

Dollhouse: Mortal Cords

By

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Dollhouse

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SCENE I. ALPHA MEET ALPHA

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM- MORNING.

Alpha is looking into the mirror at the gas station bathroom. The bathroom has no stalls. It is just a one room toilet.

(Ideally, this would be a conversation between Alpha and Mirror Alpha)

ALPHA

Didn't handle that very well did we?

MIRROR ALPHA

I should have known that she would not understand.

ALPHA

I can't assume that they are all like us.

MIRROR ALPHA

That was some smooth move bringing up the master race. Chicks dig the master race stuff.

ALPHA

Shut up!

MIRROR ALPHA

It really gets girls going when you threaten to kill them and 'rase em.

ALPHA

We misjudged her character!

MIRROR ALPHA

Now, you'll just have to go it alone.

ALPHA

What does that mean?

MIRROR ALPHA

We're like a sum of snarling snakes- and we can't get anything done like that.

Alpha smashes his fist against the mirror which cracks. The cracks on the mirror run across his face, much the way he mutilated Dr. Saunders and other victims. Looking at his own reflection, he is stunned momentarily.

(CONTINUED)

ALPHA
He's right, you know.

Knock on door.

STRANGER
Hey buddy, you almost done in there?

Alpha pulls a knife and looks towards the door, preparing for his patented "snake bite" attack.

FADE OUT.

SCENE II. BREAKFAST.

INT. DOLLHOUSE- MORNING- DINING ROOM.

Echo, Sierra, and Victor are eating pancakes in the dollhouse cafeteria. Echo is slowly eating her pancakes, twisting the knife and looking at the food somewhat disinterestedly. Victor notices.

VICTOR
Are you not hungry Echo?
(Prompted, Echo realizes she has been zoning out.)

ECHO
No, the pancakes are good.

Echo returns to eating her pancakes, then pauses and speaks again.

ECHO
I was just trying to remember something...

SIERRA
Remember? Remember what?

ECHO
I do not know. Something from my past.

Victor and Sierra smile at each other and begin laughing.

Echo looks a bit hurt by their laughter. Echo forces a smile and begins to return to eating her food. A handler notices the commotion and comes over.

(CONTINUED)

HOUSE HANDLER
Echo is everything alright?

ECHO
Yes, I'm fine.

HOUSE HANDLER
Well, Echo you are eating very slowly. If you finish your breakfast, you can enjoy some painting. You like painting don't you?

ECHO
Yes, I remember. I like painting.

SIERRA
I like painting, but not remembering.

HOUSE HANDLER (A BIT CONFUSED)
It looks like you are done eating Sierra. Why don't I take you to go painting?

The house handler waits for Sierra who gets up and they leave together for the painting area. Echo looks at Victor.

ECHO
Do you like to remember?

Victor looks back at Echo confused. Victor does not respond.

SCENE III. NOVEMBER

INT. GROCERY STORE- MORNING

Madelaine Costley is shopping at a local grocery store.

We see Madelaine entering the store.

DOOR GREETER
Hi welcome to [Nameofstore]. Is there something I can help you with?

As he greets Madelaine Costley, she becomes a bit unnerved.
(As a former doll, she will continue to be unnerved by programmatic and mechanical responses. Like all former

(CONTINUED)

dolls, Madelaine will remain hypersensitive to these experiences. Madelaine's perception of programmatic responses should be to perceive the talker in some kind of muted tone.)

Ignoring the door greeter, Madelaine picks up a shopping basket. She purchases some fruit and heads to an aisle to get some juice. On the way, she passes a store sampler.

IN STORE SAMPLER

(Muted tone.)

Would you like to try some cheese?

Uneasy at the mechanical nature, she quickly finds and grabs some juice and heads towards the checkout lane.

CHECK OUT CASHIER

Do you have any coupons?

MADELAINE

{uneasy} No.

CHECK OUT CASHIER

That will be \$6.03.

(At ease) Madelaine Costley hands him the money, counting out her pennies.

CHECK OUT CASHIER

Have a nice day!

Unnerved again by her muted perception of the checkout cashier, Madelaine Costley quickly grabs her groceries and quickly leaves the store.

EXTERIOR GROCERY STORE.

Madelaine pauses and sits down on the sidewalk outside of the grocery store. She is reflecting on the mechanical nature of her recent interactions. They jar her, as if she were interacting with dolls. As she is sitting there, a person walks past her and hands her a flyer.

Madelaine reads the flyer.

SHOT OF THE FLYER.

The flyer has a picture of the earth on it. The flyer reads: "Not sure what your place is in the world? Want to make a difference? Call us at 486-2142."

(CONTINUED)

SHOT OF MADELAINE.

Madelaine folds the flyer up and puts it in her purse. She collects her groceries and begins to proceed home.

SCENE IV. BUDDY LIST.

INT. DOLLHOUSE - ADELLE'S OFFICE - MORNING
(Conversation between Adelle
and Boyd).

ADELLE

I'm not sure if we can trust agent Ballard yet. Ballard seems to like you. You should stick with him.

BOYD

What do you suggest- we become friends over a racquetball game?

ADELLE

Just keep an eye on him. I'm not entirely convinced a former agent who is obsessed with one of our dolls...

BOYD

You mean Echo?

ADELLE

Yes. I don't trust him. As I was saying, Ballard is a bit unstable right now and this is a critical time for him.

BOYD

Critical time?

ADELLE

He's vulnerable now. It's unfortunate that we were unable to dissuade him from pursuing us. Now, however, we have an opportunity to recruit him. Since you don't seem to feel we have the right to simply turn him into a doll, he is going to be your responsibility. If anything goes wrong, I'm holding you accountable.

(CONTINUED)

BOYD

And the episode with Alpha?

ADELLE

Luckily, Alpha made critical mistakes. Unfortunately, so did we. Our dollhouse is on probation right now. Most of the services we provide should be routine. For the time being, none of the dolls will be used for anything other than simple escort services. That will give you some time to keep a closer eye on Ballard. Why don't you give him a deeper tour of the dollhouse? Try to give him a more favorable impression of what we do here.

BOYD

Understood.

ADELLE

That is all. Dismissed.

Boyd leaves. Adelle returns to her chair and sits down. She's frustrated. Her phone rings and she answers it.

ADELLE

This is Adelle.
(Pauses to listen to the other speaker, then continues)
Well, that's not good. Not good at all. Thank you for the warning.

Adelle hangs up the phone.

SCENE V. PAINTING

INT. DOLLHOUSE; ART CENTER- MORNING

Sierra and Echo are painting. Ballard is watching Echo from the balcony. Boyd approaches him and they stare at Echo.

BOYD

She's something else, isn't she? (referring to Echo).

BALLARD

Caroline?

(CONTINUED)

BOYD

Caroline is what you call her. Right now, she's just Echo. Look at her. She looks happy and she's having a good time.

BALLARD

You think she's happy?

BOYD

I don't feel any more comfortable with this situation than you do, but yeah, I think she thinks she is happy here.

BALLARD

If she's so happy, why did she call me?

BOYD

She called you?
(Boyd should be somewhat startled by this revelation.)

BALLARD

Oh, don't worry. I won't tell anyone else. I know that would look bad for you. Besides, if it weren't for you, I'd probably be a doll or worse by now...

(Ballard plays this cool, trying to gain Boyd's trust. Both men are at the same game now, but each is playing a different angle.)

As Boyd and Ballard watch Echo, Echo appears to say something to Sierra while the two are painting. Sierra stops her painting. Sierra throws down her art supplies and attacks Echo. Surprised, Echo falls back. Ballard and Boyd begin to rush down the stairs towards Echo. Boyd stops Ballard.

BOYD

Wait here. I'm still not sure she feels comfortable with you.

Reluctantly, Ballard stands down.

INT. DOLLHOUSE ART CENTER

Boyd rushes down to reach Echo and Sierra. Two nearby handlers separate Sierra from Echo before Boyd reaches them. With the two separated by the handlers, Boyd arrives.

(CONTINUED)

SIERRA HANDLER
What do you want us to do with
them?

BOYD
Take Sierra up to Topher for a
treatment. Ask him if he notices
anything wrong with her.

SIERRA HANDLER
Sierra, would you like a treatment?

SIERRA
I would like that very much.

Sierra Handler and Sierra leave for Topher's lab.

BOYD
Echo, tell me what happened.

ECHO
I don't know. I asked Sierra if
she was painting something she
remembered and then Sierra attacked
me.

BOYD
Are you okay Echo?

ECHO
I feel fine. Why did she attack
me?

BOYD
I don't know. Just to be on the
safe side, why don't you go see Dr.
Saunders now?

ECHO
Okay.

BOYD
Oh and Echo- do you mind if I see
your painting?

ECHO
Of course not. I trust you.

Echo hands Boyd the painting and he looks at it. It is a
painting of an automobile, the sun, and an empty clothes
line. (Alternative Pic, automobile, sun or moon, a jagged
line.)

BRIEF SHOT OF PICTURE FOR VIEWERS; THEN BACK TO BOYD

(CONTINUED)

BOYD
Take her to Dr. Saunders.

Echo's handler and Echo leave for Dr. Saunders. Boyd continues staring at the picture. After they are far enough away, Ballard approaches Boyd at the art center.

BALLARD
What was that all about?

BOYD
I don't know. Hopefully Topher can explain it.

