

PARADISE ART DISTRICT

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

A silhouetted figure sits crosslegged in the surf, facing the ocean as it quickly swallows the sun. The muffled, bassy tones of distant MUSIC just barely edge out the sound of seabreeze and the waves it sends crashing onto the shore, as we begin to CIRCLE around the figure.

RAURY (V.O.)

It's like... have you ever had a night that was so good, it made all the shitty ones that came before it seem to disappear?

With the horizon now behind us, we come face to face with RAURY CARVER (19). The expensive white headphones over his ears match the designer plain white T-shirt wrapped around his eyes, both of which contrast his black skin. In the background, a gorgeous mansion is beginning to leak the guests of a budding party out onto the beach.

Purposefully blind to what's behind him, Raury moves his head back and forth with a twitchy rhythm, his lips lazily following the lyrics to the song in his ears. On his lap, hovering just above the water, sit a paper pad and watercolor set, the brush in his hand despondently awaiting some sudden surge of inspiration.

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

It's a cool feeling, until you start to realize the trade-off: all the thousands of nights still to come suddenly feel pointless.

From RAURY'S POV: Darkness interspersed with faint flashes and streaks of color in sync with the music in his headphones. After a moment, our blindfold is suddenly torn off, replacing this light show with the sight of the nearly set sun over the ocean.

Standing above Raury with his shirt hand is NICOLE, 18, with bleach blonde hair and a bleach blonde personality to match. She is visibly fucked up, and holding a full shot glass. Raury takes off his headphones.

RAURY (CONT'D)

Hi.

NICOLE

Baby, come back to the house.
Everyone's showing up.

RAURY
Just give me like twenty minutes.

NICOLE
(pulling him)
No, you have to come now! The beginning of a party is the best part! Except for, like, the middle. And it won't be fun if you're not there.

Raury starts to break a smile.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Plus, I need your help finding that baggie I hid from myself last night.

It fades. Raury sighs and begins to stand up, water dripping from his shorts. Nicole spots the pad and grabs it.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Ooh, I love it!

RAURY
It's still blank.

Nicole tries to down her shot, but instead manages to spit up on the page.

NICOLE
Oops. Oh my god, but now it's like a Jackson Potluck.

Raury grabs the corner of the pad with his thumb and index finger and carefully tosses it into the ocean. Nicole plops herself down into the water, head between her legs. Concerned, Raury kneels down next to her.

RAURY
Nicole, you gotta pace yourself. It's not even dark yet.

NICOLE
I know, that's why I'm pacing myself. Oh, and I almost forgot!

Nicole reaches into the front pocket of her short denim shorts, and produces a pressed RED PILL.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
Happy birthday. I think it's dirty.

Raury takes a hard look at the pill, then at Nicole, and finally out over the ocean. His eyes hold a familiar sadness, or longing, or something in between.

RAURY
That's okay. Thanks.

A beat, as he swallows the pill dry.

RAURY (CONT'D)
Come on, let's go back.

Raury helps Nicole out of the surf, carrying her like an injured soldier to,

EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE - POOL - NIGHT

A beautiful, extravagant shit-show. The glow of the webs of string lights hanging overhead shimmer on the exquisite, slippery marble floor underfoot. In between are hundreds of incredibly drunk and high young adults lost in the enchantment of their surroundings and the music blaring from the DJ booth.

At the center of it all, the enormous, phosphorescent pool glows like a gemstone, changing from a ruby to a sapphire to an emerald and so on, as the colored light hidden under the waterfall hypnotically moves through its cycle. The lounge chairs that surround the pool are all empty, save for one.

Raury sits back, alone, surveying his surroundings with dilated pupils, while simultaneously lost in thought. A RANDOM DUDE AT THE PARTY comes up and stands unsteadily next to him.

RANDOM DUDE AT THE PARTY
This shit is lit.

RAURY
Huh? Oh, yeah, I guess it's pretty--

RANDOM DUDE AT THE PARTY
I am lit.

RAURY
Word.
(beat)
Yo, what do you think of the whole reincarnation thing?

ALEX (O.S.)
Raury!

The dude gives Raury a "the fuck?" look as he stumbles away.

ALEX PIERRE, a dark, skinny 21 year old holding a blunt, dressed sloppily but stylishly, runs up to Raury. He's trying to look urgent while simultaneously struggling to keep his eyes open, as he begins speaking with a Haitian accent.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Cops, dude.

RAURY

There's cash under the one statue.

ALEX

I know, I tried. They said this is the fifth complaint this month, so it's not gonna cut it.

Raury didn't catch that. He's fixated on Nicole, who's now making out with the random dude in the middle of the crowd.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Dude!

RAURY

Uh, whatever, fuck, I don't know. Just give them one of the paintings off the wall.

ALEX

But what if that doesn't... (work).

RAURY

It will.

Alex rushes off. Raury takes a deep breath and puts two fingers to his jugular to get a handle on the progress of the drugs' effect.

Raury pushes his way through the crowd back toward the house, on his way passing TWO BUDDHIST MONKS, who appear to be levitating a couple of inches off the ground, yet are attracting little to no attention. Reaching the huge glass doors of the house, he daps up MARSH, the *huge* guy guarding it, and goes inside.

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It's an entirely different world in here: quiet, empty, and dark; lit only by the light spilling in from the party outside. From what we can see, the interior is just as astonishing as the exterior, and the walls are lined with incredible paintings.

As Raury quickly heads up the stairs, we HOLD for a moment on one painting in particular: a simple but magnificent abstract piece displayed more prominently than any of its neighbors.

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - RAURY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Raury doesn't bother turning on the lights, as the massive window overlooking the ocean lets almost enough in. He opens up the top drawer of his nightstand and, after rustling around for a second, pulls out a small FRAMED PAINTING; a beautiful mess of swirled colors that look like the Northern Lights if the atmosphere were made of watercolors.

Taking a seat on his bed, Raury painfully studies the painting for what looks like the millionth time. Finally, he looks out the window, and catches his own wide-eyed reflection in the glass.

RAURY (V.O.)

There was this weird vibe in the air, like something bad was going to happen. But for a good reason. I guess. I don't know.

Raury walks over to a corner of the room and climbs a smooth, wooden ladder leading up to a glass hatch.

EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE - THE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

The prettiest place we've been so far, and the competition has been fierce. High above it all, everything around for miles is visible.

Although his breathing sounds labored, it finally looks as though some sort of serenity has swept over Raury, as a sudden gust of wind rips across the roof, sending a deep shiver through his entire body.

RAURY (V.O.)

I couldn't figure out what it was, so I just went with it.

Raury jumps up on the short wall separating roof from drop. Eyes closed, gently snapping along to the music below, as his body tenses in anticipation of the song's climax.

Toes over the edge.

A measure of silence. A stronger gust of wind. A loss of balance. About to fall... BOOM. The bass drops and the party below goes wild, as a hand grabs Raury's shirt and pulls him back.

He crashes down, then looks up to see ARIA, 20, pretty in a way that ignores the lack of light. Right now, her eyes are wider and more dilated than Raury's, and they've caught him in a trance while he's also in shock.

ARIA
Am I going to be okay?

RAURY
What? I-I don't know.

Aria squeezes both of Raury's hands hard, and looks him in the eyes with tears now silently streaming out of her's.

ARIA
Will you just stay with me for a little while? Please?

RAURY
You don't even know me.

Aria takes off, dragging Raury along with her.

RAURY (V.O.)
We're still strangers, but now all of the sudden the two of us are--

ALEX (V.O.)
Bro, will you please just get to the part where you smash already?

CUT TO:

EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE - THE ROOF - THE NEXT MORNING (PRESENT)

Raury and Alex sit facing an illuminated version of last night's view, the morning sun rising behind them washing away the immediacy of Raury's story.

Raury is crosslegged, holding a soggy bowl of cereal in his lap, and wearing nothing but Calvin Klein boxers and a beanie. Alex looks back and forth between the ocean to his sketch pad, where he's in the middle of a really good drawing.

RAURY
Come on.

ALEX
No offense, but this shit is dragging. I'll tell you my story of last night in two seconds.
(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Met a fine ass female, she was about it, and we got down on the beach. The end.

RAURY

Alright--

ALEX

Plus, all this detail and you're not even gonna describe what she looks like?

RAURY

I don't know. I mean, she had these wild blue eyes, and--

ALEX

"Wild blue eyes"? Chill out, Walt Whitman. What about her ass?

RAURY

Alright. Forget it, Alex.

ALEX

I'm just fuckin' with you, Raur. I I wanna hear the rest of the story, I'm just mad hungover.

Alex reaches over and grabs the weed VAPORIZER from Raury's hand, and takes a long hit.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Look, let's go grab breakfast, I'll get back to being my normal, amiable self, and then you can tell me the whole story.

