

THE CONNECTING BETRAYAL

PART ONE

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FADE IN:

INT. THE COBURN HOME - MORNING

VALERIE COBURN (early 50's) Attractive auburn haired, slender, poised and stoic, stands as friends offer their condolences.

VALERIE

(Smiles)

Thank you so much Henri for joining us today. George was very fond of you.

Valerie watches the last guest leave then enters the spacious living room. A large self portrait of George looms above his urn.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Whispering)

Oh, George I'm sorry for all the fights and arguments we had, it was such a waste of time. I will always love you. I hope you knew that.

She lights a small memorial candle. Valerie doesn't blink eyes fixed on the flame then drifting to George's portrait.

EXT. LAS VEGAS FIRE STATION - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A BABY whimpers, cries growing louder. A fire fighter preparing dinner hears it. Alarmed, firefighters rush to check it out.

A baby abandoned in front of a Fire Station Department in Las Vegas, Nevada. The six month old baby is adopted by two retired women VERONICA (RONNIE) LINLEY and ALEXANDRIA CLARK, both former university professors. Mom Ronnie cradles the infant.

INT. BABY VALERIE'S ROOM - DAY

MOM RONNIE

(Overjoyed)

Oh Alex, she's so perfect and beautiful ... and spunky... look at her eyes she understands what we're saying ... awww yes you do... what should we call her? Maybe Lourdes and her nickname will be Lord? No she will end up killing us. And Alexandria will not work either. We will call you Valerie, for
(MORE)

MOM RONNIE (CONT'D)
(Overjoyed)
strength. Okay baby girl? Look, she
smiled!

ALEXANDRIA
(Teary)
Yeah, you know she is smiling. Will
you look at that? I hope you will
love us too baby girl. Oh she is so
pretty like you Ronnie.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

TEEN VALERIE (16), restless energy shimmering under a
rehearsed calm, commands the stage mid monologue. A cluster
of boys in the front row watch her, transfixed, and yells.

BULLY BOY
(Shouts)
Hey Valerie whatcha doing tonight?
Can we come over and watch your
moms do it?

VALERIE
(Yells Back)
Go fuck yourselves! If you come
near me like that again, I'll
fucking kill ya!

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

At 23, Valerie lands her first job as a restaurant server
and hostess. Three months later, her boss BRENDA CHEN greets
GEORGE COBURN, a tall handsome philanthropist and real
estate land developer, leads him to a private booth and
signals for Valerie.

BRENDA
(Sarcastic)
George Coburn, meet my most valued
employee, Valerie. She started
three months ago, which you
wouldn't know because you haven't
been here. Valerie is a student at
the University. Valerie, please
take care of Mr. Coburn. Oh, and
George, be nice to her.

GEORGE
(Chuckles)
What do you mean by that? I have
always been excellent with people.
(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(Chuckles)
Okay... most valued employee, good
to meet you.

Brenda walks away, casting him a flirtatious smirk.

VALERIE
(Smiles Shyly)
Hello, it's nice to meet you Mr.
Coburn.

Valerie looks up at George, sets the menu down. He sits, his
blue eyes fixed on her.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
(Reserved, Nervous)
Well... um, Mr. Coburn... I'm sure
you have already memorized
everything in that menu. Is there
something different that you might
want to try? I can come back if
you're not ready... yet.

GEORGE
(Smiles, Unblinking)
Just George, please... you know my
first name. Ah yeah, maybe I'm
ready. I will try something new,
most valued employee.

INT. MOM RONNIE AND MOM ALEX HOME - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Valerie's mothers sit her down, arguing against her
relationship with the older man. In the end they couldn't
stop her.

EXT. THE BELLAGIO - NIGHT

George takes Valerie to the Bellagio for their first date.

GEORGE
(Charming)
You mentioned how much you wanted
to go play the tables and the
slots, so let's go.

Valerie was wide eyed and speechless.

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - NIGHT

VALERIE

(Excited)

Where are we going first? Are you taking me to the Casino? Which one are we going to? I've always wanted to watch that thing, you know, the water show at the Bellagio...

GEORGE

(Laughing)

Alright, alright, catch your breath. We will go wherever your heart desires.

EXT. FOUNTAINS OF BELLAGIO - NIGHT

Valerie rocks out, mesmerized by the synchronized music and luminous water jets erupting from the man made lake.

VALERIE

(Mesmerized)

Wow, oh George this is so beautiful and romantic. Thank you.

George watches Valerie enjoying every detail of the show.

GEORGE

(Happy)

My pleasure, are you ready for the next fun... take my hand baby, let's go!

INT. WYNN CASINO - NIGHT

George's driver pulls up to the Wynn, ushering them to the door.

GEORGE

(Smiles, Winks)

Thanks Billy, ah, come get us around 2am. We are going to be here for a while.

George leads the way, Valerie close behind, elegant in a cocktail dress and high heels shimmering under the chandelier above.

INT. DELILAH'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT (CONT'D)

At the end of dinner inside Delilah's, George hands Valerie some cash.

INT. WYNN CASINO - BLACKJACK TABLE - NIGHT (CONT'D)

GEORGE

(Smiles)

Here is \$500 for your first start
at the Blackjack table. Show me
what you've got, baby.

Valerie steps up to a blackjack table. Places her bet of \$100. Her card comes up triple 7 and a burst of excitement. The Dealer signs off for a payout of \$500 cash.

VALERIE

(Thrilled)

Oh yeah, baby! Look at that George,
you're my lucky charm. Let's drink
champagne!

On a hot streak Valerie hits a minor jackpot and wins \$2,400.00. They were plastered and having a great time.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Hiccups, Chuckles)

Here you go, Georgie. I believe I
owe you \$500 dollars. Thank you.
What do you want to do now?

GEORGE

(Chuckles)

Hey, wait a minute. Is this all I'm
gonna get? I should be getting
fifty percent out of that \$2,400
plus the \$500, ah, let's see,
that's \$2,900. I've been counting.
Wait, wait, I must be drunk. I am
drunk... you also won \$500 at the
Blackjack table. So that's \$3,400!

VALERIE

(Giggling)

Oh yeah, so that's what you've been
doing, Mr. Coburn, huh... counting?
Well, if you want more, you'll have
to catch me first!

George stands still, tipsy and scratching his head. Valerie skips off playfully and spins her way through crowds and tables. George catches up to Valerie and pulls her in. He closes the gap between them. They stand locked.

GEORGE

(Chuckles, Teasing)

So, now that I've caught you, what
should we do about it? Are you
gonna hand over my share, or...ah.

VALERIE
(Seductive)
No... no, but, I would rather give
you a kiss like this...

Valerie pulls him into a hard kiss and George responds with equal passion. The background crowd is annoyed by the commotion and security lets it slide.

EXT. WEDDING CEREMONY - DAY

Valerie stands with her handsome groom at a simple ceremony of fifty guests. Her mothers beam with pride. Valerie leaves George's side and goes to her mothers.

VALERIE
(Teary)
Moms, please don't cry now, I don't
want us to redo our make-ups. I
want to thank you both for giving
me a wonderful life. I am very
grateful. I love you guys so much.

Valerie wears a white off-shoulder gown fitted at the waist and falling to the floor, with diamond chandelier earrings and a five carat ring. George wears a light gray linen suit, white shirt, and matching silk necktie.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - DAY (CONT'D)

George and Valerie share their first dance to "At Last." Her mothers sit transfixed, staring at the beautiful couple.

GEORGE
(Whispers)
Are you happy, my love? I want you
to promise me to always enjoy
everything out of your life. Will
you promise me that?

Valerie kept silent as she danced in George's arms.

INT. HOSPITAL - LABOR AND DELIVERY

A year later at the hospital, Valerie pushes through labor as they welcome their first son, ANDREW.

INT. COBURN HOME - NIGHT

George comes home and kicks the front door behind him. He storms up the stairs and into the primary bedroom, searching for something and making a racket.

GEORGE

(Agitated)

Shit, where is it... dammit, why can't I ever find what I'm looking for around here! It's always being moved.

VALERIE

(Confused)

Hey, honey, what's going on? What are you looking for? Can I help you with it? Whatever you're looking for, you don't have to make such noise, you almost woke Andrew up. Did something happen at the office? George! Are you even listening to me?

George sat in silence, ignoring Valerie's questions.

GEORGE

(Disgusted)

Yeah, nothing, now forget it, go back to whatever you were doing.

George glances at Valerie, and bolts down the stairs to avoid her. Valerie trails behind, dismayed, at the base of the stairs. The sound of George's car ignition driving away.

INT. COBURN HOME - NIGHT (CONT'D)

VALERIE

(Shouting)

What did I do wrong this time! I don't understand you!

Valerie waits with tea in hand, eventually falling asleep as she grips a baby monitor.

EXT. PARKING LOT - EVENING

A black Mercedes parks behind a building. He unlocks the entrance with a key, walks toward a short hallway, and taps lightly on the private door. Brenda opens the door and lets George inside and wraps her arms around his neck.

BRENDA

(Delighted)

What took you so long, handsome, I've missed you, lover...

GEORGE

(Whispers)

Yeah, I'm sorry, but I'm here now... come here, stand in front of me, undress yourself slowly, very slow, yeah, that's it, turn around and face...

INT. COBURN HOME - EVENING

Hours later George returns home. Exits the powder room, and spots Valerie asleep on the sofa. He wakes her. Valerie is immediately startled by George's touch.

VALERIE

(Startled, Angry)

What the hell is going on? Where have you been? Please don't touch me, I don't like the way you smell!

George backs away in silence, not answering Valerie.

GEORGE

(Remorse)

Look, Val, I needed to think and I took a walk down the Malibu shores.

George sits, combing through his hair, exhaling.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(Calm Tone)

Hey, I'm sorry honey. I just had a hard day, that's all, everything will be alright. Can you forgive this old man just this once?

Valerie stays quiet, and moves away from George.

VALERIE

(Bothered)

I accept your apology, but don't let this shit happen again. I'm going to bed. You should take a shower, George.

Two years later, Valerie, pregnant with their second child, gives birth to another boy they name COOPER. Valerie and George's tension grows until the nannies quit, prompting Valerie to call her moms. Valerie's moms listen to her situation and complaints.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Crying)

I can't do this anymore, I want a divorce. I think he is having an affair. With who? I don't know, mom, if I knew that... I would go and kick her ass and strangle her, mom. My hormones are severe and I'm angry all the time and having mood swings. I need your help until I can interview another nanny and maybe a new housekeeper!

INT. COBURN HOME - DAY (THREE YEARS LATER)

George walks into a royal welcome from Andrew, now four, and two year old Cooper, who shower him with drooling affection.

GEORGE

(Chuckling)

Oh no, monsters are coming! Please don't eat me. Mommy, come here and save me, before I get eaten up alive! Help me, ahhhh!

Valerie stands to the side, watching her family.

VALERIE

(Chuckles)

Oh no, sorry, I can't help you honey. I'm too fat to roll around with you boys. I'm eight months preggo and those little monsters will have me for supper!

The little boys go wild enjoying their dad, who gives them both horsey rides.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY (CONT'D)

George and Valerie share a joyful moment as they await their third baby, the monitor filling the room with the sound of the baby's heartbeat.

VALERIE

(Labor Screams)

I don't want to do this anymore. I don't, George! Ohh, my body can't take it, I need something! Ow... George, it's time!

GEORGE
(Worried, Panics)
Okay, okay, I'm pushing the button.
Yeah, we are ready, I mean my wife
is ready, she's pushing! Hurry up!

George held his wife through the pain and anguish, welcoming their newborn daughter, MARGARET. Drained and trembling, Valerie was swaddled in warm blankets while her OB worked quickly to repair the damage. The nurses take the baby to wash and examine. George holds Valerie's hand, the nurse brings the baby to Valerie's chest.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(Emotional)
You are so beautiful and I love you
so much. And look at this beauty...
she is going to be gorgeous and
fierce like you, honey. I'll bet on
it. Three is a charm, Val.

VALERIE
(Chuckles)
Without a doubt, I agree. Hey doc,
are you done with me down there?
Hopefully you repaired me like a
teenager again. I don't want this
guy leaving me for a younger woman!

INT. RONALD REAGAN UCLA MEDICAL CENTER - ONCOLOGY - DAY
(YEARS LATER)

An older George (72) holds Valerie's hand as they listen to news from their two oncologists. Valerie wipes her eyes and George pulls her into a comforting hug.

