

ORION AND THE DARK

Screenplay by

Charlie Kaufman

Based on the book Orion and the Dark by Emma Yarlett

First Draft
December 12, 2016

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

In close-up, Orion, eight years old, walks toward camera, a tense smile plastered across his face.

ORION (V.O.)

Hi. My name is Orion. I'm a kid.
Just like you. So we have that in
common. Anyhow, I saw you sitting
there by yourself and thought maybe
you'd like some company. I know I
would. So that's why I'm walking up
to you right now and --

Pull back to reveal Orion, holding a Melancholia lunch box featuring a meteor hurtling to Earth, walking toward a seemingly nice girl eating lunch by herself under a tree.

ORION (V.O.)

-- walking right past you.
(sigh)
Why, you ask? Because I'm afraid.

He sits with his lunch under another tree, from which he can eat and discreetly eye the girl.

ORION (V.O.)

Afraid of what, you want to know.
So much, really. But in this case,
rejection, humiliation, that you
might tell your friends and you
would all laugh at me.

It's as if he's having a conversation with the girl sitting twenty feet away. He takes a bite of his sandwich.

ORION (V.O.)

And it's not just you I'm afraid
of. And not just girls in general.
It's most things, to be candid. I
have, according to my therapist a
Cluster C disorder, which includes
feelings of anxiety, inadequacy,
extreme worry about negative
evaluation. Hence my avoidance of
you.

He bites into his sandwich.

ORION (V.O.)

I do think you have a kind,
beautiful sadness about you.
(MORE)

ORION (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Not unlike Kirsten Dunst from Lars Von Trier's excellent movie Melancholia. She, too, like you, had blonde hair.

(holds up thermos
featuring Dunst)

I love that sadness. I wish I could tell you that. I almost feel I could, because we share that sadness.

(pause)

I've got tuna. What do you have?

The girl eats.

ORION (V.O.)

It would be fun to know.

(pause)

I like movies. I'm a film lover. Paradoxically, horror movies. That's why I saw Melancholia. I realize it's not age appropriate but there are certain directors I can't not see. Von Trier is one. Haneke. Kubrick. Hideo Nakata.

(sigh)

What movies do you like?

He waits for an answer. The girl eats.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Orion sits in the back of the class. The teacher, Mrs. Spinoza leans against desk and addresses the kids.

MRS. SPINOZA

Who can tell me which explorer first reached India by sea?

One girl urgently raises her hands, says "ooh ooh." The teacher scans the room.

ORION (V.O.)

A tricky situation. Mrs. Spinoza usually calls on kids who don't raise their hands. But raising my hand so she won't call on me is a dangerous strategy. Therefore I try to look invisible. But at the same time not too invisible. I know the answer is Vasco da Gama. It's the answer to a great many questions in second grade.

(MORE)

ORION (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But I'm afraid if called on, I
 won't be able to speak. I've
 already got cotton mouth. I might
 say Gasco da Vama. Everyone would
 laugh. I never say anything in
 class.

MRS. SPINOZA
 Karen?

HAND RAISING GIRL
 Vasco da Gama?

MRS. SPINOZA
 Very good, Karen.

ORION (V.O.)
 I'm not a fan of Karen.

INT. GYM - DAY

The kids play basketball. Orion tries to be invisible.

ORION (V.O.)
 I'm afraid of being responsible for
 my team losing. Who among us wants
 to be reviled?

The ball, thrown to a distracted Orion, bounces off his head.

ORION (V.O.)
 (despairingly)
 Now I am reviled.

KID #1
 Loser!

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Orion and other boys change into school clothes.

ORION (V.O.)
 Of course, I'm afraid of locker
 rooms, because a) what sane person
 isn't and b) Richie Panichi.

The bruiser Richie Panichi appears from around a locker.

RICHIE
 (mockingly fey)
 Oh, hey, Orion.

ORION
 (quietly)
 Hi, Richie.

Orion attempts to dress in a hurry, pulls his pants on backwards. Richie laughs as Orion fumbles to correct them.

RICHIE
 Wear pants much?

Richie looks to the other kids for appreciation of his witticism. Other kids dutifully supply it.

ORION (V.O.)
 I'm afraid of being humiliated by
 Richie Panichi, afraid of being
 punched by him. Also, I'm afraid of
 -- Ok, what if I punch him back and
 he falls and hits his head on a
 bench, say, and dies. Or his nose
 goes into his brain. And he dies.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

A childlike animation of a handcuffed Orion being put into the back of a police cruiser.

ORION
 I'll go to juvie. Plus I have to
 live with the guilt for the --

RICHIE
 I asked you if you dress much.
 Don't be rude.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Back to real life: Orion looks up at Richie.

ORION
 (quietly, timidly)
 Yes, I do dress much.

RICHIE
 How come I can never hear you?

ORION (V.O.)
 Because I'm scared of you,
 because you're a bully.

ORION
 I dunno.

RICHIE
 (hand cupped to ear)
 What?

ORION
 I dunno.

RICHIE
 (sing-songy)
 I dunno. I dunno.
 (to others)
 Hey everyone, O'Cryin' dunno!

Other kids laugh. Orion, dressed, grabs a pad from his locker, closes it, tries to make his way past Richie.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
 What's that pad you always got?

Orion attempts to formulate an answer.

ORION (V.O.)
 It's where I draw my fears. It's how I try to manage my issues. My therapist says it's a positive way to put things in perspective.

ORION
 I dunno.

RICHIE
 Maybe I can help you figure it out.

Richie grabs it. Orion attempts to get it back, but Richie opens it out of his reach. The pad is full of childlike and beautiful drawings of things Orion is afraid of, in the same style as Orion's "juvie" fantasy. Richie reads off some fears in a mocking voice, as we see the drawings.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
 I'm afraid of monsters, bees, haircuts, dogs, the ocean, Richie Panichi
 (looking up)
 -- Hey, I'm famous! Thanks!
 (attitude shifts)
 Wait, that's a mean picture of me.
 (punches Orion on the arm)
 But thanks!
 (continues reading)
 -- being wrongfully convicted of murder for justifiably killing Richie Panichi --

There's an illustration of a dead Panichi, X's for eyes.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm in here twice! I'm famous.
 (attitude shifts)
 Wait, you drew me dead. No one
 draws me dead!

He punches Orion on the arm, then throws the book on the floor. Orion hurries to pick it up.

ORION (V.O.)

If I weren't scared, I would tell you that's my property, that I put my heart and soul into it, that you had no right to grab it from me. That you are cruel. That you will peak in high school, marry too young, work in a used car lot, and eventually drink yourself to death.

ORION

Thank you, Richie.

Panichi walks away.

ORION (V.O.)

I don't know why I thanked him.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Orion walks home from school alone, a few steps behind an older boy.

ORION (V.O.)

I always walk home behind Johnny Wills, my next door neighbor. He's in sixth grade. I figure if Richie comes after me, I could call out and Johnny would protect me. Johnny doesn't know my plan, but he seems like a nice person, so maybe it'd work. Anyway, It's better than nothing. I've never actually talked to Johnny Wills.

They pass a storm drain. In an animated Orion-style drawing of the sewer, eyes peer out from it.

ORION (V.O.)

I'm afraid of storm drains. I could say it's because of the recent miniseries It, based on the novel by Stephen King and, certainly, that didn't help, but the truth is I was afraid of storm drains before. Falling into one and never being able to get out is a concern. Of course it's much worse if there's an evil clown down there. I should've never watched the miniseries. But I've been a Stephen King fan since The Shining. I never should have watched The Shining.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

Orion approaches his house. There's a cartoonish "sold" sign on the lawn.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

In the Orion drawing version, the house is empty. Some debris on the floor. Orion looks around, worried.

ORION (V.O.)

Page 17 of my sketchbook: I'm afraid my parents will move away while I'm at school and not tell me. I don't know why I fear this. My therapist doesn't have any theories. My parents certainly seem nice enough.

MOTHER

Hi, honey.

Back to reality: Orion turns, sees his mother in the kitchen.

ORION

Hi, Mom.

MOTHER

How was school?

ORION

Fine.

She hugs him. He grimaces when she touches his bruised arm.

MOTHER

I made some oatmeal cookies.

She offers him a cookie, looking worried.

ORION (V.O.)

I'm afraid I might be mentally challenged and adults are nice to me because they don't want me to know. Almost all adults looks worried when they talk to me.

ORION

(taking cookie)

Thanks, Mom.

MOTHER

(over-enunciating)

You're. Welcome. Sweetie.

Orion heads carefully up the stairs.

ORION (V.O.)

I'm afraid of dying. I've studied the actuarial charts. Falls are high on the list. I'm careful on stairs and in bath tubs. I will only look over a cliff while lying on my stomach. It's harder to fall that way.

(thinking)

Unless someone sneaks up behind you, picks you up, and throws you off. I need to put that in my book.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Orion eats spaghetti with his parents. As Orion narrates, the images transforms into an Orion drawing: an endlessly long strand of spaghetti is sucked into his mouth, making its way down his esophagus, into his stomach, through his intestines.

ORION (V.O.)

I'm afraid of choking on spaghetti. The strands sometimes get stuck in my throat and --

Orion snaps back to reality.

MOTHER

(to father)

-- article in the Times today about climate change. Scientists say --

MOTHER

Very, very infrequently.

ORION

Will it happen to me?

His parents looks worried.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Orion watches a CG animated film in which a bunch of anthropomorphic plastic containers with giant cartoon eyes are in a recycling plant.

PLASTIC LITRE BOTTLE

I can't wait to be reincarnated!

PLASTIC BUTTER TUB

I want to be a plastic bag next!
The way they blow in the breeze? So beautiful, so profound!

ORION (V.O.)

A nod to American Beauty. That's for the parents, of course.

A plastic juice bottle gets crushed in the recycling machine and farts. All the recyclables laugh.

PLASTIC LITRE BOTTLE

Juicy! Did you have Mexican last night?

ORION (V.O.)

That one's for the kids.

(beat)

Recyclable items do not have eyes. Or personalities. They do not go on adventures. They most certainly do not eat Mexican food. I don't appreciate being condescended to. It does nothing to help me with my real world problems to learn that Eggy the Egg Beater's bullying masks his insecurity. How does that help me with Richie Panichi? And reincarnation is wishful thinking. For plastic containers and people. When you're dead, you're dead.

(beat)

Being dead scares me.

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Orion sits on the floor among many books: *Actuarial Science for Children*, *Poisonous Plants Children Must Avoid*, *The Kids Book of Natural Disasters*, *The Big Book of Medical Self-Diagnosis*, etc. He's reading a book entitled *Kids Talk About: Nihilism vs. Existentialism*.

ORION (V.O.)

The realization that there's no way around it terrifies me. I try to imagine what death is like. I've concluded it's like nothing.

(looking into distance)

I try to imagine nothing.

INT. NOTHING

It's black and silent. Then:

ORION (V.O.)

This is black and silent, not nothing. Blackness and silence is *something*.

(beat)

Nothing is perhaps the one unimaginable thing.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Orion, bedtime.

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Orion snaps out of it, looks at the door. His mother is there.

ORION

Okay.

She enters.

MOTHER

Teeth brushed?

ORION (CONT'D)

Yes.

MOTHER

You want the book tonight?

ORION (CONT'D)

Ok. Sure. Thanks.

Orion climbs into bed. His mother pulls the book off the shelf and sits next to Orion. The title is *The Doodlebug Duck Family in: David Doodlebug is Afraid of the Dark*. Next to it is a collection of classic horror DVDs: *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Nosferatu*, etc.

ORION (V.O.)
 But of all the things I'm afraid
 of, I am most afraid of the dark.

The Mother opens the book and begins to read.

MOTHER
 David Doodlebug Duck was
 afraid of the dark.

ORION (V.O.)
 I don't have the heart to
 tell her this book doesn't
 help me. I'm afraid to hurt
 her feelings.

MOTHER
 (reading)
 His mother assured him there was
 nothing to be afraid of...

The mother's voice goes under as she continues to read.

ORION (V.O.)
 First of all, I am neither a
 doodlebug nor a duck.

MOTHER
 ... Mr. And Mrs. Doodlebug
 Duck would never let anything
 bad happen to any of their
 children...

ORION (V.O.)
 Secondly, the book skews way
 too young for me.

MOTHER
 See, David? There are no monsters
 under your bed.

ORION (V.O.)
 OK, I'm not afraid of monsters
 under the bed. I'm afraid of real
 things. Although, to be candid, I
 am also afraid of monster under the
 bed. But my fear is more
 generalized than Doodlebug David's.
 My issues are less about monsters
 and more about what they represent,
 that yawning chasm of mystery which
 is darkness. The black. The
 silence. The horror of the unknown.

MOTHER
 (reading)
 And just like that, David Doodlebug
 Duck fell fast asleep.

She closes the book. Orion is wide-eyed with terror.

ORION
Thanks, Mom. That helped.

MOTHER
I'm glad.

She kisses him good night, switches on the night light, heads to the door, switches off the room light. She steps into the hall and reaches for the doorknob.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Say when.

She starts to close the door.

ORION
Okay.

She stops.

ORION (CONT'D)
A little more open.

She adjusts it.

MOTHER
Here?

ORION
Yes. Actually, a little more.

She adjusts.

MOTHER
This?

ORION
Good. Yes.
(beat)
A little more.

MOTHER
(adjusts it)
Good night, sweetie.

ORION
Night, Mom.

She disappears down the hall. Orion waits a beat, jumps out of bed, pulls seven pairs of balled socks from his dresser, removes a night light from each, plugs them into various outlets. He opens the blinds so the street light shines in. The room, now lit like a sports arena, Orion climbs back into bed, closes his eyes.

ORION (V.O.)
 Guided meditation!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Orion lies on a towel on the sand.

ORION (V.O.)
 I am on a beach. Not too close to
 the water. No sharks. No jellyfish.
 Sunny day. None of those disease
 ridden sand fleas. Warm with a nice
 breeze. Sunscreen applied. SPF 50
 so there's reduced danger of sun
 damage. Natural sunscreen. No
 oxobenzene so I can relax about
 carcinogens for the moment. I am
 calm, sleepy.
 (beat)
 Suddenly there's a blaring radio
 playing rap music.

Loud music.

ORION (V.O.)
 Why are people so inconsiderate?

Orion gets up, grabs his towel.

ORION (V.O.)
 I move farther down the beach, lie
 down. Sleepy. The sun is warm. The
 waves lap rhythmically at the
 shore. Am I too close to the water?
 I open my eyes and check.
 (squints into distance)
 No. But is the tide coming in or
 going out? I check.
 (consults tide chart)
 Going out. Everything is fine.

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In bed, his face relaxes, breathing deepens. He is asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALL - DAY

Orion's POV walking. Mrs. Spinoza pops out of a door.

MRS. SPINOZA
It's about to start!

She grabs him.

ORION
The play? Today? I didn't --

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Mrs. Spinoza hands him his costume and slaps on make-up.

ORION
I never learned my lines!

She hands him a massive script, his many lines highlighted in yellow.

ORION (CONT'D)
How do I know when it's my turn to speak?

MRS. SPINOZA
When everyone stares at you.

She pushes him on stage. The set is a drawing room. Other kids deliver lines. Orion looks out into the audience of adults in tuxedos intently watching the performance.

