SHELF LIFE

By

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Fourth Draft

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INT. SHOPPING MALL - TITLES SEQUENCE

From above, we follow an industrial sized electric floor polisher as it slowly and deliberately glides over the shiny floor tiles of a shopping mall.

The mall is expansive and empty except for TWO CLEANERS in the distance, one polishing the floor with the electric polisher, the other cleaning shopfront windows.

In another part of the mall a SECURITY GUARD walks from shop to shop checking that the doors are still secured.

From above, the cavernous food court is deserted. A glowing Slushie machine churns away making a whirring noise that echoes through the space.

The car park, seen from high in the distance, is bathed in the first signs of early morning light. It is vacant except for one forgotten car under a street light. The same security guard appears doing his rounds. Close on a sparrow that is perched on a street light watching the guard below.

A boom gate sits motionless in front of a ramp that leads on to a multilevel car park. There are no cars to trigger it.

A glassed-in elevator rises several levels and the door opens. No one gets into it. The doors close and it goes back down again.

The same sparrow flies high through the mall and settles high in the eaves where it is nesting.

Drifting forwards, looking down, eventually coming to rest at the bottom of an ascending escalator.

Title over image.

SHELF LIFE

EXT. ABANDONED QUARRY - DAY

Below in the distance, drenched in sunlight, a dusty old Ford Falcon sits abandoned, dwarfed by the surrounding quarry. A crow’s caw echoes off the rocks. Nothing moves but a few tufts of dead grass, pushed along by a breeze that cuts through the quarry.

Smoke begins to spring from somewhere within the body of the car and is carried off on the breeze. The smoke soon grows black as flames lick at the interior, heat causing the windows to crack. Soon a thick pall of dirty smoke spews

(CONTINUED)
from the car, embers and curls of smoke erupting from the white heat of the inferno, pouring into the vast blue sky.

KATE (V/O)
When I was a little kid I figured out how to make everything blur into a kind of grey mash. You do it by focusing on one spot really hard and pretty soon everything around it starts to turn kind of grey and just dissolves until all that’s left is this one tiny spot in the middle, then if you stare at that hard enough it disappears too until it’s like - nothing - just you and the grey mash. (Pause)

Close on the car now as embers get consumed by the smoke and the sound of fire grows.

KATE (V/O)
Sometimes I reckon I’d like to stay there in that grey mash and not come back. I wonder what’s in there, like how it’d be to go further into it. (Beat) Do you reckon there’s another world in there like this one but with other versions of us? Wanna try it with me? Come on let’s both stare at the wall, now, look at that spot on the wall, there.

Smoke billows furiously, matched in force by the sound of the exploding fire.

3 INT. KATE’S HOUSE - MORNING

KATE (16) is on her back on the bathroom floor gripping on, desperately trying to trap her mother, ANNIE (mid-30s), on top of her. A razor is in the sink and there is blood. Annie struggles wildly against Kate trying to free herself, crying out like an animal.

Annie catches her breath then fights harder than before, pulling down the shower curtain with her feet and knocking over shelves. She looks tormented. Kate is not much stronger and does her best to calm her.

In the doorway, Kate’s 12-year-old sister, SARA, small and frightened, is watching on, holding a phone in her hand.

(CONTINUED)
KATE
Did you call her?

Sara nods. Eventually Annie calms down. She lies on the bathroom floor in Kate’s arms resigned to defeat. Soon after, another woman, AUNTY JULES (late 30s), enters the room.

JULES
Not again. It’s alright, Kate.

Kate slides out and Jules checks the wounds.

JULES
They aren’t deep. She’ll be OK. (To Kate) Take Sara outside for me?

Kate and Sara exit. Annie is in a ball on the floor now crying. Jules comforts her.

JULES
Shhhhh.

4 INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Sara stands in the hall. Kate kneels down in front of her and stares into her eyes searchingly. Sara stares back vacantly.

5 INT. SCHOOL BUS - MORNING

We follow Kate as she walks down the school bus, backpack slung over her shoulder. Covering the backpack is a big yellow smiley face painted in thick yellow lines. She takes a seat with Sara.

The school bus drifts along the road carrying a full load of rowdy school kids. Kate sinks into her thoughts, oblivious to the crowd around her. She stares out the window in thought, blocking out the chaos around her so that all she hears is the engine of the bus. A huge shopping mall looms in the distance. She slumps in her seat, knees up against the back of the chair in front of her. There is a crudely drawn picture of a penis rendered in liquid paper on the back of that chair but Kate’s focus rests on the words “4Ever” scratched deep into the plastic. Everything goes blurry around it. The bus horn sounds and Kate snaps out of her trance. Everyone starts to exit the bus.
EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

The hot morning sun bleaches the school, red bricks and cracked concrete with weeds poking through. JADE (16), thin and unkempt, leans against the chain-link fence outside the school. Her uniform looks dirty. Kate steps off the bus and when she sees Jade they embrace warmly.

JADE
Hey Kate.

KATE
Hey Jade.

Sara stands next to them.

KATE
(to Sara)
Go.

SARA
I wanna come with you.

KATE
(resolutely)
GO!

Sara skulks off into the school grounds.

EXT. FIELD NEXT TO MALL - DAY

Kate and Jade are with four boys and three girls (THE GROUP), all the same age, all in the same school uniform. THE GROUP is made up of the girls EM, FLICK, SAIRS and the boys JOEL, STICKS, PED and DOUGHY. Together they form a formidable presence, close-knit, intimidating.

They walk through tall grass in an open field, long dead from the crackling heat. In front of them is the shopping mall. Kate watches Joel, a skinny kid with a mop of dark hair that falls in his eyes as he leads the group.

EXT. MALL DELIVERIES AREA - DAY

Around the back of the mall, Kate and Jade sit in the gutter sharing a cigarette. Behind them Em, Flick and Sairs are getting changed, going all out with high heels and revealing dresses. Joel and the other boys stand by smoking and laughing among themselves at the girls changing.
CONTINUED:

FLICK
(To the boys)
Why don’t you take a picture?

They mock paparazzi. Flick gives them the finger as she struggles with a shoe.

Kate and Jade eye the girls over their shoulders with wry judgement. Kate makes eye contact with Joel as his fake camera is trained on her now. She is close up in his lens.

JADE
(under her breath)
Lame.

Kate’s attention is drawn to the other side of the road, to where several ratty-looking caravans are parked in a vacant lot at the back of an amusement arcade called DREAMLAND. Plastered above the caravan on a huge, otherwise featureless expanse of red-brick wall, that makes up the back end of the shops, are the words ‘DREAMLAND WELCOMES YOU’. The words are chalky and faded like some relic of happier, more prosperous times.

VICTOR, mid-20s and meek but dependable looking, sits on the stoop of one of the caravans doing up his shoes. He is dressed for work. Kate watches him intently as he locks the caravan and disappears behind the shops.

JADE (CONT’D)
(to Kate)
Come on let’s go.

They exit, leaving the others.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

A large, glitzy suburban mall, not particularly busy.

Kate and Jade skip through, arm in arm, ignoring the stares from other people, smiling with a mocking joyfulness that actually does make them laugh eventually.

Kate pulls Jade to a stop outside a swanky dress shop. An expensive-looking red dress has her attention. She looks transfixed. Jade eyes Kate as she stares at the dress and laughs at her with ridicule.

JADE
That one? As if.

She pulls Kate away and they skip off smiling inanely again.
INT. MALL FOOD COURT - DAY

The food court is half empty. Kate, Jade, Joel and the rest of the group are spread out slouching across three adjoining tables. The three girls look out of place dressed up next to the others. The boys use their straws like blowpipes to blow bits of ice at each other from their drink containers. A PREPPY BOY and PREPPY GIRL, both around 18, sit at an adjacent table.

FLICK
(pulls shoe off to rub heel)
My feet are killing me.

SAIRS
I know. Give me those fuckin’ band aids.

The preppy girl snorts out a laugh in response to Flick and Sairs, smiling with her boyfriend, confident in their superiority. The girl has her mobile phone on the table next to her. Kate sees it sitting there. She pays close attention to the girl, how she moves and talks. Suddenly the preppy girl becomes distressed, as does the boy she’s with.

PREPPY GIRL
My phone?

PREPPY BOY
(Standing to the group)
Where’s her phone?

No one in the group reacts.

PREPPY BOY (CONT’D)
Which one of you ferals took it?

Joel stands up and pushes the preppy boy backwards. The other boys in the group stand too as the girls look on bemused.

SECURITY starts to zero in from the other side of the food court. Kate and The Group run off, shameless, drawing maximum attention.

When they reach the escalator, Kate stops as the others run on ahead of her up to the next floor. She turns to look but security have given up and are talking to the preppy kids. She looks back up to her friends, a line of blood running from her nose. She pinches it and looks up to catch the sun through the skylight and as she closes her eyes again a greyish pink glow pulsates. When she opens her eyes and they refocus, Joel is there at the top of the escalator waiting for her, hands on his knees, puffed from running.
EXT. FOOTPATH OUTSIDE DREAMLAND AMUSEMENT ARCADE - DAY

Close on the stolen mobile phone. Ped is pressing numbers randomly. The Group are on the footpath outside Dreamland.

PED
It’s locked.

FLICK
My brother can unlock it.

PED
Fuck off.

Suddenly it rings and Ped drops it to the ground. It continues to ring.

FLICK
Answer it!

Ped is frozen. Jade picks it up and answers it.

JADE
Yeah?

They watch as Jade listens then hangs up.

PED
What did they say?

JADE
Nothing except they got us on the security cameras.

Jade locks eyes with Kate.

INT. DREAMLAND - DAY

Time is slowed down. We drift through the darkened arcade, lit mostly by the neon flashes coming from computer game screens. Kate is with Joel playing a computer game. They look happy.

The boys from the group are running amok again and are being chased out of the arcade by A GROUP OF OLDER BOYS. Joel gives chase too. The girls follow but Jade is nowhere to be seen.

Kate wanders out of the arcade onto the...
8.

13 EXT. FOOTPATH OUTSIDE DREAMLAND AMUSEMENT ARCADE - DAY

...footpath and is blinded by the sunlight. Her eyes adjust and she looks down the road to where they have run but doesn’t follow. She isn’t interested. Right then she sees VICTOR, the guy from the caravan, pinning something to a noticeboard outside the supermarket across the road.

She wanders over to look. It’s a "Help Wanted" ad. We follow her as...

14 EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

...she enters the supermarket. It’s a dated supermarket, one of the lesser brands, not very big and not very full. A very bored-looking CHECKOUT GIRL checks items through the checkout for an equally bored customer.

Kate drifts through the aisles, not really shopping.

She has her hands out on either side running her fingers along cans of food as she walks down an empty aisle.

She reads the ingredients on the back of a packet of chips.

