

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

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EXT. FIRST DAY IN PRISON -DAY

A prisoner transport vehicle just arrived at the gates of a prison. Each inmate comes out one by one in a line. The last person to come out is Erica Wills; a tall and curvy 34-year-old caucasian woman. She has luscious and wavy brown hair tied in a low ponytail. Erica is walking confidently and avoiding showing any sign of nervousness. Some of the new girls are nervous, one is already crying. Once inside, the inmate processing starts.

INT. MEETING CELLMATE -NIGHT

It's Erica's first night in the cell, she washes her face before going to bed. Her new cellmate has been watching her closely but hasn't uttered a word. Erica is avoiding any eye contact. She climbs up to get to her bed, it creaks. The silence fills the room but the tension is loud and clear.

CELLMATE

(Chuckles)

Girl if we're gonna be cellmates for a long time, you can't ignore me. We're stuck in this little room for a long time. I think it's in our best interest to get acquainted and avoid the awkwardness. How about I go first? I'm Ceecee, been in this hellhole for 5 years. Don't ask me why I'm in here though, I don't know you like that. Maybe once we get to know each other or you piss me off, it'll come out. Your turn.

ERICA

I'm Erica. That's all you need to know, and I like my privacy as well so don't ask.

CEECEE

Ooooooh... white girl has some attitude. That's good girl, especially in here. Be careful how much you use it though, it might get you in trouble you don't want to be in. You want to make more friends than enemies. So anyway, I need to set some ground rules in here. Number one, don't touch anything that's not yours. Don't overstep your boundaries. Don't ever think of disrespecting me or your ass

is hanging up on that wall. Basically, mind your business, be respectful and we'll be the best of roomies. How's that?

ERICA

Gotcha.

CEECEE

(chuckles)

I think you'll do just fine in here white girl.

Erica rolls over to the other side and faces the wall.

CEECEE

You know if you ever want to talk about why you're in here though, I'm all ears. It can get boring in here, I need something juicy. Don't worry, I'm not the gossiping type. It can be our little secret.

Erica is in deep thoughts as she stares at the blank wall. She goes back in time.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Erica is walking in a dimly lit underground parking lot. Wearing a chic business suit, with some high heels. Erica is one of the last people to leave the building. The only sound that is heard is the click of her heels. Once she gets to her car, she looks in her purse to get the keys, she unlocks and gets in. Erica places her documents on the passenger seat, she gets a text. She grabs her phone to read it, it says.

"Hurry up before dinner gets cold, I miss you."

The text puts a smile on her face, she puts it away and starts the car. She turns around, right before she could scream she is put on a chokehold. The intruder is sitting right behind her, they have a face mask on. She tries to bite them but they won't let go. As her left hand is trying to fight off the person, she uses her right to go into her purse to find something. She finally grabs it, it's a gun. She tries to point it towards them but the chokehold won't let her. She accidentally shoots inside the car. The intruder lets go of her neck and runs away. Erica comes out of the car still holding her gun, looking furious.

ERICA

Go and get your own money you scumbag!

She gets back in the car and drives off.

INT. ERICA'S HOME/DINING ROOM -NIGHT

Erica is driving home, she enters the driveway. The sound of laughter from the inside puts a smile on her face despite the horrific incident that just happened. Erica and her family are doing good for themselves, they live in a nice suburban three-story house in Atlanta. She enters the house and is greeted by her daughter Keisha, a six years old with a bubbly personality.

KEISHA

HI mommy!

ERICA

Hello my princess! How are you?

KEISHA

Good!

Dante is the oldest, a tall, skinny sixteen year old with a big afro and a heartwarming smile.

DANTE

Hey Ma.

He hugs his mother.

ERICA

Hi honey, can you take this upstairs?

Dante grabs his monther's purse.

KEISHA

Hi mommy!

ERICA

Hi sweetie! How was school?

KEISHA

Good! Did you bring me candy?

ERICA

No, we're about to have dinner. You had enough candy last night, unless you want to visit the dentist again.

KEISHA

No, thanks.

ERICA

Come on, go get washed up for dinner.

Erica's husband is Adam Wills, a muscular, tall and handsome black man. His white t-shirt showing off his muscular figure is a sight to see for Erica. She admires her husband cooking and can't take her eyes off him. They share a kiss.

ADAM

Hey Baby! How was work?

ERICA

Dreadful, it seems like there can never be enough hours in the day. Just glad I have a great husband who can cook a nice dinner for us when I'm late.

ADAM

Yes you are lucky, can't deny that.  
Come here babe.

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They kiss again.

ERICA

I'm gonna go change.

ADAM

Okay. I'll set the table.

Erica goes to their bedroom as Adam starts to put the table together. The kids come and help their father. Erica returns to see everyone already seated and waiting for her. She sits next to her husband.

ADAM

Okay, who's gonna say grace tonight?

KEISHA

I'll do it!! Me me me!

ERICA

Okaay... go ahead, sweetie.

KEISHA

Dear Heavenly father, thank you for this food. We thank you for everything we have. AMEN.

They all say AMEN together. Erica helps Keisha put some food on her plate as everyone passes around the dishes.

EXT. KEISHA'S SCHOOL - DAY

The following morning, Erica is driving her daughter to school very early in the morning. She is sipping some coffee while listening to the news on the radio. They arrive, she parks in the drop-off section.

ERICA

Okay honey, make sure you grab everything.

KEISHA

I got it, mommy.

ERICA

What about your science project?

KEISHA

Mom, that was last week, I already turned it in.

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ERICA

Right.... Okay baby, have a good day okay? Your daddy will pick you up later I have a lot of meetings today.

KEISHA

Okay.

ERICA

Give mommy a kiss.

Keisha kisses her mom on the cheek and grabs her backpack. She joins a friend who has been waiting for her by the entrance of the school. They enter together as her mother watches them walk away.

INT.ERICA'S FOUNDATION- DAY

Erica is the first person to arrive at work. She is the founder and owner of her foundation "Circle of Angels". The lobby of the building is filled with wall photos of past events of the foundation. There is another section with photographs of teenage girls represented by the foundation, under their photo is a paragraph of their story and achievements. Erica looks proud of the work she is doing. She enters her office, filled with chic decor and flowers.

Later in the afternoon, the office is quite busy. Everyone is on task, there is some calm music playing on the sound system. A few girls walk in, they speak to the receptionist. In the back, there is a conference room where Erica is having a meeting with a few staff members.

ERICA

So, I wanted to have another brainstorming meeting next week. I have a few ideas I want to talk about in the outreach area. I feel like we need to focus on that more now that we have more capital. It's time we brought in more girls. and stuff like that. Gina, if you would kindly set that up and email it to me, that would be awesome.

GINA

Got it.

ERICA

Okay, let's set that up. Add it to my calendar and send it to me. Other than that, great job this week everyone. Let's keep it pushing and I'll see you all next week.

She looks at the clock, it's almost seven. She puts her laptop in its case and gathers her things, she leaves.

INT. WILLIS HOUSE - NIGHT

Erica gets home to an empty house. The house is in order, it's very quiet. She turns on the lights

ERICA

Adam? Keisha? Dante? Anybody home?

There is no response. She puts the groceries on the counter and goes to check the kids rooms. No one's there. She runs to their master bedroom to find her husband. He's not there either. On the bed she finds a note with a garment bag laying next to it. She's intrigued, she reads the note.

" I dropped the kids off at my moms, they're spending the night. Meet me at the little restaurant you've been dying to try, I'll be waiting for you. See you soon Gorgeous. Kisses."

She is excited, her face turns into a bright smile. She starts taking off her clothes. She takes a shower.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Erica has arrived at the restaurant. Erica is looking beautifully elegant with a red tight dress and her wavy hair look with a few bracelets to finish their look.

ERICA

I can't believe you actually remembered that I wanted to try this restaurant. I didn't think you were listening.

ADAM

Most of the time. Plus I know work has been kicking your ass lately so I wanted to take your mind off.

ERICA

Ooh.. you're the sweetest, if we weren't in public, I'd do you right now.

ADAM

THE RETURN OF NIKKI  
That never stopped you before.

ERICA

Don't tempt me.

They both laugh.

ADAMY

You look amazing, I'm a lucky man.

ERICA

You know you got me right? you can stop buttering me up.

ADAM

That doesn't mean I can't appreciate my wife from time to time.

ERICA

You got a point there. No such thing as too much appreciation.

ADAM

I propose a toast, to how far we have come and the journey ahead.

They toast.



ERICA

Thank you for choosing me.

Adam has a forced smile, they kiss.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

It's a nice spring afternoon, school is over. Kids are getting in school buses while others wait for their rides. Erica finally arrives at the school, she is talking on the phone. She parks in the pickup lane and starts to look for her daughter. It's hard to find her as there are a lot of kids running around and others playing.

ERICA

Hey Terry, let me call you back. I'm picking up Keisha.

She hangs up the phone to concentrate on looking for her, after a few seconds of scanning through the crowd, she notices her. She is shocked to see her talking to someone who's not a kid. It's a woman with a black veil on and sunglasses, hard to identify her.

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ERICA

Keisha!

Keisha turns back, realizing it's her mom she smiles. Keisha waves goodbye at the woman while walking to her mom's car, she waves back. Keisha runs to the car as her mother and the woman watch her. Keisha hugs her mom and jumps in the backseat. They drive off.

ERICA

Keisha who was that person you were talking to?

KEISHA

She volunteers at our school. She's really nice too.

ERICA

Why was she talking to you?

KEISHA

I dropped my book, she returned it to me.

ERICA

Is she a teacher?

KEISHA

No. She was just standing outside.

ERICA

Ah okay. Want to go get some ice cream?

KEISHA

Yes, please!

ERICA

Alright, we're going on an ice cream date then.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD WALK - DAY

Dante is walking home with his friends after school.

DANTE

So what are y'all doing this weekend?

FRIEND #1

I'm going to the mall, need some new kicks.

DANTE

I'm kinda broke right now.

FRIEND #1

Doesn't your dad give you an allowance?

DANTE

I don't want money I didn't earn anymore, that's not me.

FRIEND #2

Oh really! So what's your plan?

DANTE

I might get a job.

Both his friends laugh.

DANTE

What's so funny?

FRIEND #1

You know your privileged ass knows nothing about work.

DANTE

And you do Quincy?

QUINCY

Boy, I've been working since I was five, you don't know what you're talking about.

FRIEND #2

No seriously what's this about?

DANTE

I feel guilty every time my dad gives me money, I know I don't deserve it.

FRIEND #2

If you want a job, I can hook you up.

QUINCY

Man, Dante don't know anything about flipping some damn burgers. He wouldn't last a day at your job.

DANTE

Yes, I can. What's so hard about making sure the burgers aren't burnt?

QUINCY

Yeah alright, you will go crawling back to daddy's money in a week. I promise you that.

DANTE

You just watch. So Junior are you hooking me up or what?

JUNIOR

Yeah, I'll ask my manager if there's an open position.

DANTE

Thanks, bro.

QUINCY

Why do you want to start in a burger joint anyways? I'm sure your dad can hook you up with something better.

DANTE

I don't need my dad to help me get a job, I got this.

QUINCY

Yeah right, I give this a week.

JUNIOR

Let's go get a Slurpee at the gas station, It's hot out here.

They keep walking.

INT. WILLS HOUSE/ OFFICE - NIGHT

Later that night, Erica is in her office which is located downstairs. She is very concentrated on her work. Someone knocks on the door.

ERICA

Come in!

It's Adam, he's bringing her a sandwich and some snacks.

ADAM

THE RETURN OF NIKKI  
I thought you needed a quick break and some company.

ERICA

You read my mind, I needed a quick distraction. I'm stomped in here.

ADAM

Here, a turkey sandwich, some orange juice, and fruits.

ERICA

Thank you, honey.

He kisses her and sits down.

ADAM

So what's up? What are you working on?

ERICA

I'm prepping for our brainstorming session this coming week. I think it's time we expanded our services and brought in more girls.

ADAM

That's good! You've been talking about it for a while, I'm sure that's a

great accomplishment for the foundation.

ERICA

Yeah definitely, I've been putting it off for too long. It's time to make the jump.

ADAM

You'll do great honey. I know once you commit to something, you go all the way. So let's talk about something else than work since you wanted a distraction.

ERICA

Yeah, actually I wanted to ask you what do you think about home school?

ADAM

What do you mean?

ERICA

THE RETURN OF NIKKI  
I don't know, I've been giving it some thought, maybe we should look into it. I just feel like it's more manageable and saves some time, mostly for me I guess.

ADAM

What, you want to homeschool the kids? Did something happen?

ERICA

No, I was just looking into it a few minutes ago and wanted to bounce it off to you. It's hard for me to pick up Keisha every day and I know your schedule is always changing so I can't rely on that.

ADAM

I mean I sell houses babe, it's not like I'm stuck at a nine to five and need permission to leave. It was just one time I was an hour late, you can't hold on to that forever. Or is there something else?

ERICA

Today when I went to pick up Keisha,

she was talking to this woman I never saw before. I couldn't even see her face because her head was covered and was wearing glasses. It was kind of weird. She kept staring at us till we left. I can't stop thinking about it. I have a bad feeling about her.

ADAM

You know how Keisha is though, she's friendly with everyone. She's not an introvert like you.

ERICA

You know my instincts, most of the time they're right.

ADAM

I think you're reading too much into it.

ERICA

I just want my kids to be safe, especially when they're out of my sight.

ADAM

So you don't think she's not safe because a possibly Muslim woman was having a friendly conversation with her? That doesn't sound right.

ERICA

You know very well that's not what I mean. It was just an odd situation that's all.

ADAM

Relax babe. You're stressing yourself over for nothing. Well, I'm gonna leave and take a shower. You're welcome to join me.

ERICA

So will you give it some thought?

ADAM

Yeah, I'll give it some thought. But we have to ask the kids first.

ERICA  
Okay, I'll be up in a few.

ADAM  
Cool.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Sunday is family outing for the Wills family, their activity for the day is a shopping spree. Everyone is dressed casually, even Erica. They enter a kids store.

ERICA  
We need to get some shorts and sandals for Keisha.

