

SCENE 1

MUSA drives the kids to school.

MUSA

Khalid and Layla are you excited to start High school at an American school? Isn't it exciting?!

LAYLA

Nem, lakan Anna kahyif. (yes, but I am scared.)

AMAL

Yalla Habibti (come on, baby), don't be scared. Everything is going to work out. Soon you will have a village of friends! You will have a happy life, okay?

LAYLA

Okay, momma.

KHALID

I can't wait to meet new friends.

MUSA

That's the spirit, Khalid. Layla, try to speak English like your mother, brother, and me. So you can improve your English, and your teachers can understand.

AMAL

Musa, you need to go fill out the papers so you can get social security. Don't forget. Most jobs require a Social security number.

MUSA

I'll get it done. God knows we need our social security number to do just about everything in this country.

KHALID

Look! Look! The school. We are here!

LAYLA

(Laughs) Oh yeah. It's big.

MUSA

Have a good day, my dearest children.

AMAL

Be on your best behavior. Tell me all about it when you are home. We love you.

LAYLA

Love you, momma.

Amal

Take care of each other. Khalid, make sure you take it easy Today. Especially no running. Remember what the doctor said. You're fragile! Okay?

KHALID

Okay, love you, momma.

AMAL

Layla, make sure your brother takes his medicine at lunch.

LAYLA

Okay Momma.

AMAL

Musa am I forgetting anything?

MUSA

If someone tries to bully you, hit them in the throat. Okay, my children?

Amal

Musa!

MUSA

What?

AMAL

Go on, kids, before the teachers mark you late.

The children exit the car.

AMAL

Drop me off at home. I will finish sorting the apartment, and you figure out what to do with the SSN and try to ask around to see if you can find a job. We have vastly underestimated living in America. We have many financial responsibilities. We are already behind on the bills this month. We are running out of money.

MUSA

Don't worry. I will deal with this. I will drop you, and then I
will go find a job.

AMAL

I feel blessed to have a responsible husband like you and I know
you will be successful.

MUSA

With your hands on mine, I can do anything.

AMAL

You're very sweet habibi, I love you!

MUSA

I love you too, habibti!

SCENE 2

KATHRYN

What are you doing? Why are you taking our emergency fund money?

JAMES

Nothing, I'm just... going shopping...

KATHRYN

Shopping? Do you know what time it is? The stores are closed. James... don't tell me you're gambling with your fair weather friends again.

JAMES

Don't call them that...

KATHRYN

James, do I have to remind you how much you've lost already? We are in so much debt...

JAMES

We have a roof over our heads and that's the only thing that matters.

KATHRYN

Did you forget that we had to sublet the entire first floor to an immigrant family just to cover our mortgage?

JAMES

It's called passive income.

KATHRYN

James...we haven't been able to keep up with payments for Splendora's chemotherapy sessions in months.

JAMES

I don't know what you're talking about.

KATHRYN

Stop pretending... I spoke to the hospital. I know that you have been throwing away the medical bills.

JAMES

I thought I'd told you I would take care of it.

KATHRYN

Take care of it? They're going to remove our daughter's Splendor spot from the hospital and stop the cancer treatments if we don't pay off the medical bills.

JAMES

I'm sorry, baby, but you knew that we still can't afford to pay those bills, even if I didn't gamble, you knew that...

KATHRYN

Shut up! Don't you have any ambition!

SPLENDORA walks in.

SPLENDORA

Mom..? Dad..?

KATHRYN

Everything is okay honey, go back to your room. It's late and you have school in the morning.

SPLENDORA exits.

JAMES

Sorry, Kathryn, forgive me. Unless you have any other solutions this is our last hope to pay off our debt.

He opens the door.

KATHRYN

There's no reason we should take this risk.

JAMES

I'm tired of nothingness.

KATHRYN

NO! PLEASE DON'T GO!

JAMES slams the door and leaves.

SCENE 3

The scene starts in a small café. There are people sitting at tables having quiet conversations. KATHRYN and AMAL are sitting at a table together, each holding a mug of coffee.

AMAL

So how is Splendor recovering?

KATHRYN

She's definitely not getting any better. She's always so uncomfortable, throwing up, losing hair... I don't know how much more of this I can take.

AMAL

Khalid has not been getting better either. It's like every day is a new issue. And his treatments just get more and more expensive! I have no idea what to do.

KATHRYN

What are the odds... two moms with sick children living under the same roof.

AMAL

Thank you Kathryn for taking us in. I don't know where we would be if you and James weren't so generous.

KATHRYN

Everybody needs a little help. Also I think it is great for Splendor to have friends.

SCENE 4

MUSA

(thinking)

Lord, this line is long. I hope people don't think I'm rich and try to rob me! Eh, da? *(what's this?)*

A homeless man makes direct contact.

Wallahi anna amut w---- *(I swear I am going to die and----)*.

BANK REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Nassar? Mr. Nassar?

MUSA

Oh, yes, that's me.

BANK REPRESENTATIVE

How can I help you today?

MUSA

I need a social security number.

BANK REPRESENTATIVE

We, unfortunately, don't do that here. However, I can write down the location and number of a federal facility that can assist you with that if that's okay with you.

MUSA

Okay, no problem. Do it.

BANK REPRESENTATIVE

Here you go. I do apologize for any inconvenience.

A beat.

Might I say, you are a good-looking fellow.

MUSA

Thank you.

BANK REPRESENTATIVE

Are you single?

MUSA

I am happily married. Thank you again, but I must go now. Good day.

JAMES

Howdy neighbor, funny seeing you here

MUSA

Oh yes hi, James. What are you doing here?

JAMES

I work security here. So what brings you over here?

MUSA

Oh I came to get my social security card. I gotta pay you your rent somehow. But the lady inside said they don't do that here, she even gave me this paper with the address of where to go.

