

DUKKHA

Written by

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EXT. SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

MIA GUERRERO (20's) a hope to die alcoholic, wearing extra large glasses, hoop's, and a dark colored outfit reminiscent of the 90's is loading her car with alcohol.

By the look of it, it's going to be quite a party.

She looks around. She notices the cart corral is far, across the parking lot.

Damn forget that...she nods no way.

She pushes the cart and awkwardly leaves it in the most obnoxious location directly behind a car.

She walks away without a care.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mia, in a dark colored party dress and extremely high heels, and a sad picture of addiction. Bags under her eyes, hair disheveled.

She is sitting on a closed toilet seat and digging through her purse.

FAST HEARTBEAT HEAVY BREATHING

She pulls out a prescription pill bottle, she opens it, shakes out several pills, onto her palm. She swallows them with the help of an alcoholic drink.

EXHALE BREATH, she needed that, with a...Nirvana. She relaxes for a moment.

SLOWED HEARTBEAT

LATER

She pulls out some makeup, a picture pop's out of her bag and onto the floor. She bends down and picks it up...

It's a picture of her daughter EMMA (4). She looks at the photo, overcome with sadness.

MIA

Carajo, que vida de mierda.

LATER

In front of the mirror, and with full face of heavy makeup.

GUY forcefully KNOCK's on the door. Mia looks towards the door, now a bit loaded from the pills and booze.

GUY (O.S.)
Come on Mia, you've been in there
forever.

MIA
I'm coming.

Looking towards the door she shakes it off her emotions.

Next she takes a drink and another look in the mirror. She heads for the bathroom door and opens it.

At the doorway hands in the air.

MIA (CONT'D)
Who's ready to party!

She exits.

EXT. COURT HOUSE - DAY

INSERT STOCK FOOTAGE- OUTSIDE SHOT OF COURT HOUSE

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

INSERT STOCK FOOTAGE - A GAVEL HITS

INSERT STOCK FOOTAGE - AN ATTORNEY ADDRESSES COURT

CSW (V.O.)
Your honor while we understand that
Ms. Guerrero is still grieving the
loss of her husband...

INSERT STOCK FOOTAGE - A HOSPITAL, A FLATLINE

INSERT STOCK FOOTAGE- A GRAVESTONE

JUDGE (V.O.)
Remind the court of how Mr.
Guerrero died.

CSW (V.O.)
He overdosed your honor. As I was
saying she has done nothing to
comply with the counties mandates.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A room in disarray. Clothes, food containers, and bottles everywhere.

Mia, wakes, still in the same dress. Makeup smeared all over her face. Damn the sun is bright. She looks over her shoulder at Guy, full of tattoos and sleeping on his stomach.

CSW (V.O.)

She is homeless, and apparently couch surfing. Not an environment for a child.

Quickly she pops up, and out of the bedroom.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mia heads for the kitchen. She takes a bottle and a glass.

Forget the glass she needs the drink now. She takes a swig from the bottle.

Mia dances bottle in hand, carefree she rhythmically dances.

CSW (V.O.)

Based on Mrs. Guerrero's actions, it just doesn't seem she's interested in getting her child back. We recommend termination of parental rights.

Mia's face...shock. She drop's the bottle.

JUDGE (V.O.)

What about Rehab? Mrs. Guerrero would you be willing to go to rehab?

Silence.

FLASH:

Mia's daughter's photo and the bottle.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mia's face, intense.

MIA

Yes.

TIME PASSES

SUPER: OVER OUTSIDE SHOT OF CENTER - ONE BREATH AT A TIME
REHABILITATION CENTER

INT. REHAB - DAY

A slightly healthier looking Mia talking into a landline phone.

MIA

Okay, yes. Yes I have a pass now.
So the mall? Okay. Eleven? Oh no,
one. Okay, one in front of the
Macy's entrance. I'll see you then.

We meet Mia's Counselor CELENE.

CELENE

Three hours, good for you Mia.

MIA

I cant wait to see Emma.

Celene smiles and Mia walks off.

EXT. MALL EAST ENTRANCE - DAY

SUPER: OVER SHOT OF MIA OUTSIDE THE MALL - 12:25

Mia stands in front of the Macy's entrance. She holds a stuffed animal.

EXT. MALL WEST ENTRANCE - DAY

SUPER: OVER SHOT OF TAYLOR AND EMMA - 1:15

TAYLOR (60s) upperclass, uptight, a bit harsh, a foster mother, and EMMA (4) wait. Emma looks at Taylor. Taylor smiles politely.

EXT. MALL EAST ENTRANCE - DAY

SUPER: OVER SHOT OF TAYLOR AND EMMA - 1:25

Mia looks at her watch, and grow's anxious.

MIA

Maybe she meant the other entrance.

Mia takes off running.

EXT. MALL WEST ENTRANCE - DAY

SUPER: OVER SHOT OF TAYLOR AND EMMA - 1:25

Taylor looks at Emma, regretfully.

