

FLOWERS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PETERBOROUGH - DAY

The city is full of travelling cars and people going about their lives. In one of the quieter streets, a flower shop and a tattoo parlour stand side by side.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

MELANTHA, a short, slender woman in her mid thirties with long dark hair, looks lonely as an old man buys a dull bunch of flowers. He leaves and Melantha starts watering the rest, which also seem lifeless.

Suddenly, loud music erupts from the shop next door. Melantha jumps, spilling water on the floor. Visibly annoyed, she hesitates, puts down her watering can and steps outside.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Melantha enters the well lit parlour and goes to the counter. She is about to ring the bell on the surface when a petite, dark haired woman with big brown eyes, ALIANA, pops up and points a tattoo gun at her.

ALIANA

Freeze.

Melantha jumps. Aliana giggles and puts down the tattoo gun.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

Sorry, couldn't resist. Name's Aliana.

MELANTHA

Melantha.

ALIANA

I know you. You run the flower shop next door, right?

MELANTHA

Yes. And this music is distracting.

Aliana's grin fades and she starts drumming her fingers on the counter nervously.

ALIANA

Oh. That's just how Jordan likes to relax at lunchtime.

Melantha is about to speak when WILL, a tall, muscular black man with a tattooed, bald head approaches.

WILL

Ali? You got that tattoo gun?

ALIANA

Right here, Willy.

She grins at Will's annoyance and tosses him the tattoo gun.

WILL

Hey, gorgeous. You here for a tattoo?

MELANTHA

No, I'm here to ask you to turn down the music.

WILL

You'll have to take that up with our boss. I should warn you though, she's a total bitch.

He leaves and Aliana glances at Melantha.

ALIANA

He's very opinionated.

MELANTHA

Clearly. Can I talk to your boss, please?

Aliana relents and gestures for her to follow. Upon reaching a door at the back of the parlour, she knocks tentatively.

ALIANA

Jordy?

Nobody replies. Aliana glances at Melantha nervously. Melantha steps past her and shoves the door open.

INT. JORDAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jordan is a muscular, tattooed blonde who is smoking with her feet up on a messy desk. Her cold eyes sweep over Melantha and lock onto Aliana who flinches. Jordan smiles dangerously, puts out her cigarette and takes her feet off the desk.

JORDAN

Ali, remember the conversation we had about inviting people into my office without an appointment?

ALIANA

Course I remember. It's just.  
Mellie's from next door and...

MELANTHA

I wanted to ask you to turn the  
music down. I expect half of the  
street can hear it.

JORDAN

And what gives you the right to  
lecture me about the music I play?

MELANTHA

Nothing. But I do have the right to  
ask you to keep it quiet.

Jordan narrows her eyes, then lazily turns down the music.

JORDAN

Better?

MELANTHA

Much.

JORDAN

Good. Ali, would you be so kind as  
to show Mellie out? And then I'd  
like to speak to you in private.

ALIANA

Sure. Come on, Mellie.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Aliana leads Melantha towards the door, then pauses.

ALIANA

You don't mind, do you? That I call  
you Mellie?

MELANTHA

No. Look, I'm sorry if I caused you  
any trouble.

ALIANA

Don't worry about it. Nice to meet  
you.

MELANTHA

You too.

She leaves. Aliana's smile fades as soon as she's gone.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Melantha enters the shop, looking worried. She looks at the spilled water on the floor, goes to her office and returns with a mop which she uses to clean it up.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Melantha is locking up when she spots Aliana and Jordan walking across the road together. Aliana waves and Melantha raises a hand. Jordan scowls and yanks Aliana away.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Melantha is arranging flowers when she hears the door open. Aliana enters and looks around. Despite her joyful expression, there is a large bruise on her cheek.

MELANTHA

Aliana?

ALIANA

Hi there, Mellie. Just thought I'd drop by and have a look around.

Melantha eyes her bruised cheek. Aliana seems oblivious as she bounces around the shop.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

You know, I could do with some more practice drawing flowers. Do you mind if I do some sketches?

Melantha hesitates.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

Believe it or not, I can be quiet. I won't disturb you.

MELANTHA

Okay.

Aliana grins and takes out a small sketchbook and a pencil. Melantha goes back to her work.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY (LATER)

Melantha looks at the clock. Aliana is still sketching. When her pencil leaves the paper, Melantha taps her shoulder and Aliana flinches.

MELANTHA

Sorry. I close up early on a Friday.

Aliana glances at the clock.

ALIANA

That went fast. You know, you could have kicked me out sooner.

She hops to her feet.

MELANTHA

I could. But I didn't want to. By the way, that's a lovely sketch.

ALIANA

Eh, it's alright I guess. Let's go, I want to take you to see a friend.

MELANTHA

A friend?

ALIANA

Yeah. You know, people you like to hang out with.

She grins at Melantha's annoyed look and darts to the door.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Aliana opens the door and steps aside to let Melantha in, then darts past her to JENNIFER, the red haired woman at the counter.

ALIANA

Hi there, Jenny.

JENNIFER

Hi, Ali. This your new girlfriend?

Melantha looks embarrassed but Aliana takes it in stride.

ALIANA

Nah, just a friend. Mellie, this is Jennifer. We've known each other since college.

MELANTHA

Pleased to meet you. I'm Melantha.

JENNIFER

Nice name. So what can I get you?

MELANTHA

Just a hot chocolate please.

ALIANA

Not very adventurous are you,  
Mellie? I'll have a white  
chocolate, caramel syrup, breve  
mocha, with whipped cream,  
chocolate drizzle and salted  
caramel sprinkles.

JENNIFER

Of course it would be something  
extravagant. Give me a moment.

She goes into the back room while Aliana tugs Melantha to a  
table.

ALIANA

So, how'd you spend a day when  
you're not in the flower shop?

MELANTHA

I mostly stay at home. Sometimes, I  
see Tim but I prefer to keep to  
myself.

ALIANA

Oh. Is Tim...

MELANTHA

My ex-boyfriend. He realized he  
needed someone more mature.

ALIANA

Mature?

MELANTHA

He has a thing for older women.

ALIANA

Ah. You know I've never understood  
why people find that weird. It's no  
problem for a woman to date an  
older man, so why do people point  
and whisper when it's the other way  
around?

MELANTHA

Because most people are shallow  
idiots.

Aliana giggles. Jennifer arrives with the drinks.

JENNIFER  
Here you go, ladies.

ALIANA  
Thanks, Jenny.

She and Melantha sip their drinks. Aliana looks content but Melantha looks uncomfortable.

MELANTHA  
So um, how's Jordan?

Aliana's smile disappears and she hesitates.

ALIANA  
Grumpy. But she's always been like that.

MELANTHA  
She seems like your polar opposite.

ALIANA  
Well, opposites attract. Speaking of which, men must go gaga over you.

Melantha flinches and looks down at her hot chocolate.

MELANTHA  
Yes. But after Tim, I wasn't interested.

Aliana looks at her thoughtfully as she sips her drink. Then she brightens.

ALIANA  
Hey, I've got some more doodles to show you.

She takes out her sketchbook and flips it open, nearly knocking over her drink in the process.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
I always wanted to be an artist. I eventually settled on tattoos because Jordan wanted help running the shop.

Melantha looks at the bruise on her cheek but doesn't speak.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
Here's a horse I did when I was a kid.



She shows her a childishly drawn brown horse that has been stuck on the first page of the book.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I know it sucks but it was the first drawing I ever did. I got attached and it also helps me see how much better I've gotten over the years.

She flips to the next page which shows a wonderfully detailed brown horse drawn on the page itself.

MELANTHA

Wow. You've improved a lot.

ALIANA

What can I say? Practice makes perfect.

She flips to the next page which shows a falcon.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I needed more practice drawing feathers when I did this one. See how they're uneven here?

She strokes one of the falcons wings. Melantha squints at it.

MELANTHA

It looks great to me.

ALIANA

Thanks.

She flips through some more pages and stops on a huge meadow surrounded by trees and illuminated by a setting sun.

MELANTHA

That one's perfect.

Aliana looks at the field and smiles ruefully.

ALIANA

Jordan doesn't think so. I think it's my best work but if there's one thing I've learned as an artist, it's that no matter how good you think something is, there's always a chance that people will think it sucks.

MELANTHA

Then they have no taste.

ALIANA

I don't know. Jordan's been in the tattoo business longer than me. She knows a thing or two about art.

Melantha grunts and sips her drink. Aliana brightens.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

So what are your dreams?

MELANTHA

I'm just trying to get by.

ALIANA

Oh. That's kinda sad.

MELANTHA

My parents taught me that some people don't leave an impact on the world.

ALIANA

Don't you want to leave an impact?

Melantha shrugs and starts drinking again. There is an awkward silence.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

Hey, want to come to my birthday party?

MELANTHA

Excuse me?

ALIANA

Birthday party at the tattoo shop. I'll be thirty two next Friday.

MELANTHA

Are you sure you want me there? We barely know each other.

ALIANA

What better place to get to know each other?

MELANTHA

Okay. What time?

ALIANA

Any time past nine.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Melantha smiles as she watches Aliana swing around a lamp post before bounding over to her.

MELANTHA

Do you realize how childish you look?

ALIANA

Yep, and I don't care. I'm about to turn thirty two so I gotta enjoy being young while I can.

EXT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Aliana and Melantha reach the apartment.

MELANTHA

Well, this is me. Do you want to come in?

ALIANA

Can't. Jordan'll be waiting for me.

MELANTHA

Oh.

ALIANA

I had a great time tonight. We should do it again sometime.

MELANTHA

Yeah. Well, bye.

Aliana bounds away, waving as she goes.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Melantha curses under her breath as she paints a vase the same blue colour as the flowers closest to her. The door opens and Melantha looks up as Jordan enters.

JORDAN

Lovely place, Mellie. No wonder Ali likes it here.

She looks at the vase and smirks.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Not much of an artist, are you? Oh well, it's the thought that counts.

MELANTHA

What do you want?

JORDAN

Just to see why my girlfriend hangs out here. Never been much of a flower person myself.

MELANTHA

Then you have no reason to be here.

JORDAN

Careful. You wouldn't wanna drive a potential customer away, would you?

She wanders around the shop while Melantha watches warily.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Eh, flowers are so overdone. I'm sure I can satisfy her in other ways on her special day. See you at the party.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - NIGHT

Melantha stands outside holding her vase. She takes a deep breath and knocks on the door. Aliana opens it and beams.

ALIANA

Hi there, Mellie. I was starting to think you weren't coming.

MELANTHA

I wouldn't have missed it for the world. Here, I painted this for you.

She avoids Aliana's eyes as she gives her the painted vase.

ALIANA

That's so thoughtful. Thank you.

She puts the vase down reverently and hugs Melantha.

MELANTHA

It sucks, doesn't it? I'm no artist.

ALIANA

Neither was I when I started. Besides, perfection is overrated.

