

"SKIN DEEP"

A screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOTEL VOZANDES - DAY

A tired, run-down, two-story motel along a dusty Ecuadorian highway.

EXT. FIRST FLOOR ROOMS - DAY

MARIA pushes a scratched stainless steel cleaning cart down the walkway in front of the room doors. She is a plain-looking, dark-skinned, dark-haired Latina in her 20s. She wears a stained maid's uniform.

Maria approaches a door numbered 103. The muted grunts and moans of rough sex carry through the door.

Maria rolls her eyes and glances at her cheap watch.

MARIA

Chucha mierda. Again? Or still?

The YOUNG FEMALE LOVER'S muffled voice carries through the door.

YOUNG FEMALE LOVER (O.S.)

Mas rápido, Alejandro! Dios mio!

Maria sighs, tapping her cherry-red fake fingernails on the cleaning cart.

The amorous cries of the couple reach climax.

MARIA

Finally.

She waits a few seconds, then knocks on the door.

MARIA

Cleaning service, please.

Giggling sounds from the bedroom. The muffled voice of the YOUNG MALE LOVER carries through the door.

YOUNG MALE LOVER (O.S.)

Un momentito....

Whispers and thuds of movement sound through the door.

YOUNG MALE LOVER (O.S.)  
Five minutes, okay?

Again the giggling.

MARIA  
(sighs)  
Okay. I'll be waiting right here.

She again glances at her watch. She steals a furtive look around. Then she tugs a tattered, well-read copy of woman's magazine from under rust-stained white towels on the cart.

Maria flips through the pages showing beautiful, rich, stylish people enjoying life.

She pauses on a page with a beautiful couple driving along a scenic road in a convertible sports car. The BLOND MAN smiles with perfect teeth at the BLONDE WOMAN passenger, who wears a stylish red dress.

Maria's annoyed frown relaxes into a dreamy smile. She lightly caresses the image of the blond woman.

DAYDREAM - MARIA'S DRIVE

The sports car winds through hills.

The blond man smiles lovingly at the woman in the stylish red dress.

The woman is Maria. She beams back at the blond man.

BACK TO SCENE

The door to room 103 bangs open, startling Maria from her daydream.

The two young lovers step out of the room. Both are short with dark skin and hair.

The greasy man dresses like a lounge lizard in polyester and loud colors.

The slightly overweight woman dresses like a cheap whore with too-tight, too-short clothing and hastily-applied makeup.

The man smiles at Maria with crooked teeth.

Maria looks away with barely-concealed contempt.

The two lovers walk away.

Maria picks up a dirty mop and a stained bucket and walks through the door.

INT. ROOM 103 - CONTINUING

Cheap, basic furnishings. The bedsheets are wadded up, stained and damp.

Maria puts down the mop and bucket and starts stripping the bed.

She catches a glimpse of herself in the cheap, uneven wall mirror. She stands up straight and holds in her stomach, studying herself.

She grimaces in dismay and looks away.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Peeling paint on the walls. Cheap furnishings, including a table, two folding chairs, a ratty couch, an exposed sink filled with dishes, dirty coffee machine. Magazines and empty snack food containers clutter the table.

YOLANDA sits at the table, flipping through a tabloid magazine. She's in her early 30s, dark, homely and skinny.

Maria enters through a door from the front office. She walks straight to the sink.

Yolanda looks up and smiles, revealing a gold tooth.

YOLANDA

You're late for your break, Maria.

Maria nods tiredly as she rinses out a dirty cup.

MARIA

Si, yo sé, Yolanda. A couple checked out late.

She pours herself a cup of lumpy coffee and takes a seat at the table.

Yolanda returns to her tabloid and turns the page. She leers at the page.

YOLANDA

Ooh, look, Maria. Isn't he gorgeous?

She twists the magazine for Maria to see.

A full-page photograph shows a man leaning against a motorcycle and smiling at the camera. He's a handsome Latino with white teeth and thick black hair. He wears tight jeans and an unbuttoned shirt.

MARIA

(shrugs)

He's not so great.

She rummages among the magazines and finds an old copy of a fashion magazine. She flips it open to a page where the corner has been folded down. The page shows a handsome, blue-eyed, platinum blond man in stylish clothes.

