

RISING STORM

Characters (3F/1M)

EMILY: female, sixteen, any ethnicity; a sophomore in high school who is having apocalyptic visions

JIM: male, forty-two, any ethnicity; Emily's father

ANNA: female, thirty-one, any ethnicity; Emily's psychiatrist

STEPHANIE: female, fifty-eight, any ethnicity; a more experienced psychiatrist and Anna's mentor

Time/place

Summer 2021/Miami, Florida

Note

Transitions between scenes should be rapid and fluid.

Casting decisions should ideally reflect Miami's diversity.

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Scene One

AT RISE:

Darkness and silence.

Then –

A wild cacophony of sounds, a disturbing montage of images.

A blackened sky, a Biblical storm, an angry ocean.

Wind howling, waves crashing, buildings collapsing, people screaming.

Then –

Just as suddenly, that all disappears.

The half-light of dawn illuminates EMILY in the bedroom of a modest Miami bungalow.

EMILY is sixteen, slight of build, in a Miami Dolphins football jersey. She awakens with a start, sits bolt upright, and cries out in horror.

EMILY

NO!!

EMILY'S body rocks as if she's in great physical pain. She sobs hysterically.

EMILY

NO!!

PLEASE, GOD – NO!!

JIM – EMILY'S father, early forties – rushes in. He is wearing jeans and a T-shirt, but no shoes or socks.

JIM

Em, what's going on?
Are you OK?

EMILY

It's happening!

JIM
You mean –

EMILY
Like before!
Only this time, even worse!

JIM sits next to EMILY and cradles her in his arms.

JIM
Take some deep breaths.
In and out, nice and slow.
You'll feel much better, I promise.

EMILY
No, I won't.

JIM
Yes, you will.

EMILY
No, I won't.
Deep breaths don't work.

JIM
They will if you try to relax.
Just try to relax, alright?

EMILY
I can't relax.

JIM
I know.
But you still have to try.
Please try!

EMILY
I *am* trying!
I'm trying as hard as I can!
Can't you see that?!

JIM

Oh, sweetheart!
Of course, I can see that.

(half-beat)

Tell you what:
Let's pray.
Pastor Bob said –

EMILY

Stop!
Just stop!

(half-beat)

I asked you not to speak to him, didn't I?
Didn't I *ask* you that?!

JIM

But I thought you liked Pastor Bob.

EMILY

I do.
I do like him.
Except now – he *also* thinks I'm crazy!

JIM

Please don't say that, Em.
Don't *ever* say that.
No one thinks you're crazy.
We're all just a little –

EMILY

What?

JIM

Confused, that's all.

EMILY pulls away from her father.

EMILY

(frustrated)

Just forget it, OK?
Why even bother?
You just don't get it!
Nobody gets it!

JIM

I'm trying, Em.
I really am.
Maybe if you could explain it –

EMILY

What?
You mean, like *again*?

JIM

If I understood this better, maybe I could help.

EMILY

Except you can't.
Nobody can.

JIM

Why not?

EMILY

'Cause you think it's all in my mind, but it's not!
It's real!

JIM

Sweetheart, I know it *seems* real, but –

EMILY

It *does* seem real!
That's the whole point!
But not like a show or a movie or some video thing.
It's more than that.
Much more.
It's –

JIM

What?

EMILY

Hard to describe.

JIM

Do your best.
What's it like?

EMILY

Like?

It's like I'm seeing something "live" – like it's out there right in front of me, close enough to touch.

Like I can actually feel it.

Smell it.

Taste it even.

JIM

Wait:

You can taste it?

EMILY

Sometimes.

Yes.

JIM

How does it taste?

EMILY

I dunno.

Salty.

But also bitter, like food that's gone bad.

(half-beat)

Look, I know you think it's nothing –

JIM

I never said it was "nothing."

EMILY

"Something I ate."

Or just a bad dream.

JIM

'Cause that's exactly what this is, Em –

EMILY

You're wrong!

JIM

A very bad dream.

EMILY

Except dreams fade away!
And they don't come back – and this thing does!
For almost a month now.
Night after night –

JIM

Hold on:
You mean, *every* night?
You never said it was *every* night.

EMILY

That's 'cause it wasn't – but now it is!

JIM

Really?

EMILY

Why?
Don't you believe me?

JIM

How can you even *ask* me that?
Of course, I believe you!
(half-beat, re: EMILY'S trembling)
Slow down, Em.
Your whole body's shaking.

EMILY

Daddy, if you saw what I just saw, you'd be shaking, too, trust me!
We'd *both* be shaking!
(half-beat)
I'm scared, Daddy.
I mean it.
I'm really scared.

JIM

I know you are, sweetheart.
So am I.

Scene Two

The office of DR. ANNA SHAW in a beachfront Miami high-rise, a week later.

ANNA is thirty-one, a psychiatrist just a year out of training. ANNA is warm but also very proper, very professional.

EMILY sits across from her.

ANNA

Would you like something to drink?

EMILY

Drink?

ANNA

(nodding)

Uh-huh.

EMILY

I'm just sixteen.

You know that, right?

ANNA

I do.

(half-beat)

Oh, sorry.

By "drink," I meant water, tea maybe.

I didn't mean alcohol.

Did you think I meant "alcohol"?

EMILY

I don't know.

I don't know what I thought.

(half-beat)

I guess I'm a little nervous.

I've never done this before.

ANNA

Done what?

EMILY

Seen a “shrink”
Sorry.
I mean a psychiatrist.

ANNA

“Shrink” is fine.
In fact, you wanna hear something?
In this room, anything you say is fine.
Also confidential.
Just between you and me, OK?

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

It wasn’t my idea to come here – just so you know.

ANNA

No?
Why not?

Beat. EMILY looks around ANNA’S office. She’s impressed with the furnishings, the décor.

EMILY

They must pay you a lot, huh?

ANNA

Sorry?

EMILY

You must make lotsa money.
For doing this, I mean.
Talking to people.

ANNA

I do OK.

Beat. EMILY continues to look around the space.

EMILY

I’ll bet.
Your office is kinda cool, actually.

ANNA
Thank you.

EMILY
Lotsa plants.
Very cheery
Just one problem.

ANNA
What's that?

EMILY
We're too high up.

ANNA
You think so?
There's actually four more stories above us.
We're only on ten.

EMILY
Ugh!
Don't remind me!

ANNA
Why?
Don't you like the view?

EMILY
The view?

ANNA
Outside – when you look out the window – don't you like it?

EMILY
Am I *supposed* to like it?
All I can see is water.

ANNA
It's true.
You can see the entire bay.

EMILY
More like the entire *ocean*!
Like, right on your freakin' doorstep!

ANNA

Hey, it's Miami, right?
Isn't that why all of us came here – for the ocean?

EMILY

Not me.
I was born here.
Well, not *here* exactly – a few miles west, in Coral Gables.

ANNA

I know.

EMILY

You do?

ANNA

I read your file.

EMILY

My file?

ANNA

From your pediatrician.

EMILY

Oh.

ANNA

It sounds like you've been very healthy.
Plus active in sports.
Soccer, am I right?

EMILY

Right.
Soccer.
Was that also in the file?

ANNA

It was, yes.
(half-beat)
So – getting back:
You never answered my question.

EMILY

What question?

ANNA

You said you didn't wanna come here –

EMILY

That's true!

ANNA

And I asked you why not.

EMILY

'Cause I just didn't, that's all.

ANNA

Then why are you here?

EMILY

My Dad made the appointment.

ANNA

Yes – I know that.

But why?

What's been going on?

What sort of problems have you been –

EMILY

My file – it didn't mention that?

ANNA

It did, actually.

Though only briefly, a couple of sentences.

Something about nightmares.

But files reflect someone else's words, not yours.

And I'm curious what *you* think.

EMILY

Honestly?

ANNA

Of course.

EMILY

They're not nightmares.

ANNA

OK.

EMILY

I mean it.
They're not.

ANNA

Fine.
If that's your perception of what's been happening, I believe you.

EMILY

You should.
Thank you.

ANNA

You're welcome.
But then what *are* they?

EMILY

Huh?

ANNA

If you're not experiencing nightmares, what *are* you experiencing?

Beat.

EMILY

I'm not crazy.
I want you to know that.

ANNA

I never said you were.

EMILY

Except my Dad – he thinks I might be.

ANNA

Why?
He said that to you?

EMILY

No.
Not in those words.
But I can tell.

ANNA

Really?
How can you tell?

EMILY

Well, first he spoke to our pastor.
Then he spoke to my doctor.
Then he set up this appointment.

ANNA

That doesn't mean he thinks you're crazy.

EMILY

No?

ANNA

No.
That just means he's *concerned* about you.
Why do you think he's concerned?

EMILY

Because I see things.

Beat. EMILY and ANNA regard each other.

ANNA

Go on.
I'm listening.

EMILY

Things he doesn't think I *should* be seeing.
Things he doesn't think are normal.

ANNA

Just at night?