Jade surprises her.

    JADE
    I’ve been looking for you.

15 EXT. FREEWAY OVERPASS - LATE AFTERNOON

Jade and Kate stand on a freeway overpass in the sinking sunlight, watching trucks and cars pass by underneath them. Jade still has the mobile phone and balances it on the railing with one finger.

    JADE
    (counting trucks)
    ...three, four, five, six, seven...
    eight...

She gets bored and stops.

    JADE (CONT’D)
    How many cars did you count?

Kate shrugs.

(CONTINUED)
KATE
(lying)
Um... 10?

JADE
(pushing her)
You didn’t count! Not fair.

They return to the traffic.

JADE (CONT’D)
Do you ever feel like leaving here?

KATE
I dunno, maybe, sometimes.

JADE
So why don’t you?

Kate shrugs.

JADE
You could go to your dad’s. (Pause)
You’re really lucky, you know.

KATE
You reckon?

Jade drops the mobile phone down onto the freeway, narrowly missing a car. They both watch it smash onto the road.

JADE
Yep. I do. (Pause) Wanna see something?

Kate nods.

16 EXT. NEXT TO FREEWAY - DUSK

Jade leads Kate down a steep embankment next to the freeway, through some scrubby bushes until they get down to a concrete drain that is protected by a concrete overhang. Underneath the overhang is a concrete shelf and on it there are some large cardboard boxes turned side on. This area is hidden from the road.

KATE
What is it?

JADE
Come on.

(CONTINUED)
She takes Kate closer until some bedding comes into view. Kate hangs back as Jade sits down on the concrete next to her box. Kate stares at Jade questioningly. Jade shrugs. You can hear cars passing by just metres away, but they are oblivious to this scene.

The sound the cars make drums out a droning, monotonous rhythm. Kate sits with Jade who looks kind of proud and happy to have her there to share this space with, to show it off. Jade jumps down off the concrete shelf onto the dry dirt floor of the drain. She grabs a stick and twirls it around in the air like a cheerleader marching on the spot, hand on hip. Kate sits up on the shelf looking down at Jade and laughs. A light flickers into life above to illuminate an exit sign.

17 INT. JADE’S CARBOARD BOX - LATER

The blankets are pulled tight under Kate and Jade’s shoulders as Kate spoons up to the back of Jade. Their heads are rested on a dirty pillow. Kate has her arm flung over Jade.

    KATE
    You can’t stay here.

    JADE
    I know.

    KATE
    You can stay with me.

Pause.

    JADE
    Hey?

    KATE
    Yeah?

    JADE
    You won’t ditch me will you?

    KATE
    No way.

Jade holds on to Kate’s hand. They lie there and listen to the traffic passing above them.
18 INT. KATE’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It’s dark inside Kate’s room. Kate and Jade try to keep quiet. Kate flicks a lamp on. The walls are covered with posters of bands and high-fashion shots with overly skinny models.

KATE
You can stay as long as you like.

She empties out a full drawer from her dresser, squeezing its contents into the next drawer down.

KATE (CONT’D)
You can use this.

She grabs Jade’s back pack and puts her clothes away for her.

JADE
What about your mum?

Kate sticks her head out the door.

KATE
She won’t even notice.

Sitting back down cross-legged on the bed, Kate grabs her tarot cards from the dresser.

KATE (CONT’D)
Want me to read your future?

JADE
Sure.

Kate turns some cards over on the bed.

KATE
Look. It’s amazing.

She holds a card up for Jade.

KATE (CONT’D)
It says we’ll always be together.

She gives the card to Jade.
INT. KATE’S BEDROOM - MORNING

It is early morning and Kate wakes alone, still dressed in her uniform, tarot cards scattered across the bed. The top drawer of the dresser is pulled out. She gets out of bed and finds it empty.

Sitting on the edge of her bed and looking at herself in the mirror, she notices blood on her school shirt. The sound of Looney Tunes cartoon music can be heard coming from a TV in another part of the house, but above that is the clattering sound of a helicopter as if coming from outside. She lifts her feet into the air and stretches her toes so they spread out in all directions. She stares at them for a moment.

She walks to the window and looks up but there is nothing there, just blue sky and the looming shopping mall rising above the roofline in the distance. A neighbour pushes a lawn mower through very long grass in the next-door yard.

KATE
(mumbling)
It’s too early for that.

INT. KATE’S BATHROOM - MORNING

Water gushes into the bath. Kate sits on the edge as she waits for it to fill. She can hear her mother, Annie, talking in another part of the house and turns the tap up further to try to drown out the voice. She looks at herself in the mirror and is startled when a bird flies into the window behind her. She rushes to the window and looks down at the ground. The bird is lifeless on the ground. Kate stares at it for a while but it doesn’t move. She tries to put her hand in the bath to test the water but is burnt. She sits for a moment, thinking to herself, then rushes to her feet and exits.

EXT. KATE’S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Kneeling at the spot where the bird should be, Kate finds only a feather with blood on it. She looks around but there is nothing. No birds are in the sky, no cats or dogs or people are anywhere, just the sound of the neighbour mowing the lawn. She looks up and notices Sara staring at her from the bathroom window.
INT. KATE’S HOUSE – MOMENTS LATER

The bathroom door is locked, so Kate continues to the lounge room. It is dominated by an over-sized rear-projection TV that fills the space, leaving little room for furniture or people.

She stands in the lounge room staring down at the television. Annie and Jules sit on the sofa. News comes on the TV about refugees arriving by boat. Kate stares at it vacantly.

ANNIE
Come and sit down.

Kate curls up next to her mother.

NEWS ANCHOR
In recent news we can confirm that approximately 100 people are said to be on a crowded boat drifting in the Timor Sea headed for Australia. It is believed they are mainly Afghani nationals...

The sound fades out as Kate’s eyes focus in on a SMALL BOY she can see on the boat. It is being filmed from a helicopter. She focuses in until the pixelated image of the boy’s face is all that fills her vision. The boy seems to be looking straight at her through the television. He lifts something to his mouth and Kate’s eyes focus in closer on the blurred pixels. It looks like a red cola can. Sara enters and changes the channel back to Looney Tunes cartoons.

There is a knock at the door. Annie rises to answer it.

ANNIE
Hi.

It is DEE, a woman in her late 40s. Jules is behind Annie now.

JULES
You remember Dee?

Kate also stands in the hall then enters the vacated bathroom.

ANNIE
(agitated)
What’s she doing here?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JULES
We talked about this last week.

Annie seems disoriented and confused.

ANNIE
Did we? No we didn’t!

JULES
Pet...

ANNIE
I don’t need her help. I told you that last time.

DEE
(Placing a hand on Annie’s arm)
Annie...

ANNIE
Get your fucking hands off me.

She yanks her hands away from Dee storming off into the house.

DEE
Julie, it’s OK. She’s not ready.

Dee leaves before she even enters.

JULES
No wait.

INT. KATE’S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kate listens from the bathroom. There’s a collection of antidepressants in the bathroom cupboard, all with Annie’s name on them. She picks up several packets and bottles and looks at them as she listens.

ANNIE (OS)
This is bullshit.

Sara comes into the bathroom to hide, grinning at the same time.

KATE
Stop laughing.

(CONTINUED)
Where were you last night?

This is a prime fucking example of why you do need to speak to someone.

I stayed at a friend’s.

A door slams.

(Yelling)
I can’t cope with this shit on my own.

Another door slams. Kate and Sara stare at each other, waiting for quiet.

Did Mum notice?

Sara shakes her head.

Did you go to school?

Sara nods then exits. Kate locks the door.

On the school bus again, this time Sara leaves Kate alone, moving several rows down, sitting at another seat next to two girls who look a bit older than she is. Kate watches Sara interacting with the girls from a distance. Sara looks like she’s trying to fit in with them. Kate sinks into the chair and sees the words "4Eva" still scratched into the plastic. She tries to burn it with her lighter but it runs out of gas. She pulls out her Nikko pen and draws her signature smiley face before the words "4Eva". She smirks, happy forever.

The horn sounds and the bus pulls up at the school but there is no Jade waiting.
16.

25 EXT. HOMELESS SQUAT - LATER THAT DAY/NIGHT/MORNING

Speeding cars pass Kate as she walks beside the freeway. She scampers down the dirt embankment to the spot where she and Jade had laid down but it is empty, just the hollow boxes and ratty blankets.

She sits on her haunches, hands folded on knees and head resting on her arms, leaning against the concrete wall, waiting.

The sun is sinking and Kate is standing up next to the road, looking in both directions down the highway as far as her eyes will go. Cars and trucks pass her in a blur, their lights temporarily blinding, several sound their horns as they pass.

It’s dark now and the drain is lit up by the overhead light. Kate sits cross-legged on the concrete shelf; she has Jade’s cheerleader stick and hits it on the concrete in time to the repetitive sound of the cars that pass overhead. She becomes drowsy, lulled to sleep by their hypnotic rhythm.

Moments later, we see her asleep in the box, huddled under the blankets. Water begins to trickle into the drain. It flows faster and faster as the drain begins to flood. The water level continues to rise rapidly until eventually it becomes calm and is lapping at the box in which Kate sleeps. She wakes, startled by the water around her. In the distance, she can see the hull of a large timber boat slowly emerge from the darkness, drifting into the dim light. It is the same refugee boat from the news earlier, but it looks empty. Suddenly the box Kate is in begins to float in the direction of the boat. She sees the small boy on the boat emerge from a doorway. He stares at her blankly. Kate’s box begins to sink, causing her to panic.

She wakes with a start, still in the box, still on the ledge. It is early morning. The sky has that early morning glow it gets just before the sun comes up. She is still alone.

26 EXT. FAST FOOD JOINT - AFTERNOON

Joel is across the road standing in line at a fast food restaurant. Kate leans against the wall of the supermarket watching him. A police car crawls by sliding off down the road. Kate watches a group of THREE GIRLS who stand next to Joel. They look like they have money judging by their perfect hair and clothes. Her attention is pulled in the other direction by a girl knocking on the supermarket door not far from her. It’s the bored checkout girl from earlier.

(CONTINUED)
The girl enters the supermarket and Kate walks over to look in through the window at the people stacking shelves. She sees the "Help Wanted" job on the noticeboard again, takes the whole job ad off the noticeboard and pockets it. Joel enters with an oversized post-mix soft drink.

JOEL
What’s that?

KATE
Nothing.

Joel offers his drink to Kate.

JOEL
What now?

KATE
I dunno.

27 INT. JOEL’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joel leads Kate through his house to his bedroom, where they close the door and sit down on his bed. The walls are covered in posters of hot cars and naked girls in revealing poses. They sit in awkward silence for a bit; eventually he pulls out a big bag of dope and a pipe from his bedside drawer and offers it to Kate, but she declines. He puts it aside and doesn’t have any either. Joel grabs Kate’s bag and looks at the big yellow smiley face.

