

THE LOST DAUGHTER

Written by

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Based on, THE LOST DAUGHTER by Elena Ferrante

1 INT/EXT. LEDA'S CAR/ RED FLAG ROAD - NIGHT 1

An elegant woman, LEDA 40s, drives on a two lane, sea-side road. Sand dunes and the sea are lit by the moon and the car's headlights. She sweats. Her breathing is short and sharp. We hear the sounds of her breath over the motor.

Suddenly the headlights begin to dim, the sound shifts and LEDA LIFTS SOFTLY OUT OF HER SEAT, as if there were no longer any gravity. She has to tuck her head at a funny angle to see out the windshield. She keeps a hold of the steering wheel to keep from floating away, but otherwise seems unperturbed.

2 EXT. LEDA'S CAR/ RED FLAG ROAD - NIGHT 2

The car has careened into the guardrail off the small road. A minor crash.

Leda emerges from the car. She looks around, dazed and makes her way toward the water.

CONTINUOUS:

3 EXT. RED FLAG BEACH - NIGHT 3

Leda continues toward the water in the moonlight. A RED LIFEGUARD FLAG flaps in the dark, but the sea is totally flat and calm.

Leda studies the warning flag; then walks cautiously toward the water.

She dips her foot in with her sandal on. The leather soaks in the salty water.

She puts her other foot into the water.

Then SHE COLLAPSES ON THE BEACH.

CUT TO:

4 INT/EXT. LEDA'S CAR/ ISLAND ROAD - DAY 4

Leda, looking healthy and vibrant, drives, sunglasses on, the windows open. Her car packed with suitcases and books. She lets her hair whip in the wind.

5 INT/EXT. LEDA'S CAR/SEASIDE APARTMENT - EVENING

5

Leda pulls into a small seaside town. Cottages are packed together along the coastline. She checks the address and parks.

Lyle (late 60s), thin and strong with thick white hair is waiting for her. He speaks to her through her window as she pulls up.

LYLE
Ms. Caruso?

LEDA
Yes! Leda.

LYLE
Hi, yeah, welcome. Was the drive alright? Long way. Must have been backed up on The National Road after Corinth. That can be a tough one.

LEDA
No no it was fine. Have you been waiting long?

LYLE
It's alright.

LEDA
I got a late start.

He moves to the trunk and starts to take her suitcases and books out. She moves to help him.

LYLE
No no let me.

He says it with a kind of desperation, and she lets him. She stops to look around, smell the sea air.

6 EXT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, STAIRS - DUSK

6

Lyle lugs Leda's heavy suitcases up four flights. She follows.

LEDA
Sorry. Those are half filled with books.

LYLE
 (winded)
 Yeah.

LEDA
 Is this your place?

LYLE
 No. I take care of it. For 30 years
 now.

LEDA
 Oh wow.

LYLE
 And a few other places in the
 dunes. The real big ones.

She walks behind him as he struggles up the stairs.

7

INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, HALLWAY/ BEDROOM - NIGHT

7

Lyle unlocks the door and puts down two big suitcases,
 panting and sweating a little.

LYLE
 Please, make yourself at home. I'll
 be back with the rest.

Leda moves around the small apartment. A bedroom. A small
 windowless kitchen that opens directly into the bathroom. A
 living room with a picture window that opens onto a terrace.

A big tray of peaches, plums, grapes, pears, figs has been
 left on the table. It shines like a still life.

Suddenly, there is THE SOUND OF SMALL CHILDREN coming from
 another room. Leda follows it through the dark apartment to a
 bedroom.

MEMORY:

Bianca, 5 and Martha, 3 sit curled in a corner by the bedside
 table. They are barely visible in the dark. Martha has gotten
 gum in her hair, she cries.

BIANCA
 Now you have to cut it.

Martha wails.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry but you do. You shouldn't give her gum, mama, even in the car.

MARTHA

(crying, desperately
unhappy)

No no no no mama no no.

BIANCA

Yes, mama she does have to cut it now or the whole head will get sticky.

A big FLASH OF LIGHT illuminates the room. And we:

CUT BACK TO:

8

INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, BEDROOM/ HALLWAY - NIGHT

8

Leda moves to the bedroom window to investigate the flash. It's from A LIGHTHOUSE IN THE DISTANCE.

LYLE

(from the other room)

Ok, that about does it.

Lyle brings another heavy suitcase into the apartment. He is really sweating now. He tries to catch his breath as he talks.

He moves around the apartment turning on lights. He turns on a ceiling fan, still struggling to catch his breath.

LYLE (CONT'D)

There's a remote for this somewhere. And I'll turn the air on in the bedroom.

LEDA

No no that's fine.

LYLE

It's no problem. And you're gonna want to see how it works. It's got a mind of its own.

He moves into the bedroom.

LEDA

No, I prefer the fresh air.

He turns it on anyway, as if he hasn't heard her. Then he moves back out of the bedroom. He checks that the fridge is on and working.

LYLE
Your breakfast is covered at the bar downstairs.

LEDA
Breakfast in a bar!

They stand awkwardly for a moment. The lighthouse flashes its light.

LYLE
The lighthouse. It's not all the time. Are you...you write books? Or...are you a teacher?

LEDA
I'm a professor. Let me get you a tip.

She goes for her purse.

LYLE
No, please.
(He seems almost
offended.)
Welcome to Kyopeli.

9 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT 9

Leda turns off the AC, pushes back the curtains and opens the window. She takes a breath of fresh sea air.

She turns off the lights and lays on the bed in her clothes.

THE BEAM OF THE LIGHTHOUSE EXPLODES OUT OF THE DARKNESS.
Filling the room with light.

10 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MORNING 10

Leda wakes slowly. She has covered her head with two pillows to avoid the beam from the lighthouse.

11 EXT. PINWOOD PATH - DAY 11

Leda in an elegant hat and simple sundress walks down a beach path. She holds a big beach bag filled with many books, a towel, etc.

Pine trees line the path and she has to walk carefully in her sandals to avoid tripping over their slippery roots.

12 EXT. BEACH - DAY 12

The forest path opens out onto the beach. There's a slatted wooden walkway that ends in an OLD FASHIONED PUBLIC BEACH HOUSE with a worn cafe and umbrellas and lounge chairs lining the shore.

The beach is almost empty.

There's A YOUNG BEACH ATTENDANT who looks up from a big textbook as Leda emerges from the woods.

13 EXT. BEACH - MORNING 13

Leda luxuriates in the calm, clear water.

14 EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON 14

Leda holds a pencil as she reads in her lounge chair, notebooks and books spread out around her. She is deeply concentrated.

The young beach attendant, WILL (22) approaches her. He is lean and darkly handsome, very boyish.

WILL

Do you need some help, Ma'am?

Leda, surprised by the interruption, just looks at him for a moment.

WILL (CONT'D)

You're in the sun. I could help you move your chair.

LEDA

Oh, yes I am in the sun.

WILL

Can I move your chair under the umbrella? I work at the beach house.

It's an odd offer. She studies him.

LEDA

Sure.

She gets up and watches him as he shifts her lounge chair under the umbrella and into shade.

LEDA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

WILL

So just let me know if you need anything else. I'm Will. There's a Nespresso...and ice pops.

LEDA

Ok, great, Will. Thanks.

He turns to go. She watches him for a beat.

LEDA (CONT'D)

(calling after him)

What kind of ice pops?

15

EXT. BEACH - DAY

15

Leda licks her cornetto ice cream cone in the sun; it drips down its shiny paper wrapper.

Suddenly A HUGE FAMILY GROUP arrives at the beach: A man in his 60s with a big belly wears his shirt open over his swimming trunks and carries a cooler on his shoulder. A group of young kids hit and grab at each other, screaming, as they move in and out of the water. A woman, CALLIE, around 40, with a big pregnant belly, spilling out of her bright bikini in all directions, busies herself setting up beach blankets and walking back and forth from the beach shack with ice-creams and bottles of water for the many kids. There is a pack of teenage ROUGH BOYS, rowdy, dangerous. There are grandparents.

They are loud, calling out to each other across the beach, arguing, joking. Top 40 music comes from somewhere.

WILL, the beach attendant immediately jumps to attention and bustles around setting up chairs and opening umbrellas. People call to him from all directions.

After a moment, Leda catches Will's eye. She smiles and gives him a wave.

16

EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON

16

The sun is going down. The beach is still crowded with the big extended family.

Leda is deep in her work. Finally she stretches, and looks up from her books to see:

A young woman, NINA (26) and her daughter ELENA (3) walking hand in hand out of the water, TALKING TO EACH OTHER PEACEFULLY AS IF ONLY THEY EXISTED. ELENA holds A WET PLASTIC DOLL tightly to her chest. They settle on their blanket.

The woman is slim and elegant in a tasteful bathing suit. The little girl quiet and a little sad. They are a part of the big, noisy family but they seem like another species.

CALLIE

(calling from across the beach)

NINA!!! NINA! SHE'S GOT A COLD. PUT SOMETHING AROUND HER IF YOU'RE GONNA LET HER SWIM THIS LATE.

Callie, breasts bouncing, comes running over with a hot pink terrycloth robe and wraps it around the little girl. NINA lets her.

Leda takes out her pen and writes "NINA" in small letters in the margin of her book.

17 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, HALLWAY/ KITCHEN - NIGHT 17

Leda in a towel, wet from the shower wanders into her kitchen. She opens the refrigerator. It's empty.

She takes a plum from the beautiful fruit bowl. As she brings it to her lips she sees that the underside is bruised and rotten.

She picks up a pear; its underside is also moldy and rotten. She picks up a bunch of grapes by their stem and exposes A MESS OF ROT AND MOLD under the pristine surface. All of the fruit is half rotten.

She dumps the fruit basket into the garbage.

18 EXT. BEACH - DAY 18

Leda in a different bathing suit settles at the same beach chair from the day before. She lays down her bag of books and looks for Nina, the young mother and Elena, her daughter.

She finds them sitting under an umbrella. Nina rubs suntan lotion on Elena's body with notable tenderness. Massaging the cream into the little girl's skin. Playfully squeezing the tips of each finger.

Nina and Elena move to THE DOLL who lies next to them on their blanket. They talk to her as they lovingly cover her with lotion.

ELENA

Squeeze Neni's fingers too. She likes it.

Nina massages the tips of THE DOLL'S fingers.

ELENA (CONT'D)

I'm hungry!

Elena suddenly gets up and runs to the beach house cafe.

19

EXT. BEACH CAFE - MIDDAY

19

Leda finishes a coffee at the cafe. She watches Nina and Elena as they play in the sand by the cafe, undressing THE DOLL and carefully bathing her in a green plastic bucket.

Two YOUNG MEN (20s) approach Nina and start to talk her up. She's quiet and enjoys the attention.

A few of the ROUGH BOYS from the family group (late teens/20s) immediately intervene, rudely.

After a few words, the Rough Boys shove the YOUNG MEN, almost starting a fistfight, until the young men move off down the beach.

Leda notices Will watching too.

20

EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON

20

Nina and Elena have dragged their lounge chairs closer to the water. Nina lies on her stomach, in the sun. And in the other chair lies THE DOLL, also on her stomach, same position as Nina.

Elena is at the water's edge, filling a plastic watering can to the brim. She holds it with both hands and totters under its weight as she returns to the lounge chairs to sprinkle her mother's feet with water. When she finishes she moves on to the Doll's feet.

ELENA

Is that enough, Mama? Want more?

NINA

Yes please. I want a lot more.

ELENA
Want more Neni?

NINA
(in a high pitched tone,
voicing the doll)
Oh yes please Elena. It's so very,
very hot today.

Elena moves up her mother's body with the water, dousing her legs, her hips, back. Then she moves to the Doll's legs, then hips, then back.

Leda watches, rapt.

Suddenly Leda gets up and moves quickly to the cafe.

21 EXT. BEACH CAFE - AFTERNOON 21

Leda steadies herself on the bar.

LEDA
Will, I'd love a glass of water.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. DIFFERENT BEACH/MEMORY - DAY 22

MEMORY:

A YOUNG VERSION OF LEDA (28) sits with her daughters, Martha (3) and Bianca (5), all in bikinis. She peels an orange, all in one long piece.

YOUNG LEDA
Smell...

The girls smell it, delighted.

BIANCA AND MARTHA
(talking over each other)
Peel it like a snake. Don't let it
break.

Young Leda laughs and continues to peel the orange in one long piece, without letting the peel break.

YOUNG LEDA
You know why they call it a navel
orange? Do you know another word
for navel?

They don't.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
Belly button! See doesn't it look
like a belly button?

The girls look at the orange's "navel." Then all three of them look at their own belly buttons.

CUT BACK TO:

23 EXT. BEACH CAFE - AFTERNOON 23

Will brings Leda a glass of water.

She dips her fingers in it and wets her forehead; she puts the cool glass to her cheek.

24 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM/ TERRACE - AFTERNOON 24

Leda bursts through the door, her cell phone ringing. Her hands are full, beach bag, towel, keys and her feet are sandy. She drops everything as she searches for her ringing phone.

LEDA
Martha! Hello baby. I was just
thinking about calling you. I just
got back from the beach--

Leda wipes off her sandy feet as she listens to her daughter. We can faintly hear Martha through the phone, she is clearly upset.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Ruined what baby?

She listens, taking off her shoes, wiping sand from her feet.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Why did you go to someone you
didn't know?...Your hair isn't
awful. It just gets very dry when
you dye it so much.

While Martha is talking, Leda pulls a chair out onto the and sits.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Sometimes I've put a tablespoon of
olive oil--Ok. Maybe your Dad
knows someone you can--

Leda listens to her daughter but closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

25 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT 25

MEMORY:

Martha is in the bath crying; her hair is covered in shampoo and she's gotten some in her eyes.

Young Leda is frustrated; she can't find a towel. She pulls her shirt off and dips it into the water; she uses it to try to get the soap out of Martha's eyes.

YOUNG LEDA
(her hands on Martha's
little face)
Ok, blink blink blink.

Martha does. She looks in her mother's eyes; she stops crying.

CUT BACK TO:

26 EXT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON 26

Leda opens her eyes. Still on the phone with Martha.

LEDA
I love you too, baby. I'm on
vacation--...oh ok, I love you too.

Leda hangs up and looks out over her .

27 EXT. BEACH - DAY 27

Leda is swimming. She hears a loud honking. She raises her head out of the water to find a large MOTOR BOAT moving quickly towards her. She startles, and swims out of its way.

The boat, honking, playing music, continues over a line of red buoys, startling an old man swimming laps.