EMILY

At first, just at night.
Though since last weekend, during the day as well.
That part he doesn't know yet, so please don't tell him.
It would just upset him even more.

ANNA

So ... just to clarify –
Just so I understand:
This has been going on for what?
A few weeks – am I right?

EMILY

Right.
About a month now.

ANNA

Initially just *some* nights –

EMILY

Correct.

ANNA

But now –

EMILY

Every night.
And also during the day.
Since the weekend.

ANNA

Anything else?

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

The things I see –

ANNA

Yes?

EMILT

Aren't you gonna ask me what they are?

ANNA
Would you like to tell me?

EMILY
I'm not sure yet.

ANNA
OK.

EMILY
First, I need to ask *you* something.

ANNA
Go ahead.
Ask me anything you'd like.

EMILY
When you were my age –

ANNA
Sixteen.

EMILY
Sixteen.
Right.
Who did you trust?

Beat. ANNA regards EMILY.

ANNA
The truth?

EMILY
What else?

ANNA
I'm not sure I trusted *anyone*.

EMILY
Then why should I trust *you*?

ANNA
Because I think I can help you.
I also like you.

EMILY

Ha!
How can you say you like me?
You don't even *know* me.

Beat. ANNA regards EMILY.

ANNA

You're very direct – very no-nonsense – aren't you?

EMILY

I try to be.
Is that bad?

ANNA

No, it's good.
(half-beat)
So here's my no-nonsense answer:
I'm thirty-one.

EMILY

OK.

ANNA

And I'm just beginning to know who I am.

EMILY

(surprised by this)

Really?
It *takes* that long?

ANNA

(laughing)

For me, yes.
And you remind me of me.
At least a little.
Actually, that's not true.
More than a little – a lot.
I don't mean now, of course.
I mean when I was sixteen.
So, yes – though I could be wrong – I *do* think I know you.
And – like I said – I also think I can help you.

EMILY

Why?
Because you *know* me?

ANNA

That – and something else.
(half-beat, smiling)
I'm actually pretty good at this.
(half-beat)
So ... the things that you see –
Would you like to tell me or not?

Beat.

EMILY

Not.
At least not yet.

ANNA

OK.

EMILY

First, I need more of an answer – and please no bullshit, OK?
Just how do I remind you of you?
I mean – you know – the younger version of you.

Beat. ANNA regards EMILY.

ANNA

Do you have any friends, Emily?

EMILY

That's not an answer.
That's just another question.

ANNA

'Cause when I was your age, I didn't have any friends.
Zero then, and very few now.
And you know why?

EMILY

Not a clue.

ANNA

'Cause I'm different.
Not better, necessarily.
Just different.
Some people are in the inside looking out, and some people are on the outside looking in.
And then there are people like me, and I'm guessing like you.
People on the outside who are always looking even *further* outside.
Any of that ring a bell?

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

That's really very zen.

ANNA

Is it?
Maybe it's all that kale I had for lunch.

EMILY

I don't like kale.

ANNA

So who knows?
Maybe I'm wrong.
Maybe you're nothing at all like me.
That's why I'm asking you all these questions: To find out who you are.
Now ... can we please get back to *you*, or do you have any additional questions for me?

EMILY

Just one.

ANNA

OK.

EMILY

When you were my age –

ANNA
Yes?
EMILY
Did people think you were weird?

ANNA
(laughing)
Oh, my goodness!
It was worse than *that*!

EMILY
How so?

ANNA
I thought I was weird!

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY
OK.
I'm ready.

ANNA
For what?

EMILY
To tell you whatever you wanna know.

ANNA
Good.

EMILY
But first, you have to promise me something.

ANNA
What's that?

EMILY
Don't laugh.

ANNA
I won't.

EMILY

Or roll your eyes.

ANNA

I promise.

Beat.

EMILY

OK.

But before I give you the details, here's the bottom line.
Are you listening?

ANNA

Yes.

EMILY

(ultra-serious)

You need to leave Miami.

ANNA

(laughing)

Why?

You think I'm a lousy neighbor?

EMILY

(a flash of anger)

See?

I knew this would happen.

You think I'm a joke.

You're not taking me seriously.

ANNA

(contrite)

I apologize.

I mean it: I'm sorry.

My mistake.

My sense of humor, it's *also* a little weird – and it sometimes gets me in trouble.

It's like – how can I explain it? – it's simply my way of coping, though I realize that's really a crappy excuse.

So ... please believe me when I say this to you: Right now, this minute, nothing in the world is more important – more serious – to me than you are.

So let me start over – please:

Why do I need to leave Miami?

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

No more jokes?

ANNA

No more jokes.

EMILY

(again ultra-serious, with near religious fervor)

'Cause the storms are gonna rage and the water's gonna rise, and we're all gonna drown – *that's* why!

Scene Three

The office of DR. STEPHANIE MORALES, the following day.

STEPHANIE – late fifties, very smart and she knows it – is ANNA'S friend, mentor and current psychoanalyst. Her office is in the same building as ANNA'S, just two floors higher.

STEPHANIE

Those were her exact words?

"We're all gonna drown"?

ANNA

Yes.

STEPHANIE

And the hallucinations she describes –

ANNA

Vivid.

Extraordinarily so, in fact.

And not just images, mind you.

Sounds, smells, tastes –

STEPHANIE

Tastes?

ANNA

Yes.

Unusual, I know.

STEPHANIE

Hmm.
And growing more frequent, you say?

ANNA

Yes.
Also more intense.
Though the theme, the *leitmotif*, remains fixed, stereotypical –

STEPHANIE

Not to mention, highly delusional!

ANNA

Exactly.

STEPHANIE

Ah!

ANNA

What?

STEPHANIE

An adolescent with psychosis.
A challenge for even the best of us – including me!
Your first in a while, I take it?

ANNA

In private practice, yes.

STEPHANIE

Well, good luck – you're gonna need it!
As will she.

ANNA

I know.

STEPHANIE

Though – based on duration – it's not technically schizophrenia.
At least not yet, though time will tell.
Either way, however – no matter how we categorize it initially – you'll need to
watch her closely.
Medicate her carefully – *very* carefully.

ANNA

Of course.
I'm well aware.

STEPHANIE

Plus, just so you know, if you ever need back-up –

ANNA

Back-up?

STEPHANIE

If you're ever away, out of town – I can always cover for you.
At least for this one – this new teen of yours.
I mean, look at it this way:
Since my office, your office, we're both in the same building – the same wing – it
might make things easier, more convenient.
One less thing to worry about, right?

ANNA

Less worry for her or for me?

STEPHANIE

Both of you.

ANNA

Fine.
I don't plan to be away, but if I do, I'll let you know.

STEPHANIE

Excellent!
(half-beat)
So – is that the sole reason you stopped by?
To discuss this girl, this young woman?

ANNA

I find her fascinating.
I thought you might be interested.

STEPHANIE

Oh, I am.
Though she's not the only young woman I'm interested in.

ANNA

Stephanie –

STEPHANIE

I'm also interested in *you*.

ANNA

Me?

STEPHANIE

Your state of mind.
Your well-being.
How are you?

ANNA

If you're asking if I'm doing OK, the answer is "yes."

STEPHANIE

Good.

ANNA

Besides, when I need to see you myself, I always call for an appointment, don't I?

Beat. STEPHANIE regards ANNA.

STEPHANIE

Refresh my memory, Anna:
How long have I known you?

ANNA

Since early in my residency, why?

STEPHANIE

And how long have I been your analyst?

ANNA

(joking)

I'm not sure.
I'll need to look at my checkbook.

STEPHANIE

(playing along)

Ha!
As if I remember to bill you!

(half-beat)

Seriously, what you just said – that you find this girl fascinating – tell me why.

ANNA

She *is* fascinating.

STEPHANIE

I know.

But that's not my question.

My question is, why is she fascinating to *you*?

ANNA

She's complicated.

STEPHANIE

That's the intellectual fascination.

What's the *emotional* fascination?

ANNA

Stephanie –

STEPHANIE

What?

ANNA

Remember what I just said:

When I feel I need to see you for therapy, I'll call for an appointment.

STEPHANIE

Do you find her scary?

ANNA

In what way?

STEPHANIE

In any way.

ANNA

If you're asking if I think she's dangerous, the answer is "no."

There's no reason to think that.

None whatsoever.

STEPHANIE

Good.

ANNA

I find her “challenging,” not “dangerous.”
If we’re honest, I think anyone would find her “challenging” – don’t you?

STEPHANIE

By all means.

ANNA

So we agree.

STEPHANIE

Though some might find her *especially* challenging.

ANNA

Like who, for example?

STEPHANIE

Like a therapist just fresh from her training.
Like a therapist who – let’s be frank, shall we? – tends to over-identify with her patients.

ANNA

Just for the record, I do *not* over-identify with my patients!

STEPHANIE

Not now, perhaps.
But before?

ANNA

(raising her voice)

And that’s just my point!
That was *before*, not now!
(re: her raised voice)

Sorry.

STEPHANIE

For what?

