

A SWEET LITTLE DREAM

by
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"One makes a living by what one gets. One makes a life by what one gives."

FADE IN

EXT. A GRAVEYARD - DAY

A WOMAN stands in front a grave, among the hundreds of them in the graveyard. She kneels down and places a BOUQUET of flower as she wipes a tear.

LINA MILLER is 25, pretty with blond shoulder-length hair.

THE EPITAPH READS:

MARY NELSON MILLER

APRIL 1955 - MAY 1991

IN MEMORY OF A LOVING MOTHER AND CARING FRIEND.

Lina keeps staring at the Epitaph, she then closes her eyes.

MARY (V.O.)

Lina...wake up baby, it's time for school.

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - MORNING - 1991

Mary, a beautiful woman in her late 30's, quietly pushes open the door and walks in. She makes her way to a window, then pulls the curtains open.

The sunlight motivates an unconscious groan from A FIGURE still shrouded by covers.

Mary gently pulls back the covers and peers down at her daughter's face, Lina, a pretty 12 years old blond. Mary places her hand on Lina's cheek. Lina's eyelids flutter softly.

MARY

Morning, beauty.

Lina lets out a grunt and rolls over onto her belly.

MARY

Come on baby, or we'll be both be late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

From out of the pillow, comes Lina's voice.

LINA
(muffled)
But I'm cold.

Mary smiles and shakes her head.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LINA'S HOUSE - MORNING

It's an old, beat up BUNGALOW near VENICE BEACH. Mary and Lina walk out the front door, and start walking towards a BUS STOP. Mary is wearing a uniform, looks like a Denny's uniform. Lina has a back-pack strapped over her shoulder.

LINA
Mom, when are we gonna buy a car?

MARY
Oh sweetie, who needs a car! Didn't you see that accident down by the beach a couple weeks ago?

LINA
Yes I know, but still...

MARY
I think we're better off taking the bus, save on gas money and repairs, this way I can save enough money for us to take a little vacation.

LINA
(excited)
Really? Where?

MARY
(smiling)
I'm not telling. It's a surprise.

They arrive at the bus stop. Mary checks her watch.

LINA
Mom, come on, tell me, please.

MARY
Well, I was thinking of going down to...
(the bus arrives)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY(cont'd)

...oops! My bus is here...go on now, you're late for school. I'll tell you when I see you later.

Lina looks disappointed as her mother boards the bus, and waves to her goodbye.

LINA

(loud)

I'm going to be a little late. I have a game today.

Mary nods "OK". Lina smiles and starts for school.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRAVEYARD - DAY

Lina opens her eyes and looks at the EPITAPH.

LINA (V.O.)

...That was the last time I saw my mother...it was the last day of spring.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON - 1991

The LOS ANGELES traffic is on full display. Lina and her friend from school, JESSICA, run to try and cross the street, but the signal turns red. They both stop.

Jessica notices something and points across the street.

JESSICA

Lina, look.

A POLICE CAR AND AN AMBULANCE are racing towards them with their sirens on. They turn in front of Lina and Jessica, and stop right across the street.

LINA

This is near our house. I hope no one got hurt.

A large crowd had gathered.

The red light turns green. Lina and Jessica run across the street. At that moment, a WOMAN in the crowd points at Lina, and shouts...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN

That's her daughter...That's the woman's daughter.

Everyone stop and look at Lina. TWO OFFICERS immediately walk up to her.

LINA (V.O.)

... It was like a dream...a very bad dream. I just wanted my mother to walk out of our house and tell these people to go away and leave us alone. I just wanted her to come out and take me for ice cream and movie. Instead, she was lying on the street, covered with a white sheet.

As the TWO OFFICERS approach Lina, TWO MEDICAL WORKERS place Mary's body on a stretcher, then place the stretcher in the AMBULANCE.

OFFICER

I'm officer Higgins and this is officer Jones...what's your name?

Lina's eyes are fixated on the Ambulance and the stretcher being pushed in it.

LINA (V.O.)

...It was a hit and run accident. They never knew who did it. Someone ran a red light when my mother was crossing the street...she died on the spot.

Lina stares at the officers.

LINA (V.O.)

...I was twelve years old...they wanted to know my name, but I couldn't remember it...my whole body was numb, I couldn't even open my mouth.

OFFICER HIGGINS

Do you have any relatives?

Lina shakes her head.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Lina and officer Higgins appear at the front door. He takes her hand and walks her toward a VAN. The words... "CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES" are printed on it's side.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN - LATER

There are Four young girls in the Van. Two in the middle seat, while Lina and another girl sat all the way in the back as the Van raced across DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES.

The BLACK GIRL next to Lina is HEATHER, about 7 or 8. She leans her head on the window with an empty look in her teary eyes. She looks at Lina.

HEATHER

I'm scared.

Lina looks at her, not sure what to say.

HEATHER

What's your name?

LINA

I'm Lina. What's yours?

HEATHER

Heather.

Lina is finally able to paint a very faint smile on her face as she looks At Heather.

HEATHER

Are they taking us to jail?

Lina shakes her head.

LINA

We're going to a children's home.

HEATHER

Why?

LINA

Because we don't have a home.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE VAN - AFTERNOON

Lina turns her face and looks out the window. The DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS and the traffic are now replaced with a beautiful, tree-lined country road.

The Van slows down toward the end of the road.

A SIGN READS... "WELCOME TO ST. VINCENT'S ORPHANAGE"

All eyes are fixed on the sign and on the COMPLEX of buildings straight ahead.

The van comes to a full stop in front of the MAIN GATE, and the girls get out. Heather stays close to Lina.

The van roars to life again, and drives off quickly as the girls watch it disappear in the distance.

There are about 40 or 50 children in the front yard, all stopped playing, and walked over to the fence to see the NEWCOMERS.

Two nuns arrive at the main gate, and lead the girls inside the small compound, then inside one of the buildings.

The girls follow the nuns to a front desk, where another nun, an older, mean-looking WOMAN is waiting for them. She has a clipboard and is writing something.

OLDER WOMAN

(to the nuns, pointing at
the 2 girls)

Take them to building two.

(points at Lina and
Heather)

You two, follow me.

The woman turns and walks into an office, then sits at a large desk with a computer screen. Lina and Heather follow her. Two other nuns are also in the office.

OLDER WOMAN

(very serious)

My name is sister Mary Ann. I am in charge of this orphanage, and I will be responsible for you until you graduate from high school, or get adopted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The two girls are staring at Mary Ann with wide-open eyes. A nun shows up at the front door.

NUN

Sister Mary Ann, we need you
outside for a minute, please.

Mary Ann steps to the hallway. Heather quickly holds Lina's hand and looks at her.

LINA (V.O.)

...I never felt so lonely and cold
in my entire life. I kept thinking
my mother will walk through these
doors any minute, and take me away,
take me home, to my bed, to my
toys. I thought this is just a
nightmare that keeps lingering, a
nightmare that just don't wanna go
away.

Mary Ann walks back in and picks up where she left off...

MARY ANN

... Your former life is over...
This is your new life, your "NEW
HOME"...The most important rules
here are; respect and discipline.
Break these rules, you get
punished.

Heather suddenly breaks down and starts to cry.

HEATHER

I wanna go home...please take me
home.

Mary Ann bolts from her chair toward Heather. Lina instinctively shields Heather behind her.

LINA

Leave her alone!. She's
scared...I'm scared too.

Both girls look very terrified. Mary Ann shoots Lina with a glare, and takes a step toward her. At that moment, one of the nuns, the younger of the two, about 20 years old, takes Lina's hand and pulls her away from Mary Ann.

YOUNG NUN

Sister Mary Ann, I think I should
take them to the dormitory now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mary Ann keeps staring at Lina.

MARY ANN

That's fine, sister Clara...but
make sure to explain the rules to
them. Especially her.
(pointing at Lina)

CLARA

I sure will, sister Mary Ann.

Clara quickly pushes the girls out of the office.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The hallway seems very long. Clara walks fast as the girls
try to keep up with her.

They walk past a large dining hall and kitchen, then arrive
at the door leading out of the building.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUILDING #1 - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Clara and the girls appear at the front door. Clara stops and
turns to them.

CLARA

OK. Now we can have our little
talk. First, tell me your names.

LINA

I'm Lina.

HEATHER

I'm Heather.

CLARA

Alright. Lina and Heather. My name
is Clara...sister Clara. I'm in
charge of your dormitory. Do you
know what dormitory means?

Both girls shake their heads.

CLARA

The dormitory is where you sleep,
you, and twelve other girls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA(cont'd)

No laughing or talking, only prayers and sleep are allowed. There is one bathroom in each dormitory, the older girls go first, then the younger ones; we go by age here.

HEATHER

But what if I had to go, real bad?

CLARA

(joking)

Why? Do you go alot?

HEATHER

(shrugs)

Depends.

CLARA

Don't worry dear, you'll be fine.

HEATHER

Is that all we have to do? Sleep and go?

Clara laughs, but she cuts the laugh short as she looks around, hoping no one heard her.

CLARA

let's take the tour.

Clara walks toward the front yard, then turns to face the three buildings.

CLARA

(pointing at the buildings)

These three buildings are the housing areas. That's where the dormitories are, on the second level. We, the nuns, sleep in the first level.

She points to the building on the far right.

CLARA

Your building is number three. Each building has it's own front yard and playground...

Clara points at a basketball court at the far right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

...And that's the basketball court, over there (pointing at another small building)...and over there is the church.

A beat. Clara looks at them.

CLARA

Are you with me so far?

They both nod.

CLARA

This place is like a little town, we have everything we need. But you have to remember to always be on time.

LINA

On time?

CLARA

Yes. Sister Mary Ann is a very strict lady, always on time. And she wants everyone to do the same.

LINA

(confused)

How do we do that?

CLARA

OK. Listen to me carefully...wake up time is at 6:15 AM. Beds must be made by then. And by 6:30 you should be fully dressed, and your hair combed. Church is at 6:45. Mass starts at 7:00 AM, sharp, and ends at 7:45, then you go to the dining hall for breakfast at 8:00. You have half an hour to eat and clean up, which means all dishes are to be washed and put away, the floors swept and mopped...you do all the cleaning yourselves.

The girls are staring at her with wide-open eyes. Clara notices their look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

Enough rules for oneday, you two
must be very tired. Follow me.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUILDING #3 - CONTINUOUS

The girls and Clara walk up a spiral stairway, leading to the dormitory.

INT. DORMITORY - CONTINUOUS

It's a large room with twelve beds, six on each side. Clara points out the first two beds to the left of the entrance.

CLARA

These are your beds. Remember, by
6:30, these beds have to be made,
and both of you should be ready for
the morning mass and school. Any
questions?

At that moment, other girls start filing into the room. No smiles or hand shakes, only stares and occasional nods.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Lights are out. Silence. The moon light cast tiny silver beams on Lina's face as she lies in bed, eyes wide-open.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - EARLY MORNING

Lina is deep asleep. A hand suddenly shakes her hard. Lina slowly opens her eyes. It's Mary Ann.

Lina sits up. Mary Ann is looking at her with fiery eyes. All the girls, except Lina and Heather, are fully dressed and their beds are made.

An alarm clock on the wall shows the time as 6:30. Mary Ann looks at the clock. Lina follows her look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY ANN

Didn't sister Clara explain the rules to you last night?

Lina nods.

MARY ANN

(mad)

Do not nod at me young lady. When I ask you a question, you answer me loud and clear...Did sister Clara explain the rules to you or not!

LINA

(terrified)

Yes, she did.

MARY ANN

(screams)

Then why are you two still in bed at 6:30!

Lina stares at her. Mary Ann turns to the rest of the girls.

MARY ANN

(speaking to the girls)

This establishment have codes and rules that MUST be followed...Do you agree or not!

They all stare at her.

MARY ANN

(angry)

You may speak.

CURLY

(about 17, the oldest of the girls)

We agree, sister Mary Ann.

MARY ANN

And if someone is determined to break these rules...What do we do?

(points to a 16 year old)

Samantha, you answer.

SAMANTHA

They get punished, sister Mary Ann.

Mary Ann slowly nods as she stares at Lina.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...She was trying to break me. She thought I was tough and strong, she didn't know I was frail as a feather. But no matter what, I knew I was going to be made an example of.

Mary Ann turns and looks at the rest of the girls.

MARY ANN

Since it is also part of your duties to teach the newcomers, "The Rules"...and since you failed to do so, then you all must be punished. So, I will come back here in 5 hours...to see the results.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - LATER

All TWELVE GIRLS are still in the dormitory, cleaning.

Each girl has a mop, a dirty towel and a bucket to empty the dirty water. Each give dirty looks to Lina as they walk by her.

Heather is struggling with the mop-handle, which is taller than her. Lina turns to help her. But at that moment, four girls come from behind, and EMPTY their dirty water buckets over them.

CURLY

(dirty look)

That's what you get for being a lazy ass and getting us all punished!

Lina and Heather stand motionless, wet and dirty. Clara is standing at the door, watching.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

Lina and Heather sit on the grass, watching other girls play.

Curly and three other girls walk by...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CURLY
(sniffs)
Hey, it stinks here.

SAMANTHA
Must be the dirty water.

They all laugh as they keep walking toward the basketball court. Curly turns and gives Lina a dirty look. Lina looks right back at her.

HEATHER
Why are they so mean to us, Lina?

LINA
I don't know. Maybe because we're new. Don't pay attention to them.

HEATHER
But I'm scared of them.

LINA
Don't be scared. I'm with you, I'll protect you.

A beat.

HEATHER
OK, I'm not scared now.

LINA
Heather, How old are you?

HEATHER
I'm 8. Why?

LINA
(sighing)
You're so young...so young to be in this place.

Clara walks over to them. She carries a bundle of clothes.

CLARA
(smiles)
Guess who gets new clothes.

She unfolds a pair of old blue shirts and long gray skirts. Both girls stare at them.

LINA
This is...nice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

Good. I'm glad you like them,
because that's the only thing we
have.

Lina and Heather nod and smile.

CLARA

So, girls, has Curly been bothering
you?

