

INT. ESALEN - MEDITATION HALL - AFTERNOON

Ocean breezes, seagulls, low hums and chanting as we FADE IN: it's LARA LIN, eyes shut, trying very hard to meditate. Her worry lines are emphasized as she tries to relax, hiding an otherwise understated beauty.

ANNE (V.O.)
Feel the sensations return to your
toes...

LARA flutters her eyes. She's desperate to have them open.

ANNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And welcome back. Namaste.

LARA bows, quietly repeating namaste. Pull back as we watch LARA look around, smiling, trying to be present. She closes her eyes again.

ANNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Last day. How do you feel?

EXT. ESALEN - BOARDWALK - AFTERNOON

LARA and ANNE are walking.

LARA
I turned on my phone.

ANNE
It's okay.
(she pats LARA on the
heart)
Forgive yourself. It's the last day
and...

LARA's phone begins pinging.

ANNE (CONT'D)
... and I guess the retreat is
over.

ANNE smiles and bows. She leaves.

LARA bows back and sees her phone exploding with messages. She reads quickly and voices echo in her head. She refocuses and reads a link sent by ESTHER, her sister: "85 BOWERY TO BE VACATED. RESIDENTS HAVE 30 DAYS." Sent 3 days ago.

LARA
Shit.

INT. ESALEN - LARA'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

"DAY 3"

LARA packs her things quickly. Cuts to her luggage, her clothes, her laptop. Then, she's out the door.

EXT. ESALEN - GATES - AFTERNOON

LARA sprints to catch a taxi. She hops in.

INT. TAXI - AFTERNOON

LARA leans on the window.

ESTHER (V.O.)

Day 2 of Mom trying to find you.
Doesn't matter. I'm coming back to
New York tonight.

LARA caresses her forehead.

ESTHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

You know, you really should tell
Mom where you go. When we need you,
you're just gone.

INT. AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

LARA is running through the terminal.

TITLE: "AND THEN THERE WERE THREE"

ESTHER (V.O.)

I'm in New York.

(A beat)

Mom's gonna be moving all of her
stuff by herself. I mean, could you
be more irresponsible?

LARA is lined up at the gate.

ESTHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Don't worry, it's just Mom moving
out of her home of 50 years, no
biggie. It'll be fine. It'll be...

INT. AIRPLANE - EVENING

Seatbelt sign turns off. LARA leans back and sighs.

LARA
Shit.

FADE TO:

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - EVENING

A plane lands on the runway.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY - EVENING

LARA jolts awake, grasping her luggage tightly.

EXT. LARA'S APARTMENT - OUTSIDE - EVENING

LARA stumbles to the front door. She struggles to get her keys but drops her luggage.

LARA
Shit.

She opens the door, grabs her luggage, and walks in. Her luggage hits the side door as she pulls through. We see her walk in as the door shuts.

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT STAIRWAY - EVENING

LARA slowly pulls her luggage up 4 flights. She sighs heavily. At one point, she sits on a step and buries herself in her lap.

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

LARA drops her keys and luggage and plops on the sofa. She exhales.

FADE TO:

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

LARA is browsing her phone, eyes barely open.

"DAY 4"

A knock. She rubs her eyes.

LARA

Hold on.

LARA opens the door. It's her sister ESTHER LIN, tall, lanky, arms near her chest like she's always worried. She walks in.

LARA (CONT'D)

It's 9am.

LARA closes the door.

LARA (CONT'D)

Also hi. How'd...

ESTHER

I tracked your location.

LARA

Of course you did.

ESTHER

We're facing a major crisis here.

LARA yawns.

LARA

Relax. We'll figure it out. We have a few weeks.

ESTHER snaps her fingers back and forth.

ESTHER

Hey. This is serious. Mom's gonna be homeless.

ESTHER looks around and sees her luggage sprawled on the floor.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

Where did you go? Why didn't you tell anyone?

LARA sighs.

LARA

It's personal.

LARA folds her arms.

LARA (CONT'D)

What? Don't blame me.

ESTHER

I'm not... blaming you. But Mom...

LARA
... needs us. I know. I know.
First, I have to tell her I'm back.

ESTHER strolls around the apartment, anxious to leave.

ESTHER
Then let's go.

LARA walks up to ESTHER. She hugs ESTHER and holds tight. ESTHER pulls away after she deems it long enough.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
Okay, okay, missed you too.

ESTHER taps her wrist. LARA rolls her eyes and goes to the bathroom. ESTHER tries to contain her nervous energy.

LARA (V.O.)
Where's Rob and Sandy?

ESTHER
In Chicago. Where else?

LARA (V.O.)
How are they?

ESTHER
Sandy's growing up too fast.

LARA steps out of the bathroom.

LARA
You don't send me pictures anymore.

ESTHER
You don't ask.

LARA grabs her keys. Both sisters make snarky faces at each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. 85 BOWERY - AFTERNOON

LARA and ESTHER walk up to the building. It looms over them.

ESTHER
Can't believe this had asbestos the whole time.

LARA
I can.

INT. 85 BOWERY - GULLY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The key clicks open. LARA and ESTHER walk in. Before they round the corner, GULLY LIN steps out. Short, stout, but firmly upright, GULLY has soft features that are inviting.

GULLY

Esther! I told you, let her sleep.
This all can wait.

LARA

It's okay, Mom.

LARA looks around. Empty boxes everywhere, and everything in the apartment seems to be laid out on the floor.

LARA (CONT'D)

Working hard.

ESTHER

Yes, Lara, we need to help.

GULLY

No, you two. I don't need your help. I'm figuring it out.

LARA looks around at her childhood home. She touches the walls. She rubs her fingers together.

LARA

This is really happening?

ESTHER

Yes.

GULLY

I'll be fine.

ESTHER

No, no. Mom. We need to sit down and talk about this, like I said.

ESTHER leads GULLY to the kitchen table. GULLY resists but ESTHER pushes her. LARA keeps looking at the wall.

LARA

Asbestos.

ESTHER

You can't actually see it, sis.

LARA

I know.

ESTHER and GULLY sit.

LARA (CONT'D)
You can't even see it.

GULLY taps the table next to LARA's impending seat. LARA walks over and sits.

GULLY
Girls, don't worry. I don't need to add to your plate.

ESTHER
You are our responsibility.

LARA
What about Dad?

GULLY chortles.

GULLY
Jeff's not helping.

ESTHER
Stay focused, sis.

LARA shrugs.

LARA
He should be involved too.

ESTHER
If he knows, he probably doesn't care.

GULLY
And neither should you.

GULLY holds both of their hands.

GULLY (CONT'D)
I love you both. But I can pack. I can take care of myself. I'm not useless.

ESTHER
Where are you gonna go?

GULLY sighs, annoyed.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
Don't say...

GULLY
Tao. I told you already.

ESTHER
(To LARA)
You know this is a bad idea.

LARA
(To GULLY)
Mom, Aunt Tao is weird. They're all
weird. Hobie is the weirdest. You
really want that?

GULLY
(laughs, releases her
grips)
It'll be okay.

GULLY looks very relaxed. LARA notices ESTHER glaring at her, expecting a response.

LARA
Mom, we got to think of something
else.

ESTHER
Yes, Mom, like Sunrise.

GULLY
(Groans)
No, no. Not this again.

LARA
The retirement home?

GULLY stands and pushes her chair away. She stands and waves at the air, like she's warding off bad energy.

GULLY
Not Sunrise.

ESTHER
Kelly put in a good word.

LARA
Kelly? She's still there?

GULLY
(To LARA)
Don't listen to E. I won't survive
there. It's hell. They wipe your
butt!

LARA and ESTHER stifle a laugh.

GULLY (CONT'D)
This is all very funny to you
girls, isn't it?

LARA and ESTHER both nod.

LARA
Then come live with me.

ESTHER
Lara!

GULLY

Lara!

LARA shrugs.

LARA
I'll make space.

A beat. GULLY and ESTHER stare at each other, confused.

LARA (CONT'D)
What? I can make space.

GULLY
Lara, it's too small.

LARA
It's New York.

GULLY narrows her eyes and shifts focus to the living room.

GULLY
My living room is bigger than your
entire apartment!

ESTHER
Lara, it's too much effort.

LARA
But I can make it work! I want to
make it work.

GULLY sighs. She stands up. She pats both of her daughters on
the shoulders.

GULLY
Kids. I'll be out of your way, just
like now. You two don't need more
to worry about.
(To LARA)
You, running to California.
(To ESTHER)
You, living hundreds of miles away.
You should be thanking me!!

GULLY smiles and leaves the kitchen. Hold on LARA and ESTHER.

LARA
This is...

ESTHER
... Your fault.

They both glare at each other.

GULLY (V.O.)
Come help me pack!

They both soften, clearly tired.

LARA
Well. Are you staying here?

ESTHER
In our old room.

LARA gestures to the living room. ESTHER leaves. Focus on LARA. She shakes her head.

FADE TO:

EXT. SUNRISE - AFTERNOON

LARA stands next to the a sign. "SUNRISE WELCOMES YOU."

"DAY 6"

INT. SUNRISE - LOBBY - AFTERNOON

LARA dodges two women, who give her side eye and whisper something in Russian. She walks to the front desk.

A young woman with beaming, overly energetic eyes and an eager face appears. It's KELLY TAN.

KELLY
Hello, welcome to...

KELLY's eyes widen.

KELLY (CONT'D)
I'll be. A sight for sore eyes you are.

KELLY extends her arms. LARA hugs her. She tries to break free. KELLY won't let go.

KELLY (CONT'D)
I need you to hug back!

LARA pats KELLY and applies pressure. KELLY nods and releases LARA.

LARA
Kelly.

KELLY
What can I do yer for?

LARA grimaces. That fake southern twang.

LARA
Kelly, you grew up in Bayside.

KELLY
(Laughs)
That's the Texas talking. Go
Longhorns!

LARA fake smiles and looks around. KELLY beams.

KELLY (CONT'D)
I can answer any questions. What do
you got?

LARA
I'm sure you heard about...

KELLY
Yes, about Gully. I'm sorry!

KELLY reaches over and grasps both of LARA's shoulders.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Truly a tragedy. I'm so sorry.

LARA
She's not dead.

KELLY
But her soul. Her soul. That place
means so much to her. To you! It's
like...

KELLY exhales.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Losing a piece of you. I remember
coming over to play when we were
kids.

A sad smile of longing.

LARA
(Flatly)
Yeah. It'll be fine.
(She narrows her eyes)
Also you came over... once.

KELLY sighs, nostalgic for something.

