



# PAROS

A Screenplay

by

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## OVER BLACK

**Moiraios eros.** *(Ancient Greek). (noun clause), 1. Fated love; a fatal attraction. 2. A compulsive romance complicated by unforeseen, atypical difficulty. 3. (Gk. Inf.) A romance that seems one thing, but is an entirely other thing. A much more dangerous love.*

The sounds of a harbour, with gulls murmuring and ropes slapping against masts; voices speaking Greek rise and then fade, as the wind carries them forward, and then away.

### FADE IN:

#### EXT. PARIKIA SEAFRONT, PAROS - LATE AFTERNOON

The Aegean glistens beneath a lowering sun, casting gold that bruises into lavender. A slow, steady **PAN** across whitewashed buildings. The sea wind rattles faded café umbrellas, teases a fray of bougainvillea in tangled waves of fuchsia and plum, tints the air with brine and summer dust. Time feels slow here—heavy, breathing.

Children dart between tables; a fisherman mends a net with slow, weathered hands. A distant ferry blares its horn—a low moan that lingers like memory—mingles with the clatter of dishes and the faint strains of bouzouki from somewhere down the hill. Life wends on, indifferent.

#### INT. CAFÉ MIRA - CONTINUOUS

The camera glides in, past two **OLD MEN** whispering over tiny demitasses. They speak in the ancient rhythm of island Greek—soft, unhurried, as if each word costs dearly.

At the window, **REBECCA** (late 20s) sits in silhouette. She is sun-stung, sea-tired, beautiful in that accidental, unravelling way. She pins a strand of sun-lightened chestnut hair behind her ear, absently tracing the sweating glass of wine before her—untouched, now too warm to drink. Her eyes, violet, then the pale fire of cerulean, and restless, track the ferry until it disappears. Whatever she feels is private, held close.

Behind her—**MICHAEL** (43) emerges from the restroom, hands damp, face shadowed by the village dust and time. His movements are steady, deliberate. A weathered wedding band flashes. He gathers her in a glance, then settles heavily across from her.

A silence so full it creaks. Only the pulse of the sea, the fan, the far-off music.  
Rebecca does not turn.

**REBECCA**

*(soft, almost to herself)*

The last ferry leaves at nine.

Michael, barely audible, not looking at her.

**MICHAEL**

*(calmly)*

I know.

The camera holds, letting the moment breathe.

**REBECCA**

*(finally meeting his eyes)*

Do you?

Michael reaches for his coffee, takes a measured sip. His movements are deliberate, unhurried, but winces slightly—the coffee has gone cold.

**MICHAEL**

You gonna drink that or just warm the glass?

**REBECCA**

I like how it looks.

**MICHAEL**

I thought you hated white wine.

**REBECCA**

I used to hate everything.

He smirks, meaning to disarm. But she remains still. Watching nothing.

The camera **PANS** to the harbour below, as it dances in bleached shimmer. Clinks from the kitchen drift like wind chimes. A fishing boat rocks slowly—blue paint flaking in tired curls.

Rebecca sits quiet, gazing past glass. Michael, across from her, watches the way her hand barely moves.

**MICHAEL**

You're asking if I know what staying means.

**REBECCA**

*(blinking, like surfacing, she breathes in sharply)*

I suppose I am.

A pause. She turns her attention back to the window. The fishing boat rises, sinks—tethered.

**REBECCA (CONT'D)**

*(pensively)*

I've been thinking about choices.

*(slower)*

How some lines, once crossed, they—

*(traces the rim of her glass)*

—they make things... different. Not dramatic. Just... irreversible.

**MICHAEL**

And?

He smiles, not unkindly, but knowing her gentle provocations.

Christ, you're cute when you go all existential coastal monologue.

**REBECCA**

*(dry smile, faint)*

Shut up.

*(beat)*

I'm serious. It's been three days. Just... toeing that line.  
Not moving.

**MICHAEL**

So what's on the other side, poet?

She looks at him then, studying his face with the detached interest of someone considering a purchase—the value, and not the cost.

**REBECCA**

*(still watching the boat drift)*

Complications.

A silence—loose, ambient. The fan ticks once above them.

**MICHAEL**

*(playful, soft disbelief)*

Jesus. That's it?

**REBECCA**

*(glancing at him sharply)*

Should there be more?

She studies him—tilting her head like she's appraising his face under different light. The cost is higher; is the value?

**MICHAEL**

*(setting down his cup, gently)*

I don't know. Maybe not.

They sit in the remains of things unsaid. Somewhere outside, a gull cries once, harsh and sudden. Michael comes back to her, serious.

Maybe it depends on what you want, Rebecca. Not what you think you should want. What you actually want.

The clock ticks softly; half-remembered sounds fold into the ambient haze of clinking glasses and muffled voices. Dust motes swirl lazily in shafts of dying light.

Rebecca tightens her grip on the wine glass, eyes flicking to Michael—searching, testing.

**REBECCA**

*(defensive, voice trembling just beneath)*

I want to finish my book. I need...

I want to go back to New York in the fall... with something to show for this summer.

Michael leans back, jaw tight, gaze flickering away then back.

**MICHAEL**

That's not what I asked.

His words hit like a stone skimming the surface, stirring ripples. Rebecca sips her wine slowly, buying time, not noticing its unsatisfying warmth, the silence thickening. She takes another sip of wine; this time she winces.

**REBECCA**

*(voice rising, challenging)*

What makes you think you know what I want better than I do?

Michael exhales, raw and low, leaning forward now as if closing a physical gap. Rebecca leans back, reflex, she motions to the waiter, pointing twice to her glass and silently mouths:

Can I have another?

**MICHAEL**

I don't. I only know what you don't want.

A pause, charged and brittle.

**REBECCA**

*(quiet, searching)*

Which is?

Michael's eyes darken with a mix of fear and fierce tenderness.

**MICHAEL**

To spend the rest of your life wondering.

Rebecca's lips part, caught between denial and desperation. The moment hangs with wounded honesty.

From the bar, **YORGOS** (60s), wipes down tables, indifferent to the undercurrents. He pauses a moment before approaching with Rebecca's wine.

**YORGOS**

*(smiling, caring)*

Για εσάς, δεσποινίς.

For you, miss

Yorgos, steps back, and turns slowly away, the grace of decades of overheard dramas, and the tenderest of whispers.

**REBECCA**

Your wife called yesterday.

*Beat*

It's not a question.

**MICHAEL**

*(eyes on the table)*

Yes.

The weight of his truth feels like a stone sinking. He looks away from her, with a resignation that only his honesty matters now.

**REBECCA**

*(soft, almost pleading)*

What did you tell her?

Michael looks up, meets her eyes—raw, exposed.

**MICHAEL**

The truth. That I'm not ready to come home.

Rebecca swallows hard, a flicker of hope mixed with despair.

**REBECCA**

*(barely a whisper)*

Then what are we doing here?

The fan hums overhead, time both stretched and fractured. Michael's voice tightens, desperate but steady.

**MICHAEL**

Trying to find a way. Before it's too late.

They hold each other's gaze—two fractured souls aching, trapped between wanting to leave and needing to stay.

A sharp silence. Outside, the faint honk of a ferry horn rolls in, carrying distant promise and inevitable departure.

We've been married twelve years, Rebecca. She knows when I'm evasive. She deserves better than half-truths.

**REBECCA**

But not the whole truth.

**MICHAEL**

*(meeting her eyes, more confident now)*

Not yet. We're not on trial.

Rebecca stands, nodding at his self-important wordplay, needing movement.

**REBECCA**

I need air.

**MICHAEL**

*(remaining seated; he looks at his watch)*

Take your time.

She pauses at his calm acceptance, then moves toward the terrace.

**EXT. HARBOURSIDE TERRACE, PAROS - CONTINUOUS**

The wind arrives in waves here, salt-sweet and insistent, pulling at Rebecca's dark hair like fingers through silk. She holds the weathered stone railing—not clinging, but feeling its ancient solidity, the way limestone holds memory of countless hands before hers.

Michael appears beside her, wine glass catching amber light, his presence settling into the space between her breaths. The harbour spreads below them, fishing boats nodding at their moorings like sleepy animals.

**REBECCA**

You're very sure of yourself.

**MICHAEL**

About some things.

**REBECCA**

About—

*(the wind takes her words)*

About this?

**MICHAEL**

About what I want. What I'm willing to—

**REBECCA**

*(turning, almost laughing)*

And what do you want?

The question hangs between them. A ferry horn sounds in the distance, mournful and patient.

**MICHAEL**

Time. With you. To see where this goes without—without anyone else's expectations—

**REBECCA**

That's all?

**MICHAEL**

*(slight smile, watching the wine move in his glass)*

That's enough. It's everything.

**REBECCA**

You make it sound simple.

**MICHAEL**

It is simple. But we both know simple doesn't mean—doesn't mean easy. Wouldn't be worth much if it was, would it?

The terrace stones beneath their feet are worn smooth by decades of lovers and arguments, by salt air and summer storms.

**REBECCA**

What about your marriage?

**MICHAEL**

What about it?

**REBECCA**

*(frustrated by his calm)*

Don't you feel guilty? Conflicted? Like a selfish—

**MICHAEL**

I feel a lot of things. Guilt isn't—

**REBECCA**

—prick at least?

**MICHAEL**

—one of them.

*Beat*

The wind fills the silence.

Not selfish either. Come on. You're the only person alive who gives a shit about what I can give, and not—

**REBECCA**

Christ, Michael—

**MICHAEL**

—what I can take.

**REBECCA**

*(after a moment)*

Why not?

**MICHAEL**

Because I'm not betraying anyone by wanting something real. I'd be betraying myself by walking away from it.

She studies him, tries to read this certainty written across his face. The wind catches her hair again—a natural caress—and she raises her hand instinctively, tucking strands behind her ear. For a moment, a pale birthmark on her neck, usually, tactically veiled by her long brown hair, is visible, vulnerable as a secret.

She looks down. The terrace floor's patina tells stories in its worn places, ancient as the stones that built this island.

When she lifts her gaze to the sea again, the camera follows—**PANS** across endless blue, **DISSOLVES** into the rhythm of waves against the harbour wall, then **CUTS** back to find them both in frame, Rebecca centred while Michael turns toward the water.

**REBECCA**

You talk like you've already decided.

**MICHAEL**

*(turning back, meeting her eyes)*

I have.

**REBECCA**

Without consulting me?

**MICHAEL**

*(facing her fully now)*

I've decided what I want. But I can't decide for you. Not—  
not for you.

He reaches toward her hands. She withdraws them, methodical as prayer, reaching instead for her wine, the Friday Sacrament from her childhood. She holds the glass up to catch the light, swirls it slowly, watching the wine's legs slide down like tears, buying time the way people buy hope.

**REBECCA**

What if I said no? What if I got on that ferry tonight?  
Drifted out of this place and never—never saw you again?  
Wouldn't you be devastated? Brought to your knees, or  
something equally—uselessly dramatic?

**MICHAEL**

*(without hesitation)*

Then I'd respect that choice—

**REBECCA**

*(interrupting, instantly agitated)*

You're so full of shit, Michael!

Her voice carries across the terrace. **YORGOS** glances up from polishing glasses. Two old men playing backgammon pause their game. A young couple sharing gelato at a corner table look over, the girl's spoon halfway to her mouth, both of them smiling at this familiar drama of hearts breaking and mending.

Rebecca looks down, colour rising in her cheeks. Her hair falls forward again—a curtain between her and the world—and she tucks it back with practiced grace.

**REBECCA**

*(voice softer now, eyes finding his)*

You wouldn't try to stop me?

**MICHAEL**

No.

The word hangs in the salt air like a limpid pale flag of surrender.

**REBECCA**

*(probing, exasperated)*

Jesus Christ! I can't believe this—

*Beat*

The wind fills her pause. A moaning creak from one of the fishing boats straining against its moorings carries gently across the water—they listen to them both.

You wouldn't fight for me?

**MICHAEL**

*(gentle, but something in his certainty softening)*

Rebecca, I'm not going to convince you to want something you don't want.

His wine glass finds the railing. His hands are free now, open.

That's not love. That's persuasion, manipulation—what do those kids we talked to yesterday call it? Cat—

**REBECCA**

*(annoyed)*

That's not catfishing, Michael.

**MICHAEL**

*(instantly perplexed, a small laugh escaping)*

What? Okay, never mind...

He looks out at the harbour, then back to her, something vulnerable creeping into his voice.

But whatever it is, it's a soulless transaction that messes with—with anything real between us. You see that. I know you do.

*Beat*

Do we have to name everything? Does everything need a label?

The distinction settles between them like dust after an earthquake. The terrace seems to hold its breath, as it also holds them.

**REBECCA**

*(softer now, the fight leaving her voice)*

What is love, then?

**MICHAEL**

Recognizing something true. Something challenging. And being brave enough to trust it.

*Beat*

The word hangs between them.

Completely.

**REBECCA**

Even when it's inconvenient?

**MICHAEL**

*(a smile touches his eyes)*

Oh yes. Yes. Especially then.

The sun slips lower, painting the whitewashed walls in amber and rose. The ferry horn sounds again—closer now, more insistent. Time moving like honey toward some inevitable moment.

**REBECCA**

I could walk away from this. From you.

**MICHAEL**

You could. I know.

*Beat*

His confidence wavers, just slightly.

Don't.

**REBECCA**

It wouldn't devastate me.

**MICHAEL**

*(with a knowing smile, slow and careful, his voice wrapping around her like a gentle tide)*

Now who's full of shit?

*Beat*

His eyes search hers.

Wouldn't it?

**REBECCA**

*(defensive, but the armour is slipping)*

No. I've lived without you for twenty-eight years. I can live without you for twenty-eight more.

**MICHAEL**

Of course you can. How is that even—

The damned thing about this question, Rebecca, is whether you want to.

She moves closer despite herself, drawn by something stronger than logic. The space between them charges with possibility. The camera **TRACKS** across a few dust motes, lingering in the air. And then settles with a tight **CLOSEUP** on Rebecca's face and mouth.

**REBECCA**

You're very confident...

*Beat.*

Her voice drops. The camera pulls back to present her in a **MEDIUM SHOT**.

...in your appeal.

**MICHAEL**

*(his supreme confidence fracturing into something more tender)*

I'm confident in what we have together. It's not always rational—it's more sensual, more—the gut. Instinct.

He steps closer, his voice becoming almost whispered confession.

You know when you know? When you stop thinking and just feel it. Really feel it, Rebecca. Doesn't it feel different? Real?

*Beat.*

The word hangs like an incantation; a spell of some kind of magic barely understood.

Eternal?

**REBECCA**

What do we have together?

**MICHAEL**

Recognition.

**REBECCA**

*(exasperated, but there's pleading in her eyes now, her voice slows as she speaks, pace and volume diminish)*

For fuck's sake. All this bullshit, Michael. God.

Damn you...

Her voice finally cracks, slightly. Rebecca doesn't want to damn him, she wants to enfold herself in his arms.

Of what?

**MICHAEL**

*(stepping closer, his voice barely above the wind)*

Of who we are when we're not performing for anyone else.

**REBECCA**

This isn't a performance—I'm not a fucking actor, Michael.

Who am I?

Her voice breaks, a gentle hush again.

God damn you...

**MICHAEL**

Someone who's tired of being careful. Of calculating every move. Someone who wants to be seen completely—

His hands reach toward her face, stopping just short.

—and loved anyway.

She looks at him, and for the first time her composure shows its fault lines. The need to be known—truly known—has always lived at her centre, hungry and patient as the tide.

**REBECCA**

*(quietly, almost a whisper)*

What if you're wrong?

**MICHAEL**

Then we'll find out together.

**REBECCA**

What if this ruins everything?

**MICHAEL**

It might. It might Rebecca.

*Beat*

What if it saves everything?

The ferry horn sounds one last time as the sun kisses the horizon, painting their faces in gold.

**REBECCA**

*(almost to herself)*

I should go.

**MICHAEL**

*(simply)*

Should you?

**REBECCA**

*(looking at him seriously, something unreadable in her expression)*

The smart thing would be to go.

**MICHAEL**

Probably.

**REBECCA**

The safe thing.

**MICHAEL**

Definitely.

