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The Collective

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

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in

Creative Writing and Writing for the Performing Arts

by

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EXT. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY - HEALY HALL - NIGHT

Healy Hall, the castle-like building on campus, looms in the sky, its sharp towers carving shadows in the night. A lone RED LIGHT blinks slowly atop the highest tower.

Rats scurry across low-lying branches. The hum of voices echo against the stone walls. A light in a window shines nearby.

Follow that light to--

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT - DREAMING

The slam of the front door. We meet DASH KRONOS [20, boyish and unsure of himself, many mistake his racing thoughts for being aloof]. Dash enters the house party, seemingly unnoticed by other guests.

The party is a complete contrast to the spectral exterior landscape--the windows are clouded with the fog of body heat, the house is littered with layers of clothing, and the girls and boys move against each other in gyrating purple lights and the thump of electronic beats.

Dash moves through the crowd, squeezing past groups of neon-clad girls.

One girl trails her fingers across the back of Dash's neck as he passes, smiling and exposing a pill on her tongue.

Dash is excited to be here.

A group of bare legs climb the stairs to the second floor, where bluish lights flicker in the hallway.

Dash follows her upstairs, where the hum of the crowd fades. The white walls and blue light bulbs enhance the dreamscape.

Dash hears something--someone struggling in the first bedroom. He takes slow and deliberate steps to the door. He puts his hand on the RED DOOR HANDLE. He pushes the door open a crack.

Dash's POV as he peeks inside. A girl has her back against the wall and is bent over, her long hair hanging flat across her face. Her own hands around her throat.

Alarmed, Dash takes a step into the room when a FEMALE FRIEND steps next to the girl, pulling the girl's arms away.

The girl rises slowly, her eyes closed and cheeks slightly purple. Her eyelids flicker as she enjoys the rush of oxygen now filling her brain. They girl and her friend kiss.

Dash pulls the door shut, disturbed. He faces the stairs leading back down to the party, but glances back down the hallway. The bulbs flicker like a strobe light.

He lets go of the red door handle. He turns around and continues into the darkness.

INT. COLLEGE DORMITORY - SAME EXACT TIME - SLEEPWALKING

Dash is sleepwalking, dreaming that he's at the house party.

Dash is steps away from a wooden door. He's in a hallway of dorm rooms. He's wearing gym shorts and a t-shirt. His eyes are slightly glazed over and with each step, the shock vibrates through his body.

He rounds the corner of the hallway.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - SAME TIME - DREAMING

As Dash rounds the corner, he meets another door. The door shakes violently against its hinges.

Dash reaches out to the handle just as a RUSH OF GIRLS flows out of the room. But these aren't the same type of girls as before--their pale skin and dark features seem incorporeal.

The rush of girls stumble past Dash, some rubbing the bridge of their nose with the back of their hands, others lost in a daze--coke fiends.

Dash is caught up in the energy for a moment, spinning, bumping against each girl, until they disappear down the hall just as quickly as they appeared, fantastical.

Dash walks to the front of the last door. Dash puts his ear to the door. The RUMBLE of a small motor echos behind the door.

INT. COLLEGE DORMITORY - SAME EXACT TIME - SLEEPWALKING

Dash stands inches from a door. The door has a handmade sign tacked to it, one an RA might make, welcoming "Dash Kronos " to the dorm. All the other doors, in fact, share similar signs.

Beginning-of-the-year 'Welcome' decorations are strewn about the hallway, muted and depressing in the fluorescent light.

Dash's face is inches from the sign, where below his name is a picture of Dash, looking even more boyish and innocent.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - SAME TIME - DREAMING

Dash opens the door, revealing the motor sound.

Directly across from him is a cabinet.

Dash steps forward, tripping over plastic bottles on the floor.

INT. COLLEGE DORMITORY - SAME TIME - SLEEPWALKING

Dash sloppily pushes through the door of his dorm room and into the pitch black darkness of his room. He slips on empty bottles of flu medicine.

The motor from a small fish tank gurgles by his window--this is the sound that is affecting his dream.

Dash stumbles toward his window. A slight breeze blows his curtains.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - SAME TIME - DREAMING

Dash opens the cabinet. Inside sits a small machine, a metallic wheel spinning rhythmically. The machine pumps out perfectly formed electric-blue pills into a plastic capture basket. The pills are stamped a SYMBOL of three swirling circles, a sign some might recognize to symbolize Reincarnation.

Dash reaches out in an attempt to grab one of the pills.

INT. COLLEGE DORMITORY - SAME TIME - SLEEPWALKING

Dash stands in front of his open window, a single HAND reaching out into the dark open air. The moon illuminates his bony hand.

EXT. COLLEGE DORMITORY - NIGHT - SAME TIME

The dormitory building is nearly a dozen stories high. There's a distinctive glow from the fish tank on the top floor--Dash's room.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT - DREAMING

Dash reaches further for the machine, straining now--it's just out of his reach.

INT. COLLEGE DORMITORY - SAME TIME - SLEEPWALKING

His feet lift inches off the ground, his body balancing in the window sill, his arm outstretched into nothingness. He's just about to lose his balance, teetering.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - SAME TIME - DREAMING

A HAND pulls him out of the cupboard and spin him around. It's AMIRA ROSENBAUM [25, long curly black hair, not traditionally beautiful, but commanding in the way that might inspire both fear and lust].

Suddenly the details of the room begin to gloss over--Amira kisses him passionately.

INT. COLLEGE DORMITORY - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

Dash wakes up to an ALARM.

Dash steps out of bed and drags his feet over to the window. He looks out at the orderly lines of students flowing in and out of buildings. Students are more or less evenly spaced, some walking in groups of two or three, some alone. People arrive on bike and coast into the metal frames of bike racks.

The giant minute hand on the CLOCK TOWER heaves forward--it's noon. The ominous bell chimes. Despite all the order, it all feels "natural."

EXT. N STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Dash walks past rows of stately homes with a backpack slung over his shoulder.

Dash walks through the automatic doors of a pharmacy.

INT. PHARMACY - MOMENTS LATER

Dash stands in a long line at the only open cashier. A sickly man coughs on Dash's neck. Dash tries to step forward, but people crowd together as more customers enter the store and soon the space is filled. The BEEP from the scanner continues.

Dash is nearly at the register now, standing behind a guy sporting a Georgetown University T-shirt.

CASHIER

Sir, I've already told you. We can't sell you more than one bottle a day.

COLLEGE BRO

Are you kidding me? You know I just walked eight blocks to get here? Look at my nose (points) Do I look healthy to you? Do I look like I'm in any mood to go Breaking Bad with this cough syrup?

The cashier sighs.

CASHIER

Next please.

The Bro stands there, infuriated, as the cashier rings up Dash. The Bro watches Dash's items ring up on the SCREEN, suddenly understanding how to game the system.

As they appear on the screen:

STORE BRAND FLU MEDICINE DAYTIME

STORE BRAND FLU MEDICINE NIGHTTIME

NAME BRAND ALLERGY MEDICINE DROWSY

NAME BRAND ALLERGY MEDICINE NON DROWSY

Dash looks to the Bro, who smirks and heads down an aisle. The cashier sighs even deeper.

INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL - LATER THAT DAY

Dash enters the large, dimly-lit lecture hall. There are a few students there early as well, seated towards the front. Dash takes a seat in the middle row. He takes a swig from his bottle of flu medicine, and relaxes in his seat. He falls asleep.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - SAME DREAM AS BEFORE - DREAMING

Dash watches as Amira, shirtless, shuts the door with her back to him.

Amira peers over her shoulder with an austere look. On her neck is the same SYMBOL of three swirling circles, the one from the blue pills being made.

Dash tries to speak to her, but makes no sense.

Amira begins to laugh.

INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL - SAME TIME

Dash snaps awake to a stir of laughter among the students around him. Dash, having surprised himself, drops his bottle of flu medicine. It spills on the ground loudly.

The lecture stops and the hall grows quiet.

Dash hurries to move his backpack away from the mess.

The thick RED LIQUID flows down the slanted room, underneath the rows of seats, narrowing into a stream along the crevice where the two halves of the slanting room collide, until we meet PROFESSOR WEBBER [50, artfully deceptive in his words and mannerisms, he often pauses for effect].

Webber stands just outside of the harsh light of the projector. Particles of dust floating in the air dance in front of the bulb. Webber breaks the silence with a slight British ACCENT.

WEBBER

As I was saying, this class will be unlike anything you have ever taken before. It's an examination of science and mysticism, lab-tested psychology and seemingly supernatural accounts of parapsychology.

Webber's voice carries to the back walls of the room, mounting each word with conviction, as if he were once a small-town preacher. Webber clicks the slide, revealing the title of the class, "PHARMACOLOGY IN AMERICA."

WEBBER (CONT'D)

In this class, our mission is to discover what is real...and what is not.

A few students roll their eyes. There's a small hum of movement and whispered commentary.

Dash looks down at himself. He realizes he is holding his backpack against his chest like a fearful child.

TWO CLASSMATE GIRLS sitting to his left chuckle.

Dash slouches in an effort to appear relaxed.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Now we are approaching Flu Season. In the last few years, I've noticed a trend in the market. Market trends in pharmaceuticals--we'll be covering this. I've found something...amusing.

Webber digs in the pocket of his tweed coat, retrieving a small pill bottle with a pop top. He shakes it.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Can any of you in the first row tell me what this is? What?

Webber leans in to a student--there's an inaudible response from the student.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

No, these are not 'Pop Rocks.' Good guess.

A few LAGUHS from the students. They seem to be captured by Webber's words. He moves to the other side of the room.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Anyone over here?

There's a murmur in the front row, at the corner of the room. Without turning to see who it was who spoke, Webber calls on the student.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Yes, Nakil?

We meet NAKIL NOKUR [21, Indian, spends more energy online than in the mirror]. Nakil's face is illuminated in the soft glow of a tablet computer. He flicks brightly-colored figures with the tips of his fingers. Without looking up from his mindless game,

NAKIL

The bottle you're holding is like corn for the cattle.

Webber smirks and takes a step towards him.

WEBBER

Let's avoid cryptic phrases, please--
-we're dealing in enough
ambiguities as it is, wouldn't you
say?

Nakil clicks the top of his tablet, cutting off the glow to his face. He looks up at Webber, protracting the silence-before-speaking a bit too long.

NAKIL

It's Vitamin C, packaged in a way
that makes ignorant people believe
it's medicine. Some would call it
homeopathic cold and flu medicine,
but they are idiots--

WEBBER

Right. Thank you, Nakil.

Webber holds a disapproving gaze on Nakil, who stares back blankly.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF LECTURE HALL - SAME TIME

The hall is eerily quiet and still. The door to the Woman's bathroom swings open. Amira emerges in a dark skirt suit and black rimmed glasses. She marches down the hall, her heels echoing loudly.

INT. LECTURE HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Webber takes a step toward the center of the room again.

WEBBER

This is what we take when we feel
like we are getting sick, correct?
And it's supposed to make us all
better, never mind the fact that it
says right here, "CLAIMS HAVE NOT

BEEN EVALUATED BY THE--"

Just then, the door at the back of the lecture hall swings open. The entire group of students turns around.

Amira stands in the doorway, silent and still. She begins walking down the center aisle, her sharp footsteps penetrating the silence.

WEBBER

Ah, there you are. Class, this is
Amira Rosenbaum.

Amira continues walking down the center aisle towards the front of the class, stepping on the hearts of young men as she passes. The heads of students follow her in robotic unison. There's an enchanting presence about her.

Webber gives her a nod. She spins around to face the class, her sharp jawline finally illuminated fully. She doesn't seem terribly excited to be there.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

She's a graduate student doing
research for me and she'll be the
TA for this course.

Amira scans the crowd. Her eyes appear to meet Dash's eyes, but just for a moment. She pressed together her BRIGHT RED LIPS.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Now that you're here, let's have an exercise.

Webber clicks the remote, aiming it towards the ceiling. The lighting takes a dramatic shift: the entire room, aside from a soft glow along the front row, is dark. A shaft of light fades in on a lone chair and desk. On the desk is an electronic device.

Amira rolls her eyes at the theatricality.

Dash sees this--he can't take his eyes off her. She turns to face the desk, casting shadows under each eye.

Webber strides over to the desk, sliding the chair out, smiling to Amira.

Students sit up in their seats. Hushed whispers.

She sits down at the desk and begins hooking herself up to the device. She notices a small red mark on her finger from her lipstick. She rugs it off.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

This is simple enough--no parlor tricks. The machine measures her heart rate and hand perspiration, relaying her level of anxiety and stress. She can't fake this.

Webber clicks again at the ceiling. The screen at the front now displays Amira's vital signs. There is also a point-of-view camera on the headband Amira is wearing. It shows her hand holding the pen.

Webber plops a notepad and a pen on the desk next to her. He turns to the class.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Just observe. And then we'll discuss what you think you see.

Webber turns to Amira, leaning in.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Your word...is 'window.'

Amira begins writing the word repeatedly on the piece of paper.

The class is puzzled, yet captivated. Dash stretches his neck to get a better view. Nakil continues to push around figures on his tablet.

Amira writes in sweeping, classical letters for the first dozen times. But her hand-writing begins to degrade, and she makes her first error—a misspelling of "Window." She looks to Webber. He nods for her to continue.

Amira writes more quickly this time to compensate for her mistake. The stress numbers start to climb on the screen. The class points and whispers. Dash seems concerned.

She continues to repeatedly write "window." Her letters lose their form, growing grotesque and illegible. At moments, she forgets to write the "n" and she has to go back and squeeze it in between the other letters. For a few times, she repeated writes "Widow."

The stress measurements climb. Finally, she quits before Webber tells her to.

Webber, who had been watching the screen, doesn't notice that she has quit until he turns to look at her. Wanting to sound in control of the experiment, he hurriedly commands:

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Enough.

