

Bethany

By:

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FADE IN:

INT. LINDEN HOUSEHOLD - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Screaming voices seep out from a closed bedroom door. A loud thud rattles the door.

MASTER BEDROOM

BETHANY (32) petite, brown eyed, blonde, sits on the floor with her back pressed against a dresser.

PERRY (35) tall, dark and square jawed with high arching brows, steps toward her while he wipes blood from his lip.

PERRY

Beth, I didn't mean to...

Bethany presses her hand to her cheek. Perry extends a hand to her, but she pulls away when he reaches.

PERRY *cont'd*

I'm sorry dammit. You know how I love you. I didn't mean to hit you.

BETHANY

Is that how you show love, by raising a hand to your wife?

PERRY

Hey, you hit me first. You started this whole argument. I'm trying to apologize.

BETHANY

Save it. Why don't you run to Nichole? You're always coming home late because of her anyway.

She rises to her feet sliding her back up the dresser. She then sidesteps to the door but keeps her eyes fixed on Perry.

PERRY

I told you a million times.
Nichole is just my assistant.

BETHANY

Yeah, you keep on telling
yourself that. I put my dreams
on hold for this family. The
least you can be is honest.

PERRY

I gave you everything. What
more could you want?

BETHANY

You just don't get it.

She rips off her diamond necklace and throws it at Perry.

BETHANY *cont'd*

I want you, Perry! Or is time
and attention asking too much?

She moves closer to Perry and runs her fingers along the
back of his neck.

PERRY

Beth, honey.

Bethany puts two fingers over his lips.

Her hands then run down to his hands. She rubs the back
of them then flips them over, rubs his palms.

BETHANY

When is the last time we made
passionate love? I'm your wife,
Perry or did you forget that?

Perry opens his mouth but no words come out.

Bethany proceeds to the door, opens it.

BETHANY *cont'd*

Maybe we'd be better off apart.

As she opens the door wider, Perry sprints toward her. He
slams the door shut before Bethany could step foot out.

Perry scowls and backs Bethany toward the bed.

BETHANY

What are you doing?

PERRY

Giving you what you wanted.
Passion, attention, time!

He tosses Bethany on the bed, mounts atop of her. She wriggles frantically and pushes at him, but Perry manages to press her down.

He rips Bethany's gown open then slides his pajama pants down, forces his self into Bethany. He thrusts harder into Bethany. Her face flushes redder with each thrust of his hips.

INT. LINDEN HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bethany finishes a set of push-ups then reclines in an armchair panting with her hands behind her head.

STEPS

Perry bounces downstairs with a brown briefcase in hand. He then struts into the--

LIVING ROOM

PERRY

Beth, I'm off to work.

He leans forward to kiss her. She recoils and turns her cheek.

INT. LINDEN DENTAL OFFICE - DAY

Perry comes across NICHOLE (28) mocha complexion, thin but curvy, and has wavy black hair that stretches halfway down her backside.

NICHOLE

Perry!

She rushes up to Perry, embraces him in her petite arms. Perry rests his hands on her hips then kisses her.

PERRY

Hey, love.

NICHOLE

What's the matter?

PERRY

Nothing. Just a fight with the misses.

NICHOLE

I wish you would forget about her so we can focus on us.

PERRY

I can't. She's the mother of my kids.

Nichole gently pinches his cheeks

NICHOLE

Well, Mr. Sensitive, you've got a patient waiting for you in room four.

ROOM FOUR

Perry examines a patient's mouth then places the dental hook and inspection mirror on a tray to the side.

PERRY

Mr. Kern, you have one serious cavity. It'll get more painful if it's not filled soon.

ALBERT KERN (47) a husky, stout man in fighting shape.

ALBERT KERN

How serious are we talking?

PERRY

It could get infected and I may have to perform a root canal if you delay the procedure.

ALBERT KERN

(sighs)

Let's get this over with then.

Perry places a sucking tube in Albert's mouth.

A drill sounds in the background.

INT. CROCKETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

CAFETERIA

Kids eat and talk amongst each other.

FREDRICK LINDEN (9) thin, tall for his age with dark hair
eats lunch with ALEX (9), chubby, red-haired, glasses.

Fredrick bites into his sandwich then immediately spits
it out.

FREDRICK

Ah! Everyday lunch sucks.

ALEX

It's not that bad. I kind of
like it.

He flips open his sandwich.

FREDRICK

I can't tell if this is ham or
roast beef.

ALEX

If you don't want it I'll eat
it.

He reaches over and grabs Fredrick's sandwich.

ALEX

Why don't you have your mom
make your lunch?

He bites into his first sandwich, devours it. Commotion
from older boys catches Fredrick's ear.

JASON

Staind sucks.

JAMES

Yeah, *Slipknot* is way better than those emo crybabies.

FREDRICK

It's a matter of opinion. I think *Staind* is amazing.

JEFFREY

Who asked for your input?

FREDRICK

I'm not taking ragging on *Slipknot*, I like them too, but I like *Staind's* passion more.

JAMES (11), JASON (11), and JEFFREY (11) each wear dark colors with a lot of red and very short hair. They turn to Fredrick and Alex.

Jason

Hey, aren't you that kid with the really hot mom?

FREDRICK

Careful what you say.

JEFFREY

I think he is.

Jeffrey ruffles Fredrick's hair.

JAMES

Yep, your mom's that hot blonde with the huge tits.

Fredrick clinches his fists.

FREDRICK

Don't talk about my Mom.

JEFFREY

She's my kind of cougar.

JAMES

In your dreams, Jeff. Your balls ain't even dropped.

JEFFREY

Shut up and stop worrying about
my balls.

The three older boys laugh and slap each other on the
back. Jason leans into Fredrick.

JASON

Your mom like younger guys?

FREDRICK

I said stop it!

Fredrick slams his fist on his table. Silence follows the
loud thud. Everyone turns to Fredrick and Jason.

ALEX

Cool it, Fred. They're sixth
graders.

FREDRICK

I don't care. Nobody talks
like that about my Mom!

Fredrick grabs Jason by his shirt, slings him to the tile
floor. Jason laughs.

FREDRICK *cont'd*

Take it back!

JASON

Make me.

Fredrick's fist cuts through the air, hits Jason's nose.
Blood spurts into the air.

JASON

Get off me you little punk!

James and Jeffrey tear Fredrick off of Jason. They then
pin him on a table. Jason approaches.

JASON

Hold him still.

He lifts Fredrick's chin up, cocks his arm back, and
punches him twice in the face.

ALEX

No!

He spears Jason into Jeffrey, which frees up one of Fredrick's fists.

Fredrick punches James on the chin, then swings his leg up and kicks him in the gut. James flies off the table.

Jeffrey holds Alex still while Jason knees his stomach.

Fredrick picks up a tray and smacks across the back of Jason's head then whacks his face as he spins around.

Jason crashes to the floor. Fredrick elbow drops atop of him.

Jeffrey, distracted by Fredrick, loosens his hold on Alex. Alex then headbutts his face. Jeffrey falls to the floor holding his bloody mouth.

INT. CROCKETT ELEMENTAY SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

PRINCIPAL THOMPSON (40) stares blankly at Fredrick who returns the same look.

The door opens. Bethany waltzes in with JESSICA (2) dimpled cheeks, curly, light brown haired in her arms. She sits beside Fredrick and lays the sleeping toddler across her lap.

BETHANY

Fredrick, honey, look at you.

She rubs her hand along his face.

BETHANY *cont'd*

Your face is all swollen. Your dad isn't going to be happy about this.

(to Principal Thompson)

Sorry I'm late, Regina.

PRINCIPL THOMPSON

This is Fredrick's fifth fight in eight weeks. If he continues this path I will expel him.

BETHANY

That won't be necessary. I'll see to it he doesn't cause any more trouble.

PRINCIPAL THOMPSON

This is his final warning. No more fights for the rest of the year. As of now he's suspended for three days.

INT. BETHANY'S CAR - DAY

From the passenger seat Fredrick stares straight ahead. Jessica plays with a stuffed lion in the backseat. Bethany glances at Fredrick.

BETHANY

Why do you always pick fights with kids bigger than you?

FREDRICK

Size doesn't matter.

BETHANY

What did he say?

FREDRICK

You know what they say.

BETHANY

Oh, that again. How many of them were there? Couldn't have been just one kid.

FREDRICK

Put yourself in my shoes. Imagine the things they say? You'd fight as many of them as you needed to too.

BETHANY

(smiles)

...I bet you didn't eat did you?

INT. WENDY'S - DAY

Bethany, Fredrick, and Jessica sit toward front of the restaurant overlooking the window.

A chicken sandwich meal plus two double cheeseburgers lay on Fredrick's tray.

Bethany cleans ketchup off of Jessica's face. She looks up and sees two empty wrappers lay crumpled before Fredrick.

BETHANY

How can you eat so much and stay so small?

FREDRICK

I don't know. Maybe I get it from you.

Bethany and Fredrick laugh.

ENTRANCE

Jason and MARTHA (35) dull with straight dark hair and wearing a dress suit approach Bethany.

FREDRICK

Mom, there's one of the boys.

Bethany turns, finds herself eye to eye with Martha.

BETHANY

Hi?

MARTHA

(to Jason)

Is this the boy?

Jason's split bottom lip, purple bruises on each cheek, and swollen left eye come to view. He holds an ice pack to his swollen jaw.

JASON

Yes, ma'am.

MARTHA

Your boy owes my son an apology.

BETHANY

I bet your pardon. He
instigated the fight.

MARTHA

I don't know what kind of house
you run. I'm guessing you let
that hooligan run wild. Look at
my boy's face!

She pulls Jason forward.

MARTHA *cont'd*

I know all about your son's
temper. Apologize right now!

She nudges Jason back and then grabs Fredrick's arm. Her
fingers dig deep while she lifts Fredrick from his seat.

FREDRICK

Ouch. Let go.

Bethany lunges forward and throws a crushing right hook.

Martha releases her grip on Fredrick and stumbles back.
She touches her nose. Blood smears her fingertips.

MARTHA

You broke my nose, bitch!
I see where he gets his
temper from.

BETHANY

Don't ever touch my son.

Martha lunges with her right fist. Bethany slides right
and counters with a right cross. She connects to Martha's
chin and stuns her on her feet.

BETHANY *cont'd*

Don't swear in front of my
daughter either.

JASON

(to Martha)
Mom, don't.

Jason grabs his mother's wrist. They exchange looks.

Martha turns to Bethany.

MARTHA
You're not worth this.

She wipes blood from her mouth, readjusts her clothes and then staggers away with Jason.

Fredrick looks at Bethany in awe.

FREDRICK
I, I never ever saw you fight.
I didn't know you could.

BETHANY
Don't get used to it. Fighting
is wrong. People should settle
their differences with words.

As Bethany and Fredrick clean off their table, Albert Kern approaches from a side table. He taps Bethany.

ALBERT
Excuse me.

BETHANY
Yes?

ALBERT
I saw your little scuffle.
That's some hook you got.

BETHANY
Well that woman had no right
touching my son.

ALBERT
You have a lot of potential

BETHANY
Potential?

ALBERT
Boxing. You should consider
stepping in the ring.

BETHANY

You have me mistaken. I'm not a violent person. Besides, my husband would freak.

Bethany grabs a napkin and wipes Jessica clean then lifts her up onto her side.

Bethany *cont'd*

Fredrick, grab your backpack.

ALBERT

My name's Albert Kern.

He extends his hand to Bethany, she shakes it.

BETHANY

Bethany.

ALBERT

I'm a trainer. You're not a violent person, I get that, but you have a reason to fight.

He glances at Fredrick. Bethany follows his eyes.

BETHANY

That's just maternal instinct.

ALBERT

So you're a natural.

BETHANY

Thanks again but I donno. What would Baron Edward Lytton say?

ALBERT

Baron who?

BETHANY

The pen is mightier than the sword.

ALBERT

I prefer the saying if you wish for peace, prepare for war.

Albert digs into his pocket, pulls out a business card.

ALBERT *cont'd*
Here's my card if you change
your mind.

Albert hands Bethany his card. She stares at it a moment
then accepts it.

BETHANY
We really have to go.

Albert waves as Bethany, Fredrick, and Jessica leave.

INT. LINDEN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Perry kisses Bethany's cheek as she and the kids enter.

PERRY
What happened at school,
Freddy?

BETHANY
He got into a fight with a
bunch of boys.

She sets her purse down.

Perry hunches over, examines Fredrick's swollen cheek.

PERRY
Did you lose?

FREDRICK
Do I ever lose?

Bethany sheds her jacket, lays it over the sofa.

BETHANY
Trust me the other kid was
worse off.

Perry hugs Fredrick then throws a few playful jabs.

PERRY
So you showed that punk who's
the boss, huh son?

FREDRICK

I guess.

Bethany sits Jessica down in a playpen across the room.

BETHANY

Jess, play with your toys for a little while.

JESSICA

Ok, mommy.

Bethany strokes her fingers through Jessica's wavy blond locks and kisses her forehead then rejoins the guys.

BETHANY

(to Perry)

I don't like seeing Fredrick fighting. What if he really gets hurt next time?

PERRY

Honey, we both know he can handle himself.

BETHANY

We should think about getting him counseling to manage his anger constructively.

PERRY

There's nothing wrong with releasing a little aggression.

BETHANY

He almost got expelled today. Does that even matter to you?

FREDRICK

Guys, it's one thing to talk about me behind my back but I'm standing right here.

PERRY

Sorry, son. All I'm saying is a little aggression is normal in boys your age.

FREDRICK

Right... anyway mom pummeled some kid's mom. It's a good thing everyone in this house lets go a little aggression, right dad?

PERRY

When?

FREDRICK

This afternoon. We were eating then a kid I fought waltzed in with his mom. She was yelling and grabbing all on me--

Perry perks his brow, glances at Bethany as Fredrick animatedly recounts the fight. He rubs his chin and approaches her.

