

NeoBloom

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FADE IN:

EXT. A SMALL CAFE - DAY

A charming cafe with outdoor seating, bustling with graduates and families on GRADUATION DAY.

Students in caps and gowns mingle with families.

MIA (23), soft eyes and a tentative smile, and JAMIE (22), bright smile and confident posture, enter the cafe with JAMIE'S PARENTS (50s). All four are dressed for graduation - Mia and Jamie in black gowns unzipped part way, caps in hand.

JAMIE'S MOM  
(smiling wide)  
Let me get another picture of my two  
favorite graduates!

Mia and Jamie pose near the cafe entrance. Jamie's Mom takes several photos on her phone.

JAMIE'S DAD  
These two are going to take over the  
world, Martha.

JAMIE  
(laughing)  
Dad, please.

JAMIE'S MOM  
(scrolling through photos)  
Oh, these are perfect! Jamie, send  
these to your aunt right now. She  
couldn't stop crying that she missed  
your graduation.

INT. SMALL CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

The four settle at a table by the window. A WAITER brings menus.

JAMIE'S DAD

Order whatever you want. Today we celebrate!

JAMIE'S MOM

(to Mia)

Are you sure your parents couldn't make it? We saved them seats.

Mia shifts in her seat and forces a smile.

MIA

They had... prior commitments.

Jamie gives Mia a supportive glance.

JAMIE'S MOM

Well, their loss is our gain. We get you all to ourselves!

JAMIE'S DAD

Absolutely. We're proud of both of you.

He raises his water glass in a toast.

JAMIE'S DAD

To Jamie and Mia. The world better watch out.

They clink glasses. Mia's smile doesn't quite reach her eyes.

The group enjoys lunch, laughing and talking.

Plates are cleared. Jamie's parents stand to leave.

JAMIE'S MOM

(hugging both girls)

We'll let you two catch up. Jamie, don't be late for dinner tonight. Your grandparents are coming over.

JAMIE'S DAD

(to Mia)

You're always welcome too, Mia.

MIA

Thank you, Mr. B. For everything.

Jamie's parents exit the cafe, leaving Mia and Jamie alone at the table.

Jamie takes a sip of her coffee while Mia fidgets with a napkin.

JAMIE

So? The big question. What's next for the brilliant Mia Lang?

Mia takes a sip of her coffee, avoiding eye contact.

MIA

You know. The usual post-grad plan. Apply for jobs. Hope someone calls back.

JAMIE

That's it? That's the plan from Ms. Four-Point-Oh?

MIA

What about you?

JAMIE

Moving back in with the parents. Dad's letting me help with his accounting firm while I study for the CPA.

Mia nods, taking another sip.

JAMIE

You could always come with me. Mom's been asking—

MIA

(cutting her off)

I'm good.

Jamie rolls her eyes.

MIA

Really. I saved enough from my old barista job to cover first and last on a studio. I'll figure the rest out.

Jamie studies her friend's face.

JAMIE

When was the last time you talked to  
your parents?

Mia avoids eye contact and focuses on stirring her coffee.

MIA

Two years, seven months. Not that I've  
counted.

(beat)

Ever since I came out to them at  
Thanksgiving break sophomore year.

JAMIE

Still not a single text? A call? An  
email?

MIA

(bitter smile)

Radio silence.  
My dad said he "didn't understand" and  
"needed time." Guess he's still  
processing. I mean, my sister isn't  
even allowed to text me anymore.  
Clearly they couldn't suck it up enough  
to show up today.

JAMIE

That's so unfair. I'm sorry, Mia.

MIA

(shrugging)

It's fine. I don't need them anyway.

JAMIE

You know my parents would love to have  
you stay with us. Mom keeps asking when  
you'll let her adopt you officially.

MIA

(with a sad smile)

Your parents are amazing. The way they  
just... accepted you. Accepted me.

(beat)

Sometimes I imagine what it would be  
like if my parents had reacted like  
yours did. Just saying "We love you"  
instead of "We need to pray about  
this."

JAMIE

The offer still stands. Always.

MIA

I appreciate it. I do. But I need to do this on my own. For me.

Jamie reaches across the table, squeezes Mia's hand.

JAMIE

Being independent doesn't mean being alone, you know.

MIA

I know. I'll be okay.

Mia and Jamie leave the cafe as the door closes behind them.

INT. MIA'S STUDIO APARTMENT - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER - AFTERNOON

A studio apartment that's more functional than homey. Sparse decor. A bulletin board filled with color-coded job listings and application deadlines.

Mia sits cross-legged on her bed, her laptop open, a half-eaten container of ramen beside her. On the screen: job applications and several indeed tabs open.

She refreshes her email. Nothing new. Checks her phone. No missed calls.

She SIGHS and moves to her resume pile, adding another printed copy to a stack of identical ones. Her phone VIBRATES. She lunges for it.

MIA

Hello? Yes, this is she.

Her face falls.

MIA

I understand... No, thank you for considering me.

She hangs up, tosses the phone on the bed, and rubs her temples.

TIMELAPSE - MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT TO DAWN

Mia moves between her laptop, printed resumes, and pacing, fueled by cups of coffee. The sky outside shifts from night to dawn.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Mia, now in pajamas, hair messy, scrolls through her laptop with strained eyes. Her finger pauses mid-scroll.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: A job posting for "NEOBLOOM" - Marketing Associate. The company logo is a stylized flower blooming from a silhouette of a head. The header reads: "A Better World Is Blooming."

Mia clicks on the company website. The aesthetic is warm, natural tones of brown and green. Smiling employees. Modern office spaces with plants everywhere.

CLOSE ON TEXT: "At NeoBloom, we don't just create training solutions. We invest in our people."

Mia sits up straighter. She clicks "Apply Now" and begins filling out the application.

Mia submits the application and then lays down on her bed. She falls asleep.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

Mia, showered but still in her robe, sips coffee while checking her emails.

HER EYES WIDEN.

CLOSE ON EMAIL: "Thank you for your interest in NeoBloom. We would like to schedule an interview at your earliest convenience."

MIA  
(to herself)  
That was fast.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

Mia sits in front of her laptop, hair styled, wearing a professional outfit. She's in a video call with the RECRUITER (30s), wearing a green sweater and has a big smile and enthusiastic demeanor.

RECRUITER

Your application was quite impressive, Mia. We loved your thesis on behavioral economics in digital marketing.

MIA

Oh! Well, thank you. I've always been interested in how subtle design choices can influence—

RECRUITER

(interrupting)

We believe you'd be a perfect culture fit. How soon could you start?

Mia blinks, caught off guard.

MIA

I... don't we need to discuss the role more? Or compensation?

RECRUITER

(still smiling)

We find that the right people always thrive at NeoBloom. Your... background speaks for itself. You'll receive a formal offer soon with all details.

MIA

Um, that's great, but—

RECRUITER

Is there anything else you'd like to ask?

MIA

Well, what would I be doing day-to-day?

RECRUITER

At NeoBloom, everyone works to develop training and skills to help our clients succeed and grow.

(beat)  
We're very excited to have you join our family.

The Recruiter's smile never wavers. Mia returns a forced smile.

RECRUITER  
Well, if that's all, then we'll be in touch.

MIA  
Thank you. I look...

The recruiter hangs up the call

MIA  
forward to it.

INT. CAFE - EVENING

Mia and Jamie sit in a cafe. Jamie scrolls through her phone while Mia checks hers for job alerts.

JAMIE  
How long did they say the offer would take?

MIA  
They didn't. But the whole thing was weird. I interviewed the day after applying, and it lasted like five minutes. I wouldn't be surprised if the whole thing was fake.

JAMIE  
Red flag.

MIA  
Yea, probably. But maybe they did just really like me.

JAMIE  
Nobody likes anyone that much after five minutes. Except my mom with you, but that's different.

Mia's phone BUZZES. She checks it.



CLOSE ON PHONE: MESSAGE FROM UNKNOWN NUMBER WITH A LINK. "YOUR NEOBLOOM JOURNEY BEGINS HERE. CLICK TO ACCEPT YOUR OFFER."

MIA  
It's them.

She clicks the link. A sleek digital contract appears.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: Employment offer for "Marketing Associate" with a generous salary figure.

MIA  
That can't be right.

JAMIE  
What?

Mia turns the phone to show Jamie.

JAMIE  
Holy shit! That's like... really good,  
Mia.

MIA  
I know. I could finally eat something  
besides ramen and Mac n cheese.  
(beat)  
They want me to start Monday.

JAMIE  
Monday? As in three days from now?

Mia nods, staring at her phone.

JAMIE  
Doesn't that seem... I don't know,  
rushed?

MIA  
It's a little unusual, but—

JAMIE  
A little? Mia, they barely interviewed  
you.

MIA  
Maybe I just made a really good  
impression.

Jamie gives her a skeptical look.

JAMIE

Look, I'm happy for you. I am. Just...  
be careful? Don't let them take  
advantage of you. You know how  
companies are.

Mia looks down at the offer again, her finger hovering over  
"ACCEPT."

MIA

It's just a job, Jamie. Worst case  
scenario, I hate it and quit after a  
couple nice paychecks. But this could  
be really good for me. I've been at  
this for 8 weeks, and this is my first  
real opportunity.

She presses "ACCEPT." The screen animates with the NeoBloom logo  
turning into a full flower, followed by text: "Welcome to the  
family."

EXT. NEOBLOOM HEADQUARTERS - MONDAY MORNING

A converted industrial building, sleekly renovated. Natural wood  
accents, living walls of plants on the exterior. Large windows  
reflect the morning light.

Mia approaches, dressed in a white blouse and dark blue pants.  
She pauses to look up at the building. The company logo glows  
above the entrance.

The RECRUITER appears at the entrance, wearing a green sweater  
with beige pants, with the same smile.

RECRUITER

Mia! Right on time! We're so excited  
you accepted!

Mia smiles and approaches. The Recruiter extends a hand, but  
pulls Mia in for a hug instead. Mia, surprised and feeling  
awkward, returns it.

RECRUITER

Welcome to NeoBloom. Your new home away  
from home. We have everything you need  
to thrive and grow here.

The Recruiter chuckles as if making a joke. Mia fake laughs with her, following her toward the entrance.

RECRUITER

Just a quick security check and we'll  
get you settled.

They approach a sleek security desk where a SECURITY GUARD (40s), wearing a brown sweater and khaki pants sits.

SECURITY GUARD

New bloom?

