

THE WASHING MACHINE

Written by

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INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

A very messy dining room. There are empty beer bottles and ashtrays with cigarettes on the table. ALICE (12) cleans very carefully, throwing the garbage inside a black plastic bag trying not to make noise. She accidentally moves a bottle and it crashes on the floor. She looks to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

On a very old sofa, there is PEDRO (45) her father, sleeping with his mouth wide open. He turns to the side without being bother by the sound. Alice sighs, relieved. She keeps cleaning.

INT. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY

Alice opens the fridge. There is only half a bottle of milk. She grabs a box of cheap cereal from the kitchen cabinets.

She serves the cereal on a plate. A little girl, GABI (9) appears. She seats at the table.

GABI  
(whispering)  
Are you not going to eat?

ALICE  
(whispering)  
No, I'm not hungry. Eat, I don't  
want to be late.

Gabi starts eating and Alice starts braiding Gabi's hair. Pedro snores very heavily. The girls look at each other and starts laughing.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Alice and Gabi, carrying their school backpacks wait at a very crowded bus stop. They look very small between all the adults.

ALICE  
Do you have your cookies for  
recess?

GABI  
Yes.

A bus approaches the stop. Alice kisses Gabi. Gabi steps in the bus. Alice waves to her.

ALICE  
Be good. See you at home!

Alice starts walking dragging her feet when Gabi leaves.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Alice draws distracted on her notebook, without paying any attention to the class. The drawing is very colorful and shows what it seems to be a magical kingdom.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Alice opens a can of Campbell's tomato soup. She starts heating the content in a very old pot.

ALICE  
Gabi! Dinner is going to be ready  
in a second!

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Gabi is playing in the bathtub. Alice comes in.

ALICE  
Did you wash your feet?

GABI  
Yes.

ALICE  
Behind the ears?

GABI  
Yes.

ALICE  
Really?

Gabi looks at Alice.

GABI  
Mmmmmmm. I don't remember.

Alice smiles and starts tickling Gabi. They both laugh.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Gabi, wearing pj's is doing her homework on the bed. She has a lot of heavy books next to her and she looks interested. Alice is seated in front of a small desk but she draws distracted instead of doing her homework. Suddenly, the sound of a group of very loud people entering into the apartment.

Alice goes to the door and closes it. Then she opens it very slowly and see what's happening.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Pedro enters the apartment with three more guys. They are all very drunk and they yell to each other. Pedro is carrying a lot of beers. They sit at the table and start playing cards.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Alice closes the door and locks it. She smiles to Gabi. The sound from the drunk men talking and laughing invades the room.

ALICE

It's just Daddy playing cards with his *compadres*. Do you want to make a tent?

GABI

No. I'm doing my homework!

ALICE

C'mon! It will be fun!

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Alice and Gabi are under a tent made with blankets, in the middle of the room. They use flashlights to illuminate the place.

ALICE

Isn't this fun?

GABI

Yes! Can I bring my books?

We can hear the sound of furniture moving in the next room, females voices, glasses, yelling and laughter.

ALICE

Your books? No I have something better! I'm going to tell you the story about the Land of the endless Colors. Would you like that?

Gabi looks at her sister and nods with her head.

ALICE

(whispering)

But you have to promise me that you won't tell a single soul about this.

GABI

(whispering)

I won't.

The sound of the people in the next room gets louder. Alice sighs.

ALICE

Well, this is a story Mom used to tell me, and we are supposed to repeat it to our kids, and they are supposed to tell it to their kids, and so on, until the end of the world.

GABI

Yes, the teacher said that is called oral tradition -

ALICE

Before she died, my Mom told me that there's a portal in this house, and through this portal, you can access a magical world.

Gabi lights her face with the flashlight.

GABI

The Land of Endless Colors.

ALICE

And the portal is ...

GABI

In the kitchen, inside the washing machine/

ALICE

Exactly! Everything is possible on this kingdom. It never rains, it's always sunny.

Gabi eats a cracker.

GABI

What about the food?

ALICE

You can eat anything you want! There's no money, everyone shares everything. The animals run wild, and the colors...

GABI

What about roasted chicken?

ALICE

Chicken? You can have roasted chicken for breakfast, for lunch and for dinner!

The sound of a fight in the next room interrupts the story. Alice speaks with a louder voice.

ALICE

I've been there, you know? Is the most beautiful place you have ever seen. There are colors that I cannot even describe.

GABI

Can I go?

ALICE

You can. In a year, when you are ten.

GABI

I don't believe you.

ALICE

The day of your 10th Birthday I will open the washing machine door and you are going to seat inside, very still. I will give you the sacred key and the special password. Then you will believe me.

Pedro yells something unintelligible. The sound of a door slamming.

GABI

And how can I come back from that land?

ALICE

Why would you like to do that? I'm going to be there too.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Alice walks back from school dragging her feet. She spots a snail on the side walk. She leans to look at it better. She grabs a little stick and tries to touch it but the snail gets inside its shell. Alice sighs and keeps walking.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Alice stops outside her building when she sees her father outside next to a pick- up truck. The truck leaves and Pedro waves to the driver.

ALICE

What are you doing?

PEDRO

I'm selling some stuff.

ALICE

Why?

PEDRO

I lost yesterday, playing with the guys. But I can feel my luck is going to change, baby. I'm going to get you new and better things, you'll see!

ALICE

I don't want new things, I want our things!

Pedro tries to touch Alice on a paternal way but she runs into the building.

INT. STAIRS BUILDING - DAY

Alice runs upstairs, very mad.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Alice enters into the apartment, which looks almost empty. The sofa is gone, the table is gone.

ALICE

Gabi!

Alice keeps walking through the empty apartment.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Alice enters her bedroom. The small desk is missing too.

ALICE

Gabi! Where are you?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Alice sees that the fridge is missing.

ALICE

Gabi, come here right now!

In that moment, Alice realizes the washing machine is missing too.

ALICE

Oh no... Gabi!