KELLY
And I remember like it was
yesterday.

LARA
Anyway, I wanted to see if...

KELLY
Don't you worry. We have a room
with her name on it. Follow me!

Kelly clicks her pen.

INT. SUNRISE - ATRIUM - AFTERNOON

KELLY steps into the atrium, a circular room with bedrooms all around. The center is a common area where numerous residents are chatting. LARA looks around, examining the layout.

KELLY
Gully will be in good hands with
our excellent staff.

LARA
Interesting set up you guys have.

KELLY
People like the spoke and wheel.
(A slight giggle)
No one feels lonely. Everyone feels
safe.

KELLY claps and puts her hands on her hips.

KELLY (CONT'D)
You know, I haven't seen Gully in
years. She was my best friend. How
is...

A clang. The atrium front doors open. ESTHER walks in, followed by another orderly, in a panic. KELLY holds up a hand, shaking her head. The orderly walks away.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Esther! Family reunion.

ESTHER
Lara, can I speak with you?

KELLY
Lara was just asking some
questions. I'm showing her what
fabulous accomodations Gully will
have.

LARA
Exactly.

ESTHER smiles sweetly, hiding a seething anger.

LARA (CONT'D)
Oh, you want to talk in private?

ESTHER nods. LARA looks at KELLY and shrugs.

KELLY
Please.

LARA smiles and walks with ESTHER out the door.

INT. SUNRISE - LOBBY - AFTERNOON

ESTHER and LARA stand by a vending machine.

LARA
Just seeing it for myself.

She looks around.

LARA (CONT'D)
It's nice.

ESTHER
What are you doing?

LARA
I just told you.

ESTHER
No, no. You're trying to sabotage
this. Make me look bad.

LARA
It's not just about you.

ESTHER, incredulous, points a finger.

ESTHER

Don't mess this up. I put in the work to get this application done and approved.

LARA claps.

LARA

That's great. Now did you miss the part where Mom didn't want that?

ESTHER

Mom doesn't know what she wants.

(A beat)

Mom thinks Aunt Tao is gonna spoon feed her.

LARA

How do you think Mom is gonna take the news that her daughters are putting her in a nursing home without her approval?

ESTHER facepalms.

ESTHER

You weren't doing anything, so I had to step in and fly here and get it done. Someone needed to do something.

LARA

But it doesn't matter if Mom won't go!

A beat. LARA, fuming; ESTHER, relatively calm.

ESTHER

Look, Lara, we need to be on the same page here. Mom's gonna think we can't agree on anything.

KELLY walks out of the atrium and notices LARA and ESTHER. She smiles.

KELLY

Sorry. I'm just gonna sneak on back to reception. If there's anything you need ...

ESTHER

Thanks, Kel.

KELLY nods at both women. She then shuffles past. LARA and ESTHER watch her leave and greet 2 other ladies walking by. Once they're gone...

LARA
You want Mom here... with her?

ESTHER sighs.

ESTHER
It's not ideal, but...

LARA
Then my place.

ESTHER
No.

LARA
I can take care of her. I can do this.

ESTHER
It's too small.
(she exhales)
You're never around. I'm in Chicago. Dad's hopeless.

LARA
Everyone needs to lay off Dad.

ESTHER
Since when did you care? Dad doesn't visit Mom. Neither do you. You and Dad don't get to pretend to care.

LARA
(Forceful)
I do care!

A beat. ESTHER walks away.

ESTHER
I got to go.

LARA stares as ESTHER disappears down the hallway. LARA's breath is heightened, like she's about to burst.

CUT TO:

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

LARA stares at her ceiling. Light streams in from her curtains.

"DAY 7"

Uneasy music. LARA looks left and right. It feels like the walls are closing in. Literally. She shakes it off. She hops out of bed..

LARA (V.O.)
Hey, Dad. Got your voicemail again.
How's Lindsay?

She walks around the apartment, and the camera circles. It's very small. The sofa, the kitchen counter, the bathroom, and the bed.

LARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You heard about Mom? Maybe you can help?
(A beat)
I was thinking about our last conversation. I'm your #1, right?

She exhales, sharply.

LARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Pick up.
(A beat; music gets faster)
It feels like... I have no space.
No agency. I just wanna talk.

In her mind, she rotates her bed to face the window and the short wall. A flex wall goes up separating the room. Her couch rotates to the short wall, almost blocking the door.

LARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Can you pick up and...

Another voice cuts through.

GULLY (V.O.)
Lara!

A loud knock. LARA returns to reality. The apartment is back to its original place. She's not on the phone with her dad.

She answers the door. It's GULLY.

LARA
Mom.

GULLY
Can I come in?

LARA opens the door and GULLY walks in.

LARA
You and Esther love coming in
early.

GULLY
It's 1PM.

LARA checks the time.

LARA
Well, shit.

GULLY
Time to get moving.

GULLY looks around the apartment and nods.

GULLY (CONT'D)
Did you hire a cleaner like I
asked?

LARA
No.

GULLY
The dust.
(She waves and coughs)
Lara, if you want me to live
here...

LARA jumps to attention.

LARA
Did you change your mind?

GULLY
No, but...

GULLY wipes a line of dust.

GULLY (CONT'D)
Asbestos, and now this?

LARA
Why are you really here, Mom?

A beat.

GULLY

I wanted to apologize. I was a bit
dramatic yesterday.

LARA walks to the kitchen and looks through her fridge. It's empty except for some takeout containers.

GULLY (CONT'D)

I also wanted to see how you are.
You went to California, and you
didn't tell me.

LARA grabs a container and closes the door. She plops it on the counter.

LARA

I travel and I don't tell you all
the time.

GULLY

But you weren't answering my calls.

LARA

I was at a retreat.

GULLY nods, hands behind her back.

GULLY

You see? You and E, too much to
worry about with you.

LARA

Just because we're busy doesn't
mean we stop caring about you!

GULLY

My life is boring!

GULLY then wags a finger.

GULLY (CONT'D)

Focus on you. Not me. You focus on
others, you get Jeff, you get Mary,
you get another family. You want
that?

LARA

(Folds her arms)
That's a little reductive.

LARA hands the container to GULLY. It's leftover ziti.

GULLY

Lara, my life was given up for you
once I came to America. Do you know
how much we had to sacrifice...

LARA twirls her finger.

LARA

Here we go...

GULLY

(In Chinese)

Be quiet!

(In English)

I came here to tell you to stop
worrying about me.

LARA grabs two forks and hands one to GULLY.

LARA

I still want you to live here. I
think it'll be good for us.

GULLY grabs the fork. She cracks the top and takes large
bites of ziti. LARA watches, shocked. She puts her fork
aside.

LARA (CONT'D)

Wow, Mom. Last meal?

GULLY

Esther feeds me healthy food.

LARA

Uh huh.

(A beat)

Also, you and Esther need to stop
giving Dad so much shit.

GULLY chuckles, launching food particles all over.

GULLY

Jeff deserves it. And Mary.

LARA

He can't be the only reason you
hate everyone.

GULLY

(In between bites)

We went from a family of four to a
family of three. This, on top of
everything we went through already?

(Stops eating)

(MORE)

GULLY (CONT'D)
Good reason to hate. Lara, you'll
see.

GULLY puts the container down, having eaten everything. LARA whistles.

LARA
Damn.

GULLY
Why don't you come with me to Tao?

LARA
(Groans)
Why?

GULLY
So you'll see she's not so bad.

LARA takes the container and drops it in the sink.

LARA
I know she's not bad, but she's bad
for *you.*

GULLY
Don't say that.

LARA
And Hobie's a weirdo.

GULLY taps the counter.

GULLY
Well?

FOCUS on LARA. She sighs, a dead expression in her eyes.

LARA (V.O.)
You're taking all this awful well.

EXT. A STREET IN DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN - AFTERNOON

On the street, LARA kick leaves away as GULLY shuffles through.

GULLY
You want me to cry? No time for
that. Lara, I've been living there
since 1974. It's time to move on,
you know?

LARA

I know, but I'd be pissed at the government for making you live in asbestos for years.

GULLY

Oh, I'm very mad about that.

They reach a very elegant brownstone. LARA opens the front gate for GULLY. As they walk, LARA runs her fingers through the well kept plants.

LARA

Aunt Tao's getting better at this.

GULLY

And I'm gonna help with her garden.
You see? It's a win win.

The front door opens. A tall, lanky, Asian woman, wearing a loose fitting robe and a bandana, greets them. It's GUTAO, GULLY's younger, hippie sister.

GUTAO

Gully.

(Notices LARA)

What do we have here?

LARA

Hi, Aunt Tao.

GULLY

Thought I'd show her to my new place so she can approve.

GUTAO

Of course, of course.

(Eyes LARA)

You look... good, Lara. Come, we must celebrate.

LARA

Celebrate what?

GUTAO

The arrival of a very special guest.

(A wink)

GUTAO swiftly turns and disappears inside. She claps.

GUTAO (CONT'D)

Richard! Lara is here!

RICHARD (V.O.)
You don't say?

LARA glares at GULLY.

LARA
You didn't tell them?

GULLY
It was a surprise!

GULLY pushes LARA inside. LARA resists.

LARA
She's gonna make this a whole thing
about me and how I don't...

GUTAO pops out of the darkness.

GUTAO
You lost?

LARA exhales. GULLY grins.

INT. GUTAO'S BROWNSTONE - AFTERNOON

It's dark. A frail older man emerges, wearing a red suit jacket and matching red pants. It's RICHARD. He takes their jackets and folds them.

RICHARD
Lara. What a nice surprise.

LARA
Hi, Richard.

RICHARD
Please. Call me Uncle. I've told
you that. Tao, I told her that,
right?

GUTAO (V.O.)
She doesn't listen, Richard!
(A chuckle)

Richard laughs too. He turns to GULLY.

RICHARD
How are you, Gully?

GULLY
Besides the whole eviction, doing
all right.

RICHARD
Excellent.

RICHARD bows and takes the jackets to the coat room. The entire apartment is quite dark, with only rays of light peeking in through the blinds. LARA shivers.

LARA
(To GULLY)
You want to live here?

GULLY
It's just this room that's a bit
creepy.

LARA
I don't think it was just this..

GUTAO emerges from the dining room. LARA and GUTAO both jump.

GUTAO
Boo!
(A cackle)
Gully, you're losing your edge.

GUTAO is holding 2 glasses of champagne and hands them to LARA and GULLY.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
Come.

INT. GUTAO'S BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

RICHARD is already standing at a bar counter, where he has his glass of champagne ready. GUTAO leads them to the counter and they all gather close.