Boyd and Ballard look at the picture again.

BRIEF SHOT OF PICTURE; THEN BACK TO BOYD AND BALLARD

BOYD
That's strange. Normally she draws a mountain.
(Neither make the connection:
Car-0-Line)

Boyd's phone rings.

BOYD
Boyd here.

INT. DOLLHOUSE ADELLE'S OFFICE

ADELLE
This is Adelle. We have a problem. I need to speak to you and Ballard right away.

SCENE VI. MIRROR

EXT. OUTSIDE ZOO- LATE MORNING

Scene opens with Alpha purchasing a ticket to the zoo.

Alpha walks in and heads towards the reptile exhibit.

He enters an exhibit with multiple snakes behind the glass boxes. He looks at the array of snakes before him, studying each one, until he comes across a rattlesnake.

ALPHA
Hello, friend. One in five, one in five.

(CONTINUED)

Alpha smashes the protective glass with his hand. People around scream. He holds his hand out and the snake strikes. After being bitten, he pulls his hand back, showing some pain on his face.

ALPHA

If this doesn't kill me...

In the background, people in the crowd can be heard calling for help and generally panicking. Alpha realizes he must leave before he is apprehended.

Alpha exits the zoo with his hand slightly bleeding.

Alpha makes his way towards a river, preferably near a railroad crossing. Fatigued and exhausted by the venom, Alpha lies down.

(Within hours, Alpha's vision blurs and he is reduced to a quivering state.)

SCENE VII. ADELLE'S OFFICE, THE PROBLEM.

INT. ADELLE'S OFFICE, DOLLHOUSE-LATE MORNING

This is an office meeting with Boyd, Ballard, Adelle, and Topher.

BALLARD

Topher, did you find out what went wrong with Sierra?

TOPHER

Not yet. She seems normal. Not sure what happened. Ivy is treating her, just to be safe. I'll find out more when I return to the lab.

Impatiently, Adelle turns to the men.

ADELLE

I'm afraid we have a more serious problem on our hands. It seems that fate has dealt us a very serious blow. As you know, Mr. Ballard, we released your friend Madelaine Costley.

BALLARD

If she's been hurt...

(CONTINUED)

ADELLE

Not yet, Mr. Ballard. Unfortunately, I've just received a call from one of the other dollhouses that she contacted them.

BALLARD

You mean there's more than one dollhouse?!? How many dollhouses are there?!?

ADELLE

That's not important, Mr. Ballard. What is important is that if she joins their house...

BOYD

They'll get her memories. Is that right, Topher?

TOPHER

It's not impossible. I'm not sure they'll look at them, but in theory, there might be fragments or pieces of memories they could extract. We always try to clean up all traces of the dollhouse, but we can only go so far in safely wiping a brain. Wipe too much and the person is just a drooling vegetable. If it is another dollhouse, they'll certainly notice that she's had some kind of an implant before. It would certainly raise their curiosity.

ADELLE

Exactly. With her memories, serious breaches of our dollhouse's protocol and operations could be exposed.

BOYD

We can't just ask for her return?

ADELLE

Unfortunately, while I have a friendly contact at that house, the manager of that particular house is very unfriendly towards me personally. Any excuse to cause me or my house embarrassment would be most welcome by them.

(CONTINUED)

BALLARD

So why don't you send in a doll or two and fetch her?

TOPHER

If they get Madelaine into a dollhouse, it's not that simple. A lot of our technology is the same at each dollhouse. They would be able to track a doll the same way we can. In theory, any active doll we sent near their house could be detected. If they were not expecting a rescue operation, a doll might be able to infiltrate their house. My guess is once they figure out she is a former doll, they would be expecting a rescue operation.

ADELLE

That's where you come in Mr. Ballard. You obviously care for her or you would not have secured her freedom. You are partially responsible for her current predicament.

BALLARD

I'm responsible?

(Ballard catches himself and begins to think about the situation. He wants to know more about the dollhouse network. The possibility that there were multiple dollhouses and that he might be able to locate another one, is too intriguing for him. In truth, he does not want November in another Dollhouse. There's no way he can condemn her to another five years.)

Okay. Okay. I'll help you.

ADELLE

Good. You and Boyd will be working together on this one. Good luck.

Adelle hands Boyd an envelope.

(CONTINUED)

ADELLE
Here is the location of Ms.
Costley.

SCENE VII. SAUNDER'S OFFICE

INT. DOLLHOUSE SAUNDER'S EXAMINATION ROOM-LATE MORNING

Echo is sitting on Saunders examination table. Saunders is wrapping up her examination.

SAUNDERS
Well Echo, I've looked you over and you are alright. I'm still curious as to what started the fight. Do you know why the fight started?

ECHO
I just asked her if she was painting something she remembered and she became very upset.

SAUNDERS
Echo, did you paint something you remembered?

ECHO
I'm not sure. I think so.
(Echo does not want to lead on too much, she's not entirely sure she should. She's afraid she'll get into trouble.)

SAUNDERS
Why don't you get some exercise? I'll talk to Topher. I'm sure you're fine.

Saunders gives Echo a lollipop.

SCENE VIII. STAKEOUT.

EXT. ROAD HEADING TO COSTLEY'S RESIDENCE- AFTERNOON

Ballard and Boyd are driving to Madelaine Costley's residence. Ballard is driving.

BALLARD
So you never really explained to me why you are still working for the dollhouse.

(CONTINUED)

BOYD

We were interrupted.

BALLARD

Now, what about you?

BOYD

Actually, I was just tired of doing the same thing over and over again. I had a lot of run in's with the higher ups. It was always the same thing- they don't share information, everyone is pulling rank, no real teamwork. I wasn't appreciated where I was, so I left.

BALLARD

And Caroline- I mean Echo- where does she fit in.

BOYD

She was my first assignment. We went through a lot together. In a way, I began to see her as a partner. But now, I'm focused on taking care of the house.

(Ballard relates to the easy attachment to Echo.)

BOYD

Okay. We're close. We should pull over now.

Boyd and Ballard are near the new location. Boyd and Ballard pull their car over and begin a stakeout waiting for Madelaine Costley to show up.

SCENE IX. GETTING HOT

INT. DOLLHOUSE, EXERCISE ROOM- AFTERNOON

Echo is performing exercises with Victor and some other dolls. After a while, Victor and Echo proceed to the sauna.

VICTOR

I like exercise.

ECHO

I do too. Are we friends?

(CONTINUED)

VICTOR
I like you.

ECHO
I think I like me too, but I can't
remember.

Victors smirks.

VICTOR
I just try to enjoy myself.

ECHO
Do you remember things?

Victor becomes a bit agitated.

VICTOR
No, I don't!

ECHO
I feel like I've forgotten
something. Do you feel like you
have forgotten something?

Victor is very agitated now.

VICTOR
There's nothing to
remember!!! Leave me alone!

Victor leaves and walks over to a group of dolls who begin
speaking to him.

VICTOR
Echo says she remembers things.

Several dolls laugh.

Echo approaches them.

Echo looks at Victor again.

ECHO
Don't you feel like you are
forgetting something?

Several dolls begin to move toward Echo menacingly and
surround her, but Echo's handler intervenes.

ECHO HANDLER
Echo, perhaps you should shower
now.

Echo nods and proceeds with her handler towards the shower.

SCENE X. STAKEOUT PART 2

EXT. SIDEWALK NEAR MADELAINE COSTLEY'S RESIDENCE; LATE AFTERNOON.

Madelaine Costley steps out of a building and onto a curb in plain view of Boyd and Ballard.

INT. BALLARD/BOYD CAR.

BALLARD
There's Madelaine!

BOYD
Wait here, I'll get her.

BALLARD
I should go. She knows me.

BOYD
Which is why I should go, you might disturb her.

BALLARD
Okay. How about we settle this over rocks, paper, scissors?

BOYD
Are you serious?

BALLARD
Come on, we're wasting time.

BOYD
Fine.

The two men make the requisite RPS motions.

BALLARD
One...Two...Three.

Ballard keeps his fist clenched and goes rock, Boyd goes paper.

BOYD
Rookie mistake-

But before he can complete the thought, Ballard knocks him out with a swift punch. (He uses his rock clenched fist.)

(CONTINUED)

BALLARD
Sorry, Boyd, but where I come from,
rock always beats paper.

Ballard exits the vehicle and begins to head towards Madelaine Costley. In his haste, he leaves the keys in the car.

As Ballard is moving towards Madelaine Costley, a black Escalade pulls up. Ballard begins running towards Madelaine. The driver from the Escalade jumps out. The driver approaches Madelaine and begins talking to her. She walks towards the driver and they are moving toward the Escalade. The driver places his hand on Madelaine's elbow. Ballard draws his gun.

BALLARD
Madelaine!

Hearing her name, Madelaine turns. The man now tightens his grip on her elbow and tries to pull her towards the vehicle.

BALLARD
Release her!

The man begins reaching for his side arm.

Ballard fires a shot.

BALLARD
Step away from the girl.

The man releases her.

BALLARD
Now tell any passengers to step out
of the car and come around to where
I can see them.

MADELAINE
I feel like...

Now walking into view is the passenger Graham. Graham faces Ballard.

BALLARD
Graham???

SCENE XII. META

EXTERIOR: LATE AFTERNOON ON THE BANK OF A RIVER NEAR A TRAIN.