KID #1
Greetings, Lord Kelvin.

Silence. Everyone on stage looks at Orion. Everyone in the audience looks at him, too. Orion realizes it's his turn.

ORION
Oh, hey.

They wait.

ORION (CONT'D)
So how are you all doing?

Silence. Mrs Spinoza is in the wings frantically indicating he needs to say more. Finally, Kid #2 forges ahead.

KID #2
At half past eight, my lord.

Orion looks out at the audience. Suddenly a spotlight is trained on him.

ORION
Uh-huh. Cool.

Beat.

KID #1
No, you mustn't think that about
us, sir. You see...

Music starts.

KID #1 (CONT'D)
(singing)
We're so glad you are able to
attend our ball.

They wait. The music cycles, waiting for him to sing.

ORION
(singing)
Thanks for inviting me...
(can't think)
La la la la.

KID #1
(singing)
Oh, yes, the princess will be here,
as I'm sure you recall.

ORION
(beat, then singing)
She's very funny. Ha ha ha ha.

Everyone stares at him as if he's crazy. The kids join in for the chorus and Orion tries unsuccessfully to sing along.

KIDS
The ball will be a ball/It will be
a delight/the princess will be
there/We'll dance through the
night.

Stage goes dark except for spotlight on Orion. The music continues: his solo. He looks out at the hostile audience.

ORION
(singing)
Oh, what a ball it will be/The
princess will be there/Oh, what fun
we will have/the princess is
nice/Oh, yes, it will be fun for
sure. She's very funny. Ha ha ha ha

--

The audience is laughing clowns now. Orion runs off --

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

It's dark, quiet. Orion, petrified, creeps along, looking this way and that. Squeaking sound. Howling wind. A family of ducks at a dinner table slurping spaghetti. A plastic bottle of pop is animated and glaring at him with malevolent cartoon eyes. One duck turns to him and quacks way too loudly, almost a roar. Orion's eyes widen in terror and --

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Orion opens his eyes. Wind outside. Creaking sounds in the house. The dream ducks quacking? Orion looks out the window. It's terrifying: dark, tree branches whipping around. Another creak. Orion leaps into bed, pulls up the covers.

ORION (V.O.)

It's an old house. Houses settle. Not burglars. It's windy. That makes houses creak. I'll just lie here and fall back asleep. I get one visit to my parents' room a night. Better save it. It's definitely not burglars.

Another, louder creak.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Orion drawing animation: A burglar in striped shirt, cloth cap, eye mask, bag over shoulder, creeps up the stairs.

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Orion leaps from his bed, exits, hurries back in, pulls out all his extra night lights, tosses them under the bed, exits again.

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Orion stands by their bed, heaving, staring at his sleeping parents, willing them awake. He tries to speak, but can't. After a few moments, his mother half opens her eyes, then does a wide-eyed double take and gasps in fright. His father wakes with a start.

What?? FATHER Oh. MOTHER

Oh. FATHER Nothing. ORION
 (beat, then to Orion)
 What's up?

FATHER
 Don't say nothing. You're standing
 in our bedroom staring at us as we
 sleep.

ORION
 No, I'm not.
 (beat)
 I heard something.

FATHER
 It's windy. Houses settle.

ORION
 This was different. I feel pretty
 certain it was burglars this time.

INT. STAIRCASE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Father leads him downstairs to living room, flips on light.

FATHER
 Look okay?

ORION
 (embarrassed)
 Yeah. Thanks.

FATHER
 Good.

His father jiggles the front door.

FATHER (CONT'D)
 Locked?

ORION
 Yes.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Orion and his father are in the basement. The lights are on.

FATHER

Secure?

Orion peeks behind the water heater. Checks all the windows.

ORION

Yes.

Father heads up stairs. Orion follows.

ORION (CONT'D)

Thanks, Dad. I just thought I heard something.

FATHER

Just remember, old houses settle.

ORION

I will remember. Thanks again.

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Orion is in bed. His father stands over him.

ORION

Say, I was thinking, can I stay with you guys tonight?

FATHER

Orion...

ORION

I think mom might've put coffee in the pasta sauce. Caffeine is a --

FATHER

Mom didn't put coffee in the sauce. People don't put --

ORION

They do! Instant coffee. I read it. It adds a certain tang. I think she did. We should check, to be sure.

FATHER

Orion, we've talked about this. Mom and I feel it's important for you to learn to stay in your --

ORION

I know.

FATHER
Good. Sleep tight, Son.

ORION
You, too, Dad.

His father exits. Orion hops out of bed, plugs in all the night lights, climbs back in, stares at the ceiling. The house creaks. The wind howls. He's wide awake.

ORION (V.O.)
By what mechanism does one fall asleep? One cannot fall asleep by wanting to fall asleep. One must distract oneself. Guided meditation worked, but the sleep was not deep. Shall I count sheep? Does that work? If one is to believe the children's cartoons of yesteryear. Sheep. Harmless. Fluffy. Watched over by the benevolent shepherd.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRASSY HILLSIDE - DAY

A beautiful day. Blue skies. Birds chirp. Orion, dressed as a shepherd, snoozes against a low wooden fence. A sheep leaps gaily over it.

ORION (V.O.)
Hello, sheep number one.

SHEEP
Baa.

Another.

ORION (V.O.)
Two. Good fella. What a cutie!

Another.

ORION (V.O.)
Three. So sweet.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Orion lies in bed, eyes closed.

ORION (V.O.)
Four... five... six...

His head lolls to the side.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRASSY HILLSIDE - DAY

The sky darkens, the hillside transforms into jagged peaks.

ORION (V.O.)
Nine...

Orion watches the jumping sheep, their faces now sinister.

ORION (V.O.)
Ten...

Their fleece is matted, greasy, dirty.

ORION (V.O.)
Sheep borne illnesses. Brucelosis.

Fleas hop in and out of the sheep's fleece. They rain down on Orion, burrow into his skin.

ORION (V.O.)
Rare but very serious. Must avoid
all contact with sheep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The room is shadowy, somewhat barn-like: baled hay, farm tools. Orion in bed, hooked up to machines, attended by a sheep nurse. Other farm animals pass by in scrubs.

SHEEP NURSE
Brucelosis. Very serious.

ORION
Will I get better?

SHEEP NURSE
Only hope: fresh air and exercise.

ORION
I don't want to die.

EXT. COUNTRY FIELD - DAY

Orion in running clothes. A cow fires a starter pistol. Flash of light and loud report. Orion runs. Hurdle up ahead. He leaps. While in the air, he sees a sheep on its back below.

SHEEP

One...

Orion leaps over another hurdle.

SHEEP (CONT'D)

Two...

Another flash of light and loud report. Orion is panicked. He leaps the hurdle once more.

SHEEP (CONT'D)

Three...

Pouring rain now as a soaked, exhausted Orion jumps hurdle after hurdle. Flashes followed by thunderous explosions.

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The noise awakens Orion. Rain beats against his window. Howling wind. Lightning followed by thunder. Orion leaps under his bed and shakes. Another flash of lightning.

ORION

One Mississippi. Two Mississippi --

Crack of thunder. Orion calculates.

ORION (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Half a mile away. Immediate danger.

Child-like animation of Orion in a storm being struck by lightning, x-rayed.

Another flash of lightning brings Orion back to the room. Suddenly the power goes out.

ORION (CONT'D)

Really? This is getting ridiculous!

Orion peeks out from under bed into the extreme darkness. The wind howls. The house creaks.

ORION (V.O.)

Just one parent visit a night. They need their sleep.

(MORE)

ORION (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They have work in the morning.
Can't I put myself in their shoes?

Lightning flash illuminates the room again. Orion screams. The curtains billow. A black and white woman-like creature in flowing white chiffon appears in the room, finger pressed admonishingly to lips. This is Quiet.

QUIET

Shh!

Orion screams. Quiet rolls her eyes and disappears. Orion, gets up his courage, pulls himself out from under the bed and yells at the empty room.

ORION

Curse you, Darkness! What cruel aberrations hide within your inky cloak?? Why can't you leave me alone?

A low rumbling emits from the room's darkest corner. Orion's eyes adjust to the darkness and he is able to make out a dark, pulsating form growing in the corner. He slides back under the bed, never taking his gaze off the growing form. Lightning illuminates the room in stark white and the figure momentarily disappears, only to reappear when the room is again dark. The figure takes on a huge, simplified human form, Blob-like. This is Dark.

ORION (CONT'D)

W-w-who are you?

DARK

(looks at wristwatch,
sounds like Seth Rogen)
Listen, I don't have a lot of time. Quiet insisted I come to talk you down. She's tired of the ruckus, to be frank. So, you don't want me here, I don't want to be here. Let's get it over with.

ORION

What are you??

DARK

I'm Dark! Isn't that obvious? The room's dark, It's dark out, I'm Dark. They sometimes like me to put a face to the name, so the scared ones can relax. Here I am. Ta-dah.
(360 turn)
Now I'm going; I'm behind schedule.
(MORE)

DARK (CONT'D)

(heads to bedroom door)

By the way, I just want to say, maybe consider that it's better to light a single candle than to curse me. Y'know? Just a thought.

ORION

I don't know what you're talking about.

DARK

You cursed me. Remember? Like a minute ago?

ORION

I'd *rather* curse you than light a single candle! Although, just to be clear, I would *also* light a single candle if I had a single candle, But I'd still curse you. Unfortunately my parents don't let me use matches yet. Fire is not a toy. Read the actuarial charts. And besides, dark doesn't even exist.

DARK

Yes, I do, thank you very much.

ORION

You do what?

DARK

Exist.

ORION

You know what I mean. Dark is simply the absence of light. Not a stupid cartoon character who sounds like Seth Rogen.

DARK

Kid, I don't have the time or the inclination to argue with you. I'm on my way to catch a movie with my best friend James Franco.

(waits)

That's a joke.

ORION

Light is the visible part of the electromagnetic spectrum. You're the absence of it.

(MORE)

ORION (CONT'D)

So really, this blobby version of you is nothing but a ploy to sell toys to children.

DARK

I'm a what now?

ORION

We've been trained by Hollywood to anthropomorphize animals and... and... *concepts*... like you.

DARK

(broods, then:)

Look, you humans have always had weird ways of conceptualizing me. And, by the by, you're not alone in being scared of me.

Dark pulls out a massive volume, puts it on the night table.

DARK (CONT'D)

This is a list of everyone who is scared of me. Western Hemisphere.

Orion opens to the first page, which consists of people with the last name Aa.

ORION

Aa is not even a last name.

DARK

It is. Scandinavian. Look it up. And there are 35,893 Aa's afraid of me. In the Western Hemisphere.

Orion flips the pages and sees thousands of Aa's.

DARK (CONT'D)

Everyone is scared of me. Or hates me. Or thinks I'm evil. Or represent despair. Or death.

(pointedly)

Or that I'm nothing. Hurts a guy.

ORION

I didn't mean --

DARK

And I *like* people. It can drive a guy to drink.

Dark pulls out a glowing jug marked XXX, drinks from it. As it goes through his system, he disappears momentarily, replaced by the glow.

ORION

What is that?

DARK

Moonshine. Literally. I don't have a bloodstream, so I'm not affected by alcohol. But this stuff kind of makes me disappear for a moment, takes the edge off.

ORION

(beat)

Look, I'm sorry. I never said you wouldn't make a decent toy. Ok? Cute and round. Like The Blob from the movie The Blob, but more charming. I could easily see you in a Happy Meal. You shouldn't try to make yourself disappear. It's not healthy. I know, I do it a lot.

Dark offers Orion a swig of moonshine. Orion shakes his head.

DARK

They use me as a symbol of despair. Or evil. Consider all the movies with me in the title:

(pulls out another volume,
reads)

(MORE)

DARK (CONT'D)

Dark Knight, Dark Matter, Dark Tower, Dark Places, Dark City, Dark Shadows, Dark Cove, Dark Water, Dark Signal, Dark Tide, Dark Angel, Dark Skies, Dark Crystal, Dark Blood, Dark Star, Dark Corner, Dark Net, Dark Summer, Dark Floors, Dark Angel, Dark Passage, Dark Circles, Dark Souls, Dark Skies, Dark Stranger, Dark Hearts, Dark River, Dark Victory, Dark Ride, Dark Tourist, Dark Hours, Dark Days, Dark Ascension, Army of Darkness, Edge of Darkness, Prince of Darkness, In Darkness, House of Darkness, Lord of Darkness, Heart of Darkness, The Fear of Darkness, Darkness Falls, In the Dark, Alone in the Dark, Near Dark, A Shot in the Dark, The Dark, Elvira: Mistress of the Dark, The Dark Half, So Dark, Taxi to the Dark Side, Donnie Darko, S. Darko --

ORION

I've seen most of those. I'm a movie buff.

DARK

Dark Park. And none of those are happy flicks. Pick on the dark guy. Fish in a barrel. But I like people. That's the thing. It's just that so much of how you see yourself is through the eyes of others. Y'know?

ORION

I know. A lot of kids pick on me.

Orion grabs his notebook.

ORION (CONT'D)

Richie Panichi, Davis Jensen, Howard Helstrom, Isaac Pill, Kevin Warren -- he moved but he still sends me threatening letters on occasion. Max Dorris --

DARK

Hey. You said you like movies?
Being a proactive guy, I made a
little movie of my own, to offer a
different perspective on Darkness.
Do you want to see it?

ORION

Um --

Dark pulls out a film projector, aims it at an empty wall,
turns it on. The projector whirs into action and a beam of
dark pours from its lens forming a darker rectangle on the
already dark wall.

The title "Our Friend Dark" appears in the dark rectangle,
then fades away, leaving only the darkness.

NARRATOR

Dark has existed for over 13
billion years, since the Universe
began.

Title: The End.

Title: Directed by Dark

Title: Narrated by Dark

Title: Dark by Dark

Title: Titles by Saul Bass

Dark turns the projector off. Orion is silent.

DARK

You didn't like it. I'm just trying
to offer up some food for thought.
But everyone is against me. It
didn't get into Sundance. And it's
so much better than half the movies
accepted. It's a real boys club.

ORION

I mean, it's good. It's short. For
someone who's been around for over
13 billion years, right?

DARK

Give or take.

ORION

You'd think there'd maybe be --
But, y'know, concise is good.

DARK
 (defensively)
 Well, I've only been self-aware
 since the first eyes evolved. Keep
 that in mind.

ORION
 Uh-huh. When was that?

DARK
 540 million years ago.

Off of Orion's reaction, Dark takes a swig from the
 moonshine, disappears, then reappears.

DARK (CONT'D)
 The first eyes were rudimentary.
 Keep that in mind. Y'know, Just
 sensed light and dark. No lenses.
 No real thought going on. Wasn't
 till humans came about that I
 started to get a sense of myself.

ORION
 And that was?

DARK
 (beat)
 Half a million years ago.
 (beat)
 So what? Who cares?
 (beat)
 Anyway, time to go.
 (beat)
 It's just a rough cut!

A flash of lightning (Dark momentarily disappears), followed
 by thunder. Orion shudders.

DARK (CONT'D)
 Listen, can you stay a bit? We can
 talk movies. I can maybe --

A creaking sound.