FREDRICK

Mom stepped aside and punched her so hard she froze dazed on her feet. It was crazy!

Perry furrows his brow then brushes Bethany's hair back.

PERRY

Aren't you supposed to be the nonviolent one?

BETHANY

It was just a little argument.

FREDRICK

Mom, you broke her nose. That's a pretty big little argument.

Fredrick flops on the sofa. He picks up a remote from the coffee table and clicks on a TV opposite of him.

BETHANY

(to Perry)

She harassed our kid. I think that calls for an exception.

PERRY

Sounds like Freddy's not the only one with pent up anger.

BETHANY

Fredrick, take your sister upstairs and read her Rapunzel. I'll be up to finish the story in a minute.

Fredrick huffs as he clicks off the flat screen TV then takes Jessica out of the playpen and proceeds upstairs.

Bethany digs into her jeans and pulls out Albert's card.

BETHANY *cont'd*

Freddy wasn't my only admirer.

She hands Perry the business card. Perry stares queerly at the card, gives it back.

PERRY

Albert's one of my patients. He was a fighter back in the day. Now he's hung up on the past and titles he never won.

He walks into the --

KITCHEN

Bethany follows.

Perry opens the refrigerator, takes out a carton of orange juice, and proceeds to pour some into a glass.

BETHANY

He offered to train me.

Perry takes a gulp of his juice.

PERRY

What did you tell him?

Bethany rubs her hands together and glances at the floor.

BETHANY

I told him you wouldn't think it was a good idea.

PERRY

And?

He takes another gulp of juice.

BETHANY

Boxing would give me something
constructive to do. I think I
should give it a shot.

Perry gags, juice spurts from his mouth. He slams his
glass down and wipes his hands on a dish towel.

PERRY

You what?

BETHANY

I didn't tell him yes. As far
as he knows I'm still thinking
about my answer.

PERRY

There's nothing to think about.
You're not boxing.

BETHANY

I know you're worried for me
but this is my decision to
make.

PERRY

Tough shit. I made it for you.

BETHANY

Why are you so adamant, Perry--

She brushes against Perry.

BETHANY *cont'd*

-- Afraid I'll finally be able
to take you?

Perry strokes his fingers through Bethany's hair; he
yanks down on a handful of it.

PERRY

Honey, you don't frighten me.

INT. LINDEN HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lying in bed Bethany shuffles the business card between her fingers, lays it on a nightstand.

Perry enters in the room with dampened skin and hair. He continues to the bed, slides underneath the comforter, and then leans in to kiss Bethany. She recoils.

PERRY

Goodnight, Beth.

Bethany flicks off the light on the nightstand. Incoming moonlight turns the room a dark pale blue.

She then leans over, nibbles on Perry's ear and slowly straddles atop him.

Perry's eyes snap open. Bethany kisses his lips then kissing down to his stomach while stroking her fingers along Perry's chest.

She then lowers his pajama pants and kisses him down there and then kisses up to his mouth.

BETHANY

Perry.

PERRY

Yes?

BETHANY

Albert is going to train me.

She kisses Perry's lips again.

PERRY

Are you asking or telling me?

BETHANY

Telling.

She leans in to kiss him again. Perry grabs her hair, yanks her back then mounts atop.

PERRY

We already had this discussion.
You're not boxing.

Bethany spits into Perry's eyes.

BETHANY
You can't control me like some
kind of dog.

She spits at his face again.

Perry wipes his himself then firmly rubs the spit from
his hand on Bethany's face.

PERRY
I can't control you... says who?

Bethany slaps Perry.

BETHANY
Says me.

She follows with a backhand slap.

Perry jaw swings agape. Bethany's hand speeds toward him
a third time. He catches it mid-air.

PERRY
Have you lost your mind?

He pins Bethany's hands against the bed. He continues to
slap her but stops short of her face.

Perry traces his fingers along Bethany's face then wraps
his hand around her neck.

A sudden cry wails from outside the room.

JESSICA (O.S)
Mommy!

Bethany pushes Perry off, rushes out the door.

JESSICA'S ROOM

Bethany lifts Jessica out of bed and cradles her.

BETHANY
Mommy's here, Jess. Did you
have a bad dream?

INT. LINDEN DENTAL - DAY

A bell above the entrance chimes as Bethany and Jessica enter. Bethany holds a brown bag in one hand and Jessica's hand in the other.

They approach JANICE (50's), graying brunette hair, black frame glasses, and white collared blue blouse.

BETHANY

Hi, Janice, is Perry busy?

Janice flips through a planner.

JANICE

No, his next appointment isn't for another half-hour.

Bethany glances at the wall clock behind Janice. It reads 12:30p.m.

JANICE *cont'd*

I'll go tell him you're here, Mrs. Linden.

BETHANY

You don't have to do that. I want to surprise him myself.

JANICE

Ok.

Bethany sits Jessica on a cartoon town designed rug. A kiddie table stands atop it with Lego blocks, puzzles, thick paged children's books, and other toys.

BETHANY

Mommy's going to give daddy the lunch we got packed him. Be a good girl for Janice.

Jessica eyes fixate on a colorful toy with multiple looping tubes. Miniature cars with holes through the middle attach to each tube.

Bethany glances at the toy.

BETHANY *cont'd*

You can play with the toys but
don't lose any pieces.

JANICE

I got my eye on her. You go on.

Janice crosses the room and moves the looping toy closer to Jessica then kneels down beside her. Bethany kisses Jessica's forehead then continues down the hall.

Jessica grabs hold of one of the mini-cars and runs it along its looping tube.

HALL

Faint moans resonate through the hall. The sound grows more audible with each door Bethany passes.

She passes several dark unoccupied rooms before coming to a stop in front of the last door on the left, which happens to be the only door shut completely.

Effeminate moans and deep groans seep into the hall. Bethany softly turns the handle, inches the door open.

OFFICE ROOM

Nichole lies on Perry's desk. Her open blouse exposes her supple breasts. As she moves back and forth on the desk, Bethany opens the door a bit further.

Bare chest and his pants around his ankles, Perry holds Nichole's legs up over his shoulders. He grabs her waist, pulls her closer to the edge, and thrusts faster.

HALL

Bethany's eyes well-up. She purses her lips and closes door quietly then backtracks to the--

WAITING AREA

Janice takes notice of Bethany.

JANICE

Was he surprised?

BETHANY

One of us was. Hey, Janice,
mind if I wait here till Perry
is done at his desk.

JANICE

Nonsense, you don't have to
wait. You're his wife. I'll
pull him out right now.

She pinches Jessica's cheek, rises to her feet.

JANICE *cont'd*

Family first, that's my motto.

BETHANY

Don't, if I know Perry he'll be
done in about ten minutes.

JANICE

Suit yourself.

PERRY'S OFFICE

Coffee colored fingers clinch the desk. Nichole's face
lay firm against the desk.

Perry clinches one hand on Nichole's shoulder and
traverses the other from her neck to her lower back. A
tattoo of purple serpent wrapped around a heart comes to
view on Nichole's back.

WAITING AREA

SUPER IMPOSE

The clock on the wall ticks seconds away.

END SUPER IMPOSE

Nichole approaches from down the hall. She adjusts her
blouse and slicking her hair back before.

NICHOLE

Janice, if a patient comes for
me tell him I'll be right back.

She pauses before Bethany then turns back to Janice.

NICHOLE *cont'd*

I'm going across the street for
a Pepsi. You want anything?

JANICE

No thanks. I got candy here in
my drawer.

Nichole continues over to Jessica and kneels in front of
her then glance at Bethany.

NICHOLE

Hi, Bethany.

BETHANY

Nichole.

NICHOLE

Hi, Jessica, how are you,
cutie?

JESSICA

Mommy say you're not nice.

NICHOLE

Of course I'm a nice... once you
get to know me.

She gently pinches Jessica's cheek then exits out.

Perry comes to view betwixt the hallways and waiting
room. He gives pause as Bethany stares at his awry
expression.

JESSICA

Daddy!

She lets go of the looping toy, runs over to Perry with
her hands stretched high. She trips over her shoestrings
while running and falls to the floor bumping her head.
Perry quickly scoops her up.

PERRY

Be careful, Jess. Don't hurt
yourself.

He kisses her forehead.

PERRY *cont'd*
Mommy has to tie your shoes
tighter next time.

Bethany approaches Perry with the brown bag lunch in hand.

BETHANY
Here's your lunch.

She shoves the bag into Perry's hand then reaches under his arm and rubs his side.

BETHANY
Hope your ribs aren't too cold.

JESSICA
We surprise you, daddy. Are
you surprised?

PERRY
I sure am, sweetheart.
(to Bethany)
Where's Freddy?

BETHANY
With his friend Alex. I was
just leaving to get him. Say
goodbye to daddy, Jess.

JESSICA
Bye, daddy.

PERRY
Bye, sweetheart.

He smooches Jessica's cheek and sets her on her feet.

Bethany leans into Perry, inhales deep. Perry starts to kiss her. Bethany stops him and wipes a red smudge from his cheek.

INT. LINDEN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bethany sits on an easy chair sipping a glass of lemonade and shuffling a business card between her fingers. Jessica sleeps in the playpen.

In the background a door opens and shuts. Perry enters.

Bethany slips the card between the seat cushion.

PERRY

Beth, I can explain what you saw today. I was frustrated about last night. Then Nichole...

BETHANY

What are you talking about?

PERRY

You walked into my office didn't you?

BETHANY

No, Janice said you were busy screwing around with something.

PERRY

So you didn't... I'm going to hop in the shower. Care to wash my back?

Perry starts toward the stairs.

BETHANY

I'll pass.

PERRY

See you when you come up then.

Perry continues upstairs. Water runs in the background.

Bethany removes the business card from between the seat cushion, picks up a house phone, and dials a number.

INT. REGGIE'S GYM - OFFICE - NIGHT

ALBERT

Hello.

BETHANY (O.S)

Hi, Albert, it's me, Bethany, the woman at Wendy's with the hook?

ALBERT

Right, yes. I'm glad you called. I started to doubt you would.

INTERCUT BETWEEN BETHANY AND ALBERT

BETHANY

I know. I've been putting things into perspective.

ALBERT

And?

BETHANY

My answer is yes. I want you to train me.

ALBERT

What would your friend Baron what's his name say?

BETHANY

Nothing. He's been dead more than 120 years.

ALBERT

This won't be some cakewalk.

BETHANY

If I wanted cake I'd call Betty Crocker.

ALBERT

Be at my gym tomorrow at 10a.m. The address is on the card.

BETHANY

Can you make it 11? I have to do some work around my house and restock groceries.

ALBERT

I thought you were serious?

BETHANY

I am.

ALBERT

Good, I'll see you at 10.

EXT. REGGIE'S GYM - DAY

The exhaust spews from automobiles' tailpipes. Traffic is thick.

Hundreds of pedestrians, casual and business dressed, traverse the sidewalks.

Patrons brandishing money crowd street vendors.

INT. REGGIE'S GYM - DAY

Sweat seeps through the clothes of men and women.

Two big, burly men, each wearing red, protective headgear, spar in a white top ring.

Along an adjacent wall left of the ring, fighters lift weights on various machines.

Along the other walls guests workout on flat benches, incline benches, and decline benches. They also make use of free weight dumbbells, curl bars, speed bags, heavy bags, and double-ended bags.

FRONT ENTRANCE

Two, big, steel doors open. Bethany, Jessica, and Fredrick make their way through the gym.

Fredrick scrunches up his face, wipes his nose vigorously.

Many of the fighters inside dwarf Bethany in size.

Albert stands at the base of a black iron--

STAIRCASE

ALBERT

(booming)

Bethany, c'mon up.

Bethany and a few others turn to Albert. He heads up the

staircase, Bethany and the children follow him.

Some fighters follow Bethany with their eyes. Most notable of the gazers is a gray suited man with dark sunglasses.

ALBERT'S OFFICE

Large windows inside the office overlook the entire gym.

Albert takes a seat on a worn, brown leather chair behind a thick oak desk.

Atop the desk lay neatly organized folders a wide glass bowl filled with Hershey's candy.

Bethany and Fredrick take a seat on two smaller cushioned chairs opposite of Albert. Jessica sits on Bethany's lap.

ALBERT

You're late.

BETHANY

I tried to get here at ten but time just slipped away from me.

Albert pulls out a spiral notebook from the top drawer.

ALBERT

Don't worry about it. Stuff happens, but keep in mind every minute you're late you owe me ten pushups--

Bethany nods.

ALBERT *cont'd*

--Any time you say *I can't* you owe me twenty-five pushups. Got it?

BETHANY

(nodding)

Yes.

JESSICA

Chocolate!

She stretches her tiny hands toward the glass bowl.

BETHANY

Jess, that's not yours stop it.
I'm sorry, Albert. She goes
ballistic over chocolate.

ALBERT

Let her have some.

He hands Jessica a piece of candy.

ALBERT

Chocolate is my kryptonite too.

JESSICA

Thank you.

She stuffs the candy into her mouth. Albert hands
Fredrick a couple of pieces of candy.

FREDRICK

Thanks, Mr. Kern.

ALBERT

Ok, Bethany, your training
starts tomorrow. Today we'll
test your fitness. Drop and do
as many pushups as you can.

BETHANY

Right now?

Bethany stares at Albert for a moment. He unravels a
piece of candy, pops it in his mouth, and reclines back.
The smile on his face fades as he swallows.

Bethany sits Jessica on Fredrick's lap then gets down on
all fours where Albert can see her.

BETHANY *cont'd*

Count for me, Fredrick.

She extends her legs, straightens her back. Slowly, her
arms flex 90 degrees at the elbow.

FREDRICK

One, two, three..

ALBERT

Do an extra 20 for being late.

INT. REGGIE'S GYM - DAY

MONTAGE

-Sweat patches seep through Bethany cloths as performs sit-ups while Albert holds her feet.

-Fingers grip a bar. Bethany's face surfaces above the bar.

-A long bar with two large plates on each end rest on Bethany's back. She squats down and quickly rises.

