

CAKE
by
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INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

A sign taped to a closed door: WOMEN'S CHRONIC PAIN SUPPORT GROUP.

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

A dozen Women sit in a circle.

Including CLAIRE SIMMONS: intense, intelligent eyes that don't miss a beat. She's like Turkish coffee in a roomful of Sanka.

Claire has scars on her face and neck. If she were more careful with her makeup they wouldn't be very noticeable.

In the center of the circle is an empty chair.

ANNETTE the facilitator, walks around the perimeter.

She points at an easel, which holds a picture of NINA, an attractive woman in her early 30s.

ANNETTE

I feel we need some closure with what happened to Nina, because we all cared so much for her.

Claire crosses her arms and takes a deep breath.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

It'll be hard, but I'm going to sit in the middle and pretend to be Nina. And as you feel led, I want you to verbalize to me -- to Nina -- how her suicide affected you. Okay?

Everyone nods except for Claire.

GAIL raises her hand. Annette nods and points to her.

GAIL

I just want to say...to you Nina... that I don't understand how you could give up.

ANNETTE

I'm sorry Gail that I gave up. Can you forgive me?

Gail nods yes with tears in her eyes.

LIZ raises her hand. Annette points to her.

LIZ
I...this is so hard.

ANNETTE
I know it's hard Liz.

LIZ
What about your son? He doesn't
have a mother anymore.

ANNETTE
I hope in time my son will forgive
me. And I hope you will too Liz.

LIZ
I do. We miss you. So much.

Most of the women are now crying. STEPHANIE, 30s, raises her
hand.

STEPHANIE
Why the hell didn't you reach out
for help? You could've called any
one of us! We would've been there!

ANNETTE
I know that Stephanie.

STEPHANIE
One phone call!

ANNETTE
Will you forgive me?

Stephanie is crying so hard she can't even answer. Claire
raises her hand.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
Yes, Claire?

CLAIRE
I have a question.

ANNETTE
For Nina, or for me?

Claire shrugs indifferently.

CLAIRE
Makes no difference.

ANNETTE
(warily)
Go ahead.

CLAIRE

Is it true she jumped off the Vincent Thomas bridge?

ANNETTE

Yes, but...

CLAIRE

Is it also true she landed on a cargo ship heading out to sea?

ANNETTE

Claire, we should be focusing on our feelings...

CLAIRE

And is it also true that the shipping company sent back what was left of her body in a Rubbermaid cooler?

No response.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

That the cooler was stuck in customs for a week before Nina's husband could claim it?

Everyone looks horrified. Annette finally nods.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(to photo)

Nice job Nina. Personally, I hate it when suicides make it easy for the survivors.

EXT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A cab pulls up in front. Claire lays across the backseat. As she gets out of the cab she grimaces in pain.

She hands the Cabbie some money.

INT. CLAIRE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Claire finds SILVANA, a Mexican woman in her 50s, watching television.

Silvana's kind and sympathetic demeanor belies a strength that is shocked by nothing -- she is one person who will survive even the end of the world.

CLAIRE
Why are you still here?

SILVANA
I make dinner.

CLAIRE
I'm not hungry.

SILVANA
You must eat. Doctor says.

CLAIRE
You're not going to leave until I eat, are you?

SILVANA
Quesadilla?

CLAIRE
What the hell.

Silvana starts preparing the food.

Claire sees she has messages on her cell phone.

ANNETTE (VOICE)
Hi Claire, it's Annette. Listen, we all stayed late tonight after you left. Gosh, what a tough session, huh? Anyway, not to minimize your feelings in any way at all...

Claire snorts.

ANNETTE (VOICE) (CONT'D)
...but we all agreed it might best if you found another group. Maybe one to help you deal with your anger issues? This isn't a judgment...we just think you'd be better served elsewhere. Good luck.

Claire shakes her head and erases the message. The next message is from Claire's ex-husband JASON.

JASON (VOICE)
Hey, it's me. Could you call my assistant tomorrow and let her know when I can come by to pick up the rest of my stuff.
(pause)
When you aren't there.
(MORE)

JASON (VOICE) (CONT'D)
I think it's...prudent if we don't
see each other. Not yet.

Claire erases the message.

CLAIRE
His mother must have told him
exactly what to say. He never used
to throw around words like
'prudent'.

Silvana puts a plate on the island.

SILVANA
Ready.

CLAIRE
I'll eat it in a few minutes. I
just need some quiet time.

SILVANA
Promise?

CLAIRE
On my mother's grave.

SILVANA
But your mother lives.

Claire opens her purse and pulls out some twenties.

CLAIRE
Here. For overtime.

SILVANA
No, no. This is...my way.

CLAIRE
Please. You should be home with
your family.

SILVANA
Thank you Mrs. Simmons.

CLAIRE
When you leave remember not to set
the alarm.

SILVANA
I know. Sorry.

CLAIRE
Night Silvana.

SILVANA
Sleep good I hope.

Claire watches Silvana leave with a wistful expression -- Silvana's concern touches her, although she would never admit it to anyone.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Claire opens her medicine cabinet: a miniature pharmacy.

Claire picks up one bottle, but it's empty. She picks another -- it's empty as well.

Claire moves aside a fern and pulls out a bottle of methadone from behind it.

She opens the bottle but there are only two pills.

CLAIRE
Fuck me.

Claire takes the pills and turns off the light.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The camera watches Claire sleep from above. She twitches and moans.

Suddenly she bolts upright. After she gets her bearings she gets out of the bed.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Claire turns on lights in the backyard, revealing a large pool.

She gets into the pool and swims to the deep end. She grabs the edge of the pool and floats.

A possum walks through the yard and comes close to Claire. Claire merely nods.

CLAIRE
Nice night huh?

The possum stops to consider her.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Come on in, the water's fine.

The possum scurries away.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Then again, it might not be prudent.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - DAY

Silvana walks up to where Claire, wrapped in towels, is asleep on a lawn chair. She puts her hand on Claire's arm.

SILVANA
Mrs. Simmons.

Claire opens her eyes.

CLAIRE
What time is it?

SILVANA
So cold, you poor thing!

CLAIRE
Am I?

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Claire brushes her teeth listlessly. Silvana comes in with a blouse.

SILVANA
I iron.

Silvana opens a drawer and takes out a tube of ointment. She hands it to Claire.

CLAIRE
That stuff doesn't work.

SILVANA
You must do it. My sister has big one...

Silvana points to an imaginary scar on her hand.

SILVANA (CONT'D)
...is gone.

CLAIRE
It doesn't matter one way or the other anyway.

Silvana puts the tube back in the drawer.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
When I'm dressed, we need to go to
the clinic.

Silvana looks concerned.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What?

Silvana shakes her head.

SILVANA
Nothing.

INT. SUV - DAY

Silvana drives. Claire has her seat all the way back, so that she's lying flat on her back.

CLAIRE
Never take Crescent Heights.

SILVANA
How can you know?

CLAIRE
I can feel it.

SILVANA
Ay.

CLAIRE
Crescent Heights is like being
thrown in a burlap sack and carted
cross the tundra by horse.

SILVANA
No understand.

CLAIRE
Turn left at the next light and
take Fairfax.

Claire sees a crow keeping pace with the car high above the tree tops.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Look at that.

SILVANA
What?

All of a sudden the crow disappears into the trees.

INT. METHADONE CLINIC - DAY

Silvana reads La Opinion. Claire finishes filling out some paperwork.

Nearby is a massage chair with a sign: COURTESY OF HOLLYWOOD HEALTH ALLIANCE.

An Old Man tries to get it to work. Claire watches him without any expression.

CLAIRE
It's broken.

The Old Man won't give up.

Claire points to a piece of paper on the floor by the machine: MACHINE BROKE. The Old Man keeps trying.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
It's broken. I'm trying to be helpful, and if you only knew how hard that is for me, you'd listen.

Claire turns her attention to a JUNKIE, 20s but worn-out old, staring at her.

Claire scowls at him.

JUNKIE
Sorry.

The Junkie looks away embarrassed, but he can't help looking back at Claire.

CLAIRE
What?

JUNKIE
You look like my mom.

A Clinic Worker opens a window at the counter.

CLINIC WORKER
Number forty seven.

Claire gets up and walks past the Junkie.

CLAIRE
Are you fucking kidding me?

Silvana looks up from her newspaper.

JUNKIE
(to Silvana, re: Claire)
What a bitch.

SILVANA
Shut up, you know nothing.

INT. CLINIC OFFICE - DAY

A NURSE goes through a file. Claire sits with a casual demeanor and an easy smile: she is very good at faking nice.

NURSE
How's it going?

CLAIRE
I'm doing really well. That support group has made all the difference.

NURSE
I thought it would. You know, just other women, non-threatening, everyone's super supportive.

CLAIRE
Exactly. How's your daughter doing?

NURSE
Lila started her senior year, it's hard to believe. Thanks for asking.

CLAIRE
Is she still interested in UCLA?

NURSE
Uh huh.

CLAIRE
Well, alumni recommendations count for something so let me know when she applies, I'd be happy to write one.

NURSE
We will definitely take you up on that. You're too sweet.

The Nurse flips through more pages and frowns.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Gosh, I can't seem to find that authorization.

Claire's demeanor changes slightly - like a card player.

CLAIRE
Dr. Shipman's office said they'd fax it right over.

NURSE
I'm sure they did. I swear I'd lose my head if it wasn't attached to my body.

Claire does her best to laugh convincingly.

CLAIRE
I'm the same. I have to write reminders about my reminders.

The Nurse laughs.

NURSE
I know!

The Nurse pauses for a moment, like she's making a decision.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Look, I don't want to waste your time.
(whispering)
I'll go ahead and give you a few to tie you over, just don't tell anyone.

CLAIRE
And I'll give them a call to re-fax it.

NURSE
Great. Thank you!

Claire stands up.

CLAIRE
No, thank you.

NURSE
Keep up the good work, you're doing great.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - DAY

ARTURO, 30s, is doing tile work on the hot tub.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Claire drinks a glass of wine, watching Arturo.

Silvana comes up to Claire with a bottle of wine.

SILVANA

More?

CLAIRE

Yes. Then you can go home.

SILVANA

Is early.

CLAIRE

Not really.

For some reason, Silvana doesn't want to leave Claire alone.

SILVANA

Maybe I wash patio...

CLAIRE

Silvana go home, I don't need you.

Silvana nods and takes off her apron.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Claire lays on the bed, her head propped up with pillows. There's a tap on the sliding glass door to the backyard.

The sliding glass door opens and Arturo comes in. He closes the door and stands there tentatively.

CLAIRE

You know the way to the bathroom.

Arturo nods and goes to the bathroom.

Claire takes a sip of wine.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You want something to drink?

ARTURO (O.S.)

No.

Arturo comes out, his hair slicked back. He stands next to the bed.

CLAIRE
You can take your shirt off.

She motions for him to take his shirt off. Arturo takes it off.

Arturo sits on the edge of the bed. He touches Claire's leg. He pushes up her nightgown, revealing scars on the legs.

He gently touches one of the scars. Claire pulls her leg away.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Don't.

Arturo nods. He gently pulls Claire's nightgown over her head.

He moves closer to kiss her on the lips, but she turns her head. He kisses her on the neck instead.