DARK (CONT'D)
 Actually, I'm the one staying.
 You're the one on Earth, rotating
 at a thousand miles an hour. I'm
 always right here.

ORION

Can I stay here with you then?
Turns out I like your non-
threatening, child-friendly, rough-
around-the-edges shtick after all.

Dark heads to hallway. Orion follows, still holding his notebook.

DARK

No can do, kid. Places to be.
Y'know, I tried my hand at
painting, too.

He pulls out a giant black canvas as he walks.

DARK (CONT'D)

No interest! But Ad Reinhardt does
the same thing and the art world
goes wild. Boys club.

INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Orion follows Dark downstairs, holding his pad.

ORION

I'll draw us together as friends!
Think of the lessons I could learn
from you! I could learn to love
darkness! I could grow by the end!

DARK

I work solo. A kid tagging along
cramps my curmudgeonly style.

ORION

I have lots of ideas for your
movie. We could spitball.

At the front door Orion puts on his red poncho, rain boots,
and grabs two umbrellas. Dark exits house, followed by Orion.

EXT. ORION'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's pouring.

ORION

I've seen all the Lars Von Trier
movies. Dancer in the Dark. You
forgot to mention that one.

DARK

I intentionally *don't* mention that one. In solidarity with Bjork.

ORION

These are safety umbrellas. Highly reflective for night use.

He tries to hand one to Dark.

DARK

Adios, scared kid. See you in the funny pages.

Dark jumps in the air; the handle of the umbrella inadvertently hooked around his ankle. Orion is still grasping the end and they both fly off at 1000 miles an hour.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Dark flies through the rainy night, with Orion hanging on for dear life, screaming, looking down at the speeding landscape, past a blur of darkened houses and empty suburban streets, looking back at his almost instantly disappearing house. Dark doesn't hear him over the wind and rain.

ORION

Hey! Hey! Help! Dark! Wait!!

Orion looks down. A monolithic terrifying skyscraper is approaching fast. It's completely black except for a glowing Red company name on the top: FEAR. A news ticker wraps around the building, reading: WHAT IF I FALL...BROKEN NECK...FRACTURED SKULL...BRAIN DAMAGE...

ORION (V.O.)

What's happening here? What is that building??

ORION

Help! Help, Please!

Dark finally hears Orion, looks back.

DARK

What the --

Dark screeches to a halt, lands in a suburban neighborhood, rain pouring on them both. He looks accusingly at Orion.

ORION
 (hysterical)
 The umbrella hooked -- and I
 couldn't -- And then -- And --

Orion looks small, shivering in the rain, about to cry.

ORION (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry. I just want to go home
 now.

DARK
 I can't go backwards. I told you.
 The world turns and I stay put. As
 soon as I step off the ground, the
 world spins away. See ya!

Dark gets ready to jump off the ground.

ORION
 (panicked)
 Wait! I can't walk home by myself!

DARK
 (looking at watch)
 Geez. You're right. About fifty
 miles back. Crap. I don't need
 this.

Dark paces. Orion sits dejectedly on the curb.

HYPATIA (O.S.)
 Wait. So --

Dark and Orion look toward the camera.

INT. HYPATIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. Hypatia, 8, a small, timid girl is sitting up in bed, pressed against her father, a 31 year old Orion. She has a drawing pad on her lap. There's a giant Seth Rogen poster on her wall.

ADULT ORION
 Yes?

HYPATIA
 Why couldn't you call your parents
 and have them come pick you up?

ADULT ORION
 Right.
 (thinking on feet)
 (MORE)

ADULT ORION (CONT'D)

Well, there was a power outage, so the phones weren't working, because phones need electricity. So...

HYPATIA

Cellphones have batteries.

ADULT ORION

But we didn't have cell phones when I was a kid. That would be anachronistic.

HYPATIA

Oh. Ok.

(beat)

What's anachronistic?

ADULT ORION

From the wrong time. Like if there were dinosaurs now. Or George Washington watched television.

HYPATIA

Ok.

(quietly testing)

But there was no Seth Rogen when you were a kid, right? I know this for a fact, being the president of my school's chapter of The Seth Rogen Fan Club. Or Bjork. Or probably half the movies Dark mentioned. I mean, I know Dark Park didn't exist when you were a kid, because that's your movie!

ADULT ORION

Ok, well, there was Seth Rogen. But, you're right, he was just a kid, so -- Look, maybe I'm misremembering some of the details. It's a long time ago.

(beat)

Who do you think Dark would sound like? He could sound like someone else. Someone who was famous when I was a kid. I could change it.

HYPATIA

(thinking, then:)

Moe.

ADULT ORION
 (laughing)
 Moe? Three Stooges Moe or Simpsons
 Moe?

HYPATIA
 Three Stooges Moe.

ADULT ORION
 He seems a little angry for this
 story.

HYPATIA
 Hmm. Yeah. That Scrooged guy?

ADULT ORION
 Bill Murray? I like that. Ok. Any
 other problems with the story?

HYPATIA
 A few. But it's good so far.

ADULT ORION
 So I should keep going?

The wind howls.

HYPATIA
 I'm not ready to go to bed yet.

ADULT ORION
 Okay, so --

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Orion and Dark go back into their story. Dark paces. Orion is slumped wearily on the curb.

DARK
 (sounds like Bill Murray)
 I should consult with my friend.
 (yelling)
 Quiet!

ORION
 You sound different. Why do
 you sound different?

DARK (CONT'D)
 I don't sound different.

ORION
 Bill Murray?

DARK (CONT'D)
 (defensive)
 No.

Quiet appear, her white gown flowing, her finger to her lips.

QUIET

Shh.

Orion jumps back, hides behind a tree, afraid.

ORION

It's her. That thing.

DARK

Quiet, I'm in a pickle. I gotta get moving. This kid somehow attached himself to me. I don't know what to do with him? Any ideas?

Quiet is quiet for a moment, then shrugs.

DARK (CONT'D)

Great. Thanks. You're the best.
(calling)
Sleep!

QUIET

Shh.

Sleep appears, looking very much like a giant version of Cesare from The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. He is nodding off.

DARK

Thanks for coming, buddy. I gotta get this kid home and --

Sleep is asleep.

DARK (CONT'D)

Sleep!

QUIET

Shh.

SLEEP

(waking up)
Huh?

DARK

I need to get the kid home!

SLEEP

Oh.

(thinks)

Ok.

DARK

Any thoughts?

SLEEP

About?

Quiet walks billowingly over to Dark, whispers in his ear.
Sleep nods off.

DARK
Absolutely not. I can't take him
with me.

ORION
I can't go with him!

Shh. QUIET Huh? SLEEP

ORION
(quiet panic)
If I go with him I won't get home
till tomorrow night! Right?

DARK
That doesn't work. And I don't want
him hanging on me like a... grape.

ORION
Like a grape?

DARK
Yeah. Like a grape on a... grape
stem.

ORION
That a terrible metaphor.

DARK
I never said I was a poet. Although
I did try my hand at haiku.
(reciting)
Oh no it's dark now/Not a thing to
see out here/Can't wait till
morning.

ORION
My parents are going to freak out!

QUIET
Shh.

ORION
(hysterical)
I'll be missing! A missing child!
Milk cartons! Milk cartons!
There'll be police! SWAT teams! My
mom will go insane and be
institutionalized.
(MORE)

ORION (CONT'D)

My dad will have a heart attack and die and it'll be my fault and I'll have to live with that for the rest of my life. Page 35 in my book! I'll never have a minute free of guilt! I'll never have a single carefree minute of happiness again! Oh, sure, maybe I'll forget for a second, enjoy myself for the briefest moment, then the memory will come crashing back to crush all future joy.

DARK

You paint a Dark picture.
(realizing)
Oh, great, now I'm doing it.

ORION

(quietly)
I'll eventually descend into drug addiction just to silence the condemning voices in my head --

DARK

All right! Let me think!
(beat)
You'll come with me. I'll deal.

ORION

I need to get home.

DARK

Tomorrow.

ORION

Milk carton!

DARK

Right... milk carton.

SLEEP

I couldn't help waking up for some of that. I might have a solution.

DARK

Yeah?

SLEEP

What if I keep his parents asleep until tomorrow night. They're not great sleepers, but...

He nods off.

DARK

Sleep!

QUIET

Shh.

SLEEP

(waking)

...Of course, some of that has to do with the kid waking them up every night. Since he's not there, it should be feasible.

DARK

Do you need any assistance?

SLEEP

Well --

ORION

Is it dangerous to sleep too long? I think I read on Web MD It can increase the chances of diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and death!

HYPATIA (O.S.)

There was no Web MD when you were a kid.

ORION

(correcting)

I think I read in a library book that it can be danger --

DARK

It's safe for one night. I read *that* in a book.

SLEEP

Quiet, can you keep it quiet around their house for the next 24 hours?

Quiet mulls this, then disappears and returns with Unexplained Noises, a creature who looks very much like a giant version of Peter Cullen.

ORION

Isn't that just a giant version of voice actor Peter Cullen?

DARK

No. It's Unexplained Noises.

Quiet whispers in Unexplained Noises ear.

UNEXPLAINED NOISES

Sure. I can cut out unexplained noises out for a day. I have no problem with that. Reminds me of an interesting story, which I told just yesterday at Comic-Con. When I was starting out, a billion years ago -- ha ha -- I had this idea for a sound I thought would be very scary. You know the sounds a crab makes? It's called stridulation. Sort of like --

Unexplained Noises demonstrates a series of clicking, chirping, and creaking noises.

UNEXPLAINED NOISES (CONT'D)

They make it by rubbing body parts together. But I thought, hey, that's very scary. I could use that. Middle of the night. Alone in the house? What the heck, right? So I --

DARK

We just want you to keep quiet.

UNEXPLAINED NOISES

(hurt)
Huh?

DARK

Around the kid's parents' house.

UNEXPLAINED NOISES

Oh. Yes. Ok.

He sadly disappears.

DARK

Good. Anything else, Sleep?

SLEEP

We could use the scent of jasmine. That helps with sleep.

DARK

(calling)
Night Scent!

Shh.

QUIET

Night Scent appears. He looks a lot like Max Schreck's Nosferatu, his large nose emphasized. He sniffs the air imperiously.

NIGHT SCENT

Yes?

DARK

We need jasmine smell around the kid's house.

NIGHT SCENT

Do they *have* jasmine around their house?

ORION

No.

NIGHT SCENT

I'm not a gardener.

DARK

Just for tonight.

NIGHT SCENT

(sighs)

Fine. I'll steal some from the Wills' yard.

ORION

They're right next door! They'll see where it went. Johnny Wills protects me!

DARK

Get it from a few blocks away.

NIGHT SCENT

(sighs)

Sure. Whatever.

Night Scent evaporates.

DARK

Anything else, Sleep?

SLEEP

Huh? I guess Nicturia.

DARK

Good point. Nicturia!

Shh.

QUIET

ORION

Who's Nicturia.

DARK

Nighttime Urination.

Nicturia appears, looking very much like the original illustration of the King in Yellow.

ORION
(not buying it)
Really? There's a god of nighttime urination.

NICTURIA
(defensively)
I never said I was a god.

ORION
Well, what then?

NICTURIA
I'm a... *mystical being* of nighttime urination.

DARK
Can you keep his parents' bladders relatively empty for 24 hours?

ORION
Without hurting them!

NICTURIA
Yeah. Not a problem.

DARK
Good. We're golden.

SLEEP
That'll do it.

DARK
(forced casual)
What about giving them good dreams? To encourage them to keep sleeping. That could be helpful, right?

SLEEP
Sure, Dark, that'd be fine.

DARK
Yeah. We could definitely call Dreams. Get her down here. I think that'd be very helpful.

They all exchange glances.

EVERYONE
Sure. Let's do that.

INT. MILTON SIROTTA GOOGOLPLEX - NIGHT

An infinite cinema multiplex. Thousands of "movie" posters adorn the lobby. A concession stand. Ushers. Dark leads Orion to a hall of numbered theaters stretching in all directions as far as the eye can see. The theaters feature marquees with titles like *David Hernando's Dream of Falling* and *Laquisha Blake is Back in College for Some Reason, even though she's fifty*.

DARK

This is going to take a while.
(calling)
Dreams!

No response. They step into a theater with the marquee *Janet Herrick in: Robert Downey, Jr. is my Boyfriend for some reason*.

INT. JANET HERRICK DREAM THEATER - NIGHT

Dark and Orion enter. The audience is filled with spirits and ancient gods. On the screen Janet Herrick and Robert Downey, Jr. walk down a country lane holding hands.

ROBERT DOWNEY, JR.

I'm so happy I stopped at that Starbucks where you work.

DARK

(loud whisper)
Dreams?

Quiet is in the audience. She turns her head toward the back.

QUIET

Shh.

JANET

Me too, Bobby. It's so...

ROBERT DOWNEY, JR.

Serendipitous?

JANET

Yes! Serendipitous!

They kiss. Dreams is not there. Dark and Orion exit.

INT. SECOND THEATER - NIGHT

Dark and Orion stand in the back. On screen, a man is chased by a monster. Both move as if trying to walk through water.

DARK

Dreams?

Quiet, in the audience, turns around with finger to lips.

QUIET

Shh.

INT. THIRD THEATER - NIGHT

Dark and Orion in back. On screen a young woman stands on a street corner.

WOMAN ON SCREEN (V.O.)

I discovered if I stand right here
and hold my hands by my sides, I
can lift four feet in the air.

DARK

Dreams?

QUIET

(turning)

Shh!

INT. MILTON SIROTTA GOOGOLPLEX LOBBY - NIGHT

Back in the hall, Dark looks down it at the endless theaters.
An usher walks by.

DARK

Any idea where we can find Dreams?

USHER

She's in projection.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT

Inside it's massive, as long as the downstairs hall and
featuring millions of whirring projectors along both walls,
the ceiling, and the floor.

DARK

Dreams?

Dreams approaches from far down the booth. She's a towering
female figure, whose body is filled with a multitude of ever-
changing imagery, like a tattooed woman, except the tattoos
move and change and swirl and exist through and through, not
just on skin's surface. She is powerful and impressive.

DREAMS

(coolly)

What do you want, Dark?

DARK

(in love)

Hi, Dreams. I, um, so, the thing is
I'm traveling with this kid and --

A phone rings. Dreams raises a finger and picks it up.

DREAMS

What?

(listens)

Yes.

(listens)

No, that doesn't make sense. She
wouldn't dream that.

(listens)

Has she gone to the bathroom in the
middle of the football field yet?

(listens)

The stands are full of people?

(listens)

Ok. Send in the clowns.

(hangs up, to Dark)

Talk fast. I'm very busy.

DARK

So I have to take the kid on my
rounds tonight.

DREAMS

I know all about it. You shouldn't
be dragging kids around the world.
Light and I have been talking. He
is not at all happy.

DARK

It just happened. An accident.

DREAMS

What do you want me to do about it?

DARK

We're trying to keep his parents
asleep till he gets home. So they
don't worry. Could you maybe give
them some good dreams to motivate
them to stay asleep?

Dreams sighs, looks at Orion for the first time.

DREAMS
You the kid?

ORION
(intimidated)
Yes, Ma'am.

Dreams stares at him for a long beat, sighs.

DREAMS
So what do your parents like?

