

POLARIS

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PARTIAL DRAFT

INT. SAINT PATRICK'S HOSPITAL ROOM -NIGHT

Luna sits close to Mary's bed, holding her hands. Through the window, the glow of city lights cast colors on the dimly lit hospital room. Machines beep and hum low while Mary, clearly in pain, breathes in silence.

LUNA

Well, with all of these medicines you will turn green and smash your way out of the building in no time.

MARY

Why, I could already do that! Remember when Mom made me wear that stupid pink dress for Dad's church thing?

LUNA

(Laughs) How could I? You looked absolutely adorable. And also, kind of constipated! (Southern accent) Why you looked like a bride for Jesus, halleluiah!

MARY

(Laughing) Amen!

They both laugh. The laughter eventually dies down to a sigh.

MARY

Baby, remember I left everything in writing at the apartment.

LUNA

(Interrupts) I will have none of this. Stop it!

MARY

I'm not being dramatic. I honestly didn't think it could ever come into play, but I also never thought I would get so sick so quickly. You need to make preparations.

Luna starts sobbing while gripping Mary's hand tighter and closer to her own face. Mary does her best to wipe the tears from Luna's face.

MARY

Listen, I will fight with all of my strength to get through whatever this is, but I don't want you to be unprepared. I know your family is no help and mine, despite the best of intentions, will probably just make things hard for you. So just do us both a favor, and follow the script. It's all ironed out. You don't need to worry about a thing.

LUNA

I know. I understand. But let's not talk about that now since we know you are going to walk out of this place, I have no doubt.

Mary smiles as she cries quietly. They hold one another in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. SAINT PATRICK'S HOSPITAL - HALLWAY- NIGHT

Luna walks out a door and into the hallway. As she walks closer towards us, tears are visible and a nurse steps from out of the same door calling at her. She does not respond. She storms into an elevator and as the doors close she breaks down on the floor, sobbing uncontrollably.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Luna stands surrounded by a few friends and Mary's family while they observe a priest leading a memorial service. Mary's enlarged memorial portrait, shows her dramatically healthier than she was in the hospital. After exchanging glances, Mary's family who is sitting on the opposite side of Luna, start making their way out. They go their separate ways without saying a single word to Luna. Luna cries as she sits alone in the church after everyone leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Several weeks later, Luna is sitting in her art class when she notices a fellow student and close friend, Samantha, is absent from class. She approaches another student sitting close to her in the back of the classroom.

LUNA

Ben! Have you seen Sam? I tried to call her last week and I couldn't reach her. (She says in a loud whisper)

BEN

Well about a week before Mary fell ill, Sam was really sick. Throwing up and dizzy. Her parents picked her up. That's the last I saw her.

INT. LUNA AND MARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Luna is on the phone.

LUNA

Hi Mrs. Taylor, it's Luna. How are you?

The voice on the other end is unintelligible. Luna's expression changes to dread. As she responds, her voice cracks.

LUNA

I appreciate the thoughts. But what other tragedy? I, I don't understand. Is everything alright?

There's silence on the other end of the phone. We can now hear the voice on the other end as Luna stands up from her bed and is now holding the phone with one hand and holding her other hand to her forehead.

MRS. TAYLOR (V.O. PHONE)

Dear child, I'm so sorry to be the one to tell you this. We lost our baby Sam. She felt sick and was, we thought, going through a digestive bug of some kind. But she started having

these terrible fevers. In a matter of days, she dropped a lot of weight and eventually fell into a coma. She never woke up. We are devastated but share the grief with you my dear, I know you and Mary were close to our Sam. I'm sorry for your loss as well. .Are you there?

LUNA

Yes, I'm sorry, I have no words. I'm so sorry for your loss. She was such a good person, a great friend. I had no idea. I'm so, so sorry Mrs. Taylor. I'm so sorry.

A few moments pass and after saying goodbye, Luna puts away the phone. She sits for what seems like hours, at the edge of the bed, crying while holding a picture of Mary in her hand.

LUNA

Why are you all leaving me behind? How can I do this alone?

DISOLVE TO:

INT. SAINT PATRICK'S HOSPITAL - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Luna sits in an office waiting for a doctor. She has paperwork in her hands that she keeps revising. After a very long wait, the doctor steps in with a woman dressed in a power suit.

MS. NADELLA

Hello, I'm miss Nadella, I'm here to help. What can we do for you?

LUNA

I had some questions for doctor Rivera in regards to my wife's care while she was at the hospital. If I could-

Luna is immediately interrupted by Ms. Nadella.

