

LADY MERCY



Pilot:

"Through The Black Hole"

Written & Created by

Eli Samuel

TEASER**OVER BLACK:**

*I come without refuge to you, giver of sacred rest.
I come a fallen man to you, uplifter of all.
I come undone by disease to you, the perfect physician.*

Ganga Lahiri, Poem to The Ganges River

Then the rising swell of BIRDS CALLING as we...

FADE IN:**EXT. THE GANGES RIVER (VARANASI, INDIA) – DUSK**

THE HORIZON: The Ganges snakes its way to the rising sun as we FLY overhead...heading downstream with MIGRATORY BIRDS flocking into view.

They flutter past the riverfront steps dipping into the murky water surrounding the ancient city of Varanasi, where TEA CANDLES flicker like fireflies inside saucers made of leaves and flowers as

DOWN BELOW

A sea of BODIES comes into view, hundreds bathing in the sacred waters known to heal and bless the dead. And a

FIGURE

wades amongst them in a white lab coat and black headscarf.

The bodies part as the Figure carves forward, candles floating out of the way to REVEAL DR. LHASA GANGES (30s-40s, female Indian): her face dark, EYES even darker, with a dark elegance in her stride.

ASH rains down from the sky like winter snow as Lhasa wades through – a STEADY BEEPING intensifying to draw her in deeper...BEEP...BEEP...BEEP...

LHASA'S POV: a HOSPITAL BED floats in the river ahead...a ten-year-old girl asleep within, vital machines around her:

KALI ROSE (10). Lhasa's daughter, her sweet brunette angel-
 What straggled hair is left anyway. Kali's cheeks sunken,
 lips parted and chapped. The beeping slows: BEEP....BEEP...

With each step forward, Lhasa sinks deeper into the river,
 arms outstretched, unable to reach her daughter-

Until her HAND reaches out to the edge of the hospital bed,
 the Ganges rising up to her neck, her mouth.

Lhasa FINGERS kiss the bed's railing, but her grip slips
 back into the water-

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...as the river swallows Lhasa whole-

SMASH TO:

Lhasa's EYES, wet with anguish, snap open in...

INT. LHASA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAWN (SEATTLE, PRESENT DAY)

An ALARM CLOCK beeps on a nightstand: **6:34 AM.**

Lhasa winces from the sunlight slashing across her face and
 turns to silence the alarm. She knocks over a few
 PRESCRIPTION BOTTLES in the process: Sleep aids and
 antidepressants of various sorts.

Lhasa sits up, staring right at us. Dejected.

MOMENTS LATER

WIDE: Everything in Lhasa's room is PACKED UP in boxes-

Except for a HINDU SHRINE in the corner of the room: it
 contains a framed portrait of Krishna (the supreme deity
 playing a flute) and an idol of Ganesh (elephant-headed and
 with four arms perched atop a throne).

Before the deities lay a tray, adorned with all the proper
 ritualistic items: a silver bell, incense sticks, candle
 lamp, water container, offerings of fruit, and a mat where
 Lhasa kneels, bowing her head to the floor.

Even with little faith, she prays as the TITLE fades in:

L A D Y M E R C Y

ACT ONE

INT. LHASA'S HOUSE, EVERY ROOM – MOMENTS LATER

PACKED MOVING BOXES galore. A huge two-story home with everything from the living room and the kitchen to the garage sealed up. Each box scrawled with sharpie tells a brief history: "**WEDDING FAVORS**", "**MED BOOKS**", "**CAMPING**", and many labeled "**DAVID'S STUFF**".

Each room more barren than the last except for–

INT. KALI'S BEDROOM

Pristine and unpacked. The walls a bright yellow.

Kali's twin bed is made up with astronomy sheets. A reading chair situated by a bay window seats a large teddy bear.

Plus bookshelves abound hug the walls. Tomes of children's fantasy, from Goodnight Moon and The Very Hungry Caterpillar to Charlotte's Web and a slew of Choose Your Own Adventure books.

Lhasa stands by the doorway, peering into the time capsule as dust floats in scattered sunlight.

She meanders over to one of the bookshelves, their colored spines making rainbows. Pulls out one titled: Through the Black Hole by Edward Packard.

Its big blue cover boasts the tag: "**Choose your own Fate!**" with a golden space rocket launching into the starlit sky.

The corners are flimsy and worn from so much use; it casts a fleeting grin from Lhasa. She sits on the edge of Kali's bed and cracks open the book. On the inside cover reads:

Every Great Dream Begins With a Dreamer.

– Love Mummy

Lhasa flips to the first chapter and begins to read...

LHASA

You have been chosen for a mission
that's never been attempted before...

FLASHBACK – 3 YEARS EARLIER (NIGHT)

Lhasa's still at the edge of Kali's bed, reading:

LHASA

...A journey to the center of a black hole. Scientists can only guess what will happen.

Lhasa reads to Kali (9) tucked in bed, covers up to her nose in anticipation. Healthy as can be.

LHASA

You've been warned that you may not return alive. The spaceship Athena will actually enter the black hole; its sister ship, the Nimrod, will only go to the edge and observe. Which ship will you choose to pilot?

Lhasa flips to a new page as DR. DAVID CARRELL (late 30s), Lhasa's husband, admires silently from the doorway. Along with a permanent five-o'clock shadow, he wears an heir of confidence and gentlemanly bravado.

LHASA

If you choose the Athena, turn to page 14. If you choose the Nimrod, turn to page 64. But be careful! Once you fall into a black hole you may end up as a few trillion neutrons scattered throughout space. Or you could be the first person to emerge from a black hole and return to earth a hero!

Kali mulls it over: it's a big decision after all.

DAVID

Go for it. But only if come with you.

David slides in, grabbing Lhasa's shoulders tenderly. She glances over and spots sauce on the corner of his mouth, giving him the signal to lick it away.

KALI

(giggling)

You can't, you're too fat.

DAVID

Excuse me?

David lifts up his undershirt, revealing a flat but far from athletic stomach. Pushes it out comically.

DAVID

Mum, do you concur?

Lhasa makes a more-or-less hand gesture.

DAVID

Well, thank you my lovelies. BUT...

David examines the rocket's picture on the opposite page:

DAVID

(smartass)

Looking at the fuselage's size and the multiple fusion-propulsion engines, and what looks like a carbon-nanotube aeroshell, my weight dispersal would only have minimal impact on the flight trajectory and fuel expenditure—

Lhasa shakes her head incredulously. Kali amused, but equally lost at her Dad's pretension.

LHASA

Really? Can't ever let a moment by where you're not the smartest in the room.

DAVID

(grins at Kali)

Second smartest. Your decision, captain?

Lhasa gazes at the bottom of the page where it boldly says:

Make Your Choice.

BACK TO:

INT. KALI'S BEDROOM — PRESENT DAY

Lhasa, alone, somberly lays the book on the bed. Her eyes spidered red in grief as...DRIP...a bead of water splashes on **Make Your Choice** bleeding out '**Your**'.

Lhasa looks up to spot a WATER STAIN on the ceiling, the size of a dinner plate.

