

# **SUNLIGHT PARTED**

Story by

Sean Redenbaugh

Written by

Sean Redenbaugh & Marx Pyle

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seanredenbaugh@yahoo.com  
(812) 202-0800

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

BLACKNESS is all we see.

Muffled sounds of ocean waves breaking the beach. It sounds unnatural...odd.

DISSOLVE TO:

Then darkness gives way to light as SETH's closed eyes fill the view. A soft white glow illuminates his face from above.

His fingers feel blindly around him touching sand. He scoops some sand into the palm of his hand and rolls it in his fingers, letting it fall loosely between them.

A look of confusion contorts his face. We ZOOM slowly away as he gradually begins to wake. He is on his back with sand beneath him, no clothes we can see. He peels one eye open, slowly.

Above him, he sees a blurry light. He blinks a few times until it comes into focus. It is the moon, in a perfectly black starless sky.

He sits up in a rush, then grunts as he struggles to not fall back down. Something is wrong, he feels heavy.

The beach and ocean are directly in front of him, twenty yards away. The dark waters glisten in the moonlight. The water ebbs bizarrely, almost like oil.

He looks left and right, seeing only darkness and sand. A fog hangs all around. The world is still and colorless, wrapped in an ominous darkness.

Seth grabs a handful of sand and watches as each tiny grain slowly falls through his fingers right back into place leaving no marks on the ground, as if it had never left.

He realizes for the first time he is naked. Shocked, he closes his eyes and rubs them, breathing deeply.

SETH

This is only a dream...

He takes a deep breath and repeats.

SETH (cont'd)

Only a dream.

He opens his eyes, disappointed in the lack of change. He stands and turns around, away from the water. His eyes widen.

He sees a beach house, nestled in the darkness, abandoned and forsaken long ago. It is covered in splintered wood and peeling paint. Broken glass hangs in the windows like jagged teeth. The door dangles askew on a single hinge. There is a small wooden porch with broken railings and steps. Stones in the sand form a line leading to it.

Instinctively, Seth takes several steps backwards, falling onto his back. He gathers himself and stands.

                                SETH (cont'd)  
                                (looking left and  
                                right)  
                                Hello? Hello! Is anybody out there!

In a panic, he turns and runs down the beach, away from the house, into the fog, calling out as he runs.

                                SETH (cont'd)  
                                Hello? Someone.... Anyone...

He soon tires, lumbering in the sand with heavy steps. He stops, falls to his knees, breathing heavily. He looks behind him at an infinity of smooth sand trailing off into the fog.

He is shocked: there are no FOOTPRINTS.

Seth pushes his hand into the sand and lifts it again. No mark is left behind. Panic and fear wash over him. The world spins around him. Darkness and fog converges in on him. His eyes roll back and he falls onto his back in the sand.

                                SETH (O.S.)  
                                Please let this be a dream....

Seth's POV: The darkness fades in. The last thing we see is the moon above him growing fuzzy again, being absorbed by the darkness around it.

EXT. FIRE STATION - NIGHT

ON SCREEN

8:22 P.M.

SEPT. 6TH, 2002

MONROE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

BLOOMINGTON, IN

CHARLIE pauses in front of the fire station. The air is misty. A neon light flickers red on his weary face. He looks up at the sign.

CLOSE on sign: "Station 119 Established 1947"

One of the e's flickers and buzzes. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath, trying to be confident.

He pulls a phone from his pocket, presses a few buttons, and holds it to his ear.

BOY'S VOICE ON RECORDING

Hey dad...

CUT TO WIDE SHOT

We see Charlie listening from a distance but we can't hear the rest of the message.

Back on Charlie: He flips the phone shut and puts it back in his pocket. He wipes his face and slowly enters the station.

INT. FIRE STATION - MAIN TRUCK ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Charlie stands between the two fire trucks, admiring them. He runs his hand along one. He looks at the names painted on them and a much-needed smile finds his face.

"Hell's Nightmare" & "Tidal Wave"

He looks up the stairway that leads to the second floor. The sound of the other men playing poker can be heard.

INT. FIRE STATION - UPSTAIRS LIVING AREA - NIGHT  
[CONTINUOUS]

Three firemen sit around a table in casual clothes playing poker. Occasionally the scanner in the background barks information.

HAL

Dammit Dan, would you make a decision already!

DAN

I'm thinking! Chill out!

HAL

Well you picked a hell of time in your life to start thinking.

DAN

If I'm not mistaken, you've lost more than anyone at the table, Hal. Maybe if you did some thinking yourself instead of...

HAL

Maybe if you would shut the hell up and play, we'd get more than three hands in before...

A door hinge creaks and abruptly halts the poker game. The three of them (Dan, Hal, and the quiet Nick) stand abruptly when they see Charlie come through the door.

HAL (cont'd)

Chuck, you old dog! How you been?

Charlie steps into the room and smiles. Hal noticeably limps over to him, trailed by the other two.

CHARLIE

Glad to be back. I see you are still hobbling around on that busted leg of yours.

HAL

Well, it gets the job done.

DAN

Boss said you might be back this week, but... we weren't sure you'd actually come.

CHARLIE

Oh, I couldn't get your hopes up like that and then leave you disappointed, now could I?

HAL

Ha! Married men like us are used to disappointment, right Dan?

DAN

Speak for yourself, Hal.

HAL

(walking back to the table)

Come on over and have a seat Charlie. We were just playing a little cards.

Dan follows Hal back to the table.

CHARLIE  
(to Nick)  
How've you been?

NICK  
Getting by.

CHARLIE  
That's good to hear.

NICK  
Good to have you back.

Nick shakes Charlie's hand and they walk back towards the table.

HAL  
(sitting)  
Your stash is still above your  
locker. No one's touched it.

Nick, deal him in.

Charlie makes his way to his locker. He reads the small metal name plaque: "Charles Hatfield"

He opens the locker with his gear. He sees a picture of himself and wife with their teenage son. A wedding ring is on the shelf. He picks it up and looks at it for a moment before putting it back and closing the locker.

He looks up at his hard hat on top of the locker. "Chuck" is written in sharpie on masking tape stuck to the back.

CHARLIE  
You guys been busy tonight?

Nick shuffles the cards.

DAN  
Not really. Minor accident on Kinser  
Pike and some loony burning trash off  
of Fairfax that got out of control.  
But hey, at least we got out of here  
for awhile.

Charlie grabs his hard hat and blows off the dust.

CHARLIE  
That's what I like about this place.  
Not much changes.

HAL  
 (tossing a quarter  
 in)  
 I'm in.

DAN  
 We weren't a hundred percent sure  
 you'd ever come back Chuck. Takes a  
 lot of guts to get back on the horse  
 after getting bucked like you did.

Charlie takes a seat and pours some change out on the table.  
 He sets his hard hat under his seat as the scanner announces  
 a traffic backup somewhere in town.

CHARLIE  
 To be honest, I wasn't sure myself.  
 But I couldn't take sitting at home  
 thinking about it anymore.

DAN  
 (throws cards in)  
 I fold... It was a hell of a thing  
 Chuck, and I'm sorry.

NICK  
 (fidgeting with his  
 coins)  
 Yeah, Chuck, awful thing man.  
 (tossing cards in)  
 I'm out too.

CHARLIE  
 Thanks guys.

Nick flips the next card.

DAN  
 So what have you been doing the  
 last... what's it been? Seven months?

Hal bets the hand. Charlie looks at his cards and tosses  
 coins into the pot.

CHARLIE  
 Well, early on I stayed up late  
 drinking most nights, slept most  
 days. I read a lot of books, anything  
 really to try and forget.  
 (pausing)  
 After Alison left, I guess I just...  
 lost track of time mostly. Suppose I  
 needed that.

Nick flipped over the last card.

HAL

Yeah, we heard she left. Sorry man,  
have you talked to her?

CHARLIE

Not for months. She told me she  
couldn't be around me anymore.

DAN

(running his fingers  
through his  
coins)

Hope you weren't too hard on yourself  
Chuck. There wasn't anything you  
could do. I mean, he would have been  
on that road that night whether you  
worked late or n...

HAL

(betting again)

Guys! Take it easy! Chuck just got  
here! Would you give him a break?  
Jesus! The man's first day back and  
all you want to do is make him relive  
it. And I swear, if you two don't  
stop messing with those coins...

CHARLIE

It's okay Hal. I mean it. Trust me,  
I've already tried burying my head in  
the sand and pretending it didn't  
happen... and that didn't make it any  
better. Being back here is the only  
thing I figure will get my head  
straight. Back here at the station...  
where things make sense.

(flips over his  
cards)

Oh, and I got the nut flush. I call.

Hal looks over the hand, realizing he is beat.

HAL

Well, I'll be damned! I guess one  
thing definitely hasn't changed  
around here. You always were one  
lucky son-of-a-bitch.

Charlie rakes the coins towards him, and while Hal gathers  
the cards, the scanner suddenly sounds out again.



DISPATCHER (O.S.)  
...that is affirmative.. we are  
currently on 37 between Dillman Rd.  
and the I-69 Interchange... small  
passenger vehicle heading southbound  
in the right lane lost control and  
went over the embankment near Clear  
Creek...

Hal reaches up to turn up the volume.

HAL  
Guys, listen up.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)  
No other vehicles were involved...  
spotted by channel 13 news  
helicopter... vehicle does not appear  
to be in the water... we'll be there  
in five minutes... requesting  
immediate ambulance and fire  
dispatch...

Hal stands up quickly and pushes his chair in.

HAL  
That's us boys. Game's on hold for  
now. Nick, head downstairs and fire  
up Nightmare. Dan, sound the alarm  
and gear up. I'll call it in.  
(looking at Charlie)  
Why don't you sit this one out Chuck.  
You know, stay back at the station  
and keep an eye on things. Get  
reacquainted and all.

Charlie opens up his locker, grabs his gear, and starts  
getting ready.

CHARLIE  
I didn't come here to hide, Hal. I've  
been hiding for seven months.

HAL  
I understand, man. I just think maybe  
you should ease back into it, that's  
all.

CHARLIE  
If I wasn't up for it, I wouldn't  
have come.

The station sirens blare. A truck engine thunders to life below. Charlie tightens his straps and walks to the pole sliding on his coat, his back facing Dan and Hal.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
See you on the truck.

Charlie disappears down the hole. Hal and Dan exchange a look and quickly grab their coats and follow after him.

INT. FIRE TRUCK - NIGHT - A BIT LATER

Rain pours down outside. The firetruck approaches the scene. There is a barrage of flashing lights.

EXT. CRASH SCENE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Four police cars have their headlights pointed in the same direction. A section of the guardrail has been run through.

Blue and red strobes flash everywhere. The truck comes to a stop and the men hop out and approach the deputy on scene.

HAL  
What are we dealing with officer?

DEPUTY  
Red Pontiac Grand Prix tore through the guard rail. Lost control on the wet pavement, best guess. Didn't reach the water though, got hung up in a tree. Ran the plates. Belongs to a twenty-one-year-old male. No one's been down there yet, we have no way of safely reaching the car. That's why we called you boys in.

HAL  
Dan! Get behind the wheel! Nick! Man the ladder! Officer, if you could have your men clear a path for us, I want to back the rig up to the rail and lower the ladder down to the car. The men scatter, engines fire up.  
(turning to Charlie)  
Chuck, I'm your boss. But I'm not going to tell you what to do, although I think Dan was right.  
(pausing)  
Maybe you should hang back on this one, considering the circumstances.

Charlie says nothing. He simply turns with a steely look in his eyes. He walks back to the truck and hops on the back with Nick.

ON BACK OF FIRETRUCK

The firetruck backs up to the edge of the broken guardrail. Charlie looks over the edge.

CHARLIE  
(to Nick)  
I'm going down there. Get me close.

Nick simply nods. He extends the ladder a bit and Charlie climbs out onto it on his belly.

NICK  
Ready?

CHARLIE  
(eyes focusing  
ahead)  
Let's do it.

Nick lowers the ladder at an angle down towards the car.

Charlie's POV: Through the heavy rain, we see the car is upright, but tilted precariously towards the water racing by below. The rain and metal glisten in the spotlights from above. The license plate reads "PUCK 32".

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
Hello? Can you hear me? Is anyone  
down there?  
(no answer)  
I'm coming to get you, just hang  
tight.

The ladder approaches the car. The back window is broken.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
That's close enough!

The rain and the commotion muffle his voice.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
I said stop the ladder!

The ladder scrapes the trunk of the car loudly, grooving the metal. The car shifts slightly in the tree in a near catastrophe, as Charlie holds his breath and closes his eyes.

It settles. He sees the passenger door open.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
Is anyone in there?

He climbs out even farther.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
Hello?

Charlie's POV: The inside of the car is dark, nothing can be seen inside. We hear a muffled sound coming from it.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
(yelling back to the  
guys above)  
I hear something inside the car!  
Shine a light in the back window!

Charlie's POV: In the light, we see a hand! Then a face! Both are bloody. The boy's shirt is torn. He faces us with his back against the driver door and steering wheel.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
There's someone in the car!  
(back to the boy in  
the car)  
Are you hurt? Can you move?

The boy doesn't change expression or speak. He pulls himself up. The car and tree creak and moan.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
It's alright, I'm going to get you out of here. I need you to listen to me and keep your eyes focused on mine. Now move slowly and try to get to the back seat.

The boy inches towards Charlie.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
You're almost here. That's it.

The boy extends himself out the back window onto the trunk lid. The weight shift causes the car to move in the tree. He reaches for Charlie. Charlie reaches out and grabs his hand.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
I have you now. I won't let you go.

Charlie slowly backs himself on the ladder holding the boy's hand.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
 (to Nick)  
 He's on, get us out of here!

Nick hits the switch to reverse the ladder, which is holding the car in the tree. Scraping metal sounds. As the ladder clears the trunk, the car falls with a thunderous crash into the river below, leaving Charlie and the boy on the ladder.

The boy goes unconscious.

At the top, Charlie hands the boy to paramedics. The boy is placed on a waiting stretcher, wrapped in blankets, and taken away to the ambulance.

Amid ignored congratulations, Charlie watches the boy being lifted into the ambulance. The scene melts around him into a cacophony of rustle and bustle.

Hal notices the look on Charlie's face and put his hand on Charlie's shoulder.

HAL  
 You alright, buddy?

No acknowledgment from Charlie.

HAL (cont'd)  
 Let's get out of here. You've done enough for your first day back I'd say.

CHARLIE  
 (keeping his eyes on the boy)  
 I'm going with him.

HAL  
 You don't have to go. He's in good hands now. You did your part.

The words bounce off Charlie as he walks towards the ambulance.

HAL (cont'd)  
 Chuck!  
 (shouting even louder)  
 Chu-

NICK  
 (cutting Hal off)  
 Let him go.

HAL  
What do you mean, let him go!

DAN  
Nick's right. Maybe he needs this.

CHARLIE  
(to paramedic)  
Got room for one more?

PARAMEDIC  
Sure, hop in.

Charlie gets in the back of the ambulance and the others watch as it drives away.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

This time Seth wakes in a rush, eyes wide. Still naked. He quickly looks left and right - same beach, same darkness, same dark water. He spins around to face the beach house again. It's terrifying yet he strangely feels it pulling him whenever he looks at it. For a second, he takes a step towards it before succumbing to fear.

He glances in the direction he ran before, remembering the failure. For a split second he sees something out on the water. A boat? After one more sinister look from the beach house, he turns in a panic and runs into the dark water. It is freezing cold. He swims out as far as he can.

OUT IN THE WATER

Soon the cold dark water becomes thick and heavy. He struggles to swim. He is shaking. It's difficult to stay afloat. He looks back at the beach house one more time before going under.

Seth's POV: Underwater, we look up and can see the moon glowing wavily through the water as we slowly sink. The moon grows darker as we sink deeper.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

ON SCREEN

9:22 P.M.

SEPT. 6TH, 2002

LIBERUM MEDICAL CENTER

BLOOMINGTON, IN

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

The ambulance speeds into the emergency entrance. Charlie rocks in his seat with the jolt of the stop. The back doors open. The paramedics rush the stretcher into the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - ER ENTRANCE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Charlie rushes in after the paramedics. He pauses to read the words on the etched glass: "Liberum Medical Center"

A doctor and two nurses meet the paramedics and help guide the stretcher through several doors and hallways in the bustling hospital, followed by Charlie.

DOCTOR

What do we have here?

PARAMEDIC

Caucasian mail, early twenties,  
automobile accident. Became  
unconscious shortly after being  
removed from the vehicle.  
Unresponsive since that time.

(motioning to  
Charlie)

This is the man who pulled him from  
the vehicle.