ARTURO
Bonita. Comprende?

CLAIRE
No.

ARTURO
Pretty.

CLAIRE
You're full of shit.

Arturo embraces Claire and continues to gently kiss her down the front of her body. Claire stops him and kisses him forcefully. He's a little surprised by her aggression, but he enjoys it.

They french kiss for a moment, until Claire's tongue starts tracing the outline of Arturo's lips.

Claire suddenly bites his lip - hard.

ARTURO
Ow!

He pulls back.

Claire stares at him with lust as she unbuttons his pants and pulls them down off his legs.

He sits up and tries to pull her to him, but she leans into him and pins him down against the pillows.

Arturo is clearly bothered by her aggression now. He tries to get out from under her, but Claire climbs on top of him and guides him inside her.

He moans. Claire smiles victoriously.

She rides him and now he's powerless. He tries to caress her body, but she pulls his hands away, until he finally lets his hands fall to his sides.

Claire rides him without looking at him. Her hands trace his torso until they're at his face. She covers his eyes with her hands and then pulls them aside.

CLAIRE

Boo.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire awakens to find Arturo asleep next to her.

She quietly gets out of bed and puts on a robe. She opens the sliding doors and goes outside.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Claire stands at the edge of the pool, almost like she's about to dive in.

She thinks she sees something move in the dark shadows of the deep end.

Then she hears what sounds like a ball bouncing against concrete.

CLAIRE

Hello?

But no one answers.

Suddenly, a child's ball rolls toward her feet.

Claire is horrified. She turns around:

Right into Arturo.

ARTURO

Problem?

Claire looks down, but she doesn't see the ball.

CLAIRE
I think I was sleepwalking.

Arturo shrugs - he doesn't understand.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
It means it's time for you to go.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Arturo showers.

CLAIRE
You married?

There's a long pause.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I'll take that for a yes. Children?

ARTURO
Two girls.

CLAIRE
How old?

ARTURO
Seven and five.

CLAIRE
They must keep you busy.

ARTURO
They are in Guatemala.

CLAIRE
Oh.

ARTURO
When Christmas is, I bring them here.

CLAIRE
With your wife.

Again a long pause.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Claire sits at the island with a box. Arturo comes in.

CLAIRE
I hope you weren't expecting
dinner.

ARTURO
No.

CLAIRE
I'd like to give you this.

Arturo opens the box and discovers some toys for young
children.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
For your kids. I don't need them.

ARTURO
Thank you. Your kids grow up?

Claire opens the front door.

CLAIRE
Goodbye.

ARTURO
Oh. Goodbye.

He tries to give her a kiss, but it turns into an awkward hug
-- Claire kind of patting him on the back.

CLAIRE
Night.

EXT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Arturo walks down the driveway with the box of toys and his
tool box.

He passes Silvana in her minivan: she's asleep, her head
resting against the window.

Arturo knocks on her window startling her. She rolls down the
window.

ARTURO
(in Spanish)
Will you give me a ride to the bus
stop?

SILVANA
(in Spanish)
I don't give rides to dogs.

Arturo shrugs and starts walking away. Silvana gets out of the van.

SILVANA (CONT'D)
 (in Spanish)
 Wait. You can't take that box.

ARTURO
 (in Spanish)
 Your lady gave it to me.

Silvana pulls the box out of his hands and toys spill out.

SILVANA
 (in Spanish)
 No! You can't have these!

ARTURO
 (in Spanish)
 Go ask her, she gave them to me.

Silvana shoves her finger in Arturo's face.

SILVANA
 (in Spanish)
 I swear if you take these I will
 put a curse on you and your bastard
 children.

Arturo throws up his hands.

ARTURO
 (in Spanish)
 Mexican bitch.

He spits on the ground and walks away. Silvana carefully gathers up the toys.

When she's done she puts the box in her car and drives off.

INT. SILVANA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Silvana comes into the living room with the box. Her daughter TINA, 30s, watches TV. Silvana's husband NUNCIO, 60s, is asleep on the couch.

Tina's son FELIPE, 4, is asleep on the floor.

TINA
 You're late.

SILVANA
 (in Spanish)
 Tell me something I don't already
 know.

TINA
 What's in the box?

SILVANA
 (in Spanish)
 Toys.

TINA
 For the kids?

SILVANA
 (in Spanish)
 No. I'm going to keep them for Mrs.
 Simmons.

TINA
 Did the bitch make you do that?

SILVANA
 (in Spanish)
 Watch your mouth.

Tina lowers her recliner all the way.

TINA
 (mocking)
 Silvana. Drive me to the drug
 dealer.

SILVANA
 (smiling, Spanish)
 Stop.

TINA
 She doesn't pay you enough to put
 up with her shit. If I were you
 mom, I'd quit.

SILVANA
 (in Spanish)
 You're not me.
 (re: Nuncio)
 Did he drink tonight?

TINA
 Yes.

Silvana nods and sighs.

TINA (CONT'D)

You want me to make you something to eat?

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

No. I feel a little sick in my stomach.

TINA

(in Spanish)

It's the bitch's fault.

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

Enough!

INT. SILVANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Silvana opens her closet. She puts the box of toys on top of several other identical-looking boxes.

She closes the closet doors.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Claire is in a swim suit. She takes a pill out of a bottle and swallows it.

She jiggles the pill bottle - she's down to only a couple. She sighs and puts the bottle in the locker.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY POOL - DAY

Claire's physical therapist, BONNIE, mid 20s with the body of a triathlete, holds Claire in the water on her back.

BONNIE

Remember the clock. Think of your legs at four and seven.

CLAIRE

It hurts.

BONNIE

I understand.

CLAIRE

You obviously don't.

Wheelchair Woman is being assisted by a Physical Therapist into the sling that will lower her into the water.

BONNIE
Come on. Spread your legs a little wider.

CLAIRE
Shouldn't we go on a date first?

BONNIE
Ha ha. Come on.

CLAIRE
Ow!

BONNIE
From your pelvis. Feel your hip sockets loosen.

CLAIRE
Mother fucking Jesus Christ!

Wheelchair Woman looks over with disapproval. Claire stands up in the water.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
(to Wheelchair Woman)
What are you looking at?

BONNIE
Claire. Stay focused.

CLAIRE
I am!

BONNIE
No you're not.

CLAIRE
But it hurts.

BONNIE
You had pins in your legs for almost a year. Of course it's going to hurt.

Bonnie comes close to Claire.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Your doctor wants me to write up an assessment.

CLAIRE
On my water ballet moves?

BONNIE
Why there's been zero improvement
in six months.

CLAIRE
I've always hated that weasely
little bastard.

BONNIE
It doesn't seem like you want to
get better.

CLAIRE
I show up for every appointment.
Like a good little girl.

Bonnie shrugs.

BONNIE
Maybe you'd do better with someone
else.

Claire bobs in the water. The only sound is the sling being
lowered into the water.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY POOL - LATER

Claire is alone in the pool. She floats on her back.

She stands up, takes a deep breath, and dives underneath the
water.

Claire holds her breath as she floats in the water. She
slowly exhales and her body starts to descend into the depths
of the pool.

Her face: determined.

Claire reaches the bottom, but it isn't long before she
bursts to the surface.

After catching her breath, Claire looks disgusted with
herself.

She swims to the edge.

INT. SUV - DAY

Silvana drives. Claire is laying down with the seat all the way back, her hair still wet from therapy.

SILVANA

Where now?

CLAIRE

Just stay on the 710. We're going to the bridge.

SILVANA

Okay.

Claire looks out the windows as they drive past signs for casinos, and shopping centers, and TV shows, and attorneys.

Claire starts to drift off in a druggy haze, but she forces herself to stay alert.

EXT. SHIPPING COMPANY OFFICE - DAY

Claire and Silvana stand next to BUDDY, 30s, a longshoreman. They're looking at the Vincent Thomas Bridge.

BUDDY

I'm coming out of the trailer and for some reason I look at the bridge. Like this.

He points toward the bridge.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

And I see this car stopped and then this woman walking -- I think the car's stalled. But then I realize she's not walking on the inside of the bridge. She's managed to get herself on the outside. I'm like, fuck, she's gonna jump.

CLAIRE

How fast was she going?

BUDDY

Not fast, she had to hang on to the mesh. So I called the police and then I'm yelling at her. 'Don't jump'. She probably couldn't hear me, she was too far away.

CLAIRE
How long before she jumped?

BUDDY
It was pretty long, the whole time she's looking down at the water. It was enough time for the cops to start driving up the bridge. When she saw the cops, that's when she jumped. Well, actually, fell. Backwards.

Silvana shudders.

CLAIRE
A few minutes before she jumped?

BUDDY
Maybe.

CLAIRE
So she wasn't a hundred percent sure.

BUDDY
I don't know about that. She did it, so she was a hundred percent successful.

CLAIRE
Right.

BUDDY
I gotta get back to work.

CLAIRE
Thanks.

Buddy walks off.

BUDDY
Hey, when's the article coming out?

CLAIRE
Thursday.

Buddy waves and keeps walking. Silvana shoots Claire a disappointed look as they walk to the SUV.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What?

Silvana just shakes her head.

EXT. VINCENT THOMAS BRIDGE - DAY

The SUV is parked along the side of the road, even though there isn't a shoulder and there are signs prohibiting stopping.

Silvana sits in the car. She waves anxiously as honking cars go around her.

Claire walks along the edge of the road.

CLAIRE
It's impossible.

She touches the wire fence guards that prevent someone from jumping.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
How the hell did she do it?

Claire stares down at the water.

Claire hikes back to where the bridge starts. Cars honk at her but she ignores them.

Silvana rolls down her window.

SILVANA
Get in!

CLAIRE
Wait in the car.

Claire walks all the way down to where the wire fence starts. She is able to get around to the other side of the bridge -- where Nina obviously started walking to her death.

Claire is pleased she figured this out.

EXT. VINCENT THOMAS BRIDGE - LATER

Claire is back at the top of the bridge.

She stares down at the water, as another freighter passes underneath from the harbor to the open sea.

Claire listens to the wind whistling through the fence. Her face is peaceful. She looks down at the shimmering water and the wake of the freighter.

Claire closes her eyes.

When she opens them, she is on the other side of the fence, holding onto the steel rail.

She waits for a moment, then steps off the bridge.

Falling in slow motion.

The wind blows her hair.

The water gets closer and closer.

She can see the smoke stacks and the workers and the cargo boxes on the freighter.

SPLASH!

She hits the surface of the water like a rocket. She plunges underneath, deeper and deeper.

She passes the churning propellers of the freighter.

She passes a school of fish.

She passes disappearing rays of sunlight.

She passes strands of seaweed that look like waving arms.

Deeper and deeper, into the abyss:

Everything goes black and deathly silent.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Claire sits in a waiting area. She watches Annette walk toward her with a confused look.

ANNETTE
(fake earnest)
Well hello Claire. How are we
doing?

CLAIRE
We're doing great!

Annette tentatively sits down next to Claire.

ANNETTE
Well that's super! Did you find
another support group?

CLAIRE
Funny you should mention that. I've
decided to sue the support group.

ANNETTE

Goodness.

CLAIRE

Technically it's not the support group I'm suing, it's Los Angeles County, because they oversee the community center that sponsors the group.

