

Working Girl

Written by

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EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

KATARINA MCKAY (6) a bike helmet pushed over her unruly hair, nervously clutches the handles of her new pink bicycle.

SCARLET, a gray and white plush toy bunny with long sloppy ears, sits securely in the basket on the handles.

NICOLAS O.S

Ready?

Katarina nods, lifts her foot and paddles unsteadily down the tree-lined street, stationary cars parked sparsely on either side of the street.

KATARINA

Hold me Daddy, I'm going to fall.

NICHOLAS MCKAY (35) runs behind her, his one hand holding onto the saddle of her bicycle.

NICHOLAS

I'm here. Don't worry.

KATARINA

Don't let go.

NICHOLAS

I won't.

Nicholas runs a few more steps, lets go off the saddle, stops running.

Katarina continues riding.

KATARINA

Daddy... Daddy?

She looks around to see where Nicholas is.

The front wheel of the bicycle buckles.

NICHOLAS

Keep your eyes on the road.

KATARINA

(frantic)

Daddy!

The wheel buckles out of control. She falls, scrapes her knee and elbow.

A car screeches to a halt, inches away from Katarina.

Nicholas runs down the street to catch up with Katarina.

Scarlet lays chucked to the side.

The DRIVER of the car kneels next to Katarina.

INT. KATARINA'S ROOM - DAY

Katarina McKay (17) peers out of the bare window. The room is empty, except for 2 boxes stacked on top of each other.

She is slender built, athletic. Comfortably dressed in faded jeans and a black shirt. Her hair is caught in a single ponytail, high on her head. Her headphones hang comfortably around her neck.

A heavy sigh escapes her lips as she turns away from the window and picks up the one box, walks out of the door.

Scarlet is in the box on top, a leg and ear hang over the edges.

EXT. DOUBLE STORY HOUSE - LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Katarina lifts the box into the moving truck, takes Scarlet from the box. Folds it in her arms.

She stands back, watches as a MOVER carries another box, across the pedicured lawn, to the small moving truck.

The mover swings the doors of the moving truck close, lock them.

He turns to HELENA MCKAY (43) who stands next to the moving truck.

Helena is a beautiful woman. Her long hair is elegantly tied behind her back. Crowfeet wrinkles around her eyes are evidence of happy times. She seems tired, maybe a little overwhelmed.

MOVER

This is the last box, Mrs. McKay.

(mimics ground
control)

We will see you on the other side.

Helena chuckles uncomfortable.

Katarina looks back at the double-story house. Colorful gardens lines the dove gray house.

Her eyes well up as she finds her bedroom window on the second floor. She turns away, quietly wipes the tears from her eyes.

HELENA O.S
Katarina! We need to leave.

Katarina looks at her mother, waiting at the car. She glances one last time at the house, before she gets in.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Katarina leans her head against the window. She clutches Scarlet in her arms.

Helena's eyes play between Katarina and the road.

HELENA
Do you want to talk about it?

Katarina shakes her head *No*.

HELENA (cont'd)
It's difficult for me too. We just have to make do... Make the best of what we have.

KATARINA
Yeah right.

HELENA
Don't be like that.

KATARINA
Like what? My father?

Hurt at the harsh words, Helena looks at Katarina.

HELENA
You will not speak about your father like that. He was a good man.

Katarina moves her headphones from her neck to her ears. She turns away to stare out of the window.

They drive in silence.

EXT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - DAY

Katarina stares with disgust at the derelict house. Paint peels from the walls and door.

Plants are shriveled up in pots on the dilapidated porch.
The railing hangs skew. Some sports are missing.

KATARINA
You sold the house for this?
(scoffs)
You got to be kidding... Dad never
would've approved of this.

Helena's eyes speak before she does.

HELENA
If your dad manned up for what he did
instead of choosing the easy way out,
we wouldn't be in this position.

KATARINA
Dad is gone... Leave him out of this.

HELENA
But you can bring him up whenever you
want?

Doleful, Helena shakes her head. She drops the box she
carried on the ground, looks at Katarina.

HELENA (cont'd)
You know what...

She throws her hands in the air.

HELENA (cont'd)
I can't do this.

Katarina looks at Helena as she walks away. She turns back,
looks at the house. A car door slams.

Moments later, Helena speeds away.

Katarina picks up the box, carries it inside.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - DAY

She puts the box on a table in the open-plan kitchen. She
twirls around, slowly.

She takes in the sickening yellow-ocre interior. It screams
70s. It is probably the last time the kitchen was renovated.

KATARINA
(Sarcastic)
Home, sweet home.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Katarina huffs and puffs as she pushes a two-seater leather couch in position and sags down on it, beat.

She peeks at her watch. It is past 9pm. She gets up, walks to her phone on the kitchen counter, looks to see if Helena tried to reach her... she didn't.

She tosses the phone back on the table, takes a pan from a box, puts it on the gas stove, scratches in a box for matches, gives up the search.

She straightens up, fetches her bag, opens a compartment, takes out a Zippo lighter.

KATARINA
Might as well use you.

Her eyes catches the phone on the counter. She picks it up again, dials Helena. Voicemail.

KATARINA (cont'd)
Come on, Mom. Where are you?

Katarina lights the gas stove, breaks an egg into the pan, pops toast into the toaster, switches the kettle on.

She butters the toast, flips the egg onto the plate, pours the coffee. Sits down at the table.

The door opens, Helena stumbles in, falls down on the couch.

KATARINA (cont'd)
Mom? Where were you? I was worried sick!

HELENA
(Slurred)
I needed a break... Just a teensy weensy little one.

KATARINA
Are you... drunk?

Helena nestles into the coach.

HELENA
(giggles)
Maybe just a teensy weensy little bit.

Katarina stiffens up, hands on her sides.

KATARINA

Really Mom? You go out and get wasted while I had to work my butt off to try and make a home out of this... place.

HELENA

You are such a...
(hiccup)
such a good girl.

Frustrated, Katarina turns around as Helena nestles down on the couch and almost instantly falls asleep.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - KATARINA'S ROOM - DAY

Katarina opens her eyes, blinks, tries to focus.

Plain white ceiling, bare bulb in the center.

Window without a curtain.

Boxes stacked against the wall.

She picks up her phone from a box that doubled as a temporary night stand.

KATARINA

Fuck.

She springs out of bed. Scarlet falls to the floor.

Katarina dresses in a hurry. Grabs her bag.

Scarlet remains forgotten.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Katarina rushes into the living room. Boxes still stacked everywhere.

KATARINA

Why didn't you wake me? You know I have cheer leading before school.

Helena stirs on the couch, sits up.

HELENA

(Groggily)

Hmm?

KATARINA

Ugh! Never mind.

She throws her bag over her shoulder, storms out without greeting Helena.

The door slams behind her.

Helena sags back onto the couch, her hand over her eyes. A moan escapes her lips.

INT. CLASS ROOM - DAY

A test paper slams down on the desk. The desk rattles under the onslaught. F- is circled in red on the paper.

MRS. WESLEY (59) towers over DERRICK (17) who sinks down in his seat, lowers his gaze to his desk.

MRS. WESLEY

Derrick has lost his book and
couldn't study, or maybe the dog ate
his homework, again.

Some pupils laugh nervously, maybe it's shame.

Mrs. Wesley is a former weight lifting champion and probably can be again. She is a block of a woman. Her gray hair and red framed glasses, combined with a tan pencil skirt and matching jacket, don't help to soften the image.