ORION
Um, my mom likes yoga, horses...
mystery novels, pina coladas --

DREAMS
(searching reels of film)
Well, I've got a new six part
mystery dream I have to say is
quite good. Psychological thriller.
Unreliable narrator.

ORION
She loves unreliable narrators.

DREAMS
I know my audience. Called The Girl
Who Forgot. It's binge-worthy.
(finds it)
And your father?

ORION
(thinking)
I don't know if this is helpful,
but he enjoys accordion music.

DREAMS
Not helpful.

ORION
He likes to hike?

DREAMS
(impatient)
Beach, mountain, woodland, desert?
What? I'm very busy.

ORION
Woodland.

DREAMS

Woodland. And, listen, I may have an old Myron Floren accordion record lying around. I can put that on in the background.

ORION

He loves Myron Floren!

DREAMS

I *may*. I'll check my collection.

HYPATIA (O.S.)

Could we stop again for a minute?

The characters stop, wait.

INT. HYPATIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

HYPATIA

I have to pee. Ever since the pee guy. Power of suggestion.

ADULT ORION

Ok.

HYPATIA

(looking into dark hallway)

You come.

Adult Orion grabs candle. Hypatia takes his hand.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hypatia and Adult Orion are at the bathroom. On the wall is a framed poster for the movie *Dark Park*. It features a menacing carousel and the tagline: "We Are Not Amused."

ADULT ORION

Candle in the bathroom?

Hypatia nods. Adult Orion puts it on the counter. Hypatia summons her courage, enters bathroom, turns to her father.

ADULT ORION (CONT'D)

Wait here. Put your fingers in your ears and go "la la la la la."

She closes door. Adult Orion sticks his fingers in his ears.

ADULT ORION (CONT'D)
La la la la la la la la...

Toilet flushes. Door opens. Hypatia emerges with candle, hands it to her dad, takes his hand. They walk toward her room.

HYPATIA
So Dreams makes up everybody's
dreams in the world?

ADULT ORION
Um... well...

HYPATIA
In this story, I mean. I know it's
a story. Not real life.

ADULT ORION
Well, there are custom dreams, too.

HYPATIA
What's that?

INT. HYPATIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They enter, climb back into bed. Hypatia draws on her pad.

ADULT ORION
You know, like, she collaborates
with the dreamer to make special,
personal dreams. When necessary.

HYPATIA
That's such a cool job.
(holds up pad)
Is this what she looks like?

Hypatia has drawn, in a style reminiscent of young Orion's, a picture of Dreams, her body covered with little pictures.

ADULT ORION
That's exactly it.

HYPATIA
I wish I was Dreams.

ADULT ORION
You kind of are. You love writing
stories and drawing. And you're so
good at it.

HYPATIA

I appreciate it, Dad. But you have to say things like that because you're my father.

ADULT ORION

I mean it.

HYPATIA

Do you think you'd like me if we were kids together.

ADULT ORION

Definitely.

HYPATIA

I don't think so.

(thought)

Can I be Dreams for Halloween?

ADULT ORION

That sounds really cool.

HYPATIA

How does she know where all the dreams in the word are?

ADULT ORION

Dream map.

HYPATIA

Cool.

(thought)

So do I get to see the dreams she gave Grandma and Grandpa?

ADULT ORION

Um, sure. I mean, not the whole dreams. They went on for 24 hours.

HYPATIA

Just the openings.

ADULT ORION

Ok.

(thinking)

A windswept street at night...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Orion's mother, as a younger woman, wanders aimlessly, disoriented, bundled in winter clothing. She approaches an older woman at a bus stop.

ORION'S MOTHER

Excuse me, can you tell me where I am?

OLDER WOMAN

9th and Hennepin.

ORION'S MOTHER

I mean, what city?

The older woman looks at her askance. Then:

OLDER WOMAN

(creepily)
Minneapo-apo-apo-lis.

ORION'S MOTHER

I've never heard of that.

OLDER WOMAN

You have now.

The woman laughs. Orion's mother looks terrified. A bus stops in front of them. The old woman steps on and the bus drives away. Orion's mother is left by herself on the deserted street. She sits on the bench, distractedly goes through her purse, discover a hand gun.

Title: Grandma's Dream: The Girl Who Forgot

HYPATIA (O.S.)

That's a good opening. Draws you right in. And Grandpa's?

ADULT ORION (O.S.)

We enter Grandpa's dream already in progress.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Orion's father walks through the woods to Myron Floren playing The Happy Wanderer. Orion's father seems happy and relaxed. It goes on too long.

INT. HYPATIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ADULT ORION
And he walked and walked and --

HYPATIA
That's a weird one.

ADULT ORION
You want to see more? There's lots
more walking.

HYPATIA
No. I mean, we should probably get
back to you and Dark. Right?

ADULT ORION
Right. So Orion continues west with
Dark, both desperate to keep to the
schedule and get this over with,
but Orion says --

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Orion hangs on for dear life

ORION
Now *I* have to pee.

DARK
Oh, man!
(calling)
Nicturia!

Quiet appears.

QUIET
Shh!

She disappears.

HYPATIA (O.S.)
Dad, are you making fun of me?

ADULT ORION (O.S.)
No! This is what happened!

Nicturia appears.

NICTURIA

Sorry, I was... indisposed. You didn't tell me the kid's not supposed to have to pee, too. I didn't work on that.

DARK

Can you fix it? We're behind --

NICTURIA

I'm not a magician. If it's already there, there only one way out --
(urgently)
Uh-oh! Gotta go!

He disappears.

DARK

All right. Feel free to relieve your bladder.

ORION

From up here??

DARK

Why not?

ORION

People! Heads! People's heads!!

DARK

No one down there.

ORION

How can you tell at this speed, at this height, in this darkness??

DARK

It's a forested wilderness.

ORION

Campers!

DARK

Look. Now we're over a lake! Quick!

ORION

Boaters!

DARK

In the middle of the night?

ORION

Boaters dumping bodies!

DARK

Those scoundrels deserve to be urinated upon. At the very least.

ORION

Look, I can't pee in front of anyone! Ok? I'm pee shy!

DARK

Pee shy? What is --

Nicturia appears again.

NICTURIA

The inability to urinate in front of others due to social anxiety.

(urgently)

Uh-oh! Gotta Go! Sorry!

Nicturia disappears. Dark looks to Orion for confirmation, he nods, embarrassed.

DARK

Hmm. As a non-urinating entity, it surprises me to learn of the existence of such a condition.

ORION

I need to land! Now!

Dark sighs, annoyed. They land in a field on the edge of some woods. Orion looks around for privacy. Dark checks his watch.

DARK

Snap to. Already behind. Light is not happy, as you heard.

Orion looks toward the woods. Yapping coyotes. Amidst the trees, the FEAR building pushes upward.

ORION

I can't go in there.

DARK

Here then.

ORION

Face away from me, put your fingers in your ears.

DARK

I don't have ears. Do I look like I have ears?

ORION

You know what I mean. Cover the sides of your head and and say "la la la la la."

HYPATIA (O.S.)

You are making fun of me!

ADULT ORION (O.S.)

No!

Dark turns away, covers his "ears" and says "la la la la la." Quiet appears, holds her finger to her lips.

DARK

(whisper)

Sorry. La la la la --

Quiet disappears. Orion has finished and approaches, his eyes cloud over with panic suddenly.

ORION

I was thinking, what if we get shredded in a jet engine?

DARK

Can't happen. Won't happen.

ORION

Happens to birds. Look at the whole Sully Sullenberger incident.

Orion looks over at the FEAR building. It's grown enormous during this conversation.

DARK

Maybe you shouldn't watch so many movies.

INT. HYPATIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hypatia looks up at her father.

HYPATIA

I think I get it.

ADULT ORION

You do?

HYPATIA

The FEAR building is *your* fear.

ADULT ORION

My fear?

HYPATIA

It gets bigger when you're afraid.

ADULT ORION

True. Good theory.

HYPATIA

(proud)

Yeah. And you don't even know it yet In the story. I figured it out before you. So I win.

ADULT ORION

You do. Should we continue?

Hypatia nods.

HYPATIA

You-as-a-kid could use my help, I think.

ADULT ORION

Definitely.

EXT. NIGHT SKY

Orion and Dark Fly over the Earth. Orion watches with worry as a commercial jet flies by. Down on Earth FEAR buildings are sprouting all over. The ticker reads: YOU COULD GET SUCKED INTO JET ENGINE...OH YEAH, ALSO, DON'T FORGET YOU WERE IN TALL GRASS...YOU MOST LIKELY HAVE TICKS...

ORION

I need to do a tick check!

DARK

Huh?

ORION

We were in tall grass. I need to check for ticks.

DARK

Do it when I drop you off tomorrow.

Ticker: LYME DISEASE...

ORION

Now! I won't be able to relax. I need a mirror. Two mirrors. So I can see my back.

DARK

Not now, kid.

ORION

(reading off ticker)
Lyme disease. Colorado Tick Fever.
Anaplasmosis. Babesiosis.
Rickettsia...

DARK

We need to stick to the plan.

They fly in silence for a bit, then:

ORION

(explosively, off ticker)
Borelia Miyamotoi!

Dark screams in reaction, then silence.

DARK

You can't keep doing that.

ORION

Two mirrors. Now.

Dark sighs.

ORION (CONT'D)

There's like fifty more tick borne diseases. I read Dealing with your Tick Borne Illness in a Timely Fashion. For Children.

DARK

All right. Two mirrors.
(scanning the Earth)
Um. Ok. I see a place.

ORION

How do you it from up here?

DARK

It's dark down there. Wherever it's dark is where I am. I'm Dark, after all. Stands to reason.

ORION

You're there already?

DARK

Yes.

ORION

But you're with me. I'm confused.

DARK

Join the club.

EXT. CLOSED AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

Orion and Dark walk through the deserted park. Orion is scared by the creaking of the rides in the wind, by the haunted house, the entrance a huge devil's mouth.

ORION

I don't like amusement parks. Too crowded --

Dark looks out at the empty park.

DARK

Hmm. Seems pretty --

ORION

I wasn't finished. Or too empty. Empty's worse. It's where killers hang out, according to horror movies. Scream Park. Dark Ride --

DARK

See? Dark? Dark Ride? Why not Light Ride? Why couldn't it take place in morning before the park opens? That's a better premise. Less on the nose. And scarier. Because Light's a jerk.

ORION

That's a harder pitch.

DARK

Exactly. Because people are sheep who don't want to be challenged.

ORION

That's a generalization. You shouldn't generalize about people if you don't like them generalizing about you. *And* you shouldn't generalize about sheep. Even though some do carry Brucellosis.

They become silent as they walk. There is something beautiful about the park that Dark seems to be taking in, figuratively and literally. Orion doesn't notice.

ORION (CONT'D)

I could make a good amusement park horror film that wouldn't rely on stale tropes. Dark Park, I'd call it.

DARK

Start by not using the word Dark. If you don't want to be stale.

ORION

It'd be different. I'd give you your due.

DARK

What is my due?

ORION

I don't know yet. I have to keep looking.

As Dark breathes, the dark images enter him and enlarge him, appear inside him. They enter the Hall of Mirrors.

INT. HALL OF MIRRORS - NIGHT

Lights are off, but green exits signs eerily illuminate it. They pass distorting fun house mirrors and arrive at a hall of many mirrors, reflecting in all directions to infinity.

ORION

Ok. Wait there.

DARK

La la la?

ORION

Not necessary.

Dark nods and heads back toward the entrance. He leans against the door and stares out at the deserted park, absorbing it, growing bigger still.

INT. HYPATIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hypatia listens and draws.

ADULT ORION

So I'm in the hall of mirrors,
clothes on the floor, millions of
reflections of myself. I'm spinning
and twisting, desperately checking
for ticks.

HYPATIA

I like that the amusement park
looks pretty to Dark. Like this?

She shows Adult Orion her drawing of a darkened amusement
park.

ADULT ORION

It's like you were there.

HYPATIA

Thanks. Maybe if Orion could see it
that way, he'd be able to make his
Dark Park movie.

ADULT ORION

I think maybe.

HYPATIA

(beat)
Dad?

ADULT ORION

Uh-huh?

HYPATIA

Could we maybe go outside and you
could tell me more of the story
while we walk?

ADULT ORION

Um --

HYPATIA

I thought it might be good to see
what Orion is seeing while I hear
the story. Y'know, the night? Like
the way Dark is appreciating it.

EXT. CLOSED AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

Dark stands in the doorway of the House of Mirrors, looking
out at the park. Orion approaches.

DARK

Ticks?

ORION

No. But it was a cursory check.
I'll need better light and a
magnifying glass to be thorough.

DARK

Sort of pretty out here.

ORION

We're running behind.

Dark inhales. More dark imagery enters him, he expands.

DARK

It's actually nice having someone
to travel with, to see it with me.
(thought)
Let's do some rides!

ORION

I don't do rides. Granted,
amusement park deaths are
statistically insignificant --
about one in three hundred million
for roller coasters, but when they
happen it's a bloody mess. Besides
the rides are turned off.

DARK

You've been flying through the sky,
holding onto a gelatinous blob!

ORION

There are no statistics on that! I
wish there were!

DARK

I hear ya. Ok, let's just leave.

Orion grabs onto Dark and they lift off the ground, but
instead of flying into the night, Dark lands on top of the
roller coaster, transforms himself into the shape of a roller
coaster car, in which Orion now finds himself sitting.

ORION

Hey! Wait a --

DARK

Ready, Freddy?

Dark hurtles down the track of the darkened roller coaster.
Orion screams. Dark flies off the track, sails through the
air, and splashes into the water of a flume ride.

He is now log-shaped and he and Orion traverse the flume, up an incline, into a cavernous dark interior populated with switched-off animatronic loggers, down a water slide as Orion screams once again. An automatic camera flashes a photo of them. Dark flies off the flume and onto a stationary carousel. Now horse-shaped, Dark weaves crazily through all the non-moving horses, Orion holding on for dear life. They fly off the carousel and up to the top of a free-fall ride, where Dark assumes the shape of a seat and harness and the two of them freefall to the bottom. Orion screams all the way down. They sit there for a moment while Orion heaves and regains his composure. Finally, Orion looks up at Dark:

ORION

Again?

DARK

(laughing)

You see?

Dark Flies Orion back over to the roller coaster and they take the plunge once again.

DARK (CONT'D)

You're okay, kid.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Hypatia holds Adult Orion's hand as they walk.

HYPATIA

How many more times?

ADULT ORION

Just once. We had to keep moving.

HYPATIA

You had to keep standing still, you mean.

ADULT ORION

We had to keep standing still.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Dark and Orion fly over mountainous parkland, stands of spruce silhouetted against moonlit lakes, hot springs billowing steam. Steamboat Geyser shoots up 100 feet. They swerve to avoid it. They laugh.

DARK
I'm not so bad, when I get to know
me.

ORION
Even kind of beautiful.

Orion is immediately embarrassed.

DARK
Aw, shucks.

Orion looks down with wonder at the passing landscape.

ORION
(singing)
There are things that I'm afraid
of/The list would fill my
pad/Tornadoes, green potatoes --

DARK
(spoken)
Green potatoes?

