“Redemption”

ETX. CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

Lisa is walking along by herself.

LISA (V.O.)

America: land of the free, home of the brave. A new start, a better life. Or so my parents told me. I think. Life in Brazil was hard, and they didn't have enough money to support me. So, I was sent to live with my aunt in America when I was about three. I don't really remember my parents all that much, so my aunt was like my mom. She worked at a bank and there was always more than enough money for the two of us, plus the little bit that my parents could send every so often. They never came to visit me, though. Part of me thinks they never really wanted me. School was fine. I got good grades and was in the top of my class, but I didn't have many friends. People thought I was weird, so I kept to myself. I didn’t mind it that way, but I think my aunt was always a little worried.

As time went on, school lessons turned their focus from understanding other cultures to current events in the U.S. It started out with these weird outbreaks of the flu, but people were dying instead of getting better. Then the economy slumped and tons of people were laid off, including my aunt. The more people who were laid off, the less money they had, the less people bought, the worse the economy got. Schools started closing, including mine, and my aunt wouldn’t let me go outside anymore. President Anderson had closed off all of the borders to the country and no one was allowed to have any contact with the outside world. Everyone started to run out of food and the "home of the free" turned into the home of the servants as people were shipped off to labor camps by the bus-full. We’re all trapped in a dictatorship with no help and no way out.

Then "we" turned to "I" when my aunt got taken to a labor camp and now… I'm alone. Just this morning I thought we’d be able to get through this together and now… she’s gone.

Lisa is still walking, but she turns on the sidewalk. Calvin walks in from the other direction, head down, and runs straight into Lisa. They both stumble and fall down on the ground.

CALVIN

(mumbles)

Oh, um, hi, sorry I'll just be going now, so... Bye.

Calvin gets up and walks away.

LISA

Wait, no, come back!

Calvin starts walking away quickly and Lisa runs after him and then falls in step beside him, talking.

LISA

What's your name? Where are you from? How old are you? How are you? Where's your family? Do you know what's going on? Where are you going?

CALVIN

I'm Calvin.

LISA

That's it? Nothing else?

Calvin pauses before answering, annoyed with all of Lisa's questions.

CALVIN

Nope.

LISA

Well I'm Lisa. I'm sixteen years old and I live with my aunt. Well, lived with her anyway. I'm originally from Brazil and I haven't seen my real parents since I was three. I think. Anyway, I'm alone now, but I’m doing okay, just a little shaken up. How about you?

CALVIN

Yup.

LISA

Yup what?

CALVIN

I'm alone.

LISA

Well where’s your family?

CALVIN

Gone.

LISA

But… where?

CALVIN

They’re not here, okay?! Gosh!

LISA

Well, we’ll stick together. Then neither of us will be alone.

Calvin starts to protest, but gets cut off by Will.

WILL (O.S.)

Can't catch me!

Will runs around the corner of a building and stops in front of Lisa.

WILL

Hi, Lisa!

LISA

Will!

CALVIN

You *know* this kid?

LISA

Yeah, I went to school with his sister. I wonder where-

BLAIR (O.S. yelling)

Will! Will!

Blair comes into the scene, running, as if chasing after Will. She is extremely angry and exasperated. When she sees Will, she slows to a walk and stoops down to talk to him at his height when she reaches him.

BLAIR

Will! I told you not to run off! Who knows what could’ve happened to you! You’re not safe by yourself! Look at me, Will! Do you understand?

WILL (quietly, apologetic)

I was just trying to have fun.

BLAIR

But you could’ve been hurt! You could’ve been killed! You could’ve been taken! You could’ve-

Lisa wraps her arms around Will and shields him from Blair.

LISA

But nothing did happen. He’s fine, Blair.

BLAIR

Yeah, but-

Blair stands as she talks, looking at Lisa.

BLAIR

Wait… how do you know my name?

LISA

Don’t you recognize me?

Blair gives Lisa a very confused look.

LISA

We went to the same school, we were both in Mr. Thompson’s english class, your house was only three down from mine…?