He steps gently closer, his hand reaches to hold her upper arm, not directing, not commanding...an invitation.

**REBECCA**

*(stepping closer, her voice softening, surrender beginning)*

I've always been smart. Safe.

**MICHAEL**

I know.

**REBECCA**

*(her voice dropping to barely audible)*

I don't want to be. Not tonight.

**MICHAEL**

*(reaching for her hand)*

Then don't.

She looks down at their joined hands—fingers enfolding like question and answer—feeling for pulse points, the geography of palm and knuckle, the surprising softness where she expected only strength. The camera **FOCUSES** on fingers and thumbs glancing across each other in a sensual exploration of desire and invitation. Then back up to his face, searching for something she's afraid to name.

**REBECCA**

What happens now?

**MICHAEL**

*(bringing her hand to his lips, a benediction)*

Now we find out what we're made of.

The terrace hovers above the Parikia seafront, as they stand behind the stone balustrade flayed gold by the last bruised light. The Aegean churns below, restless—every wave smudged with indigo, silvered by the dying sun, sighing with secrets swept in from open water. Salt wind tangles Rebecca's hair scrapes bare skin, each gust clawing at Michael's shirtsleeves as if to loosen all certainty. The island exhales with them, houses tumbling down the hillside in silent attendance. Cicadas fall silent; a single bell clangs far off, drifting through air thick with the slow pulse of oncoming dusk. An echo that dulls like the expanding ripples of a stone plunged into the sea.

The camera pulls back, slowly. They stand side by side, weightless and weighted, the world scrawled out before them but pressed close behind. The horizon flickers, not with promise but warning—a vapor trail bruising the sky eastward, thunderclouds boiling beyond Delos. Every heartbeat drawn in with the tide, every breath given back to the sea, fate forever tidal, hovering.

Neither moves, each waiting for the other—to speak, to retreat, to reach for the fragile hope trembling in the salt-shadowed space between them. The stones remember rain, the wind remembers storms. So do they.

Resolution sets, not as comfort, but as the heavy calm before summer's first ruinous squall.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**END OF SCENE**

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**FADE IN:**

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING**

The camera slowly **PANS** across a room that tells a story of passion unleashed. Sheets twisted and pulled from the bed, pillows scattered across the floor. A wine bottle lies empty on its side, two glasses abandoned on the nightstand. Clothes form a trail from the door to the bed—his shirt draped over a chair, her calico dress puddled on the floor like pale, spilled ink.

Morning light streams through sheer curtains, casting everything in golden amber.

**MICHAEL** lies face down on the bed, deeply asleep. The sheet has slipped to his waist, revealing the muscular landscape of his back and shoulders. His defined arms are wrapped around a pillow, holding it close like a lover—overly protective. The morning sun catches the definition of his body, highlighting every plane, every crease, every curve.

The soft sound of jazz drifts through the room—Billie Holiday's voice, intimate and knowing, coming from small earphones.

**REBECCA** sits cross-legged in an armchair by the window, completely, confidently, gloriously nude, her skin luminous in the morning light. Her dark auburn hair falls loose around her shoulders as she types on her laptop, focused and intent. A joint burns between her fingers, and she occasionally brings it to her lips with practiced ease.

A cup of matcha sits cooling on the windowsill—she pretends to sip it now and then, but her attention is entirely on her screen.

Her fingers move across the keyboard with quiet confidence, capturing something that couldn't be written yesterday.

Michael stirs, his breathing shifting from deep sleep to waking. His eyes open slowly, adjusting to the light, and then he sees her.

He doesn't move at first, just watches her work. There's something different in his expression—a man seeing something

he never expected to find. Want flickers across his features, but it's deeper now, more complex. Not just desire, but recognition—he sees her as if for the first time.

**MICHAEL**

*(voice rough with sleep)*

What are you writing?

Rebecca looks up from her screen, and there's something changed in her too. The uncertainty from yesterday has been replaced by a quiet confidence, a woman who knows her own power.

**REBECCA**

*(with a wry smile, loving, flirtatious)*

Good morning, baby.

The endearment hangs in the air between them—casual, intimate, but loaded with meaning. She's crossed a line, and she knows it. More importantly, she's comfortable with it.

**MICHAEL**

*(sitting up slowly, sheet falling away)*

You're up early.

**REBECCA**

*(taking a drag from the joint)*

Couldn't sleep. Too much to process.

**MICHAEL**

*(reaching for his cutoff jeans)*

Bad processing or good processing?

He stumbles slightly pulling on his jeans, too asleep, or without the youthful energy he might better have.

**REBECCA**

*(eyes following his movements; she laughs)*

Necessary processing.

She closes the laptop with deliberate care and sets it aside, then removes her earphones. The jazz fades to silence.

**REBECCA** (*CONT'D*)

You look like a man who's just realized he's fallen off a cliff. Or fucking jumped..

*(she laughs, a little too familiar, but with a care that hopes he isn't embarrassed)*

**MICHAEL**

*(pulling on his jeans, more determined now)*

Is that what happened?

**REBECCA**

*(standing, completely unselfconscious in her nudity)*

Among other things.

She moves to the window, looking out at the morning harbour. Fishing boats are heading out for the day's work.

**MICHAEL**

*(watching her)*

You seem... different.

**REBECCA**

*(not turning around)*

Different how?

**MICHAEL**

More yourself. Settled? If that makes sense.

**REBECCA**

*(smiling to herself)*

It makes perfect sense.

She turns back to him, and he's struck again by her beauty—not just physical, but the way she inhabits her own skin now; a resolute confidence that comes from emotional safety.

**MICHAEL**

What were you writing?

**REBECCA**

*(picking up her matcha, pretending to sip)*

The truth.

**MICHAEL**

About last night?

**REBECCA**

*(moving closer)*

About everything. About you. About me. About what happens when you stop being afraid of what you want. The way you were last night. Fuck babe, I've craved that ever since the moment I met you. I knew..

*Beat*

I knew that was you.

*Beat*

Why did you ever hold that back?

**MICHAEL**

*(standing to meet her)*

Well that's compelling. I felt I should. I felt I could. Maybe, fuck, maybe I just wanted you that much?

*Beat*

But...

**REBECCA**

*(glancing toward him, with an intention he hasn't yet seen)*

You...

Didn't know?

*Beat*

Weren't sure?

**MICHAEL**

*(he steps forward, relaxed and generous)*

Too sure.

His demeanour shifts in an instant...a smile, a confident assurance that he's found the one.

What do you want?

**REBECCA**

*(reaching up to touch his chest)*

More.

The word is simple, but the way she says it carries weight. Not desperate: more. Confident more. She knows what she has, it has a value she's never been able to calculate, and she wants to see how far it goes.

**MICHAEL**

*(covering her hand with his)*

Rebecca...

**REBECCA**

*(interrupting)*

You're going to tell me this is complicated.

**MICHAEL**

Isn't it?

**REBECCA**

*(stepping closer)*

Everything worth having is complicated.

She reaches up and kisses him, soft, loving, but sure. When she pulls back, there's something almost strangely predatory in her smile.

**REBECCA** *(CONT'D)*

The question is whether you're brave enough for complicated.

**MICHAEL**

*(pulling her closer, a feigned, comic annoyance)*

I think I proved that last night.

**REBECCA**

*(laughing)*

Last night was easy. Last night was just wanting...compulsion. This morning is harder.

They both laugh at the innuendo.

**MICHAEL**

Why?

**REBECCA**

*(serious now)*

Because this morning, we have to decide what we're going to do about it.

Michael looks at her, really looks at her, and something shifts in his expression. Not the desperate need from

yesterday, but something deeper. Recognition. Trust. Inevitability.

**MICHAEL**

*(quietly)*

I've never been happier than I am right now.

**REBECCA**

*(touching his face)*

I know.

**MICHAEL**

That should scare me.

**REBECCA**

*(with that wry smile)*

Does it?

**MICHAEL**

*(after a moment)*

No.

*Beat*

No. It doesn't.

**REBECCA**

*(moving away to put on his shirt from the night before)*

Good. Because I have plans for us.

**MICHAEL**

*(watching her button his shirt, she misaligns the buttons, starts over again)*

What kind of plans?

**REBECCA**

*(over her shoulder)*

The kind that requires you to call your wife.

The words land with quiet force. Michael's expression shifts slightly—not fear, but awareness of what's coming.

**MICHAEL**

Rebecca...

**REBECCA**

*(turning back to him)*

You said you wanted time. To see where this goes.

**MICHAEL**

I did.

True.

**REBECCA**

*(moving closer)*

Then we need to buy some time.

**MICHAEL**

*(understanding)*

You want me to extend the trip.

**REBECCA**

*(smiling)*

I want you to choose me. Properly. Not stolen moments and guilty consciences. I am not some pathetic, teenage side piece, hoping for something that can never be real.

**MICHAEL**

*(after a long moment)*

What if I can't?

**REBECCA**

*(without hesitation)*

Then you'll go home today, and we'll both pretend this never happened.

**MICHAEL**

You'd be okay with that?

**REBECCA**

*(with quiet confidence)*

I'd survive it. But you wouldn't.

The certainty in her voice is absolute. She knows what she has, what they have, and she's not going to settle for half measures.

**MICHAEL**

*(sitting on the edge of the bed)*

There will be consequences.

*Beat*

Shit...

**REBECCA**

*(kneeling in front of him)*

There are always consequences baby. The question is whether you want the consequences of doing something, or the consequences of doing nothing. There's a difference, and you should know that twenty-times better than me. Who was the guy who said you miss all the shots you never take?

She takes his hands in hers.

**REBECCA (CONT'D)**

I'm not asking you to leave your wife. Not yet. I'm asking you to give us a real chance. To know, for sure.

**MICHAEL**

*(looking into her eyes)*

How long?

Jesus. Can't believe you're going to use hockey metaphors against me.

**REBECCA**

*(with a small smile, she lets it land)*

How long...

*Beat*

Come on...

How long do you need to fall completely in love with me?

**MICHAEL**

*(touching her face)*

Jesus Christ...you're kidding me?

He looks deeply at her face, her eyes, and his gaze then shifts upwards...

*Beat*

It's like you don't already know?

I'm already there.

**REBECCA**

*(leaning into his touch)*

Then let's see what happens when you stop fighting it.

The morning light continues to stream through the windows as they sit there, the weight of their decision settling between them.

**MICHAEL**

*(after a long moment)*

I'll call her.

**REBECCA**

*(standing)*

Good. I'll make coffee.

She moves toward the small kitchenette, completely comfortable with her victory. Michael watches her go, and for a moment, his expression shows the full weight of what he's choosing—not just the joy, but the cost.

**MICHAEL**

*(quietly, to himself)*

Fuck me.

*Beat*

Jesus Christ Mikey. What have you done?

**REBECCA**

*(from the kitchen, ears like a bat, not turning around)*

You've chosen to be happy...Mikey.

She smiles, remembering a favourite movie:

Learn it.

Live it.

Love it.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF SCENE**

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**FADE IN:**

**SPLIT SCREEN - DAY****LEFT SIDE: INT. SARAH'S KITCHEN - NEW YORK - MORNING**

**SARAH CHEN** (38) sits at her kitchen island with a cup of coffee and her laptop open. She's a stunningly beautiful, ethnically-Chinese woman, but very American, with a piercing elegance in her eyes, in an effortless way—no makeup, hair in a messy bun, wearing one of Michael's old Columbia t-shirts, the white letters fading off the light blue and dangling off in gentle tatters, spelling a vague reference of *Columbia*, dark blue cotton panties, and dazzling white gym socks. Pilates is in an hour. The morning light streams through large windows overlooking Central Park West, but in truth, it's probably a **CORNER WINDOW**. Sarah and Michael have worked hard, diligent and focused, definitely long, arduous hours, and have obviously done well. The thrum of the Upper West Side murmurs gently below.

The kitchen is immaculate, organized—a reflection of her controlled life. Fresh flowers—daisies, violets, tulips, daffodils—in a vase, mail sorted into neat piles, her worn Moleskin planner open—pen meticulously poised in the margin—beside her laptop.

**RIGHT SIDE: INT. HOTEL ROOM - PAROS - EARLY AFTERNOON**

**MICHAEL** sits on the edge of the bed; his laptop balanced on his knees. He's showered and dressed, but there's something different about him—a looseness that wasn't there before. He's put his left earring back in. He smiles. The room behind him has been mostly tidied, but careful observers might notice Rebecca's dress draped over a chair, her laptop on the desk.

**MICHAEL**

*(to himself, barely audible)*

Okay. Okay.

He types in Sarah's number on Skype. The ring tone fills the space between heartbeats.

The video call connects. Both their faces light up with familiar intimacy.

**SARAH**

*(smiling)*

There you are. I was starting to think you'd been kidnapped by Greek fishermen.

**MICHAEL**

*(forced lightness)*

Not yet. Though the day is young; give it time. No promises...

**SARAH**

You look... different. Relaxed.

**MICHAEL**

The Mediterranean sun. It agrees with me.

**SARAH**

*(studying his face)*

It's a nice tan babe. How did the conference go yesterday?

**MICHAEL**

*(a sigh; a beat too long)*

Good. Productive. The usual academic posturing, but some interesting papers. Good people. Everything's fine. Great, actually. The project's going really well.

**SARAH**

That's good. That's—so you'll be home Sunday?

*Beat.*

Rebecca's movements in the kitchen stop. The silence stretches like a held breath.

**MICHAEL**

Today is... well, that's actually why I'm calling.

Sarah's smile falters slightly. After twelve years of marriage, she knows that tone.

**SARAH**

Okay...

**MICHAEL**

I need to extend the trip. Just a few more days.

**SARAH**

*(setting down her coffee)*

Extend it? Why?

**MICHAEL**

There's an opportunity here. A professor from Cambridge talked to me yesterday, and she wants to discuss a possible collaboration. It could be important for the book.

**SARAH**

*(frowning)*

You didn't mention any collaboration before.

**MICHAEL**

I know, and I'm sorry, but this opportunity—  
It came up yesterday. These things happen at conferences  
Sarah, you know that.

In the background of Michael's feed, a faint shadow moves across the room—Rebecca, out of frame, but her presence somehow felt.

**SARAH**

*(something shifting in her expression, her tone)*

What opportunity? You said it was just research.  
Background stuff.

*Beat*

How many more days?

**MICHAEL**

Maybe a week. Ten days at most.

**SARAH**

*(leaning back)*

Ten days? Michael, that's...that's not a few more days.  
You really are ridiculous sometimes.

**MICHAEL**

*(the lie coming easier than it should)*

It is. And, yeah, I know. But there's more here than I  
thought. More depth. I can't just—I can't do this book  
justice if I rush it.

*Beat*

Rebecca appears **(O.S.)** in the doorway, coffee in hand,  
watching as if evaluating a student present to the whole  
class, for the first time.

But what if it meant we could fawn around in England for  
three years? Drink tea, eat crumpets and scones or  
whatever, and pretend to be Canadians, so nobody shits on  
us?

*Beat*

I know, sweetheart. I know it's a lot to ask...

**SARAH**

*(interrupting)*

It is unexpected. We have dinner with my parents Saturday

Michael. You promised my mother you'd help her with her computer.

**MICHAEL**

*(with genuine regret)*

God, Jersey...right. I completely forgot about Saturday. I'm sorry. I can call her, explain-

**SARAH**

*(deliberately, on the edge of being patronizing)*

That's not the point.

An uncomfortable silence falls between them. Sarah studies his face through the screen.

**SARAH**

You're being weird.

**MICHAEL**

I'm not being weird.

**SARAH**

You are. You're doing that thing with your voice. That careful thing.

**MICHAEL**

*(defensive)*

What thing?

**SARAH**

Like you're reading from a script. Like you're-

**MICHAEL**

Jesus, Sarah, I'm trying to do my job here.

**SARAH**

*(sharper now)*

Don't Jesus-Sarah me. What's going on?

**MICHAEL**

Nothing's going on. This is work.

**SARAH**

Bullshit.

**MICHAEL**

Excuse me?

*(leaning forward, voice softer)*

Sarah, I'm not hiding anything. I'm trying to be considerate of how this affects you. This opportunity just... it came out of nowhere. It's Cambridge for Chrissakes!