HEATHER

Yes. She always gives us dirty
looks.

CLARA

Be careful with her. She's the
oldest girl in the orphanage and a
trouble maker, but she always gets
away with it, because she's sister
Mary Ann's snitch. Never mess with
her. She also has a mean group of
girls around her. Don't even go
near them, you understand?

They nod.

CLARA

Good. Lets go try these clothes on,
see how they fit you.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - LATER

Lina, Heather and Clara are alone in the dormitory. Both
girls are now wearing the new clothes. Clara is trying to fit
Heather's tiny body in the over-sized shirt. Lina is
watching.

LINA

Sister Clara, I'm very happy you
are here. You are the nicest nun
and we like you so much.

Clara smiles. The door suddenly opens, Mary Ann and Curly
walk in.

MARY ANN

Sister Clara, what are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

I'm just helping the girls with their new clothes.

MARY ANN

Well you're not...
 (a pause)
 ...Sister Clara, I like to see you in my office please.

Mary Ann turns and leaves. Clara steals a look at Lina then follows Mary Ann.

CURLY

You're here for oneday, and look how much trouble you started.

LINA

I'm not starting any trouble. So why don't you just leave us alone.

Curly suddenly bolts toward Lina and pretends she's about to hit her. And even though Curly is taller and bigger, Lina stands her ground and doesn't move.

CURLY

You think you're tough ha! You think you're all cool and shit.

LINA

What do you want from me?

CURLY

I want you out of this place, because I don't like you.

Curly turns and leaves. Lina turns and looks for Heather, and finds her crouched in her bed, crying. Lina walks over and holds her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Lights are out. Lina's eyes are wide open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...Mary Ann was mad at Clara because she was nice and kind to us, so she transferred her to a different area...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - EARLY MORNING

All the girls are asleep. Suddenly the door opens, and the lights get turned on as Mary Ann and another nun bolt into the dormitory. The wall clock shows the time as 6:00.

Mary Ann immediately looks at Lina's bed, and to her shock and surprise, Lina and Heather are standing next to their neatly-made beds, fully dressed.

The rest of the girls are awoken by the light, and are equally surprised to see Lina and Heather standing by their beds, smiling.

Mary Ann grins, she wants to say something but changes her mind and leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - MORNING

The dormitory is empty, except from Lina and Heather. Both have mops and buckets as they scrub the floors.

LINA

(sighing)

So much for waking up at 5:30 and making our beds. I don't know what to do to please this Mary Ann.

HEATHER

So now we have to clean and scrub the dormitory every morning?

LINA

(nodding)

You know, this is not so bad after all, because we can skip mass and school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEATHER

And we don't have to see Curly and her gang.

Heather is wiping the window next to the front door. Lina walks to the other side of the room and starts scrubbing the floor.

LINA

(smiling)

Hey Heather, this is Curly's bed, should I soak it with some dirty water?

HEATHER

Oh no please, she'll come and beat us both.

Curly's bed is the next to last. Lina is bending near it to pick up her bucket, and notices something sticking out under the pillow. She slowly reaches and lifts the pillow. It's a BOX OF CONDOMS.

Lina is shocked as she holds the box and looks at it. Suddenly the DOOR OPENS and Curly walks in.

CURLY'S POV

Heather is in front of her, wiping out a window. She looks inside, no one is there.

CURLY

(suspicious)

Hey, where's your friend?

Heather looks terrified as she shrugs. Curly walks toward her bed.

Lina is leaning behind Curly's bed and sees her coming. She quickly ducks under and starts crawling to the front. Curly passes without seeing her. She picks up something and leaves without noticing Lina, crouching under a bed.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

Lina and Heather are standing near the Basketball court, watching the girls play.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...Even at my young age, I knew what condoms are, and what they're used for. Not that I completely understood the process, but I knew enough to make me wonder why would Curly keep a box of them under her pillow.

Lina suddenly spots Curly and Samantha on the other side of the court, walking away from it toward the other side of the orphanage.

LINA

Heather, I'm going to the bathroom, wait for me here, OK?

HEATHER

OK.

She quickly crosses the court, in the direction of Curly and Samantha. And finds them lurking near the high chain fence, talking to some boys on the other side.

Lina finds a nun and walks over to her.

LINA

Excuse me, sister.

NUN

Yes?

LINA

What's behind that fence?

NUN

Oh, it's the "Boys Home"

LINA

You mean there's another orphanage on the other side?

NUN

Of course, you didn't know that?

Lina shakes her head as she runs back toward Heather.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - EVENING

Lina and Heather pick up their chicken and vegetables dinner, and find a table occupied by sister Clara and another nun. They sit at the end of that table. Lina and Clara exchange quick smiles.

HEATHER
I miss sister Clara.

LINA
Me too.

They look at her, she looks back and smiles.

LINA
Something's fishy going on with
Curly and Samantha.

HEATHER
What?

LINA
Remember this morning when I told
you I'm gonna soak Curly's bed with
dirty water?

HEATHER
(excited)
Yes I do. I can't believe she
didn't see you crawling under the
beds.

LINA
Oh my god I was so scared. It
would've been a disaster if she
caught me looking under her pillow.

HEATHER
Why? What was under her pillow?

LINA
A box of...

Lina stops, she just remembered Heather is only 8!

HEATHER
Box of what, Lina?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

No. I can't talk to you about these things, you're too young for that.

HEATHER

Oh come on Lina please...pretty please.

Lina shakes her head.

HEATHER

Now I'm gonna be thinking about that box day and night.

LINA

Think about it as long as you want, I'm not telling.

HEATHER

But I thought you were my friend.

LINA

I am...

HEATHER

Well?

LINA

Heather stop nagging me. I'm not telling, you're too young to know these things.

HEATHER

Do you promise to tell me when I grow up?

LINA

Hmm, I'll think about it...

A pause.

LINA

Hey I never got the chance to ask you, why are you here?

HEATHER

Because they came and took my mom away.

LINA

Who did?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEATHER

(shrugs)

I don't know. The police, I think.

LINA

Do you have any relatives?

Heather shakes her head.

LINA

Do you miss her?

HEATHER

Yes...alot.

LINA

Me too, I miss my mom.

HEATHER

What happened to her?

Lina wants to say something but the words won't come out. Heather gets up and walks to Lina, then gives her a warm hug.

HEATHER

Don't be sad Lina. Everything will be fine. I'm sure your mom will come here oneday and take you away.

LINA

You think your mom will come here oneday and take you away, Heather?

HEATHER

(confident)

Of course she will. My mom loves me.

Lina has a sad look in her eyes as she looks at Heather, and slowly shakes her head.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD

Christmas decorations appear on the windows and trees. Some of the girls are wearing Christmas hats and gloves.

Lina plays catch with Heather, lazily tossing a baseball around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

Hey, Heather, it's December. We need to think of a Christmas wish.

HEATHER

Do we have to?

LINA

Of course. That's why they made Christmas. So close your eyes and start wishing.

HEATHER

(closing her eyes tight)
...I wish Mary Ann stop punishing us.

LINA

No, Heather, you're not supposed to say it out loud.

Heather closes her eyes again and starts whispering to herself.

LINA (V.O.)

...I had the same wish as Heather...but what we both didn't know is that the worst punishment of all, was just around the corner...

Sister Clara walks over to the girls.

CLARA

(smiling)
Hey girls, lets take a walk. I don't want sister Mary Ann to see me talking to you.

Clara and the girls walk around the building, away from the crowd.

CLARA

(excited)
Tomorrow is a big day for us here in the orphanage, and I want you girls to be ready for it.

They look confused.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

Tomorrow is "MISTER ANDREWS DAY"...that's how we call it here. Mr. Bruce Andrews is a businessman, a Millionaire who comes every year before Christmas, and brings gifts and toys for everyone, even us, the staff.

HEATHER

(very excited)

Gifts and toys?? Even for me??

CLARA

Yes my dear, for you and me and everyone else. He's a great man. And he usually spends the whole day with us...that's why I want you two to be ready. Make sure to clean up real nice and put on your best clothes. It's a big day tomorrow.

Clara quickly turns and leaves. Lina and Heather look at each other in disbelief.

LINA (V.O.)

...When sister Clara left, we were already in a dream world. I really can't find the words to describe how we felt at that moment. Mr. Andrews was already turning into this god-like figure in our minds, the knight with the shining armor, the man with the gifts and toys... and the dream. The dream of the life we lost.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Lights are out. Everyone is in bed, asleep, except Lina and Heather. They slowly get up and sneak to the bathroom. Lina notices Curly's and Samantha's beds were empty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...We couldn't sleep that night. We both wanted to look our best in anticipation for our hero, Mr. Andrews, the man we never met but already loved from the bottom of our hearts...so we got up and snuck to the bathroom, and for the next few hours, we got busy looking good.

INT. DORMITORY BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Both girls work hard to look their best. Both faces covered with white foam as they frantically rub their cheeks. They both turn at the same time and bump into each other.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Lights still out. Lina and Heather are on Lina's bed as Lina works the brush through Heather's thick hair.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Both girls stand by the window, waiting for the sun to come up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - EARLY MORNING

Mary Ann and Clara walk in. The lights are on, beds are made, and the girls stand ready.

MARY ANN

Good morning girls.

THE GIRLS

Good morning sister Mary Ann and sister Clara.

Lina and Heather look VERY ready. Each has her hair down over her shoulders, faces and eyes look bright and beautiful. Even Mary Ann looked surprised.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Heather looks very excited, Lina has to actually hold her hand down, just to keep her from jumping. They both get an approval nod and a smile from Clara.

But what really surprised everyone is the way Curly and Samantha looked. They both had tiny tank-tops and short jeans skirts on, and a load of make-up.

Mary Ann walks over to them, and to the surprise of everyone, she stays calm.

MARY ANN

...Of course, these types of clothing are not approved here, but since today is such a special day, I am willing to make an exception.

Mary Ann walks to the middle of the room, all eyes are on her.

MARY ANN

As you all know, today we hold our annual Christmas party on the honor of Mr. Bruce Andrews. A great man who has been blessing us with his generous contributions for many years. So I expect everyone to be on their best behavior...I'll see you all down in the court yard in few minutes.

She turns and heads for the door, then stops at Lina and Heather.

MARY ANN

...And you two may continue on with your cleaning duties.

They both look shocked. Clara looks at Mary Ann in disbelief.

LINA

What do you mean?

MARY ANN

(cold)

What I mean is, participation in the party and meeting Mr. Andrews is a privilege...Of which you two haven't earned.

The girls look devastated as Mary Ann heads for the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

(angry)

You are evil! And I hate you.

Mary Ann shoots Lina with a glare and leaves. Clara looks very confused. She walks toward Lina while the rest of the girls file slowly out of dormitory, most have sympathetic looks in their eyes, except Curly and Samantha, they both paint thin smiles on their faces as they walk out.

We slowly pull back...out of the window...and we stay over a beautiful, sad picture of Christ, painted on the window.

LINA (V.O.)

...Children are small creatures,
learning to become large humans.
They need love, warmth, a shoulder
to cry on and a friend to laugh
with...but most of all, they need
someone to tell them "don't worry,
everything will be
alright"...that's what me and
Heather really needed that day.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY ANN'S OFFICE - LATER

Clara pushes the door open and walks in, she looks angry. Mary Ann is talking to one of the nuns, she then motions to the nun to leave.

MARY ANN

I would appreciate it if you
knocked sister...

CLARA

(overlapping)

"Remember those who are mistreated
as if you, yourselves were
suffering."

Mary Ann looks the other way.

CLARA

"Speak up for those who cannot
speak for themselves...defend the
rights of the needy."

MARY ANN

Stop that...STOP!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

(nearly crying)

Isn't that what you taught me?
Isn't that what you read to me when
I was young, THE WORDS OF GOD.

MARY ANN

Sister Clara, you are too
emotional. These two girls got to
you, they're taking advantage of
your kind heart.

CLARA

"One makes a living by what one
gets. One makes a life by what one
gives."

MARY ANN

(screams)

I gave my life for this place. Do
not dare tell me I don't give. And
what do I get in return? NOTHING.
So all I ask for is some RESPECT.
That's ALL I want. And this girl
didn't give it to me.

CLARA

(loud)

This girl is a hopeless orphan!

MARY ANN

She's NOT hopeless. She's a little
BRAT with a broken wing. Wait until
she grows up a little, and see how
she'll come back to spit on me.
Instead of thanking me, she'll step
all over me.

CLARA

That's why you want to break her
first? So she doesn't come back to
break you? Is that how you think?

MARY ANN

Something like that.

CLARA

(shakes her head)

Look at you! What had become of
you? WHO ARE YOU!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY ANN

I am the principle here. And you are way out of line, sister. My advice to you is to get ready for the party and forget about these girls.

CLARA

(shakes her head)

I am not going anywhere near you, or your party...MOTHER!

Clara bolts out of the office. Mary Ann collapses on her chair and hangs her head down

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT YARD - NEAR THE MAIN GATE - LATER

One of the girls points at the main gate, and screams

GIRL

Mr. Andrews is here.

Everyone stops and looks. A late-model Mercedes-Benz is approaching the gate, followed by a large U-HAUL truck.

The crowd explodes in loud CHEERS and SCREAMS as the Mercedes comes to a full stop.

BRUCE ANDREWS and his driver ANDERSON, step out of the car and wave to the cheering crowd, which now include Mary Ann and the rest of the staff, except Clara.

BRUCE ANDREWS, 55, salt and pepper hair, a warm but commanding face, a man of maturity yet who exudes a glow of enthusiasm.

His driver, ANDERSON, a large, kind looking man of almost the same age.

Both men cross the main gate as the crowd encircle them.

Mr. Andrews motions to the U-HAUL truck that's parked next to his car. A couple of guys quickly open the back door and start unloading LARGE BOXES.

MARY ANN

(big smile)

Welcome again to ST. VINCENT'S ORPHANAGE, Mr. Andrews.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. ANDREWS

Thank you, sister Mary Ann.

The U-HAUL guys bring in the first box through the main gate, and open it to reveal ALL SORTS OF TOYS AND GAMES.

