

9 Months

Milky Tran

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INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Cheap velvet chairs against an outdated wallpaper.

A petite Asian-American woman, LILIANA PHAM (23), sporting a messy "I cut my own hair after a breakup" hairdo sits. She picks at the chipped nail polish on her fingernails.

A lanky teen, KENNY (16), slowly approaches her. She doesn't notice.

KENNY

Hey-

LILIANA

(startled)

Oh-

KENNY

Yeah, he's ready for you.

LILIANA

Oh, okay.

Liliana grabs her bag and follows Kenny.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Liliana sits. We don't see her surroundings or who is interviewing her.

LILIANA

I'm a great people pleaser.

FRED

You're moving from New York?

LILIANA

Oh, I'm from here originally. I went to Sarah Lawrence-- journalism major. Lived in New York for another year after that, working for Vice News.

Liliana loses focus as she thinks about her old life.

FRED

Wow, okay. So what makes you want to work here?

Liliana clears her throat to displace undue emotion.

LILIANA

I fell in love with the wrong person.

She gets lost in the memory.

LILIANA

He treated me really well from the beginning. Dated all through undergrad, helped me study and land my dream job. Coached me through the interview. Never complained once when I left the light on to work while he slept.

She swallows.

LILIANA

And then he said Maddie was just a friend. They just work together.

ENTER FLASHBACK:

INT. OFFICE BREAKROOM - DAY

A bearded, attractive man, TYLER (24), squeezes the butt of a blonde co-worker, MADDIE (26). She hits him playfully. He grabs her abruptly, and they kiss passionately.

LILIANA (V.O.)

And I even asked him specifically if he liked her or anything, but only, like, half as a joke because I don't want to seem insecure or jealous. And he accused me of liking Pat, which I told him I definitely don't, so I never brought it up again.

Tyler sits Maddie on the table and she sits on top of his phone.

INT. VICE OFFICE - DAY

Liliana looks lost into the distance with her phone against her ear.

LILIANA (V.O.)

I heard them laughing. And then I saw the texts.

Liliana WAILS and CRIES heavily in the middle of her office. A co-worker attempts to comfort her, but Liliana screams at

her and waves her away.

INT. TYLER AND LILIANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Liliana starts pushing hard at Tyler.

LILIANA  
(weeping and screaming)  
ARE YOU FUCKING HER? TELL ME, TELL ME!

She heartbreakingly whimpers and crumbles onto the bed.

LILIANA (V.O.)  
I couldn't get out of bed. I couldn't  
come into work. I couldn't talk to him  
or anyone. Everything in New York  
reminded me of him. My mom was worried  
about me but really, I'm worried about  
her.

END FLASHBACK. BACK TO:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Liliana is nearly in tears.

LILIANA  
I talked with her, and we thought it  
was best to give everything up. And  
maybe not get it back.

Liliana looks up, finally, out of her daze.

LILIANA (CONT.)  
So I gave it all up. And I'm here.

We see the office, heavily decorated in gaudy Red Lobster  
logos and memorabilia.

Beat.

FRED  
Can you start Friday?

TITLE CARD:

MONTH 1 - MARCH.

INT. CAR - DAY

Liliana drives while talking on the phone with her spunky

mother, ANI (55).

LILIANA  
Yeah, Friday.

ANI (O.S.)  
Wow! That's amazing, honey!

LILIANA  
Thanks, mom.

ANI (O.S.)  
Maybe you'll find a nice guy there.

LILIANA  
They all play high school lacrosse.

Ani coughs hard through the phone.

LILIANA  
Aw, mom. Let me take you to the  
doctor.

ANI (O.S.)  
What? For allergies?

LILIANA  
Those aren't allergies! You've had  
that cough for like a month.

ANI (O.S.)  
How would you know, you just got here?

LILIANA  
Because every time you would call,  
you'd cough directly into the phone.

ANI (O.S.)  
I don't!

Ani coughs directly into the phone.

LILIANA  
Mom, it scares me. I'm so tired-

ANI (O.S.)  
-Fine, fine, fine. This week.

LILIANA  
Well, I was gonna head to the store to  
pick up some Advil-

ANI (O.S.)  
What's going on with you?

LILIANA  
Headache again. I'll head to the store  
later. Let's get your cough done  
today.

ANI (O.S.)  
(irritated)  
Lili, are you serious?

LILIANA  
If it's not a big deal, it'll be fast.  
I start work this week, and I can only  
handle so many things going wrong at  
once.

ANI (O.S.)  
Fine. But you have to clean your room  
after.

LILIANA  
I'm 23. See you soon. Mwah!

Liliana hangs up the phone. She turns the music on the radio  
up. She mumbles some of the words.

INT. URGENT CARE - DAY

Peachy, plump and white, Ani, wearing patterned leggings and  
a long shirt, talks to a RECEPTIONIST. Liliana stands behind  
her.

RECEPTIONIST  
So sign the front and back. Initial on  
the third page.

Ani coughs. A beard peaks out from behind a wall. Liliana  
eyes drift to it. Is it Tyler?

RECEPTIONIST (CONT.)  
Fill out any medication you're taking  
on the last page, and bring it back up  
whenever you're ready.

Liliana regains focus.

ANI  
Thank you-

LILIANA

-Thank you.

The mother and daughter duo walk towards the waiting area. Ani fills out the form as Liliana rests her face into her hands.

Ani notices.

ANI

You feeling all right?

LILIANA

Yeah, just kind of nauseous.

The man with the beard stands up and is fully in view.

It is not Tyler. Liliana's eyes still follow him as he exits to another room.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

In a white, sterile room, Ani sits on the examining bed as a female doctor, DR. FARROW (mid-40's) touches her chest with a stethoscope. Liliana watches closely.