From the water, Leda sees Callie on the shore running towards Nina.

CALLIE
 (off screen)
 NINA! NINA!! NINA!!

Nina picks up Elena and points at the boat with exaggerated cheerfulness.

The boat then passes a line of white buoys where small children are swimming. A mother rushes in to move them out of the way.

On the shore, the big family group shout and wave their hands at the boat in greeting.

Finally the boat stops, almost at the shore, and a big group of heavy men, ostentatiously rich women, obese children pile out and onto the beach to greet the big family.

Leda turns to see a heavy, thickset man, shaved head, early 40s standing at the helm of the boat. He wears a black tee shirt that stretches over his belly and swim trunks. This is NINA'S HUSBAND, TONI (40s).

In no hurry, Toni steps out of the boat to meet Nina who waits at the shore. He is followed by an entourage of other large, jovial men carrying coolers, backpacks and some wrapped presents.

Toni takes Elena from Nina. The little girl hugs him and gives his cheek small anxious kisses.

He seizes Nina by the neck, almost forcing her to bend over and abruptly touches her lips to his. It's a little violent, and also sexy.

The big family group erupts into a kind of party. Opening presents. Nina tries on a BIG STRAW HAT.

Nina's hat is carried off by the wind. Her husband grabs it in one decisive motion, like an animal, Elena still in his arms.

Leda watches from the water.

28

EXT. BEACH - LATER

28

Leda struggles to read, surrounded by the large family crowd. Their music is blaring, they are calling loudly to one another, laughing, drinking.

She looks up from her work to find that a family with 3 small children, sitting near her are packing up their gear: towels, shovels, beach bags, hats and moving down the beach.

Callie is talking animatedly to another couple, who also pick up their things, irritated, and move down the beach to another umbrella. Members of the big family take over their chairs and umbrellas as they go.

The Pregnant Lady has enlisted Will to help. They start to move in Leda's direction.

CALLIE
This lady also has to move.
(rushing over to Leda's
chair)

WILL
I'm sorry to bother you--

CALLIE
Right? You don't mind moving.

A pause. Leda closes her book.

LEDA
No, I'm fine here.

CALLIE
It's just about switching
umbrellas. So my family can be
together.

Leda takes off her sunglasses, looks Callie in the eye.

LEDA
I understand, but I have no desire
to move.

An old man, VASILI and a few of the rough boys from the family come over.

CALLIE
Really?? This is--

VASILI
(smiling)
Oh what's it to you, right? You do
us a favor today, we'll do one for
you tomorrow.

LEDA
No, thank you.

Leda goes back to her book.

ROUGH BOY
 (under his breath)
 Cunt.

CALLIE
 Honestly I don't even know what to
 say to you. It's just moving down
 the beach a few feet--

NINA'S HUSBAND
 (from down the beach, WITH
 AN UNNERVING CALM)
 That's enough. We're fine like
 this. Leave the lady alone.

They do.

Leda continues to read but she is flushed and angry.

29 EXT. BEACH - EVENING

29

The sun is setting.

The family are finishing a party with beer, lobsters, a big
 store bought sheet cake.

Leda gets up to go, puts on her dress.

Callie approaches with a plate of cake.

CALLIE
 Would you like a piece of cake?

LEDA
 Thank you. No.

CALLIE
 I'm sorry about earlier.
 (as an explanation)
 It's my birthday.

She offers Leda the cake. Leda reluctantly takes it.

LEDA
 Happy Birthday.

A pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)
 How old are you?

CALLIE
 42.

LEDA
You have a nice big belly.

CALLIE
Well, it's a girl, so... My first.

LEDA
How much longer?

CALLIE
Two months. My sister in law had hers right away. Took me 8 years.

LEDA
These things happen when they're supposed to happen. I hope you have a great birthday.

Leda tries to hand back the cake, but Callie doesn't take it. Leda takes a small bite.

CALLIE
Where are you from?

LEDA
I'm from Cambridge...near Boston.

CALLIE
No, but where are your people from?

A pause.

LEDA
My people--are from Leeds. Shipley really.

CALLIE
Fancy.

LEDA
No. Not fancy.

CALLIE
I thought you were from Queens. Not that you talk like it. Just...something. That's where we're mostly from. And we've got family in this town for like 300 years. You don't have kids?

LEDA
I have two girls.

CALLIE
Where are they?

Leda doesn't immediately answer.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
How old?

LEDA
Bianca is 25 and Martha is 23.

CALLIE
No! You look so young. You must
have started really early.

LEDA
I'm 48.

CALLIE
No, shit you look amazing. We were
saying you couldn't be more than
40. Damn, you're lucky. I'm like an
old lady already. What's your name?

LEDA
Leda.

CALLIE
Neda?

LEDA
Leda.

CALLIE
Leda what?

A beat.

LEDA
Leda Caruso.

CALLIE
Ah. Caruso from Queens. I'm
Callie.

(She shrugs)
Callista. It means the most
beautiful.

They shake hands.

LEDA
I'm also...sorry about earlier. I
was feeling a little...anxious.

CALLIE

Yeah. The sun can do that. Or
being away from your girls maybe.

LEDA

(smiling)

Yeah, well...you'll see. Children
are...a crushing responsibility.

Callie looks a little shocked.

LEDA (CONT'D)

Happy Birthday.

She gives the plate back and starts to go.

30 EXT. PINWOOD PATH - EVENING 30

Leda walks down the beach path toward the parking lot. Pine
trees on both sides.

There's a creaking behind her. A footstep?

She stops and turns. Silence.

Leda keeps walking. Suddenly she is hit by a VIOLENT BLOW to
the back. She calls out in pain and surprise.

She turns again, breathless. There's no one behind her. Only
a PINECONE rolling into the undergrowth.

She picks it up. She looks up to the tops of the pine trees
blowing in the wind for the source of the blow.

31 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT 31

Leda takes off her shirt and examines her back in the mirror.
There is a BIG, SWOLLEN, RED WELT between her shoulder
blades. She tries to reach it with her fingers.

32 EXT. SEASIDE TOWN, BOARDWALK - NIGHT 32

Leda is cleaned up and beautifully dressed for dinner. She
walks along the boardwalk checking out the cafes. It's quiet,
ghostly.

Suddenly she stops and puts her hands on her knees, like
she's dizzy or she might throw up.

She stands still like that in the empty street.

33

INT. SEASIDE BAR/CAFE - NIGHT

33

Leda, eats at the bar of the small cafe on the ground floor of her rented apartment.

A group of men laugh and play cards at a table behind her.

Someone touches her shoulder. She turns to find Lyle, the caretaker.

LEDA
Oh, hi. Hello.

LYLE
It's Lyle. From upstairs.

LEDA
Yes, of course.

LYLE
I'm glad you made it down here.
It's not half bad, right?
(signaling to his friends
at the card table behind
him)
I hope we didn't disturb you.

LEDA
No, no.

LYLE
What are you drinking?

LEDA
That's ok. I'm still half full.

LYLE
It's nice to have a place like this
just down the stairs. Especially
when you're alone. Keeps you from
eating canned beans.

LEDA
Or rotten fruit!

A beat.

LEDA (CONT'D)
I forget to eat entirely sometimes.

LYLE
That's not good. I saw you at the
beach today...At Callie's birthday
party.

LEDA
Well, I wasn't exactly at her
birthday party...I didn't see you.

LYLE
I saw you.

A pause.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Are you settling in then upstairs?
Everything ok with the apartment?

LEDA
Yes. It's great. Thank you.

He lightly touches her hand.

LYLE
Did you find that remote? For the
fan?

LEDA
No, I'm fine to just pull the
string.

He smiles at her in a complicitous way, as if she's told a
joke. It's strange. She turns to see Lyle's friends at the
card table quietly watching them, like a show.

LEDA (CONT'D)
To turn it on. The fan.

He pats her hand again.

LEDA (CONT'D)
The apartment is great.

LYLE
It's a good one. Bright and white.
Feels like you're on a boat almost.

LEDA
Yes.

Leda signals the waiter for a check. But Lyle nods to the man
behind the counter in a way that means he's paying.

LEDA (CONT'D)
No really.

He waves her off.

LEDA (CONT'D)

Well thank you.

LYLE

Just let me know if I can do anything for you.

He is almost whispering in her ear.

LEDA

Of course, I will. May I finish my dinner now, Lyle?

He's taken aback.

LYLE

Oh, sure.

He moves back to his card game. Leda tries to eat another few bites.

Suddenly she gets up and walks to Lyle and his friends. She leans over him, looking at his cards, her breasts almost brushing his neck.

LEDA

(IN ITALIAN)

A beautiful game.

He turns to look at her, shocked, almost grateful for the attention. She looks loose and a little wild.

LEDA (CONT'D)

(embarrassed)

Sorry.

34

INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

34

Leda tosses and turns in bed. There is a muted flash of light from the lighthouse through the closed curtains.

There is a faint clicking sound.

Leda turns over and her hand touches something on the pillow next to her. She startles.

She turns on the bedside light and finds a CICADA, 4 inches long sitting on the pillow. It is hurt, with a yellow ooze coming out of its abdomen.

Leda touches it with the sleeve of her nightgown. It moves a little and immediately stops its clicking.

Leda gets out of bed, picks up the pillow and tosses the insect out the window.

There is a yellow stain left on the pillow case.

35

EXT. BEACH - MIDDAY

35

Leda, wearing dark glasses looks for Nina and Elena.

She finds NINA AND HER HUSBAND ARGUING BY THE SHORE.

Her husband has a hairy chest and wears a cross with a gold chain. He has a deep scar, dissecting his protruding belly that runs from the top of his bathing suit to his ribs.

Nina gestures angrily at the family group on the beach. Her husband laughs.

She takes his hat, from the towel at their feet and throws it towards the shore, violently. It falls like a feather, lightly into the water. He walks calmly and picks it up.

LEDA LOOKS AROUND FOR ELENA.

She finds the child under a nearby umbrella, in the sand playing with her doll. She wears her mother's new straw hat.

LEDA GETS UP AND MOVES HER BEACH CHAIR A LITTLE CLOSER TO THE LITTLE GIRL. Closer than she's ever been.

Up close, THE DOLL is mangy, half bald. She has ballpoint pen marks all over her body. Leda notices that Elena's nose is red and runny.

ELENA

Neni we're gonna marry. Nena.
Nannella.

Elena kisses the doll hard on the face.

FANTASY: The doll's head begins to inflate, like a balloon from the force of each kiss.

Elena kisses the doll's bare breast, her back, her stomach with her mouth open, almost like she wants to eat her.

Leda watches.

The child catches Leda looking. She smiles and presses the doll between her knees.

LEDA, DISCONCERTED, GETS UP TO GO FOR A SWIM.

On her way to the water, she sees Nina walk off down the beach. Up close she notices that Nina has an ugly tramp stamp tattoo on the small of her back, and one on her ankle. Her bikini wax is coming in, sweat beads on her forehead.

Leda's husband wades into the water to stand with a group of men, talking, drinking beer out of plastic cups.

36 EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON

36

Leda wakes from a nap, sweating in the bright sun. The welt on her back is sore.

The first thing she sees is Nina. SOMETHING IS HAPPENING TO HER. She is moving slowly among the umbrellas. She turns her head to one side, to the other, mechanically. Then she runs to her husband.

Her husband jumps to his feet, looks around.

Soon the whole family is looking around.

VARIOUS FAMILY MEMBERS
(calling)
Elena!! Lena!!

Leda looks to where Elena had been sitting.

Only her Doll remains, its head half buried in the sand.

Nina starts to run along the beach.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. DIFFERENT BEACH - DAY

37

MEMORY:

Young Leda runs along the beach, scanning the umbrellas.

YOUNG LEDA
BIANCA!! BIANCA!!

She is frantic; She carries a crying Martha in her arms.

CUT BACK TO:

38 EXT. BEACH DAY PRESENT - DAY

38

Nina, frantic, searches the beach.

Leda gets up and goes to her. She touches Nina's shoulder, tenderly. Nina spins around.

NINA
You found her!

LEDA
No. She's wearing your big hat.
We'll find her.

Nina nods, and runs off like an athlete. Leda turns in the other direction to look for Elena. She moves slowly through the umbrellas.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. DIFFERENT BEACH - DAY 39

MEMORY:

Young Leda, continues to search for Bianca with Martha in her arms. Now both mother and daughter are crying.

YOUNG LEDA
BIANCA! BIANCA!

CUT BACK TO:

40 EXT. BEACH PRESENT - DAY 40

Leda, searching among the umbrellas sees NINA'S BIG HAT up ahead. Under it is Elena.

As Leda gets closer she sees Elena is crying, a slow flow of silent tears.

Leda scoops her up.

LEDA
Let's get you back to your mama,
sweetheart.

ELENA
(weeping)
I lost my doll.
I...Lost...My...Doll.

41 EXT. BEACH - DAY 41

Leda hurries down the beach with Elena in her arms. Callie sees her and tears the girl away in an enthusiastic fury.

Nina runs over. And Nina's husband. The whole family enveloping Elena. But the little girl continues to cry.

Leda stands alone.

42

EXT. BEACH LATER - DAY

42

A little later, Leda starts to gather her things.

Elena is now WAILING, loud.

After a moment, Nina comes over. The child's crying plays over the whole scene.

NINA

I just wanted to come say thank you.

LEDA

Yeah, it was scary.

NINA

I thought I was going to die.

Leda nods.

LEDA

Yeah.

Callie comes up.

CALLIE

Thank god you were here.

LEDA

Oh. Yes. Sometimes strangers are more useful in a situation like this.

CALLIE

I was so crazy I couldn't see right. So many awful things can happen. People are so fucked up-- oh my god, what happened there? To your back?

LEDA

I think it was a pinecone. From the beach path.

CALLIE

A pinecone?? It looks awful--did you put something on it?

LEDA
No. I didn't.

CALLIE
Oh my god I have something for you.
It's amazing. Hang on.

She runs off. Leda and Nina stand alone together. There's an intensity between them.

NINA
I like your bathing suit.

LEDA
Oh. Thank you.
(re: Elena who is still
hysterical)
She won't calm down.

NINA
(smiling)
Yeah. It's a weird day: we found
her and she lost her doll.

LEDA
I had a doll like that. Mina. My
mother called her Mini-
Mama...You'll find it.

NINA
Yeah. If we don't...what are we
gonna do? I think she'll get sick
or something.

Leda gasps suddenly. She spins around.

Callie is putting cream on her back.

CALLIE
How's that?

LEDA
It's good. Thank you. Cold!

