

Mother and Child

by
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1 INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON 1

1973: KAREN, AGE 14, is kissing and groping with a BOY OF 15, TOM. It's heated and clumsy. At one point they break apart and Karen looks at the boy's face, completely infatuated. She takes off her shirt and they kiss again.

2 INT. PREGNANT GIRLS' HOME - DAY 2

1973: Karen and other pregnant teenagers sit around a room knitting or listening to one of them read a book out loud.

3 INT. DELIVERY ROOM - NIGHT 3

1973: KAREN during labor, screaming.

Then, a silent image: a new born BABY GIRL in a hospital bassinet, crying at the top of her lungs. We see her from an angle where the baby's face can hardly be made out, adults crossing back and forth in front of her. Finally the bassinet is rolled away.

Fade to black and to a title:

36 years later

CUT TO:

4 EXT. DAY/NIGHT 4

Views of residential streets in the San Fernando valley, mostly without pedestrians. Front and back yards. A swing. Old flower pots. An empty birdcage. Days into dusks into nights. We hear music over these images: a child's piano lesson.

5 INT. KAREN'S ROOM - NIGHT 5

Close on KAREN -- NOW AGE 50 -- while she sleeps. There is perspiration on her brow and she stirs and mumbles, in the grip of a nightmare. She wakes up suddenly, scared and disoriented.

6 INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 6

Karen's mother NORA, a woman in her eighties, is asleep on the bed, facing the wall. Karen comes into the room, gets into bed with her and closes her eyes.

7 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

7

Karen is eating breakfast across from Nora. They eat in silence. Then:

KAREN

Her birthday is coming up. She'll be thirty-seven.

Nora says nothing.

8 INT. LAW OFFICES - DAY

8

A woman in her late thirties, ELIZABETH, is being interviewed by PAUL, an African-American man in his mid-fifties, a senior partner in the law firm. Through glass walls we see the very busy office.

PAUL

I spoke to Bill Colden and he said you were one of the best attorneys he's ever worked with. And I know Bill; praise doesn't come easy to him.

ELIZABETH

We had a good relationship. He runs that firm well.

PAUL

Yes, he does. Tell me about what you consider your professional strengths.

ELIZABETH

I don't believe in improvisation. I prepare my cases rigorously. I'm on top of clients and I handle them well. I protect them from themselves. I prefer to work by myself on a project but I can work well in a team if necessary. I work equally well with men or with women but I prefer to report to a man.

PAUL

Why is that?

ELIZABETH

Many women find me threatening. That makes for a difficult working relationship with a woman supervisor. Would I be reporting to you?

PAUL

Yes.

ELIZABETH

So we would have nothing to worry about.

A beat.

PAUL

Why do you think women find you threatening?

ELIZABETH

I'm not in the sisterhood. I am my own person.

PAUL

Do you believe most women are not their own person?

ELIZABETH

Yes. Neither are men, for that matter. Everyone is so eager to please.

Paul returns to the papers in front of him.

PAUL

I've noticed that you've moved to and from this area several times.

ELIZABETH

I've gone wherever I've had to go to get ahead.

PAUL

But you always return.

ELIZABETH

This part of the world is as good as any.

A beat.

PAUL

Well, Elizabeth, your resume is exceptional. It's no secret that you would be an asset to us.

ELIZABETH

I would not disappoint you.

PAUL

Tell me a little about your personal background.

Elizabeth thinks about it for a moment.

ELIZABETH

I was born here, in Los Angeles, and I was given up for adoption on the day of my birth. My mother was fourteen when I was born. That is all I know about her. My adoptive father died when I was ten. My adoptive mother and I are not close. My name, Elizabeth Joyce, is a name that I picked out for myself in junior high school. It's my legal name now; I don't go by any other. I live alone; I have since I turned seventeen. I've never been married and have no plans to marry. I value my independence above all things. That way I don't have expectations to fulfill. Other than my own, which are great enough.

A beat.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

That's all she wrote.

9

INT. ADOPTION AGENCY - DAY

9

An African-American couple in their thirties, LUCY and JOSEPH sit across from a nun in her fifties, SISTER JOANNE.

LUCY

We've been married for four years. We tried from the beginning but we haven't been able to. And we kept hoping, you know, against hope, like they say. But it's just not going to be. We know that now. We're resigned to it. We're not bitter, I don't think. Do you think we're bitter about it?

Joseph shakes no.

LUCY (CONT'D)

We're not. We could make good parents. Joseph is a very tender man. He's affectionate.

(MORE)

LUCY (CONT'D)

We could learn to love a baby in a minute, even if it wasn't ours. Would we be able to name the baby ourselves?

SISTER JOANNE

It depends on the circumstances. Sometimes the biological parents and the adoptive parents agree on a name.

LUCY

We would agree to agree.

Lucy laughs by herself. Then seriously:

LUCY (CONT'D)

We're ready now. To adopt. Blood is important, I think, but it's the time spent together that really matters. Isn't that right?

Joseph nods yes. A beat.

LUCY (CONT'D)

We're good people.

10

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

10

Lucy and Joseph walk to the car.

LUCY

Oh, my god.

JOSEPH

What?

LUCY

Why didn't you shut me up?

JOSEPH

It's all right. Everyone who comes to her office is nervous.

LUCY

That whole speech about time spent together... where the hell did I get that? Jesus. Why didn't you open your mouth?

JOSEPH

She liked you.

LUCY

You think?

They sit in the car. She's the driver.

JOSEPH

Yes. Relax.

Lucy thinks about that, then reaches over, puts her hand on Joseph's crotch and caresses it.

LUCY
How does that feel?

JOSEPH
It feels okay.

LUCY
Just okay, babe?

JOSEPH
It's good.

She smiles at him, happy that he's happy. She speaks almost to herself.

LUCY
Please, God, let us find a baby.

11 INT. THERAPY POOL - DAY 11

An indoor swimming pool used for hydrotherapy and water aerobics. Most of the patients are elderly and frail.

Karen is one of the therapists and she's in the pool, receiving an elderly patient that two other therapists help into the water. Karen sees a LATINO MAN of about 50, PACO, being introduced to other therapists like he's new on the job.

He notices Karen and the patient and smiles. Karen looks at him blankly, then looks away. Then, to the old woman:

KAREN
Is that man flirting with you?

The old woman smiles and continues with her exercises. Karen steals another look at Paco.

12 INT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON 12

Karen comes into the house. Her mother is alone in the living room, asleep in a rocking chair.

Mexican music plays in the next room.

13

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

13

Karen walks into the kitchen. SOFIA, a Hispanic woman in her late thirties, is ironing clothes while her seven year old daughter, CRISTI, is undressing a doll.

KAREN

Hi.

SOFIA

Hello. Say hello to Karen, mija.

CRISTI

Hi, Karen.

Karen smiles a stiff little smile without looking at the girl. Sofia begins to put away the ironing board.

SOFIA

Your mother had a good day. She ate really well.

KAREN

How long has she been asleep?

SOFIA

For about half an hour. She needed it. I can change her into the night gown before I go.

KAREN

I'll do that.

SOFIA

I'm going to come in a little late tomorrow.

She grabs her sweater and handbag and an ipod and little speakers that she's set up on the kitchen counter.

KAREN

Okay.

SOFIA

It's back to school day for this one.

Karen hasn't so much as turned in the direction of the little girl. Sofia and the girl exit the kitchen.

From where she stands Karen can see Sofia and her daughter preparing to go out the front door. Before leaving Sofia caresses Nora's forehead. The old woman is still asleep.

14 INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

14

Karen is tucking her mother into bed. The woman lies on her side and cuddles up in the fetal position, like a child, but remains with her eyes open. Karen checks her mother's fingernails for length.

KAREN
These need clipping.

Nora pulls away her hand softly.

KAREN (CONT'D)
I'm going to look for a new person for you. Sofia never asked if I minded that she brought the girl over while school was out. I don't know what I would have said but she should of asked.

Nora talks without looking at Karen:

NORA
You cannot fire her.

After a beat the old woman closes her eyes.

15 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

15

Elizabeth sits on the sofa reading a novel. The doorbell rings. She ignores it, reads on. It rings again. She gets up, walks to the door and looks through the peep hole. It's a PREGNANT WOMAN, flower pot in hand, with a man in his thirties. Elizabeth opens the door. They are TRACY and STEVEN.

TRACY
Hi. We're Tracy and Steven. We're next door. We just wanted to say hello and welcome you to the building.

She offers the potted plant and Elizabeth takes it without so much as a good look at it.

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

TRACY

We only moved in two months ago, so we know what it's like not to know anyone around here. It feels like a pretty safe building, though. Don't you think? We think so.

While Tracy speaks Elizabeth looks back and forth between Steven and her.

ELIZABETH

Yes. It's quiet.

TRACY

You're here all by yourself, right?

ELIZABETH

That's right.

TRACY

Yes. I told Steven I thought you were. Didn't I?

STEVEN

Yes.

TRACY

It's mostly single people in the building. No children. So far.

A beat. Tracy looks quickly beyond Elizabeth to the interior of the apartment.

ELIZABETH

Sorry, I'm just in the middle of something.

TRACY

Oh, don't worry. We'll talk again. I'm home most of the day. Come by for a cup of sugar.

STEVEN

Nice meeting you.

Elizabeth shuts the door as they walk away.

16

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

16

Joseph is on top of Lucy as they make love. The phone rings.

LUCY

That's my mother.

They practically freeze as Lucy strains to hear her mother's voice on the answering machine.

ADA (V.O.)

Lucy. Are you there? Lucy? Lu? Are you there or aren't you? (a beat) Lucy? Lucy? (She whistles) Okay. You're not there. (She whistles again, then silence). Lucy?

LUCY

Jesus. Why does she do that?

ADA (V.O.)

Call me, okay? I'll try you back in a little while. Hello? Hel-lo-o? I don't know if this is still recording or if I got cut off. Is it still recording? Okay. Bye. Call me.(a beat) Lucy?

She hangs up. They slowly start up again. Lucy tries to get into it but soon gives up.

LUCY

I can't. I lost it.

JOSEPH

Come on, Lucy.

LUCY

I'm sorry. You go ahead, you come, baby. Go ahead, I'll watch you.

He starts up again. Lucy kisses Joseph's forehead, chin, nose and eyes gently, observing him. She hums a melody for him.

17

OMITTED

17

18

INT. THERAPISTS' COMMON AREA - DAY

18

Karen is writing in her notebook, hunched over it like a schoolgirl taking an exam.

KAREN (V.O.)

I had a new dream a couple of days ago. I come home and try to get in but my key breaks inside the lock. I look through the window and I can see you in my bed, sleeping. I go in through the back door and I walk up to you and smell your breath. It smells of another woman's breast milk -- not mine. And the bed is wet. You've wet the bed and I start to cry because I don't have clean sheets to make it fresh.

The new guy, PACO, walks into the room and smiles at her while he pours himself a cup of coffee. Karen just closes her notebook and looks away. Paco walks over to the table.

PACO

I didn't mean to stare. Paco.

He offers his hand and then they shake.

PACO (CONT'D)

Karen, right?

Karen says nothing.

PACO (CONT'D)

Clara told me your name.

KAREN

Clara. What else did she say about me?

PACO

Nothing else.

KAREN

She always has time on her hands to be talking to someone. That's why her work stinks.

Karen sees that another physiotherapist has come in for coffee and she returns to her writing. Paco walks away.

19

INT. LUCY'S BAKERY - MORNING

19

A bakery owned and managed by Lucy. It's pretty busy. Lucy is putting the final touches on a cake while her mother, ADA, hovers.

ADA

Was this your idea or his?

LUCY

Please don't start. I need for you to be with me on this.

ADA

I am with you. I'm just wondering whose idea it was.

LUCY

It's my idea.

An employee walks between them. A beat.

ADA

That mother-in-law of yours is going to blow a gasket. Her prince raising the child of a stranger.

Ada chuckles. Lucy doesn't think it's amusing. She starts to put the cake in a box.

LUCY

And what about you? Are you going to love this baby or not?

ADA

Well, there's no baby to speak of yet. What's the next step?

LUCY

We're meeting a woman on Monday. She's six months pregnant.

ADA

And she just now decided to give up the baby?

LUCY

No. Apparently she's already turned down several couples.

ADA

Turned down? Who's approving who?
There's an argument that you'd be doing
her a favor.

LUCY

Nobody is doing anybody a favor, mom.
Everyone stands to win.

A beat. Ada is not so convinced.

ADA

There's so much positioning with
everything nowadays. Motherhood should
be a much simpler thing than this.

Lucy can't believe what she has just heard. She fights
back her rage and tears.

ADA (CONT'D)

Oh, Lucy -- I'm sorry. That was a
horrible thing to say. I'm sorry, Lu.
I'm an idiot. Forgive me, please. I'm
sorry.

She means it.

LUCY

You really wear me out, mom. I love you -
- but between my daughter and I things
will be different. I've promised myself
that already.

Ada is hurt.

ADA

Thank you for that, Lucy.

20

INT. ELIZABETH'S OFFICE - DAY

20

Elizabeth is arranging things in her new office. She is
unaware that Paul observes from the open door.

PAUL

We've given you one of our best offices.

She turns and sees him.

ELIZABETH

And what have I done to deserve it?

PAUL
Nothing yet, but we have high hopes for
you.

