SPECULO

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY - SCENE 1

Two women are laying in a field, their hands interlocked. As they hug each other, one of the women closes her eyes. She then hears the other woman, MARY, say "I'm sorry." When she opens them, she's alone but feels as if she's being watched.

The woman rummages through the monochrome forest, frantic and afraid. She's running from something but isn't sure what it is. She keeps walking swiftly until something catches her eye, bringing her to a stop. She stares into a seemingly empty field. Her eyes widened in fear. She sees a figure, a hooded one, with an indiscernible face. It slowly begins to approach her, prompting her to run away.

She runs frantically, as the figure is somehow able to keep up despite walking slowly. She runs until she trips, falling to the ground, though she never hits the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM OF BELLEVILLE, NJ HOME - AFTERNOON - SCENE 2

The sun pierces through the dust-covered window, its orange glow landing on the face of an awoken MALVA. She looks at her window, before turning the other way to hide from the sunlight. Her phone, which greets her as she turns, begins to ring as the time for her alarm has come. Her eyes jolt open, and she slowly moves her tired hand to the volume button to hit snooze. She then throws her blankets off, and lies in bed staring at the ceiling for some time.

She quickly brushes her teeth and appears to almost avoid looking at herself in the mirror. She gently sifts through a pile of already-worn clothes in her room to select an outfit. She opts for sweats. As she puts on her sweatshirt, she holds herself for a minute and takes a deep breath.

She enters her kitchen, pausing at a framed picture of her and her friend, MARY. The smile he had in the picture catches her attention, and she slowly strokes her cheek while staring at it. She then places her finger near her friend in the picture before placing the frame back, facedown. She opens her fridge and stares at the food in it for a while. It doesn't look appetizing. She purses her lips together, closing the fridge door.

EXT. NEWARK HOUSE - AFTERNOON - SCENE 3

She sits on her stoop, staring distantly in front of her. She rests her head on the rail. She checks her phone and sees a text from a friend. "Coffee?" Malva glares at the text for a minute, contemplating. She decides to go,

replying with “sure.” She puts her phone away and a look of dread washes over her.

INT. LOUNGE - AFTERNOON - SCENE 4

Malva sits in a booth, minimizing her presence as much as she can by sitting closest to the wall. A cup of coffee is placed gently in front of her by her friend, MADELINE.

Madeline sits across, gently blowing air into her drink before she puts the lid on the cup. She places the cup on the table and the two of them sit in silence.

Malva gently strokes her hands, staring at them. Madeline studies Malva for a bit before speaking.

MADELINE
I know this is hard for you, it’s hard for all of us.

MALVA
Hmm.

MADELINE
Did the coroner’s office ever get back to you on the cause?

Malva looks up at Madeline, her tense expression easing into a look of fear. She clutches her cup and stares into it before answering.

MALVA
Suicide.

MADELINE
Hm. I feel like I should have more of a reaction, but nothing feels real to me right now.

MALVA
Yeah. I can see that.

MADELINE
I suppose doting on it wouldn’t do me much of a favor. I’ve cried so much I’ve cried for all of us.

MALVA
Fair.

MADELINE
How’ve you been? Have you been… I don’t know, SAD?

MALVA
Pardon?

MADELINE
You’ve been damn near mute this whole time. I’m just concerned?

MALVA
I don’t know, I’m sorry…

MADELINE
I’m just saying, you don’t have to go through this alone, you know. Morgan and I are here for you.

MALVA
Thanks.

MADELINE
I mean it. There’s no way you aren’t hurt by all this. You… you were closer to her than I was, but you’re handling this so much better than me…

Madeline sulks for a bit. Malva begins to look concerned and extends a hand to comfort her friend, before retreating.

MALVA
I’ll be okay.

MADELINE
Are you sure?

MALVA
I’ll be fine.

MADELINE
Dammit, Mal…

MALVA
Sorry.

MADELINE
No, it’s fine, I just-

MALVA
You should take a breath.