INT. COBURN HOME - PRESENT - DAY

VALERIE
(Intangible)
When is this going to be over? I
need to get out of here. I don't
want to be here. Where are you?
What are you doing?

INT. COBURN HOME - KITCHEN - DAY (CONT'D)

Valerie helps her housekeeper, TANYA GONZALES, clean up. Valerie's adult children approach the kitchen. Valerie's cell phone texts tone alerts.

VALERIE

(Texting)

There you are... will have to text you later, I promise. My kids are about to be in the kitchen with me. Sorry.

ANDREW, 29, is their firstborn son, tall, dark haired, handsome, well spoken, a business degree in law. Analytical and relentlessly logical, he approaches every situation with a measured, practical mind.

ANDREW

(Waving, Smiling)

Mom looks good, Coop. She seems to cope without dad, but who knows... she hides things from us and hasn't been reciprocating.

COOPER, 27, is tall and slim with dark blond hair and lean muscle beneath a rocker's edge, his charismatic curly locks framing a face that carries effortless style, a fitness instructor. He walks beside his brother.

COOPER

(Agreed, Smiling)

Yeah, agree to disagree, because she always has been independent. We just have to keep an eye out.

Their sister, MARGARET, 25, trails behind her brothers. Margaret is of average height, brown-haired, has a curvaceous figure, a fierce-natured beauty, a no-nonsense personality. Margaret owns a small European style boutique that sells hats and accessories in Melrose.

INT. COBURN HOME - KITCHEN - DAY (CONT'D)

VALERIE

(Bellows)

Hey guys, Marge! What are you all up to? Are you all getting ready to leave now too? Thank you for helping out today with our guests.

Valerie quickly drops her phone into her Hermes bag.

ANDREW

(Eager)

No, not yet, we wanted a chance to catch up with you. How are you doing? Is there anything we can do for you? I'm sorry, today must have
(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

(Eager)

been kind of tough for you.
Grandmas are all gone, now Dad.
Making small talk with Dad's old
friends, they were not very
friendly with you back then. But at
least it was kind of them to come
for Pop's family. He didn't have
many friends left, and I think you
did a good job, mom. It was nice
and simple, a humbling memorial.

VALERIE

(Sniffles)

Thanks for saying that. It's fine,
that's life, as you know it.

Valerie grabs for her checkbook in her bag. She writes out
checks for them, three thousand dollars each.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Delightful)

Yes, it was lovely, wasn't it? Your
dad had a few good ones left. Thank
you all. It would be nice if we
stayed cordial like this more
often. I thought no one would
attend or care. But yeah, kids, I'm
okay, just a bit tired now.

Valerie finishes writing out the checks. She hands one to
Andrew first.

ANDREW

(Surprised)

Mom, what is this for? We all have
jobs, remember? You don't need to
give us money. It's kind of you,
but we are good. I can't take this
from you, right guys?

Andrew lays it down on the table then glances over and
lightly jabs Cooper's arm.

COOPER

(Chuckles)

Thank you, momma. I love you. I
needed this money. I gotta go and
get some stuff done for my car. And
maybe a couple more tattoos I have
been wanting to complete.

Cooper snatches his check then lifts his gaze to the

ceiling, thanking God and his dad.

MARGARET

(Snarky)

Hey bros, guys, you're getting sidetracked. And Coop, dude, more tats? Really, you're still not complete? That's what you said last time. What will it be this time? It's never ending. Why don't you and I invent something? Maybe we could patent a drink or an accessory for workout gear instead? With all due respect, brother, you spend too much time and money on that shit.

Andrew and Cooper shoot her a warning look.

COOPER

(Sarcasm)

Whoa! Little sister, you're hilarious. What is up with you? Don't forget I'm older than you, little girl. What's got into you, huh? Yeah, yeah, maybe you're right about inventing something together. But you know what, I like what I do. I'm good at it. You should come in and let me train you. You need to be more toned up, and build some muscle. Now, stop, and please leave my tats alone, okay? They're very cool. Besides, women always want to touch me. I'm thinking of putting Dad on my chest next. So yes, mom, please keep the checks coming anytime.

Cooper winks at Margaret, who, in return, stays quiet, arms crossed over her chest.

MARGARET

(Rolls Her Eyes)

Whatever, bro... boring.

VALERIE

(Smiling, Waiting)

Alright, settle down, you guys are too funny.

Valerie holds out the last check to Margaret, who doesn't take it.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

What's the matter, Marg? Don't you need it for rent? Please just take it, alright? It would make me feel better that I can still care for you kids, so humor me, will you?

MARGARET

(Shouts)

Mom, please just stop it! You are being ridiculous, we're not here to discuss money matters. And why must you always assume that we want money whenever we are here? It's insulting, and we're not kids anymore, mom. We are all grown adults and have occupations, besides that, we are here for a different reason. We have real concerns about you.

Valerie's face goes still.

VALERIE

(Appalled)

Margaret! What's the matter with you? I will not have you speak rudely to me. If it's not about money, what the hell has gotten into you? What concerns do you all have? Why do I suddenly feel I'm on the stand? What's happening here? What did I do?

Andrew breaks the awkwardness between his sister and their mother.

ANDREW

(Letdown)

Hey, come on now, ladies, why don't we all take this to the living room, sit down, relax, a calm, logical conversation? I get it. There has been a lot of tension between us, and it's time we talked about our differences. Family matters. Alright?

COOPER

(Stays Cool)

Come on now ladies, let's take our favorite spot and face each other, because we care, right? Well, I know I do.

INT. COBURN HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY (CONT'D)

The three sit together. Valerie faces them alone, defiant, fidgeting with her wedding rings.

VALERIE
(Uncomfortable)
Please, let's get this over with, I
have to go somewhere.

Valerie closes her eyes, jaw tightening, and waits.

ANDREW
(Clears His Throat)
Mom, please don't feel that we are
attacking you. Because we are not.

VALERIE
(Eyes Widening)
Then what on earth can this be
about? What crazy scheme brought
this on, guys?

Her phone lights up with a rapid fire string of texts. Only she can read them.

ANDREW
(Anxious)
Mom, this is just about catching up
with you. We want you to know we're
here for you. We know this is
difficult, it's been hard on us
too. I'm sorry if we are making you
feel uncomfortable. But the three
of us think you should see
somebody. A therapist who can help
you gain some perspective on your
new life without Dad.

COOPER
(Interjects)
Mom, Andrew is right. It's the best
suggestion and advice we can give
you. Jesus, who the hell keeps
texting you so much? Marge, you
have something to add here? I'm
sure you have a lot to get off your
chest.

He nudges his sister.

MARGARET

(Gently)

Mom, I respect you, but please listen. You were married to Dad for a long time, you were still in college when you had us, and relied on him. I agree with my brothers, and we want you to talk to someone. You don't need to feel wrong about this or be ashamed of that. If you have any doubts about your life, I think the therapy will help, like it helped me. None of you knew, but when Dad was in Hospice, I was seeing a therapist. She helped me sort out my grief in advance. I think it'll do you some good, you need to wake up every day and feel a sense of purpose.

She glances at the phone still buzzing in Valerie's hand.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Oh my god, who keeps messaging you? It's interrupting our time with you. Can't you fucking shut it down... it's him, isn't it? Your con artist boyfriend. Tell him to stay away from you.

VALERIE

(Shocked)

What are you accusing me of, having a friend? That's none of your business.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Conflicted)

Regarding my text messages, I have friends too, you know. And no, I can't just shut it down. I don't want to. Besides, I am the matriarch of this family. I have every right to do whatever in the hell I want. For the most part, Margaret, it may have seemed that way, but your father relied extensively on me. He also constantly criticized me for my responsibilities here at home. I have a purpose in my life. I will always be a mother to you three. Now that I am free from raising
(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Conflicted)

kids and being a wife, I enjoy my boring, independent life. No one dictates what I can do. Having two women for parents, I finally feel liberated. I resented them, and I resented your father, for never understanding me. I know who I am. I don't want or need therapy. I will make my own decisions, and my own choices.

Valerie stares at George's urn.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Right now, what we need to focus on is following your father's wishes and spreading his ashes tomorrow.

MARGARET

(Deep Sighs)

Before we spread Dad's ashes tomorrow, I hope you have listened to our concerns and why we needed this intervention. Mom, who is this guy Luke Li anyway? Is he the one who's been interrupting us today? What does he want from you? Where did you meet him... online, right? Mom, this is not good. You have no idea what this guy is up to. He could be dangerous. I'm sorry, but I know about him from your texts. Why are you taking such a big risk? I can't find him on social media.

VALERIE

(Embarrassed)

Are you all spying on me? How dare you, Margaret. I will not be a subject here today. Tomorrow we will do what your father asked, above all else, and find a memorable spot.

They all agree on the time. Valerie's attention drifts back to her phone, the messages still coming.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Uninterested)

I don't know if we're finished here, but I'd like to go.

ANDREW

(Annoyed)

Hey mom, did you hear what I said?
Are you taking us seriously,
mother?

He repeats himself, gently but insistent, until she surfaces.

VALERIE

(Coldly)

Sure, whatever you guys want. And
Andrew, I heard you. You should
know by now that I am very good
with multitasking.

She rises, drops her phone into her Birkin, and walks out, leaving the three of them speechless.

EXT. MALIBU MOUNTAINS - MORNING (THE NEXT DAY)

A secluded bluff overlooks the ocean, untouched, private for the family only. Valerie, dressed in black, holds George's urn. Andrew and Cooper stand behind their mother. Margaret takes her place at her side.

VALERIE

(Soft)

Okay, let's start, shall we?
George, darling, here we are. Today
we're honoring your wish, with our
beautiful family we made together.
Thank you for everything, honey.
Fly high. God bless you.

She opens the urn, unties the plastic. Her hands shake. Ash lifts into the wind.

MARGARET

(Sobbing)

Mom, let me hold your purse. You're
spilling Daddy's ashes too soon!
You're doing it wrong!

Valerie ignores Margaret and keeps scattering.

COOPER

(Defending)

It's fine, Marg. Mom's got this.
Don't worry, baby sis, Pops is
happy.

Valerie's eyes blur, tears streaming.

VALERIE

(Muttering)

I got this... George, as I let you go, I remember our first date. Oh honey, we had the best time, didn't we... the life you gave me, then our kids. I am so lucky. I love you forever, baby.

She hands the urn to Margaret, who holds it a moment before pouring out some of the ashes.

MARGARET

(Emotional)

We love you so much, Daddy. We will never forget you, I promise. Thank you, Daddy.

She passes the urn to her brothers. They take their turn, hand it back to their mother to finish.

ANDREW

(Sniffling)

Hey, Pops, don't worry, we'll look after mom. I love you, Dad, and thank you for all the horsey rides.

COOPER

(Sobbing)

Okay, Pops, you get going now, alright. Drew and I, we will take care of the ladies. No worries, and Pops, most of all, come visit us, give us a signal. Yeah, I love those horsey rides. I'll never forget it when I slipped and you caught me. I love you and I miss you, Pops.

Valerie's hands are steady as she pours the last remains. The wind carries George's ashes cleanly away from his family. The four stand in silence. Andrew and Cooper wipe their eyes and pull Margaret close as she cries. She hands Cooper the empty, hollow urn.

VALERIE

(Exhales, Smiles)

Okay, time to go, my loves. Let's go drink and eat.

The three start back toward the cars. Valerie hangs behind, deliberately.

ANDREW
(Calling Back)
Hey mom, you okay? Do you need help
with your phone or something?

The four walk away, Valerie deliberately lagging behind.

EXT. MEMORIAL SPOT - DAY (CONT'D)

They glance back at Valerie, absorbed in her phone. Margaret dabs at her face.

MARGARET
(Mortified)
Fuck this, mom is being an idiot,
and that's why we needed to
intervene and get her to her
appointment today!

ANDREW
(Worried)
Hey Marge, come on. We'll get her
there, okay, don't stress, you're
making me nervous. It's going to be
fine. I can't believe you found out
about mom's friend, what was this
guy's name again? From social
media? This is crazy, Cooper. We
have to make sure to keep an eye on
this, alright bro?

COOPER
(Agreeing)
Luke Li, that's his name. I'm with
you, bro. I get it though, mom
wants a younger man. She married
Pops, who was way older than her,
and now, well, you know... hey
Marge, wait up, we need to get more
info. Our little sister is
something else. Well, good for her,
that little brat.

EXT. FAMILY PIER - DAY (CONT'D)

Valerie keeps her eyes on her phone, scrolling through
messages from LUKE LI.