Webber clicks the lights and they assume their previous luminosity. Amira doesn't look up at Webber.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Do you all get this stressed
writing exams?

A few chuckles resound through the crowd.

Amira removes the equipment and stands at Webbers side.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Amira, care to explain?

She takes a step forward, assuming the same composed exterior that she had before.

AMIRA

What you just saw...

Her eyes glide over the heads of the students. The light presses down on her, highlighting the sweat on her forehead.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Was jamais vu, which in French means "never seen." We use it to describe any familiar situation that is not recognized by the observer. It feels like a new, oftentimes scary, situation.

WEBBER

Precisely. It's as if you've stumbled into a new world. Why did Amira struggle in this simple task, you ask? Well Amira, like all of you surely would, began to question her grip on reality. In this very small experiment, we tricked her mind into seriously considering whether "window" was actually a word.

Murmurs in the crowd. Dash catches himself with his mouth open--this beats Statistics class.†

WEBBER (CONT'D)

It's a simple illustration, replicated dozens of times, both in and out of lab settings. In our next class, we'll discuss a new drug in development that claims to replicate this very experience.

The faint CHIME of the clock tower bell sounds.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

See you next week.

He smiles at Amira, who stares off in Dash's direction.

INT. LECTURE HALL - MOMENTS LATER

The last of students have cleared out of the lecture hall, apart from two ATHLETIC FEMALE STUDENTS chatting with Webber. They stand in his shadow and laugh along with his anecdote.

Amira packs her things and heads for the exit. Webber takes a pause in his conversation to watch her leave.

INT. WOMAN'S BATHROOM STALL - MOMENTS LATER

Amira is hunched over the toilet with one hand against the wall and one hand holding back her hair. She vomits.

She half-crawls over to the sink to rinse out her mouth. She looks into the mirror, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand. She holds her gaze and turns on the sink, washing her hands. She looks down and sees the water flowing down the drain is red.

She pulls back her hand, rubbing her fingers together in the slippery redness. She looks back at the bathroom stall door in her reflection.

JUMP CUT to inside the bathroom stall. Amira traces her fingertips across the letters on the wall written in red lipstick. She's mortified. Written dozens of times on the wall is "Widow."

She snatches a handful of toilet paper and begins scrubbing away, smearing the letters beyond recognition.

INT. HALLWAY OF PROFESSORS' OFFICES - MOMENTS LATER

Amira arrives at the door to Webber's office, the door slightly ajar. Without knocking, she shoves open the door.†

INT. WEBBER'S OFFICE

Webber sits behind a desk that in what is closer to a throne than it is an office chair. Above the desk hangs a sheathed Indian sword. It's a corner office with a view of the Gothic clock tower.

Amira steps inside, shutting the door behind her. Webber leans back in his chair. They hold eye contact in a protracted silence until--

AMIRA

What the fuck?! Widow? Really?!

Webber† flops his large tie over his stomach, and connects his fingertips.

WEBBER

I hope that today was not too abrupt of an introduction for you.

(MORE)

WEBBER (CONT'D)

But I needed to show the students an example and well, there were a limited amount of...buzz words that would affect your senses.

Amira stares at Webber, seething.

AMIRA

Don't ever do that again.

Webber takes off his glasses and sits forward in his chair.

WEBBER

I don't want there to be any confusion here. You've been accepted into this graduate program because our little friend in London wants the final drug trials to go speedily. I'm under no obligation to provide any help to you. You, my dear, work for me.

Amira pulls at her suit jacket, as if in response to a shiver. Webber pulls open a file drawer. He sets a pill bottle on the desk.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

This is my life's work. If it sells, well, that's it. I'll be off to Monaco and you'll be on your next assignment. Your job is to find our first student subject.

AMIRA

I must ask why this is any better than what's on the market now for anxiety. I've seen these kinds of anxiety drugs fail before in cases of PTSD--

WEBBER

Listen, I know you've probably worked with some...devious individuals on past assignments. But this drug is like nothing you have ever seen.

Amira's heard that before.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Take yourself, for example. A female subject, 25 years of age, suffering from PTSD--a car crash which resulted in a fatality.

Webber speaks as if reading a scholarly report.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

But in comes Helix, a powerful new drug that take the individual to the exact moment that is giving them feelings of stress or anxiety. For you, that's being in a vehicle.

Amira shuffles in her seat--this isn't a comfortable topic.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Instead of predicting a stressful and dangerous journey, Helix gives you all positive thoughts. You imagine or daydream or whatever you'd like to call it, that you'll have a pleasant drive. Helix erase the stress completely and--

AMIRA

And what sort of side effects should I watch out for?

Webber frowns at the interruption.

WEBBER

Just continue with the plan. Find our subject.

Amira bites at her cuticles. Webber sees the scabbed skin around her nails.

Webber reaches in the drawer again. He sets a smaller pill bottle on the desk.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

These will help you settle in. A very diet version of Helix.

Amira stops fidgeting for a moment and eyes the bottle.

EXT. WASHINGTON, DC - DUSK

The sun hangs low in the sky, over the Potomac River. A boat of crew rowers skims the golden surface of the water.

INT. COLLEGE DORMITORY - NIGHT

The elevator doors slide open, revealing a very haggard and exhausted-looking Dash. He shrugs his backpack over his shoulder and exits.

Dash begins walking down the hall to the right, but he pauses and turns back. Both hallways look identical. The name signs made by the RA have all been ripped up and strewn across the halls.

He turns back and walks the opposite direction, rounding the corner and arriving at a cluster of identical doors. He rounds another corner, this time much more quickly, and crashes into a mirror hanging on a door. The mirror falls to the ground and shatters.

Dash begins to hyperventilate now, lost in the maze-like structure of the dorm. He passes through another hallway of clusters, shaking his head, then turning back, until he hears a sound. It's akin to the motor of a fish tank.

He presses his ear against the door, and as if finally recognizing the sound, he puts his hand on the handle. He guides the door open slowly.

INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM

Inside, Nakil stands in front of a machine, one we recognize to be the same pill making machine as before. It hums as the gears spin and twist, the press jutting up and down like a sewing machine.

Nakil stares intently at the machine, watching the white pills slide into the capture basin. He reaches for the switch, and the machine chugs slower and slower until it comes to a stop.

Without turning around, Nakil speaks to Dash.

NAKIL
You caught me.

DASH
Sorry, I thought this was my--

Nakil spins around in his chair just as Dash is pulling the door closed.

NAKIL
No, come in. Sit down. You're the kid that fell asleep in class right?

Dash hesitates, but closes the door behind him and takes a seat on the bed.

DASH
Yea, I was just a little sick.

NAKIL
I saw that.

Nakil watches Dash. Dash looks down at his hands for what to say next. Nakil reaches across his desk.

NAKIL (CONT'D)
You wanna chill?

Dash is relieved. He smiles.

DASH
Yea, of course.

TIME CUT:

INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - LATER

A faint haze lingers in the air. Nakil laughs, exhaling smoke, as Dash traces his fingers across the screen on a psychedelic app on Nakil's tablet. Flashes of color dance across Dash's face. Nakil finally reaches over and snatches it from Dash.

NAKIL
Enough of that. You haven't blinked in days.

Dash rubs his eyes and exhales deeply, fully relaxed. This is a version of Dash we've never seen before, one freed from a constant source of anxiety.

NAKIL (CONT'D)
So what's your plan for tonight?
Got any girls?

Dash shakes his head.

NAKIL (CONT'D)
Ya, me neither man. This is the
only girl in my life.

Nakil pats the pill making machine. Dash sits up.

DASH
What is that? I feel like I've seen
one before.

Nakil is surprised.

NAKIL
Have you? Really?

Dash thinks for a second, and then shrugs and laughs.

DASH
Nah, probably not.

Nakil clears his desk to display his prized machine. He holds
up a bag of white powder and then points to the pills.

NAKIL
Got this shipped from California.
It turns this into this. Not bad
right?

DASH
But what is that? X?

Nakil opens the bag and takes out a pill, holding it in his
palm. He extends it to Dash with a smile.

NAKIL
No, better.

DASH
No, I better not. I'm sick and I
couldn't even find my way to my
room just now.

They both laugh.

NAKIL

It's tame man, nothing out of control. Have you ever candy-flipped?

DASH

I was always too scared. My buddy in high school took Acid and X at the same time.

NAKIL

And he had a great fucking time, right?

DASH

Yea I think so.

Dash takes the pill from Nakil's hand.

DASH (CONT'D)

But then he dove into a jacuzzi and knocked out his front teeth.

Nakil shakes his head. He reaches in the bag and takes out another pill. He holds it up and looks to Dash, as if toasting two drinks.

NAKIL

Trust me, it's a great fucking time.

INT. TREACHEROUS NIGHT CLUB - LATER THAT NIGHT

The laser show drenches the crowd in purple, pulsating light. A DJ is at the front of the stage, situated in front of an LED screen.

Dash and Nakil are near the back of the crowd, nodding their heads to the beat, their eyes covered by reflective neon sunglasses.

Nakil shouts to Dash.

NAKIL

Is this fucking great or what?

Dash continues dancing oblivious.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

Dash. Dash!

Nakil finally pushes Dash on the shoulder. Dash slides the glasses up to his forehead, as if awakening from a trance.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

I said, are you having a good time?

Dash grins widely.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

Good, man.

A fellow clubber bumps into Nakil, knocking his sunglasses to the ground. Dash notices. He hands Nakil his own pair.

DASH

Fuck this, let's go to the front.

INT. TREACHEROUS NIGHT CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

At the front of the club, Dash and Nakil are sandwiched between neon-clad guys and girls in sunglasses, all bouncing up and down with the beat.

Dash begins to slow his movements and as we enter Dash's POV, the music fades to a distant hush.

He scans the crowd, of girls rubbing against each other, of guys massaging girls' shoulders. He follows the shafts of lasers up to the ceiling, where the light machines spin rapidly.

The crowd continues to dance all around him, but Dash is perfectly still, his eyes lost in the purple light. He hears an echo.

CLUB GIRL (O.S.)

Hey

He can't quite move to respond.

CLUB GIRL (CONT'D)

Hey!

Dash snaps out of his gaze. The girl is standing right in front of him. She slides her glasses up onto her head.

CLUB GIRL (CONT'D)

Have you seen Molly?

Dash looks to Nakil, who is dancing wildly now, oblivious.

DASH

Who?

CLUB GIRL

What are you on?

Dash shakes his head, cupping his ear and leaning in.

CLUB GIRL (CONT'D)

Are you selling Molly? X?

Dash shakes his head. The Club Girl, disappointed, slinks off. Dash looks to Nakil. Dash reaches out and grabs the Club Girl's hand.

DASH

Wait.

The Club Girl pauses, silhouetted in the light, half turned to face Dash, half turned to disappear back into the crowd. Dash shakes Nakil.

DASH (CONT'D)

Do you have any more pills? Nakil!

Nakil snaps out of his trance.

NAKIL

Are you insane man?

DASH

Just give me the bag.

Nakil rummages through his pocket and hands Dash the bag. Seeing this, the Club Girl approaches Dash. She stands directly in front of him, putting her arms around his neck. She whispers in his ear.

CLUB GIRL

I just need three.

Dash fumbles with the bag. The Club Girl squeezes closer against him to shield the deal from view. He drops the pills into her palm.

DASH

Thirty each.

The Club Girl fumbles with some bills and then hands him the cash. She kisses him on the cheek.

CLUB GIRL

Thanks.

She disappears into the crowd.

EXT. TREACHEROUS NIGHT CLUB - HOURS LATER

Dash and Nakil walk out of the club, shirts drenched in sweat. They continue along the sidewalk to a late-night food truck. They stand in line.

DASH

That shit is amazing, but I didn't feel the kick. Just felt like regular ecstasy.†

NAKIL

(laughs)

Maybe you don't remember dancing like a maniac for three hours? .

DASH

No, no that was great. But I didn't see anything weird, I wasn't tripping out. Just felt really energetic.

They move forward in the line. They look pale and sickly in the harsh streetlight.

NAKIL

Yea, that's the problem, man. I'm still working out the kinks. I can't figure out how to make the Acid and the X hit at the same time. In this batch, it's really delayed. So just wait a bit.

DASH

So I'm gonna be seeing cats walk on the ceiling pretty soon?

They laugh.

NAKIL

I would suggest you take a double-dose of that nighttime cough syrup you're always drinking. The minute you get home.

CLUB GIRL (O.S.)

Hey

The Club Girl is standing right next to Dash again.

DASH

Hi.

CLUB GIRL

You wouldn't have any more of those, would you?

Dash looks to Nakil, who shakes his head. Nakil seems uncomfortable just being close to a pretty girl.

DASH

Sorry.

CLUB GIRL

Okay, well take down my number for next weekend. Give me your phone.

She types her number in his phone.

CLUB GIRL (CONT'D)

Thanks again!

EXT. PROSPECT STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Nakil and Dash walking along the street. Drunk students chat loudly on different corners as people make their way home.

NAKIL

I can't believe that, dude.

DASH

You've never tried to sell before? What is it, bad Karma?

NAKIL

I've sold before...it was just never that easy. And plus, I'd prefer to focus on the development end anyway.

They continue walking.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

Well I gotta stop by my buddies' place since I promised him this last pill.

DASH

You want me to wait?

NAKIL

No, no go ahead. I'll hit you up this weekend when I have a new batch. Maybe you can pawn a few of them off on your new girlfriend.

DASH

Sounds like a deal.

They part paths and Dash walks alone. A smile creeps across his face--he has a new found swagger after making a new friend and meeting a new girl.

Suddenly, something rustles in the bushes ahead at the end of the block. Dash slows his pace. The streets are completely empty and quiet. A black cat rushes out of the bush, startling Dash. He laughs to himself and continues walking, passing under the cross street 35th.

As he reaches the next corner, he hears a rustling sound. He slows his pace again and the SAME black cat comes rushing out. It disappears down the dark street. Dash is dumbfounded, but continues.