ADAM  
Yeah, I doubt that's all we're getting.

ERICA  
Not today! I already know what I'm getting. No shopping spree.

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ADAM  
Mhmmm.

Erica starts looking in the girls area as Adam and the kids look at the toys. Dante looks like he is lost in his own thoughts. He seems distracted. His father notices, he approaches him.

ADAM  
See something you like?

DANTE  
Dad, I'm sixteen.

ADAM  
Right, so what's up with you? Usually, you love when we go shopping?

DANTE  
I do. I just hate when you're the one who pays for what I choose.

ADAM  
Why not? You're my son. I think I have a right to buy you things.

DANTE

It's no that. I always come to you guys to ask you for money and everything else. I don't want to do that anymore. I want to start earning things for myself.

ADAM

We do pay you when you do chores at home.

DANTE

I mean like getting a job.

ADAM

A job? Why do you need a job at your age?

DANTE

I want to know the real world out there dad, the meaning of hard work. I feel like you guys shield me from it.

ADAM

Maybe because you're not ready for the real world, you don't know a thing about how hard it is out there.

DANTE

That's what I'm trying to find out, I'm ready to go out there and find my own way.

ADAM

I don't think you're ready for it. You're about to graduate, why not focus on getting good grades?. No, I won't allow that.

DANTE

(sarcastic chuckle)

Look, dad, I'm not a kid anymore. I'm almost an adult, I just wanted to let you know. I don't think I need your permission. I actually thought you'd be happy to hear something like this, that your son wants to be more independent and be responsible. I was wrong.



ADAM

Dante, it's not that. I'm glad you want to start a new chapter in your life and learn the value of work. I just feel like you're doing it for the wrong reasons.

DANTE

How?

ADAM

I know what you're doing. You feel guilty. You feel guilty because you have a lavish lifestyle and you feel bad for having more than your friends. You think you're missing out.

DANTE

I am! My friends call me a rich spoiled privileged boy. Do you know how that makes me feel?

ADAM

So you want a job so you can fit in more?

DANTE

No, I want a job because I want to be able to say to myself... I did this on my own. I didn't ask for help, for once in my life. I know you're my parents and you want to protect me, sometimes I feel like you protect me from things that will benefit me and help me grow. That's not fair to me.

Dante walks away. Erica comes pushing a cart full of clothes.

ADAM

Some shorts and sandals huh?

ERICA

Don't judge me.

EXT. WILLS HOUSE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

After a fun family day, the Wills family are heading back home late at night. The back of the car is filled with shopping bags that there is barely any space for the kids to move.

ERICA  
So did you guys have fun?

KEISHA  
YES!

Keisha is the only one to respond, Dante stays quiet.

ERICA  
Are you okay Dante? You seem awfully quiet today. I thought you loved shopping.

DANTE  
I'm fine. Just tired.

ERICA  
Okaaaay. Well I'm gonna order some take out and we'll just be lazy for the rest of the night.

ADAM  
Sounds great to me.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI  
All of a sudden, a firetruck passes them by at full speed. They drive behind the firetruck, they are going the same way. After they turn a corner, they are shocked at the view in front of them. Two firetrucks are blocking the road, there are police cars and an ambulance. They drive a little closer. They are a bit far from where the incident is happening to see which house is burning.

ERICA  
Honey, I don't think we should go further, we have the kids.

ADAM  
We need to make sure our house is okay, let me pull over here and you stay in here with the kids. I'll go check.

He pulls to the side, turns off the car, and gets out. Other neighbors are walking closer to take a look at the dramatic scenery. AS he gets closer, one neighbor notices him. He calls out to him frantically.

NEIGHBOR #2  
Adam? Adam! Where have you been?

ADAM

Martin! What is happening?

MARTIN

So you don't know?

ADAM

Know what?

MARTIN

Adam, your house is the one that's on fire! I called you and Erica a thousand times. Kept going straight to voicemail.

ERICA

Oh My God!!

Adam had not realized his wife followed him and left the kids in the car. They start running towards their house. A firefighter tries to stop them but they run through him. Their faces drop as they see the state of what's left of their beautiful home. Erica can barely breathe as her husband tries to keep his composure in front of the crowd. Erica gets dizzy, Adam catches her.

ADAM

Honey.. honey... are you okay?

ERICA

I can't take this Adam. What the hell is going on!

ADAM

Come on babe, you need to sit down.

ERICA

How do you expect me to sit down? Do you not see what is going on in front of us? Everything we built, gone... in the blink of an eye. Don't you tell me to calm down!

ADAM

Come here.

He pulls her closer and hugs her. They watch in despair the house just crumbles to the ground. Their kids come to join them. It's a sad family moment. They have a family hug.

INT. ADAMS PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

After the devastating night of losing their home, the Wills family is staying at Adam's parents. They have taken the two bedrooms in the basement. The kids are watching some cartoons as their parents are having a conversation in the room.

ERICA

We need to start looking for houses

ADAM

I think we should wait a bit.

ERICA

I can't stay at your parents too long  
Adam, you know they don't like me.

ADAM

That was years ago.

ERICA

Is that why she keeps avoiding me like  
a plague? Anyways, like I said... we  
have to find a new place. The kids  
need to feel some sort of normacy  
after all this. So do I.

ADAM

I'll start looking tomorrow.

ERICA

I can't stop going through what I did  
yesterday and every move I made. I  
can't remember every single detail, we  
left in such a hurry and the kids were  
driving me crazy.

ADAM

Babe, it's fine, stop overworking  
yourself over nothing.

ERICA

I... I just can't stand another  
incident being my fault. Did we cook  
before we left for the mall?

ADAM

No, we didn't honey, we ate out. Lolk  
we'll get some answers don't worry. We  
need to handle the big priorities,  
like clothes. We need a few clothes at

least, toiletries and the basics.

ERICA

Give me the card, I'll get them right now. A great excuse to leave this house.

Adam pulls out his wallet and gives her the card. She grabs her purse and leaves.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Adam just arrived at a coffee place, he parks his car right in front and enters. He looks at the seated customers trying to find the person he was meeting there. In the back he sees a hand waving at him, it's his friend Mark. Adam makes his way to join his friend, it's rush hour so it's very crowded. There's a coffee waiting for him at the table.

ADAM

What's up man?

MARK

Late as always huh?

ADAM

I was watching the kids.

MARK

I've heard that one before.

ADAM

Well, this time I was.

MARK

I heard about the house, just want to tell you we're here if you need anything. I mean that, you can stay at our house while you find a new place.

ADAM

I appreciate it. We're staying at my parents for now. Erica is on my ass though, she hates it there.

MARK

Mother in law issues huh? Been there.

ADAM

That's why we need to get out of there before she kills me.

MARK

Well I 'll let you know if I find anything.

ADAM

Thank you man, that would help a lot.

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT OFFICE - DAY

Dante is sitting in a small office in the back of a fast-food place. It is the day of his interview and he seems pretty nervous. He keeps looking through the tiny crack of the door watching how the employees are rushing and getting the orders ready. Waiting for the interviewer is making him even more anxious. The door opens and a manager comes in.

INTERVIEWER

Dante?

DANTE

Yes that's me.

INTERVIEWER

Hi, I'm Jacob, I'm the Manager. I'll be interviewing you today.

DANTE

Nice to meet you.

JACOB

Have a seat.

DANTE

Thank you.

He sits down.

JACOB

So before we start I would like to apologize, this will be a short interview. We're short staffed today so I have to go help them.

DANTE

No problem.

JACOB

I don't think I received your resume so can you tell me what was your previous work experience?

DANTE

To be completely honest with you, I don't have that much experience. This is my first job interview. I'm a hard worker though, I learn fast.

JACOB

Okay. So why did you choose to start in the fast-food business?

DANTE

I feel like this would be a great place to start learning work skills and learn the fundamentals of a good work ethic and working with a team. I know I can build my foundation by having direct contact with the customers.

JACOB

That's great! So what would you say are your weaknesses and strengths?

DANTE

I would say my strength is the spirit of never giving up, time management, creativity and consistency. My weakness would be that I don't have much experience in working with a team. If I am offered this job, it would be an opportunity to improve that skill.

JACOB

When would you be available to start?

DANTE

As soon as you need me to, I am all yours.

JACOB

Perfect, can you remind me who was your reference?

DANTE

Junior Herrera.

JACOB

Got it! Okay Mr Wills, thank you very much for your time. Like I said, I apologize for such a short interview.

We will be in contact soon, we have a few more interviews for the day but we'll give you a call if you are hired no later than the end of the week.

Dante gets up to give him a handshake.

DANTE

Thank you Sir, have a good day.

JACOB

You too.

He leaves.

EXT. GRANDMAS BACKYARD - DAY

With Erica at work and Adam meeting his buddy, the kids are staying with their grandma; Lucie. Adam has invited his friends Junior and Quincy over for some video games as Keisha is hanging out in the backyard with Lucie. Spring is here so they are planting flowers in the garden. This is a team effort, Keisha is making tiny holes while Lucie plants the seeds.

KEISHA

Are we gonna see the flowers next week Grandma?

LUCIE

No sweetie, it takes a while for the plants to grow. You need to have a little patience.

KEISHA

What if we water them a lot?

LUCIE

No, that would be bad for the plants because you would drown them. They need some air and time to become beautiful colorful flowers.

KEISHA

But I hate waiting!

LUCIE

You're just like your mother! How about I go inside and get us something to drink and some snacks? Can you be patient about that?



KEISHA

yes!

LUCIE

Alright, keep making those holes and I'll be back.

KEISHA

Okay.

Lucie takes off her gloves and runs to the kitchen. She takes out some fresh lemonade in the fridge and grabs some snacks from the pantry. She goes downstairs to check on the boys.

LUCIE

Are you guys doing alright?

DANTE

Yes Grandma

LUCIE

You all hungry?

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JUNIOR

I could eat.

QUINCY

Me too.

DANTE

We ate an hour ago! They're fine Grandma.

QUINCY

Uhh... are you in my stomach?

LUCIE

Well, there are some snacks I left on the countertop, you're welcome to grab some.

QUINCY

Thank you Mrs Wills!

LUCIE

Oh, you're so welcome, I'll be in the backyard if you need anything. But boys, please keep this place clean. Especially you Dante.

DANTE

Don't worry Grandma, I'll make sure everything stays in order.

Lucie heads back in the backyard to finish their little project. She grabs the snacks, drinks, and heads outside.

LUCIE

Keisha! Food's here. I got your favorite snacks!

There is no response. She places the food on a patio table.

LUCIE

Keisha! Are you coming?

She looks around the house and goes back inside to check if she went in while she was downstairs.

LUCIE

Keisha! Keisha!

Now the only thing she can hear are the boys shouting in the basement. She starts panicking. She opens the gate and goes to search on the street.

LUCIE

Keisha! Keisha! Keisha... Oh my God.

Dante and his friends come out as well, trying to understand what's going on.

DANTE

Grandma, why are you shouting Keisha's name?

LUCIE

I can't find her!

DANTE

I thought she was with you.

LUCIE

We were in the garden together, when I came back after grabbing the snacks she wasn't there! I'm gonna kill that little girl.

DANTE

She couldn't have gone far! I'm gonna go ask the neighbors.

QUINCY

We'll go with him.

LUCIE

I'm gonna check the house again.

They all run in different directions to find Keisha, the boys starts knocking on people's doors asking. Lucie runs frantically in every room trying to find her. After searching as many areas as she could, she comes back out to see if there is any hope outside. Dante and the boys come back.

LUCIE

Anything?

DANTE

Nobody saw her.

LUCIE

Oh my God! Where the hell could she be?

DANTE

I'm gonna call mom and dad.

LUCIE

NO no no.. not yet. I don't want to worry them until we're sure she's not in the rea.

JUNIOR

Shouldn't we call the police?

LUCIE

No, we have to look a little more. Let me go get my jacket.

The boys start walking further looking around. Lucie comes back outside and takes her car to search for her granddaughter. She mouths a prayer as she is driving in the neighborhood.

After some time, everyone has come back inside. They are allin despair, you can feel it in the silence. They don't know the next move. Lucie is already emotional.

DANTE

I'm gonna call mom and dad.

He goes downstairs.

QUINCY

We're gonna go out and look around again.

LUCIE

Thank you, boys.

As Junior and Quincy get ready to head back out there, someone knocks on the door. Quincy goes to open the door. After he opens it, he stands there. Lucie is confused

LUCIE

Who is it?

Quincy opens the door wider, it's Keisha. She looks as though nothing happened. Keisha is holding a teddy bear in her hands.

Lucie breaks with tears of joy, she grabs her granddaughter and hugs her. She checks her to see if she was harmed in any way or anything suspicious about her, Keisha is looking confused. She hugs her again.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

KEISHA

What's wrong Grandma? Were you crying?

LUCIE

Keisha where were you? Where have you been?

KEISHA

I went for a walk.

LUCIE

At this time? You know you can't go out without letting us know!

KEISHA

Well, you were taking forever with the snacks so I just left.

LUCIE

Keisha, please don't ever scare us like that again. Next time, you need to let someone know first okay?

KEISHA

Okay, I'm sorry.

LUCIE

It's alright.

DANTE

No it's not Grandma, Do you know how worried we were? We were about to call the police.

KEISHA

But I was just walking in the neighborhood.

DANTE

DID WE KNOW THAT?

LUCIE

Hey hey hey.. that's enough. She apologized, now let's move on.

KEISHA

(low pitched sad voice)

I'm sorry....

Lucie gives her a warm hug. Dante still looks upset about all the panicking Keisha had caused. Dante notices what his sister is holding in his hands.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

DANTE

Where did you get that from?

KEISHA

It was a gift

LUCIE

From who?

KEISHA

I made a friend at the park and she gave me the teddy bear.

LUCIE

Okay you're on a roll today missy! First you leave the house on your own and now you're accepting gifts from strangers? I don't think your mother will like this.

KEISHA

It's my gift! I'm keeping it.

She goes downstairs.

INT. KEISHA ROOM - NIGHT

After a hectic evening has come to an end, Adam and Erica are now home. Everyone is getting ready to go to bed and end the day. Erica comes into the guestroom where Keisha is staying. Keisha is in bed playing with her iPad. They sit on the bed, Erica grabs the tablet from her and places it on the nightstand.