Like Oxford, yeah, I get it, I can see the hesitation—who wants to hang out with those Marxist idiots at Oxford? But Cambridge? Cambridge is different!

**SARAH**

*(standing, pacing, moving in and out of frame on the computer screen, not reacting to his impossible feint)*

You heard me, Michael.

Bullshit.

In twelve years, you've never—not once—extended a research trip. You've never played that card.

**MICHAEL**

*(thoughtfully, and then dismissively)*

You're right. *(under his breath)* We're doing card metaphors now.

And I should have called you last night when it came up. I just...I wanted to think it through first; make sure it was worth disrupting our plans. You know I overthink.

**SARAH**

*(stopping, facing the camera)*

What kind of opportunity requires ten extra days?

Michael pauses, his expression thoughtful rather than panicked.

**MICHAEL**

*(measured)*

It's not just the collaboration itself. It's the research opportunities here, the access to archives I wouldn't normally have. Come on babe...you know the tide is turning against academics at home; even New York isn't safe anymore. But this is the kind of deep dive that could really elevate my book.

**SARAH**

*(voice getting smaller, knowing the practicalities, knowing the innuendoes)*

And you couldn't do this research another time?

**MICHAEL**

*(gently)*

Professor **Kostas**, Irida Antonopoulou Kostas no less, is only here for another week before she returns to Athens, or London, or wherever she camps out with her young acolytes. I don't know. And Sarah... when's the next time I'll have this kind of uninterrupted time to focus?

There's something in the way he says it—not defensive, but almost slickly apologetic, a practised lie, smooth, authentic, as if he's genuinely trying to help her understand, and confuse himself at the same time. Rebecca's assessment of him, while calculating her notes in the corner, is guarded.

*(softer)*

I know it's selfish. I know. I know it's not fair to you.  
It's different...

*(a longer pause; running his hand through his hair)*

Sarah, I just need some time to think. About the book,  
about my career, about... things.

**SARAH**

*(voice getting smaller)*

What things? How is it different?

**MICHAEL**

*(avoiding her eyes)*

Just...things. And..

It just is.

**SARAH**

That's not an answer.

**MICHAEL**

It's the answer I'm giving you.

*Beat*

The temperature in the room seems to drop. Sarah sits back down heavily, the weight of dark understanding beginning to settle.

**SARAH**

*(dangerously quiet)*

Who is she?

**MICHAEL**

What?

Both questions hang in the digital space between them. Michael's face on her screen freezes for just a moment—not the video connection, but him. He's never truly lied to her, he doesn't truly know how...

**SARAH**

Don't what me. Who. Is. She?

**MICHAEL**

*(too quickly)*

There's no she. Christ, Sarah—

**SARAH**

*(overlapping)*

Don't lie to me. Don't you fucking lie to me, Michael.

**MICHAEL**

I'm not—

**SARAH**

You are. You're lying right now. I can hear it. That thing you do with your breathing when you're—

**MICHAEL**

*(sharper)*

What thing? What fucking thing?

**SARAH**

There. Right there. The anger. The deflection. Jesus, Michael, who is she?

Rebecca moves closer, less guarded now, her presence both comforting and incriminating. The sensuous delight of her perfume interferes with his thoughts, for a moment, and then another one. He looks up to the ceiling, with its peeling

pages of paint, watching the spinning fan pulse them in a slow rhythm, calming him.

**MICHAEL**

*(standing, pacing)*

This is insane. You're being paranoid.

**SARAH**

Am I? Twelve years, Michael. Twelve years of you being predictable as clockwork, and suddenly you're extending trips and calling at six in the morning and—

**MICHAEL**

*(interrupting)*

I needed to call when I could call. Time difference—

**SARAH**

*(talking over him)*

—and you sound like a stranger. A ghost. You sound guilty.

**MICHAEL**

I don't sound guilty. A ghost? What the fuck...

**SARAH**

*(interrupting again)*

You sound exactly guilty. What's her name?

**MICHAEL**

*(too loud)*

There is no her!

*Beat*

The explosion hangs in the air. Rebecca, leaning against the windowsill, is also jolted to her feet, amazed at his loss of control, his ease in deflecting. His lies. She spills her coffee.

**SARAH**

*(quietly, lethally)*

Oh, Michael.

**MICHAEL**

Sarah—

**SARAH**

You just told me everything I need to know.

**MICHAEL**

You don't understand—

**SARAH**

I understand perfectly. You're fucking someone.

**MICHAEL**

*(desperate now)*

It's not—it's not what you think.

**SARAH**

*(bitter laugh)*

What do I think, Michael? Tell me what I think.

**MICHAEL**

I don't know. I don't—

**SARAH**

I think my husband is in Greece fucking some local girl  
and lying to me about it.

**MICHAEL**

*(overlapping)*

She's not local. She's—

He stops. The admission hangs between them like a blade. Dumb. Stupid. Toes over the edge of an impossible cliff, and he doesn't know if she will push him, or if he will jump. Too late...

**SARAH**

*(after a long beat)*

She's what, Michael?

**MICHAEL**

*(barely audible)*

Fuck.

**SARAH**

She's what?

**MICHAEL**

She's...she's an American. A writer. She's—

**SARAH**

*(cutting him off)*

I don't want to hear about her. I want to hear about us.

**MICHAEL**

Sarah—

**SARAH**

Are you coming home?

*Beat*

Rebecca watches from across the room, the remainder of her coffee cooling in her hands. Outside the room, the clouds lower and gather, as the dry, afternoon Meltemi winds push in fast; and while they seem vaguely refreshing, the locals know their intensity well, and they make the sea dangerous.

**MICHAEL**

*(after a long moment)*

I don't know.

**SARAH**

*(her voice breaking, indignant  
)*

Twelve years, Michael. Twelve fucking years.

The connection goes dead.

Michael stares at the computer screen, the weight of what just happened settling over him like ash. Rebecca approaches slowly, sets down her coffee, and wraps her arms around him from behind.

**REBECCA**

*(softly)*

How do you feel?

**MICHAEL**

*(after a moment)*

Free.

He turns in her arms.

**MICHAEL** *(CONT'D)*

Totally fucked. But free.

**REBECCA**

*(kissing his neck, she smiles, somehow, tactically)*

Good. Now we can really begin.

The early afternoon light continues to stream through the windows, fighting hard against the clouds and dry wind, but everything has changed. Everything has completely changed.

**FADE OUT.**

**END OF SCENE**

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**FADE IN:****EXT. CLIFFSIDE TAVERNA - PAROS - EVENING**

A traditional Greek taverna perched on a low cliff overlooking the Aegean. String lights create pools of warm light between olive trees, lemon trees. The sound of bouzouki music drifts from inside, mixed with laughter and conversation in multiple languages. The voices are French, Italian, Mandarin, and Russian...

**INT. TAVERNA - CONTINUOUS**

The open-air taverna breathes with the island night—salt wind unravelling laughter and secrets beneath the lazy net of overheard string lights. The Aegean, beyond the terrace, pulses black and blue, its breath heavy and deliberate, raking the tables with a briny kiss. Heat clings to linen and bare shoulders, slick as olive oil, though the hour cools—the day's memory riding up from the stones, pooling in the ambered hollow of every glass. Saffron gleam from lanterns shivers on tabletops, the rhythm of silverware and sandals mapping the restless pulse of the crowd. Across the room, voices lift and scatter—French, Italian, Mandarin—like seabirds startled by the humid promise of a coming storm.

Somewhere, a bottle falls, laughter erupts, and cicadas fall suddenly mute, as if the shutters on the night have swung closed. The salt tang settles in throats, the wind rising insistently now, teasing napkins and skirts, carrying with it a warning as palpable as the thickening dark—every breath drawn in layered with longing, uncertainty, and the slow edge of change.

**REBECCA** sits at a corner table, stunning in a flowing sheer white dress that catches the candlelight, and the suggestions of her unequalled beauty, the certainty of her femininity. She's been watching the room with the calculating patience of a chess master. Her eyes settle on her target.

**NIKOS** (25) tends bar with fluid grace, an artist. He's devastatingly handsome in that effortless Mediterranean way—olive skin, dark curls, a twelve-hour beard that preforms sexual power and dominance; the kind of easy confidence that comes from knowing exactly the effect he has on women. Several female tourists hover nearby, but his attention is focused on his work.

**MICHAEL** enters, just slightly out of breath from the climb up from their hotel; his athleticism fades faster than he notices. He spots Rebecca and approaches, but she's already rising from her chair.

**REBECCA**

*(kissing his cheek)*

Perfect timing. I was just about to get us some wine.

**MICHAEL**

*(settling into his chair)*

This place is incredible. How did you find it?

**REBECCA**

*(moving toward the bar)*

The concierge recommended it. Said it was... authentic. She glides to the bar, where Nikos is mixing a cocktail with theatrical flair. Other patrons watch him work—he's clearly a local celebrity.

**REBECCA** *(CONT'D)*

*(in perfect Greek)*

Δύο ποτήρια από το καλύτερο τοπικό κρασί σας, παρακαλώ.

[Two glasses of your best local wine, please.]

Nikos looks up, surprised and clearly impressed by her fluency.

**NIKOS**

*(in accented English)*

You speak Greek beautifully. Are you a scholar?

**REBECCA**

*(smiling)*

A writer. I spent a summer in Athens during university.

**NIKOS**

*(pouring wine with deliberate slowness, and pride  
)*

A writer. Then you know our own Homer invented writing!  
What do you write about?

**REBECCA**

*(leaning against the bar, flirting)*

Dangerous men and the women who love them.

The flirtation is subtle but unmistakable. From across the room, Michael watches, his jaw tightening slightly.

**NIKOS**

*(laughing)*

And have you found any dangerous men on Paros? We may not have too many Odysseuses here, so many leave and never come back, but many Penelopes come sit at my bar every night. I promise you.

Nikos' eyes sparkle with pride at his purposeful attempt at witticism and the suppleness of his conversational flexibility. He's a young man who is rarely acquainted with the word 'no', and he wears it well.

**REBECCA**

*(glancing meaningfully at Michael, then back, amused with Nikos' banter)*

I'm still evaluating the local talent.

Nikos follows her gaze to Michael, sizes him up with the casual assessment of a competitor, then turns back to Rebecca with renewed interest. He knows he's not a threat..

**NIKOS**

Your *ánĥro*?

[husband]

**REBECCA**

*(after a deliberate pause)*

A friend.

The word hangs in the air. Nikos's smile broadens.

**NIKOS**

I am Nikos. My family owns this place. Since 1795! Well, maybe it was 1975.

*Μαθηματικά. Όχι και τόσο καλά.*

[Math. Not so good.]

Again, Nikos beams with confidence and awareness of his easy charm. His dark brown hair, in loose curls, twists gently under the breeze of the overhead fans, with a gleaming silver pendant hung on a long chain just seen past his unbuttoned linen shirt. Rebecca catches a glimpse of it, as it catches a strange violet light from somewhere across the room.

**REBECCA**

Rebecca. And I'm very pleased to meet you, Nikos. She extends her hand. He takes it, holds it just a moment longer than necessary, his thumb brushing across her knuckles.

**NIKOS**

Perhaps later, if your friend doesn't mind, you would like to see the real Paros? Not the places tourists go.

**REBECCA**

*(with a radiant smile)*

I'd like that very much.

Michael's chair scrapes against the stone floor as he stands abruptly...he's not sure it's jealousy, or a real interest in the tease. Rebecca doesn't look back, she senses everything, but her smile deepens slightly.

**MICHAEL**

*(appearing beside her)*

Rebecca?

**REBECCA**

*(turning with innocent delight)*

Michael! Meet Nikos. He was just telling me about some hidden spots on the island.

**NIKOS**

*(extending his hand)*

Nikos Stavros. Welcome to Paros.

**MICHAEL**

*(shaking hands, his grip perhaps too firm)*

Michael Chen. Thank you.

**NIKOS**

*(to Rebecca)*

Your friend is American?

**REBECCA**

Canadian, actually. A professor. Very distinguished.

There's something in the way she says "Canadian" that makes Michael's face tighten. Is he being dismissed is his usual reaction...is it a back-handed compliment, or a subversive insult. Sarah always told him to relax—American's know nothing of Canada—and that always made it worse.

**NIKOS**

*(impressed)*

A professor! What do you teach?

**MICHAEL**

*(curtly, as Michael too often uses his intellect to express dominance)*

Philosophy and cultural history...a bit of everything these days. Lots on the Stoics, but I'm really a snob for Heraclitus and Epicurus. I'm sure you've heard of them here on Paros?

Michael's instinctive defensiveness, intellectualising his individuality and power, and intelligence, is a tic she's noticed that she does not like. It makes him seem small. Rebecca doesn't see him as small.

**REBECCA**

*(touching Michael's arm lightly)*

Ancient civilizations. He's writing a book about cultural and philosophical exchange in the Mediterranean. He's kinda got a kink for Carthage.

Michael looks annoyed, but unbothered.

**NIKOS**

*(genuinely interested, but not engaging in Michael's intellectualized tirade)*

Fascinating! You know, my grandfather was an archaeologist here...many years. He found hundreds of artifacts in the caves near our family's vineyard.

**REBECCA**

*(before Michael can respond)*

Really? How exciting!

The traditional music shifts to something more sensual. Several couples move to the small dance floor.

**NIKOS**

*(to Rebecca)*

Do you dance?

**REBECCA**

*(glancing at Michael)*

I love to dance.

**MICHAEL**

*(quickly)*

Rebecca...

**REBECCA**

*(to Nikos)*

But I should probably stay with Michael. He's had a difficult day.

**NIKOS**

*(with easy charm)*

One dance. The night is too beautiful for sadness.

He's already moving around the bar, his intent clear. Rebecca looks at Michael with an apparent, but practiced, uncertainty.

**REBECCA**

*(to Michael)*

Would you mind? Just one dance?

Michael's face is a study in controlled conflict—he's not a jealous man; at least he hasn't been until now. He can't say no without seeming possessive, but everything that remains instinctive about him, screams against it.

**MICHAEL**

*(forced lightness, the practised indifference of one who's spent far too long in denial and in therapy)*

Of course not. Enjoy yourself.

**REBECCA**

*(kissing his cheek)*

You're wonderful.

She takes Nikos's offered hand, and they move to the dance floor. The music is hypnotic, sensual, EDM, House, a strange mutation with Greek melodies and rhythms, but with an energy that says this is the ocean, the sea, the wind, the veiled aroma of passion and desire...Nikos is clearly an expert dancer, leading Rebecca through steps that seem to flow like the water and waves beneath them.

Michael sits heavily, gripping his wine glass, swirling it though the Mediterranean heat has already made it far too warm. He sips, he notices. Other patrons watch the dancing couple admiringly—they move together with natural chemistry.

**ELDERLY GREEK WOMAN**

*(at the next table, to her husband)*

Look at Nikos with the beautiful American. They dance like they were made for each other.

She leans in, whispering, mischievously, something naughty and primal.

\

**HER HUSBAND**

*(chuckling, he clutches her hand with a treasured memory colliding with immediate desire)*

That boy. He could charm the moon from the sky. You know, Eleni's daughter once said he could sell oil to the Arabs.

Michael's knuckles whiten around his glass like he's bracing to be kicked in the back. He's sweating, with a heat at the back of his neck that is always a signal that he'd best get out of the sauna.

On the dance floor, Rebecca throws her head back laughing at something Nikos whispers in her ear. His hand rests on the small of her back, intimate and confident.

**NIKOS**

*(spinning her)*

You move like a goddess.

**REBECCA**

*(breathless)*

όχι πολύ άσχημα για τον εαυτό σου

[You're not too bad yourself.]

**NIKOS**

*(pulling her closer)*

I meant what I said about showing you the island. Tonight, if you wish.

**REBECCA**

*(meeting his eyes)*

What would we see?

**NIKOS**

*(voice lower)*

Secret beaches. Places where the moon reflects on water like diamonds, emeralds, rubies...sometimes, when the light is right. Very romantic.

**REBECCA**

*(she knows a practised line when she hears it, as she is glancing ever so suggestively toward Michael)*

It sounds tempting.

**NIKOS**

*(following her gaze)*

Your professor friend... he is more than a friend, yes?

**REBECCA**

*(after a moment)*

It's complicated.