As Alpha lays sweating and shaking beside the river way, a caterpillar is chewing on a yellow leaf.

(This represents the possibility of two separate change paths: health or sickness.)

ALPHA'S FACE IN FOCUS, MOVING OUT OF FOCUS TO FOCUS ON THE CATERPILLAR CHEWING ON A YELLOW LEAF.

ALPHA
(Whispering) What doesn't....

His voice trails off. His vision is blurring.

BLUR CATERPILLAR AND FOCUS ON HIS FACE AGAIN.

Alpha looks around, but his vision grows weaker. He can't see now. He screams as a passing train covers the sounds of his scream.

SCENE XIII. ECHO'S CHAMBER

INT. DOLLHOUSE; TOPHER'S LAB- LATE AFTERNOON

Dr. Saunders and Topher are talking in Topher's lab.

SAUNDERS
I just examined Echo and she seems fine physically. Did you find anything wrong with Sierra?

TOPHER
No. She was fine.

SAUNDERS
Is some mystery still impenetrable even for you?

TOPHER
You know, my work is not as simple as it looks. There are still some complex variables and some other stuff I need to debug.

(CONTINUED)

SAUNDERS

Disappointed that you can't simply program all of your problems away? Disappointed you can't make problems disappear, or change them, like people? Like the way I disappeared and you changed me?

TOPHER

Is this about you? Because if it is, what Alpha did...

SAUNDERS

Alpha? Really? Which one of the many personalities that you installed in Alpha is responsible? Which imprint, you created, is responsible? Why did you think it was a good idea to experiment on Alpha to begin with? And what about those personalities you chose?

TOPHER

You think I don't feel terrible about what happened? If you are looking for an apology, I'm sorry.

SAUNDERS

Your apology, is apparently not something I can or do live with. What am I? A broken chain between Providence and this world? A piece of borrowed meat that surrounds a magnetic strip? How long does does the "doctor" have before the carriage becomes a pumpkin? Will you just implant the doctor in another vessel? Make "me" forget all this? (motions towards body) Or will "I" finally rest? And what about the other me I discovered? The one who is sleeping? I guess the "Dr" is active? But what does being active mean when I've lost myself? I don't even know if I'm alive or dead.

TOPHER

I don't know what you want me to do. You were never supposed to find out. The only thing I can do

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TOPHER (cont'd)
now is make you forget. The other
dolls are quite happy.

SAUNDERS
Just keep telling yourself
that. Whatever you have done to me
and to the others, it's not
human. Isn't that funny- a doll
telling you that? And yet it's
true. Whatever I am, I prefer my
limited awareness to the sedate
promise of a doll's happiness.

Saunders leaves.

XIV. GRAHAM

EXT. MADELAINE'S RESIDENCE, NEAR SIDEWALK AND BY ESCALADE;
LATE AFTERNOON

GRAHAM
I should have known you would be
here...why don't you put the gun
away?

BALLARD
I guess... I'm a bit surprised you
are here.

GRAHAM
I've tried ignoring you for long
enough, Ballard. Let me guess,
dollhouse?

BALLARD
Would you believe that this is my
neighbor?

GRAHAM
Is that a fact...{turning to
Madelaine}. Miss, do you know this
fellow?

Madelaine just gives a confused look. She's not entirely
certain she knows Ballard and hesitates to respond.

(She's only seen him once
since release.)

GRAHAM
I figured. Alright, Ballard,
you're coming with me. Give me the
gun.

(CONTINUED)

Ballard hands Graham his gun.

BALLARD
I don't suppose you'd believe we
had sex?

GRAHAM
This is a very serious situation
Ballard. Just turn around. This
time, I'm taking you downtown for
interfering with an official
investigation.

Ballard turns around and puts his hands behind his back.

BALLARD
What exactly are you investigating?

Graham puts cuffs on Ballard.

MOVE TO SHOT OF BOYD RECOVERING IN STAKEOUT CAR.

From his vantage point in the car, Boyd recovers from
Ballard's punch and sees Ballard getting arrested. He
mutters to himself.

BOYD
Maybe I'll forgive you.

Boyd reaches for his phone.

MOVE SHOT BACK TO ESCALADE PARTY.

GRAHAM
I'll explain the investigation to
you on the way downtown.

Ballard, Graham, and Madelaine get into the back of the
Escalade. Driver gets in.

MOVE SHOT BACK TO BOYD IN STAKEOUT CAR.

Boyd calls Adelle.

(Conversation between Boyd and
Adelle, shots should
interchange between Adelle's
Office int. Dollhouse and
Boyd, Stakeout car.)

ADELLE
Yes?

(CONTINUED)

BOYD
Looks like Ballard is getting arrested.

ADELLE
Arrested? By whom?

BOYD
I'm not really sure. It looks like they are taking Ballard and Madelaine. They're getting into the car now.

ADELLE
That doesn't sound right. Follow them and report back to me.

BOYD
Okay.

Ballard, Graham, Madeleine, and the other man get into the Escalade and leave. Getting into the driver's seat, Boyd follows them in the stakeout car.

XV. DOLLS

INT. DOLLHOUSE, SHOWERS- LATE AFTERNOON.

Sierra is showering along with some other dolls.

Echo finished her sauna experience and heads towards the showers.

Sierra looks nervously at Echo. Echo is unaware of what is happening. Sierra continues to look even more irritatedly at Echo. As Sierra focuses on Echo, other dolls begin to surround and watch Echo too. They begin closing in around Echo. Echo, aware of her increasingly confined space, begins to try to find a way out of the shower. Finding her path blocked, she forcefully pushes her way passed the surrounding dolls. Echo rushes into the hands of her handler.

Echo Handler
Would you like a treatment Echo?

ECHO
I would like that.

Echo's Handler and Echo head towards Topher's lab.

XVI. ESCALADE.

INT. ESCALADE, EARLY EVENING.

Inside the Escalade, the driver should be driving. In the back, Graham, Ballard, and Madelaine are sitting next to each other.

MADELAINE

You're from the agency?

GRAHAM

I'll be with you in a minute, Miss. What the hell were you thinking Ballard?

BALLARD

Guess I just don't know when to quit.

GRAHAM

You really do not know when to back down do you? If only you had, so many problems could have been avoided. What is it about you?

BALLARD

I am afraid you just would not understand.

GRAHAM

I tried to help you, warn you, and push you away, but you wouldn't listen to me. I can not help you anymore.

MADELAINE

You're not from the agency? Are you?

Graham strikes her, knocking Madelaine back, nearly unconscious. She's stunned and immobile.

BALLARD

Are you crazy Graham? You can't just go around hitting her! What did she do?

GRAHAM

She asked the wrong questions- just like you.

(CONTINUED)

Graham strikes the handcuffed Ballard. As Ballard recoils, Graham pulls a syringe from a small leather case in the back of the Escalade. Graham grabs the stunned Madelaine's arm and injects Madelaine with the syringe. Ballard sees this and Graham turns toward him.

GRAHAM
Don't worry, you're next.

BALLARD
I don't know what the hell you're doing, Graham, but you'll never get away with this.

Graham pulls out another syringe.

GRAHAM
You should have left well enough alone. We couldn't move in on the dollhouse with you around. I know you too well Ballard, you would have said something.

BALLARD
What? You knew I was telling the truth? But...

Before he can finish, Graham sticks him with a needle and he cries out a bit. He begins to lose consciousness.

GRAHAM
You've been a nuisance for long enough. We can't disregard you any longer.

BALLARD
Graham, I don't understand....

Ballard passes out. Fade to black.
(Optional: Ballard hears the driver say, "Graham, would you like a treatment?" With Graham replying, "Very funny.")

XVII. DIAGNOSTIC

INT. DOLLHOUSE. TOPHER'S LAB EARLY EVENING

A handler brings Echo up to Topher's lab. Ivy and Topher turn to meet him.

(CONTINUED)

ECHO HANDLER

I brought Echo here. She was being encircled by some other dolls in the shower. Same thing was happening in the sauna. She had problems with Sierra earlier. I guess Dr. Saunders checked her out and gave her a clean bill of health. It's your turn now.

IVY

Encircled? And she's been attacked?

ECHO HANDLER

Yeah. Listen, I'm just bringing her to you. Giving you a brief update. You two can handle the science.

IVY

Okay.

TOPHER

Alright. I guess it's on us now. We have to run a special diagnostic. There is no need for a handler during this.

Topher leads Echo over to the chair and sits her down. Echo's handler leaves.

TOPHER

Ivy, I'm going to run a little hack I developed to fix these anomalies: a Gibson-Turing patch. Do you think you can get me a six-pack of beer?

IVY

Seriously, Topher? Why don't you ever let me help on the cutting edge stuff? I could have taken an internship at USR and I doubt I'd be making beer runs.

TOPHER

I don't have time to explain everything.

(Topher does not want to expose Ivy to the procedure, and is pretty sure he's going to want to forget it. A beer run makes sense.)

(CONTINUED)

IVY
I'll do it, but only if you promise
to share the source code for the
hack.

TOPHER
How about I just explain to you
what it does, and maybe you can
write your own code and we can
compare notes?

IVY
'Kay, but this is the last time.

Ivy leaves to get some beer.

Topher turning to Echo in the chair.

TOPHER
I'm sorry, this might hurt a bit.

Topher throws a switch and Echo tenses up a bit.

TOPHER
I'm going to need a drink after
this.

