

VEGAS NIGHTS BOUND AND BROKEN

Written by

Lisa "Pink" Matzke

Based on a true story

500 S. Main St trlr 14
Springville, UT. 84663
385-283-5568
L.matzke@lafilm.edu

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

A CRAMPED, SUFFOCATING KITCHEN. The hum of the refrigerator, the faint drip of a leaky faucet. Dusty sunlight filters through dingy curtains, casting pale streaks across a table cluttered with UNPAID BILLS, CRUMPLED NAPKINS, and a LIPSTICK-STAINED COFFEE MUG.

PINK (19) sits hunched at the table, a BACKPACK on the floor beside her chair. A half-eaten bowl of cereal rests in front of her. She stirs the soggy flakes absently, her free hand clenched into a fist against her thigh.

Across the room, PATRICIA (40s), tense and sharp-edged, paces like a caged animal. Her voice cuts through the air with each step.

PATRICIA

Look at you. Can't even finish
breakfast without sulking. You
think life owes you something? It
doesn't.

She takes a sip from her coffee mug, grimaces, slams it down on the counter.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

You walk around here with that
look—like you're better than me.
Like you're too good for this
house. Too good for your family.

Pink doesn't answer. Her spoon scrapes the bowl—scrape, scrape, scrape. A quiet act of defiance.

Patricia leans in close, sneering.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

You're just like your father. A
mistake. At least he had the
decency to disappear.

Pink's jaw tightens. She stares down, but her eyes glisten.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

You'll leave, sure. And you'll come
crawling back, broke and ruined,
begging me for help. And I'll laugh
in your face.

Pink pushes the spoon down, deliberate. Finally looks up. Her eyes blaze.

PINK
I'm not coming back.

The words hang in the air. Patricia scoffs.

PATRICIA
Please. You can't survive out there. You're too weak. You need me.

Pink stands abruptly, grabs her backpack from the floor. The chair SCRAPES loud against the linoleum.

Patricia lunges, blocking the doorway. Arms crossed. A SILENT DARE.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)
Go on. Try. See how far you get.

Pink freezes. Her breath is sharp, controlled. For a long beat, neither moves.

Then—KELLIE (12) peeks in from the hallway. Innocent, curious.

KELLIE
Lisa?

Pink softens, just for a moment. She kneels, brushing a strand of hair from Kellie's face.

PINK
(softly)
Be good, okay? None of this is your fault.

Patricia snaps.

PATRICIA
Don't fill her head with your garbage!

Pink rises, pivots sharply to the sink. Grabs her cereal bowl and DUMPS it—CLATTER, SPLASH. Patricia flinches at the noise.

Pink turns back toward the door, eyes blazing. She SHOULDER-CHECKS Patricia hard enough to stagger her.

The door YANKS open. BLINDING SUNLIGHT.

Pink storms outside. The door SLAMS behind her.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Patricia stands frozen, knuckles white around her mug. Behind the fury, something unsettled flickers in her eyes. Kellie lingers in the hallway, silent, watching.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

The same claustrophobic kitchen. The light has shifted slightly—time passing. PATRICIA leans against the counter, a cigarette smoldering in the ashtray beside her coffee. The room smells of burnt toast and stale smoke.

Pink sits back down, trying to eat again. The air is heavy with silence—until Patricia starts in again, her tone shifting from sharp to syrupy.

PATRICIA

You know... if you weren't so damn mouthy, people might actually like you. You could have friends, a good job, maybe even a man who'd take care of you.

Pink doesn't look up. Just chews. Her silence needles Patricia.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

(mock-sweet)

But no. You think you're better. You strut around like some movie star. Newsflash, Lisa— nobody's watching.

Pink's jaw tightens. She takes another bite. Patricia smiles faintly, pleased to see she's hit a nerve.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

All you'll ever be is someone's burden. And when you crawl back to me—don't expect the door to be open.

Pink slams her spoon down, stands abruptly. Her chair tips slightly before rocking back into place.

PINK

I'm not crawling back.

Patricia smirks, rises, and circles the table like a predator.

PATRICIA

You always say that. You've been saying it since you were twelve. But where do you go, huh? You got no money. No car. No plan. Just your big mouth.

She leans close, her coffee breath hot.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

And you can't eat pride, sweetheart.

Pink stares straight ahead, refusing to give her mother the satisfaction of blinking first. A long, tense beat. Then—

A KNOCK at the back door. Both women freeze. Patricia's eyes narrow. She stomps to the door and yanks it open. It's a NEIGHBOR LADY (60s), holding a borrowed casserole dish.

NEIGHBOR LADY

Just thought I'd bring this back.

PATRICIA

(all sweetness now)

Oh, thank you, Mary! You're such a dear. Lisa, say hello.

Pink doesn't move. Patricia's smile tightens.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

(through her teeth)

Lisa.

Pink glances up, forces a tight smile.

PINK

Hi.

Mary nods politely, oblivious, and leaves. Patricia shuts the door, the fake cheer draining instantly.

PATRICIA

(snapping)

Embarrass me in front of the neighbors again and I'll toss your shit on the lawn.

Pink shoulders her backpack, fed up.

PINK

Do it. Then at least it'll be out of this house.

Patricia steps in close, lowering her voice to a venomous whisper.

PATRICIA
You walk out that door, Lisa, and
don't you dare come back. You're no
daughter of mine.

Pink glares at her—fury, pain, but also freedom. She pushes past, storming toward the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Pink passes KELLIE's bedroom. The door is cracked. Inside, KELLIE (12) is curled on the bed, hugging a stuffed rabbit. Her eyes are wide—she's been listening the whole time.

Pink hesitates. Steps in.

PINK
(gentle)
I'm leaving, Kel. I can't stay
here.

Kellie sits up, her voice trembling.

KELLIE
She'll be mad. At me.

Pink kneels beside the bed, smoothing her sister's hair.

PINK
None of this is your fault. Ever.
You hear me? You're stronger than
she'll ever let you know.

Kellie nods, fighting tears. Pink kisses her forehead, then stands.

PINK (CONT'D)
Be good. And take care of yourself.

She turns, heads for the front door.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Patricia stands there, arms crossed, waiting like a sentry. The silent challenge lingers.

Pink grips her backpack straps tight. For a long beat, mother and daughter lock eyes.

Then Pink yanks the door open. Sunlight floods the kitchen. She steps out without another word.

The door SLAMS shut. Patricia exhales, her façade cracking just slightly. Her hand trembles as she grips her coffee mug. But her face hardens again, like stone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Pink moves through the worn-out living room, her backpack slung over one shoulder. The carpet is threadbare, the couch sagging in the middle. Family photos line the wall—none of them feature her alone.

ALAN (40s), Pink's stepfather, sits in his recliner with the TV on. A beer already in his hand though it's not even noon. He barely glances at her.

ALAN

Where you running off to?

Pink doesn't answer. Keeps walking.

Patricia storms in behind her, voice sharp as a whip.

PATRICIA

Don't talk to him like that. You hear me? You respect this house.

Pink stops. Turns.

PINK

Respect goes both ways. And there's none here.

Alan smirks, amused, then turns back to the TV. Patricia bristles, insulted.

PATRICIA

You ungrateful little bitch.

Pink shoulders her bag higher, trying to ignore it. But Patricia won't let her.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

I feed you. I clothe you. And this is how you repay me? Walking out like trash on the side of the road?

PINK

(quietly, furious)
You didn't feed me.

(MORE)

PINK (CONT'D)

You didn't love me. You just tore
me down until there was nothing
left.

Patricia freezes—just for a second. The words hit. Then she
recovers, sneering.

PATRICIA

Oh, poor little Lisa. Always the
victim. Always blaming Mommy for
her failures.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Pink storms down the hall toward her bedroom. Patricia
follows close, still hurling words like knives.

PATRICIA

Go on. Run. You won't last a week.
You'll be back on your knees
begging me for help.

INT. PINK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Pink shoves open the door. The small room is
cluttered—posters on the wall, journals scattered, a broken
dresser. She drops her bag and starts throwing in clothes,
notebooks, anything she can grab.

Patricia leans on the doorframe, arms crossed, her presence
suffocating.

PATRICIA

Pack it all. You'll need it when
you're selling yourself on the
corner.

Pink stops. Her hands tremble around a t-shirt. She forces
herself to breathe.

PINK

You don't get to define me anymore.

Patricia tilts her head, curious, almost entertained.

PATRICIA

(mocking)

Define you? Honey, I made you.

Pink zips the bag hard, cutting off the conversation. She
slings it over her shoulder, her eyes blazing.

PINK
Then watch what I become without
you.

She pushes past Patricia, determined, heading for the door.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Pink reaches for the handle. Patricia hovers just behind, her voice dropping to a low, manipulative whisper.

PATRICIA
Lisa... baby... don't go. You know I
love you.

Pink turns, eyes wet with fury.

PINK
You love control. Not me.

She yanks open the door. Sunlight floods in. Patricia reaches out, but Pink steps through, slamming it shut behind her.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Pink walks fast down the cracked sidewalk, not looking back. Her face is set-angry, wounded, but alive.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

The small dining table is set with cereal boxes and half-poured bowls. TYLER (9) and NIC (7) eat noisily, giggling between spoonfuls. PATRICIA hovers nearby, her voice suddenly warm and sugary.

PATRICIA
Eat up, boys. Big day at school,
huh?

Pink lingers in the doorway, backpack slung over her shoulder. Patricia notices, her expression hardening immediately.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)
Don't just stand there glaring.
Either sit down or get out of my
sight.

Pink doesn't move. The contrast is clear-Patricia's warmth for the boys, her venom for Pink.

TYLER
(innocent)
Where you going, Lisa?

Pink forces a smile.

PINK
Just out.

Patricia cuts in sharply.

PATRICIA
She's leaving us, Tyler. Doesn't
want to be part of this family
anymore.

The boys fall silent. Pink turns away, unable to bear it.

INT. PINK'S BEDROOM - LATER

Pink kneels by her bed, shoving clothes into the backpack. She pauses, pulling out an OLD PHOTO tucked into a drawer—her father, young and wild-eyed, holding her as a baby. For a moment, her hard shell cracks.

PINK
(softly, to herself)
You weren't much better... but at
least you didn't pretend.

She shoves the photo into the bag.

The door creaks open. KELLIE (12) stands there, clutching her stuffed rabbit.

KELLIE
You're really going?

Pink nods, fighting emotion.

PINK
I have to. If I stay, I'll drown.

Kellie's eyes brim with tears.

KELLIE
What about me?

Pink kneels, grips her shoulders.

PINK
I'll come back for you. I promise.
You just hang on, okay?

Kellie nods, trembling. Pink hugs her tightly, then pulls away, steeling herself.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Pink stands at the threshold, Patricia behind her like a shadow.

PATRICIA
You walk out that door, you're no
daughter of mine.

Pink turns, eyes sharp.

PINK
Then I guess you never had one.

She yanks the door open. SUNLIGHT blasts in. Patricia's face twists with rage and something else—fear. The door SLAMS shut.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Pink heads for the front door, her backpack clutched tightly. Patricia trails behind, still spitting venom.

PATRICIA
Go on then. See how far you get.
You'll be back inside a week,
begging.

Pink doesn't turn. She tightens her grip on the strap, her jaw set.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)
And when you do, don't expect me to
open this door. Don't expect me to
feed you. Don't expect me to care.

Pink finally spins, fire in her eyes.

PINK
You never cared. Not once.

For a moment, Patricia falters—just a flicker. Then her face hardens.

PATRICIA
You'll always be nothing. You'll
always be mine.

Pink pulls the door open. Bright daylight pours in.

KELLIE darts out of the hallway, clutching her stuffed rabbit, eyes wide with panic.

KELLIE
Lisa, wait!

Pink kneels, pulls her sister into a tight hug.

PINK
(whispering)
I love you. Don't forget that. I'll
come back for you, I promise.

Kellie nods, tears spilling. Pink kisses her forehead, then forces herself to stand.

Patricia hovers like a shadow behind them.

PATRICIA
Empty promises. That's all you are.