LUKE LI
(Sarcastic)
You're finally free, Valerie, and
you can relax. Spend more time with
me in bed and you don't need to
(MORE)

LUKE LI (CONT'D)
(Sarcastic)
hide us anymore. Wouldn't that be nice?

Valerie lingers on her phone, waiting for more, oblivious to her family waiting for her.

VALERIE
(Texting)
I'm crazy in love with you, and I am really excited to be with you, Luke. And yes, I'd like to stay in bed all day and play... Oops, I better go, my three guardian angels are waiting and staring at me with daggers in their eyes.

She quickens her pace, still typing.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
Oh, hey, one more thing. I opened that app account with Coinbase and I deposited ten thousand. Are you pleased with that? Talk later, or you can call me.

LUKE LI
(Low Tone)
Yeah, baby, that's nice. I have a hard on for you. I just want to touch you all over until you scream for more.

INT. LUKE'S TOWNHOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

An attractive 35 year old man, LUKE LI, draws Valerie into his private social platform weeks ago. Weeks turned into months, his influence over her deepened, until the affair became real. Valerie lies nestled under his chin.

LUKE LI
(Chuckles)
What would you like to eat tonight for an early dinner, besides me?

Valerie props up on her elbow to look at his face.

VALERIE
(Smiling)
Hmm, it sounds delicious and tempting, you're a great chef, but... I can't. His condition has
(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Smiling)

worsened and I should be more attentive now.

LUKE LI

(Cold)

I will not take no for an answer.
He's dying anyway. After you have
your way with me you rush off?
Besides, the weather's perfect and
I want to cook for us. Now it's my
turn, we'll have dinner together.

Luke's mercurial mood swings are insufferable. He pressures her into his cryptocurrency scheme, she refuses at first. He goes cold until her husband passes, and she relents.

EXT. THE PIER - PRESENT - DAY

Valerie sits with her family over lunch. Margaret studies her mother from across the table.

COOPER

(Patting His Abs)

Mom, you ordered too much. I can't
eat anymore. We need to box this up
and donate it to a homeless person
on the street. I've been seeing too
many lately. It's gotten worse, so
this will feed somebody's hunger.

He gets up and brings back food containers.

COOPER (CONT'D)

(Burping)

Excuse me. Man, this is a shame.
Mom, please don't order too much
out of boredom next time.

Valerie is turned out, busy on her phone.

MARGARET

(Whispering)

Andrew, just look at her. This is
why we have to get her to the
appointment on time, ASAP. I hate
this, Drew. I feel like I'm
betraying her privacy and rights.
We need to save her from herself.
This has been going on way too
long.

EXT. THE PIER - DAY (CONT'D)

Andrew checks his watch. He pays the bill.

ANDREW

(Snarky)

Hey, Coop buddy, you almost done?
Marg, let's help this kid out, he's
too slow and spilling everything.
Cooper, food goes inside the
container, watch closely. Hey mom,
you ready?

COOPER

(Smirking)

Ha ha, very funny. I got it, man.
Yeah, thanks for the late help,
Margareta.

ANDREW

(Insistent)

Mom, it's time to go. Let's get out
of here. We don't want to be late,
so just follow my car. Stay off
your phone and stop texting, will
you? Your boy toy can wait.

VALERIE

(Giddy)

Very funny, wait, let me finish my
Prosecco. I'm a great driver. I've
been driving since I was fifteen
years old. I insisted my mothers
teach me. I'm using my Bluetooth
hands-free for God's sake. But you
know, since I've become single
again, I have been getting a lot of
proposals. Hey, where are we going
anyway?

MARGARET

(Smirking)

You're recently widowed, you should
refuse them all, mother.

Valerie ignores Margaret's remark and walks off with the
boys, giving them her attention and avoiding Margaret.

VALERIE

(Scornful)

Margaret... I heard that, and your
opinion. Please leave it alone. I
don't want another confrontation
about my love life in public.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD - DAY

Valerie drives through LA traffic, stealing glances at herself in the visor mirror, music blasting.

INT. MERCEDES - DRIVING - DAY

Her phone lights up with an incoming call.

VALERIE

(Surprised)

I was going to call you later.
Well, it wouldn't have mattered, I
went to lunch with my kids after
the scattering. What are you up to?
We were at the pier. It's a lovely
day.

LUKE (V.O.)

(Charming)

Yeah, I know, but I wanted to hear
your voice and didn't want to wait.
Valerie, you're beautiful and
smart, why would I stay away for
long? Incredibly sexy, but
stubborn. I am grateful that you
are finally coming around. Thank
you for opening an account. My cock
gets hard just thinking of you, I
miss you baby, that sweet tight box
of yours. I want to kiss you so
badly right now. Come here... drive
this way.

LUKE LI (V.O.)

(Persuasive)

Where are you going? Listen, just
drive here tonight, I'm home. I
want to discuss some more things
about our future. We should secure
it, wouldn't you like that,
Valerie?

VALERIE

(Self-Conscious)

I get so shy when you talk dirty to
me. I will call you later, right
now I'm following my kids. They're
taking me somewhere, I'm not sure
where.

She turns the A/C up, flushed and unsettled.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Biting Her Lip)

Luke, listen. I can't just drive to you on a whim. I've been thinking, what if this is all a mistake? I have to take care of my family, they need my support. We just had a memorial for their father. And I've been having a secret affair with you, and now you're talking about the future. Don't you want someone your age? I think it's too soon to talk about this, it needs time.

LUKE LI (V.O.)

(Ridiculing)

What are you saying, Valerie? Stop it, I can't listen to this crazy talk. What are you doing to us, Valerie? How much more time do we have to wait? This is beginning to be a pointless conversation. They're not kids, stop referring to them as kids, they're grown adults. They don't need their mommy anymore, so focus on your own life. If you can't accept this, then we have nothing. Do not toy with my feelings.

Luke clicks off. Valerie's face falls.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Valerie's Mercedes glides to a stop next to Andrew's Tesla, music pours out as the driver door flies open. Andrew rounds the car and offers a hand. Cooper and Margaret hang back. Margaret strides towards her, pointing at a building.

MARGARET

(Teary)

Hey mom, this is the therapy center we talked about. We made an appointment for you here today.

Valerie doesn't register the medical building looming behind her.

VALERIE

(Offended, Mad)

You did what? I never agreed to an appointment or to see a psychiatrist today. What are you guys talking about? Oh my god, why?

EXT. PARKING LOT - (CONT'D)

The three siblings face their mother, apprehensive but resolved.

MARGARET

(Gently)

Mom, you're going to be fine. You will like Dr. Sharon Johnson, I apologize for doing this intervention, but please do this for us, we need you back. I have been the toughest, and you have every right to call your own shots, but you must be healthy about it, and picking out a younger guy online isn't like you.

COOPER

(Agreeing)

I feel genuinely the same, momma. You'll be safe and have someone professional to speak to. You're not alone, we love you and support you through this. I mean, what if it was one of us going through something not normal? You'd be all over us.

Valerie can't disagree but she can't bring herself to be pleasant either.

VALERIE

(Furious)

How could I have been so blind, I don't understand any of you, why would you guys turn on me this way? What did I do to deserve this? I told you, I don't want to go and speak to a therapist. This is surreal.

Valerie launches into a small tirade then heads for her car, aware of the public scene playing out around her.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Crying)

I feel like a caged animal, trapped. All my life I was told what to do and what not to do, and now this is what you guys are doing to me too.

Andrew, Cooper and Margaret stand rooted, defeated by her

backlash.

ANDREW
(Holding Her)
Mom, stop, come on... it'll be
alright, I promise. Margaret knows
her well. Come here, please stop
crying. Please don't get angry with
us. You're okay.

Valerie dabs her eyes, struggling to keep it together. After
a beat, she lets Andrew guide her back.

VALERIE
(Emotional)
I'm alright, don't worry, I'm sorry
for becoming undone. I'm proud of
you guys for standing up to me and
getting this shindig together. I'm
not angry, I promise.

She gives Margaret a warm hug, then turns and walks toward
her sons with quiet resolve.

MARGARET
(Teary)
Thank you, mommy. I'm proud of you.
I love you.

She glances back as she walks inside. Her boys hold their
sister in the middle.

VALERIE
(To Herself)
They took charge. Wow, at least I
did something right, George.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Valerie sits across from her therapist, their first session.
DR. SHARON JOHNSON, slim, blond hair, soft voice, blue eyes,
ample bosom.

VALERIE
(Defiant)
Well, I'm here. They tricked me,
after we scattered their father's
ashes today, we had a nice lunch at
the pier, then wham, I'm here. I
guess, hello.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Smiling)

Hi, it's nice to meet you, Valerie.
How are you doing? I understand
that you feel like you have been
ambushed by your family, but let's
not call it that. An intervention
is an important gesture and it's
coming from a loving place.

VALERIE

(Sighing)

I'm doing just fine. This is a
trial between you and me, okay? I'm
doing this for them, so they can
rest assured that I haven't come
unhinged.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Brows Furrowed)

Okay, if that's what you want. Why
do you feel that they see you as
unhinged, undone? Is there
something that you did out of
character? They intervened because
they love you, you're their mother.
This is why you are willing to take
these steps.

Valerie shrugs and lifts her gaze to the ceiling.

VALERIE

(Pensive)

George, their father, was sick for
a very long time. I got used to it.
I started to want my own identity,
my own life.

Dr. Johnson observes her new patient while making notes.
Valerie's eyes drift around the room, bookshelves, framed
certificates, a small plant on the windowsill.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Calm)

Valerie, this is where you can
speak freely. That's how these
therapy sessions work. Everything
we discuss is confidential, you're
safe. It is not shared with anyone,
including your family. No one can
hear us. This building has thick
walls, good bones, unless you're
thinking of harming yourself.

VALERIE

(Sarcastic)

Well, that's not my case. I like myself, so you don't need to worry about that.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Smiles)

I am very glad to hear that.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY (CONT'D)

Stifled and reluctant, Valerie rests her head against the pillows behind her.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Supportive)

Today, we work on getting to know each other. I want you to feel comfortable talking about yourself, so I can understand what you have been going through. I'd like to discuss your struggles, your concerns about getting older, your sex life, midlife crisis, how long were you married? And there are three children?

Valerie buries her face in her hands.

VALERIE

(Sighing)

Let me just stop this bullshit. I have been having an affair with a younger man that I met online. He was just supposed to be a fantasy boyfriend. It got complicated and we took it to another level. Pursuing him was self loathing on my part, it only made things worse, didn't fulfill anything in my heart. But the sex was hot and exciting. It left me emptier than I was. I wanted to feel that excitement again, from a passionate, spontaneous lover. I don't know if it's ludicrous to enjoy that. Luke is 35, attractive, eager about life. He has this quality I can't describe, in French... "je ne sais quoi," with a brilliant mind. He gave me what I needed.

Valerie rests her chin in her hand, transfixed.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I know that I should have never gotten involved, it was shitty, but I am alone. Why do I have to feel ashamed for it? Is it because I met him online and Luke is much younger? Well, I married George and he was sixteen years older, and why was that okay? I like Luke, and he wants me to trust him. Am I being stupid?

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Professional)

How does Luke make you feel now? Do you love him? Or does he know that you're only using him for sex?

VALERIE

(Confident)

That's a good question. Luke makes me feel sexy, confident, and bold. And yes, at first I thought only about the sex part, but now I'm not too sure about that either. I am falling in love with him. I feel optimistic about the future. But I don't want to dwell on it.

INT. HAHN LI'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

An upscale three-bedroom bachelor townhouse, contemporary. HAHN LI, "alias Luke," 6'1", handsome features, dark-haired Asian man, 35 years old, enters the kitchen with his Jack Russell Terrier DT, panting before he flops onto the cool tiled floor. Sweat beads and slides down Hahn's ripped abs. He cracks open a zero calorie drink, takes a swig, then pours a small amount of water into DT's bowl. DT laps it up eagerly, tail wagging.

HAHN LI

(Singapore English)

You're such a good boy, DT. Slow down, buddy, okay? I don't want you vomiting all over the clean floor again. I have some work to do. Please be a good dog, DT. We can play catch in a bit. Okay buddy, behave, no vomiting.

Hahn's computers line the dining table. He cracks his knuckles, eyes scanning the bank. He leans into his monitor,

finger hovering over the keyboard, then dives into the code.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

HAHN LI

(Disappointed)

Where could she be? What does this mean for us? I'm getting hungry, DT, so I'm going to make us something to eat. How does that sound?

