

LUISE AND MELISSA

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FADE IN

EXT. LARGE CITY - DUSK

A squadron of cars in the street, in formation, trapped in traffic. Car horns BLASTING.

A bunch of youths ARGUING on the sidewalk.

The sound of a SIREN as an ambulance is making its way through a busy street.

SUPER: NEW YORK CITY. POPULATION 8.468 million.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DUSK (CONTINUOUS)

An out-of-breath, sweaty, overweight man in his mid-forties, FRED, darts into the alley only to crash into some garbage cans and fall on the ground.

He tries to get up but slips on some spilled trash and falls on his bottom. He looks up in worry just as his pursuer makes an appearance barreling through into the alley:

This is LUISE LIVINGSTON, mid-thirties - although at this point of the story she goes by the name of LORENA LEON. She has blonde hair, is dressed in black jeans, black boots, and a leather jacket, and her wrists and hands are tied up with black boxing wraps. She's also has a black backpack on.

She pauses for a second upon seeing Fred on the ground with the trash, catches her breath, and SNIGGERS - then heads to him.

LUISE

Fred, you fuck, why'd you run?

FRED

To get away from you.

Fred tries to crawl away but Luise grabs hold of him, turns him to face her, and punches him. Fred lets out a CRY and grabs his nose.

FRED (CONT'D)

Not the fucking face - not the face, goddamn it.

LUISE

That was for making me break a sweat.

She punches him in the ribs and he SOBS.

FRED
I'm sorry.

LUISE
You have it?

FRED
Have what?

She hits him again and he WAILS.

LUISE
The two grand you owe Miss Moretti?

FRED
Working on it, I swear.

She sighs.

LUISE
Fred, goddamn it. Give me something.

FRED
Tomorrow, two hundred, I swear.

Luise plants him on the ground face first, then steps on his hand with one foot. Fred's eyes widen, he knows what's coming. She grabs the pinky of the stepped-on hand, while she places her free hand in his mouth as a muffler. In one swift motion she snaps his finger, but his scream is a SHRIEK.

LUISE
Had no fucking choice, Fred.

FRED
P- please.

Fred has tears in his eyes.

LUISE
Given you too many chances.

She turns him over, makes a fist and is about to hit him again but manages to stop herself last moment. Fred's tears and snot making for a not too pleasant sight.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Tomorrow, four hundred or I break all ten.

FRED

OK, OK.

Luise gets up, starts walking away, and taking her wraps off.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Luise takes her backpack off and sits on the grass. From her bag, she takes out an underarm roll-on and proceeds to apply it under her top, on each armpit.

She then takes out an energy drink, opens the can and takes a satisfactory gulp.

She looks on as lights come on the basketball court adjacent to the park and as a game of basketball continues between a group of friends.

EXT. PARK/SIDEWALK - NIGHT (LATER)

Luise mounts her red-colored *Indian* motorcycle, starts the engine and is off.

EXT. FOOD TRACK - NIGHT

Luise's turn comes to order in front of a Mexican food truck. A woman in her mid-twenties, LOLA, spotting an Austin bar nose piercing and purple colored hair greets her:

LOLA

How're we doing, Luise baby?

LUISE

Good, thanks, Lola but starving.

LOLA

Gonna fix that right up. What'll be?

LUISE

Spicy chicken, 'vocado, and creamy cilantro taco, and a Mex' coke, please.

LOLA

Awesome, won't be a tick.

INT. CLUB - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Luise is dancing away to loud MUSIC.

As she continues on, she and a tall, muscular man, DERRICK, make eye contact.

INT. CLUB - BAR AREA - NIGHT (LATER)

Luise and Derrick are downing shots.

INT. CLUB - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT (LATER)

Luise and Derrick are now dancing together and they start making out too.

INT. DERRICK'S PLACE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Luise and Derrick are engaged in an energetic sex session.

INT. DERRICK'S PLACE - BATHROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Luise is having a shower. On her upper back, on either side of her deltoid area are two tattoos. One has the ancient Greek words *Monon Lave*, (*come and get them*), resting on top of a Spartan battle spear, the other is a bleeding heart full of bullet holes. She also has a scar on the front of her shoulder and another across her abdomen.

EXT. STREET/MOTORCYCLE - DAWN

Luise mounts her motorcycle and takes off.

EXT/INT. GARAGE - DAWN (LATER)

Luise places the bike inside a small space.

She takes a cloth, wipes the motorcycle down, and then gives the fuel tank a kiss.

 LUISE

 Have a good rest, Betsy.

Luise steps outside, closes the garage door, and locks it.

INT. LUISE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Luise walks into her messy bedroom, takes her jacket off, tosses it to a chair, and drops into the bed face first. Within seconds she is fast asleep.

INT. LUISE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Luise enters her place holding onto a hotdog and a grocery bag.

INT. LUISE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

She places the dog, a bag of Nachos, and a bottle of cherry cola on a coffee table and sits back on a couch in front of a huge television with large speakers which she clicks on. A program about sharks comes on and a VOICE informs us that *Shark Week* is about to commence. Luise leans back and smiles.

As she bites into the dog, her cell starts RINGING. She wipes her mouth and with annoyance notices that 'work' is calling. She ignores it but the RINGING persists.

Finally, she grabs it and answers:

LUISE

What?

INT. CALVINO'S OFFICE - DAY

A man in his forties with rough features, CALVINO, is at the other end of the line, behind a desk in a minimalist room.

INTERCUT BETWEEN APARTMENT AND OFFICE:

CALVINO

Something's come up.

LUISE

Told ya a million times I don't work during shark week.

CALVINO

You were serious about that?

LUISE

Yes.

CALVINO

It's important. Boss wants to see ya personally about a job.

LUISE

Really? Fuck.

CALVINO

She'll be waiting by the pool.

LUISE

There better be a fucking bonus.

She hangs up. On Luise's television screen, a shark bites into the flesh of a seal.

EXT. MANSION/BACKYARD - DAY

A man-mountain, GINO, accompanies Luise - dressed in dark jeans and jacket combo - into a huge backyard.

There is a large swimming pool and a jacuzzi as well. Lying nearby on a lounge chair, sipping a cocktail, and smoking a cigar is Miss Moretti - fifties, Italian-American. Gino motions to Luise to wait as he goes over and addresses the boss. She nods and Gino motions to Luise to come over as he takes his leave.

MISS MORETTI

Lorena, please, sit.

Luise sits at the edge of a free lounge chair.

MISS MORETTI (CONT'D)

Thank you for coming to see me, I know this is your time off.

LUISE

It's OK. Calvino mentioned a job.

Miss Moretti Smiles.

MISS MORETTI

Always straight to the point, I admire that about you. Say, you don't have any children, do you?

LUISE

Me? No, no, no, not for me. No.

MISS MORETTI

I understand your reluctance, it can be quite challenging and a burden in our line of work. Be that as it may, I do hope you'll reconsider, I believe it's something all women should experience at least once, and enriching in the most surprising of ways.

Luise eyes the water of the pool, it's a reminder that she's missing out shark week for this shit.

The boss takes a breather and sips her drink. Then:

MISS MORETTI (CONT'D)

As you're aware, my son Dario has taken a keen interest in the organization and - our various dealings. I love him to death but it does not escape me that he's - young and crude and inexperienced.

LUISE

All due respect, Miss Moretti but I don't babysit.

MISS MORETTI

Understood. I assure you this will be a one off. There's a man, Simon, who's been cheating during poker night at the club. I'd take it as a personal favor if you accompany my son and - well, set the man straight.

LUISE

Why me?

MISS MORETTI

Dario's surrounded by men, the only women he knows - conniving little tarts. I think you'll be a good and perhaps soothing influence on him.

Luise sighs.

LUISE

I work alone.

Miss Moretti smiles.

MISS MORETTI

A lone loba, I know. It'll be twice your salary and - a personal favor.

That's all Luise needed to hear. She nods Yes.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Luise arrives next to a brand-new *Porsche*. Standing by it is DARIO, 21, dressed in an expensive suit and with his hair greased back. He smiles seductively upon seeing Luise get off her motorcycle. It's obvious he has a manic energy about him.

DARIO
Sweet ride.

LUISE
Thanks.

DARIO
I'm more of a *Ducati* man myself.
Got a bunch in my garage, along
with an armada of four wheels, of
course.

LUISE
Right.

DARIO
Maybe we go for a ride later?

LUISE
Got an appointment. Raincheck?

DARIO
Yeah, OK, that's cool.

LUISE
So, you got the keys from the
superintendent?

Dario brings and displays a set of keys out of his pocket.

DARIO
And we got confirmation that he's
in.

LUISE
Good, let's get this done, then.

DARIO
Let's fucking go!

They head towards the building entrance.

INT. HALLWAY/SIMON APARTMENT - NIGHT

Luise is standing in front of the door to Simon's apartment, while Dario stands further along on the right side by the wall, hidden from the peephole.

She presses the BUZZER.

Soon the door opens slightly, the security chain holding it in place. SIMON, mid-forties, is behind the door.

SIMON
What'd you want?

LUISE
Just a chat.

SIMON
Oh yeah, about what?

LUISE
Your gabbling habits.

Simon quickly closes the door.

Dario gives Luise an impatient look.

DARIO
(Whispers)
What the fuck?

Luise motions to him to stay patient. She presses the BUZZER again. The door opens, chain in place, Simon behind it.

SIMON
Look, just leave me the fuck al-

Suddenly, Luise is pushed aside by Dario who kicks the door in, breaking the chain and knocking Simon right in the face. Simon yells and covers his nose in pain.

LUISE
Fuck're you doing?

DARIO
Watch the tongue bitch and follow
my lead.

Luise rolls her eyes and tries to contain herself.

SIMON
What'd you want? Have no money
here.

Dario punches Simon in the gut taking the wind out of him.

DARIO
You're a liar as well as a cheat,
aren't you, Simon?

SIMON
Wh - what're you talking about?

Dario punches him on the mouth. Simon - teary eyed and in pain - reaches into his bloodied mouth and takes out a tooth.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Ah, Jesus.

LUISE
We need him to be able to talk,
damn it.

Dario gives her a mean mug. Then he grabs hold of Simon and brings him up so they are face to face.

DARIO
We know you've been cheating on
poker night. You've been making us
look bad, asshole. Boss wants your
earnings back, plus interest, of
course.

Dario then notices with utter disgust that Simon's blood has spilled onto his suit.

DARIO (CONT'D)
Fucking son of a whore!

Dario pushes him away hard and Simon falls back and into a glass coffee table, head first.

LUISE
Oh shit.

Luise runs over to Simon who's unconscious and who has blood pouring out of the back of his head to the wooden surface.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Fuck you do that for?

DARIO
Got blood all over my *Cerruti*.

Luise checks for the man's pulse, then stands perturbed and faces Dario.

LUISE
You killed him you fucking idiot!

DARIO
Fuck you, cunt - was an accident.

LUISE
Accident my ass, you're out of control and I was out of my mind agreeing to babysit an immature psycho man-child.

Dario comes close to her - hands molded into fists.

DARIO
Fuck you say to me?

Right then, from the edge of his eyesight, Dario notices something. Someone was partly hiding in the next room and so Dario turns fully toward that location.

DARIO (CONT'D)
Fuck's that?

LUISE
What?

DARIO
Someone's here.

SCATTERING is heard from another room.

DARIO (CONT'D)
Hear that?

LUISE
Yeah.

They follow the sound into the other ROOM...

It is a little boy's room. No one seems to be there. Dario looks under the bed but it's empty.

He looks at Luise and motions to her to stay silent, then makes his way to the closet and swings the door open. Hiding inside is a shocked and terrified ten-year-old CHILD.

Luise looks upon the child with a 'God freaking damn it' look on her face.

Right then, a BANG is heard and Luise's demeanor changes. She now looks on aghast and utterly appalled instead.

She spots a small scar on her chin and has tattoos of a letter across four fingers of both her hands - so that one hand spells *pain* and the other spells *glee* - perhaps in a type of reference to her favorite film *Night of the Hunter*. This is LUCIA, "Aunt" to Luise.

Luise walks up to her and the two women embrace.

INT. LUCIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

A small but neat room decorated with only a handful of items, one of which is a jukebox. Two framed posters of famous boxing events decorate the wall and there is a boxing speed bag in one of the room's corners. In another corner is a dog, LAILA, lying on a dog cushion and munching on a bone.

Luise and Lucia are sitting facing each other, a small coffee table separating them, one that has a whisky bottle and two full glasses on it. Luise has just finished telling Lucia what has happened to her and her "aunt's" expression has turned towards the lamentable. She is deep in troubled thought as she says:

LUCIA

Balls.

Lucia gulps some firewater.

LUCIA (CONT'D)

Was afraid this day might come.
What're your savings like?

LUISE

Not much - four grand maybe.

LUCIA

What the fuck, how?

LUISE

What? I like to buy stuff. Not like you can talk.

LUCIA

Fuck does that matter? I'm not the one that took a shit in Pandora's fucking box, am I? Besides, I haven't placed a bet in years.

LUISE

Sorry, stress and all.

LUCIA

I get it. It'll be OK. Wait here.