They stand quietly while Callie rubs in the cream. Down the beach, Elena wails. Calling alternately for her mother and her doll.

Leda puts on her dress, gathers her stuff.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Ok. See you tomorrow.

NINA

Bye.

CALLIE

You'll see, by tonight it'll feel better. It's really amazing stuff.

LEDA

Thank you.

CALLIE

Alright, let's go. Let's find this doll. I can't stand hearing her scream anymore.

Nina nods farewell. She and Callie move off.

43 EXT. PINWOOD PATH - DAY 43

Leda moves quickly through the pinewood path, almost out of breath.

44 INT/EXT. LEDA'S CAR/ BEACH PARKING LOT - DAY 44

Leda gets into her car, her beach bag in her lap, and sits behind the steering wheel. She puts her hand to her heart, closes her eyes, takes a deep breath.

Then she opens her eyes and opens her bag.

Inside is ELENA'S DOLL.

She looks almost surprised. She puts the bag in the passenger seat and starts the car.

On Leda's face as she pulls out.

CUT TO:

45 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN/ LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 45

MEMORY:

Bianca sits on the kitchen counter in her pajamas while Young Leda talks.

YOUNG LEDA

I'm sorry I lost my patience, baby. That was a very hot cup of tea and when it spilled it hurt me and it got all over my work and I got frustrated. But it's not your fault. Things spill.

BIANCA

I know.

YOUNG LEDA

And you know when you're sleeping, the whole time you're sleeping, Martha is awake.

BIANCA

She's not good at going to sleep.

YOUNG LEDA

No, she's not.

BIANCA

I am.

YOUNG LEDA

I know. So mommy has to be awake all the time. In the night and in the day.

BIANCA

She's like a baby. And you have to take care of both your babies.

YOUNG LEDA

Yes. But I wanted to talk to you because I have a present for you. It's a very special present. It was mine when I was a little girl, as little as you.

Young Leda gives Bianca a worn doll.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

Her name is Mina.

Bianca holds the doll to her chest. Young Leda is pleased.

CUT BACK TO:

46 EXT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, TERRACE - AFTERNOON

46

The beach bag with the doll inside sits untouched, on the sofa.

Leda, hair washed and brushed eats a salad on her little terrace. The sky is darkening, the wind is picking up, a storm is coming.

Leda's paper napkin flies off in the wind.

CUT TO:

47 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN/ LIVING ROOM - DAY

47

MEMORY:

Young Leda lies under a table, toys scattered. Bianca feeds her "medicine" from a small pink plastic spoon. Young Leda's eyes are closed. She's almost asleep, exhausted from mothering two very small children.

BIANCA

I'm the doctor and that means you
have to take lots of yucky
medicine.

Young Leda opens her mouth obediently, for each spoonful, her eyes still closed.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

And you also have to have your hair
brushed. And open your eyes.
Because if you don't brush your
hair, you'll be messy and you won't
get better.

YOUNG LEDA

Ok baby. I'm just gonna keep my
eyes closed for a minute.

Bianca takes a plastic toy comb and tries to run it through Leda's hair. She doesn't know how to use the comb and it snags and pulls Young Leda's hair. She startles awake.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

FUCK. Ouch, Bianca no.

She pulls the comb roughly out of Bianca's hands. And out of her hair. She has tears in her eyes from fatigue and the sudden pain.

In the next room Martha starts to cry, loudly. Young Leda gets up to go to her.

BIANCA

No!

YOUNG LEDA

I can't just let her cry...

BIANCA

She still has to have her nap! You said we'd have a date.

YOUNG LEDA

I'll be right back!

Bianca starts to cry.

She spots Mina, her old doll on the shelf. She hands her to Bianca.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

Play with Mini-Mama. Brush her hair.

She rushes off.

CUT BACK TO:

48 EXT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, TERRACE/ LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON 48

The wind is heavy and wild, blowing dust, dry leaves into the apartment. There's a loud thunder clap and it starts to rain.

Leda, a little wet, quickly grabs the salad bowl and her glass and runs inside, closing the French doors against the storm.

She looks at THE BEACH BAG, sitting on the sofa, untouched. She peeks inside.

THE DOLL IS IN THERE.

Quietly, she sits down next to it.

CUT TO:

49 EXT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DAY 49

MEMORY:

Bianca plays on the floor in the corner of the bathroom.
Young Leda can be heard coughing in the other room.

YOUNG LEDA
(off camera)
Bianca! C'mon, dinner!

Bianca doesn't move. She's playing with a shiny barbie doll.

Young Leda comes out into the bathroom, clearly sick with an awful cold.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
Bianca.

Bianca doesn't look up. She keeps playing with the barbie doll.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
Are you ignoring me??

BIANCA
(still not looking at her
mother)
No.

YOUNG LEDA
I have called you so many times for
dinner.

BIANCA
My doll is sick.

YOUNG LEDA
No I'M sick--What are you sitting
on? Bianca. Get up.

Bianca doesn't move. She is sitting on Mina, Young Leda's childhood doll, like a chair.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
You don't like her?

A pause, nothing from Bianca.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
I gave Mina to you because I
trusted you to take care of her.

Bianca keeps her eyes down, plays with the shiny barbie doll.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

You know...you can be very
thoughtless. That is my doll. You
can't treat her like shit.

BIANCA

(very measured, and cool)
No. She's mine.

Leda pushes Bianca out of the way and picks up the doll.

Bianca has taken off her clothes and scribbled all over her
with markers.

YOUNG LEDA

Well, she's ruined.

And in a flash, without thinking, Young Leda opens the window
and throws Mina out.

She falls through the air and lands in the street.

Young Leda and Bianca look out the window watching the cars
pass over the doll, mutilating her.

After a few moments Young Leda picks Bianca up and hugs her
very tightly. Bianca yields.

BIANCA

Mama, you're hurting me.

CUT BACK TO:

50

EXT SEASIDE TOWN, HORSESHOE BAY - EVENING

50

Leda, CARRYING THE BEACH BAG, walks the streets of the small
town, dressed simply, beautifully. The extraordinary weekend
flow has started to diminish.

She sees Will, the beach attendant walking towards her, still
sandy from the beach in his bathing suit and tee-shirt,
carrying a backpack.

He waves and is going to pass by, but Leda stops him.

LEDA

Hi.

WILL

Hi. Oh you look like you stayed
dry.

LEDA

Mostly. Was it really bad?

WILL

It was crazy. Everybody ran to the cafe, but it got too crowded. The umbrellas started blowing away. And people's books and towels. Everybody was freaking out.

LEDA

Wow.

WILL

And the little girl, Elena wouldn't stop crying. She lost her doll. Luckily you left early.

LEDA

I like storms.

WILL

All your books would have gotten ruined.

LEDA

Did your book get wet?

WILL

Yeah.

LEDA

What are you studying?

WILL

Business.

LEDA

In Greek?

WILL

No no. I'm on a D visa. From Dublin. I come every summer.
(he makes a face.)
Anyway, I'm way behind at school. I wasted a lot of time.

LEDA

How old are you?

WILL

24.

She smiles, nods.

LEDA
Just between my daughters.

WILL
I heard you're a professor?

LEDA
I believe the correct response is,
'sounds like fun.'

WILL
What?

LEDA
Sorry, yes, I teach Comp Lit.
Mostly Italian literature. But I'm
skiving off.

WILL
Right. Comparative Lit. I saw you
know a lot of languages.

LEDA
I don't know anything really well.
I also...wasted a lot of time.

A pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Do you want to have dinner with me?

A pause.

WILL
I should go and take a shower,
change.

LEDA
No, you're fine like that.

WILL
I don't even have my wallet.

LEDA
I'm inviting you.

51 EXT. SEASIDE TAVERNA - NIGHT

51

They are deep into dinner. They've had a few glasses of wine.
Leda is flushed and laughing.

LEDA

Wow, I thought that was Nina's father.

WILL

No! That's so funny. Vasili is Callie's husband.

LEDA

OK, I thought he was married to the heavy-set older woman--

WILL

Heavy-set? C'mon no, she's fat. That's Callie's aunt, I think.

LEDA

Right. And Lyle? He takes care of my place...

WILL

He's their lackey.

LEDA

I see. And Nina's husband is...

WILL

Toni.

A pause. He doesn't offer any more about Toni.

LEDA

Toni?

WILL

He mostly comes up on the weekends...He's got "investments" in Kalamata. They all rent one of the huge villas right behind the dunes, by the beach. It's pink.

LEDA

It's pink?

He nods. They laugh.

WILL

Every year they rent the same one.

LEDA

It's like talking about a film I saw in a language I didn't quite know.

WILL
You watch movies in languages you
don't know?

LEDA
Ha!

WILL
Without subtitles?

They both laugh, tipsy.

LEDA
Hey Will, shouldn't you be back at
school?

WILL
Shouldn't you?

She smiles.

WILL (CONT'D)
So your children are my age you
said?

LEDA
Yes. 25 and 23. Bianca and Martha.

WILL
You must have had them really
young.

LEDA
I did.

WILL
Do they look like you?

LEDA
Well. It's hard to say. If I'm
honest. They probably do.

WILL
Because you're beautiful.

LEDA
But, see...you're a smart boy. My
mother was very beautiful. And I
felt when I was Martha's age that
she didn't share it. That she
had...in creating me...she had
separated herself from me...like
pushing a plate away from you when
the food is repulsive. I'm drunk.

She pushes away her wine glass.

LEDA (CONT'D)

Martha and Bianca...it's funny...I mean as soon as you're born it's about deprivation, right? A separation. And anyway what's most interesting are the secret resemblances. What makes Bianca seductive and Martha not, or vice versa? Well, they blame me.

Leda waits for Will to respond, but he doesn't say anything.

LEDA (CONT'D)

Like...when I was young I had large breasts. After I gave birth, no. Bianca has large breasts. And Martha has almost none, like a boy. She doesn't know how beautiful she is. She wears a padded bra; and it humiliates her. She thinks I gave the best of myself to Bianca. She feels deprived. I understand! And actually I even thought, only half seriously, about implants at one point. But...they come from nowhere...so what are they worth? And Bianca. Bianca is so different. She doesn't let herself feel deprived. She wants to suck everything out of me, all my *secret* skills. She's the one who...revealed to me that I'm finicky about peeling fruit. I like it when the peel doesn't break, when it stays in one long strip. I'm very very uptight.

She laughs, a pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)

I didn't even know I did that.

CUT TO:

52

INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM/ STUDY - DAY

52

MEMORY:

Young Leda writes at a small desk pushed up against a window. Pieces of inspiration pinned to the walls, books open around her. It feels cramped and chaotic. She wears headphones.

JOE (30), Leda's husband has a larger desk in the center of the room. He talks on the phone.

JOE

Of course I understand, the problem for me is why did they schedule them so close together? There must be at least a few people presenting at both conferences...

Suddenly he's interrupted by a loud wail coming from another room.

Young Leda doesn't hear it with her headphones on.

Still holding the phone, Joe taps Leda to get her attention, gestures toward the crying in the other room. She listens. Bolts up. Then...

YOUNG LEDA

It's Sunday. You're on.

She sits back down. Joe gestures, a little violently toward the phone.

JOE

(silently, mouthing)
It's Columbia!!

Leda goes back to work. The crying continues.

JOE (CONT'D)

(begging Leda to go to the girls with his hands and body as he talks)
I would love to be there, Spivak has always been so supportive but I'll need them to cover the travel costs. I wish I didn't--

Leda gets up suddenly to tend to the girls.

JOE (CONT'D)

(mouthing his words, gesturing toward the phone)
I'm working.

LEDA

I'm suffocating.

53 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN/ LIVING ROOM - DAY 53

Leda bursts into the kitchen to find a lot of blood. Bianca crying, Martha watching, scared. Bianca holds a kitchen knife. And a partially peeled apple.

Young Leda runs to the drawer for a band-aid, quickly starts to clean and bandage Bianca's finger.

BIANCA
It hurts.

YOUNG LEDA
I bet.

BIANCA
Kiss it mama.

Young Leda doesn't kiss it; she keeps working to clean the wound. Bianca hiccups through tears.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
I want to peel it like a snake.

YOUNG LEDA
What?

BIANCA
Kiss it mama! It hurts.

Leda doesn't. She struggles with the band-aid, focused.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
I want to peel it like a snake.
Like you do.

Leda doesn't answer. She finishes with the band-aid.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
Mama!! Kiss it. Kiss it.

Bianca's crying has intensified.

Leda still doesn't kiss the wound. She gets up and goes to the sink, looks out the window. Bianca wails behind her.

YOUNG LEDA
(quiet, looking out the
window)
I can't leave you alone for one
minute.

CUT BACK TO:

54 EXT. SEASIDE TAVERNA - NIGHT

54

LEDA

...Actually, there's this great poem, by Maria Guerra 'Haciendo Serpentinias'...Or, have you read Leda and the Swan? That one's in English, my namesake..."the center cannot hold," but that's a different Yeats...yeah, I remember my mother getting dizzy all the time. Having to sit down. She said it was from standing up too fast...

CUT TO:

55 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

55

Young Leda and Joe sit at the kitchen table; it's quiet, late.

YOUNG LEDA

Sometimes I get scared that I can't take care of them.

A pause. Joe listens.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

I get dizzy...or, I get afraid of getting dizzy...It doesn't happen when you're here.

Another pause.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

What if I passed out, alone with them when you're in Arizona?

He thinks. He takes her hand.

JOE

You're ok. Of course you can take care of them.

CUT BACK TO:

56 EXT. SEASIDE TAVERNA - NIGHT

56

LEDA

Poor creatures who came out of my belly.

(MORE)

LEDA (CONT'D)

What I love best in my daughters is what seems alien to me. I don't have to take responsibility for it.

Leda laughs. She sees that she's lost Will.

LEDA (CONT'D)

Nina is very beautiful.

His face lights up.

WILL

Yeah. I hope they'll find that doll. Everyone's freaking out. I raked the whole beach.

LEDA

They will.

WILL

Can you imagine making one of your daughters marry someone like that?

LEDA

Like Nina's husband? Why? What's wrong with him?

Will shakes his head.

WILL

Everything. Him, his friends, his family. His sister, Jesus.

LEDA

Callie's his sister? The pregnant lady?

WILL

She's not a lady. That was amazing yesterday when you wouldn't move from your umbrella. But don't do things like that anymore.

LEDA

Why?

WILL

They're bad people.

She takes the doll out and places her on her knees, looking into her face.