JOEL
What is it with you and the smiley face?

KATE
It’s nothing.

Kate tries to retrieve the bag but Joel holds it away then up-ends it onto the bed. Tarot cards go everywhere.

JOEL
Jeez you’ve got a lot of shit.

Kate starts to gather the cards up.

KATE
Look. This is my card.

She shows him a card of a figure with wings.

(CONTINUED)
KATE (CONT’D)
It means freedom and stuff.

He looks at it briefly.

JOEL
Why do you have all this?

She shrugs.

KATE
Sometimes I just wanna get my stuff and go. What about you?

JOEL
What here? It’s OK most of the time. Reg is pretty cool, lets us do our own thing I guess.

KATE
My dad lives up at Coffs. He said I can go live there anytime. (Pause) What about your brother?

JOEL
He’s a tosser. [laughs]

KATE
I like your room. Where’d you get all this stuff?

He shrugs. There is silence – Kate leans in and kisses Joel on the cheek. It’s a very innocent and sweet kiss. She gets up onto her knees and leans in for more contact, kissing him on the lips – BEN bursts in on them bemused. He is not much older at 18, rakish and confident. He sees his dope sitting on the side table and smacks Joel hard across the head a couple of times, sending him flying off the bed.

BEN
Little faggot.

Ben leaves and soon a thumping rhythm can be heard in another part of the house. Joel and Kate sit in silence for a while after Ben’s interruption.

JOEL
He’s only mucking around.

Joel leaves the room. Kate waits for a while but he doesn’t return, prompting her to go and look for him.
INT. HALL/BEN’S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The music is coming from down the hall. Kate walks slowly through the semi-darkness towards the music. In contrast to Joel’s room, the rest of the house is sparsely furnished with ratty old bits of furniture. They look dirt poor. She finds Joel in Ben’s room, where the music is coming from. Ben has a cool room. Turntables and a mixer sit across a makeshift table balanced on top of some speakers. Stacks of vinyl are underneath and also line the wall. Kate stands at the doorway.

BEN
Who’s this?

KATE
I’m Kate.

BEN
Take a seat.

She takes a seat on the floor next to Joel. Joel is different around Ben, less confident. Ben lights up the pipe and passes it to Kate, who declines. He then passes it to Joel, who has some. They sit and listen to Ben’s music. He’s a pretty good DJ, focused at what he’s doing. Joel is focused entirely on everything Ben does.

INT. KATE’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kate’s house is dark and quiet as she enters through the kitchen screen door. She tries the fridge for food, but the light is off inside it so she tries the wall light only to discover that there is no power. She walks to her room and sits on the edge of her bed. Again she hears the helicopter, this time very distant. She walks to the window but there is no helicopter. Under the street light she sees that the neighbour’s lawnmower has been abandoned in the long grass, a thin aisle of cut grass behind it. Across the rooftops she can see the shopping mall lit up like a beacon. She pulls the job ad out of her pocket to read it, but the light is too dim.

She walks to her mother’s room to find that Annie is sound asleep. Kate watches her from the doorway.

KATE
Mum?

She walks to the edge of the bed and sees a pill bottle, picks it up and shakes it to check whether there are any pills then crawls into bed next to her mother, puts her arm over her and soon falls asleep.
30 INT. KATE’S HOUSE – MORNING

Annie is still in bed. Jules is in with her trying to get her to get up, but she is not responsive – she just stares into the distance.

JULES
Come on, time to get up. Come on,
Annie, you’ve got to get up.
Doctor’s appointment now. Come on.

31 INT. KATE’S BATHROOM – MORNING

Trying to be discreet, Kate has a pencil and is drawing a faint line on the side of the pill bottles to mark the level of how many pills there are in each bottle. She also counts how many sheets of pills there are in each box, putting them away just before Jules enters with Annie.

KATE
The power was out again last night.

JULES
I know. It’s all sorted.

Kate exits and we follow her to...

32 INT. KATE’S HOUSE – MORNING

...the kitchen. She picks up the phone and makes a call, trying to keep the call from others in the house. The phone is finally answered.

KATE
Hello? Yes.

She holds.

KATE
Yeah. Hi I’m just calling about the job. The one on the noticeboard.

She waits again.

KATE
OK. When? Thanks. Kate, my name is Kate.
INT. TRAIN - AFTERNOON

Kate, dressed in her school uniform, slouches in a chair on the train looking out the window at the tops of houses and trees rushing by. Joel gets on and sits opposite her.

JOEL
Hey.

Soon they are joined by the rest of THE GROUP, who sit with them. Joel keeps his focus on Kate, who in turn focuses on what’s outside the window. She throws a t-shirt at him that hits him square in the face and they both laugh.

FLICK
(to Joel)
How’s your brother?

JOEL
Why would I know?

FLICK
(to Kate)
Hey I saw Jade yesterday. She was asking about you.

KATE
Where is she?

FLICK
She was down the park.

Flick mimics a bag of glue up to her nose.

KATE
Fuck off.

FLICK
Go see for yourself. I doubt she’s moved. She’s glued to the spot.

Flick thinks it’s the funniest thing she’s ever said and cracks up laughing. The others laugh along with her, except for Joel. Kate drifts off in thought, ignoring them. When the train stops, she jumps off. Joel just makes it off too.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The park is a bare tract of land with dead grass and no trees. Plonked in the middle and surrounded by lights is a distinctive piece of new playground equipment. Kate and Joel stare at the playground from the roadside. A young mother helps a toddler walk up the slippery dip.
KATE
Do you think she was telling the truth?

JOEL
Dunno. Maybe we can come back later.

They exit.

35 EXT. OUTSIDE SUPERMARKET - DAY
A pencil crosses out the word "their" on a résumé and replaces it with "there". Kate is standing outside the supermarket, pencil in hand, looking at her résumé. She looks in through the expansive windows at the cash registers.

36 INT/EXT. MANAGERS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER
Looking through a glass window into the supermarket manager’s office, we see Kate sitting alone, waiting.

Inside the office now, Kate sits looking at several lame birthday cards on the manager’s desk. When that bores her, she looks out the window instead and notices one of the register workers being berated by a customer. Looking back down at the cards, she also notices a safe down behind the manager’s desk that is ajar and has a small amount of money in it. The SUPERMARKET MANAGER enters, takes a seat in front of Kate and motions for her résumé. He is in his 50s, balding and overweight. She hands him the résumé. He looks it over, noticing the spelling correction in detail.

MANAGER
So Kate? Tell me, what can you offer to our supermarket?

KATE
Umm...

MANAGER
OK. Tell me why you would like to work here?

Kate looks out the manager’s window at the other people working. They all look miserable. She sees the register worker still being berated and being spoken to by a more senior staff member. It is Victor, the man who lives in the caravan. The customer’s anger is now turned to him.

(CONTINUED)
KATE
It looks like a fun place to work.

The manager stares at her.

KATE
And I can work really hard.

MANAGER
Fun place? It is a fun place to work. I like your attitude, Kate.
We like hard workers here.

Outside the office again, and deaf to the rest of the conversation, we see the manager lean over to shake Kate’s hand. He stands and leads her through the shop. A few of the other employees look at her. Victor also notices her. She is led outside the shop by the manager.

37 EXT. SUPERMARKET - MOMENTS LATER
Joel has been waiting outside. Kate approaches.

JOEL
How’d it go?

KATE
I got a trial.

JOEL
Sucker.

38 INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY
THE GROUP, including Kate and Joel, drift around the mall, wasting time.

39 INT. DRESS SHOP - DAY
Kate stands outside the dress shop looking at the mannequin in the window. She chews on the straw from her post-mix soft drink as she admires the same red dress that she had looked at earlier. Her friends take off in the other direction when security staff start to walk their way.
INT. SHOPPING MALL FOOD COURT - DAY

The food court is full of people. Sara sits with the same two girls she sat with on the bus earlier. Kate approaches them.

KATE
What the fuck are you doing wagging school?

SARA
You do it all the time.

Kate drags Sara away to a quieter spot.

KATE
Listen to me. Don’t hang around with those sluts. Do you hear me? DO YOU HEAR ME?

Sara nods reluctantly. People are looking.

SARA
You’re hurting my arm.

KATE
Go home Sara. Mum’s waiting for you.

Sara skulks off.

EXT. KATE’S HOUSE - DUSK

As Kate approaches her house, she sees an official looking car parked in the driveway. She looks through the car window. A clipboard sits on the passenger seat.

INT. KATE’S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A hushed conversation can be heard as Kate walks quietly to her room. She can see to the other end of the hallway into the lounge room, where her mother and Auntie Jules are talking with a woman in a suit. It is a DoCS OFFICER. Kate hears her name mentioned. The woman sees Kate and offers a warm smile. Kate enters her room.
INT. KATE’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Kate lies in bed staring at the flame from a BIC lighter for so long it looks like she is trying to run the gas dry. When it is hot enough, she presses it to the flesh on her forearm, leaving a blister in the shape of a smiley face. This one joins several others which are in various states of healing.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS STOP – MORNING

The next morning, Kate watches as Sara gets onto the school bus. Sara takes a seat at the window and gives Kate a cheesy smile, as well as the finger. Kate smirks back at her. The bus takes off and its bulk is replaced with a vista of houses and the top of the shopping mall in the distance.

INT. SUPERMARKET – AFTERNOON

Kate buzzes the work door and is let in by the bored checkout girl from earlier, who leads her through the shop past Victor. Kate’s eyes meet his.

From a distance, we see her talking to the manager, who leads her to an aisle where DAMO (early 20s), tall and thin with glasses, sizes her up for a moment.

INT. SUPERMARKET AISLE – MOMENTS LATER

Kate stands next to Damo, who is in the middle of explaining the job. He is dispassionate and talks too fast.

DAMO
You grab the boxes like this and stack them next to the shelf like this. Open them one by one and stack the items on the shelf like this making sure that the item matches the label. Empty boxes go here like this. If you run out of boxes you go get more from the back using the trolley. Got it? I’ll be back in a minute.

Damo rushes off and Kate is left a bit confused and bewildered. She begins to stack the shelves. Damo does not return. She pushes on and finishes the boxes on her own, then takes the trolley out the back to the store rooms to get more boxes.
INT. SUPERMARKET STORE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

It is dark out the back and she finds a door that has been left ajar. It leads out to the loading dock. Damo is out there smoking cigarettes with some others.

INT. SUPERMARKET AISLE - LATER

Back inside, she continues stacking the shelves when the manager comes back.

The manager leaves and returns to the end of the aisle with Damo. They are a fair way away from Kate, so she can’t hear what they are saying. The manager doesn’t look happy with Damo, who looks to be trying to relinquish responsibility. The manager returns and Damo disappears into another aisle.