The Recruiter nods. The guard stands and gestures to a small alcove with a sophisticated-looking biometric scanner.

SECURITY GUARD

Right palm on the green square, please.  
And look directly at the red light.

MIA

Oh. That's... thorough.

RECRUITER

(still smiling)

We take security very seriously here.  
Your safety is our priority.

Mia places her palm on the scanner. A green light passes over it. Then a red beam scans her retina.

COMPUTER VOICE

Identity confirmed. Welcome to  
NeoBloom, Mia Lang.

The security doors slide open and show an interior that looks more like a high-end home than an office.

Natural light, plants everywhere, comfortable seating areas, and open work spaces.

RECRUITER

Shall we?

Mia steps inside, the doors close behind her with a CLICK.

RECRUITER

Let me show you around.

INT. NEOBLOOM HEADQUARTERS - DAY

The Recruiter leads Mia through corridors with living walls of plants and natural wood accents. Everything is designed with warm, inviting colors.

RECRUITER

As you can see, we've designed the space to promote productivity and wellbeing. Studies show natural elements help people feel more comfortable and creative.

They pass by OPEN WORKSPACES where employees in earth tones work collaboratively. Several look up and smile warmly at Mia as she passes by.

EMPLOYEE 1 (WAVING)

Welcome to NeoBloom!

Mia waves back

MIA

Thanks!

RECRUITER (PROUDLY)

We pride ourselves on our company culture. Everyone here supports each other's growth.

They reach a stylish KITCHEN AREA where employees chat while selecting from an array of snacks and prepared meals.

RECRUITER

All meals and snacks are complimentary. We believe well-nourished employees are happy employees.

MIA

This is amazing. My last job didn't even have free coffee, and it was a literal coffee shop.

A FRIENDLY EMPLOYEE approaches with a protein bar and holds it out towards Mia.

FRIENDLY EMPLOYEE

First day? The snacks here are incredible. I've never eaten better since starting.

Mia accepts the protein bar.

MIA

Thank you! Everyone is so nice here.

FRIENDLY EMPLOYEE

That's the NeoBloom way. We look out for each other.

As they round a corner, Mia makes eye contact with NORA (20s), who sits at a desk reviewing documents. Unlike the others, Nora doesn't immediately offer a wide smile. Instead, she seems to study Mia. After a beat, Nora's lips curl into a slight smirk, and she gives Mia a subtle wink before returning to her work.

Mia pauses momentarily, caught off guard by this deviation from the uniform friendliness she's encountered.

RECRUITER

Something catch your eye?

MIA

No, just... taking it all in.

As they continue walking, the Recruiter points out various amenities.

RECRUITER

We have meditation rooms, nap pods for when you need a quick refresh, and even an on-site health center for routine checkups. Totally optional, of course, but employees love the convenience.

MIA

I've never seen a workplace like this.

RECRUITER

That's exactly what we aim for.

They approach a desk with a small potted plant and welcome card with Mia's name. Alex (25), a lanky man with glasses, stands up from a nearby desk and extends his hand.

ALEX

You must be Mia! I'm Alex. I'll be working right next to you. If you need anything at all, just let me know.

MIA  
I will, thanks Alex.

RECRUITER  
Now, Director Jan is eager to meet you. She's about to have a team briefing. Everyone's excited to welcome you to the family.

INT. NEOBLOOM - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Mia sits at a polished wooden table surrounded by COWORKERS who all share the same pleasant smile. Everyone is wearing the same palette of browns, beiges, and greens. Most employees appear to be wearing pants and sweaters. At the head of the table stands DIRECTOR JAN (40s), elegant, confident posture, charismatic.

JAN  
Dan, how's the Langley project coming along.

DAN (LATE 20S, BEARDED)  
We're a day and half behind schedule but expected to wrap up next Friday. All metrics on target.

JAN  
Let's do whatever we can to trim that timeline to Thursday.

Dan nods.

JAN  
I'd like to take a minute to introduce the newest member of the family.

Mia looks up and gives a slight smile

JAN  
Mia joins us as our new marketing associate. We believe she has just what it takes to grow and thrive here. At NeoBloom we don't just care about helping our clients grow, we want our

team, our family, to grow and thrive also.

Jan looks directly at Mia.

JAN

If you need anything at all in your journey here, please don't hesitate to reach out.

The other employees nod along.

JAN

Before we close out, I have a quick announcement.

(smiles)

Leah from behavioral insights has been selected for a lateral transfer opportunity.

Several employees murmur. Some employees clap politely, others exchange glances.

Mia claps slowly, uncertain.

JAN

We're proud of Leah's progress. She's demonstrated peak optimization and sustained metrics across all categories. She'll be transitioning to a new family where her talents can continue to flourish.

Leah (30s, sharp but subdued) rises, giving a small smile. She's pale and quiet, barely reacting.

Jan approaches her with a small white flower pin and fastens it to Leah's sweater.

JAN

You've grown so much since you started. We're so proud of you. Let's give her a round of applause and send her out in style. We've catered in cupcakes for everyone!

Everyone claps together. A couple employees cheer.

JAN

Alright team, let's get back at it.  
What do we do?

EMPLOYEES  
(Chanting together)  
Together, we bloom!

MIA  
(Looking around, mumbles a  
beat behind everyone else)  
Together, we bloom.

FADE OUT.

INT. NEOBLOOM - OPEN WORKSPACE - DAY 1 - MORNING

Mia settles at her workstation in an open-concept area. Her desk is pristine, with a small potted plant and a welcome card. Alex leans over from the adjacent desk.

ALEX  
First day jitters?

MIA  
That obvious?

ALEX  
(smiling)  
I started a couple weeks ago. Still  
feel like the new kid.

He gestures to the office space around them.

ALEX  
It's great though. First real job after  
years of waiting tables.

MIA  
Same. Well, barista, not waiter.

ALEX  
The unlimited snacks alone make this  
place heaven.

He points to a kitchen area where several EMPLOYEES are drinking out of colorful bottles and grabbing food off the shelves.

ALEX



Try the tea. It's so good for focus.  
Like I've had 3 cups of coffee, but  
without the jitters or crash.

INT. NEOBLOOM - KITCHEN AREA - DAY 1 - NOON

Mia approaches a COWORKER (30s) who's grabbing a bottle of tea from the shelf.

MIA  
Hey, I was thinking of grabbing lunch.  
There's a sandwich place down the  
street I spotted on my way in.

COWORKER  
(surprised)  
Why would you leave for lunch? All of  
this is complementary for employees.

The Coworker gestures to a spread of food being set up by other EMPLOYEES all wearing green or brown sweaters.

COWORKER  
Farm-to-table, organic, personalized to  
optimize your workday.  
(lowering voice)  
Plus, management sees who leaves for  
lunch. Maybe not a great first  
impression.

MIA  
Oh. Right. Thanks.

Mia glances at the door before following the Coworker to the food and grabbing several items from the shelves.

She notices Nora, the woman who winked at her earlier, filling up a reusable water bottle in the sink.

Mia picks up a bottle of tea off the shelf and notices Nora turn her head slightly before looking back at her bottle.

MIA  
(to Nora)  
Not a tea person?

NORA  
I prefer water. No caffeine. Keeps my  
head clear.

Mia shrugs and grabs a few packaged food items off the shelf before turning back to the other coworker.

COWORKER  
(pointing at a circular pad  
on the counter)  
Just place your hand here when you've  
got what you want, and you're good to  
go.

Mia places her hand on the circle and a light illuminates under her hand and then turns green.

MIA  
That's it?

COWORKER  
That's it.

Nora screws the cap on her bottle and walks past Mia.

NORA  
(To Mia)  
Enjoy your first day. It's quite an  
experience.

INT. NEOBLOOM - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 1 - AFTERNOON

A team meeting. Jan stands at the front of the room. Employees sit, many taking notes, some drink tea bottles.

JAN  
At NeoBloom, we don't just create  
products. We create better versions of  
ourselves. The employees nod in unison.  
Mia notices and shifts in discomfort.

JAN  
Let's affirm our commitment together.

The room stands as one. Mia follows a beat later.

EMPLOYEES  
(in unison)  
Together, we bloom!

Mia mouths the words, watching others with a mixture of confusion and amusement.

INT. NeoBloom - MIA'S WORKSTATION - DAY 1 - EVENING

Mia checks her watch: 6:30 PM. She looks around - nearly everyone is still working. Alex types furiously at his keyboard.

MIA  
(whispering to Alex)  
When do people usually head out?

ALEX  
(not looking up)  
Whenever they finish, I guess? Most days I'm so in the zone I barely notice the time.

Mia begins packing up her things. A nearby OLDER COWORKER (50s) looks up, surprised.

OLDER COWORKER  
Leaving already?

MIA  
It's past six-thirty...

OLDER COWORKER  
(chuckling)  
You'll get used to it.

The Older Coworker returns to work. Mia notices their hands trembling slightly when they move away from the keyboard, but the trembling stops when they resume typing.

Mia logs out of her computer and grabs her bag. Mia then gets up from her desk.

MIA  
See you tomorrow, Alex.

Alex looks up and smiles, then looks back at his screen.

Mia walks out of the building, smiling.

Mia texts Jamie, "First day was AMAZING"

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia enters, exhausted but exhilarated. She tosses her bag down and collapses on her bed, staring at the ceiling with a smile.

INT. NEOBLOOM - TRAINING ROOM - DAY 2 - MORNING

A group training session. The TRAINER (30s) speaks enthusiastically.

TRAINER

Thank you to everyone for coming to  
this voluntary seminar. Here at  
NeoBloom, we invest in you.

Mia looks around - every single employee is present, watching with attention.

TRAINER

Now, let's discuss optimizing your  
neural pathways for maximum creativity  
and productivity.

Mia hears an employee let out a small laugh behind her and turns around to see Nora drinking out of her water bottle.

TIMELAPSE - MIA MOVING THROUGH THE WORKSPACE

Quick cuts of Mia working at her computer, attending meetings, drinking the special green tea, eating company-provided meals.

The sun rises and sets through the windows. She becomes more engaged, more focused.

INT. NeoBloom - MIA'S WORKSTATION - DAY 2 - EVENING

Mia and Alex work late. Employees move about the office. Alex glances at Mia, then back to his screen, gathering courage.

ALEX

A bunch of us are doing movie night at  
my place.

(beat)

You should come.

Mia looks up, surprised by the personal invitation.

MIA

Oh. Um, sure. When?