ELIZABETH
As well you should.

A beat.

PAUL
Any questions, concerns?

ELIZABETH
No.

PAUL
Dinner tomorrow to welcome you aboard.
Eight fifteen at La Provencal. Do you
know it?

ELIZABETH
Yes.

PAUL
I'll see you there.

He leaves.

21

INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

21

Karen is brushing Nora's hair and tying it back in a bun.
She brushes it back hard and tight.

NORA
How's work?

Karen is surprised, like Nora seldom asks.

KAREN
It's good. There's a new training
program, to work with people who are
recuperating from chemotherapy. They
asked if any of us were interested and I
said yes. They'll pay us to learn so
that's good, isn't it?

Karen nods. A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D)
There's a new therapist. This man my
age.

Nora waits for more.

KAREN (CONT'D)

He's a little...(*she searches for the
right term*) ... heavy set. And he's
graying, you know.

Karen shows the area on her own head.

KAREN (CONT'D)

He's friendly. Everybody likes him.

NORA
Watch yourself, Karen. Don't set
yourself up for falls.

Karen tries not to show her disappointment.

22

INT. THERAPY POOL - DAY

22

Karen works on stretches with a patient while a young
assistant therapist looks on.

She sees Paco walking towards her.

KAREN
(to the assistant therapist)
Here comes Valentino.

She makes the assistant smile. Karen hands the patient
over and turns to write in the patient's file. Paco walks
up.

PACO
Hey. I feel like we got off on the wrong
foot.

KAREN
Why do you say that?

PACO
You were upset when...

KAREN
You don't know me well enough to know if
I was upset.

Paco doesn't know what to add. Karen is looking straight
at him but says nothing else. Paco walks away. After a
moment she says to herself:

KAREN (CONT'D)
Karen. Stupid idiot.

23

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

23

An African-American woman in her early forties, LETICIA,
walks the hallway, apparently looking for someone.

A conference room opens and a class lets out. Among the
students is a YOUNG WOMAN. She is six months pregnant and
she is Letitia's daughter, RAY. When Ray sees Leticia she
changes direction to avoid her. Leticia follows anyway.

LETICIA

Ray! Ray, honey.

Leticia catches up and walks along Ray, who keeps walking like she's alone.

LETICIA (CONT'D)

Can we talk? How are you, honey? Are you well? You look good.

RAY

You have booze on your breath.

LETICIA

I do not. I don't.

RAY

You reek.

LETICIA

Don't say that. I haven't had a drink in four months. One hundred and eleven days.

RAY

You're a lying sack of shit.

Leticia slows down, letting Ray get away. Leticia turns and walks away. Ray takes a look over her shoulder, sees Leticia walking away and stops. After a beat she goes after her.

RAY (CONT'D)

Hey! Mom, wait!

Ray catches up to Leticia.

RAY (CONT'D)

Wait up. Let's talk.

LETICIA

Fuck you.

Ray lags behind.

Karen walks out of the building and walks towards her car. She sees Paco backing out of his spot and driving towards her. Karen waits as he drives by. He sees her, stops and rolls down his window.

KAREN

I have some time before I have to be home. I'm getting a cup of coffee.

Paco just looks at her: it's not much of an invitation.

PACO

Mind if I join you?

She nods then turns towards her car. He laughs.

25

INT. DINER - AFTERNOON

25

Karen and Paco sit in a booth. A WAITRESS takes their order.

KAREN

Coffee, black, please.

PACO

Same here. And I'll have the apple pie.

The waitress leaves.

PACO (CONT'D)

I can't seem to stay away from apple pie.

KAREN

You should watch your weight.

She regrets it the moment she says it. Paco takes it well and just laughs.

PACO

Yes, I should. How long have you been at the clinic?

KAREN

Six years and six months. April 11, 2003 was my first day.

PACO

You have a good memory.

KAREN

Yes. I was at Westside Memorial for eleven years before that.

PACO

That's a good place.

KAREN

I didn't see eye to eye with my supervisor. She was sloppy and she needed me to pick up the slack for her. I grew tired of it and I told her so. She had me fired.

The waiter comes by to pour the coffee. Karen touches her cup.

KAREN (CONT'D)

This is cold.

She picks up the cup and saucer and gives it back to the waitress who takes it away. Paco is okay with his coffee.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What about you?

PACO

I've been here for five months -- from the Bay Area. I've been a therapist for four years. Before that I drove for a car company. I'm divorced. I'm already a grandfather -- can you believe it? My daughter Melissa is twenty-eight. She has twins. Not exactly planned but what can you do. She's happy. She's still living up there.

Karen says nothing.

PACO (CONT'D)

What else do you want to know?

KAREN

We don't have to interrogate each other. This is not a date.

PACO

Interrogate. That's a harsh word.

Paco drinks his coffee.

PACO (CONT'D)

Do you live by yourself?

KAREN

No.

She adds nothing else. Paco chuckles.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

PACO

Nothing. I just can't seem to say the right thing around you. And I'm trying, believe me.

KAREN

What do you mean?

PACO

I feel like I'm always putting my foot in my mouth and I don't know why.

A beat. She doesn't take her eyes off him.

PACO (CONT'D)

Listen, I'm sorry. Forget I said that. I don't know what I'm talking about.

KAREN

I am not a difficult person.

PACO

Oh, I didn't mean that.

KAREN

You're not comfortable with me.

PACO

No, I am.

KAREN

My words are too harsh for you.

PACO

No, no. I...

Paco is silenced by the waitress, who returns with an empty cup for Karen. As she is pouring the coffee Karen gets up and leaves.

26

INT. JOSEPH'S PARENTS HOUSE - DUSK

26

Lucy and Joseph are at dinner with Joseph's parents, CAROL and WINSTON.

WINSTON

Do you know what you want?

LUCY

I don't care.

JOSEPH

A boy, I guess.

WINSTON

Biological parents get to visit their children and to have a hand in their upbringing. Isn't that the case now?

LUCY

No. It's your child and you call the shots. It's just without that whole secrecy. If a child wants to know where they come from they have the right to know.

CAROL

I hope it's all for the better. I hope they don't change their mind about all these new rules twenty years from now.

(MORE)

CAROL (CONT'D)

They're always changing their mind about things like that.

LUCY

Who is?

CAROL

The experts.

A beat. Then Lucy to Winston:

LUCY

Joseph will make a great dad, don't you think?

WINSTON

Yes.

CAROL

It's the only thing he's ever wanted.

26

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

26

Elizabeth follows a maitre d' through the restaurant. They reach a table for two where Paul gets up to greet her.

PAUL

Elizabeth.

The maitre d' has pulled back the chair but Elizabeth remains standing.

ELIZABETH

I didn't realize it was just the two of us.

PAUL

My partners can put anyone to sleep in a minute. I thought this would be better.

ELIZABETH

It's not what I expected.

A beat.

PAUL

I hope you don't think it's inappropriate.

ELIZABETH

I like to know what everything means, that's all.

Clearly she's not sitting without an explanation.

PAUL

Just a man getting acquainted with his
new employee.

Elizabeth thinks about it, then sits; Paul follows.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Something to drink?

ELIZABETH

Sparkling water.

The hostess leaves.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Are you married?

PAUL

I was. My wife died five years ago.

A beat.

ELIZABETH

What was her name?

PAUL

Maureen.

ELIZABETH

What about her do you miss the most?

The question takes him by surprise. He thinks about it.

PAUL

We were close. That's not easy to come
by. That's what I miss.

A beat.

PAUL (CONT'D)

My kids say their mother and I were
closer to each other than we were to
them. I was hoping they hadn't noticed.

It's a joke and it makes her smile.

ELIZABETH

How old are they?

PAUL

Maria is twenty-nine and Julian is thirty.

ELIZABETH

You started young.

PAUL

Not that young.

ELIZABETH

So you're no spring chicken.

He laughs.

PAUL

No, I'm not.

ELIZABETH

Most men don't get out of adolescence till their fifties.

PAUL

I'm still working on it. Age is no big deal; if you stay clear of regrets.

ELIZABETH

Ah. There's the rub.

A beat.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

You're still handsome.

He bows with his head in mock solemnity.

PAUL

Thank you.

Elizabeth reads her menu.

27

INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

27

Joseph reads while Lucy lies with her back to him, lost in thought. Finally:

LUCY

No one can make me feel like shit like your mom. Not even my own mom -- believe it or not.

Joseph waits for more.

LUCY (CONT'D)

She's an expert at it. She can zero in -- like those smart bombs that can find a needle in a hay stack. And it's all in a frequency that only I can hear -- like a dog whistle. Everyone else has no idea what's going on.

JOSEPH

What did she say?

LUCY

She said having a baby was the only thing you've ever wanted.

JOSEPH

I don't think she meant anything by it.

LUCY

Well, there's the thing: you married a barren girl.

Joseph puts the book down and moves in to cuddle up to her.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Don't touch me right now. Don't. I'm not mad at you -- just -- leave me alone for a while. I mean it.

He goes back to his side.

LUCY (CONT'D)

We can have sex later, if you want.

28 INT. KAREN'S ROOM - NIGHT 28

Karen is in bed, writing in her notebook. She hears a thump coming from her mother's room.

29 INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 29

Karen runs in to find her mother curled-up in the fetal position on the floor, in the middle of a seizure. She breaths with great difficulty, drooling and trembling.

Karen picks up the phone and dials, her hands shaking.

30

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

30

Karen's mother is in bed, awake. She's pale and tired. Karen sits in a chair nearby.

KAREN

That young doctor said he'd come back after nine to talk to us.

A beat.

NORA

I don't want to die here.

KAREN

You're not going to die.

Nora just looks at Karen.

KAREN (CONT'D)

You're not going to die. You're going to be fine.

NORA

Do you expect me to live forever?

KAREN

Don't start with that.

NORA

Even if I could I wouldn't want to. It's one disappointment after another.

A beat.

Nora looks at Karen intently and for a long moment it looks like she's about to say something but she stops herself.

KAREN

What? What, mom?

Nora says nothing.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What?

Then Nora turns away, tears running down her face. Karen looks at her, perplexed. She reaches out to touch her mother's hand, but Nora pulls the arm away slowly.

31

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

31

A telenovela plays on the TV. Sofia sits near the bed with Cristi on her lap. Karen stands. Cristi puts up her hands to play a game of palms with her mom. They play the game quickly and quietly -- expertly. Karen sees her mother looking at them and smiling.

32

LATER

32

Night has fallen.

SOFIA
Let's go, mija.

Mother and daughter stand.

NORA
Come by tomorrow.

Sofia nods.

KAREN
Call me first.

Sofia picks up Cristi.

SOFIA
Say goodbye to Nora.

CRISTI
Bye.

She holds Cristi over the bed and Nora kisses the girl on the forehead. Karen is surprised by this gesture. Sofia takes one last look at Nora. Then:

SOFIA
Goodbye, Nora.

Sofia and Cristi leave and Karen and her mom return to their silence.

*

33

INT. ELIZABETH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

33

Almost everyone is gone and the office is quiet. Elizabeth works late. Paul walks in.

PAUL
What's keeping you here so late?

ELIZABETH
Sneider and Lubezki.

PAUL
Not easy clients.

ELIZABETH

They're downright difficult. But they'll
be happy with this.

A beat. Her attention is split between her work and him.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

How about you? Time for beddy-bye?

PAUL

Yes, I think so.

ELIZABETH

I could have you over for a drink.
Unless you think it's "inappropriate".

He says nothing. She returns to her work.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

We'll take your car.

34

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

34

As Elizabeth and Paul walk out of the elevator on her floor they run into Steven and Tracy on their way out. Steven carries a pillow under his arm.

TRACY

Hi! We were just talking about you.
Weren't we, Steve? Because I'm getting
up to use the bathroom seven times a
night and our rooms are back to back. I
hope I'm not waking you.

ELIZABETH

I haven't heard anything.

TRACY

Oh, good, good. You'd let us know,
wouldn't you?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

A beat. Tracy smiles at Paul. Paul offers his hand.

PAUL

I'm Paul.

ELIZABETH

This is Steven and -- tell me your name
again.

TRACY

Tracy.

ELIZABETH

This is Paul. My father.

The couple are a little surprised that an African-American man is her father but they go with the flow.

TRACY

Oh! Nice to meet you, sir.

STEVEN

Hi.

Paul too is surprised and he laughs at the joke but no one says anything else and the moment passes.

PAUL

Hello.

ELIZABETH

(about the pillow)

Are you spending the night in the garage?

Tracy laughs.

TRACY

No. It's for our birthing class. It starts tonight. He's my coach.

ELIZABETH

We'll get out of your way then.

Elizabeth walks through between them. Paul follows.

PAUL

Good night.

TRACY

Bye-bye.

35

ELIZABETH'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

35

Elizabeth is opening a bottle of wine.

PAUL

What was that about, out there?

ELIZABETH

She was almost pleased you were black, did you notice? It was a chance for her to exercise her liberal good will. Now she'll be doing the math all night. (*imitates Tracy's tone*) "Maybe the father's only half-black and the mother is white".

PAUL

They seem friendly enough.

ELIZABETH

It's impossible to know what they are.
They don't know it themselves. They're
too busy re-inventing themselves to
everyone's liking.

She hands him a glass of wine.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Cheers.

They toast and drink. A beat.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

What are you thinking about?