ANNETTE

But...

CLAIRE

There was an interesting little case a few years ago, I doubt you heard of it. McDonnell vs. City of Glendale, where it was ruled that support groups could quote unquote discriminate on the basis of membership - e.g. only breast cancer survivors could join - but not when said discrimination was legally prohibited - e.g. race or religion - or where it involved intangible and subjective personality traits - e.g. Claire is a raving bitch.

ANNETTE

But a lawsuit?

CLAIRE

I'm just pulling your leg. I'm actually here to get Nina's address.

ANNETTE

From group?

CLAIRE

The one who killed herself? Yes, that Nina.

ANNETTE

I don't think I'm allowed to give out that information. Was there something else I could help you with?

CLAIRE

I hardly think that's possible.

ANNETTE
Well I'm certain I can't give you
that information.

Annette starts to get up.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

CLAIRE
Remember when I said I was kidding
about the lawsuit?

ANNETTE
Uh huh.

CLAIRE
Now I'm not kidding.

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Claire rings the doorbell. She rings it again.

She's about to leave when the door opens, revealing:

ROY -- there's something haunted and vulnerable about him.

ROY
Yes?

CLAIRE
Hi.

ROY
Hi.

CLAIRE
I'm Claire.

Roy doesn't respond.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I used to live in this house when I
was a little girl.

ROY
Oh.

CLAIRE
You probably think I'm strange...

ROY

No. I'm just glad you're not
selling magazines.

Claire laughs a little too hard. Roy manages a sad smile.

CLAIRE

I was wondering if I could take a
look. But it seems like a bad idea
now that I'm here.

Roy assesses Claire - intrigued. He opens the door wider.

ROY

It's kind of a mess right now.

INT. NINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lots of takeout packages and garbage bags.

ROY

We changed the dining room.

CLAIRE

(fake surprise)
Right. Wow.

ROY

We decided to open up the wall to
the kitchen.

CLAIRE

Nice.

ROY

When we entertained, it was nice.

CLAIRE

I'll bet.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is decorated for a young boy.

ROY

This was probably your room.

CLAIRE

Yes. Except I didn't have Sponge
Bob Square Pants all over the wall.

ROY
I suppose not.

CLAIRE
There was a lot of pink and purple.

ROY
What else?

CLAIRE
Let's see. My mom painted a scene
from The Nutcracker Suite on that
wall.

ROY
Which scene?

CLAIRE
The one with the mice.

ROY
Huh.

Awkward moment of silence.

CLAIRE
How old is...?

ROY
Casey. He's five.

CLAIRE
A handful, huh?

ROY
Yeah.
(pause)
He's staying with my mom for
awhile. He's been having nightmares
here.

CLAIRE
Oh. That's too bad.

INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Roy and Claire walk by the master bedroom. Roy isn't going to show it to her, but Claire stops and looks in.

ROY
Oh right.

They come into the bedroom.

The room is dark with all the curtains drawn. Roy turns on a light.

Claire sees a wedding portrait of Nina and Roy. She also sees some bottles of medication on a dresser.

CLAIRE
Still the same.

ROY
We didn't do anything to the
bedroom. We were, but then, you
know, we kind of lost track, you
know?

Claire looks at Roy -- the sadness in his eyes.

CLAIRE
I should go.

ROY
Yes.

Roy turns out the light and Claire follows him out.

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Roy walks Claire out the front door. Claire sees Silvana asleep in the SUV across the street.

CLAIRE
Thank you.

ROY
It was interesting.

CLAIRE
I'm glad.

ROY
You know, your performance was
impeccable, but we didn't do a damn
thing to the dining room.

Claire pretends not to understand.

ROY (CONT'D)
Annette called me after you left
her.

Claire doesn't know what to say.

ROY (CONT'D)

Did you really threaten her?

CLAIRE

Yes.

ROY

Why?

CLAIRE

To be honest, I'm not sure.

ROY

Nina never talked about you.

CLAIRE

Why did you let me go on?

Roy shrugs.

ROY

I wanted to see how far you'd go.

CLAIRE

Sorry.

ROY

Don't be. I enjoyed myself.

He holds out his hand. Claire shakes it.

CLAIRE

That's fucked up.

ROY

So are you.

This gets a smile out of Claire.

INT. CLAIRE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Claire moves the fern and pulls out the methadone. She only has one pill left.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Silvana is folding laundry. Claire pops her head in.

CLAIRE

I want to go to Tijuana tomorrow.

SILVANA

Why?

CLAIRE

To that pharmacy you were talking about.

SILVANA

A good idea?

CLAIRE

You have your green card, right?

SILVANA

Yes.

(beat)

But long drive. You do too much today.

CLAIRE

If you don't want to go, I'll just hire someone.

SILVANA

(resigned)

I drive.

CLAIRE

Get here early.

INT. SUV - DAY

Silvana drives, Claire laying all the way back.

Claire starts rubbing her leg. She suddenly holds up a tiny fragment of glass.

It sparkles in the light.

CLAIRE

Look at that.

SILVANA

I drive.

CLAIRE

I'm shedding glass.

SILVANA

Is normal?

CLAIRE

That's what the good doc says.

Traffic slows down: there's an accident up ahead. Silvana inhales sharply when she sees it.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What's going on?

SILVANA
Nothing.
(pause)
Workers.

CLAIRE
What kind of workers?

SILVANA
Just workers.

CLAIRE
(suspiciously)
What are they wearing?

SILVANA
Yellow. Orange.

CLAIRE
Is anyone hurt?

Silvana doesn't say anything. Claire studies her face.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Take Romaine instead.

SILVANA
Yes.

INT. SUV - LATER

Silvana and Claire are driving along I-5 south.

Something's off with Claire -- the pain seems to be worse.

CLAIRE
Are we in Orange County yet?

Silvana shrugs.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Do you only see white people?

SILVANA
Maybe.

CLAIRE

Then we're in fucking Orange County.

SILVANA

Pretty houses.

CLAIRE

I hated trials in Orange County because A, you had to assume everyone was a fucking retard and B, you had to assume that everyone was a fucking right wing Nazi sympathizer. Hi, I'm the card-carrying ACLU member defense attorney. Please don't hold that against my client and sentence him to death for shoplifting.

SILVANA

I no understand.

CLAIRE

Don't even get me started on the fucking Nixon library.

SILVANA

You take medicine today?

Claire gives her a look: give me a break.

EXT. TIJUANA BORDER - DAY

Claire's SUV waits in a long line of vehicles.

Everything is gray - the buildings, the wire fences, the air - and everything is washed out from the relentless noon sun.

Pedestrians walk into and out of Tijuana on either side of the road, an unending stream of people.

On either side of the border, vendors sell fruit and sodas and cheap ceramics and animal print T-shirts from their push carts.

INT. TIJUANA PHARMACY - DAY

Claire and Silvana approach the counter. Claire is jittery - the low level of drugs in her blood stream just starting to cause problems.

CLAIRE
 (to Silvana)
 How does this work?

The PHARMACIST, early 30s, looks up from his newspaper.

PHARMACIST
 I speak English.

CLAIRE
 Great.

PHARMACIST
 What do you need?

CLAIRE
 Um....

She pulls out a piece of paper.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 I made a list, and then I went on
 the internet to see if the names
 might be different in Mexico.

She hands the list to the Pharmacist.

PHARMACIST
 This is a lot.
 (laughing)
 Are you trying to sedate a small
 city?

CLAIRE
 They're so expensive in the U.S.

PHARMACIST
 (knowing)
 Yes.

He disappears into the back. Silvana comes up to the counter
 with a box of detergent.

SILVANA
 This is good soap. No buy at
 home...

CLAIRE
 Get it.

The Pharmacist returns with several bottles.

PHARMACIST
 You have prescriptions?

CLAIRE
(angry, to Silvana)
I thought we didn't need them.

PHARMACIST
The border, they'll take them away
unless you have prescriptions.

CLAIRE
What should I do?

The Pharmacist takes a statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe. He turns it over to reveal a hole in the bottom.

Then he opens one of the bottles and shows her the same number is imprinted on the tablets.

PHARMACIST
We write down the numbers on the
pills, see how this drug has a
unique number? Then I put all of
them in here.

CLAIRE
This seems kind of tricky. Won't I
get caught?

PHARMACIST
You're a rich white woman. Do you
ever get caught at anything?

Claire smiles and holds up the statue.

CLAIRE
Do you have anything other than
Mary?

PHARMACIST
I have Gabriel.

CLAIRE
I kind of have a problem with
anything religious.

PHARMACIST
I think you have bigger problems.

CLAIRE
Perceptivo.

Claire takes one of the pills and tastes it with the tip of her tongue.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 Yep, that's the one.

PHARMACIST
 You don't trust me?

CLAIRE
 It's not personal.

INT. SUV - DAY

Claire takes one of her pills and looks relaxed and pleased.

CLAIRE
 I want to do something nice for
 you.

SILVANA
 Do not worry about me.

CLAIRE
 What was your favorite restaurant
 when you used to live here.

SILVANA
 Are you hungry?

CLAIRE
 Yes.

Silvana smiles.

SILVANA
 I know a very good place. But, it
 is not cheap.

CLAIRE
 The sky's the limit today. Let's
 go.

INT. TIJUANA RESTAURANT - DAY

Claire and Silvana sit at a table. Silvana eats a shrimp
 cocktail while Claire drinks a margarita.

Silvana notices two women come into the restaurant: IRMA and
 INOCENCIA, both 50s.

SILVANA
 Ay no.

CLAIRE

What?

Silvana tries to position herself so that the two women can't see her, but eventually they recognize her.

IRMA

Silvana?!

INOCENCIA

(in Spanish)

It is her!

Silvana tries to appear happy.

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

Look at you two! What are the odds?

Silvana gets up and hugs both of the women. They look at Claire and wait to be introduced.

SILVANA (CONT'D)

(in Spanish)

This is Mrs. Simmons.

(to Claire)

These are my friends, Irma and Inocencia.

IRMA & INOCENCIA

Hello.

CLAIRE

Nice to meet you.

IRMA

(in Spanish)

I heard through the grapevine poor Nuncio can't find work.

INOCENCIA

(in Spanish)

That must be so hard for you. Poor Silvana, always working your fingers to the bone.

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

He got a job.

IRMA

(in Spanish)

Really?

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

A good one. He builds big swimming pools.

INOCENCIA

(in Spanish)

At his age?!

IRMA

(in Spanish)

You know my Eduardo, he retired this year. Now we spend all our time with our grandchildren.

Claire notices that Silvana is looking increasingly miserable. She gets up.

CLAIRE

Excuse me ladies, I'll be right back.

We follow Claire as she finds the Waiter. She hands him some twenty dollar bills.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Please bring the change to that woman, not me. You understand?

WAITER

Yes.

Claire slips back unnoticed.

INOCENCIA

(in Spanish, to Silvana)

Your daughter was so pretty when she was young. Is she still a beauty?

CLAIRE

Nuncio did a fabulous job on my pool.

The three ladies stare at Claire with confusion.

INOCENCIA

Really?

CLAIRE

I've recommended him to several of my friends.

IRMA

Oh.

CLAIRE

(to Silvana)

Should we go shopping or do you need to get back home.

SILVANA

(gratefully)

Shopping.