JAMES

Oh please, you fell for the biggest American lie. They only give social security cards to a select few, duh. Luckily I know the representative, she's a dancer down at the Blue Moon. Dark hair? Cute? About 5'7? D Cup with the name "Jose" on the left side?

MUSA

I- I wasn't looking

JAMES

Suuure you weren't. Listen, I got you, dont worry about it. I'll talk to her and get you that social security card no problemo.

MUSA

Wow, thank you James. I have to go tell Amal

JAMES

Woah Woah Woah hold up there, she isn't gonna do it for free. A little bit of sweet talk isn't gonna do the job, I need to show her some green.

MUSA

Oh okay, right. Well this is what I was gonna use to pay for it. It should cover the cost right?

Hands JAMES the envelope.

JAMES opens it to see \$1000

JAMES

Oh... wow yeah, you'll definitely be getting this card soon enough my friend. Oh and here give me that paper with the address, you don't need it anymore.

He tears the paper.

Aren't you lucky you ran into me?

MUSA
Yes indeed

JAMES
Laughs. Okay now see you later.

Goes into the bank.

SCENE 5

LAYLA

Hey! What are you doing on the rooftop late at night?

SPLENDORA

I was just counting the stars. It's fascinating.

LAYLA

Shall we count them together?

SPLENDORA

Why not? Come here. You alright?

LAYLA

I can't fall asleep because I can't stop thinking about someone. It's silly, I know, but I can't stop thinking about that person.

How about you? Why are you really out here?

SPLENDORA

I needed to get out of the house. I feel like a burden. My parents keep fighting over my medical bills.

LAYLA

Look! A shooting star! Don't let the wish grow old!

SPLENDORA

Do shooting stars really grant wishes?

LAYLA

Yes, but you have to have faith.

SPLENDORA

Faith?

LAYLA

Faith.

A beat.

SPLENDORA

You were very shy when you moved in earlier this summer, I didn't know if you would like hanging out with me.

LAYLA

I felt very lonely at the beginning and I was hoping to get closer to you because you seem so wise.

SPLENDORA

Now we're close and I'm here for you.

LAYLA

I love someone, but I don't want to tell that person directly.

SPLENDORA

Interesting, why not?

LAYLA

That's because I find "I love you" an old-fashioned thing, and honestly, hearing too much of it gets boring.

SPLENDORA

Well, then maybe showing that person that you love them will help.

LAYLA

Thanks, hahaha I can always count on you to give the best of advice. Hey Splendora?

SPLENDORA

Yes, Layla.

LAYLA

We must not allow our sorrow to turn our hearts into something unattractive. We have to prove that survival is beautiful. No matter how tired we are, promise we will run through the storm together.

SPLENDORA

Come here!

They hug.

SPLENDORA

I promise.

SCENE 6

AMAL and MUSA sit in their car.

AMAL

So, Musa, how's the job hunting going?

MUSA

You know how it's going.

AMAL

Why don't you work under the table? This country has good working conditions.

MUSA

You think the working condition in this country is good? That's nonsense shit! Do you even know how these people treat their immigrants workers?!

AMAL

Did you try asking the bank for a loan? Maybe they will sympathize with Khalid's medical condition.

MUSA

If you expect the bank to help a family like ours, you might as well expect money will fall from the sky.

AMAL

But how do we suppose to deal with the bills?! Khalid will die if we don't pay off the medical bills, or are you telling me that our son is tortured by the disease and dies in front of us and we can't do a single thing?!

MUSA

Well, Amal, why don't you zip your mouth and find a way to pay off the bills instead of sitting and complaining about money? I've done anything I can, but.. This is the reality, The effort we put in is useless..

AMAL

Is that so? If you couldn't make it, I would figure out and get the money I needed.

SCENE 7

KHALID

Mom? I've seen you being very busy..Is it because of me?

AMAL

No, Khalid, I'm just...

KHALID

I know mom, you don't need to lie... and I know my health condition.

AMAL

No Honey, you'll be fine, I... I will cure you, I just need more time to get that money..(sniff)

KHALID

It's okay mom, I always feel proud and happy of my family. You guys have done enough for me and I couldn't pay back...I'm sorry. But can I have my last request? I hope you guys can bring my body back to Egypt so that I can return home and feel the belongingness again.

AMAL stands up and slaps KHALID.

AMAL

I do not want to hear that spoken from my son's mouth again, and don't act like death is your choice, you won't die, I promise.

AMAL slams the door and leaves the house.

SCENE 8

LAYLA

Hey, is everything okay? I was in the middle of an at-home pop-quiz.

SPLENDORA
(sobbing)

LAYLA

Splendora, what's wrong?

SPLENDORA

Death is the only adventure I have left.

LAYLA

I don't understand.

SPLENDORA

I went in for a check-up today at the doctor's and the tumor is growing quicker than they previously anticipated.

LAYLA

So, what does that mean? Is chemotherapy still an option?

SPLENDORA

Yes, they want to take a more aggressive approach. I think I'm done.

LAYLA

Done with what exactly splendora?

SPLENDORA

This treatment!

LAYLA

Yeah, life sucks. You don't deserve to have this disease but, it doesn't change the fact you still have it. It sounds like you are giving up and that is something I will never allow you to do. You are allowed to feel tired, to want a break, to scream.

But, You are not allowed to give up. To quiet a storm, you sometimes have to run into it. We promised each other to run through the storm side by side as one.

SPLENDORA

Will the storm pass?

LAYLA

Where there is dark, eventually if you look hard enough you will see light.

SPLENDORA

I know you have a pop-quiz but stay on the phone with me? Just for a little.

LAYLA

Of course.

A beat.