DOCTOR

(to Charlie)

You say he was conscious when you  
pulled him out?

CHARLIE

(nervously)

Yeah, his eyes were open and he seemed to understand what I was saying... but he didn't say a word... just stared at me with a blank expression on his face. Passed out before we even got him to the ambulance.

DOCTOR

(to paramedic)

What was found during the en-route  
physical examination?

PARAMEDIC

Multiple abrasions to arms, head, and chest. Broken rib, possible punctured lung. Concussion, likely severe head trauma. Pupils were dilated and unresponsive.

DOCTOR

(to one of the  
nurses)

Call down and have surgery prep room four readied. Get me a Ketamine Hydrochloride drip set up and an IV kit.

They approach large double doors with a locking mechanism.

NURSE 1

(to Charlie)

This is as far as you go. I will escort you to the waiting room and someone will be with you in a little while to ask you some more questions and get your information.

The second nurse punches a code in the mechanical locking device and the doors open. Everyone rushes in except Charlie and the nurse.

INT. HOSPITAL - SURGERY WING - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

The boy is rushed down the hallway to the prep room.

DOCTOR

Any idea how the head injury occurred?

PARAMEDIC

Most likely blunt force trauma from contact with the steering wheel or windshield when the car struck the tree. Possible side impact with driver door window as well.

DOCTOR

We could have intracranial bleeding causing pressure on the brain. Did you notice any involuntary movement or muscle contraction on the ride here?

PARAMEDIC

None that we noticed.



INT. HOSPITAL - SURGERY PREP ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

They unstrap the stretcher from the cart and lift it onto the prep table.

DOCTOR

Let's have a look at his wounds. Cut his clothes off.

The nurse cuts the shirt up the center and down the arms and then down the pant legs with quick precision. She then places the IV and heart rate monitors while the doctor examines.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

I want a full set of scans. X-ray, CT, MRI. And get moving, we don't know how much time we have on this one.

INT. HOSPITAL - SURGICAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Charlie paces around. The rain bounces off the window and the soda machine hums loudly. Charlie takes a seat by the window, noticeably tired for the first time tonight. He glances at the inspirational poster next to him.

Charlie's POV: The poster is a beautiful country morning scene. The sun rises on a lake. We read the words. "Time can seem so far, And the future ever vast, But mornings quickly come, And just as quickly pass."

A nurse walks in holding a clipboard.

NURSE PINEIDA

(with a smile)

Hello. I'm nurse Pineida. Are you the fireman everyone's talking about? The one who pulled the boy from the car that was dangling in a tree just before it crashed into the water?

CHARLIE

Uh... yes ma'am... I suppose so. I'm Charlie but most folks call me Chuck.

NURSE PINEIDA

(smiling bigger)

Well I guess tonight makes you some sort of hero then doesn't it?

(MORE)

NURSE PINEIDA (cont'd)  
Do you happen to know the boy's name?  
We haven't received the accident  
report yet.

CHARLIE  
I'm no hero ma'am, anyone would have  
done the same as me.  
(pause)  
I don't know the boy's name. I'm sure  
it won't be long before they pull the  
car out of the water. They can get  
you what you need and contact the  
boy's family.

NURSE PINEIDA  
Well, if you could just fill out this  
form so we have a record of who came  
in with him, then I suppose you are  
free to go. I'll be back in a little  
bit to get it.

She sits the clipboard on the chair next to him with a  
smile.

As she reaches the door...

CHARLIE  
Excuse me ma'am, but I... If it's all  
the same to you, I'd like to stay  
here until his family arrives. I'd  
hate to leave the boy all alone at a  
time like this.

NURSE PINEIDA  
Of course. I'll tell the doctors to  
keep you updated.

She opens the door and turns back to Charlie.

NURSE PINEIDA (cont'd)  
You don't have to wear a mask and a  
cape to be a hero, you know.

She smiles and shuts the door.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Seth wakes confused and surprised to be alive. He is dry  
with no signs of drowning in the water.

Seth's POV: Looking at the beach house we feel the pull of  
it on us, almost sucking us towards it.

This time Seth feels like he has no choice. There must be a reason for all this, and the answer may lie inside.

Seth walks to the beach house slowly. Up the stone path to the wooden steps. He taps the first one, as one would a frozen lake to see if it will support his weight. Heavy creaking follows each step to the window. He peers in but sees only motionless shapes and shadows.

SETH

Hello? Is anyone in there?

He steps to the door, which hangs askew on one hinge. He pulls the handle and opens the door just enough to slip by, scraping it on the wooden deck. After a quick look at the water and down the beach in each direction, he enters the beach house.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Seth's eyes adjust to the darkness. He is in the remains of a kitchen. Broken glass, wood splinters, dust, broken cabinets and shelves.

He steps through an opening to the next room, a dining room.

Many dusty boxes are stacked everywhere. He brushes off the dust on a box revealing the word DISHES. Another box, BOOKS. This box wasn't taped shut. He opens it. The top book is Great Expectations by Charles Dickens, one of his favorites. He flips it open, looking for a name or an address to shine light on where he is. Nothing.

He steps to the window where the moonlight is the brightest. Something about this book holds his attention. There are several dog eared pages. He flips to the first one.

SETH (V.O.)

I loved her simply because I found  
her irresistible... I loved her  
against reason, against promise,  
against peace, against hope, against  
happiness, against all discouragement  
that could be...

He slides his back down the wall to sit and continues.

SETH (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 (seemingly  
 forgetting about his  
 current situation)  
 It was impossible for me to separate  
 her, in the past or in the present...  
 from the innermost life of my life...  
 (flips to another  
 dog-eared page)  
 Love her, love her, love her! If she  
 favors you, love her. If she wounds  
 you, love her. If she tears your  
 heart to pieces - and as it gets  
 older and stronger, it will tear  
 deeper - love her, love her, love  
 her!

He breathes slower and deeper, relaxing for the first time  
 here.

SETH (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 (flipping the page)  
 The air of inaccessibility which her  
 beauty and her manner gave her,  
 tormented me in the midst of my  
 delight...  
 (leaning his head  
 back against the  
 wall)  
 Pause you who read this, and think  
 for a moment of the long chain of  
 iron or gold, of thorns or flowers,  
 that would never have bound you, but  
 for the formation of the first link  
 on one memorable day.

He closes his eyes to ponder, drifts away to sleep, naked  
 against the wall in the beach house.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS ARBORETUM - DAY

CLOSE on Seth's sleeping face, similar to when he wakes on  
 the beach. This time his face is lit by warm sunlight, and a  
 SLOW ZOOM AWAY reveals grass beneath his head. His fingers  
 in similar fashion this time feel grass instead of sand.

He wakes and looks around. There are students everywhere on  
 campus. He packs his books and notes into his backpack,  
 pausing on Journalism Basics and longer when he picks up  
*Great Expectations*. He smiles and shakes his head, happy to  
 realize the beach was all a dream.

Seth stands. He is wearing his "PUCK 3:2" t-shirt. He slings his backpack onto his shoulder.

He walks through campus, past hundreds of students, many beautiful limestone buildings, a pond, a gazebo, a creek with wooden bridges, tree-lined walkways. The trees and sky are bright and colorful.

He checks his watch and sits on the steps outside the student union building to people-watch and kill time.

Seth's POV: He sees Sovannah, a beautiful and dreamy brunette, quietly reading under a tree. She is reading *Great Expectations* as well.

He takes out the same book from his backpack and slowly approaches her. He kneels down beside her when he gets there.

                                SETH  
                                (nervously)  
Hi there.

                                SOVANNAH  
                                (soft and sweet)  
Hi.

Seth holds up his book.

                                SETH  
I noticed you and I were reading the same book.

                                SOVANNAH  
                                (chuckles)  
Oh. I guess you're right. It's for W131. English Lit. Normally I don't like book reports, but this book is really good actually. Are you taking that class too?

                                SETH  
                                (slightly  
                                embarrassed)  
No. Um... it's just one of my favorites.  
                                (holding out his  
                                hand and smiling)  
I'm Seth by the way.

                                SOVANNAH  
                                (smiling)  
I'm Sovannah, nice to meet you.

They lock eyes while shaking hands. The handshake lingers.

SETH

Gorgeous day out isn't it? I wish they were all like this.

Sovannah sets her book in her lap.

SOVANNAH

I know! I could sit out here in the sun forever.

SETH

Me too. Summer is definitely my favorite season.

(pointing to the sky)

And you see that? The sun and the moon are both out at the same time... I love that.

She looks at him admiringly.

SETH (cont'd)

So... when's your next class?

SOVANNAH

(looking down at her watch)

I have to be at Memorial Hall in thirty minutes. It's about a twenty-minute walk from here. I need to leave, actually. Thanks for the reminder. How about you?

SETH

I'm actually done with classes today. I was just out...enjoying the day.

(hesitating)

I could walk with you... if that's okay with you.

SOVANNAH

(looking down coyly)

I'd like that.

(pauses, then points)

I usually take the shortcut down by the greenhouse over there.

SETH

Okay, cool. Ready to go?

SOVANNAH

Sure, you?

SETH

(reaching for her  
books)

Almost... what kind of a gentleman  
would I be if I let you carry your  
own books?

(putting her books  
under his arm)

Now I'm ready. Lead the way.

SOVANNAH

(blushing)

Thanks.

They walk to her class while chatting.

SETH

Sovannah is a cute name by the way.  
What's the story behind it?

SOVANNAH

Well, my grandmother had the name  
Sovereign. I know, it's weird. And my  
mom's name was Anna, so they sort of  
combined the two and made up a new  
name. That's why the second letter is  
O.

SETH

It's very pretty.

SOVANNAH

Aww, thanks. I met a girl once in one  
of my classes from Cambodia, and she  
said that my name means 'Dream' in  
Cambodian.

SETH

Wow, dream, that's pretty cool. I  
like that.

SOVANNAH

Me, too.

SETH

I'm not sure what my name means. I  
don't think there's a cool story  
behind Seth.

SOVANNAH

I think Seth is a cute name. And you should be glad it's only four letters. Try writing Sovannah a hundred times a day for school, or filling out all the bubbles on the tests. It gets old pretty quick... So, what are you studying here?

SETH

Right now journalism and business, but really I have no idea what I want to do. I'm not lucky enough to be one of these people walking around with all the answers, who have it all figured out.

(pause)

There are lots of different career paths that have caught my attention at one time or another, but none ever truly felt right. In fact, I'm nearly done with my business degree and I realized something... I can't stand business.

SOVANNAH

Why is that?

SETH

I don't know really. I just hate it. It's not for me. There's no creativity. Rules and numbers, deals and laws, books and balances. I guess I just don't want a dull and monotonous life, struggling to climb that

(making quotes with his fingers)

corporate ladder. You know, with bosses and cubicles, lunch hours and casual Fridays... The whole idea of it all just depresses me actually. That's why I started taking journalism classes I guess. I wanted something different. I don't know, I suppose I always just assumed I would figure it out somewhere along the way. Only I haven't yet.

(pausing)

I'm rambling, I'm sorry. How about you? Do you have it all figured out? What are you studying?



SOVANNAH  
 (embarrassed)  
 Business... specifically Business  
 Management.

Seth closes his eyes and pinches his lips together. Total  
 foot-in-the-mouth moment.

SETH  
 Open mouth, insert foot. It's a  
 talent of mine... I'm sorry.

SOVANNAH  
 (chuckling)  
 It's ok, no worries. I know it's not  
 for everyone. My dad is VP of  
 Operations in Chicago, and my mom is  
 an accountant there. I never really  
 had a creative bone in my body, and I  
 suppose business is just... in my  
 blood.

They walk past the greenhouse. The sun streams in and  
 through the open windows comes the smell of the tropical  
 plants inside.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
 (taking a deep  
 breath)  
 Mmmmmmm. I love coming by here this  
 time of year.  
 (taking it in, then  
 continuing)  
 And I wouldn't say I have it all  
 figured out, but there's definitely a  
 plan. What's your plan?

SETH  
 Plan?  
 (pauses)  
 I guess I don't really know at this  
 point. I don't necessarily like the  
 idea of planning everything. I mean,  
 I used to have this detailed idea of  
 becoming a rich computer programmer  
 with a fast car and a fancy house...  
 but now I feel like I want more out  
 of life than that. Something...  
 different. I want to leave my mark,  
 if you know what I mean.  
 (pause)  
 I suppose if I had to choose, I'd  
 like to be a writer of some kind...  
 maybe write the great American novel.  
 (MORE)

SETH (cont'd)  
 Something that people would talk about, make them think... or see the world in a different way. I think maybe I need less than I originally thought. Maybe live somewhere amazing. Something small with a great view. With shelves full of the great classics like To Kill A Mockingbird... The Great Gatsby... Brave New World... The Catcher In The Rye... Lord Of The Flies... and of course... Great Expectations.

Sovannah chuckles.

SETH (cont'd)  
 I wouldn't need lots of money either. I'd live humbly but I would be wealthy in other ways. Do I sound crazy right now?

Sovannah stepping up the steps of Lindley Hall and turns back to Seth.

SOVANNAH  
 Actually, it sounds great... there are times I wish I was more like you.  
 (nodding towards the door)  
 I suppose I should get in there and get some of this expensive education my dad is paying for. He reminds me all the time.  
 (pausing)  
 It was really nice talking to you though.

SETH  
 It was nice talking to you to. Have fun in class.

Sovannah smiles and turns to walk up the steps. She seems to be taking her time, hoping for more.

SETH (cont'd)  
 (at the last second - her hand on the door)  
 Sovannah!

Sovannah turns back to him anxiously.

SETH (cont'd)  
 Um... if you aren't busy after  
 (MORE)

SETH (cont'd)  
 class... do you maybe want to... I  
 don't know... get some ice cream or  
 something?  
 (she hesitates)  
 My treat.

SOVANNAH  
 (smiling)  
 I'd like that.

SETH  
 Okay, let's meet outside the union  
 building again. What time?

SOVANNAH  
 How about eight?

SETH  
 I can't wait.

She slips inside the doors after one more smile.

MONTAGE of Seth walking around campus enjoying the sights of  
 the sun, the trees, the squirrels, etc. As he walks into a  
 sunlit patch he stops, spreads his arms wide, closes his  
 eyes, and lifts his face to the sun, smiling wildly and  
 holding the pose. He sits to write in various places.

EXT. STUDENT UNION BUILDING - LATER THAT EVENING

Seth sits outside the student union building, continually  
 checking his watch while reading his book. The sun is  
 setting.

SOVANNAH  
 (hustling)  
 Seth! Sorry I'm late. I wanted to  
 drop my books off at my room so I  
 didn't have to carry them around. How  
 long have you been waiting?

SETH  
 Not long. I wondered if maybe you had  
 changed your mind.

SOVANNAH  
 And miss out on free ice cream? No  
 way! Don't think I forgot your  
 promise... plus, I've been wondering  
 all class what Puck 3:2 on your shirt  
 means. So I had to come back to find  
 out.

SETH

(chuckling)

So I guess I can thank my shirt for luring you back. It's actually a quote from a Shakespeare play - A Midsummer Night's Dream. There is this fairy named Puck who watches these crazy humans fall in and out of love. They all get crazy. While watching them he says 'What fools these mortals be!' and it happens in act three, scene two. So Puck 3:2. Now you know what it means.

(jokingly)

I guess you are free to leave now.

SOVANNAH

(smiling)

Not before I get my ice cream.

Sovannah chuckles.

SETH

I was hoping you'd say that. Want to go to Soma? It's not too far from here.

SOVANNAH

Sure, let's go.

They walk to Soma. Students are everywhere. We see them chatting and laughing from a distance until they arrive.

INT. SOMA CAFE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

SETH

Every time I come here I think of the book Brave New World.

SOVANNAH

(confused)

Why is that?

SETH

You don't get the reference?

SOVANNAH

No.

SETH

Oh my goodness, have you never read Brave New World?

SOVANNAH  
(embarrassed)  
Um... no.

SETH  
You HAVE to read it! It's my all time favorite book. I'll even let you borrow mine if I have to. We have to remedy this situation.

They get their ice cream and sit at a table.

SOVANNAH  
(laughing at his intensity)  
So why does this place remind you of that book?

SETH  
Well, the book is set in the future in a time when everyone is controlled by the government and not allowed to have any true emotions. They all take this drug the government provides to keep them "happy and under control". Anyway, the drug is called Soma. And they have these little saying about it. 'A gram is better than a damn'. 'All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects'. Stuff like that. But anyway, it's a book about love and happiness and control and freedom and... you should read it.

