

THE FATE GALLERY

by

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INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

CLOSE ON: A cold, blue eye opening to electronic alarm tones.

EXT. WILDERNESS - MORNING

CLOSE ON: A dirty, brown eye opening to a rustling crunch.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

A pale, masculine hand reaches over to an iPad sitting on a bedside table and smudges the alarm's "SNOOZE" button.

EXT. WILDERNESS - MORNING

A freckled fist rubs dirt off the crystal of a gold pocket watch. Dirty fingers wind a stubbornly unmoving mechanism.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

The alarm sounds again, waking a groggy young man -- NATHAN TRAVIS, late twenties -- who rolls up in his rumpled bed, revealing a pallid face to match his hands.

EXT. WILDERNESS - MORNING

Waking with a jolt to a distant rustle, BRIDGETTE CARTER, looking younger than her twenty-seven years, sits up at attention. Under a tree, a hasty campsite surrounds her.

INT. CITY BUS - MORNING

Nathan sits in the back corner of a crowded bus. Headphones in, his face is illuminated from below as he checks facebook. His finger protrudes from cut-off gloves, swiping repeatedly to refresh the message screen.

No new messages. No new messages. No new messages.

EXT. WILDERNESS - MORNING

Bridgette leaps up, sprinting away from the tree she'd been sleeping under. The sweeping motion reveals her appearance fully: she is vested, with a long, tattered skirt. Worn boots kick out from beneath the tatters as she runs.

Her crunching footsteps are followed deeper into the woods.

EXT. ART EXHIBITION - MORNING

Nathan exits at the end of a group streaming from the bus. He stands for a moment, ignoring the exhaust issuing from the departing bus.

He takes in the vastness of the building before him. With its idiosyncratic architecture, it stands alone amongst its neighboring buildings.

EXT. WILDERNESS - MORNING

Bridgette's speed is unbroken as she slices through the fluttering darkness of the woods. Her arms chop down any protruding brush that block the path she stares toward.

The spaces between trees widen. The sparse light from behind branches pours more freely as she approaches the edge. Beyond lies a vast, dead field. She stops breathlessly before it.

INT. ART EXHIBITION - MORNING

A tour of mostly elderly patrons shuffles around the exhibit. Nathan hangs back. He rolls his eyes and seems generally disinterested in the tour guide's commentary.

He peeks into his jacket pocket to check his phone. He can't quite see the notifications, so he pulls it out all the way.

Almost instantly, he is approached by an employee who indicates a "NO PHONES" sign on the wall behind them.

Smiling apologetically, he returns the phone to his pocket. Dawdling along with the tour, his eyes flit down curiously in his phone's direction. He clenches his fists, resisting.

His attention obviously gone, he looks over his shoulder and, seeing no one, dashes away from the group.

Sidling down a dark corridor, he passes several cubbies with framed works of art occupying the selectively lit walls.

Finally convinced he is alone, he goes to take out his phone and, peeking over his shoulder one more time, spots a particularly dark and secluded corridor.

Scrunching his brow with curiosity, he drops the phone back into his pocket and approaches the mysterious section.

One hand bracing himself against the wall, he turns the corner and staggers back as he sees what lies beyond...

EXT. WILDERNESS - FIELD - MORNING

Bridgette stands at the edge of the woods. She looks cautiously back. Seeing that she is not pursued, she allows herself to step slowly forward, catching her breath.

She wades out into the field which, despite its deadness, has a beauty in its sprawling scope. Taking a few pauses for breath, she travels further down the curving spread.

Continuing down, something becomes visible to her in the emerging valley: the top of a huge, lone tree.

She quickens her pace, her eyes following down the length of the tree as it is revealed. Skipping down the rest of the way, she stops herself abruptly.

Standing between Bridgette and the tree is a haphazardly constructed fence. It spans the entire field, disappearing into the horizon. She approaches it slowly.

Putting her hand up, she feels the fence's weather-worn wooden planks. Walking along the fence a few paces, her hand skips across a small gap between two planks.

She stops walking, turning toward the fence. She peers through the fence toward the tree on the other side.