...DRIP...Another drop falls – Lhasa quickly shuffles the book out of harms way, standing up. She steps onto the bed and examines the water stain – *maybe a plumbing problem?*

Lhasa touches the stain, smudging away some of the wet paint between her fingers – RINGRING! RINGRING!

Lhasa hops down, snatching her cellphone from a pocket. The SCREEN blares: **"Calling - Windermere Real Estate"**

LHASA
(picks up)
Hey Beth.

BETH (ON PHONE)
Don't be upset.

LHASA
...We didn't get it.

BETH (ON PHONE)
I'm sorry. A tech couple from San Fran went above full-ask.

Lhasa disappointedly casts her gaze out the bay window. She can make out the cloudy peak of Mt. Rainier miles away.

LHASA
What's next then?

BETH (ON PHONE)
In that area, not much inventory.
Something should pop up though.

Lhasa stares back at Kali's bed. Wheels in her mind turn...

BETH (ON PHONE)
We still have plenty of time, just a matter of finding the right fit.

LHASA
Actually...
(beat)
I might need something bigger.

EXT. LHASA'S HOUSE — SAME

A SOLD SIGN flags the front lawn as it waves from a heavy gust of wind...

INT. UNIV. OF WASHINGTON HOSPITAL, LHASA'S OFFICE — LATER

An MRI SCAN of a spine for "Mrs. Kit Abbott, Week 12" glows with rampant cancer — Spinal Metastases. White blotches jut from almost every vertebrae.

PULLING BACK, Lhasa examines her computer screen. The cancer's spreading...

INT. PALLIATIVE CARE UNIT, KIT'S ROOM — MOMENTS LATER

ON TV SCREEN: A split-screen news discussion with Washington Senator ROBERT LAKEVIEW (60s), a conservative Vietnam vet and former Harvard Bioethics professor speaking on a proposed bill restricting medical marijuana usage:

LAKEVIEW (ON SCREEN)

...I'm against the legalization of marijuana not because it's the same category of harder narcotics, but because it carries the same consequential weight. We've seen the difficulties of state-by-state regulation, unsubstantial reporting, and its lack to drastically decrease criminal growers and trade. All we're doing is sending a message of resignation, a gateway decision that isn't for the better of our security or ethical code—

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(drowning out)

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH! What a crock a shit! Collecting a greasy paycheck, that's what that is.

KIT ABBOTT (60s, black w/ Southern roots) lies in her hospital bed full of spunk and gusto; you'd never know by her energy half her spine's being chewed away by cancer, with chemo robbing her hair.

KIT

He's the one higher than a kite.

A nursing assistant and UW student, AUBREY CREST (20s, a young Aubrey Hepburn), can't help but chuckle as she adjusts Kit's IV.

KIT

I remember when getting baked was an American pastime. Like drive-ins or listening to BB King...both even better on the green!

(to Aubrey)

Come on, honey, where you hiding it? You know I won't tell nobody.

There ain't a person alive Kit can't make smile. Aubrey mutes the TV.

AUBREY

That makes two of us. Plus I have to study for finals.

KIT

Finals? You're already helpin' here.

AUBREY

Just a certified assistant nurse at the moment.

KIT

That'll change, some ink and paper can't stop you.

AUBREY

Thanks.

KIT

Welcome. Now will you tell me where the bud's at?

LHASA

(enters)

Harassing the help, I see?

KIT

Helping me feel ancient with that angel face.

LHASA

I think you look ravishing.

KIT

You mean ravaged? Oh sweetie, please tell me those pretty eyes haven't gone blind? I look like a shitty chocolate egg.

LHASA

Which are delicious.

AUBREY

I love Cadburies. That I can bring you.

Aubrey secures the IV line.

KIT

You're both sweet. Be even sweeter if one of you upped this drip. Or you prefer my yelping?

LHASA

Happy to adjust. Anything else?

Kit points out her window, which looks across the other side of UW Hospital.

KIT

This view. All I've got is other people sadder than me. God knows one thing keeping them going is when I'm bathed.

LHASA

Blame the architect. Gave all the good views to the children's ward.

KIT

Youth has everything. Least put a plant there, hun. Unless you two are gunna stick 'round 24/7.

LHASA

That's the job.

KIT

How we doing at our job?

Lhasa nods Aubrey out and approaches Kit bedside.

LHASA

Good. Very Good. Your response has slowed a bit, but that's typical of later treatment cycles. How's the nausea?

KIT

Not much to keep down. Plus I'm pissing like a racehorse.

LHASA

All regular. Means your kidneys are working well.

Lhasa looks at Kit's SWOLLEN FEET and HANDS. Ankles like softballs, fingers inflated. She takes Kit's HAND in hers:

LHASA

Squeeze my hand for me.

Kit does, grimacing in pain.

LHASA

Any harder?

Kit tries, but it's like a thousand hot needles.

KIT

More and I'll burst.

LHASA

Hm, alright. Try to eat more, okay?

KIT

Long as you let me cook. No more of this reheated gruel.

LHASA

In due time. I'll be expecting quite the feast.

Lhasa goes to let go of Kit's hand, but Kit finds strength to hold on tight. Locks Lhasa's gaze with hers:

KIT

Make sure a heart that big don't weigh you down.

INT. UW HOSPITAL, HALLWAY – MOMENTS LATER

Lhasa rounds a corner and spots LUTHER (60s), Kit's husband, at reception. He's the size of an NFL lineman, but gentler than a dandelion. He approaches Lhasa with a minor limp, carrying large Tupperware and a smile.

LUTHER
Doc, how's my lady doing?

LHASA
Hard time as always. Won't keep quiet about you.

LUTHER
Never does bout anyone.

Lhasa looks over the Tupperware skeptically.

LHASA
Hope that's not a block of sugar.

LUTHER
Tried my hand at her grandma's lemon merengue, but with Splenda and Smart Balance.

LHASA
Tastes the same?

LUTHER
Lord no, tastes terrible! Might be poison. Guess that wouldn't matter though.

It's a dark joke that doesn't quite land right.

LHASA
How's the shop and home?

LUTHER
Business is good. Kids coming down next week to help tidy the house. Pretty sure I killed Kit's rose bush though. Claiming an Act of God.

LHASA
Mum's the word.

LUTHER
Amen. She in her room?

LHASA
Treatment. Should be back within the hour.

LUTHER
Right...
(beat)
...Doc, I was wondering...is there anything else we can do?

LHASA
We're doing everything we can. She just needs you, that's your worry.

LUTHER
No...Doc. I mean...are you sure?

LHASA
Of course.

LUTHER
(beat)
Are you sure?

Lhasa sees strain on Luther's face, unsure what he means...

LUTHER
I've been reading up and...well was wondering about making...one of those...dignity requests?

WIDE: Luther towers over Lhasa like a big dejected kid.

Lhasa reaches into her pocket, retrieves a business card and a pen. She writes something on the front. Luther takes it with a baseball-glove sized hand, skeptically examining.

LHASA
I think you should go here first.
Clear your mind.

Luther muscles a grin and lumbers passed Lhasa down the hallway. She watches him, knowing it isn't quite the answer he was looking for.