A beat.

PAUL

My wife.

ELIZABETH

Maureen.

A beat.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

You'll be okay. I want you to drink the
rest in one go.

He empties the glass. She takes the glass and kisses him.

36

INT. ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

36

Elizabeth undresses Paul. He tries to undress her, touch
her and kiss her but she won't let him.

She lays him back on the bed. She is still dressed. She
removes her own underwear and mounts him. She begins to
rock back and forth and he follows.

ELIZABETH

No. Stay still.

She continues to rock slowly on top of him.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Don't move, old man.

He's very still. She's doing all the work for herself,
rubbing against him.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

That feels good.

She goes on. She hasn't stopped looking into his eyes.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Don't move. I can come like this.

She keeps going in silence. Her movements are small.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Let me come first.

She finishes, intensely but quietly and without ever looking away from his eyes.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Now you.

She watches him finish. He holds her gaze as long as he can but at the end closes his eyes. She smiles watching him, then cuddles up to him.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Good boy, Paul.

37 OMITTED 37

38 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT 38

Karen walks out of the bathroom and begins to fold a blanket that was thrown on a chair. She turns to her mother and is struck by what she sees: her mother is already dead, her eyes and mouth slightly open.

39 INT. ELIZABETH'S BALCONY - DAWN 39

Elizabeth is in her bathrobe, taking in the morning air. She can see Paul still asleep in her bed. She turns to the next balcony to find Steven walking out, already showered and dressed. He lights a cigarette.

She observes him for a moment, unseen. Finally he sees her and nods hello. Elizabeth positions herself to face him. She opens her bathrobe and bares her breasts for him to see. She holds for a good while, then finally walks back into her apartment.

40 INT. ADOPTION AGENCY - AFTERNOON

40

A meeting room. Lucy, Joseph and Sister Joanne are seated around the table.

SISTER JOANNE

Be yourselves. You have many things going for you. She wants a young couple. She wants a woman with a job or career -- Lucy you have the bakery -- she'll like that. Questions?

Lucy looks at Joseph. No questions. Sister Joanne pats Lucy on the leg and leaves the room. Lucy and Joseph wait. Finally:

LUCY

I love you, Joseph.

He smiles and reaches for her hand. The door open and Sister Joanne returns with RAY. Lucy and Joseph stand.

SISTER JOANNE

This is Ray. Lucy and Joseph.

Everyone nods.

SISTER JOANNE (CONT'D)

I'll leave you to talk.

LUCY

How long do we have?

RAY

As long as we need.

Sister Joanne leaves. Ray sits and Lucy and Joseph follow. Ray looks them over unabashed, at ease in the silence. Finally:

RAY (CONT'D)

I've already turned down several couples -- did she tell you that?

Lucy nods.

JOSEPH

What kind of people are you looking for?

RAY
(regarding Lucy)
I want to hear from her first before I
talk to you.

Lucy is intimidated and says nothing.

RAY (CONT'D)
You must have something you want to say.
Most people have a speech prepared of
some kind.

Lucy shakes no.

RAY (CONT'D)
Come on. What did you expect from this
meeting?

LUCY
I didn't expect to feel like I was
dragged into the principal's office.
That's how I feel right now.

Ray laughs.

RAY
Okay. Good answer. I'll ask you some
questions. Do you believe in God?

LUCY
I was raised Catholic.

RAY
Do you believe in God?

LUCY
I'm not a very religious person. Joseph
is -- (to Joseph) aren't you?

He nods yes.

RAY
You don't believe that a higher being
created you and loves you and looks
after you and steers the ship?

A beat.

LUCY
No. I'm sorry.

RAY
What do you believe?

LUCY

I don't know.

RAY

Tell me what you believe.

A beat.

RAY (CONT'D)

Go on.

LUCY

No.

RAY

Why the hell not? What is the purpose of meeting here today, then?

Lucy says nothing. Ray laughs, annoyed.

RAY (CONT'D)

Well -- look. Let's not play games. You either want to tell me who you are or you don't. If you don't I'd rather part ways -- better sooner than later.

She gets up.

LUCY

No -- wait.

Ray waits, standing. Lucy collects her thoughts.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I believe -- that we come from nothing and when we die we return to nothing. What we make of our lives is our will and our luck. The strength of our character and the -- the roll of the die.

Ray just looks at her. Then:

RAY

And this is what you would teach a child? This is what you want him to believe?

Lucy nods.

RAY (CONT'D)

This is what you would teach my baby.

After a beat:

LUCY
The baby would be my baby to teach.

41 INT. SISTER JOANNE'S OFFICE - DAY

41

Later. Lucy is angry Joseph.

LUCY
Why didn't you shut me up? You just sat there like a dummy -- why didn't you tell me to shut up? Why did you let me shoot off like that?

JOSEPH
Lucy --.

Joseph tries to put his arm around her. She reacts violently.

LUCY
Don't treat me like I'm a child!

Sister Joanne walks in.

JOSEPH
It didn't go well.

SISTER JOANNE
She wants to meet again.

LUCY
Really?

SISTER JOANNE
Yes.

JOSEPH
What did she say?

SISTER JOANNE
Nothing. Not a word. But she wants to see you again.

Lucy laughs.

LUCY
I can't believe it.

SISTER JOANNE
She can do Friday morning.

JOSEPH
Friday is bad for me.

SISTER JOANNE
You should come in by yourself, Lucy.
You don't want to lose the momentum.

Lucy looks at Joseph for the approval.

JOSEPH
You meet with her.

Lucy kisses Joseph.

42 NORA'S BEDROOM - DAY

42

Karen opens the curtains and takes off the sheets from her mother's bed.

KAREN (V.O.)
She's gone now. She will never see your
face and you will never see hers. There
will always be a silence between you.

Intercut with Karen placing the urn containing her mother's ashes on the floor inside a closet. After placing the urn she stands there and looks at it.

KAREN (CONT'D)
I don't want that for us. For you and
me.

Karen kneels down again, opens the urn and looks at the ashes. She smells them.

Back to Karen writing at the kitchen table.

KAREN (CONT'D)
I know it in my heart that we will meet
one day. And I will ask you to forgive
me.

43 INT. KAREN'S KITCHEN - MORNING

43

Karen is seated drinking coffee while Sofia cleans up.

SOFIA
Your mother was a good woman, Karen. I'm
glad it was over quickly for her. She
was ready.

Karen is annoyed.

KAREN

How the hell do you know if she was ready?

SOFIA

She said so.

KAREN

She said no such thing to you.

Sofia drops the subject and continues cleaning. Karen defies her:

KAREN (CONT'D)

She did not.

Nothing from Sofia. Karen finishes her coffee.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Obviously I don't need you five days a week now.

SOFIA

No.

KAREN

Once will be enough. You can pick the day.

SOFIA

Saturday.

KAREN

No. I want the house to myself on the weekends now.

SOFIA

I've got a chance to work at a dry cleaner's but it's Monday through Friday. If I want that job I have to come in here Saturday or Sunday.

Karen thinks about it.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

And Sofia will have to come in with me.

Karen says nothing.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

I know you don't like her.

KAREN

That's not true.

SOFIA

She knows to stay out of your way.

44 INT. ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM - DAY

44

Elizabeth lies naked on her side of the bed. A man sits up on the other side. It's Steven, Tracy's husband. He begins to dress.

ELIZABETH

Say hi to everyone for me.

45 EXT. STREETS - DAY

45

Karen is behind the wheel of her car, stopped at a red light. A WOMAN in her thirties crossing in front of her catches her eye. Karen then follows with her gaze ANOTHER WOMAN crossing in the opposite direction. Then a THIRD WOMAN, this one seven months pregnant.

After the women pass Karen is left deep in thought, until a honking car behind her awakes her and she drives off.

The PREGNANT WOMAN was Elizabeth.

46 INT. BANK - DAY

46

Karen is seated in a waiting area. A MAN IN HIS FIFTIES, the branch manager, waves her over. He stands up to shake her hand and greets her.

TOM

Tom Weller. What can I do for you today?

A beat.

KAREN

Karen.

TOM

Nice to meet you, Karen.

He smiles but when she says nothing he takes her in and finally recognizes her.

TOM (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Karen. Wow.

They look at each other, stunned. Finally:

KAREN

I was in this branch about three years ago and I saw you. I ran out of here like the place was on fire.

She chuckles, trying to make light of it. He takes her in.

KAREN (CONT'D)

My mother died.

Tom nods but says nothing.

KAREN (cont'd) (CONT'D)

How are you? You married that girl from NoHo High, right? Hailie.

TOM

Yes.

KAREN

Do you have kids?

A beat.

TOM

We have two boys and a girl. They're gone now. They have their own lives.

She nods. A long beat.

TOM (cont'd) (CONT'D)

I think about you all the time.

47

EXT. BANK - AFTERNOON

47

Karen and Tom sit at a bench outside the bank.

TOM

I never told you: my dad gave me the beating of my life. Not when he found out you were pregnant. He didn't say anything for months then. But when he heard the baby was born -- boy!

KAREN

Oh, Tom.

TOM

It doesn't matter. I was happy he did that. I got him out of my system forever after that. Fuck him.

A beat.

KAREN

And your mom? I liked her.

TOM

Her memory's gone. She was married for sixty years and had four kids and worked a dozen jobs and fought with my dad every day and was even happy sometimes, but mostly she was tired as hell. Now she looks at me when I visit and she doesn't know who I am -- or my sisters. Something in my face rings a bell for her -- but she can't make it out. There's nothing left.

Tom is trying to make light of it but clearly it's a painful subject for him.

TOM (cont'd) (CONT'D)

She wanted to look for her, you know. She said to my sisters once: "It's abnormal -- my grandchild out there in the world, and I've never met her."

They look at each other. Tom caresses Karen's arm.

48

INT. ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

48

Paul and Elizabeth are in bed. Elizabeth curls up to Paul and caresses his face affectionately.

PAUL

My daughter asked me if I was dating. I didn't know what to say.

ELIZABETH

You're having an affair with one of your attorneys.

PAUL

Is it an affair if neither of us is married?

ELIZABETH

An affair is any sexual or romantic relationship of an informal or temporary nature.

A beat.

PAUL

Thank you, counsellor.

Silence. Then:

PAUL (CONT'D)

I read your brief on the Nelligan case. It's outstanding. You cited Escalante vs. L.A. County -- that's a pretty obscure case but it's perfect for this. Good work.

She smiles.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I've recommended you to lead the Thomas and Thompson team.

A beat.

ELIZABETH

Do you think that's going to go over well with Guinness and Wilder and all your wonder boys out there?

PAUL

They'll have to eat it. It's still my law firm.

She nods.

ELIZABETH

I'm going to have to pass. Thank you, though.

Paul laughs.

PAUL

What are you talking about?

ELIZABETH

When I've been here long enough to win this kind of promotion, I'll take it. I know I deserve it -- just give me a chance to earn it.

He's taken aback at first, then smiles.

PAUL

What do you want for yourself --
professionally?

ELIZABETH

I want to sit on the Circuit Court of
Appeals.

PAUL

You've been with four firms in three
cities in ten years. It's not a good
strategy. You have to sit tight in one
place -- develop the relationships that
are going to win you the appointments.

ELIZABETH

That's not how I like to live my life.
I'll get there. There are many ways to
skin a cat.

49

INT. MOTEL - DUSK

49

Karen and Tom kiss like teenagers. They look at each
other's face, trying to recognize what they remember
about each other.

50

LATER

50

After sex. Karen and Tom are still in bed, in silence.

Then Karen gets up and begins to dress. Tom looks on.

When Karen is dressed she stands there for a moment looks
at him and he looks back at her but says nothing. Then:

KAREN

You haven't asked me anything. About
what it's been like for me. All of it.
All this time.

A beat.

TOM

What did --.

Karen makes a gesture -- don't speak. He stops.

KAREN

No. You should have asked me on your own. It needed to come from you.

No anger from her, just disappointment. A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What I felt with you I never felt again for anyone else. Not like that.

A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Do you remember?

He nods. She reaches for her handbag.

TOM

Let me pay for the room.

A beat. She chuckles, then leaves.

51 INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY ROOM - DAY

51

Karen is with an elderly patient. She places the patient on a wheelchair, walks to a water fountain and begins to fill a paper cup. When she looks around Paco is already walking up to her.

PACO

Hi.

Karen says nothing.

PACO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about your mom, Karen. The loss of a parent is a horrible thing.

After a beat:

KAREN

Thank you.

Paco walks away.

52 INT. THERAPIST'S COMMON AREA - DAY

52

Karen comes in and walks towards her locker. She stops suddenly: there is a small plastic bag hanging from the locker handle.

Karen stands very still, waiting for a woman co-worker to leave the area. She takes the bag and looks inside it. There are a few large, ripe tomatoes inside.

53 INT. THERAPY POOL - CONTINUOUS 53

Karen rushes in carrying the bag, looks around but doesn't find what she's looking for. She rushes out again.

54 EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS 54

Karen can see Paco walking towards his car. She moves quickly and catches up with him.

PACO

Hey.

KAREN

(about the bag)

Is this yours?

PACO

Tomatoes -- they're from my garden.

KAREN

I can tell they're freaking tomatoes. Why the hell are they hanging on my locker?

PACO

I thought you might like them.

KAREN

What made you think that, you jerk?

