

LIVE MYOur LIFE

by

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2023

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EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Rain is falling over the German metropolis. Above the surrounding buildings, the roof of the apartment building towers.

MAX (29's Weary and depressed looking) stands like a statue at the edge of the abyss, gazing absent-mindedly into the depths.

It is a sure death sentence if he falls several stories to the ground.

Wearing no rain gear, the boy is completely soaked. Max takes one final deep breath, letting himself fall forward...

...but something is holding him back: The railing he was holding on to has caught his bracelet.

Freeing himself, Max looks at the bracelet. A very old, badly worn, cloth bracelet.

The boy has a flash of memory. He looks down again, ventures a step forward...

...and lands on the gravel of the roof. He had jumped half a meter.

Max smiles.

EXT. STREETS OF THE CITY - DAY

A rainy, gloomy day dawns. People in colorless raincoats with gray umbrellas fill the streets.

Forming a uniform, anonymous mass, everyone is on the move.

Max finds his way through strangers. He does not have an umbrella, but he is wearing a rain jacket.

INT. TOWN ARCHIVES BASEMENT - DAY

The City Archives is a dark, smoky place.

There are no windows. Files are stacked one on top of the other on meter-high shelves.

The atmosphere is oppressive in the narrow corridors. There is only one person working here: Max.

He sorts files, carries boxes, and keeps order in the archives, a smoldering cigarette in the corner of his mouth. All the while, he keeps an expression of indifference on his face.

The rain still wets parts of his shirt and pants. His clothes are mundane, almost boring, like everything else about him.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Max eats a Spartan dinner of boiled potatoes in the semi-darkness of his small apartment.

The meal has a boring, tasteless appearance.

LATER

Max reads the last pages of a scientifically advanced book about celestial bodies, sitting in fetal position on his bed.

He then closes the book and turns off the light on his nightstand.

EXT. BIG CITY - DAY

The streets are busy, the downtown area is green. The people are out enjoying the beautiful weather.

The City Hall is one of the tallest buildings in the center.

INT. TOWN ARCHIVES BASEMENT - DAY

In great contrast to the hustle and bustle of the city is the City Archives in the basement of the City Hall.

With a nearly burnt cigarette in the corner of his mouth, Max stands on a ladder, arranging files on a shelf.

He is barely paying attention to the electronic bell ringing in the background.

He walks over to his desk, which also serves as a counter for the party's traffic.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL stands in front of him. He is in civilian clothes, carrying a folder. He presses the bell button once again in a demonstrative manner.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL

(provocative)

Did I wake you up? I have some files here for the archive.

Ruthlessly, he tosses the folder onto the desk, on which there are piles of other papers.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)

By the way. I also need the development plan for this parcel.

He hands Max a piece of paper with a number on it, but before Max has a chance to grab it, Karl lets the paper fall out of his fingers and onto the floor.

Max picks up the piece of paper without any emotion and disappears between the shelves.

The city official looks after him with a skeptical expression; he does not like the taciturn archivist at all.

Shortly thereafter, Max returns with the requested file and hands it to the city official.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)

Are you even allowed to smoke here?

Max looks at him indifferently. He takes his cigarette, which has already burned out, and stubs it out in the ashtray on the desk.

MAX

Anything else?

The city official Karl turns around with a grumble and leaves the archive.

EXT. SHOPPING STREET - EVENING

It is raining.

Max is heading home. Dressed in gray rain gear with gray umbrellas, he wanders through a sea of people.

INT. SUPERMARKET - EVENING

The supermarket is a busy place. Lots of people are shopping, it's closing time.

Packing his groceries into a plastic bag, Max is no exception.

INT. BOOKSTORE - EVENING

In the science section, Max looks at the books. He knows the entire selection by heart.

In one hand he is carrying two plastic bags filled with the groceries he has just bought.

THEA

Hey, I know you.

A girl about his age is standing next to him: THEA (26's, a girl with her heart in the right place).

She is slim and dressed in everyday clothes, a little smaller than Max.

THEA (CONT'D)
You also work in the city
magistrate's office, don't you?

Max does not answer, he is not interested in this conversation or talking in general.

THEA (CONT'D)
I started last week. I am Thea.

MAX
Max.

Max answers in a monotone voice, without any real interest.

THEA
Have you been working there for a
while?

MAX
Ten years.

THEA
Wow, so you're already a real pro.
(smiles)
Maybe I'll see you around.

MAX
Maybe.

He picks up a book and leaves.

EXT. SHOPPING STREET - EVENING

Max is leaving the bookstore and is weaving his way through the crowd of people on the sidewalk.

He comes to a stop. A girl, SARAH, stands motionless in the rain in front of him.

Her brightly colored, short-sleeved clothes make her stand out from the gray crowd.

Sarah looks to be in her mid-20s, and she's not wearing a raincoat or an umbrella. Yet she is not wet.

She has an air of impassivity about her, as if none of the people around her are aware of her.

The girl lifts her eyes to meet Max's. The two of them stare at each other for a few seconds, then Max takes a step to the side to get away from her and disappears into the crowd.

Sarah's eyes are on him.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING STAIRWELL - EVENING

Max is knocking on his neighbor's apartment door.

MRS. NOVAK (90's, delightful, strong Slavic accent), opens the door. She is standing with her back bent and her gait unsteady.

Max holds out the plastic bag of groceries.

MRS. NOVAK
(delighted)
My boy, heaven sent you!

Ms. Novak speaks with a strong accent.

MRS. NOVAK (CONT'D)
I've been waiting for you! You know
that the best goulash is no good
without potatoes!
What do I owe you?

MAX
(unemotionally)
Eighteen fifty.

The lady rummages in her purse and hands him a twenty euro bill.

MRS. NOVAK
You keep the rest. Shall I bring
you some goulash later?

MAX
Not necessary.
I cook for myself.

Max turns away and goes to the neighboring apartment.

Mrs. Novak watches him, as he enters. She is fond of the boy, even though his lack of emotion can often make him seem a bit rude.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Max enters his apartment. He closes the door behind him and sighs.

The apartment consists of just a slightly larger living room that combines the kitchen, bedroom and living room. In spite of its age, the place looks clean and tidy, almost sterile and devoid of color.

Max opens the window and lights a cigarette.

He can see the city lights shimmering in the rain from the top floor.

LATER

Max is in the kitchen preparing dinner. He is using a kitchen knife to cut potatoes into small pieces. Water boils in the pot next to him.

He stops for a moment and stares at the knife. He turns the knife over and holds it with both hands so that the blade is resting against his stomach.

He fights with his inner self, wants to ram the knife into his stomach, but he cannot do it. He glances down at his tattered wristband and grimaces.

Then he sets the knife aside with a grin on his face.

MAX
(to himself)
Coward.

LATER

Max sits on his bed, eats a Spartan dinner and reads the book he had purchased before.

It is yet another scientific work on the subject of astronomy.

There is a huge shelf full of books on the wall behind the bed.

LATER

Max does the dishes, tidies up the kitchen and ties up the garbage bag. He then walks to the front door to take the trash out.

He opens the door to the apartment and sees Sarah standing there.

A little surprised, Max pauses.

The girl has a curious look on her face.

MAX (CONT'D)
(indifferent)
Can I help you?

Sarah seems surprised that he has approached her.

SARAH
(incredulous)
You can see me?

MAX
(indifferent)
Of course I can see you, I'm not
blind.
And now take off.

Max closes the door and pushes the latch forward, putting the garbage bag in front of the apartment.

As he turns around, he faces the girl again now standing in his apartment.

SARAH
So you really can see me!

MAX
(startled)
What the...?
How did you get in here?

Sarah's eyes fill with tears. She sobs and cries.

SARAH
(sobbing)
I was so alone!

She rushes toward Max, who is standing rooted to the spot, to give him a hug, but she slips right through him as if through nothing at all.

Max spins around, scanning his body.

SARAH (CONT'D)
No, no, no! It can't be.

Sarah approaches again and tries to touch him with her hands.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Please, I just want...

Her hands move through Max's body without touching him. Max is frozen, unable to process what has just happened.

Robotized, he gropes along the wall past Sarah into the bathroom, careful not to brush against her.

He steps up to the sink and washes his face with cold water.

Then he glances into the mirror, where there is no one in sight but himself.

Carefully, he makes his way back into the living room; there is no one here, either.

Max walks toward the window and lights a cigarette. His fingers tremble.

In complete silence, Sarah comes to join him at the window.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I am Sarah.

Max jerks at the sound of her voice. But he pays no attention to the girl standing next to him and keeps looking out the window.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Are you ignoring me? I know that
you can hear and also can see me.
After all, you are not blind.

Max constantly ignores the girl.

MAX
(to himself)
I'm going crazy. Or schizophrenic.
Or both.

SARAH
Don't say that! You're the first
who can see me!

Max turns away from the window and walks around the apartment in a brooding manner, being careful not to look at the girl. Sarah follows him.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Wait! What's your name?

MAX
(telling himself)
I can't hear anything.

SARAH
Of course you can hear me. Stop for
a moment!

Max stops, turns around and stares at Sarah in amazement.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You don't know how much I wished I
had someone to talk to!

As he continues to stare at the chatty Sarah, the boy puts on his headphones. Her words fall silent, and all he can see is the movement of her lips as the music from the headphones drowns out everything else.

He then walks over to the bed, reclines on it, and demonstratively closes his eyes.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - DAY

In his crumpled bed, Max wakes up. He is still wearing his headphones and the clothes he wore last night.

He sits up and looks around the room a little anxiously.
There is no one to be seen.

Then his eyes fall on the alarm clock on the side of the bed.
It is half past nine.

MAX
(drowsy)
Shit!

Max struggles to get out of bed.

INT. TOWN ARCHIVES BASEMENT - DAY

City official Karl stands in front of Max's desk in the
archive.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL
You look like shit.
And by that I mean, shittier than
usual.

Max is sitting at his desk. His hair is disheveled, his eyes
dark, and his clothes wrinkled from oversleeping.

The city official gives him an indifferent look. He throws a
couple of folders on the table, which he had been carrying
under his arm.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)
I need the damn citizenship
certificates.