A RED TEAR cascades down Lhasa's eye...or is it—

SUPERIMPOSE TO:

An INCISION is made on the side of a male's chest in...

INT. UW HOSPITAL, OPERATING ROOM — DAY

Blood weeps and is quelled by TWO STAFF NURSES (20, 30s).

The MAN (50s) is unconscious, draped under a blue sheet.

REVEAL a surgically masked oncology surgeon, DR. DAVID CARRELL (40s), Lhasa's ex-husband with those blue eyes that could pierce an armored car.

David inserts a thin, rigid tube affixed with a TINY VIDEO CAMERA through the small incision in the chest's side.

As David feeds the tube, a FOREARM TATTOO of Joe Camel in a tux with 'SMOOTH' written underneath flexes; His spirit animal, confident and bold.

ON VIDEO MONITOR: the feed records the camera's entry to the right lung, spotted with two tumors on the bottom lobe.

David watches the monitor overhead at his eyeline. Then makes two more INCISIONS to excise the tumor masses.

He works with an educated and gentle touch, symphonic.

Vitals are calm, bleeping at a steady pace.

ON VIDEO MONITOR: David removes the masses with a laser cutter. He pulls the first mass with no problem through an incision: a pinkish and bruised marble...then moves on to the second mass — another success. Might not be a cure, but it buys time...

DAVID

Alright, alright. Whaddya say we go home, ladies?

The nurses smile beneath their surgical masks. Assist David in suturing up the lung, then the incisions—

BLEEP BLEEP BLEEP! The vitals wail!

DAVID
(examining vitals)
Air leak?

STAFF NURSE
Stable. Pressure's up.

DAVID
Must be a DVT. Let's open back up,
and sidewind the clot. Get it before
it embolizes in the artery.

BLEEPBLEEPBLEEPBLEEP!

STAFF NURSE
Heart rate elevating. 32, 36...oxygen
dropping...

DAVID
Let's dump herapin. Start thinning it
out. Pop the heart.

The nurses and David move furiously, reopening an incision
and snaking a wire-like tool to clear the pulmonary artery.

BLEEPBLEEPBLEEPBLEEPBLEEP!

Vital signs smooth mountains into flat, lifeless valleys...

And the Man, inert, is never the wiser of his fate.

ACT TWO**INT. UW HOSPITAL, CHIEF PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE - LATER**

Lhasa cracks open the door with a simultaneous knock.

LHASA
Mind if I come in?

Behind a desk, DR. SARAH MARTIN (50s), UW Hospital's Chief Physician, peeks beyond a stack of documents, blond bangs, and frameless glasses.

MARTIN
Could I stop you?

Martin's a confident woman who earned her spot and snark, inviting Lhasa to take a seat.

MARTIN
Find anything yet?

LHASA
(sitting)
Not yet. Down to the wire.

MARTIN
Not to say I told you so, but I told you not to sell first. Look into Kenmore. Seen a few for-sales. It's a bit north, but has the quiet.

LHASA
Price tag, too.

MARTIN
You do just fine. Not as well as me, but that's why I get this comfy chair.

(off Lhasa's look)
But I'm guessing you're not here to chat housing?

Lhasa adjusts; there's a reason why she respects Martin's opinion, needing it more than ever.

LHASA

Have a patient in PC. Spinal Metastasis.
Third round of radiation and kicking...

(beat)

And she...she and her husband might
want a DWD request.

MARTIN

Did he make the request or her?

LHASA

Him. Indirectly.

MARTIN

Him isn't her.

LHASA

Has anyone ever directly asked? I feel
like they've talked about it.

MARTIN

Feeling isn't knowing either. We don't
do relays. If they're serious, they'll,
and by they'll I mean she, requires a
full workup and written request.

LHASA

Of course. Just. Her progress has slowed.

Martin looks on, already knowing what to say.

LHASA (O.S.)

Worsened really, radiology shows
aggressive transcoelomic spread, and
want to ensure—

MARTIN

Lhasa. Let me stop you.

Martin removes her glasses. Stands and circles around to
sit on the edge of her desk across from Lhasa.

MARTIN

I know it's that time of year for you.
But you can't bring that here. We deal
in compassion, not passion. The science
of mutual benefit. Or else you're just
an expensive friend with a doctorate.

Lhasa nods, one almost imperceptible. Martin notices she needs a little more.

MARTIN

Do you remember Clifford Taskin?
Squirrely and bearded, was up for
a Board position few years ago?

LHASA

Moved to Pasadena for a big pharma
position.

MARTIN

(shakes her head)

Not by choice. The Board rescinded
their consideration.

Martin points to a picture of the two at a fundraiser.

MARTIN

Cliff, who I did my residency along-
side and knew quite well, had no rival
in kindness. Smart hands, soft heart.
So when a man with late stage ALS put
in a DWD request 3 months prior, he
executed it professionally and with
the utmost care. It was the first and
only request he'd done. Month later,
he was packing his bags for Cali.

LHASA

Because he did his job.

MARTIN

Because fact is, some things are
legal. But not everyone sees it that
way. The law doesn't chart a moral
compass, nor does it quell bias.
His patient was no better candidate,
but because of one request – which
was by the book, nothing wrong – he
got the label as "that" doctor. "That"
reputation is death. Nobody wins: one
less life or one less doctor?

LHASA

That's not a fair choice.

MARTIN

You want fair...or an impassioned answer – sorry. I'm where I am and you're where you are because of difficult decisions – the choices we did...and didn't make. And unfortunately perception is reality. With your...

LHASA

(finishes)

...My background, it's okay...

INSERT: KALI'S HOSPITAL BED FLOATS IN THE GANGES.

LHASA

...I understand.

MARTIN

I hope you do.

Lhasa stands, exiting–

MARTIN

Might want to check on David. Had a bad call this morning.

EXT. UW HOSPITAL, BACK ENTRANCE - LATER

TOBACCO EMBERS BLAZE and calm to a bright orange, then winter grey, casting out wisps of smoke.

PULLING BACK, reveal David leaning against the wall taking another long pull. He watches SPARROWS chase one another through tree branches, encircling and diving, soaring off.

As David brings his cigarette up for another drag, he notices his HAND shaking...

He holds his arm out, watching the rattle extend up to his shoulder. *Maybe nerves finally settling in.*

As David takes another hit, the smoke goes down the wrong pipe, and he coughs up a storm.

LHASA (O.S.)

To think that'd maybe stop you.

Lhasa joins beside David. He clears his throat.

DAVID

Let's me know I'm alive.

Lhasa flicks the 'Oncology" label on his medical badge and shakes her head.

LHASA

The irony was always thick.

DAVID

(knocks on his head)

My skull thicker. What you loved about me.

Lhasa chuckles, holding out her hand. David passes his cigarette. Notices the paint stained on Lhasa's fingers.

DAVID

Cerulean.

LHASA

Huh — oh yea. Don't ask.

Lhasa takes a pull, rearing her head back in satisfaction and casts out a slow billow.

LHASA

I hate how nice that is.

DAVID

Can't beat liquid alkaloids.

Lhasa hands back the cigarette, grinning incredulously.

LHASA

Can't just call it nicotine.

