

BEFRIENDING SWALLOWS

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. DOWNTOWN APARTMENT - NIGHT

A loud party is underway in smoky, extravagant rooms.

Clumsy, drunk bodies attempt to dance with each other. Occasionally trip on the carpet and spill their drinks.

Intoxicated HIGH SCHOOLERS and COLLEGE FRESHMEN.

The darkness hides expressions as deafening MUSIC threatens to burst ear drums. Several coughs interrupt unintelligible conversations.

In a corner of the room, a small group stands isolated from the rest of the party.

PRISCILLA ABBOT (18), a tall, slim brunette tries to hold the attention of the YOUNG MAN in front of her - drink in hand. She's tipsy, yet still elegantly balances on her high heels. Seductively, she moves to the beat of a hip hop SONG.

Next to her, QUINN TULSON (18), a slim, shorter blonde is barely able to hold herself upright against a wall. She is drunk. Very drunk. Barefoot, she clutches one high-heeled shoe in her hands.

PRISCILLA

(to young man)

I mean, tomorrow works for me if you're free.

YOUNG MAN

Tomorrow? I think I have practice tomorrow.

PRISCILLA

When do you get off?

YOUNG MAN

I dunno, like seven? Maybe eight.

PRISCILLA

Oh, cool. Cool.

(points toward Quinn)

We get off at seven. Gym closes at seven.

The young man scans the much less elegant form of the other girl.

YOUNG MAN

She gonna make it to gym tomorrow?

Priscilla takes a quick look at her friend. Quinn may slide all the way to the floor at any moment. Or vomit.

PRISCILLA

Yeah. She's fine. She doesn't usually drink.

Quinn gathers a whiff of strength to ask for help.

QUINN

Pri... Let's go.

PRISCILLA

Yeah. In a minute.

YOUNG MAN

You're leaving?

PRISCILLA

She's staying over at my place tonight. So... I have to take her with me.

YOUNG MAN

Oh... I was ho--

QUINN

--Pri... I want to go. I'm s-sorry. I don't feel well.

Desperate, Quinn tries to put on the sole shoe in her hands. She fails. The wall is more of a gelatin sheet than a firm support. Her body punishes her party etiquette with feeble coordination and foggy vision.

YOUNG MAN

I was hoping you could stay a little longer. Maybe hang out on the roof or something?

PRISCILLA

You have access to the roof?

YOUNG MAN

My folks keep some plants up there.

QUINN

Pri...

Quinn approaches her friend and grabs onto her.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I r- really need... to go. I can't see.

PRISCILLA

(to young man)

Sorry, she's sleeping over. Her parents don't know she's here.

YOUNG MAN

Oh, totally. Hell, my parents don't know about this party.

PRISCILLA

Right. So, I'll see you tomorrow?

YOUNG MAN

I mean... if I can make it.

PRISCILLA

Oh.

Quinn tugs on Priscilla's arm.

QUINN

Please.

Priscilla looks down at the weak form of her friend.

PRISCILLA

'Kay.

YOUNG MAN

Oh, hey! I can get one of the guys to drop her off at your place.

PRISCILLA

Really?

QUINN

No. No guys. No. Pri... home.

YOUNG MAN

Or a taxi? How 'bout a taxi?

PRISCILLA

Yes! That's a great idea. Quinn, I'll get you a taxi.

QUINN

Pri... I can't see. Let's just g-go, please.

PRISCILLA
 (to young man)
 One sec.

Priscilla drags Quinn to the side of the room.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
 I'm so sorry, but you know how much
 I like him. And his girlfriend
 isn't even here tonight!

QUINN
 Pri...

PRISCILLA
 It's gonna be fine. Here's my house
 key.

Priscilla takes out a heavy set of keys from her bag. She
 places the keys firmly into Quinn's hand.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna call you a taxi right
 now. It will come in front of the
 building in minutes, they're super
 fast.

QUINN
 Pri... I lost my shoe.

PRISCILLA
 It's fine. We'll tell your mom you
 accidentally broke a heel and we
 threw them away.

QUINN
 But--

PRISCILLA
 --Please. Pleeeeee do this for me.
 I really like him.

Priscilla attempts to persuade her friend with a loving look
 and a few eyelash flutters.

QUINN
 The taxi--

PRISCILLA
 --Will be downstairs in a minute.
 I'll pay you for the ride tomorrow.
 You know the address?

Weakly, Quinn nods.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Great! Get some rest, eat whatever you want, and I'll be home in a few hours. Okay?

QUINN

K.

PRISCILLA

(whisper)

Thank you!

Immediately, Priscilla turns her attention back to the young man.

YOUNG MAN

Can I get you another drink?

PRISCILLA

Sure.

Quinn is no longer a problem.

The blurry, smoke-filled party continues in the background.

A barefoot Quinn, one shoe in hand, heads for the door.

She bumps into people and trips her way to the exit. BLURRED FACES move out of her way, and mumble things she cannot understand.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Quinn rests her head on the walls of the elevator as it descends to the bottom of the building. The LED lights aggravate her eyes and reveal smudged makeup and sweaty hair.

Everything spins.

The elevator gives a little THUD as it reaches the ground floor. The doors open.

Quinn stumbles out of the machine.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Quinn's breath vanishes into the cold night air.

Tightly, she holds on to her scanty outfit, desperate for warmth. Her soft, bare feet drag across the rough concrete. One shoe still in hand.

Cars WIZZ past her.

She looks around for the taxi, but there is no sign of it yet.

Quinn zig-zags her way down the street. She extends her feeble arm to stop a vehicle, but she cannot distinguish between one car and another.

Everything spins.

Nearby, a small group of MEN notice her fragile form. A few WHISTLE at her.

MAN 1
Need a ride?

Quinn can't really see them, but she can tell where the voices come from. Immediately, she walks the other way.

MAN 2
You don't look so well, sis! Come
catch a ride!

She hugs her chest and tries to distance herself from them. Steps on something sharp on the pavement and tugs her body backwards.

QUINN
Ow!

The bright lights of the passing cars blind her. She walks the another way.

MAN 1
(worried)
Hey! Seriously, you okay?

The man begins to walk toward her. Quinn startles and frantically moves to cross the street.

MAN 1 (CONT'D)
Wait!

She doesn't see the CAR that approaches at a high speed.

The car HONKS and the tires SQREECH painfully. But it's too late.

The car slams into Quinn's side. Her legs fly upwards as her head and spine crash onto the car's hood and windshield.

BLOOD splashes across the broken glass.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

CAROLINE HEATH (28) walks the supermarket aisles with busy steps. She pushes a large cart full of canned food, microwave meals, and some fruit.

SUPER: 10 YEARS LATER

Caroline is different from the typical person in this supermarket. Her petite stature stands out. As does the gentle upward slant of her eyes, and her bright smile.

Everything around her is set up for a typical person. The cart is a little too big for her and most grocery racks a little too high to reach.

However, in Caroline's body language there is not a hint of struggle. She is energetic and determined as she makes her way through the

PAINFULLY VIBRANT

supermarket.

She reaches the cereal section.

Carefully, she scans the endless assortment of cereal choices. But only one will do. She finds it.

On one of the taller shelves stands a chocolate cereal box with a cute crocodile mascot on the cover. Caroline extends her hand, but she cannot reach it. She tries to jump for it. No luck.

She looks around her for a taller source of help. Finds one.

A WOMAN STAFF member arranges cans not too far away.

CAROLINE

Ex- excuse me!

The woman looks up. Then, she spots Caroline. Caroline gives her a cheerful wave.

The woman's demeanor instantly changes. Her body becomes tense and she practically runs towards Caroline.

WOMAN STAFF

I am so sorry! I didn't notice you,
honey. How can I help?

Caroline points toward the cereal box.

CAROLINE

C... ould you help me get that cereal box? The one with the cro... codile.

WOMAN STAFF

Of course!

CAROLINE

Two, p- please!

The woman easily reaches for two boxes.

Caroline extends her hands to take them, but the woman puts them directly into Caroline's cart.

WOMAN STAFF

Is there anything else I can help with, honey?

CAROLINE

No, that's all. Th... ank you.

The woman tilts her head to the side.

WOMAN STAFF

Would you like me to push the cart to the checkout for you? We have a special care policy here that we're very proud of!

Caroline's smile drops slightly. The happiness in her eyes dims.

CAROLINE

N- no. That's okay.

WOMAN STAFF

Are you sure? We recently won a regional award for our customer service.

CAROLINE

C- congratulations. But ho... nestly, I'm fine on my own.

WOMAN STAFF

Alright, dear. If you need anything, just give me a call and I'll be over here in a jiffy!

Caroline doesn't respond. She gives the woman a weak smile and pushes her cart away.

CHECKOUT SECTION OF THE SUPERMARKET

Caroline picks a queue and stands in line.

There are a few PEOPLE IN QUEUE at her checkout.

Almost immediately, they respond to Caroline's presence, especially the MAN IN QUEUE in front of her.

MAN IN QUEUE

Oh, please! Go right ahead.

He moves to the side, gestures for Caroline to take his place.

CAROLINE

Thank you. But, I...'m okay here.

The man in queue looks confused.

WOMAN STAFF

Sweetheart! Over here!

Caroline turns to see the same woman staff from before. She stands on the other end of the supermarket checkouts.

Vigorously, she gestures for Caroline to queue at a different checkout.

Caroline looks up.

A large UNIVERSAL DISABILITY SIGN hangs above that checkout. The woman staff seems delighted with herself.

CAROLINE

(loudly)

I'm f... ine! Thank you!

The woman staff doesn't understand.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Th- thank you! I'll wait here.

An awkward, almost confused atmosphere develops around Caroline.

But she stands her ground.

Hands firmly grip the handle of her cart, head high toward the checkout of her chosen queue.

INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

The room is dark. So dark, it is impossible to tell what time of day it really is.

Two large windows would provide an ample amount of light and air to the room, if they were not shut.

The blinds on both windows are closed. Only the tiniest of cracks allow some light to enter the room. The

SHADOW ART

makes the room look like a prison cell.

Someone is TYPING on a keyboard in this darkness.

Dust particles, millions of them, dance and twirl in the thin strips of light.

The TYPING sound appears in long bursts. Then goes silent.

The room is covered in books and clothes, all of which are only just visible among the shadows.

On one side of the room is a single bed. Its pillows and covers are a bundled mess.

TYPING.

A large

WARDROBE

old and dark in color, covers the entirety of another wall. Its doors are all open. Clothes, towels, notebooks, photo albums and shoes are all tangled together in any available space.

The wardrobe looms heavy above the room. A GIANT of abandoned life and discarded memories.

TYPING.

In the last remaining corner of the room, a lone figure sits arched above a small computer desk. The head hidden beneath the hoodie of an oversized sweatshirt.

The monitor's screen is covered in lines and lines of text.

Quinn (28), a specter of the young woman she once was, types on the keyboard.

All over her computer desk are CLAY SWALLOWS. Handmade. Different colors and sizes. Each bird in its own unique pose, eyes unusually large - passionately exaggerated by the artist.

Somewhere in the house, a phone RINGS.

Quinn freezes. Her head turns ever so slightly toward the piercing sound. Waits.

The phone continues to RING for a long time. Finally, the answering machine kicks in with a pre-recorded factory message.

ANSWERING MACHINE - WOMAN

We are not able to answer your call. Please leave a message after the beep, and your call will be returned shortly.

BEEP.

The caller hangs up.

Slowly, Quinn's head turns back to the computer screen.

TYPING.

Two EYES shoot up to look at the screen. The pupils painfully constricted. Tiny pink capillaries cover the whites of the eyes. The irises move right to left for a few moments while they read the text on the screen. Then, Quinn resumes typing.

She sits cross-legged on a wooden chair, almost entirely covered by the massive sweatshirt. From a distance, she looks like a ball. Or a gargoyle.

To her right is a bowl of dry cereal. Between her periods of typing, Quinn extends her right hand towards the bowl of cereal and grabs a handful of it. She shoves it into her mouth. A few pieces fall to the floor.

Quinn types a few more sentences, then triumphantly HITS the full stop key. She leans back and exhales in relief.

She opens her inbox window and CLICKS to compose a new email.

ON SCREEN:

-- TO: john@speakerjohnmartin.com

-- FROM: quinn.tulson@mail.com

-- SUBJECT: Article #74 - The Importance of Sunlight for Living Organisms

Quinn begins to type the contents of the email.

-- Hi John, Here is article #74. 75 will be done by Friday. Thank you for the work. Quinn

Quinn attaches article #74 to the email and sends it.

