

LoveBirds

Janelle McNeil

EXT. VALERIE AND DANIEL'S HOME- NIGHT

There is a big house, at least two floors. It is a bit run down, white with a gray rooftop. It sits alone on the street.

INT. JAMIE'S DORM- NIGHT

The room is very dull and filled with books.

MELANIE, 20, Black, dealing with numerous self battles yet still strong, is arguing with her girlfriend, JAMIE, 20s, Black, madly in love which causes her pain.

We do not hear the two but it is obvious they are angry.

INT. VALERIE AND DANIEL'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

The house has a lot of brown furniture and is filled with family photos.

VALERIE, 80s, Black, smiles on the outside but clearly shows some sort of pain, is in bed asleep.

INT. VALERIE AND DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Downstairs, Valerie's husband, DANIEL, 80s, Black, kind and loving, is watching T.V. We do not hear anything in this scene.

INTERCUT SCENES

Melanie and Jamie are still arguing. Jamie starts crying and pulls Melanie closer to her. Melanie is trying to resist the urge but can't. She turns around towards her.

Outside of Valerie and Daniel's home, flames start to rise from the bottom.

Melanie and Jamie are holding each other's faces pressed against one another. They are both crying.

Daniel rushes upstairs, as fast as he can, which unfortunately is not that fast. He tries to wake Valerie.

Melanie and Jamie are kissing. Jamie begins to undress Melanie and she allows her- helps her actually.

Daniel and Valerie are trying to get down the stairs. The fire is getting worse- bigger. The two are trying to get downstairs as fast as possible.

Melanie and Jamie have made their way to the bed.

Valerie trips and falls down the stairs.

Melanie pushes Jamie off of her. Distressed and confused.

Daniel is trying to help Valerie up. When he looks up he notices the roof caving in. He gets on top of Valerie. The roof falls on him.

Melanie walks out and slams the door.

END INTERCUT.

INT. MELANIE'S DORM- THE NEXT DAY

Melanie is laying down on her bed looking at the ceiling-clear pain in her eyes.

Melanie's phone RINGS. She looks at it and sits up. She answers.

MELANIE

Hello?

INT. HOSPITAL- AFTERNOON

Melanie comes rushing into the hospital. She passes many PEOPLE until she is met by her mother, MARY, 50s, Black, has a loving heart but a bad way of showing it, who embraces her.

MELANIE

(hysterical)

What happened? What happened?

The two walk away together.

INT. VALERIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM- LATER

Melanie and Mary are sitting across from one another.

They are sitting next to Valerie, who is asleep on a hospital bed with different tubes and wires attached to her.

MARY

He saved her...

They both look at Valerie.

MELANIE

How do you think she'll take it?

MARY

(snotty)

She just lost her husband, Melanie.
How else is she supposed to take
that?

Melanie turns her face, slightly irritated but knows now is
not the time to show it.

MARY (CONT'D)

But I know she'll be proud... cuz
that's what a husband does.

Melanie looks at her, annoyed. Mary stands.

MARY (CONT'D)

That's what a man does.

Mary walks out the room and Melanie SIGHS and rolls her eyes.

VALERIE

(slow, sick)

What is she getting on you about
this time?

MELANIE

Grandma?!

Excited, Melanie stands and hugs her Grandmother. Valerie
flinches some.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry- I'm sorry. Grandma!
What're you doing? Have you been up
this whole time?

VALERIE

Well, I was trying to sleep...

Melanie smiles. She takes her Grandma's hand and sits.

MELANIE

How are you feeling?

VALERIE

Ah child, these old bones been
aching long before last night.

Melanie's face switches to a more serious one.

MELANIE

Grandma... uhm- I should go get Ma-

-

VALERIE

Wait- I asked you a question.

MELANIE

(trying to smile)

It's nothing, Grandma. We're oka--

VALERIE

I've served too many days on this earth to let some child sit up here and think she could lie to me.

Melanie freezes. She is trying hard to fight her tears.

MELANIE

I... did something that Mom didn't like... b-but I fixed it and we're fine now.

Valerie sits up some and holds Melanie's hand. She looks deep into her eyes.

VALERIE

You know I never told your mother this... but I was always so glad she only had one child.

Melanie shifts around, she's confused.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Cuz when I look at you I see nothing but myself. Now how am I supposed to sit up there and lie to my other grand babies and pretend you weren't my favorite?

Melanie LAUGHS. She takes a DEEP BREATH, somewhat relieved.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I'm serious, child.

MELANIE

(slow, hurt)

Well, I'm sure after you hear what made Mom so upset you wouldn't be able to see too much of yourself.

Valerie nods her head, indicating for Melanie to talk.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

(slow, afraid)

Uhh- Mom found out that I had a girlfriend...

Valerie lets go of Melanie's hand. She turns her face around. Melanie looks terrified. She tries to fix it.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

(fast, afraid)

But I don't anymore. So you see? I fixed it. I fixed it, Grandma. I messed up but--

VALERIE

What could they find from my house?

Melanie, confused, wipes her watery eyes.

MELANIE

Uhm-- I-I don't know.

Valerie turns towards Melanie, slowly.

VALERIE

Where's your Grandfather?

Melanie looks at her, heartbroken.

INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM- LATER

Melanie is pressed against the bathroom wall, tears streaming down her face.

She looks down at her phone.

INSERT: PHONE

The phone indicates that Melanie has two missed calls from Jamie.

Melanie clears her notifications.

BACK TO SCENE

Melanie walks to the bathroom mirror and wipes her eyes with water.

She opens the door and sees Mary speaking with a DOCTOR.

The two stare at each other intensely for a beat.

Melanie walks away and Mary watches her. She keeps talking.

EXT. VALERIE AND DANIEL'S HOME- DAY

Melanie pulls up to her Grandparents home. It is completely destroyed. Melanie steps out of her car and stares at the home for a beat- she looks distraught.

MELANIE
(heartbroken)
Ahh man...

She walks past a few PEOPLE outside of the house. An INSURANCE LADY, 20s, comes up to speak to her. She seems nervous- like she's never done this before. She reads through a stack of papers as she talks.

INSURANCE LADY
M-Mary?

MELANIE
Nah, Melanie. I'm her daughter.

INSURANCE LADY
Right, right. I'm so sorry for your loss. I'm with your family's insurance company--

MELANIE
Yeah- uhm... what happens now?

INSURANCE LADY
Well, a Mr. Daniel Anderson--

MELANIE
My Grandfather--

INSURANCE LADY
Yes- he owned the home and had full coverage for it. More details can be discussed with his next of kin which would be- uhm--

MELANIE
His wife.

INSURANCE LADY
Right.. right! Valerie?

The Insurance Lady smiles, Melanie doesn't.

MELANIE
Y'all said that y'all found some stuff?

INSURANCE LADY

Yes! We were able to salvage some items.

Melanie looks around the front yard. There's some brown boxes.

MELANIE

Like what?

Melanie starts walking towards it and the Insurance Lady follows.

INSURANCE LADY

Uhm- some clothes, some bedding, oh! And a beautiful safe!

She points to a dark blue medium sized safe on top of a brown box.

INSURANCE LADY (CONT'D)

I guess those fire proof things really do work, huh?

Melanie stares at her- deadpan.

MELANIE

You could keep the clothes- my Grandma wanted this though.

She picks up the safe and looks all over it, examining every inch of it, clearly confused.

INT. HOSPITAL- LATER

Valerie is in bed holding the safe and examining at it in awe. This entire conversation is slow and heavy. Melanie sits beside her, curious.

VALERIE

I haven't seen this in almost 13 years.

MELANIE

I'm glad they were able to save it...

Valerie smiles at it for a beat. Melanie waits before asking:

MELANIE (CONT'D)

You wanna tell me what it is?

VALERIE

Sit down.

Melanie sits and faces Valerie.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

You know how much I loved your Grandfather...

MELANIE

Yeah of course.

VALERIE

He was such a good man... he took care of me like nobody else did.

Melanie smiles but you can tell she is hurting.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Oh and my parents- they adored him... hell, probably even more than they did me.

Melanie slightly CHUCKLES.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I was his person... he would've done anything for me.

A beat. Valerie struggles to speak. She rubs her ring.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Even give up his own life...

Melanie takes a DEEP BREATH. This is hard to hear.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Your heart's not happy, Melanie.

Melanie's eyes water. She looks up at her Grandmother.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

And if there's one thing I can recognize... is somebody with an unhappy heart.

Melanie furrows her eyebrows. She's confused.

Valerie lifts up a piece of the blue covering on the safe and discovers a key. She uses the key to unlock the safe.

Inside are a bunch of letters. She takes them all out and looks at them, never staying on one for more than a beat. She smiles a smile so pure and genuine.

Melanie looks intrigued. She stares at the letters and at her Grandmother.

Valerie gets to a different set of letters and this time stares at them for a long beat. She drops the rest and says:

VALERIE (CONT'D)
I wrote these when I was about your
age... kept them all these years.

She looks through the batch of letters, completely engulfed.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
I've never let anybody read them...
not even the person who they're
for.

MELANIE
Grandpa?

Valerie shakes her head no. She is holding something back.

VALERIE
I'm sure your Mom's making you feel
like you're some freak of nature.

Melanie looks confused and even a little scared.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
Well, me and you? We're one in the
same...

Melanie adjusts in her seat. She looks like she can't believe what she's hearing. She is struggling to understand.

MELANIE
(struggling)
What-what're you talking about?

VALERIE
Take these...

Valerie hands the letters to Melanie and she takes them. They stare at one another for a beat. Silence.

Mary barges in. Valerie and Melanie are startled. Melanie holds the letters behind her chair.

MARY
Melanie! There you are... what'd
you get from the house?

Melanie looks at Valerie... there is an unspeakable tension.

MELANIE

It was just some old clothes,
Mom... I didn't take anything.

Mary looks disappointed. She looks at Valerie.

MARY

Mom, when you're ready we have to
start planning for it...

Valerie looks away. She is having a hard time with this.

Melanie and Mary look at one another. Melanie breaks the
stare first and Mary walks out with her head down.

Melanie looks back down at the letters and SIGHS.

INT. MELANIE'S CAR- NIGHT

Melanie sits in her car with the letters. She keeps looking
at them, starts opening, and then stops.

She takes out her phone.

INSERT: PHONE

Melanie opens her messages and we see the top one is a
message from Jamie.

JAMIE: "Hey..."

Melanie starts typing.

"Hey..."

She erases it and presses the power button turning her phone
completely black.

BACK TO SCENE.

Melanie opens the letter and takes a DEEP BREATH.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. VALERIE'S ROOM- NIGHT (1950'S)

The room is filled with posters of different singers from the
1950's. There are a lot of records around the room as well.

A young VALERIE, 20s, is standing in front of her mirror
wearing a long brown coat.

She grabs a small purse and leaves.

INT. KITCHEN- CONTINUOUS

Valerie enters and sees her parents, PHIL and DIANNA, 50s, Black, loving but strict, in the kitchen. Dianna is cooking and Phil is reading the paper.

PHIL
Headed out?

VALERIE
Yes, sir.

DIANNA
What're you girls doing again?

VALERIE
I told you, Mom, for the millionth time. We have a lot of studying to do for a big test tomorrow.

DIANNA
Mm, well I don't know why you always have to wait last minute to study.

Valerie takes a piece of what her mom is cooking out of the pot and eats it. Her mom shoos her away.

VALERIE
I learn better that way, Mama.

She kisses her Mom on the cheek and gives her Dad a hug.

DIANNA
Be home--

DIANNA (CONT'D) PHIL
By 10. By 11.

The two stare at one another. Everyone is confused.

VALERIE
10:30? This way you both win.

She smiles and walks out.

EXT. DANCE CLUB- NIGHT (1950'S)

Valerie is standing outside a dance club with her two friends DEMI, 20, Black, weak but wishes she wasn't and NAYA, 20, Black, backstabber but hides it well. There is a long line of PEOPLE in back of them.

NAYA
What'd you tell your parents?

DEMI
Bible study.

VALERIE
Ahh, that's a good one. I used a big test.

NAYA
Y'all both better than me. I said slumber party.

The three LAUGH. A SECURITY GUARD walks outside. He's big.

NAYA (CONT'D)
Ready?

SECURITY GUARD
You girls over 21?

Flirtatiously, Naya and Demi look at him- even attempting to reveal some cleavage.

NAYA
Don't we look over 21?

The Security Guard smiles and lets them in. He stops Valerie.