She picks the vase back up and leads Melantha inside.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Melantha follows Aliana cautiously while she bounces through the small crowd. Aliana sets the vase down beside Will who is drinking by his work station which has been converted into a makeshift bar with various bottles of alcohol underneath.

WILL

Hey, gorgeous. Glad you could make it. This party needs more class.

Aliana spots Jennifer arriving.

ALIANA

Keep her company will you, Willy?  
And look after that vase.

She bounds away. Melantha looks at Will awkwardly.

MELANTHA

So, how long have you known Aliana?

WILL

About eight years. Jordan came into work one day, announced Ali was her girlfriend, and we've had to put up with her annoying ass ever since.

Melantha scowls at him.

WILL (CONT'D)

Don't look at me like that. How can any guy not find the nickname Willy annoying?

Melantha fights a smile, then half nods and half shrugs before seeing Jordan sitting with two men and a woman. Jordan catches her eye and raises her glass. Melantha scowls at her.

WILL (CONT'D)

I hear you. I've been trying to tell Ali for years that she deserves better.

MELANTHA

Why does she put up with her?

WILL

Naivety, fear and a heart that's too big for her own good. Jordan told her a sob story about abusive parents who couldn't accept her being gay.

MELANTHA

I see.

JORDAN

Ali, time to open your presents.

Melantha watches Aliana bound over and sit on the sofa's armrest. Jordan pulls her down and wraps an arm around her.

JENNIFER

Here you go, Ali.

She holds out a parcel and Aliana tears it open eagerly. Inside is a sketchbook and various coloring pencils. Jordan reluctantly allows Aliana to get up and hug Jennifer.

ALIANA

Thanks, Jenny.

She sits back down and Jordan offers her another present.

JORDAN

This is from me.

The box contains a pair of handcuffs. Jordan whispers something in Aliana's ear. She blushes and shoves the handcuffs back in the box. Melantha starts shaking, Jennifer and Will scowl, and everyone else looks uncomfortable.

GUEST

Who wants cake?

Melantha turns away and heads towards the back door.

WILL

Where are you going?

MELANTHA

I just need some air.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR BALCONY - NIGHT

Melantha is leaning on the railing, scowling at her shaking hands. She clenches her fists to stop them from trembling and doesn't notice Aliana behind her.

ALIANA

Mellie? You okay?

Melantha whips around.

MELANTHA

I'm. I needed some air.

Aliana joins her and leans on the balcony.

ALIANA

You know, I never understood why we have a balcony here. It's not like we get much of a view.

Melantha chuckles and relaxes. Aliana smiles at her.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I'm glad you came. Apart from you, Jenny and Will, the guys here are Jordan's friends, not mine.

MELANTHA

What the hell do you see in her?

ALIANA

I'm the only person she can open up to. Or at least I was before I blabbed one of her secrets to Will.

MELANTHA

The one about the abusive parents?

ALIANA

So he told you. I should have stayed quiet about that.

JORDAN

You never know when to shut up do you, Ali?

Both women whip around as Jordan steps onto the balcony.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Seriously Mellie, try living with her babbling for eight years straight. It'd drive you insane. Luckily, I've got plenty of things I can stuff in that pretty little mouth of hers.

ALIANA

Jordy, we don't need to talk about our private life.

JORDAN

True. But that didn't stop you from talking about my past, did it?

ALIANA

I told you I'm sorry about that.

MELANTHA

Can't you just let her enjoy her birthday, Jordan?

JORDAN

Sure. I'll make sure she enjoys my present tonight too.

Melantha slaps her. Jordan looks briefly surprised, then punches Melantha in the stomach before going back inside.

ALIANA

Mellie. Are you alright?

MELANTHA

Is that what she does to you every day? Why the hell do you put up with it? Do you enjoy feeling pain?

ALIANA

No, of course not. I just...

MELANTHA

You're too weak to stand up to her. It's like you want her to own you.

ALIANA

I'm not weak.

MELANTHA

Then prove it and stand up for yourself. Stop letting her treat you like trash. It's pathetic.

Aliana looks angry and heartbroken. She blinks back tears.

ALIANA

You. You don't understand...

MELANTHA

I understand that Jordan is a violent, horrible woman. I don't need to be in a relationship with her to know that and neither should you.

Aliana is crying now. Melantha lowers her gaze, then notices that Will is watching them from the door. She swallows.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

I should go.

She slips past Will who looks at her disapprovingly before going to comfort Aliana.



INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Melantha avoids everyone's gaze until Jordan starts clapping. Melantha flips her the finger and leaves.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Melantha is on her phone, fidgeting until TIMOTHY answers.

TIMOTHY (V.O.)

Mel, why on Earth are you calling at such an outrageous hour? Scratch that, why on Earth are you calling at all?

MELANTHA

I need someone to talk to.

TIMOTHY (V.O.)

Blimey, this must be serious. Okay spit it out.

MELANTHA

Well, I met this woman called Aliana who's in a relationship with a woman who beats her. We became friends but I called her weak because she wouldn't stand up for herself and I blamed her for her girlfriend's behavior.

TIMOTHY (V.O.)

I see.

MELANTHA

Is that all you've got to say? Tim, what do I do?

TIMOTHY (V.O.)

Isn't it obvious? Apologize. You didn't mean what you said, did you?

MELANTHA

Of course I didn't. I was just angry.

TIMOTHY (V.O.)

Then tell her that. Why is it so hard for young people to just talk to each other?

MELANTHA

You're only a year older than me.

TIMOTHY (V.O.)  
Yeah and my wife's nine years older  
than me. I had to grow up fast.

MELANTHA  
Did you?

TIMOTHY (V.O.)  
Shut up.

Melantha snorts quietly and her face brightens.

MELANTHA  
How is Idina anyway?

TIMOTHY (V.O.)  
Still smart and sexy. And pregnant.

MELANTHA  
Wait, what?

TIMOTHY (V.O.)  
Yeah. We found out a week ago. I  
haven't seen her so happy since our  
wedding day.

MELANTHA  
Congratulations. I thought that,  
well, considering her age...

TIMOTHY (V.O.)  
She's forty five, Mel. The  
menopause shouldn't kick in for  
another decade. Anyway, apologize  
to Aliana. I want you to be on  
excellent terms with her next time  
I visit. Good luck.

The phone goes dead and Melantha gazes at it for a moment  
before lying on her bed, still fully clothed.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Melantha is holding a bunch of red roses when she knocks on  
the door. Will answers it.

WILL  
Hi.

MELANTHA  
Hello. I need to talk to Aliana.

WILL  
It's her day off.

MELANTHA  
Well, could you give her these?

Will takes the roses.

WILL  
If it's any consolation, Ali can't hold a grudge for long. She's probably forgiven you already.

MELANTHA  
Even if so, I need to apologize.

WILL  
I'll make sure she gets these.

He goes inside with the roses. Melantha waits until the door shuts behind him before leaving.

INT. JORDAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jordan is half drunk as she watches a boxing match. Aliana sits nervously beside her, wincing whenever a particularly hard blow lands on the screen.

JORDAN  
Yeah, fuck her up.

ALIANA  
I'm gonna go to bed.

JORDAN  
Whatever.

Aliana rises and tries to step past her but Jordan trips her and she falls against the table between them and the TV, catching her femur on its hard edge. Jordan laughs and throws the rest of her beer all over her.

JORDAN (CONT'D)  
Whoops. While you're at it, get me another beer.

Aliana scrambles upright and limps to the kitchen.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana enters the parlour with less energy than usual. Will looks up from his workstation and notices her fatigue.

WILL  
Shitty night?

ALIANA  
It was fine.

WILL  
You're limping.

ALIANA  
It's just a bruise.

Will watches her go to her workstation and shakes his head. He reaches under his desk and takes out Melantha's flowers.

WILL  
Here.

Aliana looks at the flowers in confusion, then smiles.

ALIANA  
Aw, you really know how to flatter  
a girl, Willy.

WILL  
Don't start any sappy shit. These  
aren't from me. Now if you'll  
excuse me, I'm gonna get some air  
before I puke.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Melantha is working at her counter, surrounded by some of the more lifeless flowers. She is surprised when Will enters.

WILL  
Afternoon.

MELANTHA  
Oh, hello Will. I didn't know you  
liked flowers.

WILL  
I don't. Ali was happy to get yours  
though.

Melantha smiles sadly.

WILL (CONT'D)  
Melantha...

MELANTHA  
You can call me Mel.

WILL

Right. Ali's limping today. I'm pretty sure Jordan's been treating her even worse than usual.

MELANTHA

What do you expect me to do about it?

WILL

Nothing. I just want you to apologize to her.

MELANTHA

Are you trying to guilt me into doing it?

WILL

I think you feel guilty already.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana is showing a male client various tattoo options when Will enters.

WILL

Ali, you've got a visitor. I'll take over.

He goes to the client who is looking thoughtfully at the tattoos. Aliana steps around them and sees Melantha at the door. Surprise, fear, anger, joy and wariness cross Aliana's face in a second and she glances back at Will.

WILL (CONT'D)

Do you want me to...

ALIANA

No, it's fine.

Will nods and continues speaking to the client. Aliana steps out of the shop.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Melantha smiles hopefully as Aliana pulls the door to.

ALIANA

Hi, Mellie.

MELANTHA

Hello. Am I interrupting?

ALIANA

It's fine.

MELANTHA

Good. Listen I needed to apologize for what I said at the party. I was angry but I didn't mean to take it out on you. I'm sorry I ruined your birthday.

ALIANA

I think you might've been right.

MELANTHA

No, I was wrong. I know it's not your fault.

ALIANA

But I do let her push me around. It's just...

JORDAN (V.O.)

Aliana, your shift's not over. Get back in here.

Both women wince and Aliana glances over her shoulder. She bites her lip and glances at Melantha apologetically.

ALIANA

I need to...

MELANTHA

I know. I'll see you later, right?

ALIANA

Yeah. See you.

She smiles and goes back inside.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Melantha is writing at the counter when someone enters. She looks up and is surprised to see a slim, brown haired man about her age.

TIMOTHY

Hi, Mel.

MELANTHA

Tim, I wasn't expecting you back for another week.

TIMOTHY

You have Dina to thank. After she found out about our kid, she decided to come home.

MELANTHA

Where is she? How was Spain?

TIMOTHY

She's at home and it was too hot. So how have you been? How's your girlfriend?

MELANTHA

She's not my girlfriend.

TIMOTHY

But you wish she was, right?

Melantha looks embarrassed and Timothy chuckles before growing serious.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

Seriously though, have you made up with her?

MELANTHA

Yeah. We're fine now.

TIMOTHY

Good. So, when do I meet her?

MELANTHA

Soon. She's working now. And she's still...

TIMOTHY

With that abusive cow?

MELANTHA

Yeah. Anyway, would you and Idina like to come round for supper tonight?