GUTAO
The energy in the universe felt
right. It made sense that you came
today, Lara.

LARA
Thank... You?

GULLY
(A smirk)
Shh, let Tao talk.

LARA makes a face. GULLY resists laughing.

GUTAO

You all think this is very funny,
but Lara, you don't visit this
house very often. No, you don't
visit your mother very often
either.

(LARA clears her throat)

Yet here we are, on the precipice
of eviction, all of us gathered,
for something special.

LARA

I guess the stars are lined up.

GUTAO nods and holds her glass up.

RICHARD

To Lara.

GUTAO

To Lara.

We focus on LARA, hopelessly lost and confused. Everyone pats
her shoulder.

FADE TO:

INT. GUTAO'S BROWNSTONE - KITCHEN

LARA walks in with her empty glass. There is light chatter in
the living room. LARA paces, shaking off nervous energy.

The side door opens. HOBIE, dressed in dark clothing and
makeup, having seemingly stumbled out of a metal concert,
walks in.

LARA

Hey.

HOBIE just nods. He walks past LARA and checks the fridge.

LARA (CONT'D)

Are you not surprised to see me?

HOBIE shrugs. He pulls a slice of pizza out and eats.

HOBIE

Mom told me.

HOBIE reaches for LARA's empty glass and holds it up. Mid
pizza bite, he cheers.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
To Lara. The prodigal cousin
returns.

LARA rolls her eyes.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
I just waited for the lovejerk to
end.

HOBIE finishes the slice and smacks his lips. LARA grimaces.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
Mom and Richard still talking to
Aunt Gully?

LARA
Yeah.

HOBIE
I wish I got a toast every time I
walked in to my house.

LARA
I get it. I stink.

HOBIE shrugs.

HOBIE
I didn't say that.

LARA
(Continuing on)
I'm not capable of handling myself.
I never show up, so people rub it
in my face and...

HOBIE
Lara.
(A beat)
Stop feeling sorry for yourself.

A knock. GUTAO strides in.

GUTAO
(Cold)
Hobie. Nice of you to join us after
lunch.

HOBIE
I prefer leftovers.

GUTAO glares. HOBIE shrugs.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
I have to go.

He raises his glass to LARA again.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
To you, cuz. I mean it.

GUTAO clears her throat.

GUTAO
At least say hi to Richard.

HOBIE lowers the glass and places it sharply on the counter.

HOBIE
I'll say hi to Richard.

GUTAO
Thank you.

HOBIE leaves. Once he's gone, GUTAO, instantly forgetting about her son, turns to LARA.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
Lara. I didn't meant to overwhelm
you before. We're just... happy
you're here.

LARA
All I care about is Mom.

LARA folds her arms.

LARA (CONT'D)
I don't want her to live here.

GUTAO laughs, as though amused by a child.

GUTAO
Is that what your attitude is
about?
(A beat)
This isn't a competition! No, no.
This ...
(A wistful sigh)
... Is about communication. It's
truly magical. Now that we're all
here, we can put it to bed. Your
mother loves it here. It's settled.

GUTAO claps her hands.

LARA

But I'm not signing off on that.

GUTAO

Lara. Must you ignore the signs?
This is happening for a reason.
This will be perfect for you, for
us!

LARA

There's no signs.

GUTAO smiles. Her eyes tell a different story.

GUTAO

Tell me. Do you have a better
solution?

LARA

My apartment. I can take care of
Mom.

GUTAO

Oh, dear. Gully did tell me this,
but I thought it was in jest.

LARA

I'm not kidding. I can do it.

GUTAO

Lara...

(A beat)

The adults will handle it. Your
apartment is small. Think about
your mother.

LARA

Recently, that's all I'm thinking
about!

GUTAO waves her hands in a stop motion.

GUTAO

"Recently."

(A pointed cough)

That's your problem. Lara, this
needs to stop. The conversation is
over.

GUTAO leans a bit closer to LARA.

GUTAO (CONT'D)

Did Jeff put you up to this? I know
you're the favorite.

(MORE)

GUTAO (CONT'D)
(A sigh)
He's the one ruining this energy.
What is he...

Before LARA can retort, a voice from the living room:

RICHARD (V.O.)
Tao? Did you get lost?

GULLY (V.O.)
Wouldn't be the first time in this
house!

GUTAO
Just talking to my niece.

GUTAO nods and takes LARA's glass.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
Come. Let me pour you another
glass.

GUTAO begins to leave just as GULLY walks in. She notices
LARA looks pissed.

GULLY
What's going on here? Tao, what did
you do?

GUTAO offers a hug, but LARA refuses.

GUTAO
We're just talking.

LARA
Right. Just talking.

GULLY
Tao, stop stressing her out. We
should all be worried about me. I'm
the one getting evicted!

GUTAO smiles big.

GUTAO
And you won't let us forget it.
Come on.

GUTAO leaves. GULLY and LARA exchange glares.

LARA
She's such a...

GULLY
(Shushes her)
Don't say it. Be happy for me.
Please.

LARA
But are you going to be happy here?

GULLY nods. She's very excited.

GULLY
Of course. It's my sister. My best friend.

GULLY taps LARA on the shoulder and leaves. Focus on LARA.

LARA (V.O.)
Hey, Dad. Just calling to ask if you know about Mom. The eviction.

LARA'S APARTMENT - STAIRWAY - EVENING

LARA slowly makes her way up the stairs.

LARA (V.O.)
Are you gonna help? Because this is a big deal. We need help packing and figuring out where she's going and ...

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Lara collapses on the couch.

LARA (V.O.)
No one else cares about you but me.
So I would appreciate something.
Anything.

Focus on LARA, turning, yawning.

LARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
All right. Bye.

Steady background noise. Lara covers her face with a pillow and yells into it.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY - AFTERNOON

"DAY 10"

LARA is walking out of a subway station. Her phone buzzes. She rolls her eyes and picks up.

LARA

What?

ESTHER (V.O.)

Hey. Can we talk?

LARA

Okay.

ESTHER (V.O.)

In person. At 85. I need help, too.

LARA

Now?

ESTHER (V.O.)

You got plans?

LARA sits down on a bench.

LARA

No. But I wanna unwind. It's been a long day.

ESTHER (V.O.)

Come here to unwind. See ya soon.

A click. LARA puts her phone away. She closes her eyes to meditate. She hears ANNE's voice from Esalen. The sounds of the world fade and she calms down.

FADE TO:

INT. 85 BOWERY - GULLY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

LARA is inspecting a snow globe.

LARA

Trash.

ESTHER

I agree.

LARA tosses the snow globe into a giant black garbage bag. LARA digs through some other items.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
I wanted to say sorry. I said some
mean things.

LARA
Yep.

LARA keeps looking through the bag.

ESTHER
I heard you went to see Aunt Tao.
And Hobie. He still a weirdo?

We focus on LARA, who does grin but keeps a straight face,
like she's trying to stay mad.

LARA
You and Mom are the same.

ESTHER
How?

LARA
You both came knocking at my door
wanting to apologize for something.

LARA finds a box. It's full of postcards. She tosses it
immediately in the trash.

LARA (CONT'D)
You keep messing up and wanting to
apologize.

ESTHER
Because we're worried about you.

LARA
(Frustrated)
You're worried? So you keep messing
up?

ESTHER
Because we know how you are. You're
emotionally ...

LARA
... Vulnerable? Easy to cry?

A beat.

ESTHER
That's not what I said. But you are
emotional. And we want to make sure
you're okay with all this.

LARA
You don't need to tiptoe around my
emotions. I don't need babying
or...

A piercing yell from the kitchen.

GULLY
(In Chinese)
Are you hungry?

LARA
No!
ESTHER
No!

They both snicker. It soon turns sober again.

LARA (CONT'D)
Look, I don't need charity or pity.
I can handle myself.
(A beat)
And for the record, I wasn't trying
to sabotage you at Sunrise. Because
I know I'm ready. I can do this.

ESTHER
Lara...

LARA
What do I need to do to prove
myself?

ESTHER
Lara!

LARA has gripped the bag so hard it rips.

LARA
What?

ESTHER
I already put in the application.

LARA drops the bag.

LARA
When?

ESTHER
Yesterday.

LARA
So you never trusted me.

ESTHER remains silent. LARA spots a photo of her in a prom dress, lying in the ripped bag. She smiles and picks it up. She shows it to ESTHER.

LARA (CONT'D)
Prom.

ESTHER
I took that photo.

LARA nods and rips it up. She tosses it in the trash pile.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
I do trust you, sis. But this is a
lot of responsibility.

LARA
I know it is. But I've been
meditating, understanding myself,
and I know I can do it.

ESTHER takes a seat on the floor and tells LARA to sit
besides her. LARA refuses, but ESTHER taps the floor. LARA
drops.

ESTHER
Lara, I love you.

LARA
I love you, too.

ESTHER grabs LARA's shoulders and looks her in the eyes.

ESTHER
I love you.

LARA
Stop. This is weird.

ESTHER glares.

LARA (CONT'D)
I love you, too.

ESTHER nods.

ESTHER
I'm saying this because I love you.
(A beat)
I've been married and living with
Rob and Sandy in a one bedroom in
Hyde Park. Do you know how much
space there is?

LARA
It's pretty small.

ESTHER nods profusely.

ESTHER
It's barely bigger than your
apartment. And do you know how much
shit Mom has?

LARA
We'll put it in storage.

ESTHER
Sunrise *has* storage. Lockers,
sis. Lockers. She can even rent a
hut or something. They know old
ladies like hoarding. It's perfect.
Kelly already has it set up.

LARA
She's gonna hate it there.

ESTHER
I know, but does that matter?

LARA narrows her eyes.

LARA
Yes.

ESTHER
She doesn't know what she needs.

LARA
She needs family by her side! Like
me!

ESTHER
She needs help. I agree with that.

LARA
I can help. I can help!

ESTHER droops her head like she's dealing with a child.

ESTHER
Lara, I need you to be on my side.
I need you...
(A beat)
... I need you to convince her that
Sunrise is the better option.
Please.

LARA stands, furious, trying to control her temper.

LARA
Are you serious?!

Lara feels herself hyperventilating. ESTHER looks up, sympathetic.

ESTHER
You know this is the right thing to do.

LARA
(Shaky)
First, you stab me in the back.
Now, you want me to twist the knife.

ESTHER
Don't be so dramatic.

FLASHBACK

LARA is in a room. It's silent. She's laughing at something in her hand. It's a broken rope. She's hunched over and begins to cry.