He passes under the cross street 35th, and pauses in the middle of the street. He takes a step back to look at the sign--he's convinced he just walked a block, but it appears to be exactly the same corner. He hurries on into the night.

INT. AYURVEDA BIOTECH OFFICES - SAME TIME

Among the rows of cubicles, a light shines on a single desk. We move toward the light. Amira is in the middle of a heated phone conversation. She sits back in her chair, cloaked in shadows.

AMIRA O.S.

And why haven't you responded? It's been three days. I'm pulling my hair out over here.

A man responds on the phone in a London accent.

CONSULTANT CHARLES O.S.

My clients are just having trouble getting the vision for this product. And--

Amira pounds her hand on her desk and we finally see her face emerge from the dark. Her desk is littered with food trash and empty cups of coffee--she's been here for awhile.

AMIRA

Vision? What, are they an ex-marketing team? They just need to know it works. What are you getting paid for? Just sell them the damn idea, Charles.

CONSULTANT CHARLES O.S.

Amira, you've been sending me pages of jargon. How am I supposed--

AMIRA

Did you get my charts?

CONSULTANT CHARLES O.S.

Charts? Are you referring to the hand-drawn pictures you emailed me? I can't give these to clients. They don't invest in crazy.

Amira pinches her lip between two fingers in frustration. Her eyes start to water.

CONSULTANT CHARLES O.S.

Are you still there?

Amira lets out an audible sigh.

CONSULTANT CHARLES O.S.

Listen, just put yourself in my position for a second. These people have money, but they aren't scientists. Make my job a little easier for me here.

And what are you doing working on a Saturday night? It's seven in the morning here. I would've thought--

AUDIO FADE OUT:

Amira sets the phone on the desk. Charles' voice fades into the background as we focus on Amira.→†

Amira holds down the power button to shut down her computer. As she does this, the computer begins closing down all of the open applications. For a brief moment, only her desktop is visible. We see a picture of Amira and a good-looking guy embracing, both with wide smiles. The screen suddenly goes black.

She's get an idea. She picks up the phone.

AMIRA

People have anxiety because they can't predict what will happen next. So they assume the worst.

CONSULTANT CHARLES O.S.

That's the first time you haven't verbally abused me all day.

AMIRA

People have something like PTSD because they think the bad situation will keep coming back to them.

Amira looks at her reflection in the dark computer screen.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

This product helps cheat that. It's like...seeing into the future, and it looks safe. That would erase anxiety. Completely.

CONSULTANT CHARLES O.S.

That's a neat way of putting it. Maybe we could frame in a way that--

AMIRA

People could get back into their cars...

CONSULTANT CHARLES O.S.

Sorry?¬†

Amira stares off blankly, out the window and into the night.

CONSULTANT CHARLES O.S.

Amira, this is great. Think more about this and send me some notes. No more charts. Goodbye.

INT. AYURVEDA BIOTECH LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Amira saunters out of the elevator and into the lobby, exhausted. A SECURITY GUARD sits behind a desk watching a funny movie on his phone. His laugh echoes in the large lobby.

Amira arrives at the exit gate and digs through her purse to find her ID badge.

SECURITY GUARD

It's okay, Miss. You can come through here.

AMIRA

No, it's fine. I just had my badge right here.¬†

He gets up from his chair and rounds the corner to open the side gate.

She paws sharply into her purse until a pill bottle falls out, bouncing on the floor.

They both look at it--Amira's embarrassed.

SECURITY GUARD

Miss?

She grabs the pill bottle. She nods as she passes through the gate.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Miss Klein, is it?

Amira stops in her tracks. Did she hear him right? We'll soon learn that Klein was the last name of her fiancé.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

I just have to note it in the
logbook.

He smiles innocently.

AMIRA

It's Stowe. Amira Stowe.

SECURITY GUARD

My mistake, Miss Stowe.

He jots a note down into the logbook behind the desk.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Have a good night, now.

She watches him for a moment, trying to read his gentle
smile, before turning and exiting the lobby.

EXT. BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

Amira is flicking through Apps on her phone and nibbling at
her cuticles. She's the only person at the bus stop. Not even
the sound of far-off traffic is audible. The stoplight nearby
is a steady green.

Suddenly, the stoplight clicks to yellow, then red. The
racing sound of an engine rumbles down a nearby city street.

From an intersecting road comes a similar sound. Two cars,
one black, one silver, appear. They're rushing toward the
same intersection.

Amira feels her seat begin to vibrate. She looks up into the
intersection just as the two cars collide, the black car t-
boning the silver car. In a cloud of broken glass and steam,
the cars spinning and contorting.. The prolonged car horn
sounds in the night.

Amira watches from the glass barrier of the bus stop.

In the silver car, the passenger door busts open. Broken
pieces of glass chime onto the asphalt. A WOMAN climbs out in
a white dress with her back to us. She's slightly bloodied.
She turns to face us just as--

The city bus pulls up to the bus stop. The hydraulic hiss
snaps Amira out of it. The BUS DRIVER sits with the door
open, waiting for Amira to board.

BUS DRIVER
You gettin' on?

INT. BUS - JUST AFTER

Amira trudges to the back of the bus. As soon as she takes a seat, the bus pulls away, entering the same intersection.

Amira's POV as she watches out the back window and sees the girl in the white dress again--this girl staring after the bus. We see her face--it's Amira.

Back in the bus, Amira rests her head against the window. Tears fall down her face.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Amira shoves through the front door and shrugs off her jacket, letting the rest of her belongings fall to the floor.

She walks deeper into the apartment, past a large paper sheet, full of intricate hand-written formulas. The paper consumes the entire wall.

In the kitchen, she presses the button on an ancient coffee maker.

Back in the small living room, she collapses into an arm chair, facing the wall of formulas. She studies it.

Amira's POV as we see complicated charts guiding us through the mental understanding of the different strains of the drug.

It's confusing, but we get the basic sense that once an individual sees his/her future, it affects their present behavior, thus making that envisioned "future" come true. This is shown via stick figures and arrows.

Amira looks down at her chewed up cuticles--a nervous habit. She leans back in the chair and shuts her eyes.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The same silver car from the previous accident is lumbering down the road at night.

INT. CAR - SAME TIME

In the passenger seat is Amira, in a white dress DAN KLEIN [27] drives. They hold hands. Kevin speaks into the windshield of the car.

DAN
Maybe Europe? Two weeks in the
south of France.

Amira holds back a smile.

AMIRA
I'm sure your boss will be totally
fine with you extending a business
trip to go play around with your
girlfriend.

Dan squints seriously. He lets go of her hand and touches her shoulder.

DAN
You're right, I better invite my
boss along too.

Amira laughs and shoves Dan away. He cracks a smile too.

AMIRA
I'd love to go, obviously. I just
don't see how it's ever going to
happen.

DAN
I have an idea.

Amira turns to Dan. He steals a glance at her from the corner of his eye. She pushes him again, a bit excited.

AMIRA
What, come on? Did you already ask
him?

Dan shrugs.

DAN
The guy can't say no if I want some
time off for my honeymoon.

Amira's eyes betray her shock. She swallows her excitement.

AMIRA
You're full of shit.

Amira watches Dan for a reaction to see if he's being serious or not. He scratches at his neck and keeps his eyes on the road.

DAN
Hard to say.

Amira shakes her head. She's not falling for it, yet.

AMIRA
Hey put your seat belt on.

Amira, now imitating a southern police officer,

AMIRA (CONT'D)
I've never pulled a body out of a seat belt.

Dan turns to Amira.

DAN
Don't jinx me. I've never had an accident.

He reaches from his seat belt.

DAN (CONT'D)
And France is waiting--

Dan is suddenly silhouetted in white light--headlights from the black car. It's half a second from crashing through the driver's side door.

The BUZZER from the coffee machine sounds, a monotone note not too far off from the sound of a car horn. From that,

FADE BACK INTO:

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amira sits in the arm chair. She pops the top of her pill bottle and thumbs out a pill. She gulps it down with a glass of water.

She walks to her bedroom. On the way, she passes another door. Light spills out from underneath. She pauses in front of it for a moment, but then continues into her room.

EXT. UNIVERSITY WALKWAY - MORNING

Students skim through the crowded walkways on bicycles. Couples sip coffee on benches. The clock tower chimes.

The steamy breaths from people talking and the warm attire tell us that winter is approaching.

INT. LECTURE HALL - SAME TIME

Dash takes a seat next to Nakil in the front row

DASH

Where have you been? I went to your room and it was empty. Did you get caught with weed? I thought you got kicked out.

Nakil is reluctant to respond.

NAKIL

Almost. I decided to just get an apartment off-campus.

DASH

Oh...nice. You still have your phone?

Dash's body says he's a little too self-conscious. He fidgets in his seat.

Nakil turns to Dash, judging him.

DASH (CONT'D)

I'm still a little high.

He breaks out into laughter. Nakil shakes his head--his mind is somewhere else.

The lecture hall is full of students. Professor Webber approaches the podium and a hush falls over the hall.

WEBBER

Welcome. Welcome, welcome. I'm glad to see that so many of you decided to stay in this class. It will be difficult, potentially impossible for many of you, but I'm glad that you're here.

Webber clicks his device and the projector comes to life.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Last week we talked about Jamais Vu, and the idea that we can artificially create a sense of a brand new experience.

Webber smiles at Amira, who is seated behind a small desk at the front of the lecture hall. She's composed and appears to be fully-rested, thanks to that pill She gives a slight nod in return.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

In this class, we will cover the many interpretations of Deja Vu.

Webber clicks again. On the massive screen is a picture of a child being born from a pile of skeletons, then a duplicate person is shown fading into the consecutive stages of adolescence, adulthood, old age, and death.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

One of those forms of Deja Vu, pictured here, is reincarnation.

Webber takes a step out of the spotlighted podium, leaning into the front row.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Nakil.

Dash turns to Nakil, surprised. Nakil approaches the podium.

In his most Indian-sounding accent yet, Nakil speaks.

NAKIL

I come from India, where we see reincarnation as truth to every day life.

Nakil gulps, but pushes on. We get the sense that he's a nervous wreck when he's not high. Webber watches on with scrutinizing eyes.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

We believe that Deja Vu experiences occur as people are living their lives not for the first time, but at least the second.

Dash can't keep his eyes off Nakil--he's never seen him speak with such intensity before.

Amira watches Dash as Nakil speaks.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

Back home, many people become obsessed with learning about their past lives, about who they have been reincarnated from. In learning this...

Nakil scans the room. The light exposes the sweat on his brow.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

In learning this, people believe that you can determine your path. Your future. Moments of Deja Vu are clues to your past life, bringing you closer to discovering your destiny.

Whispers sift across the crowd. Skeptical students exchange glances.

Webber takes a step back to the podium as Nakil walks back to his seat.

WEBBER

Thank you, Nakil.

Webber turns to the audience, using his lecture voice now.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Fascinating to consider, isn't it?

Nakil sits back down next to Dash and turns on his tablet. He starts playing games with special determination, not acknowledging Dash.

DASH

Dude?

WEBBER

The reason I wanted to bring this up...

Webber clicks his device.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Is because of this.

The picture on the screen is a zoomed in version of the same reincarnation picture. At the man's feet in the picture, is a smoking pipe.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

You see the pipe here, but civilizations have used all sorts of drugs across the ages to get closer to a greater understanding. I want to examine how we get closer to discovering our destiny, as Nakil put it. Through pharmaceuticals.

Webber clicks again, showing a slide full of text and charts.

Students begin typing and scratching away at their notebooks-- the lecture has begun.

Dash leans closer to Nakil.

DASH

What was all that shit?

Nakil doesn't respond. Dash sits back in his chair, suddenly locking eyes with Amira. He looks away immediately, embarrassed. He can feel her still watching him.

WEBBER

A university study reported the case of a male who started experiencing intense experiences of Deja Vu upon taking the drugs amantadine and phenylpropanolamine. Can anyone tell me where we could find these?

Webber puts a hand up to block the spotlight so he can see into the crowd. A heavy shadow falls over his face. His eyes beam out as he points.

STUDENT O.S.

Flu Medicine.

WEBBER

Precisely. Due to the dopaminergic action of the drugs and previous findings from electrode stimulation of the brain, researchers speculate that Deja Vu occurs as a result of hyperdopaminergic action in the mesial temporal areas of the brain.

Students hurriedly try to write this down word for word.

Dash makes eye contact with Amira, again. This time, she seems worried. She looks down at her feet. Dash can't read her.

EXT. UNIVERSITY WALKWAY - LATE MORNING

Dash hurries to catch up to Nakil.

DASH

Hey what's up with you?

Nakil keeps walking at the same quick pace. Dash loses his patience.

DASH (CONT'D)

Nakil!

Nakil stops, as do several students walking by.

Dash notices how he has caused a small scene, and assumes a non-threatening position. He adjusts his backpack over his shoulder, trying to look casual.

Nakil seems lost in thought--he looks around at the ground until it comes to him.

NAKIL

Do you wanna go smoke?

Dash smiles.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Nakil shoves through the front door. He waits for Dash to pass through the door before squeezing it shut behind him. Inside the apartment is a large assortment of furniture and stacked books. A sheet has been haphazardly stapled over the wall of time-travel sketches.

NAKIL

Follow me.

Nakil walks quickly through the living room.

DASH

This is your place?

NAKIL

Yea, I had to find something quick.

Dash pauses, noticing the other bedroom door.

DASH

(whispers)

You have a roommate?

NAKIL

Just a little old lady. She's not here.

Nakil enters his room. Dash follows and Nakil shuts the door behind him. Nakil starts digging in his drawer. He pulls out a coffee can and shoves a hand deep into the coffee grounds.

Dash watches him in wonder.

Nakil pulls out a small baggie of weed. He tosses it on the desk and keeps digging.

