

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Sunlight peaks through the drawn shades. Random clothes hang off a brown sectional. A laptop sits in the middle of a cherrywood desk in the corner.

Crumpled papers cover the surface of the desk and lay scattered on the floor. A muted television flickers on the wall next to a cluttered bookcase.

MELODY, 28, pretty brown-skinned, slim woman, crop-top and stained sweatpants, hammers away at the keyboard.

A disheveled bun sits on her head. A pen hangs from her lips.

MELODY

Ugh! Why is this so freaking hard!

She throws the pen down and looks over at a small photo perched on the edge of the desk.

She smiles and lays it face down.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Don't look at me while I'm working.
You make my thoughts nervous,
woman.

She smooths out a crumpled paper on the desk in front of her.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Story ideas... love story or broken
love? Nope. Damn love right now.
Murder-mystery, hmmm? Nope, I don't
feel like killing people right now.
What about fantasy? Oh yeah, I
could always put another vampire in
Brooklyn. No... Queens.

(laughs)

Cancel that. I can't even fantasize
me writing fantasy. Come on Melody,
we need a bestseller. We need that
bestseller's list shit!

She gets up and paces the floor with the paper her hand.

MELODY (CONT'D)

(sings)

Story of my life, what the hell to
write.

She looks at the paper and crumples it up.

MELODY (CONT'D)

No biographies, because my life is lame and I don't want to write a memoir, either. This is bullshit! I can't--

She throws the paper. She grabs the picture frame and pouts.

MELODY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna take a shower and when I come out, I need to write the best freaking book to ever hit a shelf. So I need you and God up there to do ya' thang and give me ideas. I needs ideas, Mom!

She wines as she sits the photo down and slumps out the room.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Melody, refreshed in a pair of jeans and a t-shirt, sits on the edge of a king size bed, tying her sneakers. Her bun is neatly pinned on her head.

The closet door hangs open with clothes strewn about.

CELLPHONE RINGS.

INSERT SHOT OF PHONE SCREEN: "P.R. CHIP SANDERS"

Melody grabs her phone and frowns. She clears her throat and answers.

MELODY

Chip Sanders. Now, for what do I owe this gut wrenching pleasure?

CHIP (V.O.)

Gut wrenching? I like to think of myself as an uplifting blessing. A light at the end of your dark tunnel. And this light I got for you right now is bright baby!

MELODY

Oh, really? How bright is it Chip?

Melody fixes the cuff of her jeans and grabs a book bag off the floor.

CHIP (V.O.)

Your name on the infamous list with all the perks, bright. It's even going to get me a new deck and pool, bright.

MELODY

A deck and pool, huh?

(chuckles)

And, how do you get this deck and pool?

CHIP (V.O.)

If my favorite client drops another phenomenal book...

MELODY

Oh, now I'm your favorite? I remember a time when I was your only client.

CHIP (V.O.)

A time that has long since passed. I'm booked and busy now, but you will always have a spot in my planner.

MELODY

In your pockets too, I bet. Tell me more about the list.

CHIP (V.O.)

I need another book, Mel. I need something gut wrenching, tear jerking, funny-bone tickling and gruesome. You give me a story like that and I guarantee you a position on that best sellers list. New York Times style.

MELODY

How you gonna' do that, all of a sudden?

She walks into her living room, holding the phone in one hand and a book bag in the other. She puts the laptop in her bag.

CHIP (V.O.)

Don't worry about all that, just give me a story.

MELODY

Everyday, I'm working on a story, and it's not that simple.

(MORE)

MELODY (CONT'D)

It takes proper planning, outlines,
research, drafts--

CHIP (V.O.)

You got three months, Mel. I need
it in three months.

Melody stops and looks at the phone in disbelief.

MELODY

Chip, have you lost your rabid-ass
mind? In three months? You should
have called with this three months
ago. I don't know what planet you
live on, but here on Earth you
cannot write a bestseller in three
months. Ain't no damn way.

CHIP (V.O.)

Find a way, Melody. A beautiful,
chocolate queen like yourself
always finds a way.