BLAIR

Oh! Right, right. I’m sorry. And your name is… is… umm…

CALVIN

(mocking Lisa’s voice)

Her name is Lisa and she’s sixteen, but she lives with her aunt and she hasn’t seen her parents since they shipped her here from Brazil when she was three so she could have a better life, but now her aunt “magically” disappeared and she’s alone and super excited to be your friend! Yay!

Lisa glares at Calvin who just smirks back at her.

BLAIR

I asked for her name, not her life story. Gosh.

CALVIN

Actually, you didn’t. You just expected that it would be given to you. So it was. Plus some. You're welcome.

BLAIR

I don’t like your attitude, whatever your name is.

CALVIN

(sarcastically)

Oh *I* have the attitude. And it’s Calvin, by the way. Not that you’d care.

LISA

Guys, guys, stop it!

Will hits Blair in the arm.

WILL

I’m bored!

BLAIR

Fine, Fine. We’re going. Bye.

Blair and Will start to walk away.

LISA

Wait! We’ll come, too!

Blair and Will stop wlking and wait.

CALVIN

We? Speak for yourself!

Lisa glares at Calvin.

CALVIN

All right, all right. We’ll come. I know a place, and it should only be about a minute or two walk to get there.

(To Blair)

But this isn’t for you!

BLAIR

Fine!

CALVIN

Fine!

LISA

Oh my gosh you two! (laughs) Whatever. Let's go!

Lisa and Calvin walk to where Blair and Will are waiting and then the four walk away, their backs facing the camera.

EXT. FIELD NEAR ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

Our four characters walk around the corner of the warehouse to an empty field. The only person that’s there is another boy admiring the graffiti on the warehouse.

CALVIN

Here we are!

BLAIR

Oh, because this looks fun!

CALVIN

Like you have a better idea!

Blair sighs angrily and Will runs over to the new guy looking at the graffiti.

WILL

(to the new guy)

Did you do all that?

BLAZE

Yup.

WILL

Cool! Can you teach me?

Blaze and Will talk in the background while messing around with spray paint.

CALVIN

See? Your brother thinks it’s cool.

BLAIR

Definitely. Being taught how to be a delinquent when the government is already after you is *so* cool.

CALVIN

What do you mean the government’s after you?

BLAIR

(Sarcastically)

Wooooooow, really? You don’t know?

Calvin just gives Blair a harsh look in response.

BLAIR

When everything started failing and we all ran out of food, the government said every family can only have one kid.

CALVIN

And your point is…?

BLAIR

One-child policy? Two of us? Not exactly what they want.

LISA

But Will is, what, nine? Weren’t you both born before that law?

BLAIR

That’s what My parents said. Trust me, they don’t care.

Blair turns to Will and waves him over to her.

BLAIR

Will! Come over here!

Blair sits down in the grass a few feet in front of her as Will comes over and sits next to her. Lisa then sits on the other side of Blair and Calvin sits next to Will. Blaze slowly walks over to them behind Will.

LISA

(to Blaze)

Have a seat!

BLAZE

(appalled)

I’m not joining a hippie circle.

BLAIR

We’re not hippies, you idiot, just sit down.

Blaze sits down between Calvin and Lisa.

BLAZE

Whatever you say, princess.

(loudly whispering to Calvin)

What’s wrong with her?

CALVIN

(answering Blaze)

Everything.

BLAIR

Shut up, Calvin.

LISA

*Anyway*, what’s your name?

BLAZE

Blaze.

LISA

No, seriously, what’s your name?

BLAZE

You got a problem with my name?

LISA

No, it’s just… not common.

BLAZE

And anything that’s happened recently is? You’ve got no freedom, people being murdered all over the place, no life, constant fear of someone watching you-

LISA

Okay, okay, we get it. Blaze it is.

BLAIR

So, what are we gonna do now?

LISA

I don’t know.

Blair starts fanning her face with her hand. Will gets up and runs around in the background, almost unnoticeable.

BLAIR

It's too hot out here.