DASH

Does that work? Can drug dogs not smell that?

NAKIL

(laughs)

I actually have no idea.

Nakil pulls out another small bag. He holds it up to the light.

DASH

Whoa, I thought you just wanted to smoke? It's not even noon, dude.

NAKIL

You wanna be business partners, right? We gotta test this shit out. Hold out your hand.

Dash looks at Nakil with hesitation.

DASH
Nah man, let's just smoke and go
get food or something.

NAKIL
Go big or go home.

Nakil holds the bag up, ready to pour out a bit of the white powder, waiting for Dash to make a decision.

Dash looks over Nakil's shoulder, where he sees three intersecting spiral designs, the same design that we recognize from his sleepwalking flashforward.

DASH
Okay.

Nakil tabs the bag and a small amount spills out onto Dash's down turned hand. Nakil does the same to his own hand and they lick off the powder in unison.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - NAKIL'S ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Nakil and Dash are both laying on the floor, looking up at the ceiling. The blinds are drawn and it's quite dark. We see that they are staring at glow-in-the-dark stars attached to the ceiling.

POV of Dash as he looks up at the stars, pulsating in the low light. He moves his head side-to-side and the stars blur into long green lines. He sits up quickly and the stars stretch into thin, oncoming lines, like entering warp speed.

DASH
Nakil. Nakil? Where are we?

NAKIL
(laughs)
Orbiting Jupiter. I told you I
would fix the acid drop.

Dash is still seated upright on the floor. He turns to look again at the spiral drawing on the wall.

DASH
I know I've seen that before.

Nakil turns to see what Dash looking at.

POV of Dash as the spirals seem to swirl faster and faster. Dash breathes heavily, his eyes spinning, trying to take it all in.

Nakil turns back to the ceiling, speaking without looking at Dash. The drug's effect seems to be wearing off on Nakil, possibly from overuse.

NAKIL

It's a symbol for reincarnation, as you might have guessed.

Nakil stands up and walks over to his desk. He traces his fingers across his pill-making machine. He speaks quietly, almost to himself.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

Every batch brings me closer to the truth about my past life. I can't go forward unless I figure that out.

POV of Dash as the spirals begin to slow and eventually come to a complete stop--the most intense part of the high has passed.

Dash turns to Nakil and smiles a cheesy smile.

The steady beat of electronic music begins.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

And there's the ecstasy kick.

Dash's teeth begin to grind back and forth.

NAKIL (CONT'D)

Time to party.

EXT. TOMBS BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dash is hugging the pole of a streetlamp, chomping away on a wad of gum. His eyes are wild.

NAKIL O.S.

This is ridiculous.

Pull to reveal Nakil standing in a long line of college students, all vying to get into the bar.

NAKIL
You just couldn't keep it cool,
huh? You almost bit that guy.

Dash keeps chomping away on the gum.

NAKIL (CONT'D)
Now we're stuck going to this shit
hole.

INT. TOMBS BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Nakil and Dash are inside the bar. It's crowded with tons of girls, but the scene is preppy. Dash and Nakil stand out starkly. They try to get to the bar.

INT. TOMBS BAR - LATER

Dash and Nakil are seated in a corner. Dash chugs from a mug of beer, his hands shaking. He seems to be coming off the drug now.

Nakil watches Dash, measuring his progression with the drug. He motions to the waiter to bring two more drinks.

NAKIL
You know, we could make a lot of
money here. In this bar.

Dash nods, perhaps more intensely and quickly than he normally would.

NAKIL (CONT'D)
And you know you're just a natural
out there. The girls love you. You
sell better than I ever could.

Dash doesn't respond.

NAKIL (CONT'D)
There's a lot of new friends out
there for you.

Dash finishes his drink. He finally relaxes. He looks out at the crowd in the bar as a new song comes on. Several girls rush to the dance floor.

POV of Dash as he thinks he sees Amira among the girls. She smiles.

Dash shakes his head. One of the girls, similar to Amira, smiles from a distance.

DASH
You're right. Could be huge.

The waiter sets down two drinks. Nakil grabs one in his hand and props up his elbow.

NAKIL
So let's make a deal, right now.
You're the face, I'm the chemist.

Dash watches Nakil, suddenly serious.

Nakil's smile wavers, though only for a second.

Dash picks up the glass and clinks it to Nakil's.

INT. TOMB'S BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Dash is on the dance floor, sunglasses on, chatting to a girl.

She holds out her hand, but he swats it away.

Dash holds up the pill and opens his mouth, like a mother miming to a baby.

She opens her mouth and Dash pops the pill in. She seals the deal with a quick kiss. She fades into the crowd.

Out of the corner of his eyes, something catches Dash's attention. He catches Amira's profile just as she is exiting the bar.

Nakil watches from the table, tracing the tip of his finger around the top of his drink.

INT. CLASSROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Dash is sleeping uncomfortably in a one-piece chair-desks, the kind often found in classrooms. A classmate nudges him and Dash startles awake.

CLASSMATE DUDE
Hey. I owe you.

Classmate Dude holds out for a handshake. Dash shakes his hand.

DASH

For what?

CLASSMATE DUDE

For getting me laid, man. Half the girls at the Tombs last night were on your stuff, I heard.

The hustle of other students lets us know that class has been dismissed.

CLASSMATE DUDE (CONT'D)

You're the man.

Dash is happy to get some recognition.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dash is walking down the hallway until he sees Amira approaching. He pauses and fixes his hair.

She looks up, just as she is a few paces in front of him.

AMIRA

Well, hi. You're in my class.

Dash smiles.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

I always see you looking at me.

Dash blushes--he doesn't know what to say.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

That's probably only because I'm watching you too.

She smiles politely and blinks.

A student passes between them. Dash is at a loss for what to say. A moment of silence lingers. He lets out a nervous laugh. Amira begins to walk away.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Well, okay--

DASH
I saw you last night.

Amira turns on her heel, now even closer to Dash.

AMIRA
No you didn't.

Amira seems a little caught off-guard. Dash finds an ounce of courage in seeing this.

-+DASH
At the Tombs. You were watching me,
as you said.

Amira leans in to Dash.

AMIRA
(whispers)
I don't go to your little parties.
Maybe you were too high with all
your pills?

Now Dash is caught off-guard.

DASH
No, that wasn't--

Amira leans in even closer now.

AMIRA
(suddenly serious)
Anyone can cook a simple high. It
takes someone really special to
create something incredible,
unreal.

She smiles sweetly and walks away. Dash watches her round the corner at the end of the hall.

INT. SCIENCE BUILDING- HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dash is walking down the hallway. He presses the button for the elevator. While he waits, he glances over his shoulder. He does a double-take.

POV of Dash-he can see Amira in the lab.

The elevator chimes but Dash is already walking away from it. He stands in front of the small glass window and watches the LAB GIRL, one who looks very similar to Amira. The Lab Girl stands in a white coat with goggles over her eyes, loading tubes of liquid in the machine.

INT. SCIENCE BUILDING HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The Lab Girl exits the Lab and walks toward the elevator. As the door to the lab slowly swings shut to lock behind her, Dash appears behind it. He catches the door before it closes. He slips into the lab.

INT. LAB - HALF HOUR LATER

Dash pours a dark, thick liquid back into his bottle of Flu Medicine. There are empty, stained tubes laying around--he's been working.

Suddenly, there's a commotion at the door. Someone is jiggling the door handle. It shakes against the chair propped up under it--Dash's method of securing the door closed.

Dash hurriedly pours the rest of the liquid and rushes to the opposite door of the lab. He pushes it open with his back just as the chair tips over and the first door opens.

There's a brief moment when the Lab Technician and Dash stare at each other.

INT. HALLWAY NORTH - IMMEDIATELY AFTER

Dash sprints down to the end of the hallway and disappears down an adjacent corridor.

EXT. WALKWAY - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dash walks along the well-manicured lawns and shrubbery, catching his breath. He looks back over his shoulder--the coast is clear. He lets out a sigh and a smile creeps over his face--that was exciting.

He pulls out the Flu Medicine bottle, eyeing his new prize, and takes a swig.

He continues on the path back to his dorm. But when he rounds the corner, he sees that there is construction on the path. Men in orange vests hammer at the sidewalk.

DASH
(to himself)
Are you fucking kidding me.

But then he sees another path, one that leads under the road. He decides to take the old tunnel.

INT. TUNNEL

The lights in the tunnel cast a strong yellow tone to the tunnel. It's completely empty. Dash's steps echo loudly.

Above we can hear the pounding of jackhammers.

Suddenly, the lights begin to flicker. Then, COMPLETE DARKNESS.

Dash reaches in his pocket and pulls out his phone. He flicks around on the screen until a small shaft of light emerges from his phone. He swings it around in front of him to guide his steps.

Suddenly, the light on his phone begins to fade in and out. He looks at the screen.

POV of Dash as we see the time and the date on his phone scrolling rapidly forward. Dash stares in disbelief.

He points the phone light back towards the way he came--also completely dark. He spins around and now he's disoriented, unable to determine which way is out.

He holds his breath and hears an indistinguishable mumbling nearby (we may understand it as a male speaking in Hindi). He ventures closer to the sound with his phone light.

His light falls onto a pair of standing legs. He scans up the legs until he sees Nakil, a sweaty and pale mess. Nakil mumbles to himself, as if in prayer.

DASH
Nakil? What are you doing?

Nakil takes a step forward, his foot disappearing into the darkness of the ground in front of him, as if stepping off a cliff.

DASH (CONT'D)

Nakil!

Just as Dash reaches out to catch Nakil, a hand grabs Dash.

Suddenly, the tunnel is perfectly lit, just as before. Dash is standing there, staring off into the space where he had just seen Nakil. But now there is merely a yellow pole where Nakil used to be.

AMIRA O.S.

You okay?

Dash turns to see Amira holding his arm. Dash is sweaty and shaken.

AMIRA

Walk with me.

Amira half-drags Dash to the exit. Dash takes stares desperately back into the empty tunnel. They step out into the light.

EXT. GRASSY HILL - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dash lays in the grass and sips from a water bottle. He's still a bit shaky. Amira rubs her hand through his hair.

AMIRA

Does that feel good?

Dash nods weakly. He has the back of his hand on his forehead. He holds out one finger and trails it against her wrist. She doesn't mind.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

I'd give you one of my chill-pills, the ones Webber gives me, but I don't think your system could handle it right now. You might start crying. And then I'd have to leave.

Amira smiles sarcastically. Dash manages a trembling smile. He takes another drink of water.

Amira holds up the bottle of his doctored Flu Medicine, eyeing its consistency in the light.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

You might be a fool, or you might be a genius. Probably a fool. You could've just died.

Dash manages to sit up, now eye level with Amira.

DASH

Why are you doing this?

Amira doesn't know how to respond.

AMIRA

Why are you? You think you're gonna make the cool new club drug and then what? Hang out in dark tunnels by yourself?

Dash looks sheepish.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

You're really impressive, if that's the case.

DASH

Well if you think I'm such a loser, why are you helping me?

Amira looks at Dash, entirely serious now.

AMIRA

Because from what you just told me, you just had a flashforward into the future.

Dash shakes his head and laughs, still unable to process it.

DASH

No...I don't know what that was...I fell too deep down the rabbit hole. I just need a stiff drink and I'll be fine. I don't know what happened...

His voice trails off and he's lost in the delirious memory for a moment. But he resists it. He shakes his head and looks Amira in the eye.

AMIRA

Whatever you just concocted in that lab let you see something that hasn't happened yet.

DASH

I didn't see into the future. I've done acid before. I've had bad trips.

Amira looks at Dash skeptically.

DASH (CONT'D)

I've just never had one that intense.

Amira touches his face and trails one finger down to his lip.

AMIRA

I knew you'd create something great.

Dash enjoys the affection for a moment until a classroom door slams in the distance. He shoves her hand away.

DASH

What if someone walked by right now. Someone from our class. Or a professor. Or Webber--

AMIRA

He's not the boss of me.

They both stare at each other for a moment, not understanding the sudden mutual aggression. That tenderness Amira had disappears in an instant.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

You're right. This was a mistake.

Amira gets up to leave. Dash grabs her wrist.

DASH

Wait, wait. I'm sorry. This is what I wanted.

Dash is losing his grip on reality--everything is changing so quickly.

Amira shakes his hand away. She starts walking.

Dash sighs--he ruined things with Amira, though he's not entirely sure how. Until...

Amira turns around. The sharp Gothic architecture looms behind her.

AMIRA

I want to show you something.

Dash can't help but smile. He gets up to his feet, dusting off his pants.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

Amira shoves through the front door. Dash walks through behind her, incredulous.

DASH

This is your apartment?

Amira smiles innocently.

AMIRA

(playfully)

Don't tell anyone.

Dash stands stubbornly, waiting for an explanation. Amira tugs at his arm.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Come on, just look at this.

Dash stumbles across the room as she pulls him.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Here.

They are standing in front of the Wall--the one covered in hand drawn charts and diagrams--her theories on time travel and flashforwards.

But Dash isn't looking at her. Or the Wall. He's looking down the hall at the door he knows to be Nakil's room.

Amira studies the Wall, not paying attention to Dash.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Well? Does it make sense to you?
From what just happened to you in
the tunnel..Dash? Just look at the
chart.

She grabs his cheek, as if to kiss him, and turns his head.
He begins to eye the chart seriously.

POV of Dash as we see his mental process in understanding the
chart. In the first stage, the stick figure drinks the
liquid. Then the figure is thrust forward, via an arrow, over
several versions of that same figure. The arrow arcs over the
other versions and settles on single one, the future self.

Then, the arrow jumps back to the original self. A new arrow
points forward in time, along the various versions of the
self.

Amira watches him, impatiently.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Go on...have a guess.

DASH

You think that...once a person, me,
sees into the future, that affects
my current decision?

Amira smiles like a teacher who has taught a successful
lesson.

