

Not so ordinary

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INT. LIAM'S LIVING ROOM

LIAM sits at the edge of his seat, elbows resting on his knees, face in his blood-covered hands.

He shakes his head. Sweat hangs from his fringe. Perspiration glitters on his forehead.

LIAM

No, no, no.

The room is sparsely decorated.

Drug paraphernalia litters the coffee table, in front of him. A cigarette still smolders in an overfull ashtray, next to a fallen beer bottle and his friend.

Light from the adjacent kitchen is the only light source that can be seen.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAWN

BEN CARTER(39) sips on his coffee. He looks at Roger(38). Intense.

BEN CARTER

So, there's no way?

Roger shakes his head.

ROGER

We can adopt.

BEN CARTER

Damn.

DISPATCHER V.O

10-16 at 352 South Eighty-Second Street.

Roger reaches for his mic and responds.

ROGER

This is Unit Six. We are en route. ETA two minutes.

EXT. STREET - DAWN

The police cruise speeds up, lights flashing.

INT. LIAM'S LIVING ROOM - DAWN

The cigarette in the ashtray burns itself out.

Liam stares at his blood-stained hands-- shakes his head.

He tries to remove the blood from his hands.

The blue and red lights flashing outside, colors the filthy white walls in spooky shadows of red and blue.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

ROGER

This is the police. Open the door!

He looks up. Confused.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Gets up, looks around.

EXT. LIAM'S PORCH - DAWN

Roger's eyes finds Ben's. Ben nods slowly. His weapon, primed against his chest.

INT. LIAM'S LIVING ROOM - DAWN

The white door bursts open. Roger and Ben barge in, weapons drawn.

Liam freezes bewildered.

ROGER

Put your hands behind your head.

His limbs come to life. He raises his hands - his fingers entangle behind his head - his hair and fingers, intertwined.

ROGER (cont'd)

Get down on the ground!

Liam kneels down, hands behind his head. Roger moves in, slow, vigilant.

Liam lays face down on the filthy floor.

Ben puts his pistol in his holster, kneels down next to Liam, slams cuffs on. He looks at the blood on Liam's hands.

He looks up at Roger and motions to the kitchen with his head.

INT. KITCHEN - DAWN

The kitchen is a sickening yellow, the interior screams "seventies".

A round wooden table fills most of the kitchen.

The table cloth, with the dainty pink flowers hangs skew on the table.

A fallen over cup, separated from the saucer, keeps the tablecloth from falling to the ground.

A bloodied vase lays scattered on the floor.

Roger steps deeper into the kitchen.

A pool of blood comes to view.

Roger steps around the table.

A woman is sprawled out on the floor, a knife clenched in her hand. Blood seeps from a wound on her head.

Roger tries to find a pulse. He slides his hand across her eyes, close them respectfully.

He gets up, talks into the mic on his shoulder.

ROGER

This is Unit 6. We have one deceased female.

An unfamiliar sound draws Roger's attention. He pauses... listens... hears the faint cry.

Roger follows the cries down--

THE PASSAGE, past the first door. He enters the second door open.

INT. DIRTY BEDROOM - DAWN

Roger flicks on the light switch. Life comes to a bare bulb hanging from the roof. Shocked, Roger stares into the room.

ROGER

Oh my God!

He reaches the grimy mattress in the corner of the dirty room and kneels down next to a baby. Instinctively, his hand reaches for the mic.

ROGER (cont'd)
This is Unit 6. We request medical assistance.

Faint cries escape her lips. Blood gashes out from the slit in her throat.

He picks a towel off the floor... presses it on the wound... reaches for the mic.

ROGER (cont'd)
Unit 6. I need that ambulance, now!

DISPATCHER V.O
An ambulance has been dispatched. ETA three minutes.

Roger turns to the infant.

ROGER
(soft and fatherly)
Hang on, little one. Help is on the way.

EXT. LIAM'S YARD - DAWN

Ben leads Liam to the police cruiser... opens the back door of the vehicle... helps him into the vehicle.

The ambulance arrives. Two medics jumps out.

BEN CARTER
(points to the house)
In there, second room to the left.

INT. INSIDE HOUSE - DAWN

Two medics runs into the room. They kneel on either side of Roger.

He hands the dirty towel compress over, rise to his feet.

EXT. LIAM'S YARD - DAWN TURNING TO NIGHT

Ben and Roger chat indistinctly. Different departments arrive. The coroner. Forensics.

The two medics exit the house.

ROGER
I'll be back.

He rushes over to the medics. Reaches them, before they step off the derelict porch.

ROGER (cont'd)
How is she?

MEDIC1
She has lost a lot of blood.

MEDIC 2
We need to get her to the hospital immediately.

Pensive, Roger looks at Ben for a moment.

ROGER
I'm coming with her.

The medics heads for the ambulance.

Roger runs towards Ben, exchange a few words.

Ben nods, squeezes Roger's shoulder.

Roger sits in the ambulance.

Medic 2 places the baby in his arms. A silent nod before he closes the doors. The ambulance starts moving.

EXT. OUTSIDE COURT - DAY

SUPER: 8 MONTHS LATER

Roger and WANDA(28) exit the building on a determined walk. Wanda looks at Roger, holding the eight month old baby in his arms.

She kisses the baby on the cheek. She has a prominent scar in her neck.

WANDA
I can't believe its final.

Roger smiles. He hugs the bundle in his arms and leans over to kiss Wanda.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY - 9 YEARS LATER

Wanda straightens after Roger's kiss. She smiles and looks down at VALERIE (9), who is holding a white pitbull puppy in her arms.

WANDA

Did you think of a name yet, Val?

Valerie holds the puppy at an arms length and looks into the blue eyes.

VALERIE

ICE. I think.

ROGER

Oh, I like that.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

SUPER: 6 Months Later

ICE, weaves in front of Wanda. She strains against her harness.

Wanda follows her with a smile, a spring in her step. She crosses the road.

Patrons look up as they pass the tables in front of the coffee shop.

EMMA, a stately sixty-something woman, with a battle ax demeanor, shakes her head in dismay.

EMMA

(Under her breath)

I wish they would ban these beasts.

Her husband JOHN looks at her across his glasses, balancing on the tip of his nose. Dumbfounded.

JOHN

What is what is wrong with you? Look how friendly she seems.

EMMA

(Snorts)

Till she turns. They all do...
Eventually.

John shakes his head and turns his attention back to his paper.

JOHN
(snorts)
Old hag.

He picks up his cup and sips on his steaming cup of coffee, savors the flavor.

A young couple comes to a stop. SARAH, kneels down, calls Ice.

Ice runs to Sarah, licks her across her face. Sarah cups Ice's face between her hands.

SARAH
Oh, aren't you a sweetheart?

Ice breaks free, showers Sarah with kisses.

Emma shakes her head, disapproving, takes a bite from her cake.

John smiles, turns back to his newspaper.

Sarah laughs, pushes Ice away and rises. She runs her fingers through her hair.

SARAH (cont'd)
She is adorable, what is her name.

Wanda smiles.

WANDA
Ice.

Sarah bends over, and rubs Ice's ears.

SARAH
It suits her.

She turns to Wanda.

SARAH (cont'd)
She is beautiful.

Wanda nods in agreement.

WANDA
She is.

Sarah finds ALEX's hand. She smiles at Alex, who's dark eyes haven't left Sarah.

SARAH
I guess we should go.

Alex smiles at Sarah.

ALEX
If you want to be in time for your appointment.

They smile at each other.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

The school bell RINGS. Moments later the doors burst open, pupils piles out off the doors.

Ice's tail starts to wag... Barks excited.

VALERIE pauses on the steps.

She pushes her glasses up, looks up... searches. A big smile creeps onto her face. She leaps off the steps and runs to the gate.

Valerie kneels down, hugs the wiggly pitbull. Her laughter cuts though the noisy rush of school kids.

She gets up hugs Wanda.

VALERIE
Hey Mom.

Wanda places a kiss on Valerie's head.

MOM
How was your day, Honey-bun?

Valerie's face falls serious, almost sad. She bites down on her lip.

INSERT FLASHBACK

Valerie closes her locker. She looks into the face of AMY, the class bitch and her two sidekicks, Chloe and Sam.

AMY
My mom says your dad didn't want you.

Valerie looks at her in shock.

AMY (cont'd)
She said he tried to kill you and that is why you have a scar.

CHLOE
Scar-face.

Amy and Chloe shares a high five.

A crowd forms around Valerie and Amy. They chime in.

CROWD
Scar-face, Scar-face.

END FLASHBACK

VALERIE
It was OK.

MOM
Did something happen?

Wanda kneels down and holds Valerie at arm's length by the shoulders.

Eyes glued to the ground, Valerie shakes her head.

Ice comes into her view, her tail wags vigorously.

Valerie's face brightens up, a smile creeps across the somber mouth.

VALERIE
Yeah, I just missed Ice. Come, let's go home.

Valerie takes the leash from Wanda's hand, they walk home, unaware of the black Chrysler Escalade following them.

INT. VALERIE'S ROOM - DAY

Valerie sits back. She looks at Ice, dressed in a pink chiffon tutu.

The blue make-up above her eyes in sharp contrast with her white skin.

VALERIE
I am sure you will find that to your satisfaction, Ma'am.

She puts the foot- red painted toe nails- on the table.

She reaches for a summer hat, places it on Ice's head.

VALERIE (cont'd)
There.
(Stands back)
Ready for your tea-party, Miss.
McMullins?

Ice barks.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Valerie enters the kitchen, school bag already on her back.

ROGER

You ready for school, Sweetie?

VALERIE

I guess.

ROGER

Let's go.

Val takes her lunch off the kitchen counter, kisses Wanda goodbye, and hugs Ice, leaves with Roger.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Wanda opens the kitchen door.

Steps in THE BACKYARD --

WANDA

Ice, come on.

Ice comes running around the corner, jumps up against Wanda's legs.

Wanda prepares the harness, looks down at Ice.

WANDA (cont'd)

Sit.

Ice sits down... jumps up before Wanda can fit the harness properly.

WANDA (cont'd)

Ice, sit down.

Ice sits with immense effort, while Wanda fits her harness.

EXT. ROAD TO SCHOOL - DAY

LEON re-adjusts his seat. The red bandanna, hangs low over his eyes. His dark eyes follow Wanda and Ice.

The big pitbull in the backseat wags his tail.

LEON

Calm down, yo. You gonna get us busted.

Wanda and Ice passes the black Chrysler Escalade.

Leon slides down in his seat.

Wanda glances at Killer.

Ice and Killer lock eyes. Time slows down.

They walk past the car.

Ice looks at Killer over her shoulder. Time returns to normal.