RAURY

Alright, I'm down. You don't have to paint today?

ALEX

Nah, your dad gave me the rest of this week off.

RAURY

Really? That's weird.

ALEX

It is. Not complaining, though.

Nicole enters from the hatch.

NICOLE
Raury, I-- Ooh!

She spots the vaporizer, greedily grabs it from Alex, and sucks on it hard.

ALEX
Damn, you hit that thing like a crackhead.

Nicole just giggles, then kisses Raury.

NICOLE
Let's go take a shower. I still feel sticky from last night.

ALEX
Yikes.

RAURY
(to Alex, with a sigh)
Breakfast in thirty.

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Nicole leads Raury, who now has a carton of orange juice in one hand and a bottle of champagne in the other, through the wide hallways off the house.

NICOLE
...and then I just blacked out, but I bet it was so much fun. We should do it again. Like, tonight. Raury?

Raury's stopped dead in his tracks, confusedly staring at the spot on the wall where that special painting hung less than twelve hours ago. Now, all that's occupying the space is a small, spray-painted insignia.

RAURY
Go ahead, I'll be right there.

The two monks from the party, DIKI and DAWA, enter and stand on either side of him. Diki, the older of the two, bears a vague resemblance to the Buddha himself, whereas Dawa, tall and thin with glasses, has more of a Dalai Lama vibe going. Raury doesn't shift his gaze from the wall.

RAURY (CONT'D)
Whaddup, Diki. Whaddup, Dawa.

DAWA
Hello, Raury.

Diki looks to Dawa and gives a nod.

DAWA (CONT'D)

Diki says hello as well. Raury,
what happened to your father's
favorite painting?

RAURY

I have no idea, but it's probably
my fault.

Raury lifts the orange juice and champagne to his lips and
takes a healthy chug of both simultaneously.

RAURY (CONT'D)

Hey, can you guys teach me your
little levitation trick?

DAWA

There are many things we'd be happy
to teach you, Raury, but no tricks.
The road to enlightenment is long
and paved with--

RAURY

Nevermind, then.

NICOLE (O.S.)

Raury!

RAURY

But thanks anyway. This painting
thing is on the down low, right?

Diki and Dawa exchange a look.

DAWA

Three things cannot be long hidden,
Raury: The sun, the moon, and the
truth.

Raury stares at him blankly.

DAWA (CONT'D)

If your father finds out, it wasn't
us.

Raury smiles at them and, with a wink, continues down the
hallway, putting down the orange juice while continuing to
guzzle champagne.

Diki looks to Dawa who, after a moment, nods in agreement.

DAWA (CONT'D)

Yes, but look around you. The poor boy never stood much of a chance.

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - MORNING

Steam fills the marble and gold space, diffusing the sunlight that's streaming in. Raury stands in the center of the ornate shower, water coming at him from heads on all sides. Nicole kneels in front of him, just obscured by the steam.

Raury closes his eyes and, suddenly, dim flashes and streaks of colored light appear in front of his face.

QUICK FLASH - MEMORY OF LAST NIGHT

Raury and Aria are passionately embraced in the shower, lights and colors wildly bounding through the air and off the glass.

NICOLE (V.O.)

What's wrong?

BACK TO SCENE

Raury's eye shoot open, water streaming down his face.

RAURY

What?

NICOLE

You lost your--

RAURY

I think we should break up.

Nicole stands up to reach Raury's eye level.

NICOLE

I don't.

RAURY

Do you really think we're right for each other?

NICOLE

Do you really think being alone would be better?

Raury opens his mouth to reply, but nothing comes out. Nicole flashes a deviously cute smile and starts kissing him.

It shuts him up.

I/E. COASTAL ROAD - MORNING

Raury and Alex tear down a two lane road separating the beach from a wall of wavy hills dotted with half built mansions metastasizing down the coastline. FRANK OCEAN blares over the speakers of Raury's convertible Jaguar, loud enough for any nearby fish to hear.

ALEX

(shouting)

Once the cops realized whose house they were at, I didn't have to give them shit. And-- man, can we turn the music down?

Alex reaches for the volume knob, but Raury bats his hand away. A mini-skirmish breaks out over the radio, before Alex finally punches the power button, killing the music and drawing a scornful look from over the top of Raury's shades.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm already getting fucked up by the wind. Why do you insist?

RAURY

I like feeling like I'm in a music video, we've been through this. So can you whip up a replacement painting when we go back? My dad doesn't get in from New York until midnight.

ALEX

I have until midnight? That's child's play.

RAURY

Perfect.

Raury hits the button and the radio exploding back to life, as they breeze through a yellow light with no time to spare.

ALEX

Yo, that was the turn! That's always the turn!

Regardless of whether Raury can't hear him or he's just choosing not to, the Jaguar continues to fly, right past a flashy sign reading: **WELCOME to Paradise Art District.**

INT. CANVAS BISTRO - MORNING

The epitome of artsy. Every table is covered in canvas, and equipped with brushes and paint, like some kind of Macaroni Grill on steroids. Everyone and everything inside are perfectly cool and perfectly casual.

Raury and Alex sit next to a window that frames up the world outside like, well, a painting. A stone's throw away from the coast, the Paradise Art District is waking up at a leisurely pace, as artists and "artists" alike move languidly through the chromatic cityscape.

A TRENDY WAITER approaches the table, holding two dishes.

TRENDY WAITER

Alright, I got one Francis Bacon
and Eggs, and here's your Frosted
Flakes.

Alex looks down at his plate with disdain; one strip of bacon laying atop a single sunny side up egg. Arranged tastefully, of course.

TRENDY WAITER (CONT'D)

Wow, that's incredible, man.

In front of Alex is a work-in-progress near flawless recreation of "Girl with a Pearl Earring".

ALEX

Huh? Oh, yeah. Thanks.

Off waiter. Alex glares at Raury.

RAURY

I heard it was a really good place.

ALEX

From who, a mouse?

The waiter returns and places a glass in front of Raury.

TRENDY WAITER

And here's your glass of our cold-
pressed, free-range, vegan apple
juice.

ALEX

Free-range apples?

RAURY

Thanks. Hey, uh, is Aria working
today?

TRENDY WAITER
No, she actually just quit.

The waiter excuses himself to tend to another customer.

ALEX
So that's why we came.

RAURY
I literally just remembered that she mentioned working here.

ALEX
Bullshit. You ordered cereal, you're not even hungry! What kind of spell does this hoe have you under, Raur?

RAURY
She's not a-- will you just chill and eat your breakfast so we can get back?

Half out of spite, half out of hunger, Alex demolishes his meager breakfast in three bites, before standing up and signalling for Raury to follow him as he leaves the bistro.

Raury sighs, slips a bill under his still full glass of juice and catches up.

EXT. PARADISE ART DISTRICT - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The two walk down the district's main strip, past people creating in anyway they know how. Vibrations of music, of people talking about interesting things or simply about being interesting, leave every cubic inch of air in Paradise moving in some way. The name fits well, if not too well.

RAURY
I think this is the first time I've been here since I was a kid.

ALEX
Dog, you own every season of Spongebob Squarepants on DVD. You're a kid.

RAURY
Spongebob is dope, and kids don't do drugs.

ALEX

Cool kids do. Just pay attention to your surroundings, if we came here to find a girl, we're not leaving until we do.

Suddenly the wind picks up, and seemingly out of nowhere comes a vortex of rose petals swirling through the air.

RAURY

Am I tripping, or?

ALEX

Oh, damn...

Alex is drawn toward whatever just caught his attention, Raury in tow.

EXT. PARADISE ART DISTRICT - THE WALL - CONTINUOUS

Framed up beautifully against the beach stands one of the largest structures in Paradise, an enormous wall serving as an enormous canvas. While almost every wall in Paradise is essentially just a painting with structural integrity, this one is top dog.

Atop the wall, a girl sits on the edge, emptying bag after bag of rose petals.

A crowd is gathered solemnly around the spectacle, as finishing touches are put on the stunning portrait of a woman adorning the wall. On her forehead is the same insignia that was tagged on Raury's wall.

RAURY

What is this?

ALEX

Wow, I can't believe she died.

RAURY

Who?

ALEX

That's Kailah, man. She's a legend. The godmother of the underground art scene. Paradise wouldn't even exist without her.

Raury processes the new information, when suddenly something clicks. His eyes shoot up toward the girl on top of the wall. He squints, trying to make out some kind of detail against the bright blue backdrop.

RAURY

Holy shit, that's her.

Just as Alex looks up, a sharp yell pierces the somber atmosphere. A neighboring GALLERY OWNER, 45, well-dressed but seemingly on a mission to prove money can't buy style, angrily approaches the ceremony.