The cheering is getting LOUDER, as one of the guys reach inside the box and start giving away stuff to the tens of hands surrounding him.

WE PAN UP and find Lina and Heather, their sad faces GLUED to the window.

INT. DORMITORY - SAME MOMENT

The door opens and Clara walks in. Her eyes are red from crying. She walks over and hold the girls. Heather can't look any more, she hides her face behind Clara

POV from dormitory

Curly and Samantha make their way through the crowd, and reach Mr. Andrews. He looks at them, unimpressed.

CLARA

(shaking her head)

I feel sorry for these two girls,
they're so lost.

LINA

I know.

Lina looks at Clara.

LINA

How come you're not in the party?

CLARA

(sad smile)

Because I'm wasn't invited.

Lina looks for Heather, and find her crouching on her bed, asleep. She looks back through the window and is shocked to find Mr. Andrews looking right back at her.

Both she and Clara wave to him, and he waves right back. He then says something to Mary Ann, while pointing at the window. Mary Ann motions to him "don't worry..."but he keeps staring anyways.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

I can't take this anymore.

Lina and Clara walk to Lina's bed and sit.

LINA (V.O.)

...I was so sad and heart broken, I actually fell asleep...we all did...and then something happened, and I thought I was dreaming...

CLOSE ON Lina's face. She sleeps like an angel. A lock of hair covers her eye. A hand appears and gently pushes the lock behind Lina's ear, then, very gently shakes her shoulder.

Lina slowly opens her eyes. It's Mr. Andrews, looking down on her with the most beautiful smile.

LINA (V.O.)

...It was him. Mr. Andrews himself, standing right by my bed...I almost closed my eyes again because I really thought I was dreaming, and I didn't want the dream to end...

Mr. Andrews is leaning next to Lina's bed. Behind him is Anderson. Both men are smiling. Lina sits up and instinctively wraps her arms tight around his neck. Heather and Clara also wake up.

Heather stares at Mr. Andrews for few seconds, taking it in, then suddenly crawls over her bed and into his welcoming arms.

HEATHER

I thought you forgot about us.

He holds her tight and wipes her tears.

MR. ANDREWS

How can I forget about pretty girls like you...I just saved the best for last.

Mr. Andrews looks around and finds the U-HAUL guys, standing by the door, next to them is a large box. He motions to them and they bring the box next to the bed.

Mr. Andrews opens up the box, revealing all kinds of colorful toys. Both girls are all over the toys in seconds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He just stood there watching with the biggest satisfaction smile on his face, and maybe even a tear.

LINA (V.O.)

...And there he stood, our hero, our angel from the sky. The toys were beautiful, and as children we were very happy to get them, but now when I think about it after all these years, Mr. Andrews gave us alot more than pretty toys, he gave us hope, he made us feel normal again, even if it only lasted for one day.

MR. ANDREWS

(to Clara)

Sister, how come these two girls aren't celebrating Christmas with us?

MARY ANN (O.S.)

Because they had cleaning duties to finish, Mr. Andrews...that's why.

Mary Ann walks through the door.

MR. ANDREWS

(grins)

What cleaning duties? We're celebrating Christmas, couldn't cleaning wait?

She hesitates, not sure what to say.

MR. ANDREWS

Sister Mary Ann?

MARY ANN

(squeezing her teeth)

...I Suppose so, Mr. Andrews.

MR. ANDREWS

(cheerful)

Well then...

(to the girls)

I want you girls to join us in the dining hall for lunch. We're starving to death.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA/HEATHER
 (big smiles)
 Yes sir, Mr. Andrews!

MR. ANDREWS
 (to Clara)
 And you too sister...

CLARA
 Clara, sister Clara.

He smiles and turns to leave. Anderson follows. Mary Ann shoots the girls with a glare as she walks out.

Curly and Samantha are walking to the room at the same time. They fake a big smile for Mr. Andrews, he nods and keeps on walking.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - LATER

Lina and Heather walk in. They sit at a table with few other girls. They see Mr. Andrews sitting with the rest of the staff, next to him is Mary Ann and Clara.

He sees them. He picks up his plate, whispers something to Mary Ann, then walks over to the girls, and sits with them. Clara glances over and smiles. Mary Ann is fuming.

WE SLOWLY PULL BACK as Mr. Andrews and the girls are being joined by other HAPPY FACES.

LINA (V.O.)
 ...He spent the whole day with us.
 We talked about everything. He told us about his wife of 30 years who died few years ago, and how much he loved her. He told us about his travels around the world, places we never heard of, people he met...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD

Mr. Andrews is sitting on the green lawn, next to him is Lina, Heather, Clara and about twenty other girls, all listening to him, as we pick up the conversation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. ANDREWS

...I lived in that orphanage for
ten years, then I ran away.

Everyone look stunned.

CLARA

Mr. Andrews, I had no idea you were
an orphan.

MR. ANDREWS

(nodding)

Never knew my real parents, or my
real name.

JODY

(14, blond hair)

Then how did you become so rich?

Mr. Andrews laugh.

CLARA

Jody, it's not polite to ask these
kinds of questions.

MR. ANDREWS

Well, my dear, it's called hard
work and determination. Remember
that.

HEATHER

Did you miss your mom when you were
an orphan?

Mr. Andrews gives Heather a very warm look.

MR. ANDREWS

I didn't know my mom, Heather, but
I'm sure I would have, just like
you miss your mom.

Few rain drops fall on them.

ANDERSON

(looking up)

Mr. Andrews, I think we should head
out, sir.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRONT YARD - NEAR THE MAIN GATE

The light drizzle quickly turns to heavy showers. Everyone run toward their buildings, except Lina and Heather. They both stand in the rain, waving as the car disappears in the distance.

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Lights are out, everyone is deep asleep. The RAINSTORM pelts the windows.

Lina is awakened by the continuing storm. She slowly opens her eyes. Nothing but blackness...just as she's turning to go back to bed. A LIGHTNING FLASH lights up the night. Lina's eyes go wide.

LINA'S POV

In a spilt of second, she sees Curly and Samantha sneaking out of the room, and hears the front door swinging shut.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD

Another flash illuminates the TWO GIRLS running toward the basketball court. Lina appears from behind, walking in the same direction, drenched as she tries to keep up.

She runs across the basketball court and arrives at the high chain fence, which leads to the BOY'S ORPHANAGE. She suddenly sees Curly and Samantha, on the other side of the fence, going inside a building.

LINA
(looking around)
How did they do that?

Lina looks for an opening in the fence, and finds it. It's a tiny hole enough to fit a small person.

She hesitates a bit, then pushes herself through the opening and crawls to the BOYS CAMP.

She looks around, it's dark, except from the light at the front of the building which Curly and Samantha went in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUILDING - BOY'S ORPHANAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Lina walks through the front door. It's very quiet. The silence and the dimmed light on the ceiling, gives this place an eerie feeling.

She hears A FAINT VOICE, it sounds like a girl's laugh. Lina walks toward the voice, very slow and very careful. SUDDENLY A DOOR OPENS, only few feet away from Lina, and a BOY comes out. Lina and the boy SCREAM when they see each other. Lina turns and flies out of the building.

BOY (O.S.)
Hey! Wait!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHAIN FENCE - BOY'S ORPHANAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Lina runs as fast as fast as she can toward the fence, she hears footsteps behind her, it's the BOY, running after her.

BOY (O.S.)
Stop!

She arrives at the fence and tries to cross to the other side, but now she can't find the opening, and the boy's footsteps are becoming louder and clearer.

Lina finally finds the opening, and DARTS through it, then keeps running towards her building.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING HALL - MORNING

Lina and Heather stand in the breakfast line. They pick up their plates and walk to their usual table.

Lina looks tired, her eyes are red. She sees Curly and Samantha sitting at a different table with four other girls. They were giggling and whispering to each other, except Curly, she was staring at Lina.

HEATHER
(noticing Lina's red eyes)
Lina, what's wrong? Are you sick

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA
(sneezes)
No. I'm fine.

HEATHER
But your eyes are red. Were you
crying because Mr. Andrews left?

Lina shakes her head, then notices Curly's stare.

HEATHER
Because I did.

Curly gets up and walks toward Lina. She gives her a dirty
look then leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Lina and Heather scrub the floors.

HEATHER
So now we have to mop the hallway
floors, and clean the bathrooms as
well?

LINA
I bet you Curly went into Mary
Ann's office and told some lies,
that's why she added this to our
cleaning duties.

HEATHER
That's not fair.

LINA
(sighing)
It's OK, Heather.

A pause.

HEATHER
(mopping)
Lina...

LINA
Yes...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEATHER

How many days left till next
Christmas?

LINA

Hmm, I think 365 days.

HEATHER

Oh, how long is that?

LINA

A year.

HEATHER

A whole year??

Lina nods.

HEATHER

So what are we supposed to do for a
whole year?

Lina thinks about this one.

LINA

We can dream.

HEATHER

Dream about what?

LINA

Lets dream about things we wanna
have, the nicest things.

Heather closes her eyes and thinks hard.

HEATHER

I wanna have a candy factory, so I
can eat all the candy I want. Your
turn.

LINA

I wanna have lots and lots of
money, so I can buy me a big house
with big garden to grow my own
flowers, oh and I want my own
bathroom too.

At that moment Curly, Samantha and two other girls walk by.
One of the girls (CAITLIN, about 15), kicks Heather's bucket,
spilling dirty water all over the floor, then walks off,
laughing with the rest of the gang.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEATHER
(sighing)
So much for dreaming.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD

Early tulips and wildflowers BLOOM everywhere. It's spring time. The front yard is back to life.

Lina and Heather appear, lazily waking toward the basketball court.

Curly and her gang are playing against three other girls, and easily winning.

One of the girls on the opposing team misses a pass, and the ball ends up at Lina's feet. She instinctively picks it up and shoots a THREE POINTER...ALL NET.

Everyone is shocked. AMY, 14, walks over to Lina.

AMY
Hey Lina, wanna play?

Lina hesitates a bit, then nods.

Curly and her gang get ready. Amy motions to the third girl on their team to step aside for Lina.

LINA (V.O.)
...I was never an A student, but I WAS talented enough to become the captain of the 6th grade basketball team at school...and I wasn't about to let anyone take that away from me.

Lina takes to the court, and it's obvious this is becoming alot more than a BALL GAME, as Curly rolls up her sleeves and huddles with her team.

Curly, Samantha and Caitlin, against Amy, Lina and Jody. Both teams play against one basketball goal since this is a only a half court.

A girl, acting as a referee has the ball.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REFEREE

OK, listen up. This is a ten
minutes game...keep it
clean...Ready...GO!

She blows her whistle and throws the ball up in the air...AND
THE GAME BEGINS.

Curly, the tallest girl on the court, gets the ball. Amy is
defending her. Curly dribbles twice then throws a pass to
Samantha, but the pass is intercepted by Lina, who quickly
passes to Amy, and Amy scores from under the basket.

Loud cheers all around as girls flock to the court from all
directions. Even boys from the other side of the fence are
cheering.

Another girl is keeping scores on a small board. Team Curly
(0), Team Amy (2).

Caitlin takes the ball and drives past Jody, then passes to
Curly, who dribbles past Amy and scores. Curly and Caitlin HI-
FIVE each other, even though their team doesn't get alot of
cheers.

Lina has the bowl, she quickly dribbles past Samantha, Curly
tries to block her, but Lina easily dribbles past her and
passes to Amy, who quickly scores over Curly.

HEATHER

(very excited)
Go Lina, GO!

Mary Ann, Clara and some members of the staff appear in the
front of the building, drawn by the loud screams and cheers.
They see Curly who just went up and scored over Lina and
Jody. Mary Ann catches eyes with Clara as she paints a thin
smile over her lips.

Back at the court

The scoring board shows Team Curly (16), Team Amy (14)

The referee checks her watch and announces:

REFEREE

TEN SECONDS LEFT.

The girls look tired as they wipe their sweat.

AMY

OK girls, this is our last chance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Amy gets the ball and dribbles toward the basket. Curly and Samantha block her route. Lina is under the basket and wants the ball, Amy throws to her, Lina quickly takes the ball and dribbles to the far end of court, Curly is running after her. The referee checks her watch and gets ready to sound the whistle, but at that same moment Lina lifts up and throws a long THREE POINTER.

The ball HANGS in the air as the referee sounds the whistle...and falls right in.

The crowd explodes.

Team Curly look at each other in disbelief. Amy and Jody run up to Lina and lift her up in the air.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Lina pick out a wildflower, Heather runs after a butterfly. They are behind the basketball court, close to the fence. Curly and Samantha walk over and start talking to some boys behind the fence.

One of these boys is MICKY. It's that same BOY who saw Lina in the building. He watches her, then walks closer to where she's sitting with Heather.

MICKY

Hello.

Lina pretends she didn't hear him.

MICKY

Hey, I know you.

LINA

I don't know what you're talking about.

Curly is squeezing her teeth. Lina takes Heather's hand and walk away. Micky walks over to Curly and whispers something.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

It's dark. Lina is deep asleep. She feels something. She slowly opens her eyes, and sees FOUR SHADOWS, inches away from her. She tries to get up, but one of the shadows pushes her back and closes her mouth as the rest start BEATING her up.

SHADOW
(Curly's voice)
That's what you get for snooping
around!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INFIRMARY - DAY

Lina lies in bed unconscious. She has BANDAGES on her face and arms.

Heather, Clara, Amy, Jody and few other girls sit around her. Heather is holding her hand.

Mary Ann walks in.

MARY ANN
Did she wake up yet?

Clara shakes her head.

MARY ANN
I wonder who'd do such a thing?

AMY
(mad)
You mean you don't know?

MARY ANN
(shrugs)
How should I know?

JODY
It's obvious Curly and her gang did
it, we all know that.

MARY ANN
And how do you know that? Did you
see them do it?

Jody shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY ANN

OK then, I don't think we should start accusing people if we're not sure.

AMY

But...

MARY ANN

(interrupts)

And that will be the end of it. I'm gonna have a talk with her when she wakes up.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD

Lina leans on Heather as they both walk toward the park bench near the main gate. The bandages are gone. Amy and Jody walk up to them and give Lina a hug.

