

_THE VOICE

Written by

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"What if a lovely, young woman who has been horribly
brutalized doesn't know her terrible ordeal has ended
tragically?"

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FADE IN:

EXT. NIGHT

A single house on a residential street. It is the Christmas holidays. A little snow is covering the decorated houses and the ground.

INT. NIGHT

A large group of people dressed in black are gathered together. A tall, dark-haired, dark-eyed, lovely, young woman stands and watches as the people chat with one another. She smiles at some children who are playing.

A few people stand near the young woman by a small table, looking at a photograph. It is a picture of the young woman. A tall, lean, middle-aged man speaks somberly.

MAN

That's a nice picture of Traya.
Isn't it?

A medium-height, young, brown-skinned woman is standing next to the man. She is smiling, but it is a sad smile as she replies sorrowfully.

WOMAN

Yes, it is. I believe it was taken
just a few months ago.

Traya looks at her photograph and speaks.

TRAYA

I was so happy that day. It was
Tanda's birthday. She turned seven
years old.

Traya turns around and looks at the children again. As she does she speaks to the two people standing next to her.

TRAYA (CONT'D)

Laycock is a small town. It's good
to see my family members, and
friends together under my roof. But
I don't see Tanda anywhere. It's
strange that she isn't playing with
the other children. Something must
be wrong.

Traya hears a mysterious, female voice speaking to her.

THE VOICE (O.S.)
Come on, Traya. It's time for us to
leave.

Traya looks around but doesn't see the woman who is speaking to her.

TRAYA (V.O.)
That voice is familiar to me. I'd
heard it before. Yet, like before,
I couldn't see who it was.

Traya softly answers the voice.

TRAYA (CONT'D)
Just a little while longer.

Traya looks toward the stairs. Then makes her way up the stairs past the guests.

INT. NIGHT--BEDROOM

Traya stands in the room looking at a little, dark-haired, dark-eyed girl, who is laying across her bed. The child is upset, and sobbing softly.

Traya walks over to the bed, and sits down next to the child. She gently speaks to the little girl curiously.

TRAYA
Tanda, honey, what's wrong?

Tanda stops sobbing as she dries her eyes with the back of her hand. She sits up on the bed next to Traya. With a couple of left over sniffles she smooths out her dress.

Traya puts her arm around Tanda's shoulders. She tenderly kisses Tanda on her forehead, and speaks to her in a comforting voice.

TRAYA (CONT'D)
Everything is going to be alright,
sweetie. Why don't we go back
downstairs?

Tanda looks toward the ceiling. She sadly speaks, barely above a whisper.

TANDA
Okay, Mommy.

Traya hears the strange female voice again, urging her.

THE VOICE (O.S.)
We must go now, Traya.

Traya looks around, but again she sees no one. She ignores the voice as she and Tanda leave the room together.

INT. NIGHT--LIVING ROOM

A middle-aged, well-dressed, somber, little man arrives. An average-height, dark, middle-aged woman walks up to him. She extends her hand to him in greeting.

WOMAN
How are you this evening, Jason?

They shake hands. Jason speaks sadly forcing a smile.

JASON
I'm doing fine, Mrs. Norris. But how are you in this tragically dark hour?

There is sadness in Mrs. Norris's voice.

MRS. NORRIS
I'll get through this. What choice do I have?

Mrs. Norris turns to the people in the house, and speaks.

MRS. NORRIS (CONT'D)
Excuse me, everyone. Jason Whims is here. Let's get ready to go to the church.

Mrs. Norris gives Jason Whims a sheet of paper as the people get ready to leave.

MRS. NORRIS (CONT'D)
Here is the list of names of family members for the cars, Jason. They're listed according to the closest relatives then friends.

The people in the house form a line, as Jason Whims calls out their names from the list. Traya looks at Mrs. Norris.

TRAYA (V.O.)
My mother's name is, Diana. I knew the routine well. It was the way my family did things for a funeral in her time. She liked doing things the old way. The funeral was held

at night, and the burial would be held on the following morning.

Diana Norris is at the head of the line with Traya, and Tanda. She starts to sob softly. Traya puts her arm around Diana's shoulders.

TRAYA (CONT'D)

Oh, Mom, please don't cry. You have to be strong.

A tall, dark-skinned, young woman speaks to Diana.

WOMAN

I know it must be terrible for you right now, Diana. But you'll be okay.

Diana dabs at the tears in her eyes with a handkerchief. She nods her head. Traya looks at the woman who spoke to Diana.

TRAYA (V.O.)

Claudia is my oldest brother Connell's wife. She always had a sweet spirit. It was something highly appreciated at a time like this.

EXT. NIGHT

Traya gets into Jason Whims' black limousine with Diana and Tanda. Everyone else gets into their designated cars. The procession begins following behind Jason Whim's car.

It starts to rain slightly. Traya looks out of the car window during the procession. Her mind begins to wander.

TRAYA (V.O.)

My father died of Pneumonia earlier this year. His sister, my Aunt Beiela, was number two not long afterward. I always heard a rumor that Death came to a family in threes. If that's true, I wondered who would be next in our family to leave us.

Traya listens as Diana sorrowfully begins talking to Jason through teary eyes. Tanda sits quietly but sadly.

DIANA

My husband and I had four children. My daughter and I have always been close, since she is the only girl.

Traya looks at Diana and smiles tenderly. Jason looks briefly into the rear view mirror, as he speaks compassionately.

JASON WHIMS

I can certainly understand, Mrs. Norris. I have three children, and they're all girls.

DIANA

We were so proud of Traya when she graduated from college, being the first one to ever do it.

Traya smiles as she looks at Diana, and speaks to her with surprise.

TRAYA

Thanks, Mom. You never told me how proud you were of me.

Diana looks at Traya. She half-smiles as she dabs at the tears in her eyes with her handkerchief.

DIANA

Traya always wanted to make something of herself. The last thing on her mind was marriage. She wasn't like me. Me and her father got married right out of high school.

Traya looks at Diana and speaks matter-of-factly to her.

TRAYA

Mom, you know I didn't want to marry Ashly. He's a good looking guy. But he has a problem with his hands, always beating me up. I got tired of it and so did you.

Diana speaks almost angrily through her sadness.

DIANA

Tanda was five years old when she got out of that terrible relationship. She never needed that bastard in the first place. But she wouldn't listen to me when I tried to tell her that.

The Undertaker looks briefly into the rear view mirror again, and speaks solemnly.

JASON WHIMS

I'd have to agree with your daughter about getting out of a horrible mess like that, Mrs. Norris. Life is too short to put up with that nonsense. But you know how children are. They think they know more than we do.

Traya looks at Jason and speaks to him with seriousness.