She brings the doll briefly to her breast, then gingerly, she kisses its face, its lips. She gives the doll a squeeze which pushes out A JET OF DIRTY BROWN WATER FROM THE SMALL HOLE IN ITS MOUTH. It squirts on Leda's blouse and face.

She quickly gets up to clean off.

58 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT - MORNING 58

Leda wakes on the sofa in her bra and skirt, cold without a blanket.

She feels for the doll, but can't find it. She looks between the pillows, under the sofa.

Then she goes out to the and looks down at the street below. Nothing.

She wanders into the kitchen. The doll is sitting on the table. In the shadows, next to her soiled blouse from the night before.

She climbs onto the counter and HIDES THE DOLL HIGH UP IN A KITCHEN CABINET.

59 INT. TOY STORE - DAY 59

Leda stands at the cash register with DOLL'S CLOTHES in front of her: a blue dress, socks, shoes, a little jacket.

LEDA

You know, actually I'm not going to take the jacket. Just the dress and the socks and shoes. No...actually I will.

The sales woman smiles. Leda pays and starts to put the doll's clothes into her purse.

LEDA (CONT'D)

I don't need a bag.

She's packing up when Vasili enters the shop, followed by Callie. Vasili doesn't seem to recognize Leda.

CALLIE

Leda! Hi! How are you?
(re: the toy store)
You can't have grandkids already?

A beat.

LEDA

No.

CALLIE

Did the ointment help?

LEDA

Oh for my back, yes. I'm feeling much better. Thank you.

Nina enters the shop, holding Elena. Nina looks dressed up, in a lovely dress, her hair pulled back, earrings. Elena wears a fancy white dress with chocolate stains down the front, her thumb in her mouth with a sticky line of chocolate saliva on it. Her head lolls on her mother's shoulder, her nose is running.

Leda looks at the girl for a moment. Then,

LEDA (CONT'D)

How are you sweetie, did you find your doll?

Elena gives a kind of shudder of rage, she takes her thumb out of her mouth and tries to hit Leda with her fist.

Leda swerves. Elena hides her face against her mother's neck.

NINA

Elena, no! C'mon baby, don't be like that. She's super tired. Tell the lady we're gonna find Neni tomorrow, when it's not raining. Today we're gonna get a doll for a big girl.

Elena shakes her head.

CALLIE

Whoever took her should get brain cancer.

VASILI

Oh come on, it's kid's stuff. They like a toy, they take it.

CALLIE

Arruno's children aren't like kids.

NINA

(quietly)

It was their mom. She's a cunt.

VASILI
I spoke to Toni, the children
didn't take anything.

NINA
He's lying.

VASILI
Don't say that.

NINA
It's true.

VASILI
Even if it's true.

CALLIE
(to Leda)
You don't know how upset this child
has been. She's had a fever. We're
furious. She's having trouble
breathing. Blow your nose Elena.
(to Leda)
Do you have a Kleenex?

Leda starts to unzip her bag. But freezes, the doll's
clothes inside.

LEDA
Sorry, I don't.

Vasili gives Callie a handkerchief and she cleans the girl's
nose as she wriggles and kicks.

Leda zips her purse up, looks at the salesgirl
apprehensively.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Is the fever high?

NINA
Not really, barely 100. She's ok.

Nina goes to put Elena down but the child refuses with great
energy. She clings to her mother's neck as if suspended from
an abyss, pushing off the floor at the slightest contact,
kicking.

Nina seems frozen for a moment, bending forward, her hands
around her daughter's hips trying to detach her, but careful
to avoid her kicks.

Abruptly, Nina resettles Elena in her arms with a violent
jerk.

NINA (CONT'D)
 (hissing)
 Stop it.

She pulls Elena's dress down hard over knees.

NINA (CONT'D)
 I don't want to hear anymore from
 you. Do you understand? Enough.
 Fuck.
 (to Leda)
 I'm sorry. She's driving me crazy.
 Her Dad's away and...now she's
 taking it out on me.

CALLIE
 Come to auntie, baby.

Callie takes Elena who, this time puts up no resistance,
 throwing her arms around her aunt's neck.

NINA
 There, great, go, so I can have a
 minute.
 (to Leda)
 Sometimes you just can't...handle
 it anymore.

LEDA
 (pointedly, to Nina)
 That's true.

CALLIE
 (kissing Elena, noisily,
 in Greek)
 Pretty girl, pretty pretty girl.
 Pretty girl.

Callie sets Elena down on the ground. This time, the girl
 complies.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
 Let mama and the lady see what a
 good girl you are.
 (to Leda and Nina)
 They put us through so much.

Leda studies Callie.

LEDA
 I thought you said you were
 pregnant with your first?

CALLIE

I am.

A pause.

CALLIE (CONT'D)

What were your daughters like when they were little? Were they like this little, willful treasure?

A pause.

LEDA

I remember almost nothing actually.

CALLIE

What, No. You don't forget anything about your own children.

LEDA

Is that your experience?

CALLIE

I just mean did they give you a hard time when they were little?

LEDA

I don't know...I don't remember.

A pause. LEDA LEANS ON THE STORE COUNTER, LIKE SHE'S DIZZY.

CALLIE

You ok?

NINA

She doesn't remember.

Leda looks at Nina.

LEDA

I was very tired.

Another pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Leda starts to go. ON HER WAY OUT SHE KNOCKS INTO A DISPLAY OF PLASTIC TEA SETS. SOME OF THEM FALL TO THE GROUND.

She stops to pick them up. She's shaking a little. Nina goes to help.

LEDA (CONT'D)
 (to the room)
 Don't buy her anything. It won't
 help. She'll find the doll.

Leda walks out.

60 EXT. TOY STORE - DAY 60

Lyle is standing in front of the shop, holding some shopping bags. He smiles at her as she rushes by.

61 EXT. FISH MARKET - DAY 61

Leda walks quickly. The streets are lined with food vendors in a small outdoor market.

It has started to rain.

Leda covers her head with her purse, looking for shelter. She makes her way under a makeshift tent that houses some of the food stalls.

She walks along the aisles, fish and fried dough, dried octopus, candy.

CUT TO:

62 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT - DAY 62

MEMORY:

Young Leda sits at a table, writing. Books, notebooks and her computer spread out. She is struggling over something in her work.

As she writes SHE TALKS TO HERSELF IN ITALIAN, almost singing. She is translating poetry.

Martha plays under the table. Bianca sits next to Young Leda pretending to read and write, imitating her mothers' gestures and frowns, talking quietly to herself. Sauce bubbles on the stove for dinner.

CUT BACK TO:

63 EXT. FISH MARKET - DAY 63

The tent is getting crowded with people seeking shelter from the rain.

Leda leans up against a column in the tent, the smells and crowd overwhelming her, making her nauseous.

BIANCA
 (v.o., pre-lap)
 Mama is this how you write volcano?
 Mama mama mama mama??

CUT TO:

64 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

64

MEMORY:

Young Leda, deep in thought and work doesn't respond to the question.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, Bianca slaps Young Leda's ear, hard. Young Leda gasps and puts her hand to her face.

Without thinking, she slaps Bianca back, softly, her fingers barely grazing the little girl's arm.

YOUNG LEDA
 Don't do that.

Bianca smiles. Then tries to hit Young Leda again, thinking a game has finally started.

Young Leda dodges the blow and slaps Bianca's bare arm again. Still gently, but a little harder. She's angry, but controlled.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
 Don't you dare, ever again Bianca.

Bianca laughs, bewildered.

Young Leda hits her again, still lightly, with the tips of her fingers. Contained, but real.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
 You don't hit Mama. You can never
 ever do that.

Finally, Bianca realizes Young Leda isn't playing and bursts into tears.

Then Leda takes Bianca by the arm calmly and starts to pull her into the next room.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
 (without raising her
 voice)
 Out. Mama has to work. I need 15
 more minutes.

Bianca screams and cries, tries to hit Young Leda again.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
 I don't want to see you right now.

Young Leda manages to get her into the other room. Then
 closes the door decisively.

The door has a BIG PANE OF FROSTED GLASS. As it slams, the
 glass SHATTERS.

Bianca appears in the empty space where the glass was, wide
 eyed, small, tears flowing, but silently.

Martha pulls at Young Leda's skirt.

Young Leda puts her hand over her mouth, her breath taken
 away.

CUT BACK TO:

65 EXT. FISH MARKET - DAY 65

Leda pushes her way through the crowd that has formed under
 the tent. She moves to the edge, where gusts of rain and wind
 blow against her. She breathes in the air.

She is about to cross the street when she sees: Vasili, Lyle,
 Callie and Nina, carrying Elena, a light scarf draped over
 her. Callie holds a big plastic package at her waist, inside
 is a new doll that looks like a real child.

Leda freezes till they've passed.

66 INT. LEDA'S CAR/ COASTAL ROAD - DAY 66

Leda drives fast down the coastal road.

CUT TO:

67 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY 67

MEMORY:

Young Leda and Joe make love.

JOE
I love fucking your wet pussy.
You're so wet. And tight. My cock
is--I'm so...I'm...

YOUNG LEDA
Your cock is pushing me open.

He stops.

JOE
I'm sorry.

YOUNG LEDA
You're not hard?

JOE
I sort of am.

A pause.

YOUNG LEDA
I'm just going to the bathroom.

JOE
When you get back I'm gonna make
you come.

CUT BACK TO:

68 INT. LEDA'S CAR/ COASTAL ROAD - PRESENT DAY 68

Leda drives, fast. She hits a puddle on purpose.

CUT TO:

69 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT (MEMORY) - DAY 69

The girls are wild, in dress-up clothes playing charades with their parents.

Young Leda and Joe laugh so hard they can barely speak, tears stream down their faces.

CUT BACK TO:

70 INT/EXT. LEDA'S CAR/ BEACH PARKING LOT - DAY 70

Leda pulls fast into the beach parking lot.

71 EXT. PINWOOD PATH - DAY 71

Leda walks through the pinewood path. It drips with rain left on the branches.

72 EXT. BEACH - DAY 72

Leda arrives at the beach. It's wet and deserted from the rain. The beach cafe is closed up.

Leda goes to Nina and Elena's umbrella. Under the beach chairs is a pile of Elena's toys, some stuck into an enormous plastic bag.

Leda sits in their spot, spreads out her body on their beach chair.

She sees NINA IN THE DISTANCE, walking towards her down the beach, alone. Leda watches Nina coming closer, then jumps to her feet, waves her arms over her head.

LEDA
(calling to her, waving)
Nina! Hello! It's me.

The woman doesn't respond at first, then looks behind her, confused. As Leda watches it becomes clear that the woman walking towards her is NOT Nina. She's imagined it.

Embarrassed at the mistake, Leda starts to walk down the beach in the other direction.

CUT TO:

73 INT. JOE'S PROFESSOR'S FARMHOUSE - AFTERNOON 73

MEMORY:

Joe stands at the counter of a funky, old country kitchen making peanut-butter and jelly sandwiches with Saltines, eating most of them as he works. He drums along to the Jazz on the crackling radio.

It's a stormy day. The windows are dripping with rain.

Leda pulls the cabinets and drawers open, rummaging inside.

JOE
(mouth full)
You know...Judy Garland was a
fucking genius.

YOUNG LEDA
 (re: Saltine sandwiches)
 Those are for the girls.

Her head buried in a low cabinet.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
 Fuck. What does Dr. Williams make
 coffee in? Or does she just drink
 green tea?

JOE
 Didn't you just have one in Great
 Barrington?

YOUNG LEDA
 Fuck you.

JOE
 (offering a saltine
 dripping with peanut
 butter and jelly)
 Have one of these. They're
 incredible.

He pops one in her mouth; she lets him. It's dripping and
 sticky; some jelly gets on her tee-shirt.

The girls come bounding into the room, wet and very muddy.

YOUNG LEDA
 Jesus. You're soaking wet. This is
 Daddy's teacher's house. We have to
 be really careful. No shoes. Off,
 off.

MARTHA
 (smiling and happy)
 There were big, big puddles.
 They're not dirty!

YOUNG LEDA
 Off! Martha I can't get your shirt
 off without your help.

MARTHA
 It feels sticky.

The girls start to pull their muddy shoes off. Leda gets down
 on the floor to help them with their wet clothes.

BIANCA
 I'm hungry.

YOUNG LEDA
Daddy ate your snack.

BIANCA
Daddy, you said we'd make Blitzes
so the sun would come out.

JOE
Later we will.

Leda stands and suddenly GASPS. Everyone turns to look.

She's looking out a big picture window to see TWO BACKPACKERS standing at the edge of the woods, on their property. They are very still, drenched with water, looking at Leda's family inside the house.

JOE (CONT'D)
Oh, hikers. They must be doing the
Catamount Trail.

He goes to the window and waves.

YOUNG LEDA
Are you kidding me?

JOE
It goes all the way to Quebec, they
could have been out for weeks.
(to the girls)
Exciting!

YOUNG LEDA
Joe, it's not 1985.

JOE
Leda, they're soaking wet.

He's opening the back door and calling to them. The hikers wave, making their way towards the house. Drenched, but smiling and bright.

He is mid-40s greying but handsome and fit. She is late twenties, luminous. He's English. She's Italian, with an accent.

She is limping slightly, holding onto him for support. As they move towards the house.

MALE HIKER
Hello!

FEMALE HIKER
Ciao!

Young Leda is furious.

CUT BACK TO:

74 EXT. BEACH PRESENT - DAY 74

Leda walks down the beach. She stops to take her sandals off.

CUT TO:

75 INT. JOE'S PROFESSOR'S FARMHOUSE - EVENING 75

MEMORY:

The hikers sit in the kitchen, still in their wet clothes. She has a bag of ice on her ankle; her foot resting in his lap.

Leda is cold; and the girls are stiff and careful with the strangers. Martha sits in Young Leda's lap, Bianca stays close. Joe makes tea.

The sun is starting to set.

MALE HIKER

Actually there was a theater company for a while called Mabou Mines, after the town. Robert Frank and Richard Serra and a whole bunch of artists still live there, I think. Robert Frank's wife is an artist too. What's her name? The light is incredible.

FEMALE HIKER

(to the children)

And they have a funny accent. And whales swim by all the time.

MARTHA

I know about whales.

FEMALE HIKER

What do you know?

MARTHA

I know they have babies named calves, like cows.

FEMALE HIKER

Yes!

Bianca gets up and brings the Female Hiker the tea that Joe has made.

JOE
You look like you've been going a long time?

MALE HIKER
Yes. Since April.

JOE
Amazing.

A pause.

JOE (CONT'D)
Can I ask how old you are?

MALE HIKER
46.

JOE
Life is so different without kids.