She does not see the sag of his shoulders, nor the hurt in his eyes as she continues down the aisle.

She pauses next to Katarina and smiles. Hands Katarina her test paper. A+ with a smiley face drawn next to it, decorates the test paper.

MRS. WESLEY (cont'd)

I have high hopes for you, Miss.
McKay. You have a bright future.

EXT. SPORTS GROUNDS - DAY

MISS. MARTINS (25) ties her hair up... her eyes scans through the squad of cheer-leaders in front of her.

MISS. MARTINS

Again! Katarina, try to keep up.

KATARINA

Yes, Miss Martins.

They start their routine from the beginning...

Katarina messes up again.

KATARINA (cont'd)
This routine isn't working. The
timing is out.

MISS. MARTINS
It does work. We've done this
countless times before...

Katarina stares coldly at Miss. Martins.

KATARINA
I can't do this...

MISS. MARTINS
Just get in the space... nothing else
exits... except for the now.

KATARINA
You know what?

Takes a swig from her water bottle.

KATARINA (cont'd)
I quit.

She turns around, grabs her sweater... runs off.

A stunned silence falls over the squad.

Miss. Martins is the first to react.

MISS. MARTINS
Lindsey, stand in for Katarina. From
the beginning again. Repeat until I
return.

She rushes off to catch up with Katarina.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE- KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is older, but clean and functional.

Dishes are piled up in the sink.

Derrick puts the lid on a pot, moves another pot of the
stove, stirs another.

Derrick is big for his age. He could be the next NBA
superstar if he had time to play.

Two younger siblings, TOM (4) and WILLIAM (5) run through the kitchen, shouting at the top of their voices.

DERRICK
Guys, come on, not in the kitchen...

The whirlwind of kids comes to a standstill. Tom looks at Derrick with big eyes.

TOM
I'm hungry.

WILLIAM
Me too.

DERRICK
Why don't you two go jump in the bath? When you are done, we can have supper.

TOM
But I'm hungry now.

DERRICK
I know you are Tommy, but the food isn't ready yet.

TOM
But... I'm...

Derrick rolls his eyes, takes a deep breath, bends down.

DERRICK
Go now... Please.

The two boys run from the kitchen to the bathroom.

He glances at JULIE (12), who sits at the table doing homework.

DERRICK (cont'd)
How are you going, Jules?

JULIE
Almost done.

A sad smile crosses his face as he returns to the pots on the stove.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE - SONIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Derrick slowly rocks back and forth as he reads from Decent into Hell by Charles Williams.

DERRICK

Do I, she asked hesitatingly. He turned a serious gaze on her and her own eyes turned away before it. He said, there's nothing worth quite so much vigilance or anxiety.

Derrick looks across the book at his mother, SONIA (38), propped up against the pillows, lays with closed eyes. She has no hair.

DERRICK (cont'd)

Watchfulness, but not anxiety, not fear. You let it in to yourself when you fear it so; and whatever it is, it's less than your life. You talk as if life were good, she said.

He stops reading, looks at his mother.

SONIA

Just a little more... please.

Derrick turns the page, continues to read.

DERRICK

It's either good or evil, he answered, and you can't decide that by counting incidents on your fingers. The decision is of another kind. But don't let's be abstract. Will you tell me what it is bothers you?

EXT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - DAY

Katarina walks home. She pauses in front of the house. The rickety railing has new sports, and a fresh coat of white paint.

The house is painted a pale yellow.

She walks up the stairs, looks at the flowers in the pots. She sticks her hand out, brings a flower to her nose, smells it. A wry smile crosses her lips.

KATARINA

You guys look good. You must be happy.

The flower slips from her hand.

KATARINA (cont'd)
I'll come water you in a bit.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Helena shoves a stuffed chicken into the oven, wipes off the counter, tucks at her jersey.

She looks up as Katarina enters.

HELENA
Hey, honey. How was school?

Katarina pauses, looks at Helena suspiciously.

KATARINA
What's going on?

HELENA
(uncomfortable)
Nothing. Why?

KATARINA
What's all this?

HELENA
Oh, this?

Helena takes a sip of the glass of wine in front of her.

HELENA (cont'd)
We are having a guest for dinner.

KATARINA
Ughh... Great.

HELENA
Don't be like that. You will like him.

KATARINA
(abrupt)
Yeah... sure.

She storms off to her room, slams the door.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOME - KATARINA'S ROOM - DAY

Katarina chucks her school bag onto the floor, kicks it out of the way.

She falls down onto her bed, hugs Scarlet, stares at the ceiling. The bare bulb was replaced with a new light.

After a moment, she picks up her phone, dials.

KATARINA

Ugh... you won't believe what I walked into when I got home.

INT. JADE'S BEDROOM - DAY

JADE (17) goth, lights an incense stick. She speaks to Katarina on speaker phone.

JADE

She wasted again?

INTERCUT KATARINA/JADE

KATARINA

Worse. She invited some dude over. Apparently...

(Mimics Helena)

I'll like him.

JADE

Do you think it's serious? I mean, like, is she gonna marry him?

KATARINA

NO! It's too soon. My dad... it's only been five months...

JADE

Dude... I... Maybe it'll do her good.

KATARINA

(scoffs)

Yeah, right, like that's gonna happen. She is always either drunk or at work, or both. Don't know how she does it.

JADE

Yeah. You still thinking about college?

KATARINA

Yeah, if I can get a scholarship. You know what happened with my college fund.

JADE
I'll have to find myself a rich husband. No way I can afford to go to college.

KATARINA
Let's hope he's got a brother. Maybe I can have him.

They chuckle.

KATARINA (cont'd)
I gotta go. Talk to you later.

JADE
Have fun.

KATARINA
(scoffs)
Yeah, right.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - KATARINA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Helena knocks on the door, opens it.

Katarina lies on her bed, stares blindly at the ceiling.

Helena opens the door, peeks around it.

HELENA
May I come in?

Katarina sits up.

Helena sits on the edge of the bed. She faces Katarina.

HELENA (cont'd)
I know I haven't been much of a mother lately... This thing with your dad... I... I didn't know how to handle it. He always controlled everything, made all the decisions. I just had to go along.

Her eyes plead with Katarina to understand.

HELENA (cont'd)
When your dad passed away, I didn't know how to... how to handle all the responsibility... I was worried all the time.

Helena fiddles nervously with her hands on her lap.

HELENA (cont'd)
I chose to drown the worries... I
didn't want to feel anymore. Then I
met Jeffrey.

Helena's eyes sink to the floor.

HELENA (cont'd)
I don't want to grow old alone.
(looks at Katarina)
I need someone in my life... I need
Jeffrey. He's a good man. He makes me
feel good...

KATARINA
It... It's just so quick. It's hardly
been 5 months.

Helena sighs, her head sags.

HELENA
It's been much longer.

KATARINA
What do you mean?

Helena finds Katarina's hand.

HELENA
Your dad and I, we were talking about
divorce. We haven't been happy for
years. He was always busy with work.
I was lonely.

She looks at Katarina, her eyes begs for understanding.

HELENA (cont'd)
Your dad was a good man, but he
wasn't married to me. He was married
to his job, his clients.

KATARINA
(shocked)
You were getting a divorce? Is that
why he..?

HELENA
No... When he lost his job, he ran up
a lot of debt gambling. That burden
became too heavy.

