

THE IN-BETWEEN

Written by

Diana Abousaleh

In the darkness of a screen, we HEAR the distant sounds of an
AMBULANCE.

ISABEL (V.O.)
(soft)
Do you know what happens to the
brain in the last 30 seconds before
we die?

INT. OFFICE- DAY/NIGHT- WHO THE HELL KNOWS?

A very dull office. A WOMAN (40s) looks down at her notes.
CLOSE on her hands as she writes, we notice a Grim Reaper
tattoo on her wrist.

ISABEL (V.O.)
Everyone talks about a light at the
end of the tunnel.
(pause)
But it's really your brain losing a
lot of blood.

PULL OUT to reveal that she has her hair up, reading glasses
perched at the end of her nose, and commands a massive desk
littered with stacks of paper.

CLOSE ON a plastic BRAIN model sitting on her desk. WE PAN
across the room. RAIN beats against the window. Posters of
HUMAN BRAINS decorate the grey walls.

Across from her, is our narrator, ISABEL. For a seventeen
year old, she's a good kid, but she's got some unresolved
anger she hasn't quite channeled yet.

Isabel holds a clip board, as she fills out some paperwork.

INSERT CLIPBOARD:

Did you see a flash of white light? Yes No Maybe

She looks up from the paper, and takes a moment to look
around her anonymous surroundings.

Isabel sets her pen down, slides the clipboard across the
desk.

ISABEL
This is bullshit.

She breathes out heavily, her heart hollow.

The woman look up at her, smiles.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
(nods)
Bull-shit.

The woman takes a beat to look at it.

Isabel studies her. She glances at the window. RAIN keeps pouring down.

WOMAN
No white light, huh?

Isabel shakes her head.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
No worries. You're right. It is
bullshit.

The woman tears the paper into small pieces and throws into the garbage can.

Isabel looks confused. She points to the paper.

ISABEL
Ok then... why include it as a
question?

The woman smiles again, calm.

WOMAN
Hope. 4 out 5 people will believe
they see the white light, which
makes them feel better about what's
on the other side.

The woman takes a few notes down. Isabel stares at her, expectant.

ISABEL
Why are you telling me this?

WOMAN
Well, do you know why you're here?

She taps her fingers on the desk.

ISABEL
Aren't you supposed to tell me
that?

The woman half-smiles. Isabel shrugs, runs her hand through her hair.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

I.. I mean, I don't remember much.

THUNDERS roars through the sky. Isabel glances back at the window.

THUNDERING continues.

She shifts her attention to the Isabel gold CROSS on the wall of the office. The woman notices her staring.

WOMAN

Do you believe in God, Isabel?

She smirks.

ISABEL

I don't know.

WOMAN

Why not?

Isabel shifts in her seat, annoyed. The dilemma clearly etched on her face.

ISABEL

What's God got to do with this?

The woman writes down a note. Isabel sighs. She's not up for the 'constant barrage of questions' thing.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Look can we just skip the interrogation and tell me what the... punishment or whatever is.

WOMAN

Punishment?

ISABEL

Yes, for committing a sin.
(pause, soft)
I think I remember a bus.

The woman thinks.

WOMAN

Hmmm.
(beat)
Well, for something to be sinful it needs to be done willingly.

Tight on Isabel.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You need to be free to make that choice. To know that the act is sinful.

ISABEL

I understand.

(pause)

But I did know what I was doing.

WOMAN

Why did you do it?

Isabel remains silent, stares at the brain model sitting on the desk. The sound of the heavy RAIN fills the room.

ISABEL

Do you know that the brain starts dying from the top?

The woman sighs. She gets up, stands next to her.

WOMAN

Isabel, I'm trying to understand.

She paces.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Death is easy. Even tempting. But in order to consider returning, you have to be able to shoulder the burdens.

Isabel gets up, moves towards the window. CLOSE ON HER EYES.

It takes her a bit to work up to it. Distraught, she massages her temples.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT.PARK-DAY

Isabel strolls through the park with JENNY, her best friend.

ISABEL (V.O.)

It was a normal day. It was actually a really good day.

They each hold a piece of paper. They put their papers side by side.

ISABEL (V.O.)
We'd just set up our schedule for
our senior classes and we were
gonna have a lot of classes
together. We had plans. Senior
year. "It was gonna be legendary",
she said.