ALEX

Tonight. After we finish here.

MIA  
(hesitant)  
Who all is coming?

ALEX  
(stumbling over his words)  
Well actually I invited several others,  
but they all had to cancel. Work  
commitments.

Mia raises an eyebrow.

ALEX  
But we could still watch something?

Mia studies him.

MIA  
Okay. Yeah, why not? I don't have  
anything else going on.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A sparse, barely-lived-in apartment. Functional furniture, but minimal decoration. No personal photos. A few unopened moving boxes in the corner. A desk with a work laptop open to NeoBloom analytics.

Mia stands in the doorway, taking in the emptiness.

MIA  
How long have you lived here?

ALEX  
About six months.

Mia glances at the still-packed boxes.

MIA  
Still settling in?

ALEX  
(confused)  
No. Why?

Mia gestures vaguely around the apartment.

MIA

Just seems... empty.

ALEX

I'm mostly at work. This is just for sleeping.

Alex gestures to the couch.

ALEX

Want anything to eat?

MIA

I'm alright.

ALEX

A drink? Wine? Or maybe tea? Same kind we have at work. I brought some home.

MIA

I could go for wine. It's been a long day.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - LATER

Mia and Alex sit on opposite ends of the couch, Mia sipping her wine while Alex holds a bottle of tea. We don't see the TV screen, but blue light flickers across their faces. The sound of electronic music and dialogue plays faintly.

MIA

So it's about a guy testing artificial intelligence?

ALEX

It's about optimization. Creating something perfect.

MIA

I don't know. Seems more like it's about control and exploitation to me.

ALEX

(tilting his head)  
How so?

MIA

Well, he's basically imprisoned her, right? Using her for his own purposes.

ALEX

I mean, she's not even human. He's just helping her to fulfill her function. She was designed for a purpose.

MIA

That doesn't make it okay to manipulate her.

ALEX

Yea, maybe so.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - LATER

The room is darker now. Movie sounds fade out. Neither speaks for a moment as the credits roll. Alex glances at Mia, then away when she catches his eye.

MIA

Well, that was interesting.

ALEX

Yeah. I always like the scenes where he's trying to teach her about emotions.

(beat)

Reminds me of work somehow.

MIA

(raising an eyebrow)

How so?

ALEX

(shrugging)

I don't know. Just... I'm not great at getting along with people sometimes. At work, the way we're all... working and learning to be better, I guess I just like that.

Another uncomfortable silence. Mia checks her watch.

MIA

It's getting late. I should probably head out.

ALEX

(disappointed)

Right. Early meeting tomorrow.

Mia stands, gathering her things. Alex follows, hovering close as she collects her jacket.

MIA

Thanks for having me over.

ALEX

(smiling)

Yeah, of course. It was... nice having someone here.

Mia moves toward the door. Alex reaches it first, opening it for her.

As Mia moves to step through the doorway, Alex suddenly leans in and attempts to kiss her.

The movement is awkward and poorly timed. Mia quickly turns her head, his lips landing on her cheek.

MIA

(startled)

Oh—

ALEX

(flushed and embarrassed,  
stumbling over his words)

I'm sorry! I totally—I thought maybe—I misread—I'm really sorry.

He steps back, face flushed with embarrassment.

MIA

(with a nervous laugh)

It's okay. I'm just... not into guys... if you know what I mean.

ALEX

(mortified but relieved)

Oh... Oh! Wow! Okay. That's... that's great! Makes me feel way better. I can't believe I did that. I'm so sorry.

MIA

(smiling awkwardly)



It's fine, honestly. Just maybe ask someone before you try that next?

ALEX  
(attempting to joke)  
Well, at least it can't get any worse after this. Jan would say this is a "growth opportunity."

His attempt at humor falls flat. More silence.

Mia walks out of the apartment and looks back at Alex.

MIA  
Goodnight, Alex.

Mia starts walking away.

ALEX  
(calling after her)  
See you tomorrow. Don't forget your productivity report!

He winces as soon as the words leave his mouth, aware it sounded strange.

MIA  
(talking over her shoulder,  
more loudly)  
Goodnight, Alex.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mia walks down the hallway checking her phone. She notices how quiet the building is. No signs of life from other apartments despite the hour.

She exits the building.

INT. NEOBLOOM - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 3 - MORNING

A morning meeting.

JAN  
Today we're introducing something exciting.

She holds up a sleek wristband with the NeoBloom logo.

JAN

Our health initiative. These track your vitals, sleep patterns, even stress levels. All to help you optimize and grow.

ALEX

(raises a hand)

Yea, is it mandatory?

JAN

(laughing)

Of course not! It's 100% optional and completely complimentary.

CUT TO: LATER IN THE DAY EMPLOYEES WALKING AROUND THE OFFICE. EVERY SINGLE EMPLOYEE WEARING THE WRISTBANDS.

INT. NEOBLOOM - KITCHEN AREA - DAY 3 - NOON

Mia, with her new wristband on, grabs a bottle of tea. Alex joins her.

ALEX

How's day three treating you?

MIA

Amazing. I've never been so productive.

ALEX

I wanted to apologize again for last night. I hope we can still be friends?

MIA

It's honestly fine. Like I said, maybe just ask someone before you try something like that?

(beat)

So how do you feel about these new wristbands?

ALEX

Honestly, I like it. I could never afford a smart watch, so being able to track my steps is awesome.

A COWORKER nearby wipes blood from their nose casually while continuing a conversation with another employee. Neither seems concerned.

Mia notices, frowning.

MIA  
Is she okay?

ALEX  
(glancing over)  
Probably just the dry air. The air  
conditioner is working overtime almost  
as much as I do.  
(laughs at his own joke)

MIA  
(lets a reluctant laugh out)  
That was terrible.

INT. NEOBLOOM - MIA'S WORKSTATION - DAY 3 - NIGHT

Mia works feverishly. The office is dimly lit, but several employees remain. Alex is gone. Mia barely notices, completely absorbed in her work.

TIMELAPSE - MIA WORKING THROUGH A COUPLE DAYS

The lighting shifts as night turns to dawn and back to dusk. Mia remains in place, occasionally sipping tea, eating company snacks.

She occasionally gets up to get more snacks/tea or go to the restroom, but she spends the most time at her desk.

INT. NEOBLOOM - BATHROOM - DAY 8 - MORNING

Mia splashes water on her face. She looks tired but wired. Checks her reflection, straightens her clothes - the same ones she has been wearing. She sniffs herself and notices she smells awful.

INT. NeoBloom - HEALTH CENTER - DAY 8 - MORNING

A clinic-like space within the building. Several employees wait in line for what looks like routine check-ups. A sign reads: "Complimentary health Checks - Because We Care."

Mia passes by, glancing in curiously. Jan emerges from an inner room.

JAN  
Mia! Perfect timing.

MIA  
(surprised)  
Oh, I was just passing by...

JAN  
While you're here, why not get your health check?

Takes just a moment.

COMPANY DOCTOR (40s) appears behind Jan, already prepping a blood draw kit.

MIA  
I, uh... did I miss a memo about this?

JAN  
(warmly)  
It's just a complimentary service we offer to our employees. It's completely optional, of course.

Mia looks around - every employee in line watches her.

JAN  
It's a great way to stay on track with your health and well-being.

MIA  
Sure, why not?

INT. NEOBLOOM - MEETING ROOM - AFTERNOON

A marketing presentation. A SENIOR EMPLOYEE (40s) stands at the front.

SENIOR EMPLOYEE

Our metrics show a seventeen percent  
increase in--

The employee suddenly stops mid-sentence. Their eyes unfocus,  
and roll backwards. The employee slumps over against the podium.

The room falls silent with many people standing up including  
Mia, who rushes towards the employee to help.

After a beat, two COLLEAGUES calmly walk towards the stage, take  
the Senior Employee by the arms, and lead them from the room.

JAN

Let's take ten minutes, shall we?

The remaining employees resume conversations as if nothing  
unusual happened. Mia stares at the door where the Senior  
Employee was taken.

INT. NeoBloom - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Mia walks quickly, trying to follow where they took the Senior  
Employee. She turns a corner and nearly bumps into Alex.

ALEX

Whoa, where's the fire?

MIA

That employee, in the meeting. Did you  
see what happened?

ALEX

(confused)

What meeting?

MIA

Just now. The marketing presentation?

ALEX

(blank smile)

I've been at my desk all morning, Mia.

He gently touches her arm.

ALEX

Maybe you should get some rest. When's  
the last time you went home?

Mia stands there, lost in thought, trying to recall when she last went home.

ALEX  
Mia? You okay?

MIA  
Yeah... I just...  
(beat)  
When did we come in today?

ALEX  
(checking his watch)  
Around 8 AM, I think.

MIA  
No, I mean... what day is it?

ALEX  
(laughing)  
Monday.

Mia's eyes widen.

MIA  
I came in last Wednesday.

ALEX  
(shrugging)  
Time flies when you're busy. Sometimes  
I just stay here all week.

MIA  
  
I need to go home. I need to... shower,  
change clothes.

ALEX  
(nodding toward a door)  
We have facilities for that here.  
Several people just stay here. The  
shower rooms are like spas - way nicer  
than what most people have at home. And  
the company shop is full of the nice  
clothes that most of us wear. Designer.  
Really good stuff.

MIA

That's... No. I need to go home. I  
didn't even get a weekend!

She backs away, ears ringing and heart racing.

INT. NEOBLOOM - LOBBY - EVENING

Mia approaches the security desk, bag in hand. The SECURITY  
GUARD looks up, surprised.

SECURITY GUARD  
Leaving already?

MIA  
(with forced confidence)  
Yes. I'll be back tomorrow.

The guard studies her for a beat too long, then nods. The doors  
slide open.

EXT. NEOBLOOM - EVENING

Mia steps outside, taking a deep breath of fresh air. She looks  
disoriented, as if trying to remember which way to go. She pulls  
out her phone: 18% battery, 9 missed calls from Jamie.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia unlocks her door, the sound echoing in the quiet space. She  
flips on the lights, revealing a thin layer of dust on the  
counters. She runs her finger through it, staring at her  
apartment as if seeing it for the first time.

Her phone RINGS. Jamie's face appears on screen.

MIA  
(answering)  
Hey, stranger.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

JAMIE  
Stranger? I've been calling you for  
days!

MIA

(genuinely confused)  
Days?

JAMIE  
Luckily I saw your location at work. I was about to file a missing persons report.

