MOTHERLESS BROOKLYN

Lionel & Laura – Apartment
INT. LAURA’S APARTMENT – MORNING

LAURA and LIONEL lie in bed, sleeping. Lionel wears his outfit from yesterday. They wake up.

LIONEL
IF! Ah, God I’m sorry, shit. I’m sorry... I don’t know what happened. I didn’t mean to fall asleep.

LAURA
It’s okay, it’s okay. Thank you for staying.

LIONEL
Yeah sure. I know how you’re feeling, I really do. Pretty soon you’re gonna hear his voice in your head. He’s gonna tell you to pull yourself together and get moving. And when you do, you’re gonna feel him smiling at you again, I promise.

She gets emotional. He holds her.

LIONEL (CONT’D)
I really am sorry.

LAURA
Why are you being so nice to me?

LIONEL
Cause I think you’re a good person. You’re trying to make a difference. You actually care about what happens to other people. There’s not many people who can say that. That’s a good way to be.

LAURA
You’re sweet.

LIONEL
I don’t think that’s how most people usually describe me when they meet me, but I’m glad that you think so.

LAURA
Anybody ever tell you you talk in your sleep?
LIONEL
No, but I never slept with anyone.

LAURA
You never slept with anyone?

LIONEL
I mean, I been with a few girls but just not, not the kind who wanna stay and sleep with me.

Beat.

LAURA
Who’s Frank?

LIONEL
What?

LAURA
You said that name when you were asleep. You seemed upset. Was he your friend who...?

LIONEL
Yeah. I worked with him... I worked for him. I met him when I was 12. I was at that Catholic Home for Boys on DeKalb. They threw me in there when I was 6, after my mother died. Frank kinda took me under his wing. You know he never called me my name. He called me “Brooklyn”. He’d say “Look at you, Motherless Brooklyn. You got no one looking out for you.”

LAURA
We all need someone looking out for us.

She gives him a quick kiss and gets up. Lionel notices a framed photo of a young woman with a baby.

LIONEL
Is that your mother? She’s beautiful.

Laura grabs the photo.

LAURA
She died a long time ago. I don’t remember her. I guess we both got nobody now.
Beat.

LIONEL
Listen, I, I gotta ask you... is there something you’re not telling me?

LAURA
What?

LIONEL
Is there something you’re holding out, you and Horowitz, on all this housing deal? Look, those goons at the BA, they’re scared of something, okay? There’s something big out there that has to do with all this fraud you been digging around in. I think it ties it right up to Moses Randolph. Do you know what it is?

LAURA
No, no. I mean, somebody’s getting rich, but no.

LIONEL
You gotta take this seriously. If you’re holding onto some card and you’re waiting to play it to try to block that vote, you’re playing a dangerous game. They already killed Frank. They killed your father. They did this to me last night. These people aren’t gonna stop.

LAURA
What’s Billy got to do with it?

LIONEL
He knows something about it.

LAURA
No, no. No wait. That’s not possible.

LIONEL
He and my friend Frank were working together on--
LAURA
He doesn’t even... He didn’t even know what I’m working on. I have an uncle who knows Gabby. He got me that job.

Beat.

LAURA (CONT’D)
You’re not a reporter, are you?

LIONEL
No, and my name’s not Jake, it’s Lionel. Look, Frank is an investigator, okay? That’s who I worked for. They hired him to keep tabs on your committee. He was following you. I wasn’t trying to expose anything. I was, I just was poking into it to try to figure out who killed him, and now there’s so many Goddamn pieces it’s like I’ve got glass in my brain. And I don’t even know what I’m after anymore. I’m sorry for lying to you, but you gotta believe what I’m saying. You’re webbed up in this somehow, and you’re in danger. Can you stay around here today?

LAURA
Gabby’s expecting me. We’re preparing her testimony. It’s important, but I need to make arrangements, a funeral...

LIONEL
Look, none of that matters, okay? If I’m right, they’re gonna keep a tight lid on it, and they won’t even let the Coroner’s office release his body. Just, please. Get one of the guys from the club to take you down to work. Stay around people that you know for the next few days. I’ll come and find you. Okay?

She nods.