DT wags his tail. Hahn yanks open the fridge, pulling out crisp salad greens and neatly packed sashimi cuts. He snatches the remote, punches a button, and the room erupts with K-pop beats. He takes a snapshot and sends it off to Valerie.

HAHN LI (CONT'D)

(Anxious)

Hey Valerie, I'm trying you again, please answer. See the beautiful lunch I made myself? I'm distraught when you avoid my messages.

Hours pass. Hahn opens his cryptocurrency accounts, screens glowing with charts and balances. He studies his Bitcoin holdings.

HAHN LI

(Frustrated)

It's four o'clock, where the fuck are you, we need to talk, remember?

Hahn rakes impatient fingers through his thick hair, then picks up his phone and sends another text to Valerie.

HAHN LI

(Restless)

We have an opportunity to seize, this is a pivotal moment for our future.

Hahn grabs the burner phone and calls her number. It rings once then cuts to voicemail. He paces the room restlessly before tossing the ball to DT. DT bounds after it.

HAHN LI (CONT'D)

(Exasperated)

What's the point of bringing her into this anyway? I should just use my own money, oh fuck! Valerie... Valerie.

Hahn walks his dog DT past his townhouse one more time, using the stroll as a distraction. He pulls out his phone and calls.

VALERIE (V.O.)

(Surprised)

Hello? Luke, how are you? I can't believe you're calling me after the way you cut me off.

Hahn's face twists in a silent cringe, he catches himself, straightens, and reins in his reaction.

HAHN LI

(Sounding Casual)

Hey, Val, yeah, it's me again. I've been texting and messaging. What the hell is going on? Why are you ignoring me? Are you angry with me? I have been thinking of us.

He forces himself to stay calm.

HAHN LI (CONT'D)

(Steadier, Sighs)

You're a widow now and we can get married. I want to care for you. I need you to start taking back control of your own life, and I think you must stop being manipulated by your family. I don't like them for that. I am here for you, you're not alone. I want you to start thinking about it. I am willing to give you that commitment, to care for you. Valerie, did you hear what I just said? We can be successful together.

INT. COBURN HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Valerie stays quiet, listening to Luke as he keeps talking.

HAHN LI (V.O.)

(Brows Furrowed)

Hey, are you there? Say something, please.

VALERIE

(Apprehensive)

Yes, I'm here. I'm sorry you caught me off guard, that's all. You know
(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Apprehensive)

that my family will go against this
and will have plenty to say to me.
I went shopping and I thought I'd
get back to you later. What's
wrong, you sound offended. Do you
want me to drive to you?

HAHN LI (V.O.)

(Pissed Off)

Is that all you can say? It's not
their life, it's yours, tell me,
are they really going to be at your
bedside when you get older and
alone?

INT. COBURN HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONT'D)

Valerie paces, phone in one hand, taking distracted sips
from a glass of wine.

VALERIE

(Disagreeing)

Look, I love that you want to get
committed, but it's unrealistic...
anyway I have mountains of
paperwork I have to get through
tonight. I've been neglecting to
work on it. Can we catch up later?
Do you want to come over by any
chance, Luke, we can talk as much
as you want if you were here for a
change.

INT. HAHN'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

HAHN LI

(Furious)

No, I don't want to come over.
You'll just have to convince them
harder. I thought they knew about
us. You're stalling our
relationship, and I don't like
that, Valerie. I need a commitment
from you, and I too need to
concentrate on my own life and move
on if you're unwilling to
participate. I wanted you to learn
about cryptocurrency. I want to
teach you how to invest in it and
start growing with me. No more
worrying about cash, Valerie, don't
(MORE)

HAHN LI (CONT'D)

(Furious)

you get it? You're young enough to see this into the future of digital mining. But if you can't believe or trust me, I will stop being involved with you. I don't want to waste any more time. You're toying with my feelings.

Hahn hangs up. Valerie's face freezes, confused.

INT. COBURN HOME - BEDROOM - EVENING

Valerie yanks her prescription glasses off and tosses them onto the bed.

VALERIE

(Deeply Sighs)

What the hell did I get myself into? You stupid woman! Argh, fuck, fuck!

INT. HAHN LI'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT (CONT'D)

Hahn sits on his white leather couch, laptop open on his lap. His phone vibrates.

VALERIE (V.O.)

(Annoyed)

Hey Luke, please don't hang up on me. It's rude, and I am tired of your attitude. I learned from my sons about cryptocurrency five years ago, and even now, it's not worth investing in. Why are you so sure of this? They lost a lot of money. I'm just skeptical about something I cannot feel in my hand. I don't want to jeopardize what I have. And just like that, it's easy for you to tell me this, that's a waste of time. Oh, and by the way, I'm not toying with your feelings as you do with mine!

HAHN LI

(Taunting)

Oh, so now I got your attention? I see. I'm sorry baby, you didn't learn much. It's a volatile business. Don't be angry with me, Val. It's not wasted time when you
(MORE)

HAHN LI (CONT'D)
(Taunting)
start acting like you really want
me. Instead of the hot and cold
excuses you give me.

HAHN LI (CONT'D)
(Retorting)
I'm sorry baby, your sons clearly
did not know what they were doing.
They're amateurs, and I'm sure they
did not fully comprehend the
strategy. This is my expertise. It
wasn't their thing, it was merely
just a hobby for them. Frankly,
this sounds insulting and it's
boring, Valerie.

INT. COBURN HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

VALERIE
(Upset)
Luke, let me remind you that when
we first met, I told you what I was
looking for. I went into this
affair because I wanted a boyfriend
who could be passionate and
romantic, a lover who knows how to
have fun. Not about money all the
time. I am financially stable, you
know that. Why would I want to buy
Bitcoins anyway? I love the feel of
cash in my hands. I don't
understand your obsession with it.

Valerie takes a tissue and wipes the tears on her cheeks.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
(Speaking Softly)
Well, I said what I wanted to say.
I will go to bed and think about
what I am doing with my life, Luke.
I want to be with someone who
shares my passion.... Goodnight.

INT. HAHN LI'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

HAHN LI
(Manipulative)
Wait, wait, I'm still talking and
have much more to say, Valerie. My
obsession is with you, baby. I'm
yours, but I won't be just your boy
(MORE)

HAHN LI (CONT'D)

(Manipulative)

toy. I want to be everything for you. Is that what you want to hear, Valerie? Now listen, you can start with a small investment and watch it grow. Tomorrow at your bank or online, you must transfer another ten thousand into your Coinbase account. Your previous deposit is not enough. I will show you how to sell, buy and trade. I promise you, you won't regret this. It will be just you and me, sexy momma. I'm texting you photos. I want us to get married soon so we can start our new life together. Here is where I want to take you first, then we can go and venture on our honeymoon to Capri as well.

Valerie's phone vibrates, photos of Greece, Santorini Island and Capri.

VALERIE

(Deeply Sighs)

Alright, alright. Is this what falling in love again feels like? I'll take care of it tomorrow. I've always wanted to go there, and it's beautiful.

EXT. BANK - NEXT DAY

Valerie wires another ten grand into Coinbase. Hahn watches the balance update and takes control. Across the grid Hahn slips in like he owns it.

INT. HAHN'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

HAHN LI

(Smiling Happily)

Unbelievable, she actually did it. Good girl...

Hahn messages Valerie.

HAHN LI (CONT'D)

You have doubled your profits, I will study which company to trade or sell tomorrow. You have twenty thousand and you will see the rise when I choose for you. Imagine if you deposit 50K or even 100K more.

INT. COBURN HOME - DAY

Valerie hesitates, something's off. Luke's words echo, and the weight of his manipulation finally sinks in.

VALERIE

(Doubtful)

Shit, this is not right, something is off. Why is everyone dead? Moms, I really wish I could speak to one of you, I regret not having been a better daughter to you both. I need guidance from above... please.

Valerie journals all the recent issues of Luke's behavior and growing demands, forcing herself to face it.

INT. THERAPY SESSION - DAY

Valerie opens her notebook, bracing herself to share what's written, preparing to read it.

VALERIE

(Depressed)

I think Luke is beyond me, and I'm distancing myself. I led him on. He wanted to teach me about investing in cryptocurrency, and I thought it was very stupid and odd. And it angered him. I kept ignoring all the signs. Wished I had known a little sooner, before I got in too deep.

Valerie reads from her notebook with shaking hands.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Calm)

Why are you blaming yourself, Valerie? Did you do something to hurt your relationship with Luke?

VALERIE

(Subdued)

I feel guilty and ashamed. And I'm older and a widow. He is so overwhelming and he can talk me into anything. I don't think I am enough for him. He has trouble understanding my way of life and my maturity. We will never see eye to eye about anything. However, he visualizes a future with me.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Curious)

Your feelings are conflicted. You say you're in love with him, but you're "not enough." He wants you to be more submissive to his ways or it's the highway. Carefully listen to yourself, use your instinct. Valerie, you are smart and this is not normal behavior. If you have serious doubts, why do you continue associating yourself with this guy? You always have a choice.

Valerie shrugs it off, deep in thought.

VALERIE

(Self-Pity)

What other alternatives or choice do I have, Doc? I don't want to join those dating sites. It sounds awful. I don't have a job, so I started a small investment with him. He wants to get married in Greece, and have our honeymoon in Capri, for God's sake. It sounded so tempting, that I wanted to just say, ah, fuck it, let's do it! It sounds like a teenager's dream. But it's my reality, dysfunctional and ridiculous. I feel stupid and crazy for him.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Perceptive)

Listen, you're very, very far from being stupid. And sometimes these things happen when you have experienced trauma. We become vulnerable. So here, wipe your eyes and blow your nose.

VALERIE

(Blowing Her Nose)

Okay, thank you... I don't know what else to say at the moment.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Empathetic)

You're going to be okay. Relax and breathe in and out slowly. That's good, one more time...

INT. THERAPY SESSION - DAY (CONT'D)

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Concerned Look)

Please don't stop talking, I am just making some small notes in my journal. Get it all out, whatever it is you have been sitting on for 24 hours, Valerie.

Dr. Johnson stops taking notes, studying Valerie. Pig Butchering crosses her mind and it doesn't feel far fetched. She sees it now, a deliberate psychological con, preying on loneliness and desire. Valerie fits the profile precisely, drawn in and fed on illusions of love and intimacy.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(With Concern)

Valerie, I want you to be honest with yourself. As your therapist, I need to ask, has Luke ever asked you for money? You mentioned you have a small investment with him? I won't make any judgments. Are you okay with that? Are you helping him with some kind of project? This investment you mentioned, is it income generating?

VALERIE

(Opens Up)

I'm a real fool, aren't I, falling for a con artist. I haven't heard from him. He's ignoring my calls and texts again...

Valerie nods, confirming the truth.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Sniffles)

I have behaved wildly and on an impulse. My life is messy. I had no father figure, my parents were women. And I married a father figure in George, and I miss him. I'm angry with him for letting me down! I was a good wife and lover. He gave me and our children a beautiful home, made sure we had financial stability. We were so in love, I was young, wealthy, and naive.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I wanted to have my children early,
(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

and he only wanted me. I was happy to be a wife, I knew he was having an on-and-off affair with Brenda. Without her, I would never have met George. During that time I felt I owed her something. That was a big mistake and I should have stood up for my marriage, but I didn't. George would have never divorced me, I knew that. I have compromised and sacrificed my needs so that George could be happy with himself. He had a slow growing prostate cancer. It cut off our sex life. I was worn out, depressed, angry and lonely. I kept myself preoccupied with my children, gave myself to everyone's needs but my own. And as for my gorgeous young boyfriend Luke, he did ask me for money. Not a "project" per se, but an investment in cryptocurrency.

Valerie's session was ending, and Valerie was wiping her eyes.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Deep Sigh)

Thank you for listening. I understand now what I must do.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(With Advice)

Valerie, you did a good job in your therapy today. I want you to leave here with a clear conscience. You are remarkable, stay strong and stay true to yourself. You have done a fantastic job providing and raising your children. Yes, you were young and it forced you to grow up faster than most women, and you compromised yourself by keeping George's infidelity secret. You stayed healthy for the most part, but you held onto that resentment far too long. We'll work on that next session... I believe George knew. I'm sure he did his own soul-searching, and I admire you even more for it. There aren't too many women left with your kind of
(MORE)

DR. SHARON JOHNSON (CONT'D)
(With Advice)
strength and patience. Valerie,
please be careful with Luke.

INT. COBURN HOME - BEDROOM - EVENING

Valerie decides to go out for the evening, talking loudly to herself.

