

AFTER THE HUNT
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Written by

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"People never lie so much as after the hunt, during a war, or before an election."

- Otto Von Bismarck

CHYRON OVER BLACK: **IT HAPPENED AT YALE**

PROLOGUE

In a series of quick cuts, we see ALMA IMHOFF (51) beginning a typical day. We watch as she:

-Sleeps. FREDERIK MENDELSSOHN (Alma's husband, 53, handsome but fatigued; greying all over), sets down a glass of water and two herbal supplements on Alma's bedside table, then walks into the bathroom.

-Blow dries her hair, Frederik toweling off from the shower behind her.

-Alma checking her reflection in the mirror in her apartment foyer before grabbing her keys, her thermos of coffee. FAVIOLA (50-60's), her consistent hired help, cleans.

FAVIOLA
(calling out)
Have a good day, madam.

-Leaving her apartment and passing a PATIENT OF FREDERIK'S, getting off the elevator, as she rushes to get in it.

-Parking in the faculty parking lot. A student passes her.

STUDNET
Good morning, Professor.

ALMA
Good morning.

-Walking past the Beinecke library.

-Walking across Yale University's quad.

-Teaching a small dissertation class to eight students, including her star pupil and TA, MAGGIE RESNICK (mid-late 20's, who bears a striking resemblance to Alma, if not in appearance then in energy), and another male student, ARTHUR, who is in conversation with Maggie about his dissertation.

ARTHUR
Not wallowing in myopia.
Kierkegaard said--

MAGGIE
Yeah. But isn't that, like,
implied. That it's preferable for
one to focus only on themselves.

-In the HALLWAY outside of her OFFICE, where she runs into PATRICIA ANGLER (40's, a Professor Emeritus of Philosophy; the type of woman who is always losing her keys, her wallet, her badge), who is eating from a to-go container of soup and texting at the same time. She looks up when she sees Alma.

PATRICIA
Busy week, Alma.

ALMA
I'm aware.

Alma stops at the empty office of HANK GIBSON (40, Alma's colleague. Handsome and smart and scrupulous with both, having worked his way up the ladder at Yale from a lower-class background).

PATRICIA
(re: Hank's absence)
He's at Knox's lecture. Sucking up.

ALMA
See you tonight, Patricia.

Alma pushes past Patricia into her office.

-Teaching to a large lecture class, the students' attention rapt on her. Maggie is taking notes to Alma's right, acting as TA. Alma is at ease here; the ruler of her own kingdom.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Foucault paints a picture of public torture, performed in order to maintain the social contract of a time in which displays a power...

-Back at home, Alma inspects the kitchen.

-Faviola, pulling wet sheets and linens out of the washing machine and unloading them into a rattan basket. She meets Alma in the hallway between the laundry room and the kitchen, carrying the basket.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Faviola. The table looks beautiful.

FAVIOLA
Thank you.

-Alma refreshing her make-up and hair. We can see, in the bathroom mirror's reflection, Frederik lying on their bed, looking at his phone, nowhere near ready. She returns to the mirror, and Frederik lifts his eyes up from his phone, watching her.

TITLE CARD: AFTER THE HUNT

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alma is holding court in her living room at the tail end of a raucous--by academia standards--party. The meal is finished; the assembled group sit around Alma drinking wine and enjoying the general salon ambience of elitism mixed with the buzz of intellectual superiority - real or imagined.

Behind the group we are focused on, we can see Faviola clearing the dining table beyond; picking up errant glasses full of half-drunk cocktails, melted ice, cigarette butts.

The sounds of other guests still intermingling can be heard. Satellite conversations are carried on in various corners, but Alma is the nucleus, the center of gravity, here. She holds a bottle of (good) red in one hand.

ALMA

I'm not contesting the perceived
existence of a collective morality,
I'm saying that...

She puts the wine bottle down.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I'm saying that, pretending that
the ethics of a society hasn't
always started with the highly
biased, stone-throwing court of
public opinion--Maggie?

Maggie nods, her attention pulled away from a small reproduction of a BENIN BRONZE artifact she was looking at.

Alma raises the wine bottle to her.

MAGGIE

Yeah.

Alma refills her glass as she continues.

ALMA

Is a convenient elision--

HANK

Aimed at what?

Hank reaches for the wine bottle and refills his glass.

ALMA

Aimed at making us, as people, feel
as though we once had a plan for
ourselves. We were "better" or more
united.

HANK

Weren't we?

ALMA

Would you say we've always agreed
on god or sex or race or politics?
Or were there just fewer voices,
less easily amassed in dissent?

HANK

That reminds me--
(turns to Maggie)
What did you say? What was that
thing you said?

Hank grabs Maggie's leg, trying to remember.

HANK (CONT'D)

What's that thing you said?
(then, finding)
'Performative...'

HANK (CONT'D)

... discontent'.

MAGGIE

... discontent'.

HANK

Ah! Oof.
(to Alma)
You've read Maggie's dissertation,
right?

ALMA

Of course.

HANK

She's giving me little scraps.
That's all I'm getting, little
scraps. But what I have read is--

MAGGIE

(blushing)
Is barely coherent?

HANK

No. I'm curious what you think,
Alma?

ALMA

I think it has potential to be great. Truly great.

HANK

(to Maggie)

So why're you hiding it? Why? *Why?*
You're tight, why're you so tight?
All your generation, everyone in
your generation, you're so tight.

One of the listening students, Arthur, drops his plate as he tries to eat.

HANK (CONT'D)

(re: the accident)

Thank you. Perfect.

ARTHUR

I'm so sorry.

HANK

Exemplar.

Fellow students move to help Arthur clean up.

HANK (CONT'D)

What are you scared of? Scared of
saying the wrong thing or, uh...

Hank shifts over on the couch, gestures for Alma to sit next to him. She does.

HANK (CONT'D)

...offending someone. When did
offending someone become the
preeminent cardinal sin?

MAGGIE

I mean, I don't have a *date*
exactly, but maybe it's around the
same time your generation started
making sweeping generalizations
about ours.

HANK

Are you scared that we're going to
think less of you if it isn't
perfect? Whatever shame you have
around your self-expression, it
is...it's false. It's bullshit.

ALMA

It's bullshit.

HANK

Bullshit.

Alma shares a look with Frederik across the room, listening.

ALMA

It's bullshit.

FREDERIK

(repeating Alma)

Bullshit?

He feigns shock at the word, giving her a wink.

HANK

You can't corrupt your individual
purpose, your clarity of voice.
It's too lucid.

Maggie's fellow PHD STUDENTS have a hard time masking their
jealousy. She stands.

MAGGIE

Okay. That feels like my cue to
use the restroom.

HANK

Why? 'Cause you need the restroom
or...

ALMA

Oh, honey, don't go to the usual
one-- 'cause Frederik has a project
in there. Go to the guest one down
the hall.

Maggie leaves to go to the bathroom. As we follow her to:

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - SAME TIME

It's quieter here, but the sounds of voices and clinking
glasses still carries.

Maggie opens the second door on the left and turns on the
light, revealing: it's not a bathroom, it's a closet, housing
a large boiler surrounded by shelving units, stacked high
with sheets and various linens. The wet linens we saw Faviola
carrying earlier are hanging here to dry.

Maggie closes the closet door, and walks down the hallway a
few paces to another door, which she opens, revealing:

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - GUEST BATHROOM - SAME

Quickly, Maggie shuts the door behind her.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The conversation has continued in Maggie's absence.

FREDERIK (O.S.)

My sense is, that the two of you--

He gestures to Alma and Hank.

FREDERIK (CONT'D)

Might feel rather...bereft once
you've gotten the thing you've been
so fixated on for the past six
years. Sometimes a wish fulfilled
can be more baffling than the
longing preceding it.

ALMA

It's not a sure thing--

HANK

Oh, hey. Come on, Alma, don't let
your modesty veer into delusion.

(then)

It's not a mountaintop, Fred, it's
not some egoic teleological pursuit
to tenure. It's a threshold. It's
just a threshold to more freedom.
Freedom to follow any impulse. Any
desire, any interest you want
without fear of systemic reproach.

FREDERIK

Oh, I'm not questioning its value.
I'm saying that...well, it is a
significant thing to work your
whole life for: being above
accountability, consequence.

(then)

What happens if one of you gets it,
and the other doesn't?

Alma and Hank look at each other.

ALMA

If it's me, and not you, will you
be angry?

HANK

Yeah, I'd be rageful. Yeah.

ALMA

Me too. If it's you and not me?
Furious.

They share a smile, some other listeners laugh.

FREDERIK

Or will the strain of it be too
much for your friendship? Hank, I'm
fearing, doesn't like to lose.

An appreciative laugh from Alma. We return to MAGGIE, who is
now in:

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - GUEST BATHROOM - SAME

When she's finished, Maggie goes to wipe but realizes there
is no toilet paper.

She looks around. No Kleenex; no help. She sees a cabinet in
front of her and bends down to inspect it.

She roots around, but then STOPS when she sees: what looks
like a couple of old photographs stuck together with
humidity, and placed inside an envelope, taped to the top of
the dark cabinet.

Maggie, unable to stop herself, pulls out the pictures,
finds a vintage cotton piece of a handkerchief. She starts
unsticking the pictures, looking at them, when she sees:

A PICTURE OF an adolescent Alma, leaning on a man who has his
arm around her. In the foreground, a woman who looks like
Alma is laughing, playing with a little baby boy sitting on a
blanket. The group stands by a river; sun-dappled light and
perfect blue-green water. It's a beautiful picture, except
for the MAN ALMA LEANS ON - HIS FACE has been entirely
blacked out, crossed over by many angry lines.

Stuck to the back of the picture is a GERMAN newspaper
article. Maggie unsticks it, just a little, when we hear--

Footsteps. Maggie is startled.

MAGGIE

Shit.

Quickly, she shoves the photographs and contents back into
the envelope, about to place it back in the cabinet when--

She reconsiders, removing the newspaper to put it in her pocket before returning the envelope to its original place.

She grabs a toilet paper roll and closes the cabinet.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The assembled party is still talking in small factions.

HANK

But seriously, how many of the people we teach have private lives that wouldn't pass today's muster?

ALMA

All, well...

ALMA (CONT'D)

Most.

HANK

Most.

ALMA

Plenty.

HANK

Precisely. But we forgive it, why? Because we have to figure out how to forgive it because they're canonical.

(then)

Nietzsche: easily lends himself to Lebensraum propaganda.

FREDERIK

Carl Schmitt doesn't just lend himself, he was a Nazi.

HANK

Sure, sure. Hegel, couldn't control *little* Hegel--

KIM

Heidegger--

ALMA

--Treated Arendt like shit.

HANK

Well, that whole dynamic, *fucked up*. So I don't think we can appropriate blame one way or another.

ALMA
Aristotle: xenophobe.

KIM
They were all racist. And Freud--
(pointed, to Frederik)
Was a misogynist.

ALMA
Did you hear that, darling?

HANK
Freud was a misogynist, darling.

FREDERIK
It was a different time!

KIM laughs at that as Maggie returns to her seat. Alma looks to her, clocks her mood.

ALMA
You okay?

MAGGIE
Yeah.

Out of nowhere, ARTHUR UCCELLO (late 20's, another PhD. Chip on his shoulder as large as the sense of entitlement masking it), decides now is the time to interject.

ARTHUR
If you're worried about tenure, you shouldn't be.

ALMA
Me? Oh. *Oh?*

ARTHUR
I mean, you were gonna get it anyways, but you'll definitely get it now.

MAGGIE
Let's not...

ALMA
No, come on. I'm interested.
Illuminate us.

ARTHUR
Okay. You can't deny it's the culture! The common enemy has been newly chosen and it is the white, straight, cis man.

MAGGIE

Okay, Arthur. I'm so sorry 'cause I just, I had no idea that you were going through this. That you were feeling so victimized.

ARTHUR

I literally never said that.

MAGGIE

You didn't have to! But you're still bemoaning the fact that you're white and male and straight and, regrettably, cis, in a time when the overt culture is just pretending, like you know it's pretend, right? *Pretending* to not prefer these things, and that makes you, what, the first man in this room, or in history...

ALMA

History.

MAGGIE

...to feel fucked over by society's bad opinion.

Everyone looks at Arthur.

ARTHUR

I'm--no, all I'm saying is that it used to be that a man would edge out an equally qualified woman because he was a man. Now, the woman does edge out an equally qualified man, because she's a woman.

Alma pours herself another glass of wine.

ALMA

So--let me get this straight--what you're saying is that, even despite the many professional accolades I've accrued over the years in a deeply misogynistic environment;

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

even despite coming back after a protracted absence only to affirm my singular position as a woman in the field, my prospective tenure couldn't possibly be earned because its awarding happens to coincide with higher education's sudden subservience to inclusivity?

(then)

Did I get that right, Arthur?

ARTHUR

Um, no...I.. I'm not trying to...

ALMA

(turns to Maggie)

Did I miss something...

Alma notices Frederik has entered with a tray.

ALMA (CONT'D)

(re: the tray)

Tart.

Hank stands, claps his hands to "call it off."

HANK

Hey. It's a "tart break." It's a tart break, everybody.