AMY

Welcome back champ.

A late-model CADILLAC drives up to the main gate. A couple get out, and walk inside. One of the NUNS on duty in the front yard greets them, and shows them the way to Mary Ann's office.

AMY

(sighing)

I wonder who's the lucky one this time.

JODY

I'm sure it's not one of us. They all wanna adopt young girls... Babies.

HEATHER

Who are these people?

LINA

They come here to look for children to adopt.

HEATHER

Why don't they get their own babies?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMY
(laughs)
Because they ran out of gas.

Lina and Jody laugh.

HEATHER
Gas??

That same couple and Mary Ann appear at the front of the building, then start walking towards the front yard. The girls watch.

JODY
Here we go. The usual tour.

The couple and Mary Ann walk in the direction of the girls.

AMY
This is weird.

LINA
What's weird?

AMY
They're coming this way, the babies
are in the other direction,
building number one.

JODY
Hey, they're looking for an OLDIE,
get ready girls.

Amy and Jody try to fix their hair, wipe their teeth with their fingers. Lina and Heather look clueless.

The couple is passing them. Lina catches eyes with the WOMAN, who smiles at her. Lina smiles back then looks the other way.

AMY
Man! I wish they pick me, they seem
loaded

HEATHER
Loaded with what?

AMY
'Christ Heather, can't you see?
Look at their car...that's a
MERCEDES honey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JODY
That's a PONTIAC, you idiot.

AMY
Whatever.

LINA
I wish they adopt Mary Ann.

HEATHER
I wish they adopt Curly and
Samantha.

AMY/JODY
I wish they adopt me.

The tour has ended. The couple and Mary Ann walk back to the office.

Moments later, that same nun appears again, and walks up toward Lina and her friends.

NUN
Lina.

LINA
Yes sister?

NUN
Sister Mary Ann wants to see you.

LINA
Me? Why? What did I do this time?

NUN
I have no idea.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARY ANN'S OFFICE - LATER

Lina walks in. She sees the couple smiling at her. They are Edna and Bob Jones. BOB is in his mid 50's. EDNA, a very elegant woman in her mid 40's. Mary Ann is grinning.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD

Lina slowly walks back to the park bench.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMY

Well?

Lina is lost in her own thoughts.

HEATHER

Lina, are you OK?

LINA

(absently)

Who, me?

AMY

Oh come on, what did she want from you?

LINA

...I'm being adopted.

A beat.

AMY

Are you serious?

Lina nods. Heather didn't get it yet.

AMY

Wow, this is cool. Congratulations.

JODY

But how come they picked you?

AMY

Shut up Jody, this is not our business.

(to Lina)

Lina, we're gonna miss you alot...
When are you leaving?

LINA

Tomorrow morning.

Now Heather gets it. She looks at Lina in disbelief, getting ready to cry...Lina holds her.

LINA

I'm gonna come visit you every week, I promise.

HEATHER

(very emotional)

Lina, why do you want to go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lina is out of words.

HEATHER
(crying)
What about me?

Amy holds Heather's hand.

AMY
Heather, don't worry honey. You
have me and Jody here. We'll take
care of you, don't worry.

Lina gives Amy a "thank you." Look.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - EARLY MORNING

Lina just finished packing. She places a small suitcase by the bed and looks at Heather. She then pulls her closer and start brushing her hair.

LINA
(sighing)
Here's my plan...Are you listening?

Heather's chin begins to tremble and she chokes out a sob.

LINA
Well?

Heather finally nods.

LINA
Good. First of all we have no
future in this place, right?

Heather nods.

LINA
...So, we need a way out, and if
I'm lucky, and if these people turn
out to be as nice as they look,
then in a month or so I'll talk
them into adopting you as well.

Heather looks happy all of a sudden.

HEATHER
Really??

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

Of course, Heather, you're my little baby sister and my best friend, and I'm not going anywhere without you. I just need a month or maybe less, and then we'll be back together again...sounds Good?

HEATHER

Yes, sounds good Lina, so what's the plan?

LINA

Ha?

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN GATE - MORNING

Lina has her suitcase and is walking towards the gate. Bob and Edna are waiting in the Cadillac outside.

CLARA (O.S.)

Lina.

Clara walks over to her and they hug each other.

CLARA

You take care of yourself, my dear.

LINA

Thank you for everything, sister Clara.

CLARA

I am your sister Lina, don't you ever forget it.

(wipes a tear)

We'll miss you so much.

LINA

I'll miss you too.

Mary Ann appears at the door step of the building, and waves goodbye to Lina.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - INSIDE THE CAR - LATER

Lina is in the back seat. Edna turns and gives her a big smile.

LINA (V.O.)

...I was off to my new life. My new parents are Bob and Edna Jones. A retired couple living off some real estate investments they made few years ago. They told me their daughter grew up, and went on with her own life, and now they're living alone in their big house in The Hollywood Hills. That's why they decided to adopt me, so I can "fill their lives with joy and happiness"...These were Bob's exact words.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - AFTERNOON

The Cadillac is driving up a narrow, winding road. A street sign appears. The words on the sign read..."Mulholland Drive."

We stay with the Cadillac as it winds its way up Mulholland Drive, past the fancy homes of the Hollywood Hills.

The car makes a turn on a secluded, private road, which dead-ends at a large SECURITY GATE. The gate SLIDES open, and the Cadillac pulls in.

Lina gets out and looks at the house. She can't believe her eyes. It's a breathtaking, two-story Mediterranean mansion. Bob & Edna take her hand and walk her in.

INT. THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

French doors, granite floors, spiral Staircase, large plasma TV Screen in the living room.

Everything is custom-made and very expensive.

Edna takes Lina's hand and walk her upstairs...

INT. THE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

...They walk through a long hallway.

EDNA
 (pointing)
 This is the door to our bedroom,
 and...
 (she opens a door at the
 end of the hallway)
 This is your bedroom.

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lina and Edna walk in. There is a large bed, beautiful pictures on the walls and a balcony. Lina gasps.

Edna pushes open another door, it's the bathroom.

EDNA
 And you get your own bathroom.

LINA
 (shocked)
 Mrs. Jones this is...

EDNA
 (interrupts)
 Don't call me Mrs. Jones, just call
 me Edna, Edna and Bob. We are
 family now, right?

Lina is out of words, she nods.

EDNA
 I'm gonna let you settle in.
 Whatever you need, just knock on my
 door.

Edna kisses Lina and leaves.

LINA (V.O.)
 ...It was like the stuff we see in
 the movies...the poor little girl
 who finally gets her happy ending,
 and lives happily ever after.

Lina looks around. She puts her hand on the bed, then on the table, making sure they are real, she then turns and looks in the bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...I shared a bathroom with TWELVE other girls, for a whole year...now I have this, all to myself...I guess dreams do come true, sometimes.

She then walks out to the balcony, which overlook a large park-like BACK YARD with large swimming pool.

She turns to walk back in, but finds a MAN standing right behind her. Lina SCREAMS before realizing it's Bob.

BOB

(big smile)

I'm sorry. I knocked but you didn't hear me. I just want to make sure you have everything you need.

LINA

(still gasping)

Yes...Yes I do, thank you Mr...I mean thank you Bob.

BOB

You're welcome honey...

(a beat)

So, we'll be having dinner in about an hour, just come down whenever you feel like it.

Edna suddenly storms in, and gives Bob a strange, suspicious look.

EDNA

(to Bob)

What are you doing here?

BOB

Nothing, I'm just checking on Lina.

EDNA

Lina is fine, Bob. I think we should let her rest.

Bob heads out, Edna moves out of his way, still keeping eye contact with him until he's outside. She follows him as she closes the door.

Lina can still hear Edna talking to him...moments later she hears their bedroom door SLAM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)
 ...They kept yelling at each other
 for a while, but I couldn't
 understand what they were arguing
 about. I just hoped it wasn't
 because of something I did or said.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

A digital clock reads: 6:15 AM. Lina sits up and quickly
 jumps out and starts to make her bed...then stops and looks
 around.

LINA (V.O.)
 ...I kept thinking Mary Ann will
 come in any minute through that
 door.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BACK YARD - MORNING

Lina walks out into an immaculately manicured ROSE GARDEN.
 She takes in a breath of fresh air as she walks around.

MAN (O.S.)
 Hello.

Lina is startled. It's FERNANDO, the Gardner, about 30. He
 carries a shovel and a bucket.

LINA
 Hello.

FERNANDO
 (Spanish accent)
 I am Fernando, the Gardner.

LINA
 (smiling)
 Hi Fernando, I'm Lina. Nice to meet
 you.

FERNANDO
 Nice to meet you too.

He nods to her, then turns and gets back to his work. Lina
 stays with him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

So did you plant all these pretty flowers?

FERNANDO

(proud)

Of course I did. When I came here few years ago, there was nothing here, and now look at it, full of life.

LINA

Wow, Fernando, this is so pretty.

FERNANDO

Do you want to see real beauty?

LINA

(excited)

Sure.

Lina follows him to the other side of the garden, there, Fernando proudly points to a breathtaking, 8 foot TREE with dark burgundy-red leaves.

LINA

This is so beautiful, what is it?

FERNANDO

This is Japanese maple tree. TEN years old.

Lina notices a small structure few feet away.

LINA

What is that?

FERNANDO

This is my room. I sleep here in the week, and I go see my wife and kids on the weekend.

LINA

(smiling)

Fernando, I'm so happy you're here, I like you so much.

FERNANDO

I like you too, you are nicer than the other girl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

What girl?

EDNA (O.S.)

I see you two have met.

Edna walks over to them, smiling.

LINA

Yes. Fernando was showing me the flowers.

EDNA

Aren't they pretty! Fernando is the best...but we have to leave him now, we have other things to do.

Lina smiles at Fernando, then walks away with Edna. Fernando watches them leave, then shakes his head.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

EDNA

You must've been very tired. You went to bed without dinner last night.

LINA

It's OK, I wasn't hungry.

EDNA

So, Lina, tell me, was Bob bothering you at all yesterday?

Lina shakes her head.

LINA

No. He came to ask me if everything was OK. Did I do anything wrong?

EDNA

No honey, not at all, you're fine. But please make sure to tell me if Bob, or anyone else bothers you.

LINA

No one is bothering me at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDNA

Very good, I'm glad to hear that sweetheart, because now you are our responsibility. I want you to think of me and Bob as your parents. Bob tends to get in the way sometimes, he tries too hard, and some people don't like that. But he's a good man, that's why I've been married to him for nearly TWENTY years.

LINA

That long?

EDNA

That's right honey, twenty years and still going, like the energizer bunny.

Lina smiles.

EDNA

You know, you have the prettiest smile.

Lina's face turns red.

EDNA

Out of all the girls in that orphanage, you were the only one I liked, you know why?

LINA

Why?

EDNA

Because you weren't trying too hard.

Lina looks confused.

She is still wearing that same blue shirt and the long gray skirt Clara gave her.

EDNA

Hey I have an idea, how about if you and I go shopping? Just us girls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

OK.

CUT TO:

EXT. MELROSE AVENUE - DAY

Lina comes out of the car, and takes few steps onto the street. Edna lurks behind, talking on a CELL PHONE.

EDNA

(to Lina)

Honey, walk around, I'll be done in few minutes.

Lina is looking wide-eyed and delighted, and a bit overwhelmed. She passes store windows...and MORE STORE WINDOWS. Each display is more beautiful and expensive than the one before.

Two GIRLS, in elegant designer outfits, stroll by, eyeing Lina as if she were a freak. Lina suddenly feels naked. She stands there, feeling lost all of a sudden. She takes a deep breath, trying to control herself.

LINA (V.O.)

...This was my first time in public for over a year. I almost forgot how it feels like.

She steals a look at her own outfit, then looks around to see if anyone is watching...And painfully discovers that everyone IS.

LINA (V.O.)

...I was still wearing that same outfit Clara had given me. It's the only one I had...the only one I needed, because in the orphanage no one cared what you're wearing, you were lucky if you had something decent and warm...but here it's different, here I felt naked.

Suddenly a hand touches her shoulder, startling her. She turns...It's Edna...Who notices her pale face.

EDNA

Hey sweetie, are you OK?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA
 (nearly crying)
 Yes, I'm fine.

Two more, nicely dressed GIRLS her own age look at her, then turn away and giggle. Edna looks surprised. She then takes a look at Lina's outfit and gets it.

Lina suddenly loses it and starts to cry. Edna holds her tight.

EDNA
 Oh honey, baby don't worry about them. These people have no heart.

LINA (V.O.)
 ...Even though Edna was very nice to me, that day, I missed my mother, more than any other time. No one ever can protect, comfort and love children like their own mothers.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOUTIQUE - LATER

Lina and Edna walk in. The place looks very expensive.

HELEN, a large friendly woman, spots them and quickly approaches.

HELEN
 (smiling)
 Hello ladies, my name is Helen, what can I do for you today?

EDNA
 Helen, this is my daughter, Lina. I want you to help her pick out the prettiest and most expensive outfits you have, can you do that?

HELEN
 (excited)
 Well, sure we can do that.

She takes a step back, then regards Lina with a professional eye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HELEN

Such a pretty girl, nice figure.

Lina's face is very red.

HELEN

So what are we exactly looking for?
Dresses? Tank-tops?

EDNA

Everything.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOUTIQUE - LATER

Lina tries on different clothes. She comes happily out of the dressing room wearing a low cut tank-top and designer jeans.

CUT TO:

EXT. MELROSE AVENUE - LATER

Lina and Edna walk down the street. Lina has the new tank-top and the jeans on. She has few shopping bags in one hand, and holds on tight to Edna's hand with the other. A big smile on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HOUSE - EVENING

Lina and Edna walk in, talking, giggling. Lina has a cute hair cut. Bob is waiting for them, his eyes are wide-open as he stares at Lina.

Edna puts her hand on Lina, as if displaying her.

EDNA

(to Bob)

So?

Bob is staring at her, top to bottom.

BOB

...Amazing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDNA

(proud)

I'm telling you Bob, with time I'm gonna make this girl the talk of the town. MY girl.

