

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY

White envelopes everything in sight.

An arctic gust howls across the barren and desolate landscape. The weather has kept people home, off the road.

White, powdery snow blows in ferocious swirling funnels.

Ahead, cutting through this, headlights approach.

The car pushes cautiously through the storm.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

The car, an innocuous but dependable sedan, is loaded with luggage and assorted items typical of a college dorm room.

ANN, 20, pretty and young-looking, tall with short brown hair. perches nervously on the edge of the passenger seat, trying to see past the windshield.

SETH, 21, tall and lean, a stern and determined look on his face, drives cautiously but confidently. He's not as worried as she is.

ANN

(incredulous)

Can you see anything in this?

SETH

(matter-of-factly)

No. Can you?

ANN

All I see is white.

SETH

Well... we're still on the road, aren't we?

ANN

(panic rising in her voice)

What road? I don't see a road. I see white.

SETH

Take it easy, Ann. We're almost there.

ANN

I'm okay. I'd just hate to get stuck out here, that's all.

SETH

(mildly annoyed)

We're not gonna get stuck out here.

A beat.

ANN

I'm sorry. I'm whining, aren't I?

SETH

Just a tad, yes.

ANN

I hate going back early. Christmas morning comes and goes, then New Year's Eve... then voila!... just like we never left.

SETH

You're still whining, you know.

ANN

(sheepishly)

Sorry.

SETH

We all hate this. I know I do. Winter break cut short. That creepy, empty dorm. Everyone in close quarters like that. It sucks for one and all. But it's just for a week. It goes with being an R-A.

She scoffs.

ANN

(sardonically)

You mean the fulfilling experience of being a resident assistant? How did they describe it to us at August training? In loco parentis? What a fucking joke.

SETH

I thought you liked being an R-A.

ANN

I used to. It was a great job. I liked seeing my residents discover college for the first time. I liked hanging out with them and having my own room and all. But then they started in with all the fucking rules. They turned us into cops. I didn't sign up to be a cop, Seth.

From his face, it's clear he disagrees.

SETH

I think you're focused on the wrong thing.

ANN

What else should I be focused on?

SETH

Well... rules are part of what keeps the whole thing running. They keep people alive. They're integral, you know?

ANN

But do there have to be so many? These are people, not kids. Whatever happened to personal responsibility?

SETH

People who don't know enough to stop drinking to the point that they die are not people who have any fucking clue what personal responsibility is. They need their hands held.

ANN

(a hint of anger)
 Oh, get over yourself. You never did anything stupid when you first came to college?

A pause.

SETH
 Oh, look. We're here.

Slowly, through the snow, a large sign on the side of the road emerges. It reads:

WELCOME TO STEWART, PENNSYLVANIA -
 PROUD HOME OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY

ANN
 It's about time.

SETH
 What's the matter? Don't you like my company?

ANN
 No. I have to pee.

The car slowly drives past the sign, through the blizzard, into town.

CUT TO:

INT. DORMITORY LOBBY - DAY

Two WORKMEN, dressed in navy blue overalls, come around the corner from the boiler room and approach the front desk.

At the counter, ROSS, 21, slightly overweight, stares with beady eyes at a computer monitor.

The Workmen approach him.

One fills out a form on a clipboard, trying to make small talk with Ross. He is tired and mostly unresponsive.

WORKMAN #1
 This is the last stop. Good thing, too. Mother of a blizzard coming

through. We patched up the leak in that exhaust hose, cleaned up your burner a little bit. That furnace ought to hold you through the rest of the winter. The natural gas line ought to keep you juiced up through the spring.

He tears off the top copy off and hands it to Ross.

Ross takes it, looks at the men and nods solemnly.

WORKMAN #2

You have a good one.

They nod back, look at each other and leave the building.

Beyond the front glass doors, the world is almost impenetrably white. The workmen pull up their collars and leave apprehensively.

Ross puts the slip into an inbox marked JANE and returns to his computer. The screen we can now see, is blank.

CUT TO:

INT. AMANDA'S DORM ROOM - DAY

AMANDA, 20, sits behind a computer monitor wearing headphones.

She's haughty, with an affected air, pretty under all the pretension.

On the screen, she reads a musical score, watching a guide bar scan over the notes, waving an imaginary baton. It's a score heard only by her.

Seated in a flowery-upholstered armchair by the window is FRANK, 22.

Soft-featured and docile, Frank watches with detached ambivalence as she moves her way through her silicon-orchestrated piece.

After a moment, she lowers her arm and removes the headphones.

AMANDA

This program is amazing. But you're sure there's nothing wrong with the coda?

FRANK

It's fine, sweetheart. It sounds fine.

AMANDA

(accusatorially)

You're just trying to placate me.

Frank scurries across the room to her.

He leans over and looks at the screen, pointing to emphasize his words.

FRANK

(somewhat fearful)

Look here. The way your notes peak in the fourth line... and then you repeat that theme here, in a higher register. It's brilliant, Amanda-Panda.

AMANDA

You really think so?

He doesn't.

FRANK

Absolutely.

They kiss. It's a good kiss. A tender kiss. A kiss that explains (at least a little) his subjugation.

AMANDA

You mind hanging around by yourself tonight? We have this R-A thing until 10.

FRANK

Where else would I possibly go?

AMANDA

(seductively)

Good. And when I come back...

FRANK

Yeah?

He hangs on her next work.

AMANDA

You can rub my feet.

He loosens his grip a little.

FRANK

(under his breath)

Oh. Joy.

CUT TO:

INT. CAIGE LOBBY - DUSK

Seth and Ann, snow-covered and loaded down with luggage, brush themselves off before entering.

Standing next to Ross at the front desk is JANE, 26, short and petite with a button nose and large brown eyes, she is the Residence Hall Director.

JANE

Didn't think you guys were going to make it.

SETH

For awhile there, neither did we.

ANN

We almost didn't.

SETH

Hey! We got here. (to Jane) She's criticizing my driving.

ANN

Am not.

SETH

Are too.

ANN

Am not.

JANE

Guys...

SETH

Sorry.

ANN

How much of the training has been canceled yet?

JANE

They're going ahead with dinner tonight, as planned. They're going to wait for morning to see how things look before they cancel anything more.

SETH & ANN

Oh.

JANE

Disappointed?

SETH

I'll let you know in the morning.

They get onto the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNA'S DORM ROOM - DUSK

The room is lit from outside through the curtained window with the reflected ambience of the snow and the dim light of a cloud-masked sunset.

Along the back wall are two single beds, pushed together to make one large bed.

In it, a young, sweaty, attractive couple lie next to each other, breathing heavily.

JACK, 19, tan and muscular, and JENNA, 19, thin and sexy, stare at the ceiling and look contented.

JENNA

I think we should come back to school a week early every semester. I like it when the dorms are empty.

JACK

Definitely. I missed you.

JENNA

I missed you.

They kiss.

JACK

When are we going to tell other people about this? About us.

JENNA

You think they don't already know?

JACK

I don't care about what they think they know. I just want to tell them. I want to tell everyone that you and I are together. I'm tired of all this sneaking around.

JENNA

Jack, I'm sure they'll find out on their own.

JACK

Why do we have to go sneaking around like this, anyway? You're not ashamed of dating me, are ya?

JENNA

(changing the subject)

Think the R-A dinner is still on?

JACK

(sounding dejected)

I dunno. We should go down and check, just to be sure.

He starts to get out of bed. Jenna pulls him back down.

JENNA

Right now?

JACK

Yeah. Why not?

JENNA

Well... I thought we might, uh, go for one more.

She smiles, mischievously.

Moving her body down past the covers, Jack responds to her touch as we PAN AWAY, past various articles of clothing strewn about the floor.

We pass through the door itself and out into the hallway.

There, huddled outside the door, his ear firmly pressed to the wood is CARL, 24, a large overweight man with glasses and a thin wisp of a moustache.

He listens to the MOANING inside with the rapt attention of a safe cracker.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLES'S DORM ROOM - DUSK

A lanky Englishman named CHARLES, 21 and JASON, 20, a large, imposing figure with long curly hair and a Black Sabbath t-shirt push their way into a room littered with stuff.

Clothes, books, coffee cups, CD cases and various other items cover the floor, the bed, and every other available surface in the room.

They carry with them construction paper and magic markers.

JASON

(looking around the room)

Um, maybe we could work in the study lounge.

CHARLES

What's wrong with my room?

JASON

Um...

Jason continues to survey the place, astounded by the clutter.

Charles pushes past him to a desk shoved into the corner. With a sweep of his arm, junk clatters to the floor.

CHARLES

There we are... plenty of room.

Jason shrugs, drops his materials and begins to work.

JASON

How do you live here?

CHARLES

What do you mean?

JASON

I mean, look at this place. It's like The Salvation Army just attacked.

CHARLES

Fuck you, dude. I like it this way. It's illustrative of an uncluttered mind to live like this. Everything is out in the open; no need to ever have to look for anything.

JASON

Whatever. How many signs did Jane ask for?

CHARLES

Fuck if I know. I just work here.

JASON

Well... five floors, two wings per floor, so ten, right?

CHARLES

That's why you're the honors student, mate.

JASON

(in sarcastic agreement)

Yeah, I'm a regular poster boy for public education.

A beat.

CHARLES

Is Seth back yet?

JASON

Haven't seen him. He called me last week... said he was going to give Ann a ride.

CHARLES

(after a pause)

I'm sure he did.

JASON

What?

CHARLES

Nothing.

JASON

I know you're not thinking Seth and Ann. Because I know Seth and Ann, and there is no Seth and Ann.

CHARLES

None of my business, that's for sure. All I know is, she's a pretty girl and he's a single guy.

JASON

She's dating his best friend.

CHARLES

That's not enough to stop some people.

JASON

Seth's not "some people." He's Seth.

CHARLES

I think you give the bloke too much credit. I know you respect him, but he's still a dude. Hand me that marker. No, the black one.

Jason hands it to him. Charles begins to scribble furiously with it.

Charles holds his sign up for Jason (and us) to see. A hastily drawn stick figure with scratchy letters reads:
MEN'S ROOM

JASON
(sarcastically)
Professional.

CHARLES
(winking)
Thanks, man.