LAYLA

Hey, Splendor?

SPLENDORA

Yes, Layla?

LAYLA

I... I'm gay. I'm sorry. I hate keeping secrets. Especially from you.

SPLENDORA

(Laughs) You're cute when you are nervous. Please, never apologize for being yourself. Not to me, and not to anyone. Your sexuality doesn't change how I feel about you. I still love you and I'm proud of you for coming out!

LAYLA

I'm going to say something and you don't have to respond right away. But I think this needs to be said or I'll just regret it later for not having enough courage to say it. So here it goes...

SPLENDORA

You know you can always talk to me about anything.

LAYLA

I am in love with you. Like when I'm around you it feels like I can be myself free of judgment. When you call it feels like my heart skips a beat. I want you!

SPLENDORA

Layla I can't. I'm sorry!

LAYLA

Yeah, I know it was stupid. I'm sorry I brought it up.

SPLENDORA

It's not stupid. You don't have to apologize.

LAYLA

You're right. I won't apologize for loving you, Splendor. I have been feeling this for quite some time, and I was afraid to tell you. I guess, in a way, I haven't entirely accepted who I am until you once said in a conversation, "There comes a day when you realize happiness is where you are." For so long, I left like something was wrong with me, like I'm broken, or I'm messed up, ugh. But you taught me what it means to love myself unconditionally. I...um...

AMAL

I heard enough. Close the phone now, Layla.

LAYLA

I gotta go.

LAYLA hangs up the phone.

LAYLA

What are you doing in my room?

AMAL

You're gay?

LAYLA

Of course not.

AMAL

Don't lie to me, Layla!

LAYLA

I don't know. Maybe?

AMAL

Are you insane? There is no such thing as being gay. American culture is really rubbing off on you! hUh?

LAYLA

How can you hate who I am so much?

AMAL

I don't hate you; I hate the person you have become. You think this is normal? Because it isn't. Back home, you wanna know what would have happened to you if they ever caught you with the same gender in a romantic way?

LAYLA cries.

AMAL

DEAD! You would have been shot where you stood. I suggest you learn where you came from and check your morals.

LAYLA

What if I can't? What if I love women?

AMAL

Sweetheart, it's not only about love, it's also about our society.

LAYLA

So you're saying the outside people matter the most to you and not my feelings?

AMAL

I'm not ignoring your feelings, all I'm saying is to think twice before making a quick decision. You know your dad won't agree to this.

LAYLA

Would you still love me, mom?

AMAL

...

LAYLA

MOM?

LAYLA continue to cry.

AMAL

...

LAYLA

Society has become so fake that the truth hurts people. My truth. No matter what I do, What I say, who I become, What I look like, I will never be good enough for society. Not even close. You, mother the only person in this world who is supposed

to love me more than anything was left questionable when I asked
if you would still love me if I was gay.

AMAL

Layla, I will never accept you. Ever! You must be normal.

LAYLA

Normal? Mom, Look at me! I am breathing, I can bleed, I can
walk, I can function just like a normal human being. I am
normal!

AMAL

You are not. Go pray.

LAYLA

Perhaps, you should pray the gay out of me. Maybe then would I
be cured of this disgusting virus or disease that left my own
mother disgusted by her own daughter's presence. Excuse me.

LAYLA storms out of the house in tears.

SCENE 9

SPLENDORA
Mom, I'm home.

KATHRYN
Hi, Splendor! Let me take your temperature.

SPLENDORA
Mom! Stop it. I'm fine.

Kathryn
You look pale. Sit down. Dinner is almost ready.

A sudden knock on the door.

SPLENDORA
I'll get it.

She opens the door.

SPLENDORA
Oh my god.

KATHRYN
Who is it? Splendor! Splendor, who is it?

JAMES
I... I would have won! Hi Splen and Kathryn I at a...at a
friends house.

KATHRYN
James are you drunk?

JAMES
NOOOOOOOOOOOO! How could I be drunk, me soberrrrrrr!

SPLENDORA
Dad?

KATHRYN
Listen Splendor, go to your room I will take care of this okay?

JAMES
No! Splendoraaaaaa. Don't go baby!

KATHRYN
Go now Splendor!

SCENE 10

SPLENDORA

Khalid, I want to ask you a serious question.

KHALID

Okay, what? Why did you just change your tone?

SPLENDORA

Have you ever wondered that one day we might leave each other for a certain reason?

KHALID

Why are you suddenly asking that?

SPLENDORA

I don't know. We both have cancer. I mean our survival is pretty low compared to an average healthy person.

KHALID

Maybe so, but we are fighters. We will get through this.

SPLENDORA

Yeah, I guess.

KHALID

Are you giving up?

SPLENDORA is silent.

KHALID

Splendora! Have you really given up on yourself?

SPLENDORA

I don't know. Money is getting tight. I have no idea how long my parents can keep paying for my treatment without going homeless first.

KHALID

We will figure it out. I will figure it out. I'm here Splendora. I'm here and nothing will happen to you okay?

SPLENDORA's phone rings.

KHALID

Who keeps calling you for the millionth time?

SPLENDORA

Layla. She probably wants to hang out.

KHALID

Have you told her about us?

SPLENDORA

Not yet, I don't know How she would react, telling her I am dating her twin brother. How would I even bring it up?

KHALID

She will get over it. I'm tired of hiding our relationship. Tell her Splendor!

SPLENDORA

I will. I will. I have to.

SCENE 11

MUSA bangs on JAMES' door repeatedly. JAMES opens his door smiling.

JAMES

Oh hey man, what's up? Come on in, how's the family?

MUSA

Where is it?

JAMES

Where isss...what?

MUSA

Don't play games with me, James. Where is the social security card that you promised to get for me?! Because of you, I haven't been able to work OR pay my bills. It's been over a month and I need the money back.