Her inbox is full of new emails - BOLD. They all request for more articles.

FOCUS ON:

INBOX:

-- John Speaker: Article #74 - The Importance of Sunlight for Living Organisms

-- Carlos Yuventis: Article #143 - Physical Exercise and Endorphins

-- Sophia Lawrence: Article #62 - How to Care for House Plants

Slowly, Quinn lowers her feet to the floor. She waits for a moment, then stands up. Painfully.

When she begins to walk, a heavy LIMP forms between her steps. Her right leg struggles to keep up with the left one.

Overly destroyed for her age, Quinn's body is only barely able to move her from one point to another.

LIVING ROOM

Quinn enters the room. It is just as dark as the previous one.

TV, couch and coffee table - surrounded by a disgusting amount of dirty dishes, empty cans and abandoned socks.

Quinn moves toward the window.

On the window frame is a PLANT housed by a tiny pot. It is unclear which plant this is supposed to be, or whether flowers are expected to bloom from it in the future.

One thing is certain though - the plant tries desperately to survive.

With no other light source in the room, the leaves and branches grow painfully towards the few strips of light that break through the cracks in the window blinds. All the leaves face in the same direction.

Quinn approaches the plant and checks the soil. It looks parched.

KITCHEN

Quinn opens the freezer. Frozen microwave meals are scattered in piles. Among them, one large tub of ice cream.

Quinn looks at a few boxes, then chooses the spaghetti. She tears the plastic cover from the package, throws it into the microwave, and sets the timer.

A loud HUMMING sound starts as the spaghetti begins to turn.

Quinn opens a kitchen cupboard and grabs a semi-clean glass. She moves over to the sink and fills it with water.

LIVING ROOM

Quinn turns on the TV. A cooking channel flashes across the screen. A WOMAN CHEF prepares lasagna.

WOMAN CHEF

Like my mother used to say, you can never have too much cheese!

Quinn approaches the plant with her glass. She pours half of the water into the flower pot.

FOCUS ON:

-- The plant absorbs it with incredible speed.

Quinn watches the water disappear into the soil. Then, she takes a swig of her own.

WOMAN CHEF (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Always invest in good olive oil.
None of that cheap stuff.
Oh, and salt! You really want to make sure that you have quality sea salt in your kitchen.

Painfully, Quinn sits on the couch. She turns her attention to the bubbly TV chef.

WOMAN CHEF (CONT'D)

Make sure that you let that meat brown together with the onions. You really want to let the onions caramelize. Let those natural sugars stick to the bottom of the pan.

For the first time, Quinn is truly visible. Her face is illuminated by the harsh blue light from the TV screen.

Apathy.

WOMAN CHEF (O.S.) (CONT'D)

See this? These brown bits at the bottom of the pan? This is fond. *Fond.*

You can use that word to impress your friends next time they come over for dinner.

Quinn is pale. Freakishly pale. Her mouth droops downwards. Her facial muscles completely relaxed.

She watches the woman, but her eyes are dull. Blank. Dry. No emotions protrude from them. No personality is yet visible.

The hoodie covers most of her face. One thin, weak strand of long blonde hair falls next to her cheek.

WOMAN CHEF (CONT'D)

Now, place the lasagna in the preheated oven at three-seventy-five. You want to bake it for about forty-five minutes, or until the cheese is golden brown.

Quinn watches. Motionless.

WOMAN CHEF (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Here, I have one that I baked a little earlier. Look how beautifully the cheese has melted on top. I wish you could smell this.

From the kitchen, a faint DING.

KITCHEN

Quinn removes the spaghetti from the microwave.

In the corner of the kitchen counter is a cup filled with plastic forks. Quinn grabs a random one.

LIVING ROOM

Quinn sits on the couch and places the spaghetti on her lap.

On the TV, the chef now prepares dessert. She vigorously mixes a chocolate dough with her spatula.

WOMAN CHEF

Make sure that you get rid of all the lumps. You don't want white flour balls in your cake slice!

Quinn's meal is depressing. The spaghetti is one big, gluey lump of food in the same shape as the container it was microwaved in.

Quinn makes a large spaghetti twirl and shoves it into her mouth. She doesn't chew it for long before swallowing. Then, she makes another.

WOMAN CHEF (CONT'D)

Now, this serves eight people. It's best to keep it in the fridge for a few hours, or preferably overnight to let it set.

There is not much spaghetti left in Quinn's microwave pack. She makes one last, enormous twirl. It barely fits in her mouth. She quickly chews it, and slurps up the remaining sauce from the aluminum packaging.

WOMAN CHEF (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And a few decorative, candied oranges on top, and there you go! A delicious chocolate and orange cake.

(beat)

You will impress everyone with this decadent dessert!

Quinn stares at the blue, painful light of the TV screen for a few more moments. Eyes empty. Then, she turns the thing off.

BEDROOM

Quinn limps toward her bed in agony. Slowly, she sits on the bed and carefully lies down. She plops a cover over her body.

Once her painful breath settles, she stares at nothing in front of her.

She lies in the darkness.

Her face lights up in the dark every time a car passes by.

Quinn's face looks lost.

Darkness.

Another car.

Quinn's face shows misery.

Darkness.

Another car.

This time, when Quinn's face lights up in the dark, tears stream across her nose and into the pillow.

Darkness.

Quinn begins to SOB in the dark.

LIVING ROOM

The plant sits on the window in semi-darkness. Depressed.

Then, a soft light begins to form in the outside world.

The morning sun seeps through the small cracks in the window blinds. It bathes the lonely plant in small strips of warmth.

A loud BUZZING sound pierces through the silent void.

BEDROOM

Quinn startles awake. Eyes red.

Her fragile body moves into a sitting position. She focuses on the floor for a few moments. Tries to breathe properly.

Another BUZZING. This time, it sounds angrier. Quinn doesn't move.

Quinn's phone BEEPS.

Her empty stare turns toward her phone on the floor. Painfully, she extends her hand to reach it.

On the screen:

-- CAROLINE

-- It's me, you hobbit.

FRONT DOOR

Quinn buzzes Caroline into the building and opens her apartment door to wait for her.

BUILDING HALLWAY

Caroline can be heard WALKING up the stairs.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
 (echoing throughout the
 building)
 Has it ever o- occurred to you-
 (beat)
 -that there are nu... merous
 benefits to living in a building
 with an el... levator?

QUINN
 Shhh!

CAROLINE (O.S.)
 (echoing)
 Don't sh- shush me!

Worried, but for no obvious reason, Quinn checks the building hallway.

Finally, Caroline appears around the corner with a dozen supermarket bags and a messenger bag across her torso. Her face is red, and she pants through the remainder of the building's hallway.

She reaches Quinn's apartment door and pushes her way inside.

KITCHEN

Caroline drops the supermarket bags onto the kitchen floor. Relieved. Quinn watches her from a distance.

CAROLINE
 Oh. My back is ki... lling me. It's
 g- gonna go soon, I can tell.

Caroline bends backward in an attempt to stretch her spine.

She turns to look at Quinn. There is an awkward silence. Quinn looks confused. Caroline tries to give her a hint. Quinn doesn't catch on.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I'm fi... ne, thank you. How are you?

Quinn drops her head.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
It's raining. That's the wet s... tuff.

Caroline begins to unpack the groceries. She knows exactly where everything goes. Neatly, she organizes each grocery item into cupboards, drawers, as well as in the refrigerator.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
When your clothes are fly... ing all over the place, that's w- wind.
(beat)
And the white flu... ffy stuff is snow. Say it with m- me - snow.

Quinn isn't impressed with the sarcasm.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
When was the last time y... ou, you saw snow?

QUINN
You put the ice-cream upside down in the freezer.

CAROLINE
The au... dacity.

Caroline comes over to Quinn and gives her a tight hug. Awkwardly, Quinn taps her on the back a few times, but does not pull away.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
You need to o- open a window. I can't breathe in h... ere.

Caroline walks out of the kitchen.

LIVING ROOM

Caroline walks over to the shut window with the closed blinds.

Quinn enters the room. Her limp achingly obvious.

Caroline opens the window. Bright

DAYLIGHT

bursts into the living room. She sticks her head out the window and takes a deep breath. Then exhales.

CAROLINE

Keep this window open. You'll drown in here!

Quinn is mortified by the sunlight. Her eyes find it almost painful to be in this room.

Caroline raises the sleeves of her jumper to inspect the soil of Quinn's poor plant. She touches the soil.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Are you watering it every day?

QUINN

Yes. Yes.

CAROLINE

You're lying. Look how dry it is.

With quick, determined steps, Caroline leaves the room. Quinn stays in the same position and leans against the nearest wall for support.

A few moments later, Caroline is back with a glass of water. Carefully, she pours the entire contents of the glass into the plant's pot.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

P- poor thing.

Caroline turns and gives Quinn a look.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Mean.

Quinn rolls her eyes. Caroline sighs.

Then, she opens the top of her messenger bag.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Made you a new one.

From the bag, Caroline pulls out something wrapped in newspaper and gives it to Quinn.

Quinn unwraps the present.

Inside is a handmade clay swallow bird.

Caroline's smile shines across her face.

Quinn looks at the bird.

This one is dark. Its eyes are huge and its mouth wide open - calling for something.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

I made three more. One for D- DAD,
one for M- MOM, and one for the
sh... op.

QUINN

Thank you.

CAROLINE

We are gonna have a p... pop... pop
up shop in the park. Wanna come and
s- see me?

Quinn stares at the swallow.

QUINN

I uhm... You know I have a lot of
work to do. I can't promise I can
make it.

CAROLINE

I know. I'm p- proud of you. You're
doing better.

QUINN

Am I?

Caroline nods.

Then, from her messenger bag she pulls out a leaflet.

CAROLINE

I got this in the m- mail. It's a
free cooking class. We can finally
b- both learn how to cook pro...
perly. Wanna come with me?

Quinn looks uncomfortable.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

W- we haven't done anything
together in a l... ong time.

QUINN
I promise I'll think about it.

CAROLINE
R- real hard?

QUINN
Real hard.

CAROLINE
Okay.

Caroline proceeds to clean up some of the mess in the living room. She picks up dirty dishes and cups, sticky, used utensils, and empty cereal bowls.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
H- how's work?

QUINN
Good. There are a few regular clients. Speaking of which...

Quinn leaves the room.

A few moments later, she returns with cash in her hand.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Here.

CAROLINE
No. I t- told you. I got a goo... good job at the coffee sh- shop.

QUINN
Take it. Please.

CAROLINE
No.

QUINN
I'm doing better. I swear. Much better than last year.

Caroline looks at her friend for a moment. Worried.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Please. I'm a burden.

CAROLINE
You're n- n- not! I want to help you.

QUINN

And you have. Please! I have a job now. I'm better.

Caroline considers the offer for a few moments. Finally, she chooses to accept it.

CAROLINE

Fine.

QUINN

Thank you.

Caroline stashes the money into her bag.

QUINN (CONT'D)

So... the coffee shop is working out for you?

CAROLINE

Yup! W- watch. I'll be their manager soon.

Quinn smiles.

QUINN

No doubt.

CAROLINE

Do you need anything else?

QUINN

No. Thank you.

CAROLINE

Cool.

Caroline checks her watch, then moves toward the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Caroline gathers the trash bag from underneath the kitchen sink.

CAROLINE

I'll throw this out for you.

QUINN

Thank you.

Caroline takes the leftover supermarket bags.

CAROLINE
 These ones are for d- dad. I bought
 him his fa... vorite sausages.

QUINN
 Is he making a barbeque?

CAROLINE
 Oh, I h- hope so!

Caroline turns to look at her friend.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 He asks ab... out you all the time.
 Dad. A... ll the t- time.

QUINN
 I'm sorry. I appreciate it. I
 just... I'm not there, yet.

CAROLINE
 I know.

Caroline moves to leave the kitchen.

HALLWAY

Caroline carries her own grocery bags in both hands. She
 opens the front door.

CAROLINE
 I'll come back a... gain next week.

QUINN
 Thank you.

CAROLINE
 Think h- hard about the cooking
 class!

QUINN
 Real hard.

CAROLINE
 Bye, bye!

QUINN
 Bye.

Caroline leaves the apartment. Gently, Quinn closes the door
 behind her. Then locks it both with the regular lock and the
 extra chain.

She leans her forehead on the door.

LIVING ROOM

Quickly, Quinn shuts the window. She returns the room to its previous dark state.