Pink steps into the sunlight. The DOOR SLAMS.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Pink walks fast down the cracked sidewalk, her backpack heavy on her shoulder. Her breathing is shaky but determined.

She passes NEIGHBORS working in their yards. A couple of them glance up, curious, then look away. Nobody stops her.

Pink's flip-phone BUZZES. A text from Patricia:

"YOU'LL REGRET THIS."

She deletes it without opening. Keeps walking.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Pink marches down the sidewalk, backpack tight on her shoulders. She pulls out her flip-phone, thumbs a quick text:

ON SCREEN: "I'm on my way. Truck stop. -P"

She slips it back in her pocket and keeps walking.

EXT. ALISON'S HOUSE - LATER

A modest, worn-down home in a small Provo neighborhood. ALISON (17) slips out the front door, clutching a small duffel bag. Her braces glint in the sunlight. She glances back nervously—then hurries down the street.

INT. ALISON'S BEDROOM - FLASH CUT

We glimpse the chaos she left behind—clothes strewn across the bed, a MOTHER'S VOICE shouting from another room. A slammed door. Silence.

BACK TO SCENE:

Alison jogs to the corner where Pink is waiting. Pink gives her a quick once-over—checking the bag, checking her face.

PINK
You ready?

ALISON
(breathless)
I've never been more scared.

PINK
Good. Means you know it's real.

They exchange a look. Pink turns and keeps walking. Alison follows.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - PAYSON - AFTERNOON

Diesel fumes. The growl of idling engines. Pink and Alison stand together now, backpacks slung, side by side. Pink exudes boldness; Alison fidgets nervously.

ALISON
What if nobody picks us up?

PINK
Someone will. They always do.

ALISON
(half-joking)
What if they're a murderer?

Pink smirks.

PINK
Then we'll outsmart them.

A SEMI TRUCK pulls in. The DRIVER (50s, heavysset) climbs down. Pink straightens, fearless.

PINK (CONT'D)
Vegas bound?

The Driver eyes them, smirks.

DRIVER
Depends. You girls legal?

Alison flushes crimson, looking at the ground. Pink doesn't flinch.

PINK
Old enough to ride. Old enough to
know what we want.

The Driver shrugs, jerks a thumb at the cab.

DRIVER
Climb in. Don't make me regret it.

Pink grabs Alison's hand. Together, they haul themselves up.

INT. SEMI TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

The cab rattles along the dark highway. Outside, the desert stretches forever.

Pink stares out the window, neon fantasies in her eyes.
Alison hugs her duffel like a shield.

DRIVER
Vegas, huh? That city'll chew you
up.

PINK
Then we'll chew back.

The Driver chuckles. Alison forces a smile but her voice betrays her fear.

ALISON
(whispering, to Pink)
What if he's right?

Pink turns, squeezes Alison's hand tight.

PINK
Then we'll survive anyway.
Together.

INT. SEMI TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

The cab rattles down the long stretch of highway. Headlights slice through endless desert. Pink leans her forehead against the glass, staring at the dark horizon. Alison hugs her duffel close.

DRIVER

You girls ever been to Vegas before?

PINK

First time.

DRIVER

(snorts)

Thought so. City like that—she don't treat rookies kindly.

ALISON

(tentative)

We'll be fine. Right?

Pink reaches over, gives her hand a squeeze.

PINK

We'll be better than fine.

The Driver chuckles, shifting gears.

DRIVER

You sound tough, girl. But toughness don't mean much when neon lights blind you. Seen more than a few kids like you roll in wide-eyed, roll out broke... or worse.

Pink smirks, unshaken.

PINK

Then I guess we won't roll out.

Alison swallows hard, her fear etched across her face.

EXT. HIGHWAY REST STOP - NIGHT

The truck pulls into a lonely rest stop—one gas pump, a flickering vending machine, and a row of dead pay phones. The Driver cuts the engine.

DRIVER

Gotta stretch my legs. You two behave.

Pink and Alison climb out. The desert air is cool, sharp. Crickets hum in the distance.

Alison wanders toward the vending machine, presses her nose against the glass.

ALISON
(quietly)
Can't even afford a soda.

Pink joins her, digs into her pocket, produces a few crumpled bills.

PINK
(grinning)
First round's on me.

She buys two sodas, tosses one to Alison. They clink cans.

ALISON
To... getting out?

PINK
To never going back.

They drink. For a moment, they laugh, the weight lifted. Then the Driver calls out.

DRIVER
Let's move, ladies. Vegas don't wait.

They climb back into the cab.

INT. SEMI TRUCK MOVING LATER

The neon glow of the city begins to appear faintly on the horizon. Pink's eyes widen, catching the first glimpse of flashing color.

PINK
(whispering)
There she is.

Alison leans forward, awe and fear mingling in her expression. The truck barrels toward the shimmering lights in the distance.

INT. SEMI TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

The truck barrels down the dark highway. The faint neon glow of Vegas shimmers on the horizon, still miles away.

Pink leans her head against the glass, eyes fixed on the lights ahead. Alison sits stiffly, twisting a bracelet around her wrist.

ALISON
What if she calls the cops?

PINK
Let her. By the time they figure it out, we'll be ghosts.

ALISON
(hesitant)
I don't know if I'm built for this, Pink.

Pink turns, studies her.

PINK
You're built tougher than you think. Or you wouldn't be sitting here next to me.

Alison looks away, lips pressed tight.

DRIVER
(grinning)
You two remind me of my daughters. Always thought they knew better than their old man. Life taught 'em quick.

Pink arches a brow, unimpressed.

PINK
We'll learn fast too.

The Driver chuckles, but there's something unsettling in the way he looks at them in the rearview mirror. Alison hugs her duffel closer.

ALISON
(quietly)
What if Vegas isn't what we think?

Pink shifts her gaze back to the glowing skyline.

PINK
Doesn't matter. Anything's better than where we came from.

A long beat. The truck roars forward, carrying them closer to the city of lights.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The semi's headlights cut through the desert night. In the distance, VEGAS glows brighter, a promise and a threat.

EXT. LAS VEGAS HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The semi truck barrels forward. In the distance, the first waves of neon light shimmer against the desert sky.

Pink presses her forehead to the glass, her eyes alive. Alison leans forward too, but hers are wide with fear.

ALISON
(softly)
It's... huge.

PINK
It's ours.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT - MONTAGE

- A flashing billboard: GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS!
- Showgirls in feathered headdresses hand out flyers.
- Tourists stumble drunk out of a casino.
- A homeless man shakes a cup of change.

Pink and Alison weave through the chaos, their backpacks marking them as outsiders. Pink is wide-eyed, almost smiling. Alison stays close, clutching her bag.

ALISON
(under her breath)
This doesn't look like
freedom.

PINK
That's because you're looking at it
wrong. This is opportunity.

They pause at an intersection, overwhelmed by the sheer noise. The TRUCK DRIVER honks, pulling over to the curb.

EXT. CURB - CONTINUOUS

The girls climb down. The Driver leans out his window, eyeing them one last time.

DRIVER

City don't care about you. Remember
that. Careful where you step.

Pink nods, trying to look tougher than she feels. Alison
whispers a shaky "thank you." The truck pulls away, swallowed
by traffic.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

The girls stand alone now. Surrounded by light, laughter, and
the hum of slot machines. Pink straightens, takes Alison's
hand, and leads her down the Strip.

PINK

Come on. We've got this.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Pink and Alison move down the sidewalk, swallowed by a sea of
tourists. The air is thick with perfume, beer, and cigarette
smoke.

A STREET PERFORMER in gold paint strikes a frozen pose. A
group of BACHELOR PARTY GUYS cheer and shove dollar bills
into a showgirl's feathered costume.

ALISON

(awed, nervous)
It's like... another planet.

PINK

(smirking)
No. This is freedom.
They stop outside a fast
food joint. A glowing
menu in the window makes
Alison's stomach growl.
She digs in her bag-pulls
out a few wrinkled bills
and coins. Barely enough.

ALISON

We can't even buy fries.

Pink takes the money gently from her hand, shoves it back
into her bag.

PINK

Don't worry about tonight. We'll
figure it out.

ALISON
(quietly)
What if we can't?
Pink turns, eyes locked on
the flashing skyline.
Determined.

PINK
Then we make it work anyway. I'm
not going back.

Alison studies her, torn between admiration and fear.

EXT. SIDE STREET - LATER

The neon fades slightly as they turn off the Strip. The roar of traffic dulls. Pink leads with purpose, though she doesn't really know where she's going.

ALISON
Where are we even staying?

PINK
My aunt's place. She lives here.
It'll be fine.

Alison exhales, relieved. Pink doesn't let her see the doubt flickering in her own eyes.

They keep walking, the glow of the Strip behind them.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Pink and Alison turn off the Strip. The neon glow fades behind them, replaced by the hum of streetlights and the distant echo of sirens. The noise of the casinos gives way to silence.

Alison hurries to keep up, clutching her duffel tight.

ALISON
How far is it?

PINK
Not far. She lives in a quiet
neighborhood. We'll be safe there.

Alison exhales, relieved. Pink forces confidence into her voice, but her eyes dart nervously at the shadows around them.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - LATER

The girls walk through a modest Vegas neighborhood. The houses are small but tidy, with desert plants in gravel yards. Porch lights glow warm against the night.

Alison slows, her nerves catching up with her.

ALISON

What if she doesn't want us there?

PINK

She's family. She'll help. She has to.

Pink says it like she's trying to convince herself as much as Alison.

EXT. SAM AND JANALAINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They stop in front of a modest one-story home. A flickering porch light buzzes above the door. Pink stares at it, frozen for a moment. Alison shifts nervously at her side.

ALISON

You gonna knock?

Pink adjusts her backpack, steels herself, and marches up the steps. She knocks firmly. Alison lingers behind her, biting her lip.

A long pause. Then footsteps inside.

The door CREAKS open to reveal JANALAINE (50s), Pink's aunt. She looks surprised, then wary. Behind her, SAM (60s) appears from the kitchen, drying his hands with a dish towel.

EXT. SAM AND JANALAINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pink and Alison walk quickly down the driveway, the front door clicking shut behind them. Alison lags a little, shoulders sagging under her duffel.

ALISON

I told you it was a bad idea.

PINK

(snapping, covering her
hurt)

No. They're a bad idea. We don't
need them.

They reach the sidewalk. Pink pauses, scanning the street, trying to figure out their next move. Alison fidgets beside her.

ALISON

Then what? We can't sleep on the curb.

Before Pink can answer, a CAR ENGINE rumbles behind them. A beat-up sedan pulls into the driveway across the street. Out steps LARRY KING (mid-20s), casual, confident, with an easy smile.

He slams the car door, then freezes when he sees Pink. Recognition flickers.

LARRY

Lisa? No way.

Pink turns, startled. Her face lights up with both surprise and relief.

PINK

Larry? What the hell—

LARRY

(grinning)

Damn, kid. You grew up.

Alison hangs back, uncertain. Larry notices her, nods.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Who's your friend?

PINK

Alison. We... we just got into town.

Larry studies them—backpacks, tired eyes, the weight of rejection still fresh. He smirks knowingly.

LARRY

Lemme guess. Trouble at home?

Pink shrugs, trying to play it off.

PINK

Something like that.

LARRY

(after a beat)

You two hungry? Come on, let's get a drink, figure shit out.

Pink hesitates, then nods. Alison glances at her, wary but willing. Larry gestures toward his car.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Hop in. I'll take you someplace
safe.

Pink and Alison exchange a look—equal parts doubt and relief. Then they climb in.

INT. LARRY'S CAR - NIGHT

The sedan rattles as it heads away from the quiet neighborhood. The glow of the Strip fades in the rearview mirror.

Larry glances at the girls, smirking.

LARRY
So... Vegas, huh? What's the plan?

Pink stares out the window, arms crossed.

PINK
No plan. Just not Utah.

Alison clutches her duffel, nervous.

ALISON
We just needed out. That's all.

Larry chuckles.

LARRY
Fair enough. This town chews people
up, though. You'll need someone who
knows their way around.

Pink arches a brow, half-smiling.

PINK
And that's you?