SOVANNAH  
Ok, I will. I promise. Thanks for the ice cream, it's yummy.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT - A BIT LATER

MONTAGE - They walk back through campus. It's romantic at night, with lights flanking the walkways. They walk across the rocks in a trickling stream outside the gazebo. He holds her hand as she navigates across. As she jumps across, a frog leaps into the water and she gives a girlish yelp.

SETH  
(laughing)  
Afraid of frogs, are we? One of those could be your prince you know. Maybe I'll fish him out so you can give him a little kiss.

SOVANNAH

(giggling)

You better not! I'll push you in after him!

SETH

Ok, but only cause I just met you. I can't believe how perfect it is out here tonight.

SOVANNAH

Summer nights are the best.

They sit in the grass outside the gazebo. They lie on their backs and look up at the stars that are fully out now.

SETH

You know, when I was a kid my mom once told me that the stars are really dreams, and every time you have a dream, there is a new star in the sky... so I used to look out the window each time I woke up after a dream and look for the new star. I would convince myself that I had them all memorized and I always found the new one. I would look up and be so proud of it.

SOVANNAH

That's a really cute story.

SETH

That group over there is Aquila. It means eagle.

SOVANNAH

Where?

SETH

(leaning in to her  
and pointing)

Right over there. Those four stars that make a triangle are supposed to be the wings and body. And that single star below is the tail.

SOVANNAH

Looks like a kite to me.

SETH

Yeah it does, but I'm guessing it was named before kites were invented.

SOVANNAH

You're so smart. I wish I knew more about this kind of stuff. My brain is too full of business models and legal statutes. I feel like such a grown up. Like... I'm boring or something... compared to you.

SETH

(sarcastically)

I AM a little bored actually, maybe I should go...

He smiles to show he was kidding and she smacks him playfully.

SETH (cont'd)

Seriously though... you aren't boring. You're anything BUT boring. In fact, everything seems a little better just because you're here.

(pause)

I'm really glad I bumped into you tonight, it's been almost perfect... like a dream.

Sovannah blushes and smiles. He closes his eyes and slides his hand over to hers. He opens his eyes after a few seconds.

SETH (cont'd)

I guess I can look for my new star now.

They share a long look into each other's eyes from a few inches away. Slowly, they lean in and their lips touch, ever so softly.

SETH (cont'd)

Okay, now it's perfect.

They look up at the stars again. From above we see them both looking up, smiling, holding hands on their backs. Seth squeezes her hand and closes his eyes, savoring the moment.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

ON SCREEN

9:58 P.M.

SEPT. 6TH, 2002

LIBERUM MEDICAL CENTER

BLOOMINGTON, IN

Charlie is resting his head against the wall, about to doze off.

INTERCOM (O.S.)  
(loudly, startling  
Charlie)  
Doctor Brigham to ER Consult Six...  
Doctor Brigham to ER Consult Six,  
STAT.

INT. HOSPITAL - ER CONSULT ROOM - NIGHT

The halls are abuzz. Inside the room a nurse waits for Doctor Brigham to arrive. The boy is on a stretcher. Another nurse monitors him.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM  
(almost simultaneous  
with opening the  
door and entering)  
What do we have?

NURSE 2  
(handing him a  
folder)  
Here are the X-ray results. There are fractures to the 4th thoracic rib, the left clavicle, and the left first rib.

Doctor Brigham removes the first plastic x-ray sheet, snaps it onto the light-board, and quickly scans it.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM  
(eyes on the light-  
board)  
There may also be damage to the brachial plexus or the subclavian vessels, but neither of these injuries is life threatening.

He places another x-ray onto the light-board as the nurse briefs him.

NURSE 2  
I'm afraid he also has a compound depressed fracture of the cranium just above the joining of the frontal and temporal bones on the left side.



DOCTOR BRIGHAM

(expression  
changing)

I was afraid of that. Have you done a CT scan?

NURSE 2

Yes, I ordered it immediately when I saw the x-rays. He was taken in right away and just arrived back here a few minutes ago. The radiologist just called and is on her-

The door opens mid-sentence and in walks a tall and elegant woman who immediately hands the doctor another folder. The nurse could tell by his expression the news wasn't good.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM

Yep, just what I feared. The depression of the skull has increased the pressure on the frontal lobe and there appears to be some damage to the soft tissues underneath. There is evidence of intracranial hemorrhaging. We need to go in immediately to relieve the pressure and remove the skull fragments or he's not going to make it. Get him down to prep room four now.

(unhappy with their  
urgency)

The boy has minutes, not hours, get moving!

The nurse wheels the stretcher out of the room, met by two attending males who were waiting outside the room.

Doctor Brigham picks up the phone and hits a single button.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM (cont'd)

This is Dr. Brigham, I have a young man, early twenties... immediate response surgery required... frontal lobe depressurization. He is headed to prep room four now. Who is the on-call surgeon tonight?

(pauses to listen)

Okay, tell Dr. Meeker the boy is already on the way, and I'll send the scans his way now.

(handing the folders  
to the radiologist)

I have to check in on a chemical burn in three, then I'll be down.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie is alone in the surgery waiting room at this time of night. He flips through channels on the small mounted TV. The door opens.

NURSE PINEIDA  
Charlie, could you follow me please?

CHARLIE  
(stands and hands  
her the clipboard)  
Here are the forms, all done.

NURSE PINEIDA  
Thanks, Charlie, I'll send them to  
reception to get logged.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

A beautiful and shapely Latina nurse is in the hall when they exit the waiting room. Puppy paws wander all over her pink scrubs.

NURSE PINEIDA  
This is Ramona, and she will take you  
down to the ER's main entrance. The  
police have arrived and are  
requesting to speak with you. When  
you get back here, hopefully I'll  
have an update for you on the boy.

CHARLIE  
Thanks, I really appreciate it.

NURSE RAMONA  
Hi Charlie, follow me.

They begin walking.

NURSE RAMONA (cont'd)  
I hear you climbed down to a car in a  
tree to save the boy. That's pretty  
amazing.

CHARLIE  
Stories travel fast in a hospital...  
it was nothing, really.

NURSE RAMONA  
I bet it was something to the boy.

They walk in silence the rest of the way, until they meet the officers. Charlie reaches one of his hands out to one of the officers.

CHARLIE

Hello officer, I'm Charles Hatfield.

OFFICER 1

The car was pulled from the water at the scene about thirty minutes ago. Currently there is a team dredging the river, and divers are on the scene.

CHARLIE

What are they looking for?

OFFICER 1

Investigators at the scene have questions as to whether or not someone else may have been in the car with him at the time of the accident. They probably won't find anything, but it's standard procedure in an accident like this. Anyway, we brought the boy's personal belongings that were removed from the car. The family hasn't arrived yet, but we were told you planned on staying until they get here.

CHARLIE

That's right.

OFFICER 1

We thought we'd see if you mind hanging on to it until then, so we could take off.

CHARLIE

Sure, that would be no problem at all.

Almost before Charlie says the words, the second officer hands him the box, which hits his chest with a thud. It is wet from all the rain.

OFFICER 1

We ran the plates and contacted the boy's parents. They were informed of the situation and were told where he had been taken. They were an hour away when we spoke and are headed here now. Probably be here by ten.

CHARLIE  
Thanks for the update, I'll take care  
of this until then.

OFFICER 1  
(turning mid  
sentence)  
Thanks for your assistance.

Charlie follows nurse Ramona back to the waiting room, where he shuts off the TV, closes his eyes, and rests his head back on the wall, just as the door bursts open again.

NURSE PINEIDA  
Hey, Charlie, you sleeping?

CHARLIE  
No, but I could use a nap. Have you  
heard anything yet?

Nurse Pineida sits down next to him.

NURSE PINEIDA  
I spoke to Dr. Brigham and I'm afraid  
he didn't have good news.

CHARLIE  
How bad is it?

NURSE PINEIDA  
His skull is fractured, and they  
found some bleeding in his brain.  
They had to rush him to surgery.

CHARLIE  
(hangs his head)  
He was awake when I pulled him from  
the car. But only for seconds.

NURSE PINEIDA  
Bleeding takes time, and the pressure  
builds slowly. People often show no  
signs of serious head injury until  
hours after an accident. It's not  
uncommon.

CHARLIE  
Poor kid.

NURSE PINEIDA  
Don't you worry, we have the best  
doctors and surgeons in the country  
here. They will do everything they  
can.

(MORE)

NURSE PINEIDA (cont'd)  
 (pats Charlie on the  
 arm and stands)  
 I'll keep you updated.

Nurse Pineida leaves the room and Charlie peaks inside the cardboard box. He fingers through the textbooks: Business Law, Economics, Journalism Basics, and American Literature.

CHARLIE  
 (to himself)  
 Smart kid.

There are pens, golf balls, and a stack of CDs. He picks up a CD with a picture of someone shouting in pain on the cover. Another has a similar theme. He flips through several more: Third Eye Blind, Pearl Jam, Linkin' Park, Our Lady Peace, Matchbox Twenty, Fuel, Live. He puts them away.

He picks up a dog-eared novel with a metal bookmark. He reads the words on the bookmark. "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you've always imagined. - Henry David Thoreau."

Near the bottom of the box is an old weathered journal.

Charlie flips through the pages filled with the boy's poetry, quotes, drawings, etc.

He pulls out his cell phone and sets it on his lap, gripping it tightly.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

CLOSE on Seth's face, awake and looking up at the stars.

SETH  
 Maybe I can find Orion's Belt. I  
 always have trouble seeing that one.  
 I'm not even sure if it's the right  
 time of year for it.  
 (cups his hands  
 around his eyes)  
 You've at least heard of the big  
 dipper, right?  
 (silence)  
 Sovannah?  
 (turns his head,  
 startled to find  
 Sovannah gone)  
 Sov...

WIDE. Seth sees he's back on the dark beach.

He silently mouths the word "No".

                  SETH (cont'd)  
                  (looking all around  
                  and yelling)  
Sovannah?  
                  (remembering)  
The book!

He stands quickly and runs towards the beach house again, up the steps, stopping in his tracks when he notices something in the broken glass reflection. He is no longer naked, but wearing the same khaki shorts and Puck 3:2 shirt he was wearing with Sovannah.

                  SETH (cont'd)  
                  (looking around,  
                  then yelling again)  
Sovannah?

With no answer, he enters the house again.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

The entire stack of boxes marked "BOOKS" is gone, along with the copy of Great Expectations that he was reading earlier.

He is confused yet ventures farther into the house, down a hallway. There are swatches of moonlight in the hall where it streams in through the windows of the two rooms on the left.

He peeks in the first room. He flips a light switch to no avail. This room has a large bay window and a view of the beach. It is filled with painting supplies, an easel, and scattered paintings. Leaving the room he flips the light switch back to off out of habit.

He continues to the second room and enters. Same layout as the first, yet it is a library instead of a painting room.

The walls are lined with shelves full of books. The empty box is on the floor. There is a large desk and chair by the window. He looks at several books on the shelves, and makes his way to the desk. He sits in the chair.

On the desk is an old Underwood typewriter. There are scattered papers on the desk, including a brochure with a picture of a boat on it. He dusts off the brochure. "Marco Polo Adventure" is written at the top, along with the tagline "Close Your Eyes and Picture the Most Sublime Place You Can Imagine."

He noticeably feels calm and relaxed in the chair. He leans back, holding the brochure. He closes his eyes.

CLOSE on Seth's face: Flashes of a beautiful sun-drenched beach cross his mind. Palm trees... perfect sand... blue water... sunlight... warmth... the sound of seagulls... a gentle breeze...

EXT. CRUISE SHIP IN THE ANTARCTIC OCEAN - TOP DECK - NIGHT

CLOSE on Seth's face: A breeze blows his hair, slightly at first, then harder. He frowns with obvious confusion. The breeze is ice cold.

Seth opens his eyes, struck by the sight before him. He is looking out onto an iceberg floating in the brilliant blue water. Looking left and right, he sees he's on a huge ship.

He walks forward to the rail, mesmerized by the scene. He places his hands on the rail, which was covered in ice. He suddenly pulls his hand back in shock from the cold. He notices how cold he is, with no coat. He looks down to see he is wearing polished dress shoes, dark black pin-striped slacks with a belt, and a tucked-in long-sleeve button-down shirt. He shoves his hands in his pockets for warmth. He feels something, and pulls it out. It is a credit-card-like room key with the words "Marco Polo" & the number "215" on it.

He turns and sees a door labeled "Stairs". He walks to it and enters. The door shuts with a metal clang. He rubs his arms to warm them.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - STAIRS AND HALLWAY - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

He makes his way to level 2 and walks down the hallway between the rooms, looking for room 215. When he finds it, he pauses in front of the door, holding the key, nervous about what might be inside.

He slides the card in the slot, the light on the door lock turns green, he hears a mechanism unlock. He turns the handle and slightly opens the door.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - ROOM 215 - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Seth peeks his head inside the dark room.

SETH

Hello?

No answer. He steps inside. The room is like a small hotel room, quaint with a single bed. A small lamp across the room on a table gives a soft glow. He sees a men's coat and picks it up. It matches his clothes. On the table next to the bed are some papers. He sees the same brochure from the beach house.

He walks towards the opening to the bathroom and flips on the light. Immediately he sees a man and ducks. Realizing his folly, he slowly rises. The man is his reflection in the mirror. He didn't quite recognize himself. He seems... different... older. He leans in closer to the mirror and runs his fingers through the hair on his temples, noticing the grays mixed in. There are some in his chin, too. He touches his face. It is fuller than it used to be. He steps back and turns sideways to take in his profile. He has put on a few pounds.

Seth hears a sharp knock on the door. He looks around and debates hiding. He hears another knock.

                                SETH (cont'd)  
                                (whispering to  
                                himself)  
Please be room service.  
                                (out loud)  
Who is it?

                                WOMAN'S VOICE  
It's me, open up. I don't have my key  
with me.

Seth glances at the table and sees another key. He walks to the door and touches the handle and hesitates.

He opens the door and it all happens in slow motion, revealing her an inch at a time. She is slender with long wavy brunette hair. Her long coat is open in the front revealing a long black dress.

                                SETH  
                                (incredulously)  
Sovannah!

She's holding two steamy styrofoam cups and hands him one.

                                SOVANNAH  
Of course it's me. Here, I brought  
your latte.

She walks in and he shuts the door behind her. He turns and stands motionless, staring at her.



SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
What happened to you anyway?

Seth searches for words with a lost look on his face.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
We were both standing on the deck,  
and I went to get us drinks, and when  
I got back, you were gone.

SETH  
(searching and  
finding his coat)  
I... came back to get my coat. I  
thought I would be back up by the  
time you got back. I guess I got  
distracted... I'm sorry.

SOVANNAH  
(shaking her head)  
I told you that you would need it,  
didn't I?  
(playfully)  
I swear you never listen to me. You  
think you are so tough.

Sovannah turns back to the mirror.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
The wind really did a number on my  
hair out there.

Satisfied with her hair, she turns back to Seth.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
Are you excited about getting in the  
hot tub after dinner?  
(not waiting for an  
answer)  
I can't wait! I hope we see some  
penguins!

Seth pauses and smiles before answering.

SETH  
Sounds wonderful... I'm just happy to  
be with you... right here... right  
now... on this ship...

Sovannah steps towards him with adoration in her eyes. She  
puts her arms around his neck and pulls him in close.

SOVANNAH

You're such a sweetheart. I'm glad to be here with you too. This place is amazing. I wouldn't want to celebrate our anniversary any other way.

She hugs him tight, then looks in his eyes.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

Four years! Can you believe it?

SETH

Four years...

(peaks over her  
shoulder to the  
mirror)

No, I can't believe it.

SOVANNAH

It seems like just yesterday that we met in college, you know?

SETH

I definitely do.

Sovannah grabs her room key.

SOVANNAH

Now let's go, I think it would be fun to walk to the very front of the ship before our dinner reservation.

(looks at her watch)

We have about forty minutes.

Seth picks up his coat and follows her out of the room.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - HALLWAY - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

As they walk in silence down the long hallway, he mouths "twenty-five" to himself.

SOVANNAH

Are you okay, Seth? You are being awfully quiet. Are you sure you have your sea legs yet? The captain said it could take a few days.

SETH

Oh, yeah, I'm fine. I was just thinking about the last four years and how fast they've went.

Sovannah stops at the door to the stairwell and place her hand on the handle.

SOVANNAH  
I know. It's crazy.

She opens the door and a blast of cold air hits them. Seth puts his coat on.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - STAIRWELL - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Sovannah reaches down and grabs Seth's hand.

SOVANNAH  
Your hands are always warm, no matter how cold it is. I love that.

Seth spins her around and kisses her intensely.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
There's the Seth I know.

They reach the top level and Seth holds the door open for her.

