

1 "BUYING FATE" BY SAMANTHA VOLK 1
2 FADE IN: 2
3 EXT. ALLEY BETWEEN TWO BUILDINGS - NIGHT 3

Three men are stumbling down the alley, clearly intoxicated. KYLE JOHNSON (21-years-old) is slightly ahead of the two other men: VINCENT (28) and BRENDON (24). All three are nicely dressed, Kyle's neck is rimmed with a black bow-tie that had been tied hours earlier but now hangs limply around his neck.

Kyle rubs his shoulder against the brick wall and Vincent and Brendon grab either arm to hold him up.

VINCENT

I just wish you'd be able to remember this moment. It's a treasure, man. Believe me.

Kyle's head rolls backwards over his shoulders.

The three take a right at an intersection and come to a stop at a building with a wall of tall glass doors. In the background, we can hear the two men singing "Happy Birthday" off tune and out of sync, laughing all the while.

Sitting in the middle of one of the glass doors is a box with a large keypad and this is what Kyle is focused on. Using his left arm for balance on one of the glass doors, he types a complicated number and then places his hand on a scanner.

There is a click and deep hum and the glass Kyle has been leaning on pushes forward revealing it is a door. Kyle stands straight as the door slides out of the way.

CUT TO:

4 INT. ENTIRELY WHITE ROOM - SAME NIGHT 4

The crew stumbles inside.

BRENDON

You have a privilege you gotta obtain to. That's why we're here. That is why we are here today, my friends.

VINCENT

No way you'll regret this, birthday boy. My two-year-old is the greatest thing in my life.

BRENDON

Oh, tell the little warrior I say
hi!

VINCENT

Of course, he loves you man.

Kyle has left the two a few steps behind and walks to the back of the room where there is a row of more square scanners spread across the back wall. Kyle allows one of the scanners to see his half open eyes.

Kyle's identity is accepted and the scanner widens into a black screen and pushes a few inches out of the wall. The screen goes from black to a slightly darker grey as it wakes up.

BRENDON

Where's the vial?

KYLE

(pulling out his wallet and
sliding the vial out of it)
Just where I left it.

BRENDON

Aw, yes! Here we go! Here we go.

Brendon slaps Kyle on the back and Kyle almost loses control of the vial.

The screen continues to warm up.

KYLE

Boys, boys, boys. A lil privacy.
C'mon now. I'm reproducin' here.

Vincent approaches Kyle and wraps his arm around his shoulder.

VINCENT

Creating my son was the best day of
my life, Kyle. But today... this
day is going to be the most
important day in history. I can
feel it. Right, Brendon?

BRENDON

(laughing)
You can't feel shit, Vin.

BRENDON and VINCENT laugh and stumble around the front of the room leaving KYLE alone at the monitor.

The words INSERT VIAL flash across the screen. Kyle pushes the vial into a circular slot in the side of the screen and the screen then dissolves into a calm blue with a new question, "Are you ready to create your child, Mr. Johnson?"

DISSOLVE FROM KYLE'S FACE...

5 EXT. BUYING FATE HEADQUARTERS - MORNING 5

...to Kyle's face 17 years later.

Kyle (now 37) is sitting at a long table on an outside stage. Several microphones of all sizes are across from him and several other people in white suits on either side of him. Kyle has smooth skin, bright eyes, and is fairly attractive. He is clearly a customized child. Interviewers and cameramen are surrounding the stage. Behind the stage a little ways in the distance is bright white buildings that make up the main headquarters of the Buying Fate company.

The interviewers are shouting questions that morph into one loud, indecipherable voice.

KYLE

(Leaning to the microphone)

One at a time, please. You sir.

RANDOM PERSON 1

How many customized people have died from his outbreak?

KYLE

Our records show a few dozen, next question please.

RANDOM PERSON 2

What is the cause of the "Chosen Virus"?

KYLE

It's a virus that is effecting the immune system of the oldest customized generation.

(pause)

We are in the process of finding a cure.

RANDOM PERSON 3

Why is it just that the customized are effected?

KYLE

Unsure... research will show more.
(pause, many murmurs in the crowd)

It is predicted that the disease is directly correlated to fate.

Voices raise. Kyle points to another reporter.

RANDOM PERSON 4

What exactly is the company doing to move forward in finding a cure?

KYLE

Research and testing my good man, next?

RANDOM PERSON 5

Where is Dr. Johnson? We want real answers!

The crowd erupts again. Kyle is at a loss of words, living once again in his father's shadow. He eventually says:

KYLE

My father and I have the same information. Yes, you ma'am.

The camera zooms out to find Kyle can be seen from a TV screen in:

6 INT. STEVENS' HOUSEHOLD - MORNING

6

Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, Amanda's adoptive parents, are seated on either side of her at a small kitchen table. The house is cozy. Amanda (16) has wavy brown hair, piercing blue eyes, and perfect teeth -- a customized child. Mr. and Mrs. Steven are not customized and are slightly short and plump in stature.

AMANDA

Wouldn't getting rid of Buying Fate solve every problem?

MRS. STEVENS

Don't let this stuff worry you, Mandy. There's a cure, they just hype this stuff up for the media.

AMANDA

I'm just saying it would be easier to stop messing with people's DNA. Let em die of old age like you guys.

MR. STEVENS

You callin' this guy old?

MR. STEVENS motions to his arm where flabby muscle hangs loose. He quickly puts his arm down making a face and Amanda laughs.

MR. STEVENS (CONT.)

No but on a serious note,
technology has a way of fixing
itself. This too shall pass.

AMANDA

Yeah, when every customized
individual spontaneously combusts.

Mr. Stevens stands and grabs Mrs. Stevens' empty plate.

MRS. STEVENS

How about you take that creative
brain of yours and go ace this
exam? Hmm?

AMANDA

Exam? Oh shoot is that today? Guess
I forgot to study...

Amanda stands and follows her dad to the sink with her dish.
Mrs. Stevens has turned to face the TV.

MRS. STEVENS

Ha. Ha. Very funny.

AMANDA

It's not funny if I'm being
serious, ma.

MR. STEVENS

You need a ride over to the
college?

AMANDA

No, James offered. I'll be home
later.

Amanda kisses each parent on the cheek and runs out the door. Mr. and Mrs. Steven wait in the doorway and watch her go, hollering "good luck".

MRS. STEVENS

You think she really didn't study?

MR. STEVENS

Dear, when's the last time you saw her open a notebook?

MRS. STEVENS

Point taken. And she's still smarter than you dear.

She smiles and kisses Mr. Stevens' shoulder.

MR. STEVENS

Somebody thinks they were programmed to be a comedian, huh?

MRS. STEVENS

Babe I'm all natural, I'm programmed to be whatever you want me to be.

