

LALA

By

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INT. BEDROOM - MORNING (Break of dawn)

Santa Barbara, CA. Present Day

We're presented with a messy room. Clothes, stuffed animals and other miscellaneous belongings lie on the floor. Above a twin sized bed hangs a giant Marilyn Monroe poster. A stand fan in the corner facing closely towards the bed as it oscillates. There is a great feeling of humidity juxtaposing with a coolness.

AALIYAH REED (about to turn 20) biracial, lays sideways, her body is facing towards her open window. CRICKETS and MOURNING DOVES circulates from outside. Sheets already kicked away from her. She wears an olive green tank top and cheeky black underwear. Her phone lays beside her pillow charging.

ALBA REED (14), Aaliyah's younger sister, also biracial. A childish, emotional and innocent nature. Looks to Aaliyah as a maternal figure and best friend.

She enters the room in an oversized t-shirt hiding a card behind her back.

She joins Aaliyah in bed spooning her. Aaliyah rejects.

AALIYAH
(groans)
It's hot.

ALBA
(whispers)
Sorry.

Aaliyah resumes her sleep. Alba attempts to hide the card underneath her pillow.

AALIYAH
What are you doing?

ALBA
Nothing.

Aaliyah turns around giving her a tired but suspicious look. She glances over at Alba's hand.

AALIYAH
Move your hand.

Alba releases.

ALBA

You ruined the surprise.

AALIYAH

Well, you're not very good at making them.

Aaliyah opens to read the birthday card made for her. She warmly smiles.

MATCHCUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Aaliyah sits at the kitchen table reading the card. It says in cursive writing:

"Happy 20th birthday. Your teenage years are over. We love you. Love Dad and Alba"

She CHUCKLES. Alba standing behind her kisses her on the cheek.

MARCUS REED, Aaliyah and Alba's dad (late 50s), Black. He sets a birthday cake in front of Aaliyah with number candles saying "20". The cake is store bought vanilla with old fashion pink trimmings.

Alba rushes to turn off the lights.

The only thing that illuminates the setting is the candles.

MARCUS AND ALBA

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday dear Aaliyah, happy birthday to you...

ALBA

Make a wish.

Aaliyah takes a moment. She BLOWS out her candles.

SCREEN GOES BLACK

EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Alba and Aaliyah are jumping in a net trampoline playing like like children.

ALBA

Wait, lay down. Let's do that thing we

did like we when we were little.

AALIYAH

Okay, hold on.

They take a moment to stop jumping. Aaliyah stops to lay down. Alba resumes her jumping. Aaliyah's body springs into the air from how hard Alba jumps.

ALBA

Birthday jumps for the birthday girl!

The girls starts LAUGHING.

EXT. BACKYARD NET TRAMPOLINE - CONTINUOUS

The sisters are laying down on the trampoline gazing at the night sky.

ALBA

When do you think you're gonna leave?

AALIYAH

I don't know. You trying to take over my room when I do?

ALBA

(chuckles)

No, it's just... you're really up there now, don't you think?

Aaliyah drops her jaw in shock. She hits Alba on the arm.

AALIYAH

Bitch!

AALIYAH

I'm not that fucking old!

ALBA

(laughs)

No, I didn't mean it like that.

AALIYAH

I'm not that much older than you.

ALBA

I know, but you're probably gonna move out before me though.

AALIYAH

It won't happen now.

ALBA

But it will one day. I'm gonna miss you.

AALIYAH

Well, it's not happening now.

ALBA

When do you think it will?

AALIYAH

I don't know.

ALBA

Probably when you become a big star and forget all about me?

AALIYAH

I'm not gonna forget you.

ALBA

That what you say now.

AALIYAH

Hey, I'm not going to forget you. Okay?

ALBA

Better not.

Alba and Aaliyah stare up at the sky.

Momentary pause.

ALBA (CON'T)

Do you really think it'll happen for you?

AALIYAH

I hope so.

ALBA

I think it will.

Aaliyah turns to her. She warmly smiles. She cups her hand over Alba's cheek softly caressing it with her thumb.

She kisses her on the forehead.

AALIYAH
(softly whispers)
My little sister...

Aaliyah gets up from the trampoline.

AALIYAH (CON'T)
I'm going inside.

ALBA
Okay.

She exits through the back door.

MATCHCUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Aaliyah enters back inside the house through the kitchen. The cake from before sits on the counter already cut pieces taken.

Marcus stands in front of the sink washing dishes. He loads into the dishwasher next to him.

AALIYAH
Yeah. You need help with that?

MARCUS
I got it. Thanks, kiddo.

AALIYAH
Can't call me that anymore.

MARCUS
You're still a kid to me.

AALIYAH
Alba begs to differ. She said I was
"way up there."

MARCUS
Did she?

AALIYAH
Uh huh.

Beat.

AALIYAH
Did you get a call from mom today?

Marcus stops.

MARCUS
(sighs)
No.

Aaliyah nods to herself. Not surprised but discreetly hurt.

AALIYAH
'Kay.

MARCUS
Got any auditions coming up?

AALIYAH
Yeah. Tomorrow actually.

MARCUS
What for?

AALIYAH
Just a short film.

Marcus nods his head.

MARCUS
How do you feel?

AALIYAH
I think I'm alright.

MARCUS
Alright. Just be safe. Good luck,
tomorrow.

AALIYAH
Okay, I'm heading to bed.

MARCUS
Okay, goodnight. Happy birthday.

AALIYAH
Thanks, I love you.

MARCUS
I love you too.

Aaliyah heads upstairs to her room.

INT. AALIYAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aaliyah lays on her bed. On her phone scrolling through her Facebook feed she searches up:

AIRESS GRAHAM.

For clear reference, AIRESS GRAHAM - Aaliyah and Alba's mother (not present)

Aaliyah looks up her profile. Sees her most recent photo at the Grand Canyon Arizona. Smiling next to her "assumed" husband. Two smaller children standing in front, smile looking off guard.

Aaliyah quickly exits out her phone facing it down. She lies her head on her pillow staring out the window. Hurt but not surprised.

Alba enters leaning on the doorway.

ALBA

Hey.

Aaliyah turns around. She smiles to cover up her hurt.

AALIYAH

Hey.

ALBA

You okay?

AALIYAH

Yeah.

ALBA

Did mom call you?

Aaliyah's smiles dimmers an answer.

ALBA (CON'T)

Sorry.

AALIYAH

It's okay. Come here.

Alba walks over climbing into bed with Aaliyah. She curls up next to her.

AALIYAH (CON'T)

...Turn off that light next to you.

The two hold each other. Aaliyah kisses Alba on the forehead as Alba buries her face in chest.

INT. AUDITION ROOM - NEXT DAY

A small white rehearsal room. A piano sits in the corner. Mirrors are covered with curtains. A white fold table with papers and drinks like coffee and half empty water bottles sit.

KEITH (late 30s) casting agent/director, a subtle douchebag and a FEMALE READER sit behind the table.

Aaliyah stands in front of them holding her script.

KEITH

Hey.

AALIYAH

Hi.

KEITH

Nervous?

AALIYAH

No.

KEITH

Good. You can start with your slate and then we can read from the top of the first page.

AALIYAH

My name is Aaliyah Denise--

KEITH

We don't need your middle name. Just state your first and last name, your age, who you're reading for and your talent agency.

AALIYAH

I don't have an agency.

An awkward silence ruminates. Keith and Reader side eye each other in question.

KEITH

Alright then. You can just say your

name, age and height.

AALIYAH

Hi, my name is Aaliyah Reed. I'm 20 years old, I'll be reading for "Desiree" and I am 5'3.

KEITH

Let's begin.

Aaliyah gets into character.

AALIYAH

I needed you. I fucking needed you and you just left without any concern to ask me what the problem was. I didn't even know what the problem was after we were-

KEITH

Stop.

Pause.

KEITH (CON'T)

What do you want to convey from this character? Put yourself in Desiree's shoes and pretend you're really her. Say that first line to me, again.

Aaliyah pauses. Gains her momentum.

AALIYAH

I needed you. I fucking needed you and you just left without any concern to ask me what the problem was. I didn't even know what the problem was after we were intimate! You just left me there and I felt like I had no one else. Just you!

KEITH

Okay, thank you.

Aaliyah begin to make her way out.

KEITH (CON'T)

Wait, hold on.

Keith writes his number on a corner sheet of paper. He tears

off handing it to Aaliyah.

KEITH (CON'T)

Here, you can give me a call.

Aaliyah smiles.

She picks up her stuff sitting in the corner and exits the room.

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - SAME DAY

Aaliyah enters. Same outfit.

RICO, 25 (black/hispanic) Aaliyah's best friend and manager. Flamboyant and sarcastic. He leans behind the glass concession scrolling through his phone. He looks up noticing Aaliyah as she enters.

AALYAH

Hey.

RICO

Where were you?

AALIYAH

Sorry, I had an audition.

RICO

Okay and?

AALIYAH

Don't be a dick.

RICO

I'm not, I just said, okay and.

AALIYAH

Look, I'm sorry.

RICO

I don't want any more apologies, I want someone who's reliable.

AALIYAH

I'll let you know next time, okay?

RICO

You better.

Beat.

RICO (CON'T)
How was your audition?

AALIYAH
It was alright. Casting agents kind of
an asshole but he gave me his number.

Aaliyah shows him the piece of paper. Rico gives her a look.
"You have got be kidding me"

RICO
On a piece of paper?

AALIYAH
Yeah, I know it's comes off a little
sketchy but I feel good about this.

RICO
Just be careful.

AALIYAH
I am careful.

RICO
Uh, huh.

AALIYAH
Look, can you just trust me?

RICO
(Sighs)
I don't know. Can I?

Rico and Aaliyah chuckle at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT (SAME NIGHT)

Aaliyah sneaks into one of the theaters. An old romance movie
plays. Rico slides into the row seats next to her. He
WHISPERS in her ear mockingly.

RICO
Kiss me you fool!

AALIYAH
Shhh!

RICO
Enjoying it so far?

AALIYAH
Yeah I'm envisioning my future. I just needed something to do.

RICO
Well you got 20 minutes.

AALIYAH
You gonna watch it with me or not?

RICO
Yeah, only for a little.

AALIYAH
Okay, so shh!

Pause.

Rico starts roleplaying the female actors on the screen playfully teasing Aaliyah.

RICO
(high pitched feminine voice)
Ooooh whatever will I do without a big hunky man like yourself.

AALIYAH
(low pitched male voice)
I love you, Shirley. I loved you since the day I met you.

RICO
(continuous)
Oh, just take me into your arms you stud!

They both imitate the sounds of kissing.

AALIYAH
(in a normal tone)
...and then boom they run off into the sunset and live *happily ever after*.

RICO
(jokes)
You really thinks that's gonna be you up there.

AALIYAH
I don't think. I *know*.

INT. HOME - NIGHT

Aaliyah comes home from work. Marcus sits on the couch watching TV.

MARCUS

How was your day?

AALIYAH

It was good. How's yours?

MARCUS

It was long. How did your audition go?

AALIYAH

It actually went pretty well. The casting agent had me reread a script and he gave me his number.

MARCUS

That's great. Hey can I talk to you for a sec?

AALIYAH

Yeah sure. What's up?

MARCUS

There's a possibility I need you to help pay for Alba's tuition next fall?

AALIYAH

(confused)

What tuition?

MARCUS

I think it's in Alba's best interest she goes to a private school. I'm sending her to Richards.

AALIYAH

But they're really expensive. What do you think she's gonna get there that she won't get at a public school?

MARCUS

She's gonna be around a diverse group of well rounded people.