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - TOP DECK - NIGHT

SOVANNAH  
(excitedly)  
Let's go to the front of the boat and look over the edge!

They walk hand in hand.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
We've been on this boat for four days and I'm still so amazed.

SETH  
(tongue in cheek)  
Boat? I think this qualifies as a ship.

SOVANNAH  
(shakes her head)  
And I love how it never gets fully dark here. I don't think I could ever get bored with looking out at that view. The glowing sky and the dark water. And all those floating icebergs.

SETH  
(looking out on the  
view)  
It is amazing.

They walk past the lifeboats and anchors. Everything has an icy skin.

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - TOP DECK - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Seth walks to the front and looks over, as Savannah hesitates. The massive hull cuts through the water, pushing smaller chunks of ice aside with ease.

SETH  
You have to see this, Savannah.

Seth turns to see her standing about five feet away.

SETH (cont'd)  
I thought you wanted to look over the edge.

SOVANNAH  
(nervously)  
I did, but...

SETH  
Are you scared?

SOVANNAH  
(sheepishly)  
A little.

SETH  
(reaching out his  
hand)  
Come on, I'll hold onto you the whole time.

They walk to the edge and she looks down as he stands behind her.

SETH (cont'd)  
Walking around on the deck, you can barely feel it, but when you look down from here you really get a sense of how fast we are moving.

SOVANNAH  
Crazy.

SETH  
Almost feels like you're flying  
doesn't it?

Seth closes his eyes and spreads his arms wide.

SOVANNAH  
(looks down at her  
watch)  
Okay, Leo, we should get back now.  
Our reservation is soon. And my  
fingers and toes are freezing.

SETH  
Alright, lead the way.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - HALLWAY - NIGHT - A BIT LATER

SOVANNAH  
I've been really looking forward to  
tonight, but it's bittersweet.

SETH  
How so?

SOVANNAH  
Well, sad because it's our last night  
on the ship. But sweet because I've  
been wanting to eat at Maxim's since  
we arrived. I've heard people talking  
about how good it is. That and you  
promised me a surprise. Don't think I  
forgot.

SETH  
Uh... a surprise?

SOVANNAH  
Don't try to trick me. You said we  
would celebrate our anniversary in  
style and that I'd never forget it.  
How can a girl not remember a  
statement like that?

SETH  
(nervously)  
Well, I guess I can't let you down  
then can I?

SOVANNAH  
I'm sure you won't.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - MAXIM'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

They arrive at the restaurant. The Maître d' is a dapper-dressed Italian man, with an authentic accent.

MAITRE D

Good evening and welcome to Maxim's.  
May I have your name sir?

SETH

Seth.

MAITRE D

(looking at the  
list)

Ah yes, and this lovely lady must be Sovannah. Come right this way, we have your table ready. It's the best table in the house, I'm sure you will find it splendid.

Sovannah shoots Seth a look that she is impressed as they follow the Italian man to the back. The Maître d' opens the glass doors to a private room with a single table.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - MAXIM'S PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Everything is red and black. There are candles lit on the table. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling. There are roses in a vase on the table.

MAITRE D

Here you are. I hope you enjoy your visit with us today. And I hope you have a wonderful anniversary. Congratulations from everyone here at Maxim's.

SETH

Thank you.

SOVANNAH

Thank you.

The Maître d' leaves.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

You set all this up?

Seth smiles at her and pulls the chair out for her.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

Such a gentleman. This place is so nice. And that guy was right. This is the best table in the house! So romantic. I'm very impressed.

SETH  
I'm glad you like it. I'll be right  
back, I have to find a restroom  
before dinner.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - RESTROOM AT MAXIM'S - NIGHT

Seth looks at himself in the mirror. He just needs a moment  
to process things.

SETH  
(to himself)  
What surprise?

In the mirror he notices a bulge in this coat pocket. He  
pulls out a small black box and opens it. A ring! His eyes  
open wide. He now understands what the surprise is supposed  
to be.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - PRIVATE ROOM AT MAXIM'S - NIGHT

Seth walks back into the room and Savannah smiles and holds  
up a bottle of wine.

SOVANNAH  
They had our favorite red, so ordered  
a bottle.

SETH  
Sweet.

SOVANNAH  
I can't believe we are on a huge ship  
near Antarctica, and yet we are  
sitting in a fancy restaurant having  
wine. It's crazy to think about.

MONTAGE OF DINNER

Laughter and smiling, shrimp and wine. Smelling flowers and  
sharing dessert.

END DINNER MONTAGE

Savannah puts down her glass at the end of the meal.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
Everything was wonderful. Thanks  
again for setting all of this up.  
It's been the best week ever. I'll be  
sad when it ends.

SETH

Don't forget about the hot tub.

SOVANNAH

Oh yeah, I almost forgot. I read on the brochure they have them up on the observation deck and you can watch the icebergs float by while you are all warm in the hot water. I hope we see some penguins!

SETH

That sounds awesome, let's go grab our suits.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - ROOM 215 - NIGHT

Sovannah kicks off her shoes and hangs her coat in a closet.

Seth throws his on the bed.

SETH

Any idea where I put my shorts?

Sovannah grabs her suit and steps into the bathroom.

SOVANNAH (O.S.)

I think I put most of your stuff in the bottom drawer next to the bed.

Seth finds and slips on his shorts, as a black dress comes flying onto the bed from the open bathroom door. He turns to look at Sovannah, who is removing her makeup in the mirror, wearing only a lacy black bra and matching panties.

SETH'S POV: Sovannah turns around in SLOW MOTION, like a dream.

SOVANNAH

Four years and you still look at me like it's the first time you've ever seen me. That's why I love you.

SETH

You look... like an angel.

Sovannah steps closer to him and gives him a kiss, pressing her warm body against his. Afterwards, he notices a scar on his side and runs his finger along it. Sovannah notices.

SOVANNAH

I'll never forget when you got that. Our third date you took me skiing.

(MORE)



SOVANNAH (cont'd)

You were trying to impress me and took off down the blue diamond trail, even though you barely knew how to stop.

(walking back to the mirror)

Inevitably you crashed and I couldn't stop laughing... at least until I knew you were really hurt. I thought you were faking it all the way until the ambulance came.

Seth grabs the coats, making sure the ring is safe, and Sovannah comes out of the bathroom in her bikini. They put on their coats and leave the room.

EXT. CRUISE SHIP - OBSERVATION DECK - NIGHT

There are a couple of hot tubs steaming wildly, but no other people.

SETH

I guess we are the only ones crazy enough to do this.

SOVANNAH

I'm not surprised. It's freezing out here!

Seth opens the door to a little room next to the hot tubs.

SETH

Here's a little heated changing room, hand me your coat and I'll put it in here.

Seth slips the ring box out of his coat and hides it in his hand as he shuts the door. He holds Sovannah's hand as they step into the water. He slips the box just out of view. The steam provides ample cover.

SOVANNAH

(sinking low in the steamy water)

Oh my, it's glorious!

SETH

Ahhhhh... yes it is.

Sovannah points out to the water.

SOVANNAH

And look, penguins!

An iceberg floats by with a few penguins riding along.

SETH

(shaking his head)

Wow. This is so surreal. We are in a hot tub in the middle of the Antarctic ocean... looking at penguins.

Sovannah slides over next to him in the water. Seth puts his arms around her. They kiss. She lays her head on his shoulder and he rests his head on hers. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

SOVANNAH

I love you.

SETH

I love you, too.

The steam grows and surrounds them, fading out the surroundings. Seth can no longer see anything but Sovannah. He looks up at the stars and then closes his eyes, resting his head back on hers. He squeezes her tight as all of time seems to melt away. They both drift off.

INT. HOSPITAL - ER ENTRANCE - NIGHT

ON SCREEN

10:28 P.M.

SEPT. 6TH, 2002

LIBERUM MEDICAL CENTER

BLOOMINGTON, IN

The doors open and a family enters, shoulder to shoulder, in a rush. The boy's mother Gail reaches the reception desk first, distraught, aged, bad knees. The boy's older sister Michelle reaches the desk a moment later, a confident woman and mother herself.

Behind the women is the boy's brother-in-law Brian and two children, Marcus and Mariah.

MICHELLE

(turning to Brian)

Where are Ryan and Rachel? Is dad with them? Why are they not here?

On cue Ryan, the boy's younger yet taller brother and his small and quiet blond wife Rachel enter. The boy's father Arthur follows, slower, with the walk of a man who has worked hard his whole life. Everyone gathers around the receptionist desk.

GAIL  
(hysterical)  
My... son... he... accident.

MICHELLE  
(ushering her mother  
to Arthur)  
Dad, take care of mom.

ARTHUR  
(to Gail, taking her  
into his arms)  
It'll be okay, I promise. Let  
Michelle talk to her. We will see him  
soon. He's a fighter, he will be  
fine.

MICHELLE  
(to the  
receptionist)  
We are here to see my brother. He was  
in a car accident near his college  
and was brought here in an ambulance  
about an hour ago.

RECEPTIONIST  
Age and name please.

MICHELLE  
Twenty-one. Seth Ashling.

RECEPTIONIST  
Okay, I found him.

MICHELLE  
Is he okay?

RECEPTIONIST  
(eyes locked on her  
screen)  
He's currently in surgery. I'll call  
down and have a nurse come lead you  
to the surgical waiting area.

INT. HOSPITAL - SURGICAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT - A BIT LATER

Charlie is sitting with his eyes shut, resting his head against the wall. The door opens.

NURSE PINEIDA  
 Hey, Charlie. The boy's family is here. I'm headed down to get them. Thought I'd give you the heads up.

She leaves and Charlie places the boy's journal back in the box. He flips open his cell phone.

CLOSE on phone: You can see the voicemail icon with a number "1" on it.

Charlie slips his phone in his pocket and walks over to the vending machine while rubbing his eyes. He gets a soda, walks to the window, and stares out into the misty night rain.

The silence is broken when the door opens behind him. Nurse Pineida enters with the entire family right behind her.

NURSE PINEIDA (cont'd)  
 Charlie, I'd like you to meet the boy's family.  
 (to the parents)  
 Charlie is a firefighter here in Bloomington. He was on the scene tonight. He was the one who pulled your boy from the car.

Charlie walks over as she continues.

NURSE PINEIDA (cont'd)  
 He didn't want your son to be alone tonight and so he volunteered to stay until you got here.

CHARLIE  
 (extending his hand to the boy's father)  
 Nice to meet you.

ARTHUR  
 Thank you.

GAIL  
 (tears streaming down her face)  
 I'm Gail and this is Arthur. Thank you for saving our boy.

CHARLIE

No thanks necessary ma'am. I'm no savior. I just did my job. If it wasn't me, it would have been one of the other guys.

ARTHUR

Well, thank you anyway.

Everyone sits down in a row of chairs, some on one side, some on the other. The children go across the room to the window.

Nurse Pineida goes to the door and opens it. She turns back to everyone.

NURSE PINEIDA

He's about halfway through surgery. I'll let the doctor know you've all arrived and he will be down afterwards to give you an update.

She leaves and shuts the door. Everyone's eyes are on Charlie, hoping for details.

CHARLIE

He was awake when I first got to him.

MICHELLE

What happened? We heard such a quick version of the story from the cops. They said he drove his car into the river or something? How did it happen?

CHARLIE

I'm not sure really. But the car hadn't made it to the water when we arrived. It was caught up in a tree over the edge. So we lowered a ladder down to the car to pull him out. Like I said, he was actually awake when I got to him, but before we made it back up he collapsed.

MICHELLE

See mom, that's good news. He was awake.

(turning back to  
Charlie)

Could you see how bad he was hurt?

CHARLIE

He hit his head pretty good I think, but I'm not sure what else. It's all sort of a blur really. On the way here in the ambulance I heard something about a broken rib and punctured lung, but they seemed more concerned with his head.

Gail gasps.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

I think the nurse said there is a crack in his skull and that's why they rushed him into surgery. I think they are trying to relieve some pressure and reduce swelling. I'm sorry... I wish I knew more, or had better news for you all. But the nurse did say they have the best doctors in the country here, so at least he's in good hands. And now his family is here with him. That's important.

Charlie seems to be bothered by his own words as Gail burst out crying again.

MICHELLE

Mom, I'm sure he'll be okay. He's always been okay, no matter what has happened to him. He's tough. I'm sure he'll make it through this just fine too.

ARTHUR

(squeezing Gail's  
hand)

We'll see him soon.

The door opens and Dr. Brigham enters with a folder in his hands. The room falls silent.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM

Hello. I'm Dr. Brigham. I'm guessing you are all here for young Mr. Ashling?

MICHELLE

Yes.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM

He is still in surgery, which will most likely last another hour at least, depending what they run into. While that is in progress, I'd like to go over the extent of his injuries with you, and tell you what steps have been taken to this point.

MICHELLE

Okay.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM

During his accident, he sustained several cuts and abrasions on his upper body. He also has a broken rib and a punctured lung, probably from the jolt of the initial fall in the vehicle. This could be from hitting the steering wheel or the dash. However, none of these injuries are life threatening, and they were initially treated in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. They will require more attention after surgery, but for now we will concentrate on more important things. Our major concerns are the injuries to the head. He suffered a major concussion, and an x-ray showed a small depression fracture in his cranium above his left eye near the hairline.

Gail lets out a wail.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM (cont'd)

A CT scan of this area showed damage to the soft tissue of the frontal lobe of his brain. This, in turn, caused bleeding and pressure to increase inside his cranium. It was this pressure that caused him to black out at the scene of the accident. When this was determined, we immediately scheduled an emergency surgery to relieve the pressure and remove any bone fragments left behind, which may cause even more damage to the brain tissue.

MICHELLE

What does that mean? Will he be okay?

## DOCTOR BRIGHAM

We are confident the surgery will be a success, but there are no guarantees. To be honest, there's no way to really tell how much damage his brain has sustained, or what lasting effects might linger afterwards. I'm sorry, but that's all the information I have at the present time. I'll know more when surgery is completed and I've had a consultation with the surgeon. Once he's in the recovery room I'll come back down here and take you all to see him. Unfortunately, there's nothing more you can do except wait at this point. It shouldn't be more than another hour or so. If you need anything, the nurse's station is just down the hall.

Dr. Brigham stands up and shakes hands.

## DOCTOR BRIGHAM (cont'd)

I'll see you all again soon.

## ARTHUR

Thank you.

Dr. Brigham leaves the room.

Michelle puts her arms around a sobbing Gail.

## MICHELLE

Did you hear what he said, mom? They are confident surgery will be fine. Seth will be all fixed up in an hour and we'll get to see him, okay?

## GAIL

(through tears and sobs)

Yes.

## EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

CLOSE on Seth's face. Steam rises up (from hot tub?). Zooming slowly out reveals he's back on the beach, sitting on the steps, leaning against the railing. The steam is actually his breath on the cold air.



Seth, afraid to open his eyes, peaks slowly by lifting one eyelid, then the other. His eyes roll left and right, then he hangs his head in his hands in defeat.

Suddenly, he slaps his own face with force. One side, then the other.

SETH

Wake up!  
           (smacks again)  
 Wake up!  
           (crying)  
 Wake up!

He stands and look around. He sees he is still wearing the swim shorts he was wearing in the hot tub.

SETH (cont'd)

          (to the left)  
 Sovannah!  
           (to the right)  
 Sovaaaaannnaah!

Silence. He wipes his tears. Anger begins to fill his eyes.

SETH (cont'd)

          (to the sky with  
           rage)  
 Why?!  
           (screaming)  
 Why are you doing this to me?!

Seth falls to his knees facing the beach house and buries his head in his hands again, screaming a muffled scream. He takes several deep breaths to calm himself. He looks up at the beach house and wipes his tears.

Seth's hands rest on his sides. His fingers feel an aberration in his skin on his lower back. A flash in his mind reminds him of seeing the scar in the mirror with Sovannah.

His eyes widen and he stands.

He rushes up to the house and with one mighty jerk, he rips down the door that was hanging askew. It falls in a crash onto the deck and he rushes in.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Seth rushes through the kitchen and as he's reaching the dining room, he stops suddenly.

CLOSE on Seth's face. Confusion.

He backs up to the kitchen again slowly. He looks around. All the cabinets that were once in crumbling disrepair are all perfect and new looking. The floor is clean, and all the broken dishes are gone.

He wipes his eyes again and remembers the scar on his back.

He quickly rushes to the bathroom in the back. The anger has not left him.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

The bathroom is dark. Seth flips the light switch back and forth with no result. He walks to the window and rips down the curtains with one swift tug, letting them crash to the floor, and light to rush in.