The two kiss and then Mr. Stevens kisses Mrs. Stevens' forehead. They are an affectionate couple. A perfect image of what true love looks like in the non-customized world. The door closes on the camera.

CUT TO:

7

INT. COLLEGE LECTURE HALL - MORNING.

7

Amanda is surrounded by about 50 college students in a lecture hall. She is at least four years younger than each of them. All are buried deep in an exam, scribbling on paper. PROFESSOR EDWARDS is seated behind a long brown desk off to one side of the room. He is tall and lanky and sophisticated looking.

PROFESSOR EDWARDS

Time is up! Finish that thought and hand in those exams.

The students rise and walk to the front, flinging backpacks over one shoulder and beginning to converse. Amanda remains seated until they all exit. She then makes her way to the front.

Amanda holds her out exam packet to the professor and before grabbing it he asks:

PROFESSOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)

What did you think?

AMANDA

(shrugs)

I had some difficulty.

PROFESSOR EDWARDS
 Expected. Let's see how you did.
 (he rises, towering over
 Amanda)
 Follow me to my office, we can
 grade this right away.

CUT TO:

8 INT. COLLEGE BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

8

Amanda and Professor Edwards are side by side walking down a tall, narrow hallway with pictures of important looking people hung along the ancient walls. Amanda is still holding her exam.

PROFESSOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)
 You may have always been the
 smartest in your class but I am
 sure we have found your perfect
 match this time, Amanda.

Amanda gives a weak smile. She looks small, young, and out of place walking down the hallway.

PROFESSOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)
 I am quite ecstatic to have you in
 my class, by the way. The college
 could always use a few more
 brilliant minds to up it's status.

Amanda shrugs and nods as Professor Edwards walks in front to unlock an aging wooden door. Something has her tongue-tied.

CUT TO:

9 INT. PROFESSOR EDWARD'S OFFICE - DAY

9

Professor Edwards enters the office first and Amanda follows. He reaches across the desk and opens a drawer pulling out an answer key and his reading glasses. He then takes the exam from Amanda and sits in the guest chair by the door.

Amanda walks around the desk, puts her bag in the chair at the head of the desk, and begins to wander the office.

PROFESSOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)
 (flipping the first page over)
 Hmm, yes, very good.

Amanda runs a finger over a row of books.

AMANDA

Stephen King is my favorite author.
You have a lot by him.

Professor Edwards flips another page, silent.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

My favorite novel is "The Dead
Zone," you don't seem to have that
one...

PROFESSOR EDWARDS

(interrupting)

Ah, a mistake.

Amanda spins and faces him. She walks over.

Professor Edwards leans back so she can see where he is
pointing in her work.

PROFESSOR EDWARDS (CONT'D)

Right here, dear. It's okay, most
college aged students don't get
this one right. I trip up on it too
when I retake the exam every
semester.

Amanda studies it for a moment and then looks at the answer
key, flipping it a few times.

AMANDA

No. Sir, the answer key is wrong.
(she holds it out for him to
see)

The velocity is completely
incorrect. Here, you forget to
change units and are multiplying
values that are not in the same
units. That's fine, as long as you
would change them later. But that
wasn't factored in. It threw off
the rest of the equation. That's
the flaw.

Professor Edwards studies it for a moment and then looks
back at Amanda, removing his eye glasses. He flips a few
more pages and then looks back at Amanda.

PROFESSOR EDWARDS

You aced the exam. That's
incredible.

AMANDA

What's surprising me is the fact
that you don't have "The Dead
Zone."

She grabs her bag out of the main chair and walks toward the door. She turns back to the professor.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Thank you for your time. Should I
return for next class?

PROFESSOR EDWARDS

I'll um, I'll let you know.

She exits and closes the door behind her, leaving the professor sitting in the guest chair.

CUT TO:

10

INT. COLLEGE LOBBY - DAY

10

Amanda is walking into the lobby where we see James (17) seated on an old blue faded love-seat, leaned forward flipping through a magazine, his hair falling over this forehead.

He hears Amanda's footsteps and rises, placing the magazine in his spot.

This is the first time we get a good look at his full body. He is built and fairly attractive, but a little rough around the edges and not completely put together. There's a hint of rebellion in his tattered jeans and stained striped button up. He is blonde with many freckles.

JAMES

What's up, kid? How'd it go?

AMANDA

It was challenging.

JAMES

Oh, yeah? Ya bombed it?

AMANDA

Something like that.

Amanda leads the way out the front door.

CUT TO:

11 INT. JAMES' CAR - DAY

11

Amanda and James are seated in James' car. He is driving away from the college.

AMANDA

You didn't have to wait for me. I could have called.

JAMES

Eh, I thought by sitting in a college building I might soak in some intelligence.

AMANDA

You're a dork.

JAMES

And you're a freak, you know that?

AMANDA

So flattering.

JAMES

Okay, c'mon. You know it's just a little crazy how smart you are. That exam covered an entire masters degree worth of shit and you were there for what, three review days? And you ace it. That's sick.

AMANDA

I don't know if "sick" is the way to describe it.

JAMES

I've said it before and I'll say it again... You must have been expensive as hell. An intelligence that freakin' high! It costs hundreds to buy a normal intelligence. You're years and years ahead.

Amanda is looking out the passenger window in a daze. James looks at her, lifts his hand to touch hers which is on the middle console, and then brings it back to run through his hair as she turns to look at him. She is unaware what just happened.

JAMES (CONT'D)

How could your parents afford that anyway?

AMANDA

Must you ask me that every day?

JAMES

Yes. Because you suck at answering that question.

AMANDA

(a rehearsed answer)

My parents just thought it was of great value. They saved up so I could have the best education possible.

JAMES

(smiling now)

Uh huh, yeah, so why couldn't they have saved a few hundred and given you the ability to drive?

AMANDA

Oh, shut up.

James pulls into his driveway which sits between his house and Amanda's.

JAMES

Yeah, I guess I am pretty glad you don't know how to learn. I know that's the only reason you still talk to me after all these years.

Amanda rolls her eyes and gets out of the truck, James does the same. They begin to walk opposite directions.

AMANDA

I'll learn how to drive someday. Just you wait.

JAMES

Only if your fate is to be a truck driver. Oh wait, what exactly is your fate?

AMANDA

I have no idea why I hang out with you. You're fucking annoying.

JAMES

Ha ha you know I'm kidding! Yo two days and you'll know your entire genetic makeup. THAT will shut me up for good.

AMANDA
Good bye James.