MELODY

Don't patronize me because you're
asking me to create the impossible.

CHIP (V.O.)

Listen, do you think Terry McMillan
or Sista Souljah complained about
deadlines? Sa'id Salaam drops a new
book every three to six months,
effortlessly. So, you have no
excuse. You either deliver me a
story in three months or find
another rep. Simple as that!

CALL ENDS.

Melody rolls her eyes at the phone and blows a raspberry.

MELODY

I know this lint licker didn't just
click on me. You want a story in
three months? Fine! How about the
story of the writer who stabs her
P.R, repeatedly in the eye with her
pen. Oh yeah Chip, won't that sell
millions.

She drops her phone in the bag and grabs her keys.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Like I'm not already trying to
write a damn story. Now he gives me
three months. Son of a...

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Sunlight streaks through the trees that surround the playground. A jungle gym mixed with slides, swings, and a set of monkey bars of assorted colors stands in the middle of a wood chipped space. A large sea saw, sandbox and scattered benches sit off to the side.

Melody sits on an empty bench and exhales loud. She pulls out notebook and pen and scans the park.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

-- Woman chasing behind a small toddler.

-- Woman on the phone, laughing.

-- Two boys digging in sandbox.

-- Children playing on jungle gym.

END MONTAGE

Melody taps pens vigorously as she looks up and closes her eyes.

TREE BRANCH SNAPS.

DYLAN, 8, scrawny brown-skinned child, sits on bench and stares at Melody.

Melody opens her eyes and looks at Dylan, startled.

They stare at each other.

MELODY

Well, hey. Where did you just come
from?

She looks around confused.

DYLAN

Home. Then the back seat of my
mama's hot car. But, I just walked
over here.

MELODY

Why, though?

DYLAN

Because your pretty. Is that a wig
on your head?

MELODY

(laughs)

No.

Melody smooths her hair.

DYLAN

My mama got a wig like that. She
wear it when she go food shopping.
But she got a wig for everything.

Dylan sits back comfortably and kicks feet.

MELODY

So, you just gonna tell your mama
business like that? They don't
teach ya'll stranger-danger
anymore?

DYLAN

My mama said that I'm the danger to
any stranger I meet.

Dylan smiles.

Melody snickers.

MELODY

You don't look like a danger to me.
Maybe in danger of becoming a
toothpick, but some milk can fix
that.

DYLAN

I don't like milk unless it's with
my Fruit loops, but my mama been
tripping and buying that fake bag
cereal. That junk taste like
colored circles.

MELODY

How do colored circles taste?

DYLAN

Like nothing. Milk and nothing.

MELODY

Your cute what's your name kid?

DYLAN

Dylan. But you can't have my number.

Dylan smiles at Melody as she shakes her head.

MELODY

I think Miss Mel, is out of your league anyways, sweetheart.

DYLAN

A boss can have anything they want. And I'm a boss.

Dylan puffs out his chest.

Melody raises her eyebrow.

MELODY

A boss of what? Milk and cookies? Nap time and colored circles?

Dylan looks at her in disbelief.

Melody laughs again.

They both look towards the jungle gym.

Melody taps the pen.

DYLAN

So, which one is your kid?

MELODY

None of them.

Dylan snaps his head back and moves over slightly.

DYLAN

So, why you in the park? Are you a kid-feeler?

MELODY

It's called a pedophile and hell no. I'm out here for air and ideas. I'm a writer and I have to come up with something great for my next book. I got a lot of pressure on me.

DYLAN
You write books?

Melody nods.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
So...you like to write?

MELODY
Yes. So much that I made a career
out of it.

DYLAN
That's crazy. I hate writing and
you actually want to write. I
thought that when your an adult you
can do whatever you want.

MELODY
You can, in a sense but--

DYLAN
So, why do you want to write? I
hate writing anything after my name
and your writing a book. That's
crazy pretty lady. Does it at least
have super heroes and magic stuff?

MELODY
I don't write that stuff, I write
Urban Fiction. It's like real life,
but fictional.

