

OVER BLACK.

Click.

The beginnings of *I Don't Want To Set The World On Fire* by The Ink Spots begins to play through tinny speakers.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

We open on the bare back of a YOUNG WOMAN. She wears no clothes. Her hair is long and limp. We can't see her face.

She stands in front of a blank wall and seems to be staring at it with great interest.

The room is cold, lit by fluorescents that give off a blue-ish tinge. It doesn't look dark, but it feels dark. Like a freezer aisle lit while the store's closed.

There are metal gurneys pressed up to the edges of the room. Empty but waiting.

Sets of speakers are set up in the corners of the ceiling, letting the music hack it's way through.

Her fingers twitch against her thighs, tapping slightly off beat.

The camera pushes in closer and we start to hear her muttering along with the song in a cracking voice.

YOUNG WOMAN

(singing)

... lost all ambition of... I just
wanna be the one you love... the
one you love...

The music screeches to a stop.

Through the speakers, a static filled VOICE pours through.

VOICE (V.O.)

Can you hear me?

Young Woman's head twitches to the side.

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes.

VOICE (V.O.)

Can you tell me your name?

YOUNG WOMAN
It's so dark in here.

VOICE (V.O.)
Answer the question.

YOUNG WOMAN
It's so dark.

Her hands move to her face, feeling around. We still can't see it.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
Where are my eyes?

The voice sighs, irritated. Like the young woman is an irksome child.

VOICE (V.O.)
Please note that she is not responsive.

The woman's hands cover her ears.

YOUNG WOMAN
I want my dad.

VOICE (V.O.)
Hm.

Woman curls up one of her hands into a fist and starts hitting herself in the side of the head.

YOUNG WOMAN
I can't see I can't see I can't- I want- I want my-

VOICE (V.O.)
Stop that.

She stands up, continuing to hit herself. She starts slamming her head into the wall in front of her.

YOUNG WOMAN
Wrong and wrong and wrong-

VOICE (V.O.)
I said stop!

She starts to scream like a goat being led to slaughter.

With her hands curled into her hair, she slams her face hard into the concrete wall.

SPLAT!

Black blood spews out of her crushed head. Her body slumps down, twitching a bit before it finally gives out. Dead.

The voice sighs, annoyed.

VOICE (V.O.)
Okay. We'll try again.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

MARGARET "MICKEY" SUMMERS (21), a college student with razor sharp eyes and a sardonic drawl in her voice. Her hair is cut short and messy. But her makeup is artsy, smudged, and suggests she cares a little more about her presentation than she lets on.

She wears a threadbare shirt advertising *Scream II* and loose fitting jeans.

Her legs dangle over the edge of a balcony attached to a modest but cozy suburban home.

She's leaning against the safety bars, eating Indian food out of a takeout container.

MARGARET
This place is a grave.

Sitting beside her is LEVI SHADID (18), lanky with a shock of loose black curls and a permanent chip on their shoulder. Less of a chip, more like a rock. Pebble on a good day.

They wear patchwork pants and an ugly patterned button up. Their takeout sits beside them.

LEVI
You just figured that out?

She poked them hard in the stomach. Levi lets out a pained huff.

LEVI (CONT'D)
Why was that necessary?

Without missing a beat, she kicks him in the ankle.

LEVI (CONT'D)
Ow! Mickey!

MARGARET
Sit up, dipshit.

LEVI
No.

MARGARET
Yes.

He sits up.

LEVI
Screw you. What's with the
philosophy?

She looks to the city before them.

Sprawled out before her is the outskirts of SILICON VALLEY suburbs. While technology has integrated itself into everyday life, there's something nostalgic about the area. Think Cupertino back when Steve Jobs worked out of his garage.

Out on the horizon are the lights of the tech hub city centers, too close to be considered completely separate but too far to feel easily accessible.

MARGARET
I have something to show you.

LEVI
That much was clear.

MARGARET
Fine. Maybe I won't tell you.