Lucia heads to the bedroom and Luise drinks some whiskey. Laila the dog comes over and Luise scratches behind her ears.

LUISE

Who's a good girl then?

The dog walks back to her place and continues working on the bone. Luise looks around and her eyes fall on the *Frazier vs. Ali One* poster, aka "The Fight".

Lucia returns holding on to a few documents, a cell, and some cash that she places on the table in front of Luise.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Won't take your money.

LUCIA

You fucking better.

Luise picks up a driver license with her photo on it. The name says *Luise Livingston*.

LUISE

Luise livingston?

LUCIA

The new you.

LUISE

Why would y-

LUCIA

Been doing this since you started working for the Morettis four years ago. Gut fucking feeling. And each year been updating everything. I've worked hard and diligently creating a full-proof identity for you. All background checks will come through fine, unless NSA's involved or some shit. Listen now carefully: You need to lay low for a while in a tiny town, build up a monetary cushion s-

LUISE

Why not just head to Mexico or Canada?

LUCIA

No good, you'll get found in both places. The Moretti family has too many connections and allies there.

(MORE)

LUCIA (CONT'D)

I'm thinking tropical but you'll need capital to keep you going till you settle in and find something to do. You got four, I got 16 aside, that's 20 grand, you'll need to gather, roughly, another 20.

LUISE

Where, how?

LUCIA

Know a principal in an elementary school in a town up North, tiny populace, small and cold, it's perfect.

LUISE

Doesn't sound perfect, sounds kinda shit.

LUCIA

Shut the hell up. I make a call, set you up with a job and a cheap place to rent. You'll need to change your look, your hair, and -- to get rid of the motorcycle.

Luise looks at her like she just spat at her face.

LUISE

I ain't fucking getting rid of Betsy.

LUCIA

You think this is a fucking game? You know the trouble you're in?

LUISE

I know.

LUCIA

Do you? You shot a Mafia don's only son in the fucking head. A mother Don at that. Know the hellfire that's gonna rain down on ya?

LUISE

I...

Luise lowers her head.

LUCIA

Yeah.

Luise looks at her again.

LUISE
What's the job?

LUCIA
Huh?

LUISE
At the new place?

LUCIA
Oh, P.E. Teacher to some kids.

LUISE
No, fuck that? Not teacher
material.

LUCIA
It's personal education, just make
them play dodgeball or something.

Luise sighs in annoyance.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
You'll be all right. What have I
always told you?

LUISE
(As in the 100th time)
Life means adaptation.

Lucia smiles and nods.

LUISE (CONT'D)
What about you?

LUCIA
What about me?

LUISE
Won't you be in danger?

Lucia smiles.

LUCIA
You know I'm not really your aunt,
right? They don't know about me.

LUISE
Yeah. Still th-

LUCIA
I'll be fine, I'm a wise old hen,
worry about your skinny little ass.

Luise manages a smile.

LUISE
Ain't skinny - not no more.

Lucia smiles back. Then:

LUCIA
Seriously, I'll settle some stuff
here and come find you up North.

LUISE
OK.

INT. LUCIA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Luise is in front of the sink mirror and is applying dark brown color dye to her hair.

INT/EXT. LUCIA'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT (LATER)

Lucia and a now dark-haired Luise embrace by the opened door and Lucia hands her a small piece of paper.

LUCIA
Charlie's address, he'll be
expecting you.

LUISE
Thanks for everything.

LUCIA
You'll be fine, I'll be in touch.

Luise nods, gives her a mini wave and heads to her bike.

Lucia watches as she rides away, then turns, walks inside, and closes the door.

INT. LUCIA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lucia sits back down on the couch and downs her glass. Laila comes over, places her head in Lucia's lap, and lets out a soft GROAN.

LUCIA
It's OK, old girl, the Murphys will
take care of you just fine.

Laila WHIMPERS in protest.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
I know, I know, I'll miss you too.

Lucia kisses the dog on the top of her head.

INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - MIDDLE OF NIGHT

Miss Moretti, in her nightgown, is on the floor of her large bedroom and is crying away - all around her items have been thrown and broken all over the place.

When she finally sheds her last tear, she rises, eyes hollow and cold. She walks to the door, opens it, and addresses Calvino who is stationed in the hallway:

MISS MORETTI
Get me Vadim.

Calvino becomes apprehensive.

CALVINO
He is - quite selective.

MADAM PUGLIESI
Offer him anything he wants. Just
get it done.

She moves back into the room and slams the door shut.

INT. HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

MALCOLM, 45, has a terrified look on his face.

He stands frozen in place, having just entered the house.

MAN (O.S.)
Close the door.

Malcolm does so. He walks into the living room and towards the voice. An imposing-looking man with harsh features, VADIM, is there and is holding on to a woman in her mid-thirties, MARGARITA - and pointing a gun to her head.

MARGARITA
Malcolm.

Malcolm gets really emotional seeing her and tries to go towards her but a petite but toned and fiery-eyed woman, VERA VOLKOVA, gets in front of him and kicks him in the head.

MARGARITA (CONT'D)

No!

VADIM

Shut up.

Malcolm's lips are split.

MALCOLM

It's all right sweetie, I'm here,
it's going to be OK now. (To Vadim)
Please let her go.

VADIM

You have something for me?

Malcolm nods his head yes and takes out a USB stick.

VADIM (CONT'D)

Hand it to my assistant.

Apprehensively, Malcolm moves to Vera and offers her the stick. She takes it off him and smiles.

Vadim lets the woman go and she runs to Malcolm. Husband and wife hug tightly, desperately.

VADIM (CONT'D)

Sit on the floor, both of you.

They sit.

There is an open laptop on the coffee table and Vera inserts the stick in it. She looks intently at the screen and soon smiles. She looks to Vadim and nods and he nods back.

VADIM (CONT'D)

You did good, Malcolm.

From his pocket, he takes out a silencer and applies it to the pistol. Malcolm eyes it with horror.

MALCOLM

I - I did what you wanted.

VADIM

And she's in your arms once more,
just as I promised.

Vadim aims his weapon and his finger squeezes the trigger.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The subtle and soft sound of a SUPPRESSED SHOT is heard.

INT. MENDEZ'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Malcolm is on the floor holding on to the bloody, lifeless body of Margarita and is WALLOWING away.

Vadim is watching him, almost in a trance. Vera is standing by patiently, giving her employer his moment.

Malcolm looks up at Vadim, teary-eyed, lost.

MALCOLM

You - sick monster. Why?

Vadim snaps out of his trance and walks to him.

VADIM

For the look you have in your eyes -
for your tears.

He places the gun at his temple.

VADIM (CONT'D)

Thank you for sharing this with me.

He pulls the trigger once more.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Vadim and Vera exit the house and the assistant checks her phone.

VERA

The team will be here in five to
create a gas leak.

VADIM

Good.

As they reach a parked car, Vera's surprised to see another message pop up.

VERA

We have another job offer.

VADIM

And a plane to catch.

VERA
It's potentially - very lucrative.

MARIO
Tell them I'll be free in a month's
time. Maybe.

They enter the car and Vera types a response and sends it.

VERA
Done.

VADIM
Good.

Vadim starts the car and they're off.

EXT. MOTORCYCLE/STREET - DAY

(MOVING)

Luise is on her motorcycle and is riding through a rough-looking neighborhood. She is not in the big city anymore as she has driven all through the night.

EXT. MOTORCYCLE/CHARLIE'S GARAGE - DAY

Luise swivels into a driveway and brings the motorcycle to a stop outside an open medium-sized garage. It's mostly full of motorcycles but there are some cars around too. An athletic man in a singlet with long hair and greased stained jeans, CHARLIE, smiles as she dismounts from the bike.

CHARLIE
Oh yeah, she's a beaut.

He approaches and Luise extends her hand.

LUISE
Charlie I presume. I'm Luise.

They shake hands.

CHARLIE
Nice to meet you. That's a great-looking ride.

LUISE
Yeah, Betsy's the best.

CHARLIE
I'll take good care of her.

LUISE

Thanks.

CHARLIE

Might make her blue though, I like blue.

LUISE

(matter of fact like)

She's a red.

Charlie makes a 'fuck it' expression. He takes out a set of keys from his front pocket and hands it to Luise, then points to a blue *Mini Cooper SE*.

CHARLIE

There's your new ride. Tank's full as agreed.

Luise hesitates.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

Luise takes the keys.

LUISE

Nothing.

She walks to the *Mini Cooper*, opens the driver's door, and gets in. There's an immediate feeling of claustrophobia, suffocation and loss.

She looks back to the garage just in time to see Charlie put his filthy hands on her Betsy and she GROANS.

She's out of the car in a burst of energy and she rushes up to Charlie and Betsy.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Changed my mind, get off, get off, changed my mind.

Charlie looks at her perplexed and annoyed.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Didn't you hear me, get off her!

CHARLIE

Deal's a deal, lady.

LUISE

Oh please, look, I made a mistake, OK, what the fuck?

(MORE)

LUISE (CONT'D)

Be a sport and hand me the keys and
I'll get the fuck out of your hair.

Charlie gets off the bike and stands threateningly in front of Luise, he's a good head and half taller but she's hardly perturbed.

LUISE (CONT'D)

What, you gonna hit me? Outweighed
me like 40 pounds, bitch. Gonna
punch me - will that make you feel
better?

Charlie sighs then laughs it off and hands her the keys and she grabs them and hops on Betsy.

CHARLIE

Lady, swear you must be such a
fucking cockteaser.

Luise starts Betsy and revs her.

LUISE

Not when it comes to cocks I'm not.
See you, Charlie.

She speeds off.

EXT. MOTORCYCLE/STREET - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

(MOVING)

Luise is riding Betsy along the street, relieved that she still has her beloved motorcycle but apprehensive about what this might mean for the future too.

LUISE

It'll be all right, it'll be fine -
just fine - easy.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

SUPER: FOUR MONTHS LATER.

It is a cold wet morning in a small, quiet and underdeveloped town.

SUPER: TOWN OF DYANI. POPULATION: 5.120.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

The sun appears through some clouds, bringing a little warmth to an otherwise cold morning. Luise - paler and wearied looking - wakes up on grass and dirt, in the small, front yard of a small house.

Flakes of snow cover part of her body, she's disheveled, shivering and clearly hangover. There's an almost empty bottle next to her and, upon seeing it, she picks it up and downs the last of its liquid content.

She looks around, then to the house, then grabs her lower back in pain.

LUISE

Eat a dick.

She gets up, walks to the front door, opens and gets inside.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Luise is under a hot shower, not really moving, just letting the warm water wash all over her.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (SOON LATER)

Luise quickly dresses in black trousers, black boots, grey shirt and a black jacket.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (SOON LATER)

She fills up a thermos full of coffee and exits in a rush.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE/MOTORCYCLE - DAY

Luise secures the thermos on a drink-holder installed on her motorcycle, hops on it and starts the engine.

EXT. MOTORCYCLE - DAY

(MOVING)

Luise is riding and looking around in melancholy at the quiet and sedated pace of small town life.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Luise parks the motorcycle, looks towards the school building and sighs with displeasure. She grabs the thermos, gets off the saddle, hurries to the entrance, opens the building's front door and walks inside.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

And he's there, waiting for her, principal LARRY GOLDSMITH - 60s, aging rockstar gray hair, loud clothes that look odd on him, in general painting the picture of certain desperation in wanting to look younger and hipper than his years - with a disapproving expression on his face.

Luise tries a quick change-of-direction pivot but...

PRINCIPAL GOLDSMITH (O.C.)

Luise, a moment please.

Luise turns back and comes face to face with the principal.

PRINCIPLE GOLDSMITH

You're late once again.

LUISE

I'm so sorry, traffic was a bitch.

PRINCIPLE GOLDSMITH

Traffic?

LUISE

Yeah, there was - like an - oil spill right on center street and just - you know terrible.

He hesitates, looking for the right approach.

PRINCIPLE GOLDSMITH

Luise, I know I owed your aunt a favor - hell of a woman by the way - but that doesn't mean you can bend the rules and stroll in here whenever the mood strikes you. Those kids are reliant upon you to learn and you're setting a bad example for them.

Luise tenses up, her hands turning into fists but she fights back her natural impulses and lets go.

She places her hand on his arm, instead.

LUISE
Thank you, Larry.

Larry looks at her surprised.

LUISE (CONT'D)
You're right, I can do better and
your constructive criticism is most
welcome and appreciated.

PRINCIPLE GOLDSMITH
Well - I mean, if I'm a bit stern
with you it's cause I see such
great potential in you. You have
the natural instincts to be an
amazing educator, I really believe
that. You just need to apply
yourself a bit.

LuiSe seems to be biting her own tongue, then forces a smile.

LUISE
I - will, I'll - apply myself big
time. Definitely.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM - DAY (SOON LATER)

In a basketball court filled with various sporting equipment,
ten-year-old CHILDREN are quietly sitting on the floor,
perfectly still and perfectly aligned.

LuiSe walks inside the space.

LUISE
Sorry, I'm late.