Maria smiles. She turns the page to show Yolanda.

MARIA

Now this guy is guapo!

Yolanda glances at the picture. She shrugs.

YOLANDA

Sure, he's cute. But not my type.

MARIA

(disbelief)

Not your type?

She takes the magazine back and gazes at the picture.

MARIA

(softly)

He is mine.

She lightly caresses the man's face. Her gaze turns dreamy.

MARIA

That's the kind of man I want. I don't care if he marries me or not, just so long as he gives me a beautiful baby with blue eyes and blond hair. That's all I want.

Yolanda burst out laughing, startling Maria.

YOLANDA

You want a man like him? Oh, Maria, no me corras lampara! What makes you think a man like him--or even like him--

She points to the picture of the Latino by the motorcycle.

YOLANDA

--would be interested in someone like us, eh? And where would you even meet him? Here at this motel?

She bursts out laughing again.

Maria's face burns with embarrassment.

MARIA

I-I'm not beautiful...but I will have a beautiful baby, you'll see.

Yolanda puts a comforting hand on Maria's hand.

YOLANDA

You're not ugly, Maria, and I'm sure any baby you have will be beautiful.

(suggestive smile)

I noticed Fernando at the gas station talking to you yesterday, no? I think he likes you. I bet he would be happy to give you a beautiful baby.

Maria pulls her hand away.

MARIA

Fernando? That greasy torpe?  
You're crazy! I wouldn't sleep  
with that boy if he was the last  
man on Earth! I'm going to have a  
beautiful baby--one with light  
hair and light eyes, you'll see!

YOLANDA

What's wrong with dark ha--

Maria stands up with a screech of her chair on the cement floor. She grabs up her magazine and storms out.

EXT. LOWER FLOOR ROOMS - SUNSET

Maria runs a mop across the stained, cracked tiles of the walkway.

YOLANDA (V.O.)

You want a man like him?... What  
makes you think a man like him...  
would be interested in someone  
like us, eh? And where would you  
even meet him? Here at this  
motel?

Yolanda's laughter echoes in Maria's ears. Her head bowed and shoulders slumped, Maria continues mopping.

Approaching footsteps and the clink of keys distract her.

GOLDEN MAN (O.S.)

(barely audible)

I'm sorry, mi amor, but there's  
nowhere else to stay while they  
fix the Mercedes. It's only for  
one night.

Maria turns and sees the GOLDEN MAN and the BEAUTIFUL WOMAN walking up the stairs to the upper floor.

The beautiful woman is young, slim, sexy. She wears a stylish red dress.

Maria scarcely notices. Time slows for her as she sets eyes on the man.

The golden man has thick, golden blond hair, a handsome chiseled face, bright blue eyes, a bronze tan. He wears an elegant gray suit.

Maria stares in awe.

The golden man unlocks the door to room 205. He and the beautiful woman step inside. They close the door.

Maria snaps out of her reverie. She takes a deep breath and reluctantly returns to mopping. She steals glances at the closed door to room 205.

EXT. FRONT OFFICE - NIGHT

Maria exits the office, pulling a cheap coat over her uniform. She locks the door and heads toward the exit.

She pauses and turns to look back toward room 205. Her gaze turns longing. As if in a trance, she walks toward the room.

EXT. UPPER FLOOR ROOMS - NIGHT

Maria quietly climbs the stairs, her eyes focused on the door to room 205.

Through the door come the muffled gasps and moans of lovemaking.

Mesmerized, Maria slowly moves up next to the door and leans her back against the wall, listening to the moans.

She closes her eyes. Her hand slowly moves down her leg and up under her dress. She begins massaging herself between her legs. Her hips rock in time to the woman's moans coming through the door.

DAYDREAM - MARIA MAKING LOVE

The golden man gazes down at the woman with loving eyes. He rhythmically thrusts into her. She moans in time to his thrusts.

The golden man lowers his face and kisses her. The woman is Maria.

BACK TO SCENE

Oblivious to the world, Maria gasps in climax. She covers her mouth as spasms shudder through her body.

Gradually she recovers. She smiles sensually and slowly runs her hand through her hair. She slowly sinks to sit on the ground. She hugs her arms to her body, embracing herself like a lover, and closes her eyes.