The Waiter brings the change to Silvana. A beat of confusion, before she counts out a tip. Irma and Inocencia are impressed.

CLAIRE

(to Silvana)

Thank you for lunch, it was wonderful.

(to Irma and Inocencia)

And any friend of Silvana is a friend of mine.

INT. SUV - DAY

Silvana drives along I-5 north of San Diego.

Silvana is lost in thought.

SILVANA

I always think you no speak Spanish.

CLAIRE

I understood a few of the words, but mostly it was those bitches' attitudes.

Silvana smiles.

SILVANA

Thank you.

CLAIRE

De nada.

SILVANA

They are friends when I am young. Now they are no friends. Because of money.

CLAIRE
That's fucked up.

SILVANA
This is life.

Silvana approaches the Border Inspection Station north of Camp Pendleton and slows down.

CLAIRE
What's going on?

SILVANA
Inspection.

Silvana slows down even more, as cars file past Border Patrol officers.

An Officer looks at Silvana, then at Claire laying all the way back in the passenger seat. He waves the SUV over.

CLAIRE
What's going on?

EXT. BORDER PATROL BUILDING - DAY

Claire and Silvana stand outside the SUV. An OFFICER is looking at Silvana's green card and the contents of her purse.

Silvana gives Claire a desperate look.

CLAIRE
(to Officer)
Can I make a phone call?

OFFICER
To who?

CLAIRE
My husband. I want to let him know we're running late.

OFFICER
Fine.

Claire dials.

ASSISTANT (VOICE)
Jason Simmons's office.

CLAIRE
Put me through right now. It's
Claire.

ASSISTANT (VOICE)
I don't think...

CLAIRE
Now!

ASSISTANT (VOICE)
Please hold.

OFFICER
Hold on.

The Officer opens the back door of the SUV and pulls out the bag of detergent Silvana bought.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
You can't bring this shit into the
country.

EXT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The SUV pulls into the driveway. JASON sits on the stairs near the front door.

Claire gets out.

CLAIRE
What are you doing here?

JASON
I wanted to make sure you got home
okay.

CLAIRE
You could've called.

JASON
Your phone goes straight to
voicemail and then you never return
calls.

CLAIRE
Oh, right.

Silvana gets out of the car with the statue.

JASON
Hi Silvana.

He gives her a warm hug.

SILVANA

Hello Mr. Simmons. Is good to see you, but you are too skinny!

JASON

It's good to see you too.

CLAIRE

We're both okay. You can leave.

JASON

I don't get a thank you?

CLAIRE

Thank you for abusing your position within the federal government...

JASON

To save your ass...

CLAIRE

Over some stupid laundry detergent...

JASON

And whatever you put in the statue that they didn't find.

Silvana opens the front door.

SILVANA

Good night Mr. Simmons.

JASON

Good night Silvana.

CLAIRE

Good night Jason.

JASON

I may as well get the rest of my stuff.

CLAIRE

Not tonight. It wouldn't be prudent.

JASON

You never called my assistant.

CLAIRE

I'll call her tomorrow.

JASON
You're lying.

CLAIRE
Boy, nothing gets by you.

Jason sits down on the front steps.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
That doesn't say 'I'm leaving'.

JASON
I want to know how you're doing.

Claire sighs and sits down next to him.

Claire doesn't say anything for a moment. She finally rests her head against his shoulder. He puts his arm around her.

CLAIRE
I've been better.

JASON
I'm sorry.

Claire sits up.

CLAIRE
I'm just warning you, what I'm about to ask is going to sound weird and full of inappropriate intentions.

JASON
I can deal.

CLAIRE
I don't want sex or anything, but would you stay in my room until I fall asleep.

JASON
Of course.

CLAIRE
(suspiciously)
That was easy.

JASON
Oh, come on. Can you just give me a little credit for being a nice guy.

CLAIRE
Sorry.

Jason stands up and helps Claire get up.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jason tucks in Claire.

JASON
Do you want me to lay next to you?

CLAIRE
Nah. The chair.

JASON
Okay.

Jason sits down.

JASON (CONT'D)
Do you want me to tell you a
bedtime story?

CLAIRE
Tell me a story where everything
works out in the end for the evil
witch.

JASON
I think I can do that.

CLAIRE
Thanks.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Claire wakes up and sees that Jason's not in the chair.

CLAIRE
Jason?

No response.

She lays back down and goes back to sleep.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire is awakened by:

KNOCKING

On the sliding glass doors.

Claire stirs.

CLAIRE
Go away Arturo! I'm not in the
mood!

MORE KNOCKING

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I said go away!

The knocking doesn't stop.

Claire flings opens the curtains.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

In the jacuzzi is Nina, Roy's dead wife.

Claire opens the sliding door. Nina waves.

CLAIRE
What the fuck do you want?

NINA
I could use something to drink.

CLAIRE
Go away!

NINA
And something to snack on. Some
chips would be nice.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Claire sits in the jacuzzi. Nina takes a sip of wine.

NINA
Why are you such a cunt?

CLAIRE
I hate to break it to you but I
don't believe in ghosts.

NINA
That doesn't mean you're not a
coward.

This comment gets to Claire.

CLAIRE

I know.

NINA

What's stopping you? You don't believe in God. In heaven or hell. You don't believe in anything.

CLAIRE

I know.

Nina moves in closer, her eyes blazing.

NINA

Do it right now.

CLAIRE

Get away from me.

NINA

Come on. Don't be a coward.

Nina grabs Claire by the shoulders and pushes her down into the water.

Claire fights for her life.

CLAIRE

Stop!

But Nina is stronger. Claire tries to lift her head out of the water for air.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire wakes up gasping for air. She's pushed off most of her covers and sheets.

Claire notices the curtains billowing from the open sliding doors.

She gets up slowly -- her pain nearly unbearable -- and shuts the door.

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Roy comes out of the house to find Claire waiting by his car. A cab drives away in the distance.

He stops and frowns.

CLAIRE
I need a ride.

ROY
(beat)
I'm running an errand.

CLAIRE
I don't mind.

INT. ROY'S CAR - DAY

Roy looks down at Claire, her seat lowered all the way back.

CLAIRE
Thank you for not asking why I sit
like this.

ROY
Or why you just showed up at my
house without a car?

CLAIRE
Yeah.

Roy continues to drive.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I'm not a stalker. Not in the
traditional sense.

ROY
I believe you.
(beat)
It doesn't matter either way.

CLAIRE
I like your attitude.

ROY
Thanks, I guess.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Roy and Claire stand before of a shiny new headstone.

Roy rubs his hand against the surface of the headstone.

ROY
They did a nice job.

CLAIRE
Italian marble?

ROY
The best.

CLAIRE
Do you know where they got it? I'm thinking of putting a kitchen island in the back yard.

ROY
I could give you the name. I don't have it on me.

CLAIRE
That would be great.

They stare at the headstone in silence. A flock of noisy crows lands nearby.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
She was thirty two.

ROY
Yes.

CLAIRE
I never would have guessed.

ROY
Why?

CLAIRE
She seemed younger. Too naive to be in her thirties.

Roy picks up a stepladder and a box and walks to a nearby tree.

ROY
Could you help?

CLAIRE
If I can.

Roy places the stepladder under the lowest branch of the tree. He unpacks the box, pulling out a wind chime.

ROY
Hold this...

Roy climbs up the ladder and takes out a piece of wire from his pocket.

ROY (CONT'D)

Okay.

Claire hands him the wind chime.

CLAIRE

Careful. Don't fall.

Roy attaches the wind chime to the branch. He taps it lightly and soothing tones fill the cemetery.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I don't think that's legal.

ROY

I don't give a shit.

INT. BAR - DAY

Roy and Claire sit in a booth, beneath a huge sailfish. They both have a glass of wine.

CLAIRE

You can talk about her if you want.

ROY

I don't.

Claire nods and takes a sip of her wine.

CLAIRE

I'm just saying...I don't mind.

A Waitress brings over a plate of nachos. Roy and Claire stare at the food as if they regret ordering it.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I was recently in Tijuana.

ROY

What for?

CLAIRE

This frat boy I'm dating. He wanted to get tanked on cheap booze and then go see a woman have sex with a donkey.

Roy doesn't laugh...waiting for Claire to continue.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I'm kidding.

ROY

Oh.

CLAIRE

I had some business there.

ROY

What kind?

CLAIRE

Nothing very interesting.

Roy takes a bite of the nachos.

ROY

You know how she killed herself,
right?

CLAIRE

Yes.

She waits for Roy to continue. Finally:

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Did she leave a note?

ROY

No.

Claire takes another sip of wine.

CLAIRE

You must wish you could talk to
her.

ROY

Why?

CLAIRE

Don't you wonder why she did it?

ROY

We did an exercise in my suicide
support group. Your partner
pretended to be the person who
died.

(beat)

Want to know what I had to say to
my lovely wife?

Claire nods.

ROY (CONT'D)

Thanks for ruining Casey's life.
Thanks for ruining my life. Thanks
for leaving me this fucking mess.

(beat)

I hate you so much I can hardly
breathe anymore. I hope you're
burning in hell, cause that's where
you've put me and Casey.

Claire doesn't say anything -- not even a raised eyebrow.

ROY (CONT'D)

(to Claire)

My partner got scared.

CLAIRE

Why?

ROY

She said she felt like I was gonna
bash her face in.

CLAIRE

Did you want to?

ROY

Yes. But I didn't.

Claire catches the Waitress' attention: another glass for
both of them.

ROY (CONT'D)

Do I scare you?

CLAIRE

Yes.

(beat)

But that's not a bad thing.

The Waitress brings two glasses of wine. Roy raises his.

ROY

Cheers.

CLAIRE

Cheers.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A very drunk Roy and Claire stumble in. Claire has to grab
Roy to support herself.

ROY
I want to get something straight.

CLAIRE
He said, changing the mood of the room.

ROY
Seriously, I don't want to have sex.

CLAIRE
I know.

ROY
I just wanted to be clear.

CLAIRE
I get it. I hate sleeping by myself too.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Roy and Claire lay next to each other on the bed - Roy's asleep.

Claire turns on her side away from Roy. Her eyes wide open.

After a moment, she reaches for Roy's hand and carefully places his arm around her.

Claire closes her eyes.

INT. WALK-IN CLOSET - DAY

Claire comes in and notices Jason's clothes on one side.

Claire pulls some of his clothes off the rack, tossing them into a pile.

When she's done with that, she pulls down some shoe boxes and tosses them into the pile.

An unmarked box tumbles down on her.

CLAIRE
Ow! Fuck!

The contents of the box: old CDs.

Claire picks out a Carpenters CD and considers it for a moment.

She takes this CD and the others and throws them in the garbage with a loud bang.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Claire sits drinking wine.

A car drives up her street. She opens the curtains and looks out the window -- maybe it's Roy? But the car drives past her house and Claire is slightly disappointed.

The Carpenters play on the stereo.

KAREN CARPENTER (SONG)
All the years of useless search,
Have finally reached an end.
Loneliness and empty days will be
my only friend.
From this day love is forgotten,
I'll go on as best I can...

Claire turns her attention to the stereo.

CLAIRE
Jesus Christ. Enough with the
whining already.