Reluctantly, Max takes the folders from the table and
disappears into the aisles.

Karl looks after him grimly.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)
You're lucky I don't rat you out. I
would have needed the proofs
already this morning!

Exhausted, Max sifts through the documents in the folders and
finds his way to the correct place in the file room.

Once there, he picks up a couple of folders from a shelf at
eye level.

SARAH
This guy doesn't like you very
much, does he?

Max glances up.

He sees Sarah's face, standing in the next aisle, through the
crack in the shelf.

Frightened, Max backs away and hits the bookcase behind him, burying him in an avalanche of falling books.

Sarah steps through the bookcase as if it were nothing at all and comes to stand in front of Max.

MAX
(stammering in
bewilderment)
It was not a dream.

SARAH
Of course not. I am completely
real.

Max regains his composure.

MAX
Completely real.
(ironic)
That's why you just walked through
the shelf like it was nothing.

SARAH
Oh that.
(waves off)
Trifle. Tell me, can you actually
see others like me?

Max arranges the documents on the floor.

MAX
Fortunately not.
That means I'm not completely lost
yet.

He returns to his desk, where City official Karl is waiting impatiently.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL
Finally, why is it taking so long?

Max gives him the requested documents.

SARAH
What's his problem?

Karl is about to leave.

MAX
(to Karl)
Wait.
Do you notice... notice anything?
Anything... unusual?

Max points to Sarah standing next to him.

MAX (CONT'D)
About here.

From Karl's perspective, Max points into the void. Only he can see Sarah.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL
You really need a psychiatrist, you freak!

The city official shakes his head and leaves.

SARAH
(Calling out to Karl)
Idiot!

MAX
He may not be in the wrong.

EXT. STREETS OF THE CITY - DAY

Max walks out of the administration building and steps out into the streets of the city. Sarah follows him out through the wall.

SARAH
Hey wait! Where are we going?

MAX
We are not going anywhere. I am going.

SARAH
And where to?

Max does not give any answer, he tries to escape from the whole situation, he wanders aimlessly through the city.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Don't you want to know what I am?

The girl does not get an answer. She then jumps in front of Max, trying to startle him.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I am a ghost!

MAX
(completely unfazed)
More likely a pipe dream.

SARAH
I am really a ghost.

MAX
Then haunt someone else.

SARAH

Listen to me!
I didn't choose that! I can't help
the fact that only you can see me.

Max stops and looks at Sarah.

MAX

What do you want from me?

SARAH

Just talk. I haven't talked to
anyone in ages.

MAX

So? Me neither!
And I found it very pleasant!

It is only now that Max notices the puzzled looks of those
passing by, who seem to think he's talking to himself.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Chewing on a sausage, Max sits in a chair.

Facing him, Sarah is sitting on his bed. They stare at each
other.

SARAH

So, are you going to tell me your
name?

MAX

Why?

SARAH

Well, I need to know how to call
you.

MAX

Who says I want that?

SARAH

Why are you being so dismissive?

MAX

I don't know if you've noticed, but
I don't usually like to talk.
My favorite thing is to be left
alone.

SARAH

(somewhat upset)
Oh, yeah? Well, not me!
I was left alone for...

(thinks)

For...

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
 (she can't remember)
 forever!
 (sadly)
 I can't even remember when I died
 or what I died of.
 You will have to deal with me,
 whether you like it or not.
 That is not your decision!

Sarah stands in front of Max.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 (threatening)
 So, you're going to tell me your
 name, or else....

Max grabs the headphones beside him and starts to put them
 on.

Sarah realizes her mistake.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 No! Wait. Please, don't.
 (repenting)
 I didn't mean to threaten you. I'll
 be good, but just let me stay here.

Max sighs, but puts the headphones down.

Then he stands up, picks up his book, and lies down on the
 bed on his stomach. He begins to read without paying
 attention to Sarah.

Soon Sarah is also lying face down on the bed next to him,
 curious to see what Max is reading.

MAX
 What are you doing?

SARAH
 Well, I'll be allowed to read.

The two continue reading.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 What does right ascension mean?

MAX
 This describes a certain position
 in the sky.

SARAH
 Uh-huh. And that? Elongation.

MAX
 The angle between two celestial
 bodies.

Max turns the page.

SARAH
Wait, I'm not through yet.

He flips back again.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Ready.

He scrolls forward again.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What does...

Max swiftly closes the book and sits down cross-legged.

MAX
Listen, we clearly need to get this
straightened out.

Sarah sits cross-legged as well.

SARAH
Okay, I'm listening.

MAX
First of all, you will respect my
privacy.
If I wanna be alone, leave me be.

Second, you stay out of my work.
The last thing I want is for
someone to have the impression that
I'm some kind of nut.

And third, don't barge in here all
the time. I can't afford a heart
attack.

SARAH
Okay.
But I also have a condition.
You have to help me find out why I
died. That's the only reason I'm
still here, in my opinion.

MAX
(displeased)
Agreed.

The two of them sit in silence across from each other.

MAX (CONT'D)
Max.

SARAH
What?

MAX
You asked for my name. Well, my
name is Max.

SARAH
(cheerfully)
My name is Sarah. Nice to meet you.

EXT. MAGISTRATE'S ENTRANCE - DAY

The sun is shining brightly. Outside the magistrate's office there is a hustle and bustle.

INT. TOWN ARCHIVES BASEMENT - DAY

Max is standing on a ladder in one of the corridors between the shelves of files and is sorting through some documents.

He hears a knock. It is Thea standing at the end of the corridor.

THEA
Hi.

Max sees her, but seems not to remember having ever seen Thea.

THEA (CONT'D)
It's Thea.
Do you remember when we met at the
bookstore the other day?

He gets down off of the ladder.

MAX
(neutral)
What do you need?

THEA
(slightly embarrassed)
Well, I work upstairs on the third
floor in the lost and found
department.
I was wondering if you could help
me.
A set of keys was left here. Here
they are.

Thea shows Max the bunch of keys. There is a pendant with the name "Elodie" engraved on it.

MAX
(reading)
Elodie.

THEA

Pretty rare name, huh?
I thought you might want to check
the Civil Registry to see if it
exists anywhere.
I hope there are not too many
people with that name.

Thea pushes a piece of paper into Max's hand.

MAX

What is this?

THEA

(smiling)
My number. I would love it if you
could send me the results.

MAX

To your private phone?

THEA

(smiling)
Of course, you can send it to me at
the lost and found number too.

Thea leaves, but turns back to Max.

THEA (CONT'D)

Oh, before I forget.
Mr. Schauer would like to talk to
you.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Someone is knocking at the office door.

MR. SCHAUER

Yes, please?

Max goes to see Mr. Schauer, who supervises Max.

MR. SCHAUER (CONT'D)

Hello, Max. Please have a seat.

With a bushy beard and glasses, Mr. Schauer is in his mid-fifties. His clothes make him look a little old-fashioned, but nice.

Max takes a seat at the desk. The office is located on one of the upper floors of the building.

MR. SCHAUER (CONT'D)

How are you doing?

MAX

Fine.

MR. SCHAUER
(sincerely)
You are? I'm glad to hear that.
Coffee?

MAX
No, thank you.

Mr. Schauer sits in his swivel chair and looks out the window.

MR. SCHAUER
A complaint has been received.

He picks up a piece of paper from the desk and looks at it.

MR. SCHAUER (CONT'D)
Your head's not in the right place
lately, your speech is crazy and
you are late.

Without even trying to defend himself, Max sits motionless, letting the accusation wash over him.

MAX
Karl.

MR. SCHAUER
(nods)
It is obvious that you are not the
best of friends.
Max. I take these things very
seriously. I've been your boss for
ten years.
I don't care about the complaint,
but I do care about you. You
haven't taken a vacation day in
years.
It won't help anyone if you work
yourself into a burnout. Especially
not you.

MAX
I like the work in the archive.

MR. SCHAUER
That's a good thing, but you also
have to have a little bit of
balance.
What I have in mind is: You can
take time off whenever you want.
The archive can get along without
you for a few days.

EXT. CITY STREETS - EVENING

Max leaves the city hall. He steps out into the open air. The end of his day's work begins as he lights a cigarette.

Sarah is waiting for him on the sidewalk next to the entrance.

SARAH
May I walk with you?

Max walks past her without answering.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I take that as a yes.

Sarah follows Max and catches up with him.

SARAH (CONT'D)
So how was work?

MAX
What are you going to do now, make small talk?

SARAH
I guess I'll have to start if you have nothing to say.

MAX
What is your last name?

SARAH
(surprised)
Where did that come from?

MAX
I have access to every death certificate in the archives for the last thirty years. At least as far as the city's deceased are concerned.

SARAH
Oh, that's smart!
(playfully)
But it is useless, because I only know my first name: Sarah. I'm not even sure when I passed away.
Who says I haven't been dead for a hundred years?

MAX
Your watch.

Sarah checks the watch on her wrist.

SARAH
What about it?

MAX
This is one of the relatively newer models. So you would not have been dead for thirty years if you were wearing it on the thirteenth.

SARAH
Thirteenth?

MAX
Do I have to spoon feed you on everything?
Just look at when it stopped.

Sarah looks at the clock face. The clock has stopped, the date is at thirteen.

SARAH
(excited)
Man, you are a genius, a master detective!

MAX
There are still thousands of files I have to search:
For a Sarah who died on a 13th at the age of...

Max pauses and looks at Sarah.

MAX (CONT'D)
...about twenty-five.

SARAH
(perky)
I might be older than I look.

MAX
Yeah, but you could look older than you are.

SARAH
We really need to work on your compliments.

INT. BOOKSTORE - EVENING

Max is looking for new reading material in the science section as usual.

Sarah is looking at the titles of the books on the shelves and is wrinkling her nose at them.

SARAH

Ugh, boring, boring, I don't even get the title. You're not really gonna buy one of these complicated books, are you? I won't understand half of it.

MAX

You don't have to read it.

SARAH

But I want to. Plus, think of it like this: You don't have to deal with me while I read, if it's so annoying. Come on!