JAMES

Woah Woah Woah Relax there friend, everything's taken care of. Listen, how about you go back home, kick your feet up and let this process run its course huh?
(Gestures Musa outside then tries to close his door)

MUSA

NO!

He slams his hand on the door.

MUSA

I came here to get my money back and I'm not leaving until I do!

JAMES

Sigh. Musa, come on man, what is this? You come over to another man's house, I invite you in, and this is how you treat me? This is really unprofessional if you ask me.

MUSA

Bu- But I-

JAMES

Look, how about you go back home to your kid and see if he needs help or anything. And maybe in about...hmm... a week or two you come back? Hey, maybe by then the social security card might be in your mail and you'll be working in no time. Wouldn't that

make the wife happy? You know what they say: A happy wife is a happy blah blah blah, you know how the phrase goes. Right?

MUSA

Enough of your foolery James! I'm calling the police.

He dials.

MUSA

What's all of that?

JAMES

All of what?

MUSA

Fake casino tokens? Duplicate cards? What the hell is this, you gamble James?

JAMES

What? (nervously chuckles) Don't be crazy, they're just to mess with my "fair-weather" friends you know. Hey, how about you give those backs. And would you hang up the damn phone.

MUSA

NO! God, James, you looked straight at my face and told me you were gonna help me out. Or was that the empty bottle of alcohol speaking?

JAMES

Come on man, it doesn't have to be like this. How are you gonna explain to your kids that you sent the father of their ill friend to jail? So just put the phone down.

MUSA

No! Not until you do what's right.

JAMES

Goddammit. Who do you think you are? WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? Huh? Are you my wife or something?

MUSA

No but I'm just like you!

JAMES

Ha! And how so Musa? Huh? Please, enlighten me.

MUSA
Because-

DISPATCHER
911, what's your emergency?

MUSA and JAMES stare at each other in silence.

DISPATCHER
Hello. Is anyone there? What is your emergency?

Musa hangs up the phone.

MUSA
Because I'm a man, James. More importantly I'm a father, just like you, with a family and kid that's suffering while I'm trying to do everything I can...and by the looks of it, so are you.

JAMES
You don't know me man. You don't know how hard this is.

MUSA
Then tell me.

JAMES
I can't.

MUSA
TELL ME!

JAMES
I CAN'T! YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE WAY YOU THINK YOU WOULD!

MUSA
But I do! How long have we known each other for? 6 months? May not be a lifetime, but it doesn't take much to recognize a survivor... a scavenger, like yourself.
Even with your bullshit and that thick skin of yours.

JAMES
Scoffs. The same skin that my wife looks at with tears in her eyes like I'm not the man she read her vows to. But I am... I promise. But I'm trying... I really am. And my girl? Jesus, my beautiful baby girl. I do it all for her you know. I put on this fucking facade like I'm unfazed by everything around me, but in reality I'm more scared than her. How does a father live with

himself knowing that his kid is dying and he has to resort to life like this to save her. Going out every night with fake tokens and cards to con any joker out his money that comes my way. All in the name of keeping my girl alive. "The ends justify the means." That's what I say before I wash down the fear with a bottle of liquor... just...like.. this...

He toasts to himself before almost drowning himself in liquor.

MUSA

Hey, hey, that's enough. Give me the bottle.

He grabs it.

JAMES

AYE give that back it's MINE!

JAMES goes to take the bottle back but MUSA moves it leading to JAMES trips and falls face first. JAMES chuckles to himself then sighs.

JAMES

I'll get you back your money man, I promise. Even if it kills me. But something has to give, we can't keep busting our balls trying to save our kids while drowning in debt. Where do I go from here man?

MUSA

Better question: Where do WE go from here? I mean, any other option would be better than this fucking shit-show

JAMES

Woah! You kiss your mother with that mouth?

MUSA

Only when the kids aren't around

The two share a laugh.

MUSA

But we'll figure out something.

JAMES

Right, because we're the "scavengers" huh?

MUSA

Yes my friend, because we're scavengers.

JAMES

Musa, I think I can trust you. I have this plan, It's a little unorthodox, but I think It can solve both of our problems.

MUSA

What's the plan?

JAMES

Before I tell you, you must agree to work with me.

MUSA

I will work with you, but you must give up the bottle. Deal?

JAMES

Why do you care if I drink?

MUSA

I don't care... But your family does.

JAMES

You've been spending too much time with me. Your comebacks are getting better, fool. Deal, for my family.

SCENE 12

Amal

Kathryn! I'm so glad you could make it, come in! Make yourself at home.

Kathryn

Thanks for having me over! You said you had something you wanted to ask me?

Amal

Yes. I hope this isn't a bad time, I'd hate to interrupt you if you were busy.

Kathryn

Nah, it's all good. I had something that I had to ask you too, so it all works out fine.

Amal

Oh, really? You can ask me your question first if you'd like.

Kathryn

No, no, it's fine, I can wait! What did you wanna ask me?

Amal

(laughs nervously) Well, it's a bit of a hard question to ask, considering we haven't known each other for long...

Kathryn

Alright... what is it?

Amal

So, you know how we had spoken earlier about our kids... my son and your daughter...

Kathryn

(hesitantly) Yeah, what about them?

Amal

Well, the whole money situation has only been getting harder and harder. My husband hasn't been able to get a social security number yet, and I haven't been able to find work anywhere.

Kathryn

Oh... I'm really sorry to hear that, Amal.

Amal

Keeping up with everything has just been so difficult and... I was wondering if you and James would be willing to lower the rent for this month?

An uncomfortable silence washes over the room. Both Kathryn and Amal try to avoid looking at each other, the situation growing more awkward by the second.