AALIYAH

She's gonna be around a bunch of rich cocaine sniffing white assholes. What

makes you think they're not gonna treat her differently. We don't own a Mercedes.

MARCUS
Liyah', it's *if*.

Beat.

AALIYAH
How much is it?

MARCUS
16,000 a year.

AALIYAH
Can't you get her scholarship? I mean they must have programs or something.

MARCUS
I'm doing the best I can. A lot has been going on with my job recently. They're laying off people and work hours.

AALIYAH
So you just been home?

MARCUS
I been looking for other jobs but it's been difficult. You're an adult now so it's your job to help take on these responsibilities.

AALIYAH
This doesn't make sense. I mean what about my life?

MARCUS
Don't be so selfish.

AALIYAH
How am I being selfish? Hmm?

No response.

AALIYAH (CON'T)
I wanna know.

MARCUS

Honey.

AALIYAH

How am I being selfish?

Aaliyah waits for a response.

MARCUS

I am not doing this with you, Aaliyah.

AALIYAH

I just wanna know what it is I'm doing that makes me selfish. But you're not giving me an answer.

MARCUS

Go to bed.

AALIYAH

I'm not fucking 7!

Marcus grabs the television remote shutting it off.

MARCUS

Goodnight.

He goes upstairs.

Aaliyah RUMMAGES through her bag as she looks for the piece of paper.

She find it and dials the number on her phone.

AALIYAH

Hey, it's Aaliyah. I was at the audition today.

NEXT DAY

INT. KEITH'S LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Aaliyah enters a lobby of a modern luxury condo. She wears a short floral mini dress, a green cross body bag she carries on her shoulder and a natural makeup look that is barely noticeable other than the shade of rose lipgloss.

She heads into an elevator up to his apartment.

INT. KEITH'S HALLWAY - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

She knocks on his door. He answers.

INT. KEITH'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Keith's apartment is modern contemporary style. Various style paintings are hung and a glorious view of the city overlooking the beach. Aaliyah is stunned as she enters.

AALIYAH (CON'T)

You're home is amazing.

KEITH

Thank you.

AALIYAH

I don't understand how people can afford to live like this.

Keith chuckles at her remark. Beat.

AALIYAH (CON'T)

Thank you so much for inviting me. Really.

KEITH

No need, it's really all my pleasure.

She gazes acknowledging his artwork.

AALIYAH

I like your art. It's different.

KEITH

Thank you.

She gets up and views it closer.

AALIYAH

Are any of them yours?

KEITH

No, I travel for these.

AALIYAH

Where to?

KEITH

(nonchalantly)

Everywhere.

AALIYAH

But *where*?

KEITH

London, Paris, a few parts of Germany.
They have excellent gay clubs in
Berlin.

AALIYAH

Are you a gay?

Keith lightly shakes his head.

KEITH

(chuckles)

No. Just friends.

Momentary pause. Aaliyah observes his art more.

AALIYAH

What other places have you been to?

KEITH

West Africa.

AALIYAH

(intrigued)

Really? What part did you go to?

KEITH

Benin. Beautiful place. I did a
project there with some good friends
from college. Are you in school?

AALIYAH

Kind of. It's complicated.

KEITH

How so?

AALIYAH

I took a year off so I just been
focusing on work and auditions and
stuff.

KEITH

How old are you?

AALIYAH

I just turned 20.

KEITH
Happy Belated. Would you like a drink?

AALIYAH
Sure.

KEITH
You got one year left. It'll be our
secret.

Aaliyah chuckles.

AALIYAH
(flirtatiously)
Do you invite all your actors over to
your place, Mr. Walter?

KEITH
Just the special ones.

Keith grabs two wine glasses from his kitchen cabinet. His
finger peruses a wine rack mounted to his wall.

KEITH (CON'T)
Have any preferences?

AALIYAH
No.

KEITH
Let's go with... Aha! This one.

He grabs a bottle of white wine and pours it into the two
glasses. He hands one over to her.

AALIYAH
Thank you.

KEITH
Cheers!

The two CLINK their wine glasses together and take a sip.

Beat.

AALIYAH
So when are we gonna talk about my
role?

KEITH
Well, aren't you very forward.

AALIYAH

I just happen to know what I want.

KEITH

You have a lot of great potential.

AALIYAH

Thank you.

Beat.

KEITH

Does anything scare you?

AALIYAH

What does that have to do with anything?

KEITH

Well, we all have fears going into this type of industry.

AALIYAH

Yeah, but I'm not gonna just tell my fears to someone I barely know.

KEITH

Well you did choose to come here, that's taking a risk. I'll tell you mine.

AALIYAH

I don't care.

KEITH

It's the water. When I was 8 my dad wanted me to learn how to swim so he decided to throw me into a lake one summer when I came to visit family.

AALIYAH

He probably did that with the intention to drown you.

KEITH

Yeah, well I'm still here.

AALIYAH

Are you still afraid of the water?

KEITH
I'm not fond of it. Now you go.

AALIYAH
I already said I'm not telling you.

Pause. Keith looks at her for a moment.

KEITH
Okay. I won't push it.

Keith goes over with his glass to take a seat on the couch.
He takes a sip.

KEITH (CON'T)
I'm just saying this business is
cutthroat.

AALIYAH
Okay, I can handle that.

Silence.

KEITH
I'd like for you to come to this event
with me this weekend.

AALIYAH
For what?

KEITH
To network and looks definitely help.

AALIYAH
What are you saying?

KEITH
I'm saying your life is a lot easier
having it...you have it.

Aaliyah twirls her finger on the rim of the glass in
contemplation. She gives him a look of uncertainty of wether
or not she should take his offer.

INT. AALIYAH'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Aaliyah comes home. Her dad is sitting on the couch watching
a game on television.

MARCUS
Where were you?

Aaliyah puts down her bag taking off her shoes.

MARCUS (CON'T)

I didn't see you leave today. Where'd you go?

AALIYAH

I had a meeting with that casting agent I told you about.

MARCUS

Where'd you meet him?

AALIYAH

His home, dad.

MARCUS

Wait, you went to his house? Alone.

AALIYAH

Yeah.

Pause.

AALIYAH

Dad, nothing happened I'm here in one piece. I'm fine.

MARCUS

I would appreciate it if you told me where you were going instead of just running off.

AALIYAH

Okay, I'm sorry.

Alba is about to grab her stuff heading upstairs. Marcus stops her.

MARCUS

We still need to talk more about paying Alba's tuition.

Alba willingly puts her stuff back down.

AALIYAH

Fine. What's there to talk about?

Pause.

AALIYAH (CON'T)
Why can't you just get financial aid?

MARCUS
We're not eligible for it.

AALIYAH
So you what do you want me to do?

MARCUS
I'm gonna need you to go through your savings.

AALIYAH
(scoffs)
I'll be damned if you're serious about me going through my fucking savings.

MARCUS
I am serious.

AALIYAH
Why do I need to go though my fucking savings?

MARCUS
I can't pay for this all on my own.

AALIYAH
So don't pay for it! You're making this a bigger deal than it has to be. She'll be fine going to a public school.

MARCUS
I never said she wouldn't be.

AALIYAH
So then why are you sending her? Has this even been made official.

MARCUS
She'll have a higher chance at getting into a good college for the future.

AALIYAH
Did you even ask her how she feels about this? Knowing that she's not gonna be with her other friends?

No response.

AALIYAH
Of course you didn't.

Beat.

MARCUS
We're gonna tell her soon.

AALIYAH
No you're gonna tell her.

MARCUS
You need to be an adult here.

AALIYAH
I thought I was still a kid to you.

Beat.

AALIYAH
What about my future?

MARCUS
You have plenty of time to think about
your future.

AALIYAH
Not really. I never did. It was always
about Alba since you and your wife
split.

MARCUS
Don't bring your mom into this.

AALIYAH
She's not our fucking mom! She never
was. She doesn't even *call* us! I have
to sit here and worry about how our
family can survive being her
replacement, it's exhausting and I
feel like I have never had any time
for myself. It's always about Alba
it's was never focused about me or
what I want.

MARCUS
Well, maybe when you become rich and
famous you won't have to think about
us anymore.

AALIYAH

Fuck you!

INT. AALIYAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aaliyah enters her bedroom. She sees Alba sleeping in her bed.

She sets her stuff down and takes off her stuff quietly. She changes into her pajamas.

Alba tosses her body. She awakes. She's groggy and half awake.

ALBA

Leah'?

AALIYAH

Hey, go back to sleep.

ALBA

Do you ever think about what it would be like if I didn't exist?

AALIYAH

No, never. Why?

ALBA

I heard you guys talking, kind of.

AALIYAH

Just because I'm stressed out doesn't mean I don't love you or care for you.

Beat.

AALIYAH (CON'T)

Do you think maybe you might wanna switch schools?

ALBA

And go where?

AALIYAH

Dad wants to send you to a private school.

ALBA

...and wear those ugly ass uniforms?

AALIYAH

I can see that teen angst finally
starting to kick in.

Aaliyah tries to convince her as well as herself. For she did
not like the idea either.

AALIYAH

It might be fun. Nicer facilities,
better education...

ALBA

I don't care. I don't want you to
waste all your money because of me.

AALIYAH

When I get rich and famous it won't
matter. I'll have enough money for us
to run away and be happy.

Aaliyah smothers her with kisses

ALBA

(laughs)
Don't forget dad!

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

Aaliyah enters the movie theater through the back door of an
alley.

Inside there's a room with an office of security footage
cameras and lockers.

Aaliyah clocks in.

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - DAY CONTINUOUS

She enters into the Movie Theater Lobby. Rico is setting up.

RICO

Funny seeing you early.

AALIYAH

You proud?

RICO

Only if you keep up with it.

AALIYAH

I told you it won't happen again.

RICO
No, you said you'd let me know next time.

AALIYAH
Well, I'm here.

RICO
Did you remember to clock in?

AALIYAH
Yes.

RICO
Good. I need you to do some inventory for me later.

AALIYAH
Are you gonna ask me about how my thing went with Keith?

RICO
Who?

AALIYAH
The casting agent.

RICO
Oh, the dick you were telling me about.

AALIYAH
Yes.

RICO
Definitely a dick name for a dick casting director. How did it go?

AALIYAH
It actually went really well. He invited me over to his apartment and we had drinks.

RICO
Did you suck his dick?

AALIYAH
Can you stop saying dick?

RICO
I'm just asking. Did you or did you

not suck his dick?

AALIYAH
No, I didn't.

RICO
You didn't suck his dick?

AALIYAH
No!

RICO
So what did you do?

AALIYAH
We had drinks and talked.

RICO
About?

AALIYAH
Fears and whatnot.

RICO
Fears and whatnot?

AALIYAH
Yeah.

RICO
I don't see how that got to do with
your acting but, okay.

Beat.

AALIYAH
He's invited me to go to this party.

RICO
You gonna go?

AALIYAH
You think I should?

RICO
I think you should be careful.

AALIYAH
So I shouldn't go?

RICO

I didn't say that. All I'm saying for you is you gotta be careful. You don't really know much about this guy.

AALIYAH

I know that his dad tried to drown him.

RICO

The fuck?

AALIYAH

Something personal he told me.

RICO

Whatever.

AALIYAH

What if I did go?

RICO

I'm not gonna tell you what to do, Lala.

AALIYAH

Okay, okay.

RICO

If you do go and he tries something, you tell me so I can drown the nigga.

AALIYAH

Okay.

EXT. ELEVATE LOUNGE BUILDING - NIGHT

The car pulls up to a tall glass penthouse.

Aaliyah gets out the car. She wears a fitted black mini dress with platform boots and bold eye makeup.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

She enters an empty lobby. DESK SECURITY, Black male, late 20s in black formal wear sits behind the desk.