Sarah steps through the bookcase into the next aisle.

Max sighs, but eventually follows her, bypassing the shelf.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Ah, this is the place.

Sarah reads the titles of the books.

MAX

(disappointed)

This is the fiction section.

SARAH

Exactly. Time for a change of scenery in your life, too!

He picks up a book from the shelf.

MAX

I don't think "Fifty grades in May" is going to expand my horizons.

SARAH

(amused)

No, we're not going to take that one. We need a book that we both like. Like this one.

He picks up the book Sarah has in mind from the shelf.

The title is "Live My Life".

On the cover is a picture of a girl sitting on a log and looking up at the starry sky.

What we don't immediately notice is the author's name "Philipp Weiler", and the girl's bracelet: It is the same one Max is wearing.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 The title fits somehow.
 Live my life. Because...
 (sad)
 Because I can't anymore.

Max reads the blurb.

MAX
 Sounds boring.

SARAH
 (sassy)
 I knew it would be a perfect fit.

Sarah gets a stern look for her statement.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 (defusing)
 Oh, come on, I was just kidding!

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING STAIRWELL - EVENING

Max and Sarah are climbing the stairs leading to where Max lives. The building does not have an elevator.

He stops in front of the door of his neighbor's apartment and knocks on it. In his hand is a shopping bag filled with groceries.

SARAH
 Don't you live next door?

MAX
 I have to drop this off.

SARAH
 So you didn't go shopping for yourself?

MAX
 No.

Max knocks again, but no one answers.

Sarah reads the name on the doorplate.

SARAH
 Lana Novak. Is this your girlfriend?

MAX
 (defensively)
 No.
 The woman is in her nineties!

SARAH
(curiously)
Do you have a girlfriend?

Max knocks again.

MAX
(distracting)
Strange. She is usually always
home.

He opens the unlocked front door.

MAX (CONT'D)
Mrs. Novak?
It's me, Max.

As Max enters the apartment, he already sees the woman's legs lying on the floor in the next room.

MAX (CONT'D)
Mrs. Novak!

He runs to her and kneels down beside her.

The woman has fallen and is lying on the floor. Dried blood is on her brow.

MAX (CONT'D)
What happened?

Mrs. Novak is barely conscious and does not answer him.

He grabs his cell phone and calls 911. Sarah comes up behind him.

MAX (CONT'D)
(to Sarah)
Stay with her, I'll call an
ambulance.

As Max paces the room on the phone, Sarah kneels down beside Mrs. Novak.

The old woman's dull eyes follow Sarah. She speaks with great difficulty.

MRS. NOVAK
(to Sarah)
Evil spirit.

The girl is surprised at first that Mrs. Novak can see her.

SARAH
(empathetically)
I am not an evil spirit.

MRS. NOVAK
Have you come for me?

Sarah is speaking in an uncharacteristically calm, almost emotionless manner.

SARAH
No.

MRS. NOVAK
Why are you here?

Sarah does not answer.

MRS. NOVAK (CONT'D)
Please don't hurt the boy.

The woman's body glows with bright light. Points of light rise from her like sparks from a fire.

Then her spirit, the reflection of the body, separates from it and floats skyward.

SARAH
(to Mrs. Novak's ghost)
Wait, take me with you!

Sarah grabs the ghost's hand.

MRS. NOVAK
(in ghost form, echoing
voice)
No.
You're not ready.

As her ghostly body is pulled upward, Sarah continues to hold the hand of Mrs. Novak's ghost.

SARAH
Why?

The woman's ghost has a look at Max who is on the phone. In slow motion, the world around her unfolds.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Him?

Sarah loses grip of her hand as Mrs. Novak's mind begins to fade.

MRS. NOVAK
(in ghost form, echoing
voice)
Help him and save yourself.

The woman's ghost begins to fade, disappearing completely.

Max approaches again, having ended the call. He has no knowledge of the conversation between Sarah and the woman.

MAX

Rescue is at hand.

SARAH

She's dead.

Max's eyes are on Mrs. Novak, who is motionless on the floor.

LATER

The paramedics are carrying the covered body out of the apartment on a stretcher and down the stairs.

Max and Sarah are standing in the hallway watching the process.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the dim light of his apartment, Max sits by the window. He looks out at the city lights glittering in the rain.

The metropolis is engulfed in a thunderstorm.

He looks thoughtful as he takes a drag from his cigarette.

Sarah is sitting on his bed. The mood is somber.

SARAH

What happens to us when we die?

MAX

Well, you are already dead. But if that's what you're getting at, I don't believe in an afterlife.

(deep thought)

Death should be the end of it all. I hope so.

SARAH

(amazed, amused)

You're talking to a ghost and you don't believe in the afterlife?

MAX

You're not like that. Something is keeping you in this world, you said so yourself. That you were not ready to leave it just yet.

SARAH

That's what the old woman said.

MAX

Who? Mrs. Novak? She saw you?

SARAH

Yes, in her last moments before she died.

She said that we were connected, that she wanted me to help you.

MAX

(astonished)

But I'm supposed to help you.

SARAH

(thinking)

This makes no more sense for me than for you.

Is it possible that I'm still here to save you from the same fate that has befallen me?

Come to think of it, that doesn't sound so unlikely!

What if I died of Lung Cancer, and now I'm supposed to come back and save you from dying the same way I died?

Max looks thoughtfully at the cigarette that is stuck between his fingers.

MAX

You don't begrudge me anything.

He stubs out the cigarette and stands to his feet.

MAX (CONT'D)

(stretches)

Man, I am going to eat something and then go to bed.

Max goes to the refrigerator, takes out a plate of potatoes and puts them in the microwave.

A SHORT TIME LATER

Max is sitting in front of the plate of steaming potatoes and pokes around in them.

He's not into it, especially as it doesn't look very attractive.

Sarah sits across.

SARAH

This is your dinner?

MAX

It's what I want.

SARAH

You can't look at this.
What the hell are you trying to
punish yourself for?
They cook better even in prison.

MAX

What the hell is your problem? You
don't have to eat this.

SARAH

Thank God!

MAX

(cynically)
Are you afraid I might die from it
again? From "potato cancer"?

SARAH

(sniffs)
Probably, yeah.

Sarah stands and goes to the refrigerator.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'm sure you have something in here
to make this at least a little more
appetizing.

Through the closed door, she leans her torso into the
refrigerator.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(muted)
What a mess!

Sarah returns from the fridge.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You've really got nothing.
At least I could solve one mystery:
When the fridge's door is closed,
the light goes out.

MAX

Every five year old is aware of
that fact.

Her eyes fall on Mrs. Novak's shopping bag. Max left it in
the foyer of the apartment.

SARAH

(points to the bag)
Hey, what about this?

MAX

Those are Mrs. Novak's groceries.

SARAH

Yeah, but she's not going to need them anymore.

A SHORT TIME LATER

Max is placing the groceries from the bag on the kitchen counter.

There is pasta, rice, vegetables, spices, butter, milk, and more.

He and Sarah look over the ingredients.

SARAH (CONT'D)

This is definitely a solid base.
The woman knew how to cook.
But we'll be fine.
You just follow my instructions to the letter, and I promise you, you will have dinner like a king.
Now, the first thing on our list is hot water.

Max picks up a glass, fills it with hot water from the faucet, and sets it down for Sarah to use.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MAX

Well, you asked for hot water.

SARAH

Yeah, but not like this. I meant in a pot on the stove.

MAX

Uh-huh.

Max grabs an old pot from the cupboard and puts it on the stove.

SARAH

Okay, now chop the shallots.

MAX

The what?

SARAH

(shows)
Shallots, like this.

Max obeys.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Do you have a pan?

Max pulls a pan out of the cabinet.

SARAH (CONT'D)
All right, butter it and put it on
the heat.
No! Not all of it.

Max fishes the block of butter out of the pan again.

MAX
I'm just following your
instructions!

SARAH
I may have overestimated your
abilities.
Anyway, the water is boiling.
Salt it and add the rice.

Max adds the salt to the water and then pours the entire
package of rice into the pot.

Sarah bends over the pot.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Well, this is probably going to be
a bigger portion.
Now comes the most difficult part:
beating the eggs in the pot.

Much to Sarah's surprise, Max knows exactly what is meant by
this and confidently breaks the first egg into the pot.

MAX
Do you think I'm stupid?

Max cracks the second egg. The contents spill all over the
stove and onto the floor.

SARAH
Nothing can shake me anymore.

A SHORT TIME LATER

Max sets the finished vegetable omelet with rice on the table
and sits down.

Sarah, crouched at eye level next to the table, examines the
dish and then claps her hands.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(very excited)
Bon appetit!

Behind them, the entire kitchen block looms in a picture of devastation.

EXT. MAGISTRATE'S ENTRANCE - DAY

It is noon, the sun beating down from the sky.

There are a couple of shady trees in front of the municipal building, with benches under them.

Max is sitting on one of the benches. He eats the remains of the omelet from the night before, which he took to work in a food container.

He then takes out a pack of cigarettes and puts one in his mouth.

On the verge of lighting it, he hesitates.

He smiles and puts the cigarette back in the pack. Finally, he tosses the whole pack in the trash can that is next to him.

SARAH

Hey. Mind if I join you?

Sarah appears next to him. Keeping some distance, she sits down at the end of the bench.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I know I shouldn't be disturbing you at work, but ...

(hesitates)

I wanted to be with you, just for a few minutes.

Max grins.

MAX

Now I take my home-cooked food with me.

He looks at the empty food container next to him.

MAX (CONT'D)

You've got me this far. I don't even like smoking anymore.

SARAH

But that's a good thing. Have you found out anything? On the death certificates, I mean.

MAX

No. Not yet. But I didn't go through every one. I've had a lot of thoughts...

SARAH

Yeah?

Sarah moves closer to him.

MAX

Well, you have no memory of anything except your first name.

SARAH

Right.

MAX

But we might be able to find out a few other things about you. For example, we learned that you know how to prepare meals. Maybe you were a chef?

SARAH

Come on, Max.
The fact that I can cook is not unusual.
(joking)
That you can't cook is more unusual.