MANAGER
This is all done wrong. You’ll have to fix it and you’ll have to stay over til it’s done.

Kate turns around and notices Victor watching from the top of some stairs.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - LATER

The sun is sinking. We look through the glass windows of the supermarket and see Kate, alone in an aisle, small against the weight of the shelves around her. She quietly continues to stack the shelves.

EXT. BUS STOP - SUNSET

The street is empty. Kate sits at the bus stop after work eating Twisties and drinking Orange Fanta. She tosses her chip packet at the rubbish bin next to her but it teeters on the edge of the bin. She watches as it hangs there. Eventually it misses its mark and she lets it fall to the ground and blow away. She watches as it drifts down the empty road. A car pulls up. It is Joel and Ben. Flick is also in the back, done up to the nines. Kate gets in the car and they drive off.
INT. BEN’S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Kate sits in the back next to Flick and notices her skirt is riding so high you can see her underwear. Flick appears to be high and is drinking premix drinks. She offers one to Kate who takes it. Joel twists around to talk to Kate. Ben drives.

JOEL
How was it?

FLICK
(mocking old married people)
How was work love?

Kate shrugs.

EXT. BEN’S CAR - SUNSET/NIGHT

From high above we see Ben’s car rolling through the suburb, street after street, prowling.

INT. BEN’S CAR - LATER

They drive past the park and circle slowly around it. It looks deserted.

BEN
Who are we looking for?

JOEL
Jade.

BEN
(sexualised)
Ooooh, Jadey.

KATE
(at Ben)
Shut up.

FLICK
(jealous)
Yeah, shut up.

Ben laughs.

JOEL
(to Kate)
Do you wanna get out?

(CONTINUED)
KATE
No. There’s no-one here. Can we stop at her house?

Ben eyes her in the mirror.

EXT. JADE’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Looking through a fly-screen door out to the street, we see Ben’s car as it pulls to a stop, the ever-present shopping mall glowing over the rooftops in the distance. Kate gets out and walks to the door.

She stands at the screen door of a washed-out lime-green fibro house and knocks. The boys sit in the car waiting for her; she looks back to them as she waits. A woman approaches the door. It is JADE’S MOTHER, mid-40s, thin with a face and voice like she’s lived a hard life.

JADE’S MUM
Yeah?

KATE
Do you know where Jade is?

JADE’S MUM
She left about three weeks ago.

Kate eyeballs her.

JADE’S MUM
No, I don’t know where she is.
(Pause) Sweetheart, you’d be better worrying about yourself. Jadey can take care of Jadey. She always has.

KATE
You don’t even care!

JADE’S MUM
It’s not the first time she’s done this.

Jade’s mum walks away, quickly swallowed by the dark house, back to the blaring TV, glowing from somewhere within.
INT. PETROL STATION - NIGHT

Ben and Joel are inside a rundown old petrol station, browsing the aisles. Joel is filling up a Slushie at the machine. Ben is flicking through magazines. The elderly female CONSOLE OPERATOR looks on suspiciously.

INT/EXT. BEN’S CAR/PETROL STATION - MOMENTS LATER

The car is parked in a spot just outside the door. Kate sits in the back seat of the car looking at Ben through the window. He pays and he and Joel exit the shop to the car.

INT. BEN’S CAR - LATER

They are parked across the road from the petrol station, where they eat chips and drink Slushies. Over at the petrol station, there is a shift change and the console operator is replaced by an OVERWEIGHT MAN in his 40s with a comb-over. The streets are empty.

BEN
I’m just going to get something else.

Ben jumps out of the car and heads back over to the petrol station. Joel slides over to the driver’s seat and smiles at Kate as he revs the engine. She laughs at him, but soon he drops the car into gear and they hurtle forward. Kate falls sideways in the back seat, unable to get up, when suddenly Ben flies through the open window with a hood over his face and lands on top of her and Flick. Slushie goes everywhere. Flick laughs.

KATE
What are you doing, you fucking idiot?

BEN
Man, what’s she here for anyway?

Joel and Kate lock eyes. Ben kisses Flick.

KATE
Just take me home.

She pushes Ben’s legs off her lap. The car peels off down the road at breakneck speed.
EXT. KATE’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kate steps out of the car and stands on the footpath as the car drives away. The TV can be heard blaring from the house. She doesn’t immediately enter, instead staring at the house in apprehension before heading in.

INT. KATE’S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

We follow Kate as she walks to the lounge room and finds her mother staring zombie-like at the TV. She grabs the remote and turns the volume down, then walks to the bathroom and checks the pill packets to see whether the levels have changed. They haven’t. She finds Sara in her room.

KATE
Where’s Auntie Jules?

SISTER
She said she can’t come this time.

KATE
How long’s she been going for?

SISTER
Since I got home this arvo.

KATE
Have you eaten?

Sara shrugs to indicate no.

INT. KATE’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kate is in the kitchen stirring a pot of pasta that she strains.

INT. KATE’S HOUSE/DINNER TABLE - LATER

Sara, Annie and Kate eat in front of the TV.

SARA
Isn’t there anything to put on it?

KATE
It’s mac cheese. You love it.

Sara looks unimpressed.
INT. KATE’S HOUSE - LATER
The overhead bulb in the bathroom reveals every detail on Kate’s face. She stares at the blemishes in the mirror then cleans her teeth.

INT. KATE’S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER
In the kitchen. Kate leans against the wall, phone pressed to her ear. It is answered on the other end.

KATE
Hi Uncle Pete, is Auntie Jules there? (PAUSE) No it’s OK. Can you just let her know I rang? Thanks.

She hangs up.

EXT. AN OPEN PADDOCK - NIGHT
In the distance, a white Holden Commodore is engulfed by flames. The glow from the flames lights up the surrounding hills, revealing an eerie natural amphitheater.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY
The supermarket is nearly devoid of customers, and in an empty aisle Kate is stacking shelves. There is some commotion down at the other end of the shop that grabs her attention. She walks to the end of her aisle to look. She watches lights being set up and a camera being put in place. She returns to stacking. Soon afterwards, the manager enters her aisle with a man in his 30s; he is the PRODUCER/DIRECTOR. The man and the manager converse for a moment, talking about Kate, but she can’t make out what they are saying. The manager calls out to Kate.

MANAGER
Kathy. Can I get you to come with me, please?

She drops what she’s doing.

Kate is placed in front of a camera but looks a bit stunned. Someone applies makeup to her.

MANAGER
They want to use you for the commercial. OK?
PRODUCER/DIRECTOR
OK, we just need you to say how good you think the supermarket is. Yeah?

She nods apprehensively.

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR (CONT’D)
(to crew)
You ready? (to Kate) OK – action!

She is surrounded by lights and film crew. Staff filter in from other parts of the shop to watch, customers stop to observe the scene. It’s as if the whole shop has stopped to watch. She notices Victor watching from a distance. She freezes.

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR (CONT’D)
OK, cut. What’s wrong? Just say what you think. Whatever comes into your mind. Anything good you can think of. Yeah?

MANAGER
What do you think you might say, Kathy? What about the produce?

Kate struggles to think of something, but smiles politely.

KATE
Um...

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR
Hold that thought! Action.

KATE
It’s good?

JUDITH pipes up from the sidelines. A co-worker in her late 40s, plump with short bleached hair, she is more confident but less pleasing to the eye.

JUDITH
What about: our produce is the best you’ll find by a long mile?

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR
That’s great.

MANAGER
Good work, Judith.

(CONTINUED)
JUDITH
(encouraged)
Or you could say: you won’t beat our prices for great value. We are the cheapest by far.

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR
Judith? Could you?

Motions for Judith to take over.

Kate is ungraciously bumped aside as Judith takes her place and has makeup applied. Drifting into the background, she becomes an observer; eventually she returns to her work in the aisle as the commercial shoot continues in the background. On her way, she passes the office and sees the safe ajar. She stops and considers going in there. There is no one around and she could easily do it but she decides against it. We hear people applauding Judith several times. Kate returns to stacking the shelf.

66 INT/EXT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

From the cash registers, looking out of the supermarket’s expansive shop windows, we see Kate sitting at the bus stop outside. The lights are shutting down inside.

67 EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Kate sits at the bus stop, in the background the lights are flickering off in the empty shop. The registers glow in the semi-darkness. Soon Victor walks from the rear of the building and sees Kate sitting at the bus stop. He’s about to get in his car, which is parked on the street.

VICTOR
Hi.

KATE
Hey.

VICTOR
You know the bus doesn’t run this late.

KATE
(lying)
I was waiting for someone.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICTOR
I can give you a lift if you need one.

She looks him in the eyes, sizing him up.

KATE
OK. I’m not that far.

68 INT. VICTOR’S CAR - NIGHT

Victor’s old bomb. Time slows as they drive. Kate spies Victor’s hand on the gear stick. It looks strong.

VICTOR
So, Kate. How are you finding the job so far?

KATE
It’s OK.

VICTOR
It’s a great place to work. If you’re lucky you could work your way up to assistant manager or maybe even manager one day.

KATE
Is that what you are?

Victor points to his trainee manager’s badge. They drive on in silence, Kate staring out the window. Victor looks at Kate’s hair and lips. Light from passing cars make them iridescent. Kate catches him.

KATE (CONT’D)
(pointing to her house)
It’s just up here.

They pull up outside her house and she stares in from the car.

KATE (CONT’D)
Where do you live?

VICTOR
Not far from here – well, not far from work actually.

KATE
Can we go there? I don’t feel like going home just yet.
He looks past Kate to the house for a moment and then does a u-turn.

69 EXT. VICTOR’S PLACE - NIGHT

Victor’s car pulls up to his caravan. They get out. An OLD MAN sits under a light outside the neighbouring caravan. He’s ancient and doesn’t acknowledge Kate or Victor.

    KATE
    Hi.

The old man either ignores her or doesn’t hear her.

70 INT. VICTOR’S PLACE - NIGHT

Kate and Victor enter. It’s small inside, tidy but old and lived in, warm and inviting. Victor is a collector, a hoarder of old junk and figurines.

    KATE
    How long have you lived here?

There is nowhere to sit so she takes a seat on the bed.

    VICTOR
    Forever.

Victor leans against the kitchen bench. There is a small series of photos in frames hanging on the wall next to a distinctive 70s wall sconce. They are all of Victor, the earliest one being of him cradled in his mother’s arms.

    KATE
    How long have you worked at the shop?

    VICTOR
    Forever.

    KATE
    Is that all you wanna do?

    VICTOR
    Ahhh...

    KATE
    How old are you, anyway?

(CONTINUED)
VICTOR
How old are you?

KATE
Sixteen.

Pause.