Wanda and Ice disappears around the corner.

Leon leans forward and starts the vehicle. He pulls away, slowly. They too disappear around the corner.

EXT. WOODED PROPERTY - RAINY DAY

Old wooden shed, surrounded by trees... make shift dog box next to every tree.

A thin, drenched pitbull chained to every doghouse.

Parked in front of the shed, a black Chrysler Escalade. Next to it a black Cadillac.

INT. WOODEN SHED

Leon paces. Agitated.

LEON

Where the fuck is he? It's the third fucking day this week.

JOHNSON

I don't know yo, he said he'll be here.

LEON

Is he bringing the fucking food? We need to feed the dogs.

Leon starts pacing again.

JOHNSON

He said he is.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - LATE NIGHT

The energy is electric. Everyone talks at the same time. Laughing. Money. Excitement.

In the middle of the crowd, a ring is squared off.

RINGMASTER

Ladies and gentleman, have we got a fight for you tonight?

In the left corner Leon leans forward, holds a black pitbull.

TERMINATOR barks, saliva spatters in all directions.

The crowd ROARS wildly.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)

On our left tonight we have the undefeated, Terminator.

In the right corner, DWAYNE bends over a fawn pitbull.

The dog seems much calmer than the one in the opposite corner.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)

In the left hand corner, we have newcomer Trent.

The crowd CHEERS.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)

Will the Terminator disappoint?

(Waits for the cheers)

Or will Trent surprise us with his brute strength?

SERIES OF FLASH SHOT

Bookies takes bets, money change hands. Smoke, laughter, excitement.

The ringmaster steps out of the ring.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)

Ladies and gentleman shall we get this started?

CROWD

YEAH!

The ringmaster looks at the two competitors and their dogs.

RINGMASTER
Are you ready?

Leon is be over his dog, hands on either side of The Terminator's face. The Terminator barks excited.

The ringmaster looks to the competitor in the opposite corner.

Determined, the young man, bent over his dog nods. He speaks to his dog, whom is straining against his arms.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)
Release!

The two dogs charge. They lunge at each other, mouths open, murder in their eyes.

A woman in a red satin, evening dress, turns away. Shields away the horror with her hand.

Her partner cheers excitedly.

Teeth, blood, eyes...

Money change hands, bets are placed. The crowd goes wild.

Leon paces nervously, shouts words of encouragement to The Terminator.

The newcomer gets a hold of The Terminator's cheek. He yelps.

Leon turns his back to the fight, discouraged.

The Terminator, on his back, kicks with his hind legs. He manages to break free from Trent's grip.

The crowd cheers.

Leon turns back... sees The Terminator up... cheers.

On the opposite of the ring Trent's handler looks cocky.

Roger moves around the crowd. The hidden camera takes pictures of the event, the people and the participants.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Wanda washes her hands and dries them on her apron. Valerie watches her every move. Ice sitting close by her feet. The expression on her face is somber.

VALERIE

Mommy?

Wanda turns to Valerie.

WANDA

Yes Honey.

Valerie straightens up a little. She seems uncomfortable.

Wanda notices and sits down opposite Valerie at the kitchen table. She takes Valerie's hand.

WANDA (cont'd)

What's it baby?

Valerie looks up and into Wanda's eyes. Her hand finds the scar in her neck.

VALERIE

How did I get this?

Wanda looks overwhelmed.

WANDA

You always had it. Why?

VALERIE

But how did I get it?

Wanda looks around uncomfortable. She takes a deep breath.

Two hands cover Valerie's eyes.

ROGER

Guess who?

A smile creeps onto Valerie's face.

VALERIE

The tooth-fairy?

Roger laughs.

ROGER

No, it is not. Guess again.

Valerie giggles.

VALERIE
Is it the Easter bunny?

Wanda, grateful for the break, smiles at their silly game.

ROGER
No, it is not. Guess again.

Valerie smiles.

VALERIE
That only leaves Santa.

Roger laughs. He lets his hands slip from Valerie's eyes and places a kiss on her cheek, then pulls out a chair at the table next to her.

ROGER
You ready for school?

Valerie nods, a somberness creeps across her face.

VALERIE
I guess.

Valerie slides of the chair and collects her schoolbag. She wraps her arms around Roger.

VALERIE (cont'd)
Bye Dad, I love you.

The big man wraps his arms around his daughter.

ROGER
I love you too, Peanut.

He places a kiss on her head, before letting her go.
Valerie turns to Wanda.

VALERIE
You didn't answer my question.

HONK! HONK! The school bus honks outside.

WANDA
We'll talk later Honey. You'll be late.

Wanda pulls Valerie into a hug.

WANDA (cont'd)
Come give me a hug. You must have a good day.

HONK!

VALERIE
(Hugs Wanda)
Bye, Mom.

She scoops her lunch off the table.

VALERIE (cont'd)
Come on Ice.

She hands Ice her lunchbox. They hurry out the door to the bus.

ROGER
What was that about?

Wanda turns to him. Concerned.

WANDA
She asked me about the scar.

Roger, reaching for a cup, stops in mid-air. He looks at Wanda.

ROGER
What did you tell her?

Wanda looks out the door. Valerie takes her lunch from Ice, kneels down, gives her a hug.

WANDA
I didn't.

INT./EXT. LEON'S VEHICLE - MORNING

Leon sees the girl and pitbull run towards the bus. He exits his vehicle. Leans against the fender.

INSIDE-- Killer moans excited.

Valerie gets on the bus. Ice sits on the sidewalk.

Leon calls at Ice. She looks at him, then back at the house.

LEON
Come on girl.

He kneels down, extends his hand.

LEON (cont'd)
Come on. You know you want to.

Ice gives a couple of steps towards him.

WANDA
Ice! Come on, girl.

Ice stops, looks back at the house... looks at Killer in the window of the car, turns, runs to the house.

Leon looks at his watch. 8:32am. He gets into the vehicle and drives off slowly, looking at the house.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING - RESUME

Roger looks at Wanda, intently.

ROGER
We have to tell her Wanda.

Wanda shakes her head.

WANDA
NO! Can you imagine what it will do to her?

Roger smashes his hand on the counter top.

ROGER
Dammit Wanda, rather let her hear the truth from us, then half-truths from strangers, or from the kids at school.

Wanda looks at Roger, big-eyed. She starts to cry.

Roger folds his arms around her.

ROGER (cont'd)
I'm sorry, for losing my temper,
(Holds her at an
arm's length)
but we need to tell her. She deserves to know.

WANDA
I know, but it's her whole life.
Everything she knows. We just can't do it to her.

Roger takes Wanda's face between his hands.

ROGER
Hey, we have raised a beautiful and strong girl. She'll be alright,
(Takes a seat)
and if she isn't... we'll handle it.

Wanda allows Roger to pull her into a hug. She lays her head on his chest. She nods, in agreement, tears slowly making their way down her face.

WANDA

Maybe you are right. I noticed she is not as happy to go to school, lately. It was worrying me.

Roger places a kiss on top of Wanda's curly hair. Love for her radiates from him.

ROGER

I am working a late shift today. We can tell her after school.

Wanda nods. She loosens Roger's grip and looks into his eyes.

WANDA

Do you have any idea how much I love you?

ROGER

Well, you'll just have to proof it Mrs. McMullins.

He kisses Wanda in the neck and giggles as he starts to steer her to the bedroom. Wanda happily obliges.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Leon looks at his watch again.

LEON

Anytime now.

He straightens from leaning against the fender of his Escalade. He opens the door, grabs a hold of Killer's leash. Eagerly, Killer jumps out of the vehicle.

Leon looks at his watch again. Then up and down the tree-lined street.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The door closes. Wanda checks to see if it is locked.

WANDA

You ready, girl?

Ice barks excitedly.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Leon looks at his watch... grins.

LEON
Right on time.

He rubs Killer's head.

LEON (cont'd)
You ready, boy?

Killer barks.

LEON (cont'd)
Let's go see what she's made off.

Leon takes a hold of the lead and heads around the corner, purposely bumps into Wanda and Ice.

LEON (cont'd)
Oh, I'm so sorry.

Wanda recovers from the initial shock. She tucks on Ice's lead to bring her closer.

WANDA
It's alright. No harm done.

Wanda looks at Killer. Leon holds Killer back.

LEON
Hey yo, give the ladies some space man. What's wrong with you, yo?

He looks down at Killer. He shivers with excitement.

Leon tucks on the lead.

LEON (cont'd)
Come on yo, sit down.

Killer sits down obediently.

LEON (cont'd)
Sorry about that. He gets a little excited at times.

Wanda looks at the big brown dog.

WANDA
He is beautiful.

Leon motions to Ice.

LEON

Thanks, but so is yours. How old is she? She looks young.

Wanda looks at Ice, who reaches to Killer. Wanda tucks the lead.

WANDA

Ice. Leave him alone.

She turns to Leon.

WANDA (cont'd)

She is 7 months.

Leon kneels down and extends a hand to Ice. She smells, hesitantly, turns her attention to Killer.

LEON

She fixed?

WANDA

Not yet. She is booked to go soon.

Wanda looks at the time. Leon notices and straighten up. He looks at Killer.

LEON

Come boy, let's not keep the ladies any longer. They seem to be in a hurry.

Killer reacts immediately. Wanda looks apologetic.

WANDA

Sorry, I didn't mean to be rude. We need to fetch my daughter from school.

Leon nods in understanding.

LEON

All good, we should be on our way too. It was nice meeting you and... Ice.

Wanda smiles.

WANDA

You really have a beautiful dog.

Leon smiles.

LEON
Yeah, he's alright. He's a good boy.

Wanda walks off... glances over her shoulder at Leon still standing there, with the big brown dog.

Leon kneels down and talks to Killer.

LEON (cont'd)
Well, yo, looks like we found you a pretty new bitch, if we quick about it.

He gets up, walks back the way he came. His hand slides across the slats of the wooden fence.

He stops, backs up a step, has a quick look around, feels the loose slat again.

A smile plays on the corner of his mouth.

LEON (cont'd)
Well would ya know. Ice must have slipped out.

He laughs, lets Killer into the back seat. He drives off.

INT. WOODEN SHED - DAY

Leon puts a puppy back in the litter box and picks up another.

He lifts the lips to look at the teeth and smiles when the pup growls. He turns the puppy to see the sex. It's a boy.

LEON
Hands off this one. He's mine.

He ties a ribbon around the neck of the pup and puts it back in the litter box.

Johnson nods, shifts the ever-present match from one side of his mouth to the other.

JOHNSON
It's a good litter... should get good money for the pups.

LEON
I found a new bitch. We need to prepare, will bring her home soon.