AMIRA

Exactly. It's self-fulfilling. You
make it come true.

DASH

That's impossible.

Her smile fades.

DASH (CONT'D)

I don't know what this is all
about, but you're both fucking with
me.

Amira is suddenly confused.

AMIRA

Both? Who?

Dash stares at her, losing his temper now.

DASH

You and Nakil! Every time I'm around you, it's something different. One day you're my TA and now you're kissing me and bringing me into your apartment.

Dash starts pacing in front of the wall of hand drawings.

AMIRA

Dash. Dash calm down.

DASH

And you're living with your student!

Amira grabs him by the shoulders, ducking under his gaze to try to read his face.

AMIRA

What are you talking about? I don't live with anyone.

Dash shakes her off and storms over to the door to Nakil's room. He looks back at her with disdain and shoves open the door.

The room is empty, aside from a handful of moving boxes covered in dust.

Dash looks back at Amira, who stands in front of the first figure drawn on the wall. →† The arrow that arcs over the other figures seems to arc just above her head.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

What is it?

Dash takes another frantic look into the room. He walks back to Amira, flabbergasted.

DASH

This can't be happening. It can't.

He paces in front of the wall, squeezing his temples.

Amira reaches out to console him, but he dodges her hand. Dash tries to recreate the moment when he came to this same apartment with Nakil.

DASH (CONT'D)
(to himself)
I walked through the door. I saw
her room. I followed Nakil--

AMIRA
Nakil? From our class? Dash you're
scaring me.

Dash takes a seat in the arm chair.

DASH
I've been here before. In this
apartment. Nakil was living in that
room!

Amira takes a seat on the arm of the chair, her legs draped
over Dash's. She touches his face.

AMIRA
That's impossible. You must still
be suffering from the side effects
of whatever you cooked up. Let me
grab something for you.

Amira gets up to go to the kitchen.

Dash puts his head between his legs to control his breathing.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Amira has Dash's bottle of Flu Medicine in her hand. She
pours it into a small glass of dark liquid. She adds a pinch
of powder between two fingers. She squishes it around.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT- LIVING ROOM

AMIRA (O.S.)
Here you go.

Dash looks up and see Amira standing in front of him. The arc
drawn on the wall behind her swoops perfectly over her head.
He looks at the glass.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
(smiles)
It's brandy. To calm the nerves.

Dash takes the glass and kicks in back in one gulp.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

You'll be fine.

Amira stands in front of him, waiting for the effects to kick in.

POV of Dash as the room begins to become blurry. He sees Amira kneel down in front of him. She puts one on his face and closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - THAT NIGHT

Dash opens his eyes just as the sound of a door slams ahead. He's standing in the middle of the street, directly in front of the red door of a charming townhouse. It's clear there's a party inside, from the music and the loud voices.

He looks around and sees a handful of college students roaming about, some headed to the party. No one seems to notice him standing in the middle of the road. He walks to the red door.

It's unlocked. He opens it and enters.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

The party is a complete contrast to the spectral exterior landscape--the windows are clouded with the fog of body heat, the house is littered with layers of clothing, and the girls and boys move against each other in the gyrating purple lights and the thump of electronic beats. Dash moves through the crowd.

We realize now that this is the same exact scene that we saw in the opening of the film.

We follow Dash as he squeezes past groups of neon-clad girls, mystified by their wayward glances and bare skin--one girl trails her fingers across the back of his neck as he passes, smiling and exposing a pill that sits on her tongue. He's excited to be here.

A group of bare legs climb the stairs to the second floor, where the lights dim and flicker. Dash follows.

Upstairs, the hum of the crowd fades and the bare white walls and blue light bulbs enhance the dream scape.

He hears something--someone struggling in the room nearby. Dash takes slow and deliberate steps down the hall, his demeanor shifting from one of ecstasy to fear.

He reaches the door and pushes it open a crack.

Inside, he sees a girl with her back against the wall, bent over, her long hair hanging flat across her face with her own hands around her throat.

Alarmed, Dash begins to take a step into the room when another figure steps next to her, pulling the girl's arms away. The girl rises slowly, her eyes closed and cheeks slightly purple, enjoying the rush of oxygen now filling her brain. They kiss.

Dash pulls the door shut, disgusted. He faces the stairs leading back down to the party, but he glances back down the flickering hallway. He lets go of the red door handle. He turns around and continues on into the darkness.

As he rounds the corner, he meets another door, one that shakes violently. His hand reaches out to the handle just as a rush of girls suddenly flows out of the room. But these aren't the same type of girls as before--their pale skin and dark features seem incorporeal.

They stumble past Dash, some rubbing the bridge of their nose with the back of their hands, others lost in a daze. He's caught up in the energy for a moment, spinning, bumping against each girl, until they disappear down the hall just as quickly as they appeared.

He's alone, and in front of the last door. The rumble of a small motor echos against the blue-tinted walls.

Dash opens the door, revealing the motor sound. Across from him sits a small machine, a metallic wheel spinning rhythmically. He steps forward, tripping over plastic bottles on the floor.

Dash watches the machine as it pumps out perfectly formed electric blue pills into a plastic capture basket. He holds one of the pills--it's stamped with three swirling circle, a sign some might recognize to symbolize reincarnation.

Suddenly, the door shuts behind him.

He turns and sees Amira, shirtless, with her back to him. Her long curly hair trails down her back. She looks to him over her shoulder.

DASH
I've been here before.

AMIRA
I know you have.

DASH
But what does this mean?

AMIRA
What do you think?

Amira turns and faces him. She takes slow, deliberate steps toward him.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
What will I do next, Dash?

Dash takes a big swallow. His voice trembles.

DASH
You're gonna kiss me.

Amira leans into his face. She puts a hand on the back of his head and pulls him in for a kiss. He closes her eyes, getting lost in it.

We see Amira's tongue as it slips a bright blue pill into Dash's mouth. Dash pulls away, grabbing the pill out of his mouth with his fingers. He examines it.

DASH (CONT'D)
What the fuck is this?

Amira grabs his hand and pulls him closer, his hand touching her skin.

AMIRA
What's wrong--it's just a mint.

She moves closer to him, trying to distract him.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
What? You don't want this?

DASH
What? I--why the hell are you
trying to put a pill into my mouth?

Amira can't find words. She reaches for her shirt, covering herself. Dash tries to process what is happening.

DASH (CONT'D)
Why have I seen this all before?
This party? What's going on?

Amira pulls the shirt over her head, suddenly serious.

AMIRA
Dash, listen to me.

Dash looks off at the window. She walks towards him and grabs his face, squeezing his cheeks in her grip.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
I've been studying you. That's all.

Dash pushes her hand away.

DASH
Bullshit.

She doesn't waver.

DASH (CONT'D)
So that's why you brought me here?
To this party, to parade me around
in front of all your friends? What
are you studying?

Amira walks over to the pill press on the desk and pulls a plastic cover over it.

AMIRA
It doesn't matter.

DASH
And why not?

Amira is already walking to the door.

AMIRA
Just forget this happened.

She pulls open the door, ready to step out, just as Dash punches the door shut. She turns around slowly, staring at him in disbelief--she's a little frightened by him.

DASH
I can't forget. Now why did you
bring me here?

AMIRA
The study didn't work. Webber
wanted to test out his new drug on
someone.

DASH
Why me?

AMIRA
Because it's two-stage. There needs
to be a pill and then on top of
that, a liquid form of amantadine
and phenylpropanolamine.

DASH
Cough syrup.

AMIRA
When I saw you drinking it the
first day of class, I knew it had
to be you.

She opens the door and turns, about to give up on this
experiment.

DASH
(to himself)
That's why you looked at me.

Amira pauses--she realizes that he's infatuated with her.
Maybe she still has one more chance to mess with his mind...

She turns and kisses him.

AMIRA
Goodnight, Dash.

She slips out of the door and pulls it shut behind her. Dash
is left alone in the room, the shrouded pill press looming
behind him in the moonlight.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Amira is climbing into a cab with friends just as the front
door of the house bursts open.

DASH
Wait!

He hurries down the brick steps.

Amira's friends, all dressed to go to the club, look at Dash and back at Amira in confusion.

Amira leans on the open door of the cab.

DASH (CONT'D)

Where are you going? Let me go with you. I'm sorry for how I acted I just wasn't sure how to take it all in. It's fine--we're fine.

Dash smiles hopefully.

Amira steps out of the cab and whispers to her friends. She shuts the door on her giggling friends and stands facing Dash.

The cab drives away as Dash watches.

DASH (CONT'D)

Where are they going? Don't you want to go?

AMIRA

They're heading to the club. You wanted to go?

DASH

Yea, of course. I mean, if you wanted to.

Amira smiles at him like he's a little boy.

AMIRA

Ok then. But we have to stop at my place first.

DASH

No...no I can't take anymore of...anything. My body hates me right now.

AMIRA

That's fine. I just need to grab something.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Amira tosses her keys on the counter and slides off her coat, revealing a backless dress.

Dash watches her move through the kitchen, feeling considerably less stressed than before.

AMIRA

You can drink it straight right?

She turns around to face him. His eyes climb quickly up her back to her eyes.

DASH

What? Oh no, I really can't. I'll just have water.

Amira shrugs and pours herself a glass from the bottle of rum.

AMIRA

Kids these days.

She lights a cigarette on the stove.

DASH

Get outta here. You're four years older than me. And besides, I'm bigger than you anyway.

He pats her on the head playfully.

Amira laughs into her drink, fogging up the glass momentarily. She swallows, and moves closer to Dash, backing him up against the counter--she's still in charge here.

She sets the drink and the cigarette down on the counter next to him. She puts her arms around his neck, stepping into him so that her legs wrap around one of his. They kiss.

In a moment, his hand reaches up the back of her shirt and she works his shirt buttons from the top down. She slides her shirt over her head and tosses it to the floor.

Amira lifts one of her legs and wraps it high around Dash's, as if to mount him. He spins her around and sits her on the counter top. She peels his shirt off to the floor.

The jingling of a belt buckle causes Dash to stop kissing her. He hangs his head and sighs.

AMIRA

What?

He shakes his head.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

What!

DASH

I just forgot a...I mean...do you
have a--

AMIRA

A condom?

DASH

(embarrassed)

Yea.

She puts her arms on his shoulders now, pushing him away to
see his face more clearly.

AMIRA

You can't even say it can you?

DASH

(quietly)

Yes I can...condom.

Amira lets out a huge laugh.

AMIRA

You are the cutest fifteen year old
boy I have ever met.

She picks up the cigarette for a quick drag. She squeezes his
cheeks.

DASH

Oh get outta here.

Just then, a flash of movement passes by the doorway of the
kitchen. Dash's head instinctively snaps to the doorway.
Nothing.

AMIRA

Aw, don't get mad now.

DASH

(suddenly serious)

Is anyone else here?

AMIRA

Oh come on, are you on that syrup
again?

She sees that he's actually frightened. She pulls his face to meet hers and kisses him again. Her hand sinks below his waist. His belt jingles again. He looks to her.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

It's fine.

He kisses her and then awkwardly pushes down his jeans to the floor. As she watches, she takes another drag and a sip from her glass. She then kisses his neck and he closes his eyes, getting lost in the moment.

She pauses on his chest, and she begins to leak out the gulp of rum she had in her mouth. It starts dripping down his chest.

He opens his eyes just in time to see her brushing the cigarette along his chest--it burst into a brief but explosive flame.

DASH

What the fuck!

Dash jumps backwards, slapping at his chest. The alcohol burns off quickly, leaving only a slight redness on his skin.

Amira laughs like a maniac.

DASH (CONT'D)

(out of breath)

Are you kidding me? What is wrong with you?

AMIRA

You've never seen that before?
Don't tell me you've never seen that before. Aww...

She reaches out to squeeze his cheeks like before but he dodges her hand.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

(in a baby voice)

Somebody got scared...

Amira hops off the counter, still in her bra.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Where's my--oh whatever.

She picks up her slim leather jacket off the chair and puts it on, zipping it up most of the way.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
You ready?

Dash looks at her in disbelief.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
Oh put your shirt on, we have places to go.

She grabs her keys and walks past him, but not before pecking him on the lips.

He reaches for his shirt on the ground, peering into the silent darkness of her apartment.

INT. TREACHEROUS NIGHT CLUB - LATER THAT NIGHT

The same laser-light show in pulsating across the packed crowd of ravers.

Amira and Dash are at the bar. They slam down a few shots.

AMIRA
So who do you see?

The bartender sets down two drinks. Dash grabs one, pulls out the straw, and takes a huge gulp.

DASH
What do you mean? From school?

Amira gives him a knowingly stare.

DASH (CONT'D)
Oh. Clients.

Dash puts his back against the bar and surveys the crowd, somewhat reluctantly.

DASH (CONT'D)
(points with his drink)
There.

POV as we see a group of goth-like ravers in a small circle, far away from the stage. They contrast sharply with the sorority-like ravers dressed in neon hats and tanks.

Amira looks disgusted.

The music grows in intensity, inciting a universal spike in energy among the crowd.

AMIRA
(yelling)
Them? Are you kidding?

DASH
(yelling)
Trust me.

AMIRA
What?

Dash leans into her ear.

DASH
Just trust me.

He kisses her on the cheek. He finishes his drink and clinks it next to Amira's full one. He disappears into the crowd.

She watches him, stirring her drink.

POV of Amira as Dash makes his way through the club. He's recognized by many due to his dealing.

Amira watches apprehensively, suddenly and surprisingly protective of him.

Dash meets the group of goths. They ignore him until one goth girl in particular recognizes him. He swaps a small baggie for a wad of cash--she's the distributor. Dash gives the girl a hug and heads toward the stage. He catches Amira's eye.

Amira has been watching intently this whole time, and tries to act casual when he sees that she was watching him. She largely fails at this.

Dash motions for Amira to come meet him at the front, near the stage.