DYLAN
What's fictional?

Melody exhales.

MELODY
Fiction or fictional is something
written that is not real. It can
have real situations but overall
its not a true event. Non- fiction
is--

Dylan raises his hand.

DYLAN
Stop! This sounds like school and I
don't do school on Saturdays,
pretty lady.

Melody covers her chest with her palm.

MELODY

Well I'll be damned. Your supposed to learn something new everyday.

DYLAN

Yeah, okay starting Monday. I promise.

Melody looks at Dylan with an arched brow.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

What? Weekends are for me to be free. I'll learn everything else during the week.

MELODY

Okay, boss man, we'll see how far you go with that mindset.

DYLAN

(animated)

To infinity and beyond!

MELODY

(laughing)

I wish I had your imagination right now. I bet you got all types of stories in that little peanut.

DYLAN

Only thing I imagine is being some where else because my mama boyfriend has got to go!

Dylan scowls his face as he looks away.

Melody smirks and nudges him.

MELODY

He eating all your colored circles?

DYLAN

Yes! And all the food in the fridge. He never lets me watch what I like to watch. He is mean and stinky and he takes up all the space. He took my game from me and said games were for kids.

MELODY

But your a kid.

DYLAN

Exactly! My mama was gonna get me a PS5. A PS5, pretty lady! But he stopped her and told her it was too much and she listened. I hate him and I wish he wasn't born.

Dylan crosses his arms and pouts.

Melody pats his knee gently.

MELODY

Don't say that because words are powerful.

Dylan looks at her with a sly grin.

DYLAN

Well, I hope he slips on a banana peel. I don't like him and I know my mama don't either because she gives him that same look she gives me when I'm in trouble. But it's way more scary. They always be arguing and screaming at each other. One time he raised his hand to hit her but I jumped in front of my mama and swung on him.

Melody gasps.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

I missed, but he got the point. He not gonna hit my mama.

MELODY

Well where's your daddy?

DYLAN

My mama said he died when I was a baby. My granny said they shot him.

Melody starts scribbling notes on the paper. She pauses and looks at Dylan.

MELODY

I'm sorry to hear that. You don't have anyone else in the family that can help?

DYLAN

No, my granny just died and my mama caught my auntie doing something with her boyfriend so, they don't speak anymore.

MELODY

Damn, thats foul and she is still with him. Crazy. What does your mother's boyfriend do?

Melody continues scribbling notes.

DYLAN

I told you nothing, but yell, smoke the stank sticks, fart and eat. Are you not listening, pretty lady?

Dylan kicks his feet vigorously.

INSERT CLIP: Melody writing in book.

MELODY

I'm listening. But let me ask you a question?

Melody pauses.

DYLAN

You just did.
(laughs)

She smiles and rolls her eyes.

MELODY

Besides your mama's boyfriend, what else would you change about your life? For the better?

DYLAN

Everything! First, get enough money to take care of my mama so she don't get no dumb guy to move in our house. Then get her a big, stupid house away from the projects and the roaches. Then buy all the game systems in the world with every game...

He pauses.

MELODY

What else? Keep going...

She writes on the paper as Dylan looks at her.

He looks at the paper, then back at her.

DYLAN

Are you copying me?

MELODY

Not really, just taking notes for my story. You actually have an interesting life kid. You may not see it, but your life and the drama in it is very book worthy. And if I get it done in time and dress it up right it can make the bestsellers list and get us famous.

DYLAN

Famous? What about rich?

Dylan rubs his palms together.

MELODY

Rich and famous.

DYLAN

How would your book make us both rich and famous?

MELODY

I have to give credit to my muse. I wouldn't just use you like that. Your my inspiration.

Dylan stops and stares at the ground for a minute.

DYLAN

But I don't want to be in a book, you gonna get me in trouble. My mama said what happens in her house--

MELODY

Stays in my house.

DYLAN

Aye! How did you know? She told you too?

Dylan looks around.

MELODY

Nope, but my mama said the same thing to me as a child.