From the coffee table, she picks up Caroline's swallow.

BEDROOM

About two dozen swallows cover every inch of her computer desk.

Quinn places the new swallow next to the ones that are already there.

KITCHEN

Quinn takes a glass from a cupboard and fills it with water. She drinks. As she turns to leave the kitchen, she notices the tied up trash bag leaning on the kitchen wall.

She stares at the bag.

Quinn pulls out her phone from her pocket. She texts Caroline.

ON SCREEN:

-- QUINN

-- You forgot the trash bag.

A few moments later, her phone BEEPS a reply.

ON SCREEN:

-- CAROLINE

-- Practice.

Reluctantly, Quinn picks up the trash bag.

She moves to leave the kitchen, then stops. She stares at the stove and each dial. Satisfied, she leaves.

The kitchen door closes.

Moments later, Quinn opens it again.

This time, she walks over to the stove and actually touches each dial to make sure that it is in the OFF position.

Finally, she limps out of the kitchen and closes the door.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Quinn stands at the top of the stairs with the trash bag in her hand. She eyes the steps below her.

Firmly, she holds the handrail and begins to take slow, painful steps down the stairs. She takes one step down with her left leg, then waits for the right leg to join it.

She repeats.

Suddenly, she hears someone on the same floor UNLOCK their door.

Quinn panics. With no time to make it down the flight of stairs, Quinn limps back up the few stairs that she has already taken and rushes toward the fire escape.

The NEIGHBOR opens their front door.

At the very last moment before being seen, Quinn bursts through the fire escape door and shuts it behind her.

Panting and in great physical pain, Quinn slowly slides down the fire escape door and sits on the floor.

She listens as the neighbor leaves their apartment and walks down the stairs. The neighbor's FOOTSTEPS fade to the bottom of the building.

Quinn stares at the long flight of fire escape stairs in front of her.

Then, she notices a small shadow blast past her. Startled, she turns toward it. She cannot see what it was. A rat?

Quinn waits for a moment, then continues down the stairs of the fire escape. One agonizing step after another.

EXT. TRASH DISPOSAL AREA - DAY

Quinn opens the door of the staircase and looks into the trash disposal area. There is no one there.

She approaches one of the large trash containers and quickly throws the bag inside.

She speeds back to the fire escape door.

INT. APARTMENT/HALLWAY - DAY

With heavy breaths, Quinn closes the door behind her.

She limps, badly.

Quinn's phone BEEPS. She takes it out of her pocket.

ON SCREEN:

-- CAROLINE

-- Shower. Eat. Fresh air. Repeat.

Quinn throws the phone on the floor.

BATHROOM

The bathroom is small. No windows. A large, dirty mirror, covered in limescale, hangs from one tiled wall.

Quinn pulls down her hoodie.

Her hair is greasy and tied up in a bun at the top of her head.

Quinn takes off her sweatshirt and the rest of her clothes, then throws them on the bathroom floor.

She stands hunched.

Her body is pale, tired, and somewhat overweight. Her muscles are invisible, yet clearly struggle to keep her upright.

Quinn removes her hair bun. Her hair falls across her shoulders. Long but weak. Washed out hair dye starts just above her ears, pushed away by her natural hair color.

Quinn avoids the mirror.

She steps into the bathtub, and draws the shower curtain.

Absentmindedly, she begins to wet her body and hair.

She grabs the soap and aimlessly spreads it over her body.

Then, she looks down and notices a thin, bright red line on the side of her torso. She moves her hand and sees more of them.

She opens the shower curtain, lifts her left hand, and looks into the mirror.

The left side of her torso is covered in a web of thin red lines.

Stretch marks. New. A lightning bolt down the side of her body.

Quinn frowns. Then looks worried. She closes the shower curtain.

KITCHEN

Quinn enters with wet hair dripping down her back and a towel around her body.

From the freezer, she takes the large tub of ice cream.

INT. ART CLASS - DAY

A room full of clay, paint, desks, chairs, and artwork. Inside, at various desks, STUDENTS sit and work on their individual art.

Two TEACHERS make their way through the room.

One of these students is Caroline.

With great concentration, she works on her newest swallow.

At the moment, it is only a wet ball of clay. But her hands carefully shape the future bird with care and precision.

Each student is different from the typical person in their own way. Some are in wheelchairs, others, like Caroline, were brought into the world with their own unique syndrome.

One of the teachers approaches Caroline's desk.

TEACHER 1

Do you need me to get you anything, Caroline?

CAROLINE

No. I have ev- everything I need.

Caroline's fingers carefully shape the outline of a bird.

TEACHER 1

Another swallow?

CAROLINE
Another s- star.

TEACHER 1
Hm?

CAROLINE
A... nother star.

TEACHER 1
What do you mean?

CAROLINE
Swallows s- symbolize stars. And
the dead.

TEACHER 1
The dead?

CAROLINE
Mhmm. Dad read a b- book about it.
Long t- time ago. The dead tran...
sform into swallows, and enter the
un- underworld as birds.

Teacher 1 looks at Teacher 2 across the room, who has heard everything that Caroline said.

TEACHER 2
Egyptian. The Book of the Dead.

TEACHER 1
Huh. I didn't know.

CAROLINE
My dad loves re... ading books.
Mom, too.

Caroline's left hand is covered in clay. However, beneath the clay is a large dotted

BRUISE

which covers most of her left hand.

Carefully, Caroline forms the initial shapes of this important bird.

The three fingers of her right hand come together to form a beak.

INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Quinn is back in her usual position in the prison of her bedroom. Her body hidden underneath her old sweater.

Lines of text cover her monitor's screen.

TYPING.

Dead silence and an ominous atmosphere surround Quinn. Although her movements are the same as usual, something is a little off about her environment.

Quinn pauses.

Her head turns ever so slightly to the side. Inspects.

She turns in her chair and observes the room. Her curiosity is met with silence and emptiness.

The giant wardrobe towers above her. She watches it for a moment. Notices the abandoned fragments of her life decaying inside of it.

Enough.

She moves back toward the computer, then sees it.

One of the window blinds is slightly more open than it should be.

Quinn watches it. Scared.

She makes her way to the window to investigate.

She touches the open blind suspiciously. Checks the window to make sure that it is locked. Confused, she takes a few steps back.

She hears a tiny RUSTLE in the room. Startled, she turns to look at the massive wardrobe. Among the many piles of abandoned things, another RUSTLING sound.

Paralyzed, Quinn watches the pile in fear. Terrified to move in her own home.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Caroline and her father, DAN (60s), walk through a large cemetery.

The weather is beautiful.

In their hands, father and daughter carry many tote bags. Flowers, a bucket, a broom, and some incomprehensible things.

Crows fly above them. Some perch on trees and watch the two people curiously.

Seemingly endless rows of gravestones surround them. Weeds swallow those that have been forgotten. Some graves have collapsed into an empty void below them.

Slowly, the pair reach a special grave. They place their tote bags next to it.

ON THE TOMBSTONE:

-- SAMANTHA HEATH

-- 1952 - 1999

CAROLINE
(to tombstone)
Hi, mom.

Caroline approaches her mother's grave, places a hand on it, and then gives her mother's name a kiss.

DAN
(to tombstone)

Hi, dear.

He repeats the same ritual as his daughter.

Weeds and dry grass claw at the side of the grave, which is covered in dirt and dead leaves. Lifeless flowers adorn the center of the grave and the remains of two candles lie in a pool of their own wax next to the tombstone.

Silently, Dan and Caroline begin what is clearly a well-established routine between the two.

Dan begins his maintenance on the weeds, while Caroline cleans the tombstone. They have done this many times before.

A crow CAWS loudly as it flies above them.

From her messenger bag, Caroline pulls out a new present.

CAROLINE
(to tombstone)
I brought you something, m- mom.

Carefully, she unwraps it. A blue swallow, mid-flight, eyes wide and beak open.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 (to tombstone)

See?

Gently, Caroline places the bird on top of the grave.

Dan watches.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 (to tombstone)

I made this new one with the n- new
 paints that we g... ot in art
 class.

There are no other swallows around the grave.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 (to tombstone)

You can t- take this one with you
 too, mom.

DAN

She's not the one taking them,
 Caroline.

CAROLINE

Sh- she is.

Dan continues to clean the grave sight.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 (to tombstone)

We're both doing w... ell. Dad has
 a new job. A good one. And I g- got
 a job too, in one of the cafes. I
 really l- love it.

Caroline arranges the flowers that they brought.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 (to tombstone)

Quinn s... ays, hi.

Dan frowns at the mention of the name.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 (to tombstone)

She's doing much b- better. She's
 really h... elping me.

DAN

With what?

CAROLINE

Dad...

DAN

Sorry... it's just. With what?

CAROLINE

She's my best f- friend.

Dan looks annoyed once again. He decides not to confront his daughter.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

When I- I was alone, s- she helped me.

DAN

Sorry. I'm just saying... It's taking her a long time.

CAROLINE

S- She can take as lo... long as she needs.

Dan looks particularly displeased.

DAN

I just want you to focus on yourself more. There's so much else that you could be doing.

Caroline ignores him.

DAN (CONT'D)

We have bills and medicine and a massive mortgage. And you said you wanted to study.

CAROLINE

I h- have time to co... ntinue my studies.

DAN

I'm just saying, we need to save money to get you to where you want to be, honey.

CAROLINE

I'm happy wh- when I can help, dad.

DAN

But aren't you helping enough? I've taken on a second shift just to keep us afloat. You bring her more food than we have.

CAROLINE

(to tombstone)

Mom, t- tell him he's be... ing mean.

DAN

Caroline, I'm serious. You need to reduce the spending.

CAROLINE

She says yo- you're being mean.

Dan SLAMS the shovel against the ground.

DAN

She's not here!

Caroline turns to look at her father. Startled.

DAN (CONT'D)

Sorry... I'm just stressed. Sorry.

Caroline turns her attention back to her mother.

She takes out one of the new candles.

CAROLINE

(to tombstone)

It's okay m- mom. He didn't m... ean it.

Caroline lights the candle and places it next to the new swallow.

INT. APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

A handful of water SPLASHES across Quinn's face.

She raises her head. Eyes wide, she SOBS - mid panic attack.

She holds onto the edges of the sink and steadies her breath. Something haunts her from within. Shallow breaths clash with WHALING sounds in her throat.

After a few moments, she slowly takes back control of her mind.

Quinn fills her palms with sink water, then drinks.

LIVING ROOM

Quinn limps into the room with a glass in her hand.

She approaches the plant on the window.

Pours a tiny amount of water into the potted plant. Then, she stares at it.

It looks fragile. Its leaves have closed in on themselves from dehydration. Helplessly, the plant withers in its dark home on the inside of a window.

In Quinn's eyes, a sudden flash of anger appears.

Quinn touches a leaf at random. She feels its texture underneath her fingers. The dry leaf makes a RUSTLING noise.

Then, with a tug, Quinn rips the leaf away from the weak branch that held it.

She lets go and the leaf falls gently onto the floor.

Quinn stares at it. Then looks back up at the plant. It looks hopeless, and with no way to escape Quinn's oncoming onslaught.

Quinn grabs another leaf and severs it from its body. Another leaf falls to its death.

Quinn pauses her attack for now.

KITCHEN

Quinn opens a kitchen cupboard and takes two medicine boxes. It is unclear which medicine is in either box.

She takes one pill from each box and holds them in the palm of her hand. She goes to swallow the pills but then stops.

After a few moments of thought, she throws the pills into the sink and drinks the remaining water in her glass alone.

BEDROOM

Quinn enters the bedroom with a ramen packet in her left hand.

She sits in front of the computer and turns it on.

While the computer boots, she opens the ramen bag. Removes the two small flavor packets and tosses them aside. Then, she bites into the corner of the dry instant ramen noodles.

The computer has booted by now. Quinn checks her inbox.

New emails have arrived from her usual clients. Each one is a request for more work. She opens the first one.

FOCUS ON:

INBOX:

-- FROM: Sophia Lawrence sophialawrence@mail.com

-- TO: Quinn Tulson quinn.tulson@mail.com

-- SUBJECT: RE: Another batch

-- Hi Quinn! Great job, love the article! I will send you 3 more tomorrow. Same payment method? Thanks, Sophia

Quinn CLICKS on the reply button.

-- TO: sophialawrence@mail.com

-- FROM: quinn.tulson@mail.com

-- SUBJECT: RE: Another batch

Quinn TYPES.

-- Thank you! Glad you liked it. Yes, same payment method. Thanks.