KATE (CONT’D)
Do you live here on your own?

VICTOR
Yeah.

KATE
Your friends at work aren’t very nice.

VICTOR
Those losers aren’t my friends.

She sees a guitar leaning against the wall.

KATE
Oh, are you in a band or something?

VICTOR
No, I gave it away. My Mum was sick for a long time and, you know, I looked after her.

KATE
I can’t wait to get away from my Mum.

VICTOR
Why?

Kate shrugs as if never having thought of a reason.

KATE
I dunno.

VICTOR
Well that’s a good enough reason, I guess.

She picks up his guitar and strums out a simple melody of power chords.

KATE
I wish I was famous. One day I wanna be a singer - or an actor - or something.

(CONTINUED)
The guitar is out of tune and she can’t really play either, but she keeps going. Victor, who has been watching from the kitchenette, takes the guitar from her and kisses her. She is unmoved at first, but after a moment she softens and embraces him. They have very short-lived intercourse. Victor wipes the wet patch with an old T-shirt and lies down next to Kate, grabbing her hand and gradually working his fingers between hers. The moment is awkward, yet sweet and full of innocence.

VICTOR
Brothers or sisters?

KATE
(lying)
No. Just me.

VICTOR
Oh Princess.

Kate smiles then rolls away from Victor quickly losing the smile and focusing instead on how the light from outside catches on a tear in the curtain. She can see the old man sitting under his light.

71 INT. KATE’S HOUSE - MORNING

Victor’s car pulls up outside Kate’s house. Kate hops out. Annie watches her from the window.

72 INT. KATE’S BATHROOM - DAY

Close in on Kate’s left ear as it sinks into the water. Kate is in the bath, blocking sound with her ears under water. We hear what she hears through the left ear when her right is submerged. Then we hear what she hears through her right ear when her left is submerged.

She dries herself, exits to the hall and...

73 INT. KATE’S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

...catches Annie giving Sara some of her medication. Sara looks Kate in the eye as she downs the tablet then runs out the back door. Kate approaches and grabs the pill packet out of Annie’s hands as she passes. It is Valium.

ANNIE
What are you doing?
KATE
Why do you do this?

ANNIE
It never hurt you.

KATE
You’ll fuck it up for everyone.

Kate throws them back at Annie then enters her room and slams the door.

74 EXT. PARK – DAY
The park looks barren in daylight and the playground looks even more out of place. What was a new playground has been vandalised. FOUR KIDS, all aged around 15, all unkempt and thin, are sitting on the playground equipment, passing a plastic bag around and taking turns to breathe from it. Jade is not one of them. Kate stands alone on the other side of the park, watching, then exits.

75 INT. BUS – DAY
Sitting at the front of the bus behind the driver, Kate consults a map to figure out where she needs to get off. From a distance, we see her talking to the bus driver, who gives her instructions.

76 EXT. STREET IN BUSY PART OF TOWN – DAY
Kate walks along the high street looking for an address. She stops outside an office and enters. It is a Migrant Resource Centre.

77 INT. MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE – DAY
The reception is cluttered with posters and pamphlets featuring smiling people from different ethnic backgrounds offering help to those who need it. Behind the reception is a warren of cubicles, but they all seem to be empty. Kate approaches the receptionist.

KATE
Can I speak to Julie?

RECEPTIONIST
Do you have an appointment with her?

(CONTINUED)
KATE
Um no, she’s my auntie.

RECEPTIONIST
One moment.

She picks up the phone.

RECEPTIONIST
Hi Julie. I have a young lady here who says she’s your niece. (TO Kate) What’s your name?

KATE
Kate.

RECEPTIONIST
Kate. Sure.

She hangs up.

RECEPTIONIST
Grab a seat, she won’t be long.

Kate takes a seat in the waiting area. Opposite her are a Sudanese family; the wife is in traditional dress and they have two very well-dressed young children with them. Kate makes eye contact with the mother and smiles at the children. She notices a wide scar that runs from one side of the father’s neck to the other. She nervously picks up a fashion mag and flicks through it, looking at the high-fashion shots, which are in stark contrast to the scene she finds herself in. Jules enters.

JULES
Well this is a nice surprise.

KATE
Hey.

JULES
You hungry? I can take lunch now.

INT. JULES’ CAR - LATER
Jules drives. Kate sits next to her. They are silent for a while.

KATE
Why is she like that?
JULES
She’s always been... fragile. She’s just going through a rough patch right now.

KATE
What’s gonna happen to us?

Jules pulls over to the side of the road.

JULES
I’m not sure, Kate. We just need to keep Child Services out of it but if it happens again...

KATE
Well what are they gonna do?

They pull back out into the traffic.

JULES
If they deem your Mum unfit, I guess you’ll both have to go live with your fathers.

KATE
Couldn’t we come stay with you?

Jules looks apprehensive at this suggestion.

JULES
You know that would be difficult. (Pause) They want to do an assessment. They say you haven’t been going to school.

KATE
But I’m 16!

JULES
And you’re still enrolled at school. We just need to show them you’re OK, both of you.

They pull into a petrol station - the same one that was ripped off earlier. Kate sinks down a bit in her chair.

JULES
I’ll just be a minute.

Jules gets out and starts to fill the car with petrol. She has left her handbag sitting open on the front seat. Kate notices a lotto ticket sitting at the top of the bag. She

(CONTINUED)
watches Jules heading in to pay. She can see that the numbers are almost all circled. She takes the ticket and pockets it just before Jules returns. Jules hops in.

JULES

Kate shrugs her shoulders.

79 INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

It’s early in the day shift, and Kate kneels in an aisle, re-stocking the shelves with Victor. She hands him tins from a box and he puts them on the shelf. They make a game of it, slowly doing one tin at a time. Yelling can be heard from somewhere in the store. Victor and Kate both go to investigate. A customer is abusing one of the checkout operators.

CUSTOMER
No! You’ve ripped me off and I want my money.

OPERATOR
I’m sorry but the offer finished yesterday. That discount no longer applies.

CUSTOMER
Give me my fucking money.

Victor has to step in. Seen from Kate’s perspective, things fall silent as Victor is abused by the customer.

Eventually the supermarket manager has to step in and settle the dispute because Victor is unable to.

The manager gives the customer his money and then angrily marches Victor off as other staff members watch on. Kate returns to stacking the shelves.

80 EXT. MALL GYM - LATER

Standing outside the gym, Kate and Victor both stare through the expansive floor-to-ceiling glass windows, watching as people march away from them on treadmills. Victor is fixated on an obese man’s loose shoelaces. Kate sucks on one of her post-mix drinks. Victor feeds his mouth with chips.

(CONTINUED)
Kate gives off a single small, fake cough, mocking illness in contrast to all the people trying to get fit. Victor is unexpectedly approached by a woman, MARNEE. She’s the same age as him, dressed in a suit, slick and confident but nice at the same time.

MARNEE
Vic?

Victor is caught off guard.

VICTOR
Marnee!

He hides his supermarket name badge. Kate notices this.

MARNEE
How are you?

VICTOR
I’m great. How are you?

MARNEE
I’m great too.

VICTOR
Well that’s great. (Awkward pause) I think I’ve seen you around, you know from a distance.

MARNEE
Really? Oh, you should’ve said hi.

VICTOR
It was from a distance. So what are you doing here?

MARNEE
Well I’m working here now.

VICTOR
Where?

MARNEE
I’m in charge of the centre – can you believe it? Well, you know, the mall. After I finished uni I lived in London for a while and worked in finance, then did an MBA and, well anyway it’s a long story but now I’m back in the old haunt. So how about you? How’s the band?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICTOR
Oh I gave that away, you know...

MARNEE
That’s a shame, Victor. You guys were really good. What do you do now?

Kate, who has been observing, steps in.

KATE
He’s with me.

VICTOR
We’re here shopping but I’ve really gotta run.

MARNEE
OK, sure. Well, keep in touch.

Victor walks briskly with Kate, leaving Marnee in the background.

KATE
Why did you do that?

VICTOR
What?

KATE
Why did you hide your badge?

They round a corner when suddenly Victor grabs onto the wall next to him, pulling a whole rack of brochures down as he falls to the floor. He has a fit. Kate doesn’t know how to react and as other people rush to help him, she just stands by and watches.

81 INT. VICTOR’S PLACE - DAY

Close in on an old water stain. Kate and Victor lie on his bed, staring at the water stains on the ceiling of the caravan.

VICTOR
Sorry about that. It’s my brain, it’s this thing.

KATE
It’s OK. I pass out sometimes too. Sometimes I forget to eat.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)
VICTOR
I’ve been thinking that I don’t wanna do this anymore.

KATE
Do you mean this?

VICTOR
No not that.

He pulls her closer.

KATE
Then what?

VICTOR
Just work. My life. You know.

After a while.

VICTOR
Can I show you something?

Kate shrugs to indicate yes.

INT/EXT. VICTOR’S CAR IN LEAFY SUBURBIA – DAY

Driving in Victor’s car through an upper middle-class suburb, miles removed from the world they inhabit.

They pull over. Sitting in Victor’s car outside a large, well-kept house with a neat garden on a leafy street full of similar houses.

KATE
Is this what you wanted to show me?

VICTOR
This was our house.

KATE
Really? What happened?

VICTOR
We lost it.

KATE
How do you lose that?

VICTOR
My dad’s business failed. He went bankrupt. Couldn’t handle it. Then (MORE)
VICTOR (cont’d)
he and mum would argue... a lot. Eventually they split up and he moved out. Then one day he just topped himself. He parked the car in the car park where his business was, got a hose and attached it to the exhaust then sat in the car and went to sleep. When they found him, the car was still running. So anyway mum couldn’t handle that, and she kind of went sick. We had to sell the house. I looked after her for ages but then they found out she had cancer and a month later she was dead. I was 17. Anyway I dropped out of school and started work at the supermarket, and I’ve been there ever since.

Pause as Kate takes it all in.

KATE
But what happened to all the money?

VICTOR
When he died he owed a lot and I dunno, there was just none for us.

KATE
What’d you do?

VICTOR
I moved into the caravan.

KATE
Didn’t you have any other family you could live with?

Victor shakes his head. Kate looks away to the house.

KATE (CONT’D)
Do you ever wanna go back?

VICTOR
All the time.

Pause as they both look at the house.

KATE
Come on.

Kate gets out of the car and starts to walk towards the house.
CONTINUED:

VICTOR
What are you doing?

KATE
let's just go knock.

VICTOR
You can't go in there like that.

She turns and keeps walking.

VICTOR
Kate?

She knocks on the door. There is no answer. She rings the bell. Still no answer. She turns to look at Victor, who is still in the car, then she turns back to the door and knocks loudly, ringing the bell at the same time. There is still no answer. She looks back to Victor again then walks to the side gate and disappears around the back. Victor sits thinking for a bit, then he gets out and follows.