James watches as Amanda reaches her door, smiling.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. BUYING FATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY 12

Mobs marching around the outside of the Buying Fate headquarters. The headquarters buildings are protected by a large bubble shaped fence for security reasons. The mobs dance around the edge of this bubble. There is a clear distinction between groups of people and their signs. One group is the customized and one is non-customized. The customized are beautiful yet aggressive with signs supporting the customization of all children. The non-customized come in all shapes and sizes with less high-end clothing and have signs referencing the deaths of the customized.

CUT TO:

13 INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM - DAY 13

Amanda is sitting on her bed looking out her window. On her window sill sits a bird cage. Her window is directly across from James'. He runs across frame and there is faint giggling from a child. Mrs. Steven enters her room.

MRS. STEVENS

Okay I have a few minutes before the afternoons start getting dropped off at the daycare. What happened at the exam?

Her mom sits on the end of the bed next to Amanda.

AMANDA

I killed it mom. Like actually shot it, boom, one perfect little bullet to the brain and it was done for.

MRS. STEVENS

With your track record that's not all that surprising.

AMANDA

Do you not see that as a problem? That is a college class made for college aged customized children. I'm sixteen.

MRS. STEVENS

Almost seventeen... I don't know what you want me to say, Amanda. You're smart.

Silence.

AMANDA

How did you afford to make me so smart?

MRS. STEVENS

Intelligence is of great value. We saved up so you could have the best education possible.

AMANDA

You've told me that a million times.

MRS. STEVENS

A million in one.

AMANDA

But how am I that smart? Like how much could you have possibly saved?

MRS. STEVENS

Dear, you're overthinking this.

AMANDA

Okay then what's my fate?

MRS. STEVENS

You'll find out on your--

AMANDA AND MRS. STEVENS

-- Seventeenth birthday --

AMANDA

Yeah, yeah you like to be traditional, I know.

Mrs. Stevens stands and pats Amanda's leg.

MRS. STEVENS

Genetically you don't need to know until you're of that age, regardless of what your friend Taylor says.

They are interrupted by a honk outside. Amanda stands and looks out the window, Taylor is leaning out of her car door waving for Amanda to come down.

MRS. STEVENS
Speaking of Ms. Taylor here she is.
You guys going out?

AMANDA
Just hanging at her house.

MRS. STEVENS
James' joining?

AMANDA
You've got jokes.

MRS. STEVENS
Why's that?

AMANDA
They don't get along. I'll follow
you out.

The two leave the room.

CUT TO:

14 INT. TAYLOR'S CAR - DAY

14

Amanda slides into Taylor's front seat. Her car is clean and expensive. We watch the two exit the messy, homey feel of Amanda's neighborhood and enter a neighborhood with symmetrical white mansions. This shows the difference between a non-customized neighborhood and customized living.

CUT TO:

15 INT. BUYING FATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

15

Doors open and KYLE, EMILY (37), and Dr. JOHNSON (83). are escorted to the same set of podiums that Kyle was at for an earlier press conference. Dr. Johnson is low but hiding any discomfort he may feel. The crowd erupts, directing all comments to Dr. Johnson. The three each take a position behind a microphone. Dr. Johnson clears his throat and the crowd silences.

DR. JOHNSON
As always, I am grateful for your continued support in Buying Fate. I apologize for my earlier absence but I was dealing with a major issue. With no more delay, I am saddened to announce the death of a major figure in our country...

The crowd uproars, overtaking Dr. Johnson's words. He lowers his head.

KYLE

Please, please settle down.

RANDOM PERSON 1

You have no right to tell us what to do! You already control our DNA.

EMILY

A cure for this disease is being created as we speak. This is temporary.

RANDOM PERSON 2

Death is permanent! How temporary can it be?

RANDOM PERSON 3

Why don't you work on a cure for death?

CUT TO:

16 INT. TAYLOR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

16

Amanda is laying on the floor painting her nails a bright red. Taylor (16) is sitting on the couch. Both are watching the press conference on a TV sitting in the middle of the room. We get a good look at both girls now and they are beautiful. Taylor appears to have a higher fashion sense, perhaps more money, and is a lovely blend of mixed-race parents.

TAYLOR

This is so dumb! Like clearly Dr. J is going to stop this. These reporters are just jealous as shit. You know what I think?

AMANDA

Huh?

TAYLOR

I think everybody needs to be customized. Who cares if you die from some disease if you get to live your entire life in a chosen way. I mean as long as you got money, you're guaranteed to look good and be successful.

AMANDA

The way these people are dying is so much worse.

TAYLOR

The virus is just a temporary flaw in the system. We'll be fine. Maybe we'll even live forever. Oh! Maybe your fate is to solve this!

AMANDA

Maybe...

Throughout this conversation the press conference has continued in the background. Pictures are flashing across the screen of some victims of the virus and what it looks like under a microscope. Amanda glances up to see an elderly man who looks frail and pale and very ill. His skin is burned in patches.

AMANDA (CONT.)

Ick. Yes, I wish this disgusting torture upon everybody. Sounds like a real success story.

TAYLOR

They cured cancer like last year. I'm not worried.

AMANDA

You know maybe, just maybe, it would be okay for the world to not be taken over by this process of choosing a fate. My parents weren't customized and they happen to be great happy people.

TAYLOR

Funnnn sucker. Whatever, I'm over it. What's something delicious that won't go to my hips? Popcorn!

Taylor jumps up from the couch and scurries to the kitchen. Amanda continues to paint her nails and as the images fade from the TV and the press conference fills the screen again.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

17

KYLE

We have several victims recovering well from the burns. Next please.

RANDOM PERSON 4

When will we have more access to the headquarters? The people want stories. What are you hiding from us?

KYLE

In due time, ma'am. Thank you for your patience. It was a pleasure.

The three push back from the podiums.

CUT TO:

18 INT. TAYLOR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

18

Amanda's attention is back on the screen but her interest has not changed. She is still disconnected as any teenager would be watching the news.

Amanda looks back down at her nails, paints her pinky nail gracefully, then picks up the bottle of nail polish with the painted hand, and squeezes it between her fingers and palm until it shatters.

Taylor returns.

TAYLOR

Popcorn is almost done! Get ready to grub--Amanda what the hell happened?

AMANDA

What are you talking about?

Taylor is on her knees, she picks up a piece of the shattered bottle and Amanda looks down and sees the mess and her bleeding hand.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Oh my god, I'm so sorry. It must have been cracked.

TAYLOR

(on her feet looking for tissues)

This carpet is new, my parents are going to flip.

AMANDA

It was an accident. I'll fix it.

TAYLOR

Yeah, you need to. You know last night our cat went missing too. We've got enough to deal with.

AMANDA

I said it was an accident, Taylor, and don't worry I'm fine...

Taylor runs to the bathroom and Amanda has found a kitchen towel and is on the ground soaking up the mess as we settle back on the TV screen which is now of just an empty press conference table.