**NIKOS**

*(spinning her again)*

The best things always are.

The song builds to its climax. Nikos lifts Rebecca, spinning her as she laughs with genuine delight. When he sets her down, they're very close, his hands still on her waist.

**NIKOS (CONT'D)**

*(quietly)*

You are extraordinary, Rebecca.

**REBECCA**

*(looking directly at him)*

So are you.

For a moment, it seems like they might kiss. The tension is electric, palpable. Michael half-rises from his chair, a mockery of protest, and he knows it. He sits down and reaches for his glass.

Then Rebecca steps back, her hand trailing down Nikos's chest.

**REBECCA (CONT'D)**

Thank you for the dance.

**NIKOS**

*(holding her hand)*

The night is young. We could—

**REBECCA**

*(smiling regretfully)*

I should get back.

She moves toward their table, leaving Nikos watching her retreat with obvious appreciation. Several women immediately approach him, but his eyes remain on Rebecca and the sensuously slow pace she makes back to Michael. The camera **TRACKS** as she moves across the dancefloor, and the music lingers and pulses just a little bit more intensely. The music fades...

**MICHAEL**

*(standing as she approaches)*

Ready to go?

**REBECCA**

*(surprised)*

Already? But we just got here.

**MICHAEL**

*(darkly)*

You seemed to be enjoying yourself.

**REBECCA**

*(innocently)*

I was. Nikos is a wonderful dancer. And quite charming.

**MICHAEL**

*(barely controlled)*

I noticed.

**REBECCA**

*(tilting her head)*

Are you jealous, Michael?

**MICHAEL**

*(after a pause)*

Should I be?

**REBECCA**

*(moving closer)*

That depends.

**MICHAEL**

On what?

**REBECCA**

*(touching his chest)*

On whether you want me to be available for midnight tours  
of secret beaches.

The words hit Michael like a physical blow. His hand covers  
hers, pressing it against his chest.

**MICHAEL**

*(voice rough)*

Rebecca...

**REBECCA**

*(looking up at him)*

He asked me, you know. To go with him tonight.

**MICHAEL**

*(grip tightening)*

What did you tell him?

**REBECCA**

*(with a small smile)*

I told him it was complicated.

**MICHAEL**

*(searching her face)*

Is it? Complicated?

**REBECCA**

*(stepping closer)*

That's up to you.

Michael looks over at Nikos, who raises his glass in a friendly salute, completely unaware of the storm he's unleashed.

**MICHAEL**

*(turning back to Rebecca)*

I want to leave.

**REBECCA**

*(triumphant but hiding it)*

Now?

**MICHAEL**

*(pulling her close, confident, masculine, almost intimidating)*

Now.

**REBECCA**

*(allowing herself to be led)*

What's the rush?

**MICHAEL**

*(stopping mid-stride, turning to face her)*

Because if we stay—

He pauses, watching the way candlelight catches the curve of her collarbone.

—I'm going to do something that will cause a scene.

**REBECCA**

*(tilting her head, a smile playing at the corners of her mouth)*

Like what?

The question hangs between them like the last remaining incense in the warm evening air. Around them, the restaurant hums with quiet conversations, the gentle percussive of silverware against porcelain, the distant sound of waves against the harbour stones.

**MICHAEL**

*(his voice dropping to something almost whispered, dangerous)*

Like make it very clear to every man in this room—

His eyes never leave hers.

—that you're mine.

The words settle over her like honey, slow and golden. She feels the familiar flutter low in her stomach, that delicious tension between what's proper and what's possible. The possessiveness in his voice doesn't frighten her—it awakens something she's been keeping carefully locked away.

*Beat*

She steps closer, drawn by the gravity of his certainty. The taverna continues its eternal evening rhythm around them—an old fisherman's laugh from the corner table, the soft scrape of chairs against worn stone, the bartender's glass finding its place among others with a gentle clink. But in this pocket of space between them, time moves differently, charged with the electricity of things unsaid but deeply felt.

**REBECCA**

*(softly)*

Am I? Yours?

**MICHAEL**

*(cupping her face)*

Completely.

**REBECCA**

*(rising on her toes)*

Then show me.

Then he moves—not sudden, but inexorable, inevitable as tide returning to shore. His mouth finds hers, and there's nothing tentative about it. His hands slide behind her neck, fingers threading through the silk weight of her chestnut hair, anchoring her to this moment, to him, to what they're choosing in full view of strangers and candlelight. An audience be damned.

The kiss is a declaration written in a language older than words. Older than time.

When they surface, breathless, the taverna has become audience. Scattered applause ripples through the room—gentle, approving, the kind reserved for young lovers caught in romance's sweet theatre. The elderly couple at the window table exchanges knowing smiles. The fisherman raises his ouzo in mock toast.

But Nikos sees differently.

From behind the polished bar, he watches with the quiet recognition of a man who understands the weight of moments that change everything. There's something in his expression—not defeat, but acknowledgment. The way a chess master nods when his opponent reveals an unexpected gambit. The way warriors salute each other across a field before the battle is decided later with a practised *coup de grâce*.

He lifts his glass slightly, almost imperceptibly. A gesture that speaks of honour among those who understand what it means to want something completely.

**MICHAEL**

*(his voice rough against her ear)*

Let's go.

**REBECCA**

*(her smile soft, but with victory)*

Yes. Agreed. Let's.

They move toward the exit, her hand finding his with the certainty of rivers finding the sea. As they reach the threshold, Rebecca glances back once—a moment's acknowledgment of what's been won and what's been lost.

Nikos meets her eyes across the warm-lit space and raises his glass again. This time it's pure salute—the kind offered to a worthy opponent who has played the game with skill and grace.

The taverna door closes behind them with the soft finality of choices made and paths chosen.

**FADE OUT.**

**FADE IN.**

**INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT**

The heavy door clicks shut behind them. Michael's jaw is rigid; his eyes glint cold steel in the lamplight. Rebecca tosses her clutch onto the bed, feigning nonchalance, but the tension is palpable; she is winding, the coil tightening between them.

Michel closes the door behind them, pauses and looks at her for a moment. His head tilts, slowly, intentionally, trying to discern if the frame is level.

**MICHAEL**

*(voice hard, barely above a growl, unbuttoning his shirt, terror in his hands)*

Really, Rebecca? Dancing with the bartender—what was his name? Nikos? You think this is a game?

Rebecca lifts her chin, a spark of defiance, perhaps even guilt, in her eyes.

**REBECCA**

*(indignant, but posturing)*

Maybe you should ask yourself why it bothers you. He's half my age, Michael. It was harmless.

Michael strides across the room, his presence looming, impulsive. He stops just short of her, his irritation unmistakable—shoulders squared—voice dropping to a steely edge. His head tilts again, almost imperceptibly, as if to disarm her pretentious naivete.

**MICHAEL**

*(steady, but barely controlling his rage, then, a smirk)*

Don't play me for a fool. Harmless? You wanted my attention, and you got it.

You got it.

But I'm not some jealous boy you can tease into submission. Chase you like a candy falling down the stairs.

Not here.

Not ever.

Rebecca's bravado wavers; she folds her arms across her chest, searching his face. His anger is tangible, rising—a force that fills the suite, demanding her focus.

**REBECCA**

*(not entirely demur)*

Why are you so angry? I needed to feel—

**MICHAEL**

*(cutting her off)*

What you need is to stop acting like a child, Rebecca. If you want my attention, ask for it. Don't parade yourself around for Nikos, or anyone else.

What on earth were you thinking?

He steps closer, lowering his voice, his dominance absolute.

**MICHAEL (CONT'D)**

I don't share. Not you. Not us.

Next time you want to test me, remember who you're with.

The room vibrates with the weight of his words. Rebecca looks away, chastened, her earlier mischief replaced by a simmering awareness of the line she's crossed.

Rebecca's arms drop, her bravado gone. Her gaze lingers on Michael—his resolve, his restraint, the silent warning in his eyes. Something in her softens, her lips parting as if admitting defeat, but also surrender. She steps forward, closing the space between them, her fingers trembling as they reach for his chest.

Michael's jaw flexes; his stoicism wavers, replaced by a fierce longing. He lets her touch linger, then covers her hand with his own, anchoring her. The tension dissolves into something deeper—need, fear, relief, all at once.

Rebecca's breath catches, and her attraction shifts: from defiance to vulnerability, from flirtation to raw hunger.

He tilts her chin upward, searching her face for permission—finding it in the way she leans in, her pulse quickening. Without another word, he kisses her: slow at first, then urgent, as if drawing her in and letting her dissolve against him.

Rebecca melts into the embrace, her need no longer masked, and Michael takes over, guiding her with a conviction that leaves no room for doubt. The suite becomes the stage for their conflict—now fused, now necessary, now unstoppable.

The air between them thickens, charged with the unspoken language that pulses beneath skin and memory. Michael brushes his lips along Rebecca's temple, his breath warm against her ear. His voice is barely a whisper—broken, hungry, reverent.

**MICHAEL**

You drive me crazy, you know that, right?

Her answer is a trembling laugh, caught between anticipation and surrender.

**REBECCA**

Then get lost.

*Beat*

Here.

*Beat*

...with me.

She murmurs, her hands tangled in his shirt, knuckles white with longing...her hand reaches lower, intently, desirously.

They move together, shedding the last of their defenses as easily as slipping from silk. Each touch is a promise, each sigh permission. Shadows spill across tangled sheets, painting their bodies in the fleeting Cycladean half-light. Words dissolve into gasps and laughter, soft moans, the music of two people colliding—devouring, discovering, cherishing. Their world shrinks to pulse and taste, to the press of lips and the slow giving way—until nothing exists except the heat rising between them and the certainty that, here, they are utterly known and wanted.

**REBECCA (CONT'D)**

Say it.

Rebecca breathes, her voice almost trembling with need.

**MICHAEL**

*(a confession, not a plea)*

You're mine. All of you.

**END SCENE**

**FADE TO BLACK**

**INT. NYC YELLOW TAXI - MOVING 6<sup>th</sup> AVENUE - LATE AFTERNOON**

A taxi moves like a needle through cloth-stitching avenues, hemming corners. The **GARMENT DISTRICT** passes in pieces: loading bays exhaling warm air, garment racks wrapped in clear plastic, like bodies in raincoats, mannequins glowing behind fogged glass. Steam rises and dissolves. The drizzle turns brake lights into red wounds on the street.

The **CAMERA** feels trapped with them—not a shot so much as a presence—it **PANS** randomly, until it settles on the couple in the back. It doesn't cut away when it's uncomfortable. The city is always there, refracted: neon, scaffolding, silhouettes, the flash of a billboard sliding across faces like an unasked question. The meter clicks. The wipers keep time...the slowest rhumba ever.

The driver's partition is scuffed. A '**Be Kind**' notice stuck, but frayed, on the screen. A small ayatul kursi pendant swings from the rearview mirror, tapping it with each bump—a quiet metronome for confession, or protection, or sin?

Back seat: **SARAH**, composed in the way people become when panic is familiar, cortisol a strange friend, and **MARCUS BOUCHER (37)**, impeccably assembled, not Gucci, but not Gap either; a practiced aesthetic ease that reads as armor first, fashion second. He's careful about what he shows. She's careful about what she admits.

Sarah grips her phone as if it might bite. Her wedding ring flashes in a passing LED, then vanishes as the cab rolls into shadow.

**MARCUS**

*(light, offering; eyes on the window, not on her)*

You want the window down?

Marcus keeps his voice casual, but his posture is tuned: shoulders relaxed, hands still—a man trained to look unthreatened. He's guarding something behind the calm. It sits in his throat like a coin.

**SARAH**

*(too quick, too bright; performing steadiness)*

No. If I feel the air I'm going to...I don't know.

You know?

Open my mouth and something will leave.

You know?

Outside, a box truck noses in. The taxi shudders. A garment rack tips somewhere — metal scraping metal—a brief scream.

**MARCUS**

*(a small nod, as if agreeing with physics)*

Okay. Then we keep the air in—entropy 101. We keep it all in here with us.

Sarah watches him say it, measuring if he means it. The cab's ceiling feels lower. She winces at 'entropy'. The city presses its wet face to the glass. Staring.

**SARAH**

*(quietly, like a fact she's afraid will become real when spoken)*

He wasn't in Athens. Marcus. He was never in Athens.

**MARCUS**

*(soft)*

I know.

Her thumb scrolls. Screenshots. Receipts. A boarding pass that doesn't exist. A photo she shouldn't have seen—cropped sky, someone's shoulder, a pool's edge. Evidence without context. The screen turns her face into a ghost over the proof.

**SARAH**

*(starting to fracture)*

All week. An entire week I was—

**MARCUS**

*(gentle correction; keeps the rhythm steady)*

Breathing, and going to work, and being a total boss in goddamned New York City.

**SARAH**

*(a swallow, then a harder truth, she ignores his enthusiasm)*

—being lied to like it was...like it was nothing.

They pass a showroom: inside, a seamstress pins fabric to a model in the mirror. Quick hands. Invisible stitches. A life tightened and tailored while no one sees the needles.

**MARCUS**

*(guarded; chooses a word that won't implicate him)*

It's never nothing. It's just...practiced. The art of deception someone said once...

**SARAH**

*(anger wearing intelligence)*

I can see him saying it. In that voice. Like he's presenting a paper. Like he's jerking off at Cambridge again. Or the LSE. Like it's an argument I should respect.

**MARCUS**

*(a micro-smile that doesn't reach his eyes)*

Michael does love a thesis.

*Beat*

Even more than he likes a stage.

Sarah's laugh snaps out – one sharp sound – then collapses into tears as if the laugh opened a trapdoor. She turns to the window. City light bruises her cheek. The wipers keep insisting on clarity. They're not winning..

*Beat*

**SARAH**

*(flat, dangerous)*

I want to ruin him.

**MARCUS**

*(doesn't flinch; lets her have the sentence)*

I know.

Marcus begins to assemble 'Why?' in his head; it comes to his mouth, his teeth. It can't pass.

**SARAH**

*(building momentum, then catching)*

I want to walk into that terminal and–

**MARCUS**

*(careful; he knows the trap of the perfect line)*

And do what Sarah? Say the perfect sentence?

**SARAH**

*(honest, almost childlike)*

I want him to look at me and feel–

**MARCUS**

*(gently interrupting)*

What you're feeling.

The driver checks the mirror—not curiosity, just weather-forecasting. A city skill. He decides not to speak. The entertainment across his windshield is just as amusing as that unfolding in his back seat.

**DRIVER**

*(without turning)*

Traffic to the tunnel, little heavy. We still make.

Marcus offers a small nod toward the front—thanks. Then back to Sarah. He keeps his hands visible. A practiced gentleness. A practiced distance.

**MARCUS**

*(choosing his words like he's stepping on glass)*

Sarah...before we get there, can I say something ugly?

Not about you. About people.

**SARAH**

*(dry; deflection as a life raft; resigned)*

I'm already in ugly.

**MARCUS**

*(a breath held, then released)*

Sometimes the betrayal isn't a declaration of war. It's a stupid, panicked exit door someone takes because they can't stand still in the room they built. It might not be you...seriously.

**SARAH**

*(needle-point)*

He built it too.

**MARCUS**

*(measured; he's talking to her, but also to himself)*

Yes. And then he started resenting the floor plan. And then the drapes. The damned cutlery in the drawer.

Sarah twists her ring hard. Her knuckle pales. Outside, a mannequin's blank face slides by – then another – then none.

**SARAH**

*(testing him)*

So, it's my fault.

*Beat*

Fucking predictable.

**MARCUS**

*(immediate)*

No.

**MARCUS**

*(lower, firmer; a rare edge)*

But you asked me to help you hold the whole picture. Not just the part that cuts.

A siren passes behind them now, dopplering the world. For a moment the cab feels submerged. Marcus's jaw tightens—something unsaid held in place.

**MARCUS**

*(as if offering a menu he hates)*

There are a few boring explanations people hate because they sound like excuses. I don't know if explanations are worse, but...I do hate excuses.

**SARAH**

*(brave, combative, despite herself)*

Try me.

**MARCUS**

*(steady cadence; keeps it clinical so it won't become personal)*

One: routine. Two people get so good at being functional that they stop being close. They stop risking saying what they want. They start negotiating life like a calendar invite. It's like, I can leave this shit on 'read'...its self-defeating actually...