LARA (V.O.)
I don't believe you, E. I want to take care of Mom, and no one is LETTING ME. It's so...

In the present day, ESTHER stands.

ESTHER
This will be easier for everyone.

LARA
I need this.

ESTHER
It's not about you, sis. It's about what Mom needs.

Another yell from the kitchen.

GULLY (V.O.)
Esther!
(In Chinese)
Come here!

ESTHER nods and leaves. Focus on LARA, who's breathing faster and faster.

FADE TO:

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

A shot of her ceiling over weary music.

"DAY 12"

Voices accumulate. It's from ESTHER, about how she doesn't trust her for this responsibility of looking after their mother. It's from GULLY, who doesn't want her to be bothered with looking after her. It's from KELLY, her sweet demeanor covering her intent to steal her mother. And of course, GUTAO, her dismissive attitude cutting deep thorough her insecurities. It builds.

We see LARA. She sits up and looks out the window. It's a bird. LARA walks over, pensive, and it doesn't fly away. She reaches over to touch it. But then: a door knock. Her hand freezes. She looks behind her shoulder.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

A door opens. It's JEFF. He looks overwhelmed, tired, short on sleep. A baby cries behind him, with a woman tending to the baby. JEFF is the center of frame, and turn to see LARA on the knocking end.

LARA

Hey.

JEFF

Lara, what are you doing here?

LARA

You weren't answering.

JEFF steps inside and yells:

JEFF

Be right back!

He steps out and shuts the door.

LARA

When can I meet her?

JEFF

When Norah says it's okay. She's
breastfeeding now.

LARA

You know, Lindsay is my sister too.

JEFF, clearly impatient, puts his palm on his temple.

JEFF

What do you want, Lara?

LARA

I'm going to California tomorrow.

JEFF shrugs.

JEFF

Okay.

LARA

It's a meditation retreat. It's for
recovery and ... Stuff.

JEFF nods, albeit cautiously.

JEFF

I'm happy for you. You're working
on yourself.

LARA

Dad, can we take a walk outside or
something?

JEFF nods. He listens through the door, nodding. No baby.

JEFF

Okay.

EXT. A PLAYGROUND - MORNING

LARA and JEFF stroll through a playground.

JEFF

I remember when you played here.
Lindsay's next.

LARA

You're getting too old for this,
Dad.

JEFF

Hey, I'm healthy, you know.
Healthier than you!
(He grins)
Speaking of kids, have you....

LARA kills the conversation.

LARA

The retreat is for me. My well
being.

JEFF

And "stuff."

LARA shrugs.

JEFF (CONT'D)

So... you're gonna make me ask?

LARA

It's personal things. I've been
struggling. With Mom and E.

JEFF nods.

JEFF

I see. And this retreat is gonna
help?

LARA

We'll see.

JEFF

I'm here to listen. If you wanna
talk, just ask.

LARA swiftly dodges a passing ball. A kid runs past.

LARA

You're impossible to reach, Dad.

JEFF

Lara... I'm barely sleeping.
Norah's on my case, Lindsay's just
crying, always.

LARA stops walking.

LARA

I know. But I'm also your daughter.

JEFF

I know that. I promise, I'll be better.

LARA

You said that last...

JEFF

Gully and Esther. Tell me. What have they done this time?

JEFF sits on a bench. He clears away some dust. LARA takes a seat.

LARA

Esther's in Chicago, but I feel her controlling the family from there. And Mom just lets it happen. She doesn't want me involved, and all she does is listen to that hippie dippie shit that Aunt Tao spews.

JEFF nods. He checks his smart watch.

JEFF

Mhm. Nothing changed. Hold on...

JEFF checks his phone. A baby cries through an app. He adjusts some settings.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Sorry. Norah should be handling it. Anyway...

LARA

Are you even listening to me?

JEFF

Yes.

He grabs LARA's hands and grips them.

JEFF (CONT'D)

I'm here for you.

LARA looks down, almost ashamed.

LARA

We're your family.

JEFF nods.

JEFF

You're my #1, Lar.

LARA smiles.

JEFF (CONT'D)
To be continued.

He stands. He straightens his shirt.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Love you.

Focus on LARA as he walks away. FADE IN... the sound of an airplane landing.

EXT. SF INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - EVENING

An airplane lands.

EXT. ESALEN - GATES - EVENING

A taxi pulls up. LARA gets out and grabs her luggage. A woman walks out and bows. It's ANNE.

ANNE
Namaste. Do you need help?

LARA
Please.

A young woman appears from the shadows and grabs her luggage, bows, and runs away in the cover of dark.

ANNE
I hear you're from New York?

LARA
Yeah.

ANNE nods and smiles.

ANNE
I'd love to visit some day.

LARA shows LARA to a side door by the gate. It clicks open.

EXT. ESALEN - BOARDWALK - EVENING

ANNE and LARA walk briskly on the boardwalk. A few bonfires are lit. LARA looks up and sees stars.

ANNE
 Beautiful, right? No stars in New York.

LARA
 No stars in New York.

INT. ESALEN - LARA'S ROOM - EVENING

ANNE walks in, followed by LARA. It's a sparsely decorated room. Her luggage has been brought in.

ANNE
 My name is Anne. I'd like to personally welcome you to Sunrise. First session is at sunrise...
 (A smile)
 Meet in the main hall around 6.

LARA
 Thanks.

ANNE bows and leaves. LARA immediately plops on the bed.

The fan on the ceiling rotates, hypnotic. Focus on LARA. She closes her eyes.

INT. ESALEN - MEDITATION HALL - MORNING

LARA opens her eyes. She's in the meditation hall, next day.

ANNE (V.O.)
 Our goal during this retreat is forgiveness and compassion. Now, who do we forgive? And what compassion do we need to feel?

LARA nods.

ANNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 That's up to you. But remember, be kind to yourself and others will follow. There is someone who understands what you're going through. We're all going through something.

ANNE leads a breath. Everyone breathes in and breathes out.

ANNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Everyone feels pain, but no one's pain is more or less.

LARA closes her eyes.

ANNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Forgive yourself, forgive others,
feel true compassion, and perhaps
we will heal. Together.

FADE TO:

EXT. ESALEN - BOARDWALK - AFTERNOON

LARA walks alone. She seems a bit calmer with a gentler step.
She steps by a railing and looks out to the water. A quick
flash to her holding a rope. Her weird laugh.

ANNE (V.O.)
Hi.

LARA looks up. It's ANNE.

LARA
Hey.

ANNE
Mind if I join?

LARA
Of course.

ANNE stands besides her.

ANNE
How's the first week been?

LARA
I love it. I think I'm speaking
less.

ANNE
Interesting. Why is that?

LARA ponders this.

LARA
Because I don't have to keep
defending or explaining myself.

ANNE
I see.

ANNE smiles.

LARA

I have a very ... intense family.

ANNE

What does intense mean to you?

LARA

Intense like... they judge me, baby
me, don't trust me, all of that.
I'm always on guard.

(A beat)

Well, except my Dad. My Dad
listens.

ANNE leans on the railing.

ANNE

Dad's a good listener?

LARA

By default, yes.

ANNE

By default?

LARA

Everyone else is the worst. But
Dad, he doesn't interrupt me or
judge me. He's just there.

ANNE

And you like that?

LARA nods.

LARA

I think it's a divorced dad thing.
He's been through this before. He's
detached, but he's present. Right
now...

(A beat)

... I think that's what I need.

ANNE turns to LARA, who's looking straight into the ocean,
fixed on the waves.

ANNE

You need someone that's there for
you.

A beat. LARA steps back from the railing.

LARA

This was a lot. Sorry.

ANNE
No, it's okay, Lara.

ANNE looks at LARA, listening. LARA sighs, looking to the ground.

LARA
He cares. He listens.

ANNE nods.

ANNE
Will you join me for dinner?

LARA nods. ANNE smiles and bows.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Meet you at the cafe in 10.

FADE TO:

INT. ESALEN - LARA'S ROOM - EVENING

LARA is meditating. JEFF's voice swirls, appearing from left and right.

JEFF (V.O.)
You're my #1.

LARA shakes it off.

JEFF (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm here for you.

LARA grimaces.

JEFF (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If you wanna talk, just ask.

The noise builds. LARA opens her eyes. All noise cuts out.

END FLASHBACK.

The sounds of a baby crying.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

LARA paces in a hallway.

"DAY 12"

She's practicing under her breath. The crying baby grows louder.

LARA
(Mumbling)
Okay.

LARA knocks on JEFF's door. When JEFF appears, she wastes no time.

LARA (CONT'D)
Are you free?

JEFF
Of course. When'd you get back?

LARA
A few weeks ago.

JEFF
And how was it?

LARA peeks over his shoulder. NORAH, JEFF's wife, takes their baby LINDSAY to the bedroom.

LARA
Can I come in?

JEFF
Lara...

LARA
No mixing families, I know. But I'm tired and I'm hungry.

JEFF steps outside but before he can close the door, LARA extends her foot and stops it from shutting.

JEFF
Lara, I'm ...

LARA
... Tired, no sleep, I know. But when are you gonna really listen to what I have to say?

JEFF
What are you talking about? That's all I do. I listen to you talk about your problems.

LARA forces her way inside.

INT. JEFF'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

LARA steps in. It's huge. It's not as daunting as GUTAO's but it's decorated stylishly and has plenty of space. She spreads her arms out and spins.

JEFF
What are you doing?

LARA notices NORAH peeking out of the bedroom.

LARA
Are you embarrassed of me?

JEFF
No. Why would you ask that?

A beat.

LARA
I want to tell you about why I
really went to California.

A FLASH of LARA holding the rope. We zoom out and see it's a noose and bits of ceiling have fallen on her. She laughs.

LARA (V.O.)
But I don't think you'd care. About
suicide or my mental well-being or
anything...

JEFF
Lara, what....

LARA
You don't care about me. Or Mom.
You know she's being evicted.

JEFF is frozen, not sure what to say. LARA just continues on.

LARA (CONT'D)
I defended you, you know? Even
after you never pick up the phone,
or actually follow through on
spending time with me, I tell Mom
and E that you're worth it. But you
don't care. You pretend. I thought
you were different.

JEFF
Lara, did you hurt yourself?

LARA exhales. She notices a clay plate. She picks it up and examines it.

LARA

I made this.

JEFF

Yes. It reminds me of you.

JEFF walks over and tries to hug LARA, but she snaps away instinctively. She places the plate down again.

LARA

You're not real.