TIMOTHY

As long as you let her help with the cooking.

INT. JORDAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jordan hurls Aliana down onto the bed, crawls up the smaller woman's body, and waves the handcuffs in front of her.

ALIANA

Please, Jordy, not tonight. I've  
still got marks.

Jordan handcuffs her hands behind her back. Aliana struggles.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I said no. Please, I'm not...

Jordan covers her mouth with a hand then leans close.

JORDAN

You're gonna be a good girl and  
take it.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Melantha and Timothy sit around the table with IDINA, a beautiful, dark haired woman who, aside from the lines around her dark eyes, looks much younger than her forty five years.

MELANTHA

So Idina, Tim tells me you're  
excited to be having another child.

IDINA

I am. Although I don't know how  
Nicole will respond to finally  
having a sibling.

TIMOTHY

Half sibling. Nearly four years and  
Nicole still won't call me dad.

MELANTHA

Wasn't her dad a total bastard?

TIMOTHY

Not to her.

Someone knocks on the door. Everyone looks up.

IDINA

Melantha, did you invite someone  
else?

MELANTHA

No. Hang on, I'll get it.

She rises and goes to the door.



EXT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Aliana is rubbing her bleeding wrists as Melantha cautiously opens the door.

MELANTHA

Ali, what the hell happened?

Aliana manages a painful smile. Her right eye is bruised, her lip is split, there is dried blood under her nose, and her neck is decorated with bruises.

ALIANA

Hey, I got the right place.

Melantha ushers her inside.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Idina and Timothy rise from the table as Melantha brings Aliana into the room.

TIMOTHY

Bloody hell.

Aliana presses herself to Melantha as she eyes them.

MELANTHA

Aliana, this is Tim and Idina.

IDINA

Melantha, where are your medical supplies?

MELANTHA

Top cabinet in the bathroom.

Idina sweeps off and Timothy addresses Aliana.

TIMOTHY

Hi. Mel's told me about you.

ALIANA

Nice to meet you. Just wish it didn't happen while I look like this.

Melantha sits her down on the sofa and allows Aliana to lean on her shoulder. Idina returns with the medical kit and Timothy eyes Aliana's wrists.

TIMOTHY

Are those handcuff marks?

ALIANA

Yeah. Jordan wouldn't take them off  
so it was hell for me to get the  
key without waking her.

Idina shares a silent glance with her husband before going  
back to treating Aliana. Melantha strokes the younger woman's  
brown hair while Idina works.

IDINA

Done.

She straightens gracefully and Aliana smiles painfully.

ALIANA

Thanks.

She snuggles up to Melantha again and closes her eyes.

IDINA

Tim, I think we should go.

TIMOTHY

Yeah. Look after her, Mel.

Melantha nods and smiles weakly. Idina glides through the  
door and Timothy follows. Melantha leans back on the sofa,  
allowing Aliana to rest against her as she closes her eyes.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

Aliana wakes up still leaning against Melantha.

MELANTHA

Good morning.

ALIANA

Morning.

She shifts and looks at their positions.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

Have you been sleeping like that  
all night?

MELANTHA

Yeah.

ALIANA

Sorry. You know you could have just  
left me here and gone to bed.

MELANTHA

I could. But I didn't want to.

Aliana smiles then winces as her split lip opens again.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

Aliana, don't go back to her.

Aliana's smile fades.

ALIANA

She never loved me, did she?

She starts to cry. Melantha is momentarily surprised but then her expression melts into pity and sorrow. She hugs Aliana.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I put so much effort into it. I wasted eight years of my life trying to make her happy.

MELANTHA

Don't blame yourself. It's not your fault.

ALIANA

But I'm annoying and noisy and childish and stupid and...

MELANTHA

Ali, stop it. Jordan's a horrible, abusive animal and you deserve better.

Aliana sniffs and looks up at her.

ALIANA

Why are you so kind to me?

Melantha hesitates.

MELANTHA

I know how it feels to be abused. Back when I was dating Tim, we had to deal with a pervert who was obsessed with me. His name was Rian Kennedy. We called him Roundhead.

Aliana's sniffing becomes a snort. Melantha smiles painfully.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

Yeah, we joked about it but we underestimated how unstable he was. He broke into my home.

Aliana's smirk fades instantly. She looks worried and a little frightened.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

I don't know how he found out where I lived. He must have been stalking me for ages. I was asleep and when I woke up, I was tied to the bed and gagged. He didn't even speak. He just raped me and left.

Aliana looks horrified. Melantha lowers her eyes and looks at her shaking hands.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

I managed to get free and call the police. He didn't deny the accusations or resist arrest, he just went with them. He was convicted of rape and I never saw him again. But the last thing he said to me was that breaking me made him feel proud.

ALIANA

Mellie, I'm so sorry.

Melantha takes her hand and strokes the back with her thumb. Aliana wipes her eyes, then blushes as her stomach rumbles. Melantha's pensive expression softens into a smile.

MELANTHA

Hungry?

ALIANA

Yeah. Starving.

MELANTHA

Do you like pancakes?

Aliana nods and grins.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Will looks down at his phone, looking worried. Finally, he puts it away and strides to Jordan's office.

INT. JORDAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jordan is sorting out papers when Will bursts in. Jordan doesn't even look up, although her shoulders tense.

JORDAN  
Haven't you heard of knocking?

WILL  
Where's Aliana?

JORDAN  
I dunno. She disappeared last night.

WILL  
What did you do to her, Jordan?

JORDAN  
I didn't kill her if that's what you're thinking.

Will glares at her then storms out. Jordan looks relieved.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Will looks at the closed sign on the flower shop door before heading down the street.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Jennifer gives a customer her brownie when Will enters.

JENNIFER  
Hi, Will. Shouldn't you be at work?

WILL  
Yes and so should Aliana. You haven't seen her, have you?

JENNIFER  
No. Why has something happened?

WILL  
That's what I'm trying to find out. She hasn't picked up her phone.

Jennifer looks worried.

JENNIFER  
Do you think Jordan...

WILL  
I confronted her just now. She claims she doesn't know where Ali is either.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliana is trying to usher Melantha out of the door.

ALIANA

Don't worry, Mellie, I'll be fine.

MELANTHA

I'll send Tim or Idina to check on you. Keep the doors and windows locked.

ALIANA

Don't patronize me. I'll be okay. Hang out with your flowers and don't worry about me.

Melantha hesitates a moment longer, then leaves. Aliana closes and locks the door before slumping down on the sofa.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Melantha is unlocking her shop when Will comes down the street. He looks relieved when he sees her.

WILL

Melantha, thank God. Where's Ali?  
She won't pick up her phone.

MELANTHA

Relax, Will. She stayed with me last night and she didn't have her phone with her.

WILL

So she's safe?

MELANTHA

I sent a friend to check on her.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliana is watching television when someone knocks. She cautiously goes to the door and half opens it without undoing the chain. Idina is standing outside.

IDINA

Hello.

ALIANA

Hi. Come in.

She fully opens the door and Idina glides through it. Aliana locks it behind her.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
Where's Tim?

IDINA  
At home, writing. How are you?

ALIANA  
Sore.

IDINA  
I'm not surprised. Your eye's looking better though.

Aliana smiles and they sit.

ALIANA  
Thanks for helping last night.

IDINA  
No problem. What's this?

She nods at the television. Aliana gropes for the remote and switches it off.

ALIANA  
Oh, just some stupid comedy. I was bored. But now I've got someone to talk to.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

When Melantha arrives home she finds Aliana and Idina laughing on the sofa.

ALIANA  
Mellie.

Leaping to her feet, the younger woman barrels into Melantha with a tight hug. Idina smiles as she rises more slowly.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
Dina's just been telling me about the time she and Tim had sex on a beach. In front of a crowd.

IDINA  
Proudest sex of my life. I'm pretty sure it was the one that impregnated me too.

MELANTHA

Didn't they arrest you for public indecency?

IDINA

Yes, but the prison cell was more comfortable than the motel room.

MELANTHA

Thank you for looking after her, Idina.

IDINA

You're welcome. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to see if my husband has eaten or drank today.

She sweeps through the door and Aliana waves after her.

ALIANA

Damn, Tim's got good taste.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Melantha and Aliana meet Will who leans on his pickup truck.

WILL

Ladies.

He opens the door and the two women climb in while he goes around to the driver's seat.

MELANTHA

Thanks for doing this, Will. Is Jordan...

WILL

She's at the shop. We shouldn't have any trouble.

INT. JORDAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliana opens the door, glancing around nervously before stepping inside. Melantha and Will follow her.

WILL

Split?

The women nod and they each go into different rooms.



INT. JORDAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aliana enters and looks at the messy bed. She rubs her wrists absentmindedly and starts gathering her things.

EXT. JORDAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Will puts Aliana's belongings in the truck. Melantha, holding Aliana's vase, watches her lock up. Aliana pauses with a hand on the door handle. Then she turns, smiles, takes back her vase, and follows Melantha to the truck without looking back.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliana bounces around the apartment unpacking her things. Melantha, who is reading on the sofa, occasionally glances up from her book with a fond smile.

ALIANA

Done.

She emerges from the bedroom, bounds to the sofa and sits on the armrest.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

Anything interesting?

MELANTHA

Probably not to you.

ALIANA

Hey, I love The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

MELANTHA

You've read it?

ALIANA

Nope. I saw the Disney movie.

MELANTHA

I've never seen that version. It seemed too childish.

ALIANA

Trust me, apart from the gargoyles, it's not childish. The Hellfire song is scarier than most horror movies I've seen. No blood or gore, just a tortured man going batshit bonkers.

She hesitates.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I think that's why I stayed with Jordan for so long. I thought she was tortured too.

Melantha takes her hand.

MELANTHA

You really are too kind for your own good, Ali.

Aliana looks down at their joined hands, then slides off the armrest to sit beside Melantha.

ALIANA

We should watch it together sometime.

Melantha half nods and half shrugs.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Melantha wakes to the sound of sobbing. She gets out of bed, puts on a dressing gown, and heads into the other room.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Aliana is on the sofa, crying in her sleep. Melantha sits down beside her and gently shakes her shoulder.

MELANTHA

Aliana? Ali, wake up.

Aliana does so. She takes a moment to get her bearings before wiping her eyes and focussing on Melantha.

ALIANA

Sorry. Did I wake you?

MELANTHA

Yes, but I don't mind. Are you okay?

ALIANA

I was just. Remembering.

She looks like she wants to say more. After a moment, she drops her gaze.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
Can I sleep with you?

MELANTHA  
What?

ALIANA  
I asked if. Well I want to sleep in  
the bed. With you.

She is still avoiding Melantha's gaze, looking embarrassed.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
I don't like being on my own.

Melantha pulls her off the sofa and guides her to the  
bedroom.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Melantha takes off her dressing gown while Aliana gets into  
bed. Melantha looks uncomfortable too, but gets into bed  
beside her and switches off the light.

