

PERRY
TREATMENT

09/25/18

PROLOGUE

Cold and foreboding mountain peaks slowly disappear in an intense snowstorm and a halting, fragile girl's voice seems to be carried by the wind. Perry Talbot, age 15, narrates the montage recounting feelings of profound displacement and disturbing thoughts as her face slowly appears in a fogged mirror.

ACT 1

It is a week before Thanksgiving and fall's glorious dying has passed. A gloom hangs over the Connecticut landscape as Perry enters the kitchen of her house, fresh from her shower. She reads a note from her mother and it is clear she will be alone for dinner.

The headlights of a luxury car illuminate the woods and Julia Meade enters the house to find its alarm is off and food is scattered in both the kitchen and Perry's bedroom. A series of sad and disturbed emotions pass over Julia's face as she tidies up and gently kisses the sleeping Perry.

Pale morning light filters through the trees as Julia hurries Perry off to school. She loads a suitcase into her car and, on their way to Perry's private school, she makes an oblique reference to a violent incident concerning her sister, Perry's favorite aunt. They also discuss their imminent trip San Francisco: Julia leaves today and Perry will follow on Saturday. Julia apologizes to Perry for the strain in their relationship, causing Perry to panic and reassure her mother that all is fine. Their goodbye is an awkward moment when Perry spills the contents of her backpack (losing her journal under the passenger seat) and rushes out of the car.

Julia's assistant Samantha drives her to the airport in a menacing rain. They discuss Perry's unhappiness and Julia reveals she has little insight into her daughter's emotional turmoil. As they park, Julia finds Perry's journal under the seat and, once in the airport, she casually opens it to find an angry warning to stay away.

Snow is beginning to fall as Julia settles into an evening cocktail at an upscale hotel in Denver. She is on her cell with Samantha going over the events of the day when she receives a cocktail from a stranger at the bar. Robert is a mirror image of her husband and she takes great pleasure in rebuffing his advances. Nevertheless, she takes him back to her room only to usher him out when he asks to see her again. Looking out at the now heavy snow, she addresses her sister about her regret for the encounter. Her tone suggests her sister is dead.

Julia appearance on a morning TV show goes well, though it is shortened so Julia can rush off to the airport. There, her worst fears are materialized when her flight is delayed. She texts Perry.

Passing over the Rocky Mountains, Perry plays a dystopian video game on her phone. When she arrives in San Francisco, she takes her phone off airplane mode and receives Julia's text. She is quietly elated and comforts her mother on a call promising to go directly to the hotel in a cab. Her mood lightens again as she hurries to a BART train for the city.

As she rises from the underground, she is washed in sunlight and greeted with the vibrant and gritty street life of downtown San Francisco. Along the way, she bumps into Bea (pronounced

Bay-ah), a street teen from Haiti. Bea is striking and shares some physical characteristics with Perry. As they walk and converse they step dangerously off the curb, causing a traffic cop to accost them both simultaneously. When they part ways, Bea charmingly mocks the police officer, raising her fist and sarcastically urging Perry to “feel the power.”

After Perry settles into the Presidential suite at the Ritz-Carlton, she video chats with her friend Rachelle, who comes onscreen after playing a mean-spirited video of a drunk classmate. Perry is offended and Rachelle makes amends by offering to send her a list of cool things to do in San Francisco. With some reluctance, Perry takes up her suggestion to explore the city.

Perry calls her father as she walks downtown. He is in London negotiating a business deal and after she fills him in on her trip and her mother’s delay, he suggests a few additional things she can explore around Union Square. There, Perry finds a small café and orders some food.

As she waits to be served, Bea saunters by dressed more provocatively than before. Some businessmen ogle her as she joins Perry, disgusting both girls. When the waiter returns with the food, he recognizes Bea and angrily kicks her out of the restaurant. In an act of solidarity, Perry leaves as well, stiffing the waiter for her order.

The girls run off laughing and begin a series of adventures which build a quick intimacy between them. Bea pulls off a clever shoplifting scam; Perry discovers City Light Books, a store her aunt has told her about, and buys a book of Haitian poetry. They then go to a rummy pool hall where Perry naively displays herself flirtatiously, causing Bea to firmly pull her to safety before the locals get out of hand.

It is clear the girls are growing infatuated as Perry recites bits of the first stanza of Eliot’s *Prufrock* (*Let us go then, you and I...*), a poem she memorized with her aunt Maddie. They run off gleefully into the night as Perry ignores her mother’s texts that the airport has closed.