CALVIN

Not all of us could grow up in giant mansions with perfect air conditioning all the time, you know. Some of us are used to it.

BLAIR

Shut up.

Calvin stands up.

CALVIN

You know, some of our lives actually sucked before this happened.

BLAZE

You tell her, Calvin!

Blair stands up and glares at Calvin.

BLAIR

I said, shut up.

Lisa stands up, obviously nervous that a fight will start.

LISA

Guys, guys, let's just calm down.

BLAIR

(Ignoring Lisa) What makes you think I had a mansion of a house anyway?

CALVIN

You’re just that type.

BLAIR

That type?

Blaze points to Blair as he talks.

BLAZE

Oh yeah, I see it! Preppy clothes, actually managing to stay clean, the attitude problem, the acting entitled to everything. Fits you perfectly, princess.

BLAIR

Shut up! And stop calling me princess!

LISA

Guys-

CALVIN

(to Blaze) Doesn’t it though? Acting like she knows everything!

BLAZE

Bet she learned everything in that mansion of hers in Vegas. She probably had her own floor to herself.

BLAIR

It… It was in L.A. And I didn’t have my own floor. It wasn’t that big.

CALVIN

(voice rising)

A mansion in L.A. and you think *you* had it rough?

LISA

Calvin, please!

CALVIN

No! I'm tired of this! Y'all think you've got such hard lives! Well, you know, the world sucks!

BLAIR

Like you even know what a hard life is.

CALVIN

(furious)

I DO! Don't you dare ever say that I don't know what it means to have a hard life! None of you know what a hard life is!

Blaze finally stands with the rest of the group.

BLAZE

(slightly irritated)

Okay, I *suggest* you watch your mouth. We've all been through crap.

LISA

Guys, please, this is not what we need right now!

BLAIR

(to Lisa)

I don't see how this could possibly get any worse! In case you couldn't tell, the world as we knew it is dead! What's a little yelling gonna do? Can’t make it worse!

LISA

It's just... But...

CALVIN

(to Lisa)

Oh would you stop it! We're not perfect, we fight, life sucks! None of you know what a bad life is!

BLAIR

Oh yeah?!

CALVIN

Yeah!

BLAZE

You wanna go?

BLAIR

Yeah, what happened to you anyway?

CALVIN

(Hesitantly)

I... Um...

Calvin sits back down.

BLAZE

(smugly)

So quiet all of a sudden. Can't fight me.

Lisa sits down next to Calvin and puts her hand on his shoulder.

LISA

(gently, to Calvin)

Calvin, what happened to you?

CALVIN

I… My… My family… was… Burned. Alive. In my house.

BLAIR

What?!

LISA

Calvin! I'm so sorry!

CALVIN

I was out getting food to cook for my uncle’s birthday and when I came back… The door was locked and they were tied up. When the flames caught… there was nothing I could do. I saw two soldiers running out the back door right when I got there.

Blair sits down next to Lisa, her focus on Calvin.

BLAIR

But, what would the government want with your family?

CALVIN

No idea. But I wish I had been with them.

Blaze leans on Calvin's shoulder.

BLAZE

Don't say that.

Calvin pushes Blaze's hand off of his shoulder.

CALVIN

Not that I died, idiot. No one gets off that easy. But then I could’ve *done* something. I could’ve saved them.

BLAIR

Well I should've saved my parents. We moved here from L.A. because the government wanted either Will or me dead. My parents wanted to go to where no one knew us, but they found us anyway. And when the soldiers couldn’t find us in the house… they took my parents instead. I watched them pull my parents out of my house literally by their hair and I just hid with Will. I could’ve stood up and turned myself in, saved them, let Will have a perfect life growing up with actual parents, but I was selfish. That was months ago. We haven’t seen our parents since.

LISA

Guys… neither of those things are your fault!

Blair points to Will playing out in the field.

BLAIR

Try telling that to you’re little brother when he’s scared and asking for Mom and Dad to play with him. All he wants is to just run around and play and have fun with friends- and he deserves that. But he'll never have it in this world.