DEMI
Oh- no no. She's our friend.

SECURITY GUARD
Is your friend over 21?

VALERIE
(unconvincing)
Yeah...

He looks over at Demi and Naya. They gesture for her to reveal herself.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
(through her teeth)
No... no!

SECURITY GUARD
Well then I need to see I.D.

Valerie shrugs and closes her coat.

VALERIE
Whatever.

She starts to walk away. Naya yells for Valerie.

NAYA
H-hey hey.
(to guard)
C'mon... you don't have to be so
mean.

She rubs his chest from behind and whispers something in his ear. Valerie looks away, uncomfortably.

SECURITY GUARD
You got a real convincing friend.

He lets Valerie in. She fake smiles and rolls her eyes at him.

INT. DANCE CLUB- CONTINUOUS

The club is BLASTING JAZZ. It's dark and filled with PEOPLE.

DEMI
Girl, I know you're with Daniel but
damn! A little flirting won't hurt.

Valerie fidgets.

VALERIE
The guard was a pig, Demi.
(laughing)
And actually flirting would hurt
him.

Demi and Naya start LAUGHING.

NAYA
(fake jokingly)
As fine as he is- you think he'd be
more secure in ya relationship.

Valerie barely smiles- confused by that statement. Demi and Naya start dancing. Valerie is a lot less comfortable dancing.

The three walk over and sit down.

DEMI

What is up with the guys here? I mean I'm over here looking fine as ever and ain't nobody snatched me up yet?

VALERIE

We *just* got here.

NAYA

Yeah and we made it to our seats-- that means they're slacking!

Valerie looks around uncomfortable. A RANDOM GUY comes over to their table. He places his drink on the table.

RANDOM GUY

What's going on, ladies?

Demi and Naya are flattered. Valerie just looks away.

RANDOM GUY (CONT'D)

(to Valerie)

Dance?

VALERIE

(startled)

O-oh me?

He nods and extends his hand.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(uncomfortable)

Oh- uhm- I'm okay but w-why don't you ask one of my friends instead? They're much better dancers than me.

He smiles and looks across the club. He waves his hand gesturing to "come here". Two GUYS come over.

RANDOM GUY

These lovely ladies would like to dance.

Each of the guys extend their hands. Demi and Naya, flattered, take them and leave. Valerie looks pissed.

RANDOM GUY (CONT'D)

Looks like everyone's got a dance partner but me.

VALERIE

Yeah? Well, I didn't tell you to tell your friends to ask, I told you to.

RANDOM GUY

(chuckling)

Yeah-- well--

VALERIE

Look- I don't wanna dance, okay?

She moves her hand and his drink spills all over her.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Dammit!

From the bar, MAE, 20s, Black, masculine, more comfortable with herself than most people her age, sees Valerie. She eyes her.

Valerie gets up and walks away, angrily.

The Random Guy looks at her angrily. He shakes his head and walks away.

Mae watches Valerie walk into the bathroom. She follows her.

INT. CLUB BATHROOM- CONTINUOUS

Valerie is cleaning herself up, irritated.

Mae walks in and sees Valerie struggling. Mae scrambles for a paper towel and once she gets it, she hands it to Valerie.

Hesitantly, Valerie accepts.

MAE

Uhh- Mae.

She extends her hand. Valerie shakes it.

VALERIE

Valerie.

The two smile at each other, somewhat awkwardly.

INT. DANCE CLUB- LATER

Valerie and Mae are sitting down at the table, talking and LAUGHING.

From the dance floor, Naya and Demi, see them. Demi looks in shock- worried even, Naya looks furious.

They walk over to the table. There is a strong tension between Naya and Mae.

VALERIE
Oh- hey! Guys- this is Mae--

NAYA
We know her.

Valerie notices the tension. She is confused.

DEMI
Can we talk to you for a second?

Valerie stands and walks with them. Hesitant and unsure.

VALERIE
What happened?

NAYA
Stay away from her, Val.

DEMI
Yeah, she's bad news.

VALERIE
Mae? S-she's so sweet.

NAYA
She's a creep that likes to touch girls--

VALERIE
W-wait what-- no wa--

NAYA
(pissed)
Look at her pants.

Slowly, Valerie looks over at Mae and sees her zipper is in the front. Mae looks straight across, sipping her drink, angry. Valerie turns back, confused and shocked.

NAYA (CONT'D)
Valerie, I know her! Okay- like two months ago me and her were talking and all of a sudden she just starts touching all over my thigh--

VALERIE
What--

Mae walks pass all of them, clearly upset. She leaves.

NAYA

You let her keep her one way ticket
to hell all to herself.

Valerie stares at the door Mae just walked out of.

DEMI

Just be glad we noticed before you
did something stupid.

Valerie looks at them. Skeptical at first but eventually gives in.

VALERIE

Yea-yeah. You're right.

She smiles and they all smile back.

NAYA

Okay, now can we dance?! I'm ready
to dance!

The three go towards the dance floor. Valerie looks at the door one more time.

EXT. STREETS- NIGHT (A FEW DAYS LATER)

It's almost pitch black outside and Valerie is walking down the street holding her books in her hand.

It's obvious she's nervous. She walks very fast.

Standing at the corner are three MEN, 20s, evil. They are talking to one another until they spot Valerie.

Nervous, Valerie stops walking towards them. She takes a deep BREATH and starts to step back some.

She starts to look around. She has some trouble breathing.

As the men get closer we see it's the same men from the dance club a few nights ago.

Valerie, still nervous, stands still as they walk toward her.

RANDOM GUY

Hey, y'all look- this that bougie
bitch from the club the other
night.

Valerie, shocked by these words, stands still, worried.

MAN 2
Want a drink?

Man 2 throws his drink on Valerie, wetting her clothes and face. She stumbles back and begins to PANT. She falls back. The men huddle around her.

Man 3 yanks her up and gets in her face. Her books have fallen. Valerie is trying to fight him off. He kisses the side of her mouth.

VALERIE
Get off of me!

Man 2 pushes her to the wall. Her back hits it hard. She SCREECHES.

From around the corner Mae and about 15 of her FRIENDS, 20s, caring and protective of one another, are walking.

ARLY, 20s, Black, masculine, loving but tough, notices and nudges the rest of them. She SUCKS her teeth.

They all start running towards Valerie.

ARLY
(to the men)
Didn't I tell you to leave our boys
alone?

The men back away from Valerie. Mae makes eye contact with her. There's tension there.

RANDOM GUY
This ain't one of your boys, you
fucking dyke!

Arly looks at Valerie. Valerie is clearly hurt.

ARLY
So you pick a girl to beat on
instead? Y'all are a fucking joke.

MAN 3
Bitch, you don't run this block the
way you think you do!

The three of them get in her face.

Arly's friends whip out pocket knives. The men step back.

ARLY
That might be true- but Ant on the
other hand--

Random Guy and Man 3 pull Man 2 back. They walk away, slowly.

Valerie gets up, hesitantly. Still looking at Mae. She is still shaken up.

Arly lends a hand to Valerie to help her up.

ARLY (CONT'D)

I ain't never see you around here before.

VALERIE

(still scared)

I was just taking a quicker way home.

ARLY

(flirtatiously)

Well, maybe you should stick with the routes you know, darling.

Arly smiles until she notices Valerie and Mae staring at one another. She steps back to face Mae.

ARLY (CONT'D)

(smirking)

Ohh-- I'm sorry I--

MAE

N-n-no...

(to Valerie)

Look you should get outta here. Do you need me to walk you home--

VALERIE

N-no I'm fine.

Mae grabs her hand and looks at her arm which is bleeding.

MAE

That looks bad.

Valerie pulls away.

VALERIE

I'm fine... thank you. All of you.

Valerie, hesitant, stares for a beat before walking away.

ARLY

So what was that about?

MAE

I told you... it's nothing.

ARLY
You sure?

MAE
She's straight.

Arly looks up at Valerie, who turns back towards them. She quickly turns away.

ARLY
(chuckling)
You sure?

Mae looks at her, embarrassed and shakes her head.

INT. VALERIE'S BATHROOM- NIGHT

Valerie is studying her arm bruise in the bathroom mirror, still in pain and horror.

She gently goes from her arm to her hand and caresses the part Mae grabbed. She smiles at it for a beat.

She is interrupted by a young DANIEL, 20, loving and sweet. Valerie's boyfriend.

At first he is smiling until he sees her bruises. His face quickly turns to worry.

DANIEL
What the hell happened?

VALERIE
Shh-shut up! Come here.

She quickly closes the door.

DANIEL
What the hell happened to you?

VALERIE
Please shut up, okay? I don't want them to hear you!

Daniel looks at her concerned.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
I fell on my way home from class.

DANIEL
That is not a fall!

He starts to leave but she grabs him.

VALERIE

Okay- okay. Some guys roughhoused me--

DANIEL

What the hell? What guys?

VALERIE

N-no please! Please, calm down!
Okay? I'm fine! See?

She grabs his face and kisses him. He doesn't budge.

DANIEL

Who did this to you?

VALERIE

They wanted money... okay, t-they thought I had money and I didn't.

DANIEL

How'd you get the bruise, Valerie?

VALERIE

I told you they roughhoused me!

Daniel looks furious. He starts walking out while asking:

DANIEL

Where were they?

VALERIE

I'm not telling you that.

DANIEL

Valerie--

Valerie grabs him and makes him face her.

VALERIE

Baby, please. Okay? I missed you all day and I don't want our night ruined because of them. Please...

Valerie kisses Daniel. After a beat, he kisses back.

DANIEL

How late was your bus?

Valerie turns toward the sink and hesitantly confesses:

VALERIE

I... I walked.

DANIEL

Valerie--

VALERIE

(stuttering)

I know- I know- I know. It's just-
I-I found this shortcut one day and
I couldn't come home late again--

DANIEL

You know how much worse this
could've been?

Valerie takes this is in for a beat.

VALERIE

(sweet)

I won't do it again. Okay?

DANIEL

(sighs)

Well thank God you made it out
safe.

Valerie looks in the mirror and caters to her bruise.

VALERIE

Yeah... thank God.

EXT. VALERIE'S HOME- DAY

Daniel is waiting outside of Valerie's house. Valerie opens
the door to see him.

PHIL

Hey, son!

VALERIE

What're you doing here?

DANIEL

Day and night, beautiful.

Valerie smiles and Dianna comes outside the house and fixes
Valerie's hair.

DIANNA

I love you, sweetheart.

Valerie hugs Dianna. She walks over and hugs Daniel.

VALERIE

You don't have to walk me in the morning, too.

DANIEL

Gives me a reason to wake up on time.

She CHUCKLES. He kisses her hand. The two walk off.

EXT. STREETS A FEW BLOCKS DOWN- LATER

Valerie and Daniel are still holding hands and talking. They are content.

Valerie sees Mae, Arly, and their friends on the corner. She looks at them for a beat. Mae sees her and turns the other way. Valerie keeps walking with Daniel.

MAE

Told you.

ARLY

Oh, come on... we've had a couple boyfriends too.

Valerie turns back and Mae looks at her. For a beat they stare at one another then Valerie breaks the eye contact.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MELANIE'S CAR- NIGHT (PRESENT)

Melanie puts the letters down for a beat. She looks puzzled.

MELANIE

Holy shit.

Her PHONE RINGS. She looks at it and sees it's Mary.

INT. HOSPITAL- LATER

Melanie is talking to Mary at the hospital. They are standing in front of the desk. Mary is upset and Melanie is worked up.

MELANIE

But I don't understand how this happened!

MARY

I don't either. Apparently it's something like-- a delayed onset.

MELANIE

But she's gonna be okay?

MARY

I don't know... they don't know.

Melanie SIGHS and takes a seat. Her eyes water.

MELANIE

She was just fine, Ma.

MARY

Yeah... I know.

She grabs Mary's hand.

MELANIE

(crying)

I'm just so--

At first Mary looks at Melanie, with pain in her eyes. She hesitates before she pulls her arm away.

MARY

Melanie... I still have a funeral to plan.

Mary walks away, Melanie tries to settle her tears.

INT. MELANIE'S CAR- NIGHT

It is pouring rain outside. When Melanie gets into her car she is soaking wet.

She SLAMS the door shut and CRIES for a long beat.

She looks over to the safe sitting in the passenger's seat.

She picks up her phone and goes through it. She calls someone and we hear the DIAL TONE immediately. She looks confused.

She does this about three more times and each time the call immediately goes straight to voicemail.

MELANIE

(sucking her teeth)

Fuck.

