FOR OUR FUTURE

Written by

Sarah Foster

Based on a true story

Address
Phone Number

SUPER: 1944- Villa San Michele, Italy

INT. CALABRESE HOME - MORNING

Morning sun rays shine through the only window of a little room. On one side there is a stove and three cabinets of dry foods, pots, and dishes.

On the other side of the room there are stairs leading up to a second floor. Five little backpacks are hung on the wall going down the stairs.

The room is plain, dry herbs and cheese hang from the ceiling in a line above the stove and cabinets. Cream colored walls and neutral tones fill the space through wooden furniture and kitchen utensils.

In the center of the room is LEONTINA, 30, female, 7 months pregnant, her hair is pulled back and braided, sitting at a round wood table in front of five separate cloths. She cuts slices of bread and places one on each cloth.

Leontina gets up from the table and walks towards the scarmoza cheese hanging with twine. She cuts down the cheese and sits at the table with it. She cuts up the cheese into five pieces, placing a piece with each cloth.

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

A few yards from their home is a swimming pool sized garden. Summer fruits and vegetables fill the garden with vibrant colors. Three different fruit trees are scattered in their yard along with a wood table and matching benches.

Leontina sets a small basket down by a peach tree. She moves the branches, searching the tree. There are no peaches to pick.

She looks down at her empty basket. She looks up to her neighbor’s yard.

Ripe peaches hang from a tree in that backyard, not far from Leontina. A peach sways in the wind as the branch does, taunting her.

EXT. LUCIA’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A few doors down from the Calabrese home, stands LUCIA, 28, female, in the doorway of her home, smiling at Leontina. She hands her 6 peaches, a loaf of bread, and four eggs to put into her basket. Her small basket now overflowing with food.

LUCIA
Oh! Take some of these too, I baked them last night.

Lucia drops a couple of cookies into her basket.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Keep it a secret, these are just for you and my baby nephew.

LEONTINA
I'm good with secrets. Nobody knows that you're my favorite sister out of the rest of them.

Leontina smiles gratefully as she kisses Lucia goodbye.

LEONTINA (CONT'D)
But don't get your hopes up, it still might be a girl! I only pray for a healthy baby.

LUCIA
A beautiful, healthy, baby *boy*- I know of it.

LEONTINA
How would you know?

LUCIA
I've already met him in my dreams.

Lucia smiles at Leontina, matter of fact.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - MORNING

Leontina puts the wrapped cloth lunches into the back packs hanging on the wall. Little children's FOOTSTEPS can be heard moving all around up stairs. Leontina SHOUTS up the stairs.

LEONTINA
Time for school!

The foot steps hurry up and rush down the stairs. MARIA, 16, the oldest girl, grabs the first backpack on the wall, as she walks down the stairs. She holds ANNA, 5, female, against her hip.

Leontina grabs the backpack hanging by the bottom of the stairs and hands it to Anna, still in Maria's arms.

LEONTINA (CONT'D)
Bye, my pretty girl, I love you.

ANNA
Love you Mamma.

Leontina squeezes Anna’s face in her hands and kisses her cheek. She kisses Maria goodbye and she walks out the front door.

LEONTINA
Goodbye Maria, I love you!

MARIA
Bye, Mamma!

DOMENICA, 9, female, grabs the next backpack and BAMBI, 7, female, grabs the next backpack after her. They run down the stairs to catch up with their sisters. They stop at the door to kiss Leontina before leaving.

LEONTINA
I love you my babies, have a good day at school.

DOMENICA
I love you// Mamma!

BAMBI
Bye Mamma, I love you.

Bambi trips but catches herself and runs after the others. SANTO, 35, Male, kind and gentle, skips down the stairs cheerfully with SAL, 3, Male, bouncing in his arms, GIGGLING.

Santo kisses Sal on the head and hands him to Leontina.

SANTO
Have a wonderful day, my love.

LEONTINA
Always a wonderful day with you. (She turns to Sal, smiling) And you!

Santo kisses her goodbye, she smiles as he walks out the door.

EXT. CALABRESE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Leontina stands on the door step holding Sal watching her family walk down the cobblestone road.

She watches as they pass many identical terra-cotta houses that stand side by side without any space in between them. The homes stretch down the long road and follow the bends going up and down the mountain.

Five long roads of houses are parallel to each other going down the mountain side. A school house sits at the bottom of the village and a church sits at the top. BELLS are heard from either building at different times during the day.

Santo playfully walks as he catches up to the girls. He takes Bambi's and Domenica's hands swinging their arms as they all walk together.

Leontina looks at them with awe and then becomes confused. She points with her finger and counts her children as they walk. With shock, she runs inside the house.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Leontina puts Sal in a wooden crib by the table. She looks at the last back pack on the wall. She runs up the stairs, we hear feet running all around.

LEONTINA (O.C.)
Angelo! Angelo?

Leontina runs down the stairs and takes the backpack off the hook. She looks out the back screen door and sees ANGELO, 14, smart mouth, working in the garden. She yells through the screen.

LEONTINA (CONT'D)
Angelo! Why aren't you at school?

ANGELO
If I'm at school then who's going to take care of the garden?

LEONTINA
Let me worry about the garden and you can go to school.

Angelo waves her off, and continues picking vegetables.

ANGELO
No, you don't do it right.

Leontina grabs a wooden spoon from the tin of kitchen utensils and runs out the door, the backpack in one hand and waving the big spoon around in the other hand.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
I’m going-- I’m going to school!

Angelo sprints away, as she chases him towards the RINGING school bells.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Three horse stables and five pens are full of cows, chickens, goats, sheep, and rabbits. The animals are eating while the chickens and goats roam in and out of their gates, CLUCKING and BLEATING.

Santo sits on a stool by a work bench widdling a piece of wood. He looks up and smiles at Leontina. He puts his tools away and shakes out a table cloth, excited.

SANTO
Oh! My lovely lunch date is here.

He lays the table cloth gently on a small wood table. Leontina sets the basket by the table, laying out plates, food, water, and wine. They sit together, as Santo pours wine for himself and water for her glass.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Saluti.

LEONTINA
Saluti.

They clink their glasses and drink from them. They begin to eat.

LEONTINA (CONT'D)
How are the crops growing? Do you think we’ll have any squash this week?

SANTO
(laughs)
Don’t worry so much about it. The summertime is always plentiful. Next week we’ll even have pork to eat.

LEONTINA
(excited)
Oh! The kids will be so happy.

Beat. Leontina pushes her food around.

LEONTINA (CONT'D)
I was thinking it’s time we apply for our visas to Australia. So maybe we’ll be there for the start of next summer.

Santo is timid, but supportive.

SANTO
You don’t want to stay here any longer than that?

Leontina stops eating and gives him a look.

LEONTINA
I would never want to leave if I felt like we had a good future here.

SANTO
I know... And I know the end of last winter was hard on all of us--

LEONTINA
And that’s not because of you. Animals get sick, the land changes, the crops never grow the same.

SANTO
I think we could stay a bit longer. Wouldn’t you want your children to grow up here?

LEONTINA
They won’t be able to grow here. I want them to have new opportunities and options.

A beat.

LEONTINA (CONT'D)
There aren’t many options up here... And I don’t want to risk another winter of being hungry if we don’t have to.

Santo puts his food down, wiping his hands on a napkin. He looks at her with adoring eyes and holds her hand on the table.

SANTO
Me either, so we’ll follow wherever you lead us.

Thrilled, she jumps across the table and kisses him over and over.

LEONTINA
A beautiful life waits for us in Australia, Santo, we'll be so happy there.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - EVENING

Leontina SLAPS a spoonful of polenta onto a plate and ladles a small amount of tomato sauce on top. She puts the plate in front of Domenica. Sounds of SEARING pans, kids CHATTERING, and plates clinking are heard as Santo sets the table.

The room is crowded with everyone moving around and sitting at the table. They often bump into each other and squeeze around tight spaces near the table.

Maria bounces Sal on her lap trying to calm him, he WHINES softly.

DOMENICA
Could I have more sauce, please?

LEONTINA
Wait until I make everyones plates, we only have this much tonight.

She shows Domenica the small pan of sauce. Bambi comes running down the stairs with a book in her hand.

BAMBI
Hey! Who is this for?

LEONTINA
It's for you!

DOMENICA
What is it? // I want to see.

BAMBI
Mamma said it's mine!

Angelo takes the book from Bambi's hands, she SQUEALS in anger. Angelo reads the cover and keeps it out of Bambi's reach.

SANTO
Bambina don't yell like that you'll hurt the baby's ears.

Santo sits Bambi in a chair at the table.

ANGELO
Italian to English? What is this?

LEONTINA
It’s for all of us to share and to learn English together. That’s what they speak in Australia, where we’re going to go live one day.

Everyone in the room stops, and looks at her in shock. Leontina seems to panic.

LEONTINA (CONT'D)
A new adventure! Australia is beautiful like Italy, and it’s full of wild life--

ANNA
Are there snakes?

Leontina pauses in thought, she looks at the nervous faces of her children.

LEONTINA
No snakes in Australia!

All the kids CHEER.

BAMBI
How far away is it?

SANTO
Very far. But it’s one of the few places we may actually qualify to move to.

LEONTINA
You’ll love it when we get there. Big beautiful oceans to play in, animals like you’ve never seen before-- and we’ll have a house three times the size of this one! Close your eyes, can you guys see it?

The kids all close their eyes, noses pointing up towards the ceiling like they’re dreaming. Slight smiles grow on some of their faces.

ANGELO
(relief)
I can’t wait to go. Especially since I never have to see a snake again.

Angelo opens his eyes and sits with the book at the table. Leontina puts a plate of polenta in front of Angelo, she kisses him on his head, as he stirs his food.

LEONTINA
Good boy.

She smiles and walks to the stove continuing to serve the rest of the family. We see all of them around the table TALKING, LAUGHING, and helping each other pass food around.

EXT. CALABRESE HOME - NIGHT

The neighborhood is dark but many fireflies light up the cobblestone street. Oil lanterns hang from doorways and PEOPLE sit on their doorsteps, watching little KIDS dance in the street together.

An OLD MAN plays the HARMONICA, happily walking up and down the street. The kids dance to his music, and some hold hands skipping in a circle.

Leontina cuddles Sal in her lap sitting next to Santo.

LEONTINA
These are the moments I'll miss most here. Don't you think?

SANTO
Listen, wherever we live-- as long as we're together as a family they'll be happy.

Tears swell in Leontina's eyes.

LEONTINA
There is no place in the world with as many loving people as this village... I don't know if I can leave them all--

Santo pulls out a hanker-chief from his pocket and wipes her tears away.

SANTO
You don't have to cry yet, we're still here! C'mon, c'mon.

Santo pulls Leontina up and into the street. She holds Sal, as Santo pulls them into his arms and leads them dancing with the other PEOPLE on the street.

We see a crowd of people LAUGHING, dancing, and swinging each other around to the sound of the harmonica. Santo and Leontina break away from each other to dance with their kids.

EXT. FIELDS - AFTERNOON

The fields and barns are very far from their homes up the mountain side, a long and deep valley separates the two places. Homes are on the higher side of the mountain, and the fields are further down in the valley.

Leontina and Lucia walk together with baskets of food on their heads down yellowish green hills. Many leaves have fallen and dried up on the ground. The barns can be seen far in the distance, and animals graze the valley.

LUCIA
Giovanni and I have been talking about emigrating too. We haven’t decided where yet.

LEONTINA
It’s hard to pick.

LUCIA
I keep thinking about all of the places I’ve seen and yet I’m still drawn to this mountain.

Beat, Lucia looks around in awe and then in frustration.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
No other place feels as safe.

Leontina nods her head with understanding.

LEONTINA
You have your roots here. Hard to rip out when they’ve gone so deep. Everyone has been living here for- what would you say, at least 10 generations?

LUCIA
Probably more. (CHUCKLES) No one has really wanted to go--

LEONTINA
It hasn’t been this hard to live before now.

LUCIA
If Mussolini hadn't gotten into this mess of a war--

LEONTINA
We would've *all* been happy, still.

Lucia gives Leontina a look of sorrow, and she looks back at her reassuringly for a beat.

Leontina hesitates and carefully puts her basket down, having trouble standing up. Lucia drops her own basket and catches Leontina as she falls.

LUCIA
What happened? What's wrong?

LEONTINA
The baby is coming--

LUCIA
Okay, come on I'll help you get to the doctor. I know someone down here with a car.

Lucia lifts Leontina's arms across her own shoulders and helps her walk in the opposite direction of the barns.

LEONTINA
Wait! Wait, we have to get Santo--

LUCIA
No, his barn is still 30 minutes away. We have to go see the doctor, but look, look! It'll be your first time in a car.

Leontina nods in pain.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
And you think, Lucia, how do you know such rich people! But I don't, they're just con artists.

