

ROUTES

written by

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EXT. L.A. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD DRIVEWAY - DAY

SIX YEARS AGO

A car parked in a driveway.

An old Chevy Impala. A piece of crap with dents, scratches, paint rusted off.

The driveway of a small yellow house. We're in a suburban neighborhood in Los Angeles: Reseda.

Like the car, the house isn't much to look at either. Chipped siding. Dirt-covered windows. An unkempt and weed-infested front yard. Jagged cracks in the concrete driveway.

All is quiet. The car is motionless, lifeless.

Until -- We hear PLATES CRASH. MUFFLED YELLING. SHATTERING BROKEN GLASS. O.S. from inside the house.

Then the front door to the house swings open, revealing TWO GIRLS (17 and 12) in ratty long-sleeve shirts and sweatpants. The older girl holds the younger girl's hand.

This is YOUNG SAMANTHA "SAM" (17) and YOUNG BROOKE (12). Both thin, both pale, both with long-flowing brunette hair. They're sisters.

The open door lets out the INCOMPREHENSIBLE SCREAMING. A man yells at a woman O.S. in the house. He sounds drunk. She yells back. She sounds drunk too.

Sam closes the door behind her. Careful and quiet.

SAM
(whispering to Brooke)
Let's go.

Sam and Brooke walk briskly towards the car in the driveway. With urgency, but trying to not draw attention.

PUSH IN on Sam. Determined and calm. Despite the chaos coming from inside the house.

Brooke, a spitting image of Sam, trails closely behind her. Fear and anxiety in her eyes, but she follows the lead of her big sister.

BROOKE
Sam?

SAM
Just trust me.

CLOSE on Sam's hands. Her right hand clutches Brooke's hand. Sam's fingers—with chipped black nail polish—wrap tightly around Brooke's palm.

Sam's other hand holds the keys to the car, the keys jangling and clinking.

And that's all they have: the clothes on their backs, the car keys, and each other.

Sam guides Brooke around to the passenger side and opens the door.

There's a massive 36-pack of Budweiser on the passenger seat, the box opened, with cans spilling out all over the seat and floor.

Sam exhales sharply and is about to slam the door shut. Thinks better of it and pushes it shut softly.

Brooke instead gets in the backseat, while Sam jogs around the front of the car and gets in the driver seat.

INT. THEIR PARENTS' CAR - CONTINUOUS

Sam collapses into the seat. Inserts the jangling keys into the ignition.

Brooke, in the back seat, puts on her seatbelt.

As Brooke adjusts in the seat, her BARE FEET slide around on a pile of waxy yellow McDonald's burger wrappers and other trash littering the floor. She shoves the trash underneath the seat in front of her.

Sam cranks the car to life and--

Immediately pulls out of the driveway. Getting out of there quickly before someone hears the car.

While in reverse, Sam alternates between looking out the back window and making eye contact with Brooke.

Sam pulls into the street. Checks the rearview mirror--

No one's following them. She exhales. They're free.

As they continue to drive, they're silent. A right turn. Then a left turn. On Reseda Blvd. heading north towards Northridge.

IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR, alternating POV between Sam and Brooke:

Brooke stares up front. Quiet and still. She looks at the rearview mirror. Waiting for Sam to make eye contact with her.

They come to a stop at a red light.

Sam meets Brooke's eyes in the mirror. Their eyes *lock*.

SAM
Brooke, listen to me. It'll be
okay... I'm taking us somewhere
safe.

Brooke nods. Stares back at her older sister, intently. She's scared. But... she believes her. *She trusts her.*

CUT TO:

INT. RIDESHARE (DRIVING) - NIGHT

IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR, from the driver's POV.

CLOSE ON those same eyes looking back at us. It's BROOKE. But she's older. She's 18 now.

And it's dark now. Streetlights flash through the car's windows, illuminating her dark brown eyes.

NOW

She looks just like her older sister. Long flowing dark hair, but maybe a little less pale.

And now, it's not Sam who's driving.

Brooke's in the backseat of a rideshare. A middle-aged RIDESHARE DRIVER sits up front.

Brooke stares out the window at the glittering L.A. city streets.

The car comes to a stop.

Brooke doesn't notice. Lost in thought out the window. Adrift.

RIDESHARE DRIVER
Is this good here?

No response. The driver turns around towards the back seat.

RIDESHARE DRIVER (CONT'D)
Miss? We're here?

Brooke comes back to the present.

BROOKE
Yeah. Thanks.