

THE BURDEN
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INT. BATH ROOM

CLASSICAL MUSIC faintly plays in the distance.

DECEMBER lays face up in a bathtub full of blood and water. Her light brown hair floats in every direction. Her skin is pale, lifeless. Her full lips are dry. She is pretty, late teens.

Her hazel eyes slowly open and she takes in a deep breath, as if she were startled.

She gasps for a few more moments, eyes welling up with tears, and tries to speak.

DECEMBER
(in a soft trembling voice)
Daddy.

A LOUD BEEPING is heard.

INT. DECEMBER'S ROOM - DAWN

The BEEPING continues.

We PAN to find posters of modern art on the walls and stacks of classical music CD's. The room is cozy, lived in.

We STOP on DECEMBER, who is now in her early twenties. She lays face up in her bed, opening her eyes with contempt to focus on a digital clock that hangs from the ceiling.

It reads 6:00AM. With frustration she gets up, standing on her bed to reach the clock.

She wears a long black T-shirt that covers her curvy little frame. Her legs are strong but feminine, pretty.

She swings at the clock with an opened hand. The BEEPING stops.

BATHROOM

December steps out of the shower. Her arms are crossed over her chest as she gets up and grabs a large white towel and wraps it around her.

She turns on the sink and looks at herself in the mirror on the medicine cabinet.

She opens it and pulls out a lighter and cigarettes.

She lights one up, savoring the first drag.

INT. DECEMBER'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

It's a mid 80's Plymouth station wagon. She taps on the steering wheel while flipping through radio stations.

She gets nothing but STATIC. Annoyed, she shuts it off.

Her eyes scan the country outside.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The road is long and windy. The trees have begun to show their autumn colors.

Her car passes the frame of an old pick up truck on the side of the road.

MR.MORRIS (VO)

Where are you going Ms. Ray?

INT. MR. MORRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

MR. KINE sits at a large desk in a large office. He is a business type in his mid thirties. In a corner sits MR. DEEGAL.

He's also a business type but a few years younger. He scribbles notes onto a small pad. Both wear grey power suits.

Across from Mr.Kine sits December. Her mood is distant.

DECEMBER

What?

MR.MORRIS

What do you want out of this company?

DECEMBER

The same as everybody else.

Mr. Degal writes some more notes.

MR.MORRIS

Would you like to tell us what that is?

DECEMBER

I....I want...

He leans in closer.

MR.MORRIS

Ms. Ray why did you come here?

DECEMBER

What?

MR.MORRIS

Why have you come to us?

DECEMBER

(to Mr. Deegal)

What are you writing?

MR.MORRIS

He's just taking some notes.

DECEMBER

On what?

He laughs.

MR.MORRIS

Just relax.

DECEMBER

Could you please stop that?

MR.MORRIS

May we continue?

DECEMBER

I'd like him to stop that.

MR.MORRIS

It's simple interview policy here
Ms. Ray I..

She gets up, grabs her purse and heads for the door.

OFFICE HALLWAY

On one side of the hall is a long window which reveals dozens of people sitting at computer terminals.

December runs through, bumping into others in the process. One EMPLOYEE drops his cup of coffee.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

December staggers out of the office building to her car. She fumbles for her keys and finally pulls them from her purse.

Just as she reaches her car, she leans forward and throws up. She then leans against a sign that says, "Guest Parking".

She looks up to the sky.

POV - DECEMBER LOOKING AT THE SKY

A flock of birds fly by, probably heading south for the winter. Their black silhouettes cut through the grey sky.

DECEMBER'S BASEMENT

December runs on a treadmill while listening to music over a head set. The room is cluttered with old bikes, toys, furniture and other assorted junk.

Her breathing is rhythmic, sweat covers her face.

DECEMBER'S LIVING ROOM

The room is lit by the setting sun outside. On the wall is a shelf with various models of trains along with a weathered baseball cap bearing the local rail workers logo.

December comes up from the basement, wiping her face with a towel. Her FATHER sits in a recliner.

He's in his late forties but looks much older. Tubes run from his nose to an oxygen tank beside him. He wheezes with each breath.

FATHER

Got the mail all by myself today.
How about that?

