Barbie Jr.

Written by

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Barbie Doll/Toy-line and Media.

Address
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FADE IN

INT. BARBIE'S ROOM - MORNING

It's a sun-sweet breaking dawn for the legend of lush herself, Barbie. No sight of her currently, but it's brain-dead obvious that this is her room.

Evidence: Everywhere is pink, pristine and has a glittery finish. Not to mention a wall of awards, photos and accomplishments. Her name is plastered all about the room as well. That helps.

An alarm clock with a toy Ballerina Barbie ceramic atop chimes for six A.M. The ballerina spins, singing to wake up.

ALARM CLOCK
(peppy)
Rise, shine. Look, divine, don't be late, be on time! Rise, shine, Wakey-time, hurry-before there's no more rhymes.

A dainty hand peeks from the covers of the bed, clicking the clock off. The covers unfold, the shadow of Barbie casts over. It stretches and yawns. Just her shadow.

Insert:

A calendar. Dates, appointments and events are all marked. Barbie's hand comes to frame and circles a date that seems to be important. A sigh is heard.

From the movements of the shadow, she disrobes.

From behind a shower-curtain, a perfect silhouette of her casts. Her hands peek out on occasion to grab random bottles.

The walk-in closet is totally high-end. An automated clothing carousel rotates. A dress is considered for one moment, but chosen over something more flashy.

Insert:

One final wall opens. This one is eerily odd. The wall consists of a rack of masks that captures Barbie's likeness 100%. Each mask a unique expressions/emotions and pattern of makeup.

Barbie's hand sifts through a row of these masks and takes one of her smiling giddily with a simple coating of blush and strawberry lip-gloss.

The inside of the mask looms over the screen for a moment with a leathery squishing sound effect.

A mirror finally reveals BARBIE as she looks upon herself for some last minute touch-ups. Her demeanor reads as perpetually happy, flawless in skin and figure and in prime twenties.

BARBIE
(Softly)
Morning, Barbie...

Her reflection responds, weirdly enough.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
Is that all you have to say? Aren't you excited for today? The fans? Seeing your friends?

BARBIE
I suppose...

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
(scoffs)
That's not a very 'Barbie' type of word. 'I suppose' you better find the happy. What's not to love about being you?

BARBIE
Nothing...

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
Good girl! Off you go, now. Byyyeee...

Barbie exits her room, her reflection waving.

She begins her 'awesome' day.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

First is surfing on the Malibu shores with her honey-boo Ken. KEN, prime twenties, lives for Barbie, hunked-up but not the brightest.

She almost wipes-out, but miraculously recovers. A small flap of her mask dangles. She fixes it before Ken can notice.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - CONTINUOUS

Second is a big tennis match. Barbie's clearly winning. Despite the fast-moving ball and the elaborate and laborious movements, her smile never changes.

Game set and match. As she waves on the podium, trophy-in-hand, robotically. Nothing earned, nothing special.

EXT. STORE - CONTINUOUS

Next is the ribbon-cutting for a new gift shop. Think the Disney-store but Barbie-fied. She cuts the pink-ribbon.

Among the roaring crowd, color seems to flicker in and out. For a second, everything is pure gray and all sounds are muffled and wavy, as if under water.

Color returns quickly. Barbie does a double take.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKROOM OFFICE - DAY

This office is claustrophobic, cluttered and doesn't exactly scream dignity. An interviewer sifts through a meager resume as ALEJANDRO SERGIO, A.S for short lazily waits.

A.S is 18, fresh out of high school, Afro-Latino Descent. Even though he wears business casual clothing, its clearly wrinkled and his posture is non-existent.

INTERVIEWER
(looking at papers)
And what would you say are your greatest weaknesses?

A.S
Ahh... god. What was it again? Um... I'm too hard on myself. I over-think crap. Something like that.

The interviewer writes down his answer.

A.S (CONT'D)
You mind if I ask a few questions for a change?

The interviewer looks up from his paper.

A.S (CONT'D)
Why does a table-wiping job need questions about strengths and weaknesses?

INTERVIEWER
Just standard procedure, bud. How about availability?

A.S
(rolls eyes)
Everyday that ends with Y. Do I have the job the now?

INTERVIEWER
(writing)
It doesn't exactly work that way. I think we touched all the bases today. Just gotta run the info through and uh... we'll see.

A.S
(stands up)
Uh-huh.

A.S stands up and takes his leave.

INTERVIEWER
Think you could close the door on your way out?

A.S
(not looking back)
We'll see.

A.S leaves the door untouched.

EXT. NYC RESTAURANT - DAY

A.S exits the building. He sees a help wanted sign pasted on the window. With a pen he casually scribbles on the sign so it reads "Help UN-wanted".

A.S
Fixed it.

His phone rings. The number lightens his mood. He picks up.

A.S (CONT'D)
Hey, mom! How's it been going? I uh... I missed you. Yeah, a lot.

He walks along, happily talking.

A.S (CONT'D)
At a job interview. Well, finishing more like. Oh, well it was a cleaning kind of thing. They said they look forward to working with me.

INT. SUBWAY - CONTINUOUS

A.S leans on the grody walls, still chatting.

A.S
Huh? You ran out of the money Abuela sent? Wasn't that... three days ago? Hm? Oh, well I would. I will. Soon as this job gets back to me.

INT. TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

A.S sits on a cramped seat, adjusting his elbow as he talks on the phone.

A.S
So, what audition do you have lined up for today?
(Perks ear)
A knocked up waitress? That's great! Classic typecasting. So you're living where exactly?
(Beat)
A tow truck? There's a reasonable amount of room in there too... oh, I see. A tow truck is taking the CAR you were sleeping in. Yep, uh-huh, I could see why you'd need the funds. No, you're right. A sunbaked bench isn't a great alternative for a bed.
(a chuckle)
Well, despite that hiccup, I hope you're still stopping by for my birthday.
(glowers)
Ah, there's magically *another* audition right on my birthday? What are the odds. Maybe you still consider---What's that beeping? They're dragging the car away right now? Hi? Hello?

The line is dead.

A.S looks at his phone, lips thinning in disappointment. He politely inquires the person on his left.

A.S (CONT'D)
Excuse me, miss. Could you please tilt your head to the right. Just for a quick sec?

The woman honors the request. A.S aggressively pounds the window in a controlled fit of rage, loudly. Some people stare. He stops.

The train begins to slow. This is A.S' stop. The train door slides open.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

A.S enters his apartment devoid of spirit. The interior is a bit spacious and neatly furnished. Likely not his doing.

ABUELA DORIA, 48, very young for a biological grandmother of a young adult. A passionate, fiery Latina. She's a total Barbie-fan. Sporting pink lounge wear as she watches Barbie play a fierce tennis match on T.V.

DORIA
(in spanish)
Get her! Swing that racket with the grace of a butterfly. My goodness, she's too talented.

A.S attempts to walk behind the couch inconspicuously. He is avoiding her like the plague. Unfortunately for A.S, Doria has eyes at the back of her head.

DORIA (CONT'D)
(watching the screen, english)
Alejan! How did the interview go?

A.S
(curt)
I showed up if that's what your asking.

DORIA
You don't sound too confident.

A.S
I'm confident that I wasted time.

DORIA
(pauses T.V, looks in his direction)
You messed it up on purpose, didn't you?

A.S
Why would I do that, Abuela? Jobs equal money. I like money.

DORIA
You did it unconsciously. Like you do it now. My lord, you are lucky I am in a good mood. And... I bet you on money you didn't iron anything you're wearing.

A.S
How do you know I didn't?

DORIA
Because the iron is exactly where I left it three days ago. I made sure to put it somewhere you couldn't find, so you would have to ask me where it was. You did not ask me, that's how I know!

A.S, indifferent and defeated, sits on a loveseat.

A.S
Alright, get it over with.

DORIA
(spanish)
What are you talking about?

A.S
(explains)
I find a way to make you tick. You get pissy and chew me out for five to seven minutes. But NOT before I sit in this exact seat. So go ahead. I'm ready.

Doria just cannot deal with A.S' smart-ass behavior today. She tries a less toxic approach.

DORIA
We're not doing that.
(points)
Sit next to me...

A.S is apprehensive to her offer.

DORIA (CONT'D)
I'm not going to slap your culo. You're not seven anymore.

A.S obeys and sits on the couch. She sits down next to him. No malice, no anger on her side.

DORIA (CONT'D)
Why did you throw the interview?

A.S
I didn't graduate high-school just so I could wipe some tables for a living. I didn't like how that guy looked at me either.

DORIA
Sometimes you make it easy for people to judge. No posture, no eye contact, dear lord, did you even brush your hair today? It's like a bird's nest!