Claire ejects the CD and throws it across the room.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire is in bed, propped up on her elbows. She stares at the chair where Jason sat before. She sighs and lays back down.

She turns on her side. After a moment, she takes a pillow and pushes it against her back - like someone is spooning her.

But this substitute doesn't provide much comfort.

Claire sits up. She stares at the room for a moment, eventually focusing on the billowing curtains.

For a moment it appears that there's a young child hiding in the folds of the curtains - but then the shape is gone.

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Very late at night. The neighborhood is dark.

Claire knocks on the door. Eventually, Roy answers the door, sleepy and confused.

ROY
What's going on?

CLAIRE
I took a fucking cab.

ROY
Why?

CLAIRE
It dawns on me that you're more than a little depressed, and I realized I didn't have your phone number.

ROY
You thought I killed myself?

CLAIRE
Not that it's actually any of my business.

ROY
I didn't. I'm alive. Ta da.

CLAIRE
Okay, you're not dead. I don't have to break in and call the police. That's a relief.

Roy opens the door wider.

ROY
You could have just said you wanted to come over.

CLAIRE
Yeah, but where's the fun in that?

INT. NINA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Claire goes through the medicine cabinet -- she examines several bottles.

CLAIRE
Good girl.

She takes a couple of pills and drinks water from the faucet to wash them down.

INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Roy and Claire are laying in bed. Claire is focused on the portrait of Roy and Nina on the opposite wall.

CLAIRE
There are primitive people who
think you steal a person's soul
when you take their picture.

No response. Claire turns over and discovers Roy is asleep.

When she turns back around, she sees:

Nina, sitting on the bed by her.

NINA
Hello slut.

CLAIRE
Thanks for the percocets.

NINA
What are you doing here? He doesn't
even like you -- he's in mourning,
for me. He's not thinking clearly.

CLAIRE
You think I love him? Give me a
fucking break.

NINA
You just use people.

CLAIRE
You're right.

Claire pretends to cry. Nina tries to comfort her. Claire starts laughing.

NINA
Fuck you.

Nina gets up and leaves the room.

CLAIRE
Your language has really degraded.

EXT. NINA'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

The yard is filled with holes. Claire realizes she's holding a shovel.

Claire starts to dig a hole. She hits something hard. She puts all her force into it until she's standing on the shovel.

Suddenly she hears screaming and then the shovel dislodges something:

Nina's head.

CLAIRE
Did it hurt?

Nina's head opens its eyes.

NINA
I could hear him yell 'don't jump'.

Claire tries to bury the head back in the hole, but it keeps appearing in other holes.

NINA (CONT'D)
(mocking)
Don't jump. Don't jump.

INT. NINA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Claire and Roy are asleep. The doorbell rings. Roy sits upright.

Someone is opening the front door with a key.

Roy looks at the clock.

ROY
Shit!

He jumps up and throws on some clothes.

CLAIRE
What's going on?

ROY
I forgot my mom's dropping off Casey. Just stay here.

Roy runs out of the bedroom and closes the door behind him.

INT. NINA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Claire sits on the toilet. She opens a bottle of pills and takes a couple.

Suddenly the bathroom door opens.

CASEY, 5. He's shocked to see Claire, but the shock quickly turns to admiration of her scars.

CASEY
(whisper, re: scars)
What happened?

CLAIRE
Can you let me finish peeing?

Casey nods and closes the door.

INT. ROY'S CAR - DAY

From his car seat in the back, Casey stares at Claire laying all the way back in her seat.

CASEY
It's my birthday.

CLAIRE
Happy birthday.

CASEY
I want a kite.

ROY
Your birthday isn't until next Tuesday.

CASEY
Oh. Right.

CLAIRE
What kind of kite do you want?

CASEY
A big one.

CLAIRE
I like dragon kites. And shark kites. I like any animal that bites.

Casey laughs. Roy looks at Claire with concern.

ROY
Are you okay?

CLAIRE
Yeah.

ROY
You don't have to come to the
cemetery with us.

CLAIRE
I'm good. Really.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Claire sits in Roy's car. She watches Roy and Casey stand in front of Nina's headstone.

Roy takes Casey over to where the wind chime hangs.

Casey wants to touch it. Roy puts him on his shoulders, and Casey touches the chimes - it's beautiful and poignant.

Then Casey really whacks the chimes.

Claire winces from the noise. She gets a bottle of pills out from her purse and takes two.

She drops the pills. She bends down to find them on the floor. It's excruciating for her to bend over.

Claire moans and lifts her head.

Casey is at the window, his face pressed against the glass.

CLAIRE
Ah!

Casey giggles and runs back to Roy.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Roy and Casey eat breakfast.

Claire isn't eating anything -- she colors a children's paper placemat.

She holds it up for Casey.

CLAIRE
What do you think?

CASEY
Everything's blue! That's silly.

CLAIRE
Picasso did it and it turned out
pretty well for him.

She notices a booth in the corner. Claire does a doubletake
when she realizes it's:

Nina. Nina waves at Claire.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I'll be right back.

Claire walks over to Nina, who has a Cheshire cat grin on her
face.

When Claire reaches the booth:

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I ought to smack that fucking grin
right off your face.

NINA
(fake innocent)
What?

Claire leans against the tabletop.

CLAIRE
You heard me.

But Claire isn't talking to Nina, she's actually talking to
an OLD WOMAN.

OLD WOMAN
Can I help you?

CLAIRE
Leave me the fuck alone, that's
what you can do to help me.

OLD WOMAN
Waitress!

Claire walks away -- toward the exit and not back to Roy's
table.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell rings. Silvana answers it to reveal Roy.

SILVANA
Yes?

ROY
I'm a friend of Claire's.

Silvana is suspicious.

ROY (CONT'D)
I live in Palos Verdes. I think you
drove her to my house one time.

SILVANA
Yes. She sleeps now. Very tired.

ROY
Can I come in?

Silvana hesitates.

ROY (CONT'D)
I'm worried about her.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Roy sits in the chair the end of the bed watching Claire
sleep.

Claire stirs and is startled when she sees Roy.

CLAIRE
Jesus!

ROY
Sorry.

CLAIRE
Is that really you or am I
hallucinating?

ROY
It's really me.

CLAIRE
Prove it.

ROY
You'll just have to trust me.

CLAIRE
How'd you get in?

ROY
Silvana.
(beat)
She told me about the accident.
(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)
(long pause)
And your little boy.

CLAIRE
She needs to keep her fat mouth
shut.

ROY
She cares about you.

CLAIRE
I pay her to care about me. It's
not my fault she's sentimental.
(beat)
I hope you're not getting
sentimental.

ROY
I can't save you Claire. I can
barely save myself and my kid.

CLAIRE
I'm not asking you...

ROY
I lied about Nina not leaving a
note.

Roy opens his wallet and pulls out a folded piece of paper.
He puts the note on the edge of the bed and leaves.

Claire waits a moment, before eagerly picking it up. All it
says is:

I'M ALREADY DEAD. I'M JUST MAKING IT OFFICIAL.

Claire is disappointed.

CLAIRE
I was expecting something a little
more original.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Silvana is cleaning the floor. Claire comes in and stares at
her.

SILVANA
Yes?

CLAIRE
You've got this habit of letting
everyone into the house.

SILVANA
He say he is friend.

CLAIRE
Anybody can say that.

SILVANA
But he is friend, no?

Claire doesn't know how to respond.

SILVANA (CONT'D)
I think you get angry now, but...

CLAIRE
What?

SILVANA
I invite him and his boy for lunch tomorrow.

CLAIRE
What?!

SILVANA
I make tamales. You like my tamales.

CLAIRE
That's not the point.

Silvana waits for Claire's wrath, but it doesn't come.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Did he say yes?

SILVANA
Yes.

CLAIRE
Good.
(beat)
Maybe you could make some mango tamales too?

SILVANA
Yes. Anything more?

CLAIRE
The next time someone asks for me at the front door, you have to let me know before you let them in. Understand?

Silvana nods.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Even if it's Jesus fucking Christ
himself.

Silvana tsks her disapproval.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What? I'm serious. This isn't a bus
station.

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

Claire stands on the sidewalk, watching the cars go through
the busy intersection.

She glances down and notices some pieces of glass from a
shattered car window. She picks one up and examines it.

A car HONKS.

Claire jumps back. The Driver motions for her to get out of
the street.

INT. TOY STORE - DAY

Claire walks slowly through the enormous aisles, like she's
lost. Like she's in a lot of pain.

Claire finds the kite section. She tries to grab one, but
they're all beyond her reach.

She groans and sits down on the floor.

A young ASSISTANT walks by the aisle and sees Claire.

ASSISTANT
Are you okay ma'am?

CLAIRE
I got dizzy.

ASSISTANT
Should I call 911?

CLAIRE
No! I'm okay. I was just trying to
get one of the kites.

The Assistant helps Claire to her feet.

ASSISTANT
Which one? I can get it for you.

CLAIRE
I don't need any help.

Claire walks away. The Assistant watches her with a puzzled expression.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Claire sits in the waiting area. Annette comes out of her office.

When Annette sees Claire, she turns around and walks in the opposite direction.

CLAIRE
Annette?

Claire gets up and follows her.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Wait. Come on, we need to talk.

Annette keeps walking away from Claire.

ANNETTE
I have nothing to say to you.

CLAIRE
I want to apologize Annette.

ANNETTE
Hah!

CLAIRE
I come bearing a conciliatory gift.

ANNETTE
What, a poisoned apple?

CLAIRE
That's a good one. Actually I brought a nice bottle of vodka.

Annette considers this and stops walking.

ANNETTE
What kind?

CLAIRE
Grey Goose.

Annette turns around.

ANNETTE

Show me.

Claire takes out the bottle from her bag.

CLAIRE

The big bottle from Costco.

ANNETTE

Put it on the floor.

CLAIRE

What?

ANNETTE

I accept your apology. You can put the bottle on the floor and go home.

CLAIRE

You don't want me to hand it to you?

ANNETTE

No.

CLAIRE

Fair enough.

Claire puts the bottle on the floor. She waves at Annette before walking away.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Have a good night.

ANNETTE

You too Claire.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Claire floats on her back in the pool. The possum watches as she moves her arms and legs in various positions.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY POOL - DAY

Claire sits at the edge of the pool staring at Wheelchair Woman being lowered into the water.

Bonnie the physical therapist comes out to the deck.

BONNIE

Claire.

CLAIRE

Don't sound so surprised.

BONNIE

I wasn't sure I'd see you again.

CLAIRE

I want to get something off my chest.

BONNIE

Sure.

CLAIRE

I am in a lot of pain.

BONNIE

I know that.

CLAIRE

You may know it, but sometimes I suspect you think I'm just this uncooperative old bitch who's making it all up.

BONNIE

I'm sorry if you've felt that way. Because that's not what I think. At all.

CLAIRE

Good.

BONNIE

Can I get something off my chest?

CLAIRE

Sure.

BONNIE

There's going to be some pain involved in our therapy. This isn't a spa.

CLAIRE

It isn't?

(beat)

Just kidding.

BONNIE
Do you really want to get better?
No bullshit, just an honest answer.

CLAIRE
I do.

INT. BEAUTY SALON - DAY

Claire sits in a chair - a Stylist cutting her wet, freshly-colored hair.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - DAY

Claire opens the door from the kitchen -- she's put on some foundation that mostly masks her facial scars.