MAX

Very funny.
But in all seriousness, there are a lot of things we could find out about you and your past life. You know, things that you like, for example, or skills that you have.

SARAH

What do I like?

Sarah sits back and looks thoughtfully up into the treetops.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I like...
(hesitates)
...trees.

MAX

Trees?

SARAH

Yes, I have a sense of connection with them.
They ground me. But simultaneously they are heavy and scary.

MAX

This doesn't help us now, but it's a start.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

Maybe when you see places from your life again, we can jog your memory a little bit.

My guess is that you were a resident of this town, otherwise you wouldn't be here.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL

Look at him, that weirdo.

Karl is coming from the entrance of the City Hall. He is accompanied by two employees.

They come to a stop in front of Max and look down at him.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)

(to his colleagues)

Was I promising too much?
Talking to himself in public in the middle of the day.

SARAH

(to Max)

That's bullying.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL

(to Max)

Come on. Don't you want to introduce us to your imaginary friend?

Max remains calm, not reacting to the provocation.

Karl accidentally looks in Sarah's direction - he cannot see her, of course - and imitates shaking her hand.

Karl's colleagues laugh.

Sarah is furious. She clenches her fists and leaps to her feet.

SARAH

(angrily)

You idiot, I'll show you.
Shame on you! When I get my hands on you!

Totally out of control, she hits and kicks Karl, missing him as her arms and legs slide through him.

She dances around the three unsuspecting men, trying to hit them, and it looks funny.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL

(to Max)

My guess is he is just as much of a wimp as you are.

Karl leans over to Max. He holds out his cheek provocatively.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)
Come on. Hit me.
You want it.

Max's expression is one of composure, and he just stares at Karl.

The City official straightens, turns and leaves with his colleagues after a few seconds.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)
(walking away)
I knew you wouldn't have the balls
to confront me.

Sarah, still upset, stands next to Max and watches Karl.

SARAH
Somebody really needs to teach him
a lesson.

MAX
(angrily to Sarah)
This is why I didn't want you
coming to see me at work.

Thea emerges from the entrance of the town hall. On her way home, she crosses paths with Karl.

As she passes by, Karl gives her a hard slap on the backside. Thea is startled and gives him the middle finger.

THEA
Asshole!

The girl quickly moves away as Karl looks after her with a lustful expression.

Max gets up from the bench. He takes a step forward to confront Karl.

SARAH
Wait. I have a better idea.
Max, do exactly as I tell you.

Outside the building's entrance, Karl and his two colleagues are smoking.

MAX
(shouts from the
background)
Karl!

CITY OFFICIAL KARL
(to his colleagues)
Look who's finally found his balls.

On his way to Max, Karl rolls up his sleeves. His colleagues stay at the entrance.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)
(to Max, mockingly)
Have you lost your friend?

Karl stops in front of Max.

MAX
(a little uncertain)
For a grown man who still lives
with his mother, you have a
surprising amount of confidence.

Karl's coworkers are watching the conversation from a distance. They have no idea what the conversation might be about.

Max does most of the talking, while Karl listens, intimidated.

After a while, Karl comes back and silently hurries past his colleagues back into the building. They follow him in astonishment.

Max and Sarah watch them.

MAX (CONT'D)
(to Sarah)
How did you know all this?
Those were pretty graphic details
from his personal life.

SARAH
After your last session, I went to
his house and took a look around.

MAX
(conciliatory)
So, you were a detective when you
were still alive?

SARAH
(embarrassed, laughing)
Oh, nonsense!

MAX
I feel kind of guilty.
Weren't we a little hard on him?
I mean, it was almost blackmail.

SARAH
I think this will wake him up. He
won't be messing with you again
anytime soon.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It is a hot summer's night. To let at least some cool air into the room, the apartment window is open.

Max is lying on his stomach on the bed, reading a book. It is the one called "Live my life", which he bought with Sarah.

Sarah is lying next to Max, reading with him. She looks very sad, her eyes are watery.

Max is completely unaffected.

Tears trickle down Sarah's cheeks, then she bursts into tears. She buries her face in her arms.

MAX
(astonished)
What is it?

SARAH
(wipes away tears)
This is so sad!
She was never out of his mind!

The girl looks at the emotionless Max.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Are the two of us reading the same
book now?
How can you be so cold about this?

MAX
It's just a story.

SARAH
A story that should touch your
heart! What are you, a stone?

MAX
I'm just not built for the water
like you.

SARAH
You know what? I would say you are
emotionally stunted.
What would it take to make you cry?

MAX
I don't know.

SARAH
When was the last time you cried?

MAX
I...
(hesitates)
I don't know if I ever cried.

SARAH
 (surprised, sad)
 You never cried? That is sad.

MAX
 It's not like I actively suppress
 it. I just...
 (doesn't understand
 himself)
 I just can't.

SARAH
 (thoughtfully)
 Well, in your defense, it has to be
 said that there is not a whole lot
 of drama going on in your life.
 I mean, you spend most of your time
 at work, and the rest of it you are
 here alone, reading.
 Is that all you do?

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Max pushes open the dilapidated access door and steps out
 onto the roof of his apartment building with Sarah in tow.

They have a nice view of the city as it is slightly higher
 than the roofs of the surrounding buildings.

MAX
 I come up here sometimes when I
 need to clear my head.

SARAH
 (ironically)
 More like: if you want to isolate
 yourself even more...

Sarah's eyes are on the sea of lights in the city.

With an outstretched hand, Max points to the night sky.

MAX
 See that bright star up there?

SARAH
 (looking up at the sky)
 The one above the steeple?

MAX
 Right there.
 That's the North Star.
 It is just above the North Pole.
 Sailors used to use it for
 navigation.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

The sign that goes with it is the
little bear.
See the tail?

SARAH

(straining)

What, where would there be a tail?

MAX

Yeah, it is kind of hard to see.
It's easier to recognize the great
bear.
There, look a little further down.
Can you see it?
It looks like a wagon with a
handlebar.

SARAH

(excited)

I see it, I see it!

MAX

(points)

The chain of stars between the two
bears is called the Dragon.
He fights with Hercules, beside
him.

SARAH

Man, it takes a lot of imagination
to see this.

MAX

(chuckles)

That's right.

SARAH

You like that, don't you?

MAX

Astronomy?
Yeah, I guess I do.
Unfortunately, you can't get a good
look at the night sky out here.
The city lights are too bright.

Falling from the night sky is a shooting star with a long
tail.

SARAH

(excited)

Look!
Did you see that? Max, a shooting
star!
Quick, make a wish!

Sarah closes her eyes and clasps her hands.

Max looks up at the sky.

MAX

What did you wish for?

SARAH

I can't tell you. Otherwise, my wish won't come true.

(looks up at the sky)

Do you think it's true that heaven sheds a tear when someone dies?

MAX

You mean like a shooting star?

No.

The sky would be full of shooting stars in that case.

Another shooting star crosses the sky.

SARAH

There it is! Another one.

And another. Max, look!

Several shooting stars in a row are falling from the sky.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What does it mean?

MAX

Those are the Perseids.

Once a year, Earth crosses the tail of a comet.

SARAH

It is beautiful.

Sarah starts to move closer to Max. The two of them look out at the rain of shooting stars in the night sky.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - DAY

The sun has already risen, casting a beam of light into the room.

Max is still asleep. He turns to the side and opens his eyes.

The boy looks directly into Sarah's eyes, which are staring back at him.

MAX

Are you watching me sleep?

SARAH

(caught, blushing)

What?! Don't be silly!

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)
(pouting)
You're not that interesting.

Sarah walks to the window in a huff and crosses her arms over her chest.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I was just waiting for you to wake up, since we got so much to do.

MAX
I know nothing about that.
What time is it anyway?

Max gets up to look at his alarm clock: ten to eight.

Tired, he falls back into bed.

MAX (CONT'D)
Let me sleep.

Sarah marches over to the bed and puts her hands on her hips.

SARAH
Come on, get up!
After all, it was your idea to do a city search for places I have memories of.
You've got the weekend off, and the weather's great too. We don't have to wait for a better day.
(screams)
Get up!

Max turns and falls out of bed.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Max and Sarah walk aimlessly through the city.

The boy is nibbling at a piece of bread, his meager breakfast.

SARAH
So what do you want to do? What do you have in mind?
Are we just going to walk around or is there a plan?

MAX
A plan?
Until a few minutes ago, I didn't know anything about it.

SARAH
But it was your idea!

MAX

Yes, an idea, but nothing more,
nothing less.

Sarah looks a little disappointed.

MAX (CONT'D)

All right.
Let's take this one step at a time.
We have no idea when or why you
died, but there's a very good
chance you were in a hospital
before you did.
I think we should start there.

Sarah's face brightens up.

EXT. MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Located in the center of the city, the Municipal Hospital
consists of a large area with several complexes.

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - DAY

The reception area of the hospital is a large, bright hall.
It has an information area, seating, and access to stairs and
elevators.

It is busy with patients, staff, and visitors.

Sarah and Max look around.

SARAH

Nothing here looks familiar.

Max is leading Sarah over to a large overview board with a
map of the hospital on it.

His eyes are on the map, as if he is in search of something.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What are you looking for?

MAX

If there is any truth to your lung
cancer theory, we are looking
for...

Max taps his finger on the board.

MAX (CONT'D)

Here: Oncology.

SARAH

But we don't know that.

MAX

Exactly.
So we have to start somewhere.
Third floor.

The two of them walk to the elevator. Max hesitates.

SARAH

What is it?

MAX

Wait a second.

He disappears into the crowd.

A SHORT TIME LATER

Holding a bouquet of flowers, Max returns to Sarah.

SARAH

Oh, how beautiful, for me?

MAX

What? No.
This is... I mean, I can't just...
At least I look like a visitor with
these.
Now, come on.

Max leads the girl to the elevators and gets into one with her and a couple of other visitors.

He pushes the button for the third floor and the doors close.

As the elevator begins to move up, Sarah disappears through the floor and remains in the same position in three dimensional space.

MAX (CONT'D)

(wondering)

Uh, Sarah....

The other passengers look at the boy in amazement. He seems to be talking to himself.

