

THE FOURTH FLOOR

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

We see a slow zoom from behind MIA (21) sitting at her desk, laptop open. With her feet on the desk, she tosses a lacrosse ball in the air, catches it, and repeats.

We hear the MUFFLED sound of her on the phone with her MOTHER (50s).

The camera pans over her shoulder. A draft of a graduate program application is seen on the desktop.

The MUFFLED noise becomes clear.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Don't put all your eggs in one
basket.

The camera switches to Mia, staring uninterestedly at her screen. She pauses, taking her feet off the desk. She pinches the bridge of her nose, closing her eyes and lets out a sigh.

MIA
I'm doing better this year.

Her mother's words begin to BLUR out again. As she takes her fingers off her face, we see a look of regret fill Mia's face. Tears well in her eyes.

We see Mia mouth a soft goodbye to her mother and the BLURRED noise ends. She presses the red button on her phone screen, noticing the time: 5:16pm.

She clicks on a different tab on her computer, showing her grades for the semester so far: 1 B, 2 Cs, and an F. Mia shuts her laptop.

She sits in silence for a moment, a look of disappointment spread across her face. She clenches her hand in a tight fist.

She stands up and heads to her closet, wiping the tears from her face. She opens a drawer and moves a stack of folded clothes to the side, revealing a small box.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Smoke fills the air. We hear the CRACKLING of Mia hitting a joint.

The camera switches to an aerial point of view of Mia laying on her bed, eyes glossy, aimlessly staring at the ceiling. The box from the drawer lays next to her, filled with a lighter and 3 pre-rolled joints.

She grabs her phone and begins meaninglessly scrolling on social media.

After a few moments, Mia sets her phone down and sits up to glance out the window. She walks slowly towards it, letting out a large cloud of smoke from the hit she just took.

She opens the window. Goosebumps cover her skin while her hair blows in the cool, evening breeze. She breathes in and closes her eyes.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia's skin is covered in goosebumps as her hair blows in the cool, evening breeze. She stands at the edge of her window, looking down at the outside ground, four floors beneath her. Her face is damp from tears, mascara running down her face.

She turns around and glances at her messy room with a look of despair. She redirects her gaze to the note, scribbled with her handwriting, on the desk.

Shaking, she turns back towards the window. Just as she places her hands on the windowsill, the sound of a loud RINGING fills her ears.

She turns around to see her phone, buzzing and illuminating with a picture of her mom's contact information.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A PIERCING high-pitched laugh snaps Mia out of this triggering memory, abruptly opening her unexpectedly tear-filled eyes. She wipes her eyes.

Outside of the window we see a little girl and her mother laughing while they hold hands. As she watches them walk away a soft smile appears on her face.

Her gaze shifts to a group of kids walking down the sidewalk outside of the apartment.

The smile on her face quickly turns into a frown. They chat and laugh with each other as if nothing is wrong in the world.

She shifts her view again to a young couple, holding hands and smiling. A look of jealousy crosses her face, soon becoming a look of anger.

Mia loudly shuts her window and locks it.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - LATER

We hear footsteps on the stairs and see Mia walk to the kitchen. She grabs a handful of ice from her freezer and places it into a cup. As she pours water over the ice, we hear a CRACKLING sound.

She opens the refrigerator, blankly staring into it as she sips on her ice cold water. Clearly dissatisfied, she shuts it and heads back upstairs.

She enters her room, glancing down at her clothing-covered floor. She sees a pair of jeans on the ground next to dirty shoes and muddy footprints.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

The living room BLARES with loud music and indistinct chatters as Mia and her roommates walk in. The moment they enter, Mia loses the other two girls in the crowd.

As she stands alone in a corner, no one bothers to start a conversation with her. No one bothers to even look at or notice her; its as if she is invisible.

She heads to the kitchen, where she knows the drinks are kept. The lonely girl grabs herself a red solo cup, filling it with a pour much too large to be a shot. With two big gulps, she gets the whole thing down. A look of disgust fills her face as she winces and her eyes tightly squeeze shut.