Kathryn

Amal, I... goodness, I don't really know how to say this but... James and I had actually been planning to raise the rent starting next month.

Amal

Wait, really?! But why?

Kathryn

He had been talking about bumping it up a little to account for the amenities in the apartment - you know, the paintings and stuff.

Amal

(exasperated) Are you serious?

Kathryn

I'm sorry, there's not much I can do. You'd probably have to discuss the whole thing with James, but I don't know how easy he'll be to convince.

Amal

How much would it be increased by?

Kathryn

...About a couple hundred.

Amal

But- but that's crazy! We're already struggling enough to pay as it is, this is impossible!

Kathryn

I really wish there was something I could do... I'm sorry.

AMAL

There is something you can do! We never knew anything about amenities when you gave us the lease, we shouldn't have to pay for them!

Kathryn
Amal, you knew what you signed up for when you rented out the apartment.

AMAL
Did we? You're taking advantage of us because we're new to this country and we are desperate.

Kathryn
How dare you say something like that about me? We are good people. Why would we do that?

AMAL
Good people? You're raising our rent out of nowhere. You're forcing us to pay for things that we had no idea about... You're the whole reason we're struggling in the first place! Your husband is scamming my husband.

Kathryn
What the hell are you talking about?

AMAL
You don't know?

Kathryn
James never tells me anything!

AMAL
YOUR husband promised MY husband that he will get him his social security card.

Kathryn
Are you kidding?! James *never* makes promises to anyone.

Amal
Maybe he just never makes promises to you.

A beat.

Kathryn
You're right. I can't trust a word he says half the time... He's always running around, hiding things from me, pretending I don't know where he's going at three in the morning... I'm so sick of it. He treats me like I'm stupid, like I don't know anything..

But clearly I don't... All this time and I didn't even have a clue. I've just been so busy, working and taking care of my

daughter, it just... completely flew over my head. But how could I not know, God, how couldn't I see it?!
God, it must be so easy to have a good husband...

Amal

Well, I wouldn't know. Musa hardly tells me anything, unless he's yelling at me. He's always so distant and he never listens to me... he just tells me what to do. He thinks I'm stupid too.

Kathryn

You aren't stupid, you're really smart... and you're clearly devoted to your family. You care about your kids more than anything.

Amal

So do you! You do so much just to keep your daughter happy, let alone healthy. Maybe we're both just... good mothers with bad husbands.

Kathryn

Absolutely.

A beat.

Amal

What are we going to do?

Kathryn

What *can* we do? We don't have that many options.

Amal

We could try... hosting a bake sale?

Kathryn

It's a little cliché, but maybe. We could try starting a charity...

Amal

Ha, maybe we could try robbing a bank...

SCENE 13

At LAYLA's house.

LAYLA sitting on the stairs, as AMAL and MUSA talk in the kitchen.

AMAL

What are going to do with layla?

MUSA

Nothing. There is nothing to do. She is still my little girl. She is old enough to make decisions. Our job is to teach her how to survive this world, not run her life.

AMAL

Let's hope for both our sake, you're right.

MUSA

It's fine. What's that?

AMAL

Oh, that? Ahahaha nothing, Hungry?

MUSA

Ah, okay.

AMAL

Layla, dinner is ready! Layla get down here now!

LAYLA

Where is Khalid?

MUSA

At a friends house.

AMAL

Your dad and I are going to bed, clean dinner up and go to bed. Alright?

MUSA

Good night, habibti!

AMAL

Yes good night darling.

LAYLA
Good night!

As LAYLA cleans the mess from dinner she notices the paper that MUSA previously asked about but, AMAL dismissed.

LAYLA
What's this?

She continues to read, LAYLA begins to realize that it's a bank robbery plan. She notices on the top right-hand corner both KATHRYN and AMAL's signatures.)

LAYLA
No way! This can't be right. Mom? Kathryn? Bank robbery?
... No! NO! It can't be.

She calls SPLENDORA twice before she answers the phone.

SPLENDORA
Layla?

LAYLA
Are you asleep?

SPLENDORA
I'm awake now, what is so important you had to ruin my beauty sleep?

LAYLA
This is going to sound crazy but, you have to believe me.

SPLENDORA
Yes, about that. I'm dating your brother. If I wasn't, I would totally give you a chance.

LAYLA
Dating my brother? I think I threw up a little. Wait, you would have given me a chance? Wait! No, that's not what I was talking about.

SPLENDORA
Then, what? Are you even okay? Sounds like you are in the middle of a mental breakdown.

LAYLA

BECAUSE I AM!!! Okay, here me out I was cleaning dinner and found a bank robbery plan I think orchestrated by both our mothers.

SPLENDORA

Hahahaha, Yeah and I'm a billionaire. But, no! I am so broke I legit have one cent in my bank account, and even that is being generous. Please, Our parents are "those good kids" who never stepped on a bug before, and if they do, they would start crying because they feel bad.

LAYLA

You would be surprised what people would do for a taste of money!

SPLENDORA

I really didn't want to pull the cancer card but, (cough, cough) I feel like I'm seeing stars. I must sleep...now!

LAYLA

Stop playing around. Believe me, trust me! I have proof.

SPLENDORA

Fine. I'll meet you tomorrow after school, Okay?

LAYLA

Okay! Thank you!

A beat.

LAYLA

Splendora?

SPLENDORA is snoring.

LAYLA

Hahahah! Some things never get old.

SCENE 14

(Layla and Splendor walks to Splendor's house)

Layla

Did you do the homework for Mr. T's class?

Splendor

No. I feel like the man has something against me.

Layla

Why do you say that?

Splendor

I have a 40% average in his class. So, I came up with a plan to trick him into giving me a high grade with minimal amounts of homework.

Layla

And?

Splendor

The man is completely heartless.