MALE HIKER
I have kids. I have 3 kids.

A pause.

MALE HIKER (CONT'D)
12, 9 and 7. They're in London. With their mother.

JOE
Ah.

A pause.

YOUNG LEDA
So...you ran off together?

MALE HIKER
Yes. I guess we did.

FEMALE HIKER
Yes. We did.

A long silence. The children study the strangers.

FEMALE HIKER (CONT'D)
We are...obliged to do so many stupid things, from childhood even.

YOUNG LEDA

Obliged?

FEMALE HIKER

Yes...What happened to us is the only thing that's happened to me since I was born that makes sense.

ON YOUNG LEDA, struck by this.

76

INT. JOE'S PROFESSOR'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

76

Young Leda's family finish a spaghetti dinner with the hikers, two wine bottles open.

Young Leda and the FEMALE HIKER sing a dirty Italian folk song together, almost like a limerick. They laugh as they crescendo and finish.

FEMALE HIKER

Amazing! Bene, Bene! Your Italian is so beautiful. So feminine.

JOE

Leda is an extraordinary scholar of Modern Italian literature!

FEMALE HIKER

Ok!

YOUNG LEDA

No. Jesus, Joe. I study translation really. Comparative literature.

FEMALE HIKER

What are you working on?

YOUNG LEDA

I'm barely working.

JOE

Yeats. She's working on a Yeats translation.

MALE HIKER

Yeats in Italian! That's...like chocolate on chocolate!

YOUNG LEDA

Well, no.

BIANCA
 (in Italian)
 "The chill of the crooked wing
 falls down along my body."

FEMALE HIKER
 Wow. Wow.

YOUNG LEDA
 No.

MALE HIKER
 What is that?

YOUNG LEDA
 It's Auden. "The chill of the
 crooked wing falls down along my
 body." It's ridiculous, it's
 something I taught them. From "The
 Crisis." It's an inside joke.

There is a flushed silence at the table. Bianca is
 embarrassed.

FEMALE HIKER
 Bene.

77

INT. JOE'S PROFESSOR'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

77

The hikers are all packed up. They stand by the door, saying
 goodbyes, children loud and excited around them.

As the FEMALE HIKER embraces Leda:

FEMALE HIKER
 (in Italian)
 Would you give me something of
 yours to read?

YOUNG LEDA
 (in Italian)
 Something of mine?

FEMALE HIKER
 (in Italian)
 Yes. Your work.

A pause.

YOUNG LEDA
 (in Italian)
 I will, yes.

Young Leda starts upstairs, turns.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
 (in Italian)
 How are his daughters doing? Are
 they ok?

FEMALE HIKER
 (in Italian)
 Not daughters. They're boys
 actually.

78 INT. JOE'S PROFESSOR'S FARMHOUSE - DAY 78

Young Leda cleans up from the night before. She unmakes the fold-out sofa bed where the hitchhikers slept, taking off the pillow cases.

She starts to strip the sheets, but stops and gets into the bed instead. She pulls the sheets around her, smells them.

CUT BACK TO:

79 EXT. BEACH - DAY 79

Leda stops walking and looks around her. The sun has started to come out and people are returning to the beach.

She turns back the way she came, stretching her ankles. She's walked a long way.

Up ahead she sees a group of kids, Nina's family from the beach, DISTRIBUTING FLYERS TO THE BATHERS. They each hold a sizable packet of them. They're making a feverish game out of handing them out.

As Leda approaches, all the children rush to her, offering flyers. One of the children recognizes her.

CHILD
 (to his friend)
 Don't give her one.

CHILD 2
 Why?

But the children offer their flyers anyway. She takes one. The children bound off down the beach.

At the center of THE FLYER is an ugly photograph of Elena with her doll. In big bold letters is a cell phone number.

And a few lines offering a reward and saying the child is "grieved by her loss."

Leda carefully folds the flyer and puts it into her purse, next to the doll's new dress.

80 EXT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, STAIRS - DAY 80

Leda opens the door and runs up the staircase. Specters of her two daughters, Bianca and Martha (6 and 4) sit on the steps. Leda lightly touches their hair with her fingertips as she walks quickly past them.

81 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, HALLWAY/ KITCHEN - AFTERNOON 81

Leda walks straight into the kitchen. She climbs onto the counter to retrieve the doll from its hiding place in a top cabinet.

She opens the door, but THE DOLL ISN'T THERE.

She rummages around in the cabinet, pulling out paper towels, cleaning supplies etc...still no doll.

She starts to get frantic.

Then she opens another top cabinet. THE DOLL IS INSIDE.

She pulls her down. She looks at her for a while.

82 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, - AFTERNOON 82

Leda, sits on the terrace with THE DOLL. She uses a cloth and a bottle of rubbing alcohol to clean the pen marks off THE DOLL.

LEDA
Oh little thing--

She covers her mouth. Shocked at hearing her voice talk to the doll.

Suddenly, the sound of a door BUZZER is deafening. Leda startles. IT BUZZES AGAIN.

LEDA LEAVES THE DOLL ON THE TERRACE AND GOES TO ANSWER.

She presses the intercom and speaks into it.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Who is it?

LYLE
Hi it's Lyle.

His voice is right outside her apartment door. She opens it.

Lyle, the caretaker stands, sunburned, hair carefully combed, with a package in his hands.

LYLE (CONT'D)
I used my key downstairs. I didn't mean to disturb you.

LEDA
That's ok.

LYLE
I saw the car, I thought hey, she's back from the beach already.

LEDA
Yes.

She looks at the open doors to the terrace, THE DOLL LIES ON THE TABLE.

LYLE
I don't want to bother you, but if you like octopus, this was literally swimming an hour ago.

LEDA
Oh. Octopus.

LYLE
Chtapodi!

LEDA
You speak Greek.

LYLE
Some yeah. I've been here a long time...

A beat.

LEDA
Do you want to come in?

LYLE
Great.

He walks in and hands her the package. She takes it, makes an effort to smile.

LEDA
Thank you.

LYLE
Have you had dinner?

LEDA
I didn't have lunch.

LYLE
It's almost 5.

She nods.

LYLE (CONT'D)
This is so fresh you could even eat
it raw.

LEDA
I think I would find that
disgusting...or was that a dirty
joke?

A beat.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Sorry.

LYLE
How about fried?

LEDA
I don't even know how to clean it.

LYLE
I cleaned it! It'll take two
minutes.

Suddenly he's taken over the kitchen. He reaches for a pan;
he knows the place.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Where do you keep the oil?

Leda points.

LYLE (CONT'D)
I remember when I first got here
you could pick octopus off the
rocks with your hands. We'd hang
them from our clotheslines! Like
the old ladies do. Now you've got
to know a guy just to get a fresh
fish.

He laughs.

LYLE (CONT'D)

But it's all dying down now, not just here. You know my father-in-law used to say there was a time you could have walked from Martha's Vineyard to Nantucket on the backs of whales.

LEDA

You're married?

LYLE

Not since the 80s.

He laughs.

LEDA

Was your wife Greek?

LYLE

No. She was a Mayflower Mainer. That's a tough breed. Everyone she ever knew was a fisherman, or married to a fisherman. I was a sore thumb up there...She's dead three years now. My oldest son's much older than you.

LEDA

I don't think so--I'm old.

LYLE

What do you mean old? At the most you're 40.

LEDA

Nope.

LYLE

42, 43?

LEDA

I'm 48, Lyle, and I have two grown up daughters. One is 25 and the other is 23.

LYLE

Well, my oldest is 50, actually 51! So I win. I had him at 19 and my wife was 17.

A pause.

LYLE (CONT'D)

You didn't want to bring them on vacation with you?

LEDA

They're up in Canada with their father. He's a brilliant scientist. And it looks like they're going to be brilliant scientists too.

A pause. Leda looks again out the open French doors at THE DOLL lying on the outside table.

LEDA (CONT'D)

Are your kids here? On the island?

LYLE

Nah.

Leda nods, looks at him.

LEDA

So, you're 69?

LYLE

Yep, and three times a grandfather.

LEDA

They're so soft when they're very young. Their little bodies. You don't look it, like a grandfather.

LYLE

All show.

He's finished the cooking. He hands her a plate. The fried fish shimmers beautifully.

CUT TO:

83

INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

83

MEMORY:

Young Leda plays with Martha and Mini Mama, her doll.

MARTHA

She wants Mama's milk.

Martha brings the doll to her breast and pretends to nurse her.

YOUNG LEDA
Is the milk yummy?

Martha thinks for a moment, the doll at her breast.

MARTHA
(speaking in Nani's voice)
It's sometimes yummy. And sometimes
yucky. Like yours.

Young Leda takes this in.

CUT BACK TO:

84 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM/ TERRACE - EVENING 84

A while later...they've nearly finished a bottle of wine; she and Lyle sit side by side on the sofa, almost finished eating, leaning their plates on the coffee table.

The doors to the terrace remain open, revealing THE DOLL, untouched sitting on the table.

LEDA
It's funny how little food you need
to actually survive...but how nice
it is to feed yourself!

A pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)
...I think Martha grew up worried
about me, poor thing. It's too
much, making sure I ate and that I
didn't die at night, like a little
mama.

LYLE
That's not good.

She really looks at him.

LEDA
No...That's what made her
so...aggrieved. Little thing. But
actually, I don't know. These are
things I'm not sure about.
(re: the wine)
Have some more.

LYLE

I better not. If I really get started it's not easy for me to stop.

He laughs.

LEDA

Ah. Me, I only talk when I drink wine. Otherwise I just...Bianca see, is like her father. She makes me feel, well she's often made me feel that she wants to...re-make me. Like her viciousness was for my own good. Ha! Makes me sad...

A pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)

I bet your kids liked that, with the octopus'? Sounds like a nice way to grow up.

LYLE

They grew up with their mom in Philly.

LEDA

Ah.

LYLE

But yeah, that's the kind of thing a kid likes...

A pause.

LYLE (CONT'D)

You know Leonard Cohen used to come over here, from Hydra. We used to write songs together. My kids liked that, when I told them. Not real songs, just messing around...They liked that. And you know those uni shells?

She shakes her head.

LYLE (CONT'D)

No? Sea urchin? They come in those purple, beautiful shells? I'd fill them up with cotton balls and send them out to Philly for their birthdays...I'll look out for some for your girls.

LEDA
You sound like a real family man.

Lyle doesn't know what to say. He shakes his head.

LYLE
I taught them all how to
swim...except the littlest...

He pours a little wine into his empty glass. She watches him.

LEDA
I'm so mean. I'm sorry.

LYLE
Fuck, Lady. Say what you like...I'm
mean too.

LEDA
Well, you're in good company.

She raises her glass. They toast.

LYLE
Sklirotita.

LEDA
That sounds like the loveliest
thing in the world. What am I
toasting to?

LYLE
It means, mean. Cruel.

A pause. They drink. There's an intimacy between them.

LEDA
It must have been lonely here.

A beat.

LYLE
It was a real party.

Leda puts her head on Lyle's shoulder.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Do you feel sick?

LEDA
No I'm fine.

LYLE
Lie down for a minute.

Leda lies on the sofa. Lyle remains sitting next to her.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Now it'll pass.

LEDA
Nothing has to pass, Lyle, I feel fine.

Leda, her head on the sofa, looks out the open door again to the terrace where THE DOLL LIES ON THE TABLE.

LYLE
Do you want some coffee?

LEDA
No, thank you, stay there, don't move.

A long pause.

Leda opens her eyes, sits up.

LYLE
There you go. You've got your color back. You went totally pale.

LEDA
Yeah. You know, I studied Homeric Greek? But it doesn't do me much good here.

Lyle gets up, indicates the terrace.

LYLE
Would it be ok, if I had a smoke?

She nods. He goes out to the ; she follows.

He sees THE DOLL, half dressed on the outside table. But he looks away, smoking.

After a long beat, he picks up the doll by the chest, then, disconcerted, puts her down.

LYLE (CONT'D)
There's water in there.

A long pause. Leda doesn't answer. Lyle smokes.

Leda sips a cup of coffee on the terrace, as if the doll weren't there.

86 INT/EXT. LEDA'S CAR/ COASTAL ROAD - DAY 86

The sun is hot and bright. Leda listens to PEOPLE LIKE US by Talking Heads as she drives. She sings along, loud and wild:

LEDA
 People like us!
 Do-do-do-do-do
 Who will answer the telephone...
 People like us!
 Growing big as a house!
 We don't want freedom. We don't
 want justice. We just w-a-a-a-a-nt
 someone to love.

87 EXT. PINWOOD PATH - DAY 87

Leda makes her way down the pinewood path. It's cool and wet from the previous day's rain.

There are leaflets of Elena and her doll posted on many of the trees.

Leda stops to look at one.

88 EXT. BEACH - DAY 88

Leda lies on her beach chair, looking around at the usual suspects.

The pack of teenage rough boys play in the water, wrestling, holding each other's heads down, loud, violent.

One of the boys, 19, beautiful, eyes Leda. He flicks his head in a threatening way. Leda looks away.

Callie stands with her feet in the water, her enormous pregnant belly protruding in front of her.

Elena and Nina are not there. Their beach chair is empty, toys still piled underneath.

Finally, Leda gets up and joins Callie at the water's edge.

LEDA
 Hello.

Callie nods a little coldly, looks out at the water.

LEDA (CONT'D)
How's Elena?

CALLIE
She has a cold.

LEDA
Still? Does she have a fever?

CALLIE
Barely.

LEDA
How's Nina?

CALLIE
Nina is fine. She's with her
daughter.

A pause.

LEDA
In the pink villa?

Callie looks at her.

CALLIE
In the house. Yes.

They stand with their ankles in the water.

LEDA
You don't swim?

CALLIE
What?

LEDA
I never see you swim.

CALLIE
Yeah. I don't like it.

LEDA
My mom was afraid of the water too.

Leda smiles at her. Callie doesn't smile back.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Is everything ok?

CALLIE
No. Everything's not ok.

LEDA
I mean did I do something?

CALLIE
Did you do something? I don't
know. Did you?

Leda doesn't answer.

The two women stand together, not talking, their ankles in
the water.

LEDA
I saw the flyers.

CALLIE
It's ridiculous. I told my brother,
fucking waste of time.

A pause.

LEDA
Yeah. Fucking waste of time.

Finally Leda walks away.

She grabs her purse and walks down the beach.

89 EXT. PINK VILLA, COVE - DAY

89

Leda struggles along the dunes, looking at the houses set off
from the beach.

The sun is extremely bright. The sound of the cicadas is
deafening.