Johnson looks at Leon with renewed attention.

JOHNSON
She a fighter?

Leon shakes his head.

LEON
A pet... awesome specimen. Pure
white, blue eyes... Gorgeous man.

JOHNSON
When?

Leon paces agitated.

LEON
I don't know man, soon as I can lay
my hands on her.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Valerie kneels down. Ice kisses her vigorously. Valerie's happy laughter audible above the school yard bustle.

Valerie gets up, hugs Wanda. They start the walk home, Wanda's arm across her shoulder.

Valerie chats indistinctly with Wanda. Ice walks in front of them, smells at everything.

INT. VALERIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wanda quietly peeks into the half-open door.

On the bed, Valerie sleeps peacefully, her arms stretched across the pitbull, sleeping on the covers.

Wanda smiles silently, she tucks on the duvet, places a soft kiss on Valerie's head and rubs Ice's head.

WANDA
Good night girls, sweet dreams.

She switches the light off. The moonlight falls over the girl and her dog.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Valerie takes her lunch tin from Ice. She hugs the pitbull and gets on the bus.

The buss rides off. Valerie waves and blows kisses at Ice, on the sidewalk.

The buss drives past the black Dodge Escalade parked on the side of the road. Inside the vehicle Leon looks at his watch. 8:33 am.

LEON
Right on time.

He looks at Killer.

LEON (cont'd)
You ready to do this yo?

Killer barks excitedly.

LEON (cont'd)
Let's do this.

He opens the door and lets the dog out. They walk up the street.

At the loose slat, Leon kneels down... pretends to fasten a shoelace, glances around.

When sure no one is watching, he slip the blade of a flip-knife in, loosens the slat completely.

Satisfied, he walks back to the Escalade and gets in.

LEON (cont'd)
Looks like we will have company tonight.

The big dog barks excitedly.

Leon rubs Killer's ears.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Wanda slips her bag across her shoulder. She looks down at Ice.

WANDA
No girl, you have to stay, I won't be long, I promise.

The door closes. Wanda walks down the footpath leading to the street.

Inside the house, Ice gets up, she turns around, runs to the kitchen, through the doggy door and into the back garden.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Leon straightens up in his seat. Attention on Wanda, leaving the house.

LEON

Oh yeah... There we go.

Wanda walks past the black vehicle without noticing Leon in the driver seat.

He watches her walk past. He sinks back in his seat, adjusts the rear-view mirror. He watches her in the mirror until she disappears from view.

He sits up, looks through the back window. He can no longer see Wanda. He takes the leash, from the passenger seat and turns to Killer.

LEON (cont'd)

You wait here yo, I'm gonna get you that bitch.

Leon gets out the vehicle. He walks to the loose slat and slips it to the side.

Ice notices and runs to the opening, curious. Leon puts his hand through.

Ice smells his hand, recognizes the smell. She wags her tail.

LEON (cont'd)

That's a good girl. Come now.

He slips the leash around her neck and helps her through the gap.

LEON (cont'd)

That's a good girl.

He leads Ice to the vehicle, opens the passenger door and allows her to jump in. He closes the door behind her. They disappear down the tree-lined street.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The front door closes.

WANDA

Ice, I'm back.

Wanda waits for the sound of dog steps on the floor.

WANDA (cont'd)
Ice?

Nothing.

WANDA (cont'd)
Ice! Come on baby, where are you?
Ice?

Wanda starts to panic, she searches the house, calling Ice.
Nothing. More frantic she opens the kitchen door.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Wanda barges into the backyard.

WANDA (cont'd)
Ice? Come on girl.

Wanda pauses... inspects the loose slat shifted to the side...shocked.

WANDA (cont'd)
(Frantic)
No, no, no, no, no. Ice? ICE!

Wanda runs into the house.

EXT. WOODED PROPERTY - DAY

Leon ensures the chain and collar is properly secured. He gets up and turns to Johnson.

JOHNSON
She's a fucking beaut.

Leon looks pleased.

LEON
Told ya man, she's a babe.

He looks back at the pitbull fighting against the heavy chain.

JOHNSON
I wonder if she will perform.

LEON
She better, if she doesn't perform,
she'll be fucking bait.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Wanda dials a number on her phone... urges Roger to answer.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Papers are strewn about the desk, files are piled up on one side. A phone rings.

Roger pads down the papers, trying to locate the phone, hidden underneath the mountain of paperwork.

ROGER

Hey Honey.

INTERCUT WITH WANDA AND ROGER

WANDA

(Frantic)

Roger, you have come home, she's gone, I can't find her anywhere.

Roger gets up, worried immediately.

ROGER

Val?

Wanda shakes her head.

WANDA

Oh my God, Val. How am I going to tell her?

Roger sits down again.

ROGER

Wanda you not making sense.

Wanda takes a deep breath, trying to calm herself down.

WANDA

Ice, I can't find her. I went out and when I came back, she was gone.

Still worried, Roger relaxes a little.

ROGER

Did you look outside?

WANDA

Of course I looked outside. I looked everywhere... there is a loose slat in the fence. I searched around the neighborhood. I can't find her.

She starts crying.

WANDA (cont'd)
What will I tell Valerie? She will be devastated.

ROGER
Don't worry, we'll find her. Make posters and contact the Humane Society and the pound.

WANDA
I'll get on it right away.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Wanda envelopes the crying Valerie into her arms.

WANDA
Don't worry honey... we will find her. Dad is looking for her.

Teary eyes look up to Wanda, a sob shakes through her body.

VALERIE
But what if we don't. What if we never find her. She must be so scared... we are the only family she knows.

Wanda kneels down, she takes a gentle hold on Valerie's arms. She takes a deep breath to calm herself.

WANDA
Honey, I know you are upset, but right now we need to focus on the positive and that is the hope that we will find her.

Wanda gets up.

WANDA (cont'd)
Come, we need to be strong. We have to put these posters up.

Valerie nods slips her hand into Wanda's.

VALERIE
Do you think we'll find her?

Wanda looks down at Valerie and smiles.

WANDA
We will try our best.

INT. VALERIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

A poster with a picture of Ice lies on the bedside table... Valerie's thick frames glasses lying on top of it.

Valerie is lying on her side, clenching a pillow. She is crying softly.

INT. WOOD SHED - NIGHT

Leon circles a third ad in the newspaper. It reads: Cute Jack Russel cross puppies, free to good home. Loves kids.
Contact Pete followed by a contact number.

He looks up at Johnson, also reading through the swap columns.

LEON
You finding any?

JOHNSON
Yeah... lots of kittens... a dachshund...

LEON
Good. We need bait. I want Ice on the jenny this week.

JOHNSON
Yeah. I wanna see what that bitch gonna do. I'll make the calls. We can pick up in the mornin'?

Leon nods in agreement.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Wanda places the phone back in its base. She turns to face Roger and Valerie's anxious eyes. She shakes her head.

WANDA
Nothing.

Valerie starts to cry.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Valerie barges from the school doors. She pauses for a moment, searches for Wanda. Her happy demeanor changes.

Wanda kneels down in front of Valerie, tries to hug her.

Valerie swats her arms away.

Doleful, they walk home. Valerie wipes tears from her cheek.

INT. VALERIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Valerie kneels in front of her bed. Hands folded in prayer. The curtains dance in the slight breeze, the moon paints the room a pale shade of blue.

VALERIE

Dear God, please bring Ice home.
Lord, you know I don't have many
friends. Please don't take away the
one that I have. If I promise to be
good, will you bring her home?

Frozen in the door, Wanda's eyes well up. She takes a deep breath and walks into the room. She sits down next to Valerie and takes her hands.

WANDA

(Fighting back
tears)

Val, honey, please don't think that
you did anything wrong. Ice isn't
missing because of anything you did
or didn't do.

VALERIE

Why did she go away then?

WANDA

I don't know, Honey.

Valerie looks up at Wanda.

VALERIE

Do you think we will find her?

Wanda looks at the moon, closes her eyes for a moment.

WANDA

I hope so. We just have to keep the
faith.

EXT. WOODED PROPERTY - NIGHT

The wind howls through the trees on the property. Every tree has a makeshift shelter and dog chained to it.

Some of the dogs barks at the wind, some howls.

Ice lays curled up in front of her shelter, she shivers. She looks up at the moon. Tucks her head in... shivers. Her eyes close... shivers.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Wanda turns to Roger and hands him a cup of coffee.

Roger glances at Wanda.

ROGER
We cannot lose hope.

WANDA
It's been 5 days.

EXT. WOODED PROPERTY - DAY

Leon stares at Ice, a far off look in his eyes. He looks up as Johnson joins him.

JOHNSON
How do you want to do this?

LEON
Undertaker.

Johnson looks up in shock.

JOHNSON
Undertaker...? You sure?

Leon nods slowly, deliberate.

LEON
I have feeling about her. She reminds me of Athena.

JOHNSON
The bitch that took out the Don's dame?

Johnson takes another look at Ice. He nods in affirmation.

JOHNSON (cont'd)
You might be right, yo, there is
resemblance. Those eyes... I'll never
forget those fucking eyes... They use
to creep the fuck out of me.

Johnson walks away. Moments little later, he returns with a
conditioned, huge black and white pitbull on a leash.
Undertaker strains on his leash.

Johnson looks at Leon, his dark eyes, brooding.

JOHNSON (cont'd)
You sure you want to do this?

Leon nods.

LEON
Yeah, let's see what this princess is
made off.

Leon steps a little back.

LEON (cont'd)
Let's do it man. Set him loose.

Undertaker charges.

She cowers and strains on her chain. The chain pulls tight,
Ice falls face in the ground.

Undertaker rushes closer, teeth exposed, slobber flying in
all directions.

Ice yelps, turns her butt towards Undertaker, protecting
herself.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Amy walks behind Valerie.

AMY
Hey Scar-face!

Valerie ignores Amy, walks o, trying to avoid Amy and her
sidekicks

AMY (cont'd)
(Taunting)
I'm talking to you.

Valerie walks faster.

AMY (cont'd)

If I was as ugly as you, I'd kill myself. Save my dad the trouble of having to try again.

Chloe and Sam giggles, share a hi-five, feeding of each other's vindictiveness.

Valerie pauses for a moment, clenches her jaw, continues walking.

AMY (cont'd)

(Grabs Valerie's shoulder)

Even your dog ran away, coz she couldn't stand the sight of you.

Valerie turns on her heels, grabs Amy's shoulders and head-butts her.

The momentum still in her favor, she pushes Amy, who falls on her back. A crowd quickly gathers... starts chanting.

CROWD

Fight! Fight! Fight!

Valerie doesn't let the opportunity slip, jumps on Amy, pins her to the ground.