He goes back to the mirror. It is covered in dust. He wipes a swatch clean with his hand to examine the scar. The glass beneath is broken into bits. The scar is just as he saw it on the ship with Savannah. He sees a mosaic of himself in the pieces of mirror and leans in to examine his face. Just like on the ship he is older. He touches his face.

SETH

(to himself in the  
mirror)

I'm not crazy. I just need to wake  
up.

(looking into his  
own eyes)

Wake up.

(pausing)

Just wake up.

(louder)

Wake up!

(balling his fist)

Wake up!

Seth slams his fist down on the sink with might. Dust goes everywhere as he screams again.

SETH (cont'd)

Wake up!

He cries in a rage.

SETH (cont'd)  
 (looking up)  
 Why are you doing this to me?  
 (in a rage)  
 Whyyyyyy?!  
 (back to himself in  
 the mirror, reaching  
 a boiling point)  
 Wake up! Wake up you fool! Wake  
 Uuuuuuuuuup!

He makes a fist. Screaming into his own reflection, he punches the mirror with all his might. The mirror shatters into a thousand pieces that crash down around him. Crying, he crumples to the floor. His face smashes against the dusty rug. His tears trickle through the dust on his face. His hand is bloody and the blood drips from his knuckles onto the rug.

Seth watches the blood drip from his hand, and examines the unique pattern on the rug. It is like a maze. He traces his fingers along the pattern as his heartbeat and breathing slows. He uses his blood to trace a trail in the maze of the rug, calming himself. A look of hopelessness fills his face.

He seems to give up and loses himself in the texture and pattern of the rug, slowly rubbing it with his fingers as his eyelids begin to fall.

INT. FURNITURE STORE - DAY

CLOSE on Seth's face. Eyes still closed. He suddenly takes a deep breath.

CLOSE on Seth's fingers rubbing the rug. The rug, however, is bright, clean, and good as new, as well as his hand. There is no sign of the cut or blood or dust.

Seth opens his eyes. He sees the bright new colors of the rug hanging before him as he stands in front of it. The rug is one of many hanging in a rack. He sees a small price tag attached to the corner with the store name on it.

"The Furniture Gallery"

When Seth reaches for the tag he is surprised to see a wedding ring on his finger. He takes it off and brings it close to his face to examine it. Inside there is an inscription.

"If not for You, for nothing shall I live. If not for You, my heart has naught to give."

SETH  
 (to himself,  
 smiling, putting the  
 pieces together)  
 Savannah.

He puts the ring back on his finger. His eyes widen thinking she must be near.

SETH (cont'd)  
 Savannah!

He rushes to the end of the aisle and looks left and right. He doesn't see her. He quickly walks down the main aisle, looking left and right down the adjacent aisles.

Near the front entrance to the store he stops and looks around one last time. The sun streams in the all-glass window front wall and he shields his eyes. From behind him he hears a voice.

WOMAN'S VOICE  
 Looking for something in particular?

Seth spins around with anticipation. The woman is a store clerk, small and overly happy.

SETH  
 Wh... what do you mean?

STORE CLERK  
 (continually  
 smiling)  
 Are you looking for a new sofa? A  
 bedroom set? Or perhaps a new rug?

Seth looks at her with confusion.

STORE CLERK (cont'd)  
 We have several items on sale today.  
 I'd be happy to help you find what  
 you are looking for.

SETH  
 No thanks...  
 (pausing to look at  
 her name tag)  
 Kelsey. I was just leaving.

Seth begins to step past her, but stops.

SETH (CONT'D)  
 Actually, could you answer what will  
 seem like a strange question?

KELSEY  
(extra happily)  
Of course!

SETH  
(hesitantly)  
Um... what city are we in right now?

KELSEY  
(looks at him  
strangely)  
We are in Bloomington, of course.

SETH  
(nodding)  
Thanks.

He steps past her then turns around again.

SETH (cont'd)  
Indiana or Illinois?

KELSEY  
(looking at him even  
more strangely)  
Indiana of course.

SETH  
Of course. Thanks again.

Seth walks out the front doors of the store into the bright sunlight.

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

It is warm and he seems to be overwhelmed by it, as if he hasn't felt the sun in a long time. After a few steps he stops and closes his eyes. He raises his arms and spreads them wide.

Seth opens his eyes and turns to face the building. A slight breeze blows a few leaves along the pavement in front of him. They are brown from the changing of the season. He looks around at the trees, adorned in deep reds and oranges.

To the left of the furniture store is a small bakery and deli. He takes a deep breath to smell the aroma. To the right is a bookstore.

Seth walks over to the bookstore and peers in the windows. He looks at the books on display in the main window and sees "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens.

He tilts his head and thinks back to when he met Savannah. Flashes of that moment fill his eyes.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(from behind him)

I knew I couldn't keep you away from the book store.

CLOSE on Seth's face. He smiles, recognizing the voice. He turns around.

SOVANNAH

What are you doing out here anyway?

Seth smiles at her, taking her in. Her hair is slightly lighter from a long summer in the sun. Her skin is darker for the same reason. She is wearing a fall jacket and boots, more beautiful than ever.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

(obviously sarcastic and bossy tone)

I go to the bathroom for two minutes and you leave me.

SETH

(snapping out of it)

Sorry, I just wanted to soak up some of this sun before it goes down.

(smiling)

It's amazing out here.

SOVANNAH

I know. I'm sorry we have to do this on a Saturday. We probably shouldn't have waited until the last day, but it's been a crazy week. I'm so excited though! Aren't you?

Seth tries to not give away that he has no idea what she is talking about.

SETH

Of course I am.

SOVANNAH

Our first night in our new apartment! Let's rent a movie and order Chinese!

SETH

That sounds like heaven. By the way, you look amazing... beautiful.

SOVANNAH  
(shaking her head)  
How do you do it?

SETH  
Do what?

SOVANNAH  
You always know exactly what to say.  
You can take something as small as  
standing in front of a furniture  
store and make it... romantic. I love  
that about you.

Sovannah gives him a kiss.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
Now let's go back inside and you can  
show me the rug you picked out.

MONTAGE SHOPPING

Them walking the aisles picking out furnishings for their  
apartment.

END SHOPPING MONTAGE

At the register, Sovannah reaches in her purse and then  
hands Seth a set of car keys.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
I'll take care of this, can you pull  
the car up front so we can load the  
small stuff?

SETH  
(taking the keys)  
Uh, sure.

EXT. STRIP MALL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Seth walks out the front door of the store. He purses his  
lips together and scans left and right. He looks at the key  
fob and sees "Ford" on it. He walks towards the lot while  
pressing the lock button over and over, listening for beeps.  
He follows the beeps to a black Ford Expedition XLT on 22"  
rims with tinted windows.

SETH  
Not bad... not bad at all Seth.

Seth opens the door and hops up into the driver's seat. He drives to the front door of the store and parks just off the sidewalk where a large man is waiting for him with a metal cart full of items. He gets out and walks around to the back, where he awkwardly fumbles with the rear door and lock as the man looks at him curiously.

He finally opens the rear door and spends time embarrassingly figuring out how to lower the rear seat.

SETH (cont'd)  
 Sorry, I haven't had this very long.  
 Haven't figured out how to work  
 everything just yet.

The man looks at him in a way that says 'what a pansy', and together they load the rug, blankets, pillows, sheets, etc... into the back of the vehicle just as Savannah exits the store.

SOVANNAH  
 All done?

SETH  
 Yep. And still room for you and me.

SOVANNAH  
 Perfect, now let's get all this to  
 our new place.

Seth takes a step towards the driver's door and pauses, realizing he would have no idea where to go.

SETH  
 Uh... hey, do you want to drive?

SOVANNAH  
 (stopping in her  
 tracks)  
 What?

Seth holds out the keys.

SETH  
 Do you want to drive?

SOVANNAH  
 (suspiciously  
 looking at Seth)  
 You NEVER let me drive the Boss!

SETH  
 Well, I figure since today is a day  
 of firsts....



SOVANNAH  
(grabbing the keys)  
Say no more. I don't want you to  
change your mind.

They hop in the front seats, Sovannah in the driver's seat  
and Seth in the passenger seat.

INT. FORD EXPEDITION - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

SOVANNAH  
Now maybe I can finally find out what  
the big deal is about this car.

SETH  
(playful)  
It's not a car you know, it's an SUV.  
Or truck. I would accept that. But  
definitely not a car.

SOVANNAH  
Whatever. Who names their vehicles  
anyways? The BOSS! You're such a  
dork.

Seth reaches over and tickles her as she is starting the  
engine. After they settle down, she drives.

Seth introspectively studies the people and buildings as  
they pass by.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
Are you alright? You seem awfully  
quiet over there. What are you  
daydreaming about now?

SETH  
Just people-watching. Wondering where  
everyone is going. What they are  
doing.

SOVANNAH  
The lady said the delivery truck  
should be there with the big stuff  
around 7:30 tonight. I know it's  
late, I didn't want to wait until  
tomorrow and we don't have to work,  
so we can stay up all night setting  
it up! Plus that gives us over an  
hour to get some food. Still want  
Chinese?

SETH

Actually, that sounds great. I could go for some General Tso's Chicken!

SOVANNAH

Cashew chicken for me! And some bird drop soup! And Crab Rangoon!

Seth laughs hysterically.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

What?

SETH

It's egg drop soup!

SOVANNAH

What did I say?

SETH

You said BIRD drop soup!  
(laughing still)  
Who's the dork now?

SOVANNAH

(laughs)  
Great, I'll never live that one down.

They turn off the main road next to a park.

The sign reads "Deer Park" and there is a silhouette of a deer with large antlers on it. The sun is mostly down, and the park is lit with bright lights lining the walkways. We see a young girl jogging with her dog, and various people playing tennis and basketball as they pass the courts.

At the end of the park sits an apartment complex. They enter.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

It's going to be so nice living next to a park!

Seth nods in agreement.

We see "Sonho Suites" on the apartment complex sign. The main entrance is lined by trees and old fashioned lanterns on poles. Each building is half stone and half wood siding, lit on the outside with many small lights and surrounded by elaborate landscaping and sidewalk designs. On the top of the buildings we see rows of chimneys.

SETH

The fireplace will be nice this winter, too.

SOVANNAH

I know. I can't wait! We can put the big round chair in front of it!

Sovannah parks in front of one of the buildings near the end.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

I told you I could drive this big thing without hitting anything.

SETH

Good job. I'm very impressed.

SOVANNAH

Anyways, sorry I went on a shopping spree back there. I could tell by the look on your face it was too much. So thanks for letting me go a little overboard and not freaking out on me.

SETH

(cracking a smile)

No worries, you just won't get any Christmas presents this year.

Sovannah playfully sticks her tongue out at him as they exit the truck.

INT. APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

They enter a large unfurnished apartment that is very open with white pillars separating the dining area from the living area. Across the room are large glass doors leading to a cozy wooden deck off the back of the living room. Beyond is a line of trees.

Sovannah sets her purse on the counter and does a little twirl onto the hardwood floor of the dining room. She bounces and twirls and dances some more while giggling like a little girl.

Takes a few elegant steps onto the makeshift dance floor. He holds out his hand like a gentleman.

SETH

May I have this dance, madam?

SOVANNAH

But of course, good sir.

Sovannah steps towards him and takes his hand. He pulls her close and places his hand on her waist. He looks into her eyes and begins to dance.

SETH

I must say, 'tis lovely out this evening, wouldn't you say?

SOVANNAH

A fine day indeed. May I ask what manner of business brings you here on this evening?

SETH

I come not on business matters madam, but pleasure. I am a superbly wealthy but lonely business man who seeks the companionship of a beautiful young lass. You see, my fortune is without heir and my heart longs to find a suitable lady to spend my days with.

SOVANNAH

I may be able to help you on this most endearing mission sir. What are your requirements for this young lady?

SETH

(grinning)

This exceptional lass must have such beauty that she glows before my very eyes. Her hair must glisten with the color of rich walnut or mahogany as yours does, and her skin, much like your own, must be as soft as silk sheets. Also, she must be the perfect height compared to me so that when dancing, we form the perfect match, much like you and I right now.

SOVANNAH

Hmmmm, I must say, this girl you have described sounds too near to perfection to be real, yet I fear you limit her by comparing her to myself.

SETH

I assure you, she is very real.

SOVANNAH

And how will you know when you have found this specimen of a lady?

SETH

I believe that when our hands meet,  
she will be filled with the same  
feelings that I have, and will be  
overcome by an urge to kiss me. That  
kiss shall end my search and I will  
know I have found my home.

Sovannah stops dancing and pulls Seth's face closer. She slowly kisses him and holds it for a long time.

SOVANNAH

Welcome home.

SETH

(exiting character)

Just so you know, you really are so  
close to perfect that I wonder  
sometimes if you are real.

Sovannah smiles and kisses him again.

SOVANNAH

Awww, thanks. Now let's order some  
food, I'm starving.

Sovannah walks to the counter and gets her phone from her purse.

SOVANNAH

Still want General Tso's Chicken?

SETH

Yeah, and don't forget the Crab  
Rangoon.

Sovannah dials while Seth walks to the glass doors that overlook the deck. He sees flashes in his mind of dinners and breakfasts and evenings with her out there.

SOVANNAH

Hey, could you start bringing in the  
stuff from the car?

EXT. APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Seth takes in the evening sounds and sights for a minute. He pulls out as much as he can carry from the truck and as he opens the door to the apartment, Sovannah meets him with an obvious look of disgust on her face.

INT. APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING [CONTINUOUS]

SETH

What's wrong?

SOVANNAH

Guess who just called and left a message while I was ordering the food? The furniture people. Their stinkin' truck broke down and they can't deliver the rest of our stuff until the morning! We have nothing for tonight!

SETH

It will be fine!

SOVANNAH

How will it be fine? Where will we sleep? We have no bed!

Seth walks in and drops the pile of blankets and pillows onto the living room floor.

SETH

At least we have these. I guess we will just have to have a picnic and a sleepover on the floor.

Sovannah isn't convinced.

SETH (cont'd)

Come on, it will be fun. I'll get a fire going in the fireplace.

SOVANNAH

(sheepishly with a  
pouty face)

Okay.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

A quick shot of the outside shows smoke wafting out of the fireplace. Inside, the fire is blazing. The rug is in front of it. A wine crate they bought is a make-shift table for the food. Around the table on the floor is a cozy setting of pillows and blankets. They sit around the table eating Chinese food.

SOVANNAH  
(mouth full of food,  
barely  
distinguishable)  
This is so delicious!

SETH  
(laughing)  
I can see that.

Seth looks around the empty room, seeming hunting for something.

SOVANNAH  
What are you looking for?

SETH  
There was this cute girl here  
earlier. We shared a dance. Quite the  
lady. I was wondering if she was  
still here.

SOVANNAH  
(swallowing and  
laughing)  
Sorry, but that lady disappears when  
there is Cashew Chicken around!

Seth's POV: SLOW MONTAGE of Sovannah laughing and being adorable the rest of dinner.

Quick cuts: Outdoor shots of the apartment at night, then back inside where the two of them have just finished up dinner.

END SLOW MONTAGE

Sovannah is picking up the trash and filling a bag.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
Remember when we first met? And you  
told me about the stars?

SETH  
Like it was yesterday.

Sovanahh takes the bag into the kitchen.

SOVANNAH  
It's amazing how fast time goes.

SETH

(nods)

Tell me about it. It goes by before  
you know it. In the blink of an eye.

SOVANNAH (O.S.)

(from the kitchen)

They forgot our fortune cookies!

Seth sees a very small paper bag partially hidden by a  
blanket and grabs it to peer inside.

SETH

No they didn't. I found them.

He turns the bag upside down and two fortune cookies fall  
into his hand, along with the receipt. He inspects it and  
reads the date.

SETH (cont'd)

(quietly to himself)

Two more years?

SOVANNAH

(walking over)

What are you mumbling about?

SETH

(wadding up the  
receipt)

Oh, nothing.

(holding out the two  
cookies)

Here, you pick, I will leave my fate  
in your hands.

Sovannah picks a cookie and opens it.

SOVANNAH

"Whether you think you can, or think  
you can't, you are correct."

SETH

I've always loved that quote. Self-  
fulfilling prophecy sort of thing.

(playfully)

And no, it doesn't mean you are  
always right.

SOVANNAH

(smacks his arm)

Neither are you Mr. Smarty Pants!



SETH

Ok, my turn.

Seth opens his cookie, reads it to himself.

SOVANNAH

So? What does it say?

SETH

"Turning dreams into reality requires only waking."

SOVANNAH

Interesting. I think I could go for a dream right now. I need a nap.