**SARAH**

*(defensive; a practiced denial)*

We weren't roommates Marcus. Get your eyes out of your queer ass, Grindr swiping carnival...I'm not the worst you know. Not remotely.

**MARCUS**

*(not taking the bait, gentle, but pointed)*

I didn't say you were. I said you were capable. You have capacity Sarah.

Capacity.

The most dangerous quality in a partner is competence.

It lets the other person pretend their absence doesn't matter. It does.

It so fucking does.

Sarah's eyes narrow—anger, yes—but also recognition, like a lock clicking. The city outside keeps moving, indifferent, but precise.

**SARAH**

*(small voice, larger meaning)*

He used to need me.

**MARCUS**

*(warmth, then he pulls it back)*

And you stopped being a rescue mission. You became...

your own country.

**SARAH**

*(trying not to sound proud)*

That's supposed to be good.

**MARCUS**

*(a quick self-edit)*

It is. But some men—

He catches himself. Reframes. A breath. His guard snaps back into place.

**MARCUS (continued)**

*(carefully inclusive; carefully distant)*

Some people confuse partnership with being the center. When they're not, they go looking for a place where they feel uncomplicated again. The influencer shills call it 'being seen...'

**SARAH**

*(bitter clarity)*

So, he found a person with no history...just an algorithm. Nothing to see here? Is that it?

**MARCUS**

*(soft; almost tender)*

A person who doesn't know what it looks like when he's tired. Or disappointed. Or quiet.

The taxi slows at a light. Red spills through the windshield and stains the partition. A modern-day Ratzo Rizzo stares at them as he crosses...he flips the bird at them, grabs his crotch, and mouths an ugly word. Sarah's face grimaces and then becomes a stop sign.

**SARAH**

*(the number tastes like metal)*

She's twenty-six.

**MARCUS**

*(gentle; refuses the comparison)*

And that number is loud. I know. It's just sex Sarah...

**SARAH**

*(a smile that lies)*

It's not just loud. It's humiliating. Like, who the fuck  
am I?

**MARCUS**

*(firm, protective)*

It's arithmetic. It's not a measurement of you.

**SARAH**

*(honest about the lie)*

It feels like it is Marcus...same as you.

**MARCUS**

*(no argument, only acknowledgment)*

Of course it does. But you don't have to sharpen the  
talons with me, okay? I know what I am, and I definitely  
know WHO I am.

A pedestrian darts across, clutching a garment bag overhead  
like a cape. The bag flaps, translucent, revealing the  
outline of a dress, Carolina blues, iridescent violets—a  
life meant for a different story.

**MARCUS**

*(glances away; his reflection overlays hers in the glass)*

Another explanation: fear.

Not of you.

Of time.

Of becoming the version of himself he tells his students  
not to become.

**SARAH**

*(sharp; afraid of how reasonable this sounds)*

He lectures people about ethics. He never talks about  
morality.

**MARCUS**

*(a tiny exhale)*

Exactly.

*Beat*

But seriously, what the fuck is morality Sarah? Maybe he's  
right? You're not a religious person. And if Michael is  
we'll be damned before Tuesday.

His retort lands as a deadweight...a dark thud on a pristine  
New York sugar maple floor. Is it indignance, or rebellion?  
John Calvin is long gone...

**SARAH**

*(trying to make it simple so it hurts less)*

So, what is it then? Hypocrisy? A midlife-

**MARCUS**

*(cuts in, not unkindly)*

A crisis of narrative, Sarah. The man wants to believe he  
is still the Protagonist...he's not looking for a Porsche.  
He wants a plot twist. He chooses the cheapest one.

Marcus pauses on 'cheapest,' a nanosecond of intellectual  
challenge, completely unscripted. Danger.

Sarah absorbs that too. Her breathing steadies as if  
steadiness is something she can choose, for a second. The  
cab drifts forward, the city's grid loosening as they angle  
toward the bridges and parkways.

**SARAH**

*(almost whispers; afraid to name herself)*

And the part where I...where I don't-

She stops. The words snag, like thread caught on a nail.

**MARCUS**

*(careful)*

Where you don't feel met. Or seen?

Sarah sits for a moment. **BREATH.** Therapy, again, and its attendant but diffuse language. She wants to believe, but an upbringing with a Chinese cellist, her father an unloved East-Side realtor, she imagines, 'we don't like to be seen Marcus.' Which really means, "Who are we?"

**DRIVER**

*(apologetic, but in the New York way)*

Sorry brother; know it' getting heated back there: you want the Queensboro Bridge or the Midtown Tunnel?

**MARCUS**

*(distracted and annoyed)*

Your choice man...can we get there in five minutes..

**SARAH**

*(She interrupts, but controlled; disingenuous with herself, maybe with everything)*

Where I don't feel... anything sometimes. Where I feel like a locked door and I don't have the key.

**MARCUS**

*(a soft refusal of shame)*

That is not a crime. And it's not a verdict.

**SARAH**

*(testing a cruel logic)*

But maybe it's why.

**MARCUS**

*(steadier now; a hand on the wheel he doesn't have)*

It may be part of the weather in your house. But he chose to set fire to the curtains instead of opening a window.

Sarah swallows. Her jaw tightens, then loosens. A tear falls cleanly, as if it has been waiting in line. Metaphor..

**SARAH**

*(fury as confession; primal)*

Fuck!!! I'm so angry I can't see straight.

**MARCUS**

*(a fact, not a pep talk)*

Good. It's data. Only data Sarah. Anger is vision.

**SARAH**

*(stalls; afraid of what this reveals)*

And I...

*(she hates this)*

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

*(forced; true)*

I'm relieved.

Marcus doesn't show surprise. He receives it like a confession in a church he doesn't attend – respectful, distant, present.

**MARCUS**

*(quietly insistent)*

Say it again.

**SARAH**

*(almost calmer; not performative; not authentic; but she pauses)*

I'm relieved.

**MARCUS**

*(naming it so she doesn't have to)*

Because now the thing you've been carrying without a name has a name.

**SARAH**

*(a half-laugh that's also a sob)*

Because I can stop wondering if I'm crazy.

**MARCUS**

*(a glance to the mirror; a secret stay put)*

Because your intuition is vindicated Sarah. Crazy is just a shit label...where do you girls get this nonsense? You should ALL want to be crazy!

**SARAH**

*(admitting what she would deny to anyone else, she moves from caution to astute declaration)*

I don't know Marcus...Because I don't have to keep being perfect.

Her shoulders drop a fraction, like a heavy coat sliding off. Expectation. Conformity. She wipes her face with the heel of her hand; the gesture is practical, angry at the evidence.

**MARCUS**

*(a tender tease that doesn't trespass; triumphant)*

There she is. Perfect.

Wabi-Sabi.

**SARAH**

*(warning)*

Don't.

Don't you fucking dare, Marcus.

**MARCUS**

*(sincere, he turns to her and closes distance in the cab...he looks her in the eye)*

I'm not applauding your pain. I'm applauding your honesty Sarah...accountability, self-awareness...I'm wondering where this was in St. Augustine last spring?

They pass under an overpass—the **MIDTOWN TUNNEL**. The light turns briefly greenish, nauseous, clinical. The road hum changes pitch—*asphalt* turns to concrete. The city begins to thin into infrastructure — ramps, barriers, signs—as if Manhattan is letting go. Brooklyn changes everything...

**SARAH**

*(small; the reality setting in; terrified)*

Goddammit Marcus! What do I do when I see him?

**MARCUS**

*(chooses neutral words; doesn't give away much)*

You decide what you need. Not what you're supposed to do. Not what your books say. Not that shit on your phone. Not what your mother would do.

**SARAH**

*(truthful)*

I don't even know what I need.

**MARCUS**

*(grounding)*

Then start smaller. What do you want first?

**SARAH**

*(immediate)*

The truth.

**MARCUS**

*(a nod; this he can deliver)*

Good. Truth is concrete. You can stand on it.

But, come on, we both know that's not what we really want.

Do we even need it? It's literally not 1957!

Sarah looks at her ring again. This time she slides it off—not dramatic. Slow and deliberate. Like removing a splinter. She holds it between finger and thumb: a small circle, a small law. She puts it in her coat pocket.

**SARAH**

*(seeking absolution)*

Is that awful?

**MARCUS**

*(gentle permission)*

It's an action. A choice, no? Okay, actions are allowed.

You are allowed Sarah.

Ahead, the first blue airport sign appears, softened by a schizoid rain that doesn't know what it wants to be—cold, warm, ice? The letters are steady even when everything else isn't. If you squint, and hold your breath, you'll be fine. JFK is always a nightmare when you least need it. Welcome to the land of dreams.

**DRIVER**

*(calling out)*

JFK. Five minutes...maybe. Traffic is shit...

Marcus checks Sarah's face as if reading a gauge — not to manage her, to stay with her. In the mirror, his own eyes look away at the last second.

**MARCUS**

*(quiet vow)*

When you get there, you don't have to perform strength.

**SARAH**

*(a confession wrapped as a complaint)*

I don't know how to do anything else.

Marcus...does he even know me?

**MARCUS**

*(a smile; guarded)*

Strength? Then borrow mine. Just for the walk from curb to terminal, OK?

He knows...even all the shit he can't admit to. He's not going to be a happy boy. Trust me.

Sarah nods once – decisive. The taxi merges. Manhattan folds itself into the rearview and becomes memory: lights, water, steel, rain. The rosary taps the mirror. The meter keeps counting. The city keeps moving. The airport approaches.

**CUT TO**

**JFK Airport, New York**

**FADE IN:**

**INT. JFK AIRPORT - DEPARTURE LOUNGE**

The departure lounge exists in a dissociating, perpetual fluorescent twilight—never night, never day. Overhead, the artificial suns hum their electric hymns while outside, through floor-to-ceiling windows, real clouds gather like the sternest of accusations against the glass.

**SARAH** sits marooned in a plastic chair—one of hundreds arranged in sterile rows like pews in some godless cathedral of transit. Her Louis Vuitton carry-on rests in her lap, a leather talisman against uncertainty. She's armoured herself in Chanel and Miyake, the uniform of successful

Manhattan womanhood, but under the airport's merciless lighting, the ensemble reads like pewter, costume jewellery—bright, expensive, hollow.

Above her, the departure board flickers: **ATHENS - ON TIME**. The letters pulse like a heartbeat, indifferent to the human dramas playing out below.

She cradles her phone like a rosary, thumbs moving in ritual repetition across the screen. Her last text exchange with Michael glows accusingly:

*"Business dinner running late. Don't wait up. xM"*

Sent three days ago. Three days of silence that stretches between New York and wherever Michael really is.

Her thumb hovers, typing ghost messages:

*"Arrived safely..."* DELETE.

*"Looking forward to seeing you..."* DELETE.

*"Surprise..."*

The cursor blinks. Waiting. Like she's been waiting.

**SARAH**

*(to the phone, barely audible)*

What are you hiding from me?

The words escape before she can stop them. She glances around, embarrassed by her own voice in this temple of public solitude. An **ELDERLY WOMAN (80s)** in the adjacent chair—weathered hands folded over a worn passport—offers the kind of smile that suggests she's witnessed many private moments made public by travel.

**ELDERLY WOMAN**

Going somewhere special, dear?

Sarah forces brightness into her voice like pushing light through frosted glass.

**SARAH**

Athens. To see my husband. He's been... working there. The word "working" hangs in the recycled air, bitter as day-old coffee grounds.

**ELDERLY WOMAN**

*(her eyes knowing)*

A surprise visit?

**SARAH**

Something like that.

She returns to her phone—digital archaeology, sifting through Michael's Instagram for evidence of... what? Another woman's laugh in the background of a photo? A shadow that doesn't belong? The penumbra of desire and deceit? The posts have stopped entirely. His last: a sunset over the Acropolis, captioned simply, ambiguous by intent, "Beauty everywhere." Posted six days ago. Before the silence began.

Through the windows, rain begins to streak the glass—not the romantic rain of movies, but the industrial precipitation of another eternal city that seems to breathe, if you catch it right, but otherwise, in the glower of humid immortality, never stops exhaling. New York. Each droplet traces its own path downward, like tears on a face too large to comprehend.

The boarding announcement crackles through speakers mounted like surveillance: "American Airlines Flight AA334 to Athens, now boarding passengers in Group A. Business class, AAdvantage members, and passengers travelling with small children may please approach the gate."

Sarah doesn't move. Not yet. She's so much more American now than her Chinese mother ever could be, and she waits until the bitter end before she walks onto a plane. In this liminal space between certainty and discovery, she can still

pretend her marriage is what she thought it was. In this airport purgatory, surrounded by the white noise of departure and arrival, she is neither wife nor fool.

She is simply a woman with a phone, in a chair, under artificial light, about to cross an ocean to confront a truth she's not sure she wants to find. Stepping across the threshold of a 777 is like coming ashore, or worse.

**SARAH**

*(closing her eyes, whispering)*

Just let me be wrong.

But the departure board continues its relentless countdown, and outside, the real sky grows darker by the minute.

**FADE TO BLACK**

---

**FADE IN:**

**INT. AIRPLANE - COACH SECTION - DAY**

Sarah is wedged between a **LARGE MAN** who's claimed both armrests and a **CHATTY WOMAN** knitting what appears to be a sweater for a very small dog.

**CHATTY WOMAN**

*(without looking up from her knitting)*

First time to Greece?

**SARAH**

*(staring straight ahead)*

Yes.

**CHATTY WOMAN**

Oh, you'll love it! So romantic. Perfect for couples. Are you meeting your boyfriend there?

**SARAH**

*(tersely, but amused she seems so young)*

Husband.

**CHATTY WOMAN**

Even better! How long have you been married?

**SARAH**

Twelve years.

**CHATTY WOMAN**

*(finally looking up)*

Twelve years! And he's already there without you?

The innocent question lands like a slap. Sarah pretends to sleep, and the **CHATTY WOMAN** loses interest.

But Sarah's mind races. She pulls out her phone, checking her appearance obsessively. The airplane lighting is merciless.

**SARAH**

*(whispering to her reflection)*

You're being ridiculous. He loves you. He chose you.

But even as she says it, doubt creeps in. When was the last time he looked at her the way he used to? When was the last time she felt beautiful instead of just... appropriate?

The flight attendant approaches with the drink cart.

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT**

Something to drink?

**SARAH**

Wine. Red wine. Actually, make it a double.

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT**

*(apologetically, in a soft midwestern accent)*

Sorry dear. This is American Airlines. We don't really do doubles in coach...

**SARAH**

*(voice rising)*

The **LARGE MAN** glances over. Sarah realizes she's becoming "that passenger" and forces a smile.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

*(quieter)*

Please.

As the flight attendant moves on, Sarah opens her laptop; a page already opened is shown: "Kleyman & Stein—Attorneys at Law: Identifying and Valuing Assets, Intellectual Properties, and Liabilities." The pages are a catalogue of her recent fears made manifest, lists, cross-tabulated indices...

She slams the laptop shut, attracting more stares.

**CHATTY WOMAN**

*(concerned)*

You okay, honey?

**SARAH**

*(laughing with an edge of hysteria)*

Perfect. Everything's perfect.

**FADE OUT.**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. PAROS HARBOUR - LATE AFTERNOON**

The ferry exhales Sarah onto the dock like a mechanical whale releasing Jonah—not onto dry land, but into liquid light. The Aegean sun has transformed the harbour into molten honey, every surface gleaming with Mediterranean benediction. Ancient cobblestones, polished by ten thousand arrivals, reflect the sky in scattered coins of brilliance.

Sarah emerges, trailing her wheeled suitcase with the determination of Sisyphus and half the dignity. Her carefully curated Manhattan armour—that morning's Chanel and Miyake ensemble—now hangs on her frame like expensive white flags of surrender. The fabric, designed for air-conditioned boardrooms, has staged a rebellion against the honest heat of Greece.

But even dishevelled, even sweating, even with her hair escaping its architectural styling, she moves through this golden hour like a figure from a Renaissance painting—if Renaissance painters had access to Louis Vuitton luggage and the particular beauty of exhausted determination.

