

THE EXCHANGE

by

Rachel Dickstein

Based on a story by Jhumpa Lahiri

135 Eastern Parkway #14D Brooklyn, NY 11238
917-771-8450

Mira opens the front door of her apartment and walks in. She is in her early 40's, slight, beautiful, practical. She drops her KEYS in a bowl.

She kicks her SHOES off.

She hangs her COAT up in a closet. There are 15 neatly arranged coats and an empty space waiting. She hangs her coat in the empty spot.

INT. LIVING ROOM

She walks into her elegant, mid-century living room.

In between a set of windows is a DESK. Mira walks towards it, drops a bag and removes two MANUSCRIPTS and a LEGAL PAD.

MIRA'S POV: Legal pad: handwritten revisions, Italian translated into English: "C'era una donna, una traduttrice, che voleva essere un'altra persona. There was a woman. A Translator. Who wanted to be another person."

She kneels and picks up Jenga pieces scattered on the floor, left from her daughter's play that morning. She carefully arranges them into a tower, slides it into the box and sets the box upright on the floor.

Letters printed on the toy box "HOW DO YOU STACK UP?"

Mira looks at the message on the box. *(beat)* She looks at a clock on the wall of the adjacent kitchen.

Clock reads 6:15 pm.

INT. KITCHEN

Mira walks into her kitchen. She pulls a box of pasta and a can of tomatoes from the cabinets.

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS: She sets a pot of water on the stove. She pulls an onion and pepper from the refrigerator. She chops. She sets a pan on the stove with oil. She sautés the vegetables. She executes these tasks quickly and confidently.

INT. DINING ROOM AREA OF LIVING SPACE

She puts a BOWL OF PASTA and a salad bowl on the table. Three place settings at the table. The steam from the pasta rises in the air, through late afternoon light. Cut to:

TITLE: The Exchange

A key in the FRONT DOOR lock JINGLES. She looks at the door.
She crosses towards the hall.

INT. FRONT HALL.

ALEJANDRO, 40'S, MIRA'S husband and her DAUGHTER, 8, arrive home from work/school like a hurricane bursting into the calm of the apartment. Her daughter drops her coat on the floor, hugs MIRA, and then runs into the living room.

ALEJANDRO
How was work?

He kisses her with affection. She accepts the kiss and looks him in the eye.

MIRA
Fine. Ok. Well, justfine.

She looks at him, but turns after a pause towards the table.

INT. DINING AREA.

ALEJANDRO, MIRA AND DAUGHTER eat. They are mid-meal. Camera moves slowly around the table.

ALEJANDRO
(mid-story) You could not believe how absurd he seemed. Just

DAUGHTER
Mom?

MIRA
Yes, sweetie. *(she looks lovingly at her daughter)*

DAUGHTER
What does in-cog-neeto mean?

ALEJANDRO
(with curiosity) Where did you hear that word?*(looking at Mira, amused)*

DAUGHTER
At school.

MIRA
Well, it's, um... *(hesitates)*

DAUGHTER
In-Cog-Neeto. Neeto.

ALEJANDRO
when someone is in disguise...

MIRA
Hiding...Or trying to solve...

MIRA and ALEJANDRO look at one another, translating.

ALEJANDRO
...to solve a case.. you know like
a spy. Like you, silly....(*he
tousles her hair, laughs*)

DAUGHTER
Neeto! Neeto! (running away)

Mira laughs. They all laugh. She watches her husband and daughter. She is happy. She looks down at her plate.

A finger runs along the edge of her plate.

Alejandro leans in towards his DAUGHTER.

ALEJANDRO
(*whispering*) Why don't you go
INCOGNITO to school tomorrow. I
will lend you my spy glasses....

DAUGHTER
Catch me!

She runs around the table.

The camera pans around the table. Music. Voices and laughter become muffled, separate and apart. Mira sees her daughter running, but in slow motion, muted, figures blur.

The MANUSCRIPTS on the desk from across the room. The books are in clear focus. They glow slightly. Music suspends.

INT. LIVING ROOM.

Mira (at the table, at a distance.) Looks towards her desk. Her husband and daughter in conversation, in real time, laughing, unaware her focus has shifted. She closes her eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

MIRA crawls into bed. Her husband is reading next to her.

She grabs a BOOK from her nightstand and starts to read.

BOOK COVER: Elena Ferrante's "Storia della bambina perduta."

Mira reads. Voiceover continues and builds underneath action.

MIRA (V.O.)

