

Decisions

By

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FADE IN ON:

INT. DELAPIDATED KITCHEN - DAY

A callused male hand draws back - SWINGS.

Tattoo ink flashes on a hairy arm - wiry muscles in motion. Knuckles HIT a soft cheek with a SMACK. Long hair scatters away from the impact.

A female head jerks up:

SOPHIE (30s) - thin with middle-aged pudge around her waist. Faded bruises mottle her arms. A blooming shiner on her face.

She staggers back from the blow. The edge of an oven digs into her back. Sophie CRIES OUT, falls to the floor.

And then looks up. Chaos reigns.

CRAIG (40s) hovers over her. One of his scraped knuckles oozes. He squints at the wound, in a rage.

CRAIG

Look what you made me do!

HARRY (20s) tackles Craig from behind. He pile-drives him into a wall - screams murder into Craig's reddened face.

HARRY

Don't touch my sister, you useless fuck!

CRAIG

Useless? *She's* the one who didn't clean the kitchen. *And* the one who asked you to dinner. So I told her to do it. Three whole times!

Sophie scrabbles against filthy floor tile. Blood from her cheek DRIPS to the floor. Her palm SLIPS and SLIDES. She looks up at Craig, confused and dazed.

SOPHIE

I was planning to. I promise! But I had cramps this morning. And threw up.

CRAIG

What a surprise. An excuse.

He storms towards Sophie, snatching a dirty pot from the sink. SPLATTERS filthy water into her face.

CRAIG
(to Harry)

I have to deal with this bullshit. See?

He grabs Sophie by the arm, and yanks her to her feet.

SOPHIE
I'm sorry, Craig. I'll clean up tomorrow.
I didn't mean to make you mad.

She SNIFFLES. Snot bubbles from her nose. A disgusted Craig screws up his face.

CRAIG
"I'm sorry?" No kidding. The only thing
you're good for is getting laid.

Harry's reaction: pure gut instinct. An upper cut to Craig's jaw.

Craig lets Sophie loose, ROARS in anger. Charges at Harry like a bull.

CRAIG
Think you can hit me? Puny shit!

The two men collide. HIT the kitchen table, entwined.

Sophie jumps to her feet, and grabs a steak knife off a counter. She fidgets with the weapon, over the combatants. Fear and uncertainty hold her back.

Craig pins Harry down. Pummels his face with blows.

Harry knees Craig in self defense - a solid hit to the groin. Craig doubles over. GROANS.

SOPHIE
Harry?

HARRY
Sophie, run!

Sophie clutches the knife. Does as she's told... runs.

She darts from the kitchen. Through the apartment; multiple rooms. Until she reaches...

INT. THE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

An unmade bed. Dirty sheets. A mirror stands in one corner. Rumpled clothes on the floor.

Sophie runs in and SLAMS the door. Locks it with a chain.

She listens to the SCREAMS of the men. The steak knife trembles in her hand.

She glances across the room at the mirror. A forelorn sight greets her eye.

Blood on her face. Clothes and long hair askew.

Sophie wanders past an open window. Street SOUNDS invade her reverie.

She looks out: spots a LITTLE GIRL (11) on a bike. LAUGHING, playing with LITTLE FRIENDS.

Sophie shudders and looks away. Keeps moving - towards the mirror.

Furniture and glass CRASH in the next room. The battle between Craig and Harry rages.

HARRY (O.S.)

Get out. Fuckin' leave!

CRAIG (O.S.)

This is your sister's fault. Think I'd do this if she'd behave?

Sophie reaches the mirror. She extends a bloody hand; touches the glass and her "face."

The reflection morphs to memory:

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

A ranch-style house waits nearby. The clothing? Neon eighties style.

FRANK (30s) looms over YOUNG SOPHIE (13). He's dressed in faded denim with a golf shirt. Sophie looks small and frail, balanced on a children's bike.

Frank GROWLS in annoyance. Rears back. Swings.

Sophie tumbles off her ten speed. She cries as she hits asphalt - cement skins her knobby knees.

LILLY (30s) runs to her aid. She kneels in Frank's shadow, at Sophie's side.

LILLY
Don't hit her!

FRANK
I told her to come to dinner. She ignored me again, Lilly!