DAVID

And not annoy the shit out of you?
No, can't have that. Plus when am
I gunna get to use such a cool word?

Lhasa levels David with peaceful eyes:

LHASA

You don't have to. Entertain me.
What happened?

A moment. David takes a long, almost existential drag.

DAVID

Pre-op turned up fine. No med complications, heart steady. He was a little porky, but so are most fifty year-olds whose main staple is chicken liver and pretzels. Was wrapping up when leg clot sprinted to his lung. Tried to outrace it— Apparently I'm not Usain Bolt.

LHASA

No one is. You know it's not your fault.

David stomps out his cigarette.

DAVID

...Yyyep.

LHASA

Take the day.

DAVID

It's okay.

LHASA

Dave...take off, it won't kill you to get out of here.

DAVID

Only have one more 'round 6. Small invasive, no biggie. Then I'll down enough bourbon to sleep all of Louisville.

(beat)

Misery loves company?

Lhasa grins at the invitation, dropping her head.

LHASA

(beat)

I do need you to pick up your things when you can.

David's disappointed, crashing back to reality.

DAVID
Tomorrow night?

LHASA
Whenever's convenient.

DAVID
Then's good. I think I can load
most of it in the jeep.

LHASA
I appreciate it.

David looks Lhasa up and down.

DAVID
You look different.

LHASA
Certainly know how to make a woman
feel old.

DAVID
No...something else. I dunno. Like
you know something.

Lhasa moves in close, as if they may embrace...but no, she
reaches into David's back pocket, and pulls out his
cigarette pack.

LHASA
Quit.

David smiles. Even after all this time, Lhasa can't help
but look after him. She tosses the pack into a trash can,
and walks off to her car—

DAVID
Hey...
(beat)
Happy Anniversary.

What would have been anyway. Lhasa is halfway into her
sedan, and before diving in:

LHASA
You too.

David watches Lhasa pull out of the parking lot. Then slowly meanders to the trashcan. Leans over...

Those cigarettes look good...

But not that good as David grins, heading back inside. As the door closes behind him—

WHACK! Something smacks into the door's glass.

Startled, David whips around, approaching the door...

DAVID'S POV: A sparrow lies still on the concrete...

He moves in closer for a look, ZOOMING ON: a RED SPARROW, chest and head the color of blood, its wing black as night.

David looks around, kneeling, almost touching—

It FLUTTERS to life, scaring the bejesus out of David as it launches into the sky.

INT. TWO-STORY HOUSE, ALL ROOMS — LATER

BETH (30s), Lhasa's real estate agent, tours Lhasa around a quaint 4 bedroom-3 bath house. New construction, new finishings...the type of home that looks good visiting but doesn't feel lived in.

Right now, they float through an open concept living-room kitchen. Lhasa takes it all in, but her mind's clearly elsewhere as Beth pitches:

BETH (O.S.)

...All new appliances, marble counter-tops. All new bones. There's access to the backyard. Also access to a semi-finished basement down this way. Maybe turn it into a home gym or something. But I think it ticks all the boxes. Definitely a home you can grow into and make your own.

Lhasa is...underwhelmed. It won't quite do.

LHASA

No, it's great...

BETH
I'm sensing a 'but'?

LHASA
(beat)
I meant bigger. I don't care where.

Beth is very confused. This woman lives alone...

BETH
How big?

CUT TO:

SUBMERGED UNDER BLUE WATER...lines of fluorescent light
beaming above when—

Undulating ripples blur the bright white light, the water
churning—

A MAN swims past above: arms paddling forward, torso
twisting, and legs — make that ONE RIGHT LEG kicking
forward, the left amputated at the knee...

INT. YMCA, POOL — DAY

The Man kicks off the wall for a last lap, paddling into
breaststrokes. He's fast with one leg and never get a clear
look at him. Only enough to tell he's blonde and bearded.

As his head dives in and out of the water:

The faint sound of...an EXPLOSION...gunfire...a band of
distant SCREAMS...all growing LOUDER as his head bobs above
water each time—

Until he reaches the edge of the pool, gasping for breath:

DR. SILER SNOW, an abnormal psychiatrist, removes his
goggles and hulls himself on the pool's lip with ease. His
right leg in the water, the left stump out.

At the far end of the pool, an OLD WOMAN (70s) in a water
aerobics class does jumping jacks...staring at Siler's leg.

Siler stares back...and smiles from ear to ear, waving like
princess Diana. The Old Woman embarrassedly raises her
hand, blue styrofoam dumbbell and all, and waves back

INT. YMCA, MEN'S LOCKERROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Siler's LEFT LEG: scars crosshatch where the skin was sutured and stapled after amputation. He puts on a PROSTHETIC LEG, sinking his kneecap into a plastic socket connected to a metal limb and beige foot.

As Siler leans over to slip on pants and shoes, we see SHRAPNEL SCARS checker his back and a 'SEMPER FI' TATTOO on his neck as a familiar voice bellows:

LUTHER (V.O.)
 When? Oh, memory'd say I got drafted
 on...November 22, 1969. Couple weeks
 after turning 18.

INT. HARBORVIEW PSYCHIATRY, SILER'S OFFICE - LATER

On a desk, the BUSINESS CARD Lhasa gave Luther: it's Siler's with Lhasa's handwriting at the top - **"He'll Help."**

LUTHER (O.S.)
 Was a stock boy at a Biloxi hardware
 store, then shipped as a replacement
 body in the Third Brigade of the
 Twenty-Fifth Division.

PULLING BACK, Siler and Luther come into focus sitting opposite one another...

LUTHER
 The Cacti Green. Task-force division
 down in Cu Chi, but operated all over
 II Corps and Eye Corps wherever Viet
 trouble creeped.

A LARGE PAINTING on the wall portrays two females in a boat (Mother and Daughter) rowing from an isolated volcano...

LUTHER
 Hell, couldn't even drive, let alone ever
 been east of Georgia. Lot of scared dudes
 were trying to get deferments. Clip their
 toes, mess their vision up. Even my older
 brother, Darrell. He put some kind of
 cleaner in his eye. So never went, but
 still can't see ten steps ahead.

Siler pays attention, but his glassy eyes say otherwise—

EXT. IRAQ DESERT, 36 PARALELL — DUSK (2010)

Siler in military camo-gear mans a turret atop a moving RG-33 armored vehicle. Two other vehicles trail behind snaking their way through vast sand dunes on a thin road.

LUTHER (V.O.)

As a recon unit, most of our activities were at night and hid in the brush by day. Then called in strike coordinates. We were pins on a map.

INT. HARBORVIEW PSYCHIATRY, SILER'S OFFICE — SAME

Siler blinks away the memory as Luther continues:

LUTHER

War was waiting for B-52s to turn thousands of acres of lush green rain forest into bomb craters. The holes in neat rows like a highway across the surface of the moon. Felt just as alien.

(beat)

Sometime in early '70, we got stranded. Those same craters kept us alive with heavy rains. Also gave a good lick of jungle rot. Could barely stand, wear boots. All I could do was wear these Ho Chi Minh sandals I had. Try crouching and running with those and an M16. Meander bout all those punji stick traps. They weren't the worst though. I remember...