GALLERY OWNER

HEY! Do you all have a fucking permit for this? You're scaring away my clients, and those dirty ass rose petals are blowing into my clean gallery.

ARTIST IN THE CROWD

We're trying to honor our friend, man!

The crowd roars in agreement.

GALLERY OWNER

The police are on their way, prick!

ALEX

And look at that, time for us to leave.

RAURY

Hold up, what about Aria?

ALEX

We found her. Come on, we need to bounce. Now.

RAURY

But--

Alex grabs Raury's sleeve and starts dragging him through the crowd, as the situation devolves further into shouting and name-calling. Raury steals one last longing glance up at Aria as he's whisked the way.

ATOP THE WALL, head in the clouds, Aria squints down at the boy being pulled through the crowd. She watches as he disappears into a Jaguar, then morosely turns her attention back to the ruined ceremony below.

EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE - DAY

The hushed asylum of upper-upper class suburbia evaporates with the roar of an approaching engine, as Raury's Jaguar impatiently barrels toward us.

Right before we're run over, the car SCREECHES to a halt and the engine cuts out. Raury climbs out of the car without opening the door, and stares past us toward the house, mouth agape, a reflection of blue and red lights twinkling in the lens of his sunglasses.

Alex, absorbed in his phone, takes his time getting out of the car.

ALEX

Aye, my girl from last night just followed me on Instagram and, get this, she looks better than I remember. Bro, that shit never happens. Maybe we should go hunt down this one next.

RAURY

Alex.

ALEX

I mean you should see some of the L's I've taken before...

RAURY

Alex.

Alex finally looks up, his expression instantly sinking to match Raury's. We SPIN AROUND to face the house and, more importantly, the small army of squad cars parked in front of it.

ALEX

I think your pops came home early.

Raury buries his face in his hands, before taking a deep breath and stepping forward nervously to face the music, with Alex being the one in tow this time.

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The guys timidly make their way onto the scene, their wide eyes immediately drawn to the epicenter. A handful of officers and detectives surround the painting-less spot on the wall, investigating as they tend to do.

A tall man clad in perfectly tailored, jet black Italian fabric descends the stairs with a calculated, electric swagger in his movement, and a baleful glint in his eye. More of a presence than a man, this is EZRAH CARVER, Raury's father.

EZRAH

What do you have for me, gentlemen?

A hotshot young DETECTIVE addresses him.

DETECTIVE

Less than we'd like to. It was a clean job. There's the tag, but making every street artist in Paradise a suspect won't help. Other than that, there was nothing left behind, no signs of forced en--

EZRAH

WELL THEN, TAKE A HARDER FUCKING LOOK!

Ezrah's outburst echoes through the entire house, causing even the toughest looking of the cops to flinch. Raury and Alex both look like they just shit themselves in the most severe of ways.

Ezrah takes a deep breath to compose himself, while closing his eyes and raising two steepled index fingers to his brow.

EZRAH (CONT'D)

Sorry. That painting is very important to me on a very personal level, and I need for it to find its way back home, out of the hands of whatever low-life shit stole it.

Raury looks up to the second floor, and sees Diki and Dawa standing there, stonefaced. He locks eyes with Diki, who motions for him to escape back out through the door he just came in. Raury nods, grabs Alex, and starts moving gingerly--

EZRAH (CONT'D)

(to Alex and Raury)

Boys!

Fuck.

EZRAH (CONT'D)

This is my son Raury and my, uh, apprentice, Alex. Why don't you two take a minute out of your busy days to tell one of these men what you know about where my painting went?

Marsh approaches Ezra, and whispers into his ear with a deep voice.

MARSH

Camera crew is outside.

EZRAH

You'll have to excuse me. Be thorough with these two, but don't wear them out. They've got a function tonight.

Ezrah walks briskly toward the door, stopping momentarily when he reaches Raury and Alex. He speaks so only they can hear him, suddenly losing any gentility in his voice.

EZRAH (CONT'D)

This is on your watch. You motherfuckers cooperate, or you'll find yourselves in shit so deep the goddamn Mariana Trench gon' be jealous.

He taps them on the shoulders as he leaves. The lead detective and his PARTNER approach Raury and Alex, wielding pads and pens.

PARTNER

So, let's start with--

RAURY AND ALEX

We don't know shit.

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - DUSK

A tuxedoed Raury stands facing the mirror, eyes flicking back and forth between himself and a reflection of the bathroom's wall-mounted flatscreen.

ON THE TV: Ezra is in front of the house, giving an interview for the local news. The title bar underneath him reads: **EZRAH CARVER - GALLERY OWNER/LOCAL CELEBRITY.**

EZRAH (ON T.V.)

It's just a shame, you know? I've spent my life bringing art and refinement to this community, really just working to mold Paradise into what it's become.

(MORE)

EZRAH (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)
 And a heartless crime like this
 just goes to show that, regardless
 of whatever laurels they try to
 bestow themselves, Paradise's
 underground street "art" subculture
 is really nothing more than an
 unchecked, loosely-organized
 criminal gang with paint. Frankly,
 it's time to take action, which is
 why Mayor Blatt and I--

Raury hits the remote and Ezra vanishes from the screen.

Nicole enters, looking devastatingly gorgeous in her tight,
 but still classy, dress. She wraps her manicured hands around
 Raury's neck and begins to adjust his bow tie.

NICOLE
 Aw, Raur, you look so dappy.

RAURY
 Dapper?

NICOLE
 What'd I say?

Beat.

RAURY
 That dress is pretty. You said you
 like these things right?

NICOLE
 Mhm.

RAURY
 Why?

NICOLE
 Well... sometimes it's fun to get
 dressed up and feel like the whole
 room is watching you.

RAURY
 You think so? I usually hope no
 one's looking.

Raury checks his shiny silver watch.

RAURY (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna go catch the sunset
 before we leave.

NICOLE

No, come smoke with me! The sunset's there every night.

RAURY

So am I. Can't remember the last one I missed. Plus, I already smoked.

NICOLE

What happened to being afraid of commitment?

Raury kind of laughs as he walks out.

EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE - POOL - DUSK

The taps of Raury's glossy black shoes against the marble floor ring out, as he glides toward the gate, hands in his pockets, head down.

Suddenly, he stops. Stooping down, he picks up a pink cord bracelet with a metal charm in the shape of the same insignia that replaced the painting. After studying it a few seconds, he slips it into his breast pocket and continues on to,

THE BEACH

Gorgeous as always, but maybe a bit more so than usual tonight. Raury looks straight up at the nearly cloudless sky, where rays of sun are slicing through the few cirrus clouds lingering in the troposphere, as they bleed purple, pink, and orange.

He walks a hundred feet or so down the beach to where Diki and Dawa are standing looking out over the ocean and stands next to them, the three in a line, bathing in the last of the light the day has to offer.

RAURY

How long have we been doing this again?

DAWA

Hm... I believe the first time was two weeks from when your mother first brought us to your home.

Raury cringes at the mention of his mother. Diki glances to Dawa.

DAWA (CONT'D)

Ah, Diki is right. It was three weeks. That would make it... six years, five months, and one week's worth of sunsets.

Raury nods for a pensive beat.

RAURY

Remember how this morning you were talking about teaching me stuff, and the long road to enlightenment and all that? On second thought, could we maybe give that a shot?

Diki and Dawa both smile. They sit down in the sand, cross their legs, and motion for Raury to do the same.

RAURY (CONT'D)

Oh, I didn't mean right now.

They stare at him. He sits in the sand and crosses his legs.

Diki and Dawa begin taking deep breaths through their noses, using their hands to illustrate the flow of air in and out of their bodies. Raury begins taking deep breaths.

Looking at Raury, Diki raises two fingers in the air and uses them to gently shut his own eyes. Finally, Raury closes his eyes as he breathes shakily; this is clearly harder than he thought. He pulls the bracelet he just picked up out of his pocket, rolling it around with his fingers. After a moment, his breathing steadies.

Deep breath in, deep breath out. Breath in, breath out. In--
Out...

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - LAST NIGHT

Aria sprints down the dark hallway, still clasping Raury's hand, leaving him struggling to keep up.

Then, abruptly, she stops, lets go of Raury, and sinks to the floor crying. Raury looks on with a unique blend of pity, confusion, and panic, his jaw clenching from the pill. He sits down next to her, and tries to get his mouth to form the words that will fix this.

RAURY
Um... I'm Raury, by the way.

That wasn't it.

RAURY (CONT'D)
Listen. It's up to you; but, in my experience, opening up to someone you don't know, who doesn't know you, who you'll probably never see again is really, what's the word... cathartic. Like, one time, I told this homeless dude I met on the street about a recurring nightmare I was having, and--

Aria giggles through her sobs. Raury smiles.