BOB

She is a beauty, no doubt about that.

EDNA

Doesn't she remind you of Kathy?

Bob takes the chance to stare harder at Lina.

BOB

(nodding)

That's right, she actually does look a little bit like Kathy.

EDNA

(to Lina)

Kathy is my daughter, she's married and lives in Virginia.

BOB

Come to think of it, she looks alot like Kathy, same eyes...and Body.

EDNA

(looking at Lina)

That's right...you're Right, the eyes

(to Lina)

Baby, go put away your new clothes so we can have dinner, I'm starving.

LINA

OK.

Lina hesitates for a second, then gives Edna a big hug, she then turns and walks to the stairs. Edna is touched.

Edna then reaches inside one of the bags, and pulls out a cute BLACK DRESS...and fits it over her body.

EDNA

(smiling)

And look what I got for myself, Bob.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bob smiles. He walks closer and gives her a warm hug, with his eyes tracking Lina over Edna's shoulder, as Lina walks upstairs.

EDNA
 (releasing herself)
 I've got to call Kathy and tell her
 about Lina, maybe she'll come down
 next week.

CUT TO:

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Lina is in her under-shirt, fitting new clothes over her body, as she stares at herself in the MIRRORED CLOSET DOOR.

LINA (V.O.)
 ...It was too good to be true. New
 clothes, new house, new life, new
 parents...

Lina pinches her arm.

LINA (V.O.)
 ...I kept pinching my arm, I wanted
 to make sure this is true. I kept
 looking at the door, thinking it
 would be pushed wide open, and Mary
 Ann will walk in, screaming at me.

The bedroom door is suddenly pushed wide open, Lina's eyes go wide. It's Bob.

Lina instinctively covers her body with a shirt. Bob stares for few seconds.

BOB
 (faking a smile)
 Hello.

Lina doesn't answer.

BOB
 Oh, Edna sent me...dinner's ready.

LINA
 OK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gets an eyeful before leaving. Lina walks quickly toward the door to lock it, but to her shock, the door has NO LOCK.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALCONY - MORNING

Lina stands at the balcony, taking in a breath of fresh air. Fernando is trimming some leaves, he smiles and waves to her, she waves back.

LINA (V.O.)

...Two weeks have passed, and everything was going fine. Edna was such a great person. She really treated me like a daughter, took me out shopping, bought me ice cream and even gave me a TWENTY dollars allowance. She also promised to take me next week on a visit to the orphanage.

Bob shows up strolling in the back yard, wearing only a pair of white shorts. He strikes a conversation with Fernando while keeping an eye on Lina.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lina comes downstairs as we pick up the conversation between Bob and Edna. Edna is mad. She still has a cordless phone in her hand, and seems like she just finished a call.

EDNA

...Bob, I'm telling you, this guy is way out of line, someone has to straighten him out.

BOB

You know him and I don't get along. He won't listen to me. I think you should go.

EDNA

You're right.

They notice Lina.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDNA

Hi honey.

LINA

Is everything OK?

EDNA

(shakes her head)

No. My daughter Kathy just called crying from Virginia, she's fighting with her husband. I think I'm gonna have to go there for a couple of days, straighten things out with that guy.

LINA

Sorry to hear that.

EDNA

Oh, I'm starting to get used to it. This is not the first time.

LINA

Do you want me to go with you?

EDNA

I don't know sweetie. I'd love to take you, and introduce you to Kathy, but maybe this is not a good time.

BOB

(quickly approving)

I agree. Just go by yourself, Edna, and when things calm down, maybe me and Lina can take a flight and spend a couple of days over there.

EDNA

(nodding)

Yeah. This makes sense.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK YARD - AFTERNOON

Lina sits with Fernando by the pool.

LINA

I hope Edna comes back soon. I'm bored.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FERNANDO
When did she leave?

LINA
Last night. She said she'll be back
in two days.

FERNANDO
She is a nice lady, I like her very
much.

LINA
Me too.

FERNANDO
So you are alone in the house?

LINA
Yes, just me and Bob.

Fernando looks worried. He wants to say something but changes
his mind.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lina is sitting alone, watching the movie "SHARK TALE" on the
large Plasma TV. Bob walks in. He's wearing a short BATHROBE.

BOB
Hi.

LINA
Hi.

BOB
Edna called, she says hi.

LINA
When is she coming back?

BOB
Oh, couple more days...you miss
her?

LINA
Yes. Alot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB

(smiling and testing)

What if I went away for a while.
Would you miss me as well?

She thinks about this one for few seconds.

LINA

Of course, you're like my father.

He doesn't like this answer.

BOB

That's it? Just a father?

LINA

Yes.

Bob gets up, walks over to the WET BAR, and pours himself a JACK DANIELS, straight...then walks back and sits a little closer to Lina. Both looking at the screen

Now comes the part in the movie when "LOLA" is coming on to "OSCAR".

BOB

Hot little girl, isn't she?

LINA

She's a fish!

He takes a long sip, and seems to enjoy every drop.

BOB

Doesn't matter...look at this hot
body.

Lina is starting to feel uncomfortable.

LINA

I don't like her.

BOB

Why not?

LINA

Because she's deceiving. She's only
pretending to like Oscar, she wants
to take his money and leave him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB
 (clearly testing the
 water)
 Not true. She's a poor little girl,
 he's a rich man. They can both make
 each other happy...don't you think
 so?

LINA
 How?

BOB
 (hinting)
 Lots of ways.

Lina feel very uncomfortable.

LINA
 (getting up)
 I'm sleepy. Goodnight.

She quickly runs up the stairs. Bob watches her as he licks
 his lips, and finishes his drink in one long sip.

CUT TO:

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's dark. Lina is deep asleep.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME MOMENT

A dark shadow moves slowly toward the staircase. A tiny
 hallway light in the second floor, illuminates the shadow as
 it walks upstairs. It's Bob.

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

That same tiny light illuminates Lina's face as her door
 slowly opens.

BOB IS INSIDE THE BEDROOM

The door is left half open. We can now see Bob standing in
 the middle of the room, staring at Lina.

SHE SUDDENLY MOVES

LINA'S POV

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She slowly opens her eyes, it's blurry, but in a split of a second, she sees the light which illuminated her face, disappearing and the door is being closed. THE ROOM IS NOW DARK.

Lina freaks out. She quickly gets up and turns on the light. The room is EMPTY. She walks to the door, hesitates, then slowly turns the handle and opens the door. THE HALLWAY IS EMPTY.

She sits on her bed, her body is shaking.

LINA (V.O.)

...I was never more scared in my entire life. I didn't know what to do, or what to think. I tried to convince myself that it was just a nightmare, and that Bob would never do such a thing. But then I remembered his looks, his comments, everything was starting to make sense. Bob is a PERVERT, and a dangerous one.

CUT TO:

INT. FERNANDO'S ROOM - MORNING

Fernando is hanging a picture on a wall. His door is suddenly pushed open, it's Lina. She runs to him.

FERNANDO

What's wrong?

LINA

(gasping)

Bob! I think he was in my room last night!

FERNANDO

That son of a bitch. I knew it...Did he...?

Lina shakes her head.

LINA

He left when I woke up.

FERNANDO

I can't believe this. He is doing it again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

Doing what again??

FERNANDO

Few years ago, they adopted a young girl, Lisa, little bit older than you. One night he went into her room and...and tried to do something bad to her. His wife went crazy when she found out. She almost called the police.

LINA

(freaking out)

Oh my god!

FERNANDO

But instead, she took him to a doctor, you know what I mean, a head doctor. And he gave him medicine. It looks like the medicine didn't work on this crazy man.

LINA

(crying)

Fernando, I'm so scared, please help me, please. I wish Edna was here.

FERNANDO

I know. She is a very good woman. I don't know what she is doing with this crazy guy.

LINA

So what do I do now? I'm so scared Fernando.

FERNANDO

Do you have any relatives? Any place to go?

LINA

No. I don't have anyone.

Fernando thinks.

FERNANDO

I have an idea. Tomorrow morning I go to my home. I take you with me, then we decide what you should do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

I wanna get back to the orphanage.

FERNANDO

OK, tomorrow morning I take you.

LINA

But I want to leave now, Fernando.
I can't stay here another minute.

FERNANDO

(shakes his head)

If we leave now, he will see us and he will be mad at me. He will fire me. Best time is very early in the morning, he will be sleep. I meet you here and take you with me.

LINA

So I have to spend another night in this house? What if he tried anything?

FERNANDO

I don't think he will. He is very scared from his wife after what happened with Lisa. But if he did...

(holds up his shovel)

...I Take care of him.

Lina takes a small box of thumb-tacks, the one Fernando was using to hang his picture.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a thumb-tack, one of many, being placed by Lina on her bedroom floor, in an upright position, all the way from the door to the bed.

Lina stares at the thumb-tacks as she sits on her bed...and turns off the light.

LINA (V.O.)

...I didn't sleep that night. All I wanted is to get out of that house. The house of terror as I called it later. I didn't care for the new clothes, or the money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA(cont'd)

It all seemed worthless to me comparing to the price I'd have to pay if I stayed. That night I missed the orphanage, I missed my friends, I missed my simple and innocent life...and I prayed for this night to end in peace...but it didn't.

Lina hears something outside her door. She's very alert. CLOSE ON THE DOOR HANDLE as it slowly turns. Lina is terrified.

THE DOOR IS SLOWLY PUSHED OPEN, and Bob appears...shirtless.

BOB

(soft)

Lina, can I come in? Please?

LINA

(gasping)

No. GO AWAY!

BOB

Why are you doing this to me, Lina?
I just wanna talk to you. I just
wanna be your friend.

LINA

If you don't leave now, I'm gonna
tell Edna about you. So you better
leave.

Bob suddenly pushes the door open and starts to walk in. He steps on the thumb-tacks, and screams in pain as he FALLS face-down to the ground, hitting his head against the closet on his way down.

Lina quickly jumps up on her bed, and SPRINTS out of the room, and into the hallway.

INT. STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lina stumbles as fast as she can down the stairs. She looks up and sees Bob, his forehead GASHED, glaring down from the landing.

She screams as she runs across the living room to the front door. She reaches for the door knob, but her hands are shaking hard, making it difficult to open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, A BLOODY HAND yanks her backwards. Lina screams as she pushes the HAND away. Bob advances on her. At that same moment, the front door OPENS, it's FERNANDO, holding out his shovel. He STRIKES Bob on his head, but Bob moves his head and gets it on his shoulder as both men FALL to the ground.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lina FLIES out the door, across the driveway to the SECURITY GATE, which is locked. She frantically searches for a way out, and spots a door handle, she quickly turns it, and a DOOR SWINGS WIDE OPEN.

She BOLTS onto the private street. She hears footsteps behind her, she looks, it's Bob, stumbling across the driveway, being slowed down by the WOUNDS he got from the thumb-tacks.

She FLIES down the private road, then crosses Mulholland down through the bushes, and into DARKNESS.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

Lina runs down a hill through tangles of hostile desert plants. She loses control and FALLS to the ground. She gets up and stumbles through the trees. When she clears them she is standing overlooking all of LOS ANGELES, glowing down below. She starts down toward it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - LATER

Lina slides down a dusty hill and finds herself on SUNSET BOULEVARD. A car races by, and its headlights flare on her face. Her expression shows fear and panic. She doesn't know where she is or where to go.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - IN A SERIES OF CUTS

Lina is running frantically down the street, then moves quickly to a sidewalk which takes her into a residential area.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lina is on a different street, breathless, she leans over a WALL for few seconds, looks around. No one is following her. She turns and keeps running.

LINA (V.O.)

...That night I kept running, and running. I didn't know where I was, and I had no place to go...I kept hearing, or imagining footsteps behind me. I thought Bob is gonna catch up to me, and take me back to the house of terror, so I ran faster until my legs gave in.

Lina runs off a sidewalk and into the bushes in the FRONT YARD of a house. Feeling safe in these bushes, her exhaustion overtakes her as she lays her head down and closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

Lina is lying on a bed, face down, unconscious.

A beautiful young girl, about 5, climbs into the bed, and starts to play with lina's hair.

We hear the voice of a WOMAN, calling out to the little girl, IN SPANISH... " Maria, leave her alone, come have your breakfast "

Maria quickly climbs down from the bed and runs out.

WE PULL BACK AND FOLLOW MARIA from the bedroom where Lina is, to a living room where a TV station plays " sesame street " in Spanish, to a kitchen, and we find ROSA, a 23 years old Mexican Woman, making breakfast.

Rosa takes out few strips of BACON from a hot SKILLET and places them in a plate next to scrambled eggs and toast, then takes the plate to a small dining table and gets ready to feed her daughter.

BACK TO LINA

She slowly moves her face up and tries to open her eyes. She can smell the bacon & eggs. Her face and arms have few pieces of BAND-AID.

LIVING ROOM

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Maria can see through the bedroom from the dining table, she sees Lina move.

MARIA
(pointing)
Mom, look, she's alive.

Rosa and Maria run to the bedroom.

LINA'S POV

It's blurry, then, the kind, smiling faces of Rosa and Maria start to take shape.

LINA (V.O.)
...I slept for three full days, and when I woke up, I had no idea where I was. But for some reason I felt at peace...a peace I haven't felt in a very long time.

Lina slowly sits up. She looks at the pillow, at the bed. Her eyes move quickly and frantically through the walls and ceilings. She then jumps out of bed and stumbles to the living room and kitchen, scanning every little detail, to the shock of Rosa, and to the joy of Maria, who kept following her around.

LINA (V.O.)
...I couldn't believe it. I ran all night long, in the darkness. I had no idea where I was going, and of all the places in the world, I ended up at MY OLD HOUSE.

She kneels to the floor and touches the carpet, crawls and hugs the TV.

LINA (V.O.)
...It was either my survival instinct, or GOD himself who brought me back to the only place on earth where I can feel safe, my old house. This is where I was born, this is where my mother raised me, and loved me.