ORION
(singing)
Green potatoes -- very bad!
(speaking)
The green indicates the potato has
been in the Sun too long. It's
chlorophyll, actually, which
contains solanine, a glycoalkaloid.
Toxic. Could kill you.

ORION (CONT'D)
(speaking)
Huh.

ORION (CONT'D)
May I?

Dark nods.

ORION (CONT'D)
(singing)
I'm afraid of poison ivy/which
makes me red and itchy/I'm afraid
of frozen yogurt/and that bully
named Panichi.

DARK
But, wait, frozen yogurt is good
for you!

ORION

(speaking)

Not if it's highly processed, which many commercial brands are. High fructose corn syrup, artificial colors, flavors, bone ash --

DARK

Bone ash? Ew.

ORION

Exactly.

(singing)

But of all the things that scare me/counting barking dogs and sharks/ The numero primero is/being in the dark.

DARK

Still?

ORION

Well, the times they are a-changin'/as Bob Dylan -- who scares me -- said, but the dark is now revealing something/other than pure dread.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Hypatia walks with Adult Orion along the quiet street. She looks up at the star-filled sky.

HYPATIA

I like that you sang to Dark.

That's so sweet.

(singing)

The sky at night is filled with stars/tons of light years away/Try as you might you'll never see/that far during the day.

EXT. WOODLAND - NIGHT

Orion and Dark walk through a forest. Nocturnal animals surround them.

ORION

(singing)

As many sleep/some others wake/more
than you'd have thunk/owls, bats,
nighthawks, rats/our smelly friend
the skunk.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Hypatia and Adult Orion look at beautiful flowers glowing in
the moonlight.

HYPATIA

All the night-blooming flowers/you
miss while beddy-bye/Acanthocereus
tetragonus/Peniocereus greggii.

The flowers sing back at them.

FLOWERS

Oenothera
fruticosa/Hylocereus/Polianthes
tuberosa/Please step outside and
see us!

EXT. NIGHT SKY - NIGHT

Dark and Orion fly over the rocky coast of Northern
California.

ORION

There are scientific lessons/You'll
only learn at night/like
Bioluminescence/organic chemical
light/It's found in different
species/a sight for your sore eyes.

As they head out to sea, the ocean below them glows
phosphorescent blue

ORION (CONT'D)

In oceans rife with plankton --

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Hypatia and Adult Orion stand in wonder amidst thousands of
fireflies glowing greenish-yellow.

HYPATIA

(singing)

And fields of fireflies.

(MORE)

HYPATIA (CONT'D)
 (speaking)
 My gosh, this is so beautiful.

ADULT ORION
 It is.

HYPATIA
 I think the scariest thing about
 darkness is you don't know what's
 hidden in it. It's like the future.
 You don't know what's going to
 happen tomorrow. So you worry. But
 worry doesn't help and sometimes
 tomorrow something great happens.

ADULT ORION
 True.

HYPATIA
 And sometimes, if you're not afraid
 to look, you can find amazing stuff
 right here, right now. In the dark.

ADULT ORION
 We've experienced that tonight.

HYPATIA
 Thanks, Dad.

Suddenly, Hypatia tenses up. There's a pair of headlights
 moving slowly towards them.

HYPATIA (CONT'D)
 That car is slowing down. That's
 sketchy. What if they're
 kidnappers?

ADULT ORION
 I think it's unlikely.

HYPATIA
 Or carjackers.

ADULT ORION
 Well, they already have a car, so I
 think we're safe. Maybe they're
 just looking for house numbers.

The headlights get closer and the car slows to a stop.

HYPATIA
 Oh my God. They're stopping!. We
 need to get ready to run!
 (MORE)

HYPATIA (CONT'D)

(then:)

Oh, it's mom.

The window rolls down. Hypatia's mother, Amaya, pokes her head out.

AMAYA

What are you guys doing out?

ADULT ORION

Enjoying the night. Telling stories.

AMAYA

So beautiful tonight. Power out at home?

HYPATIA

Yup.

AMAYA

At the observatory, too. An amazing night to look through the telescope, the lights out all over town. Now that the cloud cover has dissipated.

ADULT ORION

That's great.

AMAYA

It is. You guys want a ride home?

Adult Orion looks down at Hypatia, who indicates "no."

HYPATIA

More story to tell.

AMAYA

See you back there.

ADULT ORION

There's pasta on the stove.

AMAYA

Great. Yum. Starving.

HYPATIA

Bye, Mom.

AMAYA

Bye, Hypatia chan.

Amaya rolls up her window and drives off.

HYPATIA

Where were we?

ADULT ORION

So they're watching the black ocean
speed past beneath them as they
travel west --

EXT. NIGHT SKY - NIGHT

Orion and Dark fly over ocean. Beautiful and calm from up here. But Orion sees the FEAR building rising ominously from the water like the sail of a massive submarine. The ticker reads: WHAT IF YOU FALL INTO THE ICY BLACK WATER...HOW LONG BEFORE HYPOTHERMIA...SHARK BITE...DROWNING? Orion squirms and slips out of Dark's grip, plummeting toward the now fierce looking water. Circling shark fins appear directly below. As he approaches, the sharks poke their heads out, look up and bare their sharp white multi-rowed teeth. Orion falls into the mouth of one of them. He screams.

DARK

What?? What??

Orion looks over at Dark. He's still safely ensconced in Dark's arms.

ORION

Oh. Sorry. Nothing. I just had -- I was just worried about sharks.

DARK

Oh.

ORION

In actuality, they get a bad rap. Thank Mr. Steven Spielberg for that. About a one in two hundred and fifty million chance you'll be killed by one. But don't shake a vending machine if your candy gets stuck. More than twice as likely of dying from a vending machine falling on you.

DARK

See?

ORION

Exactly. I don't go near vending machines.

DARK

That's not the lesson.

ORION

That's a lesson. In addition to falling on you the candy inside might be moldy. You don't know how long it's been in there. Mold freaks me out. Don't get me started on mold. If I open a container and the stuff inside is moldy, I have to run around the kitchen, wiggling my fingers and screaming "ah ah ah ah ah ah" with my mouth open and my tongue hanging out. It grows everywhere. It's furry! It's not an animal but it's furry!

DARK

Ok. It's time.

Dark swoops down with Orion, toward the base of the giant monolithic building emerging from the black sea. The ticker reads: MOLD CAN BE TOXIC...ESPECIALLY TO PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA...

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Adult Orion and Hypatia walk.

HYPATIA

I'm terrified of mold, too.

ADULT ORION

I know.

HYPATIA

I run around the kitchen going "ah ah ah" also.

ADULT ORION

Like father, like daughter.

HYPATIA

I read a true story about mold that grew all over the wall's of someone's house and they would scrub it off and it would be back the next morning. Every morning.

ADULT ORION

I don't know if it's true.

HYPATIA
It's true. I read it.

EXT. FEAR BUILDING - NIGHT

Black waves slosh around the base. Dark and Orion are at the entrance. The doors open. Glaring fluorescent lights inside.

DARK
Go.

ORION
You come.

DARK
I can't. Bright in there. Have to go by yourself.

Water sloshes into the marble lobby. Orion nods and enters.

INT. FEAR BUILDING - NIGHT

The doors slide close behind Orion. The lobby is white marble, huge and imposing. He approaches the reception desk, his plastic poncho squeaking in the silent space. He cannot see over the reception desk, just the forehead of a guard.

ORION
I'm here to see Fear.

The guard hands him badge.

GUARD
179th floor. Elevators over there.

Orion cannot see his pointing arm.

ORION
Over where?

GUARD
There.

ORION
(still doesn't know)
Ok.

Orion heads off in search of the elevators.

GUARD
One of them plummeted the other day.

(MORE)

GUARD (CONT'D)

But that one's closed so don't
worry. I think that's the closed
one.

Orion gulps, finds the elevator bank. One of them is closed.
He presses the up button on the other. The doors open.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

It's glass and goes up the outside of the building. Orion
presses 179. It ascends. The glass is cracked and water leaks
in. Dark appears outside and ascends along with the car. He
smiles at Orion. The elevator arrives at Floor 179. The doors
open. Dark gives Orion a thumbs up.

INT. 179TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Gleaming white walls and floors. Scary paintings line the
walls. Orion passes an occasional terrifying sculpture. At
the end of the hall is a door marked FEAR. Orion trembles as
he knocks.

FEAR (O.S.)

(booming)

What??

ORION

Um...

FEAR (O.S.)

WHAT??

ORION

My name is Orion and I was hoping
that maybe I could meet you and --

FEAR (O.S.)

GET OUT OF HERE!!

Orion runs down the hall to the elevator.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Adult Orion and Hypatia are walking.

HYPATIA

So you just left?

ADULT ORION

I was scared.

HYPATIA

(beat)

You needed to go in anyway, I think.

ADULT ORION

He told me to go away.

HYPATIA

I think maybe if you actually meet Fear, then it won't be as scary as you imagine. Like how you and I aren't afraid of the dark anymore.

ADULT ORION

That's a good point.

They come to a stop in front of a darkened house.

ADULT ORION (CONT'D)

There it is.

HYPATIA

Where you and Dark first met.

ORION

Yup.

HYPATIA

Do you feel bad that Grandma and Grandpa sold it?

ADULT ORION

Nah. They needed something smaller.

HYPATIA

Maybe there's a new kid afraid of the dark in your old room?

ADULT ORION

Possibly. So we should leave. In case he's looking out the window and sees two strange people outside staring up at him.

HYPATIA

(waving at dark window)

Bye, new scared kid.

They walk on.

INT. 179TH FLOOR - NIGHT

Orion tears down the hall toward the elevator. He stops suddenly.

ORION

No.

He turns defiantly, marches back to the door marked FEAR, hesitates for a second, then turns the knob and enters.

INT. FEAR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Behind the desk is a giant creature, human-like but made out of mold. Orion shudders, but walks toward the creature.

FEAR

I told you to leave.

The creature steps out from behind the desk. Its head almost touches the 20 foot high ceiling. He slowly walks toward Orion.

FEAR (CONT'D)

Go. Before it's too late.

Orion begins to back slowly away. Fear advances. Orion trips over a very large black piece of cloth. He sees it has a zipper. The black cloth has stars on it. He continues to crawl away from the mold man. Then he notices a zipper running down Mold's side, too. Orion has a thought. He climbs up a book shelf, steadies himself, then leaps toward the creature, grabbing the zipper and unzipping it as he falls to the ground. The mold suit falls away revealing a giant vending machine.

ORION

Ha!

Vending Machine creature is about to topple over onto Orion. He screams, climbs the bookshelves again, leaps for the zipper and pulls off the Vending Machine suit revealing an enormous spider. This goes on and on, the discarded suits piled on the floor as the creature, now a shark, now a zombie, now a burglar, now a clown keeps moving forward. As the costumes are removed the creature is getting smaller and smaller, shedding one layer of clothes after another. Now Death with a scythe, now a wasp, now a rabid dog, now Richie Panichi, now a thunder storm, now a girl, now a hypodermic needle, now a tick, now a green potato, now Bob Dylan --

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Hypatia is rapt.

HYPATIA
This is so cool!

ADULT ORION
It was your idea.

HYPATIA
Well, sort of. We collaborated.

INT. FEAR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Orion has the creature down almost to his own size now. It's poison ivy. As it advances, Orion reaches out and unzips one last time. The costume falls away and reveals another Orion, slightly smaller than the original.

ORION
You.

FEAR ORION
Yeah. Hey.

ORION
Wow. I guess I have to ponder this one.

FEAR ORION
I'm your fear. I'm not a bad thing. Useful even. You just shouldn't let me take control.

ORION
You're not my boss?

FEAR ORION
I'm just a consultant. You're the boss.

ORION
Huh.

EXT. NIGHT SKY - NIGHT

Dark and Orion are nearing land.

ORION
That was very informative.

DARK
Glad.

ORION
I feel lighter.

DARK
I would imagine.

Dark and Orion now fly over the city of Wakkanai, Japan.

ORION
What's this?

DARK
Wakkanai. Japan's northernmost
city. Same latitude as your town.

ORION
We've gone far. It's beautiful.

DARK
We have. It is. And we're being
watched.

ORION
What do you mean?

DARK
Someone is watching us through a
telescope.

ORION
How can you tell?

DARK
It's dark, I'm there. Remember?

ORION
Oh yeah. Who?

DARK
A kid. A girl. Let's find out what
she wants.

A small FEAR building appears on the landscape. Ticker reads:
A GIRL?...WHAT IF SHE DOESN'T LIKE ME...

ORION

We have to keep on schedule.

DARK

Might be a spy. Better check.

ORION

It's getting late.

DARK

I don't like people looking at me. When people look at me, they hate me. I'm going to give her a piece of my mind.

ORION

I don't do well with girls.

DARK

Welcome to my world. Girls, boys, men, women. I deal with it a billion times a day.

ORION

I don't like rejection.

DARK

Quit consulting with your Fear guy on this.

(squinting, angry)

I think she's laughing at us.

ORION

That's *your* Fear guy! She's probably laughing at some joke she just thought of. A Japanese joke. We wouldn't understand.

DARK

I understand Japanese.

ORION

You do?

DARK

I understand every language. How do you think I know everyone hates me? Kirai. Haine. Odio. Hass. Chuki. Pick a language and I'll tell you how to say hate.

ORION

No. I don't want --

DARK
Pick a language!

ORION
Hindi!

DARK
Nafarat!

ORION
Ok!

With that they plunge to the Earth.

ORION (CONT'D)
Noooooooooooooooooooo!

They reach the Earth and find themselves in:

EXT. JAPANESE BACKYARD - NIGHT

Amaya, 10, stands behind her telescope, which is trained at the starry sky. She and Dark converse in Japanese.

AMAYA
That was so cool! Who are you two?
I've never seen anything like that!

DARK
Who are you??

AMAYA
Me? I'm just a kid. I'm a junior
member of the Haikkado Astronomy
Society. I'm always out at night.
Night time is the right time.

<p>ORION (timidly) What'd she say? Does she hate us?</p>	<p>DARK (ignoring Orion) Really?</p>
--	--

AMAYA
Darkness is where I feel most at
home.

<p>DARK Oh, wow. I'm Dark, y'know.</p>	<p>ORION What'd she say??</p>
--	-----------------------------------

AMAYA
(giggling)
No you're not!
(MORE)

AMAYA (CONT'D)

You're a blob who sounds like
beloved American comic actor Bill
Murray! Dark is everything around
us now. It's endless and majestic!

DARK

(pleased)

Oh, well, yeah.

(confidentially)

I do it for the kid. He's
scared of the dark. So I kind
of make myself user friendly
for him. For the kid.

ORION

What'd she say??

Amaya looks over at Orion for the first time. She has a
kindness in her eyes. She gestures to Orion.

AMAYA

Come here.

Orion understands the gesture, but turns to Dark, stalling.

ORION

What'd she say?

DARK

Just go over there! For God's sake!

Orion nervously approaches Amaya. She gestures for him to
look through the telescope.

AMAYA

This is your friend Dark. This is
what she makes possible.

DARK

She?

AMAYA

In Japan, The darkness is female.

ORION

What'd she say?

DARK

Dark is female.

ORION

That explains why I'm scared of it.

AMAYA

(gesturing to Orion)

Look.