ANNA

Raising my voice.

STEPHANIE

Are you angry with me?

ANNA

No.

STEPHANIE

Angry at the girl, maybe?

ANNA

Why would I be?

STEPHANIE

I'm not sure yet.

Perhaps she's posing issues you'd rather not face.

Be they personal –

ANNA

Counter-transference, Steph?

Really?

You don't think I'm beyond that?

STEPHANIE

Or existential.

ANNA

What?

STEPHANIE

You heard me.

Maybe the issues she's posing are existential.

Maybe that's one of the reasons she scares you.

ANNA

I never said she scares me.

You said she scares me.

Your words, not mine.

STEPHANIE

You're right.

Maybe I'm just projecting.

To be honest –

I find your description totally chilling!

Absolutely frightening!

ANNA

My description of what?
Her hallucinations?

STEPHANIE

All those raging storms, the monstrous floods – all those visions of the apocalypse – doesn't that frighten *you*?

ANNA

Of course, it frightens me!
It frightens me because it's a manifestation of how ill she is – not because I believe what she's describing is true!

STEPHANIE

Really?
A world on the edge of disaster – you don't think that's true?
Where have you been for the past ten years?
Don't you worry at all about climate change?

ANNA

That's a stupid question.

STEPHANIE

Why is that a stupid question?

ANNA

'Cause *everyone* is worried about climate change!
At least everyone with half a brain!

STEPHANIE

Exactly!
Anyone with half a brain – including psychotic adolescents!

Beat. ANNA regards STEPHANIE.

ANNA

You know, as much I like you, I really hate it when you do this.

STEPHANIE

Do what?

ANNA

Act like you're still my supervisor.

Beat. STEPHANIE regards ANNA.

STEPHANIE

Extreme weather is real, Anna.
Climate change is real.

ANNA

So?

STEPHANIE

So anxiety about climate change is *also* real – and, if you ask me, extremely appropriate!

ANNA

My patient is not just anxious, Steph!
She's psychotic!

STEPHANIE

And what?
Being psychotic – that makes her blind to all the chaos swirling around us?
All the crazy swings in rain?
In temperature?
In weather?
Tell me the truth, Anna:
This girl, this new patient of yours: You think she sees that craziness less clearly
than all the rest of us – or more clearly?!

Scene Four

EMILY'S bedroom, the following night.

Darkness and silence.

Then –

Another cacophony of sounds, a montage of images.

Cities flooded, sirens blaring, children crying.

Then –

That all disappears.

EMILY awakens with a start, sits bolt upright, and begins to rock in place.

EMILY
(screaming)

NO!!

EMILY begins to sob.

JIM rushes in and tries to comfort his daughter.

JIM
It's OK, sweetheart.
It's all gonna be OK.

EMILY
No, it's not!
It's *never* gonna be OK!

JIM
Please don't say that.
Don't even *think* it.

EMILY
Why not?
It's true, isn't it?

JIM
You know what?
Maybe we shouldn't be talking right now.

EMILY
(annoyed)
Fine.
Then go back to bed!

JIM
No.
You don't understand.
I mean: Instead of talking, perhaps we should be praying.

EMILY
Praying?

JIM

Why not?

EMILY

What's the point?
God's not even listening.

JIM

That's not true.
God is *always* listening!
(half-beat)
C'mon, sweetheart: Let's join hands.
Let's recite a verse or two.
Something to clear our heads, OK?
Something affirmative, calming.

EMILY

A verse or two of what?

JIM

Scripture – what else?!
First me, then you.
Ready?

JIM and EMILY join hands. JIM bows his head.

JIM

"Heal me, Lord."
(raising his head)
C'mon, Em: Repeat after me.

EMILY

"Heal me, Lord."

JIM

"Heal me, Lord.
And I will be healed."

EMILY

"Heal me, Lord.
And I will be healed."

JIM

"Save me, and I will be saved."

EMILY

“Save me, and I will be saved.”

JIM

“For You are the one I praise.”

EMILY

“For You are the one I praise.”

JIM

Good.

Now you.

Your turn.

(half-beat, off EMILY'S look)

C'mon, Em: It shouldn't be all that difficult.

Just one or two lines.

Your choice.

Just make it right for the moment at hand, that's all.

EMILY

Right for the moment at hand.

JIM

Exactly.

Beat.

A glazed look comes over EMILY'S eyes.

Then –

EMILY

(with fire and brimstone)

“For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy every creature under the heavens that has the breath of life. Everything that is on the earth shall perish.”

Beat. JIM regards EMILY with a combination of fear and bewilderment.

JIM

(worried)

Oh, Emily –

Beat. EMILY doesn't initially respond. She seems lost in a trance, both eyes staring at something far off in the distance.

JIM

Emily!
Can you hear me?!

EMILY slumps over. JIM catches her.

JIM

Emily, wake up!
Do you hear me?!
Wake up!

Scene Five

ANNA'S office, the following day.

EMILY and JIM sit across from ANNA.

JIM is fidgety, while EMILY appears detached, subdued.

JIM

(to ANNA)

Thank you.

ANNA

For what?

JIM

Seeing us so soon.
Also –
Well, for bending the rules a bit.

ANNA

I wouldn't call them "rules," actually.

JIM

You wouldn't?

ANNA

No.

I mean, it's true, yes: I usually like to see my patients alone – you know – without their parents.

But after your call –

(half-beat, then to EMILY)

Emily, let me ask you:

Are you sure you're OK with this?

EMILY

OK with what?

ANNA

Your father being here.

EMILY

Why?

Do I have a choice?

JIM

Do you want me to leave, Em?

'Cause if you do, I will.

I'll just need to talk to Dr. Shaw afterwards.

EMILY

(sarcastic)

Oh, great!

Talking behind my back!

Trust me: That's the last thing I want!

ANNA

(to both EMILY and JIM)

Tell you what:

Let's do this:

Maybe the three of us could chat first, then I could meet with Emily afterwards.

Alone.

How does that sound?

JIM

OK with me.

ANNA

Emily?

EMILY

Sure.
Fine.
As long as no one talks behind my back!

EMILY yawns.

ANNA

You look tired.

EMILY

I didn't sleep much last night.

ANNA

So I heard.

JIM

(to ANNA)

It was a rough night all the way around.
That's the whole reason I called.

ANNA

Yes.
I understand.
And I'm glad you did.
So – let's talk about it.
Emily, you wanna start?

EMILY

No.

ANNA

Why not?

EMILY

'Cause some of what happened – well, what my *Dad* says happened – I don't remember.

(indicating her father)

So *he* should go first.

ANNA

Fine.

If *that's* your preference, *that's* what we'll do.

(to JIM)

Mr. Lee?

JIM

OK, then.

I'll start.

And I'll also be blunt, so please don't be offended.

ANNA

Don't worry.

I won't be.

JIM

What's been going on –

What's been happening to my daughter –

It's not the real her!

It's not the real her, and it's definitely not normal!

And that's what's worrying the hell outta me – 'cause it's simply not normal!

Beat. ANNA regards JIM.

ANNA

Anything else?

JIM

I'm not sure what else you'd like me to say.

ANNA

You can say anything you want.

That's why we're all here.

JIM

It's like I told you on the phone.

(indicating EMILY)

Last night, after she got up, after the nightmare –

EMILY

(to JIM, interrupting)

It wasn't just a nightmare!

It's more *real* than a nightmare!

I keep *telling* you!

JIM

Fine.

Whatever you say.

(to ANNA)

Anyway, after she got up, it's like she was under – well, you know.

ANNA

What?

JIM

Some sorta spell.

First, she *said* something strange.

Then she *did* something strange.

ANNA

OK.

I'm gonna ask you to be as specific as possible here.

First things first:

What did she say?

JIM

You mean, her actual words?

ANNA

Please.

JIM

Genesis 6:17.

ANNA

Sorry?

JIM

“For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy every creature under the heavens that has the breath of life. Everything that is on the earth shall perish.”

That's it.

Those were her words.

ANNA

What?

You mean, just like that?

Out of the blue?

JIM

No.
We were praying.
Quoting Scripture.
I recited a verse.
Then she recited a verse.
And that's the verse she recited:
Genesis 6:17.

Beat. ANNA regards JIM, then EMILY.

ANNA
(mulling this over)

Hmm.
I see.

JIM

Do you?

ANNA
(to JIM)

I'm curious –
Well, a bit confused, actually –

JIM

So am I, believe me!

ANNA
What do you think it *means*?

JIM
Why are you asking *me*?
I'm just an electrician – *you're* the psychiatrist!

ANNA
Yes.
And I'm also very secular.
So – psychiatrist or not – your insights may be just as pertinent as mine.
(to EMILY)
What about *you*, Emily?
That verse – the lines from *Genesis* – what do *you* think?

EMILY
Me?

ANNA
Yes, you.
You're the one who recited it.

EMILY
Honestly?
it's all kind of a blur.

ANNA
But on hearing it now –

EMILY
Yeah?

