

B L A C K G I R L M A G I C

Written by

Sasha Kai

OVER BLACK

"If you are silent about your pain, they will kill you and say you enjoyed it."

- Zora Neale Hurston

FADE IN:

EXT. CALIFORNIA HIGH DESERT - DUSK

The sun sets behind a looming mountain, sending cotton candy streaks across the sky.

It's giving Coachella poster vibes.

EXT. METHUSELAH MOUNTAIN - CONTINUOUS

We FLOAT over the rocky, jagged terrain and land on a FISSURE at the mountain's base.

A beat, then the ground starts to quake. The shaking widens our fissure revealing a deep, dark HOLE.

We PUSH IN to the darkness as the earthquake stops.

Another beat, then a guttural cacophony of SCREAMS rise up from the depths, growing louder and faster as they ascend.

They break the surface and shriek out across the open desert--

EXT. CALIFORNIA HIGH DESERT - CONTINUOUS

-- and blow past a WOODEN TOWN SIGN for **DANSBURY, CALIFORNIA**. We linger on the sign as it rapidly weathers, becoming sun-scorched, dilapidated, and barely legible.

EXT. HIGH DESERT RANCH - DUSK

A sprawling ranch house surrounded by desert on all sides.

INT. HIGH DESERT RANCH - STUDIO - NIGHT

A boho oasis that's one-part plant den, two-parts recording studio.

AUTUMN FALLS (30s, Black, artsy & ballsy) sits behind her computer, layering vocal harmonies over a moody, ethereal soundscape.

Her tunnel vision drowns out the unnecessary noise, including the voice of her boyfriend --

RANDY
Babe. Babe! AUTUMN!

Behind her, **RANDY ROWDY** (30s, Black, wiry & tatted TF up) beckons from the doorway.

But Autumn stays focused. Randy refuses to be ignored. He approaches her and attempts to take off her headphones.

Autumn pushes him away, but keeps her cool.

AUTUMN
I'm working, babe.

RANDY
I know, but I'm hungry.

AUTUMN
So order something.

RANDY
We should go out. There's that old-timey spot up the road. I think they have a stage too.

AUTUMN
I gotta get these demos out tonight.

RANDY
You gotta get back out there, Autumn. This sad, moody shit isn't you. Besides, people don't want to hear that. They want something they can nod their head to.

AUTUMN
Noted. Now please --

RANDY
-- All I'm sayin is if you don't start standing on your business, your window's gonna close.

AUTUMN
I said 'noted,' Randy. Now let me cook. I'm on a deadline.

She puts her headphones back on and returns to work.

EXT. HIGH DESERT RANCH - NIGHT

Randy storms out the front door towards his car. Just as he reaches the driver's side door, he's hit hard from behind.

He slumps to the ground, out cold.

INT. HIGH DESERT RANCH - STUDIO - NIGHT

Autumn listens back to the song, satisfied.

She fires off an e-mail, then breathes a sigh of relief.
Mission accomplished.

Her stomach growls. She remembers --

AUTUMN
(annoyed)
Fucking Randy.

But her annoyance is fleeting, quickly replaced by another feeling.

She pulls up another track on her computer. Presses PLAY.

A TRAP BEAT booms over the studio speakers. She presses record, then turns to the mic. She catches tempo then --

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
*I'm certified flawless / The weight
of the past behind us / Fuck if a
trauma define us / We healers &
warriors / Don't make me have to
remind you / Come find you / One-on-
one / Skin tougher than diamonds /
Emma Frost in these streets, no
lying / Fuck a ex man, I got next,
man / And I'm rising like the
phoenix from the ash / I'm shining.*

Edge looks good on her. She nods her head to the beat,
feeling herself...then catches herself --

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
(laughs)
Fucking Randy.

She turns off the song, grabs her phone.

AUTUMN (TEXT) (CONT'D)
Done. You were right. Don't gloat.

A faint *DING!* rings out from elsewhere in the house.

AUTUMN (TEXT) (CONT'D)
Can you bring me back a burger?

DING!

INT. HIGH DESERT RANCH - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Autumn shuffles into the entryway, then abruptly halts.

HER POV: Randy's PHONE on the entryway TABLE, then she spots the front door -- slightly ajar.

AUTUMN
(to herself)
This man.

She grabs the phone, then closes the door.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
(calls out)
Did you forget your keys again?

No response.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
Babe? Randy?

Silence.

Nope. She turns to head back to the studio, but finds her path blocked by a foreboding **INTRUDER**, clad in head-to-toe black leather & denim.

A blacked out biker **HELMET** with **STAG ANTLERS** obscures his face. A large **WOODEN CLUB** dangles from his hand.