KEISHA

I already know what this is about.

ERICA

Good, let's go straight to the point then. What happened today? How could you do something like that Keisha?

KEISHA

I just wanted to take a break from helping grandma.

ADAM

But you know you're not allowed to go anywhere without letting someone know right?

KEISHA

Yes. But I was just walking in the neighborhood. That's it.

ERICA

Keisha how many times have we talked about this?

KEISHA

But I'm not a kid anymore! I can't go for a walk just around the house by myself?

ERICA

No, you can't. Especially not that late. It's not safe out there baby, I don't want you roaming the streets alone. We're very upset about this.

KEISHA

But I came back right? Nothing happened to me.

ADAM

Baby look, we still have to know where

you are and who you're with. It is our responsibility to keep you safe.

KEISHA

I know, It's just boring here. I miss our house. It doesn't feel like home here.

ERICA

I understand honey, I feel the same way too. We all miss home but there's nothing we can do. We're trying to find another house. For now, you have to be strong and patient okay? We'll get through this. I promise.

KEISHA

What about our stuff? It's all gone.

ERICA

We will buy new stuff, what matters is that we're all together and safe. We're trying our best to do our part in making sure you and Dante stay out of harm's way but you also need to do your part okay?

KEISHA

Okay.

ADAM

That's my girl.

Erica notices something, she finds the teddy bear next to Keisha, it's unfamiliar.

ERICA

Keisha, where did you get this from?

KEISHA

A friend gave it to me when I was at the park. Can I keep it please please, please?

ERICA

Keisha, you're bringing things from strangers now?

KEISHA

It was just a gift, I gave her my candy. Can I please keep it?

ERICA

Okay, only if you promise to never do something like this again.

KEISHA

I promise. I will always make sure you know where I'm going and never leave the house when it's dark.

ERICA

That's a deal, now time to sleep.

She kisses her daughter goodnight and Adam follows after her. He turns off the light.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

School just ended, the halls are filled with students trying to exit the building and get to the buses or their transportation. It's very crowded, Dante is trying to make way through the crowd. He receives a phone call, it is impossible to hear with all the chaos going on so he walks faster to exit. Once he is outside, he answers.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

DANTE

Hello?

JACOB (VO)

Hi, is this Dante Wills?

DANTE

Yes, that's me.

JACOB (VO)

This is Jacob, I interviewed you a few days ago. I was calling to let you know that you got the job. Congratulations.

DANTE

Are you serious? Oh thank you so much! Thank you!

JACOB (VO)

You're very welcome. When do you think you can start?

DANTE

Whenever you'd like me to! I'm ready to start today.



JACOB (VO)  
Okay, let's do this Thursday at two.  
How's that sound?

DANTE  
That sounds fantastic sir.

JACOB (VO)  
I just need you to stop by the day  
before to grab your work clothes and  
name badge.

DANTE  
Okay, I will be there on Wednesday.

JACOB (VO)  
Welcome to the team Dante, I'll see  
you Thursday.

DANTE  
Thank you, Sir.

He hangs up the phone and does a quick happy cheer. Quincy  
comes from behind him and taps him on the shoulder.

QUINCY  
What you doing the Carlton dance for?

DANTE  
I got the job! I start this week.

QUINCY  
Is that right? Just make sure you hook  
me up from time to time. Some chicken  
nuggies, shakes, and all that.

DANTE  
I haven't even started and you want  
free food?

EXT.QUINCY  
Because you're my man. I would do the  
same for you.

DANTE  
How about I try not to get fired first  
and we'll talk about that later.

QUINCY  
That's what's up.

INT. RESTAURAUNT - NIGHT

Adam is at a restaurant with some friends. They are toasting and having good conversationS.

ADAM

When is this food coming, I'm starved.

MALE #1

Damn dude, you act like you never get fed by your wife. It's not a good look I tell you.

ADAM

Man, shut up. Good thing my wife is not here to listen to this.

MALE #2

She probably got you on a salad diet huh, I can see you are shedding the dad bod. The shirts are starting to fit again.

MALE #1

Nah man, he's sucking it in. He's barely breathing right now. Don't pass out on us though, Erica would cuss us out.

MALE #2

For real, white girl has some spice into her. The first time I talked to her, I thought she was black.

ADAM

Hey hey hey... My wife is a sweet woman David. You guys just don't know her that well. As for you Kenny, between me and you; she is the blackest white girl I ever met.

DAVID

Why, because she knows a couple of rap songs by heart? That makes her black inside? Come on man, you know how ignorant that sounds? Better keep your damn voice down talking that nonsense.

KENNY

Plus if she wanted to get to know us, she would have made herself available.

I can count on my hand how many times we talked. And you guys have been married for seventeen years now.

DAVID

Now she has you acting all boujee on us. We don't even go to our favorite joint or get some tacos from the streets like we used to.

KENNY

Tell me about it, when he was still with...

Kenny stops himself before ending his sentence. It is an awkward moment. It is stopped by the waiter bringing the food. He puts it on the table.

SERVER

Alright, here we go. We have the brisket, smoked salmon, and the steak. Enjoy guys!

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

ADAM

Thank you!.

They dig in. Adam is shoving food in his mouth, his two friends are starring at him.

KENNY

Damn man, you really don't get fed huh?

DAVID

Act like you got some manners dammit.

INT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

Adam and Erica just bought a new house. Erica is in the bedroom unpacking. Adam enters.

ADAM

Need help in here?

ERICA

No, I think I got it. You should go and check the kids rooms so they have a bed to sleep on tonight.

ADAM

I just checked, everything's set up.

ERICA

Thank God! You have no idea how relieved I am that we're finally out of your mother's place.

ADAM

Come on, my mother is not that bad.

ERICA

Yeah right, so anyways... can you order takeout? I'm sure the kids are hungry.

ADAM

Let me go get my phone.

ERICA

Hey babe?

ADAM

Yeah?

ERICA

Thank you for this. I know it wasn't easy to get a place this quick. I love you

Thsye share a kiss.

ADAM

Anything for you babe. So what are you feeling like today?

ERICA

I think Chinese for tonight.

ADAM

Chinese it is.

EXT. FAST FOOD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

After ending a long day at work, Dante is happy to get off. Quincy is waiting for him outside to give him a ride. Dante grabs his backpack and exits. He gets into his friend's car.

QUINCY

Damn man! Look at you, you the flour man now? You're gonna mess up, my seat man.

DANTE

I had to learn to make biscuits today.

QUINCY

Well, I don't want any damn flour in my car, I don't want chicks laughing at me.

DANTE

You don't have a reputation Quincy, cut it out.

QUINCY

Anyways, did you hook me up with some chicken wings or something?

DANTE

I didn't have the time.

QUINCY

Hey man! If I'm gonna be giving you a ride almost every night, I need an incentive.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

DANTE

It' all good, I got you.

QUINCY

Why don't you ask your dad for a car anyways?

DANTE

Because I want to buy my own car, I'm gonna save up.

QUINCY

Yeah, good luck with that. With how you get paid here, you have a good five years to go.

DANTE

If you don't want to give me a ride just say so, I'll ask Junior.

QUINCY

(chuckles)

You think that whipped boy is gonna leave his girl to give you a ride every night, not happening.

INT. ERICA OFFICE - NIGHT

Erica usually leaves after most of her employees, she checks that the lights are off in each room. She locks her office and grabs her stuff. As she heads to exit the building, someone knocks on the door. It's dark outside, there's heavy rain and it's only her, she's scared. From where she stands, she can see that it's a woman, her face is hidden with a headscarf. Erica checks her purse to make sure her gun is in there, then proceeds to the door. The woman is standing there watching her every move. She is drenched and her scarf is stuck to her face, making it worse to identify her. Erica stands right in front of her, refusing to open without knowing who she is.

The woman looks up, she can see a glimpse of her eyes. The woman tries to force open the door but she can't, Erica pulls out her gun, she sees it. The woman starts to lift her scarf, Erica gasps. A gorgeous, dark skinned woman with big blue eyes. Erica seems to know her, both women stand there staring at each other. Erica is trying to keep her composure but her face says it all; there is something about this woman.

BEGIN FLASHBACK: 20 years earlier

INT. NIKKI KITCHEN - DAY

Erica is eating some fancy charcuterie set on the kitchen counter. She's admiring the fancy decor in the beautiful beige colored mansion as she munches on the snacks. A little girl comes running, she bumps into Erica.

ERICA

Hey hey Simone, what does your mom tell you about running in the kitchen?

SIMONE

To do it when she's not there?

ERICA

You stinky little liar! I'm gonna tell on you.

SIMONE

Then you won't be my favorite aunt anymore.

ERICA

You're right, I can't risk that. Actually I have a small gift for you.

Erica grabs something from a shopping bag, it's a white teddy bear.

SIMONE

I love it!! Thanks Aunt Erica.

ERICA

You're welcome!

Simone kisses Erica on the cheek and runs outside. Someone comes up from downstairs carrying a basket of laundry. She is a beautiful dark-skinned woman with a curly afro and big brown eyes. Although she is not wearing any makeup, she looks effortless.

WOMAN

God, I hate laundry day.

ERICA

You know you don't have to right? I mean you guys can afford maids and helpers to do all the manure labor for you, right?

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

WOMAN

Yeah but I like to complain afterward because I have a real reason to.

They laugh.

ERICA

I swear I've been to this house a million times but I still drool over it.

WOMAN

Why don't we switch homes then? Then you can deal with the laundry, a six-year old and staying sane?

ERICA

You know I wouldn't mind trading lives with you any second Nikki. I mean you have it all dude, a great career, a beautiful family, people love you. On top of that, you make a huge impact in people's lives. Who wouldn't want that?

NIKKI

I'm grateful. God has been so good to

me. But don't think all this came on a silver platter.

ERICA

Can you ask him to be good to me as well? I think he forgot about me.

NIKKI

You know that's not even true, we all have our seasons of trials and the ones for blessings and abundance.

ERICA

Seems like I've been stuck in the same season my whole life.

NIKKI

Be patient my friend, God sees it all.

There is a sound of a car being locked in the driveway, Nikki rushes to the door to open it. A tall man walks in, they kiss and hug. She takes the grocery bags from his hands. As he walks into the kitchen, his identity is revealed. It's a younger Adam.

ADAM

Oh hi Erica? How are you?

ERICA

Hey Adam! You know me, I come uninvited.

ADAM

(chuckles)

And it's always a pleasure to have you.

ERICA

Thank you!

NIKKI

Is he the sweetest man or what? He gets groceries when I'm too lazy.

ERICA

He is.. you're a lucky woman.

ADAM

I'm the lucky one here.

They keep kissing and giggling as Erica stares at them with



an envious look.

INT. ERICA PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Erica's alarm rings early in the morning, she lets it ring a couple more times. It keeps ringing loud, she covers her head with a pillow. Her mother walks in.

ERICA

Yes mom! I heard the alarm!

SUZANNE

Any plans on getting up? You know there's this thing called a JOB that I think you need to show up to get paid.

ERICA

Thank you for reminding me again that I'm poor and broke.

SUZANNE

Here's another reminder for you, past due bills. I already gave some to your father and I will pay a few too, this is your share.

ERICA

Mom, I just told you I have nothing! I'm ass out. Can't even pay for my freaking car. So keep that bus pass around.

SUZANNE

Can't you do some overtime? I mean it wouldn't hurt.

ERICA

I can barely stay the whole shift on my scheduled days, you think I can stay out of my own will? Not happening.

SUZANNE

Well, these bills need to get paid, figure something out. I'm sick of being stressed out about this.

ERICA

Don't worry mom, it won't be like this forever. No matter how I do it, I'm gonna get out of this misery.

Erica gets up and gets ready to hit the shower.

INT. CLOTHING BOUTIQUE - DAY

Nikki and Erica are doing some shopping at a fancy boutique. Erica is staring at the clothes and just admiring them as Nikki is grabbing whatever she likes. It's a shopping spree for her.

ERICA

I don't know why you bring me in here when I can't afford any of these clothes.

NIKKI

Come on, you know sometimes we have to spoil ourselves. We deserve it after working hard all week.

ERICA

You have a point there, after working that damn witch at work, I think I deserve this. That doesn't mean my wallet agrees though.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

NIKKI

That's what you're worried about? This is on me, go ahead and find something you like.

ERICA

I don't like when you have to pay for my things. I feel uncomfortable.

NIKKI

Erica are we not friends? I'm not doing this out of pity, I'm doing this as a friend. Consider it a gift from me. Come on, I know you will find something you like here.

ERICA

Well when you put it like that, I'll take you up on your offer.

NIKKI

Let's go check out some shoes!

INT. NIKKI HOUSE/ BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nikki is watching TV as Adam is taking a shower, she is

laying on the bed while drinking some wine. Adam's phone rings a couple of times, she picks it up to answer but the call ends. She unlocks the phone to see who it is. She finds an open tab with a picture of a woman, she's curious. She opens the tab to find Adam has been looking at pictures of beautiful white women online wearing lingerie. She's mad, she hears her husband come out of the shower.

ADAM

Was that my phone ringing?

NIKKI

Yeah, it was Kenny. He hung up before I could answer it.

ADAM

Oh okay.

NIKKI

So what's this?

She shows him the pictures he was looking at.

ADAM

What do you mean?

NIKKI

What do you think it means? Why are you looking at pictures of other women in lingerie?

ADAM

Why are you looking through my phone?

NIKKI

I was trying to answer your phone and I saw the tab was open! And don't try to change the subject! Explain this to me...

ADAM

What do you want me to say? It's not like I was cheating.

NIKKI

And you think this is something a married man should be doing behind his wife?

ADAM

Oh, come on... It's nothing. I'm sure

you also started at other men behind my back.

NIKKI

Why would I do that when I have a husband? Unless there is something you want to tell me. You don't like what you have?

ADAM

That's not what I meant. It's nothing serious Nikki, you know how us men are.

NIKKI

Oh such an original explanation! Have you lost your mind? Just so we're clear, this will not pass with me. If I ever see this again, we're gonna have a problem.