Luther chokes up as — **INSERT: IRAQ DESERT, THE ROAD AHEAD. SILER AND CREW DON'T NOTICE A HIDDEN IED BURIED UNDER SAND.**

Siler takes a gulp of water. Composes himself.

LUTHER

I remember...how it tore through everyone, automatic gunfire, mortar rounds. Our own M14 mines used 'gainst us.

INSERT: BOOM! SILER IS CATAPULTED INTO AIR AND FIRE.

LUTHER

The trees and grass had caught fire,
the smoke made it hard to breathe.

**INSERT: DISORIENTATED AND EARS RINGING, SILER CRAWLS AND
GLANCES BACK PAST HIS WAIST TO SEE...NOTHING.**

LUTHER

One of the few with two legs, I kept
going back to help load more bodies
onto the floor of a Kaiser Jeep...
Looking down, they were all me. White,
brown, black. Bout 10 of 'em. All with
those big wide eyes, gawking up lost
dogs...had no medics or morphine...and
all I could think...the way they train
you to think about solutions and
efficiency...was that the magazine
capacity of my standard Colt M1911 is
seven...and all I knew...was I'd have
to reload twice to get all ten.

Luther cradles his shaking hand in his lap, a tear
swallowed up by his stubborn eyes.

LUTHER

I don't want the same for her.
(beat)
She deserves to decide when.

WIDE: A clock TICKS, framing the two very different, yet
oddly similar men. And then the guttural swell of PUKING—

INT. HARBORVIEW PSYCHIATRY, MEN'S BATHROOM — LATER

IN A STALL: someone's hunched over, throwing up into a
toilet — FLUSH! Reveal Siler, wiping his mouth. The
session, the traumatic triggers — he was able to hold it
together till his job was done.

Siler goes to the sink, splashing his face. Retrieves an RX
BOTTLE and dumps BLUE PAXIL PILLS into his hands...but he
doesn't want to take them. Doesn't want to numb himself
anymore. Siler pours the Paxil into the toilet—

FLUSH! As we watch the BLUE PILLS swirl into oblivion.

ACT THREE**DWD HOME FOOTAGE, WALLACE HOME – KITCHEN (OCT, 2009)**

CLOSE on a 100mg dose of GEL-CAPPED SECANOL PILLS being opened. They're diluted and stirred into a glass of water: turning clear to cloudy with the clink of spoon and glass.

PULLING BACK, ANNA WALLACE (30s) wields the spoon, doing her best not to cry and focus on the task.

We can hear mumbled conversation off-screen...

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Anna carries in the concoction where friends and family are gathered around PAUL WALLACE (late 70s), Anna's father on his bed, a giant window behind framing wintered trees.

Paul sits upright in his undies and a t-shirt with his son, AARON (late 40s), beside. Anna joins on his other side.

Paul's calm but hunched by his old age as a Death With Dignity Rep explains protocol:

DWD REP

...After 60-90 seconds, he will slip into a coma. Before that, Paul can say what he wants. Does this all make sense?

FRIEND

I heard it tastes woody.

ANNA

Dad, maybe you want something to wash it down? Water, Coke?

PAUL

Beer's fine. Old Mill if we have.

Paul's friend goes to grab it as the DBD Rep finishes asking mandatory questions:

DWD REP

Now Paul, you still have the right to change your mind—

PAUL
 My mind's not changing. Just gimme
 the glass, will ya?

Anna does, almost spilling it with trembling hands.

DWD REP
 Okay, now Paul, what will this
 medication do?

PAUL
 It will kill me and make me happy.
 (morbid grin)
 Also opens up a guest bedroom.

A few awkward giggles churn. Everyone's trying to treat
 this normally, but it is what it is.

PULLING BACK, reveal Lhasa watching the video in...

INT. UW HOSPITAL, LHASA'S OFFICE - DAY

Lhasa, hands in palms, is captivated by the stark, yet kind
 reality. INTERCUT Lhasa's reaction with...

HOME FOOTAGE, PAUL'S BEDROOM - SAME

The DWD Rep continues:

DWD REP
 Do you have any final words?

PAUL
 I want to thank you all for being here.

EVERYONE
 (unsynchronized)
 We love you, Paul/Uncle P...

PAUL
 (choking up)
 ...And I thank the voters for allowing
 me...the honor...of doing myself in.
 On my own volition.
 (looks to Anna/Aaron)
 ...And to my sweet, stubborn children...
 (looks up)
 ...And to my wife.

Paul holds out his hand, shaking. Anna gives the glass and a kiss on his forehead. Paul gulps.

DWD Rep
Slow down Paul, you can take it at
your own pace...

But Paul's already done. The room: silent, somber.

ANNA
How's it taste?

PAUL
Ugh, like the backend of a woodchipper.
(looks around)
Somebody gunna wipe my chin? I'm still
a sick old man for Christ's sake.

The tension doesn't break, but reminds everyone to breathe.

PAUL
Where's that beer?

Paul's friend hurries in, handing over a beer.

ANNA
Why don't you lie down?

Anna, Aaron, and others help Paul lie down and stroke him, his head cradled in his daughter's lap.

PAUL
(almost wailing)
...Ah, it's coming. It's right there...
(singing)
*"...For my head is hanging low. I hear
the gentle voices calling. 'Old Black
Joe...'"*

Paul's mouth continues to mutter but no words form, no sound as he slips away.

Deeper and deeper...like plunging into a warm bath...

...And like that, serene and painless, Paul's passed.

The camera ZOOMS IN, past Paul's lifeless, yet satisfied face...and through the window to the snowy trees outside—

INT. UW HOSPITAL, OFFICE – SAME (AFTERNOON)

Lhasa's watered eyes blink back to the present. She exits the video, revealing a WEBSITE WINDOW headed:

'Washington State Health Licensing and Certification.'

Lhasa scrolls down to her **'Application – State Hospice Licensure'**, which status is **"In Process"**.

Side text reveals a cautionary list of basic DWD qualifications:

By law in order to participate, a patient must be:

- *18 years of age or older*
- *A resident of Washington for at least a year or valid identification*
- *Diagnosed with a terminal illness that will lead to death within six months (dependent on physician's diagnosis and best estimation)*
- *Capable of making and communicating health care decisions for him/herself (preferably validated by a mental healthcare professional)*

SILER (O.S.)

Hey stranger.

Siler hangs by the door. Startled, Lhasa exits the application.

LHASA

Siler...hey!

SILER

Bad time?

LHASA

Never, come here.

Lhasa rounds her desk and embraces Siler.

LHASA

So?

SILER

He's a good guy. Brother-in-arms.

LHASA
Figured that'd open him up.

SILER
It did. Can't go into much obviously,
but for a first session, not bad.
He's pretty intent about his
wife though.

LHASA
(nods, resigned)
Figured that, too.

SILER
But he's in the right place mentally.
What's the deal?

LHASA
I'm happy to hear that. He needed
an outlet. And you're one of the
most understanding men I know.

SILER
Have my moments.

LHASA
You two going to continue?

SILER
I hope so. Go deeper. We have two
dates locked in and we'll take it
from there.

LHASA
How's Harborview treating you?