Autumn backs toward the door, slowly.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
This is a rental. Just take what
you want. Nobody has to get hurt
tonight.

The STAG just stands there, silent. It's unsettling. Then he raises his club.

Autumn chucks Randy's phone at the Stag's head, then turns to flee and **SLAMS** into **ANOTHER STAG!**

And Stag #2 isn't playing games. He yokes her by the neck.

She claws at his **GLOVED** hands, feet dangling as she gasps for air. As she loses consciousness, we...

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE UP:

BLACK GIRL MAGIC

FADE IN:

SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER...

EXT. ARTISTS & FLEAS - NIGHT

A vibrant, open-air flea market in the heart of Venice Beach.

Packs of HIPSTERS and MOM INFLUENCERS rove from booth to booth, gushing over the various vendors & wares.

We PUSH through the crowd and land on the one booth having a slow night.

A stylish, hand-painted SIGN tells us this is the **UHURU DESIGN BOUTIQUE.**

On the table, an assortment of custom jewelry -- LOCK PICK EARRINGS, BRASS KNUCKLE NECKLACES, wrap-around BRACELETS, and SPIKY RINGS -- all meticulously placed.

And tucked behind our table, we find **LEX LIRA** (24, Black) -- a dogged and determined diamond in the rough (emphasis on the rough.)

Lex scans the crowd, trying to make eye-contact with potential customers, but they avoid her gaze.

She pulls out her cell phone, turns up the charm --

INSERT: LEX'S IG LIVE

LEX
Hey fam! It's your girl Lex from
Uhuru Designs. I'm down here at
Artist & Fleas with a hot new drop.

In the B.G., a **CUSTOMER** approaches her booth and test drives one of the wrap around bracelets.

She checks the view count. Only 5 people are watching.

LEX (CONT'D)
All your faves are back in stock,
so grab a friend and come through
to support your favorite internet
cousin!

CUSTOMER
How much is this?

Lex tries to ignore her, but the Customer persists.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)
Hello?? How much is this?

END LEX'S IG LIVE

Lex turns to the Customer.

LEX
Fifty-five dollars.

CUSTOMER
Fifty-five?! That other girl is
selling them for forty.

LEX
What girl?

EXT. ARTISTS & FLEAS - ANOTHER BOOTH

The Customer points Lex toward another booth -- **ARJANA JEWELRY**.

An **INFLUENCER DUO** leaves the booth, raving about their finds.

Behind them, Lex spots the booth's owner -- a bubbly, beach blonde with an aggressive spray tan.

LEX
(seething)
This bitch.

Lex storms up to the booth.

LEX (CONT'D)
Amy! Amy!

ARJANA, the owner (25, white), doesn't respond. She wraps up with a customer.

ARJANA
Namaste. May the guides keep you
protected.

Ick. Lex pushes past the customer, ready to confront Arjana.

LEX
Amy! What the fuck?

ARJANA
You know I don't go by that name
anymore.

LEX
You're Amy from Anaheim. You don't
just get to rebrand yourself.

ARJANA
I'm Arjana now.

LEX
No, you're a snake.

We see Arjana's wares -- spiky RINGS and wrap-around BRACELETS. Identical to Lex's, but in BRIGHT PINK and PURPLE hues.

Lex grabs one of the bracelets and in one quick motion, whips it down on the table, HARD, leaving a small dent.

Now she's got Arjana's attention.

ARJANA
These are my original designs.

LEX
No. These are my designs. You design friendship bracelets.

ARJANA
Lex, you're making a scene.

And people are starting to notice. Several on-lookers have their phones out, filming, but Lex doesn't care. She's incensed.

LEX
And you're underpricing me.

ARJANA
My uncle has a friend in manufacturing.

Lex puts a stiff finger right in Arjana's face.

LEX
You can't just steal my shit!

ARJANA
I didn't steal it. I just did it better.

LEX
You fu--

She reaches across the table, grabs Arjana by the collar --

COP (O.C.)
Ma'am, is this woman bother you?

A **COP** emerges from the crowd. Lex release her hold on Arjana.

LEX
Yes!

The Cop looks to Arjana.

ARJANA
No, officer. We're fine.

LEX
We are not fine. This bitch stole my products and --

COP
So you designed these?

He holds up one of the bracelets. Lex nods.

Then the Customer from her booth comes to Lex's defense.

CUSTOMER
And she makes these lovely brass
knuckle ones too, Officer.

COP
Hmm. You know possession of brass
knuckles is a felony, right?

INSERT: LEX'S IG LIVE

Lex films as the Cop and her partner, **COP #2**, toss Lex's booth, confiscating all her merchandise.

LEX (O.C.)
Do y'all see this? Venice PD out
here harassing Black vendors.
(to the cops)
You can't do this. I have a permit
to sell here.