Seth lays on his back, head on a pillow, looking up at the ceiling, still thinking about the words, as Savannah curls up next to him.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

I wish we could hold on to this night forever.

SETH

(squeezing her hand)

Me too.

Seth rubs her fingers, feeling the engagement ring.

SOVANNAH

And in just a few short months we will be married, I can't believe how fast it's all going.

SETH

Me neither.

Savannah closes her eyes and snuggles closer to him.

SOVANNAH

Aren't you tired?

SETH

(still looking at the ceiling)

Yeah, but I'm not ready for this night to end. And I know as soon as I fall asleep it will be gone.

SOVANNAH

(eyes still closed)

Yeah, but we can do this every night.

SETH

I hope so.

FROM ABOVE - CLOSE ON BOTH - Savannah dozes off with her head on Seth's chest. Seth gives her a kiss on the forehead and then looks back at the ceiling. SLOW PULL AWAY as Seth fights the weight of his eyelids.

INT. HOSPITAL - SURGICAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

ON SCREEN

11:32 P.M.

SEPT. 6TH, 2002

LIBERUM MEDICAL CENTER

BLOOMINGTON, IN

Charlie looks at the clock on the wall. An hour has passed mostly quietly. He scans the room to see the different levels of anxiety among the group. He remembers the box of the boy's belongings under the chair against the wall and retrieves it. He carries it to Gail and sets it next to her.

CHARLIE

I had forgotten until now, but this box is for you. It contains everything they found in your son's car. The police dropped it off about an hour ago. I was keeping an eye on it until you arrived.

GAIL

Thanks, Charlie. You've been real good to my boy. I appreciate it.

Charlie sits next to her.

CHARLIE

You know, he's really lucky to have a family that cares for him so much.

GAIL

(wiping a tear)

I just can't wait until he wakes up so I can tell him I love him again.

CHARLIE

I'm sure he knows. And you being here for him when he wakes up will make him feel a lot better.

Michelle scoots over a seat to join in the conversation.

MICHELLE

Seth is the only one of us that moved away from home, but we've always been a close family. A few hours apart isn't going to change that. We all dropped whatever we were doing to head here. I can't imagine someone going through this all alone.

Michelle's words sting Charlie when he hears them. His eyes slam shut. Michelle and Gail notice.

CHARLIE

(opens his eyes and  
takes a deep breath)

I'm sorry. I just...

MICHELLE

Are you alright? Was it something I said? I'm sorry if...

CHARLIE

Oh no, don't worry about it. I... I have my own problems I guess. And you all don't need me adding anything else negative to this night.

GAIL

(motherly)

It's okay Charlie. We are friends now, and you can tell us whatever you need to.

CHARLIE

(staring at the  
floor)

It was about seven months ago. My boy was in a wreck too. His name was Michael and he would have been... twenty-two this fall.

MICHELLE

Would have been?

CHARLIE

They brought him to this very same hospital.

MICHELLE

I'm so sorry, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Me too. I've told him a hundred times since that night. I don't know if he can hear me, but if so, I hope he can forgive me. I can't seem to forgive myself.

MICHELLE

I don't understand.

Brian overhears most of this, and scoots over to join.

CHARLIE

You see, I decided to work late that night. I missed his call asking for a ride home. His mom was out of town visiting family. So he drove himself, even though he had a few beers. By the time I got the news and rushed over here, he was already gone.

(wipes his eyes)

It was here in the hospital that I first heard the message he left on my phone. The words hurt each time I listen, but I suffer through it just to hear his voice again.

Michelle starts crying and holds Charlie's arm.

MICHELLE

Charlie, I'm so sorry.

CHARLIE

If I could do one day over again in my life, that would be the day I would choose. Even if I couldn't change what happened, I just wish I could have been there to say goodbye to him. He deserved that at least.

Charlie looks at the floor as a tear falls between his legs.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

The last thing he said to me was "I'll see ya when I see ya". That was one of his little catchphrases. He used to say that every time he left the house.

Michelle and Gail audibly sob, and Arthur comes to comfort Gail as Brian does the same.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

(looking up)

Oh, man. I'm sorry. I knew I shouldn't have said anything. You guys don't need this story on a night like tonight.

MICHELLE

It's fine. I... I was just trying to think of the last thing Seth said to me, and I can't remember.

Brian pulls a tissue from a box on a table and hands it to Michelle.

BRIAN

Don't worry about it. You can talk to him and ask him really soon.

MICHELLE

(wipes her eyes and  
smears her mascara)

I know. I just keep thinking about a conversation we had a few weeks ago over the phone. I asked him if he had a girlfriend in college yet. He didn't, but he said he knew what he was looking for. He would describe this perfect girl to me. "The girl of his dreams." What if he never gets to meet her? What if...

Brian hands her another tissue.

BRIAN

You can't think like that. Don't do that to yourself. Just keep being positive.

MICHELLE

I'm real sorry about Michael, Charlie. I'm sure he knows you care about him.

She motions to her son across the room.

MICHELLE (cont'd)

You know, my son Marcus' middle name is also Michael.

CHARLIE

Good looking young boy.

MICHELLE

He's named after his uncle Seth,  
who's middle name is also Michael.

GAIL

You mentioned a mom. How is she  
handling the loss?

CHARLIE

I... Probably better than me. We  
separated a couple of months ago.

GAIL

Oh, sorry-

CHARLIE

No... Alison is...was a great mom. We  
tried to make it work after losing  
Michael, but...

GAIL

Charlie, if being here with us all,  
dealing with Seth's accident, is too  
much for you, I understand if you  
want to go home. You have done a lot,  
and we are grateful, but if you need  
to take off, we totally understand.  
Don't feel like you need to suffer  
for us.

CHARLIE

(holding his cell  
phone tight)

It's okay, I...

The door quickly opens, and the doctor walks in looking at  
an open folder. The family rises and walks to him. He snaps  
the folder shut as he stops in front of them.

GAIL

Dr. Brigham, tell me you have good  
news about my boy.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM

Well, the surgery is complete, and we  
had no serious complications. We have  
no reason to believe at this time  
that he won't make a full recovery.

They all let out sighs of relief.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM (cont'd)  
However, and I can't stress this  
enough, I can't promise anything just  
yet. We've seen both good and bad  
outcomes from injuries like the one  
he sustained tonight, and as of now,  
he is currently sedated in a  
medically induced coma.

MICHELLE  
When can we talk to him?

DOCTOR BRIGHAM  
Not yet I'm afraid. We will likely  
keep him unconscious for twenty-four  
to forty-eight hours while we monitor  
his vitals and keep a close eye on  
his brain activity. After that, we  
will dial back the medicine and  
hopefully his body will begin to  
support itself and gain consciousness  
within the first few hours.

RYAN  
Hopefully?

DOCTOR BRIGHAM  
Like I said, there are no guarantees.  
Every patient is different. Every  
injury is different. Every brain is  
affected differently. We've called  
for the head neurologist in the area,  
and he should be here in the morning  
to do a full assessment of his brain  
scans and responses. As of this time,  
we've done all we can do here and we  
are confident. But from this point  
forward, it will be up to his body to  
recover... and fate, if you will. All  
you can do is wait at this point.

RYAN  
Can we see him at least? I can't take  
any more waiting in this room.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM  
Absolutely. Having family there would  
be good for him too.

Once again, Charlie feels the sting in his words.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM (cont'd)  
If you would all like to follow me,  
I'll take you to the recovery room.

GAIL

(turning to Charlie)  
Charlie, forget what I said earlier.  
I'd like it if you stayed. And Seth  
will want to see you again when he  
wakes up.

Charlie simply nods.

MICHELLE

(to Gail)  
Mom, you and dad go ahead.  
(turning to the back  
of the room)  
Kids, get over here. We are going to  
see your uncle now. No horsing  
around. Just be quiet and follow us.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

The doctor leads them to a door requiring a code to enter.  
After a few more turns, the doctor stops at another entrance  
and waits for them to all get near.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM

On the other side of this door is a  
washing station. You will be required  
to thoroughly wash your hands, put on  
a pair of gloves, and wear a paper  
gown over your clothes before  
proceeding through the next door. We  
have some burn patients in this ward  
as well and they are very susceptible  
to bacteria and contaminants.

(looking at the pop  
can in Marcus'  
hand)

And you will not be allowed to take  
any food or beverages past this  
point, I'm sorry.

INT. HOSPITAL - WASH STATION - NIGHT

QUICK MONTAGE of the family washing hands and helping tie  
the backs of their gowns.



INT. HOSPITAL - INTENSIVE CARE WARD - NIGHT

Doctor Brigham leads them to a room nearby. A curtain is partially drawn inside and only Seth's feet can be seen through the glass doors. When he nears the automatic sliding doors, they open, and the family walks inside.

INT. HOSPITAL - SETH'S ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

The family forms a semi-circle around Seth.

CLOSE on Seth: His head is shaved and his face is covered in bandages and abrasions. Tubes are in his nostrils and mouth. The room is silent and the machine beeps and sounds seem loud.

Breaking the silence, Gail cries aloud, triggering many others as well. The doctor checks the machines.

Gail and Arthur step close to Seth's head. Gail holds Arthur tight.

GAIL  
(through tears and  
sobs)  
Our poor boy...

Michelle steps closer and holds Seth's hand. Gail kisses him on the forehead. Arthur pats his head gently. Charlie and the children hover near the corner of the room, not getting too close.

MICHELLE  
(looking over at  
Charlie)  
Come on over Charlie. You two have  
already met, and he would be glad to  
know you are here too.

CHARLIE  
He looks so different with his head  
shaved and all those things attached  
to him.

MICHELLE rubs Seth's hand and is trying to not cry.

MICHELLE  
We're all here for you buddy.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM  
(speaking directly  
to Gail and Arthur)

I... I know this isn't something you want to think about right now, but I'm required to ask. Do you know what your son's wishes are about being kept alive... artificially?

GAIL  
What? Artificially?

DOCTOR BRIGHAM  
Yes... I'm sorry, but although unlikely, there is a very real possibility that when we ease him off the anesthetic, his body might fail to... take control again. Basically, if his body is unable to sustain life on its own, we would use the machines to simulate breathing and pump his heart. In that scenario, he would be alive in the technical sense, but unable to sustain life without the machines. Some people would prefer not to live this way, and I just need to know if you've ever spoken to him about it.

GAIL  
No. He's twenty-two. Of course not.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM  
Okay, it's not something that needs to be decided right away, and I hope it doesn't come to that, but I have to make you aware that there is still a possibility that a decision may need to be made in that regard, and obviously since he would be unable to make that decision, it would fall on you as the parents.

Gail simply walks away and Michelle squeezes Seth's hand even harder. Arthur nods to let the doctor know it is understood.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM (cont'd)  
I'm sorry to make you all think about the worst case scenario. I don't like it any more than you. Now do any of you have any questions for me?

No one speaks.

DOCTOR BRIGHAM (cont'd)

Okay then. There are no specific visitor hours in this ward. It is open 24 hours so feel free to stay by his side as long as you like. I'm leaving for now but I'll be back tomorrow. We should know more when the neurologist gets here in the morning.

The doctor leaves the room. Arthur turns to Seth.

ARTHUR

Hang in there bud. You hear me? Hang in there for mom.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

FROM ABOVE: Seth is laying on the rug, just as before when his hand was bleeding. He knows before opening his eyes that he is back on the beach, in the beach house. He opens his eyes without emotion, defeat in his eyes.

He sits up in the bathroom and leans against the vanity. The rug is bright and colorful, just as it was hanging in the store. The colors stand out against the rest of the room.

Seth reaches out for the rug and notices the wound on his hand is healed. There is a scar in its place.

CLOSE on the scar. Seth rubs his fingers along the raised skin.

He is wearing the same clothes as the last time he was with Sovannah. On the rug next to him he sees a small pieces of paper and picks it up. It reads "Turning one's dreams into reality requires only waking." It is the fortune cookie he read to Sovannah on the floor of the apartment, older, faded.

CLOSE on Seth's face as he closes his eyes tight for several seconds. He opens them, looks around, closes them tight again, hoping for a change.

SETH

(almost a whisper)

Why?

(louder)

Why!

(screaming and raising his fists)

WHY!!!

He screams and cries and pounds his fists into the rug over and over. Sobbing, he stops when he notices a wedding ring on his finger. He stares at it for a moment, then stands and shoves the fortune in his pocket.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

He angrily barrels out of the house onto the porch. He looks up at the stars about to explode.

SETH  
What is this place?!?!

He paces back and forth angrily and kicks a spindle from the railing.

SETH (cont'd)  
Hello?!!

Seth picks up a large piece of wood and bangs it on the railing over and over, and then throws it with all his might through what is left of the window. Glass crashes everywhere and the board goes flying inside. He puts his face in his hands sobbing and rests his elbows on the railing.

After several seconds, Seth raises his head and stares out at the water. He wipes his eyes and walks out onto the sand. He raises his hand and inspects the ring on his finger in the moonlight. With his thumb he spins it. He pulls the fortune from his pocket and holds it close to his face. In the moonlight he can see the last two words - "simply waking." He stares at the words.

SETH (cont'd)  
How can I wake? How?!? Is this even a dream?

Seth walks to the water's edge. The memory of drowning flashes momentarily in his head.

SETH (cont'd)  
Am I dead?

He looks left and right along the beach, then turns towards the beach house.

SETH (cont'd)  
Is this hell?

He looks down at his hands and tears form in his eyes - he spins the ring again on his finger.

SETH (cont'd)  
I have to see her again. And tell her  
what is happening to me.

Seth makes a fist and walks back up the beach with conviction towards the beach house. He goes back inside.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Seth is determined to find something to set off another glimpse. He rushes into the living room to the pile of boxes and opens one. It is empty. He is confused. One after another they are empty. He rushes to one of the bedrooms and opens the drawers in a dresser. They are filled with neatly folded, colorful clothing.

SETH  
Who did this? Who was here?

He opens the closet. It is the same. He rifles through the clothing.

SETH (cont'd)  
Come on. Something. Anything!

He rushes back to the kitchen. He opens several cabinets and all the dishes are neatly arranged inside them. The hinges appear shiny and new. He is confused, but determined to set off another glimpse. He quickly opens all the drawers, looking for anything to catch his eye. Nothing does. He hangs his head in despair and walks outside.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - DECK - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Seth stands on the deck and looks up at the stars.

SETH  
What now?

He looks at the ring again and begins to cry. He sits on the steps and leans his head against the post. After a few moments he notices a spot on the side of the beach house next to the door. There are outlines of numbers that used to hang there, and the wood beneath has weathered differently. He can make out the numbers "9064" and tiny nail holes where they were held on.

He looks out over the water and spins the ring on his finger.

SETH (cont'd)  
Maybe this is hell.

He closes his tear-filled eyes after several seconds.

EXT. CAR - DRIVING DOWN A SUNNY ROAD - DAY

WIDE shot from above of a car on sunny country road.

INT. CAR - DAY

Seth's head is resting against the passenger window. The sun flashes on his face through the trees. His eyes are shut and he is napping. A tear is trickling down his face. A dip in the road stirs him from his slumber.

Seth's POV: The world is blurry, fading in as he rubs his eyes, along with the music that is playing in the car. ("Wake Me Up" by Avicii). We see the grass and the trees fly by outside the window. A hand reaches for the radio knob and turns down the music.

SOVANNAH

How was the nap?

SETH

(smiling through  
sleepy eyes)

Hard to wake from.

(rubbing his eyes)

Feels like I've been asleep for  
years. How long was I out?

SOVANNAH

About two hours, I think. Ever since  
the last stop, when I took over  
driving.

Seth looks around, and in the backseat he sees some bags and suitcases, and a few magazines. He flips over a magazine to inspect the cover. "July 2017". He uses his fingers to count to five. His eyes grow large.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

We are getting closer, should be  
there in less than an hour. I'm not  
sure how far it is once we get off  
the main road. I still can't believe  
we are doing this, can you? I've  
never done anything crazy. I'm not  
spontaneous!

Seth just smiles, not knowing what she's talking about, but loving her enthusiasm.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

These last four months have been such an emotional roller coaster.

SETH

I know what you mean.

Sovannah reaches over and squeezes Seth's hand. Her diamond ring glistens in the sunlight. The wedding band is attached.

SOVANNAH

Thanks for being so strong during my father's funeral. I'm not sure I could have made it through that day without you.

SETH

(squeezing her hand  
back)

Of course.

SOVANNAH

I know the two of you weren't close, but I always thought there was a chance you could be someday.

SETH

I'm sorry.

SOVANNAH

It's okay, really. And I'm so glad you talked me into this. I can't wait to see the place. I've never been the adventurous type. I mean, who does this sort of thing anyways?