SILER
(smiles)
Like royalty. I did have a stellar
recommendation.

LHASA
It was my pleasure.

SILER
How are you doing?

Siler looks around her desk, swamped with folders.

SILER

Hope you're not behind a desk pushing paper all day?

LHASA

Not yet. Still have my slew of spring chickens.

SILER

So you're to thank for the 94 year-old Dominican man salsaing in his robe on my way in?

LHASA

That'd be Mr. Mendez. Pancreatic.

SILER

Never know it.

AUBREY (O.S.)

Hey—

Aubrey checks in:

AUBREY

—Oh, sorry.

LHASA

(waves her on)

It's okay.

AUBREY

303's turned over. Cool if I cut out?

LHASA

Course. I'd say 'Good luck' but you don't need it.

Siler swivels around and lock eyes with Aubrey. Stops her for a moment before:

AUBREY

...Thanks.

Aubrey slips from view. But it takes a second longer for Siler to turn back around.

SILER
Doctors getting younger and younger.

LHASA
Nurse. Almost.

Lhasa looks around at her swamped desk (really wanting to finish the Hospice Licensure).

LHASA
I hate to kick you out.

SILER
(jests)
No, you don't.

LHASA
I do.
(beat)
Thank you. Really.

Siler stands, and they hug.

SILER
Dinner later?

LHASA
Sorry, I can't.

SILER
Next week then? On me.

LHASA
Deal.

INT. UW HOSPITAL, ELEVATOR BANK – MOMENTS LATER

Siler looks out floor-to-ceiling windows as he waits for the elevator—

SILER'S POV: at the edge of the parking lot, he spots Aubrey hopping onto a public bus.

DING! Doors slide open: Siler steps in, grin on his face.

INT. PUBLIC BUS – LATER

Aubrey studies index cards on nursing and medical terms.

A few seats ahead, a MOTHER (40s) and her tomboy DAUGHTER, freshly dirtied in a soccer uniform (8) do homework together.

Aubrey admires while the Mother notices a smudge on her daughter's cheek.

The Mother employs the standby lick-thumb-wipe technique, much to the Daughter's dismay. She dodges and weaves from her mother's gross method of affection, but must succumb.

Aubrey smiles, unaware that she's staring...but the Mother catches her -averting Aubrey's eyes back out the window.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Aubrey climbs the top flight of stairs, takes out her rattling keys and sees a '**NOTICE - PAST DUE RENT**'.

She rips the notice off and enters into...

INT. AUBREY'S APARTMENT, LIVING AREA/KITCHEN - SAME

She chucks off her heavy purse onto a small kitchen table, medical texts and index cards spitting out.

One large space houses the living room, small kitchen, and a breakoff space for a desk with a computer. There's a few windows facing the bricked alley.

Aubrey looks around. Starts for the only bedroom door.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Aubrey's teen sister, GRACE (17), and her boyfriend, TYLER (18) sit at the edge of one of two twin beds. Tyler has a laptop out, both giggling at a video via shared earbuds.

AUBREY
Really, Grace?

Aubrey steps in, Grace busted.

GRACE
What, we're not doing anything.

AUBREY
I said not in our room.

Tyler holds out his earbud as a kind gesture:

TYLER
Check it out, this kid faceplanted
into a wall. The sound is epic.

AUBREY
Riveting.
(to Grace)
Nothing, huh?

Aubrey sees Grace and Tyler's wet hair. Spins out the room.

INT. BATHROOM — SAME

Aubrey feels Grace's TOWEL...damp. Then feels her own, even more wet. She shakes her head and heads back into...

INT. BEDROOM — SAME

AUBREY
Tyler, out!

GRACE
What's your problem?

AUBREY
My own towel, Grace?! You two took
a shower.

Grace goes wide-eyed. Tries to think of something:

GRACE
It was hot and we don't have AC.

AUBREY
Bullshit. It's like you get off
on not listening to me...
(looks at Tyler)
Tyler, go!

Tyler wants no part of the sibling rivalry, closing his laptop. As he sidles past Aubrey, she slaps his arm:

AUBREY
If you wiped your tiny balls on
my towel, I swear.

Moments later, the front door shuts. Grace gives Aubrey the stink-eye.

GRACE
(snarky)
They're not tiny.

AUBREY
Ugh, Gross. Come on.

INT. LIVING AREA/KITCHEN – LATER

TIMECUT: Aubrey and Grace make dinner together. Chicken Alfredo w/ angel hair and garlic bread. Grace boils the pasta with Aubrey cooking chicken and toasting the bread.

On the refrigerator, a PICTURE: Grace and Aubrey (8 & 13) sandwich their mother, LISETTE, at a water park, drenched after a ride and giddy as can be.

At the table, Aubrey and Grace revel in silence as RAIN patters the windows. They bask in the warmth of the food, eating in silence before—

AUBREY
The angel hair's really good.

GRACE
I boiled water.

Aubrey's attempt to make peace flounders.

AUBREY
Hey, I just – you're better than that.

GRACE
You don't even know him.

AUBREY
Not him... 'That'.

Grace makes an 'O' with her fingers and slides another in and out of it sexually.

GRACE
(rolls eyes)
Oooooo... 'that'.

Aubrey swipes Grace's immature finger-show down.

AUBREY
Don't joke. It can screw up everything.

GRACE
Good choice of words.

Grace cast her eyes down, mindlessly swirls her angel hair.

AUBREY
Look, I'm not trying to be...anything
I'm clearly not. But you're getting
ready for college and me graduating.
I wanna know you're okay.

GRACE
I am, you don't have to baby me.

AUBREY
I want three things.

GRACE
You just skip one request and go to
three? You're like a shitty genie.

AUBREY
I'm serious. Listen.
(counts with fingers)
One: Don't get pregnant. Two: Graduate
college. And three:

Aubrey grabs Grace's forearm. Stops her pasta swirling.

AUBREY
Know I love you.

Aubrey smiles. It's infectious, and Grace, grouchy hormones
and all, can only do the same. Her big sis always wins.

CUT TO:

DINGDONG! A front door opens...

INT. LHASA'S HOUSE — NIGHT

...And it's David, an umbrella in one hand shielding him
from the pouring rain and a greasy burger bag in the other.

DAVID
Felt awkward not to bring something.
Burger for me, chicken for you.

He raises the bag with unhealthy pride. Lhasa snatches it.

LHASA
I'll take it.

She gestures him on in, closing the door behind. He points to his wet shoes:

DAVID
Shoes off?

LHASA
No need.

WIDE: David looks around the empty house, only a pile of boxes stacked near a corner.

DAVID
Where's the furniture?

LHASA
Some storage. Most of it donated.

David meanders to his stack of boxes. Kneels to inspect:

DAVID
This all of it? Didn't realize I left
so much behind.

LHASA
I added some stuff in, picture doubles,
docs, etc.

Lhasa digs into the bag, plucking a few fries.

DAVID
Mind if I open?

LHASA
Your stuff.

David takes out a butterfly knife, flipping it open. He carves open a box and opens: full of old ALBUMS and knick-knacks. While he sorts through, Lhasa's cell RINGS—

DAVID
 Sorry, I shouldn't keep you.