Cop #2 holds up a brass knuckle necklace, notices a button on the side of the handle.

He taps it and a small BLADE pops out of the hilt.

COP
That's a keeper.

COP #2
Indeed.

He nods approvingly, then tosses it in his pocket.

LEX (O.C.)
I got you on camera, asshole. You
owe me \$75 for that!

COP #2
Ma'am, you can't film this. Ma'am!

He rushes toward her. She keeps filming.

LEX (O.C.)
Don't touch me!

The phone crashes to the ground. We linger on feet -- Lex's, the officer's -- as they struggle with each other.

A beat, then Lex is on the ground too. The cop stomps on her phone, and we **CUT TO:**

INT. POLICE STATION - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Lex sits on a bench in an empty cell.

Her fingers trace the etchings carved into the bench. Messages from the cell's former inhabitants.

She keeps coming back to one in particular:

HER POV: *"Give 'em hell, Sis!"* carved into the wood.

Her mind drifts off as a wave of fatigue washes over her. She shuts her eyes, then is brought back by the sound of the cell door opening.

An **OFFICER** appears and waves her out.

INT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

The Officer escorts Lex out of holding and deposits her at the --

DISCHARGE WINDOW

Where she collects her **CRACKED CELL PHONE** and **LOCKBOX** from the disinterested **DISCHARGE CLERK**.

LEX
Where's the rest of my stuff?

DISCHARGE CLERK
Take it up with the court.

She hands her a **NOTICE** to appear before a judge.

DISCHARGE CLERK (CONT'D)
Sign and date at the bottom.

Lex scribbles down a signature, then takes her copy. The Clerk buzzes her through the **SECURITY DOOR** where she finds --

INT. POLICE STATION - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

-- Arjana waiting for her.

Lex blows past her. Arjana hurries to catch up.

ARJANA
Lex, wait.

LEX
I'm not paying you back.

ARJANA
I don't want it back.

LEX
Then we don't have anything else to talk about.

ARJANA
Just wait. Look, I-I don't want to
press charges.

Lex stops in her tracks.

LEX
Charges for what?

ARJANA
The police asked me if I wanted to
press charges. I don't want to --

LEX ARJANA (CONT'D)
Because I didn't do anything. But I will.

A tense beat as Lex and Arjana standoff, neither backing
down. Then finally --

LEX (CONT'D)
What do you want?

INT. ARJANA'S BOUTIQUE - DAY

A modest, beach inspired storefront, not quite ready for the
public. SIGNAGE leans against empty DISPLAY CASES. UNOPENED
BOXES of product are stacked in the corners.

Arjana leads Lex to what will be a checkout area.

ARJANA
My uncle connected me with a
private equity firm and they're
pushing to be a brick and mortar
brand. Liberté soft launches next
week.

LEX
(sarcastic)
I'm so happy for you.

Lex and Arjana meet Arjana's lawyer **HELEN YU** (30s, polished
and professional) behind the checkout counter.

Helen hands Lex a very thick, very legal-looking DOCUMENT,
and gets straight to business.

HELEN
Ms. Lira, this document states that
all intellectual property and any
Uhuru inventory will be transferred
to Arjana Incorporated, and Uhuru
will cease all operations,
effective immediately. Also any
disclosure of the terms of this
agreement can result in legal
action. Sign here, and here.

Lex reads it over, very unhappy with the terms.

LEX
So do I get anything? Like a
licensing fee or a percentage of
sales?

ARJANA
I think we can --

Helen holds up a finger, silencing Arjana.

HELEN
Miss Lira, may I remind you that
criminal weapons possession can
result in up to three years in
prison and a \$10,000 fine per
offense. You had 12 brass knuckles
at the time of your arrest, right?
(off Lex's look)
Now, I'm sure my client would be
happy to help your legal troubles
find a positive resolution if you
found yourself agreeable to our
terms, as outlined. Or perhaps
you'd rather take your chances with
a public defender.

Lex can't hide her loathing. Arjana notices, but keeps quiet.

LEX
I need to think about it.

HELEN
Of course. Just don't take too
long. Time is of the essence.

Lex turns to leave. Arjana follows after her.

ARJANA
Lex, wait! I want you to know I
feel terrible that things had to go
down like this.

LEX
With all due respect, fuck your
feelings, Amy. This is my life!

ARJANA
I know, but it isn't personal. It's
just business.

INT. LEX'S MOTORHOME - NIGHT

Lex, now hunched over her workbench, tools in hand. She moves with a heavy hand, slamming drawers, and banging her tools on the desk.

ON HER LAPTOP, a FaceTime call in progress.

TASHIA (ON FACETIME)
Of course it's personal!