Roy and Casey come outside to the pool.

ROY
(to Casey)
Wow.

CASEY
Can I go swimming?

ROY
You don't have your swimsuit.

CLAIRE
I might have one he can borrow.

ROY
Well...

CLAIRE
Silvana needs a few minutes to get the feast ready anyway.

CASEY
Please?

ROY
Okay.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Claire stands in front of a door that we haven't seen before. She goes to open the door, but pauses.

CLAIRE
Hey Silvana?

No response.

Claire decides to open the door.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Claire comes into the room and turns on the light.

Everything is boxed. The drapes are closed, and the room is dusty.

Claire looks at an enormous mural on one of the walls. She turns on a light to better see it.

The mural is of a Little Boy flying with arms outstretched through outer space: the Sun, the planets, stars, comets.

Claire parts a curtain to see Roy chasing Casey in the backyard.

Claire tries to open a box, but stops when she realizes her hands are shaking.

CLAIRE
Silvana!

SILVANA (O.S.)
What?

CLAIRE
I need your help!

SILVANA (O.S.)
Where are you?

CLAIRE
Here!

Silvana comes in to find Claire staring helplessly at the boxes.

SILVANA
What are you doing?

CLAIRE
A swimsuit for Casey.

Silvana puts her hands on Claire's shoulders and guides her out of the room.

SILVANA
I will find.

CLAIRE
Thank you.

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - DAY

Claire and Roy lay on lawn chairs drinking wine. They watch Casey splashing in the shallow end.

ROY
I stopped going to my support group.

CLAIRE
Did they kick you out?

ROY
No. My anger scared me.

CLAIRE
But anger can feel so good.

ROY
It's just a drug.
(beat)
I'm going back to work next week.

CLAIRE
Really?

ROY
I need to get my mind off myself.

CLAIRE
They've got real drugs for that.

ROY
I think I'm going to sell the house too. We can't live there anymore.

CLAIRE
(annoyed)
You're just full of resolutions today. Pretty soon you'll be running marathons.

ROY
I'm not the one getting my hair done.

CLAIRE
What's wrong with my hair?

ROY
Nothing. It's nice.
(pause)
Can I ask you a question?

CLAIRE
Sure.

ROY
How can you stay here?

CLAIRE
I like my house.

ROY
I mean...don't you sometimes feel
like you're surrounded by ghosts?

CLAIRE
No.

ROY
I'm not even talking about real
ones. Just memories. Or maybe
that's what ghosts are.

Claire gets up.

CLAIRE
More wine?

ROY
Sure.

Claire takes Roy's glass and goes into the kitchen. Roy goes
to the edge of the pool.

ROY (CONT'D)
(to Casey)
You want to dive for a quarter?

CASEY
Yes!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Silvana is busy preparing the food. Claire pours wine.

SILVANA
Casey is so cute. He is good father
that man.

CLAIRE
(distracted)
Yes.

Casey shrieks from the pool -- it's a scream of joy, but it sounds just like a something terrible has happened.

Claire is startled and drops one of the wine glasses. It shatters all over the floor.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Shit.

SILVANA
No move. I clean up.

Claire stands rigid while Silvana picks up shards of glass. She looks out the window at Casey diving for Roy's quarter.

SILVANA (CONT'D)
No move!

CLAIRE
I'm not!

Casey screams again and Claire closes her eyes and clenches her teeth.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Claire pushes aside the fern and takes out the bottle of methadone.

SILVANA (O.S.)
Lunch is ready! Mrs. Simmons?

Claire puts the bottle back.

CLAIRE
Coming.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Roy, Casey, Silvana and Claire sit at the table. Before them is a terrific spread.

ROY
I think we should applaud.

Roy and Casey clap and Claire joins them.

SILVANA
(embarrassed)
Stop. Pass plates.

CLAIRE
I'm glad you could come to lunch.

ROY
Us too.

Roy points to a wall in the living room where a large piece of art obviously hung -- there's now a large square of darker paint where the sunlight didn't hit.

ROY (CONT'D)
What'd you have up there?

CLAIRE
You know that painting of the dogs
playing poker?

ROY
Seriously?

CLAIRE
No. It didn't go with the room
anymore.

Silvana starts dishing out food. Suddenly the doorbell rings.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Ignore it.

SILVANA
One second.

Silvana disappears for a moment. She comes back.

SILVANA (CONT'D)
It is man, he ask for you.

CLAIRE
What's his name?

SILVANA
He no say.

CLAIRE
He's probably a Jehovah's Witness.
Tell him to go away.

Silvana leaves again, but she comes back quickly.

SILVANA
He say he wait outside.

CLAIRE
Oh, Jesus.
(to Roy)
Excuse me. This won't take long.

EXT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - DAY

Claire opens the front door to find LEONARD, late 60s, sitting on the steps. He gets up.

When Claire sees him her face fills with disbelief.

CLAIRE
Get off my fucking property before
I call the police.

LEONARD
I'm sorry.

CLAIRE
What the fuck?

LEONARD
I wish I could do something. I
can't live with myself. If I could
switch places I would.

Claire stares at Leonard with horror. Then rage.

LEONARD (CONT'D)
I wanted to tell you that at the
trial, but the lawyers wouldn't let
me.

Leonard starts crying.

CLAIRE
Get the fuck out of here!

She pushes Leonard -- he stumbles backward and falls on the grass.

Claire starts kicking him. Leonard doesn't resist.

Silvana rushes outside and tries to pull Claire away from Leonard, but Claire pushes her back.

Roy and Casey follow close behind.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 You fucking piece of shit! I will
 kill you!

Roy manages to pull Claire away from Leonard. She starts hitting Roy but he grabs her arms.

ROY
 Stop. Claire, come on, calm down.

Silvana helps Leonard up -- he's sobbing and bleeding from his lip.

CLAIRE
 (to Silvana)
 Don't you dare take him inside!

LEONARD
 She's right.

Claire notices a couple of Neighbors watching the scene with horrified interest. Leonard limps away to his car.

Claire looks at Silvana and Roy and Casey. Casey is crying.

CLAIRE
 All of you go home! Right now!

SILVANA
 But...

ROY
 Claire...

CLAIRE
 Get the fuck out here!

Claire goes back inside the house and slams and locks the door. Roy picks up Casey and consoles him.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Claire angrily washes off the makeup. After wiping her face with a towel she grabs the methadone and takes several.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire watches TV with glassy eyes. Beside her is an empty bottle of wine and several bottles of pills.

She keeps pressing the remote, endlessly changing the channels: infomercials, celebrity gossip shows and reality shows.

CLAIRE

(commenting on each show)
 Bitch. Stupid bitch. Cunt. Moron.
 Retard. Go ahead, flash your snatch
 at me. Get your teeth done asswipe.
 You're gonna tell me how to invest
my money, dyke?

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Claire is in the same position - asleep. Her head bobs and she wakes up.

She looks at the bottle of pills and wine.

CLAIRE

Oh my God.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Claire forces herself to throw up. When she can't throw up any more, she looks at herself in the mirror - terror in her eyes.

CLAIRE

Holy. Fucking. Shit.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Claire lays on a stretcher moaning.

EMT

How many did you take?

CLAIRE

It's okay. I ride like this all the time.

EMT

Ma'am? What have you taken?

CLAIRE

Everything.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Claire is in a private room. She opens her eyes to find a NURSE standing over her. Claire notices a drip.

NURSE

If your throat hurts it's because we pumped your stomach. The bad taste in your mouth is the charcoal.

CLAIRE

Nothing hurts.

Claire slips back into unconsciousness.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Claire opens her eyes and sees Silvana sitting next to her. Silvana's eyes are closed: she's praying with a rosary.

Claire watches the rosary swing as Silvana goes through each of the beads. She hears the beads click against each other - the sound distorted and out of proportion.

In contrast, Silvana's prayers are soothing, indistinct Spanish words.

Claire closes her eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Claire lays on her side in the bed, asleep.

She opens and closes her eyes. When she opens them again, everything is blurry.

Claire sees a man sitting next to her. After blinking a few times, she realizes it's Roy.

Claire nods appreciatively. Everything goes blurry again and she shuts her eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Claire opens and closes her eyes a couple of times, until she sees:

Nina walk into the room carrying a large layer cake, which she places on a table.

Claire gets up on her elbows.

CLAIRE
I like your cute new do.

NINA
Thanks. I wish I could say the same
about yours.

CLAIRE
My makeover didn't take.

Nina pulls up a chair next to Claire.

NINA
You're probably wondering about the
cake.

CLAIRE
I didn't want to be rude, but yes.

NINA
Remember when Annette asked us what
our dream would be if we didn't
have chronic pain?

CLAIRE
I always hated her drippy little
exercises.

NINA
Yours was to have sex with the
entire Madrid soccer team.

CLAIRE
And yours was sickeningly sincere.

NINA
What's wrong with a mother wanting
to make her son a birthday cake
from scratch?

Nina gets up and lights the candles on the cake.

NINA (CONT'D)
Everyone in the group cried after I
told mine. Everyone except you.

CLAIRE
I had my reasons.

NINA
I know that now.

CLAIRE
I know you know.

Nina comes over and strokes Claire's face.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
To be honest, I wasn't that
impressed with the whole Saint Nina
thing.

NINA
Saints don't jump off the Vincent
Thomas Bridge.

CLAIRE
I give you points for execution.

NINA
(pleased)
I knew you'd like it.

Nina brings over the cake to Claire.

NINA (CONT'D)
Make a wish.

Claire closes her eyes and thinks for a moment.

CLAIRE
I can't think of anything...

NINA
It doesn't matter. Just blow them
out.

Claire blows out all the candles.

When she opens her eyes, she sees Nina opening the window.
Nina throws out the cake and then immediately jumps out
herself.

There's a horrible

THUD.

Someone below starts screaming.

The Nurse runs into the room and looks out the window. The
Nurse starts screaming.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Claire is screaming at the top of her lungs. A FILIPINO NURSE runs into the room.

FILIPINO NURSE
It's okay. It's okay.

Claire realizes she's the one screaming and she stops.

CLAIRE
Don't touch me!

FILIPINO NURSE
Okay, I won't.

CLAIRE
Don't!

Claire lays back down and pulls the IV out of her arm.

FILIPINO NURSE
What are you doing?!

CLAIRE
I don't want this shit anymore. Do you hear me?

FILIPINO NURSE
It's just saline! Don't pull it out!

The Nurse runs out of the room.

Claire watches her arm bleed profusely. The blood splatters all over the white sheet.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Claire sits up in bed, pale, dark circles under her eyes. She's alone.

The Discovery Channel is playing on the TV. Claire tries to change the channel with the remote, but it doesn't work.

The TV is showing a documentary about animal attacks.

Claire pushes the call button. The Filipino Nurse comes in.

FILIPINO NURSE
(weary)
Yes?

CLAIRE
 Could you change the channel? This
 thing isn't working.

Filipino Nurse sighs and pulls a chair under the TV.

FILIPINO NURSE
 No problem your highness.

CLAIRE
 Oooh. Someone's got a little edge
 to her.

Filipino Nurse gets up on the chair and starts changing the
 channel manually.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 HBO would be great.