83 INT/EXT. VICTOR'S OLD HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

He finds her standing at the back door, which is wide open.

KATE
It's open.

Victor looks at the door, adrenalin pumping.

VICTOR
We can't go in.

KATE
(Calling out)
Hello?

VICTOR
Kate!

KATE
Let's just have a look. I won't touch anything.

She walks through the door.

VICTOR
(reluctantly following her)
What if someone comes?

(CONTINUED)
KATE
We’ll just say we’ve got the wrong house.

Victor finds himself standing in the kitchen that he used to know. Kate turns to look at him.

KATE
What is it?

VICTOR
It hasn’t changed at all.

KATE
Where was your room?

VICTOR
(whispering)
Wait!

Kate is in the hall. She knocks gently against a wall, testing. Victor watches her. She gives the wall one hard loud whack.

VICTOR
Shhhhh!

KATE
HELLO!!!

VICTOR
(whispering loudly)
What the fuck are you doing?

KATE
There’s no one here.

She walks on, bolder now. Victor follows her, gradually becoming more confident too. She walks up the stairs, all the time surveying the house, taking it in.

KATE
Which room was yours?

Victor motions to a door at the end of the hall. They walk to it and enter. Victor looks confused.

VICTOR
It’s a kid’s room.

KATE
 Doesn’t look like any kid’s room I’ve seen.

(CONTINUED)
VICTOR
No, I don’t think it gets used.

He walks past Kate to the bed and sits down, grabs a big pillow and hugs it. They lock eyes. He looks like a little kid.

They hold the stare for a moment until they are startled to hear movement in the house. They look out the door and can see an OLD LADY in a wheelchair downstairs.

VICTOR (CONT’D)
What the fuck was that?

OLD LADY
Jenine? Jeniiiiiiine! Was that you ringing the bell.

The old lady sits in front of the closed front door, staring at it. She looks frail and scared. Kate puts finger to lips.

KATE
(very quietly)
Shhhhhhhhh...

Victor nods. They creep out, creep down the stairs and leave the way they came, pulling the door behind them, locking it at the same time.

The old lady is none the wiser.

INT/EXT. VICTOR’S CAR IN LEAFY SUBURBIA - MOMENTS LATER

They jump into the car.

KATE
Quick, drive, drive!

It takes a bit for the car engine to kick over but it starts eventually. They drive off slowly. They are full of adrenalin and Victor is charged up, but as we watch him drive the energy gradually erodes and he becomes pensive, lost in thought.

EXT. KATE’S PLACE - DAY

Kate walks up the driveway to her house and sees the same official-looking car in the driveway that was there earlier - the DoCS officer’s car.
INT. KATE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Entering the house through the back door into the kitchen, she slams the fly-screen door hard so it can be heard. She opens the fridge, which is empty, shuts it, then heads for the lounge room. The same woman as before is there. She is a Department of Child Services (DoCS) assessor, 30-ish, educated and well-meaning. Jules and Annie are sitting together in the lounge room with the DoCS assessor when Kate walks in. They are drinking mugs of tea.

KATE
Is this the assessment?

INT. KATE'S HOUSE - LATER

Kate is having a one-on-one interview with the assessor at the kitchen table.

ASSESSOR
How is family life? Tell me about day-to-day stuff. Is there anything you want to tell me at all?

KATE
No, not really.

ASSESSOR
That’s fine, Kate. I understand it must be difficult. (Pause) You’ve missed a lot of school and, given your Mother’s history...

KATE
What about her history? She’d be fine if you’d just leave us alone. (Pause) I’ve got a job now. I can support us.

ASSESSOR
OK a job. That’s good. Where?

Kate doesn’t answer.

KATE
I don’t have to finish school anyway. I’m old enough for that now. You can’t touch me.

ASSESSOR
We have to consider your well-being until you turn 18, Kate and that’s (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
ASSESSOR (cont’d)
still two years away, and then
there’s your sister, Sara. (Pause)
I understand it’s hard for you. I
know it must be. Here take this.
It’s my number. Call me, any time.

She places the number in front of Kate.

88 INT/EXT. KATE’S HOUSE - LATER

Jules is talking to the DoCS assessor out at the car as
Annie stands at the top of the path near the house watching
them. Kate watches them all from her window. The DoCS
assessor’s car pulls away from the house and Jules and Annie
head back to the house. Kate comes out of her room and heads
to the lounge room to meet them.

Jules and Annie enter. There is a prolonged awkward silence
between them.

KATE
Where’s Sara?

JULES
She’s gone to stay with her dad for
a bit.

89 INT. KATE’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kate lies on her bed, staring at the winning Lotto ticket in
her hands. The TV blares in the background. Suddenly the
power goes off leaving her in the dark. She gets up to
investigate and finds that the power has gone off
completely. She looks out the window. All the other houses
still have power and the street lights are still on. She
walks to the lounge room and finds Annie struggling with the
TV.

KATE
Did you remember to pay?

Annie turns to look at Kate. Both stand staring at each
other in the semi-dark. Kate exits, leaving Annie alone in
the lounge room.
INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Kate is stacking shelves in an aisle on her own. She ploughs her way through a box of product. Clearly she knows what she is doing. She can see Victor in the distance. They smile at each other. When she thinks no one is watching, she shoves a packet of chips down her shirt in what looks like a familiar manoeuvre. Damo, who has been watching her from the next aisle, sees her. Moments later, the manager appears in her aisle with Damo.

    MANAGER
    Kathy.

He calls her over with his finger. She obliges.

    KATE
    Yes?

    MANAGER
    Have you got something you’d like to tell me?

    KATE
    No.

Victor is watching from the stairs.

    MANAGER
    Victor!

Victor comes rushing over.

    MANAGER
    Ask Kathy if she has something to tell us.

Kate and Victor lock eyes for a moment. He’s trapped and can’t speak.

    KATE
    Don’t bother.

She pulls the chip packet out of her top and hands it to Victor, who stands useless in front of her.

    MANAGER
    Name tag.

She takes it off and hands it to Victor, then walks out past Damo and the other staff.
CONTINUED:

MANAGER
(Calling after her)
You’re lucky I don’t call the
police for this. You’re not welcome
here again. Remember that!

Victor looks humiliated.

91 EXT. FREEWAY OVERPASS - DAY

Kate walks across the freeway overpass that she and Jade were on earlier. She scampers down the embankment and stands before the area where the box was that she had slept in with Jade. There is nothing there now. No trace of Jade anymore. She scampers back up the embankment and walks resolutely in the direction of the traffic. Tears well in her eyes as the traffic streams past her, but she chokes them back.

92 INT/EXT. VICTOR’S CAR/CARAVAN PARK - NIGHT

We are looking out the front window of Victor’s car as it crawls through the vacant lot to his caravan. When the lights fall on his caravan, we see Kate sitting on the front stairs waiting in the dark. Victor slows and looks at her. She stands up, vulnerable in the glare of the headlights.

93 INT. VICTOR’S PLACE - LATER

Kate and Victor are on his bed.

VICTOR
I’m sorry about today.

KATE
It’s OK.

VICTOR
No it’s not. I’m sick to fucking death of that place. I feel like I need to get away from there sometimes. I feel like I’m drowning.

Pause.

KATE
So why don’t you leave? The caravan’s got wheels, doesn’t it?

He looks at Kate, apprehensive.

(CONTINUED)
KATE (CONT’D)
You could take me to see my Dad.

VICTOR
Maybe. Where is he?

KATE
Coffs.

VICTOR
Coffs? That’s ages away!

KATE
I know but you said yourself you needed a break from this place. It’d only be a short trip. We can take the caravan. It’ll be fun.

VICTOR
I can’t do that? What about work?

KATE
We’ll only be gone for the weekend.

He looks reluctant.

KATE (CONT’D)
Well I’m going with or without you.

She gets up to leave.

VICTOR
Wait.

She turns to look at him and they hold one another’s gaze.

94 INT/EXT. VICTOR’S PLACE – DAY

Victor is hitching the car up to the caravan and we follow him as he hops into the car, and adjusts the mirror to reveal Kate standing at the back of the van. He flicks on the indicators. Kate gives him a thumbs up and runs to join him in the car. They slowly pull away from the weedy plot. Victor stares at the old man in the side mirror and gives him a wave, but gets no response.

They peel out onto the street and Kate looks back at the empty plot and the old man. She looks nervous for a moment and turns to Victor, who focuses on the speedo gathering speed. The car splutters to life and picks up power.
CONTINUED:

VICTOR
That’s it.

95 INT/EXT. VICTOR’S CAR - DAY

Cruising down the freeway with the windows down, sharing a large packet of chips, Kate lounges back with her feet on the dash as Victor drives. Her hair whips around in the wind. She looks at Victor driving, then out the window at the passing scenery. She looks happy. He looks content. Suddenly the car starts to run a bit rough.

96 EXT. FOREST ON SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

The caravan is parked in a rest stop in a heavily forested area. Victor is replacing a flat tyre on the caravan as Kate stands beside him holding a tyre iron. Kate wanders off to the side and looks at a tree that is marked for felling.

KATE
(touching a big pink cross sprayed on the tree)
What’s it on there for?

VICTOR
Looks like it’s coming down.

They look up at the tree. It is massive and must be very old. It bristles.

KATE
It’s weird that it doesn’t know.

At that moment, as they are looking up at the top of the tree, a huge flock of birds flee its branches en masse. They watch as the birds circle and fly off. Victor returns to the tyre. He fits the spare tyre and lowers the iron. The spare tyre immediately deflates as Kate and Victor watch on.

VICTOR
Shit! I think we might be stuck here for the night. I’ll have to drive back to the last town and get a spare in the morning.
INT. CARAVAN - NIGHT

It is dark inside the caravan. Kate lies next to Victor in bed. He sleeps heavily and she stares at the stain on the ceiling. Lights from passing cars occasionally illuminate the space. The sound of another car with a low rumbling engine can be heard pulling in nearby. It flicks its lights off but keeps the engine idling. Kate leans up on her elbows to look out the window. In the distance, she can see the car sitting in the dark with its engine running. Eventually it pulls away, reigniting its lights as it exits the rest stop. Kate checks the door is locked then returns to the bed and resumes her spot staring at the stain on the ceiling.

INT. CARAVAN - MORNING

Kate is woken by the shaking movement of the caravan. Victor is not in bed or in the caravan.

EXT. REST STOP - MOMENTS LATER

Exiting the caravan and wrapped in a blanket, Kate finds Victor unhitching the caravan from the car.

VICTOR
I’ll be back soon. Are you right to stay here with the van?

She shrugs to indicate yes.

VICTOR
I’ll be as quick as I can.

She watches him drive off.