TRAYA

Believe me, I did figure it out for myself. After I ended it with Ashly I didn't hear from him for almost a year. I should've known he wouldn't go away quietly, like a man.

Diana looks at Traya then at Jason. She speaks to Jason in a choking voice, holding back tears.

DIANA

Your children can be so hard-headed. Why is that?

Jason looks briefly into the rear view mirror at Diana, and speaks.

JASON WHIMS

I guess we were the same way, Mrs. Norris. We were young once.

Diana lets the tears roll down her cheeks again as she hugs Tanda. Her voice is very sad as she continues to speak.

DIANA

Your kids just don't grasp the fact that you can see farther down the road than they can.

JASON WHIMS

That's so true, Mrs. Norris. It's a shame that when they do, it's usually too late.

Diana begins to sob softly again. Traya tries to comfort her.

TRAYA

Oh, Mom, it'll be alright.

EXT. NIGHT--CHURCH

The procession arrives at the church. Everyone gets out of their cars. They form a line at the door of the church before entering the building.

There are people standing outside in front of the church, sobbing softly and talking. Traya remains outside with them.

INT. NIGHT--CHURCH--FUNERAL

The church is crowded with mourners. Family members and friends of the deceased person enter the building. They form a line in the middle aisle to view the body at the front of the church.

People are sobbing softly as family members, and friends file past the body in the coffin.

After viewing the body, the family members and friends sit down in empty, reserved pews at the front of the church.

EXT. NIGHT--FRONT OF THE CHURCH

Traya stands in front of the church next to a lovely, young, red-haired woman with blue eyes who is sobbing softly as she speaks to a tall, lean, dark-complexioned man.

WOMAN

Our job wasn't an easy one. So we helped each other a lot. I just don't understand how something like this could've happened, Eddie. I hope they catch that rotten, no-good bastard, and give him the death sentence for what he did.

Eddie replies sadly in a choking voice.

EDDIE

As a Mail Carrier I get to know a lot of people on my route. We talked when I delivered the mail. I know what you mean, Myrna. How could something so terrible happen to someone so nice?

Eddie shakes his head sorrowfully in disbelief. He, Myrna and others get ready to go back inside the church. Traya follows them.

INT. NIGHT--CHURCH--FUNERAL

Traya sits down in a pew near her family members. People are still filing past the body in the casket. Traya looks at all of the flowers, and smiles. She whispers to herself.

TRAYA

The flowers are beautiful. I was hoping someone would notice how nicely I was dressed.

Traya overhears two female mourners sitting behind her, whispering to each other. She doesn't look to see who they are.

MOURNER #1 (O.S.)

I'm glad, for the family's sake, that the scars on her body can't be seen.

Traya is confused.

TRAYA (V.O.)

Scars? Why would she have scars on her body?

MOURNER #2 (O.S.)

Undertakers can do wonders with makeup you know. Minerva Westin is a great Beautician, too. Her hair looks wonderful. Don't you think?

MOURNER #1 (O.S.)

Oh yes. Minerva does a beautiful job on people's hair, whether they're living or dead. Jason's been using her for years.

Traya hears the familiar female voice again. The woman speaks urgently to Traya.

THE VOICE (O.S.)

Traya, please. We've got to leave.

Traya ignores the voice. The rest of the people stop filing past the casket, and take their seats.

Jason Whims comes to the microphone and makes an announcement to the congregation.

JASON WHIMS

We will have a selection now by Miss Ally Bascombe. She has a beautiful voice, and is a good friend of the family. She's going to sing the decease's favorite hymn, Ave. Maria.

Traya is a little surprised.

TRAYA (V.O.)
That's my favorite hymn, too, and
I'm not even Catholic.

A short, stout, middle-aged woman walks to the front of the church. She takes the microphone from Jason Whims, and begins to sing. When she is finished singing she gives the microphone back to Jason Whims, and takes her seat.

Jason Whims covers the face of the body in the casket with a handkerchief. Then he speaks to the people in the congregation.

JASON WHIMS
We will now have the Eulogy by
Reverend Carl Marsh. He has known
the decease's family for many
years.

A tall, stout, gray-haired Pastor steps into the pulpit. He begins to give the Eulogy. There is much sadness in his voice as he speaks.

REVEREND CARL MARSH
Good evening, brothers and sisters.
Mr. Whims is right. I've had dinner
with the family of the deceased so
many times I stopped counting them.
There is nothing I can think of to
say in order to give the family
some comfort in this terribly, dark
hour just two days before
Christmas. But I'll do my best.

Traya doesn't hear Reverend Marsh anymore. Her mind begins to wander again, and her thoughts sadden her.

TRAYA (V.O.)
I couldn't help thinking about my
life suddenly, especially about my
past.

INT. DAY--LIVING ROOM--DIANA'S HOUSE--FLASHBACK

Traya, Tanda and two tall, handsome, young men, one with dark hair and one with light hair, are visiting with Diana. They sit around the room, talking. Tanda is sitting on the floor watching television.

Traya whispers something to Diana that upsets her.

She looks at Traya as if she has lost her mind. Then she looks at the dark-haired, young man and speaks.

DIANA

Connell, you and Mark won't believe what your sister just told me.

The two men look at Diana then at Traya. The dark-haired, young man speaks apprehensively.

CONNELL

Please don't tell me what I think it is, Mom.

The other young man with the light hair speaks soberly.

MARK

Yeah, me either, Mom. I really don't think I want to know.

Diana looks at Traya again. She is a little peeved as she speaks.

DIANA

Why don't you tell your brothers what you just told me, Tray. I can't wait to see their reaction.

Traya hesitates as Diana and her two brothers look at her, waiting. She looks at them warily as she speaks.

TRAYA

I'm thinking of re-kindling the relationship I had with Ashly. After all, he is Tanda's father.

Connell and Mark are stunned. Then they become angry as they speak to Traya.

CONNELL

What? Are you kidding me, Tray?

MARK

Did you forget how many times you've had to hold us back from killing that sucker, Tray? I can't believe what I'm hearing.

DIANA

I understand exactly how you feel. I can't wait for Marvine to hear this. He's your youngest brother, Traya, and he'll be just as angry and upset as we are.

Traya speaks trying to reassure them.

TRAYA

I understand how you all must feel.
I really do.

DIANA

Do you, Traya? I can't understand
why you would want to be bothered
with a man like that.

Traya tries to be convincing as she speaks. It is as if she
is trying to convince herself, too.

TRAYA

I think he's changed, Mom.

Diana is flabbergasted as she speaks to Traya angrily.

DIANA

A man like that never changes,
Traya, never! You're making a
terrible mistake, and it's one
you'll regret.