Layla

What was the plan?

Splendor

Simple, I told him my tumor got bigger and it affects my brain. So, all I could do is sleep all day. I also told him that I am constantly tired and that he should take it easy on me since I could die soon.

Layla

Hahahahah, you're always playing the cancer card. Well?

Splendor

He looked directly into my eyes and told me, "life is full of challenges. You are still alive and you are taking my class. Therefore the work must be completed." It was this day I came to a very important realization - write this down, my dear Layla - all teachers work for the devil!!! They are all heartless and cruel. Sent down by the devil to torment children. Oh, oh that clever bastard.

Layla

Hahahaha! The world isn't as beautiful as it looks. It may seem extraordinary on the outside but, once you take a look inside, you see conflicts and chaos. Life is full of tough choices, isn't it?

(approaches house)

Layla
Here!

Splendora

Is this the bank robbery plan you were going on about last night?

Layla
Yeah.

Splendora

(takes a look at it) If this is a bank robbery plan. Well, they are screwed. This is a terrible plan.

Layla
Seriously, can you be real for a second? Stop fooling around.

Splendora

What? I am being honest, they are going to JAIL! This seems like a child came up with it. Why would they even rob a bank for?

Layla
They are chasing after money. But why?

Splendora

Perhaps they are struggling to pay bills?

Layla

But why rob a bank? There must be a reason. There are so many options. Why a bank robbery?

Splendora

Maybe they don't see any options. They have been struggling to get by for so long they probably lost hope.

Layla

We have to stop them before it's too late!

Splendor

According to this, they plan to rob the bank today at 3.

(Layla panics)

Layla

Selfish. Selfish. THEY ARE SELFISH!!! How could they? How could they think that money is more important than our family?

Regardless of our circumstances we always had each other. What so ironic is these are the same words my father whispered to me.

LAIRS! SELFISH LAIRS! Whenever something happens I smile and hope it gets better. But this time there isn't enough smiling that can make this go away! There isn't any such thing as getting better. Not this time. Why is the world so cruel to me Splendor? What have I done to deserve such pain?

Splendor

As we learned from my cruel experience from Mr. T...

Layla

All teachers are devils?

Splendor

Yes, wait no. I mean yes! Just shut up and listen. I came up with a plan. Yet it failed. What does that mean?

Layla

You can't plan to save your life?

Splendor

No weirdo! And besides, I can plan. The disrespect. Shaking my head. When a plan fails you change the plan not the goal. There is a saying that goes, "Pain will leave once it's done teaching you." you see my dear Layla, your story isn't done yet, merely even a chapter. Take the pain, so it may nourish you. Get up, set a goal, and plan until it succeeds. so, let's do it. Maybe we can get Khalid to help us.

SCENE 15

MUSA and JAMES got out of the car.

JAMES

Here we are, we finally arrive

MUSA

Do we really have to do this? Is this the only way to rescue?
Cuz I feel like we...

JAMES

come on! You kidding? We have been planning for so long and you
are telling you hesitated when we are in front of the bank?

MUSA

But...

JAMES

But what? Can you think of another way to prevent your son dying
in front of your face?

MUSA

You are right, let's do this.

JAMES

Do you have your mask?

MUSA

Yes, it's in my pocket.

JAMES

You're on crowd control. Take this. Don't worry, it's loaded
with blanks. No matter what happens we must remember why we are
doing this. Don't chicken out.

MUSA and JAMES walk into the bank.

AMAL and KATHRYN arrive at the bank.

KATHRYN

So, are you ready?

AMAL

Hell yeah I'm ready, can't expect our men to do something big
for our family, we could only rely on ourselves.

KATHRYN

Here, take this. My husband has these laying around the house, they're dummy guns he uses to play around with his friends.

AMAL

Let's use these masks that I knitted last night.

KATHRYN

Wow these are great. Let's go!

AMAL and KATHRYN enter the bank.

KHALID, LAYLA, and SPLENDORA, arrive at the front of the bank.

SPLENDORA

Here we are, we have to stop them now.

KHALID

Do we even have a plan?

LAYLA

No, but I do have these masks. We don't want our parents seeing us.

SPLENDORA

Layla and I will go in behind our moms, and you guys wait out front in case we need a getaway driver.

KHALID

Okay. Go ahead.

He pulls LAYLA back.

KHALID

Hey, Layla, what's going on with you and Splendora?

LAYLA

What are you talking about? Nothing's going on.

KHALID

I'm not blind, I can tell something's going on between the two of you. You can't hide things from me. We're twins.

LAYLA

I still have no idea what you're talking about.

KHALID

I heard you and mom arguing, and you haven't been the same since.

A beat.

KHALID

You don't have to feel scared to talk to me. Like I said, we're twins. We grew up together. You can tell me anything.

LAYLA

Really?

KHALID

Yeah, really. I promise.

A beat.

LAYLA

I'm gay.

KHALID

Oh my god, sis! I'm so proud of you for coming out! Why didn't you tell me before?

LAYLA

Cuz I have a crush on your girlfriend.

A beat.

KHALID

Oh.

SPLENDORA (off)

Layla, come on!

LAYLA

I have to go. I'm sorry.

KHALID

I -

LAYLA and SPLENDORA ENTER THE BANK.

KHALID

Layla, wait!

SCENE 16

JAMES kicks the door in.

JAMES
EVERYBODY GET DOWN NOW, THIS IS ROBBERY!

James jumps on top of the teller station.

JAMES
Hey gorgeous, do me a favor don't say a word and don't try any funny business. Just put the money in the bag. Not the first register, I know the first register triggers the alarm, take the money from the other registers. Come on baby, I know you can be faster than that. Hey Camelback, How's everything going on your end?!