She notices how behaved they all are, it's a sight she's
still not used to. She downs some coffee and heads towards a
room, (her office), on the right-hand side.

LUISE (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
Children of the fucking corn.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM/OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

MONTAGE

LuiSe is in her small office adjacent to the basketball court
and is watching a shark video on her phone.

The children are playing dodgeball on their own on the court.

Luise throws papers in a bin like she's shooting hoops.

She approaches a *BOB Punching Dummy* she uses as a coat hanger, takes her coat off, punches it a few times, sighs, then puts her coat back on its head.

Luise is sitting on the chair at her desk, bored out of her mind, eyelids start to close, she opens them, eyelids close again, she tilts forward, waking up with a jump.

She grabs the thermos and finishes every last drop of coffee.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM/OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Luise walks out and sees all the children still playing the dodgeball game - albeit, with less enthusiasm.

 LUISE
 (halfhearted)
 Good form, well done.

She then notices a girl, MELISSA, sitting down alone, a portrait of sadness, her arm in a cast. For a split second, she contemplates heading towards her but comes to her senses and walks back into the office instead.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Betsy parked behind her, Luise is sitting on a rock looking down to the town below and holding on to a paperbag with a bottle of whiskey inside.

 LUISE
 Fuck am I doing here?

She takes a good swig from the bottle, then takes her phone out and dials a number but a VOICE informs her that...

 MONOTONE VOICE
 The number you are trying to call
 is disconnected.

An infuriated Luise stops the call.

 LUISE
 Aunt, goddamn it!

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Luise is asleep and drooling, an empty bottle of whiskey next to her. The ALARM goes off on the bedside table, loud and intrusive. Luise grabs the bottle and throws it at the alarm.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

The children are playing dodgeball as Luise comes out of her office, bored-looking and sipping coffee from her thermos.

She notices Melissa sitting alone and after quick deliberation, decides to approach her.

LUISE
Hey -- um, child.

A bright-looking girl, SHANNON, is near and she SNIGGERS overhearing her.

SHANNON
Her name's Melissa.

Luise, annoyed, turns to the student.

LUISE
Hey I knew that, smartass.

SHANNON
Sure.

LUISE
Just - do some dodgeballing already.

Luise turns back to Melissa who looks up at her surprised.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Goddamn it, forgot what I was gonna say. Yeah - um - so, Melissa - listen, you've had it real bad recently. I get it, but now ya know life is mean and - fuc- messed up. But - don't make it worse on yourself. If life shits on you, don't lie down and take it, punch that bitch right back. OK? Life means adaptation.

Melissa looks at her nonplused.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Ah, hell am I even doing?

Luise walks away from her quite infuriated.

EXT. MOTORCYCLE/STREET - NIGHT

(MOVING)

Luise is driving her motorcycle slowly through the streets due to the snow-wet surface. Suddenly, something across the street captures her attention and she stops the motorcycle.

LUISE

What do we have here?

She's looking at a bar called 'Ambrosia' that has a sign at the front stating: *Opening Week Special, Free Shot With Every Order.*

INT. AMBROSIA BAR - NIGHT

Luise enters, walks to the bar area and sits on a stool. The barman, JAKE - mid-twenties, ruggedly handsome - comes over and beams Luise with a smile, it's a damn fine one, too.

JAKE

Welcome to Ambrosia, what can I get for you?

LUISE

One whiskey highball, please.

JAKE

Bourbon do?

LUISE

Sure.

Jake nods and prepares the order. Luise looks around the countertop. There are various donations boxes laying about, from *Save the Whales* to *Shelter for Children*, to *Save the Planet*, etc.

LUISE (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

Oh, Jesus.

Jake serves Luise her drink, then picks up a 16-year-old bottle of *Lagavulin* whiskey and shows it to her. A surprised Luise nods Yes.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Hell yeah.

Jake pours it into two shot glasses, gives her one and keeps one too. He raises the glass and she follows suit.

JAKE
Cheers.

LUISE
Cheers.

They clink glasses and then down the shot.

JAKE
Name's Jake.

LUISE
Luise.

They shake hands.

JAKE
Pleased to meet you, Luise. You're not from these here parts, are you?

LUISE
Wonder what gave that away?

Jake smiles.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Born and bred in Brooklyn, New York.

JAKE
Nice. Born and bred in this very town.

Luise takes a good gulp from her drink and wipes her mouth with the back of her hand. She doesn't naturally continue the chat, something that makes Jake a little anxious.

JAKE (CONT'D)
So, what brings-

LUISE
Jake, got a proposition for ya.

He leans in intrigued.

JAKE
Yeah?

LUISE
Let me work here as a bouncer on the weekends.

Jake looks at her bewildered, then slowly starts to LAUGH.

JAKE
You're funny.

LUISE
Not joking. Look, don't need to get
paid - hell, I'll do it for a drink
or two.

Jake realizes that she's serious, then looks around the joint and Luise does likewise: There's only a handful of drinkers around and they are all sitting as quiet as can be. A waitress, SUSAN, (twenties), is wiping down a table.

JAKE
Appreciate the offer, and I know I
just opened yesterday - but I - I
just don't think I'm gonna need
one, is all.

Luise exhales.

LUISE
Yeah, probably not.

JAKE
Why do-

LUISE
Forget about it.

JAKE
OK, sure.

She downs the rest of her drink. Then:

LUISE
Never felt compelled to leave?

JAKE
Travelled the world at 18, got my
fix of new places. Top-up?

She nods her head Yes. Jake fills up her glass.

LUISE
Thanks.

JAKE
I'm quite comfortable here.

She sips her drink.

LUISE

Fair enough. So, what do you do for fun then?

Susan comes over with a tray of glasses that she leaves on the counter.

JAKE

Thanks, Susan, you can go now if you want, seems it'll be a quiet one.

SUSAN

Oh, you sure?

JAKE

Yeah.

Susan grabs his arm. Luise notices.

SUSAN

That's so sweet of you, thanks.

She turns, takes her apron off and heads to the back. Jake turns back to Luise.

JAKE

Sorry. Hmm, fun? Hiking, camping - def camping, oh, bowling's good.

Luise leans forward.

LUISE

Wanna have fun together sometime?

Jake's taken back a bit, not used to women being so forward.

JAKE

Um, yeah, OK.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM/OFFICE - DAY

The end of day bell RINGS, startling a drowsy looking Luise.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - RESTROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

She walks into a restroom and splashes water on her face.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - TEACHERS LOUNGE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

She heads into the teachers' lounge, grabs the coffee pot and fills up her thermos. A fellow teacher, CHERYL - 45, overweight, curly hair - is having her tea at a table and she gives Luise a look that's close to disdain.

 LUISE

What?

 CHERYL

Didn't say anything.

 LUISE

Didn't have to.

 CHERYL

Just sitting here having my tea.

 LUISE

Sure you are.

Luise forces herself to walk out of the room and when she's obstructed by the wall turns and does an obscene gesture towards the other teacher.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Luise is sitting on the couch - her tablet playing a boxing fight, microwave-ready meal in front of her, untouched - and is drinking whiskey from a bottle.

She stands, bottle in hand and walks towards her bedroom.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Luise has opened her closet and is looking through her clothes. She soon chooses a military-styled jacket and puts it on.

She opens a drawer and takes out her pistol.

She stands sideways to the mirror which is located on the inside part of her closet. Her hand with the pistol is hidden inside the jacket.

 LUISE

 (Doing a Deniro impression
 - but drunk)

Yeah? Huh?

She takes out her hand and aims the gun.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Faster than you. Saw you coming...
Shitheel... I'm standing here, you
make a move. You make the move.
It's your move.

She aims the weapon again - but breaks character, suddenly bored of the act, of the film-pretend game, so she places the pistol back in the drawer.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Luike comes back into the living room area, walks over to the window and looks outside.

LUISE
Stupid ass town.

She takes down a large gulp of alcohol.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Screw this shit.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

Luike, bottle in hand, walks - not entirely in a straight line - down a sidewalk. It's snowing lightly, not enough to cover the ground.

Luike tosses the empty bottle in a trash can.

EXT. AMBROSIA BAR - NIGHT

Luike approaches the bar just as Jake locks the door, Susan next to him.

JAKE
Alright, Susan, you have a...

He notices Luike walk up to them.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Luike?

LUISE
Hey there.

JAKE
Um, we're closed.

LUISE
That's cool, wanted - don't know,
wanna - hang?

JAKE
What - now?

LUISE
No time like the present.

Luise notices Susan staring at her. She turns to her.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Got something on my face?

SUSAN
Oh, no, no.

JAKE
It's OK, Susan, I'll see you
tomorrow. Thank you for your hard
work today.

SUSAN
Oh, sure, see you, Jake.

Susan heads towards her car but not before looking behind her
one last time as Jake turns to Luise.

JAKE
You're drunk.

LUISE
A barman can always tell.

Jake smirks.

JAKE
Come, I'll take you home.

LUISE
Good idea.

EXT. LUISE'S HOUSE/CAR - NIGHT

Jake parks the car outside Luise's house. He exits, runs
around and opens the door for her.

Luise exits.

LUISE
Oh, a gentleman.

She stumbles a bit, he helps her stay on her feet. She locks eyes with him and goes in and kisses him but he pulls away.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Fuck's wrong, don't you like me?

JAKE
Like you fine - but perhaps not so much right now.

LUISE
Why?

JAKE
Cause your state of inebriation is making you act all wrong.

LUISE
State of ineb...? I'm fine.

She leans in, he leans back. She slips and falls. He helps her to her feet.

LUISE (CONT'D)
You're no fun.

JAKE
Sorry. Keys?

Luise hesitates, then hands them over.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Putting you straight to bed.

He grabs hold of her and places her over his shoulder - she WHOOPS - then he carries her to the front door.

LUISE
Christ, I want you even more now.

He opens the door and they go inside.

EXT. FRONT OF LUISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

JAKE (O.S.)
Sorry.

LUISE (O.S.)
Jake, make me dinner one day soon?

JAKE (O.S.)
I'd like that.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The cacophony of the alarm RINGING.

Luise GROANS awake under the sheet, reaches out and punches the alarm, then grabs her head in pain.

LUISE
Eat a dick!

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM/OFFICE - EVENING

Luise is asleep with her head on the desk, on top of an opened comic book page.

There's a KNOCK on the door that jolts her upright.

LUISE
(confused)
Yeah - I'm here...

Another KNOCK.

LUISE (CONT'D)
What?

PRINCIPLE GOLDSMITH (O.S.)
It's Larry, it's kinda urgent.

Luise notices the comic book so she quickly puts it aside, replacing it with a notebook and a pen.

LUISE
Yeah, enter.

The principle enters, a concert look evident on his face.

PRINCIPLE GOLDSMITH
Luise, there's like a situation. A girl that hasn't been picked up, she's sitting alone on the steps.

LUISE
What'd you want me to do about it?

PRINCIPLE GOLDSMITH
Go talk to her and bring her inside so we can deal with it.

LUISE
Why me?

PRINCIPLE GOLDSMITH
Cause you're the only one here,
apart from me, of course, but
you're - you know, female and best
to handle this.

LUISE
I'm the only - what time is...?

She looks for the time confused, it's late indeed.

PRINCIPLE GOLDSMITH
Please, Luise.

She sighs.

LUISE
Fine, I'll do it.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - EVENING (SOON LATER)

Luise exits the school's front door, stops to down some of
her coffee and notices Melissa sitting all alone at the curb.

LUISE
Fucking peachy.

She walks to Melissa and sits next to her.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Hey, your grandma hasn't shown up
yet then?

Melissa stares listlessly at her.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Yeah, I know, stupid ass question.

She looks around, there's still no one about.

LUISE (CONT'D)
So, want some hot chocolate?

Melissa slowly nods her head Yes. They stand and walk back
inside the school.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Luise apprehensively walks into a patient's room. Inside,
lying on a mobility enhanced bed, looking miserable, is a
woman in her mid-sixties, GRANDMA MOLLY.

LUISE
Mrs. Paterson?

GRANDMA MOLLY
Who the hell wants to know?

LUISE
I'm - Luise Livingston, Melissa's
P.E. teacher - was send by the
school to check in on you.

GRANDMA MOLLY
How's little Mel, she OK?

LUISE
Yeah, fine, she's with a child
protective services representative.

GRANDMA MOLLY
Right, well, not much I can do for
a while.

LUISE
Doctor mentioned hip and vertebra
fractures?

GRANDMA MOLLY
That's osteoporosis for ya. Slipped
down the stairs, got in a world of
pain, ended up in here.

LUISE
Sorry to hear that, Mrs. Paterson.

GRANDMA MOLLY
Thanks, I guess. And Molly's fine.

Luise looks around the room unsure.

GRANDMA MOLLY (CONT'D)
Anyway, I'm an old warn coat, it's
little Mel that one should be
worried about.

LUISE
Why's that?

GRANDMA MOLLY
Won't be able to look after her
anymore, not for a good long while.
(MORE)

GRANDMA MOLLY (CONT'D)
 Hell, even if surgery's successful,
 I only got half a chance of being
 able to live a normal independent
 life again. Poor girl's gonna join
 the foster care system.

