

## 1 INT. CECELIA'S HOUSE - MORNING

1

A young woman (CECELIA, early 20s, willowy) is checking the contents of a vial. Once satisfied, she inserts a needle and withdraws some of the fluid. She flicks the needle to remove any air, before piercing her skin with it.

A phone pressed up against her ear she converses with someone, completely blasé to what she's doing.

CECELIA  
 (Mid-conversation,  
 somewhat preoccupied)  
 Yeah, I haven't forgotten. No, no,  
 it's no bother at all. I'll see you  
 then. Mhm. Bye, bye...

She hangs up and promptly removes the needle, dropping it into a clinical waste bin.

Cecelia opens a medicine cabinet that is crammed with various prescription medications, selecting a few nonchalantly. Swallowing several pills at once, she disappears into the bathroom.

A small light flickers on a fuse board beside a letter from the hospital, tacked to the wall amongst family photos. In bold type we see the results of a test. It appears to have been inconclusive and requires a follow-up appointment.

The light turns off and Cecelia is stood peering into the bathroom mirror, her expression vacant. The reflection she's examining appears to be the poster child for 'health'.

CECELIA  
 (Pulling at her face)  
 ... Yikes. That needs work.

She opens the bathroom cabinet, using multiple cosmetics in an attempt to make herself look 'better'. Her arms are bruised with noticeable puncture marks. A moment passes and she stumbles forward slightly, imbalanced, clutching onto the sink.

CECELIA  
 (Blinking rapidly)  
 Woah there.

She cups her hands and drinks from the tap. Something shifts in the air - Cecelia seems oblivious to the iridescent haze around her. Looking up, it disappears as though never there.

Cecelia trudges throughout the house. It's pristine on the surface - putting on a good show - but a mess behind doors. Bottles of pills stand guard, whilst expired food occupies the fridge and a laundry basket is stacked high.

CECELIA  
 (Notices the mess, signs  
 in resignation)  
 Tomorrow.

Picking up a pair of headphones by the back door, she heads out - it's a sunny day. Pausing for a moment she puts in the headphones and presses play.

**2 EXT. NEIGHBOURHOOD STREET - SAME MORNING**

**2**

A melancholic, almost wistful, song is heard blaring from her headphones - just loud enough to silence the outer world. A bead of perspiration trails down her forehead, hastily wiped away before anyone could notice. She checks her watch.

A plethora of people pass by. The neighbourhood is manicured and presentable, occupied by people who fit that same description. Dog walkers, runners, people on errand runs... Cecelia watches exasperatedly as she wraps an arm around her midriff.

CECELIA  
 (Humming to distract  
 herself)

We suddenly see Cecelia from across the street through the eyes of someone else. He watches her curiously, walking slowly as though in a trance. There's a noticeable shift in the air around her, and the stranger inhales deeply.

Unbeknownst to Cecelia, a screen or veil surrounds her as she trails along. It's cloudy, with pinpricks of translucency that resemble opals. It catches the morning light filtered through a tree, rippling like water. She passes into a long shadow and it's gone again.

**3 INT. GROCERY SHOP - SAME DAY**

**3**

Cecelia enters her local grocery shop, collecting a basket on her way in. She moves seamlessly, as though she knows exactly where everything is. Moving throughout the aisles, she selects the same items we saw already expired in her fridge.

The stranger comes in behind her, pretending to read a magazine as Cecelia peruses the fresh produce aisle whilst he sneaks glances. She disappears around a corner and he panics.

Cecelia is in the frozen produce aisle, her basket laden as she struggles with the weight of it. The stranger appears at the end of the aisle, watching her blatantly. She hasn't noticed him.

The odd ripple is back, but this time it isn't silent. It courses with energy, whirring away gleefully. Cecelia lifts her head to find the source of the sound, her eyes darting then-- she sees her reflection in the sliding door.

THE STRANGER

(Realising she's noticed  
it, hurriedly walking  
towards Cecelia)

Hey, wait, don't panic...

Cecelia drops her basket, the contents rolling out onto the floor cacophonously. She extends a hand towards the veil, reaching out slowly... And abruptly recoils as it disappears at her touch. The trance she was under breaks. Pivoting quickly, she rushes out of the shop, rummaging for something in her bag.

Other shoppers seem oblivious, milling about as the stranger tries to keep Cecelia in his sights.

**4 EXT. PARK - NOON**

**4**

Cecelia paces back and forth in a frenzy looking at her hands, as the veil moves around them absentmindedly. She sits herself down on the bench and screws her eyes shut.

CECELIA

(Mumbling to herself)

It's just the meds. Just the meds...

The stranger runs down the path, slowing to a jog as he sees Cecelia on the park bench, visibly shaken. He approaches tentatively - as though approaching a spooked animal - sitting down beside her as the veil catches the sunlight. Cecelia stiffens, aware someone has sat down beside her.

THE STRANGER

(In a calm and low voice,  
almost whispering out the  
side of his mouth)

Are you alright? ... I saw what  
happened in the supermarket.