RAURY (CONT'D)
I'm serious! I stopped having the nightmare after that.

ARIA
(collecting herself)
I'm sorry for ruining your night. You should go back to the party.

RAURY
Nah, I hate parties. I'm good with this.

A beat. Then, Aria starts tearing up again.

ARIA
My mom just died.

RAURY
Whoa. Damn, I--

ARIA
And here I am at a party, on a random pill someone gave me, and, and--

She breaks down crying on Raury's shoulder. He doesn't know how to react.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - LATER

Raury and Aria stand in front of the glass doors, looking out over the still raging party on the other side.

The colored lights spilling in dance across their faces, revealing the yearning glint in Aria's puffy eyes.

RAURY

It's up to you. We can keep
chilling in here, or--

Aria doesn't need to hear the second option. She lunges forward and pushes the doors open, sending the ROARING NOISE of the party spilling inside.

CUT TO:

POOL AREA - LATER

Raury and Aria stand on top of the stone waterfall, hovering above the rest of the fray with a handful of other people, all dancing like nothing exists outside of the current moment.

Suddenly, the music cuts out, eliciting a massive GROAN from the crowd. Raury and Aria are left standing there, out of breath and steeped in sweat, staring into one another's massive pupils. Finally, they lean in...

Just as their lips meet, the music springs back to life, and the party erupts. Raury's cloud of colors burst into being from thin air, right as someone brushes Aria, sending her bracelet tumbling down the back side of the waterfall without her noticing.

Raury suddenly pulls away, stunned by and in awe of the light show that no one else around him seems to be able to see.

ARIA

What's wrong?

RAURY

(excitedly)

Nothing. Nothing's wrong, I just--

At that moment, Raury takes a misjudged step backward, his foot finding only thin air over the edge of the waterfall. In an instant, he finds himself plummeting down into the water below with a tremendous SPLASH.

EZRAH (V.O.)

Raury!

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Raury's eyes shoot open. The sun is long gone, and Diki and Dawa are nowhere to be found. Ezraah stands calling him from the gate.

EZRAH

Move your ass, Raury! We're late!

With a deep sigh, Raury puts the bracelet back in his pocket and makes sure it's secure, then gets up.

INT. EZRAH'S GALLERY - NIGHT

A well lit room full of well-off, well-dressed, wealthy people buzzing around with glasses of wine, chatting about nothing, and pretending to admire art with blank stares.

Raury and Alex stand in the middle of the room, scanning their surroundings with disdain.

ALEX

I bet you I can pick up one of these millionaire girls.

RAURY

Be my guest.

Alex takes a second to psych himself up and straighten his tie, before smoothly sauntering over to a GORGEOUS WOMAN of about 25. Raury watches, intrigued, as Alex begins chatting her up, even getting her to laugh.

Easy come, easy go. The woman SMACKS Alex across the face, turning a few head and sending Alex back to Raury with his tail between his legs.

RAURY (CONT'D)

What the hell did you say to her?

ALEX

I used the finger painting line, don't want to talk about it. Be right back, I gotta take a piss.

RAURY

Be careful, you never know which toilet is a modernist piece.

Off Alex. Raury starts aimlessly wandering around the gallery, glancing at art. He looks up from one piece and suddenly freezes.

Across the room, quietly studying a painting is Aria.

Raury stares, hesitates. Then, finally, he walks toward her, heart beating out of his chest, and butterflies tearing up his stomach.

RAURY (CONT'D)

Hey.

ARIA

Oh, hi! Raury, right?

Raury tries to correct his devastated expression as fast as possible.

RAURY

Y-yeah. Raury. Last night. At the party... Last night, we--

SIMÉ

Don't I know you?

SIMÉ BALZAC, the guy standing next to Aria, turns to face Raury. But, we might better remember him as the Random Dude At The Party who Raury watched hook up with Nicole. Raury's face sinks even further.

SIMÉ (CONT'D)

Reincarnation guy, right?

RAURY

Uh, I guess.

Aria laughs uncomfortably.

ARIA

Last night was such a blur. I guess you two already know each other but, Raury, this is my boyfriend, Simé.

Raury can't breathe. Suddenly, Nicole swoops in.

NICOLE

Raury, there you are!

SIMÉ

Now, you, I definitely remember.

Just in time for the show, Alex returns.

ALEX

Good thing you warned me about the toilet thing. Who are your new friends?

RAURY

(weakly)

Alex, this is Aria. And this is her boyfriend--

SIMÉ

(extending his hand)

Simé Balzac.

A looong beat, as Alex's eyes go wide.

ALEX

(under his breath)

Jesus fuckin' Christ.

(to Sime)

Nice to meet you, Sime *Ballsack*?

Sime is far from amused.

SIMÉ

What?

ALEX

So, are you an artist?

SIMÉ

Of course. You?

ALEX

Eh, I dabble, but Raury here...

Alex, scrambling to diffuse the tension, puts his arm around a still shell-shocked Raury.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Raury's another story. The guy's got synesthesia. He sees sounds and hears tastes and all that, it's like he's on acid all the time or something. And he uses it to make these incredible portraits of people, that aren't what the person *looks* like, but--

RAURY

Yeah, not anymore really. Excuse me.

Raury speeds off, just as MAYOR BLATT, 60, bald, stout, and oozing incompetence, bursts through the gallery's doors.

MAYOR BLATT

(panting)

Sorry! Sorry I'm late! Mr. Carver?
Where's Mr. Carver?

Ezrah appears by the mayor's side, and helps him toward the front of the room.

EZRAH

We're just glad to have you here,
sir.

(to the room)

Ladies and gentlemen, if we could
have your attention a moment
please.

The room abides.

EZRAH (CONT'D)

Thank you all again for coming.
Now, I know you all were expecting
to see some new art unveiled
tonight, but this is actually a
special occasion. As some of you
may know, my home was violated last
night, and I had a piece very near
and dear to my heart stolen from
me. Left in it's place was a tag
associated with Paradise's street
art gangs. To me, this is a wake up
call, and one that can't be
ignored. Mister Mayor, would you
like to share our news with
everyone?

MAYOR BLATT

Ah, yes. Thanks-- thank you Ezrah,
er, Mister Carver. What we have on
our hands here is a textbook case
of Paradise lost, and it is crucial
that we take it back.

People in the crowd exchange confused looks.

MAYOR BLATT (CONT'D)

Effective immediately, our city will be passing a new ordinance prohibiting all graffiti, public performance art, and any other form of "street art" that is tarnishing our culture, and detracting from the true heart of Paradise, our galleries. Furthermore, Mr. Carver has been kind enough to bankroll the task force in charge of enforcing the ordinance.

The crowd is surprised. Aria is shocked, shaken even. She quickly pulls out her phone, and walks outside to make a call.

EZRAH

And there you have it. It's time for us to reclaim Paradise. Now, get back to enjoying yourselves, and I hope I'll see you all next door for drinks later on, assuming the free wine here doesn't do the job.

With a tepid laugh, everyone in the gallery instantly returns to business as usual. Alex quickly makes his way through the crowd, leaving Nicole and Sime alone to exchange flirty glances.

INT. EZRAH'S GALLERY - BATHROOM

Alex bursts into the bathroom, to find Raury sitting on the sink, with his head in his hands.

ALEX

Hey, we've got bigger problems on our hands now.

RAURY

What?

ALEX

Your dad just declared war.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - LATER

A crowd of familiar faces from the gallery drink and dance under the reddish pink lights of the club.

Raury and Alex sit at a table in the corner, Alex discerningly scanning the crowd, while Raury racks up a line of cocaine on the table and snorts it.

ALEX

Alright dude, that's enough. Chill.

RAURY

She has a boyfriend. She barely even remembered me.

ALEX

Are you really giving up this easy? Here, give me this--

Alex snatches the bag of cocaine.

RAURY

Hey, I need that.

ALEX

Now take *this*--

Alex grabs the currency-turned-coke straw out of Raury's hand and smooths it out.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Decide what song is going to win her heart, and slip the bill to the DJ. I'll take care of the rest, so we can get out of here before shit goes down.

RAURY

But, I--

ALEX

Now! Go!

Raury begrudgingly gets up and gets moving, as we begin to FOLLOW Alex through the crowd and up to where Sime and Aria are dancing. He taps Sime on the shoulder.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey, man. You want some free blow?

SIMÉ

Fuck yeah.

Sime grabs the baggie and pockets it without Aria seeing. Alex gives him a wink, and continues through the crowd up to Nicole.

ALEX

Ey Nicole, do you wanna do some
coke?

Nicole nods enthusiastically. Alex taps his pockets and feigns disappointment.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Ah fuck, wait, I don't have any.
Hold on, I think I heard Sime say
he had some. Can you go ask him?