A.S
Can't I just do some chores around here instead of getting a job?

DORIA
I honestly do not trust you to keep my house proper.

A.S
Then we're outta options. I guess I just lie on this couch till I die.

DORIA
Always with the pity parties. Sit up straight.
(fixes his posture)
Look at the T.V. You see Barbie? You see how determined, how un-yielding, how graceful she is? If you adopted that kind of attitude in life, you'd be on top of the world.

A.S
(set off like a fuse)
Why do all of these brain-dead conversations lead to Barbie? She doesn't even know you exist! So what, I wear lipstick and shop at Victoria's Secret? Then I'm the perfect Grandson, right?

DORIA
Why do you always miss the point?

A.S
No, it’s a bullseye. I’m useless and you can’t stand looking at me!

DORIA
Aye... I can’t do this with you today. I need to pray.

A.S
(sneers)
‘Course you do... Mom doesn’t give me all this trouble.

A.S turns on his heel and retreats to his room. That last comment stings Abuela to the very core, but she is a strong woman.

CUT TO:

INT. ABUELA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Doria’s room is neat, organized and pink as strawberry ice cream. She enters, a hand to her forehead. A.S has siphoned a good chunk of her soul.

She prepares for some sort of ritual. Doria gets on her knees, grabs a handful of pink glitter and blows it from her palm.

Next she opens her closet and finicks with a special compartment.

Inside: An elaborate Barbie shrine. Seemingly years in the making. It has everything you’d imagine.

A collage of pictures, aspirational quotes and doll accessories plastered artistically. Nothing is wishy-washy about this physical tribute.

There’s offerings of bread and cakes at the side of the bottom shelf. The centerpiece: A limited edition doll from the 90s. Worth at least two-hundred thousand dollars.

Doria takes a favored picture from the shrine. She speaks to it, no, prays to it.

DORIA
(devoted)
Shining light in pink. I have been faithful. I have been grateful.
(MORE)

DORIA (CONT'D)
I have been patient. I humbly ask. Please, guide my grandson. He is my life's work, as you know. I just want what's best for him. That is why I come to you, because you are the best. Please. Offer a chance to him, let your perfect essence pour onto his skin as he sleeps at night. Show him. I beg of you show him.

Doria waits expectantly, as if communicating with the picture she prays to.

DORIA (CONT'D)
Of course. I rest it in your well-manicured hands, Barbie.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Barbie is adjusting her make-up and refining her hair. She now sports a lavish gown fit for a gala.

The smile still present, but it does not move or adjust once. Not even when she applies lipstick.

A subtle knock on the door. This startles her, so much so, the mask slips off of her face.

She catches it! Just centimeters away from the floor. Just before Barbie places her mask , she looks up her face, her real face in the mirror.

Plain, reddened, tear tracks running down the cheeks. Not ugly, just stressed, overwhelmed and ready to pop at any moment.

Ken peeks in, covering his eyes politely.

KEN
Five more minutes, Bee.

Barbie stands petrified, mask in hand before responding.

BARBIE
(cheery)
Your amaze! This gala is gonna be glitz-tastic.

He blows a kiss with his other hand before closing the door. Barbie sighs as she quickly shuffles on the mask.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
That was close. Why are you so...

BARBIE
(confused)
So what?

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
I can't quite put my finger on it. Frowny, I guess. This party's all about you!

BARBIE
All of my parties are about me...

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
We don't have time for this today, honey.
(sings)
You have people waaaiiting.
(waves off)
Now, off you go. And don't forget to smile...

Barbie fixes up the most precious and stunning smile the world ever witnessed. Presentable for a party.

She heads for the door. One last look at the mirror. Her refection gives a thumbs up.

HALLWAY. INT - CONTINUOUS

Barbie meets up with Ken, who locks in his arm with hers.

KEN
Ooh, I love this feeling of the material. Like my arm is being kissed. Who weaved it?

BARBIE
Me all the way. I'm a designer, remember?

They begin to walk, arm and arm.

KEN
Is there anything you can't do?

BARBIE
I can't see anything changing...

Ken laughs, Barbie doesn't.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Upbeat yet dignified music plays, people in refined suits and dresses walk about, upper crust types no doubt. They hold masquerades.

The theme: Midnight in Paris. A giant clock ticks in the middle of the venue. It’s inches away from dropping to midnight.

When Barbie enters, everyone stops to clap and cheer. It truly isn’t a party without Barbie. Some people flock to her, naturally.

BARBIE
(to Ken, quietly)
Can you hold them off? I gotta go check on the girls.

Ken salutes of Barbie slips away. He wrangles the crowd with his charms. Barbie sneaks off to a certain corner of the ballroom.

Her sisters, CHELSEA, STACY, and SKIPPER are dressed to the nines and pre-occupied with their own affairs.

CHELSEA, the youngest of the Barbie bunch, six and full of life. She plays with her dolls and gets REEEEALLLY into their lore.

CHELSEA
(playing w/dolls)
Wow, Kelsie! How big do you think that cake has to be?
(places doll to ear)
Hm? Gluten free? Are you still on that? It’s cake, Kels. Life’s not about impressing your Pilates instructor. You know he’s been eyeing Jina for a while.

STACY, middle child and age thirteen, she skate boards in circles around the marbled floor... in heels. She practices kick-flips, zooming and zipping around tables.

Skipper, the second oldest is eighteen is still in her moody/angsty phase. Her hair is dyed black with a single pink streak. She texts away, ignoring everything else in the world.

Stacy wooshes past her, practically toppling Skipper over.

SKIPPER
(piece of her mind)
This is a party! Act like it before I dunk you in a punch bowl!

STACY
(cheeky)
I am! I'm turned aaallll the way to eleven. How 'bout you act like it! Who spends a whole party on their phone?

Things are getting heated between the two. Barbie chimes in, despite the thick atmosphere, this is the happiest she's been all night.

BARBIE
(exuberant and chipper)
Girls! Girls! Every where is a party when all four of us are together. Now, hug!

Both Skipper and Stacy eye one another, not wanting to make physical contact.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Pleeeeeze... for me?

They exchange the fakest hug know to mankind.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
(claps)
Yay! Now were all friends again! So, Stacy, how was your day today?

STACY
(skates away)
Can't talk Barbie, 'bout to jump the buffet table.

BARBIE
No prob! Don't forget to wear a helmet! Skipper... how was---

SKIPPER
(curt)
Kinda in a conversation with thirty seven other people...

BARBIE
Oh, that's a whooper. Look at you Ms. Popular. Whatcha talkin about. Girl to girl.

SKIPPER
Can you like, be weird somewhere else?

Skipper scoots away. Barbie laughs off the comment.

BARBIE
I'm not weird... I'm fun. Chelsea... Am I weird?

Chelsea is too absorbed in her conversation with her doll Kelsie to answer Barbie's question.

CHELSEA
Lotta brown belts in this function, huh, Kelsie?
(places doll to ear)
Yes I DO think it's tacky. Black goes with everything! Are you sure you're my twin sister.

Barbie is abandoned by her own flesh and blood, she quickly peels the mask halfway discreetly to wipe a tear from her real face.

RAQUEL
(O.S)
Isn't that just sooo sad.

Barbie turns. Right behind her is RAQUEL, prime twenties, feminine and fierce and sees herself as a rival.

Glistening black hair and loves leopard prints and brown and white hues as shown by her dress.

A total contrast to the pink and glitter aesthetic. She is essentially the anti-version of Barbie.

RAQUEL (CONT'D)
Abandoned by your younger sisters! Oh, its just to teeeerible. How do you ever manage?

BARBIE
(jovial)
Oh, hi Raquel. Enjoying the festivities?

RAQUEL
Avoiding questions... getting out of difficult subjects. Sounds like the Barbie I know. And as for the
(mocks Barbie)
"festivities"
(MORE)

RAQUEL (CONT'D)
(normal tone, pronounces Paris with the accent)
Isn't midnight in Paris more of a sweet sixteen kind of vibe? I know you're far past that.

BARBIE
Can't mess with the classics.

RAQUEL
Cliches more like...
(swirls her drink)
It's poetic really. The tired theming of this party. You do the same things over and over again for years on end. And nobody, especially you, gets sick of it.

Raquel's words resonate with Barbie. All the color around them begins to flicker in and out.

BARBIE
Sick of it? Me?

RAQUEL
(condescends)
That is sooo precious. You're like a naive fairytale princess wandering through the forest. Think about it, all the parties, the fashion shows, trophies, certificates and movie deals. Don't you feel a little bit lonely?

The background music of the party begins to disorient.

BARBIE
(flustered)
It does get a little bit... quiet.

RAQUEL
And of course it does! Why wouldn't it. It's lonely at the top. Your friends can't keep up with you, your fans will never know the real you, and like it I said...