LUISE
 Foster care?

GRANDMA MOLLY
 Yeah.

LUISE
 There's no one else, no family, no
 close friends?

GRANDMA MOLLY
 Only one left. Moved here after the
 accident to care for her. There's
 no one else. God knows how much
 this will set her back, her
 traumatic mutism, I mean.

LUISE
 Sorry to hear that.

Luise turns.

LUISE (CONT'D)
 Um, better be going.

GRANDMA MOLLY
 What about you?

Luise turns back.

LUISE
 What about me?

GRANDMA MOLLY
 You seem responsible and you're her
 teacher. Why don't y-

LUISE
 Not the right person.

GRANDMA MOLLY
 You brought your ass here to
 inquire about her well-being.

LUISE
 More like forced into it.

Luise makes for the door.

LUISE (CONT'D)
 Hope it all works out.

Grandma Molly sighs.

 GRANMA MOLLY
 Got me some savings. Can pay you
 ten grand to look after her for a
 few months.

Luise hesitates at the door.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Luise enters her bedroom holding on to paper shopping bag which she places on her bed near a tablet. She drops her jacket to the floor, jumps on the bed, takes out a bottle of whiskey and a burger and puts *Taxi Driver* on.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Luise has eaten the burger and is now sipping the half empty bottle while watching a boxing fight. She yawns, then glances to the floor and sees the alarm clock lying there.

 LUISE
 Saturday tomorrow, asshole.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

The doorbell is RINGING with much persistence and Luise opens her eyes confused. She holds her head in pain.

 LUISE
 Huh?

She notices there are a lot of miscalls on her phone while the BELL continues its discord.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON (SOON LATER)

Luise opens the front door to RACHEL - mid-thirties, short hair, glasses, somber-colored clothing - and to Melissa.

 LUISE
 What?

 RACHEL
 I do apologize but I've been
 calling all morning.

Luise looks from her to Melissa and back.

LUISE

So - soon?

RACHEL

The sooner she gets settled, the better. Background check was fine so we just need to review the premises and then there's paperwork.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY (LATER)

Rachel comes out of a room holding onto a pad and a pen.

RACHEL

Not sure about all those dumbbells and exercise equipment in there, I think perhaps those need to be moved if Melissa's going to be sleeping in there.

LUISE

Ah - yeah, sure, no problem. Get right on it.

RACHEL

OK, good.

Rachel hands Luise a form.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Please, sign here.

Luise takes the form, places it on the wall, signs, and hands it back and Rachel hands her a second one.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

And here.

Luise signs that one too and returns it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

OK, well, that's it.

LUISE

OK.

RACHEL

I'll be back here sometime soon.

LUISE
When?

 RACHEL
Won't be scheduled.

 LUISE
Oh.

 RACHEL
They never are.

 LUISE
OK.

 RACHEL
Well, I shall leave you to it. Any
issues arise, just give me a call.

Rachel heads towards Melissa and playfully pinches her cheek.

 LUISE
Won't be no issues.

Rachel nods.

 RACHEL
You have a good day then.

 LUISE
You too.

Rachel exits.

Laise and Melissa look uncomfortably at each other.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
So -- you're hungry?

Melissa nods Yes.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
Don't got no weird ass allergies,
do ya?

Melissa shakes her head No.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
Good.

Laise takes out her phone.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
Pizza?

Gino pushes the door wider and Vadim enters the room accompanied by Vera and holding on to a file.

VADIM
How're we all doing today?

MISS MORETTI
Give me good news, Vadim.

VADIM
(Indicating the file)
If I may?

The boss nods Yes and Vadim approaches the desk and opens up the file in front of her. He produces a photo of Lucia and a page of information about her.

VADIM (CONT'D)
Lucia Lane. Known to Lorena as 'Aunt", not an actual blood relative but something akin to a mentor. No doubt she's played a crucial part in her disappearance.

Miss Moretti looks up excitedly from the photo to Vadim.

MISS MORETTI
Finally, some progress. Good job.

Vadim nods.

MISS MORETTI (CONT'D)
(Addressing entire room)
Let's pay her a visit, shall we?

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

On a search engine the word 'babysitter' is being typed.

A pizza box lies empty on a coffee table as Melissa downs a glass of cherry soda and as Luise looks anxiously at the tablet screen.

LUISE
I mean, I - already arranged this, didn't know you were coming and - can't just cancel last minute, that's not cool, you know?

Melissa places her glass on the table, it's not clear if she's even listening to her.

LUISE (CONT'D)
 Someone will be here; don't have to
 worry.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - EVENING (LATER)

Luise takes a shower.

She shaves her legs.

She applies makeup on.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EVENING (LATER)

She slips into a mini, tiered, black dress and puts black boots on. The DOORBELL is heard.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING (SOON LATER)

TATIANA - 16, blase looking - is sitting on the couch next to Melissa.

LUISE
 Should be back by -- midnight, I
 think.

Tatiana halfheartedly nods Yes.

LUISE (CONT'D)
 No weed or any shit like that and
 no guests. Got - cameras hidden all
 over, I'll know.

TATIANA
 Sure thing.

Luise nods, looks at Melissa who stares deadpan at her, turns, and exits.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake is busy in his open-space studio apartment, putting the finishing touches on a chocolate cheesecake.

The table is set in an overly romantic fashion: There are candles, there's a banquet of flowers in the middle, fine plates, glasses and cutlery, a bottle of wine - the works.

The doorbell RINGS.

Jake opens the door and finds Luise standing there, a naughty expression in her eyes.

LUISE
Hey.

JAKE
Hey. You look great, come on in.

LUISE
Thanks.

Luise enters and sees the table.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Wow, what's all this?

JAKE
Presentation counts.

LUISE
It does.

JAKE
Wine?

LUISE
Sure.

Jake pours them a glass each. They clink glasses and take a sip. Luise smiles.

LUISE (CONT'D)
It's good.

JAKE
Glad you like it. Take a seat, I'll serve the first course.

Luise sits down at the table and Jake returns with a plate of mushrooms and a bowl of salad.

LUISE
Oh my.

JAKE
Triple cheese & tarragon-stuffed mushrooms and Greek salad.

LUISE
You're really into your food.

Luise gets to her feet.

JAKE

What is it?

LUISE

Nothing, just not that hungry right now.

JAKE

No?

Luise shakes her head No. She then places her hands under her dress and proceeds to work her panties off.

LUISE

Why don't you help me work up an appetite?

Jake looks at her, jaw dropped.

CUT TO:

Luise, dress pulled up, is popped up on a counter, legs wrapped around the bare bum of Jake. They are in the middle of intense sex. He's GRUNTING, she's MOANING. She bites lightly down on his shoulder.

CUT TO:

The activity comes to an end, both of them flushed, sweaty and out of breath.

Luise kisses Jake all over the face, then gets to her feet.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Hit the goddamn spot, it did!

Jake pulls his trousers back on as Luise adjusts her dress, then she heads to the table, grabs the plate and starts devouring the mushrooms.

Jake composes himself and looks at her a little nonplussed. Luise is now digging into the salad too.

JAKE

Wait, let me light the candles and serve the main meal.

LUISE

(mouth full)

Nah, screw that, gotta hit the road soon.

JAKE

You're not staying?

LUISE

I've got -- I like my bed.

She stuffs her mouth more, puts the plate down, grabs the bottle of wine, and gobbles a mouthful down to wash the food with.

JAKE

There's - cheesecake.

She wipes her mouth with the back of her hand, walks over to Jake, and gives him a big, wet kiss.

LUISE

Thanks for the ride, cowboy, God knows I needed it.

She heads for the door and Jake notices her underwear on the floor.

JAKE

Your panties?

LUISE

Give them to me next time.

She winks at him, opens the door, and leaves.

Jake stands there with a 'what the hell just happened?' look on his face.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

Luise slowly opens the door to Melissa's room and sees that the girl is in bed asleep. She closes the door and sighs.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (SOON LATER)

Luise, fresh from a shower with a towel around her body, grabs a bottle of whiskey from the cupboard and heads to her bedroom.

INT. LUCIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucia is in the living room sitting on a chair by the speed-bag and is finishing wrapping her hands with boxing wraps. There's a round metal table in front of her with a couple of pistols, a pair of goggles, a towel and a monitor on it. The monitor is feeding her security footage of her front garden.

The dog cushion is on the other side of the room but Laila, Lucia's dog is not there.

The kitchen is dark but visible in the shadows is a shotgun tied expertly on a chair, with a rope attached to the trigger and connected to the back door.

Lucia finishes placing the wraps on her hands and makes sure they are tight and in place. Then she's surprised to see her monitor go dark.

LUCIA

Damn, they're good.

NOISE comes from the kitchen, then the sound of a shotgun BLAST followed by a CRY.

Suddenly, the windows in the living room are broken in by the launch of various smoke grenades that land on the floor.

Lucia puts on the goggles, wraps the towel around her face, and grabs both pistols as the room gets enveloped in smoke.

MEN in tactical gear enter through the windows and the front door and Lucia starts FIRING at them, killing a couple and injuring a few. One of the ASSAILANTS fires a round at her, hitting her in the chest and lifting her off her feet. Lucia falls hard to the floor on her back, the weapons escaping from her grip.

She's in pain but not bleeding away as the round fired at her was that of a salt bullet.

She is soon surrounded by her attackers all pointing their weapons at her. The smoke grenades are quickly disposed of and the visibility in the room soon improves.

Vadim enters the place followed by Vera and they approach Lucia.

VADIM

Lucia Lane, I'm Vadim and this is my assistant Vera. We're here to ask you some rather pivotal questions.

Lucia takes her goggles and the towel off her face.

LUCIA

Thought you might.

Vera notices the hand wraps, the wall posters and the speed-bag, and she smiles with anticipation.

VERA

You box?

LUCIA

I've known to. Do you?

VERA

I like to kick.

Lucia gets to her feet.

LUCIA

Don't ya know, sweetie, kicks are
for pussies.

Vera turns pleadingly to Vadim:

VERA

May I?

VADIM

Sure, why not?

Vadim and the others make space as Lucia and Vera square off.

Vera unleashes a variety of kicks on Lucia but she takes them well and surprises her much younger opponent with her agility and quickness - despite her advancing years - as she gets in close and lands a head and body combination before eating a back-kick herself which stops her momentum.

As the fight continues, Vera does not underestimate her opponent anymore and soon starts to land kicks at will, bloodying up Lucia in the process. The more time goes by, the more Vera gains the upper hand and the more Lucia slows down.

Finally, a hard sidekick sends an exhausted Lucia to the floor.

VADIM (CONT'D)

I think she's ready to talk now.

Lucia brings her knee up so she can reach into her boot and take out a small blade.

Vera smirks at her:

VERA

What're you gonna do with that,
then?

In one quick motion, Lucia stabs herself in the neck. As blood starts pouring out from her wound and her mouth, she manages to form a smile and then falls back dead.

Vera turns to Vadim.

VERA (CONT'D)
 Fuck, I should have anticipated
 that.

VADIM
 Don't think she would have talked,
 regardless.

VERA
 What now?

VADIM
 Let's head to Seattle, make it our
 base of operation. I have a hunch
 our target is hiding out in that
 vicinity or about.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Luise, dressed for a night out, knocks on Melissa's door and then opens it. The girl is on her bed and is reading a book. She looks up at Luise.

LUISE
 So, um - pizza's on the way. I'm
 just gonna be a couple of hours.
 Tatiana -

The BELL is heard.

LUISE (CONT'D)
 Ah, speak of the devil. You just -
 oh I ordered some salad as well, so
 make sure you have some of that too
 - well, if you want.

Melissa keeps looking at her but remains expressionless.

LUISE (CONT'D)
 I'm - just gonna be playing some
 bowling.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY-CAR PARK/INT. CAR - NIGHT

Jake's in the driving seat and Luise is on top of him as they both climax from their intense sex session.

Luise pops back to her seat and they both catch their breaths and compose themselves.

Suddenly, Luise pops the door open excitedly.

LUISE
Right, how about some bowling,
then?

JAKE
Hmm, I guess.

She moves out and turns to face him.

LUISE
Come on, night's still young.

Jake opens the door and steps out.

JAKE
(More to himself)
You're so full of energy.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - MELISSA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Melissa is on her bed with a book on her lap. In front of her is an open pizza box and next to that a bowl of salad - both of which are untouched.

She picks up a piece of pizza and brings it to her lips but makes a face and puts it back.

She exits her room into the HALLWAY...

and heads to the doorway of the LIVING ROOM and sees that Tatiana is looking intently through various items and light fixtures - presumably in an effort to determine if there are indeed cameras all around.

Melissa sighs and walks back to her room.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Luise is fast asleep in bed, drooling on her pillow and lightly snoring away.

There is a big KNOCK on her door.

She opens her eyes confused and annoyed.

Another KNOCK follows.

She looks at the clock on the nightstand, the alarm - probably broken - hasn't gone off.

LUISE

Ah, shit.

She jumps out of bed.

More BANGING.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Alright, I'm coming!

Luise - in her football jersey - opens the door.

Melissa is standing there, all dressed up, looking annoyed.