Hank extends his hand to Arthur. Arthur shakes it; laughter. Tension broken.

HANK (CONT'D)

Hey! You're beautiful. You did great. You did fine.

ARTHUR

You could have backed me up a little bit, man.

HANK

It was fun while it lasted. I wanted to see how you did on your own, you did okay. Have some tart.

Alma sits back. She looks at Frederik across the table, who is staring at her. She takes a long sip of her wine.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - FOYER - LATER

Frederik and Alma say goodbye to a few lingering guests by the front door, including Kim and Arthur.

ALMA
(to Arthur, playful)
Don't talk.

KIM
Bye, Fred.

ARTHUR
See you in class.

ALMA
(to Frederik, re: Arthur)
Make him stop talking.

ARTHUR
Thank you, sir. Thanks.

FREDERIK
Goodnight.

ALMA
That boy can just talk and talk and
talk...

After the cheek kisses, the last niceties, a silence lingers between Alma and Frederik.

Alma breaks it first, walking into the living room where she pours the last of a bottle of wine into her glass. We see a few lingering guests, including Maggie and Hank, are still in the apartment. Frederik watches this, wary.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Don't look at me like that.

FREDERIK
Oh, I didn't say anything.

ALMA
You're the worst at hiding your
feelings.

FREDERIK
Well. Coming from the welter-weight
champion, I'm flattered.

ALMA
I'm fine. I haven't had any pain in
weeks.

(then)
It was a nice evening. I'm just
capping it off.

FREDERIK

I imagine it was nice, for you.
Nice to bask in Hank's continued
obsession.

Alma laughs. Frederik doesn't.

FREDERIK (CONT'D)

The least he could do is hide it
better.

ALMA

We're friends. Always will be.

But she's smiling.

FREDERIK

Hank's *and* Maggie's. Adoration. Of
you.

ALMA

Maggie. Just because...

Alma stops, hearing Maggie's laughter from the other room.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Just because Maggie is gay it
doesn't mean she's in love with me,
Frederik.

FREDERIK

I'm *saying* you tend to *choose*
people, elevate people to the
status of your approval, because
they worship you on bended knee,
not because of any actual merit on
their part.

ALMA

Maggie is brilliant.

FREDERIK

Is she? Or does she just think
you're brilliant?

Alma is about to retort, when Maggie enters.

MAGGIE

Hi.

ALMA

Oh. Hi.

They turn to her in the doorway, Maggie awkwardly enters.

MAGGIE

Sorry.

Alma smiles, goes to Maggie and puts her arm around her.

ALMA

Did you have a nice night?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

ALMA

The pork was too tough.

FREDERIK

Oh, well, if you roast it past 145 degrees it's technically Kosher.

Alma walks into the KITCHEN as she speaks, Maggie and Frederik following suit, Frederik grabbing a tumbler of whiskey he must have set down before as he goes.

In the KITCHEN, we see Faviola, washing dishes.

MAGGIE

You never did that but your efforts are duly noted.

ALMA

I put something together for you to take to Alex.

MAGGIE

Oh, no. They're not coming back for a minute. They're still in Boston.

ALMA

No, it's already done. Look, it's done, right?

MAGGIE

Thank you. And, thank you both, for the lovely evening, really.

ALMA

These things are never "lovely."
But you're sweet to lie.

Frederik hands Maggie a Tupperware container.

FREDERIK

There you are. Is that enough?

MAGGIE
Thank you so much.

Maggie takes the Tupperware, kisses his cheek before going, but he turns his head awkwardly and grazes her lips.

FREDERIK
Whoa!

MAGGIE
Okay.

Alma grins. Frederik, blushing, goes back to his drink.

FREDERIK
(raising a toast)
L'chaim.

Hank enters, finishing his drink.

HANK
Bonne nuit.
(gives a kiss to Alma)
Ciao.
(then)
Freddy, hooyah.

FREDERIK
Cheers, Henry.

Hank leaves as Alma guides Maggie out.

FREDERIK (CONT'D)
(calling out)
"Peace out" as the students say.

MAGGIE
Goodnight.

Maggie grabs her bag, hanging by the door.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - SAME TIME

Alma opens the door, revealing Hank waiting for the elevator in the vestibule, an unlit cigarette hanging in his lips.

ALMA
Hank! No smoking in the hall.
(he holds the lighter)
No. Smoking. In the...
(to Maggie)
Go. Go.

Alma shuts the door. Back inside, Alma turns away from the door, then she hears laughter. She turns back, and peers through the door's peephole.

We see, from her fish-eyed perspective, Hank furtively lighting his cigarette, and Maggie trying to take it out of his mouth, with an aim to stub it out, but then realizing there's no good place to do that.

HANK

You can have your own, you know?
You want, you want your own?

MAGGIE

You know it's not the seventies
anymore, right?

HANK

Narc.

MAGGIE

Stop.

HANK

Teacher's pet.

MAGGIE

Fuck off.

HANK

I don't know, I think you're the
teacher's pet, huh? Come on.

As the elevator doors open, Hank drapes a casual arm around Maggie, steering her into the elevator in front of him. Alma watches them until the elevator doors close. She turns back.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - LATER

The dishes are done, the house is clean, the night is over. Alma walks from the foyer into the hall.

Alma pauses briefly and looks at the BATHROOM DOOR.

ALMA

(calling)

Faviola? I'm sure we wore you out
tonight. What do we owe you?

FAVIOLA (O.S.)

(calling back)

It's \$350, madam.

Alma opens her wallet and removes the bills. She walks to meet Faviola in the kitchen. Alma smiles at her.

ALMA

I don't know what we'd do without you.

FAVIOLA

Thank you.

ALMA

Thank you--

Alma is suddenly struck through with a shot of pain, right in her midsection. She crumples and cries out, sitting heavily.

FAVIOLA

Miss Mendelssohn?

Faviola stoops by Alma.

FAVIOLA (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

(then)

Take your water.

Alma nods. Faviola stands. We hear her pad into the kitchen, pour a glass of water. Walks it back to Alma, and hands it to her.

ALMA

Thank you. Thank you.

Faviola stands a moment while Alma drinks, before returning to the kitchen.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Alma sits, catching her breath.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - EARLY, EARLY MORNING

A clean, bohemian-leaning kitchen. Lots of potted plants, a pour over coffee system, postcards tacked to the wall.

But the standout feature is a large picture window that overlooks New Haven, the Gothic spires of Yale's campus visible in the distance.

Maggie is standing, facing the window. She is showered, her hair damp, wearing an old t-shirt and boxers.

She stares out the window, the architecture of her school taking on a sinister bent in the gray morning light. Her face is inscrutable.

On the kitchen table are two used, vintage glasses, a cigarette stubbed out into one.

EXT. YALE UNIVERSITY - THE NEXT DAY

Alma walks through the still quad, her shoes echoing on the cobblestones.

INT. YALE UNIVERSITY - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - LATER

We pan along the bottoms of the bathroom stalls until we reach the furthest one. We see two feet, facing the wrong direction, and then we hear it: the raw sounds of retching, followed by flush.

ALMA steps out of the stall, and walks, business-like, to the bay of sinks. In a practiced order, she:

-Drinks water straight from the sink.

-Roots around in her bag for a bottle of pills (painkillers).

Then, she performs the specific series of checks that every woman performs to make sure that this or that body part is still in its right place; that she's still attractive, at least in this lighting, looking in this particular mirror.

INT. YALE UNIVERSITY - ALMA'S CLASSROOM - LATER

The undergraduate Foucault lecture class we saw in the prologue is assembled again. Alma sweeps into the classroom and the students immediately perk up, opening their laptops.

ALMA

Good afternoon. We were discussing Foucault's expansion on the Panopticon, right?

Alma abruptly stops. She sees an EMPTY CHAIR to her right, where we had previously seen Maggie sitting during her previous lecture class, as TA.

Alma looks at her phone, annoyed. Back at the chair. Then, she shakes it off.

ALMA (CONT'D)

The Panopticon, or the "police state" in which we all, as citizens, are conscripted to observe and study one another for missteps, as opposed to being at the mercy of an ultimate authority. This unconscious enlistment...

INT. YALE UNIVERSITY - HALLWAY OUTSIDE ALMA'S OFFICE - LATER

Alma approaches her office, her phone out, texting.

We see the text on screen: FROM: FREDERIK - "Making a cassoulet tonight. See you later?"

Alma is about to respond, but instead she opens a new text, from HANK: "yes to drink."

Alma: "Meet at Three Sheets."

Alma smiles, opens her office door.

INT. YALE UNIVERSITY - ALMA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Alma sits, sighs. Alma picks up her phone, she shoots off another TEXT, to MAGGIE: "?????". She doesn't wait for an answer.

INT. THREE SHEETS BAR - EARLY HAPPY HOUR

A shitty bar that serves shitty beer and shittier liquor, full of rich college kids high on the notion of slumming it, safe in the knowledge that they will never actually have to.

Alma and Hank sit at the bar, playfully trying to flip coasters on the bar rail. Both have whiskeys in front of them. They laugh. It's easy. Comfortable.

HANK

There we go...

Alma flips, nearly drops the coaster. They laugh.

HANK (CONT'D)

Are you going to behave yourself?

ALMA

Nobody panic. It's been a long day.

She resets the coaster, flips it and misses it again.

HANK

Wait, wait, wait. No look.

Hank flips the coaster and seamlessly catches it.

ALMA

Did you talk to Micheron last night?

HANK

No. I *listened* to Micheron.

ALMA

You're just jealous because he's better looking than you.

Alma successfully catches her coaster.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Ah!

(then)

I was trapped with Find. And he, oh, just oozing the desperation of still being relegated to adjunct. It's *awful*.

HANK

That's the thing about horse races.

ALMA

Now tenure is what, winning the Kentucky Derby?

HANK

In this particular equine metaphor, yeah.

ALMA

All right. So what's the thing?

HANK

(whispers to her)

Only the thoroughbreds have a chance at winning.

Hank winks. Alma smiles at him.

ALMA

Do you think what Frederik said, after dinner, do you think there's anything to that?

HANK

I don't know what you're referring to but I'm almost positive of my answer.

ALMA

No. Just, what's going to happen? You know, when it's won, when it's over. Everybody talks about reaching for the brass ring, but nobody says what you do when you win it.

A beat. Hank considers.

HANK

I think we celebrate. And then we just get right back to work. The next publication, the next book...*Opera Completa*, the Locke Lectures--

ALMA

Alright, alright, alright. *Okay.*

HANK

(then)

Where is Fred, tonight?

ALMA

Making a *cassoulet*.

HANK

It's just a withering thing to say about a man.

ALMA

It's quite a good *cassoulet*.

HANK

He's going to break eventually, you know.

ALMA

No, he won't.

HANK

Yeah. No, he won't.

A beat.

HANK (CONT'D)

Talked to Maggie today?

ALMA

No. She wasn't in class. No call,
no show. I think, I've just
extended her too much rope.

Hank is about to say something else when a GROUP OF ROWDY
FRESHMAN roll into the bar. It's suddenly too loud and too
claustrophobic.

HANK

I miss when it was only us that
liked this place.

ALMA

I can't hear you.

Hank stands, they laugh.

HANK

You okay?

ALMA

Yeah.

HANK

You've got this?

ALMA

(shaking her head)
Once a poor kid...

HANK

...Always a cheap bastard.

They go for a high-five, turned fist bump, turned disaster
and laugh at the awkwardness.

HANK (CONT'D)

What is this?

ALMA

Stop doing that to me. Horrible.

HANK

Bye.

Hank leans in, kisses Alma briefly. Or not so briefly.

HANK (CONT'D)

(calling back)
That's on me. That's for you.
(re: the game)
Keep working on that.

Alma watches him go, finishes the rest of her drink.

ALMA
Check, please.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALL VESTIBULE -
LATER

It's late. The elevator doors open unto a quiet hall, and Alma walks through them, her keys at the ready, carrying her bags. Suddenly, she stops.

We turn around to reveal: Maggie, soaking wet and shivering, sitting on a banquette outside of Alma's apartment door.

ALMA
Maggie? What are you doing here?

MAGGIE
I came by...I went to your office,
but you weren't there.

ALMA
Oh. Alright. Why don't you come
inside--

MAGGIE
Is Frederik home?

Alma checks her watch.

ALMA
Probably. Jesus, you're soaking--

Alma roots around in her bag, pulls out a cotton t-shirt. Slowly, Alma moves towards Maggie, and starts drying her hair, section by section.

MAGGIE
I need to speak with you.

ALMA
Okay. Come on, let's just go
inside. I'll get you a towel--

MAGGIE
Alone. Please.

Alma nods, pulls Maggie into the STAIRWELL off of the apartment vestibule. A beat as they settle again.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Yeah. I guess it's just...Hank walked me home, like I said he would. It was friendly. You know, he's Hank. Everybody loves Hank.

(then)

And, Alex isn't home, I think I said yesterday they're still in Boston. He asked for a nightcap; which, you know, fine. Whatever. I don't even remember what I poured us. It was something Alex brought home from a party a few weeks ago.