INT. TASHIA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Modest with an ornate vanity. **TASHIA** (20s, Black, freckled and fierce), applies a number of makeup samples with a deft hand.

TASHIA
The bitch has her knee on your neck, metaphorically speaking.

INT. LEX'S MOTORHOME - SAME

Lex skillfully replaces the cracked screen on her phone.

LEX
I know. Like, you just throw all your humanity out the window for profits?

We **INTERCUT** between the two.

TASHIA
I mean, that is the American way.

LEX
I should've seen this coming. I mean, I watched my dad spend 30 years at the car plant just so some MBA executives -- who've never done an honest day's work in their lives -- can short his pension plan so, in the end, all he had left was debt and this motorhome. Meanwhile, they get a bail out and I could't even cover his funeral.

TASHIA
Fuck it. If everyone else can cheat and steal their way into the American Dream, why can't we?

LEX
Integrity?

TASHIA
Fuck integrity. It's a trap. I've got two degrees and yet, here I am feeding this algorithm so I can feed myself.
(beat)
How does this look?

Tashia holds her phone close to her face.

LEX

Orange. What is that?

TASHIA

Reaux Beauty's new foundation line. They sent me some samples to review. I guess they're trying to be inclusive and shit.

LEX

Of who? Garfield?

TASHIA

Girl. I can't.

She wipes the makeup off.

TASHIA (CONT'D)

So what are you going to do?

Lex flips to a page in her SKETCHBOOK, starts tinkering on a new project just out of frame.

LEX

I don't know, Tash. Maybe Arjana's right. Clearly, people want my ideas, they just don't want me. It's like, what is it about me that makes people think they can just take everything? Am I really that unworthy?

TASHIA

Stop. You are more than worthy. You are the blueprint. These culture vultures could never, ok? You just have to stop moving like you're desperate and remember who the fuck you are.

LEX

But I am desperate. Uhuru was all I had.

TASHIA

No. It was one idea. You have plenty more. Instead of clinging to the past, maybe this needed to end so you'll have the space to go after new opportunities in the future.

LEX

Is that from one of your TikTok gurus?

TASHIA

Celine is a spiritualist and energy healer and she be dropping bars, so don't knock the 'woo.'

LEX

No offense, but tarot cards aren't going to fix my problems right now.

TASHIA

Not tarot, but she does do these workshops in LA. You should go.

LEX

And do what?

TASHIA

Be open to life happening through you, not to you.

LEX

And if that doesn't work?

TASHIA

Bitch, beg. 'Cuz I need you to be successful so I can come visit, and I'm not sleeping in the motorhome. I'll DM you the deets.

END INTERCUT

We stay with Lex as she reveals what she was working on --

A newer, sleeker version of her BRASS KNUCKLE NECKLACE. She holds it up, lets out a hefty sigh.

OFF her bittersweet satisfaction --

INT. LEX'S MOTORHOME - NIGHT

Lex lies awake in bed flipping through a FAMILY SCRAPBOOK.

HER POV: A PHOTO of YOUNG LEX (8) and her MOM & DAD all smiles and posing in front of their motorhome.

A PHOTO of TEENAGE LEX (18) and her DAD at her high school graduation.

A PHOTO of Lex at her college graduation, alone.

The last photo brings up too many feelings. She bails on the walk down memory lane and pulls out her phone.

A **MONTAGE** of Lex's SOCIAL FEED:

A VIDEO of Tashia, now bare faced and looking very serious.

TASHIA

I was so excited to bring y'all a look using Reaux Beauty's new makeup line. I love their skin care and that Immortal Beauty Essence? Talk about Holy Grail! But Lord, this foundation? It's giving 50 shades of Garfield!

Lex "likes" the post. Scrolls on.

A VIDEO AD from @ReauxBeauty counts down to their new product launch with the caption, "*A brand new you is loading.*"

Lex scrolls on.

A PHOTO AD for Liberté by Arjana -- a "new" jewelry line empowering women to "be safe and stylish."

Lex reports the ad as SPAM.

END MONTAGE

DING DING! - A DM from Tashia

Lex clicks on the message and is taken to a VIDEO POST from @CelineLaLuna.

INSERT: CELINE'S IG VIDEO

CELINE (30s, bi-racial) -- an ethereal, bohemian woman in a flowing, white caftan -- speaks directly to camera. Her eyes peer directly into our soul.

CELINE

Are you feeling blocked? Like you don't deserve to live the life of your dreams? If this is the story you've been telling yourself, it's time to rewrite it. If you're seeing this message, it means a cosmic portal is opening for you. RSVP for my 'Reclaiming Your Power' workshop and take the first step toward the new you.

CLOSE ON Celine's face. Her natural beauty heightened by her dulcet tone and laid-back, inviting warmth, then --

DING! - A text from Arjana

ARJANA (V.O.)