CONNELL

I couldn't agree more.

Traya is still trying to be convincing.

TRAYA

Everything is going to be okay, you
guys.

MARK

You can't believe that, Tray. The
guy is what he is, a woman-beater.
You won't wake up until he damn
near kills you.

Diana's anger softens as she speaks to Traya.

DIANA

You don't have to listen to us,
Traya. But I'm far wiser than you
are, and I can see down the road
much further than you can. You
don't need that monster in your
life, and neither does Tanda. Ashly
certainly isn't worth any of your
brothers going to jail for, and you
know it.

Connell becomes more angry. He speaks to Traya in a
threatening tone of voice.

CONNELL

I don't give a damn about jail. If he hurts you again, Tray, I'm going to kill his ass.

Mark has a smirk on his face as he looks at Traya, and speaks.

MARK

You can count on me, too.

INT. NIGHT--KITCHEN--TRAYA'S HOUSE

Traya is sitting at her kitchen table waiting. A worried look comes across her face. She looks at the clock on the wall. It is nine o'clock.

She gets up, and starts to put away everything she cooked for dinner.

Tanda is in the living room watching television, and playing with her toys. Traya stands in the kitchen entrance, and lovingly speaks to Tanda, smiling a half-smile.

TRAYA

Tanda, honey, turn off the television and get ready for bed. It's getting late.

Tanda looks at Traya and smiles. She speaks softly to Traya.

TANDA

Okay, Mommy.

Tanda gets up and walks over to Traya. She and Traya hug each other, then kiss each other gently on the cheek. Traya watches as Tanda leaves the room.

INT. NIGHT--LIVING ROOM

Traya sits down on the sofa. She is a little nervous as she starts smoking a cigarette. The worried look comes upon her face again.

TRAYA (V.O.)

Ashly moved in with Tanda and I. Things had been nice between us for a long time. He promised me he would never touch another drop of whiskey. He was mean, pugnacious and cruel when he was drinking. He wouldn't stop until he was drunk and out of control. I was starting

to get a familiar daunting feeling
in my gut. One that hadn't been
there in a long time.

Traya nervously looks at the clock on the wall again. It is almost nine thirty.

TRAYA (V.O.)(CONT'D)
He should've been home hours ago.
Something in the back of my mind
told me to take Tanda and leave. I
don't know why I didn't do it.

INT. NIGHT--BEDROOM

Traya nervously lays in bed looking up at the ceiling. She is unable to sleep. She looks at her bed side clock. It is after midnight.

TRAYA (V.O.)
I was too scared to go to sleep. I
didn't know what to expect when
Ashly came home.

Traya hears Ashly enter the house. He enters the room. He is a tall, good-looking, muscular man who is fair-skinned with dark-brown, crew-cut hair.

Ashly is drunk. His voice is slurred as he nastily speaks to Traya.

ASHLY
Where's my baby girl? I feel like
playing with her.

Traya is still nervous as she sits up in the bed. She pleads with Ashly.

TRAYA
No, Ashly. It's past midnight.
Tanda has been asleep for
hours. Please don't wake her up.

Ashly snarls at Traya hatefully.

ASHLY
Who do you think you're talking to,
bitch? That's my kid, and I'll wake
her up if I want to.

Ashly turns to leave the room. Traya hurriedly gets out of bed. She tries to keep Ashly from going to Tanda's bedroom to awaken her.

She puts her hand to his chest. He becomes enraged as he violently pushes her away from him.

ASHLY (CONT'D)

Take your filthy hands off me, you lousy bitch! I'll kill you!

Traya becomes frightened, but insists on Ashly not disturbing Tanda.

TRAYA

No, Ashly! You're drunk, so leave Tanda alone, please.

Ashly speaks more hatefully, and sarcastically to Traya.

ASHLY

Leave Tanda alone, huh? Who do you think you're talking to, bitch?!

Ashly suddenly balls up his fist, and punches Traya hard in her face. She falls to the floor, dazed and stunned. Ashly begins to pummel Traya with his fists as she lays on the floor, screaming.

Then he jumps on Traya's head and chest with both of his feet. Soon she is unconscious.

TRAYA (V.O.)

Someone heard my horrible screams, and called the Police.

Police break into the front door, and enter Traya's bedroom. They are horrified when they see her bloody body on the floor. They handcuff Ashly, and angrily shove him from the room.

Another Police Officer is carrying Tanda. She is sobbing softly. The Officer looks at Tanda, and speaks to her calmly.

POLICE OFFICER

It was very brave of you, sweetie, to call the Police for your Mommy like that.

INT. NIGHT--AMBULANCE

Traya is in an ambulance. Paramedics use equipment to try to revive her. A short, dark-haired, green-eyed, female Paramedic is concerned for Traya.

She is very upset as she speaks to the other Paramedic who is a man. He is tall, lean and handsome.

FEMALE PARAMEDIC

My, God! I don't know if this woman
is going to make it to the
hospital.

The male Paramedic is also concerned for Traya as he
examines her. He speaks angrily.

MALE PARAMEDIC

That animal should be put
underneath the jail cell. This
woman has three cracked ribs, two
swollen, black eyes and as far as I
can tell a severe concussion.

FEMALE PARAMEDIC

Her chest has been caved in, too.
Oh, dear God.

Another young, male Paramedic drives as fast as he can to
the hospital. They arrive there in minutes.

INT. DAY--HOSPITAL

Traya has regained consciousness, and is laying in a
hospital bed. She has tubes in her body everywhere. Her room
number is 333.

Her head is bandaged and she can barely speak. The Police
and her family are there. The Police Officers are two dark,
young men who were at Traya's house the night before.

One of the officers speaks to Traya sternly.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Traya, we want you to press charges
against Ashly Trumble. We can keep
him locked up for what he did to
you.

Tears begin to run down the sides of Traya's swollen face.
She is frightened and traumatized. Connell, Mark and another
young, tall, dark, muscular man are there with Diana.

All of them have tears in their eyes as they look at Traya.
They are very angry. Traya speaks with difficulty to the
officer.

TRAYA

I-I'm s-so scared he'll kill me.
I'm just s-so scared.

Traya sobs harder. The other Police Officer tries to calmly
reassure her.

POLICE OFFICER #2
 You don't need to be afraid, Traya.
 We can keep this creep locked up,
 if you'll help us.

Diana holds back tears as she speaks soothingly to Traya,
 caressing what can be seen of her hair.

DIANA
 Tray, please say you'll press
 charges this time. He can never do
 this to you again. He'll go to
 jail.

Traya slightly shakes her head 'no'. Diana begins to sob
 softly as she puts her arms around Traya. Traya's brothers
 angrily leave the room.