(then)

It was fine. I don't know. I don't think I realized how drunk he was until I saw him stumble in the kitchen. He started asking inappropriate questions. I guess first it was about my work, my paper. Then he asked about Alex, and...if we'd had any men in the relationship...

(then)

When he kissed me, I almost...I thought it was like a joke or something. I didn't do anything, and then he kept going. And I said 'No,' and he kept going.

(then)

When he left, I showered.

A long beat. Alma is still.

ALMA

What are you saying happened?

MAGGIE

What do you mean?

ALMA

What are you saying he *did*?

Maggie is caught off guard, stumbling...

MAGGIE

Isn't it obvious?

Alma doesn't speak.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

He crossed the line. He kept going after I said no.

ALMA
But what actually *happened*?

MAGGIE
Why do you need to know? He assaulted me. Does it need to get worse than that? Do you need to hear a...

She trails off. A long beat. Then:

ALMA
Does anyone else know?

MAGGIE
Just you. So far. I--

ALMA
Why me?

MAGGIE
What?
(then)
I don't know...it's the right thing to do, isn't it? To tell someone.
(then)
...And I just, given your history--

ALMA
What does that mean, my history?

A beat. Maggie stammers.

MAGGIE
What do you mean? I--I don't know--

ALMA
Why are you saying that, my history?

MAGGIE
I didn't mean anything.

ALMA
What does it mean? You asked it, it's got to mean something.

MAGGIE
I-I just thought your history supporting women. In the department. I don't know...

A beat. Alma takes a deep breath.

ALMA
Okay. Why don't you just come
inside? I can get you a towel and
we can talk.

MAGGIE
No, I'm sorry.

Maggie searches Alma's face.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

An awkward negotiation in the stairwell. Finally, Maggie
walks past Alma to go.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - FRONT ENTRYWAY - LATER

Alma, exhausted, puts down her keys and bag. She hears faint
music and fire going in the other room.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - FREDERIK'S STUDY -
CONTINUOUS

Alma tries to pass by the ajar door of Frederik's study
without him seeing her. But he calls out, over his music--

FREDERIK (O.S.)
It's late.

Alma backpedals. Stands in the doorjamb of the study.
Frederik turns the music off with his phone.

ALMA
I'm sorry. The paper.

FREDERIK
Of course, the paper.

ALMA
If I don't publish this month--

FREDERIK
--Your position isn't as secure,
etc. etc.

ALMA
Publish or perish.

FREDERIK
Up or out.

A familiar, well-trodden argument between husband and wife.

ALMA
I missed the cassoulet.

FREDERIK
I left some in the oven.

ALMA
I don't deserve you.

A beat. Alma lingers, agitated. Frederik waits her out.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Who did you see today?

Frederik eyes her, trying to suss out her mood. She's shift.

ALMA (CONT'D)
What?

FREDERIK
No, it's just--you never want to
talk about my work.

ALMA
That's not true.

FREDERIK
Darling, please. We are too old and
too married to lie to each other so
blatantly.

(then)
I saw a teenager who hates me, a
woman who is lying to herself about
her husband's cheating, and another
patient. New. A referral from Tim?
I told you about him.

ALMA
I thought he annoyed you.
Interesting?

FREDERIK
Remains to be seen.

A beat. Frederik uses his phone to turn the music back on.

ALMA
Have you ever...

FREDERIK
...yes?

ALMA

Have you ever disagreed with a patient? Over a sensitive issue?

FREDERIK

Of course. Most people don't come to analysis looking to break old patterns. They're looking to affirm that they don't need help.

ALMA

Did you tell them so?

Frederik tips his head back, thinking.

FREDERIK

My father told me a story, once, from when he was first building his practice. He was working with a young woman who was so wedded to her own misery, it drove him mad. And one day he told her she "Lacked the ability to overcome repeating the same patterns for the rest of her small, miserable life." She never came in again. Obviously.

(then)

Why? What is this about?

ALMA

Nothing. I don't know. I don't know, I think I'm just starving.

FREDERIK

Dinner awaits.

ALMA

Again: I don't deserve you.

FREDERIK

Again: no one is contesting that.

Frederik walks her into the KITCHEN.

FREDERIK (CONT'D)

Did something happen? With a student?

ALMA

No. I wonder if I can be cold, sometimes.

FREDERIK

Cold? You?

ALMA

I mean it.

FREDERIK

Impenetrable, maybe. Aloof, sure.
But no, I don't think you're cold,
or unfeeling.

ALMA

I didn't say unfeeling.

Frederik puts a bowl of cassoulet, a nice linen napkin, and a spoon in front of Alma. Dinner is served.

FREDERIK

Guten appetit.

EXT. TANDOOR - OUTSKIRTS OF NEW HAVEN - THE NEXT DAY

Hank waits outside of Tandoor Restaurant, nervously fidgeting. Finally he spots ALMA, approaching from down the block. He waves to her. She approaches him, but stops a good distance away. They look at each other.

HANK

Hey. Thanks for coming.

ALMA

I don't have a lot of time.

Hank studies Alma, caught off guard.

ALMA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

What do you want?

HANK

Can we talk inside?

He opens the door of the restaurant for her. Alma, after a moment of hesitation, follows him inside.

INT. TANDOOR - OUTSKIRTS OF NEW HAVEN - LATER

Hank and Alma sit across from each other at a dingy Indian restaurant in an old school diner. Alma has an iced Chai tea in front of her which she hasn't touched. Hank has a beer in front of him, which he takes a long sip of, Alma watches him.

HANK

Look. I don't know what she's told you, or what's already going around with the faculty...

(MORE)

HANK (CONT'D)

(then)

I know that I sound like one of those guys, but I feel like there's no way to avoid clichés, here. In fact, everything about this feels like a fucking cliché. And I know that by saying that, I am making myself out to be the victim, a blameless entity in this fucking ouroboros of he said/she said. But see, this is what I mean: I'm damned if I do, damned if I don't. Everything I say has been said before by someone in my position, who was probably guilty, and therefore I am guilty by association. But--

Just then, a WAITRESS, BILLIE (30's), APPROACHES.

BILLIE

Ready to order?

Simultaneously:

ALMA

I'm fine--

HANK

Yes, please. Thank you.

Alma stares at him.

HANK (CONT'D)

I'll have my usual.

He smiles, and Billie melts a little. She nods.

BILLIE

Yeah. You got it.

(to Alma)

Nothing for you?

Alma shakes her head. Billie nods and Alma watches her leave. When she looks back at Hank, he is also watching the waitress as she walks away.

ALMA

"My usual."

HANK

Yeah.

ALMA

Okay.

Hank moves his beer aside and looks seriously at Alma.

HANK

It's not true, Alma. It's not. I swear.

(then)

It all happened so quick, like wildebeest scattering from an approaching lion. One minute, you're part of a pack, the next minute, your leg is in the jaws of some apex predator and everyone is thinking "Damn, glad it wasn't me."

ALMA

I'm not sure that's what everyone is thinking.

Billie drops off Hank's food.

BILLIE

Okay. We've got the Saag Paneer...

HANK

Oh yeah.

BILLIE

Yup. And we've got the tandoori chicken...

HANK (CONT'D)

...tandoori chicken. Oh yeah.

BILLIE

And we've got the garlic naan...

HANK (CONT'D)

...garlic naan. Give me that garlic naan.

HANK (CONT'D)

Goddamn. Thank you.

BILLIE

And the basmati rice. And then a plate, just in case you wanted it.

HANK

Yeah, just in case I need to... thank you. I appreciate it.

BILLIE

You guys got cutlery? You okay?

HANK

We're all good. Appreciate you, Billie. Thank you.

ALMA

So are you going to tell me why this is not true? Or did you just ask me here to check to see if I was bearing pitchfork?

Alma hands Hank a napkin from the dispenser on the table. He wipes his mouth, his fingers.

HANK

I caught Maggie cheating a few months ago. I didn't think much of it, really. I talked to her, she said she was under enormous pressure, I gave her a pass. But I wasn't convinced, not totally.

He pauses, takes a bite. Chews.

HANK (CONT'D)

And then--her dissertation.

ALMA

What about it?

HANK

You don't know? I knew, immediately. She plagiarized it. She lifted directly from Agamben's *Homo Sacer*--his notion of simultaneous subjectification and de-subjectification is reproduced almost word for word. You had to have seen too, didn't you?

ALMA

So when you brought it up at the dinner, you just wanted to see what I would say? Or you were trying to catch us out?

HANK

I wanted to see how she would react. Especially in your company. Test my hunch.

ALMA

To test your hunch.

HANK

We did go back to her apartment that night. I asked her for a nightcap.

ALMA

Why? *Why?*

HANK

I know, I know. That was a huge mistake. A huge fucking mistake. I thought if we were on her turf, off campus, she'd be more open, less guarded. I wanted, perhaps erroneously, stupidly--

ALMA

Definitely stupidly.

HANK

--To see if what I assumed was true, was true. So, we had the drinks. I was, at that point, fucking nervous. You know who her parents are, they've donated half the fucking campus.

(then)

Then, unprompted, she says to me her partner was out of town. Truthfully, listen, I know this sounds so brutally *male*, but I really did think she was coming on to *me*. And I'm fucking terrified, you know, because of the...

He gestures, vaguely.

HANK (CONT'D)

The...climate. Of higher education these days.

ALMA

Then why would you go to a female student's apartment, and drink something that she poured you?

HANK

Believe me, in retrospect--I *know*. But I was stubbornly stuck on this, I needed to bring up my suspicions to her, to let her know she would be held accountable. So I did. I told her I suspected she'd plagiarized, and she reacted just like... cold, ice calm. Denied it. And then, the next day...this...utter fabrication.

(then)

(MORE)

HANK (CONT'D)

And now it's going to be *her* word against a lifetime of hard work and good deeds and advocating for women in philosophy. Working three fucking jobs, you know, and it took me years to get through all the debt and red tape. And I'm not going to let it happen. I can't. I won't. I'm not going to allow. I've worked too hard, done too much to get here to let it all be taken away because some lying little fucking bitch with a shit ton of money, exploiting this shallow cultural moment says I should.

A beat. Hank rips apart some Naan and eats it. Alma grabs some from his hands, and he holds hers.

ALMA

Please don't ever fucking say that to *anyone* but me.

HANK

They're going to want to speak with you.

ALMA

Why me?

HANK

Since it was after your party that she said all this happened. And now that you know the truth, my *hope* is that you will not allow what is "correct" keep you from doing what is *right*.

He sits back. A long beat. Alma looks at him.

INT. ANTEROOM - YALE - LATER

Alma sits in a chair outside of a closed door in a gothic, cozily self-important space. A SECRETARY, WENDY WATKINS (30's) taps away on her computer. Alma surreptitiously takes two pills from her stash, swallows them with water.

The door swings open. The DEAN OF HUMANITIES AT YALE, RJ THOMAS, (70's, once-imposing, now so close to retirement he can taste it), steps out, stops short when he sees Alma.

DEAN RJ THOMAS
Professor Imhoff, I don't believe I
was expecting you...

WENDY
She's not on the schedule, sir.

ALMA
If you have a minute, I'd like to
speak with you.

Dean Thomas checks his watch. Sighs.

INT. DEAN RJ THOMAS' OFFICE - YALE - LATER

A space belonging to a career academic. Books, brown liquor,
and gothic arches housing stained glass windows. A framed
family portrait on the desk for local color.

DEAN RJ THOMAS
Sit, Alma, sit.

Alma is already sitting.

DEAN RJ THOMAS (CONT'D)
So-

ALMA
I imagine you know why I am here.

The Dean looks equal parts relieved and uncomfortable that
Alma's gotten straight to the point.

DEAN RJ THOMAS
A formal inquiry is going to be
conducted, yes. With all haste and
via the appropriate channels.

ALMA
Well. I think it's important I pre-
empt those channels.

The Dean, sighing, takes off his glasses, pinches his nose.

ALMA (CONT'D)
I believe there is a conflict of
interest that would preclude me
from speaking either without bias
or without the assumption of bias.
Should I be asked what I believe I
will be asked.

He opens the bottom desk of his drawer and pours himself a double shot of Jameson, neat.

DEAN RJ THOMAS

I'm just relieved you're not here about tenure.

(then)

It's a minefield, Alma. A fucking minefield, these days.

ALMA

You keep the fancy stuff for show?

DEAN RJ THOMAS

I hate that Laphroaig shit. But, what looks good looks good. And against all odds, I've found myself in the business of optics, rather than substance.

ALMA

I have to teach later.

DEAN RJ THOMAS

Ah. Of course. Purpose. Not just Sisyphean administration.

ALMA

Maybe your secretary could use some.

DEAN RJ THOMAS

Hey. Be nice to Wendy. She still believes what she does is important.

He sits. Takes a sip.

DEAN RJ THOMAS (CONT'D)

So. This conflict of interest. Do I want to know?

ALMA

It's nothing like that.

DEAN RJ THOMAS

Good. Thank God.

(already wishing this was over)

So then. Off the record?

ALMA

...Off the record.

The Dean looks wearily at her. He serves himself another long pour of Jameson.

INT. BATTELL CHAPEL - YALE - THAT NIGHT

A gorgeous, gothic hall. The weird mix of the loftiness of academia abutting its constant miserliness is exhibited by the pathetic fruit and cheese plates and cheap wine on offer.