A door is heard shutting as Amanda leaves.

CUT TO:

19

INT. HEADQUARTER'S HALLWAY - DAY

19

Kyle and Emily are walking side by side down an entirely white hallway. The building matches in design and color scheme to that of the one in the first scene. TV monitors, computer screens, offices, conference rooms, laboratories, nerds running around in white uniforms, etc fill the building.

EMILY

You did wonderful today, dear.

KYLE

What the hell am I going to do with this company without my father?

EMILY

You're going to run it as well as he did if not better. It's in your blood.

KYLE

Right, literally. My fate.

EMILY

Your father has some time, you need to focus on you.

KYLE

Yes, yes, I know.

EMILY

Vincent is waiting in the usual spot.

Emily pauses at a fork in the hallway and Kyle turns to her.

KYLE

(quietly)

Dear there's really nothing else I can remember.

EMILY

I know, but it's been some time and it's worth a shot.

She squeezes his hand and they go in opposite directions.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. TAYLOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

20

Amanda is walking down the street focusing on her hand. There is a mixture of red nail polish and blood from where the glass punctured her skin. Scars along her arms are visible as well.

AMANDA

This doesn't make sense.

Amanda looks up to see an older customized woman gardening. She has a confused look on her face. Amanda pulls a sleeve over her hand in an attempt to hide it, staining the cloth.

CUT TO:

21 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

21

Kyle walks into a dimly lit room.

Vincent is at one end of a long table. The other end has a chair for Kyle. Cameron (37) sits in the middle. Vincent stands and shakes Kyle's hand.

VINCENT

Good you see you again.

KYLE

It's only been a month or so and you already got your beer belly back.

The two share a laugh and Kyle releases Vincent's hand.

VINCENT

Well, I'll basically be in hibernation trying to untangle your fucking mess.

The two laugh and sit.

KYLE

Yeah.

Vincent has a pen and paper and a tape recorder, an odd look for this futuristic community and building.

CAMERON

Boss her birthday is soon.

KYLE

Already?

CAMERON

Just a few days. Let me go to Wisconsin.

KYLE

Shit.

CAMERON

I can keep an eye on her.

KYLE

Talk to dad. He can get you a job as chief of police there. Then anything goes. Who the fuck knows what she can do.

CAMERON

You got it, boss.

Cameron rises and leaves the room.

VINCENT

(voice changing to a strict business-like tone)

Tell me, Mr. Johnson, do you have any recollection of what fate you made for your daughter that night many years ago?

Kyle sits back and thinks for a moment.

KYLE

As always, not a clue.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. AMANDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 22

A shovel sits next to piles of dirt and a large hole in the ground surrounded by flowers. Amanda is holding a shoebox, the bottom of which is stained in a dark color. Her eyes are red from tears. Her hand is bandaged.

AMANDA

I'm sorry. I don't know--I'm just sorry.

She opens the box and drops the remains of a dead cat into the hole. She then tosses in the box and picks up the shovel to push dirt back into the hole.

The camera shifts to see James watching Amanda through the fence. He steps away and walks back to his house.

CUT TO:

23 INT. BUYING FATE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT 23

VINCENT is collecting his notes. KYLE is standing at a window of the room. VINCENT pats him on the shoulder and exits the room. In the distance KYLE sees several mobs marching around the exterior of the bubble. He smiles as he observes the non-customized signs and chants.

DISSOLVE FROM KYLE'S FACE...

24 INT. AUDITORIUM - MORNING 24

...to AMANDA's face. The auditorium is packed full of teenagers. A hologram of DR. JOHNSON is on the stage.

Signs on either end of the stage read, "50th Anniversary of Buying Fate: This Sunday! Free admission!"

DR. JOHNSON

I didn't notice just how many young and perfect faces are in this audience today. Whatta show.

A few murmurs come from the crowd. There are many smiles.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

And you all have perfect skin and perfect hair and perfect eyes for one reason and one reason only, you are all children of the customization process. Am I right?

A few cheers and clapping comes from the crowd.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Being customized isn't just a walk in the park. You may be starting to have urges, all different and unique from your friends.

(pause)

They may be out of your control and unexplainable.

TAYLOR, next to Amanda, huffs. Amanda shifts in her seat and pulls her sleeves down over her hands.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

But you have nothing to fear. These urges are all related to your fate. Once you complete your fate the urges will stop and you will have more control over your body. Every step in the right direction calms your urges more.

Taylor turns to see JAMES walk through the doors of the auditorium and lean against the wall.

Leaning towards Amanda, Taylor says:

TAYLOR

Ew, what is he doing here?

DR. JOHNSON

(continuing his speech)

Now fate is something that is inevitable.

Amanda glances back to see James. He is focused on Dr. Johnson.

AMANDA

He's always been interested in customization.

TAYLOR

We're not his little science experiments. Ew, just get out.

DR. JOHNSON (O.S.)

Mythology has always taught us that no matter what path somebody attempts to take in life their fate will inevitably come true.

Amanda catches James' eye. His face lights up and she gives a small wave. Her sleeve falls toward her elbow revealing her series of scratches. She pulls the sleeve back over her hand and turns attention back to the stage.

DR. JOHNSON

Mark your calendars to attend the "Celebration of the Customized" this Sunday to hear my son, the next owner of Buying Fate, honor the 50th anniversary of the program. Members of the Buying Fate community will welcome any questions with open ears and perfect smiles...

James slips out the door.

CUT TO:

25 INT. BUYING FATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY 25

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Thank you and best of luck completing your fates!

Dr. Johnson smiles as the lecture completes. A light drops off of him concluding the hologram presentation. His smile falls and Dr. Johnson begins to collapse. Several workers in white coats appear in frame, one catching Dr. Johnson and another driving a wheelchair. They lower him into it slowly. He is clearly in much pain.

26 INT. MALL - DAY 26

Amanda, Taylor, and a group of other customized teenagers are walking noisily through the mall.

There is a fountain where a singular hall of stores branches off into two more halls and James is at the fountain with a LITTLE BOY (5) and a LITTLE GIRL (7). The kids are jumping on the ceramic ledge and reaching into the fountain to reach the small sprinklers at the center.

Taylor notices James, he is too preoccupied with the children to notice the group.

TAYLOR

They should just build a new mall so we can be separated.

A few chuckles from the group.

AMANDA

Okay, seriously? He's no different from you, Taylor.

TAYLOR

(turning to her)

Why are you defending him? You're customized too.

AMANDA

That doesn't mean I have to think like you and be a bitch.

TAYLOR

Can you please take a joke?

Amanda walks forward and looks at a necklace on a stand at the front of the store. Taylor follows her. James can still be seen in the background. The rest of the group has wondered into the store.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Oooh, wait. That's super cute.