At the front of the stage, they dance side by side, gazing up at the DJ and the massive psychedelic LCD screen behind him. Amira digs in her purse for two pairs of glow in the dark sunglasses.

Dash smiles and slips on a pair. They continue dancing until a couple making out bumps into Dash.

He looks around and sees the same scene as before--girls giving other girls massages, guys starting at the laser show with utter fascination--Dash realizes everyone around him is rolling hard on some sort of drug--his drug.

Amira touches his shoulder, motioning for Dash to give her a kiss.

Dash leans in to kiss her. Before he arrives at her lips, he sees Amira smile, revealing a bright blue pill on her tongue. Dash hesitates for a moment.

The tempo of the music rises. The crowd jumps with a renewed energy. This is the moment.

Dash kisses Amira passionately, more confidently than ever before. He swallows the pill and they dance among the crowd like crazed tribal people. She puts a pill in her own mouth as well.

POV of Dash as the world blends into a slow-exposure of streaming colors. Amira smiles up at him, kissing his lips and neck--it's the best he's ever felt.

A fellow CLUBBER, dressed in a snap cap, neon sunglasses, and a graphic tee, puts his arm around Dash.

CLUBBER

Dash! You-are-the-man!

The Clubber lifts up his sunglasses for a moment, letting them rest above his eyebrows. He leans into Dash's ear.

CLUBBER (CONT'D)

You rolling, bro?

Dash nods, grinning widely. The Clubber slides his glasses down over his eyes again and fist pumps into the air.

CLUBBER (CONT'D)

Alright alright!

Dash sways along to the beat, holding hands with Amira while the Clubber keeps his arm around Dash. They're like old buds.

He turns to his right to see Amira chatting with a BRO.

Amira reaches in her bag for a pill and gives it to the guy--he tucks money in her bra strap and she pushes him away, but laughs. She lets go of Dash's hand.

Just as quickly as the high came, it starts to fade away.

The MUSIC FADES and is replaced with a RINGING NOISE, the one we often hear after an explosion.

Dash lets go of Amira's hand. She doesn't notice--she's getting a massage from a nearby Raver Girl.

Dash shrugs off the CLUBBER's arm. Dash removes his glasses, suddenly invoking a sharp influx of information to his senses.

ENTER FLASHFORWARD

POV of Dash as he sees every detail clearly now--the spilled drinks on the filthy floor, the sweaty clubbers bumping against him, the pale and sickly Clubber who just had his arm around Dash, his face gaunt and aged.

No longer is everyone shrouded in the beauty of youth--the club is full of haggard shells of their former selves. This is his future.

Dash starts hyperventilating--he has to escape. He starts shoving through the crowd. Amira is still enjoying her massage, lost in the drug.

EXT. TREACHEROUS NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Dash is storming down the sidewalk, past a line of ravers waiting to enter the club. He's almost out of sight when Amira emerges on the sidewalk.

AMIRA

Dash! Dash!

He turns around, continuing to walk backwards.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Where are you going?!

He looks at her with disgust and disappointment.

There are a couple of OOHS and AAHS from the line of people, enjoying the spectacle.

She hurries after him.

She catches up to him, though he's walking quickly now and she struggles to keep up.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Dash, what is the deal? I thought we were having fun? Did you not have a good roll?

Dash turns and grabs her by the arm. They're at the very end of the line now and only a few clubbers watch on.

DASH

What's the deal? WHAT'S THE DEAL? You only brought me here to help you sell Webber's drug.

AMIRA

Well, no I just--

DASH

You don't give a shit about me. This has always been about you.

Dash turns to walk away but she grabs him by the arm.

AMIRA

Dash, why are you upset? Let's leave if you want. It doesn't matter. I don't care about any of that.

There's a commotion at the front of the line. The BRO Amira sold a pill to is stumbling out of the club, looking wild-eyed, obviously hallucinating. He walks into traffic.

CAR HORNS BLARE just as the BRO is hit by a cab. He tumbles over the hood and onto the pavement. Both Dash and Amira look.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

Amira rushes over to go check on the BRO. He's holding his ribcage and bleeding from one ear. Amira kneels next to him as a circle gathers around them. She removes a small light on her key chain and shines it into his eyes briefly.

The clubbers watch her with curiosity.

Amira leans in to the BRO and whispers in his ear.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
What did you see?

The Bro is still shaken and in considerable pain.

Amira acts as though she is helping him sit up, but really she squeezes his side. He yelps in pain.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
Just tell me what you saw.

BRO
What the fuck did you give me? You did this to me.

The people in the crowd begin to eye Amira suspiciously. An ambulance sounds its siren nearby and the bouncers of the club push apart the crowd.

Amira slips away. She looks back to where Dash was standing, but he's gone.

INT. LECTURE HALL - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

Dash sits in his normal seat in the lecture hall. Next to Dash, where Nakil used to sit, is an ambitious international student--he takes frantic notes.

Dash gazes around the lecture hall--Nakil is nowhere to be found. There's an empty chair at the front too--Amira is gone too.

INT. WEBBER'S OFFICE - LATER THAT MORNING

Amira sits in the diminutive chair while Webber stands in a corner, typing at an elevated computer. He makes her wait excruciating silence. She gnaws at her cuticles and flips through her phone.

Finally, he sits down behind her desk.

She clicks the top of her phone and the screen goes black.

WEBBER
Oh Amira, you're much less fortunate that I am. When I was at Oxford there were no devices. The whole world was out here.

Webber motions around the office.

WEBBER (CONT'D)
And there you are, sitting across
the desk from me, but trapped in
your own world.

Amira stares at the floor.

WEBBER (CONT'D)
Now, tell me everything.

AMIRA
He's done. He won't do it anymore.

Webber gives Amira a disappointed look.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
We've given the drug to him too
many times. He's developing a
tolerance--

WEBBER
(suddenly serious)
Then give him a bigger dose.

AMIRA
I won't do that.

They stare at each other in silence for a moment.

WEBBER
Amira, I'm not quite sure we
understand each other here. Maybe
you've forgotten that I got you
into this program. Maybe you've
forgotten that I am providing your
medication, without which you would
be spending your days hiding in
dark apartment. Are you not feeling
better? Have you not been seeing
the scenes again?

AMIRA
It has mostly helped, yes.

WEBBER
Then why are you being difficult?

AMIRA
I'm not being difficult, I--

WEBBER

There is no room for error here,
Miss Stowe. You know how important
these test trials are. If I don't
get what I want, neither will you.

Amira begins to tear up in frustration.

Webber softens his approach.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Perhaps our subject has been
exhausted. I thought something like
this might happen.

Webber digs through his drawer, pulling out a small bottle of
pills.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

This is the last test.

He eyes the bottle in the light pridefully.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

The most potent achievable.

He hands it to Amira. She accepts it, reluctantly.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Give me a report on this and our
work will be done. You will arrange
a meeting with London and we'll
sign the papers. I'll be off to
Oxford and you'll go on with your
studies.

AMIRA

I can't give this to Dash. He'll
die.

WEBBER

No, not for Dash, my dear.

Webber leans forward across the table. The Indian sword sways
lightly above his head.

She watches his eyes fearfully.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

She crunches the pills with a spoon onto a plate.

She quickly stirs the powder into a dark, steaming cup, watching the hypnotic spiral of the liquid.

WEBBER O.S.

Send our friend where he has always wanted to go. Do what is necessary.

She stops spinning and holds the spoon in place, disrupting the current of the liquid.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - NAKIL'S ROOM

Amira opens the creaking door, holding the mug. The room is just as we've seen it before--a few dusty, stacked moving boxes in the corner in an otherwise blank space.

Amira walks toward the boxes cautiously.

POV of Amira as peers over the stacked boxes--there are strewn items of clothing, torn pieces of paper with formulas and sketches, similar to the time-travel sketches Amira has on her wall. There are a few empty pill bottles.

Amira picks up one of the bottles and examines it--there's just a jumble of numbers, possibly referencing the different trial version.

She kneels next to the boxes, examining the fort-like structure built out of cardboard. She covers her nose for a moment.

She hears a SLIGHT WHISPERING SOUND.

POV as she peels back the flap, revealing a HOODED FIGURE laying horizontally in the boxes. He's whispering nonsense to himself as he scribbles notes.

Amira's hand trembles. The hot liquid dribbles out onto the floor, smacking a piece of paper, breaking the silence.

The Hooded Figure turns suddenly.

NAKIL
What do you want?!

His voice is coarse, his face a famished version of what is used to be.

Amira is disturbed by the sight of him--she sets down the mug and moves to leave.

Nakil snatches her wrist before she can rise.

NAKIL (CONT'D)
Have I failed?

Amira is caught off guard. She looks to his hand around her wrist--his cuticles are chewed significantly.

Nakil sees her looking at his hand and he becomes, for the first time in awhile, suddenly self aware. He pulls his hand away and retreats into the darkness of the box.

Amira picks up a piece of paper next to his pen. It's a list of his ancestors going back hundreds of years.

She looks at Nakil, who watches her from the corner of your eye.

AMIRA
You haven't failed. You must be so close to seeing...to knowing your destiny. Tell me, what is it?

Nakil is hesitant at first, but he moves horizontally out of the box.

Amira tries not to notice his mangled hands.

POV of Nakil as he see Amira, silhouetted in the gray light entering in from the window behind her. She seems divinely prophetic in her glow.

NAKIL
I have seen my father.

Nakil chews at his cuticles as he speaks--a side effect of the drug. He focuses on the window behind her, avoiding eye contact.†

Amira warms her hands around the mug.

NAKIL (CONT'D)
He never left India. He was too afraid to leave his birds.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) EXT. RURAL VILLAGE ROOFTOP - DAY - Nakil's FATHER as a young man standing on a roof in a rural city in India. He ties a small bag of white powder to the legs of a pigeon. He releases the pigeon into the air, watching it with utter admiration as it flies away.

NAKIL O.S.

But the birds gave him life.

B) INT. GAMBLING HOUSE - Nakil's FATHER has a small cage of pigeons under his arm. He accepts money from a businessman.

NAKIL O.S.

And then he met my mother.

C) EXT. RIVERBED - DAY - Nakil's FATHER sees a pretty girl, Nakil's MOTHER, on the other side of the wide river. She's dressed much more elegantly than him—clearly of higher class. He scribbles a note, attaches it to a pigeon, and it flies to her across the river, landing on her outstretched arm. She unties the note and reads it. She smiles and blushes.

NAKIL O.S.

This is where something went wrong in the cycle. His life was traded for mine.

E) INT. GAMBLING HOUSE - Nakil's FATHER is being beaten to death. His eyes flicker and then close.

D) INT. HOSPITAL - Nakil's MOTHER is giving birth. The doctor wipes the baby's face and his eyes open. His MOTHER's hand is still gripping the metal pole on the side of the bed. There's an outline tattoo of a bird.

BACK TO SCENE

Nakil is staring at the window, alone in the room. The steaming mug is directly where Amira used to be.

NAKIL
(to himself)
I must reset the cycle.

Nakil reaches out to it and puts it to his mouth. He gulps it down.

Amira watches from the doorway, horrified. She pulls the door shut, holding her mouth in her hand.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

Dash is walking with his backpack over his shoulders and his headphones in, paying little attention to his surroundings.

He rounds the corner of the building, where a couple is making out against the wall.

As Dash walks past, he hears his name.

VOICE O.S.

Dash!

POV of Dash as he turns and glances at the couple, where he (thinks) he sees Amira and Nakil intertwined in a kiss.

Dash walks even faster now, until--he bumps into CLUB GIRL.

CLUB GIRL

Hey!

Dash removes his headphones. He glances back at the couple--no one he knows. Dash looks distressed.

CLUB GIRL (CONT'D)

You remember me, right?

DASH

Yea...of course.

The Club Girl watches him, not really believing him.

DASH (CONT'D)

From the club.

She smiles.

CLUB GIRL

Yea! You had me worried there for a second. I was wondering if you had any more basketball tickets.

(MORE)

CLUB GIRL (CONT'D)
I heard it's gonna be a really big
game.

Dash looks at her, utterly confused and irritated.

DASH
What? No, I'm not going. I don't
even--

She steps in closer to him, checking her surroundings.

CLUB GIRL
(suddenly serious)
I mean X. The pills.

She steps back, assuming her jovial self once again.

CLUB GIRL (CONT'D)
My friends having just been raving,
hard, about the game. I heard you
had tickets. The best seats.

DASH
No, I don't have anymore. I really
don't.

Dash starts to walk away but Club Girl steps in front of him.

CLUB GIRL
Hey, hey. Wait. Let's figure
something out.

She kisses him intensely. He closes his eyes.

THE WORLD GOES QUIET.

Club Girl continues kissing him, but glances around her. A
shuttle bus approaches the curb. Club Girl pulls away.

CLUB GIRL
(whispers)
Club Onyx this weekend. Biggest
party of the year. I'll see you
there.

She takes his hand and fills it with a wad of cash and a
beaded bracelet. Before he can do anything, she's on the bus.

POV of Dash as he examines the bracelet. The beads are
imprinted with the words: PEACE, LOVE, UNITY, RESPECT -

ONYX.

Dash stuffs the bracelet and the money in his pocket.

The bus pulls away, revealing a flattened pigeon in the road. Dash stares at the dead bird.

EXT. CLIFF ALONG THE RIVER - THAT DAY

Pigeons peck at crumbs littered around the edge. A small rock sits on top of a stack of papers, all scrawled with handwritten notes and sketches. The wind picks up, sending some of these papers over the cliff and down to the river below. Many rocks jut out of the water beneath the cliff.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY - SAME TIME

Dash walks around the corner, seeing a group of students congregating around the entrance to the cafeteria. Dash pauses, not wanting to go any further.

One of the students seems to recognize him. She whispers to her friend, the BRO from the club. He turns and sees Dash--he wants to buy some too.

BRO

Hey, buddy!

