

# White Oleander 4 (OA)

Mother

Astrid, my God.

Astrid

What's wrong, Mom? You don't like my outfit?

(BEAT)

So, what's the story? We didn't go to Mexico to buy DMSO? Barry beat you? He raped me? How bad does he have to be to get you out of jail?

Mother

I can't believe what's happened to you. When I get out, I'll make it up to you.

Astrid

Who said you're getting out? I said I'd talk to you, I didn't say I'd do it.

Mother

Then what do you want?

Astrid

I have a deal to make, a trade. You tell me the truth, and I'll lie for you in court.

Mother

The truth about what?

Astrid

Everything you kept from me.

Mother

And if I don't?

Astrid

Then you can rot in here.

Mother

I hate this look, by the way. You're a sunset Boulevard Motel, \$20 hooker in the back of a car.

Astrid  
Why did you murder Barry?

Mother  
If I submit to this, you'll testify?

Astrid  
Yes.

Mother  
Self-defense, he was killing me.

Astrid  
Claire did nothing to you. Why'd you go after her?

Mother  
Claire went after herself. I just showed her how to do it.

Astrid  
Who was my father?

Mother  
Why do you always ask that question?  
It's ancient history.

Astrid  
It's *"my"* ancient history. Who was he?

Mother  
His name was Klaus Anders.

Astrid  
What did he do?

Mother  
He was an artist.

Astrid  
How did you meet?

Mother  
At Venice Beach, at a party. He had the drugs.

Astrid

Did you love him?

Mother

It was a long time ago. I'm not the same person.

Astrid

Liar. You're exactly the same person. Answer the question.

Mother

You're such a child. Taking my propaganda for the truth.

Astrid

So set me straight. Did you love him?

Mother

We had a very sexual relationship. One overlooks many things.

Astrid

You worshipped him. I read it in your journal.

Mother

"Worship" isn't exactly the word we're looking for here.

Astrid

Who is Annie?

Mother

What?

Astrid

Who is Annie? Mother?

Mother

She was a neighbor who took in kids, did people's laundry.

Astrid

What did she look like?

Mother  
Dark, curly hair, freckles.

Astrid  
Did she take care of me?

Mother  
How can you possibly have remembered this?

(BEAT)

It will only hurt you. Imagine my life for a moment. How unprepared I was to be the mother of a small child. I was used to having time to think and you just wanted, and wanted, and wanted. I felt like a hostage. Can you understand how desperate I was?

(BEAT)

I dropped you off at her house one afternoon, to go to the beach with some friends. And one thing led to another. They had a place in Ensenada. It was wonderful. You can't imagine. To take a nap in the afternoon, to make love all day if I wanted and not have to think: what's Astrid doing? Where's Astrid? Mommy, mommy... clinging to me like a spider. At the end, I just wanted to throw you against a wall.

Astrid  
How long were you gone?

Mother  
About a year. Give or take a few months.

Astrid  
My god.

Mother  
You're not asking the right question. Don't ask me why I left. Ask me why I came back.

Astrid  
You should have been sterilized.

Mother

I could have left you there, but I didn't. Don't you understand? For once, I did the right thing. When I came back, you knew me. You were sitting by the door. You looked up and you reached for me. It was as if you'd been waiting for me all along.

Astrid

I was always waiting for you! That's the constant in my life! Waiting for you. Will you come back?! Will you forget that you tied me up in front of a store or left me on a bus?!

Mother

Are you still waiting?

Astrid

No. I stopped when Claire showed me what it felt like to be loved. What did you think? That I would amuse you? That's what babies are like, Mother. What, did you think we'd talk about Joseph Brodsky?

Mother

I thought Klaus and I would live happily ever after. That's what I thought. Adam and Eve in a vine-covered shack. I was crazy.

Astrid

You were in love with him!

Mother

Yes, I was in love with him! All right? I was in love with him, and baby makes three, and all that crap.

Astrid

Then why did you leave him? Why? Why did you leave?

Mother

I didn't leave him! He left me. You wanna know about your father? He left us when you were six months old for another woman! And I never saw him again until he came looking for you when you were 8.

Astrid

He came to see me?

Mother

Yes, he did. He came to see you, but it was a little late to see you. Why should I let him see you after what he did to me?

Astrid

Because it wasn't about you! It was about me and I wanted to see him! My whole life I've wanted to see him. That decision was mine, not yours! Everything's always been about you, never about me. I knew you were gonna kill Barry, but you didn't even care. You didn't give a damn about what that would do to me!

(BEAT)

I'll say what ever Susan wants, but I'm leaving.

Mother

No, no, no. You don't just walk away from me! I made you. I'm in your blood. You don't go anywhere until I let you go.

Astrid

Then let me go. You look at me and you don't like what you see. But this is the price, Mother. The price of belonging to you.

Mother

If I could, I'd take it all back. I would.

Astrid

Then tell me you don't want me to testify. Tell me you don't want me like

this. Tell me you would sacrifice the rest  
of your life to have me back the way I  
was.

(BEAT)

Listen, forget it. A deal's a deal. Let's  
just leave it at that.