Max smiles embarrassedly.

INT. ONCOLOGY - DAY

The elevator doors open and Max hurries out.

Sarah is waiting for him.

MAX

What was that about?

SARAH
 Sorry. Sometimes I forget I am a
 ghost. But...
 (embarrassed)
 You just called me Sarah for the
 first time.

Sarah's growing affection for him leaves Max unimpressed.

MAX
 Yes, that's your name.
 Come on.

He takes Sarah down the hallway of the oncology ward.
 Patients are sitting in wheelchairs and lying on gurneys.
 Most of them are connected to IVs.

Nurses and doctors are present.

MAX (CONT'D)
 So do you remember?

SARAH
 (looking around
 thoughtfully)
 Hm. Not really.

MAX
 With lung cancer, maybe we're
 barking up the wrong tree.
 What if you had an accident
 instead?
 Then our best bet would be...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAUMATOLOGY WARD - DAY

Max and Sarah walk down the corridor of the trauma ward.

There are many patients with crutches, bandages, and limbs in
 plaster.

MAX
 (O.S.)
 Traumatology!

SARAH
 (looking around)
 Nope, doesn't ring a bell.

CUT TO:

INT. NEUROLOGY WARD - DAY

In the neurology ward, Max and Sarah walk down the corridor. Many of the patients are paralyzed or have movement disorders and sit in reclining wheelchairs.

MAX
(O.S.)
Neurology?

SARAH
Wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. GYNECOLOGY - DAY

In the gynecology exam room, Max and Sarah walk through the room.

There are only women waiting, all of them staring at Max in confusion.

MAX
(O.S.)
Gynecology!

SARAH
(indignant)
What? No, are you crazy?

In the background, a NURSE rushes up to Max.

NURSE
(yelling)
Hey you, this area is off limits to men!

Max hurries away, caught.

CUT TO:

INT. GERIATRIC WARD - DAY

Walking down the corridor of the geriatric ward are Max and Sarah.

Most of the patients here are elderly. They have unsteady gaits, use mobility devices, and sometimes sleep in wheelchairs.

MAX
(O.S.)
Geriatrics?

SARAH
 (offended)
 How old do you think I am?

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRY - DAY

In the corridor of the psychiatric ward, Max and Sarah find themselves.

The patients here are in uniform clothing, some are in restraints. One is banging his head against the wall.

MAX
 (V.O.)
 Psychiatry!

SARAH
 (angrily)
 Do you have a tit?
 You can stay right here!

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Max and Sarah are wandering aimlessly through the city once again.

To compensate for the cigarette withdrawal, Max nibbles on a roll. But he has the bouquet of flowers with him as well.

MAX
 That was less successful than expected.

SARAH
 Sorry, Max. But none of this looked familiar.

MAX
 Well, I guess we are not at the end of our rope just yet.

EXT. CENTRAL CEMETERY - DAY

The city's central cemetery has a reverent atmosphere. It is quiet, no traffic noise of the city can be heard.

There is hardly anyone here, except for Max and Sarah, who walk through the rows of graves. Max is still holding the bouquet of flowers.

SARAH
 It's not going to help.

MAX

Concentrate. Don't you feel anything?

SARAH

No.

MAX

Maybe when we get closer.

SARAH

I can't get used to the idea of being buried in a box like this, several feet deep.

MAX

When you get close to your remains, you should feel something.

SARAH

(thoughtfully)

Tell me, when you die, do you want to be buried? Or cremated?

MAX

I haven't really thought about it. But I don't really care. When I die, I won't feel any pain, so what difference does it make?

SARAH

The people who cared for me could have taken my urn with them if I had been cremated. In a way, I would have always been with them.

Max stops.

A funeral is taking place some distance away.

As the coffin is lowered into the grave, only a few mourners are present. One of the relatives falls to her knees in front of the grave and breaks down in tears.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Do you think anyone was crying for me?

Max does not answer.

SARAH (CONT'D)

That someone missed me?

(close to tears)

Was I all alone in this world?

MAX

You are not alone.

Usually so emotionally cold, Sarah looks at Max. Then she nods.

A SHORT TIME LATER

The gravedigger is placing the wooden cross in the fresh earth of the grave. Then he is the last to leave the gravesite.

Now Max and Sarah approach. They have a look at the grave mound.

Max places the flowers from the hospital on the ground.

SARAH

Rest in peace, stranger.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

With a calm surface, the river winds through the city.

Bench seats are placed at regular intervals along the banks. Max and Sarah sit on one.

They are watching a group of children who are throwing rocks into the water from the bank.

SARAH

I wish I had kids.

MAX

Do you remember?

SARAH

No. But I feel it.

A boy and a girl, just like them.

She looks at a pair of siblings feeding ducks on the shore.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I would have gone down to the river with them, feeding ducks.

I would have watched them grow up, going to school, learning a trade.

Watching them find their first love.

Would you like to have children one day?

MAX

I can't say that I ever thought about it.

Besides, I always tried to avoid human contact as much as possible.

SARAH

But why is that, Max?
You don't have to be in hiding from
anybody.

(somewhat embarrassed)

I think that you are a wonderful
human being.

The two of them sit side by side for a few moments of awkward
silence, then Max stands up.

MAX

We should rethink our tactics.
It would be better if from now on
you were to decide where we go
next.

SARAH

You want me to decide?

MAX

I think we should let what you
feel, rather than what I think, be
the guide.
So what does your gut say?

EXT. CINEMA - DAY

Standing outside the main entrance of the theater, Max and
Sarah.

MAX

To the movies?

SARAH

Yes, exactly.
We should see a movie, my intuition
tells me.

MAX

(to himself)

Why am I letting you decide?

SARAH

Oh, come on, it'll be fun!

INT. CINEMA - DAY

Max goes to the box office to buy tickets.

He then walks over to Sarah, who has been waiting for him for
some time.

MAX

Okay, I got the tickets.

SARAH
Huh? Tickets?

MAX
Yes.

Max holds up the tickets for the movie. Two of them.

SARAH
(teasingly)
Say, are you stupid or what? Why
are you buying two tickets?
No chance that there will be any
questions about my ticket!

It is only now that Max realizes his mistake.

MAX
Why didn't you say so?

INT. CINEMA HALL - DAY

In one of the last rows of the theater, Max and Sarah sit next to each other.

There are only a few other people in the front rows, and the movie is poorly attended.

A comedy is playing on the screen. The audience is laughing. Sarah's laughter is also loud and hearty.

Max watches Sarah's reactions with some curiosity. Then he begins to smile as well.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Max and Sarah are walking along the sidewalk.

SARAH
That was so funny! It's been a long
time since I've laughed like that.

MAX
The movie wasn't that good.

SARAH
Don't pretend. I saw you break into
a smile.

MAX
(caught)
What?!

Passersby on the sidewalk begin to increase. Music comes from nearby.

Sarah stops. The two of them have come to the edge of an amusement park.

Sarah's expression begins to light up.

SARAH
Look! An amusement park.
This is amazing! Let's go.

MAX
I think we should call it a day.

SARAH
Oh, come on. Don't be a spoilsport.
Come on, please?

MAX
(sighs)
All right, just for a second.

SARAH
Yay!

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

The amusement park is crowded. Numerous booths offer games and treats.

Colorful, soft lighting bathes the place in a romantic atmosphere.

Sarah's face reflects her enthusiasm as Max strolls calmly and unperturbed through the park.

It is only now that she notices that the other visitors are mostly young couples, most of them holding hands in love.

With a blush on her face, she moves closer to Max, enjoying his closeness. Then she stops.

MAX
What is it?

Sarah's eyes have fallen on a cotton candy cart.

SARAH
I remember.

MAX
You do?
Remember what?

SARAH
The taste of cotton candy.

Max smiles, then walks over to the cart.

MAX
(to the vendor)
One, please.

He puts down a coin for him as the vendor spins the cotton candy.

From behind, someone places their palms over Max's eyes.

THEA
Who am I?

Max is surprised but plays along.

MAX
Who, uh...

He turns and sees Thea. She smiles.

THEA
Hi, Max! I had no idea you were here today.
Did you come for the Rocket Twister, too?

Thea points to the roller coaster in the background.

MAX
Actually, no.

THEA
I'm here with some friends.
Would you like to join us?
Honestly, I'm a little scared of this thing.

Max hesitates. It is only now that he realizes that Sarah is no longer by his side.

MAX
(uncertain)
Sorry, I have a meeting.

THEA
Oh, too bad.
We really need to hang out! Maybe another time.
Bye!

Thea disappears into the crowd. Max looks around, looking for Sarah.

A SHORT TIME LATER

Sarah is sitting alone on a bench away from the crowd.

Max quietly approaches her. He holds the cotton candy in his hand.

MAX
There you are.
Is something wrong?

SARAH
(disappointed)
This girl is totally into you.

MAX
How do you know that?

SARAH
How do you not know that?

Max sits down with Sarah.

MAX
Are you mad?

SARAH
Mad? No. Disappointed.
Disappointed that I can't have the
same kind of hold on you that they
do.

Sarah realizes that her words were more than she had in mind.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Whatever.
The thing that bothers me the most
is that I can't eat cotton candy.

MAX
Why not?
Why should you be unable to enjoy
something as mundane as the taste
of cotton candy?
It's all in your head.

Max holds the cotton candy in front of Sarah's face.

MAX (CONT'D)
Close your eyes.

She hesitates at first, but then complies.

MAX (CONT'D)
What does it look like?

SARAH
(with closed eyes)
Pink. Like little clouds. Soft and
puffy.

MAX

Then take.

With her eyes closed, Sarah pretends to put a piece of cotton candy in her mouth and chew on it.

MAX (CONT'D)

Now what?

SARAH

Sweet. Little strings.
They melt. Crystals between the
teeth.

Sarah grins and opens her eyes. Max eats a piece of cotton candy, too.

MAX

(feigns surprise)

You're right!

The two of them smile and continue to sit next to each other on the bench.

EXT. MAGISTRATE'S ENTRANCE - DAY

It is raining outside. People are hurrying through the rain with brightly colored umbrellas.