VALERIE
(Picking Out Clothes)
Let's see where I end up tonight. I
need to hear some music, ah, I know
just the place.

INT. COBURN HOME - BEDROOM - EVENING (CONT'D)

Valerie decides to go to the Belair Cocktail Lounge. Valerie stands half-naked before the full length mirror, cupping her breasts, then sliding her hands down to her flat stomach. She studies her reflection, steps closer, and traces the fine lines. She steps into the walk-in closet and yanks stacks of clothes off the hangers.

Valerie's phone vibrates with an incoming text.

VALERIE
(Contemplates)
Here we go... Mr. Yo Yo, I really
don't want to answer you right now.

In her black dress she slides into her car, seatbelt clicks across her chest. She tosses her phone onto the passenger seat. Ignition turns on, she shifts into reverse and backs out. Her phone vibrates again, disrupting her concentration. She stops midway out and grabs the phone. It reads:

HAHN LI
(Unreadable)
Hello dear, Val, where are you? I
have texted you maybe twelve times.
Please baby, call or text back,
alright.

INT. INSIDE MERCEDES - EVENING

Valerie responds to Hahn's messages.

VALERIE
(Deep Sighs)
You know I hate it when you call me
"dear." I want to see you, Luke.
(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Deep Sighs)

I'm tired of the hide and seek you play, and your text messages. Where have you been, you have ignored me without explanation.

Valerie waits. The Mercedes ignition starts up.

HAHN LI

(Aggravated)

And here we go again, after I said we should get married you left me cold. Your resistance is futile. Your actions, being stubborn... you're simply being a selfish bitch! I do not want a hard-headed woman who constantly questions my motives and good intentions!

VALERIE

(Infuriated)

I have been willing to do everything you wanted me to do, and you have my money now, you're saying I am a stubborn bitch? Who the hell do you think you are? I am not a child. I should drive there now, and we can discuss this in person like adults, and be civil without calling me names.

HAHN LI

(Stern, Cunning)

No, no, dear, not tonight. I have too much work.

VALERIE

(Flabbergasted)

What work, busy scamming other women? Huh, Luke? Why are you punishing me? I thought you loved me. Alright then, go to hell. I don't care anymore, and this is a mistake. Don't contact me ever again or I will turn you in.

Valerie clicks off the call, stress and manipulation getting the better of her. Her phone keeps vibrating.

HAHN LI

(Cold, Calculating)

What the fuck is wrong with you? If
(MORE)

HAHN LI (CONT'D)
(Cold, Calculating)
you're going to be reluctant about
everything and deny me what I need
and want from you, then there is a
broken trust between you and I. I
don't want or need this shit from
you! Find a jackass, and get the
fuck out of here!

EXT. VALERIE'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Valerie unbuckles, and shuts off the ignition. She runs back inside her house straight to George's bed, once shared. She flops down on it crying in vain, clutching his pillows to her chest.

VALERIE
(Heartbroken)
Oh... George, how could I have been
so stupid and selfish? Why did you
have to die? You were supposed to
be with me and our kids. I'm so
sorry, honey. Please, please
forgive me.

Valerie pulls herself together, wiping her face, reapplying her makeup, straightening her clothes.

INT. HAHN LI'S TOWNHOUSE - EVENING

Hahn Li runs on the treadmill, eyes fixated on his Android device in front of him.

INT. BELAIR BAR JAZZ LOUNGE - NIGHT

Valerie stands by the bar ordering a drink. She takes a sip of her Cosmopolitan, then slides onto a bar stool, the glass resting lightly in her hand.

VALERIE
(Whispers To Herself)
Never again will I be fooled. Fuck
you, Luke.

Her eyes close for a moment as she moves to the rhythm, even in her sadness, Valerie's beauty outshines it all. An attractive gentleman approaches the bar and leans beside her.

STRANGER
(Charming, Accented)
Hello there... you are absolutely
(MORE)

STRANGER (CONT'D)
(Charming, Accented)
gorgeous, are you alone? Can you
come to my room so we can talk,
dear, and have a drink together? Or
we can just talk. I would like to
get to know you.

Valerie goes sullen. She slides off the bar stool, stands
tall facing the stranger.

VALERIE
(Unimpressed)
Hmm, I'm not impressed. What did
you just call me... "dear"? Is that
the best you can come up with? This
is your excuse to talk to me? Look,
I'm not a prostitute, asshole.
Excuse me, thanks for making me
feel shitty.

Valerie gulps the last of her Cosmopolitan and walks away.

STRANGER
(Cool)
Would you like, ah... can I buy you
another, you look like you need it.

Valerie gives no response. The stranger watches as she tilts
her head back to finish her drink, his voice cutting through
the noise, capturing her attention.

VALERIE
Please don't follow me. You
shouldn't assume I'm alone and ask
me questions. Or I'll call the
police. Goodbye.

The stranger bows his head.

GC LEE
(Speaks In Korean)

GC LEE speaking in Korean, softly into his wrist watch.

Translation: "Follow her and make sure she gets home safely.
She's a bit drunk and pissed off."

INT. GAMING STORE - SEOUL, KOREA - DAY (FLASHBACK)

GC LEE, in his early 50's, a General Commissioner from South
Korea, a high ranking detective, attractive, 6 feet tall, a
Kendo expert in martial arts, speaks English, well educated.
GC Lee bumps into an old friend Kim Choi at a gaming store.

Kim Choi was a member of the ROK Special Forces Brigades.
Kim Choi was divorced, mid-50s, and had adult children.

KIM CHOI
(Chuckling, In Korean)
Yojeum deul-eo insaeng-eseo mwonga
saeloun il-eul haebogo sipdaneun
saeng-gag-i kkeunh-im-eobs-
ideuleoyo.

Translation: "Yeah, I have been feeling relentless to do something else with my life. I refuse to get old and weary. I'll be retiring by next year and would like to start dating again, a sexy, beautiful woman. How about you buddy, what have you been up to? Oh, and you look really good, still so attractive. How is your little girl?"

INT. GC LEE HOME - SOUTH KOREA - NIGHT

Lee sits restless at his desk, the weight of an unsolved murder case pressing on him. A day later, he calls Kim Choi and offers him a job. Lee and Kim have been tracking a wanted fugitive from South Korea, Hahn Li, a criminal operating under multiple aliases. The only alias they know for certain is LUKE LI. The case has led them to Los Angeles, California.

INT. BELAIR BAR - PRESENT - EVENING

KIM CHOI
(Serious)
Sir, she's leaving. Okay, I will
follow her.

Kim Choi listens to his instructions and follows Valerie, drives without being noticed.

INT. COBURN HOME - EVENING

Valerie eases her car into the driveway, brakes squealing. She exits the car carrying her shoes. Valerie slams the door, arms the alarm system, staggering down the hall to her bedroom, exhausted, collapsing onto the bed without bothering to undress. Valerie's phone vibrates inside her purse. Ten messages from Hahn.

VALERIE
(Muttering)
I don't understand why you are
incredibly possessed with me, Luke.

In a moment of weakness she reaches for her phone and begins to text.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Drunk)

Hello... what do you want? Stop
texting me.

Hahn messages Valerie back in milliseconds.

HAHN LI

(Conniving)

Are you okay? Where were you? I
have messaged you several times,
but you ignored all of them. What
are you doing? Are you with someone
on a date? Answer me!

VALERIE

(Nonchalant)

I went out to a friend's birthday
party. Why do you need to know?
We're over, aren't we? Now I just
want to sleep. Oh, and by the way,
what's with the ten messages? Get
over me...

HAHN LI

(Possessive)

Were you out with another man? Are
you fucking around? Why do you
think I tried so much to reach you?
Because I'm simply bored, is that
it? Maybe because I love you,
perhaps I should just stop. Is that
what you want, Valerie, tell me!

Luke's jealousy is excessive, his mood shifts mercurial,
behavior vicious, unsettling. Valerie is emotionally
drained, worn down by his abuse.

VALERIE

(Surrendering)

No, I don't want that, I'm sorry
Luke. I care about you and I miss
you.

INT. THERAPY SESSION - MORNING

Valerie's face is puffy and swollen, eyes bloodshot from
crying, skin flushed from liquor.

VALERIE

(Distressed)

Luke is a compulsive liar, I was
wrong about him. He was so great
(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Distressed)

when we first got together. I saw all the warning signs. I thought I could change him by loving him.

DR. JOHNSON

(Concerned)

Valerie, do you think Luke was only after your money?

VALERIE

(Hesitating)

I am ashamed to admit that he probably intended it, but I think it's more than just my money. There is something more about Luke that I saw.

DR. JOHNSON

(Observing)

Valerie, you must pay attention to your inner voice. Your choices were misled by lust. You are in control, and it will empower you. Once you do that, you can stand up against him. This guy, Luke, is hiding something. Valerie, are you in danger?

VALERIE

(Blinking Back Tears)

I'm sorry Sharon, I need to get out of here.

Valerie stands from the sofa and storms out. Dr. Johnson abruptly freezes.

DR. SHARON JOHNSON

(Worried)

Valerie, see you soon, okay, please remember you can also call me!

EXT. MEDICAL BUILDING PARKING LOT - DAY

Valerie steps out of the medical building, wiping her eyes. Valerie walks toward her car. A man leans against a black Cadillac nearby. She watches him, wary. Her hand touches the door, it unlocks with a soft click.

VALERIE

(Smirking)

Have we met? You look familiar. Ah,
(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Smirking)

you're the guy I called an asshole
at the bar. Am I right? Are you
stalking me, mister? What do you
want?

GC LEE

(Clearing His Throat)

That was an interesting night. I'm
sorry for how that meeting went.
Our first introduction, it was
unusual. You must have had a bad
feeling about me after that. It was
a way in to capture your attention.

GC Lee introduces himself and presents his identification
and badge.

GC LEE

(Sincere)

You can just call me Lee. I need to
speak with you regarding a case we
are investigating. Please get in so
we can speak privately, you are
safe in my car.

Valerie continues to examine his badge. She hesitates to get
into his tinted-window Cadillac.

VALERIE

(Pleasant)

I'm sorry about the name calling. I
hate being called "dear." I was
triggered, and I was on my second
cocktail. I don't often go out on a
date with myself. Why are you here?
It's a long way from South Korea.

GC Lee walks to the passenger side and opens the door for
Valerie.

GC LEE

(Persistent)

Please get in, it's alright, and I
will completely divulge all the
information that we're working on,
and why we're here in Los Angeles.
You can trust me and my team.

Valerie walks over to the open door and gets in.

INT. INSIDE GC LEE'S CADILLAC - DAY

Valerie sits inside a cop car. She folds her hands together in confusion.

GC LEE

(Calm, Accented)

We have been following a fugitive for several months, but we lost sight of him. Then it led us to you and your family. My team and I are working with the help of the Los Angeles Police Department. We are tracking a man named Hahn Li, a fugitive and a criminal whose alias is Luke Li.

Valerie's face goes still, her expression tightening with discomfort as she struggles to hold her composure.

VALERIE

(Dumbfounded)

Am I in trouble? Should I call my attorney? I need help understanding what's going on. I don't understand any of this.

GC LEE

(Unreadable Face)

No, you do not. You did not do anything wrong, Ms. Coburn. My team is listening to our conversation. We will drive to our location, and you will meet everyone there. Please buckle your seatbelt, and we will drive you back to your car after your briefing.

EXT. MEDICAL BUILDING LOT - DAY

GC Lee's team sits inside a white van, listening intently.

GC LEE

(Authoritative)

Hey guys, I am with Ms. Coburn and we are heading toward you now. See you all for the introduction. Thanks guys.

KIM CHOI, PATRICK NEAL, LAPD Task Force, and LISA PARK, LAPD Technical Engineer.

PATRICK NEAL

(Polite)

Yes sir, understood. We'll be heading back.

EXT. THE MOTHERSHIP - DAY

Lee turns into a familiar neighborhood as a gate slides open to reveal a small house and driveway, then closes automatically, parallel to Hahn Li's three-bedroom townhouse. Lee kills the engine, scans, then swings the door open and ushers Valerie inside without a word.

INT. THE MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - DAY

The living room serves as the central operation hub, tables packed with computer setups, papers and files, headsets, cameras scattered throughout, handguns and rifles left openly exposed. GC Lee introduces the agents, his team.

VALERIE

(Agitated)

Look... what am I really doing here
and how am I going to be able to
help with this matter?