She puts the car in drive and takes off.

INT. JAMIE'S DORM- NIGHT

We hear KNOCKING at the door. Jamie gets up to answer it. Standing there is Melanie, soaking wet.

MELANIE
You blocked me?

Jamie SIGHS and rolls her eyes.

INT. JAMIE'S DORM- LATER

Jamie is sitting down in bed going through all the letters. Melanie comes into the room wearing a towel around her.

JAMIE
Why would you stop reading?

MELANIE
I don't wanna read something I'm not meant to.

JAMIE
She gave them to you, Melanie.

MELANIE
I know.. It's just-- my Grandma?

Melanie sits down. Jamie stands up, irritated. Silence for a beat.

JAMIE
Why'd you come here?

MELANIE
Because I miss you...

Melanie reaches for Jamie's hand and Jamie quickly snatches it away.

JAMIE
No, Melanie.

MELANIE
What do you mean no?

This entire conversation is fast and tense. They are practically speaking over one another. There is so much passion, anger, and love in their voices.

JAMIE

I mean no! You don't get to just come back after throwing away everything we had--

Melanie stands and walks towards Jamie.

MELANIE

Hold on-hold on I didn't throw anything away! What the fuck was I supposed to do? It's my mother--

JAMIE

Yes, Melanie! Your mother! She's supposed to love you no matter what!

MELANIE

But she doesn't! Okay? She made it very clear that she doesn't! So once again- what the hell was I supposed to do?

JAMIE

Choose me!

MELANIE

And lose my entire family?

JAMIE

It's better than losing yourself!

MELANIE

You don't get to make that decision for me Jamie! Because you never had to choose! Your family never made you choose!

JAMIE

Yeah but if they did I'd choose you! Don't you see that's why my heart is broken?! Because if the tables were turned I'd choose you! In a heartbeat- I would choose you.

Silence. It's the first moment of silence in a while. Jamie collects herself, Melanie is frozen.

MELANIE

You don't know that...

JAMIE

I do know that! And so do you! That's why you came here.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

God, Melanie do you even see what your grandma's doing?

Melanie looks confused. Scared.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

She's trying to save you! She married your Granddad, right? Do you really think those letters are about how much she fucking loved him? She's trying to save you from making the same mistake she did!

A beat. Melanie looks lost for words and emotions.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Your Grandmother had to run from herself, she did. But she ran so you wouldn't have to, Melanie!

Another beat. Melanie is genuinely in need of help.

MELANIE

(soft, scared)

What am I supposed to do?

JAMIE

(irritated)

Read the damn letters, Melanie! She didn't give them to you for no reason! Stop running from yourself!

MELANIE

I'm trying! Don't I get any credit for that?

JAMIE

No, Melanie. You don't. You don't get any credit for doing the bare-fucking-minimum! My heart is broken!

MELANIE

So is mine, Jamie! Why do you think you're the only person who's heartbroken here? I have to deal with ruining the best thing to ever happen to me everyday! Every time some bad shit happens it breaks me that I can't call you- hold you- touch you. I fucking love you! I gotta deal with that...

A beat. Melanie is CRYING. Jamie, for the first time this in this conversation, has no emotion. She has nothing left to give.

She walks over to the bed and picks up the letters- she hands them to Melanie.

JAMIE

That's a great speech, Melanie...
when you get the balls to tell your
Mom, you let me know.

Jamie walks to the door and opens it. Melanie looks around for a beat before reluctantly walking out.

INT. MELANIE'S DORM- LATER

Melanie walks into her dorm room. It is very plain. She looks slumped. She gets undressed and throws her clothes on the floor.

She carries the safe to her bed and opens it. She looks at the letters for a beat. Hesitant. She SIGHS. She picks one up.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. VALERIE'S KITCHEN- DAY (1950'S)

Valerie walks into the kitchen with books in her hand. She's in a rush.

Phil and Dianna are downstairs eating breakfast.

DIANNA

You're late for breakfast again,
Valerie--

VALERIE

I know, Mom. I'm sorry. Look I
gotta go--

She kisses her Mom and Dad on the cheek trying to leave.

PHIL

Hey- hey-- uhh Daniel called.

Valerie looks confused. She looks out the window to the porch. There is no one there.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Said he's sick or something.

VALERIE
(disappointed)
Oh...

PHIL
Listen, sweetie- if you need I can
drive you--

VALERIE
N-n-no! No. Uhm-- I'm fine, Dad.
It's just our little routine.

PHIL
You sure?

VALERIE
Yeah, Dad. Look- I love you both
but I can't be late for class--

DIANNA
The way you're late for breakfast?

VALERIE
(sarcastic)
Haha! Yeah, exactly.

Valerie walks out. Phil and Dianna smile at one another.

EXT. STREETS- LATER

Valerie is walking down the street with her books in her
hand. She's rushing.

Mae is standing on the opposite street with her friends. She
is smoking a joint. She spots Valerie.

MAE
Ahh, fuck.

ARLY
Don't even try pussing out now!

MAE
(nervous)
Fuck--

ARLY
You said if she was alone, you'd
go!

MAE
Shit, Arly-- what am I even
supposed to say to her?

ARLY
 You could start with 'I'm lesbian,
 are you?'

Mae looks at her irritated. Arly takes the joint out of Mae's hand and pushes her towards the street. Mae is hesitant and nervous. She jogs over to catch up with Valerie.

MAE
 Hey!

Valerie looks over at her and gets nervous. She is about to speak but looks confused. She makes a disgusted face.

VALERIE
 (grossed out)
 Why do you smell like that?

Mae is lost for words.

MAE
 Ohh- uhh.

Valerie tries to walk but Mae stops her.

VALERIE
 Please just don't come close to me.

MAE
 Uh... I'm Mae.

VALERIE
 Yeah, I remember.

Awkward silence for a beat. The two look at one another and then at the street repeatedly trying to avoid eye contact.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
 Uhm... I've really got to get to
 class--

Mae interrupts her all too eager.

MAE
 I could walk you!
 (trying to calm down)
 Well, I mean- I was walking that
 way.

Mae head nods to the right.

VALERIE
 Well, that's too bad...

Valerie points straight ahead.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
Cuz my class is that way.

They smile at each other somehow both awkward and flirtatious.

MAE
(smooth)
I could be going that way.

Valerie faintly blushes and the two walk off.

EXT. STREETS, A FEW BLOCKS DOWN- LATER

Valerie and Mae are walking and talking, clearly enjoying one another's company.

VALERIE
(laughing)
No, honest to God!

MAE
A doctor? Really?

VALERIE
My whole life... that's all I've wanted.

MAE
(still shocked)
So- not a nurse?

VALERIE
(smiling)
No- not a nurse, a doctor.

MAE
Your parents must be proud.

VALERIE
Yeah, I wish!
(jokingly)
But they much rather me be in submission to a man--

Valerie and Mae's smile slowly disappears. The conversation has lost it's lightheartedness. They stop walking.

Valerie realizes what she said and it's an awkward beat. Valerie slowly starts to walk away and Mae follows her.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Uhm- I- uh--

MAE

Just ask me.

VALERIE

What?

MAE

I don't feel like us tiptoeing
around it... so just find out what
you wanna know.

A group of WOMEN, 20s, walk past them. Valerie gets nervous.
She takes Mae's arm and pulls her into an alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY- CONTINUOUS

Valerie and Mae stand in the more secluded area.

VALERIE

Is it true?

MAE

I know you didn't try and hide just
to still be too scared to say wha--

VALERIE

Are you a lesbian?

A beat. The two stare at one another. Valerie, with this
wannabe confidence and Mae, with her pride.

MAE

Yes.

Valerie's confidence breaks.

VALERIE

(genuinely concerned)

Well... a-aren't you scared?

MAE

Of what?

VALERIE

I mean- of people knowing. What
they'll say- what they'll do?

MAE

I mean, I gotta deal with that
everyday, Valerie. We all do.

A long beat. Valerie looks like she's discovered something.

VALERIE
(genuine)
Are all your friends lesbian?

MAE
No... some are bisexual or curious.
I got a lot gay friends too--

Valerie looks like she's having trouble breathing.

VALERIE
What are y'all in some sort of
queer club or something?

Mae looks offended by this.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
... I'm sorry.

MAE
We live together...
(lighthearted)
So I guess you can call it like a
queer group home...
(mocking Valerie)
or something.

Valerie CHUCKLES and takes this in. There is a long beat.

MAE (CONT'D)
Since we're asking questions...
What'd she tell you about me?

VALERIE
(trying to act dumb)
Wh--

MAE
Naya.

Valerie pauses. Mae is being more blunt than usual.

VALERIE
Uhm-- I don't- I don't--

MAE
I was honest with you...

Valerie pauses and takes a deep BREATH.

VALERIE

She said you were trouble and that
you tried to touch her--

MAE

What the hell, that's not what
happened!

VALERIE

That's all she told me...

Mae pauses and thinks for a beat.

MAE

Why are you talking to me then?

A small beat. Valerie smiles to herself.

VALERIE

Naya's been making up rumors about
people since the 4th grade... she
actually convinced our entire class
that one girl had a... tail.

Valerie smiles and the two CHUCKLE.

MAE

She led me on...

Valerie gathers up confidence and looks at Mae.

VALERIE

She's not a lesbian, Mae.

MAE

I know...

Mae looks at her, like she wants to ask her something.
Valerie quickly shuts down her expression of engagement.

VALERIE

Uhm... I shouldn't be late.

Valerie walks away and Mae, disappointed, slowly follows her.

INT. CLASSROOM- NIGHT

Valerie is in class with other STUDENTS, 20's, 30's. It is
clear that class is over as everyone is packing up.

Valerie closes her books and walks out.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF VALERIE'S SCHOOL- NIGHT

Valerie walks outside of the building and sees Mae leaning on the staircase outside. Her face immediately lights up.

VALERIE

How'd you know what time I got out of class?

MAE

(with a big smile)
I never left.

Valerie blushes hard and smiles. They walk off together.

INT. VALERIE'S KITCHEN- NIGHT

Valerie walks into her home, sitting at the table are her parents and Daniel. She looks surprised. They look worried.

VALERIE

Daniel? What are you doing here? I thought you were sick...

DANIEL

I am--

DIANNA

Valerie, do you see how late it is?

VALERIE

It's only been like two hou--

DIANNA

(stern)
Two hours too late!

Valerie stays silent. She's annoyed.

VALERIE

I'm sorry, Mom.

DIANNA

Daniel was kind enough to come rushing all the way over here and if it would've been just 5 minutes later we all would've been on our way to your school!

VALERIE

(sarcastic)
Well it's a good thing I'm here now, then.

They all stare at one another. It's awkward.

PHIL
Alright, sweetie. Well just come
sit and eat we've been waitin--

VALERIE
I'm not hungry.

Valerie walks away. Everyone looks in shock.

INT. VALERIE'S ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Valerie walks into her room and swings the door shut behind her. She looks like she's battling something. Daniel catches it open and walks in. Valerie sees him. She's on edge.

DANIEL
You okay?

VALERIE
W-what? Oh- uhm- y-yeah...

Daniel shuts the door behind them.

DANIEL
Valerie did those guys hurt you
again?

VALERIE
What- no.

DANIEL
I just-- I got really scared. I
mean I thought about telling your
parents what happene--

VALERIE
Did you tell them?

DANIEL
No! No- I didn't, it's jus--

VALERIE
Daniel, if you tell my parents that
they're never gonna let me go
anywhere alone--

DANIEL
Maybe that's not such a bad idea.

Valerie looks at him like she can't believe what he said.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I'm not tryna control you--

VALERIE
Could've fooled me.

A beat. The tension slowly starts to dissipate.

DANIEL
Valerie, it's just last time I
don't walk you, you got hurt by
some guys.

Valerie starts to walk away. Daniel follows.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
This time you come home two hours
late.

VALERIE
But I'm fine--

DANIEL
But we were terrified!

A beat. They look deeply at one another.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Valerie, I'd die if something
happened to you. And when you
didn't come home I- it's just with
everything going on. I--

Valerie looks heartbroken. She walks towards him.

VALERIE
I know... I'm sorry...

They hug one another and Valerie kisses him.

DANIEL
I love you...

Valerie gazes into his eyes. She kisses him passionately for a long beat. She begins to take her sweater off. He stops her.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Your parents...

VALERIE
It's fine.

She keeps kissing him. He pulls her away. He looks at her.
She SIGHS.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Right.

(beat)

I think I'm just gonna take the bus
tomorrow... so.