She snatches the necklace from Amanda and slides it into her pocket.

AMANDA

What are you doing?

TAYLOR

Girl I know a scholar like yourself didn't fall asleep at Dr. J's talk.

Amanda stares at her puzzled.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Let me spell it out for you. My fate is to be a famous fashion designer. If I get caught stealing this necklace that puts me down the wrong path and my fate won't come true. But the funny thing is, my fate has to come true. Therefore, I won't get caught.

AMANDA

That's not what that speech was about at all.

TAYLOR

Of course it is. I'll give you another example. What's your fate?

AMANDA

Nevermind. Do what you need. I'm
gunna go explore.

Amanda leaves the shot and Taylor calls after her:

TAYLOR

Wait, where are you going? We still
need cute outfits for the ceremony
Sunday! Okay, um, just text me if
you find something!

CUT TO:

27

EXT. MALL EATING AREA - DAY

27

Amanda has wandered into an outside section of the mall.
There are round tables spread across the area with a few
articles of trash on each one. She is the only person
around.

Amanda spots a squirrel on the ground next to a tree eating
away at what somebody left of an apple. Amanda picks up a
stray fork from a round table, squats down, and stabs the
squirrel's tail into the ground.

It gives a shriek and drops the apple remains. It tries to
run but struggles.

A hand appears over Amanda's shoulder. The hand rips the
fork from the ground and Amanda looks up to meet eyes with
James.

He is puzzled and Amanda jumps up. She is in shock. He holds
the fork out to her as the squirrel scampers away leaving a
small trail of blood.

JAMES

If you didn't have money for food
you could have just asked.

Amanda continues to stare at him but takes the fork back.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Actually I know for a fact that
there's free ice-cream right over
there.

(he motions behind him)

It's been keeping the kiddos
occupied for a few minutes now.

Amanda remains silent.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 You know, maybe I should keep
 this...

He reaches forward and takes the fork from her hand. Amanda then turns and races away, leaving James standing there with a bloody fork.

The little boy and little girl with ice-cream covered faces run up to James and stand on either side of him.

LITTLE GIRL
 Was that Amanda?

JAMES
 (still staring after Amanda)
 Nah.
 (he turns and places his free
 hand behind the little boy's
 head)
 C'mon let's go find the pet store.

The kids shriek with joy and run off-screen. James tosses the fork into a garage can and slips his hands into his pockets.

He walks after his siblings.

CUT TO:

28 INT. BUYING FATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

28

Kyle is laying on a table unconscious. He has several probes attached to his brain. Dr. Johnson is next to him in his wheelchair, fiddling with a computer screen that projects onto a larger screen. Many men in white along with Vincent and Emily are observing the screen.

DR. JOHNSON
 The probes send direct
 transmissions to this monitor. Any
 memory, any thought, it can be
 recreated through this using
 picture.

Several men in white coats nod and take notes.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
 A night seventeen years ago? No
 problem... ah. Here we go.

The screen shows Vincent and Brendon stumbling around and drinking the night that Amanda was created. Everything is seen from Kyle's perspective. The crowd watches the scene which becomes blurrier and blurrier.

VINCENT

Is alcohol really outsmarting the system?

DR. JOHNSON

No, we can make this work.

Kyle begins to toss and turn on the table.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Hold him please. Somebody calm him.

Several men in white coats hold Kyle down. He settles. The memory becomes slightly more clear. The men are stumbling down the alley to the customization building.

EMILY

Please. Please.

The memory becomes shaky again. Emily places her hands on Kyle's forehead. The memory is momentarily clear as the men wander into the building. The screen then goes blank. Silence fills the room. Kyle's eyes blink and he awakens. He looks up at Emily, eyes bright.

KYLE

We did it didn't we? Who is she?

EMILY

No, babe. We got closer. But you blacked out again.

VINCENT

Want to try me again?

DR. JOHNSON

You weren't near the machine. It's no use.

VINCENT

What about the sound of the buttons? The machine must have spoken. Maybe we just need to listen harder.

DR. JOHNSON

It's no use. The intoxicated brain is all we have access to. Literal mush.

Kyle rips the probes from his scalp.

KYLE

When is she seventeen?

EMILY

Tomorrow.

KYLE

Is Cameron there yet?

DR. JOHNSON

Yes, there and settled. He'll be able to keep order for a time. The Stevens have his information.

EMILY

What about her fate?

DR. JOHNSON

She won't be receiving one.

Glances are shared. This has never happened before.

CUT TO:

29 INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

29

Amanda shakes awake. Her curtains are closed, however a light thud every now and again can be heard on the window. Amanda rolls out of bed and to the window. She pulls back the shades to see a marble come at her face. She doesn't flinch but only blinks. James is stationed at his window ready to throw another marble from a bag on his window frame. He stops when he sees Amanda and holds up a sign that says happy birthday and a bag. Amanda cracks a grin and heres her name called in a sing-songy tone from both of her parents. She holds up a finger to James and drops the shades.

30 INT. STEVENS' HOUSEHOLD - DAY

30

Amanda jogs down the staircase. Her dad jumps out scaring her and throws a blindfold over her eyes. They laugh as he guides her to the kitchen table.

AMANDA

Must we do this every year?

MR. STEVENS

Yes. Traditions hold families together. Plus... I love scaring the shit outta you.

MRS. STEVENS
Quickly, quickly! Our surprise
can't wait much longer!

Amanda sits and Mrs. Stevens pushes her chair in for her. Plates clank as an array of breakfast food is placed before Amanda.

MRS. STEVENS (CONT'D)
Hold out your hands! Hold em out!

Amanda laughs and holds out one hand, expecting an envelope. Mrs. Stevens puts a large box in Amanda's hand which immediately falls to her lap.

AMANDA
What the hell?

Amanda uses her free hand to pull up the blindfold.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Wait, but this isn't--

MR. STEVENS
Open it! Open! Yes.

Amanda follows orders and begins to remove the paper from the package. Inside the box sits neatly placed walkie talkies and a (forever puppy in another smaller box). Amanda picks up the walkie talkies.

AMANDA
What are these?

MRS. STEVENS
They're called walkie talkies. They were popular in the late 1900s in place of phones.

AMANDA
No way! How did you get ahold of them?

MR. STEVENS
A good friend of mine has a collection of them. There are only so many left in the nation.

Amanda places them aside as she pushes aside paper in the box. She gasps.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
No I don't want it--

MR. STEVENS
It's okay. Pick him up.

Amanda looks from parent to parent and then reaches into the box to pull out a small dog.

AMANDA
Is it dead?

MRS. STEVENS
It can't die.

AMANDA
It can't?

