

GREED

FADE IN:

INT. HIGH-ROLLERS ROOM - CASINO ROYALE

NIKKI SELBY (late 20s) ENTERS with a nervous energy, like a cat on hot tar.

Nikki straightens her silk seamed stockings, slips on her strappy, black heels, and smooths the clingy black and white French-maid number the Casino Royale restaurant makes her wear.

Her eyes roam over the room full of PLAYERS -- all types.

AT THE BAR

Nikki leans in toward the BARTENDER. She tilts her head -- a question in her eyes.

The Bartender points to a Black Jack table. The lone player is JOHNNY RIVERS (40) a dissipated, unshaven James-Bond type in a rumpled white shirt and black Armani suit.

Bartender RUBS his thumb and fingers together to indicate Johnny's got real money.

BARTENDER

Widower --

Nikki NODS, contemplating her chances.

Johnny casually glances over his shoulder and SEES Nikki. He turns back to the Black-Jack table and slowly pushes a pile of thousand-dollar chips onto each of seven Black Jack hands.

Nikki smiles and moves toward the table.

Bartender holds her back and puts out his palm, waiting to be greased.

Nikki reaches down the front of her skin-tight black blouse, pulls out a five-hundred-dollar chip, drops it in the Bartender's palm. She makes a beeline for her newfound mark.

NIKKI

(seductively)

Something I can get you, sir?

Johnny looks Nikki up and down. Likes what he sees. Nikki throws out a smile. Johnny smiles back. He's line-caught for sure, without a fight.

INT. VEGAS WEDDING CHAPEL

Nikki and Johnny stand at the altar.

The CHAPLAIN'S WIFE is the only witness.

CHAPLAIN

By the power vested in me from the state of Nevada, I hereby pronounce you, Johnny Rivers, and you, Nikki Selby, man and wife. You may kiss the bride.

Nikki SQUEALS in delight. Her arm goes around Johnny's neck, the better to keep her eye on the enormous engagement/wedding ring he's just placed on her finger. When she tilts her head just right, she can see the sparkle.

Almost as an afterthought, they kiss.

As they turn to leave, Chaplain's Wife snaps a Polaroid photo.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE VEGAS CHAPEL - NIGHT

Johnny and Nikki float down the steps as the Chaplain's wife throws a lonely bag of rice. They slide into

INT. RED MASERATI 4-DOOR SEDAN - NIGHT

Nikki nestles into Johnny's shoulder, arms through his -- so she can continue to admire her ring.

Maserati moves slowly.

A SUDDEN BANG on the TINTED WINDOW startles Nikki and Johnny.

Johnny lowers the window.

It's the Chaplain. He hands in their Polaroid photo.

CHAPLAIN

You folks wouldn't want to forget this --

NIKKI

Why, thank you, darlin --

Nikki reaches across Johnny to snatch it. She holds it up to gaze at it, then clasps it to her heart.

Johnny rolls up the window and the Maserati moves again.

NIKKI

Pinch me.

Johnny playfully obliges.

NIKKI

Nope. Still feels like I'm dreamin'
I'm Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*.

She holds up the photo again.

NIKKI

Think we should make copies and
frame it?

JOHNNY

Are you sure there's no one you
want to call and tell, Angel?

NIKKI

I already told you, darlin' --
You're my only family, now --
Is it really a mansion, Johnny?

JOHNNY

Big enough for you and me -- and
all the new clothes I bought you --
and Anna, of course --

NIKKI

Anna. That's right. I'm a stepmom.
How old is she again?

JOHNNY

Thirteen going on 30, like every
other teenage girl.

NIKKI

We'll get along just fine, then --
Anna can help me take care of our
babies...

Nikki carefully places the wedding photo for safekeeping in her bodice. Then snuggles into Johnny.

JOHNNY

Take it slow with Anna, Nikki. I want her to love you like I do. She and her mother were very close. Teresa's death -- It was hard -- for -- her --

Johnny pauses.