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S OFFICE - LATER

Jane is typing into the computer when there's a KNOCK on the door.

JANE
Come in.

LORI, 20, a short, blonde woman with rosy cheeks enters. She doesn't look well.

JANE
Hey, Lori. What can I do for you?

LORI
Hey, Jane. You know how I told you I never quite got over being sick when I was home?

JANE
Yeah?

LORI
Well...

JANE
Uh-oh.

LORI

Yeah.

JANE

Are you okay?

LORI

Yeah, it's just a little fever and a stomach ache. But I don't think it's a good idea that I go to the dinner tonight.

Jane nods.

JANE

Do you need anything?

LORI

No, thank you. Just rest.

JANE

Well, okay. I'll check on you later, okay?

LORI

Okay. Thanks Jane.

JANE

Feel better, Lori.

LORI

Thanks.

She quietly leaves the office as Jane resumes her work.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAIGE LOBBY - DUSK

Jane stands at the head of the group, dressed to brave the weather.

The others are similarly bundled. Amanda stands on her own, hip temporarily removed from Frank. Jason and Charles stand next to Seth and Ann.

Ross and Carl stand at the back of the party, ignoring each other. Carl stares at Jenna, who's talking flirtatiously with Jack. Ross is, as usual, in his own little world.

JANE

I know I've seen most of you already, but this makes it official. Welcome back, everyone. It looks like your vacations may not be over yet. They're predicting more of the same for tomorrow, and if that's the case, a lot of what was planned for the next couple days will have to be rescheduled.

Several members of the group fight to hold back smiles.

JANE

I can see you're all broken up about that. Anyway, for now we're going to do the whole dinner thing. We should be back here by nine, and then you'll have some free time to unpack, settle in... whatever. Does anyone have any questions before we get going?

She pauses momentarily, not expecting any inquiries and getting none.

JANE

All right, then.

The group follows Jane out of the building.

As the door opens, a blast of snowy cold wind blows across the threshold.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Coats and scarves hang on the backs of chairs.

Over a hundred people stand in buffet lines, talking amongst themselves.

At the front of the room, a rectangle table supports an amplifier.

NANCY, 35, a cheerful woman with a busy head of curly hair holds a wireless microphone a la Jerry Springer, looking from table to table for an attentive pair of eyes.

She doesn't find any.

MARSHA

Can I have everyone's attention please?

Just as she begins to speak, she is interrupted by two OFFICIAL LOOKING PEOPLE who talk and point out the window at the snow.

They lead her out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL

Ann stands behind Amanda, looking as though she would rather be anywhere else. Amanda babbles on, oblivious to Ann's indifference..

AMANDA

...And so I said to Frank, I said "where are we going to put all of the aunts and uncles if they don't like each other and won't sit at the same table at the reception?" So then he says, ha ha, he's so funny, he said: "Well..

Amanda's voice trails off.

Ann looks behind her. Every person in the room is moving in slow motion.

Ann, hands firmly clamped on her plate, looks from one face to the other.

Now, people have stopped completely. Everyone is frozen in place. But it isn't just people.

Food has stopped in mid-air, as it is being served. Time has stopped.

Ann cautiously steps from her place in line, careful not to touch anyone.

Amanda's gaze is locked on the place Ann stood a moment before.

Ann moves past the occupants of the room as though they were statues. She walks clean out the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The world has frozen, and not just as a result of the weather.

Snowflakes, thousands of them, remain suspended in mid-air. As Ann walks, they collect on her. Behind her, a tunnel free of flakes as been left in the air.

She walks up the street back toward Caige Hall, brushing the gathering flakes away from her face.

At the end of the road, she comes up against an invisible wall, beyond which there isn't any snow suspended in the air.

Across this threshold, it is day, and the world moves at normal speed. She can see everything in two dimensions, as though it were being projected on a movie screen.

Police cars and ambulances, their lights still flashing, are parked haphazardly in the driveway by the front door of Caige Hall.

Paramedics begin wheeling body bags on gurneys through the open door, one at a time.

Large fans run furiously in front of the open doors and windows of the building.

Shocked, she takes a step forward to move beyond the threshold. As her foot passes across the invisible wall...

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL

...She finds herself back in line for dinner, as though nothing has happened.

AMANDA

(laughing)

Isn't that funny?! Frank is so funny, he's so wonderful, I love him. I can't wait to get married... (Ann walks away briskly, distracted) Ann? Is everything all right.

Ann closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

She drops her plate as her hands move to her temples, stooping like someone in danger of losing her balance.

Her plate clatters to the floor and shatters.

Panicked, she runs out of the room.

Seth sees and goes after her. Many people in the room have stopped in place to see what the commotion is.

AMANDA

(to no one in particular)

What did I say?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET

Seth runs after Ann through the snow, which now falls quite ferociously, calling her name all the way. She doesn't stop until she reaches the end of the street.

Ahead, Caige Hall is dark. Just as they left it.

They shout at each other over the noise of the wind.

SETH

What's wrong?!

ANN

I don't know!!

SETH

What happened to you in there?

ANN

I don't know, Seth!! I... saw something!!

SETH

Saw something?! What did you see?!

A beat.

ANN

I'm not sure. I saw Caige.

SETH

Yeah, I see it too!! What about it?!

ANN

No!! Not that one!! It was daytime!!
And there were police!! And...

SETH

Sounds like you had too much of that
casserole!

ANN

Goddamnit Seth! I know it sounds
crazy, but I know what I saw!!
Something bad is going to happen!

A beat.

SETH

How am I supposed to respond to that?!

She doesn't know. Her loss for words turns to tears. She quickly hides her face and brushes past him back to the building.

ANN

I'm freezing my ass off out here.

Without another word, she goes inside.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL

Carl creeps along the line to where Jack and Jenna are standing together.

His eyes are locked on her and his smile, vague and cold, is enough to send chills down anyone's spine.

Jenna's face hardens at the sight of him.

She steps protectively behind Jack, who has stopped smiling as well.

CARL

Hello, Jenna.

JACK

What do you want, Carl?

Carl turns his head to Jack with a grudging acknowledgement of his presence.

Carl genuinely tries to sound friendly and happy.

CARL

Hello, Jack. Having a nice time?

JACK

Jenna has nothing to say to you, shit head.

CARL

What's it to you, Jack? Jenna can speak for herself. Unless she lost her voice somehow. You know... got something stuck in her throat, perhaps?

JENNA

(with teeth-gritting fury)

Now you listen to me, you little man. I don't like you, I have never liked you, I never WILL like you. I hate your face, I hate your glasses, I hate everything about you. And if I ever, EVER catch you hanging around outside my room again, I'll slap a restraining order on your fat sorry ass so fast,

you won't know what the fuck hit you,
do you understand me?!

Carl stares blankly, his mental buffer trying hard to keep
the insult away from his brain.

JACK

Nod yes, asshole.

He does, slowly.

She walks off.

Jack turns back to him.

JACK

(menacingly)

That's the least you'll have to worry
about, my friend. My brothers and I
will see to it you got no ears left to
press against any more doors. You
understand me, you dickless fuck? We
will beat you within an inch of your
miserable little life.

CARL

(mustering courage)

I'd like to see you try it, frat boy.

Carl's response doesn't do him any favors.

Jack sets his plate down softly on the table next to him,
stands straight up, pushes out his chest and gives Carl a
forceful but reserved little shove.

Carl stumbles back a few steps, making enough of a noise to
unsettle a few chairs.

From across the room, Jason (always the peacekeeper) jumps
up from his seat. He strides, careful not to attract any
more attention to the situation.

He steps between Carl and Jack. A foot taller than both of
them, he has no trouble making sure the two of them don't
come to blows.

Carl sulks off without another word.

JACK

Why'd you do that, man?

JASON

I did you a favor, dude. Nancy is still here. If you like your job and want to keep it, this is not the place to start a fight.

Jack sulks off, watching Jason ignominiously as he goes.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL

Jenna is pale and fairly shaken. She is talking to Seth.

Jack comes up behind her and places a hand on her shoulder. She jumps and turns around, but pats his hand nonchalantly when she sees that it's him.

SETH

Could you give us a minute, Jack?

Jack's face is a dike holding back a flood of resentful rage.

He leaves them grudgingly.

SETH

How long has this been going on?

JENNA

Since August. Jane knows. She's talked to him. I dunno how many times now. Things got better toward the end of last semester, but now... it obviously hasn't done much good.

SETH

(nodding)

Well... I suggest we go to Jane again. Tonight.

JENNA

Yeah... all right. Sure.

SETH

Do you think he'll hurt you?

She shrugs.

JENNA

I dunno. Probably not, no.

SETH

All the same, I'm going to have a word with Jane.

JENNA

Okay. Thanks, Seth.

He nods and moves off. Jack returns.

JACK

You all right?

JENNA

Yeah. I'm fine.

JACK

We'll sleep in my room tonight.

JENNA

In your little bed? No, way—

JACK

Jenna, forchristsake, this guy—

JENNA

Jack, I am not running from this asshole. We'll sleep in mine.

JACK

(angered; impatient)

Well, I don't want to fuck you while he sits outside your door and listens!

JENNA

(a little offended)

Real nice way to put it. Is that all it is to you? Fucking?

The poor guy's at a loss. She mercifully lets it go.

JENNA (CONT)

Forget it. Besides, what's stopping him from just walking down to your room? Eh?

JACK

(frustrated)

He's not getting off this time. When the boys get back here next week, we're gonna tear him a new fuckin'—

JENNA

Unleashing your brothers on him is not the right way to deal with this. Unless you kill him. Which is what you're gonna have to do if you want to go that route.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL

Marsha takes the microphone again now that everyone is seated and eating.

MARSHA

Hey everyone! Listen, because of the weather and the fact that I have to drive back to Marion Center tonight, we're going to end things here a little early.

No one in the room cheers, but they sure want to.

MARSHA

Please feel free to finish dinner. When you go back to your buildings, please make good use of the time. I'm sure you need to work on all kinds of building prep. We'll decide in the morning how much of training is going to be canceled. We might lose a day or two, but, for the most part, we will be

sticking to the schedule. That's it!
Have a good night, folks.

She puts the microphone down and walks to the back of the room, consulting with a few people as she goes.