ADAM

You're right, I'm sorry. It's not right to do this. I was just in a moment of weakness.

NIKKI

Why is it only white women anyways? Do you have a thing for them? Do you fetishize them?

ADAM

I married you didn't I?

NIKKI

Mhhmmm...Anyways, this better not happen again. That's not the kind of husband I want.

She picks up the wine and the bottle and leaves the room.

EXT. SIMONE SCHOOL - DAY

Simone is waiting to be picked up. She looks at every car trying to make sure that she didn't miss her arrival. Erica arrives at the school, she finds Simone sitting on a bench. She gets out of the car and goes to her.

ERICA

Heey little Missy? Waiting for someone?

SIMONE  
Aunt Erica!!

Simone hugs her, excited to see her.

I didn't know you were supposed to pick me up.

ERICA  
Your mom called and asked me to cover for her, she couldn't make it today.

SIMONE  
How come?

ERICA  
She's still in a meeting and didn't want you to wait for long. Are you ready?

SIMONE  
Yes. I was tired of waiting here.

They walk hand in hand and get in the car. They drive off.

SIMONE  
How come you aren't at work aunt Erica?

ERICA  
I was on break, I have to drop you off quickly and go back.

SIMONE  
You should have a business like my mom.

ERICA  
I know sweetie, your mom is very lucky. And she's very lucky to have such a beautiful little munchkin like you.

SIMONE  
When are you gonna have babies?

ERICA  
I don't know either sweetie, hopefully soon. And I want them to be as dark and as beautiful as you.

EXT. NIKKI HOUSE/ DRIVEWAY - DAY

Erica arrives at Nikki's house. She pulls up at the same time as Adam, he lets her get in first.

ERICA

Okay sweetie, I had to get back to work.

SIMONE

Thanks, Aunt Erica!

ERICA

You're welcome!

Simone gets out of the car, closes the door. She runs to hug her dad.

ADAM

Hi baby!! How was school?

SIMONE.

Good!

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

ADAM

Well go in the house and I'll be there in a minute. Let me talk to Aunt Erica.

SIMONE

Okay!

She runs into the house. Adam goes to speak with Erica, she doesn't get out of the car.

ADAM

Hey! thanks for dropping her off.

ERICA

Don't mention it, she's such a sweet little girl.

ADAM

So where are you off to in a rush, you don't wanna come in for a quick drink?

ERICA

Can't, unless I want to end up on the unemployment line by tomorrow.

ADAM

A beautiful woman like you deserves something better than a nine to five you know?

ERICA

Maybe if I had a good man to provide for me, I wouldn't need that stupid job. All the good ones are taken.

ADAM

Maybe you didn't look harder, you may have missed him.

They give each other a flirtatious look.

ERICA

If you find one for me, let me know. I'll greatly appreciate it.

ADAM

I wouldn't do that... so don't count on it.

She blushes. THE RETURN OF NIKKI

ERICA

I gotta go before traffic gets bad.

ADAM

Alright, drive safe.

ERICA

Thanks.

Adam watches her as she drives off.

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. NIKKI HOUSE/ BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nikki is trying to seduce her husband while kissing and touching him. He seems to have no interest in her and his own thoughts.

INT. ERICA'S JOB - DAY

Erica is blushing as she texts someone on her phone, trying not to be seen by her supervisor.

EXT. KIDS PARK - DAY

Nikki and the kids are playing in the park, she is making sure they are playing carefully. Her husband is there as well but not paying attention to them. Nikki catches him starrng at two white women who are talking a few feet from him. One is wearing a short skirt, he admires her thighs.

EXT. DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT - DAY

Erica arrives at a restaurant at night, she is wearing cornrows and tanned a lot. There are a few stares and critics, even Nikki who was waiting for her is at a loss for words.

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Nikki and Adam are arguing in the kitchen, Simone is watching them across the hall. Adam leaves and shuts the door violently.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Adam arrives at the front of a hotel room, he opens the door. Someone is waiting for him, she is sitting on the bed, only her back is shown. He takes off his shirt and lays down, the woman rolls over the bed and lays on his chest. Her face is revealed, it's Erica. They start making out as he takes off her lingerie.

END MONTAGE

INT. NIKKI OFFICE - DAY

Nikki runs a home decor business called " Nikki's Chateau", she has employees running the store but comes there to see how things are going. Her office is in the back of the store, he mother has come to visit her. Nikki is emotional.

NIKKI

I just don't know how much more I can take. I've been disrespected over and over again by Adam. I'm losing my self respect and I don't do that. Last night, he was flirting with the waiter right in front of me, like I was invincible. He doesn't even care to get caught anymore mom, I just can't do it anymore. If I stay, he will think it's okay to treat me like trash. There is no more passion, he



doesn't even look at me the same anymore. There is such a distance between us that I don't think we can go back to where we were.

ALEXANDRA

I understand honey. Men do what you allow them to, I've learned that over the years. You have to put your foot down and not let them walk all over you. I just want you to be happy. Whatever you decide, I'm behind you.

NIKKI

What am I supposed to tell Simone?

ALEXANDRA

When the time is right and you know what your next move is, you will tell her.

NIKKI

But then I feel so selfish like I'm choosing my own happiness over hers.

ALEXANDRA

So you want her to stay in such a toxic environment just because you don't want to say your marriage failed? If you ask me, it's time to move on. Clearly, there is somewhere else Adam would rather be. Let him go

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Adam and Erica are sleeping together, she is kissing him and playing with his face. Adam is not focused Erica notices.

ERICA

Something on your mind?

ADAM

I don't think we should do this anymore.

ERICA

What do you mean? Your marriage is over right?

ADAM

Yes, but that doesn't make this right.

ERICA

It doesn't need to be right, there's no right in love.

ADAM

You think we're in love?

ERICA

You don't?

ADAM

(sighs)

Look, I just can't do this anymore. My heart won't sit right knowing what we have done to Nikki. I couldn't live with that.

ERICA

So you want to get back together?

ADAM

No, but I'm letting you know nothing serious or good can come out of this, so let's just end it now. I'm going to sign the divorce papers. I'm sure you understand my reasons.

ERICA

I don't.

ADAM

Hopefully, you will one day.

He gets up and starts getting ready.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Some months later

Erica is having a drink with a friend at a bar. The bar is crowded, there's loud music playing. She is dressed in fancy clothing and now rocking a bob cut.

ERICA

I'm gonna go to the restroom.

FRIEND #3

Okay, I'll get the tab.

ERICA

Don't forget my purse.

Erica seems tipsy, she gets up and tries to make her way through the crowd, someone pushes her and she lands on someone's back. He turns around.

ERICA

Adam? Oh MY God... I don't believe this!

ADAM

Hello again Erica, good to see you. Wow... you look amazing.

ERICA

I know, thank you

ADAM

(laughs)  
Still as confident as ever.

ERICA

Of course! So how have you been? it's been a while.

ADAM

I moved to New York for a while for some business. I just got back last week.

ERICA

So what do you do now?

ADAM

I'm in real estate.

ERICA

Wow, look at you! Big-time baller huh! You finally left the rat race huh?

ADAM

What about you?

ERICA

I have a few online businesses that I run.

ADAM

That's great! Well, I was about to head out so.... here's my card, let's keep in touch. Maybe we can go out for a quick lunch or something.

She grabs the card.

ERICA

I'd love to, talk to you soon.

Erica leaves blushing. Adam stares at her as she walks away.

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - DAY

Erica and Adam are having a picnic at a quiet, beautiful park with no disturbance. They are enjoying themselves, it's their first date. There's flirtatious touching and stares.

EXT. FRONT DOOR OF HOUSE - NIGHT

It's a rainy night, Erica and Adam get out of the car with an umbrella. They stop in front of the door to say goodnight. She hugs him, he won't let go. They stare into each other's eyes, Erica leans in, they share a kiss.

INT. ADAM HOUSE/ BATHROOM - NIGHT

Adam and Erica are taking a bath together in a Jacuzzi, they are sipping some wine and being goofy. There are some playful water fights and a lot of kissing.

INT. ERICA CONDO - DAY

Erica is working on her computer, there are lots of paper in front of her, she is concentrated. Adam brings her some coffee and kisses her on the forehead. He sits down and grabs some documents from the table to look at.

EXT. ERICA FOUNDATION- DAY

It's opening day for Erica's foundation " Circle of Angels". Adam is by her side, cheering for her. Her parents are there as well, friends and employees are by her side. She cuts the ribbon as Adam pops a bottle of champagne, it's a joyous occasion.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Adam proposes to Erica in front of friends and family who are gathered to celebrate her birthday. She bursts into tears of joy and says yes as everyone claps for them and comes to congratulate them.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. ERICA AND ADAM HOUSE - DAY

2005

Erica is cleaning the house, dusting off the furniture, and reorganizing the living room. There are pictures of their wedding on the wall, they are newlyweds. The doorbell rings, she goes to answer. She looks through the peephole; it's a woman wearing sunglasses. She opens the door.

ERICA

Hi, Can I help you?

The woman takes off her sunglasses, it's Nikki. She has short hair now lost a lot of weight. She is barely recognizable.

NIKKI

Remember me?

ERICA

What the hell are you doing here?

NIKKI

THE RETURN OF NIKKI  
I heard that you're a newlywed and wanted to come and offer my congratulations. How's married life treating you?

ERICA

As you can see, better than ever. I have a wonderful husband.

NIKKI

Is that right? Well, enjoy him while you can.

ERICA

What's that supposed to mean?

NIKKI

It means you're not the only white woman on this planet. Since we were close friends, I'll let you in on a secret. Adam has wandering eyes. He'll keep looking at anything that crosses his path. That's just who he is. I mean you don't think this is a forever thing, do you? Because if you do... you'll be sadly disappointed, my dear.

ERICA

I think that now that he has what he wants and hasn't settled for less... he won't jeopardize it.

NIKKI

(chuckles)

Well, look at you actually being committed! Who would have thought?

ERICA

Seriously, what do you want? I don't have time to talk in circles.

NIKKI

I just came to give you my congratulations and wish you a happy and lasting marriage. I'll be going now.

ERICA

Yeah, and don't ever come back here.

Nikki raises the middle finger at her as she walks to her car.

INT. NURSERY ROOM - DAY

9 months later

Erica and Adam expanded their family, they just had a baby boy. She and her husband are in the nursery as Erica breastfeeds and Adam organizes the room and the closet.

ERICA

I have a feeling he's gonna look like you. Dark and handsome.

ADAM

Of course, he will, it runs in the family. Plus I got some strong ass genes.

ERICA

Speaking of family, yours has not even come to see the baby yet.

ADAM

Do you really want to talk about that right now?

ERICA

Why not? I mean how long are they gonna oppose this marriage? It already happened, I'm your wife so they need to accept it.

ADAM

Give them some time, they'll come around. What are you cooking tonight?

ERICA

Cooking? Yeah.. no. I can barely stand on my own and barely got any sleep last night. Either you're doing it or we're getting takeout.

ADAM

Let's just go out then. I'll watch Dante and you go get ready.

ERICA

I have nothing to wear, nothing fits me anymore.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

ADAM

I noticed you did put on some weight, you need to get back to the gym.

ERICA

Well, I just carried a human inside me! Thank you very much. I think that's a good excuse to put on some weight.

ADAM

I didn't say I don't like it, you actually look sexier. Plus your butt got bigger... you know that's how I like it!

ERICA

Oh really.... is that why you're always looking back at any girl you see? You think I don't notice huh...

ADAM

There's nothing wrong with admiring, it's human nature.... I mean a man's nature.

ERICA

mhmm better be just that, you know me

damn well. Here, take Dante so I can change.

She hands him the baby, kisses him on the cheek, and goes to get ready.

END FLASHBACK

INT. ERICA OFFICE - NIGHT

As Erica is still shocked to see the mysterious woman is Nikki, she pulls out her phone. Nikki is still trying to force open the door but she can't. She starts dialing 911 but her hands are shaking. She puts her phone on the glass door to show her she's calling for help.

ERICA

Get the fuck out of here before I call the cops! Go!

Nikki doesn't seem to be phased, she leaves.

INT. ADAM AND ERICA LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

After an intense and horrifying night, Erica is back at home with Adam. Adam is holding his wife in her arms, who is shaken from the experience.

ADAM

So she just showed up in the middle of the night?

ERICA

Yeah... I don't even know how she knew where I work.

ADAM

Did she say anything?

ERICA

No, she just had this crazy look on her face, I was so terrified I couldn't even call 911.

ADAM

I don't understand how she'd just show up out of nowhere. After all these years of me trying to get in touch with her.



ERICA

She's never gonna let us live in peace Adam, can't you see that? We need to do something, I'm not gonna put myself and my kids at risk, who knows what she's capable of.

ADAM

That woman went through a lot, show some compassion. People deal with trauma in different ways.

ERICA

I'm not jeopardizing my family's safety over that, I'm sorry,

ADAM

It's alright, come here. You know I will do everything I can to protect you guys. We're good.

INT. NIKKI CONDO/SHOWER ROOM - DAY

Nikki is in the bathtub taking a shower. She has headphones on and her eyes are closed. Soft music is playing and candles are lit to enhance the relaxation. She starts having flashbacks.

BEGIN FLASHBACK 1975

INT. KINDERGARTEN CLASS- DAY

Young Nikki is a kindergartner. she is extremely shy and keeps to herself. The class is doing a coloring activity, all the kids are sitting in small groups and having fun. Nikki is in a corner working alone, her teacher notices. She comes towards her.

TEACHER

Why are you sitting here alone Nikki?  
You don't want to join the others?

She shakes her head looking down, trying not to make eye contact.

TEACHER

Come on, we'll find you a group to join.

She grabs Nikki's hand and walks toward the other students.

TEACHER

Class, Nikki doesn't have a group yet so who wants to welcome her into theirs?

There is silence, no one answers.

TEACHER

Okaaaay. everyone has to be nice to Nikki, you need to make her feel welcome since she's new to our class.

A little blonde girl with blue eyes, big glasses, and pigtails stands up.

LITTLE GIRL

She can join our group Mrs Walkins.