The other officer speaks softly to Diana.

POLICE OFFICER #1
 Mrs. Norris, if Traya doesn't press
 charges against that bug our hands
 are tied.

Diana continues to try to persuade Traya.

DIANA
 Please, Traya, please. This monster
 has to be stopped. What about
 Tanda?

Traya shakes her head again, slightly. She is very
 frightened. The Police Officers look at Traya, shake their
 heads and leave the room.

INT. DAY--HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

One of the police officers is on the telephone.

OFFICER (O.S.)
 (on the phone)

Seventh Precinct. Officer Rhodes
 speaking.

POLICE OFFICER #2
 (on the phone)

What can we do, Arnold? We can't
 get her to press charges. It's a
 damn shame but we have to let him
 go, the son of a bitch!

OFFICER (O.S.)
(on the phone)

There's nothing we can do, Mack.
Let's hope she comes to her senses.

INT. DAY--TRAYA'S HOUSE--BEDROOM

Ashly is laying in bed asleep. There is blood from Traya everywhere.

Connell, Mark and the other young man enter the room. They stand over Ashly looking down at him, angrily. Then they wake him.

CONNELL
Wake up, you son of a low-life
whore!

Ashly opens his eyes and sees Traya's brothers. He becomes terrified! The three of them begin to beat Ashly to a bloody pulp as he screams.

When they are done beating Ashly he is unconscious, laying on the floor. His face hardly looks human anymore. The other young man walks over to the telephone. He picks it up and dials 9-1-1.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
(on the phone)

9-1-1. What is your emergency?

He angrily speaks into the telephone receiver.

OTHER YOUNG MAN
(on the phone)

Yeah. My name is Marvine Norris.
There's some trash to be taken out
over here at 1124 Dauphine Street.
It's in the master bedroom. You
better hurry up if you want to find
it still breathing.

Marvine hangs up the phone. Connell hawks and spits on Ashly. He speaks angrily.

CONNELL
I hope you die right there, you
piece of dog shit.

The three brothers angrily roll their eyes at Ashly as they leave the room.

EXT. DAY--TRAYA'S HOUSE

Connell, Mark and Marvine are sitting on Traya's front stoop. They are still very angry and upset. The Police and an ambulance arrive at the house.

The same two Police Officers who were at the hospital arrive on the scene. They enter the house and soon come back outside. Paramedics go into the house.

Minutes later they come back out with Ashly on a stretcher, and place him in the ambulance. They drive off with the siren on.

The Police Officers speak to Connell, Mark and Marvine. They are smiling at the brothers.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Good job, fellas. Why don't you go on home now?

POLICE OFFICER #2

Yeah. I'd say that bastard won't be beating up anybody else for quite some time. We're looking at a good three or four weeks in the hospital, if he makes it. Maybe more than that, hopefully.

Mark looks at the officers and speaks angrily to them.

MARK

Most of it will be in the Intensive Care Unit, believe me.

Connell looks at the officers and speaks angrily to them.

CONNELL

He better not come near my sister again, or I'm going to kill him for sure. If you want to lock me up for that, Officer, be my guest because I mean it.

The Police Officers have smirks on their lips as they look at the brothers. One of the officers speaks angrily to Connell.

POLICE OFFICER #1

From what I saw of your sister, my friend, I hope he dies on the way to the hospital. I had a sister who was in the same kind of situation.

I was sixteen years old at the time, and she was nineteen.

Thank God she got out of it. She needed a lot of help to get away from him, but she did it. She's the reason I became a cop.

Marvine speaks angrily through clenched teeth.

MARVINE

With our luck that son of a bitch will keep breathing.

The Police Officers shake Connell's, Mark's and Marvine's hands. Then they get into their police car and drive off.

INT. DAY--BEDROOM--TRAYA'S HOUSE

Connell, Mark and Marvine begin to clean up the blood. They are still angry as they talk to each other.

CONNELL

We don't want Tray to come home to this mess when she gets out of the hospital.

MARK

Do you believe that sorry bastard gave her another concussion? The first one was bad enough.

MARVINE

I'll tell you now. He'll be a dead ass before I let him kill my sister.

Connell looks at his brothers with a smirk on his lips as he speaks.

CONNELL

My thoughts exactly, bro. My thoughts exactly. And to hell with going to jail. Tray says he's not worth it, but I say he is.

INT. DAY--HOSPITAL

Ashly is in the Emergency Room on an operating table. A Nurse looks at the clock. Doctors work frantically on Ashly.

The Nurse looks at the clock again and four hours have passed. Ashly is stabilized and moved to Intensive Care.

INT. DAY--HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

A middle-aged Surgeon speaks sadly to another young, pretty Nurse who was in the Emergency Room. He is also angry.

SURGEON

I know I'm supposed to save lives.
But from what I heard about that
coward in there, and what he did to
the woman in Room 333, I could've
let him die on the table, and still
be a happy man.

The Nurse speaks sympathetically.

NURSE

We see all kinds, Doctor. You know
that. But as a woman I have to
agree with you. That poor girl he
beat up is lucky to be alive. And
from what I hear it's not the first
time.

SURGEON

You're right. I saw her chart.
She's been in here a lot because of
his abuse.

All over the hospital there is talk about the horribly
battered, young woman in Room 333, Traya Norris.

INT. DAY--LIVING ROOM--TRAYA'S HOUSE--THREE WEEKS LATER

Traya comes home from the hospital. She is still bruised
from Ashly's terrible beating and can barely walk. Diana,
her brothers, Claudia and another young, blond-haired woman
are there along with Tanda.

Claudia speaks to Traya very concerned.

CLAUDIA

Tray, your brother, Connell, is my
husband and I would hate to see him
go to jail. But he's bound and
determined to kill Ashly if he ever
comes near you, or Tanda again.

The blond-haired woman joins in the conversation. They are
all worried about Traya.

WOMAN

That goes for Mark, too, Tray. I'd
hate to see my husband go to jail.

Traya looks at the two women and agrees.

TRAYA

I know, Beeda and Claudia. I know.

Diana is the voice of reason as she speaks to the others.

DIANA

Beeda, you and Claudia need your husbands. It's Traya who has to end this madness. I warned you, Traya. A man, if you want to call that thing a man, like him never changes.

Traya has made up her mind, and speaks resolutely.

TRAYA

You're right, Mom. I don't want anything else to do with Ashly, regardless of him being Tanda's father. She deserves better, and so do I.

Diana smiles at Traya, happily.

DIANA

That's what I want to hear.

Connell looks at Traya and speaks matter of factly.

CONNELL

If you have anymore problems, Sis, just let us know. Please.