ANNA
What comes to mind?
What do you think it means?

Beat. ANNA regards EMILY.

EMILY
It's the story of Noah.

ANNA
Yes.
That much I gathered.

EMILY
Man was wicked, so God sent the flood.
To punish Man for his sins.

ANNA
So men then were sinful.

EMILY
Yes.

ANNA
In what way?

EMILY

In what way were men sinful?
Is that what you're asking?

ANNA

Exactly.

EMILY

How should I know?!
I wasn't there!

ANNA

But those sins – they must've been awful, am I right?

EMILY

Obviously.
Or God wouldn't have been so angry.

ANNA

And the subsequent flood –
Was it real?

EMILY

What do you mean, "Was it real?"
It's written in the Bible.

ANNA

And that's just my point.
That's why I'm asking.
Some people believe that every word in the Bible is real – that everything happened, that it all took place – just as described.
Adam and Eve.
Noah.
Sodom and Gomorrah.
You name it.
Other people, though – different people – view these "events" as stories, metaphors filled with lessons and wisdom for sure, but literal truth? Not so much.
You understand the difference, right?

EMILY

Of course, I understand the difference.

ANNA

So how do *you* see it?

EMILY

See what?

ANNA

Noah's flood – did it actually happen?

EMILY

Why?

Don't *you* think it happened?

ANNA

I don't know.

I'm not sure.

That's why I'm asking what *you* think.

JIM

(to ANNA)

Is now really the time and the place for this?

ANNA

For what?

JIM

A discussion of religion.

I mean, is that *really* why we're here?

Besides, you already said it's not your "thing," didn't you?

ANNA

Mr. Lee, I assure you:

We're not here to discuss religion.

Religion is not the issue at all right now.

JIM

Good.

It shouldn't be.

ANNA

The issue is last night.

You just told me that Emily awakened with a start – and proceeded to recite a verse from *Genesis* that was absolutely terrifying to both of you.

EMILY
It *wasn't* terrifying to me!

ANNA
No?

EMILY
No!
I can't even remember that I said it!

ANNA
But *you're* the one who selected it.
Why do you think you selected it?

EMILY
I dunno.

ANNA
You don't?

EMILY
It just popped into my head, I guess.

ANNA
Just like that.

EMILY
Yeah.
Just like that.

ANNA
Was there a voice?

EMILY
A voice?

ANNA
Yes.
Did a voice tell you to say it?
You know:
A voice you perhaps recognized?
A particular person, maybe?

EMILY
No.

ANNA
Or maybe the voice of God?

EMILY
God?

ANNA
Yes.

EMILY
God, I can't be sure about.

ANNA
Why not?

EMILY
'Cause I don't know what God sounds like!
Do you?

ANNA
OK.
Forget the voice for a second.

EMILY
There *was* no voice!
At least not the way *you* mean it!
That's what I've been trying to tell you!

ANNA
Fine.
Then let's move on.
Let's talk about the words.

EMILY
But the words weren't mine.
They're from the Bible.

ANNA
I realize that.
But *you* selected them.

EMILY

Not consciously, I didn't.

ANNA

Alright.
Not consciously.
Then *sub*-consciously.
But just think about the words, the verse.
All the phrases you recited:
"Flood of waters."
Destruction of "all the creatures,"
Everything "shall perish."

EMILY

So?

ANNA

So what was all that about?
Was it just about Noah?
Just about the past?
Or is it also about *us*?
Today.
Our present.
Also –

EMILY

What?

ANNA

Our future.

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

Why are you asking me all these questions?

ANNA

Please, Emily:
You already know why.

EMILY

No, I don't!

ANNA

So I can better understand you.

So I can better grasp what you're trying to tell us.

EMILY

But I'm not trying to tell you anything!

The words just came out!

Don't you get it?!

The words just came out!

Can we please stop?!

ANNA

In a moment.

Just one more question –

(to JIM)

This one for you.

Her stare – perhaps you could describe it.

EMILY

(not understanding)

My *what*?

ANNA

(to EMILY)

Your stare.

After you recited the verse, you apparently, well ... you stared off into space.

(to JIM)

Isn't that what you told me, on the phone?

That she seemed to lose focus – that she stared off into space?

JIM

Yes.

That's exactly what happened.

Like she was – you know – deep in a trance or something.

ANNA

Was she shaking at all?

I mean, uncontrollably?

Like this.

ANNA demonstrates what a motor seizure would look like.

JIM

No.
Sometimes she shakes when she's nervous, but not like that.
It's more like she's trembling, fearful.
Like so.

JIM extends his arms and fingers. He demonstrates what EMILY'S trembling looks like.

Beat. EMILY suddenly turns to face her father. She looks horror-struck, haunted.

EMILY

(quietly)

Daddy –

JIM

Yes, Em?

EMILY

(still quiet)

There's something I need to tell you.

JIM

OK.
I'm listening.

EMILY

(still quiet)

There's a flood that's coming.

JIM

A flood?
What kind of flood?

EMILY

(now more agitated, more animated)

It will rise from the swell of the ocean, and submerge every street!
It will rot the pillars of our homes, and mighty towers will tumble!
No person is safe!
Not you – not even me!
No haven is safe!
Not even this one!

JIM and ANNA see the terror in EMILY'S eyes.

EMILY
(screaming)

OH, GOD!!
NO!!

EMILY starts to sob. She rocks back and forth, and begins to tear at her hair.

EMILY
(screaming)

NOOO!!

JIM and ANNA rush to EMILY'S side. EMILY reacts violently, flailing her arms, fighting them off. She pushes ANNA, and ANNA falls to the floor, hitting her head.

EMILY
It's coming!
Why can't you see it?!
It's coming!

Scene Six

STEPHANIE'S office, the following day.

ANNA and STEPHANIE are in mid-conversation.

STEPHANIE
Nine years ago, almost ten, I had a very similar experience.
One of the worst days of my life.
Did I ever mention it?

ANNA
I don't think so.

STEPHANIE

A fifteen-year-old – a boy – had an outburst in my office.
Complete decompensation.
Very dramatic.
Yelling.
Cursing.
Ripping his shirt.
He picked up his chair and shattered my window – then tried to climb out!
Only by the grace of God was I able to drag him back in, shredding both hands on
the glass.

ANNA

His?

STEPHANIE

No, mine.
Though his were bloody as well.

ANNA

Unbelievable!

STEPHANIE

“Unbelievable” is right!
The ambulance wound up racing us both to the hospital.
The nurses’ jaws – they all dropped to the floor when they wheeled the two of
us in.
And the strange thing was, I probably looked worse than the kid – like a casualty
from a war zone or some blood-soaked “extra” in a horror movie!

ANNA

(amazed by the story)

No!

STEPHANIE

Oh, yes!
I needed twelve stitches on one hand, twenty-six on the other.
So count your blessings, my dear – it could’ve been uglier!

ANNA

I can’t believe that happened to you!

STEPHANIE

Well, it did.

And you know what?

I survived.

It's amazing how well we can get through these things – how well we manage to survive!

Just not my day to die, I guess.

(half-beat)

The medics, the ambulance – did they come right away?

ANNA

Yes.

In less than ten minutes.

STEPHANIE

Good.

ANNA

Though, at the time, it seemed like forever.

STEPHANIE

I'm sure it did.

It always does in these situations.

ANNA

We gave her I-M Haldol in the E-R.

Got the usual workup.

MRI.

EEG.

All negative.

Admitted her to Psych.

Started P-O RisperDAL.

STEPHANIE

Well – for whatever it's worth – I would've done the same.

ANNA

I thought so.

STEPHANIE

Any idea what caused it?

ANNA

What?

STEPHANIE

The outburst.
Her combativeness.

ANNA

She's psychotic.
Isn't *that* explanation enough?

STEPHANIE

It might be.
Though you know the story:
Sometimes there's a straw that breaks the camel's back, so to speak.
A precipitating event.
An encounter.
Sometimes just a person.
I mean, we're always looking for those hidden threads, are we not?
The ones that tie it all together.
In the old days, you know, we usually blamed the mother.

ANNA

The mother?
What are you talking about?

STEPHANIE

Read the old papers.
They typically blamed schizophrenia on the Mom – who else?!
Those papers – they were all written by men, by the way!

ANNA

(laughing, sarcastic)

Of course!

STEPHANIE

What's the father like?

ANNA

Concerned.

STEPHANIE

Appropriately so, or inappropriately?

ANNA

If you're thinking of abuse –

STEPHANIE

I always do.
It's very common.

ANNA

There's no evidence.
I'm not suspicious.

STEPHANIE

OK.
But trust me: I've been fooled.
And the mother?

ANNA

She died.

STEPHANIE

Recently?

ANNA

No.
Ten years ago.
Car accident.
My patient was six.

STEPHANIE

Tragic.
And, I suspect, a cataclysmic blow to the family.
Obviously.

ANNA

Yes.

STEPHANIE

Was the girl in the car?

ANNA

What?

STEPHANIE

At the time of the accident, you said your patient was six.
Did she happen to be in the car?