She CLICKS the send button.

An itch begins to form on Quinn's skin.

She scratches it, then picks at a particular spot with her nails. When she pulls back her sleeve, open

SCRATCH WOUNDS

are clearly visible on Quinn's arm.

DING. DING.

Quinn's phone has made that sound. She looks at it.

On the screen:

-- CAROLINE

-- It's me.

Moments later, Quinn's doorbell BUZZES.

HALLWAY

Quinn opens the door to Caroline.

Again, she has about a dozen bags in her hands. Heavy. She gently pushes by Quinn and enters her apartment.

KITCHEN

Caroline places the groceries in their proper place. The same way that she did last time. However, this time she is a little less talkative.

QUINN

How are you?

CAROLINE

Oh, you fi- figured it out!

Caroline smiles.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Fine, th... thank you.

Caroline places the groceries around the kitchen, but with less enthusiasm than before. When she finishes, she pours a glass of water.

LIVING ROOM

Caroline enters the living room and immediately walks toward the plant.

Quinn limps painfully behind, senses that something is off.

QUINN

I'm sorry. I forgot to water it since a few days ago.

CAROLINE

Th- that's ok.

Caroline waters the plant with the glass of water from the kitchen. Quinn watches from behind - worried.

Then, she sees it.

As Caroline pours water into the plant, Quinn notices a large dotted bruise on the nape of Caroline's neck.

Quinn frowns.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 Sorry. I di- didn't have time for a
 swallow this w... eek.

QUINN
 That's okay.

CAROLINE
 I di- didn't have t... ime to make
 mom one ei- either.

Caroline bows her head and begins to CRY.

Worried, Quinn approaches her friend and tries to console her.

QUINN
 Hey, it's okay. You're busy, yo-

CAROLINE
 -I di- di- didn't have t- time for
 mom.

QUINN
 Caroline, it's okay. She
 understands.

Quinn hugs her friend.

CAROLINE
 (into Quinn's shoulder)
 I- I didn't have ti- time for m-
 mom!

Caroline weeps her soul out into Quinn's shoulder.

Confused, Quinn doesn't really know how to behave.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 (into Quinn's shoulder)
 The d- doctor said I h- have to
 c... ome every day, so I di- didn't
 have t- time... for swallows.

QUINN
 Huh?

Caroline continues to sob.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Caroline... how did you get those
 bruises?

Silence.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Caroline?

Caroline's face is still buried in her best friend's
 shoulder.

Quinn frowns.

Caroline gently pulls away from her friend and wipes her face
 with her sleeve.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 What is going on?

CAROLINE
 I don't k- know.

Quinn now sees the other dotted bruise on Caroline's hand.

QUINN
 Did you hit yourself?

Caroline shrugs her shoulders.

CAROLINE
 Probably.

QUINN
 I don't think you did.

Caroline wipes her face again and takes a deep breath.

CAROLINE
 Anyway.

She exhales. Then smiles.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 Today is the c- cooking class. Are
 w- we go... ing?

QUINN
 I want to know more about those
 bruises.

CAROLINE
I don't kn... ow anything, yet. The
d- doctor will call. Maybe
tomorrow.

Caroline wipes her face on her sleeve one last time and
clears her throat.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
So, are we g- going?

QUINN
Yes. Of course.

Caroline looks genuinely surprised.

CAROLINE
Really?

QUINN
Yes.

CAROLINE
Oh, yey! It's g- gonna be so much
fun!

Caroline's mind seems to have shifted from the dark thoughts
that bothered her moments ago.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Okay. I'm going t- to get ready
then. I'll come pick you up at
se... ven, okay?

QUINN
Sure.

CAROLINE
I need to g- get ready!

Excited, Caroline makes her way out of the apartment.

She doesn't wait for Quinn to follow her or to walk her out.

CAROLINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(from hallway)
See you s- soon!

QUINN
Hey! Tell me what the doctor said
when we calls.

CAROLINE
Okay! See you!

Quinn's apartment door OPENS and CLOSES as Caroline leaves.

Quinn stands on her own in the living room.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Caroline exits Quinn's apartment building. She begins to SOB, but then quickly stops herself and walks down the street. Head high.

INT. APARTMENT/BATHROOM - DAY

Quinn enters the bathroom.

She looks into the mirror.

Perplexed, tears begin to fill her eyes as she considers what just happened.

A crushed woman looks back at her.

Quinn takes a moment to examine the features of her own face. Arid. Tired. Self-loathing. Her weak, dry skin is slowly becoming overtaken by wrinkles. Her reflection pains her.

Then, from the corner of her shoulder, a

SHADOW

appears in the mirror.

Startled, Quinn SCREAMS and turns to look behind her.

There is no one else in the bathroom.

Quickly, Quinn takes off her sweater and uses it to cover the mirror.

BEDROOM

Quinn limps through the room. It seems even darker now.

The computer HUMS in the background.

She steadies herself against the wall for a moment. Looks around at the mess that covers almost the entire floor of the room. She scans it, but she cannot make out any shape in particular.

Slowly, she begins to push things aside. She moves large piles of clothes, books, and random boxes. She coughs when a large burst of dust flies toward her.

Underneath the mess of her life lies one single object of stability - a CANE. It may have been buried and forcefully forgotten for a long time, but now, it is needed.

Quinn is disgusted by the sight of it.

She approaches the object, and slowly excavates it from the junk that surrounds it.

The cane is old. Its black paint falls off in chunks, revealing the pale wood underneath. The silver grip has begun to corrode. The entire cane looks broken and despised. Quinn is embarrassed to be in its presence.

She holds the silver grip and places it next to her right leg. Reluctantly, she begins to walk with it.

She looks clumsy with it, obviously doesn't know how to really use it properly.

She takes a few practice steps forward, and aligns the cane with the bad leg. The limp is still noticeable, but to a lesser degree.

Her back looks hunched and awkward when she uses the cane.

From somewhere in the same pile, she finds a hair brush.

She lets down her squished bun, and tries to brush her hair.

It's not going very well. Large strands of hair fall off, and most of it is a tangled mess that cannot be sorted out this quickly.

With no other option, and no motivation to try anything else, she opts for another, new bun. It doesn't look much more presentable than before but it will have to do.

Quinn's phone BEEPS. She checks it.

ON SCREEN:

-- CAROLINE

-- I'm in the Uber. Yey!

Quinn takes a deep, heavy breath.

INT. COOKING CLASS - DAY

Quinn and Caroline enter the classroom.

Caroline looks very excited to be here. She wears a turtle neck and long sleeves.

Quinn holds onto Caroline's arm for support.

In front of them is a makeshift kitchen with a few rows of cooking benches, topped with utensils, cutting boards, pots and pans.

Three WOMEN have already arrived to the cooking class and have very much made themselves at home.

They CHAT amongst themselves, but when they notice the new arrivals they become even more excited.

WOMAN 1

Oh, look. There's more of us!

WOMAN 2

Hello!

WOMAN 3

Hi!

CAROLINE

Hello, l- ladies!

WOMAN 1

Are you here for the class?

CAROLINE

Yes!

WOMAN 2

Grab a bench over there.

WOMAN 3

Is this your first time here?

Slowly, Quinn makes her way to one of the benches and immediately sits on a chair to rest her leg.

CAROLINE

Yes, first t... ime here. Is this the first c- class?

WOMAN 1

No, we've been coming for about a month.

CAROLINE
It's our f- first time.

WOMAN 1
Are you home cooks?

CAROLINE
Amaterus, really. We b- both love
coo... king, but we aren't very
good at it. Right, Q- Quinn?

Quinn only smiles a little.

WOMAN 2
Oh, don't worry, we were like that
in the beginning, too.

WOMAN 3
I was awful!

WOMAN 1
You still are.

WOMAN 2
Quiet, you two.
(to Caroline)
Ignore them. They're being
childish.

CAROLINE
(giggles)
That's o... kay.

Quinn looks at the room.

Basic pantry, pots, knives, and a lot of chaos that she is
not exactly ready for.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
What are we making t- today?

WOMAN 1
Pasta!

WOMAN 2
The best! My mother was Italian.

WOMAN 3
Yes, yes we know. And she made the
best tortellini in Emilia.

WOMAN 1
It's a shame none of that rubbed
off on her.

WOMAN 2

Well, at least it's not a sack of
goo like yours.

The women huff and puff through their conversation as
Caroline diverts her attention to Quinn in the far corner of
the room.

CAROLINE

(to Quinn)

You can c... ome and sit c- closer,
you know?

QUINN

That's okay, I like it here.
Thanks.

Caroline looks a little disappointed.

WOMAN 2

The chef is wonderful, you'll love
her!

CAROLINE

(to Quinn)

Did you h- hear that?

Quinn nods and manages to smile.

WOMAN 1

One of the best home cooks I've
ever met.

WOMAN 3

And she volunteers at the soup
kitchen.

WOMAN 1

And she volunteers at the soup
kitchen.

WOMAN 2

What a doll.

A car ENGINE can be heard arriving outside.

WOMAN 1

Oh, that's probably the chef.

CAROLINE

How lo... ng have you l- ladies
been in the class for?

WOMAN 1
Is it three months?

WOMAN 2
Two and a half?

WOMAN 3
No, I'd say three.

WOMAN 1
Yeah, three.
(points at WOMAN 2)
She couldn't fry an egg when she
got here!

WOMAN 2 throws a kitchen towel at WOMAN 1.

WOMAN 3
Oh, shut it both of you!

CAROLINE
(excited)
I b- better get to my be... nch.

Caroline chooses the bench right next to Quinn.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Are you ex- excited?

QUINN
Yeah.

CAROLINE
Real hard?

QUINN
(smiles)
Yes, real hard. It just takes me a
little while that's all.

CAROLINE
I know. Don't w- worry, you can
u... se my dough if yours doesn't
work out.

Caroline winks at Quinn.

WOMAN 2
I really need to practice my pasta
today.

WOMAN 3
Good, because I need to work on
those tortellini.
(MORE)

WOMAN 3 (CONT'D)

Priscilla showed me a new trick last time, but I couldn't do it at home.

Quinn frowns. They have her full attention now.

WOMAN 1

I'm personally looking forward to the sauce.

WOMAN 2

I don't think we're making sauce today.

WOMAN 3

No, that's next week.

QUINN

(bewildered)

What did you say?

FOOTSTEPS can be heard approaching.

WOMAN 3

Huh? I said we're making the sauce next week.

QUINN

No, before that.

All three women look confused.

WOMAN 3

Tortellini?

Then, the door of the classroom BURSTS open.

Priscilla (28) enters the room in a rush.

PRISCILLA

Sorry, I'm late! Traffic was insane.

A stunned Quinn watches her past life burst into the classroom.

But Priscilla hasn't noticed anyone yet.

Tall, fit, elegant, she takes off her luxurious coat. Her long brunette hair flows through the air.

WOMAN 1

I love your coat!

WOMAN 2

Me, too.

PRISCILLA

Oh, stop it. This old thing?

WOMAN 1

Why a man hasn't swooped you off
your feet yet is beyond me.

WOMAN 2

They don't deserve her.

WOMAN 1

Sure don't. Can't stand a
successful woman like her.

WOMAN 2

Mh-hmm.

WOMAN 3

We have new students!

Quinn isn't the only one who recognized her.

CAROLINE

(excited)

Pri!

Priscilla halts. She cannot believe her eyes.

PRISCILLA

Shut the front door! Clementine!

Priscilla runs over to Caroline and gives her a genuine hug.
Caroline hugs her back.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Oh, it's been so long!

Priscilla squishes Caroline in her chest.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Ladies, this is my high school
friend, Clementine.

The three women awww at the sight of friends reuniting.

CAROLINE

It's actually C- Caroline.

PRISCILLA

Oh, yes! Of course! Sorry, I'm such
a mess today. Caroline!

Priscilla hugs her again, with way too much force.

CAROLINE
Quinn is h- here, too!

PRISCILLA
Huh?

Excited, Caroline points to where Quinn sits.

Quinn looks scared. Shocked.

Priscilla's expression isn't much better either.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Quinn.

She walks over to Quinn, visibly uncertain about what to do.

After a moment, she gives Quinn an awkward hug.

Quinn doesn't reciprocate. Simply remains frozen. Eyes frantic.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
I'm happy to see you, Quinn.

Quinn simply turns her head and doesn't respond.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
You look good, Quinn.

Cane in hand and her life force diminished, Quinn is a mockery of the compliment.

Quinn gives her a pained look.