*Eravamo stordite dalle emozioni e
dalla stanchezza, ma girammo
ugualmente a piedi per il riore e
per una citta' luttuosa, ora muta
ora striata da suoni fastidiosi di
sirene.*

(SUBTITLE: We were dazed by
emotions and by weariness, but
still we walked through the
neighborhood and through a
sorrowing city, now silent, now
streaked by the nagging sounds of
sirens.)

Moonlight, wind come through white drapes of bedroom window.

MIRA (V.O.)

*Dov'era Nino, dov'era Enzo, dov'
era Gennero, comme stave mia
madre....*

(Subtitle: Where was Nino, where
was Enzo, where was Gennero, how
was my mother...)

Mira turns the light off and lies still, not sleeping.

EXT. STREET. Moonlight.

Mira is walking on the street late at night. It is a dream.
She turns and sees:

Sign: "Corso Giuseppe Garibaldi NAPOLI"

Mira walks through dust lingering in the air, residue from an
earthquake that hit several hours before.

(street level) Mira's feet walk past broken pieces of stone.

MIRA

*Se ne stava andando solo il caldo,
come un respiro nebbioso che si
levava dal corpo della citta e
dalla sua vita lenta e rauca.*

(SUBTITLE: Only the heat was
departing, like a foggy breath that
rose from the body of the city and
its slow, strident life.)

A DOOR, made of old, beautifully carved wood, peeling with
olive colored paint.

Mira pauses by the door. Her hand touches the wood.

Close up on the worn painted wood and her hand running across its rough surface. She looks at her palm and sees chips of paint have broken off onto it forming a cut that bleeds. She touches and smears the blood. Cut to:

INTERIOR BEDROOM.

Mira wakes suddenly in her bed. She is sweating, breathless.

A CLOCK: 3 am.

Mira touches her lips with her fingertips. Her fingers press down on her lower lip. She takes a breath. *(beat)*

INT. GLASS DOORS TO AN OFFICE OPEN - DAY.

INT. HALLWAY.

Walking down the hallway past several other bustling bodies.

She walks down a hallway, past windows where New York City buildings are visible.

INT. OFFICE.

(from above) A desk in a brightly lit, modern office. Mira puts her bag down. Removes her manuscripts and legal pad.

A male CO-WORKER walks by Mira's desk.

MIRA
Hey. *(smiles)*

CO-WORKER
Welcome back to the source of all
that is good in the world of
literary fiction. How's it going?

MIRA
Oh fine.

She watches him walk away. She considers following him but instead looks back at her desk.

Notepad: Mira writes/translates from Italian to English, in longhand. (Italian overlaps English)

MIRA (V.O.)
*Quando pensava a cio che possadeva,
/ provava, una mite repulsione.*
(MORE)

MIRA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When she thought of what she possessed, she felt a mild revulsion...*perche ogni oggetto, ogni cosa che le apparteneva, / la dava prova della sua esistenza.* Because every object, every thing that belonged to her, gave proof of her existence.

Ogni volta che aveva un qualsiasi ricordo / della sua viata passata, era convinta che un'altra versione sarebbe stata migliore.

Every time she remembered something of her past life, she was convinced that another version would have been better.

She looks down at her notepad engaged by a challenge.

Notepad: She writes "Si considereva imperfetta, comme..."

MIRA (V.O.)

She considered herself imperfect...

She writes and then considers the next phrase: "...comme la prima stesura di un libro" then writes:

MIRA

...like the first draft of a book.

Text glows on the page.

Mira closes her eyes imagining the words transforming. She opens her eyes and looks at the notepad.

Notepad: Underlines the word "imperfect" twice.

The same co-worker interrupts her reverie, taps on her desk.

CO-WORKER

Hey, do you want to grab a drink?

MIRA

No, I'm sorry. I can't tonight.
Thanks though. *(smiles)*

CO-WORKER

You're working too hard. Your translation'll get done. It doesn't have to be perfect.

MIRA

Mm. *(Not convinced)*

Co-worker leaves. Mira looks towards the empty hallway. She turns back to her notepad, hesitates, then opens her laptop.

A website for discount airfares. On screen: "DESTINATION: Rome. Departure date:" A blinking cursor.

Mira looks at the screen with expectation.

On screen - Airfares and options for flights.

She looks at the choices.

Screen - Three dates then just one, highlighted.

Mira looks at the screen, making a choice.

Screen. The cursor hovers over "Select" button. It clicks. Booked.

INT. MIRA'S BEDROOM - DAY

CHYRON. Two weeks later.

Mira opens a closet in her bedroom.