(MORE)

MELODY (CONT'D)

I listened to a certain extent. But you know I can change names, times, and places. That's the fun in fiction. Nobody has to know it's your truth. I'm going to spice it up anyways.

Dylan sits quietly.

DYLAN

I don't want to be in a book. My life should be a movie.

MELODY

If the right person reads it, it can be. You do know that a majority of movies you watched were books first, right?

DYLAN

No way! So, Black Panther and Thor was in a book?

MELODY

Yup, a comic book at that. Matter of fact, everything Marvel related came from a comic book.

DYLAN

Wow, that's crazy. I can't believe you still got me learning on the weekend.

Both laugh.

MELODY

So, what's up? I wouldn't feel right writing any of this without your approval.

DYLAN

Well, if the book is gonna' be about me, name the person Xavier, so that his alter-ego name can be Mr. X. Then make my aunt and all my stupid cousins my arch enemies because all they do is steal. My aunt even stole my mama money and now we can't move.

MELODY

That's messed up.

DYLAN

I don't really like my aunt either.
She's mean to me and to my mama,
but always smiling at my mama
boyfriend. I think she like, like
him. So, you can't give them any
powers, only give powers to me.

MELODY

But I don't really write about
superheroes. You can be the hero of
the story, but I don't do magic,
capes or powers.

Dylan shrugs.

DYLAN

I don't think you will make that
list without it, but your the
adult. My mama said don't ever
question adults. It's
disrespectful.

MELODY

But if you don't question things,
how will you learn?

Dylan slowly nods and turns his head.

DYLAN

(smiling)

I knew there was a reason I liked
you, pretty lady.

INSERT VOICE.

WOMAN

Dylan Damarcus Lee Woods! Get your
behind over here now!

Dylan stop smiling and jumps up.

DYLAN

Uh-oh!

Melody closes her notebook.

WOMAN, 24, brown-skinned, short petite frame, with a
headscarf on her head, stomps over the bench.

WOMAN

You had me worried half to death!
Didn't you hear me calling you?

(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

And why you over here bothering
this lady? Excuse my son, I'm
sorry. Come on boy!

She grabs his arm, but Dylan pulls out of her grip.

MELODY

It's okay he wasn't bothering me.

DYLAN

Mama, the pretty lady is gonna'
write a book about my life.

WOMAN

What life? Your eight, you haven't
lived shit.

DYLAN

Yes huh. All the arguments and
stuff I seen, she said that's
enough drama for every shelf. Isn't
that right?

Dylan looks at Melody.

Melody bites her lip.

WOMAN

She don't even know what your
talking about. Which is good
because if you would have told her
my business, I was gonna' beat your
ass! Now, come on!

She grabs his arm and pulls him away.

DYLAN

Hey pretty lady, I'm here every
Saturday if you need help with my
story!

WOMAN

Boy hush! You don't know where your
gonna' be at because you don't run
shit!

Dylan waves and runs ahead of his mother.

Melody nods and waves back. She re-opens the notebook and
continues to scribble.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT/EXT. CAR - DAY - FOUR MONTHS LATER

Melody gets into the back of a taxi.

MAN, LATE 40'S, Indian decent, looks at her through the rearview mirror.

MAN

Where to?

MELODY

Writer's Conference. Upper East Side, please. And take the long way, I'd like to make an entrance.

The taxi pulls into traffic.

MAN

A lot of people going that way today. My last rider said some big time writer is going to be there. I think the name is Melon Keys.

MELODY

It's Melody K.

MAN

Yeah that's it. You know her?

MELODY

(smiles)

More than you know.

PHONE VIBRATES.

INSERT CLIP OF PHONE: CHIP SANDERS PR

Melody looks down and smiles harder as she answers.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Well hey Chip, how can I help you on this awesome day?

CHIP (V.O.)

Awesome, it is hunny. It's about time you answered the phone like you got some sense. Please, tell me you're on the way here?

MELODY

Now, you know I wouldn't miss this for the world. It's a rare event to be a guest of honor at a bestseller's conference.

CHIP (V.O.)
A honor that you wouldn't have if
not for me.

