

CEASE AND DESIST

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TEASER

INT. THE PLACE: RESTAURANT AND NIGHTCLUB - EVENING

A lively weeknight in Hell's Kitchen, Manhattan.

Situated along one of the neighborhood's busiest streets is a restaurant and nightclub called The Place.

Inside, the restaurant is elegant yet understated. It's moderately packed with an older, wealthier crowd of diners.

In contrast, the nightclub upstairs crawls with club-goers. Some people are grinding on the dance floor, while others drink cocktails, smoke joints and do lines in the seating areas.

Various female ESCORTS whisk men off to secluded rooms of the club. Among these rooms is a small OFFICE where a very somber, LUISA SOLTERO (mid 50s, Puerto-Rican) writes a letter on her desk. After signing the letter, she folds it and slips it in an envelope.

As she gets up to leave, an angry MAKSIM 'MAX' REZNIKOV (late 50s, Russian) walks in. He speaks slightly broken English, but that doesn't make him any less intimidating. Upon seeing him, Luisa quickly hides the envelope in the desk drawer.

MAX

(Cold)

What's wrong with your girls?

LUISA

Nothing's wrong with my girls.

MAX

They are out of control.

LUISA

What are you talking about?

MAX

Alaina hit a client.

Luisa shakes her head. This happens all the time. Without looking at Max, she makes her way towards door.

LUISA

Maybe he deserved it.

Before Luisa can leave, Max slaps her across the face.

MAX
You fix this.

LUISA
Or what?

Max is a bit surprised by Luisa's rebellion. He grins, sardonically.

MAX
What's wrong, lyubov moya?

Luisa pulls back, but Max forcibly pulls her forward, his hand squeezing her cheeks. He begins to caress her head.

MAX (CONT'D)
(Mockingly)
Too many bad players or you must start playing field again.

Luisa spits in his face.

Max's amusement shifts to anger. Max starts to choke her until Luisa kicks him in the shin.

Max hunches over in pain as Luisa snatches a GUN from Max's pocket. Max pushes Luisa down on the ground causing the gun to fly out of her hand. As the gun slides across the floor, Luisa and Max are at a stare down; they both intend to reach the gun first.

From outside the OFFICE door, we see nothing but a flash of light through the door cracks accompanied by the sound of a gunshot.

BLACKOUT.

MAIN TITLES ROLL.

ACT ONE

EXT. RESIDENTIAL AREA - DAY

A JEEP sits on the street of a peaceful suburban neighborhood of Phoenix, AZ

Inside the jeep sits BENITA "BENNY" SOLTERO Y GARCIA (40s, Puerto-Rican), who is dressed for a night out. She has her legs up against the wheel, sipping from a bottle wrapped in a paper bag.

She opens the car mirror and applies a bit more mascara to her eye. Satisfied with her look, Benny starts the engine, and turns on the radio full blast.

A frail hand from the passenger's seat turns down the radio. It's Benny's dead grandmother, TEOFILA SOLTERO (late 60s), a figment of Benny's imagination (as well as her voice of reason).

TEOFILA

(In Spanish)

You're going to go deaf by 50, if you keep playing your music that loud.

Benny pulls some lip liner from her purse and colors her bottom lip.

BENNY

Like you don't listen to Sinatra that loud, Abi?

TEOFILA

Did I tell you the story of how your Abuelo lost his hearing? Every day, he had his ear against the generator while he was packaging--

BENNY

I know the story, Abi.

TEOFILA

Yet, you continue your habits.

Benny pushes up the mirror and puts the lip liner back in her purse. Benny takes another swig from the bottle.

TEOFILA

(Concerned)

Have you been going to the AA

meetings?

BENNY

Like one or two. It sucks.

TEOFILA

Why? You were so hopeful about it.

BENNY

I don't really gel with the rest of the group. And the leader is completely condescending.

TEOFILA

This is what I was worried about. I've told you before, therapy and rehab centers are just a money grab. You don't need rehab, you need God.

BENNY

Jesus Christ, stop bringing God into everything.

TEOFILA

Don't take Jesus' name in vain. He did not die for your sins for you to speak about him that way.

Benny shoots the jeep down the street and heads toward the freeway.

TEOFILA

Benita Jane Soltero, what did I say about driving with a temper!

BENNY

Well, I can't focus on the road with you nagging in my ear.

TEOFILA

You're not in any position to drive.

Feeling very drunk now, Benny's annoyance turns to frenzy.

BENNY

Fine. You don't want me to drive? I'll let Jesus take the wheel.

Benny releases both hands from the wheel. She nearly flies into a curb. Benny cuts the wheel to the right, and struggles to center the jeep, until she approaches a red light.

The jeep halts.

TEOFILA
 (Yelling)
 So help me, Benita Jane Soltero, I'll
 pull off my chancletas and knock some
 sense into your head!

After a green light, Benny makes a reckless left into ongoing traffic, but swings out safely.

TEOFILA
 (fatigued)
 I need a cigarette.

BENNY
 See, this is what pisses me off. You
 lecture me for drinking, when all you
 ever did was puff your own problems
 away.

TEOFILA
 Do as I say, Benita. Not as I do.

The jeep swerves back and forth, while a chorus of cars beep.

TEOFILA
 You're cutting him off! I'm begging
 you, Benita.

Sirens start wailing. Teofila notices a POLICE CAR in her rear view mirror.

TEOFILA
 Pull over!

Benny swerves the jeep into the left lane, nearly slamming into a truck. Teofila screams.

Benny sharply turns the wheel away from the truck, but rams into a telephone pole. The airbags smack Benny and Teofila. Teofila murmurs a prayer as the pole descends over the jeep.

The pole smashes the hood of the car - just missing Benny and Teofila. Benny sits in the driver's seat, stunned. She seems quite sober now.

BENNY
 Abi... what have I done?

Benny turns to Teofila for an answer, but she's gone.

Remembering Teofila exists only in her mind, Benny sinks in her seat, amid honking cars and wailing fire sirens.

CUT TO:

INT. JAILHOUSE - NIGHT

BENJAMIN 'BEN' GARCIA (40s), Benny's soon-to-be-ex-husband, walks to the BONDSMAN sitting at the desk.

BENJAMIN

Hi, I'm here to post bail.

BONDSMAN

For?

BENJAMIN

Benita Jane Soltero y Garcia

BONDSMAN

(Holds out a paper)

OK. Fill this out.

(Looks at computer)

Let me see what the damage is.

Bondsman begins to type as Benjamin fills out the paper.

BONDSMAN

These are some pretty hefty charges. Broken telephone pole, driving under the influence, numerous traffic violations. Does she have a lawyer?

BENJAMIN

Doubtful.

BONDSMAN

(Looking at computer)

Fifteen-hundred.

