

Melissa

by

GP McClure

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - LATE EVENING

There is a light rain which sporadically appears. The young girl, LYNN BATES (16), is frightened and panicked, alone as three hoods, pursue her. She runs into an alley, away from the lights of the streets as her pursuers follow. She's not sure which way to go. She turns one way but it is a dead end. She turns to leave but the three hoods are there, she is trapped. One of the hoods, the leader, has a bad scar on his face, the other two menacing and deadly looking. They approach her slowly, laughing and enjoying her terror. She tries to move past them but they block her escape. One grabs her, she screams. The thugs begin to grope her, tearing at her clothes, she fights but to no avail. Suddenly a voice,

TRAVIS (O.S.)

I think... I think you should stop.

The three thugs turn to see a man, TRAVIS EDWARDS, standing alone, wearing a raincoat and wide brim hat. Calmly this stranger, about 30 years of age, looks at them, then glances at the girl.

HOOD 1

Who the hell are you?!

Silence from the stranger. The thugs look at each other.

HOOD 2

Mister you just better get the hell outta here... this ain't none ah yor concern.

Silence and a deadly stare from Travis. The thugs look at each other, not sure what to make of the situation. The girl scared and trembling, she looks at Travis and he smiles at her. Her rapid breathing begins to slow. Travis doesn't move. The first thug motions to another one,

HOOD 1

Tony!

The thug TONY begins to move towards the stranger, he pulls a switchblade and heads for Travis, glee in his eyes. Fear fills Lynn's eyes as she watches, but Travis stands firm. Tony swings the blade but Travis is quick, relieves Tony of the knife and puts a large slit into Tony's leg. Tony goes down in pain and blood. The second hood begins to attack but Travis throws the knife with deadly precision, which embeds itself in the thug's leg, who goes down in pain. The first thug looks at his two friends who are on the ground in pain, blood.

Travis approaches him, the scar-faced hood attacks but Travis quickly and efficiently puts him in a strangle hold. The rapist can't move, can't breath. He struggles but the grip is firm, death for the thug only seconds away. As fear fills his eyes, he looks at Lynn, but Lynn is rooted to her spot as she watches this stranger, who acts calm, but deadly. Travis releases his grip on the ruffian and grabs him by the collar, then calmly, with an ice cold voice, and in his face,

TRAVIS
Try raping this girl again, and you
will die. Now leave.

Travis drops the hood who goes to his knees, he looks up at Travis. Fear as he moves away from Travis, who never takes his deadly eyes off fleeing rapist. All three quickly leave the alley, two limping badly. Travis turns his attention to the girl, she is scared as she watches him. With a calm and reassuring voice,

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
You all right?

Lynn nods but shivers. Travis looks at her and sighs.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
(softly)
Runaways.
(looks in Lynns' eyes)
Go home. This is no place for you.
Go back to your family.

LYNN
(weakly)
I don't have a family.

TRAVIS
Heard that before. So where do you
live?

LYNN
(nervous)
Around.

Travis nods.

TRAVIS
In that case I have no choice but to
take you to the nearest police
facility...

LYNN
(scared)
NO! Please. I don't want to go
there.

TRAVIS

Well you can't stay here.

It begins to lightly rain again. He picks up her coat but it is soaking wet. He looks at the girl.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

The police...

LYNN

NO! No. No police.

The stranger looks at her, she shakes. The rain begins to fall harder.

TRAVIS

Why not?

LYNN

No police. Please.

TRAVIS

Then what am I going to do with you?

The rain beginning to get heavier.

LYNN

You can... you can take me with you...

TRAVIS

Yeah, like that is going to happen.

LYNN

I swear, you take me to the police
I'll tell them that you tried to
rape me.

Travis looks at her. The rain hits his face as he looks up speaking to the sky,

TRAVIS

I don't believe this. My horrible
scope said that something like this
was going to happen to me today.

He looks back at the girl. Slightly nods his head,

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Come on. I don't live too far from
here.

As they leave the alley he picks up a bag and she notices he walks with a slight limp.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Travis stops outside a door in a hallway. He turns and looks at her.

TRAVIS
Let me see your arms.

The girl hesitates, still shivering.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Your arms, or you leave.

Lynn holds out her arms, he looks at them.

LYNN
I don't do drugs.

Travis looks at her, examines her eyes. He smiles.

TRAVIS
Good, because I don't allow drugs.

Travis unlocks the door and turns on a light. The condo is nicely furnished, clean, immaculate. She is amazed as she enters and scans the unit. Travis turns to face her,

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
What's your name?

LYNN
Lynn.

TRAVIS
Lynn what?

LYNN
Just Lynn. What's yours?

TRAVIS
Travis.

LYNN
Travis what?

Silence. She shivers. Travis looks at her. She's cold, dirty, and her clothes ragged.

TRAVIS
You need a shower just Lynn. In here.

He leads her to a large, well maintained bathroom. She looks at him with trepidation.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

If I wanted to hurt you, or rape you, you couldn't stop me. Besides, if memory serves, didn't I just save you from that fate?

She smiles.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Put your dirty clothes in the hamper. I don't have anything feminine for you to wear but I will find something. I'll leave them outside the door. Whatever I find will be modest. You hungry?

Lynn nods.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Take your time in the shower, I'll fix you something to eat.

LYNN

You know how to cook?

Travis smiles.

TRAVIS

Yeah, I know how to cook.

He gently pushes Lynn into the bathroom and closes the door.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - LATER

Travis hears the hair dryer turn off as he puts two plates of food on the table. Lynn comes out wearing pajamas that are too big for her, and a robe that she snuggles in. Lynn is a very cute girl. Her hair blonde and clean. She smells the food and smiles at him.

TRAVIS

You look better. How do you feel?

LYNN

Clean. These yours?
(indicating the pajamas)

TRAVIS

Yeah. But don't worry I have more.

LYNN

These are nice. Real nice.

TRAVIS

Sit, eat.

She begins to eat as Travis bows his head in silence. The move takes her by surprise. He looks up.

LYNN
You religious or something?

TRAVIS
Or something.

Lynn nods and continues to eat.

LYNN
So you live here alone?

TRAVIS
How old are you Lynn? Fifteen,
sixteen?

Lynn looks at him. Travis waits for an answer.

LYNN
Sixteen.

TRAVIS
Why are you on the streets?

LYNN
(shrugs)
I don't know.

Between bites,

TRAVIS
What are you running away from?
Family, abusive father, abusive
mother? What?

LYNN
I told you, I don't have a family.

TRAVIS
I know when someone is lying, and
you're lying.

He ponders.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
You can stay here tonight, but you
have to leave tomorrow. First thing
in the morning. Understand?

Lynn slightly nods and eats.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - LATER

Lynn walks the condo, two bedrooms, two big bathrooms, one situated off the master bedroom. There is no television, no computer. There are no photos of family. She opens a cabinet door, it is full of linen, immaculately arranged. The towels professionally arranged. She opens a door to a closed room, a larger room it has numerous books, this a large bedroom turned into a library/den combination. A nice stereo system sits against one wall, next to a desk. A small table sits in the middle of the room. A Lazy Boy recliner to one side. Excellent lighting. Everything pristine, nothing out of place and no dust. She walks back into the kitchen, no dirty dishes. She opens a cabinet, it is full of glasses, different sizes, properly arranged, each glass spotless. The dishes, same. The sink spotless. The silverware drawers properly and neatly arranged.

LYNN

(softly)

The guy's a neat freak.

She moves to the living room, another pristine environment. Travis not to be seen. She looks for him, then spies him sitting outside on the balcony. She opens the sliding door and joins him on the

BALCONY

which overlooks the city. They are twenty-five floors up in Manhattan. The condo overlooks the skyscrapers and part of Central Park. The rain now stopped.

He is smoking a cigar and drinking a beer. He looks at her.

TRAVIS

Better?

LYNN

Yes, thank you. Why do you smoke those things?

TRAVIS

Because I like them.

He's courteous and makes sure the smoke stays away from her.

LYNN

So, now what?

TRAVIS

I have a spare room that you can use tonight, then tomorrow, you're on your own.

LYNN
What about you?

TRAVIS
After I finish this, I'm going to
bed.
(Indicating the beer
and cigar.)

LYNN
You always smoke cigars?

TRAVIS
One of each almost every night, just
before bed.

LYNN
Why?

TRAVIS
Why not? I like it. Helps me relax.

LYNN
Doesn't New York have laws against
smoking?

TRAVIS
Yep. So, what's your point? No one
complains, privacy of my own home,
what's the problem? If I do get a
hassle, I have no problem with moving
to another state. New York loses,
not me.

Lynn looks at him.

LYNN
Just seems like a nasty habit.

TRAVIS
And this coming from a runaway.

LYNN
Yeah. Sorry. What about cigarettes?

TRAVIS
Too nasty. But a fine cigar,
accompanied with a great beer, now
that's heaven.

Lynn not really sure.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
So what's your plans for tomorrow?

LYNN

I don't know, where are my clothes?

TRAVIS

I sent them out to be cleaned, they'll be back first thing in the morning. When they arrive, out you go.

LYNN

Why can't I stay here?

TRAVIS

Because you can't.

LYNN

If I don't stay here, maybe I'll tell the police that you tried to rape me...

Travis looks at her with a face of "really".

LYNN (CONT'D)

You're not worried at all about that are you?

TRAVIS

Nope.

LYNN

Then why let me stay now?

TRAVIS

I repeat myself, you can stay tonight, but you have to leave in the morning.

Lynn nods. Looks at the view. She's impressed. She looks at Travis,

LYNN

So tell me, where did you learn to fight like that?

Travis says nothing but smokes his cigar and sips his beer.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - MORNING

Travis in the kitchen, the phone rings, he answers.

TRAVIS

Hello... Good morning Mr. Hyatt, how are you this morning?... You're kidding, please tell me you're kidding... Yes, I understand... Yes, thank you.

Hangs up. Lynn standing in the doorway. Travis looks at her. Lynn unsure.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

That was Mr. Hyatt. He owns the local laundry and dry cleaning facility just down the street. Apparently your clothes are not worth cleaning, or salvaging.

LYNN

What does that mean?

TRAVIS

It means I can't send you out on the streets dressed like that...

Looks at her pajamas and robe.

LYNN

Does that mean I stay?

TRAVIS

Yeah. That means you stay. But just for another day. I have to buy you some clothes.

Travis looks her over.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

It has been a long time since I bought a woman any clothes. But a teenage girl... I need your size.

Lynn starts to speak, Travis interrupts her.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Don't tell me, write it down, write down everything that you need, including... under... undergarments... Whatever, your size for all of it.

Travis gives her pen and paper and she begins to write. She gives him the list. He looks at it.

LYNN

So what are you going to do?

TRAVIS

I have to go to work. I'll pick this stuff up today. What's your favorite color?

LYNN

Green. So what do I do today?

TRAVIS
You stay here.

Lynn nods.

LYNN
Where's your TV?

TRAVIS
I don't have one.

LYNN
What! Get real, no TV?

TRAVIS
No. It rots the brain.

LYNN
Computer?

TRAVIS
Only a laptop, and it goes with me.

LYNN
So what do you do for entertainment?

TRAVIS
I read. I listen to the radio. I have satellite radio, it's pretty easy to use, find a station you like and listen to it. Just keep the noise down, consider the neighbors.

LYNN
You expect me to stay here all day with no television?

TRAVIS
Yep.

LYNN
That's cruel.

TRAVIS
That's the way it is, unless of course you want to go out on the street dressed like that?

Lynn looks at herself.

LYNN
Maybe. They are your pajamas.

Travis smiles.

TRAVIS
There's food in the refrigerator and
pantry, help yourself. Just clean
up your mess.

Travis moves towards the door, he passes the main bathroom,
he stops, he looks inside the bathroom.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
(authoritatively)
Lynn!

Lynn responds and comes over to him. He motions with his
head to the inside of the bathroom. She looks in, it's a
mess.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
What is that?

LYNN
(meekly)
The bathroom?

Travis looks at her.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Ok, I'll clean it up.

Travis nods.

TRAVIS
You'll find cleaning gear under the
bathroom sink.
(begins to move again)
I left my work number on the
refrigerator door should you need to
call me. My cell phone number is
there as well. Don't call unless
it's an emergency.

He looks at her,

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
A real emergency.

Lynn nods.

LYNN
Why are you trusting me?

TRAVIS
Have you given me any reason not to?

LYNN
I don't think so.

TRAVIS
Until you do, you have my trust.
It's one of my many faults.

LYNN
(surprised)
You have faults? Mr. Perfect?

TRAVIS
That's a cruel thing to say. Mr.
Perfect? That's a first.

LYNN
It fits.

TRAVIS
I'll be home by six, stay out of
trouble. Keep the door locked.

He goes out the door leaving Lynn alone.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - EVENING

Travis enters the condo carrying bags, he looks around, it is still neat. He smiles to himself. Lynn approaches still in the pajamas and robe.

LYNN
About time. I was going stir crazy
here by myself.

Travis puts one one of the bags on the dining table.

TRAVIS
So what did you do today?

LYNN
Went crazy.

TRAVIS
Looks like you survived.

Gives her some bags.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Here, try these on.

She looks in the bags, clothes.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Go on. If they don't fit let me
know and I'll take them back.

Lynn takes the bags and moves to the spare room and closes the door. Travis goes to the

BATHROOM

it is clean and neat. He smiles. He moves back to the

DINING ROOM TABLE

and opens the bag. He pulls out a beer and a cigar. He puts the beer in the refrigerator and the cigar in a humidor. Lynn comes out dressed in a very pretty green dress. He looks at her.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Much better. You look like a beautiful young lady.

LYNN

It's beautiful. But why?

Travis moves to the stove.

TRAVIS

Hungry?

LYNN

A little. You didn't answer...

She's nervous as he begins to fix dinner.

TRAVIS

If I wanted something from you... Well I don't.

LYNN

Then why?

TRAVIS

I don't know. I hadn't planned on buying it, but it was there. It said Lynn all over it. Next thing I knew I got it. I still don't know why I bought it. Cost enough. What about the other stuff?

LYNN

The few things I tried on fit nicely. Thank you.

TRAVIS

I think you should go home, back to your family.

LYNN

I don't have a family.