LARRY
(grinning)
Damn right.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Larry's car pulls into a modest complex. Beige stucco walls, a flickering streetlight, the distant hum of traffic.

He kills the engine, climbs out. Pink and Alison follow, exchanging wary glances.

LARRY

Don't worry. My roommate's cool.
Place isn't much, but it's safe.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door opens onto a cluttered but lived-in space. Beer bottles on the counter, a sagging couch, music posters on the walls.

CHRIS (20s), Larry's roommate, sits at the kitchen table rolling a cigarette. He looks up, grins.

CHRIS

Company, huh?

LARRY

Yeah. Old family friend. This is
Lisa— but everyone calls her Pink.
And this is Alison.

Chris nods warmly at Alison, who offers a shy smile. Pink drops her bag near the couch, scanning the room.

CHRIS

You girls hungry? Got leftover
pizza.

Alison's face lights up despite herself.

ALISON

(quietly)
Yeah... thanks.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The four of them sit around the table with pizza and soda. Alison and Chris laugh over some story, their voices blending easily. Pink watches Larry, who leans back in his chair, relaxed, confident.

LARRY

So, Pink. What's your deal these
days?

PINK

Surviving. Same as always.

LARRY
(smirks)
Still got that fire. I remember.

Pink looks away, hiding a smile. Across the table, Alison's braces glint as she laughs at something Chris says.

A strange comfort settles over the room-like family, but not. For the first time in days, the girls eat until they're full.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Later. The TV glows faintly in the dark. Alison nods off on the couch, Chris tossing her a blanket. Pink lingers near the window, staring out at the Vegas skyline.

Larry steps up beside her, close enough to feel his warmth.

LARRY
You'll be alright here. Long as you
stick
with me.

Pink turns, caught in his gaze. For a moment, she feels safe.

INT. LARRY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Empty pizza boxes and half-drained soda cans clutter the coffee table. The TV hums faintly in the background. The four of them are more relaxed now-like they've known each other longer than a couple of hours.

Chris leans forward, telling some exaggerated story. Alison hangs on every word, her laughter bubbling out freely. Pink watches, amused but also protective.

CHRIS
-and then the damn dart bounced off
the board, nailed him right in the
ear. Blood everywhere. Funniest
thing I've ever seen.

Alison covers her mouth, giggling. Chris grins wide, clearly pleased with himself.

Larry sits back in his chair, eyes mostly on Pink. There's a quiet, knowing smile tugging at his lips.

LARRY
You always did like trouble.

Pink raises an eyebrow.

PINK
Takes one to know one.

Larry chuckles, leaning closer, lowering his voice.

LARRY
Guess that's why we always got
along.

Pink doesn't answer, but her cheeks flush slightly. She grabs a slice of pizza, focusing on anything but him.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Alison rinses plates in the sink. Chris leans against the counter, watching her.

CHRIS
You don't gotta do that. Guests
don't clean.

ALISON
(smiling shyly)
I don't mind. It's... kinda nice,
actually.

Chris tilts his head, studying her like she's a puzzle he wants to solve.

CHRIS
You're not like most girls I know.

Alison blushes, turning back to the dishes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Pink curls up on the couch, scribbling in a small notebook she pulled from her bag. Larry plops down beside her, close enough that his knee brushes hers.

LARRY
What's that?

PINK
Just... thoughts.

LARRY
Heavy thoughts?

Pink glances at him, a half-smile creeping in despite herself.

PINK

Maybe. Depends who's reading.

Larry chuckles. For a moment, the noise of Vegas outside fades, leaving only the low hum of the TV and the warmth of being somewhere that feels-almost-safe.

INT. LARRY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Chris and Alison sprawl on the floor, a deck of cards between them. Alison fumbles with a shuffle, laughing when the cards spill everywhere. Chris laughs with her.

Pink watches from the couch. Larry leans in close, murmuring.

LARRY

See? You girls landed on your feet.

Pink exhales slowly. For the first time since leaving Provo, she lets herself believe it.

INT. LARRY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The TV flickers with some late-night rerun. Alison curls up on the couch with a blanket Chris tossed her. She looks smaller than ever, though her smile lingers as she drifts half-asleep.

Pink sits at the other end of the couch, notebook open across her lap. She pretends to write but mostly just doodles, her eyes flicking toward Larry.

Larry drops into the armchair across from her, beer in hand. He watches her for a long moment, the corner of his mouth curling.

LARRY

You always had that fire in you.
Even when you were a kid.

Pink doesn't look up.

PINK

(guarded)

Maybe. Or maybe that's just what happens when people keep trying to put it out.

Larry studies her, serious now.

LARRY

Well, don't let 'em. Fire's the only thing that keeps you alive in this town.

A long beat. Pink finally glances up, meeting his eyes. There's a pull there—something old, something dangerous.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Chris and Alison are still awake, standing by the counter. Alison nibbles at the crust of another slice of pizza while Chris lights his cigarette.

CHRIS

You don't smoke, huh?

ALISON

(shaking her head)

No. My mom would kill me.

Chris smirks, blowing out a slow curl of smoke.

CHRIS

Moms usually try to kill the fun, don't they?

Alison laughs, soft and a little nervous. Chris leans closer, lowering his voice.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Don't worry. You're safe here.

Alison looks at him—uncertain, but comforted.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The night has settled. The apartment is quiet except for the hum of the refrigerator and faint noise from the street outside.

Alison finally dozes off, curled under the blanket. Chris disappears down the hall, leaving just Pink and Larry awake.

Pink closes her notebook, hugs it against her chest. Larry leans forward, elbows on his knees.

LARRY

You girls can crash here as long as you need. No strings.

Pink studies him, suspicious but grateful. She nods.

PINK

Thanks.

Larry gives her a look that lingers, then drains the rest of his beer. Pink shifts on the couch, trying to shake the warmth rising in her chest.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sunlight slants through dusty blinds. The apartment is quiet except for the faint clatter in the kitchen.

Pink stands at the counter, making sandwiches. She's clumsy with the knife, but determined. A lunchbox sits open on the counter.

Alison pads in, hair messy from sleep. She stops, watching.

ALISON

You're making lunches?

PINK

For Larry. He works long shifts.
Figured someone should.

Alison smiles faintly, impressed.

ALISON

You sound like... domestic.

Pink rolls her eyes, but there's pride in her face.

PINK

Don't tell anyone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Chris laces his work boots by the door. Alison flits around, tidying up beer bottles and ashtrays. Larry emerges in work clothes, grabbing the lunchbox Pink made.

LARRY

(grinning)

Look at you. Little housewife.

Pink snorts, tossing him a playful glare.

PINK

Don't get used to it.

Larry laughs, kisses her on the cheek before heading out. Pink freezes at the contact, caught off guard.

Alison catches the look, eyes flicking between them. A flicker of unease passes through her smile.

INT. APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Montage of days blending together:

- Alison scrubs dishes at the sink while Chris teases her.
- Pink stirs a pot of spaghetti, humming under her breath.
- Larry comes home sweaty and tired, finding dinner on the table.
- Pink hands him a neatly packed lunchbox each morning.

For a little while, the four of them fall into a strange rhythm. Almost like family. Almost.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The four sit together, watching TV. Alison leans against Chris, giggling softly at something he whispers. Pink sits close to Larry, stealing glances at him when she thinks no one's looking.

Larry notices. His hand brushes hers, subtle. Pink's heart skips.

INT. PINK AND ALISON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alison sits on the bed, brushing her hair. Pink digs through her bag, pretending to be busy.

ALISON
(careful)
You like him, don't you?

Pink freezes, then forces a scoff.

PINK
He's... Larry.

Alison smirks.

ALISON
That's not a no.

Pink glares at her, tossing a pillow. They laugh, but under it there's tension neither will name.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Larry grabs his lunchbox from the counter. Pink leans against the doorway, sipping coffee. Alison clears plates from the table, humming softly.

LARRY
(to Pink)
You're spoiling me.

PINK
Don't get used to it.

Larry grins, winks. He heads for the door. Pink watches him leave, a flutter in her chest.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alison vacuums the carpet with a little hand-vac, hair tied up, while Chris sprawls on the couch pretending to be lazy.

CHRIS
Miss Alison, you missed a spot.

Alison rolls her eyes, laughing.

ALISON
You could help, you know.

CHRIS
Nah, I'm supervising.

He tosses her a pillow. She swats him with it, both laughing.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

The girls cook dinner together. Pink stirs pasta sauce while Alison chops vegetables, still giggling at something Chris said earlier.

ALISON
He's funny.

PINK
He's also a pain in the ass.

Alison smirks, not disagreeing.

INT. DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

The four sit together eating. Larry tells a story about work, arms moving animatedly. Pink listens closely, smiling despite herself. Alison sneaks glances at Chris, who catches her and grins.

A sense of home settles in—strange, but almost comfortable.

INT. LARRY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Later. Pink sits on the couch, scribbling in her notebook. Chris and Alison are on the floor playing cards. Larry sits next to Pink, shoulder brushing hers.

LARRY

What are you writing?

PINK

Just thoughts.

LARRY

Heavy thoughts?

Pink smirks, shakes her head. Larry leans closer, his voice low.

LARRY (CONT'D)

You're tougher than you look. Most people would've cracked by now.

Pink doesn't look at him, but her cheeks warm. Alison notices from across the room, her smile faltering for just a second.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Chris pours cereal, Pink rummages through cabinets. He glances at her.

CHRIS

Larry's birthday's coming up.

Pink looks up, interested.

PINK

Really? When?

CHRIS

Couple days. We should do something. Doesn't have to be big—just a surprise.

Pink nods, already planning in her head.

PINK
Yeah. He deserves that.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Sunlight streaks through half-closed blinds. Alison kneels on the floor with a rag bucket, scrubbing a stubborn stain from the carpet. Chris leans in the doorway, watching, cigarette dangling from his lips.

CHRIS
You don't have to do that, you know.

ALISON
(shrugs)
I like things clean.

CHRIS
Well, you're in the wrong apartment.

Alison laughs. Chris grins, flicks ash into an empty beer can.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Don't worry. It suits you. Makes this dump feel like home.

Alison glances up at him, cheeks pink, then turns back to scrubbing.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Pink stands at the stove, stirring a pan of spaghetti sauce. Larry sits at the counter, peeling the label off a beer bottle, watching her.

LARRY
You're getting good at this.

PINK
(teasing)
Don't sound so surprised.

LARRY
Guess I never pictured you playing house.

Pink smirks, ladles sauce onto plates. Larry watches her more than the food.

INT. DINNER TABLE - EVENING

The four sit around the small table, steam rising from their plates. Alison's laughter rings out as Chris tells a story, pantomiming wildly. Larry chuckles, shaking his head.

Pink watches, taking it all in—the clatter of forks, the warmth of conversation. For a fleeting moment, it feels like family.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Pink sprawls on the couch with her notebook. Larry sits next to her, flipping through channels on the TV. Their shoulders brush, neither pulling away.

Across the room, Chris and Alison sit cross-legged on the floor, playing cards. Alison giggles, braces flashing. Chris grins, obviously enjoying himself.

Pink notices. Something sharp flickers across her face—protective, maybe jealous. She looks back down at her notebook, scribbling furiously.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Chris pours coffee. Pink stands at the counter, buttering bread for sandwiches.

CHRIS

So, Larry's birthday's coming up.

PINK

(looks up)

Yeah?

CHRIS

Couple days. I was thinking maybe we surprise him. Nothing big. Just a keg, maybe a few people.

Pink pauses, then nods, already picturing it.

PINK

Yeah. He deserves something. We can pull it off.

Chris grins, tapping his mug against hers.

CHRIS
Teamwork.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

The girls bustle around while the guys are at work. Alison folds laundry at the table, humming softly. Pink leans against the counter, scribbling a grocery list on the back of an old envelope.

ALISON
You're really getting into this.

PINK
What?

ALISON
Cooking. Making lunches. Grocery lists.

Pink smirks, shrugs.

PINK
Someone's gotta keep things running.

Alison nods, folding another shirt. She hesitates.

ALISON
You... like him, don't you?

