

Mask of The Innocent

by
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adapted for television
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EXT. MEXICAN FUNERAL PROCESSION/OPENING TITLES - DAY

Harsh summer sun streaks across palm-thatched roofs. Shuffling leather sandals fill a rural street with dust.

An OLD WOMAN, head covered in a black shawl, follows a shoulder-carried coffin. She brings both feet together between each step - crossing herself.

Behind her, a marching brass band plays a funeral dirge. Each instrument bleats out its own beat, like mechanical wailing.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO MIDDLE CLASS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A portable projection screen tilts from metal tripod legs.

A potluck assortment of people in their 60s sit along the edges of the darkened room, while others sit cross-legged on pile carpeting.

TESS, 27, with yoga-sculpted arms snuggles into the lap of JAKE, 30, who rests his just-shaved chin on her tousled hair.

TESS

Friends and neighbors, I give you fair warning. There is not a scene in all of Mexico that my father-the-mighty-explorer has not documented. He'll milk this all night long.

Good-natured groans escape from the shadows. A slide of a beach scene pops up on the screen, upside down.

TESS (CONT'D)

He dragged this slide show to every social studies class I ever suffered through as a kid.

JAKE

Oh you loved it. That's why you married a photographer.

Squirming on the carpet are four-year-old twins, ALEX and ALICIA - untangled by their mother MARIA, a 25-year-old woman with the single-mom weariness of someone twice her age.

MARIA

Dad, get this show on the road. We're losing our kid window here.

She's talking to the man behind the projector, MAC, late 50s, whose larger-than-life grin is blue from the reflection of the slide carousel bulb.

MAC

Heard and understood. I've got it working now. Drumroll please.

His voice drowns out the whirl of the carousel motor.

MAC (CONT'D)

Here's the property where we're going to build.

The screen fills with a graceful, willowy woman with blonde-grey hair standing in front of a row of stubby palm trees.

MAC (CONT'D)

That's Lizzy, for scale. Those palms will be 20 feet tall by the time Al and Alex are old enough to pick coconuts for my piña coladas.

The grandkids stop squirming and look to LIZZY for confirmation. Even more ethereal in person, their young grandmother blows them a kiss from the side of the room.

Another shot fills the screen. A higher angle on the homesite -- it's a cleared lot in the middle of scrub jungle.

MAC (CONT'D)

No-one around for miles.

A man with a faded 49's baseball cap, LEN, interrupts.

LEN

You got a problem with neighbors or just trying to make us more green with envy than we already are?

Mac throws his head back and guffaws.

MAC

Mi casa will be su casa Len. Come and visit anytime.

He clicks the advance. The screen fills with an older image, faded colors. It's a younger Mac, holding the hand of a tiny Tess as she tiptoes along the handrail of a bandstand in the middle of a village square.

MAC (CONT'D)

This family and Mexico go way back. Tess always loved the zocalos.

Little Alicia stands and points to the screen, her finger a long shadow.

ALICIA
Wasn't you scared Auntie Tess?

TESS
No silly. Look who's holding my
hand? That's grandpa.

Laughs from the shadows.

LEN
Kid doesn't recognize you Mac. You
used to be handsome. What happened?

Mac laughs and clicks through a series of dreamy slides:

-- TESS, MARIA AND LIZZY SITTING INSIDE A VINTAGE CAMPER VAN

-- TESS TENTATIVELY PETTING A BEDRAGGLED BURRO IN A MARKET

-- TESS PICKING OUT SWEET ROLLS WITH HUGE METAL TONGS

TESS
The origins of my panaderia
obsession. Gracias dad. From my
thighs, twenty years later.

-- THE CAMPER VAN PARKED ON THE SAND OF A PALM-LINED BEACH

-- LIZZY, IN WAIST DEEP WATER, CLUTCHING HER GIRLS

MAC
Lizzy never did take to the water
like the girls. So this time ...

The next slide is modern day -- a huge pit in the ground.

MAC (CONT'D)
We're building a pool!

Lizzy flicks on the light, revealing a room full of packing
boxes and faded squares on walls where photos used to hang.

LIZZY
All right Mac. Now you're just
showing off. Who wants coffee?

The whole room bustles with laughter as the guests fold up
the lawn chairs they brought in with them.

EXT. WORKING CLASS SAN FRANCISCO SUBURB STREET - DAY

Jake fiddles with the focus of a video camera, zooming in on Tess sprinting after a 4x4 pickup truck.

TESS

Wait up!

The truck is towing the vintage camper van, stuffed full of clothes and boxes. Neighbors line the street, waving goodbye.

Little fingers have printed "Adios Granny" in the dust of the camper van's rear window.

TESS (CONT'D)

Dad! Wait!

Tess hops onto the truck's running board.

MAC

Can't keep up with your old man anymore?

Panting, Tess drops a lunch pail on his lap.

TESS

You forgot the survival kit. First signs of dementia, Compadre.

I/E. CAB OF THE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

MAC opens the lunch pail. It's full of brownies. He inhales the aroma, clearly stalling.

MAC

Always got my back, right Compadre?

Lizzy leans over to smell the brownies.

LIZZY

Mmmmm...daddy's favorite.

A strand of gray hair falls from behind Lizzy's ears and Tess leans in to brush it out of her mother's face.

A puppy on Lizzy's lap, SWEET PEA, growls protectively.

TESS

(laughing)

Don't eat them all at once.

(MORE)

TESS (CONT'D)

It's three days just to Mazatlan -
four if you drive the speed limit.

MAC

Can't you retire with us? I'm gonna
starve without you.

Lizzy's fidgeting with the puppy squirming on her lap. She
talks to it in baby voice, moving its paws like a wave.

LIZZY

Sweet Pea. Say ahhh-deee-ohz.

She mangles the pronunciation.

Mac and Tess roll their eyes.

TESS

Keep practising mom. It'll come.

MAC

Hasta luego, hija amoracita!

The truck pulls away just as Jake catches up to his wife. A
close-up, through the camera lens, catches the tears in her
eyes as she blows kisses.

TESS

Take good care of her.

A square-jawed woman in her mid 70s, IDA, marches up from
behind and wraps her arm around Tess's waist.

IDA

Give me a kiss too. I've got a
check card rally I should've been
at already.

JAKE

(teasing)

Our own Don Quixote. Might as well
catch up with Mac and Lizzy and
start union organizing in Mexico.

TESS

(wiping runny mascara)

Don't listen to him Gran. Give 'em
hell.

IDA

Somebody's got to. You holding up?

Ida reaches for car keys, hesitating.

TESS
Go on - I'll be fine.

IDA
Stop worrying. She has enough
romance novels to last her at least
a year.

TESS
I'm not worrying.

Ida raises one eyebrow. Then she moves Tess's bra strap back
in place, under her tank top.

IDA
Like hell. You always worry. Waste
of energy.

TESS
It's just... Mom can't even speak
Spanish.

IDA
Hey you are not the parent here. We
all live with the choices we make.

THREE MONTHS
LATER...

INT. MARIA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maria fiddles with a Skype connection on a PC as Alex and
Alicia fight for position on her lap.

ALEX
Where is she?

MARIA
Grandma's retired in Mexico.

Alex's lip starts to quiver.

ALICIA
Why is she really tired?

MARIA
(smiling)
Not really tired. Retired. She's
lives in Mexico now, remember?

INT. UNDER CONSTRUCTION MEXICAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mac's face appears on the monitor. He's uncertain of the technology, leaning grotesquely close to his I-Pad's camera.

MAC

Maria? Is this thing on?

INTERCUT - SKYPE CONVERSATION - CONTINUOUS

MARIA (O.S.)

Whoa, back up. I'm seeing nose hair.

Mac flicks his laptop, irritated.

MAC

Can't see shit on here...

MARIA

Dad, dad, little ears here. They want to see their abuela.

MAC

Lizzy's getting food ready for the party. We've got company coming any minute. Did you and Tess get the shoulder bags I bought you? Lizzy said you'd like them.

Maria lifts up a bright pink woven bag from beside her keyboard. The patterns are intricate and geometric, but feminine.

MARIA

Right here dad. They're beautiful. Put mom on so I can thank her.

MAC

I'll tell her when she's not busy. How about a tour of the new house? Wait'll you see the pool, kids. Better start swimming lessons so you can keep up with grandma.

Mac turns his I-PAD around and begins to walk, with it, through the rooms of an almost-finished adobe house.

Construction lights string together with extension cords, illuminating a work in progress.

Masks - hairy and horned - decorate the hallway. The kids pull back, a little frightened. They say nothing.

MARIA

Jesus dad. Those are hideous. How about some of mom's watercolors?

MAC

(laughing)

Gotta go native. Appreciate the local culture. We're off the grid. On our own. Starting over.

The I-Pad emerges into bright sunlight where two fat hoses slowly fill an in-ground swimming pool.

MARIA

That's roughing it alright.

Suddenly the camera swooshes away from the pool and back toward the adobe-house. Mac's heard something.

MAC

That must be our guests. I'm gonna have to sign off for now. How the hell do you unplug...

The connection breaks and the screen goes black.

MARIA

Wait! Damn.

Both kids begin to tear up.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Isn't that a neat pool? We'll talk to grandma next time, okay?

They nod. Sad little faces.

INT. MEXICAN HOUSE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lizzy rearranges serving platters on a table made from plywood and sawhorses. Enough food for an army.

LIZZY

(apologetically)

Mac I thought you said you were inviting a bunch of neighbors.

MAC

Well there'll be enough leftovers
to last until any neighbors ever do
move in. If they do. Why spoil our
own private paradise, right Dizzy?

Mac wraps his arm around Lizzy's waist and turns her to face
the guests: a cop and two blue-collar working men holding out
empty, blue-rimmed shot glasses.

MAC (CONT'D)

Oh - I'm sorry. Here you go.

Mac pours tequilas with a flourish.

MAC (CONT'D)

Lopez. Garcia. Helluva job on the
brick work. Really. Dig in. Salud!

He knocks one back and puckers so much the workers laugh.

The policeman seems to hold back, looking at Lizzy.

MAC (CONT'D)

Oh don't wait on her. She never
touches the stuff. Lizzy, Manuel
here is one of Mexico's finest.
Keeper of Napoleonic law.

LIZZY

What?

MAC

Down here we're all guilty until
proven innocent, right Manuel?

Manuel seems to laugh, although it could be a sneer.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S MISSION DISTRICT ROWHOUSE - EVENING

Take-out boxes clutter a kitchen table as Jake helps Tess
build a pinata. A wire-frame skull balances next to a macabre
portrait of Frida Kahlo.

JAKE

You sure this won't scare third
graders?

TESS

Only INS scares my kids. Frida
Kahlo is practically Mrs. Claus.

Jake stands behind Tess, wrapping his arms around hers. Making her make a mess.

JAKE
Why don't we just have Mac send one up from Mexico?

Tess wiggles free.

TESS
Slacker. Since when do I do things the easy way? Remember, I am my father's daughter.

Tess slops a strip of pasty newspaper across Jake's chest.

JAKE
You schoolin' me, teacher lady?

With one hand, Jake wads up a strip of newspaper and dunks it deep in the pail of paste, eyeing Tess and laughing.

JAKE (CONT'D)
This is going to get messy...

Tess peels her clingy tank top away from her shoulder.

TESS
So you want something moist and sweet?

Jake lifts Tess onto the newspaper covered table.

Just as she leans back, Tess kisses him, grabs the pail of paste and dumps it over his back.

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Tess watches as IDA spreads out poster board and giant markers on a Formica kitchen counter island.

IDA
All right. Who wants to help your great granny stick it the man?

Alex and Alicia spin on vinyl covered bar stools while Maria swats away a stray fern spurting from a macrame plant hanger.

ALEX
Yeah. Stick it to the man.

ALICIA

We wanna go pickering too.

Tess hugs Alicia from behind, then gives her another spin.

TESS

Picketing Al. Great granny is making picket signs to wave around and stir up lots of trouble. Definitely not age-appropriate.

Ida picks a stub of a cigarette out of a plastic ashtray and puffs as she speaks.

IDA

They can help me instigate. I mean decorate. Who here can draw a nice fat diagonal line?

MARIA

Gran. They just turned four. They can draw happy faces. If you use your imagination.