Have you given any more thought to our offer?

BACK WITH LEX, something has shifted. She goes back to Celine's post, clicks on the RSVP link.

INT. HIGHER VIBES LA - NIGHT

Lex steps into a bright, modern metaphysical supply shop.

Aisles of colorful CRYSTALS run the floor. Shelves of new-age BOOKS and TAROT DECKS fill the walls, but there are no patrons in sight.

A faint SCREAM comes from the back of the shop. Lex inches forward, not sure if she heard what she thought she heard.

There it is again. Definitely a scream. This one more primal than pain.

She notices a door on the back wall, slightly ajar.

She opens it and finds herself in --

INT. HIGHER VIBES ONLY - COMMUNITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A dimly lit yoga studio.

Burning sage & sweetgrass waft through the air. A meditative R&B song rises up from WIRELESS SPEAKERS placed around the room.

ON THE FLOOR, we find the source of our screams -- A dozen WOMEN laying blindfolded on YOGA MATS in a semi-circle.

They breathe in unison to the beat and on the exhales, they SCREAM out.

IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM, we find CELINE, in all her self-possessed glory. She holds an ABALONE SHELL in one hand and a smoldering SAGE STICK in the other.

CELINE

That's it. Inhale and open yourself to the magic inside you. Let it awaken. Let it permeate every fiber of your being. Know that whatever you're feeling is perfect. There is no right or wrong. Give yourself permission to feel all of it. Now exhale, and let it go.

The women yell out. Loud, strong, frustrated.

CELINE (CONT'D)

Yass queens! Let it out. That rage, that fear, whatever is holding you back. It's time to let it go. You are too sacred, too blessed to be stressed and depressed.

The women exhale again, this time the screams are guttural.

Celine basks in it, entirely in her element.

Lex watches, beguiled. Then Celine spots her in the doorway. Waves her inside.

Off Lex's hesitance, we **CUT TO:**

INT. HIGHER VIBES ONLY - COMMUNITY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lex sits cross-legged on the floor with the other women. Celine hands her a MASON JAR filled with a brown, frothy liquid and motions for her to drink quickly.

Lex eyes the jar, suspicious, but sees empty jars around the other women. She chugs it.

CELINE
(to Lex)
Drop in whenever you're ready.

She lays back, takes a deep inhale, and gets in rhythm with the other ladies.

ON CELINE as she trades her sage for a WOODEN STAFF. She taps it on the ground creating a drumbeat for the women. It's giving Debbie Allen circa *Fame*.

The women's breath comes faster, in sync with each staff thump.

Lex gets in rhythm, as Celine yells out ---

CELINE (CONT'D)
Breath of fire!

The women unleash -- rapid, rhythmic synchronized breathing. It sounds like lamaze on steroids.

In a trancey, trap-heavy SEQUENCE, Celine dances and weaves between the women's writhing bodies.

LEX'S POV: Waves of color dance across the ceiling. Vibrant ribbons of red, blue, pink, and orange swirl together. She blinks, unsure of what she's seeing.

As the breathing builds toward climax, Celine moves toward the front of the room.

CELINE (CONT'D)
That's it, lovelies. Exhale and let go of all your anxieties. Don't be afraid to walk away. Burn those bridges and let them light the way forward. Now breathe into your power. Call it back to you now. Claim it! Name it!
(MORE)

CELINE (CONT'D)

It is yours and they can't take it
unless you let them.

She reaches a GONG at the front of the room. Trades her staff
for a MALLET. She draws back, then strikes.

BACK WITH LEX as the gong reverberates through the room,
washing away the colors. We've reached the end of the
ceremony. No more music, no more screams. Just silence.

The energy in the room shifts, like a weight lifted.

CELINE (CONT'D)

Just let it wash over you.

Some women sob softly, others hold themselves.

CELINE (CONT'D)

Do you feel it? This peace? This
clarity? This is your power.
Embrace it and know that you are
rooted and supported by the great
magic inside of you. The same magic
that flows through all of the
Universe. Asé.

Lex lays there for a beat, trying to make sense of what just
happened.

OFF her bewilderment --

INT. HIGHER VIBES ONLY - COMMUNITY ROOM - LATER

After class, Lex watches as several WOMEN swarm Celine.

She rolls up her mat, waits for them to leave, then makes her
approach.

LEX

I uh, I really liked that last
track.

CELINE

Thank you! It's a Celine Original.
And thanks for bringing your energy
to the group.

Then Celine notices Lex's necklace -- version 2.0 of her
brass knuckle UHURU piece.

CELINE (CONT'D)

Oh! I love your necklace.