Pink looks up, caught off guard. She covers with a scoff.

PINK
He's Larry. He's-complicated.

Alison studies her, but lets it drop.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Chris leans against the counter, sipping coffee. Pink rummages through the fridge, pulling out eggs and milk.

CHRIS
So... Larry's birthday's in a couple days.

Pink glances over her shoulder.

PINK
Yeah? He didn't say anything.

CHRIS

He won't. Doesn't like to make a big deal. But I think we should do something. Get a keg, invite a few friends.

Pink considers, then nods.

PINK

Yeah. We can make it a surprise.

Chris grins, tapping his coffee mug against the counter.

CHRIS

You're alright, Pink.

Pink smirks, flipping the eggs into the pan.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The four of them sit together, a movie playing on the TV. Alison leans comfortably against Chris, her head on his shoulder. Pink sits beside Larry, arms folded, pretending to focus on the screen.

Larry stretches, his arm brushing lightly against her. Pink stiffens, then relaxes, fighting the smile tugging at her lips.

LARRY

(low, to her)

You're tough, you know that?

Pink glances at him, eyes daring but soft.

PINK

Somebody has to be.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Chris and Pink haul a small keg through the doorway, both of them grunting with effort. Alison trails behind with bags of chips and plastic cups.

CHRIS

Careful--don't dent it before the party.

PINK

(rolling her eyes)

Relax. I've got it.

They set it down by the kitchen counter. Alison begins lining up cups neatly.

ALISON

You really think he won't suspect?

CHRIS

Larry never suspects anything.
That's what makes him easy to
surprise.

Pink smirks, wiping sweat from her forehead.

PINK

Let's hope you're right.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The place is buzzing now. Music thumps low from the stereo. A few FRIENDS mill around—laughing, drinking, filling red cups from the keg.

Pink moves through the crowd, making sure everything's in place. Alison flits around, helping with snacks, smiling nervously at strangers. Chris plays host, already a little buzzed.

Larry steps in from the hallway, caught off guard by the noise. Everyone yells.

CROWD

Surprise!

Larry freezes, then laughs. Pink watches, pride blooming on her face.

LARRY

You guys... damn.

He claps Chris on the back, pulls Pink into a brief hug. She stiffens, then melts into it for a second longer than she should.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The party is in full swing. Beer flows, smoke curls in the air, laughter bounces off the walls. Pink leans against the wall, cup in hand, watching Larry hold court with a group of friends.

Alison sits cross-legged on the floor with Chris, laughing at his card tricks. Her braces catch the light every time she grins.

Pink's eyes flick from Alison to Larry. Her stomach twists.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pink refills her cup at the keg, keeping her eyes on the crowd. She notices Larry slip away, laughing with someone near the hallway. A beat later, Alison's nowhere to be seen.

PINK
(to herself)
Where the hell-

She sets her cup down, scanning the apartment, unease creeping in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Music pounds. People talk over each other. The party swallows her search. Pink pushes past laughing guests, her heartbeat loud in her ears.

Larry's gone. Alison too.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The party grows louder. MUSIC thumps from the stereo, laughter spills through the rooms. A haze of cigarette smoke drifts in the air.

Pink weaves through the crowd, topping off cups, trying to keep busy. Every now and then, her eyes flick toward Larry—always surrounded by friends, laughing too loud, beer in hand.

Alison sits on the floor with Chris, leaning in close to hear him over the noise. He shows her a card trick, palming the deck with ease. Alison's braces glint as she laughs, covering her mouth self-consciously. Chris laughs with her, warm and genuine.

Pink notices, jaw tightening.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Pink refills her cup from the keg, glancing toward the hallway. Larry's nowhere in sight. Neither is Alison. A knot forms in her stomach.

PINK
(to herself)
Where'd you go?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Pink pushes through the crowd, scanning faces. She checks the bathroom—empty. A bedroom door—locked. Laughter filters from the other side. Her chest tightens.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She returns, scanning the party again. Chris shrugs when she asks with her eyes. No Alison. No Larry.

Pink pulls out her phone, dials.

INTERCUT - PINK / LARRY'S VOICEMAIL

The ring buzzes in her ear. No answer. She hangs up. Dials again. And again.

Finally, the voicemail clicks on. Pink's voice shakes with anger.

PINK
(into phone)
Pick up the phone. You
better not be
with her. You hear me,
Larry? If I see
you two together, I swear
Iâ€™ll fuck Alison
up. Donâ€™t test me.
She hangs up, staring at
her reflection in the
darkened window. Her hand
trembles, cup forgotten
in the other.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The party rages on around her, but Pink feels completely alone. The music is muffled, distant. Her eyes burn as she sinks into the couch, rage and betrayal boiling in her chest.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The party noise has dimmed. Pink sits on the couch, phone clutched tight in her hand, the glow lighting up her face. Her jaw is clenched, her chest heaves.

The phone BUZZES suddenly. Larry's name flashes across the screen. Pink stares at it, debating. She answers.

LARRY (V.O.)
Pink—listen. I'm sorry, alright?

Pink doesn't speak, just breathes hard into the receiver.

LARRY (V.O.)
But you gotta promise me something.
You don't touch Alison. You don't
lay a hand on her. Otherwise, we're
not coming back.

Pink's voice explodes, raw and sharp.

PINK
(into phone)
Go fuck yourself. Both of you.

She SLAMS the phone shut. Her hand shakes. For a moment, the music and laughter around her feel miles away.

The phone BUZZES again. Larry's name. Pink stares, then DECLINES the call. Silence.

She grabs her jacket, yanks it on, storms toward the door.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Pink shoves her way out, the muffled sound of the party bleeding into the night. The cool desert air hits her like a slap. She walks fast, shoulders tight, not looking back.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Pink moves quickly down the sidewalk, the glow of the Strip far in the distance. She wipes angrily at her face, refusing to let tears fall.

Her phone BUZZES again. Another call. She declines without looking.

PINK
(to herself)
Fuck this. I'm done.

EXT. JANALAINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pink stands at the door, exhausted. She knocks, then steps back. A long pause. Finally, the door opens—JANALAINE appears, confused but cautious.

JANALAINE
Lisa?

Pink swallows hard, trying to hold her voice steady.

PINK
Can I crash here? Just tonight.

Janalaine studies her for a long beat. Then she sighs, opens the door wider. Pink steps inside.

EXT. LARRY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - AFTERNOON

The sun blazes overhead, baking the stucco buildings. Pink approaches the familiar complex, her backpack slung over one shoulder. Her eyes are hard, focused. She's here for her stuff, nothing more.

As she nears the entrance, she spots ALISON sitting on the low brick wall around a flowerbed. Her duffel rests at her feet. She's crying, shoulders shaking. Pink slows, frowning.

PINK
Alison?

Alison looks up, startled. Her mascara is smudged, her braces catching the sun as she tries to form a shaky smile.

ALISON
I'm sorry, Pink. I didn't know what to do.

Pink stiffens, folding her arms.

PINK
Where's Larry?

Alison wipes her face, voice cracking.

ALISON

He... he kicked me out last night. As soon as we got back. Said I couldn't stay.

Pink's face hardens, but she doesn't interrupt. Alison keeps talking, the words tumbling out fast.

ALISON (CONT'D)

I sat out here all night. Then I met this couple—Corwin and Tina. They live in the complex. They let me crash on their couch. Said they'd help us figure something out.

Pink narrows her eyes.

PINK

And our stuff?

ALISON

I left it at their place this morning. They're at work right now, but... they said we could talk when they got back.

Pink exhales sharply, pacing a few steps, processing.

PINK

(bitter)

So Larry gets to kick you out like trash, and some strangers swoop in to play heroes?

Alison looks at her, pleading.

ALISON

They seemed nice, Pink. They just wanted to help.

Pink doesn't answer. She stares up at the sun-bleached building, jaw tight. A storm brews behind her eyes.

PINK

Fine. We'll wait. But I don't trust anyone in this place.

EXT. LARRY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - LATE AFTERNOON

Pink and Alison sit on the low brick wall outside, waiting. The sun dips lower, casting long shadows across the courtyard. A couple of kids ride bikes in circles nearby. The world feels strangely normal, even as the girls sit tense with their duffels at their feet.

ALISON

They'll be home soon. Corwin said
they get off work around six.

Pink picks at a crack in the mortar, restless.

PINK

And you trust them?

ALISON

(hesitant)

They were nice last night. They
gave me a blanket, let me sleep on
the couch.

Pink snorts.

PINK

Nobody's nice for nothing.

Alison looks down, biting her lip. Pink sighs, softer.

PINK (CONT'D)

I'm not saying we don't check it
out. I'm just saying—keep your eyes
open.

EXT. PARKING LOT - EARLY EVENING

A beat-up sedan pulls into the lot. Out step CORWIN (30s), lean, sharp-featured, eyes cold even when he smiles, and TINA (20s), soft-spoken with a wary edge. They carry grocery bags.

Alison perks up.

ALISON

That's them.

Pink studies them, expression unreadable. Corwin notices, nods.

CORWIN

You must be Pink. Alison's friend.

PINK
(flat)
Yeah. That's me.

Corwin grins, too smooth.

CORWIN
Well, you're both welcome. Come
upstairs, we'll talk about what you
need.

Pink glances at Alison, who gives her a hopeful look. Pink
hesitates, then shoulders her bag.

PINK
(under her breath)
Just talking. That's it.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is cleaner than Larry's, but colder. Everything
feels staged: generic art on the walls, spotless surfaces. A
faint smell of air freshener masks something underneath.

Tina sets down the groceries. Corwin gestures toward the
couch.

CORWIN
Sit, sit. Make yourselves
comfortable.

Alison sits quickly. Pink lingers near the door, eyes
scanning exits.

Corwin notices, smirks.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
Relax. You're safe here.

He pulls two beers from the fridge, hands them over. Pink
takes hers reluctantly, setting it on the table untouched.

TINA
You girls got plans? Work? School?

Alison shakes her head.

ALISON
Not really. Just... figuring it out.

Corwin leans forward, his smile sharp.

CORWIN

Lucky for you, I'm good at helping
people figure things out.

Pink stiffens, her instincts firing. She sets the bottle
down.

PINK

We should probably go. Long day.

She stands. Alison looks at her, confused. Corwin moves
faster, stepping in front of her.

CORWIN

You're not going anywhere.

Pink freezes. Corwin's hand shoots up, wrapping around her
throat—not choking, but firm, pinning her in place. Alison
gasps.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

You're mine now. Both of you.
You'll work for me, and when you've
earned it—then maybe you'll be
free.

Pink's eyes blaze, defiant even as fear grips her. Corwin
squeezes harder, just enough to remind her he's in control.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

Don't test me. You'll lose.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Silence after Corwin's words. Alison clutches her bag tight,
eyes wide. Pink stares him down, her throat red where his
hand pressed.

Corwin straightens, calm again, almost cheerful.

CORWIN

That's better. Now we understand
each other.

He gestures casually toward the couch.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

Sit. Both of you.

Alison sits quickly. Pink hesitates, then drops onto the
cushion beside her, rigid.

Tina emerges from the kitchen with two glasses of water. She sets them on the table, smiling thinly.

TINA
You'll feel better once you drink.

Pink ignores hers. Alison takes a small sip, hands shaking.

Corwin leans against the arm of the chair, arms folded.

CORWIN
Here's how this works. You stay
here. You do what I say. You don't
leave until I say. You got that?

Alison nods immediately. Pink says nothing.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
(sharp)
I said, you got that?

Pink meets his eyes, defiant.

PINK
I hear you.

Corwin smirks, satisfied enough.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Pink and Alison sit side by side on a mattress with no sheets. Alison's eyes glisten with tears. Pink stares at the ceiling, fists clenched.

ALISON
I'm sorry. I thought... I thought
they were different.

Pink rolls onto her side, facing her.

PINK
Don't apologize. You didn't know.
Nobody could've known.

Alison sniffles. Pink reaches for her hand, squeezing it tight.

PINK (CONT'D)
We'll get out. I swear it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Corwin sits with Tina, murmuring low. They glance toward the closed bedroom door. Tina looks uneasy, but she doesn't speak.