Leontina lets out a painful LAUGH, and Lucia LAUGHS with her as they struggle to walk.

EXT. CALABRESE HOME - MORNING

A light fog covers the roofs of the small village. Frost covers window sills and grass on the ground. A tiny car pulls up to the door of their home and slows to a stop.

Lucia gets out of the car holding a BABY bundled with heavy blankets in her arms. She SHUTS the car door, with her head down she takes a step towards the door.

Santo swings the door open and runs down the few steps to the street. Lucia SOBS as she holds the baby close to her. Santo looks to Lucia and she looks to the back seat of the car.

LUCIA
She gave us a healthy baby boy... But the doctor said there was too much bleeding-- he couldn't stop it.

Santo takes slow steps to the back car door, opens it, and kneels down to the backseat WEEPING. He lays his head on the backseat next to Leontina, petting her hair, CRYING.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - AFTERNOON

Squares of names, descriptions, and small portraits of the deceased line the walls of the mausoleum. Small glass vases with flowers and candles sit in the crevices between stone plates.

Santo and the children squeeze together in the small hall way in front of Leontina's headstone. Field Flowers poke out of every space around her stone. A small ceramic portrait of her sits under her name and date.

Starting with Santo, they all kiss their hands and touch her picture, leaving the mausoleum. Maria holds Sal, and as she SOBS, she touches the portrait. Turning to leave, Sal reaches to touch the portrait too.

Maria leans over so he can reach to touch Leontina's picture, his lips pucker and his face turns red when Maria walks away from her grave. He CRIES and MUMBLES 'Ma-ma' over and over until Maria rubs his back.

More MOURNERS come into the mausoleum as the family walks out.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - AFTERNOON

Santo and Angelo sit at the table in silence. All that is heard is the CLICKING of the wooden rocking chair in the corner, from Maria rocking the baby to sleep. She gets up and kisses Santo on the head. She reaches out and holds his hand for a beat. She walks up the stairs with the baby.

As the rocking chair stops rocking, there is only silence.

Lucia walks in with mail in her hand, reaching out and putting them on the table in front of Santo.

LUCIA
Mail came for you today, Santo.

Lucia goes to cabinets and starts cutting bread and cheese. She pulls out two empty bottles and shakes her head in disappointment.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Angelo, go to the fountain and fill these.

She puts the bottles on the table in front of Angelo. He looks up at her, ready to refuse, but SIGHS instead. He picks up the bottles and leaves through the front door. Lucia puts a small knife next to Santo by the mail.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Do you want to talk about her?

SANTO
No.

He looks down at the mail and reaches for it. His hands are unsteady as he uses the knife to tear the envelope open. He takes the letters out as Lucia puts sliced bread, cheese, and prosciutto on the table. She looks over his shoulder at the letter.

They read at the same time, a frown grows down Santo’s face, Lucia looks a bit shocked and turns away quickly. Tears swell at his eyes and he wipes them away.

SANTO (CONT'D)
I can’t go without her.

LUCIA
But you’ve just received the visas, she would’ve wanted--

SANTO
Australia was supposed to be a journey we spent together, not apart. Don’t say what she would’ve wanted because I can’t do it without her.

Lucia falls quiet, and Santo has a look of remorse.

SANTO (CONT'D)
I’m sorry, Lucia. I just... How am I supposed to take care of these kids like she did? (BEAT) How am I supposed to go to sleep without her or eat without her. I definitely can’t leave without her.

Angelo walks in the with the bottles of water.

LUCIA
You have to. Think of your children and what they need.

ANGELO
What’s happening?

SANTO
We’re not going to leave for Australia.

ANGELO
(yelling)
Why not! // We should still go, we have to go! We have to! Mama said so!

SANTO
(angry)
It doesn’t matter why! I said we’re not going, I don’t have to explain myself to you.

Lucia SLAMS down a wooden spoon on the table in front of them.

LUCIA
Both of you, knock it off! You don’t get to talk to each other that way because she isn’t here to stop you. What’s the matter with you?

Lucia looks at them both sternly. They look ashamed. She pours two glasses of water for them.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Eat.

They begin to eat the food she cut up and drink the water. She sits down with them and makes a sandwich for herself as she speaks.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
You don’t want to go to Australia and I understand that, Santo. (BEAT) Tell me, what’s left for you here? How will staying here without her, be better than leaving here without her?

Santo chews slowly, staring at the opened letter on the table. Lucia pours herself a glass of water and sips it.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
I think you should apply for visas for the United States with me and Giovanni. There’s a lot of factory jobs, cheap houses, and opportunities like no other country right now. You can build any kind of life you want there-- a very good life.

Angelo’s eyes get big and bright.

ANGELO
I’ll go with you Aunt Lucia!

Lucia smiles at him and squeezes his little face in her hand.

LUCIA
We’ll all go together, tell your Papa that.

SANTO
(softly)
Don’t make decisions for my family Lucia—

ANGELO
We want to go!

SANTO
And I want you to go upstairs now. (BEAT, Angelo does not move) Come on now, go, get out of here.

Angelo scurries up the stairs quickly.

LUCIA
If you stay here, you won’t be able to keep your family together forever.

SANTO
I know…

Santo takes another bite of food, chewing slowly. He doesn't take his eyes off the letter.

LUCIA
Think about it, you and seven kids living in a place where there's no jobs, you have no money, and very little food. How long do you think you'll last here like that?

SANTO
I think I have enough time to grieve and make travel plans later. But for you to come here and take control of what we do now is too much for me.

LUCIA
You have time to grieve, but to plan to emigrate to another country takes a lot of time. I love these kids as my own, I'm not going to let you all stay here with nothing.

Santo looks at her in the eyes, silently pleading to stop the conversation.

SANTO
We all love you Lucia. But I can't think about this right now.

LUCIA
You have to think about it sooner rather than later.

SANTO
When we have money to apply for more visas then we can talk about it.

LUCIA
It's going to be a long time before you have enough saved up again. Just let me help you now—

SANTO
(stern)
Stop! I can't think straight! Everything feels numb, I—

LUCIA
Listen! I’m not leaving you or the kids here to suffer and starve because you can’t make up your mind. We’re all going to be leaving for the United States together unless you come up with a better plan. True?

Santo nods his head, agreeing.

SANTO
You’re tough to argue with.

LUCIA
God made me that way for a reason.

Santo smiles slightly and Lucia CHUCKLES, but quickly turns into a SIGH.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
We’ll get through this together, Santo.

Lucia puts a hand on his shoulder as Santo rubs his face with his hands.

SUPER: 1946 - Villa San Michele, Italy. Two Years Later.

EXT. CANTINA - NIGHT

Bright lanterns light the doorway of a building identical to the others lining the street. It only stands out because of the three wooden barrels sitting by the door.

Two DARK FIGURES walk to the Cantina, and when they open the door, bright light, loud CHATTER, and cheerful MUSIC is heard. They walk inside.

INT. CANTINA - NIGHT

A small bar, only one BARTENDER, 53, male, standing behind it. Behind him are two rows of different liquors and stacked glasses.

He pulls out two beers from underneath the bar and hands them to a MAN, 30, standing across the bar. There are no stools at the bar, only benches and tables at the sides of the room.

A group of three BOYS in their 20’s sit on barrels and stools while playing instruments together.

One plays an accordion, another has a tambourine, while the other claps his hands to the beat while kicking the barrel with his heel.

YOUNG PEOPLE drink and dance with each other, swinging around new partners every minute.

Angelo dances with LINA, 17, sweet and sour, until they swing away to new dance partners. As they dance with other people, their eyes stay on each other.

The song ends and everyone CLAPS. Angelo goes and sits with his friends on a bench.

SERGIO, 19, big ego, and ANTONIO, 18, sensible, sit on the bench. Sergio shakes Angelo's shoulders in excitement.

SERGIO
You've got your eyes on Lina, yeah?

ANGELO
(smiling)
She's a good dancer.

SERGIO
I think she's got eyes for you too.

Sergio points to her looking at Angelo. Angelo and her meet eyes, and both look away, bashful.

ANTONIO
Leave him alone, Sergio. What about you? Anyone here take your breath away, bozo?

SERGIO
There's one over there by the bar that just can't get enough of me.

He blows a kiss to a WOMAN, 24, waiting for her drink. She sees him and rolls her eyes at him, turning away.

ANGELO
Oh yeah, I can tell she's in love.

Antonio and Angelo LAUGH at Sergio as he slicks his hair back and pretends to be confident.

Angelo looks at a clock on the wall, it reads 8:30. He gets up from the bench.

SERGIO
Hey, where are you going to?

ANGELO
I told my father I'd be home to help with dinner. He's already going to be mad that I'm late.

SERGIO
Have one more drink with us, on me--

ANTONIO
No, Santo will kill you if he smells your breath.

ANGELO
I'll see you tomorrow, goodnight!

Angelo waves goodbye and leaves.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - NIGHT

MICHAEL, 2, male, SCREAMS through a tantrum as Maria tries her best to calm him down. She looks overwhelmed and frustrated as she simultaneously cleans the room of toys, garbage, and other small things.

Bambi and Anna fight over a doll that Domenica has. She holds the doll up high, playing keep away from her sisters. They BICKER and push each other by the table.

Santo stands at the stove stirring a pot with polenta spilling over the sides. A kettle on the stove WHISTLES, he hurries to cover the pot of polenta with a lid.

Santo pours out the hot water into a ceramic cup. He sees Angelo come in through the door.

SANTO
Angelo! Come make a cup for Sal, he's not feeling good.

Santo motions to Sal, who is sitting in the rocking chair, swaying back and forth with a blanket over his shoulders. He wipes his runny nose and looks to Angelo with swollen eyes.

Angelo throws his jacket on a chair at the table and takes the cup of hot water from Santo. Maria, angry, snatches his jacket from the chair and hangs it on the coat stand.

MARIA
Don't be a slob, Angelo!

He ignores her and cracks a cinnamon stick into the cup. He searches the empty cabinets for a beat.

We see him move around a few containers, which he opens and they show to be mostly empty. He shakes his head as he puts the containers back. He hands the cup to Sal, gently.

ANGELO
There’s no honey for your drink, but I put a whole cinnamon stick in there for you. It’ll feel good for your throat.

Sal nods his head yes and sips from the cup. Angelo turns to Santo.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Did you make him pastina?

SANTO
It’s almost done. You can put it in a bowl for him in a minute.

Santo turns his head to the girls fighting.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Hey! Put the doll away it’s almost time to eat.

The girls ignore him and keep pushing each other. Angelo walks over to them, takes the doll out of Domenica’s hands and puts it in his back pocket.

ANGELO
What are you fighting for? You have nothing better to do? Come on, get up and help Papa serve the food.

He breaks up their fight and pushes them off into different directions.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - NIGHT

Santo and Angelo clean up after dinner. It is quiet, just the CLINKING of dishes are heard.

ANGELO
Tomorrow, Antonio said he would help me feed and clean the animals so you can stay here with the kids.

SANTO
Good, good… There’s some cheese that’s done curing in the barn. Thank him and send that home with him.

ANGELO
Okay, I can butcher a pig too--

SANTO
No don't do that. I have to sell the pigs this week.

ANGELO
What, why?

SANTO
(tense)
I know it feels too soon in the season to be selling the animals. But we need the money.

Angelo looks worried. Santo clears his throat.

SANTO (CONT'D)
But it's okay, we have plenty of pigs right now. Sell some for now, and maybe eat one further into winter.

ANGELO
Maybe we can have one sooner than that? It's just been a long time—

SANTO
Last week we had chicken, you don't remember.

ANGELO
That wasn't last week—

SANTO
Yeah, it was Thursday… I think.

ANGELO
It's been at least two weeks, maybe three--

SANTO
Okay, okay. It's been looking like this winter is going to be hard on us. I was just trying to pace our food—

ANGELO
We don't have enough food?

SANTO
(panicked)
No! We have food. It's okay.
(MORE)

SANTO (CONT'D)
The state is coming tomorrow to bring more food for everyone, and I know they're coming for sure this time. I'm just thinking ahead that's all-- But you know what, I think we can have some rabbit tomorrow.

Angelo has a sulky look on his face.

ANGELO
Thank you, Papa. I can bring the animals into town so you don't have to walk for ten hours tomorrow.

SANTO
That would help me a lot, thank you.

Angelo gets up and walks towards the stairs.

ANGELO
You can tell me if you're scared, I can handle it. I'm not a kid anymore.

SANTO
I don't get worried. There's no reason to be. We're all gonna be okay. Good night, Angelo.

Santo kisses him goodnight, and Angelo walks up the stairs. As soon as Angelo turns the corner, Santo pulls out a chair and sinks into it. He pours a cup of wine, drinks most of it and SIGHS as he sets it down on the table.