Amy grabs a hold of Valerie's ponytail and pulls. Valerie with her head tilted starts to scratch.

CROWD (cont'd)

Fight! Fight!

Mr. Simpson, a forty-something, partly bald, history teacher, separates the girls.

MR. SIMPSON

Come on, girls. Break it up!

He grabs a hold of both girls, tries to keep them apart.

They reach across his expanding waistline to get back at each other.

MR. SIMPSON (cont'd)

I said, break it up.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Wanda stares at the ringing phone, she picks it up, her hand shaking.

WANDA
Hello?
(Beat)
It is her.
(Beat)

Her hand raises to her mouth in shock.

WANDA (cont'd)
Oh, my word... Thank you, I'll be
there shortly.

Wanda replaces the phone, grabs her bag, slips the body strap across her shoulder and rushes out the door.

INT. WAITING ROOM, PRINCIPAL OFFICE - DAY

Amy sits forward and glares at Valerie, on the opposite side of the pot-plant. She sits back when Wanda enters.

Wanda looks around and sees Valerie. She rushes to her.

WANDA
Baby, what happened?

Valerie pulls away from Wanda.

VALERIE
Nothing.

A door opens behind Wanda.

The PRINCIPAL (41) appears behind Wanda.

PRINCIPAL
Mrs. McMullins?

Wanda turns to face the principal. She steps forward, extends a hand.

WANDA.
Yes.

PRINCIPAL
(Shakes Wanda's hand)
I am principal Matthews.

He motions to his office.

PRINCIPAL (cont'd)
Let's chat in here.

Wanda looks back at Valerie.

WANDA
I'll be right back, Baby. Will you
be, OK?

Valerie looks at Wanda and nods, then turns her eyes to the ground.

Amy mimics Wanda with a pulled face.

AMY
I'll be right back.

INT. PRINCIPAL OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Matthews looks at Wanda, he nods understanding.

PRINCIPAL
I understand that she has a difficult time, but we cannot condone such behavior.

WANDA
Agreed, but did you speak to her? Did you ask her happened?

Mr. Matthews adjusts the papers on his desk.

PRINCIPAL
Amy said that Valerie attacked her... Witnesses confirmed it to be true.

Wanda looks at the man in front of her.

WANDA
And what did Valerie say?

Mr. Matthews fiddles with his papers, uncomfortably.

WANDA (cont'd)
So?

PRINCIPAL
Nothing... She hasn't said a word.

Wanda gets up. Waits for Mr. Matthews to walk around his desk.

WANDA
I will talk to her... get behind this.

PRINCIPAL
I'd appreciate that Mrs. McMullins.

Wanda opens the door. Valerie straightens up in her chair.

WANDA
Come on, Baby. Let's go.

She holds a hand out to Valerie. They leave the office together.

Amy glares at them, mimics vindictive.

AMY
Come on, Baby.

EXT. WOODED PROPERTY - DAY

Gobsmacked, Johnson and Leon stares at Ice.

JOHNSON
I can't fucking believe it.

He looks down at Undertaker, panting next to him, his black-and-white coat, bloodstained.

LEON
I told ya, I have a feeling about her.

They turn around, lead Undertaker away.

INT. McMULLINS LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Wanda sits opposite Valerie.

Valerie wipes her tears with the back of her hand. Her glasses clamped in her hand, on her lap.

WANDA
Tell me what happened.

Valerie fights the tears that well up in her eyes, looks at her feet. She shakes her head.

VALERIE
Nothing

Wanda sighs.

WANDA
Sweetie, I am not angry with you. I'm trying to understand what happened...

Valerie starts crying again. Lashes out.

VALERIE

She started it... I tried to walk away... I did. Dad always tells me to walk away... but she wouldn't stop, she just carried on and on.

WANDA

Carried on about?

She stares Wanda in the eye. Deviant. Angry.

VALERIE

She said was ugly...and that is why Ice ran away.

Wanda looks shocked.

WANDA

What else did she say?

Valerie nods.

VALERIE

She said I should kill myself and save Dad the trouble of having to try again.

She starts crying.

Wanda tries to hug her.

Valerie resists, she looks at Wanda.

VALERIE (cont'd)

(Sobbing)

Is it true Mom? Did Dad try to kill me?

Wanda shakes her head slowly, breathes deeply.

WANDA

It's not like that?

Valerie looks up in shock.

VALERIE

What do you mean it's not like that?

Wanda puts a comforting hand on Valerie's shoulder.

WANDA

Maybe it is time need to have a talk.

VALERIE

You mean it's true? He wanted to kill me?

Wanda sighs... gently turns Valerie's face towards her.

WANDA

I will tell you everything... but I will do it on one condition only.

Valerie sits forward, eyes on Wanda.

WANDA (cont'd)

You have to listen to the end... Deal?

Valerie nods eagerly.

WANDA (cont'd)

Your Dad and I, wanted a baby of our own.

She gently plays with Valerie's long blonde hair.

WANDA (cont'd)

When I didn't fall pregnant... we went to see a doctor... doctors... I couldn't have children...

Wanda shifts her position to face Valerie.

WANDA (cont'd)

One night, Dad was called out to a scene... Later, he phoned me from the hospital.

Valerie plays with a strand of her hair.

The front door opens. Roger steps inside, his black uniform, stretching a little across his waist.

Valerie jumps up, runs to Roger, hugs him.

ROGER

Hey Pumpkin, how was your day?

Her eyes avoid his.

VALERIE

(Embarrassed)

I got into a fight.

Roger's meets Wanda's eyes. She confirms with a silent nod.

WANDA

Why don't you go sit. I'll pour
something to drink?

Valerie takes his hand and leads him to the living room.

VALERIE

Did you find out anything about Ice,
Daddy?

Roger shakes his head.

ROGER

I'm sorry, Val.

He looks into her eyes.

ROGER (cont'd)

What was the fight about?

VALERIE

Amy... She said some things... I got
angry.

She stares into Roger's eyes.

VALERIE (cont'd)

But I did try to walk away... I did..

She just wouldn't stop...

(eyes wells up)

I couldn't stop. I was too angry.

Wanda enters the living room, tray with steaming cups in her hands.

WANDA

I was just telling Valerie, about
that night...

She takes his hand.

WANDA (cont'd)

After the trouble at school today, I
realized that you were right.

Wanda takes a sip from her cup.

Roger nods.

Valerie looks at Roger.

VALERIE

What happened at the call out?

Roger cleans his throat. He takes a deep breath. Releases it slowly, mentally preparing himself for the conversation.

ROGER
Dispatch said it was domestic disturbance... it was so much worse.

Valerie looks at Roger with interest.

VALERIE
What happened, Daddy?

ROGER
We were the first on the scene. We knocked on the door, no one opened. We forced the door open...

INSERT BACK FLASH

- Ben and Roger enters Liam's house.
- Liam cuffed.
- Deceased woman, knife in hand on kitchen floor.
- Roger sees Valerie, bleeding.
- Roger holds Valerie in ambulance.

END FLASH BACK

ROGER (cont'd)
When we got to the hospital, I phoned Mom. She rushed there immediately.

Wanda looks at Val, who is listening with intent.

WANDA
We loved you from that very first moment we laid eyes on you.

Roger nods in agreement.

WANDA (cont'd)
You came to brighten up our lives, and you still do... everyday.

Valerie looks at her parents.

VALERIE
So, Amy was right. My dad did want to kill me?

Roger sits up. He pulls Valerie closer to him. She fight him off.

ROGER
Honey, no. We don't know what happened.

Valerie nods, a sad expression on her face.

VALERIE
Why didn't you tell me?

ROGER
We should have...

Valerie nods though the tears. A sob tears through her body.

Roger tries to pull her into hug. She fights him off.

ROGER (cont'd)
Hey, look at me.

Valerie looks up, into Roger's eyes.

ROGER (cont'd)
We may not be your biological parents... but you are our daughter, and we love you.

Valerie falls against Roger's chest.

VALERIE
I love you too, Daddy.

Wanda wipes the tears from her eyes... hugs Valerie and Roger.

INT. WOODEN SHED - NIGHT

Leon looks at the puppies in the whelping box. At six weeks old, they are ready to sell.

LEON
They are ready... The guys can pick them up from tomorrow.

Johnson nods.

JOHNSON
Good, I'll let them know.

He looks at Leon.

JOHNSON (cont'd)
When you gonna start on the Ice-
Queen?

LEON
We still have some kittens, right?

Johnson nods in agreement.

JOHNSON
Yeah, there's a few left.

LEON
We'll put her on the Jenny tomorrow.
She's thinned out nicely. Lost all
that spoiled pet fat.

EXT. WOODED PROPERTY - NIGHT

Ice sits in front of her make shift shelter. She shivers...
glances at the other dogs... lifts her head, HOWLS.

INT. VALERIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Valerie stares out of her window. Clouds partly covers the
moon.

VALERIE
Ice, if you out there, please come
home. I miss you.

She blows a kiss into the night, then crawls into bed, snugs
up to a big soft toy.

EXT. WOODED PROPERTY - MORNING

The dogs strains against their chains. They bark
simultaneously, as Johnson and Leon walk past... Ice on the
lead.

She too pulls on the lead, runs from side to side.

Johnson strokes the little kitten, almost lovingly, as he
watches Leon strap Ice into the cat-mill.

Leon straightens up and takes the kitten from Johnson's
hands. He brings it to Ice's face.

The little kitten spits and lashes out with its claws. This
gets the desired reaction from the frustrated Ice.

She snaps and reaches for the kitten, straining on the cat-mill/jenny.

Leon ties the kitten up, just out of Ice's reach, while Johnson keeps Ice stationary. Leon gets up... pleased.

LEON

Let's see.

Johnson releases Ice.

JOHNSON

Go get 'em girl, go.

Ice runs to get to the kitten, responsible for the blood trickles on her muzzle.

The kitten moves with the jenny. Ice runs faster, frustrated at the meowing kitten that stays out of reach.

Leon smiles satisfied. Johnson nods slowly, his braids sways with the movement.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Wanda looks at Roger concerned.

WANDA

Please tell me she'll be OK.

Roger folds his arms across her shoulders.

ROGER

She is a tough little girl. She'll be fine. She just needs time to work through the emotions.

He breaks the hug and looks at his watch.

ROGER (cont'd)

I have to go. I'll be late. Going to the ring.

WANDA

(Hugs Roger)

Be careful.

Roger nods and steps out off the door, leaving a pondering Wanda behind.

EXT. WOODED PROPERTY - DAY

Ice shakes the lifeless remains of the kitten playfully. She carries it proudly, as Leon leads her back to her shelter and chains her up.

Leon pats Ice.