While shaking his head, Benjamin writes a check and hands it to the Bondsman.

OFFICER

(Over the phone)

Yeah?

BONDSMAN

I have a bail posted for Benita Soltero y Garcia.

OFFICER

Ok. We'll send her down.

Bondsman hangs up. There is an awkward silence between Benjamin and the Bondsman.

The station is very empty. Distractions are scarce. The Bondsman looks over Benjamin's file on the computer.

Benjamin hangs his head to the ground, shuffling his feet.

BONDSMAN

(Thinking)

Garcia...

Benjamin lifts his head.

BENJAMIN

Hmm?

BONDSMAN

You're not the Garcia that played for the Mets?

BENJAMIN

(Embarrassed)

Maybe.

BONDSMAN

(Intrigued)

Huh. No kidding. Why retire in Phoenix?

BENJAMIN

Well, I'm not fully retired. I've been coaching for universities for a while.

BONDSMAN

Which one? You know, my son plays, and he's trying to go for the major leagues. You don't think --?

BENJAMIN

There are actually a lot of great coaches in the area. I'm sure if he has the drive and he practices--

BONDSMAN

My sister hates baseball.

BENJAMIN

(Beat)

Oh, why is that--

BONDSMAN

--But if the Mets game was on, she'd watch it. She's in love with you.

BENJAMIN

Is that so?

BONDSMAN

Yeah, my wife does too. You got a wife?

BENJAMIN

Well--

Benny walks out and is escorted by the Officer.

BENNY

Ben.

BENJAMIN

Benny.

BONDSMAN

Hey, that's pretty funny. You guys brother and sister or something?

BENNY

Actually we're married.

BENJAMIN

Were. We were. We're divorced.

(Beat)

Well, we're filing for divorce.

BENNY

We're separated.

BENJAMIN

Right.

BONDSMAN

Uh-huh.

(Beat)

Well, get in touch with your divorce attorney. They may be able to refer you to someone.

(Hands over citation)

Your initial appearance is this Sunday.

BENNY
Really? A Sunday?

BENJAMIN
She'll be there. Thanks a lot.

BONDSMAN
Take it easy, guys.

CUT TO:

INT. BENJAMIN'S CAR - LATER

Benny sits in the passenger's seat while Benjamin drives.

BENNY
Thanks for picking me up.

Benjamin doesn't answer.

BENNY
You know it's funny, I always knew I would end up behind bars sooner or later. I just thought you would be there with me.

Benjamin keeps his eyes on the road.

BENNY (CONT'D)
Remember that thing we used to say?
Ben and Benny...the most infamous duo since Bonnie and Clyde?

BENJAMIN
(Beat)
You tell me you're going to AA meetings and you come back with a DUI.

BENNY
Ben...

BENJAMIN
Is your head not screwed on tight enough? First your job, now this. Where were you even going?

BENNY
I was just meeting up with some

friends in the neighborhood to go out.

BENJAMIN

Then you get a cab or something!

BENNY

Cabs are expensive nowadays.

BENJAMIN

Yeah, so is a freakin' DUI bail.

BENNY

I'll pay you back.

BENJAMIN

I was gonna use the money to pay Morgan's tuition today.

BENNY

Well, I didn't ask you to sacrifice our daughters tuition for my bail.

BENJAMIN

What else was I supposed to do?

BENNY

I don't know. Ignore me? Like you have for the past year. And since when do you worry about money?

BENJAMIN

Are you even going to the AA meetings?

BENNY

(Continuing)

You're already claiming everything in the settlement.

BENJAMIN

Answer the question, Benny.

BENNY

Yes, of course I'm going to the meetings!

BENAJMIN

Really? 'Cause they don't seem to be helping.

BENNY

Like I'm supposed to be cured

overnight?

BENJAMIN

You've told me you've been going to these meetings for nearly a year now.

BENNY

So?

BENJAMIN

Well I thought I'd see a little more progress than a DUI.

BENNY

You can't see progress if you never see me, Ben.

BENJAMIN

I'm literally putting down all this money to see you get help--

BENNY

I told you, you don't have to--

BENJAMIN

I want to--

BENNY

Why?!

BENJAMIN

I care about you, Benny--

BENNY

--if you really care so much, why are you leaving me, Ben?

Benjamin is silenced. He doesn't know what to say.

After a moment, Benjamin speaks.

BENJAMIN

We have to think of what's best for Morgan right now.

BENNY

How is tearing apart the family best for her? This is the most important time in her life. She's going to college--

BENJAMIN

Benny.

BENNY

--this is the time when Morgan needs
her family together the most!

Benjamin doesn't answer. Benny gives him a cold stare. After seconds of no response from Benjamin, Benny shakes her head. They pull up to Benny's apartment. She gets out of the car.

Benjamin peaks his head through the window.

BENJAMIN

Hey, you haven't--?

Benny already knows what he's about to ask. He's asked many times before.

BENNY

I'll get to it.

BENJAMIN

(Defensive)

Okay, okay. I'm just saying the final
court date is next week.

BENNY

I'm a little booked, Ben. I have
another court date on Sunday. I'm a
woman in demand.

BENJAMIN

Just take a look at it tonight, or
tomorrow.

BENNY

Alright, alright.

BENJAMIN

Goodnight, Benny.

Off of Benny's nod, Benjamin drives away. Benny watches the back lights of the car as they slowly fade.

CUT TO:

INT. BENNY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Benny lies on her belly watching TV on the couch in her
LIVING ROOM which sits right next to the KITCHEN.

On the table sits a bottle of white rum, a glass and scattered papers. The news is on TV, reporting about hurricane damage in Puerto Rico.

Benny tightly hugs the pillow beneath her. She shuts her eyes and imagines resting on Teofila's lap. Sure enough, we see what Benny imagines: Teofila tenderly stroking Benny's hair while smoking a cigarette.

TEOFILA

Life could be so much worse, Benita.
Everyone is struggling to rebuild
their homes. They have no protection.

BENNY

It was never my home, Abuela.

TEOFILA

Oh, hush. Not everything is about you.
(Beat)
It is still my home. It was also
you're mother's at one time.

BENNY

I don't want to think about her right
now.

TEOFILA

She did love you. She was just young.
(Beat)
And stupid.

BENNY

Do you think that's where she went
when she ran away? Back to Puerto
Rico?

TEOFILA

I would pray and pray every night for
answers. But, I never received a phone
call. Or a letter. The police weren't
any help either.

BENNY

Even if she was there now, I'd want to
worry about her. But I can't.

TEOFILA

Forgiveness is hard. It was very hard
for me today.

BENNY

(Beat)

You know I didn't mean to say what I said. I was drunk. I'm sorry.

TEOFILA

It's alright, Benita.