NIKKI

Oh, baby. I know we've only been together a few days. But I've been waiting my whole life for someone like you. I'll be the perfect wife. And a mother to Anna. You'll see. I'll make you happy. I promise.

Johnny smiles, pats her hand. They kiss.

EXT. HIGHWAY WEST OUT OF LAS VEGAS - DUSK

The RED MASERATI DRIVES past an old billboards with multi-layers of flyers for Vegas shows, magic acts -- past and present.

Night Falls as they DRIVE through the desert.

In the PRE-DAWN, the MASERATI CLIMBS UP LONG AND WINDING CANYONS that overlook deep ravines. At the highest point is a deserted Native American Gift Shop -- an empty shack.

The Road then DESCENDS into the Valley. They pass a pig and chicken farm, a sign that says No Through Street and they continue onto

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN MANSION - DAWN

Maserati pulls into a long gravel driveway. Signpost reads: Manderley Villa.

INT. MASERATI - DAWN

Nikki, asleep against Johnny's side. Johnny's wide awake.

Maserati comes to a blazing stop, spraying gravel everywhere.

Startled, Nikki wakes.

JOHNNY
Welcome to Manderley, Angel.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN FRONT COURTYARD - DAWN

Nikki steps out into the courtyard. Her eyes go wide as she SEES the lone enormous Mediterranean mansion, the circular drive, the fountain in the courtyard. Desert landscaping as far as the eye can see. No neighbors.

NIKKI
I've died and gone to heaven.

JOHNNY
Pool's that way --

NIKKI
What's on the other side?

JOHNNY
Utility shed -- machinery junk --

Nikki, face to the sun, arms wide, twirls in pure delight in front of the house.

NIKKI
Is this all ours? Oh, Johnny --

In sheer delight, Nikki jumps into his arms and kisses him hard on the lips.

EXT. DOORWAY - MORNING

Door CREAKS OPEN. A Gothic-looking 13-year-old ANNA emerges.

Johnny guiltily pulls back from Nikki.

JOHNNY
Anna. Darling.

He holds out his arms to her.

ANNA
Daddy.

Anna hugs Johnny and gives Nikki a measured and calculating look over Johnny's shoulder.

Nikki, determined to make Anna like her, goes to her and tries to hug her, too.

Anna shrugs her off.

JOHNNY
(with reproach)
Anna --

ANNA
Mrs. Danby says breakfast's in an hour. And she wants to talk to you, Dad.

JOHNNY
Uh-oh. What've I done? I just got back --

NIKKI
Mrs. Danby?

JOHNNY
The housekeeper, Angel. Mrs. Danby rules the house with an iron hand -- you'll see.

Nikki's not pleased, but quickly masks it.

JOHNNY
Anna. Take Nikki upstairs so she can change.
(to Nikki)
There's a roomful of clothes just waiting for you, Angel.

NIKKI
Oh, Johnny --

She HEARS COYOTES SHRIEK in tge distance.

Nikki jumps and grabs Johnny's arm.

NIKKI
Someone's being murdered --

Johnny gently disengages Nikki.

Anna LAUGHS.

ANNA
Don't they have coyotes where you're from?

NIKKI
Not a one --

ANNA

Well, they don't leave much behind,
not even the bones --

Nikki looks around, expecting a murderer or a coyote to leap out of the landscaping at her.

Anna looks critically at Nikki's wedding gown.

ANNA

Nice dress --

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Nikki, in her bra and underpants, amidst dozens of open clothing boxes scattered around the room.

The Polaroid wedding photo's propped up on the dresser against the mirror.

Nikki holds up a long, slinky black nightgown and twirls around in front of a three-sided mirror.

Anna's in a corner, an inscrutable expression on her face.

NIKKI

Your daddy is the most generous and
wonderful man on the planet.

Nikki jumps onto the bed, clasping the nightgown to her. She smiles up at her reflection in the MIRRORED CEILING.

ANNA

My mother had a nightgown like
that.