-Bethany inhales and exhales quickly as she pushes a weighted bar away from her chest.

END MONTAGE

ALBERT

C'mon push it. Get the bar up!

Bethany's face turns pink. Her fingers clinch tighter around the bar turning cherry red. Veins pop from her neck and sweat streaks past her brown eyes.

She releases a loud grunt as she finally clears the bar from her chest and sets it on the rack above.

ALBERT *cont'd*

You can lift your own body weight. Good.

He runs his finger down a piece of paper on a clipboard.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Everything else looks good too.

BETHANY

I try to get in some anaerobic workouts every morning.

ALBERT

You ever worked a speed bag?

SPEED BAG

A small, red, teardrop shaped, ball shoots away then quickly darts back hitting Bethany's face.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Step back. Spread your feet
shoulder width apart. Keep your
elbows up.

Bethany's hands bat the bag. It ricochets back and forth at a slow rhythmic pace.

FREDRICK

She's got the hang of it now.

Jessica mimics Bethany form as she hits the speed bag.

ALBERT

That's enough for today.

He tosses Bethany a water bottle. She takes a drink then joins Albert and the kids on a bench by the ring.

Albert continues to scroll a pen down a clipboard.

ALBERT

You're stronger than I
expected. You can something
special.

FREDRICK

Mr. Kern, think you could train
me too?

ALBERT

Sorry, Freddy, you're a little
too young for me to train.

FREDRICK

Oh.

ALBERT

Tell you what. You can still
come in and workout whenever
you want.

FREDRICK

Ok!

Albert

(to Bethany)

Tomorrow you'll start weight training. We'll do that twice a week. Any questions?

BETHANY

Just one. Who was the guy in the gray suit and sunglasses?

She points to the far side of the gym. Albert follows her finger.

ALBERT

He's Jeremiah. He scouts the gym every now and again for raw talent. He seemed interested when I mentioned you.

FAR SIDE OF GYM

Jeremiah strides cool and slow to the exit, takes a look over his shoulder, and continues out the doors.

BENCHES

BETHANY

You said we're done, right?

ALBERT

If that was your only question then, yes, we're done the day.

Bethany steps from the benches, pauses.

BETHANY

There's one thing. I don't know if it's a conflict of interest but my husband's your dentist.

ALBERT

Perry Linden? Funny, he never wore a ring.

BETHANY

That's Perry. Says it makes him
feel claustrophobic.

ALBERT

I'm sorry; it's none of my
business.

BETHANY

No biggie. He's a cheating
bastard. Hey could you do me a
favor and keep an eye on my
kids while I shower?

ALBERT

Yeah, no problem.

BETHANY

Thanks.

Bethany fades from sight into the locker rooms. Albert
turns to Fredrick.

INT. LINDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

The setting sun gives the living room an orange glow.
Completely content, Perry stares straight ahead with one
leg crossed over the other. His fingers tap rhythmically
on his knee.

Keys jingle in the background followed by a door creaking
open and the pitter-patter of a half dozen feet hitting
the hardwood floor.

Bethany and the children enter the living room softly.
They freeze in place once they lay eyes on Perry.

BETHANY

Perry, why are you sitting in
the dark?

She flicks a light on.

PERRY

Where have you been?

BETHANY
(to Fredrick)
You and your sister go
upstairs.

Fredrick takes Jessica's hand and scampers up the steps.

PERRY
Where were you?

BETHANY
I was at a friend's.

PERRY
Who?

BETHANY
Cassandra, Alex's Mom.

Perry gingerly rises and approaches Bethany.

PERRY
Bullshit!

BETHANY
It's the truth.

PERRY
Truth, huh--

He lurches forth, wraps his hand around Bethany's neck.

PERRY *cont'd*
--Did you girly chat with
Cassandra before or after you
saw that trainer?

BETHANY
You're insane. I don't know
what you're talking about.

Perry backs Bethany against a wall, slams her repeatedly
against a bookcase adjacent to them.

PERRY
He left a voicemail! You
betrayed my trust.

He presses down on Bethany's trachea.

Panting, Bethany grips Parry's wrist with one hand and punches his face with her other.

She strikes him again. A cracking sound echoes. Blood trickles from Perry's nose.

Perry lets go.

Bethany holds her hand to her chest, inhales deeply.

BETHANY

You don't know a thing about trust or faithfulness. I saw your dirty secret firsthand--

She picks up a vase from the bookcase.

BETHANY *cont'd*

--I saw you screwing Nichole on your desk!

Bethany throws the vase at Perry's face. He puts his hands up in time to shield himself. The vase shatters to a dozen pieces.

Bethany grabs a thick, hard covered book from the floor whacks Perry.

BETHANY *cont'd*

You liar! You cheater! You whore!

Perry rips the book from Bethany's hands and smacks her to the floor.

STAIRCASE

Fredrick squats at the top of the steps.

LIVING ROOM

Perry lifts Bethany off the floor by her hair.

PERRY

I'm the man of this house. I do what I damn well please!

Bethany uppercuts Perry's groin then start toward the kitchen.

Perry trips her ankle before she can make any progress.

PERRY *cont'd*
I'm not done with you.

Bethany locks eyes with Fredrick while Perry drags her closer.

STAIRCASE

Fredrick jumps up and sprints down the hall to the--

MASTER BEDROOM

Fredrick flicks on the lights then digs through a black purse, retrieves a small business card. He then grabs a cordless phone off a dresser and dials into it.

EXT. ALBERT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

An office door closes.

A ringing chimes in the foreground.

Albert digs into his pocket, withdraws a mobile phone.

ALBERT
Hello.

FREDRICK (O.S)
(low)
Mr. Kern, get over here. Now!

ALBERT
Fredrick?

FREDRICK (O.S)
It's my Dad, he's hurting my mom.

ALBERT
I'm on my way.

He closes his phone and rushes down the staircase.

INT. LINDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

LIVING ROOM

Perry grabs hold of Bethany's wrist and slaps her three times.

PERRY

I gave you everything--

He squeezes his hand around her jaw, pulls her closer.

PERRY *cont'd*

--Everything!

Bethany pounds down on Perry's arm. His grip lingers.

She then spits in his eyes, headbutts his face, and then connects a left hook to Perry's jaw.

Both Bethany and Perry's clothes are ripped and torn. Scratches and bruises cover each of them. Blood stains Perry's mustache and mouth.

Perry chokes Bethany against a sofa. He lets loose one hand cocks it back.

JESSICA

(crying)

Don't hurt Mommy!

FREDRICK

Dad, don't!

PERRY

Go to your rooms!

Jessica picks up a doll from the floor, runs over and whacks Perry's leg with it repeatedly.

BETHANY

(strained)

Get out of here, sweetheart.

PERRY

Look what you did! You turned the kids against me.

BETHANY

You turned them against
yourself.

Perry grunts as his fist speeds forward punching Bethany in the face. Her left eye starts to bruise immediately.

Bethany clinches her fist, knocks Perry's arm from her throat and throws a straight punch to his chest.

Perry stumbles back coughing and accidentally pushes Jessica aside. He cocks back his arm again.

FREDRICK

Don't!

He leaps from the steps onto Perry's back, locks his arms around Perry's throat.

PERRY

Get off, Freddy!

With both hands, he flings Fredrick off and over the sofa, he bounces to the floor.

EXT. LINDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Albert drives up to the house in a black Chevy Camaro, hops out the car, and bolts to the front door.

INT. LINDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Perry turns his focus back to Bethany. He reproaches her and stretches out his hand.

Bethany punches him square on the nose. Blood trickles from it again.

Perry backhand slaps her. Panting he presses his hand to his bleeding nose.

Rapid footsteps from afar grow louder.

Albert storms in, tackles Perry and pins him to the floor. The two men lock eyes.

PERRY

You!

ALBERT

Real tough guy, huh... let's see
you try and hit me.

Bethany forces herself to stand upright.

BETHANY

Careful, Albert, he's strong.

Perry yells ferociously as he strains to free himself
from underneath Albert.

PERRY

You bastard! Get off!

Perry squirms, shifting and thrusting his hips up.

Albert presses down with his full weight.

ALBERT

(to Bethany)

Don't worry, he ain't going
nowhere. You and the kids get
outside to my car.

PERRY

God damn it!

Perry grits his teeth. Veins bulge from his neck.

BETHANY

(panting)

Ok, ok. Fredrick, come on. I'll
carry Jess.

Without a word said, Fredrick sprints out front. Bethany
groans as she kneels down and picks up Jessica who has
dried tears crusted on her cheeks.

BETHANY

Let's go, sweetheart. Dry those
tears.

PERRY

Beth, don't you dare take my
kids! Beth! Beth!

Albert places a hand over Perry's mouth, squelching his screams. Bethany scurries out the living room.

EXT. LINDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

JESSICA

Why is daddy mad?

BETHANY

I don't know, baby. We have to
give him some time to himself.

Bethany and Jessica hop in the car with Fredrick.

INT. LINDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Albert removes his hand from Perry's mouth.

PERRY

She can't leave me. She won't
get away with my kids either.
They'll all be back. You wait
and see.

Albert punches down silencing Perry and leaving him motionless on the floor.

ALBERT

Shut up.

EXT. LINDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Bethany sits in the passenger seat of a black Chevy Camaro with Jessica cradled in her arms. Fredrick stares out the backseat window.

Albert appears standing at the front door entrance. He peers over his shoulder, quietly shuts the door and then proceeds to the Camaro.

In moments the car speeds off into the night.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

ALBERT

You mind explaining what happened back there?

BETHANY

It's a long story. I'd rather not talk about it in front of the kids.

ALBERT

I understand... you can clean yourselves' up at my place.

INT. ALBERT'S HOME - NIGHT

Inside all is black. Keys jingle in the background. The front door squeaks open softly. Light from streetlamps push several shadows inside.

ALBERT

Home sweet home.

He swipes his hand along the wall flicking on the lights as he enters.

Bethany and the kids follow inside. Everything is clean and orderly with nothing too extravagant standing out.

Above a fireplace, along a wooden mantel shelf, lay portraits of boxers and a younger Albert.

Bethany stares at a photo on the end of the mantel of Albert and a woman in her early-twenties with features similar to his.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Bathroom's down the hall.
There's clean towels in the
linen closet beside to it. I'll
find something for you to wear.

He starts across the living room down an opposite hall.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Make yourselves at home.

Fredrick follows behind Albert.

BETHANY
Is this your little...

SARA (O.S)
Dad, is that you?

Music blaring from headphones approaches. It stops as SARA KERN (24) tall, strong lean build and cornrowed hair enters from the left-side hall.

SARA *cont'd*
Sorry, I didn't know we had company.

ALBERT
Come here a minute.
(wraps an arm around Sara)
This is my daughter Sara.

Bethany moves closer, offers her hand.

ALBERT *cont'd*
(turns to mantel)
That last photo there was Sara's first pro fight. Sara, this is Bethany.

BETHANY
Hi.
(points to kids)
These are my munchkins Fredrick and Jessica.

SARA
Hi, my dad told me about you.

BETHANY
What'd he say?

Sara pats Bethany's right arm.

SARA
You got strong arms. Maybe you can show me that right hook sometime.

Bethany exchanges looks with Albert. He shrugs.

ALBERT

I'm gonna get the spare rooms ready while ya'll get to know each other.

He starts down the hallway again.

ALBERT

I hope you don't mind Bethany borrows some of your clothes, Sara.

SARA

That's fine.

BETHANY

Albert.

ALBERT

(pauses and turns)
Yes?

BETHANY

Thank's for helping.

Albert smiles warmly, continues down the hallway.

INT. ALBERT'S HOME - BETHANY'S ROOM - DAY

Bethany lies in bed with a pillow clinched to her chest and her knees tucked up to her elbows. She watches Jessica doodle in a coloring book on the floor.

Jessica's dark golden curls bounce as she snaps her head up. She smiles innocently as she proudly shows Bethany her crudely colored picture.

JESSICA

Look, mommy.

BETHANY

That's a beautiful horse, Jess.

JESSICA

It's a unicorn, mommy. See the sparkly horn?

BETHANY

Oh you're right. It's a beautiful unicorn, sweetheart.

Jessica giggles at Bethany's praise. She lays the book down and starts on a new page.

JESSICA

Can we see daddy today, mommy?

Bethany's eyes widen. She sighs.

BETHANY

Daddy? Daddy needs some alone time, sweetheart.

Jessica pauses, confusion written on her face, and then starts coloring again.

Bethany wipes a bubbling tear from her eye, clinches her pillow tighter.

KNOCK, KNOCK

Albert peeks into the room.

ALBERT

I'm dropping Fredrick off at school then headed to the gym. You sure you don't want to come?

BETHANY

Not right now. You go ahead.

ALBERT

We don't have to train today. We can just talk.

BETHANY

Thanks but I need to clear my head first.

ALBERT

You know where I am if you change your mind.

Fredrick whizzes past the room.

FREDRICK (O.S)
Bye, mom. See you after school.

Albert nods at Bethany and waves to Jessica who returns the gesture and then continues on his way.

JESSICA
Mommy?

BETHANY
Yes, Jess?

JESSICA
I'm hungry.

Bethany climbs out of bed and kneels in front of Jessica. She forces a smile.

BETHANY
Mommy can make you some French
toast.

Jessica pumps her arms up and down.

JESSICA
Yay, French toast!

Bethany takes her by the hand.

KITCHEN

Metal scraps against metal as Bethany scoops a piece of French toast off a griddle and stacks it atop several other pieces. She then carries it and a handle of maple syrup to the table where Jessica waits anxiously.

Bethany quickly cuts the toast into bite size squares, drizzles syrup atop.

Jessica shovels a few pieces in her mouth and shivers with delight.

Sara meanders into the kitchen and inhales the lingering aroma.

SARA

What smells so good?

BETHANY

French toast; you can have some
of mine if you want.

SARA

I'd like that.

Bethany separates the remaining stack in half then Sara
joins her Jessica.