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS. She reaches for a small suitcase on a high shelf. Opens suitcase. Retrieves some clothes from drawers, packs. She folds a sweater, puts it into suitcase. She holds up a pair of pants, tucks shoes into the sides.

Looking down from above, a last article of black clothing is put in the small suitcase - it fits perfectly, like a well arranged bento box. She snaps the suitcase shut.

INT. FRONT HALL

She leaves a note and set of keys on the front hall table.

INT. KITCHEN

She opens freezer.

Fingers run over several containers of pre-made dinners. Counts. Closes freezer.

She attaches a note to the refrigerator.

Note: "Pack lunch for Ariane. Bus leaves at 7:15 am." She writes: "Back October 30th. Love you."

She moves the note to a more easy to notice spot on the refrigerator door.

INT. FRONT HALL

MIRA wears a trench coat that fits her small frame snugly. She holds the suitcase and a purse in front of the open door. She looks back then exits and closes the door. CLICK.

INT. AIRPORT

Mira walks through an airport terminal, consults her phone/eticket. She is looking for her gate.

INT. MOBILE HALLWAY TO PLANE.

She walks down the hallway with her suitcase.

INT. INSIDE THE PLANE -NIGHT

Mira opens the window seeing ocean water far below.

Mira looks at the moonlight on the water, smiling.

INT. PLANE - EARLY MORNING

Mira sleeps in her seat. Others sleep around her. Early morning light streaming through a few of open window cracks.

PILOT (O.S.)
Arrival in 30 minutes.
Atterriamo tra trenta minuti.

She wakes. She starts to gather her things, a book a set of headphones, a phone.

PILOT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Please remember to collect all your belongings... Welcome to Rome and thank you for flying Alitalia. *Per favore ricordate di raccogliere tutti i bagagli. Benvenuti a Roma e grazie per aver volato con Alitalia.*

She looks up and down the aisle, expectantly.

INT. AIRPORT.

Mira walks past a cafe where two men are drinking espresso, arguing, loudly. (English in subtitles)

MAN 1
Ridicolo! (*Ridiculous*)

MAN 2

Ma perche'? *(What are you doing
that for?)*

MAN 1

Ay! Cosa posso fare! *(Ah, what can
I do?)*

INTERIOR TRAIN STATION.

Train entering frame fast.

TRAIN PLATFORM.

Mira steps onto a train that has just pulled in.

Train door slams shut with a bang.

INT. TRAIN

MIRA sitting in a train compartment settling down in a seat.
Another man sits across from her, reading a newspaper.

Mira looks at him, then looks out the window. The train
starts to pull out of the station. She smiles.

(An hour later:) Mira leans her head back against the seat,
with her eyes closed. She is tired from the flight.

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)

Arriviamo a Orvieto tra dieci
minuti.

Mira opens her eyes.

Outside window, a sign scrolls as train slows. (ORVIETO)

EXT. ORVIETO TRAIN STATION.

Mira steps off train. Looks around for a taxi stand, finds it
and moves towards it.

EXT. TAXI STAND.

A man hails her a taxi and puts her suitcase in the trunk.
She climbs into the back seat and closes the door.

INT. CAR

Trees with browning leaves outside taxi window. Quick cuts of city streets, commuters going to work. No tourists, people are dressed for work and fall weather.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE PENSIONE.

Mira steps out of car. Driver gets her bag from trunk, hands it to her. She hands him some Euros.

MIRA
Grazie mille.

DRIVER
Prego, Signora.

He gets back into his taxi and drives away.

She looks up at a small white pensione.

She sees a sign - ALBERGO GIACOMETTI

INT. PENSIONE FRONT DESK.

Mira speaks fluently, confidently.

HOTEL PROPRIETOR
Come si chiama, Signora. Nome?

MIRA
Sono Mira Iyer.

HOTEL PROPRIETOR
Si, Signora.

He looks at his paperwork. (English in subtitles.)

HOTEL PROPRIETOR (CONT'D)
Eccola Qui. (*I have you...*) Si
ferma due settimane? Si? (*Two
weeks? Yes?*)

MIRA
Si, signore. (*Yes, sir.*)

HOTEL PROPRIETOR
Benvenuta a Orvieto! Le dispiace
fare le scale? Abbiamo una bella
stanza all'ultimo piano. (*Welcome
to Orvieto. Do you mind stairs? We
have a beautiful room on the top
floor.*)

MIRA
Nessun problema. (*No problem*)

HOTEL PROPRIETOR
Benissimo! (*Great!*)

He hands her a key and gestures towards the stairwell.