TRAVIS
Relatives? Somewhere, anywhere?

LYNN
Just me.

TRAVIS
You are making this real difficult
for me, you know that?

LYNN
Let me stay here.

TRAVIS
Why?

Considers.

LYNN
Because I trust you. I don't have
anywhere else to go.

Travis looks at her, relents.

TRAVIS
Help me with dinner?

Lynn smiles and moves by his side as he prepares dinner.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - LATER

He's doing the dishes, Lynn tries to help but not sure what
to do. He corrects her as necessary.

LYNN
That was a good dinner, thanks.
Where did you learn how to cook?

TRAVIS
Here and there.

They finish, everything in its place.

LYNN
So now what?

TRAVIS
Now I sit back, listen to some tunes
and read.

He moves to the

DEN/LIBRARY

She follows. He turns on the stereo but what comes out of the speakers makes him look at her.

LYNN
You said find something to listen
to.

Travis turns the station to some instrumental easy listening. Lynn makes a face.

TRAVIS
What?

LYNN
Not exactly my style.

TRAVIS
I know. Live with it.

Travis moves to get a book, she meanders. Travis watches her then considers.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
You know how to play chess?

LYNN
No.

TRAVIS
Want to learn?

LYNN
(shrugs)
Sure.

Travis pulls out a chess set and looks at it. Lynn catches the look in his eyes like he is remembering. He opens the case and sets up the pieces. It's a very expensive crystal set. They sit across from each other.

TRAVIS
What color you want, black or white.

LYNN
They're crystal.

TRAVIS
The frosted ones are known as black.
The clear, white.

LYNN
Why?

TRAVIS
 Because of rules established long
 before you or I were ever born.

Lynn accepts the explanation.

LYNN
 I'll take white. Do you play often?

TRAVIS
 I use to, not any more. I haven't
 played in years.

He turns sad, then,

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
 (softly)
 My dad and I...
 (recovers)
 Ok. White moves first and this is
 the way the pieces move...

He begins to show her the basics of the game.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - NIGHT

Travis is on the patio smoking his cigar and sipping his
 beer. Lynn watches him from the living room hallway.

LYNN
 (very softly)
 If only you could meet Karla.

She turns and goes to the spare bedroom, closing the door
 behind her.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - MORNING

Lynn wakes to the door bell buzzing. She's groggy but gets
 up, puts on a robe and heads for the door. Travis not to be
 seen. The door bell continues buzzing.

LYNN
 Hold on, I'm coming.

She opens the door, a black woman, MELINDA, about 29, holding
 a three year old boy, stands there. The woman looks Lynn
 over.

MELINDA
 Yep.

She enters the condo. Lynn not sure what to do.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
You must be Lynn.

She puts the child down and offers her hand.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
I'm Melinda, Melinda Rowan. I'm
your next door neighbor.

Lynn shakes hands and Melinda moves deeper into the condo.
She looks it over.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Damn. I wish I knew his secret.
His place is always immaculate.

She turns to face Lynn who is confused.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Just getting up I see.

Lynn looks at her night clothes.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
That has got to change.

LYNN
Excuse me, what's going on?

MELINDA
You. You're what's going on. I
understand you're sixteen, right?

LYNN
Yeah.

MELINDA
Ok, I can work with that. Did Travis
make coffee before he left?

LYNN
I don't know.

Melinda moves to the

KITCHEN

No coffee. She makes some.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Seems like you know where everything
is.

MELINDA
I do. Sit.

Lynn sits. Melinda watches her son, playing with some toys he brought over with him.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

How bad do you want to stay here?

LYNN

Excuse me? Just who the hell are you?

MELINDA

Why do you want to stay here?

Lynn really confused. Melinda smiles. She watches the coffee finish then gets a cup.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

You drink coffee?

LYNN

Sometimes.

Melinda pours Lynn a cup and sits it in front of her. Melinda sits and observes the girl.

MELINDA

Do you want to go to jail Lynn?

LYNN

NO! Why would I?

MELINDA

A runaway. Do you need another reason? Travis told me about you, picked you up off the streets, said you needed a place to stay, to get yourself together. Is he wrong?

LYNN

No. Not really, no.

MELINDA

Travis cannot keep you here without a very good reason. If the police find out you were staying here, they would arrest Travis, and take you into protective custody. They would find out all about you. Is that what you want?

LYNN

No.

MELINDA

I don't know why you ran away, and at this point I really don't care. That will change with time, however. So how did he pick you up?

LYNN

He didn't tell you?

MELINDA

Just said you were on the street and needed help. He felt sorry for you.

LYNN

That's all?

MELINDA

That's all.

LYNN

Three men tried to rape me, he stopped them.

MELINDA

Of course he would leave that part out. Just like Travis.

LYNN

Why are you trying to help me?

Melinda looks at her son. Lynn looks at the boy.

MELINDA

His name's Andy, and he's three. Last year when he was two I wasn't paying attention, his father and I had just had a big fight. Carl went storming out. I was really upset... anyway Travis comes over, wants to borrow two eggs. He had just gotten back from a trip the night before and ran out of eggs. Promised to pay me back with interest. That made me even more pissed off, how dare he.

That's when he saw Andy out on the balcony... it's 25 floors to the street below. Just as my baby was going over the rail, Travis pulled him back. He saved my son. If he hadn't been there... I owe him. I owe him everything.

(MORE)

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Last night he called and asked if I could help him with you. Told me the situation. He told me about you, so here I am. So I ask you again, why do you want to stay here?

Considers.

LYNN

Because I feel safe here. I trust Travis. I haven't felt this safe in a long time. And the fact that I have no where else to go.

(a slight laugh)

Me trusting a total stranger, I don't even know his last name.

MELINDA

It's Edwards, Travis Edwards.

LYNN

Travis Edwards. No middle name?

MELINDA

Travis. Carlton Travis Edwards. But don't even think about calling him Carlton. You will be on the streets again, and fast.

Lynn giggles and nods.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

We need a ruse, a reason for you to be here, and I think I have just the thing.

Lynn smiles and sips her coffee.

EXT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - EVENING

Travis carrying a bag stops at his door, then moves to the door across the hallway. He knocks, Melinda answers. She smiles and he enters closing the door behind him. Andy comes up and Travis picks him up.

TRAVIS

Hello sport, been a good boy today?

ANDY

(shrugs)

I guess. Mommy?

MELINDA

You've been a very good boy, now get down from there and go play, Uncle Travis and I have to talk.

Travis puts Andy down and looks at the sliding balcony door.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

It's locked. It always stays locked. She is something else.

TRAVIS

So it went well?

MELINDA

You're right, she's not a girl for the street, she's too refined. She's a piece of delicate china stranded in the middle of a busy freeway. Coffee?

TRAVIS

No thanks. Just wanted to stop and get your opinion. What's the plan?

MELINDA

You are her legal guardian. Carl will make sure the paper work is correct. He's doing that now.

TRAVIS

Where is he?

MELINDA

He's at the office. Easier to falsify paperwork and documents with no one around.

TRAVIS

You two can get into a lot of trouble for this. I don't know what I was thinking, I don't know why I asked you. I never should have gotten you involved.

MELINDA

We became involved the minute you saved Andy from going over that railing. I just wish you would open up more.

Travis silent.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Why don't you turn her over to the police?

TRAVIS

Doesn't feel right.

MELINDA

That's no reason.

TRAVIS

A long time ago I learned to trust my gut. And my gut says taking her to the police would be a big mistake.

MELINDA

You always listen to your gut?

TRAVIS

Yeah. Yeah I do.

MELINDA

I suppose you have your reasons. She has to go to school. I'm thinking about Saint Anthony's.

TRAVIS

Private school. Expensive?

MELINDA

Somewhat, and difficult to get into, but the Mother Superior is a friend of mine. I think I can convince her to take Lynn.

TRAVIS

Didn't you go to Saint Anthony's?

MELINDA

And I caused Mother Anita a lot of trouble. How she kept her cool is beyond me. But I love that woman, like my own mother.

TRAVIS

How can I repay you and Carl?

MELINDA

You didn't tell me about the attempted rape.

Travis caught.

TRAVIS

I couldn't leave her out there.
Every fiber in my body said she needed
help. I couldn't turn away from
those feelings.

MELINDA

Just like you to think of someone
else first.

TRAVIS

We need to find out who she is.

MELINDA

Carl's going to work on it, but...
I guess you want everything low key?

TRAVIS

Please.

MELINDA

Keeping it under the radar is going
to take a lot more time. Are you
sure?

TRAVIS

Yeah, I am.

Starts to leave.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

I better get over there. Let me
know what I have to do.

MELINDA

I will.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - MOMENTS LATER

The place is still clean and neat, he hears rock and roll
music coming from the library/den. He moves to the

KITCHEN

Lynn joins him as he is putting the beer and cigar away.

LYNN

Thought that was you.

TRAVIS

So you met Melinda?

LYNN

Yeah, she's nice.

(MORE)

LYNN (CONT'D)

She told me how you saved her son.
A regular Sir Galahad you are.

Travis smiles and begins to fix dinner. She moves beside him.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Can I help?

TRAVIS

Sure. Peel some potatoes. Two for me, however many you want.

Lynn unsure what to do. Travis shows her. He looks at her, the same green dress.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

I guess we need to get you some more clothes. Tomorrow is Saturday, we'll go shopping. Did Melinda tell you the plan?

LYNN

You talked to her?

TRAVIS

Just a moment ago. So I guess I am to be your legal guardian.

LYNN

That sounds cool to me.

TRAVIS

You have to go to school, she tell you that?

LYNN

Yeah, well about that...

Travis sternly looks at her.

LYNN (CONT'D)

...I guess I'm going to school.

TRAVIS

Better.

LYNN

How long have you known Melinda?

TRAVIS

Met her and her husband Carl almost four years ago.

(MORE)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

She was a few months pregnant with Andy when they moved in next door. Her husband is a sharp lawyer, and we're good friends.

LYNN

(worried)

A lawyer. Can he be trusted?

Travis studies her.

TRAVIS

Yeah, he can.

Lynn accepts his words and slightly nods. Fixing dinner.

LYNN

Can I ask you a question?

TRAVIS

Sure.

LYNN

Every night you bring home a beer and cigar. You have a humidor, why don't you just buy a box, and keep a six pack in the refrigerator?

TRAVIS

There's a man that owns a liqueur store down the street, his name is Robert Jackson. He's an old man, lives alone. His wife, Mattie, died several years ago, a few years after they lost their only son. His son and daughter-in-law were killed in a car accident. They had a son, Robert Jackson the third. Robert and Mattie were babysitting when the accident happened. After Mattie died, Robert raised the boy alone. When 9/11 happened young Robert was in the vicinity. Shortly after that the boy, excuse me, the young man, joined the Army. He's in Iraq now, but he's scheduled to be released from active duty in about a year, at which time he plans to come back and take over the business, which will allow his grandfather to retire.

LYNN

So you stop in and talk to him?

TRAVIS

Every night. Saturdays too. He's closed on Sundays. We spend twenty, thirty minutes talking, just general things.

LYNN

And you always buy a single beer and cigar?

TRAVIS

Yeah. He says our conversations help a lot. And the old codger is smart, very smart. The knowledge that man has... He's just lonely.

LYNN

Mr. Perfect and Sir Galahad.

Travis gives a little laugh.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Teach me some more chess after dinner?

Travis smiles.

NEW YORK -- TIME PASSES

Travis teaches her to play chess, him winning the games, her frustration. Her going to school, reading, babysitting Andy, Travis taking her to the opera, symphony, Broadway, the movies. More chess. Talking at night on the balcony. Shopping. Laughing. Cooking. Talking to Mr. Jackson at the liqueur store. Travis teaching Lynn how to clean, the corners, the voids, her "are you crazy" look, the mopping, the vacuum, the toilet. The feeling of a job well done.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - FOUR MONTHS LATER - TUESDAY EVENING

Lynn and Travis playing chess, she makes a move.

LYNN

Check.

TRAVIS

What! How did you do that?

Lynn enjoying the moment. Travis looks at the board, surprised. He makes a move, she counters.

LYNN

Checkmate.

Giggles with glee. Travis stunned.

TRAVIS

How, where did you learn those moves?

LYNN

This is a library. You have books.
You have books on chess. I read.
No TV remember?

Lynn enjoying the moment as Travis looks at her with amazement. He gets up, still not believing he lost and departs for the

BALCONY

then remembers his beer and cigar. Lynn brings them out to him.

TRAVIS

Thanks.

The two sit. The night enjoyable.

LYNN

Be summer soon. No more studies.

TRAVIS

It's a year round school, remember.

LYNN

I do have a small summer break coming up in a few days.

TRAVIS

Melinda gave me your grades, impressive. Very impressive. I also talked to Mother Anita, she is really impressed with you. So when are you going to tell me?

LYNN

Tell you what?

Travis looks at her.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Maybe about the same time you tell me about yourself. Nobody knows who you really are, or anything about your past. Not even Carl and Melinda.

TRAVIS

You know everything about me.

LYNN

No, no I don't. You work in advertising. You're very good at your job. You make a lot of money, but you've only been there for five years. What did you do before that? That's the mystery.

TRAVIS

There are some things that are better left buried in the past.

LYNN

(smugly)
There you go.

TRAVIS

I'm over thirty, you're sixteen. You ran away from home, I lived life, yours is just starting. There's a big difference between us. Do you really want the burden of your past to haunt you?

LYNN

Do you?

He studies her,

TRAVIS

What's this I hear about a field trip you have to take?

LYNN

Oh yeah! I forgot about that...

She leaves and quickly returns with a piece of paper.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Father and daughter field trip. Or in this case, guardian and charge.

Travis reads the paper.

TRAVIS

You have to go to work with me?

LYNN

Yeah. I have to write a report on what you do, what's involved in your job.

Travis looks at her.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Don't look at me in that tone of voice. Wasn't my idea, talk to Mother Anita.

INT. ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES ADVERTISING - WEDNESDAY MORNING

Lynn follows Travis into the office, a very impressive business. Large silver letters, situated behind the receptionist spell out ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES. The receptionist, DIANE, about 65 years, but still pretty and well dressed, looks up as they approach.

DIANE

Morning Mr. Edwards.

