A corner store counter, empty, in an OVERHEAD MEDIUM SHOT. '70s Iranian pop music plays quietly through radio static in the background. A red-orange flower bouquet is placed onto the counter. A cashier’s hand removes the bouquet and scans it.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Actually... Could I also get... Those guys up there. Yeah, the Reds.

The cashier scans another item, then places the bouquet and a pack of Marlboro Red cigarettes on the counter.

CASHIER (O.S.)
26.30.

Beat.

BOBBY (O.S.)
You know what...

Bobby’s hand points to the cigarettes.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Let’s stick with these, actually. Just these.

Bobby’s hand pulls the bouquet out of frame.

CASHIER (O.S.)
10.16.

Bobby’s hand enters with a twenty-dollar bill. The cashier takes the bill and begins collecting change from the register. A CLINK CLINK CLINK of quarters into the palm.

Bobby’s hand re-enters with THREE FLOWERS from the bouquet. The change-collection abruptly stops.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Keep the change?

BLACKOUT

TITLE: BEAR WITH ME
INT. EM’S BEDROOM--AFTERNOON

Daylight washes over neatly-arranged cross country trophies, Physics Olympiad plaques, and astronomy posters. EM (18), in jogging clothes, pulls her hair into a taut ponytail and stretches.

As Em puts in her ear buds, a face-down home phone handset on her desk rings. She walks across the room and turns it over. Her eyes lock on the “ANONYMOUS” caller ID.

Em sets her ear buds down as her mother, ELLEN (52), answers on the other line. Clicking the "CALL" button, Em secretly conferences herself in.

ELLEN (O.S.)
Hello?

BOBBY (O.S.)
Happy birthday, mom.

Beat.

ELLEN (O.S.)
Jeffrey!

A BEEP signals the muted line. For a second it’s just Em and Bobby on the call. She listens to his breathing. Another BEEP as Em’s father, JEFFREY (57), comes on the line.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
What do you want?

BOBBY (O.S.)
Hi, dad. Um...actually...I’m in town. I took the bus. I’m down at Amin’s.

Beat.

BOBBY (O.S.)
I’m clean. For good.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
It’s--Robert. It’s a year-long program. They don’t just let you out after six months.

Beat.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Is Em around? How’s she doing?
JEFFREY (O.S.)
She’s fine. She doesn’t want to see you.

Em hangs up. She stares down at the phone.

3
INT. HALLWAY--AFTERNOON

European paintings and Buddhist decorations line the walls. Em pulls a key off of an antique brass key rack.

4
EXT. DRIVEWAY--AFTERNOON

A two-story white-and-gray Georgian house sprawls behind a manicured lawn and hedges. Em sneaks into a luxurious, silver Lexus SUV at the top of the long driveway.

5
EXT. CORNER STORE--AFTERNOON

A dingy corner store bordered by cracked, unwashed pavement. BOBBY (23), lanky in a worn tweed sweater and baseball cap, smokes a cigarette, biting his lip between drags. He wheels a cheap purple suitcase back and forth, holding three flowers with the same hand.

   EM (O.S.)
   Got a light?

   BOBBY
   Yeah, su--

As Bobby frees a lighter from his jeans, he sees his little sister. He drops his cigarette and puts it out with his foot.

   BOBBY
   How’d you find me?

   EM
   You can smoke.

An awkward beat. Bobby embraces Em. She half-hugs him back. After a moment, she breaks them apart.

Bobby gives Em an admiring look. She looks at his flowers.

Bobby curtsies, handing Em a flower and raising an eyebrow.
BOBBY
Might need your help with the others.

Em gauges Bobby.

BOBBY
Don’t worry! I’m leaving.
(beat)
California.

EM
Bobby.

BOBBY
Northern. California. Land of Steinbeck... the salmon run... the fohnah Govehnatah... It’s this tiny town. Redding.

EM
Go ba--

BOBBY
They call it: "The Jewel of the Sierra." In other words, the place to paint. You got your tourists, your low rent, fresh air--

EM
Finish your program.

BOBBY
I finished.

EM
Mm.

BOBBY
They let me out early.

EM
I’m not stupid.

BOBBY
Really? Em. Rehab’s about getting better. It’s not a jail sentence.
(beat)
Here.

Bobby raises the insides of his elbows and begins pulling up his sleeves. Em turns her head away.
BOBBY
Em. Look. Look!

EM
I don’t care.
(Beat)
I mean... five months doesn’t mean shit. You know that.

BOBBY
It means something this time.

Bobby looks at his sister. She makes fleeting eye contact back.