BENNY

I always think the worst. I would have never said those things...done those things...had you actually been there.

TEOFILA

People tend to respect the dead more than the living. This is not the case with you.

Benny grimaces. She reaches over and pours white rum into her glass. She sits up and shuffles through the papers and pulls out a page that states "Final Divorce Agreement."

Benny's eyes scroll down the page, until they reach the dotted LINE at the bottom. After a moment, Benny picks up a pen and signs it.

Benny pours another glass and cradles it in her hand.

TEOFILA

You and Puerto Rico have a lot in common. Both of you are drowning.

Benny concentrates on the white rum in her glass.

TEOFILA (CONT'D)

Put the drink down, Benita.

Benny shuts out Teofila's words. When Benny turns her head, we see that Teofila is gone. Benny sips the rum, then sets it on the table.

She lies down facing the flare of the TV, then slowly passes out.

CUT TO:

INT. BENNY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Benny is still lying on her belly from the night before. The TV is still on, playing the news. It is now the middle of the afternoon.

Benny awakes, and cuffs her throbbing head. Her eyes are smeared from her mascara. She feels for the remote and shuts off the TV.

Dehydrated, she reaches for the GLASS on the table from the night before. Believing there is water in the glass, she starts chugging it. Mid- chug, she remembers it is leftover white rum from the night before. She spits it out and gags.

Her gags are interrupted by the obnoxious ring of her cell phone. It's her daughter, MORGAN (17). She answers it.

BENNY
(On the phone)
Hello?

EXT. CATHOLIC SCHOOLYARD - SAME TIME

Morgan stands outside her all girls high school looking around for a CAR. She is dressed in her school uniform. As Morgan and Benny talk, we jump between locations:

MORGAN
(On the phone)
Are you okay?

Back at the apartment, Benny sits with a stink face, as she still tastes the alcohol in her mouth.

BENNY
Just a little under the weather this morning.

Benny heads to the kitchen to get a glass of water.

MORGAN
I would think so. Dad told me everything.

BENNY
I'm sorry I can't pick you up today.

MORGAN
It's whatever. I'm used to it by now.

BENNY
Don't say that.

MORGAN
But it's true! What's it gonna take for you to get your act together?

BENNY

Morgan, I'm sorry. It's been a pretty rough couple of weeks—

MORGAN

It's always a rough couple of weeks for you.

BENNY

Well, especially now!

MORGAN

Yeah? And who's fault is that?

Benny looks like she's been slapped in the face. She's a bit choked up now. And Morgan senses this.

MORGAN

Never mind, I really don't want to fight now. I just want to make sure you're okay.

BENNY

It's okay. You have every right to be mad.

MORGAN

Yeah. I do.

Benny snickers. She heads to the cabinet and pulls out a bottle of pain reliever pills.

BENNY

What if I make it up to you? We could get brunch? Tomorrow morning?

MORGAN

Why, so you can have alcohol before noon?

BENNY

No, no, just OJ. No bubbly, I promise.

MORGAN

And no bloody?

BENNY

No bloody. Just OJ and omelettes. Sound good?

MORGAN
Sounds great.

Benny smiles at the sound of Morgan's response.

BENNY
I love you, Momo.

MORGAN
Love you too. Bye.

After Benny hangs up, she pops two pills in her mouth, then drinks the water.

She heads over to the couch in the living room. The national news on TV is reporting various occurrences of gang violence in New York City. The TV shows various footage of drug busts and restaurant closures.

Benny grows bored of this. She's seen so many stories like this before. As Benny reaches for the remote, her phone starts to ring again. Benny goes to her phone and sees that the Caller ID is an unknown number. Thinking it might be the police station, she answers with hesitance.

BENNY
Hello?

On the other line is TAMERLIN LASHGARI (30s, Persian), a lawyer from New York City. He speaks with a very noticeable accent. Benny is a little relieved.

LASHGARI
Hello, is this Benita Soltero y Garcia?

BENNY
Oh, I'm not interested--

LASHGARI
--I'm calling about your mother's will.

A pause.

BENNY
Wait what?

LASHGARI
I'm the attorney who was hired to settle your mother's will.

Confused, Benny is at a loss for words.

LASHGARI

...Yes, I'm deeply sorry for your loss Mrs. Garcia. I assure you we can make this process as painless as--

BENNY

I-I'm sorry did you mean to say my grandmother's will?

LASHGARI

No. Your mother. Luisa Soltero.

Benny's face turns pale.

LASHGARI

Mrs. Garcia?

She drops the phone, runs to the bathroom, throws her head in the toilet and vomits.

LASHGARI

(From the phone)

Are you still there?

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

INT. BENJAMIN'S CAR - SAME TIME

Benjamin speaks over the phone wearing an earpiece as he drives.

BENJAMIN

(Over the phone)

Hi, can I speak with William Bayer?
Oh, this is he?

Benjamin pulls into the parking lot of Morgan's school. Morgan is seen speaking with a friend. Still on the phone, Benjamin waves at Morgan. She sees him, waves her friend 'goodbye' then gets in the car.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

...Thanks, I really appreciate
it...OK, Sunday...she'll be
there...alright...Mhm...Bye.

Benjamin hangs up.

MORGAN

How's the car?

BENJAMIN

Well, it was crushed by a forty foot
telephone call. I'll let you figure
that one out.

MORGAN

(Sarcastic)

Great.

BENJAMIN

Maybe you can understand now why I'm
hesitant to let you drive.

MORGAN

(Annoyed)

I'm not Mom, Dad.

BENJAMIN

(A bit condescending)

I know you're not.

MORGAN

I'm not stupid enough to get plastered
behind the wheel of car.

BENJAMIN

That's good, I'm glad to hear that.

A pause.

MORGAN

So can I start driving then?

BENJAMIN

Morgan, please. Let's not discuss this now.

MORGAN

You mentioned it first!

BENJAMIN

Sorry I said anything.

(Beat)

How was your day?

MORGAN

Kind of weird. We met the new Spanish teacher.

BENJAMIN

She seem nice?

MORGAN

I guess. Apparently she's really strict.

BENJAMIN

Is that really a bad thing? Sounds like she's serious about teaching.

Morgan rolls her eyes.

MORGAN

Oh, she's serious alright. Not like she has any reason to be. She's fresh out of college, yet thinks she's god's gift to teaching. I already have a test tomorrow.

BENJAMIN

Well, sounds like she's preparing you for college.

MORGAN

(In Spanish, sarcastic)

Like I need it.

Benjamin grins.

BENJAMIN

You should at least give her a chance.

MORGAN

Yeah I guess. It's just, no one can replace mom.

BENJAMIN

Well, I'm sure you can still see her outside of school. I don't think she'll be going anywhere anytime soon.