CLOSE ON: Bridgette's eye widening at what she sees...

INT. ART EXHIBITION - DARK CORRIDOR - MORNING

PUSH PAST Nathan standing in the dark corridor to reveal the contents at its end:

A large wall, empty save for a VERY SMALL PAINTING at its center. It is flanked on both sides by TWO ARMED GUARDS.

His brow furrows in amused confusion. He holds back a small laugh. The guards don't react. He moves in closer. The painting is so small that, halfway down the hall, he still can't make out its subject.

He treads softly, trying to read the stoic faces of the guards for a reaction. Nothing.

Stopping an arm's reach from the guards, he takes his first good look at the small painting. He looks confused at its rather mundane contents:

THE VAST FIELD AND SPRAWLING FENCE.

EXT. WILDERNESS - FIELD - MORNING

The same setting as the painting, in living motion.

PUSH IN and AROUND Bridgette peering through the fence to reveal the object of her gaze: a small portrait fixed to the trunk of the large tree.

She can't quite make out the subject. She looks up at the fence, which stands barely above her own height. Testing its stability, she shakes the fence.

Looking through the crack again, she squints to try and make out the portrait. She can't make out details, but she can see now that the subject is a man. Her eyes widen.

PUSH IN toward the painting to reveal its subject: an unmoving, beautifully rendered portrait of NATHAN.

INT. ART EXHIBITION - DARK CORRIDOR - MORNING

Nathan looks up from the unimpressive painting over to the guards at either side. He looks back to the painting, trying to figure out what the big deal is, then over to the formidable rifles toted by the guards.

NATHAN

Is this it?

The guard to the left of the painting turns their head ever so slightly in his direction. A blank stare as one of them presses the page button on their walkie-talkie.

A beep echoes through the space and, within seconds, a DOCENT scurries down the hall toward Nathan. He is lanky with sharp, gray hair.

DOCENT

May I help you, sir?

Nathan is surprised by his sudden appearance.

NATHAN

Woah, hey, um...yes.

DOCENT

Are you part of the tour?

NATHAN

No--well, yes, I was, but--

DOCENT

I see. Well, you've got taste.

The Docent turns his attention to the painting.

NATHAN

Why, thank you--

Nathan leans in to read his name tag, which simply reads "DOCENT."

NATHAN (CONT'D)

--Docent. But I've never really been a fan of landscapes.

DOCENT

I guess there's no accounting for taste after all. I'll have you know, some of the finest minds in the art world have dedicated their lives to landscapes.

Nathan looks at the painting again, then to the guards.

NATHAN

I believe it. This one's got a security detail that would make Mona blush.

DOCENT

A necessary presence.

(cough)

If you've no interest in landscapes, what brings you to this corner of the gallery?

NATHAN

Um, curiosity?

He smooths down his jacket pocket.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Dark corner's just begging for it, don't you think? A little anti-climactic, though...

He looks closer at the painting. Something catches his eye.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

(genuinely interested)

But it isn't strictly a landscape, is it?

DOCENT

How do you mean?

Nathan looks back to the Docent.

NATHAN

There's a girl behind the fence.

The Docent quickly juts his head back in disbelief. Whipping his glasses on quickly, he leans in to the painting.

DOCENT

Amazing.

NATHAN

Didn't think a laymen could catch something like that, huh?

Nathan folds his arms proudly. The Docent slowly moves back from the painting, removing his glasses.

DOCENT

I've never noticed that.

Looking down, The Docent backs slowly out of the corridor, his face confused.

NATHAN

Really?

Nathan is surprised by the Docent's reaction, watching him as he slinks to the far end of the corridor. The Docent stops, raising his head toward Nathan as if possessed. His gaze lingers a moment as Nathan shifts his weight, uncomfortable.

DOCENT

Best get back to your tour.

With a twirl, The Docent disappears around the corner.

Nathan turns back to the painting for another look. He leans in to examine the woman behind the fence, her hair blown through the slats. Only her peeking eye is visible.

FLASH CLOSE ON: Bridgette's eye, fully alive. The glassy orb reflects the object of her gaze: the portrait of Nathan.