MIA  
(laughing)  
That's dramatic.

JAMIE  
Is it? You haven't answered a single text. I called your landlord too. He said he hadn't seen you either.

MIA  
I've been at work.

JAMIE  
For 5 days? Without coming home?

Mia sinks onto her couch.

MIA  
I didn't realize... it was so long. I was just so busy. You know how it is.

JAMIE  
Are you okay? Do you need me to come over?

MIA  
(perking up)  
No, no. I'm fine. Better than fine, actually. Jamie, this place is actually amazing. Like nothing I've ever experienced. Everyone is so nice.

She paces around her apartment, elated despite her disheveled appearance.

MIA  
The work is challenging but fulfilling. Everyone's so supportive. They provide everything - free doctors, showers,



clothes, healthy meals, this tea that makes you so focused...

JAMIE

That doesn't sound normal, Mia.

MIA

Normal is boring! You know when Dr. Mendez said when you love what you do, it won't feel like work. I've accomplished so much and been so productive, and it doesn't feel like work at all. I love it here, Jamie.

She notices her reflection in a mirror - dark circles under her eyes, hair unwashed, wearing the same clothes for days. She turns away.

JAMIE

When did you last sleep?

MIA

(dismissively)

I power nap at my desk. It's efficient.

JAMIE

That's it. I'm coming over. With food. Real food.

MIA

(glancing at her watch)

I should actually head back soon. I'm in the middle of a project.

JAMIE

Mia. It's 10 PM.

MIA

(defensively)

I'm most creative after dark. You know this.

JAMIE

(firmly)

You need to sleep. I'm coming over first thing in the morning, and you're going to take tomorrow off. We're spending the day together.

Mia hesitates, her hand unconsciously rubbing her wrist where the company health tracker was. Her fingers twitch slightly.

MIA  
(reluctantly)  
Fine. But just this once.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Mia and Jamie sit at Mia's small dining table, coffee mugs and breakfast plates between them. Jamie looks refreshed while Mia appears jittery, her fingers tapping restlessly on the table. She keeps checking her phone.

JAMIE  
You promised. One full day. No work.

MIA (DISTRACTED)  
I know, I know. It's just... there's  
this deadline—

JAMIE  
That can wait.

Jamie reaches across and gently takes Mia's phone, placing it face-down on the table.

JAMIE  
How about we hit that art exhibit you  
were talking about last month? The  
interactive one?

Mia nods, but her hands shake slightly as she lifts her coffee. She winces and rubs her temples.

JAMIE  
Headache?

MIA  
Just a little one. I'm fine. Just  
tired.

Jamie studies her friend with a concerned look.

EXT. ART GALLERY - DAY

Jamie and Mia exit the gallery. Jamie is animated, discussing the exhibits they've seen. Mia nods politely but keeps checking her watch.

JAMIE

That light installation was incredible, right?

MIA (DISTANT)

Yeah, amazing.

Mia stops walking and starts swaying. Jamie grabs her arm to steady her.

JAMIE

Whoa! You okay?

MIA

(blinking)

Just got dizzy for a second.

JAMIE

Let's sit.

They move to a bench. Mia's hands shake more visibly now.

JAMIE

Mia, this isn't normal. You're having withdrawal symptoms.

MIA (IRRITATED)

Don't be ridiculous. From what? Working hard?

JAMIE

From whatever they're putting in that tea they keep going on about.

Mia stands abruptly.

MIA

I think I'm just coming down with something. I should go home and rest.

JAMIE

I'll come with—

MIA (CUTTING HER OFF)

No. I'm good. Thanks for today. Really,  
it was nice.

Jamie watches upset as Mia walks away.

INT. NEOBLOOM - LOBBY - NEXT MORNING

Mia approaches the security desk, looking more put-together but still slightly pale. The Security Guard eyes her.

SECURITY GUARD  
Welcome back, Ms. Lang. Feeling better?

MIA (SURPRISED)  
Yes, thank you.

SECURITY GUARD  
Director Jan asked to see you when you arrived.

Mia meets his eyes and nods.

MIA  
Thanks.

INT. NEOBLOOM - JAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jan sits behind a sleek desk, reviewing something on her tablet.

She looks up as Mia enters, her smile not quite reaching her eyes.

JAN  
Mia. Good to have you back with us.

MIA  
Thank you. I'm sorry about yesterday. I wasn't feeling well.

JAN  
No need to apologize. Health comes first at NeoBloom.  
(beat)  
Speaking of which, you missed yesterday's health check.

MIA

I didn't realize I had one.

JAN

Just a voluntary routine follow-up. No worries. (smiling) You can head to the health center anytime.

MIA

Of course.

JAN

We want you to feel your best when you're here. Make sure to take advantage of the complimentary amenities.

Mia shifts her position under Jan's gaze.

JAN

That'll be all. I'm sure you're eager to get back to work.

INT. NEOBLOOM - OPEN WORKSPACE - DAY

Mia walks to her desk. Coworkers who normally greet her avoid eye contact or offer stiff, perfunctory nods. She sits down, unsettled.

An Older Coworker passes by.

MIA

Good morning.

OLDER COWORKER

Morning.

They walk away without further acknowledgment. Mia turns to her computer.

INT. NEOBLOOM - OPEN WORKSPACE - DAY

Mia walks to her desk. Coworkers who normally greet her avoid eye contact or offer stiff nods. She sits down, unsettled.

Alex sits at his adjacent desk, typing with intensity. His posture rigid. Mia watches him for a moment.

MIA  
Morning, Alex.

Alex doesn't respond, continuing to type.

MIA  
Hey, Alex? Did you get that marketing  
brief?

Alex stops typing. He turns his head toward her in a mechanical  
movement. His eyes take a moment to focus on her.

ALEX  
Oh. Mia. I didn't recognize your voice  
for a second. Where have you been?

MIA  
I was sick yesterday. Remember? I  
texted you.

Alex stares at her for a beat too long, then his face shifts  
into a smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes.

ALEX  
Right. Of course. Sick.

He swivels his chair to face her, movements precise. His once  
casual demeanor now more stiff and formal.

ALEX  
They had me in the health center  
yesterday. Routine checkup.

MIA  
Are you feeling okay?

ALEX  
Never better. I feel more focused than  
ever.

He picks up his bottle of tea and takes a sip.

ALEX  
You should schedule your checkup too,  
Mia. It's amazing how good I feel after  
them.

His expression is blank for a moment before returning to his screen with the same mechanical focus. Mia turns to her computer.

MIA  
(whispers)  
What the hell?

INT. NEOBLOOM - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

A company-wide meeting. Jan stands at the front, addressing the room.

JAN  
We're implementing additional voluntary health checks for everyone this week. Everyone who goes will get a free T-shirt.

Mia glances around. No one reacts.

JAN  
Sign-up sheets are by the kitchen. Remember, we care about your well-being.

INT. NEOBLOOM - MIA'S WORKSTATION - AFTERNOON

Mia works at her desk when a THUD startles her. She turns to see a MALE COWORKER (30s) collapsed on the floor nearby.

MIA (ALARMED)  
Hey! Are you okay?

He doesn't respond.

Mia rushes over and kneels beside him. She shakes his shoulder gently, then with more urgency. She checks for a pulse at his neck, finding nothing. His eyes are open, fixed.

MIA (PANICKING)  
He's not breathing! Someone call 911!

Other employees look up but remain seated. Before Mia can say anything else, two EMPLOYEES IN GREEN UNIFORMS appear and quickly lift the collapsed man onto a gurney to carry him out.

UNIFORMED EMPLOYEE 1

Thank you for your concern. We'll take him to the health center.

MIA

But he's not breathing! He needs an ambulance!

UNIFORMED EMPLOYEE 2 (CALMLY)

We have medical staff on premises.  
We've got this under control, ma'am.

They carry the man away. The office returns to normal, the clicking of keyboards resuming as if nothing happened.

Mia, still shaky, gets up and goes to the restroom to compose herself.

INT. NEOBLOOM - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Mia washes her hands at the sink. As other employees exit, Nora enters and checks under the stalls to ensure they're alone.

NORA

It was Mia, right?

MIA

Yeah? Was it Nora?

Nora moves closer, speaking in a near-whisper.

NORA

That's me. You just started last week right?

Mia nods.

NORA

I've been here eight months. Been... noticing things.

MIA

What kind of things?

NORA

The tea. The food. Haven't you felt different since you started?



Mia pauses to think and eventually nods.

MIA  
I guess I have been...really focused  
lately.

NORA  
(looking at the door  
nervously)  
They're watching. Not just cameras.  
People too.  
(beat)  
Don't drink the tea for a full day. See  
how you feel.

The bathroom door begins to open. Nora immediately turns to the mirror, pretending to fix her makeup.

JAN enters with her perfect smile.

JAN  
Ladies! Productive day?

NORA  
(now bright and cheerful)  
Absolutely! Just heading back to my  
desk.

Nora exits quickly. Jan's eyes follow her, then turn to Mia.

JAN  
Everything okay, Mia? You seemed shaken  
back there.

MIA  
Fine. Just...taking a quick break.

JAN  
(warmly)  
Of course. Take your time, and feel  
free to swing by the health center for  
a checkup if you need.

Jan's smile lingers before she exits. Mia stares at her reflection.

INT. NEOBLOOM - MIA'S DESK - AFTERNOON

Mia is typing at her desk working on a training project. A shadow falls across her keyboard. She looks up to see Nora standing there, holding two bottles of water.

NORA  
(offering one to Mia)  
Thought you might be thirsty.  
(whispering)  
I bring my own water.

Mia accepts it with a grateful smile.

MIA  
Thanks. It was Nora right?

NORA  
(glancing around)  
Yea. Sorry about the barrage in the bathroom earlier.  
(leaning closer, quieter)  
Look, I know how it sounds. But I've been collecting... observations.

MIA  
About what?

NORA  
(with a slight smile)  
Maybe we should talk somewhere that isn't... here?

Mia hesitates.

NORA  
There's a place off a few blocks away. Good food, great drinks, loud music to dance to. I'll buy... Unless you need to rush home?

MIA  
No... I mean yes... I mean, are you... asking me out?

NORA  
Why not?  
(beat)  
Unless I'm reading things wrong.

MIA  
(with a small smile)  
No, you're not reading things wrong.

NORA  
(relieved)  
Eight o'clock? I'll text you the  
address.

MIA  
But you don't have my number.