Corwin lights a cigarette, smoke curling around his face. His smirk lingers.

CORWIN

One way or another, they'll learn.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Corwin paces slowly in front of the girls, who sit on the couch, rigid. Alison wrings her hands. Pink stares at him, unblinking.

CORWIN

Here's how it works. You stay here.
You do what I say. No questions. No exceptions.

He points at Alison.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

You? You're young. Nervous. That'll
bring the wrong kind of attention.
I don't like problems.

Alison nods quickly, desperate.

ALISON

I won't cause trouble. I promise.

Corwin smirks, then turns to Pink.

CORWIN

And you. You've got fire. Fire
burns out fast if you're not
careful.

Pink leans forward, eyes blazing.

PINK

I'm not afraid of you.

Corwin chuckles, shaking his head. He steps closer, leaning down so only she can hear.

CORWIN

That's where you're wrong.

He straightens, gestures toward Tina.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
Tina'll make sure you're settled.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

The girls sit on a bare mattress pushed against the wall. Alison's eyes glisten with tears. Pink sits stiff, arms wrapped around her knees.

ALISON
I can't do this. Pink, I can't.

Pink reaches over, takes her hand firmly.

PINK
You can. We both can. He doesn't own us. Not really.

Alison shakes her head, trembling.

ALISON
He said-

PINK
(cutting in)
I don't care what he said. We'll find a way out. I swear it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Corwin sits back in his chair, cigarette burning between his fingers. Tina leans against him, quiet. He exhales smoke, smirking.

CORWIN
She'll break. They always do.

Tina says nothing, her eyes flicking toward the closed bedroom door.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark now. Alison curls against the wall, finally asleep. Pink lies awake beside her, staring at the ceiling. The faint sound of Corwin's laughter drifts through the thin walls.

Pink's eyes glisten, but they're fierce, not broken. She clenches her fists tight.

PINK
(whispering to herself)
Not me. Not ever.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The air is thick with cigarette smoke. The girls sit frozen on the couch, their bags untouched at their feet. Corwin paces slowly in front of them like a predator testing the fence. Tina sits close by, her silence complicit.

CORWIN
No one leaves here unless I say. No
phone calls. No visitors. This is
your world now. Understand?

Alison nods quickly, eyes down. Pink doesn't move.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
(snapping)
I asked a question.

ALISON
We understand.

Corwin's gaze cuts to Pink. She finally meets his eyes, jaw tight.

PINK
I hear you.

He smirks, leaning in closer.

CORWIN
Good. Because if you cross me,
you'll wish you hadn't.

Tina rises, sets two glasses of water on the table. Her smile is thin.

TINA
Drink. You need your strength.

Alison obeys. Pink leaves hers untouched.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

A bare mattress on the floor, no sheets, no pillows. Alison curls against the wall, tears staining her face. Pink sits upright, arms locked around her knees.

ALISON
We shouldn't have trusted them. I ruined everything.

PINK
(firm)
You didn't ruin anything. He tricked you. That's on him.

ALISON
He's going to hurt us.

Pink looks her dead in the eyes.

PINK
Not if I can help it.

She squeezes Alison's hand. Alison clings to it, trembling.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Corwin smokes, Tina beside him. He blows a long stream of smoke, smiling faintly.

CORWIN
The little one's already halfway broken. Won't take much. The other... she's fire. Gonna take time.

Tina leans her head on his shoulder, saying nothing. The sound of Alison's muffled crying leaks through the wall.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alison finally falls asleep, whimpering softly. Pink lies awake, staring at the cracked ceiling. The apartment is silent except for the hum of the fridge and Corwin's distant laughter.

PINK
(whispering to herself)
He doesn't own me. He never will.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - NEXT DAY

Morning light filters weakly through closed blinds. The girls sit at the table, two bowls of cereal in front of them. Alison eats slowly. Pink just pushes the spoon around.

Corwin leans against the counter, watching them like a hawk.

CORWIN

You do as you're told, you'll eat.
You don't? You starve. Simple.

Pink's jaw tightens. Alison nods quickly, spooning cereal into her mouth faster.

Corwin smirks, satisfied.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The blinds are drawn. The TV plays faintly, ignored. Alison curls in the corner, hugging her knees. Pink paces, restless, checking the door, the windows, every exit.

Corwin notices, amused.

CORWIN

Go ahead. Look all you want. Doors
are locked. Windows too.

Pink glares back, defiant. Corwin leans in close, voice a whisper only she hears.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

I like the fighters. They bleed the
longest.

Pink's fists clench, but she doesn't flinch.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dark again. Alison whispers in the dark, voice shaking.

ALISON

Pink... I can't. I can't do this.

Pink pulls her close, stroking her hair.

PINK

You can. Because I won't let him
win.
I promise.

Alison sobs quietly into her chest. Pink stares into the dark, eyes blazing, mind already working angles.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The blinds stay shut, sealing out the sun. The air feels stale. Alison and Pink sit at the table with bowls of cereal.

Corwin leans against the counter, smoking, watching them like a warden.

CORWIN

Rule number one: you eat when I
say. Not before, not after.

Pink stares him down, not touching her spoon. Alison shovels food quickly, eyes down.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

(to Alison)

See? She gets it. Knows how to
listen.

Pink's lips curl into a smirk.

PINK

Or maybe she's just scared.

Corwin's smile vanishes. He slams his palm on the table, making Alison jump. Pink doesn't flinch.

CORWIN

Watch your mouth.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The TV flickers with static, low volume. Alison curls in the corner of the couch, hugging her knees. Tina brings her a blanket, laying it gently over her shoulders.

TINA

Just do what he says. It'll be
easier.

Pink watches from the table, notebook open in front of her. She isn't writing, just staring at the blank page.

PINK

Easier for who?

Tina doesn't answer. She retreats to the kitchen, her silence heavier than words.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pink and Alison lie on the mattress. Alison whispers, voice shaking.

ALISON

What if this is it? What if we
never leave?

Pink squeezes her hand, whispering fiercely.

PINK

We will. I'll find a way.

Alison's tears slip into the pillow. Pink stays awake,
staring at the ceiling.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Through the thin wall, Corwin and Tina's voices carry.

CORWIN (O.S.)

The little one's ready. Won't take
much. The older one's a fighter.
She'll bleed herself out before she
bends.

Pink hears every word. Her jaw tightens, fists clenched.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Corwin pours coffee, watching Pink as she rinses two cups in
the sink.

CORWIN

You'd be my best earner if you
stopped fighting. Got the look, the
attitude. But your heart's not in
it. That makes you dangerous.

Pink dries the cups slowly, deliberately.

PINK

(flat)

I'm not here to make you money.

Corwin chuckles, amused by her defiance.

CORWIN

You'll change your tune.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alison sobs quietly. Pink strokes her hair, whispering.

PINK

He'll get rid of you if he thinks
you're trouble. You're underage,
Alison. That makes you a risk. I'll
convince him it's not worth it.

Alison shakes her head.

ALISON

He'll never let me go.

Pink stares into the dark, eyes blazing.

PINK

Then we'll make him.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The blinds are nailed shut, letting in only slivers of gray light. Pink and Alison sit at the table, bowls of oatmeal in front of them. Tina moves around the kitchen quietly, serving without speaking much.

Corwin sits at the head of the table, cigarette burning between his fingers. His eyes never leave the girls.

CORWIN

Rule number two. You don't leave
this apartment without me. Not for
a second.

Alison nods quickly. Pink doesn't move.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

(to Pink)

You hear me?

PINK

I'm not deaf.

Corwin's smile fades. He flicks ash into her bowl. Alison flinches.

CORWIN

Attitude like that'll get you hurt.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The TV plays cartoons at low volume. Alison sits cross-legged on the floor, folding laundry Tina handed her. Corwin lounges on the couch, pretending to watch TV but his eyes track her every move.

Pink paces near the window, scanning the locked latch again, the bars on the screen. Corwin notices.

CORWIN
You looking for an exit?

Pink doesn't answer. Corwin chuckles.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
Doors are locked. Windows too.
Might as well stop dreaming.

PINK
Dreaming's free. You can't take
that.

Corwin smirks, but there's a flash of irritation behind his eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The girls lie on the bare mattress. Alison snuffles, her back to the wall. Pink strokes her hair, whispering.

PINK
Don't give him what he wants.
That's how he wins.

ALISON
(whimpering)
But he scares me.

PINK
I know. He scares me too. But fear
doesn't get to decide for us.

Alison clings to her hand, nodding weakly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Corwin and Tina sit on the couch, voices low but carrying through the thin wall. Pink listens, wide awake.

CORWIN (O.S.)
The little one's too young. Heat'll
come down if I'm not careful.

TINA (O.S.)
Then what?

CORWIN (O.S.)
Then she goes. The older one stays.
She's tough. She'll learn.

Pink's eyes widen in the dark. She turns back toward Alison, whispering urgently.

PINK
He's thinking about letting you go.
That's our way out.

ALISON
(whispering, panicked)
He'll never do it.

PINK
(firm)
Watch me.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Corwin leans against the counter, sipping coffee. Pink enters, deliberately calm. She leans against the opposite counter, arms crossed.

PINK
Alison's seventeen. Too young.
She's gonna bring heat on you.

Corwin stares at her, amused.

CORWIN
You trying to bargain with me?

PINK
I'm telling you the truth. She's
not worth the trouble. But me? I
can handle it.

Corwin studies her for a long beat. He smirks.

CORWIN
You've got guts. Dangerous guts.

Pink doesn't move. He finally laughs, shaking his head.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
Maybe you're right. Maybe the
little one's
more trouble than she's worth.

Pink swallows, masking her relief.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Dim light seeps through blinds nailed shut. The air is heavy with stale smoke. Pink and Alison sit at the table with bowls of soggy cereal. Corwin looms over them, coffee mug in hand.

CORWIN

You don't eat until I say. You
don't talk until I say. Everything
in this house happens because I
say.

Alison nods quickly, spoon halfway to her mouth. Pink doesn't move. Corwin notices.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

(mocking)

What's the matter, Pink? Too proud
to eat breakfast?

Pink smirks faintly, shoves a spoonful in her mouth without breaking eye contact.

PINK

Happy now?

Corwin slams his mug down. Alison jumps. Tina, washing dishes, doesn't even look up.

CORWIN

One day that smart mouth will cost
you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The TV flickers with reruns no one's watching. Alison folds laundry on the couch—clothes that aren't even theirs. Corwin told her to do it, so she does. Tina sits beside her, flipping through a magazine.

TINA

He just wants things done right.
It's easier if you don't fight it.

Alison nods faintly, but her eyes dart toward Pink. Across the room, Pink scribbles in her notebook, the pen digging too hard into the page.

PINK

(under her breath)
Easier for him, maybe.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Corwin leans against the counter, sipping his beer. He studies Pink like an animal behind glass. She rinses two cups at the sink, back rigid.

CORWIN

You've got guts. I like that. Guts make you valuable.

Pink doesn't turn around.

PINK

Guts make me dangerous.

Corwin laughs, low and menacing. He steps closer until his breath touches her ear.

CORWIN

Don't flatter yourself. You're only as dangerous as I let you be.

Pink keeps scrubbing. Her hand trembles, but she hides it.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alison curls against the wall, eyes swollen from crying. Pink lies beside her, whispering.

ALISON

I can't do this anymore. He's never letting us out.

PINK

Yes, he will. One way or another. He'll let you go.

ALISON

Why me?

PINK

Because you're seventeen. You're risk. I'll make him see it.

Alison stares at her, terrified. Pink strokes her hair, eyes blazing in the dark.

PINK (CONT'D)

I swear, I'll get you out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Through the thin wall, Corwin's voice carries.

CORWIN (O.S.)
The little one's almost broken. The
other? She thinks she's
unbreakable.

TINA (O.S.)
She'll fight until it kills her.

CORWIN (O.S.)
Then we'll let it kill her. Slowly.

Pink hears every word. She squeezes Alison's hand tighter.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Corwin drinks his coffee. Pink leans against the counter,
watching him carefully.