Paco says nothing.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I don't appreciate walking into my place of work and finding this bag hanging there for everyone to see -- like I'm your god-damn girlfriend.

Karen shoves the bag in his stomach.

KAREN (CONT'D)

You're an idiot.

Karen walks away leaving him holding onto the bag. Paco is angry now. He walks quickly and catches up to her.

PACO
Hey! (*He yells*) Hey! The word is
'thanks', you weirdo!

He grabs her hand and puts the bag in it. Then he points
right to her.

PACO (CONT'D)
You are a fucking rude weirdo.

He storms off, mumbling:

PACO (CONT'D)
Stupid bitch.

Other people have stopped to witness this. Karen is
shaken.

55 OMITTED 55

55A INT. ELIZABETH'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING 55A

Elizabeth opens the door for Steven.

ELIZABETH
Where's your wife?

STEVEN
She won't be back until ten.

Elizabeth walks out.

ELIZABETH
We'll go to your place.

STEVEN
No.

ELIZABETH
That's today's menu. Take it or leave
it.

He's undecided. After a beat she closes the door and
leads the way.

55B INT. STEVEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 55B

The door opens and Elizabeth walks in ahead of Steven.
The apartment has the same layout as Elizabeth's. She
walks around, taking it in.

STEVEN

Do you want something to drink?

Elizabeth shakes no while looking at the many photographs on the mantelpiece. Presiding over them is a large one of Tracy and Steven on their wedding day, very formally dressed and flanked by bridesmaids and ushers. Elizabeth turns towards Steven and chuckles.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Is this fun?

She shakes no.

ELIZABETH

There are no surprises here.

Elizabeth walks down the hall. She opens a door and looks inside. It's a small bedroom already set up as a nursery. There are unopened gifts around.

Elizabeth heads into the bedroom and surveys the area. From where he's standing Steven can't see her. She opens the top drawer of a chest and finds Tracy's underwear. She quickly takes off her own panties, folds them carefully and places them under Tracy's.

Outside Steven looks at his watch.

ELIZABETH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Let's get going, cowboy.

Steven walks to the bedroom and finds Elizabeth waiting on the bed, belly down. She has pulled up her skirt to reveal that she's not wearing underwear.

56 INT. THERAPIST'S COMMON AREA - DAY

56

Karen eats lunch by herself. Another woman sits nearby. As soon as she walks out Karen stands up, takes a small envelope from her pocket and slides it under a locker door.

57 EXT. PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

57

Karen walks out of the building and sees Paco waiting by her car. She approaches. He's holding her opened envelope in his hand.

PACO

I'm the one who should apologize.

KAREN

Let's try to forget about it.

PACO

All right.

A beat. Karen reaches for her car keys. Paco moves out of the way and Karen opens the car door.

KAREN

I am not a weirdo but I --

PACO
I didn't mean that.

KAREN
Let me finish.

A beat. She waits for a co-worker to walk by.

KAREN (CONT'D)
I am not a weirdo -- but I am difficult.
I don't make new friends easily. I
demand a lot from others -- it's unfair
but I do. I don't like to be
disappointed. And you took me by
surprise. You took me by surprise with
your attention.

A beat. This hasn't been easy for her.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Okay?

Paco nods. She sits in the car.

KAREN (CONT'D)
We could meet up Saturday night, if you
want.

She closes the car door.

58 OMITTED

58

59 OMITTED

59

60

INT. ADOPTION AGENCY - DAY

60

Lucy sits with Ray in a visitor's room.

RAY

I haven't told anyone what I'm having.
I'm having a boy. Is that what you guys
want?

LUCY

Joseph wants a boy.

RAY

And you?

LUCY

I'm okay either way.

RAY

If you were having a baby yourself --
your own baby -- you'd want a boy or a
girl?

A beat.

LUCY

A girl.

RAY

Jesus. Do you always tell the truth?

LUCY

The truth is easier to remember.

A beat.

RAY

Okay: this is what I want. I want to
visit your house and see how you guys
live. I want to spend a couple of nights
there. I want to meet your parents and
your friends. That doesn't have to be in
one go. And I don't have to interview
them -- or to be interrogated. I just
want to see -- get a better sense of who
you are and what your world is. All that
in the next couple of weeks. After that
I'll decide. If I think we're a good
match I want you to come to the birthing
class with me -- but not your husband. I
don't want him at the birth either --
just you. And I want to be able to name
the baby myself. After that, it's
goodbye. That's the deal.

A beat.

LUCY

Okay.

61 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

61

Karen prunes roses in her front yard. The sound of the vacuum cleaner is coming from inside the house. Through a window Karen sees Sofia's daughter Cristi moving a chair in the kitchen. She places it against the counter and gets on top of the chair, trying to reach an upper cabinet. She still can't reach what she wants so she climbs on to the counter. This is enough for Karen, who rushes to the kitchen back door.

62 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

62

KAREN

What are you doing?

The girl is startled.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Get down. You're going to kill yourself.

The girl gets down, clearly intimidated by Karen's tone. She pushes the chair back to its place.

Karen walks in, looks inside the cabinet and takes out a bag of cookies. She shows them to the girl who says nothing. After a beat Karen takes out a cookie and offers it to the girl.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Here you go, you little thief.

The girl does not take the cookie.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Take it.

The girl doesn't move.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Take it.

It's somewhat of an order. The girl takes the cookie but does not eat it. Karen waits. Finally the girl takes a tiny nibble. Karen smiles, pleased with herself.

But now Karen notices something that upsets her. She takes a small pendant of the Virgin Mary that hangs from the girl's neck and examines it. Angry, Karen reaches around the back of the girl's neck and undoes the chain.

63 OMITTED 63

64 INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 64

Karen storms into the room where Sofia is cleaning. She has the necklace in one hand and she is holding on to the girl's wrist with the other.

KAREN
What is this?

Sofia turns off the vacuum cleaner.

KAREN (CONT'D)
What the hell is she doing with this necklace?

SOFIA
You're hurting her, Karen.

KAREN
What the hell is she doing with this?

SOFIA
You're hurting her.

Karen lets go of the girl who walks to her mother.

SOFIA (CONT'D)
Your mother gave it to her.

KAREN
She did not.

SOFIA
For her birthday.

KAREN
This belonged to her mother. She did not give it to you.

SOFIA
She did. Your mother was a very generous person.

Karen is bewildered to hear this and says nothing.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

She was a wonderful woman.

After a beat Sofia turns on the vacuum cleaner and goes back to work. For a moment Karen does not move. Then she speaks up.

KAREN

Turn that thing off!

Sofia turns off the vacuum cleaner.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What else did she give you?

Sofia thinks about it.

SOFIA

A photo of herself.

KAREN

Why?

SOFIA

I asked her for it. Why is this upsetting to you?

KAREN

It's not upsetting. I'm not upset. I'm just wondering what's going in my own house.

A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Did my mother ever talk to you about me?

SOFIA

Sometimes.

KAREN

What did she say?

Sofia shrugs "I don't know".

KAREN (CONT'D)

What did she say?

A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D)

What the hell did she say?

SOFIA
She said you were not happy.

A beat.

KAREN
What else?

SOFIA
She said it was her fault.

Karen is surprised to hear this.

KAREN
She said that? When did she say that?
What were her words?

SOFIA
I can't remember the exact words. She
blamed herself.

A beat.

KAREN
Did she tell you what happened?

Sofia shakes no. Then:

SOFIA
She said she had ruined your life and
that she was very sorry for that.

A beat. Karen eyes begin to fill with tears.

KAREN
Why didn't she say that to me? Why the
hell didn't she say it to me? Why did
she say it to you? She had to say it to
me!

Sofia says nothing while Karen cries openly. After a
while:

SOFIA
I think she was scared of you.

Elizabeth is waiting in an examination room. DR. ELEANOR
STONE, a woman Elizabeth's age, comes into the room.

ELEANOR
Hello -- I'm Dr. Stone.

ELIZABETH
Hi.

Eleanor looks at the chart.

ELEANOR
Elizabeth Joyce. Who referred you?

ELIZABETH
You're on a list of doctors who consult
for Walsh, Connery and Lewis. I'm one of
their attorneys.

ELEANOR
Okay. You do look familiar, though.

ELIZABETH
We've never met.

A beat. Eleanor sits.

ELEANOR
What can I do for you?

ELIZABETH
I'm a month late with my period.

ELEANOR
Are you sexually active?

ELIZABETH
I'm not pregnant.

ELEANOR
What do you do for birth control?

ELIZABETH
My tubes are tied.

Eleanor takes notes.

ELEANOR
How long have they been tied?

ELIZABETH
Since I was seventeen.

Eleanor looks at Elizabeth.

ELEANOR

That's unusual.

Elizabeth says nothing.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

It's not a procedure performed on minors
-- except for medical reasons.

ELIZABETH

I had them tied in a clinic across the
border. They didn't know I was a minor.

Eleanor takes this in.

ELEANOR

Any other problems? Abdominal pain --
cramps -- fever?

ELIZABETH

No.

ELEANOR

Let me have a look at you.

Elizabeth reaches under the paper gown and removes her
underwear. Meanwhile Eleanor puts on a latex glove and
examines Elizabeth's face.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Lie back, please.

Elizabeth does.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Where you at USC law?

Elizabeth is surprised to hear the question.

ELIZABETH

Yes.

ELEANOR

I think we have met. I was friends with
Sophie Sparrow and Nina Marshall.

Elizabeth sits up again.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

They lived next door to you. We never
really spoke. You were a little
intimidating.

Elizabeth stands and reaches for her skirt and underwear.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

ELIZABETH

I don't appreciate looking back on my life with someone I've known all of two minutes.

ELEANOR

I'm sorry -- I didn't mean anything by it.

Elizabeth is putting her clothes back on.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Look -- I am sorry. It was bad timing and unprofessional. I haven't seen Sophie in fifteen years and I don't presume to know anything about you. Please forgive me.

Elizabeth stops, apparently satisfied with the apology. She removes her underwear again and lies back on the table. Eleanor examines her quickly.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Okay.

Elizabeth sits up again.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I'll have the nurse take a blood sample -
- and urine.

Eleanor is puzzled by the reply but Elizabeth offers no more. She hands Elizabeth her file.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

You could be pregnant. It's not impossible.

ELIZABETH

I'm not.

Eleanor leaves.

66

EXT. CLOTHING STORE - AFTERNOON

66

Leticia is at the cash register, closing up. Ray is watching through the glass doors. Ray tries to open the door but it's locked. She knocks on the glass. Leticia sees her but goes back to her work, ignoring her. Ray knocks again but since Leticia continues to ignore her, Ray bangs loudly on the glass door with both fists. Leticia hangs tough, ignoring her.

Finally Leticia shouts from where she is:

LETICIA

Will you stop that!

Ray stops. Leticia walks over, unlocks the door and lets her in.

LETICIA (CONT'D)

The plan is to get me fired?

RAY

He would never fire you.

Leticia heads back to the cash register.

LETICIA

He already did. I begged to get my job back. On my knees, honey.

RAY

Why, mom? Why do you do that to yourself?

LETICIA

Ray: I'm an addict and a felon and I'm on probation -- does that ring a bell?

Ray says nothing.

LETICIA (CONT'D)

Look at the breasts on you.

She touches her breasts.

RAY

I found a couple.

Leticia says nothing.

RAY (CONT'D)

We're a good match.

LETICIA
Because you say "Jump!" And they say
"How high?".

RAY
Shut up.

Leticia returns to her paperwork.

LETICIA
How's school?

RAY
I made Phi Beta Kappa.

LETICIA
Really?

RAY
Really. Big surprise?

LETICIA
No. Good. It's a good thing. I was happy
when I made Phi Beta Kappa.

Ray says nothing.

LETICIA (CONT'D)
I'm having a little cook-out this
weekend -- with May and Kathleen. Can
you put up with that?

RAY
Can I put up with that? Is that an
invitation?

LETICIA
Yes. I'm sorry -- yes. Will you come?
We'll celebrate.

RAY
We'll celebrate what?

LETICIA
I don't know. My grandchild?

A beat. Ray turns to leave.

LETICIA (CONT'D)
Three o'clock.

On her way out Ray messes up folded clothes on a table.

67 INT. NORA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

67

Karen sits on her mother's unmade bed, still visibly upset. Sofia and Cristina come to the door.

SOFIA
I'm all done, Karen.

Sofia holds up the pendant.

SOFIA (CONT'D)
You should have this.

Karen shakes no. Sofia signals to Cristi.

CRISTI
Thank you.

After a beat:

SOFIA
You can pay me next week.

Sofia and the girl leave.

68 INT. ELIZABETH'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

68

Elizabeth is at work. Paul comes in with a cup of coffee for her. She's pleased to see him.

ELIZABETH
Oh, thanks. Sit.

He does. She returns to work and he just watches. Finally:

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
What?

He shakes "nothing". She waits.

PAUL
Have you ever looked for your biological parents?

ELIZABETH
No.

PAUL
They may be looking for you.

ELIZABETH

There is no "they." The father is not a part of my imagination.

A beat.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I live in her home town -- how hard could it be for Her Fucking Majesty to find me?

Paul says nothing.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

It's better this way. We're all better off like this.

She returns to her work.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Why do you ask?

PAUL

Because I think she would be very pleased with who you are.