INT. DERRICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Derrick is bent over his books at his desk. A night light is the only light source in the room.

Behind him, two little boys are sleeping in a single bed.

Derrick bites the back end of his pencil, eyes heavy. He yawns, continues writing...

He lays his head on his arms for a moment.

The pen slips out of Derrick's hand.

He lifts his head... Puts it down again.

The pen rolls down the desk, falls on the floor.

Derrick stirs.

SONIA O.S

Derrick..!

Derrick sits up, alert.

SONIA O.S (cont'd)

Derrick! Help...

Derrick sprints from his room.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - NIGHT

A knock on the door. Helena looks back at Katarina, begs with her eyes, straightens up, puts on a smile, walks to the door, opens it.

JEFFREY MAXWELL (59) carries a bunch of flowers and a bottle of wine.

Jeffrey tries too hard to keep his age at bay. His fake tan gives his skin the look of old leather. The black jeans fit too tight, the big buckle on his belt is too big. Everything about Jeffrey is just too much.

HELENA

Jeffrey
(stands aside)
please come in.

She takes the flowers and the bottle of wine he hands her.

HELENA (cont'd)
Make yourself at home. I'm just
putting these in a vase.

Jeffrey enters looks at Katarina. The atmosphere is thick,
almost tangible. Neither speak.

Helena returns.

HELENA (cont'd)
This is my daughter, Katarina.

Jeffrey steps forward, puts a hand out. Katarina doesn't
respond.

Helena nudges her slightly. Their eyes meet.

Helena urges Katarina to shake his hand.

Katarina sticks her hand out.

KATARINA
How do you do?

Jeffrey holds her hand longer than needed, takes her in with
his eyes.

Uncomfortable Katarina pulls her hand from his, goes to the
living room, sags down on the couch.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE - SONIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Derrick holds the oxygen mask over Sonia's face. He calmly
caresses her bold head.

DERRICK
Alright now. Breathe in... There we
go... and out... and in...

His mother relaxes visibly, exhales.

DERRICK (cont'd)
And in...

His mother touches his hand. He removes the mask, sits on
the edge of the bed.

DERRICK (cont'd)
Better?

She brings his hands to her mouth, kisses them.

SONIA

Thank you...

DERRICK

SHHH. You should rest.

He sinks into the chair next to her bed, watches her laying with closed eyes. His eyes become heavy. Slowly, he falls asleep.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - OPEN-PLAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeffrey and Helena, preoccupied with one another, laugh and drink wine.

Katarina quietly toys with her fork, pushes food around the plate. She looks at her mom and Jeffrey fondling, all giggles.

Katarina shoves the chair back...

Startled, Helena looks at her.

HELENA

Where are you going? You haven't touched your food.

KATARINA

I've got homework.

HELENA

Oh okay, go ahead.

Katarina gets up from the table, picks up her plate, walks to the kitchen.

Jeffrey springs from his chair, grabs and hugs her.

JEFFREY

It was great to meet you.

Katarina escapes his grip, flees to the kitchen.

Helena smiles starry-eyed, sips from her wine.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Helena darts around the kitchen counter, makes breakfast for Katarina. She has a bright smile on her face. She hums happily as she goes.

HELENA
 Isn't he amazing? He was so good with
 you.

KATARINA
 He's creepy, Mom. He looked at me
 like a spider does at a fly.

Helena's hand stills for a moment from wiping the counter.

HELENA
 Oh, nonsense...

She wipes with renewed determination.

HELENA (cont'd)
 It's difficult for you to see me with
 another man... I get that...
 (looks at Katarina)
 You have to move on... I don't want
 to be alone for the rest of my life.

KATARINA
 It's not that, Mom. He makes me
 uncomfortable.

HELENA
 You should see his house. It's huge,
 like a palace. You can have a nice
 room.

KATARINA
 I have a room.

Helena begs Katarina with her eyes.

HELENA
 Don't ruin this. Please.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Derrick makes sandwiches, packs it in lunchboxes.

DERRICK
 Come on, time to go.

He leans over, writes in a schoolbook.

Tommy and CARL (6) run into the kitchen. They wait in line
 for Derrick to hand them their lunchboxes.

DERRICK (cont'd)
 Come Jules, we need to go.

JULIE O.S

I'm coming.

Derrick picks up his pen to write, knocks over a glass of milk. It spills on his book.

DERRICK

Shit!

He rushes to get his book cleaned up.

Tommy and Carl look at each other... giggle. Tommy points at Derrick.

TOM

You said a bad word.

They giggle.

Derrick glares at them. If looks could kill, they'd be dead.

DERRICK

Jules! We need to go.

Julie storms into the kitchen.

JULIE

I have nothing to wear.

DERRICK

You look fine.

JULIE

Fine? Ugh. I want to look amazing.

DERRICK

Fine. You look amazing. Can we go now, please?

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

Katarina leans against a tree, closes her eyes.

Derrick sags down next to her.

DERRICK

Hey.

Katarina opens her eyes. Look surprised at Derrick.

He sweeps his fringe from his eyes. He doesn't look at her.

KATARINA
(Surprised)
What's up?

Derrick seems a little uncomfortable. He bites his bottom lip nervously before his eyes find hers.

DERRICK
Nothing... Uhm... How are you holding up?

KATARINA
What do you mean?

Derrick's eyes find his shoes. He folds his arms around his pulled-up legs.

DERRICK
Your dad... It can't be easy... After my father left, I was angry at him, at the world...
(Looks at Katarina)
It must be worse for you...

KATARINA
Why? 'Cause mine was a coward and killed himself?

DERRICK
No! That's not what I meant. I just thought... I thought you might want to talk.

Katarina jumps up, looks down at Derrick.

KATARINA
And why would I talk to you? You... you are just a sad loser!

Katarina storms off.

Derrick leans his head against the tree, closes his eyes.

INT. JADE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SANDRA (40's) sits upright in the chair. The room is dark.

A noise by the window draws her attention. She waits patiently.

JADE (17) dressed in black tights and top, goth-looking, her hair caught in a messy bun, peeks in the window. She slips in, closes the window softly, turns the night light on.

SANDRA
Look who decided to come home.

Startled, Jade swings around.

JADE
Jesus, you scared the living shit out of me. What the fuck are you doing?

SANDRA
Hey, watch your tone with me. I am not one of your playmates... I brought your washing, noticed you weren't in your bed.

JADE
Jesus, mom, why can't you just be like other moms?

SANDRA
Which other moms, hmm? Which one do you want me to be like? Katarina's mom that's always drunk? Stacey's mom, who has slept with every man in this town? Or Tara's mom, who is always traveling?

JADE
That's not what I mean.

SANDRA
They say be careful what you wish for. You are grounded for 2 months... That's what other moms do, right?

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Katarina looks up as her mother enters the door. She seems surprisingly sober.

Helena rushes closer, eagerly. She proudly sticks her hand out to Katarina, squeals. A big diamond ring sparkles on her ring finger.

HELENA
So, what do you think?

KATARINA
You getting married?

HELENA
Isn't it amazing?

KATARINA

NO! It's too soon. You've only been dating what 2... 3 months? You don't even know him.

HELENA

We love each other... Why should we wait any longer?

Katarina gets up, shrugs it off.

KATARINA

Ugh, whatever... I've got homework.

She walks to her room.

Helena looks dumbfounded as Katarina leaves the living-room. She cringes when Katarina slams close her bedroom door.