The CHATTER in the room returns to normal levels.

The staff of Caige Hall sits at a table, picking at the remains of the meal.

Jane stares out the window at the snow, rolling her engagement ring on her finger.

Seth moves a few seats over, taking the one next to her.

SETH

You okay?

JANE

Yeah. Thinking about Aaron. I hope he's not out driving in this.

SETH

Did he tell you he would be?

JANE

No. He's in Cleveland, on business. I just hope he didn't get the stupid idea to drive back here and surprise me. He does stuff like that.

SETH

I'm sure he knows better.

JANE

Heh. You don't know Aaron. (*A beat.*)
But, enough about that. Is Ann okay?

SETH

She's fine.

JANE

What happened?

SETH

She doesn't know. Either that, or she won't say. Probably just dizzy or something. It's kind of stuffy in here.

Jane nods, disinterestedly.

SETH

Jason tells me Jack and Carl almost came to blows a little while ago. Apparently Carl's been stalking after Jenna.

JANE

Still, huh? (sighs) Goddamnit. (to herself) Some people never learn. Okay, well... we'll deal with that another time.

SETH

Okay. Another question: How much food is kept in Caige?

JANE

What do you mean?

SETH

Well, there's a bad storm coming that promises to only get worse. If we're trapped, I'd feel better if there was something more to eat than each other.

JANE

What are you talking about? It's just a little snow.

SETH

Humor me.

She shrugs and thinks for a minute.

JANE

I've got some things in my apartment... whatever you guys have in your rooms... the stuff in the vending machines. That's all, really. We don't have emergency rations or anything extreme

like that. But I think you're being a little alarmist. The dining hall is just up the street. We can always walk a block through the snow. We're in Pennsylvania, not the Antarctic.

SETH

I don't have anything in my room, and I think that probably goes for the rest of us. We just got back from break, no one's been to the store. Do you think we could get something fresh, just in case it does get so bad we're snowbound?

JANE

(a little dubious)

Yeah, I think we can look into that.

He nods.

SETH

Cool. When do you want to take the troops back?

She shrugs.

JANE

I'd rather not be the first staff to leave. We'll wait until some of the others start leaving.

As if on cue, other R-A staffs begin to file out.

JANE

Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. CAIGE LOBBY - NIGHT

Our cast of characters enters the building, brushing snow off themselves.

Jack and Jenna can't get upstairs fast enough. They break from the group and run toward the stairs.

The others begin to load onto the elevators.

Jane shouts after them before they can get on.

JANE

I want everyone down here for a meeting
in ten minutes!

The happy couple stop in their tracks and exchange a frustrated glance. They mope back to the elevators and squeeze on.

The doors close.

Jane shakes her head and walks through the lobby to her apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR

Every light on the button panel is lit.

The car stops every ten seconds. Jack steps off on the first floor. Without ostentation, he subtly says goodbye to Jenna.

Jason and Ross step off on the second floor.

Charles and Amanda on the third.

Carl on the fourth.

He turns and waits when he realizes he's alone.

Jenna glares defiantly at him. The elevator doors close as he makes an overture toward the door.

With the car moving again, Seth and Ann understandingly look at Jenna.

The doors open at the fifth and top floor.

SETH

See you in ten, ladies.

ANN and JENNA

Bye, Seth.

Seth walks toward his room, Ann and Jenna in the other direction.

ANN
Is everything ok?

JENNA
Carl. He's stalking me again. I'm
okay. Really.

They stop outside Ann's room.

ANN
If you ever need anything, ask me. I
know Judo and I can load and shoot a
gun better than any guy west of the
Susquehanna.

Jenna laughs.

JENNA
Really?!?

ANN
My daddy didn't want no wimp. He
taught me how to kick ass.

They laugh and part company.

Jenna continues to the end of the hallway, through the door, and down the stairwell.

CUT TO:

INT. CAIGE MAIN LOUNGE - NIGHT

A large room with six rows of institutional couches lined up in front of a big screen television.

Scattered on various seats are the group, for better or worse.

JANE
This won't take long, folks. It's very
likely we'll be confined to Caige

tomorrow due to the weather. If that's the case, we're going to do all of our building prep. That means everything. They're trying to modify the schedule some so we can work around the snow after the storm breaks. Any questions?

Silence.

JANE

That's it. Have a good night, everyone. Please be down here at 8 AM sharp, so we can figure out who has to do what.

They groan.

People slowly wander back to their rooms for the evening.

Seth walks over to where Jane is gathering her things together.

SETH

Can I see you in your office for a minute?

She nods.

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

They walk through the main office to a door at the back.

Inside, metal filing cabinets, institutional furniture, cinderblock walls, and overhead fluorescent lighting can't keep away Jane's penchant for making a home wherever she goes.

The office is warm and tastefully decorated.

Jane carelessly plunks her stuff down on the desk.

JANE

What can I do for you?

SETH

Why didn't you tell me about the Carl problem?

She is slightly offended by his tone.

JANE

Because it isn't any of your business.

SETH

The hell it's not. These people are on my staff. I'm the Head Resident Assistant. It's my job to resolve personnel conflicts!

JANE

You watch your tone with me, Seth. This is a personal matter between Carl and Jenna, and there's no reason you need to be made aware of everything. I have handled it in the past and I will do so now. Until then, privileged information in my hands will only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis. Right now, you don't have any need to know. If this is what you wanted to talk about, it can wait until tomorrow. I'm tired, I have to go check on Lori, and I want to call my fiancé.

SETH

What's wrong with Lori?

JANE

(curt)

She's sick.

SETH

Oh. (A beat.) What are you going to do about Carl?

JANE

(now angry)

Haven't you been listening?

SETH

Jane, Jenna is scared!

JANE

You think I don't know that? You think the concept of a stalker is lost on me?! I've been there!

SETH

I-- I didn't mean anything by it, Jane. I'm sorry. I just want to handle this soon and I don't think following the book is in anyone's best interest.

JANE

There are other, more pressing considerations here. We have to do this by the book. Now, if that means we have to fire him, then we will do that by the book. The higher-ups have dealt with this kind of thing before. Please leave it to the professionals.

SETH

I'm all for that. I'm just asking to be included in the loop every now and then.

JANE

Is this about what is best for Jenna? Or you not being kept in the dark?

SETH

That's not fair.

JANE

Isn't it? Let me let you in on something. You know as well as I do just how strenuous your job is. It's not easy finding students to replace you folks, and it seems like the student pool for R-As gets smaller every year. Some people, like Carl, get past our filtration process, and when they do, it's embarrassing. Carl has no business being an R-A, and his being here compromises what we're trying to do-- which is to make life for our residents as safe and worry-

free as possible. We're trying to enrich their experience as college students. I understand your concerns. And I'm thankful that you're here to assist me and bring them to my attention. But the book HAS to be followed, word for word. If we really thought Carl posed a physical threat to Jenna or anyone else, he wouldn't be here.

SETH
(unconvinced)
I hope you're right.

JANE
(still angry; dismissive)
Go to bed, Seth. Work on your door tags, hang some signs, do whatever. Just... go.

Seth moves toward the door, lingers for a moment considering his words, thinks better of it, and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. SETH'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Seth sits at his desk carefully printing men's names on multi-colored pieces of construction paper cut to look like keys: JUSTIN, HANK, TY, KYLE, etc.

He doesn't look very happy doing it.

A KNOCK at the door.

SETH
It's open!

Ann enters, hair still wet from the shower.

She's dressed in pastel-colored pajama pants and a gray t-shirt, like someone from a J-Crew catalog.

ANN
Door tags?

SETH

No choice... part of my job requirement.

ANN

Yeah, that's what they tell me. Personally, I'm avoiding them at all costs.

SETH

You look cozy.

ANN

I am. You look... the same.

SETH

I need a shower. I just had it out with Jane.

ANN

Everything okay?

SETH

Yeah, just... clashing egos, I guess.

ANN

Stop for the night. Kick back, watch a little TV... learn to relax a little, Seth Lynford. You've earned it.

She stands behind him and rubs his shoulders. He closes his eyes and lets his head drop back.

ANN (CONT)

You're a little tense.

SETH

Just a little. Mmmm... that's nice.

ANN

Yeah?

SETH

Mm-hmm. How did you get so good at this?

She continues to massage him.

ANN

Lots of practice I guess.

SETH

Adam is one lucky guy.

Ann is silent, but perturbed.

ANN

(changing the subject)

I'm worried about Jenna.

SETH

So am I. Did she say anything to you?

ANN

No. The elevator incident tonight was enough. Everyone knows about the way Carl follows her around. At first I thought it was just an innocent, though pathetic, crush. But tonight, you saw her. Jenna was afraid to get off the elevator with him.

SETH

Jane assures me it's being taken care of.

ANN

(playfully)

Does she now, Mr. Serious...

She stops massaging him and resorts to tickling.

He protects himself but she persists. He jumps out of his chair and turns to face her, giggling.

SETH

Hey, hey, hey... watch it. I'm not ticklish!

ANN

Yeah, sure you're not.

Seth steps in. Ann runs to the bed and grabs a pillow. She holds it defensively.

Seth moves in to tickle and she hits him with it.

He grabs the pillow tackles her to the bed. She screams with delight and laughs as Seth tickles her back, holding her down as he does.

He looks right into her eyes.

SETH

Gotcha.

ANN

Yeah, yeah... this time. You had a home court advantage, though. Next time, my room. You're history, pal.

They laugh.

The laughter stops as their eyes meet.

Lying down, with his arm around her waste, they are frozen like this.

Suddenly, Seth remembers this is his best friend's girlfriend.

He breaks their link and stands, straightening his clothes and looking serious again.

ANN

Seth... it's okay. Adam's not in the picture anymore.

SETH

(curious)

Since when?

ANN

New Year's Day. He stood me up the night before... I told him I didn't want to see him anymore.

SETH

(confused)

Are you, uh... are you okay with that?

ANN

(nonchalantly)
I'm fine. Honestly, it was a long time coming. He's just a stupid, frat boy. He was no good for me.

SETH
That's my best friend you're talking about.

ANN
I'm surprised he hasn't told you yet.

SETH
He will. I have no doubt. When he gets back.

Ann sighs deeply.