INT. IDINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Melantha and Aliana are greeted by Timothy in the doorway.

TIMOTHY  
Hello, ladies. I half expected Mel  
to be working.

MELANTHA  
It's Sunday. Even I need a break  
sometimes.

ALIANA  
Where's Dina?

TIMOTHY  
In the kitchen. Nicole just called  
about her exams.

MELANTHA  
How does she feel about having a  
sibling?

TIMOTHY  
Okay, I think. Hard for me to tell  
with her.

Idina enters the room, putting her phone in her pocket.

IDINA  
Good afternoon.

Aliana bounces past Timothy and hugs her. Idina seems surprised but hugs back.

IDINA (CONT'D)  
Dinner will be ready in about an hour.

ALIANA  
Can I help?

Idina smiles and tilts her head towards the kitchen. Aliana follows her inside. Timothy and Melantha sit on the sofa.

TIMOTHY  
So what's happening with her and Jordan right now?

MELANTHA  
Ali's moved out.

TIMOTHY  
Bet Jordan didn't take that well.

MELANTHA  
She wasn't there. We haven't seen her in the last three days.

TIMOTHY  
Well, if she's anything like Roundhead, she's not going to just let Aliana go.

Melantha flinches. Timothy notices.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)  
Sorry. But they still work together, don't they?

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana and Melantha stand together outside the door.

MELANTHA  
Are you sure you're ready?

ALIANA  
No. But I've got to do it sometime.

She squeezes Melantha's hand, then strides to the door.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Aliana enters and greets Will at his work station.

ALIANA  
Hi there, Willy, I'm back.

Will rolls his eyes at her even as he grins.

WILL  
About bloody time. It's been way  
too quiet around here.

Aliana grins but it fades quickly.

ALIANA  
Is Jordan here?

Will jerks his head towards Jordan's office.

INT. JORDAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jordan is smoking when Aliana knocks on the door.

ALIANA (O.S.)  
Jordan?

Jordan smirks and puts out her cigarette as Aliana cautiously pushes the door open.

JORDAN  
Hi, Ali. How've you been?

Aliana steps into the room, wary but resolute.

ALIANA  
Good thanks.

JORDAN  
Mellie's been looking after you, I  
assume?

Aliana crosses the room and sits in front of the desk.

ALIANA  
Yeah. So have her friends.

JORDAN  
Good. So, why are you a week late  
for work?

ALIANA  
I was. Well, healing.

She rubs her wrists and Jordan smirks.

JORDAN

Still sore? At least the bruises cleared up.

ALIANA

Why do you enjoy hurting me?

JORDAN

I punish you when you deserve it.

ALIANA

No, you punish me because you're a sadist. I put up with it for eight years and I've had enough.

Jordan's dangerous smirk twists into a scowl.

JORDAN

Careful what you say. You wouldn't wanna make me angry, would you?

She rises and saunters around her desk.

ALIANA

Anything I did made you angry, Jordan. I can't do it anymore.

She rises warily. Jordan lets her but the scowl remains.

JORDAN

Tell me, Ali. What's Mellie to you?

ALIANA

A friend.

Jordan chuckles darkly.

JORDAN

You think I'm an idiot? You're fucking her, aren't you?

Aliana goes bright red and struggles to respond. Suddenly Jordan grabs her hair.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

How could you do that to me, you little slut? I'd never cheat on you.

ALIANA

That's because nobody else'll have you.

Jordan looks genuinely hurt. Then she grabs Aliana's arm and twists it behind her, holding her hair with her other hand.

JORDAN

You think Mellie's interested in a childish little midget like you? Hate to break it do you sweetie, but she just feels sorry for you.

ALIANA

Get off me.

The door bursts open and Will strides in.

WILL

What the hell's going on in here?

JORDAN

Piss off. This is a personal matter.

Will strides towards her, looking dangerous.

WILL

If you don't let her go, I'll smash your nose right into your face.

Jordan looks frightened, then scowls and releases Aliana.

WILL (CONT'D)

Come on, Ali. I've got your stuff laid out.

JORDAN

You think I'm letting her stay? She's fired.

Aliana starts to protest but Will beats her to it.

WILL

Bad idea, Jordan. Ali's the best tattoo artist we've got. Fire her and we'll lose half our customers.

JORDAN

There are other tattoo artists.

WILL

But not many who'd put up with your abusive ass for years on end. Fire employees just because they piss you off, and soon nobody'll wanna work here.

Jordan scowls at him then shoots a venomous look at Aliana.

JORDAN

Fine. The little whore can stay.  
Now get the hell out of my office.

Will and Aliana do so.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Aliana is trembling as she goes to her work station.

WILL

You okay?

ALIANA

I. She knows I've been staying with  
Mel and. Well she thinks. But I  
don't know if Mel...

Will puts a hand on her shoulder.

WILL

Melantha cares about you, Ali. A  
lot. You two are good for each  
other.

He smiles and jerks his head towards the front door.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Melantha looks worried. Her hands are shaking as she waters  
some flowers. The flower pot is close to overflowing.

Suddenly, the door opens and Aliana walks in.

MELANTHA

Ali. What happened? Are you okay?

Aliana walks up to her, hesitates, and kisses Melantha.  
Melantha freezes, eyes wide with shock. Aliana opens her eyes  
and sees her expression. She steps back, looking scared.

ALIANA

I. I'm sorry. I just. I thought  
that...

Melantha steps back, trembling.

MELANTHA

I think you should leave.



ALIANA

Mellie...

MELANTHA

Please. Just leave.

Aliana starts to cry as she leaves the shop.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Timothy is about to enter the shop when Aliana bursts through the door.

TIMOTHY

Ali? What's wrong?

Aliana shakes her head and flees towards the tattoo parlour.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Melantha glimpses Timothy out of the corner of her eye as he enters, looking concerned. She keeps her back to him.

TIMOTHY

Mel? What happened?

MELANTHA

You couldn't have picked a worse time to arrive.

Timothy frowns as she shakily puts her hands on her desk.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

Aliana kissed me.

TIMOTHY

So?

Melantha turns to him.

MELANTHA

So I. I thought that. Well, I...

TIMOTHY

Mel, Ali just ran to the tattoo parlour in tears. I thought you wanted to keep her away from Jordan.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR BALCONY - DAY

Aliana is still crying when Will finds her.

WILL  
Ali? What happened?

ALIANA  
She doesn't want me. She...

She stifles a sob and Will hugs her awkwardly.

WILL  
What did she say?

ALIANA  
She told me to leave. I thought  
that...

She goes silent as Melantha and Timothy arrive. Will glances back and tightens his arm around Aliana protectively.

TIMOTHY  
Ali, I think there's been a  
misunderstanding.

Aliana doesn't look at him, focussing on Melantha instead.

MELANTHA  
Aliana, I'm sorry. I was just  
caught off guard.

Aliana tenses and her gaze flicks past Melantha as Jordan arrives and leans on the door frame.

JORDAN  
Oh dear. Two lovers' quarrels  
within ten minutes?

TIMOTHY  
You must be Jordan.

JORDAN  
Yeah. And who are you?

TIMOTHY  
Timothy. I'm a friend of Mel's.

JORDAN  
Sounds like your friend hasn't been  
treating my girlfriend very nicely.

ALIANA

I'm not your girlfriend. You think I'll come crawling back to you just like that?

JORDAN

Don't see why not.

ALIANA

When I said I don't want you anymore, I meant it. Now go away.

Jordan eyes the four of them for a moment, then turns and stalks inside. Aliana wipes her eyes and looks at Melantha.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

If you don't want a relationship with me, that's fine. I'll just...

MELANTHA

No. Ali, I do want a relationship with you. It's just that people don't usually charge straight in like that. It was scary.

ALIANA

I didn't mean to scare you. Does this mean...

MELANTHA

It means I want you to come home with me. I don't want whatever we have to fall apart because I overreacted.

Aliana smiles and throws herself into Melantha's arms.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aliana and Melantha sit on the sofa together.

MELANTHA

I'm proud of you. For standing up to Jordan.

Aliana shrugs self consciously.

ALIANA

I was tired of being weak.

Melantha looks guilty but relaxes when Aliana snuggles up to her.

MELANTHA

I'm sorry I said that to you.

ALIANA

Don't be. It was weeks ago and it gave me a wake-up call. So thank you.

Melantha smiles uncertainly. Aliana leans back to look her in the eye.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I mean it. I'd still be falling at Jordan's feet if not for you.

MELANTHA

I don't know how you twist something as horrible as me calling you pathetic into something to be thankful for.

ALIANA

It's the reverse of how my brain tries to twist brilliant actors and actresses into lousy ones.

She frowns.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

That sounded bad. I just mean I'm so aware that they're acting that even when they're objectively perfect, I don't always get sucked in. It's the other way around when I get shown imperfection.

Melantha smiles and gently pulls Aliana into her arms.

MELANTHA

Lucky for me. We should probably get some sleep.

Aliana nods but makes no move to get up until Melantha gently extricates herself from her. Melantha heads to the bedroom and Aliana follows.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Aliana and Melantha are still clothed as they lie together. Aliana is half wrapped around Melantha and wakes first. She checks the alarm clock, then smiles as she watches Melantha's face. She buries her nose in the older woman's dark hair.

MELANTHA  
Good morning.

ALIANA  
Morning.

She kisses Melantha's neck until she reaches her ear.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
You know we don't have work for  
another hour.

Melantha grins as Aliana rolls on top of her. Aliana kisses her. However, as things start to get heated, Melantha suddenly stiffens. Aliana pauses as she rolls her to her side. Aliana kisses her again but Melantha pulls away.

MELANTHA  
I'm sorry. I can't.

Aliana looks confused and hurt at first, then becomes worried when she sees the terrified look in Melantha's eyes. Melantha kisses her cheek and manages a tight smile before going into the bathroom. Aliana slumps down, looking disappointed.

INT. MELANTHA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Melantha finishes washing her face, turns off the tap and looks in the mirror, seeing the haunted look in her own eyes.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana holds Melantha's hand until they reach the shop. Melantha gives her a hug and lets go of her hand.

MELANTHA  
I'll see you later.

ALIANA  
Yeah. Tell your flowers I said hi.

Melantha smiles and nods. As soon as Aliana has gone inside, Melantha's shoulders slump as she looks at her shaking hands.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Melantha is flicking through channels on the TV when Aliana enters the apartment.

ALIANA  
Hi there, Mellie, I'm home.

Melantha smiles, switches off the TV and rises, holding out her arms. Aliana grins and bounds into them.

MELANTHA  
I missed you today.

ALIANA  
Me too. Missed you I mean. I would've visited the shop but Jordan was working my ass off and...

MELANTHA  
Did she try to hurt you?

ALIANA  
Nah, Will was with me all day. He scares the hell out of her. I think that's the only reason she hasn't fired him. Anyway how are you?

MELANTHA  
Fine.