SARA *cont'd*

You alright? You seem down the
last couple of days.

BETHANY

I'm just feeling overwhelmed
since... never mind.

SARA

Since what? Girl to girl, tell
me what's up.

Bethany sighs heavily as she touches her eye.

BETHANY

Me and my husband got into a
fight.

SARA

Lots of couple fights.

BETHANY

I bet they don't bloody each
other up.

She glances at Jessica then back to Sara.

BETHANY *cont'd*

(softer)

My husband's very controlling,
but he wasn't always that way.
He changed after college.

She circles her fork around the edges of her plate and
rests her chin on her knuckles.

Sara stares at Bethany a moment then stands and grabs Bethany by the wrist.

SARA
We're going to the gym.

BETHANY
What?

SARA
You have to stop beating
yourself up starting now.

INT. ALBERT'S GYM - DAY

Sara holds a heavy bag in place as Bethany squares up to punch it. Bethany throws a jab, followed by a straight left, and then a right hook.

BETHANY
You sure Albert's okay with
Jess in his office.

SARA
They're fine; focus on the bag.
Besides, kids love my dad.

ALBERT'S OFFICE

As Albert and Jessica watch cartoons he unwraps a piece of candy, leans over and offers it to Jessica.

ALBERT
More chocolate?

Jessica, chocolate smears on each cheek, nods excitedly and snatches the candy from Albert's hand.

GYM FLOOR

SARA
Do basic 1-2-3 to the body
leading with your left.

Bethany hits the heavy bag with a quick left jab followed by a straight right and end with a left hook.

SARA *cont'd*

Again.

Bethany repeats the sequences of punches with a grimaced expression.

SARA *cont'd*

You still thinking about him?

Bethany relaxes and exhales heavily.

BETHANY

I can't help it. I see his face on the bag and my fists in his mouth.

She paces a bit as she shakes her arms a few times then rests her hands behind her head.

Sara steps from behind the bag.

BETHANY *cont'd*

It's just not fair. Everything was perfect you know? And then...

She punches the heavy bag as hard as she can. A loud thud booms as her fist makes contact. The bag sways wildly.

BETHANY *cont'd*

--The passion was gone. No more midnight drives to nowhere laughing into the wind or making love till dawn. I wasn't enough woman for him anymore.

SARA

I'm sorry.

BETHANY

Me too. Sorry I put everything on hold for him. I could have been a teacher, a counselor, or even a physical therapist.

SARA

You can still do that.

BETHANY

Yeah but I love being a mom. I can't stand the thought of not seeing my kids grow up.

SARA

You're doing it again.

BETHANY

What?

SARA

Let's see if you can beat me up half as good as you beat yourself.

Sara glances toward the--

SPARRING RING

Bethany and Sara bounce in place at opposite corners. A few of the other fighters gather round outside the ring.

ALBERT'S OFFICE

The cartoon playing on the office TV ends. Albert takes the disk out of the BluRay player.

Jessica nibbles on another piece of candy. She moves it to her mouth for another bite but drops it. She scans the floor for it. As she looks over her chair she sees Bethany in the ring through the glass behind her.

JESSICA

Mommy's fighting.

Albert peers through the glass just as Bethany and Sara approach each other. He scoops Jessica into his arms, continues to the door.

SPARRING RING

Bethany spots Albert and Jessica approaching the ring from her peripheral.

SARA

Hey, stay focused.

They touch gloves and part a few feet from each other.

ALBERT

Don't start until I ring the
bell!

He makes his way to a tiny table outside the ring then picks up a small hammer and rings a bell atop of it.

Bethany and Sara put up their guard.

Sara bounces on her toes as she approaches Bethany who timidly sidesteps backward in a circle.

Sara throws two quick jabs.

Bethany blocks both punches and counters with a jab, straight combination of her own. Sara blocks it.

Sara shakes her arms out and grins then continues with a triple jab, straight, right hook combo. Her last three punches catch Bethany squarely on the chin.

Sara hops back dancing around the ring a bit as she leers at Bethany gathering herself.

SARA

C'mon, where's that punching
power I heard about?

Bethany shuffles forward after throwing a hard jab, jab, straight, hook, hook combo sequence.

Sara bats away the jabs but Bethany's last three punches force her against the ropes. She strikes back with a left straight to the head and a right hook to the body.

Bethany stutter steps back wincing.

Sara moves in closer, throws two more quick body shots followed by a right straight to the head.

Bethany grunts as she eats the straight on the chin. She stumbles sideways grabbing the rope. She plants her feet.

Panting Bethany peers through the crowd gathered around the ring and locks eyes with Jessica who stares back concerned.

Bethany chomps down harder on her mouthpiece. Her eyes furrow more intensely than before as she closes the distance between herself and Sara.

She throws two jabs then a long sequence of hard punches: left straight, right hook, left jab, right straight and finally a left hook. Each punch is harder than the last.

Sara uses her superior speed to evade a few punches but the majority of them land spot on from kidney to jaw. She halfheartedly bounces on her toes from the center of the ring to the ropes once more.

Bethany continues to pressure Sara around the ring with a melee of body punches. She powers Sara into a corner where she unleashes a barrage of straights and hooks ferociously working body to head.

Sara knifes through Bethany's onslaught with a few counter strikes of her own. She sneaks in a snap jab that moves the powerful exchange back to center ring.

Sara dodges more of Bethany's strikes but Bethany continues to pressure her with a bevy of hard punches.

Both women grunt with each punch thrown, neither yielding to the other.

Sara slips past a left hook and connects with a right cross to head.

OUTSIDE RING

A young man, LUCIAN (28) lean chiseled build, Latin, moves closer to the ring. He stares intrigued at Bethany's brutish fighting style and smirks.

INSIDE RING

Bethany regains her footing then follows with a fast jab, hook to the body and then an uppercut.

Sara head snaps back. She nearly falls backward on the canvas.

Bethany charges forward, her right arm cocked back and guard wide open.

Sara shifts all of her momentum into a counter punch to Bethany's gut.

Bethany stops mid-stride clinching her stomach.

Sara winds up and unleashes a hard left hook that sends Bethany to the canvas.

Bethany pants as she crawls on her knees. She forces herself to her feet. She stares back at Sara who drips blood her nose.

The ringside bell DINGS.

ALBERT

That's enough.

He waves both fighters over.

Sara shakily approaches Bethany, takes off her glove and extends her hand.

Bethany removes her glove and shakes Sara's hand. They continue toward Albert who stands ringside.

SARA

You put up a good fight.

BETHANY

Yeah, well, you finally beat some sense into me.

SARA

That's good to hear.

They climb out of the ring. Bethany lays her gloves to the side then hoists Jessica onto her hip. Jessica touches Bethany's bruised eye.

BETHANY

Don't worry, mommy's okay.

SARA

You were right about her, dad. She's stronger a tough one.

ALBERT

She's not one to be underestimated.

SARA

We'll just gonna have to spar again. I'm hitting the showers. Catch up with you in a bit.

Albert nobs, Sara heads toward the locker rooms.

Bethany who smiles genuinely at Jessica as they playfully hit fists together.

ALBERT

Hey, Bethany, follow me to my office. I'll get ya some ice for that eye.

ALBERT'S OFFICE

He digs throw a mini freezer, pulls out a cold compress, gives it to Bethany.

BETHANY

(placing compress on eye)
Thanks.

ALBERT

You're mo lighthearted than this morning.

BETHANY

Thanks to Sara. She has a way with words and her fists.

ALBERT

Count yourself lucky. Not many people can pressure Sara in the ring like that.

BETHANY

She is really good. Even with protective gear my head's still a little rattled.

ALBERT

You'll get used to it. Sparring with Sara is the best way for you to become a better fighter.

BETHANY

I, I thank you for this chance but--

ALBERT

It'd be temporary till we set up fights for you.

BETHANY

It's just I have to think about my situation with my husband. I did just take off with the kids.

ALBERT

I know. What I'm offering you now is a chance at something new for you and the kids.

BETHANY

I am grateful for everything you've done but I'm curious. Why are sticking your neck out so much for me?

ALBERT

You remind me of a friend I had a long time ago.

He looks over to a wall of pictures, narrows his gaze briefly on a picture of him and a blond haired man with similar facial features as Bethany.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Listen, you hang around today and think about the offer. I'm sure Sara would be happy to workout with you a l'il more.

BETHANY

Thank you, Albert.

ALBERT

No worries. Me and Jess got plenty of movies and chocolate up here.

JESSICA

Chocolate!

She leans over Albert's desk with her hands cupped together like a miniature bowl.

Albert opens a drawer, takes out a few pieces of chocolate caramels, drops them in her hands.

Bethany rises, letting Jessica alone on the chair, and continues to the door.

BETHANY

Behave yourself, little girl.

Jessica nods as she savors a piece of candy.

Bethany exits. Albert quickly turns on a Disney movie, Aristocats. He then focuses on his computer and pulls up a minimized tab.

On the screen shows an obituary article of a blond man, Sonny Redding, whom Bethany resembles. Highlighted on the screen is: "Survived by his wife and two sons".

He clicks open another tab of an adoption agency.

INT. ALBERT'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bethany drops a lid onto a pot as she busily stirs boiling penne pasta in another pot. She picks up a wooden spoon from the countertop, slips on an oven mitt and then pulls the lid off the smaller pot.

She dips the spoon and tastes the sauce inside.

BETHANY

Needs more brown sugar and red pepper.

Bethany sifts through an adjacent overhead cupboard, takes out nothing.

ALBERT (O.S)
Didn't take you long find your
way around my kitchen.

Bethany looks over at Albert posted at the entryway.

BETHANY
Cooking gives me a sense of
normalcy.

She checks another cupboards, withdraws a glass jar of
brown sugar.

BETHANY *cont'd*
You have any fresh red chili
peppers?

ALBERT
Try the bottom right bin in the
fridge.

Bethany opens the refrigerator, finds a rotted bag of
peppers.

BETHANY
Eww. No go on the peppers.

She returns to the stovetop, mixes the pots once more
then crosses to the countertop, slices up a French roll.

BETHANY *cont'd*
We can make do without it. You
wanna give me a hand here?

She points to butter and a bowl of seasoning laid by the
French roll slices now on baking sheet.

Albert picks up a butter knife, spreads butter and
seasoning on the slices of bread.

ALBERT
Bout what I said earlier, you
give it some thought?

EXT. ALBERT'S HOME - NIGHT

Streetlights press a shadow against the steps. It climbs
up, stops at the door. A hand stretches to the doorbell.

INT. ALBERT'S HOME - NIGHT

BETHANY
Yeah a little.

She pauses as the doorbell rings.

SARA (O.S)
I'll get it.

EXT. ALBERT'S HOME - NIGHT

Locks pop, the door opens. Sara stares at Perry standing across from her.

PERRY
Hello.

SARA
Hi, can I help you?

PERRY
No but Bethany can.

Sara perks her brow.

SARA
What's your business with her?

PERRY
Personal. She's my wife.

SARA
Hmmp, yeah, you should go.
Goodnight.

She steps back, continues to shut the door.

Perry wedges his foot in the door.

PERRY
I just came by to give her something.

Sara pulls the door open, snarls.

SARA

Look, wife beater, I'm a
licensed boxer, wife beater. My
hands are weapons. You sure you
wanna go this route?

She pops her knuckles.

PERRY

Easy now I just came to give
her this.

He opens his jacket, a letter sticks out from the inside
pocket, he withdraws it.

Bethany appears behind Sara. She walks to the door.

BETHANY

Sara's who's...

She gasps as her eyes fall upon Perry.

PERRY

Beth, you're here. Good I got a
something for you.

He extends his hand toward Bethany. Her lips quiver.

Sara snatches the envelope and pushes him back in one
swoop.

SARA

Thanks, buh bye.

She slams the door shut.

INT. ALBERT'S HOME - NIGHT

Sara hands Bethany the letter, she opens it. Bethany's
mouth falls agape.

SARA *cont'd*

What is it?

BETHANY

Divorce papers. He wants the
kids.

Bethany crumples the paper.

INT. ALBERT'S HOME - DAY

Bethany dolled up in fashionable professional clothes, adjusts herself in a mirror. She crosses the room, picks up a folder.

INT. ALBERT'S CAMARO - DAY

Parked outside a large commercial building, she gathers her notebook, peers inside. Copies of her resume line the inside fold.

INT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING - DAY

At an oak desk in a modest sized office Mr. Le Beau (50's) gray haired, wizened features, glances up from a sheet of paper in his hand.

MR. LE BEAU

Mrs. Linden, what makes you a good fit for our company?

BETHANY

Let's see, I grasp new skills quickly and I'm self-motivated.

MR. LE BEAU

Says here in you majored in kinesiology and health education.

BETHANY

Yes, sir.

MR. LE BEAU

Do you have any office management experience?

BETHANY

Not exactly, no, but it won't take long to get me up to speed.

MR. LE BEAU

We're looking for someone more well-rounded with experience

for this particular position.
If you'd like I could put you
up for an internship. It's
unpaid but it'll help you.

BETHANY

That's really not necessary,
Mr. Le Beau.

Mr. Le Beau rises from his chair, offers his hand.

MR. LE BEAU

I'm sorry to disappoint but I
do wish you the best of luck
out there.

Bethany shakes his hand.

BETHANY

Thank you for having me.

She collects her purse and folder, continues out the
door. Once she's a few paces down she sighs.

MONTAGE

- A stiff, pale man with thick glasses shakes his head as he hands back Bethany's resume. Keller Pharmaceuticals title reads across his desk.
- Amid a glass office at a gym a gargantuan muscular man shakes his head as he hands back Bethany's resume.
- Flowers and vines adorn a botanical style office. A spritely woman with long dreaded hair shakes her head as she hands back Bethany's resume.
- Bethany stands opposite of white coated woman in white tennis shoes as an elderly man is wheeled passed them. The woman shakes her head as she hands the resume back.