She drifts off to sleep.

EXT. UPPER FLOOR ROOMS - DAY

Maria still sleeps, her legs extended before her.

A car horn beeps twice, loudly.

With a start, Maria awakens. She peers around, blinking, disoriented.

The door to room 205 bangs open. The golden man and his woman step outside, dressed as they were when they arrived. They pause and look down at Maria.

Maria looks up in surprise. The two beautiful people look back at her with mild disgust.

The car horn beeps again. The golden man looks up.

GOLDEN MAN

(calling)

Ya vengamos!

He and the beautiful woman step over Maria's extended legs and walk to the stairs. They don't give Maria a second glance.

Maria scrambles to her feet. Burning with embarrassment, her mouth works as she tries to speak. Nothing comes out.

She watches as the two beautiful people descend the stairs and head toward a Mercedes sports car waiting in the parking lot with the engine running.

A smiling, uniformed mechanic steps out of the car and holds the door open.

MECHANIC  
(barely audible)  
Listo, señor.

He holds a clipboard toward the golden man. The golden man quickly signs the form, then he and the beautiful woman climb into the Mercedes. The mechanic walks off.

Maria stares in dismay and makes as if to reach out to the golden man.

MARIA  
(softly)  
No...don't leave me.

The Mercedes drives away.

Maria stares at the receding car until it turns the corner and disappears. Reluctantly, she looks at her watch. She sighs and removes her coat. She trudges down the stairs.

EXT. UPPER FLOOR ROOMS - LATER

Maria pushes her cleaning cart along the walkway. Her eyes are listless, her shoulders slumped.

She parks the cart before room 205. Using a pass key, she opens the door.

INT. ROOM 205 - DAY

Maria walks in carrying a bucket and a mop.

MONTAGE - MARIA CLEANS ROOM 205

-- Maria strips the bed.

-- She wipes down the plastic under sheet.

-- She makes the bed.

-- She mops the bedroom floor.

-- She mops the bathroom floor.

Toilet brush in hand, Maria lifts the toilet seat lid. She glances inside--and does a double-take.

Her eyes widen with realization. Slowly she reaches into the toilet and lifts out a dripping wet, used condom. It has a knot tied at the base.

For a moment Maria just stares at the condom. Then she looks around furtively. She hurries to the bedroom.

She sits on the edge of the bed. With her fake fingernails she unties the knot in the condom.

Maria reaches under her skirt and tugs her panties down to her ankles. She pushes the opening of the condom up between her legs.

Then she lies back on the sheets and lifts up her hips. She waits as the fluid drains into her.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Maria stands by the dish-filled sink. Under her uniform her belly is swollen, nine months into her pregnancy.

Yolanda sits in a folding chair at the table, eating a cup of lemon gelatin. She waves her plastic spoon at Maria.

YOLANDA

Oye, mujér, it looks like you  
won't be working here much longer.  
You're as round as a house!

MARIA

(serene smile)

I don't care. My cousin will help  
me with a little money when I need  
it.

Yolanda looks at Maria's swollen belly wistfully.

YOLANDA

Why won't you tell me who the  
father is? Really, it's not  
Fernando?

MARIA

(snorts)

Never. All you need to know is my baby will be beautiful. He will have fair skin and hair and light eyes.

Yolanda rolls her eyes and smiles. She turns back to reading a tabloid magazine.

MARIA

Believe what you want. You'll see.

She gives a secretive smile and rubs her belly lovingly.

Yolanda peers closely at a page in her magazine.

YOLANDA

Incredible.

MARIA

What?

YOLANDA

There's this article on plastic surgery here. It's amazing what they can do. Not my type, but this man is really cute!

Maria steps closer to have a look. The page shows a large photograph of a fat man with a weak chin, bulbous nose, big ears, dark skin, dark hair and dark eyes.

MARIA

You call that good-looking? He's repulsive. I'd rather carry puppies than his child.

YOLANDA

(laughs)

No, silly, that's the before picture. Here's the after picture.

She flips the page and twists it around for Maria to see.

The page shows the smiling face of...the golden man.

Maria's eyes widen in horror. Her gaze shifts to the bloated swell of her belly.

FADE OUT