MADELINE
(takes breath) Look, Mary's parents want us to come over for breakfast tomorrow morning, 9 AM. You'll come, right?

MALVA
Y-yeah, of course.

The two of them sit in silence. The distance between them in the table increases. Malva then gets a notification on her phone. She looks at it, and there's a pause.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON - SCENE 5
Malva is sitting on a bench when her friend MORGAN approaches and takes a seat. They share a hug, but Malva isn't paying attention. They both sit quietly for a minute.

MALVA
It's good to see you.

MORGAN
Same here.

The two again pause, as both look towards the same tree. Morgan then looks at Malva, who is intensely concentrating on the tree.

MALVA
We used to have picnics there, the four of us.

MORGAN
Heh, yeah… She'd always take your food from ya, you'd get so pissed…

Morgan chuckles to herself, as Malva keeps concentrating on the tree. From behind the tree, the figure from Malva's dream appears, staring at Malva from a distance. Malva's concentration intensifies, and a look of fear washes over her. Morgan is confused, as there's nothing at the tree of interest.

MORGAN
Hey, you good?

MALVA

Of course, why wouldn't I be?

MORGAN

You're having a staring contest with the tree.

MALVA

Sorry, I'm just thinking about something…

MORGAN

What're you thinking about?

MALVA

N-nothing important…

MORGAN

Bullshit.

MALVA

Really!

MORGAN

You're looking at that tree like it ate your parents, and you want me to believe it's "nothing?"

MALVA

I'm not asking you to believe anything.

MORGAN

Mal, you know you can't pull one over me. What's wrong?

MALVA

Why's it your business, anyway?

Morgan is taken aback by this but stands firm.

MORGAN

It's not.

A frustrated Morgan gets up.

MORGAN

I'm sorry, can't do this right now, I'll talk to you later. Keep your phone charged.

Malva is left on the bench. She holds herself and decides to walk around. She approaches a river and stares into it. She looks around and spots a pair of shoes near the bank. She looks at this until she decides to head home.

EXT. TRAIN STOP - EVENING - SCENE 6
Malva sits at the train stop, waiting for her train to arrive. As the train on the other side of the platform arrives, Malva folds her hands together. As the train leaves, the hooded figure from her dream appears on the other platform. Malva is shaken by this and stares in terror. The figure slowly rises from the bench, now standing tall. Malva clutches her bag as the figure appears to walk towards the track. Malva then looks at the track. She gets up from the bench and walks to the edge of the platform, and holds her foot towards it. Just as she goes to step into it, the sound of a train pierces through.

Malva awakens, still on the bench of the train stop. She had fallen asleep. She shakes her head and quickly gets onto the train that has now arrived.

INT. TRAIN - EVENING - SCENE 7
Malva sits on the train, and looks out the window. She looks out the window, as she tightens her grip on her bag.

INT. NEWARK HOME - NIGHT - SCENE 8
Malva enters her home and drops her bag on the floor. She heads to the powder room and opens the mirror cabinet before her reflection can be seen. She grabs an empty pill bottle and stares into it, hoping to find something. She stares at it before angrily throwing it into the trash can.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - SCENE 9
Malva slumps into her bed. She checks her phone and sees she has numerous notifications from her friends. She sharply exhales and turns the phone off. She lays on her back and folds her hands before closing her eyes.

EXT. ABANDONED TRAIN TRACKS - DAY - SCENE 10
Malva awakens, with the tracks in her line of sight. She looks around to see the trash and objects littering the ground. The area hasn’t been cared for in a long time. She slowly walks towards the track and stands in the middle of them. Some leaves rustle, prompting Malva to whip around to see what’s causing the noise. Once the quiet settles, she turns back to the track. The figure looms in the distance. Malva steps back swiftly, as the figure approaches. This time, Malva tries to look into their hood to see their face. The figure makes eye contact with Malva, but all that is seen from the hood is a bright light accompanied by a blaring train horn. The figure then rapidly approaches Malva, as she puts her arms up for defense, the light closing in on her.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING - SCENE 11
Malva whips out of bed, her eyes puffy from crying and out of breath. She checks the time to see it's 12:30 PM. She then is spooked by a loud knock at her door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING - SCENE 12
Malva is sitting on the couch as her friends Madeline and MORGAN pace back and forth in front of her. They are there to check in on Malva.