Finally she sees a GARISH, PINK STUCCO VILLA.

LEDA
The pink house.

She looks around for a path that leads to the house.

90 EXT. PINK VILLA, OLIVE GROVE - DAY

90

Lyle waters a small garden in the distance. He hears
something and looks in her direction. Leda avoids him. DID
HE SEE HER?

She takes out her cell phone and fishes out THE FLYER from
her purse. She dials the number on it.

From the thick beach shrubs Leda can hear the phone ringing. Then Nina's voice.

NINA
C'mon, stop, stop it. Let me
answer.

Leda abruptly hangs up.

She looks in the direction of Nina's voice and sees:

Nina in a thin dress, leaning against a tree. WILL, THE
YOUNG BEACH ATTENDANT, IS KISSING HER.

She accepts the kiss but with her eyes open, amused, alarmed. She gently pushes Will's hand away from her breast.

Leda turns and walks quickly back toward her umbrella.

CUT TO:

91 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, OFFICE - DAY

91

MEMORY:

Young Leda writes at her small desk, headphones on. We pull back to see that A MAN, early 50s is on the ground, head between her legs GOING DOWN ON HER AS SHE TYPES. We watch her for a moment, her breath quickens.

Then Bianca and Martha burst into the room. We see them silently at first, then they pull Young Leda's headphones off.

BIANCA AND MARTHA
Mama Mama Mama Mama Mama.

She jumps. THE MAN IS GONE FROM BETWEEN HER LEGS: a fantasy.

BIANCA
Professor Cole is on the phone.

YOUNG LEDA
What?

BIANCA
Professor Cole.

A pause.

MARTHA
Is on the phone.

Young Leda jumps up and hurries to answer it.

92

INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

92

Young Leda talks on the phone, the girls listen.

YOUNG LEDA

Ok, wow, is she ok?...ok, Good.
But, I'm not sure I'll be able to
afford a ticket on such short
notice...Oh my goodness, ok!...And
should I prepare a paper to
present?...Ok, no no that's ok.
Thank you for the
opportunity...That's fine...

93

INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

93

Young Leda bustles around the kitchen, the girls, hold onto her or play at her feet. A young college student/babysitter follows behind her.

YOUNG LEDA

So I wrote down my number and Joe's
number and Bianca's school and
Martha's daycare. Also here's
their pediatrician (Martha has a
little cold, it's nothing but she
should have a teaspoon of
elderberry in the morning, also
there's a humidifier I left by her
bed, you just have to plug it in).
And here's Joe's mom's number- I'll
call at dinner time, every night--
and here's my mom's number, but
only call her if you can't reach
anyone else.

She opens the refrigerator.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

I made dinners for Wednesday,
Thursday and Friday. I marked
which is for which day. I soaked a
bunch of black beans which I didn't
get a chance to cook, do you cook
at all? I taped the recipe to the
front of the fridge if you get a
chance, it's really easy, I don't
want them to go bad--

94

INT. LONDON HOTEL, YOUNG LEDA'S ROOM - DAY

94

Young Leda stands in a small hotel room, with two single beds. It's still and quiet.

She pushes open the curtains, tries to open the window but it only opens a crack.

She sits on one of her beds and kicks off her shoes, bounces a little.

She reaches for the phone.

YOUNG LEDA

Hi, um...could I order up some wine?...no, no just a glass would be perfect...Actually, sorry do you happen to have any champagne?...Oh, right, yeah that's ok...Actually how much *is* the bottle? I'm celebrating.

There's a knock at the door; she jumps and abruptly hangs up the phone.

She answers the door.

PROFESSOR COLE

Hi, Leda. This is the paper I'm giving.

He hands it to her.

A pause.

PROFESSOR COLE (CONT'D)

I'm not sure it's...persuasive.

A pause.

YOUNG LEDA

You want me to read it?

PROFESSOR COLE

Please.

He walks away, embarrassed, back down the hallway.

YOUNG LEDA

(calling after him)

I'm sure it's wonderful.

She closes the door, looks at the phone, but instead sits down at the small desk to work.

95 INT. LONDON HOTEL, CONVENTION ROOM - DAY 95

Young Leda sits, listening to Professor Cole give his paper on the stage. It's in Italian. He reads directly from the page, stiff and nervous. The room is half full, with academics.

Young Leda studies the faces of the people in the room.

96 INT. LONDON HOTEL, YOUNG LEDA'S ROOM -DAY 96

Young Leda sits on her bed, crossed legged, reading a book and eating room service french fries. She dips them in ketchup.

97 INT. LONDON HOTEL, CONVENTION ROOM - DAY 97

Young Leda is back in the convention room, but this time it's packed. Young Leda stands at the back with other young grad students. All the seats are taken.

Professor Cole arrives with a group of other professors and is rushed to a reserved seat.

He sees Young Leda; she waves, but he doesn't acknowledge her.

Suddenly the room quiets as PROFESSOR HARDY (late 40s) walks onto the stage. A few people applaud.

He begins. A skilled speaker, using the written text as a guide, then improvising.

PROFESSOR HARDY
(low, into the mic)
Bourdieu's mistake was that he
often forgot the first part of his
own name.

The room erupts in laughter.

PROFESSOR HARDY (CONT'D)
Sorry Walter, I couldn't help
myself...But what I really want to
consider, and I promise I'll bring
this back to Auden, is that which
is not only ineffable but *unthought*
in our paradigm.

Young Leda watches him. The sound shifts and his voice goes into deep background. Young Leda studies the faces in the room, laughing, rapt.

PROFESSOR HARDY (CONT'D)

I've been really turned on by Ricoeur's recent work on linguistic hospitality, and ha!...what about his name?? Ricoeur! Let's really lean into that second syllable because he *is* coming from the heart.

Then she focuses again on Professor Hardy. Studies his face, his deep green eyes, as he speaks.

We continue to hear his muffled voice but we...

CUT TO:

98

INT. LONDON HOTEL, YOUNG LEDA'S ROOM - DAY

98

FANTASY:

Professor Hardy grabs Young Leda's hair pulling her neck back. He gently pushes her against the door to her room.

PROFESSOR HARDY (O.S.)

"Translation sets us not only intellectual work, theoretical or practical, but also an ethical problem. Bringing the reader to the author, bringing the author to the reader, at the risk of serving and of betraying two masters." An ethical problem...Of course that's where the life is.

He pulls her skirt up, her coat still on, and reaches his hand inside her underwear.

PROFESSOR HARDY (CONT'D)

In her astonishing piece on Auden's *The Crisis*, **Leda Caruso** seems to me to have anticipated Ricoeur in this recent thinking on "linguistic hospitality." For her, the "hospitality" comes in holding one's attention, even in crisis. As Simone Weil says, "attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity."

Young Leda breathes deeply. Turned on as he touches her.

PROFESSOR HARDY (CONT'D)

It could be said that **Leda Caruso** is finding and *receiving* "linguistic hospitality" in her reading of Auden.

CUT BACK TO:

99

INT. LONDON HOTEL, CONVENTION ROOM - DAY

99

Young Leda is jolted back to reality. Her face is flushed and glowing.

Professor Hardy is quoting her text. People around the room are turning to look at her.

Even Professor Cole turns slowly to look at her.

PROFESSOR HARDY

Leda Caruso is *inside* Auden's private mythology. And, thank god. Because...and I'm quoting Vey again here, "Whenever one tries to suppress doubt, there is tyranny."

He has finished. The applause is wild and uproarious.

People start to make their way out of the hall.

Students, colleagues of Young Leda's are turning to look at her, shocked, with admiration. Someone touches her shoulder.

GRAD STUDENT

Congratulations.

Stunned, she makes her way to the door.

100

INT. LONDON HOTEL, YOUNG LEDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

100

Young Leda sits on her single bed, on the phone. As she talks, she takes her shoes off and tights; she undoes her bra and slips it off from under her blouse, finally alone.

YOUNG LEDA

(talking very quickly,
almost shouting with
excitement)

He was just suddenly, suddenly he was saying my name. It was, Joe it was crazy....no no he was quoting the Auden publication. He was saying I had *anticipated* Ricoeur.

(MORE)

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

It was...I'm sorry, I'm...yes, that I *anticipated* his work on translation. It was wild and Cole looked like his eyes were going to-- I mean he turned in slow motion to look at me...what? Chicken pox?? That's crazy. She just had a little cold...Does she have fever?...that's not really a fever...I haven't even read Ricoeur's recent work; it was...my own thinking...Yes, sure, put her on the phone...Hi baby! How are you feeling?

There's a knock at her door.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

Aw sicky, I'm sorry baby. I know it's itchy. Did Daddy give you a DVD?...yeah just don't forget it gets a little bit scary when the mama elephant gets--

Another knock.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

Yes baby, hang on, I know, I know hang on one minute sweetheart. Hang on...

Young Leda puts the phone down and runs to the door. It's Professor Cole.

PROFESSOR COLE

Sorry to disturb you.

YOUNG LEDA

No that's fine.

PROFESSOR COLE (CONT'D)

I came by to...congratulate you on your success tonight.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

No.

PROFESSOR COLE

You'll have to get the Yeats piece finished now, another publication is important.

YOUNG LEDA

Yes, for sure.

PROFESSOR COLE

I'll tell Hardy how we're working.

She nods. A pause.

PROFESSOR COLE (CONT'D)
Dinner is in 20 minutes. In the
Dining room. I've arranged a seat
for you.

YOUNG LEDA
Great, yes, thank you.

Professor Cole nods and moves off down the hallway.

Young Leda closes the door and goes immediately to her
suitcase to look for something to wear. She finds a wrinkled
dress, grabs a hanger and goes into the bathroom. She hangs
the dress from the shower door and turns on the water to try
to steam it out. Suddenly she runs back to the phone on the
bed.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
Hello?? Martha??

The line is dead.

101 INT. LONDON HOTEL, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

101

A buffet dining room, full of scholars.

Young Leda sits in her slightly wrinkled dress next to
Professor Cole. He eats, barely acknowledging her. Mostly she
drinks wine.

People keep coming up to congratulate her.

Finally Professor Hardy comes into the room. Someone whispers
to him and gestures towards the table where Young Leda is
sitting.

He looks at her for a moment, heads to his table, stops and
turns back towards Young Leda.

He approaches her, she stands.

PROFESSOR HARDY
(offering his hand)
I didn't realize you would be here.
It's great to meet you. Your work
is thrilling.

YOUNG LEDA
Thank you.

PROFESSOR HARDY
It's thrilling.

A pause.

YOUNG LEDA
Thank you.

He moves away; she sits.

Professor Cole starts to laugh quietly.

PROFESSOR COLE
(turning to whisper in
Young Leda's ear)
He's a serious scholar, but...it's
amazing to see. Amazing...

YOUNG LEDA
What is?

PROFESSOR COLE
Well...it will be interesting to
see his tactics as he renews his
pursuit this evening.

Young Leda starts to speak but stops herself.

From across the room, Hardy and a few young students at his table wave to Young Leda, gesturing towards a chair they've pulled up to their table for her.

YOUNG LEDA
Excuse me.

Young Leda crosses the room to them.

CUT BACK TO:

102 EXT. BEACH PARKING LOT/PRESENT - DAY

102

Leda emerges from the pine path to the parking lot. Two men talk very close to Leda's car, smoking. One of them leans on her hood. She can only see them from behind.

Leda slows as she approaches them.

LEDA
Hello?

The men turn towards her. ONE OF THEM IS TONI, NINA'S HUSBAND.

LEDA (CONT'D)
I think...that's my car.

TONI
You think it's your car?

LEDA
It's a rental.

They still haven't moved.

After a beat...

TONI
Excuse us.

Toni's friend gets up from leaning on her hood, but they remain standing very close to the car.

TONI (CONT'D)
Lyle tells me you're renting his place?

LEDA
He did?

TONI
Teachers get to take the whole summer off. Nice.

LEDA
(indicating her bag of books)
Well, it's a working vacation.

TONI
Ah. Me too.

They are standing very close to each other. Toni and his friend are almost blocking her way into the driver's side door.

TONI (CONT'D)
Thanks for helping with Elena the other day. And with Nina, she can get spacey.

LEDA
Oh sure. Excuse me.

They move out of the way and she puts her key into the lock. It doesn't fit. She struggles with it, tries again. They watch her.

LEDA (CONT'D)
 (looking into the car
 window)
 Oh no, whoops, this one isn't mine.

They watch her, silently, as she moves to another car,
 similar make and color.

LEDA (CONT'D)
 Bye!

A beat.

TONI
 (with an unnerving calm)
 Bye.

On her face as she drives away.

CUT TO:

103 INT. LONDON HOTEL, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

103

MEMORY:

The dinner is almost over. The room has emptied out; only a
 few small groups remain, finishing coffees and dessert.

Professor Hardy and Young Leda are alone at their table, deep
 in conversation. We find them, laughing.

YOUNG LEDA
 No! I loved the jokes about their
 names. It made you seem...human.

They burst out laughing again.

PROFESSOR HARDY
 Human! As opposed to?...

YOUNG LEDA
 Instead of a god.

A pause.

PROFESSOR HARDY
 Your name. Leda...It's very
 provocative.

YOUNG LEDA
 Are you thinking of the poem? The
 Yeats?

He nods.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
Yeah. For the very high minded it
always brings rape to mind.

PROFESSOR HARDY
Jesus.

YOUNG LEDA
I bet you know it by heart.

Professor Hardy smiles. He does.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
How about in Italian?

He looks at her and accepts the challenge.

PROFESSOR HARDY
(in halting, drunken
Italian)
A sudden blow: the great wings
beating still, Above the...
(in English)
Staggering girl??

YOUNG LEDA
Sconcertante??

PROFESSOR HARDY
Si, ragazza sconcertante.

He's looking at her.

PROFESSOR HARDY (CONT'D)
Then what?

YOUNG LEDA
Really?

PROFESSOR HARDY
Yes!

YOUNG LEDA
Her thighs caressed...hang On...
Le sue cosce accarezzarono.

He watches her. A pause.

PROFESSOR HARDY
Oh fuck.

104 EXT. LONDON HOTEL, STAIRS - NIGHT

104

It's very late. Professor Hardy and Young Leda sit on the floor of the hotel hallway, a bottle of wine next to them.

PROFESSOR HARDY

I want to go to bed with you.

Leda can barely look at him.

PROFESSOR HARDY (CONT'D)

It looks like you're married.

She nods.

PROFESSOR HARDY (CONT'D)

...So you have to start this.

She looks at him and slowly puts her hands inside his sweater.

She pulls his shirt up, untucking it and puts her mouth on his nipple.