PINK
Alison's underage. She's gonna
bring heat if anyone finds out.

Corwin raises an eyebrow.

CORWIN
And you're just telling me this out
of kindness?

PINK
I'm telling you because it's the
truth. She's more trouble than
she's worth.

Corwin studies her for a long moment, smirking.

CORWIN
Maybe you're right. Maybe the
little one's not worth the risk.

Pink masks her relief, keeping her face hard.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alison whispers in the dark.

ALISON
What if he really lets me go?

Pink stares at the ceiling, voice fierce.

PINK

Then you run and never look back.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The same nailed-shut blinds. The same stale smoke. The same bowls of cereal pushed across the table. Days bleed together until they feel endless.

Alison eats quickly, eyes down. Corwin watches her like a proud teacher. Pink sits across, spoon idle, staring at him with open defiance.

CORWIN

See? She learns. She listens.

PINK

She's scared.

Corwin slams his hand flat on the table. Alison jumps, milk spilling over the edge of her bowl. Pink doesn't flinch.

CORWIN

You think you're clever. But fear
and obedience look the same to me.

Tina sets a towel down to mop the mess. She glances at Alison, not at Pink.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The TV mutters game shows no one's really watching. Alison folds laundry Tina dumped on her lap. Pink paces near the locked front door, eyes scanning the bolts, the chain.

Corwin notices, chuckling.

CORWIN

Go ahead. Count the locks again.
Won't make 'em disappear.

PINK

Locks don't last forever.

Corwin smirks, amused by her stubbornness. Alison lowers her head, folding faster.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Corwin leans against the counter, sipping whiskey. Pink stands opposite him, arms crossed.

PINK
Alison's seventeen. You know what happens if someone finds out?

Corwin raises an eyebrow, feigning calm.

CORWIN
You keep bringing that up. Why?

PINK
Because she's heat. She's liability. I'm not.

Corwin studies her for a long moment, lips curling.

CORWIN
You offering yourself instead?

Pink doesn't blink. Silence. He laughs, shaking his head.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
Dangerous little thing, aren't you?

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The girls lie on the mattress. Alison curls tight against the wall, whispering through tears.

ALISON
He's never letting us go.

Pink pulls her close, fierce.

PINK
You. He'll let you go. I'll make sure of it.

Alison shakes her head, sobbing. Pink holds her tighter.

PINK (CONT'D)
Listen to me. You'll leave this place. Even if I don't.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Through the thin walls, Corwin and Tina's voices bleed into the dark.

CORWIN (O.S.)
The little one's easy. Won't take
long. The other—she's fire. Fire
burns out fast.

TINA (O.S.)
What if she doesn't break?

CORWIN (O.S.)
Then she'll burn herself alive
trying.

Pink listens, every word carving deeper into her resolve.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Alison scrubs dishes while Tina hovers. Corwin sips coffee,
watching Pink across the table.

CORWIN
You know what your problem is,
Pink? You think this is a fight you
can win.

PINK
(quiet, sharp)
I don't fight to win. I fight
because I don't know how to quit.

Corwin laughs, but there's no humor in it.

CORWIN
Then you'll be fun to watch.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Gray light seeps through blinds nailed shut. The air is heavy
with stale cigarette smoke and the faint sourness of spilled
beer. The walls seem closer each day.

Alison and Pink sit at the small kitchen table. Two chipped
bowls of cereal sit in front of them. The milk is lukewarm,
the flakes soggy. Alison's spoon trembles as she lifts it to
her lips. Pink doesn't touch hers.

Corwin leans against the counter, coffee mug in hand,
cigarette smoldering between two fingers. He doesn't sit. He
looms, circling the table like a shadow.

CORWIN
Rule number three. You don't leave
the table until I'm done.

He takes a slow sip, watching. Alison keeps her head down, eating quickly, mechanically, as if speed will make it easier.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
(to Alison)
Good girl. You listen.

Pink smirks faintly, not looking at him. She stirs her cereal but doesn't eat. Corwin notices.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
And you. You think you're too good?

PINK
(flat)
I don't eat trash.

Corwin slams his mug onto the table, coffee splashing. Alison jumps, nearly dropping her spoon. Pink doesn't flinch.

CORWIN
You think you're funny? You think
you can disrespect me in my own
house?

PINK
(calm)
If this is a house, then where's
the door?

Corwin leans in close, so close she can smell the bitter coffee and smoke on his breath.

CORWIN
Keep running that mouth, and I'll
make sure you choke on it.

Silence. Alison's eyes are wide, darting between them. Tina enters quietly, wiping her hands on a dish towel. She surveys the tension but says nothing. Instead, she begins cleaning the spilled coffee with practiced indifference.

TINA
(softly, to Alison)
Just finish eating.

Alison obeys. Pink stares Corwin down until he finally smirks and steps back.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The TV drones, showing a game show no one watches. Alison sits cross-legged on the carpet, folding laundry that Tina dumped into her lap. The clothes aren't even theirs, but Alison folds carefully, hands trembling.

Corwin reclines on the couch, beer in hand, smoke curling from his cigarette. His eyes track Alison's every move.

CORWIN

See? She knows how to follow orders.

PINK

She's terrified. That's not the same as respect.

Corwin chuckles darkly.

CORWIN

Fear and respect feel the same to me.

Pink paces by the front door, eyeing the locks. There are three deadbolts, a chain, and a bolt plate on the bottom. She studies each one, memorizing them.

Corwin notices, smirking.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Count them all you want. Won't make 'em disappear.

Pink turns, meeting his eyes.

PINK

Locks don't last forever.

Corwin laughs, enjoying the fight.

CORWIN

Fire. That's what you've got. Fire burns out quick.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bare mattress on the floor. No sheets. The plaster walls smell faintly of mildew. Alison curls against the wall, blanket wrapped tight around her shoulders. She sobs quietly, trying not to wake Tina in the next room.

Pink lies beside her, staring at the ceiling, hand gripping Alison's tightly.

ALISON
He's never letting us out.

PINK
He'll let you go.

ALISON
Why me?

PINK
Because you're seventeen. You're risk. I'll make him see it.

Alison shakes her head, tears streaking her cheeks.

ALISON
He'll kill us first.

Pink turns, pulling her into her arms.

PINK
(fierce)
Not if I get to him first.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Through the thin walls, Corwin and Tina's voices seep into the dark.

CORWIN (O.S.)
The little one's almost broken.
Won't take much longer.

TINA (O.S.)
And the other?

CORWIN (O.S.)
She'll fight until she's dead.

TINA (O.S.)
What if she doesn't break?

CORWIN (O.S.)
Then I'll enjoy watching her burn.

Pink hears every word. Her jaw tightens. She stares into the dark, eyes blazing.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Dim gray light leaks through blinds nailed shut. The kitchen is claustrophobic: cigarette smoke clings to the air, the sour tang of stale beer lingers. A single fly buzzes near the light fixture.

Alison stands at the sink, scrubbing dishes with trembling hands. Tina hovers beside her, drying each one slowly. Pink sits at the table, notebook closed in front of her, chin resting on her fist. Across the counter, Corwin sips coffee, eyes never leaving her.

CORWIN
You're quiet this morning.

Pink doesn't look up.

PINK
Nothing worth saying.

Corwin exhales smoke across the table. He grins faintly.

CORWIN
You'll break sooner or later. They
all do.

Pink leans back in her chair, refusing to look away.

PINK
Not me.

Corwin studies her, then laughs low.

CORWIN
Pride burns hotter than fear. But
fear lasts longer.

Alison drops a plate. CLATTER. It wobbles in the sink, miraculously not shattering. She flinches.

ALISON
Sorry. I'm sorry.

Corwin's head snaps to her. Silence crushes the room. Alison freezes, dish still in her hands. Corwin smiles slowly, turning back to Pink.

CORWIN
See the difference? She knows fear.
You— you only know pride. Pride's
the deadlier sin.

Pink glares back, jaw tight.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The TV murmurs with a soap opera no one watches. The blinds cut the light into narrow gray stripes. Alison sits on the carpet, folding laundry Tina dumped in front of her. Her hands shake, but she forces each crease neat. Tina sits nearby, correcting her when a fold is crooked.

TINA

Do it right. He notices.

Pink paces near the window, tracing the bolts on the frame with her fingertips. She's counting. Memorizing.

Corwin sprawls in his chair, ashtray overflowing beside him. He watches Pink like a hawk.

CORWIN

What's the plan? Stare long enough
and the locks will fall off?

PINK

Every lock has a weakness.

CORWIN

(laughs)
You believe that?

PINK

I don't believe. I know.

Corwin claps slowly, mock applause.

CORWIN

Then let's see how long your
knowing lasts.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

Dinner is rice and overcooked beans. Tina sets plates in front of them. Alison eats quickly, eyes on her plate. Pink stirs hers, refusing to eat. Corwin sips beer, amused.

CORWIN

You'll starve before I let you win.

PINK

(quiet, sharp)
Better to starve than crawl.

Corwin SLAMS his beer down. Foam spills over the lip. Alison jumps. Tina freezes for a beat, then continues eating as if nothing happened.

Corwin leans closer, voice low.

CORWIN
Fire burns out quick.

Pink leans in too, not backing down.

PINK
Not mine.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bare mattress. Alison curls against the wall, whispering into the dark.

ALISON
He'll kill us. I feel it.

Pink strokes her hair, firm.

PINK
Not you. You're seventeen. That's a
noose around his neck. He knows it.

Alison snuffles.

ALISON
And you?

Pink stares at the ceiling, jaw tight.

PINK
I'll deal with me later. First we
get you out.

Alison buries her face in Pink's shoulder. Pink's eyes blaze in the dark.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Through the wall, Corwin's voice drifts.

CORWIN (O.S.)
The little one's easy. The other-
too wild.

TINA (O.S.)
Then what?

CORWIN (O.S.)
Then I'll break her. Piece by
piece.

Pink listens, every word carving deeper into her resolve.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Corwin sits at the counter with coffee. Pink enters, standing opposite him. The silence between them is thick.

CORWIN
You've got guts. Guts make you
valuable.

PINK
Guts make me dangerous.

Corwin laughs, leaning back.

CORWIN
Dangerous things break loudest.

Pink doesn't answer. She just glares.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Pink carries a laundry basket. Alison trails behind, smaller loads in her arms. Tina waits at the end of the hall, checking their work like a guard.

Pink whispers over her shoulder.

PINK
Don't break. Not for him. Not for
her.

Alison nods faintly, eyes down.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Corwin flicks ash into the tray, watching them. He gestures to Alison.

CORWIN
Say it. Tell me you're grateful.

Alison freezes.

ALISON
I... I'm grateful.

CORWIN
Louder.

ALISON
(shaking)
I'm grateful.

Pink stands abruptly.

PINK
Don't make her lie for you.

Corwin grins, delighted at the defiance.

CORWIN
There she is. The fighter.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Dim gray light filters through blinds nailed shut. The air is stale with smoke and grease. The small kitchen feels tighter than ever.

Alison stands at the sink, wrists red from scrubbing dishes. Tina dries beside her, efficient and quiet, but her eyes keep flicking toward Corwin. He sits at the table with a cigarette, coffee steaming in front of him. Pink leans against the counter, arms crossed, glaring.

CORWIN
You know what I like about
mornings? They remind me who's in
charge. Everything starts and ends
with me.

Alison whispers, barely audible.

ALISON
Yes.

Corwin cocks his head.

CORWIN
Louder.

Alison stiffens. Her voice trembles as she repeats—

ALISON
Yes.

Corwin smirks, satisfied. He leans back, exhaling smoke. His gaze shifts to Pink.

CORWIN

And you. You sit there, staring
holes in me, like you've got it all
figured out.

PINK

I don't need to figure you out.
You're simple. Fear and control.
That's it.

The air crackles. Corwin chuckles, but his eyes sharpen.

CORWIN

Fear works. Pride doesn't.

A plate slips from Alison's wet hands and CLANGS into the
sink. She gasps.

ALISON

I'll do better. Please—I'll be
better.

Pink spins on her.

PINK

Stop. That's what he wants. He
feeds on it.