EXT. FIELDS - MORNING

Angelo and Antonio walk down a packed down snow trail to the doors of the barn. Snow banks on both sides come up to their hips. They have trouble opening the barn doors with the snow in front. They kick the snow around trying to open the doors easier.

ANIMAL SOUNDS blast through the open doors as they walk inside and pull the doors closed behind them.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Angelo and Antonio work to feed the animals in all of the pens.

Angelo fills the pig trough with food and they all rush to eat. One big fat pig runs around in the newly opened space and starts slamming into the wooden door to the outside of the barn. Antonio LAUGHS.

ANTONIO
He wants to go outside so badly but he doesn't know how deep the snow goes.

Angelo looks at him for a beat, confused. He notices the pig hitting the doors so hard that the wood begins to split and break. Angelo runs over to it with a shovel and pushes him away from the doors. The pig pushes him back and continues to break the door.

ANGELO
C'mon! Go eat with everyone else.

The pig resists and slams into the barn door again, breaking a hole in the wall. Angelo hits the pig in the head with the shovel, and the pig falls over. Antonio and Angelo both freeze in shock.

ANTONIO
Oh Angelo... Your father is going to do the same thing to you when he finds out about this.

EXT. FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

Antonio and Angelo struggle to carry the pig, and throw him into the snow. It sinks into the deep snow, leaving a big hole. They both have a deep breath of relief. Angelo shakes his head in disappointment with his hands on his hips.

ANGELO
It had to be the fat one, huh.

ANTONIO
At *least* it was a fat one. You have to look at things with a positive light.

ANGELO
Let's go finish the feeding and we'll come back to cut this one up.

They turn away to walk back to the barn. RUSTLING in the snow is heard and they spin around to see the pig jumping through the snow and running away.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
The son of a bitch is still alive!

They start SHOUTING and WHISTLING at the pig, jumping through the deep snow after it. Antonio falls over Angelo and they tumble around in the snow after the pig.

They watch as the pig gets farther and farther from them, as they run back inside the barn shivering.

EXT. GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Angelo sprints out the back screen door, leaping over the cement steps leading to the garden.

Santo swings the screen door open so hard that it slams into the back wall. He waves a long plank of wood in the air and SCREAMS after Angelo.

SANTO
If you come back here, you better bring that pig too!

Santo lets the wood fall to his side, and shakes his head in disappointment as he shuts the screen door behind him and walks back inside the house.

INT. CANTINA - NIGHT

Lina and Angelo dance to the beat of fast music, the three same boys play for the room. They LAUGH together as Angelo leads her all around, dodging other couples in the room.

The song ends, and they all CLAP. Sergio and Antonio come to Angelo and Lina at the center of the room. The boys with the instruments join a crowd forming around MICHAEL, 25, shaking hands and wishing him goodbyes.

ANGELO
What’s happening with Michael?

LINA
He’s leaving for the United States tomorrow morning. Isn’t that exciting?

SERGIO
Yeah, really exciting. I can’t wait for him to work in a sweat shop for the rest of his life.

ANGELO
What's your problem?

SERGIO
(snarky)
I don't have a problem. I have everything I need right here.

Angelo looks at Sergio for a beat and they both get tense. Angelo takes a step closer to Sergio and Antonio cuts in between them, he puts his hand on top of Pasquale's shoulder.

ANTONIO
I'm happy for you, friend. We are both very blessed in our lives.

Antonio smiles to Sergio and then smiles to Angelo too. Angelo takes a final look at Sergio, smiles at Antonio, and takes Lina's hand as he turns away from them.

ANGELO
(to Lina)
Go wait by the door, I can get our jackets.

Lina sits on a stool by the door as she watches Angelo get their jackets from a stand in the opposite corner.

A GIRL, 19, walks over to Angelo.

GIRL
Oh! Perfect timing, if you're leaving too you can walk me home. Right, Angelo?

Angelo looks confused as she takes his arm and pulls him to the door. As she gets to the doorway, Lina stands up from her stool and quickly grabs the girl's ponytail. The girl SCREAMS in pain. Lina pulls the girl down by her hair until she hits the floor.

Everyone watches as Lina releases the girl and stands by Angelo. They look down to the girl sitting on the floor, she looks at Lina in shock and fear.

Angelo helps Lina put on her jacket, a bit thrown off. The girl stares at them.

LINA
(to Girl)
I'm gonna knock the eyes out of your head if you keep staring at us like that.

The girl quickly looks away and gets up from the floor, embarrassed. Lina glares at the girl for a beat, and then takes Angelo's arm as they walk out of the Cantina.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

On the cobblestone street, candlelights flicker in the terra-cotta houses' windows. The moon lights up the snowy cobblestones as Angelo and Lina stroll down the center of the road.

LINA
You better stay away from that girl.

ANGELO
I don't think she'll ever come back with you around.

A beat. Lina smiles at him.

LINA
Very good.

She kisses him on the cheek. A stray dog walks towards them, getting closer and looking up at Lina.

Angelo BARKS at the stray dog, and the dog leaps back and trots quickly away. Lina hits Angelo on the arm.

LINA (CONT'D)
Don't scare him! The poor thing.

ANGELO
What! I didn't like they way he was looking at you.

She GIGGLES, as she looks at Angelo fondly.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - AFTERNOON

Santo sits with Lucia at the table, he looks sad and uncomfortable.

SANTO
I don't know if I can do that to them.

LUCIA
There aren't many options at this point. If I had food or money to give you, I would—

SANTO
I know. Don’t feel like you could’ve prevented any of this from happening… And If I don’t send at least one of them to the orphanage then what else can I do?

LUCIA
If anything, sending two is better than one, none of them should feel like they’re going through it alone. But if you refuse Father Salvatore’s offer and keep all of your babies at home with you— you’re going to watch them starve.

Beat. Lucia looks into Santo’s eyes with sincerity.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Not only see it, in their faces and in their ribs. But you’ll hear it too. Screams and cries from hunger pains, exhaustion, then sleep deprivation—

SANTO
Stop, stop! I understand what will happen…

Beat. Santo rubs his face, discreetly wiping away a tear.

SANTO (CONT'D)
This shortage won’t last forever. The state will send enough food for all of us, Mussolini will not let us starve like last winter--

Lucia CHUCKLES in frustration.

LUCIA
Mussolini doesn’t care for us or our families. I know a lot of these people still believe that he reads your letters and he sees our needs-- and will fulfill them one day! But he won’t Santo, and if I had an easier option for you, I would offer it. You can’t rely on the state because they’re selfish and you can’t rely on this community because we don’t have much to pass around anymore.

Beat. Santo looks down at his shaking hands. He folds them together on the table.

SANTO
They'll be safe at the church? And we'll be able to see them?

LUCIA
They'll be safe, fed, and have a good place to sleep. Father Salvatore just wants to help you, Santo, they're not prisoners there. Go see them every day if you want, they're only living up the hill.

Santo nods his head agreeing.

SANTO
They're going to hate me for sending them there.

LUCIA
And one day they'll understand why you did. Don't treat yourself as a villain for this. So many other families have had to send their children because they can't feed them either.

Lucia puts her hand on Santo's shoulder.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
This is not your fault, you haven't failed them. They love you, respect you-- all we can do is move forward and work harder to give them lives they deserve. True?

SANTO
True.

Santo nods his head, holding back tears. Lucia stands up and pulls him into a hug. He SOBS into her shoulder.

LUCIA
This is only temporary, remember that. You'll get them back one day soon.

EXT. CALABRESE HOME - MORNING

Santo and his Family stand on the street around Domenica and Anna with wet eyes and puffy faces.

FATHER SALVATORE, 51, tall and thin, stands by waiting patiently as Domenica and Anna hug and kiss their family goodbye.

Santo kneels down to the girls and brings them both in for a hug. He holds them tight, visible pain on his face. He WEEPS softly, quickly pulling it together with a deep breath. They stand in front of him, his hands still on their shoulders.

SANTO
I know change is scary but this will be good change. You'll meet so many kids just like you, you'll learn new things, you'll--

ANNA
Will we see you again, Papa?

SANTO
Of course, my sweet baby.

Santo pulls her in and kisses her on the forehead.

SANTO (CONT'D)
I'll never leave either of you. You'll come back to us soon, I promise. But you have to be good and help Father Salvatore with the chores, okay? I love you girls.

DOMENICA
I love// you, Papa.

ANNA
Love you, Papa.

Father Salvatore approaches them calmly.

FATHER SALVATORE
They will be safe, Santo.

Santo nods his head yes as Father Salvatore leads the girls up the hill towards the church. The family waves to them as they walk away.

Angelo storms through front door and SLAMS it behind him. Santo GROANS and MUMBLES to himself as he stomps up the stairs and into the house after Angelo.

Bambi goes towards the house and Maria grabs her arm.

MARIA
No, no. Let's play outside for a bit.

She leads the children away from the house.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Angelo paces the room and turns to face Santo. He speaks quickly almost talking over himself, and appears to be panicked.

ANGELO
What's going to happen now? How long will it be until the rest of us have to go to the orphanage too?

SANTO
Calm down, Angelo. Calm—

ANGELO
Why should I be fine with this? How can I be calm?

Santo catches Angelo's shoulder, stopping him from pacing. He holds Angelo there in front of him as he speaks.

SANTO
You can't be in control of everything all the time. You have to handle your temper when things go wrong. Do you think you're the only one who is upset they have to go?

Angelo steps back, Santo's arm falling to his side.

ANGELO
I—I just don't understand!

Angelo HUFFS and takes a deep breath in.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(angry tone)
I--

SANTO
Take another breath before you speak to me.

Angelo lets out another breath. He is calmer.

ANGELO
Why is this happening to us, Papa?

SANTO
I can’t feed all of you-- I just need help right now, okay? Can you understand that for me?

Beat. Angelo shakes his head no.

ANGELO
How come you’ve never asked me for help then? I would’ve done anything you asked to keep my sisters home with us.

SANTO
There’s nothing you could’ve done. I just need time to save more money so we can all be together again—

ANGELO
(rambling)
I could’ve gone to sell animals at the market for you, I could’ve done chores for some of the old people—

SANTO
(stern)
The animals we have now are the ones we’ll eat when there is nothing else. (BEAT) And there’s no work here for you to do, the old people can’t pay you, they can barely feed themselves.

Beat. Santo shrugs, defeated.

SANTO (CONT'D)
So this is what we have to do. I’m sorry you don’t like it, but this is what we have to do.

ANGELO
(sad, apologetic)
I’m sorry, I didn’t know—

SANTO
I know, because I didn’t want you to know. That’s not your responsibility to have. All you have to do is go to school, you learn, you grow into a good man, and take care of me one day when I get old. Okay?

Santo smiles at Angelo and pats his cheek. He turns away from Angelo towards the door.

ANGELO
If I do find a job, then we can have Domenica and Anna back home?

SANTO
Yes, we'd probably be able to pay for the visas sooner too. But there aren't any jobs here for miles, nothing within four hours.

ANGELO
So? I can go further than that. I'll leave the country if I have to, Aunt Lucia would be able to help me find something, right? She knows a lot of people.

SANTO
Angelo...

ANGELO
We have the same dreams, Papa. You don't have to be the only one that works hard for them to happen.

A beat, Santo pulls Angelo in for a hug.

SANTO
(whispers)
Thank you

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

Plain walls, with candlelights hanging from the ceiling lining their path. It looks like a maze, narrow hallways twisting and turning in every direction. Every once in awhile a cross hanging on the wall or painting of Jesus will catch Domenica's eye.

Anna looks straight ahead, confident. Domenica's eyes dart around everywhere, desperate for something to comfort her.

Anna and Domenica squeeze each others hands tight as they walk down the cement stairs, following Father Salvatore. He leads them into a room.

INT. BEDROOMS - CONTINUOUS

A large room, plain walls, only religious decor is used. Many wide windows at the top of the walls lets in bright sunshine. Twin beds lines the walls, and trunks sit at the end of each bed.

CHILDREN from ages 7 to 16 can be see in the room, studying, reading, folding laundry, or sitting and talking with each other.

Father Salvatore leads the girls to two empty twin beds near each other. Domenica looks around anxiously, while Anna shyly approaches her new bed.

FATHER SALVATORE
You can put your things in here, and these will be your beds while you're here.

He smiles at them, and they stare at him nervously.

FATHER SALVATORE (CONT'D)
The chores will rotate everyday, we work together as a team here. So someone will always be either helping with dinner, or laundry, or cleaning the rooms. The chart hangs over there by the door so you know your responsibilities for that day. Breakfast is at 7am, you'll go to school, and then we'll all eat together at 1pm and 7pm.

DOMENICA
So we can still go to school?

FATHER SALVATORE
Well not your regular school, you'll attend the school we have with the other kids here.

Domenica looks down with disappointment. Father Salvatore clears his throat, uncomfortable.

FATHER SALVATORE (CONT'D)
But we also have a choir you girls may be interested in joining. We go on trips to compete and--

He waves over GIOVANNA, 14, friendly and sweet, and she comes and hugs Anna and Domenica.

FATHER SALVATORE (CONT'D)
Giovanna is a part of choir too, she can tell you some other fun things the kids do here in their free time.

Giovanna takes their bags and put them on their beds for them.

GIOVANNA
Here, let’s put these down for now. Come with me and I’ll introduce you to some new friends.

Giovanna takes their hands and leads them to a group of GIRLS, ages 9-15, sitting on beds together.

DOMENICA
Do you miss your house?

GIOVANNA
(sad)
Yes, but sometimes my family visits. It’s not bad here. I know you’re scared, but you’ll get used to it. The days go fast and there are a lot of really nice people to be friends with.

They approach the group of girls, and Giovanna sits on an open bed. She pats the mattress inviting Domenica and Anna to sit next to her, they do.

GIOVANNA (CONT'D)
(to a girl)
Pass me some of those.

The girl hands her two long, shiny, nails. She begins to put yarn on the nails.

GIRL #2
(to Anna)
I like your shoes!

Anna smiles bashfully and looks down at her shoes, she kicks her legs in the air showing them off.

ANNA
Thank you!

GIRL #2
(to Domenica)
You have a really nice dress on too.

Domenica’s nervous looks slowly becomes a slight smile.

DOMENICA
Thank you. I like your hair and your bows a lot.

The girl smiles and touches the tops of her bows in her hair.

GIOVANNA
We’ve been using these as knitting needles and making scarves with them.

DOMENICA
Where did you get the yarn?

GIOVANNA
We found a ton of it outside unraveled. So we got it all together and now so far we’ve made one hat and two scarves.

Giovanna hands the nails to Domenica, showing her how to hold them in her hands. She helps her maneuver the yarn on the nails.

GIOVANNA (CONT'D)
So you hold them like this and then... Yeah and so then you move the yarn down like this... Yeah! Just be careful of the points at the end.

Domenica begins to smile as she slowly knits together the yarn. Anna watches her carefully with admiration.

INT. BARN - DAY

Angelo brushes his horse, petting her. He leans his head against her face. Sergio walks in, he WHISTLES in awe of the horse

SERGIO
Beautiful horse.

ANGELO
The best one, my lucky Lina. Hasn’t lost a race yet.

SERGIO
There’s still time, she’s not too old.

Angelo waves him off.

ANGELO
Ah, what do you know?

SERGIO
I know when someone looks like they could use a drink.

ANGELO
I can’t go out right now, I’ve got to clean the barn—

Sergio shows him two bottles of wine from behind his back.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Now you’ve got a good idea!

The clink the bottles together and drink from them. They begin to clean the animal pens and barn floor.

Sergio sweeps by the one cow and it poops, splashing on Sergio’s shoe and leg.

SERGIO
Son of a bitch!

Angelo LAUGHS

ANGELO
It’s not her fault if you’re in her shit zone.

SERGIO
I think she waits until I get close enough.

The cow MOOS

SERGIO (CONT'D)
You see? She knows.

ANGELO
Don’t worry, one day you won’t have to do this anymore.

Sergio tenses up. His body language becomes more aggressive as he speaks.

SERGIO
What else do we know how to do?

ANGELO
Nothing yet. But we'll learn once we get the chance—

SERGIO
(stubborn)
I know everything I need to know.

Angelo picks up Sergio's bottle and shakes it. He smiles in a joking manner.

ANGELO
You're only a third through this bottle, how could you already be talking stupid.

SERGIO
I know a lot of things—

ANGELO
Yeah you've lived to 22, what don't you know.

SERGIO
Exactly.

Angelo LAUGHS and shakes his head no.

SERGIO (CONT'D)
What are you laughing for, you think you're better than me?

ANGELO
(irritated)
Oh my God, maybe you are drunk. You go home if you're gonna start squawking at me like that.

Sergio takes a few steps towards Angelo, the bottle in his hand swinging by his side. He gets in Angelo's personal space.

SERGIO
No, no! You tell me if you think you're better than me. Tell me you're too good to stay here with the people that love you.

They share a tense beat.

ANGELO
You know that's not why we're leaving to the United States, you jack ass.

SERGIO
I guess I'm the stupid one then because I thought we live a great life here. (BEAT) Everyone here takes care of everyone else. We don't have fancy things like they do in America but we have fun here, no?

ANGELO
Look around us! This barn was full of livestock only two years ago. The winters are getting worse every year, and my father and I want something better than this. And it's not just us who want to leave, it's so many more! You don't want anything better than what you have now?

Sergio SCOFFS. He takes a drink from the bottle.

SERGIO
This is my home, I have everything I need here. Everyone who lives here are my family, blood or not. How could I leave them for something I don't even know for sure will be better!

ANGELO
You make it seem like I don't care about anyone here. I love my life here because I love the people who are in it. I love these mountains, the animals, the people—I don't know anything about the United States. Except that they have good jobs there, and there are no jobs here. I'm willing to give up all of the wonderful things I have now to be able to build a better future. (BEAT) If you don't want to do that, that's up to you, it's none of my business. But you need to give me that same respect.

SERGIO
You don't care that we won't see each other anymore? Or do all of the things we love to do here?

ANGELO
(calm)
Good things don’t stay the same forever, just ask my father.

SERGIO
Don’t be like that—

ANGELO
It’s the truth! I’m sorry that you have to realize life is hard and starting a new one is even harder when you have nothing.

Sergio chugs from his bottle and wobbles out the barn doors.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

SERGIO
I’m letting you start your new life. I’m giving you the same respect as if I wanted to walk away from everyone who loves me. (CHUCKLES) And from the only place you’ve ever known too. (YELLS) Those Americans will take advantage of your good heart, Angelo!

Sergio shakes his head in disappointment. Angelo rolls his eyes and drops his tools to follow him out.

ANGELO
(YELLING after him)
If you love me so much why aren’t you happy for me! Are you too busy being mad at me? Sad for me?

A silent beat. Sergio continues to stumble on the dirt path.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Yeah, go cry about it! You don’t want to talk about it anymore, crying is just fine.

Angelo HUFFS, turns away and slams the barn doors.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - DAY

Santo peels a big pile of potatoes at the table with Michael on his lap, bouncing him with his leg.

Angelo swings the door open with a big smile on his face and papers in his hand.

ANGELO
I got a job in Switzerland!

SANTO
(confused)
What?

Santo puts Michael down into the wooden crib beside the table and stands in front of Angelo.

ANGELO
Aunt Lucia wrote to her friend who works at a hotel in St. Moritz and got me a job there for the summer.

Santo grabs Angelo by the arms and starts dancing with him, jumping around the room. They LAUGH and CHEER together, Michael GIGGLES and bounces, looking up at them.

Santo pulls in Angelo’s face and kisses him on the head.

SANTO
My son! I’m so proud of you. When do you go?

ANGELO
Next week, and I can send you money every month until we have enough saved up.

SANTO
Next week... That’s soon--

ANGELO
Yes, but that means we’ll have Domenica and Anna back sooner-- be living in the United States sooner.

Santo looks hesitant, a bit worried. Angelo smiles at him, reassuringly.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Don’t worry, Papa. Everything will be alright. Lina told me she would help you with the kids while I was gone.

Santo seems more at ease, he takes a seat continuing to peel potatoes. He nods his head agreeing.

SANTO
Good, good. She’s good that one- don’t mess it up.

Angelo takes a seat next to him and peels too.

EXT. CALABRESE HOME - MORNING

A large crowd of NEIGHBORS gather around the front of the home. We see people walk out of their own houses and go to see Angelo, who is shaking hands and kissing people goodbye.

Santo comes out of the house with two bags and sets them by the steps of the door. The kids run around and play until Angelo comes to hug them goodbye.

Angelo stands in front of Maria and they look at each other sadly for a beat.

MARIA
It’s going to be weird without you here.

ANGELO
You won’t even notice that I’m gone.

MARIA
Maybe I can come to work with you.

ANGELO
Any place in the world would be lucky to have your help.

Maria smiles excitedly. Angelo glances at Santo struggling, trying to pry something out of Michael’s hand.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
And I think Papa is the only one who truly appreciates all that you do.

Maria’s smile fades a bit and she nods her head, agreeing. They hug for a beat.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
I’ll always come back to you all, don’t forget that.

MARIA
Promise?

ANGELO
Promise.

They break out of the hug. GIO, 25, male, tall and kind, walks up to Angelo and shakes his hand.

GIO
Good luck, Angelo. And safe travels.

ANGELO
Thank you. Make sure you help her with the kids. It's good practice.

Gio puts his arm around Maria, and kisses her on the head.

GIO
Good practice for someday soon, yeah?

Gio LAUGHS nervously and waves goodbye to Angelo. Maria leans her head on his shoulder as they walk away together.

Lina walks up to Angelo and secretly puts a pack of cigarettes into his shirt pocket.

LINA
I'll miss you my love.

ANGELO
I'll write to you every week.

LINA
Every week? What will you do for the other six days?

ANGELO
(sarcastic)
Dream about when I'll be able to see you again.

LINA
(joking)
You better! And I'll know if you dream about someone else instead.

ANGELO
How could I think about anyone else when all I want to do is marry *you.*

Lina GIGGLES and looks away.

LINA
Maybe I'll let you one day. Just be safe while you're away, okay? I love you.

ANGELO
I love you too.

He kisses and hugs her goodbye. She walks away as Santo comes up to Angelo. Santo grabs Angelo by the shoulders and looks at him with pride.

SANTO
Don't be scared.

ANGELO
I'm not scared.

SANTO
And stay away from the cigarettes, they're no good.

Angelo smiles and nods his head yes.

ANGELO
I love you, Papa.

Santo brings him in for a tight hug.

SANTO
I love you too, my son.

Santo kisses Angelo goodbye. Angelo goes to pick up his bags and starts walking away down the street. The crowd waves and YELLS out final goodbyes. Angelo waves back and smiles at them all.

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE PATH - EVENING

A dirt path, crowded with wild tree roots and rocks scattered. Tall trees arch over the path. The trees become sparse along the sides until there is an opening looking out into the long green valley of the village.

Bright greens and pops of purple flowers are seen growing along the dirt path and in the valley. Up the hill above the valley, we see the small village of terra-cotta houses clumped together in the near distance. We see the barns and fields sitting deep into the valley, far away from the village.

The dirt path continues up the mountain side and into the small village.

Santo appears, riding his horse out of the wooded area of the path and continues to follow up the hill, admiring his village from a far.

He stops the horse and peers at the village for a beat. It looks like the village is shifting downwards.

Starting from the bottom row of homes, we see the earth crumble from underneath the buildings.

It all rolls into a slow cascade of dirt, trees, and broken homes traveling down into the valley.

We see many people escaping the disaster and going to safety on the sides of the mountain. Santo looks distraught as he races up the dirt path on his horse.

The whole village slides and crumbles together into one pile at the bottom of the valley. It does not hit the barns or even come near the fields. The church is the only building left standing.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - EVENING

Large crowds of PEOPLE gather in the courtyard in front of the church. The church doors are open, as people walk in and out. Some sit by the water fountains, and others console their families.

They set up canopies near the church, and help the wounded into the emergency shelters.

Father Salvatore speaks with Maria and Lina with the children sitting around them. Santo jumps off his horse and wraps his arms around his children and Lina, kissing their heads.

SANTO
(mumbling in panic)
Oh, thank you God. Thank you, thank you--

MARIA
It’s okay Papa, we’re all here. Most people were inside the church when the landslide happened.

FATHER SALVATORE
Santo, do you need to see a doctor?

SANTO
No, I’m okay, thank you.

FATHER SALVATORE
Good, please come inside and rest. We've arranged for you all to spend the nights here until the state comes to re-build.

SANTO
Has someone already left to get help?

FATHER SALVATORE
(serious, matter of fact)
Yes, and construction should start in a few days. I know Mussolini will not waste a moment to send supplies and builders.

Lucia walks up to Santo, covered in dirt and caked mud, her arms full of materials from their homes. Santo goes to her and takes the things out her hands, hugging her.

SANTO
Are you okay? Were you stuck?

LUCIA
No, no. I'm fine, I was here with the kids. I just went back to see if I could find anything left from our homes.

They look down at the few baskets, spoons, and clothing dirty with mud.

SANTO
I'm not worried about it, these things are replaceable. We've gotten to keep everything of value already.

He looks to his children, comforting each other and smiling together. He and Lucia walk over to them.

SANTO (CONT'D)
(to all the kids)
Let's go see if we can help with making dinner.

Santo helps Sal and Anna stand up, leading everyone inside, walking through the church doors. We see other people setting up multiple tables, placing them side by side, so it becomes one long table stretching across the wide courtyard.

We see everyone working together to set up chairs and place settings at the table.

Soon bringing out food and serving each other. The whole community LAUGHS and CHATTERS as they eat together, and the sun slowly sets behind the church.

EXT. SAINT MORITZ MOUNTAIN PEAK - DAY

SUPER: St. Moritz, Switzerland

The very top of the mountain is a dry and rocky peak. But we sit at the highest resting area with plush green grass and a dirt hiking path going down the mountain. White velvety flowers spring up everywhere around.

Below us, we see the entire town of Saint Moritz, with all of the bright, unique, and large buildings. A large lake sits at the left of the town, with many PEOPLE walking and biking around it. Grand mountains surround the small looking town entirely, with only one twisty roadway at the edge of the cliff.

We see Angelo leaning against a boulder with the same white flowers growing from the cracks in the rock. He picks up his pen and a journal from beside himself. He begins to write.

Angelo looks to one of the Stella Alpine flowers, feeling it’s velvety petals, gently. He picks it out of the crack in the rock, and pushes it into his shirt pocket. It barely pokes out, but is still seen.

ANGELO (V.O.)
To my Lina. Pure, sweet smelling, velvety, cream colored flowers grow everywhere here in the mountain tops. I haven’t seen any bud or bloom look like these before now. They make me think of you, just as lovely as you, one of a kind.

Angelo gazes down at the St. Moritz landscape for a beat.

ANGELO (V.O.)
St. Moritz is the second most beautiful place I’ve ever been to. So many different colors and buildings and people! There are many rich people vacationing here. Working at the hotels for them is hard work, but it’s good money. It’ll be worth it, one day we’ll be able to take our children and grandchildren here. Show them where we’ve come from, and what we’ve done to give them rich lives.
(MORE)

ANGELO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We'll be just like the fancy people here, staying at the hotels. Eating five-star food, strolling the mountain side, and I'll pick them flowers too- because they'll be as beautiful as you... Just be patient, good things are coming- I can feel it. I miss you more each day I spend without you, I love you… Angelo.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - DAY

Lina sits on the steps in front of the church with a letter in hand. She opens it, pulls out the letter and the Stella Alpine flower. As she smells the flower, she smiles, and blushes.

She sets the letter down, and picks up a little notebook and pencil. She begins to write.

LINA (V.O.)
We miss you so much here. Make sure you eat and drink enough! Those cigarettes will turn you into skin and bones if you don't eat, Angelo.

Lina looks up at the debris around her. We see OLDER PEOPLE wobbling along the edge of the debris. Others can be seen sifting through the dirt and finding items or kneeling and crying at piles of stone.

LINA (V.O.)
We're doing okay right now, we've seen better times here for sure. Our homes have been taken by a landslide...

EXT. VILLA SAN MICHELE - DAY

We see an overview of the debris from the mudslide. Loose dirt still lays over terra-cotta pieces and cobblestone. We get closer to see personal items lost within the dirt, baby dolls, barn boots, a single wedding band.

We move up the mountain to where new construction takes place. We see new terra-cotta homes being built, and BUILDERS moving materials around the site. There are no machines to help build, but many pulley systems are seen.

CHILDREN are seen by the church running around and playing together. They play a marble game on a dirt patch, flicking the marbles, hitting them against each other. PARENTS watch them play and LAUGH together. They seem worried and look at the construction being done. They WHISPER to each other and look tense.

Three MILITARY MEN, 40's ride their horses up the rocky path and stop at the church courtyard.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Lucia, Santo, and other NEIGHBORS crowd the three military men. The men stand tall and firm, they speak to the people with a cold tone. We can hear soft SOBS in the crowd.

LUCIA
(angry)
What!

Lucia throws her arms in the air and gets close to the three men. She looks directly into the eyes of the man standing in the middle.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
You've come all the way here, and you look with your own eyes, at the disaster that has taken our homes away.

Lucia motions to the debris left over from the mudslide.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Only to say that only half of us will get new homes?

The military man looks down at her, unconcerned, not much expression at all, staring like a statue as he speaks.

MILITARY MAN
That was the order, yes. You are promised 35 new homes for this village.

LUCIA
And the other 40 homes? Where should those families live now?

MILITARY MAN
I was not given any directions on that.

(MORE)

MILITARY MAN (CONT'D)
If you would like to write your requests and complaints down, I would be happy to see that it will get to the right person.

The other two men CHUCKLE at his statement, the military man smiles down to Lucia briefly for a beat. He goes back to his cold stares.

MILITARY MAN (CONT'D)
(to the crowd)
That is a viable option for anyone else who would like to write their wishes down. The Leader cares for each of you and values your feedback for him. When you are finished with your letters bring them to us, we will be waiting by the post stand for the next 10 minutes.

The men lead their horses down the hill towards a crooked and broken post marker in the ground. Supplies mixed with debris make it clear that it used to be a post office.

Lucia rushes back to Santo in the crowd. She speaks to him with panic in her voice.

LUCIA
(quietly)
Santo, I need to borrow Angelo’s horse.

SANTO
Of course, take the horse. But where are you rushing to?

LUCIA
I’m going to see Mussolini. These idiots won’t do us any good with our letters. They’ll probably use them as fire starters.

SANTO
You can’t be serious, Lucia. It’s a five-day trip just to be at his doorstep. There’s no way they’ll let you speak with him.

LUCIA
I’ll find my way in, that won’t be an issue.
(MORE)

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Believe me, I'll get our homes back-
- even if I have to pry Benito's
greedy, fascist, fingers off the
keys.

A beat, Santo doesn't believe her. But he sees her hopeful and desperate expression.

SANTO
(supportive)
Okay, go on and get the horse. Come
back here and I'll have a bag ready
for your trip.

Lucia hugs Santo tight.

LUCIA
Thank you!

She turns away and hurries down the dirt path.

EXT. MUSSOLINI'S MANSION - DAY

A grand mansion with marble pillars. Many stairs lead up to the large arch opening before the gold decorated doorway. Huge terra-cotta pots and statues line the wide pathway up to the mansion.

Lucia rides her horse, following the same military men that were at her village. They go off to the left passing by two ARMED GUARDS, 35, who they greet amicably.

Lucia jumps off her horse and ties it to one of the short pillars that a decorative pot stands on. She scrambles in her satchel and pulls out a comb and metal spoon.

Lucia uses the spoon as a mirror and combs through her disheveled hair, trying to smooth it out. She pulls out a few lavender stems and rubs them on her neck and arms.

Looking at her reflection in the spoon, she pinches her cheeks and lips until they are a blush pink. She looks very happy with her presentation.

Lucia straightens out her dress and takes a deep breath in and out. She clears her throat and marches up the stairs leading up to the door way.

She seems intimidated by the large structure of the home. She stops in front of an ASSISTANT, male, 55, holding a clipboard. He doesn't look up at her.

ASSISTANT
Do you have an appointment, miss?

LUCIA
Yes, I'm actually running late for it. The leader is waiting on me, so I'll just go on--

Lucia tries to walk around him, but the assistant steps in her way.

ASSISTANT
Name please.

LUCIA
Maria.

The assistant gives her a look of disbelief. His tone becomes more irritated and impatient.

ASSISTANT
And what family do you belong to, Maria?

Lucia holds her head up high when speaking to him, confident.

LUCIA
(stern, raising voice)
Lombar-- It's unacceptable that you will not allow me inside while the leader is waiting for me. Do you not believe his time is valuable?

ASSISTANT
Yes, his time holds more value than you yourself have. It appears to me that you have just wandered up here from the streets.

The assistant looks her up and down, disgusted with her.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Perhaps a thief, or a con artist looking for her next victim. You won't be fooling anyone here, guards please take her away.

Two armed guards take her arms and begin to lead her away from the door. Lucia begins to YELL, and resist against them.

LUCIA
I've traveled many days to speak for an entire village and express our concerns and--

Mussolini walks out of the door and stands by the assistant.

MUSSOLINI
Men! Do you not listen to the words of a beautiful woman? She's come all this way and you throw her aside? Without even asking what my thoughts are?

The guards let her go and stand ready for command.

ASSISTANT
She had no appointment sir, I--

MUSSOLINI
And yet she is one of my people who would like to speak with me. She is Italian, true?

ASSISTANT
I- I- assume sir.

MUSSOLINI
Where are you from, miss?

LUCIA
I've traveled from Villa San Michele, from the Molise region, sir.

He smiles at her, intrigued by her.

MUSSOLINI
Please, call me Benito. Would you like to talk about your long journey here over lunch?

Mussolini holds out his arm for her, she takes it as they walk inside.

LUCIA
That sounds wonderful, what will we be having?

Mussolini LAUGHS.

MUSSOLINI
Anything you would like, my dear.

INT. MUSSOLINI'S DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A large but intimate circular dining table in the middle of a grand room.

High ceilings with three crystal and gold chandeliers hung across the room. Beautiful and delicate details are found in the rug, walls, and ceilings, all are gold accented.

Marble statues sit in out-coves of the walls, watching the two as they eat together. A fireplace CRACKLES at one end of the room.

On the table, a large centerpiece of fresh flowers consisting of green, red, white, and pale yellow colors. Elegant dishes surround the centerpiece, silver platters of meat, fish, vegetables, pastas, and fruit.

SERVANTS, 20's, are lined at the walls of the room, looking straight ahead of themselves. Mussolini and Lucia CLINK their glasses together and begin to eat.

MUSSOLINI
What brings you all this way, Lucia?

LUCIA
There was a landslide in my village, taking away all of the homes there.

MUSSOLINI
Yes, I do remember.

LUCIA
But we were told that not all of the homes would be rebuilt for us. I'm here to ask that the other 40 homes are to be rebuilt as well.

MUSSOLINI
I see...

Lucia brings her chair closer to him, facing him. She puts her hand on his arm.

LUCIA
I know you care for your people, and we need your help.

MUSSOLINI
I don't think--

LUCIA
You don't think we need your help?

Mussolini sits still and glares at her as he speaks.

MUSSOLINI
(irritated)
You will not speak over me again, understand? Do not forget you are a guest here.

A beat, Lucia is not startled by his tone. Mussolini breaks his eye contact and sips his drink, leaning back in his chair.

MUSSOLINI (CONT'D)
I don’t think there’s enough safe, sturdy, space to re-build all of the homes. Some families will have to find new villages to reside. Very simple.

Mussolini cuts into a prime steak. He takes a bit of it and chews with delight.

LUCIA
(calm, persistent)
Very simple. Yes, I see. It’s simple to tell at least 40 families to either pitch a tent on the damp land that has just taken their home from underneath them— OR travel miles upon miles on foot to find new shelter, that they cannot pay for because of the current economic deprivation our state is enduring.

Mussolini looks dumbfounded that she is speaking to him like that. He puts down his silverware.

MUSSOLINI
And of course I am to blame for the poverty in your little mountain town.

LUCIA
Not only my village, but so many places all across southern Italy. I don’t have to tell you that, because you already know. And I would never come and point fingers at you, Il Duce, and cry about my insignificant life. However, I have come to ask that you re-build us all of the homes that were lost— because I know you love your country and the Italian people… True?

MUSSOLINI
(chuckling)
True, Miss Lucia... And you’re not happy with the 35 homes I’ve gifted your village? Even after this beautiful feast we’ve shared?

LUCIA
The 40 families without homes are not happy, no.

Mussolini nods his head agreeing, thinking.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
These are the same people who love you. Who think you’ll save them in their time of need. Every person in my village has given something up for you, sacrificed for you. Even my own sons went to war for you, and died for you. They died for the future of Italy, for your vision for this country.

A beat, Lucia’s eyes swell with tears. She wipes them away.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Many other women in my village have lost their sons to your war too. Don’t tell me you’ll leave these mothers homeless, when they already have nothing.

A beat, Mussolini thinks, he looks into her eyes seemingly moved. He picks up her hand off his arm and kisses it. She blushes.

MUSSOLINI
I’ll make a call and allow all of your homes to be rebuilt.

Lucia smiles, but tries not to appear too excited. Mussolini looks to his wall of servants and one of them approaches him, handing him a phone.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - DAY

SUPER: 4 MONTHS LATER

PEOPLE line the stairs in front of the church doors. Two people open the doors, as Angelo and Lina walk out holding hands, dressed as bride and groom.

They smile and LAUGH as they walk through the aisle of the people. Rice is thrown into the air, landing on top of the couple.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - NIGHT

The sun begins to set as Angelo and Lina come together in the center of the courtyard, they begin to sway together as MUSIC plays from the same small band from the cantina.

The people create a giant circle around them, joining hands, walking around the couple. People take turns leaving the circle, and run paper ribbons around the couple, creating a secure tie.

They spin the ribbon until Angelo and Lina look like a big ribbon blob. The people continue to walk the circle around the couple.

LINA
Are you scared Angelo?

ANGELO
No, we'll break through these ribbons just like any other problems that come our way.

LINA
(tongue click with attitude)
No! I'm not talking about the ribbons. (Beat) Aren't you scared to leave at all? We'll be in a new place soon, with strangers all around us... Instead of the faces we grew up with- that doesn't scare you?

Angelo smiles at her. We see their loving eyes gaze at each other.

ANGELO
I'm not scared of anything. (Beat) Besides, everything is good right now! All the houses are rebuilt, my sisters are back at home, the figs are extra sweet this summer, and I get to dance with you for the rest of my days.

Lina LAUGHS and leans her head on his shoulder.

LINA
I just get nervous when I think about leaving. In four weeks we'll be gone, and there's a lot to do still--

ANGELO
We could worry every day about the future, and still the future will surprise us. (Beat) Enjoy what we have now, and we'll have time to worry about everything else later.

The music stops and the people CLAP. Angelo and Lina break through the paper ribbons, they still hold hands as the broken ribbons fall to the ground. The crowd comes in close to them, congratulating, hugging, and smiling with them.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - DAY

The room is a bit bigger than the original home, but furniture placement is the same, only with different looking furniture.

The wooden table is a rectangle, there is no rocking chair, or crib, or backpacks on the wall. The stove is a similar model as the one before. There are two counters on either side of the stove. Small clay ducks sit on a high shelf next to a clock.

Paperwork and opened envelopes are scattered across the table. Angelo, Santo, Lucia, Maria, and Lina sit at the table sorting through the documents. Maria writes down notes as they speak of their plans.

Santo hands Maria a stack of tickets.

SANTO
Here are the plane tickets. I've double checked them, the plane leaves at 9:30am on December 7th.

Maria SCRIBBLES the information down, folding the tickets within the pages of the notebook.

ANGELO
(to Lina)
Your father knows that's the date you leave, right?

LINA
I told him, he knows. He’s not happy but he keeps saying it’s my choice. So, this is my choice.

Lina smiles and holds Angelo’s hand for a beat.

LUCIA
When you land, I’ll be at your gate to pick you up. There’s going to be a lot of people, so don’t be surprised if it takes some time to find each other.

ANGELO
You’ll have to wear a tall hat or something so we can find you, Aunt Lucia. The Americans are giants, you’ll be like a mouse in a wheat field.

Everyone LAUGHS, even Santo but quietly. Lucia shakes her head at him, with warning.

Angelo takes another stack of papers, and looks through them, sorting them into a new pile.

He stops suddenly, his face gets pale, as if he’s going to faint.

LINA
What’s the matter with you, Angelo?

ANGELO
The arrival window will close before I get there.

LINA
What are you talking about?

ANGELO
(upset)
Right here!

Angelo points to the paperwork.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
You read it! It says, arrival valid until December 2nd. If you miss your arrival window, you are unable to re-apply for green card status until six months after the date listed above.

Santo takes the paperwork out of Angelo’s hands and reads it.

SANTO
Where? Where does it say that?

Angelo points to the section with his finger.

ANGELO
Here! Open your eyes! You bought the plane tickets for the wrong date.

Santo and Lucia scramble through the other papers. Lina and Maria look at each other, nervous. They speak to each other loudly, with an angry/frustrated tone.

LUCIA
Didn’t you double check// the dates?

SANTO
I did! What am// I stupid now?

ANGELO
We need to change the plane tickets!

SANTO
You can’t get the money back, they’re non-refundable.

ANGELO
What are we// supposed to do now then?

SANTO
Don’t yell like that// people can hear you outside!

ANGELO
What are we supposed to do--

LUCIA
(loudest)
You’re supposed to sit down and shut up so I can read the dates on the paperwork.

She shakes her head disappointed, and flicks through the papers.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Bambina’s papers are good.

She hands the paper to Maria, who quickly places it in the notebook. She does this after every name.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Sal is good. Michael is good. Anna, Domenica, Maria, Lina, Santo--

She looks sadly at Angelo.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
They must’ve processed your visa paperwork at a different time than the rest of them, Angelo. Yours is the only one that will have been expired.

A sad, quiet beat falls over the room. All eyes lay on Angelo.

ANGELO
So... I’ll just have to stay here and re-apply when the window re-opens.

LINA
No, you can’t stay here alone--

ANGELO
They won’t let me in with expired papers, Li. I don’t know what you want me to do.

Lina quickly wipes away a tear, her head hangs down.

LINA
Excuse me.

Lina leaves the table and walks out of the house.

ANGELO
Wait--

LUCIA
Let her go process this.

MARIA
We’re not going to leave you alone here, Angelo--

ANGELO
What do you mean? You have to go with or without me.
(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)
It took years of work to get these visas, to get this money, to get it all sorted out. You're all going to go.

Maria looks at him, speechless.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Don't worry, I'll still get there. I'll just be a little late.

MARIA
You won't be there for Christmas.

SANTO
Maria, stop--

ANGELO
It's only one year--

MARIA
You don't know how many years we have left--

SANTO
Don't talk like that--

Maria looks at Santo with desperation, pleading with her eyes.

MARIA
Papa! We can't leave him here by himself! What's the point of going if we're not all together?

LUCIA
You'll all be together for Christmas, don't be upset about that.

MARIA
How?

LUCIA
I'm going to take his paperwork, I'll look it over and see what I can do.

Lucia gets up from the table and kisses Maria on the head.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Don't worry too much about it, beautiful girl. You'll get early wrinkles.

She takes Angelo’s papers. She opens the door to leave but looks at Santo and Angelo.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
You two better stop yelling at each other, it’s not good for anyone. Angelo, go find your wife and make sure she’s okay. Understand?

Angelo nods his head, Lucia walks out the door with a SLAM.

EXT. WATER FOUNTAIN - DAY

Water bursts out of three separate faucets from a cement wall. It all falls into a cement base, and runs down a slope into grates at the right side of the fountain.

Two WOMEN, 50’s, stand next to baskets of the clothes, they wash and scrub the clothes at the left side of the fountain.

Angelo carries a pitcher in each hand, he goes to the fountain and fills them. Sergio comes and stands next to him, filling bottles of his own at the next faucet.

SERGIO
Pretty soon you’ll be living as an American, huh?

Angelo gives him a side eye and continues filling his bottles without looking at him. He is not happy Sergio is talking to him.

ANGELO
I hope so. I might be staying here longer than I thought.

SERGIO
Why? What happened?

ANGELO
My paperwork will be expired by the time I get there.

Sergio smirks. Angelo does not see it.

SERGIO
Oh... How did that happen?

ANGELO
I don’t know, just bad timing I guess.

SERGIO
Maybe... Or maybe you're not meant to go so soon. A sign from God, if you think about it.

Angelo twists his neck to look at Sergio, anger boiling inside. He looks away and takes a breath, calming down.

ANGELO
Don't act like you and God have the same opinion, you sound crazy.

SERGIO
I'm not, I'm just saying... What if this was meant to happen to you, and you're supposed to stay here.

Angelo grows more irritated, we can hear the anger in his voice. He struggles to keep his cool.

ANGELO
Stay here for what though, Sergio? You make no sense, and you're starting to piss me off! You should mind your own business sometimes.

Angelo turns away from Sergio, and starts to walk away.

SERGIO
Hey! You tired of listening to me, is that why you're turning away?

ANGELO
Say whatever you want! If you have something to say then say it.

SERGIO
(genuine)
What will make you stay?

Angelo waves him off, shaking his head in disappointment and walks away. Sergio steps away from the fountain and YELLS after him.

SERGIO (CONT'D)
What's the matter with this place, why do you hate it here--

Angelo turns around and starts to YELL with aggression we've never seen before.

ANGELO
I've never hated it here! I've only loved being here.
(MORE)

ANGELO (CONT'D)
My mother raised me here, I met my soul mate here, you've been my best friend here... This place has given me everything I've ever loved. (Beat) But what's left for me here? Do you ever ask yourself that? Do you ever plan for your future instead of holding on so strong to your childhood?

Sergio SCOFFS.

SERGIO
(softly)
I'm not holding onto anything.

Angelo looks at Sergio like he's crazy.

ANGELO
You're trying to hold on to me! Life does not ever stay the same. Grow up, and do what you gotta do. I already know what I have to do to better myself and my family.

Sergio rolls his eyes and shakes his head at Angelo.

SERGIO
Oh, I'm so impressed, Angelo! You've got it all figured out, so get out of here! Since you're too good to stay, and you're too good for your friends so go on and make some American friends--

ANGELO
Sergio! You're acting like a little boy, I didn't mean any of those things--

SERGIO
That's what I heard.

ANGELO
Yeah that's what you heard because nothing can get through your rock head!

Sergio launches at Angelo swinging his fists. He knocks him down, the bottles in Angelo's hands shatter against the cobblestone. They wrestle in the broken glass, cutting up their arms and faces. They GRUNT and YELL, hitting each other, and yanking each others shirt collars.

The women at the fountain SCREAM and run off, bringing back Antonio and another MAN, 30’s. The two pull Angelo and Sergio away from each other.

ANTONIO
(annoyed)
What are you guys doing, you’re supposed to be friends.

Sergio spits some blood out of his mouth.

SERGIO
No, we’re not.

Angelo looks shocked and hurt. Sergio stares at him without remorse.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - DAY

Maria and Lina sit on a blanket on the floor as they play with the babies, Michael and Sal. Lina helps Michael stack blocks, as Maria helps Sal walk around.

MARIA
How did you know you were in love with my brother?

Lina SCOFFS and smiles at Maria.

LINA
You never really know. You feel a certain way and then you see where it goes.

Maria looks at her confused.

LINA (CONT'D)
Love is not something you get to know, it’s something that you allow to grow. Why are you asking? (Long GASP) Are you in love, Maria?

Maria looks away, blushing.

LINA (CONT'D)
You are! With Gio?

MARIA
Yes, he asked me to marry him earlier this week.

LINA
What did you say?

Maria looks down at Sal stumbling around and shrugs.

MARIA
Maybe!

LINA
Maybe? Why, maybe! If you love him then be with him.

Maria shakes her head no, she frowns for a beat.

MARIA
He just got a job building the railroads here. I can't tell my father that I want stay, when he's already worked so hard for us to leave.

LINA
(nurturing)
It'll be hard to tell Santo about this. But, you have to live the life that you want... That's what everyone else is doing!

Lina LAUGHS and gets Maria to smile.

MARIA
I wish I could have everyone live in one place together. I don't want to leave my family as much as I don't want to leave Gio. But... a part of me doesn't want to ever leave Italy either... All the work is already done, maybe I should just go to the United States--

LINA
Gio is not just any average man, true? You love him. Will you ever stop thinking about him if you leave?

Maria thinks for a beat. She shakes her head no.

MARIA
I'll always want to be with him.

LINA
That's what I thought. (Beat) You know, out of all his grandchildren, my grandfather loved me the most.
(MORE)

LINA (CONT'D)
So when I told him that I was going to follow your brother to the United States, it was the first time I saw him cry.

MARIA
(surprised)
He wasn't mad?

LINA
Oh he was mad, he screamed until his face turned purple. I thought he was going to faint! (BEAT) But then he just started to cry. We both knew that I was going to go live my happiest life. Even if that meant we would be apart for most of it.

Lina smiles at Maria. But Maria still looks uneasy.

MARIA
Do you think my father will actually let me stay here, with Gio?

LINA
I think the only reason he'll let you stay is because of Gio. He's got a good job, and he's got your heart. Santo won't say no.

MARIA
Do you really believe that? Or are you just trying to make me feel better?

LINA
Listen, Santo will be the first one to say, (Imitates Santo's voice) 'You gotta do, what you gotta do'. Don't be afraid of what other people think or say. Make your choices based on your own happiness, not anyone else's.

Maria wraps her arms around Lina's shoulders, they hug each other as they speak.

MARIA
Thank you Li... I'll miss you so much.

LINA
We'll miss you more.

INT. CALABRESE HOME - DAY

Santo sits at the table with his arms folded, leaning back in his chair. He LAUGHS in disbelief.

SANTO
(stern)
No.

MARIA
Papa! You didn't even think about it.

Santo looks at her like she's crazy.

SANTO
What is there to think about? Everything is already done for you to go to the United States. Don't start talking stupid about staying here with Gio. I love him, I do, but not enough to let you stay here.

MARIA
(pleading)
But I told you, he got a government job with the railroad. We won't have to worry about money, he's even building us a house in the city! Or, you just don't want to think about the positives?

SANTO
There won't be any positives if the government collapses and the state has to let everyone at the railroad go--

MARIA
Papa, stop it. You're being dramatic. I can have a good life here with Gio. I can have the life I *want*, here.

A beat. Santo nods his head in acceptance.

SANTO
So you don't want to stay with your family?

Maria SIGHS. She looks at him lovingly.

MARIA
You know I won't stay here unless you tell me it's okay. (BEAT) So just tell me what you think.

Santos nods in thought.

SANTO
You're sure he has this job?

MARIA
He started last week.

Santo grudgingly nods his head yes.

SANTO
Then I suppose you'll have a happy life here.

Maria smiles, gets up from the table and hugs santo from the side. He sits stiffly, sad. She presses her cheek against his, making him smile.

MARIA
(whispers)
Thank you, Papa.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - MORNING

A crowd of PEOPLE leave the church doors, walking into smaller groups talking with each other. Angelo walks down the steps holding Bambina's hand, helping her keep her balance. The rest of the family follows him down the steps.

FATHER SALVATORE (O.S.)
(yelling)
Angelo! Angelo!

Angelo turns around. Father Salvatore comes up to him, out of breath.

FATHER SALVATORE (CONT'D)
Your aunt has been looking for you, she has a phone call waiting for you in the basement.

ANGELO
Right now?

FATHER SALVATORE
Right now! C'mon, c'mon she's going to be mad if you keep them waiting.

Father Salvatore hurries Angelo inside.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Angelo follows Father Salvatore down the hall until they can see Lucia waiting by a phone hanging on the wall.

Lucia hands Angelo the phone, covering the receiver.

LUCIA
(whispering, hurried)
The President of the United States is on the phone, right now.

Angelo starts to panic, his eyes bulge out of his head. Lucia keeps him focused, she squeezes his face in her hand so he can't look away from her.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
You'll address him as President Roosevelt when you answer the phone. Practice.

ANGELO
P-P-Prezant Rooz-i-felt.

LUCIA
What do you mean present! He's not a gift to the United States, he's the leader. Listen to the sound of the word— Presi (BEAT) dant.

They practice together. Angelo looks faint.

LUCIA AND ANGELO
Pressssidaaaaant Roooossivvvvvelt.

LUCIA
Good, good. He's going to ask you about your visa status, and you're going to tell him you need an extension. Ex, ex-ten-sion.

ANGELO
Exten-ten. Exten—

LUCIA
Listen, listen before you speak. Exten-shhhhhiaaan.

LUCIA AND ANGELO
Ex-ten-shhhhhhion.

LUCIA
(confident)
Okay, you're going to be fine. Go, go.

Angelo wavers the phone, and holds it against his cheek. He speaks in broken English.

ANGELO
Hello? Prezient Roosivalt?

LUCIA
(panicked whispers)
PreziDANT! DANT!

ANGELO
PRESIDANT!

Roosevelt LAUGHS over the phone.

ROOSEVELT
Angelo! It's good to hear from you. How is it up there in the mountains?

ANGELO
Very good, thank you.

ROOSEVELT
Good. So, what seems to be the issue with your visa status? Did you receive the paperwork, or not yet?

ANGELO
Uh, uh-- I have the papers, and I need an ex-taan-sion. The- the... date... Is not right for the time that I will go to the United States.

Lucia nods her head in approval.

ROOSEVELT
I understand, okay. I'll sign off on an extension for your visa and have it sent to you, so you'll have the proper paperwork.

ANGELO
Thank you, thank you very much.

ROOSEVELT
It’s no problem, you’re lucky to have an aunt like Lucia. Tell her she should call more often. Good bye Angelo, and if I don’t see you, welcome to America.

ANGELO
Goodbye Prezidant Roosivelt, thank you!

We hear a DIAL TONE. Angelo smiles as he hangs up the phone on the wall.

LUCIA
See? Nothing to worry about.

Angelo hugs Lucia tightly. She pats his back reassuringly, in a motherly way.

EXT. CALABRESE HOME - DAY

A light snow falls over a crowd of PEOPLE surrounding the family home. The entire street is filled with people, they CHAT, some CRY, and most of them wait their turn to say goodbye.

The family stands near each other, people moving to each person, hugging and kissing them goodbye.

An OLD WOMAN, 85, frail and skinny, waddles over to Angelo, looking at him with her sunken, sad eyes. Tears fall and Angelo wipes them for her with a cloth from his pocket. She holds his hand to her cheek and kisses it, with a slight smile.

ANGELO
No tears, beautiful, it’s a happy day.

OLD WOMAN
And these are happy tears for you! I remember holding you as a baby, and seeing you now, for the last time... You make my heart feel full, safe travels.

The Old Woman reaches in to kiss and hug Angelo. She smiles at him before she moves on to hug Bambi goodbye. Angelo blinks quickly, pushing tears back.

He looks around at the crowd before him, taking a deep BREATH. He SNIFFLES, and shakes his head, trying to keep his strong appearance.

Antonio pushes Sergio through the crowd. Sergio tries to resist and turn back, but Antonio shoves him to stand right in front of Angelo. Sergio stares at Angelo, scared.

SERGIO
Safe travels.

Sergio turns and tries to walk away, but Antonio catches him and shoves him back in front of Angelo.

ANTONIO
(to Sergio)
He’s gonna leave and that’s all you want to say to him? Be a man and tell him what you really want to tell him!

Sergio looks at Angelo with sad eyes. He seems like he doesn’t know how to start.

SERGIO
It makes me sad to know you won’t be here anymore, but this is your life and this is how you want to live it. So I don’t hold any hard feelings against you--

ANGELO
Against me? Sergio!

Sergio shakes his head apologetically.

SERGIO
Okay, okay, I’m bad at this! And yeah, it’s hard to say goodbye when you don’t want to. So... I’ll miss you. And I hope America is everything you want it to be.

Angelo LAUGHS. He pulls Sergio in for a hug, beat, Sergio wipes tears from his eyes and pulls away from Angelo. He looks around to make sure no one saw him cry.

ANGELO
I’ll miss you too. If you ever come to the United States, you’ll have a place to stay.

Sergio smiles, Antonio cuts in between them, he kisses Angelo goodbye.

ANTONIO
I hope you have room for me too, my friend! What do you think, do you have any room in your bags for me?

Antonio inspects the pile of packed bags by the door, they both LAUGH.

ANGELO
Maybe if you lost some weight we could make it work.

ANTONIO
Well, I guess I'll find another way. I'll see you there eventually, safe travels.

They hug, as two small cars pull up to the door. Santo and two other MEN begin loading the cars with bags. Maria and Lina help the kids into the car.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Oh! And you're going out in style mister rich?

ANGELO
My aunt set it up, honestly, none of this would be happening without her.

SERGIO
She never fails to surprise. Let us help you with the bags.

They all go and start to pack the cars.

The three girls, Domenica, Anna, and Bambi stand by the car with small different colored purses in their hands. They look like little ladies, admiring the bags.

Santo kneels down to them, holding two bottles of alcohol and one string of sausage.

SANTO
Okay listen carefully. You don't let *anyone* touch your purses, understand? It's against the law to search a ladies purse. So if someone asks you what's in your purse what do you do?

BAMBI
Hit them in the face with it!

The girls GIGGLE, Santo smiles at her trying not to laugh.

SANTO
No, no, don't hit anyone with it. You say, it's none of your business what's in my purse. Okay?

The three girls MUMBLE the words back.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Say it loud! You have to scare em off.

DOMENICA
It's none// of your business.

ANNA
It's none// of your business!

BAMBI
(yelling the loudest)
It's none of your *business*!

SANTO
Good job. Anna, you put this one in your bag.

He hands her a small bottle of alcohol. He hands the other bottle to Bambi.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Bambina you take this one, and Domenica take this.

Santo hands Domenica a string of dried sausage.

DOMENICA
Why do I have to bring the sausage? It's gonna make my new purse smell bad.

SANTO
Uncle Giovanni asked me to bring it. When they pick us up, they're gonna ask what happened to the sausage. What are you gonna tell him?

Domenica SIGHS and takes the sausage, putting it in her purse.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Okay. Remember don’t let anyone take your purse and keep it closed until we get on the plane. Understand?

The three girls nod their heads yes.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Okay, c’mon let’s get in the car.

They follow him to the car and he helps them inside.

The final bags are loaded in one car, along with Angelo and Lina. Santo gets in the other car, waving to the crowd as he gets in. The cars roll away from the door steps and begin to drive off.

The crowd of people WHISTLE and SHOUT goodbyes, as the people in the cars wave back to them.

INT. SANTOS CAR - CONTINUOUS

The car is cramped and packed to physical capacity.

Santo holds Michael on his lap in the passenger seat. The kids, Domenica, Bambi, Anna, and Sal, are crammed together in the back seat. They push each other and complain/whine about the space.

Anna looks out the window to the people waving goodbye. She waves back at them. Tears swell up in her eyes and roll down her cheek. Her lips frown into a pucker, but she quickly wipes her tears away as she looks at Santo. He doesn’t see her cry. She takes a deep BREATH.

Santo turns his neck in an uncomfortable position to try and reach back there to stop the kicking and pushing. He struggles to keep the kids separated.

SANTO
Just close your eyes and go to sleep!

INT. ANGELOS CAR - CONTINUOUS

The car is quiet, we hear an occasional ROCK hitting the metal of the car. The car is cramped with luggage. It fills the trunk, and is piled in between Lina and Angelo. They both sit up wide awake.

LINA
How long have we been driving?

Angelo looks at his watch.

ANGELO
About two hours, we should almost be there.

INT. SANTOS CAR - CONTINUOUS

Santo's bloodshot eyes carefully look at the backseat, and the kids are all asleep. He let's out a breath, and the car hits a BUMP in the road.

The kids get launched in the air, falling on top of each other. They begin YELLING at each other. Santo looks like he's about to have a mental breakdown.

His face lights up as he realizes they're approaching the airport.

INSERT: Airport Parking sign

BACK TO SCENE

Santo YELLS over the kids.

SANTO
Okay, okay! We can get out in a second, we're almost there. Can we survive five more minutes in here?

They wrestle each other for more room in the car. The kids respond in unison.

KIDS
NO!

INT. ANGELOS CAR - CONTINUOUS

RUMBLING and brakes SQUEAKING are heard as the luggage pile topples over onto Lina. Angelo tries to catch the pile, but can only stop one or two bags. The car SLAMS to a stop, everyone jolts to the side.

ANGELO
Li? Are you okay?

LINA
Yes... I think.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Snow is piled six inches high on the road, while snow is still falling, creating a curtain of grey around them. The airport is distant, and barely visible on the road ahead.

Their car is crooked in a snow bank, tire marks in the snow swerving off the road.

The DRIVER, male, short, skinny, 20's, and Angelo get out of the car. Angelo leans in and helps Lina out of the car.

ANGELO
(to Driver)
What's the matter with you--

DRIVER
It's the snowstorm! It's not good for driving.

ANGELO
Well, how are we supposed to make our flight now?

DRIVER
I guess we can try to pull it out?

Angelo studies the car. He shrugs and nods to the driver. They dig their feet into the snow and pull the bumper of the car.

The moves a bit out of the snow bank but falls right back in place.

ANGELO
That's not going to do us any good. What do you usually do when this happens?

DRIVER
I'm not sure, this has never happened to me before.

Angelo turns around and kicks the snow.

ANGELO
(yells into the air)
GOD DA--

EXT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Santo stands on the sidewalk, by the car, looking into the snowy distance.

BAMBI
Papa, where's Angelo?

SANTO
He's on his way. Here, take a bag and follow your sisters to wait inside.

Bambi trots along following her train of siblings inside the building. Santo stands at the sidewalk as the car pulls away. He paces, his eyes searching through the snowy blur.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Angelo, Lina, and the Driver pull a plastic tarp with their small pile of luggage on top. They drag it, gliding across their foot holes in the snow. Angelo looks at his watch, nervous.

They move at a slow pace, stomping their way through the snow.

DRIVER
I don't know, I'd say it'll be 30 minutes until we get there.

Angelo looks at his watch.

ANGELO
We'll make it. Lina, can you feel your feet still?

Lina HUFFS and can't seem to catch her breath.

LINA
Barely.

ANGELO
As long as you know they're still there. I know people who've gotten so cold their toes froze off.

LINA
Angelo! Why would you say that to me?

Angelo and the Driver LAUGH.

ANGELO
C'mon, let's go! Use your toes while you still got em.

EXT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Santo paces along the sidewalk. Domenica runs up to him.

DOMENICA
Papa, they told me we have to board now.

SANTO
(looking up at the sky)
Oh God, why are you doing this to me?

Santo looks out to the snowy blur, nothing new in sight. He looks to Domenica for a beat. He looks out to the snow once more, before following her inside.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Angelo, Lina, and the Driver are trying to go faster, they looks ridiculous jumping through the snow.

LINA
I can’t run anymore Angelo, we have to stop!

ANGELO
(panicked)
Our flight leaves in 6 minutes, we have to run! Don’t give up yet.

LINA
Stop running!

Angelo quickly looks at his watch, heavily breathing.

ANGELO
But I can see it! I can see the airport, just keep running.

