INT. JULIAN FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

WILLOW, 16 sits on a couch FACING CAMERA, in BG, cooking at the stove is JULIAN, 22, her older brother. Room dimly lit.

WILLOW
I have a story to tell. Not because I want to, but because it wouldn't leave me alone. The kind of story that fills a house after someone you've loved forgets how to stay.

INT. JULIAN'S DORM ROOM - DAY

FLASHBACK

FROM ABOVE

Julian's room: messy, dark, dimly lit. He's in bed, tosses and catches a tennis ball.

WE HEAR "Scotty Doesn't Know" by Lustra.

Oscillating fan on high blows papers around the room. Dirty laundry covers the floor.

WILLOW (V.O.)
My brother's dorm room was small. It made you feel smaller just being there. But, you'd be surprised how much more time he spent in that room than with me.

Julian tosses the ball into a pile of laundry. He steps over to his speaker, turns it off.

His phone PINGS: CU ON PHONE - TEXT: *I'm cleaning out Gran's house this week. You should come home.*

He switches the speaker back on, WE HEAR "EVERYBODY TALKS" By Neon Trees. He starts to pack a bag. Puts a box of cigarettes into his denim jacket, walks out of the room.

EXIT Julian

TITLE CARD

INT. EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

QUICK SHOTS

V.O OVER

- Julian walking with FRIENDS

- Doing homework in dorm room

- A scene with lots of surroundings and his appearance in general.

WILLOW (V.O.)
Yup, that's my brother. The kind of person who could slice a pie and pass it around like it meant something, always knew how to carry on a conversation at the dinner table. Good grades, all the friends in the world.

CUT MUSIC

PRE-LAP "COOL KIDS" BY ECHOSMITH

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOVING - EARLY EVENING

Julian's walk to the bus stop, preferably a cigarette in his mouth. He crosses multiple crosswalks on his way.

WILLOW (V.O.)
He was senior in college now, teetering on the edge of what came next.

CUT MUSIC

ON JULIAN'S FACE, BUS DOOR OPENS, SHOT FROM INSIDE

WILLOW (V.O)
I wasn't sure if that meant he's just ahead or just further away.

INT. ON THE BUS - EARLY EVENING

FLASHBACK

Julian steps into a bus, earplugs in, then finds a place to sit down.

WILLOW (V.O.)
After college, Julian changed. Never showed up for my school events. Ignored my texts. I hated for his absence. I always wondered how he had
(MORE)

WILLOW (V.O.) (CONT'D)
all the time in the world but never left any time for me.

On seat, Julian has tired look. SOMEWHERE BY O3OHN starts playing (1:17-2:09). When bus stops, CU for the bus door opening. Julian exits the bus, then turns around. Road is split the middle and a car passes through, revealing Willow standing across from the sidewalk.

MUSIC EXITS.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOVING - EARLY EVENING (EARLY EVENING)

Julian and Willow walking on the sidewalk. When they approach the house, CU of their backs as they stand facing the house.

WILLOW (V.O)
Now we were both here to clean my grandmother's house before the month ended. That deadline felt more final than her funeral ever had.

Julian and Willow look at the house, then at each other.

MUSIC EXITS.

INT. GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Camera focuses on a clock, blinking 2AM. The light flicks on, showing the arrangements of the kitchen. Julian is making tea.

ENTER Willow - CU of her in back indicating she's in the room, then she opens the fridge.

JULIAN
(without turning) Hey.

WILLOW
Hey.

Willow looks into the fridge without doing anything. She stands there for a while, letting the cold air settle in.

JULIAN
You want tea?

Willow shuts the fridge.

WILLOW
Sure.

JULIAN
(looks back) I didn't come back for her funeral because I didn't know how to say goodbye.

WILLOW
She wouldn't care. You were her favorite.

JULIAN
She told me you were.

Characters exchange smiles. Julian sets tea on the table and returns to working at the kitchen. Willow rubs the rim of her mug.

WILLOW
No, I think I was always more hers at the moment. You were the future.

JULIAN
I'm sorry.

WILLOW
Don't be. It was better to hear her breathing.

Julian has reflective look for expression. Goes back to cooking.

JULIAN
I'm gonna cook something.

Julian cooks. CU from his angle. Silence for a while.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
(exhale) I'm not going back to school.

Julian turns back. Willow turns to him, a surprised look on her face.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
(looks back) Yeah. Didn't re-enroll. Don't tell Dad. (Goes back to cooking)

Shifts to where we can see both of them, Willow is looking at Julian.

WILLOW (V.O.)
I kept looking at him, waiting for the punchline. For once, I think my brother didn't know what to say, and I realize the dark shades under his eyes that weren't there before.

WILLOW
I don't get it. Your like ... one semester away.

JULIAN
(Takes a deep breath) When grandma died, I was in the ICU. I had multiple panic attacks. I hated every second of college. I kept waking up thinking I was walking into someone else's life.

MUSIC ENTERS - BREAK THE CYCLE BY YOU+ME / SOMEWHERE BY O3OHN / NOTHING'S NEW BY RIO ROMEO(OR MAYBE STH ELSE - TBD)

WILLOW (V.O)
When I tell a story, I like explain it as there are times in life when you feel a certain sense of guilt it's so bad your stomach does the thing, and this was one for me. There he was, notthe polished Julian who said the right things at the right time. This version had cracks. Shadows. Bruises I couldn't name.

JULIAN
I'm sorry that I left you alone with all of it.

Julian smiles, then shakes his head.

INT. THE HOUSE - LOUNGE

Back in interview perspective, as in first scene.

WILLOW
For the first time in a long time, he wasn't the good kid Julian everyone knew him as anymore. A Julian that didn't know how to slice the pie, didn't know how to speak at the dinner table. I know I'm not the best storyteller. But this, this was one of those moments so tender and

(MORE)

WILLOW (CONT'D)
unforgettable you almost miss it while it's happening. And it hurts, gosh, it hurts.

One shot from where Willow is sitting slowly to Julian's side of kitchen

MUSIC ENTERS - ALL I NEED BY RADIOHEAD

He slices a pie he made. He sets the pie on the table. Willow is no longer here. (NOTE: she has to hide in this one shot).

JULIAN FACES CAMERA.

JULIAN
My name is Julian. I have a story to tell, except it didn't happen.

EXT. INT. FLASHBACK TO PREVIOUS SCENES WITH WILLOW OBVIOUSLY PHOTOSHOPPED OVER

Three days after my grandmother passed, my sister Willow had taken her own life, folding herself into silence and slipped away. What you've just watched, this story, it's the one I built in the wreckage, the version where I showed up on time. This isn't the truth, it's just that I needed it to be. I still ride the bus sometimes, the air sharp with rosemary and rain, hoping I'd see her in the wind across the sidewalk when I get off.

BACK TO JULIAN.

JULIAN
Because some stories don't heal, they haunt. But if you tell them gently enough, they'll sit beside you.

BLACKOUT. MUSIC EXITS.

CREDITS ENTER. MUSIC - SK8ER BOI BY AVRIL LAVIGNE