On the table is a stack of bills. December sees them through the corner of her eye but pretends to ignore them.

FATHER (CONT'D)

(lighting a cigarette)
You're not talking today?

DECEMBER

Why?

FATHER

Why not. You went out for that job,
right?

DECEMBER

Yeah...I went out.

She walks over and takes his cigarette away, heading for
the..

KITCHEN

She walks to the sink and turns it on.

FATHER

So what happened?

She takes a long drag.

DECEMBER

I just didn't like it.

FATHER

What?

DECEMBER

I looked around and saw it wasn't
me.

FATHER

How can you be sure?

DECEMBER

Because I was fucking there, okay?

She throws the cigarette down the drain and turns on the
garbage disposal.

DECEMBER'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLASSICAL MUSIC plays over the stereo as December sits in
the center of the room, painting a picture that has yet to
take any tangible form.

She moves the brush in long broad strokes.

EXT. MONTE GREEN RESTAURANT - DAY

Small, upscale. Located near a pond. December's car pulls into the small parking lot.

INT. MONTE GREEN RESTAURANT (LOBBY)

December steps in. RITA, the hostess, approaches.

She's tall and beautiful. Her bright blue eyes and cool smile seem too good to be true. She briefly runs her hands through her long brunette hair.

RITA

Hello, welcome to the Monte Green.
Will you be dining alone this
afternoon?

DECEMBER

Uh, no. I came to check on a
application I filled out.

RITA

When was that?

DECEMBER

Yesterday.

RITA

It usually takes a week before
anyone gets to them.

DECEMBER

I'm in a kind of a tight squeeze
right now. Is there any way to
speed it up.

RITA

Well....I could talk to the
manager.

DECEMBER

Could you please? My name is
December Ray.

Rita smiles and heads into the main dining room.

December paces about. A young well dressed COUPLE walks in.

MAN

...I'm not asking you for that.

WOMAN

Then what do you want?

MAN

What you said you wanted.

WOMAN

I'm tiered of this.

MAN

So am I.

WOMAN

Then you'll stop it.

MAN

Do you want it to stop?

The woman looks over to see December staring at them. There is an awkward silence.

ELSA, and pretty blond in her late 30's, enters.

ELSA

Ms. Ray?

She turns to Elsa.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Would you please follow me.

(to couple)

Rita will seat you momentarily.

She smiles and leads December to the...

MAIN DINING ROOM

Quaint and classy. Logs in the fire place give a deep red glow and CRACKLE every now and then.

They take a seat at a small table for two. A pitcher of ice water and two glasses are on it.

ELSA

(pouring herself some water)

So you applied for a job

here....yesterday?

DECEMBER

Yes.

ELSA
(looking at the application)
I see you were a head waitress at
Chester's Harbor Grill for three
years.

DECEMBER
That's right.

ELSA
You left four months ago. Why?

DECEMBER
I just...wanted something
different.

ELSA
Anything bad happen?

DECEMBER
No.....I'm fine.

ELSA
No college?

DECEMBER
Excuse me?

ELSA
Did you go to college at all?

DECEMBER
No. But....I read a lot.

Elsa raises an eyebrow.

ELSA
Anything else?

DECEMBER
What do you mean?

ELSA
What else do you do?

DECEMBER
With all due respect, that's kind
of private.

ELSA
Oh really?

DECEMBER

Yes.

Elsa leans back in her chair and takes a sip of water.

ELSA

I don't have any head waitress positions open. I can have you bus during the day or waitress at night. Each job is only about 20 hours a week. But the tips...

DECEMBER

I'll take both.

ELSA

You sure?

DECEMBER

I'm sure.

Elsa takes another sip of water and sets the glass down.

ELSA

Stay here.

She gets up and heads for the kitchen. December starers at the half empty glass.

She then looks over to Rita who fixes her hair and straightens her dress.

Elsa returns with a uniform.

ELSA (CONT'D)

This should fit.

She hands it to December.

ELSA (CONT'D) (cont'd)

It's the uniform for bussing tables. Right now we don't have any waitress uniforms. For 90 dollars I can order you one. You'll get it in a week or two, good enough?

DECEMBER

That's fine.

ELSA

Can you start now?