She looks with interest at Lynn.

TRAVIS

Morning Diane. Diane I would like you to meet Lynn, Lynn the woman who really runs this place, Diane Lassiter.

LYNN

Nice meeting you Mrs. Lassiter.

DIANE

She has manners.

TRAVIS

Yep.

DIANE

And you're her guardian?

TRAVIS

Yep.

DIANE

(very skeptical)
It smells.

TRAVIS

See you later Diane.

Leads Lynn towards his glass enclosed

OFFICE

A table and chairs occupy a space by the window, two comfortable chairs are located in front of the desk. Travis moves to his desk, looks at some papers.

LYNN
I don't think Mrs. Lassiter bought
the guardian thing.

TRAVIS
Of course she didn't. That surprises
you?

LYNN
You're not worried?

TRAVIS
About what?

LYNN
How can you be so cool? Damn!

TRAVIS
Hey! Language.

Lynn moves to the window which looks over city. The hole
where the twin towers stood clearly visible. She moves to
the desk.

LYNN
Were you here when the towers went
down?

TRAVIS
No.

LYNN
So where were you?

Silence.

LYNN (CONT'D)
So what are you doing?

TRAVIS
To do lists. Basic daily activities.
Need that for your report?

LYNN
I guess. Anything interesting?

TRAVIS
Not really, just some follow-up calls.

Lynn meanders to the front of the office and looks out the
glass into the interior of the business. Some very beautiful
women pass by. Some of the women look at her with curiosity
on their face. Lynn observes them and thinks. She turns to
Travis,

LYNN
Are you a virgin?

The question takes Travis by surprise.

TRAVIS
No. What brought that on?

Lynn moves over to the desk.

LYNN
You've never had a woman over to the
condo...
(surprised)
You don't like women... you like...

TRAVIS
Yeah, right. Women are just fine
thank you.

LYNN
So you're not...

Travis shakes his head.

LYNN (CONT'D)
I put a cramp in your style didn't
I?

Still looking at letters, calendar, and to do list.

TRAVIS
You didn't help it much.

LYNN
I'm sorry. So what kind of woman
are you looking for?

TRAVIS
Someone who's smart, common sense,
attractive.

LYNN
Sexy?

TRAVIS
That wouldn't hurt. Why all of a
sudden such an interest in my love
life?

LYNN
I don't know. Just occurred to me
that I've never met any of your
girlfriends. You do have girlfriends
don't you?

TRAVIS

I do.

LYNN

Then why haven't I met them? Are you ashamed of me?

TRAVIS

No! No. I don't know Lynn. It just didn't seem appropriate. The women I know would ask a hell of a lot of questions...

(quietly)

Damn questions...

LYNN

(softly)

Language. Remember? What kind of questions?

Travis smiles at her then turns back to his work. The door opens and an older man, JOHN ANDERSON, walks in. He looks at Lynn.

JOHN

Morning Travis. What's up?

TRAVIS

Morning John. It's called bring your charge to work day. John, I'd like to introduce you to my charge, Lynn, Lynn, this is my boss John Anderson. He owns this place. Lynn has a homework assignment, she needs to write an report on what I do around here.

JOHN

You'll have to excuse my behavior young lady, but this is a first for Travis. I do remember you saying something about you having to look after a young girl. But... uh... I'm not sure about this.

Lynn looks at him carefully,

LYNN

Isn't that a Kiton suit you're wearing Mr. Anderson?

The question takes both John and Travis by surprise.

JOHN

As a matter of fact it is.

LYNN

Ciro Paone was the founder of the company if memory serves. Born in 1933 he started the Kiton company in 1968. He based his clothing on the
(remembering)

"Precepts of antique Neapolitan tailoring school", I think is the way I read it described. In 1986 they founded a New York office. In 1990 they opened a new factory in Arzano Italy and called it *Ciro Paone Spa*. All hand made suits. Very expensive. It looks very good on you. But a man of your position I would expect nothing less. A suit that speaks of power and confidence, it communicates a great deal about character.

John really impressed. He looks at Travis who shrugs.

JOHN

Not very many people are aware of Kiton. How did you know?

LYNN

I read a lot. My guardian doesn't have a TV, but he does have an extensive library. That and the city library.

Lynn looks at Travis, who is stunned at her knowledge.

JOHN

(flabbergasted)

Well... I really am... so what do you want to know for this report of yours?

LYNN

Everything.

JOHN

Travis is one of my best agents, you could not ask for a better teacher.

John still impressed, he leaves closing the door behind him. Travis looks at her,

TRAVIS

Not very many people impress John, especially to the point of flabbergasting him, and certainly
(MORE)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
 not teenage girls. How did you know
 he was wearing a Kiton suit? I didn't
 even know that.

Lynn smiles.

LYNN
 So what are you going to teach me?

INT. ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES ADVERTISING - LATER

Lynn roams the company enjoying the scampering of the employees. She stops at the water cooler and gets some water. A beautiful woman, JULIE, approaches her, gets water. They smile at each other.

JULIE
 You're Lynn right?

LYNN
 Yes, and you are?

JULIE
 Julie. So Travis is your guardian?

Lynn nods.

JULIE (CONT'D)
 You live with him?

LYNN
 Yes.

JULIE
 I'd love to...

LYNN
 Love to what?

Travis approaches.

JULIE
 Travis.

TRAVIS
 Julie.

JULIE
 Lynn was just telling me that she
 lives with you...

TRAVIS
 She does.

JULIE
So how did you become her guardian?

TRAVIS
(to Lynn)
You want some lunch?

LYNN
Sure.

JULIE
You didn't answer the question.

TRAVIS
No I didn't. Later Julie.

He and Lynn walk off, Julie frustrated.

INT. A SMALL RESTAURANT - LATER

Lynn eating a sandwich, Travis watching her as he eats.

LYNN
This is good.

TRAVIS
They have good food here. Reasonable
in price.

LYNN
I think Julie was curious about us.

TRAVIS
That much was obvious.

LYNN
Is she one of your girlfriends?

TRAVIS
We dated a couple of times. Nothing
serious.

LYNN
So says you. I didn't get that
impression. If they find out the
truth about us, what happens?

TRAVIS
It won't be good.

LYNN
Think somebody will call the police?

TRAVIS
Possible.

LYNN
What do we do then?

TRAVIS
Don't know. But why worry about
something that may never happen?

Lynn studies him as she eats.

LYNN
I think Julie wants to get you into
bed. Again.

Travis sternly looks at her. She freezes.

LYNN (CONT'D)
You've never slept with her.

INT. ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES ADVERTISING - AFTERNOON

Travis and Lynn return to the office, John approaches them.

JOHN
Just in time.

TRAVIS
Time for what?

JOHN
Photo op. The New York Times is
doing a story on us and wants a
picture of the team.

TRAVIS
I don't think so.

JOHN
You don't have a choice. Lynn I
want you in this as well.

LYNN
(a little nervous)
I'm just a visitor.

JOHN
Yes you are. But I want to talk up
the father/daughter work thing. Or
in this case guardian and charge.
Be good for business.

Lynn and Travis look at each other. The photographer begins
to move people into position.

LYNN
 (whispering)
 This is not good.

TRAVIS
 (whispering)
 Tell me about it. I think you
 impressed John too much.

LYNN
 What do we do?

TRAVIS
 Go with it.

LYNN
 Is that wise?

TRAVIS
 If we don't, it may bring questions
 we don't want to answer. Try to
 stay in the back as much as possible.
 Hide behind someone if you can, but
 don't make it obvious.

The photographer continues to position people, Lynn tries to
 make herself inconspicuous. John catches her.

JOHN
 No you don't young lady, I want you
 in the front with me, standing beside
 me. You too Travis.

They get themselves positioned. Not happy.

PHOTOGRAPHER
 Ok, everybody ready? Smile.

Takes the picture.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
 One more.
 (takes picture)
 Ok that's it.

Introductions.

JOHN
 Travis this is Tom Davis, the reporter
 who is doing the story. I want you
 to sit down with him and...

DIANE
 Mr. Edwards... It's Mike Williams on
 line one.

John looks around, to Travis,

JOHN
You better take that.

Travis departs quickly to his office.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(to Lynn)
One of our biggest clients, Williams Electronics. Travis has been working with him for a long time.

LYNN
Oh, just what I need for my report Mr. Anderson. Excuse me.

She leaves quickly, leaving John and reporter stranded.

INT. TRAVIS'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Travis is on the phone as Lynn enters and sits. She waits.

TRAVIS
I understand Mike... Yeah, that can be a problem.... Ok, I'll be there tomorrow, I'll straighten it out then... Right... See you then.

Hangs up.

LYNN
Problems?

TRAVIS
Big ones.

LYNN
You have to leave?

TRAVIS
I have to go to Boston, there was a big snafu with the Mike Williams ad, I have to go straighten it out.

LYNN
How long will you be gone?

TRAVIS
A couple of days.

LYNN
Do you have to go?

TRAVIS

Yeah.

LYNN

Can I go with you?

TRAVIS

Not this time. Sorry.

LYNN

What about the news article?

TRAVIS

I don't know Lynn, I just don't know.
It'll probably hit the paper tomorrow,
all we can do is hope for the best.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - EVENING

MELINDA

The New York Times?

TRAVIS

Yeah. Needless to say it can get
messy.

MELINDA

Messy? That's like telling the
Titanic not to worry about icebergs,
after the collision.

Melinda paces, looks at Lynn.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

You need to come clean young lady,
and you need to do it now.

Lynn, confused, frustrated.

LYNN

I just... it's just that...

TRAVIS

Lynn, you're putting Melinda and
Carl in lot of trouble.

LYNN

I know, and I'm sorry, but I can't
go back there, I just can't.

MELINDA

What happened?

LYNN

I just can't go back there. I won't go back there.

Melinda looks at Travis. Lynn curls into a ball withdrawing into herself.

TRAVIS

Melinda, I want you and Carl to protect yourself, no matter what happens, make sure you stay clean.

MELINDA

We past clean a long time ago Mr. Immaculate.

Travis not sure.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

How long will you be in Boston?

TRAVIS

No more than two days.

MELINDA

That's a long time Travis.

TRAVIS

Can't be helped.

MELINDA

Let me talk to Carl, he should be home soon. Come on Andy, let's go home.

Melinda and Andy depart. Travis follows her out the door, stopping in the

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

TRAVIS

I'm sorry about this.

MELINDA

Something happened to her, abused?

TRAVIS

I don't think so. More like traumatized. Has Carl had any luck finding out anything about her?

MELINDA

Do you know how many runaways there are in this country? Thousands.

(MORE)

MELINDA (CONT'D)

And we're trying to find the identity of one girl. This would be a lot easier if we opened it up to the police.

Travis shakes his head.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

What makes you think she was traumatized?

Travis quiet.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Because you were. That's why you don't want to take her to the police. You've experienced it.

Travis caught off guard.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

TRAVIS

Whatever happened to her... if we force her back she'll only runaway again, she'll do anything to keep from going back. Wherever back is. Do you really want to risk that? Putting her back on the streets again?

MELINDA

(thinking)

She's safe here, well taken care of... No. Just hurry back.

TRAVIS

I will. And thanks.

Travis goes back into the

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO

Travis looks at Lynn, still physically trying to protect her feelings and emotions by being in a ball position. She seems to ignore him, then,

LYNN

You didn't buy your cigar or beer tonight.

He looks at her, then around the room then at her again.

TRAVIS

I have to pack, I leave early. Lynn, whatever happens, I will protect you.

She looks up, he smiles.

LYNN

(smiling)

Need help packing?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CHICAGO - THURSDAY AFTERNOON

KARLA BATES, a woman of about 28, very beautiful, light brown hair, is looking over a big wall calendar trying to make sense of something. She and two other men are in a conference room, the men quiet as the woman thinks.

KARLA

Ok, move the Simmons flight up by two hours, that'll put them in Hawaii earlier, where they should connect to a flight to Australia.

MAN 1

Mrs. Simmons is not going to be happy about that?

KARLA

Did you tell her that there was a machinist strike on?

MAN 1

I did.

KARLA

Give her a choice, a complete refund and they can take their business elsewhere, or an earlier flight.

MAN 2

Karla's Travels is the most recommended travel agency in the world, we take care of our customers. Impress upon Mrs. Simmons the actions that we had to take to make this vacation happen for her.

KARLA

And also make sure they know that we will stay on top of their travel needs, until they return home, including any and all connecting flights.

(MORE)

KARLA (CONT'D)

And make sure she has emergency numbers, in case they need it.

MAN 1

Above and beyond.

MAN 2

Our motto.

KARLA

Well get moving, both of you.

The two men depart and Karla heads for her

OFFICE

which overlooks the Chicago skyline. Her secretary, MARGO, comes into the office, bringing mail and a newspaper.

MARGO

I gather you got the Simmons situation corrected?

KARLA

I hope so Margo, Mrs. Simmons can be a real bitch.

MARGO

A very rich bitch.

Karla smiles and nods.

KARLA

What have you got for me?

MARGO

Just the usual.

Karla takes the paper pulling out the business section. The paper is the New York Times.

KARLA

I hate this paper.

MARGO

Then why subscribe?

KARLA

Too much business information to pass up. How goes New York, goes the world. Any and every advantage, however small...

MARGO
Cut throat world.

KARLA
Tell me about it.

Margo considers.

MARGO
Any word?

KARLA
No. It's been six months.

MARGO
She is alive.

KARLA
Is she?

MARGO
It's not your fault Karla.

KARLA
Who's fault is it Margo? If not mine, then whose? I should have been there for her, I wasn't.

Margo wanting to answer but stays silent. The front page of the paper is laying on the desk. Margo looks down, ready to leave when the paper catches her eye. She looks at a photo prominent displayed on the front page below the fold, a photo of Anderson & Associates. She looks close. Closer. Karla catches her movement.

KARLA (CONT'D)
What?

MARGO
Am I wrong? Is it possible?

KARLA
What?

MARGO
That is her, isn't it?

Karla takes the paper and looks closely at the photo.

MARGO (CONT'D)
Karla, that's Lynn!

KARLA
I'll be damned, I think you're right!

Karla reads the article, stunned at what she reads.

KARLA (CONT'D)
What the hell!