Her attention turns back to the diamond ring on her finger. Hand in the air, she twirls, a smile on her face.

EXT. DODGY STREET - SEEDY PART OF TOWN - NIGHT

Derrick paces nervously. Looks down the derelict alley. A homeless man stirs... mumbles.

STEVE(19) walks up to Derrick, looks around nervously.

STEVE

Whatcha got?

DERRICK

The usual.

Steve scouts the street again, slips a \$50 bill into Derrick's hand.

Derrick disappears around the corner, into the alley.

Steve hangs around, paces nervously.

Derrick re-appears, shakes Steve's hand, handing him a small baggie.

Steve walks away.

LATER

A car pulls up, window winds down. ANTON (25) greets Derrick.

ANTON
Derrick, my man. What's up?

Derrick walks to the car, leans in, shakes Anton's hand.

DERRICK
It's been a while.

ANTON
Yeah... Been keeping my nose clean.

Anton looks at his friends in the car.

ANTON (cont'd)
The boys and I have a little house party tonight. Celebrate the end of my parole. You got something for me?

Derrick produces a variety of drugs from his pocket. Shows Anton.

ANTON (cont'd)
How much?

DERRICK
Five hundred.

Anton nods, takes the \$100 bills from his wallet, stuffs it in Derrick's hand.

They shake hands, Anton drives off.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Derrick enters the kitchen, flips the light switch, places some bags on the counter.

He packs away the groceries, pours a glass of water. He picks up the remaining bag, opens it, takes out a beautiful new top for Julie, leaves the kitchen.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE - JULIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Derrick tiptoes to Julie's bed, careful not to wake her. He spreads the new top at the foot end of her bed, tucks her in, kisses her softly.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE - SONIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Derrick peeks into Sonia's room. She sleeps peacefully. He listens to her rhythmic breathing for a bit, close the door a little.

INT. DERRICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Derrick falls down on his bed, closes his eyes for a moment, sighs.

He turns his head, looks at his un-opened school bag, yawns.

His eyes heavy, Derrick blinks, and finally falls asleep.

INT. TRAILER PARK HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Katarina stumbles still half asleep into the kitchen, startles when she sees Jeffrey in the kitchen.

Jeffrey clears his throat.

JEFFREY

Morning.

Jeffrey looks at her with desire.

JEFFREY (cont'd)

What would it be? Coffee and toast?
Tea? Orange juice?

Uncomfortable, Katarina tucks at her nightdress.

KATARINA

Coffee, please.

JEFFREY

Sit, I'll make.

KATARINA

Thanks.

She turns to go back to her room.

JEFFREY

Where are you going?

KATARINA

To change. I'll be right back.

JEFFREY
Nonsense, you don't need to. We are
practically family. Sit down.

Katarina sits at the counter, waits for the coffee, keeps
pulling at her nightdress.

Jeffrey leans on the counter, turns his attention to her.

JEFFREY (cont'd)
So, how's school?

His gaze dwindles to her legs.

KATARINA
Okay, I guess.

JEFFREY
Your mom says you've have good
grades.

KATARINA
I try.

Jeffrey walks around the counter, puts his arm around her
shoulders.

JEFFREY
I know things have been difficult
with your dad...
(Puts his hand on
her leg)
But I want you to know I am here for
you.

Katarina wriggles out from under his arm.

KATARINA
I have to go get ready.

She springs from the high chair.

JEFFREY
Katarina... Wait!

She storms off to her room.

He reaches for her as Helena enters the kitchen.

Katarina bumps into Helena.

HELENA
What's going on?

JEFFREY

Katarina is upset. I... I tried to comfort her.

Helena looks at Katarina.

HELENA

What's wrong, honey?

KATARINA

He tried to touch me!

JEFFREY

I did no such thing. I was being nice.

KATARINA

Well, I didn't ask for it.

HELENA

Katarina! Apologize to Jeffrey immediately. I will not have you speak with him like that.

Katarina looks at Helena, shrugs, looks at Jeffrey, storms off without a word.

INSERT MONTAGE

- Katarina receives a failed test from Mrs. Wesley.
- Derrick sits with Katarina during break. They don't speak.
- Helena fits a wedding dress. Katarina rejects one dress after the other.
- Helena and Katarina argue. Katarina shatters a plate on the floor, runs off in tears.
- Katarina neglects her appearance, wears baggy, oversized clothes.
- Helena packs their belongings in boxes.
- Helena and Jeffrey get married at Jeffrey's house in the garden.

END MONTAGE

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - KATARINA'S ROOM - DAY

Katarina lies on her bed, headphones on, eyes closed.

A knock on the door.

She doesn't hear.

The door opens, Jeffrey enters.

He puts his hand on her knee, slides it down her leg.

Her eyes shoots open. She springs up, away from him.

KATARINA

What the fuck?

JEFFREY

I knocked... you didn't respond.

KATARINA

Don't give you the right to touch me.

JEFFREY

I didn't... I tried to get your attention.

Katarina gives him a rebellious look.

KATARINA

Well, keep your fucking hands to your fucking self.

JEFFREY

(undisturbed)

Now that I have it. Your mom and I are going out tonight. Must I arrange for a babysitter or will you be okay?

KATARINA

I'll be okay.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE - SONIA'S ROOM - DAY

Sonia looks into the little hand-held mirror. She rubs over the new hair on her scalp.

A radiant smile lights up her face. She sits up, swings her feet off the bed, gets up. On wobbly, legs she makes her way to the bathroom.

INT. DERRICK'S HOUSE - SONIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Derrick sits in the chair next to Sonia's bed.

A radiant smile plays on her face.

SONIA
I want to show you something.

She removes the headscarf from her head, rubs over the new hair. Leans forward.

SONIA (cont'd)
Look.

She smiles as she rubs over the new growth.

Derrick leans forward, softly touches the new growth on her head. Happiness spreads through his eyes and ends in a wide smile.

DERRICK
That's great, Mom. Did you speak to Dr. Patel?

Sonia shakes her head *No*.

SONIA
There's more.

DERRICK
More?

Sonia sits up, swings her legs off the bed, gets up on wobbly legs.

Derrick springs from his chair, hugs and twirls her around.

DERRICK (cont'd)
Mom, that's amazing.
(Calls)
Jules, Tommy, Jason!

The threesome burst into the room almost simultaneously, sees Sonia standing, rushes to and hugs her.

Derrick sees Sonia tire, sends the little ones away.

DERRICK (cont'd)
That is great, Mom, but don't overdo it. Take your time to build your strength.

Sonia envelopes Derrick's face in her hands.

SONIA
I don't know what I what I would've done without you. You are amazing... I don't know how you did it.

DERRICK
I did what was needed.

She pulls him into a tight hug... holds on to him.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - KATARINA'S ROOM - DAY

Katarina sits at the desk in her room, takes books from her bag.

A test paper slips out from one, glides to the floor... lands next to her chair.

She picks up the test paper. Looks at the C- on it. Hears Mrs. Wesley handing the paper out again.

MRS. WESLEY V.O
I am extremely disappointed,
Katarina... extremely. Even Derrick
got better marks than you.

Katarina crumples the paper into a little ball, chucks it on the floor.

She shoves her chair back, springs from her chair...

She falls down on her bed, fits her headphones, listens to music.

She picks Scarlet up, folds her arms around her.

A MOMENT LATER

Annoyed, Katarina takes the headphones off, slams them down on her bedside table, nearly chucks of the nightlight.