Hands full with food, she lets it go.

LHASA
 It's likely just the realtor. Take
 your time.

DAVID
 (sifting through)
 You sure this is all for me?

LHASA
 Yea, I have enough.

David tilts the box for weight:

DAVID
 Memories weigh a bag of bricks.

David notices something in the box, and pulls out a long
 brunette wig.

DAVID
 Oh my god, I remember this!

David spots something else in the box and pulls out an 8x11
 FRAMED PHOTO: a Halloween Party picture, where David and
 Lhasa (late 20s) cross-dress as one another.

Lhasa's head shakes in amazement at one of their earliest
 memories more than a decade ago.

DAVID
 My legs did look good in that dress.

LHASA
 So humble. You passed out on the porch
 spread eagle.

DAVID
 Didn't think you'd me under the table.

LHASA
 Still can. But why oh why did you
 insist on wearing my underwear?

DAVID
Authenticity is the only good trait
I have. Had to go balls out.

LHASA
Literally.

DAVID
Did I ever give them back to you?

LHASA
By all means, please keep them.

They share a laugh. It seems like a lifetime ago when suddenly – RINGRING! Lhasa whips out her cell...and her expression sags:

LHASA
Hello?

David perks up, concerned – Lhasa DROPS the food bag, spilling burgers and fries on the carpet...STEPPING on it.

LHASA
Okay, I'm on my way.

Lhasa hangs up, snagging her car keys off a wall hook.

DAVID
Everything alright?

LHASA
(darting out)
No.

ACT FOUR**EXT. UW HOSPITAL – LATER**

Lhasa's sedan pulls in, headlights beaming through the rain deluging the hospital's half-lit windows.

INT. UW HOSPITAL, HALLWAY – SAME

Outside Kit's room, Lhasa confers with overnight staff physician, DR. LEO KRUGER (50s), under a patchwork of fluorescent lights.

KRUGER

The seizure lasted a little over three minutes. Stopped with 4 mils of lorazepam, but she still has vision loss.

LHASA

We'll do an MRI first thing. Can't be renal failure. Maybe an edema, but hopefully not a bilateral hemorrhage.

KRUGER

Pull her med list too, see if there's a source.

LHASA

Yea, keep her on an antiepileptic.

KRUGER

I'll ring radiology. You go on ahead.

LHASA

Thanks, Leo. I'm okay. Fam in there?

KRUGER

Just the husband.

Lhasa nods and breaks off from Kruger into...

INT. KIT'S ROOM – SAME

Dim single-source light casts Luther's SHADOW over Kit's sleeping, sedated body. Lhasa slowly walks in.

Luther's gaze fixed on his wife. The patter of rain like thumbtacks on glass.

Lhasa floats to Kit's bedside opposite Luther as vitals beep quietly like a metronome.

She reaches out and takes Kit's HAND in hers like earlier, her skin like black parchment: Frail, delicate, but soft.

There's nothing to say, nor is anything enough except—

LHASA
I know how hard this is.

Luther raises desperate eyes, boring a hole through Lhasa:

LUTHER
How do you know?
(beat)
You've never been where she is.

Luther snuffles back tears, softening his voice for one final plea...

LUTHER
(beat)
...Please?

LHASA
Luther—

Luther shakes his head, his body trembling:

LUTHER
(declaration)
Please.

LIGHTNING streaks outside the window miles away, and we leave before the thunder rolls in.

INT. UW HOSPITAL, HALLWAY — LATER

Lhasa rounds a corner when — swish, swish...she's up to her knees in water.

LHASA'S POV: the hallway is a river — The Ganges, with TEA CANDLES on flowered saucers drifting about...

Then a HEAVY THUMPING. Over and over. Coming from the end of the hall—

A MASSIVE ELEPHANT trudges past. Majestic. Strong.

It stops. Stares at Lhasa who's in awe...then it moves on.

Lhasa knows this can't be real. And so do we as—

SMASH TO:

INT. LHASA'S CAR — LATER

Parked in her own driveway, Lhasa's sits still as stone.

LHASA'S POV: her windshield streaked with rain, the world underwater and incomprehensible...save the glowing beacon of light from her living room.

Lhasa checks the time on the dash: **3:38 AM** (or in Lhasa's estimation, **8:38 AM** London-time).

She takes out her cellphone and scrolls to '**Dad**'. Calls...

And it rings...and rings...voicemail:

LHASA'S DAD
(Hindi accent)

Hello, please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you—BEEP!

Lhasa pulls the phone from her ear, hanging up.

INT. LHASA'S HOUSE — MOMENTS LATER

Lhasa enters, dumping off her rain-soaked jacket. She notices a BROWN STAIN where she had dropped the food...

The dried burger juice and ketchup looks like blood. But the smell of meat is still so thick...

Lhasa notices light emanating from the kitchen, where the faintest whip of steam leaks...

INT. KITCHEN — SAME

Lhasa turns in to see David cooking over the stove.

LHASA
What are you doing?

David looks over his shoulder, undeterred – BEEP BEEP – and snags a mug of piping hot tea from the microwave. Points Lhasa to the kitchen table.

DAVID
Come. Sit.

Lhasa's too exhausted to ask anymore, resigning to the long night and plopping into a dinner chair.

DAVID
You didn't have much. Thought I was
gunna have to make mustard sandwiches.

David carries over freezer-burned salmon steaks and some nuked veggies.

DAVID
But I found these bad boys in your
freezer. I'm hoping it's from after
I left. Frost ate away the expiration.

LHASA
You didn't have to do this.

DAVID
Shush. I know you didn't eat. More
importantly, I know the last thing
you wanna do is tell me why.

David hands Lhasa a knife and fork. She takes it gently.

DAVID
Unless you need to.

He brings over the mug of tea. Pours in some milk.

LHASA
(grins gratefully)
You remembered.

DAVID
Of course. You drink more tea than
the Queen.

Lhasa stares as the MILK swirls into muddy darkness—

INSERT: THE GANGES. OMINOUS. A FORCE OF NATURE.

Lhasa half-heartedly cuts into her salmon...dropping her knife onto the plate.

LHASA

(beat)

I don't know what to do anymore.

DAVID

Who does?

LHASA

I'm supposed to.

David swallows a piece of salmon — it's alright, more mush than anything.

DAVID

You know doctor means "to teach".
Not "to know".

LHASA

Maybe that's what it did mean.
Somewhere back when. It always
meant to cure. Not make mistakes.

DAVID

You didn't make any. Other than
getting too involved.

LHASA

I can't just clock out.

DAVID

Disassociate. Separate. Divide your
life from theirs, that's all.

LHASA

(shakes her head)

'That's all'...? What bullshit. We're
their last tether. Last line of hope.
We cut that, than what are we but a
bridge to the abyss?

DAVID
 ...Lhasa, what else can you do when
 that's what they're facing?

Lhasa slowly stands and pushes in her chair.

LHASA
 It's late. So I can take a shower.
 Thank you for dinner. You were
 always the better cook.

DAVID
 I do alright with less.
 (beat)
 I'll see myself out. Goodnight.

LHASA
 I'll try.