LEX

Thanks, it's a Lex original. I'm
Lex.

Celine smiles, extends a hand, but Lex stumbles back, woozy. Celine catches her.

CELINE
When was the last time you ate?

INT. HOLLYWOOD DINER - NIGHT

A trendy and ironic eatery. The type of place that has a Michelin Star in a strip mall.

Celine inhales a sandwich as Lex sops up the last of her meal with a biscuit.

CELINE
Was that your first time doing cacao?

LEX
Yeah.

CELINE
But not your last, obvi. What'd you see?

LEX
Just colors, I think. Is that normal?

CELINE
The cacao opens your heart, and the breathwork can make your body release DMT, so people see visions. It's usually more like a lucid dream.

LEX
Hm. I think my system processes stuff like that too fast. Must be from all the Benadryl my mom gave me as a kid to 'help me sleep.'

She meant it as a joke, but Celine doesn't find it funny.

CELINE
Oh my god, Lex. That's terrible.

LEX
I survived.

CELINE
Are you close with your parents?

LEX
My parents were...complicated. They're both gone now.

CELINE

I'm so sorry for your loss.

LEX

Thanks. So how often do you do the workshops?

CELINE

It really depends on how much time I'm spending with my regulars. Some clients require more...healing than others. Like I had one client, this R&B artist, she was in a real crisis of confidence when we started working together. She felt like she wasn't good enough. People kept telling her to change her image. Typical industry shit, you know? Ultimately, she realized that she needed to step back, spend some time out of the spotlight. So I was able to help her get some songwriting gigs with one of my other clients, and in helping her, I realized I could be using my skills so much more to help our community.

LEX

That's dope. So are the workshops always free?

CELINE

Yeah, so many of us need this type of healing, but I know cost can be a real barrier, so I take the money from my clients who can pay, and pay it forward to those who can't.

LEX

Like a spiritual Robin Hood.

CELINE

Exactly! But I want to know more about you. What's the deal with this jewelry?

LEX

Uh, it started out just as a few pieces for myself. I move around a lot. Have found myself in more than a few situations that weren't the safest. And you know, being a Black woman and all. So I made the jewelry to stay safe and stylish, and as it turns out a lot of other people wanted that too.

CELINE

That's so cool. Did you go to school for that?

LEX

For jewelry design? No. I studied engineering, but I've always liked working with my hands, fixing things. It grounds me.

CELINE

I feel that. And if you think about it, jewelry making is just engineering on a micro level.

LEX

Exactly!

Lex has never felt so seen.

CELINE

So what's next for your line?

LEX

Nothing actually.

(off her look)

I had a classmate who was a massive failure at her thing, so she stole my thing. And long story short, she has deep pockets and really good lawyers. So now I don't know if I should fight for it or just move on to the next thing.

CELINE

Maybe there's a way to do both.

Lex leans in, intrigued.

CELINE (CONT'D)

If your pockets aren't deep enough to fight, you just have to find an ally whose are. Trust me, there's no shortage of people in this town who would love nothing more than the free PR of being a champion for a good underdog cause. And you, *mon pote*, are a very rootable underdog.

LEX

I don't know. I don't want pity.

CELINE

It's not pity. It's capitalism. You do what you have to until you have enough to do what you want.

Lex mulls it over. Then an ALARM goes off on Celine's phone.

CELINE (CONT'D)

Actually, I have to run to this thing, but it could be a good place to network, if you're down?

I/E. CELINE'S BRONCO - NIGHT

Celine and Lex cruise down Sunset Boulevard as "Rhiannon" by Fleetwood Mac blares from the stereo.

Celine sings along and, to her surprise, Lex joins in.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

The song continues as Celine's Bronco serpentine through Laurel Canyon and finally reaches --

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS MANSION - ESTABLISHING

-- the Bronco creeps up to a large mansion, passing a dozen INFLUENCERS walking up on foot and dressed to impress.

INT. BRONCO - CONTINUOUS

Lex watches out the window, then looks down at her own attire, insecure. Celine clocks it, offers some assurance.

CELINE

You're perfect. Don't worry.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS MANSION - NIGHT

An opulent mansion party. A long, BLACK CARPET leads the way inside.

Celine struts up the carpet like she owns the place, ignoring the influencers snapping photos & videos. Lex stumbles along behind her, in awe of the spectacle.

IN THE ENTRY WAY, Lex clocks the REAUX BEAUTY LOGO -- the tree of life surrounded by an ouroboros -- projected on the floor.

INT. MANSION - GRAND ROOM - SAME

More INFLUENCERS mill about, chatting amongst themselves.