Blaze sits down and the group is silent for a few moments, all looking at the ground instead of at each other. Finally, Calvin takes a big breath and breaks the silence.

CALVIN

Well… We're all just screwed up, aren't we?

BLAZE

Got that right!

LISA

That's a good point... The government has hurt us so much and so many times...

CALVIN

Whatcha thinkin, Lisa?

LISA

We (pauses) should protest!

Blair, Calvin, and Blaze all mumble uncertainly.

BLAZE

Yeah, right, like *that* would do any good.

Calvin punches Blaze in the arm and glares to make him stop talking.

LISA

(Excitedly)

Oh, come on, guys, we could do it! We’d just need a lot more people and a dead set plan… Hmm…

Lisa gets up and starts running around, picking up rocks, stones, and sticks. Then, she comes back to the group and lays all of them down. Audio cuts out from the scene as she starts laying out all of the rocks and sticks in a specific order and explaining her plan to the others with large hand gestures. Will comes over and listens in, leaning on Blair’s shoulders. Blair, Calvin, and Blaze all seem unsure at first, but the more Lisa gets into her plan, the more they start to agree. As this goes on, Lisa voices over.

LISA (V.O.)

For once, since my parents had given me up, I felt important. I mean, my aunt had given me attention and I knew she loved me, but now, I was important. I was in charge of something, people needed me, I had a place. I know it’s going to take a lot of effort to stand up and take over the government, and it’s definitely not something a group of teenagers like us can do on our own, but we can start it. If we can be the spark of a fiery revolution, then we’ve done our part. After all, we’ve been through just as much crap as anyone else. This fight is ours.

Audio fades back into the scene with the group discussing plans.

BLAIR

Do you really think we can do it, though?

LISA

Well, not on our own, no. But if we had help.

BLAZE

Who would help *us?*

Calvin stands, becoming more enthusiastic about Lisa's plan.

CALVIN

Who wouldn’t help us? With enough people, they’d be powerless to stop us!

BLAZE

I still say it’s pointless.

LISA

No, we can do it!

CALVIN

I’m in! I guarantee there’s tons of people out there who are just waiting for someone to start something against the government for them to join.

Blair hesitates for a moment, then nods and stands up with Calvin and Lisa.

BLAIR

President Anderson is going down!

LISA

Yeah!

Blair, Calvin, and Lisa all high-five one another and then look at Blaze expectedly.

LISA

Are you in, too, Blaze?

Blaze hesitates before replying.

BLAZE

John.

BLAIR

Huh?

BLAZE

The name’s John. I used to think it was boring, but… I guess it works.

BLAIR

Well, *John*, are you coming with us?

Blaze thinks for a moment, then stands.

BLAZE

I’m in.

CALVIN

Let’s do it!

LISA

Only thing is… where do we start? We need a safe place to plan.

Everyone thinks for a moment. Then, Blair gets an idea.

BLAIR

CHOY!

BLAZE

What?

BLAIR

Children's Home of York! I was looking into going there for me and Will to have a safe place. It can’t be too far from here. I think it’s in that direction. It would be perfect!

Blair points over the river and farther in to the city.

CALVIN

Sounds good to me!

Calvin starts walking ahead in the general direction of CHOY.

BLAZE

Look at that, the princess has some brains after all!

BLAIR
(laughing and smiling)

Oh shut it, would you?

LISA

I can’t believe we’re actually going to do this!

BLAIR

And it’s all ‘cause of you.

CALVIN

Are you guys coming or not?

LISA

We’re coming, we’re coming!

BLAIR

C'mon, Will!

Blair, Will, and Lisa run to go catch up with Calvin.

BLAZE
(to himself)

We're coming, President Anderson. It's time for our redemption.

LISA (O.S.)

John, come *on*!

Blaze rolls his eyes and smiles. He turns and half jogs - half walks to the others. Then, the five of them all walk in the distance to CHO together, ready to start a revolution.

THE END.