INT. PENSIONE. Stairwell.

Mira climbs a series of narrow staircases. She looks up four flights and a maze of banisters.

INT. LANDING. Mira arrives at top floor, unlocks the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM.

Framed by the doorway, a simple, spartan room. She enters. There is a full size bed covered by a white sheet, a wooden chair, a dresser.

Mira looks at the room, satisfied. She looks up at the low ceiling, the dormer window. She notices over the bed:

A cross of a bleeding Jesus on the wall.

Mira's eyes fixed on the crucifix, intrigued. She drops her single skeleton key on the firm bed.

The key bounces on the crisp white bed cover.

Mira crosses to the dormer window.

She looks out the window down at the street. Workmen carry construction equipment to a building across the narrow road. People silently passing one other in the street.

WORKER
Nino! Dove sei finito!
(*Subtitle: Where the hell are you!*)
Mi devi portare questa roba!
(*I need you to help carry this stuff.*)

NINO
EY!

(from above) NINO's hands up in the air, annoyed with the WORKER. Camera tracks up to the top floors of the building across the street, stopping at the roof line.

INT. PENSIONE. - DUSK

MIRA stands on the window eyes closed, the breeze on her face. She opens her eyes, takes a step back, her hands on the iron window panes, folded into the room like wings.

Folding the window closed, we see the same building line through panes of glass. Focus shift to show reflection of herself in the glass. Mira opens the window slightly so the glass changes angle and her image disappears. The building across comes into focus.

EXT. STREET - NEXT DAY

Door of Pensione opens and Mira steps out into street. She is wearing her trench coat and has a small purse over her shoulder. She is dressed to explore.

CAR HORNS. A small car maneuvers by, impossibly. Mira hugs the wall of a building to get out of its way.

Construction workers passing. Mira walks and watches. People pass by her, not noticing her. She smiles. She belongs.

INT. SMALL MARKET SANDWICH COUNTER.

She points to some food through the glass and speaks to a STORE CLERK behind the counter.

MIRA

Mi da un panino al formaggio e
prosciutto, per favore. (*Subtitle:*
I would like a prosciutto and
cheese sandwich, please.)

Clerk wraps the sandwich in white paper and hands it to her.

She walks out of the store, pleased with her first exchange.

EXT. - BENCH, PIAZZA

Mira finds a bench to sit on in a nearby piazza, bites into the sandwich and smiles.

INT. DOOR OPENING TO SMALL MARKET. NEXT DAY.

Mira points again to the food through the glass.

MIRA

Mi da un panino al formaggio e
prosciutto, per favore.
(MORE)

MIRA (CONT'D)
*(Subtitle: I would like a
 prosciutto and cheese sandwich,
 please)*

Clerk wraps the sandwich in white paper and hands it to her.

CLERK
 Prego.

EXT. ON A BENCH IN A PIAZZA.

Mira bites into the sandwich. She smiles.

INT. SMALL MARKET SANDWICH COUNTER. NEXT DAY.

The CLERK sees her. Gestures, as if he knows what she wants.

Mira smiles.

MIRA
 Un giorno, provero' qualcosa di
 nuova. *(Subtitle: One day I'll try
 something new.)*

COUNTER MAN
 Nessun problema. Una donna sa
 quello che vuole. *(No Problem. A
 woman knows what she wants.)*

EXTERIOR ON A BENCH IN A PIAZZA.

Mira bites into the sandwich. A deeper, more satisfied smile.
 She loves this new routine.

Trash can, sandwich wrapper being thrown away.

Mira walks down the street.

Leaves fall from trees around her. Wind blows leaves in a
 flurry of circles and then off.

Mira stands in the midst of the leaves swirling.

MIRA (V.O.)
 My mind is empty. I feel light.
 Anonymous. *Anonima.*

Mira looks around herself with satisfaction.

INT. PENSIONE - DAY

Morning light through window.

Mira wakes up. She looks out a window, relaxed. She sits up in bed. She thinks in English and Italian, layered.

MIRA(V.O.)

I slept well. I woke up without worries. It's as if I were suspended in time / like a person without a shadow.

... Sospesa nel tempo come una persona senza ombra.

But I feel alive/ more alive than ever

....Eppure sono viva, mi sento piu' viva che mai.

Mira walks to her small suitcase, lying open on a rack and takes out a black undershirt, sweater and a pair of pants. She dresses unhurriedly, enjoying the ritual.

