

Mo and Claire

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Typical affluent suburban home. Furniture from upscale New York City stores, rooms created by an interior decorator and spotlessly mopped by a cleaning lady.

CLAIRE, (40), attractive, paces nervously the room. She wears a long designer skirt and an elegant, revealing top.

INT. HOUSE - VESTIBULE - DAY

She looks at herself in a wall mirror with a disapproving expression.

CLAIRE
(softly to herself)
No, no...it's inappropriate.

INT. HOUSE - VESTIBULE - MINUTES LATER

Claire stands in front of the same mirror. She wears a classy business attire.

She appears dissatisfied.

CLAIRE
(to herself in
frustration)
Gosh, it's not a corporate meeting.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER.

Claire wears a knee-length dark-blue skirt with a simple, white blouse.

She sits on a chair near the table.

The sound of a DOORBELL breaks the silence.

INT. HOUSE - VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS

Claire OPENS the door.

On the doorstep, an African-American WOMAN (50) stands waiting.

She drags a small carry-on luggage while she holds a large file under her arm. A big, friendly smile illuminates her face.

A few steps behind her, a skinny, dark-haired, good-looking BOY (about 12), tries to hide. His eyes express a mix of sadness, curiosity and bashfulness.

WOMAN

Good morning, Ms. SPENCER. Nice to see you.

CLAIRE

Good morning, Ms. LEE, please come in.

Claire looks at the boy and attempts a welcoming smile.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Good morning sweetie.

The boy lowers his eyes. He does not acknowledge Claire's words.

MS. LEE

I'm sorry, he's a little shy. He's a good boy...he has suffered a lot, you know.

CLAIRE

Yeah, it's terrible up there.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ms. Lee and the boy stand in the middle of the room.

The carry-on lies near them.

CLAIRE

Please have a seat.

Claire and Ms. Lee sit on a velvety sofa. The boy remains standing beside them.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(to the boy)

Do you like an ice scream?

No answer.

The boy stares at Claire for a few seconds and then turns his eyes to Ms. Lee. He has a bewildered expression on his cute face.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You told me that he speaks English.

MS. LEE

Just a little, he was going to school to learn the language when the building was leveled by bombs.... Syrian bombs.

CLAIRE

What an awful life.

MS. LEE

(indicating the
carry-on)

He has a few donated clothing...from the RED CROSS. He left Syria with nothing.

CLAIRE

Okay, I'll buy new clothes tomorrow.

Ms. Lee opens the file and shows Claire some documents.

MS. LEE

Your lawyer has signed all the papers...his status as a war refugee is in order...he's now legally in this country. These are the documents if you want to read them.

Ms. Lee hands the file to Claire.

She glances through the papers without paying much attention to the content.

CLAIRE

I trust my lawyer.

Ms. Lee stands up and extends her hand to Claire.

MS. LEE

Well, everything seems in order, I'm going...thank you again for your goodwill. We need more people like you.

CLAIRE

I hope he'll like here.

MS. LEE
I'm sure he will.

Ms. Lee starts to walk towards the door.

CLAIRE
One sec please, you didn't tell me
his name.

MS. LEE
Oh, I'm sorry, call him MO...it's
short for MOHAMMAD. In English it
means "worthy of praise." Please give
me a call if you have other
questions, okay?

CLAIRE
Fine, thank you.

MS. LEE
You're welcome...bye Mo.

Ms. Lee reinforces her words waving at him.

Mo offers a faint smile in return.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Mo sits on a chair around the kitchen table. He looks
pensive.

Claire tackles the preparation of a dish on the marble
counter top near the stove. A book lies on the counter.

INSERT - BOOK COVER

Modern Syrian Recipes.

BACK TO SCENE

She tries unsuccessfully to roll a flat piece of meat around
some greasy, slushy ingredients.

CLAIRE
(softly)
Shoot! I can't do it.

She tries again but the slice of meat opens up and the
ingredients land on the floor.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(upset)

Okay, I'm done with this.

Claire takes a large paper towel and kneels down to clean the floor

Mo laughs with gusto.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Claire sits on the table facing Mo.

CLAIRE

(speaking slowly)

Mo, I really tried to make a special
KEBAB for you...I'm not a good cook
you know...do you like pizza?

Mo glances at her. A feeble smile appears on his face.

MO

(with a Middle
Eastern accent)

...yes..like.

Claire bursts into applause. She talks at a normal speed.

CLAIRE

Good job Mo...repeat, "yes, I like
it."

Mo smiles. It seems that he's having fun.

MO

Yes, like it.

CLAIRE

I, I, I like it...

MO

(with enthusiasm)

I like it.

Claire applauds again. She looks happy.

CLAIRE

Bravo! Bravo! I'll call for pizza.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Claire and her friend GINGER (45), slightly overweight, sit on an elegant loveseat. They sip an afternoon tea

GINGER
Where is he?

CLAIRE
Watching cartoons in his room.