She sits on the side of the bed and stares into space,
troubled.

INT. CLASSROOM- NIGHT

Valerie is back in class. Once again, EVERYONE is packing up.

Valerie closes her books and walks out.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF VALERIE'S SCHOOL- NIGHT

Valerie walks outside of the building and sees Mae leaning on
the staircase outside, almost identical to before.

Valerie stares at her, nervous at first and then breaks into
a smile. She walks towards her and Mae greets her, proudly.

INT. VALERIE'S KITCHEN- MORNING

Valerie walks into the kitchen. Her parents are sitting at
the table eating and talking.

DIANNA

Look who's on time today.

Valerie smiles at her mom.

PHIL

You eating with us?

VALERIE

I would LOVE to but Daniel is
taking me to breakfast.

Her parents nod.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

So I'm headed out.

DIANNA

I'll walk you.

Dianna walks Valerie to the door. When she opens it they see Daniel on the porch, smiling. She kisses her mom goodbye on the cheek and leaves.

Valerie walks up to him and they awkwardly hug. The two look at one another, oddly, before they walk off.

INT. DINER- LATER

Valerie and Daniel are sitting at the diner- it's a bit awkward.

DANIEL

I'm really sorry about the other day...

(beat)

I love you more than anything in this world, Valerie.

Valerie takes a DEEP BREATH, she looks guilty.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I just wanna keep you safe- that's what I'm supposed to do, isn't it?

Valerie smiles and grabs Daniel's hand across the table. Suddenly, in walks Mae, Arly, and their group, this time about 5-6 others.

Valerie immediately notices and her heart drops. She and Mae make eye contact before Valerie breaks it.

They all sit at a table not too far from Valerie's. She and Mae are still able to make eye contact.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

VALERIE

(smiling, playing it cool)

Huh? Oh- uhh- yeah.

Valerie smiles at Daniel. A WAITER, 20s, comes over.

DANIEL

Uhh, sweetie?

Valerie doesn't break contact with Mae, she stands and says:

VALERIE

(guilty)

Uhm you know what I want babe.

(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I- uhm- I have to go to the ladies room.

Valerie walks away, as she does she gives Mae the death stare. Mae tries to get up but FRIEND 1 is in her way.

MAE

Move.

FRIEND 1

Why I gotta mov--

MAE

Move!

She moves and Mae makes her way out.

INT. BATHROOM- CONTINUOUS

It is a single stalled bathroom. Valerie is inside pacing, when Mae enters. Valerie is extremely riled up. Mae is monotone- annoyed even- by how Valerie is acting.

VALERIE

What the hell are you doing here?

MAE

Eating...

Valerie SIGHS and shakes her head.

VALERIE

Mae...

MAE

I didn't know you'd be here today..

VALERIE

I told you we need to stay away from each other, Mae. I mean- after the other day-- I can't let that happen again.

MAE

It wasn't that big a deal.

VALERIE

Of course it was!

(lower voice)

I cheated on my boyfriend and lied about it!

Mae turns around, irritated.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

That's not the type of girl I am!

MAE

Yeah and I'm not the type of girl
that kisses straight girls--

VALERIE

You sure? Cuz it seems to be a
pattern!

It's a tense beat. Mae starts to walk out but Valerie grabs her arm and stops her.

She turns around and they stare at one another.

MAE

(genuine)

What do you want, Valerie? You want
me to go? Or you want me to stay?

Valerie starts to tear up. Mae pulls her in and they are face to face.

Valerie BREATHES heavily, nervously. Mae leans in closer and they kiss for a beat. It starts off slow and calm and grows more passionate.

Valerie backs away after a beat. Mae looks disappointed.

VALERIE

I love him...

Mae looks at her, in disbelief. Valerie wipes her tears.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

And I can't see you anymore.

Valerie walks out and Mae stays inside, hurt.

INT. DINER- CONTINUOUS

Valerie walks towards her table still wiping her tears. She makes eye contact with Arly but continues walking.

She sits across from Daniel and grabs his hands again.

Mae comes out and sits down at her table. The two make eye contact but Valerie breaks it and focuses on Daniel.

ARLY

You good?

Mae still looks at Valerie for a beat before looking at Arly.

MAE

Yeah...

Mae picks up a menu and looks through it.

Valerie looks at Mae one last time before going back to Daniel.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. MELANIE'S DORM- NIGHT (PRESENT)

Melanie looks confused at the letter.

MELANIE

(to herself)

What kiss?

Melanie looks at the bottom of the letter and sees numbers.

INSERT: LETTERS

It has the number 5 on the bottom. She turns it around and we see the number 6.

She picks up a different letter and we see the number 1 on one side and the number 2 on the back.

She goes through a few different letters. The numbers we see are:

1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16.

BACK TO SCENE

Melanie keeps looking at the letters, extremely confused.

INT. MELANIE'S DORM- LATER

Melanie is on the phone.

MELANIE

Are you sure there was nothing else recovered?

(a beat of silence)

Well my family's fucking house
burned down so the least you
bastards could do is look twice!

She hangs up, angry. She looks back at the letters, confused.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 (to herself)
 Where the hell are the letters?

INT. VALERIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM- DAY

Valerie is lying in her hospital bed, unconscious. She is hooked up to several machines.

Mary is at the door with Melanie, who is very scared to walk in.

MARY
 She's been like this for the past couple of hours.

MELANIE
 Do you think I could have a minute with her?

Mary looks at Melanie, a bit concerned. She puts her hand on her shoulder, awkwardly. Melanie looks at her hand and then at Mary. There is a lot of tension there. Mary hesitantly leaves.

Slowly, Melanie sits beside Valerie and grabs her hand.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 Hey Grandma... I uhm- I bought your letters... they- they have been very interesting to say the least.

A beat. She is trying to stay strong.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 Did you know pages were missing?
 How am I supposed to know the whole story if there's stuff missing?

Another beat. She waits for an answer she doesn't get.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 I saw Jamie... I really messed up Grandma, I think she hates me.

A beat. Melanie gets emotional.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 I've been scared to read these letters... I'm only like four pages in and they're already too similar to me and my life.
 (MORE)

MELANIE (CONT'D)

And I know how it ends I mean you
married Grandpa... but why?

Another beat. She stares at her Grandma. Nothing.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Jamie says I should keep reading...
I also heard somewhere that talking
to people in comas could be good
for them.

A beat. She takes out the letters.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

So I was thinking. How about I read
your letters to you?

(pause)

And don't be shy! You can jump in
anytime...

A beat. She grabs Valerie's hand and tries to hold back
tears.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Anytime, Grandma....

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. NAYA'S HOUSE- NIGHT (1950'S)

Naya, Demi, and Valerie are all sitting in Naya's room in
pajamas. Her room is very colorful and bright. They are all
sitting around LAUGHING and doing their toe nails. They're
having a good time.

NAYA

Ok, ok, so tell me this, Valerie--
have you guys done it?

They all start LAUGHING.

DEMI

Not our sweet innocent, Val.

VALERIE

No... not yet at least...

Naya and Demi both let out disappointed REACTIONS.

NAYA

Valerie!

VALERIE
 (mockingly)
 Naya!!

NAYA
 What're you waiting for?

VALERIE
 It's not me... it's him.

DEMI
 What's he waiting for? A personal
 invitation?

NAYA
 If he is, I gotta few outfits in my
 closet that you can borrow that'll
 do the job.

They all start LAUGHING.

NAYA (CONT'D)
 And trust me if you don't wear them
 for him- I'm sure somebody else
 will.

Naya and Demi continue LAUGHING- Valerie CHUCKLES a bit more
 awkwardly.

VALERIE
 Well- you know him... he always
 wants to do everything by the book.

NAYA
 And what book would that be?

VALERIE
 The bible!

They all LAUGH.

DEMI
 Well, you need to get him some more
 interesting books!

VALERIE
 (laughing)
 Okay- you know what? Your turn!

Demi answers with a smile but is a bit more reserved.

DEMI
 I only ever let one person go down
 on me...

Valerie and Naya are both shocked.

VALERIE

What?

NAYA

This is news to me! Who is he?

DEMI

Uhh... it was a long time ago and besides- I don't kiss and tell.

Demi looks uncomfortable. Valerie notices. Naya doesn't.

NAYA

Lame! Well then I guess it's my turn! I have had a slewww of men try and get to home run with me.

She smiles at them.

NAYA (CONT'D)

But I always end those guys' fantasies after second base. After that I send them back home to their girlfriends.

She and Demi LAUGH. Valerie looks a bit uncomfortable.

VALERIE

(to herself)

Just guys?

NAYA

Excuse me?

Naya and Demi are more serious. Valerie can't believe she just said that. She has trouble explaining herself.

VALERIE

N-nothing.

NAYA

No. You said something. What did you mean by that?

VALERIE

Uhh... i-it's just-- you never really told us what happened between you and Mae...

NAYA

I told you- she grabbed my breast--

VALERIE
I thought you said it was your
thigh--

NAYA
Whatever it was, Valerie! H-have
you been talking to her?

Valerie looks away.

NAYA (CONT'D)
What the hell, Valerie? You're
supposed to be my friend!

VALERIE
I am! I-it's just I ran into her
the other day and--

NAYA
And you talked to her? After what I
told you happened--

VALERIE
But did it happen?

A beat. Naya is very angry. Valerie wants answers.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
I mean- did it happen? Or did you
lead her on--

NAYA
Why are you so concerned about her
feelings, Valerie? I mean fuck! Do
you like her?

Valerie doesn't answer for a beat. She struggles to lie.

NAYA (CONT'D)
Ohhh-
(mischievous)
Daniel is going to have a ball with
this!

VALERIE
It's not even like that, Nay--

NAYA
You're disgusting. And a freak.
(pause)
And I don't want you in my house
anymore.

Valerie stands there, heartbroken but mostly angry. Naya starts walking away.

VALERIE

You sure this is about Mae?

Naya turns and faces Valerie. Valerie has found strength.

NAYA

Excuse me?

VALERIE

You make a lot of jokes about Daniel and how cute he is--

NAYA

I'm sorry if you can't keep your man happy because you're too busy following behind some dyke-

Valerie flinches at this- she looks even more furious.

NAYA (CONT'D)

But don't take that out on me- or on Daniel for that matter.

VALERIE

And what's that supposed to mean?

NAYA

It means he deserves a girl that knows what she wants.

VALERIE

And who would that be?

Naya smirks, matter of factly.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

It's never gonna happen, Naya. No matter how hard you try- or how many of those slutty outfits you wear--

Naya slightly CHUCKLES.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Daniel- or no guy really- is ever gonna settle down with you- and you know that.

Naya gives her a sly smile, unbothered. Valerie is in her face.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I mean do you actually send them
back home- or were they on their
way there anyway?

Naya gets closer to Valerie.

NAYA

You know I would tell you to go to
hell- but I think you're doing a
pretty good job getting there
yourself.

Valerie still stands in her strength. Naya backs up some.

NAYA (CONT'D)

So I'll just settle for telling you
to get the hell out.

VALERIE

Gladly.

She grabs her stuff and walks out.

EXT. STREETS- NIGHT

Mae, Arly, and their friends are all walking down the street
LAUGHING and JOKING around. Suddenly, Mae stops.

Valerie is sitting on the steps where Mae and her friends
always are. She is CRYING.

Mae walks up to her. Valerie looks up, eyes filled with
tears.

MAE

Valerie--

VALERIE

I didn't know where else to go.

She stands up and falls into Mae's embrace.

MAE

It's okay- it's okay.

Mae and Arly look at each other, concerned.

EXT. STREETS- LATER

Valerie and Mae are walking down the street together.

MAE
I'm sorry that happened.

VALERIE
(still hurt)
It's okay... she was a shitty
friend anyway.

Mae stops walking and takes Valerie's hand.

MAE
I'm proud of you.

VALERIE
For what?

MAE
For standing up for yourself.

Valerie smiles and Mae pulls her in closer. A straight
COUPLE, 20s, come from around the corner holding hands. Mae
and Valerie let go of one another and back away.

It's a bit awkward for a beat before Mae says:

MAE (CONT'D)
I wanna take you somewhere.

They stare at one another. Valerie is hesitant.

MAE (CONT'D)
Can I take you somewhere?

VALERIE
(softly)
Okay...

INT. GROUP HOME- NIGHT

Mae and Valerie walk into the group home. It is very dim yet
filled with life. It's an old run down home for sure but it
is filled with PEOPLE who are young and lively.