CUT TO:

INT. BENNY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Benny is still on the phone with Lashgari. She paces around her apartment.

BENNY

I'd have to go to New York?

LASHGARI

Yes, of course. That's where she was living and that's also where her funeral will be held. Is there an issue, Mrs. Garcia?

BENNY

Of course there's an issue! Why was I never informed that my mother was alive to begin with?

LASHGARI

I'm very sorry, Mrs. Garcia. I was merely appointed to contact you about the will and inform you of Luisa's funeral--

BENNY

Who were you appointed by?

LASHGARI

Luisa's former employer. They were business partners, so he is written in the will as well.

BENNY

So why isn't he speaking with me?

LASHGARI

He is very preoccupied with the funeral at the moment. But he has paid for the funeral expenses and is willing to pay your way up to New York so you can attend as well as discuss her will.

A pause. Benny is overwhelmed.

LASHGARI

Mrs. Garcia?

BENNY

I'm here. It's just--I haven't seen or heard from my mother in years. In fact, I really never knew her.

LASHGARI

I know this is a lot. However, Luisa's close friends have arranged the funeral for this Sunday. They would love to see you in attendance.

Benny's jaw drops.

BENNY

Wow, a little more notice would have been nice--.

LASHGARI

Yes, I understand. But this is standard, as her death was sudden. Again, we will pay for your way. Should you decide to come, there is a flight that leaves tonight, so you can arrive a day before--

BENNY

Whoa, whoa, tonight?

LASHGARI

Yes, tonight. A ticket has been purchased under your name.

BENNY

This is too much. I need more time to think about this.

Before Lashgari can answer, Benny hangs up and tosses her cell on the couch. Her phone buzzes.

She opens her phone to see a message of a link. She clicks on it. It leads her to an obituary site.

The headline reads: LUISA SOLTERO DEAD at 56. Below it, a younger picture of Luisa. She is the spitting image of Benny.

CUT TO:

INT. BENNY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Benny lies on her back, staring at the ceiling while she whispers Teofila's name. A weeping Teofila appears beside her. After a moment, Benny turns to face her.

BENNY

Abi, why didn't she come back?

Teofila shakes her head as she strokes Benny's hair.

TEOFILA

I suppose she was afraid.

BENNY

She was selfish.

TEOFILA

I understand your anger, Benita. But you must forgive her and be grateful.

BENNY

What is there to be grateful for? Abi, her closest friends and co-workers arranged her funeral, but not her family. Do you know how messed up that is? And why the hell did she include me in her will, but not her life?

(Beat)

I almost wish she was never alive to begin with.

TEOFILA

Bite your tongue, then beg for forgiveness!

BENNY

Anything would have been better than this!

A pause. Teofila gives her a nod of empathy.

TEOFILA

Benita, I think you should go to New York.

BENNY

That's ridiculous, it's so short notice. Plus, there's no point. I would be attending the funeral of a stranger.

TEOFILA

Luisa is my daughter. And your mother.

BENNY

I just don't understand why she left us like this.

TEOFILA

I wondered that my whole life. I don't have all the answers, Benita. But you can, if you go to the funeral.

Tears start welling in Benny's eyes. She knows Teofila is right.

BENNY

I really wish you were still alive so you could tell me that in person.

TEOFILA

I know, Benita. But I hear you. And I know, in your own way, you hear me too. I am just that little voice inside your head.

BENNY

If I go, I might regret it.

TEOFILA

But you will regret it if you don't go.

Benny nods.

TEOFILA

Do what you need to do to make peace with yourself.

Benny fixates on Teofila's cross hanging on the wall. After a moment, Benny rises from her bed and goes to the KITCHEN.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Benny goes to the cupboard and takes out a bottle of tequila. She pours it into a glass, and throws it back. She pours another and sips it lightly while leaning on the counter, lost in thought. There is no sound besides the subtle murmur of the AC.

The silence is interrupted by the ring of Benny's phone. It's the unknown number again. She answers it.

BENNY

This is Benny.

LASHGARI

Hi, Mrs. Garcia. This Tamerlin Lashgari. I'm sorry to bother you again, but I was looking over the will, and I've discovered some information that would be of interest to you--

BENNY

I think you've shared plenty of interesting info with me already.

LASHGARI

Yes, well, regardless whether you come to the funeral or not, I think you will find it beneficial to at least collect Luisa's inheritance.

BENNY

Inheritance? Of what exactly?

LASHGARI

Quite a lot, actually. Property, car, of course the money...

BENNY

How much?

LASHGARI

Millions.

A pause.

LASHGARI (CONT'D)

But, Luisa's former employer, Maksim

Reznikov needs you to be there in person to go over the will.

Benny thinks.

LASHGARI

Mrs. Garcia, are you still there?

BENNY

Yes, I am.

LASHGARI

So?

BENNY

(Beat)

Okay. I'll see you in New York.

END OF SECOND ACT.

ACT THREE

INT. AIRPORT - NEXT MORNING

Benny walks out onto the arrival sector of the airport, dragging a light suitcase. She looks like she has just rolled out of bed.

Benny hears her phone ring. She looks at it. It's Morgan. She answers with a tone more cheery than she actually feels.

BENNY

Hey Momo.

INT. MORGAN'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

On the other line, we see Morgan rummaging through her closet for a shirt.

MORGAN

Hey, so where should I meet you for brunch?

Benny's face falls. She's done it again. She resumes her march through the airport.

BENNY

Right. Can we reschedule that?

MORGAN

(Deadpan)

Why.

BENNY

I got called out of town for an emergency. I'll be back by the week.

Benny looks around for Lashgari.

MORGAN

What could you possibly have to go out of town for?

BENNY

(Distracted)

It's nothing major.

MORGAN

You just said it was an emergency.

BENNY
Just visiting a friend, she needs me.

MORGAN
Why? So you can go and party? Where
are you even going?

Benny sees a bright white sign with her name on it. Holding the sign is RAFAEL, the chauffeur. Lashgari stands next to him.

LASHGARI
Mrs. Garcia!

Benny walks toward him. The intercom echoes through the airport about a gate change. Morgan can hear this.

MORGAN
Are you in an airport?

BENNY
(On the phone)
I'm sorry, Momo. I got to go!

Benny hangs up. Back at Morgan's house, Morgan hears the phone go to a dial tone. She throws her phone on her bed. She's let down once again.

Back at the airport, Benny drops her phone in her purse as she makes her way towards Lashgari.

LASHGARI
(Extends hand)
Mrs. Garcia, I'm glad you decided to
come out here.

BENNY
(Shakes his hand)
You can just call me Benny. Nice to
meet you.

LASHGARI
This is Rafael.