Mia repeats this two or three more times, with zero sense of consistency in her pours. Soon, Mia is stumbling through the house, not making sense of her words.

She stops for a moment, taking in her surroundings, when she makes eye contact with one of her roommates. She smiles with a sense of relief, but when she begins walking towards her, only a look of embarrassment from her friend is returned.

Mia stops in her tracks, her smile disappearing as she accepts the look of distaste she has just received. She turns around and heads for the door.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - LATER

Mia stumbles into her room, tears filling her eyes. She mumbles mean, cruel words about herself and her worth. As she takes her dirty, muddy shoes off, leaving behind noticeable marks on her floor, she heads for the bathroom.

A single razor finds its way into her hand after searching through a drawer. She stares at herself in the mirror and then glances down to her arm.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - LATER

Steam fills the bathroom, leaving a clouded mirror. The water running from the shower turns off. We hear the CLATTERING of the metal hooks on the curtain rod as Mia gets out of the shower.

Wrapped in a towel, she walks up to the mirror. For a moment, she stares at herself, disappointment in her eyes. She glances down to her arm.

Dragging her fingers across her skin, she takes note of the large birth mark stretching from the outside of her thumb to the middle of her forearm.

As she turns her palm over, scars in the shape of horizontal lines reveal themselves. One of them fresher than the others, still healing.

She looks back up at herself, a tear rolling down her cheek. She wipes the tear, takes a deep breath and walks into her room.

She changes into warm items of clothing. Curled into a ball on her bed, only a few moments pass before she dozes off while staring at her wall.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia opens slowly opens her eyes and she checks her phone. The time is 9:30pm. She puts on her jacket and heads downstairs to go for a night walk.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT

She exits the building and begins walking down the sidewalk. Just as her apartment building is about to be out of her sight, she pauses, turns around and looks up at her fourth floor bedroom window.

She stares at it, envious. She curls her shaky hand into a tight fist and after a moment continues walking.

She wanders without direction. As she turns the corner around a building, blue and red lights flash in the distance. Curiously, she walks toward them, the lights getting brighter the closer she gets.

Police cars, an ambulance and people line the street. As she grows near, the sound of people crying intensifies. She notices a figure on the ground outside of a campus apartment building being covered by a black tarp.

She looks up to see police peaking out of an open window directly above the body, four floors up.

As she gets closer, she glances back down and sees a hand peaking out of the black tarp, a familiar hand. Her eyes quickly find themselves drawn to the birthmark on the hand, starting at the thumb and ending in the middle of the forearm.

She looks back up, the police gone. Instead, she sees herself standing, hands wrapped around the windowsill, ready to jump.

She looks around to see all the commotion gone, no more police, ambulances or people. Just her and the girl in the window.

She freezes. Her heart begins to race.

Just as she looks back up, she watches herself take the leap out of the window plummeting four floors down. Right before she sees herself hit the floor she lets out a deafening SCREAM.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia shoots up out of her bed, eyes wide, waking herself with the sound of her own scream. She is panting, with sweat and tears dripping down her face.

She looks around and realizes she is in her room, alive and safe. It was only a nightmare.

Still crying, she gets out of her bed and walks to her desk. She opens the drawer and picks up a piece of paper hidden underneath some folders.

Holding up the note, her scribbled handwriting and stained teardrops are prominent. She walks over to the window and looks down on the ground, four floors beneath her.

No one is there. A look of overwhelming relief appears on her face.

She crumbles up the note and slides with her back down the wall until she is curled up in a ball, hysterically sobbing.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mia, now calmer, has slowed down her breathing and wiped the tears from her face. She takes a big deep breath and stands up.

She grabs her phone from her bed and sits on the edge of it. Once it is unlocked, she goes straight to her text messages with her mom. She pauses for a moment before her thumbs begin typing.

MIA (TEXT)
I need help mom.

She sets down her phone, releasing an exhale filled with a strong sense of hope.

FADE OUT.

THE END.