LUISE (CONT'D)

What?

Melissa points at her wristwatch.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Yeah, fine, I'm up, Shut the hell up already.

She walks past Melissa and heads to the bathroom.

EXT. LUISE'S HOUSE - DAY

Luise - dressed for the cold weather - and Melissa - backpack on - are standing by Luise's motorcycle.

LUISE

Now, I know you don't do cars, and I'm with you on that, never much cared for them caged fuckers myself. Motorcycles though, now that's a different story. This here's my very dear friend, Betsy. She's an *Indian Scout* in crimson metallic, with a liquid-cooled v-twin-engine, chrome styling, and with a leather seat - of course. What say you and I go on a ride on her? She'll nothing short but change your life, I swear.

Melissa shakes her head No.

LUISE (CONT'D)

What'd you mean no? Come on, be a good girl, a badass good girl.

Again, Melissa shakes her head No.

Luise starts getting irritated but manages to stay composed.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
 You know who loves motorcycles?

Melissa stares at her.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
 Only Keanu fucking Reeves!

Melissa remains poised.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
 So how bout it then?

Once more, Melissa shakes her head No.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
 Christ sake! Let's get this
 straight: I ain't gonna be walking
 to work in the goddamn cold each
 morning on account of your
 traumatic ass.

Melissa's face says that she is not about to change her
goddamn mind any time soon.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
 Screw walking. There's no way in
 hell I'm gonna walk!

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY (LATER)

Luise is angrily walking ahead of Melissa who's trying to
keep up.

 LUISE
 This is some bullshit.

She suddenly stops and turns to address Melissa.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
 And so you know, I ain't holding
 bloody hands with ya, ever. I don't
 do that shit. And if you happen to
 fall, you're on your own.

Luise resumes walking and Melissa tries her best to keep up
with the quick pace.

Melissa suddenly slips and falls to the ground.

Luise having heard the fall, stops and turns around.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - MELISSA'S ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Luise enters the room, switches on the light, and sees that Melissa is in the grasp of a nightmare.

Exercise equipment, including a boxing bag, are still in the room.

Luise hesitates, unsure.

She walks closer to her, stops, and loudly says:

LUISE
Hey, wake up. It's a stupid ass
dream, is all.

Melissa wakes up with a jump, she's clearly shaken and looks at Luise in fear.

LUISE (CONT'D)
You were having a nightmare, and
making a goddamn racket. Stop being
such a baby, OK?

Melissa gets visibly upset and turns around so Luise won't see her anymore.

LUISE (CONT'D)
What? Not my fault you're afraid of
your fucking shadow. Listen, life's
all the struggle, about adapting to
any...

Melissa begins to CRY although she tries to keep quiet about it and it rattles Luise who stops talking and wonders what to do next.

Then:

LUISE (CONT'D)
Whatever - let's just sleep, OK?

Luise, uncomfortable, quickly leaves the room.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Luise enters her room, picks up a whiskey bottle and takes a long good gulp.

EXT. AMBROSIA BAR - JAKE'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Jake and Luise finish putting their camping gear in the back of Jake's car. With them stands Susan who looks like she might be attending her own funeral.

JAKE
(to Susan)
Sure you'll be alright?

Susan hesitates, then nods her head Yes and forces a smile.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Call me if you need anything, won't
be too far into the woods, there
should still be reception.

Susan nods her head Yes, steps in and hugs Jake, taking him by surprise. Luise rolls her eyes and gets in the car.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Well, better be off then.

He frees himself from Susan, gets in the car, and starts the engine.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stacks of pizza boxes are resting on the coffee table and Melissa eyes them with a sense of repulsion.

Standing at the back of the room is Tatiana and she is talking to someone on her phone. She tries to be quiet and discreet but her words carry on loud enough:

TATIANA
(On phone)
Nah, there's definitely no cameras
anywhere, that was BS. Come on,
she's fine, she's a mute or
something, don't know but she won't
be an issue.

EXT. WOODS - CAMPING SITE - NIGHT

Luise - a little on edge - and Jake - completely at ease - are sitting in front of a fire and are roasting marshmallows.

Jake is finishing up a story about his past:

JAKE

So that's the stupid way I ended up spending most of my summer sitting on my ass with a plastered foot.

LUISE

I've broken a few bones, it sucks. Mind you, not on account of trying to impress the opposite sex.

JAKE

I think it's a rite of passage with men.

LUISE

Yeah, you're-

Luise hears a SOUND and flinches on the spot.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch.

JAKE

It's OK, there're no wild animals in these parts.

LUISE

Famous last words.

JAKE

You really haven't camped before?

LUISE

Nope.

JAKE

Don't worry, won't let anything happen to you.

LUISE

You'll take on the big grizzly for me?

JAKE

Well - don't know about that.

They both CHUCKLE.

Jake's marshmallow starts to fall off his stick. He quickly puts it in his mouth - it burns, he makes a face.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Ouch, hot.

Luise shakes her head playfully.

LUISE
We're doomed.

Jake composes himself. Puts a fresh marshmallow on his stick.

JAKE
So, what about you?

LUISE
What about me?

JAKE
Tell me something? How did you
break them bones?

LUISE
Trust me, nowhere near as amusingly
as you.

Luise bites into her half-melted marshmallow.

JAKE
Come on, tell me something about
yourself.

Luise demeanor changes.

LUISE
Don't like to look back, to be
honest.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The energy and atmosphere have changed now at Luise's place. Tatiana is on the couch with BEN, two years her senior and they are making out. Next to them is the couple of JUNE and JULES who take turns smoking a joint.

Melissa is spying on them from the hallway.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Luise and Jake continue to chat and roast marshmallows.

JAKE
It's OK, I respect the fact that
you don't like to talk about
yourself.

His watch BEEPS.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Oh shoot, it's time.

He puts the stick down, goes around Luise, and hugs her.

LUISE
What's happening?

JAKE
Quick, look up.

Luise looks up towards a starry sky.

LUISE
Is it a spaceship or something?

JAKE
Wait for it.

Suddenly, a bright flash of meteor shower lights up the sky.

LUISE
Nice.

JAKE
Was worth the trip, wasn't it?

Luise gets up, grabs the bottle of whiskey, and takes a swig.

LUISE
Guess so.

JAKE
Jesus, you're hard to please.

Luise SNORTS.

LUISE
Beg to differ, I please often and regularly. Was thinking we head into the tent now for some more - pleasing.

JAKE
But - it's so nice out here.

LUISE
Just don't want nothing nasty crawling up my backside while we do - the nasty.

JAKE

Don't need to fool around. Why don't we just chat about things? Like, about where this is going.

LUISE

Not towards some epic bonking, it seems.

JAKE

Come on, I'm serious.

Luise heads towards the tent.

LUISE

I'm going in there and bonking myself. You can sit outside talking about feelings and shit with a fucking grizzly for all I care.

She enters the tent.

JAKE

Luise?

No answer.

Jake kicks a rock on the ground.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Gooddamn it.

He hears a NOISE and looks cautiously around. Then heads to the tent after Luise.

INT. LUISE HOUSE - MIDDAY

Luise opens the front door and catches Tatiana spraying the living room with an underarm canister - which she quickly applies under her blouse as she notices her arrival.

TATIANA

Hey, Ms. Livingston, how was camping?

LUISE

Exactly as I imagined.

Tatiana does not know what to say to that so she just picks up her bag and makes for the front door.

LUISE (CONT'D)

All good here?

Tatiana reaches the still-opened door, evidently eager to leave.

TATIANA
Yup, all good, everything - was fine.

LUISE
OK.

TATIANA
OK. Bye.

She exits and closes the door behind her.

Luise then frantically scratches the back of her thighs.

LUISE
Fucking camping.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY (SOON LATER)

Luise is scrubbing herself thoroughly under the shower.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY (LATER)

Now dressed in lazy clothes she knocks lightly on Melissa's door and opens it to find Melissa asleep in bed.

LUISE
(More to herself)
What - were you partying all night?

In the KITCHEN...

She locates a bottle of whiskey in one of the cupboards and takes it with her as she leaves the room.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EVENING

Luise is in bed watching shark videos on her tablet and sipping from the bottle that is already half empty.

She yawns and stretches out, then tosses the tablet aside in annoyance. She grabs the bottle, stands up on slightly wobbly feet, and exits the room.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING (CONTINUOUS)

Luise stands before the couch and sniffs the air. Something does not smell right.

She looks through the couch and soon find a joint that still has a bit of body left on it.

LUISE
Thought so.

She takes a good gulp from the bottle and heads into the KITCHEN...

She locates some matches, sits by the table, lights the joint, and inhales deeply.

She drinks some more of the whiskey.

Soon, things start to darken.

The joint falls from her hand onto the tablecloth.

INT. SIMON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Luise seems to have been transported to the apartment she was in earlier on with Dario, Ms. Moretti's son. She is slowly heading towards a child's bedroom, timidly and apprehensively. She does not want to; she does not want to see what is there but it's as if a force is compelling her.

She is now just outside the room's door. She takes a breath and slowly opens it; she walks inside the BEDROOM...

And looks towards the closet but ... no one is there.

She turns around only to come face to face with Dario, wild eyed and with blood running down his face from a bullet-wound on his forehead.

He grabs hold of Luise.

DARIO
Burn, you bitch.

DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Luise opens her eyes confused and sees flames in front of her. The tablecloth on top of the table has caught on fire due to her dropping the joint on it when she passed out.

Water slashes on the table putting out the flames and some of it splashes on her as well.

She turns and sees Melissa now holding on to a big empty pot.

LUISE
What the hell?

Melissa points to the almost empty bottle of whiskey, then throws the pot angrily to the floor and walks away.

Luise lets out a deep breath.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Eat a dick.

INT. LUISE HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Luise and Rachel, the childcare representative - notepad and pen in hand - exit Melissa's room.

RACHEL
I mentioned it last time. I have to insist that you clean out that room. Too much clutter and too many potentially dangerous items.

Luise gets triggered, tenses up.

LUISE
Don't you think that you're f...

She sees Melissa appear at the end of the hallway holding a cup of coffee and catches herself at the last moment. She forces herself to relax.

LUISE (CONT'D)
I will, you're right. I'll get right on it.

RACHEL
Please see that you do. (To Melissa) Oh sweetie, is that for me?

Melissa nods yes.

INT. LUISE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Rachel enters the kitchen and places the cup on the table, right where the day before, a fire started.

Luise and Melissa follow her in and upon seeing the coffee there, give each other a quick knowing look.

RACHEL

So - Melissa, tell me, are you
happy staying with Ms. Livingston?

Melissa looks at Luise and she looks back. Luise rips out a piece of paper and leaves it on the table with her pen.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

If you need to, you can write on
this piece of paper. Everything OK
so far?

Luise looks on with visible apprehension, expecting the worst.

Melissa though, gives her the thumb-up gesture and smiles.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

OK, that's good.

Luise looks over at Melissa, relieved and thankful.

INT. LUISE HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY (LATER)

Luise watches as Rachel gets in her car. The two women wave once more to each other and Luise closes the door. She then walks into the KITCHEN...

She opens a cupboard, finds the bottle of whisky and empties whatever is left down the sink.

EXT. LUISE HOUSE - DAY (LATER)

Luise is returning to the house holding on to a bag of groceries.

INT. LUISE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

She starts emptying the bag on the table, some of the items including vitamin supplements and a brand new alarm clock.

INT. LUISE HOUSE - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The RING of the alarm.

Luise lets out a GROAN but this time presses stop on the alarm in a civilized manner.

EXT. ROAD - EARLY MORNING

Luise is running down a road, taking in the fresh, crisp air and looking with appreciation at the nature that is all around her.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Vadim - wearing glasses - is reviewing CCTV footage on a laptop. There is a KNOCK on the door.

VADIM

Enter.

The door opens and Vera enters holding on to a hot cup of coffee which she places on the table. Vadim takes off his glasses and pinches the top of his nose.

VADIM (CONT'D)

Great, thank you.

VERA

Spotted anything we missed?

VADIM

No, nothing.

VERA

Well, I've given word, we have more personnel now on the lookout in all surrounding areas.

VADIM

Good. Ms. Moretti is getting restless.

VERA

I'm restless, this work is rather tedious.

Vadim gives her an elfin look.

VADIM

If you close the door, I'll make it more exciting for you.

Vera smiles impishly. She heads to the door and closes it, then starts walking back to him while unbuttoning her shirt.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM/OFFICE - DAY

Luise is sitting at her desk, drinking out of her flask and watching a boxing match on her tablet when there's a KNOCK on the door. She presses pause and answers:

LUISE
Come in.

To her surprise, Jake pops his head through the door.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Jake?

JAKE
Are you looking after one of your students?

Luise nods Yes.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Why didn't you tell me?

Luise shrugs her shoulders.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Is that why you haven't been in touch all week?

LUISE
Had some things to sort out.

JAKE
OK. How about you bring her to bowling tonight so I meet her?

LUISE
OK.

JAKE
Cool. See you... oh perhaps we skip our usual - pre-game ritual, though.

Luise smiles.