AT THE DJ BOOTH

Raury watches as Nicole walks up to Sime and whispers in his ear. Sime walks off with her, leaving Aria alone on the dance floor. Alex shoots him a thumbs up.

Raury leans over to the DJ, whispers something in his ear, and slips him the bill. A second later, the song transitions into the same song as was playing when he and Aria kissed on the waterfall.

Raury determinedly pushes through the crowd toward Aria.

AT THE BAR - INTERCUT AS NEEDED

Ezrah sits, martini glass in hand, spitting his usual charm to those around him. A few feet away, a twenty-something guy named JONAH, muscular build and wearing artsy clothes, eyes him before walking over.

JONAH

Excuse me, Mister Carver.

EZRAH

What is it?

JONAH

Sorry to interrupt. My name's
Jonah. I'm an artist, born and
raised here in Paradise.

EZRAH

That's a great story, Jonah.

Meanwhile, Raury finally makes it up to Aria, smiling coyly, while she looks back at him with a gaze closer to what he's used to from last night.

ARIA

I do remember this song.

JONAH

Look, I don't mean any disrespect.
But what you're doing is fucked up.
We're not criminals. We're people
making our livings by expressing
ourselves, and now we're not gonna
be able to do that anymore.

RAURY

For old time's sake?

Aria might just be into it.

Ezrah stands up and leans in *real* close to Jonah.

Raury leans in close to Aria.

EZRAH

(low)

Jonah, can I give you a piece of
advice? I suggest you either learn
how to paint houses or how to suck
dick for money. Because you're
going to be doing one or the other
real soon.

Jonah backs up and looks at Ezra with murder in his eyes.
Then out of nowhere, he POPS him right in his smug fucking
mouth. Body guards and security pounce on him and tackle him
to the ground where they rough him up.

Chaos immediately starts sweeping through the crowd like
wildfire. People start screaming, pushing, and shoving, as
the music cuts out.

Raury looks around, baffled. Then, in the blink of an eye,
the frenzied crowd wedges in between he and Aria, sweeping
them away from one another as they both become part of the
pandemonium.

Ezrah stands at the bar, holding his mouth, surrounded by
help. Marsh pushes through and grabs him.

MARSH

You need to see something.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

The panicked crowd is leaking into the street in droves.
Still covering his bloody mouth, Ezra fights his way through
with Marsh's help, and begins walking up the street.

The further he moves, the clearer the SHRILL WAIL of an alarm becomes. As the noise becomes almost unbearable, Ezra is face to face with its source. His own gallery; windows shattered, and ransacked. He looks on in stunned disbelief, slowly allowing his hand to return to his side, blood dripping down his chin. Then...

Ezrah cracks a big, bloody smile.

CUT TO:

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - RAURY'S ROOM - MORNING

A grey aura envelops the room, the overcast sky outside providing little in terms of illumination this morning. Raindrops POUND against the window, as if begging to be let inside.

Raury lies splayed out on his bed, more unconscious than he is asleep. By his right hand lies a small, EMPTY BOTTLE of liquor. Clutched in his left is a well-worn TEDDY BEAR.

A sudden CLAP of thunder rips harshly through the air, violently tearing Raury from his slumber. He shoots up, knocking the bottle on the floor and SHATTERING it. After a moment, the initial adrenaline wears off and Raury sinks back down, clutching his head.

RAURY

Fuck.

His hand desperately begins searching the nightstand, eventually finding a fully packed BOWL and a LIGHTER. Raury raises the piece to his mouth, and aggressively torches the bowl, holding in the hit, despite how much it clearly hurts.

Raury grabs his bear and stands up, making his way across the room toward the ladder.

EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE - THE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Raury's head peaks above the hatch, as he blows out a huge plume of smoke, and subsequently begins coughing up a lung. He and the bear make their way to the edge, indifferent to the torrential downpour that's now thoroughly soaking them.

Raury looks out hazily toward the dark horizon.

RAURY

Why am I like this?

He turns to his bear, who stares back naively.

RAURY (CONT'D)

I was almost alright with feeling nothing. I was almost good at feeling nothing. And I have no idea how she fucked that up in one night.

The sky explodes with light, accompanied by another CRASH of thunder.

RAURY (CONT'D)

Like, the more I think about it logically, the more positive I am that it was just another fuck, she's just another girl, and everything is exactly the same as it was two days ago. But then there are those moments, like right now, where I feel like I'm looking out over an entirely different ocean than I was before we met. And I like this ocean so much better, but every second that Aria is just in my head instead of with me, it's like I'm watching it turn right back into the old one...

Raury looks back to his bear, its fabric skin now dark and heavy, and is met with a look just as unknowing as his own.

Suddenly, a gust of wind takes the bear in its invisible arms and tosses him over the edge of the roof.

RAURY (CONT'D)

Goddamnit.

(shouts)

You alright? Yeah, you're alright.
Be right there.

INT. RAURY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ezrah sits alone on the exquisite leather couch in the center of the vast living room, absorbed in a weathered photograph.

Maybe it's just an illusion of the stormy lighting, but there seems to be an air of loneliness surrounding him.

ANGLE ON - THE PHOTOGRAPH

A younger Ezrah, arm outstretched, snaps a picture of himself in front of a sheepish but smiling Kailah, brush in hand, hard at work on a painting in progress; more specifically, the one that's gone missing.

The rhythmic clatter of FOOTSTEPS descending the staircase snaps Ezra out of his nostalgic trance. He quickly but carefully pockets the photo, and stands up to face a sopping Raury.

EZRAH

Why the hell are you soaking wet?

RAURY

(duh)

It's raining.

Raury trudges on toward the glass doors.

EZRAH

Wait a second. Listen, I'm sorry you had to be involved in that mess last night.

Raury stops, turns.

RAURY

Why are you fucking all those people over like this?

EZRAH

Raury, those people are thugs and criminals, and they're proving it themselves. All I did was--

RAURY

I'm not the news, and I'm not your rich friends. I'm your kid, and I've known you too long to believe you're doing this for the greater good.

A tense beat.

EZRAH

I saw you talking to that artist girl last night. I saw the way you were looking at her. They're a dangerous breed, you know. I learned that the hard way before I met your mother.

RAURY

You're generalizing.

EZRAH

Think so? Let me ask you something. The first time you met her, did she manage to convince you that the two of you had some kind of spontaneous, once in a lifetime connection?

Raury stares him down. After a moment, he gives a weak nod.

EZRAH (CONT'D)

Well, I saw you talking to her boyfriend, too.

RAURY

Alright, you don't even know what you're talking about.

Raury makes for the door again.

EZRAH

Hey, don't fucking walk away from me!

Raury freezes.

EZRAH (CONT'D)

I'll level with you, Raury. There *is* more to this situation. And it's not Paradise versus them, or even me versus them. It's us versus them. Both of us. Do you like this arrangement? The house? The cars? The all you can eat drugs, and your parties that got us into this goddamn mess in the first place?

RAURY

I don't know.

EZRAH

You wouldn't survive without it. You know you wouldn't. So, the next time you see Aria, spend the time you would've spent setting yourself up for heartbreak gathering information that will help us cover our asses if shit goes south.

Ezrah begins making his way up the stairs.

RAURY

Dad, what's actually going on?

EZRAH

It's a long story. Do a good enough job playing spy, and you won't have to hear it.

Raury stands there, his cannabinoid saturated brain firing with all cylinders.

RAURY

Wait, I never told you her name was Aria.

The question is met only with the patter of rain, Ezra having already disappeared.

EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE - POOL - MOMENTS LATER

Raury wanders back out into the rain, toward the spot where his bear hit the ground. Once he reaches it, he finds only a faint teddy bear shaped impression in the grass.

A wave of panic washes over Raury, as he begins frantically searching the surrounding area.

DAWA (O.S.)

Is everything alright, Raury?

Raury spins around to see Diki and Dawa, their robes somehow appearing to stay dry despite the downpour.

Safely clutched in Diki's hand is Raury's bear. With a sigh of relief, Raury takes him back and cuddles him momentarily, before regaining his cool.

RAURY

I used to be able to tell this guy everything that was on my mind, and it'd help me figure it out, or at least make me feel better, you know? Thought by the time I was too old for that, I'd be able to figure shit out for myself, but...

Raury closes his eyes and exhales hard, grateful that the rain is there to camouflage the handful of tears rolling down his face.

RAURY (CONT'D)

Fuck, I'm acting like a stupid little kid.

Dawa places a sympathetic hand on Raury's shoulder.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

Alex sits in a three-walled beach tent, immune from the rain while still open to the choppy ocean in front of him, its surface shimmering with the ripples of a million raindrops.

Raury slowly comes into focus, as he makes the short hike from the house to the shore. Once he reaches Alex, he plants himself down in the sand next to the tent, leaving a wall of polyester between them.