ANN
"When he gets back." Oh, boy.

A beat.

ANN (CONT)
You know... Seth...

SETH
(nervous)
Before you start us down that road, Ann, let me ask you something.

ANN
What?

SETH
What happened to you tonight? At dinner. What did you see?

ANN
Nothing. I was just daydreaming, that's all.

SETH
You want to talk about Adam and you and me and whatever else... but you don't want to talk about your... attack?

ANN

It wasn't an attack. And you're right,
I don't want to talk about any of it.

SETH

Okay.

ANN

(considerably colder)
I'll see you tomorrow then.

She rises and leaves with only the flimsiest of
acknowledgements.

Seth sighs, flops down on the bed, and turns on the TV.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSS'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

The walls are bare. Except for a bed and a desk, there is
virtually nothing else in the room.

Ross sits behind the desk, his face lit by the computer
monitor.

Facing him on another chair sits a beautiful, ethereal
WOMAN [DEYJA] in her late 20s.

She is dressed simply in white clothes too flimsy for the
weather.

Ross is a different person. He is at ease, lighthearted
and happy.

WOMAN [DEYJA]

I'm sorry I haven't visited as much
lately.

ROSS

It's okay. I'm glad you're here,
Deyja.

DEYJA

I'm glad to be here.

ROSS

By the looks of things, we'll be stuck in here for the next few days. You want to stay tonight?

DEYJA

You know I would love to, but I can't.

ROSS

(his smile fading)

Yeah, I know.

DEYJA

But I'll be back. I always come back, don't I?

She smiles at him. He returns the smile, which turns into a yawn.

ROSS

Yes.

DEYJA

Yeah... besides, there's something important coming. I'll be here a lot more soon.

She stands. He is saddened (as he always is) by this turn of events.

They stare across the darkness at each other for a suspended moment.

ROSS

(strained)

I-- I love you.

She smiles so wide, its almost too much for her face.

DEYJA

I know you do, Ross. And, in time... soon... I'll come for you. And we can be together. But not yet. Soon, though... be patient.

ROSS

How did I get lucky enough to know you?

DEYJA

No luck, Ross. I'm just a collector.
I'm the lucky one.

And with that, she is gone.

Ross stands alone in the dark room.

He begins to weep softly to himself. Between sobs, his face is contorted by pain.

Behind the monitor, laid out on the desk is a straight-edge razor. Ross brushes it into a drawer.

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We PAN slowly across her place. It's furnished and carpeted, just like her office.

Jane is sound asleep on the couch.

In her hand, the phone is beeping, the steady tone of a phone left off the hook.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LORI'S DORM ROOM

Lori is huddled under the covers of her bed, shivering feverishly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROSS'S DORM ROOM

Ross sits in front of the computer, head down and passed out, blue lines drawn across his wrists.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JASON'S DORM ROOM

Were it not for the million books lining the walls of the place, Jason's room could be considered neat.

He looks comfortable, lying in bed, clutching a book to his chest, mouth open, fast asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AMANDA'S DORM ROOM

Amanda sleeps soundly, clutching Frank, who lies awake staring at the ceiling. His eyes begin to droop slowly, as though drugged.

They close. His mouth opens, slightly gasping for breath, drifting deeper into unconsciousness.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHARLES' DORM ROOM

Charles lies sideways on his bed, passed out where he fell.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JENNA'S DORM ROOM

In the big bed by the wall, Jenna straddles Jack.

Both of them are passed out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CARL'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

This place makes Charles' room look clean.

There is no order to the articles in the room. It is a place barely fit for human habitation. And yet, on the floor, Carl habitates.

He sits in the middle of the floor, in the lotus position, his eyes closed.

He falls over suddenly.

We pan past him and move over the walls.

Pictures of Carl from early age to some recent are taped to the wall.

All are of him - only him - some of them obviously taken by himself, holding the camera at arms length.

Stuck into the frame of the wall mirror is a bumper sticker.

In green letters, it says: ... THE CHEESE STANDS ALONE.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SETH'S DORM ROOM

Seth is bathed in the light of the television, still wearing his clothes, out cold.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANN'S DORM ROOM

If a sunflower garden were planted indoors and exploded, it would look something like Ann's room.

Looking impossibly domestic, the place is decorated with a sunflower motif.

Ann is also passed out in bed. Her journal (a book with a giant sunflower on the front) lays on her chest, a pen gripped loosely in her hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOILER ROOM

The furnace sits by itself in the basement. A large ugly box, its front vaguely resembles a face.

Two gauges on the front are its eyes. A second ambiguous box make a nose, and the grilled vent on the front is a grinning mouth full of teeth.

Behind the vent, a dozen large burners come to life, shooting blue flame from the ends, and giving the impression the furnace is grinning.

The camera pans up to and closes in on the main chimney pipe.

A large hole in it has a patch slapped on it, but the patch has come away from the hole.

We hear a very sinister HISSING.

FADE OUT

CUT IN FROM BLACK:

INT. SETH'S ROOM - DAY

He SCREAMS.

Standing in the center of the room, he pulls air into his lungs in huge, gasping breaths.

Looking about the room, he regains his bearings and leaves.

He is wearing the clothes from the night before.

CUT TO:

INT. CAIGE LOBBY - DAY

The elevator doors part and Seth steps out.

Beyond the front door it is solidly white from the storm.

Seth peers out, shakes his head and moves to open the main office.

He takes a key out of his pocket and lets himself in.

CUT TO:

INT. CAIGE OFFICE

Seth turns on the lights and lifts the security gate that separates the lobby from the office.

Jumps cuts as:

He sits at the desk and stares at the wall.

He drums his fingers on the tabletop.

He looks at the "THINGS TO DO" box on the shelf. It's empty.

He looks at the clock, looks at his watch, back to the clock, and grunts. It's 7:50.

Ross enters the lobby.

SETH

Hey Ross.

ROSS

(mumbled)

Heywuzzup.

SETH

Sleep well?

Ross nods absently.

SETH

It doesn't look like anything's going to happen today. Maybe we'll get to go back to bed.

Ross shrugs, checks his empty mailbox, gives a quick wave, and disappears as quickly as he arrived, leaving Seth to sit by himself.

SETH

(to the empty room)

Nice talking to you.

Ann and Jenna enter.

SETH

(cheerfully)

Good morning, ladies.

ANN

(a little concerned)

What's for breakfast?

SETH

Spanish omelets, French toast, and gourmet coffee.

JENNA

Sounds good. You buying?

SETH

Yeah, sure. Actually, I thought we were going to walk to the dining hall.

ANN

In this?! Are you crazy?

SETH

No. So, for now, I think we'll just wait.

ANN

Don't we have anything in the building? Other than the vending machines?

SETH

Just wait a few minutes until Jane makes an appearance. I'm sure she has our whole day mapped out anyway.

JENNA

Oh, goodie.

ANN

We're going to raid the fridge in the common area. Come on, Jenna.

SETH

Happy hunting.

Jenna rolls her eyes at Seth as Ann drags her off down the corridor, past the bank of mailboxes.

Amanda and Frank get off the elevator, holding hands.

SETH

Good morning, guys.

AMANDA

Good morning, Seth.

SETH

Well, Frank... looks like you're stuck with us for the duration.

He shrugs.

FRANK

No biggie. Wasn't planning on doing anything else.

AMANDA

(hiding her annoyance)

Weren't we all supposed to meet at 8?

SETH

They still have a few minutes. Be patient.

AMANDA

What about breakfast?

SETH

Unless you've got some mini-muffins stashed away in your room, it looks like corn chips and Pepsi is all we've got.

Amanda sighs, takes Frank by the hand and drags him away, a look on his face that screams "help me!"

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOBBY - LATER

The staff loiter in the lobby, looking annoyed.

ANGLE ON CLOCK: 8:30.

Lori is there, still looking ill. Seth pulls her away from the group.

SETH

How do you feel?

LORI

Not great, but I'm okay.

SETH

We have a problem. Can I talk to you for a second?

She nods.

SETH (CONT)

Jane isn't answering her door and the phones don't seem to be working. We don't know where she is and I can't imagine that she's left the building. It's possible she's in her apartment and can't come to the door. We need someone to go in and make sure she's okay. I've got a key to her apartment. You, however, are closer to her than any of us, and I'd like you to use it and make sure she's okay. If I'm wrong and she's just running late, or in the shower or something, tell her I gave you the key and I'll take the blame.

He gives her the key.

SETH

Can you do this for me?

LORI

Of course.

SETH

Thank you.

She nods and walks off.

Charles approaches the front counter.

CHARLES

Hey, mate.

SETH

Hey.

CHARLES

We've been waiting half an hour. Where is Jane?

SETH

I don't know where she is.

CHARLES

We're hungry over here. Are we going to hike out to breakfast or not?

SETH

Not yet. We can't even see past the windows. I want to go back to my room and sleep, but no one is going anywhere until Jane gives the go-ahead.

CHARLES

You're in charge here. If she doesn't show soon, you're gonna have to come up with something.

SETH

Why are you deferring to me.

CHARLES

You're the Head R-A, who the fuck else are we supposed to defer to?

SETH

Jane is in charge here, Charles. My hands are tied.

CHARLES

Jane isn't here, dude. You are. And we are. What are we going to do?

SETH

Find Jane and ask her.

This isn't the answer Charles wanted to hear.

SETH (CONT)

Well, what the fuck else do you suggest we do?

CHARLES

Fuck you, dude.

Charles sulks off.

Seth is visibly uncomfortable with his new position of power.

Ann approaches him.

ANN
Hey... you all right?

SETH
(panicky)
I've been better. I'll let you know in a little while, okay?

ANN
Okay.

She touches his face.

He smiles, but shies away, aware of the presence of the others.

She abashedly takes her hand back and returns to the others.

Seth leaves the lobby and walks in the direction Lori went.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR

Seth approaches the only door on the left side of a long hallway, the word "DIRECTOR" affixed to the center. It's the door to Jane's apartment.

Lori isn't there.

SETH
Lori?

The others come around the corner and watch him silently.

Seth begins to beat on Jane's door, self-control momentarily gone.

SETH

Jane?! Lori?! Jane!! Jane, are you
in there? Jane!!!!