Traya smiles at her family members.

After some time her body heals, and she gets herself together. Her life begins to get back to normal. She doesn't see Ashly anymore.

INT. DAY--TELEVISION STATION--TEN MONTHS LATER

Traya is at work. She is an Assistant Television Programmer, which is printed on the back of her vest. Everyone she works with likes her, and she likes them.

She looks at the clock. It is almost five o'clock. She starts to take off her vest.

TRAYA (V.O.)

I couldn't wait to get home. My mother took care of Tanda while I

was at work. But I had a bad feeling all day.

EXT. DAY

Traya goes to the Station's parking lot. Out of the corner of her eye she sees Ashly standing by his car, a red Mustang, watching her. Traya becomes nervous and fearful as she looks into his eyes.

He says nothing as he looks at her. An evil smirk comes upon his lips. Traya begins walking in the opposite direction.

TRAYA (V.O.)

Marvine's car was nearby. I hadn't seen or heard from Ashly in nearly a year. He stayed away from me and Tanda out of fear of my brothers. I realized then that he'd been stalking me.

INT. NIGHT--LIVING ROOM

Traya and Tanda are sitting on the sofa watching television. There is a knock on the front door. Traya gets up, goes to the front door, and looks through the eye-hole in the door.

She sees no one there. She opens the door leaving her screen door locked.

Traya looks around but no one is there. She closes the door, and nervously goes to the telephone. She dials a number.

Diana answers the other line. She becomes upset as Traya tells her about Ashly stalking her.

DIANA (O.S.)

(on the phone)

I can't believe he's that stupid. Some people never learn. Why didn't you tell me about this before, Tray. He may just be the kind you have to kill, because you have no choice.

Traya is scared as she speaks to Diana on the phone.

TRAYA

(on the phone)

I hope not, Mom. I can't kill anyone.

Diana's voice becomes hostile, and stern as she speaks to Traya.

DIANA (O.S.)
(on the phone)

Listen to me, Traya. You kill him
before he kills you. With your
hospital records you won't do a day
in jail. Trust me.

Traya and Diana hang up the telephone.

EXT. DAY

Traya begins to notice more, and more that Ashly is stalking her. Everywhere she goes he is there. He is either standing somewhere on the street watching her, or sitting inside his car watching her.

She gets terrified.

TRAYA (V.O.)
I didn't want to involve my
brothers. Although I knew my mother
told them what Ashly was doing to
me. I had to do something to
protect myself and Tanda.

INT. DAY--COURTHOUSE

Traya is standing at a counter in an office filling out some papers. A middle-aged, dark-haired, short, female Clerk is helping her.

CLERK
A Restraining Order is exactly what
you need, Ms. Norris, from all that
you've told me.

TRAYA
Do they really do any good?

The Clerk says nothing as she smiles. To Traya it seems to be a forced smile.

TRAYA (CONT'D)
You can tell me the truth, Miss. In
fact, I wish you would.

The Clerk goes to a file cabinet, and comes back with some papers. She shows the papers to Traya. Traya is wide-eyed, and filled with consternation as she reads them.

TRAYA (CONT'D)

This can't be right. According to these statistics, a Restraining Order is just a useless piece of paper.

The Clerk tries to reassure Traya in a calm voice.

CLERK

They're still helpful, honey. It's better to have one than not. At least you'll have something. And you know you can always buy yourself a gun.

Traya continues to look at the papers. She speaks doubtful, and fearful.

TRAYA

There are a lot of women who have been murdered by men they had Restraining Orders on. That's not too comforting. I didn't want to involve my brothers. But I may not have a choice.

INT. NIGHT--LIVING ROOM--TRAYA'S HOUSE

Traya and Tanda are playing a game. The telephone rings. When Traya answers it, all she hears on the other end of the line is somebody breathing.

She nervously hangs up the telephone. She looks on her caller I.D. It says 'anonymous call'. She sits down on her sofa, looks at the clock, then gently speaks to Tanda.

TRAYA

Tanda, honey, it's time for bed. Go get ready.

TANDA

Okay, Mommy.

Traya and Tanda hug each other. Then Traya kisses Tanda on her cheek. Tanda leaves the room.

TRAYA (V.O.)

I'd been getting a lot of phone calls like that. I knew it was Ashly. Things got so bad I had no choice but to call my brother, Marvine. He was the only one who wasn't married with a family.

INT. NIGHT--KITCHEN--TWO WEEKS LATER

Traya is washing dishes. Marvine and Tanda are in the living room watching television.

TRAYA (V.O.)

There were times when Marvine couldn't be with Tanda and I. Those were the times I was most afraid. Even if I didn't see Ashly, I knew he was lurking in the shadows of some dark corner watching my every move.

EXT. DAY

Marvine brings Traya to and from work every day.

TRAYA (V.O.)

I didn't see Ashly anymore, once Marvine became my bodyguard. Yet, I knew I was still in a dangerous situation.

INT. NIGHT--CHURCH--FUNERAL

Reverend Marsh is continuing the Eulogy. Traya smiles sadly to herself. She doesn't hear a word the Pastor is saying as her mind continues to wander.

INT. NIGHT--BATHROOM--FLASHBACK

Traya looks in her medicine cabinet and gets three bottles of pills. She pours herself a glass of water then takes a pill from each bottle. After taking the pills she looks into the bathroom mirror at her reflection.

TRAYA (V.O.)

I'd been on tranquilizers for a long time, and wanted to stop taking them. Every time I tried it didn't work. Thoughts of Ashly's cruelty caused me to become a nervous wreck. Taking the pills was the only way I could function. I had to face the fact that he'd made me into a mental, and emotional cripple.

INT. DAY--KITCHEN--DIANA'S HOUSE

Traya and Tanda are visiting with Diana. Diana and Traya are sitting at the table. Diana is afraid for Traya and pleading with her.

Tanda is playing with some toys in the living room.

DIANA

I don't like it, Tray. This man is stalking you and he's dangerous. You and Tanda come live with me. Please, I beg you.

TRAYA

I can't do that, Mom.

Diana speaks frustratedly.

DIANA

You told me you were afraid. You and Tanda will be safe here.

TRAYA

I like having my own space and privacy, Mom. You know that.

Diana speaks matter of factly to Traya.

DIANA

What you think you have, Traya, is all illusory. The one thing you definitely don't have is peace of mind.

Traya will not listen, and insists on staying in her own home.

TRAYA

No, Mom, I just can't do it.

Diana shakes her head sadly at Traya's stubbornness.

INT. NIGHT--LIVING ROOM--TRAYA'S HOUSE

Traya is putting up Christmas decorations. Marvine and Tanda are watching a Christmas program on television. The mood is cheerful as Marvine speaks to Traya.