LEON
You did good, girl.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

SERIES OF FLASH SHOTS

Teeth. Eyes. Slobber. Cheers.

A dog YELPS, falls to the floor. The opponent is upon it immediately. Clamps down on the victim's throat.

In the corner of the pit, an owner celebrates. He calls his dog. The dog breaks, runs to his owner.

In the pit, the opponent tries to get up... fails... lies down, gasping for breath.

Money change hands, some celebrate the win... others mourn their loss.

Roger is horrified.

The injured dog is lifted out of the ring... another two competitors lines up.

Roger's eyes follow, the dog that is being removed from the pit. He follows them at a distance, careful not to be noticed.

A new set of dogs begins their fight.

The crowd cheers, the sound deafening. Muffled by the cheers, Roger hears the feint sound of a gunshot.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Valerie looks at Wanda and Roger. Determined.

VALERIE
I want to see him.

Wanda instinctively reaches out.

WANDA
Honey!

Valerie steps out of the way.

VALERIE
I need to see my father.

Roger nods. His hand falls comforting on Wanda's shoulder. He kneels down in front of Valerie.

ROGER
Pumpkin, are you sure this is what you want?

Valerie nods.

ROGER (cont'd)
I will see what I can do?

Valerie throws her arms around and buries her face in Roger's neck.

VALERIE
Thank you, Daddy.

EXT. WOODEN SHED - MORNING

BUYER 1 picks up the puppy by the skin on its neck. The puppy screams.

He puts the puppy back with the others and picks up another. The pup wriggles, but keeps quiet.

He takes a hold of the pup in both hands and looks at the teeth. The puppy growls.

BUYER 1
Yeah man, that how I like them... Not a whining bitch like that one.

He looks at Leon.

BUYER 1 (cont'd)
You said they Killer's offspring?

Leon nods.

BUYER 1 (cont'd)
(Fishes a roll of
cash from his pocket)
I'll take this one.

Leon takes the money. Counts \$2500, smiles.

LEON
Glad we could do business.

Buyer 1 rubs the head of the pup.

BUYER 1
Yeah man, hope he'll be a chip of the old block.

LEON
He won't disappoint, if you train him right. Keep him isolated. It drives them crazy.

Buyer 1 shakes Leon's hand.

BUYER 1
Thanks man. I'll do that.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Amy steps up behind Valerie.

AMY
Hey Scar-face!

Valerie stops, clenches her jaws, turns around, a cold, determined look in her eye.

VALERIE
(Constrained)
My name is Valerie.

Amy looks at Chloe and Sam, taunting.

Amy, Sam and Chloe look at each other *Oooeeee*

AMY
She speaks.

Pupils start to congregate around them.

Valerie pushes her glasses up, turns around and starts to walk off.

Amy grabs her backpack and yanks her back.

AMY (cont'd)
Did I say you can leave, Scar-face?

Valerie finds her footing, looks at Amy. Cold, emotionless.

INT. WOOD SHED - DAY

Leon pushes Ice towards the attacking Jack Russel.

LEON
Go get him, Girl!

She YELPS when the Jack Russel sinks his teeth into her cheeks.

Anger wells up in Ice. She retaliates... fights back. The Jack Russel screams.

Frustration keeps her going. The Jack Russel yelps, goes limp.

Leon and Johnson's eyes meet, knowingly. They smile at each other. Leon moves in, grabs Ice by the collar.

LEON (cont'd)
Come, girl. You did good.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Valerie walks through the gathering of pupils. A victorious smile on the corner of her mouth, she pushes her glasses up, walks through the accumulated mass around them.

She glances over her shoulder to where Chloe and Sam are helping Amy back to her feet.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

The big knife makes quick work of dicing the tomatoes.

Wanda puts them in a salad bowl, starts chopping some lettuce.

Roger sits at the counter, an uncomfortable look on his face. He cleans his throat before he speaks.

ROGER
I been thinking, I'll take Val to see her father on Thursday.

The knife stops cutting, it is laid down on the cutting board, with trembling hands. Wanda takes a moment.

WANDA
Do you think it is the right thing to do?

Roger nods.

WANDA (cont'd)
What if we lose her?

ROGER
We have to Wanda. It's her choice.
We'll lose her if we don't.

Wanda supports herself on the counter, her head hanging low.

WANDA
I'm scared.

Roger walks around the counter and puts his arms around Wanda.

ROGER
It will be fine.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Valerie and Roger pause in front of the huge building.
Valerie slips her hand into Roger's, looks at him.

Roger squeezes her hand and smiles down at her.

ROGER
Are you sure you want to do this?

Valerie nods.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Liam is seated behind a glass screen. He speaks over the phone in the corner.

LIAM
...and you sure she wants to see me?

Roger nods.

Liam chokes up.

ROGER
She asked to. She had a difficult few weeks.
(Leans forward,
threatening)
Be nice.

Liam nods in understanding.

Roger looks back at the guard behind him. He accompanies Valerie to Roger.

Hesitant Valerie picks up the phone.

 LIAM
 (Emotional)
 Baby?

Valerie looks back at Roger. He encourages her silently.

 VALERIE
 My name is Valerie.

Liam drinks in every detail of Valerie.

 LIAM
 That is such a beautiful name. Do you
 know what it means?

Valerie shakes her head *No*

 LIAM (cont'd)
 It means brave and strong.

Overwhelmed Val just nods. She looks back at Roger again.

He motions for her to carry on.

 VALERIE
 (Trembling)
 Why did you do it?

Liam is taken aback.

 LIAM
 Baby?

Valerie pulls her sweater away, exposing the scar on her pale neck.

Liam breaks down, cries a bit... takes some time to compose himself.

 LIAM (cont'd)
 Baby, I... We...

He shakes his head.

 LIAM (cont'd)
I cannot remember what happened that
night. I know we were high... I
dragged her from your room...we
fought.

Liam shakes his head.

Valerie looks at him. Uncertain.

LIAM (cont'd)
Next, the police busts the door in...
Arrested me...

Liam looks up, he looks into Valerie's eyes.

LIAM (cont'd)
I... I thought you were dead.

VALERIE
They call me Scar-face at school.

Liam gets teary-eyed, looks to the ceiling.

Roger comforts Valerie with a hand on her shoulder.

VALERIE (cont'd)
They say I am so ugly...

Valerie swallows at the lump in her throat.

VALERIE (cont'd)
that you tried to kill me...

Liam shakes his head profusely.

Roger looks down at his daughter, in disbelief. He steps in behind her, a hand on each shoulder comforts and protects her.

LIAM
No Baby, don't listen to them. They
don't know what happened, they
weren't there. You are beautiful.

GUARD 1 steps forward, respectful not to interrupt, but still in need of doing his duty.

GUARD 1
Time.

Roger whisper in Valerie's ear. She nods.

VALERIE
Did you ever love me? Or hug me? Or
held me?

GUARD 2 steps up behind Liam.

GUARD 2

Time's up.

Liam nods, tears line his eyes.

LIAM

I did...

Guard grabs Liam by the arm. He drags Liam to his feet. Liam clings on the phone.

LIAM (cont'd)

Please come visit me again, Baby.

Motionless, Valerie stares at him, a tear slowly leaves her eye and runs down her face.

VALERIE

My name is Valerie.

INT. WOODEN SHED - DAY

Leon and Johnson sit at the table. In front of them, a cold beer.

An ashtray is slowly getting filled between them.

The monotonous hum of the treadmill cuts through the room.

A heavy panting together with the rhythmic fall of toenails on canvas accompanies the hum.

LEON

She needs a roll. Ask one of the guys to bring a match dog.

Johnson looks back to Ice running on the treadmill.

JOHNSON

You think she's ready?

Leon nods.

LEON

Only a small bump, I want to see how she handles herself.

JOHNSON

Cool, I'll ask T.J. He has a youngster he wants to start.

Leon gets up, he turns the treadmill off... untie Ice

LEON
You did good, Snowy.

Ice wags her tail.

INT. VALERIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Valerie is tucked into bed. Wanda sits next to her on the edge of the bed.

WANDA
Good night, Honey. Don't let the bed bugs bite.

She leans forward and reaches for the light.

VALERIE
Mom?

Wanda stops and turns her attention to Valerie.

WANDA
Yes, Honey?

VALERIE
Am I bad?

WANDA
NO, Honey ! Why would you to ask such a thing?

Wanda strokes Valerie's hair. Valerie strains against the gentle hand and sits upright.

VALERIE
When Dad took me to the prison... I looked at him... my father... I felt nothing. I... I didn't love him.

WANDA
Honey, you don't even know him, you didn't even know he existed. You don't have to feel anything.

Valerie looks uncomfortable.

VALERIE
What if I don't like him? Will I be a bad then?

An endearing look crosses Wanda's face.

WANDA
That won't change a thing.

Their eyes meet.

VALERIE
Even though he is my father.

Wanda looks to the window, takes a moment, looks back at Valerie's anticipating eyes.

WANDA
Do you remember the day we fetched
Ice?

Valerie nods.

WANDA (cont'd)
It's like that... Ice had a mommy
before she came to us. You cared for
her, fed her, raised her.

Valerie nods eagerly.

VALERIE
And I loved her.

WANDA
(Nods)
And you loved her... Those first few
days, she whined for her mommy, can
you remember?

Valerie agrees.

VALERIE
Yeah, and I would hold her until she
fell asleep.

Wanda laughs.

WANDA
Eventually, Ice accepted you as her
mommy... and that was pretty special
right?

Valerie's face lit up and she smiles.

VALERIE
It was.

Wanda smiles in agreement.

Valerie yawns. She snuggles back into bed.

VALERIE (cont'd)
Mom... I'm glad you guys found me.

Wanda leans forward, hugs Valerie.

WANDA
I am too.

VALERIE
Do you think Ice misses me?

WANDA
I know she does.

VALERIE
I miss her.

WANDA
So do I, Honey.

She tucks the blankets in around Valerie.

WANDA (cont'd)
Now it's bed time. Good night, Honey.
Sleep tight.

Valerie smiles.

VALERIE
Night Mom. I love you.

Wanda gets up, bends over and kisses Valerie on the forehead.

WANDA
I love you too, Sweetheart.

EXT. WOODEN SHED - DAY

T.J, well-built, ex-quarterback, gets out of his Dodge Impala.

He lets out a brown and white pitbull from the back seat, scopes his surroundings, heads in the direction of the wood shed.

Leon and Johnson await him at the door, they greet with a hug followed by a fist-bump.

LEON
This the one?

T.J moves his sunglasses to the top of his head. He looks down at his dog panting excitedly, nods.

T.J

Yeah, been training him for a while now. He's fucking game.