She gets up, paces the room...

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - OPEN-PLAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeffrey and Helena have guests over. The women sit in the living room. They are all drinking a glass of wine.

GRETA (40) takes a sip from her glass, looks at the girls, leans in.

GRETA
Have you seen that new show on TV?
Gigolo, or something like that.

She looks at them, expectantly.

GRETA (cont'd)
OH MY GOD! Those men are so hot.

CHARMAINE
Is that the one with the male
prostitutes?

GRETA
They are not prostitutes. They are...
companions.

CHARMAINE
Companions that get paid.

Helena, MELANIE (38) and Charmaine look at each other.

HELENA, MELANIE
Prostitutes!

They chuckle in unison.

HELENA
I get hot flushes every time Justin
takes off his shirt...
(sighs)
I wouldn't mind him kicking off his
shoes under my bed.

Their laughter cuts through the house.

Helena fills their glasses again from the wine bottle on the
table.

MELANIE
NO... No... Brock. Let me tell you, I
will not be responsible for my
actions if I have him for one night.
He's gonna pray for a break.

CHARMAINE
Yup, I agree. I can have him for
breakfast, lunch and supper... and as
a snack in between.

They chortle loudly.

Katarina comes down the stairs, makes her way to

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jeffrey leers at her, smirks.

JEFFREY
Why don't you join us?

KATARINA
No, thank you.

Jeffrey slams his arms around Katarina's shoulder.

JEFFREY
Come on... live a little.

Katarina breaks free from Jeffrey.

KATARINA
Take your hands off me.

JACOB
Ohhhh, feisty!

The men laugh.

She pours herself a glass of water, looks at them defiantly before she rushes back to her room.

MARCUS
The feisty ones are the best one.
Charmaine's like that. Man, she gives
me a hard time, but the makeup sex...
damn.

They laugh loudly.

LATER

Jeffrey and Helena see the guests off at the door. They return to the living room. Helena sags down on the couch, smiles at Jeffrey.

HELENA
What a lovely evening. We should do
this more often.

JEFFREY
(slur)
One last drink?

Helena nods.

HELENA
That will be nice.

Jeffrey returns with two glasses of wine.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - KATARINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The pale moonlight falls on Katarina, who sleeps peacefully, blankets tossed aside. She turns to her side, the top of her pajamas moves up, exposes her ribs and flat belly.

Her room door opens quietly, Jeffrey steps inside, walks up to the bed... stares at her.

He touches himself, groans, trembles as relief comes.

Katarina stirs at the sound. He rushes out of the room, glances back at her before closing the door.

INT. JEFFREY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Helena sleeps between the red satin sheets on the king-sized bed, with a monumental headboard.

On the nightstand, an almost empty wineglass stands abandoned.

Jeffrey slides into bed, pulls the covers over him. Helena wakes a little, then sleepily snuggles up to him.

HELENA

(mumbles)

Where did you go?

JEFFREY

I had to satisfy my hunger.

Helena snuggles up, fondles him.

Jeffrey takes her hand, holds it against his chest.

JEFFREY (cont'd)

Not tonight, honey... I'm tired.

Helena settles down... falls asleep.

EXT. STREET - SEEDY PART OF TOWN - DAY

A black SUV pulls up. The driver reminds of MR. T. Gold chains around his neck, tattoos cover his forearm, that rests on the open window.

Derrick walks up to the SUV, the back window glides open.

JEROME

Derrick. Get in.

Derrick gets into the:

STATIONARY SUV

Derrick hands over a wad of cash to JEROME (30's) tattooed and with a "gold grill".

Jerome is a block of a man, dressed in a purple suit. The blazer velvet. A white hat and sunglasses serve as finishing touches.

He speaks with an over-dramatic Jamaican accent.

DERRICK

This is my last run. After this I'm out.

JEROME

No man, I cannot lose you. You are one of my best runners...

DERRICK

I told you from the beginning it's temporary... I had to support my family while my mom was sick.

JEROME

You a born salesman yo, don't let your talents go to waste. You can be a wealthy man.

DERRICK

I have to focus on school now. My mom is better. She can look after the little ones again, go back to work.

JEROME

I get ya, but dude... I need the cash. I have...

Jerome motions with his hands to include the SUV and his elaborate outfit.

JEROME (cont'd)

Expenses.

Jerome passes a bag, with a variety of drugs, to Derrick. He quickly shoves it into his backpack, zips it up... gets out.

DERRICK

I'll see you in a week. Then I am done.

JEROME
We will see, man.
(nods slowly)
We'll see.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeffrey, Helena and Katarina eat supper.

HELENA
I have to go away for a couple of
days.

Katarina sharply looks at Helena.

HELENA (cont'd)
There is an HR workshop I have to
attend. Mr. Simmons expects it. If I
don't, I can kiss my promotion good
bye.

KATARINA
When?

HELENA
Next week, Wednesday. I'll be back on
Saturday.

KATARINA
Can I go to Jade's?

HELENA
Nonsense... Jeffrey will be here. You
won't be alone.

Jeffrey looks at Katarina, smiles.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

Katarina sits behind Jade, plays with Jade's jet black hair.

KATARINA
Please Jade, just for two nights. My
mom is going away, and I don't want
to be alone with Jeffrey. He freaks
me out... like in completely.

JADE
I would have, but I'm still grounded.
The old lady is not gonna let me put
a foot out the door.

Katarina sighs.

JADE (cont'd)
Why don't you come sleep over at my
place then?

KATARINA
I tried. She wouldn't have any of it.
Used Jeffrey being there as an
excuse. What if I ask her? Won't she
allow you then?

JADE
Jesus dude, just drop it. I told you
I can't.

KATARINA
Fine. I'll make another plan.

Katarina notices Derrick sitting a little distance away.

KATARINA (cont'd)
I'll catch up with you later.

She walks over to Derrick.

KATARINA (cont'd)
Hey.

She sits down next to Derrick.

Derrick shifts up.

DERRICK
What's up?

Katarina sits down next to Derrick, an awkward silence
between them.

KATARINA
A few weeks ago... you said if I need
help... You said... I could ask you.

Derrick looks at her with interest.

DERRICK
What can I do for you, your majesty?

Katarina gets up.

KATARINA
Forget it. It was a mistake. Forget I
asked.

Katarina turns and walks away, hurriedly.

Derrick jumps up, runs after her.

DERRICK
I'm sorry, I was just kidding. What
can I do for you?

KATARINA
I need a study buddy... only for a
few days.

DERRICK
I am hardly the go to study buddy.

KATARINA
I just need someone to be there.

DERRICK
Are you sure you want me, the sad
loser?

KATARINA
I'm sorry about that.

Derrick looks at her sharply.

DERRICK
Why do you need someone to be there?

KATARINA
My mom is going away for a couple of
days.

Derrick immediately puts one and one together.

DERRICK
And you don't want to be alone with
your stepdad.

Katarina shrugs.

Derrick looks at her questioningly.

DERRICK (cont'd)
Has he... done anything to you?

Katarina shakes her head *no*.

KATARINA
I just don't want to be alone with
him. He gives me the creeps.

The bell rings.

DERRICK
I'll be there.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - KATARINA'S ROOM - DAY

Scarlet sits propped up against the multiple pillows.

School bags and books are spread across Katarina's bed.

Derrick and Katarina sit next to each other at the wooden desk, their books open in front of them. Music plays softly in the background.