INT. TOWN ARCHIVES BASEMENT - DAY

It's just another day at the City Archives. A number of customers are waiting at Max's desk for their requests to be dealt with.

Max is receiving documents, pulling files out of the archives, and processing requests. He seems almost cheerful.

The line of people waiting in front of his desk gets shorter and shorter until there are only two people left. One of them is Karl.

He is next in line, standing in front of Max with two folders in his hand.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL

Hello.

Karl speaks quietly, anxiously.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)

I, uh...
This would be for the archives,
please.
These are blueprints.

Confused by his counterpart's behavior, Max accepts the folders.

Karl addresses him again as he carries the folders to the back.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)

Max.

(unsure what to say)

You're doing great.

I, uh...

Let me know if you need anything else, all right?

Max nods and disappears among the shelves of books.

CITY OFFICIAL KARL (CONT'D)

(to himself)

I'm sorry.

Max is on the move, between the shelves in the archive. He has a smile on his face, pleased with Karl's behavior.

He then puts the folders back in the right place.

When he returns to the desk, another person is already waiting for him.

It's THERESA, a short, slightly chubby lady in her mid-sixties. She is dressed in a wet raincoat with a hood, holding an umbrella in one hand and a cake box in the other.

MAX

Yes?

At first Max treats her like a customer, not recognizing her.

Now Theresa pulls back the hood.

The expression on Max's face changes from positive to negative. He knows the woman.

MAX (CONT'D)

What do you want?

THERESA

Max...

MAX

(with emphasis)

What are you doing here?

THERESA

(uncertain)

I wanted to see if you were okay.
Here is some cake.
Happy birthday.

Theresa puts the box on the desk.

MAX
How did you find me?

THERESA
I looked for a long time.
Come home. Let's talk.
Too much time had gone by.

MAX
There is no need to talk. Just go.

THERESA
(disappointed)
But...

MAX
Leave.

Hesitant and disappointed, Theresa turns her back and walks out of the archive.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Max enters the apartment, cake box in hand. Sarah walks through the locked door after him.

SARAH
What's in the box? Are you going to tell me?

MAX
(slightly annoyed)
Cake.

SARAH
Who are you going to get a piece of cake from?
This is a first.

MAX
Does it matter?

SARAH
What is wrong with you today?
You're even more unfavorable than you were the first day I met you!

Max puts the box down on the table and walks over to the window so that he is facing away from Sarah. He finds it hard to talk about it.

MAX
My mom came by at work.

SARAH
So? That's great.

MAX
That is not great.

SARAH
Did you have a fight?

MAX
No.
She is part of what I tried to
forget. I haven't seen her in over
a decade.
(realizes)
She has grown old.

Sarah listens, letting Max decide what to tell her.

MAX (CONT'D)
I was fifteen when I left home.
It was...
Well, I can't even remember why I
wanted to get away so badly.
But I never regretted it.

SARAH
Over a decade.
That long.
After all this time, why did she
come to you?

Max walks over to the table and lifts the lid of the box,
revealing the chocolate cake with "30" written across the
top.

SARAH (CONT'D)
This is... a birthday cake.
Your birthday cake. It's your
birthday.
Max! Are you crazy? It's your
birthday and you don't say a word?

MAX
I hate birthdays.

SARAH
(upset)
Well, I don't! And it happens to be
a round birthday, too!
We have to celebrate it!

MAX
Please don't...

EXT. CENTRAL STATION - DAY

The train station is bustling with activity. The platforms are crowded with travelers carrying colorful suitcases, bags, and backpacks.

Among them is Max. He is dressed to go outdoors and carrying a backpack. Sarah is with him.

MAX

Are you gonna tell me where we're going?

SARAH

No, I want it to be a surprise!

MAX

Surprises are not really my thing.

SARAH

You will like this one, though.

She stands in front of Max and looks him in the eye.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Trust me.

A train pulls into the station.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Ah! That's ours. Come on!

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Max and Sarah are sitting in the train compartment. They are traveling through the countryside, having left the city behind.

Max is sitting in the window seat, Sarah next to him. She has her head in such a way that it appears to be in contact with his shoulder.

The two of them are reading their joint book entitled "Live My Life".

Max turns the page. They are reading the last page.

SARAH

(reads last sentence)

...because I want to remember her the way she was, not the way she could have been.

Max closes the book and sets it down on the small table in front of him.

Sarah is sobbing, her eyes filled with tears.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I love this book so much. It was a wonderful story.

From his backpack, Max pulls out saltines and a water bottle.

He takes a sip.

Sarah notices his bracelet as he does so.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What is it with you and that bracelet? It doesn't suit you at all.

Besides, it's all torn up. You could really afford a new one.

MAX

I've had this bracelet for as long as I can remember. I like it.

SARAH

Where did you get it?

MAX

I don't remember.

SARAH

Your mother?

MAX

Certainly not.

SARAH

Max, maybe you should talk to her. I think that...

MAX

(interrupting)

Don't interfere.

Don't.

I have managed to put my past behind me and forget about it.

SARAH

You haven't. I see it haunt you every day.

It's like paying off a debt.

You don't even allow yourself to enjoy the smallest of pleasures in life. Something's weighing you down, and I think the only way of getting over it is by facing it head on.

MAX

You have no idea.
I am a coward, and that is exactly
the reason why I am unable to face
my past.

EXT. RURAL TRAIN STATION - DAY

Sarah and Max get off the train and walk out onto the platform. They are the only passengers to get off the train.

The station consists of nothing more than the platform and a small shed that shelters waiting passengers from the elements.

The landscape is mountainous, with no signs of human habitation.

The train departs, leaving the two of them alone.

MAX

Where are we? There is no one
around.

SARAH

You like this, don't you?
Admit it.

Max enjoys the silence of the place for a moment.

MAX

I could get used to this.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH

But we're not there yet. That was
the easy part.
Come on.

Sarah leads Max off the platform.

EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY

Following a well-trodden path through dense woods, Max and Sarah are having fun. They are laughing and talking.

Sarah is exuberant like a child, romping around.

They keep crossing little streams. It is a beautiful, natural area.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DAY

Max and Sarah are following a mountain trail. The forest begins to thin out. Max is panting and is in a sweat.

Sarah is completely unaffected by the exertion: there is no sweating or shortness of breath.

MAX
(panting)
Wait, not so fast.

SARAH
(exhilarated)
You should have quit smoking a long time ago.

MAX
Yeah, yeah.

The two arrive at a well. Max takes a greedy drink of the cool spring water and pours a bottle full of it over his head.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Max and Sarah follow the mountain trail. They come to a wide grassy slope.

The girl is surveying the area.

SARAH
This is the place for us.
It is perfect.

Max falls into the grass, exhausted from the effort.

MAX
Perfect for what?

SARAH
Wait a little longer. It will be worth it.

The sun bathes the sky in fiery red as it sets in a glowing ball on the horizon.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

A breathtaking starry sky hangs over the mountainside. Not a single cloud obscures the view.

Max and Sarah lie in the grass, a light breeze gently rippling the meadow. Scattered fireflies glow.

They relax and admire the sky.

MAX

I have never seen stars this clear
in my life.

SARAH

Happy birthday.
Do you like it?

MAX

It is breathtaking.

SARAH

Will we find a place among the
stars, when we cease to exist?

Max thinks for a moment.

MAX

We are really looking at the past
when we look at the sky.
The light from the stars travels
through the entire universe,
infinitely.
It penetrates the farthest galaxies
and shines into even the darkest
places you can imagine.
By the time it reaches us here on
Earth, the light from a single star
may have been traveling for
millions of years.
Even after you die, your light,
like the light of the stars, will
continue to shine out into the
universe, eternally.
A million years from now, if
someone in a distant solar system
points a telescope at the Earth and
looks a little closer, they will
find you at that very moment, lying
here on the mountainside, shining
out into the universe.
This way, we never cease to exist.

SARAH

That's beautiful.
Max?
Remember I told you to make a wish
when we were up on the roof
watching the shooting stars?

MAX

What did you wish for?

Sarah turns to face Max.

SARAH

That it never ends.
That we would never have to find
out what happened to me.
That I could stay here with you
forever.

Now Max turns to the side as well. They look directly at each other.

MAX

I could live with that.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH

From your mouth. Next you talk
about your feelings.

Max smiles.

Sarah gently places her hand on Max's cheek.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Can you feel that?

MAX

No.

SARAH

And why is that?
Did you forget? It's all in your
head.
Close your eyes.

Max shuts his eyes. Sarah moves her face closer to his face.

Then she kisses him.

All around them, the side of the mountain turns into a sea of lights. Thousands of fireflies rise into the sky.

EXT. RURAL TRAIN STATION - DAY

Max and Sarah are back on the platform. The girl stands close to him.

A train enters the station, stops. The doors open.

Sarah starts to get on the train, but Max remains on the platform.

SARAH

Are you coming? This is our train.

MAX

No.
I'm not going back to town.

SARAH

What, why not? Then where are you going?

MAX

Home.
I'm going home.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Sarah and Max are sitting next to each other on the train. They are silent.

Max's gaze is out the window at the scenery of the countryside.

EXT. VILLAGE TRAIN STATION - DAY

Max and Sarah are getting out.

The two of them remain standing on the platform until the train has pulled away again and all the other passengers have left the station.

Max takes a breath.

SARAH

So this is where you grew up?

MAX

Yes.

He is visibly uncomfortable.

SARAH

Do not be afraid. I am with you.

They take the first step off the platform together.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Slowly, Max and Sarah make their way through the center of the village.

Max looks around with a mixture of fear and curiosity.

MAX

A lot has changed...

SARAH
 (smiles)
 Even you.

The two of them walk past the glassed-in front of a bakery.

Inside, a number of people are standing at the counter, waiting to be served.

LEKI, a twenty-nine-year-old man, is one of them. His upper lip is scarred from having a harelip. He immediately notices Max as he walks by and steps out onto the sidewalk.

LEKI
 Max?

Max stops and turns to Leki.

LEKI (CONT'D)
 It really is you.

Max searches his mind for the name of the young man and is finally able to recall it.