Orion does. Amaya speaks and Dark translates.

AMAYA (CONT'D)

We can see all this, because Darkness allows us to focus outside of our own little world. We get to see the immenseness of the Universe. It lets us wonder, to ponder the mystery of existence, to see ourselves as part of everything instead of separate. Some say that people are the mechanism by which the Universe looks at itself. When you think of it that way, maybe the fear goes away.

DARK

We can see all this, because Darkness allows us to focus outside of our own little world. We get to see the immenseness of the Universe. It lets us wonder, to ponder the mystery of existence, to see ourselves as part of everything instead of separate. Some say that people are the mechanism by which the Universe looks at itself. When you think of it that way, maybe the fear goes away.

Dark has tears in his eyes. He hugs Amaya. Orion looks out at the Universe through the telescope. Beautiful, glimmering stars and planets, the Milky Way. He is moved. He turns to Amaya, summons his courage, and says:

ORION

Hi. My name is Orion. I'm a kid.
Just like you. So we have that in
common.

Amaya looks to Dark.

DARK

(to Amaya, in Japanese)

Hi. My name is Orion. I'm a kid.
Just like you. So we have that in
common.

AMAYA

Orion is my favorite
constellation! I'm Amaya.
It means night rain.

DARK (CONT'D)

(translating)
Orion is my favorite
constellation! I'm Amaya.
It means night rain.

ORION

That's pretty.

DARK (CONT'D)

That's pretty.

(CONT'D)

AMAYA

Thanks.

DARK

Thanks.

Orion and Amaya share a look.

ORION

Do you by any chance like the
Japanese horror director Hideo
Nakata?

Dark is about to translate, but:

AMAYA

Hideo Nakata?? He is my favorite!

Orion understands, even without translation.

ORION

Mine, too!!

ORION AND AMAYA

(she in Japanese)

Dark water!!

They go back to being awkward with each other.

DARK

Well, we'd better get going.

Orion and Amaya both nod.

ORION

It was nice meeting you.

AMAYA

(in Japanese)
It was nice meeting you.

DARK

Ready?

Orion nods.

AMAYA

(at her telescope)
I'll watch you go. So wave to me.

They fly off. Orion waves frantically. Amaya recedes quickly.

ORION

She's the best person I've ever
met. I don't know how I'm going to
go on without her.

DARK

I like her, too.

ORION

I should move to Japan! Do you need vaccinations to move here? I don't like vaccinations. I won't go if there are vaccinations. Although I might. It's just a needle.

DARK

I don't know.

ORION

I'll consult with my pediatrician in the morning.

DARK

Good idea.

ORION

Do you know her address? I should send her a post card.

DARK

Sure.

ORION

Or is that weird? I don't want her to think I'm weird.

DARK

I'm sure she'd appreciate it.

ORION

I was thinking from our travels, y'know? Nothing forward. I don't want her to get the wrong idea.

DARK

What would the wrong idea be?

ORION

That I like her.

DARK

But you do like her.

ORION

Yes.

DARK

So you don't want her to get the right idea.

ORION

That's correct.

DARK
You could send her an insulting
postcard.

ORION
Maybe. I think that might be
confusing though.

DARK
I was kidding.

ORION
Oh.
(beat)
What's next?

DARK
Yuhzno-Sakhalinsk. Russia.

ORION
Is that a good post card town?

DARK
I've never checked.

ORION
We should check.

DARK
All right. But quick. We're running
late and Light is up my butt.

Dark lowers them to the ground in --

EXT. DOWNTOWN YUHZNO-SAKHALINSK - NIGHT

They look around. It's late and deserted.

DARK
(looking around)
Let's see... postcard store...

There is, of course, nothing. One dark, industrial-looking
building has an open door. They step inside.

INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Mob scene. A dark, multi-tiered nightclub. Very loud. Filled
with dancing people and rotating disco balls and colored,
pulsating lights. Orion is overwhelmed and intimidated. The
crowd pushes them onto the dance floor against their will.

DARK
 (in Russian, to dancer)
 We're trying to find postcards.

No response. It's difficult to be heard above the pounding music. They approach other dancers.

DARK (CONT'D)
 Postcards? Do you know where we
 can buy postcards? Postcards?

Finally one dancer, a very skinny, dour-looking man, nods. He scribbles an address on a piece of paper, hands it to Dark.

DARK (CONT'D)
 Thank you very much.

The man nods and goes back to dancing.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - NIGHT

Dark and Orion wander, looking at addresses. Orion is scared. The FEAR building appears, small and squat. The Fear Orion steps out and walks with them

FEAR ORION
 This doesn't look right. This
 can't be right. We should go.

ORION
 I think we should go maybe.

DARK
 Hell no. You wanted a postcard,
 we're getting you a postcard.

FEAR ORION
 You want to keep on schedule,
 right? To get home to your parents.

ORION
 I really want to get Amaya a
 postcard.

DARK
 Amaya deserves one. I think we're
 almost... Yes! Here!

They have arrived at a dark, tenement building.

DARK (CONT'D)
 (checks paper slip)
 Apartment number divukhsot
 semnadtsati. 237.

FEAR ORION
 237??

DARK
 What?

They enter the building.

INT. TENEMENT - NIGHT

Dark heads up the rickety staircase first. A panicky Orion follows, followed by Fear Orion.

FEAR ORION
 237 is the bad room in The Shining!
 With the bloated corpse lady!

ORION AND DARK
 Shh.

They arrive at 237. Dark knocks. Orion hides behind him.

FEAR ORION
 What if it's not a dead naked woman
 in a bathtub but the Russian mob?
 We should have an escape plan. If
 someone answers with a Kalashnikov,
 we all split up and --

The door opens. An emaciated man in a raincoat answers the door. He and Dark speak in Russian.

EMACIATED MAN
 Yes?

DARK
 We're looking for postcards.

The man nods, opens his coat. There are rows of postcards in pockets inside, all the same: I "heart" Yuhzno-Sakhalinsk.

DARK (CONT'D)
 These are very cool. How much?

ORION
 That's it? I don't like it.

The man shrugs.

DARK
It's a postcard. It's fine.

FEAR ORION
Just take it and go. It's fine.

ORION
I'm not sending that to Amaya. It's cheesy.

DARK AND FEAR ORION
Kid --

ORION
You only get one chance to make a first impression.

Dark sighs.

DARK
(to man)
Thanks, anyway.

EMACIATED MAN
(shrugging)
Suit yourself. You won't find a better postcard in all Mother Russia.

EXT. NIGHT SKY - NIGHT

Orion and Dark fly over Russia.

ORION
Where to next?

DARK
Ulaanbaatar? The largest city in Mongolia. Probably our best bet.

ORION
I don't want Amaya to think I'm a vulgarian. I want her to see that I have a proper interest in and respect for all cultures.

DARK
It's Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia! Of course they'll have fascinating--

EXT. ULAANBAATAR MARKETPLACE - NIGHT

Exotic, bustling. Stalls featuring guriltai shul, toortsog hats, beautiful baskets and ... a postcard stall with only an "I love Ulaanbaatar" postcard. The stall is crowded with tourists enthusiastically buying the postcards. Dark speaks to the vendor in Mongolian.

DARK

That's it?

MONGOLIAN VENDOR

Most popular. Very big seller.

DARK

Do you at least have it written in Mongolian?

MONGOLIAN VENDOR

Why would Mongolians want this?

DARK

No. Just to make it more authentic.

MONGOLIAN VENDOR

Besides Mongolians don't "love" Mongolia. Like people everywhere, they have a complex and nuanced relationship to their homeland.

DARK

I'm not saying --

MONGOLIAN VENDOR

A more accurate postcard for them might be "I have complicated feelings about Mongolia."

DARK

I understand, but --

MONGOLIAN VENDOR

Maybe a picture of a spleen instead of a heart. But even then, I don't think I'd sell many. Who would they send it to?

DARK

Ok.

MONGOLIAN VENDOR

Maybe a picture of a brain. To indicate complex emotions.

DARK

Ok.

EXT. KAZAKHSTAN POSTCARD STAND - NIGHT

Orion and Dark are at a stand outside the magnificent Pavlodar Mosque. The only postcards read "I love Kazakhstan." Dark speaks to vendor in Kazakh.

DARK

No postcards of the Mosque?

KAZAKH VENDOR

Yes, yes, of course!

She fishes in a file and pulls out a postcard which reads "I love the Pavlovar Mosque." Dark sighs.

DARK

(to Orion)

Take it. We're seriously behind schedule.

ORION

Just one more!

DARK

(pulling out map)

Pick a good one. Because this is it. Then it's the Atlantic Ocean and then home.

Orion traces his finger along their latitude.

ORION

Venice!

DARK

I don't know. People love Venice. They might very well want to send a postcard saying they heart Venice.

ORION

Venice. I'm sure of it.

Dark sighs, they lift off and the world spins away.

EXT. VENICE - NIGHT

Orion and Dark wander a crowded, narrow, dark street.

DARK
 (checking address)
 It's coming up.

They turn a corner and there it is: *Negozia Cartolina*, a bizarrely large and well-stocked postcard shop. Extraordinarily bright inside. Dark stands in the shadows.

ORION
 Wow! This looks amazing.
 Let's go!

DARK
 You know I can't.

ORION
 Right. Come in, anyway. Don't be afraid. Haven't you been teaching me not to be afraid?

DARK
 It's not garlic or something. I just can't go in there! I don't exist there. It's like asking the inside of your house to come outside.

ORION
 Guess I have to do this by myself.

DARK
 You do. I'll be right here.

Fear Orion appears.

FEAR ORION
 What if you can't find Dark after?
 What if they don't let kids in unattended and they yell at you?
 What if they don't speak English?

ORION
 (steeling himself)
 I'm getting a postcard for Amaya.

DARK
 You can do it.

Orion inhales and heads into the shop.

INT. POSTCARD SHOP - NIGHT

Orion looks in awe at the shelf after shelf of postcards. An amazing variety, every sight in Venice represented in vividly colored postcards. He comes upon one depicting the St. Marks astronomical clock, featuring stars and zodiacal symbols. Perfect. He takes the card, heads nervously to the cashier.

CASHIER

Un Euro.

ORION

I'm sorry. I don't speak Italian.

CASHIER

(rolling eyes)

One Euro.

ORION

Right. That was actually pretty clear. The eye roll was justified.

Orion pats his pajamas and realizes of course he has no money. He starts to back away from cashier.

ORION (CONT'D)

Um, I don't seem to have my Euros in these pajamas. I'll just put this back and get my Euros pajamas and come back with my Euros and --

Orion makes panicky eye contact with Fear Orion outside pressing his nose against the window. Orion bolts from the shop, postcard in hand.

EXT. VENICE STREET - NIGHT

Orion looks frantically for Dark, he is nowhere to be seen.

FEAR ORION

Where is he?? Where is he?

ORION

Dark! Dark!

FEAR ORION

You're going to jail! In a foreign country! Remember Midnight Express!

Inside the store, the cashier is on the phone, talking animatedly. A policeman appears from around the corner. Orion puts on his hood and runs, his red poncho flapping behind him. The cop pursues. They run past Dark, among a crowd of tourists watching a street performer. He doesn't notice. Orion runs down a quiet, narrow street and over a bridge. The cop follows now joined by a second cop.

The streets are confused, maze-like, and Orion has no idea where he is. The cops catch up to him, grab him from behind and turn him around to face them. They speak in Italian.

FIRST COP

I was sure it was a dwarf.

SECOND COP

Yeah. I just assumed.

FIRST COP

(to Orion)

What is your name?

ORION

(terrified)

I don't speak Italian.

EXT. VENICE STREET - NIGHT

Dark pulls himself away from the street performance and looks in the window of the postcard store. Orion is not there.

DARK

(panicky)

Orion??

No response. Dark enlarges to encompass all of the surrounding darkness in Venice: the sky, the alleys, the canals. His eyes move freely and rapidly through this massive darkness as he searches for Orion. He finally spots Orion traveling in the cabin of a well-lit police boat.

DARK (CONT'D)

Oh crap.

Dark's eyes travel with the police boat to the police station, where Orion is escorted inside.

INT. POLICE STATION HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

Orion is alone on a cot. A small barred window looks out on to the darkness. Dark's eyes appear in the window.

DARK

Psst.

Orion runs to the window.

ORION

How do I get out of here?

DARK
I'm trying to think.

ORION
I've got to get home! My parents!

DARK
I'm trying to think. I won't leave.

EXT, SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Adult Orion and Hypatia sit on a curb.

ADULT ORION
So I sat in the cell and Dark sat
outside and we tried to come up
with a plan.

HYPATIA
Daddy, I'm getting really sleepy.

ADULT ORION
Ok, sweetheart. Let's get you to
bed.

HYPATIA
You carry?

Adult Orion picks up the groggy Hypatia. They head for home.

HYPATIA (CONT'D)
Keep telling though.

ADULT ORION
So Dark waited with me. And
daylight didn't come when it should
have. People all over the world
started to freak out.

INT. ITV MORNING SHOW SET - NIGHT

The presenters sit nervously on comfortable sofas in front of
a plate glass window outside of which is pitch black.

PRESENTER ONE
We have Dr. Liam Wool with us now
to "shed some light" on the current
phenomenon. Dr. Wool, it's now
10:30 AM and as everyone can see,
it's still dark. Why?

DR. WOOL

I don't know. No one knows. It makes no sense. I am a man of science, but the only possible scientific conclusion is that this is the end time.

INT. ORION'S CELL - NIGHT

Orion watches a TV mounted high on the wall outside his cell. On it, an Italian newscaster is screaming in terror directly into the camera. Dark watches, too, from outside.

ORION

You really have to go.

DARK

I'm not leaving.

ORION

People are terrified. When people are scared they act irrationally, impulsively. Read Mass Psychology for Kids if you don't believe me.

DARK

But I have to get you home.

Fear Orion appears.

FEAR ORION

If you don't get home before you're parents wake up, they'll die of fear. And it'll be your fault.

Orion looks over at Fear Orion, then back to Dark.

ORION

I'll figure it out. It'll be ok.

Dark thinks about this. He watches Fear Orion vanish.

DARK

Ok.

(beat)

I had fun with you.

ORION

I had fun, too. Thank you.

DARK

Hey, I'll see you tomorrow. Like clockwork.

ORION

Looking forward to it. I've got some really good ideas for your movie.

They touch hands through the bars. Dark pulls away. Sunlight pours in the cell window.

INT. HYPATIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adult Orion gently places the sleeping Hypatia in bed and covers her with her blanket. Amaya watches from the door.

ADULT ORION

Good thing she fell asleep. I don't have a clue how to get myself home. This'll give me a day to figure out the ending.

AMAYA

Where are you now?

ADULT ORION

In jail. In Venice.

AMAYA

Ah. That's a tough one.

They kiss, look at Hypatia.

AMAYA (CONT'D)

Look what we made.

They smile at each other, turn and leave. We stay in the room and move into Hypatia's closed eyes. Closer and closer until the skin cells are individuated. We move through those cells and nerves and capillaries. We are inside her brain revealing visual imagery, puffs of thought, of dreams, of emotion, fading in and out of existence.

EXT. DARK LANDSCAPE - NIGHT

Hypatia walks. She is scared.

HYPATIA

Dad?