MARVINE

It feels good to be on vacation, doesn't it, Tray, especially near Christmas?

TRAYA

You can say that again, Marv.

The telephone rings. Marvine gets up.

MARVINE

I'll answer it, Tray, in case it's
that bastard trying to terrorize
you again.

Marvine picks up the telephone receiver and says 'hello'.
There is a pause.

MARVINE (CONT'D)
(on the phone)

Hold on.

Marvine takes the phone away from his ear, and speaks to
Traya.

MARVINE
It's a woman from the television
station, Tray. It sounds kind of
urgent.

Traya takes the telephone receiver from Marvine's hand, and
speaks into it. Marvine sits back down in his chair.

TRAYA
(on the phone)

Hello.

There is a pause.

TRAYA (CONT'D)
(on the phone)

Oh, hi, Myrna. What's going on?

Traya listens as Myrna speaks in earnest.

MYRNA (O.S.)
(on the phone)

Traya, do you think you can come
down here to the station for a few
minutes? I hate to disturb you
while you're on vacation.

Traya becomes curious.

TRAYA
(on the phone)
Is something wrong, Myrna?

MYRNA (O.S.)
(on the phone)

We've got a problem with Frankie again. He's been drinking, Traya, and acting rambunctious. He says he'll only talk to you.

TRAYA
(on the phone)

Okay, Myrna, I'll be right there.

Traya hangs up the telephone. Marvine looks at her curiously, and speaks.

MARVINE
What's going on, Tray?

TRAYA
It's Frankie. I have to go down to the station for a few minutes, and talk to him. He's drunk again.

Marvine gets up from his chair quickly.

MARVINE
Just let me get my jacket. Come on, Tanda.

TRAYA
No. You and Tanda stay here. I won't be long.

Marvine becomes concerned as he speaks to Traya.

MARVINE
Look, Sis, that maniac is out there somewhere. You know that.

Traya calmly assures Marvine as she gets her sweater and his car keys.

TRAYA
If Ashly is anywhere around, Marv, I'll come right back inside the house. It'll be alright. I'll be back before you know it.

Marvine is still concerned as he speaks to Traya.

MARVINE

Alright. The television station is only ten minutes away from here. I'll give you a half an hour. If you're not back by then I'm calling Connell and Mark.

TRAYA

It's a deal. My visit should be a short one anyway. But it's the last thing I want to be bothered with before Christmas, and on my vacation.

MARVINE

I hear that. Just be careful, Tray.

Traya leaves the house.

EXT. NIGHT

Traya heads to Marvine's car that is parked down the street from her house. A dark-colored car with black-tinted windows, parked across the street, catches Traya's eye.

She speaks curiously to herself.

TRAYA

I've never seen that car on my street before.

Traya begins to panic a little as she stares at the strange car.

TRAYA (V.O)

I had an uneasy feeling. Maybe I'm just being paranoid. It could be anybody's car, and Ashly drives a red Mustang.

Traya shrugs her shoulders. She walks to Marvine's car, gets in, starts the engine and drives. She looks into the rear view mirror.

She sees a similar, dark-colored car some distance behind her.

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

I thought it was that same strange car following me. 'Get a grip, Traya!' I didn't like being out alone, especially at night. I wish Frankie would get himself together.

INT. DAY--TELEVISION STATION--FLASHBACK

Traya is busy at work. A tall, dark, handsome, young man is there working as a Cameraman. He is attracted to Traya and is flirting with her.

MAN

Why won't you let me take you out sometimes, Traya? You know I like you. It'll be fun.

Traya smiles playfully at the man.

TRAYA

I told you, Frankie Dunlougher. I have a serious problem I have to get rid of, before I even consider letting another man into my life.

A dour look comes upon Frankie's face as he speaks to Traya, a little peeved.

FRANKIE DUNLOUGHER

Oh yeah. That asshole named, Ashly, who treats you like dirt under his feet. I told you to just say the word. I'll make sure he never bothers you, and Tanda again. You think I'm kidding. Don't you?

Traya's demeanor turns seriously grave as she speaks to Frankie.

TRAYA

I don't think he's worth it, Frankie. You're too nice a guy to get hooked up in my mess.

Frankie smiles at Traya as he speaks tenderly to her.

FRANKIE DUNLOUGHER

I'm already hooked on you, Traya, and you know it. You frustrate me. Why do you think I drink so much? I want you to be my woman.

Traya is steadfast.

TRAYA

I just can't right now, Frankie. Please.

A short, stocky, middle-aged man comes over to Traya and Frankie smiling.

MAN

You two still work here. Don't you?

TRAYA

Sorry, Mr. Harole, we were just talking.

Mr. Harole grins slyly as he looks at Frankie, and speaks.

MR. HAROLE

I'll bet you were. Right, Frankie?
How about putting that camera on
the scene we're shooting over
there?

Mr. Harole nods in a certain direction.

FRANKIE DUNLOUGHER

Sure, boss.

Frankie and Mr. Harole walk away. Traya continues her work.

TRAYA (V.O.)

Andrew Harole was a nice boss. He
would've fired Frankie for coming
to work drunk a long time ago. But
he knew, like everybody else at the
station did, what Frankie's problem
was.

EXT. NIGHT

Traya pulls into the television station parking lot, and parks the car. She gets out of the car, and looks around her before heading into the building.

INT. NIGHT--TELEVISION STATION

Everyone there greets Traya happily when she enters the station. She sees Frankie and walks over to him. They find an empty room and sit down to talk.

Frankie calms down after a while, and goes back to work. Traya tells everyone good-night and leaves.

EXT. NIGHT

Traya heads for Marvine's car. She sees the same dark-colored car with the black-tinted windows again. It is parked near Marvine's car.

She gets scared.

TRAYA (V.O.)

My heart started pounding. For a fleeting moment I thought about going back inside the station, and having someone walk me to the car.

Traya gets to Marvine's car. Before she can get the door unlocked she is attacked. An insidious hand covers her mouth from behind her.

The attacker roughly twists her arm behind her back.

Traya is terrified!

ATTACKER

You're coming with me, you bitch!

TRAYA (V.O.)

Ashly!

Ashly drags Traya, still covering her mouth, to his car and forces her inside it. It is the dark-colored car with the black tinted windows. Ashly takes his hand away from Traya's mouth.

He holds onto the back of her head by her hair. He drives the car with his other hand. Traya pleads with Ashly.

TRAYA (CONT'D)

Ashly! Please let me go!

Ashly is enraged as he speaks to Traya.

ASHLY

Shut up! You rotten, stupid bitch!
Where are your no good brothers
now, huh? I got your dumb ass, and
ain't nobody gonna help you!