Ann steps forward.

ANN
Seth, they're not in there.

He regains his composure.

SETH
Yeah... yeah. If anyone sees Lori,
have her come see me. I'll be in
Jane's office.

He leaves. The others watch, a gathering fear on their
faces.

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S OFFICE - LATER

Seth sits behind the desk.

Jason, Charles, and Ann sit opposite him.

SETH
They're not anywhere?

Jason shakes his head slowly. They all look at their feet.

SETH
And you checked everywhere?... the
whole building?... even her apartment?

JASON
Everywhere except her apartment. We
couldn't get in. But we knocked on the
door and called their names. Nothing.

ANN
That doesn't make sense.

Seth just shakes his head.

JASON
Are we in trouble here?

CHARLES
(sarcastically)
Well, there's a brilliant fucking
question!

SETH
No, we're not in trouble here.

A beat. No one believes him.

SETH
(hesitantly)
All right, maybe.

ANN
Has anyone called the other residence
halls?

JASON
I tried. The phones are out.

CHARLES
I thought the lines were underground.
Why would they be out?

Jason shrugs.

SETH
I don't know anything about where the
lines are or why they might be out.
All I do know is the snow out there is
so thick, we can't see past the window
glass and two members of our staff have
just disappeared.

ANN
No. Not disappeared. Amelia Earhart
disappeared. We just can't find Jane
and Lori.

CHARLES
(sarcastically)
Maybe they went to get bread and milk.

JASON

If they were dumb enough to leave the building, it's possible they got lost out there. Snow blindness, and all.

ANN

What do you mean?

JASON

This isn't just any storm. If you went out there right now, you'd lose your sense of direction; get lost in all that white. If you wandered around long enough, or didn't have a coat on or something, you might succumb to the storm. You'd freeze to death.

CHARLES

(awestruck)

Fuckin' A. So we're trapped here, then?

SETH

For the time being.

ANN

(her voice quivers)

Oh, my God.

SETH

I don't think there's any reason to panic. We still have power and heat. No one's going to freeze in here.

JASON

Is there a plan? Any plan?

SETH

Not really. I think we should stay together, though. Spend the day in the lounge. We don't all have to sleep in the same place. We could just bring our work to a common area.

JASON

That makes sense.

SETH

Okay, then. We'll do that.

Charles and Jason get up to leave.

ANN

Seth, there's one more thing. Jenna's jumping out of her skin out there.

SETH

Carl?

ANN

Of course.

SETH

I dunno. And I don't know what to do about that. Keep Carl busy with work and make sure Jenna doesn't leave Jack's side.

CHARLES

That shouldn't be too hard.

Ann's eyes are still full of panic.

She looks to Seth for something more, but he simply stares back. She leaves with the others.

CUT TO:

INT. CAIGE LOUNGE - LATER

People are scattered about on couches working on materials.

Carl is at a table by himself, near the kitchenette, hunched over something, occasionally looking up at Jenna.

Jenna is as far from him as she can get, her back to him.

The windows are blinded with white.

Off to the side, Jason squints at the big screen TV controls, trying to get a signal. With every channel, though, it's only snow.

JASON

(to no one in particular)

Kind of ironic, isn't it?

He turns it off and walks away from it, running into Jack as he does.

JASON

Whoa, sorry dude. How's it going?

JACK

(very grumpy)

It's goin.

Jack sulks off, a dangerous bundle of raw nerve, and returns to Jenna's side.

Jason watches him go to a corner, then walks over to Seth, who is sitting with a book.

JASON

We're more likely to kill each other this way than if we all went to our rooms.

SETH

Yeah, but with the phones down if we needed to regroup for some reason, there'd be no way to do it except go door to door. And this might not be a huge building, but that's a pain in the ass, my friend.

JASON

I just don't think this "Happy Commune" plan is a good one. Look around you. We're bored and miserable.

That's obvious.

SETH

What do you suggest?

JASON

A walk through.

SETH

All of us?

JASON

It's nine people. Not exactly a convention.

SETH

What if they don't all want to go?

JASON

(addressing the group)

Would anyone like to join me for a building walkthrough?!

Everyone but Carl and Jack stand up, nodding. When Jack sees Carl still seated, he smiles menacingly.

Carl sees this and also stands.

JASON (CONT)

Well?

Seth closes his book with a sigh.

SETH

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. CAIGE OFFICE

Seth opens a wall safe with a combination lock. Carl watches very closely.

Inside, dozens of keys hang on little nails, each one marked by a room number.

At the bottom, on a larger hook, is a key ring with five keys on it.

He pockets this ring and closes the safe.

CARL

What're those?

SETH

It's the master key ring. One for each floor. They open every door in the building.

CARL
Why do you need them?

SETH
I'd feel better if they were in my pocket.

Carl just stares.

They leave the office and enter the lobby, where everyone mills around waiting for him.

SETH
We'll take the stairs and go one floor-

AMANDA
Seth, is this really necessary?

SETH
Yes, it is. Besides, we could all use a walk. As I was saying, we'll start at the top, on the female wings, and work our way down one floor at a time. Okay? Let's go.

They move off down the corridor.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

They walk slowly and in relative silence, two-by-two, except for Carl who lingers behind Seth at the front.

Ross walks next to Frank. Together, they sullenly bring up the rear.

CARL
So, Seth... how long have you had access to those keys in your pocket?

SETH
Jane gave me the combination when I first got the job. Why?

CARL
No reason. Just curious, really.

JACK

What the fuck are you so curious about,
douche' bag?

SETH

(anxiously)

Jack—

JACK

What, Seth? I was just asking what
makes Carl here so curious. Curious
like a fucking cat, you know? You know
what happened to the curious cat, Carl?

SETH

Jack, please.

Jack laughs quietly to himself. Seth sighs like a
frustrated parent.

They all walk on.

CARL

You ever been tempted to just key into
a random room... see what's in there,
Seth?

SETH

No.

JENNA

Shut the fuck up, Carl.

He turns around to look at her, instead looks past her.

CARL

Where's Ross?

Everyone stops and turns around.

There is no Ross. Only Frank.

Frank looks befuddled.

FRANK

He was just here.

AMANDA

Frankie? What is it?

FRANK

He was just here, next to me. What the hell?

JASON

He's probably just gone back downstairs or to the bathroom or something.

SETH

Jason, Charles, check the bathroom.

They leave the group and retrace their steps to the bathroom at the end of the hall.

The others wait anxiously.

Charles and Jason emerge, shaking their heads.

JASON

Nothing. I'm telling you, he's gone back downstairs.

CHARLES

The fuck he has, mate.

JASON

(to Charles)

Well, what-- what, you think he just vanished? Into thin air?

SETH

Guys, please! This isn't helping anyone.

ANN

We should keep moving.

CHARLES

No! Wait! Just a minute. Something is going on here. Jane, Lori, now Ross. We're basically trapped in a building full of locked rooms that isn't exactly what you'd call cavernous

and three of us are gone. Now, I think we ought to talk about what the fuck is going on!

AMANDA

(voice quavering)

Oh, I can't listen to this.

CHARLES

Wrong! You can. And you will, Amanda.

FRANK

Now, hold on...

They all start talking at once.

Seth tries to talk over them but isn't heard.

Carl sees the chaos as a chance to slip away. He sneaks away down the hallway. No one notices.

Seth sits down in the middle of the hallway, his back against the wall.

The others notice and stop talking. They stare, wondering if he's all right.

SETH

Now that I have your attention, could we all please sit down for a minute?

They sit.

SETH

I don't know what is happening. But neither does anyone else. So please... stop speculating. Jane may be sick in her apartment, and unable to come to the door. We know Lori is sick. Maybe her fever got the best of her and she's passed out in a stairwell somewhere. Maybe she's wandering the halls. Maybe she's still in Jane's apartment. And as for Ross, well... we all know how he can be. He's probably in his room, on the second floor, waiting for us to realize he's missing. Amanda, there's

no reason to be upset. The storm will pass, the roads will be plowed, and we'll be sitting in some boring classroom tomorrow wishing we were back here. It's only temporary. Jack, you and Carl have to--

They all suddenly notice Carl's absence.

JENNA

Oh, shit.

SETH

Carl?!

Silence.

VARIOUS

Carl? Carl!!

Amanda begins to cry. She's comforted by Frank.

Ann, Charles, and Jason look to Seth, who says nothing.

JASON

Then, there were four.

SETH

Let's go back to the lounge.

He strides toward the stairwell, closely followed by the others.

CUT TO:

INT. CAIGE OFFICE

The safe hangs open and several keys are missing.

JACK

Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck!!!!
I guess CARL didn't just vanish into thin air, now did he?! This is your fault, Seth!! All your fault!!

ANN

Back off, Jack. How the hell is this his fault?!

SETH

(embarrassed)

He watched me open the safe.

ALL

WHAT?!

SETH

Carl; he watched me open the safe. He must have seen the combination. I didn't even realize he was there until the thing was closed again.

JACK

The keys to our rooms. The only keys missing are the keys to our rooms.

SETH

(quietly)

Then, it seems we have a problem.

JACK

You don't say, Seth. You don't FUCKIN' say!!

Jenna puts her arm around him and leads him away.

ANN

(to Seth)

Now what?

SETH

I don't know. This is getting out of hand.

JASON

Now we're in trouble.

SETH

We don't know that.

CHARLES

We need help in here, though. Someone has to go out there and find someone.

JASON

That would be unwise.

CHARLES

Well, we can't very well stay cooped up in here with that maniac walking about with keys to every fucking room he wants, now can we?

SETH

Charles is right, Jason. With three people gone and Carl running loose... we need some help in here.

Jason shrugs and rolls his eyes, defeated.

JASON

Who goes, then? You?

CHARLES

No, I'll go. I'll do it.

JASON

You're crazy.

CHARLES

It's better than staying in here, mate. Look, I'll make my way up the hill to the campus police station, bring back some help and we'll sort everything out. I'll be ten minutes.

Seth considers this a moment.

SETH

Do you have a coat? Boots?

He nods.

SETH

All right.

CUT TO:

INT. FOYER - DAY

Charles is bundled into a parka and hood, with thick boots on his feet and a large flashlight in his hand.

