

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Institutional lighting reflects off white walls. A florescent bulb flickers overhead, buzzing like a fly.

MALLORY, 42, wears a nightgown, cardigan, wedding band. An attractive woman gone to seed. She leans in her seat toward the corridor door, willing it to open.

Standing across the hall, DR. VERUS, 40s, in a crisp lab coat, hair tightly wound at the back of her head. She studies the other woman's anxiety.

DR. VERUS
You should reconsider--

Hinges shriek as the door swings open, cutting the doctor's words short and casting her into shadow.

A CHUBBY NURSE, 50s, leans back on the push bar. She smiles at Mallory, a beacon in scrubs.

CHUBBY NURSE
C'mon, honey. He's ready with your papers.

Mallory darts through the doorway without hesitation.

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

New England. Suburbia. Houses passing by. They appear to bob and rock to the rhythm of gas pedal and brakes.

Mallory wears hand-me-downs from a more robust younger self. Her ID band scratches the paper bag in her lap as she fidgets.

The bus slows. Mallory begins to wheeze.

Air. Cut off.

Panic.

She digs in the pocket of her sweater.

Other PASSENGERS stare.

She takes a puff from her inhaler. The air brakes' bypass safety valves hiss as air again fills her lungs.

She walks to the front of the bus, sack clutched under one arm, her focus beyond the threshold.

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)
Ain't nothing here for you.

The BUS DRIVER, 40s, startles her with his gruff baritone. A sheen of perspiration on his face, polyester uniform.

MALLORY
(tentatively)
What?

The bus driver doesn't look at her as he pulls the lever for the folding door. It opens with a slap of rubber.

BUS DRIVER
Watch your step, ma'am.

Mallory looks at him for a moment, uncertain.

She walks down the steps, the door slaps shut behind her.

EXT. MALLORY'S HOUSE - DAY

A stray cat lounges on the back stoop. Mallory gets close before it swats her hand with its claws. Both hiss, the cat in annoyance, Mallory in pain.

The back door sticks in its frame. Mallory gives it a hard shove to push it open.

INT. MALLORY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

KITCHEN

Bright, clean. An unlit candle, "Caramel Pecan Pie" on the island between two place settings, white on dark granite. A table just laid for brunch.

The only sound is the leaking faucet.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

Mallory slips off her shoes by the back door, takes a cloth napkin from one of the place settings to staunch the blood on her hand. She heads into the

LIVING ROOM

with the paper sack still tucked under her arm.

MALLORY
(calling)
Peter? I'm home. Ya know...

She passes through the living room and up the stairs, to the
HALLWAY

where she opens the door to the master bedroom.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
(calling)
... we really need to get that leak
fixed.

BEDROOM

The room is neat, sparse. There is a conspicuous lack of
photographs and personal effects.

Mallory doesn't notice.

She puts the paper sack on the bed and opens it, pulling out
some clothing.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
(calling)
Peter...

Mallory opens the closet doors wide. A few tangled wire
hangers are clumped on the closet rod.

She sits down on the side of the bed. She takes a puff of
her inhaler, closes her eyes.

Deep breath.

She opens her eyes and reaches for the telephone. She dials,
waits for an answer.

DR. VERUS (V.O.)
You have reached the voice mail for
Dr. Verus--

Mallory clicks off the handset and tosses it on the night
stand. The plastic rattles against the table and lamp.

MALLORY
(exasperated)
Shit.