Aliana tilts her head and chews her lip.

ALIANA  
Are you upset about this morning? Mellie, if I did something wrong...

MELANTHA  
You didn't. I just. I think we should take it slow.

ALIANA  
Got it. Um, does this mean we're officially...

MELANTHA  
We don't have to...

ALIANA  
A couple?

They both giggle quietly as their words intertwine.

MELANTHA  
If that's what you want. I don't want to push you into another relationship so soon after...

ALIANA  
You're not. I was kind of scared I might be pushing you.

MELANTHA

You're not. I love spending time with you. It's just been a long time since I've done this sort of thing.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aliana and Melantha are kissing. Aliana works her way to Melantha's neck when she feels her stiffen and bury her head in her shoulder.

ALIANA

Mellie?

MELANTHA

I think that's enough for tonight.  
I'm sorry.

She rolls over but not before Aliana glimpses her frightened eyes. Aliana looks hurt but still cuddles Melantha from behind until she relaxes.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR BALCONY - DAY

Aliana is leaning on the railing when Will joins her.

WILL

What's wrong? Something going on between you and Melantha?

ALIANA

No. Yes. I mean we're together now but something's wrong with Mel. She says she loves being with me but she doesn't seem happy.

WILL

Why not?

ALIANA

Well, every time we do stuff, she gets scared. I'm not sure what's going through her head. She's got a problem and she won't tell me what it is.

WILL

Has she ever been with another woman before?

ALIANA

No, I don't think so. As far as I know, her only experience with sex has been...

She trails off. Will looks concerned when he sees horrified realization slowly dawn on Aliana's face.

WILL

Ali?

Aliana looks at him and hesitates.

ALIANA

I think this is something Mel would want to keep private.

Will raises an eyebrow. Aliana looks embarrassed.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I know, I know, keeping secrets isn't my forte. But I...

WILL

Think Melantha would hurt you if you told me?

ALIANA

No. No, I think she'd be upset with me. But she wouldn't hurt me.

WILL

I should hope not.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aliana lies on the opposite side of the bed from Melantha. Melantha pats her gently without opening her eyes.

MELANTHA

Ali? Are you alright?

ALIANA

Yeah. I just wanted to give you space.

Melantha opens her eyes and turns to face her.

MELANTHA

Is something wrong?



ALIANA

Well, I know something's upsetting you. And I think I know what it is.

Melantha looks scared. Aliana takes her hand.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I'll be here when you're ready to talk. But I don't want to push you.

MELANTHA

I told you before, you're not. I'm sorry I've been distant. It's just that...

She stops, trembling slightly. Aliana waits silently, still holding her hand. Melantha looks back at her and her eyes become misty.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I don't mean to. I just...

Tears are starting to fall now. Aliana squeezes her hand.

ALIANA

Talk to me, Mellie.

MELANTHA

It's Rian Kennedy. Every time we. I remember. I can't stop myself.

She starts sobbing. Aliana pulls Melantha into a hug.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. You're not him. You're nothing like him. I'm so sorry.

ALIANA

It's okay. You don't have to be sorry. Thank you for telling me.

She kisses Melantha's forehead, cradling her while she sobs. Aliana's own eyes are glistening with unshed tears.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - DAY (LATER)

Aliana is gone when Melantha wakes. Melantha panics for a moment until she sees Aliana's phone on the bedside table beside her alarm clock. Then she panics again when she sees the time, leaps out of bed and rushes to her drawers.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliana is flipping pancakes when Melantha storms out of her bedroom. Aliana grins at her but her smile fades when she sees her angry expression.

MELANTHA  
Why didn't you wake me?

ALIANA  
I just thought after last night,  
you should have a day off. I made  
pancakes.

MELANTHA  
I'm late for work.

She grabs a carton of milk, pours it into a glass and drinks.

ALIANA  
Aren't you hungry?

MELANTHA  
No time. I need to get to the shop.

She brushes past Aliana who looks wounded as Melantha leaves.

INT. IDINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Idina answers the door and finds Aliana standing outside.

ALIANA  
Hi there, Dina.

IDINA  
Aliana. This is a nice surprise.  
How are you?

ALIANA  
I'm fine. I need to talk to Tim.

Idina nods and calls up the stairs.

IDINA  
Tim, Aliana's here.

She turns back to Aliana.

IDINA (CONT'D)  
Come in. Would you like a drink?

ALIANA  
Hot chocolate please.

She sits on the sofa and Idina goes into the kitchen whilst Tim descends the stairs.

TIMOTHY

Hi, Aliana. Where's Mel?

ALIANA

At the shop. I came to talk to you about her.

Timothy jumps over the back of the sofa and sits beside her.

TIMOTHY

Shoot.

ALIANA

Well, it's about. You see whenever I make a move, Mellie gets this scared look in her eyes. Last night she said she was remembering that roundheaded freak who raped her.

Timothy's smirk is gone and is replaced by concern.

TIMOTHY

I knew she hadn't gotten over that.

ALIANA

I thought she should have the day off, you know to recover, but she got angry with me. I messed up.

TIMOTHY

Ali, that's just Mel's way of coping. She got angry with me too whenever I tried to talk to her about it.

Idina returns with a hot chocolate and gives it to Aliana.

ALIANA

Thanks, Dina.

Idina sits beside Timothy whilst Aliana takes a sip.

IDINA

Tim told me about what happened to Melantha. I tried and failed to speak to her about it once but nobody can bottle up something like that forever.

ALIANA

I think she needs to see a therapist.

TIMOTHY

She does. I told her that years ago but she refused to go. She thinks she can handle it on her own and probably assumed she'd beaten it after all these years.

IDINA

That sort of thing will always catch up to you eventually.

Timothy holds her hand and glances lovingly at her before looking back at Aliana.

TIMOTHY

Dina's right but getting Mel to do something she doesn't want to do is a nightmare.

ALIANA

Well, how do I convince her?

TIMOTHY

I don't know. I was with Mel for three years but trying to talk her into getting help only fractured our relationship.

IDINA

I know someone. She helped me out of a dark spot after my divorce. Maybe I should talk to Melantha.

TIMOTHY

No offence, Dina, but I don't think she ever fully forgave me for telling you. Being reminded that you know might cause her to close herself off even more.

ALIANA

Who is this lady?

IDINA

Her name's Doctor Francis. Give me a moment.

She rises, goes into the kitchen and returns with a card.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Melantha is reading on the sofa when Aliana enters, holding Doctor Francis' card. She puts the book down and rises.

ALIANA

Hi, Mel.

MELANTHA

Hi. What have you got there?

Aliana gives the card to her. Melantha's smile fades.

ALIANA

I went to see Tim and Dina today.  
They're worried about you. They  
think this lady can help.

Melantha wordlessly gives back the card and sits back down. Aliana hovers uncertainly beside the sofa.

MELANTHA

I'm sorry about this morning. I  
shouldn't have snapped at you.

ALIANA

It's fine.

She perches on the sofa's armrest.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

Tim told me you don't like  
psychiatrists.

MELANTHA

I don't need a stranger poking  
around inside my head.

ALIANA

Well, I can't help you with this.  
And you can't let it fester in  
there forever.

Melantha picks up her book and starts reading again.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I'll make dinner.

Melantha ignores her as she rises and goes to the kitchen.

INT. IDINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Timothy and Idina are on the sofa together.

IDINA

Do you think she'll be able to persuade her?

TIMOTHY

Maybe. I couldn't but we'll have to hope for the best.

IDINA

Yes.

Timothy smiles gently when he sees her concerned expression.

IDINA (CONT'D)

What?

TIMOTHY

I love that you're willing to help.

IDINA

She's important to you. And to be honest, I try to help her because I feel guilty.

TIMOTHY

What on earth do you have to feel guilty about?

Idina hesitates, looking slightly scared.

IDINA

In a way, knowing that she was raped is comforting to me. She might never want to sleep with anyone again so I use that to reassure myself that you won't go back to her.

Timothy is silent for a moment.

TIMOTHY

Well, you're trying to help her and that's what matters.

He pulls Idina close and starts rubbing her belly.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

You're starting to get fat.

IDINA

Charming.

Timothy chuckles and continues rubbing her belly. Idina's smile fades and she becomes pensive.

IDINA (CONT'D)

Were you expecting to have a child with me?

TIMOTHY

Not really. But I'm glad it'll happen.

IDINA

I'll be halfway through my sixties by the time it's an adult.

TIMOTHY

So?

Idina looks at him vulnerably. He looks at her with adoration and kisses her. She smiles when he pulls away and runs a hand through her long dark hair.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliana and Melantha are arguing and Aliana is holding Doctor Francis' card.

MELANTHA

I told you, I don't need help.

ALIANA

You can't hide from your demons forever, Mel.

MELANTHA

And you can't force me to share them with a stranger.

They glare at each other. Aliana drops her gaze.

ALIANA

You're right. I can't. But I want what's best for you.

MELANTHA

I'm fine. Now we need to get to work.

She strides out. Aliana looks at the card, then tosses it on the table and follows her.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana is searching for a tattoo gun under the counter. Jordan finds her with her bottom in the air.

JORDAN

Well, this is a pretty sight.

Aliana jumps, banging her head on the counter. Jordan smirks.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Don't mind me, Ali. Just wanted to see how you are.

ALIANA

I'm fine. Thanks.

JORDAN

Are you? Because you seemed pretty down when you came in. I thought I was the only person who could have that effect on you.

She leans on the counter, her smirk widening.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Trouble in paradise?

ALIANA

It's none of your business.

She stalks off and Jordan chuckles darkly.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

The shop seems lifeless. Melantha replaces some wilted flowers with fresh ones but shows no enthusiasm as she waters them.

Two young men enter the shop. One eyes Melantha with interest while the other strides up to her.

YOUNG MAN

Excuse me, Miss. I'm looking for flowers for my girlfriend. She likes chrysanthemums but I keep forgetting which ones those are.

MELANTHA

Follow me.

She leads the man to the chrysanthemums. The other watches her as she picks out the flowers and goes to the counter.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

Two-fifty, please.

The young man pays her.



YOUNG MAN  
Here you go. Thanks.

He returns to his friend who is still watching Melantha. She watches him warily and he grins before his friend nudges him.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
Oi, stop being a creeper. Let's go.

They leave and Melantha relaxes.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Melantha receives a message on her phone as she walks.

ALIANA (TEXT)  
I'll be a little late. Sorry.

MELANTHA (TEXT)  
That's okay. See you at home.

She puts her phone away and sees something out of the corner of her eye. Glancing back, she sees nobody there. However, she walks a bit faster.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Melantha is looking at Doctor Francis' card when Aliana enters. She hastily tosses the card onto the table and rises.

MELANTHA  
Hi, Ali. How are you?

Aliana taps her head.

ALIANA  
Got a bruise up here but other than that, I'm fine.

MELANTHA  
What happened?