Lina sits on the floor, tears roll down her cheeks as Rosa kindly puts her hand on Lina's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...Nothing has changed, everything is the same as it used to be. After my mother died and I was taken to the orphanage, the landlord rented the house, furnished, to this beautiful family, who found me in their front yard. They took me in and took care of me like their own daughter. They gave me a place to sleep and food to eat, and never expected anything in return.

Rosa gently takes Lina's hand and walk her to the dining table. Lina sees the eggs & bacon and jumps on the plate.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LINA'S OLD HOUSE - LATER

Lina is brushing Maria's long black hair, Rosa is working in the kitchen. The front door opens and a MAN enters. HECTOR MENDEZ is Rosa's husband, a kind-looking Mexican man in his late 20's.

He looks a bit surprised to see Lina, awake and out of bed.

HECTOR

(Spanish accent)

Hello, my name is Hector.

LINA

Hi Hector, I'm Lina. What are their names?

HECTOR

Oh I'm sorry, this is my wife Rosa and my daughter Maria...how are you feeling?

LINA

I'm OK, thanks to you.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LINA'S OLD HOUSE - LATER

Lina is sitting at the dining table with Hector and Rosa, she's talking, and they're both listening.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...I told them my story, from start to finish. They both sat and listened, and when I told them this used to be my old house, Rosa said this must be "God's Will" that I ended up here after all I went through...

Hector gets up and pick up a NEWSPAPER from a shelf, then gets back and sits at the table.

LINA (V.O.)

...I thought my troubles were over, and all I had to do is ask Hector to drop me off at the orphanage...

Hector points at something in the PAPER and starts talking to his wife in Spanish.

HECTOR

Do you believe her Rosa?

ROSA

I believe every word, she's a young girl. Young girls don't lie.

HECTOR

You think I should call the police or not?

ROSA

No.

Lina looks confused, her eyes going back and forth between them.

LINA

Excuse me. What's wrong?

Hector slides the paper to Lina. She looks, and is completely stunned to see HER PICTURE.

CLOSE ON the paper. TWO side by side pictures, one of Lina and Edna, smiling and waving to the camera, and the other one of Bob, his head is heavily wrapped in BANDAGES.

LINA (V.O.)

...Bob had lied and claimed he was attacked, beaten and robbed by me and Fernando.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA(cont'd)

...He convinced Edna and everyone else that me and Fernando, broke into his bedroom at night, beat him up, stole a large amount of cash from the house and ran away. The newspaper headline read: "A homeless orphan and a Gardner, attack an elderly Hollywood Hills homeowner, beating him unconscious before robbing him. Police is on the hunt for the TWO SUSPECTS"...the whole world came tumbling down on me at that moment.

Lina's heart is beating fast as she puts down the paper and looks at Hector and Rosa. Rosa holds her hand.

ROSA

(Spanish accent)

Don't worry Lina, we believe YOU.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. VINCENT'S ORPHANAGE - DAY

Two POLICE CARS and the CADILLAC are parked next to the front gate. Few girls had gathered near a park bench, including Heather, Amy and Jody, all look sad and concerned.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARY ANN'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Mary Ann is sitting behind her desk, reading the newspaper article.

PULL BACK

Two police officers, Bob and Edna, and few other nuns, including Clara. All sitting in silence, looking at Mary Ann.

She puts down the paper.

MARY ANN

(shakes her head)

This is unbelievable. Why would she do such a thing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDNA

(mad)

We treated her like a daughter.
What is this world coming to!

MARY ANN

How much money did she take?

BOB

It was her and that Gardner, they
took about FIVE THOUSAND...after
they hit me with that shovel.

EDNA

(wiping a tear)

We don't care about the money, if
she asked me, I would've given it
to her. But why beating a hopeless
old man? Nearly cracking his head
open.

Bob is nodding his approval.

MARY ANN

Mrs. Jones, I am so sorry for what
happened. And I am willing to take
full responsibility for this
shameless act.

POLICE OFFICER

(taking notes)

Sister Mary Ann, do you have any
idea where might she be? Any known
relatives you're aware of?

MARY ANN

(shakes her head)

Not at all. To my knowledge, she
doesn't have anyone.

POLICE OFFICER

How would you describe her behavior
when she lived here at the
orphanage?

Clara gives Mary Ann "the stare"

MARY ANN

She never stole from anyone, if
that's what you mean, officer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY ANN(cont'd)

Lina was a good girl, everyone liked her. That's why we're all very surprised with what happened.

Mary Ann steals a look at Clara and gets a "thank you" look from her.

CLARA

Mr. Jones, are you sure it was Lina and the Gardner who attacked you?

BOB

(mad)

Hell yeah! Hey, I could be old, sister, but I'm not THAT old yet. I know very well what happened that night. It was your orphan and that damn Gardner who attacked me, and beat me...OK?

Clara nods.

POLICE OFFICER

(getting up)

Sister mary Ann, I need a copy of the girl's file, and if you don't mind, we'd like to take a look at her room, or wherever she slept.

MARY ANN

(getting up)

Sure officer, I'll get it ready for you before you leave.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - MOMENTS LATER

Mary Ann walks in first, followed by the rest of the group.

MARY ANN

(pointing)

This was Lina's bed, no one sleeps here now.

Both officers look around the bed, under the mattress, on the floor. At that moment Heather walks in.

HEATHER

(emotional and angry)

My friend is NOT a thief, So leave her alone!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY ANN
Heather stop this...

CLARA
(interrupting)
Heather is right! Lina would never do such a thing...Mrs. Jones, please believe me, Lina is a sweet heart, she'd never hurt anyone. Just look out the window, please.

Edna is surprised. She and the rest of the group head for the window and look out.

A group of about TWENTY GIRLS, display a large BANNER, made out of old sheets, and the words..." LINA IS INOCENT " (innocent is misspelled) are hand-written with large letters.

The girls HOLD OUT the banner for Bob and Edna to see. Bob shakes his head.

BOB
They're all thieves.

HEATHER
(screams)
NO! YOU ARE THE THIEF! YOU STOLE MY FRIEND!

Clara and the nuns glance over at each other, with a little smile.

MARY ANN
(very mad)
MISTER JONES! Watch your language SIR! These girls maybe orphans, but they're not thieves! I assure you they have more honor and integrity than alot of people out there.

Bob doesn't like these comments.

BOB
Come on Edna, lets get out of here before we get robbed, again.

Edna looks very confused. She looks out at the girls holding the banner, at Heather and Clara, at Mary Ann, then slowly walks out with her husband.

CUT TO:

INT. THE VENICE BEACH BOARDWALK - DAY

Coffee shops, restaurants, tourists taking photos. This place is packed.

Lina appears. She wears a green baseball hat and a yellow shirt.

LINA (V.O.)

...A week had passed, and I had to get out of the house to get some fresh air. So I borrowed a hat from Hector and a shirt from Rosa to disguise myself, since I'm now a fugitive and a thief...I felt lost. I kept thinking, why is this happening to me? Why can't I just have a normal life, like everyone else?

She passes by a restaurant patio, she stops and looks at a family with some kids, the parents arguing over something silly, and the kids are crying.

LINA (V.O.)

...People need to learn to appreciate what they have...even the littlest things in life matter, because if they lost it, it will never come back...

Lina looks out at the ocean.

CUT TO:

INT. THE JONES HOUSE - NIGHT

Bob is in the living room, flipping through channels. Edna walks in.

BOB

Hi honey.

She stares at him.

BOB

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDNA

Bob, what really happened that night?

BOB

What do you mean?

EDNA

What I mean is, were you really attacked by Lina and Fernando?

BOB

Oh god, Edna, please don't tell me those damn orphans with the stupid banner got to you, please honey.

EDNA

I don't know. The more I think about this, the more LISA comes to my mind.

BOB

(mad)

I knew it! I knew Lisa's name was gonna be mentioned sooner or later!

EDNA

Well, it only makes sense. She was an orphan, too.

BOB

Edna listen to me, that episode, Lisa's episode is behind us now, I went to the shrink, we both did. I took the medicines and went on every visit...So lets drop this subject, please.

EDNA

I can't, Bob, it's driving me crazy. I...we both picked this girl out of hundreds of them. Could we be that wrong? That naive?

(a beat)

And Fernando, why would he hit you with that shovel? He worked for us for such a long time and was very honest...why would he do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB

How the hell should I know? Maybe he was waiting for the right chance. Maybe this little devil, Lina, talked him into it. You saw how she'd go into his room at night, they'd talk for hours. Maybe they were conspiring, Edna, how should I know?

EDNA

God, I wish they'd find her. I just wanna look her in the eye and ask her, why!

BOB

Honey, I think we should put this whole thing behind us and forget it ever happened. Just let the police handle it, that's what I think.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN AVENUE - NIGHT

Lina is sitting on a park bench, looking out at the dark ocean.

A couple of POLICEMEN walk by, a male and a female. The male officer stops and looks at Lina, she's terrified.

MALE OFFICER

Hello.

LINA

(looking down)

Hi.

MALE OFFICER

Are you OK?

Lina nods.

MALE OFFICER

You realize it's getting kind of late to be sitting here alone, right?

LINA

Yes...Sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALE OFFICER

What's your name?

Lina is very scared, she's not sure what to say.

FEMALE OFFICER

Come on Joe, you're scaring her,
lets go.

MALE OFFICER

OK...stay safe, alright?

Lina nods as the officers walk away.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. VINCENT'S ORPHANAGE - NIGHT

Mary Ann sits alone, reading a paper. Clara walks in. Mary Ann looks at her.

CLARA

Hello.

Mary Ann looks at her watch.

MARY ANN

Why are you up so late?

CLARA

I wanted to come and thank you.

Mary Ann walks over to her.

MARY ANN

Listen, I know I wasn't very nice to Lina, and maybe also a little unfair, at times. But I knew deep inside she's not a bad girl, and definitely not a thief.

CLARA

I'm sure she's not, sister Mary Ann.

MARY ANN

You really like this girl, don't you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

She reminded me of myself, when they first brought me here.

They both sit, Mary Ann holds Clara's hand.

MARY ANN

You were fifteen. You stood right here, in this office and told me you'll be here for a month or two, then you'll be leaving us.

CLARA

That's what I wanted to do. I wanted to go look for my mother...but then I found you, instead.

(a beat)

...What happened? Why did you change?

MARY ANN

People change, Clara. Living among these children changed me. I started to think like them, feel like them. I started to feel angry, and ask myself why I'm here, just like they do.

CLARA

Forgive me, but I don't agree with you. This place gave me shelter, protected me, taught me, gave me hope...you gave me hope. And just like you said it, we have more honor and integrity than alot of people out there.

Mary Ann holds her closer and kisses her head.

CLARA

(wipes a tear)

I'm so worried about Lina. She's out there on her own. She has no one. We were her family, and now she's alone...she's just too young for this.

MARY ANN

To be honest with you, I'm worried too...I just don't know what to do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARA

I have an idea, but I don't know if you'll like it.

MARY ANN

What is it?

CLARA

Call Mr. Andrews.

MARY ANN

Mr. Andrews?

CLARA

Yes. He's a good man, I'm sure he'll help us. You saw how nice he was to her. What if we called him and told him what happened, maybe he can help, somehow.

Mary Ann thinks about it.

MARY ANN

You know what, this might not be such a bad idea. He always told me to call him if I needed anything. Tomorrow morning I'll give him a call.

Clara gets up, and gives Mary Ann a big hug.

CLARA

(smiling)

Thank you...mother.

CUT TO:

INT. LINA'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lina is deep asleep, she moves, she just smelled something. She sits up and looks at the door. It's her MOTHER, MARY, standing at her bedroom door, smiling at her.

LINA

MOM! I knew it was you, I smelled your perfume!

Mary walks to her, sits on the side of the bed and gives her daughter a hug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

(crying)

Mom I miss you...I miss you sooo much!

MARY

I miss you too honey. I missed my little angel.

LINA

But why did you leave me? Where did you go?

MARY

I had to go my love. It was my time to go.

LINA

Don't leave me again, please, MOM, I'm so scared without you.

MARY

No, baby, don't be scared. Remember, you're not alone. I'll always be near you, looking out for you.

LINA

Please stay with me. I need you.

MARY

(getting up)

I will my love.

LINA

Mom...where are you going?

Mary smiles at Lina as she waves goodbye to her.

LINA

Mom, wait, don't go...Don't go.

Rosa walks in, and turns on the light. She hears Lina talking in her sleep, saying..."Mom, come back, please".

Rosa gently shakes Lina's shoulder, waking her up from her dream. Lina looks around.

ROSA

(smiling)

You were dreaming of you mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lina looks sad as she nods.

ROSA
A friend came to visit you.

LINA
A friend? Who?

ROSA
Come, and you will see.

Lina follows Rosa to the living room, and she is shocked to see Fernando, sitting the at dining table with Hector.

LINA
FERNANDO!

She runs to him, they hug each other.

LINA
Fernando, where have you been? I was so worried about you!

FERNANDO
I ran after you that night, but I couldn't find you.

LINA
But I thought Bob was running after me.

FERNANDO
Yes he did, but only for a very short distance, because I hit him one more time.

LINA
(hugs him again)
Fernando, you are my hero.

FERNANDO
(proud)
I would never let that man hurt you, my friend.

Rosa and Hector look at each other, they feel very good about having this man in their house.

LINA
Did you read the paper?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FERNANDO

Yes I did. The police came to my house looking for me. That's why I'm hiding at some friends house...That man, Bob, is a big liar.

LINA

So how did you find me?

FERNANDO

I looked for you everywhere. My friend, the one I'm staying with, he knows Hector.

(pointing at Hector)

This man is a good man, because he helped you.

ROSA

(in Spanish)

We knew she was innocent, that's why we helped her.

FERNANDO

(in Spanish)

She is the best girl.

LINA

So, what do we do now Fernando? We are in big trouble.

FERNANDO

I don't know what to do. Nobody will believe us.

LINA

I have an idea...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE JONES HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

The SECURITY GATE opens, and the Cadillac pulls out. Edna is alone in the car. She turns onto the private road and drives down, then gets ready to make a right turn on Mulholland.

INT. THE CADILLAC

Edna is waiting for the traffic to clear. Suddenly she hears a KNOCK on her passenger window. It's Fernando. Edna rolls down the window.