JOHNSON

Well, let's get to it then.

The three men disappears into the shed.

INT. WOODEN SHED - DAY

Johnson unties Ice. He makes his way to Leon and T.J at the pit.

LEON

Johnson will be referee. You cool with that?

T.J

Do we break?

Leon and Johnson look at each other and then at T.J

LEON

Yeah, it's just a roll to see how she handles herself.

T.J nods.

T.J

Let's roll then.

Leon moves to the one corner of the pit, takes the collar off Ice, bents over her, holds her by the sides of the neck. He looks at Johnson... primed.

In the opposite corner, T.J assumes the same position.

JOHNSON

Are you ready?
(Looks at Leon)

Are you ready?
(Looks at T.J)

GO.

The two men sets their dogs free.

They rush towards each other. Teeth, eyes, blood, yelping, slobber.

RIPPER catches the skin on Ice's neck, she yelps and turns ripping her skin.

**She retaliates
- gets a hold of Ripper's cheek
- twists her head
- flips Ripper to his back and goes for the throat.**

JOHNSON (cont'd)

BREAK!

Leon and T.J steps into the pit. Leon pulls Ice off Ripper, slips her collar on.

T.J comforts his dog, helping him to his feet, checks for injuries.

T.J

That's a sly fucking bitch you got there. She's gonna bring in the bucks.

Leon smiles, nods in agreement.

LEON

Let's hope so, man.

T.J puts his hand in his pocket, fishes a roll of notes out. He hands them to Leon.

T.J

As agreed, Winner takes 5k.

Leon takes the cash, slips it into his pocket.

LEON

You want a beer?

T.J looks at his watch.

T.J

Yeah, why not?

The 3 men disappears deeper into the shed, leaving behind a puddle of blood from the wound on Ice's neck.

INT. POUND - DAY

Wanda waits on the POUND RECEPTIONIST to finish her search on the computer.

POUND RECEPTIONIST

Nope

(MORE)

POUND RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)
(shakes her head)
Nothing. No white pitbulls that came
in.

WANDA
Can we just have a look, please?

The receptionist's eyes fall on Valerie, barely able to see
over the dark wood counter.

POUND RECEPTIONIST
Sure, do you want a guide?

Wanda shakes her head and smiles.

WANDA
No, its fine, we'll find our way.

Two tiny crossbreeds jump excitedly up and down. One barks
excessively.

Valerie's heart melt, she kneels down, sticks her hands
through the bars, rubs the two dogs, eagerly licking her
hands.

They move slowly from cage to cage, giving attention to all
the occupants, mix breeds, pure-bred, big breeds, small
breeds.

When they get to the last cage, Valerie turns to Wanda.

VALERIE
(Disappointed)
She's not here.

Wanda folds her into a hug.

WANDA
I'm sorry, sweetie.

Wanda looks into the sad face.

WANDA (cont'd)
(Hesitant)
How about...

Valerie looks at Wanda expectantly.

WANDA (cont'd)
How about we adopt that puppy that
you liked so much.

Valerie looks to the ground and shakes her head.

VALERIE

No, it won't be right. Ice will come home. I know she will.

Wanda hugs Valerie.

WANDA

I hope so, Honey... I do.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The cheers of the crowds are deafening. Money changes hands.

Undertaker and TRENT, a bulky American Staffordshire, fight in the pit. Their owners pace their corners, shouting words of encouragement to the fighting dogs.

**Undertaker bites down on Trent's front leg -- shakes his head furiously! **

CRACK!

A startled SILENCE grips the crowd.

RINGMASTER

Unbelievable! Undertaker just broke Trent's leg.

Trent yelps... bites into the skin on Undertaker's ribs.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)

Whoa! Would ya look at that? He's not done yet. He's fightin' back.

**Undertaker lets go of the leg --
Bites into the back of Trent's neck --
Trent turns -- exposing his throat --
Undertaker quickly sinks his teeth into Trent's neck --
Shakes his head violently.**

RINGMASTER (cont'd)

Undertaker is not havin' any of it.

**Trent goes limp --
Undertaker loosens his grip on Trent's throat --
Trent fails to get up.**

Leon gets into the pit, secures his dog.

Trent's owner picks up his dog, as it gasps its last breaths.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)
Undertaker claims another victim.

The crowd CHEERS. Money change hands.

Roger moves around. Keeps an eye on the exits.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)
Ladies and gentlemen, are you in for a treat tonight? We have a newcomer.

The crowd ROARS.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)
In the left corner we have Luther...
Luther has won his last two fights in under one minute!

The crowd CHEERS.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)
In the right corner, we have new comer, Snowy. Will she measure up?

CHEERS

RINGMASTER (cont'd)
Are you ready?

He looks at Leon, bent over Ice in the right corner. Leon nods.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)
Are you ready?

He looks at DOG OWNER bent over his dog in the left corner. The man nods.

RINGMASTER (cont'd)
LET'S RUMBLE!

The two men set their dogs off.

**Ice and LUTHER charge--
She folds her front legs and slides under Luther--
She latches onto Luther's throat.**

The crowd CHEERS wildly.

**Ice locks her jaws --
Luther struggles violently--
She battles to her feet--
Forces Luther down on his back.**

The crowd cheers. Money change hands. Owners shout, swear!

**Ice adjusts her grip --
Shakes Luther like a rag-doll --
He stops struggling.**

RINGMASTER (cont'd)
Ladies and gentlemen, the winner.
Ice, with an amazing technique.

Leon celebrates.

The crowd ROARS.

Ice releases her grip on Luther, pants heavily, her white face red with blood. Leon enters the pit, secures her.

Luther's carried out back.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Luther's owner drops him on the ground, kicks the dog --

DOG OWNER
Stupid son of a bitch!

Kicks Luther again --

DOG OWNER (cont'd)
Lost me a shit load of money tonight.

He stomps on the ribs of the dying dog, over and over again.

DOG OWNER (cont'd)
Fucking son of a bitch!

He slams his foot down on the dog's head -- keeps it there, until the gasping breaths stop.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - LATER

SERIES OF FLASH SHOTS

Fangs. Eyes. Blood. Crowd cheering. Money changing hands.

ICE YELPS!

TANK a huge mastiff holds her left front foot in his massive jaws.

The crowd goes wild. Leon cusses, turns away in agitation.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Figures, dressed in black, pile out of two black vans. They wear bullet proof vests and carry assault weapons. Police, written in big letters on their backs.

INTERCUT - WAREHOUSE INTERIOR / EXTERIOR

Ice break free from the Tank's grip -- she fights ferociously, her left foot dangling uselessly.

The **Tank** attacks.

The crowd cheers, money changes hands.

OUTSIDE

The police, in formation, swiftly move in to surround the dilapidated building.

INSIDE

**Ice lunges forward --
She slides beneath the Tank --
He catches the side of her neck in his huge mouth and bites down... trying for the kill.**

LEON

Fuck!

OUTSIDE

The black-clad police, backs against the wall, wait on their command.

ROGER tests the door... it swings open... he peeks in... signals to the rest of the team.

INSIDE

The crowd watches, Ice go limp -- Tank relaxes his grip.

RINGMASTER
Tank has done it again!

The crowd ROARS. The dogs are cleared from the pit.

Leon hands off Ice to his Johnson.

LEON
You know what to do.

Johnson nods.

LEON
Make it quick, Killer is up after
this.

Johnson walks off toward a door, leading outside.

OUTSIDE

Johnson drops Ice on the ground. She YELPS in pain. He
lifts his foot over her--

INSIDE

The Police surround the crowd and the pit... they block all
the exits.

POLICE (V.O.)
(bull horn)
Police! Remain where you are!

OUTSIDE

Johnson freezes -- foot in the air! Looks around terrified.
Sees nothing -- runs away.

INSIDE

Chaos erupts!

POLICE (V.O.)
(bull horn)
Hands on your heads!

MONTAGE - YOU'RE ALL UNDER ARRESTS

-- Police apprehended and cuff spectators and dog owners, and lead them away.

-- The building runs empty.

-- A big white van pulls into the building. Humane Society written on the side. Workers gets out... open the van... take out crates.

-- The dogs on the property are stuffed into crates and loaded into the van.

OUTSIDE

Ice opens her eyes... stares blankly into the darkness. Sounds from inside building reach her.

Hurt and frightened, she lifts her head... struggles to stand... her left foot dangles, helpless in the air.

She looks around, then limps away towards the city. A determined look in her eyes.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Roger sips on his freshly made cup of coffee.

ROGER

45 dogs.

Wanda breaks 2 eggs into a pan.

WANDA

I don't understand how people can do this.

Roger nods in agreement.

ROGER

Money. A lot of money was confiscated.

Wanda dishes up the eggs.

WANDA

Still. Those dogs are living... breathing beings. How were they?

ROGER

Ugh, most of them will have to be euthanized. The match dogs are too aggressive to re-home... and most of the breeding dogs is in such a bad condition... it will be kinder to send them over the rainbow bridge.

Roger shakes his head slowly, as if he trying to get rid of the images in his head.

ROGER (cont'd)

Then there is the losers. A pile of them. Disposed of like yesterday's trash... Made me sick.

Wanda puts her arms around Roger, gives him a comforting hug. She rests her chin on his shoulder.

WANDA

You did good. Thanks to your determination a lot of dogs were saved.

INT. CLASS ROOM - DAY

Colorful pictures decorate the walls. Posters that spell out the alphabet with pictures accompanying it.

MISS. SMITH writes "Oral" on the big green board. Her hair, hangs all the way down her back.

She turns around to face the 30 odd 9-year-old pupils.

MISS. SMITH

Who knows what an Oral assignment is?

A few hands go up. She looks over the eager hands, competing to get her attention. Her eyes falls on Amy, who smiles confidently.

MISS. SMITH

Amy?

AMY

It's like an essay, but it is spoken, not written.

Miss. Smith smiles.

MISS. SMITH

Very good, Amy.

Amy looks confidently around her.

MISS. SMITH (cont'd)
I'm going to give you an oral
assignment. It is due in three weeks
from today.

She looks over the faces of her pupils.

MISS. SMITH (cont'd)
Your topic is "My parents and why I
love them".

Amy whispers something to Chloe and Sam. They giggle
together. Miss. Smith walks over to Amy.

MISS. SMITH (cont'd)
Anything you'd like to share with the
class?

Amy looks guilty, shakes her head.

MISS. SMITH (cont'd)
You had something to say. I want you
to share it with class.

AMY
(Mumbles)
I said Valerie won't be able to do
the assignment... She doesn't have a
real parents.

Some pupils starts laughing, others are shocked. The room
starts to spin. Laughter... room spinning... pointing
fingers... laughing... spinning... fingers... laughing.