CLOSE ON: Nathan's eye, blinking inches from the painted brush strokes making up her obscured likeness.

NATHAN

(whispering to himself)
Who are you?

EXT. WILDERNESS - FIELD

Wind suddenly whips across the field. A faint voice can be heard amidst the whirring. It's Nathan's, slowed as if distorted through time:

NATHAN'S VOICE

Who are you?

The wind seeps through the slats of the fence, the voice startling Bridgette. She turns around nervously to look behind her. Nothing.

As the voice echoes into the natural noises of the field, Bridgette turns back around and looks again to the portrait with a motivated glare. She looks up to the top of the fence and, without much calculation, begins to climb.

Half way up, with the top of the wood slats pressing into her armpits and her booted feet scraping for a grip, she stops.

The creaking of the wood stops, revealing a distant rustle that also stops when noticed. After a moment of cautious silence, she continues, heaving her weight over the top.

Her gut bent over the top of the fence, she is just about to spring herself fully over when ...

SLAM. A gloved hand grabs her foot. Firmly grasping her now-flailing leg, the gloved hand is joined by another. And another. And another. Two sets of brown leather mitts pull down her violently resisting body.

INT. ART EXHIBITION - DARK CORRIDOR

Nathan stands in front of the painting and guards, lazily eyeing both of them. An awkward, uneventful beat.

NATHAN

So who started this place?

Nothing. No response.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Doesn't really seem like a city thing. Privately owned?

They aren't even looking at him.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Are these questions annoying you?

Silence.

DOCENT (V.O.)
(filtered)
THE GALLERY WILL BE CLOSING IN TEN
MINUTES.

The loud speaker screeches off after the announcement. Nathan looks surprised, checks the time on his phone.

NATHAN
I guess it's closing time, boys.
You have a good night now, and
thanks so much for the information.

He rolls his eyes while pivoting on his heel to walk out the corridor.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
I've always been perfectly
comfortable leaving unsatisfied in
a tantalizingly peculiar situation.
No need to investigate.

He exits the corridor and spots a restroom far in the opposite corner. He consider it curiously.

Back in the corridor, CLOSE ON a guard's leather-gloved hand tightening on a rifle grip.

EXT. WILDERNESS - FIELD

PULL BACK from the leather-gloved hand firmly gripping a flailing Bridgette to reveal her aggressors: two tweed-suited THUGS, both dirtied from scruffy head to booted toe.

Despite her resistance, they are able to drag her away from the fence toward the forest. She cranes her neck as she struggles to break free, seeing the looming darkness beyond the treeline grow nearer.

Her eyes open wide and, face filled with motivating rage, she musters up all her strength and SLAMS her limbs out, breaking herself free with the unexpected sprawl. The two Thugs stumble back from her, hands to their various wounds.

She takes the moment of distraction and, with a considered "aha!" expression, turns toward the forest and RUNS FULL SPEED toward it.

One of the Thugs recomposes himself quickly and leaps forward, grabbing her boot. She gracefully twists from the trip using his grip as a pivot to swing her other foot around and KICK him in the face.

He releases her foot just at the other Thug reaches her, swinging a punch which she ducks and returns in kind to his gut. He reels over in pain as she KICKS her heel into his forehead, sending him careening back.

With a considerable opportunity for escape, she turns back toward the forest and speedily disappears into the trees.

The Thugs immediately follow her into the darkness.

After a beat, Bridgette appears from behind a tree just at the edge where she had entered. She looks back, satisfied that she successfully lost them.

She walks back to the fence, placing her hand gently on the wood plank between her and the tree on the other side.

BRIDGETTE

(sotto)

Is this it?

She SLAMS her boot against the plank, breaking it from its surrounding planks which buckle under the force and peel away in both directions like an open book.

Walking with focus, she approaches the portrait hanging on the tree's trunk to find...

It's empty. Black.

INT. ART EXHIBITION - NIGHT

Lights shut off in empty corridors. Cubbies of displayed paintings left in darkness with odd shadows cast from the safety footlights.

The two guards leave the painting at the end of the now even darker corridor, efficiently sweeping its length before turning the corner to the main gallery.