NIKKI

Really?

Without skipping a beat, Nikki sits up and drops it on the floor without a second glance. She looks around and SEES the heavily carved four-poster bed, tapestry throw rugs, Satille tile floor and Mission-style armoire, chairs and night tables.

Native American carved fetish figures on every surface.

ANNA

Daddy hasn't changed a thing in
here since --

Anna bites her lip.

NIKKI
Is that so?

ANNA
'Cept the mirror--
That's new --

NIKKI
Your daddy does think of everything
--

Nikki scans the dresser and SEES Native American carved animal figures made from wood and natural stones.

NIKKI
Well, I can see your momma liked
her knickknacks.

ANNA
They're fetishes.

NIKKI
Fetishes?

ANNA
Spirit dolls --

NIKKI
Really? Well, darlin' where I come
from, fetish has a whole different
sort of meaning --

Nikki absently picks up a carved BLACK ONYX MUSICAL HAWK from the night stand. She twirls the key at the back.

She HEARS A LONE FLUTE play a trill of discordant notes that echoes the Coyote's shriek

ANNA
Be careful with that --

Anna reaches out to snatch it, Nikki accidentally drops it, on the bed, so it doesn't break.

ANNA
That was my mother's favorite --
the only musical one in her whole
collection --

MRS. DANBY (undetermined age, dark-hair in a severe bun, thick, rubbery skin, crooked, yellow teeth, dowdy skirt and high-necked ruffled blouse) appears silently at the doorway.

ANNA

Mrs. Danby --

MRS. DANBY

Anna -- is something wrong?

Mrs. Danby SEES the fetish in Nikki's hands.

MRS. DANBY

Let me take care of that for you.
There are some things that can't be
replaced --

Nikki and Mrs. Danby exchange a look.

Mrs. Danby puts the black hawk fetish back on the night
table; she fiddles with it until it rests in the exact same
spot.

MRS. DANBY

(to Anna)

Anna. Where are your manners?
Draw your new mother a bath --

NIKKI

Oh, she doesn't have to -- I can --

MRS. DANBY

Anna --

Anna hops to and heads into the bathroom.

Mrs. Danby, mindful of her housekeeping duties, begins to
pick up the scattered clothes and boxes.

NIKKI

Mrs. Danby -- let me -- really.

Mrs. Danby stands up.

MRS. DANBY

As you prefer, Madam.

NIKKI

Mrs. Danby -- I think you and I
started off on the wrong foot --

Nikki extends her hand.

NIKKI

I'm Nicole Selby, I mean -- Rivers.
I'm gonna have to get used to
saying that.
Call me Nikki.

Anna re-enters the room and nods to Mrs. Danby.

MRS. DANBY

Your bath, Madam. Breakfast is in
half an hour.
(to Anna)
Anna, come with me.

Mrs. Danby exits.

Before leaving, Anna glances over her shoulder at Nikki, then obediently follows Mrs. Danby out.

Nikki stands there -- unsettled by the encounter, uncertain what to do next.

She HEARS the water running in the tub, picks out her toiletries bag from amidst the clutter, and heads for

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Nikki ENTERS.

Blinding sunlight pours in through the skylight. Steam everywhere.

Nikki makes room on the counter for her toiletries bag, squints at the fogged-up wall-length mirror, wipes away a small patch so she can see her reflection.

Nikki SURVEYS the rest of the large, drafty bathroom, chilly tile floor; opulent fixtures; old-fashioned original oversized claw-footed tub in the center. Towels hang from hooks on the heavy wooden linen closet door.

A modern glass steam shower in the corner.

More fetish figures litter the counter top.

Nikki slips off her panties and bra. On her abdomen, there's a slightly noticeable incision scar below the panty line.

A cloud passes over the skylight and blocks the sun. The bathroom falls into dark relief.

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For the complete script please contact Jennifer Brooks at
info@filmmakers.com (serious inquiries only - for production or representation consideration)