END MONTAGE

INT. ALBERT'S HOME - BETHANY'S ROOM - DAY

Bethany lies with her face planted in the bed. Her papers spew out from her folder lain on the floor. Soft sobs fill the room.

Sara peaks her head in, hears Bethany's sniveling sobs then raps on the door.

SARA

You doing anything right now?

Bethany lifts her head, wipes runny mascara from her face. She notices Sara in a hoodie and leggings.

Sara jogs in place.

SARA *cont'd*

C'mon it'll clear your head.

EXT. RIDGEWOOD PARK - DAY

Trees full of gold and amber leaves line a blacktop. Bethany and Sara jog along the blacktop shoulder to shoulder.

BETHANY

You should have seen the pitying look they gave me.

Sara, gazing ahead, turns to Bethany.

SARA

You say something? Kidding. We came out here to forget about that, stuff.

BETHANY

Yeah but...

SARA

You're a fighter now. Don't worry about working in places like those.

She shoots Bethany a smile.

SARA *cont'd*

There's a dirt path up here that cuts through the woods.

Sara veers through thick foliage and onto a dirt path.

BETHANY

Wait up.

Bethany tails close behind.

Thin low lying tree limbs and vines slap Bethany's face as she presses uphill.

SARA

You gotta move faster if you
wanna keep up.

Sara reaches the hill's summit and stares back at Bethany for a moment just before darting down the other side.

SARA *cont'd*

Careful when you get to the
top. It's pretty steep on the
other side.

Bethany pauses atop the hill a moment. She watches Sara nimbly treads around rocks, brush, and fallen timber.

BETHANY

She's unreal.

She takes after Sara. The soft dirt squishes beneath her feet. Tree roots protruding from the mud nearly trip her.

Bethany finally comes within a few feet of Sara.

SARA

Race ya to the road below,
slowpoke.

BETHANY

I don't think that's a good
idea. The ground's kinda slick.

SARA

Ready? Go!

Sara whisks through shrubbery and fallen burnt orange leaves. She sidesteps around a tree and gingerly hops over fallen branch.

She hops over a gopher hole and the ground compresses. As she pulls her foot forward she snags it on a tree root.

Sara ankle twists awkwardly as she tumbles to the ground, rolling a few feet before coming to a stop. She wails in agony while holding her lower leg.

Bethany drops down to her side, looks Sara's ankle over. She notices swelling starting to set in.

BETHANY

Looks like a sprain. Try not to move it.

She withdraws a mobile phone from her jacket, dials a number.

BETHANY *cont'd*

Albert, meet me at Ridgewood Park. Sara's hurt.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Sara lies in bed with her left leg elevated.

Bethany enters the room with Albert in tow.

ALBERT

(nears Sara)
How'd it happen?

SARA

The ground was softer than I thought.

ALBERT

This couldn't have happened at a worser time.

SARA

Maybe Jeremiah could get the fight pushed back.

BETHANY

What fight?

SARA

I have a fight scheduled two months from now. Had a fight anyway.

BETHANY

I'm so sorry, Sara.

ALBERT

(to Bethany)

Sara can't fight but...

An awry smile stretches across his face as if struck by a revelation.

Bethany looks at him queerly with her arched brows.

BETHANY

But what?

ALBERT

Sara can't fight but supposing we could switch the fighter maybe you can.

BETHANY

I can't. I've never been in the ring like that before.

SARA

Bethany, no one's ever forced me into the ropes like you did. With a little training you could be even better.

ALBERT

You're more capable than you think, Bethany.

BETHANY

What makes you so sure?

ALBERT

It's in your genes. You're a natural just like your father.

BETHANY

Albert, I was adopted. I never knew my biological father and my dad wasn't much of a fighter.

ALBERT

I did some digging. Remember I said you remind me someone? That someone was Sonny Redding, my friend and your father.

BETHANY

What were you doing investigating me?

ALBERT

Hear me out. The moment I saw what you could do I knew there was more to you. It had to be more than coincidence.

BETHANY

This is absurd. This is crazy.

ALBERT

Did your adoptive parents ever tell you about your biological parents? Weren't you ever curious about them?

BETHANY

No, my parents never mentioned them. It was a closed adoption.

Albert slides a picture out from his pants pocket, shows it to Bethany.

ALBERT

Your birth father was exactly like you: moral, just, and compassionate. He always put family and friends before him.

Bethany stares at the photo.

SUPER ON PHOTO:

A blond haired, brown eyed man, remarkably resembling Bethany, smiles up from the picture.

END SUPER:

She hands the photo to Sara's outstretched hands.

SARA

You two do look alike.

BETHANY

If he was all of those things
why didn't he ever claim me?

ALBERT

Sonny and your mother met when
he was separated from his wife.
He never knew she had you until
after your adoption.

Bethany paces with her hands rubbing her temple.

BETHANY

Where is he now?

ALBERT

He died of heart disease five
years ago. Before he died I
promised if I ever came across
you I'd show you the same
kindness he gave me.

Bethany sits beside Sara on the bed.

ALBERT *cont'd*

If Sonny saw all you did these
last few weeks he'd share the
same faith in you I have.

Bethany stares at Albert and Sara a moment.

BETHANY

You guys really think I can
win?

SARA

Girl, as hard as you hit I know
you can. Besides, it beats

pushing pen to paper all day.

BETHANY

When do we start?

INT. ALBERT'S GYM - DAY

Every fighter inside busies himself strength training or hitting various workout bags. A symphony of grunts and thumps resonate melodiously throughout the gym.

In one of the two sparring rings Bethany, fitted with protective head gear and gloves, shuffles her feet as she bobs and weaves Albert's advances.

ALBERT

That's it, move. Stay on your toes.

Albert wears coaching mitts. He swings a left hook. Bethany weaves back and to the right. She grunts hard as she throws a quick jab to Albert's right mitt.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Good.

Bethany grins appreciatively. She relaxes for an instant.

Albert thrusts a right jab; Bethany blocks it. He throws a straight left; Bethany blocks it, then he follows with another left hook.

Bethany stalls on her heels, takes a hit on the cheek and falls to the canvas. She glares at Albert as he helps her to her feet.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Don't get flatfooted less you wanna get knocked on your ass.

BETHANY

I'll keep that in mind.

Bethany adjusts here mouthpiece and head gear, bounces lightly on her toes.

ALBERT

Alternate punches between the head and body with a jab, straight, bolo, and then a hook.

He demonstrates half-speed starting with a right jab and ending with a left hook.

BETHANY

Got it.

They circle each other taking small sidesteps.

Bethany bats Albert with a couple of jabs then follows with the jab, straight, bolo and hook combination.

Albert winces after Bethany lands the hook on his mitt.

ALBERT

Again. Faster this time.

Bethany opens with a quick a double jab then transitions seamlessly into the previous combination.

Albert staggers back as he barely manages to get his mitts up fast enough for Bethany to hit.

Bethany tags a left hook and straight right onto the original combination and catches Albert off guard. Albert stumbles backward onto the ropes.

He leans on the ropes and awes at Bethany.

BETHANY

Don't get flatfooted coach.

ALBERT

Humph, remind me not to take it easy on you again.

LUCIAN (O.S)

She's a natural, Albert.

A few feet from the ring, just behind Albert, stands Lucian who smirks at Bethany.

He steps out the ring and pulls off his mitts, pats

Lucian's shoulder.

ALBERT

Yeah, she is. Just like her old man. This is Bethany.

Lucian waves at Bethany. She takes off her head gear and nods at him.

LUCIAN

Who's her old man?

ALBERT

Sonny, Sonny Redding.

LUCIAN

I didn't know he had a daughter.

ALBERT

Neither did he.

LUCIAN

She's got Sonny's power.

ALBERT

Like you said, she's a natural. She's got Sonny's heart too.

BETHANY

You guys aren't talking about me like I'm not even here are you?

LUCIAN

I was just admiring your moves. Mind if I give you a few pointers?

He turns to Albert who gives a go ahead nod. Lucian climbs into the ring.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

I'm Lucian by the way.

BETHANY

Bethany. You a friend of Albert's?

LUCIAN

Nah, I'm a fighter like you.
Albert helped me realize what I
had left worth fighting for.

BETHANY

And what was that?

LUCIAN

Myself and son. Him and this
place was all I had left.

He takes off his hoodie, claps his hands twice.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Come on. Put your guard up.

Bethany shares a look with Lucian. She shrugs then shakes
her arms out and puts her hands up.

Lucian looks Bethany's stance over. He grabs her wrists,
tugs lightly. Bethany stumbles forward a step.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Part your feet a little more.

Bethany slides her right foot out an inch. Lucian reaches
down, pulls her left foot up and out an inch. He then
stands back from her with his hands up, palms outward.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Perfect. Now try and hit me.

BETHANY

You don't have any gloves or a
mouthpiece.

LUCIAN

Don't need any. You're on the
offensive, not me.

ALBERT

Knock pretty boy's teeth in?

Bethany sighs, bounces on her toes. Lucian bounces
lightly as well.

Bethany lurches forward leading with double jab.

Lucian hops left of the first jab then pushes the second away.

Bethany throws another jab, follows with a quick straight and a strong hook.

Lucian bats the jab away dodges the straight and blocks the hook with his palm.

BETHANY

You're pretty quick.

LUCIAN

You're pretty strong.

He shakes his hand out then puts up his guard with palms out.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Don't stop now. You didn't land a hit yet. Gimme all you got.

He grins as he waves her over.

Bethany charges in with a strong straight right; Lucian hops back. Bethany continues with a left hook.

Lucian knocks her fist away; Bethany follows with a right hook. Lucian absorbs the blow in his palm.

Bethany smirks and continues with a left cross.

Lucian spins dodging her punch.

Bethany whips around throwing a jab, which Lucian dodges.

She fakes a jab to the body. Lucian reacts on it stretching his hand out and leaving his side open.

Bethany throws a left hook but Lucian drops his elbow down and wraps her arm then pulls her in close.

They pant and gaze at each other.

BETHANY

Got cha.

ALBERT

Hey, this ain't a ballroom. If you wanna dance, leave. If you gon train, break it up.

Lucian lets loose Bethany's arm and they separate.

LUCIAN

I think my lessons over. You did good.

BETHANY

Thanks.

She walks to the ropes, takes off her gloves. Albert hands her a water bottle.

LUCIAN

That's some cut above your eye. Sara give it to you?

BETHANY

No and it's nothing.

LUCIAN

You sure? I'm pretty good at patching cuts up.

ALBERT

You offering to be her cut man?

LUCIAN

Not exactly but my services are available.

ALBERT

Okay, smartass.

An alarms rings from a duffle bag near the ring. Bethany climbs down and pulls a phone from the bag. She checks its screen then the actual time.

BETHANY

I'm going to head out. I have to get my kids.

ALBERT

Call me if you need anything.

BETHANY

Okay.

EXT. HORVATH HOUSE - DAY

The door to a suburban style home opens. Bethany steps out onto its porch with Jessica in her arms.

BETHANY

Thank you so much for
babysitting, Cassandra.

Also at the door stands Cassandra Horvath (35) deep auburn hair, youthful and modest look.

CASSANDRA

It's nothing. She was a saint.
Bring her by anytime.

BETHANY

You sure you don't mind.

CASSANDRA

Sure, Maxine and Megan love
playing with her.

Twin girls (4) cute and red haired run to the door and hug Cassandra's legs.

MAXINE and MEGAN

Bye, Mrs. Linden.

BETHANY

By girls, see you tomorrow.

EXT. CROCKETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Bethany waits outside the school in Albert's black Camaro. Jessica fiddles with a stuffed elephant.

At the top of the school a large clock strikes 3:00 then a bell rings. Moments later kids pour out running, laughing, and chatting amongst each other.

Principal Thompson surveys over the kids as some walk

home in groups while other approach awaiting parents parked nearby. She occasionally separates rough-housers who get too physical with each other.

Fredrick and Alex appear exiting out from a side door of the school. Alex holds a cupcake in his hand.

ALEX

I'm just saying cream filling makes everything better. It's the bacon of dessert.

FREDRICK

It's liquid sugar.

ALEX

It's not all sugar. Some of it is corn syrup.

(holds up cupcake)

More foods need cream filling like this cupcake.

FREDRICK

If you say so, Alex. I'm just not that big into sweets.

Alex shrugs then eats the cupcake in two big bites.

Fredrick scopes all the parked cars in front of the school. He spots the black Camaro.

FREDRICK

C'mon, I see my mom over there.

ALEX

(muffled)

Whoa, nice car.

Fredrick starts toward the Camaro. In his haste he bumps into two bigger kids.

SIXTH GRADER #1

What's your problem kid?

He stares at Fredrick a moment, lip upturned and brow frowned.

FREDRICK

Sorry.

CAMARO

Bethany steps out the car, leans over the hood, waves down the boys.

BETHANY

Freddy!

SCHOOL

The two older kids whip around and marvel at Bethany wearing an unzipped hoodie revealing her sports top.

The first sixth grader returns his gaze to Fredrick. His frown softens to a grin.

CAMARO

Bethany watches a bigger kid in front of Fredrick make a lewd gesture with his hands on his chest then vigorously shakes his head.

SCHOOL

Fredrick's eye twitches. He flexes his hands open and shut.

Both sixth graders laugh hardily. Sixth Grader #1 musses up Fredrick's hair and shoves him away.

Faster than Fredrick stutter-steps backward, he punches Sixth Grader #1 square on the jaw.

Sixth Grader #2 sneaks a punch in on Fredrick's blindside, levels him to the ground. He then kicks Fredrick hard in the gut.

ALEX

Hey!

He rushes the stocky second sixth grader head first. The outstretched leg of Sixth Grader #1 trips up Alex.

Sixth Grader #2 lifts Alex, pins his arms back, and then thrusts his knee into his back.

SIXTH GRADER #2

What do ya think you're doing,
porky.

Sixth Grader #1 kneels on Fredrick's chest, cups his chin
in his hand.

SIXTH GRADER #1

I was only kidding, runt.