DR. FARROW

Cough for me again.

Ani coughs. Dr. Farrow moves the stethoscope.

DR. FARROW

So how long has it been going on?

LILIANA

She'd cough pretty often, but it wasn't bad until about 3 months ago.

ANI

I work at Shelly's Cleaning Services.

DR. FARROW

Do you wear a mask as you clean?

Beat.

ANI

Well, I've been doing it for 25 years.  
I gotta wear a mask for 25 years?

DR. FARROW  
 (laughing)  
 I've been a doctor for 8, and I'm  
 saying yes.

ANI  
 Only 8?

DR. FARROW  
 I went to med school in my 30's. A bit  
 late but never too late. Open for me.

Ani opens her mouth. Dr. Farrow looks down her throat.

ANI  
 (trying to talk)  
 Lili might go to med school.

LILIANA  
 What?

ANI  
 I said you might go to med school.

LILIANA  
 (irritatedly)  
 Why? Why would I go?

ANI  
 I mean, that's what you said you  
 wanted to do when you were little. I  
 just thought maybe now that things  
 didn't work out-

LILIANA  
 What's wrong with my job now?

Beat.

ANI  
 Noth-

LILIANA  
 You were telling me how amazing it is.

ANI  
 It is... for now!--

DR. FARROW  
 Open again.

Dr. Farrow examines her throat more curiously.

LILIANA

-I'm fine where I am now and you can't be disappointed in me if I stay there for maybe forever. Like, I need you to stop worrying about what I do next because I won't know either. I can't be a doctor. Seeing sick people all day sucks.

(looks to Dr. Farrow)

Sorry.

Dr. Farrow shakes off the comment but looks at Ani in a concerned manner.

DR. FARROW

I'm gonna head next door. I did notice an abnormality in your throat. Your lymph nodes are also enlarged, which often happens when you're struck with a virus, but yours were a fair amount larger than the common cold, and in combination with your occupation and work environment, I think it's very necessary we get a sample of the lymph node.

Dr. Farrow looks at both women and exits.

Liliana shares an unhappy look to her mother. She follows Dr. Farrow out.

LILIANA

Okay, but what are you saying it could be?

DR. FARROW

We still have to run tests, so I don't think it's fair to worry any of us.

LILIANA

But you're, like, the doctor. What are you testing for?

Beat.

DR. FARROW

Nothing is confirmed, but seeing what I'm seeing and knowing that your mother has been surrounded by asbestos

everyday for 25 years, it's a decent call to test her for, um, throat cancer.

Liliana stares at her. She feels her legs buckle beneath her.

She loses consciousness.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

Liliana is lying on the bed her mother was once seated on as NURSE BLAKE stands next to her.

Liliana blinks awake.

NURSE BLAKE  
Oh, she's coming to.

ANI  
Lili?

Liliana looks around.

LILIANA  
Wha-

NURSE BLAKE  
You fainted. Outside the doorway of your mother's room.

ANI  
Baby, how are you feeling?

LILIANA  
(sighs)  
My head's kind of-- wow.

Nurse Blake hands her a cup of water.

NURSE BLAKE  
Take your time. Whenever you feel ready, I'm just gonna ask you a couple of questions and we can do a few tests.

LILIANA  
Why?

ANI  
You never fainted before, honey.

LILIANA

Yeah, because you never were this sick.

Beat.

Nurse Blake clears her throat.

NURSE BLAKE

I'll give you time to yourself first.

She hands a plastic urine sample cup to Liliana.

NURSE BLAKE

But again, whenever you're feeling strong enough, I want you to head to the bathroom and get me a sample.

Liliana looks at the cup.

NURSE BLAKE

There should be a little metal door on the wall. Just leave your sample there, and I'll come back in the room to ask you those questions.

Nurse Blake leaves the room.

LILIANA

Did they do it yet?

ANI

They got a sample but the tests will take awhile.

There's silence.

ANI

I don't know.

The two share a sorrowful look.

Ani takes a seat.

Liliana sits up slowly. She takes a deep breath and looks around the room.

LILIANA

I'm heading to the bathroom.

Liliana exits as Ani watches her.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Liliana looks at her face in the bathroom mirror. She touches her head where it hit the floor gently.

She touches her face and sees how aged it is.

Liliana pees into the cup. She caps it and puts it through the metal door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Liliana travels the hallway.

She sees a small old woman in a wheelchair exit a room with a younger woman. They cheerily laugh together.

OLD WOMAN  
I ain't going nowhere.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Nowhere?

OLD WOMAN  
Why would I?

YOUNG WOMAN  
Gotta go somewhere.

OLD WOMAN  
I'm gonna be right here.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Is that right?

OLD WOMAN  
You can bet all my savings on it.

YOUNG WOMAN  
What savings?

OLD WOMAN  
Your name is off the will.

They laugh again. Liliana looks at the pair and goes back into the screening room.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

Ani has not moved. She is looking through a pamphlet about Hepatitis.

She is so fascinated she almost does notice Liliana sit on the bed.

ANI

Did you know there's a Hepatitis A, B, C and E, but no D? That's kind of funny.

She sets the pamphlet aside.

ANI

What do you want for dinner?

LILIANA

I have a discount at Red Lobster.

They laugh a little.

LILIANA

I just want to go home.

Liliana sits on the bed and picks at the fabric.

ANI

Where are the car keys?

Ani looks through Liliana's bag on a seat and pulls out car keys.

LILIANA

What are you doing? You shouldn't be doing stuff.

Ani also takes out chapstick from the bag.

ANI

Just because you're single, doesn't mean you don't moisturize your lips.

She starts applying the chapstick on Liliana.

LILIANA

Mom-

She half pushes her away.

ANI

It's like parmesan cheese.

LILIANA

Oh my god-