A spindly hand belonging to the Docent turns a key, locking the front entrance doors. The same two guards take a new post just behind them.

BACK AT THE CORRIDOR, the facing restroom door slowly creaks open. Nathan's eye peeks through the crack, looking all around to check if the guards are still there. All clear.

Nathan opens the swinging door fully, steps through, and closes it quietly behind him. As he crosses the walkway toward the corridor, he looks cautiously over his shoulder.

As he turns to approach the now unguarded painting, he hears a loud SQUEAK behind him.

He spins around and where previously there was nobody stands a JANITOR, sweeping the floor with a large dust broom.

Nathan lets out a small gasp. The janitor looks up, wisdom in his gaze as he acknowledges Nathan with a nod.

NATHAN

Hi.

JANITOR

Evening. Lost?

NATHAN

Not exactly.

JANITOR

Ah, a stake out. Can't say we've ever had a stowaway at The Gallery.

NATHAN

Have you been here long?

JANITOR

Longer than any of the docents would like to admit. Since before the big boss left us.

NATHAN

Is she the one in the painting?

JANITOR

She? Which painting?

Nathan gestures to the painting in the corridor behind them.

NATHAN

The only one with armed guards.

JANITOR

You've got an eye for art, eh?

The Janitor eyes him curiously before moving with labored steps to the painting. He takes a long, chin-rubbing look.

NATHAN

So was she the owner, then?

JANITOR

No. He was a man.

NATHAN

Was he the one that insisted the
brutes guard this thing?

The Janitor turns away from the painting to give a squinting
look to Nathan. He lingers.

JANITOR

What drew you to this? A girl, you
said?

NATHAN

Yeah, I guess. Why?

JANITOR

There's nobody in this painting.

Nathan pushes him aside, looking to the gap between the wood
slats in the fence. She's not there. He pulls back, confused.

NATHAN

(sotto)
That's not possible.

JANITOR

Only possible if...
(A beat. An idea.)
A girl that isn't there drew you to
the painting. What drew you to this
particular corner of The Gallery in
the first place?

Nathan puts his hand in his Jacket pocket where his phone
rests. He looks surprised he'd forgotten it.

NATHAN

My phone. I snuck away to check it.

JANITOR

Been waiting for something?

NATHAN

Yes. A response. I know it's over,
but I can't help hoping a message
will pop up. That she'll come back.

JANITOR

Ah. Love gone sour or a fling
prolonged?

Nathan drops the phone back in his jacket and stuffs his
hands into his pants pockets. He looks uncomfortable.

NATHAN

She left me. Alone.

JANITOR

I'd say she left you with yourself, temporarily. Which shouldn't be a bad place to be, once in a while.

NATHAN

Not the best place to live, though.

JANITOR

Mr. Carter would not agree.

NATHAN

Mr. Carter?

JANITOR

The owner you were asking about. A great man, but seclusive wouldn't begin to describe. More than him, I felt bad for his poor daughter.

NATHAN

Daughter?

The Janitor looks down to continue his sweeping.

JANITOR

Well, I hope you find what you're looking for.

He exits around the corner and Nathan turns back to the painting a bit dazed. He leans in and whispers to himself.

NATHAN

Carter...

EXT. WILDERNESS - FIELD

Bridgette sits on the dirt next to the tree with the empty portrait behind her. She is drawing with a stick, attempting to recreate the likeness of Nathan in the soil.

Her other hand resting below her chin, she looks frustrated at her attempt and kicks through it, sending dirt flying.

Tossing the stick and putting her head in her hands, she slouches back against the tree. A wind rustles and she hears:

NATHAN'S VOICE

Carter...

She jumps up, boots forcefully stomping into the dirt. Pivoting with amazing speed, she turns to face the portrait. There he is. Nathan's face, unmoving.

Staring directly into the brush strokes that form his eyes, Bridgette is transfixed. Not knowing what to do, her arms lift themselves slowly up.

Leaning in, her fingers touch the portrait's frame.

THUNDER CLAPS sound in the distance. Frightened, she grips the frame tighter. The thunder grows LOUDER.