MAX
 Leki.

LEKI
 Yes, it's me, Leki. When did you get back?

MAX
 Just now.

LEKI
 (referring to Max's
 psyche)
 You look good, Max.

Behind Leki, his wife EMMI and his eight-year-old son CHRISTOPH walk from the bakery onto the pavement.

Emmi is carrying a paper bag full of bread in her arms.

LEKI (CONT'D)
 (to Max)
 May I present my wife Emmi and my son Christoph.
 (to Emmi)
 This is Max, he is an old friend of mine.

EMMI
 Pleased to meet you.

Max nods to say hello and gestures to introduce Sarah, who is standing next to him.

MAX
This is...

It is only now that it occurs to Max that nobody can perceive Sarah but him, and he stops in the middle of the gesture.

LEKI
Huh?

MAX
I just wanted to say how nice it is
to meet you.

LEKI
Are you staying?

MAX
Maybe.

LEKI
Come and see me some time, I still
live up there on the edge of the
forest.
In my parents' house.

MAX
Will do.

Max turns away, wants to leave.

LEKI
Hey Max. Good to see you again.

MAX
See you.

Max and Sarah leave, leaving Leki and his family alone.

LEKI
(to Emmi)
We were best friends once.

EMMI
What happened?

LEKI
A lot.
Too much.

EXT. ROAD TO MAX'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

The street Max and Sarah walk down leads from the edge of the village to the edge of the woods.

There is a small cluster of single-family homes just before it. Max stops in front of the garden gate of one of the houses.

Sarah looks over to the end of the street, where there is what appears to be an abandoned, dilapidated building.

MAX
(to Sarah)
This is the old sawmill.

As if in a trance, Sarah stares at the sawmill. She seems to be enchanted by what she sees.

MAX (CONT'D)
Is something wrong?

SARAH
No.
Are we there?

Max nods. Then he opens the gate to the backyard and slowly walks up to the front door of the family's house.

He hesitantly moves his finger to the doorbell, but before he can press it, someone opens. It is Theresa, his mother.

They stare at each other for a moment, then she hugs him with tears in her eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM PARENTAL HOME - DAY

The living room is sparsely furnished with furniture that is a bit old-fashioned.

Max is standing in front of a chest of drawers and looking at an old photograph.

It shows him with his parents when he was a toddler.

Sarah remains in the background, watching.

Holding a soup pot, Theresa enters the room. She places it on the table.

THERESA
I just didn't have the heart to put that picture away.

MAX
How is Peter?

THERESA
Your father left a long time ago. He lives with another woman up in the north now. Have a seat, I made some noodle soup with sausages.

Max approaches the table and has a seat. For him and herself, Theresa puts some soup on the plates. Then she sits down.

THERESA (CONT'D)

You loved this soup as a child. I always had to make it for you and Leki on weekends.

Max takes a spoonful of soup.

MAX

I remember.

THERESA

(smiles)

You were real rascals.
I like to think back to those days.

MAX

Leki is still here.

THERESA

Yes, he has a family now.
What about you?
You've become such a handsome young man. You must have a girlfriend, right?

MAX

No.

Max looks at Sarah, who is standing by the window and is shyly avoiding eye contact with him.

MAX (CONT'D)

She is much more than that.

Sarah seems pleased by Max's words.

THERESA

I hope to meet her someday.

MAX

Yes, someday.

THERESA

Say, you're staying here tonight, aren't you?

INT. NURSERY PARENTAL HOME - NIGHT

Theresa opens the door to the room. She lets Max in.

THERESA

Your room is still exactly the same as it was when you left it. I have not changed anything.

Max has a look around and puts his backpack on the bed.

The room is on the second floor, with a pitched roof. An old computer monitor sits on a desk, and a cathode ray tube TV sits on a sideboard.

It seems like an introverted teenager's room, a trip back in time to the nineties.

THERESA (CONT'D)

If you need anything, just let me know.

MAX

Thank you, Mom.

Theresa starts to cry. She is in disbelief that he would call her that.

MAX (CONT'D)

I know that I have not always been fair to you in the past. But I'm working on changing that.

She walks up to him and gives him a hug. There is no return gesture from Max.

THERESA

You will always be my son, no matter what.

She then leaves the room, closing the door behind her.

Sarah enters the room through the wall.

SARAH

I am proud of you.

As Sarah looks around the room, Max begins to unpack his backpack.

Computer games and consoles line the shelves.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You used to be addicted to playing games.

MAX

I liked to be off in my own little world back in the day.

Sarah's eyes are on the posters on the wall. A small framed picture of two eight year old boys hangs between them. One has a harelip scar.

SARAH

Who is this?

MAX

That's Leki and me. We were about eight at that time.

SARAH

Leki? The one from your meeting in the village today?

MAX

Exactly. We were inseparable as kids.

LATER

Max is lying on his stomach on the bed with a video game controller in his hand.

He is playing a video game on the tube TV.

MAX (CONT'D)

Man, these games bring back memories.
I didn't leave the house in days.

Sarah is standing by the window, looking out with a serious look on her face.

She's looking at the old sawmill, which is only dimly lit by the sparse streetlights.

Max pauses the game and puts the controller down.

MAX (CONT'D)

(to Sarah)
What's wrong?

SARAH

(smiling)
Nothing.

She walks over to the bed and sits down on it.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I am just glad we met.

She lies down on the bed next to Max. They look at each other.

SARAH (CONT'D)

To have you by my side.

Sarah strokes Max's cheek.

SARAH (CONT'D)

That we can still share this moment.

She smiles, snuggles into him, and closes her eyes. Max closes his as well.

LATER

Max wakes up. It is still dark, light rain patters against the window.

"05:01" reads the digital clock on the nightstand.

Max straightens in bed, glances around. He is alone.

MAX

Sarah?

There is no answer, the girl is not there.

MAX (CONT'D)

Sarah?

He gets out of bed and looks around, unsettled.

Slowly, he makes his way to the window. His eyes fall on the old sawmill.

MAX (CONT'D)

The sawmill.

A memory seems to come back to him.

MAX (CONT'D)

The mill!

(startled)

Sarah!

INT. SAWMILL - NIGHT

The atmosphere in the mill is somber. The only sound is the pattering of rain on the partially leaking roof.

Sarah looks around. Among the woodworking machines in need of repair and rust are piles of rotten wood.

There is a bandsaw and a log grapple.

Feeling a connection to the place, the girl wanders the hall.

INT. STAIRCASE PARENTAL HOME - NIGHT

In a great hurry, Max stumbles down the narrow staircase.

MAX
Don't go there.
(screaming)
Sarah!

INT. SAWMILL - NIGHT

Sarah continues to walk through the mill.

She begins to hear indistinct voices and sounds from the past of the mill.

For fractions of a second, images appear in front of her eyes that show the sawmill as she remembers it:

An operation in its heyday.

EXT. ROAD TO MAX'S PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Max is running through the rain on the road leading to the mill.

MAX
Sarah!

INT. SAWMILL - NIGHT

Something is about to happen, Sarah senses.

A dilapidated side door catches her eye.

EXT. ROAD TO MAX'S PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Max continues to run in the rain toward the sawmill.

MAX
Sarah!

He's close. He can see the dilapidated side door. He bursts through the door at the top of his lungs.

FLASHBACK
BEGINS:

INT. SAWMILL - DAY

Two eight-year-old boys rush through the side door of the sawmill.

They are YOUNG MAX and YOUNG LEKI.

It seems to be the weekend, and the sawmill is deserted.

YOUNG LEKI
(long pause)

Wow!

YOUNG MAX
Didn't I tell you? This is totally cool!

YOUNG LEKI
All these machines, like in a movie.

YOUNG MAX
Let's have a look from above!

Young Max climbs onto a big pile of logs, Leki follows him.

The two of them are enthroned, standing on the top log above the sawmill.

YOUNG MAX (CONT'D)
I am the king of this land!

YOUNG LEKI
Hey, I want to be a king, too.

YOUNG MAX
You are the First Minister!

YOUNG LEKI
But I want to rule too.

YOUNG MAX
All right, Mr. Minister.
What is your first order?

Leki thinks for a moment.

YOUNG LEKI
There is no more school!
And every day is weekend!

Both burst into euphoric screams.

A beep can be heard. Leki looks at his watch and acknowledges the alarm.

YOUNG LEKI (CONT'D)
Oh man. I have to go home, piano lesson.

YOUNG MAX
Wait, are you coming for dinner tomorrow?
My mom is making noodle soup with sausages.

YOUNG LEKI

Coming.

The two slap their palms against each other, then Leki climbs off the stack.

YOUNG LEKI (CONT'D)

Bye!

YOUNG MAX

See you tomorrow!

Through the side door, Leki leaves the sawmill.

Young Max enjoys the silence for a moment and then begins to balance on the trunks of the trees.

There is a loud noise as the big gate at the front is pushed open a crack. Someone is stepping out into the hall.

Frightened, Max takes cover behind the woodpile.

Someone is approaching, and it is a single person: Sarah.

She is twenty-five years old, looks the same as in her ghost form, and wears the same clothes. She stops in front of the woodpile.

SARAH

(friendly)

I can see you.

YOUNG MAX

(hesitantly)

You can't.

Sarah smiles, her bluff working.

SARAH

Come on out. This is not a playground for little kids.

From behind the pile, Max pokes his head out.

YOUNG MAX

I am not a little kid anymore!

SARAH

(playful)

Excuse me, sir.

But this place is dangerous even for big boys.

I don't want you to get into any trouble.

At the word "trouble," the boy flinches.

YOUNG MAX

Promise?

SARAH

Promise what?

YOUNG MAX

That I won't get in any trouble? If
Dad found out...

SARAH

I promise. Come on, I got something
for you.

Curious, Max emerges from behind the pile and approaches Sarah.

She gets on her knees in front of him and takes off her bracelet.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I got this from a powerful
magician.
He put a protective spell on it.

She puts it on and ties it around the boy's wrist. It is the same bracelet that Max is still wearing now that he is an adult.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It will protect you from trouble as
long as you wear it.