A large poster board on an easel advertises:

THE FUTURE OF JIHADISM IS FEMALE: THE HIDDEN ROLE OF WOMEN IN RECENT JIHADI DEVELOPMENTS IN WESTERN EUROPE - AN ILLUMINATING CONVERSATION WITH DR. HUGO MICHERON AND DR. JOHN ENSLER (DEPT. CHAIR: PHIL.).

Alma is at the easel, reading and eating a cube of cheese.

HANK (O.S.)

How many more times do you think we're gonna have to pretend that Dr. John Enslar is capable of anything remotely close to 'illuminating conversation'?

Alma almost chokes on her cheese.

ALMA

You're here?

HANK

Yeah. I told you I would be.

Whispers follow Hank. Alma clocks this. Hank ignores them.

HANK (CONT'D)

You look strange.

ALMA

You scared me. I'm eating cheese.

The lights dim and brighten twice, the event's starting.

HANK

Got a watered down red.

Alma does not respond.

HANK (CONT'D)

Save you a spot.

He breezes roughly past her. Alma tosses the rest of her meager cheese plate, waits. As the hall empties out, the rear doors open, and in walks Maggie, who stops short.

ALMA
(re: easel)
Popular discussion topic. Who would've thought.

A beat. Not the time for a joke, maybe.

ALMA (CONT'D)
I was surprised, the other day. I reacted poorly. It's not news that's easy to hear.

MAGGIE
Imagine telling it.

ALMA
I reacted in a way that I shouldn't have. As a teacher, and someone who considers you a friend.

Another beat. Finally, Maggie nods, starts towards the theatre's doors.

ALMA (CONT'D)
He's in there, Maggie.
(then)
I didn't think he would come or I would've warned you.

Maggie stops, blanches.

MAGGIE
I have a right to these spaces. I have just as much right as he does.

ALMA
You don't have to go in there.

MAGGIE
I need the lecture credit.

ALMA
I'll sign off on it, who cares?

Maggie turns, looks at Alma a little bit oddly.

MAGGIE
Who cares. Right.
(then)
(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I'm...I've decided to press charges. Against Hank.

(then)

And I'm hoping...it would mean a lot to me, if I had your support. Of me.

(then)

More specifically: your testimony. If we have to go to trial.

ALMA

You have a lawyer.

MAGGIE

Yeah, sort of. I don't know.

ALMA

Alex? Isn't she pre-law?

MAGGIE

They're in their second year. And it's more of a consulting thing...

ALMA

Did you go to a clinic? To collect DNA evidence, and photos?

(then)

I don't think we should be talking about this here.

MAGGIE

Yes. I did.

ALMA

To the University one? That's good.

MAGGIE

No, I...the one on Whitney? I went. But I don't know, I was there. I walked, you know. And I was by myself. It was late, and there was this group of guys there and they were just standing outside, and staring at me, and I don't know. I panicked. I know I shouldn't have. But I saw a security camera. And so they'll have me walking up. I went to you first, so even without a certain type of physical evidence, with the tape and with your testimony, it should--there could still be like a case. Right?

Alma, all empathy, shakes her head.

ALMA

Maggie. I didn't see anything, I don't know what you want me to say.

(then)

I believe you. You know I believe you. I told the Dean of Humanities as much today.

MAGGIE

You did?

ALMA

I did. But I don't know what good I could do in your case, if it comes to that. In fact, I might hurt it.

MAGGIE

How?

ALMA

The last thing you said to me that night was that he was going to walk you home. And then I saw the two of you, in the hallway, together leaving. Willingly. Is what it looked like to me. If I were to be asked under oath.

MAGGIE

Yeah, but that's not what I'm asking for--

Just then, the WOMEN'S RESTROOM DOOR OPENS. Out walks Patricia. It is immediately awkward.

PATRICIA

Everything okay?

Alma looks at Maggie.

MAGGIE

Yes, Professor Angler. Thank you.

PATRICIA

(re: the lecture)

They're starting.

ALMA

You should hurry.

She smiles. So does Alma.

Alma is painfully aware of Patricia's proximity to their conversation, her thinly veiled eavesdropping. Patricia starts walking away. They watch her leave, Alma then says:

ALMA (CONT'D)

Maggie.

MAGGIE

Alma.

(then)

I can count on you, right?

Off Alma: feeling the walls close in, we CUT TO:

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - LATER

We are at the far end of the hallway, looking down the barrel of it. At the other end, the bathroom door is ajar. We see ALMA, kneeling in the bathroom, just her legs visible.

Finally, she stands, carrying with her - THE ENVELOPE MAGGIE FOUND EARLIER.

It's clear that Alma has been drinking, but in the WASP-ish way of getting drunk, wherein you get sharper and more honest, not dulled or sloppy. We follow her as she stumbles into her STUDY.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - ALMA'S STUDY - LATER

Some loud reggae music is playing from Alma's computer. Alma, envelope in hand, sits on the floor.

Alma sits there for a moment. Then, she opens the envelope Maggie found. Slowly, begins sifting through the contents. She stops when she sees the photograph in which the man's face is scratched. A piece of tape is bent over the top of the photograph. Alma scratches at it, absently.

Then, suddenly, she freezes: a memory coming back to her--the GERMAN ARTICLE. It was attached to this photo. She looks frantically for it amongst the envelope's contents, but cannot find it. *Fuck.*

A long, still beat. Then, suddenly, Alma stands and tosses the entire contents of the envelope, and maybe even some shit from her desk, into the fireplace. She then grabs a box of matches from on top of the mantelpiece, lights one, and tosses it on the pile. She lights another, and does the same.

She watches the fire burn. The photograph remains on the floor beside her, unburned.

INT. ALMA'S CLASSROOM - YALE UNIVERSITY - THE NEXT MORNING

Alma's smaller dissertation class of eight students is assembled, including KATIE BALLARD (late 20's, plagued by a bad case of Imposter Syndrome, and someone we might recognize from Alma's dinner party), Arthur, and Maggie. The atmosphere of the room is cold, bordering on hostile.

ALMA

Who presented last? Arthur?

An awkward beat passes when Arthur doesn't immediately answer. Suddenly: there's a KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Alma looks over hopefully and sees: HANK. Her students see him, too.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Alma stands, walks to the classroom door.

ALMA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

What are you doing here?

Alma opens the door, closes it quickly behind her.

EXT. ALMA'S CLASSROOM - YALE UNIVERSITY - SAME

Alma tries to pull Hank away from her classroom's window. He shakes his arm out of her grasp.

HANK

Who are you? How could you?

ALMA

What are you--just, go to my office, wait for me--

HANK

I was fired this morning. Not suspended, I was FIRED.

This shocks Alma, but she covers it.

ALMA

If you want to talk, we can talk but not here, not now.

HANK

I told you the *truth*, and you blatantly ignored it to save yourself.

Alma looks behind her--her students, including Maggie and Katie, are assembled at the window, watching.

ALMA

You are being paranoid. Just go to my office and wait for me.

HANK

No, no. No. I think I'm right on top of something. Something I just couldn't see before. See I used to think, you and me, we had a mutual fealty to integrity, to the ethics that you so glibly teach. But I'm realizing I gave you too much fucking credit.

ALMA

You sound insane right now.

At this point, Alma's students have exited the classrooms and are watching the altercation.

KATIE

Professor Imhoff? Are you okay?

ALMA

Oh. Uh--

HANK

No, I don't know, actually, Katie. I'm not sure this blood on her hands may never wash off.

ALMA

Stop it--
(turns to students)
Yeah. I'm fine, Katie. Thank you.

Alma pulls Hank down the hallway, towards the base of a small stairwell at the end of the hall.

HANK

You know the truth, and you won't say it because it'll make you *look* bad. You're letting them fucking ruin me, ruin my fucking life, and you could easily stop it.

ALMA

You give me too much power, Hank. I did not do this. You did this to yourself.

HANK

Oh, that's convenient. Yeah. Yeah,
I know. I fell on my own sword, but
you were the one holding it.

(then, a curse)

*Let innocence make false accusation
blush, and tyranny tremble at
patience, you fucking coward.*

ALMA

Fuck you.

HANK

Fuck you!

Hank notices Maggie rush off to the STUDENT PSYCHOLOGIST
(whom we recognize from the opening party) DR. KIM SAYERS
(49).

HANK (CONT'D)

(re: Maggie)

Hey! Fuck you! Fuck you.

(to gathered students)

Fuck all of you, fuck you! Fucking
privileged, coddled hypocrites!

He walks out of the building, pulling all of the notices off
a large billboard as he goes.

Alma turns around and sees that more students and faculty
have assembled in the hallway. Maggie, catches Alma's eyes
and turns, walking quickly outside. Alma follows her.

KIM

Alma. Alma--

Alma keeps going.

EXT. YALE UNIVERSITY - QUAD - SAME TIME

Maggie is sitting on a bench outside in the midst of a panic
attack. She looks up when she senses Alma approaching.

MAGGIE

It really happened? I didn't just
make it up, right? It's real?

ALMA

If it's real to you, it's real.

MAGGIE

Everyone keeps looking at me like I did something horrible. But he's the one...*he's* the one...

She trails off.

ALMA

You want my advice?

MAGGIE

Please. Tell me what to fucking do, and I'll do it, please. Please, just help me.

ALMA

Okay. Okay.

A long beat.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Tonight, come over, and we can talk. Or not talk. You don't have to have the answers. I'll cook. Well, Frederik will cook. Alright?

Alma approaches Maggie and slowly, wipes the tears from Maggie's cheeks.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Okay?

Maggie nods again.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Okay.

Maggie doesn't move at first when Alma wraps her in a hug. Then, as the hug lingers, Maggie relaxes, sinking into Alma.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alma and Frederik wait for Maggie in their living room.

FREDERIK

It's late. Why don't we start?

ALMA

I'm sure she's on her way.

FREDERIK

You'd start without me, if I was late.

ALMA

You're being childish.

FREDERIK

I wish I had the leeway to be childish in this relationship.

ALMA

Give it ten minutes, okay?

FREDERIK

And even then, we'll probably still be waiting.

ALMA

Probably, yes.

FREDERIK

Why?

ALMA

Because it's fucking polite.

FREDERIK

Because you care more about kowtowing to a mediocre student with rich parents than you do--

Just then, a buzz at the door. Alma, triumphant, stands.

ALMA

Hmm.

She opens the apartment door to reveal: Maggie, carrying an empty Tupperware container.

MAGGIE

Hi. I wasn't expecting you.

ALMA

Who were you expecting?

A beat, they look at each other.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - LATER

Alma, Maggie, and Frederik are eating together. Frederik and Alma may come in and out at times with food from the kitchen.

FREDERIK

So, Maggie. How's the dissertation coming?

Alma shoots him a look. Frederik doesn't return it.

MAGGIE

Um...it's coming. Along.

FREDERIK

And what is it that you're exploring?

MAGGIE

It's not particularly interesting.

FREDERIK

Well, I'd like to hear. Please, I'm curious.

MAGGIE

Okay. Well, it's mainly concerning the resurgence of virtue ethics? Or, the outward display of moral character as the new model for personal morality, as opposed to, following social duties and rules, or Karmic thought. Things like that.

Frederik looks pointedly at Alma. She shakes her head.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Sorry if it's a bit confusing. It's so boring, I'm sure.

FREDERIK

No, no, no. I like listening to you talk.

MAGGIE

(re: food)

How often do you make Doro Wat?

FREDERIK

I'm curious: what drew you to *virtue* ethics?

MAGGIE

...What drew me?

FREDERIK

Well, I'm...you're spending what, four or five years of your life on this, right? Why? What um... what turns you on about it?

MAGGIE

Um, well, it's become very popular, of late. And as you might know or even recall, it was sort of invented in the 60's and 70's, when society was radicalizing, and now, that we're kind of radicalizing again, I find that interesting.

FREDERIK

Interesting.

MAGGIE

Yes, interesting.

ALMA

Frederik.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry. Did I say something wrong?

Maggie looks to Alma for help. Alma is looking at Frederik.

FREDERIK

No, no, no. I'm sorry. I'm intruding, forgive me. I'm sure without me present you ladies can talk about such *interesting* topics with much more freedom. Excuse me.

Frederik wipes his mouth, stands up, and walks out, into the kitchen. He turns on his music in the other room. It's loud.

ALMA

I'm so sorry, Maggie. He's an asshole.

MAGGIE

Does he want me to feel, like, stupid or something?

(then)

Alex didn't want me to come tonight.

ALMA

Well, she's also an asshole--

MAGGIE

Yeah, *they* can sometimes be a little bit--

ALMA

They. They, right.

MAGGIE

Stop.

ALMA

Okay.

MAGGIE

They thought it would do more harm than good to be back here so soon with you all.

ALMA

Well, I guess we didn't prove them wrong.

MAGGIE

Yeah, they don't find you especially trustworthy.

ALMA

What do you think?

Frederik walks back through the dining room from the kitchen, the music deafening as he does. He returns to the other room.