Squeezing the frame, the bottom section loosens. The ground beneath her TREMBLES. As the entire landscape begins to quake, the portrait begins to FLASH in and out of existence.

The surrounding area becomes intermittently populated with flashing portions of items from the gallery, only appearing long enough leave a ghostly impression.

Wind tousles her hair in front of her face, but between the tufts she can see a FLICKERING APPEARANCE OF NATHAN standing before her. She stares into his eyes as they transition from brush strokes into glittering reality.

Keeping one hand on the frame, she reaches out with the other to touch him. The quaking ground beneath her begins to crack as more items from the gallery appear around the field.

Just before her fingers make contact with his face, she is YANKED BACK. Her grip on the frame is lost and Nathan DISAPPEARS entirely. The quaking and thunder subside as Bridgette is dragged away from the tree by the two Thugs.

BRIDGETTE

No!

(thrashing)

Who are you?!

Kicking and flailing as she did before, she stares a spiteful look at her captors. She notices something: their features, which appear dirty from a distance, are actually composed of fine BRUSH STROKES along their skin.

One of the thugs looks down and takes notice of her realization. He looks to the other, who nods. The first Thug SMASHES his gloved fist into the back of Bridgette's head, knocking her out cold.

INT. ART EXHIBITION - DARK CORRIDOR

Nathan stands in front of the painting at the end of the corridor. FOOTSTEPS thump on the ground behind him.

The shadows of the two guards loom over him against the wall. He turns slowly to face them, putting his hands up.

Both guard's leather-gloved hands tighten on their rifle grips. Nathan gulps pitifully.

EXT. WILDERNESS - MIDDLE OF THE FOREST

Bridgette wakes up in the dirt. Empty frames surround her. Groggy, she sits up and brushes herself off. She goes to rub the back of her head, but merely brushing the lump with her fingers causes her to wince in pain.

She stands up, brushing herself off. Looking at the surrounding trees, she stumbles around in an awkward circle.

The worried look on her face tells just how lost she is. She takes one step forward in mild confidence, but second-guesses her choice and turns the other way. This happens several times before she plops down against a tree, defeated.

She pries one of the tree's smaller roots out of the ground and begins to sketch again in the soil. Her depiction of Nathan is more accurate this time. An undeniable likeness.

She jumps as she hears a distant rustling. A pair of footsteps grows nearer. She stands quickly at attention, holding the tree root defensively out in front of her.

The Thugs emerge from the trees, carrying a large, draped object between them. They set it against the tree in front of Bridgette. She shifts her stance to hid her soil sketch.

Removing the drape with a flourish, the Thugs reveal a full-body portrait of an older man in a suit. Motionless he stands in what appears to be a drawing room, with the evidence of privilege and intellect surrounding him. This is MR. CARTER.

BRIDGETTE

Father?

A gentle wind wisps past her.

MR. CARTER'S VOICE

Bridgette...

The Thugs look at each other and nod. They take the frame in both hands and hinge it downward, away from the portrait itself, which DISAPPEARS, leaving only Mr. Carter standing there, in the flesh. The frame lies empty around his feet.

Bridgette trembles as she looks at him. Her breath heaves as she takes him in, open-mouthed in shock.

MR. CARTER

We do not have long, my child.

She stumbles trying to find the words.

BRIDGETTE

How--

MR. CARTER

You must have so many questions, but I am sorry, that is the least important right now.

He walks toward her, extending a comforting hand. She thinks a moment, before approaching him and taking it. Lowering her head into his chest, he places his hand on her hair.

BRIDGETTE

Only one question matters, really.

She pulls away, breaking the embrace to look straight at him.

BRIDGETTE (CONT'D)

Who is he?

MR. CARTER

Those two are the keepers of this realm, as much my creation as the land in which you reside.

BRIDGETTE

Not them. The man. In the portrait.

MR. CARTER

Portrait? There is no--

BRIDGETTE

On the tree beyond the fence.

Mr. Carter's eyes widen.

MR. CARTER

That's not possible.

BRIDGETTE

I saw him standing before me as you are now.

She turns, pointing to her sketch in the soil.