LEVI
Then what was the point of the
assault and battery?

MARGARET
It was battery at best.

LEVI
What about the wounds to my soul?

MARGARET
Wow, Levi. You should be a
philosophy major.

LEVI
It's about as useless as film, so
why not? Can I mooch off your
doodle money?

MARGARET
Graphic novels?

LEVI

Yeah. Those.

Margaret shoves them in the shoulder.

MARGARET

Haven't sold 'em yet.

LEVI

Again with the battery!

MARGARET

Whatever. You wanna see something top secret?

Levi's eyes brighten up.

LEVI

Always. Gimme.

Tapping her hands excitedly, Margaret scoots back and rolls up her right pant leg.

Levi sits cross legged and faces her.

She pulls up her pantleg, removes her shoe and takes off her sock, printed with little cartoon robots, to reveal a tattoo of a spider lily above her ankle.

LEVI (CONT'D)

Sick.

Margaret looks at him earnestly.

MARGARET

You like it? You can't lie to me.

LEVI

I'm not lying.

MARGARET

I'll push you off this balcony if you are.

LEVI

Scouts honor. Love the detail work. Looks just like your sketches.

Margaret smiles, tugging her pant back down.

MARGARET

I've been thinking of doing this a bit. Tattoos. Y'know, for some income.

LEVI
Can I be your first customer?

Margaret hisses through her teeth with a smile.

MARGARET
Too late on that one, bud.

LEVI
What? You did illegal tattooing?
Like some sort of criminal? I'm
appalled.

The two snort and giggle.

MARGARET
You'll be my first licensed tattoo.
Deal?

LEVI
Fine. I'll settle for second place.

Margaret yanks on a clump of his hair. He yanks a clump of hers. They start smacking each other around while laughing.

Margaret's phone vibrates behind her. She picks it up and reads a text, batting away Levi's hands.

MARGARET
Hey- truce. Truce.

Levi flops onto his back with a sigh. He starts shoving samosas into his mouth as he stares up at the sky.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Shit. I gotta go.

LEVI
What? Come on.

MARGARET
What can I say? I'm a woman in
demand.

LEVI
You gonna tell me where you're
going?
(silence)
No? Typical.

Margaret gets up on her feet and grabs her takeout and discarded shoe. She nudges Levi's shoulder with her foot.

MARGARET

How am I supposed to keep up my mysterious allure if I tell you what I'm up to?

Levi gives a mock flourish with his hand.

LEVI

Of course, oh great one.

Margaret turns away with a skip.

Levi looks down to see she's forgotten her sock. He picks it up, scoffing before throwing it over the edge of the balcony.

LEVI (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Moron.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Margaret leans against her car, impatiently going through her phone.

MARGARET

Come on...

Music pours out of the office building, muffled by the windows. Classic dad rock.

JOEL (O.S.)

Hey!

Margaret looks up and pockets her phone.

We see JOEL SUMMERS (late 40s), looking out of place in his ill fitting button up and slacks. A Timothy Oliphant type. Margaret's father.

MARGARET

Finally dragged yourself away from the snack bar?

He squints at Margaret, unimpressed.

JOEL

You're here to give me a ride. Not act like a dick.

MARGARET

You can't tell me you weren't scrounging around for free rich people food.

JOEL

And here I was, about to offer you
a whole zip lock bag full of stolen
sausage thingies.

Margaret perks up.

MARGARET

Sausage thingies?

Joel pulls out a zip lock full of pigs in a blanket from his
pocket conspiratorially.

JOEL

I've got about three of these in my
backpack for when we head home.
Plus some of those coffee cake
things that just taste like
chocolate.

MARGARET

You just got bumped up to first
place on the best dad list.

JOEL

Shouldn't I already be first?

Margaret shoves two pigs in a blanket into her mouth,
speaking through a mouthful.

MARGARET

Nah. Nepotism ain't helping ya.

JOEL

Well shit.