ACT 2

Bea brings Perry down to the Tenderloin where they meet up with her friend Twig, a frail androgynous sex refugee from Guatemala. They share coffee in a nearby shop as the police do a sweep of the neighborhood, clearing the homeless. Perry becomes frightened when the police also confront them but is reassured by her friends that there is no need to worry because the police will do nothing. Perry suggests they go down by the bay. As they enter a cab, Bea notices that Twig looks especially sickly. She also watches a black limousine as it passes by.

On the Embarcadero, they walk out on a pier, smoking dope. The night is warm and enchanting and, as they approach the end, filled with the lyrical music of street musicians. Twig joins them on guitar as Perry and Bea move out to watch boats plying the bay. Bea questions Perry about what she is doing and why, asking, “Who are you?” Perry becomes disturbed and shares feelings of intense alienation from both her mother and her friends. She begins to weep as she portrays the emptiness of her life, “Nothing changes, nothing matters.” Bea responds, “Everything matters.” They walk back to listen to the music and cuddle as Twig sings a mournful song of yearning for a distant homeland. Walking back on the pier, Perry notices the hills above the waterfront and suggests they all go back to her hotel for room service.

On their way up to the room, the hotel manager notices Bea and Twig sneaking into the elevator. Upon entering the palatial suite, Bea suddenly becomes withdrawn and Perry begins dealing with her mother's repeated calls. She reassures Julia by concealing the events of the evening while Bea reads a text she has received. After the call, Bea confronts Perry about the opulence of the room, saying only bad people live like this in her country. Perry is shocked and confused and tries to reassure Bea that things are different here.

Perry is surprised when the hotel manager arrives and announces her friends cannot stay in the hotel overnight. Perry coldly reassures her that this will not happen. Bea overhears the conversation and suggests she and Twig leave. As Perry sadly protests, Bea explains that she has something she has to do for a few hours but then suggests they meet up later for dancing. Perry is elated and they make plans for the rendezvous.

Alone in her room, Perry wanders aimlessly until she catches her reflection in a mirror and takes a few pictures of herself. Turning on rhythmic music, she starts to dance in front of the mirror and, with growing emotion, begins to remove her clothes.

It is late in Denver and Julia sits at a bar in a drunken funk. The worries of the day have worn her down and she cannot stop herself from reading Perry's journal. It is not reassuring. The first page contains a dark quote from the poet Louise Gluck and goes onto a number of other troubling entries, including Millais's portrait of Ophelia floating in the river.

Perry is awakened by Bea's call and rushes to meet them. As she is leaving she notices her phone is nearly dead. She plugs it in and leaves it in the room.

Her cab takes her back to the Tenderloin where she picks up her friends. Bea is now wearing a blond wig and more makeup and Twig seems vague and agitated. They arrive at an after-hours dance club where Bea gains entrance from a bouncer she knows. They quickly move to the women's room, where they prepare for the evening. While Twig helps Perry make herself over in a startling transformation, she questions Bea about where she has been. Bea reveals she was working at a private club where she prods men to buy drinks. Perry is taken aback but in a mixture of feigned sophistication and affection, she ignores the warning.

Back on the floor, they dance with abandon while two men in dark suits take notice. More ominously, Justo, an assimilated Hispanic man, approaches Bea and asks her where she has been. When Perry asks Bea who he is, she says, "a bastard." The men in suits also take notice of this interaction and the girls go back to intimately dancing.

As the sky lightens, the three emerge from the club and decide to watch the sun come up. They find their way to a grubby beach just in time for a brilliant sunrise. Bea quickly falls asleep and Perry and Twig talk about why he left Guatemala: his father forced him to leave after learning he performed at a cross-dressing bar in his home port city. Soon after, Twig begins to feel ill and the three head back downtown.

As they search for a bus stop, they cross a small park where police are examining the body of a dead African-American girl. Perry is shaken by the sight. Lt. Nancy Mahmoud is leading the

investigation and questions the three. After lecturing them on the dangers of being in such a neighborhood at odd hours, she lets them go after gathering their names.

On the bus, Perry and Bea talk about the dead girl. Perry repeats the warning her mother uttered about her sister Maddie, “It can happen anywhere.” Bea corrects her, “It happens some places more” and begins to tell Perry about her history in Haiti. It is a story of extreme poverty and desperate choices. As a young girl she was sent to the city to work as a domestic but was instead trafficked to the Dominican Republic. She has often worked as a prostitute since. Perry is shocked and devastated but she holds close to Bea as she reads a lyrical Haitian *Wongol* poem from the book she purchased. She vows to help Bea and they continue to the Tenderloin.

