

Decisions

By

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FADE IN ON:

**INT. DELAPIDATED KITCHEN - DAY**

**Seen through a doorway:**

A callused male hand draws back - SWINGS. Tattoo ink flashes on a hairy arm. Knuckles hit a soft cheek: WHAM.

Long hair scatters from impact. A female head jerks up:

SOPHIE (30s) - just a *hint* of middle-aged pudg. A growing shiner on her face. Bruises mottle thin arms.

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

She glances up. CRAIG (40s) looms over her. One of his scraped knuckles oozes. He glowers at the wound, enraged.

CRAIG

Look what you made me do!

HARRY (20s) tackles him from behind. He pile-drives Craig against the table - screams into the man's red face.

HARRY

Don't touch my sister!

CRAIG

Why not? She didn't clean the kitchen. I asked her nicely: three whole times!

HARRY

You do it, this time. Useless fuck!

CRAIG

Look who's talkin', ass-wipe. You crash on *my* couch. Eat my food. Then talk shit with that mouth?

Craig smashes a dinner plate. Shards graze Sophie's face. She recoils.

Between the men, Sophie slip-slides on kitchen tile. She gazes up at Craig: guilt in her eyes.

SOPHIE

I was going to clean! But I had cramps.

CRAIG

Fine, I'll do your work.

He grabs a pot from the sink. SPLASHES water on the floor.

CRAIG  
You're the "Sophie expert", boy. Talk some sense into her.

SOPHIE  
Craig, I didn't mean to make you mad. I'll clean up soon. I swear.

Snot bubbles from her nose. A disgusted Craig yanks Sophie up.

CRAIG  
Clean yourself up, too. Fix that hair. Your makeup. The only thing you're good for is getting fucked.

Harry's response: a shot to Craig's jaw. Craig charges like a bull.

CRAIG  
Nice swing, pussy!

The two men collide. Hit the table, entwined.

Sophie grabs a STEAK KNIFE before it falls. An agitated butterfly, she flits between the men. Fear holds her off.

Craig pins Harry down and pummels him with blows.

Harry knees Craig. Craig doubles over. GROANS.

SOPHIE  
Harry?

Sophie clutches the knife like a crucifix. The edge bites into her palms.

HARRY  
Sophie, get outta here!

SOPHIE  
But -

HARRY  
Now. Go!

Sophie "obeys" and darts from the kitchen.

Through the apartment; multiple rooms. Many doorways.  
Twists and turns. Until she reaches -

**INT. THE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

An unmade bed. Rumpled clothes dot the floor.

A FULL LENGTH MIRROR holds vigil in one corner. An old JEWELRY/MAKEUP BOX on a stand by its side.

Sophie runs in, slams the door. She locks it with a bolt. The steak knife trembles in her cut hand.

Senses heighten. A clock TICKS. Sophie's heart POUNDS.

She glances at the mirror. A sorry sight blinks back: Dirt on her face. Clothes and hair askew.

From the kitchen, the SCREAMS of both men echo.

Thanks to adrenaline, time seems to slow. Sophie drifts toward the mirror...

Past a WINDOW. Blurred movement catches her eye. SOUNDS from outside invade. Sophie peeks out, to spy:

**EXT. STREET - PRESENT DAY**

A NEIGHBORHOOD GIRL (11) rides a bike with BRIGHT PINK HANDLEBARS. Carefree as any kid, she laughs and weaves crazy-8s around the street.

**INT. THE BEDROOM**

Sophie moves closer, strangely mesmerized by the sight.

She presses a bloody hand to the window pane. She shudders at the touch, but doesn't move.

In the next room: the Craig/Harry battle rages on. Furniture and other glass items BREAK.

HARRY (O.S.)

Get out of my sister's life!

CRAIG (O.S.)

I'm doing this for Sophie's good. If I didn't give a shit, you think I'd still be here? She's gotta grow up and behave!

In the window-frame: Sophie's reflection blends with the girl below. In her mind: a memory of other days....

**EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK**

A grainy VHS toned neighborhood. The clothes: 80's style.

Standing next to a hand-me-down children's bike, YOUNG SOPHIE (13) looks small and frail.

FRANK (30s) looms over her.

He ties a PINK RIBBON to a handlebar and squeezes his daughter's face; an *almost* tender (but possessive) move.

FRANK

There. You two are the prettiest couple  
on the block. But bikes ain't cheap.  
Don't goof around.

Young Sophie hops on, attempts to ride. Her face fills with pure joy...

Until she side-swipes a CAR.

Frank darts over, and rips Sophie off! Bike and Sophie tumble. Ignoring Sophie's skinned knee, he yanks her up.