JEFF

What did they tell you at the retreat? That I'm a bad dad? That I don't listen? Or try? Because... I do, Lara.

LARA

No, it's not that.

JEFF

Then what is it?

LARA pauses.

LARA

They said you need someone who understands you completely, knows what you're going through, gets you. You're there, but you're not. You just pretend. You're not real.

JEFF

Lara, I don't understand why you're...

LARA

Mom is right, it really is just you tearing us apart. You just pretend.

JEFF suddenly grows impatient and a burst of emotion pops.

JEFF

Lara!

A beat. LARA notices the door to the bedroom is now closed.

JEFF (CONT'D)

I don't owe Gully anything. But I persist because I love you and E. I do. But I don't have to do any of this. So be grateful.

LARA

For what?

JEFF

Get out. Just go.

LARA

Do you even love me?

JEFF

I'm not answering that question.

A beat as LARA walks to the door.

LARA

This bare minimum, of being here:
it's not enough.

JEFF

Get out.

LARA walks out. The door shuts behind her. We focus on her.
The sound of waves fades in.

CUT TO:

EXT. A DRAWBRIDGE - NIGHT

LARA walks slowly. Her steps echo on the metal. A gust of
wind blows through. She shivers.

A line truck drives through. It honks. She sits on the rail
edge and dangles her legs over the water.

FLASHES. She's gripping the rope. She's laughing.

She chuckles. It becomes a full blown laugh, spiraling out of
control. Eventually, she comes down. She then begins to cry,
at first a trickle, and soon, a torrent. She shifts over...

But suddenly, a voice, as if an echo. It's...

HOBIE.

HOBIE

Hey, cuz!

LARA sits up straight.

HOBIE (CONT'D)

Lara?

LARA composes herself and swings her legs off. We focus on LARA as she wipes her tears. We turn to see HOBIE. He strolls in.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
Whatcha doing?

LARA
Nothing.

HOBIE
Seems like you're trying to be a hero.

LARA
Is that what they call it nowadays?

HOBIE chuckles.

HOBIE
Don't be selfish, Lara.

LARA
What do you know?

HOBIE
Killing yourself only makes things harder for Aunt Gully. Is that what you want?

LARA
Since when are you a fucking therapist?

HOBIE holds his hands up, backing away.

HOBIE
Fine. Go kill yourself.

HOBIE turns around and walks away. Focus on LARA. She goes back to the railing and leans.

HOBIE (V.O.)
Is this why we don't see you?
Because you keep trying to kill yourself?

LARA
Fuck you.

A beat. The water splashes underneath, spraying some up on her.

HOBIE (V.O.)
This is all Mom's fault, isn't it?
Can we agree on that?

LARA
Fuck her, too.

HOBIE laughs. Footsteps. He's suddenly to her side, out of focus, also leaning on the railing.

HOBIE
I like you, cuz. You know that, right?

LARA
Great.

HOBIE
This is kinda low for you, isn't it? Even I haven't tried killing myself... yet.

HOBIE hops up on the railing and sits facing her.

LARA
Congratulations.

HOBIE
I like you because you have courage, guts. I couldn't do this.

LARA
Here, let me help you.

LARA fake pushes HOBIE. HOBIE grins, shaking his finger.

HOBIE
That's why I like you.

LARA
Makes one of us.

HOBIE nods and kicks his legs.

HOBIE
I heard about Aunt Gully's situation.

LARA
Okay.

HOBIE
She's welcome to stay with us.

LARA rolls her eyes.

LARA
I'm well aware.

HOBIE
Shit, man. I get it.

LARA folds her arms.

LARA
What do you get exactly?

HOBIE
Mom told me you wanted Aunt Gully
to stay with you.

A beat.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
They won't let you have it.

LARA nods, slightly, like she's unsure herself.

LARA
Yes.

HOBIE
They took away your autonomy. Aunt
Gully, Mom, even Esther? Shit, I'd
kill myself too.

LARA
Don't forget Kelly.

HOBIE
And Jeff. Yeah, that guy was a
piece of shit.

LARA holds her tongue. She grimaces.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
I understand. It may not mean much,
but I understand.

LARA
Thanks.

LARA and HOBIE just sit there. Not a word is said. A yell
here, a child crying there, but it's mostly peaceful. HOBIE
takes out a joint and lights up.

HOBIE
You want?

LARA touches her chest, like she's moved. She then begins to cry.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
What? What did I say?

LARA sniffles, dramatic.

LARA
Nothing.
(A beat)
I just... didn't know you cared. I
didn't know anyone did.

HOBIE
It's just a joint.

LARA
I know. But still.

HOBIE hops off.

HOBIE
That's a no, then.

He smokes and coughs.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
Please don't kill yourself. Mom
would kill me.

LARA
Ok. Promise.

HOBIE, joint between his fingers, raises his hand like he's raising a glass.

HOBIE
To you. I'll see you around.

HOBIE walks away. Focus back on LARA. We stay with her as the voices return, compounding, echoing, as she rubs her temples and closes her eyes.

Suddenly, everything is silent.

Her eyes open and from the side, a small girl runs past her. A young mother chases after her. The girl stops and dances and keeps running. The mother puts her hands on her hips. LARA makes eye contact with the mother.

MOTHER
She'll be the death of me.
(She laughs gently)

LARA smiles and nods.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Are you okay? If you don't mind me
asking.

LARA nods.

LARA
Yeah. I'm all right.

More up tempo music begins as we focus on LARA. Now...

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNRISE - MORNING

"DAY 15"

LARA, frame left, walks straight to the entrance on the right, pushing her way past everyone.

INT. SUNRISE - LOBBY - MORNING

LARA walks straight up to the front desk. KELLY greets her with a smile.

KELLY
Lara! Welcome back.

LARA
Can I take a look at the
application?

KELLY, confused, leans in as if to share something.

KELLY
Are you up to something?

LARA
No.

KELLY
Gully will receive the best care
here!

LARA says nothing, remaining stony faced. KELLY holds up a finger.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Hold on.

LARA take a step back. A buzz from her phone. LARA sees that it's ANNE. She picks up.

LARA
Anne.

ANNE (V.O.)
Lara. How are you?

LARA
Okay.

ANNE (V.O.)
I found myself thinking of you
today. I wanted to see how you are.

LARA turns the corner and gets some privacy. KELLY watches from her computer.

LARA
It's kind of a bad time.

ANNE (V.O.)
I can call back.

LARA
Wait.

A beat. LARA takes a breath.

LARA (CONT'D)
I thought about you, too.

ANNE (V.O.)
Are you okay? How are you?

LARA
I'm okay. I...
(A beat)
Better. Better now.

ANNE (V.O.)
How's your mom? Is everything going
well with the move?

LARA
We're figuring that out.
(A light chuckle)
How's Esalen?

Some light noise on the other end of the phone.

LARA (CONT'D)
Anne?

ANNE (V.O.)

Good. Listen, Lara, I just want you to know I'm thinking about you. We all are.

(A beat)

Gotta run. Talk soon.

LARA

Bye.

LARA puts her phone down. She taps her phone on her palms. She closes her eyes and regains focus.

KELLY (V.O.)

Lara?

LARA walks back to the front desk.

LARA

Where's the application?

KELLY hands her a printout. LARA looks at it.

KELLY

You want to make a change?

LARA reviews the details and nods. She places them back down.

LARA

I'm cancelling the application.

KELLY

Lara, she's been approved.

(Nervous laugh)

Does E know about this?

LARA

We're cancelling it.

KELLY maintains her smile but picks up the phone slowly, out of frame.

KELLY

Hold your horses. Let's ring E.

LARA grabs the receiver. Now LARA holds her sweet smile.

LARA

E knows.

LARA gently pushes the receiver back to the cradle.

KELLY

I don't understand. Did we do something wrong? Did you have a better offer? Oh no. Gully's gonna be so mad.

KELLY looks panicked. LARA can't help but chuckle.

LARA

Mom doesn't care about you.

KELLY

Lara? How could you say that? Gully is...

A beat. KELLY seems lost.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Are you sure?

LARA

Mom hates this place. We agree on that.

KELLY

Lara, you're confusing me.

LARA taps her fingers on the counter.

LARA

Withdraw the application. That's that. I don't want anyone else speaking for me.

KELLY is stunned. Her face then turns into a smile.

KELLY

(Sweet)

Okay.

KELLY takes the application papers back.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Consider it done.

EXT. SUNRISE - MORNING

LARA walks out and exhales. Enigmatic music. Hands on hip, she chuckles to herself.

FADE TO:

EXT. A STREET IN DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN - AFTERNOON

LARA walks down the street. We're not sure how she is feeling. Unease? Giddiness? Tension?

EXT. GUTAO'S BROWNSTONE - AFTERNOON

LARA approaches the brownstone. She checks the window. Darkness inside. She knocks on the door.

LARA waits. Birds are chirping, kids are playing, the sun is shining and then...

The door opens. It's RICHARD.

RICHARD
Lara. What brings you here?

LARA
Is Aunt Tao home?

RICHARD
No, she went for a walk, but she should be...

GUTAO (V.O.)
Back!

LARA turns around. GUTAO, fresh from a workout, stands there. She lowers her sunglasses.

GUTAO
Lara.

A beat. We focus on the two ladies, LARA on the high steps, GUTAO on the sidewalk, RICHARD leaning back into the darkness.

FADE TO:

EXT. A STREET IN DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN - AFTERNOON

LARA and GUTAO walk at a brisk pace. LARA is trying to keep up.

GUTAO
Come on, Lara! Keep up!

GUTAO stops briefly to let LARA catch up.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
To what does the universe owe this
pleasure?

LARA jogs to reach GUTAO.

LARA
Not much...
(A beat, a breath)
Just wanted to say hi.

GUTAO
I see. I sense there's more.

A beat. LARA gestures to keep walking. They continue.

LARA
I wanted to talk about Mom.

GUTAO
Lara, my dear. You know what the
situation is like.

LARA
I'm not done talking.

GUTAO raises her eyebrows.

GUTAO
(Amused)
Please.

LARA
I don't like the way you treat me.

GUTAO
In what way do I treat you that you
don't like?

LARA
You treat me like I can't make my
own decisions.

GUTAO
(Sharply)
Well, can you?

A beat. Focus on LARA.

LARA
Yes. I can.

GUTAO stops walking. LARA keeps moving. A gulf between them
grows larger.

GUTAO

Lara, as your auntie, I feel I must make this very clear.

LARA slows her pace, just a little bit.

GUTAO (CONT'D)

You love your mother. But you don't care about her. You don't show up like I do.