A moment passes in silence, then,

ALEX

Man, you're getting soaked. What's the matter with you?

RAURY

I was just having that conversation with someone. Inconclusive. What are you doing out here?

Alex unzips a flap on the side of the tent. He holds up the DRAWING he's working on and, once again, it's *incredible*.

The wind shifts, sending the rain into Alex's tent through the zippered opening. He quickly shuts it.

RAURY (CONT'D)

You're ridiculous at that shit. When are you going to tell my dad to fuck off and start doing your own thing?

ALEX

You know how it is. I need to keep sending this money back home. Quitting to chase dreams is way too risky.

RAURY

And getting caught doing what you're already doing isn't?

ALEX

I'm too good to get caught, Raur. And I mean that modestly. There are hundreds of Alex Pierre's hanging on hundreds of unaware rich people's walls.

RAURY

I guess.

Raury spaces out to the hypnotic sounds of the storm...

DISSOLVE TO:

RAURY'S IMAGINATION - EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE

Raury walks through the crowd at another blowout mansion party, wearing a thin smile. As he approaches people to try and talk to them, they disappear. Slowly at first, but soon, dozens of people are vanishing into thin air.

Starting to freak out, Raury runs to the granite bar, pulls open a drawer, and removes a bag of off-white powder. He hastily dumps some onto the bar and, right before he can snort it, the powder suddenly evaporates.

Now in a full-fledged panic, Raury retreats to the house. He pushes open the door, which suddenly ascends into the sky. Raury looks around in shock as the rest of the house follows suit, until he's left alone in an expanse of pitch blackness.

Raury sits down in the darkness, face in hands, lost. Then, suddenly, the distant SOUND OF WAVES gently pierces the silence, as flashes of color begin to explode in the darkness. Raury feels the ground beneath him, and realizes that the nothingness has been replaced by sand.

He looks up, and discovers he's on the beach now. Aria stands by the water, playfully beckoning him over. Raury smiles and stands up. He turns around to face the house, only to find that it's still gone, with only sand stretching back infinitely into the distance.

Raury smiles wider, then begins to walk over to Aria--

SMASH CUT TO:

BACK TO SCENE

Alex's hand comes through the tent's flap and smacks Raury in the face.

ALEX

Nigga, are you listening?!

RAURY

Jesus, what?

ALEX

I said I need to head in to Paradise to grab some supplies. Are you coming with?

RAURY
(I'm still not listening)
Do you think I could survive
without the money?

ALEX
What kinda spoiled ass question is
that?

RAURY
I'm serious. If it all disappeared
tomorrow, would I just fade away
with it?

ALEX
Eh... Maybe. I don't know, man,
that's the kinda question you need
to be asking yourself. Or at least
Diki and Dawa.

RAURY
I just did. They said the same
thing.

ALEX
Really? Damn, I knew I was
enlightened. So are you coming
with, or nah?

Raury thinks... hesitates, then,

RAURY
Alright. Let's take the scenic
route though.

Alex looks around, quizzically.

ALEX
It's all the scenic route.

RAURY
The really scenic route.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

We FLY high above the beach below, where Raury and Alex are
tearing across the sandy landscape on matching dirt bikes.

Back on the ground. Hugging the water closely, their back
tires kick up clumps of wet sand and spray that glisten in
the now burgeoning sun. They're both loving every second of
it, smiling ear to ear, and fighting the ROAR of the wind to
communicate.

ALEX

This is the shit! Look at you, all fuckin' smiley!

RAURY

What else are you supposed to do on one of these?

ALEX

Truth! Maybe that answers your question, dog!

Alex cranks his throttle and flies ahead, leaving Raury to consider the possibility. As he does, his smile begins to fade in the wake of another good time turned existential crisis.

EXT. BEACH, ROCK ARCH - SAME TIME

As far from the ocean as the beach's sand will allow stands a stunning, natural rock structure; think God's own oversized, rugged attempt at Stonehenge.

Fiery, late-morning light spills through the stony gateway and into the earthen, sanctuary-like space it harbors. Aria stands at the opening, angelically backlit.

The sudden, shrill roar of 250cc engines echoes against the rock, as a pair of expensive dirt bikes whizz by anonymously.

SHOPKEEPER (V.O.)

All out. Sorry, friend.

ALEX (V.O.)

What? Man, how are you gonna tell me that you're out of *paint*?

As Aria turns to face the already distant bikes, we CIRCLE around her to reveal the small army of ARTISTS preparing for war in the only way they know how. CRATES OF ART SUPPLIES are being moved and sorted like ammunition, while surrounding rocks and spare canvases sit downrange of spray paint target practice.

SHOPKEEPER (V.O.)

How? Just- I mean, like this I guess. We got totally bought out as soon as we opened today.

Aria spins back around to face her troops, surveying the preparations with a tinge of apprehension in her eyes.

She walks over to Jonah, and crouches down to inspect the boulder-turned-painting in front of him.

CUT TO:

INT. ART SUPPLY STORE - DAY

Raury and Alex stand across the counter from the SHOPKEEPER, a white woman in her early 30s with blonde dreadlocks that put the smell of weed in your nostrils just by looking at them.

ALEX

By who?

SHOPKEEPER

Names are just shackles that bind the soul to these earthly vessels, friend.

ALEX

Right, yeah of course. But they're kind of a necessary evil, don't you think, Joanne?

Alex's eyes are fixed on the palette shaped name tag pinned to her shirt.

JOANNE (SHOPKEEPER)

I mean-- I guess you could... It was a big group of people anyway, so...

Raury's ears perk up.

ALEX

Do you know when you're going to restock?

JOANNE

"When"? You see, friend, the thing about the time is that--

ALEX

Goddamnit.
(to Raury)
Forget it, let's go.

Alex turns and leaves the store, but Raury stays put.

RAURY

Hey, sorry about my friend, friend.
It's just, his crown chakra has
been super misaligned lately, not
to mention his Mercury is in
retrograde...

Raury looks at Joanne with the nervous anticipation of a 19-year-old who just handed the bouncer his fake I.D. For a long moment, Joanne stares back stoically, before breaking into a smile.

JOANNE

I knew it, I could totally feel his
aura's animosity even from over
here.

RAURY

Yeah... not, uh, not namaste at
all. Hey, so those people you said
came in--

Joanne leans in close. Weirdly close. With her eyes closed, she places her index and middle fingers on her temples.

An excruciatingly weird beat, before her jewelry covered hands find their way to Raury's temples. Then back to her own. Back again. Back--

RAURY (CONT'D)

What, uh--

JOANNE

You're part of their movement too,
aren't you?

RAURY

I... yes.

A beat.

JOANNE

Can you *please* put in a good word
for me, friend? Being a part of a
movement would look so cool in my
mental photo diary but, when I
asked them this morning, they said
there are already too many people
going tonight, but I explained how
numbers are just a--

RAURY

Tonight?

JOANNE

The thing at the wall tonight. That all the supplies were for.

RAURY

Right, yeah, I know. Damn, well I wish I could help you out. But, the thing is, there are already too many people going, so maybe next time. Listen, good talking to you.

Raury puts his palms together and bows to Joanne with sarcastic reverence, before spinning around and heading out of the shop.

JOANNE

Wait! Numbers are just a construct!

EXT. ART SUPPLY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Raury walks out to an impatient Alex.

ALEX

What are you doing talking to the fuckin' mushroom fairy in there? Or did she just steal your heart too?

RAURY

Do you have plans tonight?

Alex curiously tilts his head. Raury starts walking, signalling Alex to follow.

EXT. PARADISE ART DISTRICT - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The two make their way down the street, heading in the direction of the coast. Something about Paradise feels off compared to when we first visited.

The district, that was once a lively Picasso, is now taking on the surreal desolation of a Dali.

ALEX

Nah, dude. There's no way, sorry. You're going to have to solo this one.

RAURY

Alex...

ALEX

Raury. You're clearly willing to go to the extra mile to chase this pussy, for reasons still unknown to me. And I'm all for that! Look, man, I sure as hell don't agree with what your pops is doing. But that nigga's my boss. If he thinks these artists 'round here are the enemy, I can't be chilling around them, especially not at some shit like this. You feel me?

With the two just short of the beach, Raury taps his pocket, then freezes, wide-eyed.

RAURY

Fuck we need to go back.

ALEX

What? Why?

RAURY

(verging on panic)

I lost the-- I lost my phone. Just come on.

Alex sighs immensely.

ALEX

You're a mess, homie.

Already well aware, Raury whips around to begin the feverish retracing of their steps, Alex reluctantly in tow, yet again.

EXT. SAILBOAT - DAY

Big and pristine, but not to the point exorbitance, the vessel glides smoothly across the azure not-so-landscape. Onboard are Diki, Dawa, and Ezra, who is manning the sail with clear expertise.