MRS WALKINS

Well, thank you, Erica! That is very sweet of you, Nikki why don't you go and sit next to Erica. She will help you with the project.

Nikki makes her way through the tight small groups all sitting on the floor. She avoids any eye contact, Erica welcomes her with a smile as she sits by her side.

YOUNG ERICA

Hi!! I'm Erica, what's your name?

YOUNG NIKKI

(in a low pitched nervous voice)  
Nikki.

YOUNG ERICA

I like your hair.

YOUNG NIKKI

Thanks.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Nikki has made a friend in Erica, they even sit together on the school bus. Although Nikki is super shy, she has gotten comfortable around Erica.

ERICA

So what are you doing this weekend?

NIKKI

I have dance class. Sometimes my mom tutors me too.

ERICA

That desn't sound like fun.

NIKKI

Yeah,I know. What will you do?

ERICA

My friend Sarah is having a birthday party, I was invited. Why don't you come with me?

NIKKI

I have to ask my mom first.

ERICA

If she says yes then I'll ask my mom to come to pick you and we can go together.

## THE RETURN OF NIKKI

NIKKI

Okay.

INT. NIKKI PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Nikki and her parents are having a late dinner, they just finished saying grace. Her mother Adrienne passes around the mac and cheese to her.

ADRIANNE

So how's your new school honey?

YOUNG NIKKI

Good.

ADRIANNE

Are you making any friends?

YOUNG NIKKI

Yeah, one of them was nice to me. Her name is Erica.

ADRIANNE

Well, that's great honey! You should invite her over so we can meet her.

YOUNG NIKKI

She invited me to her friend's

birthday party. Can I go?

ADRIANNE

Yeah, why not? When is it?

YOUNG NIKKI

On Saturday.

ADRIANNE

ooh, that's too bad, I have a presentation to work on this weekend.

STAN

I can take her.

YOUNG NIKKI

Erica's mom said she can give me a ride.

ADRIANNE

That works! We need to get her a gift too.

STAN

Okay, that I can't help you with. Why don't you just get it before you go to work?

ADRIANNE

Honey just get her a simple toy, like a barbie or something.

YOUNG NIKKI

Or a dollhouse?

STAN

Aren't those expensive?

ADRIANNE

You know I hate cheap gifts, never mind I'll just get it myself.

YOUNG NIKKI

What am I going to wear?

ADRIANNE

Oh yeah! We need to go shopping too. We're gonna get you the most beautiful dress ever made!

EXT. ADRIANNE & STAN HOUSE/ DRIVEWAY - DAY

On the day of the birthday bash, Erica and her mom arrive at Nikki's house. They knock on the door, Stan opens. Young Nikki is excited to go, she is peeking behind her father.

STAN

Hi! You must be Erica's mom. I'm Stan.

SUZANNE

Hello there! I'm Suzanne.

STAN

Nice to meet you! Thank you so much for doing this, I hope it's not too much trouble.

SUZANNE

Oh, it's no problem at all. I wanted to get her out of the house, otherwise, she'd be glued to the TV all day.

STAN

We give Nikki extracurricular activities to avoid that, you should consider it.

SUZANNE

That sounds like a good idea actually. I'll look into it. So is she ready?

STAN

Yeah! Gon on sweetie.

He lets Nikki pass.

SUZANNE

The party ends at six, will you be home?

STAN

Oh no, I can pick her up.

SUZANNE

It's fine, I live five minutes from here, I'll just drop her off.

STAN

You're too kind. Thank you so much.

SUZANNE

It was nice to meet you. We gotta get going before all the parking spaces are filled. Come on honey let's go.

STAN

Bye baby! Be good okay?

YOUNG NIKKI

Bye.

They head to the car where Erica is waiting for them.

JUMP TO 1985 (10 YEARS LATER)

INT. ERICA & NIKKI HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Nikki and Erica are now teenagers who attend high school. They are still close and always together. During lunchtime, a cute boy comes to their table where they are eating their lunch.

TEEN BOY

Hi, I'm Aaron.

NIKKI

Hi there Aaron, I'm Nikki.

AARON

Nice to meet you, ummm... I wanted to come and ask you if you had any dates for prom already.

NIKKI

Why do you want to take me?

AARON

(nervous chuckle)

Umm... Actually I wanted to ask your friend here if she would go with me.

NIKKI

Erica?

AARON

Yeah.

Nikki is blushing.

NIKKI

Girl, why aren't you saying anything?

ERICA  
Sorry, but I'm not interested.

AARON  
Oh okay.. no worries.

You can see his disappointment clear on his face as he walks away.

NIKKI  
Dude, that wash harsh, even from you.

ERICA  
What do you want me to say? He's not my type.

NIKKI  
Because he's not a dark skinned tall chocolate brother? Yeah I know your type.

ERICA  
Don't judge me because I have a preference, it is my right.

NIKKI  
Keep it up, you're gonna end up an old woman with a bunch of cats.

ERICA  
Better than ending up with someone I am not attracted to.

NIKKI  
Whatever girl, walk with me to class.

They grab their bags and throw away the trash.

INT. TEEN ERICA BEDROOM - NIGHT

On a late-night, the girls are hanging out at Erica's. Nikki is braiding Erica's hair as they watch music videos.

NIKKI  
Hey do you ever wonder what your future will look like?

ERICA  
No. I'm too young to be thinking about that. Why?

NIKKI

That's what I was thinking about all day today. Like what kind of job will I have, how many kids I will have.. things like that..

ERICA

I don't think I'm gonna have kids.

NIKKI

Why not?

ERICA

I just never pictured myself with kids. I do want to get married though.

NIKKI

I want to have a lot of kids, it sucks being the only child... it gets boring.

ERICA

So you want to be a housewife?

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

NIKKI

No! I will also have a career, probably working for myself. I have it all planned out.

ERICA

I seriously feel like sometimes you are a thirty year old in a teenager's body, it freaks me out. Stop it.

Erica's mother Suzanne opens the door and interrupts their conversation.

SUZANNE

Dinner's ready guys, come on.

ERICA

We're almost done ma, coming.

SUZANNE

Okay, hurry up. We're not gonna keep waiting for you.

EXT. LOCAL CARNIVAL - DAY

Nikki is at a carnival. Kids are going on rides, others playing fun games. She is sitting on a bench eating her



popsicle as she sits watching everything. A guy comes to her and taps her on the shoulder, he gives her a teddy bear. She smiles. He sits down.

NIKKI

Awww.. thank you. How'd you know I like teddy bears?

DATE GUY

Your friend told me.

NIKKI

Hmmm... I see you have done your research. I like that.

DATE GUY

I was hoping it would earn me a second date.

NIKKI

(chuckles)

We haven't even finished our first!

DATE GUY

Well, how's it going so far?

NIKKI

I'll let you know at the end.

DATE GUY

Nice!

NIKKI

Can I ask you something, Adam?

TEEN ADAM

Sure!

NIKKI

Don't take this the wrong way but most of my friends were shocked that you asked me out.

TEEN ADAM

Why's that?

NIKKI

Well..... because everyone knows you only like white girls.

TEEN ADAM

Is that what you think?

NIKKI

I mean I don't know what to think,  
we're on a date.

TEEN ADAM

Let me ask you this... do you have a  
favorite food?

NIKKI

Yeah.

TEEN ADAM

So just because that is your favorite  
food, does it mean that's all you eat?  
You try other foods too. Just because  
I have a preference, does not mean I  
don't find other ethnicities  
attractive. A preference is just  
that..a preference.

NIKKI

I guess you're right. We like what we  
like.

TEEN ADAM

I don't want you to take this as if  
I'm just experimenting with dating  
black girls. I like you because of who  
you are, I think you're a great person  
and I want to get to know you. Please  
don't judge me because of what you  
hear about me.

NIKKI

You're right. I shouldn't have even  
brought it up. I'm sorry.

TEEN ADAM

No, I'm glad you did. That way we got  
it out of the way and you won't have  
hesitations going forward. I'd like to  
get back to our date though.

NIKKI

Yeah... let's do that. I think I want  
to go on some rides, it looks fun.

TEEN ADAM

I don't do too well with rides.

NIKKI

You'll be fine.. I'll hold your hand  
if you get scared. Come on.

They both get up and Nikki reaches for his hand as they walk to get in line.

INT. ERICA BATHROOM - NIGHT

Erica is washing her face and brushing her teeth to get ready for bed. After drying it and putting on some moisturizer, she stares at herself. She starts braiding her hair into cornrows but fails. She gets frustrated. She goes to her bed and sits down. She grabs a magazine from her nightstand. It's a JET magazine, she starts looking through it. As she flips the next page, there's a picture of a shirtless muscular guy. She stops and stares looking at every inch of his body.

SUZANNE

Erica!!

Erica is startled by the loud call of her mother

ERICA

Yes Mom!

SUZANNE

Come here!

ERICA

Be there in a minute!

She puts a pen on the page she was on and closes the magazine to answer her mom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM- DAY

Erica is in her Math class, it hasn't started yet. Students are quiet, waiting for their teacher to start the day's lesson. Nikki enters the classroom, everyone's eyes are fixed on her. She walks in gracefully, she just got beautiful braids. Erica signals that she saved her seat, she rushes and makes her way through the desks.

ERICA

Damn girl! You can't keep the same  
hairstyle for more than two weeks.

NIKKI  
I like switching it up a little.

ERICA  
Who did them? They're so pretty!

NIKKI  
A friend of mine referred me to her  
cousin, she has a salon downtown  
Atlanta.

ERICA  
You need to give me their number, I  
need to check them out.

NIKKI  
What, you want some braids?

ERICA  
Yeah, why not?

NIKKI  
(laughs)  
Girl, you're crazy.

TEACHER #2  
Alright class, I need your assignments  
turned in and open your books to page  
twenty-five.

The girls start going through their backpacks to get their assignments.

INT. HAIR SALON - DAY

Erica enters a black hair salon that Nikki referred her to. She stands by the reception desk but there is no one there. One of the hairstylists comes to help her.

HAIRSTYLIST  
Hi, Can I help you?

ERICA  
Yeah, I wanted to ask how much does it  
cost for cornrows?

HAIRSTYLIST  
It depends on the exact style, the big  
ones start at fifty dollars.

ERICA

Perfect, I would like to set up an appointment then.

HAIRSTYLIST

Okay, what's the name of the person you're setting it for?

ERICA

It's for me.

The hairstylist looks at her like she did not hear her right.

HAIRSTYLIST

I'm sorry?

ERICA

Yeah, I want to get braids.

HAIRSTYLIST

Umm.. Miss, I don't think we can do your hair.

ERICA

Why's that?

HAIRSTYLIST

We do black hair here, plus they wouldn't even last a month. They would start falling off.

ERICA

Oh come on! I'm sure you have someone here who can do it. I can even pay you extra.

She thinks about it for a moment.

HAIRSTYLIST

Okay, but I'm just letting you know they won't last.

ERICA

It's okay, I'm not planning on keeping it for long.

HAIRSTYLIST

Alright, if that's what you want to do. I have next Saturday at eleven. Does that work?

ERICA  
That's perfect.

HAIRSTYLIST  
You also need to bring your own hair.  
If you can't, we would charge you for  
it.

ERICA  
I'll get the hair. Thank you very  
much, I'll see you next week.

EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY

Early in the morning, Nikki is with her friends chatting  
before classes begin by the doors of the assembly room.  
Someone walks towards them, it's Erica. All the girls jaws  
are dropped by seeing her rocking a similar hairstyle that  
Nikki has. She sits down.

ERICA  
Hey guys!

They are still in shock. One of them seems angry.

GIRL  
Damn girl, where did you get those  
braids?

ERICA  
Same salon Nikki got hers, what do you  
think?

GIRL #2  
Do you want to know our honest  
opinion?

ERICA  
Well of course!

NIKKI  
Erica, what were you thinking?

ERICA  
What do you mean?

GIRL #3  
You did this to troll us, didn't you?

ERICA  
Ummm.. no. I did it because I thought

it was cute on me.

GIRL #2

Hate to break it to you girl but it doesn't. You know better than to wear a black hairstyle at a mostly black school. You want to get trolled huh?

ERICA

I can wear whatever I want, who are you to tell me what I should or shouldn't do to my hair? And by the way, braids aren't just for black people. Y'all wear weaves and wigs with white people's hair and no one says anything.

GIRL #3

(sarcastic chuckle)

You should know better, especially you being in our group. Nikki why the hell aren't you saying anything? Get your girl.

## THE RETURN OF NIKKI

NIKKI

I have nothing to say.

ERICA

Are you guys trying to gang up on me today? Why, because I look better than all of you in braids? Because they look better on a white girl?

One of the girls jumps at her and starts a fight. The rest try to stop it before they all get in trouble.

NIKKI

Stop it!! stop it now! I'm not gonna get in trouble because of you.

They eventually break it up. The three girls quickly leave, as Nikki and Erica stay.

ERICA

I see you let your little guard dogs get at me.

NIKKI

Don't ever come close to me again, you hear me?

ERICA

Whatever you guys are just a bunch of haters.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Erica enters a gas station, she buys a few snacks. After she's done, she runs into Adam who is putting some gas in his car. She walks over to him.

TEEN ERICA

Adam! Hey! How are you?

TEEN ADAM

Oh Hi Erica! What's up?

TEEN ERICA

I'm good. Just came to get some snacks before I head home.

TEEN ADAM

Do you need a ride?

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

TEEN ERICA

She starts talking in a flirtatious tone and voice.

I don't think your girl would appreciate that. Especially after our fight.

TEEN ADAM

Oh yeah, she told me about what happened.

TEEN ERICA

What do you think about it? I'm sure you side with her.

TEEN ADAM

Surprisingly, I don't. I believe everyone is allowed to do their hair however they want. Style has no color.

TEEN ERICA

Oh really! That's actually surprising. Like when I found out you two were dating.

TEEN ADAM

Why?



TEEN ERICA

Come on, everyone knows you only date white girls.

TEEN ADAM

There's nothing to be shocked about, I love her for who she is. Just because I'm attracted to a different race than mine, doesn't mean I won't date a black girl.

TEEN ERICA

Yeah but I mean you can't be with someone you're not attracted to right?