She runs her hands over the cabled edge of the cardigan and locates a small tear.

Close-up: She fondles this imperfection.

She grabs her coat and her bag and leaves the room.

EXT. OUTSIDE HER PENSIONE.

Mira exits and looks down the street, choosing where to go.

She walks down the street past a woman who puts up an umbrella. Mira sees it is raining, clocks it raining harder, and takes cover under a corner of a building where several others stand, also waiting for the rain to pass.

Mira looks at the others waiting for the rain to pass in silence. A few look at cell phones. She smiles at them. They acknowledge her but keep to themselves. They watch the rain.

The rain runs down the cobblestones. A leaf travels a slow journey down one of the rivulets.

MIRA (V.O.)

I'm thinking of the water falling from the clouds,/ penetrating the earth, filling the rivers, arriving at the sea.

Penso al percorso dell'acqua, che cade dalle nuvole, riempiendo i fiumi e arrivando al mare.

The water curves and arcs around the stones. The water catches the light as it curls around the stones.

She looks across the street at:

A large door. The door opens and a two women emerge. The women are laughing, holding bags.

Mira watches them.

WOMAN 1

Ti pare possibile? (*Subtitle: Is it possible?*)

WOMAN 2

Il colloquio Andra' benissimo! (*She will slay that interview!*)

Before the door closes, inside, she sees an interior courtyard within. Door closes.

Another group of women appear before the door and ring a buzzer and wait to be let in. They talk to one another as they wait.

WOMAN 3

Sono stanca di nascondere le mie forme, sai? Mi voglio mettere un po' in mostra. (*Subtitle: I'm just tired of hiding this body, you know. Want to show it off a bit.*)

WOMAN 4

E perchè no? Sei bellissima! Sexy. (*And why not? You look amazing. Sexy.*)

Mira watches them, curiously.

The buzzer rings them in. They enter.

Mira runs across the street, catches the large old door before it shuts hard. She enters.

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR. AN OLD DARK STONE COURTYARD.

Two women cross up the stairs.

Mira watches and listens as walk up the old stairwell.

A square of sunlight filled with rain illuminates the left corner of the screen. The women's voices echo against the stone walls. The light glows brightly.

INT. STAIRWELL.

Mira walks up the stairs to a landing where MONA welcomes those arriving. She is tall and lithe, dressed in elegant, diaphanous clothes.

Mira leans against the wall, six or seven steps down. She watches the other women enter. She then crosses towards MONA on the landing with a determined smile.

INT. LANDING.

Mira looks at MONA and gestures towards the room as if to ask if she could enter. She acts as though she does not speak the language. She smiles. (English in subtitles)

MONA
Benenuta. Avanti! Avanti! (*Welcome.
Come in.*)

Mira smiles and enters.

INT. APT. HALLWAY.

Mira enters the hall where there is a small table. She puts her black bag on the table, filled with other purses and totes. She hears voices from the main room down a long hallway.

She looks down the hallway. At the end of the hallway, framed through an doorway, is a room filled with chattering voices.

ELENA (THE OWNER) O.S.
Vieni, vieni, ci sono, tante cose
da vedere. (*Come in come in there
are lots of things to see.*)

Mira walks slowly down the long hallway.

Moving down hallway, through the rectangular frame of the entrance, is a living room. In the center of the room is a rack with black dresses, pants, shirts and sweaters, neatly spaced along the racks. Disembodied hands reach out towards the dresses from outside the frame.

WOMAN 1 (O.S.)
Cosa ne pensi? Non lo so
(*What do you think? I don't know.*)

WOMAN 2 (O.S.)
Ti sta benissimo. Lo adoro.
(*So beautiful on you. I love it.*)

WOMAN 1 (O.S.)
 Oh, è appena arrivato, vero?
(Oh that's new, right?)

WOMAN 2 (O.S.)
 Prova quello dopo. E' così
 elegante. Diafano. *(Try that next.
 It looks so elegant. Diaphanous.)*

INT. LIVING ROOM.

Mira enters the room. It is clearly someone's home, but also a pop-up shop. All the women look as if they are regulars. There are candles burning, plates of food in elegant bowls. Women are trying on clothes in the middle of the space. It is like one giant dressing room. Mira notices ELENA, the owner, sitting on the couch smoking. She laughs heartily and seems engaged in conversation with two others on a nearby couch.

ELENA looks at Mira and smiles. (English in subtitles.)