The suitcase wheels catch every cobblestone, creating a percussion section against the harbour's natural symphony: the slap of rope against masts, the distant bouzouki drifting from a taverna, the eternal conversation between water and stone.

She stops at a café where bougainvillea spills over whitewashed walls like prurient, purple laughter. The **CAFÉ OWNER**, weathered as driftwood and twice as wise, watches her approach with the amused compassion reserved for foreigners in love with their own suffering.

**SARAH**

*(showing her phone like a sacred text)*

Excuse me, do you know this hotel?

The screen glows with Michael's booking confirmation—evidence of his separate life, his parallel universe where wives don't exist.

**CAFÉ OWNER**

*(in English worn smooth by years of tourism)*

Ah yes, beautiful hotel. Very romantic. Up the hill there—  
maybe twenty minutes walking.

His gesture is generous, encompassing half the island. Sarah follows his direction to where white buildings cascade up the hillside like sugar cubes arranged by a playful, but capricious, god.

She looks down at her feet—Italian leather heels that cost more than most people's monthly rent, now as practical as stilettos on Mount Everest. The suitcase suddenly seems to weigh as much as her expectations.

**CAFÉ OWNER**

*(with the gentle cruelty of truth)*

Maybe taxi?

**SARAH**

*(pride wrestling with practicality)*

No, I can walk.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. HILLSIDE PATH - LATER**

The path winds upward like a question mark. Sarah has developed a peculiar gait—part determined stride, part careful navigation of ancient stones that have no patience for modern footwear. Her hair, engineered that morning into sleek submission, has declared independence in the Mediterranean humidity, creating a halo of rebellion around her face.

She pauses to catch her breath, and the island pauses with her. Below, the harbour spreads like a postcard written in a continuum of blue and light, fishing boats bobbing like punctuation marks in an azure sentence. The beauty is almost offensive in its perfection—a mockery, both, of her internal chaos, and the impossible tropes of Greece itself.

A **LOCAL WOMAN**, bent with age but bright with mischief, tends her garden gate.

**LOCAL WOMAN**

*(in English tinged with music)*

You are lost, beautiful lady?

**SARAH**

*(gesturing helplessly at her appearance)*

I'm looking for my husband.

**LOCAL WOMAN**

*(with the wisdom of someone who's watched many love stories unfold)*

Ah. In Greece, we say... sometimes what we look for, it finds us first.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. HOTEL ENTRANCE - LATER**

Sarah arrives like a warrior after battle—victorious but battle-worn. The hotel rises before her, all whitewashed elegance and casual perfection, the kind of place where effortless beauty is the unofficial dress code. Couples drift through the entrance, sun-kissed and impossibly graceful, as if they've been choreographed by the gods as an entertainment for themselves.

She catches her reflection in the glass doors and attempts archaeological reconstruction of her morning's careful presentation. Her hair defies every product known to science, her makeup has migrated, and her outfit now tells the story of every step, every stumble, every moment of this odyssey.

**SARAH**

*(to her reflection, practicing)*

Hello, Michael. Surprise. I was in the neighbourhood.

You know...

Eight thousand miles away.

She laughs—a sound caught between hysteria and enlightenment. There's foolishness, and then there's comprehensive idiocy.

**SARAH**

*(trying again)*

We need to talk.

The automatic doors slide open like curtains on the final act.

The camera pulls back as the focal length widens, a more cinematic expository shot, with a **CROSSCUT**

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

The lobby breathes romance like expensive perfume—marble floors that whisper stories of thousands of footsteps, light filtering through gauze curtains as if filtered dreams, couples everywhere looking so inappropriately audacious, like they've been styled by Aphrodite herself.

Sarah approaches the desk, suddenly acutely aware that she is a woman alone in a place designed for pairs, a question mark in a land of periods.

**SARAH**

*(to the DESK CLERK, her voice insistent, steadier than her hands)*

I'm looking for my husband. Dr. Michael Chen. Michael Chen? Room 237.

*Beat*

I think.

The **DESK CLERK**, young and kind with the particular cruelty of the innocent, consults his computer screen—that modern oracle, dispenser of unwanted truths, dispenser of lies.

**DESK CLERK**

*(with the precision of a surgeon delivering bad news)*

Ah yes, Dr. Chen. But I think he is not in his room now. I saw him leave for dinner... with a young lady.

The words arrive wrapped in his accent, but their meaning needs no translation. "Young lady." Two words that contain multitudes—the collapse of assumptions, the architecture of betrayal, the beginning of whatever comes after the end of everything you thought you knew.

Sarah stands in the golden light of the lobby, surrounded by other people's obtuse happiness, holding these two words like a letter she never wanted to receive. It's poison pen laying exhausted, ink strewn in Pollock's chaos on the floor beside her. She kicks the phantom away..

The marble floor seems to shift beneath her feet, she remains standing, her toes gripping something real—a figure of remarkable grace in the moment of graceful destruction, beautiful even in the precise instant her world reshapes itself around a truth she came eight thousand miles to discover.

**SARAH**

*(voice barely steady)*

A young lady?

**DESK CLERK**

*(obliviously cheerful)*

Very beautiful. Dark hair. Shining blue eyes. They seemed very... how you say... in love?

Sarah grips the desk to steady herself. Her tensed fingers push into the faded wood, and them immediately retreat. Her fingertips pull off the desk like a concert pianist mastering *mano sinistro sotto*..

**SARAH**

Do you know...

She clears her throat.

Do you know where they went?

**DESK CLERK**

Φυσικά!

[Of course]

The taverna on the cliff. Very romantic.

Very popular with lovers.

**FADE TO BLACK**

**CROSSFADE**

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. CLIFFSIDE TAVERNA - SUNSET**

Sarah climbs the path to the taverna, each step feeling like thirteen stations, to her own execution, with no Simon to take up the cross with her. The sound of laughter and music drifts down to her—mocking her. Sarah's completely alone.

She reaches the entrance and stops, frozen by what she sees through the window.

Michael sits at a corner table, but he's transformed. Relaxed, laughing, more alive than she's seen him in years. And across from him...

**REBECCA** turns in profile, and Sarah's breath catches. She's stunning in an effortless way that makes Sarah suddenly aware of every calculated aspect of her own overly-coutured appearance. Rebecca's dress is simple but perfect, her hair catches the candlelight with a cheap plastic barrette girlishly holding her hair back behind her ear, no

jewellery, no bra, and when she laughs, Michael looks at her like she's the only woman in the world. Because she is.

Sarah watches as Rebecca reaches across the table to touch Michael's hand. The gesture is intimate, confidently yet tenderly possessive. Michael doesn't pull away—he covers her hand with his other one—the gesture reciprocated. The possession mutated.

Sarah stumbles backward, pressing herself against the stone wall. This isn't an affair she can fight. Simply. This isn't some mid-life crisis she can wait out. This is love. Real, transformative love that makes her twelve years of marriage look like a comfortable arrangement, romantic side-hustle, a dress rehearsal, at best.

She fumbles for her phone, starts to call Michael, then stops. What would she say? She texts, "I flew to Greece to stalk you"? DELETE.

"Poor points for form Sash..."

Instead, she takes one last look through the window. Rebecca has stood up and moved to Michael's side of the table, saying something that makes him throw his head back laughing. She's young, sophisticated, confident in a way that Sarah realizes she's hasn't been, for years.

Sarah turns and walks away, pulling her suitcase behind her, the sound of laughter fading as she descends the hill.

#### **SARAH**

*(the camera pushes in-to herself, with bitter clarity, but with a wry, Machiavellian smile that crosses her face)*

Game over.

The camera lingers further on Sarah's face, and the dichotomy of her pronouncement becomes more ambiguous—this game is over, but for whom? The scene dissolves into muted darkness, as the sounds from the taverna fade in lockstep with the rising roar of the waves of the ocean below.

**FADE OUT.**

---

**FADE IN:**

**INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - PAROS - LATE EVENING**

The hallway is dimly lit, punctuated by pools of light from wall sconces. **SARAH** moves quietly down the corridor, her heels muffled on the carpet. She's changed from her travel clothes into something elegant—a black dress that transforms her from desperate wife to dangerous woman—her truest persona.

She stops outside Room 237, Michael's room. Her hand hovers over the door, trembling slightly. From inside, she can hear voices—Michael's laugh, then a woman's voice, intimate and low.

Sarah presses her ear to the door.

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

*(through the door, muffled, but teasingly)*

You're thinking about her again.

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

*(muffled)*

How can you tell?

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

You get this line between your eyebrows. Right here.

The sound of movement, intimate rustling.

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

I called her today. Extended the trip.

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

How did she take it?

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

Better than expected. Too well, maybe.

Sarah's face hardens at this—he has no idea how "well" she took it.

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

You sound disappointed.

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

I think I wanted her to fight for me. To demand I come home.

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

And if she had?

A long pause.

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

I don't know. I honestly don't know.

Sarah closes her eyes, processing this admission. Even now, even with Rebecca, he's hedging his bets. A man so dissolute that given the better of two evils, he cannot make a simple choice.

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

Poor Michael. Wanting to be pursued and yet wanting to be free.

She waves her hand outward in a flourish of extravagance, shaking her hair aside in practised irrelevance. Her mocking is more playful than desultory.

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

Is that...

Is that... what I'm doing?

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

*(matter-of-fact, and circumspect)*

You're doing what men always do. You want the woman you can't have while keeping the woman you can.

*Beat*

*(more authorial)*

Its escape velocity Michael...once you've left the gravitational field of one, you're in the pull of another. Men don't exist in the void...they don't do well.

Not like women do...

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

That's not fair.

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

Isn't it? Come on...we thrive! You've been married twelve years. When did you last surprise Sarah? When did you last make her feel like she was your choice rather than your obligation?

Sarah's breath catches. Rebecca's combativeness is revealing. Rebecca is defending her—or is she? The words feel both protective and manipulative.

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

You don't know her. She's... she's content. Settled. She doesn't want surprises. She's Asian...

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

*(an interrupting laugh that sounds almost cruel)*

Oh, Michael. You really don't know women at all, do you?

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

What do you mean?

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

Every woman wants to be surprised.

Fuck...really...Asian?

Really? You're half-Asian yourself Michael.

Every woman wants to be pursued. The fact that Sarah stopped asking for it doesn't mean she stopped wanting it.

Sarah leans against the wall, struck by the accuracy of Rebecca's words—and the intimate knowledge they imply.

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

You talk like you know her.

*Beat*

He looks around the room for something to hold, something to pacify him.

And anyway, if women always want to be pursued, why do they put so much effort in locking in the best man they can find as quickly as they can?

A pause that seems to stretch forever.

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

Michael, Michael, Michael. I know women like her. Intelligent, accomplished, slowly disappearing into the shadow of their husband's assumptions.

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

Sarah isn't disappearing. She's—

*Beat*

Assumptions?

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

*(interrupting)*

When did you last really look at her, Michael? Not glance at her over your laptop, not half-listen while she talks about her day. When did you last look at her and feel lucky?

The silence from inside the room is damning.

**REBECCA (O.S.) (CONT'D)**

She's probably sitting at home right now, wondering if she ever really mattered to you at all.

Outside, Sarah's eyes fill with tears—not just because Rebecca is right, but because Rebecca knows she's right.

**MICHAEL (O.S.)**

I do love her. Why does love have to be some ridiculous zero-sum game? Who made that fucking rule? Why can't I love her...and love you at the same time? And love someone else too...

**REBECCA (O.S.)**

*(In mock Texas-accent)*

Wait now...those are fightin' words. Who is this someone else you speak of?

*Beat*

Awh baby...I know you do. But love isn't enough, is it? Not for one, and not for two. Definitely not for three, you greedy, greedy bastard. Not when it comes without attention. Without curiosity. Without passion. That's why all those Mormon women are sad as. No woman in her right mind wants to be wife #6...not from the jump...not to some...

Man.

Sarah hears movement—footsteps approaching the door. She quickly moves away, pressing herself into an alcove near the elevator.

The door opens. Rebecca appears in a hotel robe, her hair tousled and adored. She looks directly at Sarah's hiding place—not searching, but knowing. The electrons dance in the air. Their eyes meet across the dimly lit corridor.

Rebecca's expression is unreadable. She could expose Sarah right now, could call out to Michael. Instead, she simply lifts her nose ever so slightly, almost imperceptible acknowledgment.

Then she closes the door.

Sarah stands frozen in the alcove, her heart pounding. That look—it wasn't surprise or hostility. It was recognition. As if Rebecca had been expecting her.

As if Rebecca had been waiting for her.

Sarah's phone buzzes. A text from an unknown number:

"Terrace. 20 minutes. We need to talk. - R"

Sarah stares at the message, her hands shaking.

She deletes the message and heads toward the elevator, but her reflection in the mirrored doors shows a woman who's just realized she might not be the hunter she thought she was.

**FADE OUT.**

---

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. HOTEL TERRACE - PAROS - LATE EVENING**

The wind off the sea toys with the linen draping the tables, each flicker aligned with **SARAH's** restless fingertips as she absently circles the rim of her wineglass. Cicadas hum in the garden below, their chorus swelling and ebbing like an anxious pulse.

**SARAH**, elegant in a light blue Balmain that seems drawn from the blue-black Aegean, sits almost submerged in the terrace's twilight. Across her lap, the iridescent reflection of harbour lights dances in unsteady patterns, as if the water itself inscribes her loneliness across her dress. Her Chanel slingbacks dangle over the stone steps, the gentle tap of her heel echoing faintly—the only human sound in an evening otherwise kept by wind and water.

Her phone rests face-down, inert and abandoned, as though an artifact from an alien world. She watches where the terrace surrenders to shadow, breathing in the salt and jasmine. The moon smudges everything silver.

Footsteps approach—their regularity softened by the ancient stones, in sync with **SARAH's** own heartbeat. **REBECCA** ascends from the darkness, every step summoned by the anticipation trembling in the breeze. Moonlight engraves her silhouette, catching on her cheek and the blue wetness in her eyes.

They meet—paused, suspended, as if the entire terrace, the shifting patterns of wind and moonlight, hold their breath. The sea's murmur rises, echoing what is neither spoken nor forgotten, nor even more will be forgotten, between them. They look at each other across the terrace for a long moment. The terrace wind swells. A napkin escapes and flutters past.

*Beat*

**REBECCA**

*(catching the napkin midair, setting it between them)*

Paros has a way of making you wait.

**SARAH**

Not for the wind.

She shrugs lightly, glancing at Sarah's untouched glass.

**REBECCA**

The wine's warm.

**SARAH**

So is the air.

*Beat*

Rebecca sets her bag down, its clasp echoing in the hush;  
Sarah drums the table, in time with the surf.

**REBECCA**

You wore blue.

**SARAH**

So did the sea. I borrowed it.

*Beat*

Rebecca studies Sarah, their eyes not meeting.

**REBECCA**

You don't look tired.

**SARAH**

I am.

Rebecca almost smiles. The wind plucks a strand of Sarah's  
hair; hardly a reaction.

**REBECCA**

You waited.

**SARAH**

Why didn't you call?

**REBECCA**

You never answer.

(Just the cicadas now.)

**SARAH**

No. I don't.

Sarah finally turns to look at Rebecca directly. The pain in her eyes is mixed with something else—longing, perhaps.

**SARAH**

How long have you been planning this?

**REBECCA**

*(with a slight smile)*

Since the moment you told me about Michael's conference in Greece. Since you showed me his photo, passed me the envelope, and said you were worried about losing him.

**SARAH**

*(bitter laugh)*

And you offered to help me understand what he might be going through. The psychology of a man in crisis.

**REBECCA**

I did help you understand. Just not in the way you expected.

Sarah pours wine into a second glass, slides it across to Rebecca.

**SARAH**

When did you decide to destroy him?

**REBECCA**

*(taking the wine)*

When I realized he'd never deserved you. When I understood that he looked at you every day and saw furniture instead of a woman.

**SARAH**

*(voice breaking slightly)*

He used to see me.

**REBECCA**

*(leaning forward)*

When? When did he last really see you, Sarah? When did he last make you feel like the most beautiful woman in the room?

Sarah's silence is answer enough.

**REBECCA** *(CONT'D)*

*(reaching across the table)*

When did he last touch you like he couldn't help himself? Like he'd die if he didn't have you?