Valerie and Mae walk past a room filled with about 20 BOYS,
13-15 years old, playing board games and hanging out.

VALERIE
(softly)
Your boys?

Mae lets out a small smile and guides her upstairs.

INT. MAE'S ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Mae and Valerie walk into her room. There are two beds in there and very little space. It's sloppy. Mae's roommate, TEE, 17, is there, reading.

MAE

Can we have the room for a minute?

TEE

I'm reading.

Mae looks at her, angry. Valerie is trying to hold back a laugh.

TEE (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

Guess I'm reading in the living room.

Tee leaves and Valerie lets out a small CHUCKLE. Mae shakes her head.

VALERIE

Who was that?

MAE

That's my roommate, Tee.

VALERIE

Y'all have roommates?

MAE

Yeah this place ain't big enough for all of us.

Mae puts her things down and clears her bed. She sits and gestures for Valerie to follow. Valerie sits.

VALERIE

Who's Ant?

MAE

Arly's big brother... he's like a king around here.

Valerie shakes her head in confusion.

MAE (CONT'D)

Oh- well, after Arly's parents found out she was lesbian... they kicked her out.

(MORE)

MAE (CONT'D)

But everyone knew Ant- and everyone knew not to mess with his sister... even if she was on the street.

A beat. Valerie is curious.

VALERIE

What about your parents?

A beat. Mae readjusts herself on the bed.

MAE

Uhh... when I was like seven my dad caught me kissing a girl... he beat me real bad after that.

Valerie looks heartbroken. Mae is trying to stay strong.

MAE (CONT'D)

Then when I was like 15 the two of them found this man they wanted me to marry. He had to be like 30 or something.

Valerie looks at her, shocked and afraid.

MAE (CONT'D)

Nah, it's not what you think... I got outta there before they could.

VALERIE

You ran away at 15?

Mae nods, it's still hard for her to talk about.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

How didn't they find you?

MAE

I'm originally from Philly...

Valerie takes a deep BREATH. She is in shock.

VALERIE

How the hell did you make it all the way up here?

MAE

Some buses... some trains.

Mae tries LAUGHING it off but Valerie is too heartbroken.

VALERIE

That must've been terrifying...

Mae shrugs. It doesn't hurt her anymore.

MAE

At first... until I met Arly. She took me under her wing and we've been riding together ever since. She's been more like family than anyone else...

VALERIE

Don't you miss your parents?

A beat. Valerie looks more hurt than Mae.

MAE

No.

Another beat. Valerie is thinking.

VALERIE

I don't know what I'm supposed to tell him...

MAE

Your boyfriend?

Valerie nods and hold back tears.

MAE (CONT'D)

Do you love him?

VALERIE

I thought I did...

(pause)

I thought the feelings I had for Daniel was as strong as they were ever gonna get... but then I met you. And now-

(struggling)

Now I don't know.

Valerie looks at Mae. They stare at one another for a beat. Mae leans in for a kiss and the two share a long passionate kiss. It grows stronger and stronger. They begin to unclthe one another and lay down. Mae gets on top of Valerie--

END FLASHBACK

INT. VALERIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM- NIGHT (PRESENT)

Melanie is sitting down wide-eyed with the letter folded in half. She looks shocked, horrified.

She just almost read about her Grandma having sex. She looks over at Valerie, who is still unconscious, she is mortified.

INT. MELANIE'S DORM- AFTERNOON

Melanie is laying in bed scrolling through her phone.

INSERT: PHONE

Melanie is looking at old pictures of her and Jamie. They look happy and content. Cute relationship pictures.

BACK TO SCENE

Melanie looks at the letters on her bed. She picks them up. She takes a DEEP BREATH and goes in.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. MAE'S ROOM- AFTERNOON (1950'S)

Valerie is reading a textbook and Mae is laying on her lap. Mae starts to playfully use her fingers to crawl up her thigh.

VALERIE
(laughing)
Stopppp.

MAE
How long you gonna study for?

VALERIE
Until I know it.

Mae closes the book for Valerie. She CHUCKLES.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
Did I say I knew it?

The two smile at one another. Mae sits up.

MAE
You wanna go somewhere?

VALERIE
Like where?

MAE
Anywhere you want.

Valerie thinks and smiles. Her smile slowly fades but she tries to hide it by suggesting:

VALERIE

Uhh... we can go to the park.

MAE

The park? I say I'll take you
anywhere and you choose the park?

Valerie smiles but looks somewhat uncomfortable. Mae notices.

MAE (CONT'D)

Come onnn- where'd you and
(mockingly)
Danielllll use to go?

Valerie CHUCKLES. She hesitates before answering.

VALERIE

Uhm... we use to go dancing.

An awkward beat. They both take this in. It's a sad realization. Mae, especially, looks hurt. Valerie takes her hand.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Hey- I love having picnics.

Mae smiles. Valerie looks excited. Mae kisses her hand.

MAE

Picnic it is.

Valerie looks extremely happy and so does Mae. Tee is in her bed trying to sleep when she says:

TEE

Wherever y'all go just please go
and shut up.

Valerie covers her mouth from laughing.

INT. GROUP HOME- MOMENTS LATER

Valerie and Mae come out the room LAUGHING. Arly and Demi come out of a different room. Valerie spots Demi and stares at her. Demi sees Valerie and stops- she looks like her heart sank.

VALERIE

Demi?

Demi doesn't say anything. She practically runs past her, ashamed and scared. Valerie looks pissed.

EXT. STREETS- LATER

Valerie and Mae are walking down the street.

VALERIE

What the hell was she doing there?

MAE

Arly has random girls in her room all the time--

VALERIE

Yeah- well that's not just some random girl! That's Demi! Me and Naya's best frien--

Valerie pauses and looks heartbroken. Mae looks at her.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

After all the shit she let Naya say to me-- and there she was just-- just with her.

(pause)

Why aren't you more freaked out by this?

MAE

I see it all the time-- I mean girls will sleep with other girls just for the hell of it.

VALERIE

Well what if Arly gets hurt?

MAE

She won't. She's a big girl, okay? Arly loved one girl, it didn't work out, and now she doesn't love anyone anymore. It's fine--

VALERIE

It's not fine! She let Naya call me a freak. She just sat there. All the while--

MAE

She's a freak too?

VALERIE

You know that's not what I meant.

MAE

Why are you so mad about this--

VALERIE

Because it hurt my feelings, Mae!
It hurt my feelings that my best
friends in the whole world just
stopped being my friends over this!
It hurts my feelings that I can't
be honest about whatever this is--

(pause)

It hurts my feelings that I can't
hold your hand in public! And it
hurts my feelings that we can't go
dancing!

A beat. Valerie is still CRYING. This really hurts her.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I mean am I crazy? Doesn't this
hurt your feelings? Do you even
care?!

A random FAMILY walks by- straight couple, 30s and three
kids, 7-13. They all look at Valerie and Mae very oddly. Mae
takes Valerie and pulls her out the middle of the street.

MAE

Of course I care, Valerie! But what
am I supposed to do? I can't cry
about it, Valerie that's just the
way the world is.

VALERIE

But it sucks!

MAE

It does suck! It does fucking suck
and I wish I could do all those
things! I wish I could hold your
hand in public! Okay, I- I wish I
could meet your parents and tell
them how I feel about you and how
I'm going to take care of you-- and
I wish I could take you dancing.
But I- But I can't.

A beat. Valerie turns around in pain and Mae turns her back
around to face her. Mae tears up.

MAE (CONT'D)

But I can be there for you every
step of the way.

(MORE)

MAE (CONT'D)

And I can hold your hand in private until the day I can finally hold it in public. And I can love you- I can love you more than anyone else in the world has ever loved you.

The two stare at one another. There is a love so deep in both of them. They look at each other like there is no one else in the world.

MAE (CONT'D)

God-- I really wish I could kiss you right now.

They both break into LAUGHTER. Wiping their tears.

MAE (CONT'D)

How about I just take you on that picnic?

Valerie smiles at her. She nods and smiles. The two walk off.

INT. VALERIE'S ROOM- NIGHT

Valerie is sitting in her room, fidgeting. She is clearly nervous and uneasy. We hear a KNOCK and in comes Daniel. Valerie smiles and they hug one another.

VALERIE

Thanks for coming.

DANIEL

Of course.

Valerie smiles at him and they go sit on the bed awkwardly. Daniel is holding something behind his back.

VALERIE

Daniel, I have to talk to you about something...

DANIEL

Me too... I think I should go first
(pause)
Unless you really, really want to--

VALERIE

N-no. It's fine. Go ahead.

DANIEL

Well... today is a very special day.

Valerie looks confused. Daniel reveals a bouquet of flowers and gives it to her. She hesitantly accepts.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Happy anniversary, Valerie.

Valerie looks shocked and disappointed in herself.

VALERIE
Oh my God... today- today-- five years...

Daniel smiles and Valerie looks heartbroken.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
Daniel--

DANIEL
I wanted today to be special... I know the other day I was being a jerk--

VALERIE
You're never a jerk.
(pause)
You are such a good guy. And I really do love you, Daniel but--

DANIEL
And I love you too. A-and before I say anything else I want you to know that I talked to your father and he gave me his blessing.

Daniel stands and Valerie looks at him. She looks shocked. Stunned. Frozen. She can't move even though she wants to. Daniel gets down on one knee and takes a small box out of his jacket.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Valerie, I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I fell in love with you when I was 15 years old and nothing has changed since.

Valerie stares at him in shock. Her mouth practically open while tears stream down her face. The pain is unbearable.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Valerie... will you marry me?

Daniel smiles and waits. Valerie is still frozen.

INT. MAE'S ROOM- LATER

Valerie is sitting on the bed tearing up. Mae is up pacing around.

MAE

And what did you say?

VALERIE

I just stood there- I just stood there. I didn't say anything.

MAE

Wait- where does he think you are right now?

VALERIE

I told him I needed to get out- take a walk- I just needed some time to think--

MAE

And what you come up with?

VALERIE

I'm here aren't I?

Mae stares at Valerie for a beat, she calms down.

MAE

Well, what are you gonna tell him?

Valerie doesn't respond. Mae looks at her, heartbroken.

MAE (CONT'D)

You have to think about it?

VALERIE

I can't just say no--

MAE

Why not--

VALERIE

Because! This was supposed to be my life! I met Daniel when I was 11 years old at church! We started dating at 15 because he went and got my father's permission. Okay- I was supposed to marry him! Wait until *after* our wedding to lose my virginity. And then have his babies and live happily ever after.

(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

That is what was supposed to happen! That is what my parents wanted--

MAE

What do you want?

Valerie looks at Mae with sadness in her eyes.

VALERIE

Who am I standing in front of right now?

Mae takes a deep BREATH. She pulls Valerie in and they embrace one another.

INT. CLASSROOM- NIGHT

Valerie is handing her PROFESSOR, 40s, some paperwork. She walks out the classroom.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF VALERIE'S SCHOOL- CONTINUOUS

Valerie sees Mae waiting for her and smiles. She walks towards her. Suddenly, Daniel appears on her side. She doesn't notice until he says:

DANIEL

Valerie?

Valerie freezes. She looks at Daniel, shocked. Mae sees this and waits to see what'll happen. Valerie looks absolutely stunned. Her heart just sunk to her feet. She's motionless.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You look like you seen a ghost

(pause)

Look I know I said I'd give you some time but I figured I'd walk you home today... like I used to.

Valerie doesn't move. She tries to crack a smile but can't really do so.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Can I get a hug?

Valerie barely nods. The two hug. Valerie makes eye contact with Mae through the hug. Mae looks uncomfortable. The hug breaks. Valerie looks at Daniel again.

Daniel puts his hand out. Tearing up, Valerie looks at his hand. Then him. Then at Mae. Mae has a hard time looking at them. Valerie looks at Daniel again. She slowly grabs his hand. Mae turns away, hurt, and walks away. Valerie watches her leave. After a beat, Valerie snatches her hand away. Daniel is confused.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You okay?

VALERIE

I'm sorry Daniel... I-I won't marry you. I love you but-- I won't marry you.

Valerie walks away. Daniel looks shocked, hurt, and confused.

EXT. STREETS, A FEW BLOCKS DOWN- CONTINUOUS

Mae is walking down the street, hurt and furious. Valerie comes behind her and grabs her arm.

MAE

Valerie, what are you doin--

Valerie grabs both of Mae's hands and holds them. There are PEOPLE who look at them weirdly. The two of them just stare at each other. Valerie has tears falling.