MIDPOINT

Julia enters the suite quietly and as she slowly explores the rooms her concern rises as she sees the unused beds and no sign of Perry. After she calls Perry’s cell and hears it ring on a nearby desk, she stands dead still. Unable to steady her hands to dial the front desk, she questions the hotel manager in person. From her, she learns that Perry had some guests who left about 9:00 but was alone in the room when the manager left for the night. Julia asks about the nearest police station and the manager offers to take her there.

Back at the suite, Julia searches Perry’s phone. She finds the call from Bea and returns it only to get an “unavailable” message. She then calls her ex-husband Richard in London, who downplays the situation but agrees to help somehow. Soon after, Richard receives a call from Perry who tells him about Bea and their need for protection from her pimp. Richard is dumbstruck and pledges to get help from an old friend in San Francisco. He insists Perry return to her mother but she hangs up on him. Richard then calls David Crain and leaves a message.

Peter Wilson, an African-American private detective, pulls up to the Ritz in a battered sedan. He is received with some suspicion by the staff and surprise by Julia, who questions his credentials on the way up to the suite. There, they get down to business.

Peter professionally questions Julia and she shows him Perry’s cell log, her computer history and the pictures she took of herself. Julia is focused but plagued by a fatalism which only increases when Peter reveals Perry’s call to Richard. The news is devastating and Julia opens up about her many concerns about Perry’s mental state – her emotional distance, her social isolation and her fascination with suicide and dark poetry. After Peter’s thoughtful response, Julia’s trust in him grows and she emotionally implores him to find her daughter.

As dusk falls, Julia hires a car to search for Perry. She is disturbed by the seediness of the Tenderloin as she passes strip joints, massage parlors and streetwalkers. Heading back, she gets out to walk and shows pictures of Perry to passerby and a few prostitutes. Disheartened, she stops to rest on a bench near an elderly homeless woman who immediately sets off on a rant about men’s balls. Once she calms, Julia shows her Perry’s picture and the woman makes an ominous comment and asks for money.

Peter is also searching the neighborhood and stops to report to David Crain: Perry, Bea and Twig were spotted earlier and he has blanketed the area with the reward poster they discussed.

Perry awakens in the dim light of a squalid room, spooned with Bea. She gently extricates herself, sees Twig sleeping on an adjacent mattress and takes in her surroundings with some alarm. Bea stirs and Perry lies back down; they cuddle and kiss. They are both starving and rush out to a nearby restaurant, where they nibble flirtatiously at the window table.

Justo, Bea's pimp, spots them, knocks on the window and motions for Bea to come outside. Over Perry's objections, Bea goes out and through the window Perry watches as they argue. Amidst angry gestures, Justo looks back at Perry and Bea forcefully pushes him away. He waits impatiently as she tells Perry to return to Twig. She goes with Justo.

After they depart, Perry sees a poster Peter has put up, which includes a \$10,000 reward. She stuffs it into her pocket. Farther on, Twig calls out to her. A man was looking for her and handing out posters. As Twig stands, he nearly falls and Perry suggests he go to a doctor.

They go instead to an SRO hotel and Perry helps Twig settle into bed. She asks if he has a phone and he takes one out of a pocket in the Mayan cloth he wears. He also takes out a holy card and tells her his real name is Arturo Marino Guzman. Perry reassures him he will be okay and as he lays to rest, Perry looks down at the shabby street and tries to call Bea, unsuccessfully. She then enters a Connecticut number but hangs up before it goes through.

On a dark street nearby, Justo hurries Bea along until they come to a black limo parked in an alley. The two men from the dance club (the Limo Driver and the Thug) emerge and as Bea tries to flee, Justo drags her to the car. There, exchanges are made: Bea is thrown into the car; Justo takes her phone, hands over her papers and receive a lumpy envelope of cash.

Bea's things are thrown onto a table and the Limo Driver takes her to a harsh light where he photographs her. He gives her a new cell phone, \$100 and instructs her to return the next day at 5:00. He warns her not to fuck with them.

