

CLEAN SLATE

FADE IN:

INT. NURSING HOME

LINDA, 30, mixed-race, stands on the other side of a worn door and knocks gently. Linda is dressed in black formal clothing and holds a pair of stockings in her hand.

LINDA  
Are you ok in there?

A muffled answer is heard from the other side of the door. Linda checks her watch, her patience is thinning. She forces pleasantries.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
(to camera)  
Now that she's dead. I can live.  
(Beat.)  
Today, my family is saying goodbye to her and I am saying goodbye to them and the person I pretended to be for them. My life starts now.

TITLE: CLEAN SLATE

LINDA (CONT'D)  
Or, once I can get this woman in these tights.  
(to door)  
Alright, if you're ok I'm gonna step out for a second.

Another muffled response. Linda nods and then walks through the modest room split with a curtain partition, above the two twin beds are pictures of people in frames. Way too many than it seems reasonable for one person to know and care about. She walks to room door cracking it open to see into the corridor. Standing right beside the door is her brother MIKE, mixed-race, also dressed formally, and smiling.

MIKE  
How is it going?

LINDA  
She says she doesn't need help putting on her 'depends' but-

MIKE  
(looks at watch)  
You're gonna have to help her.

LINDA  
(sighs)  
I know.

Linda begins to close the door on her brother but he puts up a finger buying a second.

He smiles fiendishly.

Linda raises a doubtful eyebrow but waits.

MIKE  
Watch this.

Mike casually strolls to the end of the hall by another open door. Mike leans against the window and plays as if he is passively looking at his cellphone. From the open door:

OLD MAN (O.S.)  
You fucking nigger!

Linda's mouth drops open.

Mike casually, as if not having heard, walks away. Once passed the open door he silently laughs.

Linda is still too shocked to laugh.

Mike waves his hand at Linda dismissing her shock and again pretends to pace while looking at his phone. He passes the open door again.

OLD MAN (O.S) (CONT'D)  
Dirty ugly nigger.

Mike strolls back to Linda and now they both laugh at the vulgar absurdity. Linda fake scoffs.

LINDA  
How dare he? You're not dirty.

Mike squints at her jest.

She straightens his tie before closing the door and going back to the bathroom door. She knocks.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
Ok, I'm going to come in and see if  
I can help.

INT. MIKE'S CAR

The elderly AUNTIE is in the back seat wearing the black tights. Mike drives, tensely.

MIKE

This whole thing is a joke. It's a circus.

LINDA

It is.

MIKE

I'd almost prefer there be no service at all. This just feels like disrespect.

LINDA

It does. But it's the way she would've wanted it. No deviation.  
(over shoulder to camera,  
which is in backseat  
opposite Auntie)  
Now's the time I should probably mention this side of my family is part of an Extremist Christian Fundamentalist-doomsday cult.

MIKE

I can't stand these people. They're so fake.

LINDA

Mm-hmm.  
(To camera)  
Mike rebelled from the start. He's the only sibling who never got baptized.

MIKE

It's going to be just like Dad's. They're barely going to mention her. And then it's just going to be "God God God".

LINDA

(to camera)  
Cults don't really value the individual. They discourage undesirable behaviors like independent thinking and self-worth.

INTERCUT:

INT. KINGDOM HALL - FLASHBACK

A MAN 1 stands on a platform behind a podium. The back of Linda's head is in the audience POV style.

MAN 1  
So we must strip off the old  
personality and adorn ourselves  
with the new personality.

Flashback - same setting- MAN 2 is on the platform, Linda's clothes are different to signify the change.

MAN 2  
Because of inherited sin, we are  
all damaged goods fit for  
destruction.

INT. KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

A CHILD LINDA stands holding a balloon in front of a cake with candles.

MAN 1 (V.O)  
"Better is the day of one's death.  
Than the day of one's birth."

MAN 1's voice causes a gust of wind which blows out the candles. CHILD LINDA looks sad. Now in the dark, her balloon pops.

INT. MIKE'S CAR - PRESENT

MIKE  
I'm going to have a hard time  
keeping it together. I might just  
stand up and tell every one it's  
bullshit.