SETH

I'm not sure. I guess we do.

SOVANNAH

I think I'll miss everything. But I'm excited at the same time, you know? I mean, just think, a few months ago we were living in a small apartment with bills and worries and complaining about our jobs. It was simple. It was safe. That's how I liked it. And look at us now. All that is gone! Would you ever have guessed that today we would be here? I've never quit a job before!

SETH

No, it is pretty crazy I gue...

SOVANNAH

(cutting him off)

Oh, I just remembered! Sorry, but the delivery guys called while you were asleep. They just delivered the rest of the boxes, so I guess our stuff beat us there. They asked if they could just pile them outside the door on the patio and I said yes, since we would be there soon and it's so remote. Otherwise we would have to wait until Monday for them to come back. I didn't want that to happen again. Remember our first night at the apartment?

SETH

Like it was yesterday... one of the best days I can remember. And I can remember every detail.

SOVANNAH

Every detail? Like what?

SETH

Well, everything. I remember driving past the park. Opening the door for the first time. How empty everything looked. Dancing in our future dining room. Ordering Chinese. I even remember what you ordered. Cashew Chicken.

SOVANNAH

I suppose you even remember what was in your fortune cookie.

Seth just smiles at her in a way that said he does.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

You do? Seriously? No way!

He turns to look out the window. The world goes silent.

SETH

Turning dreams into reality... requires simply waking.

SOVANNAH

Wow, how do you do that?

SETH

I don't know. I guess... to me it still feels like it just happened.

(MORE)



SETH (cont'd)

It feels so... close. My brain is just weird like that I guess. I have no idea what it's doing half the time.

SOVANNAH

Well, I like your weirdness. It's fun, just like this adventure, which I know I wouldn't be on if it weren't for you. I would never have left on a whim like that. I would have just put dad's letter away after the first time I read it and went back to my boring life. I wouldn't have had the courage to leave my job, move out of the apartment, and head ten hours away to some place I can barely remember. But you, without a care in the world, you say 'Let's Go!'... And we went. And now here we are, almost there.

SETH

As long as I'm with you, I don't care where we go.

SOVANNAH

Thanks.

SETH

By the way, did you pack that letter? I wouldn't mind seeing it again.

SOVANNAH

Yeah, I think it's in the glove compartment. I put it with the key and our other papers I think.

Seth opens the glove compartment and pulls out the letter.

SETH (V.O.)

To my dearest Savannah.

EXT. CAR - DRIVING DOWN A SUNNY ROAD - DAY

The car en route on sunny country road.

SETH (V.O.)

If you are reading this letter, it means my time here in this crazy world has finally expired. It also means.....

SOVANNAH'S FATHER (V.O.)

...That I have failed in my goal of reconnecting with you. I know I've been out of touch, but if I beat this sickness I promise to tell you these things in person. If not, then I am very sorry you have to hear from me in a letter. I know I haven't always been the greatest father, but I can only hope after I am gone that I might be able to make amends for it in some way. I spent my life following a career and money. It cost me the dreams I had as a young man, and also my family, and I would change it all if I could. I should have been there for your mother before she passed. I should have been there as you chased your own dreams. I have instructed my lawyer to cash in my meager investments and give the money to you upon my death. I know this can't make up for all of our lost time, but hopefully it will afford you the freedom you need to live the life I wish I could go back and live. Here is my advice, follow your dreams at all costs. Let your heart lead you places. Live a better life than I did. My final gift to you is the key below and the life that it may bring. It belongs to the cottage where I met your mother so long ago. Where you were born, before we left for a richer life in a different place. The land has been in our family for many years. I hope you use it to follow your passions and to find love along the way. And if you do find it, Sovannah, hold on to it with everything you have, like I failed to do. I'm sorry and I Love you, Dad

INT. CAR - DAY

Seth folds the letter and places it back in the glove compartment.

SOVANNAH

I haven't seen the place since I was a little girl. I barely remember it. I didn't even know he still owned it.

The car turns off the highway onto a smaller road.

SETH

It sounds like it was a wonderful place. So what's the plan once we get there?

SOVANNAH

Well, I'm not sure yet. I figured we could just chill for awhile, you know? A few months at least, enjoy the summer. I mean I know you said it would be dumb to take a few years off of work and just live off the money until it ran out, and I agree. We should do better things with it. But we don't have to decide right away. I mean, we won't really have many bills, so we won't need that much income to sustain us. And I thought you had some really good ideas the other day.

SETH

I try my best.

SOVANNAH

You were right when you said if we were going to do this then we had to do it right. We had to do what the letter said. We had to take the leap fully. Follow our passions. I can't wait to get back into painting again. I don't know why I ever stopped. I guess life got in the way. But now I will finally be able to. And I think it's cool that you want to start writing a book. You have always talked about it. I think you will do great.

Seth stares at the trees going by, lost in her story.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

And eventually, maybe I will start a yoga class in town, like you said.

SETH

Sovannah the yoga instructor. I like the sound of that.

The slows as they approach a narrow entryway into the trees.

SOVANNAH

I think this is it.

A one-lane, unpaved, overgrown narrow drive meanders off into the trees, bending out of sight. They pull off the main road and pass in between two stone monuments lining the lane, weathered and covered in vines.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

Yep, there are the lions. This is it.

SETH

Those lions are pretty cool, but a bit creepy. I guess whoever put them in wanted their privacy.

The car winds through the trees and comes to a stop where the road ends in a circular courtyard. They park and get out.

EXT. CIRCULAR COURTYARD - DAY

SOVANNAH

We made it!

Seth looks up at the sun and closes his eyes. He hears the ocean in the distance and gets a curious look in his eyes. He looks across the courtyard to a gap in the stone wall, guarded by lions, smaller this time, almost smiling, welcoming.

SETH

You sure we are in the right place?

SOVANNAH

Yes. I remember walking along the top of this stone wall as a little girl.

She walks over to one of the stone lions.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)

And I remember the lions. Dad told me they guarded the way to our castle, and would come to life if anyone tried to walk down these steps who wasn't welcome.

SETH

Castle, huh?

## SOVANNAH

It's really just an old cottage on the beach, but to me it was a grand castle. It's all coming back to me now. I remember hopping from stone to stone near the bottom, and jumping off the last one onto the sand. I remember running along the beach dodging the waves that rushed up to grab my feet. We are definitely where we are supposed to be.... that, and  
     (pointing to below  
     one of the lions)  
 the address is right there.

Seth walks over and freezes in his tracks when he sees the numbers engraved on the stone below the lion. "9064". His eyes widen in disbelief.

Sovannah hops onto the wall just as she did as a child. She looks down the pathway to where the trees end and the sand begins.

## SOVANNAH (cont'd)

It's so beautiful, I can't believe we are here!

Seth is still trying to process things when Sovannah hops down and runs over to him and grabs his arm. She starts dragging him to the walkway.

## SOVANNAH (cont'd)

Come see for yourself! Isn't it incredible? We can almost see the beach from here. And right there is the back of the cottage. Come on, let's go!

Sovannah takes off down the steps, hopping like a schoolgirl.

Seth descends very slowly revealing the beach house on the right, and the waves on the left. The small wooden porch is worn and aged, but completely intact. Boxes are piled. The windows are no longer broken and jagged. The door hangs perfectly on its hinges. The outside is a perfect pastel yellow. The whole place glistens in the bright sun. At the bottom, Seth steps out of his sandals and lets his feet hit the sand. He reaches down and picks up a handful and lets it fall between his fingers.

Sovannah's footprints lead down to the water. We hear her playful voice mumbling excitedly from afar.

We look out on the water and a quick flash of the night Seth went under hits our eyes.

Sovannah skipping along the water looks back to Seth.

SOVANNAH (cont'd)  
Come on, what are you waiting for?  
This is amazing!

Seth stands still. A tear dribbles down his cheek. He closes his eyes and lifts his head to the sun.

Seth's POV: We see his eyes blink a few times and then stay closed. We hear the ocean and Sovannah.

SETH (V.O.)  
Please let this be the end. I can't  
take it again. Please don't take her  
away from me.

The sounds of the ocean and Sovannah slowly fade out and Seth's heartbeat fades in.

SETH (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Please...

CLOSE on teardrop falling in slow motion, heading for the sand.

INT. HOSPITAL - SETH'S ROOM - LATE MORNING

ON SCREEN

10:37 A.M.

SEPT. 7TH, 2002

LIBERUM MEDICAL CENTER

BLOOMINGTON, IN

Seth's family and Charlie are in various places in the room, waiting for the neurologist to arrive, when the door opens.

NURSE PINEIDA  
The neurologist has arrived and will be in shortly to run some tests. He will need some room in here too, so I need to ask that everyone except the parents leave the ward and head back to the waiting area until he is finished.

(MORE)

NURSE PINEIDA (cont'd)  
 If you are interested, the lunch bar  
 in the cafeteria on the first floor  
 is open.

RYAN  
 Lunch sounds good to me. Who's in?

CHARLIE  
 I'm in. I haven't eaten since...  
 actually I can't remember.

MICHELLE  
 Okay, kids, let's go get something to  
 eat and leave mom and dad alone for  
 awhile.  
 (to Gail)  
 You and dad going to be okay?

GAIL  
 Yeah, thanks. Bring me back a water,  
 okay?

MICHELLE  
 Sure, dad you want anything?

Arthur just shakes his head.

MICHELLE (cont'd)  
 Well, if you think of anything, call  
 my cell or text me and I'll bring it  
 back. And don't worry, I'm sure the  
 tests will turn out fine.  
 (to the nurse)  
 How long should we be gone?

NURSE PINEIDA  
 It depends on what tests he chooses  
 to run, but to be safe, I'd say a  
 couple of hours. You can always call  
 the ward to see if he's done.

MICHELLE  
 (to Gail)  
 Just get a hold of me when he's done,  
 okay? I'll keep my phone by my side.  
 Just stay positive.

Gail tears up and only nods.

MICHELLE (cont'd)  
 Come on, Brian, kids, let's go.

The rest of family walks out.

Some time passes as Gail and Arthur wait. Then the neurologist walks in.

DOCTOR CUSHING

Hello, I'm Doctor Cushing. Sorry it took me so long. I was held up with another patient.

Gail and Arthur offer only smiles and nods.

DOCTOR CUSHING (cont'd)

I believe you have already been told what I'll be doing. I am going to run some tests that will determine the level of brain activity in Seth, and also some tests to examine his responsiveness to sensory perceptions and basic functionality of his major systems. Hopefully, the results will shed some light on his future, and what obstacles he might be facing.

GAIL

Thank you.

MONTAGE OF TESTING

EEG tests by the doctor, and of Gail and Arthur falling asleep in the chairs near the window. The doctor begins packing up his equipment and buttoning Seth's gown as they wake.

END MONTAGE

DOCTOR CUSHING

I have to head down to the lab and have the results processed. Unfortunately, depending on how busy they are down there, it can take awhile. But you can let the family know they can come back if they would like. I'll have the nurses inform you when I'll be back up.

GAIL

Is he going to be okay?

DOCTOR CUSHING

Honestly, I can't say until I see the results of the tests. The data is all stored in this machine, and I have to get the numbers crunched.

(MORE)



DOCTOR CUSHING (cont'd)  
 I've seen things turn out every which way possible, and I don't like to hypothesize without the data. I'm sure you understand.

(reaches his hand  
 out to Arthur)

But I'll come back as soon as I have looked over the results, I promise. I won't keep you waiting any longer than necessary.

Gail and Arthur thank him and Gail reaches for her phone to text the others.

CUT to the rest of the family and Charlie arriving back in the room.

CHARLIE

I was thinking maybe I should just take off. He has his family now, and I don't want to intrude...

GAIL

Don't be silly, Charlie. I want you to be here when he wakes up.

Michelle gives Gail her water and a hug.

MICHELLE

Sorry if it's a bit warm. That took longer than I expected. We ended up just wandering around the hospital and going outside for some fresh air. We found a cute little gift shop too. I'll take you there sometime when you need to get out of this room.

GAIL

How was the food?

MICHELLE

It was okay I guess. There is a nice salad bar that you would like. How long until we know anything?

GAIL

Couple hours maybe, he said.

MICHELLE

Want me to take you guys to get some food while we wait?

GAIL  
(tearing up again)  
No, I don't think I can eat anything  
now.

MICHELLE  
You have to stay positive mom. You  
will drive yourself crazy.

GAIL  
But...

MICHELLE  
No buts! Just do it. Try to have good  
thoughts. I'm sure there will be good  
news when the doctor returns.

CUT to Brian and Charlie talking later. Charlie is showing  
pictures on his phone.

CHARLIE  
Oh yeah. My boy loved mustangs. I was  
always a Pontiac man, but Michael  
wanted a mustang. A silver Shelby  
GT500. He had posters all over his  
room. He used to put models together  
of that car too, always painted them  
silver.

BRIAN  
That's a nice car.

CHARLIE  
I told him to start saving his money,  
because his old man could never  
afford one. But I swear, if I could  
go back, I'd sell everything I own to  
buy him that car.

The door opens and Dr. Cushing steps in, holding a clipboard  
and some folders. He flashes an obviously manufactured  
smile, but the family can see through it. He sits at the  
foot of Seth's bed.

DOCTOR CUSHING  
I hope your wait wasn't too  
unbearable. I tried to rush the lab  
as best as I could.

Everyone just stares.

DOCTOR CUSHING (cont'd)  
I'd like to go over some of the results with you, and answer any questions you might have.

Gail squeezes Arthur's hand tight.

DOCTOR CUSHING (cont'd)  
I performed an Electroencephalography test on your son. You might have heard this referred to more commonly as an EEG. An EEG uses sensors attached to the patient's head to measure the level of electrical activity in the brain. This gives us a reading of the amount of alpha and beta waves present in the hemispheres.

The family stares with a confused look.

DOCTOR CUSHING (cont'd)  
To sum it up, in this case, the EEG showed almost zero electrical current in the readouts. As you can probably ascertain, this is not good news.

Gail immediately starts crying uncontrollably and buries her head in Arthur's shoulder.

MICHELLE  
You said almost. Does that mean there is some activity going on?

DOCTOR CUSHING  
An EEG can often pick up tiny amounts of electrical current present in the room, generated by the life support machines, or even everyday items such as cell phones, lights, etc. However, for this reason, there is a minimum threshold to allow for this in the tests, and the patient must exceed this threshold for us to consider the results positive. Your son's results were far below this threshold.

RYAN  
But he's in a coma. Wouldn't his brain activity be low because of that?

## DOCTOR CUSHING

That's a fair question. An EEG is meant to just give us an idea of where his activity level is. There are certain functions, that even in a coma, continue, such as breathing, and heart contraction. In some cases of severe coma, the results can be so low that more testing is necessary. In this case, after seeing the initial readout, I did a follow up SSEP test. This type of test uses small instruments and diodes paced on the body to provide manual stimulation to the nerve endings, with an emphasis on the median nerve. Electrodes are then placed on the head to measure responsiveness in the brain of these stimuli. During this test, the brain showed no response to either pressure test or electrical stimulation. I'm sorry, but the results were fairly conclusive. They tell us that his brain is no longer capable of responding to messages sent by the body.

## ARTHUR

What does this mean?

Doctor Cushing pauses before answering.

## DOCTOR CUSHING

Essentially, it means that without the help of these machines, his lungs cannot breathe on their own, and his heart will eventually stop beating on its own. Aside from a few inconsequential blips and spikes, the brain seems to have stopped working. There is no sign of consciousness, and little hope that it will ever be achieved again.

## GAIL

(through tears)

I know there is life in my boy. I can feel it.

DOCTOR CUSHING

I am very sorry. Medically, he shows no signs of being able to sustain life, and we feel very strongly that there is likely no chance of him ever regaining consciousness.

MICHELLE

How can you say no chance? There's always a chance, right?

DOCTOR CUSHING

I don't want to crush your spirits, but I also do not want to give you false hope. That can often times be more emotional and devastating to a family. Therefore, I try to just give the facts the best I can. I can say, that even today, science knows a finite amount about the human body and the uncertainties of life and death. And we know even less about the complex inner workings of the human mind. Very little can be said with absolute certainty, so we must go by our wealth of previous experiences and the probabilities. I am saddened and sympathetic for you, but also confident in what the results tell me.

Michelle steps over to Seth and squeezes his hand.

MICHELLE

Please wake up. God, please let him wake up!

Brian rushes over and comforts her.

GAIL

(shaking and crying)  
Doctor, is my boy going to die.

DOCTOR CUSHING

To answer your question the best way I can, I must say that all of my medical knowledge and experience say that... that your son is already dead.

The room falls silent.