ALONG THE PERIMETER, PEDESTALS showcasing Reaux Beauty Skin Care products, including their Immortal Beauty Essence -- an opalescent serum in a gilded, bulb-shaped bottle.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM, a well-lit platform shows off the star of the evening, the MAKEUP LINE. Vials of FOUNDATION in an array of shades are on full display.

ON THE WALL, a stylish, black & white product PROMO VIDEO plays on a loop. Underneath it, a small, empty STAGE.

Lex's head spins, but Celine isn't fazed. Instead, she looks toward the stage, noticing a petite BRUNETTE with a topknot.

This is **DAHLIA DEVEREAUX** (early 20s, white, overworked and overwhelmed), currently arguing with a **CAMERA TECH** over the positions of a half dozen cameras set to film the stage.

Celine waves to Dahlia, who looks beyond relieved to see her.

CELINE

(to Lex)

Ok, I've got to go get ready.

LEX

For what?

CELINE

You'll see. Just hang here.

LEX

And do what?

CELINE

Mingle. This is a room full of opportunity. Opportune.

Lex watches as Celine heads toward the stage area.

She does her best to mingle, which is more like an awkward hover near people.

She turns her attention to the promo video.

INSERT PROMO: We SOAR over an expansive desert, landing on a sapling, pushing up through the barren landscape.

A TIME LAPSE as that sapling grows into a MIGHTY PINE TREE. We pull back revealing the tree, now surrounded by an oasis.

Then the Devereauxs appear on screen, three flawless siblings with slicked back hair. Barefaced and skin on full glow.

Underneath them, a caption floats by --

"Let your magic shine through."

The scene fades and is replaced with the Reaux Beauty Logo.

BACK IN THE ROOM, Lex is underwhelmed. She turns her attention to the other products.

HER POV: An INFO CARD -- *Immortal Beauty Essence*.

*...Made with Mystique Complex @ ...Sustainable Beauty
...Bottled in California ...Tested on Humans.*

Then the sound of FAKE, POLITE LAUGHTER gets her attention.

She turns around to find two **INFLUENCERS** gushing over a glowing goddess of a woman.

Lex recognizes her immediately from the promo. It's **DEMI DEVEREAUX** (32, white, intimidatingly beautiful with a practiced grace).

Demi's glow is even brighter in person. Her perfect, brunette balayage billows like an invisible fan is blowing on her.

Lex inches a little closer, listens in.

BEAUTY INFLUENCER

I love your commitment to clean beauty. And no animal testing? I align with it so much.

BODY POSITIVITY INFLUENCER

And as a body-positivity influencer, I really appreciate your commitment to inclusion.

DEMI

Well, we strive to make our products reflective of the world we live in.

Demi notices Lex hovering.

DEMI (CONT'D)

And what about you? What do you do?

LEX

Me?

DEMI

Yeah, I saw you come in with Celine.

BEAUTY INFLUENCER
I love Celine.

BODY POSITIVITY INFLUENCER
Love her!

LEX
I'm a...jewelry designer.

BEAUTY INFLUENCER
That's fun.

BODY POSITIVITY INFLUENCER
So fun.

DEMI
(intrigued)
I've been wanting to start a jewelry line, but haven't found the right collaborator to capture my vision. I'd do it myself, but unfortunately that's not my gift.

LEX
Well I just finished a project, I'd love to--

BODY POSITIVITY INFLUENCER
Don't I know you from somewhere?

LEX
I don't think so.

BEAUTY INFLUENCER
Oh my God. You're 'Brass Knuck If You Buck!'

LEX
What?

The Beauty Influencer pulls out a PHONE.

INSERT IG VIDEO: An alternate angle of Lex's scuffle with Arjana and the Beach Cops, remixed to "Knuck If You Buck" by Crime Mob.

She checks the views -- 300,000 and counting.

ON LEX as her rage rises.

BEAUTY INFLUENCER
Don't go off, sis.

LEX
First of all, I'm not your sis --

But then she notices the Body Positivity Influencer filming her reaction. Demi clocks it too, interjects.

DEMI

Coming up off of beating someone else down is such a low vibe. Maybe you should see yourself out.

She waves her hand and a **SECURITY GUARD** emerges from the crowd, escorts both influencers to the door.

LEX

Thank you.

DEMI

Fucking vultures. They'll do anything for clout.

Then the house lights dim.

DEMI (CONT'D)

That's my cue. But it was so nice to meet you. Hopefully I'll see you later.

Demi disappears toward the stage. Lex watches after her, amazed and a little starstruck.

INT. MANSION - GRAND ROOM - STAGE = MOMENTS LATER

Fog rolls in, blanketing the stage in white smoke.

The soundtrack from the promo begins to boom over the speakers. The room falls silent, all eyes on the stage.

Then Demi and Dahlia emerge from the mist, bathed in white light.