LARA turns around. She stares daggers.

LARA

I may not have shown up before, but I am showing up now.

A beat.

LARA (CONT'D)

What I did before doesn't change what I want now.

LARA turns back and keeps walking. We stay focused on her.

GUTAO (V.O.)

Lara, you must understand. I'm trying to protect my sister. And help you, too. My lovely home will be open for my sister, and all shall be well, for everyone.

LARA chortles.

LARA

You don't know what's it's like to fight. To question yourself, your capabilities, your worthiness. Your...

LARA breathes in, breathes out.

LARA (CONT'D)

Your sense of self. All you had was money. You had it easy. Of course it's easy for you to say you can take care of it.

The gap between the two women widens so much that GUTAO yells.

GUTAO

Lara!

LARA stops. GUTAO walks to catch up, taking her time. They soon stand shoulder to shoulder, both facing forward.

GUTAO (CONT'D)

I came to America one year after
your mother. I don't have to tell
you that it wasn't easy, so I'll
pretend that you know better. Can I
pretend, Lara?

LARA is still.

GUTAO (CONT'D)

Richard was kind to me. I count
myself very lucky. The stars were
aligned for me. I don't take it for
granted.

GUTAO nods.

GUTAO (CONT'D)

I know... what's it's like. I know
about doubt. But I also know we all
need help. Including you.

LARA

I don't care about help. Mom is and
should be my responsibility. I want
her with me because I know it's
best for us. For me.

A beat. LARA exhales.

GUTAO

I seem to have no choice, then.

LARA

It seems that way.

GUTAO

Shall we come back to this?

LARA

No, I want to settle this...

GUTAO waves her hand, ending the conversation.

GUTAO

I have heard and I understand. Now,
I need a shower.

CUT TO:

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

The door bursts open. The music is manic and energetic. LARA, short on breath, slams the door shut. She's hyperventilating. She's full of emotion. She sits. She meditates.

All around her the apartment begins to shift. This wall moves. This sofa rotates. This pile of junk is gone. This entire bookcase is trashed. A flurry of moving things, like a tornado, tears through the apartment until all items land the way she wants it. The music crescendos and then..

CUT TO:

EXT. LARA'S APARTMENT - OUTSIDE - LATER

LARA is on the stoop. Passersby reminds LARA that she's not the only one dealing with issues. As we pull back, we see the stairwell up to her apartment tower over her. It's the same one we saw her struggle to drag her suitcase up in the beginning.

She stands up. She goes back inside and climbs. This time, she has no issue.

FADE TO:

EXT. A STREET - EVENING

LARA, walking after a jog, gets a phone call. After looking, she groans.

"DAY 16"

LARA picks up.

LARA

Hi.

ESTHER (V.O.)

What did you do?

LARA

You just found out?

ESTHER (V.O.)

Kelly just told me. Are you out of your mind?

LARA

You know that Mom hates that place, right?

ESTHER (V.O.)

Lara, I don't care. I don't care.
This needs to happen. Aunt Tao is a
crazy bitch and you just can't
handle it and...

LARA

I can handle it. I want this to
happen.

A beat.

ESTHER (V.O.)

You don't get to want anything
anymore.

LARA

You know you went behind my back,
too?

ESTHER (V.O.)

I don't need this.

LARA

You're not...

ESTHER hangs up. LARA puts her phone away, sighing, but a
smile creeps on her face.

FADE TO:

INT. 85 BOWERY - GULLY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

We slowly push in on the apartment, which is filled with more
boxes now. The sounds of objects being thrown in boxes. We
turn the corner. It's LARA. GULLY is behind her, folding some
curtains and other fabric.

"DAY 18"

They work in silence, although a Chinese radio station plays
softly in the kitchen. LARA steals a glance at GULLY. GULLY
is very focused.

LARA

Big day coming up.

GULLY

Yes.

LARA

Are you mad at me?

GULLY puts the curtains down.

GULLY
Why are you making drama, Lara?

LARA stops sorting.

LARA
I don't want you to live there,
Mom. Or Aunt Tao's.

GULLY
I don't want either of you to
worry! How many times I repeat
myself?

GULLY huffs. She puts her hands on her hips.

GULLY (CONT'D)
(In Chinese)
The more help, the more hassle.
That's you.

LARA
I want you to be happy.

GULLY
(In Chinese)
I want *you* to be happy! I don't
want you stressed. I know you're
stressed, Lara.

A beat.

GULLY (CONT'D)
(In English)
You go to California, you don't
tell me. You see Jeff, you don't
tell me. I don't know how you are.

LARA
I know. But I'm telling you now, I
know I want you to stay with me.

GULLY
But how do I know it's different?
Now you care?
(In Chinese)
You never call, you never visit,
and now you want me to live with
you?

LARA walks to a wall and leans on it. Asbestos.

LARA
I'm sorry, Mom.

GULLY
And... And you go behind E's back.

LARA
You don't even want to...

GULLY
I know what I want, Lara.

LARA
But Mom...

GULLY
I won't let you tie yourself to me.
You know bad things happen when you
focus only on family. They drag you
down.

(In Chinese)
That idiot Jeff let me down. I will
let you down.

LARA
I don't care!

GULLY waves LARA off.

GULLY
(In Chinese)
Daughter...
(In English)
You're stressed, busy, no time for
Mom, it's okay. It's better this
way.

LARA
(Yell)
Mom! Listen!

A pause. LARA is twitching, like she's about to burst. She turns around.

LARA (CONT'D)
I know I haven't been there. But I
want you to live with me.

GULLY
Why?

LARA
Because I need it for me.

GULLY
That's selfish.

LARA considers, then nods.

LARA
Maybe. Yeah. But we need to be a
little selfish. It's the only way
to get people to really ...
Understand.

GULLY rubs her eyes, like she's dreading what she's going to say.

GULLY
I already moved some of my stuff to
Tao.

LARA narrows her eyes.

LARA
What? When?

GULLY
Yesterday.

LARA
Mom...
(She's sounding desperate
)
You won't like it there.

GULLY
Ah.
(She waves, dismissing
her)
Why can't you let me have this?

LARA groans.

LARA
Does anyone in this family actually
communicate...

GULLY
I'm the mother! I get to do what I
want. And until you show me you can
do it, this is my plan.

GULLY walks the curtains over to a suitcase. She drops it in.

LARA
You don't trust me.

GULLY closes the box. She takes some duct tape and seals it tight. LARA watches, waiting for an answer.

GULLY

Lara. I need you to take care of yourself.

LARA

Yes, and this is how I do it.

A knock on the door.

LARA (CONT'D)

Who is that?

GULLY

It's time for a family meeting.

LARA

That could be either...

GULLY

(Curt)

It's your sister. Now come on.

GULLY puts on slippers and walks to the door. Focus on LARA. The door opens.

ESTHER (V.O.)

What's so urgent?

GULLY (V.O.)

It's family meeting time.

A beat.

ESTHER (V.O.)

Wow. Is this how we're doing it?

LARA

Apparently so.

A bit of commotion. ESTHER soon appears around the corner.

ESTHER

Hi.

LARA

Hi.

GULLY (V.O.)

Kitchen.

INT. 85 BOWERY - GULLY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - EVENING

All 3 women sit down at the table.

ESTHER

I put the application back in.

LARA

Are you serious? Why are we even...

GULLY makes a motion. Zip it.

GULLY

No more drama. E, I hate that place. Take it out.

LARA leans back, smug.

GULLY (CONT'D)

Lara, I can't live with you.

LARA

Mom...

GULLY

You two need to think of me. If I say I want this, you respect that. No more fighting.
(In Chinese)
Please.

ESTHER leans in to make her case to GULLY, but GULLY ignores her. ESTHER leans back.

GULLY (CONT'D)

E, you know I moved some of my stuff to Tao's already.

ESTHER sighs heavily, facepalming.

ESTHER

Mom, why would you...

GULLY

(In Chinese)

Because I want to. And you can't convince me. Lara, I'm sorry. It has to be this way. I'm doing this for you. For both of you.

Focus on LARA. She closes her eyes, trying to meditate, but can't get to a state of mindfulness.

GULLY (CONT'D)

Now...

GULLY picks up a box, filled with loose silverware, tape, and padding.

GULLY (CONT'D)

No one leaves until the silverware
is packed.

Focus on LARA and ESTHER, both clearly upset. ESTHER makes the first move, wrapping some forks. LARA looks at GULLY. GULLY just stares back. LARA then gets to work.

LATER

ESTHER leaves without a word. LARA puts on a jacket while GULLY watches.

GULLY (CONT'D)

It's nice that you care.

LARA

Mom, this isn't a good idea.

GULLY gestures LARA to go. LARA obeys. When the door closes, GULLY takes out her phone and calls.

GULLY

(In Chinese)

Tao, I have a thought...

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

We cut to LARA, sitting on a chair, thinking. We turn to see duct tape cordoning off various parts of the apartment. She leans forward. She rubs her temples.

"DAY 19"

Her phone buzzes. She ignores it at first. She gets up, moved some tape elsewhere to create more room, and looks at it. She nods. Now, she goes to her phone.

LARA

Hi.

GUTAO (V.O.)

I need your help with something.

LARA

My help?

GUTAO (V.O.)
Don't be so surprised. Just come
over.

The line goes dead.

FADE TO:

EXT. A STREET IN DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN - MORNING

A quiet day. LARA walks down the street. She's looking at her phone. It's her conversation with ESTHER. It's one sided. ESTHER hasn't been replying and LARA wants to talk but hasn't had any response from ESTHER. Last message was from yesterday.

LARA looks up. Cut to a wide, where we see ESTHER on the left and LARA on the right.

ESTHER
You got to be kidding me.

LARA
Was this a ...

GUTAO (V.O.)
Girls...

We turn to see GUTAO, in a flashy red jumper. Earrings hang off her ear, almost touching the ground. Her glasses are huge. She's giving medium vibes.

GUTAO walks down her front steps and opens the gate.

GUTAO
Please come in.

LARA
Is this an intervention?

GUTAO
Of sorts.

ESTHER turns around.

ESTHER
Not interested.

ESTHER begins to walk away.

GUTAO
Oh, but you should be. It's about
Gully.

ESTHER stops walking.

ESTHER
It's a done deal. She's going to
Sunrise.

A beat. ESTHER doesn't even seem to believe that.

LARA

GUTAO
My nieces, please....

GUTAO waves both women over. ESTHER grumbles and turns around to walk back. LARA hesitates but meets GUTAO at the gates.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
I would like for both of you to
make your case.