BOBBY
Can we go somewhere?

Em finds and holds Bobby’s gaze. She takes the handle of his suitcase and wheels it down the sidewalk. He follows.

6 EXT. WEST ROCK PARK--AFTERNOON

A heavily forested mountain ridge juts out from the suburbs. In a BIRD’S EYE VIEW, we see the SUV ascend a snaking road up the ridge.

7 INT. CAR--LATE AFTERNOON

Squeaky clean leather furnishing. The three flowers and an empty Smartwater vibrate in the center cup holder. A jade Buddha talisman dangles from the rear-view mirror.

Em parks on the side of a cul-de-sac encircled by trees. The siblings look out the windows at Judges Cave, a ten-foot-tall boulder formation right off the road.

BOBBY
Thar she blows.

Bobby pulls a Red out of his flannel pocket. Em eyes him apprehensively. Bobby puts it behind his ear. He looks up at her.

BOBBY
Shall we?

Bobby puts the pack on his seat and leaves the car.

Em watches him stretch and head toward the Cave. She takes a cigarette, puts it behind her ear, and exits.
A spectacular view of wealthy New England suburbia extending for miles in the spring golden hour. Bobby struggles to climb up the rock. Em ably ascends after him. They sit amongst small rocks, empty beer bottles, and cigarette butts.

Out of breath, Bobby lights his Red. Em tries to light hers a few times.

BOBBY

Here.

Bobby takes the lighter and shields Em’s cigarette from the wind. It wiggles in Em’s mouth as he tries to light it.

BOBBY

Keep it still...

Bobby puts his finger on the tip of the cigarette to steady it. Em lets out a small laugh. He smirks.

BOBBY

You wanna smoke this or not?

She assumes a straight face and he lights it. They smoke for a few beats, looking out over the town.

(The siblings sporadically pick up and toss rocks off the cave as they talk.)

BOBBY

So. Stanford. I called it.

EM

Word gets around.

BOBBY

I have my ways.

(beat)

You nervous?

EM

No. Not really.

BOBBY

Well. If you ever needa come up for air, I’ll be a four-hour ride away.

EM

You’re really going.
BOBBY
Greyhound, tomorrow morning. Fifty dollars from here to Detroit, then--

Em takes too hard of a drag and starts coughing. Bobby takes her cigarette and puts it out on the rock.

BOBBY
Those things are bad for you.

EM
You’re funny. Roberta.

Bobby smirks.

BOBBY
Here. Solidarity.

He puts his out as well.

BOBBY
How’s mom and dad?

Em thinks on it.

EM
Couldn’t really tell you. They’re in the Hamptons, or Finger Lakes, like, every other weekend.

BOBBY
Empty nest syndrome hasn’t kicked in yet.

EM
Eh. They might be over the whole "parenting" thing.

Beat.

BOBBY
I hope they’re okay.

Em looks for Bobby’s earnestness. She finds it.

BOBBY
What happened...what I did. I think about it every day.

Em watches Bobby turn a rock over in his hand.
EM
She’s still in physical therapy.

Bobby tosses the rock off the side of the cave. Em watches it tumble down.

BOBBY
(looking off)
That...person. Was me.

Em searches her older brother’s eyes. He refocuses on her.

BOBBY
I have to apologize.
(beat)
Say you went in. Talked to them first.

EM
There’s nothing to say... I mean, I don’t know what... I’d--

Em’s phone is RINGING. She looks at the caller ID.

EM
Shit.

Em scrambles down the rock and picks up the call.

EXT. BOTTOM/TOP OF JUDGES CAVE--LATE AFTERNOON

Em paces at the bottom of the rock, her back to Bobby.

EM
Hi, dad.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
Where’d you take mom’s car?

Bobby watches his sister for a moment. He then trepidly begins to make his way down.

EM
I’m sorry. I should’ve told you. I had to go to Walgreens.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
I thought you were going on a run.

EM
Yeah, had to put it on hold. Ran out of tampons.
JEFFREY (O.S.)
Oh. Okay, honey... You know we have reservations at six.

EM
Yeah. Yeah, I’ll be back soon.

Bobby steps into a precarious foothold.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
Hurry up. And stay out of trouble.

Em turns around. She sees Bobby frozen in an awkward position, trying to keep his cool.

EM
Okay, dad! Love you!

Em hangs up. She strides over to the rock.

EM
Need some help?

BOBBY
No, no, I’m fine. I’m fine.

Bobby meditates on his next move as Em skeptically watches.