She drops the paper, gets up and paces.

KARLA (CONT'D)
Who is this son of a bitch, claiming
to be her guardian?

Margo picks up the paper, reads, confused.

MARGO
She's alive, isn't that all that
counts?

KARLA
Yeah, living as a sex whore! Margo
I need you to find out everything
you can about this Travis Edwards
character, where he lives, everything
you can!

MARGO
What about the private investigators?

KARLA
They haven't done jack since taking
this case, except steal our money.
Move!

Margo moves.

KARLA (CONT'D)
(calling after her)
And get me on the first flight to
New York!

EXT. NEW YORK - EARLY EVENING - JFK AIRPORT

ESTABLISHING SHOT of a passenger plane landing. INSIDE the
terminal, Karla, no baggage, moving OUTSIDE to catch a taxi.

INT. TAXI

The taxi MOVING towards downtown New York. Karla in the
backseat looking over some notes.

KARLA
(to herself)
You better be right Margo.

TAXI DRIVER
Say what Miss?

KARLA

(angry)
Just drive!

EXT. TRAVIS'S CONDO BUILDING

Karla looks up at the large building, then goes

INSIDE

A no-nonsense looking security guard is on duty behind a desk. She thinks, slightly nods to herself as if deciding on a course of action. She slightly opens her blouse to reveal some cleavage.

KARLA

(softly, to herself)
I hope this works.

She walks a sexy, but not whorish, walk up to him. The security guard takes a swallow upon seeing her. He is memorized by her beauty.

KARLA (CONT'D)

(sexy, but not whorish
voice)
I'm here to see Travis Edwards. Can
you tell me which condo is his?

The security guard fumbles.

SECURITY GUARD

I... I don't know miss. Today's my
first day. I don't know the tenants
yet.

KARLA

Can you look it up for me?

SECURITY GUARD

Is he expecting you?

KARLA

No. But he did say I could drop
over anytime.

The security guard continues to fumble looking at her as she provides a sexy smile at him. He looks up the information.

SECURITY GUARD

2503. Elevators are just around the
corner.

KARLA

Thank you.

As Karla moves towards the elevators, she softly whispers,

KARLA (CONT'D)
 (with arrogance)
 Idiot.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Karla standing outside the door. She hesitates, takes a deep breath then rings the bell. Lynn opens the door,

KARLA
 Hello Lynn.

Karla moves inside the
 CONDO

Lynn very shocked, closing the door.

LYNN
 How... how... how did you find me?

KARLA
 I must say, you had us scared to death.

LYNN
 You didn't answer my question. How did you find me?

KARLA
 Whoring ourselves these days are we? Who is he?

LYNN
 What do you want Karla?

KARLA
 What do I want! That should be obvious, I want you to come home.

LYNN
 No way! I'm never going back. Never!

KARLA
 You don't have a choice in the matter. Mom and Dad...

LYNN
 Mom and Dad can go to hell!

KARLA
 Lynn! Lynn. They're worried sick.
 (MORE)

KARLA (CONT'D)

It's been six months. They've been fearing the worse. Please, we can work it out...

LYNN

Work it out? All they're going to do is put me back in that hell hole. If not that then how about a strangle hold around my throat? Do you really think that Dad gives a damn about me? About you? It's only about control with him. It always has been.

I suppose you told them.

KARLA

I called them, said I may have a lead on you, but nothing definite. They're waiting for my call. And that's what I'm going to do, call them.

The doorbell buzzes. Again. Then again.

KARLA (CONT'D)

Well, aren't you going to answer it? Or should I?

Lynn answers the door, Melinda and Andy is standing there. She comes in.

MELINDA

Lynn, are you all right? You look like you've seen a ghost.

Melinda sees Karla.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Lynn, who is this?

Lynn, quiet. Melinda looks at Karla.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

I don't know who you are, but if you're here to hurt this girl, there will be hell to pay.

KARLA

You're right, there will be hell to pay. Kidnapping is a capital offense.

MELINDA
Kidnapping? Just who the hell are
you?

KARLA
I can ask you the same thing.

Melinda and Karla stare down.

MELINDA
(to Lynn)
Is she here to hurt you?

No answer.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Lynn! I want an answer!

Lynn caught.

LYNN
You're going to find out anyway...
Melinda, this is my older sister
Karla. Karla, this is our neighbor,
Melinda Rowan, and her son Andy.

MELINDA
Sister? Let me guess, the New York
Times.

Karla surprised.

KARLA
Yes.

Lynn really discouraged, Karla watching her. Lynn moves to
the living room and sits on the couch. Andy approaches her,
Lynn picks him up. Karla surprised. Lynn starts tickling
Andy, he laughs. Lynn smiles then hugs the boy. He hugs
her back. Karla shocked at the sight. Melinda moves over
to Lynn.

MELINDA
Sister.

LYNN
Yeah.

MELINDA
(to Karla)
So what is your last name?

Karla watching Lynn play with Andy, still shocked.

KARLA
Bates. Karla Bates.

MELINDA
Bates. Lynn Bates.

Lynn nods. Andy laughs as Lynn snuggles him. Melinda observes the sisters.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Come on Andy, we have to go home.

ANDY
(to Lynn)
You gonna take me to the park?

LYNN
Sure. How about Sunday?

ANDY
Ok.

Andy gives Lynn a kiss and she kisses him back. Melinda picks him up and looks at the shocked Karla. She looks at Lynn and the look of disappointment on her face, she and Andy depart. Lynn follows and closes the door behind them then looks at her sister.

LYNN
What?

KARLA
(shocked)
You... the child... you... you playing
with a child...

LYNN
So?

KARLA
So? Lynn Bates, playing with a child!
I... I just don't believe it.

Lynn moves to the kitchen. Karla follows.

LYNN
It's good to see you. I did miss
you. I really did.

She moves into her sister's arms, tearing. Karla holds her. Lynn moves away,

LYNN (CONT'D)
Are you hungry?

KARLA

A little.

LYNN

I'll fix you something to eat.

Karla stunned.

KARLA

You... You're going to fix me something to eat?

LYNN

Yeah. How about a chicken salad?

KARLA

Sounds... sounds good.

Lynn motions Karla to sit at the table as she pulls ingredients from the refrigerator. Karla watches with amazement as Lynn prepares the salad, then sits it in front of her.

KARLA (CONT'D)

First a child, now this... don't tell me you know how to cook...

LYNN

I do. Would you like a steak? Baked potato, or French fries?

Karla freaking. Like a zombie she begins to eat the salad.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - SHORT TIME LATER

Lynn washing dishes and putting them in place. Karla still shocked, in shock from what she is seeing.

KARLA

So... so where did you learn to make a salad?

LYNN

Oh salads are easy, now getting Italian Chicken with New Orleans Spaghetti Bordelaise just right, that's hard. What?

KARLA

You... My little sister... Playing with a child... Fixing salads... Cooking... Now washing dishes... unbelievable.

Lynn smiles.

LYNN
So, where's your luggage?

KARLA
I don't have any. As soon as I saw that picture of you and that man in the Times, I flew straight here. Never went home.

LYNN
Oh. So how's the travel agency?

KARLA
It's good. About that man...

LYNN
His name is Travis. Carlton Travis Edwards, but don't you dare call him Carlton, he's picky that way.

KARLA
So, you sleeping with him?

LYNN
No.

KARLA
No? You expect me to believe that?

LYNN
(calmly)
Nope.

She puts the last dish up and moves to the
DEN/LIBRARY

Karla follows, really confused.

KARLA
You're not sleeping with him?

LYNN
Nope.

Lynn turns on the stereo and classical music plays. Takes Karla by surprise.

KARLA
Classical? Since when do you listen to classical?

LYNN

Since I found out it helps me to concentrate on my studies. Now big sister, if you will excuse me, I have a big test tomorrow, and I need to study.

Karla looks at Lynn.

KARLA

You have a test...

LYNN

Yes. Oh, and I have to be at school by seven thirty.

KARLA

WAIT A MINUTE!

Lynn looks at her.

KARLA (CONT'D)

This is way too much! Too fast! I need some answers. Slowly if you don't mind. I haven't seen you for six months and you act like it was only this morning.

Lynn considers, turns off the stereo.

LYNN

What do you want to know?

KARLA

First, where's the man that owns this place?

LYNN

Travis. He's in Boston. Work. He'll be back on Saturday.

KARLA

So you're here by yourself?

LYNN

Yep. But I have Melinda and Carl.

KARLA

Carl?

LYNN

Melinda's husband. Nice guy. Powerful lawyer.

KARLA

How long has this Travis guy been gone?

LYNN

Left this morning.

KARLA

How long have you been living here?

LYNN

A little over four months.

KARLA

And in all that time you never...

LYNN

Nope.

KARLA

Did he try?

LYNN

Nope. He's been a perfect gentleman. Too perfect. In fact everything he does is perfect. I call him Mr. Perfect. Makes him mad, but I don't care, it fits.

Karla unable to comprehend.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Come here, let me show you something.

Lynn gets up and looks around.

LYNN (CONT'D)

What do you see, in this room, what do you see?

Karla looks around,

KARLA

Books, stereo, some furniture...

LYNN

What else?

Karla shrugs.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Come on.

Lynn takes her and opens the linen closets.

LYNN (CONT'D)
What do you see?

KARLA
Linen.

LYNN
Just linen?

KARLA
And towels. So?

Moves to the spare bedroom, Lynn's room. Not as clean.

LYNN
What do you see?

KARLA
A mess. Not bad, but still a mess.

Moves to the

LIVING ROOM

LYNN
What do you see?

KARLA
A living room.

Moves to the

KITCHEN

And opens the cabinets, silver drawers.

LYNN
What do you see?

Karla looks, then begins to comprehend, she looks around, it dawns on her.

KARLA
It's clean, no it's more than clean.
It's... it's....

LYNN
Immaculate.

KARLA
Exactly.

LYNN
Melinda calls him Mr. Immaculate.

KARLA

It must take a lot to keep this place clean, this clean. I've never seen anything like it.

LYNN

It's not hard to keep clean, once you know the secrets.

KARLA

(surprised again)
You clean?

LYNN

All the time.

Lynn closes everything back up. Karla finds herself sitting on the sofa. Lynn watches her.

KARLA

What happened to you? What happened to the sister that never gave a damn, always demanded, selfish, arrogant, would never think about picking up her own clothes much less clean...

LYNN

Oh... that reminds me, I gotta clean my room before Travis gets back.

KARLA

What happens if you don't?

LYNN

Nothing. But that look he gives can kill. Nooo thank you.

Karla lost.

LYNN (CONT'D)

I know, I was the same way when I first got here.

KARLA

You trust him.

LYNN

And he trust me. We have a respect for each other.

Karla looks at her sister, Lynn smiles. Karla moves to the

BALCONY

She looks out over the city, seeing but not seeing. Lynn follows her out. She lets her eyes drift and sees the stub of a cigar and picks it up.

KARLA
What's this?

LYNN
Oh. Every night, before he goes to bed he has a beer and cigar.

KARLA
Well that's gonna stop!

Lynn surprised.

KARLA (CONT'D)
I will not having him smoking cigars.
Nasty habit. What about cigarettes?

LYNN
(surprised)
No, just cigars.

KARLA
And a beer?

LYNN
Yeah.

KARLA
We'll see about that.

LYNN
(softly)
Oookay. Listen I need to study,
sooo, I'm going back in.

Karla looks at her. Lynn leaves. Karla looks over the lights of the city.

KARLA
(flabbergasted)
Cigars.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - NIGHT

The master bedroom, as Karla looks through the closets.

LYNN
What are you looking for?

Karla startled.

LYNN (CONT'D)
You won't find any.

KARLA
Find what?

LYNN
Women's clothes. Only mine.

Karla slightly confused, then

KARLA
Oh my God!

LYNN
No, he's not.

KARLA
Are you sure?

LYNN
Positive.

KARLA
A bachelor...

LYNN
I think I put a crimp in his style
when I showed up.

KARLA
How did you show up?

LYNN
Long story.

KARLA
So he never dates?

LYNN
He does, but not much since I've
been here. Still, I think Julie
wants to get into his pants.

KARLA
Julie?

LYNN
A girlfriend.

KARLA
Are they serious?

LYNN

Travis says no, but I think Julie has a different idea. You do know what Travis does for a living don't you?

KARLA

The Times said he works for Anderson and Associates, huge advertising firm.

LYNN

Yep. One of their top agents.

KARLA

So he's good?

LYNN

Better than good. Seven figure a year income.

KARLA

Nice. How long has he been doing this?

LYNN

Five years.

KARLA

Five years? What did he do before that?

LYNN

Don't know, it's a mystery.

KARLA

So how long has he lived here?

LYNN

Five years.

KARLA

So how did he initially afford this place?

LYNN

He's a good friend of the man who owns Williams Electronics, a man named Mike Williams...

KARLA

Mike Williams...? Not *the* Mike Williams? Williams Electronics, out of Boston?

LYNN
The same. You know him?

KARLA
By reputation only. The man's a legend in the business community. I've been trying for years to get his travel business.

LYNN
Anyway, Mr. Williams...

KARLA
Mr. Williams?

LYNN
Yeah, what?

KARLA
You calling somebody Mister... Ok, who the hell are you, and what have you done with my sister?

Lynn smiles.

LYNN
Anyway, Mr. Williams gave a very lucrative contract to Anderson and Associates, on the condition that they hire Travis. That contract allowed him to buy this place. Been success for him ever since.

Karla sits on the bed. Lynn sits beside her. Karla looks at her sister, dumfounded and silent. Karla gently shakes her head.

KARLA
Seven figures huh?

Lynn smiles.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - FRIDAY MORNING

Karla sleeping in the master bedroom, Lynn comes barging in.

LYNN
You going with me or not?

KARLA
(groggy)
Where?

LYNN
 School, I have to go to school! You
 said you wanted to go.

Karla gets out of bed as Lynn disappears down the hall.

KARLA
 (to herself)
 I don't believe it. My little sister
wanting to go to school. On her own
 initiative no less. What the hell
 has this man done to her?

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

LYNN
 Hurry up we gotta go, I can't be
 late, Mother Anita will kill me if I
 am.

Karla finish dressing.