**SARAH**

*(pulling her hand away)*

Stop.

**REBECCA**

*(relentless)*

When did he last look at you the way he looked at me tonight? You saw—I know you saw.

**SARAH**

*(standing abruptly)*

I said stop!

**REBECCA**

*(standing too)*

He never has, has he? Not even in the beginning. You were the appropriate choice. The safe choice. The choice that made sense.

**SARAH**

*(turning on her, angry)*

And what does that make you? The exciting choice? The dangerous choice?

**REBECCA**

*(stepping closer)*

No, Sarah. It makes me the weapon.

The words hang in the air between them. Sarah stares at Rebecca, understanding finally dawning.

**SARAH**

*(whisper)*

This was never about him.

**REBECCA**

*(almost touching her now)*

This was always about you.

**SARAH**

*(backing away)*

Rebecca...

**REBECCA**

You hired me to seduce your husband because you couldn't bear to do it yourself. Because leaving him would require admitting that twelve years of your life was a mistake.

**SARAH**

*(desperate)*

That's not... I never asked you to...

**REBECCA**

*(following her)*

You didn't have to ask. You handed me his photograph, told

me all his weaknesses, his secret desires, that he likes the scent of patchouli. You gave me his conference schedule, what time he caught the F train in the morning.

*Beat*

You...

You told me which hotel he was staying at in Paros.

**SARAH**

*(against the terrace railing)*

I was trying to save my marriage.

**REBECCA**

*(inches away now, carefully, loving, desirous)*

You were trying to end it without taking responsibility. And that's an entirely different kind of theatre.

Rebecca reaches up and touches Sarah's face. Sarah doesn't pull away.

**REBECCA** *(CONT'D)*

*(softly)*

The question is: now that it's ending, what do you want to do about it?

**SARAH**

*(looking into Rebecca's eyes, a difficult but comfortable resignation)*

I don't know.

**REBECCA**

*(leaning closer)*

Yes, you do.

They're about to kiss when—

Wind. Dry, but supple and comfortable. The terrace lights tremble. **SARAH** and **REBECCA**—poised on the boundary of something intimate—lean closer. The air is thick with what might happen.

A shadow knifes through the blue spill of moonlight. **MICHAEL'S** silhouette appears at the top of the steps, backlit, face unreadable—watching, for how long, no one knows.

Silence pulses. Sarah's gaze drops, but not with guilt—more calculation.

**MICHAEL**

*(voice soft, deliberate, feigning warmth)*

This is... a surprise.

**REBECCA**

*(smiles, crossing her legs, she owns the moment)*

Paros is full of them.

**SARAH**

*(studying Michael, measured)*

You're early.

**MICHAEL**

I thought I'd find you alone.

A cicada falls silent. Rebecca taps the back of her phone—a practiced rhythm breaking the hush.

**REBECCA**

*(polite, falsely so)*

Should we pretend you have?

Michael doesn't bite. A current passes between all three. No sudden outbursts, only unspoken negotiations, postures which are both defensive, and attack.

**MICHAEL**

*(to Rebecca, a trace of threat under velvet)*

It's Rebecca, isn't it?

**REBECCA**

*(tilting her head)*

In some cities.

**SARAH**

*(to Michael, quietly)*

We met in Athens.

**MICHAEL**

Did you.

Rebecca picks up Sarah's wineglass, considers the lipstick print, then raises it—a silent toast.

**REBECCA**

Some encounters change your whole itinerary.

Sarah watches the glass, not Rebecca.

**MICHAEL**

*(softly, measured—playing for information)*

That explains why you never called.

Rebecca laughs, the sound small and edged.

**REBECCA**

Or maybe she did.

A gust flares the candle—momentary darkness.

**MICHAEL**

*(sits, acting the gracious host, but his eyes cold)*

Let's not pretend to be strangers.

Rebecca leans forward, elbows on the table, intrusion wrapped in glamour.

**REBECCA**

*(whisper)*

Who's pretending?

Long silence. The wind, for a moment, does all the speaking. Each watches the other, triangulating desire, fear, history.

**SARAH**

*(not to either, almost to herself)*

Maybe it's the island. Or maybe just tonight.

**MICHAEL**

Drink?

Rebecca takes the poured glass. No one drinks.

**FADE OUT.**

---

**FADE IN.**

**EXT. HOTEL TERRACE - CONTINUOUS**

The storm builds itself from nothing—first a whisper of wind through the cypress trees, then the slow strangulation of starlight as clouds gather like dark water overhead. Candle flames bow and dance in their glass prisons. White tablecloths snap taut against their moorings, desperate as sails wanting to change course.

**SARAH** paces near the stone balustrade, her movement restless as the weather itself. The wind catches her voice mid-sentence, swallows half her words before they can land. She laughs too brightly—the sound thin and breakable in the charged air.

**MICHAEL** stands deeper under the awning, untouched by the gathering chaos. His posture suggests a man waiting for a train that may never come; Hemingway's prototype, drinking anis del Toro, hoping for Madrid, soon. Patient. Removed. Almost bored.

**MICHAEL**

*(to Sarah)*

How long have you been here?

**SARAH**

*(laughing, but there's something frayed at the edges)*

So now it's madness? I catch a train, I fuck up your-your itinerary-

She moves deliberately into the open air as lightning flickers soundless on the horizon. Her dress catches the wind like a flag of surrender. The gesture feels performed, and she knows it.

Michael doesn't move. He tilts his head skyward, watching clouds wheel overhead like vultures.

**MICHAEL**

*(clearly unimpressed)*

And you just... ran into Rebecca?

**SARAH**

*(glancing slowly at Rebecca, uncertainty creeping in)*

Not exactly.

**MICHAEL**

*(patient, methodical)*

Just weather. Just the random chaos of-

A cloth napkin slaps across his shoe. He doesn't react.

**MICHAEL** *(CONT'D)*

Drama's always been your style.

Rebecca emerges from the shadows, silent, arms folded across her chest. The wind seems to part around her—as if even the storm recognizes something immutable in her stillness. She positions herself at the centre of the terrace, an eye of calm in the gathering tempest.

**REBECCA**

She hired me, Michael.

*Beat.*

Thunder rolls distant as a sleeping giant.

At least the storm believes in itself.

Sarah's intake of breath is sharp—half outrage, half recognition. Michael processes the word "hired" with the methodical precision of a man defusing a bomb, desperate that the wires aren't crossed.

**SARAH**

Oh, don't flatter yourself.

**MICHAEL**

She doesn't need flattery, Sarah.

His attention fixes on Rebecca like a laser.

**MICHAEL** (CONT'D)

*(building)*

Hired you? Hired you for what?

**REBECCA**

*(with the slightest smile)*

To seduce you.

The words hit like physical blows. Michael's mouth opens, closes, opens again—a fish gasping on dry land. He looks between them as if they're speaking in code.

**MICHAEL**  
*(finally)*

What?

*Beat*

His voice grows dangerous.

You're not swept up in this. You ARE this.

*Beat*

Lightning strobes his face.

God help anyone who thinks they can survive you, Rebecca. Thunder cracks overhead. Cutlery rattles on abandoned tables. Sarah flinches. Rebecca doesn't move.

**REBECCA**  
*(appreciating the drama)*

They shouldn't come without an umbrella.

Michael checks his watch—an IWC Pilot that gleams like a talisman from another life. The gesture is reflexive, meaningless. Time has become elastic here.

**SARAH**  
*(quietly)*

It's true.

**MICHAEL**  
*(standing)*

That's—that's insane. Why would you—

**SARAH**

*(looking up at him)*

Because I needed to know.

**MICHAEL**

Know what?

**SARAH**

Whether you still loved me. Whether our marriage meant anything.

**MICHAEL**

*(to Rebecca)*

I came to—

He laughs, the sound bitter as burned coffee.

After your display last night, I came to bring you home.

*Beat*

He gestures at the storm, at Sarah, at the wreckage of everything.

But as you can see... there's nothing left to salvage. He steps into the wind, lets it slap him full in the face, then walks away with mechanical precision. The storm rushes to fill the space he leaves behind.

Rebecca reaches for Sarah's abandoned wine glass, empties it with surgical quiet.

**REBECCA**

Mich—

**MICHAEL**

*(whirling back, interrupting)*

This is crazy. This is completely, categorically insane.

**SARAH**

*(standing to face him)*

Is it? You've been pulling away for months, Michael.

Coming home late, distracted—

**MICHAEL**

So you decided to test me?

**SARAH**

I decided to find out the truth.

**MICHAEL**

*(laughing bitterly)*

The truth? What truth? That I could be seduced by a beautiful woman? That I'm human?

**REBECCA**

*(interrupting)*

Actually, Michael, you might want to sit down for this part.

**MICHAEL**

What part? What fucking part, Rebecca?

**REBECCA**

*(looking at Sarah, a strange delight crosses her lips)*

The part where we tell you this isn't the first time we've met.

Michael's face drains of colour. He sinks into a chair as if the weight of understanding has become physical. The storm overhead mirrors the chaos in his mind.

**MICHAEL**

What do you mean?

**SARAH**

*(taking a breath)*

Rebecca and I... we've been involved...

For over a year.

The silence stretches like a held note, a tone that goes sharp, then goes flat. Michael looks between them as if they're speaking in tongues, a coherent pitch eluding them, eluding him.

**MICHAEL**

Involved how?

**REBECCA**

*(matter-of-factly)*

We're lovers, Michael.

**MICHAEL**

*(whisper)*

What?

**SARAH**

*(quickly)*

It started as research. For her work. She's writing about modern marriage, about—

**REBECCA**

*(cutting her off)*

It started as research. It became something else.

**MICHAEL**

*(to Sarah, mockingly incredulous)*

You're having an affair.

*Beat*

With her.

**SARAH**

Yes.

**MICHAEL**

For a year.

**SARAH**

Fourteen months.

**MICHAEL**

*(standing, voice rising)*

Wait—Sarah Chen, born in White Plains, daughter of Jia Wei Tan and Alicé Gallo—you're having an affair with her? And this thing in Greece was what? Some elaborate revenge planned last year?

**REBECCA**

Revenge is such an ugly word.

**MICHAEL**

*(turning on her)*

What would you call it?

**REBECCA**

Justice.

*Beat*

Her voice becomes almost philosophical.

One man leaves. The rest, eventually—they all crawl back.

**MICHAEL**

*(to Rebecca)*

Fuck you—crawling?

*(to Sarah)*

You orchestrated this entire thing. You sent her to seduce me so you could what? Feel better about cheating?

**SARAH**

*(defensive)*

You were already gone, Michael. Emotionally, you checked out months ago.

**MICHAEL**

So you decided to destroy what was left?

**SARAH**

I decided to find out if there was anything left to destroy.

**REBECCA**

*(standing, triumphant, or bored, her face elusive)*

And now we know.

**MICHAEL**

*(to Rebecca, but looking at Sarah)*

You played me. Everything we shared, everything I felt—

**REBECCA**

What you felt was real, Michael. I made sure of that.

**MICHAEL**

*(bitter)*

How incredibly generous of you.

**REBECCA**

*(moving closer)*

You fell in love with an idea of me. A fantasy. Someone who saw you as fascinating, brilliant, worthy of devotion.

**MICHAEL**

And you? What did you see?

**REBECCA**

*(with devastating honesty)*

A man so narcissistic he couldn't see his wife disappearing right in front of him.

**MICHAEL**

*(to Sarah)*

Is that what this is about? Getting back at me?

*(to Rebecca, perfect in his logic)*

Maybe you should consider a wife so narcissistic her husband disappeared right in front of her. You've known me two weeks and you hate me enough to destroy me with this—this card trick?

**SARAH**

*(sadly)*

No, Michael. It's about finally admitting that we're strangers who happen to share a mortgage.

The truth settles like dust after an explosion, the vacuum of silence, the harshness of white light. Michael sinks back into his chair.

**MICHAEL**

*(quietly)*

Fine...

He checks his watch again—a reflex from another life.

Fine.

What happens now?

**REBECCA**

Now you get to decide what kind of man you want to be.

**MICHAEL**

Meaning?

**REBECCA**

Meaning you can rage and blame and play the victim. Or you can acknowledge that this marriage has been over for a long time, and all we did was make it official.

**MICHAEL**

*(his annoyance building)*

What are YOU doing inside this marriage? What is any of this to you?

**SARAH**

*(to Michael, desperate)*

I loved you. I really did. But somewhere along the way, you stopped seeing me as a person and started seeing me as a role. The wife. The appropriate choice.

**MICHAEL**

That's not true.

**SARAH**

When's the last time you asked me what I was thinking? What I wanted? When's the last time you looked at me and felt grateful?

His silence is damning.

**SARAH** (*CONT'D*)  
(*to Rebecca*)

Show him.

**REBECCA**

Sarah... no.

**SARAH**

Show him what he never bothered to see.

The power dynamic shifts like wind changing direction, and the momentary fury of sails adjusting apace. Rebecca moves to Sarah, takes her face in her hands—fingers threading through hair, anchoring at the nape of her neck, fingertips pulsing at the occipital nerve. The kiss that follows is passionate, intimate, possessive in a way that makes Michael's affair look like amateur theatre.

When they part, Sarah is crying.

**SARAH** (*CONT'D*)  
(*to Michael*)

That's what love looks like. That's what I've been missing.

The three remain in delicate orbit, the aftermath of argument thick as steam. The rain has not quenched the heat; it beads on skin, drips from the limp petals of overwatered bougainvillea. The storm has washed the world clean—but the slate feels anything but.

Rebecca, Sarah, and Michael take their marks in silence, divided by drenched white linen. Sarah's dress clings to her, hair tangled. Michael's shoes are muddy, his composure threadbare but not broken. Rebecca alone seems untouched, rain jewel-like on her lashes.

Candles gutter in the wind, flames struggling.

Somewhere farther down the coast, thunder mutters—a warning that distance means nothing.

Rebecca finally sets down her empty glass with surgical precision. Her eyes flick between the others: Sarah's bitterness, Michael's wounded pride. Her smile is the most dangerous thing in the room—soft, inscrutable.

#### **REBECCA**

You know what they say about a storm. The first is just a rehearsal.

**SARAH** gathers her shawl, trembling as if chilled, or bracing. **MICHAEL**, for a split second, looks over his shoulder—down the dark sloping road, away from the light. No one speaks of forgiveness, or future. Even the past seems futile.

Behind them, from a forgotten radio somewhere, a single unmistakable note—a siren's wail—curls up with the cigarette smoke, plaintive and full of dread.

A bolt of lightning splits the horizon, closer this time. The power falters—the terrace lights flicker, then hold.

The camera **TRACKS** backward: the three caught in tableau, frozen under the uneasy florescence, as the renewed downpour sheets across the glass, blurring their outlines together before the world is wiped blank.

#### **FADE OUT.**

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#### **INT. SARAH'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

A modest room, spare as a monk's cell compared to Michael's suite. Whitewashed walls hold the weight of lamplight like cupped hands. Sarah sits on the narrow bed, still in her black dress—a woman shipwrecked on her own choices. The wedding ring catches what little light there is, spinning it into small, accusatory prisms.

Hours have passed since the terrace revelation, but time moves differently here, viscous as honey in winter. A soft knock. Three taps, then silence.

**SARAH**

*(without looking up)*

Come in. It's open.

Rebecca enters like smoke through water—jeans and white t-shirt, chestnut hair pulled high in a ponytail that somehow makes her look both younger and more dangerous.

She carries wine and glasses like offerings to a shrine.

**REBECCA**

I thought you might need this.

**SARAH**

*(still studying her ring)*

I keep thinking he's going to call. Or text. Something—

**REBECCA**

*(setting down the wine)*

Would you want him—

**SARAH**

I don't know. Is that terrible? That I don't—

**REBECCA**

It's human.

Rebecca settles beside her on the bed, close enough to feel the heat of her skin but not touching. The space between them charges with possibility and regret.

**SARAH**

I hurt him tonight. Really hurt him. How can I do that to

someone I—someone I loved? Love? Fuck, I don't even know  
my own—

**REBECCA**

He hurt you first. For years.

**SARAH**

*(turning, fury rising)*

Did he? Or did I just tell myself that to justify—

**REBECCA**

*(studying her face)*

Are you having second thoughts?