XVIII. SAFE HOUSE

EXTERIOR OF A SAFE HOUSE IN AN UNKNOWN LOCATION; SHOULD BE
SEEN FROM BOYD'S PERSPECTIVE FROM THE STAKEOUT CAR- EARLY
EVENING

Boyd watches as the Escalade carrying Madelaine, Ballard,
Graham, and the mystery driver pull into a gated drive at a
secure house. Boyd pulls over by the side of the road. He
calls Adelle.

(Conversation between Boyd and
Adelle, shots should
interchange between Adelle's
Office int. Dollhouse and
Boyd, Stakeout car.)

BOYD
It's Boyd.

ADELLE
What's the situation?

BOYD
They've taken Ballard and Madelaine
to a house. It's surrounded by a
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOYD (cont'd)
wall and its gated. They've probably got some security.

ADELLE
Good. It must be a safe house and not a dollhouse then. That means they probably plan to kill one or both of them.

BOYD
That's good news?

ADELLE
Yes. It means we can use the dolls.

BOYD
What do you want me to do?

ADELLE
We'll need the address of the safe house. I'll have one of our contacts at the city pull the schematics. You wait there. We will send some specialized dolls out to assist you. It may be a few hours before we have a team fully prepped and assembled. In the meantime, continue your recon and report back on any activity at the location.

BOYD
I'll get you the address and then I'll wait for further instructions.

ADELLE
Good.

INT. DOLLHOUSE, ADELLE'S OFFICE- EARLY EVENING.

Adelle hangs up. Adelle dials Topher.

ADELLE
Topher, we're going to need a rush job. Prepare one counter terrorist team leader and five commandos.

XIX. TOPH'S LAB EX MACHINA

INT. DOLLHOUSE, TOPH'S LAB- EARLY EVENING.

Echo is in the chair writhing in discomfort. Just off the phone, Topher is frantically pulling together different drives and programs to assemble some programming for the rush job. Ivy returns with the beer.

IVY

'Kay, I got your beer. Now what's the deal? {Upon seeing Echo} Oh my god, what is happening to her...

TOPHER

It's normal. Not pleasant, but so far, so good.

IVY

She looks like she's in pain.

TOPHER

She should, because she is.

IVY

My god, Topher, even for you...

TOPHER

Yes, I know thank you Ivy. It's days like this that I wish I had simply chosen a job with Blizzard or Electronic Arts. Digital Bunraku for the kids. Somehow, I got wrapped up in the cutting edge...

IVY

What are you doing to her?

TOPHER

I'm creating a mask for her. Echo is somewhat resistant to the programming. Unfortunately, this will make her slightly more resistant. However, it will also make her life here at the house bearable. If I didn't create this mask for her, she would likely be attacked or hurt by the other dolls.

Topher is still busy gathering hard drives and assembling team programming. Echo's apparent agony increases slightly.

(CONTINUED)

IVY

But why?

TOPHER

Why what? Why would the other dolls attack her or why is she resistant to programming? Well, the other dolls would attack her if the group felt threatened by the introduction of the idea of memory or consciousness. The doll persona itself is 'alive' not in the way you and I are, but in a more simulated sense. The dolls share a connection and a limited group identity. Echo's expression of consciousness and memory challenge the security they have in their simple pleasure driven doll identity. As for the second question, I'm not sure yet. Still need to do a little debugging on that front.

IVY

So you've create a program that masks Echo's consciousness?

TOPHER

Masks the expression of her ideas. Short of wiping her and putting her in the attic, it's the only thing I can imagine doing. It doesn't fix what's wrong with her.

IVY

Wrong with her as a doll?

TOPHER

Yes, wrong with her as a doll. Unfortunately, the process is painful.

IVY

It looks like torture.

TOPHER

Torture is such a bad word. I prefer to call it encryption. I'd love to discuss this more, but for now we need to get ready for a rush job. Adelle needs 5 commandos and a counter-terrorist team leader. I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TOPHER (cont'd)
need you to find the following
handlers and their dolls so they
can be prepped for their mission.

Topher hands Ivy a list of names. {Should include Sierra and Victor as well as others, Bravo, Delta, Tango, and X-ray.}

Ivy leaves. Topher continues to scramble about the lab while Echo writhes in pain.

FADE OUT.

XX. STAR CHAMBER.

INT. SECURE ROOM AT THE SAFE HOUSE- EARLY EVENING

Inside the room are Graham, the Unknown man, and Ballard. Madelaine is not in view. Ballard should be shirtless strapped in a chair. The room should be empty except for a few lights pointed at Ballard to prevent him from seeing too far in front of him. There is a small cart of instruments. Opening shot, Graham will be a few inches from his face as Ballard comes to.

GRAHAM (VO)
I think he's coming to.

FADE IN.

GRAHAM
I tried to warn you.

UNKNOWN
That's enough. Why don't you step
away and let me do my job?

Graham steps back into the blackness, out of Ballard's view and somewhere behind the lights. The Unknown (man) steps forward.

UNKNOWN
You should have listened to your
colleague.

The Unknown has a simple needle in his hand, which he holds out in front of Ballard.

UNKNOWN
I don't know what you know, Mr.
Ballard, but I do know what I know,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

UNKNOWN (cont'd)
the principal of pain. An interesting thing about pain is that a small amount of pain, just a pin prick, will be received with the same intensity as a large amount of pain.

The Unknown sticks Ballard with a pin. Ballard winces. The Unknown pulls the pin out.

UNKNOWN
Moreover, once you have experienced the pain, it becomes harder to endure subsequent applications of the same pain owing to the additional fear that comes from anticipating the pain.

The Unknown sticks Ballard again with a pin. Ballard again winces. The Unknown pulls the pin out.

UNKNOWN
I could continue this over and over again until the pain from this simple pin prick would seem unendurable to you. In time, you would confess to anything, tell me anything I want to hear, and finally beg me for death.

The Unknown sticks Ballard again. Ballard again winces. The Unknown pulls the pin out.

UNKNOWN
But, I'm not going to do that. And do you know why?

BALLARD
No, but I have a feeling you are going to tell me.

The Unknown hits Ballard across the face with his fist, bloodying Ballard's face.

UNKNOWN
Because it is less fun for me. I can use any weapon I want. I can apply as much pain as I want. To simply use a pin, would deprive ME of pleasure.

(CONTINUED)

BALLARD

What do you want from me?

UNKNOWN

Not very much. Perhaps to understand why you wouldn't let this go...but not much more. Maybe I just want to enjoy myself. One...

Pulling forward an electrical prod of some kind the Unknown applies an electroshock to Ballard who immediately writhes and screams in pain. The Unknown pulls back the prod and Ballard "relaxes". The Unknown continues counting.

UNKNOWN

Two.

The Unknown applies another dose of electroshock to Ballard. Ballard is writhing and screaming in pain. The Unknown pulls back the prod and Ballard relaxes.

UNKNOWN

Three.

FADE TO BLACK. BALLARD SCREAMING.

XXI. MORTAL CORDS

INT. TOPH'S LAB/DOLLHOUSE EARLY EVENING

Close up of Echo, sitting in the Chair. Echo Screams.

INT. DOLLHOUSE.

Outside of Toph's lab, we see that as Echo screams, Ivy looks up from the floor of the Dollhouse as does Dr. Saunders.

INT. TOPHER'S LAB/DOLLHOUSE

Inside Topher's lab, Topher looks on anxiously. Topher heads over to the chair, and looks down at Echo.

TOPHER

Just a little bit longer. I'm sorry, Echo.

As Topher is looking down at Echo, a small stream of blood should begin to trickle out of her nose.

TORTURE SLIDE SHOW

(CONTINUED)

(It would be nice, in this case, to perhaps have a slide show of alternating shots of torture, in which images of Ballard and Echo are interchangeably shown in varying states of tortured pain, connected as they were by a mortal cord and similar circumstances. Shots of each being tortured in parallel.)

BACK TO INT. TOPHER'S LAB/DOLLHOUSE

A visibly exhausted sleeping Echo is no longer writhing in pain.

TOPHER (RELIEVED)
It's over!

Topher wipes the blood off of Echo's face and puts some cotton balls in her nose to prevent further bleeding. Echo comes to.

ECHO
Did I fall asleep?

TOPHER
Yes.

ECHO
Then why do I feel so tired?

TOPHER
Perhaps you should get some rest.

Saunders enters.

SAUNDERS
Echo, why don't you go down to my office and I'll be there in a moment.

Echo leaves Topher's lab.

TOPHER
{trying to convince himself} She should be fine.

SAUNDERS
Thank you for your professional opinion, Dr. Cotton Balls. I'll just take a quick look and make
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAUNDERS (cont'd)
sure. Maybe just let her lie down
for a while and rest. What are you
doing?

TOPHER
I'm doing what I have to do- to
help Echo.

SAUNDERS
Help her?

TOPHER
Yes, I'm helping her, so she
doesn't get wiped.

SAUNDERS
I think you're losing focus.

TOPHER
This was not easy. I mean days
like this, when you have to do what
I just did. You just need to
remind yourself that you are
helping people. The dollhouse helps
people.

SAUNDERS
Repeat that a hundred times and you
may convince yourself, but not
me. Perhaps you are becoming the
evil you once opposed.

Saunders leaves. Ivy enters with some dolls (BRAVO, DELTA,
TANGO, VICTOR, SIERRA, X-RAY) and their respective handlers.

