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## Life on the Cusp

### Prologue

(Scene opens to the inside of an apartment complex in the slums of Los Angeles.. It is a dark and cold night. A young man, with a backpack slung around his shoulder, is walking out of the worn down doors out of the apartment. The mother, with a baby nestled in her arms runs after him with a frantic look strewn across her face.)

Elana: Daniel! Stop! Where are you going?

(Daniel turns around and faces her still slowly walking backwards)

Daniel: I'm leaving. I can't deal with the price of you and the baby. I'm going to get a better job and more money, make a life of my own. Say goodbye to Lindsay for me.

Elana (worry on her face): But the child! What will I do without you?

Daniel: Elana, trust me my love, you will live. Find a better man that can provide for you. (Daniel turns back around and walks away into the dark night.)

(Scene fades out as Elana is left sobbing on the sidewalk.)

### Scene One

(Fast forward 14 years later, as Lindsay is remembering this moment as a daydream . She blinks and is brought back to reality. The smell of canned meatloaf lingers in the air of a small, frayed kitchen. A little girl is humming a song while playing with toys on the kitchen floor.)

Lindsay: Holly, clean up your toys dinner is almost ready. Mom will not be home until late again so I will be tucking you in here after dinner ok?

(Holly frantically picks up the toys and puts them away)

Holly: Ok! When's mama coming home?

Lindsay (with a strained look on her face): You know it won't be until very late baby girl. She took the late night shift at the diner tonight. But no worries, you'll see her tomorrow. (Lindsay takes out two plates from the cupboard.) Grab your dinner then I'll read you a bedtime story.

(Holly and Lindsay eat and finish dinner. Then Lindsay picks up both of their dishes and goes to clean up. Holly picks her toys back up and starts to play with them once again.)

(The eerie sound of the land line telephone pierces the air. Holly drops her toys and rushes to pick up the phone.)

Holly (in a high pitched eager kid voice): Hello?

Elana (on other side with stress in her voice): Honey? Will you please give the phone to Lindsay for me?

Holly: Yes mommy. (She runs to Lindsay) It's mommy!

Lindsay (tired voice): Hi mom.

Elana: Hi sweetie! How's it going? I hope all is well! I unfortunately will be home later tonight. Probably past midnight. I'm so sorry.

Lindsay: (sighs) Oh alright, that's ok. Um, I'll see you later.

Elana: Okay love, I will see you. Call me if you need anything! Goodbye! (Phone clicks)

Lindsay (puts down phone and turns to Holly): Bedtime Holly! Put your toys away. Do you want to pick out a story?

Holly (puts toys away): Yeah! I choose The Boy Who Cried Wolf!

Lindsay: Okay! Put your pajamas on and get into bed then we can read.

Lindsay and Holly walk to a small room cluttered with dolls and Lindsay's books. There are two beds on each side of the room. It is quite obvious that the girls share the room. Holly puts the book on her bed and hops under the hand me down quilt. Lindsay reads of the story, a favorite of hers when she was Holly's age.

Lindsay (closing the book): The end.

(When Lindsay had finished the story she looks over at Holly who already fallen asleep. Lindsay goes back into the kitchen which also has a small torn couch and a old box TV. Next to the couch there is also a small table. They have smiling faces holding books on the front. Lindsay grabbed a few college brochures from the counselor. It was the only way to earn more money. Lindsay lays in the dark. All she wants is to survive now and go to college. She falls asleep.)

### **Chorus:**

(As kids from around the neighborhood)

Mom is out late tonight  
She's working hard, double shifts  
Can't get mad, can't put up a fight  
Earns minimum wage, and not many tips  
She's let you down,  
But you need to keep going  
Don't put on a frown  
The worst is unknowing  
There's no money around  
And you wish you had more  
Now you must focus  
You want college, and must care for Holly,  
But with earning money, you're still on the hunt,  
For now just be happy, be jolly

## Scene Two

Lindsay is woken up from a deep slumber by the phone ringing once again. She grabs it wondering why someone would call her so early in the morning...

Lindsay: Hello?

Man on Phone: Is this Lindsay?

Lindsay: Yes, can I help you?

Man on the Phone: Hello, this is Sergeant Steel from the LAPD, we have your mother here under custody, she has been charged with a DUI.