KARLA
 Mother Anita? What kind of school
 is this?

LYNN
 Private Catholic school.

KARLA
 Lynn, we're not Catholic, we not
 anything.

LYNN
 Minor detail. We gotta move!

Lynn grabs something to eat from the refrigerator, then stops,

LYNN (CONT'D)
 Dear Lord, thank you for this food,
 and please, please help me pass this
 test. Amen.

Let's go!

Karla flabbergasted as she follows Lynn out the door.

EXT. SAINT ANTHONY'S PRIVATE SCHOOL - MORNING

Lynn running up the stairs with Karla falling behind. She
 runs into an older nun, MOTHER ANITA, who looks at her, Lynn
 smiles a forced smile.

MOTHER ANITA
 Just a little late aren't we?

LYNN

Sorry Mother, but my sister came in last night. We got carried away.

MOTHER ANITA

Your sister?

She sees Karla approaching.

LYNN

Yes ma'am. Karla, this is the Mother Superior, Mother Anita this is my older sister Karla.

Mother Anita looks at Karla, then Lynn.

MOTHER ANITA

Ok, move it. The test will be starting in less than five minutes.

Lynn moves as Karla stays behind. Mother Anita smiles at Karla who is out of breath.

KARLA

I thought I was in shape, but those stairs...

MOTHER ANITA

So you're Lynn's older sister?

Karla not sure how to address the Mother Superior.

KARLA

Yes ma'am.

Mother Anita smiles at the awkwardness.

MOTHER ANITA

Come into my office, I think we need to talk.

INT. MOTHER ANITA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Karla looks around at all the religious symbols and a huge Bible that occupies it's own table. The Mother motions Karla to sit.

MOTHER ANITA

This is a surprise. A pleasant surprise, but a surprise nonetheless.

KARLA

Believe me Mother Superior, you are not half as surprised as I am.

MOTHER ANITA
Lynn never talks about her family,
only about her guardian, who I suspect
is not really her guardian at all.
Not legally anyway.

Karla quiet.

MOTHER ANITA (CONT'D)
What do you know about Travis Edwards?

KARLA
I've never met him.

MOTHER ANITA
Excuse me?

KARLA
Apparently he's out of town on
business.

MOTHER ANITA
So who's looking out for Lynn?

KARLA
No one.

MOTHER ANITA
That doesn't surprise me, Lynn's a
very reliable young lady. Very
dependable.

Karla caught off-guard.

KARLA
Reliable?

MOTHER ANITA
Very. I can really count on her
when I need something done. She's a
very good girl.

Karla really bewildered.

MOTHER ANITA (CONT'D)
I think you better fill me in.

Karla thinks.

KARLA
My sister ran away from home about
six months ago. We had no idea where
she was. Needless to say we thought
the worse had happened.

MOTHER ANITA

We?

KARLA

My parents and me.

MOTHER ANITA

No other brothers or sisters?

KARLA

No, just Lynn and me.

MOTHER ANITA

I see, please continue.

KARLA

We couldn't find her. My father hired some of the best detectives money can buy...

MOTHER ANITA

I gather you come from a well-to-do family?

KARLA

Yes, my father's very rich.

MOTHER ANITA

And you?

KARLA

I have my own business, Karla's Travels...

MOTHER ANITA

I've heard of it. I understand it's very reliable, very dependable. Aren't you located in Chicago?

KARLA

Yes, yes we are, and thank you, we try our best. To do our best.

MOTHER ANITA

Please continue.

KARLA

Lynn was always wild, arrogant, but in the last few years she got worse. She failed every school subject, all F's and one D. And she said the D was an accident. The truth is, she didn't care. She rebelled at everything and everyone.

(MORE)

KARLA (CONT'D)

Nothing worked with her, so Mom and Dad sent her to a very special finishing school. They were hoping that the instructors there could help her. But... she ran away.

We couldn't find her, and believe me we searched. Then yesterday I saw her picture in the New York Times. I got on the first flight available and flew here. I found her last night.

MOTHER ANITA

I saw that article, but you were in Chicago?

(Karla nods)

The Lord does work in mysterious ways. Did you call your parents about finding Lynn?

KARLA

Initially I did. I told them to give me some time to work with her.

MOTHER ANITA

And their response?

KARLA

Dad was furious, but Mom convinced him that if anyone was going to help Lynn, it would be me. We didn't want to risk scaring her off, I figured that I could talk some sense into her.

MOTHER ANITA

Have you talked to your parents since?

KARLA

I did, but I was very vague with what I told them. There were things happening, and still are, I find hard to believe. Lynn has changed. A lot. To be honest it scared me, I think it still does.

What did you mean about the Lord working in mysterious ways?

MOTHER ANITA

I gave the kids a homework assignment, to write a report on what their

(MORE)

MOTHER ANITA (CONT'D)
fathers do for a living, in Lynn's case what her guardian does. Strange, I give them a simple assignment... She goes to work with him... A story about Anderson and Associates is printed in a New York paper... You read it in Chicago... And now here you sit. Coincidence?

EXT. SAINT ANTHONY'S PRIVATE SCHOOL OUTER COURTYARD - LATER

Karla, sitting, waiting for Lynn, who comes out of a building with a blank look on her face. Karla approaches Lynn.

KARLA
Well, how was the test?

LYNN
Hard, very hard. I'll be lucky if I get a C.

KARLA
Mother Anita tells me your grades are exemplary. Straight A's.

Lynn silent.

KARLA (CONT'D)
Maybe you did better than you think.

LYNN
It'll be a miracle.

KARLA
So now what?

LYNN
I'm out of school for the rest of the day, I'm out of school for five weeks, that was the semester final. Summer break.

Karla nods.

KARLA
It's almost lunch time, hungry?

LYNN
A little.

KARLA
Let's blow this joint.

The girls smile and depart the campus.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - LATER

Karla and Lynn walking, silent. Lynn sees the LIQUEUR store.

LYNN
I gotta stop in here.

KARLA
Lynn, this is a liqueur store.

LYNN
I know.

She goes inside the

INT. LIQUEUR STORE - CONTINUOUS

Karla follows. An old man, ROBERT JACKSON, comes out from behind the counter,

JACKSON
Lynn! How's my favorite girl?

LYNN
Hello Mr. Jackson.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek, Jackson smiles.

LYNN (CONT'D)
You're quite the looker today.

JACKSON
Flattery will get you everywhere.
Excuse me, customer...

Moves towards Karla.

LYNN
No, she's with me. Mr. Jackson, I would like you to meet my older sister Karla, Karla, Mr. Robert Jackson.

JACKSON
Nice meeting you Karla. Lynn, you never said you had a sister.

LYNN
Well...

JACKSON
Where is Travis? He hasn't come by for two days now.

LYNN

I am so sorry Mr. Jackson, I was suppose to tell you earlier, Travis got called away on business. It happened fast.

JACKSON

Boston?

Lynn nods.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Mike Williams. Those two have a history you know.

LYNN

What kind of history?

JACKSON

I don't know for sure. You have to ask Travis, or maybe someday I will. So when is he coming back?

LYNN

Tomorrow. He'll stop by then, you two can catch up.

JACKSON

Hmm, that could be a problem.

LYNN

How?

JACKSON

A friend of mine, his grandson is getting married, invited me to the funeral...

KARLA

I thought you said he was getting married?

JACKSON

I did.

Lynn smiles.

LYNN

You have to forgive her, she's from Chicago.

JACKSON

Anyway, I'm closing down for the weekend, I'll reopen on Monday. How's he fixed for cigars and beer?

LYNN

He's empty.

JACKSON

That's not good.

(considers)

You're too young, but your sister,
she's over 21 right?

Lynn nods.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Be right back.

He leaves. Karla looks at Lynn,

KARLA

Funeral?

LYNN

Think about it. I'm sure you'll
figure it out.

Karla illuminates, Jackson returns with a bag and gives it
to Karla.

JACKSON

That should hold him for the weekend.

LYNN

Let me pay you...

JACKSON

No, he can pay me on Monday.

LYNN

I'll tell him.

Jackson studies her,

LYNN (CONT'D)

What is it Mr. Jackson?

JACKSON

I had a young woman in here yesterday
that looks a lot like you. In fact
from a short distance you could pass
for identical twins. Anyway we got
to talking and she told me an
interesting story. A few days ago
she was jogging in Central Park and
three men approached her. She knew
that they were going to rape her,
maybe even kill her.

(MORE)

JACKSON (CONT'D)

She was scared to death. And of course, no one around to help. But a strange thing happened, as soon as they got closer, they stopped, froze she said. They had a look of fear on their face, then they left. In fact they ran. Just ran away. She said it was the strangest thing.

LYNN

Did one of these men have a scar on his face? A bad scar?

JACKSON

She said one did. It was you they thought they saw wasn't it?

Lynn nods.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

They tried to rape you, Travis stopped them didn't he?

Lynn nods, Karla shocked, again.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

He's a good man, a good protector.

LYNN

What's his history Mr. Jackson?

JACKSON

I wish I knew honey, I wish I knew.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - LATER

Lynn silent she goes to the

BALCONY

Looking out over the city. Somber. Karla joins her.

KARLA

Why didn't you tell me?

LYNN

I spent two months on the streets before I came here. I saw a lot of things, got hungry, got cold, slept wherever I could, even slept in a dumpster more than once.

(MORE)

LYNN (CONT'D)

I met a lot of strange people, but nobody ever tried to rape me before that night. I was so scared. Then Travis showed up. I don't know where he came from, he was just there. If it hadn't been for him... When one of those thugs pulled that knife I really thought that Travis was dead, he was in so much danger.

(slight laugh)

How wrong I was, it wasn't Travis that was in danger... I really believe that he would have killed them if it had come to that.

At the beginning I didn't know why he didn't kick me out. God knows he had every reason to. Then Melinda told me how he saved the life of her son, how he felt sorry for me. How he wanted, needed to protect me.

Over the last four months I've grown to love him, not a physical love, but a family love. I think he feels the same way about me. I know he does. I can't go home Karla, I won't go home. This is my home, and Travis is my father. Dad lost my love and respect a long time ago.

Karla silent. Thinks.

KARLA

Travis is not your father.

LYNN

Maybe not biologically, even legally, but to me he is. And that's all that matters.

The two women quietly look out over the city as the sun begins to set.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - NIGHT

Karla laying in the master bed, half-way under the sheet reading a book. Lynn enters and sits on the bed.

LYNN

I see you're wearing one of his shirts?

KARLA
It's all I could find.

LYNN
He has pajamas.

KARLA
I like this shirt better.

LYNN
Listen, your clothes were pretty
dirty so I sent them down to Mr.
Hyatt...

KARLA
Mr. Hyatt?

LYNN
He owns the local laundry/dry cleaning
shop. They'll be back in the morning.
At least you get your clothes back.

KARLA
What do you mean?

LYNN
Mine were so bad they threw them
away. I had to wear his pajamas for
almost two days. Comfortable, but
big.

KARLA
So what happened?

LYNN
Travis bought me new clothes,
including the most beautiful green
dress I've ever seen. I'll wear it
tomorrow.

KARLA
What time is he coming back?

LYNN
Sometime tomorrow, I'm not sure when.

KARLA
Will he call?

LYNN
Probably not, he'll just show up.
Which should be interesting when he
meets you. You're in his bed, is it
comfortable?

KARLA

Very. Don't read anything into that.
Sooo... you think Julie has shared
this bed?

LYNN

Nope.

KARLA

How can you be so sure?

LYNN

He told me.

KARLA

And you believed him?

LYNN

His expression did the talking, not
his voice. Well... at least we can
sleep in tomorrow. Good night Karla.

KARLA

Good night Lynn.

She departs. Karla looks at the big bed,

KARLA (CONT'D)

(softly, to herself)
If not Julie, then who?

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - LATE NIGHT

Travis enters the condo, the lights out, he keeps them out.
He goes to the library/den where he drops his load. He's
very tired. The Lazy Boy beckons. He removes his shoes and
settles into the recliner. He falls asleep.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - EARLY SATURDAY MORNING

Travis wakes and makes his way towards the

MASTER BEDROOM

where he notices the bed has been slept in. He hears water
running in the master bathroom, he opens the door. She stands
there, startled. His shirt on her, barefooted, her silky
legs very prominent, but her hair a mess, toothpaste fills
her mouth, a toothbrush sticking out of it. Still she has a
very beautiful and sexy look about her. Her presence startles
him as they look at each other. Shocked, he moves to leave,
hitting the door with his face, clumsy in his movements.
She smiles. Travis, confused and stunned, closes the door
and moves away. He goes to

LYNN'S ROOM

and knocks.

LYNN
(groggy)
What?

TRAVIS
(through the door)
We need to talk.

Lynn wide awake and up. She opens the door.

LYNN
Travis... When did you get home?

TRAVIS
Who is she?

Karla comes out of the bedroom donning a robe, his robe. Lynn sees Karla, so does Travis. He turns his attention back to Lynn.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Lynn?

Karla moves beside Lynn.

LYNN
Travis, this is my big sister Karla.
Karla, Travis Edwards.

TRAVIS
Big sister? When the hell did this
happen? How did this happen?

LYNN
Two days ago, remember, the New York
Times story?

Travis, tries to regain his composure, decides to go to the

KITCHEN

Lynn and Karla follow watching him. He begins to make coffee. The place is not very clean. Spoons, silverware, dishes, a small mess. He looks at Karla, she forces a little smile. Travis shakes his head. He opens the refrigerator,

TRAVIS
(to Lynn)
Where did you get the beer?

LYNN
Mr. Jackson.

TRAVIS
He gave it to you?

KARLA
No, he gave it to me.

LYNN
He's closed today, said you can pay
him Monday. Cigars are in the
humidor.

Travis nods.

LYNN (CONT'D)
So, how did the trip go?

Travis looks at her, shakes his head then finishes making
the coffee. He looks at Karla. Silence. Then,

TRAVIS
So you're Lynn's big sister?

KARLA
Yes.

TRAVIS
What was your last name?

KARLA
Bates.

TRAVIS
Lynn Bates.

Lynn nods.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Ok, ok. Karla? Right?

KARLA
Yes.

Travis nods and looks at Lynn,

TRAVIS
We have got to talk.