Bobby tenses, then goes for it. But his hand can’t grip the hold and he slips down. Just as quickly Em reaches out to support his foot.

EM
Hey hey hey. Just let go and you’ll land on that ledge. I’m spotting you.

Bobby almost sticks the landing, falling into Em’s support. She pushes him back onto the ledge. He hops down and sits on the ledge, panting.

BOBBY
The age-old tampon alibi.

EM
Works every time.

Bobby cracks a smile. Em studies him.
10 INT. CAR--NEAR SUNSET

Em parks in the driveway of her house. She takes a deep breath.

EM
Whatever you do: Don’t. Leave. The car.

BOBBY
Of course.

EM
If they won’t see you, then I’ll sneak back out. Are you sure a hundred’s enough?

Bobby nods.

BOBBY
More than.
(Beat)
Em, I can’t tell you how thankful I am. You are the best little sister a fuck-up like me could ask for. I’m beyond grateful--

EM
Okay, okay. Let’s not get ahead of ourselves.

She exits.

Bobby watches Em walk to the front door.

11 INT. FOYER--NEAR SUNSET [CONTINUOUS]

Em enters and walks toward the back of the house.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
Em?

Jeffrey, weary in a tweed coat and tie, enters the foyer. He brushes past Em to the front door. She freezes.

JEFFREY
(calling up the stairs)
Ellen!

Jeffrey locks the front door.
Jeffrey leads Em into the kitchen. A nearly empty whiskey glass and bottle rest on a granite island.

JEFFREY
Where are your... you know...

Jeffrey walks behind the island. Em stands on the other side, looking at her feet.

JEFFREY
Do you have something to tell me?

EM
Um.

Ellen enters in a black dress, her makeup slightly smudged. The cut of her dress reveals part of a scar on her collarbone.

ELLEN
You saw your brother.
    (nodding)
    You saw him.

Beat.

EM
I ran into him. While I was shopping.

Ellen and Jeffrey take a moment to process this.

EM
He’s doing really, really well.

ELLEN
Did he tell you that he broke out of Samaritan?

EM
Finished early.

JEFFREY
No, honey. We just spoke with them.
INT. CAR—NEAR SUNSET [CONTINUOUS]

Bobby taps the jade Buddha, making it swing back and forth. He stares ahead blankly, shifting his focus between the front door and the swaying talisman.

He tensely exhales. He gets out of the car.

EXT. DRIVEWAY—NEAR SUNSET

Bobby lights a cigarette and paces. After a beat, he puts it out. He reaches back into the car and pulls out the flowers.

Bobby walks to the front door. He looks through the sidelights and doesn’t see anyone. He tries the handle. The door’s locked.

EXT. BACKYARD—SUNSET

Bobby enters through a gate. The family’s big dog, LINCOLN (7), runs to greet Bobby. Bobby squats and embraces him.

BOBBY
Shhh. Quiet, boy.

Bobby lifts up a mat in front of a side door, but there’s nothing underneath.

EXT. SIDE OF THE HOUSE—SUNSET

A small stone Buddha is nestled into the bushes in a CLOSE-UP. Bobby’s enters the frame and lifts up the top half of the body. He pulls out a key.

INT. SIDE HALLWAY—SUNSET

Bobby enters the house. He hears an ARGUMENT coming from the back of the house. He freezes for a moment, then heads up the side stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY—SUNSET

We move with Bobby as he walks down the hallway. His FAMILY’S ARGUMENT becomes fainter and less intelligible.

Bobby stops at the open door to Em’s room and peeks in.
He then turns around to face the opposite door off the hallway. He stops there for a moment. Ever so slightly, he pushes it open.

19 INT. BOBBY’S BEDROOM--DUSK

Bobby enters in the dim blue light to find a bed surrounded by barren walls. As he moves toward the closet, he trips over a cord. Turning around, he sees a treadmill.

Bobby opens the closet and turns on its light. He finds several cardboard boxes. He sifts through stuffed animals, skateboarding posters, and a tarnished trumpet.

Bobby digs up a pile of scattered macabre sketches and landscape paintings. He looks at them up close one at a time.

20 INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN--DUSK [CONTINUOUS]

Em sits at the head of a formal walnut brown dining table. Her parents sit on either side.

JEFFREY
We’re not going to risk mom’s safety, or yours, to wish him a safe journey.

EM
He’s harmless, dad. We just spent an hour together.
   (flamboyantly)
And look at me!

JEFFREY
He’s playing you, Em.

EM
You’re wrong. I’ll prove you wrong.

Beat.