MAE (CONT'D)

Valerie... I can't take you home.

VALERIE

I don't wanna go home...

INT. MAE'S ROOM- LATER

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Mae and Valerie walk into her room. As Mae is about to close the door she meets eyes with Arly. They look at each other for a moment. It's a deep look.

- Valerie unclothes herself and gets into bed. Mae does the same. She holds Valerie. Valerie takes in this embrace.

- Valerie turns over and faces Mae. They stare into each other's eyes for a beat. They begin to kiss.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. OUTSIDE OF VALERIE'S HOME- MORNING

Valerie is walking up the street to her house. She sees Demi and Naya coming out of her home. Naya is smiling and Demi looks a bit uncomfortable. Valerie stops and stares at Demi. It's a very hard stare, she's furious.

NAYA
(fake happy)
Congratulations!

Valerie stays looking at Demi for a beat before acknowledging Naya.

VALERIE
What are you talking about?

NAYA
Your marriage proposal?

A beat. She is confused and taken aback.

VALERIE
H- how do you know about that?

NAYA
(fake caring)
Your parents told me, silly! See I just found it absolutely beautiful how Daniel still proposed. I mean the way the two of you could get through anything- even this little sexual exploring.

Naya smiles and Valerie's eyes widen- she is terrified.

NAYA (CONT'D)
Your parents didn't see it the way I did, though. And your mom seemed really upset to find out what you were actually up to when you had to "go study".

Valerie stares at her with tears in her eyes. Naya comes closer to her. The fakeness stop. She becomes resentful.

NAYA (CONT'D)
I hope hell burns so much more and is so much worse than what we learn in Sunday school.

Naya brushes past her. Demi tries to follow but Valerie grabs her arm to stop her.

VALERIE

When she says those things... she's talking to you, too.

DEMI

No, Valerie- because unlike you I'm not stupid enough to broadcast it.

Valerie looks at her. Although, tears are falling she is still powerful.

VALERIE

Or maybe you're just not strong enough.

Demi snatches her arm away and walks away. Valerie stands frozen, letting tears fall from her eyes as she stares at her home in horror.

END FLASHBACK

INT. STUDY ROOM- DAY (PRESENT)

Melanie walks inside on Mary in her study room. It is big and filled with books. Mary is reading when Melanie says:

MELANIE

That speech about trying to save me- you come up with that all by yourself?

MARY

Excuse me--

Melanie throws the letters on the table in front of Mary.

MELANIE

There's about four letters missing here, Mom-- you have them don't you?

Mary doesn't respond. The answer becomes obvious.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

My whole life you made me feel like I had some virus- some- some disease that you had never heard of--

MARY

What's your point--

MELANIE

The point is you knew! You knew
Grandma was a lesbian!

Mary SLAPS Melanie hard across the face. Silence.

MARY

Don't you ever- talk about my
Mother like that.

Melanie stares at Mary for a beat.

MARY (CONT'D)

My mother was going through some of
the worst years of her life in
those- those letters.

A beat. The tension between the two is still high.

MARY (CONT'D)

My grandparents saved her just like
I am trying to save you.

A long beat. There is so much passion in her voice.

MARY (CONT'D)

This is not some heredity condition
that passes on through generations
this is a CHOICE! A choice that you
are making to destroy our family--

Melanie is CRYING. She pushes through the tears to say:

MELANIE

I hate this part of myself. I hate
it more than you or anyone ever
could. I hate that I could never
make you happy. I hate myself Mom,
because that is what you taught me
to do--

They almost never let the other person finish speaking. They
speak over one another with more intensity each time.

MARY

I taught you to be strong and to
fight any battles you're facing
even within yourself.

MELANIE

And I have, Ma // I have.

MARY

//Then why are you still fighting
me on this--

MELANIE

Because I can't end up like
grandma!

A long beat. The two take it all in.

MARY

My mother lived a happy life--

MELANIE

She didn't love him. You know it.
You know it and that's why you've
always resented her--

MARY

My mother didn't try hard enough to
love the best damn thing to ever
happen to her!

Mary freezes. This is hard for her.

MARY (CONT'D)

My father sacrificed everyday of
his life until the day he died for
that ungrateful horrible woman!

A beat. Mary is now also CRYING.

MARY (CONT'D)

All he ever wanted was for her to
love him and she couldn't even do
that!

MELANIE

You can't help who you love, Ma! We
try- we all try but we can't.

MARY

My father was a good man. And
because of her own selfish desires-
he died. He died thinking the only
woman he ever loved didn't love
him.

Mary gets close to Melanie.

MARY (CONT'D)

It is women like you that make men
like my father suffer.

A beat. Tensions continue to rise. Mary walks away.

MARY (CONT'D)

This is a disease. It's a virus.
You are sick--

Melanie finds the courage to defend herself. She follows Mary.

MELANIE

I am not sick! I love Jamie. And I know you've always wanted to destroy this part of me but you can't. Because it's not a part of me- it's me! And if you can't love me for who I am then let me know and after the funeral you won't ever have to see me again.

A beat. Mary walks closer to her.

MARY

Don't even bother coming.

Mary brushes past her and opens the door. Without turning around, Melanie speaks.

MELANIE

I'm gonna be happy, Mom. Much happier than you ever were.

Melanie turns to face her mother's back.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

You didn't marry because you couldn't find love but I have. So keep your money or whatever the hell else you think I need from you. Because the only thing I ever needed was for you to be a mother- and you couldn't even do that.

Mary looks heartbroken but never turns around. After a beat she walks out.

Melanie stands there, hurt yet proud- stunned yet happy.

INT. JAMIE'S DORM- NIGHT

Jamie hears a KNOCK on her door. She goes to answer it and sees Melanie standing there.

MELANIE

I told her... and I lost her...

Jamie studies her, heartbroken. She pulls Melanie in and they embrace one another.

INT. JAMIE'S DORM- LATER

Jamie and Melanie are sitting in bed together.

JAMIE

So what does the last letter say?

MELANIE

I haven't read it yet.

JAMIE

Well, what are you waiting for?

MELANIE

This is probably the letter where my Grandma throws everything she had with Mae out the window and marries my Grandfather just because her parents told her to... I couldn't read that alone.

Jamie faintly smiles and grabs Melanie's hand. She nods at her. Melanie looks at her and takes a DEEP BREATH.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. MAE'S ROOM- AFTERNOON (1950'S)

Mae is sitting on her bed listening to Valerie who is heartbroken.

VALERIE

They said if I didn't stop seeing you and marry him that I wouldn't be a part of the family anymore.

A beat. Mae looks at her with despair in her eyes.

MAE

Then you should marry him...

Valerie looks at Mae in total disbelief- she's lost for words.

VALERIE

What?

MAE

What's your alternative?

VALERIE

Being with you, Mae! I- I thought that's what you wanted!

Valerie tries to grab Mae's hand but she backs away.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

What're you doing?

MAE

Look, Valerie- what we had was nice--

VALERIE

Nice?!

MAE

What did you think? We were actually gonna get married and start a family? Newsflash, Valerie- we can't!

Valerie looks at Mae. Heartbroken and shocked for a beat.

VALERIE

Why are you doing this? I don't wanna marry him, Mae. I- I wanna go with you--

MAE

Valerie I don't know if that's such a good ide--

VALERIE

Why are you saying this? Did I- did I say something? Or do something?

MAE

I just-- maybe we're not as good of a match as we thought--

VALERIE

What? Mae, we love each other--

MAE

Do we?

Valerie stares at Mae, heartbroken. She is shocked.

VALERIE
(softly)
I love you...

Mae starts to walk away from Valerie. She can't face her.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
And I know you love me too.

Mae shakes her head no and tries to stop tears from falling. Valerie turns her around so they face each other.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
Look at me! Look at me in my eyes
and tell me that you don't.

Mae and Valerie stare at each other. Mae tries hard to speak but the words won't come out. She forces them to after a beat.

MAE
I don't love you, Valerie.

Valerie backs up and holds her chest. The pain is too much to bare.

MAE (CONT'D)
I'm still leaving...

Valerie faces her. There is pain and anger in her eyes.

MAE (CONT'D)
So I hope you get your dream
wedding--

Valerie goes to slap Mae but Mae catches her hand. They stare at one another for a long beat. Valerie, heartbroken and confused. Mae, with so much to say. Mae looks like she's about to speak several times but never does.

She lets go of Valerie's hand. Valerie turns around and storms out. Mae looks like she can't breathe. She runs towards the door and when she opens it she sees Arly in her doorway.

INT. GROUP HOME HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

They stare at one another. Arly looks hurt. Mae, still with tears in her eyes, walks out. Arly tries to grab her arm and stop her but Mae pulls away and leaves.

EXT. STREETS- CONTINUOUS

Valerie walks outside, still wiping her tears. Daniel is standing out front. They stare at each other for a beat. Valerie is shocked but Daniel is prepared.

VALERIE
Do you love her?

Daniel shakes his head no.

DANIEL
Do you love *her*?

Valerie doesn't answer. She looks heartbroken again.

VALERIE
I can't marry her...

Valerie gathers herself and walks away. Mae walks out. She and Daniel stare at one another for a beat. Daniel hesitates before he walks away. Mae stays there, heartbroken.

END FLASHBACK

INT. JAMIE'S DORM- NIGHT (PRESENT)

Melanie and Jamie are in shock. Melanie looks hurt. She walks away angrily. Jamie looks at the letters.

INT. JAMIE'S DORM- MORNING- TWO DAYS LATER

Melanie is asleep. Jamie walks up to her with a mug in her hand.

JAMIE
Morning!

Melanie wakes up, barely. She has a sleepy voice.

MELANIE
Morning...

JAMIE
How are you?

MELANIE
Tired, babe. I'm sleeping.

Melanie tries to roll over but Jamie won't let her.

JAMIE
N-n-no get up, drink this.

MELANIE
(irritated)
Wassup, Jamie?

JAMIE
I found this!

She shoves her phone in her face.

INSERT: PHONE

We see a Facebook profile of a young WOMAN, 20s.

BACK TO SCENE

MELANIE
You found a girl on Facebook?

JAMIE
Look at the name!

INSERT: PHONE

The name is 'Julissa Remington'

BACK TO SCENE

Melanie shrugs. She doesn't know why she should care.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
That doesn't ring a bell to you?

Melanie shakes her head no.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
That's Mae's last name!

Melanie continues to look confused.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
This is Mae's granddaughter!

Melanie finally starts to get up and pay attention.

MELANIE
How do you know?

JAMIE
Because she told me!

MELANIE
You talked to her?

JAMIE
Yeah--

MELANIE
What did you say?

JAMIE
I said I was you.

A beat. Melanie is shocked.

MELANIE
Why would you do that?

JAMIE
Because, Melanie-- these past few days you have been miserable. I know you have questions and all those gaps-- I know you wanna know-- hell! I wanna know--

MELANIE
Do you really think she knows something?

JAMIE
I mean possibly-- and if not- we'll go to the direct source.

She shows her phone to her.

INSERT: PHONE

We see a picture of Julissa and... MAE! She's now in her 80s.

BACK TO SCENE

MELANIE
That's her?

Jamie smiles and nods. Melanie is speechless but her excitement, and nervousness, rings through.

JAMIE
And guess what else?

Melanie is still taking everything in. She is still shocked.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
You get to meet her.

Melanie is taken aback. There is less happiness there.

MELANIE

What?

JAMIE

Yeah... today!

Melanie stands and paces a bit.

MELANIE

Jamie... I-I don't know if I--

JAMIE

What do you mean you don't know?

Melanie is lost for words. She's irritated.

MELANIE

What am I gonna say to her?

JAMIE

Tell her about the letters and about your grandm--

MELANIE

What about my grandma?

JAMIE

I- I don't know-- isn't this what you wanted?

MELANIE

No- I don't know- I-I didn't want any of this I didn't even want these letters--

A beat. Jamie looks hurt by this.

JAMIE

Then what did you want? Because as I recall these letters are the reason we're even back togethe--

Melanie starts to walk away and Jamie follows her.

MELANIE

I know- I know. I just wanted my mom to accept me--

JAMIE

And what if she doesn't?

A beat. Melanie is frozen. It's like this is hitting her for the first time.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
 Melanie, I keep telling you- your
 grandma didn't give you these
 letters for no reason-- she doesn't
 want you to make the same mistakes
 that she made.

A beat. Melanie isn't just listening- she is hearing her.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
 You have to see Mae- and you have
 to find out the rest of the story.