EDNA

(mad)

What? Do you want to rob me also?

FERNANDO

No Mrs. Jones, I just want to talk to you, please.

EDNA

I should call the police right now and have you arrested.

FERNANDO

That's fine, give me a chance to tell you my story, and then call the police. I promise I will not run away.

EDNA

OK, fine, talk.

FERNANDO

Right here? Can we talk somewhere else?

EDNA

I'm gonna turn around, just come to the house.

FERNANDO

I don't want to see Mr. Jones.

EDNA

Bob's not home.

Edna puts her gear in reverse and backs up. Fernando walks up the private road.

Edna pulls into the driveway, then quickly flips open her cell phone, and dials 911.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Edna and Fernando walk to the living room.

EDNA

OK. Speak.

Fernando looks at the front door, as if he is expecting someone...and that someone just showed up. Lina appears at the door.

EDNA

Lina?

LINA

Hi, Edna.

EDNA

(suspicious)

What are you two up to? Come on, tell me.

LINA

We are here to tell you the truth.

EDNA

What truth? You beat up my husband and robbed him. This is the truth.

LINA

That's not true, Edna. I swear. Bob came to my room, I ran out and he chased me. Fernando came and hit him with the shovel. I swear to you, Edna, this is the truth.

Lina walks closer to Edna, rolls up her sleeves and shows her the bruises.

LINA

Look what happened to me, look. I ran down the mountain, because I was so scared.

BOB (O.S.)

You ran down the mountain because you are a thief.

Bob walks through the front door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB

Edna, call the police.

EDNA

I already have.

LINA

Edna, you were so nice to me. You bought me new clothes and everything. I didn't steal anything from you.

Edna looks confused.

BOB

Edna, don't believe her. This little devil. Why did you let them in the house?

LINA

(screaming)

I'm not a liar

(to Bob)

You are the liar.

Suddenly, FIVE POLICE OFFICERS appear at the front door, guns drawn.

POLICE OFFICER

NOBODY MOVE.

BOB

Oh thank god. Officer, these two are the fugitives you're looking for. Arrest them.

The officers realize this is not a life threatening situation, they holster their guns, and get the HANDCUFFS ready.

POLICE OFFICER

Mrs. Jones, are you OK? Ma'am?

EDNA

Yes Officer, I'm fine. Please get these people out of here. Lets get this over with.

LINA

Edna, please, don't do that. We're innocent, I swear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Edna is shaking her head, she can't take this anymore.

The officers put Lina and Fernando in handcuffs, and lead them to the door.

LINA
(screaming)
Wait, Edna, just one more thing.
Please.

EDNA
Officer, wait please.

The officers stop.

EDNA
What do you want?

LINA
I want Bob to take off his shoes. I
want to show you something.

BOB
Oh for god sake. Stop this non-
sense and get them out of here.

EDNA
Lina, what are you saying? What do
you want to show me?

LINA
That night, when he came to my
room, I put thumb-tacks all over
the floor, because I was scared,
and when he came in, he stepped on
them and fell. That's how he hurt
his head.

EDNA
Is that true? Bob?

BOB
She's lying.

LINA
No, I'm not.

Edna is getting suspicious.

EDNA
Bob, take off your shoes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB

This is nonsense. This girl is pulling another one of her tricks on you, Edna, don't believe her.

EDNA

Bob...The shoes.

BOB

(losing his case,
bleeding)

Edna, honey, please...Please listen to me. I went to her room to check on her, I swear Edna, and I fell... Edna, you were gone, I was lonely, please.

Edna looks at him in disbelief.

EDNA

So they were right! You were in Lina's room that night, you bastard. You lying bastard.

Bob suddenly breaks down and starts to cry.

EDNA

Officer. I am very sorry to disturb you. I like to drop all the charges against this girl and this man.

(looking at Bob)

Now we know who the real devil is, and I'll handle it from here.

The officers release Lina and Fernando, and the two hug each other.

POLICE OFFICER

OK then, we'll just have to bring back some forms for you to sign later, Mrs. Jones.

(to Lina and Fernando)

You two are free to go.

The officers leave.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ST. VINCENT'S ORPHANAGE - DAY

Heather sits alone at a park bench near the main gate. She's looking at the long, winding road leading to the orphanage. A car appears in the long distance.

LINA (V.O.)

...Edna kicked Bob out of the house, then divorced him few months later. As far as me, I told her I can't stay with her anymore. That house, and what I went through there, had left a very bad taste in my mouth. I told her I wanna come back and live in the orphanage, with my friends, where I truly belong...Edna was very sad, but respected my decision.

Heather is carelessly watching as the car draws nearer. She's suddenly alert, she recognizes this car...

The Cadillac arrives at the main gate. Fernando gets out and brings a suitcase from the trunk as Lina and Edna get out.

Heather JUMPS to her feet and RUNS to the main gate, screaming... "Lina...Lina"...

Lina runs to her and gives her the biggest hug. Edna and Fernando join them, and within nearly half a minute, half of the orphanage is at the main gate, greeting Lina, including Clara and Mary Ann.

LINA (V.O.)

...This was one of most memorable moments in my life. I'm finally back with my friends, back to "the home"...

Mary Ann walks closer to Lina, and to the shock of everyone she wipes a tear, then gives Lina a big, warm hug.

MARY ANN

Mrs. Jones called me and told me everything...I always thought you were a bit stubborn, but honey, you're NOT a thief, and I'm so proud of you, and so proud you decided to come and live with us. Welcome to "your home"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Everyone screams and cheers.

EDNA
(very touched)
My god this is so beautiful. Can I
please come and stay with you guys?

Everyone laughs.

MARY ANN
Mrs. Jones, you are always welcome
here.

Lina didn't forget about Fernando. She takes his hand and introduces him to the crowd.

LINA
Hey girls, this is the HERO who
saved me and fought for me...This
is Fernando.

Fernando's face turns very red as he gets cheers, hugs and even kisses from the girls.

INT. DINING HALL - EVENING

Edna and Fernando are having dinner with the Lina, Heather, Mary Ann and Clara.

LINA
Sister Mary Ann, I forgot to tell
you, Edna told me she'll be coming
on Christmas also to bring toys for
the girls, just like Mr. Andrews.

Edna smiles and nods her approval. Mary Ann looks sad all of a sudden.

MARY ANN
I have some sad news regarding Mr.
Andrews.

Everyone stop eating and look at Mary Ann.

MARY ANN
Few days ago, I tried to contact
him to see if he can help with
Lina's situation. His wife answered
the phone and told me Mr. Andrews
is in the hospital, sick, and asked
me not to contact him anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The girls look at each other in disbelief.

LINA

What's wrong with him?

MARY ANN

She wouldn't tell me. She wasn't very friendly either.

HEATHER

But Christmas is coming soon. I want Mr. Andrews to come back to us.

MARY ANN

I have a feeling he will. He's just not feeling well, it could happen to anyone.

EDNA

(whispering to Clara)

Who is Mr. Andrews?

Clara turns and starts talking to Edna.

LINA (V.O.)

...This was a shock. Mr. Andrews is very important to me and to Heather and all the girls, and even though I have other great people in my life now, people who helped me and cared for me...Mr. Andrews is different. He has a very special place in my heart. A place no one else can take...I was really concerned about him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ST. VINCENT'S ORPHANAGE - MAIN GATE

Lina, Heather and Clara wave goodbye to the Cadillac as it speeds away. They turn and walk towards the building.

LINA

What do you think happened to Mr. Andrews, sister Clara?

CLARA

Just call me Clara, Lina, because I really feel like we are sisters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEATHER

Can I be your sister too?

CLARA

Of course sweetie...So, Mr. Andrews...I'm not sure what happened. It sounds very strange to me.

LINA

Hey, I just remembered something. Remember when sister Mary Ann said she called and his wife answered?

CLARA

Yes?

LINA

Well, this is very strange, because Mr. Andrews told us his wife of thirty years, died few years ago.

HEATHER

That's right. I remember he said that.

CLARA

That's because he remarried. But he doesn't talk alot about that.

HEATHER

He did?

CLARA

Yes. About two years ago. I remember he brought her with him to the Christmas party, that same year they got married. She waited for him in the car the whole time. She only stepped out to smoke. That's how I knew she was with him.

HEATHER

Was she pretty?

CLARA

Well, I don't know. She had lots of make-up on, and I don't like that. She also looked very young, alot younger than him, maybe that's why he doesn't mention her alot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They walk inside the building.

CLARA

Anyways, girls, I'm going to bed.
It's been a long day.

(hugs Lina)

I'm so happy you're back, Lina,
this place was so lonely without
you.

LINA

Thank you Clara, I'm also very
happy to be back.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Lights are still on. Everyone is getting ready for bed. Lina and Heather walk in...everyone welcome Lina back, except Curly and Samantha.

CURLY

Hey, Lina, I heard you stole lots
of money from that old man. Are you
gonna share?

LINA

Unlike you Curly, I don't do such
things, and I don't sneak at night
to go to the "boys Home", and I
don't keep a box of "you know what"
under my pillow. So if I were you,
I'd ZIP IT, and go to sleep.

All the girls look at Lina with wide-open eyes, especially Samantha and Curly. Lina gives them a final stare before she turns off the light.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD - MORNING

Lina and Heather walk around lazily, as we pick up the conversation.

LINA

Do you remember when we talked
about our dreams?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEATHER

Yes, you wanted the big house and
the bathroom.

LINA

I don't want it no more.

Heather looks at her.

HEATHER

Then what do you want Lina?

LINA

I've been to the big house and the
private bathroom, and I don't want
it no more. From now on, my dreams
will be simple and little, just
like us Heather, sweet little
dreams.

HEATHER

like what?

LINA

Like having all my friends and all
the people who love me, with me,
forever.

HEATHER

OK. I like this dream, alot.

Amy and Jody join them.

AMY

Hey, Lina, is it true that story
about the thumb-tacks?

LINA

Yes, it's true.

AMY

(laughing hard)
...THUMB-TACKS!

LINA

(smiling)
That's right. I think I put fifty
of them on the floor.

Amy and Jody burst out laughing. Heather is clueless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JODY

Wait. I've got to hear this one from the beginning. Come on Lina, please.

LINA

Alright...so he opens up the door and says (she mocks Bob's voice)...Honey, Lina, I'm lonely, can I come in please...I said: NO, just leave me alone. So he pushes the door open, and I can just smell his stinky alcohol breath...

JODY

Oh he drinks?

LINA

Oh yeah, he drinks alcohol like water.

JODY

That's gross.

LINA

I know!..So anyways, he pushed the door open and walked in, then...BOOM! He was on the floor, screaming like a little girl...

Amy and Jody are laughing hard.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD - LATER

Lina just finished telling the girls her story.

AMY

Oh my god, this is amazing Lina. I can't believe you went through all that! And you're still here standing and talking.

LINA

I'm telling you girls, it's TOUGH out there.

JODY

But I thought rich people are cool and happy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

I don't know about that. The rich people I saw were miserable. The poor ones were happy. Hector and his wife, Fernando, these people were so happy, and so poor. So I don't know.

AMY

I still prefer people with money. I'm sorry but it's something I never had, I just wanna know how it feels like.

JODY

Yeah. Me too.

A Pause.

AMY

Lina, I can't believe you actually chose to come back here, instead of living with that lady.

LINA

I did it because of this...

AMY

What do you mean?

LINA

I never had this when I was there. It was the biggest house I ever saw, but I was alone. I didn't have anyone to talk to. I was very lonely, even though Edna was so nice to me, she bought me new clothes and chocolate...But I was always lonely. It never felt like home.

JODY

I don't care. I'd live alone in that house, at least I'd get me some new clothes and some chocolate...Oh And my own bathrooms.

AMY

But don't forget to get yourself a couple boxes of thumb-tacks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The girls laugh. A nun walks up to Lina.

NUN

Lina, Mary Ann wants to talk to you.

AMY

Hey, give her a break. She's only been back for oneday.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARY ANN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Lina walks in. Curly and Samantha stand near Mary Ann with thin smiles on their faces.

LINA

You wanted to talk to me sister Mary Ann?

MARY ANN

Yes. Curly just told me you misbehaved with her last night before bed. Is this true?

LINA

It's true, sister Mary Ann.
(staring at Curly)
And I'll do it every time she opens her mouth to talk to me.

MARY ANN

Why? What did she say to you?

LINA

She accused me of stealing.

CUT TO:

INT. DORMITORY - EARLY MORNING

The girls stand ready next to their beds. Mary Ann walks in with Clara for the daily morning inspection.

MARY ANN

Good morning girls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE GIRLS

Good morning sister Mary Ann and sister Clara.

MARY ANN

A couple of girls broke some of the most basic rules we have in this orphanage. These rules include: snitching, and wrongfully accusing someone of something they didn't do, therefore, and as of this morning, Curly and Samantha will be punished with extra cleaning duties, and less break time.

Curly and Samantha look at each other, and then at Mary Ann in complete shock. Clara smiles and winks at Lina.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Curly and Samantha look very humiliated as they scrub the hallway floors. Lina and Heather walk by, giggling.

CURLY

(mad)

Hey, what are you two laughing about!

Lina turns and looks at her.

LINA

You.

Curly is fuming. She gets up and kicks Samantha's dirty water bucket to the floor. Samantha stares at her, while Lina and Heather walk away, laughing.

CUT TO:

INT. BUILDING #3 - FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

Lina and Heather stroll down the front yard with Edna. Christmas decorations are back on the windows and trees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...Few more months have passed. It was now early December and Christmas was knocking on the door, but still no word from Mr. Andrews. We were all starting to get worried, especially me and Heather.

EDNA

Fernando says hi. I gave him few days off to go do some Christmas shopping.

LINA

How is he? I miss him so much.

EDNA

(smiling)

He's fine, as long as I stay away from his Japanese maple trees...oh And Bob called, he's been calling alot lately.

LINA

(frowning)

What does HE want!

EDNA

He's broke. He just needed some money.

LINA

Good. He deserves to be broke.