BRIDGETTE (CONT'D)

You know who he is.

Mr. Carter looks back and forth, choosing his words.

MR. CARTER

Not specifically. When I brought you here, when I gifted you this place, you left a world behind.

BRIDGETTE

The world we came from.

MR. CARTER

Yes. A harsh world.

BRIDGETTE

The real world.

MR. CARTER

Who is to say what is real?

BRIDGETTE

The world you didn't create. The world you didn't trap me in.

Mr. Carter lowers his head, frustrated.

MR. CARTER

Trap?

BRIDGETTE

I did everything for you, and you still couldn't let me go.

MR. CARTER

I wanted to give you a place better than what the world could offer. A place where artists can literally escape into their work. Alone.

She takes a moment.

BRIDGETTE

Art should enhance the world, father, not replace it.

(beat)

Your world has left me alone.

MR. CARTER

Great art comforts you in
loneliness.

BRIDGETTE

Not if its cost is isolation.

(beat)

Answer my question. Who is he?

He breaks her gaze.

MR. CARTER

That frame is the frame through
which all this began. The window is
set to a temporal lock which keeps
the painting still to the observer.
No one can just appear.

(beat)

The only way time could have
progressed is if you and he were
temporally linked prior to the
creation of this realm.

BRIDGETTE

Soul mates?

MR. CARTER

Not exactly.

(beat)

I'm sorry, my child, you cannot see
him. You must not open that frame,
or all this will crumble. All I've
given you will perish. Poisoned by
the reality you seem to hold so
dear for having known it so little.

BRIDGETTE

Thanks only to you.

(beat)

When I touched the frame, I saw a
life I haven't lived. Glimpses. How
is that possible? How can I
remember him if we've never met?

MR. CARTER

You would have. What you saw were
bleeding images from days that
can't be assured.

BRIDGETTE

Did he see it, too?

MR. CARTER

As with so much in this, I cannot be sure. You could arrive, and his glance be as cold as a stranger. Here, this place is made of love--

BRIDGETTE

So I should let all you took from me when you ripped me out of time perish, then, rather than your magic sandbox?

MR. CARTER

If you still care for me as you once did.

BRIDGETTE

How can I believe you did this for me, when all you ask is for my submission now? You know I'll give it to you, as I always did, against my own well being.

Bridget pulls out her pocket watch, indicating it.

BRIDGETTE (CONT'D)

You told me to keep time, and I was never late, not once. I still catch myself looking at it, even though it doesn't work.

MR. CARTER

Of course it doesn't work. It can't. Time has no presence here.
(beat)

Here you never have to worry again. Your future with him is no longer guaranteed. True then, yes, but--

He tries to approach her, but she recoils.

BRIDGETTE

Unlike you, I believe some things are always true.

Mr. Carter gives her a pitying look.

MR. CARTER

Everything that begins ends. Except here. A world where all my art is preserved. You belong here, as you are my greatest creation.

BRIDGETTE

That's where you've always failed.

(beat)

Love is not created or destroyed.
It appears to begin only as you
discover it. Or, are kept from
discovering it, as I am here.

For the first time, he looks stern.

MR. CARTER

It will end. Here, you never will.

BRIDGETTE

Yes, father, everything dies. Which
is why I would choose to destroy
everything -- every piece of art
that ever existed -- to taste, if
only for a moment, something that
doesn't.

She backs away from him.

BRIDGETTE (CONT'D)

You've shown me my fate. In your
mad gallery. So, thank you.

(beat)

But now, I choose to live it.

She turns to go.

MR. CARTER

Then I'm sorry, Bridgette.

BRIDGETTE

For what?

Mr. Carter gestures to the Thugs, who pick up the frame and pull it over him, the portrait reappearing as he phases out. They click the frame into place and cover it with the drape.

The Thugs turn toward Bridgette, their knuckle cracking muffled by their gloves. She backs away, bumping into a pile of empty frames against the tree behind her.

Bridgette looks up at them towering over her as they approach. She looks around frantically. The Thugs LUNGE at her and she grabs the first thing she can find: a small frame at her feet.