RAFAEL
Pleasure to meet you, Benny. I'll be
driving you and Mr. Lashgari to your
destinations during your stay.

BENNY
Nice to meet you, too.

(Beat)
 You are the most well-dressed Uber
 driver I've ever seen.

LASHGARI
 Oh no, Mrs. Garcia. We wouldn't dare
 inconvenience you like that.

Benny raises an eyebrow.

RAFAEL
 (Gestures)
 The limo is this way.

Rafael grabs Benny's suitcase and walks away with Lashgari.

Off of Benny's surprised look, we:

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT - LATER

Rafael, Benny and Lashgari arrive outside the airport to a
 massive LIMO. Benny is stunned.

BENNY
 Is this a perk of the funeral home?

RAFAEL
 No ma'am, I was sent by Maksim.

Rafael grabs Benny's bag and puts it in the trunk.

BENNY
 (Still a bit confused)
 Right. Of course.
 (To Lashgari)
 So, did you know my mother at all?

LASHGARI
 Unfortunately, no. Maksim just hired
 me to write and go over the will.

BENNY
 Right. OK then.

Rafael opens the door for Lashgari and Benny.

LASHGARI
 (To Benny)
 Shall we?

Benny nods and slips into the limo.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO - LATER

Benny is sitting quietly in the back seat alongside Lashgari. They sit very far down from Rafael. Rafael speeds over bumpy roads. Slightly hungover from the passed two nights, Benny holds her stomach and clenches her seat.

LASHGARI

Are you doing alright, Mrs. Garcia?

BENNY

Oh, yeah. Just a little car sick.

LASHGARI

You're sure you are alright?

Benny pauses, thinking she might puke. Thankfully, it passes.

BENNY

(Relieved)

I'm good.

A pause.

LASHGARI

How are you doing emotionally?

BENNY

Oh...Haven't really processed it.

LASHGARI

The death of a parent is always hard--

BENNY

Well, yes that. But I'm talking about all of this. The limo, the flight over here...what did my mom even do for a living?

LASHGARI

She was a manager of a very lucrative business.

Benny laughs at the obvious answer.

BENNY
(Referring to the limo)
I can see that. What was the business?

LASHGARI
Sales and services.

BENNY
OK... what kind of service?

Benny grows a tad suspicious.

LASHGARI
(Beat)
Mrs. Soltero, my job is to settle the
distribution of funds between you and
Mr. Reznikov. He will be able to
answer all of your questions.

TEOFILA (O.S.)
But he can't? He doesn't sound like a
very good lawyer.

Benny sees Teofila sitting beside her, smoking a cigarette
while holding a martini glass.

BENNY
Abi!

TEOFILA
Aren't lawyers supposed to know about
their clients?

BENNY
I guess he's not that type of lawyer.

Benny can't seem to believe her own thoughts.

LASHGARI (O.S.)
Mrs. Garcia, are you alright?

Benny snaps out of her daydream with Teofila.

BENNY
Oh, yes. I'm fine. Just deep in
thought, I guess.

Lashgari nods, suspicious. Benny looks out the window. They
are now driving through Hell's Kitchen. Teofila appears next
to Benny again, overcome with familiarity.

TEOFILA

This place is very different now.

BENNY

Sometimes I forget I spent most of my childhood here...

TEOFILA

I remember it like it was yesterday...

BENNY

I bet it looks very different now than it did when you grew up.

TEOFILA

It feels just as foreign to me as it did when your Abuelo and I came here.

BENNY

Just like old times?

TEOFILA

(Pensively)

No, not really, because no matter what everything changes.

BENNY

Hopefully it's changed for the better though.

LASHGARI (O.S)

Mrs. Garcia? Mrs. Garcia.

Benny is snapped out of her imaginary conversation with Teofila once again.

BENNY

Hmm?

LASHGARI

Were you saying something?

BENNY

(Confused)

No.

LASHGARI

It looked like your lips were moving.

Benny gives a side eye.

BENNY
I wasn't saying anything.

LASHGARI
(Nods)
OK.

Awkwardly, Benny turns to the window. We transition to a:

MONTAGE

Outside the window, the trendy streets of Hell's Kitchen bustle with people. Some carry coffee while laughing with friends. Some push baby strollers, some walk their dogs.

Flashy restaurants and apartments dot every street as well as old churches and renewed historic buildings. Cabs, tour buses and even horse-drawn carriages ride passed tall buildings.

Benny takes in the scenery one last time before we:

MOVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL - LATER

The limo pulls up to an immaculate HOTEL. Benny looks up, dazed by the building towering over her.

TEOFILA
Ay, Dios mio.

BENNY
You've got to be kidding me.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - LATER

Benny and Teofila walk to their room, amazed and a bit confused.

TEOFILA
I haven't been in a hotel this nice since my wedding day. And we were only in the basement.

The DOOR opens to a grand SUITE. It looks like the inside of a palace.

MOVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUED

Benny unpacks her things on a king-sized bed as Teofila lights up a CIGARETTE and gets comfortable.

TEOFILA

I want you to be a bit skeptical,
Benita.

BENNY

What are you talking about? This is
great!

TEOFILA

But that Tambourine...

BENNY

Tamerlin.

TEOFILA

Whatever. He didn't mention any of
this to you?

BENNY

I mean he said he would get me settled
in New York. I had no idea it would be
like this.

Teofila takes a puff and scans the room in disapproval.

BENNY

Abi, c'mon. It isn't exactly a
setback. I mean look at this place!

TEOFILA

I just think it's peculiar. He
mysteriously gives you this lavish
arrangement, but can't even tell you
how my daughter earned a living for
the last fifty or so years.

BENNY

I'm sure we'll find all this out when
we go over the will.

TEOFILA

Hmph. He seems to be a man of few
words. Zero people skills. I don't
trust people who don't communicate
well. He's leaving out so much
information. Hiding the truth is worse

than lying about it, in my opinion.

BENNY

That doesn't mean he's untrustworthy. Plus, he doesn't sound like he speaks English very well. He definitely doesn't know Spanish.

TEOFILA

I'll leave you with this then: never stop asking questions. Always be on your toes.

BENNY

Yes, Abi. I know.

Teofila goes through the bedside table and pulls out the HOLY BIBLE. Benny eyes the mini fridge. She opens it. It's empty.

TEOFILA

If this hotel was really nice, they would at least have a stocked mini bar. I could really go for some mixed nuts.

BENNY

(Closing fridge)
Or a drink.

Benny is dangerously pensive.

BENNY

I'm gonna step out for a little bit, I'll be right back.

TEOFILA

Please, be careful, Benita. A woman shouldn't be walking in the city alone at night.

BENNY

I'll be okay, Abi. I won't even be a minute.