Ida laughs, then draws a circle with dots for eyes and nose.

IDA

Okay then. Just like this, only you make an upside down smile. There are no happy workers on strike.

Her great-grandchildren grab markers and try to copy Ida.

MARIA

(half-joking)

Well look at this. A celebrated union organizer using my kids as child labor. Exploited by one generation, ignored by another.

TESS

What do you mean?

Maria glances sideways at the kids.

MARIA

Hey how about singing the "Row Your Boat" song?

ALEX

Okay. Row row row your boat.

Alicia joins in. Top of her lungs.

MARIA
 (to Tess and Ida)
 Mom didn't even call on their
 birthday.

Tess looks surprised.

TESS
 I bet dad's got something up his
 sleeve. He probably built them
 something amazing and it's just
 stuck in snail mail.

MARIA
 I'm not talking about dad. Can't
 mom ever pick up a phone?

TESS
 Give her time Maria. She's
 overwhelmed, doesn't know anybody.
 She doesn't even speak Spanish.
 Maybe I should've gone down there
 to help for a few weeks...

IDA
 And risk your job? With benefits
 and a pension plan? Tess we all
 make choices and ...

Both Tess and Maria roll their eyes at the same time.

TESS AND MARIA
 (in unison)
 We all live with the choices we
 make.

INT. TESS'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Five students read aloud to Tess in the middle of what looks
 like a Mexican Zocalo bandstand filled with little desks.

A half-smashed Frida skull hangs from the rafters.

LATIN GIRL
 (struggling)
 ...then Her...mmm...ee

TESS
 Hermione - long i sound - like ice
 cream

A distorted intercom announces an urgent call for Tess and she reaches over the bandstand hand rail to answer it.

INT. MEXICAN HOUSE - DAY

Lizzy clutches a cell phone to her ear. She's pacing alongside the pool.

LIZZY
Princess, it's me - mommy.

INT. TESS'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS/INTERCUT

Tess twists the curling cord between her fingers, irritated.

TESS
Mom, you have to learn to use the computer for personal calls. The school number is only for emergencies.

LIZZY
This is an emergency.

TESS
(covering her other ear)
Slow down, I didn't catch that.

LIZZY
I don't have time. He could be back any minute.

TESS
(alarmed now)
Jesus mom, is somebody breaking in? Where's dad?

LIZZY
In Mazatlan ...

TESS
Have you called him? No wait! Hang up. Hide. I'll call dad's cell.

Tess's urgency frightens the students; they close their books and slouch down in their desks.

LIZZY
No don't! He'll kill me.

TESS

Is someone in the house? Can he hear you? Get in a closet. Keep the phone with you. I'll get dad. Don't make a sound.

LIZZY

Listen to me. He's the one hurting me.

TESS

What are you saying mom? Who's hurting you?

LIZZY

Your father.

Tess turns white and sinks to her knees as her mother pleads.

LIZZY (CONT'D)

You have to come help me. He'll stop, for you.

TESS

Stop what? Mom are you saying dad is physically hurting you?

LIZZY

Please. Just come. Tonight.

TESS

I'm at work. I can't just fly to Mexico. Please, mom, talk to dad, this has to be a mistake. You mean he's hurting your feelings, right? You have to communicate, talk this stuff out.

LIZZY

I hear his truck. I'm begging you. Don't warn him. Just get me out of here. You're the only one who can.

The calls cuts off and the room swirls around a crumpled, disbelieving Tess.

EXT. TESS'S SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Tess paces along the curb outside the principal's office. She's fiddling with a bra strap; her face is pasty white.

Jake screeches into the parking lot in a hybrid wagon.

JAKE

There's a flight out tonight. We're on standby. Babe, are you sure you heard right?

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Tess bursts into tears the minute she pulls the door closed.

TESS

I can't...not here. Just drive...the kids...can see.

Jake pulls her shaking hand to his chest and steers the car with one hand, calming her with his steady heart beat.

JAKE

You don't want to believe it, do you?

TESS

We're not some trailer trash kind of family Jake. Gran is practically a legend around here and everyone admires dad. Or wants to be just like him. She can't mean it.

JAKE

They've been married 27 years. And now this? Out of the blue?

TESS

He's never laid a hand on her.

JAKE

That you witnessed, Tess. He would never do anything in front of you but that doesn't mean...

TESS

He's not a monster. He's my father.

JAKE

What exactly did your mother say?

TESS

I can't remember. I thought someone, a kidnapper or a killer was right there, sneaking up behind her. Then she starts saying it's him, your father, save me, flipping out. She must have snapped.

Jake draws her hand to his lips and kisses it.

JAKE

Tess, I know you love him. And he lives for you. But if you really thought your mother is...

(pausing, for the right word)

...imagining this... why did you call me, and not Mac?

Tess pulls her hand away from Jake's chest and covers her eyes.

TESS

She sounded so scared.

EXT. MEXICAN CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

Jake walks around the rental car he's parked next to a cemetery, calling out to Tess as he checks for dents.

JAKE

Make sure you get a local this time. We're losing our light here.

Tess nods and walks toward the cemetery gate, her bright pink indigenous woven bag flapping over her shoulder.

Men drag life-sized altars to the head of gravestones and a PEDLAR hawks thick bunches of bright orange marigolds from the back of an overloaded burro.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. MEXICO - TWENTY YEARS EARLIER - DAY

Tess, only seven, shyly approaches the bedraggled burro seen in the living room slide show. Mac is right behind her.

MAC

Nothing to be afraid of. I'm right here princess. Always will be.

The burro flinches.

Tess draws her hand away. Looks to Mac.

He smiles, scoops her up and they nuzzle the burro together.

BACK TO:

EXT. MEXICAN CEMETERY - PRESENT DAY

The pedlar plucks a handful of marigolds from the pile atop the burro.

PEDLAR

Senorita?

Tess shakes her head no, smiling, lifting a map out of her pink woven bag by way of explanation.

She approaches an altar and kneels down next to the old woman from the opening scene, still draped in a black shawl.

TESS

Pardon.

MOURNING WIDOW

(in Spanish)

Are you lost?

Jake peers over the top of the car, trying to overhear but keeping his eye on buses and trucks whizzing past.

TESS

Yes. My parents live near...well
it's not actually on the map but
it's north of Puerto Vallarta,
(pointing at the map)
...somewhere near this little town.

The old woman takes a long candle from a row she's arranged along the grave. She holds it up to the map, as if the flickering flame will help her decipher the words.

Realization washes over Tess's face: the woman can't read. She shoves the useless map into her pink woven shoulder bag.

The old woman stares at the bag.

TESS (CONT'D)

(in Spanish)

Are we close to the village where
the women make these bags? With
this pattern?

MOURNING WIDOW

(now she understands)

Diez kilometros, mas o menos.

TESS

Muchas gracias.

The old woman offers Tess a small bun from a bread basket covered with an elaborately embroidered cloth.

TESS (CONT'D)
Muy amable, abuela. (*how kind*)

MOURNING WIDOW
Que le vaya bien. (*safe travels*)

INT. RENTAL CAR - DUSK

Jake is already behind the wheel as Tess closes the cemetery gate behind her.

JAKE
You're not exactly exuding
certainty. I'm guessing still lost?

TESS
I can't turn back now, can I?

Jake pulls out onto the road, grinding the stick shift as he maneuvers around the flower-hauling burro.

JAKE
What'd the old witch say? Look here
my pretty?

Tess laughs.

TESS
Nice. She's in mourning Mr.
Sensitivity. We're ten miles away.

Tess puts the bun on the dashboard. A small, pink, sugar skull pokes out of it like a cocktail umbrella.

TESS (CONT'D)
It's pan de muerte - bread of the
dead. Still warm, want some?

Jake grins, laughing off the tension.

JAKE
And tempt fate? It's night-of-the-
dead tonight. Face it away from me.

Tess rolls down the window, letting her hand surf the air.
Barefoot kids stop chasing pigs and wave at the rental car.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. MEXICAN BEACH - TWENTY YEARS AGO - DAY

Little Tess, on Lizzy's lap in the camper van, waves to barefoot kids running along the beach seen in the slide show.

Mac pulls the van right up onto hard-packed sand.

LIZZY

Oh Mac. Do we have any food, or money we can give them?

Mac points to the glove compartment, and winks.

Tess grins at him, and pulls out a bag of pencils.

TESS

Daddy says pencils are better. That way we can write to all the friends we make along the way. Right Daddy?

MAC

Absolutamente, Compadre.

BACK TO:

EXT. MEXICAN ROADSIDE - PRESENT DAY

Tess folds and re-folds the map on her lap. Her face is losing color the closer they get to her parents' house.

Jake rests one hand gently on Tess's leg.

JAKE

We can stop and get some sort of police escort.

Tess jerks away from the intrusion into her unspoken fears.

TESS

A - do you see any? And B - we still don't know if it's true. Mom could have been drinking.

JAKE

Lizzy? Drinking? Would we be somewhere south of Mazatlan right now if you really believed that?

Tess looks out the window, biting her lips. She can't process the thought that her father is capable of violence, or abuse.

TESS

I should've talked to him first.
This feels like an ambush.

JAKE

Babe, he's the one who ambushed
you. You didn't ask for this.

TESS

(blurting it out)
What if he didn't do anything? This
will kill him. His own daughter not
trusting him. Don't you see? I'm
betraying my father...

JAKE

To save your mother.

EXT. MEXICAN HOUSE - EVENING

The light is low and glancing when they arrive at the house.

TESS

I'll jump out and open the gate.

JAKE

Are you sure this is the house? It
looks more like a prison compound.

Tess hops out to swing open a massive wrought-iron gate,
seeing everything through thick black bars.

A high brick wall encloses the property, topped with shards
of broken beer bottles.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Nice. Some kid's gonna throw a ball
over that and slice his stomach
open trying to get into the yard.

The tree-less yard is barren, not a blade of grass. Rebar
sticks up from the roof.

The old camper van is wedged under an awning.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. CAMPER VAN - TWENTY YEARS AGO - DAY

The girls and Lizzy sit on opposite sides of a tiny table that folds into a bed at night. They're in exactly the same position they were in when the slide show photo was taken.

TESS
Try again mommy. Ready?

Lizzy nods.

Tess pulls a flashcard from a pile in front of her.

TESS (CONT'D)
This one's easy. See? It's a cat.

Lizzy taps her fingers on the table, concentrating.

LIZZY
Cat-ito?

Tess laughs.

TESS
Dizzy Lizzy. It's gatito, not cat-
ito silly.

BACK TO:

EXT. MEXICAN HOUSE - EVENING

Next to the camper van, an oil stain on the driveway marks where the pickup truck normally parks.

Jake pulls up beside the stain.

TESS
Good. The truck's not here. If
mom's here, then she's still alone.

JAKE
Wait. We don't know that. Lizzy
might have taken the truck.

TESS
Impossible. She can't drive stick.

INT. MEXICAN HOUSE

The heavy, carved front door gives way at the twist of the knob.

Inside, a dog is barking but the sound is muffled, far away.

TESS

Sweet Pea? Is that you?

JAKE

Lizzy? Anybody home?

TESS

Where are the light switches?

Tess jumps when her hand drapes over a clump of coarse horse hair. It's the hallway of head-level animal masks.

The barking gets louder as they approach the back patio.

EXT. MEXICAN CEMETERY - EVENING

The old woman in the shawl leans over a row of candles ringing the grave. She uses the flame of one candle to light the next and shuffles, on her knees, down the line.

OLD WOMAN

(in Spanish)

Please return. Come back to us tonight.

Far off street dogs bark as she murmurs, talking to the dead.

EXT. MEXICAN HOUSE PATIO - CONTINUOUS, INTERCUT

Tess slides open a glass door and trips over a dog's bowl.

The puppy, bigger now, looks up from the near side of the dark swimming pool, still barking.

TESS

Sweet Pea. What's the matter?

Lizzy floats face down in the water, white as a skeleton.

JAKE

Lizzy!

One arm elbows out of the water and flops forward.

Jake's knees buckle.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Oh thank God. I thought she
drowned.

TESS
Mom, it's me, Tess. Mom stop!

Lizzy continues a plodding crawl. Every other stroke she turns her head to the side to take a breath. Robotically.

Her eyes are closed; she's feeling for the edge with her fingers. Her strokes are heavy and powerless.