MELODY
I wrote the book, Chip. I did the
work.

CHIP (V.O.)
And I did my part and here we are.
Teamwork baby!

Melody rolls her eyes.

MELODY
Whatever. You can't just let me
have this one. And I was just about
to thank your ass.

CHIP (V.O.)
Thank me by getting here on time!

MELODY
Now you know I have to make an
entrance.

CHIP (V.O.)
Just get your ass here!

HANGS UP.

MELODY
I'm gonna' slap him with my book
when I see him. Rude-ass always
hanging up.

Melody tucks the phone in her purse. She looks out the
window.

The park is seen in the distance.

MELODY (CONT'D)
Hey, can you slow down by the park?
I want to see something.

The driver nods.

Melody scans the park.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

-- Children playing in the park

-- Dylan sitting alone.

END MONTAGE

MELODY (CONT'D)

(gasps)

He's here! Hey, stop the car!

The man pulls over.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Keep the car running, I'll pay
whatever I have too, just don't
leave me!

Melody jumps out before he can respond. She power walks over to where Dylan is sitting and sits down.

He looks up towards her and smiles.

DYLAN

(excitedly)

Pretty lady!

MELODY

What's up, Dylan.

DYLAN

Oh snap, you remembered my name. I
knew you liked me, liked me.

MELODY

(laughs)

I don't know about like, like, but
I'll let you have your dreams.

Dylan gives her a twisted smile.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Anyways, I'm glad I seen you today,
because I wanted to give you this.

She reaches in her purse and pulls out a copy of her book.
She hands it to him.

DYLAN

What's this?

MELODY

(excitedly)

Our book. I took what you told me
and wrote a story. And a great one
at that. I made the list!

DYLAN

Did you add any capes or
superheroes?

MELODY

No, but I made a drama-filled story
with an awesome ending.

DYLAN

I don't know how you did it without
capas, but does that mean I'm rich
and famous now?

MELODY

Your story is definitely getting
famous by the day. People are
reading it worldwide. I talked to
my accountant and he's gonna set up
an account so you can get your half
of the sales. You really don't know
how much I really appreciate you
right now.

Melody pats his knee.

DYLAN

Is it gonna' be a movie?

MELODY

I mentioned that to my PR. He's
looking into that. I didn't forget.

Melody nudges him.

Dylan smiles as he stares at the book.

A woman walks up aggressively.

WOMAN

Dylan, why every time we come to
the park I gotta look for you?

DYLAN

Ma! Look!

Dylan jumps up and waves book in her face.

WOMAN

What!

She grabs the book from his hand.

DYLAN

I told you that lady was gonna
write a book about me.

The woman looks at the book cover then up at Melody.

WOMAN

Your the same lady from a couple
months ago?

Melody slowly nods.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

What you got going on with my son
because this is weird.

DYLAN

You don't listen do you, Ma? I told
you she wrote a book about my life.

WOMAN

What life, little boy? How the hell
did she write a book about you and
you ain't but eight years old? You
telling people my damn business and
I'm gonna' kick your ass!

DYLAN

But the business is famous now. I
could be in a movie. She even said
she gonna' pay me and all.

The woman blows out a heated breath and rolls her eyes.

WOMAN

Dylan...

MELODY

Listen, if you just look in the
book and read it, you'll understand
better. Just take the time to look.
I have to go.

Melody gets up and heads out the park to the taxi.

Over her shoulder, the woman grabs Dylan by the arm.

He pulls away knocking the book from her hand.

The book flies in the air and a piece of paper falls out the
cover.

DYLAN

What's that, ma?

The woman picks the book and paper up. She gasps and looks around frantically.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

What is it?

WOMAN

A check. That lady really gave you a check.

The woman looks around.

Melody is no longer there.

Dylan takes the check.

DYLAN

All these zeros! We rich, ma! You know what that means, right?

WOMAN

What?

DYLAN

First my PS5. Next, since I'm paying bills now, your boyfriend has to go!

Dylan runs off with the check. The woman chases behind him, laughing.

FADE TO BLACK.