

"The Wilding"

Margaret

998.

KAYLA
(re: poster)
How long has she been gone?

CARLOS
A week. Her whole family disappeared with her. Happens all the time. People leave their lives behind - bad loans, bad choices. They just pick up and go. Too much of that around here.
(re: cards, teddy bears)
But you can see, we really care about each other. This is a change for you, a good one.

KAYLA
(trying to joke)
Yeah, no straight-jacket will really expand my wardrobe.

CARLOS
Your mom and I will help any way we can, but you're the only one who can make this work.

Kayla nods. Message received.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
I'm in 803 if you need me.

INT. WAITING ROOM, MARGARET'S PRACTICE -- DAY

DR. EMILY BERGOM (40s) waits. A reserved professional, smart suit. But a bit wan, withdrawn.

She takes in the waiting room, wonders what the hell she is doing here. Gum stuck to the carpet, water stains across the popcorn ceiling, the magazines sticky. About to leave --

Margaret pops out of her office.

Start → #1

MARGARET

Emily?

Too late. Emily follows Margaret into --

INT. OFFICE, MARGARET'S PRACTICE -- DAY

Emily settles into a sofa opposite Margaret's desk. She eyes the bowl of jolly ranchers, the AC window unit, the Glade PlugIns - the crassness of it all urging Emily to run out.

1/9

MARGARET
Good to meet you.

EMILY
You come highly recommended from a
colleague.

MARGARET
Mark and I go back.

A beat. Emily remains silent, not wanting to cede ground.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
How you feeling today?

EMILY
Fine.

MARGARET
Mark said it was urgent.

EMILY
I never said that.

MARGARET
Why do you think you're here?

EMILY
Stress. Work-related.

MARGARET
You're at Prolexa Stearns with
Mark?

EMILY
I'm heading up R&D on a
cholinesterase inhibitor. For
Alzheimer's. ~~We're pre-clinical.~~
Our IRB is in a few days - That's
when you present to a review board
before moving forward --

MARGARET
To Phase I trials. They covered
that in med school. At Duke. That's
how I know Mark. He was my research
advisor.

EMILY
(re: her blank walls)
You don't have a degree up. I
wasn't sure you're a doctor.

2/9

MARGARET

No worries, you're sure now... Mark oversees your study, so he's more of a superior than a colleague.

EMILY

You could say that.

MARGARET

That piss you off, your boss making you come here?

EMILY

I can see this from his side, I really can. My actions were erratic. ~~The long hours, too much caffeine, low blood sugar, you get tunnel vision. There's a thought, an impulse, and you carry it through.~~ But it was a blip, a bad afternoon... And I still have an IRB to prepare for, so...

MARGARET

Mark knows that, but he thought it was important for you to see me. Urgent even.

EMILY

He needs someone to give me a few Klonopin to get through the IRB.

MARGARET

(changes tact)

... Okay, I'm gonna show you something -

Margaret spins her computer screen around, plays a video -- the quality grainy, the position fixed. Security footage with no audio --

CUT TO:

We're inside the PROLEXA STEARNS LAB, a state-of-the-art facility. Lab Techs bang away at a bank of computers, grinding out data charts.

From the corner of the screen, Emily charges in, pushing a cart full of lab equipment and computers. All the wires tangled, screens smashed.

More disturbing than a quarter million dollars in damages is Emily -- sweat soaks through her shirt as she snatches at every scrap of metal in sight.

3/9

Still no audio, but we see Emily shouting at a Lab Tech as she tries to rip apart a 200 pound freeze dryer.

The Lab Tech blocks her, but she keeps clawing at the hulking machine. Relentless, rabid.

The video stops.

CUT BACK TO:

Margaret waits for Emily to say something. Emily only stares at the star-field screen saver darting around the computer.

EMILY

... Mark sent you that.

MARGARET

He's concerned --

Emily unravels.

EMILY

-- I drop out and there's no way, no fucking way, the FDA will let us move forward. Mark tell you that? His head researcher pulls out two days before an IRB and his billion dollar study is over. I'm not the one on the line, he is.

MARGARET

That might be why he insisted you see me, but I don't give a shit if some IND gets pushed through the pipeline. I'm here to help you. Were you hearing voices during this episode?

Emily looks away, doesn't want to admit it.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Do the voices come from the objects you were collecting?

Emily turns back to Margaret, surprised she knew this.

EMILY

Yes.

(defensive)

It's only when I'm at work.

MARGARET

And home, how's that going?

4/9

EMILY

This has nothing to do with my family.

MARGARET

Never said it did. You married?

EMILY

Yes, but he lost his job a year ago.

MARGARET

Him being unemployed, that make him less of a partner?

EMILY

No, it's better this way. He helps out with the kids.

Clearly an issue there, but Margaret lets it go for now.

MARGARET

Your research is under review, supporting your whole family. That's a lot to shoulder.