CHARLES

This torch really isn't necessary.

SETH

Take it. Just in case.

JASON

Remember. Walk in straight lines, turn on right angles. If you get lost, don't wander. Retrace your steps and try again.

He nods. They shake hands.

JASON (CONT)

Be careful, man.

CHARLES

I won't be long.

He unrolls a ski mask over his face and puts on his gloves.

Jason produces a pair of sunglasses and hands them to Charles, who takes them with a nod and puts them on his face, over the mask.

The finished product is comical and everyone chuckles, easing the tension.

Jason tussles his hair and he turns to leave.

They open the door.

Surprisingly, there is no sound from the storm.

They exchange glances of surprise.

Charles shrugs and steps out, disappearing into the white.

They close the door firmly, pulling it so the latch clicks into place.

ANN

No sound.

SETH

Well... no wind. The snow is falling steadily.

JASON

What snow? I didn't see any flakes in the air. It's just a big white nothing.

SETH

(dismissively)

Optical illusion. It's fine. You'll stay here until he comes back?

JASON

Of course.

SETH

Good.

We linger on Jason a moment. He stares out the window, his eyes locked on the spot Charles disappeared into the void.

After a moment, his eyes glaze over and he begins to choke.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR

Seth and Ann walk with a purpose back to the lounge.

ANN

I don't like this, Seth. Something is very very wrong about all this.

SETH

No shit.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUNGE

Amanda and Frank are in one corner. Jenna and Jack are in another. They all sit listlessly.

Seth and Ann enter and everyone jumps.

ANN

It's just us.

AMANDA

You sent Charles out in this?

SETH

No, Charles insisted on going out in this.

JACK

He'll die out there.

SETH

He'll be fine.

JACK

The hell he will.

JENNA

Now what?

SETH

We sit and wait.

AMANDA

For what?!

SETH

Charles. Charles is bringing back some help. We'll wait here for that help, track Carl down, sort this whole mess out, and get back to where we're supposed to be. Okay?

They are unimpressed.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE - DAY

Charles trudges up a hill through four feet of snow. It blows all around him, obscuring visibility.

He runs into something, a solid white object.

He brushes snow off of it with his hands. It's a car.

Guiding himself with his hands, he makes his way around it and orients himself.

After another moment, he sees a building, directly next to him.

A sign next to the front door says "POLICE ANNEX."

The door stands out in the snow, glass with a metal frame. Beyond it is an office lit by fluorescent bars.

Charles walks toward it.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE OFFICE

Charles peels the hood and ski mask off his head.

The office is lit, the computers are on, but the place is deserted.

CHARLES

Hello? Is anyone here?

Silence.

At the other end of the room, opposite the door is a staircase, going down. He stands at the top, looking down.

CHARLES

Hello?

No response. He returns to the front desk. Behind it, an office. He walks back and looks around.

Inside, a large metal closet hangs open, the key still in the handle. It's the armory. There are five shotguns and a handgun inside.

Charles looks around.

He returns to the front desk and picks up the phone. Nothing.

STEPS ascent the stairs.

Panicked, Charles comes back from behind the front desk.

Deyja enters the room, dressed in a police uniform.

DEYJA

Hell of a storm, isn't it?

Charles is a little taken aback. She's not what he was expecting.

CHARLES

Thank God. Yes. Yes, it's a real blighter, all right. I'm on the Caige Hall staff and we're in a bit of a row over there and I was wondering if someone could come back with me and help us sort everything out.

She only looks back at him.

CHARLES

Is there... any way you can help me?

DEYJA

How long has it been Charles?

CHARLES

What?

DEYJA

You've been over here a long time now. Two, almost three years, yes?

CHARLES

(confused, wary)

I don't follow.

DEYJA

(taking on an English accent)

You ran from something. From someone. In England. And now you're here, because you think you can get away. But you can't. You can't.

Charles is frozen in place.

CHARLES

Even if I believed you and thought you knew what you're talking about... I didn't run from anything.

DEYJA

You did.

CHARLES

No.

DEYJA

You're done running, Charles.

CHARLES

I just need some help.

DEYJA

(smiling)

You aren't going to get any.

He walks backward to the door, turns and runs into the cold.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Seth enters the room, looking worried.

ANN

No sign of either of them?

Seth shakes his head.

People SIGH nervously.

JENNA

Who's left?

SETH

Only those of us in this room. But I want to give Charles a little more time.

JACK

Carl's still here. Going through our
shit.

Seth nods.

SETH

Yeah, probably. Have I not apologized
enough for fucking up, Jack?

Jack glowers.

AMANDA

I don't BELIEVE you people!! You'd sit
idly by while the WORLD fell down
around you.

ANN

What else are we supposed to do?

SETH

We've tried the phones, we've tried the
computers, according to Jack we've sent
Charles to his fucking death, what else
do you want?!

FRANK

There must be something else!

SETH

Well, there isn't!! There's nothing,
Frank!! We can do nothing but sit and
wait for help!

Amanda storms out of the room.

SETH (CONT)

Amanda, where are you going?

AMANDA

Going to find a phone that works.

After a minute, Frank goes after her. He returns
immediately.

FRANK

(dazed)

She's gone.

No one speaks.

Frank leaves.

ANN

Frank, hold on.

She runs out after him.

In the hallway, though, he's gone as well.

Ann re-enters the lounge, the look on her face says it all.

JACK

What the hell is going on here?

CUT TO:

INT. JENNA'S DORM ROOM

Carl stands in the open doorway, looking at the mess that is her room.

He steps into the room, an odd look on his face, like a man possessed.

Jump cuts as he:

pulls half-open drawers open and roots around, looking through underwear, jewelry, clothes, flipping through books, reading a diary, and lying on her sheets, sniffing her pillow.

Deyja appears in the doorway.

DEYJA

You're the only one they actually wish would go away, you know.

He jumps out of the bed as though catapulted.

He doesn't recognize her.

CARL

(caught off-guard)

Who are you?!

DEYJA

Deyja.

CARL

Who?

DEYJA

My name's not important, Carl. What is important—

CARL

How did you know my name?

DEYJA

I know everything about you. Everything. I know what you're thinking when you sit here, against the door, listening to them. I know why you hate them so much. And I know how you can get your revenge. I know how you can hurt the one called Jack.

CARL

You don't know anything?

DEYJA

No? You don't sit here, ear pressed to the door, imagining it's you fucking her, and not him? You don't think about how you might hurt him? Jack, who is so much bigger and stronger and more popular than you could ever be? Jack—

CARL

Stop!!

He's sweating buckets, shaking, full of fear and rage.

DEYJA

Interested?

He stares at her, considering.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE OUTSIDE - DAY

Charles is lost in the storm, frost gathering on his hair and his face. He's lost and in bad shape.

A figure appears in the haze in front of him.

Jason stands, coatless, a calm look on his face.

JASON

Charles, this way!

Charles is startled to see him.

CHARLES

What are you doing out here, mate?
Where's your coat?

JASON

Don't worry about it. Follow me back
to Caige. It's this way.

He turns and goes back the way he's come. Charles doesn't move.

CHARLES

I don't think that's the way, dude.

Jason stops and turns around. He doesn't shiver and makes no movement to get out of the extreme cold.

JASON

Of course it is. Just this way.

They stare at each other across the white nothing. Charles suffering in the cold, Jason motionless.

CHARLES

I came from that direction. There's
nothing there.

Another figure materializes next to Jason. It's Ross.

ROSS

You're wrong, Charles. It's this way.
Trust us.

He's confused.

Deyja leans in, directly behind Charles, surprising him.

She is dressed in her usual white, blending in almost perfectly with the background.

DEYJA

You don't trust your friends?

Charles is quickly freezing to death out here, his face red with frostbite, shivering violently with equal parts cold and fear.

CHARLES

They're not my friends.

They vanish.

DEYJA

Go ahead. Think about it. You're so smart, think about it!

He does.

CHARLES

None of this is real.

DEYJA

What is real, Charles?

CHARLES

Not this. Not you.

DEYJA

Oh, I'm very real. I'm as real as anything. And eternal. I'm only doing my job here, kid. But whatever I can do to hurry things along. Time's a-wastin'!

CHARLES

(to himself)

There might still be time. Time to...

DEYJA

You're next, Charles. You'd better hurry!

Charles rushes against the elements, pressing hard, finding it more and more difficult to breathe.

He begins to choke, but still he moves, toward what he hopes is Caige Hall.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUNGE

Jack stands up, eyes lowered, occasionally glaring at Seth.

Seth notices and tries to stop him, coming physically at him.

Jack clocks him in the jaw, sending Seth to the floor. Jack walks out of the lounge before anyone can get to him.

Ann and Jenna rush to his aid. He massages his jaw, assuring them he's okay.

SETH

Where is he going?

Jenna says nothing, but a thought occurs to her. Ann notices.

ANN

Jenna?

She shakes her head, remaining silent.

ANN (CONT)

Jenna, if you know something you have to tell us.

JENNA

I don't. I mean, I'm not sure, I-

ANN

What is it?

A beat.

JENNA

Jack has a gun.

This shocks both of them.

JENNA

He's been muttering to me about it for the last few hours. He's afraid Carl will find it and...

ANN

Oh, my god...

SETH

Come on. We have to stop him.

ANN

What about Jason?

SETH

Go tell him.

ANN

But-

SETH

Go!

Seth struggles to his feet and heads off with Jenna.

Ann glowers at him and moves in the opposite direction, toward the lobby.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S DORM ROOM

Bikini posters, neon beer signs, clothes and junk are scattered everywhere. It's a male version of Jenna's room.

Jack stands at the door, Deyja in the center of the room.

DEYJA

Reach under the bed.

He gets down on his stomach.

Under the bed, a shotgun has been duct taped to the frame. He pulls the tape away and holds it in his hand.

DEYJA

Press the safety and pump the advance.

He does as he's told.

DEYJA

Here...

She brings him to the dresser.

DEYJA

Open the bottom drawer. Reach in the back. Find the box of shells.

He produces a box of shotgun shells.

DEYJA

Good. Now, I'll show you how to load it.

He nods his head, his face a mask of subjugated fear.

She smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY

Ann enters and sees Jason isn't anywhere.

She loiters by the door, wondering what to do.