He punches down. Fredrick's head bounces on the grass. He
lifts Fredrick's head again.

SIXTH GRADER #1

But you had to go and get
serious.

Fredrick swings at the lanky sixth grader, misses.

Sixth Grader #1 shoves Fredrick's face to the ground,
rubs it against the dirt and grass.

The stocky sixth grader cackles while wrenching Alex's
arms back. Suddenly a feminine hand yanks the burly kids
arm, pulling him away from Alex.

The lanky sixth grader rears his arm back, holds
Fredrick's dirty face steady.

PRINCIPAL THOMPSON

Leave 'em alone!

She snatches the lanky kid up to his feet.

PRINCIPAL THOMPSON *cont'd*

I can expel you for beating on
a boy half your size.

Fredrick spits out dirt as he strains upright dusting
himself off.

Bethany darts across the school lawn. She softly places
her hands on Fredrick's shoulders.

PRINCIPAL THOMPSON *cont'd*

Why am not surprised to see you
fighting again, Mr. Linden?

BETHANY

Regina, you saw...

PRINCIPAL THOMPSON

I know who instigated the situation, but Fredrick still needs to control his temper.

She looks over the two sixth graders firmly grasped within her clutches.

PRINCIPAL THOMPSON *cont'd*

As for you two you'd better be ready to explain your suspension to your parents.

She starts toward the building dragging with the sixth graders in hand.

SIXTH GRADER #1

That little runt hit me first.

Principal Thompson pauses.

PRINCIPAL THOMPSON

(to Fredrick)

Starting tomorrow you'll report to the school counselor for a week to resolve your temper issue... This is your last warning, Fredrick.

INT. ALBERT'S HOME - FREDRICK'S ROOM - DAY

Fredrick punches a pillow against a wall repeatedly. He grunts as he slings it across the room hitting the door, it creaks open.

A hand pushes the door open.

Sara hobbles in on crutches. She looks down at the pillow then to Fredrick.

SARA

Feathers aren't much of a challenge.

Fredrick stares at Sara. Sara awes at his blackened eye.

SARA
You really are a scrappy one.

Fredrick starts out the room. Sara intercepts him.

SARA *cont'd*
Whoa, whoa, rewind. What's
eating you?

Fredrick points to his eye.

FREDRICK
This wouldn't have happened if
Albert taught me a move or two.

SARA
Maybe I can help.

Fredrick stares at the crutches.

FREDRICK
You're gimp. What can you show
me?

Sara lays her crutches against the wall.

SARA
Put your hands up.

Fredrick meekly puts his fists up.

SARA
I don't need both feet to show
you this. Open your hands.

Fredrick opens his palms.

Sara relaxes a moment then launches three quick punches
that push Fredrick against the wall.

Fredrick shakes his hands out fervently.

FREDRICK
How'd you do that?

Sara grabs a crutch and motions Fredrick over.

SARA

You gotta relax. Never fight
angry.

FREDRICK

Okay but how did you do that?

Sara shadows behind Fredrick, grabs his wrists. She fake pumps right, double straights left, and throws a hook.

SARA

You can't do this move with the
control if you're angry so
relax.

Fredrick blushes as Sara's bosom brushes against his back.

SARA *cont'd*

I get why you're so tense. You
can't let what goes on between
your mom and dad effect you.

A door opens and shuts in the background. Footsteps pitter-patter nearer.

BETHANY (O.S)

Sara!

Bethany leans into the room, perks her brow upon seeing Fredrick and Sara pressed together.

BETHANY *cont'd*

Me and Albert are going to see
Jeremiah about the fight.
Something came up. You coming?

SARA

Yeah, one second.

She picks up her other crutch.

INT. ALBERT'S GYM - OFFICE - NIGHT

Jeremiah perches atop Albert's desk. Albert, Bethany, and Sara sit around him.

JEREMIAH

Here's da deal. We gotta move
the fight up.

ALBERT

How much sooner are we talking?

JEREMIAH

Three weeks, Big Al.

ALBERT

That's not enough time. We
still gotta train her.

JEREMIAH

Either we move the fight or
there is no fight. I think if
new girl can hold her own
against Sara she can handle the
numba one contender.

SARA

We both know Jacquelyn is a
whole different animal. She has
no conscience in the ring.

BETHANY

You make her sound like a freak
of nature.

JEREMIAH

She's got alotta issues and
pent up anger. Like too many
girls in dis business she come
up from unfortunate
circumstances.

ALBERT

Molested by her stepdad, beat
by her husband and every guy
before him; "unfortunate" is
putting it lightly.

JEREMIAH

I didn't say this was the
fairest of fights. All things
considered this is the best to
make a name for yourself.

SARA

He's right. Besides, you can use her anger against her.

JEREMIAH

So the fight's four weeks from now. Everyone copasetic?

ALBERT

What do we get in exchange for this agreement? My fighter's taking all the risk.

JEREMIAH

A bigger purse, 45% instead of 30%. That's \$60,000 more.

Bethany's eyes dilate.

ALBERT

One hundred and eighty thousand? We can work with that.

INT. ALBERT'S GYM - FILM ROOM - DAY

Lucian rewinds footage of Jacquelyn K.O'ing a woman.

BETHANY

We watched this tape ten times. How much longer do we have to watch the same knockout?

LUCIAN

This woman fights similar to you. We keep watching until we see an opening.

SUPER ON TV:

Jacquelyn attacks her opponent with a barrage of right hooks followed by two power straights as the opponent stumbles. The opponent freezes stunned on her feet and falls over as if hit by a wrecking ball.

END SUPER:

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Right there she drops her guard.

BETHANY

Where?

LUCIAN

Every time she throws that double hook, double straight.

Lucian rewinds the tape again.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

She's tense then relaxes for an instant dropping her hands before she unloads.

BETHANY

How do I counter?

He walks over to a large box on the side of the room, takes out a double ended bag, and hooks it to the ceiling and floor.

LUCIAN

Pick up your gloves and come here.

He positions Bethany beside him arms-length from the double ended bag.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

This bag will help sharpen your reflexes so you can counter faster.

He squares his shoulders, gives the bag a double jab, twists right shielding his head tight, and then throws a right cross.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Pretend the bag is Jacquelyn dropping her guard. When she opens throw two jabs and a straight.

He jabs at the doubled ended bag again.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

She's going to fight through it. So you shield your face and twist right. Her punch will roll off of you.

He twists again then throws a right cross.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Once she's off balance hit her with a right cross. Try it.

Bethany jabs once at the bag. It sways wildly. She jabs three more times, but misses.

BETHANY

I'm never going to hit this thing like you.

LUCIAN

Yes you will. Remember what you're fighting for.

Bethany closes her eyes and inhales deeply. She slowly exhales as she reopens them. She thrusts her fist through, misses the bag.

Once more Bethany calms herself. In an instant her right hand pops the bag first, a split second later, so does her left. She then twists right tucking her elbows tight, and follows with a right cross on the bag.

Lucian claps his hands excitedly.

Bethany grins blushing.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

I think we can move on now.

A loud gurgling grumble catches his attention.

BETHANY

Sorry, I didn't eat anything since this morning.

LUCIAN

Don't be sorry. You should eat.

BETHANY

I better get home then.

Bethany tosses her gloves in her duffle bag, tosses it on her shoulder.

LUCIAN

Wait. You like quesadillas? I know this place a few blocks up.

BETHANY

Sara and the kids are probably wondering why I'm not in yet.

LUCIAN

Treats on me, won't take long.

He heads out the room, Bethany follows warily.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The streets are jammed with evening traffic.

Bethany and Lucian walk along the sidewalk each with a steaming quesadilla in hand.

A small shop with three mariachis painted on its face sits in the background.

Bethany folds back the wrapper around her quesadilla, deeply inhales its aroma. She unzips her sweatshirt, wind ruffles the open flaps.

She bites into her food, pauses mid-step and locks eyes with Lucian.

LUCIAN

I know.

BETHANY

(swallows)

It's like biting into a gold cloud exploding with rainbows.

LUCIAN

I know.

He casually bites into his quesadilla, savors it.

BETHANY

This, this, this is--

LUCIAN

--Amazing. I came across Three Mariachis last year. It's the only place I'll ever buy quesadilla.

They each take a bite of their food, sighing as they savor each mouthful.

Opposite of them two men in stylish urban dress smoking cigarettes peer at Bethany from a stoop.

A gust of wind blows Bethany's sweatshirt open once more revealing her short purple sports tops and midriff. Her abs flex with each step she takes.

The two stoopers make a b-line toward Bethany. They ravish her with their gaze as they block her path.

LUCIAN

Excuse us fellas.

The stoopers continue to look Bethany over as they take slow drags of their cigarettes.

STOOPER #1

No, excuse us.

They step aside letting Bethany and Lucian pass.

Stooper #1 feels up Bethany backside as she walks past. She turns and glares at him.

BETHANY

What the hell's your problem?

STOOPER #1

My bad, shawty.

BETHANY

Grab my ass again--

STOOPER #1

--Okay.

He reaches around Bethany. As he leans in to grab her, she hits him with a right hook.

Stooper #1 crumples to the concrete. Stooper #2 helps him to his feet.

Lucian steps between Bethany and the stoopers.

Stooper #1 spits blood out from his busted lip.

LUCIAN

If you think she hits hard you don't wanna try me.

STOOPER #2

Be easy, bruh. We ain't mean no disrespect.

He scrapes his friend up and shuffles out of sight.

Lucian lays a comforting hand on Bethany's shoulder.

LUCIAN

You okay?

BETHANY

Yeah, just a little upset.

Lucian examines her hand. Her knuckles are bright pink and slightly swollen.

LUCIAN

We need to get you some ice.

EXT. LUCIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bethany and Lucian enter a tall, brown bricked apartment complex. An iron gate with fleur-de-lis tips separates it from a dozen other complexes lining the streets.

INT. LUCIAN APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A cold compress flops onto a counter top. A door shuts in the background. Soon after, a hand grabs the compress.

Lucian comes into view. He continues to--

DINING ROOM

Bethany waits at a table.

LUCIAN
Hold your hand out.

Bethany extends her hands. Lucian presses the compress on Bethany's knuckles then locks eyes with her.

LUCIAN *cont'd*
You sure you alright?

Bethany withdraws her hand, holds the compress herself.

BETHANY
I'm fine. You should see the other guy.

LUCIAN
Sorry about tonight.

BETHANY
I think those stoopers sorrier than you.

Lucian laughs subtly.

A rapping echoes from the front door.

Lucian shoots Bethany a nonplus gaze.

LUCIAN
Give me a second.

He continues to the door, opens it.

MARTA (25) a tall, slender woman with long flowing dark hair barges in. DIEGO (5) a small hazel eyed boy follows in tow.

Marta hands Lucian a small suitcase.

MARTA
Here's all Diego's things for a weekend with his papí.

DIEGO

Papí!

He hugs Lucian's leg. Lucian scoops Diego up in his other arm.

LUCIAN

Holá, míjo! You're getting so big.

Marta stares briefly at Bethany.

MARTA

Who's that?

Lucian glances over at Bethany then sets Diego down and kneels in front of him.

LUCIAN

Go put your jacket in your room, míjo. When you come back I'll get you a big bowl of hélado. Esta bien?

DIEGO

Sí, papí.

Lucian tickles Diego's sides, whose cherub-like giggle fills the room.

LUCIAN

Vas rápido.

Diego takes off, makes a quick left into the first room past the dining room.

Lucian, formerly all smiles, sets his focus to Marta.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

I forgot you were coming. Oh and Bethany here is a friend.

MARTA

Uh huh. Well you and your "friend" keep it PG around our son.

LUCIAN

Don't worry about my personal
life, Marta. I'd never do what
you're thinking around Diego.

MARTA

Let's keep it that way. I'll be
back for him Monday.

She starts out the door, pauses.

MARTA *cont'd*

You know, you really shouldn't
give him ice cream this late.
He'll never get to sleep.

LUCIAN

Goodbye, Marta.

He shoos Marta out then shuts the door.

Diego comes running out of his room jumping up and down.

DIEGO

Papí, can I have ice cream now?

LUCIAN

Whoa wait just a second, míjo.

Bethany approaches Lucian and Diego.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Sorry about Marta. She's cold
toward anyone I have around
Diego.

Diego squares his shoulder, playfully punches Lucian.
Lucian leans over and puts his hands up.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Show me what you got.

Diego gleefully punches Lucian's hands.

Bethany smiles at their playfulness.

BETHANY

I understand where she's coming from.

LUCIAN

That's no excuse not to be civil. You want to stay a while for ice cream too?

BETHANY

Not tonight. I better get home to my little ones.

LUCIAN

(to Diego)

Take a break, *míjo*. You did good.

He ruffles Diego's hair and then brings himself upright, pulling his son close to his side.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

(to Bethany)

I'll take that as a raincheck.

BETHANY

Definitely and thanks again for tonight.

She opens the door starts to head out. Lucian grabs her wrist.

LUCIAN

Wait.

He pulls Bethany close, kisses her soft and sweetly.

Bethany blushes as their lips part.

LUCIAN *cont'd*

Have a goodnight.

Bethany nods feverishly, too nonplussed to talk. She continues down the complex's hall smiling.

EXT. LUCIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Across the street in a parked black BMW Perry watches

Bethany exit Lucian's building. She stops and stares at the night sky. Her eyes twinkle like the stars.

Bethany exhales an elated sigh, continues past the iron-gate and down the sidewalk.

Perry gnaws on his knuckle as he starts his car. It peels out in the opposite direction of Bethany.

INT. ALBERT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bethany sits on the hardwood floor coloring with Jessica.

Fredrick reads a book on the couch.

A children's show plays on the television across from Bethany and Jessica. The muppet character holds up a cat drawing.

Bethany looks over at Jessica's picture. It nearly matches the one on TV.

BETHANY

Good job, Jess.

She hugs kisses Jessica's forehead. The toddler giggles.

Fredrick glances at his wristwatch.

FREDRICK

Mom, it's 2 o'clock.