Aaliyah approaches him.

SECURITY

You here for the party?

AALIYAH

Yeah.

SECURITY

Your name?

AALIYAH

Aaliyah Reed.

He TYPES up her name on the computer checking her in.

SECURITY

You're gonna take the elevator and
make your way up to the 21st floor.

AALIYAH

Okay, thank you.

SECURITY

Enjoy.

Aaliyah goes inside the elevator heading up.

INT. ELEVATE LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

The elevator opens to a modern high-rise club. A loud
variation of music plays in the background as people drink
and socialize among each other. It's a crowded setting.

Aaliyah spots Keith from a far. He sits at the bar having a
drink.

Aaliyah makes her way through the crowd of people to approach
him.

KEITH

Hey, you made it!

AALIYAH

Yeah.

Aaliyah blushes. Beat.

AALIYAH

I want to talk to you more about my
role for the audition.

Beat.

KEITH (CON'T)

There's some people I'd like you to

meet first.

Keith walks her over to a Vip Section.

KEITH (CON'T)

Everyone, this is Aaliyah. Make her feel special.

(to Aaliyah)

I'm gonna go get you a drink. I'll be right back.

Keith leaves.

Aaliyah awkwardly joins in scotching over to sit down.

DIANA

I don't know how people these days can still show up and see these musicals. I find them so derogative.

DIANA (late 20s) preppy and superficial.

AALIYAH

I don't see how they're derogative.

DIANA

You know it's impolite to eavesdrop.

AALIYAH

I wasn't eavesdropping I was joining the conversation.

DIANA

Well maybe ask before you just join. It's common manners.

AALIYAH

I didn't think it was a big deal.

DIANA

Well, you're not special so just ask.
(dig)
Hasn't your mother ever taught you that?

Pause. Aaliyah gives a look: *I cannot believe this bitch!*

AALIYAH

(snaps)

Maybe before making the assumption if
someone has a mom, ask! Mine is gone.

Aaliyah gets up and leaves in irritation.

EXT. ELEVATE LONGUE BALCONY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Aaliyah is outside the club leaning on the Balcony.

Keith enters with holding the drinks.

KEITH

So, I see you've met Diana.

No response.

KEITH (CON'T)

Don't mind her. That's just her way of
feeling you out. She does it to every
new comer.

AALIYAH

Well, she could do a lot better.

Beat.

Keith wryly chuckles. Beat.

KEITH

I didn't know you lost your mom.

AALIYAH

I didn't lose her. She's just not
present.

Beat.

Aaliyah stretches her arms and back holding onto the balcony.
She lets out a deep exhale.

KEITH

Well, someone can definitely use a
drink.

Aaliyah stops. Keith gestures handing her a drink.

KEITH (O.C)

Come on, don't waste my money.

Aaliyah takes a sip of the drink. She pauses for a moment.
Beat.

AALIYAH
So when are my dreams finally gonna
start to come true?

Beat.

KEITH
There's somebody I want you to meet.

IVY, (19) looks youthful yet older at the same time. Edgy,
bold and sophisticated.

She sits at a booth alone minding her business. A nearly
empty drink sits in front of her. She takes out a small
makeup mirror from her purse to check her makeup.

Aaliyah and Keith approach her.

KEITH
Why aren't you with the others?

IVY
I didn't think it was obligatory.

Beat.

IVY
Who's this?

KEITH
This is--

AALIYAH
Aaliyah, my names Aaliyah. It's nice
to meet you.

Aaliyah reaches out her hand for Ivy to shake. Ivy gives her
a dry smile, uninterestedly shaking it.

IVY
Ivy. Nice to meet you too.

KEITH
Well, look at you being assertive.
I'll give you guys some time to get to
know each other.

Keith leaves. Aaliyah stands awkwardly holding her drink in

front of Ivy unsure of what to do with herself.

Ivy eyes and head glance towards the seat gesturing Aaliyah to sit. She sits down.

AALIYAH

So how do you know, Keith?

IVY

He takes care of me.

AALIYAH

He takes care of you?

IVY

Well, he takes care of all of us.

AALIYAH

How long have you been working with him.

IVY

About 4 years, now.

AALIYAH

How old are you?

IVY

19.

AALIYAH

That's really young.

IVY

Well, how old are you?

AALIYAH

20.

IVY

(chuckles)

One year is not that far apart.

AALIYAH

You just don't seem your age. How were you even able to get a drink?

IVY

Don't be so hypocritical.

Pause. Ivy takes a remaining sip of her drink

IVY (CON'T)
Besides, we're not supposed to be
buying our drinks. Regardless, if
we're of age or not.

AALIYAH
I wonder why Keith wanted us to be
friends.

IVY
I just met you.

AALIYAH
This has to be joke.

Pause. Ivy looks at the group of people in the VIP section
from a far.

Beat.

IVY
Come with me.

Ivy gets up. Aaliyah joins her apprehensively.

AALIYAH
Where are we going?

IVY
I'll show you.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOUNGE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A moment of silence is shared as they both take in the
silence contrasting with city street NOISES circulating at
the distance.

Ivy takes in a deep inhale letting out an exhale of relief

IVY
This is way better.

No response from Aaliyah. She's guarded and standoffish.

IVY (CON'T)
Don't you think?

AALIYAH
 (standoffish)
 Yeah, it's nice.

Ivy picks up on her body language. Beat.

IVY
 Hey, look I'm sorry if I came off
 bitchy to you earlier. I thought maybe
 if I took us out here, I could get to
 know you a little bit better.
 (pause)
 Too much noise makes me irritable I
 guess. I don't know.

AALIYAH
 It's okay. You been here before?

IVY
 Previously but there's like way better
 clubs. This is nothing.

AALIYAH
 How are you able to get in?

IVY
 Same way you did.

AALIYAH
 What do you mean?

IVY
 Special connections. You just have to
 know people.
 (pause)
 You know in a sense, we're kinda like
 Drew Barrymore.

AALIYAH
 How?

IVY
 Bitch, how? She was drinking and going
 to clubs and shit at like the ripe age
 of 9. Girl was far ahead of us.

AALIYAH
 That can't be true//

IVY
 Yeah, huh. Watch any interview, she'll

talk about it, I swear on my life.

AALIYAH

(scoffs)

That's so sad. I'll be damned if I ever saw a 9 year old walk into a bar.

Beat.

AALIYAH (CON'T)

So, what have you done thus far working with Keith for 4 years?

IVY

Traveled. He's taken me like so many different places. It's amazing what's out there. Where we are right now, is nothing near compared to what's outside.

AALIYAH

I've always wanted to travel. I feel like that comes with what I wanna do.

IVY

So what's the goal?

AALIYAH

To be well known. I always enjoyed acting because it was like this escape from the real world. I could be whoever I wanted to be.

IVY

What's your real world like?

AALIYAH

Stressful. It's just annoying when you feel like you can never catch a break for yourself because everyone is always giving you the burdening weight of responsibilities.

Pause.

AALIYAH

I think mainly what I want for myself is stability and independence from others.

IVY
I get that.

INT. ELEVATE LOUNGE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ivy and Aaliyah return back to the party from the rooftop to find Keith.

KEITH
There you are. I was looking all over for you guys.

IVY
We just went to get some air.

KEITH
To get some air?

IVY
Yeah, is that a problem?

KEITH
No.

AALIYAH
I think I'm gonna go, now.

KEITH
(sarcastically)
You're tired of us already, we get it!
(chuckles)
Alright, I'll call an uber for you.
We'll stay in touch.

AALIYAH
Thank you so much for this. Really. I look forward to hearing about my role soon.

KEITH
Of course, all my pleasure.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATE LOUNGE LOBBY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah is about to exit out the lobby heading towards her Uber. She's holding her phone. Ivy runs up from behind her

IVY
Hey!

Aaliyah turns around in startle.

IVY
Wait! Can I have your number. I'll put
it in really quickly.

Aaliyah hands her phone to Ivy. She types in her number then
handing back her phone.

IVY
Here. Text me, okay?

AALIYAH
See you!

EXT. AALIYAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The uber pulls up in front of Aaliyah's house.

AALIYAH
(to uber driver)
Thank you, have a good night!

She exits car closing the door behind her. The Uber drives
off.

INT. AALIYAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aaliyah enters. Marcus sleeps on the couch along next to Alba
leaning on his shoulder.

The TV PLAYS an episode of "Fresh Prince of Bel Air" in the
background.

Aaliyah QUIETLY grabs the TV remote on the nightstand next to
the couch shutting it off.

She TIPTOES upstairs to her room.

INT. AALIYAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah enters her bedroom. She sets her stuff on top of her
dresser before getting undressed to change into something
comfortable.

When finished she finally grabs her phone to call Ivy.

She picks up.

IVY (O.C)
Hello?

AALIYAH
Hey, it's me.

IVY (O.C)
Hey. Did you just get home?

AALIYAH
Yeah, my dad and sister were sleeping.

IVY (O.C)
You have a sister?

AALIYAH
Yeah. Younger.

Aaliyah goes over to lay on her bed.

IVY (O.C)
I see what you meant now when you said
taking on other responsibilities.

AALIYAH
Yeah, I guess.

IVY (O.C)
Is that why you left so early?

AALIYAH
No, not really. I just didn't really
feel like I belonged there.

IVY (O.C)
I see.

AALIYAH
Are you still there?

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEVATE LONGE ROOFTOP - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

IVY
I'm at the rooftop.

AALIYAH (O.C)
Why aren't you at the party?

IVY
It's too noisy, I told you.

AALIYAH (O.C)
Do you know when it ends?

IVY
Not until at least 3.

INT. AALIYAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

AALIYAH
A.M?

IVY (O.C)
Yep.

Beat.

IVY (O.C)
So, this was really your first time at
a nightclub, huh?

AALIYAH
(lies playing it off)
No.

IVY (O.C)
Liar.

Aaliyah chuckles.

AALIYAH
Shut up!

IVY (O.C)
You're Drew Barrymore and you know it.

Ivy LAUGHS. Beat.

EXT. ELEVATE LOUNGE ROOFTOP - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

IVY
Anyways, I'm glad we got to speak
today.

AALIYAH (O.C)
Me too.

IVY
So when are we gonna hang out?

INT. AALIYAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

AALIYAH

Um, I don't know yet. I'll let you know.

IVY (O.C)

Okay, well, let me know soon.

Marcus comes knocking on the side of Aaliyah's door.

AALIYAH

I will. I gotta go.

IVY

Okay, goodnight.

AALIYAH

Goodnight.

Aaliyah hangs up.

AALIYAH

Hey, what's up?

MARCUS

Who were you on the phone with?

AALIYAH

Just a friend.

MARCUS

Do I know them?

AALIYAH

No. Dad you're not gonna know all my friends.

MARCUS

I was just checking up on you?

AALIYAH

I'm fine.

Beat.

MARCUS

Did you get that audition?

AALIYAH

I don't think so. But he said that

we'd keep in touch so that has to say something right?

Beat.

MARCUS

I been looking into some financial aid programs for your sister's school.

AALIYAH

So it's settled?

MARCUS

I don't know yet. We have to see if we're eligible.

AALIYAH

And if we're not?

MARCUS

We pay out of pocket. The deadline is June 21st.

AALIYAH

Okay. Is that it?

Pause.

MARCUS

Yeah.

AALIYAH

(sigh)

Okay, goodnight.

MARCUS

Goodnight.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

RICO

Wow, you're on a roll coming in early.

AALIYAH

Yeah, yeah.

RICO

How was your weekend?

Aaliyah pauses before breaking the news.

AALIYAH
It was interesting.