She says nothing. Then:

PAUL (CONT'D)

Spending time with you out of work is delightful. It's more than delightful. The truth is ever since you landed here I don't know whether I'm coming or going. You want things the way you want them -- I like that. Your willfulness is a great part of your charm. But it's getting a little scary for me -- feeling like this. I'm going to have to bow out.

A beat.

ELIZABETH

You don't seem like a man scared by scary things.

PAUL

It's a precaution. Sometimes when you fall, it's hard to get up.

He leaves.

69 INT. NORA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 69

Later. Karen is curled up on the bed. The doorbell rings. The doorbell rings again. Karen looks at her watch and gets up quickly, fixing her hair and rumpled clothes.

70 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 70

Karen turns on lights on her way to the door. Before she opens it she pulls her head together. It's Paco.

PACO

Hi. I'm I early?

KAREN

No -- it's fine.

She opens the door wider and he walks in. They stand there in awkward silence. Finally:

KAREN (CONT'D)

Look -- I'm sorry. It's not a good time for me. I don't think I can --

Paco's reaction is small but clear: it's always something with this woman. A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Give me five minutes, okay?

He nods. She exits.

71 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT 71

Later. Paco and Karen walk in silence to his car. He opens the door for her and she sits in. He sits behind the wheel. Karen is practically absent.

PACO

I thought we'd go to the Shadow Grill in Burbank. Do you know it?

She shakes no.

PACO (CONT'D)

It's a good place.

She nods okay. He starts the car.

KAREN

I want to say something to you.

A beat. He turns the car off again.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I had a baby girl when I was fourteen
and she was given up for adoption.

She waits for a reaction but Paco says nothing.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I don't know where she is. I don't know
who she is. Everything I do -- every
thought in my head takes me back to her.
Everywhere I go I look for her face in a
crowd but I don't know what she looks
like. I write her letters that I never
send. I buy her birthday gifts. I have a
name for her: Rachel. I don't even know
if she's dead or alive.

A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D)

That's who I am. I have nothing else. I
have nothing to give.

She's done and she seems depleted. Paco places his hand
on her knee for her to hold. She puts her hand in his and
he holds it tight. After a few moments she asks:

KAREN (CONT'D)

Where on earth did you come from?

He says nothing.

72

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

72

Elizabeth is waiting. Eleanor comes in.

ELEANOR

Hello, Elizabeth. How is everything?

ELIZABETH

You tell me.

ELEANOR

You are pregnant.

Silence from Elizabeth.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

It happens rarely, with tied tubes, but it happens. Talk to the girls up front about coming in and we'll take care of it.

Eleanor writes quickly in the file.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Then we'll talk about other methods of birth control, okay?

Eleanor smiles at her and leaves. Elizabeth sits there, lost in thought. Finally she walks out. She stops for a moment at the nurses area. There are patients and other doctors and nurses around and it's quite busy.

Suddenly, with surprising ferocity and speed, Elizabeth flails her arms around and begins hitting everything within her reach: files, a bowl of candy, a computer screen, a bulletin board full of baby pictures, a Rolodex, pens, magazines. The outburst lasts only a few seconds, long enough for all activity to stop and for Eleanor to rush out of a room.

Elizabeth walks right up to her face.

ELIZABETH

You don't know who I am or what I want, you cunt.

Elizabeth leaves.

73 INT. ELEVATOR - AFTERNOON

73

Elizabeth walks into the elevator. She stands there, still stunned by the news. The doors close. Elizabeth presses the STOP button and crouches down to the floor.

74 INT. LUCY'S BAKERY - DAY

74

After hours. Lucy and her mother clean up behind the counter.

ADA

And who is the father?

LUCY

She won't say.

ADA

But she knows who it is.

LUCY

I don't know. Yes. Why wouldn't she?

Ada shrugs. A pause.

ADA

How old is she?

LUCY

She's twenty-one -- and she's already a senior at Cal Tech.

ADA

And she's had all the medical tests and everything?

LUCY

Mom -- you're putting me in a bad mood.

ADA

When can I meet her?

LUCY

Never.

ADA

I thought that was one of her conditions. One of her many conditions.

Lucy says nothing.

ADA (CONT'D)

I bet if I met her I'd be able to see right through her.

LUCY

What? Regarding what?

ADA

Whatever it is she's playing at.

Lucy looks at her mother wondering what this is all about.

LUCY

English, please.

ADA

I don't think this girl --.

LUCY
You always do that.

ADA
What?

LUCY
Take something good and twist it and
turn it till you find something rotten.
Something that I'm doing wrong.

She walks off.

75 INT. ELIZABETH'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON 75

Elizabeth sits on the floor sipping a cup of tea. TWO MEN
work around her, carrying boxes.

Elizabeth hears loud voices. It seems that Tracy and
Steven are having a good fight.

76 EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - DUSK 76

Elizabeth rings the doorbell and waits. A woman of
thirty, MARIA, opens the door. Voices can be heard
inside.

ELIZABETH
Hi. I'm looking for Paul.

MARIA
Is he expecting you?

ELIZABETH
I'm from the office. Elizabeth.

MARIA
Oh, sure. I'm Maria, Paul's daughter.

They shake.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Come in.

ELIZABETH
It's okay.

MARIA
No -- come in. He's on the phone.

She walks in reluctantly. Maria leads the way.

ELIZABETH

I'll wait here.

MARIA

You can't just stand there. Come on.

She follows to the dining room where a large table sits Paul's FAMILY: his son JULIAN is also there as well as both of Paul's children's SPOUSES. An OLDER WOMAN who must be Paul's mother, four or five CHILDREN of various ages and a COUPLE that is Paul's brother with his wife.

The group of almost 15 is in the middle of an animated discussion that involves people talking at the same time and teasing and prodding one another. It's a warm feeling.

Paul is pacing in the background on the phone. He is surprised to see Elizabeth but apparently can't get off the phone so he signals to her "give me a minute".

Maria addresses the table:

MARIA (CONT'D)

Everyone, this is Elizabeth from dad's firm.

Greetings from many of them. Elizabeth smiles briefly.

Paul's son JULIAN gets up and pulls up a chair for her.

ELIZABETH

It's okay.

JULIAN

Please, sit.

MARIA

He'll be off in a minute.

JULIAN

Have you had dinner?

ELIZABETH

No. I mean, no, thanks.

MARIA

How about something to drink?

ELIZABETH

I'm okay.

*
*
*
*
*

MARIA

Sure?

Elizabeth nods and sits. She looks around at everyone, as much of a fish out of water as we have ever seen her, in the midst of the animated family.

Elizabeth's eyes meet with the OLDER LADY'S, who must be Paul's mother. The woman smiles at her, friendly. A LITTLE BOY of about one also looks at her with curiosity.

Paul finally hangs up and observes her in silence. She seems like a lost child, almost physically smaller.

Finally Elizabeth sees him and he gestures: meet me out there.

77

INT. FOYER - THAT MOMENT

77

Elizabeth walks in and is met by Paul.

PAUL

Hey -- is everything okay?

ELIZABETH

Yes. That's --.

He wants to say something about his family but can't find words.

PAUL

Stay. Have dinner with us.

ELIZABETH

I can't.

PAUL

Of course you can.

ELIZABETH

No.

She means it. A beat.

PAUL

What's going on?

ELIZABETH

I'm leaving in the morning.

PAUL

Leaving for where?

ELIZABETH

Leaving.

A beat.

PAUL
What happened?

She thinks about it and shrugs -- she has no good answer.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Is it something that I did or did not
do?

ELIZABETH
No.

A beat.

PAUL
The wind changed, is that it?

She nods yes and walks to the front door and opens it and turns to say goodbye. But before she can say a word Paul steps forward and embraces her. A big burst of laughter can be heard coming from the dining room.

After a moment he breaks the embrace and takes one last, good look at her. He kisses her forehead and goes back inside, closing the door behind him.

78 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 78

Steven walks to Elizabeth's door and rings the doorbell. No answer. He rings again.

79 INT. APARTMENT - THAT MOMENT 79

The apartment is completely empty.

80 EXT. DAY/NIGHT 80

Views of the San Fernando valley.

A sprinkler watering a front yard. A crow eating crumbs of bread in a parking lot. A few children in the playground of a public school in the late afternoon. A cat walks past a garage door, making the safety light turn on.

Days into nights. Again, over these images: a child's piano lesson.

81 INT. HALL OF RECORDS - DAY 81

Karen and Paco are getting married in a civil ceremony. The only guests are Paco's daughter MELISSA and her TWIN BOYS, 7 years of age.

Other couples, some with brides in full wedding gowns, wait their turn.

82 EXT. PARK - DAY 82

Sunday and the park is quite full of families, mostly Latinos. A loud soccer game with people of all ages is in the background.

Karen and Paco are at a picnic table with his daughter MELISSA. Her twin boys play in the background. Melissa is serving a plate of food for Paco.

PACO

Thanks, mija.

MELISSA

Karen -- you want white or dark?

KAREN

Oh, no -- I can do that.

MELISSA

No -- I want to.

KAREN

White.

She serves Karen.

KAREN (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Thank you. Wow. I'm not used to this.

MELISSA

This is how I want it to be between us.

As Karen tries her food Melissa lowers her head and whispers Grace. Karen is embarrassed to have started eating. When Melissa is done she makes the sign of the cross and eats too. Paco has eaten through all this, unconcerned.

KAREN

I'm always rushing to eat like a hog.

MELISSA

Oh, no. You've got yourself confused
with my dad.

(MORE)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Has he told you that he doesn't believe in God? The most kind-hearted man in the world has turned his back on Jesus.

Paco says nothing.

MELISSA (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Jesus would never turn his back on you, pop.

Paco gives her a look.

MELISSA (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Okay, okay -- I'll stop. One day we'll be in Heaven laughing at these arguments.

PACO

If I'm in Heaven I won't be laughing. Someone will have a lot of explaining to do.

MELISSA

What's to explain? All wickedness and cruelty is human. All love is God's love. Karen, you're a good woman -- you must feel the love of Mary in your heart.

Karen says nothing. Silence while they eat. Then:

MELISSA (CONT'D) (cont'd)

My dad has told me about your loss.

Karen is taken by surprise.

PACO

She doesn't like to talk about it.

MELISSA

Sometimes it's hard to understand God's design.

PACO

Melissa.

Silence. Karen is a little shaken.

MELISSA

May I speak?

Karen waits.

MELISSA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
You are my father's wife now. My
children will grow to know you as their
grandmother. They will learn to love you
as my father loves you - as I hope to
love you. Because it's the time spent
together that counts. More than blood.
Time counts the most.

Karen says nothing.

MELISSA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Find her now -- before time runs out.
After that only regret remains. And
regret is a killer.

Karen sits perfectly still, tense, revealing nothing.

82A

INT. ELIZABETH'S BATHROOM - MORNING

82A

A different apartment. Elizabeth is on the bed reading a
magazine. She changes position and her robe opens,
revealing her seven month belly.

83

INT. AMANDA'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

83

A small law office, much less elegant than Paul's.
Elizabeth sits across from a Mexican-American woman in
her fifties, AMANDA. Amanda reads Elizabeth's resume.

AMANDA
Well, Elizabeth, to say that you're
grossly over-qualified would be putting
it mildly. I couldn't possibly afford
someone like you -- though I'd like to,
believe me.

ELIZABETH
I don't care about the money.

AMANDA
I can't offer you benefits.

ELIZABETH
I'm not looking for them. I've got
plenty of my own insurance.

AMANDA

The job is on a project-by-project basis.

ELIZABETH

It's fine. For the kind of work that you do, for a firm of this size -- for the means of your clients -- it's all fine.

Amanda considers this.

AMANDA

Do you know what you're having?

After a beat Elizabeth shakes no.

AMANDA (CONT'D) (cont'd)

What are your alternatives? What would you do if you didn't get this job?

ELIZABETH

Stay at home and watch game shows.

Amanda smiles then looks at Elizabeth's papers again.

AMANDA

I don't know what to make of you.

ELIZABETH

I'm just passing through.

84

INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

84

Lucy is serving a cup of tea to Ray, who is almost nine months pregnant.

LUCY

It's hot.

Ray drinks from it anyway.

LUCY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

I've always wanted to ask you what happened. How you got pregnant.

RAY

I had sex with a boy at a party. I have no idea who it is.

Lucy thinks about it.

RAY (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Wherever he is he wakes up in the morning and goes on about his life and he doesn't know he's a father.

LUCY
Would you recognize him if you saw him?

Ray shakes no. Then:

RAY
It's frightening, isn't it? How disposable men are.

Lucy says nothing. Ray puts her hand on her belly.

LUCY
What?

Ray looks at Lucy, then takes Lucy's hand and places it on the pregnant belly. Movement.

LUCY (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Jesus.

Lucy is very still, transported. She closes her eyes, concentrated on feeling movement. Ray looks at her carefully, at how moved Lucy is.

Ray then shifts position, essentially moving her belly away from Lucy. Lucy is taken aback but says nothing.

85 INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

85

Karen is lying awake with her back to Paco, who reads. Finally:

KAREN
What do you think about what Melissa said?

Paco takes a beat.

PACO
I agree. You should look for her.

KAREN
Why?

PACO

Because whatever happens when you meet
will be better -- easier -- than this
thing that's eating away at you.

A beat.

KAREN

Why haven't you told me this before?