MADELINE
We don't mean to push but we're just getting worried. We agreed to visit her parents this morning but you never showed up…

MORGAN
You haven't been answering our texts. Talk to us, Mal.

MALVA
I don't know what you want me to say.

MADELINE
Nothing specific, but we want to know if you're okay.

MALVA
I'm fine, I guess. (Beat) I don't know, I don't have an answer.

MORGAN
Do you miss her?

MALVA
What?

MADELINE
Morgan-

MORGAN
No, do you miss her? Cause (beat) I do. It's normal.

MALVA
Of course, why wouldn't I?

Morgan studies Malva's face and notices her deep bags and sullen demeanor.

MORGAN

Have you seen a mirror lately?

MADELINE
Morgan!

MALVA
I’m sorry?

MORGAN
You look terrible, have you been sleeping well?

MALVA
Well, no, not recently…

MADELINE
Malva, now I’m really worried.

Malva sits still, unsure of how to answer. Madeline and Morgan look at each other, concerned. Morgan sits next to Malva and puts her hand on her shoulder.

MORGAN
If you don’t want to talk, we’ll understand. But we want to help you, and we can’t be there for you if you don’t let us in.

MALVA
I- I think you guys should go.

Malva tightly closes her eyes as she looks down. Morgan looks at Madeline, who is silent. They both quietly make their way to the door, leaving Malva on the couch. They look at each other hoping one of them can say something, but no one speaks. They leave, Madeline eying Malva before nearly closing the door.

MALVA
Wait, I’m sorry, I-

MORGAN
Mal, unless you’re going to tell us what’s going on, we can’t help you.

Malva looks at Madeline, who looks back with worry. Madeline breaks eye contact and heads out the door. Morgan stares intensely at Malva before heading out the door and closing it. Malva is left in her living room, alone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING - SCENE 13
Malva is alone on her couch watching a movie, a plate full of food in front of her. She stares at it before picking it with her fork. She begins to nod off, deciding to put her head down on the table.

The color grade shifts. Malva puts her head back up, her outfit had changed. She looks at the end of the table. The figure is sitting on the other end. Malva doesn't respond with fear, but with passiveness.

MALVA
I don't know what you want from me.

The figure places its hands on the table. They then slowly rise from the chair. They begin making their way around the table, as Malva hurriedly gets out of her chair, and runs to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - SCENE 14
Malva runs into the kitchen, but the figure is blocking the other entrance. They walk towards Malva, who runs into what she thinks is the dining room.

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT - SCENE 15
Malva runs out, now on the roof of a building. She is freaking out and notices the guard rail. She slowly approaches the edge and looks down. She sees cars whizzing by, and backs away. As she backs up, she bumps into the figure. This causes her to freak out as the figure places its hands on her arms to restrain her.

The sounds of the city grow louder, and the sounds of Madeline and Morgan make their way in. Malva is flailing about as the figure turns her body to make eye contact. Malva has her eyes shut when the voice of her late friend cuts through the noise and calls her name. This causes Malva to open her eyes, prompting her to look into the figure's face.

It is revealed that the figure's face is a mirror. All Malva sees is her reflection. She sees, for the first time in a while, the pain on her face. Her deep bags, her tear-stained cheeks, her unkempt hair. The noise dies down, as Malva begins to cry, collapsing into the figure. The figure hugs Malva, comforting her.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - SCENE 16
Malva awakens at her table, and sits still for a moment. Her plate with her dinner is as untouched as it was when

she dozed off. She begins to softly cry to herself, and she grabs her phone. She calls Madeline.

MALVA
Maddie, I’m sorry I know it’s late, but I need you right now.

FADE OUT