MRS. STEVENS
Nope, it's technically not alive.

AMANDA
A Forever Puppy? You're kidding.
You didn't need to. They're so
expensive.

MR. STEVENS
No, no. You're worth it. Every kid
deserves a pet.

AMANDA
I've had pets, dad...

MR. STEVENS
This one you can't hurt.

MRS. STEVENS
Dear.

MR. STEVENS
What?

Amanda rolls the dog over in her hand and rubs it's stomach until a green light flashes under it's fur. It begins to stretch and squirm. She shoves it at her dad. He takes it.

AMANDA
I don't want to hurt him.

MR. STEVENS
You won't.

The dog begins to nibble on Mr. Stevens' fingers and he is in a trance as he plays with it. Mrs. Stevens runs her fingers through Amanda's hair.

MR. STEVENS (CONT'D)
He's indestructible, Amanda-proof.

Amanda cracks a small grin which quickly fades. Mrs. Stevens puts the walkie talkies back in the box and puts the box on the counter. Amanda scoots forward to begin eating as Mr. Stevens sits with the puppy in his lap. Mrs. Stevens clicks on the news.

CUT TO:

31 INT. BUYING FATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

31

Emily and Kyle stand behind closed doors. Kyle is pacing as Vincent walks up to them.

KYLE
There you are. Any updates?

VINCENT
Cameron's there. He's settled. The Stevens are meeting with him today.

KYLE
Great, perfect.

EMILY
Okay, dear it's time. You ready?

KYLE
Ready as I ever am to get shit on.
Check on dad?

EMILY
Going to him now.

Emily kisses Kyle on the cheek and departs down the hallway with Vincent. Kyle takes a breath and pushes open the doors to reveal the carpet that leads up to the press conference podiums.

ZOOM OUT:

32

INT. STEVENS' HOUSEHOLD - MORNING

32

FROM KITCHEN TV IN THE STEVENS' HOUSEHOLD.

Amanda is breaking apart bacon and feeding it to the dog as her father holds it. They're laughing. Amanda glances at Kyle on TV. There's a knock at the door and envelopes fly through a golden mail slot on the door. A faint voice hollers "Happy Birthday, good luck!" Amanda turns to look as Mr. Stevens stands and places the dog in her lap. She turns attention to the dog. Mr. Stevens picks up the mail and shoves it into his black workbag which lays on the counter.

MRS. STEVENS

Enjoy your breakfast, honey! Come dear.

Amanda looks up from the dog.

AMANDA

It's only 7, who's your love affair with?

MRS. STEVENS

Uh the daycare calls us, and babe a love affair would only involve one of us.

AMANDA

True. Oh wait, did my envelope come?

MR. STEVENS

Not yet.

AMANDA

How'd he know it was my birthday?

MR. STEVENS

You're just so important, that's how.

AMANDA

Dad, really.

MR. STEVENS

Why don't you go ask him?

Mr. and Mrs. Stevens are shuffling around the room throughout the conversation. Mrs. Stevens kisses Amanda on the head.

MR. STEVENS
Really, it'll come.

AMANDA
I've waited seventeen years, what's
one more day?

MR. STEVENS
That's the spirit.

MRS. STEVENS (O.S)
Dear!

Mrs. Stevens is at the door glaring at Mr. Stevens. He checks his pockets for his wallet, keys, and phone and looks around for what he is forgetting.

MR. STEVENS
Ah, knew I was forgetting something
important.

Mr. Stevens kisses the dog on the head and runs out the door hollering "bye birthday girl" after him. His black bag remains on the counter. Amanda looks down at the dog in her hands.

AMANDA
I won't hurt you. I mean I can't
hurt you... but I also don't want
to hurt you.
(pause)
If I do I'm sorry. Just know that.
But I'm also pretty sure you can't
feel pain... because you're a
robot...

The dog is smiling up at her and jumps to lick her face. He then leaves her lap and Amanda's attention falls back on the TV. She is not paying attention to her actions as she cuts her french toast with a fork and knife. Her pressure causes the plate to crack and the table to fall towards her. Plates slide to the ground and food is spilled. Amanda jumps up to grab napkins when she notices her dad's bag is still there. An orange envelope peaks out of the bag and she pulls it out revealing that it is addressed to her.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
No way.

Amanda runs to the window, she sees her driveway is empty. She runs out of her house and across her lawn toward James' house.

CUT TO:

33 EXT. JAMES' HOUSE - DAY

33

Amanda knocks aggressively on James' front door. A LITTLE BOY (5) pops the door open a foot. This is the same boy from the mall.

AMANDA
Oh goodness, hi.

The little boy stares at her.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Do you remember me?

The little boy shakes his head.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
I'm James' friend, is he here?

The little boy stares again. The door opens wider. Another head pops around the door. This is a LITTLE GIRL (7), also the same girl from the mall. A toothy grin spreads across her face.

LITTLE GIRL
Amanda! Manda! Manda! Jamie! Manda!

The little girl pulls open the door and jumps into Amanda's lap. Amanda kneels to hug her. The little girl pulls her into the house and the little boy follows a few feet behind.

34 INT. JAMES' LIVING ROOM - DAY

34

The little girl is laying across Amanda's lap showing her a holographic drawing from a handheld device. She's pointing out parts and making it twirl with her finger. James skips down the stairs.

JAMES
Well, well. Look who it is.

AMANDA
Took you long enough.

LITTLE GIRL
No, no Jamie go away. We're having fun.

JAMES
What's the occasion birthday girl?

The little boy has been silently watching TV from the ottoman a few feet away.

LITTLE BOY
Happy happy bird-day!

AMANDA
Aw thank you Tommy.

Amanda pulls the orange envelope from behind her on the couch. James eyes brighten.

JAMES
Holy shit!

The little girl rolls over so Amanda can stand up.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Um, shit. Uh come up stairs.

He runs up the stairs and Amanda follows.

35

INT. JAMES' ROOM - DAY

35

James falls into a black rolling chair at his desk. The desk is also black and lined with computers and displays. His bedroom has a dark theme to it, much like a gamer-addict room would be. Amanda has a light theme to her room -- both rooms are opposite their personalities.

JAMES
Did you open it? What's it say?
What's the final call? Who the hell
are you?

AMANDA
I haven't yet--

JAMES
No? Give it to me!

Amanda hands the envelope to James and sits on his bed. James holds it for a moment.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Nope you do it.

He shoves it back at Amanda. He is more frantic than she is. Amanda begins to peel the corner and James rolls into her to stare at the document. She pulls out a certificate and they scan it.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Holy shit it says everything. Your
intelligence is 15 grand and your
looks... no wonder you're so
gorgeous and the--

AMANDA
There's no fate.

JAMES
Huh?