Priscilla gets the message and backs away.

WOMAN 1
How sweet!

WOMAN 2
I remember my high school days.

WOMAN 3
Do you? You were passed out for most of them. Never made it to track practice on time.

WOMAN 2 throws another kitchen towel at WOMAN 3.

WOMAN 1

Please don't embarrass yourselves with your sport abilities in front of Priscilla.

PRISCILLA

Oh, please. That was a long time ago.

WOMAN 1

Now, now, dear. A successful woman should never undermine herself.

WOMAN 2

Agreed!

WOMAN 3

Especially an Olympian!

PRISCILLA

Oh, please. I wasn't an Olympian.

WOMAN 3

Didn't you sa-

PRISCILLA

-state champion. Almost an Olympian. Right, Clementine?

CAROLINE

Pri was our s- state champion in gy... mnastics.

WOMAN 1

That's an amazing accomplishment!

Priscilla beams with pride.

WOMAN 3

What happened with the Olympics, again?

PRISCILLA

I didn't qualify in the end.

Priscilla makes a childlike, pursed-lip sad face.

WOMAN 2

Oh, honey, you did great! Even a chance to qualify was amazing.

PRISCILLA

Oh, trust me, I know. The Olympics are something else entirely.

(MORE)

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

We were just a little high school.
None of us could qualify.

In the other corner of the room, Quinn sits consumed by her own thoughts. A rage rises to tense her body, eyes lost somewhere in the past.

Caroline senses the atmosphere and tries to divert the inevitable train wreck.

CAROLINE

And now yo- you're a chef?

PRISCILLA

Oh, yes. Had some ups and downs but really settled on this. It's such a creative profession, I love it.

WOMAN 1

And you're so good at it!

PRISCILLA

Well, I actually have a surprise for you ladies, but I can't say anything yet. There's a big project coming up that I'm so proud of!

WOMAN 2

I can't wait to find out!

WOMAN 3

Oh, tell us now!

At this point, Caroline notices that Quinn has very much been left behind. She tries to improve her friend's mood.

CAROLINE

Quinn is a w- writer!

WOMAN 1

Like my daughter-in-law!

PRISCILLA

That's amazing, Quinn!

WOMAN 2

What genre?

Quinn is in no mood for this.

QUINN

Articles.

WOMAN 3
For magazines?

QUINN
No.

PRISCILLA
Like a blog? Or column?

QUINN
No. I'm a ghost writer.

WOMAN 1
Oh.

WOMAN 2
(whispering to WOMAN 1)
What's a ghost writer?

WOMAN 1
(whispers)
She writes for other people. But they make it look like they wrote it. They put their name on her writing.

WOMAN 3
Huh? Why?

WOMAN 1
Shh...

PRISCILLA
Oh, it's uhmm... I have a friend who does that. She wants to save her own name for her own projects. Is that it, Quinn?

Quinn doesn't respond. Caroline does it for her.

CAROLINE
Y- yes! She has a bo... ok idea that she's w- working on.

WOMAN 3
(with much less enthusiasm)
That's great.

Caroline's plan has very much backfired and Quinn is now in a worse position than she was in before.

Embarrassed. Degraded to not only a ghost of a person, but also the ghost of a career.

PRISCILLA

Well, let's get to it, then.

She takes out a couple of business cards and hands them to Caroline and Quinn.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

You can reach me anytime if you have any questions. I always encourage that you practice the recipes at home.

WOMAN 1

She will help you whenever you need her!

Priscilla approaches Quinn's bench.

PRISCILLA

All my contact information is on here. If you ever need anything, please don't hesitate to call.

Quinn doesn't look at her.

Priscilla turns to address the class.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Right! Let's get started, ladies! Eggs and flour are underneath your benches. Grab a bowl.

Quinn holds the business card in her hand.

FOCUS ON THE BUSINESS CARD:

Expensive. Professional. At the bottom a quote in cursive.

-- "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

INT. APARTMENT/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Quinn enters her home. Exhausted. Limping. Covered in splashes of flour. She leans on the door for support.

BEDROOM

Quinn throws the cane at the wall.

As she stands in the middle of the room, she turns her attention to the massive, dark wardrobe.

Slowly, she begins to walk toward it.

She rummages through the huge pile of things in the wardrobe. Dust and cobwebs are everywhere. Some things are disgustingly and inexplicably sticky.

She pushes things aside and throws them behind her all over the room.

Then, she finds it.

FOCUS ON:

-- A high school yearbook.

Quinn looks at the forsaken object, then slowly opens it.

Inside, photos of students flash in front of her as she looks for a specific page. She finds it.

FOCUS ON:

-- A class photo. Students stand or sit in their position as they smile for the camera.

-- On the far left, Caroline stands among a group of high schoolers, smiling ear to ear.

-- On the far right, Quinn and Priscilla stand together, arms around each other, laughing.

-- Quinn has a silver medal around her neck. Priscilla a bronze one.

Quinn's eyes are in pain.

She closes the yearbook and throws it on top of the pile.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Quinn sits on an old chair. Around her are many people of all ages, even a few children. Each one of them looks lost in their own thoughts.

Some people hum to themselves, others sway back and forth.

At the very end of the line of chairs, Quinn notices a man bent over. Tying his shoe laces.

Painfully hunched over his knees, the man tugs at the shoe laces with all his might. He tugs them with such force that his leather shoes make a CRACKLING sound.

The sheer force of the tugging brings the holes of the shoe laces entirely closed together. But the man is still not satisfied with the tightness.

He pulls the laces toward himself until his own face turns a bright red color. His jaw clenched, there seems no end to his misery.

Then, a door opens and a NURSE comes out into the hallway.

NURSE
Ms. Tulson?

QUINN
Yes?

NURSE
The doctor will see you now.

Slowly, Quinn uses her cane to stand up. She walks towards the room.

DOCTOR'S OFFICE

A cheap doctor's room. Quinn sits on an old, battered patient's chair.

Across her is psychiatrist DR. JOHNSON (late 60s), tired.

DR. JOHNSON
Haven't seen you in a while.

Quinn stares at her hands and fumbles with her fingers.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Have you been taking your
medication?

Quinn doesn't respond. She continues to sit still, with only a few movements from her hands coming through.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
We've been through all the tests
and the instructions, Quinn. Seven
times. I told you, it doesn't work
if you don't do anything for
yourself.

Quinn still doesn't respond. Annoyed and without any other options, the psychiatrist goes back to his computer and begins to type.

QUINN

Why is it always me that has to
change?

Dr. Johnson stops typing for a moment and looks at her.

DR. JOHNSON

You're the only one here Quinn. If
anyone else was here with you, I'd
tell them the same thing.

Quinn stares at her fumbling fingers.

Dr. Johnson looks at her with pity. Then decides to go back
to his computer.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Have you at least been taking the
medication from your chiropractor?

Quinn is silent. Stares at her hands.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Quinn.

She doesn't respond.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Look at me, please.

Quinn just barely lifts her eyes to look at the doctor.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I cannot change what happened,
Quinn. I can only help you with the
present. I can only help you to
move on.

Quinn stares at him.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

But you don't want to move on.

Quinn's eyes fill up with tears.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Would you like me to refer you to
someone else?

Quinn shakes her head slowly.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Would you like to go through it one
more time? Again?

Quinn is now visibly shaking and falling apart. She only barely manages to nod her head.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 Okay. I will ask you to come back again next week, and then we can start again.

The doctor goes back to his computer. Quinn sits there and sobs gently.

QUINN
 Caroline has cancer.

Dr. Johnson stops. Looks at her.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Leukemia.

Quinn fumbles with her fingers.

QUINN (CONT'D)
 Do you think she'll make it?

DR. JOHNSON
 It's not my specialty. But it is fairly common with Down Syndrome.

Quinn nods her head and continues to cry.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 I'll see you next week, Quinn. Take your medicine.

The doctor hands her the prescriptions.

INT. APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Quinn enters her kitchen and drops the bag of medications on the counter.

She takes the phone from her pocket and dials a number.

A few vague TOOT sounds.

Someone picks up.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
 Hey.

QUINN
 (into the phone)
 Hey. How are you?

CAROLINE (O.S.)
I'm alright.

QUINN
Did you hear back from anyone?

CAROLINE
(O.S.)
Yeah. To... morrow I have to g- go
to the hospital.

QUINN
(into the phone)
For what?

CAROLINE (O.S.)
They're running so... me tests.
To see wh- what the next steps
should be.

Quinn fumbles with her clothes.

QUINN
(into the phone)
Does it hurt?

CAROLINE (O.S.)
Does what hurt?

QUINN
(into the phone)
Leukemia.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
Oh. No. The brui- ses hurt a
little. But o... therwise, no.

QUINN
(into the phone)
Okay.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
Will you come and s- ee me?

QUINN
(into the phone)
Yeah. Do you need anything?

CAROLINE (O.S.)
No. I'll bring all m- my stuff that
I need. Dad will be th... ere, too.

QUINN
 (into the phone)
 Okay.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
 I have to g- go. Dinner is ge...
 ting cold.

QUINN
 (into the phone)
 Of course. Say hi to your dad for
 me.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
 Okay. Bye.

QUINN
 (into the phone)
 Bye.

Quinn taps on the phone screen to end the call.

BEDROOM

Quinn sits in front of her computer. She opens her inbox.

ON SCREEN:

-- One lone new email appears on her screen. Bold.
 Quinn CLICKS to open it.

ON SCREEN:

-- FROM: Sophia Lawrence sophialawrence@mail.com
 -- TO: Quinn Tulson quinn.tulson@mail.com
 -- SUBJECT: New batch
 -- Hi Quinn,
 -- I'm attaching a new batch of 3 articles with instructions
 bellow.
 -- Not urgent. Say in the next 20 days?
 -- Thanks.

Quinn opens a word processor and starts her work.

Darkness. The computer screen provides the only light in the room. A cave.

TYPING.

Then, Quinn stops.

An ominous tension fills the room.

She turns her head to listen behind her. There seems to be nothing there. Still, she looks worried.

HALLWAY

Quinn approaches the door and leans her ear on it. Listens.

There doesn't seem to be any noise coming from the other side of the door.

She leaves the hallway.

Moments later, a DRAGGING sound is heard.

It's Quinn, she drags a chair from the living room to the front door.

She places the chair against the door. Checks that it is locked. Slowly, she backs away from the door.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Quinn limps towards the fruit and vegetable section of the supermarket.

Her cane awkwardly jabs the floor by her side.

She looks at the fruit section. Bananas, apples, oranges, etc. She notices the strawberries in plastic containers.

Quinn looks at the price. \$6.99. She frowns.

She moves over to the apples. Looks at their price. \$2.99.

Quinn grabs a plastic bag and awkwardly places the apples, one by one, into the plastic bag. She turns each apple around to make sure that it hasn't been damaged.

When the bag is filled, she pauses. Looks back at the strawberries. Thinks.

One by one, Quinn returns the apples from the bag to their original place in the box.

She then moves over to the strawberries.

She chooses one of the strawberry packets. Looks it over in great detail. Above, underneath, the sides.

Satisfied with her choice, Quinn places the strawberries in her shopping basket.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Quinn limps through the hospital corridors. Hospital rooms pass by her as she walks. She carries a plastic supermarket bag with the strawberries.

Quinn glances at some of the rooms with their doors open.

Many PATIENTS lie in beds connected to machines. Most of them have lost all of their hair. Some are fast asleep, while others read books or observe the world through a window.

Finally, Quinn stops at a particular room. She knocks on the door.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Come in!

Quinn opens the door.

Inside, Caroline sits on a bed in her hospital clothes. Dan sits on a chair next to her.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Heeey, you c- came! Dad, I told you she'd come!

DAN

Hey, Quinn.

QUINN

Hello, Mr. Heath. How are you?

DAN

We're good.

Dan looks exhausted. Physically and emotionally distraught.

Caroline is for the most part her usual self. Although the illness has already taken a drastic toll on her body.

CAROLINE

Is that for m- me?

Caroline points at the supermarket bag.

QUINN

Yes. I got you a little something.

Quinn gives the bag to Caroline.

Eagerly, Caroline opens the bag and a huge smile spreads across her face.

CAROLINE

Str... awberries! Yum!

Caroline rips open the plastic package of the strawberries and immediately starts eating them.

After a few strawberries, she offers them to both her father and Quinn. They both shake their heads, so she continues to enjoy her treat.

QUINN

(to Dan)

Is there any news?