KATARINA
Here is your mistake. See?

She shows him a miscalculation.

They both reach for the eraser. Their hands touch, they look at each other... their eyes meet.

Behind them, Jeffrey enters the room quietly, sees Derrick about to kiss Katarina.

JEFFREY
(Clears his throat)
Hope I'm not interrupting.

Derrick and Katarina spring from their chairs. They both look guilty.

DERRICK
No, we were... we were just...

KATARINA
We were just studying.

Her gaze falls on Derrick. She smiles.

JEFFREY
I made supper... Derrick, you are welcome to join us.

Katarina looks at Derrick, pleads with her eyes.

DERRICK
Thank you Mr. Maxwell, it will be nice.

KATARINA
We'll be there shortly. We are just packing our books away.

Jeffrey nods, turns around, staggers a little.

Katarina turns to Derrick.

KATARINA (cont'd)
Thank you.

Derrick nods, shoots her a quick smile.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - KATARINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jeffrey opens Katarina's door. Looks at her sleeping in the dim light streaming from her window.

He staggers to her bed.

His gown drops to the floor, next to his green-checked slippers.

He gets into bed with Katarina.

Katarina stirs.

He kisses her neck. She smiles.

KATARINA
(Giggles)
Stop.

He kisses her neck again.

She opens her eyes, sees Jeffrey, tries to fight him off.

KATARINA (cont'd)
What the fuck are you doing? Get off
me.

He over-powers her. With one hand on her mouth, he continues to fondle her.

She fights frantically against his weight, pushing her down. She shakes her head from side to side, trying to free it from his hand.

JEFFREY
Come on, you know you want it.

He fights against her, pushes her down with his weight.

JEFFREY (cont'd)
I saw the way you looked at that
boy...

She shakes her head.

Her eyes big with fear.

She struggles again.

Her curtains lift in the slight breeze. The full moon shines into the room.

Outside in a tree, an owl hoots.

A muffled scream.

In the distance, a car horn sounds.

Groans are followed by a sigh.

Jeffrey's bare feet step into the slippers. His hands pick up the gown, tightens the belt.

He sits down next to Katarina.

She cries.

He puts his hand on his shoulder.

She moves away from him.

JEFFREY (cont'd)
Come on, you enjoyed it. I know you did.

He leans closer, pins her between his hands under his body.

JEFFREY (cont'd)
You aren't going to tell now, are you?

Terrified, she shakes her head. Tears streams down her cheeks.

JEFFREY (cont'd)
Not like anyone will believe you, anyway.

He kisses her cheek.

JEFFREY (cont'd)
Sleep tight, sweetheart.

Katarina turns to her side. She hugs Scarlet tight. She cries silently.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

Katarina wanders around the school grounds aimlessly.

Derrick sees her, rushes over.

DERRICK

Hey.

Katarina avoids eye-contact with Derrick.

KATARINA

'Sup?

DERRICK

What time you need me to come over
again today?

Katarina looks at him pensively, slowly shakes her head.

KATARINA

It's okay.

Derrick looks at her sharply.

DERRICK

Why, what happened? Did he... Did he
do something to you..?

Derrick reaches out to her. She steps out of reach.

KATARINA

I'm fine.

She turns away from him, pauses... turns back.

KATARINA (cont'd)

Thank you.

She walks away.

Derrick runs after her, puts his hand on her shoulder, she
shrugs it off, looks him square in the eyes.

Her eyes spit fire.

KATARINA (cont'd)

Don't you fucking touch me.

DERRICK

What happened? I thought we... I
thought we had a moment last night.

Katarina explodes.

KATARINA.

Oh, and that gives you the right to touch me like you want? You men are all the same. Bloody useless.

DERRICK

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to. When is your mom coming back?

KATARINA

One more night.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - DAY

Helena enters, puts down her traveling bag, kicks off her shoes. Jeffrey rushes to meet her. He wraps his arms around her.

JEFFREY

I missed you. How did it go?

HELENA

It went well, thanks. Did you guys manage okay?

JEFFREY

We did just fine.

She looks up at Katarina on the foot of the steps. Katarina shoots her a hateful glance, turns away.

HELENA

Hello, Katarina.

KATARINA

Hey.

HELENA

Aren't you going to give me a hug?

Katarina obeys.

Helena hugs her.

Katarina looks up into the eyes of Jeffrey. The warning is unmistakable.

HELENA (cont'd)

How did things go here?

JEFFREY

All good. Katarina had a friend over,
and we had a nice supper together. It
was good. He is a nice boy.

Helena looks at Katarina in surprise.

HELENA

Who's this boy? You haven't mentioned
him before.

KATARINA

No one. We just studied together.

Katarina looks at Helena.

KATARINA (cont'd)

There is something I want to discuss
with you.

Jeffrey looks up sharply.

Katarina sees the warning in his eyes.

HELENA

What is it, baby?

JEFFREY

I'm sure you can discuss it later.

His eyes send another warning to Katarina.

JEFFREY (cont'd)

First, I want to hear all about your
trip.

He slams his arm around her shoulders, kisses her on the
cheek.

JEFFREY (cont'd)

I missed you.

Helena giggles.

HELENA

And I you...

KATARINA

Ugh...

Katarina stomps her foot, storms off to her room.

HELENA

What's with her?

JEFFREY
You know teenagers. Probably
boyfriend trouble...

EXT. SPORTS GROUNDS - DAY

Jade and Katarina sit high in the spectator stands. There is no one around them.

On the sports field, the cheerleaders practice their routines.

Katarina watches them. She bites her nails.

JADE
Chill, dude. You are so anxious lately...

KATARINA
I wish it was that simple.

JADE
It is... If you have some help.

KATARINA
Help?

She picks up her schoolbag, digs in it. Finds a delicate, old-looking purse.

She flips it open, takes out a joint, slips into Katarina's hand.

Katarina looks at Jade, surprised.

KATARINA (cont'd)
What's this?

JADE
Just try it.

Katarina slips the joint into her pocket, continues watching the practice.

JADE (cont'd)
You can go back, you know.

Katarina looks at Jade, dumbfounded.

JADE (cont'd)
Cheer leading.

Katarina picks up her bag.

KATARINA
I have to go. See you.

JADE
Katarina, wait!

Katarina does not heed Jade's call.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Leaves rustle in the slight breeze. The waterway and fountain, contributes its serenity.

Katarina sits cross-legged with her back against the big, old tree.

She leans her head against the tree.

Close her eyes.

She sticks her hands in her pockets. A moment later her hand emerges, joint between her fingers.

She opens her eyes, looks curiously at the joint in her hand.

Quickly sticks her hand back in her pocket.

Anxiously, she glances around. The park is basically deserted, except for a few people minding their own business.

She leans forward, opens her bag, digs in it, brings out a zippo lighter.

She repeatedly flicks it open and close.

She glances at the few visitors to the park. They show no interest in her.

A moment she later, she lifts the joint to her lips, lights it, takes a drag, inhales.

A violent fit of coughs overpower her. She looks back at the people in the park. They don't pay any notice to her.

Another round. She lights the joint again, takes another drag. Keeps the smoke in. She exhales slowly, her head leaning against the trunk of the tree. She closes her eyes.

OFFICER KENT O.S
Are you okay there, missy?

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Helena rushes into the police station, looks around, anxiously. Finds someone to assist her.

HELENA

Excuse me. I am looking for my daughter, Katarina McKay... She was arrested at the park.