After Benny leaves, Teofila rolls her eyes and performs the sign of the cross.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Benny walks out of a liquor STORE, clanking bottles in a plastic bag.

After a few minutes of walking, a MAN follows behind her. Benny senses him, but thinks nothing of it. After making various turns around the block, with the Man still behind her, Benny is certain she is being stalked.

She picks up the pace.

So does the Man.

Alarmed, Benny bolts down the street, triggering a high speed chase in a rougher, more desolate area of the city. Benny looks back to see the Man far behind.

She makes an abrupt left into a tight alleyway, then trips over a POTHOLE, smashing the bottles.

BENNY

La mierda!

Benny crawls to the bag and tries to salvage the bottles, then sees the Man straight down the alleyway. Benny looks at the bottles, then the Man. Just before he reaches her, Benny dodges towards a nearby DUMPSTER.

The Man looks around the alleyway, then makes his way towards the Dumpster, peering through the cracks. After several agonizing seconds, he leaves in the opposite direction. Confident the coast is clear, Benny scrambles out of the dumpster and runs toward the hotel.

Eventually, Benny arrives at the hotel entrance, as a CHAUFFEUR escorts a wealthy couple out of their car. Benny is out of breath, sweating and covered in food scraps. She struggles to compose herself while entering the hotel.

As she walks in the lobby, a PRIEST'S words are heard:

PRIEST (V.O.)

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you..."

CUT TO:

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - NEXT MORNING

A funeral mass is held for Luisa Soltero at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

The church is a beautiful, old cathedral decked with grand pillars, gorgeous stain-glass windows and roses tucked in every crevice.

The Priest leads a large, well dressed congregation in prayer.

To the side of him is a COFFIN holding the BODY of Luisa Soltero and an EASEL holding her photograph.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

(Reading)

"I have called you by your name and you are mine. When you pass through water, I will be with you; in the river, you shall not drown..."

SWITCH TO:

INT. CHURCH ENTRANCE - SAME TIME

The Priest is heard faintly from the other room as Benny and Teofila arrive late.

TEOFILA

(Looking around, stunned)

Are you sure you are in the right church?

BENNY

Abi, they wouldn't just drive me to the wrong church.

TEOFILA

Do you know how many 'Lady of the Sacred Hearts' there are? Plus, maybe they were distracted.

(Annoyed)

You took an awful long time to get up.

BENNY

I know. I didn't sleep well last night.

Teofila looks through the large doors where the mass is taking place.

TEOFILA

This is not what I was expecting at all.

BENNY

Well, what were you expecting?

Teofila marvels at the height of the church in awe.

TEOFILA

I don't know...Just not this.

The Priest is heard concluding the prayer. Benny gingerly opens the door and we:

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CHURCH - SAME TIME

The door creaks open. The church is massive and the pews are filled with people. Most are dressed in chic, black attire compared to Benny who sports a modest black cardigan and skirt.

PRIEST

...Please join us in the Cemetery of the Sacred Heart for Luisa's burial...

BENNY

(Mutters)

El maldito, we missed it.

Organ music begins to play as the Priest and Luisa's coffin descend the aisles. Before the song ends, several people already make their way out the door.

Benny begins to follow the crowd when she is stopped by a woman named Tabatha 'Tabby' (50s, Ukrainian) who is dressed well but looks sickly and slightly bruised.

TABBY

Forgive me, but you look so much like Luisa. Are you related to her?

BENNY

I am. Actually, I'm her daughter.

Tabby gasps, then embraces her. She pulls back and cradles Benny's face in her hands.

TABBY

It's like Luisa is born again. You look just like her!

BENNY

I'm sorry what is your name?

TABBY

Tabatha. But people call me Tabby.
I've known Luisa for a very long time.
We met through work.

(Beat)

If you'll excuse me. I have to go
powder my face. I let my emotions get
the better of me again.

Once TABBY leaves, Benny walks back out into the church parking lot and inspects the crowd. Suddenly, she spots a familiar face. We see Teofila walking up behind her.

BENNY

Holy--!

TEOFILA

Watch it, Benita.

BENNY

No, Abi, look. That's the Cuban
Missile.

TEOFILA

(Alarmed)

The what?!

BENNY

No, no, Abi. Aroldis Chapman. He
played for the Yankees as well as the
Reds.

TEOFILA

How do you know?

BENNY

Because Benjamin played against him
during a charity game once! I know
that's him.

TEOFILA

That's crazy! Why is he here?

BENNY

I have no idea.

An older, well dressed man with a young woman around his arm passes Benny and Teofila.

TEOFILA

(Gasps)

I think I've seen that man on
television before!

Benny scans the crowd. Everyone around her looks like they come from money. Benny overhears some of the conversations and notice a lot of them are speaking Russian.

BENNY

(To Teofila)

There seems to be a lot of Russians
here. What are they doing at a
Catholic mass?

Benny grows uneasy. Her suspicions are interrupted by Teofila's gasp.

TEOFILA

Oh Dios mío! Is that the mayor?

BENNY

There's no way...

Benny gets a closer look.

BENNY (CONT'D)

No, but that's definitely a former
one.

TEOFILA

How did these people know my Luisa?

BENNY

How did Luisa know these people?

Benny and Teofila look at each other in agreement. Benny spots two MEN from the funeral party load Luisa's coffin into the HEARSE.

As the Hearse begins to drive away, Benny stays fixated on Luisa's coffin as strangers scramble to their cars around her.

END OF ACT THREE.

ACT FOUR

INT. COURTROOM - SAME DAY

A JUDGE sleepily speaks to a courtroom. She has just dismissed a case and is transitioning to a new one.

WILLIAM BAYER, the DUI attorney, is sitting at one of the stands, while Benjamin sits close behind.

BENJAMIN

Thanks again, for coming in. I really appreciate it.

BAYER

No problem, Mr. Garcia. Anything for my favorite player.

BENJAMIN

(Embarrassed)

Oh, well--

BAYER

But is Mrs. Garcia here?

Benjamin's face falls.

BENJAMIN

You haven't seen her?

BAYER

She won't answer my calls.

JUDGE

Okay, so we're gathered today to address the bail of Benita Soltero y Garcia for driving under the influence. Councilman Bayer, is your client present?

Before the BAYER responds, Benjamin interferes.

BENJAMIN

(To Bayer)

She told me the other day she would be here. She's probably running late.

Bayer nods, then speaks:

BAYER

Your honor, my client's husband,

Benjamin Garcia, is with us today. He said she should be on her way.

JUDGE

Well, did your client tell you herself whether she was on her way?

Bayer looks at Benjamin, unsure of what to say. Benjamin steps in.

BENJAMIN

Your honor, I'll call her right now.

JUDGE

Alright, I'll grant five minutes, otherwise we have to move on.