Traya is utterly terrified as she continues to plead with Ashly.

TRAYA

Ashly, I beg you please. Don't do
this! Think about Tanda!

The more Traya pleads the more enraged Ashly gets. He punches Traya with his fist on the side of her head that is facing him.

He speaks angrily to her.

ASHLY

You should've known I was gonna get
your stupid ass sooner or later.
You're nothing but a trashy piece
of shit, and always have been.

Traya holds the side of her head where Ashly punched her. She is too terrified to say anything else.

TRAYA (V.O.)

I could hear the hate in Ashly's
voice. I realized then that he
always hated me. I just never saw
it, or maybe I never wanted to.

Ashly is speeding. Traya watches the street signs whiz by, until there are no more of them. They are on the highway that leads out of town.

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

I had to think fast.

Traya puts her hand on the car door handle. Ashly's grip on her hair loosens. Traya hurriedly opens the car door, and jumps out onto the road.

She hurts her arm and her leg, and yelps in pain. Traya thinks out loud.

TRAYA (CONT'D)

I know something is broken by the
fall. The pain I'm feeling is
excruciating. I think it's my leg.

Traya manages to pull herself up, but all she can do is drag herself. She sees Ashly stop the car and put it into reverse. He backs up the car.

There is no other car in sight. Traya is puzzled by that as she speaks to herself.

TRAYA (CONT'D)

It's strange that there are no
other cars around. I could call for
help.

Traya looks around her. She sees a sign that reads: HIGHWAY CLOSED FOR REPAIRS. She panics as Ashly's car comes toward her.

Traya desperately tries to drag herself away, but she can hardly move.

Ashly hits Traya with his car purposely. He knocks her to the side of the road. She has no choice but to lay there.

Traya can no longer move at all. She begins to sob and pray.

TRAYA (CONT'D)
Oh, dear God, help me please. Don't
let this crazed monster kill me.

Traya stops sobbing as she hears a strange, female voice. She doesn't see the woman anywhere.

THE VOICE (O.S.)
Traya! Traya, it's time.

Traya is confused as she looks around her, and speaks to the voice in a panic.

TRAYA
Who are you? Where are you? Are
you telling me you'll help me
escape Ashly? I don't see any way
to do that.

Traya watches Ashly get out of his car. He slowly walks toward where she is laying on the ground.

She sees a long, shiny blade in his hand, and becomes more frightened as she begins to sob again.

TRAYA (V.O.)(CONT'D)
Oh, God, no! What about my little
girl? How could I have ever thought
I loved this monster?

Traya hears the urgent, mysterious voice again.

THE VOICE (O.S.)
Come on, Traya. It's time.

Ashly straddles Traya as she lays helplessly on the ground. He has a virulent, crazed look in his eyes. He raises the blade in his hand, and angrily speaks to Traya.

ASHLY
You stupid, simple tramp! You could
never get away from me, never!
Didn't you know that?

Ashly brings the big blade down onto Traya's body over, and over again.

TRAYA (V.O.)

I felt a hot, searing pain in the middle of my chest suddenly. Then another one and another one.

Everything around Traya turns completely black.

INT. NIGHT--HOSPITAL

Traya wakes up in a hospital bed. She gets out of the bed, and walks into the hallway. She sees Diana, her brothers, Claudia and Beeda. They are all very upset.

Marvine is pounding the wall, sobbing softly. Traya walks over to Diana and speaks curiously.

TRAYA

Mom, what's wrong? Why are you guys so upset?

Diana doesn't answer Traya. A Doctor walks over to Traya's family and pulls them aside. He begins talking to them.

Traya strains to hear what he is saying, but cannot hear him.

INT. NIGHT--CHURCH--FUNERAL

The Eulogy is over. Reverend Marsh sits down. The people in the church form a line to view the body in the casket again. Jason Whims removes the handkerchief from its' face.

There is more weeping.

After the last viewing Jason Whims closes and seals the casket. Traya and her family leave the church. Everyone else follows.

EXT. NIGHT--FRONT OF THE CHURCH

Traya, her family and friends get into their designated cars. Traya puts her arm around Tanda, who is sobbing softly. She tries to comfort her.

TRAYA

It's alright, honey. Mommy is here.

The procession leaves from the church.

INT. NIGHT--TRAYA'S HOUSE

Everyone is socializing as coffee and cake are being served to the people. Traya watches as Tanda goes upstairs. She walks over to a circle of people who are talking.

Traya hears the voice again.

THE VOICE (O.S.)

Traya, we have to leave now.

Traya becomes impatient with the person whose voice she is hearing. She looks around her. She becomes a little annoyed with the voice as she speaks.

TRAYA

Why are you rushing me away? This is my family and my friends. I have nowhere to go.

A young, slender, dark-haired woman is talking to Mr. Harole. She is shaking her head in disbelief.

WOMAN

I still can't believe it. There will never be another one like her. I'll miss her that's for sure, Mr. Harole.

Traya is curious as she speaks.

TRAYA

I'm surprised you're even here, Renee. I didn't think you liked me because of Frankie. Everybody at work knows you have a thing for him.

Renee doesn't respond, and Mr. Harole speaks sadly to Renee.

MR. HAROLE

I couldn't agree with you more, Renee.

TRAYA (V.O.)

I was surprised to learn that Renee Yonkers liked me. She always acted like she didn't. But here she is, in my home with me and my family.

Traya sees Frankie sitting in a corner alone. She walks over to him, smiling, as she speaks to him.

TRAYA (CONT'D)

Hey, Frankie. How are you?

Frankie is all choked up. He stares blankly past Traya. She can see the tears in his eyes.

Traya sees Diana heading upstairs, and decides to follow her.

INT. NIGHT--UPSTAIRS

Traya watches Diana go to Tanda's bedroom door. She knocks on the door lightly. Traya hears Tanda's small voice.

TANDA (O.S.)
Come in.

INT. NIGHT--TANDA'S BEDROOM

Tanda is laying on her bed. Diana sits down on the side of the bed. Tanda sits up on the side of the bed. Diana puts her arms around her.

Traya stands there looking at them, sadly. Diana speaks comfortingly to Tanda.

DIANA
Tanda, honey, it's going to be alright.

Diana and Tanda sadly smile at each other. Tanda speaks sadly.

TANDA
I know, Grandmom. I can feel her with me.

DIANA
You'll always feel her, honey. That's why I know everything will be okay.

Traya speaks reassuringly to Diana.

TRAYA
I told her that too, Mom. We'll all be okay and get through this, just like we did with Dad.

Diana smiles as she continues talking to Tanda comfortingly.