MARGARET

Get in the car, old man.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The pair piles into the car, buckling up.

JOEL

I'll have you know I'm a very young
father.

MARGARET

You were when I was five. Now
you're just old.

JOEL

I should've called a taxi.

MARGARET

See. Old. Old people like taxi's.
Who even uses them anymore?

Margaret presses the ignition button, bringing the car to life. A touchscreen dashboard lights up. It's cracked a bit.

As she starts to pull out of the office parking lot and onto the street, Margaret immediately begins fiddling with the music.

JOEL

How's Levi?

MARGARET

Levi's Levi. Same as always.

JOEL

Still in his goth phase?

MARGARET

Nah. Directionless artist phase.
Much more aesthetically pleasing.
How are the office creeps?

JOEL

They're not creeps.

MARGARET

They're the Silicon Valley freak
show. And you're their ring master.

She puts on a scratchy, Igor-esque voice.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Come, ladies and gents! Observe our
gallery of mechanical oddities! We
shall be your skinsuits tonight!

JOEL

Med tech-

MARGARET

Experimental tech.

JOEL

It's not- eyes on the road, please.

Margaret turns to playfully glare at her father in the passenger seat.

He shuts off the music, turning back to look out the windshield.

MARGARET
I've driven before you know.

JOEL
I know.

MARGARET
Like, a million times-

JOEL
Yes-

MARGARET
Since I was sixteen. Remember?

JOEL
I remember you hitting that
squirrel hard enough for it to
burst.

MARGARET
I buried it!

JOEL
And you reeked of roadkill.

MARGARET
Whatever. Mr. Nutter Butter got a
proper burial.

JOEL
If you'd please stop naming dead
animals, that'd be great.

MARGARET
What? It's adorable.

BEEP!

Joel' phone goes off.

JOEL
(digging his phone out)
Ah, just- gimme a second.

MARGARET
Really?

JOEL
Yes, really.

MARGARET
(passive aggressively)
Wow, almost made it a whole car
ride.

JOEL
Margaret-

MARGARET
Full name. I'm in trouble.

JOEL
You know full well that I have a
lot of work to do.

MARGARET
And you know I'm only here for a
week, right?

JOEL
It's summer.

MARGARET
I have shit to do.

JOEL
And I'm glad you're here.

MARGARET
Whatever.

JOEL
I don't have time for this.

Margaret's fingers tighten on the wheel.

MARGARET
(lightly)
Maybe I should've gone to visit
mom.

JOEL
Mickey.

MARGARET
Or maybe Levi. Could've just stayed
over at his place. His family loves
me.

JOEL
That's enough.

The two start talking over each other as the phone continues
to ring.

MARGARET
 Enough of what? I didn't say anything. Is it so hard to put your phone on silent? It's one stupid little button- Oh my god! I never asked for that, okay?

JOEL (CONT'D)
 You're saying enough. I'm so sorry I'm such a terrible father because you seem to reap all the benefits of me working all the time-

Joel runs his hands down his face. With a huff, he declines the call.

JOEL (CONT'D)
 (holding up his phone)
 Look. Okay? I hung up.

MARGARET
 You said it was important.

JOEL
 It was.

MARGARET
 Great. Perfect. I hope you get fired.

JOEL
 What the hell did I do now?

MARGARET
 Nothing. Okay? Absolutely nothing-

JOEL
 If you've got something to say please just come out with it-

MARGARET
 You're the one who called me-

JOEL
 Mickey-

MARGARET
 -and I thought you might actually-

JOEL
 Mickey- MARGARET!

Margaret turns her head just in time to see a pair of headlights ramming right towards her.

MARGARET
 DAD-

Glass shatters. The pair screams. The details are fuzzy and impossible to decipher.

The world slows a fraction, an amalgamation of glass and light and blood.

Margaret screams, though we can't hear it. The impact is on her side and-

BLACK.

VOICE (V.O.)
Okay. We'll try again.

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