MAGGIE

You know, I used to think I could rely on myself. That I could...trust my instincts, about people, about myself. Now, I'm not so sure. I certainly didn't anticipate this getting so big so fast, or being something that would resonate with so many people. Like, a lot of women, you know, DMing me, stopping me on campus with similar stories and...

Alma waits her out.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

A reporter approached me. I declined to comment. But she gave me her card, I kept it.

ALMA

And?

MAGGIE

And I don't know.

Maggie shrugs. A beat. Alma takes a sip of her wine.

ALMA

Don't do it, Maggie. Don't tell your story to someone who just wants to turn it into something they can sell.

The music swells in the background.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I... I am telling you, *if* you move forward with this, if you press charges, you will become radioactive. I know that you want to believe in the fairness of the system, but higher education is run by white men, and you need those white men to hire you, and they won't, because they will be terrified you will do the same thing to them. If they ask you to work late or touch your shoulder for too long. It, not your work, is what anyone is going to see when they look at you. I promise.

MAGGIE

And what if I don't care to be a career academic?

Frederik opens the door to the dining room again, causing the music to permeate the space. He walks past the two women without acknowledgment.

ALMA

You need to decide what you care about. Yourself, or--

Frederik walks back through the dining room, to his study.

ALMA (CONT'D)

--decide what you care about, yourself or what you want to do for yourself.

MAGGIE

And which would you choose?

ALMA

I think you know. Sometimes, it's about taking the long view.

MAGGIE

Can we stop being smart? For like, one fucking second?

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(then)

I feel like you're...completely removing me from what happened to me. Like, you're speaking in these hypothetical riddles about women writ large when I'm sitting right here in front of you. I just--

ALMA

I thought you wanted my advice.

MAGGIE

I do! I *did*. I do. I don't know. It's just--so, because women are penalized for speaking out, I shouldn't? *That's* your logic? I mean, that's just so...

(then)

And then what? He just gets to get away with it? And relocate to another university and give speeches, and write books and sleep with other students all over again...? That is--

ALMA

Well, I think Hank is pretty well fucked, so I wouldn't worry about that.

MAGGIE

...So you think I ruined *his* life?

ALMA

I didn't say that.

MAGGIE

Am I not *owed* this? I mean, this happened to me, and I'm not even allowed to speak about it?

A long beat.

ALMA

You can do whatever you like, Maggie.

Frederik enters again. The music swells again, a loud crescendo. They wait until he leaves.

MAGGIE

Just not with your support.

ALMA

I support whatever you choose, but I think what you want is restorative justice; and what you are getting is vengeance. And I would be doing a disservice to you, to let you believe otherwise.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Frederik again sets down two herbal supplements on Alma's bedside table, then walks into the bathroom. He starts a shower just as Alma's ALARM goes off.

A bleary Alma turns off her alarm, and then sits up. She looks at her phone, groans, and puts it back down on the bedside table.

She sees the supplements and the water that Frederik left. Something about this nice gesture pisses Alma off. She leaves the pills where they are.

INT. YALE UNIVERSITY - ALMA'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Alma works in her office, a pile of cafeteria food and cans of Coke scattered across her desk. She pops two pain pills in a practiced movement as she works. Her phone BUZZES: she looks at it--HANK is calling. It goes to voicemail, and we see that this is her FIFTEENTH missed call.

Alma tries to go back to work, but her phone BUZZES again. In a brief but volatile second, Alma throws her phone across the room.

Just then: A KNOCK at the door. Kim sticks her head in.

KIM

You free?

EXT./INT. THREE SHEETS BAR - EARLY EVENING

Kim and Alma finish cigarettes underneath the lurid neon sign of "Three Sheets."

KIM

It's not long now, right?

ALMA

What?

KIM

Tenure. I keep meaning to check in.
Do you not want to talk about it?

ALMA

I haven't thought about it. I'm
always thinking about it.

KIM

Well, I, for one, have no doubts.

Kim nods towards the bar. Alma stubs out her cigarette in response.

Before the two women go in, Arthur and AN ATTRACTIVE YOUNG MAN, clearly on a date, walk in front of Alma and Kim. An awkward moment of shuffling before Arthur holds open the bar's door and lets Kim, then Alma, go in first.

ARTHUR

Hey, Professor.

He blushes as his teacher passes him.

KIM

Shall we?

INT. THREE SHEETS BAR - CONTINUOUS

Alma and Kim walk through the crowd.

KIM

Fuck, I have to pee.

ALMA

Hover, don't sit.

KIM

They're all genderless now, so we
don't even know who to blame for
all the piss everywhere.

ALMA

Rich kids are filthy.

KIM

Because they've been looked after
their entire lives, of course they
are.

Alma and Kim take their seats at their booth, half a glass of red wine on Kim's side, and many more empties on Alma's. A drunk student sleeps at their booth, Alma taps the table.

ALMA
Good morning.

The student groans and walks off.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Take your drink.

A beat.

KIM
So. Are we gonna talk about it?

ALMA
What?

KIM
Maggie Resnick. Of *the* Resnicks.

ALMA
Has she talked to you?

Kim takes a sip of her wine.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Oh. Doctor/Patient confidentiality.
That is deeply honorable and
fucking boring.

KIM
I'm not technically *her* doctor.
Sometimes.

Alma waits...

KIM (CONT'D)
This is between the two of us,
right? I won't be screwing anything
up between you two?

ALMA
No.

KIM
I believe her. I think Hank crossed
a line. I think he violated
something she held to be deeply
sacred: the student-teacher
relationship.

(MORE)

KIM (CONT'D)

And I think one could make the argument that when a power differential is involved, consent and the ability to give it is inherently incapacitated, to the point of rendering the question all but moot. But--

(then)

I have had a lot of wine, I know this isn't very *correct* of me.

Alma looks at Kim's barely half-drunk glass of wine.

KIM (CONT'D)

But after all these years it's gotten so fucking *hard* for me to listen to these kids when they have had everything--*everything*--handed to them in their lives, insist that the world stop at the first small injustice.

She takes another sip of her wine. Simultaneously, a spasm of pain hits ALMA. She is stoic, but her nails dig into her thigh below the table.

KIM (CONT'D)

There's almost this...*possessiveness* they have to their pain. How they nurse every slight, every bump in the road, every blip of victimization as if it's the only thing that can affirm them. Whatever happened to stuffing everything down and developing a crippling dependency habit in your 30's like the rest of us, you know?

The jukebox switches over to a song by The Smiths. Kim, surprised, looks around.

KIM (CONT'D)

They're playing *this* here? Bold.

ALMA

What?

KIM

Morrissey.

ALMA

Oh. I think this is The Smiths.

KIM
Potato, po-tah-toh.
(then)
I love this song.

A short beat, then:

KIM (CONT'D)
So, what do you think?

ALMA
About what?

KIM
About all of it. The *student*, the
professor.

ALMA
I think it was only a matter of
time and, it's hopelessly banal.
(then)
Didn't you have to pee..?

KIM
You never talk about yourself. I
never hear from you about your
personal life, your family...all I
know is what I hear from Fred.

ALMA
Well. Misconstruing my need for
privacy as having something to hide
would be a mistake.

KIM
Respectfully, Alma, I'm not sure
that it is.
(then)
Look, Maggie and I did talk. And
when we did, she mentioned a
favorite teacher of hers, a mentor,
the target of her Electra complex,
perhaps...

ALMA
Alright, let's not bring Jung into
our conversation.

KIM
Fine, well. This *person* was...less
than supportive when she came
forward.

(MORE)

KIM (CONT'D)

And this lack of support made her wonder why this teacher was unforthcoming, which made her question said teacher's deeper motives...

(then)

Anyway. Without saying too much: I just thought you should know. And I thought you should be ready.

ALMA

Ready for what?

KIM

Well, backlash. Potentially. I mean, these are insane times we're living in.

(then)

Now, if you want anybody to talk to, you can come to me anytime. On the record, or off. Or, I could put you in touch with some very excellent people--

ALMA

Why would I trust a therapist who violates her clients' privacy?

Kim is stunned.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Shit. I... That was uncalled for. I'm sorry. I'm...

KIM

It's okay. I'm gonna...be right back.

Kim gets up, and walks towards the bathrooms. When she disappears, Alma reaches for Kim's purse, which sits on Kim's side of the booth.

She opens the bag and roots around for something, we're not sure what. But we know she isn't finding it. Just as she puts the purse back on Kim's side of the booth, Kim returns.

ALMA

I'm uh... I'm off. I'm sorry. I'm an ass. I'm buying the wine. And I mean it. I apologize.

Alma drops a wad of cash on the table and slides out of the booth as the jukebox switches over to yet another Morrissey song.

KIM
Who keeps playing this?

Kim looks around, raises her glass to the kids by the jukebox. They "cheers" back.

KIM (CONT'D)
Fuck, yeah.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Another day; another alarm going off. Frederik lays out the supplement pills and gives Alma a kiss. The sound of Frederik in the shower. Alma hits snooze, and her phone comes online, revealing MORE MISSED CALLS FROM HANK, a flurry of NOTIFICATIONS, and her now-cracked phone screen. She sets her phone down on her bedside table...

...next to another glass of water, another pair of supplement pills. This time, she takes them.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER THAT MORNING

Alma, dressed and ready, is pouring coffee at the kitchen counter. Frederik comes in, his head buried in his phone.

FREDERIK
Did you see this? In the Yale Daily?

ALMA
What?

FREDERIK
(reading)
"Promising young Philosophy PhD Candidate, Maggie Resnick, tells her all-too familiar story in her own words. Said, 'I was prepared for hard work, prepared for the difficulties inherent in being a black woman in an elite, white, male-dominated...'"

Alma grabs the phone away from Frederik, reading ravidly.

FREDERIK (CONT'D)
Oh my god. And Hank. I almost feel bad for him. Did you know anything about this?

Alma heart pounding, scours the article for her name...but she doesn't see it. Alma breathes a sigh of relief.

ALMA

No.

She hands his phone back to him.

FREDERIK

She didn't say anything to you?

She pours her coffee from her mug into a to-go cup.

ALMA

Campus will be a zoo. I'm going to the wharf to work. I'll be home late.

Frederik fixes her with a look.

FREDERIK

But that's it? What, you're fine?

ALMA

(to herself; leaving)
Guess I'm just an unfeeling cunt.

Alma waits a moment, and then BOLTS for--

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - ALMA'S STUDY CONTINUOUS

Alma rifles through her desk drawers, looking for her painkillers. The bottle that used to be full enough is now empty. *Fuck*. She checks the purse on the floor, the coat over her desk chair...nothing.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - GUEST BATHROOM - SAME

Alma rifles through the bathroom's medicine cabinet, frantically. Advil, Aleve...none of the hard stuff she needs.

She opens up the cabinet in front of the toilet and pulls out old plastic organizing bins labeled "Alma Care - Day" and "Alma Care - Night." In each are medical swabs, bandages, syringes, various pill bottles and prescriptions, as well as DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS as to which pills to take when and their side effects. A detailed road map of a bad illness.

Finally, Alma finds a bottle of VICODIN. Checks the expiry date: three years ago. Whatever. She holds up the bottle-- only two pills left.

She swallows both, drinking straight from the tap to wash them down. She stands up, and meets her own bloodshot eyes in the mirror. Water drips down her chin, onto her blouse. She doesn't wipe it away.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Maggie is sitting up in bed, looking at her phone. ALEX KATSIAROS (mid- late 20's, non-binary, Law School student and TikTok social justice warrior), her partner, comes in, sweaty and panting from a long run.

ALEX (O.S.)
(calling)
Babe, I'm back!

MAGGIE
Hi!

ALEX
(then, appearing)
You're there. Kiss?

Alex leans over Maggie; Maggie moves away.

MAGGIE
You're all sweaty.

Alex notices Maggie's necklace.

ALEX
Is that new? Did your mom get it for you?

MAGGIE
No, I think she left it, like, when she was here once. Or...

ALEX
Looks like something she'd want you to wear.

MAGGIE
The reporter called to, um, congratulate me.

ALEX
That's great!

MAGGIE
I mean, I guess. I don't know. Yeah. I mean, I guess...

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

It's just, like, kind of fucked up, maybe, to be congratulated on being assaulted.

ALEX

No. I'm sure she congratulated you for your bravery. Look. We talked about this, fallout is inevitable. It's your courage that's gonna inspire other people in pain.

MAGGIE

Yeah. I guess...

(then)

It's just, amazing to me, you know. Like, a young black woman can get assaulted and all these white people figure out a way to make it about themselves or how to process *their* shit. Or get a leg up at their job. She was like "oh, we might get picked up by the *Times*." And I was like, "neat...?" Congrats on your fucking Pulitzer or whatever?

Alex moves closer to Maggie.

ALEX

Can I?

Maggie nods. Alex wraps her in a hug.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Come here. Let me get close to you.

MAGGIE

She hasn't called.

ALEX

Your mom?

MAGGIE

Alma. She hasn't said anything.

Alex pulls away, looks at Maggie. Alex sighs and moves off, slamming the door.

Maggie goes back to her phone.

EXT. NEAR ALMA'S APARTMENT - LONG WHARF, CT. - LATER

A very different part of New Haven, down by the water.