TESS (CONT'D)
Jake. Turn on a light. It's like
she's sleep-swimming.

Jake finds the outdoor light switch and floods the patio with searchlight intensity. Still Lizzy doesn't acknowledge them.

EXT. MEXICAN CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS, INTERCUT

A giant skeleton jerks overhead; the old woman looks up from her candles to see two men hoisting it over their shoulders like they're carrying a body on a cross.

OLD WOMAN
Be careful. The dead have eyes.

The men move the skeleton between the graves, under the stars, toward the flowered alter.

EXT. MEXICAN HOUSE PATIO - CONTINUOUS, INTERCUT

Tess runs to the end of the pool, waving her arms.

Lizzy does a slow kick turn, splashing water over Tess's feet.

A white tag catches Tess's eye.

TESS
Her swimsuit's inside out.

There's a dark splotch at the bottom of the fabric and, as Lizzy pushes away from the wall, a steady trail of blood flows from between her legs.

JAKE

Uhm, where's that coming from?

The light off the water's surface bounces up to two faces flooded with sudden, brutal clarity.

TESS

Oh my God.

Tess dives into the pool, fully clothed. She pulls at her mother's arms to stop her, getting elbowed in the face as she struggles to touch the bottom with her toes.

Lizzy is catatonic, stiff in her daughter's arms. Green pool scum clings to wrinkles in her neck.

TESS (CONT'D)

Oh God mom, what did he do to you?

Lizzy tries to smile, but her eyes have no sparkle.

LIZZY

You came.

TESS

I'm right here. We both are. It's gonna be alright.

Jake squats down at the far side of the pool, hushing the frantic puppy.

JAKE

(calmly)

Lizzy, I'll get some towels. Will you come out?

Lizzy's red eyes dart between them, like a deer.

TESS

We're going to take you home, get you to a doctor. But we need to know - where is dad?

LIZZY

(with a dull dread)

Is he back?

TESS

Mom. Concentrate. Where is he? How much time do we have?

LIZZY
 (uncomfortable)
 Where he always goes on Friday
 nights...

Tess tilts her head, not following. Jake takes the dog
 inside, to give them privacy.

LIZZY (CONT'D)
 It's never enough...

Tess draws her mother closer, bearing the weight as she
 slowly side-strokes her to the shallow end.

TESS
 It's over mom. You can tell me.
 Where is dad?

LIZZY
 (like she's not sure how
 to pronounce the words)
 Whorehouse. Mazatlan.

INT. MEXICAN HOUSE - EVENING

Lizzy lets Tess wrap a towel around her but she keeps her
 arms at her sides, like it's a straight jacket.

TESS
 Mom, where do you keep your
 passport? Jake's getting your
 things.

Lizzy bends at the waist as Tess lowers her onto the sofa.

LIZZY
 But he'll come after me.

JAKE (O.S.)
 It's not in the drawers...

TESS
 No he won't. I've got a plan. Take
 this paper and write down exactly
 what I tell you.

Tess pulls Lizzy's hands out from under the towel and pats
 them dry. She hands Lizzy a pen.

TESS (CONT'D)
 We'll throw him off the track.
 Write this. Took taxi to a spa...

INSERT - NOTE, AS LIZZY WRITES:

TESS (CONT'D)
Took taxi to a spa in Puerto...

Tess's voice falters. Her mother's wrists and forearms are covered in bruises and rope burns.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jake opens suitcases stacked on either side of the master bed, functioning as twin night stands. A solitary pillow leans against the headboard.

JAKE
Only one?

Jake thumbs through the contents of the top suitcase - dozens of pornographic magazines. Brutal, invasive images.

In the bottom suitcase, he feels something leather. It's a wallet. With Lizzy's passport inside.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Get-out-of-jail free card.

He hesitates. Then takes an ATM card out of the wallet too.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Have fun without this, Asshole.

He carefully puts everything back in place.

JAKE (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Found it. Everybody decent out there?

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jake and Tess meet next to the row of leering masks.

They lean together, pressing their foreheads against each other, just for a moment.

JAKE
I'm going to book us some flights out of Mazatlan tonight - if I can get a decent signal outside. Get Lizzy ready, okay?

Tess steals a glance at her mother, sitting with the exposed bra lining of her inside-out swimsuit bunched and puckered.

TESS
 (choking back sobs)
 Look. Where she sleeps. With the dog.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lizzy holds the dog in one arm, the other hand blotting watery blood from the sofa seat where she was sitting. Her feet soak a rumpled sheet and pillow -- on the floor.

Tess takes a deep breath, through her nose.

TESS
 Mom, you gotta take that suit off and get dressed. I'm going to get a dry shirt out of the car.

Lizzy tugs at her swim suit, hiding herself with the towel.

LIZZY
 What about Sweet Pea?

The puppy sticks its nose inside Lizzy's towel, quivering.

TESS
 I'm sorry mom, we can't take her.

LIZZY
 I'll go get her leash. It's out back.

TESS
 Mom, they won't let her on a plane.

LIZZY
 (pleading)
 I can't leave her with Mac! He never wanted a dog. He doesn't have the patience...

Jake walks in, behind Lizzy, shaking his head no - in case Tess is considering caving in.

TESS
 Remember the note we wrote? If we take Sweet Pea with us then Mac will know you're gone for good.

LIZZY
But she's afraid of him.

Jake gently takes the dog from Lizzy's quivering arms.

JAKE
We'll leave her plenty of food and water but we have to hurry. The red-eye leaves in two hours. I'm sorry.

Lizzy's sobbing sets Sweet Pea into a mournful howl.

INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

Lizzy curls up in the back seat of the rental car.

LIZZY
He has to come back this way. It's the only road. What if he sees us?

Tess watches her in the rear view mirror, like a mother checking on a frightened child.

TESS
Just keep your head down mom. He won't recognize this car. I'll wake you when this is all over.

The road is menacing in the darkness; the car's wimpy head lamps barely illuminate the steep drop-offs on either side.

Then, like the rising sun, a field of candles glows in the distance. It is the cemetery where Tess got directions, now filled with families communing with their dead.

EXT. MEXICAN CEMETERY - DAWN

Songbirds hop along a garland of marigolds strung between sugar skulls decorating the fence posts.

They peck at bulging eyeballs and cracking lips -- until Mac swings open the gate.

MAC
Jesus these people dump trash everywhere.

He needs a shave, his pitted-out shirt is unbuttoned and his eyes are bloodshot.

His truck is still running, pulled over on the roadside.

MAC (CONT'D)
Nobody'll miss these...

Mac gathers up a bunch of marigolds from the nearest grave.

INT. MEXICAN HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

Mac bursts through the bedroom door.

MAC
Where are you? I brought flowers.

He yanks the cord to raise the window blinds, blinking against the blinding sunlight.

MAC (CONT'D)
You better be in that pool!

The back yard is empty.

Mac turns back to the bed. Lizzy's cell phone is still on the night stand. He flings the flowers on the ground and storms into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lizzy's handwritten note curls in the sudden burst of air and flutters to the ground near the blood-stained sofa.

INSERT - NOTE

Took a taxi to a spa in Puerto
Vallarta. Need the break. Be back
in a few days - Lizzy.

Mac stares through the sliding glass door, eyes narrowing past the dog pawing to get in. He pivots, ignoring her whimpering as he crumples the note in his fist.

MAC
(muttering)
Like hell...

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mac crushes the flowers as he gets down on his knees and yanks the bottom suitcase from the makeshift night stand.

The reading lamp flies off and shatters as the stack collapses. He goes straight for the leather wallet.

MAC

That passport better be there.

His lips pinch together and eyes squeeze shut. His neck tendons tense and he sucks in air through flared nostrils. His whole face quivers with rage as he stands.

His eyes slowly open, level with a faded photograph hanging directly in front of him.

It's an old vacation snapshot of little Tess, holding Mac's hand and walking along the handrail of a Zocalo bandstand.

INT. TEACHER'S CREDIT UNION - SAME DAY

Lizzy, Jake and Tess wait in line for a teller.

LIZZY

It's awfully busy. Couldn't we come back another time?

TESS

It's always jammed on Saturdays. They close early.

JAKE

She's tired, Tess.

TESS

Jake, we talked about this. My name is on dad's bank account, in case something ever happened down in Mexico. My name. Not his own wife.

LIZZY

He said I don't need my own account. I'm no good with numbers.

TESS

You see? That's why we have to do this now. It's your savings too mom and you need your own account. Before dad finds out you're gone.

JAKE

She's just making sure you're protected, Lizzy. Financially.

Tess shoots a grateful smile to Jake. Then her mother.

Both women look bone tired, faces drained of sleep.

TESS

Well I feel glamorous. Does my hair
look as green and stringy as yours?

Lizzy pats her pool-matted hair, suddenly embarrassed.

TESS (CONT'D)

I'm just kidding. Mom. It's just
chlorine. We'll live.

Jake punches the speed dial on Tess's mobile.

JAKE

Ida it's Jake. Everybody's safe...
At the bank getting Lizzy set up
before Mac finds out she's gone...
She's freaked, but hanging in.

Tess and Lizzy are almost at the front of the line when Jake
hears the beep of an incoming call.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(to Ida)

Shit. Sorry Ida. Mac's on the other
line...Okay. I will.

He catches up to Tess, holding the phone away from him like a
hand grenade. A tinny mariachi ring tone is the lit fuse.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(to Tess)

If he hasn't found the note yet,
he's probably panicking.

Patrons behind them back up, clearing a space around the
palpable tension. Jake hands Tess the unavoidable consequence
of what she's done.

Tess's hands shake but she forces an even tone.

TESS

Hey dad. Que paso?

INT. MEXICAN HOUSE/CREDIT UNION - CONTINUOUS, INTERCUT

Mac puts his cell phone on speaker and sets it on the tile
sink stand in the bathroom. His speech is dictatorial, like
Tess is a teenager.

MAC

Listen carefully. I need you to do
something for me. Lizzy's gone.

He turns on the faucet, lathering up his face.

TESS
(testing him)
Gone? Gone where? Have you called
the police?

Jake pulls Lizzy to his chest, away from the phone.

JAKE
(to Lizzy)
Shhh. Tess can handle him. He
thinks you're in Puerto Vallarta.

Mac scrapes along his bearded cheek, fist-gripping the razor.

MAC
I need you to get to a bank,
immediately...

He finishes one side and stares at the mirror.

MAC (CONT'D)
I can't believe this is happening
to me. She up and left.

TESS
How do you know?

MAC
Took my bank card. She'll wipe me
out Tess - leave me stranded. She
did it once before.

TESS
Did what once before?

MAC
Cleaned me out. After a stupid
argument. You were little.

The bank teller pushes a form to Tess, annoyed. She taps the no-cell-phone sign taped to her work station.

Tess steps to the side, shaking her head at Jake in disbelief. Mac isn't even going through the motions of concern for Lizzy's safety.

TESS
(incredulous)
You're. Worried. About. Money.

Mac swishes the blade in the soapy sink, turning to examine his other cheek.

MAC

You're all I've got. You and me;
we're the level-headed ones. Just
hang onto the cash until I find
your crazy mother and talk some
sense into her.

Tess listens as she fills out the bank form. She grips the pen by its very tip.

She cuts back into line, handing the teller her ATM card as she speaks, enunciating each word, phone pressed to her lips.

TESS

(into phone but also to
teller)
Withdraw all the money in the joint
account...

She forces a smile and holds eye contact with the teller.

TESS (CONT'D)

...and put it into my own account.

The teller shoots Tess a loaded look, the intentional double audience lost in irritation over the cell phone intrusion.

MAC

Right. Just for a few days. I'm
counting on you, Compadre.

TESS

Don't you compadre me...

Tess she doesn't see the teller recoil. She's staring at the receipt. The money's safely transferred.

TESS (CONT'D)

How is it okay to leave mom
penniless in Puerto Vallarta? She
can't even speak the language!

Mac's jaw clenches and the blade nicks his skin. Blood trickles down his chin, out of his control.

MAC

Who said anything about Vallarta?

He looks down at Lizzy's crumpled note lying in the trash can. Lizzy must be with Tess.

EXT. MEXICAN HOUSE - DAY

The sounds of a door slamming and tires spinning almost drown out the yelps of the puppy. Sweet Pea is tied to the front door with a length of chain.