EMILY

Nothing I haven't handled before.

MARGARET

What do you think these voices are?

Emily deliberates, weighs how much she wants to reveal.

EMILY

(letting go)

... We're all made of the same particles - mammals, machines. All of us, aware, listening, remembering. And we know it, can feel it. This connection. But you walk forward, eyes ahead, stay in your lane. And then you hear it... all around you... Past or present, matter can't be destroyed.

Margaret not understanding, still listens. Emily pauses, it's hard to say aloud.

EMILY (CONT'D)

People died in there. And I can hear them.

Margaret nods, not fazed. Gets this a lot.

5/9

MARGARET

Ghosts. And what do they say?

EMILY

There's no words... Numbers. I only hear numbers.

Margaret's heard enough.

MARGARET

I specialize in psychotic disorders. These diseases present early, or they involve trauma... You're a healthy woman, overworked, but no history of mental illness. Your MRI was clear. But if there's even the slightest genetic predisposition, these diseases can be triggered. And if they are, you need treatment. Not a few Klonopin.

EMILY

I'm not psychotic.

MARGARET

I know it's a scary word to hear. Especially for someone like you, with your mind.

Emily's bravado melts away. Margaret takes Emily's hand, comforting her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

These voices, these ghosts you're hearing, they're not real.

Emily snaps away from Margaret, unwilling to accept that she's losing her mind.

INT. HALL, JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

Between classes, Kayla follows the herd down the hall. She ventures a few smiles at fellow Students.

She stops at her locker. But there's an African American STUDENT in front of it. Her back to us.

KAYLA

Excuse me. I gotta get in there.

Not hearing Kayla, the Student doesn't turn. Kayla moves to tap the Student, but stops short, noticing...

Stop

6/9

MARK

Not officially. But my ears in the
FDA say we have a greenlight.

Emily, overjoyed. Years of her hard work paying off.

EMILY

(two steps ahead)
With a double blind, it'll be a
challenge to hit our enrollment
targets.

MARK

We're already screening
participants.

(Emily overwhelmed)

This is your victory. No one
questions that. But you've had a
hard few weeks. If you need to take
some time, we'll still be here --

EMILY

I'm seeing this through.

Hesitant, Mark consents.

INT. MEN'S WEARHOUSE -- DAY

By the sale rack George tries on a black suit.

At the mirror George looks himself over. The suit fits well,
collared shirt underneath, shoes shiny -- a new man.

Nervous, George straightens his cuffs one too many times. He
stops a Sales Clerk.

GEORGE

Can I wear this out?

SALES CLERK

Long as you pay for it.

George pulls out his wallet.

I/E. JEEP, DURHAM ROAD -- DAY

Margaret drives them home in silence. Kayla fidgets, a
sinking feeling in her stomach.

KAYLA

You gonna take me back to Central?

Start →
#3

7/9

MARGARET

Wasn't me that put you there. The Judge said it was Central or juvie.

KAYLA

... Never knew you had a choice.

Margaret losing it a bit --

MARGARET

It happens again, I won't get one... You saw that Gaby Reddings girl --

KAYLA

Don't be mad at Carlos.

MARGARET

-- You saw her cause of those signs at school.

KAYLA

She didn't look like her photo.

MARGARET

A picture puts an idea in your head, and you make it real, but these visions --

KAYLA

THEY'RE NOT FUCKING VISIONS.

MARGARET

Kayla, please, this has to stop --

KAYLA

Cole Mill Road. Follow it to the end.

MARGARET

What's there?

KAYLA

(a challenge)
Gaby Reddings.

Defeated, Margaret eyes her daughter.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

I'm not crazy.

At her breaking point, Margaret pulls to the shoulder.

8/9

MARGARET

Kayla, I love you, but none of this
is real. You need to see that.

KAYLA

... So drive. Cole Mill Road.

A challenge. Margaret, desperate, pops a U-turn, driving away
from the city.

INT. PROLEKA STEARNS -- DAY

STOP

A Lab Tech wheels away a cart of animal enclosures, dead rats
inside of them.

EMILY

(re: rats)

Did the analysis come back?

LAB TECHNICIAN

We ran full scans. Same as the
others, nothing irregular.

EMILY

(concerned)

Store the samples.

The Tech nods as he wheels away the dead rats. Emily stops
short.

MAN (OS)

11... 13... 17...

Emily creeps towards a closed door, following the faint
counting.

None of the Lab Techs buzzing around her react. Do they hear
it too, she's not sure.

Pressed against the door, Emily tenses, certain she hears the
prime numbers being counted out. She bursts into --

ANIMAL CONTAINMENT ROOM

All the Animal Enclosures have been removed. The space is now
filled with a conference table.

A LAB TECH questions an OLDER MALE PARTICIPANT (60s) who
fidgets with his packet of consent forms.

MALE PARTICIPANT

19... 23... 29...

9/9