GUTAO
Make your case.

ESTHER

Are we on Judge Judy?

LARA

Make a case about what?

ESTHER

GUTAO twirls a fake mustache, enjoying the chaos.

GUTAO
Your mother told you that she
already moved some of her things
here, right?

ESTHER
Right.

GUTAO
But also...

GUTAO turns to LARA.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
If Gully doesn't want Sunrise,
wouldn't you prefer she stay with
me over with Lara?

ESTHER (V.O.)
I...

LARA narrows her eyes.

LARA
Whose side are you on?

GUTAO shrugs.

GUTAO
Just want to hear both sides.

GUTAO straightens up, clears her throat, and takes a step back.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
Let's sit down.

CUT TO:

EXT. GUTAO'S BROWNSTONE - MORNING

LARA, ESTHER, and GUTAO are seated besides a patio table. Glasses of lemonade sit untouched. RICHARD walks out, this time in a green robe, and places an ice bucket on the table.

RICHARD
Hope you have a good talk.

GUTAO
(Mild chuckle)
Thank you, Richard.

RICHARD nods and shuffles away. GUTAO takes some ice and drops it with a plop in her lemonade. Focus on LARA, who is dreading all of this.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
Now...

GUTAO offers ice. LARA and ESTHER refuse.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
Now... I want an end to this nasty
business.
(To LARA)
I've heard your side. But first...
(MORE)

GUTAO (CONT'D)
(To ESTHER)
What do you want?

ESTHER
I want Mom to be taken care of when
I go back to Chicago. That's it.

ESTHER turns to LARA.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
Lara, I love you, but honestly, if
Mom doesn't want to go to Sunrise,
it's better here. She's got Aunt
Tao.

GUTAO
I see. So... Lara, seems like your
sister doesn't trust you.

LARA
Oh, she's made that clear.

ESTHER
It's for peace of mind. It's for
your peace of mind, too. We have
family looking after Mom.

GUTAO makes a mock sad face.

GUTAO
But you know, Lara has really
cleaned up her place. She's told me
herself that she can handle it.

LARA
Aunt Tao, stop with the ... devil's
advocate or whatever the hell
you're doing.

GUTAO elongates her sad face.

GUTAO
(Cute)
I'm fighting for you.

LARA waves her hand, like swatting a fly away.

LARA
Aunt Tao is right, though. I can
handle it. And you know as well as
me...

(Looks right at GUTAO)
... She's a bad influence and she
drinks too much.

GUTAO laughs and takes a sip of lemonade.

GUTAO
I do, I do.

ESTHER
She's her sister.

LARA
I know....

ESTHER
No, you don't. Aunt Tao knows Mom
better than anyone. I...
(A beat; it pains her to
say it)
... Think it's the best thing we
can do for her. Family. Peace of
mind. Sis.

LARA and ESTHER stare down one another. Focus on LARA, who is breathing heavily. She then articulates.

LARA
You don't live here, so you don't
get to decide.

GUTAO lets out a singular ha. She slams the table. All the lemonade splashes.

GUTAO
I've heard enough.

She pulls her chair back and stands. She waves her fingers back and forth.

GUTAO (CONT'D)
Oh, my nieces. We've reached an
impasse. Yes.
(She nods)
I'm withdrawing my name.

ESTHER
You what?!

GUTAO
Gully is not staying here.

LARA
So that leaves me.

GUTAO smirks.

GUTAO
Richard!
(Clap clap)
Come.

RICHARD appears at the doorway, cloaked in darkness.

RICHARD
Yes. More ice?

GUTAO
No.

GUTAO stares at LARA and ESTHER. ESTHER is absolutely livid. LARA is pleased but feeling overwhelmed.

RICHARD
What is it then?

GUTAO
Let's give my nieces some space.
Let them air it out, wouldn't you say?

RICHARD
Quite. Shall we?

RICHARD hooks GUTAO's hand and they walk arm in arm back into the house.

The two women sit in silence. ESTHER then suddenly stands and leaves.

LARA
E...

ESTHER
No.

LARA stands.

LARA
E, we have to talk about this.

ESTHER stops at the gate.

ESTHER
There isn't anything to talk about.

LARA
I love you. But this is for me.

ESTHER

We have a responsibility to Mom.
Did you think about that?

LARA

Of course I did!

A beat, of disappointment.

ESTHER

That's even worse.

LARA

You don't know what I've been
through.

ESTHER snaps back and points.

ESTHER

No, you don't know what I've been
through. You don't know how much I
need this off my plate. You just
make things worse.

LARA doesn't have time to rebut as ESTHER abruptly turns around and leaves. We follow her walk away, and pan back to LARA. In the background, GUTAO watches from the window.

FADE TO:

INT. A SUBWAY PLATFORM - AFTERNOON

LARA, dressed up for work, is about to take the subway when she gets a buzz from her phone.

GULLY: "CALL ME."

LARA facepalms and turns around, leaving the platform.

"DAY 21"

GULLY (V.O.)

(In Chinese)

What did you do?

EXT. A STREET IN MANHATTAN - AFTERNOON

LARA is walking up the stairs into a busy Manhattan street.

LARA

What are you talking about?

GULLY (V.O.)
Did you talk to Tao?

A beat. LARA sighs and rubs her temple.

LARA
To be fair, she talked to us.

GULLY (V.O.)
(In Chinese)
Why? Why are you doing this?

LARA
It's not just me!

GULLY
Come to the house. Now.

The line goes dead.

INT. 85 BOWERY - GULLY'S APARTMENT - DOOR - AFTERNOON

LARA knocks on the door. There's talking that stops.
Footsteps. The door opens. It's GULLY. She shooes her inside.

INT. 85 BOWERY - GULLY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

LARA walks in. GUTAO is seated at the kitchen table.

GUTAO
Such a good daughter, always being
there for your mother. What a
change.

GULLY walks in.

GULLY
Sit.

LARA sits besides GUTAO.

LARA
Where's Esther?

GULLY
Tell Tao you made a mistake.

LARA
What?

GULLY

Tell her this was not what your
mother wanted and you take it back.

A beat.

LARA

But that's not true.

GULLY slams the table. LARA and GUTAO both jump back.

GULLY

It **is** true.

Another long silence. GUTAO then stands and looks at GULLY and LARA. She nods and places a hand on GULLY's shoulder. GULLY, breathing heavily, holds her sister's hand and then lets it go.

GUTAO then leaves the apartment.

GULLY (CONT'D)

You disappoint me. You and your
sister. You won't let me make my
own choices.

LARA

Living with Aunt Tao isn't a good
choice, Mom!

GULLY

But it's still my choice!
(In Chinese)

Don't you get it?

LARA

What about me, Mom? Don't you want
me to be happy?

GULLY

How dare you, Lara? After
everything...

LARA

You told me! You want me to not
worry about you! Well, if you're
with Aunt Tao, then I'll be
worried!

GULLY abruptly shifts in her chair and turns to the window.

GULLY

Why are you making everything so
difficult?

LARA

Because I love you.

LARA walks over to GULLY but GULLY retracts. LARA pouts.

GULLY

You... you still haven't proven you
have space in your apartment.

LARA

I figured it out.

GULLY nods, and sighs, obviously exhausted.

GULLY

I have stuff to move back from
Tao's. You and your sister, this
weekend, you're doing it.

LARA

Okay, okay.

GULLY curses randomly in Chinese.

GULLY

And that Tao!

(In Chinese)

Dumbass! She just listens to you
two. So stupid!

(In English)

I should throw this stupid phone
book at her.

On the mess of a table, GULLY picks up an old phone book and
attempts to pick it up but struggles.

GULLY (CONT'D)

Stupid thing weighs a ton.

LARA

(Mild chuckle)

Don't hurt yourself, Mom.

A beat. GULLY taps the book.

GULLY

Saturday, 9am, at Tao's.

LARA grabs GULLY's hands.

LARA

Do you trust me?

GULLY

I know I love you.

LARA

That's good enough for me. This is going to work. Okay?

GULLY

You've worn me out, Lara. I don't really have a choice, do I?

GULLY grips their hands tight.

GULLY (CONT'D)

Now get out.

CUT TO:

EXT. 85 BOWERY - AFTERNOON

A door slam. LARA is back on the street, weaving through old Chinese ladies. She finally manages a smile even as the ladies yell at her for standing still.

FADE TO:

EXT. LARA'S APARTMENT - OUTSIDE - AFTERNOON

LARA opens the door and walks up the stairs. She is methodical, precise, and tunes out the noise in the stairwell.

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

She walks in and goes to the bathroom. She sits on the toilet. She begins to cry. It takes her a while to stop crying. Then...

EXT. GUTAO'S BROWNSTONE - MORNING

"DAY 23"

LARA is moving a heavy box to an Uber. The driver sits in the car, browsing his phone. When LARA gets to the trunk, she heaves and loads the box. It's labeled "winter clothes."

LARA

(Mumbling)

You'd think she lives in Alaska...

From the mirror, the driver locks eyes. LARA nods. The driver looks away, back to his phone.

LARA walks through the gate again and walks past ESTHER without saying a word. ESTHER struggles to carry another clothing box. LARA turns around to go help but ESTHER shooes her away like a fly.

ESTHER

I don't need your help.

Right at the instant, her box drops. It sounds muffled, probably a box of blankets. LARA kneels and helps ESTHER lift it back up. They briefly stare at each other.

INT. GUTAO'S BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

LARA grabs the last box. GUTAO is sitting on a chair, watching with amusement.

GUTAO

That's the last one.

LARA ignores her.

GUTAO (CONT'D)

You better take care of Gully.

LARA

I will.

GUTAO

I believe you.

(A beat)

The energy is right. It feels...

Right. You should transfer some of
that energy...

(She puts her palms up and
waves them side to side)

... To my poor useless Hobie.

LARA turns around, swinging the box, almost hitting an overhead light.

LARA

Hobie is fine. Leave him alone.

GUTAO

He got to you, didn't he? Richard!

(Clap clap)

RICHARD appears from the shadows, this time from a room LARA was sure didn't exist.

RICHARD

Yes.

GUTAO

Our esteemed niece says Hobie is
"fine."

RICHARD

Ah. Not at all. He needs ...
Improvement.

GUTAO

I agree, Richard.

ESTHER appears at the door, hands on hip.

ESTHER

You got it?

LARA

Yeah.

ESTHER nods and goes back outside. LARA sees that RICHARD has disappeared back into the shadows.

LARA (CONT'D)

Thanks. I guess.