Lindsay(heavily breathing in shock): Excuse me?

John: Last night around 3 a.m. your mother was taken under custody for being heavily intoxicated while driving. She is here, and will be able to get taken out soon. She will be charged heavily.

Lindsay(choking): Um..how much officer?

John: Well, by the time she is finished, the total will be around \$10,000, for DUI in the state of California.

Lindsay (gasping): We don't have that much money! We don't have any money!

John: That is for you and your mom to discuss. We will see you soon. (Phone clicks)

Lindsay almost collapses in awe. She quickly runs to Holly's room and wakes her up.

Lindsay: C'mon baby girl. Get dressed fast we are going into town to pick up mommy ok?

Holly(sleepily): Why?

Lindsay: Nevermind, Holly, please hurry.

(They both get ready quickly then head outside to catch the nearest bus to the police station, about a 45 minute ride. Lindsay and Holly stare out the window in fear, not knowing what is going to happen when they arrive. They pull up to the station and hop off, both shaking in fear as the station is very large. Lindsay grabs Holly's hand and walks inside to the front desk where a woman sits eagerly typing away on a computer.)

Front Desk Lady: May I help you?

Lindsay: Hi, um I'm here to pick up my mother from custody.

Front Desk Lady (annoyed): And her name?

Lindsay: Elana Wallers, I'm Lindsay Wallers, her daughter.

Front Desk Lady: Ahh yes. She is 4 doors down and on your right.

The two girls hand in hand walk down the eerie hallway to the 4th door. Holly screams and jumps on her mom as soon as she sees her. Lindsay just stares in disgust.

Holly(as hugging her): Mommy! I missed you

Elana: I missed you too honey. I missed both of you. Now lets jump back on the bus and talk about what happened at home ok? I just want to get out of here.

Holly take Elana's hand. Lindsay just stands there with crossed arms ,obviously extremely frustrated. She then turns around and starts walking towards the bus stop. Elana and Holly follow.

### **Chorus:**

(As kids from around the neighborhood)

What has happened here  
You can't believe your eyes  
Your life is not clear  
Your life is full of lies  
Why mom, why must you do this  
We have no money  
You have to miss  
Your days are never sunny  
Minimum wage  
You can't handle  
Where will we go  
What will we do  
We may never know  
My life is a zoo

### **Scene Three**

(The three girls are back at the apartment. Holly is in her room as Lindsay and Elana are in the living room)

Elana: Look, I'm sorry. I was having a rough ni-(interrupted)

Lindsay (yelling): Ohhhhh it was a rough night? Really mom really? Do you know how much this is going to cost us? \$10,00! There goes any chance of me getting into college!

Elana: I know honey just please calm down everything will be fine. We will figure this out ok? I cannot say sorry enough.

Lindsay (voice raised): Fine mom whatever. Just go do whatever you need to do. I have got YOUR child to take care of.

(Lindsay then goes to her and Holly's room to comfort Holly and slams the door

(Lindsay and Holly come out of the room together to get ready for dinner)

Lindsay (peeking into kitchen): Mom! What's for dinner?

(No reply)

Lindsay: Hmm! I wonder where she is! I'll check the bathroom, maybe she's taking a shower. Holly go to the kitchen and sit down. Dinner will be soon

(Lindsay walks to bathroom and knocks on the door.)

Lindsay: Mom? Are you in there?

(Lindsay knocks again)

Lindsay: Mom! Open up!

(Nothing)

Lindsay: Ok mom I'm coming in!

(Lindsay opens the door and walks in .She sees her mother lying there on the ground lifeless, with an empty pill bottle in her hand. A loud scream pierces the cool air.)

Lindsay: Mom! (Walks up to her and shakes her) Mom wake up!

(Lindsay sees a note scrunched up in the pill bottle. She reads it, as it states her mom killed herself due to the stress of bills.)

Lindsay (crying): Mommy please wake up! Mom! What will I do without you?

**Chorus:**

(As kids from around the block)

Your mother is dead, what to do  
Her face is cold  
Her hands are blue  
You must stand up, you must be bold  
The stress did this,  
The minimum wage  
It locks you up,  
It puts you in a life-long cage  
You can't go anywhere  
Unless they raise  
We must stand up and fight  
We must do it for all  
This is our right  
We will not fall

The End