DIANA
How about we go back downstairs, sweetie? We have a lot of guests.

TANDA
I didn't know so many people loved her, Grandmom.

DIANA

Yes, they did, honey. Yes they did.

INT. NIGHT--LIVING ROOM

Traya, Diana and Tanda enter the room. Some of the guests are leaving. Traya sees a tall, gray-haired, middle-aged man.

He begins talking to Diana. Traya smiles at him happily.

TRAYA (V.O.)

Uncle Leon? I hadn't see him since my Dad's funeral. He was his brother. I loved him so much.

LEON

We'll be back in the morning for the burial, Diana. You stay strong.

DIANA

Alright, Leon. I'm afraid I have no choice in the matter.

Leon kisses Diana on the cheek lightly. Then he leaves.

INT. DAY--CHRISTMAS EVE MORNING--TRAYA'S HOUSE

The house is filled with people dressed in black. Jason Whims performs his duty of organizing everyone into their designated cars again.

EXT. DAY

Traya gets into the car with Diana and Tanda. Before the procession begins two Police Officers, whom Traya has seen before, come to the house. They are the officers who came to the hospital when she was badly beaten.

Traya watches as the Police Officers walk over to Jason Whims, and speak with him.

Jason Whims points to the car where Diana, Traya and Tanda are sitting. The two officers come over to the car. They take off their hats as a sign of respect.

POLICE OFFICER #1

We're sorry to intrude on you like this, Mrs. Norris. But we wanted you to know we've apprehended Ashly Trumble. He didn't try to get away.

POLICE OFFICER #2
And he's confessed to murdering
your daughter, Maam.

Diana puts her hand to her chest, and speaks with great relief.

DIANA
Oh, thank God.

Traya's mouth falls open in stunned surprise and disbelief as she speaks.

TRAYA
What? I'm dead? I was at my own
funeral, and I thought it was Aunt
Beiela. She died months ago. But
I'd completely forgotten that.

The first Police Officer continues speaking sorrowfully to Diana.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Alright, Maam, that's all we came
to tell you. Again we're sorry to
intrude, and we're so sorry about
your daughter. We did the best that
we could.

Diana is grateful for the news as she speaks to the officers sadly.

DIANA
We all did, Officers. Thank you so
much. I'm so glad you got him
before my sons did.

The other officer speaks to Diana sorrowfully while looking at Tanda.

POLICE OFFICER #2
I know it holds no meaning for you
and your family now, Maam, but
Merry Christmas anyway.

The Police Officers walk away. They signal to Jason Whims to proceed. Traya becomes wide-eyed with disbelief as she speaks softly to herself.

TRAYA
All I could ever recall was being
attacked by Ashly, and waking up in
the hospital. Now I remember that

long, terrible blade he had in his hand, and the horrific pain I felt. I was viciously and brutally stabbed to death by that monster.

Traya becomes calm as she hears the strange, female voice again.

THE VOICE (O.S.)
Now do you understand, Traya? Can we leave now?

Traya speaks sadly to the mysterious woman.

TRAYA
How can I leave Tanda?

THE VOICE (O.S.)
You have no choice now, honey. When you did have a choice it was a terrible mistake.

A sad smile comes upon Traya's lips as she looks at Tanda.

EXT. DAY--CEMETERY

The people get out of their cars and walk to the grave site. Traya stands beside Diana, Tanda, her brothers and their families.

Reverend Marsh prays aloud as the casket is lowered into the ground. Everyone throws one flower atop the coffin.

Traya is sad and resolute as she speaks to herself.

TRAYA
I realize now that nobody can see, or hear me. I want to scream, but what's the use?

Traya looks at the beautiful, marble headstone by her grave. She smiles.

EXT. DAY--CEMETERY--HEADSTONE

The headstone is made of black marble, and has Traya's photograph on it. The writing is etched in silver letters.

It reads: TRAYA MAE NORRIS, Born: August 8, 1961, Died: December 19, 1996. Beloved Mother, Daughter and Sister.

EXT. DAY--CEMETERY

Traya stands in the cemetery with her family looking around at everyone there. She speaks lovingly to herself.

TRAYA

I was glad to know so many people loved, and cared about me. And I had touched their lives in some small way. Tanda would be alright. My mother and the other members of my family would take good care of her. Still, I wouldn't see my little girl grow up, and be there for her when she needed me.

My family would see her through what I knew would be the most tragic, and horrifying Christmas of her life. One I knew she would never be able to forget.

Traya looks down at the clothes she has on. She is surprised as she speaks, because they are not the clothes she thought she had on.

TRAYA (CONT'D)

These are the same clothes I was wearing on the night I was murdered. Not the dress I thought I was wearing.

The dress I saw on the body in the casket. I saw its' hair, too, but I never did see the face.

Traya looks at Myrna and Frankie, who are both sobbing softly, there in the cemetery. A smile of sympathy comes across her lips.

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

I hope Frankie will never blame himself for what happened to me. Since he was the reason Ashly had a chance to get me alone, and take my life. Still, it wasn't his fault. It was my fault, all of it. I was so foolish.

What happened to me would've happened anyway. I know now it was just a matter of time. My situation was far more perilous than I ever knew. What I heard was true after all. I was Death's number three in our family.

Traya hears the strange woman's voice again.

THE VOICE (O.S.)
Traya, please. Let's go!

TRAYA
Yes. I'm ready to go now.

Traya bends down, and kisses Tanda gently on her cheek. Tanda touches her cheek where Traya kissed her, and smiles. She cannot see her mother as she looks in Traya's direction.

TRAYA (CONT'D)
Good-bye, Tanda, honey. I love you.

Tanda replies in a whisper happily as if she heard Traya.

TANDA
I love you, too, Mommy. Good-bye.

Traya smiles a sad smile at her little girl. Diana looks at Tanda curiously and speaks.

DIANA
Are you okay, honey?

Tanda answers Diana smiling.

TANDA
Yes, Grandmom. My Mommy is alright now. She's safe forever. Everything's going to be okay.

Traya looks around her. Suddenly all of the people, and the cemetery have vanished. An elderly woman with white hair, and fair skin is standing beside her.

Traya doesn't recognize her at first. She looks at the woman more closely. The woman looks at Traya and smiles. Traya is pleasantly surprised as she realizes who the woman is.

TRAYA
Aunt Beiela?

Beiela's spirit speaks softly and sweetly to Traya.

SPIRIT OF BEIELA
I've been waiting for you, honey.

TRAYA
It was your voice I've been hearing. It was you.

Beiela's spirit says nothing. Traya smiles at her aunt. They hold each other's hands as they walk away together.

Both spirits fade into a glorious, bright light that surrounds them.

FADE OUT