GUTAO smiles. LARA slowly walks outside. GUTAO watches and walks to the door, watching her nieces pack the car. GUTAO turns around, chuckles mildly to herself, then leaves.

GUTAO

Richard!

EXT. GUTAO'S BROWNSTONE - MORNING

The taxi trunk closes. LARA exhales. She sees ESTHER near the front gate, smoking. She sees LARA staring and glares back.

ESTHER

What?

LARA

I thought...

ESTHER

You thought wrong.

ESTHER takes a drag.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

They're not here.

LARA
How are they?

A beat. The cigarette dangles from ESTHER's mouth.

ESTHER
Sandy still likes me. Sandy's
teacher is gonna be disappointed,
though. "Second hand smoke", blah
blah.

A chuckle.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
We're getting a divorce.

A beat.

LARA
Oh... I didn't know. I'm sorry.

ESTHER
I found Rob sleeping with his
student. In our bed.

LARA widens her eyes.

LARA
Damn.

ESTHER
Yeah, what a moron.
(A drag)
Us Lin ladies have terrible taste
in men.

LARA
Yeah.

ESTHER
I just want it to go away. Is that
so hard? Like... I just want to
take Sandy and go somewhere else,
have Mom put away, so I don't have
to worry, so Rob won't bother me,
so I just have Sandy and no one
else. But I can't just leave
Chicago.

The driver honks the horn. "Hurry up!" Both women wave
aggressively. They both smirk, then turn serious again.

LARA
Do you wanna stay with me?

Esther laughs. She tosses the cigarette on the floor and steps on it.

ESTHER
You're cute.

LARA
I'm sorry. About all of it.

ESTHER
This is kinda stupid, isn't it? Mom is a grown woman. She can do whatever she wants.

LARA
But I need her with me. For me.

ESTHER nods.

ESTHER
I know. I see it.
(A beat)
I'll withdraw the Sunrise application. Officially.

LARA
Okay. Thank you.

ESTHER
Yeah, sure. I know for me, I just need to figure my shit out.

LARA
You will.

ESTHER
You better not mess this up. We have a week now.

LARA
Holy shit, yeah.

LARA widens her eyes, the weight of everything hitting her.

ESTHER
How are you feeling?

LARA
I gotta get movers, I gotta vacuum my place, let my landlord...

ESTHER
Good luck. You wanted this, sis.

LARA
Are you gonna help? I could use
some help.

ESTHER takes out the cigarette carton and fidgets with it.

ESTHER
Yeah. But now, I need a walk.

ESTHER walks to LARA and hugs her. They embrace for a long time.

LARA
(Muffled)
This is gonna be hard.

ESTHER
You got this.

FADE TO:

INT. 85 BOWERY - GULLY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

LARA drops a box on the floor. She slides it to the pile of boxes packed into the center of the room.

The apartment has been stripped. Boxes, paintings, sofas, lights, and more are wrapped and piled around each other. We pan to the kitchen, where GULLY watches from the doorframe.

GULLY
That's it?

LARA
Yes.

GULLY nods and turns around, disappearing into the kitchen.

INT. 85 BOWERY - GULLY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

LARA walks in. GULLY is pouring herself tea.

LARA
E had to go.

GULLY says nothing. LARA takes a seat at the table. GULLY stands at the counter, by her cup.

LARA (CONT'D)
It's going to be fine.

GULLY

You made this so difficult.

GULLY taps her cup.

GULLY (CONT'D)

I don't want to be a burden. I want
you to live your life. Both of you.

LARA

This is how living my life happens,
Mom. By us living together.

GULLY

After all I did for you, you won't
even let me have this.

GULLY takes the cup and walks it back to the dining table.
She avoids eye contact.

GULLY (CONT'D)

I suppose I have no choice.

A beat.

LARA

Okay. What do you want? I'll
listen.

GULLY sips some tea. She then smiles.

GULLY

(In Chinese)

Lara, my baby.

GULLY puts the tea down and reaches over to hold her face.

GULLY (CONT'D)

(In Chinese)

My daughter.

LARA

What?

GULLY

(In Chinese)

It's okay. I just wanted you to
ask. To listen. It's okay to be a
little...

(In English)

Selfish.

GULLY lets go of her face. She strokes LARA's hair.

GULLY (CONT'D)

What I always wanted was for you to be happy. So... we can try to make it work. Okay?

LARA nods but seems distressed.

GULLY (CONT'D)

Isn't this what you wanted?

LARA

Yes, but...

LARA exhales.

LARA (CONT'D)

I...

A FLASH to LARA holding the noose.

LARA (CONT'D)

I wanted to tell you that I haven't been doing that well. It's been really hard.

GULLY

Lara, what do you mean?

LARA

I don't want you to worry, but since we're being honest... Promise you won't freak out.

GULLY

(In Chinese)

No promise! Tell me!

A beat.

LARA

Well... I went to California because I tried to kill myself.

FLASHBACK:

LARA tightens a noose around her neck. She stands on a table. We focus on her. We then focus on the table she's standing on. It's a bit slippery. She sighs and adjusts her feet but accidentally slips and falls off the table.

She's gasping for air, clawing at her neck. The ceiling then breaks and she falls and slips off the table, landing on the floor. We focus on her. She grasps the noose. She takes it off her neck.

We cut to the shot we keep seeing of her holding the noose.
She laughs. She then cries.

BACK TO PRESENT

LARA (CONT'D)
It didn't go great.

GULLY
Lara!

GULLY pulls LARA in to hug her. LARA leans into GULLY's shoulders and closes her eyes.

GULLY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm such a bad mom.

LARA
It's not your fault.

GULLY
Well, now I have to keep an eye on you.

LARA breaks the hug.

LARA
I felt like I had no agency. I was treated like a child. That's the issue, Mom.

A beat. GULLY doesn't understand.

LARA (CONT'D)
Mom. No more babying me. I can take care of myself. I just need you on my side. Okay?

GULLY
On your side.
(In Chinese)
Okay.

LARA narrows her eyes, not sure that GULLY gets it, but she moves on.

LARA
We can begin by living together.
Being equal.

GULLY
Are you okay, Lara?

GULLY rubs her shoulders, like giving a massage. She begins to tear up.

GULLY (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.

LARA hugs her now. Zoom out on the two women, finally understanding each other just a bit more.

LARA
It's okay. It's okay.

Music begins to swell.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

LARA is making some phone calls, to the movers, to KELLY at Sunrise to confirm the application is out, to her landlord about her mom moving in.

LARA also furiously vacuums, packs some more at 85 Bowery, argues with GULLY and ESTHER, who has joined in helping to pack. Then...

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

LARA's phone rings. It's from JEFF. LARA stares at it. She mutes the call and walks away. As she disappears in the background, we see that there's been 7 missed calls, all from JEFF.

LARA opens the door and HOBIE walks in. They nod at each other.

HOBIE walks in and peruses the apartment, his hands behind his back. There are already some of GULLY's boxes, still unpacked. HOBIE steps around everything and sees the bedroom and bathroom. He steps back out into the living room.

LARA
Well?

HOBIE
I think you're out of your mind for trying this, but what do I know?

LARA
More people have lived in smaller spaces.

HOBIE shrugs.

HOBIE
I suppose. I think Mom was right.
This is insane.

LARA
Maybe.

HOBIE
But who cares... It's your choice,
right?

LARA nods. She sighs, taking a look at the clutter.

HOBIE (CONT'D)
Happy you didn't kill yourself.

LARA
Thanks.

LARA drops onto a chair.

LARA (CONT'D)
This isn't even half of it.

"DAY 28"

A pillow on her head. LARA yells into the void.

CUT TO:

EXT. 85 BOWERY - MORNING

A shot of a moving truck. It pulls forward and we see a pile of boxes outside the front door. There's a light rain coming down. Numerous Chinese officers direct the tenants to move their stuff to the side. There's arguing and general mayhem as all boxes are getting soaked.

"DAY 29: MOVING DAY"

We pan right and see LARA and ESTHER waiting by their stuff.

LARA
It's late.

ESTHER
I told you we shouldn't have
brought this stuff down first. They
should've have done it themselves.

LARA
They said they'd be here.

ESTHER rolls her eyes.

ESTHER
Never trust a contractor.

LARA
Oh wait...
(She points and waves)
Here!

A large red truck pulls a bit far from where they're standing. LARA waves them forward. The truck honks no. LARA groans and beckons ESTHER to start moving.

MONTAGE:

Numerous shots of the 85 Bowery elevator, doors opening and closing, boxes and carts being pushed through, shots of the movers and LARA and ESTHER moving stuff to the truck, of GULLY watching.

Timelapse of the apartment being slowly emptied out. When there's nothing left but bags of garbage, GULLY, LARA, and ESTHER stand and watch. We hear sounds of laughter, excitement, an echo of a distant past that is now fading. GULLY closes the door.

EXT. 85 BOWERY - MORNING

LARA, ESTHER, and GULLY watch as the movers load their last items. LARA notices that JEFF is watching from across the street. He waves. LARA ignores him. Focus on LARA.

FADE TO:

EXT. LARA'S APARTMENT - OUTSIDE - MORNING

The red truck is double parked. The movers make their way up the staircase, the one LARA traversed, has traversed, will traverse.

The women just watch. We focus on them for a long time as their eyes dart back and forth. We zoom in on LARA. Slowly, a tear forms.

CUT TO:

INT. LARA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Slow motion: LARA walks through her now filled apartment. She steps around some stuff, dodges the movers, and steps into the bathroom.

In the bathroom, she leans against the mirror. She takes a breath.

LATER

EXT. LARA'S APARTMENT - OUTSIDE - MORNING

The red truck pulls away. LARA and ESTHER stand side by side. GULLY stands behind them. ESTHER turns to leave but LARA holds her back.

LARA

Hold on.

EXT. A STREET IN BROOKLYN - MORNING

Through the fall leaves, LARA and ESTHER talk, although we don't hear a word. GULLY walks slowly behind, simply listening. Soft music plays. It's a montage of reactions, but one stands out. ESTHER almost breaks down in tears and hugs her. They pause and LARA remains strong, not crying. We hold here as GULLY hugs both of her children.

FADE TO:

EXT. 85 BOWERY - AFTERNOON

LARA, ESTHER, and GULLY arrive at 85 Bowery. The building is still imposing. Other families are still moving things to trucks.

LARA helps some elderly ladies who have trouble. ESTHER goes to help while GULLY smiles and watches.

We zoom out as LARA and ESTHER grow up a bit, helping other families, while GULLY observes, proud.

THE END.