BETHANY

You sure you don't want to come with me? We can hangout like before all this.

FREDRICK

I'll pass.

BETHANY

Oh... well uh Sara will be home in a few. Keep an eye on Jess until then.

She gathers her purse, kisses Jessica once more, and then starts for the door.

FREDRICK

Hey, mom, play ya in Pac-Man
when you get back?

Bethany shares a smile with him.

BETHANY

You got it, Freddie. Be ready
lose to your old lady.

FREDRICK

You can try.

INT. JENSON AND GOLD ATTORNEYS - DAY

VERONICA JENSON (50's) ashen haired, portly and imposing
for her short stature, lays a manila folder on her desk
and seats herself.

VERONICA

Mrs. Linden, you have chance at
full custody but your husband
has more of what the court's
looking for.

BETHANY

What about a safe, nurturing
environment. Perry does have a
short fuse you know.

VERONICA

His potential danger to the
children is why you have a
chance. Was temperamental
before the night you fought?

BETHANY

He's always been adamant about
his opinions. At first I
figured it was because he
wanted the best for us.

VERONICA

Has he ever physically harmed
the children?

BETHANY

Outside the night I left him,
no, but I think he'd hurt them
to hurt me.

VERONICA

Without a history of violence
against him it's likely the
court will regard that incident
as one of passion.

BETHANY

What about the best interest of
the kids?

VERONICA

The best interest is a
situation where both parents
have joint custody.

She flips through her manila folder.

VERONICA *cont'd*

How did you go from health
education into boxing?

BETHANY

I kind of fell into it.

VERONICA

You never wrote your income.
You are paid to fight, right?

BETHANY

Technically I haven't fought
anyone yet but I have a big
purse coming in my first fight.

VERONICA

When?

BETHANY

Four weeks from now.

VERONICA

I'll push your case back as
closer to your fight to make a
stronger argument for you.

BETHANY

You can do that?

Veronica closes the manila file, takes off her glasses.

VERONICA

Mrs. Linden, this is Jenson and Gold. Action you can believe in.

Bethany shakes Veronica's hand.

BETHANY

Thank you, Ms. Jenson. You have no idea how much this means to me.

Veronica gestures to a picture of teenage girl in high school graduation cap and gown on her desk.

VERONICA

I think I do. I wouldn't be a divorce lawyer if it weren't for my daughter--

She shows Bethany to the door.

VERONICA *cont'd*

--You focus on your fight. I'll worry about the case.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Bethany crosses the street from her attorney's building. She draws her phone from her purse, dials a number. Sara's voicemail answers on the other end.

BETHANY

Sara, I'm leaving and Jenson and Gold right now. My attorney's pretty confident about my case.

She unwittingly bumps into someone, fumbles her phone but manages to catch it.

BETHANY *cont'd*

--Sorry. You and the kids get dressed. We should go out...

PERRY O.S

Beth?

Bethany looks up, notices Perry and Nichole before her.

NICHOLE

I'm sorry I didn't mean to run into you.

BETHANY

It's okay. I didn't see you either.

NICHOLE

You sure?

She touches Bethany's shoulder but is shrugged off. Perry pulls Nichole back.

PERRY

(to Nichole)

Why don't you go start the car?
I'll be there in a minute.

He drops a set of keys in Nichole's hand, who then continues to a parking lot a few paces away. She hops in a black BMW and starts it up.

BETHANY

So you and Nichole?

PERRY

We came out for a late lunch.
You, you look good.

He grabs Bethany's bicep. She twists away.

PERRY *cont'd*

Certainly stronger too.

BETHANY

One of the perks of boxing.

She holds her phone close. The voicemail continues

recording.

PERRY

You're 32-years-old. How long do you think you can keep up this ridiculous stunt?

BETHANY

You won't get it. Why bother explaining?

PERRY

I have a proposition for you.

He steps closer to Bethany. She watches him cautiously.

BETHANY

Keep it. I don't need your help.

Perry gingerly pushes Bethany's hair from her face. She disdainfully glares at him.

PERRY

But you do. When this boxing stint falls flat and it will, you'll need someone to take care of you and the kids.

BETHANY

It's too late, Perry. You broke up our family when you hand delivered me divorce papers.

PERRY

You broke up this family when you walked out on me!

He clears his throat, glances left and right at people staring at him and Bethany.

BETHANY

You can't control me anymore.

Bethany pulls away from Perry. He holds her steady.

PERRY

I'll give you full custody. All you have to do is quit boxing. We both know I'll win if we go down this road and you'll never see the kids again.

Bethany tears away from Perry shaking her head while back peddling.

Perry grits his teeth as Bethany vanishes amidst the crowded sidewalk.

INT. ALBERT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sara sets a sandwich on the coffee table, flops on the couch, and lays her crutch beside her.

A door slams in the background. Thundering steps grow nearer.

Sara grabs a crutch and continues to the steps.

SARA

Bethany?

Bethany whisks into the room, her hands on her temple.

SARA *cont'd*

What's going on?

Bethany paces back and forth.

BETHANY

I bumped into Perry. He's so aggravating.

Sara stretches out her hand, holds Bethany in place.

SARA

Slow down.

BETHANY

I have to clear head. I need to hit something.

SARA

Bethany, what happened?

Bethany takes a few deep breaths.

BETHANY

I left my lawyer's then called
you but got your voicemail.
Next I knew I there was Perry.
He said I'll never see my kids
again if he gets custody.

SARA

He can't do that.

Bethany spots keys in a ceramic dish and snatches them.

BETHANY

I'm borrowing your car.

She storms out the room.

SARA

Where you going?

INT. ALBERT'S GYM - DAY

Albert trains Bethany in the ring with sparing mitts.

Bethany hits the right mitt, left mitt, and then ducks as
Albert swings his arm overhead. She repeats the pattern
several times.

ALBERT

Hit, hit.

He hooks his arm overhead again. Bethany ducks, hits the
mitts again.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Now let's switch this up a bit.

Bethany watches Albert's lips move but drowns out his
voice as she narrows her scope on only the mitts.

QUICK FLASH:

Perry escorts a sullen Fredrick and tearful Jessica away.
While in Perry's arms Jessica reaches out for Bethany.

JESSICA

Mommy!

END QUICK FLASH:

Albert's right arm hooks overhead, Bethany ducks and pops back up. Albert's left mitt hooks in hard, hits Bethany square on the jaw.

Bethany crumples to the canvass. Groggy eyed she sees a blurred vision of Fredrick and Jessica outside the ring. She rolls onto her back. All fades black as her eyes close.

FREDRICK (V.O)

What's wrong with her?

ALBERT (V.O)

I don't know. Give me some room. Wake up, Bethany.

Two slaps resonate in the foreground.

Bethany opens her eyes and all comes to view, fuzzy at first and then sharpening until clear.

Bethany sits up on a bench in the --

LOCKER ROOM

She touches her hand to her head.

Albert, Fredrick, Sara, and Jessica gather near her.

BETHANY

What happened?

ALBERT

I kind of knocked you out.

Jessica hugs Bethany. Bethany hugs her back.

JESSICA

I scared you got hurt, mommy.

BETHANY

I'm fine now, sweetheart.

She kisses Jessica forehead.

ALBERT

What were you thinking out in
the ring?

BETHANY

I wasn't thinking.

SARA

I'm fine with you blowing off
steam but you can hurt yourself
zoning off like that.

BETHANY

I know. I'm just a little
stressed.

A BOOM thuds in the background. Everyone turns and sees
Fredrick panting heavily. He slams his fist against a
locker again.

FREDRICK

You're not the only stressed
one here. You never think how
all this affects us!

He points to himself as he sways side to side.

Bethany shares a look with Albert and Sara. They nod.

BETHANY

Go with Sara and Mr. Kern,
Jess.

Albert hoists Jessica in his arms.

ALBERT

Every things alright. Let's get
you some candy.

JESSICA

I want chocolate.

Albert walks out the locker with Jessica in arms.

Sara touches Bethany's shoulder then continues out.

BETHANY
Come here, Freddy.

Fredrick sits beside Bethany.

FREDRICK
I get that you and dad have
problems. I knew that for a
while now but you brush it off
like nothing's different.

Bethany wraps an arm around Fredrick's shoulder.

BETHANY
Nothing's different as long as
I have you and your sister.

FREDRICK
Then why do you push us away
and distance yourself?

BETHANY
I don't know if I'm making the
best decisions. I'm scared of
losing everything, you, your
sister, and the fight.

Tears streak down Fredrick's cheeks.

FREDRICK
Do you know why I'm always
fighting?

Bethany shakes her head.

FREDRICK *cont'd*
I love you more than anything
in the world and I'll be damned
if I let anyone disrespect you.

He hugs Bethany.

Bethany strokes her hand through Fredrick's hair.

BETHANY
You don't have to fight any
more, Freddy. This is my fight.
I'll win for us because you and

Jess are my world.

MONTAGE:

- Transparently in the background days are crossed through on a calendar.
- Bethany drips sweat as she furiously throws a sequence of punches at a heavy bag. She then moves onto a double ended bag.
- Albert times Bethany as she jumps rope. His stopwatch reads "15 minutes and 22 seconds".
- In the sparring ring Lucian shows Bethany how to lock her opponent in a hold and how to break them. They nearly kiss when Bethany holds onto Lucian.
- Albert and Bethany watch more tape on Jacquelyn. He points out Jacquelyn's weak points and animatedly demonstrates counters.
- The background calendar comes to the forefront with an 'X' slashed before the date marked "Fight Night".

END MONTAGE:

INT. ALBERT'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bethany continues to the couch where Fredrick curls under her arm and Jessica hops on her lap.

From the entryway Sara watches Bethany, Fredrick, and Jessica tickle each other. They're all smiles.

The house phone rings from another room.

SARA

I'll get it.

She limps into the kitchen.

Bethany and the kids sigh after laughing then lean back on the couch.

FREDRICK

Mom, you nervous about
tomorrow?

BETHANY

Not really.

FREDRICK

That woman is big. What if you don't win?

BETHANY

Where do you think you get your scrappiness from? It's not your dad.

She musses up Fredrick's hair. He smirks back.

Sara limps into the room with the house phone.

SARA

It's for you, Bethany.

BETHANY

I'll be back in a second you two.

She takes the phone from Sara, enters the --

KITCHEN

BETHANY

Hello?

VERONICA (V.O)

Mrs. Linden, its Veronica Jenson. I have news about your case.

BETHANY

Oh hi. What's the word?

VERONICA (V.O)

Your trial date is tomorrow.

BETHANY

But my fight is tomorrow.

VERONICA (V.O)

If we don't go to tomorrow we won't get another trial date for three weeks. Then there's still no guarantee we'll win.

BETHANY

What time is the trial?

VERONICA (V.O)

Two o'clock.

BETHANY

I can do them both.

VERONICA (V.O)

Pardon?

BETHANY

Nothing, I'll be there
tomorrow.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

The doors fly open. Bethany rushes down the steps. She approaches the street curb and Sara pulls up in silver Chevy Impala. Bethany hops in.

INT. IMPALA - NIGHT

Bethany smiles jubilantly and hugs Sara.

Sara clears her throat, puts on a straight face.

Bethany nods then she too puts on a straight face.

EXT. BOARDWALK HALL CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT

The front of the convention center is alive with activity as patrons wander the light filled Atlantic City Boardwalk.

Bethany and Sara enter the center from a side door.

INT. BOARDWALK HALL CONVENTION CENTER - LOCKER ROOM -
NIGHT

Albert and Lucian look up as Bethany enters. Lucian hugs her.

LUCIAN

How'd it go?

BETHANY

Well Sara's taking a seat with
the kids right now.

Albert clears his throat.

ALBERT

It's about time you got here.

He picks up a red robe and brings it to Bethany.

ALBERT *cont'd*

We have half an hour to make
our way to the ring.

Bethany flips the robe over and reads its back lettering.

BETHANY

Blond Bomber?

ALBERT

It was your father's moniker.
Now it's yours.

Bethany runs her fingers along the stitching then tries
the robe on.

Albert nods approvingly.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Looks good on you.

BETHANY

Thanks.

Bethany runs her fingers along the edge of the robe.

Albert lays his hands on her shoulders comfortably.

ALBERT

Get dressed. We got to head to
the ring.

BOARDWALK HALL

Guests fill the seats around the ring while the concert
hall standings have about half its seating occupancy
filled.

RING SIDE

Fredrick sits beside Sara who holds Jessica atop her lap.

FREDRICK

When is she coming out?

Sara glances at her watch.

SARA

Anytime now.

The lights dim. Blondie's "Rip Her to Shreds" plays over the loud speakers.

ENTRANCE

Bethany, Albert, and Lucian stand at the Hall's entrance.

ALBERT

Remember what we worked on.

They make their way from the top of the entrance to the ring.

RING

Bethany backs into her corner and stares awed into the crowd. Her gaze falls upon Sara and her kids, who wave at her. She smiles back and sighs.

The Blondie song cuts off. It's replaced by the blaring opening riffs of Jimi Hendrix's "Voodoo Child".

ENTRANCE

JACQUELYN (27) thick muscular build, dark olive skin, wavy hair pulled tight in a bun, appears with a posse of people. She dons a gold robe and black trunks with white trim.

She and her posse continue to the ring with her in the middle.

RING

Jacquelyn takes a lap around. She's met with a mix of

applause and jeers. During her once around she sizes up Bethany and snorts before finally steps into her corner.

She stares Bethany down and makes a cutthroat gesture.

At the center of the ring a black tux announcer lifts a microphone to his lips.

ANNOUNCER

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to 10 rounds of welterweight boxing. The winner of tonight's match will be the number one contender for the Women's WBC championship.

The crowd cheers.

ANNOUNCER *cont'd*

Introducing first in the red corner: at 5'9" and 145 pounds with a record of 13-2, all the way from Tallulah, LA., Jacquelyn "The Jackhammer" Moreau.