The officer points her in a direction.

INT. POLICE HOLDING CELLS - DAY

Katarina sits, squashed between NINA (21)brunette with a streak of red dyed hair and a skimpy body hugging, red dress and CANDY (25) wearing a blonde wig and very little clothing.

CANDY

What you in for?

KATARINA

Who cares?

CANDY

I'm sure your mama does, Babygirl.

KATARINA

The fuck she does. Do you think I'd be here if she did?

CANDY

Listen honey, your Mama brought you in to this world, and though you may not believe it, she loves you.

KATARINA

Is that why she let him do things he does? Huh? Because she loves me? I call bullshit.

Candy puts her arm around Katarina's shoulder.

CANDY

I am sorry, sweetheart. Does your mama know about these things he does?

Katarina stares Candy in the eye, shakes her head *No*.

CANDY (cont'd)
Then you have to tell her, Babygirl.
You can assume she knows.

KATARINA
What if... What if she doesn't
believe me?

An OFFICER CORDELIA (35) her hair pulled into a tight bun on her head, walks down the aisle, clipboard in hand. She looks at the paperwork.

OFFICER CORDELIA
Katarina McKay?

Katarina jumps up from where she is seated.

CANDY
See, I told ya. Now tell her.

She steps to the bars, leans against them.

KATARINA
That's me. I am Katarina.

OFFICER CORDELIA
Your mom is here.

KATARINA
Is she... alone?

OFFICER CORDELIA
Now, how the hell should I know? Am I
her guardian now?

Katarina looks back at Candy.

CANDY
Tell her.

Katarina nods in agreement.

Officer Cordelia unlocks the door. Katarina exits.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Helena sees Katarina enter with Officer Cordelia. She rushes over, hugs Katarina.

HELENA
Are you okay? What happened?

KATARINA
Can we just go home?

HELENA
Yeah, yeah, let's do that.

INT. CAR - DAY

Helena glances at Katarina, looks back at the road.

HELENA
What were you thinking..? Marijuana?
Why Katarina..? Why?

KATARINA
Can we just go home?

HELENA
No! We can't just go home. I want to
know.

KATARINA
It doesn't matter.

HELENA
It does... It does to me. I can't
help you if I don't know why. What
drove you to this?

INSERT BACK FLASH

Candy puts her arm around Katarina's shoulder.

CANDY
Tell her.

END BACK FLASH

Katarina looks at her mother with determination.

KATARINA
It's...

HELENA
It's what?

KATARINA
Jeffrey, okay... He raped me.

HELENA

Don't talk shit... Jeffrey would never do such a thing... He is a good man...

KATARINA

He did..! When you went away a few weeks back...

HELENA

Stop it! I don't want to hear another word. Jeffrey isn't like that.

KATARINA

I'm not lying, Mom...

HELENA

I won't have you blame Jeffrey to get out of this.

Katarina stares out of the window, tears fill her eyes.

EXT. SPORTS GROUNDS - DAY

Katarina wanders aimlessly around the school grounds. She passes a group of girls. They point, whisper behind their hands, laughs.

Derrick falls in next to her, hands held in the air.

DERRICK

I come in peace.

KATARINA

What do you want?

DERRICK

I... I just wanted to see how you doing. I heard about... you know...

KATARINA

Me being arrested? Me being a druggie? What?

DERRICK

We have all done things we're not proud of... I have... I am not here to judge. I honestly just wanted to see how you are.

KATARINA

Why do you care?

DERRICK
I... because...

KATARINA
Because why?

DERRICK
Because I understand okay...

Tears well up in Katarina's eyes.

KATARINA
(Angry)
Well, I don't need your sympathy.

DERRICK
I'm just trying to help.

KATARINA
I don't need your help.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Jeffrey sits in his study behind a large wooden desk. The wall is decorated with certificates of various sizes.

A knock on the door. Jeffrey looks up.

JEFFREY
Yes?

Katarina enters hesitantly, leaves the door open.

KATARINA
Hey.

Gets up from his chair.

JEFFREY
This is a pleasant surprise.

KATARINA
(nervously)
I have a favor to ask.

JEFFREY
Anything.

Katarina avoids his eyes.

KATARINA
Can I borrow money, please.

JEFFREY

How much?

KATARINA

\$100.

Jeffrey takes his wallet out, takes out \$100.

JEFFREY

There you go.

Katarina nods, hesitantly takes the money from his hand.

KATARINA

Thank you.

(looks at him)

I don't know when I can pay you back.

Jeffrey steps forward. Pulls her into a hug.

JEFFREY

That's okay, we'll sort something out.

Katarina allows him to hug her.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Two fried eggs are dishes onto a plate, next to a slice of toast and two strips of bacon.

Helena hands the plate to Jeffrey. He smiles as he takes it from her.

He kisses her on the cheek.

JEFFREY

Thanks, Baby.

Helena shoots him a quick smile.

HELENA

Katarina! Come, you will be late.

Helena pours coffee, hands it to Jeffrey .

HELENA (cont'd)

Katarina!

(at Jeffrey)

I wonder what is taking her so long?

JEFFREY

You worry too much. Come sit down.

Helena sits with Jeffrey. They have coffee and toast. She looks at the clock.

HELENA
Katarina! You have to go. You will be late.

She rushes out of the kitchen towards Katarina's room.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - KATARINA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Helena knocks. There is no reply.

The door bursts open.

HELENA
Katarina, you are... Katarina?

She looks at the bed. It is made. Scarlet is missing from her usual spot against the pillows.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Helena enters the kitchen. A worried frown plays on her face.

HELENA
Did Katarina say anything about leaving early?

JEFFREY
No.

HELENA
She has been acting strange lately.

Jeffrey shrugs it off.

JEFFREY
She has? I didn't notice.

Helena packs the dishes in the dishwasher, stares out of the window.

Jeffrey folds his arms around her, leans his head on her shoulder.

JEFFREY (cont'd)
It's her senior year, she has a lot on her plate.

HELENA

I guess...

Helena turns around, slips her arms around his neck.

HELENA (cont'd)

I am so blessed to have you.

She melts into his arms.

INT. BUS - DAY

Katarina sits at the back of the bus. She leans her head against the window. She stares blankly at the passing cars.

Her phone vibrates. She takes it out, looks at the screen.

MOM Calling...

Katarina ignores the call. Switches her phone off... puts it in her pocket.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY - LATER

The ring of the doorbell cuts through the silence of the house.

Jeffrey looks at Helena...

JEFFREY

You expecting anyone?

Helena shakes her head. *NO*

HELENA

Maybe it is Katarina.

JEFFREY

Why would she knock?

Helena pulls up her shoulders.

HELENA

Maybe she forgot her key.

The doorbell rings again.

Jeffrey walks to the door... opens it. He is surprised to see Derrick at the door.

DERRICK

Hi Mr. Maxwell.

JEFFREY
Derrick, right? Come in.

Jeffrey steps aside, leaving room for Derrick to enter.

DERRICK
May I see Katarina? I brought her homework.

JEFFREY
I don't understand.

Helena hears Katarina's name, gets up, walks to the door to see who it is.

DERRICK
She wasn't at school today. I thought I'll bring it around. I don't want her to fall behind.

HELENA
Wait, wait... she wasn't at school?

Derrick shakes his head *No*.

DERRICK
I assumed she was sick... She acted different lately.