INT. CARAVAN - DAY

Kate leans against the bench seating next to the kitchenette. She flicks through a magazine but is bored with it. She tries to pour herself a glass of water but the glass fills only a quarter before the water runs out. She sits on the stairs looking out of the caravan and drinks her water. Sitting there, staring into the forest, she sees a small wallaby staring back at her before it is startled and disappears.
Looking down at a walking path in the forest as we walk forward through the undergrowth. Kate is pushing her way through the over grown path. She follows the path until she reaches a creek then squats down beside the creek to urinate.

Holding her shoes in her hand, she steps barefoot across the rocks in the creek. She kneels down to look at the water and finds a tiny green tree frog. She picks it up and plays with it.

**VICTOR (O/S)**
(Echoing from a far distance)
Kate?

She looks back towards the caravan.

**102 EXT. MAIN ROAD - AFTERNOON**

Victor and Kate are driving through dry country and farmland.

**KATE**
I’m not going back.

**VICTOR**
What?

**KATE**
I’m not going back after this. I’m gonna stay. (Pause) You should stay too.

Victor avoids answering.

**VICTOR**
What about your Mum?

**KATE**
She’ll be fine. Besides I can live with my Dad if I have to. He said I could stay anytime.

Victor checks the caravan in the mirror. They slow to let a cattle truck pass and are almost run off the road. The caravan buckles sideways behind them and Victor slides to a stop in the gravel, throwing up a mountain of dust. He gets out of the car to check the caravan. Kate follows.

(CONTINUED)
VICTOR
Why didn’t you tell me this earlier?

INT. CARAVAN - AFTERNOON

The inside of the caravan is a mess. Victor stands in the middle of it. Kate enters. The floor is covered with broken crockery, the TV has dislodged itself from the wall and hangs precariously from its bracket with a broken screen, cupboard doors are flung open with their contents spilling out, the mattress is on the floor and when Victor steps on it he cracks his acoustic guitar, which is under the mattress. Victor lifts the guitar to show a big crack then sits looking at the chaos. Kate has grabbed a box and has started gathering the broken crockery. Victor stands and...

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

...still carrying the guitar in one hand, exits the caravan. He stops just outside the van and stares past the barbed wire fence into the paddock beyond. Kate stands in the doorway of the caravan behind him. They are being watched by a herd of cattle that have raised their heads to observe them.

VICTOR
What the fuck are you looking at?

He throws the guitar as hard as he can into the paddock but there is no way he can reach the cows. A few of them baulk. He storms back into the caravan and returns shortly with the broken TV, which he hurtles through the air.

VICTOR
(screaming)
Fuck you!

The cattle just stare unmoved.

VICTOR
(mockingly)
Moooooo

A cow moos back, which causes Victor to laugh. Kate, who has just been watching up until now, laughs too.

KATE
Moooooo
Again the cow moos back and they crack up laughing. Suddenly Victor jumps the fence, but is surrounded by very nervous cattle. It’s like a stand off. Victor flinches at them and yells, and the cows finally react by running away. He retrieves the broken guitar.

105 INT. VICTOR’S CAR - SUNSET

Victor drives while Kate rests her head uneasily on the passenger window. He looks over at her for a time as she sleeps. Soon the coast appears in the distance. Victor leans over to turn on the radio and Kate begins to stir. Victor gives her a shake.

   VICTOR
   We’re here.

Kate wakes, looking out at the view. It looks like a ghost town.

106 INT/EXT. COFFS HARBOUR ON SIDE OF THE ROAD - NIGHT

Victor pulls the car over to the side of the road and they sit and stare at the ocean. On the other side of the road in a vacant lot is a temporary theme park lit with garish, flashing, multi-coloured lights.

From a distance, we see a POLICE OFFICER talking at Victor’s window. He appears to give Victor directions and motions with his hands as Victor nods in understanding. The officer exits and Victor starts up the car and pulls away from the footpath. He is followed by the police car, which now has its lights flashing.

Victor drives slowly, watching the police car in his side mirror. As the police car peels away down a side street, it gives a short sharp sound of its siren. Victor drives and Kate stares out at the passing buildings once more.

107 EXT. BOAT RAMP - NIGHT

Victor’s car pulls into a deserted car park designed for boats. They park near the boat ramp.

   VICTOR
   Where does he live?

   KATE
   I’m not sure.

(CONTINUED)
VICTOR
Did you wanna head straight there?

KATE
It’s probably too late. (Pause) We should go out. It’s still early.

VICTOR
Yeah, OK. I’ll unhook the car.

EXT. THEME PARK – NIGHT

Kate and Victor are at the theme park. This area is livelier, with a strange mix of drunk partying tourists and families in the restaurants and bars. In one tent there is a travelling boxing troupe, the kind that pits semi-professionals against average punters. It’s a pretty ugly scene and the air is tense with aggression. Yelling from inside draws the attention of FAMILIES in the restaurants nearby. A BELLIGERENT PUNTER is turfed out along with his FOUR MATES, who then proceed to fight with SECURITY. Kate and Victor are sitting nearby watching it unfold when Kate is knocked to the ground and skins her hands as the main offender stumbles past her.

KATE
Hey!

Victor is pulling her up to the seat. He sits down with her.

DRUNK
Oh sorry, mate – is this your girlfriend? Mate what a dog.

VICTOR
It’s OK.

DRUNK
It’s what? What did you say? You look like a fag. What do you do?

VICTOR
I’m...

The drunk’s friends are circling now.

DRUNK
I’m a builder. What the fuck do you do?
KATE
He’s a shelf stacker. The manager’s assistant.

The drunk laughs.

DRUNK
Manager’s assistant.

At this point, his friend steps in from out of nowhere and punches Victor in the face then stands there waiting for him to react. Victor looks at Kate, not knowing what to do. She looks stunned too. Time slows as Victor stands up and starts throwing a punch, at which point he is set upon by the group. He is dragged to the middle of the mall and is laid into as he falls into a foetal position on the ground trying to protect himself. Kate, who is screaming, tries without effect to help him. DINERS look on from their tables and eventually the BOUNCERS come to his aid, dragging him into the club. The drunks run off down the mall. Victor is bloody and bruised and in shock. Kate runs after them, yelling abuse, then returns to Victor, who can’t hear her talking.

109 EXT/INT. ROADSIDE/VICTOR’S CAR - NIGHT
Victor walks with Kate back to the car. Once inside, he sits in silence, staring at the steering wheel. He starts the car and they drive off.

110 INT. VICTOR’S CAR/CAR PARK - NIGHT
We are looking through the windscreen of Victor’s car as it pulls into the boat ramp car park. The caravan is not there. They pull in slowly to where it should be but the boat ramp car park is empty.

111 INT. VICTOR’S CAR/CAR PARK - MORNING
Kate wakes alone in the car. She sees Victor standing on the boat ramp, his feet in the water.

112 EXT. BOAT RAMP - MOMENTS LATER
Victor stares out at the water and Kate enters to stand next to him.
Kate stands outside the car staring at Victor. The car is idling but Victor just stares at the wheel. Eventually, Victor starts to drive off and Kate tries to open the door to stop him, blood smearing down the glass from her skinned hands. She stands watching as the car slides off into the distance.

Car horns sound as they pass Kate. She puts out her hand and sticks up her thumb.

Kate hops out of a car, thanking the DRIVER for the lift. The car peels away and Kate looks at a piece of paper with an address on it. She walks until she finds the matching address. She enters the yard and knocks on the door. A YOUNG BOY answers.

BOY
Yeah?

KATE
Is your Dad home?

The boy leaves and a second later a man comes to the door. It is KATE’S DAD. He is 40, average looking.

KATE’S DAD
(Surprised)
Kate?

He opens the door and they embrace.

KATE
Hey.

Kate sits at the kitchen table. Her father’s new wife, SASHA, brings a glass of Coke. She’s an attractive, warm-looking woman. Kate eyes the TV in the next room through the crack in the door. On it is an image of New York’s World Trade Center in flames.
KATE’S DAD
How did you get here?

Kate shrugs, looking down at her bloody hands.

KATE’S DAD
You know we’ve been waiting for this day for a long time. How’s your mother been?

KATE
Up and down.

KATE’S DAD
Mmm. She never let us see you. Once you moved away, it became very difficult, and I met Sasha and well it’s different now. (Pause) The kids don’t know about you. We’d prefer it if you didn’t tell them. We don’t want to upset them. Maybe when they’re a bit older. (Pause) It’s good to see you.

The young boy runs in and sits on his father’s knee, staring at the stranger in his house. Kate smiles at him.

KATE
Can I use the toilet?

KATE’S DAD
It’s just down the hall.

They sit in the kitchen waiting for Kate to return. After waiting a while, Kate’s dad gets up to look for her and sees that the back door is wide open. There is no sign of Kate.

117 EXT. STREET - DAY

Kate walks with purpose down the street. Tears well in her eyes. The signal on the mobile says "Emergency Calls Only". She switches it off. Across the road from her is a huge shopping mall. She stops and looks across at it.

118 INT. PAYPHONE IN MALL - DAY

A bank of payphones at the mall, all partially covered in graffiti. Kate fishes in her pocket for loose change, drops some into a payphone and dials. She gets the answering machine’s automatic message.

(CONTINUED)
ANSWERING MACHINE
Please leave a message.

Fighting back tears, she hangs up and dials again.

KATE
Hello. Is Jade there?

FEMALE VOICE
She’s moved.

KATE
Moved? When?

FEMALE VOICE
A couple of weeks ago.

KATE
Where?

FEMALE VOICE
Surfers. With her Mum.

Pause.

FEMALE VOICE
Are you there?

KATE
Sorry. Thanks.

She hangs up without saying goodbye and fishes in her pockets for more money, but there is none. She pulls out the winning Lotto ticket and stares at it for a moment.

119 INT. NEWSAGENTS - DAY

Kate stands at the counter of a newsagent holding onto the winning Lotto ticket. She hands it over to the NEWSAGENT.

NEWSAGENT
Oh, lucky you - that’s $96.

KATE
96? But it’s got nearly all the numbers circled!

NEWSAGENT
It’s only 4th division. That’s $96.

He hands the money over to Kate who takes it, looking disappointed.
120 INT. COFFS HARBOUR TRANSIT CENTRE - DAY

We see Kate paying for a ticket from the ticket booth at the transit centre.

She sits and waits along with a few other random people in a brightly lit waiting area. On the TV, a protest is taking place about refugee rights. Some people are marching and carrying placards.

121 INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

When the bus arrives, Kate hops on and takes her seat. She stares vacantly out the bus window, deep in thought as it pulls out from the station and finds its way on to the freeway.

122 INT. KATE’S HOUSE - DAY

Kate enters through the back door as usual. She checks the fridge for food, then walks through the house but there is no one home.