MUSA
Camel-back? Why did you call me that?

JAMES
It's a codename so we don't blow our cover.

MUSA
Ok, I get it. I will call you Ass man.

JAMES
Why Ass man?

MUSA
Because your half asshole and half man.

The women burst in from the staircase

KATHRYN
PUT YOUR HANDS UP! THIS IS... a robbery?

JAMES
Who the hell are you guys?

James points his gun back at them

AMAL
Who said we were guys?

KATHYRN
Typical men! Always talking out of their ass.

JAMES

Jesus give me a break! You're starting to sound like my wife.

KATHRYN

Keep filling up those bags sweetheart, you're doing a great job.

MUSA

Listen, we got here first so why don't you go find yourselves another bank, because this one's ours.

JAMES

Either you leave or may death do us part.

KATHRYN

James? Is that you?

JAMES

Kathryn?

MUSA

Assman, what is going on here?

AMAL

Musa?

MUSA

Habibi? What are you doing here?

AMAL

You told me to come up with something... seems like we had the same idea

MUSA

Well I always did say you look good in black

Amal

And so do you

JAMES

Wait, you can tell that's your wife in the mask?

MUSA

Of course, she's worn all sorts of costumes for me

Amal hits him on the arm.

JAMES

Alright then, people. We know what we came here to do.

Splendora and Layla burst through the door.

LAYLA

STOP! You don't have to do this!

MUSA

Layla, what in the world are you doing here?

LAYLA

Dad?

JAMES

Splendora, the doctor ordered you to be on bed rest. Do you know how dangerous it is for you to be here?

LAYLA

Bed rest? You never told me anything about that.

SPLENDORA

That's not important right now. Please, I know that you feel you need to rob the bank to pay for our medical bills. But I promise to you it's not worth it (cough)... it's... it's not (cough)...
worth

Falls on the floor coughing

LAYLA

Hey Splend, get up, are you okay?

KATHRYN

Hey baby, mommy's right here. James, help me pick her up. We gotta take her to the hospital.

SPLENDORA *Continues to cough to the point that blood comes out.*

LAYLA

Oh my god, is that blood!

JAMES

She's getting worse, we need to leave NOW.

ENTER KHALID

KHALID

Yo! What's taking so long?

LAYLA

Khalid, I thought we told you to stay in the car?!

KHALID

You do realize that at the rate that you're going you're going to get caught. We need to get the fuck out of here before the cops come.

MUSA

We need to get Splendor to the hospital!

KHALID

Yo what happened to my Splend!

AMAL

She's fine, son. Let's get going!

KHALID

Alright! Where's the money?

JAMES

Forget the money, we have to go now!

KHALID

I'm not leaving without the money. We didn't do this for no reason. We came so far let's finish the job.

JAMES

Let's go out the back. We'll take the employee elevator.

KHALID

You guys go. I'll grab the money and I'll meet you at the elevator.

We hear running.

They come rushing down the hallway.

An elevator ding.

JAMES

COME ON! LET'S GO GET IN!

They all enter the elevator to escape.

An alarm rings.

Khalid runs to the elevator.

JAMES
WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU JUST DO!?

KHALID
Did you? For a second did you think you could walk away from the money to help your daughter? Did you forget the reason that you came here in the first place? You left one of the registers filled with cash.

JAMES
You little shit. That register was connected to the alarm and you triggered it. Now the cops is gonna be all over our ass.

MUSA
Alright, everybody just calm down.

KATHRYN
Calm down?! Don't you see what's going on around us? My daughter is dying on the floor, and we're all holding money stolen from a bank, stuck in this elevator until the police come to take us away!

KHALID
How would I know the register was connected to the alarm?!

LAYLA
Well if you stayed in the car like we told you to, we wouldn't be here right now!

SPLENDORA
(weakly)
Why did you leave the car?

KHALID
Because of you! Because of me! Because I was trying to prevent exactly what's happening now. Layla doesn't understand that this was the right thing for us -- she doesn't love you like I do.

LAYLA
Splendora and I have been friends for longer than you've been together.

KHALID
So what if you've been friends longer? There's no time frame when it comes to love.

LAYLA

You've been together for like two weeks. You don't know what love is.

KHALID

Okay, and you do? Splendora and I are bonded together through our suffering, we know each other more than you can ever understand.

LAYLA

Maybe so, but I've stood by her by her happiest and worst moments.

KHALID

You-

AMAL

Enough! This is not the time for this nonsense! We have a situation at hand. You both know nothing about love. America has had an impact on you.

MUSA

James, is there any other way to get out of here?

JAMES

I'm thinking. There's only one way this ends.

A beat.

JAMES

This is how it's gonna go. You all take the elevator to the second floor. In the west wing there's a security room. Take these keys.

He tosses MUSA his keys.

JAMES

Go inside. There's a door that leads to a hallway. It'll let you out a block away from here. Once you get through, don't look back. Take her straight to the hospital.

He grabs KHALID.

JAMES

Khalid, if my baby dies, I'm coming for you.

AMAL

What are you going to do?

KATHRYN

He'll be right behind us. Right?

JAMES doesn't respond.

KATHRYN

Right?!

JAMES

You know this is where my story ends.

The elevator dings. The door opens.

JAMES

We're here. Everybody out.

KATHRYN

No, no! I'm not leaving you.

JAMES

This is how I atone for everything I put you all through.

KATHRYN

But you'll go to prison!

JAMES

No. I'll just distract them. Don't worry, I'll get away, and as soon as I do, I'll meet you at the hospital. Now go!

We hear them all exit. The elevator doors close.

SCENE 17

The group rushes into the hospital.

KHALID
We need a doctor!

LAYLA
Excuse me, are you a nurse?

NURSE
Yes. What's wrong?