The crowd goes wild. They take it in, gracious and faux-humble.

They milk it a beat too long, then Demi takes a mic, motions for everyone to quiet down. Instant silence.

DEMI

I want to thank the Goddess for bringing us all together tonight. 150 years ago, our great-great grandmother started selling homemade wellness elixirs with the goal of making every woman feel powerful. Mémé Devereaux would be so proud to see what the seeds of her dream have blossomed into.

The crowd applauds.

Demi looks to Dahlia, who is frozen like a deer in headlights. She's not built for the spotlight, so Demi continues --

DEMI (CONT'D)

Thanks to the generosity and guidance of our partners at the Arbor Group, we have been able to expand on Mémé's vision with a new line of products that will usher in the start of a global era for Reaux Beauty. And to bless this next step, please welcome our sister Deana to perform the world premiere of her new single!

Demi surrenders the stage to her younger sister **DEANA DEVEREAUX** (late 20s, white, nihilistic & narcissistic).

Deana steps into the spotlight, takes the mic.

DEANA

It's Duchess, bitches!

She looks to the DJ booth.

REVEAL Celine at the turntables.

She drops a SPIRITUAL TRAP BEAT -- heavy 808s with layered vocal chants and R&B harmonies.

A calm washes over Deana, she shuts her eyes, vibes on the beat, then **goes off**.

All eyes are on the stage, but Lex watches the crowd. Some people record the performance, but then she notices some people are whispering and pointing at HER.

Then someone bumps into her, hard. She looks around, but the person has disappeared into the crowd.

She sees a few phones angled in her direction, waiting for her to react.

Uneasy and unsettled, she decides to see herself out.

INT. LEX'S MOTORHOME - MORNING

DING DING! Lex stirs awake, searches for her phone.

She finds it, sees dozens of **NOTIFICATIONS** -- tags from the launch party. She needs coffee before she can face them.

She rolls out of bed and makes her way to the kitchenette, turns her attention to the COFFEE POT.

She tosses out the day-old grounds, grabs a fresh bag of coffee from the cabinet and dumps it in the filter, but there's barely any left.

She looks down at the grounds in the trash. **CUT TO:**

Lex leans against her counter, sipping a hot, bitter cup of coffee. She collects herself, then opens her phone.

INSERT SOCIAL FEED:

- A VIDEO: The Body Positivity influencer's reaction video but it's edited to look like Lex is going after Demi.

LEX (V.O.)
First of all, I'm not your sis.

DEMI (V.O.)
This is such a low vibe. Maybe you should see yourself out.

Lex scrolls to the comments, sees one from @DemiDevereaux

DEMI (V.O.)
Great edit. Too bad it never happened. Hashtag love and light. Prayer hands emoji.

- ANOTHER VIDEO: The Beauty Influencer outside the Reaux Beauty party.

BEAUTY INFLUENCER (V.O.)
Just had a run in with 'Brass Knuck If You Buck' at the Reaux Beauty party. If security hadn't shown up, I swear she would've killed me.

IN THE COMMENTS: Another one from Demi --

DEMI (V.O.)
As I recall, security escorted you out. Hashtag clout chasers never prosper. Peace sign emoji.

- ANOTHER VIDEO: The original "viral video" of Lex and Arjana's scuffle. The view count now closing in on a million views.

IN THE COMMENTS: One from Tashia --

TASHIA (V.O.)
Shame on you for stealing from Black creatives. Hashtag we did it first. Hashtag boycott Arjana.

DING DING! -- New DM from @CelinaLaLuna.

Lex clicks on Celine's message.

CELINE (V.O.)
Sorry we missed you last night.

Lex types her response, then retypes something more 'chill'.

LEX (V.O.)
Personal emergency. Had dip out out early.

CELINE (V.O.)
*No worries! Hope all is well.
 Heading to the Desert for the weekend if you wanna keep the good vibes up. P.S. Demi said she won't take no for an answer!*

Celine sends through a MAP SCREENSHOT with the location.

DING DING! -- A new notification: *@DemiDevereaux is now following you!*

Lex beams, but her elation is cut short by --

DING! -- A text from Arjana.

ARJANA (TEXT)
No pressure, but I'd really love to get this closed out sooner rather than later.

BACK WITH LEX as she weighs her options, then --

EXT. CALIFORNIA HIGH DESERT - DUSK

Lex's motorhome barrels down a two-lane desert highway and right past the town sign for DANSBURY.

As the exhaust clears, we LINGER on something in the distance.

A PLUME OF DUST cutting across the open desert.

EXT. OPEN DESERT - CONTINUOUS

A Mad Max-style CARAVAN of heavily reinforced, off-road vehicles cuts across the barren land -- The Stags.

They race onward, on a collision course with our heroine.