PACO

I was working towards it.

Karen thinks about it.

PACO (CONT'D)

She may be looking for you. Have you
thought about that?

KAREN

There's nothing I haven't thought of.

PACO

Would you know where to start?

She thinks about it, then nods. A beat.

PACO (CONT'D)

What is your biggest fear?

A beat.

KAREN

That she'll spit in my face.

86

INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - DAY

86

Karen and Paco sit across from Sister Joanna. Karen is nervous. Paco reaches for her hand to comfort her. She pulls away without looking at him.

Sister Joanne comes in with a note pad and sits.

SISTER JOANNE

You delivered on November 7, 1973. Your
mother was the legal guardian of the
baby girl -- you agreed to that before
the baby was born.

Both Sister Joanne and Paco look at Karen who says
nothing.

SISTER JOANNE (CONT'D)
(cont'd)

A couple took the child on November 10. Unfortunately the provisions of the adoption do not allow me to give out any information regarding the identity of the parties involved. What you can do is write a letter to her. The letter is kept in the file and if she were ever to contact us we would give her the letter and she would be free to reach out to you directly.

A beat.

SISTER JOANNE (CONT'D)
(cont'd)

I'm sorry. That's the best I can do.

A long beat. Finally:

KAREN

If she had been here you would have told her the same thing?

SISTER JOANNE

That's right.

KAREN

So if she was here she didn't leave me a letter.

SISTER JOANNE

There's no letter in the file.

KAREN

So she's either not looking or doesn't want to write to me. Or she thinks I'm not looking for her.

PACO

Maybe she doesn't know where to look.

Karen says nothing.

SISTER JOANNE

I really encourage you to write a letter. It works. People find each other. I've seen it many times.

Karen thinks about it, then shakes her head no.

87 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

87

Elizabeth is being examined by a male doctor of sixty,
DR. MORGAN.

DR. MORGAN
Anything to report?

ELIZABETH
I've had a little spotting. Last week
and again yesterday.

The doctor runs his hands over Elizabeth's belly. There
is a point in the lower abdomen that makes Elizabeth
flinch.

DR. MORGAN
Does that hurt?

ELIZABETH
A little.

DR. MORGAN
Has long have you had this?

She thinks about it.

ELIZABETH
I'm not sure

The doctor presses again. Elizabeth reacts again.

DR. MORGAN
Have you had any fever?

ELIZABETH
No.

He keeps checking it out. Elizabeth says nothing.

DR. MORGAN
Let's do an ultrasound and get some
blood work.

He pats her cheek affectionately.

DR. MORGAN (CONT'D)
You're going to make a beautiful mom.

He leaves.

88

OMITTED

88

89

EXT. ROOF TOP - AFTERNOON

89

The roof top of an apartment building. Elizabeth lies face up on a beach towel, sunbathing. She is wearing shorts and a bikini top. The sound of a door opening and closing makes her turn and cover herself. A GIRL OF FIFTEEN walks out, leading with a white cane. She's blind.

Elizabeth observes the girl as she takes a chair that's folded up against the wall, walks to the middle of the roof area, sits and takes in the sun then puts on an Ipod.

Elizabeth folds her towel and walks towards the door. The girl, VIOLET, speaks up.

VIOLET

Who's there?

ELIZABETH

I'm a tenant. I was sunbathing.

VIOLET

Careful up here -- it's a big drop.

The advise makes Elizabeth smile.

ELIZABETH

Okay. Thank you.

VIOLET

I'm Violet.

She offers her hands and Elizabeth walks over to shake it.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth.

VIOLET

How old are you?

ELIZABETH

Thirty-seven.

VIOLET

Thirty-seven. You come and you go as you please, you lucky dog. What do you do for a living?

ELIZABETH

I'm a lawyer.

VIOLET

The law. Not a big field for the blind. My mother wants me to be in radio. She says I have the voice for it. It's her fear talking -- that I won't be able to make my way.

ELIZABETH

Does radio interest you?

VIOLET

I don't know what interests me. I sometimes tell her I could have a career in phone sex. She's humorless. Do you know anyone else in the building?

ELIZABETH

No.

VIOLET

I'm always here in the afternoons. My mother takes a nap from five to six and the silence in the apartment drives me crazy. It's the sleep of the High Priestess. Meet me here if you're lonely.

ELIZABETH

Okay.

VIOLET

Are you lonely?

ELIZABETH

No.

VIOLET

I am, sometimes.

A beat.

ELIZABETH

I'll see you around.

VIOLET

Goodbye, Elizabeth. Count on me.

Elizabeth leaves.

90 INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 90

Karen walks in from the back yard and spots Sofia's daughter Cristi asleep on a couch in the living room.

Her first instinct is to be annoyed that the girl just chose to nap there. Karen approaches as if resolved to wake her up, but something about the sleeping girl captures her.

Karen just stands there, then kneels, looking at the girl.

91 INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DUSK 91

Sofia and Cristi are getting ready to leave. Karen is counting money at the kitchen table.

Then: Karen looks up at the girl:

KAREN

Cristi.

The girl and mother are surprised that Karen even knows the girl's name.

KAREN (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Tell me something you remember about my mother.

The girl thinks. She looks at her mom who says nothing.

Finally:

CRISTI

Sometimes when she ate, little pieces of food would fall out of her mouth.

Karen can't help but smile. Then all three laugh a little.

Karen gives Sofia her money and Sofia and the girl leave.

92 INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY 92

Leticia is helping a customer, unaware that Ray stand nearby, waiting. The customer takes an article of clothing into the changing room. Leticia sees Ray.

LETICIA

Hey, hey, hey. My grandchild is in the house.

Ray says nothing, just walks around the store looking at the clothing.

LETICIA (CONT'D)

What are you going to name him?

RAY

I'm not naming him, they are.

A beat.

LETICIA

Sebastian. That's what I wanted to name you if you had been a boy.

Ray says nothing. Leticia folds sweaters. A beat.

RAY

Why do you do that?

LETICIA

Do what, bunny?

RAY

Ignore my god-damn wishes.

LETICIA

Which are?

RAY

You know what the hell they are.

LETICIA

To give that child away on his birth day? To take something that comes from you -- made of you -- and part with it for ever and ever?

RAY

I don't want it.

LETICIA

I didn't want you either.

RAY

I'm not you.

LETICIA

A yet here you are -- twenty-one and pregnant and single like I was.

A beat.

LETICIA (cont'd) (CONT'D)

I didn't want you and now I can't take a breath without thinking of you and wanting the best of the best for you.

The client exits the changing room. Leticia goes to her.

93

INT. AMANDA'S LAW OFFICE - AFTERNOON

93

Elizabeth is at work when she looks up and out the window sees a woman who is standing on the sidewalk, looking at her intently. It's Paul's daughter, MARIA. For a moment Elizabeth looks preoccupied with the coincidence, but she pulls it together.

Maria comes into the office

MARIA

I'm Paul's daughter.

ELIZABETH

Yes. Maria. How is Paul?

MARIA

He's good.

Elizabeth nods, taking it in. Maria points to her belly.

MARIA (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Is that his?

ELIZABETH

No.

Maria walks away.

94

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - MORNING

94

Sofia has set up an ironing board and is working on a blouse. She stops suddenly, hearing something: Cristi singing and someone clapping.

95 EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS 95

Sofia walks up slowly and peers into the living room. Cristi is singing a Mexican song and dancing a traditional dance for Karen, who watches, delighted.

96 INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 96

Lucy comes in to the sound of a game on television. She puts down her things and turns on a couple of lights and walks into the living room.

Joseph is there, sitting in front of a football game. But Joseph isn't watching the game, lost as he is in thought.

LUCY

Joseph?

He turns but says nothing.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Hey. Who's playing?

He looks at the game on TV like he hadn't realized it was on.

LUCY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

A beat.

JOSEPH

I've been thinking.

LUCY

About what?

JOSEPH

About Ray and what we've gotten ourselves into.

A beat.

LUCY

What have we gotten ourselves into?

JOSEPH

That baby of hers that we're planning to keep.

LUCY

Planning to keep? We're adopting a baby. I thought you were all for it. If you're not, how did the fuck did we get this far?

JOSEPH

I don't know how we got this far. I want a child of my own.

Lucy is hard hit.

LUCY

But you know I can't give you that.

A beat.

JOSEPH

I wish you could.

Lucy leaves the house.

97

EXT. ROOFTOP - AFTERNOON

97

Elizabeth walks onto the roof. Violet is there, reading. She turns when she hears someone approaching and points towards Elizabeth with her cane.

VIOLET

Your money or your life.

ELIZABETH

Hello, Violet.

VIOLET

Hi.

ELIZABETH

How are you?

VIOLET

Still blind as a bat, but without wings. Are you married? You must be, otherwise you wouldn't be hiding up here so often.

ELIZABETH

I'm not married.

VIOLET

You're hiding from your children.

ELIZABETH
No children yet.

VIOLET
Smart move. I've heard they're a
disappointment.

Elizabeth thinks about that.

ELIZABETH
I'm pregnant, actually.

VIOLET
Really?

Violet rubs her hands together and holds them out.
Elizabeth takes Violet's hands and puts them on her
belly.

VIOLET (cont'd) (CONT'D)
A person inside another person. Science
fiction.

A beat.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
She doesn't know anything.

ELIZABETH
Who?

VIOLET
Your baby. She doesn't know a thing.
Morning -- snowflakes -- music.

A beat.

VIOLET (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Only her mother's heartbeat.

Elizabeth thinks about that.

ELIZABETH
That should be enough for now.

A long beat.

VIOLET
You're easy to talk to.

ELIZABETH
So are you.

A beat.

VIOLET

I can't talk to my mother.

ELIZABETH

Why not?

VIOLET

We talk. I just can't -- really talk, you know. There's this knot in my throat when we get close to anything real.

ELIZABETH

Why do you think that is?

VIOLET

She's so scared for me it scares the shit out of me.

Elizabeth says nothing.

VIOLET (cont'd) (CONT'D)

What's your mother like?

Elizabeth thinks about it.

ELIZABETH

She's really gentle and -- patient. And she's fun.

VIOLET

Wow.

A beat. Elizabeth looks at Violet and reconsiders.

ELIZABETH

The truth is I have no idea. She gave me up for adoption when I was born. We've never met.

Violet says nothing.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

(CONT'D)

For a long time I could only think of her as a girl of fourteen. That's how old she was when I was born.

A beat.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

(CONT'D)

She was like you.

VIOLET

But not a virgin.

ELIZABETH

That's right.

Elizabeth laughs. She touches Violet's face.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

(CONT'D)

In the last few months I've formed this image in my head of a woman her real age. I imagine her living alone -- no husband or children.

VIOLET

You don't want her to have a life without you.

A beat.

ELIZABETH

Smart girl.

VIOLET

Do you think she thinks of you?

A beat.

ELIZABETH

She must. I was inside her once. Who can recuperate from that?

Violet says nothing. Elizabeth is quiet for a moment.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

(CONT'D)

I used to be angry at her. Not any more. I don't know what happened but all that anger just washed out of me.

VIOLET

So why not look for her? God, I would.

A beat.

ELIZABETH

What would you say to her?

VIOLET

Nothing. I wouldn't say a thing. I would just sit with her -- like we're sitting here right now.

They sit in silence.

98

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

98

Lucy cries while Ada watches. Finally:

LUCY

I've never felt so worthless in my entire life.

ADA

You're not worthless.

LUCY

I could hear his mother speaking right through him. It was fucking freaky.

Ada says nothing. A beat.

LUCY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

It's over.

ADA

You're angry right now, Lucy -- and you should be. But you guys need to talk some more.

Lucy shakes no.

LUCY

I can still adopt the baby on my own. Ray won't mind. She doesn't even like Joseph.

ADA

She doesn't?

LUCY

No. She hasn't said it but I can tell.

A beat.

ADA

Lucy -- I think you need to think about why you're adopting this baby in the first place.

Lucy looks at her.

LUCY

Why am I adopting this baby?

ADA

For Joseph.

LUCY

That's bullshit. I've committed and I'm not just going to walk away from it. It's a baby -- it's not shopping for shoes. I want that baby. That's my god-damn baby.

99 EXT. FAIR - DAY

99

Karen and Paco ride the spinning teacups with Cristi.

100 INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

100

Karen is on the bed, reading a book out loud to Cristi. Sofia looks in, but stands in silence, not wanting to interrupt.

Karen reads something that makes Cristi laugh. Karen stops to watch the girl laugh and she laughs, too. Before she returns to the book she caresses the girl's hair affectionately.

Then:

SOFIA

Vamos, Cristi.

KAREN

Oh. Already?

SOFIA

Come on.

KAREN

We'll finish it next week, okay?

SOFIA

Use the rest room before we leave.

KAREN

Use this one here.

The girl looks to Sofia for permission and the mother nods. Cristi enters Karen's bathroom. A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D)

How is she doing at school?

SOFIA

Good. She likes it.

Karen nods. Then:

KAREN

If you ever need help -- with books.
With anything. Let me know. I'd like to help.

SOFIA

We're okay.

KAREN

Oh, I know. I just --.

A beat.

KAREN (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Anything.

Sofia smiles, but says nothing. Then:

KAREN (CONT'D)

Can I ask you a question?

Sofia waits.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Aren't you ever scared that --. That --
something --. That she could --.