ANNA

I ... I don't know.

Beat. ANNA is clearly embarrassed that she doesn't know the answer to this question.

ANNA

But I'll find out.
I'll ask her.

STEPHANIE

Though just keep in mind: Even if she *was* in the car, she may not remember much.

ANNA

Then I'll ask her father.

STEPHANIE

Good.
It might be worth pursuing.
You know how this works:
It could be something or it could be nothing.
Right now, we just don't know.

(half-beat)

Always searching for threads, remember?
Those mysterious, elusive threads.
A key to the safe, the secret compartment.
It's kind of what we do, is it not?

(half-beat)

Sorry.

ANNA

For what?

STEPHANIE

Talking too much.
Being intrusive.
But still ... I can't help wondering –

ANNA

What?

STEPHANIE

What all this means to *her* – your patient.

ANNA

What?
The episode in my office?

STEPHANIE

That – and also the hallucinations.
All those storms and floods.
All that doom and gloom.
I mean, I'm rather obsessed with climate change myself – in fact, I think we should *all* be obsessed, at least to some degree – but, if anything, she's even more obsessed than I am!
So there's a ton I'm curious about:
Like, how much does she actually know?
How closely does she follow the news, the science?
Is she glued day and night to the Weather Channel?
What, specifically, is she worried about?

ANNA

She's probably worried about what we're *all* worried about:
You know: How bad will things get?
What it means for our future?
And the fact that she's younger – well, I'm guessing it makes those worries even worse, more intense.

STEPHANIE

Yes, her age is critical, I think.
But I suspect there might also be something else – something that personalizes the danger, makes her think she's especially vulnerable.
What's her experience been like with hurricanes, for example?
Was her house ever damaged?
Did she ever need to be evacuated?
You said she's sixteen, correct?
That means she would have been twelve during Irma.
Twelve's an especially chaotic age anyway, and that storm was particularly nasty.
If I were you, I'd investigate that – ask all those questions and more.

ANNA

Stephanie –

STEPHANIE

Oh!
And I would also ask about Greta Thunberg.
Does she follow her?
Identify with her?
Relate to her?
A lot of kids do, you know.
And not just kids, for that matter.
I mean, for God's sake's, even I relate to her – and I'm fifty-eight!

ANNA

(louder, to get her attention)

Stephanie!

STEPHANIE

What?

ANNA

This has all been very helpful.

STEPHANIE

Good.
I'm glad.

ANNA

You've given me lots to think about, inquire about.
So thank you.

STEPHANIE

You're welcome.

ANNA

But now it's time.

STEPHANIE

For what?

ANNA

For me to go.

STEPHANIE

Go?
Go where?

ANNA

To the hospital – where else?
The patient we've been talking about, speculating about?
Well, guess what?
It's time to see how she's actually *doing* – wouldn't you agree?

Scene Seven

The room of a nearby hospital, later that day.

EMILY is lying face-up in bed, sleeping.

ANNA and JIM are in mid-conversation.

JIM

She was there, yes.
In the car.

ANNA

How awful.

JIM

It was years ago.

ANNA

Ten.
I know.

JIM

We've tried to put it all behind us.

ANNA

Right.
Of course.

JIM

We've tried very hard.

ANNA

I understand.

(half-beat)

And Emily – she was injured, too, I would imagine?
In the crash, I mean.

JIM

Yes.
Very badly, in fact.
A broken leg.
A broken collarbone.
Also a concussion.

ANNA

I'm so sorry – for both of you.

JIM

Thank you.

ANNA

It must have been devastating.

JIM

It was.
I was at work when it happened – this fancy new high-rise, right off the beach.
There was a storm, a sudden squall– one they didn't predict, or at least didn't think would be so severe.
The car went into a skid, and my wife lost control.
After that – well, the police said she never had a chance, really.

Beat. ANNA regards JIM.

ANNA

A storm, you said?

JIM

Yes.

(half-beat)

Why?
Is that important?

ANNA

I don't know.
It might be.

JIM

You mean, *now*?
With Emily?
After all these years?

ANNA

It's possible.

JIM

(skeptical)

I dunno.

That sounds like quite a stretch.

ANNA

Perhaps.

But take a step back.

Consider Emily's words:

All that talk about water.

Floods.

Catastrophic weather.

Catastrophic events.

JIM

And what?

You think that's related in some way to the crash?

What happened when Emily was *six*?

ANNA

I'm just saying it's important to keep an open mind, that's all.

Beat. JIM regards ANNA.

JIM

Y'know, Dr. Shaw, I'm just a working guy, an electrician –

ANNA

I know.

You mentioned that yesterday.

JIM

Which means I *think* like a working guy, an electrician.

People call me when they have a problem.

I diagnose the problem, then I fix the problem.

It's all very straightforward.

Not a whole lotta need for discussion.

Or digging up the past – like going back ten years in time, and asking “what about this?, what about that?”

You understand what I'm saying?

ANNA

I think so, yes.

JIM

Good.

ANNA

Except people are not that simple.

When things go awry, it's not like fixing a frayed wire, replacing a faulty socket.

JIM

And maybe that's the reason I'm happy I do what *I* do, and not what *you* do!

Beat. ANNA regards JIM.

ANNA

You and Emily seem very close.

Beat. JIM regards ANNA.

JIM

We are.

Why?

You think that's a problem?

ANNA

No.

Of course not.

Beat. JIM continues staring at ANNA.

JIM

I don't mean to pry, Dr. Shaw, but your parents – are they still alive?

Both your mother and your father?

ANNA

They are.

Yes.

JIM

Then you know what?

I doubt there's any way in hell you could understand us!

What Emily and I have been through together!

EMILY stirs in her bed. She opens her eyes and stares at JIM and ANNA.

EMILY

(to JIM)

What's going on?

Where *am* I?

(re: ANNA)

What's *she* doing here?

JIM

She's a doctor.

EMILY

I *know* she's a doctor!

But why is she *here*?

JIM

What do you mean, "Why is she here?"

She's here 'cause *you're* here.

EMILY

But where is *here*?

That's what I'm asking!

JIM

You're in a hospital, sweetheart.

Mount Sinai.

EMILY

Mount Sinai?

(half-beat, looking around the room)

Why?

Am I sick?

I don't *feel* sick – just a little tired.

ANNA

(to EMILY)

You don't remember how you got here, what happened?

EMILY

No.

Should I?

ANNA
You don't remember hitting me?

EMILY
I *hit* you?

ANNA
(*nodding*)
Uh-huh.

EMILY
How?
With my *fists*?

ANNA
That's right.

EMILY
I don't understand.
Why would I do *that*?
(*to JIM*)
Daddy, what is she talking about?

JIM
You had a spell, sweetheart.
Another one.
One that lasted a little bit longer than the others.

EMILY
I did?
Where?
Here?

JIM
No.
(*indicating ANNA*)
In her office.

EMILY
When?
You mean, *today*?

JIM

No.
Yesterday.

EMILY

I've been here since *yesterday*?

ANNA

That's right.

EMILY tries to stand up, but she wobbles slightly and sits back down.

EMILY

Wow.
That's weird.

ANNA

What?

EMILY

I feel spacey
Why do I feel so spacey?

ANNA

It's the medicine.
When you stand up, it's important to do it slowly.

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

You're giving me medicine?

ANNA

That's right.

EMILY

Is that the reason I can't remember things – the medicine?

ANNA

It's one of the reasons, yes.

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

(to ANNA)

Are you hurt?

ANNA

What?

EMILY

You said that I hit you.

Did I hurt you?

ANNA

Don't worry about it.

I'm fine.

EMILY

'Cause if I hurt you in any way, I'm like really sorry.

ANNA

It's OK.

You don't need to apologize.

You didn't do anything wrong.

(half-beat)

What's the last thing you remember?

EMILY

When?

You mean yesterday?

ANNA

Exactly.

EMILY

We were there – in your office – talking.

The place with all the plants.

(to JIM)

And you were there, too – right, Daddy?

JIM

Yes, sweetheart.

I was.

EMILY

I thought so.
Though it's all a little hazy.

ANNA

Do you remember what you said?

EMILY

When?

ANNA

Right before you hit me.

EMILY

No.
Why?
What did I say?

ANNA

That "it was coming."

EMILY

That *what* was coming?

ANNA

A flood.
(half-beat)
That the ocean would rise.
That streets would submerge.
That "towers would tumble."

EMILY

Huh.

ANNA

What?

EMILY

That all sounds kinda weird.
I must've sounded weird, right?

Beat. ANNA regards EMILY, not sure how to respond.

ANNA

No.
Not really.

EMILY

I don't believe you!
I'm *sure* I sounded weird!

ANNA

Can I ask you a question?

EMILY

You're already doing that!
You're *already* asking me questions!
Just like you always do!

ANNA

Does all that scare you?

EMILY

Does all *what* scare me?

ANNA

Everything you were talking about:
The ocean.
Flooding.
Worsening weather.
Discombobulating climate.
The future of the planet.