ALIANA  
Banged my head on the counter.  
Anything happen on your end today?

MELANTHA  
Not really.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Melantha allows Aliana to kiss her neck. Aliana crawls up her body so that she's half behind and half on top of her. Melantha shifts so that she can look at her.

ALIANA

You okay?

Melantha forces a smile. Aliana frowns.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

Do you want to stop?

MELANTHA

No.

Aliana looks at her suspiciously, then kisses her again. Melantha's fists clench as she moans. Aliana trails kisses down her neck until she notices how tense Melantha is.

ALIANA

Mellie?

MELANTHA

Keep going.

Aliana pulls back. Melantha opens her eyes.

ALIANA

You're not enjoying this, are you?

Melantha hesitates, looking ashamed and sad.

MELANTHA

No. I'm not.

Aliana lies down. Melantha tries to cuddle her but Aliana pushes her, just enough for Melantha to shift backwards.

ALIANA

Night.

She rolls over to sleep on the other side of the bed.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliana is dialing on her phone when Melantha comes out of the bedroom. A flicker of panic crosses Aliana's face.

MELANTHA

Who are you calling?

Aliana hesitates.

ALIANA  
Doctor Francis.

Melantha's expression darkens as the phone rings. She snatches it from Aliana as the SECRETARY picks up.

SECRETARY (V.O.)  
Hello. How may I help you?

MELANTHA  
I'm sorry, we got the wrong number.

She turns off the phone and scowls at Aliana who scowls back.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)  
Don't do that again.

She thrusts the phone into Aliana's hands and storms away.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - NIGHT

Melantha ushers a stubborn man out of her shop, sighing with relief when he leaves. She looks at the clock on the wall.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Melantha is walking when she suddenly stops and looks over her shoulder. Nobody is visible. Shakily, she continues.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aliana opens the door as Melantha enters.

ALIANA  
Finally. I was getting worried.

MELANTHA  
Sorry. My shop's suddenly popular.

ALIANA  
Maybe that's because you run it.

Melantha flinches and Aliana's smile fades.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
Oh.

MELANTHA  
Yeah.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Melantha is reading and when she turns the page, Doctor Francis' card falls out. She glares at the bathroom door.

MELANTHA

Aliana.

ALIANA (O.S.)

Yes?

MELANTHA

Stop shoving that damn card in my face.

Aliana is silent until Melantha hears her flushing the toilet. She emerges, wearing only a nightshirt.

ALIANA

I know this woman can help you.

MELANTHA

Have you met her?

ALIANA

Well, no. But Dina has.

Melantha tosses the card onto her bedside table and puts the book down on top of it. She turns off the light before Aliana reaches the bed, leaving her to find her way in the dark.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Aliana is ranting to Jennifer who listens patiently.

ALIANA

I can't stand it, Jenny. Mel thinks ignoring the problem will make it go away and now she treats me like I'm part of it. I don't understand why it's so hard for her to just admit she needs help.

JENNIFER

Maybe you should give her some space.

ALIANA

She had ten years of space before we met but it's still eating her up. I hate seeing her like that but I can't carry this relationship by myself.

JENNIFER

So don't.

ALIANA

What?

JENNIFER

Ali, if Melantha's too stubborn and stupid to get help, you don't have to put up with her. You can just leave.

ALIANA

No, I can't just. I...

JENNIFER

What are you getting out of this relationship aside from frustration? Like you said, you can't carry it by yourself.

ALIANA

But I love her.

Jennifer's face softens briefly then hardens again.

JENNIFER

You loved Jordan too and look how that turned out.

INT. MELANTHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Aliana looks sadly at the empty bed, before starting to pack her clothes. She stops when she finds the vase Melantha painted for her birthday.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Melantha is smiling when she arrives home and finds Aliana waiting for her, holding the vase. Melantha looks at the vase, then at Aliana and her smile fades.

ALIANA

You worked so hard on this. Why don't you work that hard on our relationship?

She gives the vase to Melantha who looks bewildered.

MELANTHA

Ali, what's going on?

ALIANA

I'm going to stay with Jenny for a while.

She picks up her bag. Melantha's confusion turns to panic.

MELANTHA

Wait. You're leaving?

ALIANA

Yeah. I've already wasted years of my life in a relationship that wasn't good for me.

MELANTHA

Ali, wait. Let's talk about this.

ALIANA

It's not me you should be talking to.

She takes Doctor Francis' card out of her pocket and thrusts it into Melantha's hands. Melantha grabs her arm as she passes. Aliana stiffens, then looks Melantha in the eye.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

Let me go.

Melantha obeys. Aliana leaves. Melantha stands still for a moment, then slumps down on the sofa looking stunned.

INT. IDINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Timothy finds Melantha standing outside looking miserable.

TIMOTHY

Mel? What's happened?

MELANTHA

Ali. Aliana left me.

Timothy pulls her into a hug as she starts to cry.

INT. JENNIFER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliana is asleep on Jennifer's sofa. Jennifer shakes her awake.

JENNIFER

Rise and shine, Ali. Don't you have work today?

ALIANA

Will can cover for me. It's not like business has been blooming recently anyway.

JENNIFER

Oh no you don't. I'm not leaving you here to mope.

Aliana looks irritable as she sits up.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I've made porridge.

ALIANA

Mellie and I often had pancakes.

Jennifer's smile fades. She sits on the bed and puts a hand on Aliana's shoulder.

JENNIFER

Look, Ali, I know moving on isn't easy but...

Aliana shrugs her off irritably.

ALIANA

I'm not moving on. I'm giving her time to sort herself out. There's a difference.

INT. IDINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Melantha sits with Tim, gazing at Doctor Francis' card. Idina offers her the phone. Melantha hesitates, glancing at Tim who nods encouragingly. She takes the phone and dials the number.

INT. DOCTOR FRANCIS' WAITING ROOM - DAY

Melantha is fidgeting and Timothy glances at her while Idina reads a magazine. DOCTOR FRANCIS, a plump, red haired woman with glasses arrives. Idina looks up and rises.

IDINA

Doctor.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Hello, Idina. You're looking...

IDINA

Fat? That's my husband's fault.

She tilts her head at Timothy as he and Melantha rise.

DOCTOR FRANCIS  
Oh, congratulations.

TIMOTHY  
You didn't tell her that you  
remarried? Shame on you, Dina. Hi,  
I'm Timothy and this is Melantha.

Melantha nods jerkily.

DOCTOR FRANCIS  
Pleasure. So are you ready for  
this?

Melantha hesitates for just a second, then nods and follows  
Doctor Francis into her office.

INT. DOCTOR FRANCIS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Doctor Francis sits and gestures to a chair. Melantha sits  
stiffly as Doctor Francis takes out a clipboard and pen.

DOCTOR FRANCIS  
So Idina and Timothy are friends of  
yours?

Melantha gives a half nod and half shrug.

DOCTOR FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
It was thoughtful of them to come  
and support you today. But Idina's  
always been a caring person.  
Anyway, let's talk about you,  
Melantha. Or do you prefer Mel?

Melantha shrugs.

DOCTOR FRANCIS (CONT'D)  
You know, I'm not trained to deal  
with a mute.

MELANTHA  
You can call me Mel.

Doctor Francis writes on the clipboard.

DOCTOR FRANCIS  
Good. Now let's start with your  
family history. Where were you  
born?



MELANTHA

London.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Why did you move?

MELANTHA

It's less constricting here.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

What about your family?

MELANTHA

I haven't seen them in a while. Mum and dad let me do my own thing and I let them do theirs.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Any siblings?

MELANTHA

No.

Doctor Francis scribbles something on the clipboard.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

So did you move here for professional or personal reasons?

MELANTHA

Personal. I needed a fresh start.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

People often do. Especially when they've experienced trauma.

Melantha flinches and remains silent.

DOCTOR FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Why are you here today, Mel?

MELANTHA

I need help.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

I think the more important question is do you want help?

MELANTHA

Not really.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Pride? Shame? Fear?

Melantha glares at her.

MELANTHA

Isn't it your job to make me feel better not worse?

DOCTOR FRANCIS

I can't help you feel better until I get to the root of the problem.

MELANTHA

I was raped alright.

Doctor Francis' expression doesn't change. She just writes.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Was this a recent assault?

MELANTHA

It happened ten years ago.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

And you haven't sought help until now?

MELANTHA

No.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Why not?

MELANTHA

I didn't think I needed it.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

What changed your mind?

Melantha's glare fades. She suddenly looks very vulnerable.

MELANTHA

My partner left me.

For the first time, Doctor Francis shows a flicker of pity.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

I know how that feels.

MELANTHA

She was selfish. She gave up when I needed her.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Didn't you just say you didn't need help?

MELANTHA

Well I. I would have. She shouldn't have abandoned me.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

If you don't let anyone in, they'll eventually lose patience.

MELANTHA

She was patient with her previous girlfriend. And she was an abusive bitch.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Are you?

MELANTHA

No. No, I'd never hurt Ali. I just. She kept pestering me about this and...

She falters and goes silent. Doctor Francis writes again.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

There are different kinds of abuse, Mel. Sometimes, it isn't even intentional. Are you here because you want to fix things with her?

Melantha nods.

DOCTOR FRANCIS (CONT'D)

But you also need to heal.

INT. DOCTOR FRANCIS' WAITING ROOM - DAY

Timothy is pacing while Idina reads, occasionally looking up at him silently. Finally, Melantha appears, looking exhausted. Doctor Francis is with her.

TIMOTHY

Mel, are you okay?

MELANTHA

Not really.

Idina glides over.

IDINA

Things like this take time. How did it go, Doctor?

DOCTOR FRANCIS  
Melantha did very well. We've  
agreed to try Prolonged Exposure  
Therapy.

TIMOTHY  
What's that?

IDINA  
It means talking about the details  
of painful memories until they have  
less power over you.

Timothy and Melantha glance at her and Idina shrugs.

IDINA (CONT'D)  
It was helpful for me.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana is at the counter when Timothy enters.

TIMOTHY  
Hi, Ali.

ALIANA  
Oh. Hi, Tim.

TIMOTHY  
I thought you'd like to know that  
you got through to Mel. She's  
finally going to see a therapist.

Aliana smiles with a hint of triumph.

ALIANA  
About time.

Timothy leans on the counter and looks at her shrewdly.

TIMOTHY  
Did you plan it?

ALIANA  
Technically, no. Jenny gave me the  
idea. I just modified it a bit.

TIMOTHY  
Mel doesn't like being manipulated.

Aliana's triumphant expression turns guilty.

ALIANA

I tried everything else I could think of. Should I talk to her?

TIMOTHY

Not yet. She'll come to you when she's ready. When she does though, you need to be honest with her.

ALIANA

Do you think she'll be angry?

TIMOTHY

Maybe at first. But I doubt it'll last.

INT. DOCTOR FRANCIS' OFFICE - DAY

Doctor Francis is writing something while Melantha sits opposite her.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

So how is Aliana right now?