James scans the document. They both stare at the bottom, rereading the same word over and over again. Next to fate it reads: UNASSIGNED.

JAMES (CONT'D)
How is that possible?

AMANDA
I don't know.

James takes the certificate and slides over to this computer. He punches some numbers.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

JAMES
Amanda...

AMANDA
(still stunned)
What's up?

JAMES
Your fate... whatever it is... it was over 50 grand.

END OF ACT 1

CUT TO:

BEGIN ACT 2

36 INT. BUYING FATE MORGUE - DAY

36

Dr. Johnson is wheeling himself through the morgue in the headquarters where bodies of customized children have been brought for examination. Visible bodies have extreme burn marks, several are unidentifiable, others have strangely colored skin, some are distorted in unhumanlike ways. Scientists in all white shuffle around the room, blending into the white background of the facility.

LABCOAT 1
It's unlike anything I have ever seen.

LABCOAT 2

As expected, genetic engineering is a fairly new field of study.

DR. JOHNSON

What have you found?

LABCOAT 1

Their brains... upon examination they are literally distorted, dysfunctional. It's clear this occurred before death, perhaps causing the body to respond in such gruesome ways.

DR. JOHNSON

After their fates are complete.

LABCOAT 1

Well... yes. That is a valid conclusion.

DR. JOHNSON

The body shuts down. It gives up.

LABCOAT 1

Not necessarily gives up. But it assumes it's done.

LABCOAT 2

The brain retires in a sense.

DR. JOHNSON

So they reach their end goal, their fate, and slowly the brain shuts down. What's the chance it will happen to all customized children?

LABCOAT 1

Well for anybody with a fate? I'd say 100%.

Dr. Johnson looks sick. He nods.

DR. JOHNSON

Thank you. Good work.

LABCOAT 1 AND 2

Thank you, sir.

Dr. Johnson wheels to the door, pauses for it to peel open, and wheels through into an elevator.

CUT TO:

37 INT. BUYING FATE ELEVATOR - DAY 37

The doors reopen to an entirely white hallway.

CUT TO:

38 INT. BUYING FATE HALLWAY - DAY 38

Dr. Johnson wheels out and Emily emerges from behind a corner. Walking frantically on the phone. She spots Dr. Johnson and lowers the phone.

EMILY

Kyle, we have a problem. The mob is getting violent, disruptive. Several fights have broken out today alone.

Dr. Johnson is frozen in his chair, unable to speak. Emily notices.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Doctor? Are you okay?

Dr. Johnson leans forward and the momentum takes him out of his seat. He falls to his face. Emily kneels to comfort him. She picks back up the phone.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Vincent, get the medics in here asap. I think the doctor is having a heart attack.

CUT TO:

39 INT. BUYING FATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY 39

Kyle is looking out a window watching the non-customized mob roam and rally. The room he is in is entirely white. He has an odd smirk on his face. A door behind him opens, lighting his silhouette. He turns to see Vincent with tears in his eyes.

VINCENT

We need you boss.

The two exit.

CUT TO:

40 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

40

Cameron walks to the front of the police station in uniform. He speaks with somebody at the front desk who points to a couple sitting in a waiting area. Cameron turns to them. It's the Stevens. He walks over and holds out a hand.

CAMERON

Mr. and Mrs. Stevens. It's a pleasure.

The couple nervously take turns shaking his hand. Cameron turns away and the couple follows him to the back of the building.

CUT TO:

41 INT. CAMERON'S OFFICE - DAY

41

The Stevens and Cameron take seats opposite side of a desk. Cameron's office itself is very bare. A few pictures sit on shelves along with a few certificates on the walls -- none of which are Cameron's.

CAMERON

Well, let's just cut to it. How is she doing?

MR. STEVENS

She's totally fine. Normal.

MRS. STEVENS

Dear we have to be honest.

MR. STEVENS

She has some strange tendencies but that's normal for adolescent-hood, right.

CAMERON

What do you mean?

MRS. STEVENS

She has little control over her hands.

MR. STEVENS

She's a little violent at times.

CAMERON

Huh.

Cameron is leaned back, looking from parent to parent, tapping a pen on the desk. He looks out of place.

MRS. STEVENS
Nothing too weird.

MR. STEVENS
But her make-up--

MRS. STEVENS
Oh yeah we have that.

CAMERON
Has she questioned getting her
envelope yet?

MRS. STEVENS
Oh immediately. As expected, any
17-year-old expects to be told
immediately. They're promised that
much.

CAMERON
And what's her fate?

MR. STEVENS
We haven't looked yet.

CAMERON
You think her violence is tied to
it?

MRS. STEVENS
Why would it be?

CAMERON
Okay, well let's take a look.

Mr. Stevens leans down for his bag which is not there.

MR. STEVENS
Shoot.

CAMERON
Problem?

MR. STEVENS
No, I just ditzed. I left my bag on
the counter at home.

CAMERON
Does Amanda have access to that
bag?

MR. STEVENS
No? She's generally not interested
in what we do for work.

MRS. STEVENS
She's never been much of a snooper.

Cameron stands along with the Stevens.

CAMERON
Call me immediately when the locate
the envelope. Do not open it
outside of my presence.

MR. STEVENS
Is there a reason it is so
pressing?

CAMERON
Just as you said, Amanda deserves
to know who she is but her
biological parents are asking to
know first. That's all.

The Stevens share a look but agree. They seem unaware of the
severity of the situation, but will continue to follow
orders.

CUT TO:

42 INT. AMANDA'S ROOM - DAY

42

Amanda is at her window, sitting out of it looking down at
James.

JAMES
Seriously call me after you talk to
them, okay? Don't push me out of
your medical mystery investigation.

AMANDA
I won't, I won't. You're going to
be late.

James makes a face and slides into his jeep. Amanda gets up
from her window sill and replaces a bird cage to where it
sat before. She steps inside and turns on the TV. The words
"Breaking News" flash across the bottom of the screen, under
a news reporter.

REPORTER
We are still awaiting details on
the heart attack that occurred
earlier this morning...

The reporter trails on as Amanda's attention falls on a bird that has entered the bird cage. She stands and walks to the window, slowly closing the door to the bird cage. She begins turning a lever until the cage closes in on the bird. With a small squeak, blood begins to drop from the contraption. Amanda holds it outside the window so it drips on the roof. She moves back inside to grab a shoebox from under her bed. Below James has not left the driveway. He stares up at Amanda's window in amazement. He pops his car into reverse and drives away.

Back in Amanda's room, she drops the bird into the shoebox and slides it back under her bed. Her "Forever Puppy" pokes his nose under the bed sniffing at it. Amanda slowly and casually wipes the blood from the metal bird cage and places outside her window. She returns attention to the TV, visibly upset with her actions.