He starts to make his way over.

Dash crosses the street and walks quickly down the path.

The BRO tries to cross as well, but the shuttle bus passes by. When the bus is gone, Dash is nowhere in sight. The BRO reluctantly heads back to his group of friends.

EXT. RUNNING PATH - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dash ducks through the trees and emerges on the dirt running path. A bike zooms right in front of him.

BICYCLER

Asshole!

The Bicycler keeps riding. Three female joggers make their way towards Dash, chatting loudly.†

Through the trees, Dash sees the river. He makes his way towards it.

EXT. RIVER - SAME TIME

The slow current pushes along small branches and leaves. On the surface, we see soaked papers--the same ones we just down blowing off the top of the cliff. They have frantic hand-drawn sketches. We might recognize this to be Nakil's.

Dash emerges through the trees and steps onto the sandy river beach. It's quiet, except for the moving water. He takes a seat on a rock.

He watches a bird swimming. Suddenly, it dips below the surface. He waits. Nothing. He looks for where it could have popped up. Then, something fills his line of sight. He can't believe what he's seeing--it's a person floating in the water.

Dash splashes out to the person. He wraps his arms around the person and starts dragging him to the shore. But as he is pulling the body, he recognizes that it's Nakil. Dash collapses in the knee-deep water, still clutching the body.

DASH
(to himself)
This isn't real, this isn't real.

Dash is seated in the shallow water now. He pulls Nakil backwards, edging toward the beach. Dash is hyperventilating, growing weaker. He grabs for Nakil's arm.

POV of Dash as he grabs Nakil's sleeve, which slides back and reveals Nakil's forearm. On it is a carved outline of a bird.

DASH (CONT'D)
(to himself)
No.

Dash immediately lets go of the body. Nakil starts to float away, farther down the river.

Dash's breathing starts to slow.

A SCREAM echoes. Dash hurries to his feet and dives back through the bushes.

EXT. RUNNING PATH - DAY

Dash, now soaking wet, appears cautiously on the bike path. In the distance, he can see a group of joggers and bicyclists talking--they've discovered the body as well.

Dash steps across the trail as quietly as possible, but not before someone calls out after him.

JOGGER

Hey you!

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

An ambulance zooms in the direction Dash is walking from. Numerous students watch as it passes. Their eyes naturally fall on Dash, the only person walking away from the incident. Water drips from his clothes onto the pavement.

Dash ducks down an alley.

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - AMIRA'S ROOM - SOME MINUTES LATER

Amira is sitting in front of her computer in her room. Her back is to the window. She's typing up the end of her report to Ayurveda Consulting.

POV on the screen: At the bottom of the page is an unchecked box for "Full Recommendation." The cursor hovers around it. Her eyes wander to a shelf on her desk.

She grabs the framed picture in front of her--it's a very early photo of her and her fiance. It's the happiest we've ever seen her.

As she turns the angle of the picture, the glass covering reflects her own image. She looks tired and old. She drops the picture and it falls to the ground, shattering.

POV of Amira as she scrapes the floor with her feet, crumbling the broken glass with her shoe.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT -FLASHBACK

Amira scrapes her foot across broken glass on the street. Red flashes shoot across the ground.

POLICE OFFICER
Are you currently on any
medication?

Amira looks up, as if seeing him for the first time.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
I need to take your statement.
Please, go through everything you
remember.

Amira shrugs the blanket over her shoulders and loses herself
in the spinning red police light. A fire truck nearby sprays
water on the two cars. Both cars have been burned severely.

The agitated Police Officer shifts his weight.

AMIRA
We were just going along. We were
talking about traveling to Paris.

POLICE OFFICER
How fast were you going?

AMIRA
I don't know.

POLICE OFFICER
What color was the stoplight when
you entered the intersection?

AMIRA
Oh I wouldn't know.

POLICE OFFICER
Ma'm, did you say you wouldn't
know?

AMIRA
How could I? We were talking.

The tow truck begins to hoist the masticated car off the
ground. The tragedy of the moment begins to settle in. Her
voice quivers.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
He was taking me to Paris. We were
going to be married--

POLICE OFFICER
Ma'm, I need this for the report.
What color was the light?

AMIRA
(exasperated)
I already told you, I don't know.

POLICE OFFICER
Then I'm going to have to put into
the report that the operator of the
vehicle did not--

AMIRA
Operator?

She looks to the wreckage--it stings.

The Police Officer knocks on the window of his squad car.

POLICE OFFICER
Ma'm, we pulled his body out of the
passenger seat. You were the
driver.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. AMIRA'S APARTMENT - AMIRA'S ROOM

There's a knock at the window. Amira turns her head slowly--
it's Dash.

She opens the window and lets him inside. He seems angry at
first, but her reticence throws him off.

She takes a seat on the bed. Dash takes the chair--his
clothes are still soaked.

A tear floats down her cheek. Dash notices.

DASH
So you've heard?

Amira looks at the broken glass at his feet and says nothing.

Dash sighs. He sits back in his chair and ruminates in the
moment--finally, someone who's dealing with the same thing as
he is.

DASH (CONT'D)

Do you know where he was?

Amira looks up at him, confused. Amira is still thinking about her dead fiance.

DASH (CONT'D)

I mean, where was he living all this time?

AMIRA

He's dead. Why are you asking about him?

DASH

Does this have anything to do with Webber?

Amira doesn't say anything.

DASH (CONT'D)

Of course it does.

He stands up.

DASH (CONT'D)

Everything has to do with Webber. He's playing this whole fucking school.

AMIRA

Oh what would you know about any of that?!

DASH

You don't think I see what he does to you? One day you act like you love me and then I don't hear from you for days? Am I supposed to think that's a coincidence? Mood swings?

Amira's eyes wander to the pill bottles on her desk.

Dash notices. He walks over and grabs the bottles and throws them against the wall. A top pops off and pills fly everywhere.

DASH (CONT'D)

Everything you told me was a lie!

Dash paces the room, out of breath.

DASH (CONT'D)

There's no fucking future in this drug. It's all bullshit. All the charts, the lectures--this was all part of the scam. To use me. You fucking used me.

Amira picks up the scattered pills on the ground, placing each into a pill bottle one by one.

DASH (CONT'D)

You're kidding. Look at you!

Dash stomps down onto a few pills, crushing them.

DASH (CONT'D)

It's because of these that Nakil is dead!

Amira freezes. It all clicks--Dash has been talking about Nakil. Nakil is dead. And that's because Amira gave him the final version of the test drug.

Amira continues picking them up.

Dash rushes over and grabs her by the wrists, pulling her to her feet.

DASH (CONT'D)

What is wrong with you!?

Amira grabs a fistful of Dash's shirt.

AMIRA

I need them!

Dash lets go of her. He takes a seat on the bed. Amira watches him process everything.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

We were driving...I was driving. I ran a red light. My fiance died. And now I can't even get in a bus without seeing it happen all over again. Like reliving the moment and the shame every time. So I need this drug to pass so I can go on living my life.

Dash walks to the doorway.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Dash.

He turns.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

I didn't choose this life.

DASH

You're right. But you did choose me.

Dash leaves the room and heads for the front door of her apartment.

We hear the sound of TEARING PAPER just before the door slams.

Amira peeks around the corner and sees that he has torn down her long sheet of paper full of drug graphs.

She sits back down at her computer, shaken, but determined. POV as she clicks the "FULL RECOMMENDATION" box and submits the report for Webber's drug.

INT. DASH'S DORM ROOM - THAT EVENING

The pill press is running at full speed. Dash in dry clothes now. He operates the machine like a seasoned pro--measuring the powder, working the gears, adjusting the spout.

Dash watches at the blue pills spill one by one into the capture basket, echoing loudly like pouring candy into a bowl.

He puts on a nice shirt and slicks his hair back. He feels at his pockets for his keys and then sees his wet jeans on the floor. He picks them up and reaches in the pocket, pulling out his keys, a wad of cash, and the bracelet from

CLUB GIRL.

POV as he eyes the bracelet: PEACE, LOVE, UNITY, RESPECT -

ONYX.

He looks to the pill press, still spitting out pills. He walks over and flicks the off switch and the gears stop. He throws a blanket over the machine and heads out the door, leaving the basket of pills untouched.

INT. GEORGETOWN RESTAURANT BAR - SAME TIME

Amira is seated with a few of the friends we met at the house party before. Amira is dolled up with her hair tightly slicked back, wearing red lipstick and her leather jacket.

Her friends laugh as they clink their drinks.

But Amira's head is somewhere else. She digs in her purse for her phone and checks her recent text to Dash:

AMIRA: WHERE ARE YOU?

DASH: FRONT GATES

She scoots to the edge of the booth.

FRIEND #1
Where you headed off to?

AMIRA
I just have to take this call.

They smile at each other and Amira heads outside. She watches her friend from the large window. They all seem entirely caught up in the conversation. She steps off the curb and disappears into the darkness.

EXT. GEORGETOWN CAMPUS - FRONT GATES - NIGHT

Dash stands in between the two gates. The castle-like Healy building looms behind him.

AMIRA (O.S.)
Dash!

Dash turns to see that Amira a block away.

She jogs to catch up to him.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
(out of breath)
Hey. What are you doing out here?

DASH
Don't fucking talk to me like we're
friends. I have a bus to catch so
hurry up.

Dash turns and walks down the street. She follows.

AMIRA
Dash, I'm sorry. Will you just let
me talk to you for a second?

Dash yells to her over his shoulder as he continues to walk.

DASH
(growing irritated)
You always have something to tell
me. Always something to show me.

Amira reaches out to grab his arm just as Dash spins around
and grabs her by the shoulders and kisses her.

Dash pulls away. Amira looks at him with total surprise.

Dash doesn't know what to say, until--

DASH (CONT'D)
This time, I have something to show
you.

INT. GEORGETOWN HEALY BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

Amira follows Dash up a winding set of stairs in a stone
hallway. Shards of moonlight enter from above.

AMIRA
How the hell did you find this?

DASH
I discovered this my first year
here. I spent a lot of time in the
dark.

She looks at Dash with wonder. They press on up the stairs.

EXT. HEALY ROOF - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

They emerge from the small opening and step out onto the roof. The whole of DC, including the moments, are lit up in the distance.

DASH

Come out here. Here. On the ledge.

Dash hangs his feet over the edge, scraping small rocks and sending them to the ground hundreds of feet below.

Amira cautiously approaches the edge—she's not quite that brave. She sits with her feet on firm ground and her back to the skyline.

AMIRA

Is this your way of saying that
you're not mad at me?

Dash seems lost in thought. The warning light for planes flashes red across his face in even pulses. He stares up at it.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

(looking up at the light)
Ever since I came here I've had
dreams of seeing fireworks
exploding by that tower.

DASH

That's impossible. They sealed the
entrance to the tower with stone a
few years ago. I've already tried.

AMIRA

It's so beautiful every time I
dream it.

Amira scoots closer to Dash.

DASH

I also lied to you. The first time
we spoke.

Dash looks down at his feet. The tall trees below seem miniature from this height.

DASH (CONT'D)

I said that I was gone from school because my girlfriend had committed suicide. But that didn't happen.

Amira moves closer to him, curious.

DASH (CONT'D)

She actually just got knocked up by my best friend and moved back home. But to me, it felt like she died. It felt like they both did.†

Dash turns to Amira, looking her in the eye for the first time.

DASH (CONT'D)

So I stood on this ledge, ready to jump, just to make it all feel real to me.

AMIRA

To make what feel real?

DASH

All my mistakes. Being this close to the edge made me afraid of dying. So I started drinking the syrup every day. It's only when I stopped that I realized things were strange.

AMIRA

It's not your fault that the people you cared about hurt you. That's their mistake.

DASH

And where does that put you? What if I slip off this earth--where would you be?

AMIRA

I'd be standing here, holding my hand out in the dark.

The red light flashes against her cheeks.

Dash looks off in the distance as a plane soars over DC.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

We have the meeting tomorrow. I think the drug is going through. And then Webber will be out of here for good.

DASH

And so will you. Good luck to you Amira.

Dash stands up and walks towards the exit hole. There are several broken padlocks on the ground next to it.

AMIRA

Dash.

He turns.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

I didn't want any of this. You said we'd be together.

DASH

I didn't choose for this drug to ruin my life. You did.

Dash disappears down the dark hole.

EXT. CLUB ONYX - THAT NIGHT

Dash stands at the mouth of an alleyway as he slugs from a bottle. Ravers dressed in an eclectic mix of Gothic and neon rave gear pass by.

Dash eyes the bottle--he's not even halfway finished. He puts the bottle to his mouth, about to chug it, when he glimpses CLUB GIRL pass by with a group of her friends.

Dash tosses the bottle aside and rushes to catch up with her.

INT. CLUB ONYX - MINUTES LATER

Dash enters the club, alone, and searches for the CLUB GIRL. She's nowhere to be seen.

He weaves through people deeper into the festive club--LED lit banners advertise tonight's "END OF THE YEAR/WORLD" party. Girls with masquerade masks carry sparklers and bottles to the VIP section.

The club is the most packed it has ever been, filled with tons of new faces. Dash pushes on.

As the crowd parts, he recognizes GOTH GIRL, the distributor for the drug that he had used before. She's in dark sunglasses and is chatting within her group of goths. He sneaks up on her and whispers in her ear.

DASH

Ma'm, I need you to come with me.

She spins around, startled. But upon recognizing Dash, she gives him a hug. She bounces along to the beat.

GOTH GIRL

What's going on dude! I haven't seen you in awhile. Here.

She nods to her friends and they give her and Dash some privacy, keeping an eye out for bouncers.

GOTH GIRL (CONT'D)

You know, I'm almost sold out of Helix by the way. How much did you bring?

Dash shakes his head. Goth Girl looks at him with surprise. She slides her glasses up to her forehead.

GOTH GIRL (CONT'D)

(suddenly serious)

You didn't bring anything?