She dodges one Thug and SWINGS the frame at the other.

The frame goes around his head, smashing into his shoulders. His head begins to PHASE out of existence, DISAPPEARING to leave a headless body running around aimlessly with a frame dangling around his neck.

The other Thug reacts in shock. Bridgette takes the moment to grab the remaining frames and SPRINTS away from him. He notices and speeds after her.

Running through the forest, Bridgette maneuvers around trees with amazing speed. She peeks behind her, seeing the second Thug gaining quickly.

Decisively stomping her feet to a stop, she pivots on a dime and TOSSES one of the frames at the Thug. He puts up his fist to deflect it, but it lands on his arm like a ring toss and his forearm phases out.

He reacts in horror, stumbling backward. Bridgette takes the opportunity to rush him, sliding a frame up his leg. It disappears, and he teeters over, crashing into the dirt.

She smiles victoriously and turns toward light in the distance.

EXT. WILDERNESS - FIELD

Bridgette walks toward the tree and sees that the portrait is empty again. A sullen look wipes her face.

She turns from the tree, looking out to the sweeping field and forest beyond. It really is beautiful.

She lowers her head in decision, closing her eyes.

FLASH. The vision of her and Nathan, running, hand in hand.

She looks up to the empty portrait, determined. Raising her hands slowly, she grips both sides and PULLS with all her might. As she strains, the world around her DISTORTS.

A great wind picks up, roaring around her.

Items from the gallery phase in, partial sections of walls and other objects occupying the field. The wilderness in the distance phases away as the two worlds MERGE.

Bridgette pulls the frame completely apart, DESTROYING it.

INT./EXT. ART EXHIBITION/WILDERNESS

Bridgette stands alone in the rubble of two reconciled worlds. The broken frame lies at her feet.

Bits of the field peek through tiles on the gallery floor. City and sky are visible through partially obliterated walls and aisles of exhibits lie in ruin.

As she walks forward, the wind dies down as the last bits of each world phase into equilibrium.

She turns a corner and hears a rustling in the rubble. She turns quickly to see: The Janitor. He smiles at her.

JANITOR

He's just there, Ms. Carter.

He points and she nods in thanks.

She turns to walk in the direction he indicated, but thinks of something and turns around to ask.

BRIDGETTE

Does he -- ?

But the Janitor is gone. She turns back around to proceed. Walking nervously, she turns the last corner and sees:

Nathan, standing over two incapacitated guards, both of their rifles in his hands. His back to Bridgette, he hears her approach and drops the rifles on the unconscious brutes.

He turns around slowly and their eyes meet.

They approach each other, gazes locked. They stop nervously a foot from each other. Both open their mouths to try to say something, but stumble over their thoughts.

NATHAN

Bridgette...

BRIDGETTE

Nathan...

They both freeze in awe of each other's recognition and break into an immediate embrace. Their lips meet, and a wind surges powerfully around them, zipping past and clearing a path to a dark corner of the remaining gallery.

Both look in the direction of the wind and turn to walk hand in hand. As they approach the corner, a large portrait becomes visible in the dark.

Bridgette starts to break into a run, but he holds her back.

NATHAN

No more running.

She looks at him and smiles. He lets go of her hand as she continues to the dark corner.

The portrait's frame was damaged in the transition, and a figure flickers in and out of existence. It's Mr. Carter.

Parts of him are phasing rapidly, and he doesn't look good. As he fades into darkness, he smiles at her.

MR. CARTER

I'm so proud of you.

She weeps. He's gone.

The frame falls to the ground in pieces onto a pile of rubble. Nathan comes up behind her and she turns to him. He puts his arms around her.

Nestled in his arms, she looks down to her pocket watch. She unchains it from her vest and considers it.

Nathan sees this and removes his phone from his pocket. He sees a notification: One new message.

CLOSE ON the pile of rubble and broken frame pieces.

SMASH. Bridgette's pocket watch lands on the heap face-up and the crystal cracks.

SLAM. His phone collides with the debris, its screen splintering into a thousand shards.

The couple strolls into the distance, hand in hand. The pocket watch starts ticking.

THE END.