**SARAH**

I'm having all the thoughts. First, second, third—it's a  
goddamned baseball game over here?

Her mind wanders somewhere else.

Odysseus hearing the sirens? Only I tied myself to the  
mast.

*Beat*

She stands, begins pacing.

What if he's right? What if this was all just elaborate  
revenge? What if I hired you because I was too much of a  
coward to—

**REBECCA**

*(pouring wine)*

Is that what you think happened?

**SARAH**

*(stopping mid-stride)*

I don't know what I think anymore. A year ago, I thought I

had a marriage worth saving. Six months ago, I thought I was conducting an experiment. Tonight—

She pauses, as if the words might break something.

Tonight, I'm wondering if I'm just another woman you've seduced.

Rebecca goes very still. The word 'another' hangs in the air like incense.

**REBECCA**

Woah...not fair. What do you mean?

**SARAH**

*(turning to face her)*

I mean you're very good at this. At knowing exactly what people need to hear. At becoming exactly what they need you to be. Like a—like those Byzantine mosaics in Ravenna, you know? Beautiful from far away, but up close it's just tiny pieces of—

*Beat*

Who are you? Really?

**REBECCA**

*(standing)*

Sarah... that's not fair—that's really not fair.

**SARAH**

*(overlapping)*

With Michael, you became this sensual fantasy, made real. The passionate intellectual beauty who saw his brilliance, his—

*Beat*

..his wounded nobility or whatever. With me, you became the understanding lover who saw my pain, my—

She breaks off, voice cracking.

God damn you, Rebecca. There's something about you that's  
like—like those..

Beautiful, but everything inside is gone.

**REBECCA**

Those weren't performances.

**SARAH**

*(moving closer)*

Weren't they? How would I know the—

**REBECCA**

Because you know me.

**SARAH**

Do I? I know you're a writer. I know you're beautiful. I  
know you're incredibly skilled at reading people and then—  
then giving them exactly what they want. Like some kind of  
emotional—

**REBECCA**

*(voice rising)*

I fell in love with you, Sarah.

**SARAH**

*(quietly)*

Did you? Or did you fall in love with the idea of me? With  
the challenge I represented? This crazy pantomime I  
imagined?

Rebecca's composure cracks like ice in spring.

**REBECCA**

That's not—what does that even mean? We're talking  
symbolism now? This is undergraduate—

**SARAH**

*(stepping closer)*

Fair? Nothing about this has been fair. Not to Michael,  
not to—

**REBECCA**

Michael got exactly what he deserved.

**SARAH**

*(with acid sarcasm)*

Maybe more than he deserved.

*Beat*

And what did I get?

**REBECCA**

*(after a pause, confidence returning)*

What do you think you got?

**SARAH**

I think I got played. By an expert.

The accusation settles between them like dust after an explosion. Rebecca's mask slips—just for a moment—revealing something colder underneath.

**REBECCA**

*(controlled, but petulant)*

If that's what you believe, then maybe you should go back  
to Michael.

**SARAH**

Maybe I should.

**REBECCA**

*(moving toward the door)*

Then do it.

**SARAH**

*(calling after her)*

Just like that? You're walking away? Like some—some  
Byzantine empress who doesn't get everything tied up in  
silk and—

*Beat*

Like a coward?

**REBECCA**

*(turning back)*

What do you want me to do, Sarah? Beg? Crawl across this  
floor and—

**SARAH**

Yes.

The word drops like a stone in still water.

**REBECCA**

*(stepping closer)*

Why? So, you can have the satisfaction of rejecting me?  
So, you can feel like you had some power in—

**SARAH**

*(desperate)*

So I can know if anything between us was real.

Rebecca moves close enough to touch Sarah's face, her finger  
tracing the jawline like a cartographer mapping new  
territory.

**REBECCA**

*(softly)*

When I touch you like this, what do you feel?

**SARAH**

*(closing her eyes)*

Like I'm drowning.

**REBECCA**

*(leaning closer)*

In a good way or—

**SARAH**

*(opening her eyes)*

How can drowning ever be good? Like those sailors who saw  
the rocks but sailed toward them anyway because the song  
was so—

Her voice breaks.

I can't breathe, but I don't care.  
Rebecca kisses her then, soft and deep as prayer. When they  
part, Sarah is crying.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

I can't tell if you love me or if you're just very good at  
pretending to love me.

**REBECCA**

*(wiping Sarah's tears)*

Does it matter?

**SARAH**

*(shocked)*

Of course it matters. It, it—

**REBECCA**

*(with devastating honesty)*

Why? You feel loved when you're with me. You feel chosen, desired, valued. Isn't that—

**SARAH**

Not if it's not real.

**REBECCA**

*(pulling away)*

What's real, Sarah? Your marriage to Michael? That was real, and it made you—

**SARAH**

*(following her)*

This is different.

**REBECCA**

*(turning back)*

Is it? Or is it just a different kind of arrangement? One where you get to feel like the heroine instead of—

**SARAH**

You're manipulating me right now.

**REBECCA**

*(with a slight smile)*

Maybe. Does that make you want to leave?

Sarah stares at her, and the terrible truth is written on her face—no, it doesn't. If anything, it makes Rebecca more fascinating, like staring into an abyss that stares back.

**REBECCA (CONT'D)**

*(moving closer)*

I'm offering you a life where you're the centre of someone's attention. Where you're desired, pursued—

**SARAH**

*(whisper)*

Cherished?

**REBECCA**

Do you really care if I had to learn how to love you?

**SARAH**

*(whisper)*

Had to learn?

**REBECCA**

*(touching her face)*

Love is a skill, Sarah.

*Beat*

Like writing, like—like medieval scribes copying manuscripts. Some people are naturally gifted; others have to practice. I've gotten very good at it.

**SARAH**

*(backing away)*

You're scaring me.

**REBECCA**

*(following)*

Good. Fear means you're awake. When's the last time Michael scared you? When's the last time he made you feel anything that—

**SARAH**

*(sitting heavily on the bed)*

I don't know what's real anymore.

**REBECCA**

*(sitting beside her)*

This is real. Right now. The way you feel when I touch you. The way you—

**SARAH**

But is it love?

**REBECCA**

*(after a long pause)*

It's the closest thing to love I've ever felt.

The admission is raw, unguarded—perhaps the first completely honest thing she's said. The room seems to hold its breath.

**SARAH**

*(looking at her)*

What does that mean?

Rainwater clings to the olive branches, caught in pale grey dawn. All is new-washed, yet battered: petals scattered, chairs overturned, the aftermath palpable. The air hums with the memory of the storm.

**REBECCA** and **SARAH** sit inside the circle of lamplight, faces drawn, eyes distant. Tea steams, forgotten, the cup between them clouded with fingerprints.

**REBECCA**

*(softly, not looking at Sarah)*

It's strange how much you can know about someone. And how little, at the same time.

Sarah's gaze drifts to the terrace glass, watching rivulets trace slow patterns—never a straight line.

**SARAH**

We didn't really see him, did we?

Rebecca's lips quirk—a trace of the old slyness, now dulled. They both see the wreckage, for the first time.

**REBECCA**

He always left a window open. Took pieces, hid the rest. I tried to map the shape of him from what was missing.

A gust rattles the terrace doors; they both flinch, unconsciously drawing closer.

**SARAH**

And us?

**REBECCA**

*(nearly a whisper)*

We're here. The only proof I have is the sound of your breath.

She reaches, fingers grazing Sarah's hand; the touch is tentative—no certainty, just longing.

**SARAH**

When do you stop waiting for the next storm?

Rebecca folds her hands, rainwater glistening on her wrist like a vein.

**REBECCA**

You don't. You just learn the shape of shelter.

A silence. It's not peace, not quite.

Sarah rises, the chair legs scraping—a reminder that departure is never graceful.

**SARAH**

*(quiet, almost to herself)*

Maybe this is how we love people—by returning to what survives after everything else.

Rebecca's hand lingers where Sarah was, palm open, wanting.

Sarah passes through the door—pausing, she looks back. Her eyes catch the first sunlight skipping on the wet stones, a promise, or an omen.

The terrace is empty again except for Rebecca, who stands in ruined light—surrounded by the spectre of memory, the ghost of Michael, the scent of rain on stone.

**CAMERA PULLS BACK:**

The two women, now in separate spaces—each framed by opposing doors—reflections twisted and beautiful in the rain-laced glass. The landscape holds its secrets. Nothing resolved, but everything changed.

**FADE OUT.**

---

**INT. MICHAEL'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

The room has contracted around him, walls drawing closer like the slow breath of something dying. What once felt expansive now reveals itself as merely borrowed space—a stage set waiting to be struck. The harbour lights through the window fracture against glass, scattered like the remnants of conversations never finished.

**MICHAEL** sits on the bed's edge, wedding ring catching lamplight in small, accusatory flashes. The metal has grown warm from his turning it, turning it, as if the motion might wind back time itself.

A soft knock. Three measured taps, then silence thick as held breath.

**MICHAEL**

It's open.

Sarah enters—not the desperate woman from the airport, not the broken figure from the terrace, but something else entirely. She moves with the careful grace of someone who has learned to carry transformation like water in cupped hands, afraid to spill a single drop.

**SARAH**

Can we talk?

**MICHAEL**

*(not looking up)*

I don't know what there is to—

**SARAH**

*(settling across from him)*

I'm sorry.

The words fall between them like stones into still water.

**MICHAEL**

For which part?

**SARAH**

For the deception. For letting it go this far. For—  
She pauses, as if testing the weight of the next words.  
For hurting you.

**MICHAEL**

*(finally looking up)*

Are you? Sorry for hurting me?

She considers this with the thoroughness of someone examining evidence of their own metamorphosis.

**SARAH**

I'm sorry that it had to hurt. But I'm not sorry it happened.

**MICHAEL**

Because it proved what you wanted to prove?

**SARAH**

Because it freed us both.

Michael rises, moves to the window where the harbour spreads below like a map of all the places they'll never go together. Fishing boats nod at their moorings, patient as sleeping animals.

**MICHAEL**

I fell in love with her.

**SARAH**

I know.

**MICHAEL**

I was ready to leave you for her.

**SARAH**

I know that too.

The acknowledgment carries no weight of surprise, only the dull recognition of the inevitable.

**MICHAEL**

*(turning back)*

Doesn't that bother you?

**SARAH**

*(after a moment, her voice carrying something like wonder at her own calm)*

Yes. But not for the reasons you think.

**MICHAEL**

What reasons?

**SARAH**

It bothers me that you could fall so completely for someone you'd known for a week, when you couldn't be bothered to fall in love with me again after twelve years.

The observation settles over them like ash after a fire.

**SARAH** (*CONT'D*)

It bothers me that you saw her as mysterious and fascinating, when I was sitting right there, full of mysteries you never thought to-

She stops, as if surprised by her own eloquence.

**MICHAEL**

(*defensive*)

I did love you.

**SARAH**

You loved the idea of me. The institution of me. But you stopped being curious about the actual me-

*Beat*

A long time ago.

**MICHAEL**

And Rebecca? She's curious about you?

**SARAH**

(*with something that might be a smile*)

She sees me, Michael. Really sees me. When I'm with her, I remember who I am when I'm not being your—

She doesn't finish. The word 'wife' hangs unspoken but understood.

**MICHAEL**

*(sitting back down)*

So what now? You leave me for her?

**SARAH**

I don't know. Maybe. Does it matter?

**MICHAEL**

Of course it matters.

**SARAH**

Why? Because it's embarrassing? Because people will—

**MICHAEL**

Because we're married. Because we made promises.

**SARAH**

*(standing, something crystallizing in her voice)*

We made promises to love and honour each other. When's the last time you felt honoured by me? When's the last time I felt loved by you?

Michael has no answer. The silence stretches like a held note.

**SARAH (CONT'D)**

We've been keeping each other prisoner, Michael. Comfortable, respectable prisoners. Like those birds in the taverna—caged but singing anyway, pretending the bars aren't there.

She moves toward the door, then stops, her hand hovering over the handle as if it might burn her.

**SARAH** (*CONT'D*)

I'll file the papers when I get back to New York. We can work out the details through—

**MICHAEL**

(*standing*)

Sarah, wait.

She turns back, and for a moment the lamplight catches something in her eyes—not regret exactly, but a kind of quiet mourning for the woman she used to be.

**MICHAEL** (*CONT'D*)

I did love you. I do love you.

**SARAH**

(*sadly*)

I know. But not enough. Not the way either of us deserves to be loved.

**MICHAEL**

We could try again. Counselling, therapy—

**SARAH**

(*shaking her head*)

We can't unknow what we know now. We can't unfeel what we've felt with other people.

**MICHAEL**

So that's it? Twelve years, and we just... walk away?

**SARAH**

(*at the door*)

We walked away from each other years ago, Michael. We just never made it official.

She pauses, her hand on the doorknob, as if the brass might hold answers.

**SARAH** (*CONT'D*)

For what it's worth, she really did fall for you too. The way she looks at you... that's not acting.

**MICHAEL**

But?

**SARAH**

But she loves me more.

Sarah opens the door, and Rebecca materializes from the hallway shadows like smoke given form. Two suitcases—her silver Rimowa, Sarah's weathered Louis Vuitton, with a strap emblazoned with 'Cancún' holding it together like a half-remembered prayer—wait beside her like loyal dogs. She stands with the imperial bearing of someone who has orchestrated a perfect campaign and now surveys the conquered territory.

**REBECCA**

(*to Michael*)

The last ferry leaves at nine.

**MICHAEL**

I know.

*Beat*

You're both leaving?

**SARAH**

We're going to Paris. Rebecca has a flat there. St. Germain—you'd love it, actually.

**MICHAEL**

*(to Rebecca)*

Of course you do.

*Beat*

And your book? The one you're supposedly writing?

**REBECCA**

*(smiling with the satisfaction of a chess master announcing checkmate)*

It's finished. This was the final chapter.

**MICHAEL**

About modern marriage and infidelity?

**REBECCA**

About love. And the courage it takes to claim it.

Sarah takes Rebecca's hand—the gesture natural as breathing, intimate as prayer. But there's something in Sarah's grip, a slight tremor that speaks of Cortez burning his ships in Mexico, territories crossed from which there may be no return.

**SARAH**

*(to Michael)*

Goodbye, Michael.

**MICHAEL**

Sarah...

But they're already moving away, their footsteps echoing down the hallway like a countdown to some inevitable

conclusion. At the elevator, Rebecca says something that makes Sarah laugh—really laugh, with her whole body—but even Michael can see it's the kind of laughter that carries an undertone of disbelief, as if she's surprising herself with each sound.

The elevator doors close with the finality of curtains falling.

**INT. MICHAEL'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Michael returns to his room, closing the door behind him, with a soft click. The space seems to exhale around him, — air, dust, memory — rising and settling again, releasing him from its hold. He sits on the bed and picks up his phone, finger hovering over Sarah's number like a man standing at the edge of a cliff, testing the wind. He throws the phone onto the bed.

Michael stands still for a moment, eyes tracing the half-folded shirts, the faint smell of rain through the open window. Somewhere outside, the harbour murmurs to itself, the tide finding its way in the dark.

He sits on the bed, phone in hand.

A breath. Then another.

On the screen: **SARAH.**

His thumb hovers, again — a hesitation that lasts long enough to mean something. He scrolls back.

He scrolls up. **MOM.**

He pauses. The **CAMERA** catches this nuance. A flicker of tenderness, maybe guilt. Then, quietly, he keeps scrolling, upwards again.

**MARCUS.**

The name glows against the dim light of the room.

He taps call.

A few rings.

**MARCUS (V.O.)**

*(soft, intimate)*

Mikey! Hey, babe. I missed you. I guess you've had a time over there, yeah?

*Beat*

How'd it go?

Never mind that...when are you coming home?

Michael exhales – the released breath trembles at the edges. His shoulders slip down an inch. He closes his eyes. His free hand grazes the bedsheet beside him – a small, unconscious search for presence.

Outside, the harbour continues speaking to itself. The tide rolls, unhurried, inevitable. The blues and cyans move to their iridescent tones, dark, but quiet.

Michael opens his eyes again. The faintest smile forms – not declaration, not relief – just recognition.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**THE END.**