NORA  
Well, let's fix that. Holds her hand  
out for Mia's phone, which is sitting  
on the desk. Mia unlocks it and gives  
it to her.

Nora opens her text messages, types in her number, and sends  
"Mia." Then hands the phone back.

NORA  
How's 8?

MIA  
I'll be there.

Nora walks away. Mia watches her go with a slight, flushed  
smile.

EXT. TRENDY BAR WITH RESTAURANT SECTION - NIGHT

A vibrant spot with industrial decor, ambient lighting, and  
music loud enough for privacy but not too loud for conversation.  
Mia enters, scanning the crowd nervously. She spots Nora at a  
corner table, already waiting.

Nora waves her over. She's dressed more casually than at work -  
a stylish top and jeans instead of NeoBloom's earth tones. Mia  
approaches.

NORA  
You found it.

MIA  
Your directions were good.

An awkward pause as they both smile. Nora gestures to the chair across from her.

NORA

I ordered some wine. Hope that's okay?

MIA

Perfect.

Mia sits. A SERVER arrives with two glasses of red wine.

NORA

A toast. To life outside of work.

They clink glasses. Mia takes a sip, relaxing.

MIA

So... do you do this often?

NORA

(smirks)

Ask attractive coworkers out for drinks?

MIA

(blushing)

No, I meant... go out on weeknights.

NORA

(leaning in)

Not as much since I started at NeoBloom. Too tired, usually.

MIA

So tell me about yourself. Before NeoBloom.

NORA

Four years of pre-med at Northwestern. Then a complete change of direction.

MIA

What happened?

NORA

I realized I hated it. My parents are both doctors - it was expected.

But after my third panic attack before organic chemistry finals, I knew I needed something different.

MIA  
That took courage.

NORA  
My parents called it stupidity. Still do. What about you?

MIA  
Behavioral economics at Brown. Graduated this spring.

NORA  
(impressed)  
Wow. I could never. I switched to communications.  
(beat)  
This your first job?

MIA  
First real one. I was a barista through college.

NORA  
And family?

Mia hesitates.

MIA  
We're not exactly... in touch.

NORA  
(connecting the dots)  
Mine neither. Didn't take the whole bi thing very well.

MIA  
(surprised)  
I know the feeling.

NORA  
(smiling)  
So I was right? The radar's still working.

They both laugh, the tension breaking. More wine arrives. The restaurant lighting dims, music gets slightly louder.

NORA  
You dance?

MIA  
Absoltely not

Nora stands up and holds a hand out.

NORA  
C'mon it'll be fun

MIA  
(sighs dramatically)  
Fine. You convinced me.

Mia takes her hand and stand up too.

TIME CUT:

Mia and Nora are now back at their table sitting closer, plates pushed aside, wine glasses empty. They're laughing at a shared joke.

Their laughter fades. A moment of comfortable silence.

MIA  
This is nice. I haven't connected with  
anyone like this since...  
well, since before NeoBloom.

Nora's expression shifts at the mention.

NORA  
(serious now)  
Mia... that's actually part of why I  
wanted to talk to you.

MIA  
What do you mean?

NORA  
Have you noticed anything... strange?  
About yourself? Since starting?

MIA  
(hesitant)

I've been... really productive.

NORA

Too productive? Like you can't stop?

MIA

(uncomfortable)

I worked five days straight last week.  
Didn't even realize I hadn't  
been home.

NORA

(leaning in)

What I'm about to tell you is going to  
sound crazy.

(quieter)

I went for a health check a few weeks  
ago and saw a medical report on  
the counter. When the doctor left the  
room, I got curious. It had  
information on Martin, the guy who  
collapsed. It mentioned "neural  
reconfigurations" and "chemical  
adjustments."

MIA

What?

NORA

(intense)

Ever since, I've been collecting  
evidence. Files, photos, documents.  
I've been tracking changes in  
coworkers. They're experimenting on  
us, Mia.

MIA

That sounds... that's illegal.  
Criminal.

NORA

I've got proof. Real proof. Not at my  
place though - too risky. I've  
been keeping everything in a storage  
unit downtown.

Mia looks stunned, processing this information.

MIA  
I can't believe this is happening.

NORA  
(reaching for Mia's hand)  
Come home with me tonight. We can talk  
more where it's safer.  
(with a small smile)  
Plus, you should meet Ada.

MIA  
Ada?

NORA  
My cat. Only living being I trust  
completely these days.

Nora signals for the check.

NORA  
Tomorrow morning, I'll take you to see  
everything I've collected.  
Then we can figure out what to do.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Mia and Nora walk together down a dimly lit sidewalk. Their  
shoulders occasionally brush.

NORA  
It's not far from here. About three  
blocks.

They walk in comfortable silence for a moment.

MIA  
So, a cat person, huh?

NORA  
(smiling)  
Since college. Ava showed up outside my  
dorm window one night.  
Skittish little thing. Took me two  
weeks of leaving food out before  
she'd let me pet her.

MIA



Is that how you approach all  
relationships? Patience and  
persistence?

NORA  
(looking at Mia)  
Only the ones worth pursuing.

They stop under the warm glow of a streetlight. Nora turns to face Mia, their eyes meeting. After a moment's hesitation, Nora gently places her hand on Mia's cheek. They lean in, sharing a soft, tender kiss.

When they part, both are smiling. Nora takes Mia's hand as they continue walking.

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A cozy, lived-in space. Plants on windowsills, books stacked on coffee tables, framed photos on walls. Much warmer than Alex's sterile apartment.

ADA, a gray tabby cat, watches cautiously from atop a bookshelf as they enter.

NORA  
That's Ada. She'll warm up to you  
eventually.

MIA  
Your place is nice. It feels... real.

NORA  
As opposed to?

MIA  
I went to a coworker's apartment. Alex.  
It was like... like no one  
actually lived there. Empty. Soulless.

NORA  
Yeah, that unfortunately sounds about  
right.

Nora moves to the kitchen.

NORA

Wine? Or I have chamomile tea. The real kind, not NeoBloom's special blend.

MIA

I could go for a glass of wine.

LATER - Mia and Nora sit on the couch, wine glasses in hand. The TV plays softly in the background. Ava has ventured closer, now perched on the arm of the couch.

NORA

I started noticing things about three months in. The way people changed. Not just work habits, but personalities. Alex used to joke around, question things. Now he's just...

MIA

Empty.

NORA

Exactly. And the longer people stay, the more they change.

MIA

What do you think they're doing to us?

NORA

From what I've gathered, it's some kind of neural reconfiguration through chemical compounds. The tea, the food - it's all designed to make us dependent, compliant. Perfect workers.

MIA

Then why aren't you...

NORA

Like them?

(taps her water bottle)

I haven't consumed anything they provide since week two. I bring my own food, my own water. I fake drinking the tea.

MIA

And they haven't noticed?

NORA

Oh, they've noticed. My productivity numbers aren't as "impressive" as everyone else's. I've had three "voluntary" health checks scheduled this month alone.

Mia yawns, the exhaustion of the day catching up with her.

NORA

We should get some sleep. Tomorrow morning, I'll show you everything.

MIA

I should probably head home...

NORA

Stay. Please.

(beat)

I'd feel better knowing you're safe.

TIME CUT:

LATER - Mia and Nora have fallen asleep on the couch, a throw blanket covering them. The TV plays quietly. Ava is curled up between them.

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sunlight streams through the windows. Mia stirs first, momentarily disoriented. She looks at Nora, still asleep, her face peaceful. Mia smiles.

Ava stretches and jumps down, breaking the moment. Nora wakes.

NORA

(sleepily)

Morning.

MIA

Morning.

NORA

Coffee? Then we can head out.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

A different coffee shop than the one near NeoBloom. Smaller, less corporate. Mia and Nora sit at a corner table, coffee mugs between them.

NORA

The storage unit is about ten minutes from here. I've been gathering evidence for months. Medical reports, internal memos, even chemical analyses of the tea.

MIA

This is insane. What are you planning to do with all this?

NORA

I've been in contact with someone at the Tribune. Investigative reporter. She's cautious, but interested. With enough evidence...

MIA

Do you think it will be enough?

NORA

It has to be. People need to know what's happening.

(checks her watch)

We should get going. I'll take you there tonight after work. Safer that way.

They stand and gather their things.

MIA

I should head to the office. If I'm too late, it might raise suspicions.

NORA

Smart. I'll meet you at the corner of 5th and Grand at 6:30.

(remembering)

Oh! I forgot to feed Ava this morning. I was distracted by someone.

(smirks)

I need to run back to my place real quick.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

They exit the coffee shop together.

MIA  
I can wait if you want...

NORA  
No, you go ahead. Don't want you to be late. I'll see you tonight.

Nora leans in and kisses Mia quickly.

NORA  
Be careful today. Act normal.

MIA  
You too.

They start to walk in opposite directions. After a few steps, Mia turns back to watch Nora go.

A HOODED FIGURE approaches Nora from behind.

MUGGER  
Hey, got the time?

NORA  
(distracted, checking her watch)  
It's quarter past eight--

The Mugger GRABS her arm. Nora SCREAMS.

MUGGER  
Wallet and phone. NOW.

MIA  
(shouting, starting to run back)  
HEY!

Nora frantically reaches for her phone and tries to dial.

NORA

(into phone)  
HELP! I'm being--

The Mugger SHOVES her hard. Nora stumbles backward into the street just as a CAR rounds the corner.

SCREECHING brakes. A THUD. The Mugger runs away.

MIA  
(screaming)  
NORA!

Mia runs toward the scene. The car stops. The DRIVER jumps out, panicking.

In the shadows, we glimpse the mugger getting into a black SUV. As it pulls away, Mia catches a glimpse of a small metal plate on the front - the NEOBLOOM logo.

Mia kneels beside Nora's motionless body, crying and trembling as she calls 911.

MIA  
(into phone, voice breaking)  
Please! We need an ambulance! She's  
been hit by a car!

Mia tries to perform CPR as we see police lights come into the scene.

EXT. CITY STREET - MORNING

Police lights flash. A DETECTIVE (40s, weary eyes) interviews Mia while paramedics load Nora's unconscious body into an ambulance.

DETECTIVE  
And you said there was a mugger?

MIA  
(shell-shocked)  
Yes. He pushed her into the street...

The Detective makes notes. Mia stares at the dark stain on the pavement.

DETECTIVE

Can you give a visual description?  
Anything we might be able to use to  
identify them?

MIA

I... I really don't remember... He was  
kind of tall, but fully  
covered. Couldn't really make out any  
features from where I was.