MISS. SMITH
AMY! What a horrible thing to say.
Apologize to Valerie immediately.

Valerie storms out of the class, runs blindly down

THE PASSAGE.

The bell rings.

Miss. Smith runs after Valerie. Hordes of pupils piles out
of their classrooms. She is brought to a standstill.

She reaches the doors. Opens them and looks around...
doesn't see Valerie.

She returns to her class. The class in disarray.

Children are squeals, throws paper planes, balls of paper. A boy is runs from desk to desk.

Miss. Smith opens the door and steps into the class, pupils scatter to get into their desks. A paper plane lands at her feet.

MISS. SMITH (cont'd)
Amy, get yourself over to the principal's office. I will meet you there shortly.

Amy gets up, eyes glued to the floor.

AMY
Yes, Miss. Smith.

Miss. Smith turns her attention back to the rest of the pupils.

MISS. SMITH
(Sternly)
I am extremely disappointed.
(Looks slowly from one pupil to another.)
I am going to the office... When I return, I expect everything to be back in order.
(Steps out of the door, looks back)
And not a word, from anyone of you.
Do you understand?

The pupils nod, big-eyed.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Valerie flees out of the school grounds... turns left, runs down the street, blinded by tears.

Ice staggers and falls. Her breath is shallow... labored. She tries to lift her head... Gives up.

Valerie pauses... sprints forward.

VALERIE
Ice? ICE!

Valerie reaches Ice.

VALERIE (cont'd)
Baby, where have you been?

The only movement is the feint tap, tap, tap of the tail...
the slight turn of her eyes.

Valerie cries... she looks around.

VALERIE (cont'd)
HELP! HELP!
(Gets up, looks
around)
Help me.

No one in sight. She turns back to Ice.

VALERIE (cont'd)
Nobody can hear me. I will have to
carry you.

Valerie wraps her arms around Ice and strains to pick the
heavy pitbull up. She fails.

VALERIE (cont'd)
(Breaks down)
I can't do it... You are too heavy.

She sits down next to Ice... notices the breathing.

She gets up... determined, she tries again. Ice whines.

VALERIE (cont'd)
I'm sorry, Baby. I'll try to be more
careful.

With inhumane strength, Valerie starts down--

THE STREET-- turns right into the

THE FOOTPATH-- up

THE STAIRS-- down

THE PASSAGE-- into

THE OFFICE. She staggers to the RECEPTIONIST.

VALERIE (cont'd)
Can you please
(grunts)
call my mom.

The receptionist jumps into action.

RECEPTIONIST
Name?

VALERIE
McMullins, my mom is Wanda.

Valerie's legs buckles under the weight. She tries her best to keep Ice up.

The Receptionist motions to a quiet spot and whispers, phone clamped in her neck, hand over the mouthpiece.

RECEPTIONIST
(Whispers)
Why don't you lay the dog down in the corner over there?

Valerie lays Ice down carefully, sits cross-legged next to her, softly caressing the blood-stained skin.

VALERIE
What happened to you?

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
She is here in the office. She... she has a dog with her... I didn't know what to do... Thank you.

Valerie looks up when the receptionist hands her a little bowl of water.

RECEPTIONIST
Your Mom will be here shortly.

Valerie looks up at and takes the water from the receptionist. She smiles.

VALERIE
(Quietly)
Thank you.

The receptionist returns to her station, leaving Valerie lone with Ice.

Valerie offers Ice the water. Ice doesn't react.

She dips her fingers in the water... lifts Ice's lips... drips some droplets into Ice's mouth.

VALERIE (cont'd)
Mom is on her way. She should be here any minute now.

Wanda rushes into the office. Stops and sees Valerie in the corner. She rushes over... falls down on her knees.

The door to the principal's office opens.

Amy exits. She glances at Valerie sitting in the corner on the floor... walking past her, slowly... she pauses.

WANDA
Where did you find her?

Amy progresses to the door, looks back to Valerie. Jealous.

Wanda looks at Ice, suddenly rushed.

WANDA (cont'd)
Come, we need to get her to the vet.

She gently puts her arms under Ice and lifts her, gently. They head out of the office. At the receptionist's station, she stops briefly.

WANDA (cont'd)
Thank you so much.

The receptionist smiles and nods.

INT. VET'S ROOM - DAY

Valerie opens the door. Wanda rushes into the room with Ice in her arms, legs dangling.

A friendly ASSISTANT, behind the light wood station, looks up, notices the emergency.

Briskly, she steps out from behind the counter.

ASSISTANT
Right this way.

She motions to a room on the left.

INT. SURGERY - DAY

Wanda places Ice on the stainless-steel table, gently stroking her head. Valerie stands close by, watching with big eyes.

DR. STAPLES, mid-forties, dark hair, gray around the temples walks in, drying his hands on a hand towel.

DR. STAPLES
Good morning. How can I...

His eyes fall on Ice, lying on the table.

DR. STAPLES (cont'd)
Oh my God.

He carefully look Ice over .

DR. STAPLES (cont'd)
Fighting?

Wanda looks up sharply.

WANDA
I don't know. She'd been missing for
a while.

She looks at Dr. Staples. Her eyes, begging for some good news.

He continues to look over Ice, he touches the ribs carefully.

Ice yelps.

He listens to her breathing and heart, cleans the wounds and puts her on a drip.

He turns his attention to Wanda.

DR. STAPLES
Her lungs sound clear though there are some fractured ribs. I need to do an CT Scan to look for internal bleeding. She has lost a lot of blood.

For the first time since they entered the surgery, Valerie speaks.

VALERIE
Is she... dying?

Ice starts twitching. It quickly progress into a seizure.

Dr. Staples jumps into action. Calls for an assistant. ROBERT(28) barges in, rushes to Dr. Staples' aid.

Wanda watches in horror. Her hands on Valerie's shoulders.

Dr. Staples grabs medicine from the cupboards, syringes from the counter.

Robert holds Ice down. Dr. Staples administer the injection. The seizure stops, Ice goes limp.

Valerie cries... reaches out to Ice. Wanda holds her back.

Dr. Staples straightens up. Turns to Wanda and Valerie.

DR. STAPLES

She is stable for now, but as you can see in critical condition.

(turns to Valerie)

Can you stay with her, while I speak with your mom quick?

Valerie nods... turns to Ice.

INT. DR. STAPLES OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Staples' dark eyes stares into Wanda's.

WANDA

So, there's no hope?

Dr. Staples shakes his head.

DR. STAPLES

No, no, that is not what I said. I just want you to be prepared. It's not an easy journey ahead.

He plays with his pen, turning it over and over again, between his fingers.

DR. STAPLES (cont'd)

You saw what happened in there. She has serious infection... broken ribs... multiple puncture wounds.

He flips the pen around again. Uncomfortable.

DR. STAPLES (cont'd)

Then there is the psychological aspect you need to consider. You don't know how this has altered her mentally.

He looks at the pen, now sliding it from one hand to the next.

DR. STAPLES (cont'd)

It may be more human to euthanize.

WANDA

No... No, we can't. My daughter... You have to save her.

They get up and walk to the door.

INT. SURGERY - DAY

Valerie talks quietly to Ice. She looks up when Wanda and Dr. Staples enter.

DR. STAPLES
I'll keep you up to date.

Wanda smiles.

Wanda puts her hand on Valerie's shoulder.

WANDA
Come on Honey, time to go.

Valerie hugs and kisses Ice, gently.

VALERIE
We have to go now, Girl. You have to stay here until you feel better. We will come to visit tomorrow.

Valerie looks up to Dr. Staples.

VALERIE (cont'd)
You will take good care of her, won't you?

Dr. Staples smiles.

DR. STAPLES
Of course, I will.

Valerie spontaneously hugs Dr. Staples.

VALERIE
Thank you, Doc.

INT. HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Valerie flies up when she hears the front door. She runs up to Roger and throws her arms around his waist.

VALERIE (cont'd)
(Excited)
Daddy, Daddy, we found her.

The happy smile on Roger's face change to disbelief.

ROGER
(Confused)
Wait! What? Where?

He picks Valerie up and carries her into the living room.
Wanda closes her laptop and puts it aside.

VALERIE
(Excited)
She came to my school.

Roger slowly lowers her to the floor.

VALERIE (cont'd)
We took her to the vet,
(A somber expression
crosses her face.)
but we had to leave her there.

Roger hugs Wanda, who is patiently waiting for Valerie, to finish her rant.

ROGER
Is this true?

Wanda nods, a sad smile on her face. Roger's eyes meet hers. He notices the concern.

ROGER (cont'd)
What's wrong?

Wanda turns to Valerie.

WANDA
I bet Dad is dying for a cup of coffee. Why don't you make him one?

Valerie happily obliges, skips to the kitchen.

Wanda turns to Roger.

WANDA (cont'd)
Ice is not doing well. She is badly injured. The vet wanted to euthanize her.

She looks back to the kitchen.

WANDA (cont'd)
Dr. Staples said if she gets an infection she may not make it.

Valerie enters the living room, carrying an I love Dad cup.

ROGER
Just what I need. Thanks Peanut.

INT. VET'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ice's ribs move up and down, breathing deep. Her foot twitches.

The NIGHT TECHNICIAN, a slender built thirty-five-year-old, sips on a cup of coffee... browses the internet on a computer.

Ice's closed eyes twitch, the breathing becomes irregular.

The night technician looks up from the computer. The clock against the wall reads 3:07. He stands up, stretches.

The movement of the ribs becomes erratic.

The night technician disappears to the kitchen. A moment later, he returns eating a sandwich.

Ice's whole body twitches in distress. The breaths are short and irregular, shallow.

The night technician looks on his watch. He looks to the animal room... takes the last bite of his sandwich.

The twitching stops, the body goes limp. The breathing now, fast and shallow.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Valerie tosses and turns. The curtain floats in the breeze. She tosses again, nightmare ridden.

INSERT DREAM

Black, darkness. Valerie follows Ice walking in front of her. Ice runs to the edge of the light, surrounding them.

VALERIE

Ice, wait. I can't keep up.

Ice her looks at her, turns and runs back to Valerie.

Valerie kneels down and hugs Ice. She straightens up, they start to walk again.

Ice runs ahead, pauses at the brink of darkness.

VALERIE (cont'd)

Ice, you scaring me.

Ice looks back at Valerie, then steps forward and disappears into the darkness.

VALERIE (cont'd)
ICE!
(Beat)
ICE!

Valerie starts running to where Ice disappeared.

VALERIE (cont'd)
ICE! Come back.

Valerie hears Ice bark in the distance. The darkness closes in.

VALERIE (cont'd)
ICE?

The darkness swallows Valerie.