Filipino Nurse leaves it on the History Channel. She gets off
 the chair.

FILIPINO NURSE
 There.

CLAIRE
 Touché Imelda.

FILIPINO NURSE
 It's Amparo.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Claire watches a documentary on drive-in movie theaters.

NARRATOR (TV)
 Once a popular symbol of youth
 culture, drive-in theaters have
 mostly disappeared from the United
 States. One of the last operating
 drive-in theaters is in the
 California desert town of
 Barstow...

Claire watches the TV with a wistful expression.

The Filipino nurse comes in to check on Claire.

FILIPINO NURSE
 You should eat something. How about
 the apple sauce?

CLAIRE
We went to a drive-in.

FILIPINO NURSE
Who?

CLAIRE
On our first date. We were law students at UCLA.

FILIPINO NURSE
I should've known you were a lawyer.

CLAIRE
I found out he liked the Carpenters, and not in an ironic way either. And I got sick on rum and Coke.

FILIPINO NURSE
Sounds like a wonderful time.

CLAIRE
Are you being sarcastic?

FILIPINO NURSE
I don't have the energy to be sarcastic.

The Filipino Nurse tucks in a couple of stray sheet corners.

CLAIRE
He held my hair while I got sick. And he kept saying, it's gonna be okay. Over and over.

FILIPINO NURSE
That's nice.

CLAIRE
I believed him.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A Nurse pushes Claire in a wheelchair out the exit.

Silvana is waiting by the SUV.

She tries to help Claire get out of the wheelchair -- initially Claire tries to do it on her own, but she's shaky on her feet, so she takes Silvana's arm.

The two move very slowly.

SILVANA
Careful.

CLAIRE
We're going on a little trip.

SILVANA
To home, yes.

CLAIRE
To Barstow.

SILVANA
No. Only home.

CLAIRE
Barstow.

Silvana shakes her head firmly.

SILVANA
Home.

CLAIRE
Barstow. You'll see.

SILVANA
You are not in good mind.

CLAIRE
That's an understatement.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Silvana holds a large overnight bag. She looks concerned as Claire paces back and forth, manic.

CLAIRE
Um. The travel pillow. You know the one.

SILVANA
Sit down and rest. I find it.

Claire starts to sit down on the edge of the bed, but decides to get back up.

CLAIRE
It was fifty bucks. I bought it at Sharper Image.

SILVANA
This one, yes?

CLAIRE
Yes! Great!
(examining pillow)
Oh, but I also want that lumbar
support pillow.
(explaining)
For my lower back. I bought it on
the internet, what a fucking
fiasco, remember?

SILVANA
Rest.

CLAIRE
And what about my sunglasses, I'll
need those too. And a six pack of
Coke. A change of clothes just in
case.

Silvana keeps trying to get Claire to sit down.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Maybe I should write all this down
so we don't forget.

SILVANA
You sit down if you write?

CLAIRE
Yes.

Silvana leaves and comes back with a pen and pad of paper.
Claire takes them and sits down on the edge of the bed.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Okay. Now we're in business!

INT. SUV - DAY

Silvana drives on I-15 through the high desert. Claire
fidgets as she scans the relentlessly bleak scenery for any
sign of life.

All of a sudden, a large crow flies right into the
windshield.

Silvana and Claire scream.

CLAIRE
Jesus!

The dead and bloody bird is still on the windshield. Silvana tries the wipers, but it only makes the mess worse.

EXT. INTERSTATE - DAY

The SUV is parked on the shoulder.

Silvana tries to remove the dead bird with a stick.

Claire stands beside the car, staring at the passing vehicles, but not really watching them - her body trembling.

Suddenly a car honks at Claire, startling her back into the present.

SILVANA
(re: bird)
This is very bad.

CLAIRE
(inside her own head)
Yes.

EXT. DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

The marquee: THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

The tinny speaker in the driver's window is a constant stream of lashes and groans.

Silvana watches the movie and weeps.

Claire has her head back against the head rest, sweating profusely, miserable. She takes several tissues and wipes her forehead.

Claire opens the travel bag and reaches inside.

CLAIRE
We're out of Coke.

Silvana doesn't respond. Claire sighs.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
It's okay, I get it. The damned
should have to go to the concession
stand.

EXT. DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

Claire walks toward the concession stand. She passes the playground, where a few young children in pajamas play.

Claire pulls out her cell phone.

CLAIRE

Hey it's me. Crazy lady. I'm sure you're screening, I wouldn't blame you one little bit.

(nervous laugh)

Thanks for coming by the hospital, I'm assuming you were there and I wasn't hallucinating.

(pause)

Listen, please please please apologize to Casey.

(pause)

I can't justify what happened, but...Jesus! His lawyer advised him not to apologize to me?!

(getting angrier)

What the fuck?! What kind of fucked up person does that? If I had been his fucking lawyer I certainly wouldn't have done...

Claire notices some of the parents of the children looking at her with displeasure.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Sorry Roy. You're a good person. And I'm me.

As Claire hangs up she starts shivering uncontrollably and zips up her jacket.

She hears a not-so-distant train horn. She walks to a fence and sees train tracks nearby.

Claire squeezes through a hole in the fence. She walks through the brush to the tracks.

She's joined by Nina.

NINA

It's really hard without the drugs, isn't it?

CLAIRE

Unbelievably hard.

NINA
What would Jesus do?

CLAIRE
I think the son of bitch would lie
down on the tracks and let Union
Pacific put himself out of his
misery.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS. - NIGHT

Claire and Nina reach the tracks. A train approaches from a
distance.

CLAIRE
They need a mile to stop, right?

NINA
More or less.

Claire lays across on the tracks. Nina joins her.

NINA (CONT'D)
Not very comfortable, is it?

CLAIRE
That's okay. It keeps me focused.

The two stare up at the beautiful desert night sky.

NINA
Your last thoughts are very
important Claire. They're the only
things you get to take with you.

Claire considers this.

CLAIRE
Michaelangelo's David.

NINA
That's a good one. Even though he
has a small dick.

CLAIRE
Listen to you!

NINA
What else?

CLAIRE
Bach cantatas.

Nina hums the theme of one. Then she starts humming a theme from The Nutcracker Suite. Claire recognizes the tune and smiles happily.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I was a mouse in The Nutcracker Suite. Three years in a row.

NINA

(nodding)

You were adorable.

CLAIRE

I wanted to be Clara or the sugar plum fairy, but my mother told me I wasn't graceful enough. She said, be grateful you're a mouse, because then no one will notice when you make a mistake.

NINA

Ouch.

CLAIRE

The thing is, she was right. She was always right.

(shaking head)

But I refuse to take her with me.

NINA

(whispering)

We're running out of time.

Claire goes quiet. The train is getting closer.

NINA (CONT'D)

Say it Claire.

CLAIRE

I was...

Claire turns her head to watch the train approaching. She looks back at Nina with a scared expression.

NINA

You were what Claire?

CLAIRE

A...

NINA

A what Claire?

Claire watches the train approaching. When she looks back Nina's gone.

CLAIRE

A good mother.

Claire sits up, her eyes fill with tears. She gasps - trying to stifle a sob. She wipes her eyes, just as she sees Silvana running toward her.

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

Oh my God! What are you doing?

Claire gets to her feet with great difficulty.

CLAIRE

Don't worry. I was just resting.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Silvana drives through the high desert. Claire lays back in her seat - looking very guilty.

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

It's not enough I put up with your bad attitude, your insults, you sleeping with every low life man who crosses your path, your drinking and drugs, you treating me like a dog and paying me a dog's wages. Why do I worry about your soul? Why do I bother lighting candles for you? You want to kill yourself, be my guest, and Mary in heaven, Queen of the Angels, forgive me for saying that, but I'm only human.

CLAIRE

I've never heard you this angry.

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

You don't see the good in your life. You drive poor Mr. Simmons away, when all he wanted to do was help you. He lost his boy too!

CLAIRE

I'm going to let you vent in Spanish as long as you want.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 Because I can only imagine how
 frustrated you've been with me.

All of a sudden the Check Engine light starts buzzing and
 flashing.

SILVANA
 (in Spanish)
 Frustrated!? That doesn't begin to
 describe my feelings. Dear Lord, I
 should have left you months ago...

CLAIRE
 (re: warning light)
 Uh, Silvana...

SILVANA
 What?

CLAIRE
 I think there might be a problem.

SILVANA
 (sarcastically)
 Oh you do?

Just as the engine rattles and gasps to its death.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

A tired MECHANIC finishes unhitching the SUV from his tow
 truck.

Silvana and Claire stand near him.

CLAIRE
 (to Mechanic)
 How long will the repair take?

MECHANIC
 Two, three days.

CLAIRE
 Shit.

MECHANIC
 Your head gasket's blown.

CLAIRE
 (to Mechanic)
 Okay, fine, I trust you, not like I
 have any choice. Okay, just take me
 to where we can rent the car.

MECHANIC

What?

CLAIRE

I'm a platinum triple A member. I'm entitled to a free mid-size rental.

The Mechanic looks confused.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What's the problem?

MECHANIC

Everything's closed.

CLAIRE

Why? Is it a holiday?

MECHANIC

People are sleeping.

CLAIRE

Right. Sometimes I forget.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT

Bound for L.A. on I-15.

Claire and Silvana sit in the middle of the bus. Silvana is asleep.

In the back of the bus is a noisy group of Teenagers. Claire looks around and sees that they are passing around a joint.

Claire sighs -- annoyed at the noise. She sniffs and can smell the pot.

Finally Claire gets up and walks to the back. The ringleader, BECKY, 16, glares at her defiantly. She doesn't bother to hide the joint.

BECKY

Toilet's broke bitch.

CLAIRE

I don't need to use the toilet.

BECKY

Then get lost.

Her friends laugh. Claire smiles and leans in close to Becky.

CLAIRE

I used to be married to a federal prosecutor in L.A. I have no problem getting on my cell phone and asking him to send a marshal to the bus station.

Becky stops grinning. Claire points to the joint.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Is that just pot or did you morons cut it with something else?

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT

Claire sits next to Becky. Both are stoned and quiet. The rest of Becky's friends are asleep.

BECKY

I ran away from home. In case you were wondering.

CLAIRE

I wasn't.

BECKY

From Boise. Ever been there?

CLAIRE

I make it a point of pride that I've never set foot in Idaho.

BECKY

It's beautiful.

CLAIRE

If you're a white supremacist.

A moment of quiet.

BECKY

I want to be an actress.

CLAIRE

Let me give you some unsolicited feedback. You're going to end up doing porn or worse. That's what happens to girls from Idaho like you.

BECKY

Gross! I won't do porn!

CLAIRE

Right. Do any of these stars ever say in an interview, 'I ran away from Idaho when I was sixteen and ended up doing Hollywood movies'? No. That's what porn actresses say, not Scarlett Johansson.

BECKY

I hate Scarlett Johansson.

CLAIRE

You realize we're not talking about Scarlett Johansson?

BECKY

I'm not sure what the fuck we're talking about.

CLAIRE

I'm trying to help you avoid at least some of the many mistakes you seem so intent on making.

BECKY

Yawn.

Becky points at Claire's scars.

BECKY (CONT'D)

So what happened? Was it gory?

CLAIRE

You got another joint?