RICO
What do you//

AALIYAH
I may or may not have accepted Keith's offer

RICO
Oh, really? Look at you going places.

AALIYAH
Uh huh.

RICO
How was it?

AALIYAH
It was more or less than what I imagined a club would be like.

RICO
What did you expect it to be?

AALIYAH
I don't know it just wasn't my vibe. I got scolded and accused of eavesdropping and then she brought in how my mother didn't raise me with good manners.

RICO
Well, then.

AALIYAH
Well jokes on her I don't have one so I left.

RICO
Period.
(Pause)
So that's it you just left cus' of one bad encounter?

AALIYAH
I didn't leave, leave. I just removed myself from her.

Beat.

AALIYAH
I did meet someone though.

RICO
(intrigued)
Mhmm, go on who?

AALIYAH
Not like that. Just a new friend.

RICO
What's her name.

AALIYAH
Ivy. One of Keith's friends I guess. I don't why he introduced me to her though.

RICO
But you guys got along right?

AALIYAH
Yeah. We'll see where it goes.

RICO
(teasing)
As long as you don't try to replace me with her, it's all good.

Aaliyah rolls her eyes, nudging him on the side chuckling.

RICO
Hey, even though I'm your manager. I'm still your best friend.

AALIYAH
Who you telling?

Rico goes to set up the rest of the theater.

Incoming call from Ivy. Aaliyah looks back as Rico's oblivious. She silences it.

CUT TO:

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah sits at the break on the couch eating half a sandwich scrolling through her phone. An open bag of chips sits in front of her on a small coffee table with the other half sits on open foil with a bottle of Sprite.

She scrolls through her social media feed before going through her call list to call Ivy.

She puts down her sandwich chewing up the remainder of what she's already ate.

Ivy answers.

IVY (O.C)

Hey, what's up?

AALIYAH

I saw you called so I just wanted to call you back.

Aaliyah feels a sheepish. Beat.

IVY (O.C)

Oh. So what are you doing right now?

AALIYAH

I'm just on my break. That's why I couldn't answer you before.

IVY (O.C)

Where do you work?

AALIYAH

You really wanna know?

IVY

Yeah, that's why I asked.

AALIYAH

Regal Theater.

IVY

(chuckles)

How ironic. Maybe it is written in the stars for you, Drew.

AALIYAH

Yeah well, I'm just on break now what's up?

IVY

Just wanted to see what you were doing. Are you busy later?

AALIYAH

Uh, no. I don't think so.

IVY
What time do you get off?

AALIYAH
Uh, 3:30?

IVY
Address?

AALIYAH
What?

IVY
Let me pick you up today. I wanna take
you somewhere.

AALIYAH
Oh, okay. It's 562 Sunnyview Lane.

IVY
Cool. See you then.

AALIYAH
Okay, bye.

Rico enters the break room, walking in on her as she just
about to hang up.

RICO
Your break ends ins 5. Can you do some
cleaning in the bathrooms after you
usher?

AALIYAH
Yeah.

Beat. Aaliyah awkwardly fidgets with her phone. Rico gives
her a look of skepticism and curiosity.

RICO
Who were you on just on the phone
with?

AALIYAH
Ivy. She's taking me out after my
shift.

RICO
Sounds pretty gay to me.

AALIYAH
Shut up. You're gay!

Rico throws his hands up.

RICO
Hey, no judgement. I'm just saying.

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah is at the concession stand giving popcorn and snacks to guests.

Ivy enters the lobby from a far as Aaliyah continues to work, obliviously. She carries a black mini channel backpack

Ivy approaches her

IVY
Hi, can I have one ticket to see
Aaliyah, please?

Aaliyah is caught off guard.

AALIYAH
Hey.

IVY
You almost finished?

AALIYAH
Yeah, I'll be done shortly

IVY
(sarcastically joking)
Well, hurry up!

Ivy smiles.

AALIYAH
Yeah, yeah.
(to Rico)
I'm about to go.

RICO
Kay' later mama.' Be safe

AALIYAH
You too. Bye.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - SAME DAY

Ivy and Aaliyah enter a giant shopping mall.

AALIYAH

You took me to go shopping.

IVY

I was planning to go anyways with or without you. I just thought it be nice for both of us.

Aaliyah's not sure if she should be offended or pleased.

INT. URBAN OUTFITTERS - SAME DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ivy and Aaliyah peruse through the clothing section. Ivy already holding a few items.

IVY

Find anything you like, yet?

AALIYAH

Just browsing...

IVY

There's nothing here that you like.

AALIYAH

No, it's not that I'm just being careful with money right now.

Pause.

IVY

Come try these clothes on with me.

CUT TO:

INT. FITTING ROOMS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ivy brings Aaliyah into the fitting rooms. She hangs her clothing items on the rack setting her backpack down.

Ivy begins to undress as Aaliyah awkwardly stands looking away from Ivy.

She pauses turning her head to Aaliyah.

IVY

You okay?

AALIYAH
What? Yeah, I'm fine

IVY
You just seem uncomfortable.

AALIYAH
We're in a dressing room.

IVY
And?

Beat.

IVY (CON'T)
It's okay. We're just gonna try on a few things

AALIYAH
I'm fine//

IVY
(emphasizes)
//We're gonna try on a few things and then we'll go. It's not so bad.

Aaliyah folds her arms and takes a seat on the chair inside the dressing room.

AALIYAH
Okay.

Ivy's first item is a gold sparkly tube top. She checks herself out in the mirror.

IVY
Thoughts?

AALIYAH
It's nice.

IVY
That it?

Aaliyah nods her head.

AALIYAH
Yeah, you look good.

Ivy sighs.

IVY

Okay.

Ivy takes off the tube top handing it to Aaliyah. Her breasts are completely exposed.

IVY (CON'T)

Now you.

Aaliyah eyes widen in shock. She can hardly form a sentence.

IVY

You look like a man who's never seen tits before.

Aaliyah's tensity softens.

AALIYAH

I've seen them.

Ivy gestures her the tube top to try it on. Aaliyah takes it and tries it on.

IVY

It looks way better on you.

AALIYAH

Thanks, but I don't think I'm gonna get it. It's 48 dollars.

Beat.

IVY

Are you a snitch?

AALIYAH

What do you mean?

IVY

Gimme the top.

Aaliyah hands to her. Ivy takes it setting it on the seat. She goes through her bag and takes out a lighter and a pair of scissors removing the security tag attached. Aaliyah cannot believe what she's doing. She goes into a state of panic.

AALIYAH

What are you?//

IVY
Shut up!

Ivy stuff the top in the bottom of her bag covering it up with other miscellaneous things.

IVY (CON'T)
'Kay let's go.

Aaliyah freezes as Ivy is just about ready to leave.

IVY (CON'T)
Just don't act nervous and trust me.
It's one item, we're returning the
rest. Okay?

Aaliyah takes a few momentary deep breaths. She nods.

IVY (CON'T)
Come on.

Ivy grabs the remaining clothes as she's about to leave the fitting room. She pauses handing her a few items.

IVY (CON'T)
It's just so they're not suspicious. I
know what I'm doing.

CUT TO:

Aaliyah nods taking a deep breath. She follow her lead attempting to stay calm as they exit the dressing room.

Ivy approaches the ROOM ATTENDANT, young female, could range from ages 18-20.

ROOM ATTENDANT
You can just hang whatever you don't
want onto the rack.

IVY
Thank you.

Ivy and Aaliyah hang up the items. Ivy keeps only one item. A burgundy mini dress. Aaliyah notices but doesn't say anything. She follows her to the front of the store.

INT. FRONT OF U.O. - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah and Ivy go to the cash register.

Ivy hands the mini dress over the CASHIER, female (18-20) to scan.

CASHIER
Find everything okay, today?

IVY
Yes.

CASHIER
Your total is 35 dollars. Would you like a bag for 25 cents?

IVY
Yes, please.

CASHIER
Whenever you're ready.

Ivy takes out her wallet in the front compartment of her bag to insert her card.

The Cashier fold up the dress placing it into a small tote bag as she does so.

The Cashier hand her the bag with her receipt.

CASHIER
You ladies have a nice day.

IVY
You too!

Aaliyah and Ivy approach a metal detector as they are about to exit the store.

A SECURITY GUARD, male, looks to be in his early 30s, tall and slender wearing black formal attire. He stands near the metal detector.

Aaliyah takes a DEEP BREATH as they are about to walk through.

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP!

Aaliyah freezes as Ivy does too. The Security Guard stops them.

SECURITY GUARD
Excuse me, ladies.

IVY

Hi, sorry. I just paid for this.

Ivy hands him the shopping bag with the paper receipt inside. He checks notices the security tag is still attached to the dress she purchased.

SECURITY GUARD

Go back to the register and they'll remove it for you.

IVY

Thank you. Sorry about that.

CUT TO:

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ivy and Aaliyah have left the store having gotten away with shoplifting.

Ivy casually,

IVY

Shit that was close. You hungry? I kinda wanna go to Five Guys.

Aaliyah doesn't answer. She is passive aggressively silent.

IVY (CON'T)

You okay?

AALIYAH

Yeah, I'm fine.

IVY

Aaliyah?

Aaliyah breaks.

AALIYAH

What was the point of doing that?

IVY

I told you we were gonna be fine.

AALIYAH

We almost got caught!

IVY

But we didn't...Right?

AALIYAH

Look, just don't put me in that again,
okay?

Ivy SIGHS and rolls her eyes. She gives a slight smile.

IVY

(ingenuine)

Okay, fine. I'm sorry. We good?

Aaliyah doesn't buy it. In annoyance and irritation Aaliyah starts to walk away.

A sense of guilt washes over Ivy realizing what she has done and how it made Aaliyah feel. She goes after her grabbing her arm

IVY

Hey. Okay, okay. For real... I'm
sorry. I just thought it would be a
fun adrenaline rush for us. But on
some real shit I won't if it makes you
feel that bad. I promise...Really.

Aaliyah's tense expression softens.

AALIYAH

Okay. Thank you.

IVY

I mean at least I bought one thing,
right?

Ivy makes doe eyes showing her the bag. Aaliyah rolls her eyes smiling nudging her.

AALIYAH

Come on, let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT ROOF TO - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah and Ivy lay on the front of Ivy's car enjoying the view of a pink and blue sky sunset overlooking the rest of the city.

A Five Guys paper bag lays between them as they share an order of fries together. Along side with half eaten burgers sitting on open scrunchy foil and two milkshakes.

IVY
How are you feeling?

AALIYAH
Better, I suppose.

IVY
Good.

AALIYAH
What is it with you and these views?

IVY
Well, I know you like them too.

Aaliyah CHUCKLES.

IVY (CON'T)
Nothing beats this very moment we live
in.

They share a quiet moment. Aaliyah takes a fry dipping it
into her milkshake before taking a SIP.

Aaliyah circles her finger around the rim of the straw. Beat.

AALIYAH
Ivy?

IVY (O.C)
Hmm.

AALIYAH
Why did you get the dress but not the
top too?

IVY
I don't know.

Aaliyah doesn't believe her.

AALIYAH
Come on really.

Ivy SIGHS fessing up.

IVY
I kinda did it to make you feel
better. There.

AALIYAH
Have you ever been caught?

IVY
Yeah. Twice.

AALIYAH
What were trying to steal?

IVY
First time was at CVS for nail
polish...the other one--

Ivy pauses in embarrassment for admitting.

IVY (CON'T)
A mini vibrator from the back of a
Spencer's.

Aaliyah tries to keep her composure but busts out LAUGHING.
Ivy does the same.

AALIYAH
Oh my god!

IVY
It was pink too! But it was so cute.

They stop. Ivy grabs the shopping bag beside her handing it
to Aaliyah.

IVY
Here. I want you to have it. I bought
it for you just in case the tube top
made you feel guilty.

Aaliyah smiles to herself.

AALIYAH
Thanks.

Beat.

IVY
I feel like there is a wild side to
you somewhere in that brain.

AALIYAH
What gives you that impression?

IVY

I don't know. I mean you technically did participate in an act of illegal activity. Had you been more frigid you would've walked out and snitched.

AALIYAH

I'm not frigid. I have a soul

IVY

I just feel like there's more to you than what you give off. That's why I like you.

AALIYAH

Okay.

Aaliyah takes a SIP of her milkshake. Beat.

IVY

Keith thinks you're special too.

AALIYAH

Well, I haven't heard from him.

IVY

He's just busy that's all. That's why you're with me.

AALIYAH

What do you mean?

IVY

I mean I've worked with him since I was 15. I kinda have more experience in the business than you do. Not to sound like that.

AALIYAH

What did he say?

IVY

He thinks you're smart but skeptical at times when taking risks which he wants me to help you work on. But he feels like you're very attentive and can understand how things work. Only if you remain calm.

Pause.

IVY (CON'T)

Kinda like with what we did earlier.
It was like... a little acting
exercise.

AALIYAH

I'm not stealing with you again.

IVY

Okay, so we'll do something different.

Beat.

AALIYAH

What about my role?

IVY

What?

AALIYAH

The audition? That's how I met him.
The party? He must've mentioned that.

IVY

He's a busy guy, but he'll get back to
you eventually. He just has a lot
people to deal with and recruit. But
you have a lot of potential to him. He
wants you to explore that and I agree
with him.

Beat.

IVY

That night on the rooftop, you said
you had to put up with a lot
responsibility. What kind if you don't
mind?

Aaliyah take a BREATH. Her body language relaxes as she
begins to express her sense of vulnerability.

AALIYAH

It's... a lot. I haven't really had
the time to express it to anyone. Not
even my own best friend.

IVY

Who's your best friend.

AALIYAH

My manager.

IVY

Wait, that guy was your?//

AALIYAH

Yes, but I've known him way before that. His name's Enrique but he just likes to be called Rico for short. We've been friends since high school and he knew a lot of shit about my family and school and finding a job and shit. He kinda gave me the job knowing my whole situation with school and auditions and stuff.

IVY

What's your deal with school.

AALIYAH

I went for like a year cus' I wanted to study medicine originally. Then I took a year off cus' it was too stressful and during that year I just realized that medicine wasn't for me but neither was college. Not as much as I really thought but I always loved art and acting cus' in high school I was always a theater kid doing plays and musicals and I really enjoyed it so I thought maybe I should get back into that. So that's when I started auditioning and working and trying to accomplish my dreams and such...

IVY

Wow...and your family?

AALIYAH

Major mommy issues. Somewhat daddy issues.

Aaliyah CHUCKLES. She takes a pause.

AALIYAH

I have a sister. She's 14 and still very innocent but she looks to me as mother I think moreso than a sister. Our mom who I wouldn't consider her much of one has a nice new husband

with two nice beautiful replacements.
 And she lives with them in a cul-de-
 sac somewhere in Arizona. And I
 haven't properly spoken to her since I
 was 13 and she never did with her
 either.

Beat.

AALIYAH (CON'T)

My dad's tryna send her to private
 school but we can't afford it. Yet,
 he's still persistent on me paying
 that tuition which I assume is the
 majority since he's not working all
 the time. It doesn't make sense...

(pause)

What do you do?

IVY

What?

AALIYAH

What do you for your work?

IVY

Oh...

AALIYAH

What is it?

IVY

If I tell you, do you promise to get
 mad?

AALIYAH

I don't know.

IVY

(vaguely)

I talk to men and they pay me.

AALIYAH

So you're like a sugar baby?

IVY

No.

AALIYAH

(confused)

So then what are you?

IVY
I'm an escort.

AALIYAH
(scoffs)
You can't be fucking serious. Does
Keith know?

IVY
It's not his business.

AALIYAH
So you just fuck men and they pay you?

IVY
Not all of them come to fuck.

AALIYAH
So then what do you do?

IVY
I go on dates with them, I talk to
them. Most of them are unsatisfied
rich married men.

AALIYAH
So you're a home wrecker?

IVY
I'm not a home wrecker!

AALIYAH
(scoffs)
That's crazy.

IVY
Might be crazy but at the end of the
day it gives me the things I
desire...and pays the bills.

AALIYAH
Unbelievable.

IVY
Don't knock it till' you try it.

AALIYAH
I'm not doing that.

IVY
I think you should. It can help with

your current circumstances. I mean
 come on what's the minimum wage here
 in the state of California? Like 14?
 You can do better.

AALIYAH
 I'll wait.

IVY
 For how long?

Aaliyah SIGHS and rolls her eyes.

AALIYAH
 I don't know.

IVY
 Think about it. I'll help you of
 course. Remember what I said taking
 risks.

AALIYAH
 Yeah, yeah.

INT. AALIYAH'S HOUSE - SAME NIGHT

Aaliyah comes home from the mall. She sees her dad putting
 storing dirty dishes into the dishwasher.

AALIYAH
 Hey, dad.

MARCUS
 Hey, you missed dinner. Alba still
 insisted to make you a plate in case
 in case you got hungry

AALIYAH
 I'm good I already ate but I'll tell
 her I said thanks. Where is she?

MARCUS
 Doing homework at a friends.

AALIYAH
 Really?

Beat.

AALIYAH (CON'T)
 Did you find out if we're eligible for

financial aid?

MARCUS

I did.

AALIYAH

And?

MARCUS

We're not.

AALIYAH

So what's the plan? Are we gonna send her to public school then?

MARCUS

I really wanna strive to make this happen for her.

Aaliyah sighs in annoyance and distress. She cannot believe him. She nods her head then shaking it.

AALIYAH

Why are you adamant about this? I mean she doesn't even know she wanna go.

MARCUS

Did she tell you that?

AALIYAH

Yes, she did. But of course you wouldn't know because you don't bother to ask her anything. She was fine going then what make you think she won't now?

MARCUS

When you start to become a parent//you will understand the sacrifices you need to make if you want what's best for your kids.

AALIYAH

(snaps)

Oh, please! I was more of a mother to her than Airess could've ever been.

MARCUS

She's your mother//

AALIYAH (CON'T)

She NOT our mother. She never was. She doesn't even call us! She left to go fuck another man which she was probably doing behind your back anyway and now she lives in a nice a big house with a nice new husband and nice new replacements for children...and ever since I always felt those responsibilities were placed onto me. I was 13! Taking Alba to school, helping her with her homework, cooking her dinner, attending the parent teacher conferences. I was a child myself and you both took that from me. So don't ever fucking tell me about what it means to be a parent!

Aaliyah leaves walking upstairs to her room. Marcus is at a loss for words.

INT. AALIYAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah throws herself onto her bed burying her face into her pillow CRYING.

MONTAGE:

She is SCREAMING into the pillow.

PUNCHING her pillow.

She eventually throws the pillow across the room knocking things over.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NEXT DAY

Aaliyah walks into work late. She looks tired and distressed. Rico looks at her annoyed and irritated.

RICO

Where were you?

AALIYAH

A lot happened last night, okay? I didn't sleep very well.

RICO

Not a valid enough excuse.

AALIYAH

Rico, please.

RICO

I need you to refill the butter dispenser and check inventory for me today.

AALIYAH

You're not gonna ask me what's wrong?

RICO

I'm under a lot of pressure right now with my boss and your inconsistency reflects on how I manage this place.

AALIYAH

Wait, your boss?

Rico snaps.

RICO

Yes, Aaliyah! My boss! Managers have bosses too but you wouldn't know anything about that because you never ask me how *I'm* doing, you always have to make it about you.

AALIYAH

Okay, well I'm sorry I won't talk about me anymore. Really. Tell me more about what's going on. Please!

Rico SIGHS.

RICO

Look, there's a lot of shit I got to take care of right now. Just do your job right or I'm letting you go.

Aaliyah feels a sense of defeat and loss.

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah is ushering tickets to guests.

She sees Ivy waiting outside looking at her from a far smoking a cigarette. She smiles and waves at Aaliyah.

Aaliyah looks at her but does nothing. She continues until she finished ushering the remaining guests into the theater

before approaching.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER/STREET - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

She approaches her with agitation.

AALIYAH

What are you doing here?

IVY

I'm waiting for you to finish. I hope
it's not a bother.

AALIYAH

Put out the cigarette!

IVY

I'm outside.

AALIYAH

Ivy.

Ivy rolls her eyes. She takes the cigarette to the ground
lightly STOMPING it out with her feet.

IVY

There, happy?

Beat.

AALIYAH

You cannot just show up to my
workplace unannounced. I'm not on the
best terms with my manager right now,
either so I think it's best you just
leave.

IVY

I thought he was your best friend.

AALIYAH

I need you to leave.

IVY

He probably doesn't remember what I
look like.

AALIYAH

Please.

IVY

I'm not bothering anyone.

Beat.

IVY (CON'T)

You think these people are out for your best interest but the people who betray us most are the ones we trust. Don't ever think he's incapable of that. Just remember, you always have a choice. You can either let people make them for you and be miserable or you can chose agency. But don't let me be of bother at your workspace. I'm just a random stranger you decided to approach.

Aaliyah turn around heading back inside bumping in Rico.

RICO

Get back to work.

AALIYAH

I was just coming back inside.

RICO

(condescendingly)

Uh huh. Why don't you go see what she has to offer. Try to make you famous.

Aaliyah stops to contemplate.

She turns around looking at Ivy standing outside who lights up another cigarette. She turns back at the theater in which she is in.

She realizes there's a decision to make.

She goes to grab her stuff.

She goes to the cash register to withdraw money shoving it into her bag.

She leaves with agility walking past Rico.

RICO

Hey, your shift is not over.

AALIYAH

Fuck you, Rico I quit!

RICO
Whatchu say to me?

EXT. MOVIE THEATER/STREET - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah leaves reproaching Ivy waiting outside smoking another cigarette. Ivy is caught off guard by her approach.

AALIYAH
I change my mind.

IVY
Glad you finally came to your senses.

INT. CAR - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

IVY
So you quit?

AALIYAH
Yeah...
(realization)
I did.

IVY
How do you feel?

AALIYAH
I don't know but I took out some cash before I left though. It was really from what he owed me.

Aaliyah opens her bag showing Ivy the money.

AALIYAH (CON'T)
It's technically not stealing is it?

Ivy makes a sly smile. She doesn't answer. She looks out the window.

AALIYAH
Where are we going?

IVY
My place. Then I'm gonna take you somewhere

AALIYAH
Where?

IVY
You'll see.

AALIYAH
You're always full of surprises.

INT. IVY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah sits on the floor in front of the couch as Ivy helps apply makeup. Laying beside them is a a bag full of makeup.

AALIYAH
Can you just tell me where you're taking me?

IVY
No, it'll ruin the fun. Stay still.

AALIYAH
Not at least a hint?

IVY
Nope. Close your eyes.

Ivy adds light eyeshadow. Beat.

IVY (CON'T)
Has your mom ever done your makeup?

AALIYAH
Yeah, a little before my sister was born. She would do it whenever she was going out with my dad or something when things were good and they were happy. Sometimes, she would offer me her lipstick but other than that no not really.

IVY
You know what I always like to remind myself?

AALIYAH
What?

IVY
You know that song by Marilyn Monroe that goes,
(sings)
Diamonds are a girls best friend...

AALIYAH

Yeah. I have her poster hung in my room.

IVY

Well, I learned that it's not the diamond that's your best friend. It's the makeup. Because without the makeup, you get no diamond.

Ivy is done with her eye shadow.

IVY (CON'T)

You understand what I'm trying to tell you?

AALIYAH

Did you learn that somewhere?

IVY

Yes, my mother...somewhere.

Ivy softly CHUCKLES.

AALIYAH

She did your makeup for you too?

IVY

Yeah sort of. Kind like what you said. Only for a brief period. But she's not here anymore.

AALIYAH

Oh. Where is she then?

IVY

Well, she was in and out of rehab clinics and wasn't able to raise me so CPS took me away. She also just had super young so, yeah.

AALIYAH

Did she ever get better?

Ivy nods her head "no."

IVY

She OD'd when I was 12.

AALIYAH

I'm sorry.

IVY

It's fine. It was gonna happen sooner or later. Just one of those things I sorta felt. But that was just something of hers I always remembered her saying to me that just stuck. I felt like you could use it.

AALIYAH

Well, thanks I'll remember it.

Ivy makes the finishing touches adding a shade of lipstick. When she's done, she hands Aaliyah a small mirror to take a look at herself.

IVY

Here, tell me what you think.

Aaliyah is stunned. Almost unable to recognize herself.

AALIYAH

Wow, I love it. Thank you.

Aaliyah hands her back the mirrors. Ivy smirks.

IVY

I work my magic with the skills I got!

INT. CAB - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ivy preps Aaliyah on what to do as they make way to their destination. They're faces are not shown, just visuals of their commute.

IVY (O.S)

Your name is Mia okay? These people *cannot* know your real identity.

AALIYAH (O.S)

Why?

IVY (O.S)

To protect you. And remember it's always money up front.

MATCHCUT TO:

INT. HILTON HOTEL - NIGHT

Ivy and Aaliyah enter a hotel lobby. Aaliyah wears the mini dress Ivy bought her.

IVY
Just follow my lead.

Ivy and Aaliyah sneak past the front desk into the bar.

INT. HILTON BAR - NIGHT

MONTAGE

-Aaliyah sits alone at the bar. Ivy sits at the lounge. They both wait until being approached. Ivy looks effortless.

-Ivy gets approached by a man, fairly suited, early-mid 40s, looks wealthy

-They begin to converse.

-Aaliyah notices from afar as she waits. No luck.

-Ivy and the man take off together a few moments later. His hand around her lower waist.

-LATER Aaliyah finally gets approached. MAN late 30s/possibly early 40s, wears a work suit.

-He buys her a drink and they converse for a little bit before taking off to a hotel room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE CONTINUES

-Aaliyah sits on the bed masking her timidity as she waits for him.

-Man comes out from the bathroom. He grabs his jacket taking out his wallet placing a couple hundred dollars onto the nightstand before they start.

-Aaliyah's POV- A view of a blank white ceiling zooms in before blurring out. Everything is inaudible.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah rinses off her face before leaving. She stares at herself in the mirror for a moment.

She is in total disbelief in what she has done. Unsure if she should feel disgusted or not.

She exits the bathroom grabbing her things and the money before leaving.

The Man lies on the bed passed out.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah walks down the hallway towards the elevator.

SUDDENLY she stops and vomits.

She pauses to breath. She's really in shock this time.

She looks around to see if the coast is clear. She resumes her walk towards the elevator.

EXT. HOTEL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah exits the elevator looking for Ivy.

She sees her waiting by the entrance/exit and approaches. Ivy sees her.

IVY
How was it?

AALIYAH
I wanna go home.

IVY
Okay.

INT. UBER CAR - NIGHT

The Uber parks outside of Ivy's apartment. Ivy is about to get out.

IVY
You okay?

AALIYAH
Mhm.

IVY
You sure you don't wanna stay over?

AALIYAH
Yeah.

IVY
Okay. See you.

CUT TO:

EXT. AALIYAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Uber pulls up to Aaliyah's house. She tiresomely gets out of the car before it drives off.

INT. AALIYAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah quietly sneaks in trying not to make any noise. She tip toes her way upstairs.

INT. AALIYAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aaliyah heads into her room closing the door behind her. She drops everything throwing herself on the bed tired and drained. Her face buries in her sheets

Pause.

Incoming call from Ivy. Aaliyah, too tired, picks up anyways.

AALIYAH
Hello?

IVY (O.C)
How much did he pay you?

AALIYAH
I don't know.

IVY (O.C)
Go, check.

Clearly too exhausted to get up, Aaliyah walks over to her bag to see how much money there was.

She counts the total. Her face gradually lights up the more she counts.

AALIYAH
375!

IVY (O.C)
Holy shit! Not bad for a first time.
Most girls make like 200 on the first try.

AALIYAH
What do you mean?

IVY
It just a fact. Wanna know how much I made?

AALIYAH
Sure.

IVY
I made 450.

AALIYAH
Congrats.

IVY
No need, that's all you.

Beat.

IVY (CON'T)
So, how do you feel?

AALIYAH
Good.

THE NEXT DAY

INT. IVY APARTMENT - DAY

IVY
I made an account for you.

AALIYAH
Why?

IVY
That's how you attract customers and make money properly.

Aaliyah makes a face in question.

AALIYAH
What we did before wasn't properly?

IVY
It was more like a test run for you. To see if you were actually willing and committed.

Beat.

AALIYAH

Has it ever been scary for you?

IVY

Of course it was scary. It usually is the first time you fuck someone but after a while you get used to it.

AALIYAH

Your first time was through escorting?

IVY

No. I mean sex is sex. It's just a matter of if you feel in control with it or not whether it's good or bad.

AALIYAH

Have you ever fallen in love with your clients?

IVY

It's a business transaction.

AALIYAH

But I'm sure you can still fall in love with them though. Have a connection.

IVY

That's not how this thing works. Our service is meant to provide company while being accompanied. If you want to make it you need to be logical.

AALIYAH

Okay, I'm sorry.

Ivy SIGHS.

IVY

I'm not mad at you. It's just these types of things are not about love. We're here to make money, okay?

AALIYAH

Yeah, right.

THE NEXT NIGHT

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Aaliyah sits across from WALTER, a client, mid 50s, average built.

AALIYAH
This wine is amazing.

WALTER
Isn't it? It has this perfect balance.
Not too heavy I would say.

AALIYAH
I don't know much about wines. But the
food is amazing. I'm really glad you
took me here.

WALTER
It's my pleasure. Who would I be to
not take a fine lady like yourself
out.

Aaliyah smiles politely.

AALIYAH
Thank you.

WALTER
You look beautiful.

AALIYAH
Thank you, really.

WALTER
So, Mia are you in school?

AALIYAH
(casually lies playing along)
Um, yeah. I'm in medical school right
now.

WALTER
That's not an easy field. What are you
studying?

AALIYAH
Nursing.

WALTER
I'm sure you will be great at it.

AALIYAH
What do you do?

WALTER
I'm a contractor.

AALIYAH
What's that?

WALTER
Well in basic terms I construct houses. But it's a very tedious job with many responsibilities.

AALIYAH
How long have you been doing it for?

WALTER
About 30 years.

AALIYAH
Wow, that's a really long time. You must be good at it.

WALTER
It's what I do.

AALIYAH
Are you married?

WALTER
Was. My wife and I been separated for about 5 years.

Aaliyah fakes her empathy. She grabs his hand.

AALIYAH
I'm so sorry. I can't imagine how hard that must be.

CUT TO:

INT. THE HILTON/HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Walter and Aaliyah enter the hotel room.

WALTER
After you.

Aaliyah goes in first.

AALIYAH

Thank you.

WALTER (CON'T)

Please sit down. Get yourself comfortable.

CUT TO:

Aaliyah's POV - the ceiling

Walter and Aaliyah are having intercourse.

Once they finish, Aaliyah leaves.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

Aaliyah walking the city strip.

She stops at a bus stop to ride home.

She gets off closest to her neighborhood.

She walks the rest of the way until she's finally home.

INT. AALIYAH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aaliyah sneaks into her home upstairs to her room.

She takes off her things before going to bed.

THE NEXT DAY

Incoming call from RICO

Aaliyah answers

AALIYAH

Hello?

RICO

(infuriated)

What the fuck?

AALIYAH

Huh?

RICO

I know it was you who did it!

Aaliyah already knows.

AALIYAH

Yeah, well that's my money you owed me for my check.

RICO

You cannot just steal money out of a cash register from work like that. It's a federal crime. I can charge you for embezzlement!

AALIYAH

Fuck you!

RICO

Oh yeah, fuck me! You come here and return that money or I'm calling the police.

AALIYAH

(to herself)

Shit!

(to him)

So much for being my friend.

RICO

I'm not your fucking friend anymore! Go have fun with Evy or whatever the fuck her name is--I know that's what you been doing. Give me the money back. Today!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Alba lies on the couch scrolling through her phone as the TV is on. Aaliyah comes downstairs about to leave.

AALIYAH

I'm heading out. I'll be back later.

ALBA

Where and when will you be back?

AALIYAH

To work.

ALBA

Right. When will you be back?

AALIYAH
I don't know.

Alba scoffs passively. Aaliyah notices.

AALIYAH
Is there something you wanna get off
your chest before I leave?

ALBA
Yeah, where are you actually going?

AALIYAH
To work!

Alba nods her disbelief.

ALBA
I don't believe you.

AALIYAH (CON'T)
I'm serious, Albs'

ALBA
Don't call me that!

AALIYAH
Can you tell me why you're upset.

ALBA
I saw the money!

Aaliyah is at defeat in loss for words.

AALIYAH
Alba...when?

ALBA
A couple nights ago. I saw it sitting
on your night stand.

AALIYAH
Look...

ALBA
I mean you're out almost every night
and you're always coming home late if
not the next day. Tell me what's going
on.

AALIYAH
Alba, you wouldn't//

ALBA
...Understand because I'm too young.
When are you just gonna be my sister
and not protect me from everything?
Just tell me where you got the money
from? I promise I won't tell dad.

AALIYAH
I have to go. I'm sorry.

ALBA
Please!

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Aaliyah comes to work to return the money to Rico.

She pauses.

Rico has with an interaction with an incoming customer.

She resumes her approach. She slaps the money on the counter.

AALIYAH
Here's your money.

Aaliyah makes her way out.

Beat.

RICO
Is she making you do this?

Aaliyah stops and turns around.

AALIYAH
Who?

RICO
You know who I'm talking about Liyah',

Beat.

RICO (CON'T)
Man, you really changed overnight
didn't you? I really didn't think you
would turn out this way.

Pause.

AALIYAH
Have to go.

Rico sees as she watches her leave. No further response.

EXT. IVY'S APARTEMNT - DAY

IVY
I have a suprise for you.

AALIYAH
What is it?

IVY
Close your eyes.

Ivy pulls out two flight tickets to Miami, FL.

IVY (CON'T)
Okay, you can open them.

Aaliyah opens them.

IVY
I thought it would be a nice
celebration present.

AALIYAH
What is this?

IVY
Uh, what does it look like?

AALIYAH
How did you manage to get these
tickets?

IVY
From the work we've been doing. I
thought it would be a nice treat for
us to get away from here.

AALIYAH
I don't know.

IVY
What do you mean you "don't know"?

AALIYAH

It's a bit spontaneous don't you think?

IVY

It'll be good for us to get away for a bit. We can go to Disneyland.

AALIYAH

That's here in California.

IVY

(Sighs)

Whatever, Disney World, Disneyland...does it matter?

AALIYAH

I don't know. I have stuff going on still with my family.