GINGER
Can I see him?

CLAIRE
Okay, but don't talk to him, he's very shy.

INT. HOUSE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Claire and Ginger stand in front of a door.

Claire opens slowly the door. They silently peek inside.

Mo, still in his clothes, sleeps soundly on his bed. His gentle features radiate an aura of peace.

The TV is still on.

CLAIRE
He's exhausted...so handsome.

GINGER
Uhm.

CLAIRE
This is all you have to say?

GINGER
What you want me to say....okay, he's a good looking boy.

CLAIRE
(irritated)
Thank you, your highness!

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire sits on a leather sofa.

Ginger lounges on a armchair facing her.

GINGER

Are you sure you know what you're doing?

CLAIRE

Of course, why?

GINGER

How long have we known each other?

Claire hesitates while trying to remember.

CLAIRE

More than ten years, I guess.

GINGER

Have I ever steered you wrong?

CLAIRE

No...well, yes, when you introduced me to my ex-husband.

GINGER

You know, you never thanked me for that.

CLAIRE

Thanked you...for what? He constantly cheated on me...he lied every time he spoke.

GINGER

I wouldn't complain if I were you. You came out on top...this house and a good chunk of money in the bank.

Claire slowly sips her tea. Ginger smiles at her. They lock eyes and burst into laughter.

GINGER (CONT'D)

The silver lining in your defunct marriage is that you didn't have kids with him.

Claire's expression suddenly changes. Her eyes project deep sadness.

CLAIRE

Yeah.

Ginger looks at her with a smirk on her face.

GINGER
Going back to your boy--

Claire's face shows annoyance and contempt.

CLAIRE
Why you still want to get on my
nerves with this?

GINGER
You made a huge mistake to accept
this Syrian refugee.

Claire looks very upset.

CLAIRE
Why?

GINGER
You're welcoming a terrorist into
your house.

Claire bursts into a loud, nervous laughter.

CLAIRE
What you're saying is beyond
ludicrous, Mo is just a child, a
sweet child...an orphan, for God's
sake.

GINGER
Oh yes, a kid...but what's going to
happen when he grows up...when he'll
become a teenager...he'll go online,
get in touch with his friends and--

CLAIRE
And?

GINGER
He'll be radicalized by his
terrorist...his terrorist...
COMRADES...killing Americans and
destroying our country.

CLAIRE
So, let me understand, all the people
coming from Syria are terrorists?

GINGER

It might be... okay, you have an urge to help...why don't you get an African; they're black but at least they are not terrorists.

CLAIRE

Are you listening to yourself? I don't know from where this crazy xenophobia is coming from.

GINGER

Don't you see what is going on? Muslim terrorists will...oh God, you're so naive.

Claire appears passionately incensed.

CLAIRE

I can't believe you're such a bigot...you have no heart, no compassion...this child would have died under the bombs...like his family.

GINGER

It's not our responsibility to save the world...we have to save America don't you know that now they use children as suicide bombers.

CLAIRE

Are you saying that this child is a suicide bomber?

GINGER

Not right now but--

CLAIRE

Please stop, you're getting pathetic, you don't make any sense.

GINGER

You're the one who is irrational... send him back!

CLAIRE

He's a child, not a package.

GINGER

Whatever...

Claire is now furious. Her face turns red from anger.

CLAIRE

I think that it's time for you to go...I can't stomach you anymore. The boy stays with me--like it or not.

GINGER

Okay, I go but don't cry when he blows up your house and maybe--

CLAIRE

Maybe what?

GINGER

Even kills you.

INT. HOUSE - TV ROOM - EVENING

Claire unwinds from a very emotional day.

She lounges on a leather armchair and enjoys a glass of wine while watching a movie on television.

Three candles are lit on an end table near the armchair creating a relaxing atmosphere.

She slowly begins to doze-off. Her body gradually bends towards the side of the end table. Suddenly, her upper body falls over the end table and knocks it down to the floor.

The lit candles reach the carpet that immediately ignites.

The room is rapidly engulfed in smoke and flames.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

Claire lies in bed breathing from an oxygen mask. Her hairs are spottily damaged and her face shows dark marks. She is mildly sedated.

Two DOCTORS stand alongside the bed.

Doctor #1, FEMALE (40) looks at Claire with an incredulous expression.

DOCTOR #1

A miracle, the fire burned down the house... and in a week she's gonna be out.

Doctor #2, MALE (30) checking her vital signs displayed on a machine on the side of the bed.

DOCTOR #2
I wouldn't call it a miracle...let's
go, we've to complete the round.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The two doctors stand near a bed. Immersed in a drug-induced
deep sleep, lies...

Mo, his hands and arms heavily bandaged, his face grazed and
reddish. He's attached to a myriad tubes.

DOCTOR #2
This is the miracle...he saved the
woman's life risking his own.

DOCTOR #1
A young hero, I hope he can make it.

The End