The Judge bangs the gavel.

The PHONE rings in Benjamin's ear. As he impatiently waits for a response, we:

SWITCH TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - SAME TIME

Benny and Teofila walk with the funeral party to Luisa's grave.

After several minutes treading the cemetery, the party circles around Luisa's blank GRAVESTONE. It is statuesque and looks very expensive.

BENNY

Ay bendito...

TEOFILA

I never got a stone like this when I bit the dust.

BENNY

Where is this money coming from?

Minutes into the prayer, Benny's phone rings, loudly.

BENNY

(Mouths)

I'm so sorry.

Benny rummages through her purse for her phone then swipes left without looking at the Caller ID.

After an awkward pause, the priest resumes his prayer.
Shortly after, Benny's phone rings again.

BENNY
(To the party)
I'll just shut it off. So sorry.

Benny turns off her phone then tries to compose herself.

SWITCH BACK TO:

INT. COURTROOM - SAME TIME

Benjamin sighs at the sound of Benny's voicemail.

BENJAMIN
Your honor, I can't get a hold of her.
I can try calling again--

JUDGE
We can't afford to lose anymore time.
My day is very full.

BAYER
May I ask your permission for a
continuance?

JUDGE
Attorney Bayer, your client has been
called here after committing numerous
traffic violations including driving
under the influence. Not showing up to
court is another serious violation and
should not be taken lightly. I see fit
that Mrs. Garcia be further charged
for failure to appear in court...

Benjamin sighs and holds his head down in shame.

JUDGE
...The date for this case will take
place a month from today. Should the
defendant fail to appear in court a
second time, we must issue a warrant
for her arrest.

The JUDGE bangs the gavel. Benjamin collapses in his seat,
dejected.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - SAME TIME

As the funeral party leaves the burial, Benny looks at her phone to see missed calls from Benjamin.

Benny starts to call him back, but is startled by a strange, unfamiliar voice.

MAX (O.S)

You must be a very popular person.
Someone must really need to reach you.

Benny looks up and sees Max for the very first time. Lashgari comes up behind him.

LASHGARI

Benita, this is the friend and employer I was telling you about, Maksim Reznikov.

MAX

Hello, Mrs. Garcia. I'm so sorry about the loss of your mother. I send you my deepest condolences.

BENNY

Thank you, but I think you may need my condolences more. To be honest, I never really knew her.

MAX

Yes, well, she was wonderful person. So tragic, what happened to her.

BENNY

Yes, Tamerlin mentioned her death was sudden?

MAX

Yes, we found her dead in bed one morning. Died in her sleep. We're still not sure how.

BENNY

And you did all this? Planning the ceremony?

MAX

A large part of it, yes. It is the way she would have wanted it.

BENNY

Right. Well this is all very thoughtful.

(Beat)

It's amazing you were able to get the tombstone so quickly.

Benny stares at Max in suspicion.

MAX

Ah, well, you reach a certain age and you have to prepare for these kind of things ahead of time anyway.

Benny nods, her eyebrows raised.

BENNY

Uh huh.

(Beat)

How do you say your name again?

MAX

(Pronouncing)

Maksim Reznikov. You can call me Max. Perhaps that might be easier.

BENNY

Yes, I think it would. I can remember that.

MAX

Well, it's very important you remember me.

BENNY

Oh? And why is that?

MAX

Luisa and I had quite a history. We go back a long time.

BENNY

What is your company exactly? I never really knew how my mother earned a living all this time.

A vibration is heard from Max's pant pocket.

MAX

Please excuse me, Mrs. Garcia.

Max answers the phone.

MAX
(In Russian)
Yes? Oh, they are here already?

Teofila shoots Benny a look.

MAX
I'll come immediately.

Max hangs up.

MAX
(To Benny)
My apologies, Mrs. Garcia. I have to
leave you now. But I will see you in
the morning. We can discuss over
breakfast. Eight o'clock. The Place.

Max walks off before Benny can get a word in.

BENNY
But were is the-?

LASHGARI
I can text you the address. Rafael is
here for you when you are ready to
leave.

BENNY
Okay.

Lashgari leaves to catch up with Max.

TEOFILA
Why is that Tamara walking back with
him?

BENNY
Business, I guess.

TEOFILA
He seems very odd.

BENNY
He does, doesn't he.

Teofila stares disapprovingly as Max and Lashgari walk off.
She looks at Benny with watchful eyes.

TEOFILA
Remember, toes!

Benny heads to the limo. She looks back at Max one last time only to find him looking back at her too.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PLACE, RESTAURANT - NEXT MORNING

Benny enters the restaurant, tired. She approaches the HOSTESS who looks just as tired. Benny quickly scans the area. The restaurant is empty and chairs are still up on the tables.

BENNY
Hi, I'm here to meet Max.

She nods and motions for Benny to follow her.

HOSTESS
This way.

Benny follows the Hostess till they approach two GUARDS. They are both covered in tattoos.

HOSTESS
Okay. They will take you.

The Guards signal Benny to follow them. They lead Benny to an ELEVATOR. A guard presses the 'B' button on the elevator, then the doors close.

Benny looks quite small between two very large guards. Benny looks over at one of the guards. She spots a gun in his coat pocket. The doors eventually open to a large yet secluded OFFICE SPACE.

Max sits at a large desk with a bottle of vodka and some shot glasses. Off to the side is GABRIEL 'GABE' MILLER (50s, African).

Benny looks at Gabe with familiarity. Lashgari is no where in sight.

MAX
I'm glad you were able to find the place. Please, sit.

BENNY
It wasn't hard. I had no idea I would

have escorts.

Max pours vodka into a shot glass.

MAX

Vodka?

Benny nods, tentatively. Max pours her and himself a shot. He hands Benny the glass. Max raises his glass in a toast.

MAX

K vashemu zdorov'yu!

BENNY

(Struggling with the words)

K vashemu zdorov'yu.

They both shoot the vodka.

A pause.

BENNY (CONT'D)

So, how are we doing this? Do I sign something and get a check or...?

MAX

Well, there is a bit of a complication.

BENNY

What sort of complication?

MAX

Luisa, as you may know, was a manager for my business. Several years into her role, she expressed interest in wanting to explore other business ventures. Because I respected her so much, I was willing to let her go. But right before she left, she made clerical error which devastated my business. So, after many negotiations, I extend her contract and she continues working for me for five more years. Unfortunately, she died before she could repay this debt. Now, since you are her daughter, this falls on you.

Benny pauses, unsure how to respond. Assuming there is a misunderstanding, Benny speaks:

BENNY

Oh no, you've got it all wrong. I'm just a teacher. Or was a teacher. Whatever Luisa did for you, something in sales? That's not really-

MAX

Where I come from, bloodline is very important in business. Luisa was a very valuable asset to my business, so I'm sure, as you are direct descendent, you are, how should I say? Practically a carbon copy.