Alma parks her car in a seedy, overgrown parking lot. Hers is the only car besides a massive white van in the lot.

INT. ALMA'S APARTMENT - LONG WHARF, CT. - CONTINUOUS

Alma opens the door unto a barely-used, beat down, but exceptionally tidy apartment, with a nice view of the wharf beyond. The apartment is sparsely furnished, with a couch, a coffee table, a kitchen table with two chairs, and a lone desk with a severe wooden chair. That's it.

INT. ALMA'S APARTMENT - LONG WHARF CT. - LATER

Alma's laptop, notes, and research texts have been set up on the small desk in the apartment. Alma walks in from the kitchen, stirring a cup of instant coffee.

She sits down at the desk, and looks at her PAPER, titled:

"Metaphysical Ethics in the Anthropocene: Sub-Ontological 'Human' Behavior, Avatars, and the Cotillion of the Internet." She stares at the blank page, hands poised above the keyboard. She cannot, or does not, start typing.

Instead, she pulls out the precious photo of MATTIAS WOOLF as a young man that she did not burn. She spreads it out in front of her, taking care to treat it gently.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - MAGGIE'S "OFFICE" - LATER

Alex has left, but the smell of coffee lingers in the air. Maggie is sitting at her computer, set up in an "office" that's really more of a walk-in closet.

Her laptop is open to a GOOGLE TRANSLATE page. Next to the computer, on her desk, is the GERMAN ARTICLE from Alma's house. The one that was stuck to the picture.

Maggie begins typing the German into the translate function. We see as English words begin to appear.

Translated, the headline reads: **"Crying Wolff? Girl who accused family friend of sexual abuse retracts her allegations, saying 'I made it all up.'"** The article is dated from right around the time Alma would have been 18.

INT. ALMA'S APARTMENT - LONG WHARF CT. - LATER

It's been a few hours. Alma is clearly distracted. She's written some, but probably not enough.

She picks up her cup of instant coffee and takes a sip of the cold dregs. The photo of Mattias is still near her, sticking out. The photo's presence acts like a gravitational pull.

Alma lays on the couch when suddenly, A MASSIVE SPASM of pain rips through her.

She stands up, nearly bent at the waist, and hobbles to the kitchen, rooting around violently in the cabinets, finally coming up with a bottle of Advil that looks like it's from the 50's. She pours its remaining contents--four pills--into her palm, fills a glass of water, and takes the pills. She chugs the water down. Pours another glass, chugs that too.

Her breath comes in ragged bursts. She looks at the oven clock. 6:03p.

Alma walks to her desk, slams her laptop shut. Shoves it, and the passel of photos, in her bag. She hoists her bag over her shoulder, grabs her jacket, and her keys from the table by the apartment's front door. Time to go.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - MAGGIE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Maggie has translated some of the article. We may see some of what she sees, we may not. But her face tells us that whatever she's found, it has shocked her.

INT. YALE UNIVERSITY - YALE HEALTH - OUTSIDE KIM'S OFFICE - LATER

A SECRETARY sits outside of Kim's office, behind a computer, a landline phone cradled between his ear and his shoulder. Alma walks up to his desk, motions towards Kim's office.

SECRETARY

Kim's not in--

ALMA

I'll just--

SECRETARY

Okay, go in. I'll tell her you're here.

The secretary goes back to his phone call.

INT. YALE UNIVERSITY - YALE HEALTH - KIM'S OFFICE - LATER

Alma, antsy, looks at the bookshelf filled with Kim's books: *Codependent No More*, the *DSM V*, *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, all the hits. On Kim's desk: a stack of *Psychology Today*. She looks at the clock, also on Kim's desk: 6:45p.

Alma wanders over to the desk. She picks up photographs, reads Kim's random notes to self on Post-its. Then, she pauses. Calmly, but deliberately, Alma opens the drawers of Kim's desk until, finally, she sees what she was looking for: a STACK of Kim's prescription pads. She takes three, and shuts the drawer. She is stuffing the pads in her purse when:

KIM (O.S.)

Oh good, you're here.

(then)

Sorry I'm late, I was compelled to interrogate Donna on her insistence on eating, and then lying about eating, my Chobani. For the fiftieth fucking time. What's up?

Alma turns and coolly smiles.

ALMA

Oh, uh... nothing. I gotta go.

KIM

Alma it's not even seven, we said after six-thirty--

ALMA

No. I just... I thought I had more time.

KIM

You asked to see *me*.

ALMA

No, it's not important. I'll see you later. Night, Kim.

Alma walks out, leaving a befuddled Kim in her wake.

INT. WALGREENS PHARMACY - NEW HAVEN - LATER

Alma is next up in line. The pharmacy is crawling with Yale students. Alma looks pale, and impatient. Finally, it's her turn. Alma hands a WALGREENS PHARMACY TECHNICIAN (late 20's), the script she's forged.

ALMA

Alma Imhoff. 01/31/68.

The pharmacy tech looks at the script. Looks at her.

PHARMACY TECH

This is a controlled substance. I'm gonna have to get the pharmacist to sign off. Hold on a sec.

Alma is hit with a spasm of pain. She stumbles a bit.

PHARMACY TECH (CONT'D)

Are you okay? Ma'am?

Alma straightens as much as she can.

The tech walks back to the WALGREENS PHARMACIST, DAFNE and the two confer, looking over at Alma. Alma smiles at them. Dafne, the pharmacist, comes over.

WALGREENS DAFNE

Mrs. Imhoff? I just need to check something...

The pharmacist types. And types. And types again.

INT. ALMA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

In the Walgreens parking lot, Alma swallows two prescription strength pain pills. She closes her eyes, rests her head against the head rest, and waits for relief to come.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - ENTRY WAY - MUCH LATER

Alma, who was likely at Three Sheets, drinking, creeps into the apartment. She listens for a second, but doesn't hear Frederik stirring. She creeps towards the stairs.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - SAME

Alma stops outside the door to the master bedroom. It's slightly ajar, and a light is on. Alma pushes the door open a little further...

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

...and sees Frederik in bed, asleep in a pair of graying, stretched out underwear.

His socks, and the bedside table light, are still on. His back is to Alma, and his laptop is open in front of him. He snores, softly.

Alma approaches the bed and sees in front of Frederik, his laptop. Open to a PORN SITE.

Whatever video he was watching has long since timed out, but in its place are graphic ads of Anime characters having sex on a loop. Alma watches for a moment. Then, tenderly, shuts his laptop, puts it on the bedside table.

Something about this pose--her husband, so unknowingly exposed, softens Alma. She slips in the bed behind him, reaching over to turn off the light before falling dead asleep.

INT. ALMA AND FREDERIK'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Frederik is up, making breakfast. He listens loudly to John Adams' "**The Death of Klinghoffer**" again, and conducting.

Alma, blearily, enters the kitchen.

ALMA

Frederik, can you turn the music down?

(no response)

Frederik. Frederik!

Frederik turns, sees her, and turns down the music, blushing.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Can you please turn the music down?

FREDERIK

What? You don't like my beloved Adams?

Alma blinks.

ALMA

I like coffee.

He gestures to a fresh pot. She goes to get some.

FREDERIK

(blushing further)

Last night was nice.

ALMA
(the porn?)
Oh?

FREDERIK
Well, we haven't slept that close
together in...

ALMA
(not the porn)
Oh.

FREDERIK
I don't remember how long. It was
nice. You look so different when
you sleep.

ALMA
Wretched?

FREDERIK
Like you looked when we first met.

ALMA
I was twenty-nine when we first
met.

Frederik laughs.

FREDERIK
You looked beautiful.

Frederik turns down what he is cooking and moves towards
Alma, wrapping his arms around her. She stiffens. He notices,
but tries to kiss her anyways, her neck, her jaw...when he
moves to her lips she turns her head.

ALMA
Frederik. Frederik--

Frederik has a difficult time masking his hurt.

FREDERIK
What? What? What? What? It's been
months since we were intimate. If
it's the beard, I can lose it. If
it's the belly...that might take a
little bit longer.

It's a joke, but no one laughs.

FREDERIK (CONT'D)
Or is it because I'm not in the
Philosophy department?

ALMA

You're my husband. I married you.

FREDERIK

Won the battle but lost the war,
have I?

Alma moves to him, and reaches her hand up to touch his face. He flinches. To cover, he holds her hand against his cheek.

ALMA

I'm still here. Aren't I?

A beat. Frederik looks at Alma.

FREDERIK

How's the paper coming?

ALMA

Finished. More or less.

FREDERIK

Finished? *Finished*, finished? Wow.

Alma nods, sips her coffee, looks at her phone. We see a text from MAGGIE: "Can we talk?"

FREDERIK (CONT'D)

That's cause for celebration. Maybe we could, I don't know...have some people over? Or, or what? Go out, huh? Maybe? To the city? Whatever you like.

Alma looks at her e-mail to avoid her texts, and sees something worse: an e-mail from DEAN RJ THOMAS: "Re: All hands. All department heads and graduate staff please report to an all-hands meeting today at 4pm, 220 York, Seminar Room 4." She closes her phone.

ALMA

Yeah. Sounds good.

And swiftly, she kisses him on the cheek, then turns to leave. Frederik turns the music back up. When she's out of earshot, Alma pulls out her phone. Dials, waits. Voice mail.

ALMA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Kim, it's Alma. Call me back.

Alma hangs up the phone, tension starting to build.

INT./EXT. ALMA'S CAR - PARKING LOT - LONG WHARF - LATER

Alma sits in her car, waiting. Finally, she sees an Uber approaching in her rearview mirror. Alma gets out of the car, leans against it, and waits for Maggie.

MAGGIE

We could have done this from my apartment.

ALMA

I wouldn't want to run the risk of being deposed.

MAGGIE

I thought Alex wasn't a "real lawyer" yet?

ALMA

Someone should tell them that.

(then)

What did you want to talk about?

A long beat. Maggie leans against the car, next to Alma.

MAGGIE

I don't want you to be angry.

Maggie reaches into her pocket, pulls out the FOLDED ARTICLE, and Alma's heart stops.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I don't know why I took it. It was a strange, impulsive thing. But, I can't help but wonder if...if something like what happened to me, happened to you. Why didn't you tell me?

ALMA

May I?

Maggie hands her the article. Alma unfolds it, looks at it.

ALMA (CONT'D)

You translated it? Online?

Maggie nods.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I guess it's impossible to keep anything to oneself, these days.

Suddenly, Alma tears up the article, violently.

ALMA (CONT'D)
You don't know anything about me.

MAGGIE
And whose fault is that?

ALMA
You are not entitled to *any*
information about me or my life.

MAGGIE
And yet you have so much of mine!

ALMA
I haven't asked you for anything.

MAGGIE
You take it anyways! At first, I
thought it was maybe because we
were close or you had some sort of
interest in me as a human being,
but now I can't help but wonder if
it wasn't some sort of sick
vampiric kink of yours. To let me
bleed myself dry while you give
nothing in return.

ALMA
Thank you, I already have a
husband.

MAGGIE
That's how you treat people who
care about you?

Alma turns to get back in the car.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I told Kim. I really think you
should talk to someone about this.
(then)
I'm trying to help you!

ALMA
No. No. You are trying to convince
me, and yourself, that violating my
privacy was moral and good because
it proved you right. Leave me
alone, Maggie.

Maggie doesn't move.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Go. Go!

Finally, Maggie--hurt, bewildered--leaves. Alma turns and...

Then types Kim's number into her phone. It goes straight to voicemail. She calls again, same thing. She calls again, same thing. She calls again, and--

ALMA (CONT'D)

Fuck!

(into phone)

Kim, it's Alma, calling you
for the fifteenth fucking time!

Alma hangs up.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Fuck!

EXT. ALMA'S OFFICE - YALE UNIVERSITY - LATER

Alma walks past Hank's office door, across the hallway from hers. His name, on his door, is being removed by a MAINTENANCE WORKER.

INT. ALMA'S CLASSROOM - YALE UNIVERSITY - LATER

Alma lectures to her (now, three person) dissertation class. She has a livid power to her, an edge borne of desperation. She is tense throughout, feeling the winch screw ever-tighter as her agita crescendos.

ALMA

Adorno writes in his *Minima
Moralia*: "*Es gibt kein richtiges
Leben im Falschen.*" "There is no
right life in the wrong one." What
is he really saying?

Dead silence in the classroom. The students are nervous, maybe even a little frightened of Alma.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Okay. What he's *saying* is there is
no "right" life in the "wrong"
world. We are either of this world
and its conditions, or we are awake
to what is "right," and therefore
cast out of society. Alienated.

ARTHUR

But then, why attempt to act
morally, if it's truly impossible.
Isn't that just nihilism?

Another beat of silence in the classroom.

KATIE

I think, Hannah Arendt's
explanation of Ulysses' Paradox
could be relevant...

Alma stares, surprised, then gestures for her to go on.

KATIE (CONT'D)

So, Ulysses is sitting at the
Phaeacians' Court, and a blind poet-

ALMA

Aoidos.

KATIE

Aoidos, right. Aoidos starts
singing the story of Troy and of a
hero, Ulysses, whom he doesn't know
is sitting in front of him. And
suddenly, Ulysses starts to cry.
And Arendt says:

(she reads)

"Of course he never cried before,
hearing that what had *actually*
happened. Only by listening to the
narration did he fully understand
its true meaning."