Outside, she texts Twig and goes to the room. She and Twig overrule Perry's suggestion to go to a hospital, even as Twig's condition worsens. The girls rush out. Perry calls Peter's number from the poster, telling him she has seen the girl and gives him the address. Questioned by Bea, she responds that they will take care of Twig. She then asks, "Where can we go."

As day breaks, Julia receives a call from Peter to meet her at police headquarter about a lead. There, he explains the events concerning Twig and hopes they might speak to him. Once in Mahmoud's office, they learn that Twig has died and after some back and forth about Perry's unusual behavior, Julia asks to see Twig's body. Mahmoud declines but Julia insists: She is not morbid, she needs to see who Perry has been with.

In the morgue, Julia examines Twig's face which is nearly translucent and eerily beautiful. Julia silently makes a sign of the cross. Peter learns that the phone traces he put in have not come back and Lt. Mahmoud assures Julia that she will do everything she can to find Perry.

ACT 3

Perry and Bea wake up in a scrubby homeless camp in Golden Gate Park. They are in a gloomy mood. Bea wants to discuss things and they quickly pack up and head out to an isolated bridge. Bea tells Perry of her abduction and sale to a new set of traffickers and the grave danger it presents to them both. She insists Perry must now go back to her mother and bolsters her argument by confirming that Justo wanted to pimp her as well. Undaunted, Perry says she can't leave; her feelings for Bea won't let her. Bea begins to tremble. "You have no idea."

Back in the Tenderloin, Peter receives a mug shot of Justo and begins showing it around with some luck – he soon has a picture of him with Bea. He texts it to Lt. Mahmoud and David Crain.

As the sun sets at Ocean Beach, Perry and Bea are in a better mood. Perry calls her father, asking again for protection. The phone reminds Bea that the traffickers will be looking for her. "We'll pretend we aren't home", Perry says and they decide to stay at a cheap motel nearby.

In the fading light, Julia sits at an outdoor café reading the final pages of Perry's journal. She goes back to passages she has marked and rereads them. She opens a two-page spread on the table and closely examines it. On it are a series of police photos of an underground space which held a young girl in a famous abduction case.

Continuing to search the Tenderloin, Peter locates Justo and has him arrested by an old friend, Officer Mike. He copies some numbers from Justo's phone log and makes a few calls, the last going through to The Fortress, a well-known BDSM dungeon down in the Mission. As night falls, Peter drives to the forbidding building and finds it locked up.

David Crain is in his penthouse office standing by a bank of windows overlooking the bay. A cell phone rings in a desk drawer nearby and he pulls out one of four phones and answers it. It is Peter with the latest news. David is pleased and asks Peter to send a picture of Perry, remarking that he knew her as a child. Upon receiving it, he holds it up in front of his majestic view.

Julia is back at the suite which is now disheveled and dark. Peter calls and she meets him in the lobby. She is unfocused and tense as Peter recounts the day's discoveries. He suggests they are close to finding Perry. Julia is certain they are too late.

Later, Julia leaves the hotel in a wandering search for Perry. She unknowingly retraces Perry's steps to Union Square and half-heartedly shows her picture to a number of people there. She finds herself in Macy's where a group of girls is gleefully trying on makeup. She hovers, enjoying the scene until she becomes fixated on the sales clerk who has a resemblance to Perry. On the street again, she catches a glimpse of a blonde girl dressed like Perry. She follows her until she enters a massage parlor. After some hesitation, Julia enters.

The spa is gaudy and Julia asks the madam if she has any American girls. She is ushered to a side room filled with bored women lounging and watching TV. At the back is the blond girl. When she turns around, Julia sees she is Chinese. She moves to leave but the madam tries to interest her in a massage, introducing a young Chinese masseuse. "Brand new", she says. She

gives *good massage* and needs the work, “Very shy.” After much protest, Julia finally relents and enters a massage room.

As the massage proceeds, Julia begins to relax. She indulges her curiosity about the spa and it soon becomes clear the masseuse does not speak English. Julia begins to ramble: she details her encounter with Robert in Denver and the sexual escapades she shared with her sister Maddie as a teenager. Her reverie then turns dark as she relives the night she discovered her sister’s body. The masseuse calms her strong spasms and she falls asleep for the first time in three days.

Late into the night, Julia wanders the empty streets until she crumples on the sidewalk in exhaustion and despair. A chromed-wheeled Mercedes approaches and rolls down its window. She emits a loud, unearthly groan as she rises and the car slowly drives off into the darkness.