She trails off, unable to find the words.

SOFIA

That she could fall and break like an
egg?

Karen nods. It's been difficult to ask, but it has been honest and Sofia considers her answer carefully:

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Yes. Sometimes.

KAREN

How do you live with it?

Sofia smiles and shrugs: who knows?

The girl returns from the bathroom and she and Sofia leave. The girl turns to wave goodbye to Karen on her way out.

101 OMITTED 101

102 OMITTED 102

103 OMITTED 103

104 INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY 104

Ray during labor. She's scared and she holds Lucy's hand, breathing between contractions.

The baby crowning.

Lucy watching, mesmerized.

105 OMITTED 105

106 LATER 106

Lucy cutting the umbilical cord.

107 EXT. ROOFTOP - AFTERNOON 107

Violet walks across the roof, leading with her cane. She slows down a little as she approaches the edge, and when her cane confirms that she's steps from it she kneels down and travels the rest of the way on all fours.

Violet kneels by the very edge and taps the side of the building with her cane, confirming the precipice below.

Elizabeth comes out of the door and sees Violet.

ELIZABETH

Violet. Don't move.

VIOLET

Hi.

Elizabeth walks towards her.

ELIZABETH

Back up.

VIOLET

I've done it a hundred times. Sit with me.

Elizabeth sits a couple for steps behind Violet.

ELIZABETH

Let's move back.

VIOLET

Are you afraid of heights?

ELIZABETH

No -- I'm afraid of falling and breaking every bone in my body.

A breeze blows on them.

VIOLET

Oh, my god -- can you feel that?

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

A beat.

VIOLET

I'm not afraid of death. Are you?

ELIZABETH

Don't think about death right now, Violet. You'll have plenty of time later, believe me.

VIOLET

You didn't think about death when you were my age?

A beat.

ELIZABETH

I did. It didn't scare me either.

Elizabeth thinks about it.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I felt like I wasn't really there -- that I was invisible and disposable -- and that the world after me would be like the world before me. That I wouldn't leave a thing behind. It wasn't a bad feeling, really. It was comforting -- to feel like I was nothing.

VIOLET

You should of doubled up on the medication.

Elizabeth laughs. Then:

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I'm not nothing.

Elizabeth looks at her for a beat.

ELIZABETH

No, you're not. You're lovely.

Elizabeth fixes a loose strand of hair on Violet.

VIOLET

I have a favor to ask you.

ELIZABETH

Shoot.

VIOLET

There's a boy I want to have sex with.

A beat.

ELIZABETH

Use a condom, Violet.

Violet reaches out to Elizabeth's belly.

VIOLET

You didn't always use a condom, did you
Tex?

ELIZABETH

No, I didn't. You have to, though. Who
is this boy?

VIOLET

He's a boy like any other boy -- except
that he's singled me out so he deserves
a reward, don't you think?

Elizabeth smiles.

ELIZABETH

I suppose he does, yes.

A beat. Then in a different tone:

VIOLET

Sometimes when we're making out I feel
like we're just -- one person -- all
tangled up. I breathe in his breath and
it feels so good it makes me want to
cry.

Elizabeth says nothing, just takes her in.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I was hoping I could use your apartment during the day.

Elizabeth says nothing.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

We have no other place. He lives with his family -- there's five of them. My mom is home most of the day. She'll freak.

Elizabeth just looks at her. Then:

ELIZABETH

Let me think about it, okay?

VIOLET

Okay.

Violet reaches out and holds Elizabeth's hand.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

We'll look back on this and laugh our asses off.

108

INT. RAY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

108

Ray is asleep. Lucy is seated nearby. Ada stands against the wall on the opposite side of the room.

The door opens and a nurse rolls in a bassinet with the BABY sleeping inside.

Ray opens her eyes.

NURSE

Has your milk come in yet?

Ray shakes no.

NURSE (cont'd) (CONT'D)

You should put him on the breast -- he'll stimulate it.

RAY

No. I'm not nursing him.

A beat.

KAREN

That's great.

Sofia nods, keeps working. Then:

SOFIA

He wants me to move out there. To be his cashier.

A beat.

KAREN

Do you want to?

SOFIA

We're leaving at the end of next month.

Karen returns to washing dishes.

SOFIA (CONT'D)

I can recommend someone to take my place here.

Karen nods but says nothing.

112 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

112

Dr. Morgan comes in with test results. Elizabeth is waiting.

DR. MORGAN (cont'd)

Hello, Elizabeth. You have what's known as *placenta previa*. Your placenta sits low -- under the baby -- partially blocking the cervix. If it stays there it'll make for a very tricky delivery. We might have to consider a C-

(MORE)

*

DR. MORGAN (cont'd)
section. Maybe even before term.

ELIZABETH
No. I want to deliver her.

DR. MORGAN
Well, we're not there yet.

ELIZABETH
I mean it, doctor. I'm going to push her
out myself.

He's unwilling to commit.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Is that clear?

A beat.

DR. MORGAN
Let me take a look.

Elizabeth lies back. Dr. Morgan touches her belly.

DR. MORGAN (CONT'D)
Has anyone in your family ever had a
bleeding disorder?

Elizabeth shrugs "I have no idea."

DR. MORGAN (CONT'D)
Please try not to exert yourself. No
running around or carrying heavy stuff.
Okay? Otherwise I'll put you on bed
rest.

She says nothing.

DR. MORGAN (CONT'D)
You're a piece of work, aren't you?

She smiles but says nothing.

113	OMITTED	113
114	INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING	114
	We hear only score over this scene -- no dialogue.	

Lucy and Ada walk the hallway.

As they approach Ray's room they see a group gathered at the door. Sister Joanne is here, together with a DOCTOR and another MAN that looks like a HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR. Further down the hall is a SECURITY GUARD.

Sister Joanne pulls Lucy over to one side and explains something to her slowly, carefully. Lucy listens in silence, then reacts badly and begins to scream. She rushes to the door and bangs on it and screams but is pulled away by hospital staff and by Ada. Ada tries to walk her away, but Lucy tries to get back into the room.

As they pull her away this time she collapses to the floor, screaming and squirming in an uncontrollable fit.

Sister Joanne looks on, heart-broken for her.

115 INT. RAY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - THAT MOMENT 115

Lucy can be heard yelling outside. Ray is in bed nursing the baby. Her mother sits on the edge of the bed, watching. Neither says a word or looks at the other.

116 EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 116

Sofia, Paco and Karen exchange quick formal hugs.

Paco shakes Cristi's hand and bows, playfully formal.

Cristi reaches into Sofia's bag and takes out a little present, wrapped by her. She hands it to Karen. Karen kneels and hugs the girl and then just looks at the girl's face, long and hard, taking in every detail, touching her with the tips of her fingers -- like a blind person trying to memorize the features.

Karen gets up again and they all stand there in silence. Suddenly Sofia steps up again and embraces Karen quickly and whispers in her ear:

SOFIA

Your mother loved you more than anything
in the world.

Sofia breaks away and without another look or word she takes the girl's hand and they walk away.

Karen and Paco watch as Sofia and Cristi walk away.

Karen unwraps Cristi's parting gift. Inside it is Karen's mother's necklace and pendant of the Virgin Mary.

Karen puts on the necklace.

117 OMITTED 117

118 INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 118

Lucy is lying down on a couch, depleted. Ada sits next to her, holding her hand.

LUCY

You were right. If God wanted me to be a mom he would have made me a mom.

ADA

Lucy, I never said that.

LUCY

The whole adoption thing is just so fucking -- unnatural. How come no one will just come out and say it?

The doorbell rings and Ada walks away.

Ada returns followed by Sister Joanne. Lucy sits up slowly when Sister Joanne walks in.

Sister Joanne sits. Ada remains standing.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I don't blame her. I mean, it's her child, right? Who would give up her child that didn't have to?

SISTER JOANNE

Lucy. There's another baby.

ADA

Oh, for god's sake --.

SISTER JOANNE

Just hear me out.

ADA

No.

SISTER JOANNE

A baby girl. She has no one.

ADA

Until that no one comes knocking on our door to take her away.

SISTER JOANNE

That's not going to happen.

ADA

I think you better leave.

LUCY

Mom --.

Ada backs off.

LUCY (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Is this a baby that was meant for someone else?

SISTER JOANNE

No. Absolutely not. There are waiting lists but --. Look -- it's already arranged -- if you want it.

LUCY

Where is the mother?

SISTER JOANNE

There is no one. There isn't, okay? Sometimes there's just nobody. This is one of those times.

Lucy doesn't take her eyes off Sister Joanne. A beat.

SISTER JOANNE (cont'd)

(CONT'D)

Lucy: this little girl -- you're crossing paths with her today. If you let it pass it'll be gone forever.

118A INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

118A

Karen and Paco are in bed. They lie there in silence. Finally:

KAREN

I've been thinking a lot about my mother lately.

He waits.

KAREN (cont'd) (CONT'D)
She could be very funny, you know. When I was little she would dress me up in her clothes and paint my face and we would put on these little musical shows and laugh like crazy. She once peed in her pants, she was laughing so hard. I hadn't thought about that in years.

A beat.

KAREN (cont'd) (CONT'D)
She loved everything that I wrote and she encouraged me. She had high hopes for me. All her hopes were for me, really -- she had none for herself. That was scary. And then when I got pregnant something broke inside of her and she never recuperated.

A beat.

KAREN (cont'd) (CONT'D)
She was capable of a lot of love, once. And it was all for me.

She cuddles up to him.

119 OMITTED 119

120 EXT. REBECCA'S HOUSE - DAY 120

Elizabeth's childhood home. Elizabeth drives up and looks at the house from inside the car. There is a "For Sale" sign up front.

Elizabeth takes out her cell phone and dials a number. The number rings and rings. When a machine answers with a woman's voice on it, she hangs up.

121 INT. REBECCA'S HOUSE - DAY 121

Elizabeth lets herself into the back door and rushes past the living room and right up the stairs.

122 INT. REBECCA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 122

Elizabeth walks into her old bedroom and heads straight for the closet. Although things are stored in the room, it is still somewhat dressed like it was when she was in high school, twenty years ago.

Elizabeth, rifles through cardboard boxes quickly, picking out a photo album, looking through it and taking a little photograph.

She puts the album away and turns to leave but stops and looks around and breaths in the smell of the place. She closes her eyes.

When she finally opens her eyes we see how hard the memories are for her. She walks to the window and looks out to the large, unkempt back yard

123 OMITTED 123

124 EXT. REBECCA'S BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER 124

Elizabeth stands in the middle of the large yard, looking around, lost in her memories.

After a while she turns around and standing not far from her is a woman in her sixties, REBECCA.

For a few beats nobody speaks, while the women take each other in. Finally:

REBECCA
Well, look at you, Sandy.

Elizabeth walks past her on her way out.

ELIZABETH
Don't call me that.

124A OMITTED 124A

125 INT. SISTER JOANNE'S OFFICE - DAY 125

Karen is seated in front of Sister Joanne's desk. Sister Joanne comes in.

SISTER JOANNE

Okay. How are you?

Karen smiles, nervously. She's holding an envelope. Sister Joanna points to it without a word. Karen hands it to her.

SISTER JOANNE (CONT'D)

I'll put it in the file right away.

Karen doesn't move. Finally:

SISTER JOANNE (CONT'D)

I'll do it right now.

Sister Joanne gets up and exits the room.

126 INT. APARTMENT - DUSK

126

Elizabeth lets herself in. She puts down her handbag and briefcase and notices a girl's shoes on the living room floor.

Elizabeth walks quietly to the bedroom door. Inside, naked and asleep in bed, are Violet and a BOY HER AGE.

Elizabeth observes them for a few beats then backs away.

127 INT. LUCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

127

The BABY cries desperately at the top of her lungs. Lucy tries to comfort her, holding her and dancing around. Lucy is crying too, exhausted.

The doorbell rings.

Lucy opens the door for her mother.

LUCY

I can't do it, mom. I can't.

Ada takes the baby and walks towards the bedroom. Lucy collapses in a chair, exhausted.

128 OMITTED

128

129

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

129

Lucy drinks a cup of tea. Ada comes in.

ADA

She's down.

LUCY

It's not going to last. She'll be up in a minute.

ADA

Maybe not. Let's wait and see.

LUCY

What the hell am I going to do, mom? I can't do it.

ADA

It'll pass.

A beat.

LUCY

I don't love her.

ADA

Yes, you do. It's lack of sleep. You're not yourself.

LUCY

She's this -- thing -- on my bed. She's this -- creature -- from --. I'm angry at her.

ADA

For what?

LUCY

She's taken over everything. All day and night. Me, me, me. Feed me, hold me, clean me. I do it all and she cries and wails anyway. Who the fuck does she think she is?

Lucy breaks down crying again. Ada blows up:

ADA

Oh, for god's sakes, Lucy -- you're not the first woman to have a baby. Shit!

Lucy is stunned.

ADA (CONT'D)

What did you think this was going to be?
Jesus! Stop whining and grow the fuck up
and get your act together and be the
mother!

Lucy looks at her mother in shock, then nods and breaths,
trying to calm down. The women regroup. Then:

ADA (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Listen -- let's change the plan. Let's
let her cry herself to sleep.

Lucy thinks about it.

ADA (cont'd) (CONT'D)

It'll be hard, okay. Really hard. But
after a couple of days --.