ALMA

And what does this mean to you?

KATIE

That Ulysses recognizes himself as
a hero only when his story is told
to him by someone else.

ALMA

But not just someone else, "The
Other." A blind poet who has no
external sight, only self-sight.
And therefore, more knowledge.

ARTHUR

And so, such an account by "The
Other" can mitigate nihilism and
give us a sense of linearity, of
purpose?

KATIE

When you say "the Other", who
exactly are you referring to?

ALMA

Stop being so literal. Trying to take the philosophical "Other" and turn him into a sociopolitical binary is like a sweaty tourist at a modern museum of art who points at a Pollock and says "My kid could do that." It's immature and regressive and totally misses the fucking point!

Another silence. Alma calms herself down.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Okay. In the universal human condition of...of a--Katie?

Katie has had her hand up for a while.

KATIE

Sorry, I don't understand.

ALMA

What? What part of the argument that you helped frame do you not understand?

KATIE

It...well, it seems to me like you're condoning literally, not conceptually, "Other-ing" someone, despite seemingly advocating for the opposite?

Alma stares at Katie.

ALMA

You do realize this is a *Philosophy* class, right? What is it that you think we are *doing* here?

Katie doesn't answer this, rightly intuiting that it is rhetorical.

ALMA (CONT'D)

What is wrong with your question, Katie, and why I don't care for it, is that you're assuming when I refer to "the Other," I mean something *bad*. When, in actuality, you are the who is *instinctually* and *unconsciously* making that association.

ARTHUR
I don't think s--

ALMA
Don't think, Arthur.
(then)
You, Katie, are advocating for the human rights of a *symbolic* poet, while, in actuality, *refusing* to allow the "Other" to exist at all. Because you think that *acknowledging* difference, *naming* it, is *wrong*. So, what is *right*? Hmm? What could make *you* happy? Shall we build a society to your exact specifications? Should I build a world for you that has all the edges rounded out, pad your chosen cell with niceties and fucking trigger warnings? That's not what I'm here for! I am here to fucking *teach*, okay?

A long beat of silence. Alma is almost panting.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Okay.

KATIE
Okay.

ALMA
Good. Great. Good.
(then, to the 3rd student)
Marcus? Fucking Marcus is here. You want to add anything to this?

MARCUS
No, Professor Imhoff.

ALMA
Okay.

INT. 220 YORK ST. - YALE UNIVERSITY - SEMINAR ROOM 4

It's 4pm. Alma joins others filing into the room. She sees Kim, at the back of the room, and Alma tries to make her way over to her, but people get in the way. By the time Alma gets close to Kim, the Dean, followed by Wendy, has entered the room, and a hush falls. People take their seats.

DEAN RJ THOMAS

I wish I didn't have to call this meeting, and I'm sure you all wish you didn't have to be here. We've experienced a terrible breach of Yale's values, a wake-up call for me, certainly, and for all of us. As many of you know, a female PhD student has brought allegations against a male professor...

And we FADE OUT TO:

INT. 220 YORK ST. - YALE UNIVERSITY - SEMINAR ROOM 4 - LATER

Everyone is beginning to get up, "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace" pamphlets strewn across the plastic seats assembled for this talk. Alma, too, stands, but we hear--

DEAN RJ THOMAS

Professor Imhoff? Can you stay behind a minute?

Alma stops. The other department heads whisper, trying to act like they notice nothing. Kim settles herself near the Dean and Wendy, still not looking at Alma.

DEAN RJ THOMAS (CONT'D)

Well, no sense in dragging this out further.

Alma says nothing, a flimsy smile plastered on her face.

DEAN RJ THOMAS (CONT'D)

It's come to our attention that you filled a prescription under Dr. Sayers' name that she did not prescribe to you.

Alma's alert. This is not what she expected. The Dean references a paper document in his hand.

ALMA

Wait, what?

DEAN RJ THOMAS

Walgreens on Park flagged the prescription for being filed without an online corollary. When Dr. Sayers realized who had filled it, she brought it to us.

ALMA

I...I don't know what you're talking about.

The Dean looks again at Kim.

DEAN RJ THOMAS

Alma. There's a pretty unassailable paper trail here. Kim has decided not to press charges, but we need to decide, collectively, what disciplinary actions must be taken.

(then)

I think it's safe to say that the tenure conversation is...paused.

ALMA

Paused?

DEAN RJ THOMAS

Indefinitely.

ALMA

Oh.

He continues talking, but Alma doesn't hear him anymore.

EXT. YALE UNIVERSITY - STEPS OUTSIDE BEINECKE - LATER

Alma is walking in a stupor, past Yale's storied Beinecke library.

She stops when she sees a familiar figure: Maggie. She's with Alex and some other friends, talking a few yards ahead.

When the group notices Alma approaching, they quiet. Maggie turns around, and sees Alma. Alex grabs Maggie's hand.

MAGGIE

Alma, what are you doing here?

ALMA

I'd like to talk.

ALEX

That's not a good idea. Maggie?

ALMA

Don't you have some obscure protest to go be publicly angry at?

MAGGIE

Okay, it's fine. I'm fine.

ALMA
She's fine.

ALEX
Maggie--

ALMA
THEY go AWAY.

MAGGIE
...It's okay. I promise.

Alma walks past the group, towards a more private area.
Maggie follows.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
You know, Alex is right. Probably
shouldn't be talking like this.

Alma steps towards Maggie, close to her. Alma's back is to
Alex, so the two women appear as if a part of one body.

Maggie's breath catches in her throat. Alma touches the side
of Maggie's face.

ALMA
People used to say that you were
like my shadow. Frederik, actually,
used to say it all the time. That
you were taking on my mannerisms,
copying the way I dress.

MAGGIE
Okay, you can stop.

ALMA
I know you have feelings for me.

MAGGIE
What is this? What are you doing?
Alex is right there--

ALMA
Frederik is wrong about a lot of
things but he was always right
about you. You are the worst kind
of mediocre student: with every
availability to succeed but no
talent or desire to do so. Yet so
many resources, so much of other
people's time is wasted on you. Not
the least of which, mine.

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

And your paper, so obviously plagiarized just reeking of laziness combined with your desperate hope that you will be worth your endowment.

MAGGIE

Okay. I don't know what you *think* you think you're talking about--

ALMA

Spare me, please.
(then)
Please.

MAGGIE

I don't feel comfortable having this conversation with you anymore.

ALMA

Not everything is supposed to make you comfortable, Maggie. Not everything is supposed to be a lukewarm bath for you to sink into until you fall asleep and drown.

MAGGIE

And there are no rewards in death for suffering as much as fucking possible in life.

ALMA

You've constructed a life that hides your accidental privilege, neediness, desperate desire to impress. At least I have the self-respect to be obvious about what it is that I want. But you, it's all lies. Living in an apartment that's ten times cheaper than what you can afford. Dating a person you have nothing in common with because you think their identity makes you interesting. Fawning over me because you think my affection offers you credibility; another adoptive mother to replace your own insufferable one. It's all lies. Christ, it's no wonder everyone thinks you lied about Hank, too.

And with that, Maggie SLAPS Alma. Alex notices this, starts jogging over.

ALEX

Fuck.

MAGGIE

You stupid bitch. You have no idea what you've just done to me.

ALEX

Hey, hey. That's enough. Let's go.

Alex steers a livid Maggie away.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You okay? You okay, babe?

MAGGIE

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. It's alright.

ALEX

What did she fucking say to you?

MAGGIE

I'm fine.

Alma stays stock still.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NEW HAVEN - LATER

Alma, holding her stomach, explores the rows of bottles. She picks out a middlingly-priced bottle of whiskey.

EXT. NEW HAVEN STREETS - DUSK

The bottle of whiskey in its brown bag tucked under her arm. Alma unwraps the carton of cigarettes, packs them using her palm, takes out a cigarette, and lights it. Takes a drag.

EXT./INT. ALMA'S APARTMENT - LONG WHARF CT. - LATER

We are in a dingy hallway, facing the apartment door, 2B. Alma pushes all her weight into the door to open it.

She steps inside, puts her keys down. Takes her coat off. She walks into the KITCHEN - and puts the bottle of liquor down. Gets out a glass, some ice, pours herself a solid drink.

She pats herself down, realizes she doesn't have her cigarettes. She walks back towards the front door, checks the pockets of her coat (nothing)--and then stops. Next to her keys, is another PAIR OF GOLD KEYS.

She walks back towards the KITCHEN--and sees a pair of MEN'S TROUSERS flung over the back of her desk chair. Cautious now, Alma opens the door to the BATHROOM - turns the light on. Nothing. Then, she slowly pushes the BEDROOM door open--

And we see HANK. Napping in a white undershirt and boxers over the covers. Alma stands there, at the base of the bed, looking at him, unsure what to do.

As if sensing he's not alone, Hank opens his eyes. As soon as he realizes who it is, he sits up.

HANK

Oh, yeah. This is embarrassing.

ALMA

How long have you been here?

HANK

Today?

(then)

I've been coming off and on.

ALMA

How did you get my keys?

HANK

Why are *you* here?

ALMA

It's my apartment.

HANK

You gave me the keys last Christmas. When my sister was visiting. I never gave them back.

A beat. Alma considers him.

ALMA

I've had a shit day. You want a drink?

HANK

Yeah.

Alma nods, tosses him his pants, and walks out of the room.

INT. ALMA'S NEW HAVEN APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Alma opens the freezer, grabs an ice tray.

Hank grabs his pants. She makes him a drink, and holds it, watching him as he gets dressed.

Out of the pocket of his pants, Hank gets out a pack of cigarettes.

HANK
You want?

ALMA
No, thank you.
(then)
Actually, yes.

Hank lights both cigarettes in his mouth, and passes one to Alma.

HANK
Look at us, two Icaruses.

ALMA
You've heard?

HANK
Word travels fast.

ALMA
Last I checked, we were still living.

HANK
What's being alive when your livelihood is stolen from you?

They smoke for a moment in silence.

ALMA
I feel like, deep inside, I always *expected* this. I expected the rotten-ness in me to be seen by other people right before I managed to expunge it.

HANK
Spoken like a true woman. Never felt myself to be rotten, at all.

ALMA
Spoken like a true man.

HANK
A man you loved, once.

Hank looks at Alma, smiles.

HANK (CONT'D)

Yeah. Knew I was right about that.

ALMA

Didn't keep you from wanting me to say it.

HANK

Yeah. Dead right, I'm a simple man. Want my feelings to be reciprocated.

ALMA

You loved me.

HANK

Come on.

(then)

Told you. Told you. Countless times. It never went away. Not for me. Why...why do you think I'm here...?

Alma looks down at her drink.

ALMA

You're not, you know.

HANK

What?

ALMA

A simple man.

Another long beat passes between them.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Maggie hit me.

HANK

Woah. What?

ALMA

Well, she slapped me.

HANK

She slapped you?!

Alma nods. The two laugh.

HANK (CONT'D)

Goddamn. Okay, well, I do wish it was the other way around, but...

ALMA

Well, I mean, I did belittle all of her life choices and told her that I knew about the plagiarizing, so, it wasn't entirely unwarranted.

Hank sits up--puts his drink down.

HANK

You told her what I told you?

ALMA

No, the dissertation. I knew before you told me. It was clear, as you said, anybody looking at it, so...

HANK

You knew? All this time, you knew...?

(then)

Why...why didn't you tell me?

ALMA

I didn't think it mattered.

HANK

You didn't think it *mattered*?!

ALMA

What would you have done? Draw a line between two disparate points and make a case against a young woman who said you abused her?

(then)

It's grasping at straws.

HANK

Yes. Yes. Exactly that.

ALMA

You sound like a desperate man--

HANK

I AM A DESPERATE MAN! I am absolutely, positively, fucking DESPERATE!

ALMA

You just would have given them more rope to hang you with!

HANK

I wish...I wish they would! I wish they would.

(MORE)

HANK (CONT'D)

Rather than let me just die here in
obscurity!

(then)

You know how many fucking times I
thought about jumping into that
fucking wharf? Do you?

ALMA

Nothing I would have done could
have changed what's--

HANK

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT! You don't know
that! You can't know that.

A beat. He considers her, an idea forming.

HANK (CONT'D)

Do you think...do you think I did
it?

ALMA

What?

HANK

Do you think I raped her?

A beat.

ALMA

You flirted with all of them, Hank.

HANK

I *flirted*. I flirted! Yeah. So
fucking what? All of who?

ALMA

All of your students. You could
have fucked any number of them!

HANK

So you're jealous? Is that--

ALMA

I'm *uncertain*.

HANK

'Cause I didn't. 'Cause I didn't.
'Cause, like a fucking idiot, the
only person I ever broke the rules
to fuck was you.

Hank turns away from Alma, and rests his head against the kitchen cabinet, before PUNCHING IT. Which...hurts a lot more than he expected.

HANK (CONT'D)
Fuck! Shit. Fuck.

ALMA
Jesus christ.

Hank, cradling his hand, stands against the wall.