A moment passes while she thinks, her face clouded by worry.

Suddenly Charles appears, frosted and cold, a DULL THUD against the window glass.

Ann SCREAMS. The sight of him is ghastly. He is suffocating. She runs to the door.

ANN

Charles!! Charles!!

Pulling him inside, she closes the door and drags him across the lobby floor.

ANN

Talk to me. What happened? Did you
bring help?

She shakes his head, barely able to get the words out.

CHARLES

(strangled)

Not what it seems.

ANN

What's not as it seems?

CHARLES

I-- A woman. Not...

ANN

Oh, my God. Charles, wait. Just hang on.

She gets up and runs into the office, looking frantically for something. Unable to find it, she runs back to the lobby.

Charles is gone.

ANN

No! Goddamn it, NO!!

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL

Jack takes the stairs two at a time to his floor. He trips and falls on his face, a sharp CRACK as his nose breaks.

He curses, blood rushing down his face, as he rushes through the door and out onto his floor.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL

Jenna and Seth race up the stairs, see the blood on the step and hesitate.

Jenna continues on and Seth goes after her.

They are frozen in place by the sound of a GUNSHOT.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JACK'S ROOM

A smoking hole in the cinderblock over Jack's left shoulder marks the point of impact for the bullet.

Jack is frozen in place, face bloodied.

Carl, thrilled by his having the upper hand, ejects a shell and advances the next one.

The old casing bounces on the floor, echoing hollowly up and down the hallway.

Jack's fear quickly changes to contempt.

Seth and Jenna enter the hallway from the stairs.

Jenna gasps and begins to cry.

JENNA

Don't hurt him, you bastard!

CARL

Or what? What will you do? What will anyone do?

JENNA

So help me, you motherfucker, if you so much as touch him I will fucking kill you before we get out of here. I swear to God.

Carl raises the gun, aiming at Jack's head. He flinches, slightly.

CARL

Oh, yeah? You got a gun, bitch?

Anger all around.

CARL

Get the fuck in that room.

He moves aside and uses the barrel of the gun to push Jack into his room.

CARL

Sorry guys... only room for two. But
I'll be back.

He goes into the room as well, slams and locks the door behind him.

Jenna runs to the door and uses all of her force to kick and punch the door.

A GUNSHOT. Two.

Jenna's face is choked with grief. She moves quietly away from the door and slips down the wall.

Seth is aghast.

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. STORAGE ROOM

Jenna, Seth and Ann sit quietly on the floor of a storage room off the lounge.

A large table has been placed in front of the door.

They looked beaten.

Jenna, especially, whose grief has left her nearly catatonic.

Ann watches her with particular concern.

ANN

(quietly, to Seth)
We've got to get her to a doctor.

SETH

I know. We're going to have to brave
the storm; get us all out of here.

ANN

Charles—

SETH

I don't want to hear it.

ANN

Seth, I'm not blaming you for anything.

SETH

I am, though. I sent him. I let him go.

ANN

He made it back here.

He scoffs.

SETH

Barely. What difference does it make?

Ann shakes her head.

ANN

When he came inside, he was choking, like he couldn't breathe. And he said something about a woman and nothing being what it seemed.

SETH

What woman?

ANN

It's kind of vague, you know?

Seth nods.

Suddenly, the lights go out.

All three of them stand, Jenna more panicked than the others.

SETH

Now what?

Jenna begins to whimper.

Seth and Ann cast her concerned glances.

ANN

Are there any other weapons in this building?

SETH

What?

ANN

Guns... does anyone else have one?

SETH

No, of course not! Jack sure as hell wasn't supposed to have one.

ANN

We can't stay here. He'll find us in here.

SETH

We need coats if we're leaving the building.

ANN

Can we risk roaming the halls with him out there?

SETH

Do we really have a choice?

They both look toward the door.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CIRCUIT BOX PANEL

Carl is upset, shaken and crying. Jack's blood stains his shirt and forearms.

Deyja stands at the end of the room, hands crossed on her chest.

DEYJA

Are you going to sit here crying all day, or are you going to finish off the girl?

Carl turns on the flashlight.

Deyja looks translucent in its glow.

DEYJA

No wonder they don't like you. Here you are, in a position of power, where you can have anyone and anything you want, and still, you do nothing. All you can do is turn off the lights.

Carl continues to sob.

Deyja's loving attitude has vanished, replaced with something hard and cold.

DEYJA

Don't you have any respect for yourself, boy?

He clumsily picks up the shot gun and, as though drunk, points it at her.

CARL

(through sobs)
Shut up.

DEYJA

(playfully)
Ooh, look at you, trying to sound tough. Well? Tough guy? You gonna go finish off the others?

Carl pumps the next shell into the chamber.

DEYJA

(mischievous smile)
Yeah...

He points the barrel at her.

CARL

(weeping)
You made me kill him.

DEYJA

(shrugging)

It was just his turn. I didn't have anything to do with it. I'm only a collector, babe. I just try to hurry things along, you know. Time's a-wastin'!

CARL

What? No. You made me. It was-

DEYJA

All you, baby.

CARL

(in a burst of anger)

NO!

He pulls the trigger. The round is discharged in her face, taking a chunk out of the cinderblock wall behind her.

She continues to smile, unharmed.

DEYJA

You limp-dicked motherfucker. You still don't get it, do you?

Carl, frightened and furious, breathes hard enough to pass out, sweating and bloody.

Deyja's eyes get big, her voice loud, and she seems to become larger, taller.

DEYJA

FINISH THEM OFF!

CUT TO:

INT. STOREROOM

Everyone wide-eyed.

ANN

What was that?

SETH

Our chance. He's distracted, let's go.

Seth starts to pull the table away from the door.

Ann helps him.

Jenna implores both of them to stop.

ANN

Jenna, we have to go.

The table is away from the door. Seth opens it. Ann grabs Jenna, who struggles but is too weak to fight much.

Floodlights mounted in strategic points on the wall spark to life, casting an eerie gloom on throughout the mostly darkened lounge.

The three of them make their way to the other end, through the office, to the stairwell.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

Seth and Ann lead Jenna along the darkened corridor, creeping like people trying to hide rather than strolling casually past the various rooms.

They reach Seth's. He opens the door and enters, leaving Ann and Jenna in the hallway.

Beyond their light, the inside of the room is dark.

Seth emerges with a coat, gloves, scarf, hat and boots.

CUT TO:

INT. ANN'S ROOM

The room is lit with candles and a flashlight.

They stand in a circle at the center.

Jenna, zombified, cleans the room, putting away clothes and closing drawers.

SETH

We'll go to the police annex. For all we know, the other residence halls have

similar problems. The annex is just up the hill. We should be fine.

No one thinks so.

Seth sees something across the room and goes to it.

An extension cord along the wall, long enough to stretch between the three of them.

He tears it out of the wall, removes a lamp cord from the other end and wraps it around his hand.

SETH

So we don't get separated out there.

He's nervous.

ANN

Hey. We'll be fine.

She looks into his eyes. He finds his breath and calms down, nodding solemnly.

The three of them move into the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY

Carl, looking monstrous, stalks the hallway.

The lights are still out. The flood lamp bulbs are inexplicably red here.

CARL

Jenna! Hey, Jenna! I just wanna talk to you! You never let me talk to you!!

He stands outside Jenna's room. The door's closed now.

KNOCKING, he smiles.

CARL

Jenna, it's me. Carl. Let me in, please. I can make this all better again.

When there is no answer, his smile fades.

CARL

Open the door, you bitch!!

He fires a round into the door, near the knob, turning the lock to splinters.

The door is flung open with the impact.

Deyja stands in the center of the room.

DEYJA

You're wasting bullets, and they're getting away.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Seth, Ann, and Jenna creep across to the front door. The solid white beyond is mesmerizing, and they stare in awe.

Seth takes the extension cord and wraps it around his wrist, giving it to the girls and telling them to do the same. They comply.

Nodding, they step through the door into the white.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL

Carl trips over himself, taking the stairs two at a time, struggling to hold onto the gun, to get down to the lobby in time.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE - DAY

The three of them walk in a straight line, kept together by the cord.

Ann looks down at her feet trudging through the snow and notices the ground seems to disappear just ahead of them.

ANN

Seth, wait!

Everyone stops instantly.

SETH

What?

ANN

Look.

SETH

Where?

ANN

At the ground. Look at the ground.

They look. He doesn't see it.

SETH

What do you see?

ANN

Give me the flashlight.

He complies.

She throws it down in front of his feet.

Rather than clatter, it continues to fall, into a white oblivion.

The ground under Seth's feet begins to give out.

SETH

Back, back, go back!

They turn and run.

The world around them is dissolving into the white nothing.

They reach the front door of Caige Hall and find Carl there, with a gun to Seth's head, holding the door open.

CARL

Going somewhere without me?

The three look back at him with equal parts fear and contempt.

He drags Seth and, by virtue of the extension cord the others, inside closing the door behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY

Carl holds the gun on them.

CARL
You tied yourselves up for me, already.

ANN
What are you going to do?

CARL
I haven't decided about you two yet.
Jenna and I have some things to talk
about.

Jenna glares at him with a hatred that obscures her beauty.

Then, unexpectedly, she smiles.

JENNA
Go ahead and try it. I can plead self-
defense and get away with everything.

She removes her wrist from the cord and walks toward him.

He takes a step back, the menacing look on her face enough to scare him.

She continues to approach.

Carl raises the gun.

ANN
Oh, my God. Jenna, don't.

Jenna continues to stalk.

Carl continues to retreat.

JENNA

I loved him, you know. Jack. I didn't love you. I could never love you. You disgust me.

Carl begins to cry.

SETH

Jenna, forchristsake—

JENNA

Go ahead. Do it. Pull the trigger. Blow my head off.

Carl raises the gun and puts it directly to her forehead.

Jenna smiles a mirthless, evil grin, stretching her hands out like wings.

JENNA

Go ahead!!

Carl, weeping, pulls the trigger—

A dry thud as the hammer strikes an empty chamber.

Now Jenna's really happy.

JENNA

(whispered)

Yeah.

She comes to life, shaking off the catatonia that had made her so sluggish.

She grabs the barrel and, with startling force, yanks the shotgun from his hands.