TAYLOR

I'm sorry Emma, I don't think your
mommy is coming.

Mia runs.

EMMA

I think she is, she promised.

Mia runs.

TAYLOR

Emma, your mommy makes a lot of
promises she doesn't keep. I just
don't think she cares enough to
change her life. Come now lets go
home.

EXT. MALL WEST ENTRANCE- DAY

SUPER: 1:32

Mia reaches the entrance. No sign of Emma

MIA

Oh my God she's going to think I
didn't show.

Behind Mia, over her shoulder we see Taylor and Emma walking
away.

Defeated Mia, walks in anther direction.

INT. REHAB - DAY

Mia is sitting at a table sobbing, a stack of papers in her
lap and a suitcase nearby.

Celene enters purse on her shoulder and quickly notices the
suitcase.

CELENE

What aren't you in mediation group?

MIA
I'm leaving this isn't working.

CELENE
Are you sober?

MIA
Yes.

CELENE
Then whats not working?

Mia shows her the documents.

MIA
Look at this.

Celene sits and takes the stack, looks through the documents for a moment.

CELENE
Maybe you're not the best thing for that kid.

MIA
Are you crazy? I'm her mother.

CELENE
Mia you have to make a choice.

MIA
I made a choice I came here didn't I?

Celene looks through her bag and pulls out a highlighter.

CELENE
Right with the expectation that if you stay sober you will get Emma back.

MIA
Of course, why else would I do all of this.

CELENE
For you, because it's the right thing to do. You can't get sober with expectations. No one owes you anything. You in turn owe. You owe and you will never stop owing.

MIA
Celene...it's not fair.

CELENE
Honey, the Fair is in Pomona.

Mia cracks a smile, she turns serious again.

MIA
I've been working my butt off...and
this report has nothing but
negative things to say about me.

Celene points to the document.

CELENE
Whats true?

MIA
Nothings true. That worker just
wants to see me suffer.

Celene scans the document a bit.

CELENE
Mia your life, your suffering is
all your own making. Not drinking
and drugging isn't enough.

Celene hands the highlighter o Mia.

CELENE (CONT'D)
It's time to work on true sobriety.
Which means to be of sound mind.

MIA
I am of sound mind.

CELENE
Are you? Do you think someone of
sound mind would refuse to take
responsibility for their actions?

MIA
No.

Celene points out something on the document.

CELENE
Look here it says you neglected
Emma. Can you agree you were
neglectful?

Mia thinks, she doesn't want to admit its true.

MIA
Yes.

Celene hands the document back to Mia.

Celene motions For Mia to highlight.

CELENE
Highlight what's true.

Mia scans the report. With a highlighter in hand, she forcefully and briskly swipes the page.

We see the words amplified in each sentence. GENERAL NEGLECT, FAILED DRUG TESTS, DISAPPEARING WITHOUT NOTICE OF WHEREABOUTS, they pop of the page with each highlight.

CELENE (O.S) (CONT'D)
The suffering comes from never being satisfied. Our inability to accept things as they are. Our constant need for more. It's the unwillingness to just be.

Mia nods in agreement.

Mia reads through the document highlighting.

Again we see words amplified in each sentence. MISSED VISTS, PROMISES MOTHER DOES NOT KEEP pop off the page with each highlight.

CELENE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Addiction is a selfish, fear driven, self-centered, state of existence.

Celene reaches for Mia's hand, this is important.

CELENE (CONT'D)
Recovery is about thinking of others. It's putting the shopping cart back, because it's the right thing to do.

Mia pauses and looks to Celene.

MIA
Shopping cart? Are you serious. That seems pretty stupid if you ask me.

One more highlight, then Mia looks to Celene for approval.

CELENE

Good, start. You can finish this
later, go to meditation.

INT. MEDITATION GROUP - DAY

FAST HEARTBEAT

Mia sits on a pillow in deep meditation.

She INHALES. Her feet are in the Lotus position.

She HOLDS - SILENCE. In her hand meditation beads.

She EXHALES. Her face serene.

SLOWED HEARTBEAT - SILENCE

She is transformed the clear light of Nirvana overtakes her.

EXT. STORE - DAY

A much healthier looking Mia color's/enlightenment?. Unpacks
her groceries and places them in her car.

She looks at the cart, she looks for the corral, it's far.
Mia roll's her eyes.

MIA

Fine.

She takes the cart and walks it to the cart corral.

She walks back to her car. After a few seconds... huge smile
stretches across her face.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mia and Emma walk down the street hand in hand. Mia is
talking with Emma.

We can't hear what they are saying but they look happy. Emma
skips along.

She is going home. Mia carries her suitcase.

SUPER: "BOTH BUDDHISM AND THE TWELVE STEPS ARE KEPT ALIVE,
GENERATION TO GENERATION BY SINCERE AND DEEPLY COMMITTED
PRACTITIONERS..." - KEVEN GRIFFIN