MS. NADELLA

Doctor Rivera, please do not answer any questions. As council I am advising you now; refrain from any comments as everything you can offer is documented in the death certificate, which has been issued.

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Luna, can we offer you a new copy of the report?

LUNA

That's not what I want. I want to find out from doctor Rivera if there are any other cases like Mary's. A perfectly healthy young woman walks in with abdominal pain and in a matter of weeks, she is gone. Does that sound like a common illness to you? I have another friend from school who passed away in a similarly shocking way and I-

Ms. Nadella interrupts Luna once again.

MS. NADELLA

I'm sorry, at this point intime there is nothing further we can offer that is of any value in this case.We are sorry for the loss of your partner-

LUNA

My wife.

MS. NADELLA

Yes, your. wife. We are sorry. Have a good day and please accept our condolences.

Luna is in shock at the complete stone-walling she received. Dr. Rivera does not make eye contact and the tension is evident. Luna leaves the office and makes her way to the parking lot where as she opens her car door, she's approached by a young man.

LANE

Hey! Luna, do you remember me? I bought you breakfast for dinner one night a few weeks ago in the hospital cafeteria?

LUNA

Yes, I, I'm sorry. I do, how are you? You were here with your wife, right? I'm sorry, I forgot your name.

LANE

It's Lane. My wife Vicky, she didn't make it.

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Luna is just paralyzed with sadness. She remembers that his wife was pregnant and was at the hospital for some routine checkup of some sort. It seems, death is everywhere around her.

LUNA

I don't know what to say Lane. I'm so sorry for your loss. I can't believe this. I lost Mary. It all happened so fast, I remember we were both staying with them when we ate together that night. How could it be? Was she sick?

LANE

Not really. That's why I've been here the last few days. I was hoping to catch you but I hadn't seen you. I found out from the news about Mary. When they ran the piece I didn't realize it was your wife until they showed a picture of the two of you back when you marched downtown last year. I remember you told me about your advocacy work with the mayor's office. I can't believe they are both gone. Listen, my job, the work I do. it affords me a level of access to certain things. I found something of interest and, don't ask me why, I thought of you guys immediately. Can we go somewhere private to chat for a bit? I promise that if you're not interested I won't bother you again.

Luna is at this point dazed and confused. She seems drained. The young man in front of her looks like he hasn't bathed in days and at the least, is as tired and weary as she feels. With apprehension, she agrees.

LUNA

Let's go to Stevie's diner down the way on route 51. It's probably dead right now and we can talk there.

LANE

I'll follow you.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEVIE'S DINER - PARKING LOT - DAY

As they arrive and park at the diner, Luna takes a look at herself in the rear view mirror for the first time in days. She can see the bags under her eyes. Her bloodshot eyes give away how little sleep she's been able to secure and how much she's cried. She couldn't cry if she wanted to; there are just no tears left. With a sigh, she grabs the interior door handle to find it moves beyond her reach. Lane is opening the door for her. He hugs her and she's caught by surprise. She doesn't embrace him back, but awkwardly grabs his shoulders in a very weak attempt at returning the gesture. Lane is un-phased by this and starts to make his way into the diner. Luna follows.

INT. STEVIE'S DINER - TWILIGHT

As they sit down at the rather small, laminate wood print lined booths, they both look outside the window as night falls on the North Hills of western Pennsylvania. Golden hour has passed but there's a painting-like beauty to the view.

The waitress asks for their order and without hesitation, both respond.

LANE  
Coffee, black.

LUNA  
Coffee, black.

WAITRESS  
Alright, need a minute to look over the menu?

LUNA  
Yes, we will get back to you in a few.

WAITRESS  
Sure thing. Be back with your coffee in a minute.

As the waitress leaves, Luna realizes that Lane is crying. He is still staring out the window. She decides to get the conversation going.

LUNA  
So, what did you have in mind?

LANE  
(Clears throat) I see her. I can see her bringing me hot tea and cold medicine. Those horrible tasting



liquid ones. She insisted they worked better and I followed her lead. I was always sick, but not Vicky. She was the healthiest person I knew, my wife.

He pauses.

LANE

Aside from being young it's the fact that I don't think I ever saw her get seriously sick in the 9 years we were together. And when she found out she was pregnant, then it was like military level care of herself at all times. Prenatal vitamins, vitamin C, anti-bacterial gel in her purse and just about every corner of the house and even the car had a can of Lysol. That woman, was the healthiest person I knew. And just like that, in a matter of weeks, she just vanished. At the end she had lost about 30 pounds. For a woman who never weighed over 150 pounds, that was significant. What does that in that short a period of time?