He ties off one final rope, with a proud exhale.

EZRAH

And there we go.

Ezrah outstretches his arms, shuts his eyes, and takes a deep breath of sea air through his nose.

Strangely enough, this appears to be his element.

EZRAH (CONT'D)

You wanna talk about Zen? This is fucking Zen. This is... art. Purer than any damn painting could ever be.

Ezrah moves across the deck and grabs an already poured scotch on the rocks, downing it like it's not his first one of the day. Diki and Dawa look on patiently.

EZRAH (CONT'D)

I bought a beat up old thirty-footer as soon as the gallery started bringing in enough to actually make ends meet. And that was before I even replaced the piece of shit car I was driving. Then, the better the gallery started doing, the bigger the boats got, and now here we are.

A beat.

DAWA

That is very nice. Very nice. But Diki and I are wondering, Ezra. Why have you decided to share the experience with us today, after all these years?

EZRAH

Come on Dawa, this isn't the first time I've brought the two of you out here.

Diki and Dawa look to one another, have their silent exchange, then nod before turning back to Ezra.

DAWA

It is.

EZRAH

Oh. Well, I just thought that... When Gabrielle first asked you both to live at the house, I think you both sensed my resistance. But, truthfully, I enjoy your presence. Otherwise, I wouldn't have kept you around all this time since she left. So, I don't know, I suppose I just want to... open up more of a dialogue.

DAWA

(with a warm smile)

That sounds wonderful, Ezra. Well, where should we begin? Of course, we would be overjoyed to share some of the Buddha's teachings with you, if you were interested--

EZRAH

Actually, I want to talk to you about Raury.

Diki and Dawa's faces harden, for what looks to be the first time in decades.

DAWA

What about Raury?

EZRAH

Look, you know the kid won't talk to me, and sometimes I worry. I just want to know what he's up to lately. Who he's with. Where he goes.

DAWA

I see. Well, I'm afraid he hasn't shared any of that with me. Perhaps Diki would be able to tell you.

Diki smirks, and looks to Ezra as if to say "ask away".

Ezra scowls back.

EZRAH

Gotta love that Tibetan sense of humor. Now, here's a joke for you. What do you call two dipshits in robes who think they're wise, but don't even know how close they are to losing the incredible arrangement they never should have had in the first place?

DAWA

Right now? I suppose I would call them two men in the presence of a frustrated child.

EZRAH

You listen to me, you sons of bitches. I--

Ezrah's tirade is cut short by his phone RINGING. He pulls it out of his pocket and checks the screen -- **BLOCKED NUMBER**, then answers it.

EZRAH (CONT'D)

What?

GARBLED VOICE (V.O)

We know.

EZRAH

Who the fuck is this?

GARBLED VOICE (V.O.)

We know everything. If you want your reputation in tacks, then--

EZRAH

You don't know shit.

Ezrah slams his finger against the screen to end the call, and stands there seething. The anger on his face is tinged with the slightest hint of fear and uncertainty.

Then, suddenly, Ezrah HURLS the phone in to the ocean with a roar. Diki looks to Dawa, and the two share a subtle smirk.

DAWA

You're upsetting the "true Zen" of the sea, Ezrah. Is everything alright?

EZRAH

(pouring himself another scotch)

Why don't you take a lesson from your friend, and shut the fuck up?

He downs the scotch, then goes back to tending to the sails.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RAURY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Only the dim rays of a pale moon and the phantasmic blue glow of an alarm clock reading **10:51** cast any sort of light over the otherwise dark room.

Raury walks in, carrying a nervous energy. He makes his way straight over to his nightstand, and takes out Aria's bracelet out of the same pocket that he lost 'something' out of earlier.

He clasps it for a moment, before carefully finding a safe place in the drawer for it.

NICOLE (O.S)

Raur! Where are you?

Choosing not to even register the question, Raury begins digging through another drawer and pulls out a PAIR OF HEADPHONES and his vaporizer.

He goes to click the vaporizer on, its LED light flashing red to kindly inform him that he's shit out of luck.

RAURY

(moderately devastated)

Fuck. No, come on.

His thumb furiously attacks the button, as if enough clicks will somehow recharge the battery.

With a sigh, he realizes his attempts are futile, his eyes glazing over to formulate a plan B.

Another sigh. Raury turns the device over, and pops the cover off of the heating chamber, revealing the half-cooked cannabis inside. He deftly flips it up toward him and empties the contents into his mouth, swallowing laboriously.

Shaking it off, he makes it halfway toward the ladder before stopping, and looking back to the nightstand.

EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE - THE ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Raury pops through the hatch, a PILL BOTTLE now joining the headphones in his hand. He hops up on the ledge, and throws the phones around his neck.

He extends his arm holding the bottle out toward the moon above him. The pale white moonlight shines gently through the translucent orange plastic, the circular silhouettes of the narcotics inside looking like so many moons, themselves.

Top off of the bottle. A pill in hand.

RAURY

No more of this shit, Raur.

Down the hatch. With just as strong an arm as his father, he chucks the bottle, the dozens of pills inside flying out, shining like gems for the splittest of seconds, before all hitting the ground with a miniature RAPPORT.

RAURY (CONT'D)
No more of this shit.

Raury dons the headphones, and plugs them into his phone. As he hits play, the whole world, ours and his alike, is suddenly filled with MUSIC; he and Aria's 'song'.

Eyes closed and gently grooving.

Fleeting clouds and flashes of color - brighter than the moonlight, but not by much - paint the air in front of him. His hands blindly follow and trace them, as if engaged in some kind of supernatural finger painting.

EXT. BEACH - SAME TIME

Sudden, jarring SILENCE, save for the ocean's own SONG.

We're alone in the sand, looking up at the silhouette of a boy on a roof dancing and gesturing.

ZIP. Wait, we're not alone. Alex just finished taking a piss in the ocean. He turns around with a satisfied sigh, then looks up to see Raury.

He shakes his head.

ALEX
This nigga, man. My best friend's a fuckin' mental patient.

He starts walking toward the house.

EXT. RAURY'S HOUSE - THE ROOF - SAME TIME

The music EXPLODES back to life.

CLOSE ON:

Raury's feet, joining in with the motion, to the rhythm. Shifting back and forth, testing the limits of the ledge just enough to make us nervous, but not enough to hint at anything dire.

We PULL BACK, and see that Nicole is now sitting on the ledge next to Raury, staring out carelessly and dangling her legs.

Raury's opens his eyes momentarily, and sees her.

RAURY
Whoa, shit.

He takes off the headphones, as we lose the music once and for all.

RAURY (CONT'D)
When did you get here?

NICOLE
I was looking everywhere for you, I even checked the bathroom three times. And then I looked here. And that's when I got here.

RAURY
Why'd you check the bathroom three times?

NICOLE
I dunno. Anyway, can you give me a few of those pills I really like?

RAURY
That's not specific enough.

NICOLE
The round, blue ones.

RAURY
Oh. I just threw them out over the edge, sorry.

NICOLE
Are they still on the ground?

RAURY
Yeah, I guess.

NICOLE
Oh good, then I forgive you.

Nicole pops up to go harvest her bounty.

NICOLE (CONT'D)
By the way--

RAURY
Oh, shit. Fuck, I forgot I said I would take you out tonight. I got a thing now, sorry...

NICOLE
(about to climb down the ladder)
Did you say that? Don't worry, I have plans anyway.

RAURY
What are your plans?

NICOLE
I have a date. I mean, ice skate.
I'm going ice skating.

RAURY
Yo. Nicole, we need to talk about
what we're doing here, what the
fuck we are anymore. Like, I know
what you said in the shower
yesterday is--

He turns around, and sees that she's already disappeared down
the hatch.

Raury half yells after her,

RAURY (CONT'D)
I'm in love with a girl I barely
know and you fuck other dudes.
(beat)
Aight.

EXT. POOL AREA - SAME TIME

Alex comes through the gate and moves toward the house.

EZRAH (O.S.)
Alex.

Thoroughly startled, Alex whips around to see EzraH sitting
quietly at the bar.

EZRAH (CONT'D)
Can I ask you a question?

Hand on his chest, Alex takes a breath to get his heart rate
back down.

ALEX
Sorry, you scared me. Yeah of
course, Mr. Carver.

EXT. PARADISE ART DISTRICT, BEACHSIDE PARKING - NIGHT

A light drizzle falls invisibly in the dark, before the
matrix of droplets suddenly springs into existence from the
flood of light emanating from a Jaguar's headlamps.

Top down and radio BLARING as usual, Raury slows the car to a stop, before throwing it in park. Looking somewhat affected, he hesitates before taking the keys out of the ignition and hopping out.