Benny laughs nervously.

BENNY

Look, I'm sorry to hear that Luisa inconvenienced you before her passing. But, Luisa didn't raise me. I didn't even know where she was until three days ago. If anything, I'm the complete opposite of her. I'm afraid I have to decline your offer.

A pause. Max face grows cold and hard.

MAX

I think you misunderstand. This isn't a job offer, Benita. This is an order.

Benny's eyebrows raise. Benny looks around the room, looking for some indication that this may be a joke. Everyone is just as serious as Max. Max leans in over his desk.

MAX (CONT'D)

You work for me now.

A pause. Another nervous laugh slips Benny's mouth.

MAX

Is something amusing to you?

BENNY

Well yes. You can't order me to do anything. I have a whole other life back in Arizona. What does it say in the will?

MAX

(Beat)

I don't think you fully understand
what you're up against.

BENNY

Excuse me?

MAX

There is no will.

Benny stares at the tattoos on Max's knuckles. Her eyes wander back to Gabe. His cold look and demeanor is suddenly very recognizable to Benny. Then it hits her: Gabe was the stalker in the alley the other night.

We then flash to a memory of meeting Tammy, the Hostess then the Guards. It's suddenly very clear to Benny now.

BENNY

(Beat)

I've seen people like you before. And
I'm not afraid to get the law
involved.

Max suppresses a grin.

MAX

You are wrong about not being like
your mother. You have her fiery
passion.

Max gets up from his seat and walks over to Benny.

MAX (CONT'D)

Benita, I have spent my whole life
building this business, this empire. I
make more money in a week than most
physicians do in a year. I am even
praised more highly than God himself.
As far as you're concerned, I am the
law.

Benny swallows, starting to panic, but is determined to hold her own.

BENNY

And what happens if I break the law?

MAX

Then I break you.

(Beat)
Very, very slowly.

Max is very close to Benny now. Benny breathes heavy.

MAX (CONT'D)
...And also whatever family you may
have left. Perhaps you have a daughter
of your own?

Benny's fear turns to anger and she pushes Max on to the desk. She is immediately seized by both the Guards. Benny starts kicking and trying to escape. Max grabs the vodka bottle from behind him then smashes it on Benny's head, knocking her out.

A high-pitched ring is heard over faint voices. Everything surrounding Benny starts to fade. She loses consciousness.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR.

ACT FIVE

INT. MASTER BEDROOM. NYC APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Benny wakes up in a plush, Queen-sized bed.

She now has a bandage over her head and is dressed in silk pajamas and a matching robe. Even her suitcase is in the room. When she goes to cup her forehead, she feels the bandage. She looks down and notices the new pajamas on her body.

MAX (O.S)

You like?

Max stands in the doorway alongside Gabe.

BENNY

(Looking around the room)

I don't understand.

MAX

You need beauty rest before you start new job, yes?

Benny just stares, still not understanding.

MAX

Like I say, this business is extremely lucrative. You do a good job, you will live good life. You do a poor job, or you don't cooperate, I make your life a living hell.

Max starts to walk out, when Gabe enters the room.

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh, I almost forgot. I'm sure you remember my friend, Gabe Miller. He's served me for a while, and now he'll be serving you as well as watching you.

Benny looks intently at Gabe, slightly disturbed.

BENNY

(To Max)

And what is my job exactly?

MAX

We'll discuss your role in the

morning. I'm sure you've had enough news for today. I don't want to overwhelm you.

BENNY
(Sarcastically)
How considerate of you.

MAX
Make Gabe a list of what you need at the beginning of every week. I'll leave you to look around, get comfortable.

Max leaves the room. An unsettling silence stirs between Gabe and Benny.

GABE
If you need me, I'll be preparing dinner in the kitchen.

Benny nods.

Gabe nods and looks at Benny for a moment before he leaves the room.

Teofila appears in the LOVESEAT beside the bed. She is enjoying coffee and a cigarette as she flips through a MAGAZINE.

TEOFILA
He's cheery. I hope he doesn't poison the food.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Benny speaks with Teofila. She is still in her pajamas. She sits on the edge the bed.

BENNY
I need to get out of here.

TEOFILA
But that man. How will you sneak passed him?

BENNY
I don't know.
(Beat)

But I've done it once before.

TEOFILA
What are you talking about?

BENNY
Abi, that's him.

TEOFILA
Who is who?

BENNY
Gabe. When I went out the night before
the funeral, I was being stalked. He
even ran after me at one point.

TEOFILA
Oh, Benita! I knew I sensed something
off about him.

BENNY
I don't know what to do. There's no
one I can go to. I'm surrounded by bad
guys.

TEOFILA
Oh now, Benita. I'm here.

Teofila takes Benny in her arms.

BENNY
(Realizing)
But you're not.

TEOFILA
What?

BENNY
I'm so stupid. You aren't even real!

TEOFILA
No, that's not true. I'm always here
to look after you. And so is God.

BENNY
Screw God.

TEOFILA
Benita Jane Soltero!

BENNY

I listened to you when you said "go to New York," and look what happened. I'm being held hostage by some psycho Russian mob man.

TEOFILA

Please, Benita! Keep the faith.

BENNY

I lost my faith when the best thing that ever happened to me walked out on me. If anything, there's someone up there trying to destroy me.

TEOFILA

These aren't the values I taught you. You were starting to lose yourself a long time ago, but now, Benita is gone. This is not the Benita I know.

BENNY

You are not the Teofila I knew. To be honest, I forget what she was like.

Benny dumps herself on the bed, crying into the pillows.

TEOFILA (O.S.)

Benita, calm down and look at me.

BENNY

(Weeping)

Abi. What do I do?

Benny looks up to see Teofila, but she's can't even imagine her any more. Benny starts to laugh then cry.

Benny is truly alone. After a moment, Benny sees a COMPUTER on top of a DESK. Benny immediately goes to it and types in web addresses. Each website she goes to denies access.

Benny goes through her purse and notices that her cell phone is missing.

Benny looks around the bedroom. It is glossy, modern and has a decently sized walk in closet and private bathroom. Her eyes catch sight of a doorway leading to a private balcony.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALCONY - SAME TIME

Benny walks out onto the balcony overlooking the city. Benny stares at the sky, searching for composure. She closes her eyes, trying to calm herself.

Benny opens her eyes abruptly at the sound of fire engines, police cars and loud music. She looks down from her balcony and sees a busy, chaotic city. As Benny stares out into the distance, we see a large scale view of Hell's Kitchen, and a very, very tiny Benny.

CUT TO BLACK.

CREDITS ROLL.

END OF EPISODE.