LUISE
That's probably a good idea.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Luise - in jeans and a bra - is applying makeup by a small round mirror she has on a nightstand and is TALKING away. Melissa is sitting silently on the bed and reading a book.

LUISE

I mean, ya know, he's like super goddamn nice, OK, not joking, like, old school proper courteous shit. I mean, you'll see tonight. And - OK, he's got a handsome face and a hard body, like, that good type of hard, not the bulky bullshit veins popping out type, just nicely athletic. But he's too damn clingy, and that's a bit yuckie. Ya know?

She looks at Melissa through the mirror.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Hey, by the way, you're not bringing the book with you.

Melissa looks at her disappointed.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Don't care, all you do is read, it's - unhealthy. You gotta mix things up. The more things you do and experience the more you'll be able to adapt to what life throws at you.

She continues to apply the makeup, then stops and turns around to face Melissa who looks at her.

LUISE (CONT'D)

How'd I look?

Melissa gives her a thumbs up.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Blue mascara and pink eye shadow. I swear by that combo. Make a mental note.

Luise gets up and puts on a black tank top. Then looks at herself in the large mirror on the open closet door.

The doorbell RINGS.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Well, this will have to do. (To
Melissa), You ready?

Melissa nods and stands, holding onto the book.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Leave it.

Melissa pouts as she drops the book on her bed.

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Luise's in bed watching a shark video on the tablet when she hears faint SCREAMING.

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE - MELISSA'S ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Luise enters the room, switches on the light, and sees that Melissa is having another nightmare.

Luise hesitates, unsure, then gently places her right hand on the girl's shoulder.

LUISE
Melissa, it's OK, it's just a bad
dream.

Melissa wakes up with a GASP, all shaken up.

She locks eyes with Luise.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Just a silly dream, you're safe.

Melissa grabs Luise into a tight hold, taking her by surprise.

LUISE (CONT'D)
You're - safe.

Suddenly Luise has an idea and a spark of excitement invades her being.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Right, I know what you need to do.

Luise pulls away from the embrace.

LUISE (CONT'D)
This always works for me whenever I
have a stupid ass scary dream.

Luise walks up to the boxing bag which is hanging at the furthest corner of the room.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Come here.

Melissa rubs her eyes, gets out of bed, and joins Luise.

Luise gets in a traditional boxing stance and punches the bag with a jab.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Now, you try it.

Melissa gets in a stance and Luise lifts the girl's free hand a bit higher, correcting her posture.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Now punch.

Melissa is about to when:

LUISE (CONT'D)
No, wait.

Melissa pauses and looks at her. Luise runs to a drawer, opens it and searches through it. Soon she comes back with boxing wraps which she proceeds to apply on Melissa's hand.

LUISE (CONT'D)
So we protect your wrist and
knuckles.

Melissa - hand wrapped up - is punching and kicking away with everything she has on the punching bag.

LUISE (CONT'D)
That's it, show that stupid-ass
nightmare what's up. Show it who
the goddamn boss is.

Melissa continues to punch, a smile of excitement now on her face.

CUT TO:

Luise tucks a cover around an exhausted Melissa in bed.

Luise stands and is about to leave but hesitates.

She slowly, apprehensively even, bends down and pats Melissa's head, then quickly exits the room.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

Luise is addressing her students who are all in front of her and standing in perfect symmetry.

 LUISE
 OK, so get a ball and begin a
 dodgeball tournament.

SIGHS of complaints are heard among the students.

Then a soft VOICE goes:

 STUDENT
 Again?

Luise looks at them annoyed and puzzled.

 LUISE
 What is this shit? Dodgeball's
 brilliant. Why are you brats
 complaining for?

Shannon raises her hand.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
 Why're you putting your hand up?

 SHANNON
 Excuse me, Ms. Livingston, I would
 like to speak.

 LUISE
 Oh, would you, now?

Shannon nods her head Yes.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
 Fine, talk.

 SHANNON
 Thank you. What my fellow students
 and I wish to express is that we
 always seem to do the same physical
 activity, day in and day out -
 namely dodgeball. And as fun as the
 exercise, no doubt is, it might be
 beneficial to our athletic process
 if we change things up a bit - with
 all due respect.

 LUISE
 Aha, I see. Just play the damn
 game.

LUISE (CONT'D)
I said, everyone.

Luise stands in front of Melissa who notices her teacher looking at her.

Melissa points to herself.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Yes, Melissa, I did say everyone.

Melissa gets off the bench and joins her classmates.

LUISE (CONT'D)
You got a free arm and a set of feet, don't you?

Melissa nods Yes.

LUISE (CONT'D)
OK, now all of you, do as I do.

Luise gets in a boxing stance.

LUISE (CONT'D)
When I say one, we dart forward like this.

She darts forward, then throws a jab.

LUISE (CONT'D)
And we snap the front hand out like this. Everyone got that?

The children nod Yes.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Good. One.

The children all dart forward and jab.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A bun lies sliced open on a plate.

Luise - a dirty apron on - lays a sausage onto the bread.

Next to her, Melissa - with her own smaller apron on - watches with fascination.

LUISE

This here's an all-beef, natural casing dog, no fucking ham or pussy-ass vegan shit. These details matter, OK?

Melissa nods her head Yes.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Pass me the onion sauce.

Melissa reaches for a glass bowl of sauce which has a spoon inside, picks it up and hands it to Luise - who proceeds to place the sauce delicately on top of the meat.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Some folks add two spoons of honey in the sauce, and it kinda makes sense - I put four, but I got a bit of a sweet tooth, so screw it.

Luise then adds some sauerkraut and moves aside so that Melissa puts the finishing touch by squirting brown mustard on - which she does with enthusiasm.

She turns and looks with expectation at Luise and she gives the girl the 'perfect' sign with her fingers.

Luise closes the ban on top.

LUISE (CONT'D)

And there's your genuine Big Apple hotdog.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Luise and Melissa take the two dogs and move to the living room where Luise has hooked up her tablet to the television screen. She presses play and a shark documentary comes on.

LUISE

Trust me, you gonna love this.

Melissa picks up her dog and is about to bite into it when she sees on screen a shark bite into a sea lion.

She freezes in repugnance and a big chunk of sauce drops from the hotdog onto her lap.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

Luise is fast asleep in bed. Outside, the sun is starting to rise in the sky.

The doorbell is RANG.

Luise mumbles something in her sleep then turns sides and continues sleeping.

The doorbell is RANG again.

Luise opens her eyes.

LUISE
What the fuck?

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - DAWN

Luise - just a football jersey on - opens the door and finds Rachel standing there.

RACHEL
Morning.

LUISE
What'd you want?

RACHEL
Routine visit.

LUISE
At this hour?

RACHEL
Wanted to catch you before school.

LUISE
Oh, right, OK.

Luise lets her inside.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Um, you can begin, I'll go change and wake Melissa up.

RACHEL
OK.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - MELISSA'S ROOM - DAWN

Luise bursts into Melissa's room.

LUISE
Wake up sleepy head, we gotta move
the damn stuff.

Luise picks up a set of dumbbells and looks for a place to stash them. She decides under the bed will do for now.

Melissa gets up and starts trying to help.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Don't worry, just go stall her.

Melissa looks at her with a 'how'd I do that?' expression.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Don't know, improvise.

Melissa leaves the room and Luise looks at the boxing bag and sighs.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAWN (CONTINUOUS)

Melissa enters the kitchen and sees Rachel opening cupboards and making notes.

Rachel notices her and turns to address her.

RACHEL
Melissa, how have you been?

Melissa smiles and gives her a thumbs-up.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Oh, that's good.

Melissa looks around unsure.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
What is it?

The girl runs to the counter, picks up a jar of coffee, and shows it to Rachel.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Oh no thanks, love. I already had a
massive cup earlier on.

Melissa hesitates, then lets the jar drop from her hands and crash to the floor. She puts her hand over her mouth in mock horror.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - MELISSA'S ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Back in the room, Luise - on a chair - manages to unhook the boxing bag and lets it drop to the floor.

She proceeds to drag it out of the room.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Luise continues to drag the bag in the hallway, nearing her own room, when she hears FOOTSTEPS and Rachel's VOICE - she's approaching along with Melissa.

Luise manages to open her bedroom door and throw the bag inside just as Rachel and Melissa appear at the front of the hallway having come from around the corner.

Rachel sees Luise standing there - still in her football jersey - out of breath and sweaty.

RACHEL
What're you doing?

LUISE
Me? I - oooh - been chasing a rat.

RACHEL
A rat?

Melissa puts her hand on her face in dismay.

LUISE
Well - not a rat, rat, we're not dirty in here. More like a large mouse, it was, like a clean, healthy, white mouse.

Rachel looks on at her with a perplexed expression, while Melissa shakes her head.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Luise is running on an empty road and looking like she's really enjoying the activity.

EXT. LUISE'S HOUSE - DAY (LATER)

She slows down her pace as she approaches her house and comes to a stop near the front door.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Luise enters the house and takes in a few deep, slow breaths.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

She opens the fridge, takes out a carton of orange juice, and gulps some down.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Luise enters her room and proceeds to take her trainers off, lazily, using just her feet.

She suddenly freezes as she sees Melissa sitting on the bed and holding onto a pistol.

Melissa looks up at Luise, the weapon in her hands.

LUISE

Melissa, that's - not a toy, no
fucking game. Slowly put it down
and move away. Do you understand?

Melissa nods her head Yes. She places the pistol on the mattress, gets up, and moves away.

Luise rushes to the weapon and picks it up.

She sighs.

LUISE (CONT'D)

You put the fucking safety off.

She secures the safety and turns to face the girl.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Hell's wrong with you? Do you
fucking understand how dangerous
this thing is? Do you? You could
have fucking blown your face off!

She notices that Melissa is close to tears, then looks at the weapon in her hands, then back to Melissa and her energy softens.

Melissa starts crying.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Why the hell are you crying for?
I'm not even angry at you. OK?

(MORE)

LUISE (CONT'D)
I'm - I'm pissed off at myself.
This was my fuck up. OK?

Melissa stares at her and wipes away her tears.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Know what I'm saying?

Melissa nods her head Yes.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Cool. Now, go put your jacket on, I
want to show you something.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (LATER)

Luise and Melissa - small pumpkin in her hands - are walking
deep into a forest.

CUT TO:

They soon come to a clearing and Luise takes the pumpkin from
Melissa and places it on top of a large rock.

Luise looks around to make sure they are alone and takes the
pistol out from under her waistline.

LUISE
Step back and place your hands over
your ears, hard.

Melissa does so and Luise aims at the pumpkin and pulls the
trigger, blasting the vegetable into little pieces.

She picks up one such piece and hands it to Melissa.

LUISE (CONT'D)
See that? You see what happened to
it? This could have been you. Get
it?

A wide-eyed Melissa nods her head Yes.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Last thing.

Luise puts her pinky finger out.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Pinky swear you won't ever pick
this up without me present.

Melissa brings her pinky out and wraps it around Luise's.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Good.

Luise takes a deep breath in.

LUISE (CONT'D)

You hungry?

Melissa nods Yes.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Me too. Let's go get some pie.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Luise is sitting at her usual spot overlooking the town, holding her pistol and looking troubled.

LUISE

Hell are you doing, Luise?

She places the gun in her pocket.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Just get the fuck away.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Luise and Melissa are visiting Grandma Molly in her hospital room.

Melissa's holding on to a box of chocolates and a banquet of flowers. These items are currently squashed as Grandma Molly is squeezing Melissa into an embrace.

Grandma Molly eases her hold and looks at Melissa whose face is red from a momentary lack of oxygen.

GRANDMA MOLLY

Look at you, practically a grown woman.

Luise rolls her eyes.

LUISE

Hasn't been that long.

GRANDMA MOLLY

Feels like years.

Melissa's holding on to a contorted box of chocolates and crushed flowers.

GRANDMA MOLLY (CONT'D)
Those're for me?

Melissa nods Yes and hands them over.

GRANDMA MOLLY (CONT'D)
Oh, sweetie, you shouldn't have.

Grandma Molly casually tosses the flowers aside but excitedly opens the box of chocolates and takes a piece. She makes a sound of utter delight as the treat hits her taste buds.

GRANDMA MOLLY (CONT'D)
Has Aunt Luise been treating you well?

Melissa nods Yes.

GRANDMA MOLLY (CONT'D)
Good or I'd have to get to my feet and kick her ass.

They all share a smile.

GRANDMA MOLLY (CONT'D)
They say I can go home by the end of the week.

LUISE
You can move to my place, have my room. There's space in the basement for me to put a mattress in.

GRANDMA MOLLY
Can't ask that of you.

LUISE
You're not asking.

Grandma Molly's taken back.

GRANDMA MOLLY
Thanks.

LUISE
Fuck it.

Grandma Molly's taken back again but for a different reason.

LUISE (CONT'D)
What?

Melissa gives Luise a look.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Oh right. Yep, swearing's bad,
don't do it.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Luise is running along her usual path.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Luise's on top of Jake as he's positioned on a chair by the dining table. They are passionately making out. Unopened bags of takeaway food are resting on the table.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

Luise is showing her students how to perform the uppercut.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - DAY

The front door is open as Luise, Melissa, and Grandma Molly - moving with the help of a front wheeled walker - take Grandma Molly's belongings to her new room.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

A handful of punching bags are scattered on the floor of the basketball court.