She sticks her head into Sara’s room, which looks untouched.

She is in the bathroom, looking at the pill bottles, but drifts off in thought.

123 EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

It’s the end of the school day and kids are exiting the school grounds. Kate sits in the gutter across the road. She sees Sara exit the gate with her friends. Sara sees her and waves, then crosses the street.

KATE
Hey. What’s going on?

SARA
Nothing.

KATE
Are you back at your dad’s for good now?

SARA
Dunno. Maybe. How are you?

(CONTINUED)
KATE
I’m OK. Have you seen mum?

Sara doesn’t answer this.

SARA
She says she wants me to come back.
(Pause) I better go. He’s picking me up.

KATE
See ya.

SARA
See ya.

Kate watches Sara walk away.

124 INT. DRESS SHOP - DAY

Kate is in the change rooms at the dress shop room trying on the red dress that she has wanted for a while now, but it doesn’t really fit her. The dress is unforgiving and unflattering.

SALES GIRL
Maybe we can get you something else?

KATE
No I’ll take it.

At the cash register, and dressed back in her usual clothes, Kate is counting out loose change onto the counter.

SALES GIRL
That’s not quite enough.

KATE
What?

She starts to count the money out for Kate. Lots of loose change is strewn on the counter.

SALES GIRL
You can always come back for it.

Kate stands there dejectedly. She grabs the dress and begins to walk out.
SALES GIRL (CONT’D)
Hey I can’t let you take that!

She tries to recover the dress from Kate’s grip but is knocked back in the struggle and falls, hitting her head on the foot of a clothes rack. She is concussed for a moment and there is blood. Kate stares for a moment until she sees the girl move and then exits the store before anyone sees anything.

125 INT. MALL – DAY
It has gone silent and time has slowed as Kate runs through the mall.

126 INT. KATE’S BEDROOM – AFTERNOON
Kate sits on her bed looking at herself in the mirror. She is still wet from a shower and her hair is wrapped in a towel. She removes the towel and we see that she has cut her hair into a boyish crop. She puts makeup on but it makes her look harsh.

She looks at the security tag clipped very securely to the dress. She tries to prise it off but is unsuccessful, so decides to cut it off, attempting to make the cut as small as possible with nail scissors. She tries it on in front of the mirror. The cut has made a noticeable hole so she puts a puffy jacket on over the dress to hide the hole. She stares at her reflection. This is not the image the dress promised in the shop window. She exits.

127 INT. SUPERMARKET – EVENING
Kate stands outside, looking through the glass. Inside Victor is in a conversation with Marnee. The supermarket is busy with customers. Kate enters through the automatic doors wearing the dress with the puffy jacket over the top.

On her way in, Kate is confronted with a giant poster featuring her image which hangs from the ceiling. It is a print version of the ad that was shot in the supermarket and is positioned to greet customers as they enter. It makes her look stupid with a caption that reads "Um, it’s good?" with the words "OF COURSE IT IS!!" plastered over the top.

Victor sees her coming. He’s still in the middle of the conversation with Marnee when Kate interrupts.

(CONTINUED)
KATE
Hi.

VICTOR
Hi. (to Marnee) Sorry.

He pulls Kate aside into an aisle.

VICTOR
You know you shouldn’t be here. If they see you we’ll both be in trouble.

KATE
I don’t care about them.

VICTOR
Well I do. It’s my job.

KATE
Why are you talking to her? I thought you didn’t like her.

VICTOR
She’s getting me a job in management. It’s a great opportunity. I really feel like I can do something with it.

KATE
Really? Well that’s great. Maybe we can find a place together.

Marnee overhears this.

VICTOR
I really think you need to leave and we’ll talk later.

KATE
Later - when? When? You don’t even have a phone. Are you gonna call me? Victor?

Kate is becoming loud and Victor is becoming embarrassed.

MARNEE
Victor, is everything all right?

KATE
(to Marnee)
Why don’t you fuck off.
CONTINUED:

VICTOR
(tryin' to quiet her)
Just calm down.

The manager hears her, along with everyone else. He motions
for security. Kate stares into Victor’s eyes searchingly. He
stares back. Marnee looks at Victor, waiting for him to
react. He does nothing. A SECURITY GUARD, mid-50s and
portly, arrives and corrals Kate out.

KATE
(to Victor)
You weak prick.

Security has her by the arm now, but Kate wrests free and
starts to walk out on her own. The whole shop has stopped to
stare. She looks hollow. As she passes the giant
advertisement, she jumps up and tears it from its moorings,
sending it crashing to the ground. She exits the shop,
leaving everyone in shock.

128 INT. KATE’S HOUSE - NIGHT

The TV is missing and Annie is sitting on the edge of the
sofa facing where it used to be. Jules stands in a doorway
on the other side of the room. Kate enters, still in her red
dress.

KATE
What’s going on?

Kate stares at her mother.

ANNIE
Why don’t you ask your Jules?

JULES
Annie!

ANNIE
Your Auntie Jules wants her share
of the house. That’s why she’s been
coming round.

JULES
It’s not like that at all...

KATE
(to Jules)
Is that true?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JULES
Kate. We could all do with the money. You can rent somewhere just like us.

Kate exits to her room.

129 INT. KATE’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Sitting down on the edge of her bed, Kate sees the DoCS assessor’s phone number in front of her on the dresser. She grabs it and looks at it for a moment then exits.

130 EXT/INT. PHONE BOX – NIGHT

We follow Kate as she walks to a payphone out on the street. We watch her on the phone from a distance as she completes her call, hangs up and steps out of the phone booth to stare at the street light that is flickering.

131 INT. MALL – DAY

The same sparrow is nesting in the rafters of the shopping mall.

132 INT. MALL – DAY

Montage. Kate, looking carefree, is with Joel and the others at the DREAMLAND arcade. Kate is laughing with them but her attention drifts away; she is deep in thought.

133 INT. OFFICE – DAY

Montage. Victor enters the new office wearing a new suit. He is shown to a desk and looks pleased.

134 INT. STREET – DUSK

Montage. THE GROUP round the corner to find TWO PREPPY BOYS AND THEIR GIRLFRIENDS standing in the spot where they usually hang out. The preppy boys are on skateboards but stop skating when they see The Group. The Group look more hardened than before. Ped, one of the boys from The Group pulls out a knife. The preppies try to placate them but Ped and The Group aren’t having any of it and give chase.
135 INT. BEN’S CAR – NIGHT
Montage. Kate rides in the back of the car.

136 INT. PETROL STATION – NIGHT
Ben, Joel and Kate are all in the petrol station, browsing the shelves. Joel is getting a Slushie from the dispenser, Ben is flipping through a magazine and Kate is looking at confectionery. The station is empty; no one is getting fuel and the three are the only ones in the shop. The CONSOLE OPERATOR is a young girl not much older than Kate. Kate makes eye contact with her and sees that she looks nervous. Kate holds her gaze. A customer enters the petrol station and starts to fill his car up with petrol. Joel pays for his Slushie and they exit. Kate maintains eye contact on her way out.

137 INT. BEN’S CAR – NIGHT
We are back in the car with Ben, Joel and Kate. After a while, Kate speaks.

KATE
I don’t think it’s a good idea.

Joel turns to look at her and Ben checks her in the rear view mirror.

KATE
It’s just my opinion. (Pause)

The boys stare out at the petrol station.

KATE (CONT’D)
Besides I know somewhere we can get loads of easy money. More than you can get here.

BEN
Where?

We see Ben’s car prowling past the supermarket.

KATE (V/O)
It’s in a safe but it’s never locked. They just leave it open. It’d be easy. It’s in the office, behind the manager’s desk. You just walk in like you’re shopping. There’s never anyone around. You just walk in and take it.

(CONTINUED)
Pause.

BEN
You sure about this?

KATE
Yeah.

JOEL
How much do you reckon?

KATE
Thousands. They keep everything there - a whole week’s worth.

JOEL
Cool.

138 EXT. BEN’S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Parked across the road from the supermarket, Joel gets out of the car and puts a tyre iron under his jacket. He bumps his brother’s outstretched fist with his own then heads off towards the supermarket.

139 INT. BEN’S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Kate and Ben watch him walk.

140 INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

The shop is busy. Joel has a trolley and walks around, filling it with random items, trying to look convincing. He finds the office and cases it out for a bit in a nearby aisle. When the coast is clear, he ducks in. When he gets in there, the safe is shut and it takes him a while to wedge it open. Inside there are piles of money. He grabs as much as he can, stuffing it into his backpack and exiting the office quickly. As he exits the office, the manager rounds the corner and sees him.

MANAGER
What’s this?

Joel smashes him in the face with the tyre iron.

At the other end of the shop, the security guard comes out of a doorway. He sees the manager staggering about in pain. There is blood everywhere and Joel has the tyre iron in his hand. The manager has a serious wound to his head, a gaping hole.
141 INT. BEN’S CAR - NIGHT

Ben and Kate can see the security guard at the other side of the shop, but they can’t see Joel. They both become concerned.

    BEN
    Come on, come on! You never said there was security.

    KATE
    I...? He’s useless.

142 INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Joel sees the security guard too, and decides to run. As he does, the security guard pulls out his gun and shoots. Blood spurts from Joel’s body and he slams into the window, smearing blood down it as he falls. The security guard looks down at his gun.

143 INT. BEN’S CAR - NIGHT

Ben plants his foot.

    BEN
    Fuck.

The tyres smoke and they lurch towards the shop with wild acceleration. As they are about to cross the road, they are collected side on by a fast moving truck. They are hit hard and pushed sideways. The car spins to a stop and the truck slowly comes to rest in front of it, headlights glaring into the car.

Ben has been thrown from the car and appears lifeless, slumped on the road. Kate is still strapped into the back seat and is all messed up, but she is still conscious. She can see the lights from the truck.

The truck has two big silver wings on its grill like an eagle emblem. The truck is called ’Fly Girl’. This is painted above the wings on the grill in peeling paint.

Kate is semi-conscious. She looks at the grill through her half-open eyes and seems to smile a bloody grimace. She closes her eyes and the light of the truck’s headlights passes through her eyelids. A greyish pink glow pulsates.
EXT. ABANDONED QUARRY - DAY

We are back at the same car that was on fire in the opening scenes.

A thick pall of dirty smoke spews from the car, embers and curls of smoke encouraged along by the white heat of the inferno, drifting into the sky.

Black smoke and flames lick at the interior, heat causing the windows to crack.

Below, in the distance, the old pale-blue early 80s model Ford Falcon burns, dwarfed by the surrounding quarry, drenched in sunlight. A breeze cuts through the quarry, pushing the smoke high into the sky.

KATE (V/O)
Anyway I think I like it better here. There’s more opportunities and stuff, you know?

CUT TO BLACK