MELANTHA

I don't know. I've only caught glimpses of her outside the shop since she left.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

And you haven't tried talking to her?

MELANTHA

I'm not sure how to.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Melantha parks her car a short way from her apartment. As she heads towards it, Jordan appears from the opposite direction.

JORDAN

Evening, Mellie. How was your session?

Melantha jumps and Jordan smirks.

MELANTHA

How do you? What the hell are you doing here?

JORDAN

Is it illegal for a lady to walk down the street? A couple of little birdies told me you're going through some issues. My condolences.

MELANTHA

Piss off.

Jordan laughs and deliberately bumps Melantha as she passes.

INT. IDINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Timothy sleeps beside Idina who is snoring softly whilst cuddling him. Timothy's cell phone rings. He opens his eyes and glares at it. Idina stirs as Timothy picks up the phone, checks it, shoots her an apologetic glance, and answers.

TIMOTHY

Mel, we're trying to sleep.

MELANTHA (V.O.)

Did either of you tell her?

TIMOTHY

What?

MELANTHA (V.O.)

Jordan was just outside my apartment. She knows about my sessions with Doctor Francis. What the hell did you say to her?

TIMOTHY

Whoa, calm down. I haven't said anything to her. Neither has Dina.

MELANTHA (V.O.)

Then how did she know?

TIMOTHY

I don't know. There's no need to be hysterical.

MELANTHA (V.O.)

This is the perfect time to be hysterical. I knew going to a therapist was a bad idea.

TIMOTHY

That's not true. Look I don't know how...

He stops for a moment.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)  
Oh shit.

MELANTHA (V.O.)  
What?

TIMOTHY  
She must have overheard me telling  
Aliana in the tattoo parlour. Mel,  
I'm so sorry, I didn't think it  
through. I just thought Ali would  
want to know.

MELANTHA (V.O.)  
You bloody idiot.

Timothy's phone signals that she's ended the call. He looks guilty as he turns to Idina who gives him a comforting look.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Melantha paces around looking agitated. Finally, she grabs the phone again and calls the police. A POLICEMAN answers.

POLICEMAN (V.O.)  
Hello, Peterborough police service.  
How may I help you?

MELANTHA  
Hello. I need to talk about filing  
a restraining order please.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Melantha is writing at her counter when Timothy enters.

TIMOTHY  
Hi, Mel.

Melantha glares at him and he grimaces but approaches.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)  
Look, I'm sorry. I didn't mean  
to...

MELANTHA  
I know you didn't. But I really  
don't want to see you right now.

TIMOTHY  
Fair enough.

INT. IDINA'S HOUSE - DAY

Timothy is typing on his computer when Idina finds him.

IDINA  
How did she respond?

TIMOTHY  
She told me to leave her alone.

Idina rubs his shoulders.

IDINA  
She'll come around.

TIMOTHY  
Yeah, I know.

He puts his hand over Idina's and smiles up at her.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)  
Want to brainstorm with me?

Idina smiles back and pulls up a chair.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR BALCONY - DAY

Aliana is eating a sandwich on the balcony with Will.

WILL  
You missing Melantha?

Aliana nods, looking worried.

WILL (CONT'D)  
You two need to kiss and make up.  
Seeing you this miserable freaks me  
out.

Aliana manages a small smile.

ALIANA  
I didn't think anything could freak  
you out.

WILL  
Well, even when you were with  
Jordan, you didn't get this mopey.  
It's not like you.



ALIANA

Mel's been avoiding me for several weeks. At least with Jordan, I knew where we stood.

INT. DOCTOR FRANCIS' OFFICE - DAY

Melantha is fidgeting while Doctor Francis waits silently.

MELANTHA

I feel like someone's constantly watching me. It's the same feeling I used to get after the rape. And I don't know if a restraining order built on very limited evidence is going to be enough to keep Jordan away from me.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Your paranoia is giving Jordan more power over you than she really has. You may not find her so scary if you remember that she eats, drinks and sleeps just like any other person.

MELANTHA

I know that.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

But you still feel like she's some kind of demon. She's not. She's just a mean spirited woman.

MELANTHA

I think Aliana understands the difference better than I do.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana enters and finds Will at the counter.

ALIANA

Hi there, Willy.

WILL

Shut up, Ali.

Aliana forces a giggle and goes to her work station.

WILL (CONT'D)

You seem marginally less miserable  
than you were yesterday.

Aliana smiles but it doesn't reach her eyes.

ALIANA

Jenny's been trying to cheer me up.

JORDAN (V.O.)

You can't do this. You've got no  
proof.

ALIANA

What's going on?

WILL

Some policewoman marched in here  
and demanded to speak to Jordan.

ALIANA

About what?

WILL

Dunno, didn't ask.

Aliana goes past him towards Jordan's office. She stops  
outside the door and listens.

INT. JORDAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jordan is raging at a calm looking, blonde haired POLICEWOMAN  
who is holding a packet of papers.

JORDAN

So walking down a street counts as  
stalking now? Sounds to me like  
this woman's got a screw loose.

POLICEWOMAN

I've been assured that she never  
revealed the location of her home  
to you. So the only way you could  
have known where to meet her was by  
following her.

JORDAN

So I met her on the street. Big  
deal. Where's your evidence that I  
knew she lived there?

POLICEWOMAN

I've also been informed that you know she's been attending therapy. How could you know so much about her private life?

JORDAN

Because her sweethearts can't keep their mouths shut. It's not my fault I overheard them.

POLICEWOMAN

I'm not here to argue with you. These papers are telling you to stay out of her street.

JORDAN

Oh, so I can follow her on any other street?

POLICEWOMAN

Are you confessing?

JORDAN

Way to twist my words, officer. Sounds like you're applying the guilty until proven innocent logic. Sadly an all too common mindset these days.

The policewoman scowls and puts the papers on the desk.

POLICEWOMAN

Just follow what's written here and we won't have a problem.

JORDAN

You got it, doll.

She smirks condescendingly as the policewoman leaves.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

The policewoman finds Aliana outside the door.

POLICEWOMAN

What are you doing?

ALIANA

Wondering what my boss has done.

The policewoman eyes her suspiciously.

POLICEWOMAN

She's been accused of stalking someone.

She passes Aliana and heads for the door.

ALIANA

Is that person called Melantha?

The policewoman looks back at her. Will glances up from his work station and looks between them. The policewoman leaves.

INT. DOCTOR FRANCIS' OFFICE - DAY

Melantha looks frustrated as she speaks to Doctor Francis who has her pen poised over her notepad.

MELANTHA

This isn't working.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Be patient, Mel. Healing takes time.

MELANTHA

No, I mean this therapy doesn't feel right. Why does sex have to be the deciding factor in a relationship?

Doctor Francis leans forwards, looking interested.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

Maybe I'm just bitter because of what happened but I don't get why everybody's so horny. I mean I know humans are supposed to procreate but Ali and I are obviously never going to do that so it just seems pointless.

Doctor Francis starts scribbling something.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Interesting. Mel, were you a virgin before the incident?

MELANTHA

No. But when I had sex with others it felt empty. Even with Tim, there was nothing fulfilling about it. I'm not planning to have kids so what's the point?

Doctor Francis beams at her.

DOCTOR FRANCIS

Beyond physical pleasure, there isn't one. Mel, I don't think trauma is the root of your problem. I think you just don't want to have sex at all.

Melantha stares at her, suddenly looking worried.

MELANTHA

But if that's the case, what if I can't give Aliana what she needs?

DOCTOR FRANCIS

What she wants, Mel. What we need and what we want are two very different things.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Melantha meets Will who looks surprised to see her.

WILL

Huh, haven't seen you in a while.

MELANTHA

Hello Will. Is Aliana here?

WILL

She went to Jenny's for her lunch break. Want me to give her a message?

MELANTHA

No thanks.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Aliana pays Jennifer and is about to leave but bumps into Melantha at the door.

ALIANA

Sorry, I. Oh. Hi.

Melantha smiles nervously.

MELANTHA

Hi. Can we talk?

ALIANA

I've gotta get back. I've got two clients back to back this afternoon.

MELANTHA

Can I walk you there?

Aliana hesitates, then shrugs.

ALIANA

Okay.

She waves to Jennifer who is frowning at Melantha. Her expression softens and she waves back before continuing her work. Melantha and Aliana leave.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Melantha and Aliana walk together, looking uncomfortable, especially when people pass them. Finally, Aliana jerks her head at an alleyway. Melantha nods and follows her into it.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

A straight couple squeezes past, leaving Aliana and Melantha alone. Melantha glances at the couple's joined hands as they walk into the street. Aliana watches her silently.

MELANTHA

I've been doing therapy.

ALIANA

I know. Tim told me. How's it going?

MELANTHA

Good.

ALIANA

I heard you filed a restraining order against Jordan.

MELANTHA

Yeah. I didn't have much evidence but luckily the police don't seem to like her much either.

ALIANA

She already had a criminal record when I met her. They're looking for any excuse to arrest her.

MELANTHA

I see.

She goes silent and fidgets. Aliana glances at her watch.

ALIANA

Mel, I need to get back soon.  
Whatever you have to say, just say  
it.

MELANTHA

I. I'm sorry.

She finally manages to look directly at Aliana.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

I love you, Ali. I really do. But I  
just can't do sex. It makes me feel  
dirty and I've realized that I'll  
never be able to give you the kind  
of satisfaction you want.

Aliana's hopeful expression fades.

ALIANA

So does that mean we're done? For  
good?

MELANTHA

It means that our relationship will  
have to be celibate.

She drops her gaze. Aliana is quiet for a long moment.

ALIANA

I slept with Jenny.

Melantha's gaze shoots up, a combination of shock and hurt on  
her features.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

I thought that she'd help me feel  
better after we broke up. That  
she'd fill up the hole in my life.  
It didn't work. If anything, it  
just made me more miserable.

She meets Melantha's gaze.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

Mellie, I've slept with several  
people in my life. At best, they  
gave me a temporary rush and at  
worst, they made me feel ashamed.

She takes Melantha's hand.

ALIANA (CONT'D)

You made me realize how little sex really matters in a relationship. I just like spending time with you and I'm sorry I was selfish enough to force you to go through therapy before I realized that.

Melantha is silent for a moment. Then she steps forwards and pulls Aliana into a hug. Aliana hugs her back.

MELANTHA

Thank you.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana skips into the parlour and Will points at the clock.

WILL

Five minutes late.

ALIANA

Have they arrived?

WILL

Not yet.

ALIANA

Then who cares?

She bounces past Will who smiles fondly.

INT. JENNIFER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jennifer hugs Aliana as Melantha stands at the door.

ALIANA

Thanks for looking after me.

Jennifer grins at her as she pulls back.

JENNIFER

Somebody has to.

Aliana punches her arm playfully before throwing her bag over her shoulder. When her back is turned, Jennifer's smile fades and she glares at Melantha.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

You'd better treat her well.