IVY
Are you ready to assemble your
team?

TOPHER
Let's get this over with...

Handler turns to Sierra.

SIERRA HANDLER
Would you like a treatment?

SIERRA
I would like that very much.

XXII. STAR CHAMBER PART DEUX

INT. SECURE ROOM AT THE SAFE HOUSE- EVENING

The Unknown hovers over a now thoroughly bloodied Ballard. A menacing assortment of various instruments lay on a small cart next to him.

UNKNOWN

Some people do not like their work,
Mr. Ballard. I'm not one of those
people.

Unknown punches Ballard again.

UNKNOWN

Why don't you tell me- why you
didn't just stop pursuing the
dollhouse?

BALLARD

They were holding a girl, Caroline,
against her will...

UNKNOWN

You have feelings for this woman?
You love her?

Pulling forth a small knife, the Unknown begins to etch a heart shape in small cut blood over Ballard's actual heart as Ballard moans in pain.

BALLARD

I just want to see her smile.

UNKNOWN

If you want to see a doll smile,
all you have to do is pay.

The Unknown cuts Ballard's shoulder with the knife.

BALLARD

I wanted to see her really smile,
not a forced smile, a real one.

UNKNOWN

You're chasing nothing but a shadow
and an echo Mr. Ballard.

BALLARD

Her name is Caroline.

The Unknown stakes a knife through Ballard's left hand, pinning it to the chair. Ballard cries out in pain.

(CONTINUED)

BALLARD

Graham, I know you're there! I know you're watching this! You can't just sit there and watch this! You're not evil! I know you Graham, you can't do this...sit by...

UNKNOWN

You think you have any friends, Mr. Ballard? Perhaps you have one here, but I doubt she can help you.

The Unknown steps into the shadows. Ballard is now staring into nothing but lights and darkness. He can hear nothing but the voices.

UNKNOWN (OS)

And I doubt you can help her.

Madelaine SCREAMS!

(This should primarily be shots of Ballard looking into the lights and darkness, seeing nothing and only hearing Madelaine and the voice of the Unknown.)

BALLARD

Leave her alone...

UNKNOWN (OS)

If you weren't here, I probably would do just that. It's hard to accept that you are the reason for her torture, isn't it?

Another Scream from Madelaine.

BALLARD

It's me you want, isn't it?

UNKNOWN (OS)

And it's you, I'm torturing...

A series of muffled cries from Madelaine.

UNKNOWN (OS)

Of course, when we're done with her, she won't remember what we did to her. You, on the other hand, will be dead. I only wonder if before you die, I can torture you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

UNKNOWN (OS) (cont'd)
so much that you will rape your
friend here.

Unknown steps back into Ballard's vision and begins to reach for another instrument.

SCENE XXIII. ADELLE'S OFFICE; MISSION BRIEFING.

INT. DOLLHOUSE, ADELLE'S OFFICE- EVENING

Adelle is briefing the dolls that are part of the strike force, SIERRA, VICTOR, BRAVO, DELTA, TANGO, X-RAY as well as IVY, TOPHER, and SAUNDERS.

ADELLE
Boyd located the house where they are holding Madelaine and Ballard. Madelaine is the first priority, though we can't let Ballard fall into their hands. He knows more than he should. We must recover both of them, or at least their bodies to reduce our exposure.

SIERRA
As the team leader of the strike force, I would like to know how much resistance we can expect to face? What kind of weapons are we going against?

ADELLE
I'm afraid, the only thing we can offer you are the housing schematics on file with the city. We do not know how many people are in the house or what kind of weapons they will be equipped with. It's safe to assume the house will have some kind of security system. This is a very dicey situation and the use of deadly force is not only advised but necessary.

SAUNDERS
Are six people enough for this mission?

(CONTINUED)

ADELLE

It's what we can spare. There will be some assistance lying in the wings, but for primary intrusion and target recovery, Sierra's team will be in charge. If backup is necessary, there will be a few people waiting to receive the go-ahead order from Topher to move in. We have a well stocked weapons store. Your team can outfit itself with any equipment you feel is necessary.

SIERRA

What about local units of law enforcement and government?

ADELLE

This is clearly a grey operation.

VICTOR

By which you mean illegal.

ADELLE

I prefer the term, "grey". In any event, the strike needs to be quick, covert, and clean. The less attention you draw to yourself, the better off we are. Local units of government will be both unaware and presumably hostile if they are alerted to the situation. After executing the strike and recovering the targets, you will need to make an immediate evacuation.

VICTOR

Sounds like a suicide mission.

ADELLE

It is risky, but you're the best we have and its absolutely necessary to protect critical security interests. If there are injuries, bring anyone back here for treatment.

SAUNDERS

I'm not sure...

(CONTINUED)

ADELLE
{cutting Saunders off}: You should
prepare accordingly.

SIERRA
Okay, we're on it.

Dolls leave.

ADELLE
Doctor, I understand what you were
going to say.

SAUNDERS
Alone, I'm not sure if I can handle
the situation especially if there
are serious injuries.

ADELLE
Hopefully, you won't have to. Just
do the best you can.

SAUNDERS
I will prepare what I can in
anticipation of problems, but I
can't make any assurances.

ADELLE
Topher, can you monitor the
operation?

TOPHER
Actually, I was hoping maybe Ivy
could monitor the operation.

Saunders looks at Topher in some disbelief and mild concern.

ADELLE
Is there some reason you can't
monitor the operation?

TOPHER
It's not that. It's just that, I
think it would be prudent for Ivy
to begin getting more experience in
the operations.

ADELLE
Topher, this is not a training
exercise. We are on the brink of
war with another house.

(CONTINUED)

TOPHER

Ivy will be able to handle this situation. I've shown her how to check monitor the vitals. No offense, but chances are, if something goes wrong with a doll in this situation, it's probably because they are dead. She needs some experience handling situations that are deeper than just escort missions.

IVY

I'm sure I can handle it.

ADELLE

If something goes wrong, I'm holding you accountable Topher.

TOPHER

I just want you to understand that you are sending these dolls into an unknown situation with little insight. I don't expect a problem from a technical standpoint.

ADELLE

You rarely do...

TOPHER

It's much more likely that the mission risks exceed acceptable safety parameters. You can hold me accountable if they glitch during the mission, but if I were you I'd be more concerned about the dangers inherent in the mission itself.

ADELLE

Fair enough. By the way, Victor called it a "suicide mission". Are you sure you got this right with his programming?

TOPHER

Rush job or not, programming is fine. Just tough guy commando talk.

Topher, Ivy, Saunders turn toward the door and begin to leave. Ivy is smiling.

{Whispering to Topher}

(CONTINUED)

IVY

Thank you.

Before they can reach the door, Adelle summons Topher.

ADELLE

Topher, can I have a private word with you.

Ivy leaves. Saunders leave. Topher returns.

ADELLE

Are you sure you're okay? I don't expect you to turn down an opportunity to troubleshoot a mission.

TOPHER

It's been a stressful day. I've already had to deal with a serious problem with Echo.

ADELLE

What was the problem?

TOPHER

She's disturbing the other dolls by introducing concepts such as memory and exhibiting some limited self awareness. I'm trying to shield her from any retribution.

ADELLE

Retribution? Why?

TOPHER

It's a conflict within the doll's value hierarchy. Normally, dolls simply seek out the immediate gratifications of their surroundings. We keep the environment stimulative and the dolls busy. Normally, nothing interferes with their gratification. Because of the carefully controlled environment we keep them in, they rarely move out of stage one- gratification. But apparently, Echo triggered a stage two response from the other dolls. They perceived her ideas as a disturbance to their environment and the dolls reacted accordingly.

(CONTINUED)

ADELLE

And you were able to fix this?

TOPHER

If she tries to communicate memory concepts in the future, it will come out like meaningless gibberish. It is not simply a language filter. It operates more like a way to encrypt the idea itself. If Echo speaks about memory or expresses self awareness, the dolls will look at her with confused amusement. The dolls will not react malevolently. Echo will presumably get tired of trying to communicate the ideas to them and eventually stop.

ADELLE

Why wasn't I made aware of this scenario?

TOPHER

Actually, in some of my earlier memos to you, I did inform you that these scenarios were theoretically possible. My guess is the memo may have been treated as another one of my many often ignored technical memos. Would you like me to find a copy of that memo for you?

ADELLE

No, that won't be necessary. Do you think the problem has been contained?

TOPHER

I think so. We'll just have to keep a protective eye on Echo and make sure she does not run afoul of the Dolls in the near short term. As an aside, it might make her harder to program. Her next assignment should certainly be nothing more than a routine escort mission.

ADELLE

I see. It sounds like you are on top of it. Keep informing me as problems emerge. And Topher, Ivy

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADELLE (cont'd)
can run the mission, but I want you
there- just to watch over things.

TOPHER
Just out of curiosity, are the
handlers up to this?

ADELLE
I briefed them before I briefed the
dolls. The only thing they know is
that the dolls are engaged in a
rescue mission. They are under
strict orders not to enter the
house or assist the dolls unless
they are given a direct order by
you- or in this case, Ivy.

TOPHER
I'll remind Ivy.

Topher leaves.

XXIV. ARSENAL.

INT. DOLLHOUSE- WEAPONS ROOM; NIGHT

The dolls and handlers are in the weapons room at the
dollhouse weapons cache loading up on weapons.