Becky opens her bag with a pout.

BECKY

I hope you know these weren't free.

Claire opens her purse and hands Becky a hundred dollar bill.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Thanks!

(chatty)

It's funny, you don't seem like a stoner.

CLAIRE

Just for today. It's kind of a special occasion.

BECKY

Cool.

CLAIRE
Right. Cool.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAWN

Everyone in the bus is asleep except for Claire. She watches the sun rise as the bus goes down El Tejon pass.

Silvana wakes up and panics when she sees Claire isn't next to her.

Silvana looks in the back and sees Claire -- Claire waves serenely. Silvana walks back to her and points at Becky.

SILVANA
Who is this?

CLAIRE
You know what sounds good right now? A homemade yellow cake with fudge frosting.

SILVANA
I make one later.

CLAIRE
Let's make one the minute we get home.

SILVANA
First I go my home. Later I go your home.

Silvana offers a hand to Claire. They walk back to their seats.

CLAIRE
You know, I'm ashamed to admit that I have no idea where you live.

SILVANA
Downey.

CLAIRE
It's where the Carpenters are from.

SILVANA
I do not know them.

They sit down.

Claire pulls out a small bottle of lotion from her purse. She takes some and starts rubbing Silvana's hands with it.

A moment before:

CLAIRE
 (singing quietly)
 Why do birds...suddenly appear...

SILVANA
 This is very pretty song.

CLAIRE
 Every time...you are near? Just
 like me...they long to be...close
 to you.

Claire continues to rub Silvana's hands.

EXT. LOS ANGELES BUS STATION - DAY

Silvana opens the door to a cab. Claire hands Silvana some cash.

CLAIRE
 You know I wouldn't blame you if
 you didn't ever come back to my
 house.

SILVANA
 I come. I promise.

Claire hugs Silvana.

CLAIRE
 Thank you.

Silvana gets in and the cab drives off.

When Claire looks around she sees Becky sitting outside by herself. Becky has been watching Claire -- she waves.

Claire sighs. Another cab pulls up.

CABBIE
 You need a ride?

CLAIRE
 Just a second.

Becky walks over to her.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 What are your big plans? Oh that's
 right, you're going to be a star.

BECKY

Shut up.

CLAIRE

Want to make another hundred?

BECKY

Ew, I knew you were a dyke.

CLAIRE

I don't want to fuck you, I just need you to bake me a cake.

BECKY

You're a freak.

CLAIRE

Can you follow directions in a cook book, or are you illiterate?

BECKY

Am I what?

CLAIRE

Jesus. Can you read? Do they still teach that in Idaho?

BECKY

Fuck off.

CLAIRE

Fine.

Claire gets in the cab. It starts to drive off.

BECKY

Wait!

The cab stops. Becky runs up to it and opens the door.

CLAIRE

Offer's fifty now.

BECKY

That's not fair.

CLAIRE

I'd take notes if I were you.

INT. SILVANA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Silvana comes in to find Tina making breakfast for Nuncio, engrossed in TV, and Felipe.

FELIPE

Grandma!

He runs to hug her.

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

My handsome sweet little man!

TINA

You hungry?

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

Starving. I'm going to take a bath first.

TINA

You okay?

Silvana nods.

NUNCIO

(to Silvana, in Spanish)

Did she pay you for the extra time?
It's not your fault the car broke down.

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

It all works out in the end.

NUNCIO

(in Spanish)

That's what someone says when the answer's no.

Silvana puts the money Claire gave her in the parking lot on the table. Nuncio ignores it.

TINA

Felipe, sit down and quit bugging grandma, your food's almost ready.

SILVANA

(in Spanish)

I've got a quick little gift for him.

FELIPE

Yay!

SILVANA

Come with me.

INT. SILVANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Silvana makes Felipe sit on the bed. She takes down one of the toy boxes and opens it.

FELIPE

Whoa!

SILVANA

Just one for now.

Felipe chooses a car and runs out of the room. Silvana puts the box back in the closet.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Claire and Becky are in the baking aisle. Claire pushes/leans against a shopping cart.

Claire stares at the theme birthday candles -- it's clear she's in a lot of pain.

BECKY

Why don't I use a mix? It's so much easier.

CLAIRE

No. It has to be homemade.

BECKY

(exasperated)

Fine. Do you have baking powder?

CLAIRE

Is that the stuff you put in the fridge to keep it from smelling?

BECKY

No. That's baking soda.

CLAIRE

Then I don't have any.

Claire throws some shark candles into the shopping cart. Becky throws in baking powder.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Is that it, cause I'm fading fast.

BECKY

We can go.

They make their way up to the checkout.

BECKY (CONT'D)
You are pathetic.

CLAIRE
You're only just now realizing
that? God, you really are stupid.

The CLERK starts ringing up the items.

BECKY
What about booze?

CLAIRE
I've got plenty, but can you handle
liquor? I don't want green puke all
over my carpet after you drink a
whole bottle of Midori.

BECKY
Why are you always such a fucking
cunt?

Claire smiles: admiration.

CLERK
(nervously)
Paper or plastic?

INT. CLAIRE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Becky is busy making the cake. Claire checks in on her.

CLAIRE
Can I do anything to help?

BECKY
Yeah, stay out of the fucking
kitchen.

Claire notices a house key on the counter -- Jason's.

INT. WALK IN CLOSET - DAY

Claire checks the closet and sees that all of Jason's clothes
are gone. She touches all the empty hangers and they tinkle
like a wind chime.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Claire walks into the living room.

She stops when she sees a family portrait hanging back in the blank spot: Jason, Claire, and their little boy.

There's a Post-it on the picture with the following note:

DON'T THROW AWAY!

Claire stares at the portrait for a moment. She takes the note down and crumples it up. Then she adjusts the picture to straighten it.

She dials her cell phone.

CLAIRE

Is Jason there?

(pause)

Yes, I'd love to leave him a message. Tell him thank you for the gift.

(pause)

He'll know what I'm talking about.

She hangs up.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(yelling to kitchen)

How about a glass of wine?

BECKY (O.S.)

Yeah!

CLAIRE

I'm not going to waste the good stuff on you.

BECKY (O.S.)

I don't give a shit.

EXT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - DAY

The pool shimmers in the sunlight. Claire sits in a deck chair drinking wine.

Becky comes outside with her glass of wine.

CLAIRE

You want to go for a swim?

BECKY

I don't have a suit.

CLAIRE

You can borrow one of mine.

BECKY

Cool.

Becky sits next to Claire. Claire stares at her for a moment, then reaches over to flick some hair out of her face.

Becky reacts like Claire's going to hit her, but then relaxes.

CLAIRE

I've been thinking.

BECKY

What?

CLAIRE

Does your dad or your mom's boyfriend or some creepy uncle molest you?

BECKY

No!

CLAIRE

Mom or dad beat you? Force you to perform satanic rituals?

BECKY

My folks are the most boring people in the world.

CLAIRE

Then you should go home.

BECKY

I just got here!

CLAIRE

I think you've already figured out this whole L.A. thing isn't going anywhere.

Becky takes a sip of wine, but doesn't say anything.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Stay here a couple days. We'll eat out. You can swim and we'll watch a bunch of movies. Then I'll send you home on a plane.

BECKY

But they'll kill me.

CLAIRE
They'll ground you, big deal. You
live in bumfuck Idaho, what's there
to do anyway?

Becky is quiet for a moment.

BECKY
Why do you give a shit?

CLAIRE
Because.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Claire wanders in with a half-empty bottle of wine and curls
up on her bed.

BECKY (O.S.)
(yelling)
Where's the fucking booze? Cause
I'm thirsty!

CLAIRE
Be resourceful! You need to be
resourceful!

Claire stretches out with difficulty and drifts in and out of
consciousness.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Come on, you can do it.

Claire closes her eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Claire wakes to find Silvana wiping her face with a wet
washcloth.

CLAIRE
What time is it?

SILVANA
Too many hours.

CLAIRE
Is the girl still here?

SILVANA

No. She stole. She take your
purse, your jewelry, your alcohol,
your pills...

Silvana helps Claire get out of bed. Claire checks behind the
fern. The bottle of methadone is gone.

CLAIRE

How did she find the methadone? I
completely underestimated her.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Claire sees a frosted cake wrapped in plastic.

SILVANA

I call the police.

CLAIRE

No.

She lifts up the plastic and tastes the frosting.

SILVANA

She does wrong when you are sick!
This is bad girl!

CLAIRE

Homemade fudge frosting. Taste it.

Silvana reluctantly takes a taste. She nods.

SILVANA

This thief can cook.

CLAIRE

Right?

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Roy opens the front door. He doesn't seem surprised to find
Claire standing there holding the cake and a large bag.

CLAIRE

Hey.

ROY

Hey.

CLAIRE

Where's Casey?

ROY
Playing at a neighbor's.

CLAIRE
Good. Can I come in?

INT. NINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Roy watches Claire clean off the dining room table.

Claire sets the cake on the dining room table and takes off the plastic wrap.

She takes out shark birthday candles from the bag and carefully places them on the cake.

She takes out a pack of matches and sets them next to the cake.

She takes out a shark kite from the bag and puts it in on the table next to the cake.

Claire finishes and turns to Roy, who's been watching her. She makes a motion with her hands - ta da.

She stands there for a moment, intensely vulnerable.

Roy smiles at her.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Silvana drives. Claire lays back in the passenger seat with a satisfied expression.

EXT. NINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Roy watches the rental car make a left at the end of the street.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The rental car is parked near Claire's son's headstone.

Silvana uses a step ladder to attach some chimes to the branch of a nearby tree. Claire watches.

CLAIRE
I think they should go higher.

SILVANA

If you no like, you put them up.

CLAIRE

Look at you. I like you with a pair of balls.

SILVANA

Do not say this!

Silvana gets down and puts the ladder back in the car.

CLAIRE

I suppose you'll want a raise too.

Silvana looks surprised.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I understood your little tirade. It's okay. You were mostly right. Although I don't think I paid you like a dog - that's a little drama queeny.

Claire and Silvana stop in front of Claire's son's headstone.

They listen as a breeze moves the chimes. Silvana pulls out a handkerchief to dab her eyes.

Claire takes Silvana's hand in hers.

INT. CAR - DAY

Claire gets in the passenger side and lays down. She puts on her seat belt.

Silvana gets in the driver's side and puts on her seat belt.

Claire stares up at the beautiful blue sky, at the clouds, at the dappled sunlight coming through the bright green trees.

She looks up at the ceiling of the car, then over at Silvana.

Silvana gets the keys out of her purse and puts them in the ignition. Claire puts her hand on the tilt lever.

CLAIRE

Wait.

Silvana notices Claire's hand and thinks Claire's lost something.

SILVANA

What...?

But she realizes Claire's hand is on the tilt lever.

Silvana waits, not looking at Claire, almost like she's dealing with a bird she doesn't want to scare off.

Claire takes a deep breath, concentrating intensely.

She nods her head, as if she's about to do it.

But Claire can't do it after all. She moves her hand into her lap.

Silvana smiles to herself, disappointed, but glad Claire at least tried.

Silvana turns the key in the ignition. The car starts.

Claire's hand suddenly reaches back to the tilt lever.

And pulls it.

Claire's face rushes up into frame.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END