ALMA (CONT'D)
You're an idiot. Let me see. Let me see. Hey.

She looks at his hand, the knuckles bloody.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Jesus.
(then)
Hey. You're an idiot.

Slowly, softly, Hank tips her chin up, and kisses her. She kisses him back. They break apart. And come back together. Then, suddenly, the kiss turns aggressive. Hank pulls Alma towards him, roughly, sticking his tongue down her throat.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Stop.

She pushes away from him. He once again kisses her, roughly.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Stop, Hank. Stop it!

Finally, Alma pushes Hank off of her.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Get off!

There's a wild, animalistic look in his eye. Suddenly, the weight of what Maggie told her, what Maggie has been telling her this entire time, hits Alma.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Get out.

She gets up, shakily.

ALMA (CONT'D)
This was a mistake. Get out.
(then)
Please, get out!

Hank stands. Walks towards Alma. She flinches--but he walks beyond her, grabbing his jacket from the rack by the door. We, and Alma, watch as his hand hovers over his set of keys.

He looks back towards Alma. And leaves the keys where they are.

As Hank's footfalls get quieter and quieter, Alma returns to herself. Alone again, in a silence so complete that she can hear all of her mistakes perfectly. Until...her PHONE RINGS AGAIN. She walks over to it, and turns it off, but not before we see MULTIPLE MISSED CALLS and texts from an unknown number.

INT. ALMA'S APARTMENT - LONG WHARF CT. - BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

Alma, bleary and hungover, wakes up in the exact same position in which she passed out, fully clothed, on top of the bed. She turns over, towards where her phone rests on the bedside table. She sees there's no supplements, no cup of water waiting for her, placed there by Frederik. Of course not.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ALMA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Alma walks briskly to her car, noticing some people idling nearby. The discrepancy between Yale and the city in which it resides once again on display. She unlocks her car. Gets in.

INT. ALMA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Alma types out a text to FREDERIK. We see that their text conversation contains many texts from him, and no responses. She types out: "Sorry--I totally passed out. Working. I'll see you tonight, promise. xx"

Then she turns the ignition over, and starts to drive.

EXT. YALE UNIVERSITY - OUTSIDE BEINECKE - LATER

Alma once again walks across Yale's campus. For a moment, she is lost in herself, but then something catches her eye--a scrum of STUDENTS on the quad, someone holding a bullhorn, others holding painted cardboard signs. An ad hoc protest.

Something in Alma tells her this does not bode well. The feeling deepens when she sees: Alex, holding a bullhorn.

Suddenly, her PHONE BUZZES. She ignores it. It buzzes again, again, again.

Finally, taking a seat, she pulls it out and sees the screen alight with what will soon become HUNDREDS of notifications.

She zeros in on a text, that contains a link, and a message: "Did you see this?" Alma clicks on the link.

She navigates to the page, and we see: A new article profiling Maggie, in *Rolling Stone*. Alma scrolls through the article's mention of further accusations, a rehashing of Maggie's story, and then - STOPS when she sees: HER OWN NAME. She gasps.

ALEX

Look. There she is!
(then)
Everyone, come on!

The students notice Alma, and start moving towards her, filming her.

Alma, head down, tries to move as quickly as possible towards her office, trying to skirt the beginnings of the protest when--

ALEX (CONT'D)

Professor Imhoff!

Alma starts moving faster, but is quickly surrounded.

ALMA

No. Okay. I'm sorry. I...

ALEX

We just want to have a conversation with you, okay? All we want is accountability.

A line of mostly women, chanting: "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Professor Imhoff's Got To Go, Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Professor Imhoff's Got To Go..." Maybe the chant becomes "We Believe Women," repeated.

ALMA

I'm sorry. I just... Please.
Just...

ALEX

Do you believe Maggie Resnick? Are you willing to say that what he did was wrong?

Everyone has started to look at the small group of protesters, one of whom has PULL QUOTES from a ROLLING STONE ARTICLE printed out on their cardboard sign.

Alma keeps trying to push towards her office, but she is surrounded. It's akin to a modern day stoning, only no one is throwing the first rock. Which somehow, makes it all worse.

ALMA

You don't understand what--

But no one hears her. Suddenly, Alma is seized by a momentous SPASM of pain--the worst yet.

ALEX

We want accountability.

STUDENT

Will you give us a statement?

ALMA

No, I...

Again, she is TORN THROUGH by another spasm of pain. This one causes her to CRY OUT. People ignore her at first, but then she doubles over, near Alex, who is leading the pack.

And then, she collapses. BLACKOUT.

WE CUT TO:

INT. YALE NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL - ER ROOM - DUSK

We are on the door of the bathroom, which Frederik delicately opens, trying to be quiet. He is on his phone, which illuminates his face in the otherwise darkened room.

Frederik closes the bathroom door behind him, and puts his phone in his pocket. He walks to Alma's bedside and sits in the armchair facing her. We rest on his face as he looks at his wife, a myriad of emotions moving across his features.

FREDERIK

Hey.

Finally, Alma stirs.

FREDERIK (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

ALMA

Like shit.

FREDERIK

Well, multiple perforated ulcers will do that to you.

(then)

(MORE)

FREDERIK (CONT'D)
Doctor said you must have been in a
lot of pain. Why didn't you say
anything?

Alma coughs, weakly.

FREDERIK (CONT'D)
You got a lot of calls. All from
the same number. And, uh...

He takes her phone out of his pocket and shows it to her:

FREDERIK (CONT'D)
It'll blow over. Some other
catastrophe will break, and it'll
all be forgotten.

A long beat of silence before:

ALMA
Read it to me?

FREDERIK
Al, I--

ALMA
Please.

Frederik holds up her phone. Puts his glasses back on.

FREDERIK
"It's what Resnick refers to as the
'Feminist Generation Gap,' saying:
'Alma had to fight for everything
she should have been given, but she
can only conceive of progress in
the way that she achieved it: by
subsuming herself to the abusive,
Patriarchal agenda."

Frederik looks up. Alma gestures for him to keep going.

FREDERIK (CONT'D)
'Alma failed me as a teacher, but
beyond that, she failed me as a
woman, as a mentor. And now, I'm
just another black woman who hoped
for equal and fair recognition from
a white woman, but got nothing but
tokenistic subjugation in return.'
(then)
We can fight this, yeah? Do a
counter Op-Ed, or something?

Alma shakes her head.

ALMA

I want to share something with you.

Frederik sits back, nods. She keeps going.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I told you, when I was a child,
that my father's best friend
sexually assaulted me. Abused me.

Frederik nods again, dreading what's coming next.

ALMA (CONT'D)

None of that is true. We were in
love.

(then)

He was so kind. He was so handsome.
I could just stare at him from
across rooms, I would go to work,
sometimes, with my father just so I
could see him. I couldn't
focus...in class, school, my
friends--everything felt so
pedestrian. Except for him. He was
the only thing that felt real to
me.

(then)

He kissed me for the first time the
day after my fifteenth birthday.

FREDERIK

And when...?

ALMA

Six months later, maybe. He said I
was too young but I had insisted.

(then)

It was the happiest time of my
life. Then, out of nowhere, he said
that he met someone else,
and...someone that was more
appropriate. He started bringing
her to my parents' parties and
throwing her in my face like he was
trying to prove how little he
cared. It was so cruel. So I made
up a story that I knew would hurt
him the most. And, three years
later, he committed suicide. I had
already retracted the story by
then, but it didn't matter.

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

I'd wanted to hurt him the way I thought he'd hurt me. And I did.

A very long beat.

FREDERIK

Alma...you were very young. Young girls want adult things to happen to them sooner than they're ready for them all the time. But it's always the adult's job to protect the innocence of a child.

ALMA

No. I didn't give him a choice.

FREDERIK

There's always a choice.

(then)

It doesn't matter if you wanted him. It doesn't matter if you threw yourself at him. He should have rejected you outright.

ALMA

No. He did. He did. *He* refused me. He was a good man, and I destroyed him with a lie.

FREDERIK

Alma. It wasn't a lie. You keep thinking he did nothing wrong, you keep blaming yourself. Do you think you can allow yourself to see the truth in that?

ALMA

The truth is that I love him.

A beat as that lands on Frederik.

FREDERIK

And I love you.

Alma does not respond. The sounds of hospital machinery beeping. Everything Alma's lost seems, finally, to come to bear on her. She turns on her side, away from Frederik. And we see two people sharing the same small space who remain deeply, unequivocally, alone.

FADE TO BLACK.

CHYRON OVER BLACK: **FIVE YEARS LATER**

INT. A LARGE, BEAUTIFUL OFFICE - DAY

We are in a familiar, Gothic-looking office but with new decor. New books. A new occupant.

We are behind a COMPUTER, which is playing the news. We hear a CNN anchor explain to us the fresh horrors of being alive. We move towards the person watching it, when--

A KNOCK at the office door. A young, male SECRETARY, PETER, sticks his head in.

PETER
Dean Imhoff?

We reveal: ALMA. Older, but not much changed. Watching the news in her beautiful office.

PETER (CONT'D)
Your four o'clock. You said to remind you?

Alma looks at her watch.

ALMA
Thank you, Peter. I was just getting ready to leave.
(then, re: the news)
Horrible, don't you think?

PETER
Absolutely.

Alma pauses the news, grabs her coat and bag and steps out of the door Peter holds open for her.

EXT. YALE UNIVERSITY - OUTSIDE BEINECKE - MOMENTS LATER

It's snowing, hard. Alma walks briskly across the wintery and eerily empty, silent campus.

EXT. YALE UNIVERSITY - QUAD - CONTINUOUS

Yale's still quad is blanketed in snow, a MAINTENANCE WORKER and his plow the only other figures visible.

INT. TANDOOR - OUTSKIRTS OF NEW HAVEN - LATER

Alma sits alone, with a glass of red wine in front of her. A small television in the corner of the restaurant plays the news on mute, covering horrific war atrocities occurring abroad. Alma watches it until we hear a woman's voice--

WOMAN (O.C.)
Sorry I'm late.

Alma turns. And we see--MAGGIE. Five years on.

Maggie comes forward, shaking snow off of her. The two look at each other. They both sit.

ALMA
Sorry I ordered without you.

MAGGIE
It's fine.

ALMA
The wine here is surprisingly good.

MAGGIE
Oh, I mean, I don't drink. Anymore.

ALMA
Nobody does. It's good to see you.

MAGGIE
Yeah. You look the same.

ALMA
You're lying.

MAGGIE
No. But the people who only live
for one thing never seem to age.

A beat. Maggie looks around. It all looks the same. Then:

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
You know, this is where Hank used
to take all of us?
(pointing)
That was his table, right over
there.
(then)
Sometimes I still wonder where he
is.

ALMA

Oh, making a pile of money spin doctoring for some Democrat. 'The death knell of intellect is politics.' That's what Frederik always says.

MAGGIE

Are you still together?

ALMA

We're still together. And Alex?

MAGGIE

Uh, but I hear they're doing very well. On track to make partner somewhere.

(then)

You know, I read your article. I thought it was very smart. Your confession. The contrition.

ALMA

It was well written, though, don't you think?

MAGGIE

I *think* it was written for you to get everything you wanted.

A beat.

ALMA

And how about you? Married?

MAGGIE

Engaged.

Maggie shows Alma her ring.

ALMA

Congratulations!

MAGGIE

Yeah.

ALMA

Who's the lucky...

MAGGIE

Nia. *She's* great. So intelligent and just...do you want to see?

ALMA

Sure.

Maggie slides beside her, and pulls out her phone. She scrolls, then stops.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Wow. She's gorgeous.

MAGGIE

How old do you think she is?

(then, quick)

Forty-three.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

She's the Director of Curatorial Affairs at the New Whitney.

(then)

You can keep going.

Alma does. Maggie studies Alma's face. Then:

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You know, I think I spent so much time, wishing for you to fail. I figured it'd make us even or something.

Alma puts Maggie's phone down.

ALMA

It probably doesn't matter now, but I know I hurt you, Maggie. And I'm sorry.

Maggie smiles.

MAGGIE

I don't know if you were expecting more, I just...that's nice.

(then)

I think I was more confused, than anything at the time. I wasn't sure if I wanted to *be* you or *be with* you.

ALMA

And now?

MAGGIE

I mean, I always knew we were different. But now I know that that's a good thing.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(then)

I like being alive to what happens
to me. And nothing affects you.

ALMA

I lost everything.

MAGGIE

And look at you now.

ALMA

You think I'm a bad person.

MAGGIE

Oh. Does that even matter?

(then)

I gave up on the idea of
retribution a long, long time ago.

(then)

But...I am curious. After
everything, are you really *happy*?

Alma looks at Maggie. Smiles.

ALMA

Yes. I really am.

Another beat. Maggie returns her smile.

MAGGIE

Then I'm happy for you.

Maggie puts her hand over Alma's.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You did it. You won.

With that, Maggie stands, and walks out. Alma motions for the
check.

ALMA

Check, please.

Alma, from where she sits, watches her go: watches as Maggie
pulls her coat around her and walks off into the falling
snow, not once looking back, watches until Maggie disappears,
completely, into the encroaching storm.

When the check arrives, Alma puts cash down, and leaves.

THE END