CUT TO:

43

INT. BUYING FATE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

43

Kyle is shuffling back and forth within a crowd of white-coat scientists. Technology fills the white room and there is non-stop chatter. Emily enters the room and wiggles her way to Kyle.

EMILY

Dear?

Kyle is engulfed in his task.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Kyle. I need you.

Kyle turns to her, she holds up a phone.

KYLE

Can I call back?

Kyle turns back to his work.

EMILY

It's Brendon.

Kyle spins back to her. They share a look. He removes white gloves from his hands and takes the phone. Emily follows him out of the room.

CUT TO:

44 INT. AMANDA'S HOUSE - DAY

44

There is aggressive knocking at the door. From Amanda's window she can't see who it is. She jogs downstairs to the front door. She opens it and James barges in.

JAMES
You need help.

AMANDA
What? How are you here?

JAMES
I got half way to school and
couldn't stand it anymore.

James is pacing back and forth inside the door.

AMANDA
What do I need help with?

James stops and looks Amanda in the eyes. He holds eye contact.

JAMES
I saw the whole thing, Amanda.

AMANDA
What thing?

James runs to the stairs with Amanda following close behind.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Stop, stop stop! Okay, okay!

CUT TO:

45 INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

45

James dives under Amanda's bed and pulls out a shoebox. He kicks it open and closes it again, a hand over his mouth.

JAMES
Why? I don't get it.

AMANDA
I can't help it.

JAMES
You're insane. Of course you can!

AMANDA

James.

JAMES

The fucking cat, the squirrel, what did the bird do to you?

AMANDA

James I can't help it.

James is sliding the box farther and farther away, pacing again. Amanda sits on the bed.

JAMES

Stop lying.

AMANDA

You aren't listening.

JAMES

I hear you. You find weird pleasure in hurting small animals.

AMANDA

(pause)

It's not just animals.

James meets her gaze. She sighs and rolls up her sleeve revealing the rows of cuts.

JAMES

Whaaat are you doing to yourself?

AMANDA

I can't control it.

JAMES

Do you want a counselor? Isn't your mom like a counselor or something? What can I do to help--

James puts his hands on Amanda's knees. She jumps.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What can I do to help you?

AMANDA

You can listen.

James releases his grip, stands straight, and sits next to her.

JAMES

You're right.

AMANDA

I cannot control it James. It has to be a customized thing. I can't do anything about it. The destruction. The killing. The car crashes. It's like my brain says one thing and I want to do another but I just can't.

James searches her face.

JAMES

It's a programmed person thing? From that talk? THAT's your weird habits? Violence? That's why you can't drive?

AMANDA

No, that's not why I can't drive. But I've crashed 3 of my parents cars. Like bad crashes. I'm surprised I didn't kill anybody.

JAMES

Have you always done shit like this?

AMANDA

For as long as I can remember... We've never had a pet for longer than a month.

James eyes the puppy that has been gnawing on a shoe in the corner of the room.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

He's indestructive.

JAMES

Ah, right. Of course.

AMANDA

But, yeah. I've... hurt... three living things this week. My outbursts are getting more aggressive and faster.

JAMES

Because you're 17. You're officially on your path to completing my fate.

AMANDA
My fate that is totally unknown.

JAMES
Fuck, dude.

AMANDA
Exactly...

A voice from downstairs calls Amanda's name. Her parents have returned home.

CUT TO:

46 INT. AMANDA'S HOUSE - DAY

46

Amanda emerges from her room with James and they jog downstairs. Her parents are in the kitchen. Mr. Stevens is shuffling through his workbag. Mrs. Stevens is next to him. They spot Amanda and calm their demeanor. They are shocked to see James.

MRS. STEVENS
James? No class today?

JAMES
Amanda's birthday is a nationally holiday, Mrs. S. Don't ya know that?

Amanda shoots him a look at and he shrugs.

MR. STEVENS
Amanda, you haven't uh... you haven't been in my bag have you.

AMANDA
(quietly to James)
Shit, shit shit... Um yeah sorry dad. I thought I saw something of mine in there. Why?

MR. STEVENS
Did you take anything?

AMANDA
Uh, yeah.

James hits Amanda's arm.

JAMES
(to Amanda)
Lie dammit.

AMANDA

Yeah I looked but didn't find what I thought I would find.

MR. STEVENS

Oh, odd.

MRS. STEVENS

You sure it was in there?

MR. STEVENS

I thought I was.

MRS. STEVENS

I'm going to call Cameron.
(to Amanda and James)
Have fun celebrating kids!

Mr. and Mrs. Steven shuffle to their room. James and Amanda run back upstairs to find the envelope.

CUT TO:

47

INT. BAR - NIGHT

47

Kyle enters a bar. Nobody cares about his presence. His identity is clearly not a big deal here. Townies stumble around, mirroring the opening scene of the movie. Kyle spots a man sitting by himself hunched over a mug of beer. Another mug sits next to him in front of an empty chair. It is Brendon (40). Kyle walks over to him and slides in the seat. Brendon looks up, grins, and wraps an arm around Kyle. Kyle is uncomfortable.

BRENDON

What is up old boy?!

Brendon has an unruly beard and uncombed hair. He has clearly let himself go.

KYLE

How are you, uh, how's everything?

BRENDON

It's shit, Kyle.

KYLE

Yeah.

Kyle takes a sip from the beer in front of him. Brendon's gaze doesn't leave Kyle's face.

BRENDON
I need something from you.

KYLE
Yeah?

BRENDON
You owe it to me.

KYLE
Okay.

BRENDON
Take me fucking seriously, dude.

KYLE
I do, I do.

Kyle is bracing himself, defensive. Brendon has wild eyes.

BRENDON
You fucked me over, Kyle. Left me
in the dirt to claim all this fame
and I got nothing.

KYLE
You're a drunk, Brendon. I couldn't
have hired you. It wasn't even my
call.

BRENDON
You can hire me now.

KYLE
Brendon...

BRENDON
I want half of the company.

KYLE
You're drunken mad.

BRENDON
Your dad is about to die. You're
going to accept your role as the
new owner, and I want 50%.

KYLE
No chance.

BRENDON
You don't give me half, I tell the
world what you did 17 years ago.

KYLE

You're kidding. Brendon you're insane! You know I can't do that.

BRENDON

And I know you can't let that secret out. It'll ruin the company. It'll ruin you.

KYLE

You're just paparazzi. Nobody will believe a drunken asshole.

BRENDON

Well, we'll see about that.

KYLE

I guess we will.

Kyle stares at Brendon in shock as Brendon finishes his drink and reaches for Kyle's. Kyle presses away from the bar. He leaves.

CUT TO:

48 INT.

48