LUNA

I saw the same in Mary. But I thought maybe a mosquito, remember that swine flu how it was carried by mosquitoes?

LANE

This is different. None of the blood work showed anything resembling any known viruses or bacteria. It was just a completely destroyed immune system in no time at all. So, I decided to start looking to see if anything similar was showing up anywhere else.

LUNA

How did you do that?

LANE

Like I said. I'm a system administrator for a government contractor working for the CDC. I found something that I believe is only an overview of something wider. But I

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need to find more before I go anywhere to poke. I know enough with that dude that ended up in Russia, to keep my mouth shut, but I'm trusting you with this because I don't have anybody else I can share this with. My wife's family as well as my own, already believe I'm losing my mind after she passed. If they could, they would have me 5150'd.

LUNA

I know that feeling. So what are we doing?

The waitress brings them their coffee.

WAITRESS

You lovebirds know what you want?

Luna's face turned to hellfire red and before she was able to form the high level of insult she wanted to verbalize, Lane defused the situation.

LANE

Oh, she's my cousin! And we're pretty far north so, no danger there right? Just bring us two big breakfasts and surprise us!

WAITRESS

I can do that sweetheart! Two waffle scramblers coming right up!

Lane turns to Luna who is half offended and half amused. They realize this is probably the first real interaction with anybody that hasn't been related to the deaths of their loved ones or scripted as so many of the conversations with those grieving tend to be. For a moment, Luna smiled at this awkward normalcy.

LANE

Don't even worry about it. We're both "nobody" at this place. Let's keep it that way. Alright cuz?

Luna nods.

LANE

I found a project file. It had dates for these so-called

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campaigns. These campaigns, seem to be a sort of vaccination plan for different parts of the country.

LUNA

And what does this have to do with us?

LANE

This area was 2 months ago. The campaign lists Saint Patrick's hospital as the vaccination point.

LUNA

But I don't remember Mary getting a vaccine recently.

LANE

My wife didn't have vaccines done either because of the baby. However, she was in the hospital for a touch-point checkup with her OBGYN at that time.

LUNA

Mary did go recently for her migraines. But I don't remember her telling me of any vaccinations.

LANE

I don't have much more at this point. But don't you find it odd that both were at the hospital in or around the time of this campaign. Both of them young and in good health. Both of them. they pass away within such a short time of each other?

LUNA

I don't know what to say. Yes, of course it's too much coincidence but today as you saw me leaving, I was completely stonewalled by an iron bitch in a suit.

Lane

Fucking Ms. Nutella or whatever the fuck her name is.

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LUNA

That's the one. She wouldn't even let the doctor say a word. He looked terrified.

LANE

Imagine the lawsuit just one wrong word could trigger. He's not saying anything, any time soon.

LUNA

What else do you have? What else could we check?

LANE

I have a name. The project is called Polaris. Project Polaris and it's slated to be completed by early next year. I guess the next logical step is identifying other mysterious deaths within our time span at this hospital and take it from there.

LUNA

Wait. I have a friend who died while Mary was in the hospital. Samantha was young and heavily into sports. She apparently got sick while we were at the hospital and passed. In the mess of dealing with Mary's passing, I had not found out she passed away too.

LANE

This feels like it could be what we are looking for. How could we get information of what happened?

LUNA

I'm close with her family. Her mom is practically a second mother to me. We knew each other since childhood. Like Mary's parents, they are very traditional, but unlike Mary's folks, they didn't shun her when she came out as bisexual. That's what drew us close in school so young. The three of us were the token gays. Out circle had the metal heads and goths, gays or straight, we were all weird and so we were targets. We had each other's backs. And now, they're both gone. And

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I.

LANE

You, like me, have got to find out what this is. What if there's a connection? How did they get exposed to whatever this is? Why them? Why the complete silence from the hospital?

Breakfast is served. They both start eating and the conversation goes silent. Suddenly Lane stops, takes a sip of coffee and sighs.

LANE

This is the least I can do. My life, what it was and what it was to be has been destroyed. I have nothing but to figure out what happened to it. What happened to her. I was never the brave one. She was brave. You mentioned being the outsiders at school. My wife works with the humanist league. They are the ones working to remove all of this church-driven policy that took over legislation years ago. She also worked in advocacy, like you. She was fearless. Working for the humanist league always made me nervous because it made her a target.

LUNA

There doesn't seem to be much of an option here. If this is crazy and we're completely wrong, we lose nothing more than what we've lost already. What was it called again?

LANE

Polaris.

LUNA

Polaris...

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