105 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM/ KITCHEN - DAY

105

Young Leda keys into her apartment carrying her heavy suitcase.

MARTHA AND BIANCA

(O.S.)

Mama mama mama mama mama

They run into the room, toward YOUNG LEDA. She kneels and they literally tackle her to the ground.

She lets them.

CUT BACK TO:

106 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, HALLWAY/ KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

106

PRESENT:

Leda keys in and enters her apartment. She throws her purse on the couch and goes straight into the kitchen, where she pours herself a glass of wine, filling a tall water glass.

As she drinks, she climbs onto the counter and retrieves the doll from its hiding place.

She looks at the doll for a while.

She flashes through a few memories as she drinks her wine:

107 INT. ITALIAN DINNER PARTY - NIGHT 107

MEMORY:

Young Leda sits with Professor Hardy and three Italian scholars. They are drinking, smoking and talking over each other in Italian: loud, elated, happy, high. Leda says something in Italian and everyone laughs.

One of the Italians is much older (70s) bearded. He takes Leda's face in his hands.

 OLDER ITALIAN SCHOLAR
 (In English, with a thick
 accent)
 You are brilliant. Brilliant! You
 have a brilliant mind.

He kisses both her flushed cheeks. The other tipsy men raise their glasses in agreement.

 THE GROUP
 Salute!!

THEN:

108 EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY 108

MEMORY:

Young Leda arrives at a playground with Martha and Bianca.

 MARTHA
 Do you have snacks?

 YOUNG LEDA
 Oh shit. Later we'll get some.
 Go. Play.

The girls run off and she immediately pulls out her phone.

She reads a text and smiles, then makes a call. She speaks in Italian.

 YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)
 (in Italian)
 I don't want to cum in your mouth.
 (MORE)

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

I want to save it till you're
inside me...well, it might be
interesting for you not to get
exactly what you want.

She listens. Martha comes over.

MARTHA

(excited, pointing!)
Mama! The balloon man!!

There is a man sitting on a bench twisting balloons into
animals.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

I think he can make a whale!

Young Leda waves her away, gestures that she's on the phone.

Martha sits down by the balloon man watching him make
balloons for a line of kids.

THEN:

109 INT. PROFESSOR HARDY'S LONDON APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY 109

MEMORY:

Young Leda is naked in bed, on the phone. Professor Hardy,
half dressed moves in and out of the room.

YOUNG LEDA

(into the phone)
Yes baby AND candy from
London...you hang up
first...what?...I, Bianca can you
flip the phone around for Martha??
I can't hear her...Ok babies I love
you. You hang up first, it feels
better like that. I love you.
(she kisses a few times
into the phone)
Bye-bye. You hang up first.

Leda lies back in bed.

A pause.

YOUNG LEDA (CONT'D)

I hate talking to my kids on the
phone.

PROFESSOR HARDY

What?

YOUNG LEDA

I hate talking to my kids on the phone. They don't like it either.

PROFESSOR HARDY

Don't say that.

A pause.

YOUNG LEDA

Ok.

CUT BACK TO:

110 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, KITCHEN - AFTERNOON 110

PRESENT:

Leda finishes her wine and puts it in the sink.

SHE PICKS THE DOLL UP BY HER HEAD AND THROWS HER IN THE TRASH.

111 INT. SMALL TOWN MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 111

Leda sits in an old time summer movie theater; a few couples sprinkled around. An ordinary summer romantic comedy is just starting.

Suddenly a group of about 10 teenage boys comes into the theater, loud, rambunctious, rude. They throw a few pieces of popcorn at the screen as they sit down. They are THE ROUGH PACK OF BOYS FROM THE BEACH.

To the lead actress, on the screen:

BOY 1

(loud)

I'd fuck that hole.

BOY 2

Nah, she's too old yo.

Another boy starts trying out different ring-tones on his phone. His friends laugh.

BOY 1

I'd let her suck my cock if I didn't have to look at her face.

All the boys laugh.

Leda shushes the boys, imperiously.

LEDA
Shhhhhhh.

They ignore her.

Leda looks around at the other people in the audience. They look upset by the noise and a little scared.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Excuse me, please. We are trying
to watch this movie.

The boys quiet for a minute then burst out laughing.

LEDA (CONT'D)
If you can't control yourselves I'm
going to call the usher.

This just riles them up more.

BOYS
The usher! The usher! She gonna
call the usher, yo.

BOY 2
(standing up and thrusting
at her)
Yeah bitch! Call the usher. Call
that cocksucker.

Leda, furious, gets up and leaves the theater.

112 EXT. SMALL TOWN MOVIE THEATRE/ TICKET OFFICE - NIGHT 112

Leda storms up to the man at the ticket counter. He's Greek and struggles with her English.

LEDA
Excuse me, there are a group of
boys in theater 2 that are being
extremely disruptive.

MAN AT THE TICKET WINDOW
(sleepily)
Disruptive?

LEDA

Throwing popcorn, yelling at the screen and at the people in the theater. Yes. Disruptive.

MAN AT THE TICKET WINDOW

Do you want your money back?

LEDA

No. I want you to do something about it.

MAN AT THE TICKET WINDOW

Ok, I'm sorry. I'll take care of it. Give me a minute here.

113 INT. SMALL TOWN MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

113

Leda storms back into the theater and sits down.

The boys continue to laugh and jeer, louder now. They are hysterical; like a pack of wolves.

After a minute the ticket man opens the door, light from the hallway shines onto the screen.

SILENCE. The boys are totally quiet.

The ticket man stands there for a few beats then leaves, light shining onto the screen again as the door opens.

Immediately the boys start up again. Louder even, like an explosion.

LEDA

(rising, hysterical)

I'm gonna cut your little dicks off and feed them to you like peanuts!!

It's strange. Almost funny. The boys erupt in laughter.

LEDA (CONT'D)

This is unacceptable. I'm calling the police!

BOYS

(turning into a chant)

Call the police, bitch! Call the police. Blue Lives Matter! Blue Lives Matter!!

We hear Vasili's voice from the back of the theater:

VASILI
 (calm and clear)
 That's enough.

The boys quiet. Leda turns to see Vasili sitting in the shadows, alone.

Leda, disconcerted, embarrassed gets up and leaves the theater.

114 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT 114

Leda fishes the doll out of the trash.

115 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT 115

Leda lies in bed, eyes open. The doll lies next to her, dressed perfectly in the new clothes Leda bought for her at the toy store.

She shakes the doll.

LEDA
 Little thing. You've got water in your belly.

Leda cuddles the doll tenderly.

The lighthouse flashes its light at them. Leda gets up and closes the curtains.

116 EXT. FLEA MARKET - DAY 116

Leda walks through the streets of the town. They've been transformed into a flea market.

She mingles with a crowd of mostly women, rummaging through old coats and dresses, teapots, marine paintings etc...

She stops to dig among the jumble. She's holding a hat pin, dangerously long and sharp with a beautiful black amber handle when her phone rings.

She doesn't recognize the number.

LEDA
 Hello?...yes, this is she...Oh. Is everything ok?...I'm right near the fountain, at a stall selling vintage clothes and jewelry, I won't move from here.

Leda puts her hand to her heart and looks around.

Finally Nina appears, wearing the big hat her husband gave her. She's holding it on with one hand to keep it from flying away while struggling with her stroller through the crowd.

Leda waves her arms.

NINA
(laughing)
I've been following you for like 10
minutes...

LEDA
Yes, you said. Is everything ok?

NINA
What, yeah. But it was too hard in
this crowd...with this hat...Your
number came up on my phone, from
yesterday. You called me?

LEDA
I did.

Leda squats down to see Elena in the stroller.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Hello...Are you feeling a little
better?

Elena has a pacifier in her mouth.

NINA
She's fine. But she won't get over
it. She wants her doll.

Elena takes the pacifier out of her mouth.

ELENA
She has to take her medicine.

LEDA
Your doll? Is she sick?

Elena nods.

Nina's hat flies off. Leda picks it up for her.

NINA
Sorry, it won't stay on.

LEDA

Oh, wait.

Leda arranges the hat carefully and uses the long, beautiful hat pin she was examining to fix it in Nina's hair.

LEDA (CONT'D)

There you go. My grandmother used to use hat pins. It won't fall off.

VENDOR

(in halting English)

That's 55 Euro. It is amber, for real.

NINA

I got it.

LEDA

(paying him)

No, no. It's a gift. But disinfect it when you get home. It's very sharp, I remember getting really bad scratches when I was little.

NINA

Thank you...C'mon baby, let's put the pacifier away. We don't want to make a bad impression on Leda.

Elena refuses. Nina gives up.

LEDA

Fuck it.

They start to walk out of the crowd.

NINA

She's been...ever since the doll was stolen...she's been like actually driving me crazy. There's something wrong with her. She won't sleep unless I'm in her bed with her...and the binky, it's like...I'm...I'm really tired. Like scary tired.

LEDA

I remember, yeah.

Suddenly Nina laughs.

NINA

I know you saw me and Will...I don't want you to think badly about me.

LEDA

I don't think badly about anyone.

NINA

Yes! See I KNOW that. As soon as I saw you I thought...I wish I could be like that lady.

Leda smiles.

NINA (CONT'D)

You're...I don't know how to explain it. It's all over you.

LEDA

Thank you.

They walk a little.

NINA

It doesn't mean anything...what you saw.

LEDA

Oh really?

NINA

Yeah, it doesn't! I don't let it go anywhere. I just want...He wants me so bad, you know. I'm just letting it go for a little while...I want to.

A pause. They walk. Elena has fallen asleep. Nina takes the pacifier out of her daughter's mouth and wraps it in a Kleenex.

NINA (CONT'D)

But I'm happy with Elena, I'm happy with everything. It's just...I met my husband really young so...He's fucking crazy about me. And Elena. He says my breasts are exactly the size of his hand.

LEDA

What would he do if he saw you with Will?

NINA
Oh, he'd cut my throat.

A pause. It's not clear if she's joking.

NINA (CONT'D)
It's just me really. I'm like..If
I find whoever is making my child
suffer...

A pause.

LEDA
What will you do?

NINA
I know what I'll do.

Leda lightly touches Nina's arm.

LEDA
It's ok.

NINA
What do you mean?

LEDA
I mean...you're not gonna go to
hell.

Leda smiles. Nina does too. A beat.

NINA
Yeah. I just wanted to talk to you.
When I see you at the beach I just
want to sit under your umbrella and
talk to you all day...I don't know
if you'd be bored. Will told me
you're a professor...

LEDA
What do you do?

Nina laughs again.

LEDA (CONT'D)
You don't work?

NINA
My husband works.

LEDA
What does he do?

Nina shrugs, annoyed.

NINA

I don't want to talk about him. I have like 5 more minutes till Callie finishes shopping.

LEDA

She doesn't want you to talk to me?

NINA

Who gives a fuck. She doesn't want me to do anything. Can I ask you a question?

LEDA

Sure.

A pause.

NINA

What happened in the toy store?...You were talking about your daughters...and something happened. Do you know what I'm talking about?

A pause.

LEDA

Yes.

A pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)

I left.

NINA

Oh.

LEDA

When the oldest was six and the youngest was four.

NINA

What do you mean?

LEDA

I left...I abandoned them. I didn't see them for three years.

A pause. Nina studies Leda.

NINA
You didn't see your daughters for
three years?

LEDA
Right.

NINA
Who took care of them?

LEDA
Their father, my mom...After that I
took them back.

Nina considers this.

A pause.

NINA
What did it feel like...without
them?

LEDA
What did it feel like? It felt
amazing...Like I had been trying
not to explode, and then I
exploded.

NINA
That doesn't sound amazing.

LEDA
Okay.

A pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)
(looking over Nina's
shoulder.)
Your husband and Callie are here.

NINA
My husband?

Nina turns to see Toni and Callie standing at the entrance to
the market, a hundred feet away.

NINA (CONT'D)
What the fuck is he doing here? He
was supposed to come back tomorrow.
Fuck...I have to go.

She quickly kisses Leda on the lips.

NINA (CONT'D)
Can I call you?

LEDA
Yes.

Leda watches Nina hurry off to her family, link arms with her husband, kiss him, laugh.

117 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DAY 117

Leda holds the doll in the sink, face down. She pushes on its back; a stream of dark, slimy liquid mixed with sand sprays out her mouth and down the drain.

Leda shakes the doll, there's still liquid inside, but there's something keeping it from coming out.

Leda examines the doll's mouth; she squeezes: a soft, reddish engorgement.

She puts the doll down and goes to the medicine cabinet for some tweezers. Her face in the mirror...

CUT TO:

118 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM/ KITCHEN - DAY 118

MEMORY:

Joe opens the door for Young Leda. Martha and Bianca hide behind him.

A quiet moment.

YOUNG LEDA
(to the girls)
Hi, guys.

Martha looks out a little from behind Joe's legs.

JOE
Hi Leda.

YOUNG LEDA
Hi.

He kisses her cheek.

MARTHA
Are you home now Mommy?

YOUNG LEDA
I'm home today!

MARTHA
After dinner, can you wash my hair?

A pause.

YOUNG LEDA
I can't stay for dinner tonight,
baby. I have to get on an
airplane.

A pause.

MARTHA
Ok.

Young Leda leans down to the girls. Bianca looks away.

YOUNG LEDA
I brought you a present. Fancy
dresses!

119 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT/BIANCA AND MARTHA'S ROOM- DAY 119

Young Leda helps Martha into an exquisite, starched, pearl-
buttoned little girl's dress. Bianca puts her own dress on.
The girls are small and tender.

MARTHA
(trying to please her
mother)
Oh pretty!

Bianca struggles with some buttons in the back.

YOUNG LEDA
Bianca, can I help you with the
buttons in the back?

BIANCA
No.

Joe comes to the door.

JOE
Leda. Can I talk to you?

A pause.

YOUNG LEDA
Sure.

She gets up to go to him.

120

INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

120

Young Leda and Joe are midway through this conversation. Joe is weeping. They are both trying to whisper so the kids don't hear.

JOE

Please please don't do this.

YOUNG LEDA

Please, Joe...

JOE

Do you need me on my knees?? Do you need me to cut my fucking balls off?

He drops to his knees, ironic, angry.

JOE (CONT'D)

Leda??...You've got your professor's cock in your mouth? You can't even answer me?

YOUNG LEDA

Fuck you. This has nothing to do with that.

JOE

Fuck me??

YOUNG LEDA

I left him. That isn't why.

JOE

Oh good. Leave Everybody! Queen of the fucking world! You think I'm an asshole?