DOCTOR CUSHING (cont'd)  
Technically, his body is hanging on with the help of these machines. But clinically, the brain is under the threshold of what we can call living.

Gail places her hand on Seth's chest.

GAIL  
I can feel him in there. He is still with us. His soul is still strong. It still has life. I know he's in there somewhere, struggling, trying to hang on. I just know...

DOCTOR CUSHING  
I'm sorry, Mrs. Ashling, but we have done everything we can to help him. There is nothing more we can do at this point for his body. Some things simply cannot be fixed. I am very sorry.

Ryan storms out of the room and slams the door.

GAIL  
I can't let him go yet. I'm not ready. And he's not ready. He hasn't finished school... or bought a house... or fell in love. It can't be over. Tell me there is something we can do for our boy.

ARTHUR  
Doc... what comes now? What do we do?

DOCTOR CUSHING  
I'm afraid that your only decision left to make is how long to keep him on life support. These machines can keep his heart pumping and his lungs breathing for now. But I need to be honest with you. Since this is optional, most insurance companies don't cover life support once it is determined that the patient can no longer be revived. If you pay for it yourself, it can be crippling for a family. I've seen families empty their savings, wipe out their retirements, sell their homes... trying to keep a loved one alive on machines as long as they can.

(MORE)

DOCTOR CUSHING (cont'd)

But my experience tells me it's never worth it in the end.

(pauses)

I know it's a lot to think about. I just want you to have all the information for when you make the decision.

ARTHUR

Doc... I know you are just trying to help and do your job. I understand. When do we have to decide?

DOCTOR CUSHING

My report has already been submitted. Take the rest of tonight to talk it over among yourselves and take a look at your financial situation. In the morning, you can let us know whether to take the next steps or continue waiting. Also, please discuss the option of organ donation. I know this day has been filled with bad news, but consider the idea that your son could save the lives of several people. Once again, I'm sorry I didn't have better news.

Arthur and Brian shake the Doctor's hand before he leaves the room and silence engulfs them. Eventually, Michelle breaks the silence.

MICHELLE

I can't believe we have to talk about this.

GAIL

It's getting late. Everyone is stressed. Why don't you all get out of here and head back to the hotel and get some rest. Or go get something to eat. You can come back here in the morning. I'll think about things and let you know.

MICHELLE

What do you mean? Leave without you?

GAIL

I'm going to stay here alone with him tonight. I want to be alone and think. He's my boy.

MICHELLE

We're not just going to leave you here all alone.

GAIL

I'll be fine. You can go. I'll have some food sent up to the room.

MICHELLE

What are we going to tell the doctors tomorrow?

GAIL

(looking down)

I don't know... but I'll figure it out. Just let me be alone with him tonight.

MICHELLE

I'll stay with you then.

GAIL

(stronger)

I want to be alone.

MICHELLE

You shouldn't-

ARTHUR

Stop! Your mom has already told you. She knows what she wants. She can handle herself. If she wants to stay alone, she can. That's the end of it.

MICHELLE

(sheepishly)

Okay.

Arthur kisses Gail on the forehead and pats Seth on the leg.

ARTHUR

I love you.

(to everyone else)

Now let's go.

Gail stands and everyone takes turns hugging her on the way out. She walks to the foot of the bed and looks down at Seth. She squeezes his feet under the blankets.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

CLOSE on sand. A tear drop falls in slow motion still.



SETH (V.O.)

Please...

When the teardrop hits the sand it disappears instantly, leaving no indentation or trail of any kind. Seth peels his eyelids open slowly. When he sees his prayer has been unanswered, he falls to his knees in despair, the same spot where he watched Savannah along the beach. Only she is not there. The sun has left. He peeks behind him and sees no sign of the steps leading to where they parked their cars.

Slowly, his emotion turns to anger. His blood boils. His hands form fists and he pounds the sand with them.

SETH

WHY! WHYYYYYYYYY?!?!?!?

(he stands)

What do you want from me? Why are you doing this?!?

(looking up)

Is it you God? What have I done? What have I done to deserve this!

(looking around)

What is this place? Why won't you answer me!? Why take me to Savannah just to take me away again?

He looks at the beach house again. Once again his eyes fall up on the faint outline of the numbers 9064. Rays of moonlight bounce off the broken glass in the windows.

SETH (cont'd)

Why can't I have her? Why do I keep coming back here? WHY?!

Seth runs to the steps of the porch outside the beach house and kicks the railing as hard as he can, breaking off a large chunk of wood. He picks it up and swings it over and over at the railing, door, and house. His hands grip it so tightly they cut and bleed. He shatters more glass and kicks the door. As his foot comes pack down, it is punctured deeply by a shard of broken glass. He lets out a scream and falls on the deck. He crawls to the beach as blood pours from his hands and feet. Defeated, he manages to stand and take a few steps. He looks back at the beach house one more time.

SETH (cont'd)

Never again... you hear me? Are you listening now? I'm done. I'm done with your stupid game. No more. No more pain.

Seth limps slowly away from the beach house, along the edge of the water. In front of him is only endless beach.

SETH (cont'd)  
I'd rather die than lose her again.

He continues to walk away from the beach house.

INT. HOSPITAL - SETH'S ROOM - MORNING

ON SCREEN

7:37 A.M.

SEPT. 8TH, 2002

LIBERUM MEDICAL CENTER

BLOOMINGTON, IN

TIME LAPSE showing the morning sunlight streak through the window blinds, across the room, and reach out like fingers that touch Seth's face. His face has a warm glow.

Gail is resting her head in a chair next to Seth's hospital bed. When the light reaches her, she wakes. She rubs Seth's face in the sunlight with her thumb.

The TV on the wall is on but muted. It's the local news and we see on the screen the words "Missing Local College Student" with a picture of Savannah. Gail doesn't look up at the screen, focused on Seth.

GAIL  
You always did like the sun. What do I tell them Seth? What do you want me to do? I don't know what to do.

She holds his hand and gently rubs his head, and notices a glare from the sun shining off an object across the room. She walks to the box of his belongings that Charlie left under the chair. She sets it on the chair and begins looking at the books and CDs and other items inside. At the bottom of the box she notices something pink. She pulls out a small, soft, pink cardigan, dirty and torn. She rubs it with her fingers with a curious look on her face. She folds it neatly and places it back in the box. She pulls out a journal and flips through it. It is filled with Seth's poetry.

GAIL (cont'd)

Wake me up and ask me why, I stare  
into the sunlit sky, or dream of  
souring on the high, forever in the  
by and by.

Gail flips the page and continues to read.

GAIL (V.O.)

Be this night the night of dreams,  
and all that passed before, fall into  
forgotten seams, on far forsaken  
shores. Though longed for in the  
eager hearts of men, and searched for  
in the distant skies above, eternity  
is not the journey's end, but found  
in every second spent in love. Maybe  
I have walked these very shores  
before, but never as it now had  
seemed, and maybe life and death are  
simply doors, among the many hallways  
I have dreamed.

MONTAGE of her reading and flipping pages for almost an  
hour, as the sunlight continues to fill the room.

END MONTAGE

GAIL

Talk to me son.

She notices a dog-eared page near the back of the journal,  
and flips to the page. She reads the whole thing in silence.  
She squeezes Seth's hand and wipes the tears from her eyes.  
The sunlight now fully shines in the window, engulfing her.  
She spreads her arms the way Seth always did and closes her  
eyes. Tears fall. She lowers her arms and opens her eyes.  
She kisses Seth on the forehead.

GAIL (cont'd)

Thank you, buddy. I Love you.

The door opens and Dr. Cushing walks in.

DOCTOR CUSHING

I hope your night wasn't too  
terrible. I thought I'd let you know  
that the rest of your family has  
arrived. I told them I would step in  
here and let you know while they are  
putting on their gowns.

GAIL

It's okay, you can let them in.

The doctor leaves and comes back with everyone. They all pile into the room.

DOCTOR CUSHING

I'm going to let you all have some time. It's almost nine thirty. I'll be back around ten-thirty and we can go over any decisions you've made and talk about the options. We will need to fill out some paperwork. If you have any questions in the meantime, you can tell one of the nurses to page me.

The doctor leaves and Arthur puts his arm around Gail.

ARTHUR

Were you alright last night?

GAIL

I survived. Mostly I just prayed he would wake up and talk to me. I miss my boy.

ARTHUR

Me too, honey... me too.

GAIL

(to Michelle)

What did you guys have for dinner last night.

MICHELLE

We just found a place.

GAIL

Did you sleep okay last night?

Gail can tell no one cares for small talk. They all want to know her decision. They gather around the bed. A few seconds pass as they all just stare at her.

GAIL (cont'd)

Okay, enough small talk.

(looking down at  
Seth and squeezing  
his hand)

I can see you want an answer.

MICHELLE

It's okay. Whatever you have to say, we support it. We love him and we love you.

GAIL  
I... I've decided...  
(taking a deep  
breath)  
...to let Seth go.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT/DAY [TRANSITION]

Seth continues to walk away from the beach house, into the darkness before him. The moon is bright above him. There are no sounds except his breath and ever-slowing heartbeat. His tears are all gone now, as are his curses and prayers. He lets go and simply walks, emotionless, towards nothing, away from everything.

He stops and looks down at the ring on his finger. He spins it on his finger.

MONTAGE SOVANNAH

We see flashes of all of the scenes with Savannah.

END MONTAGE

Seth pulls the ring from his finger and looks at it for several seconds through tear-filled eyes, before flinging it with all his might into the dark ocean waters.

Just as the ring hits the water, a slight breeze blows the hair on his head. He feels a change in the air and strains to look into the distance.

We stare out to the dark horizon on the water. Suddenly, somewhere off in the distance, we notice the tiniest white light on the horizon.

Seth's eyes widen as it begins to grow.

Seth's POV: It is the sun, peaking above the dark waters. The light is like an immense train emerging from a tunnel, blasting its powerful light at us with infinite force.

He shields his eyes as the sun rises slowly on the water. The sky begins to grow lighter, erasing the moon above. Seth looks up at the moon.

Seth's POV: The moon fades away into the blue sky.

He turns back to the sunrise.

Seth's POV: A glorious yellow reaches out to us. The dark waters turn a brilliant shade of blue, as if the sun is painting colors all around us, bringing this dark beach to life. The sounds of waves crashing on the beach fill the air, as the sun overwhelms us.

Seth closes his eyes in the sunlight, letting it warm his skin and fill him. He spreads his arms wide.

The light grows brighter and brighter.

FADE TO WHITE:

INT. HOSPITAL - SETH'S ROOM - LATE MORNING

ON SCREEN

10:37 A.M.

SEPT. 8TH, 2002

LIBERUM MEDICAL CENTER

BLOOMINGTON, IN

The room is silent, as everyone is still in shock from Gail's words.

ARTHUR

Is this what you really want?

GAIL

Of course not. I want my son to wake up. I want him to go home with us tonight. I want to talk to him about his hopes and dreams.

(rubbing Seth's arm)

But if that's not going to happen, then I think this is the only choice we have.

RYAN

But...

MICHELLE

How can we just let him... die?

GAIL

You heard the doctor. Only the machines are keeping him alive. He wouldn't want this.

MICHELLE  
Why do you think that?

GAIL  
(looking over at the  
journal on the  
chair)  
Because his own words told me.

Gail walks to the journal and brings it back.

GAIL (cont'd)  
I want to read something to all of  
you. Something Seth wrote. It's  
called Sunlight Parted.  
(reading out loud)  
When time has come to steal away the  
day, and barter me with laughter in  
the night...

SETH (V.O.)  
Tis but for love that I would choose  
to stay.  
If not, then let me seek the  
brilliant light.  
If I must live, then let me live in  
chase,  
Of that perfection I have dared in  
dreams,  
For what is life, if filled with  
empty space,  
And what is sunlight parted from its  
beams,  
I shall not want if wanting cannot  
ease,  
I shall not stay if staying has but  
night,  
Tis not a dream if waking brings  
decrease,  
Tis not the day if daytime brings no  
light,  
So I must choose between to worlds  
apart,  
To wake and face what waking brings  
to view,  
Or stay asleep and nevermore depart,  
The place where I have dared to dream  
of you.

GAIL  
(closing the  
journal)  
Seth Ashling, September 5th, 2002.  
(MORE)

GAIL (cont'd)  
(after a moment of  
silence)  
He wrote it the night before his  
accident. You see, he chose for us.

RYAN  
How so?

GAIL  
He only wants to live if he can chase  
his dreams. Didn't you hear?  
(reading again)  
"I shall not stay if staying has but  
night." He'll never see the light  
again. And so he wouldn't want to  
stay.

MICHELLE  
You're right mom... He wouldn't want  
to just lay here, trapped. He would  
want to be free.

GAIL  
(walking towards the  
door)  
I'm going to talk to the doctor now.  
I want you all to say goodbye to  
Seth. And I think he would want to  
help others as best he could. He  
loved life too much. If he can save  
others, I think that's what he would  
want. Another mother out there might  
get to talk to her boy again because  
of him. And knowing that makes this  
easier.

Arthur steps up to Seth first and then they take turns  
saying goodbye, until Charlie was the only one left.

ARTHUR  
Come on Charlie.  
(Charlie walks over)  
I want you to know that we appreciate  
what you did for our boy, and for us.  
I'm sorry he won't get to thank you  
himself.



CHARLIE

(to Seth)

Seth, I know you don't know me at all, and I don't know you, but without knowing it, you've sort of given me a second chance at something, and for that I want to thank you. I'm sorry I wasn't able to get to you sooner, and I'm sorry I'll never get to meet you. For now, all I can say is goodbye. And if you can hear me, maybe I can ask you one small favor. If you bump into my boy Michael, please tell him I said I'm sorry and that I love him.

(patting Seth on the shoulder and turning one last time before stepping away)

Oh, and tell him one more thing... tell him I said - see ya when I see ya.

Charlie retreats back to the hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - LATE MORNING

With a slight sense of relief, as if a weight had been lifted off him, he pulls his phone from his pocket and presses a few buttons. He holds the phone to his ear. He smiles. After a few seconds he looks down at the screen.

CLOSE on phone - Charlie's fingers hovers over DELETE, but he hits save instead. Then pulls up his saved contacts and selects Alison. The phone rings.

CHARLIE

Alison?

(pauses)

Yeah, it's me. Listen, I...can we talk? I know it's been a long time, but-

(pauses)

Good, good. Why don't we have dinner tomorrow at our favorite Italian restaurant?

(pauses)

Great.

He sees Gail and Doctor Cushing coming down the hallway.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Hey, Alison. I'm at the hospital with someone. I've got to run...I'll tell you all about it tomorrow night. Talk to you soon.

He shuts the phone and puts it away. He holds the door for Gail and the doctor as they walk into the room.

INT. HOSPITAL - SETH'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They all step back as the doctors unhook the machines and turn off the devices. When this is complete, the doctor turns to the family.

DOCTOR CUSHING

It shouldn't be long now. I'm very sorry for your loss. We will step outside now to give you some privacy in his final moments.

After a few minutes pass in tears, the beeps on the machine get farther and farther apart. Eventually one long beep signifies the end.

FADE TO WHITE:

FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Seth still stands in the bright light with his eyes closed and his arms spread wide. He opens his eyes and turns to the beach house.

Seth's POV: Everything is pristine and beautiful. There are colors everywhere. This dark beach is now a perfect paradise.

The waves slowly crash on the sand. There are birds in the air. We hears them chirping as they glide on the breeze.

He looks down at his body.

Seth's POV: The leather sandals are back on his feet. The wound is healed. Seth holds his hands up. The wounds here are healed as well.

He is wearing clean khaki shorts and a nice button-down shirt. He feels his back and looks at his finger. The scars are gone.

He takes a deep breath and fills his nostrils with smells of fish and water, birds and trees, life all around him.

Seth's POV: To the left there are trees and grasses he never knew were there. They sway in the ocean breeze.

He turns his eyes to the beach house.

Seth's POV: It looks perfect, clean, and put together. The sun streams into the clear windows.

He smiles.

Seth's POV: For a split second we see someone walk by inside the beach house.

He takes a step towards the beach house.

Seth's POV: Again someone walks by a window.

He stops. He takes a deep breath through his nose and smells wonderful aromas coming from the beach house. He notices a glimmer on his hand in the sunlight and lifts his hand.

Seth's POV: The wedding ring is back on his finger, shiny and new.

He smiles and looks back to the beach house.

                                SETH  
Sovannah....  
                                (pausing and  
                                smiling)  
We're home...

We FLY away slowly as Seth walks towards the beach house, smiling profusely.

  FADE TO WHITE:

                                SETH (cont'd)  
I'm home.

THE END