ELENA (TO ALL)
 Benvenuti. Prego, mangiate,
 guardatevi intorno, accomodatevi.
*(Welcome please have something to
 eat, look around make yourself
 comfortable.)*

The camera pans across half a dozen dresses and half dressed waistlines, arms, disembodied body parts trying on clothes, voices of women asking opinions...

Mira stands by the rack and decides to take off her sweater. She starts to try on clothes.

She tries on a shirt.

She removes her pants, drops them on the floor, like the other women are doing. She tries on a pair of pants.

Two others take off garments and fold them neatly to pay for.

WOMAN 2
 Mi stai prendendo in giro?
(You are kidding me?)

WOMAN 1
 È successo davvero. Non se lo
 aspettava proprio. Boom. Una
 pazzia!
*(It really happened. Like she
 didn't expect it. Boom. It was
 insane. (laughs)*

Mira closes her eyes and listens with pleasure. The women's voices meld like music. Mira continues to try things on.

ELENA sees MIRA and offers some advice.

ELENA

Sono ideali per viaggiare, disse la proprieteria. sono comodi, moderni, versatili. Si possono lavare a mano in acqua fredda. Non si squalciscono.

(They are ideal for traveling. They're comfortable, modern, versatile. You can wash them in cold water. They don't wrinkle.)

At the same time two other continue to one another:

WOMAN 2

Sexy

WOMAN 3

Potresti indossarlo da Marcello! Sarebbe perfetto.

(You could wear that to Marcello's! It would be perfect.)

Mira tries on a black sweater and looks for a mirror in which to see herself.

Mira crosses to a three way mirror in the corner of the room confidently.

INTERIOR. MIRROR.

Mira looks at the mirror. She sees other women reflected behind her.

Focus shift to see herself but from where she is standing, camera catches just the left half of her body.

Mira shifts to left panel of mirror which only captures the right edge of her frame, her head looking away.

Mira adjusts her position and looks to the right panel and again only sees only edges of her body. She backs up, confused. She doesn't understand how the array of angled mirrored surfaces works. She tries to find a better place to stand to see herself whole in three-way mirror.

Instead of seeing Mira's whole reflected body, the three way mirror presents an assemblage of lines, as if the mirror were made up of the cracks in between the glass. The cracks shift like tectonic plates.

(Animation, or a hallucination?) The sound of the room shifts to something less harmonious and more broken. A woman behind the mirror comes into focus. Sound morphs into reality.

Mira looks past the edge of the mirror.

INT. BACK HALL.

A WOMAN at the end of the hall. She looks like a worker, an assistant. She is in her 40's, she stands stoically over the ironing board. She irons a garment, she has a needle in her mouth. Her shoulders are slumped. Her expression is rigid, fixed. Empty.

Mira crosses towards her.

The woman, not seeing Mira, looks at the room of shoppers and disappears into the back.

Mira walks into the space where the woman had been. She puts a hand on the ironing board. She looks around to find where the assistant has gone but cannot.

She sees a faint outline the shape of an iron on board, rust colored burn marks, aged.

Mira looks away from the shape on the ironing board, realizes she won't find the assistant, and crosses back into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM.

Center of the living room. There is only one other person left.

Mira crosses towards the pile of clothes in the middle of the space. She picks up an item, looking to find her own clothes.

She finds her undershirt, her pants.

She puts the pants on. She takes off the black sweater and drops it. She is wearing just an undershirt. She looks but cannot find her own sweater in the morass of clothes. She looks up and realizes all the other shoppers have left.

INT. BY DESK.

Mira crosses to the desk. The owner sits at a desk tallying a receipt for the last remaining visitor besides Mira. She looks up to see Mira, smiling.

ELENA

E lei, cosa ha deciso di prendere?
(*And what did you decide on?*)

MIRA

Niente, in realtà, mi dispiace. Mi manca un golfino, il mio.
(*Nothing, actually, sorry. I'm just missing a sweater, my own.*)

ELENA

Il Colore? (*What color?*)

MIRA

Nero. (*Black.*)

ELENA

Ah, mi dispiace. (*Oh I'm sorry.*)
(*She turns behind her and calls to the assistant*) A questa signora manca un golfino nero. (*The lady is missing a black sweater.*)

INT. BACK HALLWAY.

The assistant comes out from behind the mirror.

INT. LIVING ROOM.

The assistant sorts through the piles of black clothes left on the floor.

INT. DESK.

MIRA watches her with curiosity. She sits and waits, watching the woman sort through clothes.

INT. LIVING ROOM.

The assistant sorts through the clothes putting them back on hangers. She sets a few aside that look like they need ironing before replacing. She works efficiently.