A murder of crows overhead against the dark sky. A broken door appears. She walks through it.

INT. VAGUELY RENDERED SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Hypatia scans the crowded atrium. Harsh sunlight pours in from the massive skylight two storeys up.

HYPATIA
(calling out)
Hello? Dad?

Hypatia squints up at the skylight. Close on her eyes.

EXT. DETENTION CELL - MORNING

Bright sunlight streams in the window. Hypatia sits on a cot, sees Orion asleep on the other cot.

HYPATIA
Oh.

Orion wakes up and looks over at the girl.

ORION
(shyly)
Oh.

HYPATIA
(shyly)
Hi.

Silence. An unseen clock ticks. Close on Orion.

ORION (V.O.)
What do I say? Do I say hi? Why is she looking at me weird? Is there something wrong with how I look? I have to say something.
(to Hypatia)
I stole a post card.

HYPATIA
Ok.

ORION
I'm not violent, if you're concerned.
(beat)
My name's Orion.

HYPATIA
I'm Hypatia.

ORION (V.O.)
 Like the ancient Greek astronomer.
 I'll say that. That'll impress her.
 (to Hypatia)
 Like the ancient Greek astronomer.

HYPATIA
 Yes.

ORION
 I read about her in The Young
 Feminist's Guide to Woman
 Astronomers. Males can be
 feminists, too.
 (V.O.)
 That'll make her think I'm
 progressive.

HYPATIA
 That's very progressive of you.

ORION
 Thanks.

HYPATIA
 My parents met while admiring the
 night sky. So --

ORION
 So hence the name.
 (V.O.)
 Hence? What a pretentious idiot.

HYPATIA
 Yeah. Well, I'm glad to meet you.
 (confidentially)
 Actually, I think I might be
 dreaming.

ORION
 You mean, like, you're dreaming me?

HYPATIA
 Yeah. That's what I'm thinking.

ORION
 (V.O.)
 This is a crazy person. I'm locked
 in here with a lunatic. Don't
 excite her. Act natural.
 (to Hypatia)
 That's interesting.

He suddenly pokes at himself.

ORION (CONT'D)

(gently)

But think about it, could I poke myself if you were dreaming?

HYPATIA

(considers)

If I dreamt that you poked yourself.

ORION

(not convinced)

Maybe.

Hypatia thinks for a moment, then floats and hovers.

HYPATIA

See?

After Orion takes this in:

ORION

That is very dream-like. I will grant you that.

HYPATIA

(thought)

Hey, wait, since this is a dream --

ORION

Maybe. We don't know. The jury is --

HYPATIA

But if it is, I have an idea on how to get you home to Pittsburgh.

ORION

How do you know I need to get home to Pittsburgh?

HYPATIA

It's my dream. I keep telling you this. So if we can locate Dreams --

ORION

I just can't wrap my head around --

HYPATIA

So if we find Dreams, maybe she can lead up from dream to dream to get you home before your parents wake up.

ORION

I think I should stay here.

HYPATIA

No. This is good. C'mon.

She grabs Orion's hand, drags him toward the camera. They walk past and find themselves stepping out of the jail and into an audience of entities in the theater watching this dream. The entities cheer this twist.

ENTITY ONE

(whisper)

I did not see that coming.
Fantastic. So meta.

ENTITY TWO

Dreams has outdone herself.

Hypatia drags Orion up the aisle. The jail on screen is now empty. The clock ticks. Nothing happens.

ENTITY TWO (CONT'D)

Do we follow them or stay and watch
the jail?

INT. GOOGOLPLEX HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hypatia and Orion are in the endless hallway outside the theater. The marquee reads: *Cinema 453,888,721 - Hypatia's Orion Dream*. Hypatia and Orion both see this. She gives him a "See?" look.

ORION

Anyway, that was cool, I admit.
You're good at this dream stuff.

HYPATIA

Really? Thanks! I like making up
stories. I like that you like it.

Hypatia opens the door to the projection booth.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT

Hypatia and Orion look around the immense projection booth, filled with whirring projectors.

HYPATIA

(timidly)

Dreams? Hello?

(MORE)

HYPATIA (CONT'D)
 (a little more)
 Ms. Dreams?

Dreams appears, impatient.

DREAMS
 What? I'm busy. Too much damn
 dreaming today. What is it with you
 people? Dream, dream, dream.

HYPATIA
 You're her. Wow. You're very...
 big. I didn't know. So, anyway...

DREAMS
 Look, as I mentioned, I don't have
 a lot of time. So spit it out.

HYPATIA
 Right. Sorry. This boy --

Dreams looks over.

DREAMS
 Oy. The kid.

HYPATIA
 I'm trying to help him get home.

DREAMS
 Tell me something I don't know.
 Cinema 453,888,721. I wrote this
 dream.

HYPATIA
 With all due respect...

DREAMS
 This is what it's always about with
 that kid, isn't it? A broken
 record. Get me home. Get me home.
 Speaking of which, I'm wearing out
 my Myron Floren Accordion album on
 your father.

ORION
 I'm sorry.

HYPATIA
 I was hoping you... might be able
 to lead us to his house, through
 other people's dreams, y'know.

DREAMS

Do I look like I have the day off?
Am I wearing my beer cap? Look at
this operation I have to run.

HYPATIA

Right. I'm sorry.
(beat)
Well, there is a Dream Map, right?

DREAMS

Somewhere, I guess. I haven't
looked at it in years.

HYPATIA

Can we borrow it then and follow it
back to his house?

DREAMS

You'll never find your way. It's
extremely complex and constantly
changing, so --

HYPATIA

I think I can do it. I got a
hundred plus a smiley sticker on my
geography test last week.

DREAMS

Well, No skin off my nose -- Ooh, I
like that image for a dream. Need
to remember that!

(looking around)

Where did I leave that map?

Dreams searches. Close on her hand reaching for a glove
compartment, opening it.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The three of them are in the car. Dreams' hand is in the
glove compartment, feeling around. She pulls out napkins, a
tire gauge, a bag of cookies, sunglasses, a mouse with
antlers, a tube of black toothpaste...

DREAMS

Here it is.

She pulls out map, unfolds it. A crazy, colorful
multidimensional map, illustrating pathways between dreams.
The dreams constantly move, change, morph. She hands it to
Hypatia, then drives the car recklessly down the googolplex
hall. Entities with popcorn and sodas jump out of the way.

DREAMS (CONT'D)

A word of caution: don't startle or scare the dreamer. If they wake up, you'll pop out into their bedroom. That'll definitely screw up your plans. Maybe get you shot, if they have a gun. Or stabbed, if they have a knife. Or bludgeoned if --

HYPATIA

We'll be careful

The car stops.

DREAMS

Fine. Start at this dream.

HYPATIA

Thank you.

Hypatia and Orion get out of the car. The car and Dreams drive off and start to fade.

DREAMS

The bludgeoning would come from a baseball bat, is what I was going to say.

Dreams is gone. Hypatia and Orion enter the cinema entitled Giancarlo Bruno at the Carnival. The seats are packed. On screen is a circus environment, people in heavily striped and checked clothing, theatrical make up. All speak Italian.

ORION

(whisper)

Looks like a Fellini movie.

Orion follows Hypatia down the aisle to the screen. She steps into it. The audience "oohs" and ahhs." Orion looks back at them, bows shyly, then quickly follows her into the dream.

ORION (CONT'D)

I think they like us.

EXT. CARNIVAL - DAY

It's gray and windy, looks like rain. Hypatia and Orion walk while she attempts to read the map. There's a droning, echoey, ubiquitous Italian voice over, as if we're hearing a thought process.

ORION

Where do we go?

Hypatia unfolds the map. It unfolds and unfolds, forming a giant floating topographical globe. She studies Europe. The dreams can be seen in extreme miniature swarming all over the surface. Hypatia traces her finger along it as she explains the route To Orion.

HYPATIA

(re: map)

This is west. So I think if we head past the sword swallower, we should spot a northern exit. If we can get to the Netherlands at the right time, we can hook onto this --

A miniature space station circles above the map.

HYPATIA (CONT'D)

(pointing to it)

-- astronaut asleep in the space station, as it flies over head. Take the space station east, all the way around the world, drop out over Pittsburgh -- above your house, right into your bedroom and poof. Easy as pie.

ORION

Easy as pi to the one thousandth decimal place.

HYPATIA

Oh, that's good. I like that.

ORION

(pleased)

It's a math joke.

HYPATIA

We really could be friends, I think.

They walk. Hypatia looks around. Among all the more vaguely rendered people, she spots a detailed man in a passionate embrace with a woman.

HYPATIA (CONT'D)

That's got to be Giancarlo.

As they watch him, Giancarlo's skin begins to peel off his nose. He screams, grabs his nose, and runs off.

HYPATIA (CONT'D)

She just added that! She's really good!

They walk through a field of tall grass on the outskirts. As they move away from the main action, the rendering becomes increasingly vague. Hypatia spots a sword swallower next to a circular swirling tunnel. Pieces of the dreamscape are sucked into the hole.

HYPATIA (CONT'D)

There!

They approach it.

ORION (V.O.)

That thing looks like a black hole.
Things that enter a black hole
never come out. I'm not going into
there.

HYPATIA

We have to.

He looks at her perplexed

ORION

Did I say that out loud?

The tunnel sucks them in.

INT. SYSTEM OF TUNNELS

The tunnels consist of pulsating tubes, dream fragments coursing like corpuscles through veins, images and sounds delivered to the heads of dreamers all over the world. Orion tries to make conversation.

ORION

So... Where are you from?

HYPATIA

Pittsburgh.

ORION

Me too!

HYPATIA

I know.

ORION

Oh yeah.

(beat)

So do you like the Steelers?

HYPATIA

Not really.

ORION

Me neither. I'm not much of a
basketball fan.

Their voices become part of the dream tube, entering the
dreams of various dreamers. We see this as Hypatia and Orion
look into the passing, untaken dreams.

ORION (V.O.)

My theory is, I'm the one dreaming.
This girl doesn't exist, but is
rather a symbol anxiety and --

HYPATIA

Just so you know, I can hear what
you're thinking.

ORION

You can hear what I'm thinking?

HYPATIA

It's my dream.

ORION (V.O.)

Can you hear this?

HYPATIA

Yes.

He pulls his poncho over his head.

ORION (V.O.)

Now?

HYPATIA

Uh-huh.

He thinks for a moment, then rapid fire:

ORION (V.O.)

Ibble-duh-dibble-duh-floop-yop-
clum.

HYPATIA

(casually)

Ibble-duh-dibble-duh-floop-yop-
clum.

ORION (V.O.)

I have to stop thinking.

HYPATIA

Don't! I like it. It's swee --
 (spotting dream tunnel)
 There! Piazza Narbonne 8, Aosta.

They allow themselves to get sucked in, along with a lot of dream debris.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

Blizzard. A lone man struggles to climb the mountain. Hypatia and Orion try to talk over the howling wind.

ORION

Do we follow him?

HYPATIA

(consulting map)
 No. We need to look for his mother
 dancing in an evening gown.

They search. Orion spots her waltzing alone in the mouth of a cave. They struggle against the elements to get to her. There they find a dream tube and allow themselves to be sucked in.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Low to ground dog POV as he chases a ball. He picks up the ball and turns to head back to his master. Hypatia and Orion appear on the dog's nose as he lopes.

ORION

Dog dream!

The dog arrives at his owner, who wrestles the ball from the dog's mouth. Hypatia reads the map.

HYPATIA

We need to get onto the ball!

Hypatia and Orion, climb off the nose and onto the ball. The owner gets the ball (and Hypatia and Orion) and as he winds up to throw it, the dog runs deep into the field. The camera stays in his POV. The dog turns to face his owner as the ball is released, and starts running in the direction the ball has been thrown. As the dog nears the landing ball, we see that Hypatia and Orion are hanging on for dear life. The ball lands and bounces to a stop.

HYPATIA (CONT'D)

Toward the flowers!

Hypatia and Orion hop off and run. A dream tube is revealed.

INT. DREAM TUBE

Hypatia and Orion run through the tube, are suddenly carried along by a river of beer. Sausages and pretzels float by.

HYPATIA

Yes! We've entered German dream space. On course and schedule.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

Male VO in German: quiet, authoritative. Long table. Business meeting in progress. All the executives in suits. One man sits there naked.

ORION

You don't have to guess which person is the dreamer here.

HYPATIA

I really hope the exit isn't under the table.

The dreamer looks down at himself, realizes he's naked. His eyes widen. One by one the other executives turn and look over at him. All conversation stops. The naked man grabs two folders, covers his front and back with them and makes his way out of the room, saying something apologetic in German.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The naked man walks to the elevator. Hypatia and Orion follow. Hypatia consults the map.

HYPATIA

This should turn into a mud bath...
now.

INT. MUD BATH - DAY

The German man, now in a business suit, walks through a mud bath, struggling to get away from a mud-covered old woman who follows him, singing *99 Luftballons*.

HYPATIA

The steam cabinets!

They hurry to the steam cabinets. Hypatia opens one of them to reveal a tiny man and a dream tube. They enter.

INT. DREAM TUBE

They float through. Fear Orion floats next to them.

ORION (V.O.)

Can you get trapped in someone else's dream? What if I get stuck in here forever? What makes me think I can trust this girl? What do I really know about her? Maybe she's some sort of dream demon sucking me farther and farther into a never ending nightmare.

Orion looks over at Hypatia. She's watching him.

HYPATIA

Are you through?

ORION

Yes. Sorry.

HYPATIA

Good. Because we need to focus. We're about to enter a dream at the M.C. Escher Museum in The Hague. Looks like a guard fell asleep in the gallery.

ORION

I don't really think you are a dream demon. Just crossed my mind.

HYPATIA

It's fine.

ORION

You seem very nice.

INT. GALLERY - DAY

Silent. Shoes click on tile. POV of guard slowly making rounds in empty museum. Distant buzzing. Guard turns to investigate. Around the corner comes a swarm of bees. The guard tries to run, but it's like moving through molasses.

FEAR ORION

(appearing)

You don't like bees!

Guard, Orion, and Hypatia run past several living Escher prints. They pass *Relativity*, which depicts an impossible staircase. The guard leaps into the lithograph. Hypatia, Orion, Fear Orion, and the bees get sucked in in his wake.

HYPATIA

Good!

(re: map)

The next tube is at the top of these stairs.

The environment is confused. They run through an archway to discover more impossible staircases. Orion is exhausted.

ORION (V.O.)

I have to rest. What if I have a heart attack? If you have a heart attack in a dream, do you have one in real life? What about a heart attack in someone else's dream?

HYPATIA

No stopping! We have to get to the dream tube just as the space station passes overhead or we won't make our connection!

Orion struggles to keep up. The staircase inverts.

HYPATIA (CONT'D)

We're going down! We need to go up!

She points to a different staircase going up, leaps onto it. Orion tries to follow, but his jump is short and he's about to plummet. Hypatia grabs him by the arm. He looks down and sees a bunch of dead bodies at the bottom of the stairs.

ORION

Are you sure you can't die in someone else's dream? Because --

HYPATIA

Keep moving!

They reach the dream tube. The guard continues running, followed by the bees.

ORION

Poor guard.

HYPATIA

Don't worry. He wakes up in 53 seconds.