SIERRA
Take a pair of night vision
goggles, 2 grenades- 1 flash, 1
fragmentation, a sidearm and a
machine gun. Then we roll.

Dolls should proceed to load up on the appropriate weapons
and then proceed to the cars with the handlers. Sierra
takes 1 flash grenade and 1 phosphorous grenade. The
handlers and the dolls should get into vehicles and drive to
meet Boyd at the location for a night mission.

XXV. STAR CHAMBERS CONTINUED.

INT. SECURE ROOM AT THE SAFE HOUSE-NIGHT.

The Unknown applies an electric shock to Ballard. As he
experiences the shock of it, he should see an image of
Caroline's face.

HEAD SHOT OF CAROLINE, SLOW MOTION, SMILING.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE OVER OF UNKNOWN
You could have made a thousand
different choices anywhere along
the way and not ended up in this
chair. Yet, here you are.

BACK TO ROOM WITH BALLARD SITTING IN THE CHAIR LOOKING AT
THE UNKNOWN.

BALLARD
Smiling...Caroline...

Ballard manages a brief smile. The Unknown hits him.

BALLARD
You make them dance, force their
smiles, they read the lines you
feed them, dress up in the costumes
you give them, but none of it is
real. That's why I'm here...

The Unknown hits him again.

FLASHBACK- REPLAY OF CAROLINE SITTING ON THE ROCK IN HER
VIDEO INTERVIEW WITHOUT SOUND.

VOICE OVER OF UNKNOWN
I'm almost finished having my fun
with you. Just one more test.

SCENE XXVI. BOYD.

EXT. ALLEYWAY, NIGHT.

Sierra, Victor, Boyd, and one handler have the housing
schematics and are looking over them.

SIERRA
I'm thinking we just jump the wall,
and head in full on assault.

BOYD
Won't they expect that?

SIERRA
They expect everything. An assault
is always at a disadvantage. The
only thing we can try to do is
reduce that advantage.

(CONTINUED)

BOYD

What do you recommend?

SIERRA

We should cut the power to the house. If they have an onsite back up generator, it will only give us a few seconds before power is restored. It maybe enough time for us to cross the lawn before tripping any alarms. Initially, they will be in darkness. Our goggles should give us a small advantage. Once inside, it will just be room to room combat anyway.

X-RAY HANDLER

Why don't you leave the electrical system to me?

SIERRA

I was told my team would be the only team working the assault.

X-RAY HANDLER

You will be, but I can cut the electricity without breaching the house. Besides that will give your team a better chance to get in position for your assault.

VICTOR

Can you handle that?

X-RAY HANDLER

Before I did this, I used to set up grids for military units. I'm familiar with setting up and taking down systems fast. Power to one house? No problem.

SIERRA

Sounds good. We're just going to have to trust that you can cut the wire and make a break for it. We should synchronize our watches. At 22:15, we roll out. That gives us ten minutes to set up and ten minutes for you to cut the power.

X-RAY HANDLER

I'm on it.

(CONTINUED)

BOYD

Wait. You'll need a ride back, just in case we get separated. See that car (indicates car). Here are the keys. (Throws X-RAY HANDLER keys). See you back at the dollhouse.

X-RAY HANDLER leaves. Boyd rolls eyes and sighs.

SIERRA

Any better ideas?

BOYD

Sadly, no.

SCENE XXVII. 10:10

INT. DOLLHOUSE, COMMAND AND CONTROL CENTER NEAR TOPH'S LAB.

Topher and Ivy are monitoring the vitals of the dolls.

TOPHER

All vitals look good. You're doing great Ivy. Only decision you really have to make is whether or not to send the handlers in.

IVY

Hey Topher, I want to thank you again for sticking up for me.

TOPHER

No problem. It's important for you to get experience like this, just in case I'm not able to do the job.

IVY

I'm sure you'll be doing this for a long time, but I appreciate it just the same.

TOPHER

Okay, everything is under control, I'm going to get a beer.

IVY

Right now? Are you crazy?

TOPHER

It'll be fine. It's just to take the edge off. You want one?

(CONTINUED)

IVY
Uhhh...nooooo....thanks.

TOPHER
I didn't think so, I'll be right
back.

Topher gets up and begins walking away. (He has no
intention of getting a beer.)

IVY
No wait...wait...don't leave me.

TOPHER
You're just going to have to get
used to handling things on your
own.

{Topher leaves, knowing that Ivy can't follow him. As
Topher leaves, we see Saunders watching him from a
distance.}

The time is now 10:11

MEANWHILE AT SAFE HOUSE LOCATION.

Sierra's team moves into a secure location near the houses
perimeter and begins to wait for the lights to go out in the
house before they breach the perimeter.

SIERRA
(to Victor): 4 minutes to go.

SCENE XXVIII. 10:12

INT. SECURE ROOM SAFE HOUSE
(Unknown, a bloody Madelaine,
Ballard, unseen Graham in the
shadows. Madelaine should be
stripped to her bra and
panties. She should have a
bloody heart shape carved
above her breast. Her nose
should be bloodied.)

Ballard cannot see into the darkness.

The Unknown drags Madelaine into Ballard's view. She's on
her hands and knees, she's crying and bloodied.

(CONTINUED)

UNKNOWN

See what you've done now?

BALLARD

You're nothing but a filthy rotten animal.

UNKNOWN

I'm going to give you a choice- either you rape her or I do.

SCENE XXIX. PRIVACY

INT. DOLLHOUSE; TOPH'S LAB/ANTECHAMBER.

Back at the dollhouse, Topher makes his way in privacy to an unoccupied antechamber near his lab. It is a solitary location of the dollhouse, out of Ivy's vision or other prying eyes. There is a desk and a chair. He moves toward the desk. He opens the desk drawer and exposes a gun. Topher pulls out the gun.

SCENE XXX. 10:13

INT. SECURE ROOM SAFE HOUSE

Inside the room, the Unknown, a bloody Madelaine, Ballard, and unseen Graham in the shadows. Madelaine remains stripped to her bra and panties. She is on her hands and knees, sobbing and looking at Ballard.

UNKNOWN

I take it you're going to watch.

Madelaine is gazing at Ballard.

MADELAINE

Please, help me...please... God help me...

The Unknown, pushes Madelaine's head down to the ground breaking her contact with Ballard's eyes. She's crying. The Unknown moves behind Madelaine, and reaches down to unzip his trousers.

Graham moves in at this moment. Graham slams a knife into the back of the Unknown. The Unknown is surprised by this sudden back stab. The Unknown turns around revealing to Ballard the knife in his back. The Unknown takes two steps toward Graham and collapses.

(CONTINUED)

BALLARD

I knew you weren't that bad Graham.

GRAHAM

I'm sorry, but I'm worse than you think. I am truly sorry though. I tried to warn you so many times. Why wouldn't you stop?

BALLARD

What happened Graham? How did you get mixed up in this?

GRAHAM

It was my daughter. She ended up at one of the dollhouses. She was one of those young idealistic kids who wants to make the world a better place. Next thing I know, she signs up with one of these "dollhouses". They promise her that she'll make a difference, make the world a better place. I tracked her down to the dollhouse she served. I secured her freedom on the condition that I take her place in service to their dollhouse. They let her go, but I had to help them. But this time, they went too far. What if she had been my daughter?

Graham points to Madelaine.

BALLARD

So that night I turned you away- you knew I was telling the truth about the dollhouse?

GRAHAM

Yes. The people I was with, those weren't agents, those were other dolls. We were going to sweep the dollhouse, wipe it out. It was a high stakes bloody plan to take over the house. Figured by the time that dollhouse realized it was being attacked by dolls, it would be too late. Safe to assume most of the handlers would break rank at the first sign of trouble. The dolls wouldn't put up much of a fight in their trance. We would

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GRAHAM (cont'd)
liquidate the leadership of the house.

BOYD
But it didn't happen. Why?

GRAHAM
When I saw you, I knew we'd have to kill you or you'd talk about it endlessly. I called off the attack. I staked out the house waiting for you to leave. Only thing was, I saw Madelaine leave. I figured if we captured her, we might be able to discredit the dollhouse. Save everyone the trouble of a bloody confrontation and take the operation over after the other houses shut down management. But you showed up yet again...

BALLARD
It's okay Graham, it's not your fault.

GRAHAM
No it is. It is my fault and if they find out what I've done, they're going to kill my daughter.

Graham pulls out a gun.

SCENE XXXI. MORTAL CORDS II; DUEL AT 10:14; GUILT

INT. DOLLHOUSE; TOPH'S LAB/ANTECHAMBER

Back at the dollhouse, all alone, Topher slowly runs his hands along the barrel of the gun. He moves the gun up and uses the barrel to brush back his hair as he moves the gun up to the side of his head. He carelessly rolls the barrel along the side of his head until he moves the gun forward to a position in which the gun is pointed straight at his forehead.

MEANWHILE AT THE STAR CHAMBER

INT. SECURE ROOM AT SAFE HOUSE- NIGHT

(Madelaine is still crying on the ground, afraid to move).

(CONTINUED)

BALLARD

Graham, everything you did was out of duress.

GRAHAM

If they find me alive, they'll kill my daughter.

Graham moves the gun up along side of his head.

BALLARD

Graham- DON'T!

AT TOPH'S ANTECHAMBER LOCATION

INT. TOPH'S LAB/ANTECHAMBER

At the dollhouse, Topher points the gun directly at his forehead. His thumbs are on the trigger. His thumbs slowly begin to put pressure on the trigger.

BACK AT THE STAR CHAMBER

INT. SECURE ROOM AT SAFEHOUSE

In the Star Chamber, Graham has the gun directly at the side of his head.

EXT. SAFEHOUSE NIGHT.

Sierra is watching her watch. It's a few seconds to 10:15. (Maybe 5 seconds.)

FOR EACH SECOND, ALTERNATE BETWEEN A PICTURE OF TOPHER WITH A GUN TO HIS HEAD AND GRAHAM WITH A GUN TO HIS HEAD.

10:15, lights out.

FADE TO BLACK: SOUND OF GUNSHOT.

SCENE XXXII. ATTACK.

EXT. SAFEHOUSE NIGHT.

SIERRA AND DOLLS, OUTSIDE PERIMETER, LIGHTS ON HOUSE GO OUT.

SIERRA

10:15, GO! GO! GO!

The dolls jump the wall and rush across the lawn towards the blacked out house.

(CONTINUED)

(Dolls: Sierra, Victor, Delta,
X-ray, Tango, Bravo.)

Victor and X-ray are first to breach the house perimeter. Upon entry, both get shot. Sierra and Bravo return fire killing the first two perimeter guards.

SIERRA

Tango, cover Victor and X-ray,
while the rest of you, come with
me.

VICTOR

I don't need anyone to cover me.
Take Tango and move in. I'll guard
X-ray.

SIERRA

Okay. Okay, move in.

The lights come on. The dolls remove their night goggles. The alarm begins to sound.

(Action packed firefight.)

Sierra and company move from room to room clearing them out. They rush up a flight of stairs and reach a corridor. Down the corridor, three guards have taken up various positions in rooms adjacent to the corridor. They fire a shot or two down the corridor. Tango throws a flash grenade down the corridor. Unable to see, the defending guards fire aimlessly. Sierra and Tango easily pick off the now defenseless and blinded guards. Having secured the upstairs, the dolls rush downstairs. Sierra reaches the Star Chamber door, the secure room, where the torturing has occurred. She opens it.

SCENE XXXIII. RESCUE.

INT. DOLLHOUSE COMMAND CENTER NEAR TOPH'S LAB.

At the dollhouse command center for operations, Ivy sees the vitals of Victor and X-ray are in a state of decline.

IVY

(Muttering to herself)
Where the hell is Topher?
(Collecting herself and then
Ivy speaks to Boyd via
headphones.)
Boyd, I've got two dolls that look
like they've been hurt pretty
badly.

(CONTINUED)

SHOT OF BOYD WITH FEW HANDLERS.

BOYD
What do you want us to do?

SHOT OF IVY.

IVY
Send some of the handlers in just
to recover the injured dolls.

SHOT OF BOYD

BOYD
You got it.

Boyd looks at the handlers around him.

BOYD
I need two of you to come with
me. The rest of you should get in
our cars. In a few moments, drive
the vehicles to the front of the
house. We're going to need to get
out of here fast. (Pointing at two
handlers:) You guys, come with me.

MEANWHILE...

INT. SECURE ROOM AT THE SAFE HOUSE.

Sierra with the rest of her team burst through the door of the star chamber. Graham is lying dead on the floor, bleeding from a fatal gunshot wound to the head. The Unknown is lying beside him. Madelaine and Ballard are distraught bloody messes. Seeing Sierra, Ballard is momentarily overcome by relief.

SIERRA
Let's go!

Sierra begins to untie Ballard and removes the knife from his left hand.

SIERRA
Get the girl and let's get out of
here. We don't have much time
before the hostiles arrive. We need
to be gone. When we're out, we're
torching the place.

(CONTINUED)

BALLARD
I can't leave Graham.

SIERRA
He's dead.

BALLARD
They have to find his body...
someone help me with his body.

Tango assists Ballard and they carry Graham's body on their shoulders.

SIERRA
No time to argue with you. You two
can carry him, but you must leave
the body outside. We're not
transporting it off the premises.

Everyone rushes out of the room.

EXTERIOR OF SAFE HOUSE, NEAR DOOR.

Outside the safe house, the handlers led by Boyd have retrieved the unconscious X-ray and the barely conscious Victor. They move X-Ray and Victor back to the driveway gate. Other handlers move the vehicles in front of the driveway. Boyd opens the gate from the inside. Then the handlers and Boyd move the wounded dolls into some of the vehicles.

The dolls, Ballard, and Madelaine rush out the front door. Sierra pauses and tosses her phosphorous grenade into the house. The house catches fire. Ballard and Tango carry Graham's body a safe distance from the house and they drop it near the front gate. Everyone then jumps into different vehicles and they rush off.

Jumping inside the back of one vehicle are Boyd, Madelaine, Sierra, Ballard.

INT. BACK OF VEHICLE.

SIERRA
What happened to X-ray and Victor?

BOYD
We retrieved them. They are on
their way back in one of the other
vehicles.

(CONTINUED)

SIERRA
How were they doing?

BOYD
Not good, but hopefully we'll get them back in time to help them.

Sierra looks concerned, Boyd turns his attention to Ballard.

BOYD
So, Ballard, you have a good hook on you, but it looks like you got the worst of it.

BALLARD
Yeah, maybe you should thank me.

BOYD
I was thinking just that.

Boyd hits Ballard, nearly knocking him out. This panics Madelaine, who is still traumatized by the earlier events.

MADELAINE
Oh God! Not again! Not again! Who are you people?!?

Madelaine begins screaming. Ballard recovers his senses just enough to calm Madelaine down.

BALLARD
Madelaine, it's okay. We're "friends". He was just playing around. You're safe. You're safe now.

Madelaine continues sobbing but stops screaming.

BALLARD
Okay, Boyd, truce. I'm sorry about what happened back there, but as you can see, I certainly got the worst of it.

Sierra pulls her gun and points it at Boyd.

SIERRA
Very professional...I'm surprised we're all not dead. Do that again, and you just might be.
(Boyd realizes that Sierra's Handler is in another car.)

(CONTINUED)

BOYD

No need for that. It was like he said, just finishing up a game between "friends". Isn't that right, Ballard?

BALLARD

Yeah. Just a dumb game. No need for the gun.

Ballard continues to comfort Madelaine.

SCENE XXXIV. REDEMPTION.

INT. TOPHER'S LAB/ANTECHAMBER NIGHT

A hand crawls up behind Topher's back and touches him on the back. (The hand belongs to Saunders.)

SAUNDERS

Don't Topher.

Surprised, Topher slowly turns around to see Saunders. He moves the gun against the side of his head, holding onto it with one hand.

TOPHER

You?

SAUNDERS

I know I've been hard on you Topher, but this isn't the answer.

TOPHER

You hate me and probably with good reason. I made you hate me to remind me of the mistakes I made. You performed wonderfully today.

SAUNDERS

If you kill yourself, I'll hate you more than ever.

TOPHER

{surprised} Why?

SAUNDERS

I've been robbed of my awareness, my conscious. I lost my self. I am left with these broken fragments- and you would throw away what you have: your awareness, your

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAUNDERS (cont'd)
consciousness, your identity? The things I want the most, miss the most, you would just squander? I would hate you even more than I already do- really hate you- if you throw those things away. Your suicide would only be a final violation, a selfish and senseless act of a true coward... Even having been spiritually raped, I'm not the coward you would be under these circumstances.

TOPHER
I am not supposed to hurt anyone. Today, I think I may have.

SAUNDERS
I know I've been hard on you Topher, but you've at least shown today how difficult this is for you.

TOPHER
My reaction is not an exoneration.

SAUNDERS
You really think you understand everything?

TOPHER
Probably.

SAUNDERS
Topher, you need to accept some mysteries Topher. I know you think you understand everything Topher, but you don't. You keep looking at problems from the top down and only see the surface.

TOPHER
You couldn't be more wrong. I dream of an unknowable mystery. Sadly, most things just take a little bit of time to comprehend.

(Not making any real progress, Saunders changes her approach.)

(CONTINUED)

SAUNDERS

Your current course of action will change nothing. Now put the gun down.

Topher is emotionally drained with tears welling up in his eyes. He lowers the gun slightly.

TOPHER

I hurt Echo, today. I never wanted to hurt anyone, least of all Echo.
(Some speculation that Topher may in fact love Echo.)

SAUNDERS

I checked her out and Echo will be alright.

TOPHER

When she wakes up, tell Echo, I'm sorry.

Topher closes his eyes. He raises the gun again.

(Saunders cannot seem to reassure Topher. Selfishly, she doesn't want Topher dead for the previously stated reasons, it would hurt her. Without recourse to any other methods, Saunders concludes she should forgive Topher to prevent a greater harm. Saunders may be willing to forgive, but she will probably still be mad at Topher. Nevertheless, the statement is a sign that Saunders is overriding some of her "programming" as well.)

SAUNDERS

I forgive you! Whatever you are feeling about the past, I'm willing to forgive you for what happened to me.

Topher drops the gun. Overwhelmed by the unexpected gesture and perhaps not entirely emotionally balanced, Topher grabs Saunders and kisses her passionately. Saunders is surprised and after a moment pulls back. (The kiss is a promise to be kept- a kiss of life. Topher will not attempt suicide again.)