INT. DESK AREA.

ELENA (CONT'D)

(*Looking at Mira*) Non la conosco.
Come mi ha trovata? (*I don't know you. How did you find me?*) (*She smiles, welcomingly.*)

MIRA

Ero qui Fuori. Ho seguito le altre.
Non sapevo cosa ci fosse dentro.
(*I was just outside. I followed the others. I wondered....I didn't know what was inside.*)

ELENA

Non le piacciono, i vestiti?
(*You don't like the clothes?*)

MIRA

(*assuring her*) Mi piacciono... ma non ne ho bisogno. (*I like them... but I...I don't need them.*)

ELENA

(*with interest*) Da dove viene?
(*Where are you from?*)

MIRA

(*awkwardly*) Non sono di qui. (*I'm not from here.*)

ELENA

Neanch'io. Ha fame? Gradisce del vino? Della frutta? (*assuring her*) (*I'm not either. Are you hungry, would you like some wine or fruit?*)

MIRA

No, grazie. (*No, thank you.*)

The assistant enters from the middle of the room.

ASSISTANT

Scusate. (*Excuse me.*)

She hands a sweater to the owner.

ELENA

Ecco! Era nascosto, abbiamo ritrovato il suo golfino. (*Here! It was hidden! We found your sweater.*)

ELENA hands the sweater carefully folder to MIRA.

MIRA takes the sweater and looks at the wool, concerned. It looks unfamiliar.

Mira puts it on, moves inside of it as if it doesn't fit right. She crosses to the mirror with consternation.

MIRA

Questo... non e il mio. (*This... isn't mine.*) (*uncertain*)

ELENA

Cosa Dice? (*What do you mean?*)

MIRA

Il mio e' simile, ma non e' questo.
Non riconosco questo golf. Non mi
sta bene. (*Mine is similar but this
isn't it. I ... don't recognize
this sweater. (She wriggles) It
doesn't fit well.*)

ELENA

Ma dovrebbe essere il suo. La donna
ha sistemato tutto. Non rimane
niente sul pavimento, niente sui
divani, guardi.
(*But it must be yours. (assuringly)
The maid has put everything in
order. There's nothing on the
floor, nothing on the couches,
look.)(she gestures to the room)*)

The floor clean and all the clothes put on the racks.

MIRA looks back at ELENA.

MIRA

Questo non è il mio. Il mio è
sparito. (*This isn't mine. Mine has
disappeared.*)

She takes the sweater off, balls it up in her hand, gestures
as if to throw it back on the ground. It revolts her.
Instead, she offers it back to the owner deliberately.

ELENA

Ma come? (*calmly*)
(*What do you mean?*)

MIRA

Forse un'altra cliente l'ha preso
senza accorgersene. Forse c'è stato
... uno scambio. Un errore?
(*Maybe another woman took it
without realizing it. Maybe there
was ... an exchange. Some mistake?*)

ELENA

Mmm oddio, non mi ricordo. Va bene,
posso controllare, aspetti.
(*Ah, oh god, I don't remember.
Alright I can check, wait.*)

INT. LIVING ROOM COUCH AREA.

The owner picks up a NOTEBOOK from the desk and moves over to the couch. She lights a cigarette, pulls a phone over from a side table, and opens the notebook to a list of names and numbers. She starts making calls.

INT. DESK AREA.

Mira paces. She waits and looks around the room as if lost. She holds her bare arms, she is cold.

INT. couch area.

The owner makes multiple calls.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Buongiorno, Christina. Mi stavo solo chiedendo, ti è capitato di prendere un golfino da qui che non era il tuo? Sto solo controllando. Se è così, sicuramente e' stato solo un errore. C'è una donna qui che sembra aver perso...*(listening)*
(Hello, Christina. I was just wondering, did you happen to take a sweater from here that wasn't yours? Just checking. If so, I'm sure it might have just been a mistake. There's a woman here who seems to have lost....(listening)

Ah grazie mille. No? Grazie per aver controllato, amore mio. Ci vediamo il mese prossimo, vero?
(Oh, thanks so much. No? Thank you for checking my love. See you next month I hope?)

She hangs up. Looks up another number and dials again.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Bon Giorno, Estella. Mi stavo solo chiedendo... *(Hello, Estella. I was just wondering...)*

INTERIOR DESK AREA. Mira waits. We hear more phone calls O.S. Sound of phone being hung up with finality.

Elena puts down the phone and crosses to her chair and desk.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Mi dispiace, Signora. Ho chiesto a tutte. Nessuna indossava un golfino nero oggi da me. Solo lei.
(I'm sorry. I asked everyone.