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA with suspicion.

EMILY

Why do you keep asking me about the future?

ANNA

Like I told you before:
So I can better comprehend all this.
Better understand what's troubling you.

EMILY

Ha!
So you think the "trouble," it's all with *me* – is that it?

ANNA

That's not what I said.

EMILY

(becoming agitated)

'Cause the "trouble" is not with *me!*

It's with *you!*

And people just like you!

ANNA

Emily –

EMILY

(even more agitated)

I didn't cause all this!

You did!

JIM

(to EMILY)

Please calm down, sweetheart.

Everything's OK.

EMILY

No!

Everything's *not* OK!

Things are falling apart – and you think that's all OK?!

JIM

Em –

EMILY

The storm is coming soon, Daddy.

People are gonna die!

JIM

No one's gonna die, sweetheart.

You'll see: We're all gonna be just fine.

EMILY

No, we're not!

The rain will come and the water will rise – and people are gonna die, Daddy!

And not just down the road, either.

It's coming sooner than you think – a lot sooner!

Scene Eight

STEPHANIE'S office, the following day.

ANNA and STEPHANIE are in mid-conversation.

STEPHANIE

Ah!
The plot thickens!

ANNA

Sorry?

STEPHANIE

All these new details – what you just told me.
So she *was* in the car after all.
And there was *also* a storm.
Interesting, no?

ANNA

Very.

STEPHANIE

Indeed.

ANNA

Though I'm not sure there's a connection.

Beat. STEPHANIE regards ANNA.

STEPHANIE

Anna –

ANNA

What?

STEPHANIE

Do you even hear yourself?

ANNA

Why?

STEPHANIE

Why?

'Cause when it comes to things like this –
There's *always* a connection!

ANNA

Not always.
Just sometimes.

STEPHANIE

Just sometimes?

ANNA

You heard me.

STEPHANIE

Ha!
Not according to Freud!

ANNA

And what?
You think Freud was right about *everything*?!

STEPHANIE

Of course, not.
Except when your mother dies in a storm –
Are you listening?

ANNA

Of course, I'm listening!

STEPHANIE

And you subsequently *dream* about storms – experience these awful recurrent
nightmares about storms! – what are the odds that they're *unconnected*?!

ANNA

Except what she's experiencing aren't nightmares.

STEPHANIE

No?

ANNA

No.
They're hallucinations.

STEPHANIE

Oh, Anna – you have no idea how much I hate doing this to you.

ANNA

Doing what?

STEPHANIE

Acting like your supervisor!

ANNA

Then don't!

STEPHANIE

Do me a favor, OK, Anna?

Actually, do *yourself* a favor.

Go to the library.

Or even easier: Just check on Google.

Read what Freud said about hallucinations.

ANNA

Why?

What did he say about hallucinations?

STEPHANIE

That they're basically the same as dreams, that's what!

At least from the psychodynamic standpoint.

Look, they both emanate from the subconscious, right?

So, of course, it's all connected!

ANNA

Except for one thing.

STEPHANIE

What's that?

ANNA

Why *now*?

STEPHANIE

What?

ANNA

Why now?

I mean, just think about it:

Her mother died in a storm a decade ago, right?

So why is my patient first having hallucinations – hallucinations about storms ... *raging* storms ... catastrophically *violent* storms – *now*, ten years later?!

STEPHANIE

Because *now* is when this psychotic episode started!

ANNA

Precisely!

And why did her psychotic episode start *now*, and not a year ago or two years ago or five years ago?!

STEPHANIE

Because statistically, psychosis is much more common in teenagers than in kids, that's why!

ANNA

(sarcastic)

Statistically.

Sure.

Wow!

You're all over the map with your arguments – don't you see that, Steph?!

One minute, you're quoting Freud, the next minute you're citing statistics!

STEPHANIE

And what?

They're mutually exclusive?!

(half-beat)

I'm really surprised at you, Anna.

ANNA

For what?

STEPHANIE

For not fully appreciating what you've stumbled upon!

And – let's be honest here – what you might *never* have stumbled upon without plenty of help from *me* ... namely, the mother's death!

(half-beat, off ANNA'S look)

What?

You don't think that's key?

ANNA

It could be –

STEPHANIE

You don't sound convinced.

ANNA

That's 'cause I'm not.

STEPHANIE

Well, maybe you *should* be!

ANNA

Or maybe not.

(half-beat)

I mean, "key" is one thing.

But the *right* key?

The *only* key?

That's a different thing entirely – don't you think?!

Scene Nine

EMILY'S hospital room, later that day.

ANNA and EMILY are in mid-conversation.

EMILY seems much calmer than before – more rational, less confrontational.

EMILY

The Sixth Sense.

ANNA

What?

EMILY

That's who I feel like – the kid in the movie.

Though there's one big difference.

ANNA

What's that?

EMILY

He saw dead people –

ANNA

Right.

I remember.

EMILY

And I see *dying* people.

(half-beat)

My *saying* that – does it freak you out?

ANNA

No.

EMILY

Good.

Though it sure as hell freaks *me* out!

(half-beat)

You know what else freaks me out?

ANNA

No.

What?

EMILY

(indicating the hospital room)

This.

The fact that I'm not getting better.

ANNA

Who says you're not getting better?

EMILY

Me.

That's who.

ANNA

I don't understand.

Why do you feel that way?

EMILY

Isn't it obvious?

I'm still seeing things.

ANNA

I know.

But at least now you're able to talk about it, discuss it – isn't that so?

EMILY

I guess.

ANNA

So that's a "positive," don't you think?

EMILY

I dunno.

Is it?

Beat. ANNA regards EMILY.

ANNA

I'd like to hear more.

Assuming you'd like to tell me.

EMILY

More what?

ANNA

How does it happen?

The people who die – do they all drown?

EMILY

Not all of them.

Just some of them.

The rest of them, they're –

ANNA

What?

EMILY

Crushed.

ANNA

Crushed?

EMILY

(nodding)

Uh-huh.

ANNA

Crushed *how*?

EMILY

Well, it's kinda like this:

It's like they're all in this tower, see?

Like a really big, really tall tower.

And soon things start to go haywire – and once that starts, it can't be stopped.

I mean, first the ocean swells, then the streets all flood, then the basements – they flood next.

Then the iron gets rusty, then the concrete cracks, then –

ANNA

Wait.

Stop right there.

EMILY

Why?

What did I say?

ANNA

The building in Surfside, on Collins, the one that collapsed –

EMILY

Yeah?

ANNA

Did you *know* any of those people?

EMILY

No.

I don't think so.

Why?

ANNA

Emily, I want you to think about this:

Is that when you first started seeing things – after that building collapsed?

EMILY

I dunno.

When did the building collapse?

ANNA

Late June, I think.

EMILY

Late June, huh?

ANNA

That's right.

Nearly a hundred people, they –

(half-beat)

Is that when things started – for you, I mean.

Late June?

EMILY

I dunno.

It's hard to say.

It could've been sometime around then.

I don't remember, exactly.

ANNA

Did you ever think about it, talk about it?

Back then, I mean.

In June.

EMILY

Talk about what?

The building?

ANNA

Right.

When it collapsed.

Like with your friends –

EMILY

I don't *have* any friends!

I thought I already told you that!

ANNA

Then with your father?

EMILY

My father?

ANNA

Did you talk to *him* about it?

EMILY

I dunno.
Maybe,
I mean, it was on TV – like all the time, really.
He was sad.
I was sad.
Everyone was sad.

ANNA

Wait:
Did he ever work there?

EMILY

Who?
My father?
You mean, in that building?

ANNA

Yes.
As an electrician.

EMILY

How should I know?!
He almost never tells me where he works, where the job is.
(half-beat)
Why are we even talking about this?

ANNA

I'm just wondering if it might be related.

EMILY

Related to *what*?
Me?

ANNA

Yes.
You – and all the things that you've been seeing.
(half-beat, off EMILY'S look)

Why?
You don't think that's possible?

EMILY

(confused)

I don't understand.

You think that just because I saw something on TV –

(half-beat)

Hold on a sec:

The things I'm seeing – you think I'm making that up?

ANNA

What?!

No!

EMILY

Then what are you saying exactly?

The stuff I saw on TV – you think it got stuck in my head somehow, and now –

What?

I'm just running it back to you?

Like it's a re-run or somethin'?

Is *that* what you're saying?

ANNA

No!

Of course not!

EMILY

'Cause that doesn't make any sense!

ANNA

I know.

EMILY

I mean, why would I *do* that?!

ANNA

I'm not saying you did.

EMILY

Why would *anyone* do that?!

(half-beat, angry)

You know what?!

Get out!

ANNA

What?

EMILY

Get out!
I don't wanna see you anymore!
I want another doctor!

ANNA

Why?

EMILY

'Cause you don't believe me!

ANNA

That's not true!

EMILY

You're calling me a liar, aren't you?

ANNA

No!

EMILY

For once, just be honest with me, OK?
You think what?
I'm doing this on purpose?
Like for attention or something?
Is *that* what you think?!

ANNA

Emily –

EMILY

I mean it!
Get out!

JIM enters the room. He's heard EMILY'S voice from down the hall.

JIM

(to both EMILY and ANNA)

What's going on?
Why all the yelling?

EMILY
(re: ANNA)
She just called me a liar!

JIM
What?!

ANNA
(to EMILY)
Emily, please!
(to JIM)
I *never* called her a liar!
I would never say that about her!
I would never say that about *any* of my patients!

Beat. JIM regards ANNA. He is trying hard to maintain his composure.

JIM
(to ANNA)
Maybe you'd better leave.

ANNA
(to JIM)
This is all a mistake!
Please let me explain!

EMILY
(to ANNA)
No!
Just go!

ANNA
But –

JIM holds up a hand, cutting ANNA off.

JIM
(to ANNA)
No more talk, OK?
Not today.

ANNA
(hopefully)
Then how 'bout tomorrow?
What if I come back then?

Beat. JIM regards ANNA, then EMILY.

JIM
(to ANNA)
I dunno.
We'll see.

Scene Ten

STEPHANIE'S office, later that day.

STEPHANIE and ANNA are in mid-conversation.

STEPHANIE
You see the problem here, don't you?

ANNA
Of course, I see the problem!
My patient's on the verge of firing me!
I screwed up!

STEPHANIE
Actually –
That's *not* the problem.

ANNA
(confused; not sure she's heard STEPHANIE correctly)
What?

STEPHANIE
The problem is this:
You're taking this way too personally.

ANNA
Excuse me?

STEPHANIE
You heard me.
You're taking this way too personally.

ANNA

You're kidding, right?
I mean, you *can't* be serious.

STEPHANIE

Ha!
On the contrary, I couldn't be *more* serious!
(half-beat)
Take a step back, Anna.
Just consider what's happening here.

ANNA

Believe me, Steph, I know *exactly* what's happening here!

STEPHANIE

You do?
Then perhaps you could tell me.

ANNA

Fine.
I will.
(deep breath)
I thought I was making progress with her, and then –

STEPHANIE

And then *what*?

ANNA

Things blew up.
Everything fell apart.

STEPHANIE

(sarcastic)
And you blame *yourself*, of course.

ANNA

Naturally.
Who else *should* I blame?

Beat. STEPHANIE regards ANNA.

STEPHANIE

You're an extremely empathetic person, Anna.
That's always been evident to me and everyone else.

ANNA

Thank you.

STEPHANIE

Don't.

What I said just now about empathy – it wasn't entirely a compliment.

ANNA

It wasn't?

STEPHANIE

Far from it.

I don't mean to be critical, but you're completely ignoring what we've discussed God-knows-how-many-times in the past.

ANNA

Which is what?

STEPHANIE

The myriad pitfalls of what you so often do: Over-identify with your patients!

ANNA

Stephanie –

STEPHANIE

“Stepping into the patient's shoes” – isn't that the new expression, the trendy mantra?

Well, there are definite pros and cons to that philosophy – and trust me – when it comes to exercising empathy – *useful* empathy! – sometimes more is less, and less is more!

ANNA

(louder, to get STEPHANIE'S attention)

Stephanie – !

STEPHANIE

What?

ANNA

Emily is just sixteen.

STEPHANIE

So?

ANNA

So I'm thirty-one.
I'm nearly twice her age.

STEPHANIE

So?

ANNA

So the notion that I'm in any way over-identifying with her is patently absurd!

STEPHANIE

All I'm saying is: Developmentally, she's still a child.

ANNA

I know!
That's just my point!

STEPHANIE

And when a child throws a tantrum, our first instinct should be what?
To understand what's going on emotionally – inside her head – right?
Not immediately endorse her maladaptive behavior!

Beat. ANNA regards STEPHANIE.

ANNA

(exasperated)

Unbelievable!

STEPHANIE

What?

ANNA

You have no idea how frustrating this is.

STEPHANIE

Is it?
Why?

ANNA

Well, for one thing: Emily's outburst today – it's demeaning to call it a tantrum.

STEPHANIE

Really?
Then what would *you* call it?

ANNA

She was upset –

STEPHANIE

Exactly!
And she threw a tantrum!

ANNA

Just stop, alright!
Hear me out:

(breath)

Actually, she was *more* than upset.
She was offended.
Deeply offended.
Understandably offended.

STEPHANIE

By what?

ANNA

My mentioning that building ... its collapse ... and all the news ... all the TV coverage – afterwards.
Implying there might be a connection between that ... and her ... and everything she's been experiencing, everything she's been describing.

Beat. STEPHANIE regards ANNA. She looks at her with sadness, pity even.

STEPHANIE

Oh, Anna.
Anna.

ANNA

What?

STEPHANIE

The two of us – is this really where we are after all our time together?
Have I really taught you nothing?

ANNA
What are you talking about?

STEPHANIE
Dig deeper, Anna!
Dig deeper!
Just think:
Why did she seem so upset, so offended?
Because what you said to her was wrong – ?

ANNA
Obviously, yes!

STEPHANIE
Or what you said to her was *right*?!

Scene Eleven

EMILY'S hospital room, the following day.

EMILY, ANNA and JIM are in mid-conversation. All three are sitting on chairs, JIM positioned closer to EMILY than ANNA is.

ANNA
(to EMILY)
Before you make a decision –
About *me*, I mean –
Whether I should continue on as your doctor –

EMILY
(interrupting)
Trust me:
I've already *made* my decision!

ANNA
– I'm hoping you'll let me say something.

JIM
(to EMILY re: ANNA)
Let her talk, Em.
It's only fair to let her talk.

EMILY

Do we have to?

JIM

Yes.

We have to.

(to ANNA)

Why don't you finish?

We're both listening.

ANNA

(to JIM)

Thank you.

(to EMILY)

What I said yesterday –

What I was *trying* to say yesterday –

I didn't mean to imply that you were –

EMILY

That I was what?

ANNA

Lying.

I know you're *not* lying.

EMILY

Good!

'Cause I'm not!

ANNA

Or making things up.

Or just describing what you saw on TV.

Or *embellishing* what you saw on TV.

You know what I mean by "embellishing," right?

EMILY

Of course, I know what "embellishing" means!

I'm not some sorta moron, y'know!

JIM

(to EMILY)

Em, please!

EMILY

(to JIM)

Well, I'm *not*!

JIM

(to EMILY re: ANNA)

Just let her finish, OK?

ANNA

I know some doctors think they have ... well, all the answers –

EMILY

But they don't!

JIM

(to EMILY)

Em –

ANNA

(to JIM re: EMILY'S last comment)

No.

She's right.

(to EMILY)

'Cause if the past few days have taught me anything, it's this:

I don't have all the answers.

Sometimes, in fact, I'm not even sure –

(*half-beat*)

I'm not even sure I'm asking all the right *questions*.

I mean, there's so much we don't know.

Theoretically, at least, so many things can affect us:

Past trauma.

Recent trauma.

The state of the world.

The *fate* of the world.

It can all seem pretty daunting.

Pretty awful.

EMILY

It *is* awful!

We're killing the planet!

ANNA

Yes.

In many ways, yes.

And watching that happen – and feeling so hopeless sometimes – that *also* can affect us.

It has to.

It just does.

At least on some level.

I mean, I *get* that.

I feel it, too.

Maybe the ones we should worry about are the ones who *don't* feel it, right?

Beat. For a moment, ANNA seems lost in her thoughts, all the ideas and emotions she wants to express right now. JIM picks up on this.

JIM

Dr. Shaw –

ANNA

Sorry.

I know I'm rambling a bit.

Where was I?

JIM

I could be wrong –

But I thought you were in the middle of an apology.

ANNA

Yes.

Of course.

An apology.

(to EMILY)

So the bottom line is this:

I know you're not lying.

I know you're not making things up.

I know what you're experiencing *seems* very real to you, and therefore *is* very real to you.

I don't doubt that for a second.

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

Wow!

ANNA

What?

EMILY

(even more agitated now than before)

You just said you “get” it – but you know what?!

You really don’t!

JIM

Em –

EMILY

(to ANNA)

You don’t “get” anything!

JIM

Em, please!

Calm down!

EMILY

(to ANNA, ignoring JIM)

What I see – it’s not just real to me!

It’s real – *period!*

EMILY rises from her chair. She begins to pace. Her eyes stare into the distance.

JIM

(worried; he’s seen this look before)

Emily –

EMILY

(as if in a trance)

It will rise from the swell of the ocean, and submerge every street!

It will rot the pillars of our homes, and mighty towers will tumble!

No person is safe!

Suddenly, we see STEPHANIE. She is sitting in her office, a cell phone to her ear. This can be represented either by a projected video or the “real” STEPHANIE on the periphery of the stage.

STEPHANIE
(into the phone)

Yes.
Six is fine.
Right after work.
I'll meet you at the *bistro*, OK?

