

REGENERADE 9:2

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"The Warrior Gene"

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FADE IN:

INT. SMALL HOUSE IN NORTH BERKELEY, UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - DAY

Trish and Mitch walk into a bedroom of the house Trish is viewing. They both look around, trying to gauge the room, to feel it. Trish moves over to the double bed and lies down on it.

TRISH

This is really, really nice!  
(Makes a sweeping motion  
towards the windows)  
From this angle, you only see  
treetops and the sky! What a  
relaxing view!

MITCH

(Crooked smile)  
We don't lie down on client's beds  
now do we Trish?

TRISH

You think they've got cameras in  
here?

Mitch looks around the room, then he collapses on the other side of the bed, folding his arms behind his head, smiling contently.

MITCH

You're right about the view.  
Totally relaxing.

Trish turns towards him and looks curious.

TRISH

First time in a client's bed?

MITCH

Not at all. I've done all kinds of  
stuff in client's beds...

Trish's eyes widen.

MITCH (CONT'D)

(Laughing)  
Never! This is my first time...

TRISH

Do you check their bathroom  
cabinets?

MITCH  
(Appalled)  
No! No Trish. I don't do that.

Thinking for awhile.

MITCH (CONT'D)  
I have checked people's wine  
cellars...and...OK, back when  
people watched DVD's...

TRISH  
Lots of porn huh?

MITCH  
I'm sad to say that I should have  
reported some to the police...

TRISH  
Fucked-up people...  
(Shaking her head)

MITCH  
Really, really fucked-up. Lots of  
them. Lots.

Trish goes quiet for a moment, then she says;

TRISH  
It's hard to deal with the ugly  
sides. It takes a toll on you. It  
grinds down your innocence, leaves  
you scarred and bruised  
and...hollow...

Mitch turns towards her, with a concerned look, and he  
studies her.

TRISH (CONT'D)  
Remember I told you that Stella's  
dad's a detective on the force?

Mitch nods, looking serious.

TRISH (CONT'D)  
Well...he's...dissipated...depleted  
...  
Extinguished.

MITCH  
Way past desillusioned?

TRISH

Way past. Self-medicating heavily to make it to retirement, almost there. But then he won't have reason to stay sober during his shifts anymore so...

MITCH

And with Stella...?

TRISH

He's sober when he sees her. Nowadays.

Mitch just studies her, his face calm, his look disarming. He's waiting for her to continue.

Trish looks out on the treetops again, then she says;

TRISH

My choice of husband must have followed some type of psychological imprint in me...my dad was a staff sergeant who was stationed in Vietnam when I was only 1,5 years old. He came back three years later, completely broken. I have some hazy memories of him...and they're not good...he took off when I was around 5 and we never saw him again. Two years later my mom was notified by the army, he was dead. Cause of death, alcohol and substance poisoning...

MITCH

Suicide?

TRISH

Most likely, yes.

Mitch looks pained.

TRISH

OK. That was the heavy shit. Bear with me. Three years ago my older brother does this ancestry DNA-test and he gets a very close match! A "likely half-sibling"! Turns out our dad knocked up some girl in Saigon in 1972, and the result of that is our brother, Bihn-Chi, who lives in Indianapolis with his wife and kids.

MITCH  
Amazing....wow...you keep in touch?

TRISH  
Yes! We try to. He's great.

Trish looks around the room.

TRISH  
So I'm thinking, if I buy this house...  
(Smiling mischievously)  
I can invite Bihn-Chi and his family to come over for Thanksgiving!

MITCH  
That reason alone is good enough!  
You're making an offer on it?

TRISH  
I think I will.  
(Looking content)

Mitch sits up and proceeds to leave the bed.

TRISH  
Where do you think you're going?  
We're not done yet.

MITCH  
Huh...?

TRISH  
I googled you. Your family's loaded.

Mitch collapses down on the bed and he moans.

MITCH  
Arrrrggghhh....so it's my turn now...?

Trish props herself up on her elbow and just looks at him.

MITCH  
(takes a deep breath)  
Right.  
My dad's family wasn't exactly poor, but my parent's money mainly comes from the 20 year patent on Lipidopril. My dad was in charge of the R&D of this drug, and others, in the late 80's.

Trish just listens attentively, expecting him to go on.

MITCH

They're beyond that threshold...their wealth is just accumulating on its own at this point...however, I have not benefitted from this. They basically cut me off when Lauren got pregnant, and I had to drop out of Berkeley Haas.

Mitch sees the look on Trish's face asking \*why?\*

MITCH

To my mother, it was just a big, fat "faux pas". Everything I was doing...what was happening to me...was just "wrong". My cousin in LA helped me to get my broker's licence, fast-tracked, so that I could become financially independent, quickly. So. I never got anything from them, and I've never asked for anything, either. However....

Mitch shifts a little and looks a bit sad and vulnerable.

MITCH

They've been fantastic grandparents to Aidan. And they've created a trust fund for him. He knows about it, but he doesn't realize the scope of things...thankfully. Even I don't really know the details, but I know there will be a first big payout when he receives his MD. After that, I will be asking him for money, not the other way around.

(Crooked smile)

TRISH

So...it's all stipulated? All conditional...?

MITCH

Exactly. Contingent on achieving the right degree, at the right school, at the right time, pursuing the right career and, marrying the right spouse.

TRISH  
(Fascinated)  
Wow. And obviously you didn't do  
it....will Aidan...?

MITCH  
I gotta be honest...

TRISH  
I thought that's what we were  
doing...you and me. Honesty?

Mitch smiles, warmly.

MITCH  
I'm very, very ambivalent about  
this situation. I want Aidan to get  
their money, if there's anyone in  
this world who deserves it, it's  
him. He could be a philanthropist in  
his own right, he would put their  
money to really good use, something  
they would never consider doing,  
themselves. But....what kind of  
personal sacrifices would that  
entail, for him? Would they be  
worth it? Just to get the "fuck-off  
money" down the line? I want my son  
to be free. To make his own  
choices. To live HIS life. I  
fucki'n hate the fact that they've  
managed to control us even though  
I've fought for independence my  
whole life...

TRISH  
Mentally...?

MITCH  
Yeah. Why do I still feel inferior,  
to like, my brother, even though my  
paycheck is bigger than his...? My  
mom is really good at making you  
feel like a worthless piece of  
shit. She's got that down to an art  
form.

TRISH  
Not healthy.

MITCH  
Not at all.

TRISH

You've already answered your own question, haven't you?

MITCH

Yeah. It's gotta stop.

Trish smiles warmly and touches Mitch's hand.

TRISH

Rich people's problems...

Mitch just nods and rolls his eyes.

TRISH

I basically chose to deal with the "problems" of a more...privileged clientel to shield myself from more...uncomfortable situations...

Trish is thinking. Then she continues;

TRISH

I may come across as "a free spirit" but I'm definitely not. I'm a bit of a control freak. I need to feel like I'm 100 percent in charge of my own destiny, that no other person, or circumstance, can dictate my life, in any way...

MITCH

(With emphasis)

Trish. I know EXACTLY what you mean. *Exactly.*

TRISH

There we have it, Mitch Van Bureen. We're much more alike than we first thought...

MITCH

(Smiling, affectionally)

I know what I'm thinking about right now. You're thinking the same thing?

TRISH

Double cheese with fresh basil at The Cheesetable?

MITCH

*Exactly.*



Mitch and Trish look at each other with a somewhat naughty expression, then they quickly get off the bed and move towards the bedroom door but they both make a halt at the exact same time, turn around and walk back to the bed, smoothing the bedspread, before exiting the room.

CUT TO:

INT. MITCH'S DOWNTOWN APARTMENT BUILDING, SF - AIDAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Antonia's face appears on Aidan's computer screen. Aidan is lying on his stomach, on his bed, as usual.

AIDAN

Heeeeyyy....

ANTONIA

No "babe"?

AIDAN

(Softer)

Hi babe...

(Pause)

Were were you last night?

ANTONIA

Oh my God. More eating. We went out for Lomitos, and ice cream...I'm getting fat Aidan, "una gordita"...

AIDAN

Who were you with?

ANTONIA

The usual crowd, you know Fabien, Teresia...

AIDAN

(interrupting)

It's always Fabien! Why does he get to be with you, and not me!?

ANTONIA

(Laughing patiently)

He's got a girlfriend back in France, remember? And where were you the day before yesterday?

AIDAN

This Med Student Association mentorship pub...

ANTONIA  
And who'd you go there with huh?

AIDAN  
(Pausing)  
Amanda...

Antonia just stares at Aidan as in; \*I rest my case\*.

AIDAN  
Toni. I'm just into you, and *no one* else. I'm waiting for you, and even if it's driving me FUCKING INSANE, I'm prepared to wait for a long, long time.  
(Pause)  
Should I - theoretically - change my mind, I would tell you that, before anything happens. I'm about honesty. Transparency, y'know.

Antonia looks sad and emotional.

ANTONIA  
It's been too long now  
Aidan...but...7 weeks left...

AIDAN  
Then I'll have you for two weeks  
and then you'll leave me again...

Aidan rests his chin on his arms and looks crushed.

ANTONIA  
I may as well tell you now...I had another online meeting with the headquarters in New Jersey today...

AIDAN  
And....?!

ANTONIA  
They tell me I would be qualified to apply for a Junior Program Manager position there next year...however, even if I would outrival other national candidates, the hassle and time spent on the H1B visa application would weigh into my candidature...and even if they WOULD decide to sponsor my visa, there'd be another 6-12 month waiting period...

Aidan is pinching the bridge of his nose, trying not to cry.

AIDAN  
(Emotional)  
I'll come to you. Somehow...I'll  
take a gap year...

ANTONIA  
No! No Aidan. We'll figure  
something out. You need to  
continue. Don't even think about  
anything else. Promise me that!  
Remember, the world needs you Aidan  
Van Bureen!

AIDAN  
I just want you to need me Toni...

ANTONIA  
But I DO!!! I do need you!!!

Both Antonia and Aidan start to cry but there's some relief  
showing in Aidan's face.

AIDAN  
I booked tickets for Asunción today  
for Thanksgiving...

Antonia looks baffled and wipes her tears.

ANTONIA  
What?! But...You were going to be  
at Zittravon?

AIDAN  
I had a meeting with Amanda's  
brother yesterday, he's gonna run  
the feature! They're sending a  
reporter down on the the 24:th! And  
they want you and me there.  
Apparently we're "the faces of the  
benevolent post-millennials". I  
know they want me there as the  
stereotypical "rich kid samaritan",  
whatever, I don't care...

ANTONIA  
(Whispering, emotional)  
You're really coming?

AIDAN

I'm coming! Three whole days! I've talked to Zittravon, they understand, their sponsorship will be mentioned so...

ANTONIA

(Crying and laughing at the same time)

Fuck! I need to go on a diet! I don't want you to see me this chubby!

AIDAN

Stop that! You're so fucki'n beautiful...I can't wait to touch you, hug you, hold you...

ANTONIA

(Smiling, knowingly)

And...more...

AIDAN

Ahhhh!!! That's what's happening in my early morning dreams...just before my alarm goes off...

ANTONIA

"More"?

AIDAN

Yeah. The "more".

(Grinning)

You tell that Fabiano dude your boyfriend's coming now OK.

ANTONIA

I will. And you can tell Amanda that; "sharing is caring"...

CUT TO:

EXT. ELYSIAN PARK, LA, PARKING LOT AND TRAIL, MIDDAY

Josh is parking his big truck next to Liz's car at a parking lot in Elysian Park. Liz is standing there, next to her car, giving him a short wave. Josh jumps out of his truck and they meet in a hug.

JOSH

Thanks for meeting me!

LIZ

Thanks for agreeing to power walk with me! (Looking at her watch)  
I've got about 30 minutes before I need to get back to court. Nice truck.

JOSH

Well...yeah. Lauren bought it.

LIZ

(Walking swiftly)  
So what's up...how's..business?

JOSH

Business is going well thank you. Lauren is signing with the buyers for Claremont as we speak, and we've started work on the apartments...

LIZ

(Efficiently)  
Glad to hear it! But you wanted to see me...because..?

JOSH

(Looking down at the ground before him)  
I've been wanting to talk to you..y'know, in private...I just feel...

LIZ

(Interrupting)  
I know it must seem like...I haven't been all that enthusiastic about your relationship with Lauren. I want you to understand that any misgivings I may have had has absolutely nothing to do with you, personally. I think you're a great guy Josh. (Glancing sideways at him)  
Believe me.

JOSH

(Smiling)  
I think you're great too. You remind me of my mom.

Liz gives Josh a sideways glance and wry smile.

LIZ  
Guess we're the exact same age?

JOSH  
I believe you are.  
And you're both very direct. No-nonsense.

LIZ  
It's about the age difference. And Aidan.

JOSH  
I know.

LIZ  
She should have met you 20 years ago...

JOSH  
When I was in preschool?

Liz and Josh glance at each other and she shakes her head.

LIZ  
It is what it is. I just want what's best for my sister. Simple as that.

Josh just nods in agreement and they continue to walk in silence. Suddenly Josh speaks up;

JOSH  
I want to marry her.

Liz just takes a deep breath and halts.

LIZ  
Why? Because of the baby?

JOSH  
No. Because I want us to be together no matter what happens. She's the love of my life.

LIZ  
(Resumes walking)  
Don't you think it's enough with the baby. The business partnership. And the tattoo. For now?

JOSH  
Want to put a ring on it too. Seal the deal.

LIZ  
Is that what she wants too y'think?

JOSH  
(Smiling shyly)  
I think she'd marry me.

LIZ  
(Almost talking to  
herself)  
I think so too...

JOSH  
I want a prenup. Before even asking  
her.

LIZ  
You want me to help you with that?  
A prenup?

JOSH  
(Looking at Liz)  
Yes. And I guess I'm asking you for  
her hand...

LIZ  
So, a legal document. And my  
blessing?

Josh looks at Liz and nods with a slightly pleading  
expression.

LIZ  
What does your mom think about all  
of this?

JOSH  
She's...adapting..

Liz is quiet for awhile, then she says;

LIZ  
You don't think Lauren would  
initiate a prenup herself?

JOSH  
I'm not so sure...

LIZ  
(In a serious voice)  
Me neither.  
(Pause)  
(MORE)

LIZ (CONT'D)

I guess we'll have to be the grown-ups here, right?  
(Smiling)

JOSH

Yeah. Turns out the truck is registered as an equally divided property...

LIZ

So she basically gifted you around...what? 50,000 dollars...right there? The operating agreement could be adjusted accordingly, do you have it?

Josh nods and holds up his phone.

JOSH

I have it...

LIZ

OK. Send it over to me.

JOSH

Thanks.

(Contemplative)

It's never going to work if everybody thinks that she's my..."sugar mama"...

LIZ

Ha! You're right. It's essential that you get it clearly sorted out. I'll help you draft an agreement. In terms of the blessing...

JOSH

I'm not getting it...?

Liz sighs and stops. She fixes her eyes on something in the distance, then she looks straight at Josh, smiles, and hugs him while whispering;

LIZ

You have my blessing Josh.

Josh is beaming. They resume walking.

JOSH

I saw the ring she used to wear. I can't buy her anything like that.



LIZ

You really think she'd expect you to? That she cares? About carats and shit?

JOSH

No. I don't.

LIZ

That ring was an upgrade. She got it on their 10th anniversary, as a compensation for his...

JOSH

(Interrupting)

OK. I get it.

(Thinking)

Would you be able to...

LIZ

Suggest something. Sure.

(Smiling, efficient)

What else do you need?

JOSH

(Hesitating)

I'm thinking about how to...y'know...propose...?

LIZ

No Josh.

(Laughing)

I can't help you with that!

JOSH

I know! I'm thinking she's not into helicopter rides or mariachi bands...

LIZ

Definitely not.

(Pause)

How 'bout the good ole post-coital?

Josh lets out a surprised laugh.

JOSH

I'll consider it...

LIZ

She's so into you. You know that right?

JOSH

I hope so...I've never, ever wanted anything so badly...we're SO GOOD together, I can't imagine anyone better than her...

LIZ

What if...something was to happen...with the pregnancy?

JOSH

That's why I want to ask her now. If it...fails, I know she'd start thinking about "letting me go" again, and I don't want to go anywhere.

LIZ

So...you want a shotgun wedding?

JOSH

I do. Preferrably without firearms.

LIZ

Just a prenup?

JOSH

And a blessing.

LIZ

You should ask Skylar.

JOSH

I may just do that.

(Grinning)

But most of all, I want family...like, you.

Josh and Liz give each other a warm smile.

CUT TO:

INT. MITCH'S DOWNTOWN APARTMENT BUILDING, SF - AIDAN'S BEDROOM, EVENING

Mitch is in the process of changing the sheets in Aidan's bed when his phone rings. It's his mother, Katarina. He sighs, puts in airpods and answers the call.

MITCH

Hi mamma.

KATARINA

(O.C)

There you are! So you just left a message saying you're not coming. How disrespectful of you two! Well I know now that Aidan has left the country! That information reached us through the PR department at Zitravon! And you Mitchell! Why arn't you here!?

MITCH

I'm spending the evening with some friends...

KATARINA

Have you met a new woman? What's going on?

Mitch pauses to breathe.

MITCH

Like I said. I'll be with some friends tonight. But I can visit you tomorrow, if you want me to...

KATARINA

Oh. You have time for us, TOMORROW? Or, should I call your assistant and have her check your schedule? How does this work exactly? Have you heard the expression "Family First"? We've hardly seen Aidan since he moved to the city with you, and I'm starting to feel like he's just doing whatever pops into his mind...

MITCH

Aidan is working SO HARD, I'm SO proud of him. He's passing his courses and he's managed to raise so much money for the school project in Paraguay...

KATARINA

(Interrupting)

That's exactly my point here Mitchell! He shouldn't be...running around begging for money, when he could be working on his MDTD-application!

MITCH

(Losing his temper)  
For Christ sake mother! He's not  
applying! It's enough with the MD!  
Aren't you proud of him?!

KATARINA

I knew it! He's losing focus! Just  
like you were at that age! Don't  
tell me there's a girl down there  
in...Paraguay..? The Greenleafs  
showed me some fundraising webpage  
that had Aidan and some girl as  
contact persons...

MITCH

I completely disagree. He's finding  
his focus now. Not losing it. I  
support him wholeheartedly.

KATARINA

Well. That sounds so nice. Perhaps  
you'd also like to take over the  
financial support, altogether, huh?

MITCH

(In an ice-cold tone)  
I could do that. Effective  
immediately.

KATARINA

You're being silly Mitchell, and  
you're not being responsible...

MITCH

(Interrupting)  
"His spirit and heart"! "Unequaled  
in excellence"! Isn't that what you  
said about him in your graduation  
speech?! And now you're calling his  
fundraising work "begging for  
money"! I actually didn't think  
you'd be like this with him, I  
actually thought you loved him!

KATARINA

Don't be so DRAMATIC Mitchell! OF  
COURSE we love him! You're  
beginning to sound like Lauren...

MITCH

Just to make this crystal clear  
once and for all - we can manage  
just fine without your money.

(MORE)

## MITCH (CONT'D)

I advise you to wise up regarding the demands you think you're entitled to put on Aidan, you are crossing the line and you're gonna end up losing him, his love and respect. Is that what you want? You should think long and hard about that. And don't you DARE talking about my son like that again!

Mitch simply ends the call. Katarina immediately calls back but Mitch shuts his phone off. He walks up to a full length mirror in the hallway and checks himself. Then he puts on his suitjacket, scoops up Dinah in his arms, and leaves his apartment.

CUT TO:

I/E. MONTAGE - ARRIVALS HALL AIRPORT ACUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY /TRISH HENDERSON'S APARTMENT, DINNER TABLE / ANTONIA'S APARTMENT IN ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY - DAY / NIGHT

## Soundtrack Music:

Antonia is standing in the arrivals hall at the airport, staring at the travellers coming through the opening. Suddenly she sees Aidan and she shouts out and waves enthusiastically. He sees her and runs towards her, navigating through the crowd. They reach out for each other and fall into each other's arms. Aidan lifts her up and she clings to him, wrapping her legs around him and they kiss passionately. A REPORTER from the Chronicle is standing right by them, holding on to camera bags and baggage. He's just observing them, smiling, waiting for them to acknowledge his existence.

Mitch is sitting at Trish's dining table with Trish's half-brother BIHN-CHI. They're looking at the screen of the macbook on the table in front of them. Mitch is showing him the website for the school project charity in Paraguay. Mitch is talking passionately and animatedly and points at the screen and Bihn-Chi leans in and looks at the website with interest. Trish is standing right behind Mitch, wineglass in hand, also looking at what Mitch is showing them. When she leans in towards the screen, she puts her hand on Mitch's shoulder for support. As she does this, Mitch glances at her hand resting on him, for just a split second. He smiles, and contentment registers in his face.

The front door to Antonia's apartment flings open and Aidan and Antonia tumble inside. Aidan just drops his baggage on the floor and they cling to each other eagerly.

Antonia is backed up against the wall in the hallway and Aidan is kissing her passionately, her lips, then her neck, moving down to her chest. Antonia looks drunk with desire and gazes at him with amazement. She pulls away and takes his hand as she's moving towards her bed. When she swiftly undresses down to her underwear Aidan follows and does the same and they fall onto her bed and into each other's arms. Antonia lies on top of Aidan and then she sits up on him, removing her bra. Aidan looks at her with complete awe and his hands are on her breasts. Antonia bends down and kisses him deeply and then she pulls off her underwear. Aidan immediately follows her cue and does the same. When Antonia straddles him he looks like he's about to explode with gratitude and lust, and when she starts to move on top of him he is gasping for air. He closes his eyes and bites his lip and then he cries out;

(Music stops.)

AIDAN

No...No....Ahhh....NOOO!

(As he comes, prematurely)

Antonia stops moving as he siezes up and moans.

AIDAN

(In a thick voice)

Fuck! I'm sorry...*Fuck!*

Antonia collapses on him, her face close to his.

ANTONIA

(Panting)

It's OK! It's OK Aidan...

They just lie still for a little while, breathing heavily.

AIDAN

(Whispering)

It's been too long Toni...

ANTONIA

Talk about a build up...

They begin to laugh.

AIDAN

(Caressing her hair and face)

This has already happened like 5000 times in my imagination...

ANTONIA

In mine too...

AIDAN  
(Whispering)  
Just give me 10 minutes and I'll be  
ready...

ANTONIA  
Relax...we have three days! And  
three nights...

Aidan wraps his arms around her tightly.

AIDAN  
(Emotional)  
I never want us to be apart like  
this again...

ANTONIA  
(Looking into his eyes)  
Me neither. Let's decide not to be.

AIDAN  
(Smiling affectionately)  
It's decided.

Aidan and Antonia kiss deeply.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ALTMAN FAMILY HOME, WEST SEATTLE, WA, SMALL BEDROOM -  
AFTERNOON

Lauren is in her old room back in her parents' house. The entire room is packed up with moving boxes lining the walls. Lauren is balancing on a small step ladder while dismounting the curtains. She proceeds to fold them up and puts them in one of the open boxes. She then moves over to the single bed and begins to pull off the quilted bed spread when she suddenly freezes. She slumps down on the bed and begins to stroke the bedspread absentmindedly, then she just drops down on the bed, curls up in a fetal position and closes her eyes.

--INTERCUT FLASHBACK--YEAR 2000

Lauren's mother Elaine is lying in Lauren's bed, propped up with pillows and hooked up to an IV. Lauren is curled up right next to her on the bed, and they're holding hands.

LAUREN  
I'm so scared. Are you scared  
mom...?

ELAINE

No. And you don't have to be baby girl.

(Carefully caressing her hair)

Doc says the treatment I'm starting on monday will blast the hell outta the naughty cells. I'm gonna be unstoppable after this round. Promise.

Lauren puts her arm around her mother.

LAUREN

Promise?

ELAINE

(Convincing)

Promise.

Pause.

ELAINE

I want you to promise me a few things. No matter what happens, OK?

LAUREN

(Worried, vulnerable)

What...?

ELAINE

Promise me you will live your life to the fullest. Don't wait for things you want, or for bad situations to resolve on their own. Always take action, as much as you can, to get what you need...

LAUREN

OK....

ELAINE

And don't marry a man that doesn't worship the ground you walk on. This is the most important thing. Life will always throw you curveballs, and you want to have someone who's strong enough to love you unconditionally. In health, and in sickness, and everything in between. A man that will always put you first. Y'hear me?

Lauren nods.



LAUREN

I don't like you talking like  
this....it sounds like you're  
leaving me..

(Starts to cry)

ELAINE

I'm not baby-girl. I will never  
leave you. This is just mother's  
advice to my daughter, growing up  
so fast...

Lauren cries silently and snuggles up to her mother who keeps  
caressing her forehead.

--END INTERCUT -(PRESENT DAY)

Lauren opens her eyes as Liz is caressing her forehead.  
Lauren looks at her sister, dazed.

LIZ

Hey knocked-up sleepy head...

(Crooked smile)

I should just let you sleep, but  
dinner's actually ready...

Liz looks around the room.

LIZ

Well done baby-sis. You sure know  
how to pack up a room really  
fast....

LAUREN

(Mumbly, sitting up)

If packing up a room was an olympic  
sport I'd win the gold...

LIZ

You sure would...

(Holding out her hand to  
pull Lauren up from the  
bed)

C'mon now. Turkey's on the table.  
Last dinner in this house.

LAUREN

Another closed chapter...

LIZ

And another one beginning...

CUT TO:

I/E. GIRLS BOARDING SCHOOL, ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY - DAY

The Reporter from the Chronicle is photographing Antonia on the school grounds. He's taking pictures of her alone, of her with the headmaster, her with other school staff, her with young female pupils. Finally the reporter stops and walks up to Antonia.

REPORTER

Where's Aidan? I really need to get these shots of you two now, I have to leave for the airport in an hour...

ANTONIA

(Concerned)

He had to use the bathroom...like what? 40 minutes ago...? I have to go check on him...

The reporter nods and Antonia hurries across the school grounds.

--MOMENTS LATER - INSIDE THE SCHOOL BUILDING

Antonia walks down an empty corridor inside the school. As she's passing a row of doors she's calling;

ANTONIA

Aidan! You're here?!

There's a faint reply from inside one of the (toilet) doors;

AIDAN

I'm here...

ANTONIA

You're OK Aidan?! Are you sick?!

AIDAN

(Miserable)

I've got the runs...

ANTONIA

Oh, No! Like..."Montezuma's"?!

AIDAN

Yep.

ANTONIA

Did you throw up?

AIDAN

Not yet. But nauseous.

ANTONIA  
(Emphatic)  
Ohhh baby...

AIDAN  
I'm running out of toilet paper in  
here...

ANTONIA  
I'll get some more OK! And I'll ask  
if they have some Loperamide here.  
Can I leave you for 10 minutes?

AIDAN  
Yes!

--TIME LAPSE, 15 minutes--

Antonia places two toilet paper rolls, a water bottle and  
medicine right outside the toilet door.

ANTONIA  
OK Aidan, the rolls are right  
outside, you can open the door now!

Antonia backs away and there's a delay, then the door opens  
just slightly and Aidan's hand appears, quickly grabbing the  
items before the door slams shut again. Antonia sits down on  
the floor right outside the door.

AIDAN  
(Half-yelling)  
Where's Manuel?

ANTONIA  
He had to go to the airport...

Antonia can hear Aidan's phone ringing inside the toilet. It  
stops after a few signals, then it starts ringing again.

ANTONIA  
Someone's trying to reach you?

AIDAN  
(Sounding feeble)  
Yeah. My mom.

ANTONIA  
She's probably worried about you...

AIDAN  
She's trying to face time me. She's  
with my granddad in Seattle...

ANTONIA

Oh...

AIDAN

You don't have to sit there...and  
like...listen to this...you can  
go...

ANTONIA

I'm staying here. I don't want you  
to pass out in there!

--TIME LAPSE-- 30 minutes

Antonia is still sitting on the floor by the toilet door,  
leaning her head back against the wall.

AIDAN

OK...I'm coming out...

Antonia backs away slightly and the door opens. Aidan comes  
through and slides down on the floor right beside the door,  
leaving it ajar. Antonia begins to move closer but he's  
holding his hand up;

AIDAN

Not too close...please..there's  
vomit on the floor in there...

ANTONIA

Awww...the Loperamide should begin  
to work now...

AIDAN

Yeah...let's hope so...if not I'll  
have to stay here all night...

Antonia smiles at him, with empathy.

ANTONIA

Remember I told you this happened  
to me too when I came here...

AIDAN

Yeah. Poor you.

ANTONIA

Poor you.

They smile at each other.

ANTONIA

Did you text your mom?

AIDAN

No.

ANTONIA

But you have to. Let her know  
you're alive. You know how mothers  
worry!

Aidan shrugs.

ANTONIA

Just send her a text...

Aidan pulls out his phone from his pocket and turns it on. As he's waiting for it to restart he doubles over in pain and grimaces, then he quickly gets up and dives into the toilet again, locking the door. The phone remains outside on the floor. Antonia hears the unmistakable sounds of diarrhea and Aidan moaning. She looks at the door, with a pained expression. Aidan's phone lights up, and it vibrates. The word "Mom" appears on the screen. Antonia picks up the phone and holds it in her hands, she hesitates, then she answers the call. Lauren's image appears on the screen, alongside Antonia's own image. Lauren looks surprised.

ANTONIA

Hi there! I'm Antonia!

Lauren's facial expression changes to overjoyed.

LAUREN

ANTONIA!!! FINALLY!!!! SO good to  
see you!!! How are you?!!!

ANTONIA

I'm good thank you! But Aidan has  
diarrhea...

Inside the toilet Aidan realizes what is happening and puts his sweaty face in his hands and just moans with embarrassment.

LAUREN

Ohhh Nooo! Is he OK? Is he with  
you? Is he hydrated...?

ANTONIA

(Interrupting)

I'm with him. I've given him water  
and medicine, I think it's calming  
down a little bit. There's this  
clinic I can call if he doesn't get  
better...

LAUREN

Oh good! I'm so glad he's with you!  
Not only because he's got diarrhea  
(chuckles) but I'm just so happy  
he's finally with you...

ANTONIA

Me too! I've counted the hours and  
the minutes...

LAUREN

Do you mind if I show your picture  
to my dad and my sister? They're  
right here with me...

ANTONIA

I'd love to say hi...

Lauren turns her screen towards Liz and her father George who  
both lean in curiously and wave at Antonia.

ANTONIA

(Smiling and waving)

Hiii....

Lauren moves away from them and she's walking into another  
room as she continues;

LAUREN

I think it's so amazing what you're  
doing down there with the School  
Project. Me and my partner just  
made our first donation today, it's  
made in the name of our company,  
"Regenerade".

ANTONIA

Thank you so much! I'm working hard  
for all the donors, making sure  
that not a penny goes to waste.  
You'll be able to follow the  
progress on our website and to see  
the feature article soon...

LAUREN

(Emotional, sincere)

We're so enormously proud to have  
you in our family Antonia!

ANTONIA

Oh...Thanks!

LAUREN

We're hoping that you and Aidan will come and see us in LA when you come over for Christmas, but if you can't, I'll come to SF to meet you! I can't wait to hug you!

(Beaming)

ANTONIA

Same here! Happy Thanksgiving!

LAUREN

Happy Thanksgiving! Give my love to Aidan and make him call me as soon as he's able to...

ANTONIA

I will, I promise!

They both give each other a little wave and end the call.

Antonia keeps holding Aidan's phone in her lap and she's smiling. She can hear the toilet flushing and Aidan shuffling inside the bathroom. The door opens and Aidan comes out and slumps down on the floor again, looking very pale and sweaty, and bothered.

AIDAN

All chummy with my mummy now huh?

ANTONIA

She's GREAT!!! Soooo sweet! Super-cute!

Aidan just closes his eyes and leans his head back against the wall. Antonia looks worried.

ANTONIA

You're not mad at me for taking the call are you?

AIDAN

No. It's fine.

Antonia just studies Aidan for a moment.

ANTONIA

She was referring to her "partner", is that a business partner, or like...

AIDAN

(Sighs)

Both.

ANTONIA

Aha. And....you've never mentioned  
this person because...

Aidan hesitates, looks disillusioned.

ANTONIA

...it's...a woman?

Aidan is shaking his head. After a moment he says;

AIDAN

She's with the guy who used to be  
my best friend. He's 21 years  
younger than her.

Antonias eyes widen and she nods, slowly.

ANTONIA

I see....(thoughtful)...and here I  
was, thinking we'd just about  
shared everything with each  
other...but this little detail...

AIDAN

(Interrupting)

I've been blocking it out. I really  
have. It was too much for me...

ANTONIA

You asked me to "need you", and I  
do. But I want you to need me to,  
to let me in...

AIDAN

(Dry chuckle)

You're in now. All the way.  
Diarrhea. My mom's young  
lover...jeeeez...there's just one  
more thing...

Antonia looks at Aidan, urging him to continue.

AIDAN

She's pregnant. My best friend will  
father my sibling. (Shaking his  
head as in; \*you can't make this  
shit up\*)

Antonia reaches out for Aidan's hand across the floor and he  
takes it. They just sit there, holding hands.



Antonia looks at Aidan and gives him a loving smile, he smiles back, a smile saying; \*Thank you for being you\*

CUT TO:

INT. MONTAGE - THANKSGIVING, ALTMAN FAMILY HOME, SEATTLE /  
VAN BUREEN RESIDENCE, WOODSIDE / POMONA AVE, LA / ANTONIA'S  
APT ASUNCIÓN - AFTERNOON/EVENING

Soundtrack music:

Lauren, Liz, Nick, Ruth and George are seated around a circular dining table. On the table is a turkey with trimmings, and everyone is holding hands while George says grace. When they let go, Ruth, who's seated next to Lauren, leans on her, hugs her and pats her belly. Lauren smiles blissfully and kisses Ruth on her forehead.

--

The Van Bureen family is also seated at the large dining table at the family residence in Woodside. Philip is standing up at the short end, carving the giant turkey. The seat on Katarina's right side is empty. It's "Aidan's chair". Katarina looks at the empty chair and looks thoughtful.

--

Josh is plating food in the Pomona kitchen, wiping the edges of the plates like a professional chef. He picks up the plates and carries them to the small dining table in the front room where his mother Janice is seated. She looks up at her son who is placing the plate in front of her and she's beaming at him with love and pride.

--

Aidan is lying in Antonia's bed right next to her. He's sleeping but she's half-sitting, propped up on pillows, watching a movie on her macbook in her lap, wearing headphones, and eating a bowl of cereal. Aidan wakes up and begins to shift in the bed. Antonia quickly puts her bowl and computer to the side and turns to him. She takes another bowl from her bedside table and motions for him to try to sit up. When he does, she proceeds to spoon-feed him the liquid in the bowl. Aidan obediently opens his mouth and swallows, but he gives her a weak smile and a look saying; \*You're exaggerating, but I'm going along with it\*

CUT TO:

INT. THE ALTMAN FAMILY HOME, WEST SEATTLE, WA, SMALL  
BEDROOM/BATHROOM/BIG BEDROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Lauren switches on the bedside lamp. She gets out of the single bed and steps into the upstairs bathroom. She pulls down her panties and sits down on the toilet, her eyes barely open. When she reaches for the toilet roll she sees blood in her underwear. Her eyes open wide and she gasps for air.

LAUREN  
Noooo...No NO NO NO NO NO...!!!  
Awww FUCK!!! Noooooo....

She just puts her head in her hands and begins to moan and sob quietly.

--IN THE MASTER BEDROOM, MOMENTS LATER.

Lauren quietly enters the master bedroom where Liz, Nick and Ruth are sleeping in the double bed. She carefully approaches Liz and puts a hand on her shoulder. She then leans over her and half-whispers in her ear;

LAUREN  
Liz. Please wake up. Liz...

Liz wakes up and kind of jerks.

LAUREN  
It's just me...

Liz stares at Lauren in the darkness where she can barely make out her sister's silhouette. Liz carefully lifts Ruth's arm and leg that are splayed on top of her and slowly shifts out of the bed. She quietly follows Lauren out of the room while whispering;

LIZ  
Dad?

LAUREN  
(Whispering)  
No. It's me.

--BACK IN THE SMALL BEDROOM, SECONDS LATER --

Lauren sinks down on the bed and Liz just looks at her.

LAUREN  
(Half-whispering, upset)  
I'm bleeding...

There's a split second when Liz is registering what Lauren is saying. Then she sits down beside her on the bed and wraps her arms around her.

LIZ  
(With devastation)  
Ohhh no.....

LAUREN  
(Hugging her sister  
tightly)  
I'm sorry for waking you....but I'm  
literally falling apart...

Lauren begins to cry and just falls down on the bed. Liz lies down close beside her and holds her.

LIZ  
Is there...a lot...?

Lauren just nods and sobs quietly.

LAUREN  
Can you take me to UW Medical in  
the morning?

LIZ  
(Pained, empathic)  
Of course...you don't wanna go now?

LAUREN  
No...let's wait....it can't be  
saved....I'm just 22 weeks....so  
close...  
(Her crying intensifies)

LIZ  
(Feeling Lauren's  
forehead)  
OK...you decide baby-sis. I'm here  
for you.

Lauren just hugs her sister, even tighter.

LAUREN  
I know I've acted....I've been so  
STUPID. I'm sorry Liz...I'm so  
sorry I didn't listen to you...you  
were right, I couldn't have this!

LIZ  
Now Lauren...

LAUREN

(upset, interrupting)  
This is divine intervention. And  
I'm getting the message. This needs  
to end. I'm gonna act responsibly,  
do the right thing now...

LIZ

What are you talking about?

LAUREN

Josh. I will end it. Now.

LIZ

No! Lauren...

LAUREN

It will be really hard for both of  
us, and messy in terms of the  
business, but we'll survive, and  
he's got his whole life ahead of  
him...he's just....so goddamn  
beautiful y'know...(sobs  
uncontrollably)

LIZ

But you love him...

LAUREN

I do! That's why I need to let him  
go. I should never have allowed  
anything to happen between us! I  
lost the plot, and I've messed  
everything up!  
But please....(deep sobs) just stay  
with me and help me through  
this...even though I don't deserve  
it...please...?

LIZ

No.

Lauren almost stops sobbing, she pulls back and looks at Liz,  
puzzled.

LIZ

You can't do that now. You're too  
far into this. It wouldn't be the  
right thing. It'd be cruel. It  
would destroy him.

LAUREN

(Starts crying again)  
I know..but...

LIZ

The guy worships you Lauren!  
Just...worship him right back.  
You'd both be miserable without  
each other. His love is real. Don't  
play with him. I won't allow it.

Lauren does not respond. She looks at Liz, then she curls up close to her and they just hold each other.

CUT TO:

INT. UW MEDICAL CENTER, SEATTLE WA, WOMEN'S CLINIC - MORNING

Lauren's in a gynecological chair and a female doctor is gliding a transducer over her lower abdomen. Lauren has her eyes closed. The doctor keeps moving the transducer and seems to be adjusting the image on the computer, but she says nothing. Finally Lauren can't stand it any longer and exclaims;

LAUREN

She's dead, isn't she?!

DOCTOR 2

No! She's alive! She's moving  
about, can't you feel her? Here?

The doctor presses the transducer against the right part of Lauren's belly. Lauren opens her eyes and looks at the screen, with amazement.

LAUREN

I think I can! So she's a girl?!!

The doctor looks at Lauren, puzzled.

DOCTOR 2

Yes...You said "she" didn't you?  
You didn't know?

Lauren's grinning.

LAUREN

Now I do. You're sure?

DOCTOR 2

I'm positive. And everything seems  
fine with her.

The doctor puts the transducer away and wipes Lauren's belly with some tissues.

DOCTOR 2  
Now we need to find out where the  
blood's coming from OK? Just relax.

The doctor proceeds with a gynecological examination. Lauren  
closes her eyes again and blows air through her lips.

DOCTOR 2  
Just relax Lauren.

LAUREN  
I'm trying.

DOCTOR 2  
Well...You have a polyp on your  
cervix. That's why you're bleeding.

LAUREN  
(Alarmed)  
Cancer?!!!

DOCTOR 2  
No, it very rarely is. They're  
almost always benign. Women with  
high estrogen tend to get them. I'd  
advise against removing it now as  
it would increase the risk of  
miscarriage. Will you have another  
check-up soon?

LAUREN  
I have one scheduled in two  
weeks...

DOCTOR 2  
That's good. Have them check it  
then. And you should be on the  
lookout for any new type of  
discharge, and bleeding during or  
after intercourse, OK?

LAUREN  
No sex...?

DOCTOR 2  
(Smiling)  
Just tell your partner to be  
careful.

LAUREN  
(Spontaneously)  
Oh, he is...

DOCTOR 2

You want a print-out of today's  
scan?

LAUREN

(Beaming)

Yes please!!!

CUT TO:

I/E. MONTAGE - UW MEDICAL CENTER, WAITING ROOM / ANTONIA'S  
APARTMENT / PICK-UP LANE OUTSIDE LAX, LA - MORNING/DAY

Soundtrack music:

Lauren comes out from the examination room into the waiting room at the Women's clinic. Liz who's been waiting for her shoots up from her chair as she sees Lauren, who's beaming and waving the ultrasound picture. The sisters fall into each other's arms and laugh.

Aidan closes his suitcase lying on the floor by Antonia's bed. He then climbs into the bed where Antonia is lying, naked under the comforter. She reaches out for him and he leans over her and kisses her deeply, for a long time. When he pulls away she won't let him go, she holds on to his neck and rises up, continuing to kiss him. Aidan surrenders and falls back on top of her and the kissing continues. Finally he breaks free and crawls backwards as Antonia's arms keep reaching for him. Aidan takes his suitcase and puts on his Dodger's cap. He moves to the front door and he looks at Antonia in the bed. Aidan's eyes are glowing with emotion as he sees her breaking down, crying uncontrollably. Aidan musters up all his strength to hold it together as he does the three-finger salute and exits through the door. As the door closes, Antonia collapses face-forward on the bed, her body shaking from her intense crying.

Lauren is coming through the terminal sliding doors at LAX and runs up to Josh standing by their huge "Regenerade" truck by the curb. She falls into his open arms and he lifts her up in a tight embrace. When he sets her down he cups her face and showers her with kisses and then he stoops over and puts his hands on her belly, kissing it too. Lauren looks blissfully happy as Josh takes her suitcase and puts it in the backseat and she moves around the truck to get in on the passenger side.

(Music stops/fades)

INT. INSIDE THE TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

As they drive off from the airport Lauren kicks off her sneakers and puts her feet up on the dashboard. Josh takes her hand and kisses it softly while keeping his eyes on the road.

JOSH

I've missed you soooo much...

LAUREN

(Loving smile)

And we've missed you! What's daddy been up to huh?

JOSH

Daddy's been working hard. Finished the demolition in apartment 3 and started on the plastering in number 1.

LAUREN

I don't like you working all by yourself. What if something was to happen? If you'd hurt yourself?

Josh just smiles and shakes his head as in; \*you worry too much\*

LAUREN

(Confused)

Why are we going north?

JOSH

Well, with global warming at its finest here, the weekend's been so hot...I thought we'd take a trip to the beach...I've prepared a picnic for us...

(Nodding towards a cooler in the backseat)

LAUREN

Wow! What a great idea!

JOSH

(Grinning)

Glad you think so...

JUMP CUT TO:



EXT. TOPANGA BEACH, MALIBU - LATE AFTERNOON - LATER

Josh is sitting on a blanket close to a small tree. He is rummaging through the cooler and grabs a bottle of non-alcoholic champagne and opens it as he watches Lauren approach him across the sand.

LAUREN  
(as she slumps down on the  
blanket)  
I have to pee like every 30 minutes  
now. It's insane. I went at LAX  
y'know...

JOSH  
(filling a glass for her)  
And now we're filling up that  
bladder again...

Josh and Lauren clink their glasses together.

LAUREN  
To....public restrooms..?!

JOSH  
(Taking a sip and  
laughing)  
I was gonna say "to us, reunited",  
but sure...

Lauren leans forward and they kiss. A long, loving kiss.

LAUREN  
(looking down at the  
containers on the  
blanket)  
Awww! You made all this?!

JOSH  
No. Picked it up at Whole Foods.  
Here. I got the Rosemary chicken  
that you love...

Lauren greedily grabs a chicken thigh and takes a bite, looking very content. Josh does not eat anything, he just sips his wine and glances at Lauren, and the ocean, back and forth, looking very thoughtful.

LAUREN  
(Mouth full)  
You OK baby?

Josh nods and smiles enigmatically.

JOSH

This is "my place", this is where I come to clear my mind, to recharge. I let the waves wash over me, and all the bad stuff in my mind gets...filtered out...

Josh looks at Lauren who studies him intensely, and then he looks back at the ocean.

JOSH

The ocean is in control, you can't fight it. This is what I love, you have to obey the force of the element y'know, and when you do, you can ride the wave where it decides to take you, and that is the ultimate sense of freedom for me, to succumb to the laws of nature but to know how to find ways to let the ocean carry you...forward, as long as you respect it...

LAUREN

Wow...how...

JOSH

(Interrupting, laughing)  
Profound?

LAUREN

Amazingly beautiful, I was gonna say....

Josh goes quiet and just looks at Lauren and she's beginning to look quizzical.

LAUREN

What...? You're thinking about something?

Josh keeps looking at her.

LAUREN

Josh....is something wrong?

JOSH

Excuse me. I need to speak to my daughter.

Josh bends down, pulls up Lauren's top and puts his face next to her belly. He seems to be listening. Lauren just looks down at him, amused.

LAUREN  
I think she's sleeping...?

JOSH  
Uh-huh. No. She's talking to me.  
(Putting his ear to her  
belly, then whispering;)  
OK baby girl. I'm gonna talk to  
mommy. I'll ask her now.

Josh sits up and he's looking at Lauren. Lauren eyes widen and her expression shifts from questioning to worried. Josh seems anxious and he pulls his hands through his hair. Lauren now looks alarmed but Josh meets her eye and takes her hands in his.

JOSH  
Baby...I'm not good at these  
things...but I know one thing I'm  
good at. I'm good at loving you.  
And I wanna keep doing that for the  
rest of my life...

LAUREN  
(Whispering, emotionally)  
Oh Josh...

JOSH  
I want us to wake up together, and  
go to bed together, every night...I  
want us to belong to each other...

Lauren looks misty eyed and caresses his cheek. Josh takes her hand and kisses it, then he sticks his hand into the pocket of his cargo shorts. He turns back to Lauren and looks very serious.

JOSH  
I fell in love with you the very  
first time we met.  
I never thought you could be mine.  
I never thought I could be your  
guy. I thought I'd only be allowed  
to fantasize about you...

Josh opens his palm to reveal a ring. Lauren's jaw drops.

JOSH  
I want to be your husband Lauren.  
And I hope that you would want to  
be my wife...

Lauren gasps for air and covers her face with her hands.

JOSH

So...I'm asking you, will you marry me? With a prenup.

Lauren lets out a surprised laugh, then she cups his face and kisses him deeply. She keeps her hands on his face and her forehead touching his, the tips of their noses touching as she whispers;

LAUREN

Yes. I want to be your wife. With or without a prenup.

JOSH

The prenup part is not negotiable. It's already been drawn up.

LAUREN

Liz?

Josh nods and Lauren shakes her head.

JOSH

Please?

He takes her right hand and attempts to slide the ring onto her ringfinger but she giggles and offers him her left hand instead. It fits perfectly and Lauren admires it.

LAUREN

(Beaming)

It's so beautiful! I love it so much!

(Looking up at Josh, teary eyed)

Can life *be this good*!?

Josh slides his hand around her neck and rests his forehead against hers again. With eyes closed he says;

JOSH

I've never felt like this in my entire life. You make me feel so calm...like, I've found my purpose. My purpose is to love you and to take care of you and protect you.

LAUREN

And I'll take care of you too...

JOSH

I know you will.

Lauren pulls Josh down with her and they lie close together on the blanket, facing each other, caressing and kissing and smiling.

JOSH  
I forgot the part about getting  
down on one knee...

LAUREN  
God. I'm glad you didn't. That's so  
fucki'n corny.

They both laugh.

JOSH  
I'm a simple guy...

LAUREN  
I'm a simple girl.

JOSH  
Who used to live in a 3300 square  
feet mansion...

LAUREN  
Before she met her true prince...

More smiling and kissing, then Josh rises up to sitting.

JOSH  
Ahhh. Now my bladder's full, gotta  
take a leak...

He rises up and starts to walk away.

JOSH  
Be right back baby.

Lauren just nods. She looks blissfully happy and pops a couple of fresh strawberries in her mouth. Then she lies back down. She looks at her left hand and admires her new engagement ring while stroking her belly. Then she just closes her eyes and rests.

--

Someone's blocking the sunrays from her face. She smiles without opening her eyes.

LAUREN  
Hi...

No reply. Lauren opens her eyes and shoots up to standing. It's not Josh.

It's a strange man kneeling on the blanket, opening her purse. Lauren's heart is thumping inside her chest and she's backing away as the guy turns to her with her phone in his dirty hands. She can see that he's a bum, and that he's really high.

LAUREN  
(voice trembling)  
Just take it, take it and go away  
please...

The bum looks at her, grinning. He's missing a front tooth.

BUM  
Your code! Gimme the code to your  
phone! And your cards!

Lauren keeps backing away, her legs feels like jelly. She wants to answer him, but her brain is blocked by fear, her tongue is tied. The bum rises up from the blanket holding her purse in one and, and a shiny object in the other. Lauren registers that it's a knife before her knees buckles and she falls down on the sand. The bum moves closer and hisses;

BUM  
Gimme the codes! And the ring!

Lauren's hands are shaking violently as she's trying to pull the ring off her finger. The bum moves closer with his grubby palm outstretched, motioning for Lauren to hand him the ring just as she registers a shadow in the corner of her eye and -

BAM. The bum is hit by a kick and he flies off to the side and lands belly down on the sand, the knife lands about 10" from Lauren. Josh is towering over him and grabs him, flips him over and BAM BAM BAM hits him in rapid succession with straight punches to his face. There's a cracking sound before Josh shoots up and kicks him in the stomach. Josh retreats and quickly grabs Lauren and pulls her backwards, he's panting loudly and his eyes are open wide, not diverting from the injured man lying motionless on the sand, face covered in blood.

JOSH  
(Shocked, to Lauren)  
You're OK?!!! You're OK?!!!

Lauren cannot answer him, she just clings to him and nods. The whole world seems to be spinning but she can see two people approaching carefully, hesitating to come close. One of them is holding up his phone. Josh sees them and shouts to them;

JOSH  
Call 911! Now!

CUT TO:

INT. LAPD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, LA - RECEPTION AREA -  
NIGHT

It's late night. Lauren is leaning sideways in a chair at the police station. She looks devastated and exhausted in the harsh overhead lighting. Her eyes are smudgy from all the tears blending with her eye make-up. Her hair is disheveled and her blouse crumpled.

Suddenly Liz comes through the door and Lauren shoots up from the chair, they fall into a tight embrace. Lauren looks at Liz with fear and desperation.

LAUREN  
What's happening?!

LIZ  
(Motioning for her to sit  
down again)  
It's OK baby-sis. It's gonna be OK.  
They're actually releasing him now  
without bail. I didn't expect that.  
He's back there filling out a ton  
of paperwork but he'll come out  
soon OK.

Lauren exhales deeply and throws her arms around Liz.

LAUREN  
Oh thank God!!!

LIZ  
They've interrogated him for over  
four hours straight. We still don't  
know if the prosecutor will press  
charges. They'll decide within 48  
hours. (Catching her breath) The  
robber is still in hospital but  
he's apparently fine, even though  
his face is pretty smashed up and  
he's got withdrawal symptoms.

Pause.

LIZ

They've secured the robber's fingerprints on the knife, the guy's criminal record is extensive, to put it mildly, and the witness statements support the self-defence plea. However...

(Looking bothered)

The film provided by the witness does not show any of the actual robbery...it only shows the use of violence "beyond a reasonable degree of force", meaning Josh going completely rampant...and...(sighs)..

Lauren looks at Liz, pleading for her to continue.

LIZ

Josh doesn't have a clean record. He was charged with assault as a minor.

LAUREN

I know.

LIZ

Oh, you knew that?

Lauren just nods.

LIZ

I guess the days when we told each other everything are long since over.

LAUREN

(Holding Liz' hand)

You didn't tell me he was gonna propose...

Liz lets out a laugh even though her eyes are sad.

LIZ

Of course I didn't tell you that, stupid.

(Hesitant)

Can I see the ring?

Lauren leans her head on her sister's shoulder and holds out her left hand for her to see.



LIZ  
It's really beautiful...it fits you  
well...

LAUREN  
Can you please just tell me that  
things will calm down now? That  
everything's gonna be all right?

Liz just gives Lauren an empathic look but before she has a chance to answer Josh comes through the door. He and Lauren rush towards each other and fall into each other's arms and both begin to sob loudly.

JOSH  
(In complete agony)  
I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so  
sorry, I'm so sorry, I'm so  
sorry...

LAUREN  
We're OK baby! We're OK!!!

JOSH  
I'll never leave you again!!! I'll  
never leave you!!! I'm so sorry!!!  
I'm so sorry baby!!! Can you ever  
forgive me?!!!  
(Crying his heart out)  
Please forgive me baby...

Liz just stares at them, with devastation and empathy. She looks exhausted.

CUT TO:

INT. ED KENDALL'S HOUSE, TAMPA FL - AFTERNOON (CIRCA 2003)

Little Josh (3) is sitting on his parents' double bed by an open suitcase lying on it. His mother Janice is moving about the bedroom, rushed, but quietly opening closets and drawers, pulling out clothes that she just throws into the suitcase. Josh pulls some of the clothes out of the suitcase and is entertained when his flustered mother keeps putting them back in.

JANICE  
(Quietly, hushed but firm)  
No Josh! It's not a game! Leave it  
there.

Josh keeps smiling and giggles to himself while Janice just pushes down on the pile of clothes in the suitcase and begins to close it with the zipper. Suddenly there's a loud voice calling;

ED KENDALL  
JANICE!!!

Janice freezes with terror in her eyes. She quickly puts the suitcase beside the bed, towards the window, and then picks up Josh and sets him down on the floor, next to the suitcase and dives down right beside him, hunching down.

ED KENDALL  
(Drunk, slurring)  
WHERE THE FUCK ARE YOU JANICE?!!!

Janice looks at Josh. She puts a finger to her mouth as to say; \*hush, keep quiet\* and as the bedroom door flings open she covers Josh's mouth with her hand. His eyes are wide, and questioning.

ED KENDALL  
(Muttering to himself)  
Where's that fucki'n bitch...

Ed walks away, but leaves the bedroom door open. Janice removes her hand from Josh's mouth and whispers to him;

JANICE  
Now we're gonna play a game OK?  
We're gonna sneak out of the house,  
real fast and real quiet OK, so  
daddy can't hear us, and then we're  
gonna race each other to the  
neighbors' house. On my  
count...One. Two. Three. GO!

Josh darts off like a little squirrel and Janice grabs the suitcase and runs through the bedroom door.

Josh knows that he can outrun his mother. He's done it before. As he's running out through the front door and down the front lawn towards the sidewalk he giggles to himself and glances over his shoulder. He sees his mother coming through the door carrying the suitcase but he also sees his dad coming after her. Josh halts and locks eyes with his mother just as Ed catches up with her and pulls her down on the ground. Josh freezes as he sees his dad kick his mother lying on the grass and as he bends down to pull her hair she shouts at Josh;

JANICE  
 RUN JOSH!!!!!! RUN!!!!

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BUNGALOW ON POMONA AVE, BELMONT SHORE, LA - BEDROOM -  
 MORNING (PRESENT DAY)

Josh is in bed next to Lauren and he's screaming. A loud  
 agonized scream. Lauren wakes up and throws herself on top of  
 him, holding him down while repeating;

LAUREN  
 Calm down! It's just a dream baby!  
 It's just a dream!!!

Josh calms down but is breathing heavily as he's holding  
 Lauren tightly. He's staring up at the ceiling.

JOSH  
 Fuck! I'm sorry...I'm doing it  
 again...I had the weirdest dream...

LAUREN  
 (Raising her head, looking  
 at him)  
 What about...?

Josh opens his mouth, but hesitates.

JOSH  
 I don't want to talk about  
 it...right now..I need to speak to  
 my mom...I'm starting to get the  
 feeling she hasn't given me the  
 full story...about everything...

Lauren just puts her face close to his, and caresses his  
 face. Josh turns towards her and says;

JOSH  
 I'm starting therapy on Tuesday.  
 For the first time in my life.

LAUREN  
 Oh? Good....

JOSH  
 I have so much self-loathing going  
 on right now...so many fears...I  
 wanna get it all out of my system  
 before...

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)  
(Caressing Lauren's belly)  
She comes....

LAUREN  
Perhaps you can't get it out of  
your system...?