(MORE)

ELENA (CONT'D)
*No one was wearing a black sweater
here today. Only you.)*

MIRA
Ma questo non è il mio.
(But this isn't mine.)

The owner shakes her head, shrugs.

ELENA
Non so cos'altro fare. Grazie per
essere venuta, arrivederla.
*(I don't know what else to do.
Thank you for coming.)*

ELENA looks down at her receipts for the day and starts to organize them.

Mira crosses towards the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY.

Mira picks up her bag and coat. She still holds the sweater awkwardly. She looks towards the living room.

Rack of clothes still, quiet, framed in the hallway opening.

Mira opens the front door of the apartment and exits, nervously.

EXT. COURTYARD LANDING.

Mira stands on the landing, awkwardly. Suddenly she realizes it is cold. She puts on the sweater apprehensively, then the coat. She pulls the collar up towards her ears.

EXT. COURTYARD FROM GROUND LEVEL.

Mira quickly crosses down the stone steps.

In the dark stone entryway, Mira opens the large wooden doors to the street and steps out into the street. The door closes.

EXT. STREET. DUSK.

She looks right and then left, unsure which direction to go. She cannot remember which direction her pensione is located. She chooses a direction.

She walks quickly, rounds her shoulders against the rain.

MIRA'S POV: She starts to run. The streetscape is chaotic. She trips and lands hard on the wet cobblestones.

Lifting her head from the ground, she sees feet walk by. She lifts her forearm from the ground and sees small bits of rock stuck to her wet skin. Some of the rocks have cut into her hand. Her hand bleeds.

She sits up and rubs her other hand over the cut.

Her hand, close up. The blood smears in the rain.

Mira gets herself back on her feet, slowly. She looks at her hand and wipes it on neck of her sweater, across her torso.

She walks slowly through the busy street. She clutches handfuls of her dirtied sweater in her hands holding the collar close to her neck. Her knuckles meet with determination.

EXT. OUTSIDE PENSIONE.

She crosses the street in the rain and returns to her pensione. The large door shuts with A HARD THUD behind her.

INT. PENSIONE FRONT DESK.

She collects the room key from the front desk. The HOTEL PROPRIETOR looks at her as he hands her the key.

HOTEL PROPRIETOR
Stai bene, signora?
(Subtitle: Are you ok, madame?)

She nods without looking back at him and walks towards the stairs.

INT. STAIRWELL.

She climbs the stairs, tiredly to her room.

INT. PENSIONE ROOM.

MIRA sits on her bed. She removes the coat and lets it fall away from her shoulders onto the bed. She quickly takes off sweater and throws it onto the chair opposite the bed.

The sweater lands haphazardly on the chair, limp and wet.

Mira looks at it with disgust.

She lays down onto her bed and collapses with tiredness.

From above: Her wet hair splays across the covers. Mira grimaces, turns on her side and tucks into a fetal position on the coat. She wraps her arms around her legs.

She turns her face into the surface of the bed and closes her eyes. She puts her fists together as she'd done in the street with effort. She takes a deep breath.

INT. PENSIONE ROOM, BED - DAY

Light through the window, the next morning. Mira wakes, looks around, disoriented, and sees the sweater on the chair.

The sweater lies in the same haphazard position as yesterday.

Mira remembers her adventure the day before and laughs. The memory seems ridiculous. She looks at the sweater again, as if it were a puzzle she wanted to crack.

Mira crosses to the chair and picks up the sweater. She looks at it hard. She sees the tear, recognizes it with surprise.

Mira's fingers fondle the tear in the sweater.

She puts the sweater on. It feels comfortable, familiar and new. It is dry. And clean. How?

Her fingers trace the texture of the sweater, as if reading a text in braille.

Mira closes her eyes, as if she's is deciphering a message.

She sees herself in the rectangles of old glass, and the view beyond, layered over one another. (*English and Italian layer:*)

MIRA

(*confidently*) The sweater is mine.
But it's no longer the same. *Il*
golfino è il mio ma non è più lo
stesso... (beat) (with discovery)
I'm someone else now.
Sono ... un'altra persona ora.

She looks intently at herself in the reflection, hungry. Mira grabs a fist full of the sweater.

Her fist grips the sweater, pressing into her chest.

Skyline of city comes into focus with her form ghosted on top of it in reflection. Mira squeezes her eyes shut as if to make a wish. She tightens her fists. Hard.

Fade to black.