Luise is sitting on one such bag and is surrounded by her students.

LUISE
So, from here, you can start
raining down punches like this.

She starts raining down punches on the bag.

LUISE (CONT'D)
They will be covering up now, so
best to mix up the strikes.

Luise hits the bag low, then to the side, and up again.

LUISE (CONT'D)

But me, screw punches, this is an
invite to elbow city.

She starts raining down elbows, a large constant THUD echoing
across the space.

At that moment, from outside the gym's doors, fellow teacher
Cheryl watches on with a shocked expression.

Inside the room, Luise gets to her feet.

LUISE (CONT'D)

OK, pair up now, should be enough
bags for you to take turns. One
works the bag, the other does leg
raises, till I call 'switch'. You
got that?

The students all YELL in the affirmative, in unison.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PRINCIPLE'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

An agitated Luise is sitting in front of Principal Goldsmith
who is looking at her with a concerned expression.

LUISE

Look, I was just doing my job. OK?
I was teaching my students, that's
what we're here to do. Isn't it?

PRINCIPAL GOLDSMITH

Yeah, but not how to kill others
with their bare hands. That's not
cool.

Luise sighs.

LUISE

It's self-defense, Larry. Most
fights end up on the ground,
statistics point to that.

PRINCIPAL GOLDSMITH

Let's say for a second that it was
self-defense-

LUISE

It was.

PRINCIPAL GOLDSMITH

Thing is, that's not even part of
the curriculum.

LUISE

Well, it should be.

PRINCIPAL GOLDSMITH

Look, Luise, I understand that your intentions were pure and sound - I'm with you on this - just, perhaps tone things down a bit. No more tossing punching bags down and ground and pounding them.

LUISE

Sure, Larry, that makes sense, you got it, no problem.

PRINCIPAL GOLDSMITH

Great, happy to hear that.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CORRIDOR AND CLASSROOMS - DAY (SOON LATER)

Luise exits the office and walks down a long corridor that includes various doors leading to classes on either side.

As she walks a safe distance away from the principal's office, she calls out:

LUISE

Yep. We got ourselves a smelling little rat in here. Filthy rodent's running around squealing and stooling. Yeah, I know you can hear me, rat.

Inside one of the CLASSROOMS... a fearful-looking Cheryl has paused writing on the board as she hears Luise's words.

Luise reaches the end of the CORRIDOR.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Know what happens to snitches, don't ya? That's right, they end up in ditches. Don't ya forget that.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - MELISSA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Melissa is at her desk listening to music on an MP3 player and drawing on paper.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Luise brings a cup of hot chocolate and leaves it on the bedside table next to Grandma Molly who's sitting up in bed.

GRANDMA MOLLY
You're a savior, thanks.

LUISE
Don't mention it.

Luise reaches the door but hesitates.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Molly...

GRANDMA MOLLY
What is it?

LUISE
Um - keep it between us, not a sure thing but I've been offered a job in - Europe - and, well, it's been a few months, think you can give me that money?

GRANDMA MOLLY
Oh, yes, of course, just give me a few days.

LUISE
Sure.

BEAT

GRANDMA MOLLY
Will you be here for the party?

LUISE
Yeah, this - like I said, it's not definite yet.

Grandma Molly sighs.

GRANDMA MOLLY
She'll get - quite glum, you know, she's really fond of you.

LUISE
She is?

GRANDMA MOLLY
Yeah. Can't you tell?

He approaches Melissa with it.

JAKE

Here, this little lady needed a home, would you like to provide her with one?

Melissa nods Yes a handful of times and Jake gives her the kitten.

Melissa can't stop smiling as she pats and kisses the little feline.

LuiSe puts an arm around Jake and whispers in his ear:

LUISE

Great damn move, dude.

Melissa hands the kitten to LuiSe and gives Jake a huge hug.

CUT TO:

The party continues:

Grandma Molly has the kitten on her lap while eating a slice of cake as LuiSe, Jake, and Melissa are dancing away.

EXT. LUISE'S HOUSE/JAKE'S CAR - NIGHT (LATER)

LuiSe walks Jake to the car. As they reach it, they stop, turn to each other, and start kissing hard.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Melissa and Grandma Molly are by the living room window, hiding behind the curtain but spying on the two of them.

EXT. LUISE'S HOUSE/JAKE'S CAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

LuiSe and Jake take a breather from all the kissing.

JAKE

Come to the city with me this weekend.

LUISE

Oh, I - I don't think I -

JAKE

Please, it's super important. I have a surprise for you.

LUISE
Surprise?

JAKE
Yeah.

LUISE
Don't think that's such-

He looks at her with puppy eyes.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Don't look at me like that, it's
not fair.

JAKE
Please. Just do this for me. It'll
be so much fun.

LUISE
Oh, alright. Day trip, no staying
over. In and out.

JAKE
I'll take it.

He grabs her and they kiss once again.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (SOON LATER)

Luise walks into the living room to find Grandma Molly and
Melissa GIGGLING.

LUISE
What is it?

GRANDMA MOLLY
Someone's in love.

LUISE
I'm not in love.

Melissa puts her arms around herself pretending she's making
out.

LUISE (CONT'D)
You're both so stupid.

GRANDMA MOLLY
Yes, but you're stupid in love.

Luise can't help but smile as she walks to the exit. Grandma
Molly and Melissa continue to tease.

LUISE
Just cause you two aren't getting
any.

EXT. LUISE'S HOUSE/MOTORCYCLE - DAY

Luise and Melissa are by the motorcycle.

LUISE
Sure about this?

Melissa nods her head Yes.

Luise mounts the motorcycle and she then helps Melissa get on
behind her.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Tap me twice on the shoulder if you
want me to stop.

Luise starts the engine and drives off.

EXT. ROAD/MOTORCYCLE - DAY (LATER)

(MOVING)

Luise is driving the motorcycle down a road while Melissa
holds on behind her.

Although still cold, the sun is high up in the sky.

Melissa has a big, bright smile on her face.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

Luise is performing sit-ups in front of a line-up of her
students who are on the floor and are mimicking that exercise
too.

The children all finish the sit-ups among sounds of GRUMBLE.

Luise looks up at the clock on the wall.

LUISE
Crap, we still have 15 minutes.

STUDENT
Dodgeball game?

LUISE
You want dodgeball?

They all YELL out Yes in unison.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
OK, then.

 SHANNON
You join in too, Ms. Livingston.

 LUISE
Me?

They all YELL out Yes in unison once more, then look at her with expectation.

Luise hesitates but then smiles.

 LUISE (CONT'D)
Well, if you all want to have your asses kicked today, so be it.

All the children CHEER in unison.

INT/EXT. JAKE'S CAR - DAY

(MOVING)

It is early in the morning and Jake is driving his car on a main road accompanied by Luise in the passenger's seat.

 LUISE
Just give me a goddamn straight answer already.

 JAKE
Told you, I'm taking you to the city.

 LUISE
And you refuse to tell me why.

 JAKE
You'll see.

 LUISE
I hate surprises, Jake.

 JAKE
You'll like this.

Luise sighs.

Jake looks at the fuel gauge, they are running low.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Sorry, forgot to top up.

LUISE
It's OK, I need a piss anyway.

INT/EXT. JAKE'S CAR - EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Jake notices a gas station up ahead, pulls into it, parks the car next to a gasoline pump, opens the door, and exits. Luise exits too and stretches out her body while Jake follows the instructions on the gas pump screen.

LUISE
Need anything?

JAKE
No, I'm OK, thanks.

Luise heads to the station's shop.

INT. GAS STATION SHOP - DAY

Luise enters and sees a young man, JEREMY, 25, behind the counter of the shop. She smiles at him and he awkwardly smiles back at her. Luise heads to the back, where the bathroom facility is.

Jeremy takes out his phone, checks through his photo file and clicks on an image of Luise with blonde hair. He then quickly types a message and sends it.

In the RESTROOM...

Luise washes her hands, splashes some water on her face, and fixes her hair.

In the SHOP...

Jeremy receives a text message back which states: *FOLLOW HER.*

EXT. GAS STATION SHOP - DAY (SOON LATER)

Luise exits the shop holding on to a paper bag with some snacks.

INT. GAS STATION SHOP - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Jeremy watches from behind the front door as Luise gets into the car, then he flips the door sign to the *SORRY, CLOSED* side, exits, and locks the door.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

He gets on his scooter and as the car Luise is in leaves the premises, slowly follows after her.

INT. AQUARIUM - DAY

A sand tiger shark swims up close to the glass in the aquarium's tank.

Luise, face pressed up to the glass in awe, watches as the shark swims by. Jake is a few feet away, looking at her, a smile on his face.

He turns and notices a large group of people exit the room. There are only a few people left in the space. Seems like a good moment for what he has in plan.

Jake approaches Luise.

JAKE

Happy?

LUISE

(While looking at the sharks)

Fuck yeah.

JAKE

Have something I want to ask you.

LUISE

Shoot.

Jake hesitates.

JAKE

Need you to look at me.

Luise turns to him.

Jake gets on one knee and brings a small box out of his jacket pocket.

LUISE

Fuck are you doing?

He opens it, it contains a diamond-studded ring.

JAKE

Luise Livingston, will you make me
the happiest man in the world and
marry me?

Luise picks up the ring, marvels at it, and puts it on a
finger.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Wait, I should-

LUISE

No.

JAKE

Huh?

LUISE

Answer's no.

INT/EXT. VADIM CAR - DAY

Vadim is driving his car with purpose, Vera riding shotgun, a
smile evident on her lips. At the back of the car sit Franco,
Carlo and Calvin.

INT. DINER - DAY

Jake and Luise are sitting at a booth and are having cherry
pie and coffee.

JAKE

How can you be so breezy and uppity
about this?

LUISE

Come on, Jake, don't spoil such a
nice day with this melodrama
bullshit. I told you from the start
I don't do marriage and shit. I
just go with the flow. Doesn't mean
I don't want to be with you.

JAKE

But, I mean...

He sighs.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Is it wrong that I want to be old-fashioned and -- romantic?

LUISE

No, not at all. I like that about you - like it a lot.

He drinks some coffee; she bites into some pie.

JAKE

Well, give it back then.

LUISE

The ring? No way, it's gorgeous.

JAKE

That's not how it works.

LUISE

You gave it to me, didn't you?

JAKE

I offered it, in the hopes of an engagement. You said no.

LUISE

Jake, I love that ring. It's mine now. That thing got me all flushed and bothered the minute I laid eyes on it. All I can think of is how hard I'm gonna hump you when we get back. Hell, I'm prob gonna blow you in the car.

Jake goes all quiet in contemplation.

Then:

JAKE

How's the pie?

Luise smiles.

LUISE

Delicious.

EXT. STREET/JAKE'S CAR - DAY (LATER)

Jake and Luise walk up to Jake's parked car. He unlocks the doors and they get inside.

At that moment, four car lengths down but along the same street, Jeremy - on his stationary scooter - is exchanging words with Vadim, who's inside his parked car.

Then Jeremy starts his scooter and drives away.

EXT. LUISE'S HOUSE/JAKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Jake brings the car to a stop outside of Luise's place.

INT. JAKE'S CAR - NIGHT

(NOT MOVING)

JAKE
And we're back.

LUISE
Wow, what a day, eh?

JAKE
It's been - interesting.

LUISE
Just interesting? After all, you got a happy ending, didn't you?

Jake smiles and slightly blushes.

JAKE
Sure did.

They both CHUCKLE.

She undoes her seatbelt.

LUISE
Sure you can't come in for a bit?

JAKE
Better not, got inventory tomorrow.

LUISE
Sounds boring and stupid.

JAKE
A little, maybe.

She leans into him and they kiss.

LUISE
Thank you for today.

JAKE

Thank you - for coming into my
life.

Luise gives him a funny look.

LUISE

So corny.

JAKE

That's me.

She kisses him again, harder this time.

She opens the door and gets out but at that exact moment,
Franco comes at her and points his pistol to her head - while
Carlo points a shotgun at the window of the driver's seat
where Jake's located.

FRANCO

Move, slowly, towards the house.

Luise springs into action, knocking the pistol out of
Franco's hand and slamming his head hard to the car's hood
making him go on wobbly legs.

Carlo sees this and points his shotgun at her but a terrified
Jake opens the door into him making him drop the shotgun.

Jake comes out of the car and Carlo punches him hard knocking
him down.

Luise notices a knife in a sheath on Franco's trousers so she
quickly takes it out and throws it at Carlo, impelling him in
the throat.

She follows that immediately by slamming Franco's head again
into the hood of the car and he falls unconscious.

Luise goes to the other side of the car and finds Carlo lying
dead and Jake sitting up holding on to his jaw in pain.

JAKE

Think my jaw's broken.

LUISE

It'll heal.

JAKE

What's - going on. Who are you?

LUISE

Long story.