FRANK

Don't scare me. I told you to be careful!  
Christ!

He slaps Sophie. She HOWLS. The cheek puffs.

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

LILLY

Don't hit her!

FRANK

She ignored me again, Lilly!

Sophie reaches for her father. Frank slaps her hand down.

FRANK

Now the brat's crying. Forget dinner.  
She's ruined my appetite.

LILLY

But -

FRANK

You too.

SOPHIE

I didn't mean to make you mad.

Frank drags Sophie's bike towards a garage. SCRRRRRRRAAPE.

The pink ribbon flutters to the ground. Nearby:

TODDLER HARRY (3) sits on a BIG-WHEEL. He stares at his big sister: a deer-in-the-headlights look in his eyes.

Lilly picks Sophie up.

LILLY  
Shhhh - stop fussing.

YOUNG SOPHIE  
Daddy hit me!

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

YOUNG SOPHIE  
Mom, it huuuuurrrts!

Lilly guides the girl towards their house.

LILLY  
I know, sweetie. But your father wants you to be happy and *enjoy* life. He only gets upset because he cares!

Sophie spots the fallen ribbon, scoops it up. Over her head, Lilly's voice fades.

LILLY (O.S.)  
He loves you. You know that, right?

**INT. THE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT**

Sophie stares at her ragged reflection.

**Beyond the window-frame:** the neighborhood girl rides on - oblivious to being watched.

Sophie removes her hand from the pane.

**On her side of the glass:** Sophie's bloody fingerprints.

**Outside the pane:** a faint child-sized palm.

On autopilot, Sophie drifts to the full-length mirror.

She meditates on the steak knife. Extending one thin arm, she experimentally lays the knife against her wrist.

SOPHIE  
(whispers)

No.

Her eyes slide to her reflection. The shiner's turning purple. The same side where Craig punched her.

And where Frank smacked her before.

SOPHIE  
"Clean myself up"? Sure.

She opens the makeup/jewelry box.

INSIDE THE BOX: Makeup for that bruise. And:

THE PINK RIBBON Frank tied to her bike, decades earlier.

Sophie picks the faded keepsake up, ties her hair back.

Another CRASH from the living room. Harry HOWLS. Sophie drops the knife, startled.

HARRY (O.S.)  
Ow!

CRAIG (O.S.)  
You think that hurt? I'm gonna *kill* you!

HARRY (O.S.)  
That's it. I'll call the cops!

CRAIG (O.S.)  
Remember how that worked last time?

Another CRASH. Both men down.

HARRY (O.S.)  
What the fuck? You got a gun?

Suppressed misery morphs to rage on Sophie's face. She scoops up the knife, darts out the door.

SOPHIE  
Don't touch my brother, Craig!

As before, a series of doorways. Twists and turns.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

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

In Craig's right hand: A *gun*.

Sophie darts behind Craig. She yanks him backwards by his hair, slips the steak knife to his throat.

Shocked, Craig drops the weapon. Eyes wide, he fumbles blindly for it on the ground.

SOPHIE

Craig, you leave this time. Or I'll take you out. In pieces.

CRAIG

You're shittin' me. You wouldn't dare.

Harry extends a shaking hand towards his sister.

HARRY

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

SOPHIE

(sobs)

It doesn't matter. I want it to stop!

She presses down. Blood beads on Craig's throat -

A GIGGLE outside the window. Sophie stops.

Time slows again, senses heighten. Craig's GURGLES fill Sophie's ears.

She squints towards the pane, and the world outside.

#### **EXT. CITY STREET**

The neighborhood girl on the bike's still playing.

With the pink handlebars and riding-on-clouds look, she looks like Sophie years before.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM**

SOPHIE

(whispers)

Be happy, please. Enjoy your life.

Craig squirms and bleeds. Determined, Sophie holds him down -

Then spots her reflection in the window's glass. Her younger self.

With that, anger fades. Followed by a decision:

She kicks Craig's gun across the floor, to Harry.

Grabs her cell phone off a table.

With a carefree gesture, she tosses the knife aside.  
Craig dives for it.

Harry levels the gun at his head. Craig freezes.

CRAIG

You wouldn't, pussy b-

HARRY

I would. Stop right there.

Harry nods to Sophie as she dials.

SOPHIE

(into the phone)

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

CRAIG

Stupid bitch. What do you think you're  
doing?

SOPHIE

Making a decision. Living my life. My  
way, now.

She nods to Harry. Her younger reflection, too.

Loosening her hair from the pink ribbon, Sophie shakes  
her head. Free... at last.

FINAL FADE OUT: