

Persephone

EXT. SMALL TOWN - ENGLAND - DAY.

We glide above a humble residential area on a sunny day,  
over houses toward WOODLAND.

EXT. WOODLAND - MEADOW - DAY.

Young mother DEE (35) is sat on a picnic blanket reading a  
book, surrounded by half-nibbled sandwiches and fruit-filled  
lunchboxes.

CORA (5) is nearby playing with her MERMAID BARBIES, doing  
voices for them.

CORA

...I don't want to marry you, you  
are ugly and mean! But I am King of  
the Sea. I don't want to be a  
mermaid I want to be a *hooman*...

Dee chuckles to herself.

DEE

Why does Poseidon want to marry  
her?

CORA

Because she's beautiful.

DEE

Is that it?

CORA

Mm, and she's kind and... she has a  
seashell necklace, look.

DEE

(chuckles)

So he wants her seashell necklace?

CORA

Mh-hm.

DEE

And what does Aqua Barbie want?

CORA

She wants- she doesn't want to live  
in the sea because she likes  
dancing.

Dee laughs and hugs her daughter.

(CONTINUED)

DEE

Come here, I love you.

CORA

Love you too mummy.

DEE

Hey shall we pick some flowers for Nanny?

CORA

Yeah!

The DOG, who's been snoozing up until now, follows Cora.

DEE

Stay in the meadow darling, where I can see you.

CORA

Okay.

But Cora wanders to the edge of the treeline to pick some wildflowers.

CORA O.S

(calling)

Mummy there's some red ones over here!

DEE

Alright darling not too far.

Cora hears the faint echo of a **FLUTE** being played, drifting in the BREEZE. The dog **growls** and becomes more agitated the closer Cora gets to a THICKET.

CORA

(patting dog)

It's okay.

She notices something curious and pushes through into the foliage.

Dee picks out some violets.

DEE

Do you think she'll like these purple ones?

The dog BARKS at the thicket.

DEE

Cora?

Cora is nowhere to be seen. Dee rushes over to where the dog is barking.

DEE

Cora?

DEE POV: On the floor are several of the FLOWERS that Cora had picked.

Dee searches the bushes and surrounding area. Nothing.

DEE

CORA?!

CUT TO:

EXT. UNDERWORLD - SNOWY FOREST - DAY.

Cora emerges into a **SNOWY MEADOW**. She looks around at the dense white forest, confused. She's still holding one of her flowers.

POV: She has a faint **golden glow** about her.

She trudges forward but then HEARS something ahead in the trees and pauses.

CORA

Hello?

HAEVA (8) an **otherworldly** boy with silver hair steps out from behind a tree. He wears dark leathers, and has piercing eyes that are hyper-alert, like someone who's just escaped something traumatic.

Haeva and Cora stare at each other.

WIDE SHOT: They walk toward one another, stopping a few feet apart.

He sees she is holding a FLOWER.

She sees he has a DAGGER in his belt.

Beat.

Cora offers her flower to Haeva.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

He warily accepts it from her.

Suddenly a **MONSTROUS SCREECH** tears through the sky above them.

They both REACT.

HAEVA

GO!

He PUSHES her away.

She falls backwards --

DIZZY, BLURRY FADE TO BLACKNESS:

EXT. DARKNESS

A rising RINGING sound, like the aftermath of an explosion.

EXT. WOODLAND - NIGHT.

The ringing continues, with blurry trees and FLASHLIGHT beams sharpening into focus.

POLICE OFFICIAL 1 O.S

Over there!

LOW ANGLE: Dee is running toward Cora.

DEE

(distorted)

Cora! Baby!

She DROPS to the floor and clutches Cora. Behind her are two POLICE OFFICIALS and some NEIGHBORS.

A LIGHT beam illuminates Cora's face - her eyes are WIDE, pupils BIG.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT.

Cora is wrapped in a blanket sat on the sofa. Dee comforts her.

The Police Officials sit across from two untouched mugs of hot chocolate.

(CONTINUED)

POLICE OFFICIAL 1  
You don't remember, anybody talking  
to you? Or, maybe leading you  
somewhere?

Cora stares, completely transfixed.

DEE  
Honey? Do you remember anything at  
all?

Cora shakes her head.

INT. CRYPT OF WORSHIP - UNDERWORLD - NIGHT.

A candle-lit, underground cavern of Ancient **Evil**.

Young Haeva is pushed down to his knees in front of a huge  
MONOLITH constructed of figures in torment - similar to  
Rodin's 'Gates of Hell.'

A feminine, regal HAND **seizes** Haeva's shoulder, he winces.

Haeva nods desperately as she says something in his ear,  
then lets go of him.

STAY ON HAEVA: as a HUSH sweeps through the cavern and  
diminishes candles.

Silence.

Haeva peers up at the Monolith.

He places his shaking hands on two **black obsidian** stones on  
the ground.

A HISSING sound bleeds in, like steam. It splits into  
thousands of whispering, DEMONIC VOICES.

CLOSE ON: Haeva squeezes his eyes tighter shut.

ON HIS HANDS: **BLACK**, SPIDERY **VEINS** start to slither up his  
skin from the stones, up through his arms, and onto his neck  
and face.

Haeva's eyes BOLT OPEN when the veins seep into them and  
turn his eyeballs BLACK. He SCREAMS as though acid is  
entering his body.

OFF HIM SCREAMING:

CREDITS.

EIGHTEEN YEARS LATER

INT. CORA'S BEDROOM - MORNING.

Meditation music fades in, with a serene, comforting voice.