TEEN ADAM

Who said I'm not attracted to her?

TEEN ERICA

Wel look at you standing up for your girl! That's a committed man right there! I'm happy for you guys.

TEEN ADAM

(chuckles)

Thank you.I better get going or you'll get me into more trouble. See you around.

INT. NIKKI BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nikki is doing her homework in her bedroom, while she listens to relaxing music. Someone knocks on her door. It's her mother.

ADRIANNE

Honey someone is here to see you.

TEEN NIKKI

Who?

Erica enters the room. Nikki is not too pleased.

TEEN ERICA

Heey..

TEEN NIKKI

Hey what's up?

TEEN ERICA

I wanted to come over and apologize

for what happened the other day.

TEEN NIKKI  
I'm listening.

TEEN ERICA  
I know I said some harsh things. I was way out of line and didn't see where you guys were coming from.

TEEN NIKKI  
So do you now?

TEEN ERICA  
Yeah, I do. I also want you to know that I didn't get those braids with any bad intentions. I just thought they were cute. I guess I just wanted to fit in with you guys.

Nikki closes her books and sits closer to her friend.

TEEN NIKKI  
Erica you don't have to look like we do to fit in with us, we like you because of you. You don't have to mimic who you are and change yourself to feel like you belong. It's not fair to us or you. You being white has nothing to do with it. Okay?

TEEN ERICA  
Yeah, you're right. But I'm truly sorry for what I said, I was way out of line. I love you, you're my best friend.

TEEN NIKKI  
So are you, and I know we're gonna get into more arguments.. hopefully not about things like this. It happens in friendships, but I know ours is strong to endure them.

TEEN ERICA  
So best friends then?

TEEN NIKKI  
Always! Come here.

They hug it out.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Nikki is spending time with her father, they are fishing. Stan just caught one. He turns to show his daughter what he caught but Nikki seems to be lost in her thoughts. Stan tries to awake her.

STAN

So how's school? Anything new?

TEEN NIKKI

No.. not much. Still trying to figure out what's next after high school.

STAN

I wouldn't stress out about it too much, but it is your future.

TEEN NIKKI

I kind of feel lost that I'm not certain of what career I want to do.

STAN

Well what are you passionate about?

TEEN NIKKI

Most things. That's why it's so hard.

STAN

Okay let me try another way. What do you want to be remembered for?

TEEN NIKKI

I just want to help people. I want to give opportunities to those less privileged.

STAN

There you go. Just start there and you'll figure it out along the way.

TEEN NIKKI

How did you know what you wanted to do dad?

STAN

It took me a lot of years to find out. At first I was chasing the glamour you know... the money and respect. I thought that I would find happiness in that, I didn't. So take your time and

learn more about yourself and your place in this world. Don't let other people define what success means, go out there and find out for yourself alright?

TEEN NIKKI

Thanks dad, I'll keep that in mind.

STAN

Now come on, stop thinking about. Let's see if you can get something.

BEGIN QUICK MONTAGES

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Erica and Nikki just graduated, they are taking photos with all their family members. Adam is also present.

INT. ADAM PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Adam and Nikki are having dinner with their parents and close friends on Christmas. Adam gets up and kneels in front of Nikki. He pulls out a ring and asks her to marry him. She says yes as they embrace and everyone claps for them.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Erica is having a romantic night with a handsome, dark-skinned black man. She is giving him a massage as he lays on the bed.

EXT. LUSH GARDEN - DAY

It's Nikki and Adam's big day. Nikki is wearing a beautiful body hugging white dress and all her bridesmaids are dressing in pale pink. It's the perfect spring wedding, there are beautiful colorful flowers all around them. They exchange rings and seal them with a kiss. Erica does not look too pleased with the event, she is trying to force a smile even though she is the maid of honor.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - NIGHT

Erica has a full shopping cart full of new clothes she is about to purchase. Her card gets declined, she has to put some clothes back. It's an uncomfortable situation.

EXT. NIKKI NEW FOUNDATION - DAY

Nikki is celebrating the launch of her business "Nikki's chateau" a home decor store. Nikki is talking with some of the guests, charming them with her warm smile and friendliness. Adam is talking to Nikki in a corner, Nikki catches him checking out Erica.

EXT. NIKKI AND ADAM BACKYARD - DAY

It's Nikki's baby shower, she's having a girl so most of the colors are pink. Everyone is sitting in a circle watching Nikki open her baby shower presents. Erica is putting them away and helping her open the big ones.

END MONTAGE.

INT. NIKKI OFFICE - DAY

1998

Nikki is back to work after delivering her baby girl. She's in her office working. Erica comes in without knocking.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

ERICA

Well hello, Miss can't answer her phone.

NIKKI

Oh My God! Erica! What a beautiful surprise! I didn't know we were supposed to meet today.

ERICA

We weren't. I just thought I'd stop by and see how you're doing. I couldn't reach you today.

NIKKI

Ugh... I've been trying to get caught up with everything and it's draining me.

ERICA

Don't you think you came back a little sooner though? I mean you just had the baby two months ago.

NIKKI

I know but I have a responsibility here too, I want to make sure

everything is running smoothly. You know how I am. Anyways, what's up with you?

ERICA

I just got back from an interview, I don't think I'll even get a callback. I totally bombed.

NIKKI

Do you know something crazy? A few days ago I had an idea. Why don't you come work here? I could definitely use another hand.

ERICA

I don't know about that Nikki.

NIKKI

It's not that complicated, plus I could train you myself. Come on... wouldn't it be fun to work together?

ERICA

I just have a bad feeling about mixing friendship with work. And it feels like charity.

NIKKI

No it's not! I'm asking because I trust you and know you would get it done.

ERICA

I just feel like I wouldn't be deserving of this. There are more qualified people out there, I can't take their opportunity.

NIKKI

Wow, I see you still have your ego perfectly intact. I guess there's no need to keep asking.

ERICA

It's for the best Nikki. Business and relationships do not mix.

NIKKI

Alright, I can accept that. Why don't we go to lunch then? I'm starved.

ERICA

Let's go.

EXT. NIKKI AND ADAM BACKYARD - DAY

FOUR YEARS LATER.

Nikki and Adam's daughter Simone just turned three. They are having an intimate birthday bash for her. It's a unicorn-themed party. Erica and Nikki are sitting on the grass watching the kids play.

NIKKI

So when are we gonna have a party like this for little Erica missy?

ERICA

Yeah.. you're gonna have to put that thought away.

NIKKI

You still don't want kids huh?

ERICA

There's nothing wrong with that. I feel like every time I say it, people judge me.

NIKKI

I respect your decisions, you know that. It's just that when I see you with Simone, It makes me feel like you'd be a great mother. Plus I want to be a godmother as well, spoil your kids like you spoil mine.

ERICA

I mean who knows, life is full of surprises. For now, I haven't changed my mind. Plus I have Simone, she's like my own child.

NIKKI

You know she adores you.

ERICA

I know, I love that little girl so much.

Simone runs towards her mother, she hugs her and sits on her lap. Adam who is on the grill has been watching them, he and

Erica make contact at the same time. There is some chemistry.

INT. ERICA APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nikki and Adam arrive at the door of Nikki's new apartment. They brought some wine. They knock on the door, she answers.

ERICA

Always on Nikki time huh?

ADAM

It was all her. I was ready on time.

ERICA

Well, get in.

Erica's apartment is quite chic, everything looks brand new. There are some African artifacts all around the house. Nikki and Adam are looking around, checking it out.

NIKKI

Oh my God, it's so pretty! I love it!

ERICA

Really? You don't think it's too much?

NIKKI

Of course not, I like the cozy and warm ambiance it gives. I don't like too much blank space in a house.

Someone knocks on the door again. Erica's smile gets bigger.

ERICA

Oh God, it's him!!

NIKKI

Well, go open silly!

She opens the door, the man is hiding behind a red bouquet.

MAN

These are for you Madame!

ERICA

Awww thank you, Steve. Please come in!

He kisses her on the cheek and enters. Steve is an average height, skinny, caramel complexion black man.



ERICA

Guys, I want you to meet Steve.

NIKKI

Nice to meet you, Steve! I'm Nikki,  
this is my husband Adam.

ADAM

Hey, how are you doing man?

STEVE

It's a pleasure to meet you both.

ERICA

Well now that everyone is here, I'm  
gonna set the table for dinner. Nikki,  
can you give me a hand?

NIKKI

Yeah, sure. Why don't you two go sit  
for a while, we'll call you when it's  
ready.

Steve and Adam go and sit in the living room.

They are now sitting at the table having dinner.

NIKKI

So what do you do Steve?

STEVE

I have a production company, we shoot  
short films, music videos,  
commercials.. that sort of thing.

NIKKI

How nice! So how did you meet Erica?

STEVE

We met on set.

ADAM

So are you two official?

Erica and Steve look at each other before answering.

ERICA

Yeah, I think we're pretty official.

STEVE

Erica is quite the woman, she has this

fierce attitude and passion for life that makes her irresistible to me. She spices things up for me.

Adam chuckles.

ERICA

Excuse me, I'm gonna go get some more salad.

NIKKI

I'll help you with that.

ADAM

No, it's okay babe, I'll go help her.

Nikki is confused with his attitude.

They go into the kitchen, Erica is quiet.

ADAM

So are you really going out with that guy?

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

ERICA

Yeah, why not? I can't stay single for the rest of my life. I have to find my own partner.

ADAM

He's not your type.

ERICA

Oh really? Do you know my type?

ADAM

I do, and it's not him.

ERICA

What the hell are you talking about?

ADAM

Let's stop beating around the bush.. you and I have something... we can't hide it. We have undeniable chemistry.

ERICA

Don't flatter yourself, you're feeling yourself way too much.

Adam gets close to her. He grabs her hips, she starts

breathing too fast.

ADAM

Look me in my eyes and tell me I'm  
lying and you don't feel anything  
towards me..

Erica is silent, they both stare at each other. He pulls even closer, as he's about to walk away she grabs his hands. She kisses him passionately as he hugs her tight. After the long embrace, Adam realizes what they just did. He is too late though as Nikki has been standing by the door watching them.

NIKKI

(shakes her head and chuckles)  
You know it's funny how instincts are  
accurate all the time. Something told  
me to come in here for no reason.

ADAM

Honey... I can...

NIKKI

THE RETURN OF NIKKI  
You shut up!! If you care for your  
safety, you wouldn't say anything  
right now. With the rage inside me, I  
don't know what I'm capable of.

Steve comes to join them after hearing loud voices.

STEVE

What's going on?

ERICA

Look Nikki it's not what you think.

NIKKI

Are you fucking kidding me! It's not  
what I think... So my eyes are  
deceiving me? I knew you were  
tasteless and classeless but I never  
thought you'd stoop this low. Really?  
My husband? And you stand there with  
your chest high and tell me it's not  
what I think?

ADAM

Baby listen... I

Because he could finish the sentence, she slaps him so hard  
it echoes the room.

NIKKI

I better get out of here, because I have a child that needs a mother so I'm not going to jail for two useless human beings you two are. You can have each other, I'm done with both of you. But just so we're clear, both of you better stay the hell away from me and my child or I'll kill you. That's a promise.

Nikki exits, she passes by Steve who is still confused. She stops to tell him something.

NIKKI

You should go home, apparently, she has found the man she was looking for in my husband.

Nikki leaves the apartment leaving all three of them still standing in the kitchen.

INT. NIKKI AND ADAM BEDROOM - NIGHT

After an intense dramatic night, Adam arrives home. He quietly goes into his daughter's room who is sleeping. He kisses her on the forehead and sneaks out. He goes up the stairs to his bedroom, finding Nikki sitting on the other side of the bed.

ADAM

I'm here to get my things.

NIKKI

Yeah, I think that's a good idea because you might find them on the streets tomorrow.

ADAM

I don't know what to say... I didn't want you to find out this way. We got caught up in the moment.

NIKKI

Please don't insult me. You think I didn't notice all the sneaky flirting, eye contact and the constant touching? You think I'm that stupid to not catch up on what was happening?

(chuckles and shakes head)

I've always known you were attracted

to white women, it didn't bother me. But going after my best friend, that's sticking a knife in my back and twisting it. Both of you are scums for doing this, two of the people I cared about so much almost my whole life, this what I get. Just get your shit and get out of my house and my life. I guess I don't need to tell you that this marriage is over, I want a divorce.

Adam starts gathering his belongings.

INT. ERICA APARTMENT - NIGHT

That same night, it's raining and heavy thunder. Erica is awoken by a knock on her door. She puts on some clothes and her slippers. She opens, it's Adam with a bunch of suitcases and bags.

ADAM

I didn't know where else to go.

ERICA

Come in...

She helps him get his bags inside. Adam takes off his jacket. They both don't know what to say, Adam looks defeated. She gets close to him, hugs him, then looks up and gives him a soft kiss on the lips. As she pulls away, he grabs her face and kisses her more.

EXT. SIMONE SCHOOL - DAY

2004

Adam and Erica are waiting in the car for Simone at her school. He notices her walking out of the building.

ADAM

Simone!

Simone turns around to see her daddy waving at her. She runs to the car.

ADAM

So How was school today?

ERICA

Boring, we had a substitute teacher.

ERICA

Hi Simone!

SIMONE

My mom told me not to talk to you.

There is an awkward silence.

SIMONE

So daddy, are we still going to the arcade place on Saturday?

ADAM

I have to ask your mother for permission first honey.

SIMONE

But why? You didn't have to before.

ADAM

That's just how it is now.

SIMONE

THE RETURN OF NIKKI  
Why can't things be like before? And why do you live somewhere else now? You don't like living with us?

ADAM

No, no. It's not about that. Of course, I want to live with you. It's just that mommy and daddy's relationship has changed.

SIMONE

You don't love each other anymore?

ADAM

No, no it's not that. I love your mother. I will always love her... it's complicated. I'll explain it to you when you're a bit older.

SIMONE

I wish things were like before, I hate how it is now. Can't you just come back and stay with us?

ADAM

I can't sweetheart.

SIMONE

This sucks.

Simone is quite upset, she puts on headphones and listens to music.

INT. ERICA APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam and Erica are cuddling in their bed at night. Erica is laying on his chest while they watch TV.

