

AN ACT OF KINDNESS

(Short)

OVER BLACK:

As we slowly pull back, back, back, we see more and more white pixels on the screen until we can make out what it is.

FADE IN:

A large CAT FACE stares at the camera. It MEOWS over and over.

INT. BARBARA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

The cat, named AMORE, sits on the bed in a room filled with posters of Italy. He watches as thirtyish, plain-looking BARBARA WILSON tries to button her tight-fitting long-sleeved blouse.

She pulls up her pants, struggles to pull the zipper up. The snap keeps POPPING OPEN. She SIGHS.

BARBARA

That's it. I start my diet today.

She goes to the closet for a belt. She puts the bottom of her blouse in her mouth to hold the blouse up, then realizes there are no belt loops.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

Why don't they make belt loops anymore?

She connects the belt over the pants hoping to keep them up. She looks at jewelry on the counter.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

What do you think, Amore? Should I wear jewelry?

Amore looks away. Barbara SIGHS.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

You're right. This'll have to do.

Amore MEOWS as she watches her hands shake.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I'm okay. You know I'm always nervous on the first day. I hope I get good students this year.

She takes a last look in the mirror.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Well Amore, wish me luck.

FADE OUT.

OVER BLACK:

A school bell RINGS.

FADE IN:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

"WORLD HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY" is printed nicely on the whiteboard. Barbara stands in front of her high school class. She INHALES, EXHALES slowly, puts on a happy face.

BARBARA
Good morning! How is everyone?
My name is Miss Wilson. Barbara
Wilson.

A couple of STUDENTS yell out.

STUDENT
Bra-bra-bra

ANOTHER STUDENT
Miss Bra

Everyone laughs.

BARBARA
(angrily)
No, it's Miss Wilson. Okay?

She calls roll with each one answering "HERE", "PRESENT", or raising a hand, except for the last one.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Adams... Alvarado... Brown... Davis...
Donovan... Espinosa... Harris...

No answer.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Jackson Harris...

Barbara looks up, sees a student lightly fist the upper arm of another boy, JACKSON HARRIS, good-looking in a boyish kind of way. Jackson wears earbuds, slaps the other boy back.

The other boy points with his chin at the teacher.

JACKSON
What!

Barbara walks over to him.

BARBARA
Please remove your earbuds.

No reaction.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Give them to me.

JACKSON
I ain't givin' you nothin'.

Class reacts with OOOHHHHH.

Barbara walks over, uses the emergency phone on the wall.

An overweight SECURITY GUARD arrives.

Jackson struts slowly to the door, high fives others as he walks.

SECURITY
Again, Jackson? Geez. Give 'em
to me. You know I'll give 'em
back after school. Otherwise,
we're gonna go to the office.

Jackson reluctantly gives them to Security, goes back to his desk, puts his feet up.

Barbara glares at him. He doesn't lower them. She decides to let it go, continues with roll call (inaudible).

Barbara puts her roll sheet on her desk. Looks down, sadly shakes her head. She smiles, turns around.

BARBARA

Okay... well, class. The next two weeks we're going to focus on Italy and the ancient Romans.

She pulls a movie screen down in front of the whiteboard, walks to her desk, presses the key on her laptop for a slide show.

Quick MONTAGE of modern Italy with a map, pictures of Rome, the Colosseum, Venice, Florence...

BARBARA (CONT'D)

It's my dream to visit Italy someday.

Jackson taunts her, keeps interrupting with mean remarks.

JACKSON

Not interested.

Barbara ignores him and continues. She walks down the rows of desks, smiles as she looks at the students while she speaks. As she walks by, students pass notes behind her back. The notes make fun of her.

BARBARA

They have beautiful fountains, grapes growing over trellises...

JACKSON

You like Italy so much, then go. We won't miss you.

Students LAUGH. Her smile dissipates. She walks back to the front of the room.

BARBARA

They have Michelangelo and Da Vinci paintings, wonderful museums, great food..

JACKSON

Still not interested.

She turns around, darts seem to fly from her eyes. He struck a nerve. Any pride and self-esteem she had, flew out the door.

BARBARA

That's enough!

The startled students are quiet. Jackson? He's smiling ear to ear proudly. Got the reaction he wanted.

Barbara passes out an assignment paper to the person in front of each row.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I'd like you to write your name on this paper and circle the subtopic that interests you.

She waits as a few obey. The others look at Jackson. Barbara notices, realizes he's the leader.

JACKSON

Hell no. We ain't doin' diddly squat.

Barbara is now livid. Face shows she's smoldering. The students are excited about the showdown. Some GIGGLE.

Barbara storms to the emergency phone. Security arrives quickly.

Barbara stares at Jackson as she talks.

BARBARA

Please take him to the principal for defiance.

Security arrives. Jackson slowly stands, nods to his classmates as he struts out with her.

Barbara lets out a satisfied SIGH and half-smiles. For the moment, she won. She walks to the front of the class, continues as if unfazed.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Tomorrow I will put you in groups
based on your...

The BELL RINGS drowning her out. The students can't get out fast enough.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NEXT MORNING

Barbara walks out from the Main Office and into the crowded hall alongside another teacher, Alice Brubaker (about the same age, shorter of the two, hair and makeup done perfectly).

BARBARA

I'm not looking forward to my first class, Alice. They're horrible, mainly because I've got this really obnoxious student who keeps interrupting with insults.

ALICE

Some kids today have no respect. We've all been there. Good and bad students, good and bad days. I spend more time disciplining than teaching.

Barbara nods her agreement.

ALICE (CONT'D)

It's too bad the misbehaving ones ruin it for the those who really want to learn.

They stop in front of Alice's Math class as students walk by. Alice looks seriously into Barbara's eyes.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Don't let him get to you, Barb. And, make sure that student doesn't see he's getting to you.

Barbara nods, walks on to her classroom.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

Barbara stands in front of the class, smiles.

BARBARA

We owe a lot to the Romans.

In mid-conversation, she looks over at Jackson sitting at his desk with arms folded.

She presses a key to show a slide of a Roman street.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Did you know they invented streets with an underground sewer system?

JACKSON

Yeah, and it stunk the whole place up.

Everyone LAUGHS.

BARBARA

I was hoping we'd have a good day without you interrupting, Jackson.

JACKSON

Yeah... No.

BARBARA

Well, I'd appreciate it, if you'd let me teach to the students who are interested.

Jackson SCOFFS, looks around at the others, shrugs.

Barbara reaches for a marker from her desk. It falls on the floor. She bends over to fetch it.

Jackson makes a FARTING noise. Everyone LAUGHS.

Barbara storms to the emergency phone again.

Jackson knows the routine, struts to the door. He doesn't

have to wait long for Security to escort him out.

Happy again, Barbara continues teaching.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
The Romans also invented the
aqueduct to bring water...

Jackson walks back into class.

Barbara looks astonished at the Security Officer standing
by the door. Barbara walks over to her.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Why is he back in class?

SECURITY
Dunno. Ask the Principal.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Barbara KNOCKS lightly on PRINCIPAL BARNER's open door.

Fortyish Principal Barner rarely smiles. He has intense
eyes, speaks with slow and distinct words, his way of
showing he's the boss. He looks up at her.

BARBARA
May I speak to you for a moment?

PRINCIPAL
Concerning?

BARBARA
Jackson Harris.

The Principal's expression goes cold.

PRINCIPAL
Come in.

Barbara enters, doesn't close the door, sits down.

BARBARA
I sent him out for being
(MORE)

BARBARA (CONT'D)
disrespectful and cussing. He
came right back to class. Why
wasn't he suspended?

PRINCIPAL
We can't suspend any more.

BARBARA
You've got to be kidding.

Long hesitation.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
What about detention?

PRINCIPAL
Can't' do that either.

BARBARA
What? When did that happen?

PRINCIPAL
Parents complained and the Board
agreed. Our job is to educate
them, not punish them. Now we
talk to them explaining how their
behavior is inappropriate, and
hopefully, they will decide to
change.

Barbara shakes her head.

BARBARA
But, what if they don't think
they're doing anything wrong?

PRINCIPAL
We keep trying to convince them.

Barbara is annoyed by his nonchalant attitude.

BARBARA
I feel so helpless. If there are
no consequences, and the kids
know that...

She stalls hoping for a resolution. Gets none.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

We're talking about Jackson Harris.

PRINCIPAL

Yes, I know who he is. He's not
the best student, I grant you that.

Barbara SCOFFS.

He looks at Barbara staring down sadly.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

Now if there's nothing else, I
have work to do.

BARBARA

Yes, of course. Thank you for
your time.

She walks into the adjoining Main Office.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - DAY

As Alice signs out, she takes note of Barbara coming from the Principal's office. She waits as Barbara signs her time card. They walk out together.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Alice and Barbara walk out of the brick-and-mortar school building, head for the parking lot.

BARBARA

Why don't they punish students
anymore? Remember, when they made
us write a hundred sentences?
That's considered abuse now.

ALICE

I remember when a student got
swatted with the board of
education. Today, the teacher
and the principal would both
be arrested for doing that.

In the parking lot Alice beeps her remote to unlock her car door. She looks at Barbara.

ALICE (CONT'D)

He's been acting out since his mother died. Have you called his father?

BARBARA

I think I'm going to try and reason with Jackson first.

INT. CLASSROOM - NEXT MORNING

Students quietly work on a written assignment. Barbara is happy that Jackson is absent. She walks around class helping students, passes his empty desk.

The door opens. Jackson walks in, struts to his desk.

SECURITY

Look who I found cutting class.

Barbara's whole demeanor becomes depressed. She walks over, hands him the assignment and a textbook, walks back to her desk.

All is quiet. And then... Jackson SLAMS his book on the floor. Everyone is startled, including Barbara.

The BELL RINGS ending class. As the students rush out, Barbara looks over at Jackson.

BARBARA

Jackson, would you stay a moment?

Other students hear this, tease him.

STUDENTS

Teacher's Pet!

Jackson sits at a desk near the door. Barbara walks over.

BARBARA

Every day it's the same thing.
(MORE)

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I try to teach, and you keep interrupting. Why?

Jackson folds his arms over his chest. He's clearly annoyed.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I've always wanted to be a teacher.

Jackson's face shows his anger is about to burst. Barbara looks down, sees his foot tapping.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I love giving my knowledge to students. It's like giving them a gift. History's my passion. Can you image yourself living as a Roman and seeing...

Jackson can't hold his anger in any more. He interrupts her in mid-sentence.

JACKSON
I don't give a flyin' fig about the Romans. That was all in the past.

BARBARA
Yes, but we learn from the past. It helps us prevent mistakes for the future.

Barbara looks away as she thinks, then looks back at him.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Okay, I get it. History's not your thing. I felt the same way when I had to take a class on Shakespeare. I couldn't understand the way he...

Jackson quickly stands.

JACKSON
Blah, blah, blah. Don't care.

He walks out. Barbara SIGHS DEEPLY, shakes her head.

EXT. LUNCH COURT - DAY

Barbara walks through the lunch court. She sees Jackson sitting on top of a picnic table with his buddies. He drinks soda, then snatches a bag of potato chips from another student.

As Barbara walks by, Jackson BARKS like a dog three times. She slows down, bites her lip as she thinks.

BARBARA
(mumbles to self)
Should I turn around and confront
him, or ignore him?

She walks on, continues through a doorway with a SIGN on top, "FACULTY LOUNGE".

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

Barbara sits down next to Alice. They talk as they eat lunch. Barbara looks forlorn.

ALICE
Problems with Jackson again?

BARBARA
Every day. No one's born a bully.
I wonder how he got that way?

ALICE
His father, Jamal Harris, owns
Superior Hardware. I saw him
once at Back-to-School Night.
Bossy, Type A personality.

INT. JACKSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jackson and his three friends, JOEY, SAM, and ANDRES smoke WEED.

JACKSON
I'm sick and tired of that ugly
hag, Wilson. Let's do somethin'.

SAM
Whatta ya wanna do?

EXT. BARBARA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Andres' car pulls up, parks in front. Jackson exits the car. The others follow, stand next to him.

Jackson's eyes pan across a dead lawn to a quaint 1950's style house fallen into disrepair. Paint peeling, broken shutter, roof damaged, weeds.

JACKSON
Her house is as dumpy as she is.

They light FIRECRACKERS.

INT. BARBARA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Amore is scared, MEOWS ANGRILY, runs, hides.

Barbara sits up in bed, startled. She rushes to the window.

EXT. HARRIS' HOME - MORNING

The POLICE speak to Jamal and Jackson at the front door.

POLICE
Where was your son between one
and two AM?

JAMAL
Asleep in bed. Why?

POLICE
We got a report that four boys
were shooting fireworks at a
teacher's house.
(looks at his notepad)
A Ms. Wilson.

JAMAL
What proof do you have that my
son did it?

POLICE

Ms. Wilson stated it was dark,
and she didn't get a good look
at the boys, but she's sure one
of them was Jackson.

JAMAL

So, she thinks it was him. I'm
not a lawyer, but I'm pretty sure
you can't arrest my son because
she thinks he did it.

POLICE

You're right, sir. That's why
we're not taking him in. We just
wanted to make you aware that he
may have perpetrated this.

Jamal's face is livid, but he's not angry with Jackson.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Principal Barner talks on the school phone.

PRINCIPAL (INTO PHONE)

Yes, Mr. Harris.

(listens)

No, I don't think she would...

(listens)

Yes, sir, I totally agree. She
had no right to accuse your son.

(listens)

Yes, I promise you I will speak
to her.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - DAY

Principal Barner walks over to the teacher timecards. He
stuffs a "COME SEE ME NOTE" on top of Barbara's sign-out
card, then walks back to his office.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Barbara sits fidgeting with her hands.

PRINCIPAL

I got a very distressing call
from Mr. Harris, Jackson's father.

BARBARA

Yes, I thought you would.

PRINCIPAL

You had no right to accuse his
son when you didn't get a good
look at him.

BARBARA

But I know it was him.

PRINCIPAL

You should have spoken to me
instead of calling the police.
You had no proof, Ms. Wilson.
I think you wanted it to be
Jackson.

Barbara shakes her head in disbelief, feels she can't win.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Barbara and Alice jog slowly.

BARBARA

Alice, what do you see yourself
doing in five or ten years?

ALICE

Teaching, I guess. Why?

BARBARA

I don't know if it's worth all
the aggravation... you know... If
it's not the students, it's the
parents, or other teachers, and
even the principal.

ALICE

They say most teachers quit after
three years.

BARBARA

Really?

Alice looks at her, nods.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I'm wondering if I want to teach the rest of my life. This is not what I signed up for. I always wanted to be a nurse, but I'm afraid of needles.

Alice stops, out of breath, looks at Barbara empathetically.

ALICE

You're letting that kid get to you.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

As Barbara passes out the day's assignment to the first student in each row to pass back, Jackson keeps MOANING.

Barbara glares at him.

BARBARA

Jackson, can you please stop making that noise?

JACKSON

No can do. My back hurts.

Jackson stands.

BARBARA

Please be seated.

JACKSON

I gotta take a piss.

He runs out the door.

Barbara shakes her head.

INT. BOY'S RESTROOM - MORNING

Jackson runs to the urinal, relieves himself. He stares at

it as it flushes.

He walks to the sink, uses his cell phone.

JACKSON (INTO PHONE)
Dad, something's wrong. I just
pissed blood.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Jamal and Jackson sit in front of the doctor's desk.
NAMEPLATE reads, DR. BRAD NELSON. They wait for the test
results as the Doctor thumbs through Jackson's file.

DOCTOR NELSON
(not looking up)
Jackson's potassium level is
quite high. Looks like he has a
kidney infection.

He looks seriously at Jamal.

DOCTOR NELSON (CONT'D)
I'm concerned about the blood in
his urine. We'll do some more
tests to rule out renal failure.

JAMAL
If it is renal failure?

DOCTOR NELSON
Then he'll need renal replacement
therapy... dialysis four times a
week.

Jamal looks with empathy at his son, eyes well with tears.

Jackson stares out the window, keeps his emotions locked
inside. His knee shakes.

The Doctor hands a brochure to Jamal.

DOCTOR NELSON (CONT'D)
Here's a brochure from the
National Kidney Foundation. It
(MORE)

DOCTOR NELSON (CONT'D)
lists foods he needs to avoid
like potato chips, soda, and
processed food like TV dinners.

JACKSON
That's everything I eat. I ain't
eatin' rabbit food.

DOCTOR NELSON
Jackson, do you understand how
serious this is? You could lose
your kidney.

Jackson SCOFFS.

JAMAL
You'll do as the doctor says!

Jackson folds his arms angrily.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

While the students read silently, Barbara glances at Jackson fast asleep at this desk. She prefers him sleeping to being disruptive, so she doesn't bother him.

The BELL RINGS.

Barbara watches him awaken groggy. He shuffles out slowly.

EXT. LUNCH COURT - DAY

Jackson sits on the outdoor table with his buddies as usual.

Barbara walks by on her way to the Faculty Lounge.

Jackson takes a bite of a bologna sandwich, then VOMITS.

The guys in his group back away from the table with "EW!", and "DISGUSTING" heard.

Barbara thinks they're saying that to her. She turns around.

BARBARA

That's enough! You're being
very rude.

The boys look at each other, a couple shrug, dumbfounded.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Doctor Nelson gestures for Jamal to sit. Jamal sits, looks worried, suspects this is bad news.

DOCTOR NELSON

Well, I'm sorry to say, he's in
stage four of kidney failure.

JAMAL

Meaning?

DOCTOR NELSON

Jackson needs at least one new
kidney.

JAMAL

Let him have one of mine.

DOCTOR NELSON

Unfortunately, your blood, Mr.
Harris, is not a match.

JAMAL

What do you mean? He's of my
blood.

DOCTOR NELSON

A child gets genetics from two
parents, so it's unlikely that one
parent would have the same genetic
makeup as their child, as in your
case.

Jamal looks sadly down at the floor, then at the Doctor.

JAMAL

Jackson looks more like his
mother. She probably would've
been a match.

DOCTOR NELSON

I'm going to get him on the transplant waiting list. In the meantime, we need to start the dialysis.

INT. DIALYSIS CENTER - DAY

Jackson lies on a hospital-type bed with a catheter in his arm. Blood flows out, filtered by a nearby machine. Jamal sits in a chair next to him. There are several infusion patients also in the room.

An Attendant, PHILLIPE, walks over.

PHILLIPE

How you doin', Jackson?

JAMAL

He's okay. Aren't you, son?

No answer. He's depressed. Phillipe takes note.

PHILLIPE

I know just the thing to cheer you up.

He walks over to a cupboard, whips out an ACCORDIAN, plays ITALIAN MUSIC, sings.

INT. JIMMY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jamal sits at his brother JIMMY'S dining table. Jimmy's WIFE brings them pie and coffee. She joins them.

JAMAL

Jackson needs a kidney. He's gonna need dialysis four times a week until he gets one. I'm not a match.

He looks at Jimmy's wife, then back at Jimmy.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

If you're a match, will you donate yours?

JIMMY

22.

Gosh. I don't know, Jamal.

Jimmy looks at his wife, shrugs questioning what to do.

Jamal looks at her. She shakes her head no.

WIFE

What if one of our children needs one?

She looks at Jimmy.

JIMMY

Sorry, Bro. She's right.

Jamal SIGHS, looks disappointed, but nods.

JAMAL

I understand.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

Barbara watches the clock on the wall. TICK, TICK, TICK. 3 o'clock. The BELL RINGS. She smiles broadly.

BARBARA

See you all tomorrow.

Barbara notices Jackson's face looks puffier. She stops Jackson before he leaves.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

You don't look so good. Are you okay?

She tries to put her hand on his shoulder, but he pulls back.

JACKSON

Why don't you do somethin' 'bout the way you look?

BARBARA

That wasn't very nice. I was just concerned because you might be sick.

JACKSON

I don't want your concern. Mind
your own business!

Barbara shakes her head, walks away in frustration.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Principal Barner picks up the ringing school phone.

PRINCIPAL (INTO PHONE)

Hello?

(listens)

No, Mr. Harris. No need for that.
I will speak to her. Our teachers
are not allowed to harass our
students.

(listens)

Yes, sir. I can assure you she
will be disciplined.

Through his open door, Principal Barner sees Barbara and Alice about to check out in the adjoining office. He calls out to Barbara.

PRINCIPAL

Ms. Wilson, come in here a
minute, please.

Barbara rolls her eyes at Alice. Barbara enters, sits down.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

I got a very concerned parent
threatening to take you before
the Board for harassing his son
resulting in the boy's depression.

BARBARA

Let me guess, Mr. Harris?

PRINCIPAL

Boy's got enough problems as it
is waitin' on a kidney transplant.

BARBARA

A transplant?

PRINCIPAL

Seems your hearing is good. So,
I expect you to remember this.
One more complaint about you,
and I'm going to give you an
unsatisfactory notice.

Barbara is dejected. That's it. She wants to quit.

BARBARA

(sotto voce)

Yes, Sir.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - DAY

Barbara is teary-eyed as she quickly passes Alice.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Barbara eats lunch alone at her desk. She's depressed, eats slowly, stares at Jackson's empty desk.

INT. BARBARA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barbara has a fitful sleep. She tosses and turns while Amore is fast asleep on the pillow next to her head.

She DREAMS of a NURSE approaching her with her arm behind her back.

NURSE

This won't hurt a bit.

The Nurse displays a huge needle requiring both of her hands to hold it. The giant needle is headed for Barbara. Barbara SCREAMS.

BARBARA

No, don't touch me!

Amore is so frightened he darts off the bed, and hides under it.

Barbara gets up, awakens her laptop. She googles, then squints at the screen.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - ROOM - DAY

Barbara wears just a paper robe as she sits on an examining table. A FEMALE DOCTOR stands next to her.

FEMALE DOCTOR

After I examine you we're going to do several tests. We need an EKG, x-rays of your chest and back, urine and blood samples..

Barbara's eyes widen.

BARBARA

I'm afraid of needles.

FEMALE DOCTOR

We'll give you a sedative to help you relax.

Barbara looks worried. She GULPS.

BARBARA

Well... Okay. I guess, if it needs to be done.

INT. BARBARA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barbara is awakened by her RINGING PHONE.

BARBARA (INTO PHONE)

Hello?

(listens)

Yes, that's me.

(listens)

You're kidding.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Barbara knocks lightly on Principal Barner's door. He's surprised to see her. From the looks of her forlorn face, he fears she's about to quit.

BARBARA

I'm sorry to interrupt. I need to take a medical leave.

INT. HARRIS' HOME - JAMAL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jamal is awakened in the middle of the night by a PHONE CALL.

JAMAL

A match? Oh, fantastic! Yes,
we'll meet you at the hospital
right away.

SUPER: SIX WEEKS LATER**EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MORNING**

Barbara parks her car. She exits, walks towards the school's front entrance.

Jackson stands with his group next to Andres' car. He sees Barbara. He abandons his buddies, rushes over to her.

JACKSON

Heard you was out sick while
I was gone. Why don't you just
leave? Nobody likes you.

Barbara is disappointed. She stops, confronts him.

BARBARA

Same ol' Jackson. Nothing's
changed. It's too bad. I thought
there was some good in you.

Jackson is unfazed. He scrunches his face, APES her.

Barbara spies Principal Barner nearby watching. She walks away.

Principal Barner quickly walks over to Jackson.

PRINCIPAL

So, that's your gratitude, huh?

JACKSON

Whatta ya talkin' about?

PRINCIPAL

She made me promise not to tell you, but... you've got a second chance at life, thanks to her.

JACKSON

Whatta ya mean?

PRINCIPAL

She's the one who donated the kidney and saved your life.

Jackson has a look of disbelief, looks back at Barbara entering the school.

SUPER: FIVE DAYS LATER

EXT. BARBARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Alice drives up. Barbara gets inside the car.

BARBARA

I've never had a 'me' day. Thanks for thinking of this, Alice.

ALICE

You deserve it, Barb. What you did was heroic.

BARBARA

It was just the right thing to do. I couldn't just let him die.

ALICE

Well, today you're going to treat yourself. A day at the spa. New makeup, new hair style, new clothes. The works.

Jackson sits in the passenger seat of Andres' car parked nearby. He watches Barbara drive away, then exits the car.

He stands in front of her house, picks up a small rock, looks at the large bay window. Is he going to break it?

He tosses the rock to the side, looks over his shoulder.

Behind him are his father, employees of the hardware store, Principal Barner, and other students, teachers all with garden tools, paint buckets, plants, etc.

JACKSON

Let's do this.

Everyone gets to work, painting, gardening, fixing the place up. Some go inside. Some go to the backyard.

INT. DRIVING - DAY

As Alice and Barbara drive up to Barbara's home, Barbara notices a lot of people going in and out of her house. She is amazed at the new paint, nice garden, white picket fence.

BARBARA

What's going on, Alice?

EXT. BARBARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Barbara exits the car, looks at her house with gaping mouth.

As she walks towards the front door, everyone stops, and APPLAUDS.

INT. BARBARA'S KITCHEN - DAY

She watches many people busy cooking. She looks out the window at the backyard, walks out to it.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Barbara holds Alice's elbow as they slowing walk around, take everything in.

There is a small version of an Italian fountain, a replica of the statue of David, picnic table with red and white checkered tablecloth, grapes growing over a trellis.

Amore wears a green, white, red scarf like the Italian flag. He sits on someone's lap as he's happily stroked.

Jackson stops talking to his father, rushes to Barbara.

BARBARA
What's all this, Jackson?

JACKSON
I heard you was the one who gave
me the kidney.

She smiles, nods.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Why'd you do it?

BARBARA
You needed a kidney. We matched,
so...

JACKSON
But, you didn't have to.

BARBARA
Why does there have to be a
reason for an act of kindness?

Jackson starts to tear up.

JACKSON
I'm sorry for all the trouble
I caused you, Miss Wilson.

She puts her arm around him.

BARBARA
It's alright.

Jackson looks past Barbara at an elderly woman walking with
a cane having a hard time going down the porch steps.

He rushes over to help her.

Barbara watches his act of kindness, releases a satisfied
SIGH, and smiles.

Jamal walks over grinning ear to ear.

JAMAL

This...

(pointing to all that was done)
...is to show my appreciation
for saving my boy's life. I'm
sorry for misjudging you.

Barbara smiles.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

Wait. That's not all.

Jamal pulls an envelope from his pocket.

JAMAL (CONT'D)

This is for you.

He hands it to her. Barbara opens it.

ALICE

What is it, Barb?

BARBARA

It's a roundtrip ticket to Italy!

Everyone APPLAUDS, let's out a WHOO-HOO!!

Barbara and Alice hold hands, jump up and down excitedly.

People bring out bowls of spaghetti and other Italian foods, place everything on the table. Everyone gets in line to eat buffet style.

Phillipe and other musicians play Italian music as everyone parties.

FADE OUT.