DAN

Well, not really. We're going to start the process of the chemo and the medicine, and whatever else the doctor says we need to do.

Quinn nods.

Dan only now notices Quinn's cane.

DAN (CONT'D)

Shit, sorry.

He stands up.

DAN (CONT'D)

Have a seat.

QUINN

No, no. It's okay, I'll stand. It's good for me. I sit all day.

QUINN (CONT'D)

(to Caroline)

How are you feeling?

Caroline has a full mouth of strawberries.

CAROLINE

Stop looking so we- weird. Both of y... ou.

Caroline flashes them a huge smile.

QUINN
I'm serious.

CAROLINE
Then s- stop being serious. I'm
f... ine. This isn't a m- morgue.

QUINN
That's not what I meant. I'm just
worried, Caroline.

CAROLINE
Wll, I'm n- not. Everything is
go... ing to be fine.

QUINN
How are you so calm about this?

Dan moves closer to Quinn.

DAN
(to Quinn)
Please stop. She's tired.

Then, the door opens and a SENIOR NURSE enters.

SENIOR NURSE
Caroline, dear, I need to ask you a
few more questions.

Dan takes Quinn to the side as the nurse and Caroline
converse in the background.

DAN
(to Quinn)
Listen. I don't want to come off as
rude or anything, but... this is a
really rough time for us.

Quinn seems confused.

QUINN
Right. What do you mean?

DAN
It's just... I'm worried that
you're stressing her out.

QUINN
But, she's my friend.

DAN
Yes, of course. I understand that.
I'm just asking if you could tone
it down a bit?

QUINN
Tone what down?

Dan sort of gestures to the entirety of Quinn's body.

DAN
All this... negativity.

QUINN
I don't understand.

Dan seems annoyed with her answer.

DAN
I'm pretty sure you do. It's been
long enough.

He turns and walks towards his daughter.

DAN (CONT'D)
(to Caroline)
Say bye to Quinn, honey!

CAROLINE
You're l- leaving?

Quinn is caught off guard.

QUINN
Uh... yeah. I need to uhmm... I
need to finish up some client work.

Caroline looks disappointed.

CAROLINE
Okay. Will you c- come again soon?

QUINN
Of course.

CAROLINE
Thanks for the str- strawberries.

Quinn responds with a weak nod.

All attention now turns to the nurse and her paperwork.

Quinn watches them from the corner of the room. Abandoned.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Quinn sits in her usual place across from Dr. Johnson. They seem to be in the middle of a difficult silence in which Quinn is expected to provide an answer.

DR. JOHNSON

Can you walk me through it again?

Quinn starts to visibly shake. She clutches onto her clothes. Tears stream down her red, pale face.

Dr. Johnson looks at her with a pained expression.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Do you want to take a break?

Quinn nods.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Quinn throws the cane carelessly to the side of the room.

Painfully, she limps her way to her computer chair, then sits down.

Her computer desk is covered in a thick layer of dust. Grease and crumbs have accumulated on and around the clay swallows.

Repugnance suffocates art.

Quinn stares at one of the swallows on her computer desk. The bird stands proudly on its feet, wings out, ready to fly.

She brings her focus back to the computer.

Opens the window to her email inbox.

ON SCREEN:

There are no bold emails to be seen.

Quinn frowns.

KITCHEN

Quinn limps into the kitchen.

She opens the cupboard where her medication is. Takes out two bottles of pills.

She takes one pill from each bottle and holds them in her palm.

After a few moments of serious thought, Quinn throws the pills into the sink.

LIVING ROOM

Quinn sits on the couch with a new tub of ice cream and a large spoon.

She jabs the large spoon into the ice cream and gluttonously shoves it into her mouth.

Desperately, she jabs the large spoon into the frozen ice cream and shoves it in her face. Aggressively.

She turns on the TV. The cooking channel is back on.

Quinn watches a woman's hands prepare pasta.

She stabs the ice cream with the spoon again and shoves another spoonful of delight into her broken self.

The woman's hands gently knead the luscious dough.

Quinn prepares another large spoonful.

ON SCREEN:

-- Priscilla appears on the cooking channel.

-- She wears an elegant dress and a beautiful apron. Glamorous.

-- Posture straight and hair perfectly styled. Slim.

PRISCILLA

Pasta is one of the easiest but also one of the most sensitive things that you can make on your own.

Quinn freezes.

She lifts her eyes and is immediately confronted with the sight of Priscilla on the TV screen.

PRISCILLA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

If you have the right recipe, making pasta is a breeze.

Quinn stares at her in disbelief.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Remember, let food be thy medicine
and medicine be thy food.

Quinn watches her. In her frozen stare, only her tears are in motion as they burn down Quinn's cheeks.

FOCUS ON:

-- The plant. Withering without water or sunlight on the window.

-- A dry leaf falls on its own, to its death.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

With cane in hand, Quinn limps through the supermarket. She looks much worse than she did last time.

Again, she approaches the section with the strawberries. She looks at the price. \$6.99.

Quinn opens her hand.

FOCUS ON:

-- A bunch of small coins lie in Quinn's palm.

She looks disappointed.

Then, she makes her way to the other fruit that is on offer.

She sees the bananas. 55 cents per pound.

Regretfully, she grabs one of the small plastic bags and puts four bananas into the bag.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Quinn reaches the doors to Caroline's hospital room. She knocks.

There is no answer from the other side.

Quinn frowns. She knocks on the door again.

Nothing. She presses her ear on the door.

No answer.

Slowly, Quinn opens the door and peeks inside.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Caroline lies on the bed in a deep sleep. Her mouth is partially open, and she has some trouble breathing.

No one else is in the room with her.

There are many machines connected to her body.

She looks more pale and more weak than Quinn remembers.

Most of Caroline's hair has already fallen off. There are a few strands of hair visible on her hospital pillow.

The room is very white. Painfully steril, with nothing in it that resembles any source of life other than the two broken souls that are already in it.

Slowly, Quinn approaches the bed.

She limps to one of the chairs in the room and takes a seat.

Uncomfortable and visibly shaken by the look of Caroline, Quinn looks around the room.

After a few moments, Caroline gently stirs from her sleep. She moves her head a little, then finally opens her eyes.

Slowly, they focus on Quinn.

CAROLINE

Hey.

She moves to sit up on her elbows.

QUINN

No, no. It's ok, stay down.

Caroline falls back down on the bed.

CAROLINE

(smiling)

Sorry. B- bad day today. Could you l... ift the bed a little for me?

QUINN

Sure. Where?

Caroline points to a remote next to the bed.

Quinn picks it up and presses a button. The bed slowly rises to bring Caroline into a more upright position.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I woke you up. I didn't know you were asleep.

CAROLINE

No, no. It's ok. I'm h- happy to see y... ou.

QUINN

Where's your dad?

CAROLINE

Out with the do... ctor.

Quinn looks worried. Caroline's eyes are barely open. Her cheeks have sunk into her skull.

She notices the bananas in the plastic bag.

Caroline tries to look happy.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Are those for m- me?

QUINN

Oh, yes. Yes. I got you some bananas. I um, I didn't really like the looks of the strawberries today. They weren't fresh.

Caroline nods.

CAROLINE

Thank you, Quinn. C- could you put them on the table, p... lease?

QUINN

Sure.

Quinn places the bananas on the table next to Caroline as instructed.

QUINN (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

CAROLINE

Good. G- good. I have a few more rounds o- of... chemo. And then I'll... I'll be out of h- here.

QUINN

Really? So it's getting better?

CAROLINE

Oh yeah. I'll be o- out of here soon.

Caroline gives her a huge smile.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

I'm just ti- tired f... from the meds.

QUINN

Right. I understand. I won't keep you long.

CAROLINE

No, it's o- ok. You can stay.

QUINN

No, I should let you rest. I can't wait till you're out of here.

CAROLINE

Me, too.

QUINN

Do you want me to call someone to get you anything? A nurse? Or a doctor? Do you have all the meds and water and food that you need?

CAROLINE

I h- have everything. D- don't w... orry. They come to s- see me every ten m... inutes.

QUINN

Okay.

Caroline watches her friend for a moment.

CAROLINE

How are y- you?

QUINN

Good. Good.

CAROLINE

Really?

QUINN

Yeah. Of course! I'm just worried for you that's all.

Caroline isn't convinced.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I'll come back again in a few days.
If you need anything please call
me. Or have your dad call me.

CAROLINE

Will d- do.

Quinn gently holds her friend's hand.

QUINN

Get some more sleep.

Caroline nods.

Painfully, Quinn begins to limp to the door. When she reaches
it, she turns around and gives her friend a small wave.

Caroline gives her a tiny wave back.

HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Slowly, Quinn closes the door behind her.

She looks alarmed.

She leans her forehead against the door to her friend's room.
Her eyes fill up with tears.

Gently, she breaks away from the door and begins to limp down
the hospital hallway.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Caroline stares intently at something across the room.

FOCUS ON:

-- The bananas.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Quinn closes the door behind her as she enters her apartment.
She leans on the door.

Her face is swollen and red from crying. She looks horrible.

BEDROOM

Quickly, she limps toward the computer.

She tries to compose herself.

She sits at the computer desk and quickly opens a new tab.
Her inbox.

It takes longer to load than usual. She looks agitated.

FOCUS ON:

-- The inbox finally loads. Not a single email is in bold.

Quinn looks very worried now. She opens a new empty email to write.

ON SCREEN:

-- TO: John Martin john@speakerjohnmartin.com

-- FROM: Quinn Tulson quinn.tulson@mail.com

-- SUBJECT: Any updates?

-- Dear John,

-- Just wondering if you have any new articles that need writing? I have some free time this week and would love to help you out!

-- Let me know,

-- Quinn.

She clicks SEND.

Then, she opens another empty email.

ON SCREEN:

-- TO: Sophia Lawrence sophialawrence@mail.com

-- FROM: Quinn Tulson quinn.tulson@mail.com

-- SUBJECT: Any updates?

-- Dear Sophia,

-- Will there be any new articles coming in soon? I'm writing up my schedule at the moment and I want to make sure that I leave enough space for everyone.

-- Let me know.

-- Quinn

Confused, Quinn sits back and stares at the computer screen.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Quinn walks through the hallways. Slowly, with the help of her cane. In her other hand is a new plastic bag with bananas.

She approaches the same room where she visited Caroline last time. The door to the room is wide open.

Quinn looks inside.

Empty. There is no patient inside. The room is spotless and has been completely cleaned.

Ready for the next patient.

Confused, Quinn looks around for an answer. She sees a NURSE IN HALLWAY.

QUINN

Excuse me. I'm looking for a friend. She was in this room a few days ago. Caroline Heath?

NURSE IN HALLWAY

Down the hall to the left. Room 409. They won't let you stay long.

The nurse walks away, leaving a confused Quinn behind her.

Quickly, Quinn tries to make her way in the direction the nurse told her to go. The more she tries to go faster, the more painful her leg is and the more pronounced her limp.

Finally, she makes it to the room in a state of almost complete panic. The door is closed.

Quinn stands in front of the door. 409.

As she is about to knock on the door, the door opens and Caroline's previous senior nurse comes out, almost bumps into Quinn.

SENIOR NURSE

Yes?

QUINN

Uhm... I'm looking for my friend. Caroline Heath?

The nurse looks at her with a frown.

SENIOR NURSE

I will be back in ten minutes. When
I come back, you leave. Stay here.

The nurse goes back inside and closes the door behind her.

Confused, Quinn stares at the door that has just closed in front of her face.

Finally, the door opens again. The nurse comes out with a white medical jumpsuit and a face mask.

NURSE

Put this on, then go inside. And
leave those bananas outside. In
fact, give them to me.

She snatches the bananas out of Quinn's hand and walks away.

Quinn fumbles with the jumpsuit.

HOSPITAL CLEANROOM

Caroline lies on a bed surrounded by machines that are attached to her body.

Around the bed is a curtain panel with see through protective curtains.

Dan sits in a chair outside of the plastic curtains in his own jumpsuit. Head in his hands.

Slowly, Quinn approaches.

The sight of her friend is miserable. She can barely recognize the cheerful Caroline that was with her only days ago.

Although she still has a huge smile across her face, Caroline is in visible pain and weak beyond measure.

Quinn slowly approaches her only friend.

QUINN

Hey.

Caroline turns her head to look at Quinn. A smile forms across her face.

CAROLINE

Hey, g- girl.

QUINN
What's this?

CAROLINE
It's j- just for good m- m-
measure. Against ba... cteria.