There's enough slack to wind herself around an open sack of dry dog food in the dead center of the walkway.

I/E. PICKUP - DAY

Barefoot children stare at the gringo racing through the Sonoran desert. They wave, hopefully.

MAC

Not tonight. Get out of my way.

The truck's windows are rolled open. He's chain smoking.

At the turnoff to Puerto Vallarta, he drives in the opposite direction, toward the border. He knows Lizzy's note is a lie.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tess hands Jake a comforter - he'll be sleeping on the couch.

JAKE

Night Lizzy. I'll be in the other room if you girls need anything.

LIZZY

Are you sure? I don't need a bed. I'm used to it.

Tess and Jake share a knowing glance and he walks out.

Tess holds up a nightgown and soft hair brush, masking concern for Lizzy's mental state with a too-bright smile.

TESS

He's fine mom. Let's get you ready for bed.

Lizzy shuffles backward, waiting until her legs brush against the edge of the bed before she sits.

She looks through Tess, replaying the trauma of the last 24 hours. She holds her arms above her head in surrender.

LIZZY
What have I done?

Tess gently tugs her mother's dress up over her head.

TESS
The right thing, mom. You must have
been terrified. Down there all
alone.

Lizzy's thin, extended arms droop helplessly at the wrists.
Naked now, she drops her gaze to the floor.

TESS (CONT'D)
Mom, where are your undies? Did you
forget to put any on when we left?

LIZZY
He hides them. So it's faster.

TESS
So what's faster? He hides your
underwear? I don't get it.

Lizzy draws her knees to her chest, like a child.

TESS (CONT'D)
Not that. Please tell me not that.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. IN THE SURF OF A MEXICAN BEACH - TWENTY YEARS AGO

Maria hangs off one of Lizzy's hips in chest-deep surf.

Tess jumps up and down, waving to Mac. On the beach. With a
camera. Taking the picture that will end up in a slide show.

MAC
Wave Lizzy!

TESS
Come on mommy, wave to daddy.

Lizzy shifts little Maria to her front, like a koala bear.
She's hiding bare breasts. Mac has her bikini top on shore.

BACK TO:

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

Tess takes Lizzy's hands.

TESS

I'm so sorry, mom. I never saw it.

She bends over and kisses the top of Lizzy's head.

Lizzy stiffens at the contact and then relents.

LIZZY

Don't make me go back.

TESS

No one will ever make you go back.
You're safe. Get some sleep. I'm
not going anywhere.

Tess pulls the alarm clock cord from the wall.

EXT. MEXICAN HOUSE

The chain tied to the front door handle yanks and strains.
Sweet Pea can't free herself.

She yelps, panting. Abandoned in the middle of nowhere.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

A toilet flushes. Lizzy slams upright, instantly on guard.

TESS

It's just Jake. Relax mom.

LIZZY

He'll find me. He always does.

TESS

What do you mean, always?

LIZZY pulls the turquoise sheet up to her chin, shaking.

LIZZY

You were too little.

TESS

Wait. Dad said that too. How long
has this been going on?

LIZZY

Don't make me go back.

TESS

Mexico wasn't the first time, was it? How long, mom? Since I was a little kid? Your whole marriage?

LIZZY

Ups and downs. Every marriage goes through them.

Tess grabs Lizzy's wrists, below the bruises.

TESS

This isn't ups and downs, mom. It's abuse. You should have said something.

LIZZY

You were too little...

TESS

But Gran would have sic'd Teamsters on him. Had his kneecaps busted. Something. Anything.

LIZZY

(oddly detached, reciting)
It's too late. We all live with our choices. Please don't tell her. It's bad enough my princess knows.

TESS

I already told Gran. You're safe now mom. No more secrets.

Lizzy curls up on her side. Hiding the shame of it.

Tess scoots closer, until she's spooning her shaking mother.

TESS (CONT'D)

Shh...remember our bedtime story? You're the mermaid queen and I'm the mermaid princess. We live at the bottom of the ocean. Where nobody up above can see.

Lizzy's body begins to relax. She's mumbling softly.

LIZZY

Only mermaids allowed...

TESS

That's right. Nobody else can breathe underwater. They'll just sink, like rocks while we swim away. Together.

LIZZY

Happily ever after. Night princess.

TESS

Sleep tight.

INT. MAC'S PICKUP - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Immigration agents make their way down the line of vehicles waiting to cross the border, directing random drivers to the side for searches.

Mac sweeps Red Bull cans and candy wrappers into a garbage bag. He sets it on the floorboard, feeling around without taking his eyes off the line ahead of him. His fingers curl around the butt of a .38.

He looks down just for a second, to check that it's loaded. As the pickup inches forward, Mac stuffs the gun into a rip in the seat's upholstery between his knees.

He slips into neutral and idles as an agent walks up.

AGENT

U.S. Citizen?

MAC

Yes sir.

Mac nods his head in respectful deference. And smiles.

AGENT

License and passport out?

MAC

Will do.

The agent waves Mac on with a friendly salute.

EXT. TESS AND JAKE'S ROWHOUSE - SUNDAY MORNING

Tess backs onto a rooftop deck holding a steaming cup of tea.

The barest sliver of the ocean peeks out from behind row houses and warehouse apartments.

TESS

All I have is herbal mom, okay?

She turns to find Ida standing between Lizzy and Jake.

IDA

Glad I didn't wake anyone. I brought donuts. And a plan.

TESS

(surprised and relieved)
Hey Gran. Didn't hear you come in.

IDA

(to Lizzy)

I've already got calls out to some lawyers I work with. First thing tomorrow morning we'll get the ball rolling. You just let me handle it.

There's a bit more color in Lizzy's face - she's less zombie, more embarrassed. She looks to Tess for confirmation.

LIZZY

Handle what? What's going on?

TESS

It's the smart thing to do mom. I know it's a lot, so soon, but we already know how dad's reacting. We have to be prepared for a fight.

LIZZY

(tears welling)

But you said he wouldn't find me. I did what you said. I left Sweet Pea. I wrote that note. Everything you told me.

TESS

You did the right thing. Now it's time to put this behind you. You don't ever have to see him again. That's what you want, right?

LIZZY

I just want to disappear. To the bottom of the sea. That's all.

IDA

You deserve better Elizabeth. I know it doesn't seem like it now, but you'll find somebody who deserves you. Mac doesn't have the balls to contest this divorce. It'll be over quick.

LIZZY

Divorce? Who said anything about divorce?

TESS

You didn't have to. Mom, he hurt you. You never have to go back, nobody can make you once it's over.

LIZZY

Oh God, this is all my fault. I overreacted. I always do. He's gonna be so mad at me.

She looks around, searching for answers in the faces of her new controllers. This is happening too fast.

LIZZY (CONT'D)

(changing the subject)

When can I see my babies?

TESS

(gently)

Soon. They missed you so much. But you need to eat something now, OK?

Ida starts cutting up a donut, with a knife and fork. Like her daughter is still a child.

LIZZY

He's going to keep calling. I know it. I can't talk to him...

IDA

(firmly)

You don't have to. That's what family's for.

She's probably spoken for Lizzy her whole life.

Lizzy's teacup begins to rattle on its saucer. Her voice comes out in a squeaky whisper, like she's apologizing.

LIZZY

I just want to see my grandkids. I need to hold them. Thinking about them is all that kept me from killing...

Tess takes the rattling teacup away.

LIZZY (CONT'D)

I thought about it so many times. He always keeps the guns loaded.

TESS

Guns? Guns are illegal in Mexico.

JAKE

Like that means anything to Mac.

Ida wraps her arm around Lizzy's shoulders and walks her over to the edge of the roof deck.

IDA

One day at a time Elizabeth. Take it one day at a time.

She points to the ocean.

IDA (CONT'D)

Look out there, where the horizon is. The sun rises behind us. Never fails. Even when you can't see it.

EXT. SIDE OF A HIGHWAY

Mac pulls his truck over to the shoulder. The whole cab shudders as giant semi-trucks rumble past.

He waits for a break in the traffic He's wearing the same clothes, hasn't stopped. His face masks any emotion.

Down, in the ditch, wildflowers cling to the loose dirt. Mac scrambles down, adjusts himself and pisses on them.

EXT. IDA'S GARDEN

Ida yanks at a garden hose, trying to reach a thorny rose in a well-tended bed just under her kitchen window.

Mud splatters up against the cedar shingles of her house.

IDA
 (to the hose)
 Don't you pick a fight with me...

She yanks even harder, madder than she should be. The plastic hose roller peels off the wall, tearing shingles with it.

She ties the hose in her hands into a tight knot, killing off the water for now. One tough old lady.

INT. SANDWICH SHOP - LATER THAT DAY

Tess holds the door open for Lizzy, talking non-stop.

Her mother has a T.J. Maxx shopping bag in each hand. She looks shell shocked.

TESS
 ...so you can just use our card until we can get one under your own name. Establishing credit's going to be important, you know, for renting, in the short term, or getting a home loan eventually. Whenever you're ready. I'm not rushing you, am I?

Lizzy eyes a booth, to sit down. She's pale.

LIZZY
 You and you father are good with numbers. Not me.

TESS
 Okay okay. Moratorium on the full court press. Let's just eat, okay?

Tess motions to the menu board above the counter. A giant "order here" sign flaps in the air-conditioning.

LIZZY
 I don't know. It's so confusing.

TESS
 It's okay mom. I'll show you what to do. Right now, just order lunch.

Lizzy stares up at the menu, squinting. A man behind her taps his foot, already impatient. Tess shoots him a fuck-off look.

TESS (CONT'D)

Do you need your reading glasses?
Shit, did we forget them in Mexico?

LIZZY

What can I get?

TESS

What do you mean? Whatever you
want. The turkey's good.

LIZZY

But how do I know?

Tess stares at her mother, waving the irritated man behind them around. Another truth is dawning on her: Lizzy thinks she can't survive without Mac.

TESS

How do you know what?

LIZZY

Anything. Dad always decides.

TESS

Mom. Look at me. Mac is not in
control anymore. You can have
whatever kind of sandwich you want.

LIZZY

But how am I supposed to know what
I want?

Tess takes Lizzy's hand and squeezes it. Her voice wavers.

TESS

(to the clerk)
Two turkey and avocado subs,
toasted, light mayo.

LIZZY

(to Tess)
Maybe a cookie too?

TESS

Tell him, not me.

Lizzy clears her throat, afraid to speak up.

LIZZY

One cookie please.

SANDWICH CLERK

What kind?

LIZZY

Oh, I don't know. Give me one of everything!

Tess kisses Lizzy on the cheek.

INT. TWINS BEDROOM - EVENING

Lizzy and the twins snuggle on the top bunk in the kids bedroom. Alex wears Spider Man pajamas; Alicia wears Dora.

ALEX

I want the Lion and the Mouse!

LIZZY

What about a nice fairy tale? That one's so scary...

ALICIA

Granny, the lion-snot-really-mean.

Alex leans halfway off the bunk to reach a stack of books.

LIZZY

Alright. But nobody better have nightmares.

Lizzy launches into the telling - dramatic pauses, varying pitch - a grandmother who has ached from missing this.

LIZZY (CONT'D)

Who who whooooooooo?

Alex throws his head backs and growls like a lion.

Lizzy tickles him to make him stop.

Outside the house a car door slams. Lizzy looks up from the book - the muscles in her neck involuntarily clench and she loses her place on the page.

ALEX

No Granny, you don't turn the page over yet.

INT. MARIA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tess and Maria are doing dishes, polishing off a bottle of wine as they work.

MARIA

There. You're doing it again. I'm not blaming you. I'm just saying there were signs we all missed.

TESS

Such as?

MARIA

He used to call her Dizzy instead of Lizzy. You don't remember that?

Tess freezes, hands halfway out of the water, stung.

TESS

He was just kidding. Don't tell me you thought any different.

MARIA

Fine. We won't talk about it then.

Tess cocks her head in the direction of a door slamming, alert. She glances at her cell.

TESS

Jake would call first.

The front door bursts open and Mac barges into the house. His eyes are bloodshot and his voice trembles with barely contained fury.

MAC

Where. Is. She.

Tess blocks the hallway to the kids bedroom, trying to make a call on her cell phone with wet, soapy hands.