JEFFREY
(At Helena)
She wasn't in her room this morning. We assumed she left early for school.
(At Derrick)
Are you sure she wasn't at school?

Derrick hands Jeffrey a stack of papers.

DERRICK
If you can just give this to her, please.

Derrick steps away out from the door.

JEFFREY
Thank you... She is fortunate to have a friend like you.

Derrick smiles, nods.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Helena paces the room, she punches a number into the phone, brings it to her ear.

HELENA

Hello... Jade? This is Katarina's mom... I was wondering if Katarina is with you..? Not... Do you have any idea where she may be..? Okay, thank you. If you hear from her, please let me know.

She turns to Jeffrey.

HELENA (cont'd)

She's not there... I phoned everyone I can think of.

Paces again... Pauses... looks at Jeffrey.

HELENA (cont'd)

Do you think I need to call the police?

JEFFREY

You worry too much.

(Pulls her closer)

She is probably just skipped school and out partying with friends.

(Kisses her)

Why don't we make the most of the alone time?

Helena shrugs him off.

HELENA

Not now, Jeffrey! My daughter is missing. I need to find her.

She dials another number, waits for the call to be picked up.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Katarina gets off the bus.

The bus departs.

She stands at the bus stop, her backpack on her back, a suitcase next to her.

Scarlet peeks out from the backpack.

She picks up the suitcase, drags it across the street to:

EXT. SHELLY'S MOTEL - DAY

The S and Y of the Shelly's Motel sign flicker and die. The sign now reads Hell's Motel.

Katarina enters the foyer warily. Her long hair is tucked in under an oversized hoodie. Her jeans are torn, to the newest fashion.

Behind the counter, the manager JOHN WILLIAMS (40's) a bold, unshaven, cigarette hanging from the corner of his mouth creep, dressed in a dirty vest and beige chinos, looks up as the bell rings.

He smirks, gets up. His suspenders hang loose at his sides.

JOHN WILLIAMS
How can I help?

KATARINA
I... I need a room, please.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Katarina walks down the street, sees a HELP NEEDED sign in the window. She pauses a moment, takes a deep breath, enters the shop.

INT. DAILY DELIGHTS - DAY

Katarina steps inside, looks around. She walks to the counter.

MRS. FAIRCHILD (50's) stiff-lipped, gray hair caught in a bun behind her head looks up as Katarina walks up to her.

KATARINA
Good day, Ma'am. I noticed the sign
in the window.

Looks back at the sign in the window.

KATARINA (cont'd)
I am looking for a job. I am really
smart, and willing to do anything.

Mrs. Fairchild looks down at Katarina.

MRS. FAIRCHILD
How old are you, child?

KATARINA
Seventeen, Ma'am.

MRS. FAIRCHILD
Shouldn't you be in school?

Katarina's gaze sinks to the floor.

KATARINA
I left school, Ma'am.

Looks at Mrs. Fairchild, hopeful.

KATARINA (cont'd)
Please. I will do anything.

MRS. FAIRCHILD
I am sorry. I am looking for someone
a little more mature.

INSERT MONTAGE

-Katarina enters another shop with a Help needed sign. She enters, the sign is taken off. The shop owner shoos her away.

-Katarina talks to a man at the door of a small cafe. He shakes his head.

-Katarina is at Shelly's motel in her room. She counts the money. Worried, she packs her wallet away, circles adds in the newspaper.

She goes to sleep, Scarlet clutched in her arms.

-Katarina phones some numbers she has circled in the newspaper. Disappointed, she chucks the newspaper to the side.

-Katarina walks from shop to shop, some shop owners shoos her out, she resists.

END MONTAGE

EXT. SHELLY'S MOTEL - ROOM 6 - DAY

John Williams waits at her door. He leers at her.

JOHN WILLIAMS
I've been waiting for you.

Katarina looks at him questioningly.

JOHN WILLIAMS (cont'd)
 You have stayed the week you paid
 for. You need to either pay or
 vacate.

KATARINA
 Can I have the room for tonight only,
 please? I have nowhere else to go.

John sneers at her.

JOHN WILLIAMS
 I'll be in the office.

INSIDE

Katarina sags down on the bed, curls up in a fetal position
 with Scarlet in her arms. She cries.

SOME TIME LATER

Katarina sits up, takes her wallet from her backpack, walks
 to the reception.

INT. SHELLY'S MOTEL - RECEPTION - NIGHT

John looks up as Katarina enters. He smirks, gets up.

JOHN WILLIAMS
 You came. I thought you were going to
 ditch me.

Katarina shakes her head.

KATARINA
 No, Sir, I would never. How much is
 it?

JOHN WILLIAMS
 Just the night?

KATARINA
 I don't think I can afford more.

John leans in, grins at her.

JOHN WILLIAMS
 I'll tell you what. Let's help each
 other out. I have needs.
 (MORE)

JOHN WILLIAMS (cont'd)
You need a place to stay. You help
me... you can stay another week...
and I'll introduce you to someone who
can help you with a job.

Katarina is disgusted by the idea.

KATARINA
You are full of shit. I'll leave now.

Katarina storms out of the reception.

INT. SHELLY'S MOTEL - ROOM 6 - NIGHT

Katarina stuffs her belongings in her backpack and suitcase.

Scarlet goes into the backpack last. Katarina looks around.
She has left nothing.

She opens the door.

John blocks her way.

KATARINA
Get out of my way.

He steps in front of her.

JOHN WILLIAMS
Or what? What you gonna do, huh? You
have now where else to go.

KATARINA
Well, that's not your concern, is it?
I paid my dues. Now step aside.

She takes a step to the side. He does the same.

JOHN WILLIAMS
I said I could help you find a job.

KATARINA
I don't want it if it involves you.

Laughter comes from outside as two girls walks past.

Katarina notice John distracted and bursts past him. He is
surprised, but can't react.

John leaves hurriedly.

KATARINA (cont'd)
Thank you... I think you just saved me.

The girls turn to Katarina. Candy recognizes her.

CANDY
Aren't you the girl? The one I met when I got picked up last time?

KATARINA
Candy?
(Hugs Candy)
Oh Candy.

Candy holds Katarina at an arm's length.

CANDY
What in the world are you doing here?

NINA
(Slurred)
I need to pee.

Candy kicks into action.

CANDY
Let's go to my room, we'll talk there.

INT. SHELLY'S MOTEL - ROOM 22 - NIGHT

Candy sits opposite Katarina on the bed.

KATARINA
I did what you told me to. I told my mother about Jeffrey. She called me a liar.
(Cries)
I ran away before he could do it again.

CANDY
Good on you, girl...
(concerned)
What are you going to do?

KATARINA
I don't know. I have been looking for a job...

A toilet flushes. A door opens.

Nina enters the room.

KATARINA (cont'd)
No one wants me. They say I'm too young.

NINA
Nick will take you. Money is good too.

Candy looks sharply at Nina.

CANDY
Keep your mouth shut. Nick's isn't the place for a girl like her.

NINA
Why not? She too good? She's here with us, isn't she?

Candy shrugs.

KATARINA
Oh, I'll do anything. I need the money.

CANDY
Honey, you are not like... us.

Realization hits Katarina.

NINA
Nick's looking for dancers. No touching. That's different.

KATARINA
No touching at all?

Nina shakes her head.

NINA
And the money is good too.

KATARINA
I was a cheerleader at school. I am sure I can dance.

CANDY
We'll take you to Nick's later.

TO BE CONTINUED...