ERICA

I'm going over to my mother's tomorrow. Want to come?

ADAM

No, I have some errands to run.

ERICA

What about after?

ADAM

I have too much going on. My top priority is spending time with my daughter.

ERICA

So our relationship is not a priority?

ADAM

I have a daughter I barely see, I'm sure you understand that. Actually, I've been thinking. Maybe we should take a break and spend some time apart.

ERICA

Wait... what?

ADAM

This whole thing doesn't feel right, this relationship is causing me to make too many sacrifices I don't think I'm ready to make.

ERICA

Are you breaking up with me?

ADAM

I need to get my daughter back, this relationship makes it harder for me to

do that. You're a great person and I do love you, but I can't sacrifice my relationship with Simone for you. Nikki is not making it easy for me to spend time with her, as long as we're together. I don't blame her either. that's why this has to end. I'll go find a place tomorrow.

Adam turns off the lamp and goes to sleep, leaving Erica still lost about what just happened.

EXT. NIKKI HOUSE/ BACKYARD - NIGHT

Erica is sitting in her car, watching Nikki's house. It's very late and dark. Nikki's car is not there and there seems to be no one in the house. She gets out of her car and walks to the backyard wearing a big hooded sweater. She tries to open the gate but it won't open. There's a window right next to her, it's open. She peeks inside, no one there. She pulls out a lighter and a piece of cloth. She lights it up and throws it through the windows. It lands right by the bed. The cover takes fire and the bed starts burning. She leaves. She drives off and looks at the side-view mirror, the room is ablaze.

END FLASHBACK MONTAGE.

INT. NIKKI CONDO/SHOWER ROOM - DAY (CONTINUED)

After a long walk down memory lane, Nikki is left with tears rolling down her eyes. She gets out of the shower and puts on a robe.

EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

Adam is dining by himself outside. It's the middle of the day, not too many people so it's nice and quiet. A woman wearing sunglasses passes by him and stops. She stares at him until he notices her. He's creeped out by it and stops eating.

ADAM

Hi, Can I help you?

The woman comes over to his table and sits next to him.

ADAM

I'm sorry, I think you got the wrong table.



She takes off her glasses, it's Nikki.

ADAM

Nikki? Oh my! What a surprise! Wha...  
how... I'm so lost.

NIKKI

Yes, Adam, you didn't see a ghost.  
It's me.

ADAM

Where have you been? How long have you  
been in town?

NIKKI

For a few weeks now.

ADAM

I haven't seen you in years. You just  
disappeared.

NIKKI

I needed a break and a new  
environment. I had nothing left in  
this town anyway. What about you?

ADAM

I'm good, the kids are all grown now.  
My oldest... my son is sixteen now and  
the youngest is six.

NIKKI

That's great. You seem to be doing  
well for yourself.

ADAM

Yeah I'm doing alright. So what brings  
you here?

NIKKI

I kind of missed it here. And I wanted  
to visit my mother.

There is some silence, no one knows how to continue the  
conversation.

ADAM

I really don't know what to say right  
now, it's a lot of things I want to  
say but not enough time.

NIKKI

I don't need to hear anything from you, I put everything behind me. What we had is history, just a chapter in our lives. Let's keep it in the past, it's better for both of us.

ADAM

I still want to say I'm sorry for everything. Every day I think about what I did to you and my conscience eats me alive.

NIKKI

I'm over all the things that happened between us and what you put me through Adam. I've forgiven you, not for you.. for me and my peace.

Their conversation is interrupted by a call. Adam picks up the phone and looks at who's calling.

ADAM

I have to pick this. It's... my wife.

NIKKI

Yeah, I should get going.

ADAM

Take care of yourself

NIKKI

You too.

INT. ADAM AND ERICA HOUSE/ DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It's dinner time for Adam and his household. The kids are on their phones while they eat. Erica is bringing more dishes to the table. Adam is quiet.

ERICA

What did I say are the rules at the table? No phones! Both of you put it down.

KEISHA

But it's so boring.

ERICA

That's why we talk and have family time. Off the phone now. I won't say

it again.

ADAM

Your mother's right, phones are not allowed during dinner time. Anyways, how was everyone's day?

DANTE

Well, my day was really great, I got paid. I'm gonna start saving up for a car now.

ADAM

That's great son! But you better remember what comes first, school. Don't get all caught up just because you're making a little bit of money. Okay?

DANTE

Yes, father. I'm reminded every day before I go to work.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

ERICA

So, babe, you didn't call me back earlier today. What happened?

ADAM

I was meeting someone when you called, I kind of forgot.

ERICA

Wait, who?

ADAM

It's... Nikki.

ERICA

Where did you guys meet?

ADAM

She ran into me at a restaurant.

ERICA

What did she want?

ADAM

What do you mean? We just ran into each other. We said hello and that's it.

ERICA

And you didn't bother sharing that piece of information?

ADAM

I'm telling you now am I not?

ERICA

You don't think that's something you're supposed to tell me right away? You wouldn't have told me if I hadn't even asked, would you? That woman came to my office and threatened me Adam! Do you think it's a coincidence that she ran into you?

ADAM

Have you lost your damn mind? This is not the place nor the time to do this.

DANTE

Dad who's Nikki?

ADAM

Don't worry about it, finish your food.

INT. NIKKI PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Nikki is at her mother's house. They are watering the plants in the front yard. Adrienne is now old, she has aged gracefully though. She walks with a cane. A car pulls up on their driveway. Erica gets out, Nikki sees that it's her. She goes to stop her from getting further.

NIKKI

You must have lost your damn mind coming here! You better not take another step.

ERICA

I heard you had lunch with my husband. I don't know what you're up to but you know me don't you? I'll protect what's mine no matter the cost.

NIKKI

You need to get out of here right now before it gets ugly!

ERICA

And what are you gonna do about it?

NIKKI

You want to find out?

ADRIANNE

Little girl, you better get back in that car and leave before we call the cops!

ERICA

Stay out of this grandma.

Nikki is furious, she slaps her across the face. They start to quarrel. Erica pushes Nikki to the ground, she gets back up grabs her as they tussle on the concrete. Adrienne tries to stop them, Erica pushes her, she falls. Nikki jumps on her, punches her in the stomach, and some fists to the face. Erica's purse is on the floor, there is a gun that fell out. She tries to grab it but Nikki stops her, Adrienne gets to it. She points it to Erica.

ADRIANNE

Get out of my house now!

Both of the girls are panting hard.

ADRIANNE

I said get out of here before I pull this trigger!

NIKKI

Mom, stop!

ADRIANNE

This woman is pure evil! She doesn't deserve to live! Look at what she has done to this family! She is a curse that was brought upon us, I will not let her hurt us even more, you understand me?

Erica gets up, grabs her purse.

ERICA

You stay away from me, my husband, and my family. This is your only warning.

She leaves.

EXT. GRAVEYARD VISIT - DAY

Niki went to visit her daughter's grave. She puts some new flowers, cleans out the leaves and things that fell around the site.

NIKKI

Hi sweetie, I miss you. Sorry I haven't been coming to visit that much but I keep you in my heart everyday. I think about you every day, I pray that you are in a better place and watching over us. I'm also sorry that I wasn't there to protect you when you needed me to. It kills me to this day. Just to think about the pain you endured that time, guts me to the core.

(gets emotional)

BEGIN FLASHBACK MONTAGE

EXT. NIKKI HOUSE/ BACKYARD - NIGHT ( CONTINUED)

After Erica set the bedroom on fire, it gets bigger. The fire starts taking on more rooms, it reaches Simone's room who is asleep as her grandfather is sitting on the chair in a deep sleep as well. They are trapped, Stan wakes up to the horrific scene, he wakes up abruptly and grabs Simone. She starts crying, he gets a blanket and puts it on her to cover her. There is no way they can get out. He breaks the glass window, manages to throw Simone through the window before the fire consumes him. Simone is unconscious on the grass. Some neighbors come running towards her with extinguishers.

WOMAN

Honey look, there's a kid!

MAN

See if she's breathing, I'm gonna see if anyone's still inside.

The man starts using their extinguisher to get through inside but the fires are too strong. The wife is doing CPR on Simone but she's not responding. More neighbors come out to try and fight the fire, a woman is calling for help.

INT. ICU ROOM - NIGHT

Nikki is at the hospital waiting for any updates. Her daughter is in the emergency room being treated. She is sitting with her mother who is praying. Adam is in a corner looking helpless. One of the doctors come to them.

ADRIANNE

How is she, doctor? Is she awake?

DOCTOR

Mr and Mrs Wills, I'm sorry to tell you that they both didn't make it. The smoke damaged their lungs pretty badly, we tried everything we could to save them but we were a bit too late. I'm very sorry.

Niki falls to the ground, everyone breaks down in tears. They go to see them one last time. Nikki has no emotion as she stares at her daughter's small body covered with white sheets as Adam is standing next to her. She kisses her forehead. Adrienne is by her husband's body mourning in tears.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

The family is gathered to bury Simone and Stan. Their graveyards are next to each other. The pastor is preaching as the crowd listens, Nikki is sitting in the front with Adam. Erica is there as well, standing way in the back. Adrienne is being comforted by a friend. Once the pastor is finished, everyone takes turns saying their final goodbyes. Nikki stays seated. She turns to her left, makes eye contact with Erica. Later, after everyone has left. Nikki is still at the site, she gets up and goes to the caskets. She places a rose on top of each casket, then bursts into tears.

INT. NIKKI PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

After losing her daughter, Nikki lives with her mother. She has lost weight, her head is now shaved. The glow that she had is gone, the tragedy they just experienced has aged her a bit. She is sitting outside on the patio swing, staring at nothing. Her mother comes to sit by her. She holds her hands, Nikki looks like she wants to say something but words can't come out. She lays on her mother's shoulder and sobs like a child. Her mother kisses her head as they console each other.

END FLASHBACK MONTAGE.

EXT. GRAVEYARD VISIT - DAY (CONTINUED)

After spending some time visiting her late daughter and father, she puts flowers on both sites and leaves.

INT. ERICA AND ADAM BEDROOM - DAY

Erica is getting ready to leave for work, Adam is still in bed. She opens the nightstand. The noises of her scattering things around wake up Adam.

ADAM

Can you not make so much noise? I'm trying to sleep.

ERICA

Have you seen my charger?

ADAM

You never know where you put your things, how am I supposed to know?

ERICA

What the hell is up with your attitude lately? Since last night you've been giving me the cold shoulder, I'm the one who should be mad, not you. You're the one who went behind my back and met up with his ex!

ADAM

Are you fucking joking! I said she ran into me! It wasn't planned. Do you not listen or what?

ERICA

I mean how would you feel if I met with my ex and didn't tell you?

ADAM

Which one? There's a dozen of them so who are you talking about specifically?

ERICA

How dare you!

ADAM

(clicks tongue)

You make such a big deal out of nothing, I'm getting sick of you and your insecurities. It doesn't matter what I do, I will get shit for it. That's not how I'm trying to live my life, living in fear over every little thing I do. I never had this issue



when I was with..

ERICA

Ooooh... so you regret marrying me now? Because all of a sudden your ex popped up? I didn't force you to be with me... you made that decision. Don't get it twisted, I could have had any guy I wanted.

ADAM

Yet you set your eyes on your best friend's husband, way to go.

ERICA

You know what? I'm gonna go.

Erica grabs her purse.

I'm not dealing with this today. If you want to go back to your ex-wife you can go right ahead... I'm not holding you hostage here.

She gets in her car and takes her rage out on the dashboard, punching it a few times and screaming to the top of her lungs.

INT. ADRIANNE HOUSE - DAY

Adam is at Adrienne's house, they are sitting in the living room. Adam seems uncomfortable with how to start the convo.

ADAM

Thank you for allowing me in your house.

ADRIANNE

I'm surprised I let you in myself, I didn't think I could even after all these years.

ADAM

I know I never got the chance to truly apologize for all the pain I caused you and your family. I know I'm not worth your forgiveness but I still want you to know how truly and deeply sorry I am for everything.

ADRIANNE

How come it took all these years to finally say that to me?

ADAM

I was ashamed, couldn't even stand in front of you. I guess I didn't want to be reminded of all the horrible decisions I made that affected your daughter.

ADRIANNE

Hmmm...better late than ever I guess. I want you to know that I forgave you a long time ago, that doesn't mean I forgot though.

ADAM

I understand. Thank you.

ADRIANNE

So is that all you came for? To apologize?

THE RETURN OF NIKKI

ADAM

Well, lately I've been thinking a lot about that night. I feel like I wasn't told everything. So much was going on, I didn't get the chance to ask what really happened.

ADRIANNE

Are you sure that's something you want to talk about? Because I don't.

ADAM

Please, I have been avoiding finding out but I won't be able to move on until I get some answers. Nikki wasn't even talking to me at that time, no one was actually. I was focused on trying to grasp that I just lost my daughter, I realized I didn't know the whole story.

ADRIANNE

So what is it exactly that you want to know?

ADAM

I know the police said that the fire

could have been caused by a candle that was lit or something left on the stove. Were there any updates on that?

Adrienne is startled by his statement.

ADRIANNE

Hold on... wait...wait a minute. So you're not aware of what actually happened?

ADAM

No, that's what I'm trying to find out.

ADRIANNE

The fire wasn't started by accident Adam, someone caused it.

ADAM

I'm sorry... what?

ADRIANNE

(voice starts to crack)

I don't think I'm ready to get into this again, I can't.

ADAM

Please, Adrienne, I can't rest until I know the truth. I have to for my sanity... I have been having nightmares every night and something tells me I need to know the whole truth.

ADRIANNE

Maybe you should ask your so-called wife.

Adrienne gets up and goes to the bedroom, leaving Adam trying to take in what he just heard. She comes back, slams an envelope on the table.

INT. ERICA FOUNDATION- DAY

It's a busy day for Erica at her office. She is having a meeting with some new investors. She is giving a presentation.

ERICA

Gentlemen, when I started this

foundation, I knew that these girls were meant for so much more. They may have been born in unfair conditions but with your help, we can help them secure an extraordinary future. I believe in them and what they can achieve, just like I believe you do too. We have a lot of new projects coming up and with your help, we can change these girls' lives.