Dash tries to calm her down. He puts both hands on her shoulders.

DASH

It's fine-people don't need that shit. I think it'll be a good time tonight.

Amira shrugs his hands off her shoulders.

GOTH GIRL

No dude, it's not fine. What the fuck are you trying to do?

Dash can't understand her sudden anger.

GOTH GIRL (CONT'D)

Did you get busted?

She looks around, as if the police are about to bust in at any second.

DASH

No, no. I'm just done. I don't wanna sell anymore. I'm clean.

Amira steps away from him, disgusted.

GOTH GIRL

Well you just fucked me over for tonight.

She turns and walks back within her group.

DASH

Hey! Hey!

But the DJ is just starting his set and the crowd rushes towards the stage. Dash gets pushed along with the crowd.

At the front of the stage, Dash tries to shake off that encounter and he bounces along to the beat.

Suddenly, the CLUB GIRL is right next to him.

CLUB GIRL

Boo bitch!

Dash turns, excited to see her. He leans in for a hug and she gives him a light kiss on the cheek.

DASH

How's it going?

The CLUB GIRL giggles. She's there purely for the drug transaction.

CLUB GIRL

Umm...good.

Dash admires the light show on stage.

DASH

I didn't even hear about this party last year. Did you go?

He turns to CLUB GIRL, who is talking to her friend. The friend hands her more cash. The Club Girl turns to Dash.

CLUB GIRL
Hey can we get two more pills? I
have money.

She smiles sweetly.

DASH
Do you wanna get a drink sometime?

CLUB GIRL
A drink? No, I'm good.

She holds the money out in front of Dash. He tries to ignore
it.

DASH
Maybe we could go somewhere cool
before everyone goes home for
summer.

The friend of the Club Girl motions for Club Girl to hurry it
up.

CLUB GIRL
It's fine actually, I don't need
the extras. Just give me what I
paid for earlier.

Dash looks at her, utterly disappointed.

DASH
I don't have any.

CLUB GIRL
You don't have them? Are you
serious? I gave you money!

Dash digs in his pocket and pulls out the wad of cash she
gave him.

The Club Girl snatches it away before he can say anything.

POV of Dash as he watches the Club Girl talk angrily to her
friends just a short distance away. A new crowd fills in the
space where she was standing.

INT. CLUB ONYX - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dash at the bar now, looking disheveled.

Across the bar, he recognizes the BRO from earlier that day. Dash waves. But the BRO gives him a "fuck you" look and turns back his group of friends. Dash is all alone.

EXT. CLUB ONYX - MOMENTS LATER - BEFORE DAWN

Dash storms out of the front doors and marches up the street. It's much lighter outside and Dash looks especially haggard.

EXT. N STREET - LATER THAT MORNING

A BMW pulls out from a meticulously manicured brick home. A man steps sticks his head out of the window as he backs up-- it's Webber.

He pulls his head back into the car and looks in the rear-view mirror to see AMIRA. She's standing directly behind his car. He slams on the brakes.

He opens the driver's side door.

WEBBER

Amira? What are you doing here?

AMIRA

Good morning, Professor.

WEBBER

How do you know where I live?

Amira lets the silence draw out eerily.

AMIRA

I phoned your wife and she told me.
We need to talk.

Webber reluctantly puts the car in park.

INT. WEBBER'S HOUSE - STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Amira is seated in a high-backed leather chair. The room is filled with books and antiques from America's glory days--a folded cotton American flag, a megaphone record player, and several corked, elegant bottles of dark liquid.

Webber appears and sets down a glass in front of Amira. He sits in a chair opposite her and takes a sip from his own glass. She eyes the drink in front of her.

WEBBER

A good friend once said, "I feel bad for those who don't drink, because when they wake up in the morning, that's the best they're going to feel all day."

Webber raises his eyebrows and takes a gulp.

AMIRA

You weren't friends with Sinatra.

Webber freezes, then slowly sets his glass down in front of him. Before he can reply--

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Dash knows about the drug. And he won't talk to me anymore. He's done dealing, so there will be no more of that. No more tests. I think we need to postpone the meeting with Charles until we can fix this last version of Helix.

Webber smiles patronizingly, holding his drink in his lap.

WEBBER

Ms. Stowe, I'll excuse this intrusion into my home because I know things have been difficult for you. With the pressing deadlines and our final meeting tomorrow--

AMIRA

And Nakil's suicide.

Webber frowns at the interruption, but presses on.

WEBBER

Your dedication to this project has been tested time and again. And you've continued to perform wonderfully. Don't think I haven't noticed.

Webber reaches in a small cupboard beneath a lamp. Amira grips the arm rest of her chair instinctively. She watches him.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

I plan on sending rave reviews to your employer. This is a big step forward for you, and I don't want you getting tripped up on what happened in the past. Your mission here is nearly complete.

AMIRA

Complete? How can you say that? The worst possible side effects that you said would never happen, happened! How many other people will jump off a bridge when this drug tells them they need to?

WEBBER

Those issues will get resolved.

AMIRA

When? After they cut you a check and you're long gone? What if I just go down there and tell them the truth myself?

Webber gets to his feet, now towering over her.

WEBBER

My dear, the success of this project is due to your efforts as much as mine. You sought me out, you secured your placement with me, and you completed the subject tests as need. You chose this and any blood that's on my hands is also on yours.

Webber drains the rest of his drink and shrugs on his suit jacket.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

I'll see you at our meeting with Charles. Good day.

INT. AYURVEDA LOBBY - NOON

Webber, dressed in a tweed jacket and elbow patches, chipper from a stiff Manhattan cocktail earlier that day, enters through the large glass door.

At the desk, he interrupts the guard with a smile and a rattle of his knuckles on the granite.

WEBBER

The last name is Webber.

The SECURITY GUARD looks up at him, setting his newspaper aside. He clicks through the computer.

Webber anxiously hops in place, smoothing his beard. With a note of pretentiousness,

WEBBER (CONT'D)

I have a very big meeting today.
That's why I'm here a bit early.
They might not even be ready for
me.

The Security Guard keeps clicking through, now squinting at the screen, searching harder.

Webber notices and clears his throat, growing worried.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

The name was Webber. W-E-B-B-E-R.

The security guard sits back in his chair.

SECURITY GUARD

There's no meeting today. It's not
in here.

WEBBER

There must be some mistake--a
miscommunication, you must call
someone at once.

The security guard rolls his eyes and picks up the phone with the weight of the world.

Just then, the BELL from the elevator chimes. Out walks Amira in a sharp business suit, looking disheveled.

Webber lets out a sigh of relief. He rattles his knuckles on the surface once again.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Ah, there she is. I'm with her.

Webber strides away from the desk, wiping sweat from his brow. The security guard watches on, skeptical.

More business types enter into the lobby through the swinging glass doors as Webber tries to make his way over to Amira. He gets lost in the tangle.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

Ms. Stowe! Ms. Stowe! Amira! God damn it!

Amira doesn't hear him and she slips through the glass doors. Webber shoves through the crowd to catch her.

EXT. AYURVEDA - CLOUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Amira punches her heels down concrete steps to the street when Webber bursts through the swinging door, yelling after her.

WEBBER

Ms. Klein!

Amira stops dead in her tracks. Webber is out of breath. She turns to face him. Webber takes his time now as he pokes down the steps, smoothing his jacket and adjusting his tie until he reaches her.

WEBBER (CONT'D)

We have a meeting today. A very important one. Probably the most important one of your life.

AMIRA

I'm afraid that's all gone now.

Webber tries to restrain his growing rage, but his ferocity seeps through as he spits words at her.

WEBBER

All gone now? Maybe I should decrease your dose of tranquilizer-- you are acting like a fool. Where is Charles?!

Webber takes a step towards her. She doesn't budge.

AMIRA

Charles is in London. He's not coming here. And the meeting is off. I already took care of--

Webber reaches to grab a hold of her face.

WEBBER

You listen to me--

Amira shoves his hand away. Bystanders pause to watch the argument. Neither Webber nor Amira notice.

AMIRA

No you listen to me. I sent them the reports from the field and guess what? The drug doesn't work. You're a failure.

That stings. He searches for an explanation.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

And if they care enough to keep reading, I also included the report about Nakil. You're done, Webber.

Webber can't believe what he's hearing. Suddenly, the rage of failure overtakes him. Webber slaps Amira across the face.

Amira's head rolls to the side as the slap glances off her cheek. Several bystanders stop in mid-step and stare holes into Webber.

Webber looks at his hand, as if it weren't his own. His mouth hangs agape and he stumbles backward, now seeing a dozen people watching him. He turns and hurries down the street, as if in a daze. A male bystander yells after him.

MALE BYSTANDER

Hey! Get back here!

He turns to Amira.

MALE BYSTANDER (CONT'D)

Don't worry miss, we'll take care of this.

The Male Bystander and his Buddy start after Webber.

Webber checks over his shoulder and seeing the approaching men, quickens his pace,

Amira watches Webber go, a slight satisfaction at seeing his complete ruination. Amira watches them for a moment, but heads off in the other direction.

Webber glances over his shoulder again, stepping off the curb and slamming down to his knees. A bus whizzes by in front of him, nearly hitting him.

EXT. CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Amira walks quickly with a phone to her ear. She looks at the phone.

AMIRA
Damn it! Come on!

INT. CAB - MOMENTS LATER

Amira sits biting her nails with her head against the window. Morning lights refracts through the glass.

Amira's POV as she sees the Gothic towers of Georgetown looming in the distance.

EXT. HEALY BUILDING ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

We recognize the rooftop from before--the large square surrounded by a three foot tall wall.

Dash approaches the edge just as a breeze kicks up, filling his nostrils with the scent of spring. Suddenly, the sounds around him coalesce into a single whirling of the wind. He closes his eyes, letting his senses take over. He traces his fingertips against the rough concrete lip.

He opens his eyes and steps up onto the concrete ledge. The wind is even stronger now, blowing through his hair and inflating his shirt into a sail.

Dash's POV as he looks down below, surveying the world he's ready to say goodbye to. Hordes of students are splayed out on the lawn below, anxiously awaiting the first day of spring.

Dash closes his eyes again as a sudden, imaginary fog rolls in, masking the world beneath him. Only the sharp points of the towers are visible through the fog.

Dash's POV looks at his feet, slowly disappearing in the fog. He's ready to fall into the abyss.

Just then, the metal door slams behind him. Dash is frozen, unsure who to expect. But a hand creeps inside his, and next to him on the ledge is Amira. She faces forward, embracing the view.

Dash's POV as the fog burns away and the sun appears, torching the campus in orange light.

Dash turns to Amira.

DASH
How did you know I'd be here?

Amira takes a step closer to him, letting her cheek rest on his shoulder. They're both still precariously close to the edge.

AMIRA
I wasn't sure what to expect.

Smiling now.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
Coming back to see you was the only choice I had where I didn't know where I'd end up. What that would mean for me.

Dash puts his hands around her shoulders.

DASH
What were the choices? Flying off this rooftop...

He peeks over the edge.

DASH (CONT'D)
Skipping off to Europe with Webber...

He moves closer to her, touching her nose with his.

DASH (CONT'D)
Or finding me.

Suddenly, he grips her shoulders and shoves her quickly over the edge, pulling her back just in time to reverse her momentum. He speaks to her with an unseen intensity.

DASH (CONT'D)
How can I ever trust you? You made
me a criminal. Nakil is dead.
Everything that comes out of your
mouth is a lie.

He squeezes her more tightly now, shoving her even farther
over the edge. She arches her back, desperately trying to
keep her body on the narrow ledge.

AMIRA
Because I protected you.

Amira's eyes begin to swell now, a mix of fear and maybe
something else.

AMIRA (CONT'D)
Because I was the one holding my
hand out in the dark.

Dash searches deep into her eyes.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. TUNNEL - FLASHBACK

Amira waits outside, staring deep into the darkness, anxious.
She enters to go rescue Dash.

Above the construction tunnel, the construction crew
struggles to reconnect the electrical wires to the tunnel
lights.

BACK TO PRESENT

EXT. HEALY BUILDING ROOFTOP

Dash holds Amira close, measuring the truth in her eyes. For
a moment, it seems like he might jump.

Amira glances over the edge.

AMIRA
I'll go with you, if it's too much.

Dash looks over the edge as well. Students below begin to set
up a small rocket firework.

DASH
No. I'll stay.

Dash lets go of her and steps down from the ledge. She stands there, staring back at him, utterly confused. He turns.

AMIRA
Dash? Stay with me?

Dash arrives at the small metal door.

DASH
When I think about Helix now, I realize that none these flashforwards were ever real. This has all just been...a daydream. I thought I knew what I wanted and I risked everything for it. For you. But now you're someone I want to forget.

Dash disappears down the hole.

Amira sits on the edge and hangs her feet over. She watches the students splayed out on the lawn, drinking, laughing and enjoying the last few days of the year.

Down below, two college bros flee from a fiery firework rocket.

The rocket shoots into the air and careens up over the trees and to the tower, exploding into the air.

She steps forward, her toes jutting out over the edge. The rush of adrenaline gives her tremors. She squeezes her eyes shut

INT. HOUSE - AMIRA'S FANTASY DREAM

Amira's Husband stands in front of her, holding out his hand.

EXT. HEALY BUILDING ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

Amira reaches out with one hand, eyes still closed, and steps off the edge. She begins to dip forward into nothingness--

Until a HAND pulls her back back onto the ledge.

DASH

I won't let you die like this. We
aren't defined by our premonitions--
we can create your own destiny.

He pulls her off the ledge and onto the safety of the roof.
Amira tries to send herself back into reality.

AMIRA

But we can't create one together?
You should've just let me
disappear. I don't deserve to be
saved.

DASH

I can't pretend like you never
saved me. And all you did was--

AMIRA

Hold my hand out in the dark.

They kiss briefly before Dash turns and walks away.

THE END