KATHRYN
My daughter is coughing up blood. She needs to see a doctor.

SPLENDORA COUGHS!

NURSE
It could be internal bleeding. We need to run some tests to make sure she doesn't need surgery. You just wait in the waiting room, we'll come get you if necessary.

SPLENDORA gets wheeled away.

LAYLA
Dad, look at that! On the news!

MUSA
Excuse me, can we turn that up please?

WE HEAR THE TELEVISION.

NEWSCASTER
Breaking News! An armed gunman has been apprehended outside of the Central City Bank. Authorities have identified him as James Cornfield, an security employee at the bank. Witnesses say there were other masked intruders, but Mr. Cornfield says he worked alone. At this time, there are no other suspects.

AMAL
Kathryn...

The NURSE comes back in.

NURSE

She's lost a lot of blood. Are any of you relatives of hers?

KATHRYN

She's my daughter.

NURSE

Okay ma'am. What blood type is she?

KATHRYN

She's O-.

NURSE

Okay, come with me. You're the same blood type?

KATHRYN

Her father is, but...

LAYLA

I'm O-.

A beat.

NURSE

Okay. It's a lot of blood. Are you going to be okay with that?

LAYLA

Yes, of course.

NURSE

Well, if you're under 18, we'll need your parents' approval.

LAYLA

Mom? Dad?

MUSA

I don't know. It sounds dangerous.

LAYLA

Please? Mom, you know how much I love her.

AMAL

You have my blessing.

KHALID

You're so brave, sis. I wish I could be the one to do this, but since I can't, I'm glad it's you.

LAYLA
Really?

KHALID
I admire what you're doing. I can see how much you love her. And
right now, she needs you more than she needs me.

LAYLA
So dramatic, bro. I'll see you guys after.

NURSE
We have to hurry. Come with me.

SCENE 18

THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE SOUNDS FAINT AND DISJOINTED.

DOCTOR 1

Hand me the autologist tube.

BEEP

DOCTOR 2

She's lost too much blood already!

BEEP

DOCTOR 1

Come on, come on stay with me. Where the hell is that tube
I asked for?!

BEEP

DOCTOR 2

WE'RE LOSING HER!

BEEP!BEEP!BEEP!

DOCTOR 1

I NEED A SUTURE, NOW!

BEEP!BEEP!BEEP!

DOCTOR 2

There's nothing more we can do

DOCTOR 1

NO! We have to try!

DOCTOR 2

It's over.

BEEP...BEEP...BEEEEEEP.

SCENE 19

SPLENDORA's hospital bed. KHALID enters.

SPLENDORA

Haha! Okay, layla come out! I know you put him up to this.
Layla? Layla?

Khalid

Splendora! She is gone!

Splendora

Khalid I know you are messing around. How long do you plan on
keeping this up? AHAHAH! Can't fool the joker!

Khalid

I'm not lying dammit. She is dead! Wake up! She is dead, I'm
sorry.

Splendora

No, No I don't care what you say. Impossible. She can't be dead.
She isn't dead. I just saw her, she was fine. She is fine.

Pause

Stop looking at me like that. Like, I'm crazy. Like I'm glass,
about to break at any second. Like, something is wrong with me.

Screams

Layla! I hate you! I hate you for leaving me! I hate you! I
hate you for making me feel this. I hate you for loving me!

Khalid

No, you don't. Or else you wouldn't be feeling like someone
crushed your heart.

Why are you getting up? You're weak! Your body can't handle
this. Lay back down!

Splendora

I want to see her! Let me see her! Why are you forcing to seat
down? Let me go, let me go khalid. If you don't let me walk out
of here, we are over. Do you hear me? OVER!

Khalid

Look at me, this isn't your fault! Don't blame yourself.

Splendora

How could I not? She died because of ME. How can I ever face myself in the mirror knowing I killed the person I loved the most in this world?

Khalid

You didn't kill her, it was an accident. We will get through this!

Splendora

We? There is no WE. It is Me and Layla. We were going to get through the storm together with our hands tightly gripping one another, with a big smile. Oh, oh, oh this hurts. This hurts so damn bad.

Khalid

What hurts?

Splendora

Everything hurts. It hurts to speak. It hurts to move. It hurts to breathe. I want my LAYLAAAAA!

Khalid

Come here!

Splendora

NO! NO! Let me go!

Khalid

No! I am not letting go, so stop resisting.

Splendora

Cries

I want Laylaaaaa!(sniff) Please, bring me Layla! I want Layla. I need her!(sniff x3)

Khalid

Splendora I know it hurts, but Layla is here. She's here! Looking over you! In your heart. Your glamorous memories. Everything is going to be alright.

Splendora

I want my chemo pills. Give me it.

Khalid
Okay. Here!

Pause

Wait, what are you doing? Why are you taking so much pills?
Splendora, don't do this. Put the pills down.

Splendora
Just let me go! We'll meet again soon. If you take another step,
khalid I promise you I will empty this bottle!

Khalid
Now, wait. You don't have to do this.

Splendora
I will see her when I fall asleep. I'm going to be united with
the person I love. We are going to do things we never got to do,
without caring about what people think or money. We will be
free! I'm going to see layla!

Khalid
I know you miss layla. But she's here! Layla may have died
giving you her blood, and that is because she loves you! When
the doctors asked her to give up some blood, she didn't give it
a second thought. That's because, she wants you to live on. For
the both of yall. Don't allow her death to be in vain. Give me
the pills Splen!

Splendora
Live on for the both of us?

Khalid
Shhhhh! Lay down!

whispers

Yes. Live on! Make her proud splen. She will watch you become
the woman you are met to be one day.

Pause

Shhhhh!

Pause

I will be here when you wake up.

Splendora

S-she is here. (her voice fades before she slept.)