All of a sudden, Erica notices her husband walking into the building with a scary angry expression. He scans around to find her in the conference room, he enters. Everyone in the meeting is confused, Adam stands by the door as Erica comes to him to find out what's going on.

ERICA

What are you doing here? I'm kind of busy right now.

ADAM

I'm gonna ask you one simple question and all I need is the truth.

ERICA

Do you not see what I'm in the middle of? I just said I'm busy. I'm sure this can wait.

ADAM

I don't think you're hearing me, What happened to my daughter?

Erica walks away but Adam grabs her hand aggressively and stops her. He pulls out a photograph, holds it in front of her. It is a picture of Erica the night she burned Nikki's house. It shows her wearing a hoodie, getting in her car. He shows her another picture showing her license plates. You can see the fear in Erica's eyes.

ADAM

What happened to my daughter you fucking bitch!?

Adam starts choking her.

ADAM

What did you do to my daughter? You fucking killed my child!!! You took her away from me!!

He slams her on the conference table as he punches her face repeatedly, some people try to stop him but he's too strong.

ADAM

You will rot in hell for this! You hear me!!? I'm gonna fucking kill you myself you evil bitch!!! I'll kill you!

Two employees come running to diffuse the situation, it takes them a while to get him off of her as he won't let go of her. Erica is now bloody, her lips and nose are bleeding. The guards hold Adam as Erica's assistant helps her get up.

ADAM

You better run! Do you hear me?? You better run before I get to you because I'll fucking skin you alive! Hey! get the fuck off me!

Adam manages to get off the arm lock he was in, he spits on Erica before he leaves the scene. No one dares to stop him. Everyone in the building is confused.

THE RETURN OF NIKKI  
INT. ADAM AND ERICA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam arrives home late at night after the disastrous night at Erica's office. He runs upstairs and starts packing his stuff. He gathers his clothes on the bed and starts throwing them into a suitcase. Dante comes up to the room, he is confused about what his dad is doing.

DANTE

Dda, what's going on?

ADAM

I have to go away for a little while. I got an emergency.

DANTE

Why? What happened?

ADAM

I'll explain it to you later son, I have to go now.

DANTE

Are you going alone?

ADAM

Yes, but I'll come to see you guys

soon and you'll come to visit me okay?

DANTE

Sure dad, whatever you say.

Adam grabs the bags, Dante helps him carry some downstairs.

ADAM

Where's Keisha?

DANTE

She's staying at Grandmas for the weekend.

ADAM

Okay, I gotta go. Take care of yourself, I'll call you soon okay?

DANTE

Okay, bye Dad.

Adam hugs his son, kisses his forehead, and leaves. He starts packing his bags in the car when Erica pulls up. He totally ignores her. She comes out of the car, mascara is running down her eyes.

ERICA

Adam, please let me explain. Please, just let me explain...

ADAM

I'm taking my kids, get yourself a lawyer because I'm pressing charges. I want a divorce too, now get out of my face before I kill you.

A MONTH LATER.

EXT. LOCAL GROCERY STORE - DAY

Adam is shopping with his daughter at a small supermarket. Keisha is putting snacks in the cart. Adam notices Nikki shopping on the other side, they go over to say hi.

ADAM

Hey there!

NIKKI

Heey! How are you?

They hug each other.

ADAM

This is my daughter Keisha? Say hi Keisha.

KEISHA

Hi!

NIKKI

Nice to meet you, Keisha! Aren't you a little cutie pie?

She blushes.

ADAM

So you're still in town?

NIKKI

Yeah, I added a few more days, I'm leaving in two weeks.

ADAM

Maybe it's a sign that you should stick here a little longer, it'd be nice to have you around.

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NIKKI

For who?

ADAM

You know... your mom.

NIKKI

She's actually gonna come live with me in Colorado.

ADAM

Oh! How nice. That's good, that way she won't feel so alone. Yeah...we're just finished shopping, what about you?

NIKKI

Yeah I didn't find what I was looking for so I'm about to leave too.

ADAM

Well let's go then, We're going to get some ice cream, why don't you join us?

NIKKI

Oh sorry... I can't. I'm meeting

someone.

ADAM

Oh.. no worries then. Let's get out of here.

They exit the store together, Keisha notices a cute dog. She goes to pet it as Nikki and Adam talk without realizing she's not next to them. Out of nowhere, Erica is driving on the same street. As she looks to her left, she notices Adam with Nikki laughing and Keisha with them. A sudden rage fills her, she parks her car. She opens the glove box and there's a gun, she takes it. She walks towards them and crosses the streets, hiding the gun behind her. Nikki is the one to see her first, she is suspicious, she points her to Adam. Keisha comes running towards her mother smiling with open arms, she starts pointing the gun towards Nikki.

ADAM

Erica! No!

Adam blocks her, he pushes her away.

A shot is fired. People start running away. Nikki checks to see if she got shot, she didn't. Adam is covered in blood, he looks down to see his daughter falling to the ground, realizing who got the bullet. Erica is mortified, her hands shake and the gun falls to the ground. Adam grabs his daughter, holds her in his arms, sobbing. Erica tries to come forward, Adam reaches for the gun and points it towards her.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

MONTAGE

Erica is at her trial, she stands up as they are about to sentence her. Adam is there, his parents and Erica's. Nikki is also present sitting in the back watching attentively. Erica stands up, the judge is about to give her final decision. The judge mouths the words "guilty". She is taken by the bailiff officers outside the court as her family breaks down and Adam gets up to leave. He passes by Nikki, who is also emotional. They stare at each other without uttering a word.

INT. PRISON CAFETERIA.- DAY

Erica is now in prison, they are eating in the cafeteria. She is sitting by herself at a table in the back. A group of mainly black women sees her, one of the inmates signals the others. She gets up and takes her lunch tray. Erica can hear



footsteps coming towards her, she continues to eat her food in peace. The inmate sits down in front of her as her friends on the other table watch.

INMATE

Hey there, snowflake? I wanted to come over and welcome you. I'm Ashley. What's your name?

Erica doesn't answer.

ASHLEY

You're gonna have to speak up when Ashley is talking to you baby, She doesn't like being disrespected.

There is no response.

ASHLEY

I heard through the grapevine that you're here because you smoked your own daughter, is that true? That's wild, but then again I'm not surprised. White people don't surprise me anymore. But let me tell you a little secret... We hate child killers in here. You might wanna keep it on the low, for your own safety that is. Wait... wait, the secret's already out! Because I and my girls know! But... If you want it to not be public knowledge... you can do little favors for me from time to time. What do you think? You might need a friend in here, especially for new fish like you.

The other girls are giggling, watching Erica try to not look scared or weak.

ASHLEY

You're a really good listener.. I like that. I'd like to get to know you better snow bunny. Something about you is intriguing me.

She tries to touch her arm, Erica pulls away. Ashley chuckles.

ASHLEY

I'll be seeing you soon sweetness.

Take good care of yourself alright?

She gets up and leaves, Erica is trying to hide her emotions. The girls are bursting out in laughs now.

A YEAR LATER.

INT. PRISON VISITING AREA- DAY

Erica is in her cell, reading a book. A prison guard comes to her.

GUARD

You have a visitor.

She puts her book away, follows the guard. She gets to the visitation area, looks around. She lays her eyes on Nikki. She walks slowly towards her. She hesitates to sit down but finally does.

NIKKI

I know I'm the last person you'd expect to see huh? Well, I'm here.

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ERICA

Nothing shocks me anymore. Look where I am.

NIKKI

Yeah, like you always said.. life is full of twists and turns.

ERICA

Why are you here Nikki.

NIKKI

It's crazy because even when I was on my way here... I couldn't figure out the answer to that. I had a feeling that I had to do this... for myself. To close a chapter in my life that needs to be put away for good.

ERICA

If you're here to look down on me, you're wasting your time. I'm not also gonna apologize to you and beg for your forgiveness, I know God has forgiven me. That's all that counts.

NIKKI

That's not why I'm here, and it's not my style to look down on people's misery. I came here with a message.

ERICA

From who?

NIKKI

Your son.

ERICA

Let me guess, you're already under Adam now that I'm in here, aren't you? This is your chance to get what you lost back?

NIKKI

What I lost ... I could never get back. I was forced to move on. Like I told you before, I don't want that man... but I do care for him, probably always will. I didn't come back because I wanted to steal him back. Do you want to know why I came back? I was determined to hurt you to the core, make you beg for mercy, have you on your knees, keep my foot on your neck. That's what I thought would help me and push me to move on or even gain a crumb of some sort of happiness in all of this. But after every attempt, it brought back memories I hid for years. I couldn't keep going anymore, trying to hurt you was hurting me more. There was no point.

ERICA

What are you talking about?

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - NIGHT ( CONTINUED)

Nikki is hiding behind a car, she puts on a mask while watching Erica leave her office. She unlocks it, gets in, and hides behind the driver's seat. Erica gets in the car, she starts choking her.

EXT. ADAM AND ERICA HOUSE- DAY

Nikki is stalking Erica and Adam's house. She is sitting in her car with sunglasses on. She watches as Erica and Adam get out of the house and drive off. Later that night, she wakes up. She goes and climbs over the gate to the backyard. She breaks the glass and climbs through the window. Once inside, she takes a tour of the house. She looks at photos of the family, goes to each bedroom. After the quick tour, she grabs her lighter and drops it on the sofa in the living room. She climbs back out through the window. She runs back to her car, it is quite late at night and very dark. She drives off as the house starts to take on more fire.

EXT. KEISHA SCHOOL - DAY

After the mysterious woman watches Keisha drive off with her Erica, she takes off her glasses. It's Nikki.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK - DAY

Keisha is talking to someone at the park, sitting on a bench. It's Nikki she's sitting with. She hands Keisha a teddy bear, she smiles.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD DRIVE ( CONTINUED)

Nikki watches as Erica drivers off after talking to the neighbor. She gets out of the car, walks towards him. They talk, he gives her the business card Erica gave him.

END FLASHBACK MONTAGE.

INT. PRISON VISITING AREA - DAY (CONTINUED)

ERICA

So that was you the whole time!

NIKKI

Yes, I was planning on making you pay for every second of pain you caused me. I was determined to go all the way, but I stopped. I realized it wasn't helping me feel any better.

She pulls out a letter in her purse, slides it to her.

NIKKI

This letter is the only reason I came. That boy has turned to stone, he doesn't talk, barely smiles. Seeing

him breaks my heart. He told me I was the only one who could do this for him, so I had to keep my promise. I think I will get going now.

Nikki gets up. Erica is teary-eyed.

ERICA

Wait... I need to tell you something.

NIKKI

Look He won't come, his father wouldn't even allow him to.

ERICA

I know... I wouldn't expect him to. Just listen to me.

NIKKI

Okay.

ERICA

I don't know where to begin but...I'm sorry for everything... I know I don't deserve an ounce of mercy from you. But I know you're a better person than I could ever be. That's why I envied you I guess. It started from copying your personality and style and failing, then I tried to bring you down... didn't work either. That's when I decided, I would take everything you cherished from you, destroy you and turn everything to ruins. I really want yo to know that I was not aware that Simone and your father were in the house. That is something that will go with me to my grave and will haunt me forever. Foolish of me to think that I would feel better than because you represented everything I wanted to be... that I could never be. Hatred and envy ate me to the core that I became this evil, manipulative ugly person. I wanted everything you had, a beautiful family, the love and admiration of everyone around me, the respect.. the good heart... I thought I deserved it so I was determined to take it at any cost. I'm truly sorry.

I never deserved your friendship, never deserved you to be in my life. I only ask you to please watch over Adam and my son, they need you now more than ever. I know I can trust you to do that. Because you're that good of a person. Even after everything I have done to you. I hope one day you can find it in your heart to forgive me... even for just a second. Thank you for visiting... it means a lot.

Nikki leaves with tears in her eyes, Erica puts her head down on the table and sobs.

INT. ERICA CELL - NIGHT

After a visit from Nikki, that night Erica reads the letter she was sent. She prepares herself to read it, closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. It reads.

DANTE (VO)

" Dear Mom. I have a few words to say to you, I don't even know if I should call you Mom anymore. I always thought you would protect us because we were the most important people in your life. I thought that everything you did, was for our own good. I guess I thought I knew who you were, I was wrong. To me you have become a monster and evil murderer. People at school mock me, they say I am a child of a killer, you have put me and dad through so much pain. I hope you're happy with what you did, taking your own daughter's life. You're gonna pay for what you did, and I'm gonna be there to watch it. Even when you come out, I never want to see you again for the rest of my life, to me you are dead. Don't ever try to get in contact with me, dad and I are moving out of Atlanta, there is nothing left for us here. Hopefully we will have a chance to start over, maybe try to be happy because we deserve it. I am telling you again, stay away from us, we want nothing to do with you. Thank you for ruining our lives. Goodbye.

Dante."

Erica breaks down in tears, she sobs. Her cellmate can hear her crying.

CELLMATE

Girl, you're gonna have to cry  
somewhere else. I'm trying to sleep, I  
don't want to hear that mess. Geez.

She covers her ears with a pillow.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Nikki and her mom are visiting the graveyard of Simone and Stan, once they're done they go to their car. Nikki holds her mother as she walks with her cane. There is a truck that is attached to a small moving trailer. They get into it and drive off.

INT. ADAM AND ERICA HOUSE -DAY

Adam is checking the rooms to make sure they have packed everything and didn't miss a thing. The house is empty, walls that were filled with photographs and beautiful memories are now blank walls. He takes a look one last time, closes the door behind him. He walks to his car, Dante is waiting for him inside. They both look at each as if to reassure the other that everything is okay. He playfully rubs his son's hair.

INT. PRISON SHOWER ROOM- DAY

Erica is taking a shower alone, two girls sneak in quietly. They have a knife, Erica has soap in her face.. she can't open her eyes. They sneak behind her, one taps her on the shoulder. Erica looks back, they start stabbing her multiple times both at the same time. She cries out in pain. They leave her bleeding on the ground as the water washes away the blood and into the drain. She stops breathing.

THE END.

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