Lynn nods.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - LATER

Travis on the balcony, standing there looking at the city. Karla and Lynn in the kitchen, they watch him as Lynn cleans the mess. Karla helps.

LYNN

I wonder what he's thinking?

KARLA

The fact that we shocked the hell out of him, who knows.

The doorbell buzzes.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

She opens the main door, Melinda and Andy stand there. Andy runs in and goes to Lynn. Karla watches him, then turns her attention to Melinda.

MELINDA

Is Travis home yet?

KARLA

Yes he is. I'm sorry, please come in.

Melinda enters and sees Travis outside on the balcony. To Karla,

MELINDA

You shocked the hell out of him didn't you?

KARLA

Big time. It's Melinda right?

MELINDA

Yes.

KARLA

Listen, I'm sorry for my behavior the other night, Lynn told me all about you, how you've looked after her. Thank you.

MELINDA

Oh, I can't say I blame you. If I were in your shoes I'd probably react the same way.

Melinda and Karla look at Lynn playing with Andy.

KARLA
Your son likes her.

MELINDA
Yes he does. Well, this is rather awkward.

KARLA
I know what you mean. You need to talk to Travis?

MELINDA
No, I already know what he's thinking.

KARLA
Which is?

MELINDA
Wondering how soon you're going to take Lynn away from him.

Karla puzzled.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
You want to take a walk?

KARLA
Like this?
(looks at her robe)

MELINDA
Just over to my place. My husband had to go to the office for a couple of hours this morning, it's quiet there and I think we need to talk.

Lynn, please watch Andy, your sister and I will be next door.

Lynn nods as Karla looks at Travis who is ignorant to what is happening.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
He's lost in his own world for the moment, give him time to absorb what has happened.

INT. MELINDA'S CONDO - MOMENTS LATER

MELINDA
Coffee?

KARLA
Yes please.

MELINDA

It's not as clean as Travis's place but he doesn't have a three year old either. Not withstanding, that man does keep his home immaculate.

Melinda sets the coffee down at the table and the two women sit.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Travis is scared, very scared.

KARLA

Why?

MELINDA

For Lynn. You're going to take her away from him and that terrifies him. Oh, it's not what you think, he has no love desires for her, it's something deeper.

KARLA

What?

MELINDA

I don't know. All I know is that something very traumatic happened in his life and he's using Lynn as a crutch. I've known Travis for four years, he's kind, caring, will give you the shirt off his back. He always seems to be there, but he's always so sad. I have never seen him more alive than these last four months. It's like he had a need to protect somebody. I think Lynn filled that requirement.

KARLA

Lynn told me how he saved your son.

MELINDA

Andy was actually going over the railing when Travis pulled him back. I was so scared. I became fearful that I could never be the kind of mother that Andy needed, that I couldn't protect him when he needed protecting most. I became terrified every time I looked at that balcony. So I convinced Carl that we needed to move. That's when Travis told me something that I will never forget.

(MORE)

MELINDA (CONT'D)

He said that if you let fear control you, then you become nothing more than a slave, a slave to fear.

As a black woman, who has a history of slavery in her family, those words struck hard, and they struck deep. They were brutal. That night Carl and I talked, and I told him what Travis had said. For a few moments Carl said nothing, then asked a simple question, he said... ok, so what do you want to do, stay on the plantation?

Travis was always there, being Travis, until the day Lynn entered his life... Then he changed, he became protective, more so than I've ever seen before. He became scared, scared that something might happen to her. I've never seen Travis frightened before. It's like he was becoming the slave, a slave to some type of fear. What kind of fear I have no idea. He's protective, but not demanding. He encourages her to try new things, but he always watches over her. He gives her a lot of freedom, but teaches her responsibility. He gives her trust and respect, and she returns it. But he's always there, protecting... Protecting her.

Karla in thought, Melinda studies her.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

When Lynn first got here we started searching for her identity, but she was just one of thousands of runaways. Travis wouldn't let me go to the police, so the search has taken time. And then we did something else... I convinced Carl to do a search on Travis. We never told him of course, but I wanted to know what type of man Travis Edwards is, what kind of past he has. I want to know what scared him so much that he felt compelled to protect Lynn.

KARLA

What have you discovered?

MELINDA

Not much yet, but our search has been limited. We still don't know much about him... You would think there would be more information available, but... there's not. However, one name keeps popping up, Melissa.

KARLA

Who is she?

MELINDA

We have no idea. Only that she's someone very special to him. Someone that left him hurting. So I have to ask you, now that you found your sister, are you going to take her away from him? Are you going to hurt him?

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - EVENING

Travis walks towards the den when he hears giggling coming from the master bedroom, the door open, he looks in. Lynn and Karla, in pajamas, sitting on the bed, painting their toenails, low talk and giggling like little girls. Karla, then Lynn, sees Travis standing there, he shakes his head and leaves. The two girls look at each other then giggle some more.

SHORT TIME LATER

Karla comes out of the bathroom, closing her robe, she sees Lynn in the den reading a book and listening to classical music.

KARLA

I still can't believe you listen to classical music. Or that you want to go see Phantom of the Opera. You and opera... Who would have... What are you reading?

LYNN

Agatha Christie, "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd".

KARLA

You are kidding? No, no you're not. Any good?

LYNN

I just started it, I'll let you know.

Karla nods and leaves Lynn to read. She walks to the
LIVING ROOM

where she sees Travis on the

BALCONY

She joins him. Travis smoking a cigar with a glass of wine.
He starts to get up as he sees her.

KARLA

Stay.

She sits.

KARLA (CONT'D)

Wine? Lynn tells me you always drink
beer with your cigar.

TRAVIS

Most of the time, for some reason I
felt wine was more appropriate.
Would you like a glass?

KARLA

Yes, thank you.

Travis leaves and shortly comes back with another glass of
the vineyard. As he gives it to her their hands slightly
touch, a silent moment as he looks in her eyes. Then he
sits.

TRAVIS

So you own Karla's Travels?

KARLA

I do, sorta. Actually my father is
the primary backer, I just hold down
the office.

Travis nods.

KARLA (CONT'D)

Lynn told me how you saved her from
being raped. Thank you.

TRAVIS

It was nothing.

KARLA

Nothing? She said one pulled a knife.

TRAVIS

Minor detail.

KARLA

Minor detail? I don't think so.
She said you could have been killed.

TRAVIS

Lynn's a good kid. A very good kid.
I will miss her.

KARLA

She doesn't want to go back, she
considers this her home now.

TRAVIS

I'm honored, but it can't be that
way and you know it.

KARLA

For her it can be.

TRAVIS

You're afraid she'll run away again.

KARLA

She will. I don't know what I'm
going to do. I know one thing, you've
changed her, a lot. Thank you.

TRAVIS

She changed herself, I just supported
her.

KARLA

You were the catalyst. You were
there for her. And I'm ashamed to
say, more so than me.

TRAVIS

Why did she run away?

KARLA

She was driven away. Driven away by
a man who knows only how to control,
and never knew how to love.

TRAVIS

Your father.

KARLA

Our father. I think Lynn was the
smart one, she rebelled before he
could really get a strangle hold on
her. It's no wonder she thinks of
you as her father now.

TRAVIS

That's a role I could never fill.

KARLA

In her eyes you already have. I don't know how to take her away from here. She's so much at peace, I've never seen her so happy. Do I have the right to destroy that?

When I first read about you, discovered that Lynn was living with you, the thoughts I had... I was wrong and I'm sorry.

TRAVIS

Nothing to be sorry about. You had every reason to be concerned. Maybe you still do.

KARLA

No. No. The way Lynn changed, the way she respects you, the way you respect her, you're a very special man. I just wish there were more men in the world like you.

TRAVIS

Now that you're here, she can't stay here, she has to go with you. She has to go home, it's only right.

Karla nods, then looks at Travis and sees the pain in his eyes.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - MONDAY MORNING

Karla getting ready, wearing a nice belted dress which accents her figure, her shapely legs emphasized by her heels. She looks at herself in the mirror as Lynn, wearing a pants suit, comes up behind her.

LYNN

Nice.

KARLA

Very. Why I let Travis buy it I have no idea.

LYNN

Considering the fact that you brought no clothes with you...

KARLA

I left Chicago in a hurry. Still, he bought way too many clothes for us. Did you see the look on his face when he saw the total?

LYNN

Priceless. Did you call Chicago?

KARLA

I did, told Margo I'm taking a few days off. I feel so guilty, him paying...

LYNN

Let me tell you something, Travis doesn't do anything that Travis doesn't want to do. I learned that real early on.

KARLA

Really? We kicked him out of his bed...

LYNN

Correction, you kicked him out of his bed.

KARLA

I told him I could sleep with you, but he insisted that I take the master bed. Now he's on the Lazy Boy...

LYNN

It's comfortable. He has spent many a night sleeping in that chair.

KARLA

Still... doesn't seem right. What do you think?

LYNN

I think you look great, real great. Of course I know why you wore that dress.

KARLA

And why is that?

LYNN

Julie.

KARLA

Oh please, cut me a break.

LYNN
You're in competition.

Karla looks at her.

KARLA
I've never met the woman, how can I
be in competition?

LYNN
Because she's a girlfriend, and you're
only a mere woman.

KARLA
Yeah, right.

Karla examines herself again in the mirror,

KARLA (CONT'D)
(softly)
Still.... I wonder what she's going
to be wearing today.

INT. ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES ADVERTISING - MORNING

Travis, Karla and Lynn enter the business and approach the
reception desk.

DIANE
Morning Mr. Edwards, I see you got
the message.

LYNN
Morning Mrs. Lassiter.

DIANE
Morning Lynn, you do look nice. Mr.
Anderson is very anxious for you to
meet some people.

Diane looks at Karla then Travis, who is looking at Karla.

TRAVIS
Diane, I would like to introduce you
to Lynn's older sister, Karla Bates.
Karla, this is Diane Lassiter...

LYNN
...The woman who really runs this
place.

DIANE
Flattery will get you everywhere
young lady. It's nice meeting you.

KARLA
It's nice meeting you.

The two shake hands.

TRAVIS
Miss Bates owns Karla's Travels.

DIANE
Really? Excellent.

KARLA
You've heard of us?

DIANE
I have, you have an exceptional reputation. But now, you young Travis, you are needed in the conference room, and you're late.

TRAVIS
Guess I better see what's up. Lynn, why don't you take Karla to my office, show her where the coffee is, I'll be there as soon as I can.

LYNN
Ok, come on sis.

As they travel down the hall Julie approaches from the opposite direction. Quickly and quietly the two women size each other up.

INT. TRAVIS'S OFFICE

KARLA
Julie?

LYNN
Yep.

KARLA
She's beautiful. Are you sure Travis has never slept with her?

LYNN
Positive.

KARLA
If not, why not?

Lynn shrugs. The two women move to, then look out the window at the New York skyline.

KARLA (CONT'D)

Nice view.

Lynn nods. They move to the table and sit. They look at magazines, drink coffee, meander. Lynn looks at the clock and notices that an hour has passed.

LYNN

I wonder what's taking him so long?

KARLA

Well, if experience is any guide, meetings can sometimes drag on forever. He'll be here when he's here.

Lynn nods.

KARLA (CONT'D)

So what was it you said to Mr. Anderson, that he call us on a Sunday and insisted you accompany Travis into work?

LYNN

I don't know. I guess I impressed him.

KARLA

How exactly? How does a sixteen year old impress a man like John Anderson?

LYNN

I complimented him on his Kiton suit.

KARLA

Dad wears Kiton suits.

LYNN

I know, but Mr. Anderson doesn't know that. He thinks I'm smart. Listen, you didn't have to come, I told you that.

KARLA

And stay in that condo with no television, I'd go nuts.

LYNN

There's lots of books, and the stereo.

KARLA

How did you, you, ever survive without TV?

LYNN

After awhile you don't miss it.

KARLA

I still can't believe you play chess.
I'm having trouble adjusting to just
how much you've changed period.

LYNN

For the good or bad?

KARLA

(softly)

Oh honey, for the good, oh so much
for the good. I am really proud of
you.

LYNN

Travis had a lot to do with it.

KARLA

He was the catalyst, but it was you
that created the reaction.

Travis comes in accompanied by Anderson, two other men, FAGIN
and MACE, and Diane.

JOHN

Lynn, good to see you again my dear.

LYNN

Mr. Anderson, you are looking sharp
today.

JOHN

Thank you. And you must be Karla,
John Anderson. Travis was telling
me all about you, how he had to take
care of Lynn while you and your
parents were overseas.

The two shake hands, Karla looks at Travis, with those "are
you kidding" eyes.

KARLA

Yes... A situation developed where
Lynn was on her own, and Travis,
well...

Karla smiles at Travis who gives a small breath of relief.

JOHN

Lynn, this is Mr. Fagin and Mr. Mace,
both from Kiton here in New York.

LYNN

Mr. Fagin, Mr. Mace, it's nice meeting you.

FAGIN

She's charming. What do you think Larry?

MACE

Maybe. Tell me Lynn, what do you know about the Kiton female line?

LYNN

Just what I read... I know that in 1995 Kiton introduced a female line of clothes, and in 1996 they introduced a fragrance line for both men and women. The last I heard the female line was only tailored in Arzano Italy.

Karla impressed.

MACE

(to Anderson)

Are you sure you didn't coach her?

JOHN

Positive. Lynn, Travis tells me you're out of school for five weeks...

LYNN

Yes sir.

JOHN

How would you like to intern here, working with Travis for a few weeks? I'll pay you of course.

Lynn, Karla surprised.

LYNN

Doing what sir?

FAGIN

We're thinking about launching a new line of clothing for the younger set, for teenage girls and boys such as yourself...

MACE

We're looking for an ad campaign, to see if it's feasible. But we need a prospective, a point of view from someone such as yourself.

LYNN

I don't know anything about fashion...

FAGIN

Young lady I disagree with that statement. You have exquisite taste in clothing, just look at you today.

LYNN

I don't... what would I do... I don't know how...

JOHN

You'll be working with Travis on this project, I'll pay you five hundred a week, then when school starts you'll have some spending money, and I'll have some ideas I can pitch.

Lynn looks at Karla who is smiling, eyes that encourage, pride in her little sister.