JOSH  
I know. But I need to start dealing  
with it...

Lauren and Josh lie quietly for a moment.

JOSH  
When I took genetics as a prep  
course I sequenced my genome for a  
project. Turns out I have what they  
call "The Warrior gene", it's  
apparently common with inmates...

Lauren's eyes widen.

JOSH  
But it's also fairly common in the  
general population. What it means  
for me, and many others, is  
that...if there's a threat against  
me, or my close family, I will not  
hesitate, I will strike first. I  
will kill.

Lauren looks alarmed, but she says nothing.

JOSH  
What happened at Topanga...there  
was a second,..seconds...when I  
really lost all control.  
(Looking at Lauren)  
I'm scaring you now...

LAUREN  
You will never scare me Josh.

JOSH  
Good. If I ever was, I'd kill  
myself...I promised to protect  
you...and the very next minute...

Josh swallows, closes his eyes and rests his head on Lauren's  
chest, holding her tightly.

JOSH  
I'd give my life for you. I love  
you so much.  
(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

But I also wanna make sure that I don't end up in prison because of my...protective instincts...this time I was acquitted, but there cannot be a next time. Zero tolerance. You get me?

Lauren nods.

JOSH

I'm about to marry the woman of my dreams. *Nothing* that's within my control, will mess this up.

Lauren just holds his head, resting on her chest, and kisses his hair.

CUT TO:

INT. MITCH VAN BUREEN'S APARTMENT, DT SF, KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM  
- LATE MORNING

Mitch and Trish come through the front door with their dogs, Dinah and Bobo. They release the dogs from their leashes and scramble towards the couch in the living room where they slump down, next to each other, as they put a brown paper bag and the Chronicle Sunday Edition on the coffee table. Mitch eagerly opens the paper and starts to flip the pages until he finds the big spread; "Creating Hope where there is None - How two benevolent post-millennials are changing the conventions of charity work"

Both Mitch and Trish lean in over the paper and scan the article, silently, while Trish is peeling an orange. Then Mitch exclaims;

MITCH

Look here! This quote wasn't in the web edition!

(Reads aloud) "In the context of today's social media landscape, co-founder Aidan Van Bureen explains, donors expect a whole other level of transparency and communication, and this is where our project seems most progressive. We allow donors to remain fully participative and to interact with their beneficiaries, on a daily, or even hourly basis.

(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

It's possible for donors and pupils to form a strong social bond, although the more traditional and anonymous ways of support, also remain an option."

Mitch keeps staring at the page and is smiling widely.

TRISH

(Putting her arm around Mitch's shoulders)

Awww!!! Are you proud. Or are you proud?!!

MITCH

I'm proud. I'm so fucki'n proud.

TRISH

You should be. You have such an amazing son!

(Mitch nods)

With a very cute girlfriend huh?!

Look at her! What a little beauty!

(Pointing at the photo of Antonia)

MITCH

(grinning)

He sure has good taste. Takes after his dad in so many ways...

TRISH

(Walking with a handfull of orange peel towards the kitchen)

Uh-huh....and where's he now...?

MITCH

(Still leaning over the article)

At the gym...most probably...like I also should be...

TRISH

(Opening the pull-out drawer with the trash containers)

I'm not gonna hold you up Mitch, I'm going back to my place, I'll finish the packing today, movers will come at 8 tomorrow..

Trish trails off as something lying in the trash has caught her eye. It looks like a wedding invitation.

The creamy white stationary, the cursive letters. She can just about make out some of the text on it underneath the marinara sauce splattered on top of it; "Joshua Edward Kendall" and "Lauren Elaine Van Bureen" "28 December", "Villa Del Mar, La Jolla". Trish is tempted to pick it up from the trash, try to wipe the sauce off it and read the entire invitation, but she leaves it, and closes the drawer. She walks back to Mitch who's now engrossed in the competitor's real estate ads at the back of the paper.

Trish sits down in the armchair and studies Mitch for awhile. He doesn't notice. Then she says;

TRISH  
Lauren's getting married...?

Mitch looks up, caught by surprise, then realizing what she's seen in the trash.

MITCH  
Aww fuck...

TRISH  
I'm gonna be nosy now Mitch.

MITCH  
(Shrugs, sighs)  
All right. Go ahead.

TRISH  
Is Aidan attending the wedding?

MITCH  
I have no idea. I put his invitation on his desk.

TRISH  
How are the avoidance strategies worki'n for ya? Good?

MITCH  
Real good. Thank you.

Trish sighs.

TRISH  
OK, here's what I'm thinking...

Mitch gives her a look as to say; \*I didn't ask what you're thinking but I know I'll get to hear it anyway\*

TRISH  
You and your wife split up because you cheated on her right?

Mitch takes a deep breath and Trish continues;

TRISH

From what I've gathered between the lines, you didn't always treat her so great...?

Mitch shrugs, with reluctant affirmation.

TRISH

You never planned to invite her to your cancelled wedding, did you?

Mitch shakes his head.

TRISH

But now she's inviting you to *her* wedding...?

Mitch just looks at her, and then closes his eyes.

TRISH

If that's not a BIG FAT olive branch, I don't know what is...

MITCH

Trish....it's...complicated...this guy she's marrying...he was Aidan's best friend. Aidan looked up to him like a big brother...

TRISH

So he's older than Aidan?

MITCH

No, born the year before him I think, but like...oh, I dunno...more experienced I guess...the point is, it's just all so...awkward...

TRISH

It will be, as long as you don't face it...

Mitch just leans back on the couch and stares in front of him.

TRISH

Obviously, I'm urging you to reconsider. I really think you should attend the wedding. I'm not saying this as a therapist. I'm saying this as a friend.



No answer from Mitch, who seems to be thinking.

TRISH

And if the invite includes a plus  
one...and if you're not like,  
seeing anyone...

Mitch finally reacts.

MITCH

Who would I be seeing?

Now Trish just shrugs.

MITCH

(Chuckles)

I'm with you all the time! Are you  
seeing someone?

TRISH

God no. You don't think I'd tell  
you if I was?

Mitch and Trish lock eyes.

MITCH

You'd come with me as my plus one,  
is that what you're saying?

Trish nods, slowly. Mitch looks out through the windows for a  
moment, then he turns back to Trish.

MITCH

What the fuck. Let's go to La  
Jolla!

Trish's face lights up and she smiles widely.

TRISH

Now you're making *me* proud, Mitch  
Van Bureen. Real proud.

Mitch smiles back at her, contently.

CUT TO:

I/E. MONTAGE - VAN BUREEN REAL ESTATE, OFFICE, SF, APARTMENT  
BUILDING, LA / STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CAMPUS / THERAPIST'S  
OFFICE, LA - DAY

Soundtrack music:

Mitch is sitting at his desk at the Van Bureen Real Estate office in SF. He is handed a pile of freshly printed property briefs by his ASSISTANT. She shows him the last page of the brief that is advertising the school project charity in Paraguay. Mitch studies the ad contently while handing his assistant a hand-written note. On the note it says; "Me+Aidan+Trish Henderson+Antonia Fernandez-Carlsson SFO-SAN 27 Dec midday, return 29 Dec midday." The assistant nods and walks away.

Josh and Javier are installing kitchen cabinets in one of the apartments. Josh turns around and sees Lauren walk in. She's holding two big brown paper bags in each hand and smiles at them and they both get up and walk towards her, accepting the lunch bags. Josh pulls her close, kisses her deeply and caresses her belly.

Aidan is coming out of one of the buildings on campus. His friend Amanda walks next to him and they're talking. Aidan suddenly halts as he sees his grandmother Katarina standing on the path right in front of him. Katarina smiles at him and gives him a tentative wave. Aidan continues up to her, hugs her, and introduces his friend to her.

Josh and his mother Janice are seated in armchairs in a therapist's office. The female therapist is seated opposite them and in the middle is a small circular table with a box of kleenex on it. Janice is talking and Josh and the therapist listens attentively to her. Suddenly Janice stops talking and seems to be breathing deeply. She bends forward and puts her head in her hands and her body is heaving heavily from her intense crying. Josh slips down on the floor and kneels by her chair, putting his arms around her, holding her and whispering to her. Janice looks up at Josh, her face wet with tears and they look each other, faces close together. Janice puts her hand on Josh's cheek and mouths; "I'm so sorry". They hug tightly.

FADE OUT.