The baby begins to cry.

ADA (cont'd) (CONT'D)

After a couple of days she'll get used
to it. Okay? It's for the better.

Lucy nods. The baby cries harder. Then harder. Lucy
whispers.

LUCY

Jesus.

Ada takes her finger to her lips: hush. Then Ada gets up
and closes the door. They sit there for a long time while
the baby cries. Lucy begins to cry too.

Finally she gets up and storms out. Ada runs after her.

ADA

Lucy!

130

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

130

Ada runs in just as Lucy is picking up the baby and
dances around with her, trying to calm her down.

LUCY

We can't let her cry herself to sleep.
Okay? We're not going to. Tell me we're
not going to.

ADA

Fine -- we won't.

After a few moments the baby stops crying. The women look at each other and at the baby, who now looks around calmly.

LUCY
What's the secret?

Ada gestures "who knows?". Lucy holds up the baby to her face. The baby looks into her eyes. Lucy looks back.

131 INT. ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 131

Elizabeth writes a letter.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
I was born November 7, 1973. I don't want to impose myself on you. I don't want to be a nuisance. I am pregnant and I'd like my baby to know where she comes from. I live in Los Angeles. I am successful in my work and financially independent. I am open to sharing more about myself and if you were open to that as well, it would be welcome. If you don't want to communicate with me, I will also understand and accept it.

*

A beat. She writes again.

ELIZABETH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If we were to meet, I think we should look forward, not back, and build something new. My name is Elizabeth. I think of you often.

Her writing the letter is intercut with Elizabeth setting up a camera and sitting for a self-portrait.

132 INT. ADOPTION AGENCY - DAY 132

Elizabeth sits across from an AGENCY WORKER, a YOUNG MAN. We do not hear what they say, but eventually Elizabeth hands the man a sealed letter-sized envelope. The man takes it and after a beat Elizabeth realizes that's it and gets up.

After Elizabeth has left, the man puts the letter on his desk. The phone rings and he picks up.

During the call another WORKER comes into the room and places documents over Elizabeth's letter, burying it.

133

INT. LAW FIRM - EVENING

133

After hours. Most people are gone and the office is quiet. Elizabeth is at a file cabinet next to her desk.

The sound of the office door opening makes her look up. It's PAUL. He walks up to her desk.

ELIZABETH

Hello, Paul.

Paul remains standing, just taking her in. She waits.

PAUL

I met someone else three months ago.
She's caring and smart and good for me.
We're talking about moving back East.

A beat.

PAUL (CONT'D)

But if that's my child you're carrying
I'm going to say goodbye to all that --
and I want you to come back and be with
me. And you can grow roots here and I'll
stay at the firm and I'll pave your way
to the top. You're what I want. I'm
going to care of you -- both of you. And
I'm never going to leave.

He walks away. Elizabeth is trembling.

134 INT. ELIZABETH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 134

Elizabeth is packing two large suitcases.

135 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT 135

Elizabeth places the heavy suitcases in the trunk of her
car with difficulty.

136 INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT 136

Elizabeth loads two full and heavy cardboard boxes into
the elevator and presses the button.

The elevator stops at a floor and Violet walks in.
Elizabeth is about to say something but realizes Violet
doesn't realize she's there.

Elizabeth backs up and they ride in silence, Elizabeth
quiet as a mouse and Violet unaware of her presence.
Elizabeth observes Violet with obvious tenderness,
fighting back tears.

Elizabeth kisses the tips of her fingers and reaches out
close to Violet, but without making contact.

At the ground floor Violet gets out.

137 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT 137

Elizabeth opens the back door of the car and is loading
the two boxes when the pain in her lower abdomen makes
her fold over and drop the box.

Elizabeth can hardly stand up from the pain. She remains
on her knees and breathes deeply.

138 OMITTED 138

139 INT. ER - NIGHT 139

Dr. Morgan comes in to find Elizabeth in pain.

DR. MORGAN
How are we doing here?

ELIZABETH
I'm scared.

DR. MORGAN
Let's have a look.

He raises the hospital gown and touches Elizabeth's lower belly ever so lightly.

DR. MORGAN (CONT'D)
You're bleeding internally.

ELIZABETH
I don't want a C-section.

DR. MORGAN
It's not just the C-section -- we have to contain the hemorrhage.

ELIZABETH
I want to see her when she's born. Don't knock me out.

DR. MORGAN
If things get complicated it'll be better if you're under general anesthesia.

ELIZABETH
You don't have my permission to knock me out, doctor!

Then, in a different tone:

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Please don't.

140 INT. O.R. - NIGHT 140

Elizabeth is awake but looks pale and tired as the doctors work to extract the baby.

Silence. Elizabeth begins to drift off when the sound of the crying baby wakes her up.

A nurse steps up and places the BABY on Elizabeth's chest. Elizabeth holds on to the baby and is overcome by feelings.

A couple of nurses and a doctor move around Elizabeth, as the work climate in the room seems to become more tense and hurried. After a few moments the nurse steps back in and takes the baby and hold her up for Elizabeth to kiss. Then, as the baby's face is pulled away Elizabeth's eyes lose their focus. The color is draining from her face.

141 INT. O.R. - LATER 141

Close on a very pale Elizabeth, on the operating table, her lifeless eyes still slightly open. More at peace than we've ever seen her.

142 EXT. DAY/NIGHT 142

Views of the San Fernando Valley

A garbage truck making its rounds. High power cables humming in the sun. A street with no pedestrians at dusk.

143 INT. ADOPTION AGENCY - DAY 143

A WOMAN AGENCY WORKER is looking through boxes with documents when she discovers Elizabeth's letter to Karen.

The woman worker shows the letter to Sister Joanne.

Joanne looks through file cabinets for Karen's file. She puts the envelope in the file and makes a note of it on a piece of paper. She's about to walk away when something stops her.

She opens the file again and checks Elizabeth's name on the envelope.

Sister Joanne checks another file, then checks through records on the computer. She realizes the connection between Elizabeth and Karen, and therefore between Karen and the baby Lucy adopted.

144 INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - DAY 144

Karen walks in to find Sister Joanne.

SISTER JOANNE

Hello, Karen. Thanks for coming in.

KAREN
What's happening?

SISTER JOANNE
Sit down, please.

KAREN
No. What's going on?

A beat.

SISTER JOANNE
This letter is for you.

A beat.

KAREN
From her?

SISTER JOANNE
Yes.

KAREN
Did you meet with her?

SISTER JOANNE
No. She must have spoken to one of my co-workers.

KAREN
When was this?

A beat.

SISTER JOANNE
I'm afraid it was a while back. We're not sure. The letter was misplaced. I'm very sorry about that.

Karen looks at the letter in Sister Joanne's hand, but Joanne doesn't hand it over, she just looks at Karen.

Finally:

KAREN
What?

PACO

Honey, I'm home!

It's a joke. No answer.

Karen walks in slowly from the hallway that leads to the bedrooms.

KAREN

She's been dead for over a year.

A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D) (cont'd)

There is a daughter -- a little girl. She was given up for adoption -- and they can't tell me who she is or where she is. That's it. It's the end.

A beat.

KAREN (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Why did you make me look? Until I found out she was dead, she was alive. She would be alive to me right now.

She makes a move as if to strike him on the chest with a fist but stops just short of it, then hugs him.

KAREN (CONT'D)

She wrote to me. She wrote me a letter.

146

EXT. DAY

146

Views of the San Fernando Valley again: a MAN trimming tree branches. a large group of GIRLS racing by on bicycles. A birds' NEST. A FREIGHT TRAIN passing by slowly.

147

INT. AMANDA'S LAW OFFICE - AFTERNOON

147

Amanda shows Karen to Elizabeth's old work station. It's now occupied by someone else's things and the desk has been re-oriented.

Amanda walks away, leaving Karen by herself. Karen takes in the place. She turns to look out the window. A heavy rain is falling.

A WOMAN LAWYER walks up and sits at the desk. Karen just looks at her. The lawyer looks at her, smiles politely and continues her work.

148 EXT. REBECCA'S BACKYARD - AFTERNOON 148

Karen stands in the middle of the yard which has been cleaned up and re-landscaped.

A YOUNG COUPLE, the new owners, watch her from nearby while their SONS play baseball.

149 EXT. ROOF - AFTERNOON 149

Violet is crouched down on the floor, lost in her own thoughts.

Karen walks the roof slowly, the breeze blowing on her face.

150 INT. JOANNA'S OFFICE - DAY 150

Karen and Paco talk to Sister Joanne.

SISTER JOANNE

The mother has agreed to let you see her. Saturday afternoon. They have asked me to remind you that you have no legal claim over the baby. Legally Elizabeth was not your child, so you have no claim over her children. Also, after Elizabeth's death, a legal, good-faith effort was made to publish the news of her death and to look for relatives.

KAREN

What kind of effort?

SISTER JOANNE

In local newspapers. And on the county website. Nobody came forward. So the baby is now legally this woman's daughter.

A beat.

KAREN

How about Elizabeth's adoptive mother? Her name was in the file, wasn't it?

SISTER JOANNE

We tried to contact her. She never responded.

KAREN

Jesus.

A beat.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Will the child know who I am?

SISTER JOANNE

That's up to the mother.

KAREN

Will she let me visit her again after this time?

SISTER JOANNE

I don't know. She's not obligated to.

PACO

Don't think about that. Meet and see how it goes.

Karen thinks about it.

KAREN

Hello and goodbye. Again.

A beat. Sister Joanne holds out a piece of paper.

SISTER JOANNE

This is the address. The girl's name is Ella.

Karen takes the piece of paper and looks at it. She reads it and looks at Sister Joanne, then laughs and hands it to Paco who reads it also. Karen can't stop laughing.

151 EXT. LUCY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 151

Karen stands partly hidden behind tree branches, watching the front yard of a house where a woman sits with her back to Karen, playing with a TODDLER.

152 INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 152

Karen is on the phone.

KAREN

Hi. Sorry. I -- it's an African-American family who lives in that house. I just wanted to check that --.

She listens.

KAREN (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Okay. All right. Thanks. Bye-bye.

She hangs up.

152A

EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE AND STREETS - AFTERNOON

152A

Karen comes out of her house, closes the door behind her. We follow in an uninterrupted shot as she crosses her street, walks down to the corner, turns and walks towards Lucy's house.

153 EXT. ADA'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON 153

Lucy is resting on the lawn looking at clouds passing overhead, next to Ella who is fast asleep. The girl's face is partially covered with a blanket

Lucy sits up, feeling herself watched.

Karen is there, looking at the child.

Lucy is a little taken aback and is about to say something when it occurs to her who this woman might be.

She uncovers Ella's face and the women look at her in silence.

154 LATER 154

Ella is awake and she plays peek-a-boo with Karen, who is nervous but increasingly delighted.

The girl laughs heartily and Karen laughs too, through tears. Ella wipes her tears.

Ada watches from inside the house.

The girl sees and holds the pendant around Karen's neck. Karen takes it off and puts it on the child.

155 LATER 155

Karen watches as Lucy and Ella play a game that involves quick little kisses on each other's face.

156 DUSK 156

Lucy follows Ada who carries Ella into the house as Ella waves goodbye to Karen who waves back, then slowly backs away.

157 OMITTED 157

158 INT. LUCY'S KITCHEN ROOM - NIGHT 158

Ada looks into the kitchen and finds Lucy standing at the sink, the dishes all washed and the water still running, lost in thought.

ADA
Where are you right now?

Lucy turns off the water tap.

LUCY
I was thinking about Joseph.

Ada waits for more.

LUCY (CONT'D)
He was a stranger once -- then he was the love of my life. Now I don't know what he is any more. And it doesn't matter to me.

Ada has no comment.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Time is ruthless, isn't it?

159 EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE - THAT NIGHT 159

Karen is at the door of her house, wearing her night gown. She's standing there, looking towards the street corner. Half of Lucy's house is visible from where Karen stands.

The last light goes out in Lucy's house.

160 INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 160

Karen walks into the living room. Paco is standing there, waiting for her.

PACO
How are you?

She nods "fine". He embraces her.

PACO (cont'd) (CONT'D)
Are you?

A beat.

KAREN

She has my mother's eyes.

PACO

Is that a good thing?

She thinks about it.

KAREN

Yes. But I don't want to talk about it today. We'll talk about it tomorrow.

She looks up at him and takes in his face up close. She whispers:

KAREN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

161

INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - LATER

161

Paco is fast asleep. Karen is writing in her notebook.

KAREN (V.O.)

I never saw you. With a new haircut. With new shoes. When was your first period? Was someone there to help? Did anyone explain? Did you hear the rain one night, when I heard it? What gave you comfort? I've missed it all -- and I've accepted it. But today I met Ella. Her little face is like a bird that flies high over thirty-eight years that have gone on and on and on like a horrible parade. But now it has passed. Only Ella remains, God bless her. Ella is peace.

*

She picks up the envelope that Sister Joanne gave her (it's already been opened by her before) and takes out a letter and two photos. She reads the letter and it makes her smile.

Karen puts the notebook aside and rests the photos on her side table and lies down to look at them. One photo is the self-portrait of a pregnant Elizabeth, the other is the school photo of Elizabeth, age 8.

Karen looks at them -- scared, curious, marvelled -- then turns out the lights.