LYNN

When do I start?

TRAVIS

Next week. I told John that you just finished finals and needed some down time.

LYNN

(excited)

Ok. Yeah, yeah! I mean yes sir. Thank you sir.

JOHN

Diane, why don't you take Lynn to HR so she can fill out an application.

DIANE

Come on Lynn, let's get you started.

Lynn, excited, looks at Karla, follows Diane out the door.

JOHN

Your little sister is really special, a one of a kind. You must be proud.

KARLA

(with pride)

More than you know Mr. Anderson, more than you know.

(soft smile at Travis)

JOHN

Well if you will excuse us, we have
some business to conclude.

Travis smiles at Karla as the men leave the office, leaving
her alone. Smiling, happy, excited,

KARLA

Yes!

SHORT TIME LATER

Karla drifts out of the office, she passes an employee,

KARLA (CONT'D)

Excuse me, where can I get some water?

EMPLOYEE

Down this passage, just around the
corner, there's a water cooler there.

KARLA

Thank you.

Karla moves in the direction indicated when she sees Julie
and Travis. Julie fondling the lapel on Travis's suit.
Both smiling. Karla slowly goes back to

TRAVIS'S OFFICE

She looks out the window, numb. Diane enters the office.

DIANE

You ok?

KARLA

(startled)

Yes. Why wouldn't I be?

(wipes tears from her
eyes)

Where's Lynn?

DIANE

She's still finishing up with HR.
She'll be here shortly.

Diane looks at Karla,

DIANE (CONT'D)

You're definitely in love with him.

KARLA

Excuse me?

DIANE

Travis, you've fallen in love with him. And the interesting thing is, he's fallen in love with you. I wonder how he's going to react when he realizes it.

Karla forces a small laugh.

KARLA

Me, in love with him? I don't think so, I just met him. Besides I think he has eyes for Julie.

DIANE

How long have you known Travis, two, three days?

Karla nods.

DIANE (CONT'D)

I've known him for five years, and in all that time I've never seen him in love. Not until today. You think because Julie entices him that he's crazy about her. He could care less about her affections.

KARLA

Really? Looking at the two of them you wouldn't know it.

DIANE

Don't sell yourself short. You have more to offer than you realize.

Karla questions.

DIANE (CONT'D)

What do you know about Travis Edwards?

KARLA

Nothing really. Nothing at all.

DIANE

So you didn't know that Travis was a Navy SEAL?

KARLA

No I didn't.

DIANE

So was a man named Mike Williams.

KARLA

I'm aware of Mike Williams, his business reputation is legendary... but I didn't know he was in the military.

DIANE

Mike was Travis's commanding officer in one of the SEAL teams. After 9/11, when the war was just starting, their unit was sent into harms way. I don't know all the particulars but I do know that they were involved in many clandestine operations. Very dangerous operations. I also know that Travis saved Mike's life at least twice.

Then one day, they were involved in a major battle and both were critically wounded, both of them almost died. When they recovered they were released from active duty, both around the same time. Mike went to Boston to work in the family business and Travis came here to New York. Mike offered Travis a job, but electronic sales didn't appeal to him. But he did have an eye on advertising. He applied for a job here, Mike found out about it and blackmailed the old man into hiring Travis. Best decision the old man ever made. Travis has made this company a lot of money, made himself a lot of money.

KARLA

How do you know this?

DIANE

My husband works for the city of New York, has for almost forty years. We're retiring next year. With his connections I asked him to investigate Travis. When the man started working here he intrigued me, he was a complete mystery, and I love a good mystery. My husband was able to get some information on him... The process took almost two years to get the limited information we got. But, it was enough to satisfy me.

She studies Karla.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Julie holds no interest for him, she never has. True they dated a few times, but she never captured his heart, and never will. Of all the women Travis has dated, very beautiful women I might add, not a one of them ever captured his heart. I don't know how, but you did, and that makes you very special.

I know all about Karla's Travels. It takes a special woman to run that operation, and that kind of woman is the type that appeals to Travis's intellect. You have style, but you also have substance. And that is Travis's Achilles heel. And while I can't believe that I'm saying this, you hold his fate in your hands. The only question is, how bad do you want him?

KARLA

You think I want him?

DIANE

Only you can answer that question.

Silence as Karla considers. Lynn comes into the room, sees Karla wiping her tears.

LYNN

You ok? What happened?

KARLA

I'm fine, better than fine. Another small miracle happened.

Diane smiles and leaves the room. Karla smiling after her.

LYNN

You sure you're ok?

KARLA

I'm great. Did you see Travis?

LYNN

Yeah, he and Julie are going with the Kiton people, I'm not sure what they're doing, anyway Travis says not to wait around, he'll be tied up all day. That Julie...

KARLA

Oh, I wouldn't worry about her...
 (straightens Lynn's
 collar)
 Old girlfriends can be sooo overrated
 sometimes. Let's go home.

Lynn confused as they go out the door.

THE RECEPTION DESK

Karla stops at the reception desk, Diane acknowledges her,

KARLA (CONT'D)

In your investigation, did you ever
 come across a woman named Melissa?

DIANE

No. No, that name doesn't ring a
 bell. Who is she?

KARLA

All I know is that she was someone
 special. Someone he may have lost.

DIANE

I don't know all of Travis's past,
 but it sounds to me that you may
 have more to worry about from this
 Melissa woman than from Julie.

Karla considers, nods.

KARLA

Thank you, for everything. Bye.

DIANE

Bye.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - LATE MORNING

Karla, now in Levi's, in the master bedroom, arranging a
 closet. Lynn, also changed, comes into the room.

LYNN

Whatcha doing?

KARLA

Putting my clothes away, straightening
 the closet. Travis may keep the
 condo immaculate, but his closets
 leave something to be desired. Talk
 about a contradiction.

LYNN

So he's not so perfect after all.
So, now that I have this job, what
are you going to do with me?

KARLA

I don't know sweetie. I know one
thing, you're not going anywhere, at
least not for awhile.

LYNN

So I can stay?

KARLA

Didn't I just say that?

Lynn smiles big. Karla fumbles and a box drops from a shelf,
it opens. Several items spill out onto the floor.

KARLA (CONT'D)

Darn it.

LYNN

What? Butterfingers?

Gives Lynn a look. She picks everything up and places the
contents on the bed. Lynn begins to shift through the
contents, a photo of a young girl who resembles Lynn, military
medals, and an old newspaper clipping, from the Los Angeles
Times. Lynn pays attention to the medals.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Aren't these military medals?

KARLA

Yes they are, but I don't recognize
them.

LYNN

I read about this...

She leaves and comes back with a book, she looks in the pages,
a chart. Comparing the medals to the chart.

LYNN (CONT'D)

That one is the Defense Distinguished
Service Medal.

KARLA

What's this one?

LYNN

The Silver Star.

KARLA
There are three of these...

LYNN
The Purple Heart, when you're wounded
in battle.

KARLA
This one?

LYNN
The Navy Cross. Second highest honor,
after the Medal of Honor.

They look at the medals.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Karla... all of these are for heroism
under fire... War.

KARLA
I know, I know... Diane told me he
was a Navy SEAL, I just didn't
realize... You never saw these before?

LYNN
Never.

Lynn looks at the photo.

LYNN (CONT'D)
I wonder who this girl is?

Karla picks up the newspaper clipping from the LA Times,
which has the same photo and reads the headline,

SEVENTEEN YEAR OLD MURDERED IN GRIFFITH PARK

Karla begins to read,

KARLA
A seventeen year old young woman,
Melissa Edwards, was raped and
brutally murdered last night by two
unidentified assailants...

Lynn shakes, Karla continues,

KARLA (CONT'D)
...around seven thirty last night in
Griffith Park. Witnesses say that
she had just come out of Joe's Qwik
Mart when the two men abducted her
and carried her away. Her body was
found three hours later by police.

Quick FLASHBACK to the rape and murder of Melissa.

KARLA (CONT'D)

Police Detective Jack Roberts told the Times that no arrest have been made at this time. Miss Edwards mother had just died the day before from a heart condition. Her father has been dead for at least three years.

Neighbors told police that her twin brother Carlton...

Lynn and Karla look at each other...

KARLA (CONT'D)

...her twin brother Carlton Edwards had run away from home four years earlier. Detective Roberts told us that Carlton would probably never be found, or could already be dead. Services are pending at this time.

Lynn tearing.

LYNN

Oh my God... My God... He was a runaway... that's why he felt that he had to protect me... oh my God...

KARLA

(shaking, softly,
looks at the photo)
His twin sister... when he saw you that night... those thugs... the thoughts that must have gone through his mind...

LYNN

He was reliving her death... Karla...

KARLA

His need to protect you... it must have been overwhelming... the guilt he must feel... the loss... he couldn't let it happen again...

Silence as Karla and Lynn look at the medals and newspaper clipping.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - EARLY AFTERNOON

The two girls at the table drinking a beverage, somber mood.

KARLA

What time do you think he'll be home?

LYNN

He'll stop and talk to Mr. Jackson first, six, maybe six thirty, depending upon what they talk about. What do we say to him?

KARLA

I don't know, I really don't know.

LYNN

That night, when those men tried to rape me, I wonder why he didn't kill them? After what someone like them did to his sister, what stopped him?

KARLA

Because he's not a killer, he's a protector. I believe that he would kill only if necessary. It's what separates man from barbarian.

LYNN

I wonder why he didn't turn me over to the police?

KARLA

He probably felt that you may have been in just as much danger with them as you were on the street.

LYNN

Experience?

KARLA

Probably. As a runaway there's no telling what he saw, but he knew what could happen. He didn't feel it was safe for you.

LYNN

The police couldn't help his sister...

KARLA

No they couldn't. But he might have...

LYNN

And he failed to do so.

KARLA

Yeah. How much remorse... Maybe one day he'll tell us...

The phone rings, Karla gets up and answers it,

KARLA (CONT'D)

Hello... Oh yes Mother Anita, how are you today?... Yes, I understand... I'll tell her... you too... goodbye.

LYNN

My grade? The final?

KARLA

Yeah.

LYNN

So?

Suspense.

KARLA

(casual)

I'm disappointed... you may be disappointed, I'm sorry...

(Lynn beginning to panic)

You only got an A minus...

LYNN

Yes!

The sisters hug.

KARLA

Travis is going to be so proud of you, I'm proud of you.

LYNN

I think we need to celebrate.

KARLA

I think you're right...

The door bell buzzes.

LYNN

I'll get it, it's probably Melinda.

Lynn opens the door, stands there shocked. An older man, OWEN BATES, and woman, GINGER BATES, stand in the doorway. Owen walks in, followed by another large, mean looking man. Ginger, unsure, comes in. Lynn says nothing. The big man stands silently inside the door.

OWEN

It's about time young lady, what the hell do you think you're doing?

Karla approaches,

KARLA

Mom, Dad, what are you doing here?

OWEN

I could ask you the same question. You don't return my calls, you're out of the office, why the hell aren't you in Chicago?

The two girls look at each other.

KARLA

How did you find us? I don't remember telling you where I was.

OWEN

You really think you can hide from me? So where is he?

KARLA

Who?

OWEN

The bastard that owns this place.

KARLA

His name's Travis, Travis Edwards.

OWEN

(looks at Lynn)
Travis Edwards, and this is where you've been staying. For four months I understand. You little whore. Worthless whore.

KARLA

Don't you dare talk to her like that!

OWEN

Another whore. A family of whores. I'm not only disappointed, you make me sick. If I wanted a slut I'd go to the streets and get one.

GINGER

Owen! Enough!

OWEN

Shut up Ginger. Do you realize what you two girls have done? I'm going to be late for a conference call because of you.

KARLA

Well, it's good to see you too Dad.

OWEN

Don't get smart with me young lady.

Owen begins to wonder the room.

OWEN (CONT'D)

So where is he? You never said.

KARLA

He's working. He'll be home later.

OWEN

To his harem.

GINGER

Owen please. Give the girls time to explain.

OWEN

Ok, explain. Go on, explain.

Karla looks at Lynn, Lynn scared, the big man menacing.

KARLA

I see you brought "Lurch".
(looks at the big man)
What's the matter Dad, needed support?

OWEN

(to Ginger)
See, after all I did for these girls,
this is the thanks I get.

GINGER

OWEN! Just shut up!

Owen looks at his wife but stays quiet. Ginger moves to Lynn,

GINGER (CONT'D)

My baby... my baby.

Ginger holds Lynn,

GINGER (CONT'D)

Let me look at you, you had us worried
sick... six months honey, I've been
so worried...

LYNN

I've missed you Mama.
(holding her)

GINGER
You look good, you look real good.

LYNN
I feel good. Really good.

Ginger holds Lynn tight.

OWEN
So this Travis guy fed you good, how is he in bed?

KARLA
DAD! Don't even go there! There is nothing going on between Travis and Lynn, you have no idea...

OWEN
You're right, I don't have any idea, please enlighten me.

Owen looks at his watch.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Get your stuff, we have to go.

LYNN
I'm not going anywhere.

GINGER
Lynn, you have to come with us.

KARLA
Just how the hell did you find us?

OWEN
That secretary of yours is something else. I had to threaten to fire her unless she told me. She didn't, so I fired her. I got the information from one of the other employees, a loyal employee.

KARLA
You had no right to threaten Margo, much less fire her.

OWEN
I had every right. I still own the company.

KARLA
True, you own the building.

OWEN

I expect you to be at work first thing in the morning young lady. Lynn, I'm taking you back to that school.

GINGER

Owen...

OWEN

Shut-up Ginger. Now let's go. I have a phone conference I have to attend.

KARLA

We're not going anywhere father.

OWEN

Are you defying me?

KARLA

You're damn right I am.

OWEN

I don't believe this.

KARLA

You don't own me, I'm over 21 remember?

OWEN

Ok, ok, you want to be independent, fine, consider your expense account suspended, and don't bother to go back to Chicago, you no longer work there. But as for Lynn, we're going, she is under 21. Hell, she's under 18, that means she goes with us.

KARLA

Lynn's not going anywhere. She stays here. You have no idea what has happened here. No clue. You come barging in like you own the place and you called her a whore, you called me a whore! You know Dad, you are really something else.

GINGER

Why do you want to stay here Karla?