EDNA

Oh by the way, did you ever hear from Bruce Andrews?

LINA

(sighing)

No...Not a word.

HEATHER

Don't worry Lina. He's coming for Christmas. Remember how he promised us last year?

LINA

Yes, sweetie. I hope he does.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDNA

By the way, I know him. We've met before.

LINA

You did??

EDNA

(nodding)

Long time ago. I was just getting into the real estate business. He was some hot shot banker...I had the biggest crush on him.

HEATHER

You crushed him??

EDNA

No honey. He crushed me.

LINA

(excited)

What happened, Edna? Tell me!

EDNA

Nothing really. I was young. He was a very successful business man, and very handsome. But nothing happened, we were both married.

LINA

But did you really love him?

Edna nods and sighs.

EDNA

Only if I can bring back time.

LINA

Edna, this is so cute. So how come you ended up with someone like Bob?

EDNA

I REALLY don't wanna talk about it.
(checks her watch)
I better get going before I hit traffic.

CUT TO:

INT. DORMITORY - EVENING

Lina, Heather and Clara are sitting on Lina's bed, talking. Mary Ann walks in.

MARY ANN

(worried)

Girls, I think we have a problem.

CLARA

What's wrong?

MARY ANN

Today is the 10th, and Mr. Andrews hasn't called yet.

CLARA

Isn't it too early? He usually comes a couple of days before Christmas.

MARY ANN

I know, but he usually calls me on the 10th exactly to tell me what day he's coming, so we can get ready, and he hasn't called. I'm really worried.

They suddenly hear a THUD!. Heather has passed out on the floor. Lina and Clara kneel next to her, trying to wake her up.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY - LATER

Heather lies on a hospital bed, her eyes are open but she looks very weak. Lina is next to her, holding her hand. A NURSE just finished examining her.

NURSE

(to Mary Ann)

I think it's just exhaustion. Her heart beats and blood pressure are normal. There's nothing wrong her.

Lina wraps her arms around Heather.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...Heather's heart maybe beating normal, but it's broken up to pieces. Just the thought of Mr. Andrews not showing up for Christmas, brought Heather down.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY ANN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Mary Ann is going over some paper work. Lina walks in. Her eyes are red. She looks like she hasn't slept.

MARY ANN

Good morning, Lina, are you alright?

LINA

I have to go find Mr. Andrews.

MARY ANN

(getting up)
What? How? Where?

LINA

I don't know. But Heather is sick because of him. I didn't sleep last night thinking about him. All the girls are worried. We have to do something, sister Mary Ann.

MARY ANN

Lina, I'm very worried too, he's a great man. But what if he was really sick, and decided to skip Christmas with us this year? We can't force the man to come here, can we?

LINA

No, we can't. But at least we can wish him well and send him flowers.

MARY ANN

(convinced)
That actually sounds like a good idea. I'll just order some flowers and have it delivered to his house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

I like to deliver it to him personally, if you don't mind.

MARY ANN

And how are you planning to do that? Just get in your car and drive up to his house?

LINA

I don't have a car.

MARY ANN

I know!

Mary Ann thinks...

MARY ANN

Well...You need to contact Mrs. Jones to come and take you there, because she's officially your guardian.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CADILLAC - AFTERNOON

Edna is driving. Lina sits next to her. She has a BOUQUET OF RED ROSES on her lap. Edna looks at a BUSINESS CARD.

EDNA

I know where this is. It's in Brentwood.

LINA

Do you think he'll be happy to see me?

EDNA

Do you think he will remember you?

LINA

Of course he will. We spent a whole day together.

EDNA

Then, yes. He'll be very happy. I think it's a very nice touch.

LINA

Touch?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDNA
Getting him the roses, I mean.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A STREET IN BRENTWOOD - LATER

The Cadillac is parked next to a beautiful and very large HOUSE, surrounded by a large BLOCK FENCE.

INT. THE CADILLAC

Lina and Edna are looking at the house.

LINA
Wow!

EDNA
Nice! Alot bigger than mine.

LINA
How come all of you rich people
live in big houses with big fences?
It's like one big orphanage, but
only for one or two people.

EDNA
Are you gonna keep talking, or
you're gonna go get your man, young
lady?

LINA
Sure you don't wanna come with me?

EDNA
I don't think his wife would
appreciate another woman, coming to
check on her husband.

LINA
OK. Wish me luck.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MR. ANDREWS HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lina has the bouquet of roses as she walks to the front gate. It's locked. She sees an INTERCOM button on the side and pushes it. The gate suddenly slides open. Lina walks through a long WALKWAY, leading to a large DOUBLE OAK DOOR.

The door suddenly opens. A beautiful WOMAN in her early 30's, stares at Lina.

LINA

Hello.

The woman keeps staring. Lina looks a bit confused.

LINA

I...I came to see Mr. Andrews.

The woman is looking at Lina, up and down.

WOMAN

(very dry)

Why!

LINA

I want to give him these roses,
because I heard he was sick.

The woman suddenly takes the roses from Lina's hand, and SLAMS the door in her face.

Lina is stunned. She turns to leave, but the door opens again.

Lina looks, it's that same woman. She throws a piece of paper to Lina, then slams the door again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CADILLAC - MOMENTS LATER

Lina's body is shaking hard, she's almost in tears. Edna holds out the paper, it's FIVE DOLLARS.

EDNA

(shaking her head)

What a BITC...

LINA

(gasping)

Say it, I don't care, because she
really IS!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDNA

Lets get out of here.

Edna turns on the engine and drives few feet. Suddenly, a MAN appears from a side street behind the house, and flashes them.

LINA

(screaming)

IT'S ANDERSON! MR. ANDREWS DRIVER!

Anderson looks around, then motions to them to pull over. Edna stops the car. Anderson leans next to Lina's window.

LINA

(very excited)

Anderson, I'm Lina, from the orphanage! Do you remember me?

ANDERSON

Yes I do. What are you doing here?

LINA

We came to check on Mr. Andrews, we heard he was sick.

ANDERSON

(looking at Edna)

We?

LINA

(still excited)

Oh, that's Edna, she's my guardian. She knows Mr. Andrews too, she had a big crush on him...Where is he?

Anderson sighs. He looks sad and concerned all of a sudden.

ANDERSON

Don't bother, Lina. Just go home.

LINA

NO! I'm not going anywhere! I want to see him. PLEASE!

Anderson thinks...

ANDERSON

Alright. I'll take you to him, even though it's a waste of time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anderson looks around again, then gets in the back seat of the car.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - MALIBU - LATE AFTERNOON

The Cadillac speeds down this beautiful scenic highway.

INT. THE CADILLAC

LINA (V.O.)

...Finally I was on my way to see him. I was very happy when Anderson agreed to take us to him, but later I cried when I found out what happened.

ANDERSON

That woman who opened the door, is Serena, Mr. Andrews second wife. She's an evil woman who is exactly his opposite. She always argued with him because of his generosity and charitable work, but things really heated up between them when he donated HALF A MILLION dollars to build a homeless shelter few months ago. Serena then took action.

The Cadillac makes a turn on a side street, and starts driving up a long, narrow road.

ANDERSON

She claimed Mr. Andrews is mentally unstable, and hired a big shot attorney to prove he is incompetent to handle his own vast fortune, and to give her control of all his assets.

EDNA

Oh my god, what an EVIL WOMAN!

ANDERSON

She's very evil.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA

How can she say he's crazy, while he's not. She's a big liar.

ANDERSON

That's right. He actually laughed about it when he knew what she's up to. I was actually with him outside of that courtroom, when he went to the closed hearing, in front of a judge.

A pause

EDNA

And then what happened?

ANDERSON

We went in, and there was the biggest shock. Serena had actually enlisted the help of Mr. Andrews own children, Jim and Bobby. His OWN children came to testify he was crazy. That was the one single thing that broke his back.

EDNA

I can't believe this.

ANDERSON

They all conspired and faked some weird expenses. They brought one receipt for a purchase they claimed he made, a ONE SQUARE MILE ON MARS. Everyone laughed at him. And he just sat there, didn't say a word.

EDNA

This is absurd. He should've said something.

ANDERSON

What can you say, when you're own flesh and blood, stab you in the back...And steal your money?

EDNA

So what happened?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDERSON

His attorney, Mr. Lerner, and even the judge himself, kept asking him to say something. He wouldn't.

A beautiful, white two-story building appear in the distance.

ANDERSON

So the judge ended up ordering a full mental evaluation of him, before he makes his final decision. So they brought him over there.
(pointing at the building)

The cadillac arrives to the front of the building. A sign in the front reads..."CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH"

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE - MOMENTS LATER

Anderson, Edna and Lina walk through an automatic glass door, and arrive at the FRONT DESK. A NURSE smiles to them.

NURSE

Hello again, Mr. Anderson.

ANDERSON

Hi Becky. How's he doing today?

BECKY

(shakes her head)
Same. He's not even eating.

Anderson takes a deep breath.

ANDERSON

Anyways. His friends wanna say hello. Is it alright to go in?

BECKY

Sure, go right ahead.

Anderson leads the way to a room at the end of the hallway. Lina has her roses with her.

Anderson knocks, then they all walk in.

Mr. Andrews is sitting on a small chair, behind a small HOSPITAL BED. Dressed in a long hospital GOWN. Looking out at the OCEAN through a large window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is motionless. Lina walks over to him, trying to hold her tears. Edna and Anderson stay behind.

LINA (V.O.)
 ...I couldn't believe my eyes. He was a mere shadow of himself. He looked a HUNDRED years older.

Lina walks over to his side. She can now see his face. He hasn't shaved in days. His salt and pepper hair, is now all WHITE.

LINA (V.O.)
 ...He didn't even notice me. He just sat there, staring out at the ocean.

Lina holds out the roses to him.

LINA
 (wiping a tear)
 Mr. Andrews...It's me, Lina, from the orphanage...I brought you some pretty roses...

No answer. Not a single bone in his body moves. Lina looks out at the ocean, then looks back at him as she wipes her tears.

LINA
 ...And, I Just wanted to tell you, we all miss you, so much...and we always think about you, because we love you...my friend Heather says hi...she's sick. She got sick when Mary Ann told her you're not coming to see us this Christmas.

Mr. Andrews BLINKS...A single tear rolls down his cheek. He wants to say something, but the words are stuck in his throat.

MR. ANDREWS
 (broken voice)
 How can you love me? I'm nothing, but a crazy old man.

Edna walks over and kneels next to his chair.

EDNA
 Bruce, don't say that. Don't do this to yourself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at her.

EDNA

You probably don't remember me, Bruce, but I do, I know who you are, you're a great man. Don't let those people bring you down. Don't break these girl's hearts, because they need you.

MR. ANDREWS

No one needs me. Please leave me alone.

LINA

No! We need you, so bad. Because you made us happy and brought us toys. No one gave us anything, except you, that's why we love you so much and we need you.

His eyes suddenly turn bright, he shakes his head, as if trying to wake up from a bad dream. He looks at Lina, gently wipes her tears, brings her closer to him and holds her.

MR. ANDREWS

I missed you too...

Lina buries herself in his chest.

LINA (V.O.)

...I've never known my real father, but if I had the choice, I'd never pick another man, than Mr. Andrews.

MR. ANDREWS

(to Edna)

You're that girl with the funny name, aren't you!

EDNA

You remember me?

MR. ANDREWS

(finally smiling)

Yes. Edna. How can I forget a name like that!

EDNA

Gee...Thanks, Bruce!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. ANDREWS
Hey how did you find me?

Mr. Andrews looks around and finds Anderson.

MR. ANDREWS
Anderson, I was wondering where you were.

ANDERSON
I'm right here Mr. Andrews.

MR. ANDREWS
Good. Get me Lerner over here.

ANDERSON
Your attorney? Sir?

MR. ANDREWS
That's right. Tell him we have unfinished business to take care of.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. VINCENT'S ORPHANAGE - DAY

The Mercedes, followed by a U-HAUL truck appear in the distance.

LINA (V.O.)
...And he sure DID take care of business. Mr. Andrews and his attorney presented the judge with evidence of all his charitable work, and financial statements proving Serena and the children lied to the judge and faked purchase receipts in his own name.

The Mercedes and the U-HAUL arrive at the front gate...And There to meet them was the biggest and happiest crowd of orphans, ever assembled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINA (V.O.)

...The judge wanted to lock them up on the spot, but Mr. Andrews offered not to file any charges against them, on the condition Serena will not be entitled to any financial compensation from him, after he divorces her, and for his children to leave the house and never return again. Everyone agreed.

Lina gets out and runs to her friends. Anderson opens the back door for Edna and Mr. Andrews. They walk out, holding hands.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INFIRMARY - LATER

Heather is asleep. Mr. Andrews sits on her bed and gently plays with her hair. She slowly wakes up, her eye-lids flutter softly as she looks at him in disbelief.

HEATHER

(screams)

MR. ANDREWS!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRAVEYARD - AFTERNOON

Lina opens her eyes and looks at her watch. She quickly gets up and looks at her mother's grave.

LINA

Mom, I have to go now, I'll see you next week.

CUT TO:

EXT. MR. ANDREWS HOUSE - LATER

It's the same house, but the high block fence is gone. Lina appears on the walkway.

FERNANDO (O.S.)

You are late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Fernando walks over to her, smiling. His shovel resting over his shoulder.

LINA

I know, Fernando. But how come you're not dressed for the party yet?

FERNANDO

I will. I'll see you inside.

The DOUBLE OAK DOOR opens, Heather appears, now a twenty years old beauty.

HEATHER

Lina, I can't believe it, you're late for your own birthday party

LINA

(giving her a hug)
Heather, I'm so sorry. Is everyone here yet?

HEATHER

(smiling)
Yes, but the cake is gone.

Lina and Heather walk in, and everyone walk over to give Lina a hug. Edna and Mr. Andrews. Hector, Rosa and Maria. Mary Ann, Clara and few NUNS. Jody and Amy. Anderson. Even Curly and Samantha, both come out of the kitchen, faces half-covered with ICE CREAM.

LINA (V.O.)

What else can I say. I had a sweet little dream once, and the dream came true.

THE END