Alison's eyes well with tears. Corwin grins wider, enjoying
the tension. He rises slowly, circling behind Alison. He
leans in close, speaking near her ear.

CORWIN

She's soft. Easy. I could bend her
with one hand.

Pink steps forward, fists tight.

PINK

Soft things break fast. And when
they do, they break you, too.

Corwin freezes, then turns toward Pink, intrigued. He sets
his coffee down with deliberate slowness.

CORWIN

Is that what you think?

PINK

That's what I know. She's
seventeen, Corwin. That's a fuse
waiting to blow. One cop. One john
with a conscience. She brings you
heat you can't afford.

Silence. Corwin studies her like a specimen, smoke curling lazily between them. Tina dries a dish harder than she needs to, her discomfort clear.

Alison clutches the counter, whispering fast, desperate.

ALISON

Don't send me away. Please—I can
listen, I can do whatever you want,
I—

PINK

(cutting her off)
Enough. Don't beg him. He already
knows. He's just deciding what
hurts him less.

Corwin's grin fades. He takes a long drag, then stubs his cigarette out in the overflowing ashtray. His voice is calm, almost casual.

CORWIN

Maybe you've got a point.

He lets the words hang. Pink's eyes narrow, steady. Alison shakes her head in panic, tears streaming.

ALISON

No. Please. Don't do this.

Corwin finally pushes back from the table, standing tall.

CORWIN

Maybe it's time she went home.

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

The station is crowded and noisy—voices echo off concrete walls, wheels of suitcases rattle, announcements crackle from a faulty PA system. The fluorescent lights above flicker, buzzing faintly.

Alison clutches a small duffel bag with both hands. Her shoulders are hunched, her eyes swollen from crying. Pink keeps one arm around her, trying to hold her steady as they move through the press of people.

Corwin trails a few steps behind, cigarette dangling from his lips, scanning the crowd like he owns the place. Tina follows him, silent, her gaze down.

They reach the gate. The bus idles outside, hissing as the driver checks tickets. The sound of the engine thrums in the background.

Alison's breath comes fast and shallow. She shakes her head, whispering.

ALISON

I don't want to leave you.
Please—don't make me.

Pink grips her by the shoulders, forcing her to look at her.

PINK

You have to. This is your way out.
Your chance to breathe again. You
don't get to waste it.

ALISON

But what about you?

PINK

Don't think about me. Just run. Run
and don't look back. Promise me.

Alison sobs, nodding quickly.

ALISON

I promise.

The loudspeaker pops and crackles: "Salt Lake City. Final boarding."

Corwin leans against a pillar, arms crossed, watching. His grin is smug, patient. Tina stands beside him, frowning faintly but saying nothing.

Pink hugs Alison tight. Alison clings back, fingers digging into her jacket like she'll never let go.

PINK

You're stronger than you think.
Don't ever forget that.

Alison pulls back, her braces catching the light as she tries to smile through tears. She turns toward the bus. Her legs wobble, but she climbs the steps slowly. At the top, she looks back.

Pink forces a smile, holding her hand up. Alison presses her palm to the window once she finds a seat. Pink matches it from outside, their hands separated by glass.

The bus doors fold shut with a hollow CLANG. The engine roars. Pink stands frozen as the bus pulls away, taillights glowing red until they vanish into the street.

Her hand drops slowly. Her face hardens, swallowing grief with fury.

Corwin steps up beside her, blowing smoke out of the side of his mouth.

PINK (TO HERSELF) (CONT'D)
One down.

Pink doesn't look at him. Her eyes stay locked on the empty street.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is suffocatingly quiet. The hum of the refrigerator seems louder than ever. The mattress looks smaller, lonelier, without Alison curled up on it.

Pink sits cross-legged on the floor, staring at the blank wall. Her fists are clenched so tight her knuckles are white.

Corwin leans in the doorway, cigarette glowing.

CORWIN
Looks different without her,
doesn't it? Quieter. Easier.

Pink doesn't answer. Corwin smirks.

CORWIN (CONT'D)
Don't worry. You'll adjust.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT EVENING

Corwin slaps a wad of crumpled bills onto the table. Pink sits across from him, arms folded.

CORWIN
You bring this much back. Don't
care how. Don't care who. But if
you come home short, you'll wish
you hadn't come home at all.

Pink stares at the money, then at him.

PINK
And if I don't come back?

Corwin leans forward, voice low.

CORWIN

You will. Because no matter where
you run, I'll always be right
behind you.

Pink doesn't flinch, but her stomach knots.

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Neon signs flash. Crowds jostle. Music spills out of every doorway. Pink walks the sidewalk, arms folded tight against her chest. Men glance at her, some calling out. She ignores them all.

Her eyes dart constantly. Every shadow feels like Corwin. Every set of headlights makes her tense.

She spots a TRUCKER leaning against his rig outside a diner. Broad shoulders, lined face, grease under his nails. She takes a breath and approaches.

PINK

I need help.

The trucker frowns, wary.

TRUCKER

Help with what?

PINK

I can't go to the cops. He'll kill
me if I do. I just need a place to
crash. One night. That's it.

The trucker studies her, chewing on the inside of his cheek. He glances toward the busy strip, then back at her.

TRUCKER

You're in trouble.

PINK

(pleading)

You don't know the half of it.
Please. Just one night. No
questions.

The trucker sighs, scratching his beard. Finally, he jerks his head toward the rig.

TRUCKER

Come on. You'll be safe there.

INT. TRUCK CAB - LATER

The cab hums with the steady engine. The dashboard glows faint orange. Pink sits in the passenger seat, eyes fixed on the road.

TRUCKER

Bunk's in back. Get some sleep.
I'll drop you off tomorrow.

Pink nods but doesn't move. Hours pass. The trucker eventually dozes in his seat. Pink lies on the bunk, staring at the ceiling, fists clenched. She doesn't close her eyes once.

EXT. 7-11 - MORNING

The trucker pulls onto a side street near a 7-11 across from Corwin's apartment complex. Pink thanks him quickly, slipping out. He drives off.

She exhales, scanning the street. The apartments loom across the road. She circles around the 7-11, keeping to the shadows.

Her plan is simple: slip in, grab her things, get out before Corwin returns.

She rounds the corner—and freezes.

Corwin stands at the payphone, cigarette in hand. He hangs up, turns—and spots her.

For a beat, neither of them moves. Pink forces a bright smile, walking toward him fast.

PINK

Corwin! Thank God. You won't
believe what happened—

CORWIN

(narrowing)
Try me.

Pink's words tumble out fast, rehearsed.

PINK

A john slipped me something.
Knocked me out. I woke up in a
motel room this morning. Naked. I
got out of there as fast as I
could. Hitchhiked straight back
here.

Corwin studies her for a long, tense moment. He steps closer, leaning down until his eyes bore into hers.

CORWIN

You lie good. Better than most. But
don't get clever with me. Next
time, you don't come back—
I find you. And I make sure you
never run again.

Pink forces a nod, hiding the terror in her chest. Inside, her rage burns hotter than ever.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Silence, except for the refrigerator's hum and a distant TV through the wall. The blinds are nailed, the room dim and stale. Pink sits on the edge of the couch, hands clasped so tight her knuckles blanch.

Corwin paces in front of her with a cigarette, not looking at her so much as orbiting—slow circles, predatory. Tina sits at the table folding the same thin towel over and over, eyes down.

CORWIN

No Strip tonight.

Pink's eyes flick up. She doesn't speak.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

You're going out with a friend of
mine. He's gonna... take the
temperature. See if you're worth
the time.

PINK

You want him to grade me?

CORWIN

I want him to tell me the truth.

He stops pacing. They're close now—too close—his breath coffee-bitter and smoky.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

You like to pretend you're not
scared. Tonight's your chance to
prove it.

PINK

Fear isn't the same as surrender.

Corwin smiles, amused.

CORWIN
You'll learn the difference.

He taps ash into the overfull tray and keeps pacing. Tina's towel creases grow sharper, harsher.

TINA
(soft, without looking up)
He'll be here soon.

Pink registers the words but keeps her eyes on Corwin.

PINK
What's the job?

CORWIN
Job's whatever he says it is.

PINK
And if I say no?

CORWIN
(light, casual)
Then tonight turns into a different lesson.

A long, quiet beat. The clock ticks. A neighbor laughs through the wall, the sound wrong in the stale room.

PINK
You're terrified of me.

Tina's hands go still. Corwin's grin widens.

CORWIN
Of you?

PINK
Of what you can't break.

Corwin steps closer until the couch back is at Pink's spine and there's nowhere to lean. He leans over her, not touching, making space feel smaller.

CORWIN
We'll see what my friend thinks.

He straightens. The pacing resumes. The cigarette burns down to the filter.

TINA
You should drink some water.

Pink doesn't move. Tina brings a glass anyway, places it on the table edge near Pink's knee without meeting her eyes.

CORWIN
Five minutes.

He lights another cigarette.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Same room. Only the cigarette is new. The glass of water glistens untouched. Pink hasn't changed positions, but the tension in her shoulders has.

Tina gathers imaginary crumbs from the table, drops them into her palm, like order could keep the world still.

A KNOCK—three soft raps. Corwin doesn't rush. He savors the moment. He flicks ash, inhales, exhales a slow ribbon.

CORWIN
Be polite.

He opens the door.

A MAN stands there—late 30s, clean shirt, calm eyes. Not flashy. Not loud. The kind who blends into any room and takes it over by being unbothered.

FRIEND
Evening.

CORWIN
Come in.

The Friend steps inside, takes in the space with one sweep, landing, finally, on Pink. He doesn't leer. He measures.

FRIEND
That her?

CORWIN
That's her.

The Friend nods a hello at Pink. Pink doesn't return it.

FRIEND
You got a jacket?

PINK
I'm fine.

FRIEND

It's not for you. It's for people
watching.

Corwin chuckles, pleased.

CORWIN

She's stubborn.

FRIEND

I can see that.

Pink stands. The couch springs sigh. She doesn't reach for the jacket draped on the chair; Tina, unasked, picks it up and holds it out. For a second Pink hesitates—then she slides her arms in. Tina lingers at the collar, smoothing it flat like the impulse to help survived when everything else didn't.

TINA

(barely)

Don't—

She swallows the rest. Pink tilts her head a fraction: she heard.

Corwin steps between them, reclaiming the doorway with a smile that never touches his eyes.

CORWIN

Ten minutes. I want an answer.

FRIEND

You'll have one.

He gestures to the door. Pink walks past Corwin, close enough that her shoulder almost brushes his chest. Almost. It doesn't.

CORWIN

(low, to Pink)

Don't forget—everywhere you go, I'm
a step behind.

PINK

Then keep up.

Pink exits. The Friend follows. Corwin watches the door close, then looks at Tina—who is already looking away.

EXT. APARTMENT WALKWAY / STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The air outside is thin and cooler, but not clean. Sodium lights buzz. The Friend doesn't crowd Pink. He lets the silence hang while they descend the concrete stairs.

FRIEND

You always talk to him like that?

PINK

Like what?

FRIEND

Like you're not afraid.

PINK

Talking isn't the same as fear.

FRIEND

(a faint smile)

There's a lot you think isn't the same as fear.

They reach the bottom. A modest sedan waits under a crooked light.

FRIEND (CONT'D)

Front seat.

Pink gets in.

INT. SEDAN - MOVING - NIGHT

City light slides over Pink's face in bands—neon, darkness, red, white, blue. The Friend drives without the radio. No perfume, no cologne. Clean dashboard. Everything about him says: deliberate.

FRIEND

Name?

PINK

Pink.

FRIEND

That a name or a shield?

PINK

Does it matter?

FRIEND
(after a beat)
Not to me.

They roll past the Strip—noise, bodies, hunger—into streets
that look the same but feel emptier.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
You know what he sent you with me
for?

PINK
To see if I bend.

FRIEND
To see if you break.

He doesn't look at her when he says it. He doesn't need to.

PINK
And what's your answer?

FRIEND
I don't have one yet.

A LONG LIGHT. The turn signal clicks like a metronome in a
slow room.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
You got rules for yourself?

PINK
One.