LINDA  
It's not worth it. We just have to  
get through the day. For her.

MIKE  
I can't make any promises.

LINDA  
Oh, I invited our cousin, Keith.

MIKE  
Keith?

LINDA

He loved Nana, and you know they  
wouldn't have invited him.

MIKE

And you're telling ME not to make a  
scene?

LINDA

(to camera)

Keith was banished from the cult  
and shunned by the family.

INT. KINGDOM HALL - FLASHBACK

MAN 1 on stage. Linda again in a different outfit to signify  
a change in day.

MAN 1

And we must love God more than our  
family members. If they sin against  
God, and God sees fit to remove  
them from his clean organization.  
You must'nt speak to this person,  
not even to say "Hello".

INT. MIKE'S CAR - PRESENT

LINDA

(to camera)

Because...

(whispers)

He's got the gays. He's been cut  
off from the family for 10 years.  
You can get disowned for any number  
of reasons.

Text, like credits up scroll on screen:

Smoking, Dating Someone Outside of the Cult, Having a  
Birthday Party, Voting, Getting a Divorce, Excessive  
Drunkenness, Being Gay, Sex Outside of Marriage, Questioning  
the Leadership.

LINDA (CONT'D)

(to camera)

And oddly you might not get kicked  
out if you've done some other  
things.

Text, like credits up scroll on screen:

Molest a Child, Beat your Wife and Kids, or admit to committing a homicide as long as the homicide took place before your baptism and not many people in the congregation know about it.

MIKE

This really is going to be a circus.

CUT TO:

C.U of the black tights on the thin legs of an elderly Auntie.

Linda's hand puts the woman's leg back on the foot rest of a wheelchair.

EXT. KINGDOM HALL - PRESENT

The camera follows the wheelchair, Linda and Mike into the building.

INT. KINGDOM HALL - CONTINUOUS

There are scarce displays of flowers.

All Mourners are bowing their heads. Elderly Auntie, Linda and Mike move further into the building, they stop near a photo board of the deceased. The board says: WIFE, MOTHER, NANA. A prayer is being said. The siblings exchange some uncomfortable looks before respectfully bowing their heads but keeping their eyes open.

There is a BROTHER on the platform at the front of the small auditorium.

BROTHER

(prayer)

Please be with the mourning family, giving them the strength beyond what is normal to help them cope with their loss.

(Long pause, breathing in mic)

As we know, with you, all things are possible.

There's another long pause.

LINDA

(whispers to camera)

Like possibly finishing this prayer?

## BROTHER

Help them, in their grief, to  
remember your promise that you will  
keep their loved one alive in your  
memory, Oh Sovereign Lord Our God.

(Pause, breathing in mic)

Because of your love and undeserved  
kindness, you gave your dear son,  
to sacrifice his life, so that we  
may gain life eternal. Thank you,  
Oh God.

(Pause)

In Your great son and our reigning  
King, Jesus Christ's Name,  
Amen.

## MOURNERS

Amen.

Linda and Mike both mumble something. The two of them are  
handed a program with their NANA's face. She's a beautiful,  
smiling woman.

Linda's POV zooms in on the smile and the photo melts into a  
flashback.

## TRANSITION TO:

## INT. HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK

Linda's POV of Nana smiling with oxygen tubes on her nose.  
Linda squeezes Nana's hand.

POV brings us back to the present.

## INT. KINGDOM HALL - PRESENT

Linda's hand holding the program.

## MIKE

Can you believe this?

## LINDA

What?

## MIKE

I made her a Nana. I'm the first  
grandchild.

Linda turns over the program to see a large family photo with  
Nana at the center.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
You're not there either.

Linda nods but doesn't show a reaction.

Meanwhile a MAN 3 is taking the stage in the background.

A mourner stops to speak to and hug the elderly Auntie in the wheelchair.

Linda looks to the photo board. She points out a picture of two toddlers wearing matching outfits with their Nana.

LINDA  
We're here.

MIKE  
(points at program)  
This person isn't even a blood  
relative. We don't make the cut.  
But she does?

The double doors of the entrance swing open dramatically. Blinding sunshine appears behind the three men, entering in step like a crew in an action film. SLO MO. The camera focuses on the man in the middle who is wearing dark shades.