Valerie's presence gives the operation the green light, everything moves. Everyone around her moves quickly to their stations.

GC LEE

(Anxious, Patient)

Please follow me to my corner and I
will grab a chair for you. I'm
sorry, it's a mess in here. I'll be
right back.

Lee walks away to get a chair.

GC Lee's perspective of Valerie Coburn: a beautiful, well-educated woman who is a recent widow, wealthy, friendly, vulnerable.

VALERIE

(Unconvinced)

How do you know that you have the
right guy? It's a popular name in
Asian countries.

GC LEE

(Convincing)

We have the right guy, Valerie. I'm
sorry, we have Hahn Li, aka Luke
Li.

Lee leads Valerie over to Lisa Park's table. Lisa hits the keyboard, the screens show a bird's eye view of Hahn's interior. Valerie watches in silence then covers her mouth to keep from screaming.

VALERIE

(Gasped, Tears Up)

Yes, that's him. Oh my god. That's him, his voice, his dog. Oh, what have I done?

Hahn winds up and hurls the ball across the room, DT bolts after it, paws skidding, his eyes stay locked on his phone, thumb scrolling as DT disappears into the kitchen.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Betrayed, Angry)

I feel sick to my stomach. All these months, while you all sat here, you knew who he was and you did nothing? You continued to spy on him, and on me? I was with him two times in that house three months ago! Did you spy on us in the bedroom too? And you did nothing to stop this guy, a criminal. I feel violated. Where was my protection then? You let him get his way with me.

GC Lee's face falls, defeated. Valerie's outburst, raw and hysterical, leaves everyone stunned. She turns and walks away, scanning the hallway for a bathroom.

LISA PARK

(Offering Empathy)

Ms. Coburn, I'll take you. Please follow me. It's right down this hallway and the second door to your left.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - BATHROOM - DAY

Lisa leads Valerie into the hallway. Valerie sits on the closed toilet seat, head bowed in despair. After a long moment she pushes herself up, steps to the sink and splashes water on her face. In the mirror her reflection hardens, an epic reckoning of Luke's betrayal.

VALERIE

(Talks To Herself)

How could you fuck up this big? Alright, enough self pity. Let's go and face the firing squad.

Valerie returns to the living room, face clean, demeanor calm, she moves with a quiet, self-composed certainty.

LISA PARK

(Low Voice)

Hey guys, heads up, Coburn is walking back in. Hope she is doing better, and frankly, I can't blame her for the shock that this is causing in her life. That asshole psychopath used her and tried to take her money.

In the background, Patrick and Kim wait, eyes fixed on the hallway, expecting GC Lee to resurface. The moment Valerie steps back into the room, GC Lee reappears beside her.

VALERIE

(Soft Tone)

Hey everyone, I want to apologize to all of you for the inadequate accusations and outbursts I threw. I will help however I can, Lee. I also want to tell you everything from the start. I want him to pay for his crimes. One request is that my family is kept safe and well protected. I cannot jeopardize their safety during this operation. They already suspect that I was having an affair with a guy named Luke. My daughter saw his name on my phone during my husband's memorial. I'm sure she did some digging of her own. I, of course, had to deny it. Luke and I have not seen each other in weeks, he refuses to get together unless I continue to do what he wants from me. We only communicate through texting now.

Patrick mutters under his breath from the back, his voice tight with irritation, and Kim Choi turns just enough to catch it.

KIM CHOI

(Smirks)

Yeah, I agree, whatever it is, my friend, I support you.

VALERIE

(Eager And Anxious)

So what's the plan, and how will I be able to help in this?

GC Lee's face turns relieved.

GC LEE

(Straightforward)

We have seen you come to the townhouse on those two occasions, and we did not have camera surveillance inside his bedroom at that time. We respected your privacy and had to be careful with him then. He was not a threat to you.

GC pauses before he continues.

GC LEE (CONT'D)

Hahn realized he could not persuade or pressure you into investing more money into his cryptocurrency business. You became a challenge for him, so he banned you from coming over. He never expected that you would ever turn him down. The account you opened is frozen. He hacked into it the minute you deposited the first ten thousand dollars, and the next. We bugged his place and now his bedroom. We also had a tracking device attached to his car. A few days later he sold his Porsche. And we think he was on to us, or it was just pure luck. We needed to be sure of Hahn's motive with you. This mission was to extract him quietly, but you got caught in the middle. And he seemed to have fallen in love with you. We had to wait to be sure about your own intention.

INT. THE MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - DAY (CONT'D)

VALERIE

(Uneasy)

If I had only known sooner, I would have saved myself from this ordeal and the misery with this guy. Thank you for your help. Do you have coffee or something with caffeine?

Kim Choi returns and serves a tray of pastry and coffee. GC Lee and his team begin to surround her so they can be present for the questioning.

GC LEE

(Subtle)

Valerie, how did you get involved with Hahn Li? Where did you first meet? Were you introduced by a friend? I know that this is awkward and uncomfortable, but I must ask. We were not successful accessing Hahn's social media. That's when Lisa found out he was using aliases and was hard to trace.

VALERIE

(Voice Cracking)

I first got involved with Luke on social media, he privately messaged me through his own platform. I remember him saying that it was his own that he created. After three months I got to know him better. I thought I was in love. This happened when my husband's illness worsened and I was in depression. He was a nice, attractive guy, and kept me company through my grief. I didn't know his state of mind. Luke psychologically manipulated my downfall and used that to his advantage. I was an emotional wreck when my husband died and he knew that. He said that our age difference did not define a woman. He was romantic and sweet at times, but wanted to control me. He even proposed and wanted to get married right away. He wanted me to invest my money into cryptocurrency, and buying Bitcoins! I consistently refused and opposed it. This is what got him so furious at me. But I ended up opening an account on Coinbase and deposited that money you know about. I stopped communicating with him. The other night after I got home from Belair, he messaged me ten times, and accused me of being with another man. He verbally abuses me.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

He punishes me and he is cruel. I started to see a psychiatrist. My family intervened, when Margaret (MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)
found out. That's when it hit me
how lucky I am. What did he do? Why
are you chasing him?

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - (CONT'D)

GC LEE
(Cautious)
Valerie, we want to make sure you
and your family are safe from him.
And that you completely understand
how serious this is.

GC Lee and his team listen intently.

GC LEE (CONT'D)
He is very dangerous. Did you ever
tell him you were seeing a
therapist? Has he ever seen your
children?

Valerie's face freezes and she casts her gaze to the floor.

VALERIE
(Fear Sets In)
No, never. Unless he was stalking
me all this time. Oh god, this is a
nightmare. He questions me whenever
I don't respond to him right away.
He berates me in his messages. I do
invite him occasionally to come
over to my house but he always made
excuses. Now I know why.

GC Lee, aware of Valerie's discomfort. The team speaks in
low voices while they watch the fugitive.

GC LEE
(Warm Smile)
Do you want to take a break, I know
how exhausting this is.

INT. HAHN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY (CONT'D)

Hahn paces the living room, then he reaches into his
sweatpants and pulls out his phone.

PATRICK NEAL
(Heightened Voice)
Okay, he looks like he's about to
make a call. Let's turn it up,
Lisa, GC.

The team lunges for their headsets, Lisa drops into her chair, hands flying across the audio board, two microscopic cameras snap into position, locked tight onto Hahn.

LISA PARK

(Boasting)

Yep, I got him. Man, this guy is unbearable, okay, visuals and audio are clear, folks.

Hahn settles into a white leather couch. Across the room Patrick gives a subtle signal to GC Lee. The phone buzzes against the desk. Valerie jolts, eyes snapping up, GC Lee stands over her. Three hi-def monitors, angled, locked on Hahn Li live, feeds, data streams, surveillance.

GC LEE

(Instructing)

Please answer, you will be okay, we are here with you, act natural. Be sweet and understanding... please.

VALERIE

(Reluctant)

I don't want to answer this, Lee, please, can we just ignore it? I don't want to speak to him, I'm afraid... insufferable, cold, a hypocrite.

Lee scribbles quick notes on a sheet of paper. Valerie follows his lead then answers her phone, speaking to Hahn.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Voice Quivers)

Hello there. How are you? It's been a while. Hey, you must finally be tired of text messaging. I like this, when you call me instead. I've always liked your voice, and I miss you, Luke, very much.

Valerie keeps the charade going, every word and gesture calibrated to sell the lie.

HAHN LI

(Monotone)

Hi, beautiful. I'm fine, and you? What have you been doing while I've been away? I hope you are not still angry with me.

VALERIE

(Interrupts)

Ah, what do you mean? Am I still angry with you? As I recall, Luke, you said to get the fuck out of here. So I did just that. I didn't know you went away. Where did you go off to?

HAHN LI

(Whispers)

I remember that, baby... I am sorry for my bad behavior. Never mind about what I said, okay? You know I can't live without you, Valerie, my stubborn little bunny. Let me make it up to you.

INT. HAHN'S TOWNHOUSE (CONT'D)

Valerie listens, eyes locked on the monitor, talk unraveling in real time. Valerie's face flushes, biting her lower lip.

HAHN LI (V.O.)

(Seductive)

Hey baby, I have an idea, why don't you come over tonight? I miss you and your sexy body, and I am so hungry for you, Valerie. I can't think of anything else but your scent. I want to make love to you, and after your satisfaction, I'll cook for us. We can work on our investment, staying naked in bed together all night. My cock gets hard thinking of you, Valerie, I'm waiting.

VALERIE

(Coughs, Chuckles)

Oh my god, Luke, tonight? No, I can't, I have been unwell and trying to get better from a bad cold. I'm sorry, but today I started to feel better. How about tomorrow around lunchtime? I would be more prepared. I hope tomorrow is okay with you, if you agree then it's a date. I'm looking forward, I'll see you then. Bye Luke.

HAHN LI (V.O.)

(Smirking)

Well, I don't like that you can't come tonight, but I don't have a choice, so it's a date, baby. Actually, why do you need to prepare, you are too beautiful, don't overdo it. Bye.

Valerie clicks off, snatches a bottle of water and drains it fiercely. The team removes their headsets, as Hahn strips naked and disappears into his bathroom.

GC LEE

(Straight-Faced)

Alright, gather in. Time to reassess our plans into action.

VALERIE

(Flustered)

Oh god, what do I do now? What do I do. I'm sorry.

GC LEE

(Clearing His Throat)

He is very dangerous, and cunning, Valerie. We have been trying to catch this loser for two years. Hahn Li is a top priority, and so is your safety. He's been hiding, and blending in well with the young Asian community of Los Angeles. He is good-looking, charismatic, charming, a mastermind manipulator. But he made one mistake, and that was falling for you, Valerie, and you are his greatest obsession.

GC Lee prepares to disclose the murder case.

GC LEE (CONT'D)

(Reporting)

Hahn Li murdered his roommate, Robert Ono. The two were culprits of criminal activity together. They targeted wealthy middle-aged women and men, especially widowed women. Through sex and manipulation, they gained their victims' trust, they had access into their bank accounts while they were inside their homes.

GC LEE (CONT'D)

The two were handsome, clever gigolos. One day, Robert became jealous and greedy. Their operation crumbled when they got into a drunken brawl. We think it has something to do with how Hahn split their shares. Forensic investigation shows that a fight broke out in the kitchen. Hahn knocked Robert onto the kitchen island table. Hahn became furious, grabbed a knife from the knife block, and stabbed Robert as he launched at him. Robert was stabbed multiple times in the neck and body. Robert's bloody body fell onto the kitchen carpet.

INT. HAHN LI'S APARTMENT - SOUTH KOREA - DAY (FLASHBACK)

ROBERT

(Struggles To Breathe)

Please, help me... don't kill me,
I'll give you everything... I'm
sorry.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

(Gurgling, Dying)

You won't get away....

Hahn stands over Robert's blood covered body. Sweat streams down his face, mixing with the splatter.

HAHN LI

(Eerie Laugh)

Now go and tell the authorities,
you asshole!

Hahn exits fast, never realizing Robert is still breathing.

ROBERT

(Barely Audible)

Help... please help... Hahn Li,
he... I'm dying, please hurry.

Robert is found dead, clutching his phone in one hand. He never finished his last word.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - DAY (CONT'D)

GC LEE (V.O.)
(Compassionate)

I arrived along with several police officers at the crime scene. We found Robert Ono brutally stabbed. We searched the luxury apartment leased to a Hahn Li. There were no photos of family anywhere, or a photo of Hahn Li. I carefully went through Robert Ono's phone.