END DREAM

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Valerie screams. Wanda bursts into the room, she rushes over to Valerie and envelopes her in her comforting arms.

WANDA
What's wrong?

Valerie nods, pressing her head against Wanda's bosom. Comforting, Wanda rocks her slowly back and forth.

VALERIE
I had a bad dream.

A lost sob tears through Valerie.

WANDA
Shh, it's alright. I'm here now...
Want to tell me about it?

Valerie shakes her head. Wanda strokes the silky, blonde hair, softly humming a lullaby

Valerie turns her eyes to Wanda.

VALERIE
(Softly)
Ice is gone.

Wanda looks at Valerie confused.

WANDA

You found her, honey. We took her to
the vet.

Frantically, Valerie shakes her head.

VALERIE

It's not what I meant. I know she's
at the vet.

(beat)

She came to say good bye. She is,

(Takes a moment to
fight back tears)

she didn't make it.

Wanda pulls Valerie into a tight hug, blindly staring at the
clock's big red numbers flashing 3:15

The night technician walks to the hospital room, he checks
on a cat in a crate. He lifts the cat out of the crate,
cuddles it.

NIGHT TECHNICIAN

How you doing? Ready to go home
tomorrow?

The black cat purrs. The technician places the cat back in
the crate and make sure it's secure.

He reaches Ice. Stares at her blankly for a moment.

A sadness creeps across his face. He reaches out with his
hand, place it on Ice's side, notices the shallow breathing.

NIGHT TECHNICIAN (cont'd)

Oh no, no, no, no. Baby, you are
burning up.

He gets into high gear, hurried suddenly.

He rushes to the medicine cabinet, ravages through it, lifts
a bottle out, finds a syringe in a box on the counter and a
needle in another box.

He draws the fluid into the syringe, flicks his finger
against the syringe to release the air, rushes over to Ice.

He inserts the syringe into the drip and empties the
contents. He adjusts the speed of the drip.

NIGHT TECHNICIAN (cont'd)

Come on girl, you have to hang in
there. Please.

He kindly strokes Ice's face.

NIGHT TECHNICIAN (cont'd)
I know you have been through a lot,
but I need you to fight through this.

The breathing slows down, becomes regular. The night technician listens to Ice's heart, looks at his watch.

MONTAGE

- Vet checks in on Ice.
- Technician changes drip, clean wounds
- Cleaner wash floor with mop
- Valerie and Roger visits
- Vet administer injection
- Technician cleans Ice's dressings
- Cleaner wipes down cages, wash floor
- Wanda and Valerie brings a new blanket and toy
- Technician cleans bedding, writes on chart
- Ice sits up, wags tail at cleaner
- Vet rubs Ice's head, checks her over

END MONTAGE

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Wanda stares out of the window, lost in thought. The kettle starts to whistle softly, then louder Wanda does not notice.

The phone rings. It brings Wanda back to reality.

WANDA
Wanda, hello?
(nods)
Really?

She continues making her tea, the phone pinched between her neck and shoulder.

WANDA (cont'd)
Thanks, I'll be there in about an hour.

Wanda looks at the phone and smiles, before she places it back on the hook. She looks at her watch... sips on her tea.

EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

The bell sounds. The big doors swing open, learners pile from the doors, happy the day has come to an end.

Valerie pauses on the steps. She pushes her glasses up, searches. Her eyes find Wanda, waving at her. She smiles, makes her way to Wanda.

At the gate, she stops. Tears fill her eyes. She runs past Wanda.

Ice sits on the passenger seat, front foot in a cast, tail wagging.

Valerie frozen for a moment, stares at Ice, perplexed.

VALERIE

Hey Puppy.

Ice wiggles from the tip of her tail to the tip of her nose.

Valerie steps forward, hugs Ice. Laughs and cries. Happy.

Ice licks Valerie's face, wiggling with her whole being.

EXT. PARK - DAY

- Couples laze around on picnic blankets, a young lady leans against the trunk of a tree, lost in her book. A group of young people laugh.

- Valerie skips happily next to Ice. Wanda follows two steps behind.

- A distance away, a young man, plays ball with his Jack Russel. He tosses the ball, the Jack Russel in short pursuit.

The ball falls inches short of Ice, who lunges at the Jack Russel.

WANDA

Ice! NO!

The Jack Russel grabs his ball and runs off. Wanda waves and apology at the young man.

Ice strains on her leash, tries to get to the little dog.

Valerie places a calming hand on Ice.

VALERIE
It's enough now.

Ice looks at Valerie, she calms down and licks Valerie's face, her tail wagging a million miles a minute.

VALERIE (cont'd)
There we go, that's my girl.

Valerie takes Ice's head between her hands.

VALERIE (cont'd)
(Scolding)
That was very naughty, Ice.

Excited Ice breaks free, licks her face. Valerie's laughter cuts through the bustle in the park.

WANDA
Come you two, we should go.

They walk off again, Valerie skipping next to Ice, chatting away, indistinctly.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Ice runs up and down, next to the white, slat fence, aggressively barking.

She jumps up against the fence, tries to get to the little dog, on the other side.

Roger comes out, brings Ice inside.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The white minivan comes to a stop. The bright blue letters reads Julie's dog training.

Julie exits the van with a variety of leashes, a muzzle and some papers. She heads for the house... rings the bell.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell cuts through the house. Ice rushes towards the door, barks like crazy.

Wanda slips her collar and leash on and pulls her away from the door.

Roger looks at Wanda before he opens the door.

Julie extends a hand.

JULIE

Hello, I am Julie. You called about
your dog.

She looks past Roger at Ice, straining on her lead.

Roger steps aside to let Julie in.

ROGER

We glad you came. As you can see, we
need help.

INSERT MONTAGE

- Valerie, Wanda and Julie walk down a quiet suburban street. Ten feet away, a cat runs across the street.

Ice strains in her harness in desperate pursuit of the cat. Julie corrects Ice's behavior.

- A sunny day at the park, Julie teaches Valerie some basic obedience commands to practice with Ice.

Roger watches on, a concerned look on his face.

- The doorbell rings, Julie steps in to stop Ice from barking and storming to the door.

She shows Wanda how to claim her space to stop Ice bad behavior.

- The dog park is quiet, Wanda, Ice and Julie walk is working with Ice on lead.

A small Jack Russel comes running to Ice.

Wanda reprimands Ice before she can react and praises her for not reacting.

Julie congratulates Wanda, satisfied.

- Valerie and Wanda practice the basic commands that Julie has taught them.

Eager to please her loving family Ice excels in these exercises.

- Roger walks with Wanda and Valerie, Ice on lead, next to Valerie.

They pass a woman walking two Yorkshire terriers, the run up to Ice.

Ice shows signs of play.

Wanda smiles at Roger while Valerie praises Ice.

- Julie brings a young Maltese over. She introduces them, allows them free play.

The two dogs run and play, without any incident.

- Ice sits down, a black graduation hat on her head, Valerie proudly standing next to her.

Julie hands her a diploma from Julie's dog school.

Roger and Wanda take pictures.

END MONTAGE

INT. SCHOOL HALL - NIGHT

The stage is filled with trees, a little girl in a turkey outfit and more pupils dressed up as pilgrims.

Every character on stage is trying their best to keep still.

MISS. SMITH

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you, Valerie McMullins with the oral that scored the highest in her class.

The applause is deafening.

Valerie walks onto stage, Ice, next to her. They walk to the middle of the stage, before they stop and turn to the audience.

Valerie search through the spectators. She pushes her glasses up higher, swallows nervously.

Roger and Wanda's eyes meet for a second, proud. Wanda waves at Valerie.

Valerie catches sight of Wanda.

Roger mouths *I love you, Peanut*.

Valerie smiles, then looks at the people with a little more confidence.

VALERIE

Ladies and gentlemen, until recently I was just an ordinary girl, with an ordinary Mom, and ordinary Dad and an ordinary dog.

Valerie looks down at Ice sitting quietly next to her.

VALERIE (cont'd)

We live in an ordinary house, I went to an ordinary school, where I was bullied, by...

Valerie nervously swallows, she looks sideways, her eyes meet with Amy's, before she continues.

VALERIE (cont'd)

an ordinary...

Valerie's gaze falls on two empty seats, about four rows from the front. A yellow A4 paper reads "Reserved Amy Wilson".

VALERIE (cont'd)

girl. That was, until Ice, here, was stolen and I got into a fight.

Valerie briefly looks down at the flash cards, in her hands. She looks up, her eyes play across the audience.

VALERIE (cont'd)

My ordinary life was crumbling under my feet, as I learned that my birth-father was a murderer, and the woman who gave birth to me, wanted to kill me.

The audience gasps. Wanda dabs at her eyes with a tissue.

VALERIE (cont'd)

My Mom and Dad refused to give up on me,

Her eyes play across the audience.

VALERIE (cont'd)

they refused to let me lose hope of ever finding my dog,

The faintest smile crosses her face.

VALERIE (cont'd)
when I was difficult, they were kind.
When I scared,

Valerie's meet those of Roger.

VALERIE (cont'd)
they were there to comfort me.

She smiles as she meets Wanda's gaze.

VALERIE (cont'd)
I put Mom through the ultimate test
when I asked to see my father, she
wanted to be the protective mom,

Wanda sobs, she nods her head in agreement, a laugh escapes her lips. Roger takes a hold of her hand.

VALERIE (cont'd)
but Dad understood. He arranged for
me to see the man who fathered me
(beat)
and murdered my mother.

Valerie slips a flash card to the back of the pile. She looks to her notes briefly, adjusts her glasses.

VALERIE (cont'd)
It was there as I put my hand in my
dad's for reassurance that I knew my
dad wasn't ordinary, he was special.

She looks across the audience, most women now are dabbing their eyes. Her eyes fall on Wanda.

VALERIE (cont'd)
I realized that my mom, wasn't
ordinary either. An ordinary woman
couldn't love someone else's child,
as much as mine does me.

Valerie kneels down and puts her arm around Ice. Ice kisses her cheek. Valerie laughs.

VALERIE (cont'd)
I realized my ordinary dog, was not
so ordinary. She survived a dog-
fighting ring, and almost died,
making her way back to me.

Valerie walks of the stage, while speaking. She makes her way to Wanda and Roger.

VALERIE (cont'd)

That's when I realized I must be pretty special too, because these very special people chose me. They chose me to be their daughter, they chose to give me an extraordinary home.

Valerie reaches Wanda and Roger and pulls them up.

VALERIE (cont'd)

These two people, ladies and gentlemen, are my parents and that is why I love them.

Wanda cries openly, proud of her daughter. The audience rise and applaud Valerie. Ice barks to join in the cheers.