LINDA  
(to camera)  
That's my Uncle. I've actually  
never met him before today because  
he's been in and out of jail most  
of my life for being a repeat sex  
offender.

The group of men walk in further.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
(to camera)  
I'm not going to hug him.

She makes direct eye contact with the RAPIST UNCLE. When he gets closer, Linda turns her back and puts both hands on the wheelchair.

The Rapist Uncle and crew stop near Mike. They pay a cold rehearsed sort of respect to the photo of Nana, as if she were a fallen homie, and the Rapist Uncle shakes Mike's hand.

MIKE  
You didn't make the program either.

LINDA  
 (to camera)  
 To be fair he was probably on the  
 run when this photo was taken.

MIKE  
 Guess some of us just aren't  
 important.

LINDA  
 (gestures to the Rapist  
 Uncle. To Camera.)  
 He isn't. I'll never see this man  
 again after today.

The Rapist Uncle and crew enter and walk to their assigned  
 seats.

Linda and Mike follow with the wheelchair. Mike's seat is far  
 from Linda's and a few gasps are heard. Linda smirks at the  
 camera.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
 I was preceded down the aisle by an  
 actual, known, criminal and I get  
 the gasps.

Linda takes her seat giving the woman in the wheelchair  
 tissues.

An AUNT 2, very conservative, leans toward Linda and  
 whispers.

AUNT 2  
 Why are you wearing pants?

LINDA  
 (to camera)  
 In her book, their book, "the"  
 book; Women are... 1st Peter 3:17-  
 "The weaker vessel."  
 (to AUNT 2)  
 Because I felt like wearing pants.

AUNT 2  
 To your Nana's memorial!?

LINDA  
 (to camera)  
 Me wearing pants is a huge fuck you  
 to their patriarchal organization.

The camera sweeps over the mourners and all of the women are  
 wearing long modest skirts or dresses.

LINDA (CONT'D)

I might as well have walked in like  
this...

A spotlight travels back in time up the aisle and Linda enters with the wheelchair and poses. Model runway music plays. She struts down the aisle.

CU on her heels and trouser legs and the dramatically shocked crowd of mourners gasping into tissues.

Linda does the "hammer-time" dance to emphasize her pants. She pushes the wheelchair and then cartwheels down the aisle sticking a landing and parking the wheelchair. Gymnast Linda winks at the camera before the lighting returns to normal.

LINDA (CONT'D)

(to AUNT 2)

Good thing she's not here to see  
it. Huh?

Aunt 2 is even more appalled and turns away. A MAN 3 on stage begins droning on generically about their Nana.

MAN 3

She was a wife, mother, grandmother  
great-grandmother and my dear  
sister-in-the-faith. There was no  
role she was more dedicated to than  
that of her service to our God.

ROXANNE, Linda & Mike's sister, younger than them but not by much. She's in a dress and sits beside Linda. She whispers.

ROXANNE

What took you two so long?

LINDA

Well, I had to dress an 80 year old  
woman with Alzheimer's. While our  
brother got racial slurs shouted at  
him.

ROXANNE

What?

LINDA

Your hair looks nice.

Linda pets her sister's straight hair, which contrasts with Linda's natural curls and then they both go back to pretending to listen.

MAN 3

She believed in God's promise for a future paradise on Earth. As described in Revelation. IF you will, please turn to the book of Revelation, Chapter-

LINDA

(to camera)

Blah blah blah - Adam sinned. Blah blah blah - That's why we die. Blah blah blah - If you don't convert now you'll be annihilated in the fiery war of Armageddon waged on the Earth by a loving God bringing about-

Linda points to the MAN 3 onstage as if part of a duet.

MAN 3

(reads from Bible Matt  
24:21)

"Great Tribulation, such as has never occurred since the world's beginning until now -

LINDA

(to camera)

Listen, or else, obey, or else, be blessed, or el-

Roxanne nudges Linda, as if to admonish her to pay attention.

Linda nudges her back annoyed.

They begin an elbow war on the arm of the chair and Linda wins. She looks to the camera pleased with herself.

END SAMPLE