As he begins his walk into Paradise, he lazily points his key remote and the car, securing it with a BEEP of confirmation. The top however, remains as down as ever.

RAURY
 (singing to the tune of the
 song just on the radio)
*Goddamn, man, there's gotta be a
 better way / Than pill poppin' all
 of these drugs so I can stay awake.*

EXT. PARADISE ART DISTRICT - THE WALL - NIGHT

A light drizzle has progressed into a light rain.

Passing through the streets populated only by trendy people hopping from spot to spot, Raury comes up on the wall.

It is still bearing Kailah's illustrious portrait. Devoid of any trendiness, it's as if the wall is surrounded by some kind of force field impenetrable by anyone with ironic sensibility.

Raury walks up to concrete and looks around, but there's nobody in sight.

RAURY
 (softly)
 Yo. Anybody around?

Nothing. Louder,

RAURY (CONT'D)
 Hello?

A beat. Then, louder still,

RAURY (CONT'D)
 Aria? You here?
 (beat)
 Damn, Joanne, you don't know shit.
 Came all the way out here...

Raury turns to walk back to the car. He looks down, and something catches his attention.

On the ground, there's a SMALL PUDDLE OF BLUE PAINT. Raury crouches down and touches it, with the discerning expression of your stereotypical movie detective. It's still wet.

Not only that, but there's a thin blue line leading from the puddle toward an alleyway adjacent to the wall. Raury's face says "there's no way", but his getting up and following the trail says "fuck it, let's see".

EXT. ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

This isn't your usual, dingy alleyway. This is a Paradise alleyway. Yet another painting you can walk through. Raury trudges through the rain, through the colorful, concrete canyon.

Finally, he finds himself at the end of the pigment trail, standing in front of a door. What else to do but,

KNOCK. KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. Raury then waits nervously, in spite of the anxiolytic chemicals inside of him. Suddenly, the door opens a sliver.

Jonah, eyes still blackened from Ezra's goons' knuckles, peaks his head out.

JONAH

Who the hell are you, man?

RAURY

I... I'm just here for the-- I heard there was an art thing going on tonight?

JONAH

Who the hell are you, man?

RAURY

Raury. I'm Raury.

Jonah gives him a full look up and down.

JONAH

Well, you heard wrong Raury, there's nothing going on tonight.

Jonah goes to close the door in his face, but Raury pushes on the door to stop him.

RAURY

Wait, wait, wait. I know Aria.

Jonah looks at him skeptically, then slams the door with a forceful push. Raury sighs and throws his head back, feeling the rain on his face.

He turns to leave the way he came, but then stops and looks back at the door. In frustration, he winds up to kick the door, but it opens up right as his foot is just shy of contact, sending him slipping and falling back on his ass and into a puddle.

RAURY (CONT'D)

Ow, Jesus.

Raury looks up, to see Jonah back in the doorway. Except, now, Aria is standing next to him, looking down at Raury with surprised pity.

JONAH

(holding back laughter)

This dude says he knows you. Does this dude know you?

ARIA

Um... Yeah. Yeah, we know each other.

JONAH

Wait, really?

ARIA

Yeah. Come on.

Aria turns around and walks back into the room. Jonah reaches out and helps pull Raury back up to his feet, then brushes his shoulder off, and motions for him to follow.

INT. HIDEOUT - CONTINUOUS

Raury walks in the room, where the same small army of artists from the rock arch sit around, waiting.

ARIA

Guys, this is Raury. He came to...

(to Raury)

Why did he come?

Raury throws the room a slight wave.

RAURY

Whaddup. I guess I came here to help.

A tough looking, street worn, HARDENED ARTIST, mid-30s chimes up.

HARDENED ARTIST

Homie guesses. How long you been tagging on the streets for, homie? Why we never seen you around?

RAURY

That's not really my background so much...

ANOTHER ARTIST

Damn, look at that watch he's wearing. Thing looks like it costs more than every piece I ever sold combined.

RAURY

It was a gift from my grandad. Come on guys, I wanna help cause I feel your struggle.

A chorus of groans and ooh's seems to disagree with that. Raury shoots Aria an S.O.S. look, but she simply shrugs back.

A pounding series of KNOCKS on the door serve as the proverbial bell to save Raury. Jonah glides over and opens it.

Standing in the doorway stand KYLE and JESS, 22, fraternal twins, their equal length blonde hair dripping on the floor. They speak with what sounds like the same surfer voice, just in male and female versions.

JESS

We couldn't get all of the ropes tied right with all the rain.

KYLE

And I almost fell off the roof, which would not have been tight.

ARIA

Shit. I guess I'll go try and figure it out.

RAURY

I can tie knots really good. Like, actually.

Hardened Artist rustles through a pile of supplies, and tosses Raury a short length of rope.

HARDENED ARTIST

Let's see a monkey's fist, little
bruh.

Like he's done it a hundred times, Raury makes quick work of tying the complicated knot. The tough crowd is slightly impressed.

ARIA

Alright, let's go then.
(to the room)
Be ready to go as soon as the rain
stops.

EXT. THE WALL - MOMENTS LATER

Raury and Aria emerge from the alley, moving quickly in a useless attempt at maintaining a semblance of dryness.

Aria stops, looking back down the alleyway to gauge their now respectable distance from the hideaway.

RAURY

What happened?

Aria grabs Raury by the shoulders, and pushes him into a wall.

ARIA

Raury, why did you come here?

RAURY

Whoa. I-- I don't know exactly.

ARIA

Take a fucking guess then.

RAURY

Hey, come on.

ARIA

I have a boyfriend, Raury. Not only that, but do you understand what would happen if anyone figured out who it really is that I'm letting around all of this?

RAURY

What are you--

ARIA

I know who you are, Raury. I know who your dad is.

(MORE)

ARIA (CONT'D)

We had a fun night together, but that's all it was. That's all it can be.

Raury struggles to find a response, but it isn't coming.

Then, all at once, the rain stops falling. Still staring at Raury with apologetic but resolved eyes, Aria lets go of his shoulders, and pulls a small walkie-talkie from her pocket, pressing the button with a 'KSH'.

ARIA (CONT'D)

Alright, time to go. Let's move. Ropes are still fucked, just proceed without.

RAURY

What is all this?

ARIA

I think you should go now.

A beat.

RAURY

You sure?

Aria nods. Definitively.

ARIA

You should go now.

RAURY

Ok. If you ever change your mind, and wanna follow through with our idea, you know where I live, I guess.

ARIA

What idea?

Raury sighs, as though Aria's not remembering hurt worse than her having just politely told him to fuck off.

RAURY

Nevermind. Do right by your mom's legacy. And make sure my dad regrets the fuck outta what he's doing.

Raury turns to walk away, this time without the rain there to help hide the tears welling up in his eyes.

Behind him, the artists pour out of the alleyway, arms full of supplies, ready to head into whatever battle it is they're about to fight.

ARIA

Move, move, let's go. Get what you need and get ready to spread out. This is it you guys. Tonight's going to live past dawn.

Raury stops. A single ephemeral cloud of color appears in front of his face, before retreating back to the ether in a near-instant like some sort of subatomic particle.

BEGIN FLASHBACK - 'THE' NIGHT

RAURY'S POV:

Aria laughing in the surf.

ARIA (CONT'D)

You're so lame!

We crouch down toward the ocean, as Raury's hand propels water at Aria, dousing her, and eliciting a gasp.

ARIA (CONT'D)

Fuck you, now you're just dead.

She reaches down to the water to reciprocate.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Aria is right up in our face. She gives Raury a hard shove. A little too hard, as we fall back into the water with a splash and a thud.

She stands over us with her hand over her agape mouth, trying not to laugh.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Aria is on top of Raury in the water, kissing him. Suddenly a huge wave comes out of nowhere, knocking her off, and soaking them both thoroughly.

They both crack up.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Aria leads us back toward the house slash party. She turns around to face us, as she begins to backpedal.

ARIA
You know, I feel like tonight's
going to live past dawn.

BACK TO SCENE

Raury turns back around to face Aria and crew.

RAURY
You know what, hold on.

ARIA
Raury--

Suddenly, the entire scene explodes into red and blue light, the WAIL of sirens materializing out of thin air.

A whole fleet of squad cars descends upon the group, completely ambushing them. COPS start hopping out.

COP #1
Everybody drop what you're holding,
and put your hands up!

Everyone freezes.

But only momentarily. Then,

HARDENED ARTIST
SCATTER!

And so they do. Some get picked off by the fuzz immediately, tackled harshly to the ground. Aria is still standing there, frozen.

Raury swoops in, and grabs her hand like both of their lives depend on it.

RAURY
Come on!

They take off at one hell of a clip.

COP #2
Two more going that way!

And so begins the badass foot chase sequence...