(desperately)

Is she going to be okay?

DETECTIVE

The paramedics are doing everything  
they can. We'll be in touch if  
we have more questions.

Mia watches as the ambulance doors close. Before they shut  
completely, she glimpses Nora's pale face, an oxygen mask  
covering it.

The ambulance pulls away with sirens blaring. Mia stands alone,  
shaking.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

Mia paces her apartment, phone to her ear.

MIA

(into phone)

Jan? It's Mia Lang... Yes... I won't be  
coming in today. There's been an  
accident. My... my friend Nora is being  
taken to the hospital.

Mia listens, her face hardening.

MIA

(into phone)

No, I don't know when I'll be back. I  
need to be with her right now...  
Yes, Nora Evans. From marketing.

Mia's eyes widen at whatever Jan is saying.

MIA

(into phone)

I have to go. The hospital is calling.

She hangs up quickly, her hands trembling.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Mia stands at the reception desk, fidgeting nervously.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry, but only family members are  
allowed in the ICU.

MIA

(desperate)

Please, I need to see her. I was with  
her when it happened.

RECEPTIONIST

(sympathetic but firm)

I understand, but those are the rules.  
Unless you're immediate family or-

MIA

(interrupting)

I'm her girlfriend.

The lie hangs in the air. Mia doesn't flinch.

RECEPTIONIST

(softening)

Oh, I see. In that case...

(typing)

Your name?

MIA

Mia Lang.

RECEPTIONIST

Room 307. ICU wing, down that hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU ROOM 307 - DAY

Mia enters hesitantly. The room is dim, filled with the rhythmic  
beeping of monitors.

Nora lies in the bed, surrounded by machines. Tubes run from her  
mouth, her arms. Her face is bruised, bandages covering parts of  
her head.



Mia approaches slowly, as though in a trance. She takes Nora's limp hand in hers.

MIA  
(whispering)  
I'm here, Nora. I'm here.

Her phone RINGS. She checks it: Jamie calling. Mia sends it to voicemail and sits beside the bed.

She dials Jamie back and gets voicemail.

MIA  
(into phone, voice breaking)  
Jamie, it's me. I... I met someone incredible at work, Nora. We just had our first date last night, but... there's been a horrible accident. She's in the hospital. Metropolitan, ICU. I don't know what to do...

She hangs up as a DOCTOR (50s, experienced, compassionate) enters.

DOCTOR  
You're the girlfriend?

Mia nods, not trusting herself to speak.

DOCTOR  
(gently)  
I wish I had better news. Ms. Evans has suffered severe trauma to her brain. She's in a coma, and... I'm afraid we're not detecting significant brain activity.

MIA  
What does that mean? Will she wake up?

DOCTOR  
In cases like this, it's possible but... not common. Has anyone contacted her family?

MIA  
I don't know how to reach them. They're... not close.

DOCTOR

I see. Well, we'll keep monitoring her,  
but... you might want to  
start thinking about arrangements. Not  
immediately, but...

He trails off, letting the implication hang in the air.

DOCTOR

I'll give you some time with her.

He leaves. Mia turns back to Nora, tears streaming down her  
face.

MIA

I saw it. The car that took the mugger  
away. It had a NeoBloom logo.

(voice breaking)

They did this to you because you knew  
too much. Because you were  
going to expose them.

She leans forward, resting her forehead against Nora's hand.

MIA

I promise. I'll make this right.

TIME CUT:

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia sits on the edge of her bed, staring blankly at the wall.  
Her eyes are red from crying.

A KNOCK at the door. Mia doesn't move at first, then slowly  
rises to answer it.

Jamie stands in the doorway, concern etched on her face. Without  
a word, she pulls Mia into a tight hug.

JAMIE

I came as soon as I got your message.  
I'm so sorry.

Mia nods against Jamie's shoulder.

JAMIE

Do you want to talk about it?

Mia pulls away, shaking her head.

MIA

Not now. I can't... I just can't.

Jamie nods, understanding.

JAMIE

Then let's not talk.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia and Jamie lie on the bed, fully clothed. Jamie sleeps, but Mia stares at the ceiling, wide awake.

She reaches for her phone on the nightstand and pulls up the photos from last night. She scrolls to one of her and Nora at the bar, their faces close together, both laughing. A brief moment of happiness captured between them.

Tears slide silently down Mia's face as the night deepens around her.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sunlight streams through the window. Jamie is gone, but a note sits on the pillow: "Call me when you're ready. Love, J."

Mia sits up, still in yesterday's clothes. She picks up her phone and looks again at the photo of her and Nora, tracing Nora's face with her finger.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sunlight streams through the window. Jamie is gone, but a note sits on the pillow: "Call me when you're ready. Love, J."

Mia sits up, still in yesterday's clothes. She picks up the photo of her and Nora, tracing Nora's face with her finger.

Her work phone CHIMES with a calendar reminder: "NeoBloom Team Meeting 9AM."

Mia's eyes shift from sad to serious. She stands up, resolve hardening her features.

INT. MIA'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Mia applies makeup, covering her tear-streaked face. In the mirror, for just a second, she sees Nora's reflection beside her, then blinks and it's gone.

MIA  
(to herself, determined)  
For Nora.

INT. MIA'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Mia applies makeup, covering her tear-streaked face. In the mirror, for just a second, she sees Nora's reflection beside her, then blinks and it's gone.

INT. NEOBLOOM - LOBBY - MORNING

Mia enters as she wipes away a tear. The Security Guard notices her.

SECURITY GUARD  
You okay?

Mia nods without making eye contact.

INT. NEOBLOOM - OUTSIDE JAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jan addresses gathered employees. Mia stands at the back.

JAN  
I'm happy to report that Martin has  
made a full recovery.

Murmurs ripple through the crowd.

JAN  
This incident serves as an important  
reminder of why our health checks are  
so vital. I encourage everyone to  
schedule an appointment this week.

Jan stands up a little straighter.

JAN

On a more serious note, I have some tragic news. Our colleague Nora Evans was the victim of a mugging last night that turned fatal.

Murmurs around the room. Some employees look genuinely shocked. Others show almost no reaction.

JAN

We're all devastated by this loss. Nora was a valued member of our family. We'll be establishing a memorial fund in her name.

Mia watches as Jan wipes away a tear that seems forced.

JAN

Human Resources will be available for grief counseling. Additionally, I've authorized a recreation day for the rest of the day today. Feel free to use your time however you'd like to socialize, catch up, or even go for a health checkup. I know some of you were close.

Jan makes eye contact with Mia.

JAN

Now, let's take a moment of silence for our colleague.

The room goes quiet. Mia notices Alex and other employees drinking their tea during the "silence." Her hand trembles.

INT. NEOBLOOM - COMPUTER AREA - EVENING

Mia sits at her computer working on a new training program. She sees Jan walk out of her office and towards the bathroom.

Mia approaches Jan's office. The door is ajar. Mia looks in. The room is empty, but the computer is still on, the screen displays a screensaver of blooming flowers.

After a moment's hesitation, she slips inside.

INT. NEOBLOOM - JAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mia moves to Jan's computer, jiggling the mouse. The screensaver disappears, revealing a spreadsheet already open. She leans closer.

The screen is filled with complex data showing consumption rates of company foods and beverages correlated with productivity metrics, broken down by employee. Mia and Alex's names are both shown on the screen.

She searches for more files and accesses a protected folder. Her eyes widen as she reads: "Project Bloom: Personalized Compound Development"

MIA  
(whispers)  
They are drugging us...

She scrolls through more documents and sees the truth: NeoBloom has been tailoring psychoactive compounds based on employees' genetic profiles, delivering precisely calibrated doses through food and beverages. The biometric monitoring adjusts formulas for maximum addiction and performance.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: A document showing Alex's "adjustment schedule" with before and after brain scan comparisons.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS in the hallway makes her freeze. She quickly closes the files, returns the computer to its screensaver, and ducks behind a large potted plant.

The Security Guard passes by and shines a flashlight beam across the office but misses Mia's hiding spot. After he rounds the corner, she slips out and hurries back to her desk to gather her personal items.

Mia sees Jan walking back to her office from the bathroom.

As Mia is going to leave, she passes back by Jan's office and hears Jan's voice - not the controlled corporate tone, but something softer, tired.

Mia peers in out of sight. Jan sits at her desk, video chatting on her computer. Her usual perfect composure is gone - hair disheveled, blazer draped over her chair.

JAN  
(on video call)

I know I missed dinner again, Mom. The hours here are...

(sighs)

The board wants results faster. More productivity, more optimization.

Mia shifts for a better view. Jan rubs her temples.

JAN

(continuing)

No, I haven't told them about the side effects. They don't want to know.

(pause)

The prototype worked too well, that's the problem. We created something to help people focus, to make work less stressful. But then they saw how much more productive people became...

Jan opens a drawer, pulls out an old PHOTOGRAPH. We glimpse a younger Jan in a lab coat, arm around a YOUNG SCIENTIST, both smiling.

JAN

(voice softening)

Remember when David and I started this? "Improving workplace wellbeing through neuroscience." We were going to change everything. Help people.

(bitter laugh)

Now David's gone, and I'm...

She glances at a FRAMED AWARD on her wall: "Pharmaceutical Innovation of the Year."

JAN

We crossed a line somewhere. I know that. But I'm in too deep now.

(lower)

The board knows what I did to David when he threatened to go public. They'd do the same to me.

Jan's mother says something inaudible. Jan's face hardens, the corporate mask sliding back on.

JAN

I have to go. Another meeting.

(pause)  
I love you too.

Jan ends the call, takes a deep breath, straightens up.

She puts the photo away, and when she looks up, she's once again the perfect-postured corporate director.

Mia backs away out of view and leaves for the night.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia bursts into her apartment, locking the door behind her. She's breathing hard, looking panicked. She fumbles for her phone, dialing Jamie's number with shaking hands.

It goes to voicemail.

MIA  
Jamie, I need your help. You were  
right. Something's seriously wrong at  
NeoBloom.

She paces, running her hand through her hair.

MIA  
They're drugging us. Monitoring us.  
Changing us somehow.  
(beat)  
I have to go back and get proof.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Mia sits on her bed, phone in hand. Her fingers hover over the screen. She types a message to Jamie.

CLOSE ON PHONE: "Need to talk tonight after work. It's important. Don't call during day."

She hits send, stares at the screen for a moment, then puts the phone away.