Mac lunges for her arm, sending the phone flying through the air. She stumbles and he shoves past her.

TESS

Dad, it's over. Don't make this worse.

Mac reaches into the waistband of his jeans and pulls out the gun.

MAC

It's over when I say it is.

Maria has the wine bottle in her hand, poised to pelt it over Mac's head, when she sees the gun and screams.

The wine bottle shatters on the floor, blood-red Merlot seeping through seams in the linoleum.

MAC (CONT'D)

Lizzy I know you're in here!

Mac pushes the bedroom door open with a vicious elbow stab.

INT. TWINS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex and Alicia cling to their grandmother.

LIZZY

Close your eyes. Don't look. It's just Grandpa. Nothing's the matter.

MAC

Why Lizzy? Why are you doing this to me? I didn't mean anything.

Tess slips into the room, pleading with her father.

TESS

Daddy give me the gun! You're scaring your grandkids. Give it over...

Lizzy starts signing out loud.

LIZZY

Row, row, row your boat....

MAC

(yelling now)

Twenty seven years Lizzy - you run away from 27 years together?

Tears stream down Lizzy's face and her fingernails dig tracks of torment across her knees.

LIZZY

...gently down the stream.

The twins whimper, fingers in their ears.

TESS

Dad give me the gun. Maria call the police!

Mac looks down at the gun in his hand, flings his head back and bellows in anger and agony.

MAC

Shut up! Everybody shut up! Lizzy say you're not leaving me. Say you're coming back with me...

Lizzy shrivels, eyes pleading between Mac and Tess.

LIZZY

Tess, you promised...

MAC

Lizzy look at me. Not her. I need you. I can't live without you. I didn't mean anything. You know I didn't. You're everything. If you don't come back to me I can't... I'll...

Mac suddenly lifts the gun to his temple and drops down on his knees at the base of the bunk bed ladder. He stares up at Lizzy, gulping back sobs that convulse his whole body.

TESS

Daddy no! Please daddy, we can fix this...

MARIA

Not in front of my kids!

Lizzy shudders with shame. She knows what Mac wants to hear.

LIZZY

Mac don't. Let's go. Just the two of us. Take me away. Rescue me.

She leans toward him, like she needs his hands to get down.

In the split second that he reaches for Lizzy, Tess dives for the gun and wrestles it away from Mac.

One bullet BLASTS through the ceiling fan, splintering one wooden blade and shooting out the light.

The room plunges into darkness as Lizzy CRASHES to the floor, landing on Mac.

Maria rips the ladder from the bunk bed latch and beats it against the window to break the glass. Now the twins are eye level with an escape hatch.

MARIA
Jump! Run next door and wait there.

The twins are covered in shards of glass.

ALICIA
I peed my pajamas.

ALEX
Mommy get me!

Mac drags Lizzy off the floor.

Tess steps between her parents and the twins and points the gun at her father. Her arms are shaking; she's gripping the butt instead of the trigger.

MAC
Stay out of this Tess. You heard her. She wants to come with me.

Mac shields himself with Lizzy's body, backing out of the bedroom without taking his eyes off Tess.

Lizzy begs.

LIZZY (O.S.)
Please Tess, it's okay. Let us go.
It's my fault. Nothing really
happened. He loves me. I know it
now. I'll be fine. He loves me.

Tess stands frozen with doubt. Until she hears Mac's truck start.

She runs to the broken window.

It's just light enough to see the back of Lizzy's head, resting on Mac's shoulder as he peels out of the driveway.

INT. TWINS BEDROOM - LATER

A police officer stands on a chair, poking at the bullet hole in the ceiling.

A female officer takes notes.

FEMALE OFFICER

(to Tess)

So he didn't actually threaten to kill her and you fired the weapon?

TESS

He's still got her! She's terrified. He's capable of...God knows what!

MARIA

He broke into my house. Can't you charge him with that at least?

MALE OFFICER

(to Maria)

We've only got a broken bedroom window -- which you said you broke.

Alex pokes his head around the corner of the bedroom. He's wearing mismatched pajama bottoms, high waters.

ALEX

Mommy, your bedroom is too dark. I can't go back to sleep.

MARIA

I'll come plug in a night light in a second. Bedtime, buddy.

The female cop smiles at the boy, and closes her notebook.

FEMALE OFFICER

Listen, here's the number of a domestic abuse shelter.

TESS

You've got to be kidding me. He's dragging her back to Mexico. Call the dam border. Do something!

MALE OFFICER

I'm sorry Miss. We'll send a patrol around every couple of hours.

Jake passes the cops as they leave. Tess flings herself into his arms, finally breaking down.

INT. TWINS BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

The ceiling fan wobbles overhead - splintered by the bullet.

Jake methodically scrapes glass shards from the window sill.

Ida perches on a kid's desk, her hair tidy and lipstick neatly applied. Still, she looks years older, battle-weary.

Maria and Tess slouch next to each other on the bottom bunk.

TESS

Let me get this straight Gran. You talked to mom. This morning. And you didn't tell me?

IDA

I'm telling you now Tess. That's why we're all here. Everyone needs to know what's going on.

TESS

She's been kidnapped. That's what's going on. We had front row seats.

IDA

She says she's fine. They're in Los Angeles. At a crisis center. Talking to a counselor.

TESS

(incredulous)
A counselor?

Maria stands up, bumping her head on the top bunk. She punches it with her fist and crosses the room, making a bee-line to a vacuum cleaner leaned against a wall.

MARIA

It's a little late for fucking counseling, don't you think? Counseling is what you get before you threaten to kill yourself in front of your grandchildren.

Tess still stares at her grandmother, trying to take it in.

TESS

Wait wait wait. She called from L.A.? When?

IDA

An hour ago. Maybe two.

TESS

Then they're still in the U.S! It's at least two hours from LA to the Tijuana border. I've got the cop's number from last night. She can get him stopped before they cross!

Maria stabs into the middle of the family circle with the roaring vacuum cleaner. She vacuums between Ida and Tess, over and over the same spot.

Ida has to shout over the vacuum's protest.

IDA

I already called L.A.P.D. And San Diego. She's with him voluntarily. She's done this before.

Maria stops vacuuming.

Jake stops scraping the window sill.

IDA (CONT'D)

It was after a fight. I came and got you girls and I called the cops. But when they came she wouldn't press charges. She went back to him. She was too ashamed to talk to me for a year. I almost lost her then and I'm not going to make the same mistake twice.

TESS

This isn't just a mistake! He's graduated to rape. He'll do it again, or worse. We've got to stop him!

IDA

If I've learned only one thing Tess it's that you don't back a dangerous man into a corner. You wait, until you have some leverage.

A frightened question comes from behind the doorway.

ALEX

Is Granny going get dead?

The twins have been standing there listening.

Ida hops off the desk and squats down in front of Alex, holding his hands, eye-level.

IDA

No. Your brave auntie Tess took the gun away, remember? And guess what? I talked to Lizzy a little bit ago. She wanted me to tell you that she's fine and she loves you both. Very much.

ALICIA

Is grandpa still mad at her?

IDA

Grandpa went to the doctor and he's taking medicine so he won't ever get so angry again. Okay?

Tess puts her head in her hands and groans.

EXT. MEXICAN HOUSE - DUSK

Sweet Pea snaps at a cloud of mosquitoes around her head.

A red water bowl spills into thirsty dirt when her back feet knock the sack of dog food over on its side.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tess nestles in Jake's arms. Mascara has dried on her cheeks, and drool from her lips has stained his T-shirt.

TESS

I can't fall asleep.

JAKE

I guess I better find some way to relax you then. You've been walking on razor blades for days.

He leans in, to kiss the back of her neck.

Tess flinches, and sits up taller, out of reach.

TESS

I've had the leverage all along.

Jake sits up too, willing to listen instead. Again.

JAKE

Are we still talking about what Ida said this morning?

TESS

She's right. I need leverage to negotiate. To save mom. And I have it.

She's wired, desperate, as tangled as her hair.

JAKE

Tess, he's dangerous. If Ida couldn't stop him how can you?

TESS

I still have the money. Every penny he has is sitting in my bank account. Don't you see? He can't get at it. And I won't transfer it back until I know she's safe.

Jake groans, reaching to take Tess's hand in his. His voice is gentle, non judgemental.

JAKE

It'll never work. He won't trade your mother for money. It's not about money.

TESS

Yes it is. I can't believe I didn't see it. Dad never let mom work. Touch the checkbook. Make any decisions. I always thought she wasn't smart enough but she just never got the chance.

JAKE

If all that motivates Mac was money he'd have walked out on Lizzy years ago, left her with nothing.

TESS

You're not buying that she means something to him! He mocks her, he demeans her...

JAKE

Abusers need someone to control. It's about power.

TESS

Exactly. He has power. Mom will never have it without money. I can give her that. I have to try.

JAKE
Mac will know he's being
manipulated. He's the master of it.

TESS
Yeah? Well everyone says I take
after him.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S ROWHOUSE - MORNING

Tess is on the computer checking e-mail.

Jake comes up behind her, delivering a steaming mug of
coffee, and a reminder.

JAKE
It's almost time for school.

Tess is just about to sip the coffee when the computer
monitor shows an incoming Skype call - from Mexico.

INTERCUT -- SKYPE CONVERSATION -- CONTINUOUS

They both lean closer as Lizzy sits down and begins to talk.

LIZZY
Tess are you there? Oh! I can see
you both.

TESS
Mom I've been worried sick. You
don't answer your phone.

LIZZY
I'm okay sweetheart. Listen. You
need to return the money.
Everything's fine now. Daddy and I
went to a counselor and everything.
Didn't granny tell you?

The words are tumbling out, each sentence ending with
insecure, rising intonation. Lizzy's eyes keep darting away
from the camera, seeking approval from someone off-screen.

TESS
I know dad's making you say this.

Suddenly Mac's face leers into the camera.

MAC

Get this straight. You're the one who kidnapped Lizzy. You're a home wrecker, that's what you are. So stay out of this!

Tess recoils from her father's bulging veins.

Jake yanks the modem out of the wall.

EXT. TESS'S SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Tess patrols the playground at lunch. But she's concentrating on her cell phone, not the kids.

TESS

Pick up mom, pick up.

Tess circles a tether ball pole. The heavy leather ball whizzes within inches of her head.

She snaps the phone closed in her fist and pounds the ball in the other direction.

EXT. MEXICAN HOUSE - DAY

Mac stabs a shovel into the bare earth, then digs it deeper with the heel of his boot.

Lizzy walks up behind Mac, shoulders quivering. She's carrying something wrapped in a towel and a sob escapes.

MAC

Lizzy, baby, don't blame yourself. It's just that I had to leave so quick, to rescue you.

LIZZY

She wouldn't let me bring her.

Mac puts the shovel down and holds out his arms for bundle.

Lizzy strokes the towel like it's a baby's blanket.

MAC

I know. It's Tess' fault. She killed Sweet Pea.

Mac turns and gently sets the puppy in the open hole.

EXT. IDA'S GARDEN

Dark-chocolate-colored dirt turns under Ida's spade. Her sleeves are rolled up, hair wrapped into a paisley print scarf. She could be Rosie the Riveter.

IDA

Get your nose out of those papers
and pass me the plant food okay?

Tess leans back in a chaise-lounge, grading papers.

TESS

Grades are due tomorrow. And by the way, "plant food" is just a euphemism. Fertilizer poisons the ground water supply.

Ida flicks the dirt from her gloves in Tess's direction.

IDA

That so, Miss Information? You work too much. You should find something less stressful.

Tess shoots her a look.

TESS

And give up my luxury teacher's pension?

IDA

I mean it. You're losing weight.

TESS

Like you should talk.

IDA

At least promise you'll quit when you start having kids.

Tess puts down the papers.

TESS

I'm around kids all day. I'm not in any rush. What's this about?

IDA

I was always in a rush. Collective bargaining. Equal pay. Better benefits. Rush rush rush, even after I had your mother.

TESS

I'm proud you fought those fights.

IDA

It's like she was born in the wrong century. There I was, always fighting to be one-of-the-guys, never taking no for an answer and she winds up helpless. It's like she never got the Hell-No! gene.

TESS

It's not that, Gran. She never had a chance. All my friends had crushes on him. I practically worshipped him. He oozes charisma. He swept her off her feet.

IDA

Oleander is poisonous, you know. And it grows like weeds in Mexico.

TESS

What?

IDA

We could send her some seeds. All she'd have to do is crush it up in a tea and...

TESS

Yeah right. Mac drinking tea. In this lifetime. Dream on.

IDA

The look on that bastard's face when it kicks in? I'd give anything...

Tess pictures it too, and shakes it off with a half-laugh.

TESS

Just what she needs Gran. Another life sentence.

She tosses Ida the fertilizer.

TESS (CONT'D)

Here. Poison the ground water instead.

EXT. TESS'S SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Tess holds open a heavy metal door with one hand for kids to pass -- the other hand holds her cell phone to her ear.

She smiles at a kid teasing her with the "call me" sign, then suddenly jerks away from the phone - dropping it.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jake stops drying a wok with a hand towel.

JAKE

Mac actually picked up?

Tess takes the wok from his hands and reaches for a shelf.

TESS

I thought I was going to pass out.
It's her cell phone Jake. He
doesn't even let her answer her own
phone.

JAKE

You have to let her reach out to
you Tess. When she's ready.

TESS

Yeah, right. She can't. He stalks
her in her own house.

JAKE

That's what I mean. It's dangerous.
If you keep badgering her then
sooner or later he's going to snap.

TESS

Like he hasn't already?

JAKE

It could get worse. We saw the
place ourselves. There's not a soul
around for twenty miles.

TESS

I can't just abandon her.

JAKE

If he loses it Tess, there's no-one
to take it out on but Lizzy.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
 Nobody would even hear her. Stop
 calling. Please.

EXT. TESS'S SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - MONTAGE OF SHOTS OVER DAYS

Tess sits down on a picnic table bench and looks at a number
 written on her palm. She dials, rubbing the number off.

TESS
 Do you speak English? I'm calling
 because there is a woman who may be
 in danger. No. Wait. Officer.
 (switching to Spanish)
 Let me explain. Please listen.

She's getting nowhere. Constant interruptions. Starting over.
 Changing pitch. Her voice gets louder and louder.

She bangs her fist on the picnic table and begins to swear.

TESS (CONT'D)
 (still in Spanish)
 You fucking asshole of a bitch!

DISSOLVE TO:

Tess walks past a group of girls sitting cross legged on the
 ground, trading candy bars for potato chips.

One girl, TERESA, gets up and hands Tess a pouch of tinfoil.

The steam from two moist corn tamales rises into the air; the
 student knows her teacher hasn't been eating lunch for days.

TERESA
 (in Spanish)
 These are from my mom. You'll feel
 better.

Tess hugs Teresa, fighting back tears. She takes two steps
 back but no more, holding vigil until Tess takes a bite.

TESS
 Gracias. Tell your mom muy rico.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Ida stands at the counter, to the side of a postal scale.

CLERK
 If that box isn't big enough we've
 got other sizes.

Ida nods, filling the box with paperbacks - murder mysteries.

CLERK (CONT'D)
You usually send her romances.

IDA
Fat lot of good that did.

Under each paper cover, she inserts a fifty dollar bill.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S MISSION DISTRICT ROWHOUSE - EVENING

Jake opens the front door and sniffs the air.

JAKE
Tess, you baking something?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tess looks up, rolling pin in hand, and knocks over a carton of eggs. Smoke wafts out the sides of the oven door.

JAKE
Grab the fire extinguisher. What the hell is going on?

Tess looks down at her hands and drops the rolling pin.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. MEXICAN BAKERY - TWENTY YEARS AGO - DAY

Tess uses tongs as long as her arms to pick out pastries.

Lizzy jostles Maria on her lap in the background, watching. Mac's 35mm camera perches on the table next to her.

Mac takes a tiny bite out of each pastry Tess selects, licking his lips and making her giggle.

BACK TO:

INT. KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

Tess hands stay suspended in the air.

TESS
I can't remember.

Jake opens the window above the sink.

JAKE
This'll draw the smoke away.

He checks the oven, no flames.

JAKE (CONT'D)
It's OK. I overreacted. Talk to me.

TESS
I want to make her something. But I
can't remember what she likes.

JAKE
What who likes?

TESS
He likes brownies, crunchy on the
outside, runny in the middle, and
pineapple upside-down cake - but
chunks, all in a circle, not the
whole rings...

JAKE
Stop, Tess...

Tears stream down her face.

TESS
Sugar cookies? Gingerbread?

JAKE
It's okay, calm down.

TESS
But I don't remember, Jake, I don't
remember what my own mother likes.

JAKE
You do know Lizzy; the most
important things to know. You knew
when something in her voice was
wrong. You believed her, even when
you didn't want to.

TESS
(yelling)
But I can't remember what she
likes! I never bothered to ask. She
was invisible.

Jake pulls Tess close. She's a rag doll.

JAKE

Blaming yourself is exactly what
Mac wants. You trusted him. All
your life. You didn't know.

Tess punches Jake's chest, wanting him to yell back,
acknowledge her complicity.

TESS

You can't say that. You didn't see
me, never sticking up for her.
Laughing at his mean jokes. Always
taking his side.

JAKE

You were a kid.

TESS

That's an excuse. He didn't just
turn into an animal when he crossed
the border. I lived in his house
and all that time I did nothing!

Tess fidgets with her bra strap.

JAKE

Tess, do you need to tell me
something?

She looks at the mess on the floor.

JAKE (CONT'D)

That's what this is really about.
You called the Mexican police
again, didn't you?

Tess closes her eyes, busted.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I thought we discussed this.

Tess stands her ground. Chin in the air. Trembling.

JAKE (CONT'D)

If you won't listen to me. listen
to Ida. You never push a dangerous
man into a corner. Promise me
you'll stop Tess.

Jake hands her an apron to tie around her waist and begins to
fill the sink with soapy water. She isn't alone anymore;
their movements slide into the synchronized, comforting,
pattern of partners.

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - DEAD OF NIGHT

The comforter at the bottom of Ida's bed jerks when her foot kicks a sleeping, unsuspecting cat.

Ida sits up, straight as a picket sign, shouting.

IDA

Lizzy!

Her straggly silver hair is plastered to her sweating face and her eyes are foggy with disorientation.

The cat jumps off the bed.

Ida reaches for him, but a sudden pain stops the movement.

She tries to scoots herself back against the headboard; her breathing is squeezed, wheezing.

She reaches for the glass of water next to her alarm clock, but, in the darkness, knocks it into the wall with a smash.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S ROWHOUSE

Tess doesn't look up from entering grades in her laptop on the sofa when Jake calls out from the other end of the room.

JAKE

Tess. You better take a look.

He runs his hands through his hair and reluctantly hits the print button.

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

Grinning in mocking triumph is Mac, one arm around a sheepish-looking Lizzy and the other around Manuel - the Mexican cop - giving a thumbs up sign.

TESS

Why would he send this?

JAKE

You couldn't let it go, could you?

TESS

I don't understand.

JAKE

Mac is persuasive, people want to believe him. He's the ultimate con artist. He believes his own lies.

TESS

He's bribing the police?

JAKE

(gentler tone)

How many times did you call them?

TESS

Once too many. Apparently.

She hands the photograph back to Jake.

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - THANKSGIVING DAY

A shiny new metal walker leans against the table but Ida is intent on shuffling along without it, breathing through a portable oxygen tank tucked under her arm.

ALEX

Climb the turkey Alicia!

Alicia drives a Matchbox car over a just-out-of-the-oven turkey, cooling on the kitchen counter.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Drive it up the computer now.

Tiny car wheels dribble turkey juice over a flat screen monitor. Which flickers on - a Skype call from Mexico.

The twins drop their cars and run for their mother.

ALICIA

Is Grampa going to shoot the computer?

MAC

(from the computer)

Where's heart-stoppin' Ida?

He's chuckling at his own joke as Lizzy perches on Mac's lap, a marionette.

LIZZY

Hi mom, gobble gobble.

IDA
Hobble hobble, you mean.

MAC
No more mini heart attacks Ida.
It's the little things that end you
up in big trouble.

IDA
Happy thanksgiving to you too.

LIZZY
He doesn't mean anything mom.
Thanks for the books you sent.

MAC
(interrupting)
Next time send instant turkey -
something she can't overcook.

LIZZY
He's just kidding mom. Everything's
going fine. It's like a second
honeymoon, really.

Tess sits off to the side of Ida's computer, watching Lizzy's
reflection in a glass pitcher of ice-water.

TESS
This performance is making me gag.

She heads for the back patio.

Ida hears the screen door slam and quickly creates a
distraction.

IDA
Who's strong enough to bring the
turkey over here so we can show
grandma?

She glares at Jake, who rolls his eyes but gives the kids a
nudge toward the cooling turkey.

IDA (CONT'D)
Don't you drop that bird or I'll
stuff all three of you full of corn
bread.

EXT. IDA'S PATIO - DUSK

Tess is fumbling with a second cigarette when Ida opens the screen door, turns around, and gingerly steps down onto the patio.

She's going backward, cradling the oxygen tank.

IDA

Little trick I learned. Easier to balance. Course some people would say I do everything ass-backward.

TESS

I'm not a kid Gran. You can't distract me like the twins.

She takes a deep drag on her cigarette.

IDA

Thought you quit.

TESS

Yeah well, I've been under a little stress lately.

Ida takes the cigarette away from Tess and takes a deep drag on it herself before handing it back.

IDA

Someone's got to keep the lines of communication open Tess.

TESS

Oh please. Sending little care packages? That only makes you feel better Gran. Mom needs more than a pen pal. She's a prisoner.

Ida folds her hands across her chest, allowing a slight smile to signal she's just letting the sarcasm slide for now.

IDA

She's a woman getting older... wrestling with the fact that she's wasted her life. That's why she's in denial. Admitting it would mean facing the fact that she allows it.

TESS

So what's the moral here? Waste half your life, might as well throw away the rest too?

IDA

Spoken like a woman with her best years still to come. Tess, I go along with these charades so someday Mac will stop supervising every call she makes. That won't ever happen if he feels threatened by me. Don't think it doesn't make me just as sick as you to watch it but I refuse to show my hand.

TESS

You're cooperating with him. It just enables him. I always thought you were tough as nails - the big union organizer. Breaking kneecaps if that's what it takes. But you're as weak as she is.

Ida turns to face her granddaughter, cupping her chin.

IDA

She's the only daughter I have Tess.

Tess bites her lips, dropping the cigarette and stubbing it out with her shoe. She can't hug Ida, not now, and it's killing her.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S BATHROOM

Jake leans over the bathtub, lighting a row of tea candles along the porcelain ledge. He rolls up one shirt sleeve and plunges his hand into the fragrant suds.

JAKE

Let me check the temperature.

Tess slips into the water, sighing in gratitude. Her eyes are closed; she's oblivious to Jake undoing his tie, unbuttoning his shirt, about to join her.

TESS

I said the cruelest things I have ever said to another human being today.

Jake's sits down on the closed commode.

JAKE

When is this going to end Tess?
You're letting Mac invade and
conquer every thought.

TESS

I practically blamed Gran for
what's happening to mom.

Jake turns the water off. The surface bubbles cling together,
in clumps, and then pop.

JAKE

Have you ever considered that your
mother might be happier now?

Tess pushes herself farther away from him, dismissive.

JAKE (CONT'D)

She is finally the center of Mac's
attention. Not you.

TESS

No. She thinks he needs her. But
it's all manipulation.

JAKE

Maybe not to her. Maybe for the
first time in your mother's life
she does feel needed. Instead of
jealous.

Tess stands up and grabs for a towel to cover herself,
suddenly ashamed.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Lizzy might not want to be saved.
You can't ignore the possibility
Tess.

She sits down in the tub and the towel, absorbing the weight
of water, slips from her shaking shoulders.

INT. HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS DESK - NIGHT

Ida pushes her walker up to the desk. Her skin is grey.

IDA

Excuse me. I believe I'm having
another heart attack.

She hands her car keys to the astonished night clerk.

IDA (CONT'D)
I'm sure they'll want me to move my
car. It's right...

She turns to point to the semi-circular driveway where she's left her car but the movement doubles her over in pain.

INT. MEXICAN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lizzy peers through the doorway at Mac, sprawled face-up on the bed, still wearing his boots.

She tiptoes in, pausing each time he snorts for air.

Close to his face, she grimaces at the alcohol on his breath.

She looks at the lone pillow he's knocked to the floor, then back to his face. Picks up the pillow. Hands shaking.

Mac jerks in his sleep.

Lizzy jumps back, holding her breath. Then leans over him, clutching the pillow, just at the right angle to ... catch a glimpse of the old photograph of Mac, holding Tess's hand.

She drops the pillow on his chest and runs from the room, hand over her mouth to keep the sobs inside.

INT. SURGERY RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

A NURSE adjusts the pillows under Ida's head. She's lying on an incline, surrounded by beeping monitors.

NURSE
Need to prop you up here Miss Ida.
You yell if anything hurts.

Tess holds Ida's bony hand in hers - careful not to tug at the IV taped to her grandmother's tissue-paper-thin skin.

TESS
Oh she will. She's not shy.

The phone on the other side of the hospital bed flashes with an incoming call.

NURSE
You up for phone calls?

Ida nods, so the nurse hits the button.

NURSE (CONT'D)
 Room 422. I've got you on speaker.
 (to Ida)
 I'll check back in twenty minutes.
 Don't go on strike or anything
 while I'm gone.

A familiar, forceful voice booms from the other end of the line.

MAX
 Sounds like they connected us to
 the right room alright.

Tess flinches, squeezing Ida's hand too tight.

MAX (CONT'D)
 Lizzy's right here beside me.
 Course if Tess wasn't stealing all
 our money we'd be there in person.

Tess extracts her hand, kisses Ida gently on the forehead,
 and motions she'll be just outside in the hall.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MARIA'S SUITE

Tess slaps at the hand trying to wipe away her tears.

TESS
 You can't make this better Jake.

She turns her face into the corridor wall.

JAKE
 Nobody believes him Tess.

TESS
 I didn't want Gran to know about
 the money.

JAKE
 Give Ida some credit. You think
 she'd ever take his side in this?

TESS
 That money wouldn't be sitting in
 my bank account right now if I
 hadn't spent a whole lifetime being
 his accomplice.
 (MORE)

TESS (CONT'D)

I was his favorite and I loved it.
Maria says so. You even said it.

JAKE

That doesn't make you responsible
for this. It makes you a kid he
took advantage of.

A groan escapes from Tess, threatening to transform into a full-throated wail.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You want to change the dynamic?
Then don't play into his hands any
more. You keeping the money lets
him shift the blame - away from
himself.

TESS

All I want is proof that my mother
is safe. Is that too much to ask?

She leans her forehead against the cheerful wallpaper and slides down, roughly, to the floor.

Jake crouches beside her, knowing better than to touch her.

INT. PARENT-TEACHER NIGHT AT SCHOOL

Tess sits behind a card table in a school hallway.

A pyramid of empty wrappers leans against a double-pack of Nicorette chewing gum. She flicks her cell phone open and closed, checking the time.

Teresa, the shy student who gave her tamales in the playground, approaches the card table and introduces her mother, GRACIELLA.

TESS

(in Spanish)

Delighted to meet you. Do you have
any questions about Teresa's test
scores?

GRACIELLA

No. I just wondered if you need
help to cleaning your house?

Tess hands Graciella a blank piece of paper and a pencil.

TESS

Can you leave a phone number?

She smiles at the woman.

TESS (CONT'D)
Thanks. I'll let the other teachers
know. In case anyone needs help.

She tucks the paper into her bright-pink, hand-woven bag.

Graciella smiles and points to Tess's bag.

GRACIELLA
Where did you buy that?

TESS
This bag? My mother sent it to me
when she first moved to Mexico -
they make them in a village near
where she lives.

GRACIELLA
(incredulous)
You know Nayarit, de veras? This is
my home.

A question catches in Tess's throat.

TESS
(in English, slowly)
Are you going home for Navidad this
year?

GRACIELLA
Ojala que si, (*hopefully*) if I can
get the bus fare. It's very
expensive.

TESS
I have an idea. If I buy your
ticket for you, will you deliver a
message to my mother?

Graciella steps back, unsure she's heard it right, and looks
at her daughter for confirmation.

GRACIELLA
(in Spanish)
Is this Gringa rich, or crazy or
both?

Teresa rolls her eyes.

TERESA

She speaks Spanish mama. Don't call
my teacher crazy.

INT. IDA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Ida leans forward in a hospital bed, coughing. Her chest contracts in wheezy spasms, bony vertebrae poking through the crack in the back of her flimsy gown.

Tess pauses at the door, taking in the full measure of her grandmother's rapid decline. She forces a cheery smile.

TESS

Ho Ho Ho - I brought some garland
and Christmas decorations to liven
this room up a little.

IDA

You mean my jail cell? Let me see
what you brought - better not be
that made-in-China crap is it?

Tess laughs; she knows her grandmother is only half teasing.

TESS

It's all part of my master plan.
Stuff so cheap it'll burn the place
down and nobody'll see you escape.

IDA

Good - we'll sue Walmart for
importing it and be millionaires.

The joke makes Ida start coughing again. The hospital gown slips off a defeated shoulder.

TESS

She should be here.

IDA

No sense stirring things up. You
hear me?

TESS

I'm smuggling mom a bus ticket out
of Mexico.

Ida manages a smile, and shakes her head.

IDA

You know the funny thing? Lizzy thinks Mac is the strongest person in her world when really you are.

TESS

I love you Gran but you're wrong. She's the one who has to get on the bus. She has to be the strongest person in her world. Not Mac. Not you. Not me. I want to do it for her but I can't.

IDA

Does Jake know what you're doing?

Tess shakes her head no.

IDA (CONT'D)

Don't you do that to your marriage. Secrets snowball. Trust me, I've gone through a husband or two.

Tess smiles.

IDA (CONT'D)

It's easier for your mother to pretend nothing's the matter. It's how she survives. Leave it be.

EXT. MEXICAN HOUSE - DAY

Graciella checks the address. Flimsy Christmas decorations encircle the compound. Plastic Santa faces hang from coils of brand new barbed wire.

GRACIELLA

Hola - anybody home?

She leans against the gate and it swings open.

Nobody responds to knocking on the front door so she walks around the side of the house.

She winces when her heel slides out of her flip flop.

GRACIELLA (CONT'D)

Hijo de puta...

She stops, mid-curse, realizing that she's stepped on a tiny shard of glass. She picks it out of her calloused skin.

The entire expanse of neglected lawn sparkles with broken glass.

GRACIELLA (CONT'D)

Dios mio.

She continues, on edge now.

EXT. BEHIND THE HOUSE - DAY

Lizzy slumps in a dingy nylon hammock - her limp body sways side to side like a moth in a cocoon. Her feet are filthy, as if she never wears shoes.

GRACIELLA

Senora?

Lizzy almost flips out of the hammock in surprise.

GRACIELLA (CONT'D)

Sorry senora. I was trying not to scare you.

Lizzy darts a glance back toward the house.

LIZZY

Who let you in? What do you want?

GRACIELLA

I know Tess. She learns my hija. She wants to tell you your mother is very sick and it is time to go home now.

Lizzy tries to stop the hammock from swinging and drops the book she was reading. A fifty dollar bill slips out.

LIZZY

(hushed but insistent)

You have to leave. Right now. Before my husband sees you.

Graciella follows Lizzy's nervous gaze just as Mac opens the back door.

MAC

Lizzy put some makeup on! I told Ida to call back in five minutes and you could say hello.

He sees Graciella at exactly the moment he steps on a brand-new puppy.

MAC (CONT'D)
Get out from under my God-damned
feet!

He kicks at the puppy, who whimpers back into the house. In exactly the same tone, he shouts at Graciella.

MAC (CONT'D)
Who let you back here? Lizzy what's
going on? Who the hell is she?

Graciella thrusts a cleaning brochure into Lizzy's quivering hands. Her back is turned to Mac.

GRACIELLA
(whispering)
Look inside. Not now.
(louder now)
I am cleaning the houses. Here is
my information. You call me on mi
cellular. Muy barato.

Mac points to the path around the side of the house.

MAC
Out! You're trespassing on private
property. Privado, comprende?

Lizzy responds to Graciella without taking her eyes off Mac.

LIZZY
We don't need help.
(under her breath)
Thank you.

The puppy starts howling, redirecting Mac's irritation.

MAC
Pipe down. And you...
(to Graciella)
...beat it. You heard what she
said. She doesn't need any help.

Graciella backs up a few steps, then turns and scurries back around the house the way she came.

Mac slams the door behind him as he goes back inside.

Lizzy sneaks a peek inside the brochure.

INSERT - BUS TICKET TO SAN FRANCISCO

Lizzy glances back, full of questions, but Graciella is already gone.

LIZZY
I'll be right in Mac. Right in.

INT. MEXICAN HOUSE - SKYPE CALL

Lizzy stares at the image of herself on the computer screen. She's wearing hastily applied, too-bright makeup.

LIZZY
I wish I could see your face mom.
You don't sound good. Are they
taking good care of you?

Tears begin to spill from Lizzy's eyes.

Mac glares at her and motions for Lizzy to smile. His hand holds the connection to the modem. A threat.

Lizzy wipes away her tears, keeping up appearances.

Ida's voice is faint and raspy.

IDA (O.C.)
It's never too late Lizzy. Remember
that.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Tess glances at the revolving letters of the arrival board, then pushes her way to the front of waiting relatives.

Dozens of disembarking passengers clutch taped-together suitcases. Sleeping children drape over fathers shoulders.

Graciella sees Tess, straining to find her. She shakes her head no - Lizzy didn't come with her.

GRACIELLA
Maybe she come later. Don't worry,
your mother is safe. Look I took a
picture for you.

Her own kids are crowding around her but Graciella pulls out her cell phone, fidgets with the menu, then holds it up.

INSERT - CELL PHONE SCREEN

The horizon of the photograph is tilted, snapped while Graciella walked away from the walled-in house in Mexico.

GRACIELLA (CONT'D)
See. Your mother is very safe.
Nobody breaks into this house.

TESS
Nobody breaks out of it either.

Tess starts backing away, before the tears come.

EXT. MEXICAN OUTDOOR MARKET - DAY

Lizzy tries to keep up with Mac, pushing his way through pyramids of fruits and dried peppers stacked on blue tarps.

LIZZY
It's hot Mac. Slow down.

Lizzy almost steps on a chicken, scuttling underfoot.

Mac pulls out his digital camera and gives a cheery smile to the chicken vendor.

MAC
(in Spanish)
Mind if I take some pictures?

The chicken vendor nods and Mac snaps away, pausing to show the vendor each frame in the viewfinder.

Mac charms the crowd gathering around to sneak a peek, handing the camera to a teenager.

MAC (CONT'D)
Here - you try. Take a picture of me and Jose here.

He throws an arm around the shoulder of the chicken vendor.

LIZZY
Mac, I'm going to check out flowers on the other side. Be right back.

MAC
By the bus stop? I'll find you.

He hands her some peso notes and Lizzy scuttles off.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Lizzy holds two stems of calla lilies as a FLOWER SELLER, squatting in front of the bus station, searches for change.

FLOWER SELLER
Su cambio, senora?

Lizzy ignores her -- running her finger down a poster on the plaster wall -- listing the long distance bus departures.

INT. CREDIT UNION - DAY

Tess looks into the face of the teller who first processed the savings transfer after Lizzy's rescue.

The teller recognizes Tess at the same time, and scowls.

Tess holds out her arms to her sides, as if for a pat down.

TESS
I'm not packing any cell phones
this time. I swear.

The teller slides a form across the counter.

CREDIT UNION TELLER
Here's the transfer of funds form.
Sign and date next to all the X's.

INT. MEXICAN CANTINA - NIGHT

Mac claps a clearly inebriated man on the back and pours him another tequila shot. It's Manuel, the bribed cop.

MAC
Otra. Sing us another!

The crowd of men gathered around cheer in agreement and Manuel begins another drinking song.

INT. MEXICAN KITCHEN - MORNING

Lizzy sets a cup of coffee on the dining room table, next to a plate of steaming eggs and bacon.

The table is set for one, complete with calla lilies in a vase.

On a neatly folded linen napkin, next to the silverware, she places her engagement and wedding ring.

The new dog whines from behind a dog gate. Lizzy bends down and strokes his muzzle.

LIZZY

Sorry pooch, I know it's hard. But try to stay on Mac's good side.

INT. IDA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Tess fiddles with Ida's oxygen tubes, gently re-inserting one that has slipped out of a nostril.

TESS

Don't you die on me. I can't handle this without you.

A beeping noise startles Tess, but it's just the compression pump that squeezes Ida's legs in regular intervals.

She leans in, resting her cheek on the bed rail.

TESS (CONT'D)

I did what you wanted. What everyone wanted. All the money is back in Mac's account. Lizzy will come now - just hang in there.

It's a whispered promise, as much to herself as to her dying grandmother.

TESS (CONT'D)

She loves you. I know she does.

INT. BUS - DAY

Lizzy squeezes into the middle seat of the back row, holding a pink woven bag on her lap. It's the same kind Mac bought for Tess and Maria - matching mother-and-daughter souvenirs.

The people beside her fidget with mounds of luggage, wedging kids on top of suitcases on the floor and waving good-bys.

But Lizzy only looks behind her - straining her neck as the bus pulls out of the station.

The flower vendor waves away a cloud of diesel smoke.

INT. IDA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Jake enters with the doctor, making rounds. He holds his hand out for Tess to come with him.

JAKE
You look like you need caffeine.
Intravenously.

Tess smiles and pats her grandmother's hand. When she lets go, the hand flops to the side.

INT. MEXICAN HOUSE - DAY

Mac stumbles to the table, tripping over the dog gate.

MAC
Lizzy I told you this one's an
outdoor dog. Goddamn it.

He sees the food, dotted with flies. He slurs his words.

MAC (CONT'D)
How long has this been sitting
here?

It's only when he waves a fork over the flies that he sees Lizzy's engagement and wedding rings.

MAC (CONT'D)
Lizzy!

The sound of dishes smashing against adobe walls drowns out the whimpering of the hungry, frightened dog.

INT. BUS - DAY

Lizzy waits until the sleeping PASSENGER beside her jerks awake, wiping dribble from his lips.

PASSENGER
Lo siento. Disculpame...

She waves away his apology, and makes the cell phone sign with her hand to the side of her face.

He pats himself down, finding a scratched up flip phone in his back pocket.

LIZZY

Uhm. No hablo Espanol, pero...

A WOMAN on Lizzy's other side, tries to translate.

WOMAN

You want to borrow his phone?

Lizzy digs into her bag and pulls three of Ida's fifties.

LIZZY

No. I'm going to need one where I'm going. Is this enough for him to buy another phone?

The woman draws back, wide-eyed. Then reaches into her own purse.

WOMAN

Why don't you take mine instead?
It's 3G.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Mac's truck screeches to a stop next to the flower vendor's tarp, scattering sleeping chickens.

He jumps out, leaving the door open and engine running and bangs on the ticket window.

MAC

Anybody in there?

A KID chucks firecracker poppers near Mac's feet.

KID

Siesta. Check back at four.

Mac kicks the wall. Then sees the posted bus schedule and route map taped to it.

EXT. MEXICAN TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Nearly naked men in animal-patterned body paint swarm into the zocalo of a small Mexican town.

They stab at each other with blood-red wooden swords, their faces covered by grotesque animal masks.

Twisted tree branches dipped in chalky paint are horns and antlers, writhing and rutting as the men dance.

A GUIDE holding a red placard explains to a group of tourists clutching Lonely Planet Mexico books.

GUIDE

The Judeos represent demons of the underworld and their job is to hunt down, capture and sacrifice Christ.

Horns honk as cars, and Lizzy's bus, wait for the Christ-hunting demons to pass.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS, INTERCUT

A demon jumps onto the back bumper of the bus -- pink tongue darting out between black lips. His muscled torso twitches like stripes on a sweating hyena.

Lizzy stifles a scream but the woman next to her laughs.

WOMAN

Great. Another parade, another delay. I hate taking the bus. We might as well get off and look.

INT. IDA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

Tess and Jake cling to each other, like two passengers watching a journey that has started without them.

The doctor doesn't even look at them. He is calm and measured, checking Ida's vital signs with resignation.

EXT. MEXICAN TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS, INTERCUT

Lizzy stands, backlit by the sun falling behind the town square.

A lone demon dances under a flickering street lamp.

The skim coat of white paint covering his body is sweating off in streaks and the chalky colors of the mask are fading.

He is top heavy and staggering. The drums go silent. He collapses on the ground.

INT. MAC'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Mac almost slams into the car in front of him. Traffic leading into the town square is at a standstill.

He honks his horn, pulls his side view mirrors in and drives around the waiting cars.

Lizzy's bus is up ahead.

MAC
Get a bloody move on!

A cop, on a moped, zips in front of him. Blocking the road.

Another cop blocks the sidewalk.

Mac has no exit. And no excuse.

INT. BUS - DUSK

Lizzy cranes her neck out of a side window, watching the last rays of sun go down as the bus pulls away from the square.

The blue-lights of cop cars flash in the distance.

EXT. MAC'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Two OFFICERS frisk Mac, spread-eagled on his truck's hood.

OFFICER ONE
(in Spanish)
This is going to hurt a little.

MAC
Listen. My wife's been kidnapped! I need to call the embassy.

The second officer grabs Mac's left hand. He isn't wearing a wedding ring.

OFFICER TWO
Your wife? What wife? What kidnapping?

OFFICER ONE
(in Spanish)
Are you selling drugs? Or buying?
How much cash are you carrying?

The first officer pulls Mac's wallet out of his pocket.

MAC
You've got no right!

He waves it in Mac's face.

OFFICER TWO

You don't want cops involved? Maybe you'd like to make a donation to the police fund instead.

Mac nods and waits for the wallet to be returned, a little lighter.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

All the passengers around her sleep as Lizzy makes a call on her new cell phone. Her hands tremble.

LIZZY

When you get this message it'll be too late Mac. I'm not coming back this time. Keep the house, keep the money, keep everything. Except me.

INT. MAC'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Mac glances down at an unfamiliar number ringing and throws the phone on the floor - unanswered.

He hits a pothole at 90 miles an hour, clenches his teeth, and bears down even harder.

A sign says the border is 60 miles away.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Lizzy leans against the woman who traded her cell phone, sleeping at last.

Darkness rushes past the open window, drying the tears on her cheeks into salty tracks of sorrow.

INT. TESS AND JAKE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tess aims the shower head at her face, letting water pelt her naked skin. She's thinner now, far from the confident, sexy woman she was just a few months ago.

Jake squeezes inside, trying not to let out all the steam.

JAKE

Is the water still warm?

Jake steps into the shower, slips an arm around Tess, and draws her hips into his pelvis.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 You can't hide tears, even in here.
 Let me in, Tess. Let me in.

There is a slight suction sound as Tess pulls apart.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 I woke up thinking about something
 Ida said. Up on the roof, when we
 got Lizzy back. Do you remember?

Tess shakes her head no.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 The sun rises behind us. Never
 fails. Even when you can't see it.

Tess turns and presses her head into his chest, comforted.

INT. BUS AT THE BORDER

Lizzy rubs the sleep from her eyes and runs her hands through her hair.

The bus driver's ASSISTANT walks down the center of the aisle - waving a stack of immigration forms.

ASSISTANT
 (in Spanish)
 Everyone have the entry documents?
 Passports out and ready please.
 Five minutes to the border.

Behind him, through the front windshield of the bus, Lizzy sees nothing but a sea of red brake lights.

EXT. UNION HALL - DAY

A long line of well-wishers wait to enter Ida's funeral, shoulders hunched against a steady drizzle.

MAN IN TEAMSTERS WINDBREAKER
 Hate to lose Ida. Now of all times.

TEAMSTER'S WIFE
 Least she doesn't have to watch
 what's left of unions getting
 kicked to the curb.

MAN IN TEAMSTERS WINDBREAKER
She saw plenty.

INT. UNION HALL - CONTINUOUS

A faded union election poster balances on an easel to the left of an open, oak casket.

INSERT - POSTER - "IDA FOR LOCAL 152 - THE GOOD OLE' BOYS WORST NIGHTMARE"

One by one, the funeral guests pause at the casket.

MAN IN TEACHERS UNION JACKET
You tried old girl. At least you tried...

Tess, Maria and Jake huddle to the side as the mourners settle into folding metal chairs.

TESS
(whispering)
Maria please, you deliver the eulogy. I've got it all written out. I can't do this.

MARIA
Yes you can. It's what Ida would've wanted.

TESS
Don't you see? She lost, Maria. She fought, her whole life, but in the end it was all for nothing. Unions are dead. She's dead. They won. Mac won. Mom didn't even show up for her funeral.

Maria grips Tess by her shoulders.

MARIA
Did Ida ever stop trying? No. Now I am going to hold my little girl in my lap, in the front row, and you are going to look at your niece and show her that she comes from a long line of gutsy women.

EXT. BORDER CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

Mac sees Lizzy's bus - just ahead, three lanes over in a line of buses waiting to cross.

He lays on the horn, sticks his head out the window and cuts across two lanes of traffic.

The brakes of a bus behind him squeal and the DRIVER flips Mac the finger.

DRIVER
Chinga tu madre, cabron!

Mac stares up and straight ahead.

At the back of Lizzy's head: the only blonde head of hair pressed up against the back window.

INT. UNION HALL - CONTINUOUS

The organist winds down and Tess approaches the podium.

Jake, Maria and the kids sit in the front row of chairs.

TESS
Some of you might remember my grandmother Ida's favorite saying: a woman must be twice as smart and work twice as hard to earn half as much as a man.

Tess pauses, for dramatic effect.

TESS (CONT'D)
Luckily, she said, this is not difficult.

The crowd murmurs with laughter. Tess glances down, to her left. Jake's warm smile radiates support.

TESS (CONT'D)
Her greatest accomplishment, truly, is what she represented. You fight for what's fair. You defend your brothers and sisters. One for all and all for one.

Resonant, slow clapping begins to roll forward from the back of the hall.

Tess lets it build and then drills her focus on Alicia.

TESS (CONT'D)
 And you sure as heck don't pick on
 the powerless or assume that a
 woman is.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS AND INTERCUT

Lizzy fumbles through her pink woven bag and hands the
 driver's assistant her American passport.

TESS (O.C.)
 She had another saying. My sister
 and I know it well. Say it with me
 if you know what's coming.

Behind Lizzy's head, in the line of traffic behind the bus,
 the driver's assistant laughs at a crazy gringo.

... Climbing out of the cab of his pickup truck.

... Standing on the roof of it.

... Waving his hands.

... Turning the beet red color of rage.

INT. UNION HALL - CONTINUOUS

The crowd murmurs in agreement.

TESS
 We all live with the choices we
 make. Used to drive me crazy. It's
 like she knew exactly when you were
 about to make a bad decision. As we
 all do. Even Ida herself made a
 few.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Behind Lizzy, border agents approach Mac's truck.

Motioning him to get down off the cab.

Calling for backup.

TESS (O.C.)
(voice ringing out)
But she believed in our capacity to
make things right. If we're willing
to accept consequences and turn
them into opportunities.

INT. UNION HALL - CONTINUOUS

Tears roll down the cheeks of the grizzled rank and file.
All eyes are on the powerful young woman behind the podium.

TESS
Her reward is all around us. A
legacy of respect.

INT. MAC'S TRUCK AT BORDER CROSSING - CONTINUOUS

Through the windshield, the lead BORDER AGENT watches as his
partner aims at Mac with a taser gun.

Mac keeps shouting and pointing to Lizzy's bus, even as his
knees buckle and he thuds to the hood of the truck.

TESS (O.C.)
Each of us is a little stronger
because we loved her. I can't
imagine how much I will miss her.
And I know I'm not alone.

The agent inside the truck looks away and continues to sweep
the cab with a metal detector.

Under the seat, the detector begins to beep.

His hands find the taped-over slit in the upholstery.

He pulls out Mac's fully-loaded gun.

TESS (CONT'D)
But we will live with the choice we
made to love her.

The agent steps out of the truck, bags the gun and reaches
for handcuffs.

Just as Lizzy's bus pulls away - to the American side of the
border.

FADE TO BLACK.