Skipper gestures to Barbie's little sisters in the distance.

RAQUEL (CONT'D)
Your little Barbie Juniors have flown the nest. Honestly, it's lucky Ken still sticks to you.

Barbie begins to play with the side of her cheek with thick worry. Tension rises within her.

RAQUEL (CONT'D)
It's truly awful you there isn't a Mommy or Daddy to talk to about this. How long has it been again? Since little Chelsea was new to the world. And right after, they magically embark on a around-the-world-trip. No fans or news reporters have thought to ask about that? Sweetie, I know the world is a big place, But does it reeeaalllly take six long years to trek around it? Makes me wonder if there's something you're not telling me.

Even with the brightest smile, its obvious Barbie is about to burst. Ken takes her shoulder, appearing like a guardian angel.

KEN
That dress must be awfully drafty. Cuz, your shivering like were on a ski trip. Anyway... it's almost midnight.
(hands her a pink masquerade)
Ready?

RAQUEL
(flirty)
Hiiiii Kenny... me and Barbs were just having a little girl talk. But you can stay if you like.
(to Barbie)
You okay, hun? Need some punch?

The lights dim, it's officially midnight as the central clock elegantly rings.

The party-goers place on their masquerades. Before Barbie knows it, she's running. Somewhere, anywhere that isn't here.

Thanks to the darkness, nobody can see her flee. Her reflection, acting with a mind of her own, calls back to her through various reflective surfaces of the ballroom.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
(appears from marble floors)
You know she was just joking.
(MORE)

BARBIE'S REFLECTION (CONT'D)
(appears from glassy windows)
You can't believe everything Raquel tells you.

Barbie runs trips over her heels and almost collides with a punch bowl. Her reflection materializes in the pinkish liquid.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION (CONT'D)
Running won't change anything.

Barbie winces backwards, bumping into a round table. An ice sculpture of her exact likeness stands grandly in the center.

ICE SCULPTURE
Just smile. It's easy. I can do this alll day. Until the day I melt away...

In a fright, she pushes off from the table. The sculpture breaks into several hard chunks.

She flees, kicking off her heels to gain extra speed. In Barbie's mad-dash, everything slows down around her.

Everything is reduced to sparkling pink lights, laughs, cheers and music blend into a muddled sound. Her name is being called by Ken.

She ignores it, bumping into unknown bodies. Pushing through anything to get away.

CUT TO:

INT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

A quiet starry evening. Nobody is taking the bus at this hour. The only thing standing around is a sign and a sheltered bench.

Trudging footsteps roll through, getting louder with each step. A frazzled Barbie enters frame. Distraught but still pretty as ever.

She looks left, then right. With a sigh, she grabs the sides of her face.

POP!

The mask plops to the ground, it faces the sky, ever-smiling. A slow upward pan reveals Barbie's real face.

Her makeup runny and gunky from her tears, almost hard to recognize her. The contrasting expression is akin to the Greek comedy and tragedy masks.

Barbie lets out a pitchy, sort of whale-like cry that feels like she's been holding onto for an eternity.

BARBIE
What is it all for? What have I been doing for all these years. What am I missing?

Her reflection reappears in a nearby puddle.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
Do you have to cry like beached dolphin being stabbed by an epi-pen?

BARBIE
I don't want to talk to you! You... liar! Maybe Raquel didn't mean any real harm...

Her a reflection crosses her arms in heavy skepticism. She shoots a squint that says "Girl, puh-lease."

BARBIE (CONT'D)
You're always so cynical! But she's right! I'm tired of it! My sisters don't know I exist, my accomplishments, my career, my legacy feels like cheap plastic, Mom and Dad are gone---

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
HEY! We been through this already. They aren't gone, they're on a honeymoon. A six-year long honeymoon, remember?

BARBIE
I can't keep lying to everyone! I... I hate this.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
Since when does Barbie hate anything?

BARBIE
You don't know me!

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
(offended)
Of course I do! As if you were my own reflection. What are you missing then, besides riches, iconography, beauty, and being affiliated with the color pink. Who needs Mom and Dad? It's just you and me!

Barbie has nothing. She flicks a hand through the puddle to dismiss her reflection. As it ripples away, a new reflection appears.

A woman. Brown hair tied with a green bandana, delicate features, and a concerned and caring expression. In her hands is a toddler squirming about.

WOMAN
Excuse me, miss. You seem to be having a real messy evening. Everything good?

BARBIE
(sniffs)
Not everything.

The woman, taking empathy, sits down at the bench, kid on her knee, patting the empty space next to her. Barbie sits down next to her, head hung low.

WOMAN
Heartbreak? I've been there. What was his name?

BARBIE
Ken, and he's actually amazing F.Y.I. I'm just lost.
(palm on chest)
In here.

The woman nods in agreement, she has definitely been there before.

WOMAN
Kinda like a fog, you don't know how you got in and you don't know how to get out.
(tickles toddler's chin)
But then this little light o' mine popped in one day. He helped me find my way.

Barbie studies the woman's affection towards the child. The woman notices and places him on Barbie's lap.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
His name's Dillan.

Barbie is instantly in love. A genuine smile pulls her long face. Dillan doesn't share the love, his unease turns to glass breaking cries.

The woman takes him back, Barbie sinks lower.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(soothing baby)
Alright, alright...

BARBIE
It's probably because he sees right through me... the howls of the hollow void in my chest.

WOMAN
Probably the make-up. Then again, he's a two-year old. They speak their minds. Who broke your heart, tonight?

BARBIE
A friend told me something that I didn't want to hear. But I needed it. And... it's got me all messed up.

WOMAN
Oh, get in line, sister.

Barbie scowls, wiping smeared lipstick of her chin.

BARBIE
Have you ever felt... fake. Like the world knows you as someone you aren't?

WOMAN
Ah, I see now. You got people to impress, don't you? So you put on a face for them.

BARBIE
Exactly and... I put on that face for so long that I forget what's under! Like, you don't even know the real you.

The woman affirms her statement with a subtle gesture.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Great! So you can fix me! Make me feel whole again! What do I need to do?

WOMAN
Hon, I'm not a therapist! You gotta figure that out. Don't you gotta momma to...

She reads Barbie's face and pulls back her comment.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Oh, that's the wall you hit. Now I get it. No mama, no guidance. Well, I got my hands full with that.
(rubs toddler's head)
This is a guess, but maybe you aren't used to people keeping it real.

BARBIE
What do you mean?

WOMAN
You strike me as a girl whose been told things that you wanna hear all her life, but tonight, someone gave you something different.

BARBIE
You mean... the truth?

WOMAN
It may hurt, but better that than a fake life. I think you should find someone who can help you find yourself. Someone honest.

BARBIE
(points)
Like Dillan?

WOMAN
(hesitant)
That's uh, one way to look at it.

The realization hits Barbie like a brick. She stares intently at Dillan. Then to the sky. Hope sparks into joy. She kisses the child.

In response, Dillan bites her finger. Hard. It draws a bit of blood. She doesn't care.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Dillan! No! Bad. Christ, this kid.

BARBIE
Thank you, Dillan. Don't ever be afraid to share your feelings.

A bus pulls over and stops. The woman takes Dillan and boards the bus, giving Barbie one last look of assurance.

Barbie stands tall, a new light in her soul. She wipes any remaining tears. Before leaving, she kicks the mask to the road.

The bus rolls away, crushing the mask. A smile of satisfaction on her face. She marches along the road.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
(whips out phone)
Please pick up.... Please pick up... Hello? Skipper, sweetie! Episode?
(chuckles)
I didn't have an episode, silly. They're looking for me? I'll be there, no prob. Listen... I'll pay you and everything. But how fast can you design a website?
(waits for an answer)
Yeah, that works. Hm? Aaaahh... its a surprise. Hang tight, I'll wrangle the crowd like I always do. I know you're getting something out of this, but for what it's worth... thank you. I really need this right now. 'Kay. Love ya.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

A lowkey morning stirs in. Abuela Doria watches a morning talk show on T.V as she makes a fresh pot of coffee. She speaks on the phone, irritated.

DORIA
Why are you calling Alejan for money? Even if he was employed, that is nasty. I send you enough every week.

She waddles to the couch, steaming mug in hand.

DORIA (CONT'D)
(Spanish, threatens)
Don't you make me spill this coffee. You're getting me to another level of fed up.

Doria sits down, leaning the mug on a coaster.

DORIA (CONT'D)
Stop with that! Stop it. Alejandro is your son! He misses you everyday and you just fling around like street cat. I gotta be his mother instead of his grandmother because of you. You're a thirty four year old woman, act like it!
(grunts)
Aye, we'll figure this out later.

The she hangs up, lamenting in Spanish. The talk-show host on T.V welcomes Barbie onto the podium. Doria gives her full attention, turning up the volume.

SHOW HOST
What is this secret project of yours? New inclusive doll? A feature film? A theme park?

BARBIE
A theme park? Where would I even put it? My backyard?

Doria laughs joyously at her little joke.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
What I'm working on... is an opportunity.

This has Doria's attention.

SHOW HOST
Not sure I follow. Like charity?

BARBIE
I want to give someone out there a chance to shine. To be bigger than they are. You get to live with me and my awesome sisters, attend events, help represent what I stand for and just... have fun.

SHOW HOST
A job with Barbie as my boss?

BARBIE
No, jobs have stakes. This is an opportunity. A mentorship if you wanna call it that. I wanna return what my mother gave me as a child. As all of you know I haven't seen her in six years. Daddy finally took my her on that 'round the world trip they always dreamed of. And they made it clear they want to be left alone.

DORIA
Aye...Pobrecita...

BARBIE
I got some inspiration lately. You can thank my good friend Raquel for this... I'm calling it... Barbie Jr!

Doria claps madly at the name.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Applications go live in about three hours. Anybody, any age can apply; whoever, where-ever, just sign up! So what are you waiting for? See you in Malibu!

Barbie blows a kiss as the crowd goes wild. Doria gets on her knees, too thankful for this turn of events.

DORIA
Answer to prayer! I knew you would reach out to me!

Doria rushes over to A.S' door.

DORIA (CONT'D)
Alejan! Alejan!

INT. A.S' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Inside is the average state of any young adult male's room, musty, dank and deprived of any sunlight.

Doria is taken aback by the rotted atmosphere but advances further. She navigates, making sure to not slip or trip over any worthless crap.

Doria reaches the bed, piled high with unwashed clothes and bed sheets, a pulse seeps from under. The blinds are pulled to let in some sun.

DORIA
(shakes the bed)
Alejandro! Wake up, your time to shine is here, nieto!

With a groggy yawn, the pile drops away. A.S emerges from his bed like a mole popping in a prairie. And just like a mole, he hates the light.

A.S
Feh! Too bright!

DORIA
Glad to have you join us... and where is the air freshener I gave you!

A.S
Um, ran out.

A.S erodes from his bed, stretching in ugly and unrefined ways. Bones pop, muscles creak.

A.S (CONT'D)
Any particular reason were up right now at...
(checks the time)
Ten o' three? That's the crack of dawn!

DORIA
We have a date with destiny! The stars are aligning. Barbie is looking for someone to take in, to nurture, to polish and shine into a pearl. Do you see where I'm going with this?

A.S
Are you on those painkillers again?

DORIA
Alejandro, I'm serious! Come with me.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Doria drags a tired A.S to the couch, showing the Barbie on T.V On the talk show.

BARBIE
The Barbie Jr title is open to anyone. I just want everyone to know how ready I am to be a guide, a mother for a lost soul. It could be anyone watching right now. Can you see me? Where ever you are, I will find you.

A.S cringes hard.

DORIA
You see? She's talking to you! Why are you standing around? Apply already.

A.S
Nobody, especially Barbie, is looking for me! Where do you get this stuff!

DORIA
Do you not trust me with your future?

A.S
Really starting to. What made you think: "Yeah, A.S Would be all over this. Cuz I know him so well and all and since we never argue he'll have no questions towards my sanity and judgement."

DORIA
I'm sorry, are you busy with your job at the moment?

This stings A.S.

A.S
Just to make things clear: Mom told me over the phone that I'm exactly where I need to be!

DORIA
I love my daughter, but she is in no place to be giving you life advice.

A.S
She doesn't care whether I'm useful to her or not!

DORIA
Where do you get these insane ideas?

A.S
Where do you? Why is everything always a fight with you!

DORIA
(top of her lungs)
BECAUSE YOU NEVER LISTEN! YOU'RE ALWAYS IN YOUR WORLD!

The outburst silences everything. All that can be heard is the T.V. Both A.S and Abuela retract, this was a disaster.

DORIA (CONT'D)
If you don't trust me, if you think you know what is best, fine. I guess the woman who raised you over your own mother doesn't know anything.

Doria walks off, drained rather than angry. A.S holds up his hand to reach. He forcefully pulls it away.

With a soft thud of Doria's door shutting, A.S crashes on the couch. Barbie speaks on T.V once more.

BARBIE
All of us, I believe, have someone in need of our love and care. If not for us, then who else?

This time, it actually feels like Barbie is communicating to A.S through the screen. The worst part: It's working.

A.S
I can't believe I'm taking advice from a real life doll.

INT. A.S' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A.S gears up and takes a mouth full of tic-tacs for breakfast. He opens the window and leaves from the fire-escape.

He quietly closes the window before heading out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ABUELA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door swings open, A.S barges in, all irritable and annoyed. The lights are currently off. He makes his way to the living room.

BEILIN
(O.S, revved up)
Heya, bestie!

The lights turn on by itself. Someone sits on the couch and it is not Abuela Doria. It's BEILIN. Peppy and wears a whole lotta pink. A.S' closest friend. Whether he likes it or not.

A.S
(startled)
Gah! Who let you in here?

Beilin holds up a set of keys, jingling them playfully. A.S is not pleased by this.

A.S (CONT'D)
(sighs)
My grandmother will give you the keys to her apartment, but won't let me touch the mop. It's hilarious. She doesn't even have to be here to give me a headache!
(slumps down to couch)
So, what's up.

BEILIN
A little Barbie told me you and your Abuela got into another... call it a passionate disagreement?

A.S
(sarcastic)
Did she now? It has nothing to do with the fact that you live next door, the walls are thin and I talk loud?

BEILIN
(coyly)
Perish the thought. From what I pieced together, she wants you to sign up for the Barbie Jr opportunity. And you said your favorite word of all time. Starts with and "N"? Ends with an "O"?

A.S
Am I really that predictable?

BEILIN
Hah! I knew it. Beilin for the win! By the way, where were you out lurking?

A.S
I don’t lurk. I was in Manhattan. You know that Barbie gift shop at Times Square? I tried pick something up for Abuela. Something she liked. Anything to make peace. But, sold out mostly.

BEILIN
Mostly?

A.S
Couldn’t afford what was left. So not only do I have a reminder of how broke I am, I have to come home to this. This thick atmosphere that suffocates the both of us everyday.

BEILIN
O.M.BEE! You are so miserable, it’s disgusting. Loosen up the misery stank. Let’s start small. You said no... why?

A.S doesn’t want to answer. Beilin pushes.

BEILIN (CONT’D)
Pleeeeze! I’ll be your best friend!

A.S
It’s embarrassing.

BEILIN
That. Is. Adorable.

A.S
Think about it! She’s obviously looking for a kid, namely a little girl. And what business do I have associating with a celebrity. I haven’t showered in three days!

BEILIN
That’s not stopping me.
(gestures to self)
Little miss eighteen going on nineteen.

A.S isn’t convinced.

BEILIN (CONT'D)
Fine, if you don't wanna sign up, then what do you want?

A.S
(sighs)
I dunno, Beilin. A steady job. Abuela to get off my back. Just no more of anybody peeping in my ear.

BEILIN
Hey! Those peeps are loaded with lots a love and concern. I wish I had someone on my back.

A.S
Love, she says. I can't even remember the last time she said that.

BEILIN
Maybe she doesn't need to... look! If she's asking you to sign up, maybe she sees something you can't! I KNOW you. You give up on yourself before others do. For one teeny tiny sec, stop pretending you're nothing. Then, you can be anything.

A.S perks up his head, surprised to hear that. A.S' eyes met with Beilin in curiosity. She rolls her eyes.

BEILIN (CONT'D)
No! She didn't tell me to say that!

A.S
I think I believe you. Fine, you win. Won't kill me to at least sign up. Wouldn't make a difference.

BEILIN
It will, in a way. Now as payment for the advice...

Beilin spreads her arms for a hug. A.S is in discomfort. She squeezes him in anyway, A.S leans away a bit, but doesn't outwardly fight it.

CUT TO:

INT. A.S' ROOM - MIDNIGHT

With an open laptop and a stubborn hand, A.S seems to be stuck. Metaphorically at least.

The screen on his laptop glows an eye-melting bright pink. He’s on the online application for Barbie Jr.

A.S
(squints, reading aloud)
In at least five hundred words, tell me why you want to be by my side? What is it about this opportunity that that is calling out to you. Remember, be honest.

Its an inner-battle with himself. His fingers reach out to type, but his arms reel them away.

A.S (CONT’D)
Do it... just do it. Get it over with!
(dunks head on desk)
Why is this so hard?

If submitting this application wasn’t hard enough, Abuela and Beilin appear as little pink angles on his shoulders.

ABUELA
What are you waiting for?

BEILIN
Just do it and that’s that.

A.S
I’m doing my best!

ABUELA
I know when you’re lying. I may be a form of your conscience, but I’m still your Grandmother.

BEILIN
What’s the problem? Just write what you think.

A.S
I can’t find anything to say.

ABUELA
Nothing to say! Ridiculous. You have so much to say. Too much.

A.S
What do you mean?

BEILIN
You know what you hear everyday from Abuela? Channel it into a version that’s you.

ABUELA
I don’t talk just to annoy you, Alejan.

A.S
Not following.

Angel Beilin flits closer to the screen, highlighting the last two words of the essay prompt: Be honest.

A.S (CONT’D)
Maybe...but, how honest are we talking?

ABUELA
You never listen. I always tell you to give one hundred percent.

A.S picks up what the angels are putting down. A smirk etches across his face.

BEILIN
Tell her who you really are! Tell her how you feel. She deserves the truth. And don’t hold back!

ABUELA
Just remember to use proper spelling and grammar!

BEILIN
Rootin’ for ya!

And with that, they pop out of existence in a tiny explosion of glitter. A.S sneezes from it.

With clear air, and now a cleared mind, A.S now knows what he must do. Energy wells in his fingers.

A.S
Ah, you know what, Barbie. You’re right. I’m making this harder than it needs to be. You want honesty, I can show you honesty.

A.S is off, setting his keys ablaze. He is electrified with passion and diabolic intent.

A.S (CONT'D)
This is probably my only chance to tell her how I feel. Let's go out with a bang!

Time passes, the tapping of keys slow to crawl. A.S is just about finished with his 'masterpiece'.

His eyes are heavy, but satisfied. A tired finger clicks the enter key.

A.S (CONT'D)
...Sent. Hope you enjoy.

Within seconds, A.S falls asleep on the desk.

CREAAAK!

His door opens, yellow light spills in. The shadow of Abuela casts over.

ABUELA
(O.S, gasps)
Thank you.

A fuzzy pink blanket is tossed onto his back.

FADE TO:

INT. BARBIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Barbie burns the midnight oil, despite being all dressed up for bed. She adjusts her silky pink robes and the towel wrap on her head.

A hearty stack of papers rests on her vanity desk. She picks up a fresh essay, the voice of the writer talking aloud.

APPLICANT 1
(V.O)
Dear, Barbie. My grandmother's kidney dialysis has to be put on hold due to how busy I am reaching out to you---

Barbie flips ahead to the next page of the essay.

APPLICANT 1 (CONT'D)
(V.O)
---Perhaps being under your tutelage will bring me the resources to not only care for my grandmother but also pay my two hundred and seventy thousand dollar college debt. If you have a heart, which I know you do, you'll consider.

Barbie casts the essay aside, a bit heavy to handle. She collects herself and starts a fresh one.

APPLICANT 2
(V.O)
Hi Barb. Can I call you Barb? So look, I'm kinda going through a lengthy divorce and my daughter is NOT taking it well. Blames herself, doesn't like her Father's new girlfriend, yada yada. Plus it's her birthday. Since I clearly failed as a mother, would it be too much of a bother to see if you could---

Essay two is not sitting well. On to the next one.

APPLICANT 3
(V.O)
Barbie, I lost all my working muscles and accessory organs saving a lady's limited edition handbag in a collapsing building. I am typing with my nose as it is the only part of my body that did not get archaically crushed, pelted or impaled by rusted iron support beams. Gotta keep this short before my morphine wears off. Please help a brother out.

The disappointment on her flawless face is sour enough to pucker lips. Barbie's reflection, right on cue, taps on the mirror.

BARBIE
Oh, don't you start.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
(innocent)
Oh, hon. I'm here to finish this.

BARBIE
You can't stop me.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
I'm looking out for you. It's called self-care!

Her reflection picks up a discarded page, flailing it mockingly.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION (CONT'D)
All of these little 'Essays' are nothing more than glorified sob stories. They'll say anything to be here!

BARBIE
You're just afraid I'll stop talking to you!

The reflection scoffs in deep offense. A flush of raging pink crosses her cheeks. Reflection Barbie turns away, crossing her arms.

A knocking on the door interrupts the tension. Barbie collects herself before answering.

Behind the door is Skipper with an office cart full of new essays. Barbie hides her dread with a winning smile.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Thanks a bunch, skip. You are such a big help tonight.

SKIPPER
Were you talking to someone or...

BARBIE
Just working something out!

Barbie takes the papers from the cart. Skipper blocks Barbie's hand when she reaches for a particular essay.

SKIPPER
Nuh-uh. Not that one.

Barbie's intrigue rises.

BARBIE
(coy)
Why?

SKIPPER
I uh... I read it. All of it. You wouldn't like it.

BARBIE
Interesting.

Barbie dumps the papers back onto the cart. Her hand stretched out expectantly.

SKIPPER
You're sure about this?

BARBIE
I wanna try something different. I need to.

Skipper is a bit reluctant, but caves in.

SKIPPER
I warned you.

Barbie blows a mushy kiss to Skipper before shutting the door.

She locks the door and rushes to her bed, holding the essay close to her chest.

Her reflection turns slightly.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
More junk-mail?

BARBIE
Shhh!

Barbie straightens the paper out. Her eyes close and a deep hopeful inhale follows.

She begins reading.

A.S
(V.O)
Dear Barbie. You and I have a lot to talk about. More accurately, I have a lot say. My Grandmother is a huge fan, talks about you everyday...

Barbie squints... what's so special about this submission?

A.S (CONT'D)
(V.O)
And honestly, I gotta say. I have NO idea what she sees in you!

POW! Her eyes pop, not offended, but allured.

A.S (CONT'D)
(V.O)
You've brainwashed her and made it my problem! Same as everyone who mindlessly follows you. Well, you'll be happy to know that your spell doesn't work on everyone.

Barbie, enamored, skips ahead to the next page.

A.S (CONT'D)
(V.O)
Maybe I'm the only person in the world with full brain capacity. Otherwise there'd be no way to ignore voiceless puppet that feeds lies to the masses.

BARBIE
A voiceless puppet? That's... new.

A.S
(V.O)
My mother may be too busy breaking into showbiz to acknowledge my existence. As my father, might as well be dead. And even a borderline orphan who lives with his insane grandmother, I know a useless bubblegum flavored bitch when I see one!

BARBIE
He has no mommy or daddy?

A.S
(V.O)
Just a flavorless strip of strawberry taffy who get paid to either play pretend or dress up. You're an insult to culture itself. And another thing---

Barbie flips to the last page.

A.S (CONT'D)
(V.O)
Do you not get tired of it? Everything about your life and yourself? How are you still sane? I'd lose it if I were you. Maybe you have, and you just hide it with a smile?

That last part hits close to home. Barbie clutches the essay to her heart.

BARBIE
I found him!

Her reflection butts in.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
Found what?

Barbie slaps the paper onto the mirror.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION (CONT'D)
(scans paper)
You can't go through with this! He'll---he'll corrupt us!

BARBIE
He told me the truth. That's all I ever wanted.

INT. DREAMHOUSE HALLS - CONTINUOUS

Barbie emerges from her room feeling like a new woman. The essay in her hand is more precious than gold.

Skipper is on her way with another full cart and some tissues. Barbie stops her.

BARBIE
No need for that! Our work is done.

SKIPPER
Could have told to me five minutes ago.
(BEAT, points)
That's not what I think it is, right?

BARBIE
The essay you told me NOT to read. Uh-huh.

SKIPPER
And this is person whose gonna live here, eat our food, breathe our air?

BARBIE
You'll love him, he's around your age anyway!

Barbie conclude the talk with an obnoxious cheek kiss. Skipper stands in shock as her big sister trots off.

SKIPPER
What have I done?

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: Three months later

The apartment is decked out for celebration. Banners, streamers, ceiling swirls, paper wall decor, and reasonably placed confetti. Of course, everything is pink.

The Coffee table in front of the live T.V is spread with a pink table cloth and a delicious array of food.

Courtesy of Abuela who works double time in the kitchen.

A.S and Beilin sit on the couch, in anticipation.

A.S
Not saying you're wrong or anything, but how do you know for sure she's gonna pick you.

BEILIN
Its called manifesting, A.S. If you want something enough and believe it will happen, well... the rest is obvious.

A.S
Eh, either way. You have a waaay better chance than me. Not that I'm complaining.

BEILIN
Why? What did you write in that essay?

A.S
You don't wanna know. I was buzzed on caffeine and whatever was in the medicine cabinet that night.

BEILIN
Now I kinda wanna know, for fun.

A.S
I'll show you when you get back from playing with Barbie.

A.S snaps open an soda can and drinks away.

BEILIN
Have you heard from your Mom, lately?

A.S chokes on his beverage, almost spilling it.

A.S
Where did that come from?

BEILIN
Something tells me you mentioned her when you applied. And you haven't brought her up in a while so...

A.S
Same as usual, only calls when she needs money. Promises to pay everything back once she lands a lead role in high budget movie.

BEILIN
(guilty)
Oh...

A.S
I'm not mad. By the way. About you asking.

BEILIN
Thanks.

The screen catches their attention. This is the moment.

BEILIN (CONT'D)
Omigawd, omigawd. It's starting!

Abuela pulls an unfrosted cake from the oven, dumping it on a counter.

She joins the two on the couch, taking A.S' hand. He lets it happen.

Barbie appears on the T.V. All dolled up and everything.

BARBIE
Good Morning, everyone. To start, I really want to thank all of you that took the time to write to me. I read some things that really wanted and needed to hear.

BEILIN
(whispers)
She's talking about me.

BARBIE
This person that I chose to take in, to make sure they're loved, heard and most importantly understood, please know that I want to not only help you, but also learn from you.

BEILIN
She's gonna make me cry.

BARBIE
I'm going to be honest, lately these days, I forget myself and why I do what I do. I'm hoping that this person I take in will remind me or give me a new reason to shine on.

ABUELA
Oh, Barbie. Porbrecita...

BARBIE
I can't hold this off for any longer. That's not fair for any of you watching. The title of Barbie Jr goes to...

Beilin and Abuela lean in. A.S rolls his eye, arms crossed in skepticism.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
A.S!

Beilin is stuck by bewilderment. Abuela cheers and chants her praises to the ceiling.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
A.S. If you're out there watching right now, just know. I see you.

ABUELA
I knew it. I knew it would happen if I was faithful enough to her. She has rewarded my loyalty.

Abuela looks back to her speechless grandson.

ABUELA (CONT'D)
Well, how do you feel, Alejandro?

A.S vomits.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

It's the final call for the Junior Miss Malibu Pageant. A row of young girls line up on stage, dressed to the nines. Their smiles hide their racked nerves.

One particular girl stands out from the rest: YOUNG BARBIE, 10, bite sized beauty, destined for great things.

Her parents sit in the front row. Her mother, MARGARET ROBERTS smiles politely, supportively. Her father, GEORGE ROBERTS is reserved but refined.

A smartly dressed business woman behind the Roberts couple deeply inspects the finalists on stage. The judges scribble up their thoughts and relays their decision to an announcer.

ANNOUNCER
I just gotta be honest. Even though we can only pick one winner: WHAT A SHOW, AMIRITE?

The audience claps, feeling obliged to do so.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
No, no, no. I don't think you people understand.
(points to finalists)
Felicity with her acrobatics, Neyla and that ethereal Violin, Raquel exuding her...
(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
(beat)
passion.

YOUNG RAQUEL beams at her acknowledgement.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
I'd pick all of you if I could, but there's only enough dough for one trophy.

Audience chuckles at the scripted joke.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
This was not easy, but I think our judges have spoken. This is a girl you only get once in a lifetime. Lights up the room with her presence, inspirational, sensational, her parents have struck gold birthing her, watch out, cuz she ROCKS your world...

Announcer undoes an envelope, Raquel steps forward in confidence.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
This year... Ms. Malibu goes too...
BARBARA MILLICENT ROBERTS.

Raquel is petrified while Barbie steps forward and accepts her glories and praises. Her parents exude pride, but not the vain and snooty kind.

The businesswoman has caught a scent with young Barbie.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Barbie gets all sorts of praises from her parents. Barbie absorbs it all.

MARGARET
I have to tell you, young lady. I felt it in the stars that you were something else.

GEORGE
How did you know they'd pick you, taffy?

YOUNG BARBIE
I like inspiring people, especially you guys.

They ‘Aww’ at her response. Some stamps pass through, it’s Raquel. Miffed and with much malice.

YOUNG BARBIE (CONT’D)
Ooh! Raquel. Great job, I really thought they were going to pick you. We were gonna go for ice cream, wanna join?

YOUNG RAQUEL
I don’t play with the competition!

YOUNG BARBIE
But, it’s over...

YOUNG RAQUEL
That’s what you think, Roberts! You haven’t seen the last of
(rolls her R’s)
RRRrrraquel!

Raquel takes her dramatic leave, chin up and chest out.

MARGARET
I like Raquel.

GEORGE
Oh, I know. She’s so... characterized.

YOUNG BARBIE
I love my friends.

UNKNOWN VOICE
(O.S)
Um... I like Ice Cream.

From the curtains is the businesswoman from before. MRS. STARS, late forties but still retains a young freshness. She makes deals for breakfast.

MRS. STARS
I know this spot that blends cookie dough with caramel fudge. Heavenly stuff. I’m buying. That good with Mom and Dad, huh sweetie?

Young Barbie looks at her parents for approval. They accept with a gesture.

INT. FANCY SWEET SHOP - CONTINUOUS

In a booth, Mrs. Stars talks shop with Margaret and George. Barbie enjoys some delicious sherbet in an adjacent table.

MRS. STARS
So, plain and simple, I think you two stuck gold. Pink gold. You're daughter is an icon in the making. And I wanna be the first to shoot her in the sky.

The Roberts look at her precious daughter, unburdened and undisturbed.

MARGARET
Well, we certainly have thought about it. She has stage presence, an attraction for the camera, good grades. But, we just wanna make sure that Barbara is enjoying her childhood. I hear A-Level fame can get to children. Like that Home-Alone Kid.

GEORGE
We're certainly... what word do I wanna use... compelled? We are compelled by the offer.

MRS. STARS
I see where this is going. You want her to have a normal life. And I get that. I'm just wondering... is someone so exceptional, meant to stay hidden?

Mrs. Stars slips her card.

MRS. STARS (CONT'D)
You know if she was a doll, I'd buy ten of her for my daughter. I know a lot of women who feel the same.

Mrs. Stars takes her leave, leaving a wad of cash behind and wishing Barbie goodbye.

MARGARET
So, what's the plan?

GEORGE
Torn in half, honestly. If she was older, just starting college, maybe I'd feel more comfortable.

MARGARET
But what if this was meant to be? She's special, George. She could inspire people. We'd be doing a good thing for the world.

GEORGE
But are we doing a good thing for her? She JUST won a pageant. Maybe let her breathe.

MARGARET
I understand that. But, I know these people, who make our Barbara a star... they don't like waiting. I don't want to chain her down.

GEORGE
I can't believe it... we're having our first argument as a married couple. And you're winning.

MARGARET
Let's call in a week, let her collect. I think we're doing a great thing for the world.

GEORGE
Margaret, I will never doubt you. You made Barbara. You should know best.

They kiss, understanding one another. Barbie joins in, they look at her with diamonds in their eyes. All is well.

FADE TO BLACK

Then... three sounds coalesce together. The patter of water and steam, the blare of an alarm clock and a baby crying.

FADE BACK IN

INT. SHOWER - DAY

The three noises are now louder. George, now more seasoned tries to get some soap and water on his body. But he is uncomfortable, unsettled.

It's the shower equivalent of sleeping with one eye open. He's right to be afraid, as a crazed fan of Barbie jams their hand through the bathroom window and snaps a million pictures a minute.

GEORGE
Yup, that’s not happening today.

George, defeated, leaves the shower before any real bathing can get done.

INT. ROBERTS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

George emerges from the couples bathroom in despair. What greets him is his aged wife, Margaret and a crying baby she hold. BABY CHELSEA.

Time has passed, judging by the family picture around the room. Photos of an older Barbie, and the Robert’s family’s younger daughters make that known.

MARGARET
Any luck with showering.

GEORGE
Only the bad kind.

Margaret scowls and hands Chelsea to George. He tries to soothe her to the best of his ability.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
Yeah, I know. I wanna cry too.

Margaret opens the curtains, outside are a mob of fans sporting Barbie merch. Rabid, rough, raucous. There is no way across them. A few cop cars are stationed to help mitigate it.

There is an ennui they both share to the mob’s presence.

MARGARET
(nose breathes)
Least I didn’t have call the cops this time.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The couple make their way downstairs grizzled and in bathrobes. Flashes of camera’s and hounding bodies slam against all windows.

Meh, just another Wednesday. One fan tries to make her way through a doggy door.

Margaret picks up a six foot pole in the corner and pokes the fan back outside.

MARGARET
George, you need to re-bolt the pet slot.

GEORGE
I need something in my system first.

Their other children, YOUNG SKIPPER and LITTLE STACY are at the breakfast table.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Morning, girls.

YOUNG SKIPPER
I think I know why it's bad today. The crowd.

MARGARET
Skipper, it'll pass. I promise. Now, who wants waffles.

Skipper and Chelsea raise their hands.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Too bad, cuz we're outta some stuff. Wouldn't it be nice to just leave the house whenever we wanted.
(digs in fridge)
But what's your theory anyway, Skipper?

She closes the door to mark the calendar posted on the freezer door. Today marks Barbie's return date.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Oh, that's today... George, our girl is coming back.

George, fixing a pot of coffee, leers at the fridge. A calm layer of dread surfaces them both.

YOUNG SKIPPER
Three months in Monte Carlo just passes by, I guess.

GEORGE
Maybe she can drive them away this time. They always listen to her.

MARGARET
I'm glad I married an optimist.

The roars of fans seep through the walls, louder than usual. The Roberts family knows why.

GEORGE
And, she came home early too.

The front door squeezes open, EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD BARBIE emerges, blowing kisses and gratitude to her adoring crowd.

BARBIE
Thank you, thanks a bunch. Totes cute outfit, love that hair. Oh, for me? Love ya!
(closes door, squeals in excitement)
OMG, literally my favorite people in the whole wide world.

She comes to hug her precious parents. As soon as she makes contact, she thins her lips and wrinkles her nose a bit. She's detecting an unpleasant smell.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Oh, why didn't you tell me the pipes for your showers aren't working? I would've sent some money to get them fixed.

GEORGE
Actually, Barbara, our shower is working fine. Problem is...

He shoots an uneasy look at Margaret.

MARGARET
Some of your 'adoring fans' has taken pictures of us in the tub, unclothed, in the middle *very* private times. So, excuse us if we have to be strategic when we want to bathe.

BARBIE
Oh, that... that makes sense. Yeah.
(to sisters)
You girls have the same problem?

SKIPPER
Nope. My shower doesn't have a window. You get used to the smell though.

MARGARET
(passive aggressive)
And we believe our daughters, all of them, should have their own secluded space.

BARBIE
'Course! That's why your the best.
(Leans in for a light kiss, reels back at the smell)
Hmph... why don't I draw away the crowd. That should give you some time to freshen up, and don't worry. I'll cook tonight.

Barbie skips out of the house. From the windows we can see the mob migrating away, likely leaving as Barbie pulls a pied piper on the masses.

Soon, all is quiet. Is this what peace sounds like? Margaret and George slump in relief.

SKIPPER
Huh... so is this what silence is? I kinda dig it.

GEORGE
We're free...

MARGARET
Only until she comes back. I'm gonna be LONG in the bathroom.

BEGIN MONTAGE

1. George takes out months worth of trash he's stored in the Garage. The family car is caked in garbage juice but he's just happy to see it.

2. Margaret treats herself to a small leg hair waxing. She rips sticky strips of blonde hair off her legs, sighing in relief.

3. Skipper and Stacy play in the yard, ripping up grass and being children. George hoses them playfully.

4. Margaret and George wash the car with Skipper's help. It may look laborious, but they are having the time of their lives.

5. At the grocery store, they dress in incognito. Even so, their buzzing with joy. Giggling, enjoying themselves.

6. Margaret makes lunch for her family, windows and doors wide open. It feels like the first normal meal they've had in ages.

7. Joyously, they wash and hose any stains or debris left by the crowd. The house looks brand new.

END MONTAGE

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Skipper lies on her belly watching cartoons. Margaret and George share some fresh fruit. They are at peace.

SKIPPER
Did you guys do stuff like this when Barbara was my age?

They think.

MARGARET
Honestly... no. Barbara was always out and about, getting trophies and ribbons. Always dragging them in like a cat with a dead bird.

GEORGE
We thought it was... interesting to have such a talented daughter, but in reality, I'll take this over another doll line or beauty pageant award. Now we get so much unnecessary attention.

Skipper thinks.

SKIPPER
You think if things were different, then I could stop being homeschooled?

MARGARET
There's a million things we'd do with you girls. But for now, lets just enjoy what time we have left all alo--

Barbie pops in, and just like magic, her fans have returned like flies to rotted cattle.

BARBIE
Whose hungry? I got Wagyu meat from Japan! And I brought gifts from Monte Carlo!

All of the joy and peace have deflated from Margaret and George.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

An appetizing spread is set all around the table. Despite the high quality dinner, something about this food is tainted.

Barbie awaits some form of conversation from any member of her family. They aren't in the mood for talk. Or eye contact.

With no spoken words, the pounding of windows and doors along with flash photography from outside is more cloying than ever.

BARBIE
Okay... me first then. Did you miss me?

Her parents and sisters look up from their food. No answers.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Cuz I missed you. So, so much.
(waits for a response)
I get it. Words can't match your feelings. I actually wrote a song about that. Wanna sample?

Barbie works through some brief voice warmups, before ebbing out her first lyric.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
(sings)
Pullin' through with my heart---

MARGARET
(cuts her off)
Barbara! We... don't really discuss work at the table.

BARBIE
Right... sorry. This is family time. Skip? You make any friends while I'm gone.

YOUNG SKIPPER
(curtly)
I'm homeschooled, remember?

BARBIE
Oh, I didn't mean to... well, we can still be BFFs, of course.

YOUNG SKIPPER
Yeah, until you fly off to Spain or whatever for some photo shoot...

Barbie has a spark of intuition, she claps her hands like she just solved the secrets of the universe.

BARBIE
So that's the problem! You guys feel like I care more about work than family.
(scoffs)
Like as if. Everything I do is for this family. You have NO idea how much it takes to do what I do.

Margaret drops her fork, she stands up in silent fury. George's eyes widen in fear, and he pushes out his hands in warning.

GEORGE
Margaret, I don't think she meant it like that.

MARGARET
(offended)
I'm sorry? WE have no idea? Because I have a pretty good idea!
(mocks Barbie)
Hi, Mom and Dad, did you miss me? Even though you see me on T.V, hear me on the radio, and I call every single day asking what's new? I'm only stopping by for five minutes, but take my adoring fans that imprison you guys until I get back. Love you.
(normal tone)
But no, no. Our poor successful A-List daughter carries the burden of this family. I had no idea George, did you?

GEORGE
Honey...

MARGARET
You know NOTHING about struggle, Barbara! Your followers surround us, choke us, asking about you, breaking in! Taking pictures of our sanctuary. We can't bathe whenever, we can't go anywhere, Skipper has no friends and have you ever tried to raise a fussy baby and a toddler in this madhouse? And there you are at Paris, or China or Fiji, taking pictures and giggling.

BARBIE
It's a lot more than just---

MARGARET
(cuts her off)
And you know WHY? Why they come here and pound our walls while we sleep, eat and bathe? Because you keep coming back here! Saying on T.V and every single magazine interview that THIS is your home! Is it Barbara? Is it YOUR house?

BARBIE
(confused)
I grew up here!

MARGARET
And guess what, you are now a grown up! Congratulations! I'd give you an award, but you probably ran out of room. And you know what Grown-ups do? They take responsibility and their affairs and MOVE OUT!
(points to crowd)
Your monkeys, your circus!

BARBIE
(forced smile)
You're not kicking me out... you don't mean that.

MARGARET
Oh, I'm sorry. Do you not have a place to stay, or money?

BARBIE
How about... I get those gifts I promised, you're gonna flip when you see---

MARGARET
WE DON'T WANT YOUR GOD-DAMNED GIFTS, YOU PARASITE!

Barbie, who has been keeping a cool head and a bubbly smile, fails to keep up the facade. Her face sours into furious despair, tears leak out.

Baby Chelsea cries as well. The thick atmosphere is to blame. George does damage control.

GEORGE
Honey, baby, just go upstairs. Go upstairs and lie down.

George pushes her away, she complies but still protests.

MARGARET
(O.S, shouts)
I thought successful children would make our lives better!

Some unsees stamps and...SLAM! The house rattles with that sound. George returns with a tired but reassuring smile.

Barbie, so upset, she spans her arms like a bird and runs to her daddy.

BARBIE
(emotional wreck)
Why is Mommy being so mean... doesn't she know how much I love her.

GEORGE
We know, Barbara. Trust me.

George pulls her away gently and sits her down.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Barbara, have you ever heard of 'loving from a distance.'

She gives a distraught, shaky nod.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Good, good. So you know as our firstborn, we will always give you grace and respect.

BARBIE
(hopeful)
So you'll let me stay here! And me and Mom can hug it out.

SKIPPER
(interjects)
How about you let Dad finish.