Silence. Melanie takes a DEEP BREATH.

INT. MELANIE'S CAR- LATER

Melanie and Jamie just pulled over. Jamie is driving.

MELANIE
 This is it?

JAMIE
 I think so...

They are about to get out of the car when Jamie says:

JAMIE (CONT'D)
 Oh, Melanie... uhm there was
 something Julissa had mentioned
 that I never got around to telling
 you.

Melanie looks at her waiting to hear it.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
 Apparently Mae was a nickname...

MELANIE
 (nonchalantly)
 Okay- so what's her real name?

Jamie takes a DEEP BREATH before saying:

JAMIE
 Mary...

Melanie stares at her. Confused. Taken aback. Shocked.

After a beat they step out of the car.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CAR- CONTINUOUS

Melanie and Jamie look up to a huge white house. Old but taken care of.

Out comes JULISSA, 20s, Black, sweet and outgoing, about 7 months pregnant.

JULISSA
You Melanie?

Melanie nods as though she is uncertain- nervous.

JULISSA (CONT'D)
Come on in!

Melanie and Jamie look at each other- hesitantly.

INT. MAE'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

Melanie and Jamie follow Julissa inside. The house is very beautiful, neat, and organized.

Julissa offers them a seat at the table and the two sit. Julissa is making tea. Julissa is very outgoing and happy.

JULISSA
You know my Grandma always used to talk about this woman she loved way back when- you know before you were allowed to.

Melanie smiles at her, still a bit nervous.

JULISSA (CONT'D)
I guess I never really believed her but as soon as I heard from you- I just knew it was about her.

Melanie and Jamie look at one another. Awkwardly.

JAMIE
Do you think your Grandma would be willing to talk to us?

Melanie looks at Jamie, pissed that she asked so abrupt.

JULISSA
Why don't I just go ask her?

Julissa smiles and heads out the room. Melanie is fidgeting with her fingers. Jamie notices.

JAMIE

You okay?

MELANIE

No.

Jamie grabs her hand and holds it.

Julissa comes inside with MAE, now 80s. She walks slow and with a cane. Julissa helps her.

Melanie and Jamie, nervous, slowly stand up.

JULISSA

(smiling)

I told you, you had company.

Mae looks at them both but focuses in on Melanie.

MELANIE

(stuttering)

Hi... I- I'm Melanie. Melanie
Anderson.

Melanie extends her hand and Mae shakes it. She is nervous.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I'm Valerie's granddaughte--

Mae quickly takes her hand back. There is an awkward silence. Mae turns around and walks away. Julissa looks surprised.

JULISSA

I-I'm so sorry. She's usually not
like this. Can you just give me a
minute? I'm really sorry.

Julissa walks out and follows Mae.

JAMIE

(whispering)

Okay, what the hell was that?

MELANIE

It was a big 'Fuck you' to my
grandmother--

JAMIE

You don't really think that do yo--

MELANIE

You had me blocked after a week of
not talking- imagine 60 years...

Jamie takes this in. They both look hurt by this.

Julissa walks back inside, alone.

JULISSA

I'm so sorry- I- I don't know why she's acting like this. Maybe you guys can try coming back a different time?

Melanie looks defeated. Jamie SIGHS.

MELANIE

Thanks, anyway...

The two walk out back to the car.

INT. MELANIE'S CAR- CONTINUOUS

Melanie and Jamie get inside the car, Melanie, pissed and Jamie, sympathetic.

JAMIE

Melanie, I'm so sorr--

MELANIE

(snappy)

I don't wanna talk about it.

Silence for a beat as Melanie tries to start the car. It won't start. She tries again but to no avail. Melanie snaps.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Fuck! Fuck me, bro!

JAMIE

Melanie--

MELANIE

I didn't wanna come here, Jamie- and now I can't leave!

Melanie gets out and SLAMS the car door. Jamie flinches.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CAR- CONTINUOUS

Melanie is beyond irritated. Julissa comes to her porch.

JULISSA

Everything okay?

Melanie, irritated but trying not to show it, smiles.

MELANIE
Y-yeah! Everything's fine.

JULISSA
Are you sure? Because I can cal--

MELANIE
(more irritated)
No, I'm fine- thank you.

Jamie gets out the car.

JAMIE
She's just tryna help, babe.

MELANIE
Yeah, like I need anymore of that.

Melanie leans her head on the car, almost hopeless for a beat.

MAE (O.S.)
Is Valerie okay?

Melanie turns and look at Mae. She is standing in the doorway.

Jamie frantically takes out the letters and walks over to Mae. Melanie looks terrified. Jamie hands them to Mae.

JAMIE
She gave Melanie these.

Mae looks at the letters for a beat. She looks like she is remembering.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. MAE'S ROOM- AFTERNOON (1950'S)

Valerie is laying across Mae's bed writing. Mae is sorting through clothes for a beat before noticing Valerie. She walks over to her and sits next to her. Valerie doesn't look up.

MAE
What you writing?

Valerie looks guilty and nervous. She tries to push aside the letters but Mae grabs one.

VALERIE
Mae!

Valerie tries to grab it back but Mae manages to get away.
Valerie still tries to get it as Mae reads:

MAE

"It was so passionate. I never felt
that before. With anyone..."

(pause)

Oh my God! Is this about our first
kiss?

Valerie SIGHS, slightly embarrassed. She walks away, defeated
and annoyed. Mae is loving it.

VALERIE

Shut up.

Mae is grinning from ear to ear.

MAE

You know you sure didn't act like
that after we kissed.

Valerie looks beyond annoyed. She looks at Mae with a death
stare.

MAE (CONT'D)

You practically ran from me--

VALERIE

I didn't think I was supposed to
like it--

MAE

Kissing a girl?

VALERIE

Yeah- and cheating. Not to mention
I got home like two hours late and
my entire family was hounding me
and Daniel was there--

MAE

He was?

Valerie looks at her with a sly smile.

VALERIE

You were just supposed to walk me
home...

Mae grabs her hands and stares at them and then into
Valerie's eyes. Mae smiles at her, guilty but also proudly.

MAE

Yeah I guess I was.

The two of them smile at each other.

MAE (CONT'D)

So which one of these letters is about...

Valerie looks at her, a bit confused but also interested.

MAE (CONT'D)

You know...

Valerie realizes and smiles. She looks like she's trying to hide something and smiles away from Mae.

MAE (CONT'D)

Are you writing it?

Mae looks like she's discovered something and Valerie's eyes widen. She tries to move the letter she is writing. Mae grabs it and runs away from her LAUGHING. Valerie chases her around. Even though she is angry she can't help but LAUGH.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. OUTSIDE OF MAE'S HOUSE- SAME (PRESENT)

Mae is still staring at the letter. She looks up at Melanie in deep thought. Melanie looks back, hopeful.

INT. MAE'S HOUSE- LATER

Melanie, Jamie, and Mae are all sitting at the table talking. The letters are on the table. Julissa comes and gives everyone a cup of tea. She sits at the table.

MAE

And after that, Arly had caught a cross dressing bid.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. CLUB BATHROOM- NIGHT (1950'S)

MAE (V.O.)

She got caught in a club with her pants zipped in the front instead of the side or back.

Arly and a bunch of other WOMEN, 20s, are in the bathroom trying to turn their pants around. After a beat of struggling two MALE COPS, 30s, come inside. Arly looks defeated. She is immediately arrested.

INT. GROUP HOME- SAME

MAE (V.O.)

We always had to be extra careful--
The cops were always hounding us.

We see the same scene of Arly and Mae staring at each other in their doorways as page 60. Mae walks into her room and Arly looks heartbroken. She walks into the room.

EXT. STREETS- NIGHT

MAE (V.O.)

What I didn't know was that those
same guys who tried to hurt
Valerie, had hurt Arly a few weeks
after that.

The men from the club and about FIVE OTHER MEN are walking behind Arly. They push her into a wall and she tries to fight back. She is unable to as they overpower her.

INT. ARLY'S ROOM- SAME

Arly is standing in the mirror. She slowly lifts her oversized shirt and places her hand on her pregnant stomach. She stares, heartbroken and defeated.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MAE'S HOUSE- AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

Melanie, Jamie, Mae, and Julissa all sit around the table in silence. Mae looks hurt.

MAE

She refused to give birth in a
hospital... and she died right
after the baby came.

Everyone looks heartbroken by this. Julissa also looks very uncomfortable.

MAE (CONT'D)

We all knew how bad the foster care systems were... and I promised her I would take care of her baby as best as I could.

Melanie and Jamie look at Julissa. Julissa smiles at them, just faintly. She realizes that they put the pieces together.

MELANIE

I'm so sorry...

JAMIE

D-did Valerie know about this?

Mae shakes her head no.

MAE

That was our last conversation...

She points to the letters.

MELANIE

Were you two supposed to go somewhere?

Mae smiles, faintly. She takes a DEEP BREATH.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. STREETS- AFTERNOON (1950'S)

Mae and Valerie are walking down the street. They are smiling and joking around. Suddenly, Valerie stops walking.

Across the street are Daniel and Naya making out with each other.

Valerie stares at them in shock and disbelief. She is hurt and confused. Mae looks at her.

MAE

(concerned)

Valerie...

Valerie doesn't move. Daniel and Naya stop kissing and they notice Valerie. Naya smiles at her, deviously. Daniel looks like his heart has just sunk. He pushes Naya away and rushes towards Valerie.

Valerie turns around and walks away. Mae follows and Daniel continues rushing after her.

DANIEL

Valerie-

He turns her around.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I'm so sorr--

VALERIE

I'm not mad at you, Daniel. I have
no right to be.

Daniel takes a step back and looks at Mae and Valerie.

DANIEL

So it's true?

Mae looks uncomfortable. Daniel and Mae look at one another
for a beat. Valerie SIGHS. Naya comes behind him.

NAYA

She doesn't love you, Daniel.

VALERIE

Oh, and you do?

NAYA

Aren't you supposed to be happy? I
mean why do you care who he's wit--

VALERIE

Because I know he can do a whole
lot better than you.

NAYA

With who? A queer?

Valerie gets extremely furious and walks close to her.

VALERIE

How fucking pathetic could you be,
Naya?!

Both Mae and Daniel try and stop Valerie. Mae and Daniel look
at one another- awkward, guilty, and angry.

Valerie stares at Naya with anger in her eyes. Daniel,
confused and heartbroken, walks past all of them. Valerie
watches him leave.

Naya and Mae share eye contact. Naya, overpowered. Mae,
angry. Naya walks off. Valerie and Mae look at one another,
awkwardly.

INT. MAE'S ROOM- LATER

Mae and Valerie are sitting on her bed talking.

MAE
Are you okay?

VALERIE
I'm fine... how can I be mad at
him?

There is an awkward beat. Mae looks like she's struggling to tell her something. She finally does- hesitantly.

MAE
We're thinking about getting outta
here... all of us.

Valerie listens, confused.

VALERIE
What, like getting separate places?

Mae is still struggling to speak.

MAE
It's not safe here for us,
Valerie...

Valerie sits up a bit. She is worried.

VALERIE
Okay... s-so where would you go--

MAE
Arly has some family in Jersey...

A beat. Mae still looks nervous and Valerie is taking everything in. She doesn't speak for a beat.

MAE (CONT'D)
I could never ask you to leave--

VALERIE
I want to.
(pause)
I want to, Mae.

The two stare at each other for a beat. Mae is surprised.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
I wanna be with you. No matter
where we are.

Mae starts to smile but tries to hold it back.

MAE

What about school?

VALERIE

The year's almost over... and I'm sure I can find a great school over there.

Mae looks at Valerie, passion in her eyes.

MAE

You know I'll always protect you...

Valerie nods and Mae pulls her in close. They hug for a beat before they kiss.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MAE'S HOUSE- AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

Mae stares at the floor, heartbroken. Melanie looks confused.

MELANIE

(shaking her head)

I don't get it... you two had plans. The last conversation you had... w-what happened?

MAE

Your grandfather.

Melanie and Jamie look at Mae. Confused. Shocked. In disbelief.

MELANIE

B-but we read it- you left her not the other way around.

MAE

And that was the hardest thing I've ever had to do.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. GROUP HOME- NIGHT (1950'S)

Mae, Arly, and a few others are all sitting around CHATTING. Suddenly, Daniel walks inside. Arly stands first.

ARLY
 (protective)
 You need something?

Mae stands and looks at Daniel like he's crazy.

DANIEL
 Mae?

Arly steps forward but Mae stops her.

MAE
 I'm cool.