Lina stops and catches her breath. As she stops the Driver trips and falls into the snow. Angelo bends over and looks like he’s going to throw up.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
(out of breath)
Maybe my father will tell the pilot to wait for us.

DRIVER
These people don’t wait for anyone.

Angelo helps the Driver up. They all look up as we hear an airplane TAKING OFF. It flies over them. Angelo looks at his watch.

ANGELO
Do you think they would leave three minutes early?

INT. SANTOS AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

Santo sits down, he counts the heads of his kids sitting around him. He SIGHS as he buckles his seat belt.

DOMENICA
Where is Angelo?

SANTO
On his way.

DOMENICA
But we’re taking off--

SANTO
Try to sleep on our way there. Your brother will find us later... Bambi hand me your purse.

Bambi hands her purse to him. He opens it and takes out the bottle of alcohol, takes a short chug of it. He let’s out a breath of relief and puts it back in her purse, handing the purse back to her.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Thank you. Don’t drink that.

Santo closes his eyes, peacefully. Domenica slumps down in her chair and looks out the window nervously. The plane TAKES OFF, everyone in the cabin shakes as the plane is unsteady for a beat.

Michael CRIES. Santo abruptly opens his eyes and reaches over the aisle. He picks him up and sits him on his lap, comforting him. Sal begins to CRY too, and crawls over to Santo.

Santo holds both boys in his arms. He rubs their backs as they WHINE and let out soft CRIES tucking their heads into his chest.

INT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Angelo and Lina sit in an empty waiting area with their pile of luggage sitting at their feet. The Driver stands, thinking.

LINA
They already told us we can't get a refund, and we don't have any money for tickets. So why don't we just start trying to find a way home?

DRIVER
I promised Lucia that I would get you to your flight. So... just give me a second to think of a way to fix this.

ANGELO
Unless you can build a plane, I don't think we're getting a flight tonight.

LINA
He's right. Maybe we should try to find a train?

The Driver looks up at a FLIGHT ATTENDANT, male, 30s, walking by them at a distance. His face lights up, and he begins to run over to him.

DRIVER
Jack! Jack, wait!

The driver speaks with the flight attendant and points to Angelo and Lina. The flight attendant shakes his head no, as the Driver begins to beg. The flight attendant nods his head yes and shrugs his shoulders.

The Driver walks back over to Angelo and Lina.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
C'mon, let's pick up your bags, I got you a flight.

ANGELO
How?

DRIVER
Well, you'll have to ride with some cargo. It's not *actually* a commercial flight. But it's free! And... Kind of safe, so if you're ready to go, let's go!

Angelo begins to pick up bags, and Lina yanks his arm, pulling him to her. She WHISPERS to him angrily.

LINA
What are you doing! You want to take a free ride from a stranger?

ANGELO
We're friends now, and he's doing us a favor--

LINA
What's his name if you know him so well?

Angelo thinks for a beat, he's clueless.

ANGELO
It doesn't matter!

LINA
Nothing never comes for nothing, Angelo! Ask him why it's a free flight.

ANGELO
(to the Driver)
Why isn't there a cost for us?

DRIVER
(nonchanlant)
There's no cost for friends! And again, technically there aren't seats on the plane for you--

LINA
What!

DRIVER
But! There will be. My friend over there said he could set something up for you, real nice.

INT. AIRPLANE CARGO - CONTINUOUS

A big metal capsule looking area, boxes and crates piled on top of each other. Thick black netting separates three sections of packages.

Angelo and Lina are huddled together at the front of the cargo. No packages are near them, but instead are behind the black netting about a yard away.

They sit on a long black sack of sand, resembling a bench without a backrest. One blanket lays over their laps and another lays over their shoulders. Their luggage sits by their feet, sliding left and right as the plane does.

When they speak we can see their breath in the cold air.

RATTLING and CRASHING of crates/boxes can be heard throughout the scene. Each time, Lina jumps out of reaction to the noise.

LINA
(angry)
We're going to die in here, Angelo!

ANGELO
Nothing wrong with this. What's the difference between this and first class?

LINA
I think maybe they have real seats on any other flight. I can't feel my ass anymore, and I don't know if it's because we're sitting on a bag of *sand.* OR, if it's because it's so cold in here.

Lina shows him her blue fingers.

LINA (CONT'D)
Look! I'm going to lose my fingers too. No toes, no fingers, just nubs- for what! You're going to have to start cooking for us.

Angelo takes her hands and holds them to his mouth. He blows hot air rapidly on to them. A CRASH is heard.

LINA (CONT'D)
(hysterical)
Oh my GOD! It's falling apart in the sky! We're going to fall out of the sky--

ANGELO
We're not falling! It's just cheap, a big piece of junk making all this noise. But it's better than listening to the babies cry for 10 hours. Right?

She leans her head against his shoulder under the blanket.

LINA
No.

CREEKING and a sound of DESCENDING begins. Lina sits straight up grasping the slick edges of the sand bag. She scrambles to get a good grip on the bag.

LINA (CONT'D)
Do you feel that, now? We're falling! //Don't you feel like we're falling?

ANGELO
I don't know! //I don't know! How am I supposed to know!

LINA
We're going to die! Was it worth it? You still trust your new friend? //You think he's a good friend?

ANGELO
What do you want me to do about it now? //We're already falling! How do you want me to fix that?

LINA
God please don't let us die, please help us--

INT. AMERICAN AIRPORT - DAY

Santo carries Michael in his arms and leads his children out of the boarding bridge. They all hold hands, leading the way for each other. They move around the gate like a long family snake.

Santo stops walking at the end of the aisle where there are four different path options. He looks around at all the different signs, posted on the walls and hanging from the ceiling.

The letters of the words begin to move within their signs making it impossible to understand. People rush past him and the kids, pushing him.

He begins to look around, jumping from face to face searching for help.

An AMERICAN, female, 20's, short blonde hair and red lipstick, bumps into Anna, knocking her over.

Anna begins to CRY, Santo frantically turns around, he sees the American helping Anna back up.

AMERICAN
(to Anna)
I’m so sorry, sweetheart. Are you okay?

The American wipes Anna’s tears with her hanker-chief. She looks up to Santo, watching her.

AMERICAN (CONT'D)
I’m sorry, sir! She was so tiny I didn’t even see her.

She LAUGHS, Santo does not laugh with her, and instead looks at her with a confused face. The American stops laughing nervously and clears her throat.

SANTO
Please-- I... Please, help.

AMERICAN
Sure, what do you need help with?

He hands her a piece of paper.

INSERT: Note of directions of what to do when they arrive at the airport, written in Italian.

BACK TO SCENE

AMERICAN (CONT'D)
I’m sorry I can’t read this.

DOMENICA
Go to gate?

AMERICAN
We’re at the gate.

Domenica WHISPERS to Santo indistinctly and he WHISPERS back to her. Domenica faces the American.

DOMENICA
Where, cars? Bus?

The American points to the left path and then to the right path.

AMERICAN
The busses wait over on that side, and cars are parked over on this side.

Domenica looks unsure, she WHISPERS to Santo. He nods his head yes and looks up to the American.

SANTO
Help with the cars?

AMERICAN
Sure! Just follow me.

The American leads Santo and his family through the crowded airport towards the cars.

EXT. AMERICAN AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Lucia stands with her husband, GIOVANNI, male, 30's, tall, they both eagerly watch the glass doors open and close as people walk through.

She takes his hand and squeezes it, she looks up to him.

LUCIA
Their flight landed 25 minutes ago, do you think they're lost?

A beat, he thinks and frowns. He looks up at the doors and smiles wide. Lucia hops up and down trying to look over the sea of people leaving the building.

Giovanni picks Lucia up and sets her on his shoulder, she GASPS as she sees Santo walk out. They both wave to Santo. The crowd separates.

Lucia jumps down and hurries over to Santo and the kids. She wraps her arms around the kids and kisses them over and over. She stands and hugs Santo. Lucia looks over the group and becomes concerned.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
Where's Angelo?

INT. AIRPLANE CARGO - DAY

Angelo and Lina hold each other as they SCREAM, tears run down Lina's face. They both get launched off the sand bag and slide across the floor as the plane wheels hit the ground.

They stop screaming and listen to the engine slowing down.

LINA
I don't understand-- Did we hit the water? Is that why we didn't explode?

Angelo feels the metal floor. He HITS it, and shrugs. The PILOT, male, 30's, calm, opens the metal door.

PILOT
Holy shit, he wasn't lying there really are people back here.

LINA
We're sorry! We're so sorry!

PILOT
It's okay, nobody's upset... Well, nobody's upset at *you*.

The pilot goes inside to help them up off the floor.

PILOT (CONT'D)
C'mon, we have extra space in the bunks. It's not safe for people back here.

Lina smacks Angelo's arm.

LINA
I told you it's not safe!

INT. AMERICAN HOME - NIGHT

We see the STATUE OF LIBERTY, and then we see Angelo holding a postcard of the Statue of Liberty, leaning it against a couple of branches on the Christmas tree. He inspects the rest of the tree, looking happy with it.

A spacious but cozy living room connected dining room, decorated for Christmas. Soft yellow Christmas tree lights are strung around the room, with paper cut snowflakes scattered on the walls and laying on the mismatched furniture.

A small Christmas tree, decorated in paper garland, soft yellow lights, clementines, pine cones, and candy canes sits in the corner of the room with small gifts underneath it.

The kids can be seen running around, cutting paper snowflakes on the floor, or sneaking around the gifts under the tree.

Santo carries a pan of fish to the table, dodging the kids on his way there. Angelo turns around and almost runs into Santo.

SANTO
Watch out, it's hot! It's hot!

Angelo steps aside and we hear a KNOCK at the front door. Angelo opens it, Lucia and Giovanni stand in the doorway with tin foil covered dishes in their hands.

Angelo steps out of the way and let’s them in.

LUCIA
Merry Christmas!

ANGELO
Merry Christmas! Do you want me to take that?

LUCIA
No, no, we got it.

Angelo kisses Lucia as she walks inside. He kisses Giovanni as he follows her to the kitchen. Lucia greets the kids as they run past her.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
There’s no music in here? Angelo, start some music! Don’t you kids want music?

The kids CHEER and Angelo runs up the stairs. Lina and Santo speed in and out of the kitchen filling the long table up with different dishes. Domenica and Bambi set the table with plates and silverware.

The phone hanging on the wall RINGS, Santo picks it up. We see him talk excitedly into the phone for a beat. He turns and faces the room.

SANTO
(to everyone)
Maria’s on the phone!

Santo turns back to the wall and smiles wide. Tears swell up, but he blinks them away.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Are you okay? Do you like the new house?

MARIA
We’re good here. The house is a dream, I can’t wait until you can come back and see it.

SANTO
I’ve almost saved up half the money I need to come visit. I miss seeing your beautiful face.

MARIA
Maybe one day I'll even get to come see your American life. Are you happy with everything there, Papa?

Santo nods his head yes.

SANTO
I am. And knowing you love your life, clears my guilty conscious.

MARIA
Oh, Papa. You're going to make me cry! How is everyone else?

Santo looks around, he sees Angelo coming down the stairs.

SANTO
Angelo is here, I'll let you talk to him. I love you so much, my baby.

Angelo comes back down the stairs holding an accordion, Santo grabs his arm.

SANTO (CONT'D)
Angelo, wish your sister a Merry Christmas.

He hands Angelo the phone. Santo walks away, tending to the food.

ANGELO
Merry Christmas, Maria.

MARIA (O.S.)
Merry Christmas, Angelo! How are you feeling? Is everything turning out okay?

ANGELO
It was a weird transition, especially for the kids. But...

Angelo looks around the room for a beat. Everyone is smiling, laughing, and talking with each other.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Everyone's happy here. The money is good, the food is good, and for the first time, I don't have anything to complain about.

Anna pulls on Angelo's shirt sleeve.

ANNA
I wanna talk to Maria, now.

ANGELO
(to Maria)
Anna wants to talk to you, so tell Gio I said hello, I love you both... Bye Maria.

MARIA (O.S.)
(laughing)
Okay, okay. Goodbye, Angelo, we love you too.

ANGELO
(to Anna)
Okay. You talk into this part and when you're done give it to the next person waiting.

Anna nods her head, and Angelo hands her the phone. Bambi and Domenica stand next to Anna, waiting patiently.

Angelo takes the accordion off the stairs and sits on the arm of the couch, near the dining table with it.

People take turns at the phone, Lina and Santo stop bringing food out and begin to help the babies get into high chairs.

Angelo begins to play the accordion and SING, the kids start to dance and SING along with him. Lucia joins them dancing, then Santo, Giovanni, and Lina.

They all dance for a beat. As Angelo starts a new song, they make their way to the table, and sit down together. They pass plates to each other piling food on them.

We watch them enjoy their food and company.

END.