ELLEN
Where are the car keys?

Em glances toward the kitchen counter, on which the keys rest. Jeffrey catches this, gets up, and strides toward them.
EM
He’s here.

Jeffrey stops.

JEFFREY
What?

EM
He’s outside.

21 INT. BOBBY’S FORMER BEDROOM--DUSK [CONTINUOUS]

Bobby continues to examine his paintings and sketches. One piece of art paper is tied with a rubber band. He takes the band off, looks at it, and sets it aside. He shuts the closet door and leaves the room with it.

22 INT. HALLWAY/DINING ROOM/KITCHEN--DUSK

We follow Bobby as he walks back down the stairs and through the house. He reaches a hallway divider behind which he can only see fragments of the kitchen.

Jeffrey stands in the kitchen. Em stands by the dining table. Ellen remains seated at the dining table.

JEFFREY
He’s not setting foot inside this house.

EM
He doesn’t have to.

ELLEN
(shaking her head)
He was almost halfway through.

Behind the divider, Bobby inches forward.

JEFFREY
(to Ellen)
I’m calling the police.

EM
Stop! I don’t understand why you can’t just--

JEFFREY
He pushed your mother down the stairs, for Christ’s sake.
You’re eighteen. You can go out and say goodbye.

Em strides into the kitchen, rooting herself between Jeffrey and the home phone on the counter.

JEFFREY
Emily.

EM
You know. I also drink. I smoke. I do drugs.

Jeffrey takes out his cell phone.

JEFFREY
Bobby isn’t going to Stanford.

EM
Who the fuck cares?

ELLEN (O.S.)
(from behind Em)
We told him a year.

Em turns toward Ellen. Beat.

EM
Would you do the same thing to me?

A longer beat.

JEFFREY (O.S.)
(from behind Em)
You’re not a batterer.

ELLEN
Or a pathological liar. Or a thief.
(gaining steam)
Your first mistake was to trust him. Even if he is planning this crazy trip, he’s not gonna make it.

EM
People change.

ELLEN
Not Bobby.
(Beat)
I wish he could. Em, I really wish he could. But he’s just proven that he can’t. All he had to do was
(MORE)
ELLEN (cont’d)

finish. If he wanted to be part of this family, that’s what he had to do. And he chose otherwise. So it’s over. He ended it.

In the hallway, Bobby sits with this for a beat.

He then turns to put the flowers and art paper on top of a wooden console table. We follow him as he creeps back toward the side door.

He pauses in front of the stairs.

23 INT. EM’S BEDROOM--DUSK

Bobby rifles through the top of Em’s dresser and her desk. On the nightstand, he finds what he was looking for: Em’s wallet. He pulls out five twenty-dollar bills.

Taking a legal pad and pen from Em’s desk, he scribbles a note in messy handwriting: "IOU 100. Love, Roberta." He puts it in the wallet. He exits.

24 INT. KITCHEN--DUSK [CONTINUOUS]

Em leans against the counter, her back turned to Ellen at the table.

   EM
   I’m sorry.

   ELLEN
   It’s not your fault.

   EM
   Then whose is it.

Em starts walking out of the kitchen.

   JEFFREY (O.S.)
   You have about five minutes.

Em turns around. Her father enters, hanging up his cell phone and slipping it into his pocket.

   ELLEN
   We love you, Em.
JEFFREY
We really do.

Ellen rises from the table and walks toward Em.

ELLEN
Come over here.

Ellen opens her arms. Em backs away. After a beat, Em squeezes past Jeffrey and out of the kitchen. She strides toward the side hallway.

Jeffrey and Ellen follow Em for a moment. Then Ellen stops Jeffrey with her arm. They watch their daughter round the corner.

25
INT. SIDE HALLWAY--DUSK

Em’s resoluteness fades as she sees the side door cracked slightly open.

26
EXT. DRIVEWAY--DUSK

Em exits the house. As she nears the car, her determination wanes further.

From a WIDE HIGH ANGLE, we see her at the empty open car door.

27
INT. BOBBY’S BEDROOM--DUSK [CONTINUOUS]

Through Bobby’s bedroom window, we see Bobby throw his suitcase over the backyard fence and climb it as Lincoln runs after him.

28
INT. HALLWAY--DUSK [CONTINUOUS]

Bobby’s FLOWERS and ART PAPER rest on the console table. The unfurled paper reveals a CHARCOAL PORTRAIT OF THE HAPPY FAMILY in front of various framed family photos (the pictures that include Bobby only show him as a little boy). POLICE SIRENS murmur in the distance.