She hands him the pistol.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Think Melissa and Molly need my help. Call the police and keep this pointed to the man passed out on the other side.

Jake watches in horror as Luise takes the knife out of Carlo's throat and wipes the blood off.

JAKE
What - will you do?

Luise places the knife between her belt and trousers and picks up the shotgun.

LUISE
Improvise.

EXT. LUISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Luise quickly but carefully approaches the house.

She opens the front door while stepping to the side to avoid being in firing range.

No one appears to be inside. The house is mostly dark, the only illumination coming from Grandma Molly's bedroom, the door of which is open.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Luise slowly walks inside.

After a few more careful steps towards the bedroom:

CALVINO (O.S.)
Drop the weapon and put your hands up.

Luise GROANS. Calvino is behind her at the entrance of the house and is pointing a pistol at her.

Luise places the shotgun on the floor and puts her hands in the air.

Calvino walks in and kicks the door shutting it behind him.

CALVINO (CONT'D)
Long time, Lorena.

LUISE
Not long enough, it seems.

CALVINO
Walk. Party's in the bedroom and
you're running late.

Luise starts walking towards the room with Calvino close behind her.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Luise enters the room followed by Calvino.

She finds an armed Vadim standing next to frightened Grandma Molly who's sitting on the edge of the bed. Vera is present as well but Melissa is nowhere to be seen.

VADIM
There she is, freaking Lorena Leon
herself.

GRANDMA MOLLY
Luise, hell's going on?

LUISE
It's gonna be OK, Molly, they're
only here for me.

VADIM
That's correct, Molly, dear. We're
only here for her. But - then
again, you're probably doomed by
association.

LUISE
Let her...

NOISE comes from inside the closet and all eyes turn to it.

Vadim motions to Calvino to check it out. Luise gets overwhelmed by a feeling of dread and Deja Vu.

LUISE (CONT'D)
We have mice.

Calvino opens the closet, grabs Melissa and brings the terrified girl out, dropping her by her grandma.

Vadim approaches her.

VADIM

Well, what do we have here, a huge
little mousey?

He places his hand on the side of the girl's face.

GRANDMA MOLLY

Leave her alone!

Grandma Molly launches herself at Vadim.

He knocks her on the head with the gun, knocking her to the
floor unconscious.

Melissa rushes to the side of her grandma.

Luise takes advantage of this diversion, takes the knife out,
and stabs Calvino in his chest, then grabs his pistol but
before she can use it Vera kicks it out of her hands and
without dropping her leg down follows up with a kick to
Luise's head.

Luise's knees buckle from the impact of the strike and she
falls to the floor.

Vera picks up the pistol and hands it to Vadim.

VERA

Hate guns.

VADIM

I know you do, dear.

Luise gets to her feet and a slither of blood runs down her
nose.

VERA

May I soften her up for you?

Vadim sits on the bed.

VADIM

Well, I'm always partial to a good
show but be quick about it, clock's
ticking.

Vera walks towards Luise and the two women get in a battle
stance.

Vera attacks first, using primarily kicks which is of course
her strong suit. It's not long before she starts to beat
Luise up, who is at a loss for how to deal with the fast and
furious deluge of kicking techniques that are coming her way.

Vadim turns and looks at Melissa who's looking on at the action distressed and with tears in her eyes.

Back to the fight, Luise - bleeding now also from a cut on her bottom lip - gets side-kicked by Vera and is sent crashing to the floor.

Luise struggles to catch her breath and Vera comes to stand on top of her.

VERA

Tell me, will you chicken out too,
just like your aunt did?

Luise looks at her.

LUISE

What?

VERA

Don't you know, I beat the shit out
of her so badly, she went and
killed herself.

Luise hands slowly close into fists and she scrambles to her feet with newfound rage-filled energy. She eats a couple of kicks but keeps on coming forward.

Finally, she grabs hold of Vera and drops her hard to the floor. She gets on top of her and starts raining elbows down upon her. Vera manages to turn around in an effort to escape the onslaught of damaging elbows but Luise grabs her by the neck and proceeds to break it.

Vadim gets visibly upset.

VADIM

Fuck, good assistants are difficult
to come by, you know.

Luise gets to her feet, she is bleeding, exhausted, and in pain.

VADIM (CONT'D)

(Motioning to Melissa)

Tell me, what's up with mousey
there, her eyes seem beautifully
tragic?

LUISE

Never mind her, let's finish this.

Vadim takes out his cell phone.

VADIM

Just a sec, someone wants to say
hello.

Vadim brings the phone up showing the live video image of Miss Moretti at her office.

MISS MORETTI

Hello, Lorena. Been a while. We
have lots of catching up to do. You
have a lot of suffering to endure,
for years on end - and suffer you
will. Trust me.

Vadim brings a pillow over and places the phone upright against it. He puts his pistol securely behind his back and approaches Luise.

When he is in range, Luise punches him in the face but he doesn't even flinch, he just smiles at her.

Vadim explodes with a fast combination of punches and Luise does her best to defend them but is incapable of stopping all the punches coming through.

Vadim then grabs Luise in a neck-clinch and proceeds to knee her in her midsection repeatedly.

As this is going on, Melissa is looking on in horror and her hands close into fists.

Vadim finally let's go of the clinch and jump-knees Luise in the head knocking her down. His eyes then fall on a dead Vera.

Vadim - now overtaken by berserk rage - gets on top of Luise and starts punching away.

Melissa's body seems to be trembling as she looks onto the violence unleashed on Luise.

Luise has her hands up but a lot of the blows are getting through and she is close to passing out.

Vadim's eyes seem wild as he continues punching.

MELISSA (O.C.)

Stop!

Mario stops mid-punch, both he and Luise turn to look at Melissa with surprise.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Let her be, asshole or I'll rip
your fucking head off and shit down
your neck!

A bloodied Luise smiles warmly.

Melissa runs over to them, pushes Vadim aside, and hugs
Luise.

Vadim gets to his feet, holds his right fist in pain and
notices Miss Moretti staring at him on the live video.

MISS MORETTI

Good thing the girl intervened. I
want her in pain, yes, but still
very much alive when you bring her
to me.

Vadim nods.

VADIM

Understood.

Melissa, her back to Vadim and the cell phone, is holding
Luise tight.

LUISE

Wow, Melissa, that was awesome.

MELISSA

I'm so sorry.

LUISE

Don't be sorry, sweetie.

MELISSA

But - I - I broke our pinky swear.

Melissa takes out the pistol from under her blouse and hands
it to Luise.

LUISE

Don't you worry one little bit
about any of that.

Vadim stares at Luise and Melissa as they're embracing, a
sadistic grin now having taken over his face.

VADIM

Well, well, well, isn't this
touching.

Vadim takes out his pistol and his silencer and starts walking towards them while placing the silencer in place.

VADIM (CONT'D)

Seems you two have formed a close relationship, which, in turn, means that Lorena here will bestow a special gift upon me.

He reaches them.

MARIO

That certain delicious look she'll inevitably have on her face as I blow a hole into Mousey's head here. Her eyes, sublime and glorious they will be.

Vadim raises his arm to aim the pistol at Melissa but Luise springs forward and points her pistol first into his groin area.

Mario looks down at the weapon aimed at his privates, dumbfounded, dismayed, and with much alarm.

LUISE

You really should look in a mirror right about now.

EXT. LUISE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

A GUNSHOT goes off startling Jake who is aiming a pistol at an awakened but dazed Carlo.

Police SIRENS are heard far in the distance.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Inside the room, Vadim is on the floor - hands over his bleeding groin area - and is making sounds of ANGUISH.

Melissa still has her hands over her ears protectively. She now brings them down and helps Luise up.

Luise - face all raw and bloody - walks to the cellphone which has the live face of a distraught and perturbed Miss Moretti on it.

Luise picks up the phone and brings it to her face.

LUISE

I'm gonna be coming for ya! You hear me? You won't know when or how but it will happen, I'll get my hands on you. I swear I will.

The phone screen goes dark as Miss Moretti hangs up the call.

INT. MISS MORETTI'S OFFICE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Miss Moretti throws the phone to the wall hard, smashing it. She CRIES OUT, then starts to break things around the room.

INT. LUISE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Back in Grandma Molly's bedroom, Luise and Melissa check up on Grandma Molly who's on the floor and who has started to come to.

GRANDMA MOLLY

Ouch.

LUISE

You OK?

GRANDMA MOLLY

Far from it - but alive, I guess.

MELISSA

All that matters.

Grandma Molly looks at the girl in disbelief.

LUISE

Surprise.

Police SIRENS are HEARD very near now.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Have to go.

GRANDMA MOLLY

(Sharply)

Yeah, guess you do.

MELISSA

No, you don't.

LUISE

I must. I'll send word, OK.

Luise bolts out of the room and Grandma Molly grabs hold of Melissa to stop her from running after her.

GRAND MOLLY
It'll be OK, don't worry, hon.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN

A FEW DAYS LATER:

INT. AMBROSIA BAR - DAY

Luise - some bruising still visible on her face - and Jake - his chin swelled and with his lower lip puffier - are sitting by a table. A bottle of whisky and two full glasses are present.

JAKE
Where will you go?

LUISE
Not sure, yet.

JAKE
I'll come with you.

LUISE
No, won't be safe for you.

JAKE
Don't care.

LUISE
I do.

Jake's taken back.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Besides, I need you here to look after Melissa. Promise you will. She likes you and so does Molly. It's a good set-up.

JAKE
Sure, I promise.

LUISE
Thanks. Also, how the hell aren't you pissed off at me?

JAKE
Molly's pissed off enough for both
of us.

They both SNORT.

LUISE
Don't blame her.

Jake grabs her hand.

JAKE
Don't care about your past. I know
you and I want you. I always will.

Luise exhales, just managing to contain her emotions by a
thread.

LUISE
Jake, goddamn it. Let's - no mushy
shit, OK, not now.

JAKE
Can't help it much.

LUISE
I know.

Luise digs her nails into her thigh.

LUISE (CONT'D)
Oh and - be with Susan, she's nice
and she adores you.

They stare at each other.

JAKE
I only want to be with you.

They kiss.

INT. AMBROSIA BAR - STORAGE SPACE - DAY (LATER)

Luise approaches Grandma Molly on her front-wheeled walker,
who is standing next to some boxes containing glasses. The
old woman staring daggers at her. Melissa is at the end of
the room, sitting on some big boxes, a portrait of
melancholy.

GRANDMA MOLLY
All packed?

LUISE

Yeah.

GRANDMA MOLLY

Good. I want you the hell away from her.

LUISE

I didn't mean to put-

GRANDMA MOLLY

Save it!

Grandma Molly sighs, then looks towards Melissa sitting there with her head low.

GRANDMA MOLLY (CONT'D)

She'll understand in time. She's a tough cookie.

LUISE

She is.

Grandma Molly hands Luise a cheque.

GRANDMA MOLLY

Here, per our agreement.

Luise stares at the cheque but doesn't take it.

LUISE

Don't want it.

GRANDMA MOLLY

No, you take it. I need you to take it.

Luise grabs the cheque.

GRANDMA MOLLY (CONT'D)

Say your goodbye and never come back here.

Grandma Molly walks out the room.

Luise rips the cheque and lets the pieces fall to the floor, then walks to Melissa.

LUISE

Can I sit next to you?

Melissa nods her head Yes. Luise does so.

MELISSA
You're gonna leave, aren't you?

LUISE
Have to.

MELISSA
Don't want you to go.

LUISE
I - I don't want to go. But you'll
all be in danger if I stay.

MELISSA
Am I evil?

LUISE
Hell would you say that for?

MELISSA
Everyone keeps being taken away
from me. Like a punishment.

Luise sighs.

LUISE
You're golden, OK? Life's just a
bitch sometimes, she doesn't
discriminate between good and
asshole. OK? It's not you.

Melissa stays quiet.

LUISE (CONT'D)
You're strong, Melissa, grittiest
goddamn person I've ever met,
always remember that. It's just
time now to adapt once more.

MELISSA
Will you come back?

LUISE
Don't know. I want to be straight
with you, no bullshit. I'll try to
make things good so I can find you
again, but I - don't know if I'll
be able to.

BEAT.

MELISSA
Life's a bitch.

LUISE

Sure is.

MELISSA

Sometimes she's nice, like when we made hotdogs or watched movies.

LUISE

That's true.

Luise puts her hand in her trouser pocket.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Here, put your hand out.

She takes out her *Indian* motorcycle keys and hands them to Melissa.

MELISSA

Betsy?

LUISE

Yeah. Take care of her for me.

MELISSA

I can't - it's -

LUISE

No, I want you to, please.

Melissa nods her head Yes.

LUISE (CONT'D)

Jake will teach you to ride her, OK?

Melissa reaches out and grabs hold of her and Luise hugs her back.

ONE MONTH LATER:

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Cold wind blows through the air across a tiny town. Although daytime, the sun is barely visible and the falling snow has started to cover the ground.

SUPER: WAINWRIGHT, ALASKA. POPULATION: 629.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Luise - cup of hot chocolate in her hand - is looking out the window at her new frosty and dismal environment.

LUISE
Eat a dick!

FADE OUT

THE END