

LINA

Lights turn on to house party, parents then swing open door of Lina's room. Lina lay in bed, curled up with hands over ears. Drunk mom staggers over to lean in for a kiss, laughing.

Mom: She's fine Richard, she's fine! See! Goodnight my little Lina.

No response from Lina. Dad walks over angry

Dad: Lina! *shoves her* Your mother is speaking to you!

Lina shifts in bed, whimpers

Mom: It's okay Richard. Leave the ungrateful little cry baby alone.

Parents go back to party. Lights dim

Next day

Lights turn on to Lina sitting on floor eating cereal while watching TV with beer cans all around. Parents are passed out in bed.

Knock on door. Miss Adams enters.

Miss Adams: Hi Honey, where are your parents? Are you home alone?

Lina points to bed where parents lay.

Miss Adams: Honey, were there lots of people here last night?

Lina nods

Miss Adams: And lots of noise? Were you left by yourself?

Lina nods again

Dad staggers out

Dad: Hey! What are you doing in my home?

Miss Adams: Mr. Jacque, we were informed of the party you held here last night and we are aware of the neglectful abuse you put your child through. We have had many complaints and we have warned you before, but enough is enough.

Dad defensively stands in front of Lina

Dad: No! You can't take her, you have no right.

Mom comes out

Mom: What is going on Richard? Why are they here?

Miss Adams: Ma'am, we are here for Lina. I am sorry but we can no longer allow this to happen. We have legal consent.

Miss Adams takes Lina, as she reaches for her parents and starts to cry. Mom falls to knees crying as dad yells

Lights come on to Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald speaking with Miss Adams

Miss Adams: Her name is Lina. She is now 10 years old, she comes from northern Labrador. She has lived in an abusive home with alcoholic parents for the majority of her life, but has been in our care for a year now.

Mrs. Fitzgerald: We're so excited to welcome Lina into our home. We would love to raise and nurture her the way a child should be. Our daughter Chloe is Lina's age, they should get along well.

Mr. Fitzgerald: Yes, Chloe is very excited to welcome Lina, as are we. Is there anything else we should know, Miss Adams?

Miss Adams: Just that Lina is very shy and it may take her a while to adjust. I can only hope that you both will be patient towards Lina as she eases into the new routine and the adjustments that will have to be made.

Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald: We will.

Miss Adams: I'll go get her now. Lina, this is Racheal and Derek.

Racheal reaches for Lina's hand

Mrs. Fitzgerald: Lina we are so excited to meet you. Our daughter Chloe is too, she is waiting at home.

No response from Lina. Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald look at each other as Lina stares blankly out of the window

Lights dim then come on to Racheal, Derek, Lina, and Chloe

Chloe: Hi Lina! My name is Chloe.

Lina (quietly): Hi.

Mr. Fitzgerald: Chloe, why don't you show Lina around the house and to her room while your mother and I prepare supper?

Chloe: Sure dad!

Chloe takes Lina's hand and walks Lina around as parents walk off stage

Chloe: Here's the kitchen, and here's the bathroom. This is my room, and this ones yours!

Lina: Naku... I mean, thank you.

Chloe: Naku? What's that? And what are those? *Points to Lina's traditional boots.*

Lina: They're called moccasins. They're a traditional boot from where I come from.

Lina walks into her room with head down as Chloe walks away

Lights dim, then come on as Mrs. Fitzgerald knocks on then opens door of Lina's room, where she is reading an Inuktitut language book.

Lina: Come in!

Mrs. Fitzgerald: Hi, Lina. How are you? What are you reading?

Lina: Just a book of my Inuktitut language. I like to teach myself new words and practice speaking it as much as I can.

Mrs. Fitzgerald: Put that away now, you will not be speaking it here. We speak English and you will learn French at school.

Chloe enters

Mrs. Fitzgerald: Lina, you will begin school on Monday!

Chloe: Is she going to my school, Mom?

Mrs. Fitzgerald: Yes, she is Chloe! You will have to show her around and introduce her to your friends.

Chloe: Okay, but you should get her some new boots before then, Mom.

Lights off, and then on to a class room full of children.

Teacher: Good morning everyone! Welcome to French class! We have a new student here from Labrador! Bonjour Lina!

Class turns and stares at Lina

Teacher: Lina, have you been in a French class before?

Lina: No, in my old school we had Inuktitut class. It was my favorite.

Class laughs and whispers at how quietly and slang like Lina speaks

Teacher: (giggles) Lina, please try to speak louder and more properly.

Light off

Light back on to Lina sitting on her bed writing in a diary

Lina: I am in a new home now, I live with Racheal, Derek and their daughter Chloe. I miss my family and my friends in Labrador. I wonder how Miss Adams is doing. I haven't seen her in a while. Chloe doesn't like my moccasins, so Racheal got me new shoes that all the other girls wear. She said I will fit in better. She told me not to read my Inuktitut book and the kids in my French class laugh at the way I speak. I hope tomorrow will be a better day.

Lina puts her diary down

Lights dim as Lina lays down to go to sleep

Lights come on to an older Lina sitting on her bed, writing in her diary

Lina: Dear Diary, I cannot believe that tomorrow is my graduation day! I have been living with Racheal, Derek and Chloe for seven years now. I am very thankful for them but I can't help but think about my family back in Labrador and my culture that I have lost. I know life would have been so much different if I stayed there, maybe I would have been able to speak fluent Inuktitut by now! I feel like a piece of me is missing. I would love to learn more about who I am and where I come from.

Lights dim, then come on to graduation ceremony

Teacher calls Lina's name, she goes up to get her diploma and as she walks down, Miss Adams walks up to her

Teacher: Lina Jacques!

Miss Adams: I am so proud of you, Lina. You have come so far.

Miss Adams and Lina hug then a lady taps her on the shoulder

Melissa: Hi, Lina. My name is Melissa. I am an education counsellor with the Nunatsiavut government. I am aware that you are originally from Labrador. I was wondering if you are interested in learning more about their aboriginal heritage at a conference in Ottawa?

Lina: (excitedly) Yes! I would love to!

Lights dim, then come on to conference set up where Lina is sitting and listening attentively

Speaker: This conference invites aboriginal youth and leaders to engage in conversations about the many ways in which traditions shape understanding, while registering social and cultural change. Although Inuit life has changed significantly over the past century, it is so important to learn about and practice our traditions.

Lights dim

Narrator: After attending the conference and learning a lot about her Inuit background, Lina finally felt that connection to who she was that she longed for. She felt complete and decided that she'd move back to Labrador and start a life for herself there. She decided that she'd go to school to get a degree and social work, then help children in Labrador who are going through rough childhoods like hers.

Lights come on to adult Lina, sitting at her desk talking with a couple looking to foster

Lina: Katie is 6 years old and has just recently been placed into our care. She was previously in a very unhealthy home with parents who drank a lot. She is originally from a small town here in Labrador. We would really like if Katie remained close to her home.

Lady: I assure you that Katie will be well taken care of and in touch with her ethnicity as we live right here in Labrador.

Lights dim

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