Lee unzips the body bag. He lifts Robert's eyelid, Face ID catches, unlocks. GC Lee scrolls, graphic images flash by. He stops on a single photo, a fit, tall Asian man, coifed dark hair and piercing eyes, standing apart, observing.

GC LEE (V.O.)
(Talks Into His Watch)

Here he is, one picture, just one. He should not be hard to find. We need to contact other friends or clients... find his passport.

The photo hits, Hahn Li, a fugitive criminal, wanted. Hahn Li's photo slides across the check-in counter to TSA. Screens flicker, data pulls up, passport info, flight logs. Officers flag Li as TSA scans arrivals. On screen, Hahn Li booked and departed. Flight to Los Angeles, a lead of three hours. GC Lee is already moving.

EXT. LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA - MORNING

Two days later GC Lee and Kim Choi land in Los Angeles. With the LAPD Chief's cooperation they assemble a tight, small unit. A break comes from a lease agreement signed "Luke Li." They wiretap Hahn Li's three bedroom townhouse in Larchmont. He holds no credit cards, no traceable bank accounts. He operates off the grid, deep in the dark web.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - PRESENT - DAY (CONT'D)

GC LEE
(Intense)

We saw some of your photos on his old social media account, before it became private, an account he created just for the two of you. His photo was real but his name is an alias. We have been following and tracking you, ensuring that we cover all grounds to protect you and your family. What we need from you is to help us set a trap for
(MORE)

GC LEE (CONT'D)

(Intense)

capture. It's your choice, and if you choose to cooperate in this mission, we would want you to continue your relationship.

Valerie locks eyes with GC Lee, weighing the options he's offering.

VALERIE

(Furrowed Brows)

I don't know if I can do this, I'm afraid, I don't want him touching me. Please give me a moment. I have to plan to tell my family I'm going up to Carmel or something. Alright, let's do this. I'm only doing this because Hahn should pay for his crimes. And for Robert Ono, though he wasn't innocent either.

Relieved voices from the back, from his team.

GC LEE

(Nods His Head)

We will prepare you in the morning. Please be here by 7:00am. We will go over the details and finalize our actions. The gate will automatically open up for you, and Patrick will park your car. Thank you, Valerie, we all thank you.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - DAY (CONT'D)

VALERIE

(Curious)

So why now? I mean, why didn't you guys arrest him then, you had him all this time. I just can't understand how you could lose him.

GC LEE

(Retorted)

We were on track, but it got complicated when you started a relationship with him. The intermission allowed us to move in closer. When we saw Hahn slow down, waiting for you, wanting you to give up your entire life and your family, we believe he was using you
(MORE)

GC LEE (CONT'D)

(Retorted)

as a shield, and maybe as leverage eventually. It bought us time and opportunity to approach you, hoping you would cooperate. My team and the Los Angeles PD came to this conclusion with me.

VALERIE

(Agreeing)

I am only choosing to cooperate and help because he should pay for his crimes, though I know that I am the bait. I'm taking a risk, but I owe it to myself.

A tentative bond begins to form between Valerie and GC Lee.

GC LEE

(Serious)

Valerie, this operation is to extract Hahn Li... it will be dangerous.

VALERIE

(Sighing Deeply)

Yeah... I know, he's emotionally a tricky guy, and scary at times. But I believe he loves me like no other beside his mother. It's psychological. It's a risk I'm willing to take to bring him to justice. Okay Lee, I need to get out of here. See you guys in the morning and thank you for understanding me.

The Mothership team waves their hands for goodbyes.

INT. CADILLAC COP CAR - AFTERNOON

GC Lee and Valerie drive in silence. He parks next to her Mercedes, steps out and opens her door.

VALERIE

(Smiling)

Thank you. This is where it all began. Maybe after all this is over you can buy me another drink. Crazy, right?

GC LEE

(Small Chuckle)

Yes. A redo at the bar. Valerie, please drive safely home, I will follow you to make sure before I hit the highway back. Thank you for today, and for tomorrow. Bye.

INT. VALERIE'S HOME - EVENING

Valerie calls a Zoom meeting with Andrew, Cooper, and Margaret.

VALERIE

(Pleasant)

Hi, where is Cooper? I wanted to see you three. I'm letting you guys know I'm going out of town for a few days. I'll be driving up to Carmel. Dad and I loved it up there. I'll text when I get there or something.

MARGARET

(Smiles)

For sure, mom... that's great mommy, it sounds fun, make sure you bundle up, it's a bit chilly. Coop had clients, he is working late tonight until 11:00pm. Maybe you can text him later. Are you going alone?

VALERIE

(Smiling)

I am, Marg, and maybe call a couple of friends and see who has time for me. I'll see how I feel about it. I hate gossip, frankly I might just want to be alone and reflect, meditate and do yoga. Maybe the four of us can go on a vacation to Italy.

ANDREW

(Chuckles)

Yeah, we get that. Thanks for letting us know, mom. I will check on Tanya around Friday, and yeah, don't worry about Cooper, we will let him know your itinerary. But please text him though. Margaret is keeping him busy besides getting
(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)
(Chuckles)
more tats. I would love that, us
going to Italy together.

Valerie laughs with her family, hiding the dread of the call she has to make next.

INT. COBURN HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

VALERIE
(Raspy Voice)
Luke, I will be there around
lunchtime tomorrow, confirming our
date said earlier. I am prepping
for bed so I can make that drive
over to you, okay? I can't wait to
see you. I can't wait to see you.

HAHN LI (V.O.)
(Disappointed)
Alright, then I will stop hoping
that you changed your mind about
tonight and I will stop waiting for
you. I am disappointed. But get
some rest now. I will see you
tomorrow. I love you, Valerie.

Luke's face falls in disapproval, he combs through his hair.
Another call from Valerie.

VALERIE
(Low Toned Voice)
Luke, are you angry with me? If you
are, please don't be. I'll be fine
by tomorrow. I can't wait to see
you, it has been a while. I still
love you too. Please don't be
disappointed.

Luke's face hardens.

HAHN LI (V.O.)
(Insolent)
I don't like being rejected. I'm
disappointed, but I will get over
it. Alright, get some rest.

VALERIE
(Sighing)
I'm not feeling well and I have no
bad intention. I'm sorry you feel
this way. I will see you tomorrow,
goodnight.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - NIGHT

Surveillance on Valerie's phone winds down. Hahn, alone, explodes, temper flaring the moment he hangs up with Valerie.

PATRICK NEAL

(Chuckles)

Yeah! Jackass, I know what you'll be doing in there, you selfish motherfucker. That guy has issues.

The team huddles before nightfall, coordinating and prepping for Operation Valerie.

GC LEE

(Apprehensive, Concerned)

Ah... shit. This is such a big risk, to put her in this position. But she knew this and accepted to help this operation. She's courageous, and... admirable.

Lisa's, Patrick's and Kim's expressions show they know Lee's worries about Valerie. Months of tailing her have made it clear.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - MORNING

Valerie arrives on time. The gate slams shut behind her car. Patrick steers her car into the garage. Valerie steps out in a form fitting dress, beige heels, every detail deliberate.

KIM CHOI

(Smiling)

Good morning, Ms. Coburn. I have coffee and pastries ready. Go help yourself, please.

VALERIE

(Pleasantly Smiles)

Thank you, Mr. Kim, I need it. You're very kind. I am kind of hungry.

LISA PARK

(Complimenting)

You look good, Ms. Coburn. Hope you got some sleep. That dress is perfect. When GC arrives, we will go over the details once more, okay? He is on his way now, probably stuck in traffic.

GC Lee enters. A ripple of greeting moves through the room. His gaze finds Valerie, he just nods.

VALERIE

(Nervously Smiles)

Oh, I didn't realize he doesn't live here. I feel a little jittery, it must be my nerves.

LISA PARK

(Concentrating)

No, he has to stay near LAPD downtown.

Lisa leaves. GC Lee heads over to Valerie.

GC LEE

(Concerned)

Good morning, Valerie, did you sleep well? Is there anything you want to ask me? I know this is not easy, going into the lion's den. Remember, we'll be watching and listening. Act natural, stay cool. We'll be moving in closer to apprehend and arrest Hahn for good. You can start up a conversation about Bitcoin, you've actually been studying it, and he's right, especially now that stocks and Bitcoin have skyrocketed. Don't be too eager, keep it steady. Lisa will wire you from behind your bra, you'll be in close proximity with Hahn. Placing it in front could hinder the volume from hugs, etc.

GC LEE (CONT'D)

We need to hear everything closely and prepare to move in. We will follow you everywhere in the house from the screen monitor. Are you okay?

VALERIE

(Anxious)

I've been better. I'm okay. Thank you for asking. I'm just nervous and want to get this over with. I had to lie to my family, Lee. I feel super shitty about it. Being close to him again, it will bring back too many memories of my
(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Anxious)

failures. I don't want to remember,
but I'm here.

GC LEE

(Casually Smiles)

No, Valerie, this is not a failure.
Hahn is a master manipulator.
Please don't say this, I don't see
a failure... be fair and be kind to
yourself.

Lisa catches Valerie's attention and signals for her.
Valerie pulls her eyes away from Lee.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - KITCHEN - DAY

Valerie perches on a high kitchen stool, dress splayed wide,
black lace bra exposed. Lisa works fast, wires snake from
the device, tape anchoring to Valerie's midriff. She clips
the final lead to the bra, steady and precise.

GC Lee steps in, oblivious to the scene.

GC LEE

(Turns Away)

Oh, I'm sorry, please excuse me,
ladies. I thought Ms. Coburn was
ready. Yell to me when you're done!

VALERIE

(Flustered)

It's alright, I'm covered, for
Christ's sake.

Valerie covers her breasts, breath tight. Lee steps out, she
tracks him all the way to the door, silent, unreadable.

LISA PARK

(Chuckling Softly)

My boss is a fine gentleman
underneath that stern face, is a
real nice man. Old school, but
tolerable.

INT. HAHN'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Valerie pulls up to Hahn's townhouse. She steps out and
moves toward the entrance carefully. Hahn leans against the
doorway, watching her.

HAHN LI
(Smoldering Voice)
Hi! Do you need help, little lady?
Here, take my hand, right this way.
Baby, you're all dressed up for me.
Wow, you look so beautiful, as
always. Come here, I want to hug
you, it's been a while, oh I love
the way you smell.

Valerie awkwardly hugs Hahn.

VALERIE
(Giggles Nervously)
I know, I seem to always need help.
And I love getting dressed up,
especially for you.

HAHN LI
(Smiling)
Thank you, I like that. I've missed
you very much, Valerie.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - DAY (CONT'D)

Hahn leads Valerie in and looks her over.

HAHN LI
(Witty)
Right this way, baby. Do you
remember what this place looks
like? You look a bit different,
pale, but you're still beautiful as
ever. Are you still feeling sick? I
made lunch for us, or I can just
make you tea.

VALERIE
(Nervous)
A cup of tea will be lovely. Thank
you, darling.

INT. HAHN LI'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY (CONT'D)

HAHN LI
(Charming)
Okay, stay here, baby. Sit down,
and make yourself comfortable. I'll
be right back with your tea, madam.

Valerie sits on the white leather sofa, hidden cameras roll,
live, to the Mothership. Hahn enters with a tray, a perfect
gentleman, every move calibrated. The Mothership sees and
hears.

INT. MOTHERSHIP HOUSE - TEAM - DAY

GC Lee watches as he and the team gear up for extraction.

VALERIE

(Warmly)

Oh, here, let me help you, Luke.
Thank you, what a beautiful tray.

He serves her a cup of tea. Valerie takes it and sips.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Tensed)

Mmm, this is so good. What is it? I
love the sweet taste of honey
lemon. It makes me feel better
already. What do you want to talk
about... Bitcoin? Or do you want to
talk about us?

Valerie steers the conversation to money, buying time, one question at a time.

HAHN LI

(Touching Her Lips)

Shhh, don't speak, I know you want
to talk about everything, but all I
want to do is look at you and hold
you for a while, okay? I have
missed you, Valerie.

VALERIE

(Uneasy)

Okay, it's just that you have been
gone, no words, and I didn't know
if you were serious about getting
married in Greece.

Closing the distance, Hahn takes the cup from her hand and sets it down on the table. Hahn kisses her neck, places Valerie's hand near his crotch. She withdraws gently.

HAHN LI

(Probing, Smiles)

Let me freshen our tea, which has
gotten cold. I'll be right back,
baby, so hang on. Then we can talk
about anything you want, alright...