GEORGE
Thank you, Skipper.
(to Barbara)
As your, um, proud father. I think it would be best, now that you're eighteen and possibly have more fame and money than this entire neighborhood, its best that, with respect and love, that we give you the grace to let you spread your wings... and move out.

BARBIE
(scrunches up in sadness)
You too?

GEORGE
We are people too. We deserve to not live in fear and stress under your fans. And the best solution is for that, is for you to stop coming here. Ever. Think of your mother, think of your sisters. Is this any way for them to live?

Barbie looks around, a scowling Skipper, a crying Chelsea, an indifferent toddler Stacy, her father, her fans... she doesn't know what to think.

BARBIE
But, this is my home.

GEORGE
And that it will always be.

BARBIE
But. But I, I can... let me take the girls then!

This request surprises George, but does not appall him. He thinks.

GEORGE
You want to look after your sisters?

BARBIE
You said it yourself. You're right. They can't live like this. And I never get to see them. Please.
(MORE)

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Let me make this right. You two deserve peace... I LOVE this family. That's why I kept coming back. To think of the old times here.

SKIPPER
Your gonna let her take us, Dad?

BARBIE
If that's what make you happy, Daddy. I'll take care of them. You won't have to worry anymore, just please forgive me, I don't want to make Mom mad!

George looks to the ceiling and sighs.

FADE TO:

EXT. ROBERTS' HOUSEHOLD - DAY

A line of cops make a narrow path between the walkway and a pink limo ready to go. George and Margaret stand arm at the porch, watching their precious daughter pack up as they reluctantly follow Barbie.

GEORGE
I know. I know. But it makes sense. We can't give them a proper childhood here.

MARGARET
I just wish it my idea instead of hers. She always has to control everything. I should've been the one to tell her to take the girls. Whose the parent here? WHO!

Barbie approaches her beloved parents, they regard her minimally.

BARBIE
They'll have more space, be able to run around, I'll take care of everything. So, do you forgive me, Mom?

Margaret looks away, she cannot stomach Barbie's presence.

GEORGE
Your mother... appreciates the initiative.

BARBIE
Oh, I'll call you when---

MARGARET
(terse)
Yeah, we know.

Barbie gives a loving hug that Margaret doesn't want to return. For George, its a generous cheek kiss. Barbie looks at the limo, with a wave she is off.

She blows one last kiss before entering the limo. It drives off, Margaret and George are alone again.

GEORGE
Feel better?

MARGARET
I will.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Despite the bright and loud atmosphere of the limo, the mood is dark and grumbly. Skipper sits away from Barbie as far as possible.

This time, Barbie is smart enough to not anything. She leans on the window, her face is neutral, but it feels as if she's melting on the inside.

MATCH FADE TO:

INT. BARBIE'S DREAMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Present day Barbie leans on her bedroom window with the exact same manner and expression as she had on the limo.

Her reflection feels the need to burst her thought bubble. She materializes on the window's surface.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
Hon, you're doing it again.

BARBIE
Looking out a window?

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
Being nostalgic. Just forget Mom and Dad. They never loved you like I do.

BARBIE
Well, isn't that reassuring.

Barbie turns away from her window and readies herself up on her dresser. She eyes a particular drawer, she opens it. Folded in half is an aged letter, she holds it close to her heart.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
Uh, why haven't you burned that thing yet. Its old enough to give us wrinkles.

BARBIE
Six years is not that long. Its all I have left of Mom and Dad. Can you just let me have this moment, then its back to business as usual.

BARBIE'S REFLECTION
Hmph... just read quickly. You're little pet project is coming today.

This angers Barbie.

BARBIE
He's not a pet! He's... he's going to help me get YOU under control.

Her reflection doesn't appreciate the threat. With a sneer, she makes herself scarce. Barbie revels in solitude.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
A.S will help me. He has to.

A beeping cuts through. Barbie leaps to the window. A sky blue convertible rolls through the front gate. Riding is KEN, a chauffer and the long awaited A.S., who looks well groomed.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Right on time!

EXT. BARBIE'S DREAMHOUSE - DAY

A.S flips through a series of pink index cards, quickly and concisely. Ken is curious to this.

KEN
Whatcha got there, bud.

A.S looks up, hiding his irritation.

A.S
Just keeping tabs. Whole Barbie thing is new to me.

KEN
I can always tutor you. I have three PHDs in my girlfriend.
(laughs)
No, not really.

A.S stares with a straight face for a few seconds at Ken.

A.S
Hey, uh, Chauffer. You can just drop me off here. Its only a fifty feet walk. I can see the building.

CHAUFFER, seasoned, grizzled and has likely had mob ties in the past, laughs off A.S' request.

CHAUFFER
You New Yorkers always wanna walk everywhere you go. It's a free ride, kid. Enjoy it.

With no other options, he shuts up and leans back. His head averted from Ken's direction. Chauffer eyes A.S' demeanor from the window and smirks.

CHAUFFER (CONT'D)
Ah, I see. You're nerved up.

This harmless accusation gets A.S' attention.

A.S
When did I say that? Ken is annoying me.

Ken takes obvious offense while the Chauffer chuckles.

CHAUFFER
Two things can be true, buddy. I get it. You feel outta place here. And don't go tellin' me otherwise. Cuz I was you at some point.

A.S tries to find the right thing to say, but has trouble. With tapping of the leathered seating, he starts over.

A.S
You don't think its a little weird? Me of all people heading where I am? Yeah, you caught me.
(MORE)

A.S (CONT'D)
I'm uneasy. I don't know what to think of any this.

CHAUFFER
Well, that's part of the fun, isn't it.

A.S squints, but decides to respect the response.

KEN
(to Chauffer)
You don't think I'M annoying right?

CHAUFFER
Not for me to say, Kenny-boy.
(makes a turn)
Alright, buckle down. Smiles up and keep the outspoken observations to a minimum.
(turns to face A.S)
Cuz, you never quite know who could be listening. We want this to be smooth as butter. Make sense?

A.S
Yeah, I get it.

EXT. DREAMHOUSE - DAY

The convertible passes the pink-gold gates. A.S catches himself admiring the scenery.

CHAUFFER
Nice, huh. You know this is kinda gonna be your home for the time being.

A.S
I uh... thanks. But I dunno if I wanna call it that.

KEN
So, then what would you call it?

A.S doesn't know how to respond.

A.S
Thanks for the ride.

A.S dismounts, getting his luggage and belongings together, he notices a slip of paper on the tag. A phone number.

CHAUFFER
That’s for if your in a pinch and don’t wanna call Ken. Rootin’ for ya kid.

A.S
Hm, pretty thoughtful.

KEN
Wait... so your not gonna call me, A.S?

A.S
Pretty sure you’re already in a relationship, Ken.

A.S takes a fist-bump to the Chauffer and only him, walking towards the entrance.

When he reaches the door, an unknown force plants him. He is afraid to knock, but he knows he has to.

A.S (CONT’D)
What is she gonna think of me?

INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Barbie, on the other side of the front door shares some apprehension. She knows who is on the other side, but struggles to prepare herself.

BARBIE
What is he going to think of me?

She can’t hold off forever. He can’t hold off forever. The screen briefly splits in two. As one hand grabs the knob for both sides of the door. A.S pushes, Barbie pulls.

This results in the door flinging hard and fast, and A.S tripping into Barbie. Both land on the floor, face to face, eye to eye. Not knowing what to do.

BARBIE (CONT’D)
Omigoodness I am so sorry. Wait you’re sorry, no, it was.... Okay you first, no you first, how about we... okay... me first then?

A.S
Um, that was accident, I was trying to, hold on, we’re both talk--- okay, you first, no you first, what if we... fine... its your turn.

Barbie stands and A.S follows, eye contact is a challenge here.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Hi.

A.S
Pleasure to meet you, your uh...

A.S attempts a haphazard bow.

BARBIE
Oh, no, no, no. Don't bow. I'm not royalty.

A.S
(smirks)
So, then... you're not Barbie then?

Barbie panics, hands fluttering. She walks in circles with rapid breathes.

BARBIE
(talks fast)
I know, I know. You see me for who I am? Or maybe what I'm not. Maybe I'm not Barbie, I don't know for sure, but you do and---

A.S
Hey! Its cool. Its cool. I was joking. Kidding is all.

Barbie quells her spiraling. A.S tries to explain himself.

A.S (CONT'D)
Cuz, my family treats you like royalty? Get it? Cuz you said you aren't royal, so then I say... forget I said anything.

A brief silence.

BARBIE
(blurts)
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ME SO FAR?

A.S considers the question.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
Sorry, sorry. I do not know where that came from, I'm just excited to--

A.S
Mmm... actually. I kinda wanted to talk about that...

TO BE CONTINUED...