

LINDA LOPEZ

Written by

James Rose

FADE IN:

INSERT TITLE CARD: LINDA LOPEZ

INT. JOHN'S GARAGE - NIGHT

John, (36) and Linda, (23) have Telecasters hung from their shoulders. Alex, (40), the drummer and Pete, (32), the bassist patiently wait in pregnant silence.

LINDA
(frustrated)
Let's try something else... I wrote
a new one we should try.

JOHN
We'll get to it. Let's go over the
solo section again. Almost got
it...

LINDA
We've played enough Petty. Enough
of other people's music!

JOHN
We have a gig tomorrow night.

LINDA
What you said last week. And the
week before.
(beat)
You know what? I'm done. I am so
over this.

Linda furiously unplugs, heads for the door.

JOHN
Hey! Where you goi- okay, fine!

Linda stops.

JOHN (CONT'D)
...Let's hear it.

LINDA
All right, key of A, three-quarter
time, shuffle beat. Follow my
rhythm...

JOHN
And you have lyr--

LINDA
One... Two... One! Two! Three!

The band starts playing.

CUT TO BLACK.

INSERT TITLE CARD: SONGWRITING

INT. LINDA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Linda is hunched over an acoustic guitar. She's sitting across from John. A dog eared notebook is in his hand.

A kettle WHISTLES in the background.

LINDA
So. The verse progression starts
with an A Minor.

Linda starts strumming an A Minor chord.

LINDA (CONT'D)
And then I go to C.

Linda strums her C chord.

LINDA (CONT'D)
And then to G.

Linda switches to a G chord. She goes back to her A minor and goes through the progression again.

John grooves. He likes what he's hearing.

LINDA (CONT'D)
For the chorus, it's the same but
instead of an A minor, D minor.

Linda plays a D minor chord before stopping abruptly.

LINDA (CONT'D)
I should get that...

Linda dashes over to pour a fresh pot of Rooibos tea. She brings two mugs and the teapot back to the table.

JOHN
I like the vibe... cosmic
country... Joni meets Gram.

LINDA

Exactly.

Linda pours tea for two.

LINDA (CONT'D)

And? How'd you do?

JOHN

Okay. Here's what I got for the first verse:

(clears his throat)

I know a man who lives by the sea,
Far away from you and me...

(beat)

Spends his days painting the waves,
The crash below his sweet escape...

(beat)

Frazzled white hair and a weather
worn face, travelled the world with
faith and grace...

(beat)

He sees her face in the crashing
ocean, after all these years of
perpetual motion...

John stops. Linda's smile is distracting.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Like?

LINDA

Love.

JOHN

All right and from there I go to
the chorus.

LINDA

Wait... did you mean to not rhyme
the third stanza?

JOHN

Knew you'd say something... thought
I'd throw in a free verse.

Linda nods yes. She gets it.

JOHN (CONT'D)

For the chor--

LINDA

Hold on... before we get there,
let me try finding a melody...

Linda starts strumming her chords and singing John's words. She's stopping, starting, experimenting. And then she lands on it... A melody plucked straight from the gods of song.

JOHN
(grinning)
I think we may have something.

Linda smiles at John.

CUT TO BLACK.

INSERT TITLE CARD: STAGE FRIGHT

EXT. COMMODORE BALLROOM - NIGHT

Written on the venue's marquee: LINDA LOPEZ 7:30 PM SOLD OUT

INT. COMMODORE BALLROOM, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

We hear a sold out crowd is cheering loudly.

JOHN
There's still some on your shirt...

With a rag, John wipes remnants of vomit off Linda's shirt.

LINDA
I can't go on.

The crowd starts chanting Linda's name.

JOHN
You're going on that stage.

Linda glances up at John who stands over her.

LINDA
There's nothing you can say.

JOHN
(to himself)
... Jesus Christ!
(beat)
What the hell's the matter with
you?

LINDA
I... I can't.

JOHN
 Don't be ridiculous. They want you!
 Listen!

More chanting. *Linda! Linda! Linda!*

LINDA
 (in tears)
 I can't do it.
 (beat)
 I just can't.

Frustrated, John kicks a touring case.

JOHN
 (in pain)
 Goddamnit!

Through tears, Linda manages to grin, to giggle.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 (calm)
 Listen, I know this is your first
 sold out show. I know there's a lot
 of pressure on you. And I get that
 you might think it can only go
 downhill once you step onto that
 stage. Linda...

John wipes tears from Linda's face.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 I get it.

LINDA
 ... Do you though? You know Azoff's
 out there, right? You know he said
 that if he likes what he hears--

JOHN
Fuck Azoff. Since when did you
 start caring about all that record
 company bullshit? That's not who
 you are.

LINDA
 Who am I then, John? Go ahead, tell
 me.

Linda is now standing.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 If I fuck this up, what's left for
 me?

(MORE)

LINDA (CONT'D)

You think I like serving pancakes at Denny's? You think I wanna play Tom Petty songs for the next twenty years? You think I wanna end up like you?

John looks down at his boots. Painful silence.

LINDA (CONT'D)

(apologetic)

You know I didn't mean--

The chants for Linda interrupt. Louder'n ever.

JOHN

That's why you're doing this. Not for some suit who can promise you he'll get you on the radio, into festivals, or on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine... No, you're doing this for that girl way in the back out there who saved for weeks to buy a ticket to see *you*; who took a cab all the way from Abbotsford to get here so that she can drink overpriced beer, wipe other people's sweat off her face and have some prick from West Van start hitting on her. She came... *here*. To see... *you*.

(beat)

Does that mean anything to you? Do you really want to rob her of the experience listening to you sing and play songs you wrote from your heart?

(pause)

You're Linda fucking Lopez. That's who you are.

Linda starts pacing.

LINDA

Remember what you told me the first day I started playing with you? In the garage?

Linda stops. She looks out at the crowd.

JOHN

Of course. It's only...

LINDA

... Rock n' roll.

Linda grabs her guitar.

LINDA (CONT'D)
(devilish grin)
... And I like it.

Linda takes the stage. The crowd goes nuclear.

FADE OUT.

THE END