David watches Lhasa exit, listening to her trudge up the stairs, wishing he could console his ex-wife one more time.

INT. HALLWAY / KALI'S BEDROOM - SAME

Lhasa passes by when she hears the rain's downpour LOUDER than before, as if she left a window open somewhere—

THROUGH KALI'S DOORWAY: The CEILING has caved in above Kali's bed, RAIN soaking everything!

Including Through the Black Hole, the cover saturated.

Lhasa runs in — ripping off the sheets — pushing heavy bookshelves out of the way, but they topple!

LHASA
 NO! NO NO!

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

David hears Lhasa's SCREAMS — sprinting out and up the stairs—

INT. KALI'S BEDROOM - SAME

Lhasa's collapsed beside the bed, its edges now waterfalls as the newfound skylight drench her.

She clutches Through the Black Hole, rocking...

LHASA

Kali! KALI!

David drops down and grabs her, holding her – but she tries to fight him off – more so all the rage and sorrow–

But David holds firm as Lhasa's body slumps within his, her head collapsing in his chest as we PULL UP through the caved ceiling...Lhasa's cries turning to somber whimpers...

LHASA (V.O.)

...I, Kit Eugenia Abbott, am an adult of sound mind.

INT. UW HOSPITAL, KIT'S ROOM – DAY

Kit, visionless and wearing dark sunglasses, listens in bed to Lhasa read her **Initial Request for Humane Euthanasia**. Luther and their three children, TWO SONS (30s) and DAUGHTER (40s), linger bedside.

LHASA

I am suffering from spinal metastasis, which my attending physician has determined is an incurable terminal disease that will result, by best estimation, in death within six months.

David monitors by the foot of Kit's bed.

LHASA (O.S.)

This has been medically confirmed by a second consulting physician.

INT. UW SCHOOL OF NURSING, LECTURE HALL – LATER

Aubrey takes her finals amongst other students. She moves like quicksilver, fast and confident.

LHASA (V.O.)

I have been fully informed of my diagnosis, the nature of medication to be prescribed and the potential associated risks, the expected result, and all feasible alternatives like pain control and hospice care.

Aubrey finishes before anyone and hands her paper over to the professor, who watches her exit.

They both know she's aced it.

INT. UW HOSPITAL, DR. MARTIN'S OFFICE – DAY

Dr. Martin hangs her coat and rounds her desk, taking a seat and clearing papers out of the way.

LHASA (V.O.)

I request that my attending physician prescribe medication that I may self-administer to end my life in a humane and dignified manner. I have informed my family of my decision and taken their opinions into consideration. I understand that I have the right to rescind this request at any time.

Martin goes to turn on her computer – there's a POST-IT NOTE over the power button, reading:

**Death is a right.
Not a reputation.**

- LG

Martin's stone face cracks with...approval.

INT. UW HOSPITAL, KIT'S ROOM – DAY

Lhasa hands the request form around for her family, the witnesses, to sign.

LHASA (V.O.)

I make this request voluntarily and I accept the full moral responsibility of my actions. I further declare I am not acting out of duress, fraud, or undue influence.

The older son and daughter sign. Then Luther. David and Lhasa. And finally, with Luther guiding his wife's hand, Kit signs away – rather...relinquishes her life.

LHASA (V.O.)

By initialing and signing below in the presence of the person named above, we declare that the person making and signing the request is personally known to us and has provided proof of identity, signed in our presence, is of sound mind and not under a desperate or compromised state. And...

WIDE: Everyone's still in the room. A portrait of silence.

LHASA (V.O.)

Ultimately, wishes to die with dignity.

EXT. LARGE HOUSE – DAY

A three story, white Tudor: half a block wide with old brick. The rest of the neighborhood looks rough, lawns wild and concrete long cracked.

INT. LARGE HOUSE, DINING ROOM – SAME

Beth the agent leads in Lhasa to a dark and warm space with turn-of-the-century period pieces, walnut paneling, and large windows looking out front.

BETH

Foreclosure includes all internal assets, antique furniture as is.

The tall cross-beamed ceilings and impressive fireplace dwarf Beth and Lhasa.

LHASA

Who used to live here?

BETH

Old retired elementary teacher. Had ran a daycare here. When she passed her family failed to keep up with the mortgage. The bank's offloading at a third the price.

LHASA

Is it zoned for commercial use?

BETH
In this area, yes.

Lhasa knocks on a wall. Pushes against it.

LHASA
This a bearing wall?

BETH
Not sure, the inspector can see. Opening
it up would be a great idea. Add an
island or redesign the layout or-

LHASA
Expand the plumbing upstairs.

BETH
(confused)
Sure. It's a lot of house. If you
don't mind...are you looking to turn
this into a rental property?

LHASA
Not quite.

BETH
(nosy)
...Starting a family?

Lhasa drifts her fingers over the old fireplace mantle:

LHASA
...something like that. Price?

BETH
It's authorized to sell today at
six-five.

LHASA
I'll take it.

Beth's face twists in glee with the pending commission.

BETH
Well, alright! I'll head out to my
car and grab the paperwork.

Beth rushes out, leaving Lhasa alone. The epicenter.

Lhasa looks out a large bay window: NEIGHBORS, a husband and wife, stare back at Lhasa from their porch...almost through her...like they stepped out of American Gothic, the American Flag waving behind them, WINDCHIMES JINGLING...

A sense of unease washes over Lhasa. An impending war...

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
 ...Lily Evelyn Gonzalez, twenty-eight.
 Steven Timothy Hardonk, fifty-five.
 Vicki Meredith Sartre, forty-six...

CUT TO:

FLASHFORWARD - SUPREME COURT (3 YEARS LATER)

Lhasa sits on the witness stand, surrounded by mahogany and Court Justices. A PROSECUTOR holds a list in his hand:

PROSECUTOR
 ...Frank Dillon Lister, eighty-four.
 Gregory Alex Holmes, thirty two. And
 Kit Eugenia Abbot, sixty-nine.

The prosecutor finishes the list, and stares Lhasa down. As does Senator Lakeview seated nearby.

PROSECUTOR
 Do you admit to having mediated
 End of Life options to all 37
 patients identified?

Lhasa looks past the Prosecutor and Lakeview into the pews where David sits: skinnier, paler, thinner hair...sick.

WIDEN: Alongside sit Siler and Aubrey holding hands. Her sister Grace beside, as well as Luther and his children. Behind them sits a chaplain, MURPHY HILL (50s), looking every bit of Irish Catholic.

They all look back helplessly at Lhasa – but not David though. He tearfully smiles back and nods. With conviction.

LHASA (V.O.)
 So...

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - KALI'S BEDROOM, STORYTIME

Kali looks up with wonder as Lhasa asks one more time:

LHASA
...Do you wanna go through the black
hole?

Lhasa and David await her answer as Kali lowers the
bedsheet to decide...and nods her head, those big doe eyes
and cherub smile:

KALI
...I do.

BACK TO:

INT. SUPREME COURT - SAME

Lhasa lifts her chin in the air. Proudly. Courageous.

LHASA
(beat)
I do.

CUT TO BLACK as the court gasps.

END OF PILOT