FRIEND
What's that?

PINK
I leave when I say I leave.

FRIEND
That's not a rule, that's a dare.

Pink turns her face to the window. Buildings give way to low
strip malls, a laundromat with one machine lit, a closed
barber shop with a sun-faded poster.

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - NIGHT

A low, tired diner with a buzzing red sign, two cars in the lot. The Friend parks. Kills the engine. Listens to the cooling tick.

PINK
This where you "test" me?

FRIEND
Change of plans.

He gets out. Pink stays put for a beat, then follows.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - NIGHT

Harsh fluorescent wash. A teenage server wipes down a far booth, not looking up. A TV above the counter plays a game with the sound off. Coffee smell, old grease, lemon cleaner.

They sit in a booth. The vinyl sticks to Pink's palm when she slides in. The Friend doesn't open a menu.

FRIEND
Coffee?

PINK
Pass.

FRIEND
Smart.

He signals for two waters. The server nods without stopping the rag's slow circles.

Silence. The Friend unwraps a paper straw, straightens the bent end like he needs the small, precise task. Pink watches the door, then the windows, then the clock above the pies.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
Most people fill the quiet. You don't.

PINK
I prefer exits.

FRIEND
(a real smile this time)
There aren't many that work.

PINK
There's always one.

FRIEND
(studies her)
That's the kind of sentence that
gets a person hurt.

The waters arrive. No ice. The server leaves without a word.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
He thinks you're a gold mine if you
stop fighting.

PINK
He's wrong.

FRIEND
About the gold or the fighting?

PINK
Both.

He takes a sip of water, sets the glass carefully, exactly on
the ring it left.

FRIEND
You say no a lot?

PINK
I say no when I mean no.

FRIEND
People like him don't hear that
word.

PINK
Then I'll say it louder.

The Friend lets that sit. The clock ticks. A car hisses by on
wet pavement that isn't wet.

FRIEND
Finish your water.

PINK
Why?

FRIEND
Because we're leaving.

He stands. She does too.

EXT. QUIET APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Not Corwin's. New stucco. Pruned shrubs. A pool gate padlocked and posted with rules no one reads. The Friend leads her up an exterior stairwell that doesn't creak, along a breezeway that smells like chlorine and someone else's laundry.

He opens a door with a key. Holds it for her.

FRIEND

After you.

Pink pauses. Looks down the rail at the easy, quiet street. Looks at his hand on the knob. Steps inside.

INT. FRIEND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Soft lamp light. A tidy couch. Framed prints actually hung straight. It's nice without being expensive. That makes it worse.

He closes the door and turns the deadbolt. The sound is gentle. It still lands like a slam.

He walks to a small bar cart. Pours two fingers of something amber into a rocks glass. Sets it on the coffee table in front of her. Pours a second for himself. Doesn't sit right away.

FRIEND

You don't have to drink it.

PINK

Good, because I won't.

He sits. Not close. Not far. Just where he can see her clearly.

FRIEND

He thinks if he sends you with me,
I can tell him how to polish you.

PINK

I'm not for sale.

FRIEND

Everything's for sale to him.
(a beat)
But not to you.

Pink doesn't answer.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
You could make him more money than
anyone he's got.

PINK
I'd set myself on fire first.

FRIEND
I believe you.

He takes a slow sip, savoring it, then sets the glass back
exactly on its ring.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
Here's what I'm going to tell him:
if your heart was in it, you'd be
his best earner. But it isn't. It
never will be. So you'll cost him
more than you'll make him.

Pink doesn't move. Her throat works around a breath she
doesn't trust.

PINK
Why tell him that?

FRIEND
Because it's true. And because lies
are expensive.

He stands. She doesn't.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
Finish not drinking your drink.
Then we'll go.

PINK
That's it?

FRIEND
That's it.

They look at each other a long moment. There's no kindness in
him. There's no cruelty either. Just an unbothered, clinical
honesty that feels colder than either.

Pink leaves the glass untouched.

INT. SEDAN - MOVING - LATE NIGHT

Silence again. The Strip glow grows as they head back. Pink watches the light creep over her hands and leave them.

FRIEND

You keep telling the world no, the world will keep trying to make you say yes.

PINK

Then it can keep trying.

He doesn't smile this time.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Corwin's already standing when the door opens. Tina is a silhouette at the table, unmoving.

The Friend enters. Pink follows, steady.

CORWIN

Well?

The Friend takes a breath like he's about to deliver a price.

FRIEND

If she wanted it, she'd be the best you've got. She doesn't want it. She never will. She's nothing but trouble.

The silence after that sentence is thick enough to lean on.

Corwin's smile is small and wrong.

CORWIN

Trouble can be... instructive.

The Friend doesn't argue. He nods once to Pink—neither friendly nor cruel—and leaves. The door shuts. The lock snicks.

Corwin turns to Pink, all teeth now.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

Looks like we keep our lessons in-house.

Pink stands her ground, breath steady, eyes unblinking.

PINK
Teach me something I don't already
know.

Corwin's laugh is soft and delighted. He steps closer, close enough that Pink can count the flecks of ash on his shirt.

CORWIN
Don't worry. I plan to.

INT. CORWIN & TINA'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

The Friend is gone. The lock clicks. Corwin turns slowly, smoke curling from his lips. Pink stands in the middle of the room, steady.

CORWIN
He thinks you're trouble.

Pink doesn't blink.

PINK
He's right.

Corwin grins, circling her like she's already caged.

CORWIN
Trouble burns out. Or gets put out.

Tina busies herself in the kitchen, clattering plates louder than necessary. Pink doesn't move.

PINK
Then light the match.

Corwin's grin fades into something darker. He steps close, nose almost touching hers. Silence. He laughs, low.

CORWIN
You've got more guts than sense.
Let's see how long that lasts.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

Pink stands in the corner. Hours pass. She isn't allowed to sit. Her legs ache, but she refuses to lean.

Corwin lounges on the couch, smoking, watching. Tina dusts surfaces that don't need dusting, her eyes flicking to Pink and away.

CORWIN

Rule number five. No talking unless asked.

PINK

Then stop asking.

He throws his cigarette into the ashtray hard enough that embers scatter. Tina freezes. Pink smirks faintly, refusing to flinch.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pink lies awake on the mattress, eyes wide open. The shadows seem to press closer. In the next room, Corwin snores faintly. Tina whispers on the phone, her voice muffled.

Pink whispers to herself, steady.

PINK

One crack. One chance.

She clenches her fists, willing herself to wait.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The TV blares. Corwin and Tina nod off together on the couch. Billy, one of Corwin's men, sits in a chair, bored. Pink watches him, patient.

PINK

Billy.

He glances over, annoyed.

PINK (CONT'D)

I need a soda. From the corner store. I'm not going anywhere. Promise.

BILLY

(snorts)

You think I'm that stupid?

PINK

Please. Just one. I'll sit right here until you're back. Cross my heart.

Billy studies her, suspicious. Corwin snores. Tina shifts but doesn't wake. Finally, Billy grumbles, standing.

BILLY
You try anything—he'll kill you.

PINK
I know.

He grabs his keys and heads out. The door shuts. Pink waits, counting heartbeats.

One. Two. Three.

She bolts.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Pink shoves the stairwell door open and races down. Her footsteps echo. The concrete walls press in, the air stale with old smoke.

She doesn't take the elevator. She doesn't risk the wait. Every step pounds like a drum. Her breath burns. She pushes harder, faster.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The stairwell door SLAMS open. Pink bursts out, hair wild, chest heaving. She doesn't look back. She sprints through the lobby, slamming into the glass exit.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Pink explodes onto the street. Neon glows in the distance, but here it's quiet, almost deserted. She runs, faster than she thought she could. Free. At least for now.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Pink walks along the shoulder, shoes scuffed, hair wild. The desert stretches endless on either side, black sky punched with stars. Each car that rushes past blasts her with hot air and dust.

Headlights sweep the road behind her. She tenses, ready to run. A battered PICKUP slows, pulling onto the gravel.

The DRIVER, 50s, lined face, leans across the bench seat.

DRIVER
You lost?

Pink hesitates, scanning the cab. Empty. Just him.

PINK
Just need a ride north.

He nods, pushes the passenger door open. She climbs in, hugging herself tight. The truck pulls back onto the highway.

INT. PICKUP - MOVING - NIGHT

Silence at first, broken only by the hum of tires. The driver steals glances.

DRIVER
You runnin' from somebody?

Pink keeps her eyes on the road ahead.

PINK
Just need outta Vegas.

DRIVER
Don't we all.

He chuckles softly. She doesn't. The silence stretches. Pink doesn't sleep, even when her eyelids ache.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - AFTERNOON

The truck pulls up in front of a modest house. Pink thanks the driver and climbs out, clutching her thin jacket around her.

The door to the house opens. SAM and JANALAINE BOWLER, 40s, her aunt and uncle, step out, startled.

JANALAINE
Lisa?

Pink freezes at her real name. She nods, tears pricking her eyes. Janalaine rushes down the steps, wrapping her in a fierce hug. Sam lingers, worried.

SAM
Jesus, you look half-dead. Get inside.

INT. BOWLER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The room is warm, cluttered with family photos. Pink sinks into the couch, exhausted. Janalaine brings her water. Sam paces.

SAM

Tell us what happened. Who did this to you?

Pink shakes her head, gripping the glass.

PINK

Doesn't matter. I'm out. That's enough.

JANALAINE

Enough? Honey, we need to call the police.

PINK

No cops.

SAM

(incredulous)

No cops? Lisa, you were gone for weeks. You look— Christ, you look like you crawled through hell.

PINK

I don't care. I'm free. That's all I want.

Janalaine sits beside her, stroking her hair like she's five again. Pink stiffens but doesn't pull away.

JANALAINE

You don't have to carry this alone. Let us help.

PINK

You can. By not calling.

Sam and Janalaine exchange a look—helpless, scared, but respecting her words.

Pink sips the water. Her hands still shake. But for the first time in weeks, she breathes.

EXT. THE TROUBADOUR - NIGHT

Neon burns against the night. The line outside snakes down the block, people laughing, smoking, adjusting their clothes before the bouncers wave them in. A hot pulse of bass thuds through the walls.

Pink steps out of a cab. She lingers for a moment, staring up at the marquee. Her hair is brushed, her eyes ringed with faint shadows she can't hide. She squares her shoulders and joins the line.

INT. THE TROUBADOUR - NIGHT

Dark, loud, crowded. Lights spin across the dance floor. The air smells like sweat, beer, perfume, and smoke all at once. Pink weaves through, clutching a drink, scanning the crowd.

For a while, she blends. Music thumps in her chest. She lets herself laugh with strangers, nods to the beat, tries to feel normal again.

But something gnaws at her. A prickle at the back of her neck.

INT. THE TROUBADOUR - LATER

The crowd surges as a band takes the stage. Pink moves toward the bar, trying to breathe. She leans on the counter, watching the bartender pour shots in quick succession.

A voice cuts through the noise.

CORWIN (O.S.)
Never thought I'd see you here.

Pink freezes. Her knuckles whiten around her glass. Slowly, she turns.

Corwin stands a few feet away. Same grin. Same eyes. He looks out of place in the crowd, but people part around him like they always did.

Pink's heart hammers. She wants to run. Instead, she holds her ground.

PINK
What do you want?

He steps closer. Not too close. Just enough.

CORWIN

Nothing. Just wanted to tell you something.

Pink's jaw tightens.

PINK

Say it. Then leave.

Corwin studies her, then smirks.

CORWIN

I always admired your guts. Most girls fold. You didn't. The night you left? That took balls.

Pink doesn't speak. Her chest rises and falls, her fists trembling. Corwin leans in, voice low.

CORWIN (CONT'D)

You won. Enjoy it.

He straightens, gives her a nod, and walks away. No threats. No leash. Just gone.

Pink stands frozen, breath shaking. She turns back to the bar, staring at her reflection in the mirror behind the bottles. Her face is pale, eyes wet—but alive.

The music swells, drowning everything else. For the first time, the chain is gone.

PINK

(whispered, to herself)

Free.

FADE OUT