Holding it by the barrel, she uses it like a club, knocking Carl square in the head.

He goes down.

She drops the gun.

JENNA

Get up!!

She delivers a foot to his rib cage. Reaching down, she grabs him by the lapels and drags him (with great effort) to his feet.

Against the wall, she delivers a right hook to his face. Then a left. Then a right, again.

She punches, again and again, with a hatred that fuels her ferocity.

Her punches land with greater and greater force and accuracy.

Carl struggles somewhat, but almost welcomes her aggression, even after he becomes injured by it.

She continues to pummel his face.

Seth and Ann, too stunned to move, watch in horror, half-shielding their eyes from this display.

His glasses fly off his face and land on the floor. The lenses shatter and they are speckled with blood.

Her rage has entirely possessed her.

Carl falls to the ground. Jenna makes a strange, animal-like growling noise.

She goes down with him, straddling his chest and continuing the onslaught, banging his head into the floor by the hair.

He has succumbed to her ferocity.

Seth and Ann can't look. The SOUNDS of the beating are enough to tell them what is happening.

Then, suddenly, the beating stops.

They look. Jenna, covered in Carl's blood, weeps to herself.

He's dead, the puddle growing under his head ample evidence of that.

Ann is too shocked to move.

Seth, fighting revulsion, reaches down to take Jenna off Carl's body. She violently rebukes him.

He tries again, and she relents, rising to her feet, emotionally shattered.

The two of them walk back toward the lounge.

Ann walks over and picks up the gun.

She rolls Carl over and stoops down. From his pocket, she removes shells and uses them to load the gun.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUNGE

Jenna shakes like a leaf as Seth guides her into a chair.

She sits unsteadily.

SETH

I'll find something to clean you up with.

She stares vacantly into space.

Ann enters the room.

ANN

(unsettled)

Seth, can I talk to you?

SETH

Not right now.

ANN

(firmly)

Yes. Right now.

She drags him by the arm to the lobby doors.

He flinches at the sight of Carl's body on the floor.

Beyond that, what he sees shocks him.

Part of the wall is missing, as well as one of the doors.

It has been engulfed by a white, milky cloud.

SETH

What the hell is that?

ANN

It's Nothing.

SETH

It's very obviously something.

ANN

No, no... you don't understand. That is NOTHING. If nothing were a something, that is what it would look like.

SETH

I always thought Nothing would be black.

They look. It continues to encroach into the building.

They back away and hurry along the hallway, back toward the lounge. They pass the lounge, though, and go to the other end of the building.

There, at the other end, they see the same thing.

SETH

It's closing us in.

ANN

Lounge.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUNGE

The lounge is deserted.

SETH

And then there were two.

Ann can't show any reaction she hasn't already demonstrated.

ANN
(frustrated)
All right. Look...

She runs into the storeroom, still hanging open, and drags out a chalkboard on a wheeled stand.

Seth casts her an "are-you-crazy?" glance.

ANN
Who was the first to vanish?

SETH
Why? What's the difference?

ANN
JUST HUMOR ME! Who vanished first?!

SETH
Uh... Lori. Lori vanished first.

She starts to write Lori's name.

ANN
No, wait! It was Jane. Jane never showed up this morning.

She writes the word "Jane."

SETH
Then Lori...

ANN
Then Ross...

SETH
Then, uh...

BOTH
JASON!

SETH
Right. Amanda and Frank were next.

ANN

Okay. And then Charles.

As she makes the list, she turns her head.

ANN

(to herself)

Wait a minute.

She leaves the list alone and moves to a clean spot next to it. She draws two columns.

SETH

What are you doing?

ANN

Drawing the building.

Down and to the right, she writes Jane's name and boxes it.

ANN

(pointing to it)

Jane's apartment.

She writes Lori's name in a box up and over from this.

ANN

Lori's room.

She continues doing this, mapping out the R-A room assignments throughout the building. There's an order.

ANN

They disappeared according to where their rooms are.

SETH

That's crazy.

ANN

Is it?

SETH

Wait. It doesn't hold water. Jack. He's here, next to Lori. He should have been one of the first, but he was here with us long after Ross and Jason.

She curses herself. They think.

ANN

I dunno, I dunno, I dunno...

SETH

Wait a minute...

ANN

What?

SETH

Sleep. Look... Jack doesn't sleep in his room. He sleeps with Jenna, HERE.

He points to Jenna's room on the fourth floor.

SETH (CONT)

The order they disappeared has something to do with where they sleep in the building. Where they PHYSICALLY sleep.

ANN

It can't just be a coincidence. It has something to do with what's happening here.

SETH

I agree. And it all started with Jane.

They look at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. JANE'S APARTMENT

Seth KICKS the door three times. On the third kick, the lock gives out and the front door swings in.

It looks much the same as it did when we saw it.

A cordless phone is discarded on the floor.

The lights are off, but the glow from the windows is sufficient to light the interior.

SETH
Nothing. She vanished like the others.

 ANN
Why her?

 SETH
Is that door open?
He points to the outside door.
It's bolted shut.

 ANN
No. Locked from the inside.

 SETH
There's got to be something in here.

 ANN
If you're gonna find it, find it fast.

 SETH
Why?

 ANN
Because the walls are closing in.

Seth says nothing as he continues to rummage.

Ann picks up a pink form. It's the work order for the heater.

 ANN
Seth?

He walks over. She hands him the slip.

 SETH
What's this? (*reading*) "Chimney
repair." Dated yesterday.

 ANN
What chimney?

 SETH

For the furnace, I guess.

ANN

The furnace has a chimney?

SETH

Yeah. Natural gas heats the hot water for the radiators. Chimney vents the carbon monoxide.

ANN

Anything else?

SETH

Nothing.

ANN

What the hell are we going to do?

He shrugs, defeated.

SETH

Sit here... wait for the world to cave in on us.

ANN

There must be something we can do.

SETH

Like what?

ANN

Like figure out what's going on here.

SETH

How?

ANN

We know people disappeared in building order.

SETH

Apparently. Whoever was close to this apartment went first.

ANN

Who is furthest from this apartment?

Seth thinks.

SETH

Uh... we are.

She has a thought.

ANN

It's not this apartment, Seth. It all started across the hall from this apartment.

SETH

The boiler room.

She nods.

SETH (CONT)

But what's in the boiler room?

CUT TO:

INT. BOILER ROOM

It rumbles noisily, blue jets shooting inside the metal grill.

Seth and Ann examine the chimney, a large hole barely covered by a poorly applied patch, hanging on for dear life.

Seth sees it and springs to life, looking around the room for something to hold and keep the patch on.

ANN

What are you doing?!

SETH

Trying to keep us from suffocating! Do you know how much carbon monoxide is leaking from this thing?

ANN

What?

SETH

It's amazing we're not all dead!

He suddenly realizes what he just said.

ANN

(as though falling down a hole)

No. Oh, God please, no.

Flashback: EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Ann stands in the road outside the dining hall looking at a vision of Caige Hall surrounded by rescue workers.

The buildings portals open and vented.

Bodies being wheeled out.

SLAM CUT TO:

Present: INT. BOILER ROOM

Ann stumbles.

SETH

What is it?

Ann is speechless.

SETH

Ann? What is it?

ANN

(panicky)

We have to go. Now!

SETH

Where?!

She runs out of the boiler room, Seth close on her heels.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY

Seth and Ann run through the lobby, most of which no longer exists.

Deyja walks out of the Nothing.

They stop in their tracks and stare at her.

DEYJA

It's your turn, folks. Time's a-wastin'!

They run away, down the hallway.

The cloud is moving faster now. It engulfs everything behind them.

The lobby is gone.

As they near the end of the hallway, the other Nothing is closing from the opposite direction.

SETH

Stairs!

They run to the stairwell.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL.

They run up the stairs, two at a time.

Behind them, the stairs - and everything else - is swallowed, becoming an abyss.

On the top floor, marked "5," they run through the door, everything disappearing behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. FIFTH FLOOR CORRIDOR

Everything behind them vanishes in the white cloud.

Ahead of them, the same.

Trapped on both ends, they find themselves outside Seth's door.

He tries the knob, but it's locked.

SETH
(panicky)
I don't have a key!

ANN
I do.

She pumps the shotgun and blows the lock off the door.

The door flies open. They run in.

CUT TO:

INT. SETH'S DORM ROOM

They are both shocked by the sight in front of them.

Behind, like rushing water, the Nothing engulfs everything.

Seth and Ann stare at the bed. Seth's body lies rigid and pale, eyes open, staring up at the ceiling.

It takes one final, gasping breath and stops.

Behind Seth's eyes, he is struggling to put the pieces together.

SETH
I don't remember getting up this morning. The first thing I remember was walking off the elevator.

The Nothing washes into the room and swallows everything except the two of them, who continue to stand in shock and horror.

Ann drops the gun. It disappears silently into the floor.

SETH
It takes a little while to die from carbon monoxide poisoning, you know. First you become unconscious, comatose...

ANN

The ones closest to the source die
first, right?

Seth nods.

SETH

Oh, Ann... I followed all the rules,
even when I didn't want to. I followed
the rules.

ANN

And where did it get you?

Deyja approaches them.

DEYJA

Come on, kids. Time's a-wastin.

They follow her off, into the Nothing.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAIGE HALL - MORNING

The snow has stopped and the sky is blue and sunny.

Snow is piled on the sidewalk.

Firemen in respirators enter the building in SLOW MOTION.

Emergency response vehicles are pulling into every
available parking space in sight.

CUT TO:

INT. CAIGE HALL - THROUGHOUT - MORNING

The firemen prop the doors open and smash the windows,
moving up the stairs wielding their axes.

They smash open doors.

They identify the R-A staff, dead in their beds.

EMTs enter the building in SLOW MOTION with their cases of equipment and gurneys while other fire men ventilate the building.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAIGE HALL - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Students and staff are grouped around the outside of the dormitory, many of them crying.

Marsha is there, quickly dressed, also in tears.

The EMTs begin to roll the bodies out, one at a time, on gurneys.

We pan away from all this to the end of the road.

A translucent vision of Ann from the night of the dinner stands staring at the action at the end of the road.

She vanishes.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END