The girls beam, excited.

EXT. PARK-DAY

Isabel casually waves goodbye. Jenny walks away.

ISABEL
(V.O.)
(voice breaks)
Then, she was gone. Like she never
existed.

INT. LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

The clock reads 3:04 A.M. We hear WHISPERS.

Isabel looks around the silent room. In the corner of the
room, her DAD whispers on the phone.

Isabel waits. Her dad hangs up the phone. He slowly walks
towards her. After a beat, he hugs her.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM-NIGHT

We CLOSE ON a photograph of Isabel and Jenny. Isabel SOBS,
anger mounting. She stands and RIPS the photograph into
pieces.

WOMAN (V.O.)
I'm sorry. You cared for her.

END FLASHBACK

INT. OFFICE-DAY

She says this like it's fact. Isabel looks taken aback.

WOMAN
We know.

Isabel reacts, raising an eyebrow.

ISABEL

We?

Silence. The woman smiles. Isabel shrugs, places her hand on the window.

WOMAN

You like the rain?

ISABEL

(snaps back)

I don't care about the rain. It's the weather, it's gonna happen regardless of whether I like it or not.

Isabel suddenly winces, bring her palm to her head.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Ugh..

WOMAN

That's normal. Just try to ignore it.

ISABEL

Normal?

WOMAN

By the time our session is over, the pain will stop.

Isabel is about to question her again, when:

WOMAN (CONT'D)

There are better ways to deal with grief. You need to try to find solutions, answers. Talk to others.

Isabel walks up to the brain model.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(curious)

What else do you know about the brain?

Isabel perks up, flattered to be asked.

ISABEL

Well, our sense of self, sense of humour, and our ability to think-- all that goes within the first ten to twenty seconds.

The woman sighs.

WOMAN

When did this start?

Isabel scoffs. She stares out at the heavy rain. Apprehensive.

ISABEL

I dunno. Maybe six months ago.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT - (FLASHBACK)

Isabel, deep bags under her eyes, surrounded by her LAPTOP and a tower of BOOKS. She takes notes.

INSERT BOOK TITLE: RHYTHMS OF THE BRAIN.

Words like NEURONS, INJURY and DEATH, pop out.

ISABEL (V.O.)

I wanted to know everything that was going on in my body, in my brain specifically.

CLOSE ON Isabel's eyes, as she devours the books.

Rain continues to pour down.

WOMAN

You've been planning this for a while.

Isabel nods. A long beat.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Is there anything worth going back to?

CLOSE on Isabel's face, she mulls this over for a difficult moment.

ISABEL

I don't know.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY- (QUICK FLASH)

A brief, abrupt image of a YOUNG GIRL comes to frame. She stares at us.

WOMAN

You're thinking of your sister.

After an eternal beat, Isabel nods.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Tell me about her.

ISABEL

(sarcastic)

I thought you already knew everything.

WOMAN

I want you to tell me.

Isabel hesitates.

ISABEL

Seriously what's the point if you already know?

The woman leans in.

WOMAN

(firm)

We know names. We know facts. We know numbers. I want you to tell me how you feel.

The woman stares long and hard at Isabel.

ISABEL

How I feel.

(pause)

Frustrated? My sister basically lives in and out of rehab. My dad think she's nuts, never lets me see her. Says she's a bad influence.

She smirks, gestures around her.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Joke's on him, right?

The woman nods. Isabel flashes a charming smile.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

When we were kids, we would spend hours and hours pretending we were professional ballerinas that had a big show coming up. I danced, and she was my manager.

(smirks)

Em was really good at being bossy.

Isabel smiles.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

She'd say I needed a manager because I had no idea how life worked. And she was only 11.

(pause)

Mom was there. At the front row.

I

don't remember her, but Em would tell me all these stories about her.

A long beat. CLOSE ON the woman's reaction. A sense of unease closing in on her.

ISABEL

What? What is it?

The woman clears her throat. Fakes it.

WOMAN

It's nothing.

(pause)

Do you think your sister needs you?

Isabel shakes her head.

ISABEL

She's not going to be in that place forever. She's not crazy.

Isabel's nostalgic smile fades.

The woman snaps her folder close. She stands. Defiant.

WOMAN

I'll be back. Don't move.

We STAY on Isabel, as she watches the woman leave. A horrible HOWLING noise comes from outside, Isabel rubs her temples.

She shivers; getting cold. She examines the brain model on the desk. She snaps the CEREBELLUM part out. She looks around, making sure there are no witnesses.

INT. A BIGGER OFFICE - DAY

The woman stands next to the window. Light hits her face. Outside the window, it is BRIGHT and SUNNY.

BOSS (O.S.)
So what's the verdict?

The woman places the folder on top of the desk. Behind the desk, sits her BOSS(50s). She has grayish hair, but we don't see her face...yet. There's a plate of cheese to go with the wine on her desk. She holds it up, offering it to the woman.

BOSS (CONT'D)
Cheese?

The woman shakes her head no.

WOMAN
She should go back.

The boss sighs. She hoist her feet up on the desk, leans back on her chair. She turns towards us, revealing a smile. It's not a genuine one.

BOSS
Really? This is the third one
you've sent this month.

The woman rolls her eyes.

BOSS (CONT'D)
Should we review the evidence
again?

WOMAN
We have evidence. But this isn't---

BOSS
Numbers. Look at the numbers.

WOMAN
(bored)
Numbers aren't everything.

The boss groans. She gulps down her wine.

The woman gets up, starts pacing.

WOMAN (CONT'D (CONT'D))
She has issues, but she's young.
She's smart, has aspirations. But
she doesn't need rehabilitation.
And she certainly doesn't belong.

BOSS
Shall I remind you of the budget
cuts? We don't show Him good
numbers and they will shut us down,
send all these patients straight
down there.

The woman sighs.

BOSS (CONT'D)
Don't think He won't!

She gives the woman a scornful look. The woman holds out
Isabel's folder.

BOSS (CONT'D)
Give it to me.

The Boss snatches the folder from her, opens it.

There's an edgy silence. The Woman crosses her arms, waiting.

After a beat, the boss rises from her desk, walks up to her.
She hands the folder back.

BOSS (CONT'D)
It's your choice.

The woman smiles. The boss walks up to the window, stares
out.

WOMAN
It'll be fine. Suicides have
tripled these past few months. I'm
dealing with way worse than her.

BOSS
Mhmmm.

The woman turns to leave.

BOSS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(soft)
You know, she looks a lot like her,
don't you think?

CLOSE ON the woman's pale expression.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY - (QUICK FLASHBACK)

A quick, image of the woman, much younger, carrying a BABY GIRL in her arms.

BOSS (V.O.)
Probably just a coincidence, then.

There's a clumsy pause as if her Boss is challenging her to say something. Anything to deny or confirm.

She doesn't. The woman stands out to leave.

INT. OFFICE - EVENING

Tight on Isabel, right where we left her. The woman stands next to her, looking a bit flustered.

ISABEL
(confused)
But I jumped in front of a bus.

WOMAN
(sincere)
What do you believe? It's up to you.

Long beat. Isabel shrugs.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
The way you die doesn't matter, and it certainly doesn't determine your fate over here.

ISABEL
I'm totally lost.

WOMAN
It's all about what you believe at time of death. When you died, your levels of depressions were high, but you still had a lot of faith and hope. And that rarely happens.

A reflective beat. Isabel mulls this over. The woman looks conflicted--like she wants to say more. Everything.

The woman breathes out heavily, her heart hollow.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Now, I have other people to see,
people who took their life like
you, but also took many, many more
lives.

She sets a small piece of paper on the desk.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Here are the instructions to go
back. If you really believe in it,
they'll work. If not, then...

Her words trail off. She smiles at Isabel reassuringly, a
hesitant look on her eyes. She leaves the room.

Tacitly dismissed, Isabel looks down at the piece of paper
containing the instructions.

A beat. She looks out at the window, pales. THUNDER roars
through the skies again. She winces in pain, bringing her
palm to her head.

She closes her eyes, thinking hard. Suddenly, her expression
relaxes. She opens her eyes, a new light in them.

With this new shift in energy, she smiles and approaches the
sliding doors behind the woman's desk.

The lights FLICKER....until the room goes dark.

An eternal beat.

FADE TO BLACK.