YOUNG MAX

(excited)

Really? But what about you?
Who will protect you?

SARAH

You can from now on.
Are you going to protect me, like a
knight?

YOUNG MAX

(nods)

Yes.

SARAH

Promise?

She holds out her pinkie to him.

YOUNG MAX

Promise.

In a sign of promise, he hooks his pinkie.

SARAH
 (happily)
 Now get out of here, you little
 punk.

She shoves him toward the entrance.

Max storms off euphorically, Sarah smiling.

YOUNG MAX
 (euphorically)
 I am a knight! A knight!

Max runs to the controls of the forestry crane.

Like a gymnast, he swings wildly at one of the levers. For a moment it looks as if the lever is going to hold, but in the end it gives way under the weight of the boy and the mechanism is activated.

Over Sarah's head, the massive grapple opens and drops a huge tree trunk on top of her.

Her motionless limbs peeking out from under the trunk, the girl is instantly dead.

Unable to process what has just happened, Max freezes. As if all emotion has been drained from him, his eyes fill with emptiness.

Traumatized, the boy runs out of the hall.

As he runs aimlessly, everything around him fades into darkness. Voices echo in his head.

YOUNG LEKI
 (voice in head)
 Max, what's wrong with you? What
 happened?

OTHER KIDS
 (voice in head)
 Ha! Look at him, the retard!
 (teasing)
 He's got a screw loose in his head!

YOUNG LEKI
 (voice in head)
 Leave him alone! He has done
 nothing to you!

OTHER KIDS
 (voice in head)
 Shut up, you freak!
 You have nothing to say with your
 disfigured face!

YOUNG LEKI
(voice in head)
Max, help me!

Max, now a teenager, continues to run through the darkness.

PETER
(voice in head)
The kid's a weirdo. He seems to be
mentally retarded!

THERESA
(voice in head)
That's no way to be talking about
your son. Maybe he needs therapy or
something.

PETER
(voice in head,
alcoholized)
Don't tell me how to talk! He must
have inherited your family's sick
gene.

Max's head echoes with the sound of a bottle breaking.

He starts to run slower and slows down until he finally
stops. He now looks like the socially withdrawn, introverted
adult he used to be before he met Sarah.

Max looks into the darkness, his eyes blank.

SARAH
(voice in head)
I am Sarah!

Max listens. He begins to remember.

MAX
(voice in head)
What did you wish for?

He begins to walk back through the darkness.

SARAH
(voice in head)
That it never ends.

In the darkness, the dilapidated side door of the mill is
visible.

MAX
Sarah!

SARAH
(voice in head)
That we will never know what
happened to me.

Max sprints for the door.

MAX

Sarah!

SARAH

(voice in head)

That I can stay here with you
forever.

Max breaks through the door.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. SAWMILL - NIGHT

Out of breath, Max rushes through the dilapidated door of the side entrance of the sawmill and stops in the middle of it.

It is raining, and the water is dripping down from the leaky roof to the ground.

His eyes are on Sarah, who is standing on the spot of her death twenty-two years ago.

MAX

Sarah.

He walks toward her very slowly and hesitantly.

MAX (CONT'D)

I...

Tears are streaming from Max' cheeks.

He stops, wipes one away from his face with his fingers, and looks at the tear on the tip of his finger in disbelief.

For the first time in his life, Max is crying, unaware of what is happening to him.

SARAH

Are you crying?
(moved to tears)
For me?

A flood of tears runs down his cheeks and he falls to his knees in front of her.

MAX

(crying)
It was me.
(stunned)
I killed you.

SARAH

I know.

She bends down to face Max at eye level.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I'm glad it was you.
It's the only reason we met.
This is the only reason that I've
been allowed to spend these last
few weeks with you.

Like sparks from a fire, sporadic points of light begin to rise from Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)
But my journey ends here.

She stands and takes a few steps back.

MAX
Don't go. Please.

SARAH
I already left.
That day twenty-two years ago.

Max stands.

MAX
No! We will find a way...

SARAH
Grant me one more wish.

The rising points of light increase. Sarah lifts herself off the ground and slowly begins to float to the top.

Max tries to grab hold of Sarah's hand to keep her from floating away, but all he can do is reach out into the void.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I want you to live.

Sarah is already out of reach. Max hastily climbs up the steps of the platform that hangs over the top of the old log band saw.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Not for me. But for you.
Live your life.

Max hurries forward on the platform where Sarah floats.

He reaches for her hand, the one with the bracelet on it, and grabs it.

MAX
(crying)
Sarah. I'm sorry.
(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)
I didn't mean to do it!
Stay with me. Please.

For a moment, Sarah is astonished that Max was able to get a hold of her.

The force that is pulling the girl upward is increasing.

Sarah smiles.

SARAH
I love you.

As she continues to float skyward, her hand slips from his.

Her body twists backwards so that her face is toward the sky.

Smiling, Sarah drifts into the light, ready for her end.

Then, as if nothing ever happened, the supernatural spectacle is over. Max collapses on the platform. He cries out in tears.

INT. SAWMILL - NIGHT

The rain has stopped. Twilight breaks through the shattered panes of the window and into the interior of the sawmill.

The front main gate is pushed open slowly and with a loud squeak.

An older man, PHILIPP, enters the hall. He is about eighty years old. He has graying hair and is holding a tobacco pipe.

PHILIPP
I thought I heard something!

Max is slumped over a rotten log.

PHILIPP (CONT'D)
What are you doing here, son?

The old man gets no answer. Then he sits down next to Max on the log.

He starts with the filling of his pipe.

Philipp seems to be cheerful and in good mood.

PHILIPP (CONT'D)
You smoke?

MAX
Not anymore.

Max is down in the dumps, every word is a struggle for him.

PHILIPP
Anyway, it's better. Healthier.
Not that I would have to worry
about that anymore.

He lights his pipe and begins to smoke.

PHILIPP (CONT'D)
At my age, death is a constant
companion.

MAX
Death...

PHILIPP
Before you know it, it will have
taken the people around you,
leaving you all alone.

Philipp pulls on the pipe.

PHILIPP (CONT'D)
I am Philipp.
(waits in vain for Max's
introduction)
What are you doing here?

MAX
I don't know.

PHILIPP
This used to be a first-class
sawmill.
On a good day, we processed a
couple of hundred solid cubic feet
of lumber.
Spruce, larch, beech, all local.
But that is no longer the case.
I gave up the business, after my
daughters death.

He takes another drag.

PHILIPP (CONT'D)
For a long time I had a lot of
guilt about her death.
She died here in this sawmill.
A log came loose from the grapple
and buried her.

MAX
Sarah...

PHILIPP
Did you know her?
No, it can't be. The accident
happened over twenty years ago. She
was about your age now.

He has a look at the bracelet on Max's wrist.

It seems that Philipp can see a connection between Max and his daughter's death.

PHILIPP (CONT'D)

I was always waiting for forgiveness, but at some point I realized it was me who had to do the forgiving.

MAX

No. I'm the one who needs to be forgiven.

(loud, emotional)

In truth, it was I who....

PHILIPP

(interrupting)

It doesn't matter anymore.

I grieved for my daughter. For a long time.

But at some point, you have to put the past behind you and move on.

Everyone of us, even if it is difficult.

You have your whole life ahead of you.

MAX

She had as well...

PHILIPP

I want to remember Sarah as the person she was....

MAX

(finishes the sentence)

Not the person she could have been.

Philipp's expression is one of surprise that the boy knew how to finish the sentence.

Max seems to understand something as well.

MAX (CONT'D)

Where did they bury her?

PHILIPP

Sarah was cremated. I keep her urn at home.

MAX

She would have liked that.

PHILIPP

In the woods behind the sawmill, there is a military cemetery.

(MORE)

PHILIPP (CONT'D)

About a ten minute walk.
My daughter's grave is there.
It is empty, but it is the right
place to say goodbye.

EXT. FOREST CEMETERY - DAY

On one of the mounds is a weathered wooden cross with the inscription "Sarah Weiler".

Beneath it is a faded portrait photo. It shows the girl smiling, full of life.

It is a quiet, reverent place, the forest cemetery.

Max is the only visitor.

He stands in front of Sarah's grave.

MAX

So this is it. The end.
It seems unfair that I get to live
and you had to die.
I am sure that you have found a
place for yourself among the stars.
I don't need this anymore.

Max takes the bracelet off of his wrist and hangs it on the wooden cross.

MAX (CONT'D)

Rest in peace, Sarah.

He looks up.

As the credits fade in, the camera pans up into the sky, slowly rising higher and higher. With each layer of the atmosphere that we penetrate, the surroundings get darker and darker until finally we can see the stars quite clearly.

One star among many shining especially bright. Then we see a shooting star fall out of the sky.

TEN YEARS LATER

INT. MAX'S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

Max is now living in a different apartment. It is a little bit more spacious than the one he lived in before.

You can see a cloudy, gloomy sky through the windows. A light rain is falling over the city.

The apartment is a bit of a mess.

Max has visibly aged, he has a beard. He picks up clothes lying around, puts away dishes in the kitchen, with the same uninterested expression on his face as before.

Then he picks up a couple of books from the table and carries them over to the big shelf on the wall.

There he places them in the middle of the other volumes.

A book falls off the end of the shelf behind him as he turns to leave.

Max turns and looks around the room: No one is there. Then he goes over to the book and picks it up.

The sky clears momentarily and a sunbeam falls through the window, bathing the room in warm light.

Max looks at the window with a fixed gaze, as if there were a person standing in front of him.

Then he smiles.

In the background, we can hear the apartment door opening.

Two small children, a boy and a girl, rush into the room.

CHILDREN

Daddy! Daddy!

Both run up to Max and hug him.

MAX

Where did you leave Mommy?

The kids point to the entrance. A woman standing there:

Thea.

Max puts the book on a little table, then he and the kids go cheerfully to see Thea and leave us alone in the bedroom.

Our eyes fall on the book. It is only now that we realize it being the novel with the title "Live My Life".

Written by "Philipp Weiler", Sarah's father, the book is marked. Someone has erased the "M" on the envelope and added a handwritten "our":

"LIVE MYour LIFE."