INT. DREAM TUBE

This one points up at a severe angle. Hypatia and Orion attempt to climb. It is slow going. Space related imagery floats up past them. A chimp in a space suit. A little Saturn. They slog on. A rumble behind them in the tube. They look back to see a huge rocket approaching at fantastic speed.

HYPATIA

Grab hold.

The rocket shoots past and both Hypatia and Orion grab on. The rocket carries them up through the tube and into --

INT. PALACE OF VERSAILLES - DAY

The rocket ship crashes, nose first, into the floor, sending Hypatia and Orion flying, then floating.

HYPATIA

Made it!

Wealthy men and women in 18th century formal wear and space helmets dance an allemande in what appears to be low gravity. Hypatia and Orion land and watch.

ORION

Now what?

HYPATIA

We wait. And hope she stays asleep until the station passes over Pittsburgh.

The chimp is at the punch bowl pouring himself a drink. The dreaming astronaut is there too. The chimp chats her up.

CHIMP

How's the astronaut biz?

ASTRONAUT

It's got it's ups and downs.

CHIMP

(laughing)

Man, they were telling that back in my day. It's a good one.

ASTRONAUT

I didn't know chimps could talk.

CHIMP
It's classified. There's a lot you
don't know.

ASTRONAUT
For instance?

CHIMP
Chimps can also sing.

The chimp begins to sing *Danny Boy*.

ASTRONAUT
I'm not sure why that would be
classified.

CHIMP
Think if the Russians got a hold of
this technology.

ORION
Geez. How long do we have to stay
in this dream.

She looks at the map.

HYPATIA
45 minutes till Pittsburgh.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

A robot war. The Astronaut is controlling one of the giant
robots with a joystick. Hypatia and Orion sit and watch.

ORION
So what grade are you in?

HYPATIA
Second.

ORION
I'm in second! What school?

HYPATIA
Colfax.

ORION
I go to Colfax!

HYPATIA
No way.

ORION

I've never seen you. Who's your teacher?

HYPATIA

Spinoza.

ORION

She's my teacher! You're not in my class!

HYPATIA

I sit in the back.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The astronaut is on the bed, the robot, now human size, sits next to her, so do Hypatia and Orion. A man lectures about snails, which cover the floor of the room.

LECTURER

The snails are here to provide oxygen. Also to make sure you stay on the bed. The cost of any snails squashed under foot will be charged to your room.

ORION

I'm getting exhausted. I've been up forever.

Hypatia checks the map.

HYPATIA

We're almost there. 4718 Piedmont?

ORION

Yes.

HYPATIA

(indicating point on map)
This bedroom?

ORION

Yes.

Hypatia exits, squashing snails. Orion follows.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Hypatia leads Orion through the hall, which is becoming increasingly vague as they move away from the center of the dream. At the end is a dream tube. Hypatia looks back at Orion to make sure he's following, then enters --

INT DREAM TUBE

Hypatia and Orion slide down the tube, dream images passing them by.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - MORNING

Hypatia and Orion sit on the bus, watching a kid play Mortal Kombat on his smartphone.

HYPATIA

Ok. Here we are.

ORION

What is this I'm looking at?

HYPATIA

Mortal Kombat on your Iphone.

ORION

On my what what?

HYPATIA

Iphone.

ORION

I don't know what that is.

HYPATIA

How can you not know what an Iphone is --

(realizing)

Oh! Oh no.

ORION

What?

HYPATIA

This is your room but not your dream.

ORION

What do you mean?

HYPATIA

I just realized, we're in my dream,
so we're in my time. We traveled to
your house but into the dream of
the kid who lives there now.

ORION

What do you mean *your time*?

HYPATIA

I didn't want to say. I didn't want
to freak you out.

ORION

Freak me out?

HYPATIA

We have to figure out what to do.
(looking at map, mumbling)
I'm your daughter.

ORION

No, seriously --

Hypatia pulls out a snapshot of herself and her dad. He looks
at it, recognizes an older version of himself. He starts to
back up the aisle.

HYPATIA

(following him)
Let me try to explain.

ORION

Stay away.

He keeps backing up.

HYPATIA

It's ok. It's just a --

Orion backs into the bus driver, causing him to swerve the
bus, which sails over a cliff. The kids scream, including the
video game playing dreamer, who wakes up with a start.

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The dreamer is wide-eyed in bed as Hypatia and Orion fall
onto the floor of his room.

KID IN BED

Ahh! Who are you?? Why are you --

HYPATIA

(to Orion)

We have to go!

(to kid, dreamily)

You're just dreaming.

(grabs Orion's hand)

Let's go!

KID IN BED

I know you! You were outside my window before!

She pulls Orion from the room.

EXT SUBURBAN STREET/PARK - NIGHT

It's the same street Hypatia walked along with Adult Orion. Hypatia and Orion run into the firefly park. Police cars, sirens on, speed by. They sit on a bench, surrounded by fireflies.

ORION

Explain.

HYPATIA

My dad -- you -- were telling me a story tonight about his -- your -- childhood fear of the dark. See, I'm afraid of the dark, too. So anyway, in your -- my Dad's -- story you met "Dark" and he was a guy, kind of, and he sounded like Seth Rogen and --

ORION

Who?

HYPATIA

(rambling)

Exactly. It didn't make any sense because Seth Rogen, the greatest comic actor of his generation, wasn't famous yet when you -- my Dad -- was a kid. And I know this for a fact, because I happen to be the president of my school's chapter of the Seth Rogen fan club, so of course I know Seth was born on April 15, 1982. And I figured maybe my Dad -- you -- made up the whole story. But I was enjoying it anyway, so I let him/you continue. Plus I wasn't ready to go to bed.

(MORE)

HYPATIA (CONT'D)

Anyway, it's good to be able to come clean. Anyway, I fell asleep before he finished and I guess I started this dream we're in to finish the story. I guess in my mind I needed to try to help you get home. And here we are. Anyway.

ORION

So I'm how old?

HYPATIA

Now? As my dad? Thirty-five?

ORION

Thirty-five??

HYPATIA

In your time, you're still eight. I'm sorry, I didn't want to tell you and freak you out.

ORION

What do I?? I have to get home! My parents are waiting!

HYPATIA

Your Parents are fine. I saw them yesterday. They're my Grandma and Grandpa.

ORION

Oh. Still, I can't just stay in the future like this. I have to get back! What am I going to do?

Fear Orion appears next to him.

FEAR ORION

This could be very bad.

ORION

I know!

FEAR ORION

What are you going to do??

ORION

You're not helping. I need to stay calm.

FEAR ORION

It's not safe! There could be cosmic repercussions. You saw Back to the Future!

HYPATIA

Sometimes when I need to calm myself, I look at the stars. They're always just... *there*, y'know? Ancient, unconcerned with the little, petty things going on down --

ORION

Actually, we don't know if they're still there. The light can take millions of years to get to us. Those stars could be long gone.

HYPATIA

True. I was just trying to think of --

ORION

But that gives me an idea.

HYPATIA

What?

ORION

Are we still in your dream?

HYPATIA

I... I guess so. I don't know.

ORION

Well, those ancient stars are still visible. What if old dreams are still there? So if we're still in your dream, maybe I could travel back to my time through your father's -- *my* -- past dreams?

FEAR ORION

That would definitely not work. And it would get you killed.

ORION

Shush.

(to Hypatia)

Can I see the map?

Hypatia hands him the map. He opens it up.

ORION (CONT'D)
Where's your father on here?

HYPATIA
Um...

She traces her finger from where they are, to her parent's house, then points to his bedroom and her father's side of the bed. Her mother is there, too.

ORION
I'm married?? Wow!
(considering)
I never imagined that would happen.
(studies map)
Let's see...

He studies the four dimensional map, enlarges the section where Adult Orion sleeps. He looks at a miniature version of Adult Orion's current dream: In it Adult Orion is standing on a hillside watching a murmuration of swallows. The swallows form the shape of a giant hand, then become an actual hand. His tinny, small-speaker VO can be heard --

ADULT ORION (V.O.)
I've never seen birds do that before...

ORION
Look. The archived dreams slide down over here, like a waterfall. Maybe if I go into your dad's dream, I can ride it back to my current age.

FEAR ORION
I wouldn't risk it. First of all, you don't know that that's even what's happening there. Second. What if you can't stop at the right place? You could end up at the beginning of time or something! Better stay here. Get a job here, start a new life.

ORION
Maybe you're right.

FEAR ORION
Maybe you can even adopt you.

ORION
I don't want to be adopted by me!

HYPATIA

That *would* be really weird. I
couldn't handle that.

ORION

I have to try this.
(to Hypatia)
Can you see the tube going to your
dad's dream?

Hypatia looks at map.

HYPATIA

Yeah. This way.

Hypatia leads Orion down the suburban street. Fear Orion
follows.

ORION

You can't come with me on this one.

FEAR ORION

Actually, good. Because I don't
like this idea at all.

ORION

I'll see you back home at some
point, I'm sure.

FEAR ORION

If you don't get killed. Which you
will.

Hypatia and Orion continue on. They arrive at the tube.

ORION

Ready?

HYPATIA

This is my time. I have to stay
here.

ORION

(beat)
Right. Yeah, Ok. Well, I'll see you
in twenty-seven years or so.

HYPATIA

I'm looking forward to it. Bye,
Dad.

She hugs him.

ORION
Bye, Hypatia.

He nods, then turns into the tube and is carried off.

INT. DREAM TUBE

Orion is carried through the tube. This one is sort of transparent and he can watch the nighttime street passing by. The tube carries him into Adult Orion's house, up the stairs, past Hypatia's room, in which he sees her fast asleep in her bed, into Adult Orion's room, where he sees his Adult self asleep next to Adult Amaya. Orion is sucked into Adult Orion's dream --

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A parade is in progress. Giant inflated cartoon character balloons pass overhead. Adult Orion is on the street watching the parade, flanked by Hypatia and Amaya.

ADULT ORION
Look, that one's alive.

A passing Shrek balloon is pursing his lips and whistling. The air coming from his mouth is causing a serious wind. Orion looks at Adult Amaya and recognizes her from Japan.

ORION
No way.

Adult Orion looks down at Orion.

ADULT ORION
Good to see you again.

ORION
I gotta get home.

Orion backs away. He turns and follows the parade. As they turn the corner, he watches as they go over the "waterfall." Orion takes a deep breath, marches along side the marching band and disappears over the edge.

INT. "WATERFALL" - DAY/NIGHT

As Orion plummets, the marching band members fall away revealing a room with violet walls. Adult Orion is fighting a rabid-looking dog. This falls away to reveal a swimming pool in which Adult Orion is receiving a lesson.

This falls away to reveal a restaurant: Adult Orion and Adult Amaya are having a romantic dinner. Adult Amaya leans across the table and kisses Adult Orion. This gives way to a running path on which Adult Orion and his visibly much older father are jogging.

ORION

Dad.

Orion now passes Adult Orion uprooting a strange human-looking carrot from a vegetable garden.

ADULT ORION

I'm sorry I hid you underground.

He brushes the carrot off. Orion passes a loud, garish Japanese game show in which Adult Orion seems to be a contestant. A pie filled with black cream is smashed into his face. Laughter. Orion passes a library in which Adult Orion is coughing loudly. People look at him annoyed. Orion begins to slide faster and faster past these dreams, until it starts to be come a blur of color, of light and dark, of loud and quiet. Orion cannot tell what he is seeing. He starts to panic. After another beat, he grabs hold of something in passing. It stop him and he sees he is now in the dreams of teenage Orion, who is in gym class, in a volleyball game and about to be beaned on the head by the ball. Orion lets go and continues his speedy ride past colors and shapes. After a moment, he stops himself short again to find he is in the dream of a twelve year old Orion, who opens a Tupperware container to discover a blue white mold covering the contents. Twelve year old Orion and Eight year old Orion both scream in horror. Orion speeds past more colors, until he hears familiar music and feels a sudden instinct to stop. Orion, 8, is on stage singing, back in the dream from earlier in the night

ORION

(singing)

Oh, what a ball it will be/The
princess will be there/Oh, what fun
we will have/the princess is
nice/Oh, yes, it will be fun for
sure. She's very funny. Ha ha ha
ha --

The audience is a group of laughing, scary clowns now. Orion runs from the stage into --

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

It's dark, quiet. Orion is petrified. He creeps along, looking this way and that. Squeaking sound. Howling wind.

A family of ducks sit at a dinner table slurping spaghetti. A plastic bottle of pop is animated and glaring at him with big cartoon eyes. One duck turns to him and quacks way too loudly, almost a roar. Orion's eyes widen in terror and --

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Orion opens his eyes. It's windy out. There are creaking sounds in the house. He looks around. It's exactly the scene from earlier: the creaks are the same, the same shadows on the walls.

ORION
(to himself)
A dream. Wow. A dream.

But this time he doesn't go to his parents' room. He goes to the window and looks out at the night. It's a little hard to see with all the night lights on. He turns them off and watches the blustery, dark, beautiful night out his window.

ORION (CONT'D)
(to Dark)
Hey.

There is no response from the night.

ORION (CONT'D)
Anyway.
(beat)
Cool dream.

The wind blows; the house creaks. Orion doesn't seem to mind. He is deep in thought.

INT. ORION'S FATHER'S STUDY - NIGHT

Orion sits in front of his father's boxy Mac Classic computer. He is connecting to the internet through dial-up with all the attendant "pings". It connects and Orion types in: Vancouver, Canada births April 15, 1982. A list of births and photos comes up. Orion sifts through it to the R's, where he finds Rogen, Seth next to a photo of a curly-headed baby wearing horn-rimmed glasses.

ORION
Son of a gun.

There is thunder and lightning now. The power goes off.

ORION (CONT'D)
Cool.

INT. KITCHEN NIGHT

Orion sifts through a drawer in the dark room. He pulls out a candle and matches.

INT. ORION'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Orion sits at his desk with a pen and a book called Japanese is Fun! The candle is lit on his desk. He flips over the post card writes on card in a primitive, halting Kanji.

ORION (V.O.)

Dear Amaya. Are you interested in
having a pen pal? The reason I ask
is --

INT. HYPATIA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

It's a sunny morning. Hypatia awakens, looks around, smiles a relaxed smile.

INT. ADULT ORION AND AMAYA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Adult Orion and Adult Amaya are asleep. Hypatia enters with a breakfast in bed tray.

HYPATIA

Good morning!

Her parents wake up, look over at her.

ADULT AMAYA

Oh, wow. Good morning, honey.

ADULT ORION

Morning.

HYPATIA

(climbing into bed with
them)

I made breakfast!

ADULT AMAYA

Thank you!

ADULT ORION

Looks great.

HYPATIA

Any dreams last night, Dad?

ADULT ORION

Hmm. I'm not sure. Something, but I can't remember. Something about a carrot?

HYPATIA

Well, I figured out how to get you home from Venice. So that's good.

ADULT ORION

Yeah? Let's hear.

HYPATIA

I'll tell you tonight. Bed time story.

ADULT ORION

Good.

ADULT AMAYA

Can I listen, too?

HYPATIA

Yeah. It's kind of cool.

They start to eat the breakfast. On Amaya's night table is a framed, yellowed postcard of Pittsburgh.

END