INT. MIA'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Mia studies her reflection. Dark circles under her eyes, skin pale. She splashes water on her face, takes a deep breath.



MIA  
(to herself)  
Stay focused. Get evidence. Get out.

INT. NeoBloom - LOBBY - MORNING

Mia walks through security with forced casualness. The Security Guard eyes her.

SECURITY GUARD  
Good morning, Ms. Lang. Feeling better today?

MIA  
Much better, thank you.

The Security Guard's smile doesn't reach his eyes as he waves her through.

INT. NeoBloom - OPEN WORKSPACE - MORNING

Mia sits and pretends to work while watching her colleagues. Alex approaches with two bottles of tea.

ALEX  
Morning boost?

MIA  
(smiling)  
Thanks, but I brought my own today.  
(patting her bag)  
Doctor's orders. Special vitamin blend.

ALEX  
(slight frown)  
Our tea has all the vitamins you need.

MIA  
Just for a few days.

Alex places the tea on her desk anyway.

ALEX  
In case you change your mind.

He walks away. Mia watches the steam rise from the mug, then moves it to the far corner of her desk.

MONTAGE - MIA THROUGHOUT THE DAY

--Mia pretends to eat company snacks, secretly disposing of them

--She mimics drinking from her mug but never swallows

--Her hands begin to shake

--She wipes sweat from her forehead

--Her vision blurs momentarily during a meeting

--She excuses herself to the bathroom where she splashes water on her face, gripping the sink to stay upright

INT. NEOBLOOM - CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Mia sits in a meeting, visibly struggling. Her legs bounce under the table. She bites her lip to stay focused.

DIRECTOR JAN

...and these projections show our  
growth trajectory...

Mia's vision blurs. Jan's voice fades in and out. Mia grips the edge of the table.

COWORKER

(whispering to Mia)  
Are you okay? You look pale.

MIA

(whispering back)  
Just a headache.

**INT. NEOBLOOM - BATHROOM - AFTERNOON**

Mia stumbles into the bathroom and grabs the edge of the sink.

The lights above flicker. She turns the sink on and splashes water on her face with shaky hands.

Mia freezes as she looks up at her reflection. In the mirror, thin streams of dark, greenish fluid seep from her eyes, like tears tinged with the NeoBloom tea.

She blinks repetitively and rubs her eyes.

MIA

No, no, no...

When she looks again, the green liquid has spread, now trickling from her nose and the corners of her mouth. Her reflection's eyes suddenly appear solid white.

Her reflection SMILES, even as Mia herself is horrified and not smiling.

REFLECTION (IN JAN'S VOICE)

Together, we bloom.

Mia staggers back into a stall door, and looks away.

MIA

This isn't real.

Mia looks back at the mirror.

Her reflection is now replaced by Jan, but still wearing Mia's clothes.

REFLECTION/JAN

You belong here, Mia. With the family.

Mia slams her eyes shut and grabs the edge of a stall to stay upright. When she opens them and looks back at the mirror, it's just her again - pale and sweating but normal.

Behind her, a TOILET FLUSHES. A COWORKER emerges from a stall and looks at Mia, alarmed.

COWORKER

First week jitters?

Mia nods with a forced smile.

MIA

Something like that.

The Coworker approaches the sink beside Mia and washes their hands.

COWORKER

One time, after I started here, I had to go out of town for a wedding. I started seeing some wild things. After I got some more tea, it all stopped.

Mia nods again and backs toward the door.

MIA  
I should get back.

As she turns to leave, Mia catches a final glimpse of herself in the mirror. For just a split second, her eyes appear completely BLACK, pupil and iris indistinguishable from one another. She blinks, and they're normal again.

She hurries out, and the bathroom door closes behind her.

INT. NeoBloom - LOBBY - EVENING

Mia approaches the exit and tries to stay composed. She scans her access card. A RED LIGHT flashes. She tries again. Same result.

SECURITY GUARD  
Problem, Ms. Lang?

MIA  
My card's not working.

SECURITY GUARD  
(checking computer)  
That's strange. System shows your biometrics are... irregular. Protocol requires a health check before exit in such cases. Just have to make sure it's not a medical emergency.

MIA  
But I feel fine.

Her hand trembles. The Security Guard raises an eyebrow.

MIA  
It's just been a long day. I really need to get home.

SECURITY GUARD  
I'm afraid I can't authorize that without clearance.

He presses a button under his desk.

INT. NEOBLOOM - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Two Employees in Green Uniforms appear beside Mia.

UNIFORMED EMPLOYEE 1

Ms. Lang, please come with us to the health center.

MIA

No, I'm fine. I just want to go home.

She backs away, bumping into Alex who's suddenly behind her.

ALEX

(robotically pleasant)

It's just a quick check, Mia. For your own good.

MIA

Alex, please. Help me get out of here.

Green liquid starts coming out of Alex's eyes.

ALEX

I am helping you.

More employees gather around her, all with the same smile and same green liquid coming out of them.

COWORKERS

(variations of)

It's for your own good, Mia.

Just a quick check.

You'll feel better after.

They close in. Mia looks for a way out, but she's surrounded.

Several employees grab her and hold her down.

The security guard comes up and puts a syringe into her arm.

Mia's eyes close slowly as she SCREAMS.

INT. NEOBLOOM - HEALTH CENTER - NIGHT

Mia wakes up on an examination table, with an IV in her arm. The Company Doctor checks readings on a tablet.

DOCTOR

Quite a fall you had. They say you were walking out of the bathroom and just collapsed. How have you been feeling recently?

The door opens. Director Jan enters, composed.

JAN

Mia, I'm so glad you're alright. We've been worried about you.

MIA

I want to leave.

JAN

Of course. Soon.

(to Doctor)

How are her levels?

COMPANY DOCTOR

Dropping. Significant cortisol elevation. Dopamine crash.

JAN

As expected.

(to Mia)

Your body is quite dependent. The symptoms will only worsen.

MIA

What have you been doing to us?

Jan sits on the bed beside Mia.

JAN

I know you were in my office the other night. We have cameras, you know.

Mia's eyes widen.

The doctor leaves the room.

JAN

Mia, we're doing important work here. We are perfecting what it means to work.

Jan gestures to screens showing complex data visualizations.

JAN

Every employee here is part of an experiment in chemical optimization. We monitor responses, adjust formulations, perfect the balance between output and sustainability.

MIA

You're drugging people!

JAN

We're enhancing human potential. The employment contract you signed included consent for our "proprietary health program" and "any treatments included."

MIA

That's not—

JAN

(interrupting)

—specific enough? Perhaps. But legally binding nonetheless.

Jan stands and paces.

JAN

NeoBloom isn't selling products, Mia. The employees ARE the product.

MIA

What?

JAN

Through employee data and DNA, we're perfecting performance-enhancing pharmaceuticals. Work-life integration solutions that companies pay millions for.

(beat)

Additionally, we develop pre-dedicated employees like yourself to sell to other companies at a significant markup.

MIA

(disgusted)

That's human trafficking.

JAN

That's talent acquisition optimization. Your genetics, your psychological profile, your adaptability to our compounds... You're quite valuable, Mia. Remember Leah? The one with the white flower pin on your first day?

MIA

The lateral transfer.

JAN

Precisely. After two years of optimization, her neural pathways were perfectly reconfigured. Complete dedication. Maximum output. Minimal maintenance required.

(beat)

She sold for seven figures to a tech firm in Singapore. Our most profitable placement this year.

MIA

I quit.

JAN

That would be wasteful.

(leaning closer)

I see a lot of promise in you. Stay with NeoBloom, and I'll promote you to management. Come and go as you please. Full autonomy. You can shadow me directly.

MIA

You honestly think I'd stay after learning all this?

JAN

You should. Once you truly understand the opportunity I'm giving you. Do you really think you'll get a better offer somewhere else? A better salary? A better chance?

Mia stares in horror.



MIA

I need to go home. Think about it.

JAN

Certainly. Sleep on it. We'll discuss  
your future tomorrow.

Mia looks surprised at the easy acquiescence.

JAN

You'll be back, Mia. You belong here.

EXT. NeoBloom - NIGHT

Mia exits the building, breathing heavily. She looks back at the  
glowing NeoBloom logo, then hurries away into the night.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia bursts through her door, slamming it behind her and locking  
it. She paces around her small apartment, running her hands  
through her hair. Her movements are erratic, her breathing  
uneven.

She grabs her phone, dials Jamie.

MIA

Jamie? Are you home? Can I come over?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

JAMIE

Of course. What's wrong? You sound-

MIA (CUTTING HER OFF)

I'll explain when I get there. Don't  
talk to anyone.

She ends the call, grabs her jacket and keys, then pauses at the  
door, peering through the peephole before cautiously exiting.

INT. JAMIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jamie's door flies open. Mia rushes in, immediately closing and  
locking it behind her.

JAMIE

Okay, you're officially freaking me out.

MIA (BREATHLESS)  
You were right. About NeoBloom. It's worse than we thought.

JAMIE  
Sit. Breathe. Tell me everything.

They move to Jamie's couch. Mia's hands tremble as she speaks.

MIA  
They're drugging us. Through the food, the tea—everything. They monitor our biometrics, our DNA. They adjust the drugs to maximize our productivity.

JAMIE  
That can't be legal.

MIA  
It gets worse. Jan told me they're not just selling products—they're selling us. "Pre-dedicated employees" is what she called it. They're trafficking human beings.

Jamie stares at her in disbelief.

JAMIE  
You need to call the police.

MIA  
With what proof? My word against a multi-million dollar company?

Jamie grabs her laptop, typing rapidly.

JAMIE  
Wait. Remember that coworker you mentioned? The one who collapsed?

MIA  
Yes. They said he recovered.

Jamie turns the laptop to show Mia a news article.

JAMIE

According to this, a Martin Kramer died  
of a seizure at work a couple days ago.  
At NeoBloom.

The laptop screen shows an article that says, "Local Man Dies  
After Workplace Seizure" with a photo of the man Mia saw  
collapse.

MIA

That's him. I watched it happen. They  
carried him away. They said he was  
fine.

JAMIE (GRAVELY)

Mia, promise me you won't go back  
there. Ever.

MIA

I won't.

JAMIE

No, I mean it. Promise me.

MIA (FORCEFULLY)

I promise. I'll never go back.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mia sits at her desk, surrounded by job listings. Her phone  
RINGS with "NeoBloom" on the screen. She silences it.