VOICE O.S  
 (on meditation track)  
 ...you are safe. You are bright.  
 You are joyful. And on the count of  
 three, you will be wide awake.  
 Three. Full of awe, full of  
 curiosity, full of excitement. Two.

CORA (23) half-opens her eyes, scowls at the light. Rolls over in her bed.

VOICE O.S  
 Noticing *how* fabulous you are  
 feeling. Right now. And back into  
 the room on... One! Feeling  
 vibrant, breezy, and ready to take  
 on, the rest of your-

A **car alarm** sounds from outside. Cora STOPS the meditation app on her phone. Groans. Drags herself up.

EXT. CITY CENTRE - MORNING.

Morning rush hour, heavy traffic.

INT. CAR - MORNING.

Cora stares forward, waiting at a red light. Her deadpan expression is a stark contrast to the upbeat music on the radio. She wears smart office clothes.

To her left she sees a group of SCHOOL KIDS (13-14) egging each other on to sit with a HOMELESS MAN (40s) and take selfies, one knocks over his collection cup.

To her right a BUSINESS MAN (40s) sticks out of a steady stream of commuters, ranting on the phone and barging past where he sees fit.

ON BUSINESS MAN:

(CONTINUED)

BUSINESS MAN

(on phone)

...if you're new to the company,  
you should NOT be clocking out  
before the boss- I'm in the office  
til 6:30/7 most days there's no  
excuse. We've all got families.  
She's taking the piss, Mark-

CORA POV: Ahead at the BUS STOP a fragile ELDERLY LADY (80s)  
shuffles to stand under the shelter - all seats are TAKEN by  
PEOPLE with their heads down in their phones. One GIRL looks  
at the Elderly Lady, then back down at her phone.

A 4x4 blaring music aggressively HONKS behind Cora - the  
light has turned Green.

INT. OFFICES - MORNING.

Cora sets up her computer, overhearing her COLLEAGUES  
(30s-50s) gossiping.

EMMA

Awful isn't it.

HALINA

I know! Another one. Can't feel  
safe in your own houses anymore.

EMMA

Reckon they were part of a gang  
don't they-?

ANNE

You watch, they'll start making  
guns legal in this country.

HALINA

Guns aren't gonna solve the  
problem, Anne-!

EMMA

The world's going to shit, I'm  
telling ya.

Supervisor SUSAN (50s) puts a colorful card down on Cora's  
desk. It says 'Bon Voyage' in bubble writing.

SUSAN

Morning Cora, do you wanna sign  
Mia's card?

(CONTINUED)



CORA

Sure.

Cora opens it and reads the written messages - 'Have the best time on your travels Mia! We'll miss you! Sue x' 'Getting out of here - jealous! 'Keep the insta updated!' etc. Anne sees Cora reading the card.

ANNE

(to Cora)

I tell you if I were your age, I'd be doing exactly the same thing. Get out and see the world while you can. Don't waste your youth.

Cora smiles and hands the card back, gets up to go to the kitchen.

CORA

If you're paying, Anne.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY.

Cora stirs her coffee slowly, in a daze. ANDREW (26) enters, carrying a RED 'marketing' folder. Cora straightens.

ANDREW

Oi oi. How's it going bab? Come in for some peace and quiet?

He winks and starts opening cupboards, until he finds a box of tea bags.

CORA

(blushing)

Y'alright Andrew?

ANDREW

Living the dream bab. Just stealing some tea bags.

(then)

I was hoping to catch you actually. We er, well it's not officially advertised yet so y'know, but we might have a position going upstairs pretty soon.

CORA

Really?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Yeah, you'd love it as well, it's chill. You might have some tough competition, but I'll put in a good word. Just thought I'd tell you so you can you know, start sucking up. That's if you're still interested?

He scribbles something on a piece of paper.

CORA

Yeah, I'll think about it.

ANDREW

It'd be great to have you on the team. We could use your artistic skills.

(on his way out)

And you know, having a beautiful face to look at would be a bonus too.

(he winks)

See you later bab.

CORA

We'll see.

He grins and leaves. She smiles to herself.

On her way out Cora notices - Andrew's RED Marketing FOLDER on the side. A piece of paper is sticking out of it.

She picks it up, it reads - 'Here's an excuse to get away. Come see me! :)'

She smiles.

INT. OFFICES - DAY.

Halina, Emma and Anne are gathered around looking at Emma's computer, gossiping about celebrity Oscar outfits. Cora stands in the doorway with the folder.

ANNE

Wouldn't catch me in that.

HALINA

So unflattering, what was she thinking?

(CONTINUED)

EMMA

I know! You'd think with that amount of money you'd hire a decent stylist...

CORA

I'm just, popping upstairs.

HALINA

Look at the rolls!

EMMA

I know...

ANNE

(to Cora)

Alright love!

(then)

That green one's nice though ennit-

EMMA

Mm, it's a bit short for her age...

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY.

Cora ascends the stairs, adjusting her hair and blouse, carrying Andrew's Marketing Folder.

INT. MARKETING OFFICE - DAY.

Cora peeps from the corridor into the marketing office and sees Andrew leaning closely over a pretty INTERN (20) showing her something on her computer.

Two LADS (20s) are slouched nearby on their office chairs, playing music, pretending to work. There are two other heavily made-up GIRLS (20s) with resting bitch faces, working at the back. They look the same and move in unison.

Cora clears her throat and politely knocks.

ANDREW

Ey Cora! Long time no see.

CORA

You um, left your-

She holds the folder out to him. The resting bitch face Girls look up and glare.