IVY

You're always so worried about other people aren't you? But when it comes to yourself you're scared of what other people think. I think this will be good for you. Take your mind off things. I know you've always wanted to do that.

AALIYAH

I guess.

IVY

Everything including the hotel booking is covered. All you need is this.

Ivy hands her a fake ID and passport.

JENNIFER MILLER

DOB 10/15/2000

Beat.

IVY (CON'T)

It's a fake ID. It makes things easier when checking in. They usually don't let anyone under 21 unless they're accompanied so you'll be accompanying me.

Aaliyah feels suspicious and contemplates.

IVY (CON'T)
Come on, stop worrying. It'll all be
fine. Trust me.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIOTTE HOTEL MIAMI - DAY

Ivy and Aaliyah arrive at the hotel. They check in with the
front desk, CLERK.

IVY
Hi, we're here to check in.

CLERK
What's your last name?

IVY
Jackson.

The Clerk looks up the name in the system behind the desk.

CLERK
Okay, great. Claire?

IVY
Yes.

CLERK
Okay, great. I would just need to see
some form of ID.

IVY
Sure, no problem.

Aaliyah and Ivy take out their ID's. Ivy unbothered hands her
ID to the Clerk.

CLAIRE JACKSON

DOB 5/07/1998

The Clerk takes a look at it. Gives Ivy a smile of approval
handing it back to her.

CLERK
Thank you.

Aaliyah struggles as she looks for ID. The Clerk waits. A

sense of awkwardness ruminates.

AALIYAH

Here.

Aaliyah hands the Clerk her fake ID. They observe it and look back at her.

The Clerk gives her a polite smile handing it back.

CLERK

Thank you.

The Desk Clerk hands them two key cards.

CLERK

Here you ladies go. You'll be on the 5th floor room number 511 and 513.

BOTH

Thank you.

They leave heading up to their rooms.

AALIYAH

Why did she call you Claire?

IVY

It's a fake ID.

AALIYAH

But I thought//

IVY

//It's fine. We got in now let's go.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

IVY

I should hold onto your key, so you won't lose it.

AALIYAH

But how will I be able to get into my hotel if I leave?

IVY

I got it under control, alright? Just go your hotel room and I'll go mine we'll relax for a little. We can go get drinks later.

AALIYAH
Yeah, sure sounds like a plan.

IVY
Okay, good.

Ivy scans Aaliyah's card letting her in.

Aaliyah looks around. She throws herself onto the bed.

MONTAGE

-Aaliyah unpacking and putting her things away.

-Taking a shower.

-Takes a nap.

Aaliyah is awoken by a knock at her door.

She checks through the peephole and opens it for Ivy.

AALIYAH
Hey.

IVY
Why aren't you dressed yet?

AALIYAH
I was taking a nap.

IVY
I told you we were going out.

AALIYAH
Where are we going?

IVY
(sigh)
Just out. Wear something nice.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ivy and Aaliyah are at a high end night club.

The music is loud, people are dancing and drinking.

AALIYAH
This was your idea of going out?

IVY
You're supposed to have fun.

AALIYAH
I thought you hated places like this.

IVY
What?

AALIYAH
Never mind.

IVY
I'm gonna go get us some drinks.

Ivy and Aaliyah are on a crowded dance floor dancing.

Aaliyah's POV - Goes from becoming conscious and aware to blurred and distorted. The music blares in the background and the colors are bright and vivid. Aaliyah loses all sense of control as she dances.

From a distance among the crowded dance floor is Diana in a shiny purple dress sitting at the bar conversing with an older man before she leaves the club with him.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI CAB - SAME NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah leans her head on the window as she watches the cars pass by.

They go underneath a tunnel. Aaliyah puts the window down sticking her head out for some air. She freely lets the wind hit her as the car moves through the tunnel. She looks up at the tunnel lights as they speed pass her. She's in a euphoric state.

INT. MARRIOTT HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah and Ivy get dropped off at the Hotel.

Aaliyah tries to hold herself up as she walks into the lobby. Ivy aids to keep her up holding her.

INT. MARRIOTT HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ivy helps hold Aaliyah up as she stumbles down the hallway to

her room.

Passing her we see a glimpse of Diana again as she walks beside the same man from previous at the club into her room.

INT. AALIYAH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ivy brings Aaliyah to her room. She lays her down onto the bed before leaving her unconscious.

LATER

A MAN, face unspecified enters Aaliyah's hotel room with the key. He quietly closes the door behind him

He takes out his wallet from his back pocket and puts the money on the nightstand counter.

He flips her over, she groans too weak to defend herself. He takes advantage of her.

INT. AALIYAH'S HOTEL ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Aaliyah awakens more conscious but confused.

She gets up wincing in pain as she holds her pelvis. She feels a moist slickness in between her legs. She looks down putting her fingers between her thighs to see there's blood.

She pauses for a moment. A sense of dizziness comes over her. She runs to the bathroom vomiting in the toilet.

She holds her head under the faucet drinking water before spitting into the sink.

She tries to recollect her memory from what happened yesterday.

Memory Montage:

Aaliyah dancing at the club from a distance spotting Diana

The hotel scene where she passes Diana again leading up to her being taken advantage of.

Everything clicks.

INT. IVY'S HOTEL ROOM - SAME MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah knocks at Ivy's door. Ivy opens up.

IVY
Hey, what's up?

AALIYAH
Someone was in my hotel last night.

IVY
What?

AALIYAH
Last night, the club? Come on, I know
you have my fucking key!

Ivy doesn't know what to say.

AALIYAH (CON'T)
Who was it? Tell me!

IVY
I think you should sleep off last
night, you seem really disoriented
today.

AALIYAH
No, I'm not, you fucking drugged me.
What did you put in my drink?

IVY
I think you should go back//

AALIYAH
//Where did you get it?

IVY
You're being ridiculous right now.
There's people sleeping?

AALIYAH
What are you hiding?

IVY
We can meet later. Go back to your
room.

AALIYAH
No, let me inside!

Ivy tries to block the doorway but fails.

IVY
No, please--

Aaliyah fights her way into Ivy's room. She sees Keith sitting on the edge of the bed. She is stunned nearly in a state of panic and confusion.

She looks around at Ivy and Keith. Everything from the moment she met them leading up to present she realizes it was a planned setup.

Ivy and Keith look at her before Aaliyah attempts to make a break for it and escape.

Ivy and Keith grab her arms on each side. Keith uses the rest of his strength grabbing the rest of Aaliyah's body slamming her against the wall putting her into a chokehold.

KEITH

You're not going anywhere. You go to the police all they're gonna do is arrest you and charge you for a misdemeanor and with a fake ID and you're definitely not getting out for a while. You realize we're the only ones you truly have to protect you.

(to Ivy)

Claire, get her phone and her wallet.

Claire (Ivy's real name) leaves.

KEITH

Now, we're gonna take you back to your room and you're gonna stay where you are. Claire's gonna keep watch.

Aaliyah struggles to breath through his grip.

AALIYAH

You lied.

KEITH

You only have yourself to blame.

Keith releases her.

KEITH (CON'T)

Now go, I'll be right behind you.

Aaliyah walks in before Keith as he follows behind her back to her room.

They pass by a HOTEL GUEST.

Keith gently puts his hand behind Aaliyahs waist and smiles maintaining the facade.

They enter AALIYAH'S ROOM.

INT. AALIYAH'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Claire hands him her phone, wallet, and charger.

KEITH

Good.

He caresses her cheek with his hand and thumb.

KEITH

You stay here with her, okay?

LATER AT NIGHT

INT. AALIYAH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Claire sits on a sofa chair next to the TV in the corner of the room. She scrolls through her phone on social media eating a bag of chips.

Aaliyah disassociates staring mindlessly at the TV. She hugs her legs to her chest.

CLAIRE

Keith said he's coming with food.

AALIYAH

Can't give me some of yours?

Beat.

AALIYAH

How many girls have you done this to?
Does he make you do this?

Aaliyah nods to herself.

AALIYAH

You're just following protocol like he wants. You're his pet.

Another beat.

AALIYAH (CON'T)

Your name really Claire, it's not Ivy?
Just gonna keep ignoring me. Not say a

word? That must mean you're not really 19 either.

Claire gets a message from Keith.

CLAIRE
He's here. He'll be up shortly.

AALIYAH
Was any of it true?

CLAIRE
I don't know what you mean.

AALIYAH
I just...I thought we were starting to become good friends.

Claire doesn't respond.

A few moments later Keith lets himself in through the key card holding a bag of Chinese food.

He sets it down on the desk next to the TV. He takes out two containers along with napkins and utensils handing one to Claire and one over to Aaliyah.

KEITH
Come on, eat. The last thing I need is for my girls to get skinny on me.

AALIYAH
I'm not hungry.

Keith sarcastically SNEERS.

KEITH
I wasn't asking.

Beat. Keith sets the container next to the bed on the nightstand. He levels with her.

KEITH
I'm doing a nice thing for you. I suggest you take it while you can.

Aaliyah complies with his orders and eating the food

KEITH
Atta' girl!
(to Claire)

We'll be back with someone later tonight to take care of Aaliyah.

(Aaliyah)

He'll be here at 9:30.

SOMETIME LATER.

She sits at the edge of the bed.

Her hair is tied up and she wears a black halter top and a black fitted mini skirt. Her lipstick is bright red. Her head down.

Keith enters welcome a man inside, CLIENT 1. His face unspecified. Claire gets up to leave with Keith.

Aaliyah is left alone with the man.

He sits himself close next to Aaliyah. He touches her following with taking advantage of her.

CUT TO:

Aaliyah lays stomach faced on the bed. The guy buckles his pants before leaving.

Aaliyah winces in pain leading up to her crying.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah looks at herself in the mirror. The shower runs hot water steaming up the bathroom.

Her eyes watery and her makeup slightly smudged and worn off.

She turns on the faucet washing her face to clean herself up. She wipes her face with the towel. Take a look at herself again.

She notices her razor sitting on the counter along side next to other toiletries she has.

CUT TO:

Aaliyah lays on the bathroom floor against the tub. She clutches her wrist pressing it against a towel to stop the bleeding.

A KNOCK comes to the door.

Aaliyah weakly gets up looking through the peep hole.

Diana waits outside anxiously looking around.

Aaliyah opens it ajar.

DIANA

Hey, I need you to let me in.

She notices Aaliyah's wrist. Looks up at her. She SIGHS.

DIANA

Shit.

CUT TO:

Diana runs cold water from the sink underneath Aaliyah's cut. The blood still seeps. Diana uses compresses the towel onto Aaliyah's wrist to prevent the bleeding.

AALIYAH

Did anyone send you here?

DIANA

No.

AALIYAH

Don't lie to me.

DIANA

I'm not.

AALIYAH

Can you tell me your name?

DIANA

(chuckles softly and sarcastically)
Which one?

Beat.

DIANA (CON'T)

It's Tabatha. You're the Aaliyah girl right?

Aaliyah nods her head, "yes". Beat.

AALIYAH

How did you find me?

DIANA

I saw you with Claire the other night coming back. You looked pretty out of

it.

AALIYAH

I'm sure I did. I almost couldn't remember anything from that night

DIANA

That's what Rohypnol does?

AALIYAH

That's what it is?

DIANA

Yeah, you know 'roofies'?

AALIYAH

Did she do it to you too?

DIANA

Ivy is Keith's pet. Of course she did.

AALIYAH

I said the same thing. About her being his pet.

Beat.

AALIYAH (CON'T)

How old are you?

DIANA

Wanna guess?

AALIYAH

21?