Daniel and Mae stare at each other. She's confused. He's determined.

INT. MAE'S ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Mae and Daniel walk inside her room. She looks at him, waiting for answers.

MAE
 (annoyed)
 Wassup?

DANIEL
 I know all about you and Valerie.

Mae looks like she's waiting for a reason to care.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
 (distracted)
 What did you do to her?

MAE
 Excuse me?

DANIEL
 She wasn't... like this... before you.

MAE
 You sure? Or did you just not know her?

DANIEL
 I love her--

MAE
 So do I!

A beat. The two look at each other. So different, yet the same.

DANIEL

I wanna marry her--

MAE

It didn't seem that way when you were making out with her best friend.

Daniel freezes. Mae is beyond angry. Silence for a beat.

DANIEL

You can't be with her--

MAE

Get the hell outta my face, man.

Mae walks away from Daniel. He looks furious. They are both filled with passion. They never let the other finish speaking.

DANIEL

I love her enough to want to see her happy!

MAE

Then you oughta know who she wants to be with it!

DANIEL

Now! But we both know you can't give her the future she wants! Or deserves!

Mae looks at him, deeply. She finds her strength.

MAE

You got a lot of nerve coming in here saying that--

DANIEL

It's true!

(pause)

I can see that you love her. And maybe she loves you too, I don't know--

MAE

She does.

(pause)

And I can give her everything you can--

DANIEL

She wants a family. Marriage.
Kids... You can't give her any of
that.

(pointing at her)
Literally!

Mae stares at him. She tries to stay strong. There is silence
for a beat. Her heart shatters more each second.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

She deserves so much better than
what you could give her.

(pause)
You know that... I know you know
that.

Mae doesn't move. Daniel walks out. Mae looks at the door but
is still frozen. Her eyes filled with both anger and sadness.

EXT. STREETS- AFTERNOON (A FEW WEEKS LATER)

Mae is walking with Arly and a few other friends. Most of
them have some sort of suitcase or bag.

Mae already looks heartbroken then suddenly stops walking.
Across the street is Valerie coming out of a store. She looks
sad and bothered. The two make eye contact.

They stare at each other passionately for a long beat. They
both look like they have so much to say but can't. Valerie's
eyes start to well with tears. Mae breathes deeply. Mae
starts to walk towards her. Valerie stares at her and starts
to smile at her.

Dianna opens the door and says:

DIANNA

Valerie! Come here, sweetie! Look--

Mae looks and sees Dianna holding up a slim fitting wedding
dress. Mae stares at Dianna and then at Valerie. Mae stops
walking. Dianna sees Mae and looks furious.

DIANNA (CONT'D)

Now, Valerie!

Valerie stares at Mae. She looks heartbroken. Her eyes are
begging Mae to save her.

DIANNA (CONT'D)

Valerie!

Mae backs away and catches up with her friends. Valerie doesn't move. She wipes her tears and turns around.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MAE'S HOUSE- NIGHT (PRESENT)

Mae is wiping her tears. Julissa rubs her back.

MAE

That was the last time I saw her.

Melanie and Jamie look heartbroken.

JULISSA

Maybe that's enough for one night.

Julissa helps Mae up. They walk away but Mae suddenly turns.

MAE

Melanie... I'm sorry about your grandfather.

Melanie looks at Mae, surprised and hurt. She faintly smiles. Mae and Julissa leave.

Melanie looks at Jamie and her eyes well with tears.

MELANIE

That was supposed to be me...
marrying a man to make my mom
happy... that's what I was supposed
to do.

Jamie takes her hand. Melanie wipes her tears away.

JULISSA

You guys are welcomed to stay the
night...

Melanie and Jamie smile at her.

INT. GUEST ROOM- LATER

Melanie and Jamie are laying down cuddling.

JAMIE

How are you?

MELANIE

I'm alright... I mean on the one hand I can't believe my grandma had a man and a woman fighting for her in the freakin' 50's.

Jamie GIGGLES.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

But on the other I just feel bad. She had to spend the last 60 years thinking Mae didn't love her...

JAMIE

I don't think she thought that.

A beat. The two sit up and stare at one another.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Have you heard anything?

MELANIE

No... my mom still won't answer my calls. I'm just gonna call the hospital in the morning to find out.

Melanie looks worried. Jamie grabs her hand.

JAMIE

Everything's gonna be okay...

The two smile at each other and lay back down.

INT. MAE'S HOUSE- MORNING

Melanie is on the phone and Jamie and Julissa are drinking coffee.

MELANIE

Okay! Okay, thank you so much!

Melanie hangs up. Jamie stares at her, waiting.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

She's up.

Jamie looks excited.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Ima go call her.

Jamie and Melanie smile at each other. Melanie walks away.

JULISSA

You two are such a cute couple.

Jamie blushes.

JAMIE

Most people just assume we're friends.

JULISSA

My husband and I have been married for over a year now... and trust me, friends don't look at each other like that.

They smile at one another. Melanie walks back inside.

MELANIE

Hey, Grandma can you give me a second?

Melanie covers the microphone and looks at Julissa and Jamie.

JAMIE

Everything okay?

MELANIE

How absolutely crazy would it be if we got the two of them to talk?

The three of them look around and smile.

INT. MAE'S ROOM- LATER

Mae is sitting up in her bed, she looks a bit worried. Julissa and Jamie stand around her, excited.

MELANIE

Hey, Grandma I have someone here who wants to talk to you.

INT. VALERIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM- DAY

Valerie is laying in her bed on the phone. She looks confused.

INTERCUT CONVERSATION

Melanie hands Mae the phone. She takes it hesitantly.

MAE

Valerie...

Valerie looks like her heart just dropped. Her eyes widen.

VALERIE

Mae?

INT. MAE'S HOUSE- NIGHT (PRESENT)

Julissa, Melanie, and Jamie are all sitting around. We can hear Mae LAUGHING in the background.

JAMIE

I can't believe they've been talking all day.

MELANIE

Yeah I really wish we would've gave her the house phone or something.

They all CHUCKLE.

JULISSA

60 years of catching up?

JAMIE

Where do you even begin?

Melanie shakes her head. They all look content.

JULISSA

I haven't seen my grandma this happy in ages.

Melanie smiles at her.

JULISSA (CONT'D)

What if we did something for them?

Melanie and Jamie listen.

JULISSA (CONT'D)

The last time they saw each other was heartbreaking... okay and we can see that there is still so much there.

She points to the room where Mae is still smiling and talking.

MELANIE

My grandma should be leaving the hospital in a few weeks.

JAMIE

Yeah, but you can't bring Mae to your mother's house...

JULISSA

So why don't we see her before she leaves?

(pause)

Sometime next week?

Melanie looks hesitant.

JULISSA (CONT'D)

(pointing to her belly)

I mean maybe it's the hormones talking but-- I think they deserve a do-over.

Melanie looks to see how happy Mae looks on the phone. She smiles.

INT. MAE'S ROOM- A WEEK LATER

Mae is getting dressed and Julissa is helping her.

JULISSA

Are you excited?

MAE

Words can't describe how I feel.

They smile at each other.

INT. MELANIE'S DORM- MORNING

Melanie and Jamie are getting dressed as well.

JAMIE

You okay?

MELANIE

My mom is gonna kill me when she finds out.

Jamie walks towards her and holds her hands.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

But if I don't do this... then I'm just as bad as her.

Melanie takes a deep BREATH. The two smile at each other.

INT. MELANIE'S CAR- DAY

Jamie is driving and Melanie is in the passenger's seat fidgeting. Mae and Julissa are in the back. They pull into the hospital. Melanie looks nervous.

JAMIE

Why don't you go in and get everything-- with your mom...

MELANIE

You sure?

Jamie nods and smiles. Melanie looks at Julissa and Mae who also agree with Jamie. Melanie gets out of the car.

INT. HOSPITAL- CONTINUOUS

Melanie walks inside and goes to the front desk to see a RECEPTIONIST, 30s.

MELANIE

Hi, I'm here to see a Valerie Anderson.

The Receptionist begins to look through files. Suddenly, Mary comes, practically falling, outside a room. She is hysterically CRYING. Melanie notices and walks towards her.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Mom?

She walks towards her even faster.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Mom! Mom what's wrong?

Melanie grabs her mother and holds her. She is still confused until she looks inside the window of the room. There are two DOCTORS, 40s, inside. One of which just covered Valerie with a white blanket.

Melanie's eyes widen and her jaw drops. Tears fall from her eyes uncontrollably. She is frozen. She falls to the floor, still holding her mother.

INT. FUNERAL- WEEKS LATER

There are many PEOPLE dressed in black for the funeral. There is a huge photo of Valerie and Daniel hanging up. It is the photo from their wedding day.

Melanie is walking around, interacting with people. She looks sad and broken. Julissa and Mae walk inside the funeral and Melanie walks towards them.

MELANIE
(genuine)
You made it.

JULISSA
I'm so sorry, Melanie.

Melanie faintly smiles at Julissa. Mae looks heartbroken.

MELANIE
Are you okay?

MAE
I'm just glad I got to talk to her
again.

Mary walks up to them. Melanie looks at her, uncertain.

MARY
Hello.

Mary smiles at Mae and Julissa. Melanie looks uncomfortable.

MARY (CONT'D)
Were you friends of my parents?

MAE
With your mother...

MARY
Mary.

MAE (CONT'D)
Mary.

The two shake hands, both smiling. Mary finds it funny until:

MAE (CONT'D)
But everyone calls me Mae.

Mary looks at Mae in disbelief. She stands frozen and stops shaking her hand. Mae walks away and Julissa follows. Mary and Melanie look at one another.

MELANIE
Did you know?

Mary still looks in shock. She looks angry and confused.

MARY
No.

Melanie takes this in and starts to walk away.

MARY (CONT'D)

Melanie.

Melanie turns around, annoyed.

MARY (CONT'D)

How could you bring her here?

MELANIE

She loves her. That's the thing,
Mom- you can force two people away
from each other... but you can
never help who you love.

Melanie walks away and Mary stares at her for a beat. She turns around to see Jamie walk inside. The two eye one another. Jamie, uncomfortable, almost guilty. Mary, heartbroken and confused. Mary walks away from her.

Jamie takes a deep BREATH. She walks towards Melanie, Julissa, and Mae. Melanie puts her arm around Jamie.

JULISSA

(to Mae)

You okay?

Mae is staring at the wedding picture. Valerie is smiling but her eyes aren't happy. We zoom in on her eyes.

MATCH CUT TO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. MAE'S ROOM- NIGHT (1950'S)

We see Valerie's eyes and then zoom out to her standing in front of Mae, with a big smile. They are both content.

VALERIE

I wanna huge dress. Like out to
here.

She spreads her arms out wide. Mae LAUGHS.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Are you gonna wear a dress?

MAE

(laughing mockingly)
No- no I'm not.

Valerie looks at her, a bit taken aback.

MAE (CONT'D)
But I promise I'll find something.

Valerie smiles and sits down next to her.

VALERIE
Do you really think that one day
we'll be able to get married for
real?

MAE
I think so...

Valerie straddles Mae and Mae gazes at her, deeply.

VALERIE
What?

MAE
Even if it never becomes legal... I
still wanna give you that wedding
with the big dress.
(mockingly)
Out to here.

The two smile at one another. Valerie, with hope in her eyes.

VALERIE
And maybe our family's can come
too.
(beat)
I mean since we're dreaming, right?

Valerie smiles and Mae looks at her, saddened. Suddenly, Mae turns and puts Valerie on the bed. Mae gets up and PLAYS A RECORD. A slow love song. She extends her hand to Valerie.

MAE
Dance with me.

VALERIE
What?

MAE
We can dream about things becoming
legal and people accepting us but
some things we don't have to wait
for. And I-

Mae turns up the MUSIC.

MAE (CONT'D)

Want to dance with the woman I am
in love with.

Mae extends her hand again and Valerie takes it.

VALERIE

(smiling, but shocked)

Here?

MAE

Right here... our first dance.

(beat)

Promise me it won't be our last.

Valerie smiles at Mae, a deep and content smile.

VALERIE

(gentle)

I promise.

Mae pulls Valerie in and the two slow dance. We FADE OUT.

END FLASHBACK

INT. FUNERAL- DAY (PRESENT)

Mae is still staring at Valerie's photo. She is in a very
slim fitting dress. Mae smiles at the picture.

MAE

(content)

Yeah, I'm okay.

Mae smiles at the photo and takes it in. She takes it all in.

THE END.