Quinn looks at Dan. His eyes are almost completely bloodshot. He tries to stay calm, but it is obvious that he is falling apart.

DAN
Hey, Quinn.

QUINN
Hello, Mr. Heath.

An awkward silence comes over the room. Caroline is too ill to speak.

QUINN (CONT'D)
When... uhm... When do you get out
of here?

CAROLINE
Not sure. M- maybe next week.
Right, d... ad?

DAN
Yeah. Probably next week.

Quinn can tell that this is a lie.

The sheer intensity of the machines and the white brightness of the room is almost too much to bear.

Quinn feels dizzy. She steadies herself with her cane.

QUINN
How do you feel? In general?

CAROLINE
A little w- weak. But they say it's
the m- meds. It will g- g- et
better.

Caroline smiles again. Quinn almost cannot look at her anymore.

QUINN
I brought you some bananas today.
But the nurse took them from me.

CAROLINE

Oh. S- sorry. I forgot t- to tell you. I can only e- eat hospital food. That th... ey bring me.

QUINN

It's ok.

Quinn tries to smile.

DAN

Thanks, Quinn.

The senior nurse walks into the room.

SENIOR NURSE

Visiting time is over. I'll have to ask you to leave now. Caroline needs her rest.

QUINN

Of course. Thank you.

Quinn steadies herself on her cane.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I'll come back tomorrow to see you.

SENIOR NURSE

Not tomorrow. No visits tomorrow. Caroline has a lot to go through. You can come back early next week.

QUINN

Ok. Yeah. Sure. Of course.

Quinn turns to her friend.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I'll find out when I can come. You can do this.

CAROLINE

Heh. Of c- course, I can.

QUINN

Bye, Mr. Heath.

DAN

Bye, Quinn.

The nurse points at Quinn's hospital jumpsuit.

SENIOR NURSE

That's disposable. There's a big trash can for it outside. When you take it off put it in the trash.

Quinn nods.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Quinn limps into the bedroom and throws the cane to the other side of the room.

Painfully, she makes her way to the computer chair. She takes a seat and a few moments to compose herself.

Lost, she tries to organize the desk a little. Moves papers and pens in no particular order and to no particular location.

When she finally gets a hold of herself, she opens the browser window.

FOCUS ON:

-- Computer screen. Inbox is loading.

INT. HOSPITAL CLEANROOM - NIGHT

Caroline lies on her bed. Half awake.

Dan is on a chair next to her, a closed laptop in his lap and a crossword puzzle on top.

DAN

Famous American artist, Ohr.

Caroline opens her eyes.

CAROLINE

G- George.

Dan counts the squares to make sure.

DAN

You're right.

Dan searches for another question to solve.

CAROLINE

Dad. Quinn isn't do... ing well.

Dan ignores her.

DAN
Here's another one. French car.
Three letters, starts with "A".

CAROLINE
Dad.

DAN
I'm sure she's fine.

CAROLINE
She's n- not.

DAN
Caroline, now is really not the
time.

Caroline takes a deep, painful breath.

CAROLINE
Dad, p... lease.

DAN
Caroline-

CAROLINE
-dad.

Caroline turns her head to look at her father.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Please.

Dan watches her.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Be k- kind.

A long stillness grabs the room.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Be kind.

Dan succumbs.

He pushes the crossword puzzle to the side and opens the
laptop.

He opens a browser window.

ON SCREEN:

-- Mail login screen.

Dan TYPES.

-- Username: sophialawrence@mail.com

-- Password: *****

The login screen disappears and is replaced by an inbox.

At the very top is a new, bold email.

Dan clicks on it.

ON SCREEN:

-- TO: Sophia Lawrence sophialawrence@mail.com

-- FROM: Quinn Tulson quinn.tulson@mail.com

-- SUBJECT: Any updates?

-- Dear Sophia,

-- Will there be any new articles coming in soon? I'm writing up my schedule at the moment and I want to make sure that I leave enough space for everyone.

-- Let me know.

-- Quinn

Dan stares at the screen, then looks at his daughter.

Caroline has fallen asleep. Exhausted.

Dan begins to TYPE.

ON SCREEN:

-- TO: Quinn Tulson quinn.tulson@mail.com

-- FROM: Sophia Lawrence sophialawrence@mail.com

-- Dear Quinn,

-- Yes. Sorry about the wait. I was busy.

-- Here are a few more articles. No rush. Get them done whenever you can.

-- Thanks,

-- Sophia

Dan CLICKS send. Then closes the laptop.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Morning.

Quinn walks to the fridge and opens it. The fridge is completely empty except for a single carrot.

She moves to one of the kitchen cupboards and opens it to look inside. Empty.

She opens another cupboard and sees that there is one pack of ramen left. She takes it.

BEDROOM

Quinn enters the bedroom with the ramen packet in her hand.

She sits at her computer desk. Opens the packet of ramen and tears a small, dry piece from it. She puts it directly into her mouth.

She presses a button on her computer to boot it.

She bites off another piece of dry ramen.

The computer is up now.

Absentmindedly, Quinn looks at it.

ON SCREEN:

-- Quinn clicks on her inbox window. Slowly, it loads.

-- One single bold email stands out.

Surprised, Quinn quickly clicks to open it.

ON SCREEN:

-- TO: Quinn Tulson quinn.tulson@mail.com

-- FROM: Sophia Lawrence sophialawrence@mail.com

-- Dear Quinn,

-- Yes. Sorry about the wait. I was busy.

-- Here are a few more articles. No rush. Get them done whenever you can.

-- Thanks,

-- Sophia

Quinn exhales in relief.

Immediately, she begins to fuss with the papers on her desk in preparation for her new article assignment.

Suddenly, her phone RINGS.

In her current excitement, it takes a few rings for Quinn to notice.

Clumsily, she reaches for her phone on the table and looks at it.

ON SCREEN:

-- Dan Heath

Quinn looks both confused and panicked. She quickly picks up the phone.

QUINN
 Dan? Mr. Heath?
 (pause)
 Yes? Are you alright?
 (pause)
 Huh?

Quinn's face changes from confusion to shock. Her eyes tear up and she begins to cry.

She sobs into the phone and wails in the middle of the room.

FOCUS ON:

-- A clay swallow on her desk. Black. Eyes wide open in shock, wings extended.

EXT. CEMETARY/FUNERAL - DAY

Heavy rain pours over the mourning funeral attendees who surround Caroline's new grave.

Many hug and gently speak to each other. The sound of rain hitting leaves surrounds them.

Caroline's father cries on his knees next to his daughter's grave.

Among the many flowers, one bouquet is from Quinn.

A simple bouquet of white daisies with a black ribbon and a card.

ON CARD:

-- Till we meet again.

-- Quinn

Quinn stands close by with her cane. Her eyes are bloodshot red and she gently sobs with what tears are left in her system.

Every now and then, a new person approaches to add a bouquet of flowers to Caroline's grave.

Each person does it slowly and meaningfully, gently placing the flowers on top of the grave as if to not disturb Caroline's rest.

Quinn doesn't really pay attention to the people who approach the grave. She is lost in her own thoughts.

However, a sound of a woman's heels shakes her from her thoughts.

Priscilla.

She approaches Caroline's grave. Glamorous. Her black dress and high heels are more suited for a cocktail party than a funeral.

Priscilla has her own bouquet. Large, colorful, with a massive black ribbon that holds the whole thing together.

She places the flowers on top of the others, next to Quinn's.

Quinn watches her.

Priscilla approaches Dan. She speaks a few words to him that Quinn cannot hear. Then makes her way back where she came from, and disappears.

Quinn stares at the luxurious bouquet that Priscilla brought, right next to her small daisies. She focuses on the card.

ON CARD:

-- I will miss you forever, C.

-- Your friend, Priscilla.

A rage rises in Quinn's stare.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Quinn enters her home. Soaking wet.

She looks broken and destroyed.

Her limp is almost more prominent than ever, and she painfully makes her way to the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Quinn opens the fridge. A single carrot.

Quinn then makes her way to the kitchen cupboards. She opens each one. They are all empty.

Some empty wrappers, plastic bags, and a lot of cereal crumbs are the only things that can be seen inside.

Quinn fills a glass of water in the sink and drinks.

BEDROOM

Quinn approaches the computer. It's on but the screen is black in sleep mode. She taps a key on the keyboard and the screen comes to life.

On the computer screen is Quinn's inbox. She looks at it.

FOCUS ON:

INBOX:

-- No new emails.

Quinn walks to one of the drawers of her desk. She opens it.

Inside, a quarter. She takes it.

LIVING ROOM

Quinn rummages through the mess in the living room. She lifts the sofa pillows and throws them to the side.

She finds another quarter hidden somewhere in the sofa. Takes it.

Quinn stands and leaves the room.

FOCUS ON:

-- The plant. Dead. Its dried up remains hang to the side of the tiny pot.

INT. SUPERMARKET/CHECKOUT QUEUE - NIGHT

Quinn stands in line.

A single ramen packet in her hand.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Quinn fills a small pot with water from the sink. Places it on the stove and turns it on.

She opens the ramen packet and dumps the ramen into the cold water.

LIVING ROOM

Quinn turns on the TV. The cooking channel comes on.

A MALE CHEF prepares a steak. No sound.

Quinn sits on the pillowless sofa and watches him.

The chef places the steak on a cutting board.

He grabs a large cutting knife.

Slowly, he slices through the perfectly cooked steak. Each slice is followed by red liquid that oozes from the meat.

The knife cuts another perfect slice.

Quinn's mind is lost somewhere in the distance.

A loud HISSING sound interrupts her.

Quinn jumps from the sofa.

KITCHEN

Quinn rushes to the stove.

The ramen has violently boiled over in the small pan. Piping hot noodles and ramen soup overflow and cover the stove.

Quinn tries to save the food in a state of panic.

She grabs the pot's metal handle. Burns herself.

QUINN

Fuck! Shit!

She jerks her hand away and knocks over the pot, which crashes on the kitchen floor.

Quickly, she turns the stove off. She looks around her for something to clean the mess with. A dirty kitchen towel is the only thing available.

She grabs it and throws it onto the hot mess on the floor.

Quinn tries to mop up the liquid but it's too hot to touch.

Heavy breaths.

Quinn stands and begins to pace the kitchen. Frightened and in a state of panic.

Heavy breaths.

She begins to sob, but tries to control it.

Quinn grabs a plastic bag and starts to breathe into it.

BEDROOM

Quinn enters the bedroom.

She takes deep breaths into the plastic bag in an effort to calm herself. Paces the room as she sobs. Unable to focus on anything during this panic attack.

She grabs the roots of her hair in frustration. Tugs on her own face.

In the midst of her hysteria, she notices an item half-hidden in the wardrobe.

The yearbook.

She pauses. Slowly, she lowers her arms as her attention shifts entirely toward the past.

She approaches it.

From the pile of abandoned things, she picks up her high school yearbook.

Quinn slowly flicks through the pages.

FOCUS ON:

-- Smiling students flash by one after the other as Quinn looks through the yearbook.

-- Then, a class photo appears.

Quinn examines it.

FOCUS ON:

-- An entire class.

-- On the far right, Priscilla smiles with her arm around another girl. Around Priscilla's neck hangs a gold medal.

-- On the far left, Quinn. In front of the class - in a wheelchair. No smile.

-- Next to Quinn, Caroline stands smiling. One hand on the handle of Quinn's wheelchair.

KITCHEN

Quinn stands above the ramen mess that covers the kitchen floor.

Her face is numb as she watches her ruined meal.

She lifts her arm and opens a kitchen drawer. From inside, she takes out a large knife. Holds it loosely in her hand.

BATHROOM

Quinn steps into the bath tub and sits down. Knife in hand.

She extends her left wrist.

She places the dull side of the knife on her exposed skin. Takes a deep breath.

With a confident tug, she does one quick, determined practice slice with the dull edge.

A soft pink line appears on her wrist.

Beside herself, Quinn switches to the sharp edge of the knife and aligns it with the faint pink line.

She shuts her eyes and takes a few quick breaths. Braces for the cut.

Suddenly, a realization creeps into Quinn's face.

She looks at the knife and the tired, pale skin of her exposed wrist. Something sinister appears in her stare.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

With her cane in one hand, Quinn limps through the street. Rain pours down her broken face.

In her other hand, Priscilla's business card.

EXT. LUXURIOUS HOUSE - NIGHT

Quinn reaches the front door of the house.

She takes a moment to absorb the luxury that stands in front of her.

She RINGS the doorbell.

No answer.