DIANA

Aren't you a charm. I'm 28. But I feel like I look much older. This kind of shit wears on you. It'll wear on you too eventually and you won't look fresh faced the way you do now. They only take women who look like girls because that's what clientele sees as desirable. You have to learn how to maintain it so they don't take you out. Why else do you think Claire looks and strikes people as younger. When I first met her I thought she was 17.

AALIYAH
Why did you come?

DIANA
I wanted to check on you. It was the least I could do since our last encounter. I know I was being a bitch to you.

AALIYAH
I don't think it really matters now.

DIANA
Well, you still deserve an apology.

AALIYAH
Thanks.

DIANA
Did he take your wallet?

Aaliyah nods "yes".

DIANA (CON'T)
I really shouldn't be doing this.

Diana pulls out a plastic baggie of \$300 from her sweater pocket.

DIANA (CON'T)
I don't know if it's enough but I want you to get out of here and use this money to try get back to wherever you were before this.

She hides the baggie of money inside the toilet tank.

DIANA (CON'T)
You never show this to Keith.
Understand.

Aaliyah nods. Beat.

AALIYAH
Why are you helping me?

DIANA
It's something I wish someone had done for me. Good luck.

Diana leaves.

CUT TO:

BREAK OF DAWN

Aaliyah, asleep, feels a gentle caress on her arm leading up to her face. She softly awakens to it leading to a tight grip of her face leaving her petrified. It's Keith.

KEITH

When did she come here?

AALIYAH

What?

KEITH

I won't hesitate to break your jaw if you don't tell me.

AALIYAH

Please.

His grip gets tighter nearly about to break her jaw.

KEITH

I know she was here, I have other eyes. When was she here?

AALIYAH

After, the guy left.

KEITH

What did she tell you?

AALIYAH

She didn't say anything!

KEITH

You're not making this any easier.

His grip tightens. Aaliyah is struggling to breathe at this point. He thinks for a moment before he releases her. He gets up and searches the room. Tears apart her drawers.

He then enters the bathroom and searches doing the same thing.

He walks out the hotel room calmly.

Aaliyah quietly hyperventilates.

Aaliyah immediately goes to the bathroom to check if the

money is still there.

It's gone. Aaliyah feel a sense of defeat.

CUT TO:

Aaliyah tidies up everything that Keith took apart from the bathroom to the bedroom.

Moments later as Aaliyah finishes, Claire (Ivy) enters.

She walks past her as she finishes to sit down.

CLAIRE

You should get some sleep after you finish.

INT. AALIYAH'S HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Aaliyah wakes up.

CLAIRE

Morning. Keith left something for you.

She sees the dress from before that Diana wore. The shiny purple dress.

She goes over to it. There's a card that says "Be ready for tonight! Love Keith"

CLAIRE

He wants you to wear it tonight.

Aaliyah realizes, she doesn't say anything but thinks it's her fault.

LATER AT NIGHT

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Aaliyah waits sitting on the bed wearing the dress.

Keith enters to come get her.

KEITH

Come on.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Keith and Aaliyah pull up to a luxury villa mansion.

They get out of the car and walk towards the entrance. Keith rings the doorbell.

An older gentleman opens it. JOHN, mid 50s, wears a brown sweater with white collar underneath.

KEITH
Hey how you doing?

They shake hands.

KEITH
She's all yours.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

John and Aaliyah sits across from each other at a long dining room table.

Aaliyah is silent. Her head is down.

John grabs a bottle of wine he pours it into his glass. he looks at Aaliyah.

She shrinks avoiding interaction.

He thinks of something to say.

JOHN
Have you tried the wine?

AALIYAH
Hm?

JOHN
I said have you tried the wine?

AALIYAH
Oh, yes. It's good.

She takes a sip.

JOHN
(softly chuckles)
You're cute.

He can tell she's nervous.

JOHN
(reassures)
You know, it's like a regular date.

You don't have to sit there all quiet.
I didn't put anything in the food.
 (tries to make a joke)
...or the drink
 (softly chuckles again)

Aaliyah has no reaction.

His smile dimmers. He realizes it's a bad joke.

 JOHN
 (changes subject)
Jennifer, right? You wanna tell me a
bit about yourself?

Aaliyah thinks about whether she should lie to him or not.

 AALIYAH
Are you a cop?

 JOHN
No. Just here with a fine lady like
yourself eating dinner.

 AALIYAH
How do I know you're not lying?

 JOHN
Because I paid your pimp. Even if I
was there's so many cops who do
anyways too even though it's illegal.

 AALIYAH
If you know, then why are you a
hypocrite?

 JOHN
You're very discerning.

 AALIYAH
Why are we having this conversation?

 JOHN
You asked me if I was a cop. I'm just
making conversation.

 AALIYAH
Do you have a wife?

JOHN

Yes.

AALIYAH

Where is she?

JOHN

Right now, Ibiza.

AALIYAH

Does she know about this?

JOHN

She does, but she doesn't mind it.

Aaliyah can't believe this.

AALIYAH

What do you gain from doing this?

JOHN

Excitement.

AALIYAH

So your wife doesn't excite you?

JOHN

We've been married for 35 years. We just have our own lives to live. It wouldn't surprise me if she was getting fucked by some 25 year old boy toy as we speak. It might be hard to agree with at first but we love each other. We work through it.

AALIYAH

(are you kidding me)

That's love to you?

JOHN

It's how we compromise. I get to have a special time for an hour with a girl like you and she gets to travel and fuck all the boy toys she wants. It doesn't bother me.

AALIYAH

So when are you gonna fuck me?

JOHN

After we finish this meal.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah puts her dress back on. She goes to the bathroom to freshen up.

She sprays one of the perfumes in the bathroom onto her wrist and neck.

She leaves.

JOHN

Here.

John hands her extra money. It's \$200.

JOHN

For keeping me company. I'll wait downstairs for you.

John leaves.

Aaliyah takes the money and wraps it in tissue from the bathroom. She puts it in her underwear before heading downstairs.

She walks downstairs to meet John where he walks her to the door.

AALIYAH

Thank you.

Aaliyah leaves and sees the car waiting out front where Keith waits.

She gets inside.

They drive back to the hotel.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Keith return her to the hotel room.

KEITH

Get some sleep.

Keith leaves.

LATER ON:

CRACK OF DAWN

worker, wears professional work attire.

SHEILA

Hello, my name is Sheila. I'm going to be your social worker.

(pause)

You've been through an incredibly hard journey.

AALIYAH

So what's gonna happen?

SHEILA

Well, first we're going to contact your family and then see what types of programs we can look into.

AALIYAH

Programs?

SHEILA

Yes. We do recommend programs for people who were victims of trafficking. Group therapy works as well as individual--

AALIYAH

I was trafficked?

SHEILA

Yes. Your father reported you missing 3 days ago, Friday, June 10th. Marcus Reed.

Aaliyah realizes everything leading up to now.

AALIYAH

My dad was looking for me?

SHEILA

I know this is extremely hard for you to hear?

(long pause)

Aaliyah?

AALIYAH

Can I just have a few minutes?

SHEILA

Sure.

Aaliyah calls Alba. She picks up.

ALBA

Hello?

Aaliyah doesn't say anything right away. Just wants to hear her voice. Relief and sadness washes over her. She tries not cry. A few short moments then...

ALBA

Hello?

AALIYAH

Hey, Albs'.

ALBA

Aaliyah?

AALIYAH

Yeah. It's me.

ALBA

It's so good to hear your voice. Dad and I were so worried about you. Are you somewhere safe?

AALIYAH

Yeah. What have you been doing?

ALBA

I haven't been able to sleep. I thought you were dead.

AALIYAH

I'm so sorry.

Beat.

ALBA

Anyways, Dad said you were right about the whole private school thing. He's sending me to public school in the fall.

Aaliyah covers up her cries with chuckles.

AALIYAH

Really? That's great.

ALBA

He was also just really stressed out

about you not being here. Everything
just started to feel too much

AALIYAH
Maybe me going missing was a blessing
in disguise, huh?

Alba and Aaliyah CHUCKLE together. Beat

AALIYAH
(sniffles)
Are you nervous starting?

ALBA
Not really. I'm more relieved over the
fact I won't be seen in a plaid
uniform.

Aaliyah LAUGHS covering up her tears. Beat.

ALBA
When are you coming home?

AALIYAH
I don't know yet.

ALBA
Did you call dad?

AALIYAH
No, just you.

ALBA
I'll let him know you called and that
you're safe.

AALIYAH
I don't know when I'm gonna be back.

ALBA
Can you just tell me where you are?

Aaliyah is silent. Beat.

ALBA (CON'T)
I know where you got the money and I'm
not mad. Everything just sorta' came
together when you gone missing so//

AALIYAH
I'm really sorry. I was just so scared

and I didn't wanna drag you into anything. I was just trying to help us.

ALBA

It's okay. I don't think you're a bad person. I always knew you meant well.

AALIYAH

I love you.

ALBA

I love you too.

Aaliyah nods her head. Holding back her tears.

AALIYAH

Bye.

She hangs up.

She remembers the money is still hiding in her underwear

She waits a few moments and looks around to make sure people are oblivious. She slowly reaches her hand into pants taking out the tissue wrapped money. She looks around counting it underneath the table before wrapping it up again shoving it back into her underwear.

She takes one last look around before getting up to leave.

INT. PRECINCT LOBBY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She finds approaches any stranger.

AALIYAH

Hey, do you have a quarter?

CUT TO:

INT. PAYPHONE BOOTHE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah inserts a quarter into the payphone slot. She dials a phone number. She waits until someone answers.

AALIYAH

Hello?

The rest of the conversation is inaudible. We are uncertain on who she called. She looks around as people pass her while she still speaks on the phone.

Moments later towards the end of the conversation.

AALIYAH

...yeah can you get me on Johnson St,
Hansen Boulevard? I'm wearing burgundy
sweatshirts and white tee. I don't
have a phone right now can you just
say that for him so he knows what to
look for when he comes? Yes... okay,
thank you.

She hangs up, exiting the booth.

EXT. PRECINCT BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She leaves the precinct passing by police and other cop cars
attempting to blend in.

She turns to an empty corner block. Her walking pace speeds
up before she runs the next block.

She continues to run until she finds herself at a boulevard.

EXT. HANSEN BOULEVARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She stops and takes a breather. She discreetly feels the
front of her pants to check for the money. She begins walking
again passing along a couple of guys .

GUY #1

Hey, what's good shawty.

Ignores.

GUY #1

Hey, I said what's good shawty?

Ignores.

GUY #1

Ayo, bitch are deaf?! I'm talking to
you!

Aaliyah attempts to control her anger.

GUY #1

Man, fuck you! Ugly ass bitch!

Aaliyah loses it.

AALIYAH

Ayo! I hear you! You don't know what I
been through or what the fuck I'm
capable of!

GUY #1

Woah, mamas. I was just playing wichu'

GUY #1

Fucking crazy!

GUY #2

I like her.

Aaliyah walks away.

GUY #1

But really, how much?

The guys laugh amongst each other as she walks away.

A taxi cab pulls up in front of her. DRIVER, rolls down his
window.

DRIVER

You, Aaliyah?

AALIYAH

Yeah.

Aaliyah opens the car door.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah pulls out the money from her underwear handing a 100
dollar bill to the driver.

He gives her a strange look.

AALIYAH

I'm--I'm sorry. I been through a lot.
You can keep the change.

The Driver sighs. He finds a tissue taking the money from
her.

AALIYAH

Thank you. Really.

The Driver starts up the car and they drive off.

Aaliyah looks out the window as they pass boulevard streets.
She leans her head on the window, hopeful. She take a breathe
gently closing her eyes.

BLACK OUT.

THE END.