In the morning fog, Peter finds his way into the Fortress. The manager insists he knows nothing about the girls and suggests Peter go to the Safe Harbor Teen Shelter around the corner. There, he has no luck about the girls but learns David Crain is their founding benefactor.

Peter stakes out the Fortress as he researches David Crain on his phone. When the manager leaves, he tails him to a limo repair shop where he drives in and disappears up a ramp. The upper floors of the building are windowless. Peter calls Officer Mike who becomes curious and promises to check around.

Perry and Bea rouse at the motel and Bea turns on her phone. A number of threatening messages pop up as well as a message from Perry’s father, Richard. He is coming to San Francisco and should be in midday. The girls argue again about what to do. Bea declares that neither Perry’s father nor Peter or even the police will be able to protect her. “They do what they want: it just happens.” It is Perry’s turn to tremble.

The girls leave the motel and huddle in the chilly fog at the beach. Their conversation is lost in the roar of the waves but it is clear their conflicted conversation continues. Perry walks to the tideline and becomes overwhelmed by the power of the waves and returns, dejected, to Bea.

As they walk back through the park, Perry wishes they could live there forever. She wants to dally and they find shelter in a flowered meadow surrounded by trees and fall asleep.

A black limo approaches and the Limo Driver and the Thug violently put the girls in the car. They go to the limo shop and up the ramp. The girls are pushed into a room with a long glass panel -- lights go on behind the glass and another room appears. Perry is taken to the door and given to someone inside. Another black limo enters the shop and goes up the ramp.

Peter is exiting Police Headquarter with a stack of documents when he receives a call from Julia. Richard has arrived and received two messages from Perry.

At the suite, Julia tells Peter that they have come to another dead end: by the time Richard learned the girls were staying at a motel they had left. Peter then questions Richard about David Crain. Richard scoffs at the notion that Crain could be involved in any way: he has known him

since college and he has been a client for decades. Julia counters that she has always been uncomfortable with his interest in Perry. This infuriates Richard and he accuses Peter of betraying his client, revealing this relationship to Julia for the first time. She storms out in anger.

Peter receives a text from Officer Mike. Justo denies knowing anything about Perry and he will be released soon. With an air of defeat, Peter walks out to the balcony to Julia and calls Crain. On speaker, he tells Crain he is finding connections between the Fortress, the Safe Harbor Shelter and the limo repair shop. Crain feigns utter confusion until Peter tells him he has been investigating the myriad properties he owns. Crain coolly notifies Peter their relationship is over, causing Julia to jump in. She swears that if he is involved, she will track him down and kill him. After the call, she asks Peter to take her to the three locations.

In the upper parking area at the loft, Crain is disturbed. He calls out to the Limo Driver that they must shut the place down. The Limo Driver protests: he has other obligations and, in any case, the girls will be gone later that night. Crain insists the girls must be released and promising to cover all lost revenue. The Driver agrees to close the site but will move his operations elsewhere. On his way to the airport, Crain tosses the sim card from his phone onto the roadside.

Long shadows fill the streets as Peter drives through the Mission at a funereal pace -- past the Fortress, the Safe Harbor Shelter and then out to the repair shop. Peter investigates the building thoroughly to find it completely locked up. He returns to the car devastated and painfully apologizes to Julia about Crain. "I led him right to her." Julia unconvincingly tries to reassure him just as his phone receives a text message. "It's Perry. Bryant and Division."

They speed to the corner and find Perry and Bea in an extensive homeless camp. Julia jumps out and embraces a listless Perry. Peter rushed them into the car and speeds away. Inside, Julia watches Perry taking comfort in Bea's arms. After a moment, Bea returns her gaze. Peter calls Officer Mike and they head back to the Ritz.

The group forms a tableau in the hotel lobby: Perry and family on one side, Peter, Bea and the police on the other. Lt Mahmoud is in the center and makes officious announcements. Perry will need to be examined and statements will be taken tomorrow at headquarters. Perry softly weeps as Bea tries to make eye contact. As they are ushered out, Perry turns to Bea and their eyes lock.

Snow is falling heavily as Perry and Julia make their way to their home. As they enter, Perry arms the house alarm and, ignoring Julia, walks over to look out at the falling snow. In the blurry background, Julia moves in close behind as Perry continues to look out the windows.

EPILOGUE

Peter is sipping a whiskey as the thin afternoon light filters into the bar. Outside, Bea walks past and leans up against a ratty wall plastered with action movie posters and answers her phone.