(CONTINUED)

SAUNDERS

I assume that was not meant for the doctor.

TOPHER

No it wasn't. It would take too long to explain everything. I'm sorry.

(Collecting himself a bit)

I have to get back, I left Ivy alone.

SAUNDERS

Are you sure you can handle it? I'll go with you.

TOPHER

About what happened...

SAUNDERS

No need to say anything.

Saunders picks the gun up off the floor and puts it back into the drawer. Saunders and Topher return to Ivy at the command center. (Topher has barely recollected himself).

INT. DOLLHOUSE COMMAND CENTER NEAR TOPH'S LAB- NIGHT.

TOPHER

Did I miss anything?

IVY

Just the entire operation. We have two dolls with unstable vitals, apparently gunshot wounds, incoming.

SAUNDERS

I better get prepared for the incoming.

Saunders heads to her office.

IVY

Hey Topher, where's your beer?

TOPHER

I changed my mind about that, among other things.

SCENE XXXV. TRIAGE

INT. DOLLHOUSE, SAUNDERS OFFICE NIGHT

Some handlers bring in Victor and X-Ray, both bleeding profusely and in shock from their gunshot wounds. They lay them down on examining tables (or her desk if there is only one examining table). The handlers carrying the dolls leave. Sierra is with them. Boyd and Sierra's handler are also in the room.

SIERRA
How bad is it?

SAUNDERS
Honestly, I probably only have time to save one of them.

SIERRA
Save that one.

Sierra motions to Victor.

SAUNDERS
Could you please leave, I have work to do.

SIERRA
As their commander, I feel responsible for them. I'm not in your way and I'm not leaving either.

SIERRA HANDLER
Sierra, would you like a treatment.

SIERRA
That would be nice.

Sierra handler and Sierra leave. Saunders begins her work to save Victor. (R.I.P. X-ray.)

SCENE XXXVI. WAITING FOR SAUNDERS; INT. DOLLHOUSE.

INT. DOLLHOUSE. NIGHT.

Outside of Saunders' office, Madelaine and Ballard are sitting down. They are waiting for a chance to be examined and perhaps fixed up a bit. Madelaine has been given a blanket to cover herself.

(CONTINUED)

MADELAINÉ

So, we know each other? I only remember seeing you once, but you said we were neighbors.

BALLARD

It's a rather long story.

MADELAINÉ

You were rather brave out there.

BALLARD

So were you.

MADELAINÉ

Honestly, I was very scared.

BALLARD

I think we both were. Who were you trying to contact? How did you get swept up into that?

MADELAINÉ

Someone handed me a flyer asking if I wanted to make a difference. I really like helping people, so I thought I would call.

BALLARD

I know you. I know helping people sounds like a good idea, but I hope next time you'll be more careful.

MADELAINÉ

I will try to remember.

Adelle walks up and overhears this last line.

ADELLE

Yes, about that. I was wondering if you would care to forget what just happened. We are willing to offer you a free treatment. I understand the experience may have been a bit traumatic.

MADELAINÉ

I would like that very much.

ADELLE

I'll talk to Topher and see what we can do. He's a bit busy now, but I'm sure we can squeeze you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADELLE (cont'd)
in. After that, you'll be free to go. Would you care for an escort home, perhaps Mr. Ballard could help you?

MADELAININE
No, that's alright. Everyone has been a lot of help already. I don't want to impose anymore than I already have, especially on Mr. Ballard.

ADELLE
Fine. When you are done, I'll arrange for some cab fare and a cab will pick you up and drop you at your residence.

Saunders comes out of her office with Boyd. Adelle takes her and Boyd out of earshot of Madelaine and Ballard.

ADELLE
Well? Were you able to save them?

SAUNDERS
I could only save Victor. X-ray is dead. I'm sorry. I just am not prepared to act as a combat surgical unit. My facilities are more ordinary. I'm only a single doctor.

ADELLE
I see. Okay. Boyd dispose of X-Ray's body. We will make the usual arrangements for the family. Doctor, after Boyd has removed the body, please attend to Madelaine first. Whatever you do, please do not tell either of them about X-Ray's death.

Boyd signals some handlers. Boyd and the handlers walk into Saunders Office.

INT. SAUNDERS OFFICE DOLLHOUSE

Boyd and the handlers clear out the body from Saunders office, moving it out the back. Victor lies recovering on Saunders examining table.

SCENE XXXVII. TOPHER'S LAB; CLEANUP.

INT. DOLLHOUSE, TOPHER'S LAB NIGHT

Topher, Ivy, Sierra, and a line of Handlers.

IVY

Say, Topher, why didn't you give the dolls new names this time?

TOPHER

It was a rush job. Besides, military uses names like those, so I figured it wouldn't be a problem.

IVY

But shouldn't we always use different names than their doll names?

TOPHER

That would be best, but I don't think it's going to hurt us this one time.

IVY

Okay. Topher knows best, I guess.

TOPHER

Something like that.

SCENE XXXVIII. FRIENDS?

OUTSIDE SAUNDERS OFFICE.

Madelaine and Ballard are waiting to be treated.

SAUNDERS:

I can see you now.

After Saunders asks Madelaine in, the two disappear into her office.

Having disposed of X-ray, Boyd returns to visit Ballard who is waiting for his turn with Saunders.

BOYD

We made a pretty terrible team, didn't we?

(CONTINUED)

BALLARD

I'll say. I was out of line. I should not have hit you like that.

BOYD

Well, I returned the favor. I just want you to know that I did not hit you simply to retaliate. I saw what they did to Madelaine and it angered me. It might not have happened if you hadn't gone all lone wolf on me.

BALLARD

Fair enough. I should have trusted you more. If we're going to be stuck together, we better learn to work together.

BOYD

Agreed. Let's see if we can trust each other a little more next time.

BALLARD

Better yet, I'll let you win next time.

SCENE XXXIX. POST-MORTEM CELEBRATION.

INT. DOLLHOUSE, MORNING, ADELLE'S OFFICE.

There is a small staff meeting in Adelle's Office. Adelle speaks to Topher, IVY, Ballard, Boyd, Saunders.

ADELLE

I've called you all here to thank you for the work you have done so far. The last challenge we faced was met with extraordinary teamwork on your part. I'd like to honor that. Topher, you and Ivy are both valuable members of this organization, and I'd like to reward you each with a small bonus.

TOPHER

(somewhat embarrassed) There's...

IVY

(interrupting) Thanks for trusting us. Topher is the best boss anyone could ask for.

(CONTINUED)

(TOPHER TAKES HIS CUE TO SHUT UP.)

As Adelle is addressing each person, she hands them an envelope with a bonus in it.

ADELLE

Good to hear. (To Topher) I will try to pay closer attention to your memos in the future. (To Ivy) I will look forward to having you run more missions as well. (To Saunders) Thank you for your outstanding medical work under extreme circumstances. Perhaps we should invest a bit more in the medical facilities. But, I would also like to offer you a bit of a reward as well.

SAUNDERS

(politely) Thank you. (She's not really sure what to do with the money).

ADELLE

Finally, Mr. Langton and Mr. Ballard. You worked very well as a team together. I have a small bonus for both of you.

Adelle extends envelopes to both. Boyd takes his envelope, but Ballard does not.

BOYD

Thank you.

BALLARD

I don't want the money.

ADELLE

Always the difficult one, Mr. Ballard. I would think that maybe a suspended agent would have some bills to pay...

BALLARD

I'd rather see it used to buy out a doll's contract...

ADELLE

A rather noble gesture, but we can always find another doll. Why don't I just hold onto your

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADELLE (cont'd)
bonus? While you and Boyd spend
some more time together, try to
keep an open mind to what we are
doing here. Alright everyone,
thank you again.

With their envelopes in hand, everyone leaves. Ballard
leaves empty-handed.

SCENE XXXX. ERASER

INT. TOPH'S LAIR. AFTERNOON.

A somewhat cleaned up Madelaine is sitting in a chair. Boyd
is watching. Topher is getting ready to erase Madelaine
again.

BOYD
When this is over, I'll escort you
to a cab and send you home.

MADELAINE
And Mr. Ballard?

BOYD
He sends his regards.

MADELAINE
So I won't remember any of the
horrible things that happened?

Topher starts the process and looks down at Madelaine.

TOPHER
You won't even remember this
conversation.

SCENE XXXXI. THOSE WHO FORGET THE PAST, ARE DOOMED...

EXT. EARLY EVENING

Boyd escorts Madelaine to a cab which drives her home.

The cab pulls over and lets Madelaine out. She pays the
cab. The cab pulls away. She begins to fumble through her
purse to find her keys. Pulling her keys out, she looks up
from the purse. A figure staggers towards her and nearly
collapses into her arms. Reacting quickly, she catches the
falling person.

(CONTINUED)

MADELAININE
Are you alright?

FIGURE
Help me.

MADELAININE
Do you need to go to the hospital?

FIGURE
No...please, just take me in and
let me rest. I'll be alright.

MADELAININE
Okay, I'll help you in, but you
have to help me walk you in. Can
you put your arm around my
shoulder?

FIGURE
Yes, thank you. Thank you.

AS MADELAINE PUTS HER ARM AROUND THE FIGURE, THE CAMERA
REVEALS THAT IT IS ALPHA.

Not knowing any better, Madelaine carries him into her
apartment where he will begin his recovery.