Several minutes go by, Valerie remains seated on the white leather couch, watching closely.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - DAY

GC Lee and team watch the feed. Hahn returns with fresh brew, leans close and whispers something inaudible.

INT. HAHN'S TOWNHOUSE (CONT'D)

HAHN LI
(Taunting, Presses On)
Why is your account frozen?

VALERIE
(Caught Off Guard)
What do you mean? Because you went MIA, I put a hold, not freeze. I didn't think it would be frozen. Let's go in and find out why...

Valerie holds her cup against her mouth, sipping, holding his gaze.

HAHN LI
(Sinister Smile)
It's alright, I'll check it out again, maybe a glitch in the system.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM (CONT'D)

GC Lee and his team check all weapons and shields, ready to bust down the townhouse door.

INT. HAHN'S TOWNHOUSE (CONT'D)

Valerie breaks Luke's spell and stands. He pulls her back.

VALERIE
(Compelling)
I need to use the restroom, I had too much tea, darling, and I'll be right back. And we need to get back to talking about my investment with you. It's down that way, right?

HAHN LI
(Seductive)
Hurry back, okay, please. I'm eager to be with you.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - DAY

GC Lee and his team begin to move out, they've missed that Hahn swiftly follows Valerie.

INT. HAHN LI'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Valerie staggers toward the bathroom, leaning against the wall for support, the club drug MOLLY Hahn slipped into her tea has taken hold.

VALERIE
(Disoriented)
Oh shit, where is the fucking
bathroom? Oh my god, what's
happening to me, Luke!

Valerie misjudges the turn, missing the bathroom, she's drifting toward the bedroom instead.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
(Giggling)
Luke, oops, I can't find the
bathroom... did I have too much to
drink?

He grabs her hips. Hahn catches her before she falls.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
(Immobilized)
Ah, thank you for saving me...

Hahn takes advantage of her condition, pulling her in and kissing her. Valerie, delirious and mentally foggy, reciprocates without awareness or control. He lifts her into his arms, kicks the door open, carries her to his bed, and lays her down.

INT. HAHN'S BEDROOM - DAY (CONT'D)

VALERIE
(Gasping, Moans)
Mmmm, ahh, ohh, Luke, Luke, come
here.

Hahn strips off his shirt, unzips her dress, pulling it down. Rips her bottom garment. Drugged and barely conscious, she hangs in his grip.

HAHN LI
(Aroused)
Valerie, Valerie, slow down baby.
I'm right here... ahh.

Valerie grabs Hahn, pulls him closer, her hands roaming over his abs before slipping beneath, inside his waistband. The muffled sounds of two people having sex drift through the room.

VALERIE
(Moaning In Pleasure)
Come here, don't go, don't stop.

The drug overwhelms Valerie's body, she goes slack, her mind slipping further out of reach. Hahn feels something is off. He finds a small microphone hidden in her rumpled dress. His demeanor snaps, he yanks Valerie up, then slams her back down. What follows is violent and nonconsensual, an assault.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
(Screaming)
Please stop hurting me. Help! Help!
No! Stop it, Luke!

HAHN LI
(Violent, Enraged)
No one can hear you! Scream all you want. Tell me, who are you working with? Who wired you? Wake up, bitch! I'm a fool, and to think I loved you! You keep betraying me! I hate you! You fucking whore! I'm going to kill you. Is that what you want, huh?

Hahn grips her throat, pinning her down. He rapes her. Valerie strains to push him off, but she can't move, paralyzed, tears rolling silently.

VALERIE
(Gasping, Coughs)
No, Luke, please don't hurt me.

He releases her, draws a syringe from his pocket, and moves back on top of Valerie.

HAHN LI
(Furious)
Look at me! Why?... Why!

VALERIE
(Gasping For Air)
Luke, please, let go of me, you're hurting me. Please stop, please.
You don't understand.

HAHN LI
(Beyond Outrage)
How could you do this to me? Why? I loved you! Tell me the truth!

Hahn's eyes burn with rage, hot breath over her face, Valerie barely conscious, he crushes his mouth to hers then

drives a syringe into her thigh.

VALERIE
(Small Cry)
Luke, Luke, please don't go, stay
with me, don't hurt me... please.

Hahn packs in a frenzy, laptops, clothes, a box of ammunition all shoved into a large duffel. He tucks a gun into the back of his waistband. DT barks uncontrollably from his crate.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - TEAM - DAY

GC Lee stops and shouts for Lisa to turn up the audio, the team makes their move toward the townhouse.

GC LEE
(Horrified)
Hey, turn that up! No, no, this is
not supposed to happen! Let's move
out now. Go! Go! Now! Fuck! Fuck
that fucking asshole!

EXT. TOWNHOUSE STREET - DAY (CONT'D)

GC and his team sprint toward Hahn Li's townhouse, weapons drawn. Patrick and Kim split off as GC and Lisa head straight for the front door.

PATRICK NEAL
(Shouting)
Let's go, let's go! Kim, take the
back! I'll go around the other
house.

GC Lee calls for patrol backup.

EXT. THE ALLEY - DAY

Hahn Li bolts into the alley, cuts the corner. Kim Choi tackles him, they slam into a brutal fight, Kim landing martial arts blows to Hahn's face. Hahn draws a Glock and shoots Kim twice.

KIM CHOI
(In Agony)
You son of a bitch!

Agent Kim drops to the ground, Hahn Li keeps running to his escape car. Patrick reaches the alley, finds Kim Choi down and clamps his hands over the wounds. Patrick calls for backup, shouting into his mic. Signal 36.

PATRICK NEAL

(Shouting)

Help, 10-13! Officer down, officer down! Come on man, hang on. Look at me, Choi. You're our badass. Okay, stay with me, buddy. Stay with me.

Patrick keeps pressure on Choi's wounds as sirens grow louder.

INT. HAHN LI'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

GC LEE

(Panting)

Ah shit! That fucking fucker!

GC and Lisa take Hahn's doorway down, guns drawn. Shots pop nearby, Patrick calls for backup, sirens rise, and a dog barks furiously. Lee storms the bedroom, kicks the door open, finds Valerie motionless. He covers her then checks her pulse.

GC LEE

(Relieved)

Lisa! Valerie is unconscious and alive! Come on Valerie, wake up. I'm sorry. I'm here, I'm here.

Gun drawn, Lisa sweeps the kitchen and garage, kicking doors open, until she calls it clear.

LISA PARK

(Breathing Hard)

Ah, poor puppy, hang on DT, we will figure something out, okay? Shhhh, you're okay.

LISA PARK

(Shouting)

All clear, and all the computers are gone, oh god, he left his dog behind, it's still in his crate, that asshole! I calmed him down, he was scared.

The ambulance arrives and EMTs work to revive unconscious Valerie while GC Lee presses the emergency medical techs for answers.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECH

(Professional)

Ms. Coburn needs to be seen by a doctor and examined. She is heavily
(MORE)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECH (CONT'D)

(Professional)

drugged, and she's a rape victim. She's slowly coming back, but we don't know what drugs he injected her with. She needs to be examined and have blood drawn to determine the drugs in her system. She needs to be monitored properly overnight, hoping she is not internally harmed.

Valerie stirs, dazed, one slow blink, then she focuses.

VALERIE

(Confused, Hysterical)

Please, Lee, don't let them take me. I don't want to go, and I don't want to be examined. I don't want to be an experiment at the hospital! I'm alright.

Valerie fades out beneath the IV drip.

GC LEE

(Comforting)

I'm sorry, Valerie. We must have you checked out. Okay, I will accompany you and wait for you. Just take it easy. I will be right here, I won't leave you alone.

GC Lee stays close to Valerie, watchful and protective. GC tells Patrick and Lisa he's following the ambulance and staying overnight, checking on Kim Choi, and to take the Jack Russell back to the Mothership.

INT. COBURN HOME - DAY AFTER - AFTERNOON

Valerie comes home with GC Lee, battered and devastated, while police patrols flood the neighborhood. Lee walks in and out of every room making sure it's safe.

VALERIE

(Disheveled)

Lee, if you don't mind, I would like to be alone. I think you can leave me, and I'll be fine. I will go straight to bed, okay? You need to rest too. Thank you again for staying with me. Does my family know what happened? Please, I don't want any of them to know about this
(MORE)

VALERIE (CONT'D)

(Disheveled)

horrible incident. Oh, before I forget, where is DT? Did you keep him, Lee? I think I remember asking you to keep him, I'm sorry, maybe I was dreaming it.

Valerie leads Lee to the front door, dazed and incoherent.

GC LEE

(Persistent)

Valerie, you were not dreaming. We are taking good care of him at the Mothership, until you get stronger. Please, don't forget to lock this door when I go, okay? Hey, listen to me, please.

Lee brushes her hand gently, and Valerie's gaze finds his again.

GC LEE (CONT'D)

(Worried)

Valerie, you know that Hahn is still out there somewhere. I have patrol cars in the back and in the front. Call me for anything, it doesn't matter what time... or if you want some company, I can stay here.

GC Lee turns to leave and Valerie follows, hugs him at the door, it lingers. Lee steps into the driveway, locks eyes with two officers assigned to watch.

INT. COBURN HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Valerie lies staring at the ceiling. She rises, moves to the bathroom, turns the tap, water gushes into the tub. Back to the bedroom, she grabs her laptop, a glass of wine, returns. Her robe slips from her shoulders, pools on the tile. She steps in and sinks into the bath.

VALERIE

(Relaxed)

Ah, this feels so nice. All alone...

Valerie closes her eyes, they snap open, she grabs the laptop, the screen flares, illuminating her unreadable expression.

EXT. STREET - DAWN

Valerie slips out the front door unseen. Ditching the two cops asleep, she rolls her luggage down the street, quiet. An Uber idles ahead. She gets in.

VALERIE
(Whispering To Herself)
Yeah, right, just like I thought.
Asleep at their job. Oh Lee, I'm
sorry.

EXT. LAX INTL. AIRPORT - MORNING

Valerie boards First Class. At sunrise, Lee discovers Valerie took off, left him a sweet note, and traces her phone. Patrol cops look exhausted and apologetic.

INT. ATHENS, GREECE - ONE DAY AFTER - DAY

Valerie arrives at Athens International Airport, her exhaustion reflected in the taxi's window. She waits at the ferry port heading towards Santorini Island with other tourists.

VALERIE
(Mutters To Herself)
Together, forever, yeah right. What
a shit show that was, Luke, a
fucking disappointment, a disaster.

Valerie sits alone in sunglasses, a scarf over her hair whipping in the wind. She stares straight ahead, stoic and fearless.

EXT. SANTORINI, GREECE - HOTEL - DAY

Valerie arrives on Santorini and steps into her room. She throws open every window and door to the private terrace, where a small pool overlooks the endless sea.

VALERIE
(Talks To Herself)
Ah, how beautiful this is, I wish
this could have been different.

Valerie steps onto the terrace, framed by pink bougainvillea. She inhales the salt air, stretches toward the early sun, then removes her sunglasses and scarf. Sweat beads on her forehead. Tears slip down as she finally lets herself decompress. Valerie doesn't hear the footsteps behind her. A hand touches her shoulder. She jolts, turns, then her surprise breaks into pure happiness.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
(Gasp, Emotional)
Lee, you followed me... why? How
did you know where I was?

EXT. HOTEL VERANDA - DAY (CONT'D)

GC LEE
(Warm Smiles)
I tracked your phone, just as a
security measure, since you went
missing under two watchful cops in
front of your house... I'm a
special super cop? Valerie, I care
deeply about you. I haven't been
able to sleep, not even on the
flight. I literally flew the same
day you left. Thinking only of you
and how I feel about you. I called
your family telling them only what
is necessary that had happened. I
respected your privacy. I want them
to not worry, so I only added that
we would be here for a while. It
would be nice for you to rest,
meditate and reflect on everything
in your past life, and present. We
can FaceTime them later if you
want.

Valerie steps to Lee. He gathers her in his arms, and they
kiss passionately.

VALERIE
(Embracing Tightly)
I can hear your heartbeat, beating
so fast. Are you okay, or are you
just excited as I am? Lee, thank
you for being you. I'm happy you
are here, I remember this
feeling... it feels right.

GC LEE
(Kissing Her)
I am the luckiest man, I fell in
love with you, Valerie, a long time
ago...

Across the veranda another figure raises a pair of
binoculars and watches them, head on. In slow motion, the
hand holding the binoculars brings his arms down, slamming
the binoculars onto the glass table, causing it to crack.

THE END

FADE OUT