Quinn can see a light in the upstairs room of the house. She RINGS the doorbell again.

After a while, Priscilla opens the door. A wine glass in one hand.

PRISCILLA
(surprised)
Quinn?

Quinn doesn't answer.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Oh my God, you're soaked! Come in!

Priscilla opens the door wide and gestures for Quinn to enter.

With the help of her cane, Quinn slowly enters the house.

The door closes behind her.

INT. PRISCILLA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Priscilla gestures for Quinn to take a seat.

PRISCILLA
Let me get you some dry clothes.

QUINN

No!

Priscilla is visibly surprised.

QUINN (CONT'D)

It's okay. I won't sit anywhere. I just... wanted to talk.

PRISCILLA

It's not about the couch, you'll catch a cold!

QUINN

No.

Priscilla nods.

PRISCILLA

Is this about Cle- Caroline?

Quinn seems irritated.

QUINN

Uhhh... yes.

PRISCILLA

I understand. Sit down, grab that blanket and cover yourself. I'll bring you some tea.

Before Quinn can stop her, Priscilla has already disappeared into what is probably the kitchen.

On her own, Quinn examines the room.

Extravagant.

Cookbooks, awards, diplomas, and then... medals. An entire glass display of gymnastics medals.

A bitterness creeps into Quinn's face.

Priscilla returns with a cup of tea and some cookies. She places them on the coffee table in front of Quinn.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Here you go. I really should get you some dry clothes.

QUINN

No. I'm fine.

Priscilla shakes her head and sits on the other side of the couch.

PRISCILA
How are you doing?

QUINN
I don't really know.

PRISCILLA
I can imagine. She was such a sweet girl. I remember her from back in high school.

QUINN
Do you?

PRISCILLA
Of course, I do! She always came to cheer us, remember?

QUINN
I remember. I'm just surprised that you do.

PRISCILLA
Well, she always sent us photos from competitions.

Quinn looks angry. She moves in her seat and rearranges her coat. Nervous.

QUINN
She really cared about sports, you know?

PRISCILLA
I know. Poor girl, she must have been through so much in life.

Priscilla takes a sip from her wine glass. Quinn stares at her with mixed nervousness and determination.

Priscilla looks at Quinn's cane. Memories almost visibly pass across her face.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
How are you, Quinn?

QUINN
I'm fine.

PRISCILLA
Quinn, I'm serious.

QUINN

So am I.

Priscilla sighs. She twirls the wine in her glass.

FOCUS ON:

-- Slowly, Quinn moves her hand toward her hip. Underneath her coat, the KNIFE hides tucked into her sweatpants.

-- Quinn's hand trembles as it grasps the handle of the weapon.

Quinn's face shakes in anger.

Suddenly, Priscilla begins to cry.

PRISCILLA

I know it's my fault, Quinn.

(sobs)

You think I don't know that?! You think it doesn't torment me every single day?

Quinn is taken aback.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Do you know how many times I tried to reach out to you? You ran from me, Quinn. I would have helped you. Somehow, I don't know, but I wanted to help you.

Priscilla cries loudly.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, okay? I'm sorry! I don't know what to do.

Quinn doesn't move.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

What do you want me to do?

Priscilla wipes her face.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

I can't imagine what you've been through. But what could I do? You wouldn't talk to me! I called your house every day.

FOCUS ON:

-- Slowly, Quinn's hand lets go of the knife.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Every day I called.

Quinn considers these new words for a moment.

QUINN
It's okay.

PRISCILLA
It's not okay.

QUINN
Well, no. But it could be, I guess.

An awkward silence forms between the two women as they both try to compose themselves.

PRISCILLA
Listen, whatever you need just come here, okay?

QUINN
I don't need anything.

PRISCILLA
Yes you do, shut up. Drink the tea.

Quinn obeys.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
We're gonna figure this out. I'm gonna help you. We'll figure it out. I have some money, I don't know.

Priscilla downs the rest of the wine in her glass.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
I'll find you a place to stay. We'll figure it out, okay?

Quinn nods.

Priscilla extends a hand to cup Quinn's cheek.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Look at you.

Priscilla stands.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
I need a wine refill.

She leaves the room.

Quinn is left on her own.

She looks once more at the glass display of medals. Dozens of them are carefully positioned in the beautiful display. Ribbons, medals, and trophies.

Quinn considers their sparkling elegance.

Priscilla returns. A full glass of wine in hand.

QUINN

I like your medals. So many.

Quinn stands and limps over to the glass display.

PRISCILLA

Oh, yeah. My dad made that.

QUINN

How long did you keep going?

PRISCILLA

College. Got bored of it after my first year.

QUINN

Bored of it?

PRISCILLA

Yeah.

Priscilla stands and walks to her handbag. From inside, she pulls out a small mirror and her lipstick. Quinn watches her.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

It was a lot. Plus, there was more fun at college, you know?

Priscilla reapplies her lipstick and fixes her hair.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

(laughing)

I visited more boys' rooms than classes.

She winks at Quinn.

QUINN

Right.

Priscilla comes closer. Both now admire the glass display of medals.

PRISCILLA
How was college for you?

QUINN
Sedentary.

Priscilla laughs out loud - then realizes that it wasn't supposed to be a joke.

PRISCILLA
(quickly serious)
Sorry.

QUINN
(stern)
I spent four years in a wheelchair,
Pri.

PRISCILLA
Shit, sorry. I had no idea. I
thought it was just senior year.

QUINN
You had no id- I thought you said
you were trying to reach me?

PRISCILLA
I did. But it was awkward. And then
I tried to reach Cle- I mean,
Caroline, but her number changed,
and... oh it was a mess.

Quinn seriously thinks about this for a moment.

QUINN
Caroline's number didn't change.

PRISCILLA
Yes, it did. Remember? When her dad
died she was so sad and changed her
number.

QUINN
Mom.

PRISCILLA
Huh?

QUINN
Her mom died.

PRISCILLA

Yes. Oh, did I say dad? Sorry, it's been a long day. May she rest in peace.

Priscilla watches her medals in admiration. Head high, proud.

Quinn studies her face suspiciously.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

We had some good times in high school. Right?

Quinn sees a different person now. Or is this the same Priscilla that always existed?

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

You were such a great friend, Quinn. Always stuck with me. Always supported me. Remember that stupid science test you took for me?

(laughs)

Shit, that really saved me.

Quinn stares at her. A flame begins to burn behind her eyes.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

My mom loved you! She was convinced that nothing... *inappropriate* would ever happen with you around.

(laughs)

She was a good judge of character. But you were a better friend.

QUINN

Was I?

This was not a question. It was a self-evaluation.

PRISCILLA

Of course! You always came with me everywhere, remember? All the car rides? All the parties? We had a great time.

A shadow falls across Quinn's face. Her demeanor becomes stern.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Ugh, dad was so obsessed with these medals.

Priscilla scans over her many accomplishments.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Obsessed with the Olympics.
(laughs)
As if any of us could ever have
qualified.

Quinn doesn't blink. Her glare is fixed onto a single target.

QUINN
I could have.

PRISCILLA
Huh?

Quinn doesn't respond.

Priscilla scans her weak body real quick before she realizes what Quinn meant.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Quinn, c'mon. You were great, but
the Olympics? They're a whole
different level than our little
high school team.

Quinn, now furious, can no longer contain the years of anger and disappointment that are behind her.

Priscilla watches the metal shimmer on her medals.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
We got as far as we could.

QUINN
(grim)
I could have.

PRISCILLA
Quinn-

At that moment, Quinn grabs the hidden knife.

With one strong swipe, she slashes a large part of Priscilla's face.

Priscilla screams in agony.

QUINN
I! COULD! HAVE!

Priscilla wails and grabs her face as she takes a few steps back, away from her attacker. Soon, her own blood fills the vision of one eye.

Priscilla still cannot gain control from what just happened. She tries to both stop her own bleeding and to get away from another attack.

Quinn points the knife directly towards Priscilla. Her limp stops her from moving quickly.

PRISCILLA
Stop! Stop! What are you doing?

QUINN
You took everything from me!
Everything!

PRISCILLA
What are you talking about? What
the hell did I take?

QUINN
My career!

PRISCILLA
Your c-?

Priscilla tries to understand.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Your... gymnastics career?

QUINN
I could have done it! I could have
qualified!

Quinn aimlessly swipes with the knife again, but misses this time.

QUINN (CONT'D)
Look at me. Look at me! Look what
you made of me!

Priscilla, with one eye that can see, looks at Quinn. She sees an animal. A rabid creature overcome with acidic hate.

Quinn doesn't wait for a response. She moves as quickly as she can and slashes at Priscilla once again.

Priscilla screams and moves out of the way at the last moment. But Quinn continues her pursuit.

They move through the room clumsily. Priscilla grabs a lamp and tries to throw it at Quinn. But with only one eye to aim with, she misses.

Quinn continues to approach her with the knife and to slash at any opportunity she has.

This time, she manages to push Priscilla into a corner. By now, most of Priscilla's face is covered in blood and she has almost completely lost the ability to see.

Quinn uses this opportunity and approaches Priscilla as quickly as she can.

QUINN (CONT'D)
I fucking trusted you!

She motions the knife toward Priscilla's arm and stabs it. Priscilla screams in pain.

QUINN (CONT'D)
I fucking-!

Quinn slashes Priscilla across her chest. The cut isn't deep, but it is enough to cause more pain.

Priscilla curls into a ball on the floor. Sobs in agony.

Quinn is visibly exhausted by the effort. Her leg is in excruciating pain and she can barely stand on her own. She takes a moment to recollect herself and to plan her next attack.

Then, a loud THUD is heard from a room upstairs.

Quinn freezes.

Upstairs, FOOTSTEPS move across the floor.

QUINN (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Who the fuck is that?

Priscilla turns toward the ceiling. Petrified.

PRISCILLA
Oh shh-

QUINN
-who... the fuck... is here?

Priscilla freezes. Bloody, cut up and in pain. After a few moments, she delivers her answer.

PRISCILLA
My daughter.

Quinn is stunned.

QUINN

What?

PRISCILLA

(louder)

My daughter.

Quinn stares at her, unsure of what to do next.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Please. Whatever you think of me...
don't let my daughter go through
this trauma.

Quinn pulls back slightly.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Please. Don't let her see her
mother like this.

Quinn still holds the knife pointed towards Priscilla.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

I still have time to clean up a
little. I'll tell her I fell. But,
please.. please, Quinn. Don't let
her come down and see me like this.

Quinn pulls away even more and looks up at the ceiling.
Deliberates.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. We'll figure it out,
Quinn. I'll help you more, I will.
Please!

(sobbing)

My daughter needs me! She has no
one else.

Quinn lowers the knife.

She looks at Priscilla. Baffled.

She tucks the knife into her sweatpants and leaves the house.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Quinn cries heavily as she limps her way down the street.
Splashes of Priscilla's blood are on her face and clothes.
She wails loudly.

INT. LUXURIOUS HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Priscilla, still on the floor, waits to see if Quinn has really left the house.

All clear, she grabs her shirt and tries to wipe the blood from her eyes. Terrified.

FOOTSTEPS approach closer.

Then, a very DRUNK MAN (late 60s) enters the living room. Confused.

He looks at her, and can just barely comprehend what has happened as he leans on the wall for support.

DRUNK MAN
The hell happened here?

PRISCILLA
Call nine-one-one!

The man only looks at her - confused.

INT. APARTMENT/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Quinn enters her apartment in complete despair.

She locks the door behind her. Her hands leave blood stains on the door and its handle. She seals all the available locks.

BATHROOM

Quinn opens the tap and tries to clean the blood from her hands. She is completely out of it.

KITCHEN

She is now both cries and screams at the same time.

She opens one of the kitchen cupboards and takes out all of her medication.

Dozens of unused, full medication bottles are now on her kitchen counter.

Between her sobs, Quinn gluttonously stuffs her face with pills. Handfuls of them. She swallows them, chews them, pushes some down with water, coughs out others.

BEDROOM

Quinn enters the bedroom. Delirious.

She collects all the swallows from her computer desk. Manic.

She lies on her bed and holds all the swallows to her chest.

Her face deforms in pain. An animalistic scream echoes from her throat into the night.

Car headlights pass every now and then, illuminating the despair on her face.

Quinn's cries slowly weaken and her breath becomes more shallow.

In the distance, a police SIREN approaches closer and closer.

Quinn weakly tucks her body into a ball, surrounded by swallows.

She sleeps.

FADE OUT.

THE END