CLOSE ON COMPUTER SCREEN: Mia typing an email: "Unfortunately, I  
will not be returning to the office due to unexpected  
illness..."

MONTAGE - MIA'S JOB SEARCH

--Mia submits applications online

--She practices interview responses in a mirror

--Her phone continues to ring with "NeoBloom" calls

--She ignores texts from Jan asking about her return

--She crosses days off a calendar

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Mia sits across from an INTERVIEWER (50s), polished and professional. The interview seems to be going well.

INTERVIEWER

Your resume is quite impressive, Ms. Lang. I'm particularly interested in your time at NeoBloom.

MIA

It was... brief.

INTERVIEWER

But impactful, I'm sure.

(looking down at notes)

I assume you're accustomed to working long hours without breaks?

Mia shifts uncomfortably.

MIA

I'm not sure where you got that information.

INTERVIEWER

(smiling)

We have comprehensive selection processes.

(beat)

How would you rate your response to stress on a scale from one to ten?

MIA

(confused)

I'm sorry?

INTERVIEWER

And do you have any medical conditions that might affect your performance under pressure?

MIA

I don't see how that's relevant.

INTERVIEWER

I'm going to be honest, Mia. We're very interested in your experience with productivity enhancement.

Mia stands abruptly.

MIA

I don't... Thank you for your time. I don't think this position is right for me.

Mia walks out of the room

INTERVIEWER

(shouting out of view)

We could make it worth your while!

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Mia exits the building, visibly shaken. Her phone RINGS. She checks the screen: "UNKNOWN NUMBER."

She hesitates, then answers.

MIA

Hello?

JAN

(V.O.) (calm)

Hello, Mia. We've missed you.

Mia stops walking.

JAN

The offer still stands. Management track. Complete autonomy. And we're prepared to add a considerable raise for your demonstrated hard work and talent.

MIA

I told you, I quit.

JAN

(V.O.)

Did your interview just now change your mind?

Mia looks around, as if being watched.

JAN

(V.O.)

We're all connected, Mia. Every company worth working for. They all want the same thing. The difference is, with us, you could get to be on the controlling end.

(beat)

Think about it. What other option do you have?

Mia ends the call with Jan, shaken. She leans against a wall to steady herself.

A PASSERBY glances at her with concern.

PASSERBY

You okay, miss?

Mia straightens up.

MIA

Fine. Thanks.

The Passerby walks away. Mia's phone pings with a text notification.

Mia opens the text from Jamie: "How did the interview go?" Mia stares at it, unable to form a response.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

Mia sits in a corner booth, nursing a cup of coffee. The shop is filled with PEOPLE working on laptops, all with vacant, focused expressions reminiscent of NeoBloom employees.

Jamie enters, spots Mia, and hurries over.

JAMIE

Hey, I was worried when you didn't text back.

MIA

They're everywhere, Jamie.

JAMIE

Who?

MIA

NeoBloom. Or companies like them. That interview today? They knew things. Things only NeoBloom could know.

Jamie slides into the booth across from her.

JAMIE

Maybe it was just a coincidence.

MIA

No. Jan called me right after. She knew about the interview.

JAMIE

(alarmed)

What? How?

MIA

She said they're all connected.

Mia looks around the coffee shop at all the workers.

MIA

What if this is just the beginning?  
What if NeoBloom is just a branch in something much bigger? Or what if they're the root?

JAMIE

(firmly)

Then we go to the police. The press. Someone.

MIA

With what proof?

JAMIE

We'll figure it out. Together.

Mia sees a YOUNG WOMAN at a nearby table, typing, dark circles under her eyes, multiple empty coffee cups beside her.

MIA

(softly)

I keep thinking about Alex. What they did to him.

JAMIE

What do you mean?

MIA

I saw his file. Brain scans. Before and after. They changed him, Jamie.

(beat)

And he has no idea.

EXT. JAMIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Mia and Jamie approach the entrance. Mia freezes, spotting a black SUV parked across the street.

MIA

(whispering)

That car. It was outside my apartment earlier.

JAMIE

Are you sure?

MIA

Positive.

JAMIE

Come inside. Stay with me tonight.

They hurry inside while glancing back at the vehicle.

INT. JAMIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jamie's living room is now makeshift sleeping quarters for Mia.

Blankets and a pillow on the couch. Jamie brings her a cup of chamomile.

JAMIE

(smirking)

Some not poison tea. Any luck with the other applications?

MIA

(shakes her head)

Not yet.

JAMIE



Something will turn up. My dad says his firm might have a reception position opening soon.

MIA  
(smiling weakly)  
Me? A receptionist?

JAMIE  
It's something.

MIA  
Four years of college for "something."

Jamie sits beside her.

JAMIE  
This isn't just about finding a job anymore, is it?

MIA  
What if Jan's right? What if there is no alternative?

JAMIE  
There's always an alternative.

MIA  
Is there? Look at us, Jamie. We were told our whole lives that if we worked hard, got good grades, went to college... we'd have options. Opportunities.

(bitter laugh)  
But here I am, practically begging for any job that'll have me. Any company that hasn't been warned about me.

JAMIE  
Warned about you? Mia, that's paranoid.

MIA  
Is it? Three more rejections today. No interviews. Not even a call back.

The silence between them grows heavy.

INT. JAMIE'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Mia quietly gathers her things while Jamie sleeps. She leaves a note on the counter, then slips out.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mia sits at her small desk, staring at her dwindling bank account on her laptop screen. Bills are spread out before her.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: Account balance: \$347.26

Her phone pings with a text. She hesitates before looking.

CLOSE ON PHONE: Text from Jan: "The offer expires today. Management track. 50% salary increase. Your own office."

Mia puts the phone down, rubs her temples. She opens her laptop and begins typing.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: Mia googling "NeoBloom whistleblower"

Her search returns nothing useful—just corporate health articles and company press releases.

She tries again: "NeoBloom employee died"

Again, nothing substantive. The news article about Martin has somehow disappeared.

The doorbell RINGS, startling her. She approaches cautiously, checks the peephole. It's her LANDLORD.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The Landlord stands in the doorway.

LANDLORD

Look, I hate to be the bad guy here, but rent was due three days ago.

MIA

I know. I'm waiting on a check. Can you give me until the end of the week?

LANDLORD

(sighing)

End of the week. That's it.

He leaves. Mia closes the door, leaning against it.

Her phone RINGS again. It's Jamie. She answers.

MIA

Hey.

JAMIE

(V.O.)

Why did you leave like that?

MIA

I needed space to think.

JAMIE

(V.O.)

About going back there? Mia, you promised.

MIA

You don't understand, Jamie. You have options. Your parents. Your dad's firm.  
(beat)

What do I have?

JAMIE

(V.O.)

You have me. We'll figure this out.

MIA

There's nothing to figure out. I applied to thirty-seven jobs in the last three days. Nothing.

(beat)

Meanwhile, I have rent due, student loans, and about enough money left for one more week of groceries.

JAMIE

(V.O.)

Move in with me. We'll split the rent.

MIA

That's not the point.

(voice breaking)

What kind of life is that? Barely  
surviving, always one paycheck away  
from disaster?

JAMIE

(V.O.)

It's better than selling your soul.

MIA

Is it?

A long silence.

JAMIE

(V.O.)

Mia, please. Don't do this.

MIA

I'll call you later.

She hangs up, looks at her phone. Jan's text still on the  
screen.

EXT. NEOBLOOM HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Mia stands outside the building, staring up at the glowing logo.  
Her face is expressionless, almost resigned.

She approaches the entrance. Before entering, she pauses.

CLOSE ON MIA'S FACE: A single tear rolls down her cheek. Her  
lips tremble as she forces them into an artificial smile.

With her face locked in this disturbing, false expression of  
happiness, she walks through the doors.

The glass doors slide shut behind her with an ominous CLICK.

INT. NEOBLOOM - CONFERENCE ROOM - ONE YEAR LATER

A conference room identical to the one we saw in the beginning.

New EMPLOYEES sit around the table, all wearing the company's  
signature earth tones. At the head of the table stands MIA (now  
24), dressed in a beige sweater and green blazer, her posture  
perfect, her smile practiced and empty.

Gone is the uncertain graduate we met at the beginning. Her eyes are now sharp. She wears a small pin showing a fully bloomed flower on her lapel.

MIA

Before we close out, I have a quick announcement.

(smiles)

Alex from product development has been selected for a lateral transfer opportunity.

Several employees murmur. Some clap politely, others exchange glances.

EVELYN (early 20s, bright-eyed, uncertain, the only one not wearing company colors yet) claps, looking around in confusion - just as Mia did a year ago.

MIA

We're proud of Alex's progress. He's demonstrated peak optimization and sustained metrics across all categories.

He'll be transitioning to a new family where his talents can continue to flourish.

ALEX (now completely transformed, hollow-eyed) rises, giving a small smile. He's pale and subdued, barely reacting.

Mia approaches him with a small white flower pin and fastens it to his sweater.

MIA

You've grown so much since you started. We're so proud of you. Let's give him a round of applause.

Everyone claps together. A couple employees cheer.

MIA

(with Jan's exact cadence)

Alright team, let's get back at it. What do we do?

EMPLOYEES

(chanting in unison)  
Together, we bloom!

As the employees disperse, Mia notices the new employee looking around as if confused.

The other employees walk out of the room, but EVELYN lags behind to put her pen and notepad back in her bag.

MIA  
(With a wide smile)  
Is there anything I can help you with?  
It's your first week right? Evelyn,  
right?

EVELYN  
(surprised)  
Yea, how'd you know?

MIA  
I sat in that exact seat on my first  
day just over a year ago. I still  
remember what it was like.

EVELYN  
(wide-eyed)  
You just started a year ago and are  
already a manager?

MIA  
Things moved fast for me, and the  
opportunity came up, so I took it.

Mia hands the new employee a business card.

MIA  
Please let me know if you need anything  
at all. Remember, my door is always  
open. Don't hesitate to reach out.

The new employee looks down at the business card and sees it is upside down. On the back is written, "leave while you can."

Mia gives a gentle nod, still smiling.

MIA  
We're here to help in your journey any  
way we can.

The new employee looks at Mia. They hold each other's gaze. The new employee nods and exits the room. Mia's smile drops when they leave.

She walks to the window and sees Nora's reflection instead of her own.

She straightens her blazer, and her face returns to its empty corporate mask.

MIA  
(whispers to herself)  
Together, we bloom.

FADE TO BLACK.

END.