MELANTHA  
I will. I promise.

INT. JORDAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jordan is smoking while she scowls at the papers on her desk. She puts out the cigarette and starts sorting through them. She stops when she finds her restraining order. Her eyes light up as she scans it and she smiles wickedly.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

The shop looks brighter with flowers beginning to bloom. Melantha is sorting through them when her phone rings.

MELANTHA  
Hello?

TIMOTHY (V.O.)  
Mel, Dina's gone into labour.

MELANTHA  
What? I thought it wasn't due for another month.

TIMOTHY (V.O.)  
We did too. Dina's terrified and to be perfectly honest, so am I.

MELANTHA  
I'm on my way.

INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana receives a text from Melantha whilst helping Will sort through their tattooing equipment.

MELANTHA (TEXT)  
Ali, I'm going to the hospital.  
Idina's gone into labour.

ALIANA  
Oh no.

WILL  
What?

ALIANA  
Dina's gone into labour a month early. Oh no, is that safe at her age? What if she...

WILL

Ali, relax. Getting worked up isn't gonna help.

ALIANA

I need to be there. I need to support them.

WILL

Hey, hey, we've both got clients today.

ALIANA

But...

WILL

No buts. Skiving when you're not booked is one thing but skipping out on a customer is another.

INT. FIRST HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Idina screams while Timothy holds her right hand and a nurse crouches between her legs. Melantha bursts into the room.

TIMOTHY

Mel, thank God.

Ignoring the startled nurse, Melantha crosses the room to Idina's left side. Idina glances up at her as she has another contraction. Melantha looks at Timothy uncertainly, sees him holding Idina's right hand, and takes her left one.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana leaves the parlour, muttering angrily to herself. She quickly becomes anxious and checks her phone.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Finding no new messages, Aliana puts it in her pocket as she turns into an alley. As she approaches the end, Jordan suddenly steps into view.

JORDAN

Leaving early?

Aliana jumps and takes a step back.

ALIANA

My client cancelled and...

JORDAN

I don't need or want an excuse. I want to talk.

Aliana watches her warily.

ALIANA

We can talk tomorrow. I need to...

JORDAN

We're gonna talk now.

She saunters into the alley, blocking Aliana's way out.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Mellie filed a restraining order against me with little to no evidence. You of all people know the police have had it in for me for years.

ALIANA

For good reason.

JORDAN

Petty theft, a few broken bones, nothing really worth their time.

ALIANA

Physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse. That's definitely worth their time.

JORDAN

Perhaps. But you didn't tell them about that, did you? If you had, your name would have been on the restraining order too. Maybe Mellie didn't care enough to put it there.

Aliana turns to leave. Jordan slams her into the wall.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Don't turn your back on me.

Aliana tries to scream but Jordan grabs her throat and holds a switchblade up in front of her face.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

It's such a shame this happened, isn't it? I gave you a home, a job, a good fuck. What more could you ask for?

Aliana eyes the knife, looking terrified while Jordan gestures carelessly with it.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

And then you went off with the slut next door. You were such a good pet until she came along. But when a pet becomes useless, it's kinder to put it out of its misery. Wouldn't you agree, Ali?

Aliana struggles frantically, managing to jerk sideways so the knife lands in her side instead of her stomach.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

You'll only make it hurt more if you...

WILL (O.S.)

Get away from her, you bitch.

Jordan's eyes widen in fear. She hastily pulls the knife out of Aliana's side and turns just before Will slams her into the wall, hard enough to knock her unconscious. Aliana collapses, clutching her wound and looking terrified at Will's expression as he turns to her. His face softens.

WILL (CONT'D)

Are you...

He sees the blood streaming out of Aliana's side.

WILL (CONT'D)

Shit. Hang on, I'll get you to hospital.

INT. FIRST HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Idina is holding a tiny girl in her arms while Timothy cries by her bed. Melantha watches them with a smile. They all jump and the baby starts to wail as Will barges into the room.

TIMOTHY

What the hell?

MELANTHA

Will, what are you doing here?

WILL

Jordan attacked Ali. Stabbed her. I don't think it's fatal but...

Melantha and Timothy are on their feet in an instant.

MELANTHA

Where is she?

WILL

In a ward downstairs. They're  
operating right now.

Melantha nearly slams into him in her hurry to leave the room. Timothy starts to follow, then hesitates and looks back at Idina who is trying to calm the screaming baby.

TIMOTHY

Dina, I...

IDINA

Go.

Smiling gratefully, Timothy kisses the baby's forehead and rushes after Melantha and Will.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Will takes Melantha and Timothy to a room with a window. Aliana is being treated by two doctors. Will leads a trembling Melantha to a chair and Timothy catches the eye of a DOCTOR who meets them outside.

TIMOTHY

How is she?

DOCTOR

She's lost a lot of blood but the  
blade didn't pierce anything vital.  
She'll be unconscious for a while  
but I don't think she'll die.

Melantha gives a sob of relief.

TIMOTHY

Thank you.

He sits by Melantha while the doctor goes back into the room.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)

She'll be fine, Mel. She's tougher  
than she looks.

He looks up the corridor and Melantha looks at him.

MELANTHA

Go to your family. I'll call you.

Timothy nods, smiles briefly and leaves.

INT. SECOND HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Aliana wakes up and finds Melantha holding her hand beside her bed. Melantha glances at her as Aliana smiles tiredly.

ALIANA

You're here.

MELANTHA

Of course. How do you feel?

ALIANA

Tired and sore. How long was I out?

MELANTHA

All through the night.

Aliana notices the circles around her eyes.

ALIANA

You didn't sleep, did you?

MELANTHA

I couldn't.

Aliana grins then winces and her free hand flies to her side.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

Careful.

ALIANA

I'm going to have a huge scar there, aren't I?

MELANTHA

Yes. And you can use it to show how strong you are.

She kisses Aliana, who looks surprised.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

ALIANA

Nothing. I just thought you didn't like kissing.

MELANTHA

Kissing isn't sex. I'm not making you feel horny, am I?

ALIANA

No. Probably because I'm a better kisser than you.

Melantha chuckles and Aliana smiles and relaxes as Timothy, Idina and Will enter. Idina is carrying her newborn daughter.

WILL  
You okay, Ali?

ALIANA  
I will be, thanks to you.

She looks at the sleeping baby and shifts herself higher on the bed, ignoring the concerned look Melantha gives her.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry I wasn't here for the birth.

TIMOTHY  
You were stabbed in the gut, Ali. I think we can let it slide.

ALIANA  
Can I...

Idina hesitates, then carefully gives her the baby.

ALIANA (CONT'D)  
What's her name?

TIMOTHY  
Freya.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

Melantha and Will are talking with the blonde policewoman.

POLICEWOMAN  
So your friend was attacked and you were defending her?

WILL  
That's right.

MELANTHA  
So Jordan's going to jail, right?

POLICEWOMAN  
Almost certainly. Technically, she didn't break the restraining order but she'll be charged with assault and attempted murder.

MELANTHA  
Good riddance.

INT. SECOND HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Aliana is sitting up in bed, playing with Freya while Timothy and Idina watch.

TIMOTHY

You'd be a good mother, Ali.

Aliana smiles at him as Will and Melantha enter the room. Aliana sits up a bit straighter on the bed and Freya gurgles as she moves. Idina gently takes her daughter back.

IDINA

How did it go?

WILL

Jordan's gonna be charged for attempted murder. Unless the British justice system is as fucked up as the American one, she'll be in jail for a long time.

ALIANA

Good.

She smiles weakly as Melantha sits beside her.

MELANTHA

There's something else. Since Jordan owned the tattoo parlour, it'll probably be closed down while she's locked up.

ALIANA

Okay.

MELANTHA

I thought you'd be upset.

ALIANA

It's just a building, Mel. I care more about people.

IDINA

What about your career?

ALIANA

I never really thought of it as a career. I mean I got paid but it was more of a hobby to me.

MELANTHA

You're not going to depend on me to pay for everything, are you?



ALIANA

Not if I can get paid for my other artwork.

INT. MELANTHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aliana is painting when Melantha returns home.

MELANTHA

What's that?

ALIANA

Don't look, I'm not finished.

Melantha chuckles but doesn't peek.

MELANTHA

Are you sure you're okay about the tattoo parlour closing?

ALIANA

I'm fine. Besides I might have found a couple of buyers.

MELANTHA

Really? Already? Where?

ALIANA

Online. You know you can sell artwork on the internet, right?

MELANTHA

No.

ALIANA

Get with the times, Mellie.

EXT. FERRY MEADOWS - DAY

Timothy, Idina, Melantha and Aliana are having a picnic together. Aliana is holding Freya and allowing the baby to play with her finger while the others are eating and drinking. Idina checks her phone and smiles.

IDINA

Nicole says she'll be home soon to meet her little sister.

TIMOTHY

That's good.

He looks nervous so Idina takes his hand.

IDINA

Maybe Freya will help you two connect.

Freya starts fussing in Aliana's arms. Idina takes her daughter back and starts breast feeding her. Timothy watches until Melantha shoves his shoulder playfully.

MELANTHA

You're such a pervert.

TIMOTHY

In my defense, she's my wife. So anyway, I've found a publisher and we're finalizing an agreement for my novel.

MELANTHA

Excellent. Did Idina set it up?

TIMOTHY

No. Believe it or not, I'm not completely dependant on my wife.

MELANTHA

Not completely? Ow.

Aliana punches her arm and Melantha looks contrite.

MELANTHA (CONT'D)

Sorry.

TIMOTHY

I'm used to it. Anyway, how's your online career, Ali?

ALIANA

I don't think it counts as a career.

TIMOTHY

It does if you get paid.

ALIANA

Oh, well in that case, I've had two offers so far. I hope my work goes mainstream in the next few years but until then, I'm going to help Mellie in the flower shop.

TIMOTHY

How romantic.

Aliana giggles and kisses Melantha who smiles at her.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP AND TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

Aliana watches Melantha lock up her shop before her gaze drifts to the closed tattoo parlour. Unlike Melantha's blooming flower shop, it looks dilapidated.

MELANTHA

Thanks for the help, Ali. Maybe I should start paying you.

ALIANA

Well, we live together so that seems pointless.

MELANTHA

Think of it as an allowance.

Aliana punches her arm. Melantha grins and follows her gaze to the parlour.

ALIANA

Is it wrong that I feel kinda nostalgic?

MELANTHA

I don't think so. Moving on isn't easy. Would you change anything?

Aliana looks from the dismal tattoo parlour to the blooming flower shop, then at Melantha. She smiles and takes her hand.

ALIANA

No. I wouldn't. Now come on. I wanna spend this evening eating pizza and watching crappy TV.

MELANTHA

Sounds perfect.

They hold hands as they walk home together, leaving the two shops behind.

FADE OUT.

THE END