Jacquelyn steps forward with her arms raised. The crowd gives her a thunderous applause.

ANNOUNCER *cont'd*

And in the blue corner: at 5'7" and 140 pounds making her ring debut from Philadelphia, PA., daughter of former lightweight champion Sonny Redding, Bethany "The Blond Bomber" Linden.

Bethany timidly steps forward, squinting under the bright lights. She bounces on her toes and lifts a hand high. She's met with cheers and a slew of intrigued gazes.

The announcer yields center ring to the referee who then motions Bethany and Jacquelyn together.

REFEREE

I want a clean fight. No hitting below the belt. Now touch gloves.

Jacquelyn raises her gloves. Bethany slams her down on them. Jacquelyn arms barely budge an inch.

Each woman takes her corner.

Albert rubs Bethany shoulders.

ALBERT

Play this limber. Don't let her
power tense you up.

Bethany nods then faces center ring and rolls her neck.

The opening bell dings.

Jacquelyn closes in fast. The two fighters exchange light jabs to each other's defense.

Bethany lunges forward, sneaks in a straight to the body.

Jacquelyn absorbs the hit and throws a hard left hook too fast for Bethany to react.

Bethany's face whips around on contact. She crumples flat to the canvas. She looks up dazed at the referee who begins the 10-count.

The crowd lets out a disappointed sigh in unison.

RINGSIDE

Fredrick and Sara jump to their feet.

FREDRICK

Get up, mom!

SARA

Shake it off!

RING

Their voices echo to Bethany. She wipes the dizziness from her eyes and stands up at the count of six.

The referee, checks her hands and eyes. Bethany nods. The referee backs away and continues the fight.

Jacquelyn saunters to Bethany, her stance relaxed.

JACQUELYN

Barbie, likes pain, huh? Okay,
Barbie.

Jacquelyn squares up, throws a snap jab. Bethany lets it roll of her gloves, counters with a quick right jab, left straight combination.

Both punches catch Jacquelyn off guard. She stutters. She gathers her legs under her but walks into a four punch barrage.

Bethany hits Jacquelyn with a jab, straight, left hook, and crushing right hook combination to the body that sends her stumbling backward to the ropes.

The crowd roars to life as Bethany attacks Jacquelyn.

ALBERT

Watch for the hook!

Bethany and Jacquelyn exchange punches blow for blow. Jacquelyn leans on the rope, lunges forward throwing a right hook.

Bethany lifts up her in time but still recoils as she flies back three feet.

Jacquelyn slips away from the ropes following up her first hook with another.

Bethany takes the hit on the jaw. She starts to stumble and quickly wraps up Jacquelyn.

JACQUELYN

Bad move, Barbie.

She throws several hard close-in punches to Bethany's ribs. Bethany gets in a couple punches to Jacquelyn's head before the referee separates them.

Panting, the fighters ready to attack each other again. Then the closing round bell DINGS.

Jacquelyn grins as she saunters to her corner.

Bethany, with a look of relief, retreats to her corner and plops down on the awaiting stool.

Lucian applies Vaseline to Bethany's face. Albert squirts water into her mouth. Bethany swishes it around, spits out it out.

ALBERT

Not bad for the first round.
Not bad at all.

BETHANY

She punches like a wrecking
ball.

Albert touches a bruise on Bethany's ribs, she flinches.

ALBERT

When the bell rings, dance
around her. Move your feet and
look for openings.

She stands. Albert and Lucian leave the ring. Lucian pulls the stool.

The round bell rings.

Bethany bounces from left to right.

Jacquelyn approaches aggressively.

Bethany hops around Jacquelyn's jabs and continues to bounce around the ring.

Jacquelyn cuts off Bethany's path but she quickly bounces the opposite direction.

JACQUELYN

Prance all you want, Barbie.
I'm still gonna get cha.

She lunges forward with a quick right jab.

Bethany sidesteps then throws a hard right cross.

Jacquelyn eats the punch on the chin then shoves Bethany against the ropes. Bethany whips off the rope and into straight right to her ribs.

Bethany strains to hold herself upright. She drops her elbows and twists right to getaway.

Jacquelyn blocks off her retreat and throws a left hook to the body so hard it pushes Bethany into a corner.

ALBERT

Get out of there!

Jacquelyn rushes Bethany, shoving her against the corner pad. She winds up and unloads a right hook to the body followed by a left straight to the head.

Bethany staggers left but Jacquelyn shoves her into the corner once more.

Jacquelyn throws another straight right to the body.

Bethany wraps her arms around her Jacquelyn's and slings her into the corner.

She catches Jacquelyn with three hard jabs, ducks her looping left hook, and pops her again with another three hard jabs.

Bethany steps back bouncing left to right once more.

Jacquelyn, looking more furious than before, growls as she pounds her hands together and steps out from the corner.

She throws a lunging jab, Bethany bats it away. She throws a straight right, Bethany sidesteps letting the punch roll off her gloves and then counters with a jab.

Jacquelyn wildly throws a left hook to the body.

Bethany thrusts her hips back, avoiding the blow then quickly pops in with another hard jab and hops out bouncing on her toes.

She continues to hop about the ring dodging Jacquelyn's punches or letting them roll off her gloves.

JACQUELYN

Quit dancing and fight!

BETHANY

Gotta catch me.

Jacquelyn throws two hooks to the body, which drops Bethany's elbows to block. She then pumps right and finishes with a left hook to the head.

Bethany stumbles.

JACQUELYN

Got cha

She closes on Bethany, connects with two quick jabs, pumps left then throws a crushing right straight.

Bethany loses her bounce as she backs away with her guard tight to her face.

A cut forms above Bethany's eye. She blinks rapidly and shakes her head as a bloody sweat drips into her eye. She wipes her glove over her face.

The round bell rings.

Jacquelyn bumps Bethany as they continue to their corners.

As soon as Bethany's on her stool Lucian wipes her cut with a damp towel then swabs it with a soaked cotton swab. Next he puts another soaked swab to the cut and greases the area.

LUCIAN

Don't let pump fake fool you or this cut'll get worse.

ALBERT

We got her frustrated. Mix some power shots in with those jabs. You can catch when she leaning.

Bethany nods.

ALBERT *cont'd*

Remember what you're fighting for.

Bethany stares ringside at Fredrick and Jessica. They,

and the people around them, clap their hands in cheer.

RINGSIDE

FREDRICK

(to Sara)

She's not doing too bad.

SARA

Yeah, as long as she keeps the
fight off the ropes.

RING

The round bell rings.

Bethany stands, takes a deep breath then bounces on her
toes as she meets Jacquelyn head on center ring.

She baits Jacquelyn with a few jabs.

Jacquelyn lunges at Bethany's midsection and misses as
Bethany sidesteps nailing her with a straight left.

Bethany follows up with a double right jab and another
straight left.

Jacquelyn's knee nearly touches the canvas but she
catches her balance and throws a hard uppercut as Bethany
approaches dazing her momentarily.

Jacquelyn continues to bombard Bethany with a series of
power punches, each one more devastating than the last.

JACQUELYN

Game over, Barbie.

Bethany teeters near the ropes.

Jacquelyn throws a left jab and a straight right that
send Bethany bouncing off the ropes.

Bethany slips past Jacquelyn and wobbles to the center of
the ring.

Jacquelyn take a deep breath and unloads a right hook to
the body, left hook to the body, and finally a left hook
to the head that crumples Bethany to the canvas.

The world fades black around Bethany.

FLASHBACK

INT. COURTHOUSE - MEDIATION ROOM - DAY

In a modern minimalist room an ashen haired MEDIATOR (60) with wizened features glosses over a checklist at a long black table.

Bethany and Perry sit opposite of the Mediator but apart from each other with their attorney.

Bethany glances Perry's direction, finds him sneering at her. She averts her eyes to her twiddling thumbs.

MEDIATOR

Shall we proceed?

JOHNSTON STONE (40), the mild mannered, clean cut lawyer beside Perry clears his throat.

JOHNSTON

Ladies, my client has no interest in divorce. Doing so would be detrimental to his children.

VERONICA

Your client's temper is detrimental to the children.

JOHNSTON

Mr. Linden has no history of violent behavior outside of one passionate incident.

VERONICA

Mrs. Linden recalls the relationship differently.

JOHNSTON

Truth is Mr. Linden has been hurting since Mrs. Linden abruptly ran away with their children.

MEDIATOR

Counselors, we're not here to place blame. We're here to work out solutions.

(to Bethany)

Now, Mrs. Linden, are you willing to go through a separation or is divorce the only option?

BETHANY

My husband is guilty of infidelity. I saw him have sex with another woman. So for me divorce is the only option.

MEDIATOR

Mr. Linden?

PERRY

It was a onetime thing, a fling.

BETHANY

It didn't look like a fling last time saw you two.

PERRY

That part of my life is over.

Bethany stares into Perry's wistful eyes.

BETHANY

Still willing to give us another try if I quite boxing?

PERRY

Absolutely.

BETHANY

And grant me full custody?

Perry clears his throat. His sad eye look turns into an intense glare.

JOHNSTON

What is she talking about?

Veronica lays a voice recorder on the table.

VERONICA

This conversation was recorded while my client was on the phone when she bumped into Mr. Linden.

She presses play on the voice recorder.

PERRY V.O

When this boxing stint falls flat, and it will, you'll need someone to take care of you and the kids.

BETHANY V.O

It's too late, Perry. You broke up our family when you hand delivered me divorce papers.

PERRY V.O

You broke up this family when you walked out on me!

BETHANY V.O

You can't control me anymore.

PERRY

I'll give you full custody. All you have to do is quit boxing. We both know I'll win if we go down this road and you'll never see the kids again.

Johnston and Perry exchange a grimaced look. They whisper back and forth to each other.

Veronica holds the voice recorder in her hand.

VERONICA

Mr. Linden tried to manipulate my client to control her.

Everyone's eyes turn to Perry.

PERRY

It's not how it sounds. I just wanted things back to the way they were.

MEDIATOR

Shall we discuss visitation days?

BETHANY

(to Perry)

Even though I don't love you anymore I will allow you to see the kids if they want to see you.

PERRY

I guess you'll be by for your things?

BETHANY

Maybe after my fight.

PERRY

Why are you fighting?

END FLASHBACK

INT. BOARDWALK HALL CONVENTION CENTER - RING - NIGHT

The referee moves Jacquelyn to a neutral corner then hovers near Bethany and starts the 10-count.

The blinding lights above the ring awaken Bethany. She strains to sit upright.

Bethany looks rings to her kids and Sara then to her corner at Albert and Lucian.

BETHANY

(low)

I fight because have to and I will not lose.

The referee reaches the count of seven. Bethany forces herself to her feet.

The ref checks her eyes and nods. He resumes the fight.

Bethany bounces with more pep in her step.

JACQUELYN

You must like the way that
canvas taste.

Bethany smirks then hits Jacquelyn with a barrage of body punches.

Jacquelyn laughs as she blocks every punch.

JACQUELYN *cont'd*

Now that's more like it!

Bethany grunts as she throws a hard straight to Jacquelyn's head. The punch rolls off Jacquelyn's glove and grazes her cheek.

Jacquelyn counters with right cross.

Bethany stumbles back a step but charges in again.

Jacquelyn throws light jab and a straight right. She misses with both as Bethany sidesteps and delivers a shot to the gut.

Bethany dances around Jacquelyn again then unleashes a machinegun-like volley of left jabs backing Jacquelyn across the ring into a corner.

Jacquelyn slips between Bethany's punches and counters with a bolo uppercut, freeing her from the corner.

Bethany catches herself on the ropes. She lifts her guard up in time to block another uppercut and counters with a right hook, catching Jacquelyn square on the chin.

Jacquelyn falls to a knee. The referee moves Bethany into a neutral corner then starts the 10-count.

The crowd roars chanting "Bomber".

The referee gives Jacquelyn the go ahead nod and resumes the fight.

ALBERT

Don't hold back. Take it to her.

Bethany and Jacquelyn once again exchange punches at center ring.

Cheers from the crowd grow deafeningly loud as neither fighter backs falters to the other.

Jacquelyn connects with a hard right hook to Bethany's gut knocking the wind out of her. She continues with left hook that leaves Bethany gasping and wobbling.

JACQUELYN

Lights out, Barbie.

She fakes a right cross but Bethany doesn't bite on it.

Bethany guards high and braces herself. She absorbs Jacquelyn's double left hook.

Jacquelyn exposes her entire right side.

Bethany grits her teeth and leads in with a double jab and hard straight left. She throws her full weight into the last punch.

Jacquelyn's face whiplashes left to right as both fighters tumble to the canvas.

The referee begins the 10-count.

The crowd roars, willing the fighters to their feet.

Jacquelyn lies flat on her back motionless while Bethany pants face down on the canvas.

The referee reaches the count of four and both fighters start to stir.

Bethany brings her knees and elbows under her while Jacquelyn rolls onto her side pressing her glove to the canvas.

ALBERT

C'mon, Bethany, c'mon!

The referee reaches the count of seven. Bethany shakily pushes herself up. She wobbles backward but catches herself.

Jacquelyn clings to the middle rope straining to pull herself up.

REFEREE

Nine... ten.

He notices Bethany standing and Jacquelyn collapsing onto the ropes. He waves his hands and the ringside bell DINGS.

The crowd erupts into cheer as the fight ends.

Jacquelyn's corner men help her off the ropes.

Albert and Lucian leap into the ring and catch Bethany.

ALBERT

You did it. You won!

Bethany stares at Lucian hazy eyed and smiles.

LUCIAN

I knew you had it in you.

BETHANY

Was there any doubt?

She kisses Lucian's lips softly.

FREDRICK (O.S)

Mom!

Fredrick, Sara, and Jessica enter the ring. Jessica leaps into Bethany's arms and Fredrick hugs her tight.

The crowd cheers as Sara hoists Bethany's fist high.

FADE TO BLACK

ANNOUNCER (V.O)

And the winner by knockout is
Bethany "Blond Bomber" Linden.

THE END