She doesn't open her eyes, or show any sign she has heard him. Maybe he'll go away if she pretends to be asleep.

A few moments pass - it hasn't worked.

CECELIA  
 (Feigning indifference)  
 Me? Fine. Just having an 'off' day.  
 I started these new meds - must  
 cause hallucinations or something.

He looks at her blankly, scoffing under his breath. He's around the same age, lanky, with gentle eyes and an easy smile.

THE STRANGER  
 (Exasperatedly)  
 I can see you're not '*fine*'... I see  
 it as well.

CECELIA  
 (Eyelids half-open,  
 peering out)  
 Your meds give you hallucinations  
 too?

He looks at her unamused.

He gestures towards the veil around her, as it glitches at his touch. Cecelia's eyes open promptly as she shoots upwards, resisting the urge to turn and look at him.

CECELIA  
 (Bluntly, looking forward)  
 I have no idea what you're talking  
 about. It's just the mist catching  
 the light. Do you always quiz  
 strangers...?

The stranger looks at her sympathetically. There's a pause, then--

THE STRANGER  
 (Blurts out)  
 Crohn's, right?

She turns to look at him properly, unable to hide her curiosity. There's another veil around the stranger, only his looks different; red, pink and white. It looks like a butterfly with its wings outstretched.

CECELIA  
 (Breaking eye contact,  
 looking around  
 suspiciously)  
 How-how'd you know that?

THE STRANGER

I've seen a veil like yours before with someone else I knew. The more they tried to hide it, the more it would appear.

CECELIA

(Dubiously, trying to discount his words)

A *veil*? Is that what we're calling it...? Why can only you see it then?

He looks down, smiling to himself, before locking eyes with Cecelia.

THE STRANGER

(Gesturing towards his veil)

Lupus. I mean, I'm Jun - but I'm Jun *with* lupus.

At the mention of the word 'lupus', his veil dances excitedly. Jun sits grinning as though he's won a prize - he doesn't look ill... He has a certain brightness to him. A luminosity.

CECELIA

(Hesitantly, side-eyeing)

... Cecelia.

She apprehensively extends out her hand. Jun shakes it vigorously. The gesture seems to have been encouragement for him to continue.

JUN

(Talking energetically)

Your veil is years old. You must've been ill for a long time with all these tears in it.

(He reaches out, Cecelia's veil drifting over to him)

The veils get damaged over time, especially if you can't see them. Their feelings are easily hurt.

CECELIA

(Grimacing, not sharing his enthusiasm)

How do I get rid of it? I don't *want* people to see it.

Jun looks slightly downhearted at her response.

JUN

(Looks away briefly)

You can't. Now you know it's there,  
it's here to stay.

(Leaning towards Cecelia)

Is it really so bad...?

Cecelia remains silent.

JUN

Look around. Notice it got busier as  
we were talking?

Cecelia prises her gaze away from Jun and towards others  
basking in the winter sun. Some have veils that catch the  
light and temporarily glitch, showing what people were trying  
to hide behind them.

JUN

(Watching Cecelia  
inquisitively)

You see them now, don't you? All of  
them different. All people with  
their own veil and something they're  
hiding.

Jun slumps back into the park bench, adjusting his baseball  
cap.

CECELIA

I've never seen them before... It  
was just me trying to get through  
the day and not thinking about  
others doing the same.

Cecelia ducks her head, knotting her hands together. Jun's  
expression softens, as he reaches over and places a hand on  
her shoulder. Their veils overlap.

JUN

It's okay to not have seen them  
before. The veils remind us we're  
not alone and don't have to be, if  
we choose.

JUN

I didn't always accept my lot in  
life. Then the veil appeared - I  
thought I'd finally lost it.

(Shaking his head)

It forced me to open up. Sure, not  
everyone could see it, but enough  
people could.

Cecelia keeps her head down.

CECELIA

It didn't make sense for others to see I was in pain. It made me feel helpless and weak to see them look at me and know they felt the same way...

She trails off as someone passes by, their veil following behind them like fabric on the wind.

JUN

You thought it was for the best. We've all been there; thinking it's easier to 'pretend'. Just don't forget that beneath the veil is the real Cecelia - the one people want to know.

She turns to smile at Jun, eyes glassy, as she breathes out shakily.

CECELIA

How long have you had lupus?

Jun smiles broadly.

JUN

Ah, I thought you'd never ask... That's the *starter* question. My answer? As long as I can remember.

Cecelia scoffs, crossing her arms.

CECELIA

(Sarcastically)

Making this a competition, are we?

JUN

(Deadpan)

No. Just hoping you'll come to my pity party later.

Cecelia bursts into laughter uncharacteristically.

JUN

Want to know something? The more you talk about your Crohn's, the less the veil appears.

CECELIA

Oh?

JUN

I'm expecting a detailed life story  
now. It's only fair.

Suddenly we see from someone else's perspective - another  
stranger. Cecelia and Jun are talking animatedly, their veils  
frolicking carelessly. As the other stranger walks away, a  
veil follows.

FADE TO BLACK.