Suddenly, we hear a noise, the sounds of concrete cracking, steel snapping. The sounds grow louder – deafening – over seconds.

STEPHANIE
(into her phone)

Oh, my God!
The whole building, it's shaking!
It's –

Suddenly, STEPHANIE disappears.

There is now another sound – the sound of an immense Miami high-rise falling apart, collapsing.

EMILY
(her eyes still off in space somewhere)

For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy every creature under the heavens that has the breath of life! Everything that is on the earth shall perish!

We see a projection: A disturbing montage of images, accompanied by a wild cacophony of sounds.

A blackened sky, a Biblical storm, an angry ocean.

Wind howling, waves crashing, people screaming, sirens blaring.

Then, still other sounds:

The sound of ANNA's cell phone ringing, the overlapping sound of JIM'S cell phone ringing.

ANNA
(into her phone)

Hello?

JIM
(into his phone)
Hello?

ANNA
(in disbelief, into phone)
What?!

JIM
(distraught, into phone)
Oh, my God!

ANNA
(now crying; into phone)
No!
NO!
NOOO!

Scene Twelve

A funeral home in Miami, a week later.

ANNA is delivering a eulogy at a memorial service for STEPHANIE.

She addresses the audience as if we are fellow mourners.

ANNA
Like all of you who knew and loved Stephanie Morales, I am grieving today, mourning the loss of a wonderful mentor and role model, but – most of all – an exceptional woman and the truest of friends. Stephanie was born and raised here, and she knew this city better than anyone. She loved its energy, its flair – the way the wind blew off the bay, the pink of the sun rising each morning over the unending blue of the water. When it came to Miami, Stephanie seemed to know everyone and everything. She could tell you the best boutique to buy a scarf, the best salon to cut your hair, the best café to sip a cool *sangria* and share the hottest news of the day. Hers was a counsel we all valued and cherished: If you wanted an opinion about something – anything! – you just needed to ask her. In fact, most of the time, you didn't even *need* to ask; she would tell you anyway, even if you *didn't* ask! But as smart as she was – as *funny* as she was – she was also enormously kind, consistently supportive.

She always had time for her patients – and she always *made* time for her friends. Over four hundred lives were lost last week, an unspeakable tragedy that we as a community are still struggling to understand, that we as a city are just starting to come to grips with.

Given the horrific scale of the devastation and the astonishing speed with which it occurred, it is only by the grace of God that even more lives were not lost that day.

It is only by the grace of God that *my* life was not lost that day.

As many of you know, my office was also in that building – and if, by chance, I had not been at the hospital that afternoon, attending to a patient – there is no doubt in my mind that today my name – Anna Shaw – would be included on that long and harrowing list of casualties.

I am so so grateful, of course, to be alive, but also humbled by my narrow and inexplicable escape from death.

I am also left asking, “Why me”?

Why were others taken?

Why was *my* life spared?

None of this makes any sense.

None of this seems fair.

In the days ahead, I’m sure we’ll all hear more and more about rising sea levels, water-table instability, porous limestone foundations, corroded rebar, and widening cracks in the concrete.

We will hear more and more about unprecedented extremes in the weather, and the exponential warming of the entire planet.

How all that affects us both globally and locally.

How no one is immune.

How no one can escape.

So yes, we need to take all this very seriously, for if we ignore these warnings – if we downplay this new reality – we do so at our peril.

For today, though, let us all take time to honor and celebrate everyone whose life was lost last week, all those who have left us way too soon.

Let us honor and celebrate Stephanie Morales.

Stephanie may no longer walk among us, but her spirit lives on – and those who loved her, those who learned so much from her, will never ever forget her!

Scene Thirteen

EMILY’S hospital room, the following day.

ANNA, EMILY and JIM are in mid-conversation.

ANNA

You *do* understand, don’t you?

EMILY

I think so.
Yes.

ANNA

If you don't wish to talk to me, you don't have to.
It's entirely up to you.

EMILY

My choice, right?

ANNA

Exactly.
This is – well, it's *not* what you would call an "official visit."
It's more like –

EMILY

What?

ANNA

A social call.

EMILY

A "social call"?

ANNA

Right.
So I could stop by and say hello.
See how you were feeling.
See how you were doing.
But – just to be clear – I'm *not* here as your doctor.

EMILY

I know.
I have a new doctor now.
Doctor –
(to JIM)
What's her name, Daddy?

JIM

Dr. Clayton.
Carol Clayton.

EMILY

Dr. Clayton.
Right.

(to ANNA)

She seems nice.
I like her.

ANNA

Good.
She's an excellent doctor.
I like her, too.

Beat. JIM regards ANNA.

JIM

(to ANNA)

Dr. Shaw –

ANNA

Yes?

JIM

We heard about your friend.

ANNA

Oh?

JIM

The nurses were all talking about her.

ANNA

Right.
Well, most of them knew her.

JIM

We're very sorry for your loss.

Beat. ANNA regards JIM.

ANNA

Thank you.
That's very kind of you.

ANNA chokes up for a moment. She wipes a tear from her eye, but quickly recovers her composure.

JIM

What happened last week – it was so horrible, just so awful.
It was –

ANNA

(to JIM, interrupting)

Mr. Lee – with all due respect – I don't think we should be talking about this.

Beat. JIM regards ANNA.

JIM

No.
Of course.
You're still in mourning.
I'm sorry, I –

ANNA

No.
I don't mean *me*.
I mean in front of Emily.

JIM

Oh.
But that's OK.
We've already talked about it.
In fact, it was impossible *not* to talk about it.

EMILY

(to ANNA)

It's really weird, though – isn't it?

ANNA

What's weird?

EMILY

That building – it was yours, right?
The place where I used to see you.

ANNA

That's true.
Yes.

EMILY

So it could have been *you* in there –

ANNA

But it wasn't.

EMILY

Or even *me*.

ANNA

Emily –

EMILY

What?

ANNA

It's probably best not to think about that.
Let's talk about something else, OK?

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

OK.
Though you know what's also weird?

ANNA

No.
Tell me.

EMILY

I'm better!

ANNA

What?

EMILY

I'm better!
The visions, all that stuff I was seeing and hearing –
Well, guess what?
It all went away!

ANNA

It did?

EMILY

Yes!
Completely!
And it hasn't come back.
Not even at night.
Isn't that bizarro?

JIM

(to ANNA)

The medicine – maybe it's working.
You think it's the medicine?

ANNA

It must be.

JIM

Though –
Doesn't it usually take longer?

ANNA

Usually, yes.
But sometimes –

JIM

Pastor Bob says it's a miracle.

ANNA

Yes, well –

JIM

I know you don't believe in them.
But Pastor Bob does.
And so do I.
Not to explain everything.
Just some things.
Like this one.
This thing with Emily.
Especially since she got better so fast.
I mean, like one day she was sick – and the next day she was well.
Actually, not just well.
Perfect!
Like a hundred per cent!

Beat. ANNA regards JIM.

ANNA

It happened that fast – like overnight?

JIM

Yes.

In a flash.

Just flipping a switch.

That's what we're trying to tell you.

Beat. ANNA regards EMILY.

ANNA

(to EMILY)

The last time you saw things – when was it exactly?

EMILY

I dunno.

I'm not sure.

ANNA

Was it the last time I was here?

EMILY

Maybe.

I dunno.

ANNA

The same day the building –

Was *that* the day?

Beat. EMILY regards ANNA.

EMILY

Yeah.

I think so.

(half-beat)

Weird, huh?

Beat. ANNA regards EMILY.

ANNA

(to EMILY)

Take good care of yourself, Emily.

EMILY

I'll try.

You, too.

ANNA

Thanks.

I will.

Beat. ANNA stands. She prepares to leave. Before exiting, she turns to face EMILY.

ANNA

And Emily?

EMILY

Yeah?

ANNA

Listen to Dr. Clayton.

You're right.

She really *is* very good.

It sounds like she's helped you a lot.

JIM

(to ANNA re: EMILY)

You think she's cured, though, right?

Isn't *that* what you're saying?

Whatever the reason – you think she's cured, correct?

ANNA

I hope so.

I really do.

(to EMILY)

Though if your symptoms should ever come back –

If suddenly you start seeing things again, hearing things again –

EMILY

Yeah?

ANNA

Make sure you let everyone know.
Please.
Like right away, OK?

Beat. ANNA and EMILY share a look, then ANNA exits.

EMILY and JIM sit silently in the hospital room.

Scene Fourteen

A bedroom, the following night.

This time, however, the bedroom is ANNA'S, not EMILY'S.

Darkness and silence.

Then –

A wild cacophony of sounds, a disturbing montage of images.

A blackened sky, a Biblical storm, an angry ocean.

Wind howling, waves crashing, buildings collapsing, people screaming.

Then –

Just as suddenly, that all disappears.

A bedside lamp is switched on. It illuminates ANNA as she sits upright in bed, rocking, her arms clutching her knees.

ANNA

(crying)

NO!

NO, GOD!

NOOO!

Blackout.

End of play.