Still on his knees, he wraps his arms around her legs.

JOE (CONT'D)

Oh Leda. Leda baby....They're just little girls. How am I supposed to do this? I love you. Oh I love your ass.

He buries his face in her belly. He puts his hands on her ass, up her skirt.

YOUNG LEDA
I can't...Joe. I'm dizzy...

She separates herself from him. She is very still and stoic. It infuriates him.

JOE
I'm gonna take them to your mom's.
I can't handle this.

Suddenly she's not whispering anymore.

YOUNG LEDA
NO.

JOE
Yes.

YOUNG LEDA
YOU'RE THREATENING ME. Please don't do that. THAT IS REVENGE. Or laziness. They will sink into that black shit hole, all the shit I came from. I DO think you're an asshole. My mother didn't finish HIGH SCHOOL!

JOE
And so what she's not a human being??

She storms out of the room and into the kitchen.

121 INT. YOUNG LEDA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

121

Young Leda closes the kitchen door and pours herself a glass of water, upset.

A timid knock at the door.

YOUNG LEDA
Yes...

The girls come in, in their new dresses, not quite buttoned up. Martha first, then Bianca. Bianca closes the door.

MARTHA
(to Young Leda)
Mama, can you...
(to Bianca)
I forgot.

Martha looks to her sister. Bianca whispers in her ear.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
 (to Bianca, whispered)
 You say.

BIANCA
 Will you make a snake for us?

YOUNG LEDA
 What?

MARTHA
 Will you make a snake for us, mama?

Young Leda understands. She gets an orange and a knife.

She sits at the table, the girls across from her. SHE PEELS THE ORANGE IN ONE LONG PIECE, LIKE A SNAKE.

Then she gets up and walks out the door.

CUT BACK TO:

122 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, BATHROOM - DAY 122

Leda comes back to the doll, tweezers in hand. She uses the tweezers to pull the doll's lips apart.

The reddish engorgement seems to move. Something starts sliding out of the doll's mouth.

Leda, scared, drops the doll.

A LONG WORM slides out of its mouth.

Leda watches as it slithers down the doll's body.

123 EXT. BEACH - DAY 123

It's the crowded weekend scene at the beach. Loud, bright.

Leda watches, all her books spread around her.

Elena is screaming that she wants to go in the water. Nina is frustrated. She meets eyes with Leda.

CALLIE
 I'll take her.

NINA
 Will you lay off?? Fuck. I'm going.

Callie is taken aback. Nina roughly takes Elena to the water.

Leda starts to gather her things.

One of the rough boys from the movie theater runs up to her, startles her from behind.

ROUGH BOY
(smiling)
Do you need a hand with your bags?

LEDA
What?

ROUGH BOY
Do you need a hand? My aunt asked me to ask you.

Leda looks over at Callie who is looking at her, but looks away.

LEDA
No. Thank you.

124 EXT. PINWOOD PATH - DAY 124

Leda walks through the deserted pinewood path.

She hears A SCUFFLING SOUND BEHIND HER, and turns to look, scared.

She starts to walk faster. The noises get louder, the cicadas, the far off voices, maybe even footsteps? She's sweating.

LEDA STARTS TO RUN, as fast as she can through the pinewood.

125 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON 125

Leda sleeps deeply on the sofa, head back, mouth open, snoring. She's still in her wet bathing suit, and holding the doll.

126 EXT. SEASIDE TOWN, BOARDWALK DANCE PARTY - NIGHT 126

Leda walks, eating an overfilled Greek sandwich. She's enjoying it, sauce seeping out; it's dripping and she licks her lips and fingers.

YOUNG CHILD'S VOICE

Mama!

Leda turns out of habit, thinking she's being called.

She turns to see a little girl and her mother waiting in line for a clown, knotting long colored balloons into animal forms.

It's not her child of course.

She continues on...

127 EXT SEASIDE TOWN, BOARDWALK DANCE PARTY - NIGHT 127

Leda sees a small crowd gathered on the boardwalk.

A dance floor has been laid; there are a few couples dancing to a rock n roll cover band. Among them is Lyle; he has serious dancing style. Leda watches.

128 EXT SEASIDE TOWN, BOARDWALK DANCE PARTY - NIGHT 128

LATER

The crowd has multiplied, now many more people are dancing: grandmothers and their grandsons, a father with his 10 year old, old women with old women, children, locals, tourists.

Lyle emerges from the crowd, sweating, happy, bright.

LYLE

(offering his hand to
dance)

What do you say?

LEDA

No. Thank you.

LYLE

Oh, say yes.

Leda looks at him.

LEDA

Ok, yes.

LYLE

Here, leave your purse with Kyra
Nitsa.

He hands Leda's big beach bag to an old lady standing by; she smiles.

Leda and Lyle dance.

129

EXT. SEASIDE TOWN, BOARDWALK DANCE PARTY - NIGHT

129

LATER

Lyle and Leda are still dancing, sweaty, deep into conversation.

LYLE

The full moon in September,
Jesus!...

Leda laughs, spinning.

LYLE (CONT'D)

And the mussels! They're
flourishing!

The cover band starts playing Bon Jovi's LIVIN' ON A PRAYER.

LEDA

Oh shit. I love this song.

She starts to really dance. Wild, sexy, strange. Singing along to the music; she knows all the words.

LEDA (CONT'D)

(really singing along)
Tommy used to work on the docks,
union's been on strike. He's down
on his luck, it's tough, so
tough...

SHE'S WILDER THAN ANYONE THERE. People start to notice.

NINA AND HER HUSBAND TONI AND CALLIE AND ELENA (WITH A MASSIVE ROLL OF COTTON CANDY) ALONG WITH THE ROUGH BOYS AND THE REST OF THEIR FAMILY APPEAR AT THE EDGE OF THE DANCE FLOOR.

Lyle notices them. He looks embarrassed. He stops dancing.

LYLE

Excuse me. Thank you.
(motioning to Nina's
family)
You should go home.

Is he warning her?

Then he moves off to greet Nina's family, in particular her husband. Leda is left alone on the dance floor.

It feels to Leda like Toni and Lyle are talking about her, gesturing towards her.

She turns to leave.

130

EXT. SEASIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

130

Leda finds Will waiting in front of her door in the dark, looking at his phone.

She jumps, a little spooked.

LEDA

Will.

WILL

Hi.

LEDA

Is everything ok?

WILL

Yeah.

A pause.

WILL (CONT'D)

(oddly formal)

It's beautiful, the gift you gave Nina...She was really grateful for your kindness.

LEDA

Okay.

WILL

I have something to ask you.

LEDA

What?

WILL

Do you mind if I come up?

A pause.

LEDA

I do actually.

WILL
(looking at the wall
behind her)
Nina wants to know if you would be
willing to lend us your place for a
few hours.

A long pause.

LEDA
Tell Nina I'd like to talk to her.

WILL
When?

LEDA
Whenever she wants.

WILL
Her husband leaves Sunday night,
before that it's impossible.

Leda laughs at his intensity.

LEDA
Monday is fine.

A pause.

WILL
Are you angry?

LEDA
No.

WILL
You seem angry.

LEDA
Will, the caretaker of my apartment
knows Nina. He has business with
her husband.

WILL
Lyle? He doesn't count. 20 Euros
and he won't say anything.

She looks at Will carefully.

LEDA
Why did you ask this of me?? In
particular?

WILL
Nina asked me to.

131 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT 131

Leda lies in bed in the dark, TV on, books around her. The doll leans against the pillow next to hers.

Leda flips through her cell phone, scrolling through her phone contacts. She lingers on BIANCA'S number and MARTHA'S, thinking about calling them.

Suddenly the BUZZER SOUNDS. IT'S UNNATURALLY LOUD. Leda jumps.

She goes to the door and pushes the intercom.

LEDA
Hello?

Nothing.

LEDA (CONT'D)
Hello??

She goes back to her bedroom and quickly turns out the light. She peeks out the window.

There's no one there.

The beam from the lighthouse floods the room with light.

132 EXT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, TERRACE - AFTERNOON 132

Leda, in a bikini, lies in the sun on a lounge chair on her small balcony, hair wet, reading.

THE BUZZER SOUNDS. It's very loud; Leda jumps.

She wraps a towel around her waist and goes to the door.

133 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, HALLWAY/ LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON 133

Leda goes to the front door and presses the intercom.

LEDA
(into the intercom)
Yes?

NINA
It's Nina.

A beat.

Leda buzzes her in.

Leda opens the door to Nina. She's wearing her new hat and hat pin, she's out of breath.

LEDA
Well, hi.

NINA
Hi.

LEDA
I thought you were coming Monday.

NINA
No.

LEDA
Just give me a minute to get dressed.

NINA
No I just have like literally a minute. I told Callie I was going to get nose drops for Elena. She's always in the water...she can't get rid of her cold.

LEDA
Sit down for a minute.

Nina does, taking off her hat and placing it carefully on the table next to the hat pin.

NINA
It's lovely here.

LEDA
Yeah. So...you want the keys?

NINA
If it's alright with you.

LEDA
Well, it doesn't really have much to do with me.

NINA
It doesn't?

A pause.

LEDA
You told me you were happy with
your husband.

NINA
I did?

LEDA
You told me you were happy with
everything.

NINA
Yeah...

LEDA
So?

NINA
I don't know.

Leda nods.

Leda takes out the keys and puts them on the table next to
the hat and hatpin.

NINA (CONT'D)
What do you think?

LEDA
I think you should do what you
want.

Nina looks at her.

NINA
Where do you live?

LEDA
Cambridge, near Boston.

NINA
I'll come see you.

LEDA
Ok. I'll leave you my address.

A pause.

NINA
Is this gonna pass?

LEDA
What?

NINA

I don't know what to call it.

Nina makes a gesture to indicate vertigo and also a feeling of nausea.

NINA (CONT'D)

I have depression or something...
But, it passes?

LEDA

I thought you were in a hurry.

NINA

I am. If it felt amazing...why did
you go back? To your daughters?

LEDA

Amazing?

NINA

That's what you said...

LEDA

It felt like a lot of things.

A pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)

No. I don't think it does pass.

A pause.

LEDA (CONT'D)

I'm their mother. I went back
because I missed them...I'm very
selfish.

Nina watches Leda, then she starts to take the keys.

LEDA (CONT'D)

Wait, I have to give you something
else.

Leda stands up and feels suddenly dizzy. She steadies herself against the wall.

NINA

Are you ok?

LEDA

It's just from standing up so
quickly.

Leda goes into the bedroom. Nina waits on the couch.

LEDA RETURNS HOLDING THE DOLL.

Nina laughs.

NINA

What's that?...You found her? Where did you find her?

LEDA

No...I took her.

A beat.

NINA

Why?

LEDA

I don't know.

NINA

You don't know?

LEDA

No...

NINA

I don't understand...Did you think...the doll wasn't good for us?

Nina looks scared.

LEDA

I was just playing.

NINA

But, what? playing?...We were all messed up. You saw us...

LEDA

I'm an unnatural mother.

Leda starts to cry.

NINA

Oh fuck.

LEDA

I'm sorry.

NINA

This is...fucked.

Nina grabs the doll.

She starts to go, leaving the keys and her hat and hatpin on the table.

LEDA

Oh, take the keys Nina. I'm leaving tonight. The apartment will be empty till the end of the month...

NINA

I don't want anything from you.

LEDA

Ok...I'm sorry. You're so young...No. It doesn't pass. None of it passes.

NINA

(suddenly hissing,
furious)

You are a fucking sick cunt. You better watch your back bitch.

Leda gasps.

She looks down to see THE END OF THE HAT PIN STICKING OUT OF HER SKIN, above her stomach, just under her ribs.

NINA (CONT'D)

You are one crazy ass bitch.

Nina pulls the pin out, throws it on the floor. She leaves her hat and the keys and runs out the door with her doll.

Leda stands, her arm against the window, watching a tiny drop of blood form on her skin.

134 INT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM/ HALLWAY - DUSK 134

LATER

Leda sits, lost in thought, on the sofa; it's almost dark now.

She gets up slowly and turns on a lamp. She walks gingerly over to a closet and pulls out her suitcases.

135 EXT. SEASIDE APARTMENT, STAIRS - NIGHT 135

Leda, elegantly dressed, hair brushed, stands on the landing in the hallway.

Moving very slowly, she pushes one of her suitcases down the stairs, then leans against the wall, watching as it bumps against each step on its way down.

There is A SMALL BLOOD STAIN ON THE SILK OF HER BLOUSE.

136 INT/EXT. LEDA'S CAR/ RED FLAG ROAD - NIGHT 136

Leda's car speeds down the two-lane seaside road. The sea is on one side, dunes on the other, lit by a bright moon.

137 EXT. RED FLAG ROAD - NIGHT 137

WE ARE BACK WHERE WE STARTED.

Leda's car has careened into the guardrail off the small beach road.

Leda emerges from the car. She looks around, dazed.

Leda continues toward the water in the moonlight.

We watch from the road as she collapses on the beach.

DISSOLVE TO:

138 EXT. RED FLAG BEACH - DAWN 138

We are very close on Leda as she lies, passed out, by the shore.

Suddenly the sun crests the horizon. Its light hits Leda's face. It is extremely bright.

Leda slowly opens her eyes, squinting against the intensity of the sunlight.

A big wave hits Leda's body, the cold water shocking her.

She takes in a sudden, deep, surprised breath.

CUT TO:

139 EXT. RED FLAG BEACH - NIGHT 139

Leda sits in the sand, still a little wet. She is deep in thought.

HER PHONE RINGS.

She jumps as if she forgot she had it with her. She finds the phone in her pocket. She looks at the screen, answers.

LEDA
Bianca. It's mama.

There is a blast of sound from the other end of the phone. We hear her daughters' excited voices, but muted.

BIANCA
I know, mom! I called YOU.

MARTHA
Mama!! You haven't called us
in so long!

LEDA
Oh, you're both there. Martha.
Little thing.

MARTHA AND BIANCA
(still speaking over each
other, playfully, almost
shouting)
Mama! Mom! Where have you been? Oh
my god, mom. We literally thought
you were dead.

LEDA
(deeply moved)
Dead?
(she considers this)
No, I'm alive actually.

On Leda as her daughters talk on the other end of the phone. Bubbling, laughing, needing things, explaining things...

As she listens, Leda puts her fingers to her wound. She looks at the blood it leaves on her fingers.

She opens her hand and AN ORANGE magically appears in her palm.

With bloody fingers, listening to her daughters talk, she sits in the sand and peels the orange. In one long piece, like a snake.

THE END