OWEN

Ginger...

GINGER

Shut-up Owen! Karla, what is going on here?

KARLA

A small miracle mom, just a small miracle. You know, now that I think of it...

She looks at Lynn,

KARLA (CONT'D)

Yeah, why not.

OWEN

Why not what?

KARLA

I'm going to challenge you for guardianship of Lynn.

Owen and Ginger surprised, Lynn smiles and nods in agreement.

OWEN

What the hell are you talking about?

KARLA

I want to be Lynn's legal guardian.

OWEN

Are you out of your mind?

KARLA

Yeah, I think I am. But I'm going to do it.

OWEN

How the hell are you going to pull something like that off?

KARLA

The next door neighbor is one sharp lawyer. He can do it. He'll do it for Lynn, he'll do it for me, he'll do it for Travis.

OWEN

Like hell! My lawyers will tear you apart.

KARLA

I don't think so Father. I can prove abuse, your abuse.

GINGER
Karla, please explain...

KARLA
Why did Lynn runaway Mom? Have you ever asked yourself that question?

GINGER
Everyday for six months.

KARLA
Lynn didn't runaway, she was driven away, driven away by you Father.

OWEN
By me? I have done nothing but give that girl, and you everything you ever wanted.

KARLA
Everything except the one thing we needed...

OWEN
What?

KARLA
Love Dad, simple love. You tried to buy us, but we were an inconvenience for you. Something you didn't want around, but couldn't get rid of.

OWEN
That's enough young lady. You want to stay, fine. Lynn, Ginger we go now.

LYNN
I'm not going.

OWEN
Kidnapping is a capital offense if I remember correctly, and the man that is claiming to be your guardian, I can put him into a lot of trouble. Trouble the police may find very interesting.

KARLA
Wrong approach Dad. That type of threat doesn't work anymore. You don't think I can prove abuse do you?

OWEN

No, I don't.

KARLA

Would you like a sample of my proof?

OWEN

What kind of sample?

KARLA

Lynn herself.

OWEN

This ought to be real good, go ahead, show me your proof.

KARLA

Ok... when she was living at home Lynn was rebellious, arrogant, selfish, always failing in school. A regular juvenile delinquent you called her. Am I wrong?

Owen quiet.

KARLA (CONT'D)

In the last three years, what is the highest grade she ever received? If I remember correctly, it was a D, and that was an accident. I just got off the phone with Mother Anita, she gave me Lynn's grades, she made an A minus on her semester final. Lynn's now carrying a straight A average. When has she ever done that before?

GINGER

Lynn, is this true?

Lynn nods.

OWEN

Who the hell is Mother Anita?

KARLA

She's the Mother Superior at Saint Anthony's Catholic School. I'm sure she will be more than willing to testify on Lynn's behalf.

GINGER

Karla, we're not Catholic...

KARLA

Minor detail Mother. Want more proof Father? This morning she was offered a job, an internship at Anderson and Associates. You remember them don't you, some of your businesses use them for advertising. John Anderson, the founder and owner, he personally offered Lynn the job. Don't believe me, ask him yourself.

Ginger looks at Lynn who stays quiet, nodding, slightly smiling.

OWEN

What are you trying to do Karla?

KARLA

I'm trying to give Lynn a chance at life Father, something you don't want her to have. You don't want me to have. All you want is domination. Sorry, too much has happened.

GINGER

Karla, why do I sense a change...

KARLA

Because I have changed Mother. I'm not the same woman I was when I walked in here last Thursday. So much has happened in these last few days. You have no idea...

OWEN

It'll take more than your words to convince me young lady, you're nothing without me.

KARLA

You need more proof, right Father? Come with me.

She leads them to the

DEN/LIBRARY

Owen and Ginger impressed with the room. She looks at the chess board.

KARLA (CONT'D)

You play chess Dad, and you're good, very good. Take a look at the board.

Owen, unsure but studies the board.

OWEN
White's in trouble. But white can
get out of it.

KARLA
It's white's move. Show me how you
would get out of it.

Owen questions her with a look but studies the board.

OWEN
I don't know what you're trying to
prove Karla...

KARLA
Just go with it Dad. White's move.

Owen continues to study the board, he moves a piece. Karla looks at Lynn, who is studying the move. Owen looks at Lynn with a lot of skepticism.

OWEN
What do you think you're doing?

LYNN
I'm getting ready to kick your ass
Dad, that's what I'm doing.

Owen unbelieving. Lynn scrutinizes the board. She makes a move.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Checkmate.

OWEN
WHAT? What the hell...

KARLA
She just kicked your ass Dad. Not
bad for a juvenile delinquent don't
you think?

Ginger shocked.

KARLA (CONT'D)
Need more proof?

She turns on the stereo, classical music - Vivaldi, Concerto per Archie Camblo in C Major.

KARLA (CONT'D)
Dad you recognize this piece don't
you?

OWEN

Of course I do... it's...

KARLA

No help please. Lynn, what is it?

LYNN

It's Vivaldi, Concerto per Archie Camblo in C Major.

OWEN

How the hell did you know that?

KARLA

Need more proof? Would you like Lynn to cook you a three course dinner, with all the trimmings?

GINGER

You cook?

KARLA

She's a very good cook.

The doorbell buzzes. Before anyone can move Melinda and Andy come in, Melinda really confused.

MELINDA

Who the hell is the monster standing by the front door?

KARLA

Melinda, I would like to introduce you to our parents, Owen and Ginger Bates. Mom, Dad, this is Melinda Rowan, our next door neighbor.

Andy moves to Lynn, who picks him up.

ANDY

Look what I got...
(shows her a new toy)

LYNN

That looks cool, how does it work?

ANDY

I'll show you...

He gets down and puts the toy on the floor, Lynn joins him as he begins to play with it, Lynn supportive as she plays with the boy. Ginger amazed, Owen speechless.

KARLA

Need more proof Dad? I can go on for a very long time. Melinda can testify to Lynn's credibility as well. You see Dad, when Lynn was living at home she wasn't happy, now... She's changed Dad, she's changed a lot. But you're too blind to see it. I can win guardianship of Lynn and I can support her, easily.

OWEN

How?

KARLA

With my business.

OWEN

I own the business.

KARLA

You own the building, I own the name Karla's Travels, not you. And I don't have to stay in Chicago, in fact I'm moving the company to New York.

OWEN

That's preposterous.

KARLA

Really, why is that?

OWEN

How will you get funding for such a move?

KARLA

I can get funding, I can get funding from my fiancée, the man I'm marrying, Travis.

Owen glares at her. Lynn and Melinda look at her then each other with amazement. Ginger thinking.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I know what you're thinking Dad, "Lurch" can take care of Travis... I don't think so. Lurch has been very efficient at scaring off my boyfriends in the past, but not now. Travis doesn't scare that easy, and Lurch is no match for Travis.

(MORE)

KARLA (CONT'D)

You see he's a former Navy SEAL, he can take Lurch down with one hand tied behind his back.

Lynn skeptical but hiding it.

KARLA (CONT'D)

You have controlled us, manipulated us for years. It was always your way. You never considered us. You never loved us. You drove us away, and you wonder why she doesn't want to leave? Why I don't want to leave.

We love you, why can't you love us?

OWEN

I have a conference call I need to attend. We need to go.

GINGER

I'm not going.

OWEN

What, what do you mean you're not going?

GINGER

I'm going to stay and talk to my daughters. I haven't seen Lynn for six months, I want to know about my daughter.

Lynn and Andy still playing.

MELINDA

Come on Andy, we need to go home.
(to Karla)
Call if you need anything.

Melinda and Andy depart.

OWEN

I'm not going to tell you again Ginger.

GINGER

Then don't. Go to your precious meeting, conference, whatever it is, but go. And while you're going, maybe you should start looking for a good divorce attorney. You're going to need one.

Owen startled.

OWEN

Ginger...

GINGER

GO! And take that monster of a body guard with you. I'm staying with my babies.

Owen looks at the girls, then storms out leaving the girls alone.

LYNN

Mom, you're not really going to divorce Dad are you?

GINGER

I may. After you ran away, all I could think about was how he treated you. There's either going to be some major changes with that man, or I will leave him.

KARLA

Why didn't you do that years ago Mom?

GINGER

Scared maybe. I don't know.
(to Lynn)

But now I want to know more about this young lady I'm looking at.

(to Karla)

And I also want to know more about this man you're going to marry.

KARLA

Well... about that...

LYNN

There could be a small problem...

GINGER

What type of problem?

KARLA

He hasn't asked me to marry him yet...

GINGER

I can see where that could be a problem.

The girls look at each other, as Ginger studies her daughters.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - LATE AFTERNOON

Lynn on the sofa reading, Karla walks in from the main door, joins Lynn on the sofa.

LYNN
Mom settled?

KARLA
Yeah. I gave her the Reader's Digest version of what happened to you, it took her by surprise. When I told her about the attempted rape, she really got scared. Been one hell of a day. I wonder what other surprises are in store for us?

LYNN
(shrugs)
What about Dad?

KARLA
I don't know. Mom wanted some space, time to think things out. We're meeting her tomorrow for lunch. She definitely wants to meet Travis.

LYNN
Speaking of whom, what do we tell him? Do we tell him anything?

KARLA
I've been thinking about that. I think...

The phone rings.

LYNN
I'll get it.

Gets off the sofa and picks up the phone,

LYNN (CONT'D)
Hello... Mags! How are you?... How'd you do on the test?...
(listening)

Karla approaches Lynn,

LYNN (CONT'D)
Just a minute Mags...
(MORE)

LYNN (CONT'D)

(puts hand over
mouthpiece)

It's Margaret, a friend of mine from school, she's asking if I want to go over to her place for a slumber party. But I don't think so, I'm not in the mood.

Karla thinking.

KARLA

Lynn, I think you should go.

LYNN

Why?

KARLA

Because you need your space, you need some down time. You start work next week, your social life is going to take a hit.

LYNN

I don't feel like going.

KARLA

I really think you should go.

LYNN

Why?

KARLA

Because you should, be with your friends.

LYNN

(slight anger)

I don't want to! What are you trying to do, drive me out of this hou...

(silence, thinks,
into the phone)

MAGS! A slumber party sounds great...
Yeah, I'll be over soon. Bye.

Lynn looks at the smiling Karla.

LYNN (CONT'D)

I'll... be late... tomorrow...

KARLA

Just be back by eleven, we're meeting Mom at noon.

Lynn starts walking towards her room, turns,

LYNN
He likes sexy...

Karla surprised, Lynn to her room,

LYNN (CONT'D)
(softly)
Yes!

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - EVENING

Travis enters the condo, he looks tired. He leans against the door and gently shakes his head like he is remembering something. Silence in the condo. He perks up, too silent. He turns, then sees her, Karla wearing only his shirt, her heels accenting her legs. She carries a glass of wine in one hand, a cigar in the other. She is very sexy, very beautiful. He is stunned, he drops his packages and coat.

KARLA
(sexy voice)
Lynn's doing a sleep over at one of
her friends, so I thought you and I
could share a glass of wine.

Travis silent. She puts the wine and cigar down, then approaches him, very sexy walk, he begins to shake, nervous, she's in complete control. His silence, her sexiness. Up close, her perfume, he is really nervous. So close, he swallows hard, she's dominates, enjoying his awkwardness. She grabs his tie and, like a dog on a leash, he follows her deeper into the condo.

INT. TRAVIS'S CONDO - ONE YEAR LATER - EVENING

Lynn enters carrying a portfolio, professionally dressed, sees Karla in the kitchen fixing dinner, Karla almost nine months pregnant.

KARLA
You're home. So how was work?

LYNN
Fine. Learning a lot.

KARLA
So where's my husband?

LYNN
Still talking to Mr. Jackson.

KARLA
About what?

LYNN

Fishing.

KARLA

Not a hot topic for you...

LYNN

Nooo. So how long have you been home?

Karla moving in the kitchen, fixing dinner.

KARLA

Melinda kicked me out of the office around noon, said a woman in my condition needs to be home resting. I tell you, bringing that woman on as a partner was the best decision I ever made. That lady is smart.

LYNN

So you came home?

KARLA

Didn't want to, but Margo got in on the act, between the two of them, they forced me out, told me to rest and not worry about anything. I must remember to give Margo a raise.

Lynn starts snacking on a bowl of nuts sitting on the counter.

LYNN

So, need any help?

Karla slaps her hand,

KARLA

Stop that! You'll ruin your dinner.

LYNN

Should you be cooking?

KARLA

I'm pregnant, not handicapped. So what happened at work today?

LYNN

Julie found another boyfriend. Cute guy.

Looks at Lynn, considers.

KARLA

Let me ask you something, how do you like marketing and advertising? I mean, would you consider it for a career?

LYNN

I like it, I really do. Yeah, I can see myself doing this as a career. Why?

KARLA

I got a call from John Anderson today... about you.

LYNN

Me?

KARLA

He was really impressed by the work you did last year, and from what he tells me, you're doing even better this year. After you graduate high school he wants to send you to a special college, one that specializes in marketing and advertising. A very prestigious college. And he said he'll pay for it.

LYNN

You're kidding? Why didn't he tell me?

KARLA

Because you're on probation. Everything hinges on how well you do this year. Not to mention keeping your grades up.

LYNN

No pressure huh?

KARLA

Just do your best, you'll be fine.

Moving in the kitchen, finishing dinner.

KARLA (CONT'D)

I talked to Mom, she's coming out next week. She wants to be here when her grandson is born.

LYNN

I still can't believe it, a baby brother...

KARLA
Nephew, you will be his aunt.

LYNN
Minor detail. Is Dad coming?

KARLA
(sighing)
I don't know.

LYNN
Are they still separated?

KARLA
Yeah.

Looks at Lynn, her sadness,

KARLA (CONT'D)
Hey listen, Dad made his choice,
there's nothing we can do about that.

LYNN
I know, but still, after so many
years of marriage, you would think...

Karla reacts in pain,

KARLA
OW!

LYNN
(concerned)
What!

KARLA
The baby, he just kicked... hard!

LYNN
Really! Let me feel!

As the sisters smile and laugh sharing a baby moment, the
CAMERA PULLS OUT of the condo to set our sights on the skyline
of New York.

FADE OUT: