

A FIELD FULL OF WISHES

EXT. WAKEFIELD CHAPEL PARK, 1980 - TWILIGHT

Foliage nestled between suburban homes. Not a soul in sight. Everything is calm. Ideal.

SUPER: Based on a true story.

Then- THE RUSHING OF CHILD'S LEGS. YOUNG MALIA (6) dressed in her brother's hand-me-downs, frantic.

Breathing heavy. RUSHING.

A half-fallen birch tree trunk. In seclusion, she shimmies herself up. Straddling.

Rapid. Scissoring her legs.

YOUNG MALIA'S FACE- eyes closed, strained.

Intensity increases. Faster. Harder.

Holding her breath. Everything blurs.

FADE TO WHITE:

SUPER: Let me fall if I must fall.

The one I will become will catch me. -Baal Shem Tov

FADE IN:

EXT. IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, 1980

A white, colonial revival. Steeple. Open doors. People.

INT. IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH SANCTUARY, 1980 - DAY

CHILD'S HANDS play *Church. Steeple. Doors. People* game.

Young Malia, in her Sunday best, sits in a pew next to her mother, VICI, (39) a mild-mannered homemaker, and her THREE OLDER BROTHERS (8,10,13.)

ORGAN MUSIC. Vici removes her shawl and covers grass stains on her son's pants.

STEVE (39) enters the sanctuary in his "Summer White Service" Naval uniform. He checks his watch.

Steve slides in next to Young Malia. Vici hands Steve the bulletin.

LATER -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The MINISTER (50s) shakes hands and passes awards to a 6TH and 8TH GRADER. A large, balding ELDER, (60s) looms at the pulpit.

ELDER

The last prize for writing goes to
a little lady from our Christian
School who not only won their age
group, but also the grand prize!

The Elder grabs the next award from the Minister.

Malia, draws on her dad's bulletin.

ELDER

And the winner for grades K-3,
(struggling)
Mmm...MOH-lee-uh Christine Taylor.

Steve, Vici, and the brothers begin clapping. Malia blushes.

Malia puts down her artwork and walks the aisle. She climbs the stage. Small.

The Elder hands Young Malia the award and shakes her hand. He grabs her by the shoulders. Leans in swiftly, and kisses her on the cheek.

Instinctually, Malia pulls back out of his grasp.

She wipes her hand to her cheek as if slo-motion.

YOUNG MALIA

Yyyyyyuck!

The audience erupts in a collective GASP.

Then- LAUGHTER.

Young Malia looks up, scanning the congregation, confused. Her EYES LOCK on her parents.

Doom.

INT. YOUNG MALIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Young Malia sits at a child-sized, replica 1950's ice cream table in the back corner.

Malia gazes out the window at the backwoods and creek. In the front corner of the room, a hand-made, PAPER MACHÉ CLOWN FACE is propped up on a dresser.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Still in uniform, Steve towers above. He places paper and a pencil down. Malia flinches.

STEVE

Now, write it.

YOUNG MALIA

Dad! I don't know what to say!

STEVE

Say what you did!

YOUNG MALIA

(desperate)

What did I do?!

Steve's patience fades.

STEVE

You embarrassed him, Malia! What you did was so rude!

YOUNG MALIA

But, Dad!

Steve snaps.

STEVE

No! Stop. This is what you are going to say: You say you were wrong. You say you are sorry. And you ask his forgiveness.

(beat)

And you don't stand up from this table or leave your room until that letter is finished!

(harsh)

Do you understand me, young lady?

Young Malia quivers.

STEVE

I can't hear you.

YOUNG MALIA

Yes, sir.

Steve, slams the door.

Malia frozen, glares at the page. Tears fall.

A tiny hand reaches for the jumbo pencil.

FADE TO:

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM, 2009 - DAY

A tiny hand reaches for a plastic tea cup placed on the child-sized, replica of an old-time, ice cream table.

SOPHIE, (6) dressed in her brother's hand-me-downs, sings to herself. Beams of sunshine dance across blonde hair.

Swinging legs. Carefree. Sophie plays with stuffed animals, serving tea and cookies. A speckled, pink, Build-A-Bear wears an aged BIRTHDAY PARTY HAT.

BACK TO:

INT. YOUNG MALIA'S BEDROOM, 1980 - DAY

The award rests on the table as Young Malia signs her name, wiping her nose with her sleeve.

Malia places the letter in an envelope. Young Malia gets up and passes her reflection in the mirror, tattered.

CUT TO:

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM, 2009 - DAY

Sophie rises from the table revealing a tiny FOSTER KITTEN in her lap. A tag too big for its neck: "Toto".

Smiles. Snuggles.

BACK TO:

EXT. WAKEFIELD CHAPEL PARK, 1980 - TWILIGHT

Honeysuckles bloom in the bushes.

Birds fly from tree to tree.

Fireflies gradually illumine. All is calm.

THE RUSHING OF YOUNG MALIA'S LEGS. Young Malia, RUNS through the empty park passing the backyards of upper middle-class homes.

Breathing heavy. Frantic.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD, 2009 - DAY

The sun shines through the fruit trees as Sophie, chases Toto throughout the yard. Happy. Laughing. Glee.

BACK TO:

EXT. WAKEFIELD CHAPEL PARK - TWILIGHT

Dodging branches and bushes. Young Malia ducks out of the clearing, racing toward a half-fallen birch tree.

In seclusion, she glances around, and climbs on the tree. She shimmies herself up, straddling the fallen trunk.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD, 2009 - DAY

Sophie running around the yard, dodging a hammock and outdoor basketball hoop - chased by Toto.

Sophie climbs and straddles a low branch in the tree. Losing balance, she falls to the grass.

Toto RUSHES. Jumping on her belly. Licking her face. Sophie belly laughs.

BACK TO:

EXT. WAKEFIELD CHAPEL PARK - TWILIGHT

YOUNG MALIA'S FACE: eyes closed, strained as the intensity increases. Faster. Harder. Holding her breath. Teeth clenched. Grunting.

At last she lets out a moan, exhaling. She opens her eyes. Weary. Relieved.

She has done this before.

FADE TO:

INT. ANDASOL LIVING ROOM, 2009 - DAY

The WEARY FACE of MALIA, (35, an old soul who has lost her way) stares vacant out the big, bay window.

CUT TO:

EXT. 6533 ANDASOL AVE. - CONTINUOUS

MALIA'S FACE through the big bay window PULLING BACK slowly-

TO REVEAL the front yard covered in dandelions.

BACK TO:

INT. ANDASOL LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia breathes slowly. Her teeth clench as she looks out the bay window into the front yard covered in dandelions.

SUPER: **March 17, 2009**

A BEAT.

MALIA

Fucking weeds!

Sophie, comes in singing to herself. She stops in her tracks when she notices her mom, and quietly goes to stand beside Malia.

Sophie looks at Mom. Looks out the window. Sophie gasps in full wonder.

Malia, snaps out of her day dream. Looks at Sophie.

SOPHIE

A field full of wishes!

Malia gazes from Sophie's face, filled with wide-eyed wonder, back out the window at the ocean of dandelions.

Tears. Silence. Drowning.

MOMENTS LATER

Malia's image reflects on the window, revealing Sophie-running through the front yard, covered in dandelion puffs.

Squealing. Twirling. Pure joy.

EXT. 6533 ANDASOL AVENUE - DAY

Sophie lays down in the midst of the weeds and plucks one stem. Malia transfixed through the window.

Big smile. Eyes closed. Deep breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sophie blows the dandelion seeds off the stem.

SUPER: A Field Full of Wishes

Opening credits.

Carefree Sophie in the yard. Dandelions. The puffs flying in the air and finally landing on the house IN THE WIDE.

Dying rose bush beds under the bay window.

Malia's image through the big, bay window gets lost by the sun's reflected light.

FADE TO:

EXT. 6533 ANDASOL AVENUE, 2004 - DAY

IN THE WIDE, the sun shines on the corner-lot home with a manicured lawn. Beautiful roses bloom in the beds underneath the large bay window.

A realtor sign posted on the lot is covered with "Sold".

SUPER: May 9, 2004

A new minivan with luggage on the roof pulls up to the house and parks on the street.

SUPER: Mother's Day

A BEAT

Then- BOTH SUPERS FADE.

A Latino GARDNER, (60s, rugged, yet kind face) is trimming the bushes, neatly gathering the clippings.

Kenny, (32, Southern, bald, computer geek) gets out of the driver's side and walks to the front of the van staring with pride at the home. He notices the Gardner.

Malia (30) gets out of the passenger's side grabbing her purse, and immediately opens the van door releasing three energetic boys: YOUNG TAYLOR (6, natural observer and aspiring rock star), YOUNG CARTER (4, moppy blonde, CEO-skater type), and YOUNG ETHAN (2, happy-go-lucky, always trailing behind.)

Malia unbuckles BABY SOPHIE (18 months, sugar, spice & everything nice), from a car seat and rests the blonde baby on her hip, watching the boys play in front of the big bay window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kenny approaches the Gardner.

KENNY (IN SPANISH)

Hello!

The Gardner stops clipping and greets Kenny with a smile and offers a handshake. Kenny shakes the hand but wipes it on his pants afterwards, disturbed.

GARDNER (IN SPANISH)

Good day, Sir. How may I help you?

KENNY

Oh! I don't speak, uh, Espanol.
You? Work? Here?

Malia, hugging and swaying Sophie, watches the boys chase one another in the yard, falling, laughing, squealing in joy. Young Ethan, feeling left out, begins crying.

MALIA

Boys! Be sweet to Ethan! Let him
catch you every now and then.

Taylor and Carter fall on the grass wrestling.

YOUNG TAYLOR

Come here, Ethan! Can you get me?

Young Ethan launches across the grass, landing on top of the pile. Smiles restored. Malia watches, glancing over to see tension rising between Kenny and the Gardner.

Kenny points to Malia and waves. Malia waves sweetly at the Gardner. Baby Sophie mimics.

KENNY (CONT'D)

We're East Coasters! My wife is
really good at mowing the lawn.
So, we won't need you any more.
(pausing)
No. Work. No....labor-o.

GARDNER (IN SPANISH)

I worked for Mr. Anthony for 15
years. And now you're telling me
I'm finished? Mary, Mother of God!

KENNY (BROKEN SPANISH)

Yes! No more work! Finished!

GARDNER (IN SPANISH)

You're firing me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KENNY

(nodding)

Ummm... Terminated? Ter-mi-nAdo?

Kenny turns back towards Malia. The boys are shaking grass off their clothes.

MALIA

What happened?

KENNY

Oh I just told him we didn't need him anymore.

MALIA

What?! You fired the gardener? We just got here! And they're so,

KENNY

Cheap? I know.

MALIA

Don't you mean, inexpensive?

KENNY

What's the difference?

Shocked, Malia looks at unaware Kenny.

MALIA

(scoffs)

There's a difference, Kenny.

KENNY

Why on earth would we pay for a gardener, when we can do the work ourselves?

(beat)

We have a great lawn mower, it's only two years old. The one I got you for Mother's Day!

MALIA

Yep. It's a really nice one.

KENNY

C'mon! This lawn'll get mowed in 30 minutes tops!

(beat)

We have to save everywhere we can now. This house cost double what we sold our house for in Virginia, and it's half the size!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MALIA

I know, you're right.

KENNY

Babe, it's not like you're working
to pay for it. That's on me.

Kenny walks away.

The Gardner gathers his tools into his old truck. Malia approaches him. Malia reaches in her purse and pulls out all the cash she has. Their eyes connect.

MALIA (IN SPANISH)

I'm so sorry. Please use this
money for your wife and family.

The Gardener is shocked at Malia's fluency. He graciously accepts the money. Kenny, inspects the mailbox oblivious.

GARDNER

Gracias Señora.

Baby Sophie starts to blow kisses and Malia backs away as the Gardener gets in his truck.

KENNY

Boys! Come on! Let's go inside and
check out our new house!

The boys wrestling in the yard get up and run to the door. Malia is cuddling Baby Sophie, kissing her head.

MALIA

(to Sophie)

Those are our very own palm trees!
Pretty, huh?

Sophie points up at the sky and claps. Kenny notices a row of rose bush beds lining the front window.

KENNY

From here on out, Babe, you can't
say I never buy you roses, look!

Malia is speechless. She stares at the manicured rose bushes, her reflection in the big bay window.

The screen door smacks shut as the boys rush in the house. Baby Sophie slaps her two hands on Malia's cheeks. Malia stares blankly, and sighs.

BACK TO:

INT. ANDASOL KITCHEN, 2009 - DAY

Malia is busy in the kitchen. Wearing her grandmother's pink scalloped APRON, covered in flour, she puts a tray of potatoes in the oven to roast and checks on the chicken.

SUPER: **March 15, 2009**

Malia swings opens the fridge door: Artwork. Photos. A colorful notice of the upcoming Chumash Indian Museum home-school field trip.

Most recent family Christmas card photo- Giggles. Silly faces. Playful. Yet, something is off between Kenny and Malia. Unspoken. Distant.

A timer DINGS. Malia gingerly pulls a round, halfway-frosted cake from the freezer, checking the firmness.

Ready.

Malia pipes Elvish writing in frosting as if it's her native script. She examines her masterpiece next to an open *Lord of the Rings* movie book.

Perfection.

The boys enter dressed in skillfully homemade costumes. TAYLOR, (11) dressed as Aragorn, and curly-haired CARTER, (9) as Frodo, rush through the kitchen with wooden swords causing a ruckus. ETHAN, (7) dressed as Samwise Gamgee, lags behind.

ETHAN

I'm coming Mr. Frodo!

MALIA

Boys. Swords do not belong in the house. Take it outside!

The boys rush back through the kitchen holding their swords high.

TAYLOR

Gandalf!!

CARTER

(fake-crying)
Gan-dalf!

Ethan, again lagging behind, stops to eat a pineapple slice off the fruit platter on the counter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALIA

Watch it.

ETHAN

Mommy, the Balrog just got Gandalf
the Grey.

Ethan chews the pineapple. Slurping. Malia puts down the
pipping bag and licks her black stained fingers. She
takes a napkin and wipes Ethan's face.

MALIA

Oh Samwise, you must keep an eye
on Frodo now that Gandalf is gone.

ETHAN

Yes, Momma!
(yelling)
Mr. Frodo!!!

Ethan goes blaring outside after his brothers. Malia
picks up the frosted "One Ring" cake, admires her work
and puts it back into the freezer.

Malia wipes her hands and then the counter and gathers a
stack of mail, an old tie, and a phone charger, and
carries it through the living room.

INT. KENNY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia walks in the disheveled bedroom and puts the stack
of mail on a massive computer desk taking up most of the
room.

On a cork-board several pictures of the kids are tacked.
Malia picks off an old picture of her and Kenny and looks
at it, deep in thought.

CUT TO:

INT. BEVERLY FARMS PARISH LIVING ROOM, 1994 - EVENING

A group of eight people sit in a circle on gathered
furniture. WILL, (30s, a charismatic preacher) closes his
eyes and leads the singing.

Next to him, Southern wife, CHRISTY, (30s) cuddles up.
Harmonizing.

GRAD KENNY, (20s) accompanies on guitar. A Young Life
baseball hat covers his bald head. COLLEGE MALIA (20s)
sits in the circle, singing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Grad Kenny looks at College Malia. She notices him and looks away. Will notices, nodding. Malia fidgets.

INT. BEVERLY FARMS PARISH KITCHEN - LATER

College Malia is washing dishes as Christy is covering the bundt cake.

People meander in and out of the kitchen.

CHRISTY

So, did you meet anyone over the summer?

COLLEGE MALIA

Christy, you know I'm not much of a dater.

CHRISTY

I know! But you never know when you'll meet "the one!"

COLLEGE MALIA

I had a great time on Summer Staff, but nothing that would last past the summer.

Christy notices Kenny enter the kitchen holding his empty coffee cup.

CHRISTY

So you're keeping your options open?!

COLLEGE MALIA

What options?

Christy nods to Grad Kenny to take his dishes to the sink. She gives him an endearing squeeze on the arm as she passes.

CHRISTY

I'll be right back, I'm gonna go check on the kids.

Grad Kenny approaches Malia and hands her his dishes and leans against the counter confidently and charming.

GRAD KENNY

Hi. I'm Kenny.

COLLEGE MALIA

Hi. Malia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAD KENNY

Malia? That's different.

COLLEGE MALIA

(awkward)

It's Hawaiian. My dad was in the Navy and we moved around a lot growing up.

GRAD KENNY

Nice. Are you at the college?

COLLEGE MALIA

Yeah. I'm a junior. Theology major.

GRAD KENNY

Oh! I just started at the seminary. I've known Will and Christy for, like, five years now.

COLLEGE MALIA

Really?

Malia looks intrigued. He smiles back. She blushes.

BACK TO:

INT. KENNY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia stares blankly. CRIES come from down the hall. She snaps back to reality. Drops the picture into the trash can, and exits.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Malia enters. One wall and bedding is blue with plush monkeys. One wall pink with frilly bedding, pillows and dolls. The little replica ice-cream table is tucked under the corner window.

Sophie is standing in the middle of the room trying to put a costume dress over her head.

MALIA

Baby, here, let me help!

SOPHIE

I'm stuck!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALIA

Your hair is in the velcro. Hold on.

Malia ferries Sophie's blonde waves away from the velcro opening. She gets the dress over Sophie's head and fastens it closed.

SOPHIE

I'm okay, Mom.

MALIA

There ya go, Baby!

Sophie goes to her bed and picks up the kitten, Toto. Snuggles.

SOPHIE

Can you fix my hair?

MALIA

Sure, but if you're going outside, let's put Toto back in the crate first, okay?

SOPHIE

Okay!
(to the kitty)
I love you.

Sophie kisses the kitty and stows it safely in its cage.

MALIA

Come here.

Malia begins brushing and smoothing Sophie's hair.

SOPHIE

Do we have to give Toto back to the shelter?

MALIA

Well, we are just fostering the kitty, remember? 'Til it's old enough to be adopted.

SOPHIE

But can we adopt her?

MALIA

Hmmmm, well? We'll see. It depends what your Dad says.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOPHIE

I think he will say 'yes.'

Malia laughs. Out the window, the brothers are SHOUTING in play. Sophie, confident, looks at herself in the mirror. Malia watches as she ties back pieces of hair.

MALIA

There, perfect! You gonna go find the brothers before the party?

SOPHIE

No, Momma. I am going to go kill the Witch King of Angmar!

Malia kisses Sophie on the head and hands her a wooden sword.

MALIA

Be brave, young shield maiden of Rohan!

Sophie rushes out the room. Malia follows her with a smile and a sigh.

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - DAY

Malia brings out the platter of fruit. A hand-painted banner with the number 11 and "Happy Birthday Taylor!"

Kids rushing. Play-fighting. Taylor helps Ethan in a sword battle. Carter jumps off the back wall. Sophie rushes past.

SOPHIE

I. Am. No. Man!

Carter falls to the ground writhing in fake pain.

MALIA

Be. Careful.

Malia sees GRANDMA VICI, (68) and GRANDPA STEVE, (68) short and loving, entering through the back gate. Grandpa has a movable cast on his right leg. Using a cane. Free arm filled with presents, carrying a bundle of helium balloons.

GRANDPA STEVE

Hello, favorite daughter! This way to the party?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALIA

Dad! You made it, right on time.

Malia greets her parents and gives hugs. She takes the basket her mom hands her.

GRANDMA VICI

Here's the focaccia.

MALIA

Ah, you mean, the lembas bread!
Thank you, it smells great.

GRANDMA VICI

Lembas bread, right.

GRANDPA STEVE

You're so cleaver.

(beat)

Where's the birthday boy?

MALIA

He's out back. Can you put the
balloons by the table on your way?

GRANDPA STEVE

Sure thing.

Carter comes whipping around the corner, unseen.

CARTER

(gruff)

No admittance, except on party
business.

MALIA

Carter, watch out for Grandpa's
broken leg!

GRANDPA STEVE

Well, I'd say this is party
business, Mr. Frodo.

Grandpa pulls some poppers out of his pocket and snaps
them on the ground creating smoke.

CARTER

(yelling)

Whoa. Gandalf's here!

Grandpa hobbles out back with Carter to the grandkids.

KIDS (O.S.)

Gandalf!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Grandma follows Malia into the house.

INT. ANDASOL KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Malia puts the basket on the counter and checks the oven turning the temperature down.

GRANDMA VICI
It smells good in here.

MALIA
Thanks. Potatoes are almost ready.
(beat)
How's Dad's leg healing?

Grandma washes her hands and makes herself helpful.

GRANDMA VICI
He's doing much better this week.
The doctor says he will make a
full recovery.
(beat)
It must've been so terrifying for
the boys on that hike, to witness
Grandpa break his leg in the
middle of nowhere.

MALIA
I mean, the one time, Kenny and I
go to therapy, and that's what
happens? What are the odds?
(beat)
Ethan did tell Dad not to cross on
the rocks...

GRANDMA VICI
He didn't listen...

They straighten up the kitchen, waiting for the food.

MALIA
It must've been hard for you, with
him not being able to do anything
this whole month.

GRANDMA VICI
Yes. Well, he's had a hard time
receiving help.

MALIA
I've noticed. But, I think it's
making him, softer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Grandma nods affirming. Malia goes to the counter and opens a large mailing envelope and pulls out a stack of legal papers.

MALIA (CONT'D)

Hey, can we go ahead and sign these, before Kenny gets here?

GRANDMA VICI

Where is he?

MALIA

Working.

GRANDMA VICI

On a Sunday?

MALIA

He works everyday, Mom. Yeah, he left straight from church.

(calmly)

Can we sign these, please?

GRANDMA VICI

I'm just not sure...

MALIA

I need a witness and I don't want anyone else to know yet.

(pleading)

Please!

GRANDMA VICI

But what about the kids?

MALIA

What about the kids? I'm doing this **for** the kids.

GRANDMA VICI

I just, I don't want them to find these papers someday and know I was the one who allowed you to do this.

MALIA

You're not allowing me to do this. If anything, the kids will one day find out that you helped me, and thank you.

Grandma Vici is troubled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRANDMA VICI

I don't want the kids to grow up
with a mom who's been divorced.

(beat)

You don't know how that feels!

Malia stops. She gazes at her mom. Feeling awkward in the
silence, Grandma picks up a pot-holder and checks on the
chicken. Malia softens.

MALIA

Mom, I *don't* know how that feels.
But it's gotta be better than
growing up with a Mom who is dead
inside, or worse.

Vici jolts.

MALIA (CONT'D)

My kids are gonna be teenagers. I
don't want them thinking **this** is
what love is. I won't do that to
them.

Malia picks up the papers and shakes them.

MALIA (CONT'D)

I'm doing this **for** them!

(beat)

You're just a witness. Please. I
want to get this done so I can
file it.

GRANDMA VICI

But on Taylor's birthday? This
isn't a good time.

MALIA

It's never going to be a good
time! I have to do this. I've been
living in the garage for a month
now.

(pleading)

Please!

GRANDMA VICI

Okay.

Malia grabs a pen and moves her finger down the page to
where a post-it arrow points. She signs and dates the
document and hands the pen to her mom.

Grandma signs it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MALIA

Thank you. Thank you!

Malia picks up the papers and hugs her mom.

Grandma releases. Turning the oven off and pulling out the chicken.

MALIA (CONT'D)

I'll be right back. We can get the food on the table.

GRANDMA VICI

Shouldn't we wait for Kenny?

MALIA

No, Mom. There's no telling when he'll be home.

As Grandma plates the chicken, Malia clutches the papers and heads out the back door.

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Malia enters the DIY finished garage-turned-home-school-room.

She passes through, into a simply furnished back bedroom. She looks at the signed documents, places them back into the envelope and places the envelope into her dresser.

Malia avoids making eye contact with her reflection out of habit, but squeals and does a silent dance, letting out a long exhale.

She exits the room.

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

POV OF GRANDMA, Malia carries the "One-Ring" birthday cake to the table. The food is displayed behind their child-written signs: Troll chicken Lembas bread. Po-tay-toes.

Presents. Drawings. Action figures. Balloons

MALIA

Guys! We're ready!! Come and eat!

The four kids and Grandpa come running to the table, and take their seats. Grandpa sits down holding a sword. Ethan comes up to him looking stern.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETHAN

Grandpa, swords don't belong at the table.

Grandpa looks embarrassed and hands his sword to Ethan who stashes it under a tree and comes back to his seat.

CARTER

Grandpa!!

Grandpa turns to Carter and tickles him in the side, laughing.

SOPHIE

Is Dad coming?

MALIA

He should be here soon. But let's go ahead.

Grandma notices how defeated Malia has been, and how hard she's trying.

TAYLOR

Troll Chicken!!!!

Taylor grabs a drumstick and holds it up. Carter grabs one too and they have a drumstick battle.

MALIA

Boys! Let's just eat!

GRANDPA STEVE

Um, shouldn't we pray first?

MALIA

Oh, yeah. Right. Who wants to pray?

Ethan and Carter raise their hands. Malia points to Carter. Sophie grabs Grandma's hand.

CARTER

(fast)

Jesus, thank you for today, and for our troll chicken and po-tay-toes,

(Samwise-voice)

Boil 'em. Mash 'em. Put 'em in a stew!

(fast)

And for Taylor's elevensies birthday. Amen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The boys snicker. Grandpa hesitates, about to say something. Malia interrupts. Grandma notices the ever so slight distance between Malia and her dad.

MALIA

Amen. Let's eat.

Everybody digs in, enjoying their meal and enjoying being together. Malia stares off. Grandpa pats her back, bringing her back to reality. She looks up, passes him the lembas bread, forcing a smile.

LATER

Table cleared. Small party plates. Grandpa has two half-gallons of ice cream, and a scooper in his hand. Malia, holds the cake with eleven candles in front of Taylor while they finish singing.

ALL

...Happy Birthday, dear Taylor!
Happy Birthday to you!

Proud, Taylor makes a wish, and blows out his candles. Taylor takes the candles out of the cake. Malia cuts pieces, as Grandma holds plates and Grandpa begins scooping ice cream.

Commotion.

SOPHIE

Dad!!!

CARTER

Dad's home!

Everyone looks up to see KENNY (37, bald, shaved, dressed in jeans, Sambas, and a polo with designer Prada glasses) entering the back gate holding a big present. Putting his computer bag down he walks towards the table.

ETHAN

Daddy's home!

TAYLOR

Dad! Come look at the cake Mom
made from scratch!

Malia smiles slightly. Kenny greets the kids. Hugs.
Tickles. Laughter.

KENNY

You come here! I've got something
for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Taylor takes a bite of cake then jumps down to see his dad. Kenny hands him the box, and he unwraps it revealing a brand new TAYLOR GUITAR.

TAYLOR

My own Taylor guitar!! Thank you,
Dad!

KENNY

You're welcome, Buddy!

Taylor takes out the guitar.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Let me show you.

Taylor hands Kenny the guitar and he starts playing. Sweet moment. Until- Taylor's birthday. Taylor's turn.

Taylor begins playing. He's quite talented. Kenny notices frosting on little fingers and grabs the guitar out of Taylor's hands, hurting him.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Awe, Buddy, your hands! You can't
play with dirty hands. Do you know
how much this costs?

Taylor rubs his hand, ashamed. He sucks frosting off his fingers.

MALIA

Kenny! He is a child!

Malia fires him "the look." Kenny softens, changing his tune.

KENNY

I'm sorry buddy. Here, let's go
finish eating first. We can play
something after dinner, when we
wash up.

Taylor runs back to the table holding back tears. Malia hands him a fresh and bigger slice of cake and ice cream.

Kenny walks over and gives Grandpa a hand shake and Grandma a wave.

Kenny walks toward Malia intending to hug her. She stiffens. He backs off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Malia grabs Taylor's smushed cake and melted ice cream and hands it to Kenny, indignant. He takes it and sits at the table, pouting. The kids seem unaware. Happy even.

Grandma looks down at her cake and ice cream.

FROM THE WIDE: The kids get up from the table one by one and get back to imaginative play. Grandpa clears dishes. Kenny takes his plate inside. Sophie draws Malia from the table, into play with the kids.

Grandma Vici, sits alone. Fork down. Absorbing all.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malia carries Sophie asleep on her shoulder. She lays her down in the bed and pulls out the wooden sword. Shoes off. Jeans off.

With a mother's touch Malia surgically removes the Eowyn costume without a peep.

Sophie is zonked. Malia covers her in blankets and sits on the side of her bed. Staring. Sophie smiles, lost in a dream. Malia tenses, lost in thought.

FADE TO:

EXT. BRUCE'S HOUSE, 1979 - AFTERNOON

Cold. Rainy. Vici, (38) in school teacher clothes, stands outside the Buick station wagon rear door, holding an umbrella, pleading.

VICI

Malia. Come on now, I need to
leave for my meeting.

Young Malia (5) in her school uniform, sits in the way
way back, downcast.

YOUNG MALIA

I don't want to go to Bruce's
house. We're not even friends! Why
can't I go to Stevie's house?

BRUCE'S MOM, (30s, frazzled) and BRUCE, (6) an over-sized
child, stands in the doorway of the home waiting.

VICI

Stevie and Maryann weren't free
this afternoon.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICI (CONT'D)

Bruce's mom was the only one I
could get a hold of on short
notice. Come on.

Young Malia reluctantly gets out of the car. Vici zips up
her coat.

VICI (CONT'D)

It's just for an hour or two.
Then we're having pork chops for
dinner.

YOUNG MALIA

Mmmm. Pork chops and applesauce!

Vici laughs and gives her an "Eskimo kiss" rubbing their
noses together.

VICI

Ugga-mugga!

YOUNG MALIA

(giggling)

Ugga-mugga!

Vici walks Young Malia up to the door. She hands off her
daughter to Bruce's Mom and Bruce, and Young Malia enters
the house. Vici, pauses momentarily but turns back to
leave as the door smacks shut.

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Bruce and Young Malia sit at the table, covered with
plastic and filled with art supplies. On the wall hang a
few family photos of Bruce, his teenage step-brother, Mom
and Step-Dad.

BRUCE'S MOM

Malia, have you ever worked with
paper maché?

Young Malia sits silently nodding her head 'no'.

BRUCE'S MOM (CONT'D)

Oh, let me show you. It's easy.

They begin blowing up three large balloons and dipping
strips of newspaper into the paper maché and covering the
balloons.

LATER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bruce's Mom pours from a small bottle of whiskey into a coffee cup and comes over to check on the kids. Malia is finishing up, proud of her clown-faced creation.

BRUCE'S MOM (CONT'D)

Oh, you've done such a good job!
We just need to leave these here
to dry while we clean up.

Young Malia, more relaxed, begins straightening up her area. Bruce, surrounded by scraps, is visibly disturbed.

BRUCE

Can we go play downstairs instead?

BRUCE'S MOM

Uh...okay. But stay out of Gary's
things.

(defeated)

I can clean up for you.

Bruce hops down from the table and motions for Young Malia to follow him. She hesitates. Looks at Bruce's Mom take another sip of coffee, then follows Bruce.

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE, BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

As if in a dream, Bruce leads Young Malia down the stairs. Dark flashes. Couch. Dart board. Lay-z-boy recliner. Stacks upon stacks of magazines. Darkness.

Straight ahead a light. A clean white bathroom. Safety.

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bruce and Malia play in the sink with bath toys. Child's games. Splashing. Laughing. Levity. A carefree moment.

BRUCE

This is dumb. Let's play something
else. Follow me.

Young Malia turns off the sink and dries her hands slowly.

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE, BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Bruce and Young Malia stand by the Lay-z-boy as Bruce motions to the stacks of magazines.

BRUCE

Pick one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Young Malia glances down at the Hustler and Playboy all around the floor. *Thousands?*

Seeing the covers she is unsure what to do. Frozen. Bruce flips through a few magazines and grabs a couple.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

What, are you chicken? Come on,
it'll be fun!

He grabs Young Malia's hand and pulls her towards the bathroom. She follows in a daze.

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bruce hands Young Malia a magazine, and begins flipping through it. Unsure. Unsettled. Unspoken.

BRUCE

It's a game! You pick a picture
and then we pretend we are the
people and do what they're doing.
(beat)
It's fun. You'll see.

SERIES OF BEATS:

A) YOUNG MALIA'S INNOCENT EYES.

B) The MAGAZINES open on the floor.

C) POV FROM THE CEILING Young Malia's stare goes vacant as an eternity seems to pass.

FADE TO:

INT. BRUCE'S HOUSE, BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

FROM THE BASEMENT STAIRS looking past the darkened room with the Lay-z-boy and the stacks of pornography, through to the open bathroom door with the light on and the blur of children on the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM, 1979 - DAY

Young Malia plays trucks on the floor with a boy classmate. Bruce walks by and pulls one of Young Malia's pigtails.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUCE

Come here!

Young Malia looks up at him, scared. She stands up and follows him into the classroom bathroom with the child-sized toilet. He turns the sink on as if to wash his hands.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Okay, we've got to get our stories straight!

Wide-eyed Young Malia, trembles.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

If my mom calls your mom and asks what we were doing, you have to tell her that we were playing in the sink,

(beat)

With the toy boats. Do you understand?

Malia flinches.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Tell me you understand!

YOUNG MALIA

I understand.

Bruce nods and walks away. Young Malia stands alone. Faucet running.

INT. NIGHTINGALE COURT, KITCHEN, 1979 - AFTERNOON

Vici pulls a tuna casserole out of the oven. Young Malia is working on homework at the table, set for dinner: FRANCISCANWARE MADEIRA DISHES and glasses, with silverware on folded napkins.

The phone rings. Young Malia jumps. Vici answers. Animated. Blank. Serious. Vici glances over at Malia and puts her hand to her mouth. Shoulders drop. She turns.

Malia hides under the table. Vici puts the phone to her chest and looks for Malia.

VICI

Malia, it's Bruce's Mom. She, uh, did anything happen yesterday you want to tell me about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG MALIA
(muffled)
No! Nothing happened.

VICI
I can't hear you, Sweetheart.

Malia crawls out from under the table, her heart beats rapidly.

YOUNG MALIA
We made paper maché and played
with toy boats in the downstairs
bathroom.

VICI
Toy boats?
(hesitating)
Are you sure that's all that
happened?

Young Malia puts her homework in her folder and clears her things from the table.

YOUNG MALIA
Yes. That's all that happened. I
swear.

VICI
Okay. You don't have to swear,
Sweetie. Why don't you go wash up
for supper.

Vici goes back to her phone call. Young Malia flees.

INT. YOUNG MALIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A nightlight reflects on the clown project, propped up on the dresser. Young Malia, in pajamas, tries to fall asleep, scared and alone.

A beautiful handmade bedspread of quilted irises covers Young Malia. Tears stain her cheeks.

The dark room fills with LIGHT.

A GLOWING FIGURE walks towards her bed and stands in silence. Young Malia's face looks closely at the Glowing Figure's face. Lit by the reflection of the glow, her expression changes from fear to calm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Young Malia, closes her eyes, and falls asleep in peace.

BACK TO:

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Malia is spooning sleepy Sophie in her bed, combing her hair with her fingers. Tracing her face. Hugs. Kisses. Breathing in her smell as she sits up.

Malia stands, hearing a commotion in the kitty cage. She opens the cage, snuggling and kissing the kitty.

MALIA

Yeah, we're gonna keep you. Sweet thing.

Malia secures the kitty back in the cage.

MALIA (CONT'D)

Goodnight, my little loves.

Malia stands in the door, looking in. She backs out closing the door.

INT. BOYS' BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Malia peeks her head in. Taylor and Carter busy in bed like cubicles at work. Taylor playing guitar. Carter drawing. Malia walks over and kisses Carter on the head, scruffing his hair.

MALIA

Time for bed you, guys.

CARTER

Awe, mom! When do we ever get to stay up later than the little guys?

Malia walks over and listens to Taylor playing.

MALIA

When I no longer feel like, forget it...

(beat)

Wait. Where's Ethan?

CARTER

Dad's bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carter looks up and rolls his eyes. Malia nods, moving her attention back to Taylor's music.

MALIA

That's beautiful, Tay! I want to hear more in the morning.

TAYLOR

Okay! Dad's gonna teach me Stairway to Heaven.

Taylor hands Malia the guitar she checks his fingers and kisses them.

CARTER

Is that a worship song?

TAYLOR

No, Carter, it's Led Zeppelin.

Malia places the guitar in its stand.

MALIA

Oh my gosh, Taylor! You know what we almost forgot?!?

CARTER

Brush our teeth?!

TAYLOR

What?!

MALIA

No, Cart, you already did that! Tay, Come here!

Malia motions Taylor out of bed and grabs a pencil from his drawing pouch. Upon remembering the Ritual, Carter bolts out of bed as well.

Malia pulls Taylor to the door jam where the boys have notches marking their heights from 2004 onward. Taylor stands upright back against the door jam and Malia makes the first mark for 2009.

TAYLOR

I'm getting up there!

CARTER

I'm kinda short. What happened?

MALIA

Nothing to worry about, Carty. You'll catch up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The boys crawl back in bed and settle in. They pick up their sketch pads and colored pencils and continue drawing.

TAYLOR

Thanks again for my party, Mom.

MALIA

Awe, you're welcome, Buddy. I love you so much!

TAYLOR

I love you more than Middle Earth!

They hug, Malia kisses Taylor on the head. She walks to the dresser; sorting through CDs deciding what to choose.

MALIA

Which one are you on tonight?

TAYLOR

Return of the King...

CARTER

Disc one!

TAYLOR

No! We are on disc two!

CARTER

NO! We did Two Towers disc two last night and tonight we are on Return of the...

TAYLOR

No! That was two nights ago!

MALIA

Guys! Knock it off. We are just gonna start at the beginning, Return of the King, disc one.

Carter acknowledges his victory, Taylor shrugs off his defeat.

MALIA (CONT'D)

Now go to bed.

Malia puts the correct disc into the player and begins the audiobook. Malia glances back, smiling. Lights out.

INT. KENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lit by the hallway, Malia peeks in. Ethan sleeps under sloppy covers of the king-sized bed - once Malia's side.

She pulls the covers up and over him and kisses him sweetly on the head.

MALIA

Goodnight, my little king.

Malia glances around, turns off the bedside lamp and exits the room.

INT. ANDASOL LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kenny sits at the dining table covered with paperwork, computer open prepping his taxes. Malia briskly passes through.

KENNY

I'll carry Ethan to bed later.

MALIA

Okay.

KENNY

Can we talk?

Malia stops, closes her eyes, taking a deep breath. She clenches her teeth, exhales and opens her eyes.

MALIA

Fine.

Kenny sits silent. Malia finally looks at him.

MALIA (CONT'D)

What is it?

Kenny motions for Malia to sit down. She ignores him and crosses her arms, defiant. Kenny closes his computer and stands up. Malia takes a step back leaving a significant distance between them.

KENNY

Listen. I know the last month has
been hard for us.

(beat)

For you...

Malia softens slightly, curious. She looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KENNY (CONT'D)

...With what you shared in
therapy, about your childhood.

Malia walls up, taking another step back.

KENNY (CONT'D)

If this is about sex,
(beat)
...and you not wanting to have sex
anymore. That's fine with me. I'll
support you.

Malia looks shocked.

KENNY (CONT'D)

(pleading)
I love you. We don't ever have to
have sex again. I'm okay with
that.

Malia stands aghast for what seems like an eternity.
Kenny thinks he's a real knight-in-shining-armor.

MALIA

I'm not okay with that.

Kenny looks confused. *1+1=2 How can that be?*

MALIA (CONT'D)

I **want** to have sex, Kenneth. I
want to have **a lot** of sex,
someday.

Relief washes over Kenny's face and he lets out a relaxed
smile, almost laughing.

MALIA (CONT'D)

But you, you will **never** have the
right to touch my body again.
(beat)
I'm not your possession. I **do not**
belong to you.

Malia stares Kenny dead in his eyes; she is completely
empowered and angry. He cowers and looks away,
speechless. She lets out a sigh, proud of herself, and
leaves the room.

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malia, paces. Energized. She opens the dresser drawer and pulls out the signed divorce documents. A breath. Restrained Smile.

She nervously returns the papers to the envelope and buries them in a drawer under her pajamas. She tosses pjs on the bed.

Malia turns off the overhead switch and begins lighting several candles. Burning incense.

She approaches the full length mirror. Time slows.

Malia begins to undress herself, watching every movement. She observes her nearly naked form and runs her hands across her body.

She fixates her hands on her STRETCH-MARKED BELLY, and lingers. Her mind drifts-

FADE TO:

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Kenny sits closed off, arms crossed, on one end of the sofa, separated from Malia. Malia has showered and put on make-up for the appointment, her only interaction with grown-ups for the week.

The THERAPIST (60s) a tall man with kind eyes; no notes or anything separating him from truly hearing. He leans in, eyes locking with Malia.

THERAPIST

What's coming up for you right now?

Malia sighs. She opens her mouth to answer but Kenny cuts in, oblivious.

KENNY

Well, I'll speak for myself. I think that Malia is just not willing to honor the vows of our 12 year marriage. And I don't know what to do about that.

Malia curls into a ball, turning from Kenny, distant and small.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THERAPIST

Malia, can you tell me where you are right now? What's happening?

Malia is distant, but clear. She remembers perfectly.

MALIA

The first time I met Kenny's family, they were up visiting us in Boston.

FADE TO:

I/E. STATION WAGON, 1995 - NIGHT

A 1980s Oldsmobile station-wagon drives down a city street at night. Inside 60's music plays on the radio. LARRY, (50s, bald) drives as ANNETTE, (50s, homely, southern mom) studies a map.

MALIA (V.O.)

We had a really lovely day showing them the city. The freedom trail. Faneuil Hall. Quincy Market.

AUNT GLORIA, (50s) sits in the back seat working on a crossword puzzle, with EDDIE (16) who is listening to a disc-man, zoned out.

MALIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

His family was so nice. His parents. His Aunt. His little brother. Very Southern and very kind.

Grad Kenny (20s) sits in the "way way back" facing out the back window with College Malia (20s) cuddled and comfortable.

The Therapist and Malia (35) now sit in the backseat of the station wagon observing the tableau play out.

MALIA (CONT'D)

Kenny and I were in the "way way back" of the station wagon.

(beat)

We had only been dating 5 months, and, look, I know I was naive...

Grad Kenny leans in to College Malia and begins kissing her. She kisses back. Pulls away. Both glance over the seat. He continues.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

College Malia stares at him. Shocked. Curious. He looks at her. Mischievous. More kisses. Sinking lower.

The radio station changes. Grad Kenny and College Malia pull away.

They stare at each other in the darkness. Holding breath. False alarm.

Grad Kenny looks College Malia in the eyes and then slowly begins unbuttoning her jeans. He slides the zipper down. College Malia puts her hand on his to stop.

COLLEGE MALIA

(whispering)

What are you doing?

Kenny asserts himself. Moves her hand to the side. Places a finger over his mouth, smirking.

GRAD KENNY

Shhhhhh...

She hesitates, surrendering to the glance.

He puts his hand in her pants and fingers her. Naive. This is her first time.

Curious pleasure. Closed eyes. Exhale. Kenny pleased, continues. College Malia responds to this touch.

College Malia GASPS. An audible, pleasurable response.

Kenny stiffens. He rips his hand out of College Malia's pants and shoves the same hand over College Malia's mouth.

Fast. Forceful. Furious.

Malia is shocked silent.

Broken.

Numb.

GRAD KENNY

(whispering sternly)

What the hell are you doing?

College Malia goes stone-cold and stares at him in fear. She shakes. He glances over the seat at his family, unaware. He slowly lowers his hand from her mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Malia re-adjusts away from Grad Kenny and zips up her pants.

Grad Kenny adjusts himself. He takes a deep inhale. Sweet fingers. Wet. Fragrant.

He takes a lick. Satisfied.

Cold. Dark. Alone. Vacant stares out the window.

With one hand College Malia guards her jeans button, with the other she wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

Her reflection flickers in the moonlight. She closes her eyes, tears ripple down her cheeks.

Malia (35) watches, teary, from the back seat as the Therapist holds space.

FADE TO:

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Malia sits in silence, open and grounded; having spoken truth out loud. The therapist sits back in his chair.

KENNY

(Impatient)

That was *years* ago. You made a commitment to me *after* that. What about *now*?

(to the therapist)

Can you fix this?

THERAPIST

Malia, thank you, for sharing your story with me.

Malia cocks her head, taken aback, being validated. One side of her mouth faintly curves upward.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Ken, I think it best if we meet separately from here on out, and-

Kenny stands up in a huff, actually displaying emotion.

KENNY

What? I can't believe you're taking her side!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THERAPIST

There are no sides here, Ken.
There's just the story. In the
weeks ahead we can explore
separately the wounds that caused-
it.

Kenny, speechless, grabs his coat and begins to storm out
of the office. Malia looks to the therapist for hope.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

See you next week?

Malia nods, receptively.

BACK TO:

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malia stands in front of the mirror in pajama shorts,
pulling her night shirt over her head. She grabs her
journal and a pen and crawls in bed. Thoughtful.

MIDNIGHT

Malia, sound asleep in bed, opens her eyes and bolts up,
when she hears-

SOPHIE (O.S.)

(screaming)

Mom!

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE - NIGHT

Malia comes out of her room and sees Sophie standing in
her pajamas, eyes closed and fearful. The outside door
left open.

MALIA

Sophia, it's Mommy. I've got you.
You're safe. Hey...

Whimpering, Sophie comes to, and begins settling. Malia
hugs her and holds her close.

SOPHIE

I had a bad dream.

Malia comforts her, looking in her eyes. She stands up
and closes the outside door. They walk into the bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALIA

Come get in Momma's bed. You can
sleep with me.

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia pulls back the covers as Sophie climbs in bed.
Malia crawls in after her and spoons little Sophie.

SOPHIE

(foggy)
I love you.

MALIA

I love you more.

Malia kisses Sophie on the head. Sophie scrunches up her
face as if concentrating and relaxes.

SOPHIE

(yawning)
We love the same.

Malia pauses admiring her girl. She smirks.

MALIA

Yeah. We love the same.

Malia continues snuggling Sophie, looking at her little
girl falling back to sleep, safe.

MALIA (V.O.)

(echoing)
Jesus, please just let her turn
six...

FADE TO:

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM, 2008 - NIGHT

Malia stands in the doorway looking in on a sleeping
Sophie. She rubs her finger across the door jam. Freshly
penciled "2008." And "Sophie." Lost in a memory.

MALIA (V.O.)

(echoing)
...If I can protect her until she
turns six, she'll never be as
fucked up as I am. Please!

Birthday balloons with a "6" are anchored to the ice-
cream table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia enters the room and unhooks the BIRTHDAY PARTY HAT from Sophie's chin and places it on the speckled, pink, Build-A-Bear.

Malia kisses Sophie's head and draws up the covers, pausing a moment to look at her innocent girl.

BACK TO:

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia leans over Sophie and kisses her cheek.

MALIA
(whispering)
Thank you.

Malia lays her head down. She watches Sophie breathe. Studying her features. Eyes close. Asleep.

DAWN

Sophie opens her eyes. Happy. She sees her mom sleeping. She watches her breathe. Peaceful. Sophie smiles. Quietly gets out of bed without disturbing Malia and exits.

SUPER: **March 16, 2009**

Malia stirs in her sleep, but refuses to open her eyes. Then- she hears the wheezing of a nearly lifeless cat.

Malia looks up as Sophie comes back in the room holding Toto. Limp. Gasping for air.

SOPHIE
Mom, something is wrong. Toto
needs help.

MALIA
Baby, what happened?

Malia bolts out of bed horrified. She cradles the limp cat, still gasping for air.

SOPHIE
I went to get her in the cage and
she couldn't walk. She keeps
crying.

MALIA
(frantic, shouting)
Kenny?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia runs out of the room, and Sophie follows behind.

INT. ANDASOL LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Malia rushes in holding the limp kitty, shouting.

MALIA

Kenny! We need you!

Sophie follows as Kenny sits at the table in his jeans and under shirt, working.

KENNY

What is it?

MALIA

The cat! Something is really wrong!

Malia shows Kenny the cat and he and Sophie huddle close over the kitty. Kenny inspects the cat and realizes the gravity of the situation.

KENNY

What can we do? This cat is dying.

SOPHIE

No, Daddy!

MALIA

Please, take her to the vet, now!

Sophie begins crying even harder. Malia gives Kenny the wifely death-stare. They step aside.

KENNY

Sorry, I'm in the middle of something.

(beat)

I mean, clearly the cat is not going to make it.

MALIA

This isn't about the cat, Ken.

Malia motions for Kenny to look at Sophie.

MALIA (CONT'D)

This is about our daughter. She is **hurting** right now.

Sophie begins cradling Toto like a mother to a child.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALIA (CONT'D)

Wouldn't you want to do everything
in your power to keep her from
hurting?

KENNY

Okay. Okay. Calm down.

Malia furious is about to speak, but restrains herself.

KENNY (CONT'D)

I need to get a few things, for
work.

Malia gives the "hurry-your-ass-up" look. Kenny exits.

Malia turns to comfort Sophie and Toto. He reenters
wearing shoes, carrying a computer bag and keys. Malia
hands him the kitty.

MALIA

You need to hurry!

SOPHIE

Take care of Toto for me, Dad!

Malia picks up Sophie and cradles her in her arms. Kenny
rushes out of the room towards the back door.

KENNY (O.S.)

I'll do what I can.

Malia cuddles a whimpering Sophie in her arms.

EXT. CHUMASH INDIAN MUSEUM, PARKING LOT - DAY

Malia pulls into a parking space and stares off vacantly.
The boys make noise in the backseat and Malia begins
getting the kids out of the car.

A banner hangs over the entrance "Welcome Homeschoolers!"
The boys pile out of the van.

ETHAN

I see Derek!

Ethan waves to a friend in the distance and gets ready to
bolt. Carter holds him back.

CARTER

No, Ethan! Wait!
(beat)

MOM!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia turns to the boys and huddles up getting right in their faces.

MALIA

Boys! Listen to me. You can walk over together and wait for me by the entrance.

(whispering)

You need to be very sweet to your sister today. Do you understand me?

TAYLOR

Yes, ma'am.

CARTER

Yes, ma'am.

MALIA

Ethan?

ETHAN

(reluctant)

Yes, ma'am.

The boys all nod. Sophie sits in her carseat booster, visibly sad.

CARTER

Is Toto going to die?

MALIA

I don't know, Carter. She might.

ETHAN

She kept crying and woke me up.

MALIA

I know, Buddy. Dad is getting her some help. We just have to wait.

(beat)

Go on. Look both ways. I'll be right behind you.

The boys hold hands and rush off to the entrance seeing some friends. A group of mothers are huddled together talking.

One HOMESCHOOL MOM is wearing a large cross and has a bag with yarn and knitting needles popping out. Malia notices them but turns to get Sophie unbuckled.

Carrying Sophie, Malia slides the door shut and walks towards the entrance. The mothers share "prayer requests."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOMESCHOOL MOM

I heard she's been living in the
garage for a month! Can you
imagine?

Malia sees the stares and armors up. Just then AMBER,
(40, Topanga Canyon mom) in flowing, bohemian clothes
with an 'Om' necklace and crystal bracelets breezes by
carrying her barefoot boy, COURAGE (6) wearing a felted
Robinhood hat.

AMBER

(giggling)
Excuse us, Loves!

Malia looks up, caught off guard, she smiles curiously.
Courage makes a little wave at Sophie who smiles shyly.
It's the first joy of the day.

MALIA

Boys! Let's go.

The boys wave to the friends and head back toward their
mom.

The mothers make a wave at Malia who reciprocates the
wave with a curt smile, busying herself with the kids so
as not to engage.

INT. CHUMASH INDIAN MUSEUM, VISITOR'S CENTER - DAY

Homeschool families form in pods. They begin to take
their seats as a DOCENT, (50s, Native American) motions
for people to come closer and sit down.

DOCENT

Welcome, welcome everyone thank
you for being here today. Honoring
the Chumash people involves moving
beyond awareness, toward active
solidarity. Do you know how we do
this?

Malia and Sophie linger in the back of the room, visibly
saddened. Malia scans the room while the Docent leads
children in discussion.

DOCENT (CONT'D)

Just like homeschool families, for
"the first people" where we come
from -our home- is where we learn
and make discoveries.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCENT (CONT'D)

The ocean is our library. The soil
is our textbook...

The other mothers are close to the front with their kids.
Amber and Courage stand off to the side half-way back.
Malia's boys sit up front eager to participate.

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

The sky and stars and planets are
our smart phones. How we keep
time. How we know when to plant
and when to harvest.

Malia distracts herself looking through leaflets on the
back counter. She comes across one advertising the museum
as a wedding venue and flips through, lost in thought.

FADE TO:

INT. NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH, 1996 - DAY

College Malia stares vacantly into a full-length mirror
in the Bridal Suite of an old New England church, dressed
in a store bought, designer knock-off, wedding gown. Her
hair and make-up is getting touched up.

VICI (55) approaches, wearing a hand sewn Mother-of-the-
Bride dress holding a post office air mail box.

VICI

It came! Special delivery from
Waikiki. Your dad picked this up
from the post office this morning.

Vici opens the flap revealing a gorgeous and intricate
Hawaiian floral headpiece.

COLLEGE MALIA

Mom, it's beautiful. I can't
believe you did that.

Vici takes the lei out of the box and ties it onto
Malia's head.

VICI

Since the day you were born, and
your dad and I named you, this is
the one thing I always wanted to
give you on your wedding day.

(beat)

My beautiful girl!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

College Malia and Vici look at Malia's reflection in the mirror, holding the moment.

COLLEGE MALIA

I love it.

College Malia stares into her reflection as if trying to find herself. Vici beams. *Malia will be happy for her.*

CUT TO:

INT. 127 BAR & GRILL, BEVERLY FARMS, 1996 - MORNING

Grad Kenny and College Malia sit in a old wooden booth in a quaint New England diner. A huge D-ring binder sits on the table with all of College Malia's wedding planning.

Grad Kenny types silently on his IBM Thinkpad referencing a leather-bound journal.

College Malia pauses looking over the wedding invitation tucked in the clear plastic sleeve; her countenance shifts.

She holds her breath and lets out a long sigh; flipping the page. The dress page has a big black sheet that says "no peeking!" And she breezes by that to the "vows" tab.

GRAD KENNY

Writing our vows is really important.

COLLEGE MALIA

I know. I just don't know what to say.

GRAD KENNY

These are our commitments to each other. When I say 'I do' it's for life!

(beat)

Here, look at mine.

Grad Kenny brushes aside the Book of Common Prayer open to an inscription:

"To Steve and Vici: On your wedding day, June 29, 1963 - Grace & Web"

College Malia looks over Grad Kenny's vows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLLEGE MALIA

Well, what's wrong with "for
better or worse, for richer or
poorer"?

Grad Kenny picks up the Prayer Book, shaking it.

GRAD KENNY

Why would we want to take vows
from the 1500s when we could write
our own?

College Malia sighs, staring into the paper, distant.

COLLEGE MALIA

Why don't you just tell me what
you want me to say then, Ken?

GRAD KENNY

What if I we just take my vows and
make yours look just like them?

COLLEGE MALIA

Fine.

GRAD KENNY

Great! I'll just change the male
part about a husband loving his
wife as Christ loves the church,
(beat)

To the female part about
submitting to your husband, and we
should be good to go!

Grad Kenny goes back to typing on his laptop. College
Malia stares off, eating the remaining pancakes
mindlessly.

CUT TO:

INT. NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

The Bridal suite has cleared. Music is playing in the
background and the bridesmaids begin making their way
down the aisle. College Malia stands next to STEVE (55),
in a grey suit with a single pink rose, nervously
shaking.

STEVE

How are you feeling? You look
beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLLEGE MALIA

I feel like I'm gonna throw up.

STEVE

Oh, that's just nerves.

(beat)

It's a big day!

Steve stands side-by-side with College Malia. He holds his arm out for her. She slides her hand in by his elbow and holds her breath. Steve glances over and looks at her proudly, unaware.

College Malia steadies her breathing. Malia, like in a dream, glances over at all the faces in the crowd. She disassociates.

The commotion spins as "Ode to Joy" morphs into the sound of prison doors slamming shut echoing through College Malia's head.

MALIA (V.O.)

What the hell did you just do?

BACK TO:

INT. CHUMASH INDIAN MUSEUM, VISITOR'S CENTER - DAY

Malia looks up from the brochure, rubbing her forehead.

The Docent is clanging an ancient Chumash tool.

DOCENT

Could you imagine if someone just came into your bedroom and started living there? And told you, you had to leave?

(beat)

Who here has had something stolen from them?

Hands raise. Kids nod. Sophie clings to her mom's leg. Malia tracks the Docent. *This hits close to home.*

DOCENT (O.S.)

(softening)

And it could even be by someone who was very sincere. But it doesn't make it any less wrong.

Teary-eyed Sophie has moved away from her mom, looking at items in the gift shop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia panics, looking for Sophie. She finds her eyeing a Webkinz display. Bowl of rocks. Feathers. Arrowheads.

Malia starts to follow after her, but pauses when she sees Courage approach Sophie making her giggle. Sophie is looking at a stuffed black cat. Malia moves closer to listen in.

COURAGE

That one's cute!

SOPHIE

It looks like my kitty. She is sick.

COURAGE

Oh I'm sorry.

SOPHIE

She woke up this morning and couldn't breathe. So I'm sad.

COURAGE

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sad for you.

(beat)

May I give you a hug?

SOPHIE

Okay.

Courage leans in to hug Sophie, he pauses, opening his arms wide in invitation, waiting. Sophie approaches him on her terms and hugs him back. They giggle.

Malia watches. *This little guy has been trained well.*

COURAGE

My name is Courage.

Malia listens in approaching the kids.

SOPHIE

I'm Sophie. It means 'wisdom'.

COURAGE

That's cool.

(beat)

Bye, Sophie!

Courage runs back to Amber. Malia watches. Amber notices and waves. Malia waves back almost instinctual. They smile and Malia turns back to Sophie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MALIA

Which one looks like a new friend?

Sophie glances up at Malia and flashes a faint smile. Debating between a black cat or white fox. She hesitates.

SOPHIE

This one! I'm gonna name him
Courage.

Sophie chooses the WHITE FOX and gives it a hug then hands it to her mom. She wipes her eyes. Malia picks up three arrowhead necklaces and checks out.

People stand and meander through the small exhibit.

EXT. CHUMASH INDIAN MUSEUM, GROUNDS - DAY

Malia holds Sophie's hand as she cuddles her stuffie. The boys, excited about their new necklaces spill out onto the grounds. Homeschool families follow the Docent on a guided tour.

Malia and Sophie lag behind.

Malia glances at her phone. A voicemail from Kenny. She glances down at Sophie and locates the boys.

MALIA

Taylor!

Taylor looks back and sees his mom on the phone. He acts years beyond his age to quickly gather the boys, breaking up a fight between Ethan and Carter.

TAYLOR

Guys, come on!

MALIA

(to Taylor)

Can you watch your sister for a
minute?

TAYLOR

Is it...

Malia darts a glance at Taylor. He knows. Carter and Ethan follow suit.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Oh, Sophie! Is that a new Webkinz?

Taylor motions to Carter, and Ethan to join in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

What's his name, Sophie?

ETHAN

He's so cute!

The diversion works. Sophie basks in the attention. Malia steps away to listen to the voicemail. Distraught.

Taylor watches his mom. She wipes away tears, visibly shook, and glances back at her kids, catching eyes with Taylor.

Malia shakes her head. Hand over her mouth. Tears fall.

Malia, approaches the kids bending down to Sophie.

MALIA

Baby, I am so sorry.

Malia cradles Sophie in a strong embrace.

SOPHIE

Toto is in heaven?

Malia nods, breaking down sobbing. Taylor stands guard over his mother. Ethan joins the hug and Carter rubs Sophie's back and hair.

FADE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM, BATHROOM, 1996 - NIGHT

The wedding dress hangs on a hanger behind the door. College Malia dressed in a conservative white silk nightgown, is crouched on the floor muffling sobs.

She places her hand over her mouth. Trembling.

Violently, she weeps in silence. Then- she hears Kenny's muffled call:

GRAD KENNY (O.S.)

Babe? You coming? I'm ready!

Heaving forcibly. Silently. Gasping. Malia forces herself to stop. Deep breath. Calm. Down. *You have no choice.*

COLLEGE MALIA

Coming...

College Malia readies herself for her wedding night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rising to stand, she lets out a deep exhale. She grasps the handle and opens the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

College Malia lays motionless on the bed. Grad Kenny is on top of her. Thrusting.

College Malia winces in pain. Biting her lip. Turning her head away. Holding back tears.

SERIES OF BEATS:

A) COLLEGE MALIA'S tear stained EYES

B) Champagne flutes. One filled, one drained, next to a liter of Pepsi.

C) POV FROM THE CEILING College Malia's stare goes vacant. Eternity seems to pass.

College Malia rolls over pulling the covers over her naked body. Defeated. Alone. No longer a virgin.

BACK TO:

INT. CHUMASH INDIAN MUSEUM, GROUNDS - DAY

Sophie holds Malia's hand, sad and dazed, as they aimlessly wander throughout the grounds. The boys lead the way.

The kids inspect the replica huts and fire-pit. They watch an interactive demonstration. The boys are involved and keep trying to make Sophie happy.

They break for a bag lunch at picnic tables. Sophie weaves in and out of smiles. Malia, a million miles away.

EXT. CHUMASH INDIAN MUSEUM, PARKING LOT - LATER

Malia loads the kids back into the van. Amber happens past noticing the other religious moms still staring at Malia. She stops at Malia's van, curious.

AMBER

You with that group?

MALIA

Uhh, no. Well, not anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Amber nods. Courage climbs in the van and begins talking to Sophie and the boys.

AMBER

I'm Amber.

MALIA

Nice to meet you. I'm Malia.

AMBER

Your name's beautiful. Hawaiian?

MALIA

Yeah. How'd you know?

AMBER

Oh, I studied Lomi Lomi massage on the Big Island ten years ago.

MALIA

Wow. That's...

(embarrassed)

I don't even know what that is.

AMBER

Let me guess, you're an Aquarius, right? Cancer rising? You carry that energy!

MALIA

Uh, yeah, Aquarius. I don't know about the other part.

Malia glances over at the group of homeschool moms.

MALIA (CONT'D)

I was brought up to believe that was the Devil's-handiwork.

They share a sinister laugh.

AMBER

I live in Topanga Canyon. If you ever want to come over for a playdate, let me know. I can read your birth chart. And I make a killer organic margarita.

MALIA

Wow. Thank you. I'd actually love that.

CARTER

Yes! That sounds delicious!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Amber hands Malia her cell to put in her number. She leans in to the van.

AMBER

(laughing)

It is my little man, but you'll have to wait a few years. These are just Mamma Margaritas!

CARTER

Oh, drat!

Amber eyes Carter. *She likes this kid.* Malia watches the interaction in awe.

AMBER

Do you know how to make guacamole, Carter?

Carter shakes his head no, but eagerly smiles!

AMBER

Tell ya what? You come over with your Mom and siblings and I can teach you the recipe I learned in Oaxaca. Deal?

CARTER

Deal! Deal!

AMBER

Okay, Courage, say Goodbye to our new friends!

(to Malia)

I'll call you tonight, Malia!

Malia hands Amber back the phone. Courage jumps in Amber's arms and they wave while walking off.

ALL

Bye!

Malia watches her walk away goddess-like and free. Something awakens.

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

The boys barge through the back gate to Middle Earth. Wooden swords. Elven cloaks. Ready for battle.

Sophie comes through the back gate, cuddles her white fox and sways into the yard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia follows. Jackets. Bags. Rocks. She dumps it all by the back door and heads in the house.

INT. ANDASOL BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Malia fastens her jeans at the sink. She washes her hands and looks up in the mirror. Lingerin, she wipes her mascara.

She opens the medicine cabinet and scans over the bottles of pills. She picks one. Shakes it. Opens the lid.

One. Two. Then- twenty pills in her palm. Her gaze falls on the pills, her breathing lengthens.

SOPHIE (O.S.)

Mom!

Startled, Malia takes the pills and shoves them back into the bottle as Sophie pounds on the door.

SOPHIE (O.S.)

Mom!!

MALIA

Yes, Baby. I'm in here. Momma just needs a minute to pee. Hold on!

Malia, takes one last look in the mirror and turns to open the door.

Sophie stands sweetly holding the wilting birthday BALLOONS from the party.

INT. ANDASOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

SOPHIE

Mom?! Can we play the "Give it to God" game?

MALIA

Oh, Baby. Not right now. Mommy's tired.

(beat)

And I need to make dinner.

Malia exits the bathroom and leads Sophie back outside.

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

SOPHIE

Please?!

Malia softens to the sweetness of her girl.

MALIA

Well, those are Taylor's
balloons...

The boys bust through the backyard, chasing each other
with swords. Carter's "it."

SOPHIE

Taylor, can I have a balloon?

Seeing how distracted the brothers are, Malia interjects.

MALIA

Taylor!

Taylor stops for a moment and looks up.

TAYLOR

What?

MALIA

Can Sophie have a balloon for the
"Give it to God" game?

TAYLOR

I don't care. She can have all of
them!

Sophie cheers. Carter zeros in on Taylor.

SOPHIE

Thank you, Taylor!

CARTER

Gotcha!

Taylor lets out a grunt and then turns chasing after
Carter right past Sophie and Malia and into the house.

MALIA

Boys! Swords!! Out of the house!!
Now!!

Carter runs back out of the house.

CARTER

Sorry, Mom!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Taylor follows almost knocking Ethan over.

TAYLOR
(laughing)
Sorry Ethan!

Ethan, unsure what to do between brothers and balloons, hesitates. Malia notices.

MALIA
(to Ethan)
Do you want to play too?

Ethan hears laughing from the back yard and makes his decision.

ETHAN
No thanks, Mom! I'm gonna play
with the strong guys.

MALIA
Hey! Strong guys can pray to God
too!

Malia rolls her eyes, shakes her head, and looks to Sophie.

MALIA (CONT'D)
Brothers!

Sophie, hands on her hips, mimics her mom letting out a sigh.

SOPHIE
Brothers!

Malia pauses, looking at her mini-me.

She takes the balloons from Sophie untangling the ribbons. She pulls out the most inflated balloon and hands it to Sophie and takes one for herself. Malia pops a wilting one and sucks in the helium.

MALIA (HELIUM)
Here you go.

Sophie takes the popped balloon and sucks in some helium, erupting in giggles.

Malia begins singing "The Lollipop Guild."

SOPHIE (HELIUM)
Give it to God!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Malia scrunches the popped balloons and tosses them in the outdoor trashcan. They walk to a part of the yard with no tree coverage. Side-by-side. Looking up.

SOPHIE (CONT'D) (HELIUM)
How do we do it again, Mom?

MALIA (FADING HELIUM)
Well, you hold your balloon in
your hand in front of you, like
this.

Sophie follows the instructions.

MALIA (CONT'D)
You close your eyes.
(beat)
Pray a prayer to God.

Sophie squints her eyes closed tight. Malia watches her, lovingly. Longingly.

MALIA (CONT'D)
And when you are ready,
(beat)
You let go.

Sophie holds her ribbon. She opens one squinty eye and looks at her mom.

SOPHIE
What if I don't know what to pray?

MALIA
Sometimes it's hard to come up
with words to say, Baby.
(breathless)
Especially when you are holding
something really sad.
(beat)
I think the balloon carries to God
even what you might not think is a
prayer.

Sophie takes a moment. A deep breath. She exhales and lets go of her ribbon. Opening her eyes, she watches her balloon rise in the air. Joy. Giggles.

SOPHIE
It's your turn, Momma.

Sophie watches Malia close her eyes. Holding her breath, Malia slowly lets out an exhale. She releases her ribbon and the balloon flies over-head chasing Sophie's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THERAPIST (V.O.)

What do you see now?

CUT TO:

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on MALIA'S FACE, her eyes are closed.

She sits cross-legged on the couch at ease. The Therapist holds space.

The sound of FIREWORKS explode in the distance. CLOSE on Malia's face. She flinches.

MALIA

It's the fourth of July. 1995. We were having a backyard party...

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE, 4TH OF JULY, 1995 - NIGHT

Fireworks explode in the yard. College Malia opens her eyes, stunned. Numb. She crosses her arms, shivering.

MALIA (V.O.)

Kenny's there to meet my family for the first time.

Vici and Steve are clearing the table from their outdoor bbq. BROTHER JT, some friends, and Grad Kenny, are shooting fireworks in the yard, bonding.

EARLIER

Malia (35) and the Therapist sit on the deck facing one another while the family and College Malia bustles around them.

Vici clears the remains of dinner from the deck. Steve brushes and wipes the grill. The brothers and friends gather on the deck for outdoor cinema arranging their seats around Malia (35) and the Therapist.

MALIA

My parents were busy cleaning up dinner. Kenny suggested we all watch a movie...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Everyone gathers cozy on outdoor couches and loungers on the deck watching **Natural Born Killers** projected in the back yard.

Grad Kenny and College Malia sit cuddled on a Loveseat. College Malia sits upright and Grad Kenny lounges with his legs on her lap. Grad Kenny grabs her hand and pulls it under the blanket.

Without anyone else noticing, Grad Kenny places College Malia's hand on his dick under the blanket and motions for her to massage him. She is visibly disturbed. Populated space. Trapped. Expectation.

College Malia glances around at her peers: Everyone watching the murder show. *This is entertainment?* Gunfire. Profanity. Blood-spatter. Carnage.

College Malia disassociates.

Malia (35) and the Therapist have their eyes fixed on College Malia's face, hand still under the blanket.

LATER

Malia (35) and the Therapist, in their seats, watch the friends and family standing on the deck spectating. Fireworks grand finale.

Grad Kenny puts his arm around College Malia rubbing her back. She goes frigid. Unable to speak. Silent. College Malia ducks away from Kenny's touch.

Cut off from her body.

Cut off from her family.

Cut off from herself.

Steve glances over, smiling. Oblivious.

STEVE

Isn't this an incredible view?!
Happy Independence Day,
Sweetheart!

College Malia closes her eyes, sullen.

BACK TO:

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

Malia stands. Eyes closed. Tense. Sophie tugs on her mom's hand.

SOPHIE

Mom, I'm hungry.

Malia opens her eyes, disoriented.

MALIA

What?

SOPHIE

I'm hungry...

Malia looks up at the balloons barely recognizable in the sky.

MALIA

Okay, Baby. I'll go start dinner.
Why don't you go play with the
brothers until I call you.

Sophie runs off. Malia heads towards the house. Lost.

INT. ANDASOL LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Fresh Pajamas. Bathed. Teeth brushed. Combed hair. Malia sits on the couch in between Taylor and Carter watching a movie. Carter holds Malia's hand.

Kenny sits on the other couch next to Ethan. Sophie in his lap dozes off. A plate of picked over leftovers and a glass of wine sit on the side-table.

Carter takes his mom's hand and moves it to his back. Rubs and scratches. A sweet moment.

Ethan yawns and gets up on his own.

ETHAN

I'm going to bed.

MALIA

Goodnight, Buddy! Want me to tuck
you in?

ETHAN

No, I'm a big boy. I got it.

KENNY

Goodnight!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia stands up anyway following Ethan.

MALIA

You can be a big boy, and still
need your Momma...

A few moments later Malia returns. She walks over to Kenny offering to take a sleepy Sophie. He hands her over. And Malia begins to head out through the kitchen to the backdoor.

KENNY

Where are you going? Her bedroom
is back there?

MALIA

I'm taking her to my room.

KENNY

No you're not!

Malia shoots a glance at the boys. They look up to their dad, then back on the film. Malia glares Kenny down.

MALIA

Can we not do this tonight?

KENNY

Do what? I'm just telling you
where my daughter's room is; you
seem to have forgotten.

Sophie stirs in her mother's arms. Malia soothes her.

MALIA

Do you not remember what happened
last night?

KENNY

What? The cat dying?

TAYLOR

Dad!

CARTER

Jeez, Dad. That's harsh.

Malia, pissed, turns and walks out of the room.

INT. ANDASOL KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Malia passes through the kitchen holding Sophie. Kenny rushes in after them dropping his dishes haphazardly. Angry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KENNY

Wait!

MALIA

She's six, Kenny! She woke up in the middle of the night terrified and sleepwalked out to my room!

(beat)

Are you okay with that?!

Kenny looks at her blankly.

KENNY

Well, no, of course not...

MALIA

She's six!

Malia holds on to Sophie for dear life and turns continuing to walk out of the kitchen, and out the back door. Kenny hesitates, he follows behind her.

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Malia holding Sophie tries to open the sliding door to the garage.

KENNY

So that's it?

Malia pauses. A deep breath. Her shoulders soften.

MALIA

For now.

(beat)

We can't have our six-year-old daughter wandering around Los Angeles in the middle of the night, all alone.

They stand in deafening silence. The air is cold.

KENNY

So that's it for us?

Malia sighs, and looks Kenny in the eyes. They connect.

MALIA

Yeah. That's it for us.

Malia lets the words fall, comfortable in the silence. Kenny fidgets. *2+2=4. It doesn't make sense.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KENNY

When?

MALIA

I'm filing the papers tomorrow.

Kenny looks crushed.

KENNY

So what? You're taking all the kids with you to do this?

MALIA

No, Kenneth. I'm not taking my children to the courthouse.

(beat)

My mom is babysitting.

KENNY

So what now? You're just gonna keep living in the garage and...

(beat)

Just, be the nanny?

Malia clenches her teeth and fires back sharply, but collected.

MALIA

Yeah. I guess so...

(beat)

And you'll just be my Landlord.

They stand in the tension. No one moving. Kenny caves.

KENNY

Isn't there any other way?

Malia stares at the ground for a long moment and then looks up into Kenny's scared eyes.

MALIA

I don't think so.

Malia holds Sophie tight keeping her warm. She turns to enter the garage.

KENNY

Listen, I, can't keep paying for you to go to therapy. So you'll need to cancel any future appointments.

Malia pauses, taking in the news, restraining herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MALIA
(scoffs)
Of course.

Malia holds Sophie protectively, and leaves Kenny out in the cold.

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malia sits with only the dim light on at her desk. Sophie is snuggled in her Momma's bed.

Malia purposefully writes in a journal. She is mid-thought when, from the bed, Sophie lets out a giggle. Malia glances over, intrigued. Fast-asleep. Dreaming.

A second time. Just as unexpected as the first. Malia busts into a curious smile that lingers, then fades.

Malia rummages through the desk drawer. She pulls out a small pouch. Inside is a half-empty box of cigarettes and a lighter. She exits through the back door of the garage.

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Malia paces. Racing. A light flashes from the main house but Malia takes no notice. She lights up a cigarette, leans against the brick wall and steadies her breathing.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. BOYS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Taylor hits Carter who drops his flashlight. Both peer out the window into the backyard.

CARTER
Ouch!
(whisper-whining)
Stop it, Taylor!

TAYLOR
Look!
(beat)
It's a cigarette. Mom's smoking!

CARTER
What? Let me see. Whoa. Should we tell dad?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAYLOR

Oh my god, Carter, no way! We're
not gonna rat out Mom!

CARTER

Oh, duh. Right.

TAYLOR

Shhhh. Just watch.

BACK TO:

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Malia closes her eyes, trembling. She opens her eyes and
stares off at the waning gibbous moon's glow.

She takes another drag.

Malia's gaze drops to the tree line. She notices a
glimmer. Caught in the large Bottlebrush tree is the
helium balloon she had "given to God" earlier that day.

Her countenance darkens. She extinguishes her light,
grinding it with her shoe.

MALIA

Fuck you!

Rage. Malia stares at the sky, raises both her middle
fingers towards heaven, and fires away:

MALIA (CONT'D)

FUCK! YOU!

Malia begins crying, but she fights it off. Gasping.
Shouting. Raging. She is too angry for tears.

MALIA (CONT'D)

I did it all. I did everything you
told me.

(beat)

I was a good girl. I hardly dated.
I was a virgin on my wedding
night.

(beat)

I played by the rules. I lived by
the book.

(beat)

And it didn't. Work. Out.

(defeated, spent)

I. Quit.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALIA (CONT'D)

I will not believe in a God who is
less loving than I am!

(escalating)

You are not sufficient for my
pain.

(quiet rage)

So, fuck you, you goddamn
motherfucker.

Breathless, Malia looks down in relief letting out a
sigh.

MALIA (CONT'D)

I quit.

Malia stands in the darkness of the night. She calms
herself and looks around realizing-

She wasn't struck by lightning.

She's still alive.

She's okay.

In the distance she hears laughter and glances around
curiously, but there is nothing there. *Is God, chuckling?*

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. BOYS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Taylor shushes Carter. They peer outside at their mom.

BACK TO:

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

In the quiet, Malia exhales, sitting in the silence,
waiting. She catches her breath.

FADE TO:

I/E. MINIVAN, VAN NUYS COURTHOUSE - MORNING

Sitting in the driver's seat, parked. Malia, mid story,
takes a sip of coffee, processing.

SUPER: **March 17, 2009**

Amber listens in the passenger seat. Drinking coffee.
Hanging on every word.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALIA

I just got this sense that God was telling me, "Now I'm gonna show you who I really am."

AMBER

What do you think that meant?

MALIA

Like God, could handle it. He wasn't phased by me dropping the f-bomb. Or smoking. Like it's not a big deal.

AMBER

Yeah, right. Cuz it's not a big deal. What else?

Malia baffled at Amber's quick response. *It fits.* A curious smile half-slips.

MALIA

Like, whatever "God" is, doesn't even matter anymore. I just have this sense - it doesn't make any sense - but I have to do this- I have to end this marriage.

Malia holds a manilla envelope. Her court documents. She hands them to Amber.

MALIA (CONT'D)

Does that make any sense to you?

Amber takes her burden. And her hand.

AMBER

You make perfect sense to me.

MALIA

What am I even saying? After last night I don't know if I believe in God anymore.

AMBER

What are you saying? Girl, you gotta give yourself a minute, and not be so hard on yourself.

(beat)

You just had a textbook mystical experience and you don't believe in God? C'mon!

Malia falters, unsure what to say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MALIA

Well, do you believe in God?

Malia looks over at Amber, sheepishly. Amber contemplates.

AMBER

You seriously want to know if I believe in god?

Her expression transforms from deadpan into exuberant joy.

AMBER

I think She's fucking incredible and I love Her with my whole heart!

Malia cracks a smile. Unfiltered laughter. Amber engages.

MALIA

Oh, my! You are the kind of woman my husband would hate me being friends with!

Malia puts her hands in her face. Amber enjoys how willing Malia is at being stretched.

AMBER

Well, that's perfect timing! He's not gonna be your husband after today.

MALIA

Oh my god. Do you think I'm ready for this?

Malia grabs the steering wheel. Amber senses Malia deflecting. She knows this is hard.

AMBER

Hey, you called me. This is not something anyone should have to go through alone.

(beat)

There's a part of you that knows that, and you reached out. You're ready.

Malia's hands, still with wedding rings, lets go of the wheel. Malia lets out a deep exhale.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MALIA

I was never in love with him. I married someone I didn't love. Isn't that awful?

AMBER

I'm not here to judge you.

MALIA

I think I chose Kenny because, he's a boy scout. I knew he'd take care of me and provide for me, but I think I knew that he wasn't capable of knowing my heart.

(beat)

So I could hide away from him and never be known.

AMBER

What was it that changed for you?

MALIA

I changed.

Amber looks at Malia, tears forming in her eyes.

AMBER

What is it that you want, Malia?

Malia steadies her breath.

MALIA

I want to be known, Amber.

Amber nods at Malia, eyes locked in her gaze.

A beat.

AMBER

You are worthy of being fully known, loved and wanted, Malia.

Hearing these words move Malia. They also scare her. It's too much. Too soon. Malia begins to breathe erratically.

MALIA

I have no money and no plan, and I'm terrified. How am I going to take care of my kids?

Calmly, Amber places her palm on Malia's sternum.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

AMBER

Breathe with me.

(beat)

Do you feel this?

Malia nods. Already regulating her breath to Amber's.

AMBER (CONT'D)

I can't promise that the way ahead
won't be difficult.

MALIA

Great.

AMBER

(teasing)

Oh, I can guarantee it will be the
hardest thing you will ever do...

Amber gives Malia a playful nudge. She cracks a smiles.

AMBER (CONT'D)

I'm a little further along the
single-mom road.

(beat)

I promise you, it **will** get better.
You are not alone anymore.

Amber's words are a balm. Malia grabs her and holds her,
like a lost part of her Soul reunited.

Smiling. Laughing. Hope, and a future reincarnated.

Malia laughs, wiping snot from her nose. Amber hands over
the manilla envelope and they exist the van.

INT. VAN NUYS COURTHOUSE - MORNING

Malia and Amber enter the large doors and stand in line
to be bag-checked and scanned by security.

They get into the long line, outside a side office door,
with various people holding documents, waiting.

INT. VAN NUYS COURTHOUSE, CLERK'S OFFICE - LATER

Malia approaches the counter when a CITY WORKER (50s,
female) calls her forward.

CITY WORKER

Next...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia hands the paperwork to the clerk. Typing.
Printing. Stapling. Stamping.

The City Worker slips Malia a small receipt. Amber's
presence a support.

CITY WORKER

There you go.

Malia looks up at her stunned.

MALIA

That's it?

CITY WORKER

That's it, honey. We'll take care
of the rest.

She looks again at the paperwork and pauses.

CITY WORKER (CONT'D)

Kenneth, will be receiving some
paperwork in the mail in a few
days. And then we go from there.
(compassionate)
It's going to be okay.

Malia glances at the aged woman, and smiles.

MALIA

Thank you.

CITY WORKER

Take care of yourself, Hon.

Amber puts her arm around Malia as they exit the office.

CITY WORKER (CONT'D)

Next!

I/E. MINIVAN, VAN NUYS COURTHOUSE - DAY

Back in the driver's seat, Malia places a hand over her
mouth as if holding in a joke. Glances- to Amber. To
Malia's left hand. Exhales

MALIA

One ring to rule them all...

AMBER

Fuck that shit!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia removes her wedding rings. Rings in her palm. Rings tucked into her jeans pocket. Another exhale.

MALIA

Yes! Fuck. That. Shit!

Amber takes her hands, massaging. Focusing on her ring finger. Malia admires her bare ring-finger.

AMBER

How does it feel?

MALIA

Like freedom.

AMBER

Then let's get the fuck out of Mordor!

Amber and Malia share a sacred moment.

Malia places her ringless hand on the steering wheel.

MALIA

(laughing)

Mordor, Van Nuys. Same difference.

She turns the van on and drives off.

EXT. ANDASOL BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

Malia enters the back gate. The rowdy boys see her from the garage homeschool.

TAYLOR

Mom!

ETHAN

Mom's home!

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE - AFTERNOON

Malia enters. The kids do their schoolwork around the table. Sophie works on math problems with counting bears with her Webkinz fox.

Ethan and Carter are working with ones, tens, and hundreds cubes. Taylor is doing multiplication/division tables.

ALL

Mom!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia greets Ethan with a kiss on the head, Carter a rub of the back, Taylor a shoulder squeeze. Sophie holds out her cheek for a kiss.

SOPHIE
Momma, look at this!

Malia kisses her cheek.

MALIA
Ohhhh, you're doing such a good job.

CARTER
Mom, can you show me how to do this?

MALIA
Where's Grandma?

TAYLOR
Making lunch.

MALIA
Yeah, Buddy. Gimme a second to put my stuff down.

Malia turns towards her bedroom. The kids keep working.

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia enters the bedroom and puts down her things. She stands in front of her dresser and looks in the mirror.

She takes the wedding rings out of her jeans pocket.

She pulls out a small orange box from the dresser, and opens the lid. Baby teeth. Letters to the tooth-fairy.

Malia secures the rings in the box, replacing the lid. She buries the box in the back of the dresser and closes the drawer.

INT. ANDASOL GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Malia re-enters the homeschool room. Grandma carries a tray of lunches. Kids clear away their supplies, putting them in their assigned cubbies.

Color-coded plates of sandwiches, goldfish, applesauce and grapes, and cups of milk distributed to the kids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOPHIE

I don't want my applesauce.

Holding up the single-serve cup in the air, Carter and Ethan both raise their hands for it.

CARTER

I'll want it!

ETHAN

Me! Me!

Sophie hands the cup to Carter. Triumph.

ETHAN

Awe, man!

Grandma steps up to Carter and takes the extra applesauce.

GRANDMA VICI

Nobody needs more than one. I'll put it back.

CARTER

Awe, man!

Malia tousles Carter's hair.

MALIA

Enjoy your lunch, and no fighting. Grandma and I have a project to finish.

GRANDMA VICI

Oh! I already started!

TAYLOR

Can we watch something after lunch?

MALIA

Don't talk with your mouth full! That's gross.

(beat)

But yes, you can watch something.

The boys are stoked.

MALIA (CONT'D)

Ethan can choose.

Carter groans. Ethan celebrates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MALIA (CONT'D)

And no fighting, or I'll find some
chores for you to do!

The kids continue eating, friendly enough. Malia and
Grandma exit the sliding door.

INT. ANDASOL KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The cabinet doors are all open and the old FRANCISCAN
MADEIRA DISHES from Malia's childhood are all out on the
counters. Grandma Vici follows Malia in.

GRANDMA VICI

I've got everything out. I'm just
going to scrub the shelves and
then we can put the new dishes
away.

Grandma puts on rubber dish gloves and grabs a sponge and
bowl of ammonia. Grandma climbs the step-stool to scrub.

MALIA

Sounds good.

Malia grabs a pink scalloped apron off the hook and puts
it on. She sees the blue Ikea bag and peeks in, revealing
two sets of brand new Fårgrik dishes.

MALIA (CONT'D)

Oh! These are nice!

GRANDMA VICI

Will that work? They were \$20 a
set.

MALIA

Oh, totally! Kenny won't know the
difference.

GRANDMA VICI

He'll probably just be excited to
have new dishes.

MALIA

(laughing)

True.

Grandma keeps busy wiping the cabinets.

GRANDMA VICI

How'd it go today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALIA

Well, it's done.

(beat)

But once Kenny actually gets those papers there's no telling what he'll do.

GRANDMA VICI

What will he do?

MALIA

I just think it's smart to get any of our family heirlooms out of here before he says anything.

Grandma pauses. A glance at Malia. Back to the cabinets. Silent. Busy.

GRANDMA VICI

I went through the bathrooms already, but why don't you check the linen closet?

MALIA

Sounds good...

Malia lingers on her mom scouring, grabs a couple empty boxes and exits the kitchen.

INT. ANDASOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Malia walks down the hallway holding boxes, passing the bathroom, glancing inside.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. ANDASOL BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

Malia's hand. Twenty pills. Glance in the mirror. Lost.

BACK TO:

INT. ANDASOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Malia rummages through the linen closet. Towels. Bed sheets. A box of framed pictures. Malia pulls out a few of the kids pictures to keep.

A shadow box frame with the dried WEDDING DAY LEI. Malia puts it in a box.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On the top shelf Malia finds an old embroidered table cloth and puts it in the other box. In the back of the closet, an old QUILT. Malia gasps.

MALIA

Oh my god.

Malia walks down the hall to Sophie's room holding the quilt and an empty box.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia enters and shakes out the quilt. She spreads it on top of Sophie's covers.

SOPHIE (O.S.)

Oh pretty!

Malia turns to see Sophie entering her room, admiring the quilt.

MALIA

This was Momma's covers when I was your age.

Wide-eyed Sophie, hops on the bed and draws her finger over the decorative stitching.

SOPHIE

These are pretty flowers, momma.

MALIA (CONT'D)

They are called irises. I had so many planted right outside my bedroom window when I was your age.

Sophie rearranges her stuffed animal friends on the heirloom quilt. Malia is a little unsettled and interjects.

MALIA (CONT'D)

You know what you can do?

SOPHIE

What?

Malia opens the empty box in the middle of the bedroom.

MALIA

You can decide which of your things you'd like to move out to the garage for nighttime.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOPHIE

Really?! I can pack up just like
you and Grandma?!

Sophie piles her stuffed animals together on the bed,
playing openly and freely. One by one she packs them into
the box.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I wish Dad were here to help pack!

Malia watches her - a dart to the heart.

MALIA

Soph, I'll be back in a bit.

Malia turns and dashes out the door.

INT. ANDASOL LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Malia passes through the living room, pausing to catch
her breath. She notices the bookshelf. She grabs an extra
box for a handful of books.

Her leather-bound wedding album. Shock. Malia flips
through the pages:

-A picture of her and her dad walking down the aisle.

-An outdoor shot of her and Kenny. He beams. She holds
secrets.

Malia slams the book shut. It drops to the floor. She
takes a few books off the shelf and placing them in the
box. The old Book of Common prayer.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Malia, checking on Sophie, stops in her tracks.

MALIA

How's it going, Baby?

Sophie's curled up, asleep, in a pile of stuffed animal
friends, on the old quilt. Peaceful.

Backing out of the room, Malia closes the door.

INT. ANDASOL KITCHEN - LATER

Malia sets down two boxes, one with the shadow box lei and wedding album on top. Grandma is carefully wrapping dishes and packing them away.

GRANDMA VICI

You and Kenny always seemed like a good team.

MALIA

A good team? We were at best like business partners. But, we were never husband and wife.

(beat)

I don't expect you to understand, Mom, but our marriage has always been broken.

GRANDMA VICI

No, I understand.

Malia looks at her curious.

MALIA

You do?

GRANDMA VICI

When you told me a month ago you were getting divorced, I wasn't surprised.

MALIA

You weren't?

GRANDMA VICI

No. I've always seen it.

Silence falls on the kitchen.

MALIA

Then, why didn't you say anything?

Grandma turns inward. Called out.

GRANDMA VICI

We didn't talk about things when I was growing up. I wasn't like you.

Malia softens, hearing the pain in her mother's voice.

MALIA

Mom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Malia looks at Grandma focusing her pain on the task at hand. Malia works alongside her in silence.

LATER

MALIA (CONT'D)

Awe, Mom, look. Remember?

Malia grabs an old ceramic pie pan, Grandma Vici glances over and smiles knowingly. Malia wraps it in paper.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. NIGHTINGALE COURT, KITCHEN, 1979 - DAY

Vici (38) and Young Malia gather around the counter next to a half-lit cigarette. GRANDMA CHARLOTTE, thin, with alligator skin, tanned from hours toiling in the garden.

Charlotte wears a pink scalloped APRON and pours home-made, cherry filing into a pie shell. She folds and lifts the homemade pie crust off the top of the flour dusted counter and places it over the pie.

She takes a drag of the cigarette and sip of coffee, then masterfully cuts the edges with a knife.

GRANDMA CHARLOTTE'S HANDS show YOUNG MALIA HANDS how to crimp the pie shell closed.

Steve (38) enters and takes a picture. Vici, Malia and Grandma Charlotte pose proudly before their pie. Charlotte puts the pie in the oven and gives Malia an Eskimo kiss on the nose; she takes another drag.

Three generations of women beam. *This is holy.*

BACK TO:

INT. ANDASOL KITCHEN - LATER

Grandma Vici and Malia work in silence. Boxes stacked on the counter labeled and taped. One last box remains opened.

GRANDMA VICI

You know, the dishes from your childhood are all antiques now!

MALIA

Sophie's napping on the Iris quilt from Virginia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRANDMA VICI

Oh wow! That's a treasure.

MALIA

Yeah, I didn't even know I still had it.

GRANDMA VICI

I'm just really glad you'll have all these things when you move into your own place.

MALIA

Well, I'm not moving any time soon.

Malia starts picking up the dishes and looking at the pattern. She joins her mom wrapping dishes in paper for the last box.

GRANDMA VICI

Whenever that day comes,
(beat)
I just want you have these.

Malia gets tense.

MALIA

Mom! Stop!

GRANDMA VICI

What? What is it?

MALIA

When is that day going to come? I don't have a job! I don't have any money!

Grandma is visibly distraught with the tension.

GRANDMA VICI

I just meant, with whatever you and Kenny work out...

MALIA

Mom! He's going to get everything.

Grandma puts her dish down and looks naive and confused.

GRANDMA VICI

Well, why will he get everything?

Malia pauses. She is visibly upset, but trying to remain calm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MALIA

Because if I don't give him
everything we own,

Malia can't hold it together any longer and begins
crying.

MALIA (CONT'D)

He will do anything he can to take
the children from me.

GRANDMA VICI

He can't do that!

MALIA

He stopped paying for therapy. He
canceled my Costco membership, for
Christ's sake!

(beat)

He will do everything in his power
to take the kids from me if I
don't comply.

Grandma pauses. She wraps another dish and looks up at
her little girl.

GRANDMA VICI

But what about the house?

MALIA

I am signing the house over to
him.

GRANDMA VICI

Why would you do that?

MALIA

Because he and his lawyer are
setting all the terms.

(beat)

I'm a stay-at-home-mom, what value
do I even have?

Malia is broken. It's too much. Grandma stands next to
her daughter, helpless.

Ethan enters the kitchen with the tray of dishes,
stumbling, cutting through the tension.

ETHAN

(sweetly)

Can we please have desert?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Malia grabs the tray from Ethan and puts it on the counter. Grandma takes the dishes to turn away.

Malia, faking cheer, opens the pantry and pulls out a sleeve of cookies and hands the entire thing to Ethan.

MALIA

Here you go, Bud. Divide these up
with the brothers.

ETHAN

Yes! Thanks, Mom!

Ethan runs back out to the garage.

ETHAN (O.S.)

We got all the cookies!

Malia holds the silence. Her tears have dried.

MALIA

I'm doing this, because up until
this morning, I was, thinking of
harming myself, Mom.

Grandma, tears in her eyes, is paralyzed.

MALIA (CONT'D)

It was only a matter of time
before my kids would've walked in
on me.

(beat)

Just like that! That sweet. That
innocent.

(beat)

And seen Mommy had overdosed, or
blown her brains out,

(strained)

Or, *something...*

Grandma breaks. Malia can't recall ever witnessing that.
She moves to Grandma's view.

MALIA (CONT'D)

So I will do everything in my
power to save my children.

(resolved)

And choosing to do this, to get a
divorce, feels like the first
choice I've actually ever made for
myself. For what *I* want.

Empowered. Broken. Malia paces the kitchen expelling
energy. Grandma turns towards her only daughter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MALIA (CONT'D)

So in choosing to leave Kenny and everything he stands for, I am choosing myself.

GRANDMA VICI

And you're choosing those precious kids.

Malia nods.

MALIA

So I will do anything to keep them, and be close to them. Even if that means living in the garage, and being their nanny.

GRANDMA VICI

You are their mother, and the best thing that has ever happened to those kids!

Malia deflates. Pummeled by waves of emotion. Grandma waits, still unsure what to say.

GRANDMA VICI (CONT'D)

(pausing)

Do you want to pray about it?

Malia's countenance falls, defeated.

MALIA

No, mom. I'm done praying. Jesus can go fuck himself for all I care.

Grandma trembles, placing a weathered hand on her only daughter's arm. Malia is guarded, but closes her eyes receiving the love of her mother's touch.

GRANDMA VICI

I'm sorry.

Malia gently places her hand on top of her mom's, and squeezes.

MALIA

I know we really only ever talk about sewing, or cooking, or the kids...

Malia, vulnerable, looks at her mother in the eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MALIA (CONT'D)

But I want you to know me now.

Grandma grabs Malia's hands holding them tight, looking at her with love. She pauses, holding the moment.

GRANDMA VICI

I'd like that.

Grandma releases Malia's hands.

Malia grabs the tape gun and starts sealing the last box.

MALIA

There ya go. We did it.

They look around at their accomplishment, proud. Grandma gazes at Malia with wonder.

GRANDMA VICI

Your Grandma Charlotte would be so proud of you. You are strong, like her.

Malia gazes back at her mom and smiles.

EXT. 6533 ANDASOL AVENUE - LATER

Grandma's trunk is open and full of boxes. The boys give hugs on the side lawn.

The back gate smacks shut. Malia holds the box of trash with the shadow box Lei and leather-bound wedding album. She buries them in the black trash can.

TAYLOR

Bye Grandma!

ETHAN

(monster voice)
Love you Grandma!

CARTER

Bye Grandpa, I mean
Grandma!

GRANDMA VICI

I love you boys!

Malia claps the dust off her hands and heads to the car.

MALIA

Thanks for your help!

GRANDMA VICI

That's quite a day's work!
(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRANDMA VICI (CONT'D)

Say goodbye to Sophie for me! And
don't forget the quilt on her bed!

MALIA

I'll bring it over Friday.

Malia shuts the back trunk. Grandma gets into her seat rolling the window down. Malia takes the apron off and hands the heirloom through the window.

GRANDMA VICI

You might want to mow your lawn.
The front is looking like it needs
some TLC.

Malia glances towards the front yard and stops herself looking back.

MALIA

I stopped mowing the lawn a month
ago, Mom, when I moved to the
garage.

GRANDMA VICI

Let me know if you want your dad
to come help.

MALIA

Nope! That's Kenny's
responsibility now.

GRANDMA VICI

Well, okay!

MALIA

Bye Mom. Say hi to Dad. I'll see
you both Friday.

Grandma looks at Malia. Holding hope. Awe.

GRANDMA VICI

Love you.

MALIA

Love you more.

Grandma rolls up her window and pulls away. Malia rolls the trash cans out to the street and gets the kids back inside the gate.

INT. ANDASOL LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Malia enters from the kitchen, passing through. She glances out the big, bay window and stops in her tracks.

Standing in silence, Malia stares out the window, upon the un-kept lawn. Anger simmers. She clenches her teeth. Inhale.

MALIA

Fucking weeds!

Sophie enters from the hallway singing. Seeing her mom staring out the window, she walks up silently. A glance at mom. A glance out the window. Sophie's eyes blaze with wonder. She gasps:

SOPHIE

A field full of wishes!

A huge smile spreads over Sophie's face. She rushes out the front door. The screen-door smacks shut, startling Malia back to reality.

Looking back out the window Malia sees Sophie run through the weeds. ***Something awakens inside of her.***

Malia watches Young Malia join Sophie. The two girls run with joy, independently, throughout the yard. Young Malia and Sophie lay down next to each other and begin picking dandelion puffs and blowing the seeds away.

From the living room window, Sophie lays alone on the weeds as Malia approaches her laying down in the space where the apparition of Young Malia just was.

EXT. 6533 ANDASOL AVENUE - MOMENTS LATER

Malia and Sophie lay in the front yard field of dandelions. Laughing. Smiling. Closing their eyes back and forth, taking turns - making wishes.

FADE TO:

INT. TOPANGA HOUSE, ART STUDIO - AFTERNOON

TIGHT ON A FEMALE BODY crouching on the floor mixing black paint in a can. A DANDELION TATTOO on her forearm.

Super: 2021

Malia (47) seems focused, maybe even happy and at peace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A mixed media art piece leans against the wall. Covered in scraps and remnants from 1970's pornographic magazines. Affixed with barbed-wire are several naked vintage Barbie dolls. Glue and epoxy leave a sheen.

Malia repositioning the paint can and brush, staring at the artwork. She notices every little piece as her demeanor changes. Teeth clench. Fists tighten.

Malia loads the brush with paint. A GUTTURAL ROAR. She swings the brush through the air marking the canvas. High-gloss splatter.

Again. And again like she is battling a dark force. Her arms hang by her side as she pants; paint dripping from the brush to the drop-cloth.

Amber (50s) still youthful and goddess-like, enters the studio, struck by the scene. Silence holds the moment.

AMBER

Ohhh, Malia. This is powerful.

MALIA

(panting)

Yeah? You think?

AMBER

Oh, Honey. Keep making art. Art heals like nothing else.

Amber hands Malia home-made kombucha, unable to take her eyes off the piece of art.

Malia, plops down on the old sofa. Amber follows her over, sitting in the silence. Holding space.

Malia begins steadying her breath, gazing at the ceiling.

SERIES OF BEATS:

-Malia (47) staring at the ceiling of the bathroom floor in 1979.

-Malia (47) laying on the loveseat on the Farm House deck staring at the sky 4th of July, 1995.

-Malia (47) staring at the ceiling on her wedding night after losing her virginity in 1996.

Amber, hurting for her friend, watches Malia stare off.

AMBER

Hey, come back to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Malia returns to herself. She sits up and chooses vulnerability.

MALIA

You know how much work I've done on myself with therapy, the steps, and Spirit. But, sometimes, I just wonder if my physical body will forever feel, broken.

AMBER

What feels broken?

MALIA

I mean I started compulsively masturbating at six years old. Who does that, Amber?

AMBER

Someone who's been traumatized.

MALIA

Yeah. So I guess I've always wondered what it would've been like, without abuse. Like would I be normal?

AMBER

Whatever you **are** is normal to you. Everyone grows up thinking their experience is normal.

MALIA

(reflective)

Until they are exposed to something else...

Amber stands up and walks intentionally through the studio taking time to really look at Malia's art.

Beauty. Passion. Pain.

Amber's up to something. Malia knows it.

AMBER

Malia, in all the years I've known you, in every way, you show up for your kids. You've shown up for your partners and the people you love. And you've shown up for yourself with a courageous heart, wide open.

(beat)

You are always evolving.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

AMBER (CONT'D)

You're pursuing your recovery, and
you have healed so much. So stop
being so hard on yourself!

Malia comes alongside Amber. Amber pulls her into a deep hug.

AMBER (CONT'D)

You're gonna be alright. You know
that, right?

Malia thinks about it. The expression on her face gives it away. Amber smiles.

MALIA

Yeah. I know it.

EXT. TOPANGA CANYON HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Blue sky. Birds chirping. The sun shines on Malia.
Awakening.

AMBER

We'll see you tonight at the show!

MALIA

8pm at the Echoplex.

AMBER

Go slow. Do something kind for
yourself today.

(beat)

That piece! Girl, You're
processing a lot!

MALIA

I will.

Laughing. Malia smiles. Gets in her car.

I/E. MALIA'S CAR - DAY

Malia drives North on Topanga Canyon. She gets a FaceTime from ADULT SOPHIE (18).

ADULT SOPHIE (FACETIME)

Mom! I'm so stressed out. I'm
still trying to figure out my
living situation for next year.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALIA

What happened to the two places
you saw yesterday? I thought those
were promising.

ADULT SOPHIE (FACETIME)

They were both taken by the time I
got there. There's nothing
available in my price range.

MALIA

Just take a deep breath. What does
your gut tell you?

(beat)

Do you believe you're meant to be
in New York to finish your
studies?

Malia pulls onto the 101 South.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK AVENUE, NYC - DAY

Adult Sophie briskly walks south from Grand Central
weaving through crowds.

SOPHIE

Of course. Absolutely. Without a
doubt. What kind of question is
that?

MALIA (FACETIME)

Then do you really think the
Universe has destined you to be
homeless?

SOPHIE

(laughing)

No. I guess not.

Adult Sophie looks at Malia over the screen.

MALIA (FACETIME)

Something's gotta come through.
Maybe it's even something amazing!
Keep trusting, Babe.

SOPHIE

You're right. Okay. I've got one
more place to see. I'm on my way
to Murray Hill now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
(distracted)
How are you?

BACK TO:

EXT. MALIA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

MALIA
I'm good! I was just at Amber's.
(beat)
Courage is getting back from the
PCT today. I'll see him tonight!

ADULT SOPHIE (FACETIME)
Oh sick. I can't wait to hear more
about his trip!
(beat)
How is Grandpa?

MALIA
He sleeps a lot. We are just
trying to keep him comfortable.

CUT TO:

EXT. 36E 38TH, NYC - CONTINUOUS

Adult Sophie arrives outside a pre-war, walk-up, in
Murray Hill. AirPods. FaceTime. Another call.

ADULT SOPHIE
Oh! Mom, that's the broker
calling. I'm gonna take this. I
love you.

BACK TO:

I/E. MALIA'S CAR - DAY

Malia glances down at Sophie on the screen.

MALIA
Okay, Baby. Love you. You've got
this. Keep trusting!

The call ends. Malia smiles as she drives.

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Malia enters her home quietly carrying groceries. Malia's phone vibrates. A PICTURE of ADULT TAYLOR (23) standing outside The Echoplex with his guitar case and gear.

Malia glances over to see her dad, Grandpa Steve, (80) asleep on a hospice medical bed. Kisses on the head. Breathing slowly. Frail. 130 pounds. Dying.

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING

Malia enters approaching her mom, Grandma Vici (80) who is preparing a tray. Stirring soup in a crock pot. Malia puts down the groceries.

MALIA

How's dad?

GRANDMA VICI

Today has been a good day. The nurse came by for his bath. And he's hasn't thrown up.

Malia pulls out fresh, crusty bread.

MALIA

That's good. How are you?

GRANDMA VICI

Oh, I'm fine. Can I get you dinner?

Grandma smells the bread and cuts a piece to put on Steve's tray.

MALIA

Oh, no. I'm good. I'm going to shower and head out to Taylor's show in a bit.

GRANDMA VICI

Carter came by earlier to pick up Ethan.

(beat)

Look what got delivered.

Grandma Vici motions to a large floral arrangement.

MALIA

These are pretty. Who are they from?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRANDMA VICI

He can't give his kid's a dime
after they turn 18, but he can
send a bouquet like that to your
father?

(beat)

I think there's a card.

Malia fishes the card out of the arrangement.

MALIA

You're kidding, Ken and his wife
sent flowers from North Carolina?

GRANDMA VICI

Just goes to show, the stronger
the manure, the more beautiful the
flowers bloom.

Vici touches Malia's cheek. A moment. She recognizes the
long and slow sacrifice Malia has made for her kids.

Malia opens and reads the message, clenching her teeth.
She exhales practicing a mantra she has prayed a thousand
times.

MALIA

May you feel safe. May you be
happy. May you live with ease.

Vici takes the card from Malia's hand and re-reads it:
**"Sorry to hear Steve is feeling unwell. Praying he
recovers soon. God Bless, Ken & Beth."**

GRANDMA VICI

He's dying of cancer.

(sharp)

What a fucking idiot.

Shocked. Impressed. *This might be the first time Malia
has ever heard her mom drop the f-bomb.* She walks over
and hugs Vici from behind. A moment years in the making.

Malia kisses her head, and exits the kitchen.

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Grandma picks up her phone and clicks on the video of
Taylor holding his acoustic guitar during sound check and
plays his song, ***My Mind Makes Noises.***

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. THE ECHOPLEX - EVENING

Adult Taylor, sits on a stool and begins strumming his guitar. ADULT ETHAN, (19) approaches Taylor adjusting his microphone. ADULT CARTER, (21) moves around Taylor, filming. Taylor sings.

BACK TO:

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lost in thought. Silence. Malia takes in her father's state. Emotional. From the kitchen, Grandma Vici looks on, unable to speak.

Malia holds her dad's hand and then places it on his sleeping chest.

MALIA

I love you.

Grandpa stirs.

GRANDPA STEVE

(faintly)

I love you more.

MALIA

(whispering)

We love the same.

Malia smiles at her dad. They connect. Staring in each others eyes. A moment. Grandpa closes his eyes. Drifts to sleep. Peaceful.

Malia stands. Leans over her daddy. Gently kisses his head. She grabs her things and heads upstairs.

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING

Her parents' old bedroom, filled with family heirlooms. Malia has clearly made the space her own sanctuary.

Malia enters, placing her bag on the antique church pew.

Certificates and diplomas hang on the wall: Reiki Master. Crystal Healer. Massage Therapist. Spiritual Director.

The bookshelf is filled with mystical writers and classics as well as the old gifted Book of Common Prayer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She begins undressing, slips in the closet and comes out in a spa robe.

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia looks at herself in the mirror. She turns on the shower, disrobes, and steps in to her baptism.

Taylor singing **My Mind Makes Noises** still echos in her head. She plunges her head under the shower-fall.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. YOUNG MALIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Malia is scared and alone lying in bed trying to fall asleep. Tears stain her cheeks.

A bright glow fills the room and a GLOWING FIGURE walks towards her bed and stands in silence. Young Malia, looks closely at the glowing figure's face.

BACK TO:

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia looks up from the shower, lost in a gaze. The water continues to pummel her.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. YOUNG MALIA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Young Malia, looks closer into the Glowing Figure's face TO REVEAL Malia (35), standing over her younger self, gazing on her. Lovingly. Radiant.

Young Malia smiles softly. Closes her eyes. Falls asleep in peace. Malia (35) still glowing, crawls in bed, spooning Young Malia.

MALIA

You're safe. No matter what
happens, you'll always be safe.

(beat)

I've got you.

BACK TO:

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia crumples to the floor of the shower, sitting stunned. In silence, tears begin to form in her eyes and stream down her cheeks. She sobs, clutching her knees to her chest.

FADE TO:

INT. HAYNES HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Taylor's song still plays in the dark bed room lit only by the corner bedside lamp.

Spa robe. Wet hair. Malia puts down her hairbrush, and approaches her writing desk.

She lights a candle and reaches in the drawer for a nice pad of paper. She begins penning a letter.

MALIA (V.O.)

My darling girl, I am so proud of you. Of the girl you are now, and the woman you are becoming.

FROM BEHIND, Malia sits alone taking her time to form her thoughts. A FRAMED PICTURE of Malia holding Sophie at the Getty from 2009 is on the desk next to a PAPERWEIGHT with a perfectly formed dandelion puff encapsulated in a polymer cube.

MALIA (V.O.)

My heart shines when I think of you.

FROM BEHIND, TOWARDS THE DESK: Malia (35) and Young Malia sit on either side of Malia (47) facing out the window.

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Grandma Vici enters and sits down next to Grandpa Steve, holding his hand in silence.

MALIA (V.O.)

Baby, life is hard. And things will happen to you along the way that will try to dim your light or steal your wonder - don't let it!

Grandpa Steve stirs from his slumber and squeezes Grandma Vici's hand. Grandma Vici's lip quivers, holding back tears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRANDMA VICI (V.O.)
No matter what challenges you go
through, and there will be many,
keep showing up with your brave
and beautiful heart.

Grandma Vici clutches Grandpa Steve's hand tight.

I/E. 36E 38TH, NYC - AFTERNOON

Wide-eyed Adult Sophie finishes a tour of the cozy
Penthouse studio apartment.

ADULT SOPHIE (V.O.)
Be curious! And keep moving
forward.

The BROKER comes and hands her the keys and shakes her
hand. She leaps in his arms giving him a hug. He departs.

She steps out onto her private rooftop balcony.

ADULT SOPHIE (V.O.)
There is so much Goodness in this
world for you!

Sophie twirls in awe amidst the skyline of New York City.

INT. HAYNES HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Malia sits at the desk scribbling, the words flowing out
of her. Determined. Enchanted.

YOUNG MALIA (V.O.)
Your life is a celebration!

SOPHIE (V.O.)
And I am in awe of you.

MALIA (V.O.)
Wherever you go,

GRANDMA VICI (V.O.)
In all that you do,

Malia continues writing, her face reflects in the window.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

SERIES OF BEATS: Light shines on each scene, as each
character BREAKS THE FOURTH WALL.

A) EXT. FIELD OF WISHES, 2009 - DAY

Standing amidst the dandelions, close up on Malia (35).

MALIA
Never forget,

JUMP CUT TO:

B) INT. YOUNG MALIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

At the ice cream table, Young Malia looks up.

YOUNG MALIA
How Loved,

JUMP CUT TO:

C) INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

On her iris bedspread, CLOSE UP on Sophie, looking up.

SOPHIE
How Loved,

JUMP CUT TO:

D) INT. HOTEL ROOM, BATHROOM, 1996 - NIGHT

Sitting on the floor, makeup running, College Malia looks up with strength and resolve.

COLLEGE MALIA
How Loved,

JUMP CUT TO:

E) INT. ANDASOL AVENUE, KITCHEN - DAY

Grandma Vici cradles the family dishes and looks up.

GRANDMA VICI
How Loved you are.

BACK TO:

F) INT. HAYNES HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malia sits at the desk, the room fills with Light as she looks up from her letter, tears in her eyes.

MALIA (V.O.)
You will always be mine.

Malia finishes the letter, pausing. She signs it with a heart and "We Love the Same. Love, Mom."

Malia puts the letter into an envelope with a Trader Joe's gift card, and seals it with wax.

EXT. THE ECHOPLEX - NIGHT

THE LETTER addressed to Sophie at 36E 38th St. PH, NY, NY gets dropped in a mailbox. Malia crosses Sunset Blvd.

INT. THE ECHOPLEX - NIGHT

Malia enters the club and looks up, seeing Adult Taylor on stage playing one of his songs with full band.

Taylor's ballad finishes. He transitions to an upbeat rock number. The energy in the club explodes.

In the back, Malia spots Amber and ADULT COURAGE (18, free-spirit, van-lifer.) He catches her gaze. His smile couldn't be wider.

As Malia moves through the crowd, she waves at Adult Ethan in the sound booth, commanding the board. Adult Carter moves around the stage with his camera. He sees his mom and nods, smiling. She blows him a kiss.

Malia approaches Adult Courage, and gives him the biggest hug. Amber hugs Malia and hands her a beer.

Malia looks around the room of family, friends, and strangers. She stares in wonder, taking in the moment. Smiling widely.

Loved. Known. Wanted.

FADE TO BLACK.

[AS THE CREDITS ROLL, DANDELIONS BLOW ACROSS REAL LIFE FAMILY PHOTOS OF MALIA AND THE KIDS - HAPPY & FREE]