He grabs the bike. Sophie reaches for his hand. Cries when Frank SLAPS it away.

FRANK
And now she's crying. A brat move, you ask me. She ruined her bike. Not to mention my appetite. Again.

SOPHIE
I didn't mean to make you mad...

Frank stomps off towards a garage.

TODDLER HARRY (3) stands in the entrance and drools. A deer-in-the-headlights look in his eyes.

Lilly picks Sophie up and sets her gently on her feet. Brushes away her daughter's bitter tears.

YOUNG SOPHIE
Daddy hit me!

LILLY
You upset him by misbehaving. It's you that does this. All the time.

YOUNG SOPHIE
Mom, it huuuuurrrts!

Lilly SHUSHES Sophie. Smooths back her blonde hair.

LILLY
I know sweetie. Just tell yourself, it's okay. Sure, your dad gets upset sometimes. But he only does it 'cause he cares.

She walks the girl towards the garage.

LILLY
You're my little baby. Don't keep the bad times in your head. All I want for you are the *good* things. Have some fun in your life.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. THE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sophie stares at her ragged reflection.

Peers at the knife. Then her face.

The shiner's turned reddish-black. Major swelling on her cheek.

Sophie extends her hand, and lays the knife against her wrist. She slides steel across skin...

...rivulets of blood well from the blade.

Another CRASH - this time, from the living room. An injured Harry HOWLS in pain.

Sophie winces. She drops the knife to the floor. And listens to the fight. Again.

HARRY (O.S.)

Ow!

CRAIG (O.S.)

You think that hurt? I'm gonna fucking *kill* you!

HARRY (O.S.)

I'll kill you first.

CRAIG (O.S.)

Not if you're dead!

Another CRASH. Both men down.

HARRY

What the fuck is that? You got a gun?

Sophie scoops the knife off the rug, and whirls around. Suppressed rage bubbles to life on her face.

SOPHIE

Get away from my brother, you freak!

She stalks towards the door, the knife poised to stab. Then runs to the...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The TV's smashed. Harry and Craig roll across the floor.

In Craig's right hand: that awful *gun*.

Sophie darts behind him, and slips the knife against his throat; yanks Craig backwards by the hair.

A shocked Craig drops the gun.

He bends down and fumbles for the weapon. Stops as he feels the prick of Sophie's blade.

CRAIG
You crazy bitch!

Harry slides backward on his hands and feet.

HARRY
Wait... What you doin', sis?

SOPHIE
(hisses)
Craig, get out of our house. Right now.
Or *I'll* take you out. In pieces.

Craig's eyes widen in fear.

Harry extends a shaking hand towards his sister.

HARRY
Don't, Sophie. You'll go to jail!

SOPHIE
(sobs)
It doesn't matter what happens. I just
want this all... to stop!

She presses the blade harder to Craig's throat.

Like her wrist, his neck streams with blood.

A GIGGLE just outside the window. Causing Sophie to stop.
And look out:

It's the girl on the bike.

She's still there - happy. Playing. Not a care in the world. And despite her modern clothes, she looks like Sophie on that day.

SOPHIE
(whispers)
Enjoy your life. Have some fun. Don't
ever end up... like me.

Craig renews his struggle.

She leans against the blade. Again. Craig GURGLES and squirms. Starts to bleed.

Sophie looks towards her reflection in the broken TV screen.

Her face morphs to her younger self. Innocence. Indeed.

Sophie SIGHS. Thinks it over. Decides.

Followed by a blur of quick movement.

She kicks Craig's gun across the floor - straight into Harry's hand.

She tosses the knife across the room. Grabs her cell phone off a table.

Craig dives for the knife.

Harry levels the gun at his head. Craig freezes in place.

CRAIG

You wouldn't.

HARRY

I would. Stop right there.

Harry nods to Sophie as she dials.

SOPHIE

(into the phone)

Police? Yes, I want to report an assault.
We need you at 1550 Johnson. Right away.

Craig glares at her.

CRAIG

What are you doing? Stupid bitch.

SOPHIE

Living my life. As I decide.

She looks toward the window one more time.

She spots the girl with the bike. Nods to Harry.

Then the girl.

And smiles.

FINAL FADE OUT: