

12 PLAYS
Matthew Temple

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Text sampled from
G.I. Joe
George H. W. Bush
Barney
Jeopardy
Jerry Maguire
William Gibson
Stephen Sondheim
Charles Dickens

Titles by Matthew Temple
MURDER CLUB CANDY
CAMP LAKE
THINGS SAID IN DREAMS
SNOWBUNNY
12 PLAYS

The author online
<http://clownfysh.com/>
<http://twitter.com/clownfysh>
clownfysh@gmail.com

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1

Contract with the Real (1995)

CHARACTERS
BEFORE
AGAIN

BEFORE. Hey ...

AGAIN. Hey! What's up?

BEFORE. Nothin much. What about you?

AGAIN. Ehhh ... great! The writing's ...

BEFORE & AGAIN. Flowing.

AGAIN. Like a river.

BEFORE & AGAIN. Like the Nile.

AGAIN. Yes! You and I are the only people I know with enough rapport to do that.

BEFORE. Looks more like Niagara Falls.

AGAIN. I know ... We're like ... we have a conversation in which we say absolutely nothing ... I mean, nine yesses, two nos ... and the next day you show up with the apples, I bring the cherries ...

BEFORE. And we make a fruit salad.

AGAIN. Exactly.

BEFORE. You know, if someone asked you to tell me what I'm thinking, I'd bet my life on you getting it right.

AGAIN. And you'd live nine times out of ten.

BEFORE. I would ... What are you working on?

AGAIN. Well, lately I've been working on this series of short stories that kind of go together to form a book ... well, see, they didn't start out to be a book ... I didn't even know I was writing a series ... I just wrote this short story and ... it just kind of grew.

BEFORE. I know what you mean.

AGAIN. It's funny how it happens like that.

BEFORE. At least the good ones.

AGAIN. Yeah.

BEFORE. It's like there's some kind of thing with the subconscious ... once you let it open, all this stuff comes out that you didn't even know was there.

AGAIN. It's kind of scary.

BEFORE. Yeah, you don't want to let people in by accident. Except, when you do ... like when you show people your writing ... they can ... or they could ... find out all this stuff about you ... or they could just feel some sense of connection ... some contract with the real ... most people don't psychoanalyze you when they read your stuff anyway.

AGAIN. It just goes in on their subconscious level.

BEFORE. Yeah, most people don't think about it too much.

AGAIN. No, they don't.

BEFORE. I wonder if everybody thought about it, would it mess things up?

AGAIN. Ehh ...

BEFORE. Probably not.

AGAIN. Because even if they did, some people would still think about it more than others.

BEFORE. Yeah.

AGAIN. Kind of like how things are now.

BEFORE. We have this thing with possession. ... Like it makes us better than everybody else.

AGAIN. I don't follow.

BEFORE. Where people think they're special because they have things that other people don't. Or do things that other people don't. Like this space of us thinking about deeply about people thinking deeply is the only one.

AGAIN. Like we're the only ones who've ever had this discussion.

BEFORE. And we aren't.

AGAIN. No ... we're not ... But we are ... it doesn't happen every day. Even for us. We don't always talk like this.

BEFORE. No ... so it's special for us ... within our relationship ... it's special for us regardless of who's talking philos outside this room ...

AGAIN. ... outside this space ...

BEFORE. ... outside this time ... this experience ...

AGAIN. And we're the only ones who've ever had this exact conversation.

BEFORE. Yes ... this experience of being us ... right here, right now ... that's completely ours. No one's ever been us before, and no one will ever be us after.

AGAIN. And even we've never been us before, the usses we are now ... and after this moment ...

BEFORE. ... that moment ...

AGAIN. ... we'll never be the us we were before again.

BEFORE. Deep. Well ... ?

AGAIN. What's the call on the play?

BEFORE. The play?

AGAIN. Baseball!

BEFORE. Okay ... it's deep into the bottom half of the second inning. Samuel Oxford Lackadaisical Quinn steps up to the plate.

AGAIN. Lackadaisical?

BEFORE. Lack for short.

AGAIN. Okay ... !?!

BEFORE. He stomps the dirt like a bull in heat. Paces madly over the plate. Lackadaisically.

AGAIN. And madly?!?

BEFORE. Yes! Yes! ... Catching him off guard, the pitcher fires a runaway bullet into the sack.

AGAIN. Owooo ... !

BEFORE. But it misses good Sammy.

AGAIN. Misses?

BEFORE. Barely.

AGAIN. Okay ...

BEFORE. And it starts to rain. And thunder. And lightning! ... And ... they call off the game.

AGAIN. Ehh ... too bad ... I was having a good day. If they had a let me in there ... sweet nilly, I would a done some harm.

BEFORE. Oh no.

AGAIN. Yes, brother ... I was standin on the plate ... lookin out over the sea of fans ... a breeding ground for the evils of sin and temptation!

BEFORE. My, my.

AGAIN. And I said to myself—

BEFORE. Go on, now.

AGAIN. I said—

BEFORE. Preach it, brother Lack.

AGAIN. I said Devil be gone!

BEFORE. Oh yes!

AGAIN. And the people ... they brooded!

BEFORE. You know they do!

AGAIN. They brooded! And can you tell me what I did?

BEFORE. Well yes I think I can now.

AGAIN. I'm a gonna let you tell it, brother Dork.

BEFORE. Thank you brother Lack.

AGAIN. I'm not gonna say another word—

BEFORE. Well thank the good Lord—

AGAIN. Not gonna interrupt you one more time!

BEFORE. No you're not—

AGAIN. Not another—

BEFORE. No, good brother Lack. I know what you did next, though. Standing in the middle of that cesspool ... no, the apex ... the paramount—

AGAIN. Acme.

BEFORE. Zenith.

AGAIN. Epicenter!

BEFORE. The epicenter of that cesspool of Satan's own vermin—

AGAIN. Tell it now.

BEFORE. You called upon the Lord.

AGAIN. Yes ...

BEFORE. You stared out into the crowd ...

AGAIN. Uh huh ...

BEFORE. Into the face of those power-hungry, greed-mongering sinners! ... And you picked up the microphone ... and you stared into the wide angle soft focus fifth-three millimeter lenses, and therefore into the homes, the private residences, of millions of unsuspecting Americans—

AGAIN. And I said—

BEFORE. Tell em what you said.

AGAIN. I said ... put your hands on the TV set! You will be saved!

BEFORE. And don't forget to send your contributions to Televangelist I-N-C.

AGAIN. You know, it's amazing what some people do for a living.

BEFORE. Yeah ... When we grow up, we're gonna do good things.

AGAIN. We're gonna do things that help people.

BEFORE. We're gonna change the world.

AGAIN. And we're not gonna be up the ass of some whiffy-spiffy CEO of some big company.

BEFORE. No.

AGAIN. We're not gonna work for anybody.

BEFORE. ... We're gonna starve.

AGAIN. Hey ... I'd rather starve.

BEFORE. Me too.

AGAIN. Yes, my friend ... we'll grow up and starve together.

BEFORE. All right!

AGAIN. Well ...

BEFORE. There's nobody I'd rather starve with.

AGAIN. Thank you. I would return the sentiment ... except that it's completely sick and disgusting.

BEFORE. How fitting for the world we live in.

AGAIN. So true. ... You know, we're the only people I know who'll go from, like, super-ecstatic to ... real deep and half-depressed in practically the same breath.

BEFORE. Yeah. ... But I'm not depressed, are you?

AGAIN. Oh, you mean aside from the fact that my mind is filled with about a million and one thoughts about death and growing up and the wicked, gradual loss of youth and innocence that occurs with all of that ... ? Yeah, I feel okay.

BEFORE. Me too. Not perfect. Maybe not even good. But okay.

AGAIN. Okay ...

BEFORE. Okay!

AGAIN. Okay!

BEFORE. All right!

AGAIN. Yeah!

BEFORE. Yes!

AGAIN. Ooo ... ooo!

BEFORE. Woo!

AGAIN. Okay!

BEFORE. All right!

AGAIN. Yes!

BEFORE. Indeed. ... Are you better?

AGAIN. Much. ... You?

BEFORE. Top of the world.

AGAIN. Indeed. ... Apples?

BEFORE. Cherries.

AGAIN. Of course!

BEFORE. All right! ... See you later.

AGAIN. ... If not in this life then the next.

BEFORE. ... Absolutely.

AGAIN. Okay ... see you later.

BEFORE. See you.

2

Small Zone (1997)

CHARACTERS
WOMAN
MAN

WOMAN. . . the black people irritate the white people and the white people irritate the black people . . . the white people are more generally depressed than the black people, but the black people are stronger than the white people . . . if you sit around the house all the time being sad, being consumed with yourself, the chances are in favor of you being white . . . the black people don't go to head shrinks as often as the white people do . . . white people are usually shorter than black people . . . and in general white people usually make less noise than black people . . . usually people with really light skin speak almost in a whisper . . . and people who have very, very mild skin are almost invisible at times . . . white people like to live in the same zone as the other white people . . . white people are often capable of killing a person, but they frequently decide not to . . . Janine only sees people who fall into a certain white zone . . . if you're not in that certain white zone, you can forget about seeing Janine, I'll tell you that much right now . . . a punch so hard it was almost shiny . . . a cut so deep it would glisten in the sunlight . . . but I'm not making any promises, so don't get your hopes up . . . she might invite you into her zone . . . Janine can be very fickle . . . very fickle sometimes . . . if you get killed, say maybe on a drug bust

...say you're a police officer and you get killed maybe on a drug bust ...in that case Janine will probably place you in a certain white zone ...I know I'm white when people tell me I'm crazy ...a lot of you probably think I'm crazy ...right? ...isn't that right, that some of y'all think I'm crazy?

MAN. Is bitch talking to me?

WOMAN. ...isn't that right? ...well, at least you can all agree that I'm white ...and if you can do that you can probably agree that I'm crazy ...I know that I'm white when people tell me I'm crazy ...

MAN. This bitch is fucking wacko.

WOMAN. ...Janine tells me what to do ...not even a sunny beach is as good as having Janine tell you what to do ...actually, having a sunny beach is almost the same thing as having Janine tell you what to do ...she's very outspoken, Janine knows how to tell a story ...and it is true, a lot of people have been put away in crazy houses and sent to head shrinks because of Janine ...on account of Janine was telling them something and they couldn't pull themselves away ...if a potato tastes good, and then it doesn't taste good, it can't taste good anymore ...cause if potato zone can't taste good anymore it gets run over by all the other potatoes ...it might even taste like cocoa zone ...I had the bark of a cocoa tree one time while I was sitting in the back of the truck ...see the black people irritate the white people and the white people irritate the black people ...so if you scrape all the taste buds off the tongue of a potato, then what good is that potato to itself or others? ...you can throw it away and put it down the garbage disposer ...if a male potato and a female potato get together and have sex their baby potato doesn't taste like a potato ...say it tastes like cocoa zone ...you can't serve cocoa zone for dinner and try and pass it off for potato ...same thing with the cocoa zone ...you ever had cocoa zone? ...see, the black people irritate the white people and the white people ...the white people irritate the black people ...see? ...so if a cocoa zone tastes more like potato zone then you might as well throw it away ...you can't try and pass that off as a cocoa zone ...can't even serve it for dinner ...maybe a crazy person might try to ...

MAN. Bitch, you are a crazy person.

WOMAN. ...zone ...so you might as well get rid of it ...I'm not telling you to break the law ...Janine was a lawyer ...suitcase worked in one of those skyscraper zone ...ever see a sky zone? ...zone ...I seen them first hand and I know for a fact ...start to

wonder if the sun has to duck when it passes by through the day zone ... Janine was a lawyer ... she knows about those things ... she would get you on the smallest inconvenience ... shoes weren't tied right or hadn't brushed your teeth ... sperm dried on your gums ... you've got to brush your teeth to get the sperm off ... that's what some people say, anyway ...

MAN. Man, I knew I shouldn't have taken the bus.

WOMAN. ... Janine said forget the sperm it's not important ... you don't need to fill your mental zone with concerns like the number of sperm cells in the world at any given moment ... who cares if you've got some sperm stuck on your teeth? ... do people go around examining your mouth to see if you've got sperm stuck on your teeth? ... some people do ... usually people will carry on a conversation with you just fine ... Janine says forget about the sperm in your teeth ... people picking the sperm out of their teeth are sometimes so involved that they don't even realize what time zone they're in ... but you have to understand, the official zone is that you've got to get the sperm out from being stuck between your teeth before you go on with your day ... that's the official zone ... so if you saw Janine at work she would say you've got to get the sperm out from between your teeth ... that's what she would say if you saw her on the job ... get down with a hammer and a chisel and a toothpick and a key chain and a tiny piece of plastic and a lice comb ... you ever had lice? ... I had lice once ...

MAN. Bitch, get the fuck away from me. This is crazy. Bus driver, you tell Greyhound that I'm never taking one of these busses again. Crazy white bitch back here talking about scraping sperm off people's teeth. Telling us she had lice once. Ain't nobody want to be sitting next to somebody like that. Sheeat.

WOMAN. ... actually what you really need for the job is a screwdriver to get down ... to get down ... to get down between those cracks and really give it a good try to get all those little sperm cells out of the mouth zone ... before you go to have a conversation ... Janine has a book about getting sperm out of your teeth ... actually she has an entire set of books about it ... it's too long ... a line outside her office ... people waiting to read the books ... all day and all night ... you can never get to see her because there's always a line of people waiting outside her office to read the books ... she has something like ... something like ... twenty-six volumes of information that will help you get all the sperm off your teeth ... and the first person is reading Volume A and the second person is reading Volume B and the third person is reading

Volume C and the fourth person is reading Volume D and the fifth person is reading Volume ... the fifth person is reading Volume E, I think it is ... and the sixth person is reading ... yes, the sixth person is reading Volume F ... each book has over a thousand pages in it ... some have upwards of over sixty or seventy thousand pages ... you have to read every page of every book before you can get in ... the print is so fine that sometimes you need a magnifying glass to read the words ... some books the text is so small you need a periscope ... yes, just to read words on a page ... sounds very unreasonable ... but people do it ... people do it each and every day because Janine won't let you in her office if you haven't done it ... if you haven't done it Janine won't let you in her office ... Janine won't let you in her office ... it's a nice office, too ... top floor ... black people kill white people sometimes ...

MAN. We're gonna see it here in about two seconds.

WOMAN. ... zone ...

MAN. Keep talking.

WOMAN. ... black people kill black people, too, at other times ... black people always go to jail, have you noticed that? ... if you go to jail for killing somebody chances are likely that you're black ... everybody knows that black people go to jail ... but what a lot of people don't know is that black people can go to jail just for talking to a white person ... or a black person for that matter they can go to jail ... not many people know that part of the law ... say you're a nigger ...

MAN. Say I am.

WOMAN. ... say you're a nigger and you come up to some white lady and say go to hell you stupid dike-looking half-wit motherfucker ... you might get a parking ticket for that ... or a speeding ticket, just a few dollars, maybe eighty ... but there have been cases where just for calling her an idiot a black man got the gas chamber ... they don't like to electrocute black people much anymore ... that's even harder to clean up than scraping dried sperm off your teeth is scraping up dead people's eyeballs off the floor ... that's the worst part about it, too ... I won't lie about that ... it's definitely the eyeballs ... so if you're standing in the line at the bank, getting ready ... about to transfer your paycheck into your bank account ... standing in line at the bank and you remember that she cut you off in traffic ... even if she never even heard you say it ... go to hell you stupid dike-looking half-wit motherfucker ... you were thinking it and smiling at her out the window with dried sperm on your teeth ... it's a little known fact that not many people know

but it is true that all male niggers are cocksuckers ...

MAN. What did she say? Bitch better shut the fuck up.

WOMAN. ... that's okay, cause it is a little-known fact and you probably just didn't know ... remember that in the bank line with three people ahead of you in line ... even if it's just two ... drop your check on the floor and run outside into the street and find that lady ... because if she takes you to court you're getting the gas chamber ... or maybe even lethal injection ... but you might even get the chair cause even though they don't like really to clean up dead people's eyeballs they will electrocute you if they feel they have to ... do you know how much they pay people to scrape dead people's eyeballs off the floor of electrocution chambers? ... people in that line of work do just fine, I'll tell you that much ... they take vacations in Maui ... they have a little something to put away for retirement ... those people do very well, indeed ... I knew a guy in Beverly Hills, worked as an eyeball scraper ... had a yacht and all of his children went to Beverly Hills schools and wore pretty little bonnets and Calvin Kline underwear ... I don't know cause I've never bought Calvin Kline underwear ... but I hear they're pretty comfortable ... I'll tell you one thing, that's for sure ... I ain't wearing no Calvin Kline underwear ... I can't even remember if I put underwear on this morning ... so if she takes your ass to court you get in the driver's side of her car ... if she has a convertible just jump right in the top of it ... tell her you wouldn't mind getting a few more sperm on your teeth ... tell her it's no problem ... you'll scrape them off yourself ... most people can't see em anyway without a microscope, and most people don't carry their microscope with them when they go out ... Janine sure doesn't ... I don't even think she owns a microscope ... you can suck the cock of a female just like you suck the cock of any male ... it is a little known fact that all white females have cocks ... a lot of people don't know it, but they do ... if they decide to give you the gas chamber they don't stop pumping the gas until the last breath is squeezed right out of your body ... the last breath ... if you were ... if you were looking at her plain thinking about putting some male sperm into her low zone ... you can go to jail if her low zone is already taken ... thinking about putting your male sperm into a reserved low zone ... that's illegal ... most people don't yet know about they new laws ... had to put male sperm into her low zone to go to jail ... now just think about putting male sperm into her low zone ... for that they can actually give lethal injection to the male nigger and scrape up his eyeballs off the floor

...exception ...exception to article seven, opus one-sixty-one, section eight: he's thinking about putting some male sperm into the reserved low zone of a while femals ... to avoid being arrested, he runs into the woods or cuts off his penis ... if he has one he cuts off his penis ... then he can run free and unrestricted ... he may not want to cut off his penis but he will do it anyway ... otherwise they will electrocute his eyeballs ... special regulations ... special regulations require him to cut off his male zone and throw it away ... even if it means he can never deposit male sperm into his wife's low zone ever again ... then he won't have to be injected ... Janine keeps track of the exact number of male sperm lost in the operation ... if you separate yourself from a woman's low zone then anyone after that who deposits male sperm into the low zone is clearly a male nigger and in addition he is also from that point on known as a cocksucker ... in addition that woman's status changes to that of a convicted nigger-lover and she will be deposited into the nearest prison ... if a male nigger separates his male zone from the female low zone then she has an open low zone for which she will be deposited in the nearest prison ... the problem with some people is that they disguise their speech with intrusions from other unnecessary zones ... their plain speech is intruded by neighboring textual zones or if it starts out melted in the first place ... people need to separate these zones in their head and practice unmelted thinking from the ground up ... intrusion by the unknowns from extruded zones is unnecessary ... of course when people intrude on your zone you should invite them to continue ... invite them to continue intruding on your zone ... take a piss there or lay down ... tell them to take a shit in your zone before they leave ... I got mugged at a Rite Aid like that ... standing looking at magazines and newspapers ... magazines and newspapers until ... sharp poke ... hello ... you got any money on you? ... you got any money on you?

MAN. Answer me you crack baby down-syndrome retard!

WOMAN. ... I didn't know what to say so he shot me in the arm ... here's my money ... you can have my library card, too ... I don't even have a driver's license yet ... Janine says I might be able to get one soon ... that's why I have this bandage ... shoot me in the face if you have any guts ... just because I don't have a regular physician so I put an ace bandage on it ...

MAN. If you don't shut up I'll put a bullet up your cunt you stupid dyke-looking half-wit motherfucker!

WOMAN. ... if he asks you something else just do it, don't ask

any questions ...just do it before he puts a bullet up your cunt ... the black people irritate the white people and the white people irritate the black people ... when it's sunny outside, it's sunny for the black people just like it's sunny for the white people, it just affects the black people's skin differently ... when it's raining, the rain falls on the black people just like it falls on the white people ... I don't know of any differences in the skin reaction to wetness between black people and white people, but I'm sure there must be some anyway ... if you want to make it to the top you have to jump the cushion zone ... you have to be perfect if you want to make it to the top ... I'm not saying I'm perfect ... if you want to be perfect, you can't let anybody know you're perfect ...

MAN. Racist bitch talking about being perfect.

WOMAN. ... I'm not saying that I'm perfect or that I'm not ... just don't let anybody know that you're perfect ... make sure nobody knows that you're perfect ... if they're perfect then nobody knows that they're perfect ... you think bragging is perfect? ... talk in a real low whisper so people in the hallway can't hear you ... do you want people to know what you want? ... everyone who wants something gets exactly what they want ... asking Janine for something does it matter if anybody else hears? ... be real quiet but be sure not to mumble ... Janine hates mumblers ... get right to the point ... some people mumble on and on ... they think that when you go to Janine's office you have to use a lot of big words and show charts and graphs ... Janine's not the average suit of pants ... she does have a low zone ... Janine worked herself up through the ranks but she doesn't care much about charts and graphs ... I just tell her what I want since she's rich anyway, and since I always do exactly what she tells me to, every two weeks she makes a call over to accounting to make sure they don't forget to print my paycheck like they always do and she puts in a good word for me on my loan because I let her brother out of his sublease arrangement he has with me ... sometimes they forget my check anyway ... that's okay ... this is going to be the best two weeks of my life ... I'm just as happy now as when I got my Christmas bonus ... interest rates are bad right now so instead of doing my saving zone I buy ice cream ... ice cream doesn't cost that much anymore ... I used to run out of money because I used to buy everybody everything they wanted ... my friend Amos always wanted hot dogs and then his friend Andy also wanted hot dogs and one time Andy asked me for a CD player and that was a joke so I just laughed and I didn't really buy him the CD player ... now I strictly buy

everyone just ice cream sorry and I never run out of money ... you get more money every two weeks anyway ... but most people don't get enough money to purchase the Calvin zone ... not every two weeks ... everybody doesn't have to have their boobs held up by the fingers of Calvin Kline ... I support K-Mart for your crack and K-Mart supports your crack ...

MAN. You need to get some K-Mart to support your crack.

WOMAN. ... you don't have to have a Calvin shirt and Calvin jeans and a Calvin rotator cuff rotator ... and not everybody knows this but the rotator cuff isn't something that has to be rotated every day ... not everybody knows that but it's true ... to keep it fresh it isn't necessary to have it rotated every day ... it is hard to believe that it's possible but I sometimes don't even wear a bra ... you remember about that elephant ... you have to admit that mine aren't quite as big as an elephant's ... have you seen an elephant with Calvin Kline stuffed up her zone? ... you have to remember about the entire tour ... about the zoo with not a single bra in it ... there were no bras on the seals and there were no bras on the elephants and there were no bras on the mountain lions and there were no bras on the puffins and there were no bras on the anacondas and there were no bras on the midnight owls and there were no bras on the parakeets and there were no bras on the groundhogs and there were no bras on the insomniac turtles ...

MAN. Insomniac turtles?

WOMAN. ... and there were no bras on the underground ratchets and there were no bras on the fighting somersault giraffe and there were no bras on the zebras ... there were no bras on the hippos and there were no bras on the honeysuckling xyanthum and there were no bras on the ever-so-slightly-slumbering elevated elk and there were no bras on the tarantulas and there were no bras on the sulky stingray eels and there were no bras on the butterfly animals and there were no bras on the albino crocodiles and there were no bras on the flamingos and there were probably no bras on the absent armadillo and there were no bras on the titty-titillating tigress ...

MAN. Titty-titi? What the fuck is she saying?

WOMAN. ... and there were even no bras on the furiously farting ferrets ...

MAN. What the fuck?

WOMAN. ... I learned a lot on my trip to the zoo ... wouldn't you, wouldn't you? ... how to fly a plane is how to keep your eyes on the whore zone ... not letting yourself be consumed with the

markings of an enemy fighter ... E-08131 ... E-10133 ... inspecting his teeth with your periscope ... while you're looking for sperm the city is burning so just shoot the motherfucker down ... and that's why you should never use your paycheck to wipe the shit off a mule's ass ...

MAN. Paycheck to wipe the shit off a mule's ass?

WOMAN. ... jumping off a building into a swirling vat of chocolate ... walking out of a party in a tuxedo and your limousine is waiting for you ... falling backwards into the sand and Nestea pools break your flight ... dreamers wake to find their fantasy rendered in solid shades ... and if you pray for rain make sure you carry an umbrella ... then ride the ferry through the small zone ... the wide zone seems smoother from afar, but it leads to an old abandoned shipyard ... it's hard to find a captain who can navigate the small zone, but if you ride the ferry through the small zone you'll find an island whose trees grow only fresh fruit ... taste the fruit from the trees as you travel ... if the fruit isn't fresh, keep sailing until you find fresh fruit ... that's how you will know it when you get there ... if the fruit is black and moldy, keep sailing ... bad fruit comes from bad trees ... but when you taste the crisp, fresh fruit, you will know that the tree it came from is good ... that is the island you are looking for ... there you can stop ... that's what Janine told me ... listen to Janine, and do exactly what she tells you ... people will think you're crazy ... but don't let them get to you ... a lot of y'all just think I'm crazy ... go on ... plug your crotch with Calvin Kline and sitting in your beach-front house overlooking the sea ... it may look pretty now but you should have build a little higher ... cause the tides are coming in ... the tides are coming in ...

3

Riding Hood (1999)

CHARACTERS

JOHN (male, 40s)

MICHELLE (female, 40s)

CLAIRE (female, 17)

EXPIDITER

SERVER

Scene 1

The actions starts when the house opens. As people enter, the very first hints of morning light filter through the skylight in a vaulted ceiling. The room is a woman's bedroom. John and Michelle are laying in a king-sized bed, sleeping. We can see the outlines of their naked bodies through thin sheets; she is laying on her front, he on his back. John rolls toward her, resting on his side. Michelle stirs. John's arm finds Michelle's back, caresses it, moving to her ass, her legs. She sits up, sheets exposing her top half, and straddles John. They fuck, slowly rolling around to various positions, pleasuring themselves as the morning light gradually brightens. At this point, the house is closed and the house lights fade to blackness. Michelle approaches an orgasm. Then their moaning is pierced by a voice from outside the bedroom.

CLAIRE. MOM!!!

John is startled. He pulls out, sits up.

JOHN. Who is that?

CLAIRE. MOM!!! I'm gonna be late for rugby!

JOHN. I didn't know you had a—

MICHELLE. I'll be there in a minute!

CLAIRE. I'm gonna be late if we don't leave right now!

MICHELLE. I need to get dressed, honey. We're divorced. I mean, her dad and I are—

CLAIRE. Five minutes!

MICHELLE. I didn't mention it because—

JOHN. It's okay.

MICHELLE. I was going to tell you this morning.

JOHN. It's no problem. Just surprised.

MICHELLE. We've been divorced for three years.

JOHN. No, it's not like I haven't been married before. Just ... never got around to having kids.

MICHELLE. It's ... interesting.

The door opens and Claire bursts into the room. She is wearing a rugby uniform.

CLAIRE. You know what's fucking interesting ...

MICHELLE. Claire!

CLAIRE. Seeing you roll around with this pig. What's your name? Abner?

MICHELLE. Claire, get out of here!

CLAIRE. What do you do for a living? Manufacture Nike's? You look like a banker.

MICHELLE. Claire!

CLAIRE. You in stocks?

JOHN. Futures.

CLAIRE. So you're the big time. Nice catch, Mom. What's your name?

JOHN. John Lorenz.

CLAIRE. You ever been to Japan, John Lorenz?

JOHN. Yes.

CLAIRE. What are you doing with this bitch?

MICHELLE. You're not going anywhere, young lady.

CLAIRE. Don't your Japanese business fellows take you to the all-you-can-eat Asian pussy bars while you're over there?

JOHN. There is quite a bit of prostitution in Japan.

CLAIRE. Great. Maybe you can get my mom a new job.

MICHELLE. That is it.

CLAIRE. She's tired of sleeping with corporate schmucks like yourself to improve her standing in the universe. Wishes the world was fair. Wishes she could be judged on a higher merit than her

ability to get you off by squishing her skank mid-lifer cunt around Napoleon's dick here.

MICHELLE. Claire, you are grounded.

JOHN. Our professional lives don't intersect.

CLAIRE. (*at the same time as John's last line*) Good, mom. I was thinking about not going to rugby today anyway. It seems clear you need some looking after.

Claire sits down on the bed.

CLAIRE. Bad, bad girl.

MICHELLE. You're through with rugby.

CLAIRE. Stupid sport anyway. Just a bunch of girls rolling around in the mud trying to take control of the ball. Nothing you'd be interested in, John Lorenz. Do your Asian hookers play rugby?

MICHELLE. You're not going to the prom with ... whatever his face.

CLAIRE. Did you go to your prom, John? ... That's a shame. You weren't into the whole stealing-young-girls'-virginity-on-prom-night thing?

Claire gets up from the bed.

CLAIRE. My mom didn't go, either. You two are perfect for each other.

Claire picks up her mother's bra.

CLAIRE. This looks like something grandma would wear.

Claire picks up John's underwear.

CLAIRE. Sexy, John Lorenz. Get some for me, okay mom?

Claire exits the room, slamming the door. Her mother starts crying.

JOHN. Are you okay?

Michelle pulls herself back together.

MICHELLE. Fine. Fucking wonderful.

Scene 2

John and Michelle are in the kitchen. She is wearing a bathrobe. He is wearing sweatpants and a T-shirt. John is bare-footed. Michelle wears slippers. They are following a recipe; a mixing bowl sits out.

MICHELLE. If she comes down here I don't know what I'm going to do.

JOHN. Baking powder?

MICHELLE. Above the sink. What would you do? I know you've never had kids but . . . I don't want to take her to counseling. I've told her she can go by herself if she wants but she doesn't want to and I'm already going twice a week.

JOHN. Who do you see?

MICHELLE. Dr. Havestein. He runs a practice in Chelsea Tower.

JOHN. I know the place. Baking soda, but no baking powder.

MICHELLE. I might have some downstairs. Stay here, I'll be right back.

Michelle goes down some stairs to a lower level. John flips through the newspaper. Claire walks into the dining area and sits at the table with her back to John. She is wearing jeans and a mod T-shirt. He notices her come in, but goes back to reading the paper. Claire flips on a TV. She bends down to scratch the back of her calf through her jeans. On her feet are socks with little pink pigs embroidered on them. She continues watching TV, then bends down to scratch her calf again. She feels around that section of her leg. Something is there. She pushes her chair out and stands up. She unzips her jeans and pushes them down around her ankles. John is looking at Claire; her panties entice. In this position, without moving her legs or bending her knees, she bends down and removes a dryer sheet. She places the dryer sheet on the table, pulls up her pants, zips them, and sits back down to watch TV. As she is sitting back down, Michelle re-enters from the basement.

MICHELLE. Here we go. Is that everything we need?

JOHN. I think so.

MICHELLE. Do you need any help?

JOHN. Thanks, I've got it.

MICHELLE. Claire, would you like to have some waffles when they're ready?

As Claire speaks here, she continues watching TV.

CLAIRE. Sure.

MICHELLE. Great. After breakfast I'm picking some things up from the dry cleaner and John's going to take me to the airport.

CLAIRE. Where you going this week?

MICHELLE. Philadelphia.

CLAIRE. What's going on there?

MICHELLE. I'm meeting with some people from CMC. They're going to show us their respiratory-blocker engineering process.

CLAIRE. Sounds like they've been up to no good.

JOHN. What is that, exactly?

MICHELLE. Among other things, CMC makes pesticides. They have a computer simulation of parts of the cellular respiratory process of certain nasty bugs which people like to kill, like roaches. Using this simulation, the computer can engineer plans for a new type of molecule which acts as a respiratory inhibitor for just that species or a few related species of bug. It kills almost instantly and it is completely harmless to all other species. Supposedly. We'll see. It should be fun; I like Philadelphia, anyway.

JOHN. Waffle number one.

John forks the waffle onto a plate. Michelle takes the plate to her daughter.

MICHELLE. Claire, would you like this one?

CLAIRE. Does it have nuts in it?

MICHELLE. No.

CLAIRE. Sure. Thanks.

Michelle sets the plate down. Claire begins to butter the waffle. Michelle walks back over to John. She hugs and kisses him. They whisper to each other. Claire drowns the waffle in syrup. She takes a bite, then picks up the remote control and switches the TV to the Playboy channel. Sex action on screen. No one notices. She turns up the volume. Michelle and John both look over.

MICHELLE. Welcome to breakfast at the Coghlan household.

Claire makes no reaction.

MICHELLE. Claire, turn that back to Tom and Jerry, please.

Claire sits, eating. Michelle goes over and stands by Claire.

MICHELLE. I'd like to talk with you upstairs.

CLAIRE. Me too, but I'm eating right now.

MICHELLE. Claire! Now.

Claire cuts another bite, eats it, wipes her mouth, gets up from the table, and heads toward the stairs. Michelle takes the remote, turns the TV back to cartoons, and follows Claire upstairs. At the base of the stairs, she gestures to John that it will just be a minute. Claire and Michelle disappear upstairs. John puts another waffle on. He then turns and looks at the dining table. He walks to it and stares at the television. Then he looks at the table. He picks up the dryer sheet and holds it to his face. He breathes in deeply through his nose.

Scene 3

Claire is sitting in the living room on the couch. Her body is covered with an afghan. The television is on. She is watching Tom and Jerry. It is night, and the only light inside the house comes from the TV. A key fiddles in the door on the outside. The door opens. John walks in.

CLAIRE. Who gave you a key? I suppose my mom told you to keep an eye on me while she's in Philadelphia. Or is she having you feed the dog?

John closes the door and steps all the way into the house. He looks around the place, steps into the kitchen.

CLAIRE. We don't have a dog, dipshit.

JOHN. I'm not looking for a dog.

CLAIRE. What are you looking for?

He stands behind the couch, looking at her. She flips the TV to the Playboy channel. He comes around to the front of the couch. She stands up, keeping the afghan about her body. We can see no additional clothing.

CLAIRE. Do you like Tom and Jerry?

His hand reaches out to touch her breasts over the cloth. She takes his hand and puts it on her skin directly.

CLAIRE. Are you waiting for me to stop you, John Lorenz? Is that what you thought I'd do? Scream for help? Yell stop? Tell you no? Is that what you wanted? Is that what you expected? Did you want to fuck everything up? Did you want me to complain to mommy when she gets back that you came over and touched her daughter in a bad place? Did you want her to dump you? Did you want her to call the police?

JOHN. No.

CLAIRE. I think you did.

JOHN. Why do you think that?

She sits him on the couch. Unbuttons his shirt, takes off his belt. Undoes his pants and pulls them down. Claire fucks John, straddling him, her breasts and hair in his face. He cums. She gets off of him, sits beside him. There is silence and staring into space.

CLAIRE. What's your favorite movie, John Lorenz?

JOHN. Heat . . . with Al Pacino and Robert DeNiro.

CLAIRE. What's your favorite scene?

JOHN. The bank robbery.

CLAIRE. Of course. Do you like the ending?

JOHN. Yeah.

CLAIRE. I figured you did. I hate that ending. I never watch the ending.

JOHN. Why don't you like it?

CLAIRE. The same reason you do like it. The bad guys get caught. Movies are better if the bank robbers get thwarted while the robbery is in progress. Better because then people get shot and you have a car chase and a lot of noise and some explosions. But the ending you want in real life is the perfect crime with no plot twists, no fuck-ups, no trace at all of the dramatic. The good ending in real life is quiet, and nobody notices, and nobody gets famous or dead. In real life you rob the bank, get away alive with all the money, you move to a third world country and live on your yacht having sex with AIDS-tested supermodels, and that's a good ending.

Claire hands John Lorenz his shirt, and he gets dressed. She pays no attention to him; she stares at the television. He stands up, completely dresses, and waits as if something else could happen. After letting him stand there, Claire gets up and leads him to the door.

CLAIRE. Go home, John Lorenz, go home. You win the prize. You didn't get caught. You're the winner, a real story-book ending. Next week my mom will come home and she'll be so happy to see you. She'll ask if I behaved, and you'll say yes. She'll tell you she missed you and you'll tell her you missed her, too. When she's sucking your dick you'll think about tonight, about the time you had with me. You'll wish it was me on top of you. You'll wish you had a little tighter pussy to fuck. Then some Saturday the three of us will be sitting in there eating waffles. You'll make smalltalk with me, trying not to be too familiar. You'll side with my mom against me, not because you like her more but because you don't want her to know about us. And I'll sit here, watching Tom and Jerry, eating waffles, staring at the TV, not paying any attention to either of you. You'll want to talk about it, you'll wish that I would let you fuck me again sometime. But I won't talk about it. And I won't let you fuck me again. So go home, John Lorenz. Go home to that stack of pornos you have hidden under the sink in your bathroom. You got everything you wanted. Can you live with that?

Claire turns from him and sits back down on the couch. She flips it back to Tom and Jerry. John goes to the door, opens it slowly, steps out, looks back at her for a while, then turns and shuts the door. With the door shut the house is dark, but the music

continues for a moment before fading away.

Scene 4

John and Michelle are sitting in a nice restaurant. They are dressed up. They are laughing. Michelle smokes a cigarette.

EXPIDITER. Can I get you two something to drink?

MICHELLE. New Orleans.

JOHN. The same.

EXPIDITER. Excellent. Your server will be with you shortly.

MICHELLE. You know, I didn't think the special effects were all that great.

JOHN. You have to be joking.

MICHELLE. No. I don't see what the big deal was. Just a bunch of anti-gravity people doing mediocre martial arts with those computer-generated bullshit werewolves. Stupid, stupid movie.

JOHN. I sort-of liked it.

MICHELLE. I sort-of liked it, too. There was nothing special about the effects, however. They were stolen from some nineteen-sixty-nine sci-fi film about ants that take over the earth.

JOHN. I think I saw that one.

MICHELLE. No way.

JOHN. Yeah, where some desert hillbillies and half the U.S. Reserve go ballistic with flame-throwers, chasing giant ants across the desert, torching them with napalm ...

MICHELLE. Wow. I thought I was the only person who saw that movie. I'm always telling people about it, but no one's ever heard of it.

JOHN. I would think your people at CMC would love that one, with all their respiration-blocking insect killers.

MICHELLE. Those people were freaky. Jamie, this business analyst on my team, asked them if they had thought about biological warfare. And their team leader says, yes, we're well aware of the implications for biological warfare. No big deal. Who knows what else those people are cooking up over there. Or who they're selling it to.

JOHN. That's a scary thought.

The server comes to their table carrying their drinks.

SERVER. Hi, my name is Mike, and I'll be your server. How you folks doing this evening?

JOHN. Fine, just fine.

SERVER. I'm glad to hear that. Tonight our special is the roasted swordfish, straight from the coast of Norway, served with your choice of salad. We typically recommend a Chardonnay with that, but I see you two have already chosen to drink something a little more . . . shall we say . . . hard core. Do you need a moment to look over the menu or do you know what you'd like?

MICHELLE. Ready?

JOHN. Yeah.

MICHELLE. You go first.

JOHN. I'd like a chicken sandwich. Grilled.

SERVER. Soup or salad?

JOHN. No, thanks.

SERVER. You, ma'am?

MICHELLE. Cheeseburger. Burnt.

SERVER. Soup or salad?

MICHELLE. No.

SERVER. Okay. We'll have that right out for you. If you need anything, just yell.

John takes a big sip of his drink.

MICHELLE. Do you know what's in those?

JOHN. The only thing I know about these is they taste real good and they get you drunk real fast.

MICHELLE. Is that what we want?

JOHN. Yeah, I guess so. Drink up.

She drinks up.

JOHN. Holy shit. You're gonna die.

MICHELLE. Drink up, big boy, drink up.

He drinks up.

JOHN. Don't feel a thing.

MICHELLE. Wait two minutes. Wanna dance?

JOHN. We better get started while it's still possible.

They get up and dance.

MICHELLE. You feelin' that drink at all?

JOHN. Not yet. Are you?

MICHELLE. A little. But I don't think it's really hitting me, I think I'm just imagining it. Are you coming home with me tonight?

JOHN. We could go to my place.

MICHELLE. I don't want Claire to be there by herself.

MICHELLE. You know what we need to do? We need to take a weekend away.

JOHN. What about Claire?

MICHELLE. She can stay with a friend. Wouldn't that be nice? Just the two of us ... Where do you want to go? Somewhere far away? Someplace exotic? You just want to check into the Hyatt in town?

JOHN. I have a place on the beach in New Jersey.

MICHELLE. Oooh. That could be nice. Sound of the waves.

JOHN. Have you ever had sex on the beach?

MICHELLE. No. Take me there.

JOHN. It's set then. You pick the weekend.

MICHELLE. This one. I'm not travelling. Sex on the beach. Mike!

SERVER. Yes, ma'am.

MICHELLE. More drinks, please, dear.

SERVER. Of course.

JOHN. Now are you feeling that drink? Or is it still just your imagination?

MICHELLE. Really feeling. Imagining you without any clothes on. Imagining ... sacking you in the surf. Waves and our bodies and fresh seafood. You have to be a seafood fan.

JOHN. Only when I'm by the sea.

MICHELLE. Me too. Me too. Let's do something really naughty tonight. Don't you ever want to do something really naughty?

JOHN. Like what?

MICHELLE. Let's get some edible panties. Or a glow-in-the-dark condom or some lingere.

JOHN. Okay.

MICHELLE. It'll be fun. There's a store up the street like that. I've never gone in there ... do you want to?

JOHN. Sure.

SERVER. Drinks. Enjoy.

John and Michelle sit down and take sips.

JOHN. We need to lock the bedroom door this time.

MICHELLE. I'm sorry about that. She can be a little ... unrestrained.

JOHN. Has she done that with ... I mean, has she walked in on you with anyone else? I-I'm inquiring about her activity, not yours.

MICHELLE. It's okay. No she hasn't. Stood outside the door and tried to hold a conversation, yes. But she's never walked in like that before.

JOHN. Is she a good student?

MICHELLE. Straight A's.

JOHN. Does she cause trouble in school?

MICHELLE. Not on the surface. If she does anything she's gotten away with it this far. She gets it out at Rugby, I think. For the most part, they love her down there. Except that she's not Catholic.

JOHN. Catholic school?

MICHELLE. St. Mary's.

JOHN. And they like her there?

MICHELLE. Except that she's not Catholic, yes. She gets good grades, plays a sport. Doesn't sell drugs in the lunchroom like some of the students. Hasn't been caught manufacturing fake IDs. Like some of the students.

JOHN. I read about that.

MICHELLE. Divorce is hard on kids. I'm sorry to her for that. But I do my best. She gets what she needs. And for the most part, I think she's doing alright. It's hard to be that age. Very uncertain. You're uncomfortable with yourself. Unsure. People in that situation do weird things sometimes.

JOHN. Yeah.

MICHELLE. My counselor thinks she might benefit from therapy. But if she doesn't want to go . . . what good will it do?

JOHN. You know what?

MICHELLE. What, handsome?

JOHN. I am so fucking drunk. I just want to take my clothes off right here and lay you down on this table.

MICHELLE. We will we will . . . just let's get the edible panties first.

The server brings their food out.

MICHELLE. We'll get the edible panties, we'll get some glow-in-the-dark condoms, I'll buy some lingere, we'll remember to lock the door this time, and then you can lay me down on this table right here and screw the poop out of me.

SERVER. Ma'am. Sir.

Michelle realizes that the server has been standing there. She looks at him and busts out laughing. Then she looks at her plate. She picks the cheeseburger up off the plate, surveys it, and plops it right back down on the plate. She stares amazed. In a voice loud enough for the entire restaurant to hear, she says

MICHELLE. Jesus Christ. This is the biggest fucking cheeseburger I have ever seen!

Scene 5

Michelle's living room. Empty. Early evening. The door opens and in walks John, carrying a weekend getaway bag and roses. He walks into the kitchen. No one is there. He sets the roses on the counter. He walks back into the living room. Claire comes downstairs in her school uniform.

JOHN. Is Michelle here?

CLAIRE. Not even a thought to me. Michelle isn't here yet. Excited about your little weekend getaway?

JOHN. Yes.

CLAIRE. Doing anything social or are you just going to bang my mom all weekend.

JOHN. Probably just going to bang your mom all weekend.

CLAIRE. Shhh ...she's upstairs. Just kidding, she's still at work. She called to say she'll be home in a while. If John gets here, make him comfortable. Try to be nice. I'm trying. See, I've got my Catholic schoolgirl outfit on just for you. I can sit right here, with my legs crossed, revealing nothing, and you can wish you were inside these leggings, wish you were up this skirt. How's the futures business?

JOHN. Corn is up. Sugar's down.

CLAIRE. You don't sound too happy about that. Why don't you come upstairs? I'll cheer you up.

JOHN. I think I'll wait here.

CLAIRE. I'm going to strip my clothes off for you now. Then I'm going to let you fuck me, just a quick one.

JOHN. No.

CLAIRE. You have a choice to make. Would you like to do it here or do you want me to show you my bedroom?

JOHN. Neither.

CLAIRE. Why are you so sour today? Is it the corn? Or the sugar? Buy or sell, John Lorenz? I think you'll like my bedroom. Believe it or not, it's all pink. Very virginal. You can smell my perfume, you know? I'll let you go through my panty drawer and you can pick out a souvenir for this weekend. Something to keep you company while you're with my mom.

JOHN. I'm not going to do anything with you.

CLAIRE. Then your choice becomes : would you like for me to strip for you here or in my bedroom?

Claire starts to strip.

CLAIRE. It would have been better for you to choose my bedroom because if my mom walks in right now, and I'm stripping for you here, then she'll see it, and that might put an interesting spin on your weekend.

JOHN. Stop.

Claire continues to strip, leaving the removed articles all around the room. John picks up the items and tries to return them to her, this causes him to be following her.

CLAIRE. Schoolgirl shoes with buckles.

JOHN. Stop.

CLAIRE. Schoolgirl leggings. Virgin white. Note the scent.

JOHN. Claire.

CLAIRE. You're missing the scent. That's part of the whole deal. Smell those right now.

JOHN. I'm not going to smell—

CLAIRE. Schoolgirl sweater. Very preppy.

JOHN. Put this back on.

Claire has arrived at the stairs, is a few steps up already. She is facing John, below. She lets her hair out.

CLAIRE. Schoolgirl hairpins.

JOHN. Claire, stop.

CLAIRE. Plaid schoolgirl skirt. The quintessential schoolgirl item. Mother's not going to want to find that laying around, because that means that her little schoolgirl is left wearing only her schoolgirl panties, her schoolgirl Oxford shirt, and underneath, her schoolgirl bra. Let's do the shirt next.

She unbuttons her shirt. John protests at each button.

JOHN. Claire. Stop. Claire. *(etc., as she unbuttons)*

She has finished. She throws the shirt at him.

JOHN. Jesus.

CLAIRE. Come upstairs.

Claire continues upstairs, John follows. When the top half of Claire's body is out of sight, she throws her bra to the bottom of the stairs. John goes down to retrieve it. He goes back up.

CLAIRE. Now. Am I going to have to make you go get my panties from down there, or are you going to take them off of me?

We hear Claire squeal with delight.

CLAIRE. That's what I like.

We hear her voice upstairs, without seeing them.

CLAIRE. Do you like it? I told you it was all pink. Do you want to fuck me, or do you just wanna mess around?

We hear the bed squeak.

CLAIRE. I though you wanted to fuck me. Isn't this nice. Ohhh ...do me. I wanna feel you inside of me. Oh my god! Yes! This will make you forget about the sugar and the corn, won't it, John Lorenz? Oh! Oh! Yes! Talk dirty to me. I like it.

JOHN. I've been wanting you all week, Claire. I've been wanting to fuck your pink little pussy. I was hoping you'd show me your room. I'm glad you did.

CLAIRE. Talk to me more.

JOHN. I can't stop thinking about you. I've been wanting to fuck you ever since last time. Do you like feeling my dick inside of you? Do you?

CLAIRE. Yes ...

JOHN. Good, cause I like having it inside of you. I like fucking you, Claire. I like fucking you. I wanna fuck you until you—

CLAIRE. Yes! Yes! Ohhh!

Downstairs, the door opens, and Michelle enters.

MICHELLE. John?

There is a big thunk from upstairs. Michelle goes to the stairs.

MICHELLE. What's going on up there?

CLAIRE. Nothing, mom. I just dropped my suitcase.

MICHELLE. It sounded like you dropped a cinderblock. What do you have in there? Why do you need a suitcase just to go to Marianne's house for a weekend?

CLAIRE. My bookbag's too small.

Michelle goes into the kitchen, sees the roses. She looks for John in the living room.

MICHELLE. Where is John?

CLAIRE. Don't know, mom. Haven't seen him.

MICHELLE. His car's out front. His bag is right here. John? Is he in the bathroom? John?

Claire walks downstairs, wrapped in two towels. She surveys John's bag.

CLAIRE. You're right, his bag is right here.

Michelle comes back from checking the bathroom.

MICHELLE. You haven't seen him?

CLAIRE. Well, clearly he's been here, but I didn't hear him come in. I've been in the shower, though.

MICHELLE. Maybe he's in my room.

Michelle goes upstairs.

MICHELLE. John?

Michelle comes back downstairs.

MICHELLE. You haven't seen him?

CLAIRE. Not today.

CLAIRE. I'm going to finish packing.

MICHELLE. Okay. I'll take you over there when you're ready.

Michelle goes into the kitchen and picks up the phone. It is a cordless. She dials a number.

MICHELLE. Yes. Is Jonathan Lorenz there? ... Do you know when he left? ... Okay. ... No, I'll try him elsewhere.

She hangs up, dials a number. Waits.

MICHELLE. Hey, it's me. Where are you? Your stuff is here and I'm guessing you probably just ... went out to get ... something for the weekend ... or ... well, thanks for the roses, they're lovely, and ... I don't know ... just ... call me.

She hangs up and stares at the roses. She picks up the phone and dials another number. A phone rings in the living room. She goes into the living room with her phone and sees that his cell phone is laying on top of his weekend bag. She picks it up, presses talk, and, with one phone to each ear, says

MICHELLE. Hello? Fuck!

Michelle hangs up his phone, then hers, then slumps down on the couch. She looks at her watch, then flips on the TV. It is tuned to the Playboy channel. She flips the TV off.

MICHELLE. Claire, what is your obsession with ...!?

CLAIRE. Say that again. I couldn't hear you.

MICHELLE. Forget it.

Michelle sinks back on the couch stares into space. A lighting transition skips us an hour into the future. Claire is sitting on a chair in the living room. Michelle is still on the couch. We see them sitting in silence for a moment before Claire speaks.

CLAIRE. So is this dick gonna show, or what?

MICHELLE. Claire.

CLAIRE. Just asking. Maybe he forgot.

MICHELLE. You're not going to Marianne's.

Claire stands up.

CLAIRE. Fine.

Claire goes upstairs. A lighting transition skips us ahead some more. Michelle is still sitting on the couch. She looks at her watch. Dials a phone number.

MICHELLE. Non-emergency. ... Yes, can I speak to someone about a missing person? ... Sure.

Michelle hangs up the phone.

MICHELLE. Shit.

A lighting transition skips us ahead some more. Michelle is still sitting on the couch. Claire comes downstairs. She steps over to her mom, puts a hand on her.

CLAIRE. Still a no-show?

Michelle looks at Claire.

CLAIRE. Sorry, mom.

Claire goes into the kitchen and comes out with a bottle of Karo syrup. She goes upstairs.

Scene 6

Claire's bedroom. John is sitting on her bed fully clothed. He picks up a teddy bear and throws it. Claire walks in with a bottle of Karo syrup. She hands the bottle to John, then goes and picks up the teddy bear, putting it back in its original position.

CLAIRE. Are you hungry?

JOHN. Is she asleep yet?

CLAIRE. No she's not. I'll tell you when she goes to sleep. Until then, you can just assume that she's still awake. Okay?

JOHN. This is totally fucked up.

CLAIRE. Beats your typical weekend getaway, though.

JOHN. For you, maybe.

CLAIRE. That's what I meant. For me. I'm gonna get undressed. Why don't you open that bottle of syrup.

JOHN. Why?

CLAIRE. Why? Because you're gonna lick it off me.

JOHN. I don't think so.

CLAIRE. You don't?

Claire opens her bedroom door.

CLAIRE. Then I don't think I'm gonna keep hiding you here in my room. Mom!!!

MICHELLE. What?

JOHN. No, no. Okay. Close the door.

MICHELLE. What is it, Claire?

CLAIRE. Nothing, I couldn't find my remote there for a second. I found it.

MICHELLE. Go to sleep, honey. It's two in the morning.

CLAIRE. I will soon.

Claire closes the door.

CLAIRE. Now open that bottle. I'm going to make myself more comfortable. Feel free to do the same.

JOHN. No thanks.

CLAIRE. If you're good I'll let you fuck me after.

JOHN. Joy.

CLAIRE. You know you want to. You know what the difference is between you and me, John Lorenz?

John shrugs and looks up at her.

CLAIRE. I'll tell you. The difference between you and me is that if I was in your situation right now, I'd enjoy it. Everything in life has at least two sides. You might as well at least enjoy the one that favors you at the moment. You're held captive in the bedroom of a teenage girl who you want to fuck. A teenage girl who lets you fuck her. Who strips for you. Who sucks your dick. And . . . she happens to be the daughter of your girlfriend. And . . . the fact that you followed me upstairs to fuck me has gotten you into a pickle, and caused your girlfriend to be momentarily upset with you. So what? She'll fall asleep in a little while, and if I'm feeling good about you when that happens, I'll let you go. You can make up a story about why you were called away suddenly, and life will go on. In the mean time, take off your pants. Pour some Karo syrup on my pussy and eat me out. I'll play with my nipples while you do it. Then your dick will get hard, and we can fuck like little bunnies of the field. I'll let you take me from behind. I'll put on my uniform and you can rip it off of me. We can take a shower together. My door locks, see?

She locks her door. She straddles him from behind on the bed. She undoes his belt.

CLAIRE. I don't care. I want to play with you, too. And as long as everyone is sufficiently quiet about it, no one will ever know. Good?

Claire has settled herself on the bed in front of him. She is ready for him to eat her. The bottle is open, and he is about to pour it on her.

CLAIRE. Pour it on nice and thick, John Lorenz.

Scene 7

Michelle's bedroom in complete darkness. The door opens, there stands John's silhouette against light in the hallway. Michelle, who is laying in bed, flips on a lamp.

MICHELLE. What happened to you?

JOHN. Something came up at work.

MICHELLE. Came up after you go here?

JOHN. Murray called me on my cell phone and picked me up in his car, in front of your house. Right after I got here.

MICHELLE. What was it? What was it that you couldn't call me? Why didn't you call me?

JOHN. It was disorganized. We were meeting with a group of guys. We were making a deal, and we were in a meeting. I couldn't leave.

MICHELLE. Murray doesn't have a cell phone?

JOHN. He didn't have it with him. I tried to call you. I wanted to call you.

MICHELLE. What kind of deal comes up instantly on Friday afternoon?

JOHN. It's complicated. I can tell you the details tomorrow.

MICHELLE. Tell me now. I'd like to know.

JOHN. Look, I'm sorry I worried you. A lot was at stake. And I should've called you, but I couldn't.

MICHELLE. I was really worried about you. I stayed up, downstairs. I called your cell phone but you left it here. I called you place. I called the police—I wondered what might have happened. Don't do that to me. Don't . . . do that to me. Okay?

JOHN. I'm sorry I worried you. And I'm sorry about our weekend.

MICHELLE. I really needed this weekend. I really needed to get away.

JOHN. I'm sorry, baby. I'm sorry. We'll go the next weekend you're free.

MICHELLE. I wanted to go this weekend.

JOHN. I'm sorry. Don't cry. Do you want some water?

MICHELLE. No.

JOHN. Are you sure?

MICHELLE. Would you get me some milk?

JOHN. Yes. I'll be right back.

John exits the room.

Scene 8

John turns on the kitchen light. Claire is sitting on the breakfast table in her nightgown.

JOHN. Jesus. You startled me.

CLAIRE. Put your dick inside of me.

JOHN. Not now.

CLAIRE. Just for a second. I'm already wet. Come here.

JOHN. We've got to stop this, Claire.

CLAIRE. I don't want to stop. Come here.

She feels him up and unzips his pants.

JOHN. Please, stop.

CLAIRE. I want to feel your dick inside of me. Right here on this table. Right now, just for a second, before you go back upstairs to her. Give it to me. There, like that. Yeah . . .

JOHN. She's waiting for me.

CLAIRE. Just a little bit more. There we go.

JOHN. She's gonna wonder what took me so long. I just came down to get a glass of milk.

CLAIRE. Ooh. Ooh.

JOHN. I've got to go.

CLAIRE. In a minute. Ahh. Let me ask you a question, John Lorenz.

JOHN. What is that?

CLAIRE. Have you ever toed a girl?

JOHN. I don't think so. I suppose that would be sticking your toe up—

CLAIRE. Yes. You know what I think I'd like?

JOHN. To toe a girl?

CLAIRE. To be toed. By you. Tomorrow morning at breakfast.

JOHN. Claire . . .

CLAIRE. I'll sit across from you and I won't wear any panties. You can stick your toe up the leg of my shorts. You'll need to be barefoot obviously. Wait 'till my mom sits down beside you so she can't see.

JOHN. I'm not gonna do that.

CLAIRE. Yes you are.

JOHN. Do you want us to get caught?

CLAIRE. No, remember what I told you before? You're the one who wants us to get caught. I want us to get away with it. And we will. We will, don't worry.

JOHN. It's too risky. I'll toe you in your bedroom. I'll toe you when your mom is out of town. I'm not gonna toe you at the breakfast table.

Claire puts a finger on his nose.

CLAIRE. Yes, you are.

Claire pushes him away. He fills a glass with milk.

CLAIRE. After she falls asleep, I want you to come down here to me and finish this off. Then you can go back up to her. Understand?

JOHN. Yeah, okay.

CLAIRE. If you don't meet me down here I'll go into that bedroom and fuck you while she sleeps. And from what I know about you, John Lorenz, I think that might be just a little too close for comfort. True?

JOHN. True.

John goes back into the bedroom. Michelle is asleep. John sets the milk down on the nightstand and tucks Michelle's covers in around her. He turns off the lamp. John opens the bedroom door, silhouetted by the hall light, and goes back into the hallway.

Scene 9

It is morning in the kitchen/breakfast room at Michelle's house. Claire is sitting at the table watching Tom and Jerry. Michelle and John are following a recipe.

MICHELLE. Claire, honey, are you going to be hungry for waffles?

CLAIRE. I sure am.

MICHELLE. Good, cause we're making ... how many do we have batter here for?

JOHN. Ten to twelve.

MICHELLE. So that's ... three per person? I think I can only eat two. Claire, how many are you planning on eating?

CLAIRE. I suppose I could eat three. I'll need my strength for this afternoon's bone crushing.

MICHELLE. Rugby game.

CLAIRE. Those St. Agnes pussies are about to meet up with The Inquisition.

MICHELLE. Claire.

CLAIRE. Sorry, Mom, but this planet-of-the-apes bitch on their team gave Janet a concussion last time we played them. St. Agnes is fucking going down.

MICHELLE. It surprises me that a Catholic school even has a rugby team. Even if all the players don't take it as seriously as Claire.

CLAIRE. John, can I have nuts in my waffle today?

JOHN. Do we have any nuts?

MICHELLE. I have some walnuts. They aren't chopped.

JOHN. If someone will chop them I'll add it to the mix.

CLAIRE. I will chop them.

Michelle gets Claire a cutting board, a knife, and a pile of walnuts. In the process, John has to move out of her way. Michelle pays him with a lip kiss. Claire chops the nuts.

CLAIRE. You two seem like you're doing well.

MICHELLE. What do you mean by that?

CLAIRE. It's none of my business, of course, but it just seems to me that things are going very well between the two of you. Is that true?

MICHELLE. Well, yes, honey.

CLAIRE. John?

JOHN. I deeply value the time I spend with your mother.

CLAIRE. I'm glad you two have each other. I mean, I know the three of us have had some rough times, mostly because of me, but I feel like we're through that, you know?

MICHELLE. Well, things can be difficult some times.

CLAIRE. Sure they can, sure they can. But you know what they say. If life gives you lemons, hold out for strawberries. If life gives you strawberries, hold out for cake. And if life gives you cake, don't share it with anyone.

No one says anything to this.

JOHN. Waffle number one.

MICHELLE. Claire? You want this?

CLAIRE. Let's all eat together today. We can store these in the oven until several are ready. Ice-breaker question for the day : Mom, what's your favorite movie?

MICHELLE. There's this old movie about giant ants that take over the earth that I really like. But I guess ... my favorite modern movie ... is ... Sleepless in Seattle.

CLAIRE. Boo.

MICHELLE. I know. Typical chick flick.

CLAIRE. Beyond typical chick flick. They meet in the last scene. You have to wait for the sequel before the main characters have their first bit of dialog. What do you like, John?

JOHN. I guess, if I had to pick, all time my favorite movie, the movie I like to re-watch most, is Heat with Al Pacino and Robert DeNiro.

CLAIRE. Really? You like all that bank robber stuff?

JOHN. I like the action. I'm an action movie kind-of-guy. Car chases, explosions, you know. Special effects.

CLAIRE. I'm not much for special effects. I like movies where all the action takes place in one room. Where you're face-to-face with the characters themselves. People these days put too much on the scenery, the goddamn effects. It's all about the people inside the film. What they want.

MICHELLE. So what's your favorite movie?

CLAIRE. It would have to be something like . . . The Breakfast Club. There's a movie with movement but hardly any action. No effects, almost no music. Interpersonal dynamics. The characters. That's drama. That's a movie.

MICHELLE. I tried to watch that one time but I fell asleep. Not because it was boring. I was just tired. Now that I work I can't watch movies at home anymore. I always fall asleep.

JOHN. Most of the movies I see are on planes.

CLAIRE. Icebreaker trivia question number two.

MICHELLE. Do we need an icebreaker?

CLAIRE. Expression. Did you hear what happened yesterday?

JOHN. Domestic, or international?

CLAIRE. Very domestic. No? About the woman at Clover Leaf mall?

JOHN. Don't know.

CLAIRE. You didn't hear about that?

MICHELLE. I'm sure I don't want to hear this.

CLAIRE. Probably not. But you need to hear it for your own safety. There's this woman who has been shopping and when she goes out to her car to go home she sees that she has a flat tire. She looks around and sees a guy walking by. She asks this guy for help, and he agrees to help her change her tire. She opens the trunk of her car so that he can get the spare. He gets the spare out, jacks up her car, and changes the tire. He puts the flat tire in the trunk. They close the trunk. The lady thanks him and figures he'll just be on his way. But he says, lady, I'm parked all the way over on the other side of the parking lot. Would you mind giving me a lift to my car? It's not that far if we drive but it's a long way to walk, and I'm tired from helping you change your tire, etcetera. The lady thinks he seems like a nice enough man but on principle doesn't want to let him into her car. She explains this to him and he gets upset. After all, this is probably just a regular guy and he has just helped her change her tire. All he wants is a short ride to his car. He probably means her no harm. But she refuses to give him a ride and he gets really mad and leaves. The woman thinks it's probably nothing, but she decides to go back inside and tell

the police. A mall officer listens to her story and walks her back to her car. The man is nowhere to be seen, but they open in the trunk, and discover that he left his briefcase inside. They open it. Inside is a butcher knife and a length of rope.

MICHELLE. Oh! That's horrible.

CLAIRE. No kidding.

MICHELLE. Did you make that up?

CLAIRE. Swear to god, I saw it on the six-o'clock news.

JOHN. I mean no disrespect to the gravity of that story, but our waffles are ready.

MICHELLE. Thanks for making them, John.

CLAIRE. Yeah, John, thanks.

JOHN. So, what does the week hold for you?

MICHELLE. More meetings. I think somebody high up decided that this week is going to be a meeting intensive. I'm in meetings all day for four days solid. And I've got some on Friday.

JOHN. Crazy.

MICHELLE. Yeah. It's really nuts. It almost it like somebody planned it this way. What about you? Anything exciting going on?

JOHN. I'll be in Japan mid-week. Just a hobnob visit. Back on Thursday.

Claire scoots her chair in closer to the table.

CLAIRE. There we go.

JOHN. Jesus!

MICHELLE. Are you alright?

JOHN. Got a nut ... stuck in my tooth. Hurts kinda bad.

Claire holds her fork up to John.

CLAIRE. These are good.

JOHN. Same as every week.

CLAIRE. But this week, John, they're especially good.

MICHELLE. Maybe it's the nuts.

CLAIRE. It could be the nuts. Oh, my god. I don't know what it is, but John, this waffle has a quality ... that is just ...

Claire is squirming in her chair.

CLAIRE. Oh! Fucking awesome.

MICHELLE. Claire?

CLAIRE. Mom, can you pass me the syrup?

MICHELLE. Breakfast conversation?

CLAIRE. Sorry but these are great. I couldn't help it. I mean god damn. Sorry mom. This is fucking the best waffle I've ever had.

JOHN. Glad you like them.

MICHELLE. That is awful, about that woman at the mall. But at least she didn't get hurt.

CLAIRE. Yeah.

MICHELLE. Did they ever find the guy?

CLAIRE. They're not looking for him.

MICHELLE. Why not?

CLAIRE. He didn't do anything. It's not a crime to help somebody change a tire. Or to leave your briefcase filled with Dr. Death tools inside the trunk of somebody's car.

MICHELLE. But surely he had intentions of doing the woman harm.

CLAIRE. Probably. But bad intentions aren't a crime. It's not a crime to want to kill someone. You have to actually do it. They couldn't even get this guy on attempted murder.

JOHN. Just changing a tire.

CLAIRE. Yeah. He never got the chance to attempt, thank god.

MICHELLE. Thank god that woman had her wits about her.

CLAIRE. You can't trust anybody these days.

Claire takes a big bite.

CLAIRE. Mmm. John, I want you to know that I am finding this waffle to be extraordinary. This waffle is like ...what is this waffle like? The texture evokes ...I'm having deja-vu here, I'm having ...what is it called ...an epiphany ...no ...a revolution ...surging ...crescendo ...ummmmmm ...!

Claire is squirming in enjoyment. She suddenly pushes her chair out, stands up.

CLAIRE. I've had enough. I can't take it anymore. I'll be in my room.

Claire exits.

MICHELLE. What was that all about?

JOHN. No idea.

Scene 10

Claire sits in her room watching Tom and Jerry. The door opens, and John bursts in.

JOHN. What was that?

CLAIRE. That was fun. You did good. You can be my toe man anytime.

JOHN. What was all the mmm-ing and oh-ing and the fucking awesome waffles? What are you trying to do? She knows something's up.

CLAIRE. No she doesn't.

JOHN. How could she not, after that?!

CLAIRE. Relax, John Lorenz, you're overreacting.

John grabs her by the shoulders and throws her back on the bed.

JOHN. You and me are done! You understand? That's the end. I'm not playing along anymore.

Claire laughs.

CLAIRE. Playing along? Is that what you think you're doing? You're not playing along. You're doing what you have to do keep up. You're trying to hold it together. Trying not to let it come out.

JOHN. From now on, there's not going to be anything to come out. Understand? No more quickies, no more toeing, no more Karo syrup. Okay?

CLAIRE. What if that's not okay? What if I decide I want more Karo syrup, John Lorenz?

JOHN. Get it from somebody else.

CLAIRE. What if I want it from you, John Lorenz?

JOHN. You can't have it from me.

CLAIRE. I beg to differ.

JOHN. You can't make people do things.

CLAIRE. No. But you can present people with choices. That's what I've done for you in the past, John Lorenz. I've never made you do things. You have choices now. You can choose to keep my Karo syrup and toeing options open, or you can choose for our little secret to come out. No forcing. Just choices.

JOHN. She wouldn't believe you if you told her.

CLAIRE. If I told her, you'd probably break down and admit it all.

JOHN. I wouldn't. I'd deny it all.

CLAIRE. I would make it difficult for her to believe you. For anyone to believe you.

JOHN. They'd believe me over you, trust me.

CLAIRE. That's not what I had in mind.

JOHN. What did you have in mind?

CLAIRE. Let me ask you a question. When was the first time you started liking me?

JOHN. When you stormed into Michelle's room, the first time I saw you.

CLAIRE. And when did you decide that you wanted to fuck me?

JOHN. The same day. At breakfast. When you took off your jeans in front of me while I was making waffles.

CLAIRE. And when do you think that I decided that I was going to let you fuck me? Think carefully, this is the hard one. Was it before or after I stormed into my mom's room that one day? Was it before or after I planted that dryer sheet that you now hold so dearly in the leg of my jeans? Which do you think happened first : do you think I stormed into my mom's room to see the two of you fucking and then went to my bedroom to plant a dryer sheet in my jeans, or do you think I planted the dryer sheet first? When do you think that was? Five minutes before I stormed into my mom's room? Ten? How many days in advance do you think that decision had been made? Was there any question that you would follow me upstairs when I Catholic-schoolgirled your sorry ass around the living room? What do you think my odds were on that one? One to twenty? One to fifty? Try more like—

JOHN. What's your point?

CLAIRE. My point, John Lorenz, is that if I had you worked out well enough to know that you would follow me upstairs that day, how could you possibly think that it comes as a surprise to me that you now want to end this bad enough that you're willing to suffer the accusations you know I can make without using any imagination . . . do you think I'm not prepared for that? Do you think you've caught me sleeping?

She opens her panty drawer. Throws a pair at him, which he steps away from. Then she pulls out a tape recorder, and presses play. It is John's voice. "I've been wanting you all week, Claire. I've been wanting to fuck your pink little pussy. I was hoping you'd show me your room. I'm glad you did."

JOHN. Give me that.

He moves toward her; she backs away.

CLAIRE. I'll scream and she'll come upstairs.

John Lorenz backs away.

CLAIRE. Now go away, John Lorenz. Go away.

He exits slowly. He pulls the door to behind him. The music from Tom and Jerry increases in volume. The animation of Tom and Jerry is suddenly projected in simulcast on TVs all over the house. Tom gets smashed, or trapped, or blown up. The TVs switch to fuzz, with the loud fuzz noise, then blackness, silence.

Scene 11

Claire's room. Claire is standing by her dresser. John is sitting on Claire's bed, watching her. Claire bends down, without moving her legs or bending her knees, to sift through her panty drawer. The hem of her black dress rises to the base of her ass. John is looking. She pushes the drawer halfway in, swivels around.

CLAIRE. Were you looking at my ass, John Lorenz?

JOHN. I was.

Claire swivels back around, pulls the drawer fully out. She bends down the same way to sift some more.

CLAIRE. I can't find any panties.

JOHN. You don't need any.

CLAIRE. I can't go like this.

JOHN. No one will care.

John reaches out to touch her ass, but she sees it. She turns around, steps between his legs. Her breasts are in his face. He wraps his arms around her ass. She jumps back.

CLAIRE. I didn't say you could touch me.

She bows her head to examine three pair of panties she is holding. She selects one, holds it to John's face. She caresses his lips and taunts his nose. Then suddenly she snatches the panties away from his face.

CLAIRE. What did you think of those?

John closes his eyes and nods his head. Claire puts a finger on his nose and pushes him backward onto her bed.

CLAIRE. Get up! I didn't say you could lay on my bed!

John sits up. She places her hands on his shoulders and shoves him back down. One of her knees slides up beside him, then the other. She rocks over him slowly, closes as if for a kiss but does not complete it, only passing steamy breaths across his neck. She slides down on him, pressing her breasts around his dick. She slides all the way off the bed, and stands up.

CLAIRE. It's time for you to go. I have to get ready.

John gets up from the bed. She turns him, with his shoulders, to be facing the door.

CLAIRE. Walk.

He does. Claire is putting on a pair of black high-heels. Claire goes to the door and opens it. John walks out.

JOHN. Have a good time at your party.

CLAIRE. I always have a good time at parties. Bye.

She shuts the door.

Scene 12

Claire's bathroom. Claire wearing a bathrobe, getting ready to take a shower. Her shower is a full bathtub with a curtain that covers three sides; only the end which supports the shower head is against a wall. She turns on the shower. Steam begins to rise from the tub. Claire sings to herself, a Mozart opera, as she prepares to bathe. The door to the bathroom opens. Claire stops singing. Music starts on this interruption : Nine Inch Nails - Closer. It is John. He holds a length of rope in one hand, a hacksaw in the other.

JOHN. I thought you were going to a party.

CLAIRE. What the fuck are you doing here?

Claire sees what he is holding. She laughs at him.

CLAIRE. What's up with the hacksaw, freak? In the story it's a butcher knife.

John puts the hacksaw down on the sink.

JOHN. You don't cut bone with a butcher knife.

Claire laughs.

CLAIRE. That's funny, John Lorenz. You're funny, you know that? ... You like jokes, John Lorenz? I like jokes. You wanna hear my joke?

JOHN. Sure.

CLAIRE. Okay. Little Red Riding Hood is carrying her basket of goodies through the woods to her grandmother's house, when she comes across this little piggy who's also walking through the woods. The little piggy says, Little Red Riding Hood, turn back, the Big Bad Wolf is waiting for you at Grandmother's house, and when you get there he's gonna lift up your skirt and fuck the shit out of you. Little Red Riding hood says, oh, don't worry about me, I'll be fine. The little piggy says, okay, but be careful. So Little Red Riding Hood continues on and before long she runs into a second little piggy. And the second little piggy says, Little Red Riding Hood, turn back, the Big Bad Wolf is waiting for you at Grandmother's house, and when you get there he's gonna lift up your skirt and fuck the shit out of you. Little Red Riding Hood says, oh, don't worry about me, I'll be fine. The little piggy says, okay, but be careful.

Claire gets lipstick out of her makeup crate and applies it as she continues to tell the joke.

CLAIRE. So Little Red Riding Hood continues on and before long she runs into a third little piggy. And the third little piggy says, Little Red Riding Hood, you better turn back, because the

Big Bad Wolf is waiting for you at Grandmother's house, and when you get there he's gonna lift up your skirt and fuck the shit out of you. Little Red Riding Hood says, look, little piggy, you don't need to worry about me, I'll be fine. I'm a big girl, this isn't the first time I've been in the woods. The third little piggy says, okay, but be careful. So Little Red Riding Hood continues on, and she finally gets to Grandmother's house. She goes in, and sure enough, there's the Big Bad Wolf. He says, I'm glad you made it, Little Red Riding Hood, now lift up your skirt, because I'm gonna fuck the shit out of you. Then Little Red Riding Hood pulls a gun out of her basket

Claire takes a gun from her makeup crate and points it at John's face.

CLAIRE. and points it at the Big Bad Wolf. She says, no you're not, you're gonna eat me like the story says.

Claire motions with the gun for John to get on his knees. He does. Then John knocks the gun away and grabs her wrists.

CLAIRE. Let go of me!

They struggle. He wrestles her to the floor.

JOHN. Not this time.

CLAIRE. Stop!

He puts his hand over her mouth. Her words are muffled.

CLAIRE. Stop it! Stop it you fuck! LET ME GO!!!

JOHN. I don't think so, Claire Coghlan.

The music gets louder. He keeps his hand over her mouth. She tries to bite him, he forces her mouth shut with both hands.

CLAIRE. HELP!!! HELP!!!

She slips out from underneath his grip.

CLAIRE. HELP!!!

He wrestles her to the tile, this time she is on her back. Ultimately he kneels on her, pinning her legs with his shins, holding both her arms with one hand, and shoving a bar of soap in her mouth and holding it there. She is solidly trapped, but he is completely occupied by detaining her. One of her hands slips free. She grabs his shirt collar and twists it to tighten around his neck. Both of his hands rush to loosen this, and she upsets his balance, knocks him to the floor. She gets up and hits him in the face, knocking him back into the sink stand. He bleeds from this, and becomes still. Claire slings herself over the edge of the bathtub; her lower half crumpled on the floor tile. She pants, out of breath and energy. Behind her, John gets up. He wraps the rope around her neck, pins one end of it to the edge of the bathtub with his foot, and pulls the

other end to kill. The music cuts to silence on a beat; the light is instantly red; both actors freeze in time. NIN's A Warm Place begins playing as the red fades to darkness. The curtain closes, if there is one, and the house lights fade up.

4

Carbon and Bullshit (2002)

CHARACTERS
CARBON
BULLSHIT

Scene 1

CARBON. In one second a bullet from a gun travels three thousand feet.

BULLSHIT. In one second a particle of light travels one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles.

CARBON. According to the Big Bang Theory our universe expanded from something smaller than a piece of dust to approximately its present size in a tiny fraction of a second.

BULLSHIT. That first second is always the longest one.

CARBON. I look down at my watch, and for the first three or four seconds, nothing changes. The seconds stay the same. Then they finally move, one, two, and after that first one they're going the right speed. But the first one, which was actually probably shorter since you looked down somewhere in the middle of it, takes forever. It's like your watch hasn't realized you're looking at it and it takes it a while to start doing its job again. Julian says that by looking at a clock you actually stop time. Time. Noun. System of distinguishing events. A dimension enabling two identical events

occurring in the same point in space to be distinguished, measured by the interval between the events.

BULLSHIT. You keep looking at your watch. are you—

CARBON. I'm sorry, I'm—

BULLSHIT. No, it's okay, I just wondered if you were—

CARBON. No, No—

BULLSHIT. Waiting for something to happen, or—

CARBON. I just do that—

BULLSHIT. If you have somewhere else you have to be—

CARBON. No. Time. Noun. Period with limits. A limited period during which an action, process, or condition exists or takes place. Elapsed time.

BULLSHIT. If I drink too much espresso in too short a time I get very existential. Bad existential. I can drink coffee okay but after two or three double espressos I always get very existential in a completely scary way. Like an existential dread sort of way. I start thinking about how I'm alive, and how that is all there is for me, and how it's going to eventually stop, and how there won't be me anymore, and even though when I'm not jacked up on espresso that seems like a good thing, somewhat good, at least acceptable, after two or three double espressos the thought that I will someday cease to exist is . . . really . . . very . . . bad.

CARBON. Double espresso.

BULLSHIT. Thank you.

CARBON. Okay so like we're sitting here and we're eating Big Macs and fish sandwiches, and we're playing Disney trivia, and we're having fun. You and I are great friends. And we can look at it that way. I can say to myself, you and I have a great relationship. We have great connection, incredible rapport, we experience joy and enlightenment every time we get together. We can say it that way. We can say, I'm sitting here across from you and I feel a deep degree of support and understanding. I feel loved. Now that's very nice, and it makes me feel good, but it's also very high level and abstract. If I think about my relationship with you I can say, I love her, I like her, we get along well, we're a good match, we click. I can talk about my experience with you and I can say, it was a very romantic evening. We had a good time. We made love. But what's really going on here? Are you and I sitting here having a deep, spiritual moment? You can call it that if you want, but what does it really mean? What does a deep, spiritual moment really look like? Well, I would say that we are having a spiritual moment right now. Would you agree with that? . . . Absolutely. And what

are we doing that makes it so? Well, we're sitting upright, on soft seats, in the air conditioning rather than outside. We're eating good food—no, what is good? We're eating familiar food, food that we've had exact copies of a thousand times before. It is food that we know well. We are breathing comfortably, matching each other's posture and tonality. Fucking . . . Anthony Robbins, right? We are talking. We are involuntarily digesting food. But digesting is too general. Refinement. Our stomachs and intestines and pancreas are secreting bile and other acidic juices, acids, and we're breaking down that Big Mac and this fish sandwich into the basic elements from which they are formed. We are turning this pre-processed, assembly-line soybean burger back into the carbon and bullshit that it came from. That's all that's going on. That's all that's happening here. We may interpret it as a spiritual moment. We may give it deep meaning. But another way to look at it is just as a complex array of organic processes. That's all it is. And that's no reason to get upset. That's no reason to get depressed. The only way I would get depressed is if I walked in here expecting to find a spiritual experience, instead of digestion, or if I decided not to interpret this digestion as a heavenly thing. I can do it either way. I can see this moment as an abstract metaphysical phenomenon, or I can leave it like it is, like carbon and bullshit, and that . . . is an abstract metaphysics all its own.

BULLSHIT. I'm just a Big Mac.

CARBON. And massive amounts of caffeine.

BULLSHIT. What are you?

CARBON. Fish mostly.

BULLSHIT. Massive amounts of caffeine.

CARBON. Massive.

BULLSHIT. Eight fifty-seven a.m. Carbon and bullshit eats a sandwich.

Scene 2

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Method for measuring intervals. A system for measuring intervals of time. Sidereal time.

CARBON. Central daylight time.

BULLSHIT. I dream of the moon. I dream of tides.

CARBON. I dream of music, of singing and drums and bagpipes and a night at the orchestra.

BULLSHIT. Orchestra. Noun. Large Group of classical musicians. A large group of musicians playing classical music, consisting of sections of string, woodwind, brass, and percussion players, and directed by a conductor.

CARBON. Orchestra. People who get together and play instruments. And what is an instrument? It is a piece of wood or metal or catgut that has moving parts that make sounds. And what is sound? It is vibration. That's all it is. It's little tiny particles of gas moving back and forth.

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Tempo of music. The relative speed at which a musical composition is played.

CARBON. Okay. Theoretical. Let's say you have a box of rice, and you open it up and throw in some maggot eggs. You close the box, and wait however long. At some point, when you open up that box, there's not going to be any rice left. You're going to have a swimming mass of maggots, some maggot shit, and no rice. So what is life? What is a maggot's life, essentially? A maggot is the magic trick that turns a box of rice, or whatever, into maggots and maggot shit and then, eventually, dead, decomposing maggots. See what I'm saying? A maggot is not a thing. It's not a creature or a being. It's the name we have for the transformation that took place inside the box. Everywhere in the world situations like boxes full of rice are turning into different situations, like boxes full of whatever is left when maggots decompose, and then whatever's left when whatever that is decomposes, or is assimilated into another process of life. Not that life isn't life, that life isn't living. It is. Everything is always in the process of changing. Some categories of change are called movement. Some are called decay. Some are called life.

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Time as a causative force. Time conceived as a force capable of acting on people and objects. time's ravages.

CARBON. Life is a process of getting from point a to point b.

BULLSHIT. Life is a box of maggots.

CARBON. Life is a magic trick.

BULLSHIT. The trick that turns a bunny into doves.

CARBON. The trick that turns Big Macs and oxygen into dust and books and buildings.

BULLSHIT. That spawns similar processes called offspring.

CARBON. Imagine if you could visually trace the historical path of all the atoms that were part of your body when you were born. Imagine that each one of them leaves a red trace line in

space. These atoms of your infant body would have come from the air, from the ocean, from other planets.

BULLSHIT. They would have been part of other people who lived before.

CARBON. There would be a cord of trace lines spiraling into your mother's mouth from every part of the universe. A glowing ball of red inside her body, forming you. After you were born, even before, some of your atoms would constantly be leaving what we call you, to float away in the air and get stuck on a couch and then rub off on another person.

BULLSHIT. We're constantly trading matter. We're made of the same stuff.

CARBON. The very same.

BULLSHIT. You just organize it differently than me.

CARBON. And in a recognizable way so that you always know who I am.

BULLSHIT. With that model it doesn't make sense to consider anything in isolation. It would be meaningless to think about me outside the context of me and you.

CARBON. Or you outside the context of your Big Mac.

BULLSHIT. And massive amounts of caffeine.

CARBON. Or of any of us outside the context of all the items that surround us, compose us.

BULLSHIT. Entertain us.

CARBON. Distract us.

BULLSHIT. Annoy us. Time. Noun. Minute of hour. The minute or hour as indicated by a clock. what time is it?

CARBON. It's Twinkie time.

BULLSHIT. What?

CARBON. I don't think you understood what I said. It's Twinkie time.

BULLSHIT. Oh, like it's Little Debbie time?

CARBON. Yeah, like it's Hostess fruitcake time.

BULLSHIT. Pez time.

CARBON. Bubble Tape time.

BULLSHIT. Nerds time.

CARBON. Fruit Roll Up time.

BULLSHIT. Sour Patch Kids time.

CARBON. Gummy Worm time.

BULLSHIT. Now and Later time.

CARBON. Mike and Ike time.

BULLSHIT. Good and Plenty time.

CARBON. Eww. I hate Good and Plentys. They're fucking disgusting.

BULLSHIT. I'm gonna get some more coffee.

CARBON. Coffee. Noun. Strong caffeine-rich drink. A drink made from ground or processed coffee beans that contains caffeine and has a mildly stimulating effect.

BULLSHIT. Coffee may be drunk hot, often with cream or milk and sweetened with sugar, or iced.

CARBON. Theoretical. I saw this on the Internet. You walk into a gallery and all around you are pedestals with blenders on them, and inside the blenders are goldfish swimming around oblivious to their situation. The blenders are plugged in. If you want, you can participate in the exhibit by going up to one of the blenders and pressing the button, throwing it into blend, or whip, or puree, or liquefy, or whatever.

BULLSHIT. I wouldn't do it. . . . Would you?

CARBON. Absolutely.

BULLSHIT. You would?

CARBON. Of course. Why not? Ninety percent of the work has already been done by whoever set up the exhibit. Pressing the button or not pressing the button is nothing.

BULLSHIT. Except that one way the fish die and the other way they don't.

CARBON. True, but so much of the work has already gone into setting up the fish's deaths in a way that the execution can happen in an instant, by the hand of someone who five minutes before they press the button wasn't thinking about doing anything of the sort. They're having a normal day in their normal universe of events and then suddenly they are faced with a situation they would never have thought of themselves, and if they did, wouldn't have gone to the trouble to actually create, and now, all they have to do, if they want to, is press puree and walk out of the gallery back into their normal life. They don't have to think about it. It's the fucking artist who put that shit together who spends the time thinking about it. Premeditating the rapid potential of fish death, implicating gallery goers in fish murder. I don't know.

BULLSHIT. To me, it's whoever presses the button. It doesn't matter how much planning the artist slash criminal mastermind puts into something, it's the people who carry out the plans who are responsible for it happening. The person who pulls the trigger. The person who crashes the plane. The person who pushes puree.

CARBON. I see your point, and I agree with you.

BULLSHIT. And I agree with yours as well.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Moment something occurs. A moment or period at which something takes place. At the time of her ninetieth birthday.

BULLSHIT. Or, as in, the time of death.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Suitable moment. A moment or period chosen as appropriate for something to be done or to take place. The times for the games will be announced.

BULLSHIT. Or . . . as in, now's about the time I'd like to see clear water and a fish in a blender turned into murky water and essence of fish.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Unallocated period. A period that is not allocated for a particular purpose. I had time on my hands.

BULLSHIT. So I set up an art exhibit featuring goldfish in blenders.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Period needed. A period required, allocated, or taken to complete an activity. How much time?

BULLSHIT. Does it take for a goldfish to die in a blender once someone has pressed puree?

CARBON. About one second. Time. Noun. Period with a particular quality. A period, activity, or occasion that has a particular quality or characteristic. Often used in the plural. They've been through some rough times. We had an interesting time there. And, of course . . . it was the best of times, it was the worst of times.

BULLSHIT. You are one hundred percent bullshit and zero percent carbon.

CARBON. You are a toad beyond repair.

BULLSHIT. You are the acute angle of a hanger on the discount rack at Saks Fifth Avenue.

CARBON. You are the glob of toothpaste between my teeth, hanging like taffy. Gluey cotton—

BULLSHIT. Cotton hair, gamma rays, deflector shields.

CARBON. You are the Olympic torch submerged a thousand feet below the surface of the ocean, sealed in a glass bubble that is running out of air.

BULLSHIT. You implode into the shape of a flower, brilliant shards of an orchid.

CARBON. You are that same orchid, in a brittle vase in the flatness of the Mojave desert.

BULLSHIT. You are a warplane, screaming across that desert, bracing to explode.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Appointed moment. A designated or customary moment or period at which something is done or takes place. It's time to wake up. It's time to wake up. Love? Love? Oh my god. ... Hello?

BULLSHIT. What's your emergency?

Scene 3

BULLSHIT. Coming through the tunnel. White rays shining in around the edges. Bracing myself for the plunge. Coming out the end of a waterslide. Ahhhhhh! I can't go I'm not ready I have one more thing I have to do before the end. This isn't how it was supposed to be and I want a do-over. But you don't get any do-overs in life and you don't get to save your game and you don't get any undos and half the time you don't even get to say what you really feel. Now you're my baby and I'm self-pregnant with a second, you're my baby lovely baby lovely lovely baby boy you're my one and only baby one and only yes you are you are so lovely and I'm going to protect you from everything and no one's ever going to hurt you because I won't let them and you're never going to have to go through what I went through back there because no one should ever have to go through that. No they shouldn't no one should no one should ever have to go through what I went through back there. You're my baby. You're my baby, baby boy.

CARBON. Eight fifty-seven a.m. carbon and bullshit has a baby. ... And you always said your mother was such a bitch.

BULLSHIT. Bitch. Noun. Offensive term. A highly offensive term that insults a woman's temperament.

Scene 4

CARBON. Now I'm writing your mother a letter. And why am I writing a letter to your mother when it was you I was in love with, not your mother, not your sisters, not your mom. Therapy would recommend that I write a letter to you even though I'd have nowhere to send it. But whenever I do that it turns out to be a letter you're writing me, telling me I'm stuck in fourth-dimensional pain, that I'm blind from where I am, that where you are it's bright and you can feel no pain, that you are beyond what I for some reason still feel the need to struggle with and that I could, even in this world, if I wanted to, get past that struggle,

that if I have any task in my lifetime it is to completely dismantle my concept of problem. Problem. What is it that makes all these things a problem for me? What is its architecture, what is the construction of that judgment? Can I not escape that vexing of self, can I not learn to live post-dichotomy of this or that into the wider space just beyond, of disregard, of replacing, redirecting my focus to a smearing together of the two, whichever two, into a nothingness of the before, beyond Nietzsche's good and evil, beyond the having or not having of sexual pursuits, beyond pursuit, beyond the consciousnesses of having or not having themselves. You tell me that, in these letters. You tell me that and you tell me that I am foolish for not continuing to feel ecstasy, that even death is not a good enough reason to stop. But you aren't here and you don't know how it feels to be here, and you tell me that, too, that what I see is shrouded, looking through a veil, that you can see it clearly as it is, that in your light you can wrap yourself completely around my darkness, but from where I am I don't even know what light is, I am so so shadowed by dark.

Scene 5

CARBON. Bar on a Monday night. The Trolley Stop. This town is dead, I'm finally coming to realize that. Nobody's out. Half the bars aren't even open. The Asylum's not open. Sloopy's ain't open. Canal Street is dark. Everybody's at home and I'm sitting in the trolley stop drinking top shelf. Teaching the bartender how to make drinks. The sign in front of me reads, You Must Be Twenty One. Well, I'm twenty one, and I'm a genius, and I'm lonely at the moment. I've done nothing productive at work for at least three weeks. Just bullshitting and day trading. Social life is lacking, and I'm trying to do something about that, but nobody else is out except other working men. I'd like to gain some hang out friends, have some casual sex, you know. I need to involve myself in some extra curriculars. People at work think I'm a little depressed, and they are concerned. They ask me about it, try to discern how I'm doing, invite me to their social gatherings, and generally care. I appreciate it, and I try to pretend that I'm okay, try to manipulate my voice and mannerisms into happiness. But it doesn't work, they can tell anyway, sometimes can tell more than I can. I am thinking about my ex-girlfriend's roommate. And the last waitress who gave me her phone number with the bill. I might call that number now.

Or I might not. As Julian sings, she might be pretty but I wouldn't fuck her. I'm on my second purple rain now, sixty percent done, maybe seventy percent. In about twenty minutes. I may stop after this and drive home in an hour or one half an hour. Starting to feel the drinks. Starting to have the motion thing. Thinking about buying a cigarette. Pack, rather. Nice construction. Thinking better of it, thinking about cancer. Thinking about alcoholism, drinking now once or twice a week. Definitely feeling the drinks now, solidly feeling the motion thing. Sipping my ice for traces of alcohol. Thinking of Leaving Las Vegas, Nicholas Cage, having trouble with standing. Feeling good. That fucking waitress. As far as I can tell she stood me up on our would-be date last week. I want to call her but my pride prevents me. I want to fuck her but, again, pride prevents me.

BULLSHIT. Time.

CARBON. Noun.

BULLSHIT. Closing time. The time at which a bar or pub is legally required to close.

Scene 6

CARBON. Tonight I throw a Triscuit in the sink with dirty dishes. Talk with her for an hour and a half on the telephone about exes. Watch Clueless, drinking one fourth of a bottle of Absolut Mandarin by myself. With sweet and sour mix. Write a note that I've been planning on for days. Drive drunk to her place in the middle of the night, park half a block away, walk to her porch and deliver the note to their mailbox. The door was open, lights on upstairs and down. Wonder if she's awake, if she's there, if she's alone, if she's alive. Open the mailbox. Put it in. The mailbox lid makes a sound. I wonder if it's audible from within. I drop the letter. Walk back to my car, not turning around to see if my sounds were heard. Drive home past two cops investigating something infinitely more interesting to them than me, come home, write, collapse into sleep? Tonight on the phone I said, enjoy the universe from your point of view. That was my closing to the conversation. I certainly will.

Scene 7

CARBON. I dream of drinking uncontrollably.

Scene 8

BULLSHIT. Hello sweetie. I am filling the day with your beautiful radiance. May this moment be full of peace. Awww. Yeah. I remember when I wrote that for you.

CARBON. Stop it. I'm dreaming.

BULLSHIT. No you're not.

CARBON. I dream you're just beyond my reach, and I can never get you back.

BULLSHIT. I dream I'm lost.

CARBON. You know what I love? I painted all day today and when I close my eyes I can see swirls of patterns ...

BULLSHIT. Oh, that's wonderful.

CARBON. It was so much fun ... I just played ... and art should be like that. It should only be play like a little kid plays.

BULLSHIT. Yes.

CARBON. Yes, and a little kid plays ... not expecting to be observed ... a little kid is playing to their own, in their own world

...

BULLSHIT. Not for a grade, or to see what people think.

CARBON. For their own ... enjoyment.

BULLSHIT. I dream of toes.

CARBON. I dream of fingers.

BULLSHIT. I dream of lust.

CARBON. I dream I cheat.

BULLSHIT. I dream I laugh.

CARBON. I dream I win.

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Certain interval. A limited but unspecified period. We stayed for a time. You are pure form, Byron, Homer, Gauss.

CARBON. You are Turing.

BULLSHIT. You are Hughes.

CARBON. You are jazz.

BULLSHIT. You break yourself again and again and again.

CARBON. You tumble over and over the hill, Jack and Jill making love in the fairytale.

BULLSHIT. I dream of the sea.

CARBON. I dream of a desert at night.

BULLSHIT. I dream of snakes between my toes.

CARBON. I dream rivers.

BULLSHIT. I dream blood.

CARBON. I dream of silence rolling like waves.

BULLSHIT. I dream of salt.

CARBON. I dream the deep.

BULLSHIT. I dream the sky.

CARBON. I dream I float.

BULLSHIT. I dream I die.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Anticipated moment. A moment in which some important event such as a birth or death is expected to happen. She knew her time had come.

Scene 9

BULLSHIT. I dream losing my virginity, losing my mind to passion enflaming, engulfing, enraging me to possess, enabling me to control you, comfort you, console you, eat you up, digest you, expel you, and bring you in again.

Scene 10

CARBON. Time. Verb. Schedule something. To plan the moment for something, especially in order to receive the best result or effect. To time an entrance.

BULLSHIT. My song song song song song oh oh sing sing sing ohhhhhhhhoahhh this voice is mine this voice is mine this voice is mine. You can sing anything you want with this voice.

CARBON. Oh, your singing.

BULLSHIT. Soon, I promise, soon I wont shy away, dear oh, soon, I want you, soon, I want to, soon, whatever you say . . . even now, when you're close and we touch, and you're kissing my brow, I don't mind it too much, but you have to admit I'm endearing, I help keep things humming, I'm not domineering, what's one small shortcoming? Soon, soon, soon . . . soon . . . soon . . .

CARBON. Soon.

BULLSHIT. Soon. Ooh I want more, ooh I love it. I love it. Oh, yeah yeah yeah yeah.

CARBON. I would never tire of you.

BULLSHIT. Oh, never. Same with you, darling, same with you. Loo loo loo. Look at me, I'm as helpless as a kitten up a tree, and I feel like I'm clinging to a cloud, I get misty the moment you're near. You can say that you're leading me on, but that's just what I want you to do . . . don't you notice how hopelessly I'm lost . . . I'm too much in love . . .

CARBON. I could fly with you.
BULLSHIT. Mmm hmmm ... And we remind each other, we do. I can't say love enough.
CARBON. I know.
BULLSHIT. We need to think of a new word for love.
CARBON. There is no word to express love.
BULLSHIT. No, no, no.
CARBON. Wow.
BULLSHIT. Wow.
CARBON. Exactly.

Scene 11

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Historical period. A period in history, often characterized by a particular event or person. Often used in the plural. In Shakespeare's time.

CARBON. Ancient times.
BULLSHIT. I dream of then.
CARBON. I dream of how.
BULLSHIT. I dream of when.
CARBON. I dream of treasure.
BULLSHIT. I dream of trouble.
CARBON. I dream of tyranny.
BULLSHIT. I dream of revolution.
CARBON. I dream of empire.
BULLSHIT. I dream of dust.
CARBON. I dream of space.
BULLSHIT. I dream the stars.
CARBON. Eight fifty-seven a.m. Carbon and bullshit looks at the stars.

BULLSHIT. Remember spending like four hours in the bathroom and we were painting our faces for that party and the party turned out to be really stupid but we had so much fun getting ready painting and ... we must have painted our faces like eight times and that was so much fun I have so much fun when I'm with you you know that? I do, I do.

Scene 12

BULLSHIT. Ommmmmm ...
CARBON. Ommmmmm ...

BULLSHIT. All space is here.

CARBON. All time is now.

BULLSHIT. Here . . . now.

CARBON. Here now. . . Time. Noun. Somebody's lifetime. A period during which somebody is alive, especially the most active or productive period in somebody's life. She'd been a well-known athlete in her time.

BULLSHIT. We didn't worry about such trifles in my time. . . . You are my captor. You lavish me with incense. You cradle me and kiss me. I am your slave.

CARBON. You are my twin. You mirror me. You play with me.

BULLSHIT. You turn me over and over.

CARBON. Rolling.

BULLSHIT. Over and over and over again and again and again and again and again and again . . .

CARBON. Rolling over and over and over and over . . .

BULLSHIT. He. Sweetly. Dances. To. Smoky. Red. Blushing. As. We. Nourish. The. Silhouette.

CARBON. That day. That day never happened.

BULLSHIT. Then where am I?

CARBON. You're still here somewhere. You're hiding.

BULLSHIT. I would miss you too much to keep hiding this long.

CARBON. You might not miss me after a while. You might get used to being gone.

BULLSHIT. Are you used to me being gone?

CARBON. I don't think about you as much as I used to.

BULLSHIT. But you'll never get used to me being gone.

CARBON. In a sense, I am used to it. I don't expect you to show up all of a sudden.

BULLSHIT. Do you still wish I would?

CARBON. I have lists of things I would give up for that to happen. But no matter how long these lists get, there's no one to bargain with. No one can grant my trade.

BULLSHIT. Do you still dream about me?

CARBON. I still do.

BULLSHIT. I remember how we used to walk around the neighborhood and we would only go three streets in each direction because if we stayed in that little area we could pretend that we were in England. We would wear clothes we thought looked British and talk in an English accent the whole time and we'd be cold on our

walk and we'd snuggle together and hold each other like we were colder than we actually were and afterwards we'd go back to your place and we'd have tea. Remember?

CARBON. Time. Noun.

BULLSHIT. Season. A period during which particular climactic conditions prevail.

CARBON. The rainy times of the year.

BULLSHIT. The English times of the year.

Scene 13

CARBON. This morning I woke up feeling so bad because I realized it had been over two weeks since I moved out of the old apartment and I still hadn't called to give you my new number.

Scene 14

CARBON. You are the monkey.

BULLSHIT. You are the hawk.

CARBON. You are brevity.

BULLSHIT. You, elaboration.

CARBON. You are lyric.

BULLSHIT. You are song. . . . Where are you?

CARBON. I'm in the hospital. I'm in room fourteen-oh-six. and you're there, but you're sleeping. And we're playing music for you. And you're not making any sign that you hear it but you hear it, and you're singing along in your head. None of us are singing, though. We're whispering to each other and taking turns going up to you to lay our heads down next to yours. That's where my head is now, laying next to yours on that pillow. And I'm holding your hand and I'm brushing your cheek with my fingers. And touching your hair. And I'm whispering to you in your ear.

BULLSHIT. What are you saying?

CARBON. May. Oceans. Savor. Breezes. For. You. Brilliant. Yesterday. I. Am. Building. An. Eternity. From. My. Impressions.

Scene 15

BULLSHIT. Oh, I love kissing you.

CARBON. Actually, I love kissing you, too.

BULLSHIT. Oh, really?

CARBON. Uh hmm, a lot.

BULLSHIT. Remember that first long kiss we had? We couldn't stop.

CARBON. Ohhhh, and I remember our very first kiss was ...

BULLSHIT. Delicate, and ...

CARBON. Yeah.

BULLSHIT. Yeah, that was wonderful.

CARBON. I like that second one, too ...

BULLSHIT. Yeah.

CARBON. And that first night, coming home from the dance club, I was like, I think she likes me and I really hope she likes me, but I wasn't sure ...

BULLSHIT. Oh!

CARBON. And then we kissed ...

BULLSHIT. Oh, that's so cute ...

CARBON. My goodness, I was so nervous.

BULLSHIT. Oh! ... I always thought you were cute ... awww ... that's so cute.

CARBON. I hope she likes me I hope she likes me. I hope she likes me the same way I like her ... and then we kissed ...

BULLSHIT. Awww ... hold me.

Scene 16

BULLSHIT. You're not with me.

CARBON. I'm just thinking about ...

BULLSHIT. Tell me what you're thinking.

CARBON. I'm thinking about when we met.

BULLSHIT. When was that?

CARBON. College.

BULLSHIT. Debt.

CARBON. Credit cards.

BULLSHIT. Credit system.

CARBON. Debt system.

BULLSHIT. Debt ratio.

CARBON. P/E ratio.

BULLSHIT. Rising.

CARBON. Falling.

BULLSHIT. Market.

CARBON. Model.

BULLSHIT. Cheating.

CARBON. Learning.

BULLSHIT. Writing.

CARBON. Composing.

BULLSHIT. Performing.

CARBON. Opera.

BULLSHIT. Arias.

CARBON. Songs.

BULLSHIT. Songs?

CARBON. Songs. The songs in my head. Play too loud. I can't think. One minute I'm a genius, the next I am an idiot. I feel I am barely maintaining certain elements of my life, like my job and relationships with people, while I advance other elements in huge strides overnight. This month I have finished twenty six paintings, made ten drawings, and mixed five songs. I toggle between wanting to stop all progress in my life and trying to move on. Between grotesque transfixion on you and transcendent obliviousness. On the whole I hate people more than I ever have before, but I tolerate and occasionally enjoy the company of my close friends. I am monstrously critical. I see every flaw and inconsistency available in the idiotic behaviors of others and me. More and more all I have to say to people is, don't you realize how stupid you are? But more and more I censor my critical anger and say nothing at all, even to people I care about. These are not my problems. It is not my duty to help. I used to be the host, helping everyone I know feel at home when they are with me. I am less hospitable now. I am not here to entertain. I am not even here to exert a reasonable level of respect. In the past tarot readings consistently turned up the hanged man card to describe me, one who has such mental mastery of the world, such clear understanding of it, that it hinders his ability to actually live. In the card he has suspended himself by his feet, and hangs looking at the world upside down. Now my reading is twofold. To characterize me, the card Devil's Play, the most diabolic passion and creativity. Divine playfulness. Lack of inhibition. Irreverence. Originality. Spontaneity. Self declared freedom. Laughing away my fears and sorrows. Dancing to my success. And then I pull a second card, asking, what is the seed, what is the basis for this devil's play? The card I pull is Sorrow.

BULLSHIT. You don't have to talk if you don't want to. This is going to take a long time to go through. In some ways ... In some ways you'll be going through this for the rest of your life. It

will get better. I promise it will get better. But it will always be a part of your life. What have you been eating?

CARBON. Low fat butter.

BULLSHIT. Parkay!

CARBON. Butter.

BULLSHIT. Paraplegics.

CARBON. Paraplegics?!

BULLSHIT. Mmm . . . yummy with butter. Paraplegics.

CARBON. Veterans.

BULLSHIT. Hippies.

CARBON. Boomers.

BULLSHIT. Republican.

CARBON. Affair.

BULLSHIT. Scandal.

CARBON. Cover up.

BULLSHIT. 9/11.

CARBON. Marilyn Monroe.

BULLSHIT. Fucking Madonna. I don't want to go to sleep. I want to stay up all night talking with you.

CARBON. I love this.

BULLSHIT. So do I.

CARBON. And the great thing is, after tonight, we'll have tomorrow . . . and the day after . . .

Scene 17

BULLSHIT. A section of brick walkway lined with young trees whose branches merge into a canopy completely covering me. Leaves from above collect on the bricks. I walk this tunnel wishing I had frog or spider eyes and could see in all directions at once, pained knowing that whatever beauty I choose to admire jealously holds me in its fidelity, and I am incapable of looking elsewhere. Soon it will be winter, and there will be no leaves, but only black and white, dirt and sky lie together.

Scene 18

CARBON. I've been thinking about things in new ways lately, realizing how my mind proceeds and tweaking that, rearranging the wordless logic of each moment. I went camping this weekend and had the most deeply moving spiritual experience of my life.

The only way I can talk about it is to say that I danced with a hawk. The next day I laughed and cried and screamed and sang all at once. I laughed behind all, beyond all, laughed like the bottom of the ocean. I find myself more and more at home in diverse portions of the world, and simultaneously becoming less and less compatible with other portions, to the extent that I hardly need to converse with some of it in order to fully understand, and I have absolutely no need or desire to converse with other portions of it in order to know that I can never understand at all . . . I feel more and more in love and more and more alone as life goes on.

Scene 19

BULLSHIT. Where did you go, just then? Where are you?

CARBON. I'm just laying here, and the waves . . . The waves are washing over and over and over . . .

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Now. The present as distinguished from the past or future.

CARBON. I remember waking up and seeing your face in the sunlight. I remember sleeping with you on the roof in summer rain. I remember hearing you breathe. I remember kissing your neck and feeling your fingers slide along my back. I remember you saying my name. I remember that party. The dance club. The thrift store. Our English walks. That night I drove you home. I remember our first kiss. So delicate. So slow . . .

BULLSHIT. Time. Verb. Measure of how long something takes. To measure or record the duration, ratio, or speed of something.

CARBON. You can say we were making love and that gives a general idea of what's going on. You can say it was good, but what really happened is that you were laying in the front seat of your car with your head against the door and your legs spread. You were rubbing your clitoris with your fingers and my dick was inside of your body. You were gasping, I was moaning, or grunting or something, and we both cum rushing with various juices, catching each other like the rhythm of a train, I'm looking at your face, your mouth is open, your forehead lines rising like a chevron, your fingernails digging into the small of my back. Is that making love? Is that desire? Is that happiness? Some people would interpret it as happiness. Some people would see it as an achievement, a score. Some would feel that they had gained power over another human being. Some would feel ashamed, or guilty if they had attached

the idea of moral wrongness to these acts. I think I would call it joy. I would feel a great sense of connection. And love. So I say I am joyful, and I say I am in love, but what does that mean? What does that equate to? Well, it equates to having your head pressed up against the passenger door of your car, it equates to having your legs spread, it equates to feeling my dick inside your body. It equates to gasping. It equates to moaning. It equates to grunting. It equates to rushing with juice. It equates to seeing your face when you cum. It equates to feeling your fingernails cut into the small of my back. It equates to falling, at the end, tired and sweaty in each other's arms.

BULLSHIT. You're so full of shit.

CARBON. Do you really mean that?

BULLSHIT. No. I want to fuck you and all you want to do is screw around.

CARBON. So what's the problem?

BULLSHIT. Forget it.

CARBON. I'm just kidding.

BULLSHIT. I'm tired of kidding. I want adulting.

CARBON. I'm not in the mood for adulting.

BULLSHIT. I know.

CARBON. You have me down.

BULLSHIT. Yeah. I do. . . I'll be out with the girls.

CARBON. I'll be right here . . . Time. Verb. Set the time of something. To regulate or set the time of something such as a clock or a train's schedule.

Scene 20

CARBON. I dreamt I lied to you. I dreamt I had sex with a demon.

BULLSHIT. Did you like it?

CARBON. Why do you need to know that?

BULLSHIT. You did like it then.

CARBON. Of course I did. . . What did you dream?

BULLSHIT. That you lied to me.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Playing period. A period of play in a game. I dream of negligence nagging me past tense. Of writers and fame and parties where I stood on the rim.

Scene 21

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Military service. A term of military service.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Period worked. The period during a day or week that somebody works.

BULLSHIT. Working half time.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Pay. A rate of pay.

BULLSHIT. Paid double time.

CARBON. Time. Noun. Geologic division. A chronologic division of geologic history.

BULLSHIT. Time. Verb. Stay in rhythm. To keep time to a rhythmical or musical beat. Old English *tima*, period of time from a prehistoric Germanic base meaning, to extend, which is also the ancestor of English *tide*.

CARBON. All in good time.

BULLSHIT. No sooner than is appropriate. All the time.

CARBON. Continuously. At one time.

BULLSHIT. At a time in the past.

CARBON. Simultaneously. At the same time.

BULLSHIT. Simultaneously.

CARBON. Nevertheless. At times.

BULLSHIT. Sometimes. Behind the times.

CARBON. Out of touch with modern fashions, methods, or attitudes. For the time being.

BULLSHIT. For a short period of time starting from now. From time to time.

CARBON. Occasionally. Have no time for somebody or something.

BULLSHIT. To regard somebody or something with dislike or contempt. Have the time of your life.

CARBON. To have a very enjoyable experience. In good time.

BULLSHIT. Early enough. We were in time for the concert. In time.

CARBON. After some time has passed. He'll understand in time that you were trying to help him. In time.

BULLSHIT. In the correct rhythm. Clapping in time to the music. In your own time.

CARBON. At a speed or pace that feels natural or comfortable. Keep time.

BULLSHIT. To show the time accurately. Keep time.

CARBON. To do something in the correct rhythm, or in the same rhythm as somebody or something else. Live on borrowed time.

BULLSHIT. To enjoy an unexpected extension of life. Make time with somebody.

CARBON. Informal. To pursue somebody as a sexual partner. On time.

BULLSHIT. At the scheduled time. On your own time.

CARBON. Not during work hours. Pass the time of day with somebody.

BULLSHIT. To engage in casual conversation with somebody. Take your time.

CARBON. To take whatever time is necessary. Take your time.

BULLSHIT. To do something unacceptably slowly. Time after time. Time and time again.

CARBON. Repeatedly. . . . I dream of sex.

BULLSHIT. I guess you do.

CARBON. I dream of strawberries and hot tubs and chocolate and ice. I dream of lace and panties and bras. I dream of sweat and showers.

BULLSHIT. I dream of undressing myself for you. I dream of riding you like a horse. Fucking you. Licking your ears, sucking your dick.

CARBON. I dream of feathers and cotton.

BULLSHIT. I dream of tickling you with my hair.

CARBON. I dream of here and there.

BULLSHIT. I dream, I dream, I dream . . .

Scene 22

BULLSHIT. You're a cutie.

CARBON. You're a demon.

BULLSHIT. You're so hot.

CARBON. Stop.

BULLSHIT. Why?

CARBON. Okay, keep going.

BULLSHIT. Why am I a demon?

CARBON. It's not a bad thing. I call my favorite girl Satan.

BULLSHIT. I'm not your favorite girl? How come I'm not Satan? How come I'm only a demon?

CARBON. You've still got your clothes on. You're still pretty much on your side of the room. How can you be anything more than a demon?

BULLSHIT. Well, I just got here . . . give me a second . . .

CARBON. Take five.

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Timeout. Nibble. Succulent. Psychedelic. Mold.

CARBON. Organic post-clinical psychotherapy.

BULLSHIT. Woody Allen movies.

CARBON. Prescription drug abuse.

BULLSHIT. Depression.

CARBON. Mania.

BULLSHIT. Insanity.

CARBON. Antisociality.

BULLSHIT. Perverse eccentricities.

CARBON. Senile dementia.

BULLSHIT. Health insurance.

CARBON. Co-payments.

BULLSHIT. Hypochondria.

CARBON. Disease envy.

BULLSHIT. Coping fantasies.

CARBON. Coping strategy.

BULLSHIT. The overboard.

CARBON. The underground.

BULLSHIT. Suits in porno shacks.

CARBON. Masters of the universe.

BULLSHIT. Tom . . . ?

CARBON. Wolfe.

BULLSHIT. Wolfe.

CARBON. Vampire.

BULLSHIT. Gladiators.

CARBON. Talk shows.

BULLSHIT. L.A.

CARBON. Athens.

BULLSHIT. Rome.

CARBON. Carthage.

BULLSHIT. Carthage. Noun. Site of an ancient city, founded by the Phoenicians on the northern coast of Africa in eight fourteen b.c.

CARBON. Soldiers returning from battle, wheelchair bound, destined for the psych wards, damned to wander civilization's peace-

time misplaced, crippled heroes dosed with Thorazine, Zolofit dinner partners popping pill compartments at the roadside diner.

BULLSHIT. Violence, as the technological pill eclipses its own pharmacist, and the elite behave inhumanly, while the reflexive murder perpetrated among the mass of the poor makes them more understandable, more sensible, less prone to induce the tones of hell than the lonely parasite they feed.

CARBON. Parasite. Noun. Organism living on another. A plant or animal that lives on or in another, usually larger host organism in a way that harms or is of no advantage to the host.

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Instance. A separate occasion of a recurring event. I told you three times.

CARBON. Looking at clocks is a fairly recent thing for me. I look at the clock six times each night before I go to bed. I look at the clock eight times in the morning when my alarm goes off. If someone asks me what time it is, I look at my watch twice before I tell them what time it is. Then I look at my watch three more times, looking away in-between each glance, and then I usually tell the person what time it is again, by that time it's usually the next minute and if it is I tell the person the new time. My watch shows the seconds but when people ask me what time it is I don't tell them the seconds, because most people don't really care all that much about the seconds. The seconds are everything. Eighty-five and forty-nine seconds is a completely different animal than eighty-five and thirty-two seconds. Thirty-two seconds is maybe roundable to thirty seconds, thirty-two seconds is maybe roundable to thirty-three or thirty-five seconds. Forty-nine seconds is almost fifty and fifty is almost a minute. You could never round forty-nine seconds down to forty-five, it just wouldn't make sense, you're already there, you're at fifty, you're practically through with the minute. When I'm at fifty-nine seconds I'm already at five or ten after. Fifty-nine is over by the time you think about it, thinking about fifty-nine at fifty-nine is basically a moot point, you know, you might as well start planning on the next ten or fifteen seconds, at least five, just to give yourself a heads up. Most of the time when I'm on fifty-nine I'm already at twenty again, but, but, as I was saying my obsession with actually looking at the numbers on clocks is a fairly recent thing. When I was a kid I used to go out on the street and throw clocks down on the asphalt and take hammers and smash them into little bits when I was a kid I would take clocks apart, you see?

BULLSHIT. You are madness.

CARBON. You are gall.

BULLSHIT. Eight fifty-seven a.m. Carbon and bullshit goes to the beach.

CARBON. Eight fifty-seven a.m. Tired of looking at my watch, but apparently unable to break the habit with thought alone, I enact a foolproof solution which I have been considering for some time.

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Prison term. A term in prison. Informal. Serve time for robbery.

CARBON. You are the criminal.

BULLSHIT. I am the crime.

CARBON. You are subliminal.

BULLSHIT. I am sublime.

CARBON. You are the beat.

BULLSHIT. I am the beat. I carry you forth. I strike your heart. I entrance your ability to breathe until your life is a pebble in my phantom hand.

CARBON. You are a phantom.

BULLSHIT. I am the phantasm. I walk among flesh, screech as the wind. I take on any form that makes me laugh and my laugh is your thunder, siphon crushing shores of sand and cyclones searing waves of grain. My laugh is the terror you feel upon waking from a dream. My laugh is sheets of salty rain beating on tin. My laugh is ancient ruin, statues cast in blood screaming at you in a tongue composed of clicks and babbles, whispering at you in a spiral you can never catch, slicing you open again with the knife you just handed me, scratching your eyes out with nails, disarming you, birthing you, bleeding you like a gutter. . . . Beat.

CARBON. Beat.

BULLSHIT. Beat. Beat.

CARBON. Beat. Beat.

BULLSHIT. Time. Noun. Musical beat. The number of beats per measure of a musical composition.

CARBON. You are the tower.

BULLSHIT. I am a column of fire with wings.

CARBON. You are the phoenix. You rise.

BULLSHIT. Like an angel.

CARBON. Like inferno.

BULLSHIT. Like a mushroom. Hiroshima.

Scene 23

CARBON. I bet I can make a card house that's five hundred stories tall.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can write a book for every letter in the alphabet.

CARBON. I bet I can hold my breath for six minutes.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can make an ice cube out of a hairdryer.

CARBON. I bet I can add up all the numbers from one to five hundred in my head.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can train a worm to sing.

CARBON. I bet I can pick up a car with my bear hands and lift it above my head.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can swallow a snake.

CARBON. I bet I can make a bus fly like a bird.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can write a poem that will make you cry.

CARBON. I bet I can lead a revolution.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can predict your future.

CARBON. I bet I can make you cum, twice, just by breathing in your ear.

BULLSHIT. I bet you can.

CARBON. I bet I can make a train travel faster than light.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can write eight hundred symphonies by the time I'm thirty.

CARBON. I bet I can paint the world on the tip of a needle.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can eat eighteen boxes of macaroni and cheese in half an hour.

CARBON. I bet I can memorize the first one hundred thousand digits of pi.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can make a machine out of sand that will add and subtract.

CARBON. I bet I can make it add, subtract, multiply, and divide.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can make it do formulas.

CARBON. I bet I can make it recognize fingerprints.

BULLSHIT. I bet I can make it beat you in chess.

CARBON. I bet I can make it think. I can also make it so small that it fits in the palm of your hand.

BULLSHIT. I can make it so small you can't even see it.

CARBON. I can make . . . a bomb . . . out of a single atom . . . that can destroy the entire universe.

BULLSHIT. You're such a freak.

CARBON. Freak. Noun. Strikingly unusual person, animal, plant. A person, animal, or plant that is strikingly unusual, and appears to be unique or occurs very rarely. Somebody unconventional. Somebody who behaves unusually or has unusual tastes or habits.

BULLSHIT. Baryshnikov.

CARBON. Michael Jackson.

BULLSHIT. Picasso.

CARBON. Busta Rhymes.

BULLSHIT. Shakespeare.

CARBON. Feynman.

BULLSHIT. Derrida.

CARBON. John Lennon.

BULLSHIT. Trent Reznor.

CARBON. Tori Amos.

BULLSHIT. Madonna.

CARBON. Basquiat.

BULLSHIT. Fucking Warhol.

CARBON. Fucking Warhol. . . . Jesus.

BULLSHIT. Malcom X.

CARBON. Joan of Arc.

BULLSHIT. Queen Elizabeth.

CARBON. Lincoln.

BULLSHIT. Orville and Wilbur Wright.

CARBON. Turing.

BULLSHIT. Mozart.

CARBON. Mozart.

BULLSHIT. Checkmate.

CARBON. Checkmate. Noun. Winning position in chess. A move or position in chess, in which a player's king cannot escape check and the other player wins the game. . . . Do you know how many definitions of time there are in the dictionary?

BULLSHIT. How many?

CARBON. I don't know. . . . I stopped reading after sixty two. Time. Noun. A dimension enabling two identical events occurring in the same point in space to be distinguished . . . by measuring the interval between the events.

BULLSHIT. Time. In one second a bullet from a gun travels three thousand feet.

CARBON. In one second a particle of light travels one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles.

BULLSHIT. According to the Big Bang Theory our universe expanded from something smaller than a piece of dust to approximately its present size in a tiny fraction of a second.

CARBON. That first second is always the longest one.

BULLSHIT. That second before you start to wake up.

CARBON. Me. This is not me. I'm not here. I'm not hearing this. I don't have to do this I never meant to come here I hate it here I'm never coming back I don't know why you think this is necessary I can't be seen no one can see me I don't know what they're doing I've never been to one of these before I didn't know it would be like this it's not what I imagined I wish it wasn't I wish it wasn't I can't fathom how they'd feel that way they should hate me they should hate me want me dead they should kill me and want me in jail they should try to make me hurt they should kill me they should kill me but they don't have to I will kill myself so they don't have to look at me I will kill myself so they won't have to think about me anymore, I will kill myself so I won't have to think anymore, I will kill myself to make it even kill myself to make it even kill myself to make it even.

Scene 24

BULLSHIT. Everything. Everything is happening.

Scene 25

CARBON. Dreaming in bed at eight a.m. Rolling over and the covers coming off my head. Cold. The door is closing and my roommate leaves for work. I'm burying my head in the blankets, trying to keep my ears warm, but I can't. The sun is coming in higher through the window and the mailbox is opening and closing. Someone's coming by later to fix the sink and I'm hitting snooze for the fiftieth time and I'm looking at the seconds, and they just keep coming, faster and faster and—

5

Fucked (2002)

CHARACTERS

FAITH (female, 16)

JENNIE (female, 17)

MIKE (male, 16-18)

GERMANE (male, 16-18)

FRANKLIN (male, 16-18)

FERRIS WHEEL OPERATOR

CARNIVAL SECURITY GUARD

CARNIVAL GAME MC

TOPLESS SERVER

BIKER'S GIRLFRIEND

BIKER

FREAK BOY (male)

DAISY DUKE (female)

CLAIRE (female)

MARCUS (male)

JANEL

KATIE

JOEL

SCOTT

MAN (late 40s)

GIRL (14)

DOCTOR

NURSE

ALEX TREBEC

TINA

GRANDFATHER

OLD DUDE
WAITRESS (16)
SECURITY GUARD (male)
RESTAURANT MANAGER
COP

INT. PORT-O-LET - NIGHT

A 16-year-old girl, FAITH, lowers herself onto the seat of a portable toilet. The sounds of a carnival come muffled through the plastic walls. Faith wears blue Keds, gray sweatshorts, and a white button-up shirt. Her hair is tied with a ribbon. She stands. Someone bangs on the door.

JENNIE (OS). Hurry. The fuck. Up.

Faith opens the door. A 17-year-old, JENNIE, glares at her. Jennie wears black and hot pink spandex shorts and a yellow t-shirt that says LOCAL 411. Her hair is frizzy ultra-blond with orange splotches. Behind Jennie crowds of people move through a carnival. Two jugglers pass bowling pins and flaming batons between themselves. Children eat cotton candy.

JENNIE. Ready?

Jennie holds out her hand. Faith puts her hand in Jennie's. Jennie squeezes it and jerks Faith out of the Port-O-Let.

EXT. CARNIVAL - NIGHT

Jennie drags Faith by the hand through the carnival. She crosses directly in front of people and cuts apart couples and families. Skate boarders do tricks in a cluster. A child drops an ice cream and cries. A man puts his hand in the butt pocket of his girlfriend's jeans.

EXT. CARNIVAL: FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

The FERRIS WHEEL OPERATOR is taking tickets. Among those nearby are three guys between 16 and 18 years old, dressed in green camouflage BDUs and wearing combat boots. The girls take their place in line. A DATE COUPLE gets in line. The military guys get in line behind them. Faith looks at the top of the wheel.

FAITH. Nuh uh. No way.

JENNIE. Oh yes. Get back here.

FAITH. Jennie you've got to be kidding me.

JENNIE. If you can fuck Jeffrey Rammel you can come with me on this.

FAITH. I never fucked Jeffrey Rammel.

JENNIE. Then what was you two doing in my bathroom for three hours?

FAITH. It wasn't three hours.

JENNIE. I know three hours when I see it. Come on.

FAITH. No, Jennie, no. Really.

JENNIE. Do you want me to make a scene? Cause I will drag you up there kicking and screaming. Now come on.

Faith and Jennie see that the military guys are listening to their conversation.

JENNIE. Come. On.

The ferris wheel operator takes the girls' tickets and they get into the gondola. The ferris wheel operator lowers the safety bar across the girls' laps.

JENNIE. Now look what you did.

FAITH. You're the one who's fucking yelling.

The ferris wheel operator closes the door to their gondola and moves the next one into position.

The date couple gets in. Two of the military guys, MIKE and GERMANE, get into the next gondola. The other guy, FRANKLIN, gets in the one after that. Faith looks down over the side of the gondola as the wheel turns to let in the last rider.

JENNIE. Don't get theatrical on me, girl.

The ferris wheel operator starts the ride. As the ferris wheel turns, the military guys look at Faith and Jennie. Jennie looks back and winks at them.

FAITH. What are you doing?

Jennie puts her arms around Faith's neck.

JENNIE. So. How are you liking your ride? Is it high enough for you? No? Well just wait, my dear, cause it's getting higher every second. I hope they turn up the speed and make it go real fast.

FAITH. Get off of me.

JENNIE. Get you off? Get you off Faith? I can't. Not here. Not while they're watching. I want to get you off but I can't while those fucking G.I. Joes are watching! G.I. Joe! He's an American Hero! G.I. Joe!

Faith pinches Jennie's arm with her nails.

FAITH. Shut. Up.

JENNIE. Ow-owww! Fuck. Bitch. I'm gonna throw you off this thing.

Mike and Germane pry off their safety bar. Mike stands up and does a martial arts move on Germane to pull him up. Germane winces, but stands. Mike fake-pushes Germane over the edge of the gondola, but holds him back.

JENNIE. Oh, that's fucking great. Be a man. Be a man! Throw your friend off a fucking ferris wheel.

The date couple is staring at Jennie. They have their arms around each other.

JENNIE. Fucking . . . get a room!

The date couple is shocked.

JENNIE. Read my lips. No . . . new . . . taxes. Get . . . a . . . fucking . . . room! And you! If I was your friend I would throw you off if you did that to me.

Jennie stands up.

JENNIE. Think you're all Commando Joe standing up on a ferris wheel. You motherfuckers better be glad you're not in a car with me.

Jennie climbs up on the edge of the gondola, bracing herself on a support cable with one hand. She looks over at the guys.

JENNIE. Fuck. You.

Faith holds on to Jennie's foot.

FAITH. Please . . .

JENNIE. Get up here, commando motherfucker. Fucking throw your friend off a ferris wheel. Get all the way up! G.I. Joe fucking Kung Fu-on-a-ferris-wheel-motherfucker! Hope you got a parachute under there, Spiderman! Hope you got velcro on the bottom of your shoes! Listen up, and you too, take a lesson. The next time you want to impress a girl—

Jennie starts rocking the gondola back and forth. Faith holds on to the bottom of the seat. Mike and Germane look at each other, surprised. The ferris wheel stops. An amplified voice comes up from below.

FERRIS WHEEL OPERATOR. Excuse me. Excuse me.

Jennie looks down. Two CARNIVAL SECURITY GUARDS stand near the ferris wheel operator, who holds a megaphone to his face. Everyone is looking at Jennie.

FERRIS WHEEL OPERATOR. I'm gonna need you to sit down, miss.

JENNIE. Well, after I do that, I'm gonna need you to get this thing moving again, okay?

Jennie sits down.

FERRIS WHEEL OPERATOR. Yeah, we will. We'll get right on that.

He presses the green button and Faith and Jennie's gondola starts back down toward the ground.

EXT. CARNIVAL: FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

When the girls get off the ferris wheel Jennie grabs Faith's hand and leads her away hurriedly. The carnival security guards stop them.

CARNIVAL SECURITY GUARD. Did you have a good time tonight?

JENNIE. So far so good.

CARNIVAL SECURITY GUARD. Well I hope you used all your tickets because that was your last ride.

Jennie turns to Faith.

JENNIE. Are we out of tickets?

The guards move to escort the girls.

CARNIVAL SECURITY GUARD. Come on. Let's go.

Jennie resists.

JENNIE. I don't think we're out of tickets yet, actually.

The security guard gets his 2-way.

CARNIVAL SECURITY GUARD. Yeah, we may need a police unit down here.

JENNIE. Okay. Fine.

The guards start walking the girls toward the gate.

JENNIE. How bout we split our tickets with you?

A firm voice stops the guards.

MIKE. Pain. Honor. Command. Resolve.

The carnival security guards and the girls turn to see who's talking. The guards let go of Faith and Jennie.

CARNIVAL SECURITY GUARD. Richards. Didn't see that was you.

Mike and his boys approach. Mike looks the girls over and motions for them to go. Jennie pulls Faith by the hand, the two of them checking back over their shoulders as they go. The military

guys and the security guards are talking jovially, not even looking in the girls' direction.

EXT. CARNIVAL: TWIRLY-WHIRL - NIGHT

Faith and Jennie eat cotton candy. Their dialogue is punctuated by buzzers and bells and the amplified banter of a CARNIVAL GAME MC.

FAITH. Well?

JENNIE. What can you say? We rolled a lucky seven. Triple cherries. Jackpot. Fuck it.

FAITH. Doesn't it make you kind of nervous?

JENNIE. If you ever won the lottery, I swear, you'd find a way to give it back. You play enough poker you're bound to get a full house eventually. What you so nervous about, girl?

Faith looks pointedly past Jennie. Jennie turns around. The three military guys are standing awkwardly near a face-painter. As Jennie turns, Germane and Franklin quickly turn their heads away. Mike maintains his stare.

CARNIVAL GAME MC. Step right up and give-it-a-whirl. Try the Twirly-Whirl. It doesn't matter if you're a man or a girl. They all win big at the Twirly-Whirl. You, young lady? You, sir? Win something to show the lady you care? You, sir? Something for your daughter? Something to make her smile? Step-right-up. Give-it-a-whirl. Play the Twirly-Whirl! Play to win. Play to lose. It doesn't matter, as long as you play. Step right up. Twirly-Whirl!

Faith scratches her shin. Jennie takes a huge bite from her cotton candy. Jennie gets up. Faith follows. They walk away, out of the guys' view.

EXT. CARNIVAL: SKEE BALL - NIGHT

Jennie plays skee ball. Faith sits on the end of a broken lane next to Jennie, drinking a red slushee. On the other side of Jennie, a SKEE BALL PLAYER, a man in his forties, puts tokens into the machine. A fresh stack of wooden balls smacks into place. The skee ball player picks one up and rolls it. He gets a 20. Jennie reaches into the stack in the man's lane and pulls out his next ball. The

skee ball player looks at Jennie but she ignores him. She rolls the ball up her lane way too hard. She gets nothing.

JENNIE. Fuck.

She looks at the skee ball player nonchalantly.

JENNIE. You any good at this?

He doesn't know what to say.

JENNIE. I can't quite get the hang of it.

Jennie takes another ball from his stack and rams it up her own lane. It strikes the backboard so hard it rolls back down. The skee ball player is about to say something to Jennie but she interrupts.

JENNIE. Fuck. Fuck fuck fuck.

Faith hands the ball to the man. As he winds up, Jennie takes another one from his stack. His ball drops into the gutter with no score.

JENNIE. Don't you hate that? I swear to god these things are rigged. Watch. Betcha I miss.

Jennie mock-concentrates, steadying herself. She closes her eyes, breathes deeply, opens her eyes. Again the man starts to say something. But Jennie won't let him speak.

JENNIE. Nuh! Uh! Just hold that thought for about eleven par-secs, okay, daddy-o, lemme get this shot off.

Jennie holds the ball up to her lips and kisses it. She glances at Faith.

JENNIE. Bullet from a gun.

Jennie winds up like a baseball pitcher and throws the ball underhand. It hits the plastic shield in front of the target area and breaks it.

JENNIE. See!? Better chance of getting bit by a dog with rabies.

She takes another ball from the man's stack and throws it at the machine.

JENNIE. Better chance of finding out your father is really your brother's uncle!

She takes another ball from his stack and lobs it at the score board above the bay of games. Light bulbs shatter. Faith winces.

JENNIE. You might as well take your life savings and go to Las Vegas!

She takes another ball and throws it.

JENNIE. Spend seven weeks with a two-dollar hooker in a free hotel room drinking three-dollar martinis over fifty-dollar hands of five card stud!

She throws another.

JENNIE. Try getting drunk on twenty-proof vodka in ninety-degree heat sometime. See how far that gets ya.

Jennie taps the man's chest with her finger as she gives this advice. Jennie throws another skee ball. The score board goes crazy. Jennie stands up on the lanes. She looks to the scoreboard as if in prayer, then kneels and makes a motion like a gambler tossing dice in craps.

JENNIE. Canasta!

Jennie picks up a ball and throws it into a crowd of people who are watching her. Screams go up. Everyone jumps back. The ball hits an elderly woman in the back. It knocks the wind out of her. Faith tugs on Jennie's arm, but Jennie pulls away. The man is staring at Jennie.

JENNIE. What? What the fuck are you looking at?

The skee ball player cowers. Jennie picks up a ball and swings it about the man's head, hitting him repeatedly.

JENNIE. Don't. You. Ever. Look. At me. When I'm. Not! Looking! At! You!

FAITH. Stop. Stop. Stop, Jennie. Jennie! Stop!

Faith pulls Jennie off the man. Everyone is looking at them. Jennie's face flushes. Faith drags her away from the skee ball tables. They are almost out of the area when Jennie is struck by a new pulse of energy. She breaks free of Faith and runs back to the man.

FAITH. Jennie!

The man is sitting on the lanes. People are gathered around him examining his head. Jennie jumps on him and starts beating the shit out of him. The other people back away. Faith runs back and tries to pull Jennie off.

EXT. CARNIVAL: PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Faith and Jennie lean against the base of a light in the parking area outside the carnival. The military guys are standing around a black Jeep. Mike periodically looks over at the girls. Faith and Jennie are watching them.

JENNIE. I know you have a thing for military guys. Don't even try to tell me you don't have a thing for military guys because practically the last three guys you dated were military guys.

FAITH. I guess that makes two of us.

They giggle.

JENNIE. No other way to go. Have you ever tried dating someone other than a military guy?

Faith laughs.

JENNIE. What would they be like?

FAITH. I wouldn't even want to find out.

Faith sees Jennie looking at Mike and Mike looking back.

FAITH. Go talk to him.

Jennie looks at Faith in a what-are-you-getting-me-into sort of way. Faith kicks at Jennie's feet.

FAITH. Go. Go.

JENNIE. No.

FAITH. He's gonna leave if you don't go talk to him.

Jennie and Mike exchange another set of glances. Mike makes a point of jumping into the driver's seat of the Jeep.

FAITH. They're gonna leave . . .

JENNIE. They ain't gonna leave.

Mike starts the Jeep. Germane gets in the front seat. Franklin gets in the back.

FAITH. They're leaving.

JENNIE. Okay already.

Jennie goes toward the Jeep. Faith scratches her shin, bites her lips, fiddles with the draw string on her shorts. Jennie and Mike have a short exchange. Jennie comes back to Faith, hopping a little, then walking faster. She pulls one of Faith's hands out of a pocket.

JENNIE. Come on.

Faith takes her hand back, and they walk, side by side, toward the jeep.

INT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

A TOPLESS SERVER carries a tray of beer to a table of bikers. She turns around to serve the group next to them. It is Mike, Germane, Franklin, Faith, and Jennie. Everyone but Faith nurses a beer. The table is littered with empty cans, which the server makes some effort to collect.

JENNIE. Thanks, honey, but I think we're gonna switch to tequila.

Mike looks at Jennie, impressed.

JENNIE. Five tequilas?

MIKE. Let's go.

GERMANE. Yeah.

JENNIE. You in?

FAITH. Better make that four.

JENNIE. Come on, girl! Give us five shots of tequila.

FAITH. No, I don't think—

JENNIE. Five tequilas. Pronto, hun, before she loses her nerve.

TOPLESS SERVER. Five shots of tequila?

FAITH. No—

JENNIE. Better make em doubles.

FAITH. I don't—

JENNIE. Faith I don't even want to hear it.

Jennie nods at the server. The server leaves. Jennie nudges up closer to Mike.

JENNIE. So, you guys come here a lot?

MIKE. Only on special occasions.

Jennie does her best to look seductively at Mike. Her speech is hyperbole and self-parody:

JENNIE. And what is tonight's . . . special occasion?

Mike smiles. Jennie busts out giggling. Germane leans over to Mike and says something. Mike motions with a paper bill for the closest POLE DANCER to go to Franklin. The pole dancer kneels over Franklin. Jennie watches excitedly. She turns to Faith with a huge smile (This is great, huh?) and Faith shakes her head. Jennie grabs Mike's leg. She kisses Faith on the cheek.

JENNIE. This one's mine. You can have the other two.

Faith giggles, but brings a hand up to cover her mouth. The topless server comes back carrying a tray of five double shots of tequila and a can of Sprite. She wedges herself between Franklin and Germane and hands one of the shots to the pole dancer who is on Franklin's lap and sets two on the table. She moves between Mike and Jennie to set the other two shots down. She places the short glass of fizzy liquid in front of Faith and leaves. The pole dancer takes Franklin's double shot into her mouth and then feeds it to him while grabbing his crotch. Franklin almost chokes. Mike and Germane confer visually, and Mike hands Germane another bill for the pole dancer. Germane sticks it in the dancer's g-string. The dancer winks at Germane. Germane picks up his shot. Mike picks his up. Jennie picks hers up. They are about to drink but Jennie stops them.

JENNIE. Wait-wait-wait. We have to toast. Faith? Faith pick up your drink.

Faith picks up her drink.

JENNIE. Now, Faith, give us a toast.

FAITH. This is ... to me ...

This surprises everyone.

FAITH. ... being able to drink you ...

She holds her glass to Jennie's.

FAITH. ... under the fucking table.

Everyone lights up.

MIKE. Ahhh!

GERMANE. Yeahhh!

JENNIE. Let's go then, featherweight.

The four of them drink. Mike and Germane set their empty glasses on the table. Jennie snaps hers down. Faith slams hers down hard and pushes the chaser away from the her. Faith's eyes flash at Jennie. The pole dancer leaves Franklin and returns to the stage. Franklin looks at them all, taken back, his mouth open. Germane slaps Franklin's shoulder and Mike and Germane laugh hysterically.

JENNIE. Fellas, fellas.

Jennie throws her arm around Mike's neck and pulls him back in her direction.

JENNIE. You wanna get down to business?

Mike raises his shot glass in the air and turns his head in what he thinks is the general direction of their server.

MIKE. More shots!

INT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Jennie takes a shot and slams the glass down on the table next to three others. Faith slams a shot glass down in a corresponding row of her own. Germane blinks his eyes and shakes his head. Mike smiles, impressed. The topless server is standing next to Jennie.

TOPLESS SERVER. Anything else?

Jennie's speech is slurred.

JENNIE. Better bring us the bottle.

Neither of the girls see that Mike shakes his head at the topless server on this request. The server leaves. Mike looks at Franklin's chair. It is empty. He turns his head to look for him. Germane puts his hand on Mike's shoulder and points with this other. Mike follows the line of Germane's arm. Franklin is standing at the bar. The bar tender hands Franklin a pack of cigarettes and takes Franklin's cash. Franklin taps the cigarettes on the bar. He is staring at a woman sitting next to him, a BIKER'S GIRLFRIEND.

The BIKER stands next to her. His muscular arms bulge out of his tank top. There is a leather jacket hung around the chair of the woman next to him with biker insignias on it and dotted with chrome spikes. Franklin taps his cigarettes rhythmically. His stare is uninterrupted. The biker says something to his girlfriend. She pulls her boyfriend close and whispers something in his ear. The biker leaves, not noticing Franklin. Franklin's tapping becomes more pointed. He leans in toward the biker's girlfriend and starts talking to her. Mike and Germane look at each other and get out of their seats. The biker's girlfriend raises her eyebrows at Franklin.

BIKER'S GIRLFRIEND. I have a boyfriend, you know.

FRANKLIN. He never has to know.

BIKER'S GIRLFRIEND. He's in the bathroom.

FRANKLIN. By the time he gets back we can be long gone.

BIKER'S GIRLFRIEND. Oh yeah, where we going?

Mike and Germane are there. Mike is standing behind the woman. Germane stands behind Franklin.

GERMANE. Pack it up, Franklin, we're pushing off.

FRANKLIN. Hang back a minute, guys, I got something going on here.

BIKER'S GIRLFRIEND. Oh yeah, what do you got going on?

MIKE. He's got nothing going on, ma'am. Franklin. We got business to attend to. Elsewhere.

FRANKLIN. Hang back just one minute.

BIKER'S GIRLFRIEND. I don't know, Franklin. Sounds important.

The biker has returned. He faces Mike.

BIKER. These boys giving you trouble, baby?

BIKER'S GIRLFRIEND. Not yet.

MIKE. There's no trouble here, sir. We were just collecting our friend to go.

GERMANE. Let's. Go.

MIKE. There's no trouble here.

BIKER. Not yet.

The biker moves toward Mike. Germane bends down and untucks one leg of his BDUs. He has a 9mm pistol in an ankle holster. The biker's girlfriend sees Germane pull the pistol. With his other arm, Germane grips Franklin's shoulder and turns him so that he's facing the bar. His back is to Germane. Germane holds the pistol flat against Franklin's back, pointed at the biker.

GERMANE. Watch it.

Germane cocks the gun. The biker's girlfriend screams. The bartender and others at the bar look to see the situation, but the bartender can't see the gun. The biker turns to see what his girlfriend is screaming about.

GERMANE. Now. We were just leaving.

Mike comes around the biker toward Germane and Franklin.

MIKE. I'll get the girls.

Mike goes toward the table where Faith and Jennie are laughing and talking, watching the dancers, oblivious. Germane and the biker remain in a staring match. Franklin is stiff. The biker's girlfriend relaxes somewhat. She looks at the pack of cigarettes. Franklin has stopped tapping them.

BIKER'S GIRLFRIEND. Franklin. Gimme a cigarette?

EXT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

The door of the strip club swings closed as Mike walks Faith and Jennie out. It opens again as Germane and Franklin come out behind them. Germane tucks the pistol in the back of his pants and looks behind them. Mike gets in the driver's seat, Faith and Jennie in the back. Germane gets in the passenger seat and Franklin in the back with the girls. Mike starts the engine and they drive away.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The five of them are driving on the highway in the jeep. Faith leans against Franklin in the back. Jennie leans up near Mike's face.

JENNIE. Where to now, big boy?

MIKE. A surprise.

JENNIE. Are you a big fan of surprises?

MIKE. Giving or receiving?

JENNIE. How about . . . receiving.

Jennie covers Mike's eyes with her hands and pulls him back against the head rest. Germane, Faith, and Franklin tense up. Mike doesn't even react.

MIKE. Co-pilot?

GERMANE. Sir.

MIKE. Request permission to change lanes.

Germane looks back.

GERMANE. Which way?

MIKE. Left.

GERMANE. You're clear.

Mike swiftly pilots the jeep one lane to the left. A car approaches them on the right. The jeep is gradually swaying to the right, toward the approaching car.

GERMANE. Need to veer left.

Mike rapidly swerves left.

JENNIE. Yippee!

GERMANE. We're coming up on the exit. Suggest you advise the lady to remove her hands from your eyes.

MIKE. Just navigate.

JENNIE. Coo-ul.

GERMANE. Need to change two lanes to the right.

MIKE. Can I go now?

GERMANE. You're clear all the way to the other side if you go now.

Mike swerves all the way across the road.

GERMANE. A little too far. Back a little.

Mike adjusts. Faith tenses against Franklin. Jennie looks back at Faith (Isn't this great?).

MIKE. Where's the exit?

GERMANE. Eighty yards. A little to the right. Sixty yards. Forty yards. Slightly to the left. Slow down. Twenty yards until the turn off. It's about a thirty degree angle from the road, maybe twenty-five. Go now. To the right!

Mike barely makes it onto the exit. Faith grabs hold the jeep.

GERMANE. More to the right! Back a little! Okay, straighten out a little to the right. Okay. Fine. Slow down. Slow down!

They drive precariously along the exit toward a residential area.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The jeep approaches a house where many cars are already parked in the street. The jeep pulls into the empty driveway, or into a spot right in front of the house that is empty. The lights are on all throughout the house. Some people are in the lawn spraying the hose on each other and squealing. Others sit drinking beer in cans on folding lawn furniture. Yet others are on the front porch lounging on delapidated couches and wooden chairs. Music from inside the house comes out to them in the jeep. Faith and Jennie stare at the house.

FAITH. What the hell is this?

MIKE. This is home.

Mike gets up.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mike goes into the house, Jennie hanging on his arm, Faith, Germane, and Franklin following behind. People are everywhere, drinking beer from cans, talking, making out, watching and screaming at televisions scattered throughout. There is a layer of trash six inches deep on the floor. A girl younger than Faith makes out with a guy on a couch in the living room. The guy reaches down the young girl's pants. A skinny guy with knappy hair, FREAK BOY, is traveling through the room spasmodically. He sees Mike and swings by to greet him.

FREAK BOY. Richards, what's up my man?

Then, taking in the sight of the girls:

FREAK BOY. Looks like you been tossing the nets tonight.

Freak Boy eyes Faith specifically.

FREAK BOY. Where the hell you coming from?

MIKE. The fair.

FREAK BOY. Ho. Ly. Shit.

Freak Boy sashees up to Faith.

FREAK BOY. I don't believe we've met.

FAITH. We haven't.

FREAK BOY. Not for a lack of trying, though. You know if I were you I'd stear clear of this guy here. He's like the North American version of an Indian king cobra. If you know what I mean ...

Freak Boy makes himself into a snake striking at Faith and makes hissing and biting sounds. Mike pushes him off.

MIKE. Freak Boy.

Freak Boy swings back toward Faith. A girl, DAISY DUKE, comes up and hugs Mike sensually. Mike reciprocates.

FREAK BOY. I'll catch you later.

Mike stops Freak Boy.

MIKE. Show them around the house and bring them back when you're done.

This excites Freak Boy. He responds with genuine appreciation and sarcasm, saluting Mike sloppily.

FREAK BOY. Yes, sir! Right this way, ladies, for a cultural tour of the historic mansion of your host here. His presence has

had a profound effect on the community. Wait till you see what he's done with the place. Right this way. Watch your step please.

Freak Boy leads Faith and Jennie to the stairs. There are people there, making out, who block their path. Jennie looks back at Mike as he feels on Daisy Duke.

FREAK BOY. Here we have a very nice in-progress Michaelangelo. It's called, I think, The Lovers. It's not finished yet, so if you would, please try not to touch it.

They squeeze past the people making out. As the tour party goes up the stairs, Freak Boy chatters.

FREAK BOY. None of this wallpaper is permanent. We're in the process of redecorating this entire stairwell to bring it more in line with the ... the, uh ... Victorian ... neo-Orwellian sort of ... thing we have going on here.

At the top of the stairs a girl with long dreadlocks and multiple nasal piercings, CLAIRE, sits, trying repeatedly and unsuccessfully, to light a cigarette with a lighter. Claire looks up at and speaks to Faith as Faith passes. She is appreciative of Faith's beauty, but not subserviently so.

CLAIRE. You look so pretty. Where did you come from?

In the upstairs hallway, Freak Boy points out the rooms.

FREAK BOY. Bedroom. Bathroom. Closet. And in there you've got some sort of ritual sacrifice going on, I think ...

There is a room with red light coming through the partially open door. Faith looks into the room. Forms move blurrily inside. Faith hears someone inside talking. It is MARCUS.

MARCUS (OS). Katie. Okay ... Bite. Nipple.

A human form inside the red room moves more into focus as it approaches the open door. Whoever it is slams the door in Faith's face. Faith turns around. Freak Boy is right there.

FREAK BOY. What should we call you, anyway? You look like a ... Marilyn Betty Boop Charles Manson Wednesday Adams like a sort of like a Marilyn Monroe crossed with Madonna's baby ... maybe ... with a pinch of Jackie O? Maybe some La Femme Nakita? Um ...

Freak Boy struggles for the perfect descriptor.

FAITH. Faith.

FREAK BOY. Faith. Of course.

He turns to Jennie.

FREAK BOY. My best guess would be ... Renee.

JENNIE. Jennie, you spas. Can we go downstairs I wanna see Mike.

FREAK BOY. Sure sure. I guess that just about concludes our tour. I hope you ladies had a good time and I hope you will join us again next time you're in the country. So. Let's go downstairs, shall we?

Freak Boy holds out his arm for Faith. Jennie goes toward the stairs. Faith follows, leaving Freak Boy standing there by himself. He claps his hands together lightly.

FREAK BOY. Okay then.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jennie goes up to Mike, who is talking with Daisy Duke. Jennie taps on Daisy Duke's shoulder. Daisy Duke turns around. Jennie looks at her, questioning pointedly. Daisy Duke turns her back on Jennie to face Mike. This pisses Jennie off.

DAISY DUKE. What is her problem?

Mike leans close to Daisy Duke and says something quietly to her. Jennie crosses her arms. Daisy Duke stomps her foot, turns, and pushes her way past Jennie. Jennie is about to go after her but Mike stops Jennie and pulls her close. Jennie smiles, completely satiated by Mike's gesture. Mike and Jennie move out of the living room through the front door. Faith is standing at the bottom of the stairs. Freak Boy comes around from behind her. He has left his tour guide identity behind.

FREAK BOY. Hey what do you say we take a trip outside? Check out the back yard . . . maybe insert ourselves into a friendly menage-a-quatre?

FAITH. I don't think so.

FREAK BOY. You want something to drink? I can't imagine the fair had much to offer in the way of . . . beverages.

Faith lights up.

FAITH. Sure. Why don't you bring me something. I'll wait here.

FREAK BOY. You'll wait here?

FAITH. Right here. Make it something strong, okay, I wanna get really trashed tonight.

FREAK BOY. Extra strong. Martini or something. I'll bring you a drink. Wait here.

FAITH. Waiting . . .

FREAK BOY. Be right back.

Freak Boy disappears into the kitchen. Faith makes sure he can't see her and goes upstairs. As she goes up the stairs, Claire, who still hasn't managed to light her cigarette, is just standing up. Claire goes to the door with the red light and tries the handle. It is locked. Marcus speaks from within.

MARCUS (OS). Who is it?

CLAIRE. Let me in it's Claire.

Faith goes up behind Claire. The door opens, and Claire goes in. Faith follows right behind her.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: UPSTAIRS BED-ROOM - NIGHT

Claire walks past Marcus but Marcus stops Faith. He is shirtless.

MARCUS. Who is this?

Claire turns and sees Faith.

CLAIRE. Oh. Don't worry, she's cool.

Marcus looks at Claire skeptically. He closes the door with Faith inside and locks it. There is different music in this room, though the beats of the main party music underly it. The room is smoky. People sit in a circle passing a wooden pipe they are using to smoke pot. There is a makeshift cot formed of blankets that some of the people are sitting on. On one side of the room, cardboard boxes have been inverted to serve as a dresser. A broken mirror fragment rests there, hung with jewelry. Marcus gestures toward the circle of people. He speaks to Faith.

MARCUS. Please. Make yourself comfortable.

Faith moves toward the circle. People move to make room for her. There are seven people in the room all together, Marcus, Faith, Claire, JANEL, KATIE, JOEL, and SCOTT. Everyone already seated is shirtless. Katie retains her bra. Janel is bare-chested. Marcus walks halfway round the circle, duck-duck-geese style, then takes his place on the floor.

MARCUS. Now. Where were we?

Joel is sitting next to Faith. He takes two healthy drags off the pipe and offers it to Faith. She accepts and takes a small hit. Marcus is waiting for her.

MARCUS. Go ahead. Get a good one.

Faith stalls, then sees that his offer is genuine. She takes a long drag off the pipe and passes it along.

MARCUS. Good. Now. To play this game—what is your name?

FAITH. Faith.

MARCUS. Faith. To play this game, the first thing you have to do, as you may have already figured out, is take off your shirt.

Faith looks at Claire. Claire has already taken hers off.

CLAIRE. We're not perverts or anything—

MARCUS. Yes we are. We are perverts. We are also a great many other things, in addition to being perverts, but we are, without a doubt, perverts. So. To play this game, if you want to play this game, if you want to stay in this room, even, we're going to need you to take off your shirt.

Faith looks around at the people. They are looking at her.

MARCUS. Anything else you do is up to you. No one's going to force you to do anything in this room, except to take your shirt off. Even on this point no one is forcing you. It's just that if you want to continue sitting in this room, in this circle, we need you to take your shirt off . . . now.

Faith looks at Marcus. She starts unbuttoning her shirt.

MARCUS. Good. Now. Moving right along. It's Janel's turn. Janel, would you explain the rules?

Janel looks directly at Faith. She has two glow-in-the-dark dice in her hand and she rattles them around as she speaks.

JANEL. We go in a circle. If I have the dice this time then Katie here will have them next time. After that Joel, then you . . . you get the point. When it's your turn you say the name of someone in the circle—

MARCUS. Feel free to point until you learn our names.

JANEL. Yes, feel free to point. So you say someone's name, or point at them, or whatever, and then you roll the dice. Whatever it says on the dice . . . the person has to do to you. That's basically it. So it's my turn. I say someone's name. I would say you since you just walked in and you're looking mighty nice in that bra, if you don't mind my saying, but I figure I should give you some time to warm up—

JOEL. You can say her if you want to.

Janel asks Faith:

JANEL. Is that okay with you?

FAITH. Sure.

JANEL. Okay, fine, I'll say you. What's your name again?

MARCUS. Faith.

JANEL. Okay, Faith. Now I roll the dice.

Janel rolls the dice.

JANEL. Okay, this one says leg. Claire, can you see that? I can't quite—

CLAIRE. Blow.

JANEL. Blow. Okay, so, according to the rules of the game, you would now . . . blow . . . on . . . my leg.

People look at Faith wonderingly. There is a moment when no one is sure if Faith is going to stay in the room at all. Faith's feelings are not clarified by her expression. Then, under the attentive gaze of everyone in the room, Faith rolls forward over her knees and crawls slowly toward Janel. She puts her hands on Janel's legs.

FAITH. Unzip your pants.

JANEL. Excuse me?

Faith just waits for her.

JANEL. You want me to unzip my pants?

FAITH. I can't blow on your leg while you have pants on.

Janel unzips her pants. The others watch.

FAITH. Pull them down.

Janel gets up on her knees and shuffles her pants down a little. Faith pulls them down more and gently pushes Janel into a seated kneel. Faith unties her own hair ribbon and lets her hair caress Janel's legs. She lays her head on and between Janel's legs and blows on Janel's upper inner thigh. Janel flushes and smiles elatedly. Joel inhales deeply off the pipe, which has come back around.

JOEL. Whoa.

MARCUS. I think she has the idea.

Faith comes up. Janel holds Faith's face in her hands.

JANEL. Have you played this game before?

Faith laughs and starts crawling back to her spot in the circle. She turns her head to look at Claire. Claire exhales smoke with her bottom lip out, sending it up at an angle. She smiles at Faith in a sideways glance, then looks at Marcus.

CLAIRE. See? Told you she was cool.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE: FRONT - NIGHT

Jennie and Mike are sitting in Mike's Jeep in front of Mike's house. People are still playing and hanging out in the yard and on the porch. Jennie is cuddled up with Mike. She is drinking straight from a bottle of hard liquor.

JENNIE. Want some?

MIKE. I'll take a swig.

Their bodies shift against each other with the passing of the bottle. It's clear they like each other, but there is still some physical uncomfortableness.

JENNIE. So ...you got a girlfriend?

MIKE. That's a negative.

JENNIE. That girl you was feeling on ...?

MIKE. ...just a friend.

JENNIE. So it's not a problem, then?

MIKE. Not a problem.

Jennie smiles.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Faith is in the bathroom, sitting on the toilet, leaning forward, her eyes closed. She is completely still. She is topless except her bra. The walls peel and crumble, revealing pipe and stone. The floor's gunky hexagonal tile is littered with toilet paper scraps and old trash. Tiles are missing. The mirror is missing a large chunk of silver in the corner. The room is lit by a single light bulb that dangles by its cord. Faith gets up. She moves slowly. Her eyes look tired. She wipes, flushes, and leaves the room.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Faith goes to the room with the red light and tries the handle. It is locked. She knocks on the door, waits. No one answers. She knocks again.

FAITH. Come on, it's Faith.

Faith waits. She bangs on the door.

FAITH. Hey! Lemme in!

She bangs harder.

FAITH. Marcus?

His voice comes at her muffled through the door.

MARCUS (OS). Can I help you?

FAITH. It's Faith.

A long pause.

MARCUS (OS). Sorry. What did you say your name was?

FAITH. Faith.

MARCUS (OS). I don't know anyone named Faith.

FAITH. I just left to go to the bathroom?

Another pause.

MARCUS (OS). I see. So what brings you back here?

FAITH. I want to come in.

Pause.

MARCUS (OS). I'm afraid that's not possible.

Faith tries the handle again. Still locked. She is pissed.

FAITH. Well I'm gonna need my shirt.

Marcus answers absently.

MARCUS (OS). Sorry . . .

Faith bangs on the door.

FAITH. At least gimme my goddamn shirt you fuck!

She hits the door with the ball of her hand, but there is no response.

FAITH. Hello?

No answer.

FAITH. Some game.

She grudgingly goes toward the stairs, looking back more than once at the closed door.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Faith comes downstairs into the living room. Jennie and Mike are now on a couch in the living room. They are making out heavily, but Jennie is so drunk she can barely coordinate basic movements. Mike doesn't seem to care. Faith goes up to them and tries to get Jennie's attention.

FAITH. Jennie. Jennie. Can we please go home? Jennie. I'm tired.

Mike looks away from Jennie, scanning Faith's body.

MIKE. You forgot your shirt.

FAITH. Your friends stole it. Jennie, I'm ready to go.

Jennie finally realizes Faith is talking to her. She turns her head to Faith and coos, numb, happy. Faith grabs a blanket from the couch. Mike turns Jennie's face back to him and they continue making out. Faith goes through the kitchen and stands in the door that leads to the back yard. People are sitting in a kiddie pool in the grass drinking and laughing. Faith sits down in the doorway,

wrapping the blanket around her shoulders. People walk through the doorway, stepping over and around her as they go, couples and individuals wandering aimlessly in and out of the house.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE: BACK YARD, KITCHEN, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Faith wakes up sitting in a lawn chair that is behind the house. She has the blanket wrapped around her. The kiddie pool is void of people. Trash and beer cans float on its surface. Faith goes inside. In the kitchen, two boys sit on the counter, drinking and smoking cigarettes. Faith goes into the living room. The couch where Jennie and Mike were making out is now taken by another couple, passed out in each other's arms. Faith lies down on the floor near this couch. She has to move several cups and cans to do so. She pulls the blanket around her, shifts her body, trying to get comfortable, and closes her eyes.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - DAY

Faith wakes up to Jennie shaking her, to the sight of Jennie's face and frizzy hair four inches away.

JENNIE. Faith. Get up. Come on, girl, time to go. Time to get up. Time to go.

Faith sits up and gets a better look at Jennie. Jennie looks like she hasn't slept at all. Jennie helps Faith stand up and leads her out of the house, both of them stepping over trash and people. Jennie holds one of Faith's hands in hers, and with the other, Faith pulls the blanket along with her. They push open the screen door and stumble into the daylight.

INT. MCDONALD'S - DAY

Faith and Jennie are sitting across from each other in McDonald's eating fries and milkshakes. Jennie is completely disheveled. Her hair goes in every direction. She is tapping her feet on the floor ninety miles a minute. Faith's legs are off the floor, in the seat with her. She is wrapped in the blanket from the party.

FAITH. So what exactly happened between you two?

JENNIE. Oh, you know . . .

Faith dips her fries individually in ketchup as she eats them, coating each one as completely as possible with a thick layer of sauce. Jennie skips the ketchup, but seasons each one with salt before she eats it. Jennie looks at one of her fries optimistically.

JENNIE. Wanna go out tonight?

FAITH. Give me a few hours to think about it.

Jennie stares at the table. Faith feels bad.

FAITH. Maybe to a movie or something.

Jennie likes this idea. She smiles and rakes through piles of salt with a fry.

FAITH. Just you and me, though.

Jennie looks at Faith, understanding.

JENNIE. Yeah. Just chillin.

They eat more fries.

EXT. MCDONALD'S - DAY

Faith and Jennie walk along the sidewalk outside of and away from McDonalds. They are in an area densely populated with fast food and gas stations. Cars and busses pass by on busy roads. Jennie's walk is bouncy. Some of her usual energy is returning. Faith looks at Jennie cheerfully. Jennie skips for a step or two. They are talking as they walk away, but we hear their voices as though we were right there.

FAITH. How many rock stars does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

JENNIE. I don't know.

FAITH. None. Rock stars only screw in jacuzzis. How many goth kids does it take to change a lightbulb?

JENNIE. I don't know.

FAITH. They wouldn't change it. They like everything black. . . . How many prostitutes does it take to change a lightbulb?

Jennie laughs.

JENNIE. How many?

FAITH. Who needs lights? How many husbands does it take to change a lightbulb?

Jennie shrugs.

FAITH. None. Let the bitch cook in the dark.

Faith still has the blanket wrapped around her as they recede into the city landscape.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Faith is in the upstairs bathroom at Mike's house. The bathroom is in worse shape than before. The walls have yellowed, peeled more. The shower curtain has been ripped down. It lays crumpled over the side of the tub. If the bathroom has any cabinets or drawers, they are open. The medicine cabinet is open. A moth hits the exposed overhead lightbulb again and again. Faith is sitting on the toilet. Her eyes are closed. She is humming nervously, tapping her teeth together. She opens her eyes and leans down to a piece of cellophane that supports a sloppy line of crystal methamphetamine. Faith inhales it. She enters a deep memory state. We see flashes of what she is remembering. Her sixth birthday party. Candle flames wavering. Children squealing. A boy coming up behind her and pulls down her pants. A six-year-old Faith whispering in the same boy's ear ("Show me yours."). Someone bangs on the outside of the bathroom door. Faith comes back to the present. The person bangs again. Faith screams at whoever it is. Her voice is different than before, raspy, screeching.

FAITH. Fuck, you! Go, away!

There is no banging for a bit. Faith wipes herself and gets off the toilet. The banging starts again. Faith slams the medicine cabinet and looks at herself in the mirror briefly. Faith sees how bad she looks. She fumbles with the lock on the door, unlocking it, turning the handle, pushing the door. It opens one inch. Something is blocking it on the outside. Faith shoves the door open sharply with both hands.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jennie is standing in the hallway with her back to the bathroom door. It shoots open, knocking her forward. She stumbles, but doesn't fall. There are others lounging in the hallway, coming and going, in and out of doors, up and down the stairs, smoking, drinking. It's another house party. The music is darker this

time. Everything about the place and the people expresses a further progressed sense of decay. People are more shifty. Trashier. Suspicious in their movements. Jennie is wearing a very short red dress, which, if worn by another person in another context, could be an evening party dress. It is badly wrinkled and coming off one of her shoulders. A shoulder pad sticks blatantly out of the neck of the dress. Jennie gets her balance and turns around to see Faith sliding through the open space of the doorway. Jennie puts her arms around Faith's neck affectionately. Faith twitches in Jennie's embrace. She stays in it, but is uncomfortable with the closeness. Jennie's energy is smooth, her own unique brand of clumsy. Faith is snappy, fidgety, like a mouse. Her eyes focus on the irrelevant. She is somewhere else.

JENNIE. Keep a girl waiting, why don't you? What do you got for me?

FAITH "What do I got for you?"?

JENNIE. You gonna let me in on this, or what? Well, girl . . . ? You gonna let me play too?

Faith has drifted away.

JENNIE. Faith!

Faith snaps back.

FAITH. What?

JENNIE. You got some of that for me?

Faith stares at her, deciding how to say it.

JENNIE. You did save some for me. You did. I know you did.

Faith just looks at her.

JENNIE. You did it all? Bitch! You're such a fucking bitch! I leave you alone for five minutes and you do all my crystal . . . !

FAITH. It wasn't yours.

JENNIE. That doesn't matter. You think that matters? What matters is that you said you were gonna share with me and you . . . didn't.

Jennie points her finger into Faith's chest, tapping twice, as she says "you" and "didn't". Faith mumbles something unintelligible. Jennie leans in exaggeratedly.

JENNIE. What was that?

Faith says it again.

JENNIE. I didn't catch that, Faith, you're mumbling.

Faith grabs Jennie by her frizzy fucking hair. She holds Jennie's ear near her mouth. She speaks coldly, absently.

FAITH. I said. We'll get. More.

Jennie pulls her head out of Faith's grip and points a mean finger directly in Faith's face (I'm warning you.). Faith slaps Jennie's hand with a smack. Jennie recoils.

FAITH. Watch it.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: MIKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Freak Boy is sitting on Mike's bed watching TV and eating compulsively from a box of Good 'N' Plenty's. He's watching an old western. He's the only one in the bedroom. Faith opens the door and stands in the doorway while she talks. Behind Faith we can see hints of the party pulse.

FAITH. Where's Mike?

Freak Boy's eyes stay on the screen.

FREAK BOY. Grocery store.

FAITH. Where the fuck is he?

FREAK BOY. Said we needed milk and eggs. Went to the store.

Faith is incredulous. Freak Boy looks at her.

FREAK BOY. Have you seen the fridge lately? We're out of everything.

Faith wants to say something, but she can't. She shuts the door. After a second she re-opens it and glares at Freak Boy, who is still looking at the spot where Faith was standing before, where she is again standing now, Freak Boy having not looked back to the TV.

FREAK BOY. Mike is very concerned about my nutrition.

Freak Boy scans her figure pointedly.

FREAK BOY. And yours.

EXT. SOMEONE'S HOME - NIGHT

It is raining, a late summer lightning storm. We see the black Jeep, zipped up, pull into the driveway of a home in the suburbs with no lights on and come to a stop outside a closed garage door. Mike, Germane, and Franklin get out. They are dressed in black suits, putting on black masks as their feet hit the concrete. They are strapped with guns and gear. Mike makes a sign to the other two, and they split off from him, crossing through the back yard. They go over the fence into the back yard of the house next door.

Mike goes to the back of the jeep. He unzips the back window, pulls out a 9mm handgun, pops in a clip. He is wearing a scary-looking fitted neoprene mask. He has hand grenades snapped into his suit. He looks down at the 9mm, breathes in. He says quietly to himself:

MIKE. Pain. Honor. Command. Resolve.

He cocks the gun and heads off through the back yard toward the fence.

INT. SOMEONE'S HOME - NIGHT

A MAN in his late forties sits in a leather recliner watching a sitcom on TV. A GIRL, his fourteen-year-old daughter, is the only occupant of a wrap-around couch on the other side of the room. She has a math book open on her lap, pencil in hand, a piece of loose-leaf paper on the book. She stares at the television. The man has a remote control in his hand. After a laugh in the sitcom he switches to another channel. Commercial. Switches again. A nature show, underwater animals. The girl on the couch looks down at her homework. The man switches back to the sitcom. The daughter looks up at the TV. They watch as another joke is being set up. Then the TV screen goes black. Dad tries the remote. Cable doesn't respond. He and the girl look at each other, wondering. The dad gets up and checks the cable box. Tries the power. Off. On. Nothing. The girl is beside him.

GIRL. Let me take a look at it.

MAN. Maybe a tree fell on the wire?

The dad leaves the room while the girl examines the cable box. The dad goes through the dining room, the kitchen, looks out into the back yard. It is storming heavily, but no fallen trees are visible. He goes back through the kitchen, starting to speak.

MAN. I didn't see any—

He comes into the living room, or into view of the living room. Two men, dressed completely in black, masked, are standing there. They both have Uzis strapped to their bodies. One has a coil of rope on his back. They both wear neoprene gloves. One has an AK-47 pressed to his shoulder, aimed at the man, the girl's father. The other holds a 9mm handgun to the daughter's head. A 9mm muzzle held by a gloved hand comes up against the father's head from the side in the same instant that he sees the living room. Rotate to see Mike standing beside/behind the father, Mike's gun arm straight and steadied across his other as a rest.

MIKE. You make any sound louder than a pin drop, you die.
The man is frozen stiff. Mike raises his voice a little. He doesn't take his eyes off the man.

MIKE. Same goes for you, hon. You got that?
The girl nods.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Faith and Jennie are sitting on either side of Freak Boy, at the end of Mike's bed, facing the TV. Light from the TV can be seen on their skin and clothes. Freak Boy is still eating from the box of Good 'N' Plenty's.

FREAK BOY. I don't know what kind of deal you have with Mike. My deal . . . is cash . . . for shit.

Freak Boy makes a here . . . there motion with his hand. This . . . for that. Jennie looks at him blankly.

FREAK BOY. Cash . . . for shit.

JENNIE. Yeah yeah yeah we got it whiz boy. Gimme those.

Jennie grabs the box of candy from Freak Boy. Faith puts a hand on Freak Boy's leg.

FAITH. Listen, Freak Boy, we have the cash. We just don't have all of it. We'll give you some now . . .

Faith puts what cash she has in Freak Boy's open hand, the one that was holding the box of Good 'N' Plenty's.

FAITH. . . we'll give you the rest tomorrow.

Freak Boy makes no effort to take the cash Faith is giving him. Faith closes Freak Boy's hand around it and removes her own from the entanglement. Freak Boy looks to Faith.

FAITH. Please?

Freak Boy is considering it. He turns to Jennie. She is eating his candy, watching the TV. It takes her a bit to realize he's looking at her. When she does realize it, she turns to him.

JENNIE. Pretty please? With a cherry on top? What do you want from me?

Freak Boy stares at Jenny, considering their offer. Then he places Faith's money on the bed in defeat.

FREAK BOY. Sorry.

He grabs his Good 'N' Plenty's from Jennie. Jennie flops backward on the bed.

JENNIE. Fuck!

Faith kneels behind Freak Boy and speaks suggestively in his ear. Jennie rolls her eyes at the tactic.

FAITH. When was the last time you got laid?

Freak Boy's attention is with her. Then the bedroom door opens. Mike stands looking at Faith and Freak Boy while Germane and Franklin file in around him. They are still suited up, minus the guns and hand grenades, carrying their masks. Germane carries a case to the closet and leaves it there. Franklin tosses his mask on a chair beside the bed and detaches the coil of rope from his suit. Both Germane and Franklin pull off their black tops and change into short-sleeved t-shirts that are laying, folded, in the room. As soon as the guys come in, Jennie sits up on the bed. At the same time, Faith redirects all her attention to Mike. She leaves Freak Boy on the bed, going to Mike and placing her hands on him while she talks.

FAITH. Could you have a talk with Freak Boy? We want a couple of bumps and he's being a real asshole.

Faith says this quietly, only to Mike, but Freak Boy responds anyway.

FREAK BOY. They don't have the money.

MIKE. Just give it to her. I'll cover you.

FAITH. Thank you thank you thank you thank you.

She kisses Mike, a peck. Freak Boy reaches into a pocket and hands Jennie two caps, which she receives greedily. Jennie interrupts Faith's flirting with Mike, approaching them and making eyes ("let's go") with Faith, then lingering at the door. Faith detaches herself from Mike, and the girls start out of the room. Mike comes around to stand near Freak Boy, to see what's on TV.

FREAK BOY. Musta been a good run.

MIKE. Better than last time.

Freak Boy perks up.

FREAK BOY. No shit.

The girls are lingering outside the door, listening. Germane shuts it in their faces. Faith stares at the door but Jennie breaks Faith away. They go through the living room. All the places to sit are taken by people. A few people are dancing, a few others standing. Faith and Jennie come up behind a couch where people are sitting watching TV. Jennie hands one of the bumps to Faith.

JENNIE. This . . . is called sharing.

Faith has the bump open and is about to sniff.

JENNIE. Now . . . Wait! This is . . . a special hit . . . in honor of your birthday.

Jennie holds the bump up like a glass in a toast.

JENNIE. Happy birthday.

Faith chinks the bump with Jennie's and they each sniff theirs. As it hits them, they fall into each other, fall over the back of the couch onto the people who are sitting there, holding each other and smiling and laughing uncontrollably. The people they fall into are not pleased, but, recognizing the pair, they move out from under them without complaint. People are still sitting on the arms and edges of the couch as Faith and Jennie lie together.

FAITH. I love you, Jennie, you know that?

JENNIE. I know, Faith, I love you too.

Faith kisses Jennie on the mouth, another peck. Someone sitting on the edge of the couch smoking is distracted by the way the girls are lying with each other. The person's cigarette hand lowers too close to a layer of trash on a lamp table and the trash catches fire. Someone else standing nearby shouts to the smoker and the smoker, turning to see what is being shouted about, knocks over a shot glass filled with red liquid that was sitting on the lamp table. The liquid catches fire. Flames ignite the lamp shade. People jump back, yelling. Faith and Jennie are so into each other that they don't even notice what's going on until someone, trying to put out the lamp shade portion of the fire, knocks the lamp off the table. Jennie glances away from Faith. Faith lifts her head to see the action. People are jumping around like idiots, doing nothing effective to help put out the fire. Faith yells at them.

FAITH. Just get a fucking fire extinguisher!

She assumes someone will do it, and goes back to laughing with her friend.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is quiet and dark. The couch is empty. The lamp shade is burned, lamp lying on the floor. Faith lies near that mess, in front of the couch on the floor. The TV is off. Faith stirs, rolls over, wakes up. She stumbles up onto the couch and looks around the room, getting her bearings. She steps very near a patch of broken glass as she goes, in socked feet, toward Mike's bedroom.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: MIKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike and Freak Boy are standing over bundles of cash, most in small denominations, stacks of crumpled twenties. There are brown paper bags wrapped in rubber bands laid out in a grid across the bed, a pile of empty Zip-Lock bags, a set of druggists' scales and metric measuring spoons. There is a 9mm handgun sitting on the chair beside the bed with the neoprene mask that Franklin put there earlier. Freak Boy is loading the wrapped paper bags into a black Nike duffel bag. There are two raps on the closed door. Mike and Freak Boy look at each other. Freak Boy stops what he's doing. Faith's voice comes through to them:

FAITH (OS). It's Faith.

MIKE. It's open.

Freak Boy goes back to loading the duffel bag as Faith comes in. She is groggy with sleep, looking at the floor as she walks. She has already closed the door behind her when she sees what the guys are doing. She stops walking.

MIKE. Come here.

Faith goes to Mike and puts her arms around him. Freak Boy eyes them critically.

MIKE. Having fun?

FAITH. I need to talk to you.

MIKE. Shoot.

Faith looks at Freak Boy. After a few seconds Mike gets the picture. He looks at Freak Boy.

MIKE. We can finish this later.

Grudgingly, Freak Boy stopps filling the duffel bag. He walks around the bed and goes out of the room. He leaves the bedroom door open. Mike goes over and closes it. He comes back to Faith, who stands facing him with her back to the side of the bed. Faith messes around with Mike's shirt. She's looking at his chest when she says:

FAITH. I want some more.

Mike is genuinely surprised.

MIKE. More crys?

Faith nods.

MIKE. Freak Boy says you're out of cash.

She sits down with her legs parted and pulls Mike in close to her. He looks down at her. She looks up at him.

FAITH. I know.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE: FRONT PORCH - DAY

Jennie is laying in a porch swing staring at Freak Boy. It is light outside. Freak Boy is sitting on the swing next to her, completely upright, sleeping. Jennie's legs lay over his lap, bare feet propped on the arm rest of the swing. She has a plastic straw protruding from her mouth. It is mangled and creased from her chewing. She bites the straw as she gazes at Freak Boy. With one of her feet, she feels around at his crotch. Gradually Freak Boy comes to, looks down at the foot in his crotch, and follows the line of leg over to Jennie's grinning face, frizzy hair, wild eyes, chewing on a straw. She puts her foot on his head and her toes play with his ear. Freak Boy looks at her with a mixture of skepticism and hopefulness. Jennie pinches his ear between two of her toes and pulls him closer to her. He looks at her face. She taps her closed lips with the straw. He comes up on her and she pulls him closer. They start to kiss. They kiss at length, Freak Boy positioning himself between Jennie's legs. Jennie shifts awkwardly under his body. When his hand goes to her chest she pulls it off. They continue to kiss. In not too long a while Freak Boy's hand is back on Jennie's chest. She pulls it off again. Freak Boy reaches down to her waist. Jennie pushes his face away from hers with her hand.

JENNIE. Okay no n-n-n-no. No. No. No!

On her first post-stutter "No" Jennie taps Freak Boy in the chest. On the next one she pushes him away from her forcefully. On the last one she pushes him completely off the swing. He lands on his feet, though stumbling.

JENNIE. I said kiss . . .

She taps the straw on her lips.

JENNIE. . . not fuck.

She taps the straw on her cooter.

FREAK BOY. Fine. Relax.

JENNIE. Fucking hornball.

FREAK BOY. Chill. Run around the block or something. Hyperactive . . .

JENNIE. First thing in the morning . . .

FREAK BOY. . . fucking . . . diesel dyke.

JENNIE. What?! What you say?

FREAK BOY. I said you're too fucking aggressive. You need to go run around the block or something. Get some of that energy out.

Jennie is incensed. Her eyes narrow.

JENNIE. Lace it up, then. You wanna get some energy out? Step into the fucking ring. Be a man, don't be a pussy. Come on!

Jennie dances around like a prizefighter.

JENNIE. Lace it up, bitch. Let's go.

Freak Boy shakes his head at Jennie like she's crazy. Jennie stops hopping.

JENNIE. Are you gonna lace it up, or what?

Jennie is heedless to the fact that Freak Boy is not combatting her, that he's not even recognizing her attack with a defense. Freak Boy turns to leave.

JENNIE. Ding ding ding!

Jennie punches Freak Boy in the back of the head. He winces.

JENNIE. Round one!

Jennie goes up to him and, grabbing his shoulders, knees him. He doubles over and Jennie kicks him as hard as she can, throwing him down the stairs off of the front porch onto the concrete walkway. In his fall, the concrete scrapes Freak Boy badly. There is a large bleeding scrape across his forearm. He raises himself from the ground a little, looking silently up at Jennie. She is bouncing up and down with both hands in the air, victorious. Jennie sees Freak Boy staring. She stops bouncing, a bit self-conscious. She masks her embarrassment with affected toughness.

JENNIE. Learn how to take a punch, champ.

Jennie turns her back on him, opens the screen door, and goes inside the house.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is desolate. Jennie goes through the living room to Mike's bedroom door. It is closed. Jennie knocks, longer than a person would normally knock. There is no answer.

JENNIE. I know you're fucking in there. I'm ready to go, Faith. Tired of Mr. Freakity Freak Boy trying to go down my pants every five minutes.

Jennie waits a second.

JENNIE. Faith.

She knocks some more.

JENNIE. Faith, open the fucking door. I want to go home.

She keeps knocking. Then she stops. No sound comes from inside. Jennie puts her hand on the door handle. Waits a second. Turns it. Unlocked. Turns it all the way, slowly opens the door. Then, seeing what's inside, opens it the rest of the way real fast.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: BEDROOM - DAY

Faith is lying on the bed naked, on her side, turned away from the door. Her ankles are tightly bound together with rope. A loose cord connects her feet with the bottom end of the bed. Her wrists are similarly bound and connected to the top end of the bed. The room is in disarray. The paper bags that were in a neat grid on the bed are now strewn on the floor. Jennie sees Faith's head, covered with something black. Jennie goes over and crawls onto the bed. She puts a hand on Faith's shoulder and turns her partway onto her back. Faith is wearing one of the scary neoprene masks from the home invasion. Her eyes are open. For a split second they do not move. Then they shift, seeing Jennie, recognizing the friend. Jennie leans in close to her. Her voice is quiet, gentle, concerned.

JENNIE. You okay?

Faith is in pain. She closes her eyes. Jennie puts her hand down near Faith's leg, trying to turn Faith all the way over on her back. When Jennie puts her hand down it meets a puddle of crust on the sheet. She looks over and sees it is dried blood, radiating in a stain from Faith's body. Jennie's verbal reaction is one of regret that this has happened, regret that she was just yelling at Faith through the closed door.

JENNIE. Aww, fuck me ...

Jennie looks around. She goes up to Faith's head, which is covered with the neoprene mask. Jennie carefully takes the mask off of Faith. When it's off, Faith turns her own head to look at Jennie. Faith's face is badly bruised.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE: FRONT - DAY

Medics carry Faith out through the front door of the house on a stretcher. They take her down the front steps and out to the street and load her in the back of an ambulance. Freak Boy watches from the porch, where he sits nursing his arm and smoking a cigarette. Jennie comes out after the medics carrying Faith's clothes. The

medics let her get in the back of the wagon with Faith. They close up the back. The driver comes around to the front and gets in. They drive away down a street whose trees show the first signs of autumn.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE: AUDITORIUM

A movie is playing, auditorium half full of people. In one of the rows Faith and Mike sit side by side. Mike is wearing his military uniform with braided ropes and medals hanging off of it. Faith is holding an extra large tub of popcorn in her lap. With one hand, she feeds herself popcorn while staring at the movie screen. Her other hand is in Mike's lap. She is giving him a hand job. He tries to keep his eyes on the screen, but he is visibly distracted by Faith's touch. Faith has no trouble managing Mike, the popcorn, and the movie all at once. Mike's pleasure increases. Faith gets a cramp in her forearm and stops, pulling her arm back to her own space, her face visibly pained, rubbing her arm with her other hand to relax it.

FAITH. Ow.

Mike speaks at his regular volume.

MIKE. What's the problem?

FAITH. A cramp.

Mike's voice gets louder. He speaks of unfinished business:

MIKE. What the fuck is the problem?

FAITH. I have a cramp in my arm! Give me a second—

MIKE. How can you ever become anything unless you finish what you start.

His "finish what you start" is yelling at her. Other people in the theatre are looking at them. Mike starts fastening his pants, tucking in his shirt.

MIKE. Damn you.

This hurts Faith's feelings. She sulks, on the verge of tears tears, still rubbing her arm. When Mike is finished tucking in his shirt he composes himself, then speaks to Faith.

MIKE. If you ever do that to me again—

Faith has had enough. She stands up, spilling the popcorn all over Mike and a couple in front of them. When she stands up, we can see that she is pregnant. Her belly is about as big as it could get. Faith storms up the aisle of the theatre. Mike stands and turns around, yelling at Faith across the darkness of the auditorium.

MIKE. Do not leave when I'm talking to you.

Faith continues out.

MIKE. If you walk out of here you will not have a home to go to.

Faith walks out.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

It is summer again. Faith rushes out into the light. She is walking fast, through the parking lot. Mike comes out after her, catches up with her, grabs her wrist, stops her, turns her around. The way he holds her is physically menacing.

MIKE. Do not ever again act like that in public. You hear me?

Faith is afraid Mike is going to hit her.

MIKE. Now. I'm going to take you to this car . . . and you finish what you started.

Faith wriggles in his clutch.

FAITH. Let . . . go of me.

Mike lets go of Faith and then immediately slaps her face. It turns red. Faith's eyes start to well.

MIKE. I find it extremely unpleasant to be led on by you and then dropped, like nothing was happening, right in the middle of it.

FAITH. Now you know what I feel like half the time.

Faith jerks her arm free of Mike's grip, and heads away from Mike.

MIKE. Your behavior lately is totally unacceptable, Faith. Faith! Stop walking, turn around, come back here and listen to what I'm telling you.

Faith stops walking, but not because of what Mike is saying. The oddest look comes over her face. She looks down at her legs. Clear liquid is running out of her. She turns her head to Mike. He sees it, is confused.

MIKE. You piss yourself, woman?

FAITH. My water broke. We have to go to the hospital.

MIKE. Right now?

Faith nods. Mike looks at the theatre building, then at Faith.

MIKE. Great.

INT. HOSPITAL: DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

Faith is lying in a hospital bed. Several DOCTORs stand around her, talking to her, administering drugs intravenously. NURSEs come and go, following the doctor's orders. Mike and Jennie are in the room, standing away from Faith.

DOCTOR. You're doing fine, Faith, doing fine. I'm gonna need you to give me one real big push right now.

Faith grunts a push. A nurse holds her hand.

NURSE. Good.

DOCTOR. Good. Give me a little more now.

Jennie chastises Mike. He is holding a McDonald's bag and eating a burger.

JENNIE. I'm gonna lead you through a review of some basic concepts. Okay? First thing. Never, ever slap a girl while she's pregnant.

Mike turns away. Jennie gets in his face.

JENNIE. You got that? If I ever, ever find out you did that again—

MIKE. It doesn't look like she's going to be pregnant much longer.

JENNIE. Well no shit Sherlock. That don't mean you can go around slapping on my girl. You reading me loud and clear, commander?

Mike turns to walk away. Jennie steps into his path.

JENNIE. Hey! Hey! We're not through. Lesson two. When a girl's water breaks, which tends to happen after she's been pregnant for about nine months, that means she's about to have the baby. That means you get her to a fucking hospital . . . right . . . then. It doesn't mean you stand around talking about it first—

MIKE. Hey—

JENNIE. It doesn't mean you stop for McDonalds on the way—

MIKE. I was—

JENNIE. Especially you don't stop at McDonalds on the way to the hospital with your pregnant wife and only get food for yourself!!

MIKE. She wasn't hungry.

JENNIE. Did you even ask her if she wanted anything?

MIKE. She just had a whole bucket of popcorn.

JENNIE. Oh, that's wonderful. How's she supposed to grow a baby inside her body on movie popcorn you wanna tell me that,

Encyclopedia Brown? Try to grow a baby on movie popcorn. You sure your momma didn't drop you on your head a couple of times when you was little? You ain't seeming to have it all together these days, Richards. Got some loose screws rattling around your cannon, something.

Mike continues eating his burger. He looks at Jennie with contempt.

JENNIE. Richards, you're cruisin' for a bruisin', you know that? One of these days—

MIKE. Would you shut the fuck up, woman?

Jennie glares at him. They are interrupted by the sound of Faith moaning as she goes through a contraction. The doctors and nurses help Faith through. Jennie grabs Mike's McDonalds bag, takes a fry, eats it. She eats another one.

JENNIE. One of these days, Richards, I swear ...

MIKE. You swear what?

Jennie continues eating Mike's fries. Both of them look toward Faith.

JENNIE. You ain't got no business getting that girl pregnant. Practically just a boy yourself. No job ...

Mike looks at her.

JENNIE. What? You think you and your goons are gonna keep up that invasion shit?

Mike is uncomfortable with her talking about it in public; it shows.

JENNIE. It ain't no big fucking secret! You think we don't all know where you be going for three hours in the middle of a party?

Mike looks at her warningly. Jennie shuts up for a moment while they both watch Faith.

JENNIE. Do you even know what she wants to name it?

MIKE. We haven't talked about—

JENNIE. Danny. If it's a boy. Bulinda if it's a girl. You should really start keeping up with these things, now that you're going to be the father.

Faith is crying from the pain.

NURSE. Honey, you're going to get through this. Believe me, I've done it three times. I know it seems like hell right now but pretty soon it will be over.

DOCTOR. Good, Faith, good. Good. Okay, you can relax for a minute.

JENNIE. Still, you might want to consider stashing some of that loot away for retirement.

Mike speaks under his breath.

MIKE. If you don't shut the fuck up, right now—

JENNIE. Interest-bearing financial vehicle of some kind. IRA or something. Maybe get a financial advisor—

MIKE. If I hear one more word from you today I will snap your neck.

Jennie responds a a volume that ensures everyone in the vicinity can hear her.

JENNIE. Oh, that's great. Witnessing the birth of a child and all you can think of is making death threats on a close personal friend of the mother of your only child! The person without whom she might have never even gotten to a hospital today because your dumb ass can't tell the difference between water breaking and a woman pissing herself! Can't tell the difference between a sheep and an ox! Can't tell the difference between a cooter and an asshole! Can't tell the difference between a fucking nine to five job with an honest-to-God paycheck and running a bunch of goons around the world staging fucking home invasions!!! Gonna have a new baby in the house and still got high-powered rifles laying out where anybody can see!!!

The doctors and nurses observe this exchange first with rising puzzlement, then with annoyance. Faith doesn't even notice them. At the end of Jennie's speech Mike is trying to cover Jennie's mouth with his hands. Jennie lurches back, resisting, escaping his grip, continuing to shout her speech. One of the doctors motions with his head to one of the nurses. She goes up to Mike and Jennie.

NURSE. You're going to have to wait outside.

JENNIE. A hundred pounds of crystal meth laying around the breakfast table like a hundred pounds of Special K! And I ain't talking about no Kellog's, neither.

NURSE. There's a waiting area in the hallway right outside—

JENNIE. You want us to miss the birth of our baby girl?

Jennie indicated Mike and speaks confidentially to the nurse.

JENNIE. He's been waiting all morning for this.

NURSE. After she's had the baby you can—

JENNIE. I'm the fairy godmother. I can't miss the birth of my—

NURSE. You're making too much noise to stay here—

JENNIE. Oh he's sorry about the noise. He'll try to keep it down, I promise—

NURSE. If you'll just wait outside—

Jennie leans in to the nurse accusingly.

JENNIE. And miss the birth of my godchild? You'd like that, wouldn't you?

Jennie peers into the nurse's face, inspecting. Jennie's next line is delivered with absolute solidity, complete integrity of statement, as though she has known the nurse for years and it has taken her that long to come to a point where she can say it.

JENNIE. I could tell from the moment I first saw you that you were a frigid bitch.

The nurse is shocked. She looks to her colleagues for support. Jennie and Mike look over, too; they hear the sound of a baby screaming. The doctor cuts the umbilical cord.

DOCTOR. It's a boy!

Jennie rushes over to see the baby. Mike and the nurse follow. Someone cleans the infant's nose out with suction. The doctor carries the screaming baby to show it to Faith. Faith's face is flushed and moist from labor.

INT. HOSPITAL: PARKING GARAGE: ELEVATOR - DAY

There is an old man already in the elevator on one side. He breathes using a mobile oxygen tank. The elevator stops, its doors open, and Mike and Jennie walk in together.

JENNIE. —can't expect me to stand by and watch that kid grow up around the type of shit you have going on in that place. Fucking . . . Freak Boy is bad enough. But a kid growing up every day seeing . . . stuff . . . you know . . . growing up thinking that shit is normal. Thinking everybody has it. Everybody does it. Whatever. Nobody wants it Martha Stewart, but shit . . .

Mike looks at her meanly. Jennie puts her arm around him.

JENNIE. You reading me a-okay, cowboy? Got your superscope set on five-by-five?

Mike takes Jennie's arm off of his shoulders.

MIKE. If you have any care for that baby you will watch your mouth in public from now on.

JENNIE. Gee, I wish my dad had your paternal instincts.

Jennie presses a button on the controls. Mike presses another.

MIKE. If you speak in public like you did in there, even once, it will be the last time you get the chance to speak at all.

The old man looks worriedly at Mike and Jennie. The elevator stops, the doors open. Mike gets out. He is walking away from the

elevator when, right as the doors are closing, Jennie presses the door open button. She raises her voice to get Mike's attention.

JENNIE. Guess I'll get that bump off you later, then.

Mike comes rapidly back toward the elevator. Jennie presses the door close button but they don't close for another few seconds. During them, Mike draws a 9mm handgun from somewhere in the back of his uniform. Standing outside the doors, he holds the gun to Jennie's forehead. The old man's body shakes at this development. The elevator doors start to close and Mike pulls his hand back. The doors close completely.

INT. HOSPITAL: PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Mike walks to the Jeep. He goes to the back and unzips the cover. He lifts up a cloth. Other weapons are there. He puts the gun in the pile, covers them with the cloth, zips up the back. He gets in the driver's seat, buckles his seatbelt, and starts the Jeep. He heads down the twisting ramps of the garage. He turns on the car stereo; he listens to hate metal. Jennie pulls out of nowhere in a crapped-out red Chevy Cavalier, and hits the side of the Jeep, knocking it into parked cars. Mike shakes off the shock of being hit and looks at Jennie. She is staring through her windshield at him, both hands gripping the top of her steering wheel, baring her teeth like a rabid dog. Mike throws his Jeep into reverse and screeches backward up the twisting ramp out of view. Jennie drives her Cavalier up after him. They chase each other up and down and all through the garage, going the wrong direction along ramps and passages. Their object, apparently, is to hit each other's cars. At one point, Mike is chasing Jennie and Jennie is looking back at Mike while she speeds away from him. She is headed for a car out of which a doctor, dressed in ER clothing, has just emerged. The doctor has a brown paper lunch bag in his hand. He sees Jennie coming and just barely jumps out of the way as she rams into his car, crushing the driver side door. The doctor looks at her like she's crazy. She sticks her tongue out at him, gives him the middle finger, and throws her vehicle into reverse. The chase ensues. Mike and Jennie each try to outdo the other with their daring. Then, backing up around a corner, Mike's Jeep hits a child who was lagging behind his mother, looking down, playing Tetris on a Gameboy as he walked. The boy is thrown against a concrete wall. The kid's mother screams and

runs to her child. Mike gets out to see the kid. The mother yells hysterically at Mike and at the situation in general. Mike looks at the kid. For a while the child doesn't move. Then he opens his eyes. Mike hears a car horn, continuous blast. He turns to see that Jennie is idling nearby, leaning on her horn. Jennie smiles. She is gloating at her victory.

INT. HOSPITAL: BEDROOM - DAY

Faith is laying in a hospital bed. She is alone in the room. She looks at the window. The thrust from an air conditioner or air vent causes the string on the window's blinds to move about. A nurse comes in with Faith's baby.

FAITH. Is that him?

NURSE. This is him.

The nurse sits down on the side of the bed and hands the baby to Faith. Faith is all love, her eyes full of the child.

FAITH. Well you sure hurt coming out. You were worth it, though. Mmmm. You're so beautiful. So . . .so . . .beautiful. You and me, we're gonna be best friends. No one's gonna ever hurt you, not while I'm around. No one'e ever gonna hurt you. And we're gonna do everything together, at least for a while. And we're gonna go places together. Yeah. And I'm gonna call you Danny.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - DAY

It is late afternoon. Mike, Germane, and Franklin are sitting on the couch and chairs, staring at the television. Mike and Germane are holding video controllers, playing a game. Franklin is flipping through a porno mag and occasionally glancing at the television. The coffee table and arms of the chairs are littered with beer cans. All three of them are already drunk and are still drinking. Faith and Jennie are in the kitchen with DANNY. Danny lies on the floor. The girls change his diaper.

JENNIE. Richards, if your dick was half this size I'd try to steal you back.

Faith glares at Jennie, half amused.

JENNIE. What?! Wouldn't you? This kid is gonna have to beat them off with a stick. Aren't you, Danny? Little cute-ums.

Damn, this kid is hung. Richards, seriously, you should take a lesson.

MIKE. Woman . . .

Franklin lights a cigarette. The gaming continues.

JENNIE. Don't fucking call me woman. I'm telling you, Richards, you got me this close . . .

MIKE. To what?

JENNIE. If you're so curious then why don't you come over here find out?

Mike squints and sighs, annoyed. Faith smells the cigarette smoke. She looks into the living room and sees Franklin smoking while he stares at the porno mag.

FAITH. You can't be smoking that around my baby.

Franklin looks to Mike. Mike shakes his head. Faith continues looking at Franklin pointedly.

FAITH. You gotta put that out.

Franklin stares at the TV. Mike won't get involved. Franklin takes a drag off the cigarette and, looking straight at Faith, exhales. Jennie touches Danny's cheek with a smile, stands up, and comes around Faith into the living room.

JENNIE. You heard what the woman said, porno-boy. Who you looking at today, Britney Spears? Some bitch with a cucumber up her asshole? Gimme that.

Jennie grabs the magazine and flips coarsely through the pages. She looks at Faith.

JENNIE. Why do guys think this's sexy? Franklin, lemme ask you something. You find a girl who can stick a cucumber up her asshole, you still gonna wanna fuck that shit? See what I'm saying? Girls with fucking lawnmowers up their cooters. You think that shit is gonna be tight enough to get you off after she gets done making all these pictures? Huh?

Franklin blows out his smoke. Jennie gets in his face.

JENNIE. You ever ass-fuck a girl, Franklin? I don't think you have because that's the whole point, you see? Girl's asshole is tighter than her pussy. Gotta be, else guys would never do it. You got blood on one hand . . . you got shit on the other. What the fuck do you think you're gonna choose? A fucking cucumber? Think again, Einstein.

Franklin looks away from her, at the TV screen.

JENNIE. And give me that.

Jennie snatches the cigarette from Franklin's mouth. Mike's arm comes at her. Mike doesn't even get up, but his fist strikes

Jennie's face and knocks her backwards. The cigarette lands on Jennie's arm and she sweeps it off. Franklin picks it up and puts it back in his mouth. Jennie lies silently on the floor. She is badly hurt. Faith goes to comfort Jennie and look at her face. It is already red. Faith starts to approach Mike.

FAITH. Mike . . .

Jennie grabs hold of Faith's hand, though, and stops her. Faith looks at Jennie, and Jennie shakes her head at Faith, slightly, urging Faith not to try. Danny cries out from the kitchen. Faith goes to the kitchen. Jennie slowly gets up to follow.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: MIKE'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Jennie is stretched out on her back, on the bed, with a plastic bag of ice on her face. Faith is sitting on the bed next to her, holding Danny. The TV is on. The muted light of dusk comes in through the windows. Someone pounds on the outside of the bedroom door.

FAITH. What is it?

Mike's voice comes muted through the door.

MIKE (OS). I need to get in there.

FAITH. No.

MIKE (OS). No?

FAITH. You heard me.

MIKE (OS). I'm going out. Faith?

FAITH. Good.

MIKE (OS). We're all going.

FAITH. Good!

MIKE (OS). Is Jennie in there?

Faith looks at Jennie, who is lying awake in bed.

FAITH. She's sleeping.

MIKE (OS). I have a message for her. When she wakes up . . . tell her something?

FAITH. Tell her yourself when you get back.

MIKE (OS). Tell her I have that bump she asked for.

FAITH. She doesn't want it.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Mike stands facing the door to his bedroom. Germane and Franklin flank him. All are dressed in black operational suits, strapped with guns, wearing gloves. Mike leans close to the bedroom door.

MIKE. Just tell her.

Mike turns around, stuffs a 9mm into a shoulder holster.

MIKE. Ready?

Franklin cocks his gun. Germane nods.

FRANKLIN. Let's do it.

EXT. A HOUSE - NIGHT

Mike is kneeling underneath a window in a brick house. He is completely suited up, mask and everything. Yellow light comes through the window from the inside. The curtains blow in the wind. The glass part of the window is open. A screen is in place. There is a black rope fastened to the roof. Two strands hang down the middle of the window. Mike holds them in one hand. A 2-way radio is in the other. Mike speaks quietly into the radio.

MIKE. Seven. Six. Five.

Mike's voice trails off. He clips the radio onto his suit and stands up. He grabs both strands of the rope, one hand high up, at the top of the window, and braces his feet on the side of the brick house. At the time when the zero of his countdown would have happened, he launches himself feetfirst through the screen, through the curtains, through the window and into the house.

INT. A HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Two elderly people, a man and a woman, are sitting in a living room watching TV. The man sits in a recliner. The woman sits on the couch. Mike comes flying through one of the living room windows. Germane comes through the other. Franklin walks into the living room from the kitchen. The three of them assume offensive positions with respect to the elderly couple.

MIKE. Charlie, how's it looking?

FRANKLIN. All clear so far, sir. Just these two.

MIKE. Okay, what I need you to do, is—pop, you sit tight. Bravo, make sure he doesn't move. Charlie, watch the mother. I'm gonna have a look around. If either of you two make any sound louder than a pin drop . . .

Mike cocks his 9mm.

MIKE. . . you're gonna meet God a little sooner than you expected.

Mike chides them.

MIKE. You got that?

Germane moves to cover the man. Franklin moves toward the woman. Mike heads upstairs. Germane and Mike use plastic zip-ties to fasten their victims' hands together. Then they use cord to tie the man to his chair and the woman to the couch.

INT. A HOUSE: UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Upstairs, Mike goes into each room sequentially, cautiously, watching his back, opening closet doors, quickly making sure no one else is there. In the hallway, he notices a ceiling entrance to an attic. When he comes to their bedroom, the last room to search, Mike opens their bureau and looks through it. He skips over watches and jewelry but grabs a small wad of cash folded with a clip. He looks under the bed. He sees nothing. Then he goes to the closet. He yanks a pull chain inside and the closet light goes on. He slides clothes to the side. There is a small safe in the back, on the floor. Other than that, all he sees is shoes and clothing. He quickly goes downstairs.

INT. A HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Germane and Franklin have the occupants fully secured and gagged. Franklin has bound the woman tightly. She is in pain. The man cannot move, but he is not hurt. Germane and Franklin see that Mike is back.

FRANKLIN. Occupants are fully secured, sir.

GERMANE. Any more up there?

MIKE. Not a mouse. Got a safe in the bedroom closet. Bravo, stay with those two. Charlie. Get the combination to the safe. Open it. I'll check the attic.

Mike goes back upstairs.

GERMANE. Don't let me find out you're having a bridge party here later tonight, because the first person through that door . . . it's not gonna be something you want the little lady to see, know what I mean?

The old man looks at the front door, shakes his head.

FRANKLIN. You know the combination, lady? Or is that his department?

The old woman looks at Franklin fearfully. Franklin is gesturing sloppily with his gun as he speaks to her. The TV is playing Jeopardy. The sound for a daily double comes on. Franklin looks over at the TV. We don't see the show, but we see Franklin looking at it.

ALEX TREBEC (OS). That sound, as I'm sure you know, means that you've selected our daily double. A correct answer to this question is worth two thousand points. Tina, are you ready?

TINA (OS). Yes.

ALEX TREBEC (OS). Alright. This country western singer's debut album—

FRANKLIN. So? You know the combination?

The lady says nothing. She's too scared. Besides, she has a gag in her mouth. Franklin looks at Germane. Germane looks at the old man, then moves to take off his gag.

GERMANE. Listen, old man, cause I'm only gonna say this once. I'm gonna take this thing off so you can tell me the combination to that safe. If you say anything else, or if you don't tell me, my friend there is gonna kill your wife.

The wife closes her eyes briefly. She is crying. Franklin stares at the TV, watching Jeopardy. His gun is on the woman's face. He speaks absently, his attention given to the show.

FRANKLIN. Sorry, lady, that's just the way it is.

The sound for a wrong answer comes from the television.

INT. A HOUSE: ATTIC - NIGHT

The attic is dimly lit from an unshielded ceiling light. Mike kneels beside a trunk and flips open the latches on its side. He opens the lid. Inside are neatly folded military uniforms, a black and white photograph of a soldier standing aboard a Navy vessel, and underneath, several gun cases. Mike gingerly removes the uniforms and photograph and places them on a stack of books nearby. He stands, leans down, and removes the first gun case from the trunk.

He unzips the case and tosses the case aside. He is holding a hefty hunting shotgun. He cocks the gun, puts the stock to his shoulder, and looks down the barrel.

INT. A HOUSE: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Franklin is turning the dial on the closet safe. He pauses at the third number, then tries the handle. It moves. He opens the door and peers inside. Mike comes into view through the bedroom door, carrying three guns over his shoulder, none in cases. He sees Franklin at the safe.

MIKE. They come through?

FRANKLIN. Roger that, boss. What's it like up there?

MIKE. Twenty-twos, shotguns. One more load.

FRANKLIN. Want me to get it?

MIKE. I'm sending Bravo.

FRANKLIN. We're done then?

MIKE. Whatever you got ...

FRANKLIN. Done here in two.

Mike starts to move on.

MIKE. Don't forget the ATM cards.

FRANKLIN. Uh ... I think we can forget the ATM cards.

Mike pauses for a split second, excited.

MIKE. Really?

FRANKLIN. ... Yeah.

Franklin is holding an open check box full of fifty-dollar bills. The open safe contains an old-fashioned pistol and a dozen boxes similar to the one he is holding. He closes the box and tosses it into a black Nike duffel bag, then starts moving the rest of the contents of the safe.

EXT. A HOUSE: OUT BACK - NIGHT

In the alley behind the house, Mike and Germane sit in the Jeep, engine running. Franklin comes running out through the back gate and jumps into the back of the Jeep, duffel bag over his shoulder.

GERMANE. What took you so long?

Franklin says nothing. He settles into his seat as Mike drives away from the house. They get to the end of the alley. It meets a cross street. Mike looks both ways, then pulls into the street and drives away.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: MIKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennie and Faith are sitting side-by-side on the bed watching TV. They are watching Jeopardy. Faith holds Danny, who is sleeping. Jennie no longer has the bag of ice on her face. Her face is bruised and swollen. Faith splits her attention between the TV and watching her baby while he sleeps. Jennie gets up.

JENNIE. I'm going home.

FAITH. You gonna be alright?

JENNIE. Yeah. Thanks for . . .

Jennie indicates her head.

JENNIE. . . .you know.

FAITH. When he gets home I'm gonna have a thing or two to say . . .

JENNIE. You say one thing to that boy and I will come over here and kill you myself. Just take care of that baby.

They look at each other. Jennie holds up her hand in a still wave, unlocks the bedroom door, and goes out, closing the door behind her.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Jennie is driving the red Cavalier down an uncrowded stretch of highway. She has the stereo up loud. Popular music plays on the radio. Jennie is banging on the steering wheel, yelling.

JENNIE. Your motherfucking ass is mine! Your . . . motherfucking . . . ass . . . is . . . mine motherfucker!!

Jennie comes up behind two slower-moving vehicles that are blocking both lanes of the road. She hits the gas and swerves around them on the shoulder.

INT. A HOUSE - NIGHT

A dark street in the middle of the night. Jennie pulls up in front of a house and parks her car sloppily, half on the sidewalk, half on the street. There is an old-fashioned vehicle parked near hers on the street. Jennie gets out and walks toward her house, stumbling because she is so mad, ranting to herself.

JENNIE. Motherfucking asshole motherfucker. Trying to slap a woman with a baby in the house. He ever hurts my friend ...ever ...ever ...that sonofamotherfuckingsonofafuckingmotherfucking ...mother ...fucking ...ooohhh ...chills me to the core ...

Jennie gets to the door of her house. She tries the handle. It is locked. She kicks it a few times while digging in her pocket for the key.

JENNIE. Why you gotta lock your own family out the motherfucking house? Keep everything locked up like a goddamn military base!

Jennie has the key out. She unlocks the door and throws it open.

INT. A HOUSE - NIGHT

Jennie is silenced by what she sees. Her grandmother lies on the couch, bound multiply, her face covered with one of the neoprene masks, the same kind Jennie found on Faith one day before. Blood has come out from around the edges of the mask and dried on the grandmother's nightgown. Jennie's GRANDFATHER is bound to his recliner, looking at Jennie pleadingly. He is crying. Jennie goes to her grandmother in shock. She feels the body and recoils. She goes to her grandfather and takes off his gag. He speaks erratically, panicked.

GRANDFATHER. They got her. They got her ...

Jennie surveys the room, quiet.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The red Cavalier speeds along the highway at midday. The sky is blue and half covered with cumulus clouds. Jennie is at the wheel, speeding in a straight line in the fast lane. Faith sits in the front seat, buckled in, holding Danny. Jennie is not wearing her seatbelt. No one says anything for a time. Jennie drives clenched-jawed, staring forward, her expression hard. Faith holds her baby tightly, looks at him, looks out the window at the cars and signs they pass, and looks at Jennie, who does not return the glance. Jennie steers the car onto a ramp that takes them to another highway. She maintains her speed around the curves and comes onto the new road. She merges without looking to see if anyone is there, changes lanes

in a similar way, crossing over a middle lane and placing herself roughly within the lines of the leftmost lane.

JENNIE. Do you know what he did to me the other day? That motherfucker came over my house and asked me if I wanted to fuck him.

Faith looks at Jennie, surprised, and not happily.

JENNIE. That's right. That motherfucker came over my house and stood on the porch with his lip stuck out like like a little puppy, begging me to let him in and fuck him.

FAITH. What did you say?

JENNIE. I says hell no. I ain't letting that motherfucker in my house. He says we'll maybe I'll just come in anyway. I says no you ain't. You step across this doorway I'll blow your motherfuckin balls off. I've got a twenty-two shotgun in that closet and I'm not afraid to use it. What's he do? He says, all sweet like, you wouldn't do that to me, baby. I says don't you call me your baby and you bet your hairy little ass I would too do that to you. And would you believe, after all that, motherfucker still tried to come in my house.

Faith looks down at Danny, plays with his tiny hands.

JENNIE. Sorry, girl, but you gotta know. . . . And while we're at it, there're something else I gotta tell you.

Faith looks worriedly at Jennie.

JENNIE. I want you to know that that bastard fucked Kelly Washington. And I ain't talking about before you two got together. I'm talking about like, two days ago.

FAITH. How do you know?

JENNIE. I know because I walked in on em.

FAITH. When?

JENNIE. Friday. Kelly invites me over to her house. I was on the phone with her at like five o'clock and she says come right over. So I come right over. I musta got there like fifteen minutes later and I walk in cause their screen door was wide open and there's Kelly with her legs spread and Mike's right there in the middle fucking his puny little dick off . . . owwwww! Those two lovebird motherfuckers were yelling their heads off. Before I even went in when I was standing on the porch I heard this real loud Ohhhhhhhh! sort of moan coming from inside. And I go in and they're grabbing each other's butt cheeks and all that, and Kelly's sweating all over the floor and shit. Laid her naked ass right down on the floor. Motherfuckers had Barney playing in the background. I love you . . . you love me . . . we're a happy fam-i-ly!

Jennie blows the horn and slams on the gas to squeeze through a tight spot between two cars. She lurches ahead of the other cars, swerving back into the left lane. Danny slams into Faith's chest on this acceleration, and Faith tries to cushion him.

JENNIE. Motherfuckers beware! There's a crazy woman on the road! You think I won't hit your ass in that fifty-three boat piece of shit? Haven't you ever heard of foreign cars? Hey! Your taillight's out, motherfucker! You better get that fixed before I run you over . . . otherwise they'll think it's your fault! I'll just say I'm sorry judge, but I couldn't see em because their taillight was out. Do you hear me, motherfucker?! Yeah, you with the friggin wax beehive . . . yeah . . . sixties-lookin motherfucker . . . hippie freak . . . hey, fucker! Get out of my lane, I'll run you over. Fuck you! Faith, hand me something!

FAITH. What?

JENNIE. Anything! Preferably something heavy so I can knock that motherfucker out.

Danny cries out. Jennie glances over at him.

JENNIE. Awww, Danny boy, your mommy's gonna take good care of you. Don't mind me, Aunt Jennie's just feeling a little INSANE right now!

A spring water truck is merging into their lane in front of them. Faith sees it, Jennie does not. They are barreling toward the truck. Faith screams:

FAITH. Jennie!

Jennie swerves to the right one lane into the spot where the truck came from as the truck takes its place in the left lane.

JENNIE. Spring water yuppie motherfuckers! I hope every one of you dies of tapeworm and piles and I hope you all go to hell and have to fuck your dog. Of course, I fucked my dog one time and it was actually kind of fun . . . they don't yelp as much as some cheating behind-the-back motherfuckers that I know! At least dogs shut up every once in a while! At least dogs don't cum so damn much!

The car approaches the crest of a gradual hill. Without turning her eyes from the road, Jennie comes to the point of resolve she has been teetering around as she drives, and she says, so that Faith can hear her, but mostly to herself:

JENNIE. After we get done with this, I'm going over Mike's house and kill that motherfucker.

The Cavalier speeds over the crest of the hill and along the highway.

INT. SUPERSTORE - DAY

Jennie, Faith, and Danny are in the flower section of a grocery superstore. Faith holds Danny. They are picking out flowers.

FAITH. What about these?

JENNIE. I don't know. Let Danny decide. Danny, do you like these? What kind are those anyway?

FAITH. It doesn't say. What kind of flowers are you supposed to take to a funeral, do you know?

JENNIE. I never took flowers to a funeral before.

FAITH. There's gotta be a certain kind you're supposed to take. Maybe we can find someone who knows what kind you're supposed to take.

A WOMAN SHOPPER is within earshot. Jennie glances at her.

JENNIE. Around here? These dumb motherfuckers probably wouldn't know a tulip from a trashcan.

The woman shopper scurries off.

FAITH. What about these?

JENNIE. Too ... fuck it, I don't know, but those are kind of wilted.

FAITH. Yeah ...

JENNIE. Is it carnations?

Jennie turns in the direction of the woman shopper, who is some distance from them now.

JENNIE. Are you supposed to take carnations to a funeral?

The shopper doesn't reply. Jennie mutters:

JENNIE. Bitch.

FAITH. Yeah, it is. It's carnations. I think.

JENNIE. Only one problem.

FAITH. What?

JENNIE. What color?

FAITH. I don't think it matters. Any color of carnations seems proper for a funeral.

JENNIE. Well ... not fuschia!

FAITH. Tell me something. Have you ever seen a fuschia carnation?

JENNIE. How am I supposed to know?

FAITH. Here we go. Red, white, yellow. Carnations. Which one do you want?

Jennie looks at the choices blankly. She shrugs.

FAITH. I think red.

JENNIE. I was thinking red, too.

Jennie selects a pre-wrapped arrangement of red carnations.

JENNIE. It's the color of blood.

Faith looks at Jennie skeptically.

JENNIE. What?

INT. SUPERSTORE - DAY

Jennie is standing directly in front of a sunglass rack, her face two inches from a try-on mirror. She is wearing a pair of purple sunglasses. Faith, holding Danny, stands a bit off to the side. Jennie takes off the purple glasses and puts on a pink pair. She is looking at herself in the mirror, but she talks to Faith. She takes off the pink pair, tries the purple ones again, then tries the pink ones again.

JENNIE. Purple . . . pink . . . purple . . . pink.

FAITH. We're gonna be late.

JENNIE. We're already late. You should get a pair.

FAITH. I hate sunglasses.

JENNIE. Then don't ever marry Jack Nicholson.

FAITH. I wasn't planning to.

Jennie turns to Faith. She is wearing both pair.

JENNIE. Good, because . . . I'm telling you this as your friend . . . I don't think it would work out.

FAITH. You're stalling.

JENNIE. If you refuse to help me decide, then you have to accept that this might take a while.

Jennie goes back to her myopic self-view in the mirror.

JENNIE. This is a crucial point we've arrived at. Purple . . . pink . . . purple . . . pink.

EXT. SUPERSTORE: PARKING LOT - DAY

Jennie, Faith, and Danny, come out of the superstore and walk through the parking lot toward the car. Jennie is wearing the purple sunglasses. They get in. Faith settles Danny on her lap. And old couple, a woman and an OLD DUDE, are getting into the car next to theirs, close to the driver's side of the Cavalier, where Jennie

sits. Jennie starts the car. The old dude leans down to speak to Jennie.

OLD DUDE. Pardon me, young lady, but do you have the time?
Jennie glares at him sardonically.

JENNIE. The time for what, you old pervert?
Jennie turns to Faith, but speaks mainly for the sake of the dude.

JENNIE. I think he wants to fuck us.
The old man repeats himself tentatively.

OLD DUDE. Just . . . the time . . .
Jenny turns to the old man and faces him for a moment in which he waits politely for her to respond. Jennie spits in his face and wipes her mouth with her arm.

JENNIE. Time for you, you old senile delinquent warbly-ass motherfucker? Yeah, I got time for you. Step away from the car. We have young impressionable ones aboard.

Jennie stars backing out of the parking space.

JENNIE. Stand back you pee-wad pee-wee ass-wipe peniswrinkle, before I accelerate my nineteen-eighty-four broken-down red crusty-looking piece of shit up your ass!

The old dude looks at Jennie, Faith, and Danny, bewildered.

JENNIE. I mean the car you old pervert! Stop looking at her son! He's not like that! He doesn't want your semen up his ass! It's still tender, he's only three months old. I bet you'd like to get yourself a piece of that, wouldn't you? But we're not gonna letcha.

Jennie looks at the old dude's wife.

JENNIE. Why dontcha see if she'll let you slip it up her ass once in a while? She looks like a bitch with a tight ass.

The woman is mortified. Faith is looking at Jennie and the couple. Faith is likewise mortified. Jennie backs the car out into the parking lot lane, then pauses, staring at the couple. She says one last thing to the man, in the mock-tone of a grandfather giving advice to his grandson, bouncing him on his knee. She says this like it is the summation of the whole of the universe in a catchphrase. She peers over the top of her purple sunglasses.

JENNIE. Try drinking five-dollar scotch with a two-bit whore sometime. See how far that gets you.

Jennie winks and smiles at the dude, then starts the car moving forward.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A small group of mourners stand around a wreathed casket near an open grave. Jennie's grandfather stands prominently among them. A MINISTER speaks to the crowd. Across the field of graves, at the cemetery entrance, Jennie and Faith trapse toward the ceremony, carrying, respectively, red carnations and Danny. Jennie has the purple sunglasses propped up on the top of her head.

JENNIE. How's he holding up?

FAITH. He's sleeping.

JENNIE. Good kid.

At the grave site, the minister continues speaking. Jenny and Faith come up quietly behind those already standing at the grave site. They stand behind everyone else. Faith stands still to keep Danny asleep. Jennie peers toward the front of the group. She and the minister make eye contact. Jennie's face is flushed. She looks a combination of angry and embarrassed. The minister keeps speaking. Jennie goes up between the people. She goes past her grandfather, who looks at her as she goes past. Jennie puts the flowers on the casket awkwardly, turns around, and goes to her grandfather. She puts her hands on his shoulders and kisses his forehead. He smiles at her, best he can, and Jennie goes back the way she came. When she gets to Faith, Faith is absorbed in looking at her baby. Jennie gets Faith's attention by tugging on her shirt-sleeve. Faith gets the point, and they all head, unhurriedly, back away from the ceremony toward the car. Many other graves in the cemetery have been recently adorned with flowers, flags or other colorful ornaments. The trees and grass are full summer green and the sun shines bright on them as they pass under patches of ground uncovered by trees.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE: FRONT - DAY

The red Cavalier is parked in front of Mike's house. Jennie and Faith are sitting listening to the radio, Jennie in the driver's seat. Danny is awake. Jennie is holding him up in front of her, talking to him.

JENNIE. Awww ...so cute ...so ...so ...cute. Arentcha?

Faith switches through the radio presets and settles on the oldies station. Her feet are propped on the dashboard, showing her blue Keds. She is chewing bubble gum, blowing huge translucent bubbles

before her face.

JENNIE. Just a cute little stinker. Stinker, stinker, stinker.
How long does it take to get to Mexico?

Faith lets a bubble pop on her face.

FAITH. Don't know.

As Faith retrieves the film of gum from her face, Jennie speaks to the baby:

JENNIE. You want to learn how to speak Spanish?

Faith rolls her head sideways against the headrest to look at Jennie. Her lips half-crack a smile. Jennie meets Faith's gaze knowingly. Jennie holds the baby out for Faith to take.

JENNIE. Take him. I'm going in.

FAITH. No you're not, not without me.

JENNIE. What about him?

FAITH. We'll leave him here.

JENNIE. Faith. Leave your baby in a car all by his self? I don't know what's gotten into you. Now take this child out my arms, I'm getting tired of holding him and I don't want to drop him.

Faith takes him.

JENNIE. Don't let me catch you coming in there after me.

Faith does not look convinced.

JENNIE. Swear to god you will not come in there.

FAITH. Okay, I won't.

JENNIE. Swear.

FAITH. I swear . . .

Jennie pulls her sunglasses down off the top of her head and sets them over her eyes. She breathes out, both hands on the steering wheel. The keys are in the ignition. Jennie turns to Faith.

JENNIE. Take care of that baby.

Jennie pulls the lever that unlatches the trunk, gets out of the car and goes around to the back. She opens the trunk, reaches in, and pulls out a handgun. It is a Glock 9mm, one of Mike's. Jennie stands at the open trunk holding the gun. She meditates verbally to herself:

JENNIE. . . . playing Russian Roulette among suicide kings with the absolute intention of a T.K.O . . .

Jennie pops a clip into the handle, closes the trunk, and tucks the gun into the waistline of her shorts, in the front, handle protruding obviously. She is not attempting to hide the gun, she's merely putting it there for easy carrying. Jennie closes the trunk and goes up the walk toward the house. Faith holds her baby, rock-

ing him to the music and singing along with the oldies. She does not look in Jennie's direction.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - DAY

Germane and Franklin are sitting on the couch playing video games, smoking and drinking. Germane's shoes are off. His dirty sock feet are propped on the table in front of the couch. The guys play their game blank-faced, hardly moving their eyes from the screen. With respect to the game, Franklin is the more relaxed of the two. Germane, it is clear by the greater stress of his movements, is feeling the pressure of losing the game.

GERMANE. Where the fuck is that motherfucker?

FRANKLIN. It's only been ten minutes.

Germane fucks up his game. He tosses/drops the controller and reaches for his beer.

GERMANE. Damn.

Franklin pauses the machine, and right then, the two of them look up because they hear the sound of the screen door closing, by its spring, on the door frame. Jenny is standing in the doorway with the light of the day behind the thin limbs of her body. The 9mm gun is still protruding obviously from the front waistline of her shorts. The boys notice it, but if they are surprised in this moment, it is not to see her with the gun, but to see her at all. Jennie's body twists like a child who has to pee, legs crossed, waist and shoulders pivoting on her ankles. She smiles at them, her head cocked way to the side, showing her teeth. Her speech is strained.

JENNIE. Where's Mike?

Germane swallows his beer. Franklin leans all the way back in his chair.

GERMANE. Mike?—

FRANKLIN. Mike is running a small errand which will only take a few minutes would you like to . . . have a seat? . . .

Franklin holds up his game controller.

FRANKLIN. Play a little? . . .

Germane offers Jennie his controller, as he is closer to her. Germane is oblivious to any danger. Franklin is starting to catch on. Jennie's face goes blank; her exaggerated smile drops completely away and she is just fed-up-Jennie, Jennie-with-an-attitude.

She looks down at the gun in her pants, then back at Franklin. Germane sees them staring each other down. Jennie is waiting for Franklin to speak. Franklin doesn't say anything. Germane blinks.

GERMANE. Why do you have a gun?

Jennie laughs. Germane and Franklin exchange glances. Franklin gets up.

JENNIE. Sit. Sit sit sit sit sit . . . don't you worry your little heads about it.

Germane and Franklin move toward her.

JENNIE. You boys got a funny way of behaving in situations like this.

She nonchalantly pulls the gun out of her pants and waves it in their general direction. Germane and Franklin have assumed strategic postures. Germane makes a decisive move toward Jennie. She stops him by pointing the gun straight at his head.

JENNIE. Nuh—ah—

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE: FRONT - DAY

Faith sits in the passenger seat of the car rocking her baby gingerly in her arms. A new song comes on.

FAITH. Ooh . . . ooh . . . I've been waiting for this one all day.

She turns up the volume slightly, making sure it doesn't wake Danny. Then her head turns away from her child. Multiple gunshot sounds come from the direction of the house.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is perfectly still. The television has been knocked over. Beer has recently spilled. The TV is still on, displaying the paused video game screen. Franklin lies on his back, eyes open, slumped against the table in front of the couch. He has been shot in the face and chest. His cigarette is on the carpet near his body. Germane is lying face down, his head near the door, his feet crumpled under and behind him. He has been shot through the chest and then, from above, in the back of the head. His arms are folded under his body. The screen door opens slowly. The creak of the springs is the eminent sound. Faith comes in, carrying Danny, proceeding with measured, lightly-treading steps, avoiding touching any aspect

of the mess and being sure she doesn't accidentally trip while holding the baby. Faith looks at Germane and Franklin as she passes through the room. She is nonreactive. She passes over their bodies toward the entrance to Mike's and her bedroom.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: MIKE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jennie is rummaging through the dresser. Faith walks up beside her, looking over her shoulder. Jennie doesn't look up. She is loading credit cards, cash, handguns, and bags of drugs into a black Nike duffel bag.

JENNIE. How's he doin'?

Faith glances at the face of her child.

FAITH. He's sleeping. You need a hand?

JENNIE. Naw . . . I got this taken care of.

She empties the last of the dresser drawer into the now-bulging bag. The last few items she takes from the dresser drawer are the check boxes. She sees her grandfather's antique pistol, but leaves it there. She turns around. She and Faith exchange the glance of partners. Jennie heads toward the door, looks out into the living room. Facing away from Faith, facing into the living room, Jennie says

JENNIE. You know what this means . . .

FAITH. What?

JENNIE. We're gonna need more carnations.

Jennie hears clattering behind her. She turns around. Faith is standing in the closet doorway. She has Danny in one arm. She is leaning into the closet, pulling out an all-black shotgun with a barrel as big around as a silver dollar. She grips it by the cocking sheath, and, as she leans back out of the closet, she slides body of the gun up, then down, relative to the sheath, cocking the gun. Faith walks out through the bedroom door into the living room. As she passes Jennie, she says, without making eye contact:

FAITH. Help yourself.

Jennie goes to the closet and surveys its contents. She reaches in and pulls out the AK-47, throws the strap over her shoulder, and follows Faith out of the room.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - DAY

In the living room, Faith and Jennie carefully step over the boys' bodies on their way toward the front door. Jennie focuses on the two dead bodies. She sees their faces, the cigarette, still burning, laying beside Franklin. She sees the holes in the back of Germane's head. She sees the TV, their game still on pause, and the neglected game controllers strewn idly before the system. Faith goes to each of the bodies, in turn, and, switching the shotgun to the hand whose arm still holds Danny, retrieves a wallet from a pocket of each of the dead boys. At the screen door, she switches the shotgun back into her free hand and delicately pushes on the screen to let herself out. Jennie is close behind.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL ZONE - DAY

Jennie's red Cavalier is parked in a railyard by a factory. Jennie, Faith, and Danny are inside. The girls sit facing straight forward in the front seats. They watch track workers move along the cars of a train, performing inspections. There is a long silence between them. Then Faith looks down at Danny.

FAITH. You need your diaper changed.

Faith places Danny on the back seat and then climbs back to change his diaper. She goes through the business of changing him while she and Jennie talk. Faith is a moment into the diaper-changing process before Jennie says

JENNIE. If shit goes down ... If shit goes down I don't want you having any part of this.

FAITH. But—

JENNIE. No no no. Don't argue. You've got a baby, Faith. You understand what that means?

FAITH. ... Are we still going to Mexico?

JENNIE. Yeah we'll go that way but I'm just saying ... if we don't make it—

FAITH. We'll make it.

JENNIE. Yeah yeah yeah ... we'll probably make it—

FAITH. We will make it—

JENNIE. I'm just saying ... if we don't. Mexico's a long way from here and I don't exactly know how to get there, do you? It's not exactly like I go there every day.

FAITH. ... Do you need a passport to go to Mexico?

JENNIE. Exactly. Do you need a passport to go to Mexico? That's the sort of thing I'm talking about. These things just come up, you never know ... a flat tire ... running out of gas in the middle of nowhere ... snakes ... I mean, god knows what we'll run into. How bout extra diapers for the kid? How many we got?

FAITH. ... Two but I'm sure you can buy diapers in Mexico.

JENNIE. How can you be sure? I mean, it's not like the Holiday Inn down there. This is Mexico, okay, it's not like they have a seven-eleven on every street corner. Can you buy diapers in Mexico. I ... don't ... know. Can you buy diapers in Mexico? Also, another problem ... Spanish. As far as I know I took French and as far as I can remember ... you took French too. And as far as I can remember, Spanish is still the national language of Mexico, so that makes the two of us ... right about ... el fucked. Standing on the side of the road holding a taco.

FAITH. We could to go to Canada.

This is unthinkable to Jennie.

JENNIE. No. No. I won't have that kid growing up Canadian.

FAITH. A lot of people speak English in Mexico, I'm sure.

Instantly met by the confidently nonsensical:

JENNIE. Yeah, but do they speak it *well*?

Faith has nothing to say to that. Jennie lets the question hang in the air for a moment. Then she loses interest in it herself and begins tapping her hands on the steering wheel and bobbing her head to some internal music. Faith finishes up with Danny and moves herself and him back into the front seat. Faith settles in with Danny while Jennie entertains herself. Then Jennie turns the ignition and the car starts. Jennie turns to Faith and stares at her expectantly. Faith looks at Jennie, looks away, looks at Danny, looks out the window, then looks back at Jennie. They stare at each other for a second.

JENNIE. Well, don't you wanna know where we're going?

FAITH. ... Where?

JENNIE. The mall!

When she says this, Jennie throws the car into reverse and backs up real fast. Faith doesn't have her seatbelt on. Faith and Danny lurch forward in the seat. Faith's hand goes out for the dash to stop them.

INT. MALL: CLOTHING STORE - DAY

The three of them are in a clothing store like Gadzooks. They try on zillions of shirts and blouses and sun dresses. They trade off holding Danny while the other one tries on clothes. Store clerks help them pick out clothing, help them by using poles to bring clothes down off high racks so they can try them on. Faith hands Danny to one of the clerks who is helping them. They put back clothes. They go into the dressing cubicles alone, then together. They take off their clothes and put on new ones in the dressing cubicle. They kiss each other on the lips, then go out and model their clothing for Danny and the clerks. When they leave the store, Faith and Jennie are each carrying two bags of clothing. Additionally, Jennie carries the black Nike duffel bag. They are wearing new shoes and clothes they bought at the store, pastel sun dresses and black leather clubbing boots, new sunglasses, the works.

INT. MALL - DAY

They walk past a restaurant entrance in the mall. Jennie stops and stares inside. Faith doesn't see the restaurant, doesn't see Jennie stop. She keeps going. Jennie realizes Faith has gone ahead. She runs forward and drags Faith back to the restaurant entrance. Faith resists.

FAITH. No.

JENNIE. Yes.

FAITH. No.

JENNIE. Yes!

Jennie drags Faith and Danny into the restaurant past an empty host stand.

INT. MALL: RESTAURANT - DAY

Faith and Jennie sit at a table in the mall restaurant, It's the middle of the afternoon and almost no one is there. Faith holds Danny. A WAITRESS leans down to look at Danny. Danny stares blankly into space. Faith bounces the baby slightly on her lap and smiles at the waitress. The waitress is Faith's age.

FAITH. I think he likes you.

WAITRESS. Awww ...he's so cute! How long have you had him?

FAITH. He just came out about three months ago.

WAITRESS. Awww ... he's so sweet. I wanna have one.

JENNIE. Fraid we can't help you there, sweetie. Why don't you go check on our food? Will ya? Thanks ...

The waitress goes away, hurt. Faith glares at Jennie for it.

FAITH. What is your problem?

JENNIE. My problem? My problem, Faith? My problem is I just spent the morning at my grandmother's funeral and then I barged into the house of the motherfucker who did it and even though I got to shoot two of the motherfuckers who did it, the real motherfucker I wanted wasn't there ... that's my problem, Faith.

FAITH. You don't have to take it out on her.

Under the table, where Faith can't see, Jennie takes a 9mm out of the Nike duffel bag. She fumbles with it while she talks.

JENNIE. You know what your weakness is, Faith?

FAITH. ... What?

JENNIE. ... You're not willing to kill.

FAITH. What?

JENNIE. That's right. You're not willing to kill. And sooner or later, it's gonna be you and some motherfucker at the point of a gun.

Faith steers her eyes away from Jennie, looking at her baby.

JENNIE. And what're you gonna do then, Faith? What, are, you, gonna, do? What are you gonna do about your baby?

FAITH. ... What do you mean, what am I going to do?

JENNIE. I mean, Faith, what are you gonna do ... about your baby. What are you gonna do when it's you and some crazy motherfucker and your baby. You hear what I'm sayin, Faith? Because one of these days it'll come time for you to see what kind of metal your guns are made of. If it's steel it ain't nothing but steel. If it's glass, it ain't nothing but glass. It ain't until you get hit ... that you know which one you are.

The waitress comes to the table with a tray carrying five plates of food. Jennie puts the gun back in the duffel bag.

WAITRESS. Here you go.

FAITH. Thank you.

The waitress smiles at Faith. Jennie smiles at the waitress. The waitress sets all the plates on their table. When she is done the small table is overloaded with food.

WAITRESS. Do you need anything else right now?

JENNIE. Actually, yeah ... is your bar open?

The waitress looks over at the bar. No one is sitting there. No one is tending bar.

WAITRESS. What would you like?

JENNIE. Some kind of—just a martini or Scotch or something.

Faith looks at Jennie curiously.

WAITRESS. Just a martini or . . . something?

JENNIE. Anything, honey, just make it fast, okay?

Jennie asks Faith:

JENNIE. You want anything?

Faith speaks to the waitress.

FAITH. No thank you.

The waitress leaves.

FAITH. That's what I'm talking about.

Jennie leans across the table fast.

JENNIE. I know, Faith. I know. But what I'd really like right about now is if you could just cut me some fucking slack.

Jennie leans back. Faith is not happy with her. Jennie tries to recompose herself. She settles on getting up from the table without a word and walking toward the bathroom.

INT. MALL: RESTAURANT - DAY

The waitress punches some buttons on the register. The girls' check prints out. The waitress studies its contents while she goes toward their table. We can see the contents of their meal, in restaurant abbreviations, scrolling past jerkily in the waitress' view while she walks. CHK FAJ 7.99, BEAN BURR 6.99, etc. She gets to their table and sets the check between Faith and Jennie. Their plates are empty. Jennie has had several drinks. Faith is leaning against the side of the booth, holding Danny. Danny is asleep. Faith looks close to sleep herself. Jennie is slumped forward, her elbows on the table, laughing quietly, insanely, to herself. She looks up drunkly as the waitress leaves the check, and says, even though the waitress has said nothing:

JENNIE. No, we're fine, honey, just leave the ole . . . damage . . . and we'll see what we can do to help you out.

The waitress walks away. Faith reaches over to pull the check closer but Jennie does the same, faster, interrupting Faith's motion, and Jennie pulls the check to look at it herself.

JENNIE. Country fried steak eleven ninety-nine?! Buff. chick? Eight ninety-nine?!

She yells after the waitress.

JENNIE. Hey. Hey! We're gonna have some questions about some of these line items, sweetie, you better pull up a chair ...

Jennie speaks confidentially to Faith.

JENNIE. You better wait outside ... don't want to upset the baby. I'll take care of this.

Too tired to argue, Faith gingerly gets up with Danny, grabs the baby bag and a shopping bag, and passes the waitress, who is waiting in the aisle for Faith to get up. Faith goes out toward the entryway into the mall. The waitress approaches Jennie cautiously. Jennie motions for her to sit down.

JENNIE. Seriously, honey, better have a seat.

The waitress looks at Jennie like she's crazy.

INT. MALL - DAY

A male SECURITY GUARD is bent over the information desk talking to a FEMALE WORKER behind the counter. He is not looking at the person he's talking to, but instead browsing around the mall. He sees Faith exit the restaurant and walk to a bench in the mall's common area.

SECURITY GUARD. ... these are real big guys, I'm talking about frickin, Harley dudes, you know, and me and these, like fifty frat dudes we're just like ... wailing on em, I mean, they didn't have a chance ...

Faith sets her bags down, then sits on the bench. The security guard turns sharply to the female worker, and says, with affectation:

SECURITY GUARD. Would you excuse me?

He leaves the information desk and saunters over to Faith at the bench. He walks straight up to her and stands right in front of her until, because of the shadow and proximity of his body, Faith looks up from her baby to the guard. He looks at her quasi-charmingly. She looks at him blankly. He looks at her pointedly. She looks around, confused.

FAITH. What?

The security guard makes an elaborate show of sitting beside her on the bench. They are both quiet for a moment, then the guard speaks, as though the previous moment hadn't happened and it's their first moment of interaction:

SECURITY GUARD. Is that your baby?

FAITH. No, I found him in the trashcan.

INT. MALL: RESTAURANT - DAY

Jennie is sitting at the table by herself. She counts out fifty dollar bills onto the table. She counts through a stack, picks it up, then counts two out on the table. She packs the rest of the money up into one of the shopping bags, gathers her things, and stands to go. She turns back to the table, picks up her last drink, and sucks the last bit out of it through a straw. She looks at the two fifty dollar bills. She puts her drink down and takes back one of the bills and puts it into her pocket. She starts to go again, then stops again, looks around, then takes the other fifty and puts it in her pocket. She takes her shopping bags and goes. On the way out, Jennie passes the waitress, who is on her way to the table. Jennie is super-cheerful:

JENNIE. Bye!

The waitress doesn't say anything. Jennie looks back after they pass and then hurries out into the mall.

INT. MALL - DAY

Jennie rushes up to Faith and the security guard, who are still sitting next to each other on the bench. The security guard is leaning in close to Faith, talking to her. Faith is leaning back, away from the guard. Jennie stands between them, cutting off the guard's advances.

JENNIE. Sorry, Cassanova, but the little lady's gotta get on down the road. Better luck next year.

Faith is relieved. She starts to gather her things. The guard is startled by Jennie's manner.

JENNIE. That's right. Scoot back, will ya? Gimme some room? Girl, we gotta blow this bitch, right now, gotta go, let me help you with that. He still sleeping? Good boy, keep on sleeping . . . we gotta get this little wagon back on the trail, you know what I'm saying, sheriff?

Jennie takes the guard's hand and shakes it in parting. She smiles at him widely.

JENNIE. Gotta mosey on down the road, saddle up the ole six cylinder, but we'll stop by and see ya if we're ever in these parts again, okay cowboy?

Someone we haven't seen before, the RESTAURANT MANAGER, comes out of the restaurant waving the girls' check. He yells loudly and accusingly and approaches them.

RESTAURANT MANAGER. Miss! You forgot your check!

The security guard and Faith both look at Jennie, surprised.

RESTAURANT MANAGER. Your check? You wanna come back inside and take care of this?

JENNIE. Oh, yes . . . my check . . .

Jennie grabs the check from the restaurant manager and rips it up.

JENNIE. I want you to take this check . . .

She tries to hand it to him but he won't take it. She stuffs it into his shirt pocket.

JENNIE. . . and when you get some time to yourself, I want you to take this check . . .

She squeezes the manager's nose between her fingers. He jumps back, offended. Jennie advances on him and, as she speaks her next line, kicks him in the shin, then swats him with a shopping bag.

JENNIE. . . and shove it up your MOTHERFUCKING ASS!!

Senior citizens in the mall turn their heads to see what's going on. The information desk worker picks up a phone and dials "0". The guard pulls Jennie off the restaurant manager. Faith tries hard to blend into the background. The restaurant manager tries to recover his composure. Jennie squirms in the security guard's arms and manages to wriggle herself around so she's facing him by the time the restaurant manager is done speaking.

RESTAURANT MANAGER. It's a criminal offense to walk out on a bill. It's stealing. Ronnie, I want you to detain this woman while I call the police.

Jennie couches her body seductively against the security guard. She speaks an inch from his face, holding his eyes with her gaze.

JENNIE. Ronnie?

SECURITY GUARD. Ronald, really.

JENNIE. It's beautiful . . .

The restaurant manager looks confused.

JENNIE. We can take care of this without him, don't you think?

The security guard speaks to the restaurant manager.

SECURITY GUARD. I think . . . we've got this . . . I'll take care of . . . we'll bring her in there in a minute and she can pay the bill. No problem, okay? Have her right in, get it all straightened out.

JENNIE. Yes we are . . . gonna get it all straightened out.

Jennie smiles at the guard and holds him tighter. The restaurant manager reluctantly turns away.

RESTAURANT MANAGER. Okay but miss? Miss I am calling the police, since you struck me.

Jennie looks over her shoulder at him blissfully and answers him with a “hmmm” sound, then turns back to Ronnie. She straightens his collar.

JENNIE. You know what, Ronnie?

SECURITY GUARD. What?

JENNIE. You did the right thing. I’m proud of you.

Ronnie looks at her happily. Jennie then speaks where Faith can’t hear her.

JENNIE. And I want to make it up to you.

The guard perks up even more.

JENNIE. Would you like that?

The guard nods cautiously, then looks self-consciously at the information desk worker, who is watching them. Jennie follows Ronnie’s gaze then manually turns his head back to look at her.

JENNIE. Is she your girlfriend?

SECURITY GUARD. I used to like her.

JENNIE. Does she like you?

SECURITY GUARD. I—

JENNIE. Cause if she does she’s not gonna like what I’m about to let you do to me.

The guard looks at Jennie, bewildered.

JENNIE. That’s right. She’s gonna be real motherfuckin pissed. But to tell you the truth, Ronald . . .

Jennie looks over at the female worker, grabbing Ronnie’s crotch.

JENNIE. I really don’t care.

She looks back at Ronnie.

JENNIE. Do you?

Ronnie shakes his head.

INT. MALL: BATHROOM - DAY

Jennie drags the security guard, holding his hand, down the long hallway leading to the mall bathrooms. Faith stands with Danny at the mouth of the hall. Jennie and the guard approach the men’s bathroom. Jennie swings the door open, holding it open with her foot. She bangs loudly on the open door with the palm of her hand.

JENNIE. Listen up, boys, I need everybody out of this bathroom in nineteen seconds. Let's go! Let's go! I've got a security inspection team coming through here in . . .

She looks at her watch that isn't there.

JENNIE. . . about yesterday so let's get the peters back in the pockets and get a fucking move on!

One guy walks slowly out of the bathroom, looking suspiciously at Jennie. Naturally, Jennie is unphased.

JENNIE. Let's go! I don't need you to think about it I just need you to do it so let's get it on down the motherfucking hall! Thank you. Thank you.

She shoos another guy out of the bathroom.

JENNIE. We all clear in there? . . . Don't let me come in there and find you hiding out in one of them stalls, I swear I will cut your dick off, I don't care if you're three years old.

No one else comes out. Jennie winks semi-seductively at the security guard and leads him into the bathroom, door closing behind them. She leads him into a stall and pushes him up against the wall. She rubs his crotch, then starts to undo his belt. She leans up and almost kisses him, backing away at the last minute. Their interaction is absurd. Jennie is gross as she mock seduces him. The guard is pathetically wrapt to her weak seduction. Then, suddenly, Jennie opens her eyes real wide and bares her teeth. The guard is freaked out. Jennie backs out of the stall. The door swings half closed. The guard approaches the stall door and when Jennie sees the door move inward to open further she kicks the door as hard as she can with one leg. It slams into the security guard's face and knocks him back into the toilet. His arm hits the lever and the toilet flushes.

INT. MALL - DAY

Jennie comes running along the long bathroom hallway toward Faith.

JENNIE. We gotta go. We gotta go! Can you run with him?

Jennie takes all the shopping bags from Faith.

FAITH. Maybe.

JENNIE. Well give it a try, please, because what we gotta do right now is hit the motherfucking road.

They run toward the exterior door of the mall. The restaurant manager comes out of the restaurant waving fragments of the girls' check and yelling at them.

RESTAURANT MANAGER. Hey! Hey! Where's Ronnie?
Stop! Stop!

The girls go through the exterior door and the door closes behind them.

EXT. COMMERCIAL BOULEVARD - DAY

Jennie is driving, with Faith and Danny in the car, on a 35-mile-an-hour residential boulevard. Jennie is driving a little too fast. The girls are laughing.

FAITH. What did you do to him?

JENNIE. I sucked his dick!

FAITH. I know you didn't suck his dick. You weren't in there long enough.

JENNIE. He came fast!

FAITH. You did not suck his dick.

JENNIE. Girl, I still got cum in my mouth.

Jennie leans over to kiss Faith.

JENNIE. Wanna taste?

Faith looks like she's considering it, then her eyes widen, seeing that their car is fast approaching the one in front.

FAITH. Watch out!

Jennie swerves around the car.

JENNIE. Fuck, girl, why didn't you say something?

FAITH. I did!

They are both stressed to the point of hilarity. They laugh, and then say nothing for a moment while Jennie drives and Faith checks on the baby in her lap. Then Faith lifts her head and looks at the road.

FAITH. Was his dick big?

She looks at Jennie. Jennie looks back, then busts out laughing.

JENNIE. How the fuck am I supposed to know? I didn't even kiss that motherfucker.

A cop pulls out behind the red Cavalier and turns on its lights and sirens, positioning himself behind their car. Jennie looks at the speedometer. It reads 55.

JENNIE. Aww . . . fuck.

Jennie hits the gas.

FAITH. What are you doing?

Jennie is checking the mirrors and suddenly intent on the road.

JENNIE. Gonna outrun this motherfucker.

FAITH. No, Jennie! You can't—

JENNIE. We have to! I don't know how they found us but we ain't stopping here.

Danny starts crying.

FAITH. They didn't find us—

JENNIE. What do you call this then?

Jennie runs through the beginning of a red light. Cars on the crossstreet jerk to a halt. Faith looks at Danny worriedly.

FAITH. It's just for speeding! They didn't find us ...

JENNIE. They know! They know!

FAITH. They don't know. This one doesn't know.

JENNIE. Trust me, Faith, they're always talking back and forth on those little walkie talkie things ... they know. Every cop in a hundred miles is gonna be looking for this car!

Faith looks at Jennie cockeyed. The car approaches a highway on-ramp. There is an intercession between them and the on-ramp. They have a red light. Cars are passing at a medium density from both directions on the crossstreet. Jennie's fingers tap the steering wheel nervously.

JENNIE. What are the chances ... what are the chances ...

Faith looks at Jennie with raw fear but doesn't have time to say anything before Jennie slams on the gas and their car barrels toward the intersection. Faith braces herself against the seat with one hand and holds Danny with the other. Jennie, Faith, and the screaming kid fly through the intersection in the red Cavalier, narrowly missing cars on the crossstreet who don't have any time to react to the surprise of the red Cavalier zooming across the intersection and onto the ramp. The Cavalier merges into highway traffic.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Jennie swerves across all lanes into the far left lane, between late afternoon traffic, traffic approaching rush hour. Faith holds her baby tightly. Jennie comes close to hitting a truck in front of them as she changes lanes.

FAITH. Watch it!

Jennie enters into a series of passes. She switches to the right one lane, zips around a car blocking her in the fast lane, then switches left into the fast lane. The girls do not speak. They both check the rear mirrors for the cop.

JENNIE. I think we lost him.

FAITH. I doubt it.

JENNIE. You think they can keep up with me?

Jennie speeds up.

FAITH. Slow down!

JENNIE. You want em to catch us?

FAITH. We're gonna wreck.

Jennie sees the fear in Faith's eyes. Danny is crying.

JENNIE. Hang in there, Danny boy, Aunt Jennie's just gotta outrun one little coppertop, then we're gonna park this horsey back at the stables.

Jennie zips between two cars.

FAITH. Fuck! You're going too fast!

JENNIE. We're getting off at the next exit, chill.

A different cop car comes into view from around the truck behind them. Its sirens are audible. Jennie lowers her head to get a better view of them in the side mirror. Faith leans forward in her seat to do the same. The original cop car comes into view in a different lane. Jennie tightens her grip on the steering wheel. Faith glares expectantly at Jennie. Jennie presses the gas pedal all the way in . . . her piece of crap car will not go any faster. She swerves maniacally across the highway, across all lanes, entering the rightmost lane, then crossing over it onto the shoulder so she can pass everyone. Shredded tires and other debris slams into the bottom of the chassis. Jennie's jaw is clenched. Faith's arms are tight around her crying baby. They come around a string of several cars blocking their entrance back into the rightmost lane. Jennie starts changing lanes immediately in front of the first car of the string. She is halfway through the lane change when they hear a gunshot. Their front left tire has been popped by a bullet from a third cop car that is now visible on the highway, even with them, a couple lanes to the left. One cop drives; the other COP steadies his hand, his pistol aimed at the Cavalier. He puts down the gun, picks up a megaphone and aims that at the girls as they all speed along the road. Jennie is mad. Faith is shocked quiet.

COP. Stop the car. Pull over now.

Jennie struggles to maintain control of the Cavalier. Most of the cars they now approach have pulled over to the side lanes. Jennie and the cops maintain the middle of the road.

COP. I'm warning you.

Jennie maintains her course. Looking forward, she casually rests her left arm on the window opening, sticking her middle finger

up at the megaphone COP. A cop in a cruiser behind them leans out the window and steadies his arm, pistol in hand. He takes aim at the rear right tire of the Cavalier. The bullet hits. It blows out the tire, throwing Jennie's car into a chaotic trajectory. During the realization of this trajectory, Jennie reaches a new level of wack. It is clear by the look on her face, as she tries to control the car, still tries to further their escape, that she is truly enjoying this moment in a transcendent, here-now sort of way. Faith braces herself as best she can in her seat. Against her best efforts, Danny slips out of Faith's protective hold. The rims of the wheels with busted tires skid and spark against the surface of the road. The car comes griding to a halt. The cop cars rapidly slow and then screech to a halt not far from the grounded Cavalier. Civilian vehicles behind this mess slow and stop further back. The cops jump out of their cars and squat in protective positions on the far sides of their long hoods, arms extended, pistols in hand and trained on Jennie's car. The megaphone cop has his megaphone laid on the ground beside him. His gun is pointed at the car. Inside the car, Danny gives a cry. Its volume is low relative to the sirens and all the noise of the previous moments. Faith looks him over and is glad that he is not hurt. Jennie shakes her head, regaining her sense of place. Faith unbuckles her seatbelt. The girls both look around. They see the cop cars stopped in an arc, visible through their front windshield. The megaphone COP's voice comes over among the sirens.

COP. Get out of the car, slowly, with your hands above your head.

Faith stares down at the door of the car. Jennie's head is raised. She is gazing at nothing in particular. They both sit still for a moment. Then Faith makes the first move to get out. Jennie reaches out a hand and puts it on Faith's body, stopping her. Faith sees Jennie is looking her in the eyes. Jennie voice is solemn, an order, but more an order in that it is unusual to hear sincere pleading coming from Jennie.

JENNIE. Don't you say a word about Franklin and Germane. That's my problem, not yours.

The look in Faith's eyes is her acknowledgement and her agreement. They turn away from each other and slowly get out of the car. Jennie puts her hands over her head. Faith keeps both of hers on her baby. Cars on the other side of the highway have slowed to look at the drama unfolding here. There is no movement on the side with the red Cavalier, except for two girls walking slowly away from their car toward the arc of cops.

EXT. JENNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

It is still summer. Faith walks up a residential street, stepping around children playing on the sidewalk. She veers into the lawn of Jennie's house, where an old-fashioned car is parked. She goes up the steps to the front porch, opens the screen door, and goes inside.

INT. JENNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

There is no one in the living room. The television is off. Faith carries Danny into the kitchen, glancing at the dining room. There is a glass pitcher of lemonade sitting on the kitchen counter, moisture beads clinging to its surface. A keyring holding a single key is sitting on the counter. Faith goes through the kitchen and out to the back yard.

EXT. JENNIE'S HOUSE: BACKYARD - DAY

Jennie's grandfather is sitting in a lawnchair, head down, with a forgotten cup of lemonade in his hand. He looks up when he sees Faith. He smiles a forced smile. Faith walks until she is standing in front of his chair, facing him. Jennie's grandfather takes a good look at Faith. Faith is wearing a sun dress and sandals, both purchases from the mall store. The daylight on her skin, the virility of the pose of one holding a baby, and a genuinely positive outlook on Faith's visage all work together toward stirring some optimism in the old man.

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. Well, don't you just look fine.

Faith smiles.

FAITH. You're sure you don't mind watching him?

Jennie's grandfather stands up, motioning for her to hand him the baby.

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. Don't be silly. Let me see him. Might have to get him something to eat, he looks too thin—

FAITH. There are bottles in his bag, I left it in the kitchen. He's not eating solid food yet—

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. I'm just teasing.

He holds Danny up for demonstration.

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. I've raised a few of these myself you know.

FAITH. Yeah . . .

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. I want you to drive our car.

FAITH. . . . That's okay—

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. I'm not going to have you ride the bus when that thing's just sitting there doing nobody any good.

Faith kisses Jennie's grandfather on the cheek and turns to go.

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. Keys are on the table.

FAITH. I'll be back in two hours.

She takes a last glance at Danny and heads toward the kitchen door while Jennie's grandfather looks at the baby in his hands. Danny looks around alertly. The old man says, without looking away from the boy:

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. Say hi to Jennie for me.

Faith slows a bit in her approach of the door, but doesn't stop or look back. She goes into the house and the screen door shuts behind her. The old man and the baby stand in the back yard.

EXT. JENNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Out front, Faith goes up to the old-fashioned car. It has been kept in good condition. It is a convertible. The top is down. Faith looks around, as if afraid someone will think she's stealing it, then unlocks the door and gets in. She starts the car, and, with some difficulty, puts it in gear and drives down the road.

INT. PRISON: VISITING ROOM - DAY

A prison visiting room. Plexiglass. Desks and telephones. Faith is waiting on one side. A female guard brings Jennie into the other side of the room and leads her to the chair opposite Faith. Jennie is wearing prison clothing. Her hands are cuffed in front of her. Her orange hair is frizzy as ever. She sits down sloppily in the chair. Faith sits straight in hers. The guard unlocks Jennie's handcuffs. Jennie wrings out her wrists, then picks up the phone. Faith picks up the phone on her end. They sit for a beat before Jennie blurts out.

JENNIE. Where's the kid?

FAITH. I left him at your grandfather's.

JENNIE. What!? You know that man don't know what to do with a child! You better hope you get him back in one piece.

Jennie is quiet. Faith is uncomfortable. She doesn't know what to say.

FAITH. You doing okay?

Jennie looks back at the guard.

JENNIE. These motherfuckers don't know what hit em.

Faith chuckles. Another uncomfortable silence.

FAITH. Are you sure you're okay?

JENNIE. Faith . . .!

It sounds like Jennie's going to yell at her, but then she just shakes her head, laughs into her lap, then says gently:

JENNIE. Faith, you better be glad you're prettier than me cause you sure as hell ain't any smarter. You don't have anything to worry about in this thing, okay? If it was you then it would be you but it was me so now it's me. That's all it is. Hit on seventeen. Bust. Gotta cash in the chips for a while, so just shut the fuck up about it for five seconds, alright, I'm sick of thinking about this place and I wanna think about you right now.

They are quiet for a while.

FAITH. I broke up with Mike.

JENNIE. It's about fucking time. . . . You still living with him?

Faith doesn't say anything. Doesn't nod or shake her head.

JENNIE. It ain't breaking up with the guy if you still live with him. Faith . . .

Faith doesn't say anything. In response to that nothing, Jennie says:

JENNIE. And don't say you don't have no place to go because there's always someplace to go. You just gotta decide to go . . .

Faith is again quiet. Jennie continues.

JENNIE. Deciding . . . that's the hardest part of anything, really. Once you decide something, it's practically done. All you gotta do then is sit back, put your cards on the table, and see how things play out . . . Some motherfuckers be runnin around, waiting to see what you're gonna do, worrying about what they're gonna do . . . those the ones haven't decided yet . . . once you decide . . . ain't nothin else left to do.

They're both quiet for a while. Then Faith gets up. The guard comes over and re-cuffs Jennie. Jennie stares up at Faith through the plexiglass, and Faith stares back at Jennie, looking down.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Faith drives the old-fashioned car along the highway listening to oldies on the radio.

INT. JENNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Faith comes in through the screen door into the living room of Jennie's grandfather's house.

FAITH. Hello . . . ! How was he? Did he behave?

She goes through the living room and the kitchen and out the back door.

EXT. JENNIE'S HOUSE: BACKYARD - DAY

Faith is startled, in horror, at what she sees, and at what she does not see. She rushes to the middle of the yard where the lawnchair has been overturned. It lays flat in the grass. Jennie's grandfather lies face down in the grass. He is wearing one of Mike's neoprene spook masks. His hands have been bound together behind his back with a plastic zip-tie; his feet have been bound together similarly. Danny is not around. Faith rushes over to him.

FAITH. Oh my god! Are you okay?

She pulls off the mask. He is alive.

FAITH. Where's Danny? Where's Danny!?

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. He took him! He said he was—

FAITH. How long ago?

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. Right after you left.

FAITH. Where did he go?

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. I don't know!

Faith runs into the house. She fumbles around in the kitchen for scissors or a knife. She runs back to the old man in the grass and is sobbing sporadic, hysteric sobs as she cuts his hands and legs free.

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. Go. Go see if you can find him. I'll call the police.

She has cut his hands free. He takes the knife from her.

JENNIE'S GRANDFATHER. Go! Go now!

Faith runs through the yard and into the house.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE: FRONT - DAY

Faith pulls up in front of Mike's house driving Jennie's grandfather's old-fashioned car. There is POLICE LINE—DO NOT CROSS tape all over the front yard and the porch. Faith gets out of the car and goes past all the tape in the yard. She comes to the porch. She can hear Danny crying. She goes up the steps. Tape has been pulled away from the entrance. She opens the screen. The inside door is ajar. She pushes it open all the way.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: LIVING ROOM - DAY

Danny is laying on the floor by himself, crying. Faith rushes over to him, kneels beside him, and starts to pick him up.

FAITH. Oh, baby! Baby! Are you okay?

She sees Mike's boots coming to a stop. Mike towers over her. Faith looks up to see his hand coming down in a sweep to hit her on the head. The blow knocks her out. She crumples on the floor beside Danny. Mike rolls Faith over. He pulls out a zip-tie and fastens her hands together. Then he grabs her by her bound wrists and drags her unconscious body across the living room. Mike drags Faith into the bedroom and shuts the door. Danny lies crying near the couch.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE: MIKE'S BEDROOM - DAY

When Faith returns to consciousness, she is lying naked on Mike's bed. Her dress has been cut off with a knife. It lies on the floor in shreds. Faith can hear Danny crying outside the room. Her hands are bound together, she is gagged, but she is otherwise free. Mike is sitting on a chair beside the bed looking at her.

MIKE. I wanted to wait till you were awake. If I wanted to fuck a corpse I would just go ahead and kill you. Which, honestly, I might do later. Right after this.

Mike unzips his pants and climbs on top of Faith. Faith is horrified. Mike holds her legs apart and starts to fuck her. Faith screams at him and hits him with her bound hands. Her sounds are unintelligible. Mike puts his hands around her neck.

MIKE. If you hit me again I will choke you.

Faith hits him and he hits her back. The blow dazes her, even though it doesn't break her skin. Mike holds her head and hands against the bed so that she can't hit him. Faith is, among other things, frustrated that because of their relative body sizes she cannot do much but endure. Then he lays on top of her, breathing heavily, otherwise still. Quietly, he says:

MIKE. Pain. Honor. Command. Resolve.

Faith closes her eyes and turns her head to the side so that his face isn't right in hers. When she opens her eyes, she sees that on the table beside the bed is Jennie's grandfather's old fashioned pistol. There is no hesitation. In the next two seconds she has reached with her bound hands across the bed, grabbed the gun, brought it back to herself, pointed it at Mike's head, he has looked at her, and she has shot him in the face.

INT. PRISON: CELL BLOCK - DAY

The sound of a prison guard's hard-soled shoes on a stone floor. We see the guard's feet as he walks around a corner, through a series of doors. Then he goes down a long cell block. All we see is the guard's feet, the floor, and glimpses of the barred cells he passes. He arrives at a particular cell, and stops walking. Jennie is inside, sitting on the floor by the bars. She looks up at the guard when he stops, her eyes wide in receipt of the delivery. Through the bars, the guard hands Jennie a single red carnation.

INT. GAS STATION: BATHROOM - DAY

Fluorescent light. Grimy walls. Toilet paper fragments littering the floor. A condom machine bolted to the wall. Faith is sitting on the toilet, doubled over, leaning forward, her head down. She is wearing a different sun dress from the mall trip. She sits still for a moment, then wipes herself and gets up. The toilet water is red; a bloody tampon floats on its surface. Faith kicks the handle of the toilet to flush it. Clean water rushes into the bowl. Faith opens the bathroom door and squints reflexively as sunlight floods her eyes.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Faith walks out of the bathroom into the sand of a desert somewhere in Texas or the southwest States. The only structure visible is a gas station, the side of which Faith has just exited. A two-lane road stretches as far as the eye can see in both directions. Faith walks away from the gas station toward a black Jeep, Mike's Jeep, that is parked in front of an ancient gasoline pump. Danny is buckled securely in a baby seat in the front of the Jeep. Faith gets in and leans over to check on him. Danny blinks. He is alert and quiet, his eyes open wide to take in his new world.

FAITH. You hangin in there? I hope you're not tired of being on the road with momma, because we got a lot of driving left to do. We're not gonna stop now. No-oh. Ewwwk. Danny! You've got sand everywhere, you know that? Stop eating it! I know you like how it tastes but it's not healthy. . . . We're gonna have to see a lot more sand before we're through, though. This road goes on forever.

Faith is done fussing with her child. She settles into her own seat and stares at the dusty horizon.

FAITH. Would you believe that after all this desert, and after all those mountains, that this whole place is gonna turn right back into green?

She looks at her baby. He has turned away from the scenery to stare at the seat back.

FAITH. Keep looking, you don't want to miss it.

Faith settles in a bit more. She psyches herself up to continue the journey. Right before she starts the car she says:

FAITH. And tell me if you see any snakes.

As she talks to her child, Ennio Morricone's The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly starts playing. On the guitar/banjo? at 0:46 into the song, Faith starts the engine, pulls out of the gas station, and drives off toward the horizon. The text "THE END" fades onto the screen in old western lettering as the black Jeep throws a trail of dust into the air. On the hit at 1:15 into the song, the screen goes black and the credits roll.

6

All About Blue (2002)

CHARACTERS
MRS. GLENROSE (60+)
KAREN (40s)
PETER (late 30s)
CASEY (female, 6)
LAWYER

Scene 1

There's a knock at the door. An old woman opens it. She is Felicity Glenrose. A woman in her forties stands outside. A child hides behind her dress. They are Karen and Casey McDermott. Karen's left hand is bandaged.

MRS. GLENROSE. What is it, honey?

KAREN. I'm here . . . for the interview.

MRS. GLENROSE. We spoke on the phone. Come inside now. I'll take your coat.

KAREN. Thank you.

MRS. GLENROSE. Who is this little one?

KAREN. This is Casey. Say hi.

MRS. GLENROSE. They can be shy at that age. How old is she?

KAREN. Six.

Casey looks from behind her mom at a retarded adult sitting on a stool blowing hot air on his face with an electric hairdryer. This is Peter Glenrose.

KAREN. Casey don't stare.

MRS. GLENROSE. He likes when people look at him. Peter, I'd like you to meet Karen . . . and Casey.

PETER. 'lo Casey / 'lo Karen

MRS. GLENROSE. They're here for an interview.

Peter shuts off the hairdryer.

PETER. interview

MRS. GLENROSE. Yes, an interview. Like the other day. Please have a seat. And, Casey, if you'd like, you're welcome to use any of the toys we have situated in those bins over there. There're some blocks, or you're welcome to draw and Peter might even join you if you let him. So, how did you hear about the position?

KAREN. I saw your ad in the Times.

MRS. GLENROSE. And what was it particularly about this position that made you think it would be suitable?

KAREN. There were—well we—I'm just looking for anything I can find.

MRS. GLENROSE. I'm sorry. I don't mean to grill you, I'm afraid I'm not very good at giving interviews.

KAREN. No, you were fine, I just—I'm sorry—

MRS. GLENROSE. No, let's start things over, shall we? Would you like a cup of coffee?

KAREN. No, thank you.

MRS. GLENROSE. Come now, a cup of decaf?

KAREN. No, I'm fine.

MRS. GLENROSE. Well I'm having one. I was just pouring it when you came to the door. Are you sure you won't have a cup?

KAREN. No, I appreciate it, but—

MRS. GLENROSE. Alright, alright. Casey, I see you found the blocks. Peter favors the yellow ones . . . those arched ones there? He likes to make castles but even more he likes to knock them down.

Mrs. Glenrose goes to the kitchen.

KAREN. Casey. Don't make a mess.

Peter climbs down from the stool. Carrying the hair dryer with him, he goes to where Casey is stacking blocks on the floor. Casey finds one of the yellow blocks that is arched and hands it to Peter. He takes it with his free hand and stares at Casey. Casey looks away and focuses on the blocks. Peter watches her meticulously select block at a time from the pile and place it delicately into a developing structure. After watching her for a moment, Peter cautiously ventures his block onto what Casey is building. Casey lets him place it there but she taps it to make it less crooked once he has

released it. Peter stares at the little girl. Casey hands him another block. Mrs. Glenrose comes back carrying two cups of coffee.

MRS. GLENROSE. Just in case you change your mind. I though I'd save myself a trip later on. People get to talking, you know, and next thing you know it's middle of the afternoon. I get the sun through those windows in the evening. Where do you live, Karen?

KAREN. We live in Washington Heights.

MRS. GLENROSE. Where exactly?

KAREN. One-hundred and fifty-sixth street.

MRS. GLENROSE. My other son teaches at Columbia. What happened to your hand, sweetie?

CASEY. We were in an accident. Max didn't make it.

Karen chokes up. She covers her face. Mrs. Glenrose puts her hand on Karen's arm.

MRS. GLENROSE. Oh, I'm sorry for asking. Dear. We're not off to a very good start, are we?

PETER. Max?

CASEY. Max was my boyfriend.

PETER. I have a boyfriend

CASEY. What's his name?

PETER. Max

MRS. GLENROSE. How about we just sit here and look out the window and I'll try not to say anything.

KAREN. That's okay.

MRS. GLENROSE. Well, no, no it's not. Here I am trying to put you at ease and I can't help it but I keep saying the wrong things.

KAREN. You're fine. I'm just—I'm just a mess right now and I keep trying to pretend that everything is okay, put on a happy face, but you can only smile so much and everything . . . everything

...

MRS. GLENROSE. Everything is not okay.

KAREN. No.

MRS. GLENROSE. Of course it's not. Have a sip of this coffee. Tell me what you think.

Karen takes a sip.

MRS. GLENROSE. Not bad for decaf.

KAREN. It's good.

MRS. GLENROSE. It's not good, but it will do.

KAREN. No, it's fine.

MRS. GLENROSE. I used to drink it every day. My husband gave me such a hard time but I held my tongue. He drank scotch. Casey, does your mother let you drink scotch?

CASEY. I've never had it.

MRS. GLENROSE. It tastes like gasoline, and now that you know what it tastes like, you won't have need to try it.

CASEY. Max loves to drink scotch. He likes the smell of gasoline.

KAREN. Stop talking about Max, Casey, you know I don't like that.

CASEY. Max already knows you don't like him.

PETER. you don't like Max?

KAREN. Casey . . .

Casey puts her finger up to her pursed lips in a "silence" gesture. She scowls at her mom.

KAREN. Max is her imaginary friend.

CASEY. He's not imaginary.

KAREN. Well, actually, he is imaginary. She's been doing this for months. I don't know if I need to take her to see someone or what.

...

MRS. GLENROSE. Does Casey play with friends her age?

KAREN. She had a little boyfriend. His name was Max, but he died—

CASEY. He's not dead.

Karen holds her breath and closes her eyes. Then swallows and lets her breath out.

KAREN. He died . . .

Mrs. Glenrose again puts her hand on Karen.

MRS. GLENROSE. Well, you need the job . . .

KAREN. Yes.

MRS. GLENROSE. You'll have to live here, if you take it. It's hard enough to get myself up and down these stairs, and he needs help getting in and out of the bath, making sure he eats. We have an extra room on the third floor. It's very dusty now. And its not big.

Karen smiles at Mrs. Glenrose.

MRS. GLENROSE. But it will do.

Casey and Peter's castle has grown tall. Casey taps Peter on the leg and pantomimes that she is knocking down the castle. Peter becomes excited. He waits for Casey to knock down the castle and

when she does not, he pantomimes to her a knocking-down-the-castle motion.

CASEY. You do it.

Peter points to himself. Casey nods. He knocks down the castle and bounces up and down on his knees. He switches on the hairdryer and points it at Casey. Her hair flies up and she closes her eyes.

PETER. Max is my boyfriend / Max is my boyfriend

Scene 2

Casey is practicing her violin. Karen is cutting slices of apple and handing them to Peter. Mrs. Glenrose is reading, and not openly paying attention to anyone in the room.

KAREN. Remember what Vaughn says about the way you hold your pinky. There you go. And it's not—E . . . and A—flat and it's lightly . . . prancing . . . dah dah dah dah da . . . good.

PETER. beautiful

Casey stops and lowers the bow.

CASEY. Thank you.

KAREN. Practice.

CASEY. When are we going to Vaughn's house again?

KAREN. Vaughn lives in California.

CASEY. I miss him.

KAREN. So do I, Case.

Casey starts playing again. She sightreads from a book. Her mother turns the page when it's time.

CASEY. Why is my hair a different color than yours?

KAREN. What do you mean?

CASEY. Mine is lighter than yours and we're in the same family.

KAREN. Even in the same family, people's hair can be different colors.

CASEY. At school, there's this girl named Kristen. She has red hair and her mom has red hair and both her brothers have red hair.

KAREN. Sometimes people's hair is the same color and sometimes its different.

CASEY. Why is ours different?

PETER. why is our hair different colors?

CASEY. Yes, that's right. Why is our hair different colors? Peter's hair is brown and Mrs. Glenrose's hair is white.

KAREN. Casey!

CASEY. It is. And they're in the same family. Was I adopted?

KAREN. Keep practicing.

CASEY. Was I?

KAREN. No. Keep practicing.

Casey starts playing. She plays for a while, then stops.

CASEY. We need to go shopping for new clothes for me.

KAREN. Oh yeah?

CASEY. I need a black dress.

KAREN. Pray tell, why?

CASEY. What does pray tell mean?

KAREN. It means please.

CASEY. Please tell. Because I need a black dress for when I do recitals.

KAREN. Girls who don't practice don't get to do recitals.

CASEY. I am practicing.

She plays a few more notes of the song. She leaves the book behind and dances around the room as though she were at a ball. She continues playing while she dances. Her playing and speaking are interleaved.

CASEY. I will have a black dress that is very long and very black with no sequins or anything shiny. This will all be very formal and my hair will be dyed to match your color exactly and it will be pulled back in a very tight bun that will stretch the hair on the side of my head and stretch my face and my eyes back to the sides and I will have brown eyeliner like yours and as I cascade into the ballroom I will dip my knees to the audience . . .

Casey courtseys to Mrs. Glenrose.

CASEY. . . and they will smile at me from behind their programs and then I will play for them the most beautiful recital . . .

Mrs. Glenrose claps.

KAREN. And how will you know what to play at this recital if you haven't practiced?

CASEY. I'm practicing.

She starts playing. After a moment she stops and looks at her mother, who at the silence has already raised turned to her daughter.

CASEY. What does cascade mean?

KAREN. It means to fall or flow down in a beautiful way.

CASEY. Because they have commercials for it on TV and it means something else.

KAREN. It's also dish soap.

CASEY. I thought it was dish soap. But I thought it would be nice for the audience if I could cascade into the ballroom.

PETER. you can cascade into the ballroom

CASEY. Thank you. I think I might. Will you come see my recital?

PETER. yes / yes I will see your recital

Karen points to the music practice book. Casey restores her playing posture. She shoots a glance at Peter.

CASEY. I'll get you a free ticket.

Casey winks and starts playing again. Mrs. Glenrose closes her book and goes to the table.

MRS. GLENROSE. Come with me Peter.

KAREN. I can watch him.

MRS. GLENROSE. You've watched him all day and I'm almost through my book, so thank you, but he'll come with me for a while and you can rest. Come on.

Mrs. Glenrose heads out of the room with her son. Peter goes first.

MRS. GLENROSE. Go on up, dear. I'll meet you at the top.

Mrs. Glenrose goes back into the kitchen and fishes on top of the refrigerator. There are flats of Coke there and she takes a can.

KAREN. I've set you up with a new teacher here—

CASEY. But I want Vaughn!

KAREN. I know you loved Vaughn. Vaughn loves you, too. Do you want to call him on the telephone later?

Casey nods.

KAREN. We'll do that. But tomorrow you have a lesson with Alex French. I know he's not Vaughn, but I'd like you to go and see if you can get along with him just well enough for him to teach you.

CASEY. Alex French? Is he really French?

KAREN. No, but he's excellent. He's so good, Casey, I think you'll like him.

CASEY. He's not as good as Vaughn.

KAREN. Unfortunately, Vaughn's in California.

CASEY. We should have brought him with us.

KAREN. We can ask him tonight if he'd like to move here.

CASEY. And he can live with us in the attic?

KAREN. If he says yes, we can ask Mrs. Glenrose.

CASEY. If he says no?

KAREN. Then you're stuck with Alex French.

CASEY. I don't want to be stuck with Alex French.

KAREN. You can learn from him.

CASEY. I like it when you teach me.

KAREN. I can't teach you now. You need someone who can take you farther. You want that, don't you?

Casey nods.

KAREN. Well, you'll see, Alex French can make you into the best violinist you can possibly be. You want to be a good violinist, don't you? You want to play recitals?

CASEY. I want to play—

KAREN. Then you will.

CASEY. I want to play like you do.

Mrs. Glenrose has been going toward the door but she falters in her step. Karen looks at her bandaged hand.

Scene 3

Casey and Peter are playing. The adults are elsewhere.

CASEY. Who do you want to be, the owl or the pussycat?

PETER. I want to be the owl

CASEY. Okay, you will be the owl and I will be the pussycat. This is the rehearsal for our play. Tonight will be our opening night. This is the dress rehearsal. We have to practice so that we'll know all our lines. Have you ever been in a play before?

PETER. no I've never been in a play before

CASEY. You'll do fine. As long as you learn your lines and pay attention during rehearsal, you'll know exactly what to do. Are you nervous?

PETER. about the people going to see me?

CASEY. Yes, the audience.

PETER. all the people in their seats looking at us with the programs?

CASEY. Right. The people with the programs. You won't be able to see them because of the footlighting. Do you know what footlighting is?

Peter is confused and made uncomfortable by this question. Casey puts her arm around him and shows him around their stage.

CASEY. I'll tell you. The footlighting is downstage, at the front. The back of the stage is called upstage and the front part near the . . . audience . . . is called downstage. We're downstage now. These are the footlights. They come in different colors, red, white, and blue, and when you want everything to be bright you turn

them all on and they mix together to make white. So when we're singing, they're going to turn on all the lights on us?

PETER. they're going to see us in the bright lights?

CASEY. Yes, it's okay, you can touch them ... see ... they're not hot right now. But once they turn on you can't touch them cause they get very hot.

PETER. this is a red one

CASEY. Yes! And this ... is a white one.

PETER. this is another red one

CASEY. No, that one's blue.

PETER. this is a blue one

CASEY. Right. They go, red, white, blue all the way across.

PETER. and they mix together?

CASEY. They all mix together to make white. But if you turn off just the white ones then the red and blue mix together to make purple.

PETER. I like the blue one

CASEY. Oh! Be careful, they just turned them on!

PETER. and they're hot!

CASEY. Let's go over here so we don't burn ourselves.

PETER. the blue

CASEY. But later on, you'll have a solo and we'll turn on only the blue ones for you to sing in. Have you been practicing your solo?

PETER. I've never singed solo before

CASEY. I'll teach you. Have a seat. Now, I'll be Vaughn. And you're here for your lesson. You say, "Good morning, Mr. Goggins."

PETER. good morning Mr. Goggins thank you

CASEY. Just good morning will do. Vaughn doesn't like it if you add extra words to things. Now, Peter, have you practiced your solo?

PETER. I haven't practiced my solo

CASEY. You haven't practiced! What have you been doing?

PETER. what?

CASEY. Instead of practicing your solo? What's been keeping you from your studies?

PETER. I am keeping me / from my studies

CASEY. Let's hear from one of our other students. Max, how is your solo coming? Oh, excellent! Is that what I heard you practicing in your room this morning? No, I couldn't hear it clearly, would you play it for us now? Thank you, Max.

Casey makes room at the front of the classroom. Max comes up to the front and plays his solo. Casey folds her arms and listens to the music.

CASEY. Max, that was excellent. Thank you very much.

PETER. max was excellent / you're my excellent boyfriend

CASEY. No! Actually Max can't be your boyfriend. Max already has a girlfriend.

PETER. Max does not have a girlfriend

CASEY. How long have you known Max? I've known him since I was born and I happen to know that he does have a girlfriend.

PETER. how do you know?

CASEY. Because I am Max's girlfriend. You can still be his friend but he can't have both a boyfriend and a girlfriend at the same time. Understand?

PETER. yes I understand

CASEY. Now. How's your solo coming? Peter! How's your solo coming?

Peter distresses.

PETER. I don't have a solo

CASEY. Peter. Peter, not in the game. It's okay, that class is over. We're not in the game anymore.

PETER. you're not Mr. Goggins?

CASEY. No. I'm Casey. Mr. Goggins went home to be with his family.

PETER. game is over?

CASEY. Yep. Now we're just sitting here twiddling our thumbs. Peter, keep twiddling!

She shows him how. He does it, and it puts his mind at ease. Casey twiddles as though she is being watched.

CASEY. Just twiddling all the live long day.

PETER. twiddling all the day?

CASEY. Yes. Just like John Henry.

PETER. and Max!

CASEY. No. Max isn't here right now.

PETER. why not?

CASEY. Because. Sometimes he needs a break from you.

They just sit for a moment. Then Peter says:

PETER. I miss Max

Casey sighs.

CASEY. Well, if you miss him that much ... we can go visit him if we hurry.

PETER. why do we have to hurry?

CASEY. Because he won't be there long.

PETER. where is he?

CASEY. He's at the hospital. We'll have to drive if we want to get there in time. Come on! Get in!

Buckle your seatbelt.

Casey buckles her own. Peter is confused.

CASEY. Here.

She buckles it for him and steps on the gas. She makes car screeching noises.

PETER. why are we going so fast?

CASEY. Because we have to get there in time.

PETER. people get in accidents

CASEY. Don't you think I know that, Peter? But sometimes people need to drive fast because they need to get someplace in a hurry and we don't always do the smartest things when we're not thinking clearly we sometimes do things we regret later!

Casey is out of the car. Peter gets up but Casey screams at him.

CASEY. No Peter it's too late! We didn't make it on time! We didn't make it!

Peter is mortified.

PETER. to see Max ...?

Casey sees Peter's state. It calms her. She proceeds matter-of-factly.

CASEY. Max is dead now. We didn't make it on time.

Karen comes into the room.

KAREN. What are you screaming about!?

PETER. max is dead now

CASEY. We were playing car and Peter didn't put his seatbelt on fast enough.

KAREN. Okay. Time for a different game.

Mrs. Glenrose comes into the room.

MRS. GLENROSE. Is everything alright?

KAREN. Just a pretend game that's gotten a little out of hand. Maybe you and Peter can play separately for a while.

CASEY. That's fine with me.

Mrs. Glenrose speaks to Casey:

MRS. GLENROSE. Would you like to take a walk?

Karen speaks to Peter:

KAREN. Ready for a different game?

Casey shakes her head. Peter looks at Casey from across the room, then looks at the floor.

PETER. painting

KAREN. Sure, we can paint. I wish you would be a little nicer to him.

CASEY. He didn't put on his seatbelt.

PETER. red white and blue colors

CASEY. That's right. Like the footlights.

Karen moves toward her daughter. Peter stands up and fishes around on a high shelf for the painting supplies.

KAREN. You can be more patient with him.

CASEY. Some things have to be done quickly.

KAREN. But it's important that you go easy with him.

MRS. GLENROSE. Oh, he can take it.

KAREN. But I wish she'd be nicer.

MRS. GLENROSE. It's tough for both of them. They do pretty well.

KAREN. I feel awful, though . . .

MRS. GLENROSE. Don't worry about it so much. He's gotten much worse from me on my bad days. You're sure you wouldn't enjoy a short walk?

CASEY. Not right now.

MRS. GLENROSE. Maybe later, then.

CASEY. Maybe.

Karen sees that Peter is struggling to retrieve the painting supplies. She rushes over to him to help . . .

KAREN. Oh, Peter . . .

. . . but she's too late. He pulls the painting box off the shelf and it crashes onto the floor. Brushes scatter everywhere. A can of blue paint comes open when it hits the floor. Blue splatters over the floor, the furniture, and Peter. Karen is shocked. Mrs. Glenrose chuckles.

KAREN. Oh, no!

MRS. GLENROSE. It's fine . . .

KAREN. I should have gotten it down for him first before I started—

MRS. GLENROSE. Dear, it's of little consequence. He wanted to paint . . .

Peter is rubbing the paint into the floor with his fingers.

MRS. GLENROSE. . . and now he's painting.

KAREN. I'll clean this up—

MRS. GLENROSE. No! We'll clean up after he's done.

KAREN. I should learn to keep a better eye on him. I should—

MRS. GLENROSE. You should get me a Coke. And take a short walk with me, if Casey won't.

Casey looks up at Mrs. Glenrose to see if she's mad. The old woman isn't mad. She shrugs innocently at the child. Karen is getting a Coke from the top of the refrigerator.

MRS. GLENROSE. Would you like to take a walk, child?

CASEY. I'd like to stay here and paint.

Casey and her mom pass each other on their way across the room, Casey going toward Peter, Karen going toward Mrs. Glenrose. Casey tentatively enters Peter's playspace. He takes her hand and puts it in the paint. Karen helps Mrs. Glenrose put on a sweater, then opens the Coke for her and puts it in her hand. The women are on their way out when Mrs. Glenrose stops and turns to speak to her son.

MRS. GLENROSE. What did you learn today, Peter?

Peter looks at his mother.

PETER. today I learned all about blue

Scene 4

Mrs. Glenrose is reading on the couch. Peter is not around. Karen and Casey are walking toward the outside door. Casey stops walking.

KAREN. What's wrong?

CASEY. I'm not going.

KAREN. What do you mean you're not going?

CASEY. I am not going.

KAREN. Casey. You have to be there in twenty minutes.

...

KAREN. Is he that bad?

Casey nods.

KAREN. He can't be that bad. He's the best teacher in the city.

CASEY. He's not nice.

KAREN. What's not nice about him?

CASEY. Vaughn was nice.

KAREN. Vaughn? I seem to remember Vaughn could get not-so-nice sometimes.

CASEY. He was nice most of the time.

KAREN. Vaughn is in California. Alex French is in New York, and he's expecting you for a lesson in . . . nineteen minutes. Are we

gonna be there?

CASEY. No.

KAREN. Case! Every day it's this battle with you. I got you the best teacher I could find and he's not Vaughn, of course, but it's the best I can do. Maybe you don't really want to play the violin.

CASEY. I do.

KAREN. Then show me by not putting up such a stink when I'm taking you to your lesson.

Casey freaks out.

CASEY. I'm not putting up a stink!

KAREN. Casey, quiet!

Casey puts her fingers in her ears and screams.

KAREN. Casey, Mrs. Glenrose is trying to read.

Mrs. Glenrose makes a "forget about it" motion and turns the page. Casey plants herself on the floor.

KAREN. We have . . . eighteen minutes to get you to your lesson.

Karen waits. Casey doesn't move.

KAREN. If we have to take a cab I'm taking it out of your allowance.

CASEY. Mom!

KAREN. Well, what do you want me to do? We still have time if we hurry.

CASEY. I don't like hurrying.

KAREN. Then you need to get ready earlier next time.

...

KAREN. We have three minutes before we have to take a cab.

CASEY. I don't like cabs.

KAREN. If we leave right now you don't have to. But only if we leave right now.

Casey doesn't move. Karen goes to the table and sits. There is a long moment when nobody talks. Karen starts making coffee. Casey opens her violin case and takes out her instrument. She plucks the strings. Mrs. Glenrose continues to read. Karen accepts that they are not going to the lesson. She calms. She goes gently to her daughter.

KAREN. You don't have to go if you don't want to.

Casey gently ignores her, continuing to pluck at her instrument. Karen goes back to the table and stands with her back to the room. Casey gathers her things and leaves to go upstairs. She accidentally leaves behind her practice book. Karen sits at the table. Mrs.

Glenrose puts down her book and goes to sit by Karen. They have their moment, then Karen says:

KAREN. She used to beg me to see Vaughn. On days she didn't even have lessons I would find her standing by the door with her case, ready to go.

...

MRS. GLENROSE. I think she misses Max.

Karen clenches her eyes and bows her head. Then she really starts to cry, and, keeping it as much to herself as possible, she covers her face with her hands. Ultimately she lays her head on her crossed arms on the table. Mrs. Glenrose sits quietly, thinking, and then goes to the couch and takes one of the decorative pillows and brings it back to the table. She lifts Karen's head and puts the pillow underneath. Then she goes pours cups of coffee for both Karen and herself, placing them on the table. Karen is still laying on the table. Mrs. Glenrose does not drink from her cup. In a moment, Casey comes back into the room, looking around for what she's lost. Her violin and bow are in hand. She sees the practice book lying on the floor and goes to pick it up. She puts the bow under the arm that is holding her violin and takes the book with her other hand. She starts to leave again but Mrs. Glenrose stops her:

MRS. GLENROSE. Child . . . come here.

Casey stops and goes to the old woman, who scoots her chair back from the table.

MRS. GLENROSE. Give me that thing.

Casey hands the woman the child-sized violin. Mrs. Glenrose takes the bow from her as well. She rests the instrument on her shoulder and holds the bow above the strings. Her movement is halting, arthritic, painful to watch. She closes her eyes and starts to play. Its first note raises Karen's head and strikes fear into Casey's eyes. The old woman's arms lose their frailty. All softness in her face drops away as the expert shrieking of her music wrapt the small audience. It is a stark improvisation, momentary, longing, gone. When she is finished she hands the violin back to the child. Casey's eyes never leave the old woman. Casey places the violin on the table. She pulls a chair over until it is next to the old woman. She takes her violin from the table and sits in the chair. She sits up straight. She looks earnestly at Felicity Glenrose.

CASEY. I want you to be my teacher.

Scene 5

Mrs. Glenrose and her son are in the room. Peter plays with blocks on the floor and Mrs. Glenrose cleans the house around him.

PETER. where's Casey?

MRS. GLENROSE. Casey and her mother have gone out for a while.

PETER. where have they gone out to?

MRS. GLENROSE. I don't know, exactly. I think it's good for them to see the city, though.

PETER. where did they go?

MRS. GLENROSE. Well, I'm not sure. They may have gone shopping.

PETER. clothes shopping? / member clothes shopping? / we went clothes shopping?

MRS. GLENROSE. Of course I remember. How could I forget? We had such fun last time we went out. I could use some sun myself.

PETER. I like the yellow lemonade

MRS. GLENROSE. I like the pink lemonade. Shall we go out later and get some lemonade?

PETER. with Garland

MRS. GLENROSE. And we'll say hello to Garland.

PETER. I miss Casey

MRS. GLENROSE. Oh, I know you do. You have such a good playmate in her.

PETER. she's pretty

MRS. GLENROSE. Do you think so? Well, she's too young for you.

PETER. she's not too young / she is six years old

MRS. GLENROSE. How old are you, I forgot . . .

PETER. you forgot how old I am?! / you can't forget how old I am!

MRS. GLENROSE. I didn't forget, I'm just teasing.

PETER. don't tease about my birthday / I scares

MRS. GLENROSE. Okay, I'm sorry.

PETER. how old am I?

MRS. GLENROSE. You're thirty-eight.

PETER. I am not thirty-eight I'm thirty-nine

MRS. GLENROSE. Well, I must have missed your birthday—

PETER. you missed my birthday too?! / we missed my birthday presents! / you forgot how old I am and missed my birthday

MRS. GLENROSE. I didn't miss your birthday. You're thirty-eight and we haven't skipped a party the entire time.

PETER. you skipped my party?!

MRS. GLENROSE. We haven't skipped a party. We've had thirty-eight parties for thirty-eight years. Every year we have a party.

PETER. every year like the trampoline

MRS. GLENROSE. What-? No, last year you got a tape recorder.

PETER. I wanted a trampoline

MRS. GLENROSE. You'll hurt yourself with a trampoline.

PETER. I hurt myself with the tape recorder

Mrs. Glenrose chuckles.

MRS. GLENROSE. You'd hurt yourself worse with a trampoline.

PETER. I won't hurt myself with a trampoline

MRS. GLENROSE. Well.

...

PETER. next year I want a trampoline

MRS. GLENROSE. I wouldn't hold my breath.

PETER. why not you hold your breath?

MRS. GLENROSE. I mean I wouldn't wait around forever.

PETER. what you waiting for?

MRS. GLENROSE. I'm encouraging you not to wait around for a trampoline.

PETER. no I don't want to wait

MRS. GLENROSE. Exactly.

PETER. ready for our lemonades party?

MRS. GLENROSE. It's not going to be a lemonade party, it's just going to be a lemonade walk, alright?

PETER. I want a party

MRS. GLENROSE. You can pretend we're having a party.

Peter knocks down his block castle.

PETER. don't want to pretend!

He crosses his arms in front of his head. Mrs. Glenrose continues with her cleaning. Peter pokes an eye out from behind his arms, watching her. He hides again. He takes a fuller look at her, then crawls across the floor to the shelf where the toys and painting supplies are. He takes item after item from the shelves and throws them into the room.

MRS. GLENROSE. Peter! Stop! ... Peter! Come now, what's the matter?! ... Listen, Peter, when we have disagreements it isn't

necessary for you to begin throwing things. Can't you see I've been tidying up? ... Peter?

Peter throws something that hits his mother. She halts in her approach, sits at the table. She begins to cry. Peter throws a few more things but is disturbed by her crying. Gradually he calms and approaches her.

PETER. Mom you okay?

MRS. GLENROSE. No.

PETER. why you not okay?

MRS. GLENROSE. You're upsetting me.

PETER. what's upsetting you?

MRS. GLENROSE. Your throwing things. It scares me. You scare me sometimes, Peter.

PETER. I can not scare you

MRS. GLENROSE. You do scare me. You're scaring me right now.

This pushes Peter over the edge.

PETER. I'm not scaring you!

MRS. GLENROSE. You frighten me in my own home! I don't feel safe from you sometimes. You're hurting me, Peter

PETER. I'm hurting you by throwing things ...?

MRS. GLENROSE. Yes, by throwing things! You hit me and now I'm hurting!

PETER. I didn't mean to hit you!

MRS. GLENROSE. It doesn't matter, you hit me anyway. You can't do that, Peter. I'm too fragile for it.

PETER. fragile?

MRS. GLENROSE. I'm delicate, Peter. You have to be gentle with me or else you hurt me.

PETER. I'm sorry I wasn't gentle!

MRS. GLENROSE. Well remember that the next time you want to throw things.

PETER. I won't throw things!

MRS. GLENROSE. I would appreciate it if you wouldn't.

PETER. I won't! / I'm sorry I did it / you okay?

MRS. GLENROSE. No, I'm bruised. You see that?

As she says "You see that?" she forces her arm in Peter's face in a way that startles him.

PETER. I see I'm sorry / oh I'm sorry Mom I'm sorry I hurt you

She won't talk to him. Peter sulks. The old woman gets up and stands at the sink with her back to her son.

MRS. GLENROSE. Peter. It's time to play our game.

...

PETER. I don't want to play our game today

MRS. GLENROSE. You hurt me. You made me feel bad.

The old woman waits. Peter struggles, in his own way, with what he's about to do. He stands up. He takes his pants off.

PETER. you want to feel good now?

Mrs. Glenrose turns around and looks at her son. She motions to him to come close to her.

PETER. can I have yellow lemonade later?

Mrs. Glenrose nods. Peter goes to her. She touches his penis. The outside door opens and Casey walks in, holding a shopping bag. She sees what the old woman is doing. She drops the shopping bag. Mrs. Glenrose hears this sound and sees that Casey is there. The old woman points to the door that leads upstairs. Peter gets his pants and goes upstairs. Mrs. Glenrose follows. Casey is staring, shocked to stillness, when her mother comes in the house behind her. Karen goes past her daughter into the kitchen, talking.

KAREN. We'll have to hit the market next time. I'm starving. Are you starving? Remember those ginger muffins? Those looked sooo good. I bet we could make those here if we wanted to. All you'd need to know is what spices they put in them? Did you smell them? They definitely had ginger, and cinnamon. I think I smelled cardamom—

Karen has put her bags down and seen her daughter standing shocked in the doorway.

KAREN. Case. What's wrong?

Scene 6

Peter is in the bathtub. The door is ajar. Someone walks by on the outside.

PETER. hello?

The person comes back and peeks into the bathroom.

CASEY. Hello?

PETER. hey Casey it's Peter what you doing now?

CASEY. I'm going for a snack.

PETER. what's in your snack?

CASEY. A sandwich.

PETER. what you having to drink?

CASEY. I don't know ...

PETER. you have to have a drink with your snack / what kind of drink you having?

CASEY. I'm not thirsty.

PETER. you have to have a drink with your snack / will you bring me a drink? / Casey?

CASEY. Yes.

PETER. you bring me a drink I'm thirsty / please

CASEY. What do you want to drink?

PETER. Coke

CASEY. You're not supposed to.

PETER. Coke

CASEY. I'll bring you some water.

PETER. no! / I want to bring Coke!

CASEY. Shhh! If I bring you Coke you have to be quiet about it.

PETER. our little secret?

CASEY. Yes.

PETER. Casey?

Peter waits for her response but none comes. He sings and talks to himself, trying to be quiet about the Coke part.

PETER. I get Coke / I get Coke / Casey is bringing Coke for me to drink / Casey has the Coke and a sandwich in a can for me / Coke is in a can with fizz / Casey has a sandwich for her snack / and I have Coke to drink / my bathtub will have a Coke / this is our little secret / between Casey and me / we have a secret that is a private times / Coke feels good / Coke feels good in my mouth in a bathtub and secret time / friendly Casey / Casey is friendly / my friend is Casey with the beautiful beautiful hair and tied in a knot / Casey is my friendly girl and Casey likes the blue paint too and Casey on the way to get a snack in the bathtub sandwich / sandwich time / sandwich time / we have our sandwich time in the bathtub room and Casey is the beautiful beautiful Casey and she plays the violin! / Casey, Casey / playing the violin / she is my baby and violin girl! / she is my friend / she is my baby / she is a little little baby and I am her dad / she is a beautiful little baby I am her dad / I am her dad / I am her dad / she is the beautiful violet musical sound / violet violin / violet sound

His song becomes a chant.

PETER. and when do we get the Coke? / and when do we get the Coke? / Coke is my favorite drink / when do we get to drink the Coke in my bathing room / in my bathing room / Casey will come in the room / Casey will come in the bath / when will

you come into the room with Coke and with your snackwich? / snackwich, snackwich / I have a bite of your snackwich / can I feel good in the bath with a sandwich / where is my Coke and my sandwich? / Casey little daughter where are you? / Casey? / Casey can you hear me? / Casey I want the lemonade!

His chant becomes a rant.

PETER. Casey where is the lemonade! / where are you Casey in the kitchen can you hear? / Casey, Casey / hear me?! / hear me in the kitchen?! / oh, no / I am fall / oh, oh / Casey, Casey no / oh, no no no / no! / no!! / no!!! / no!!!!

The door opens. It is Casey.

CASEY. What's wrong? What's wrong?

PETER. I miss you Casey

The children hear their parents voices.

KAREN. What is going on in there?

MRS. GLENROSE. What's the matter?

KAREN. It sounded like he fell.

MRS. GLENROSE. I suspect he's grown lonely.

The parents' voices get louder. Casey flips the latch on the door.

KAREN. Peter, what's wrong?

They try the door. Casey and Peter see it wiggle from inside.

MRS. GLENROSE. Unlock this door.

PETER. fine I'm fine

KAREN. Let us in, Peter. Are you okay?

PETER. fine!

KAREN. Did you fall? ... Did you fall?

PETER. I did fall no / no / I'm fine in here alone

MRS. GLENROSE. Unlock the door, Peter.

PETER. I can't unlock the door I'm in the bath / in the bath

KAREN. We want to make sure you're okay.

PETER. fine fine fine / be out in a minute / have to dry off in a minute or two

KAREN. Let us in ...

MRS. GLENROSE. He'll be fine. Let him take his bath. He's okay. You're sure you're okay?

PETER. fine fine

MRS. GLENROSE. He's fine. Let's let him alone for now, he needs time to himself.

KAREN. I'm worried about him.

MRS. GLENROSE. He gives me such a start sometimes ...

As the parents voices grow quieter, Casey tiptoes away from the door. She sits on the toilet. She balances her plate on the edge of

the tub. There is a Coke under her arm. She takes it out, opens it, and gives it to Peter.

PETER. thank you thank you

CASEY. Shhh ...

He says it more quietly:

PETER. thank you thank you

CASEY. You're welcome.

Casey takes a bite of her sandwich.

PETER. your sandwich?

CASEY. I put cheese on it.

She holds it out for him to take a bite.

PETER. you put cheese on your sandwich?

CASEY. And peanut butter.

PETER. you put cheese with peanut butter?

She holds it for him. He shakes his head.

CASEY. It's good. Try it.

He won't try it. Casey shrugs her shoulders.

PETER. okay okay

She gives him a bite. He smiles. He takes another bite from her and holds his head back with his mouth open. He pours in some Coke. Some gets on his face. He sloshes it all around and swallows it. It takes some effort.

PETER. it's good all together

CASEY. That stuff makes me burp.

PETER. it makes me burp too / sometimes when I burp it hurts

He takes a huge gulp of the drink.

CASEY. If you drink slowly it won't hurt as much.

PETER. no / I like how it tastes

CASEY. Can I have a sip?

PETER. your mom says you're not allowed

Casey begins to reproach him.

PETER. just teasing / teasing, Casey / here / you like that taste?

CASEY. Yeah.

PETER. let's give Max a taste / does Max like Coke?

Casey nods. Peter gives invisible Max a taste of the Coke. It falls through his body into the bathwater.

CASEY. Not too much!

PETER. sorry

CASEY. He won't be able to sleep.

PETER. I didn't give him too much

CASEY. He can have a little. But no more. No! No more, Peter!

PETER. don't want him to be awake all night

CASEY. He has to wake up early.

PETER. for a recital?

CASEY. No.

PETER. he can play his recital for us now?

CASEY. He doesn't want to right now.

PETER. why not

CASEY. He's tired of practicing.

PETER. he has to practice if he wants to be good

CASEY. He already practiced today.

PETER. he can play a little song for us in the bath?

CASEY. He doesn't like to play in the bath.

PETER. because the instrument

CASEY. Can't get wet.

PETER. I know / maybe later

CASEY. Well . . .

PETER. he can play his recital in the hallway / does he want a bite of your sandwich?

CASEY. No, he—

PETER. maybe he wants some more Coke

CASEY. Max is—

PETER. maybe he wants decaf

CASEY. He doesn't drink decaf. Max is tired. He wants to go to sleep.

PETER. because he's tired

CASEY. Max is very, very tired now. He's had a big day.

PETER. and he's ready for night now?

CASEY. Actually—

PETER. and he needs to sleep till noon

CASEY. No, actually—

PETER. and he's very tired—

CASEY. Peter. Max is going on a trip.

PETER. he's—

CASEY. He's taking a trip. And he'll be on a boat. And he's going away for a long time.

PETER. how long

CASEY. Several years.

PETER. we can visit him where he's gone—

CASEY. No. He's too far away. We can't visit him.

PETER. is he going to play his recital

CASEY. He's going to play his recital for someone else.

PETER. he doesn't like us—

CASEY. He likes us. But he has to play on the other side of the ocean now. He's taking a boat to the other side of the ocean. Right now he's in a storm and the waves are rocking his boat so much he's afraid he'll fall out into the water and sharks will eat him

PETER. he!—

CASEY. He's afraid of that, but that won't happen.

PETER. the sharks won't eat him

CASEY. No. His boat will go through the storm and when he gets to the other side of the ocean the waves will lie down and his boat will slide into the sand on the beach and . . . everything . . . will be . . . very . . . quiet . . . he'll wake up . . . and he'll pick up a seashell and use it to drink from the ocean . . . then he'll take out his violin and he'll stand at the ocean and play his recital . . . and his music will float across the water, all the way through the calm and all the way through the storm to the beaches on this side of the ocean . . . and we'll be able to hear it.

PETER. then he'll come back to us?

...

CASEY. No. He's not coming back.

Casey allows herself to feel this. Peter understands. He sits quietly. Casey takes a bite of her sandwich and wipes her face with her arm. Peter drinks the last sip of his Coke. Casey gets up to leave.

PETER. I need to dry off

Casey hands Peter a towel. He wipes part of his hair, then drops the towel in the water and picks up the hairdryer. He fiddles with the switch. Click. Click. It does nothing. Casey is halfway out the door.

PETER. it's not working

Casey stops, turns around. She sees Peter trying to use the hairdryer, but it's not plugged in. She picks up the cord and moves it toward an electrical outlet. The last two seconds of her movement are in slow motion. When she plugs in the cord the stage lights go out and in the darkness there is an exaggerated sharp blue spark and its corresponding pop! We hear the sound of Casey's sandwich plate hitting the tile floor. Peter wails and gurgles. Casey screams:

CASEY. Peter! Peeeeter!!!! Moaaaaaaaaaaaaam!!!! Moaaaaaaaaaaaaam!!!!

As Casey is screaming, the lights flicker and come back on. Mrs. Glenrose has a key. She and Karen scramble into the bathroom.

KAREN. Oh, Casey! What happened!? Oh, god! Casey! Get away from the plug! Get back! Back! Fuck! Oh . . .!

Karen jerks the cord out of the wall. Peter isn't moving. Karen grabs Casey by the shoulders and shakes her.

KAREN. Casey! I'll call 9-1-1.

Karen leaves the room.

MRS. GLENROSE. Step away from the tub, dear.

Casey is too shocked to move. Mrs. Glenrose helps her aside, goes to the outlet, and re-inserts the electrical cord.

CASEY. He's dead?

MRS. GLENROSE. He never had a life.

Mrs. Glenrose sits on the edge of the tub and lets herself fall backward. Lights out.

Scene 7

There is no curtain call. A lawyer reads the old woman's will with the house lights up as the audience leaves. The lawyer doesn't have to read the whole thing, but the lawyer does have to read until everyone has left, or until the end of the text, whichever comes first.

LAWYER. I, FELICITY M. GLENROSE, of the City, County and State of New York, do make, publish and declare this to be my Last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all wills and codicils at any time heretofore made by me. I direct that there be no funeral service or memorial service of any kind for me and that I be buried at sea. I give my eyes to THE EYE BANK FOR SIGHT RESTORATION INC., New York, New York, and I hereby ratify all that anyone theretofore may have done toward carrying out this gift. I give and bequeath to my son PETER H. GLENROSE, if he survives me, my Greek alabaster head of a woman if owned by me at the time of my death. Except as hereinabove otherwise effectively bequeathed, I give and bequeath all my tangible personal property, including, without limitation, my collection of letters, papers and documents, my personal effects, my furniture, furnishings, rugs, pictures, books, silver, plate, linen, china, glassware, objects of art, wearing apparel, jewelry, automobiles and their accessories, and all other household goods owned by me at the time of my death to CASEY S. MCDERMOTT and KAREN E. MCDERMOTT, if they survive me, to be divided between them by my Executors, in the exercise of sole and absolute discretion, in as nearly equal portions as may be practicable, having due regard for

the personal preferences of these two individuals. I direct my Executors to set aside the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) for CASEY S. MCDERMOTT, and I give and bequeath the sum so set aside to the Trustees hereinafter named, IN TRUST, NEVERTHELESS, to hold the same, and to manage, invest and reinvest the same, to collect the income thereof and to dispose of the net income and principal for the following uses and purposes and subject to the following terms and conditions: 1. Payment of Annuity Amount. The Trustees shall hold and manage the trust property for a term (the "trust term") which shall commence with the date of my death and shall end on the tenth (10th) anniversary thereof. At the end of each taxable year of the trust during the trust term (other than any short taxable year thereof for which specific provisions are hereinafter made), the Trustees shall pay over to such organization or organizations, to be selected by the Trustees, in the exercise of sole and absolute discretion, and only to such organization or organizations as are described in and satisfy the requirements of both of sections 170(c) and 2055(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the "Code"), at the time any such payment or payments to such organization or organizations are maybe (such organization or organizations shall herein be referred to collectively as the "qualified charitable beneficiaries") in such amounts or proportions, equal or unequal, as the Trustees, in the exercise of sole and absolute discretion, shall determine, such amount or amounts as shall, in the aggregate, equal ten percent (10%) of the initial net fair market value of the trust assets as finally determined for federal estate tax purposes. Such aggregate amount shall hereinafter be referred to as the "annuity amount." The annuity amount shall be paid first from the ordinary taxable income of the trust (including short term capital gains) which is not unrelated business income and, to the extent not so satisfied, the annuity amount shall be paid from the long term capital gains, the unrelated business income, the tax exempt income and finally out of the principal of the trust, in that order. In any taxable year of the trust in which the net income exceeds the annuity amount, the excess, at the end of such taxable year, shall be added to trust principal and thereafter shall be held, administered and disposed of as a part thereof. Should the initial net fair market value of the assets comprising the trust, and hence the annuity amount, be incorrectly determined, then within a reasonable period after the value of such assets is finally determined for federal tax purposes, the Trustees shall pay over to the

qualified charitable beneficiaries, in the case of an undervaluation, or, in the case of an overvaluation, shall receive from such beneficiaries to which amounts from the trust were paid, in proportion to the payments made to each, an aggregate amount equal to the difference between the annuity amount properly payable and the annuity amount actually paid during such taxable year.

7

Getting Laid (2005)

CHARACTERS

JASON (male)

JULIETTE (female)

MAX (male)

ARIANNA (female)

CLOVER (female)

TRACE (female)

all adults of reproductive age

Scene 1. A coffeehouse

JASON. Hey. Hey!

JULIETTE. Just a minute.

JASON. Ask her if it's their policy to serve paying customers.

JULIETTE. Ask who?

JASON. Is it your policy to serve paying customers?

JULIETTE. You haven't paid yet.

JASON. You haven't taken my order.

JULIETTE. I was busy.

JASON. But I was standing here. What were you doing that takes precedence over a customer who's standing here waiting to pay money for said product.

JULIETTE. "Said product." What is that?

JASON. Said product. Coffee. Black. No room for sugar. No room for cream.

JULIETTE. Three dollars.

JASON. Three dollars?

JULIETTE. Please.

JASON. Three dollars for a cup of coffee.

JULIETTE. Cash only.

JASON. One cup of coffee. No cream. No sugar. Three dollars.

JULIETTE. Three dollars.

JASON. What do you have for under a buck?

She pours a cup of water.

JULIETTE. Water.

JASON. How much is that?

JULIETTE. Forty cents for the cup.

He starts to pay.

JULIETTE. It's on me.

JASON. Usually I'd leave a tip, but . . .

JULIETTE. Don't worry about it.

JASON. Ask her if it's their policy to cut off half a muffin to help somebody out.

JULIETTE. Ask him if it's his policy to talk to himself in the second person.

JASON. Tell her yes.

She gives him a whole muffin.

JASON. Tell her thanks for the muffin.

JULIETTE. She says you're welcome.

JASON. Thanks for the muffin. I can't help doing that.

JULIETTE. Do you have autism or something?

JASON. No, I just started doing it when I was little. Now I can't stop.

JULIETTE. You should see a psychologist.

JASON. You think I'm crazy.

JULIETTE. You're not crazy. You just . . . It's like a nervous tick or something. Maybe a psychologist could help you out.

JASON. A psychologist? Do they do that sort of thing?

JULIETTE. I don't know . . . a psychologist . . . a speech therapist . . . something. It's no big deal. It's like stuttering. It's just a habit your mind gets into. You've just got to get it out of its rut. What's that?

He hands her something.

JULIETTE. It's a picture of you.

JASON. It's my headshot.

JULIETTE. I know. I've seen headshots before.

JASON. No. You can keep it.

JULIETTE. Why? So I can cast you in my movie?

JASON. You have a movie?

JULIETTE. No.

JASON. Do you know someone that does?

JULIETTE. Probably.

JASON. Well then.

JULIETTE. I mean probably someone who comes in here is making a movie. I don't personally know casting directors or anything like that. Hold on to that.

JASON. Tell her she's pretty. Doh. Jesus.

JULIETTE. Are you putting me on with this whole second-person thing?

JASON. What time do you get off?

JULIETTE. I'm married.

JASON. You're too young to be married.

JULIETTE. Enjoy the muffin.

JASON. I'm sorry. You do look young. How old are you?

JULIETTE. How old are you?

JASON. We could just see a movie. Just a friendly movie. I'd leave one empty seat between us.

JULIETTE. Not happening.

JASON. You could pick the movie.

JULIETTE. Thank you so much.

He gets his things and heads out.

JASON. Well, we tried. We failed. But at least we tried.

JULIETTE. See ya.

He leaves. Then he comes back.

JASON. Hey. Hey!

JULIETTE. You again.

JASON. Have you ever seen me in here before?

JULIETTE. Yes. About two minutes ago.

JASON. I mean before that.

JULIETTE. Have we spoken before or something? You just realized we sat next to each other in high school? That sort of thing? That where we're going with this?

JASON. Damn, you're jaded.

JULIETTE. Lay off the moves, then, you want to have a real conversation.

JASON. Laying off the moves.

JULIETTE. Good.

JASON. Turning down the heat.

JULIETTE. Okay.

JASON. Taking the kettle off the burner.

JULIETTE. Try not to overexert yourself.

JASON. You're caustic, too. Know what that means?

JULIETTE. Innocent ... leads to adventurous, leads to dazzled, leads to overdone ... leads to bored ... leads to skeptical ... leads to deaf, leads to jaded leads to caustic.

JASON. Are you a poet or something?

JULIETTE. I am a poet.

JASON. Tell me one of your poems.

JULIETTE. No. But thanks for noticing.

She does some work.

JULIETTE. How'd you know?

JASON. Run-on sentence.

She does some more work.

JULIETTE. But that alone?

JASON. That's enough.

She sits down with him.

JULIETTE. So this second-person tick of yours ...

JASON. Yes?

JULIETTE. That work on most girls?

JASON. Gets the mothering instinct going.

JULIETTE. Pity for a disability ...

JASON. Hard life, life of struggle ...

JULIETTE. Poor blubbering retard.

JASON. Hey.

He sulks. She thinks.

JULIETTE. Maybe try something less drastic.

JASON. Like?

She jumps up.

JULIETTE. A patch over your eye ... I don't know! Want another water?

JASON. Tell me this hasn't all been a huge mistake.

JULIETTE. Coming in here to flirt with me?

JASON. Coming to this town ... paying sixty dollars for these headshots ... the whole thing.

JULIETTE. Lemme see that thing again.

JASON. What?

JULIETTE. Your picture.

She looks it over.

JULIETTE. Well.

JASON. Well what?

JULIETTE. That's pretty good for sixty dollars.

JASON. You can keep that one.

JULIETTE. Nah. Thanks, but you're better off holding onto it. I don't really know anyone in the movies. What do you think of Hollywood?

JASON. You know the Greyhound station about three blocks north of here?

JULIETTE. Yeah.

JASON. Everything I've seen of Hollywood is on the walk between here and there. And the inside of that headshot place.

JULIETTE. Well don't give up yet.

JASON. I'm so fucking stupid.

She brings him a coffee.

JULIETTE. On the house.

JASON. What's your name?

JULIETTE. Juliette.

JASON. Thank you, Juliette.

JULIETTE. I'm still married.

JASON. I know.

JULIETTE. You're welcome.

Scene 2. The House of Pirates

MAX. Identify yourself.

JASON. What?

MAX. Make your name known to the house, good sir.

JASON. I think I'm at the wrong place.

MAX. No no no no no no no no no no. No. I seriously doubt that. This is the place.

JASON. Yeah? How do you know? You've never met me.

MAX. I was beginning to suspect that.

JASON. What place is this?

MAX. No no no. What place were you looking for.

JASON. I don't know.

MAX. Then how did you come to be looking for it? Are you on some kind of scavenger hunt?

JASON. No, I—

MAX. Ladies, come in here ... I have a little amusement for you.

JASON. I'm at the wrong house.

MAX. Just stick around. It'll be worth your while.

The ladies enter.

ARIANNA. What has the captain for our sea-weary souls?

CLOVER. Yes, captain, who has docked our humble ship?

TRACE. Is it foe? Can we eat 'im?

MAX. No, I'm afraid I already nibbled off a bit of his ear—

TRACE. Was it good?

MAX. No ...

CLOVER. Was it edible at least?

MAX. No ...

ARIANNA. Did you taste his mouth?

MAX. No, it was a bit sour.

ARIANNA. We can season him.

MAX. Any objection to that?

JASON. What?

MAX. Object to a little seasoning? ... Say no.

JASON. No.

The girls rush toward Jason.

MAX. Hold it.

They stop.

ARIANNA. What?

MAX. Go ahead.

The girls rub their bodies on Jason: seasoning.

CLOVER. Oooh ... he's so bland.

ARIANNA. We'll fix that.

TRACE. Get his arm.

They all rub on his arm.

TRACE. Get his knee.

They all rub on his knee.

TRACE. Get his everything!

ARIANNA. How's it feel to be seasoned by pirates?

TRACE. Knowing you're about to be eaten alive.

CLOVER. Don't worry, they didn't eat the last guy.

ARIANNA. No. We threw him overboard.

MAX. Tell him why you threw him overboard.

ARIANNA. Well ... it was because ... you want to know the truth right?

Max nods.

ARIANNA. It was because he was too quiet. He didn't say anything interesting. We got bored and threw him over.

MAX. That's your cue.

JASON. What would you like to hear?

CLOVER. Everything.

ARIANNA. How did you find our ship?

TRACE. Tell us of your adventures at sea.

JASON. It was a dark and stormy night ...
ARIANNA. What ever did you do?
TRACE. Oooh. I like this one. Please continue.
JASON. Um ...
MAX. Quick with it now.
JASON. Our ship had been attacked.
TRACE. By who?
JASON. By pirates.
MAX. Which ones? What did their flag look like?
ARIANNA. Did it have a big green slug on it?
JASON. Yes.
MAX. I knew it.
ARIANNA. The pirates of the big green slug.
CLOVER. Our arch nemesis!
TRACE. That slug scares me.
JASON. It's so big.
ARIANNA. It's so ... green.
CLOVER. It's so slimy.
JASON. Anyway we were attacked at dawn.
MAX. What kind of vessel was yours?
JASON. A fishing boat. We were unarmed.
MAX. Savages.
JASON. They killed our most distinguished passenger.
MAX. The captain?
JASON. Our sushi chef.
MAX. Damn.
ARIANNA. Now that's uncalled for.
CLOVER. What did you do for food?
JASON. We had to learn to make sushi ourselves.
TRACE. And, over time, you learned his trade?
JASON. No. Our sushi was terrible.

Scene 3. The House of Pirates - Later that same night

Max mixes something, pours it in a cup, and hands the cup to Jason.

JASON. What's in that?
MAX. Just drink it.
JASON. No, but seriously ...
MAX. All you need to know ...

JASON. What.

MAX. Alcohol, right ...?

JASON. Right ...

MAX. Changes how you feel. A little bit.

JASON. Unless you drink a lot of it.

MAX. Even if you drink a lot of it. Drunkest you've ever been, still all it is is you move a little slower, you have a few less inhibitions, you have a little bit of trouble getting it up ...

JASON. And?

MAX. And what?

JASON. What is that?

MAX. It's not alcohol. It's orange juice.

JASON. But what's in it?

MAX. A special mixture.

JASON. What's that?

MAX. A clear liquid.

JASON. What's that?

MAX. A white powder.

JASON. Which powder?

MAX. It doesn't matter. A white powder. Enter stage right: a white powder.

JASON. Okay. Exit stage left: a scared little bitch.

MAX. Get back here.

JASON. Are they all drinking that stuff?

MAX. We. We. Yes, we're all drinking it.

JASON. All night?

MAX. All day. Since three o'clock in the morning.

JASON. Yesterday?

MAX. If the problem is you don't like orange juice I can make you up a little package. To swallow. Or, rather, a series of packages.

JASON. How can you be so sober?

MAX. I'm not sober.

JASON. Sober-sounding. How many cups of that have you had?

MAX. Six.

JASON. Six!?

MAX. Estimated. I've been drinking from the blender.

JASON. How are you still making sense then?

MAX. How do you mean?

JASON. After six cups of that, how can you still make sense?

MAX. All you need to know ...

JASON. What.

MAX. Is that there are substances available on this planet—some naturally-occurring, some synthesized in the laboratory—that make the effects of six shots of vodka seem like all you took was an aspirin. But you'll still be conscious. You'll still be aware of what you're saying. You'll still make sense. . . . You'll still be funny.

JASON. They haven't made a sound in like half an hour.

MAX. When we go over there . . . to them, it'll be like we never left.

JASON. Just tell me what's in it.

MAX. I'm not gonna tell you what's in it. That's part of the fun.

JASON. Can you . . .

MAX. What?

JASON. Can you get it up on this?

MAX. Which one do you want most?

JASON. No, I wasn't—

MAX. It's okay. Just between you and me. I promise.

JASON. The one in the pink wig.

MAX. Arianna. Good choice. Do you think she likes you back?

JASON. I don't know. Does she?

MAX. I don't know either. Drink it.

JASON. Fuck . . .

Jason takes a tentative sip. Then he starts drinking.

MAX. And no. You won't be able to get it up.

Jason gives Max a sideways glance.

MAX. But you won't care.

Scene 4. The House of Pirates - The next morning

ARIANNA. Anybody—

She coughs up a lung.

ARIANNA. Anybody feel like a little wokenboken?

CLOVER. Goddess, yes.

TRACE. I would love to take a trip to Wokenboken.

JASON. Where's Wokenboken?

ARIANNA. You've never been to Wokenboken?

JASON. No. I'm from Montana.

ARIANNA. Wokenboken is . . .

TRACE. It's nearby.

MAX. It's west of Hollywood . . .

CLOVER. You'll like it.

MAX. . . and east of Beverly Hills.

ARIANNA. You've probably been there before and just didn't know it.

JASON. I doubt it. I just got here yesterday.

ARIANNA. Really.

JASON. Yes. Two days before that I was in Missoula, Montana.

TRACE. Wait.

ARIANNA. That's wonderful . . .

TRACE. Wait.

ARIANNA. How did you like the trip?

TRACE. I just realized I have no idea who you are or how you came to be here . . . ? Did we meet before? Did someone introduce us? Did I just totally wig out how I met you and all of you think I'm crazy right now?

ARIANNA. Relax.

MAX. He showed up at the door.

TRACE. Oh. So you two know each other.

MAX. We do now.

TRACE. But that's what I'm saying. What was he doing before he showed up at the door?

MAX. Ask him.

JASON. I showed up at the wrong house. I tried to say something last night, but . . .

MAX. One thing led to another.

ARIANNA. Well. We're glad you showed up here.

CLOVER. Want a hit?

JASON. Sure.

He takes a hit.

CLOVER. Now you've been to Wokenboken.

TRACE. So . . . if this was the wrong house, then what was the right one? I mean, somewhere there's a group of people having a conversation, saying: "Hey, where's that guy who was supposed to show up last night?" Right?

JASON. I don't know. I met this girl at a coffeehouse and she told me to meet her at a party.

MAX. Which coffeehouse?

JASON. On Sunset.

MAX. What was the girl's name?

JASON. Juliette.

CLOVER. Juliette!

TRACE. Juliette!

ARIANNA. Where is that Juliette?

MAX. She was probably busy packing.

CLOVER. She's probably in Arizona by now.

TRACE. Arizona?

MAX. Yeah, she and Odin decided to move to New Mexico.

ARIANNA. You're kidding.

MAX. No.

JASON. Is Odin her husband?

MAX. . . . Odin's her dog.

ARIANNA. She really moved?

CLOVER. We saw her in the coffeehouse yesterday. She said she was moving today.

ARIANNA. You two are joking.

MAX. No. Clover's right. We saw her yesterday, she said it was her last day.

ARIANNA. Why?

MAX. Same spiel as always. Tired of Hollywood bullshit. She's gonna go . . . live in a tent in New Mexico, I have no idea . . .

CLOVER. The sky is so beautiful there.

MAX. It is beautiful there.

ARIANNA. She really left this time?

MAX. I think so.

ARIANNA. I don't believe she didn't say goodbye.

CLOVER. I'm sure she's thinking of you. It seemed like she just needed to get away from all the chaos of the city for a while.

MAX. Yeah, she seemed good, she wasn't mad or anything. She just needed to get the heck out.

ARIANNA. New Mexico is beautiful. I hope it's better for her.

CLOVER. I have her email address.

Clover hugs Arianna.

TRACE. So, wait a minute. You just met Juliette yesterday, and you were in . . . Montana . . . two days before. Where are you staying?

JASON. I don't know yet.

TRACE. Do you know anyone here?

JASON. Everyone I know here is in this room.

CLOVER. Well, we might be able to . . . there's an extra room—

ARIANNA. Trace was thinking about moving into that, though, if her place doesn't work out . . . Weren't you . . . ?

TRACE. Yeah. Well.

ARIANNA. But we could talk it over, and see—

JASON. That's nice of you, but—

ARIANNA. At the very least I bet we know someone who's looking for a roommate.

Scene 5. The House of Pirates - A different day

Clover is there strumming a guitar. Jason comes in.

CLOVER. How was your day?

JASON. Long. . . How was your day?

CLOVER. Good. I've been meditating and doing yoga. Also, I spent some time in the kitchen, just cleansing the space. It feels much better in there now.

JASON. Where's Arianna?

CLOVER. She's out—I think she went out to look for jobs.

JASON. Really. What's she looking for?

CLOVER. I think she's just looking for anything she can find, you know, until something better comes up.

JASON. Does "anything she can find" mean just acting jobs, or does it mean all jobs, as in: I could use some help with the rent here.

CLOVER. I'm gonna give you some time to yourself so you can unwind.

Clover leaves. Jason cracks a beer. Arianna comes in.

ARIANNA. Oh hello.

JASON. Where have you been?

ARIANNA. Is that a beer? . . . You know I don't like drinking in this room. It's a very dark energy. Perhaps you'd be kind enough to sit on the porch, if you're going to make this part of your daily ritual.

Jason fumes silently.

ARIANNA. Are you upset about something?

JASON. Guess.

ARIANNA. I'm not in the mood to play mind-reader. If you have something to say I'd appreciate if you'd just say it.

JASON. Did Clover do anything today that had to do with looking for a job? Did she even leave the house?

ARIANNA. Oh, so that's what this is about.

JASON. Did she?

ARIANNA. I don't know. Is she here now?

JASON. She's in her room. What's in the bag?

ARIANNA. Something.

JASON. Something you bought?

ARIANNA. Don't touch that! It's a surprise.

JASON. You shouldn't have.

ARIANNA. It's not for you.

JASON. I know. You bought yourself a surprise un-birthday present from Godiva. Do you know what I had for dinner tonight? A Big Mac. Know why? Cause it costs two dollars. We have a cashflow problem here that's going to result in us being unable to pay our rent and I'm the only one who's willing to work for a living and not spend every extra penny I have on Godiva fucking organic tofu and bottled water when there's free water right here coming out of the faucet. Do you know what Clover bought today? A new guitar. A new guitar. She already has two guitars. I play the guitar, does anyone here know that? You know how many guitars I have? None. Know why? Cause they're expensive. Clover, how much did that guitar cost you?

Clover has come in while he was talking.

CLOVER. I'm buying it on a payment plan.

JASON. But how many payment plans are you doing right now? That's my point. The three of us can't afford any more payment plans. We have to pay rent in four days.

CLOVER. Jason, I don't like how you get when you're drinking.

JASON. I have had half a beer!

ARIANNA. I asked him not to drink in here.

JASON. But I'm gonna drink in here anyway. Know why? How much rent did you contribute last month? How much did you contribute? That's why. I'm working Labor Ready six days a week to pay for this place. If I want to have a beer in the house, then I'll have a beer in the house. The second either of you decides to seriously look for a job then such matters can be decided by family conference, but until then . . .

CLOVER. It's really hard to find a job when you feel so much pressure. I know Arianna's been trying to find one and I've been trying too and—

JASON. When?

CLOVER. What?

JASON. When have you been trying?

CLOVER. All the time.

JASON. Did you try today?

CLOVER. You may be capable of spending every moment of every day trying to find a job but I'm sensitive. I can't just go

out into the world all the time and sell myself to people I hardly know—

JASON. Well that's what the world is.

ARIANNA. I wish you wouldn't take such a . . . kindof . . . superior attitude when we're talking about this. It makes it really hard to have a conversation with you.

JASON. You know what you could do, if finding a job is too hard on your sensitivities?

ARIANNA. What?

JASON. Don't buy Godiva. Don't buy any more guitars.

ARIANNA. You can have a piece.

JASON. I don't want a piece. I want you to help me pay this month's rent. I want you to pay me what you owe me for last month's rent.

Jason leaves.

CLOVER. What's wrong with him?

ARIANNA. I think he's just tense cause he hasn't gotten laid in a while.

Scene 6. The House of Pirates: Jason's room - Some night

ARIANNA. Do you mind that I don't shave my legs?

JASON. No.

ARIANNA. Cause it seems to bother some guys.

JASON. It's your body.

ARIANNA. Exactly. Why should I have to shave my legs or— uagghh—my armpits. Just to impress some guy? Just cause they think it's sexy? Do you think it's sexy?

JASON. What?

ARIANNA. When a girl shaves her armpits?

JASON. Well—

ARIANNA. It hurts. It hurts growing back. All those little stubbly hairs.

JASON. I guess that's why some girls keep shaving them.

ARIANNA. But why should we have to shave them in the first place? Guys don't have to shave their armpits.

JASON. We have to shave our face.

ARIANNA. You don't have to shave it. You could choose not to and no one would look down on you. I was walking down Santa Monica the other day and do you know what some guy did? He

pulled over to the side of the street—stopped his car—to ask me why I didn't shave my armpits. Can you believe that?

JASON. That's messed up.

ARIANNA. You don't shave your armpits. I bet no one ever stopped their car to talk to you about it.

JASON. If a guy wants to get a certain kind of job, he has to shave his face.

ARIANNA. No they don't.

JASON. Sure they do.

ARIANNA. Like what?

JASON. Any kind of office job.

ARIANNA. People in offices have beards.

JASON. But it changes how you're looked at.

ARIANNA. When did you ever work in an office.

JASON. I worked collections. In Florida. You show up for a job interview with a beard and see where that gets you. They think "hippie." They think "scraggly." And even if you get the job you won't get promoted. All the hot shots, places like that . . . no beard.

ARIANNA. That's different.

JASON. No it's not. How many U.S. presidents can you think of who had a beard?

ARIANNA. Abraham Lincoln.

JASON. But recently.

ARIANNA. Maybe, I don't know . . .

JASON. Governors. Senators. Those guys aren't allowed to have beards.

ARIANNA. But if they did, no one would yell "sasquatch!"

JASON. But people wouldn't trust them, though.

ARIANNA. Maybe . . .

JASON. Did that guy really say "sasquatch"?

ARIANNA. Maybe Lincoln didn't have a beard . . .

JASON. Who can say? He probably had one at some point.

ARIANNA. So you don't mind?

JASON. What?

ARIANNA. That I don't shave my legs.

JASON. Why would I mind?

ARIANNA. Have you ever had a girlfriend who didn't shave hers?

JASON. It's been a while since I had a girlfriend.

ARIANNA. Why is that?

JASON. What do you mean?

ARIANNA. Are you fasting?

JASON. No.

ARIANNA. Did you have a bad experience with the last one?

JASON. Yes. . . . Her armpit hair was out of control.

ARIANNA. Seriously. Don't you miss it?

JASON. How long since you had a boyfriend?

ARIANNA. I can't think of the last time I had a boyfriend
. . . but . . . since I was with someone . . . ? Maybe two months.

JASON. I haven't been with anyone in three years.

ARIANNA. You're kidding.

JASON. No.

ARIANNA. Why?

JASON. Just . . . because. Let's leave it at that.

She kisses him lightly.

ARIANNA. Do you want to touch my legs?

They start to make out.

ARIANNA. Do you mind if the rest of me isn't shaven?

They make out more. She grabs his hand.

ARIANNA. No. I don't want you to touch it.

JASON. Why did you mention it then?

ARIANNA. I might— Just not now. Maybe later.

JASON. As in "later tonight" or as in "some other day that
will never happen"?

ARIANNA. Maybe . . . later tonight.

JASON. You know that's about the fourth time you've said
that to me?

ARIANNA. Sometimes you're too pushy.

JASON. Why do you play this game?

ARIANNA. Game?

JASON. You walk around in your underwear. I'm lying here
reading. You're fixing yourself a midnight snack and it takes you
twelve trips to get everything you need from the refrigerator.

ARIANNA. It wasn't twelve trips.

JASON. Whatever. You know what I mean.

ARIANNA. I'm in my underwear because it's hot. Look what
you're wearing.

JASON. This is my room. I'm not prancing around in front of
your doorway.

ARIANNA. My doorway isn't on the way to the kitchen.

JASON. But twelve times?

ARIANNA. It wasn't twelve.

JASON. Okay. Six.

ARIANNA. It wasn't six.

JASON. I counted.
Arianna leaves. She comes back.
ARIANNA. Six round trips ... or six times crossing the doorway?
JASON. Six times crossing the doorway.
ARIANNA. So that's really only three trips.
JASON. The point is ... why are you in your underwear.
ARIANNA. It's hot.
JASON. Right ...
ARIANNA. This is what I sleep in.
JASON. Are you sleeping now?
ARIANNA. If you don't want me to visit anymore—
JASON. "Do you want to touch my legs?"
ARIANNA. ... No.
JASON. That's what you said to me. Five minutes ago. That's a friendly visit?
ARIANNA. I just want—
JASON. You want to tease me.
ARIANNA. No, I—
JASON. But always turn me down.
ARIANNA. I just don't want to go all the way.
She kisses him again.
JASON. Why in the hell did you do that?
ARIANNA. It was just ... impulse.
JASON. Please just let me jerk off and sleep.
ARIANNA. So crude.
JASON. Hey. That's how it is.
ARIANNA. I think I'll have my snack now.
JASON. Enjoy.
ARIANNA. Want me to come back afterward?
JASON. For another cocktease?
ARIANNA. I was going to give you a massage ...
JASON. "Five dollar happy ending?"
ARIANNA. You know what? Fuck off.

Scene 7. The House of Velvet

JASON. I want to ask you something.
MAX. Yep.
JASON. But I don't want this to get back to the girls.
MAX. It stays here.

JASON. That girl, Trace, from the party the night I first met you . . .

MAX. Is she single?

Jason nods.

MAX. Yes. Do you want to meet her?

JASON. Do you have her number?

MAX. We used to live together.

JASON. Together together?

Max nods.

JASON. So do you mind if I call her?

MAX. Not at all. I think she may like you as well.

JASON. Really?

MAX. Maybe.

JASON. Did she say something?

MAX. She asked about you after the party.

JASON. Why didn't you tell me?

MAX. She asked me not to.

JASON. Why?

MAX. I don't know. That's just what she said.

JASON. Did it seem like she didn't want me to know because she liked me?

MAX. I don't know. She just asked about you. She didn't say, "Is he single, could you hook me up on a date," she just asked what I knew about you, what I thought of you.

JASON. You said good things I hope . . .

MAX. Actually, yes, I did.

JASON. How long did you two used to live together?

MAX. About a year.

JASON. A year! How long ago was this?

MAX. This . . . is a while back.

JASON. But you two are friends now?

MAX. Yeah. She's one of my best friends.

JASON. Who broke up with who?

MAX. I broke up with her.

JASON. Do you think she still likes you?

MAX. Well . . .

JASON. Cause I was getting that sort of vibe from her at the party.

MAX. Yeah. She probably does.

JASON. Are you still into her?

MAX. I like her as a friend.

JASON. That's it though?

MAX. That's it. You want to meet her sometime?

JASON. Would that be cool?

MAX. Sure. When?

JASON. I don't know . . . this weekend?

MAX. Ok. I'll call her.

JASON. What are you gonna say?

MAX. Don't worry, I'm not gonna say, "Hey Trace, Jason really likes you. You want to come over, maybe make out with him or something?"

JASON. What are you gonna say, though?

MAX. I'll think of something.

JASON. Don't make her suspicious.

MAX. She's not gonna be suspicious.

JASON. I'm just saying.

MAX. I lived with her for a year. We're best friends. If I invite her over to my place she's not gonna be suspicious.

JASON. Are you gonna say I'm gonna be here?

MAX. Maybe.

JASON. You think that's a good idea?

MAX. I don't think it matters. She'll come over. You two'll get a chance to interact. If it's gonna happen . . . it'll happen.

JASON. She might still like you, though . . . you said that.

MAX. Yeah. She might. She probably does. But she and I are over.

JASON. Maybe from your point of view. But if she's still stuck on you, how's she gonna go for me?

MAX. Maybe she doesn't want to be stuck on me—if, in fact she is. Maybe she's looking for a reason to forget about me.

JASON. But you two are still friends.

MAX. Yeah, but I mean: maybe she needs a reason to forget about the possibility that we might get back together.

JASON. And you think she likes me.

MAX. She might.

JASON. And you wouldn't mind . . . ?

MAX. Not at all. You're a good man. She'd be lucky.

They're silent for a moment.

MAX. There's just one thing.

JASON. What?

MAX. Well . . .

JASON. There's a well.

MAX. Well . . .

JASON. What?

MAX. It's not a big well.

JASON. What is it?

MAX. Well—

JASON. Stop with that.

MAX. Okay. Sometimes—

JASON. I knew it.

MAX. What? What did you know?

JASON. There's a sometimes.

MAX. It's not a bad sometimes. It's just a sometimes.

JASON. And ...

MAX. Sometimes ... Trace? ... she and me ... we still ...

JASON. You mean ... you two ... ?

MAX. Yes.

JASON. No ... how long has it been since you guys broke up?

MAX. Over a year.

JASON. How much over?

MAX. Just about one year.

JASON. And you still ... ?

MAX. Yeah.

JASON. Jesus. ... When was the last time you ... ?

Max stalls.

MAX. About a week ago.

JASON. I thought you said it was over.

MAX. It is.

JASON. But you fucked her last week?

MAX. Emotionally. Psychologically. It's over. It was over before she moved out. It's just hard ... to stop ... you know.

JASON. So ... what ... you were going to invite her over and then ... the three of us?

MAX. No, no. We're trying to stop. We both want to stop. It's just when you've been with someone for so long ...

JASON. So if she comes over ... how's that gonna work if the two of you are still together?

MAX. We're not together—

JASON. But you still—

MAX. Yes, but it's over. Emotionally. We're just friends. She's not with anyone and I'm not with anyone, so it's just ... convenient.

JASON. You're the luckiest guy I know.

MAX. It puts a strain on the friendship.

JASON. That's every man's dream.

MAX. It's really not a good thing.

JASON. So when she comes over ... what's gonna happen?

MAX. Nothing. We'll just hang out.
JASON. Won't that be awkward?
MAX. No.
JASON. But how's she gonna like me if you two are still ...
MAX. We're gonna stop.
JASON. Sure.
MAX. No, we are.
JASON. Uh-huh.
MAX. I really need to ... for my own sake. It's been dragging
on too long.
JASON. Well let me be your excuse.
MAX. Deal.
*They cement the deal physically: shoulder-pats, handshake, what-
ever.*
JASON. You won't mind if I fuck her?
MAX. If she doesn't mind it's fine with me.
JASON. You are a god damn gigolo.
MAX. Does it bother you that I just fucked her yesterday?
JASON. You said last week.
MAX. I'm just fucking with you.
JASON. Nah, man, we're friends ... it doesn't bother me.
Beat.
JASON. You're really gonna stop though?
MAX. Yes.
Beat.
JASON. You really think she likes me?
MAX. Maybe.

Scene 8. The House of Velvet - Some night

CLOVER. Oh, god, put me in a blender.
Everyone cracks up.
CLOVER. I mean, oh, god, put this back in the blender. It's
too gritty.
MAX. Can someone take that off her hands?
TRACE. Yes.
MAX. Thank you. Okay. Clover. While we're blending your
concoction—
CLOVER. Re-blending.
MAX. What?

CLOVER. Re-blending.

MAX. While we're re-blending your concoction. Could you put your hand ...put your arm around Arianna. Around her neck, and—

ARIANNA. Do you want us to kiss?

MAX. If you want to. That's good. Yeah. That's cool.

ARIANNA. Why don't you lie back a little.

TRACE. Oh, that's hot.

MAX. Yeah. Cool. That's nice. You guys want to stop for a while?

TRACE. No! Keep going. I'm in ...me! me!

MAX. Kiss her.

TRACE. Oh that turns me on.

MAX. You kiss her too.

TRACE. No really, stop, you're turning me on. Ahhh!

CLOVER. Don't you like to be turned on?

ARIANNA. Oww! Watch the leg.

MAX. This is bizarre-looking.

ARIANNA. What! Don't you think I'm sexy?

MAX. Not right now.

ARIANNA. I'm taking a break. When you're ready to be turned on, let me know.

TRACE. Is she mad?

MAX. No.

TRACE. Are you mad?

ARIANNA. No, darling. Just taking a break.

MAX. Ok, Jason, get in there.

TRACE. Is she sure she's not mad?

CLOVER AND MAX. She's not.

MAX. Maybe put your ...I don't know, just sit on her.

TRACE. On me?

MAX. Or ...maybe ...sit with her ...I don't know ...just ...sit ...close to her.

TRACE. Maybe he should take his shirt off.

MAX. Yeah, maybe. Sure. Could you bring me that light?

ARIANNA. Where do you want it.

MAX. Just ...on them.

TRACE. I'm thirsty.

CLOVER. Where's my shake?

MAX. Here.

CLOVER. Did someone blend it?

TRACE. You mean re-blend it.

MAX. No.
CLOVER. I can't drink it like this.
TRACE. I'll re-blend it for you.
MAX. But we're taking a picture.
TRACE. Later.
MAX. We'll re-blend it for you in a second. Maybe you could
... put your arms around him. That's good.
JASON. What do you want me to do?
MAX. Just look pretty. Trace, maybe you could wrap your
arms around his head.
TRACE. Like a snake?
MAX. Exactly. Like a snake.
TRACE. Mmmmmm ...
MAX. That's good. Don't smile.
TRACE. Like a constrictor ...
ARIANNA. Let him breathe some, though.
MAX. No don't let him breathe.
TRACE. I won't. Cause I'm hungry.
MAX. That's good. That's a good picture. Alright, I'm gonna
go re-blend this shake.
TRACE. Do I get to swallow him now?
MAX. Just save some of him so we can take pictures of it later.
Trace gets forward and close with Jason.
TRACE. Is this too much for you?
JASON. You're fine.
They start to make out.

Scene 9. The House of Velvet - Later that night

Arianna is standing, oblivious. Max is looking at her. Jason comes up.

JASON. Jesus. All she'll do to me is tease me with her panties, you've got her modeling for you, kissing girls on command ...

MAX. That's not all she does on command.

Max goes to Arianna and moves her with his hands. She starts dancing, sexy, slow.

JASON. Holy shit. Can she hear us?

MAX. Not anymore.

JASON. What is this?

MAX. Private show.

JASON. How did you get her like that?

MAX. Ask her.

Jason goes to her. Arianna's movement stuns him, draws him in.

JASON. You're like water.

ARIANNA. It's probably the morphine.

Jason goes back to Max.

JASON. Have you fucked her?

MAX. What do you think?

JASON. Jesus. . . . How recently.

MAX. What do you care? Weren't you and Trace just making out on my couch? Get back to that.

Scene 10. The House of Velvet - The next morning

MAX. So what happened?

ARIANNA. She left, that's what happened.

MAX. Please. I'm not talking to you.

JASON. She just didn't want to.

MAX. Was she mad?

JASON. What do you think I did to her?

MAX. I don't think you did anything to her. That's not what's going on here. I just want to know if she was mad, that's all.

JASON. Why?

MAX. Was she upset?

JASON. Nothing happened.

MAX. That's cool. I don't want to get in your business. It's just . . . she's not answering her phone, she had some . . . medicine . . . while she was here . . . and I just want to know if she's mad . . . maybe that's why she's not answering her phone . . . ?

JASON. Can she leave?

ARIANNA. No, I want to hear this.

MAX. Please.

Arianna leaves.

MAX. What happened?

JASON. Nothing happened.

MAX. Nothing?

JASON. We kissed.

MAX. That's it?

JASON. Why do you want to know?

MAX. Dude. Chill. This isn't an interrogation. It's just you and me. I'm not saying you raped her. I don't think that, okay? I'm curious, as your friend, how it went. Also I want to know if she was mad when she left because she's not answering her phone. Everybody around here's a little paranoid this morning, myself included. I'm not attacking you.

JASON. Nothing happened.

MAX. Well I'm sorry to hear that.

JASON. Me too.

MAX. Was she mean to you?

JASON. All your ex-girlfriends just lead me on.

MAX. She led you on?

JASON. She got me this close.

MAX. And then?

JASON. And then nothing.

MAX. With her mouth?

JASON. That's all she would do.

MAX. She gives great head, though, doesn't she?

JASON. The best.

MAX. Did you try to go down on her?

JASON. Was that a mistake?

MAX. She probably thought you were rushing it.

JASON. Really? Cause I just wanted to be fair ...

MAX. No, that's how she is.

JASON. She doesn't want me to go down—?

MAX. For her that's more intimate. Not right away.

JASON. So she's not mad at me?

MAX. She sucked your dick?

JASON. Yes.

MAX. No!

Beat.

JASON. Why didn't she let me ...?

MAX. Probably because you tried to ...?

JASON. But I just wanted her to ...?

MAX. She likes it when you ... first. It's a pride thing.

JASON. Oh. ... I've got the worst case of blue balls.

MAX. Bathroom. Arianna! Let's get coffee!

Arianna comes in.

ARIANNA. So you men are done with your private conversation?

MAX. What's in your hand?

ARIANNA. Phone.

MAX. Trace?

ARIANNA. Set to vibrate.

MAX. No wonder. Where's Clove?

ARIANNA. She's fuckin' . . . passed out somewhere.

MAX. We'll bring you something.

Scene 11. The House of Velvet: The bathroom - Just a few seconds later

Jason goes in the bathroom. Clover is lying on the floor in a blanket.

JASON. Oh.

CLOVER. It's okay. Don't leave.

JASON. I'll just be a second. What are you doing in here?

CLOVER. Sleeping. It's warm in here. And I like the sound of the water.

Jason closes up shop and turns around.

CLOVER. Whatsa matter?

JASON. I can't pee with you here.

CLOVER. I'll leave.

JASON. No. You look so comfortable.

CLOVER. Feel this blanket.

JASON. Crazy party.

CLOVER. We used to do this every Friday.

JASON. Here?

CLOVER. Here, and at our place.

JASON. Really.

CLOVER. This isn't even a party.

JASON. No?

CLOVER. Uh-uh. It's just a gettogether. I'll leave if you have to pee.

JASON. No, stay. I'll try again in a minute.

They sit for a second.

JASON. So . . . I mean . . . have you and Max . . . ?

CLOVER. Yes. Once. It was an accident.

JASON. I shouldn't have asked that.

CLOVER. I don't care. Everyone knows. . . It wasn't just the two of us, by the way.

JASON. So everybody here's had sex with everybody else?

CLOVER. Well, what do you expect? We've all known each other for a very long time.

JASON. Jhesus.

He gets up and goes to the toilet.

CLOVER. Can you pee now?

JASON. I don't think so.

CLOVER. Did that excite you ... to hear about?

JASON. Are you looking?

CLOVER. Sorry. I didn't see anything.

JASON. It's okay. Everyone here's seen everyone else, I guess. I came in here to pee. I didn't mind if you saw my ... But I didn't expect you to see it ...

CLOVER. Big?

JASON. Yeah.

CLOVER. Is it going away?

JASON. No.

Clover stands up and lets the blanket fall away.

CLOVER. Do you want some help?

Scene 12. A New House

Jason is holding a baby in a blanket, singing softly.

JASON. Nora Nora Nora. Nora Nora Nora.

Clover tries to hand him something.

CLOVER. Jase.

JASON. Put that shit away. At least go in the other room.

CLOVER. Okay ... you don't have to yell.

JASON. Shhh ... she's almost asleep.

CLOVER. Why do you have to be so judgmental?

JASON. Just go in the other room.

She goes.

JASON. You want to go to sleep now, dontcha little baby. You're ready. You're ready to dream. Ready to dream. Good baby.

A knock at the door.

JASON. Christ.

He opens it.

MAX. Hey man.

JASON. Come in ... just ... keep it quiet, okay? I've almost got her down.

MAX. No problem. Hey.

JASON. What.

MAX. I've got Trace and Arianna with me, do you mind?

JASON. No. Just . . . keep it quiet. . . . Clover. Clove. Take her, willya? She's asleep.

CLOVER. Who's out there?

JASON. Everybody.

Clover takes her.

JASON. That kid is a bitch to get down.

ARIANNA. We're going down Hollywood, wanna come?

JASON. Why?

MAX. Cause of the Virgin Mary Grilled Cheese Sandwich.

JASON. The what?

TRACE. That's not why.

MAX. They've got this grilled cheese sandwich shaped like The Virgin Mary.

TRACE. It's not shaped like her. It's her face.

MAX. You gotta see it dude, come with us.

JASON. I can't.

Clover comes back without the baby.

CLOVER. Greetings my celestial friends. What fabulous journeys bring you to our lovely home?

MAX. Religious conversion.

ARIANNA. House party!

TRACE. You know Max's friend . . . the director . . . what't his name?

MAX. He's not my friend.

TRACE. He's throwing a party.

ARIANNA. It's gonna be the wildest thing you've ever seen.

TRACE. We went to this party of his two years ago. It was . . . unbelievable.

MAX. It was ridiculous. You gotta come.

JASON. We can't.

CLOVER. But Jase—

JASON. Who's gonna watch Nora?

ARIANNA. Bring her along.

JASON. No.

CLOVER. Why not?

JASON. You can't bring a three-month-old to a "ridiculous" party.

ARIANNA. He's exaggerating. It wasn't ridiculous.

JASON. The answer's no.

ARIANNA. I'm sure she'll be fine in one of the side rooms.

CLOVER. She'll be fine. I'll spend most of my time in the room with her.

JASON. But you won't, that's the problem.

CLOVER. Why do I have to be the one to watch her all the time?

JASON. I'm not suggesting you watch her. I'm suggesting we stay here.

MAX. Bring her, Jason, it's not gonna be that bad.

JASON. There's gonna be ... stuff ... there?

MAX. There's ... stuff ... all over your coffeetable.

JASON. Forget it.

ARIANNA. Clovey, you come then.

Clover looks to Jason for approval.

JASON. What?

CLOVER. Is that okay?

JASON. Sure. Go.

CLOVER. Are you gonna be mad?

JASON. No.

CLOVER. Are you lying?

JASON. Guess.

CLOVER. I need to get out of the house. We've been cooped up in here with her every day. I'll go for a while and come back ... then you can go.

ARIANNA. Cmon ... it's just a party ... it'll be good for you two.

JASON. How long will you be?

ARIANNA. Two hours?

JASON. You'll be back in two hours.

CLOVER. Then you can go.

JASON. I'm not going.

CLOVER. Don't be like that. Why not?

MAX. There's gonna be a lot of people there.

TRACE. There's gonna be a casting agent there.

Jason looks to Max for confirmation.

MAX. Yeah.

JASON. For who?

MAX. Some indie company. Maybe it's nothing, but ... maybe it's something.

JASON. ... Forget it.

MAX. Your choice bro.

JASON. You guys just go.

They gather, head for the door. Clover comes back.

CLOVER. You're not gonna be mad at me?

JASON. Clover, I'm already mad at you.

ARIANNA. Just bring her with us ... she'll be fine in a side room I promise.

MAX. We gotta go. Clove?

Clover goes to the door with them.

MAX. Want us to bring you something back?

JASON. No.

They leave. Jason is still for a moment. Then he kicks over the coffeetable.

JASON. Fuck!

8

The Wolves (2005)

CHARACTERS

ADELE (female, 15)

GRANT (male, 40-50)

CAROL (female, 40-50)

JEFF (male, 35)

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAWN

Summer. A minivan tracks the rural highway. A fifteen-year-old girl, ADELE, rides with her parents, GRANT and CAROL. Grant drives. He has a beard. The back of the vehicle is packed with camping and fishing gear, and two hunting rifles.

EXT. SMALLER PAVED ROAD - DAY

The minivan rolls along a smaller paved road.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

The minivan rolls along an out-of-the-way dirt road, cutting through dense forest. Grant pulls the vehicle off the road and stops on a patch of dirt. Everyone gets out of the car. Grant opens the cargo hatch. Adele straps on her backpack.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Carrying large framed packs, Adele and her parents hike uphill. Adele totes a couple fishing rods. Her dad carries the two rifles.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Adele and her parents hike uphill into wilder and denser woods.

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Adele and her parents set up camp for the night. Adele makes a two-person red tent. Her parents make a larger blue tent.

INT. ADELE'S RED TENT - NIGHT

Adele arranges her bedding. She's wearing pajamas. Someone tugs open her tent zipper from the outside. Grant. He pokes his head in. Adele feels somewhat selfconscious.

GRANT. Everything okay in here?

ADELE. Fine.

GRANT. If you need anything your mother and I are right over here.

ADELE. I know.

GRANT. Alright then.

He pokes his head back out and zips her in.

INT. ADELE'S RED TENT - DAY

Adele is sleeping, head covered in the sleeping bag. Grant unzips her tent and leans in. He puts his hand on her and shakes.

GRANT. Adele.

She wakes, looks down at him, frowning.

GRANT. Time to get up.

He shakes more.

ADELE. Jesus, okay, I'm getting up.

She harmlessly kicks at him. He retracts his hand and leans out of the tent.

ADELE. *(yelling after him)* Nothing like a nice relaxing vacation!

EXT. WOODS: MEANDERING BROOK - DAY

Coming to the basin of a valley, the family crosses a meandering brook on foot, using rocks as stepping stones.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Adele and her parents continue to hike. Having crossed the brook, they're now heading up another wooded hillside.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Adele's, following her parents, comes out of the woods into a clearing where a rustic log cabin stands. Grant and Carol hug, and Grant's arm reaches to include Adele in the embrace.

GRANT. *(optimistic)* Here we are!

CAROL. *(enthusiastic)* I can't believe this place is still standing.

ADELE. *(bored)* Neither can I.

Adele shakes free of her father's hold.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Adele and Carol are sunbathing in folding chairs outside the cabin. Carol has the top of her bathing suit off, and lies face-down on her chair. JEFF, a thirty-five year old man, Adele's uncle, comes hiking out of the forest. He's dressed in deep-woods gear. His hair and clothing suggest he lives rustically. Adele sees him first. She looks like him like she sort-of recognizes him, but isn't sure it's him. She tugs at her mother's arm. Carol looks up. She discreetly puts her top on and gets up. Adele follows behind her mother. Carol hugs Jeff warmly.

CAROL. You remember Adele.

JEFF. Somebody grew up fast.

CAROL. That's what happens. *(yells:)* Grant! Somebody here to see you!

Grant comes out of the cabin. He comes over and hugs his brother.

GRANT. Hey, good buddy.

JEFF. (*indicating the cabin*) Place holding together?

GRANT. Barely. Want a beer?

JEFF. Does the Pope wear a pointy hat?

They go for the house.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Grant and Jeff crack beers and sit down near where Carol has resumed sunbathing. Carol discreetly removes her top and lies on the towel spread over her chair.

JEFF. Done any fishing?

GRANT. Just got here.

Adele self-consciously rubs tanning lotion on her own shoulders.

JEFF. (*of Adele*) She still the expert?

GRANT. She is. Actually . . . I was hoping you could help me out with something along those lines.

JEFF. Shoot.

GRANT. Need some time alone with The Missus. Wanna take the Girl Wonder fishing tomorrow morning?

Jeff smiles.

GRANT. Starting early?

Jeff smiles wider.

GRANT. Staying gone for a very long time?

Jeff clinks Grant's beer with his own.

JEFF. Sure bro.

Adele prances in the grass, showing her bathing-suited bottom off to the new arrival. Carol turns to her husband and brother as much as she can given that she's topless.

CAROL. At this age, girls are starving for attention.

ADELE. What was that?

CAROL. Nothing.

ADELE. I didn't think so.

Adele takes takes an apple that was sitting on her chair. She walks off, spunkily waving her butt for Jeff to see. She's carrying a towel and wearing flip-flops as she starts down a path leading into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

In her swimsuit and wrapped in a towel, Adele sits high in a tree eating an apple. When she finishes she tosses the core and climbs

down expertly, stepping into her flip-flops.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Adele comes through the woods toward the log cabin. Through the obstruction of trees, she sees the form of her mother, sunbathing, and a man leaning over her applying lotion. Carol is topless, lying face-down with her arms stretched out in front of her. As Adele comes to the edge of the clearing where the cabin is, she sees that the man is Jeff. She walks toward them. Jeff sees her first. He continues rubbing Carol's naked back while his eyes lock Adele's. When Adele is closer, Carol sees her, looks up. Carol doesn't change her position, but she is clearly a little embarrassed. She tries to play it off.

CAROL. How was your walk?

ADELE. (*sarcastically*) Oh it was beautiful . . . just beautiful.

She goes past them into the cabin.

INT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Grant is cleaning one of the hunting rifles at the table covered with a red-and-white checkered picnic tablecloth. Adele plops down next to him.

ADELE. Where's Mom?

GRANT. Isn't she outside with Jeff?

ADELE. And what do you think they're doing?

GRANT. How would I know that?

Adele takes his hand.

ADELE. Come outside. I'll show you.

GRANT. I'm busy here!

ADELE. She's naked! He's got his hands all over her!

This gets Grant's attention.

GRANT. Oh yeah?

ADELE. Yeah.

GRANT. Let's go see.

Grant gets up, still holding the gun.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Grant and Adele come outside. Carol has her top on, and she's tying the strap. Jeff has moved to the other chair.

GRANT. What do y'all have going on out here?

CAROL. Pardon?

ADELE. She had her top off! She was lying there and he was rubbing all over her!

No response from Grant. He looks from Carol to Adele.

ADELE. I'm telling you the truth. You saw her trying her top! You're gonna pretend this isn't—

Grant hits Adele in the face. It knocks her down and she bleeds because of it. Carol stands in sympathy for her daughter, but she's afraid of Grant, and won't move farther.

ADELE. Why did—?

CAROL. Baby—

GRANT. You have a dirty mind.

ADELE. But she—

GRANT. Don't talk that way about your mother.

ADELE. But—

Grant raises his hand. That shuts her up.

GRANT. Just don't.

He goes back inside the house. Jeff stands and turns his back on the situation, wandering toward the woods in denial. Carol goes to her daughter, but slowly, and not to help her. The mother towers over her girl.

CAROL. What did you tell him?

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Fully dressed, Adele climbs up the tree she was sitting in before, this time to a precarious height. She straddles a limb and takes a zip-lock bag from her pocket. The bag contains several granola bars. Adele uses her knife to cut a length of fishing line, and she secures the bag to a small branch. Shakily, she stands up. Holding onto an overhead branch, she steps away from the trunk of the tree. Gingerly, she lets her hands release the overhead branch, and she balances.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Carol comes out of the cabin and goes to the edge of the woods. She yells:

CAROL. Adele! Adele! Honey, if you can hear me, come on back.

Grant comes outside.

CAROL. How far do you think she went?

GRANT. *(yelling:)* Adele! Come back, alright, you're scaring your mother. *(to Carol:)* She didn't go far. She can't be that far. *(yelling:)* Adele! Time to eat!

CAROL. *(yelling:)* Adele! Baby we're not waiting forever. *(to Grant:)* She knows how to keep a grudge, don't she? *(yelling:)* Adele! 'dele!

Carol shakes her head.

CAROL. Well ...

Grant shrugs.

CAROL. I ain't waiting.

They go into the house together.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Grant, Carol, and Jeff sit around eating dinner. Carol drinks a beer. Grant and Jeff both drink whisky.

GRANT. Her grades is fine. It's not her grades we gotta handle.

CAROL. There's just some things you can't let 'em het away with. But I can't stop her. Hell, I can't even keep track of her.

GRANT. She's sneaky.

CAROL. She is sneaky.

JEFF. What she need is discipline.

CAROL. You don't think we discipline the girl? Now, come on, who do you think you're talking to, here? She don't care. What do you think I haven't taken away? I've taken away everything. She don't care. I walk out the house she's taking a taxi to school so she don't have to ride in a car with me.

GRANT. I walk out the house she's got her little boyfriend on the swing with her, and I mean ...

JEFF. Was they whooping it up?

CAROL. She wasn't whooping it up ...

GRANT. Not quite. Not quite. But there's a way to do things and there's a way not to, and that girl ...

JEFF. Oh man . . .

CAROL. You don't know the half of it.

GRANT. Am I right? I mean there's things to wear and there's things not to.

JEFF. Oh boy . . .

CAROL. She sneaks out with that stuff on. Lord. I can't stop her.

GRANT. No one can stop her.

Jeff is chuckling.

CAROL. Lord.

GRANT. I can't.

CAROL. *(a prayer)* Help me with that girl.

Adele clears her throat:

ADELE. Ah-hem . . . ?

She's been standing at the door. There is an uncomfortable silence. Then Jeff busts out laughing, in a drunk way.

JEFF. She is sneaky, damn . . . !

Adele sits at the table.

ADELE. Y'all got nothing better to talk about?

CAROL. Where you been?

ADELE. Yeah, you're real concerned.

Adele fiddles with a serving spoon.

ADELE. Did you even save me some??

GRANT. There's more.

Grant gets up and goes over by Adele. Adele reaches for the whisky.

ADELE. Y'all are sloppy. Lemme try that—

Jeff grabs the bottle from her.

ADELE. Hey!

Grant spoons some green beans onto Adele's plate.

GRANT. Don't scare us like that next time.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DUSK

Jeff throws the fly over a tent he's pitched outside the cabin. Adele stands watching Grant chop wood with splitting maul. Jeff watches Adele.

JEFF. Better get your sleep.

ADELE. Ain't tired.

JEFF. I don't want to hear no complaining tomorrow.

Grant sets a piece of wood on a stump.

GRANT. Stand back, honeypot.

Adele doesn't move. Grant reels the maul above his shoulders, and brings its blade down, splintering the wood in pieces.

INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

A two-room log cabin. In the main room, the last embers of a fire glow in the fireplace. Adele sleeps in a sleeping bag by the fire. The cabin door opens. Jeff comes in. He goes to Adele and switches on his flashlight. He kneels beside her, looks at her for a minute. He puts his hand on her body and shakes her gently. His flashlight is in her face. Adele wakes.

JEFF. Why aren't you dressed?

ADELE. If I'm not mistaken I just woke up.

JEFF. Well let's go.

ADELE. Give me five minutes.

JEFF. You've got three and I'm leaving.

Jeff goes outside. Adele gets out of the sleeping bag. She's already dressed. She puts on hiking boots and a wool cap. She grabs a slim backpack and heads for the door.

EXT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

There are fifteen fishing rods of various types set against the side of the cabin; Adele takes two of the rods and runs away from the cabin. She switches on a flashlight. Jeff is already walking away from the cabin toward the edge of the clearing.

ADELE. Hold up a second.

JEFF. Shh. Let your parents sleep in if they want to.

She catches up with Jeff. He carries two fishing rods and a large yellow tackle box. The two of them walk side-by-side away from the cabin and into the woods.

ADELE. At least they get to sleep in.

JEFF. But do they get the good fishin'?

ADELE. Hah.

EXT. WOODDED PATH - NIGHT

Adele and Jeff walk single-file, Adele leading the way. They're headed downhill.

JEFF. Whatcha guessing?

ADELE. I'm guessing pike.

Adele reaches around and scratches her hip. Jeff watches as her fingers reach below the waistline of her pants in order to do this.

JEFF. You never caught pike.

Adele stops and faces him. She makes her eyes big and pouty.

ADELE. Yes I did.

JEFF. When?

ADELE. Upstate. Last summer.

JEFF. What kinda line? Huh? What kinda line?

Adele turns and starts walking again.

ADELE. I ain't telling.

JEFF. You never caught no pike.

ADELE. Just cause I won't tell you what kinda line don't mean I didn't catch em.

JEFF. Whatever you say then, li'l miss.

Adele shakes her head.

ADELE. Fine, if you don't believe me . . .

JEFF. I'm sorry, I don't.

ADELE. Forget it. What are you guessing?

JEFF. I'm guessing topwater. Early morning. Bass. That's my guess. You fish topwater?

ADELE. Naw.

JEFF. Fly?

ADELE. Dad was gonna teach me, but—

Adele stops walking and turns around. Jeff stops too.

JEFF. What?

Adele points to the ground between them. There's a dead snake, belly up, lying across the path.

ADELE. Walk around. It's bad luck if you step over him.

JEFF. You stepped over him.

ADELE. (*gravely*) I know, but walk around. I don't want us both to have bad luck.

Jeff goes around the snake. Adele pokes him in the side with her finger as he goes past her.

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

A wooden boat dock on the edge of a lake. Tied to a post at its end is a three-man rowboat with an outboard motor. Adele and Jeff

put their gear into boat. Adele gets in the boat and fiddles with the motor.

ADELE. It's only half a tank.

JEFF. How far you planning on taking us?

ADELE. I ain't for sure, but . . . Toss that oar this way, willya?
Jeff brings her an oar that was sitting on the dock. He takes a flask from his pocket and swigs. Adele sees.

JEFF. Want some?

ADELE. I'll pass.

JEFF. I know you drink when you sneak out with your friends, don't tell me you never drank.

Adele reclines/leans on the motor. She's either being guarded or maybe she's doing it to show off her body.

ADELE. Beer. With my friends.

JEFF. Just beer?

Adele gets up and goes over to Jeff. She stands right up close, and with a posture that usually nieces don't usually make when standing right up close to their uncles.

ADELE. We drink Jack Daniel's at Macey's house.

She grabs his flask.

ADELE. What's this?

JEFF. Whisky. Try it.

She hands him back the flask.

ADELE. I'll pass.

JEFF. But you drink Jack Daniel's.

ADELE. Sometimes.

JEFF. With your friends.

ADELE. You got a problem?

JEFF. No. You got a problem with me knocking it back while we fish?

ADELE. Don't matter to me. Guess I'm driving. Get in if you're coming!

JEFF. Alright, alright, I'm in, I'm in.

Adele shakes her head: "that's pathetic". Jeff steps into the boat.

ADELE. Now you're in. You wanna work on sitting down for me? I like to drive real crazy.

JEFF. That's what I hear.

ADELE. And who told you that?

JEFF. Nobody.

ADELE. Well, Nobody has a big mouth, and I would advise you not to listen.

Adele rips the cord on the outboard and the motor starts.

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

The boat motors full speed away from the dock toward the center of the lake.

JEFF. Know what else nobody says?

ADELE. If nobody says it then why would I want to hear about it?

JEFF. (*sing-songy*) Nobody ...says ...it's that time of the month for you—!

ADELE. He did not tell you that.

JEFF. Nobody tells me everything.

ADELE. Nobody needs to shut the fuck up.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

The boat motors quietly across the lake.

ADELE. I don't think you're gonna have much luck with top-water.

JEFF. Take a swig of this.

ADELE. Get that out of my face.

JEFF. Just take a sip.

ADELE. I can't. I'm driving.

EXT. BOAT - NIGHT

The boats appears to sit still on the surface of the lake. The motor is off. Adele sits in the rear of the boat by the motor. Jeff sits on the bench up front. Adele reaches in her backpack and pulls out a small black tackle box. Jeff offers her the flask.

JEFF. Take a swig.

ADELE. My parents'll smell it.

JEFF. Nah they won't. You're gonna be so smelled up with fish they ain't gonna notice no little swig.

ADELE. I ain't thirsty.

Jeff holds the flask out to her.

JEFF. Take one swig.

Adele flashes her eyes at him.

ADELE. I said I ain't thirsty.

Jeff drinks again.

ADELE. You gonna do any fishing on this fishing trip?

Jeff opens his tackle box and selects a topwater lure. He fastens the lure to the line on one of his rods. Adele clips a large hook to the end of a chain and drops it over the side of the boat. She shines a flashlight on the hook, which she keeps three feet below the surface.

JEFF. You are aware that spotlighting's illegal in this state.

ADELE. Who's gonna catch us?

Adele takes a can of multicolored glitter from her bag; the can has a perforated lid. She shakes glitter into the water; it falls along the chain, passing the hook.

JEFF. Glitter?! I am fishing with a girl.

ADELE. What are you using?

He casts his line.

JEFF. Hula popper.

Jeff reels his bait in, quick spurts. The bait creates bubbles on the top of the water.

ADELE. That's the gayest shit I've ever seen. "Hula popper"?

JEFF. Glitter and a chain . . .

ADELE. We'll just see then. We'll just see.

JEFF. Your dad know you use that shit? You better hope no ranger comes along.

ADELE. Ain't no rangers up here. I'll make you a deal, Mr.: you get first catch I'll take a swig of that.

JEFF. That's some kinda deal for me! I get first catch and I have to give you a swig!

ADELE. You're practically dying to give me one.

He fishes to see if she's insinuating what he thinks she's insinuating:

JEFF. Dying to give you one?

She leans in to him and replies sensuously:

ADELE. Yeah.

He takes it back to above-board, looking away from her, breaking her stare:

JEFF. I was just tryin to show some politeness. That's all.

ADELE. Well, if you want to be polite, keep your voice down. You're scaring away my fish.

Jeff moves to her bench; now he's sitting beside her.

JEFF. Oh, your fish? You little prude.

ADELE. That's right, my fish. Like I ever saw anyone catch anything with a hula popper. Why am I a prude?

JEFF. Cause you won't drink.

ADELE. If I was drinking I bet you'd be complaining that I was hogging up all your whiskey.

Jeff grabs Adele's wrist.

JEFF. No. You're just scared.

ADELE. Of what?

He lets her wrist go.

JEFF. Of it messing up your game.

ADELE. I'm not scared.

JEFF. Well, we'll see who gets first catch then.

ADELE. Shhh! Gimme that.

She grabs his flask and takes a swig. She hands it back to him.

ADELE. So disgusting.

Jeff re-casts his line. Adele pours more glitter into the water above her hook. FADE TO:

EXT. BOAT—DAWN

They're still sitting on the same bench by the motor. The flask lies empty on the floor of the boat. Jeff's line is in the water. Adele pulls her chain and hook into the boat. She turns around to the motor.

ADELE. Slide up front.

She puts her hand on the motor's rip cord. Jeff grabs her hand to stop her.

JEFF. My line!

ADELE. Bring it in.

She pulls her hands out of his grasp.

JEFF. Where we going?

ADELE. Pee break.

JEFF. Go over the side.

ADELE. Yeah right.

JEFF. Row us in, at least. You'll scare the fish.

ADELE. There ain't no fish out here.

JEFF. There might be. You start the motor, we'll never know.

ADELE. Too bad. Bring it in.

He starts bringing his line in.

ADELE. Slide up front.

He stands up to move to the front bench. She rips the cord. The engine starts. He rapidly brings in his line as the boat begins to move across the lake.

JEFF. We're gonna miss the fish. This is the best time, just before daylight.

ADELE. Just after daylight is good too.

JEFF. I'm gonna miss my fish.

EXT. LAKE EDGE - DAWN

Adele brings the boat up to a bank on the edge of the lake. She pushes them right against the edge with the paddle, steps out, and ties the boat to a tree. She starts into the woods. Jeff gets out of the boat and starts into the woods. Adele stops and turns to Jeff.

ADELE. What are you doing?

JEFF. I gotta go too.

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

Adele hikes up the incline away from the lake. She looks behind her. Jeff is following her up the slope.

ADELE. Leave me some privacy while I go!

JEFF. Wanna make sure you don't get lost.

ADELE. Hold back a bit.

JEFF. Go on then.

She starts on. He starts on after.

ADELE. Whatcha doing now?

JEFF. Don't want you to get lost.

Adele finds it absurd that he might think she could get lost while she's this close to the lake, the boat still clearly visible.

ADELE. How I'm gonna get lost? Meet me at the boat.

JEFF. I told you: I gotta go too.

ADELE. And you gotta go standin right next to me? Why is that?

He's caught up with her.

ADELE. I ain't going with you standing there.

JEFF. What if I lose you? Your dad'd kill me.

ADELE. He won't kill you for standing ten steps away while I pee.

JEFF. Just go.

ADELE. Turn around, at least.

JEFF. Arright . . . go so we can get back to fishin.

He turns around, three feet away from her, starts to unzip. She turns around and looks at him skeptically.

ADELE. I don't want you pissing right on top of me!

JEFF. Arright. But don't be running off.

He walks. He stops fifteen yards away, unzips, and pisses on a tree. Through the trees, he sees Adele squat, looking nervously over at him.

EXT. ROWBOAT - DAY

They're back in the boat. Adele sits on the bench by the motor. Jeff sits on the bench up front. Adele's chain is in the water. She casts a weighted line overboard. Jeff isn't fishing.

JEFF. Your daddy says you got a boyfriend.

ADELE. He did not.

JEFF. Sure he did. Said when they come home they find you two sneaking around in the basement, making sounds.

She shoots him a look.

ADELE. I've never even done anything with him.

JEFF. Nothing?

They fish.

JEFF. You wanna hear how your daddy and mommy first did it, at your momma's birthday party over Danny Madsen's place—

ADELE. No.

JEFF. Your mom, she come out looking like a snake bit her—

ADELE. Shut up!

JEFF. White. Like a ghost.

ADELE. *(disapprovingly)* And y'all standing there watchin'.

JEFF. You bet. That was a big party we had on that one. We'd been planning that for weeks.

ADELE. Mom says y'all surprised her.

JEFF. Bullshit! She's the one who planned it. Talking for weeks about how she's gonna lose her virginity to Grant Ford. Grant Ford, Grant Ford, every word outta that girl's mouth was about Grant Ford. We was tired of hearing her run her mouth, that was why we planned it.

ADELE. Who planned it then, y'all or her?

JEFF. We all planned it together. No big deal. Just picked a night and got a case of beer. Went over Danny Madsen's and we sat outside while the two of them go in Danny's bedroom, close the door. Didn't take em long! Twenty minutes, they were done.

ADELE. That is not how it happened.

JEFF. Oh yeah?

ADELE. Which birthday was it then?

JEFF. That was fifteen.

ADELE. That is not how it happened.

JEFF. You ask your momma.

ADELE. I will.

JEFF. She won't admit it. She'll be scared you'll try the same thing. What's the name of your boy?

ADELE. He's not my boy.

JEFF. What's his name.

ADELE. Matthew.

They fish.

JEFF. Your other friends do it yet?

ADELE. Like I know!

JEFF. I know you know. Course you know. You and your little girlfriends that'll be the first thing y'all tell each other.

ADELE. I don't hang out with girls.

JEFF. Sure you do.

ADELE. I don't. They all hate me.

JEFF. That Rachel Walker girl, she's your friend.

ADELE. Not anymore.

JEFF. What happened? She sweet on Matthew?

ADELE. Like he'd ever go for her.

JEFF. You watch her. She's willing to give it up before you, you might have a hard time predicting what little Matthew'll do. How far'd you go with him?

ADELE. None of your business.

JEFF. You watch that Rachel. Slut like that'll come along and temptation for Matthew gets too strong . . . boys can only resist so much.

Adele brings her line in.

ADELE. Well . . .

Jeff looks at her like "what?"

ADELE. She is a slut.

Jeff laughs. He shifts to Adele's bench.

ADELE. She already fucked half the school.

Jeff viciously slings his arms around Adele: one around her waist and one around her neck.

JEFF. *(grabbing her)* I ain't surprised.

His face is one inch from hers.

JEFF. Did you fuck the other half?

Adele screams but Jeff covers her mouth.

JEFF. Now now. Keep it quiet. This ain't no thing.

He keeps one arm around her neck and covering her mouth. With the one that was around her waist, he reaches up and gropes one of her breasts. She elbows him in the stomach. It knocks the wind out of him. She scrambles to the front of the boat. He recovers. She digs in her backpack and pulls out a knife.

ADELE. I will cut you.

He moves toward her.

JEFF. Whatcha gonna cut me for?

ADELE. (*screams*) I will cut you and leave you here!

Jeff makes a motion with his hands that means "there's no problem here, you don't need to do that".

JEFF. Okay. Okay. I was just trying to show you something.

ADELE. You don't touch me!

JEFF. I ain't touching you. Shit. There ain't no fish out here. Let's go.

Adele keeps the knife pointed in Jeff's direction. She's shaking with anger.

JEFF. Drive us home. Go on. Drive us home.

He starts toward the front of the boat. Adele threatens him with the knife:

ADELE. You drive.

Jeff stops.

JEFF. But you're a better driver than me.

ADELE. (*sharp*) You can drive a boat!

Jeff takes another step toward Adele.

ADELE. I will cut you if you come any closer.

He stops.

JEFF. Jhesus! What's got you so serious all of a sudden?

He sits.

JEFF. Fine, ya spoilsport, I'll drive.

She sits, keeping the knife handy. He rips the cord. The motor starts and the boat begins to move. FADE TO BLACK. CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN: MAIN ROOM - DAY

In the main room of the log cabin, a forty-something couple, GRANT and CAROL, sit at a table drinking coffee. Carol reads a book. Grant wears a pointy birthday hat. The table is covered with a red and white checkered picnic tablecloth. On it is a birthday cake with unlit candles and a small package wrapped in festive paper. The door to the cabin bedroom is open. The cabin door opens. Jeff

comes in. Adele comes in after. Adele goes to the fireplace. Jeff stands awkwardly in the middle of the room.

GRANT. Who caught the first one?

Grant holds the present out to Adele.

ADELE. What's that?

GRANT. Birthday.

Carol half-assedly straps on her pointy hat.

CAROL. We didn't forget.

Grant hugs Adele chummily.

GRANT. How was it out there?

An awkward silence: Adele shrugs out of Grant's embrace. Grant looks to Adele, who walks to the fireplace staring at her shoes. Grant looks to Jeff; Jeff shrugs.

GRANT. Slow morning?

JEFF. There ain't no fish out there.

Grant goes to Adele and puts his arm around her.

GRANT. Even for The Expert?

Adele winces away from Grant.

ADELE. He's right. There ain't no fish out there.

GRANT. Did you use the chain?

ADELE. There ain't no fish in that lake.

Grant goes back to the kitchen area. He picks up the present.

GRANT. Wanna find out what's in here?

Adele responds forcefully, quieting the room:

ADELE. No.

Grant puts the present on the table.

GRANT. Maybe we can all go out later and try again. They're probably just slow starters. Anyone hungry for some breakfast?

ADELE. What are we gonna eat?

GRANT. How about some sausage and eggs.

ADELE. I wanted to bring in some fish ...

CAROL. Relax, honey.

GRANT. We'll try again this afternoon.

CAROL. There's plenty of time for fishing.

GRANT. Babe, why don't you help me out with breakfast ... set some dishes out?

Adele doesn't move.

GRANT. Come on. We'll have fish for dinner, I betcha.

Adele goes to the kitchen area and starts setting dishes out on the table. She speaks quietly to her dad:

ADELE. I need to talk to you.

He is oblivious to the fact that she's trying to keep their interchange low-key.

GRANT. Okay.

Jeff is watching Adele like a hawk. Carol is absorbed in her book. Grant is getting sausage and eggs out of an ice chest. Adele makes another attempt to get her dad's attention:

ADELE. *(in a low voice)* I need to talk—

JEFF. Want some help with those dishes?

Jeff moves toward the kitchen area.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Outside the log cabin, Carol lies in a folding chair, sunbathing, reading. Jeff and Grant toss a frisbee. Adele comes out of the cabin with a bucket of food garbage. When Adele comes out, Jeff shifts his frisbee position closer to Adele and Carol.

ADELE. Mom, let's go. Too much of that book. You need some exercise.

Her mom looks at her blankly. Adele takes the book.

CAROL. Hey!

ADELE. Let's spend some time together. Isn't that what we're supposed to be doing?

Carol takes the book back.

CAROL. What we're supposed to be doing . . . is relaxing . . . in whatever way works for each of us.

ADELE. Walk with me to the lake. You can read on the way.

CAROL. I'm fine right here.

Adele goes near Grant, toting the garbage bag.

ADELE. Where do you want this?

GRANT. Just take it out a little ways and bury it.

ADELE. Come show me where you want it.

GRANT. Honey, wait till we're done, okay?

JEFF. What does she want?

ADELE. None of your business!

JEFF. Okay, okay, little missy.

ADELE. Just show me this once.

GRANT. *(snapping at her)* You can't bury some trash?

Carol and Adele both look at him, surprised.

GRANT. Alright.

Grant tosses the frisbee to Jeff. Jeff looks at Adele flatly, an expression that shows nothing. Grant starts away from the cabin area with Adele.

GRANT. I wish you could wait till we're done.

ADELE. Well I can't wait.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Beyond sight of the cabin, Adele leads the way with the trash bucket. Her dad is right behind. They're walking uphill.

GRANT. This is fine, honey!

ADELE. I wanna go a little farther.

GRANT. This is fine!

Adele turns around. Her face is red, her eyes wild. Grant stops walking.

GRANT. What's the matter?

ADELE. I'm working up to tell you, but I ain't ready yet!

GRANT. Adele, honey, what's wrong?

ADELE. I'll tell you when I'm ready.

GRANT. You're scaring me. I wish you would talk to me.

Grant hugs his daughter comfortingly. She puts the bucket down. He holds her tight.

GRANT. If you have something you want to talk about, I'm listening.

Adele pulls away from his hug. She looks away from his gaze, intentionally avoiding eye contact.

ADELE. Uncle Jeff grabbed me in the boat this morning.

Grant looks surprised, confused.

GRANT. Grabbed you? How?

ADELE. He grabbed me.

GRANT. How?

ADELE. He grabbed my tit!

Grant backs off. He thinks. When he speaks again he is softer, gentler.

GRANT. Are you sure?

ADELE. What do you mean?

GRANT. Did he mean to? Did he just accidentally—

ADELE. This wasn't no accident!

GRANT. That's a small boat. Your uncle ...he ...what exactly? ...he wouldn't do ...what exactly are we talking about here? Did he ...Did he lean on you? Something like that?

Silence between them. Then:

GRANT. Did you tease him?

ADELE. What do you mean?

GRANT. Well. Honey, sometimes ... With your friends. Like with that O'Leary boy ... Sometimes you have a tendency to ...

Adele looks at him incredulously.

ADELE. To what?

GRANT. Well, honey. Sometimes you tease.

ADELE. I didn't tease him.

GRANT. But maybe—

ADELE. I didn't tease him.

GRANT. —you might have and just not known it—

ADELE. I didn't!

GRANT. Listen. Listen to me. How can you be sure?

Adele looks at her dad as though he was a stranger. She's completely shocked: she revealed something difficult to reveal and she's getting no support, maybe not even belief. She starts walking away from her dad, down the hill, like someone who just survived a car wreck (in shock). Her dad is left standing with the trash bucket.

GRANT. Adele! Adele, honey ...

He picks up the trash bucket and follows.

GRANT. Adele. Listen ...

EXT. DOCK - DAY

At the boat dock where Adele and Jeff pushed off that morning, Carol lays out in the sun, reading. Adele sits on one of the dock posts, her eyes covered with sunglasses. Jeff and Grant fool around thus: they take turns jumping off the dock into the lake, the other one tossing the frisbee from the dock into the air, which the jumper tries to catch. The boat is tied to the side of the dock. Jeff jumps off the dock. Grant throws the frisbee fast at Jeff, but Jeff misses, and the frisbee flies a good ways across the lake.

JEFF. What the hell was that?

GRANT. I guess you need to work on your catching.

JEFF. I ain't swimming out to get that.

GRANT. I'll race you.

Grant dives in the water. He comes up a few yards past Jeff.

JEFF. The hell you will!

They swim out to the frisbee.

ADELE. Mom.

Adele shakes her mom's shoulder.

CAROL. What?

ADELE. Mom I need to tell you something.

Carol keeps reading. When she speaks it is as though her mind is a long way away.

CAROL. Well. Tell me.

ADELE. Jeff touched me on the boat this morning.

Carol doesn't respond.

ADELE. Mom.

CAROL. What?

ADELE. Did you lose your virginity at a birthday party at Danny Madsen's house?

Carol lowers her book.

CAROL. Who told you that?

ADELE. This morning, while we were fishing, Jeff touched me.

CAROL. How did that happen?

ADELE. What do you mean?

CAROL. What events transpired that led up the moment when he touched you?

ADELE. Nothing. Mom. Mom.

CAROL. What do you want me to do?

ADELE. You don't care that he touched me?

CAROL. It's not that I don't care, it's just . . . Baby you make it very difficult to know what to do in situations like this. Have you ever heard of the little boy who cried wolf?

ADELE. When did I cry wolf?

CAROL. Okay, that's a bad analogy—

ADELE. Mom, I want you to keep him away from me. Okay?

Carol gestures to mean "look around you, look how big this place is, how can I control anything within it?"

CAROL. How am I supposed to do that?

ADELE. Just keep him away.

CAROL. Watch who you're ordering around.

Adele gets up from her mom's chair, goes back to sitting on the dock post. After a while Carol speaks without looking over at Adele.

CAROL. Your father told me what you told him this morning.

Adele is wrapt.

CAROL. He said he talked to Jeff and Jeff says you leaned over him in the boat, you accidentally touched him, you got a little freaked out over it and started screaming at him saying he touched you.

Adele is shocked, silent.

CAROL. Don't you give that uncle of yours any trouble. He likes you.

Grant and uncle Jeff are back. They get up on the dock.

CAROL. What happened to your little toy?

They shrug.

GRANT. Lost.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Adele swims by herself, some ways from the dock. Carol is still sunning/reading on the dock. Jeff sits on a dock post near Carol. Adele isn't sure of what she sees: Jeff touches Carol's bare leg? She looks more carefully. Jeff's hand is on her mother's leg. Carol smiles at him and playfully slaps his hand. Jeff goes in again with a firmer grab. Carol says ...

CAROL. Not now!

... and bats his hand away. He shrinks back. She reaches out to him, pulls him close, pulls him into a kiss. Adele puts her goggles on and dives underneath the water. Grant comes quickly out of the woods, carrying a beach ball. Carol and Jeff are no longer kissing, and they make a show of welcoming Grant. Grant runs off the edge of the dock, tossing the beach ball in the air. Jeff chases him off the edge of the dock; they fight for the ball in the air, then splash into the lake. Adele watches them.

GRANT. Come on in!

ADELE. That's arright.

JEFF. We need three to play.

ADELE. I don't wanna play.

GRANT. Come on, baby, toss the ball with us!

JEFF. You chicken?

ADELE. I ain't chicken! You shut up.

CAROL. Adele.

ADELE. Tell him not to call me chicken.

JEFF. You are a chicken!

CAROL. Jeff. Cool it.

JEFF. But we need three to play.

CAROL. Well she ain't gonna play if she don't want to.

JEFF. You then.

CAROL. I can't right now.

GRANT. Come on, honey.

Carol puts down her book.

CAROL. What's the game?

GRANT. Keepaway.

Carol stands up.

CAROL. (*sarcastically*) My favorite.

Carol puts on her swimming cap and dives into the lake. Adele stands up. Alone on the dock, she moves to the spot where her mother just dove from and stands awkwardly.

GRANT. Come on in, baby.

JEFF. Don't be a—

CAROL. Jeff! I mean it now. Come on, sweetie, help me out against these boys.

Adele looks doubtfully at her mother.

CAROL. Fine! You gonna leave me all alone against these two?

Adele goes back a few steps, then runs and jumps into the water. The guys are on the outside, girls in the middle. They play keepaway. Adele is tentative at first, then, as her mom is having trouble getting the ball, Adele gets more aggressive.

GRANT. Game on!

JEFF. Whoa! Here ya go.

CAROL. Ahh!

GRANT. Nice try, honey.

CAROL. No it wasn't.

JEFF. That was pitiful.

ADELE. Don't say that.

CAROL. It's okay, sweetie.

JEFF. Catch this!

GRANT. Oh! Spiked!

JEFF. Denied. Heads up!

GRANT. Okay. A floater.

Grant tosses to Jeff. Adele is near Jeff. She jumps up and snags the ball. As she dips into the water from her jump, she comes down right by Jeff. Under the water, Jeff's hand goes to Adele. He puts his hand on her exposed leg very near her crotch. Adele screams and thwacks Jeff in the head. His hands go up to feel his reddened face. Adele is swimming for the dock.

CAROL. Honey!

JEFF. I'm gonna get you back for that.

CAROL. (*to Jeff*) What happened?

JEFF. Nothing.

CAROL. Honey! Wha'd you do that for?

Carol looks at Grant. Grant returns with a look that means "I don't know ... you got me". Adele reaches the dock and hefts

herself up. She turns around. She shakes with rage. Her eyes say murder. Everyone in the water is looking at her, unable to speak. Adele turns and runs into the woods.

CAROL. Adele!

GRANT. Baby, come back ...

CAROL. *(to Jeff)* What happened?

JEFF. I told you nothing.

CAROL. You sure it was nothing?

JEFF. Yeah!

Carol watches Adele disappear into the woods. Carol looks at Grant.

INT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Carol comes in, still wet from the lake. Adele isn't in the room.

CAROL. Adele!

Carol looks into the bedroom. Adele isn't there. Grant and then Jeff come into the cabin.

CAROL. You go find her.

Grant nods.

CAROL. You find her.

GRANT. Arright. Arright.

Grant pushes out the door past Jeff.

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Grant and Jeff walk through the woods. Jeff drinks a beer. They reach the top of a ridge. Grant cups his hands around his mouth and yells:

GRANT. Adele!

He waits a bit and yells again.

GRANT. Adele!

Grant starts walking.

JEFF. Listen—

GRANT. I don't want to know.

Jeff follows behind Grant.

JEFF. You don't?

In a single movement Grant stops walking, turns, and grabs Jeff by his jacket. Jeff's beer falls. Grant yells in Jeff's face.

GRANT. DID I SAY YOU COULD TOUCH HER? WHEN DID I SAY THAT?

Grant loosens his grip on Jeff. Jeff recovers. Grant calms.

GRANT. Come on.

Grant turns and starts walking.

GRANT. We got other things to worry about now.

Jeff follows.

EXT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

The door to the cabin is open. Carol sits outside, hunched over, staring into the woods. Grant comes from within the cabin, kneels beside his wife. He puts his hand on her shoulder. She reels from him.

CAROL. What the fuck did he do to her!?!

GRANT. Honey—

CAROL. Tell me what happened!

GRANT. Nothing happened—

CAROL. You know! I know you know!

Grant tries to comfort her again. She faces him straight on, vicious mother hen:

CAROL. You two stay away from her.

GRANT. Don't get hysterical. She'll come back when she's ready.

Carol glares at her husband: daggers.

CAROL. You stay away from her.

Carol goes back to the cabin. Grant follows.

INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Grant, Carol, and Jeff are sitting at the table looking at their dinner. Grant and Jeff exchange glances. Carol pushes a green bean around her plate. A propane lantern burns, the combustion of its gas making a loud “hhohhhh” sound. The cabin door opens. Adele comes in. She's still wearing her swimsuit. Her legs are dusty. Carol stands up. Adele looks at the threesome blankly. She goes to the fireplace and picks up her duffel bag. She goes into the bedroom and closes the door.

INT. LOG CABIN: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adele pulls a pair of cargo pants out of her duffel bag. She rummages through it and pulls out a plain white tshirt.

CAROL. (O.S.) When she comes out of there I want an apology from you. And make it a nice one.

GRANT. (O.S.) He doesn't have to apologize.

JEFF. (O.S.) No, it's okay. She's right.

INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Adele comes out of the bedroom. She sits down at the place that has been set for her at the table. She serves herself some mashed potatoes. Jeff struggles for the words to say. Adele watches him struggle.

JEFF. Look—

ADELE. Whatever it is I don't care.

GRANT. Honey—

CAROL. Now you listen—

ADELE. I don't wanna—

CAROL. Listen.

Jeff re-musters his linguistic powers.

JEFF. I . . . when . . . whatever you thought . . . this morning . . . whatever you thought I meant to do, that's not what I meant to do.

CAROL. Thank you.

ADELE. What about this afternoon—?

CAROL. Enough—

ADELE. In the lake—

CAROL. He said he's sorry.

ADELE. I never knew that was part of keepaway—

CAROL. We're finished now. That's the end of it. He said he's sorry, now don't you blow it.

Adele stares at her plate.

section*INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

The dishes have been cleared. A fire is burning in the fireplace. The foursome sits at the table playing cards. Adele's unopened birthday present sits out on the card table.

GRANT. She's shootin' the moon, I'm tellin you, she's shootin' the moon.

Adele does something almost like a smile.

GRANT. Don't let her take that one, if you can take it. Stop her.

CAROL. You stop her.

GRANT. I can't. I wish I could.

CAROL. Are you shooting the moon?

JEFF. Jes' play, arright. She ain't gonna tell you.

CAROL. *(to Jeff)* She's got a card face, just like her father. *(to Adele)* That's nothing like your granddaddy. You know what he would do? He'll sit there and let on like he don't know how to play, asking questions like "What was that rule again?" when he damn well knows that rule. Knows it like the day he was born. Just to throw you off your guard.

JEFF. You gonna play?

CAROL. Oh. Is it my turn?

JEFFGRANT. Yes.Yes.

CAROL. Arright.

She plays a card. Adele picks up the trick.

JEFF. That's all you had?

GRANT. She's shooting the moon. Somebody take one of these.

CAROL. You take one.

GRANT. I can't. Not with this shit hand. *(to Adele)* You coming fishing tomorrow morning?

ADELE. Who all's going?

GRANT. Me and uncle Jeff.

ADELE. Not Mom?

CAROL. That's too early for this old lady.

ADELE. Too early for me, too.

Grant picks up Adele's birthday present.

GRANT. Are you gonna open this?

ADELE. It's the same thing every year!

Grant puts the package down.

GRANT. How are me and Jeff supposed to catch anything without The Expert there to show us the techniques?

ADELE. You don't need me.

GRANT. Yes we do, honey. You know Jeff can't fish worth a crap.

Adele hides a smile.

GRANT. And I'm okay but I'm nothin' compared to your glitter and your chain and all—

ADELE. That stuff's illegal.

Grant puts his hand on his wife's.

GRANT. There ain't no rangers up here.

ADELE. Ain't no fish either.

GRANT. You only been out one day. Let's give it another go.

JEFF. Your turn.

GRANT. Pardon me.

Grant plays a card.

GRANT. What are we gonna eat if you don't catch us some fish?

ADELE. What's wrong with 'tatoes and green beans?

CAROL. Potatoes and green beans go a lot better with some salmon beside it.

ADELE. Ain't gonna catch no salmon in that lake.

CAROL. Well . . . whatever kinda fish you can catch in that lake . . . you know I can't remember their names.

Adele looks at her mom like "geez, you nimwit".

JEFF. Play your card.

CAROL. Sorry.

Carol plays a card. Adele picks up the trick and adds it to her pile.

GRANT. Stop her next time!

JEFF/CAROL. I can't! I got shit cards too./You stop her.

GRANT. I wish I could.

Grant holds the present out to Adele.

GRANT. Honey, open your present.

INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

The fire is burning down. Adele gets into her sleeping bag. Her mother is there, kneeling beside her. She tucks her daughter in.

ADELE. I'm fine, Mom!

CAROL. Okay!

Carol sits by her daughter for a moment, contemplating. Adele looks up at her.

ADELE. He did do it.

CAROL. I never say he didn't.

ADELE. I did not tease him.

CAROL. I didn't said you did.

ADELE. You don't believe me.

CAROL. Just stay away from him.

INT. LOG CABIN: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carol crawls in bed with Grant. Grant holds her, kisses her.

GRANT. You think my brother gets lonely out here?

CAROL. What? Like someone to talk to?

GRANT. No, like . . . a woman.

CAROL. Why are you asking me that?

GRANT. Maybe I'm worried about him.

CAROL. I doubt that.

Grant loosens his grasp on his wife.

CAROL. One thing I do know.

GRANT. What?

CAROL. I'm lonely right now.

He kisses her. They start to make love. She stops; it looks like she wants to say something. He looks at her wonderingly.

CAROL. Did you ever tell her we did it at Danny Madsen's place on my birthday?

INT. JEFF'S TENT - NIGHT

Jeff is dressed in boots and coveralls. Quietly, he unzips his tent and goes out.

EXT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Jeff zips up his tent. He heads for the log cabin.

INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

The cabin door opens. Jeff comes in. Careful not to make any noise, he goes to Adele, who is sleeping by the remnants of the fire again. He gently unzips her sleeping bag and pulls the top of it away from Adele's body. She is wearing her cargo pants and white tshirt. He switches on a flashlight and shines it on her body. Jeff unbuttons the cargo pants and cautiously pulls them down. Adele is sleeping soundly; this doesn't wake her. Jeff stares at her body. His hand moves to her underwear.

INT. LOG CABIN: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Grant and Carol lie awake in bed.

CAROL. I'm asking you what you think.

GRANT. I don't know.

CAROL. You talked to him. Did you ask him?

GRANT. I told him to keep the fuck away from her.

CAROL. What about the lake?

GRANT. What about the lake?

CAROL. What happened?

GRANT. Nothing.

CAROL. (*doubtfully*) Nothing . . .

GRANT. Nothing happened. She freaked out. That's the age she's at. She gets around a man and she's always gonna think there's something going on—

Their talk is arrested by the sound of Adele screaming in the next room.

INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

The bedroom door opens. Carol and Grant come into the main room. Adele is standing with her sleeping bag covering her body, threatening Jeff with a poker-sized piece of firewood.

CAROL. What the fuck is going on in here?

Adele thrusts the stick closer to Jeff.

ADELE. I woke up and he was right above me!

JEFF. Bullshit.

Jeff bats the stick away.

JEFF. Get that out of my face.

ADELE. He took off my pants!

CAROL. You did what?

JEFF. That's a lie!

Grant knocks Jeff to the floor.

GRANT. She better be lying!

JEFF. I came for some water.

ADELE. (*about to cry*) He took off my pants while I was sleeping.

Carol is at Jeff's head.

CAROL. Fuck! FUCK! (*and with vengeance:*) Get out.

Grant pushes down with his forearm on Jeff's neck.

GRANT. You piece of shit.

CAROL. Get off him.

Grant raises his arm and suckers as if he would punch Jeff.

JEFF. Hit me, you pussy.

GRANT. What did we talk about? Remember?

CAROL. Let him go.

GRANT. You stupid piece of shit. You fucked up. What am I supposed to do now? You can't stay here. Where you gonna go? Huh? Where you gonna go?

CAROL. Just get out.

GRANT. Give him a second—

CAROL. *(to Grant)* No. *(to Jeff)* Now. Vacation's over.

Jeff gets up to leave. Carol follows him to the door. She hauls off and hits him in the back of the head.

CAROL. You fuck . . . you fuck!

Grant holds her back. Jeff gets to the door. He turns around and looks at all three of them, shakes his head, and leaves. Carol holds her daughter and Grant stands awkwardly. FADE TO BLACK. CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adele lies in bed between her mother and her father. They're all wearing pajamas. Adele and Carol are asleep. Grant is awake. Quietly, Grant gets out of bed and leaves.

EXT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Jeff's tent is gone. Grant is dressed in hunting gear. Outside the cabin, he cleans a rifle. He loads it full of shells, lifts it to his shoulder, and looks down the sight.

INT. LOG CABIN: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rifle in hand, Grant puts a hand on his daughter and shakes her.

GRANT. 'dele.

She opens her eyes.

GRANT. Come on out.

ADELE. What time is it?

GRANT. Get dressed.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Adele and Grant hike by flashlight. He goes first, holding the rifle. Adele follows.

ADELE. Where we going?

GRANT. Just up this way.

ADELE. Where's Jeff?

GRANT. I don't know. Back at his cabin, prob'ly.

ADELE. Where's that?

GRANT. Keep quiet.

They hike onward.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Grant and Adele hike onward. They step from stone to stone across a shallow bend in a moon-lit creek.

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

Adele follows Grant onto a boulder overhang. A river valley is below. He gives her a hand, helping her onto the rock. Once she has her footing, he holds the rifle out to her.

ADELE. What?

GRANT. Need to learn to shoot.

ADELE. No way.

GRANT. Take it.

Adele shakes her head. Grant lifts the rifle and shoots it into the air at a 45-degree angle. Muzzle flash in the dawn. Adele flinches. Grant lowers the gun and holds it out to his daughter.

GRANT. Take it.

She reluctantly takes it. Grant steps down from the boulder leaving Adele there by herself.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Adele looks through the rifle sight. Crosshairs pass over the foliage of a dense wood. She looks away from the sight. She and Grant are crouched behind a cluster of rocks. Adele shakes her head. Grant motions for her to follow; he creeps from behind the rocks.

EXT. LAKE EDGE - DAY

Adele and Grant make their way downhill to the lake edge. They kneel in tall grass. Grant puts the gun to his shoulder and tracks along the surface of the lake. He takes his eye from the sight and motions for Adele to look through it. She does. The crosshairs mark the rowboat that Adele and Jeff went fishing in the day before. Adele looks at her dad, confused.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Adele and Grant hike uphill. Grant has the gun. He creeps along, making as little noise as possible, with Adele in tow.

ADELE. Dad?—

Grant holds up a finger.

GRANT. Shhh.

He takes another careful step through the woods.

EXT. JEFF'S CABIN - DAY

Adele and Grant come to a tiny cabin. There's a covered woodpile outside. Grant has the gun halfway raised.

ADELE. What are we doing?

Grant lowers the gun.

GRANT. I just want to have a little talk, that's all.

Grant goes to the cabin door. Adele doesn't budge.

GRANT. Get in here.

She crosses her arms. Grant opens the door and goes in.

ADELE. Is he in there?

No response.

ADELE. Well?

Adele shakes her head. Grant comes out, goes toward Adele.

ADELE. Where is he, then?

Grant walks past Adele, away from the cabin.

GRANT. I don't know.

Adele follows.

EXT. WOODS: SEMI-CLEARING - DAY

Adele and Grant go through a fern-dappled semi-clearing.

ADELE. Come on . . .

GRANT. Come on what?

ADELE. Tell me what we're doing.

Adele stops. Grant keeps walking.

ADELE. I ain't going no further till you tell me what we're doing.

Grant turns around.

GRANT. I'm trying to teach you how to hunt.

Grant is surprised by something behind Adele. Adele turns around. Jeff is walking toward them through the woods, a rifle to his shoulder, aimed at Grant and Adele.

JEFF. Drop it.

Grant slowly/smoothly raises his gun to aim at Jeff.

JEFF. I told you not to do that.

Jeff alters his aim and shoots. He means to miss, and he does.

GRANT. Jesus!

JEFF. Just . . . lower the rifle.

GRANT. I could kill you right now in self defense.

JEFF. You ain't gonna do that.

Jeff approaches Grant. He passes Adele, keeping an eye on her.

ADELE. (as in "why not? go ahead") Shoot him.

JEFF. Aww . . . you really do love me.

GRANT. You're not gonna shoot me, I'm not gonna shoot you. That just doesn't make sense.

JEFF. Drop. the fucking. gun.

Grant doesn't budge. Jeff aims a little to the side, but he shoots again. It's a miss. Grant closes his eyes. Adele is in shock.

JEFF. He ain't gonna do nothing.

GRANT. Think about this. Think of what you're doing.

Jeff comes right up on Grant. They're four feet apart, each man with a rifle in the other's face.

GRANT. I'm your brother.

Jeff takes another step in, brushing past the tip of Grant's gun.

JEFF. I know.

Jeff whacks Grant with the butt of his gun, knocking him out. Grant falls to the ground. Adele starts to run away. Jeff hears her. He turns around and fires a shot into the air. The sound makes Adele hit the ground. Jeff points the rifle at Grant.

JEFF. If you want your daddy to live you better come on back here, now.

Adele shifts so she can see Jeff and her dad.

JEFF. Come on.

EXT. WOODS: SEMI-CLEARING - DUSK ... NIGHT

Grant is tied to a tree. Jeff sits close by with one of the rifles resting on his lap, pointed at his brother. Adele sits against a tree, wrapped in a hooded windbreaker. Grant whispers so Adele can't hear:

GRANT. Then what is the plan?

JEFF. The plan's changed.

GRANT. What is it now?

JEFF. Same as it always was.

GRANT. This was not in the plan.

JEFF. Maybe it was. Maybe it's just that nobody told you. Or ... maybe ... you just weren't listening.

GRANT. No, I think I would have remembered this.

Adele goes to them.

ADELE. Y'all done playing mass-murderer? Let's head on back so Mom can play, too.

JEFF. Not a bad idea ...

GRANT. Is this about firsts?

JEFF. Firsts? As in "who's gonna get to go first?" You're god damn right it is.

This piques Adele's interest.

JEFF. You're daddy's a businessman.

ADELE. Actually, he's an English teacher.

JEFF. Take off that jacket. Let me see your hair.

ADELE. And why would I do that?

He indicates the gun.

JEFF. Maybe cause I'm gonna kill you if you don't.

ADELE. Try again, fuckface.

GRANT. Adele—

JEFF. I don't think your daddy explained the plan to you. Go on. Lemme see that hair.

Adele turns her back on Jeff and starts away.

JEFF. Girl, you have been misinformed.

ADELE. Oh yeah?

GRANT. Listen up, Adele—

ADELE. Y'all play your game.

Jeff turns to Grant.

JEFF. She definitely don't know the plan.

Jeff aims the rifle at Grant. It's barrel is two feet from Grant's leg. He pulls the trigger. Grant yells out in pain. Adele screams, turns. Jeff points the gun at Grant's head.

JEFF. Now take off that jacket.

Adele sees he's serious, but she doesn't move. Grant moans and winces.

JEFF. Take. off. the jacket.

With shaky hands, Adele unzips the windbreaker.

JEFF. All the way off.

She takes it all the way off and drops it on the ground beside her.

JEFF. Now take off the rest of them clothes.

She hesitates.

JEFF. If you don't do it all I have to do is pull this trigger one more time.

GRANT. Just do it.

Adele shakes, shivers; she's petrified with shock.

GRANT. Do it!

Adele takes off her shoes. Her socks are still on.

JEFF. You got a obedient girl there.

Adele grabs the bottom of her shirt.

JEFF. Everything, everything.

She takes off her shirt. She is crying.

GRANT. It's gonna be okay, baby. Jeff! Lay off her, how much fun you gonna have if she's crying?

Adele hesitates at her jeans.

JEFF. . . . Waiting . . .

She unsnaps them, unzips.

ADELE. What did you mean about "firsts"?

GRANT. What??

ADELE. "Who gets to go first"?

JEFF. I'm gonna shoot your daddy in the head, you don't get those pants off.

She pushes them down.

JEFF. Now sit down.

She sits in sticks, leaves, dirt. Keeping the rifle on Grant, Jeff goes to Adele. He looks at her body.

ADELE. (*accusing*) What did he mean about who's gonna go first?

Jeff turns to Grant.

JEFF. Oops. Looks like that ain't a secret anymore.

Adele reaches into her jeans, fumbles around in the pocket.

GRANT. He's just fucking with you . . . there's no secret . . . there's no plan!

JEFF. *(soberly)* It was your plan.

Adele finds the knife she had on the rowboat. Hands shaking, she opens it. Jeff sees this movement and turns to her. Adele stabs him in the leg. He cowers over, dropping the rifle.

JEFF. Fuck.

She scrambles around, keeping the knife between her and Jeff. She stabs him again, this time in the shoulder. Jeff is disoriented, but still active. He grabs her arm. She wrings free. He grabs her ankle. She kicks him in the face. Jeff is going for the gun.

JEFF. You are definitely gonna pay.

Adele grabs her jeans and windbreaker and runs into the woods. Behind her, Grant moans in pain. Jeff follows her.

JEFF. Get back here.

She gets far enough away that Jeff can no longer see her. She stumbles downhill, falling into the brush. Jeff paces around in the dark, in the direction in which Adele ran, but he looks back at Grant and that stops him: he doesn't want to leave Grant out of sight.

JEFF. *(yelling out to her)* You fucking whore. You killed your daddy. You killed your daddy.

Adele crouches in the brush, huddling her clothes to her skin, shaking, crying, but trying to be silent. Far off, somewhere in the darkness, the howling of wolves.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Grant is still tied to the tree. Jeff sits beside him, dressing the gunshot wound that he inflicted on Grant's leg. He ties fabric in tight knots around the limb.

JEFF. You're mad, aren't you?

GRANT. It'll heal.

JEFF. Not about that.

Grant looks at him like: "what then?"

JEFF. Firsts.

GRANT. Firsts? There ain't gonna be no firsts. Ain't gonna be no seconds either. Dumb motherfucker.

JEFF. Hey . . . I don't have to do this. *(meaning dress the wound)*

GRANT. Fine. Don't.

Jeff is hurt. He stops dressing the wound.

JEFF. You know what? You've got a bad attitude.

Jeff grabs both rifles and whatever other supplies he has around.

GRANT. And you're mentally ill.

JEFF. Mentally ill. Mentally ill? That's a good one, I'm gonna have to remember that.

Jeff starts into the woods.

JEFF. Have fun walking back.

Jeff takes both rifles and goes off into the woods.

GRANT. Yeah . . . suck it.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The full moon reflects in a medium-sized creek. Jeff steps down the embankment. He kneels. He takes one of the rifles, Grant's, and lets it sink into black water. He rises and hikes off, catlike, the hunter.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Adele runs by moonlight through the woods, in spurts. She stops beside a tree, looks, listens. She tries not to breathe. She runs again. She comes over a ridge, heads downward. The trees thicken. She finds her way into a scrub tree, dense, small branches, where deer like to sleep. She stops, listens. She sits, pulls her shirt around her head, lies down, brings her knees up to her chest, and, with effort, closes her eyes.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Adele wakes in the middle of the night, spasming with cold. She's huddled in the thick brush. She reflexively looks around. Nothing. She pulls her hood tight around her head. Even though she is exhausted, her eyes remain open, alert.

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

She wakes in the first blue light of morning, looks around fearfully, gets halfway up, still crouching, stealthily extracting herself from the thick patch of scrub tree. Her first few steps are tentative, slow.

Then she abandons caution and bolts through the woods, terrified she might be followed, that she might be running the wrong way.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Adele comes to a creek. She's smeared in mud from the night's sleep. She hikes to the creek edge, then looks both directions like she's crossing a street. She kneels and pushes her hands into the water, washing away the dirt. She looks behind her, and, convinced she is alone, cups her hands and drinks from the stream.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Atop a ridge, in staggeringly beautiful sunlight, Adele walks peacefully in soiled clothes.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Adele hikes uphill, carefully looking around, exhausted, still actively looking to make sure she isn't being followed. As the wood thins before her, she sees the family cabin.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

She comes out of the woods at the cabin. All is quiet; there is no sign or sound of anyone. Adele goes toward the door, but stops some distance away.

ADELE. Mom?

She goes to the door.

ADELE. Mom?

She cautiously pushes the door open.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Adele takes a half step inside. She looks around. No one is there. She goes all the way in, leaving the front door open. Definitely no one in the main room. She moves to the bedroom door.

INT. CABIN: BEDROOM - DAY

Adele peers through the doorway.

ADELE. Mom?

She pushes open the bedroom door. The room is empty.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Adele comes into the kitchen area and looks out a window. No one. Satisfied that the place is empty, she opens an ice chest and takes out bread, peanut butter, and jelly. She makes herself a sandwich. She gets up, goes to the front door. She leans outside, looks around, leans back in, closes the door. She sits, takes a bite of her food.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

A fire burns in the fireplace. Adele, still alone, sits in a lawn chair, wrapped in her sleeping bag, staring into the flames. She gets out of the chair and spreads her sleeping bag by the hearth. She sets her open knife on the floor, gets in the bag, zips it up. A hand reaches out and brings the knife closer. She pulls the bag around her head and closes her eyes.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The fire is just embers. Adele adjusts in her sleep, wakes, sees the fire. She sits up, reaches for another log to throw on the fire. She finds one, puts it in. She prods the coals with a sturdy stick. It's end starts to glow. She hears something and turns around. Her uncle is sitting right behind her in the lawn chair. His rifle is beside him.

JEFF. Miss me?

Adele starts, brings the glowing stick to Jeff's face. He bats it out of her hand, grabs her, as she kicks and screams, wrestles and pins her to the floor. He forcibly uncovers her.

ADELE. Where's my dad? What did you do?

JEFF. We're gonna have ourselves a little birthday party right here. Just like your momma.

He rips her shirt.

ADELE. Where is she?!

JEFF. You haven't seen her? Well I don't know . . .

ADELE. Wha'd you do to her?

JEFF. Looks like she left you.

ADELE. (*screaming*) Tell me where she is!!

Jeff hits Adele in the face.

JEFF. Quiet now.

He holds one hand over her mouth and reaches to touch her between the legs. She hits him about the head. The front door swings open. It's Grant. He limps toward the fireplace, carrying the splitting maul in both hands. Adele backs away. Jeff scrambles for his rifle but Grant is there with the maul. Grant brings the blade down at his brother. Jeff dodges. The wedge goes into the floor. Jeff goes for the gun. Grant wedges the maul out of the floor and raises it. Jeff lifts the gun. Grant brings the maul down. It hits Jeff where his neck meets his shoulder. The gun goes off. A miss. Grant lets go the maul handle. Jeff drops the gun, falls over. His blood soaks the planked floor. Grant looks like he could fall over (his leg is tied off with a shirt, he's delirious) but he goes straight for Adele. He pins her to a wall.

GRANT. Did he get to you?

ADELE. (*scared, confused*) No.

GRANT. Good.

Adele doesn't know how he means this. Grant's hand goes for her neck: a stranglehold. She squirms free, knocking him down. Grant rights himself halfway, turning, going for her, but stops: She's looking at him down the barrel of Jeff's rifle, murder in her eyes.

GRANT. I think you've got the wrong idea.

He moves closer to her. She pushes the muzzle into the skin below his eye and shakes her head.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Carol comes out of the woods with a flashlight. She looks distraught. She approaches the cabin and goes for the door. She opens it and goes in.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Carol enters the main room. At the sound of the door, Adele jumps up from the lawn chair, and the rifle she's been pointing at her father swings to point to her mother. Grant sits with his back against

the wall next to the fireplace. Carol is stunned. Adele keeps the gun on her.

ADELE. Where were you!?

CAROL. I've been out there looking for you!

Carol sees Jeff's boots peeking out from underneath a red and white checkered picnic tablecloth. Carol covers her mouth with a hand. Adele lowers the gun. Carol runs for Grant.

CAROL. What happened?

Adele points the gun at her mom.

ADELE. Get back.

CAROL. What?

ADELE. Get back from him.

CAROL. He's hurt! What's wrong with you?!

GRANT. She lost it!

Carol looks at Jeff, then Adele. Carol indicates the gun.

CAROL. Why do you have that?

GRANT. I've been trying to get her to act rationally, but—

ADELE. Shut up!

GRANT. —she won't listen—

ADELE. Shut up shut up SHUT UP!!

CAROL. Adele, baby, did you— What happened to your uncle Jeff?

ADELE. I didn't do anything!

CAROL. Explain this, then!

ADELE. Ask Dad.

Carol goes to Jeff. She kneels and cradles his head, a little too gingerly. She looks like she's going to come unglued.

CAROL. *(a prayer)* Help me . . . help me . . . help me.

Grant and Adele are watching her cradle Jeff's head. She stands up.

CAROL. Give me the gun.

ADELE. Why?

CAROL. Cause I don't like having it pointed at me.

ADELE. What are you gonna do?

CAROL. I'm doing nothing. Give it here.

Adele hands it over. Carol holds the gun in both hands, looks, once, back and forth between Grant and Adele. She snaps the neck and lets the bullets fall to the floor.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Some distance from the cabin, but with the cabin still visible in the background, Grant hauls Jeff's body to a hole in the ground. The body is wrapped with blankets and the tablecloth, tied with

ropes. Jeff's boots have been removed, and his socks, so that his bare feet are visible. Grant hauls drags the body to the edge of the hole, sets down the end he's been dragging. He kneels beside it and looks up into the sky, bright sun rays bearing down on him. He closes his eyes. Perhaps he's saying a little prayer. Then returns to the task at hand: he rolls the body into the hole, then starts shoveling dirt over it.

INT. CABIN: BEDROOM - DAY

Adele beside her, Carol loads a backpack. Carol has placed the rifle and all the bullets she can find in a pile on the nightstand. She keeps herself between Adele and the weapon.

ADELE. We wasn't hunting no deer.

Carol busies herself with the chore of packing, trying not to have to think about what Adele is telling her. Adele mimics Jeff's posture as it was when he shot Grant in the leg.

ADELE. He was this close, looking straight at him.

CAROL. You're sure it wasn't an accident?

ADELE. Mom. No.

Adele gets a look of some recognition from her mother.

CAROL. Why? Why would he do that?

Adele looks away. She starts to tear up, those angry, scared, hurt tears. When she looks back at her mother, her mom sees the rage.

ADELE. In the woods . . . he made me . . .

INT. CABIN: BEDROOM - DAY

Adele lies on the bed beside a fully loaded and ready-to-go backpack. She hears her mother's voice from outside:

CAROL. (O.S.) Baby? Baby let's go.

Adele gets up and presses her face to the screen window. Grant comes out of the woods, sweaty, carrying the shovel. Carol goes out to meet him, some distance from the log cabin. They are talking, and Adele can't hear what they're saying. She straps on her pack and exits the bedroom, specifically not-looking at the bloodstained floor, then she goes outside.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Adele goes over to them. Carol and Grant's backpacks are zipped up and ready-to-go, leaning against the cabin steps.

GRANT. You really think it's safer this way.

CAROL. It's the best I can come up with given the circumstances, so that's what we're gonna do.

GRANT. Well . . . I agree with you, partially. I don't think she should have it.

CAROL. And neither should you.

GRANT. Neither should you, while we're at it. You don't even know how to fire it.

CAROL. The point of me having it is it won't get fired.

Grant shakes his head.

CAROL. Is everything . . . taken care of?

GRANT. Yes.

CAROL. Then we're leaving.

Carol waits for him to go toward his pack. She stays behind him, with Adele and Grant both in her field of vision at all times.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Loaded up with their backpacks, the family hikes back toward civilization, downhill, along the route they took from the car to the cabin. Grant goes first. A safe distance behind him, Adele. Behind Adele, close by, Carol, carrying the rifle.

EXT. WOODS: MEANDERING BROOK - DAY

Hiking back, they cross over the same meandering brook they crossed on their hike into the woods. Grant goes first, then Adele, then Carol. Halfway across the water, Grant bends and picks up a white flower blossom that has fallen from a tree above and is floating on the surface of the creek. He smells it.

GRANT. It's funny how peaceful it is out here. On the way out here I thought I could almost . . . smell . . .

Adele hesitates, arresting her step onto the next rock, and regards her father critically.

GRANT. Trouble? Maybe not trouble. Something, though. Did you smell it?

He shakes his head and moves on. He looks up into the treetops and inhales deeply.

GRANT. It is beautiful this time of year.

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

As the sun sets, the family sets up camp. Adele builds her own tent, the red two-person one, some distance from where Grant is building the larger blue tent. Carol stands by, watching them both. She's holding the rifle. Grant is putting the finishing touches on the tent he's building: he throws the fly over it and ties it down. He stands and goes to Adele. She's struggling with her tent poles; it's hard to do by yourself.

ADELE. What are you looking at?

Grant makes a move to help.

ADELE. I've got it!

CAROL. Just let her be.

GRANT. Can't I help my daughter set up her tent?

CAROL. She doesn't want your help.

Grant sighs heavily, turns, walks away.

ADELE. You could help me!

CAROL. But then I wouldn't be able to keep an eye on things.

Carol, holding the rifle, sweating, moves away from Grant and Adele and sets the rifle on a rock. She transfers a box of bullets from her jacket pocket to the side pocket of her pants. Her pockets are already bulging with bullet casings. She removes her jacket, sets it on the rock, and picks up the rifle. Grant is watching her.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A propane lantern burns. The tents are built. The family sits around a propane stove. Grant cooks sausage and eggs.

GRANT. Would you hand me that . . . the salt.

The salt is within Grant's reach. He nods in its direction. No one gets it for him. He is offended that they're making themselves so useless.

GRANT. Baby. Help me out here.

Adele begrudgingly grabs the salt and holds it out for him. Clearly, it would have been simpler if he had just grabbed it himself.

GRANT. Protein . . . some good protein.

Grant shovels some eggs onto a plate.

GRANT. Sausage?

ADELE. I'm not eating.

Carol hands the plate to Adele. Adele looks at it skeptically, making no move to eat.

GRANT. It's not poison.

CAROL. She don't have to eat if she don't want to.

Grant shovels some more out on another plate. Carol sets this one in front of herself. She eats. Grant serves himself last, blows on a forkful of eggs, and swallows his bite. Some of the eggs get stuck in his beard.

GRANT. If you want, after this, I'll rustle up some of those biscuits.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Grant scrubs the dishes with a piece of steel wool by the light of the propane lantern. Adele stands far back, watching, her flashlight shining in Grant's direction. Carol sits on the rock with the gun. Grant finishes washing, puts the dishes away, and goes to the blue tent. His glances to the women are strained:

GRANT. You gonna sleep out here?

CAROL. I'll be in in a minute.

GRANT. *(to Adele)* Sweet dreams, honey.

Adele switches off her flashlight. Sound of her unzipping and zipping her tent.

CAROL. I gotta say something. It's probably not what you're expecting. I'm not sure what you're expecting, but . . . well I mean there's a lot to talk about . . . there has become . . . a lot . . . to talk about . . . here . . . lately. Adele may have already told you this, but . . . I . . . me and Jeff . . .

Grant starts to understand what she's saying.

CAROL. . . we . . .

Carol shakes her head.

CAROL. . . did Adele tell you?

GRANT. Did Adele tell me that you fucked my brother?

CAROL. Right.

GRANT. No.

CAROL. Well . . . I did. We didn't plan it . . . I mean . . .

GRANT. You mean recently?

Carol nods.

GRANT. That's nice.

Grant goes into the blue tent and zips it up only partway, leaving it partially open for Carol. By the propane light, Carol takes a plastic toiletry case from her backpack and removes the toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, etc, from it. She empties all her pockets of bullets, transferring them to the toiletry case. She cracks the neck of the gun. The chamber is empty. She puts one bullet in, closes the gun.

CAROL. *(a prayer)* Tell me what to do.

She sits for a long time. Ultimately, she cracks the neck of the gun and removes the bullet. She puts it in the toiletry case and closes the case. The lantern burns beside her, the combustion of its gas making a loud "hhohhhh" sound.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

No one is around. The lantern, burning through the last of its fuel, spurts out.

INT. PARENT'S BLUE TENT - NIGHT

Carol lies awake beside a sleeping Grant, uneasy.

CAROL. *(quietly, to see if he's awake)* Grant ... ?

He doesn't respond. Carol slips out of her sleeping bag and silently steps over her husband. She unzips the tent in tiny movements, making almost no sound. It's so dark all they can see of each other is silhouette. She steps out of the tent. Grant stirs, sees Carol leaving, sits up, frantically, half-awake, grabs her.

GRANT. What are you doing?

Carol shakes free of his grasp.

CAROL. Going to the bathroom.

She leaves, zips the tent up. After a moment, Grant hears the tent door open, close. In the darkness, feet stepping over him. The sleeping bag beside him zipping closed.

INT. PARENT'S BLUE TENT - NIGHT

Later, Grant, lying awake, reaches over and pokes his wife.

GRANT. Honey. Honey.

Grant peels himself out of his sleeping bag and escapes silently from the tent. He leaves the zipper door open.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Grant silently opens his backpack and removes a roundish something. He creeps through the woods toward the red tent. He stealthily unzips the flap.

INT. ADELE'S RED TENT - NIGHT

He kneels over his daughter's sleeping body, snug in her sleeping bag. He runs his hand over the form, lightly fondling its features. The bag is pulled up partway over the girl's head. He pulls it down a little. He holds the roundish thing, which is a roll of duct tape, strategically with both hands.

GRANT. (whispering) Happy birthday.

In a single movement, he extends a length of tape, attaches it to the girl's face, and wraps the roll once around her head.

GRANT. (a gruff whisper) You finally get your present.

She wakes and tries to scream. Holding her down, he shines a flashlight in her face and gets a nasty surprise: this isn't Adele, it Carol, and she's holding the hunting rifle in her arms. She can't talk for the tape around her mouth, but her eyes say it all: She swings the gun in his face. He tries to grab it.

INT. PARENT'S BLUE TENT - NIGHT

Adele switches on a flashlight and gets out of her mom's sleeping bag, scrambling out of the tent.

INT. ADELE'S RED TENT - NIGHT

Carol and Grant struggle. Carol screams as best she can through the tape.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Adele runs toward the red tent with her flashlight. A shot is fired. The sound rings through the woods, stopping Adele in her tracks. She stares at her tent. Bodies thud over. Adele is petrified.

ADELE. Mom??

The flap opens. Carol rips the duct tape off her head and comes out of the tent. She is covered in blood. Adele drops the flashlight and runs to her mother. Horrified, they embrace. CUT TO BLACK.

9

Talk to Me (2006)

CHARACTERS
BRIAN (male)
MARK (male)
MAN

Two men roam the city.

BRIAN. Like that?

MARK. Where?

BRIAN. There. That. You didn't see that?

Mark shrugs.

BRIAN. That was beautiful. Chinese. That's all I want, is a Chinese girl like that, twenty-six, not too skinny, to come home with me every night and shag the fuck out of me. But what's she gonna want? Black dick. Cholo dick. She'll want to fuck around on me. Girls can't be faithful. They're all whores.

MARK. So are we.

BRIAN. Pfff ...

MARK. Come on ...

BRIAN. What?

MARK. You wouldn't fuck around on her?

BRIAN. Nope.

MARK. You say that now. You say that now cause you haven't gotten laid in ...?

BRIAN. Six months?

MARK. Not that long.

Brian shrugs.

MARK. Jesus.

BRIAN. I wouldn't cheat on her.

MARK. Not right at first. But you would.

BRIAN. My perfect little mail order bride?

MARK. It wears off.

BRIAN. Not this.

MARK. It wears off. Sex is like being hungry. Even Ghandi, after like two double whoppers with cheese, is full.

BRIAN. I wouldn't cheat on her.

MARK. Sleep is the same way.

BRIAN. Okay, you're right. You are right. I wouldn't *cheat* on her though. I'd break up with her first.

Mark looks doubtful.

BRIAN. I would.

Mark looks doubtful.

BRIAN. What? I would. She'd probably be cheating on me with you. They do that. They do that. They'll fuck your best friend just because he seems sad. They're great if you just got broken up with. Some other bitch just pounced on your heart to spread her legs for a bun-length cholofrank, and here comes another one. Like they do when they find a lost puppy like 'awww ... look ... he's so cute ... he must have been abandoned by his family' Yes! By *you*, bitch! At home, they abuse helpless puppies. On the street, they stop to nurture anything that's wagging its tail.

MARK. Then wag your tail.

BRIAN. No. I want it to be real. I want her to love just me.

MARK. Is that the way you'd love that little mail order bride back there?

BRIAN. Is that the way you'd love her?

MARK. I didn't see her.

BRIAN. Want me to describe?

MARK. I can imagine.

BRIAN. Yeah?

MARK. Knowing you? Yeah. *Memoirs of a Geisha* ... meets ... *Sweet Valley Tampax*.

BRIAN. Knowing you? It'd be more like *Memoirs of a Geisha* meets the *Blair Witch Project*.

MARK. What does that mean?

BRIAN. It means you're an axe murderer.

MARK. That would be *Memoirs of a Geisha* meets *Deliverance*.

BRIAN. Whatever.

MARK. Anyway, with you it would be more like *Memoirs of a Geisha* meets Mary Kate and Ashley Olson.

BRIAN. The Old Mary Kate and Ashley Olson.

MARK. You mean the young Mary Kate and Ashley Olson.

BRIAN. Right. Pre-pubes.

MARK. That's disgusting.

BRIAN. I just want my little Chinese hottie.

MARK. You still have that pocket pussy I got you?

BRIAN. She looked like she went to NYU.

MARK. She doesn't go to NYU.

BRIAN. She *looks* like she goes to NYU. You know that look. It's something to do with the baseball cap.

MARK. Go jerk off. I'm serious. I'll wait. You still have that pocket pussy I gave you?

Brian shrugs.

MARK. I don't believe I'm doing this. I don't believe I'm doing this. When they sign you up to be a best friend, they don't tell you about this part. This is on page seventeen after all the insurance disclaimers and all the indemnification clauses—actually, no, I'm pretty sure this isn't even in the contract. No, definitely. Definitely no, this isn't in the contract.

Brian is paying no attention—he's staring into space, considering something.

MARK. There.

Mark holds out something—his own pocket pussy. His friend pays no mind. Brian comes back from his reverie. Mark quickly conceals the toy.

BRIAN. It's the angle of the cap. It's something about the angle at which the cap intersects the forehead. Look at this guy, look at this guy. Guy orders a chicken sandwich thinks he's hannibal lecturer—'uh, yes, that all looks fine'—it's a plate of *fries*! Just cause you're wearing linen pants and silver-rimmed glasses doesn't mean *shit*, buddy! Go to Wendy's next time, get yer chicken sandwich. Four ninety-nine. Did you see that? 'Uh, yes, that all looks fine'. Those fries cooked right for ya? Yeah? I'll deep-fry your face. Girls go for guys like that, though. Girls go for guys like that. You know what I saw on the subway yesterday?

MARK. What?

BRIAN. Chinese guy. Chinese girl, Chinese guy, cuddled up, like, teenager, rollercoaster, amusement park—

MARK. Junior high field trip—

BRIAN. Exactly. She just got fingered for the first time. He just fingered a girl for the first time.

MARK. I remember that.

BRIAN. I'm talking their first *kiss* wasn't that long ago.

MARK. Right.

BRIAN. Either of em.

MARK. Right.

BRIAN. In junior high though.

MARK. Okay.

BRIAN. But this wasn't like that.

MARK. What was this like?

BRIAN. This was like . . . he was like thirty, she was like fourteen—

MARK. Damn—

BRIAN. *Maybe* sixteen—

MARK. Hhholy cow—

BRIAN. This guy was like . . . thirty . . . thirty-three.

MARK. Oh.

BRIAN. Nasty.

MARK. Oh!

BRIAN. Teeth problems.

MARK. Oh no.

BRIAN. Ugly face. lines. almost scars. like he was in a war.

MARK. Uh.

BRIAN. And she's: *all* into it. I mean she's cooing, lying back, her eyes are closed, you just *know*—

MARK. No.

BRIAN. You just know . . .

MARK. *No*.

BRIAN. I mean you just *know*

MARK. Oh no . . .

BRIAN. That this guy . . . took this girl's virginity . . . and she is in love with this guy like he's gonna be there for her the rest of her life, when in reality, you can tell, you can see, that this guy just played this little girl out of her virginity—

MARK. She enjoyed it.

BRIAN. For *now*.

MARK. No, I know . . .

BRIAN. But three months from now . . .

MARK. Oh, I know.

BRIAN. She's gonna be—

MARK. She's gonna be up his ass.

BRIAN. She's gonna be up the ass of every man who ever *breathed* for what he did or didn't do to her.

MARK. But for now . . .

BRIAN. No, for now she's . . .

MARK. For now she's fine.

BRIAN. For now she's still a sweet little girl. For now she's still innocent. For now she's still figuring things out and the world is still a big and exciting place where if you suggest to her that that man's passion for her runs shallower than the deepest, hottest ocean . . . she will bite your finger off.

MARK. But in three months.

BRIAN. In three months . . .

MARK. Ha.

BRIAN. In three months the two of you will sit down to coffee and a nice fat syringe of heroin and swap war stories from your youth.

MARK. So she was hot then?

BRIAN. As measured in Kelvin.

MARK. And she was Asian.

BRIAN. Chinese.

MARK. What's up with that?

BRIAN. It's something about the angle of the cap, I think.

MARK. Seriously.

BRIAN. Why do you like em? Why do you like the brown-haired ones more than the light-head—?

MARK. They've got a word for that, it's called 'brunette'.

BRIAN. Doesn't sound right.

MARK. But that's the word though.

BRIAN. I know. Why do you like them?

MARK. They remind me of my sister.

BRIAN. That's disgusting.

MARK. It is not and you know it.

BRIAN. Is that really why you like them?

MARK. Maybe.

BRIAN. What a waste.

MARK. What?

BRIAN. That stupid Chinese bitch.

MARK. The one who gave her virginity to the guy with scars on his face?

BRIAN. Yes.

MARK. Instead of you?

BRIAN. Yes.

MARK. Was he Chinese?

BRIAN. Of course he's Chinese. I already said he's Chinese.

MARK. No you—

BRIAN. Whatever. He's chinese. With scars on his face like he went to war.

MARK. Hold up hold up hold up I think this chick is checking me out.

BRIAN. She's not checking you out—

MARK. Yes she is. She's looking at my shirt.

BRIAN. That's all chicks care about is what kind of job you have ... you want to know why guys drive ridiculous cars ... it's because chicks go for that type of retarded shit. Guys don't want to make five hundred thousand dollars a year. We just want to get laid. But to get laid, these days, you've got to *make* five hundred thousand dollars a year. Chicks want you to buy them platinum, they want a house on venice beach, they want *two* hundred pairs of shoes.

MARK. You using the word 'chicks' is very antiquated.

BRIAN. It's a matter of convenience.

MARK. I think it's disrespectful.

BRIAN. I know it is. And you still don't get laid any more than I do.

MARK. You know what you have to do if you want to get laid, right?

Brian shrugs.

MARK. Slap a ho.

Brian looks surprised.

MARK. That's right. Slap a ho.

BRIAN. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I think Vin Diesel just stepped into the room. I think—I think—

MARK. Because that's what—

BRIAN. Andrew Dice Clay just released thoracyclazine glutamate into the airstream and my best friend is—I think you just received an instantaneous complimentary brain transplant from an alien culture.

MARK. No, because ...

BRIAN. No, yeah ...

MARK. Right?

BRIAN. Right, yeah, no, I know, that's—

MARK. Right, that's—

BRIAN. It's the only—

MARK. Because they—

BRIAN. That's all they respond to.
MARK. No, I know, it's—
BRIAN. That's all they understand.
MARK. They just ...
BRIAN. They ...
MARK. They don't ...
BRIAN. Never ...
MARK. Almost never ...
BRIAN. Almost never do they ...
MARK. Very rarely do they almost ever ...
BRIAN. Rarely ever ...
MARK. Very rarely ...
BRIAN. Slap a ho?
Mark shrugs.
BRIAN. Slap a ho, then.
MARK. She was Asian.
BRIAN. Chinese.
MARK. Chinese?
BRIAN. Mandarin.
MARK. Mandarin?
BRIAN. Mandarin as the day you were born. Mandarin as a baby's behind.
MARK. Um ...
BRIAN. This girl was as Mandarin as Michelle Yeoh. And a young Michelle Yeoh, virgin Michelle Yeoh. Michelle Yeoh, like ... six years old—
MARK. Whoah, whoah—
BRIAN. Laid out in green bamboo leaves with a little panda bear
MARK. That's all I need! six?
BRIAN. icon in the bottom right corner that stands for *freshness* ...
MARK. Alright ...
BRIAN. and ...
MARK. That's fine ...
BRIAN. and ...
MARK. Reign em in ... bring back the horses.
BRIAN. and ... Johnson's Baby Powder, baby wax, an unused pad of paper, clean napkins—like ... a beach ... with sand ... but still the icon of the panda bear—
MARK. Whoah! Whoah. Stop.
Brian comes back to planet earth.

MARK. You had me at hello.

BRIAN. How's Sarah?

MARK. Awww, man, that girl gives me so much trouble.

Mark sees someone going by quickly on the sidewalk.

MARK. I didn't know Jewish people were allowed to roller skate.

Brian looks confused.

MARK. Doesn't it go against the, uh ... the ...

BRIAN. No.

The Jewish man skates over to their table. A woman skates over with him; she's on her phone.

MAN. Weren't you on E! Entertainment Television?

MARK. Yeah, I was.

BRIAN. You were?

MAN. I thought that was you. He was saying some shit like 'the kind of girl you want is one who seems nice on the outside, so you can take her home to mother, but really she's a whore'.

BRIAN. You said that?

MARK. I didn't say whore.

MAN. Whatever, man. That was cool. How'd you get on that show anyway?

MARK. I didn't even want to be on that show. I was just walking down Hollywood Boulevard—

The Jewish man splits his attention between mark and his girlfriend.

MAN. Right—hold on, baby—

MARK. This crew comes up, says 'we're interviewing people about relationships'—

MAN. Dude we gotta go—her sister is pregnant.

MARK. Okay.

MAN. You were awesome.

MARK. Thanks. Have a fantastic day. Fuckhead. You like how I just did that?

BRIAN. What?

MARK. 'I was walking down Hollywood Boulevard'.

BRIAN. Right ... ?

MARK. I just name-dropped ... a street. Forget it.

BRIAN. No, that's cool—

MARK. Forget it—

BRIAN. I think it's cool—

MARK. No you don't.

Brian shrugs.

MARK. Anyway it's not. So if you think it is, you're wrong.

BRIAN. What's going on?

MARK. I'm getting married.

BRIAN. You are ...? You are getting married.

MARK. Actually, we already got married. Yesterday we did this.

BRIAN. Well, I'm happy for you. Are you ... happy?

MARK. I've been through so much with that girl, I mean I'm *happy*, but it's not like seventh grade crush happy, can't contain myself happy.

BRIAN. When were you gonna tell me?

MARK. I hope you're not offended, I just wanted to give it some time ... to settle ... I wanted to tell you, I just wanted to make sure it was gonna stick ... this time ... brian I told anyone.

BRIAN. Hey, that's okay. I don't think I ever kept a secret like that from anyone.

MARK. I didn't mean to keep a secret from *you* ...

BRIAN. It's alright ...

MARK. It was just a secret from everyone. It's no offense.

BRIAN. No, it impresses me. I just have to tell people stuff. Especially my best friend. It's impressive, that you can keep something secret like that.

MARK. You should see my sister. If you think I can keep a secret, you should see my sister.

BRIAN. What? She had a baby, she didn't tell anybody?

MARK. No, close but—

BRIAN. She's a lesbian—

MARK. No, close—she's a doctor. Whole time she was at school we all thought she was there for *art history*.

BRIAN. How do you know she didn't have a baby?

Mark shrugs.

BRIAN. So when did you two get back together?

MARK. A few weeks.

BRIAN. A few weeks?

MARK. A month.

BRIAN. You've been back together for a month and you haven't told your best friend?!

MARK. I was scared to. Not scared with you particularly, but scared in general. I've been through so much with this girl I'm afraid to tell anybody about it. It's embarrassing. It's embarrassing what I've put up with from her. It's embarrassing what I've done to her. I'm scared for myself because I want it to work out. I need

this to work out this time or I really am done. I've opened myself up for this girl.

BRIAN. I know.

MARK. Anyway I'm sorry I didn't tell you.

BRIAN. It's okay.

MARK. I wanted to, I just . . . needed to deal with some aspects of this on my own before I let anyone back into the strange and wonderful world of me and . . .

BRIAN. Are you gonna get another place together?

MARK. We already did.

BRIAN. Of course. that place on—

MARK. Franklin. Right. So far it's been really nice.

BRIAN. I'm happy for you, man. You deserve it.

MARK. Thank you.

BRIAN. Smackin' that ass?

MARK. You know it.

BRIAN. Good times?

MARK. Never had any problem in that department. There's only one thing better than Asian women.

BRIAN. What's that?

MARK. Half-Asian women.

BRIAN. What about that guy? What was that guy's name?

MARK. I don't want to say that guy's name. She said she'd stop seeing that guy.

BRIAN. Has or would.

MARK. Has. She deleted his number from her phone.

BRIAN. You saw her do it?

MARK. Why?

BRIAN. How did they get back together last time?

MARK. He called her.

Brian shrugs.

MARK. She said she's done with him.

BRIAN. I hope so.

MARK. I hope so, too, but what can I do? I'm in love with the girl. She said she's done. She gives me such a hard time about that shit.

BRIAN. *She gives you* a hard time?

MARK. She thinks I'm too controlling. I tried to tell her: I don't want to control you, I'm not trying to be in your business. I'm not even necessarily demanding full monogamy. She doesn't demand it from me.

BRIAN. I don't see how you do that.

MARK. Who knows? Maybe someday when I'm fifty I'll meet some choker-wearing bleach blond little goth girl and wanna throw her against the wall. Maybe she'll want to do the same. She's always talking about her grad students: someday I'm gonna have research assistants, all this . . . whatever, it's all a theory, now: she has no grad students and I have no bleach-blond choker girls, it's just me and her in a tiny apartment in little tokyo . . .

BRIAN. What if he calls her again?

Mark shrugs.

BRIAN. I'm not trying to say he's gonna. I just don't want to see you hurt.

MARK. I'm trying not to bring it up with her. She flips out. She says I don't even want her talking to other men. All I'm saying is why do other men have to be an issue? Like she comes home from the grocery store and starts telling me how some guy was flirting with her.

BRIAN. Did she flirt back?

MARK. I don't know. Frankly, I don't care. People flirt with people. I hope she didn't flirt back. I hope she didn't give him her *number* or anything like that, but really, what can I do? I mean honestly, does some checkout girl flirt with me at the grocery? Yes she does. Some bank teller? Yes. Some actress? You know *they* do more than flirt. I mean, what, am I supposed to go out hunting down every man that through the course of a given day happens to flirt with my wife? What I can't stand, though . . . ? Why is it such a big deal to *her*? That's the problem. Waitress flirts with me. I have a five-second fantasy of how nice she would be to fuck. Then I move on with my day. By the time I get home, sincerely, I have no want or desire to mention it to my wife. What does it mean that she's still talking to me about some guy in the supermarket at the end of the day? Maybe for her it's more than a five-second fantasy. I don't know. Maybe I'm paranoid.

Brian looks silently at his friend.

MARK. I wake up the other night, she's on the phone with her ex-boyfriend—

BRIAN. Which one?—

MARK. The other one—

BRIAN. Got it—

MARK. And they're *giggling* . . . about something . . .

BRIAN. Is this the one who threatened to kill you?

MARK. Well, that's the thing.

BRIAN. So he *did* say that?

MARK. I'm *paying* for this phone call, mind you.

BRIAN. Unbelievable.

MARK. I wasn't rude, I just took the phone out of her hand and said 'hi, is this'—insert the name of asshole ex-boyfriend here—'yes, terribly sorry, but you're going to have to call the lady back on a landline. My plan doesn't include enough minutes for all-night gigglefests with murderous ex-boyfriends. Would you like the number?'

BRIAN. You didn't give him the number.

MARK. I can't make her not give it to him.

BRIAN. He threatened to *kill* you . . . ?

MARK. I told her: if that motherfucker ever comes around with the intention to act on that threat, she better find a new gigglebuddy because I will stab him *in the neck* with a *bic pen*—right here—

Mark demonstrates, on brian, where the stabbing will occur.

MARK. Then I'll pull the pen *out* of his neck and use it to write a check to his grandmother or whoever that says '*fuck* you. Sorry about your kid. Please use the enclosed amount to adopt a chinese *whore*.' I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'll stop.

BRIAN. How can she even do that to you?

MARK. They're friends. They've known each other for a long time.

BRIAN. Smackin' that ass, though?

MARK. She can never decide. One night she says she needs a break from sex, the next night she brings home a bottle of wine and wakes me up by sucking my dick.

BRIAN. She says she needs a break from sex?

MARK. It's like an academic thing, philosophical thing, like feminism . . . but newer.

BRIAN. And she brings home a bottle of wine.

MARK. She didn't even want to drink it herself. It was clear she was trying to get me drunk. And then we fuck.

BRIAN. Was it good?

MARK. I always love drunk sex with her.

BRIAN. Man.

MARK. We used to post up in the kitchen doing shot after shot of firewater and then fuck. She didn't let herself come, though. The other night she didn't. She only wanted me to.

BRIAN. That's a power thing. That's a bad sign.

MARK. I know.

BRIAN. I'm serious, dude, that's almost as bad as rape.

MARK. Now *I'm* feeling bad though.

Brian looks at his friend confused.

MARK. I went in her diary.

BRIAN. *What?*

MARK. I was on her computer. There's a folder . . . called 'journal'.

Brian shakes his head.

MARK. No, I know . . . I never did anything like that before, but . . . all this stuff: late night phone calls, and I found a receipt.

BRIAN. A receipt for what?

MARK. She won't talk about it. It was for flowers. I asked her about it and she just won't even talk about it.

BRIAN. How can she do that?

MARK. She threw it away and locked herself in the bathroom. She won't look at me when I ask her about it. It's just—the subject's closed—it doesn't exist, somehow.

BRIAN. That's fucked up.

MARK. I told her, too: I'm not looking to become Adolph Hitler here. I don't want to control your life. I'm not even asking who she has *lunch* with—

BRIAN. I would.

MARK. All I'm trying to do is not get HIV, you know? This isn't nineteen fifty-seven. I'll never get to marry a *virgin*. No one's *saving* themselves for me. I *wish* girls played more hard to get . . . then, when they were with me, maybe it would be a little harder for every other guy who walks into a supermarket to get under their skin. You know? I'll *court* a girl. I'll wait that out. I don't need to be having sex on the first date. I mean that's fine: look at me: I'm a second date guy.

Brian laughs.

MARK. I always fuck a girl on the second date.

BRIAN. I guess I'm a first date guy.

MARK. No you're a *one* date guy. I'll never understand that. Like that makeup girl—

BRIAN. Oooh, I'm telling you, you should have seen this girl's pigtails—

MARK. Then why don't you go back for more?

Brian shrugs.

MARK. I mean, for me, even if it is just sex, I'm in it for like . . . three months . . . four months . . .

BRIAN. As you say: 'to each their own'.

MARK. To each their own. And no judgement. But what I want right now, is a girl with some loyalty. I want a girl that goes to the grocery store and notices the *peppers*. Some thick skin. And eyes for me.

BRIAN. I hope that happens for you, man.

Mark chuckles.

MARK. I hope it's happening now. But it's not.

BRIAN. What do you mean?

MARK. I mean that girl who notices the peppers, that's not my girl.

Brian looks confused.

MARK. You know she's fucking someone *else*. You *know* she is. She doesn't try to hide it. I have to hide stuff but she doesn't have to hide anything. If she and I are walking down Hollywood Boulevard and I glance at a half-naked *mannequin* I'm gonna get reamed out about it for the next half a day. Every third shop on Hollywood Boulevard is a panty shop. Not looking at panties on Hollywood Boulevard is like not getting drunk at mardi gras. But she's allowed to not even come home and I'm asking her where she was, not because I want to know if she fucked someone else—I mean, yeah, I want to know if she fucked someone else—but primarily I want to know where my little girl was. I mean, just tell me: I worked late and slept over my girlfriend's. She doesn't even call me. I can't sleep. Even among housemates, you know, people worry about each other.

BRIAN. What night was this?

MARK. This was two nights ago.

BRIAN. And you're still staying married?

MARK. I think *she* thinks we're going to. I just want her to talk to me.

BRIAN. But she's talking to her ex-boyfriend.

MARK. Right.

BRIAN. Not the one she's fucking.

MARK. Right. The weird thing with me and her is: she *does* want me around for some reason. She's not breaking up with me. She likes going shopping together. She doesn't enjoy sex with me anymore, she doesn't tell me what she's really feeling, about life. But she likes waking up next to me, and she likes when I clean. It's like I'm her maid, or her pet. I think she wants the company.

BRIAN. Mark.

MARK. What?

BRIAN. I have something to tell you. I'm fucking Sarah.

MARK. Really.

Mark gathers his things and leaves.

BRIAN. Mark.

Mark lingers.

BRIAN. She doesn't talk to me, either.

10

Two Fatalities Aboard the Zygos Taverna (2006)

CHARACTERS
LUCY (female)
PORTER (male)
JANEK (male)
WAITER

Scene 1. The deck of a ship

LUCY. Beautiful day.

PORTER. Beautiful day.

LUCY. I'm Lucy.

PORTER. Porter.

LUCY. Fall in love much, Porter?

PORTER. What?

LUCY. Simple question.

PORTER. Define much.

LUCY. No.

PORTER. No?

LUCY. I won't. I will not. I will not define much.

PORTER. I fell in love once. She was ...I've never been so affected by a person.

LUCY. Me either . . . never so affected as when I was in love.

PORTER. And who did you love?

LUCY. I loved a man.

PORTER. Just one?

LUCY. Just this one that I'm thinking of.

PORTER. I loved a man once, too.

LUCY. Did you?

PORTER. Yes.

LUCY. Just one?

PORTER. Just one.

LUCY. Well aren't you full of surprises. Want a chip?

PORTER. Thanks.

LUCY. Have two.

PORTER. Mmm.

LUCY. Want an animal cracker? I'm stocked.

PORTER. I'm okay.

LUCY. Really, you better have one.

PORTER. You're right. Really, I better. Ooh, an elephant.

LUCY. Bite the legs off first.

PORTER. Usually I start with the head.

LUCY. That reflects what type of lover you are.

PORTER. No.

LUCY. Yeah. If you start with the heads you're more the bondage type.

PORTER. And you start with the legs.

LUCY. Yeah, I'm more the murder-suicide type.

PORTER. That has nothing to do with sex.

LUCY. Don't be so sure.

Lucy pulls out a miniature silver pistol, points it at Porter.

PORTER. You'd kill me already?

She points it at herself.

LUCY. Maybe me first.

PORTER. No.

LUCY. No.

She hands it to him, he points it out to the sea.

PORTER. It's beautiful.

LUCY. It belongs to my husband. He was just about to shoot himself with it.

PORTER. I see.

LUCY. I had to take it away from him before he did anything stupid.

Porter pretends to shoot the pistol, then gives it back.

PORTER. I'm not into bondage.

Lucy pockets the pistol.

LUCY. Bummer.

PORTER. Well, not that into it.

LUCY. I'm not that into murder-suicide, either, just on the weekends.

PORTER. Today's Saturday.

LUCY. I know.

PORTER. Can I have another cracker?

LUCY. Wha'd you get?

PORTER. Hippo.

LUCY. Give it to me.

PORTER. Why?

LUCY. They're my favorite.

PORTER. Start with the head.

LUCY. Why, you wanna tie me up?

PORTER. Maybe. Can I?

LUCY. Ask me later.

PORTER. It's later.

LUCY. So ask.

PORTER. Can I tie you up?

LUCY. You're gonna be mad at me.

PORTER. Why?

LUCY. I'm married.

PORTER. I'm furious. Is he here?

LUCY. See that guy right over there?

PORTER. Mmm.

LUCY. I've never met that guy in my life

PORTER. Good. Can I tie you up now?

LUCY. No. That is my husband.

PORTER. He can help.

LUCY. That really is my husband.

PORTER. Excuse me, sir!

The guy comes over.

JANEK. Lovely, who's this?

LUCY. What's your name again?

PORTER. Porter.

JANEK. Janek Henning.

PORTER. Nice to meet you.

JANEK. Nice to meet you.

LUCY. We were just saying what a beautiful day it is today.

JANEK. Yes. It is today. Beautiful day.

Scene 2. Janek and Lucy in their cabin

JANEK. What was that guy's name again?

LUCY. You know I'm bad with names.

JANEK. Porter.

LUCY. Yeah.

JANEK. Let's have lunch with him tomorrow.

LUCY. Why?

JANEK. He seemed genial.

Lucy sneakily stuffs the silver pistol into a drawer.

LUCY. That's a horrible reason to have lunch with someone.

JANEK. It's a fine reason, let's invite him.

LUCY. I would if I knew where he was.

JANEK. We'll see him around. Don't drink anymore tonight
ok?

LUCY. This is a gin martini.

JANEK. So?

LUCY. Call it what it is.

JANEK. It's a gin martini.

LUCY. Right.

JANEK. Don't drink it.

LUCY. I will stop. After this one.

JANEK. Whatever.

LUCY. Don't you like our drunk sex?

JANEK. Are we going to have it?

LUCY. Why not.

JANEK. That's my girl.

LUCY. Mm.

JANEK. Such enthusiasm.

LUCY. Blow me.

JANEK. I'm going out.

LUCY. I'm almost done.

JANEK. You'll have your drink first, then we fuck.

LUCY. I'm thirsty baby.

JANEK. Back in a while.

LUCY. No. Where are you going? I'm ready now.

JANEK. Drink your drink.

LUCY. No, stay.

JANEK. I'll be back in twenty minutes.

LUCY. I'll be asleep.

JANEK. Okay, ten.

LUCY. Are you mad?

He kisses her forehead.

JANEK. I'm not mad.

Scene 3. Porter smokes his pipe on deck, Janek comes up

PORTER. You again.

JANEK. She's a flirt, I apologize.

PORTER. But you let her out of your sight. Where is she now?

JANEK. There's not much chance she's running around now.

PORTER. Got her tied up in the room, a little bondage?

JANEK. Nope. I eat the legs first.

PORTER. The whole animal cracker thing.

JANEK. She says that all the time.

PORTER. Piece of work.

JANEK. She's okay. Drinks too much.

PORTER. How'd you meet?

JANEK. On a ship. Just kidding.

PORTER. That's funny.

JANEK. Have lunch with us tomorrow.

PORTER. No.

JANEK. Truce. Seriously, I'm sorry if she hurt your feelings.

PORTER. Don't be sorry for me.

JANEK. Have lunch with us.

PORTER. It might be awkward.

JANEK. Tell me, what did she say to you?

PORTER. Don't you think it might be awkward for you?

JANEK. No.

PORTER. Well, I'm telling you, it might be awkward for me.

JANEK. She's fine. We'll have a nice time, get to know us.

PORTER. Why not.

JANEK. That's the spirit.

PORTER. Why not.

JANEK. That's the spirit. It'll be fun. Do you drink?

PORTER. On ships? All the time.

JANEK. You'll love my wife.

PORTER. Alcoholic?

JANEK. Hard core.

PORTER. Perfect.

JANEK. Beautiful night.

PORTER. Beautiful.

Scene 4. Janek comes into his and Lucy's cabin, Lucy is passed out

JANEK. How's my little gin martini?

Janek kisses his wife. She turns.

LUCY. Mm.

Scene 5. At lunch, at a table on the deck of the Zygos Taverna

LUCY. Animal cracker?

PORTER. I'm fine with the steak.

JANEK. Would you stop with the animal cracker thing?

LUCY. Bring me another one of these things.

WAITER. Sir?

JANEK. Don't ask me, she's her own person.

WAITER. Right away miss. No offense intended.

LUCY. It's fine, thank you. No offense taken, I know I'm plastered

WAITER. Very good.

LUCY. Do you want an animal cracker?

WAITER. No thank you miss.

LUCY. You don't know what you're missing.

WAITER. Thank you miss. Be right back with your drink.

LUCY. It's a gin martini.

JANEK. Leave him alone.

PORTER. Yes, torment me instead.

LUCY. Now the two of you are going to bully up on me, I see.

JANEK. It's the only way we can get an even match.

LUCY. And what's with you telling him that I'm some kind of colossal flirt?

JANEK. Aren't you?

LUCY. Marriage is too hard, too long, too difficult for a human being.

JANEK. Here here. You married porter?

PORTER. No.

JANEK. Ever have been?

PORTER. No. Slept with a married woman once, but she wasn't married to me.

LUCY. Nice.

PORTER. Actually we slept together for five months.
LUCY. That's horrible.
JANEK. Did the guy ever find out?
PORTER. No. They had already split, but technically she was still married.
LUCY. That doesn't count.
JANEK. Sure it does.
LUCY. It counts for something. It just doesn't count for what you want it to.
PORTER. How long have you two been married.
JANEK. If you ask her she'll say it's been too long.
LUCY. It has been too long.
JANEK. In our case too long is measured in a span of six years.
LUCY. See?
PORTER. And you stayed faithful?
LUCY. I did.
PORTER. What about him? No?
LUCY. He says he did, but there was this one girl—
JANEK. I never fucked her.
LUCY. But you wanted to.
JANEK. Of course I wanted to. But I didn't.
LUCY. So you say.
WAITER. Gin martini.
LUCY. Are you married?
WAITER. No.
LUCY. You should get married.
WAITER. Anything else?
LUCY. Yes. I think it would help if you cut your hair.
JANEK. Be nice, don't hurt his feelings. Your hair is kind of long.
WAITER. It is too long.
PORTER. It's fine. Don't listen to them.
LUCY. I'll cut it for you later. We're in room twelve, come by anytime.
JANEK. Do you have scissors?
LUCY. Of course not, but this boat has to come with scissors.
WAITER. Enjoy your gin martini.
JANEK. Thank you.
WAITER. I'll be back to check on you in a minute.
LUCY. Bring the scissors.
PORTER. Be careful, he might seriously bring scissors over here.

LUCY. At which point I'll cut his hair.

PORTER. Do you cut hair?

LUCY. I'm looking to start.

JANEK. You'll butcher him.

LUCY. And he'll love every minute.

JANEK. No doubt. So, this married woman you fucked.

PORTER. Kathryn.

JANEK. Was she the only woman you ever cheated with, or on?

PORTER. I cheated once . . . on someone.

LUCY. Was it nice?

PORTER. It was horrible.

LUCY. I bet it was nice.

PORTER. It's the wrong order to do things in.

JANEK. What happened with the girl you were with, the one you cheated on?

PORTER. We broke up. Not right away. It killed her, really crushed her.

JANEK. Anyone ever cheat on you?

PORTER. Not that I know of. Well. One time. Probably, yeah. Probably.

JANEK. That's harsh.

PORTER. Wasn't good. I'm not even sure it happened, but . . . you kindof know.

LUCY. It's better to tell the person.

JANEK. It's better to tell.

PORTER. Did you two really meet on a boat?

LUCY. We really did.

PORTER. Funny.

JANEK. Bathroom.

Janek leaves.

LUCY. I wasn't just fucking with you yesterday.

PORTER. What's that mean?

LUCY. Like . . . toying with you.

PORTER. It's okay. You are married though, so let's just keep some distance.

LUCY. I don't want to make you uncomfortable.

PORTER. Thank you.

LUCY. But you did interest me.

PORTER. In what way?

LUCY. In a broad way. Not just in one way.

PORTER. Stop, though.

LUCY. Why?

PORTER. Stop with that.

LUCY. I can't help what interests me. And I don't hold back my feelings.

PORTER. I don't hold back my feelings either.

LUCY. What do you feel?

PORTER. I like you.

LUCY. In which ways?

PORTER. All of them.

LUCY. Meet me tonight.

PORTER. Where?

LUCY. Where we first met. Our railing.

PORTER. You won't tell him?

LUCY. I won't. Come at twelve.

PORTER. Don't tell him.

LUCY. I won't.

PORTER. If we're going to have an affair I want it to be a proper secret.

LUCY. Who said anything about an affair?

PORTER. Well, if we're going to have an illicit meeting.

LUCY. No. It is an affair.

PORTER. Are we really going to do this?

LUCY. I don't know, just meet me.

Janek comes back.

JANEK. Did she start flirting with you as soon as I left?

PORTER. Actually, she's gotten incredibly boring since yesterday.

LUCY. It's the two of you who have gotten incredibly boring.

The waiter comes back with a pair of scissors.

PORTER. Oh my god.

JANEK. He is fearless.

LUCY. Have a seat. Give me those.

WAITER. Should I be scared?

JANEK. Yes. You should be very, very scared.

LUCY. Actually, you should be terrified.

WAITER. Actually, I am terrified.

LUCY. Sit back.

WAITER. Have you ever cut hair before?

LUCY. If I say no is that a problem?

WAITER. No.

LUCY. Then no.

PORTER. You're a brave man.

LUCY. Have a drink. We're all having one.

WAITER. My boss won't let me drink while I'm working.

JANEK. Nonsense, this is the Zygos Taverna!

PORTER. Have a drink.

LUCY. Here, sip this, it's a—

WAITER. Gin martini, I know.

LUCY. Of course you do. Sorry, but I love to drive that point home.

JANEK. Yes she does.

WAITER. And how do you all know each other?

JANEK. We're fencing buddies.

PORTER. From way back.

LUCY. Gimme my drink back.

WAITER. God that's nasty.

LUCY. How short do you want it, short or extra short?

Scene 6. Nighttime, Porter stands at the railing, Janek comes up

PORTER. What's going on?

JANEK. What are you doing out here? Can't sleep?

PORTER. Just thinking?

JANEK. Have you seen Lucy?

PORTER. No. She's not with you?

JANEK. I think she might be down in our room, not sure.

PORTER. You haven't been down there?

JANEK. Well, I was down there earlier.

PORTER. Was she with you then?

JANEK. She was.

PORTER. Why are you asking me if I've seen her?

JANEK. Cause I want to know if you've seen her. No reason, why?

PORTER. No reason.

JANEK. So you can't sleep.

PORTER. Sure can't.

JANEK. Try getting totally fucking wasted, that's what my wife does.

PORTER. Sounds fantastic.

JANEK. Yeah.

PORTER. Especially the drunk sex.

JANEK. Did she tell you about that?

PORTER. No. I'm just referring to the general phenomenon.

JANEK. Oh yeah. Seriously, she didn't mention that to you?

PORTER. No, she didn't.

JANEK. Ok. Sorry if I'm acting weird ... it's just ... she walked out earlier.

PORTER. Out of your room?

JANEK. Out of the room. And she didn't come back for a while, and I—

PORTER. How long of a while?

JANEK. Maybe fifteen minutes. Maybe just ten, you didn't see her?

PORTER. I really didn't.

JANEK. I think you would tell me if you had.

PORTER. What concerns you?

JANEK. What concerns me about her leaving the room for fifteen minutes?

PORTER. Yeah.

JANEK. You're gonna think I'm crazy.

PORTER. I doubt I'll think you're crazy.

JANEK. Ok, I'll tell you. What concerns me is ... that waiter.

PORTER. Did you ask her where she went when she left your room?

JANEK. No, I didn't want to seem paranoid.

PORTER. Well, if it was just fifteen minutes, nothing could have happened.

JANEK. Not unless they were really efficient.

PORTER. I mean it could have happened, but that would have to be—

JANEK. Really quick—

PORTER. Too quick, unlikely—

JANEK. Right, that's true. It's just my mind. Let me ask you something though.

PORTER. Sure.

JANEK. Did they seem like they were sitting kind of close?

PORTER. Ehh, maybe.

JANEK. Did she seem like she was too into it?

PORTER. Nah. I don't know. Probably not.

JANEK. It seemed like, just ...

PORTER. Just ...

JANEK. Just a haircut.

PORTER. Just a haircut, yeah. I think so.

JANEK. Yeah, thanks. It's probably nothing. You don't think I'm paranoid.

PORTER. Well, she gives you reason to be.

JANEK. Yes she does. Thanks for talking this out. I'm tired, I'm going back.

PORTER. Sleep well.

JANEK. Thanks. Say, you want to get a drink?

PORTER. Is the bar open?

JANEK. I'm pretty sure it's twenty-four hour.

PORTER. I don't know. It's very late.

JANEK. What do you have to do in the morning?

PORTER. True.

JANEK. Sit, get a drink. We'll talk about women.

PORTER. Hmm.

JANEK. We'll talk about sports.

PORTER. Hmm.

JANEK. We'll talk about technology, I don't care, come get a drink.

PORTER. Okay.

JANEK. Yeah?

PORTER. Sure.

JANEK. Good, good!

Janek puts his arm around Porter and leads him away.

Scene 7. Janek and Porter at the bar

JANEK. I'm standing next to this guy in the urinal, and he does one of these . . .

PORTER. No.

JANEK. Yeah. Like, there's a homeless fat man, naked, crouched on the toilet . . .

PORTER. Weirdest bathroom I ever went to—

JANEK. The guy has shit himself. This guy next to me is inching over—

PORTER. Weirdest bathroom I ever went to was not in this country.

JANEK. I wonder if women's bathrooms are this crazy.

PORTER. They can't be.

JANEK. Can you imagine two girls jerking each other off at the urinals?

PORTER. If they had urinals.

10. TWO FATALITIES ABOARD THE ZYGOS TAVERNA (2006)

JANEK. You're not drunk enough to be talking to me, give him another.

PORTER. No.

JANEK. Give him another.

PORTER. No, I'm drunk enough. I'm drunk enough.

JANEK. Also, why are women homeless people less insane than men?

PORTER. I don't know.

JANEK. You see women homeless people, but they're not . . . they're not . . .

PORTER. They're not nearly as crazy.

JANEK. No.

PORTER. It's like the serial killer thing.

JANEK. What is that?

PORTER. How there aren't any women serial killers.

JANEK. Oh yeah. Well, there are, but—

PORTER. There are?

JANEK. There are women serial killers. But not nearly as many as men.

PORTER. It's just some hormone the addition of which makes one—

JANEK. Right—

PORTER. Makes one a serial killer.

JANEK. My friend, I'm trashed.

PORTER. As am I.

JANEK. Can you walk me back to my room.

PORTER. You need help to walk?

JANEK. I think I might.

PORTER. Ok. Sure.

JANEK. I'm sorry I was being paranoid about Lucy earlier.

PORTER. It's ok. No need to apologize.

JANEK. Are we all paid up?

PORTER. More than.

JANEK. Good, let's go then. Whoah!

PORTER. Hold on.

JANEK. Right, see. I said I might need help with that.

PORTER. Ok.

JANEK. Such things are not to be attempted lightly.

PORTER. No.

JANEK. Always good to get shitfaced on a boat.

PORTER. You're too heavy.

JANEK. I can make it on my own!

PORTER. Fine.

JANEK. Would you shut the fuck up and listen to me for a moment?

PORTER. Go ahead.

JANEK. It's about my wife. You know I love my wife, right?

PORTER. Of course.

JANEK. And I wouldn't want anything to happen . . . that would mess that up.

PORTER. Of course.

JANEK. But . . .there are exceptions. Life is not a hard and fast rule, you know?

PORTER. I know.

JANEK. I know you know that. You're a reasonable man, you impress me—

PORTER. Stop. Now you're just drunk talking.

JANEK. No I'm not! Not just—you do impress me. You do.

PORTER. Thanks.

JANEK. I'm very impressed by you.

PORTER. I have every respect for you as well.

JANEK. Do you?

PORTER. Yes.

JANEK. Yes?

PORTER. Yes.

JANEK. Well, this is awkward, I know, but I guess there's only one way to do it.

Janek leans in and kisses Porter. Porter pulls away.

JANEK. No? Oh, I'm sorry. How embarrassing, I'm a shit.

PORTER. It's alright, it's alright, I'll walk you to your room.

JANEK. No. I can make it.

Scene 8. Porter waits at the railing, Lucy comes up

LUCY. Beautiful night.

PORTER. Strange night.

LUCY. They go together.

PORTER. How's your husband?

LUCY. Oh, I don't want to talk about him.

PORTER. I don't either, just tell me he's not about to walk up those stairs.

LUCY. He's sufficiently destroyed, thanks to you.

PORTER. Yeah? Are we still having our affair?

LUCY. Who said anything about an affair?

PORTER. Are we still having our illicit meeting?

LUCY. We could wait till tomorrow night if you'd prefer.

PORTER. Could you wait, really?

LUCY. No. What happened between you two?

PORTER. How do you know something happened?

LUCY. I know my husband.

PORTER. I doubt he'd want me to tell you.

LUCY. That he's gay? Yes, I know.

PORTER. Why are you together?

LUCY. Why do you think?

PORTER. Did you know when you met him?

LUCY. I wasn't sure. Let's not talk about him now.

PORTER. You brought him up.

LUCY. I know, I'm sorry. Let's not say anything. Give me a smoke.

PORTER. No more animal crackers.

LUCY. I'm all out.

PORTER. Did you see the waiter?

LUCY. Is that what's worrying you?

PORTER. It does, it does worry me, yes.

LUCY. That was just a haircut.

PORTER. Maybe this is just a smoke.

LUCY. It is what it is.

PORTER. I wonder, though, love—

LUCY. Oh, it's love now? What do you wonder?

PORTER. If our ideas on what this is are similar. Do you fuck him?

LUCY. Janek? Of course.

PORTER. What's that like?

LUCY. Dead.

PORTER. Why do you stay then?

LUCY. Do we have to talk about my husband?

PORTER. I'm sorry.

LUCY. I stay because he loves me. There's a tenderness, we're familiar.

PORTER. Like a brother and sister, though?

LUCY. Don't judge me.

PORTER. I'm not, I'm trying to understand.

LUCY. How can you? You don't love.

PORTER. I don't?

LUCY. How long have you been alone?

PORTER. I know that love isn't lukewarm.

LUCY. You're thinking of lust.

PORTER. Oh.

LUCY. Love is tepid on its sunniest day.

PORTER. I think we're talking about two kinds of love.

LUCY. This is the worst affair I've ever had.

PORTER. It's just hard for me to get over—

LUCY. Him?

PORTER. Yes.

LUCY. Get over it. I need sex, from you.

PORTER. So do I, from you.

LUCY. Mm ... What's wrong?

PORTER. I'm sorry.

LUCY. What is it?

PORTER. I can't get it out of my mind. Earlier tonight. He kissed me.

LUCY. Come downstairs. Where's your key? What's wrong?

PORTER. I can't.

LUCY. Ohh, bof, why should we suffer?

PORTER. He's the one suffering.

LUCY. You go be with him then.

PORTER. And you. Don't you suffer with him?

LUCY. Yes. Yes. That's why we're doing this, to take my mind off it.

PORTER. When's the last time you did it with him?

LUCY. Oh, you suck. Why do you want to know that? Last night.

PORTER. Did he tie you up?

LUCY. No. He didn't.

PORTER. Good.

LUCY. Yeah?

PORTER. Like you've never been done before.

LUCY. You're moody.

PORTER. Sorry.

LUCY. No. I like that.

PORTER. There's something you should know.

LUCY. Tell me anything.

PORTER. When I do something, I don't do it with half my heart.

LUCY. Neither do I.

PORTER. I'm not going to regret this.

LUCY. Not if I do my part.

PORTER. When I look back I'll be happy we connected this way.

LUCY. I hope so.

PORTER. It's not stolen. It's not a trick.

LUCY. It is stolen from someone.

PORTER. Yes.

LUCY. But not from us.

She leads him by the hand down the stairs, below deck.

Scene 9. Porter's room, total darkness

LUCY. Ow!

PORTER. Too tight?

LUCY. Maybe. No, leave it. Oh, you're evil. Ahh!

PORTER. Somebody's ready.

A knock at the door.

JANEK. Porter. Porter, I can hear you awake in there, you're talking to yourself.

PORTER. What is it?

JANEK. I can't find my wife.

PORTER. What do you want me to do?

JANEK. Help me look for her.

PORTER. It's a small boat, she'll come back.

Janek bangs on the door.

JANEK. Open up. I'm sorry about earlier. Can we get over that?

PORTER. We're over it.

Janek bangs on the door again.

PORTER. Stop that. People are trying to sleep, including me.

JANEK. Come help me look.

PORTER. Go back to bed.

JANEK. She's with that waiter.

PORTER. She is not with the waiter.

JANEK. Help me look.

PORTER. Go to bed.

Janek knocks on the door again.

PORTER. I'm serious, get away from my door. No offense, but I need to sleep.

JANEK. Fine, fine. I'm going, but if she's dead it's your fault.

PORTER. You're drunk. Get some sleep.

JANEK. Or if I find she's sleeping with that waiter.

PORTER. You're safe on that front, my friend.

Janek comes back to the door.

JANEK. Is she in there!?

PORTER. Step away from my door, Janek.

JANEK. She better not be in there.

PORTER. Good night, good night.

Janek goes.

PORTER. Can you stay?

LUCY. Half an hour.

Scene 10. It's the afternoon; Porter, Lucy, and Janek sit at a table

They pick at food. No one says anything for a long time. The waiter comes up. His hair is uneven and massively shorter than before. He goes to take Lucy's plate away, but she stops him.

LUCY. It's alright.

WAITER. No, it's fine. I'll get it.

LUCY. I'm sorry.

WAITER. Don't worry about it, it's no big deal.

LUCY. I can try to fix it.

WAITER. No.

JANEK. I'm sure he's been more than compensated.

LUCY. We're fine. Just ignore him.

JANEK. More than compensated.

LUCY. You don't know what you're talking about.

JANEK. Did you tell her what happened? Did you?

LUCY. I already know, you fag.

PORTER. I didn't tell her anything.

LUCY. You practically told me, when you came in.

JANEK. I'm sorry.

LUCY. What do I care?

JANEK. I'm an evil human being.

PORTER. No you're not. Don't call him a fag, be nice.

LUCY. Spoken like a true fag, now there's two of you.

JANEK. Just don't go behind my back, porter, if we ever get married.

PORTER. I'm probably never going to get married.

LUCY. That's a horrible thing to say.

PORTER. It's true.

LUCY. Well, that's a horrible way to be.

JANEK. No, he's right. What's the point of it, these days?

LUCY. I love you, you know that?

JANEK. But what does that love mean. What does it translate into?

LUCY. Love isn't about that you do. It's about how you feel.

JANEK. The two should go together.

LUCY. You can speak.

PORTER. Please, let's have a little peace. A little peace for breakfast.

They sit in silence. Waiter comes back, approaches gingerly. When he picks up Janek's plate, Janek grabs the waiter's collar.

JANEK. Did you fuck my wife?

Dishes fall. Porter and Lucy both jump up.

LUCY. Leave him alone.

PORTER. Lay off!

JANEK. Did you fuck my wife?

LUCY. He didn't do anything.

PORTER. Let go of him.

JANEK. Just tell me. It's okay, I'm a fag anyway.

LUCY. Drop it with that.

PORTER. I'm very sorry.

JANEK. If you fucked my wife, I won't be mad. I promise, I won't be mad.

PORTER. Just leave us alone. I'm sorry.

Janek pulls out the silver mini-pistol and points it at the waiter.

JANEK. Please offer me the respect of telling me.

LUCY. I didn't sleep with him.

JANEK. I'd like to hear it from him.

PORTER. Janek, relax.

JANEK. Please stay out of this. Just tell me, kid.

WAITER. I didn't do anything.

LUCY. I gave him a bad haircut, is all, baby, give me that.

JANEK. That is a pretty bad haircut.

LUCY. No, it's awful. Give me that. You're just upset.

JANEK. But do I have a reason to be?

LUCY. What do you mean?

JANEK. Did you get with this kid?

LUCY. No.

JANEK. Where were you last night?

LUCY. Nowhere.

JANEK. You were somewhere. Where were you?

LUCY. I wasn't with him.

Janek steps to the waiter, the gun muzzle touches the kid's head.

JANEK. Was my wife with you last night?

The waiter shakes his head.

JANEK. Say it.

WAITER. No.

JANEK. Then where the fuck were you?!

Porter puts his hand on Janek's gun arm.

PORTER. Janek.

JANEK. What?

PORTER. She was with me.

Janek takes this in, lowers the gun, steps back from the situation.

JANEK. I have never cheated on you.

LUCY. We shoulda never been together in the first place.

JANEK. You're only ever toe-deep in love.

LUCY. Baby, stop being dramatic.

JANEK. Porter.

PORTER. I'm sorry.

JANEK. Want an animal cracker?

Janek steps to the railing, points the gun at himself, shoots.
Lights out.

—INTERMISSION—

Scene 11. In Lucy and Janek's cabin

Janek is in bed, his shoulder bandaged.

JANEK. Ow!

LUCY. You're lucky.

JANEK. I'm just stupid, is all I am.

LUCY. What are you gonna do, when we dock?

JANEK. What do you mean? You're serious.

LUCY. We can't go on like this.

JANEK. I'm too used to you, I can't handle myself without you.

LUCY. I know, that's becoming a problem for me.

JANEK. Then stay, we'll get a little place. We'll get two places—

LUCY. I don't want two places.

JANEK. I just thought you might be more comfortable—

LUCY. But what are we then?

JANEK. There are different types of couples.

LUCY. I can't do two places.

JANEK. If the existing models don't work, try something new.

LUCY. We tried.

JANEK. Try again.

LUCY. I'm tired, I can't.

JANEK. Don't go.

LUCY. I need some air.

JANEK. Don't see him now. We need to work things out, between us.

LUCY. We're done.

JANEK. Help me.

LUCY. You're fine. I can't always be standing between you and a gun.

JANEK. You won't be.

LUCY. I'm not so sure.

JANEK. Don't go.

LUCY. I'll be back.

JANEK. Don't see him, I can't stand thinking about it.

LUCY. Maybe I'm not going to see him.

JANEK. Are you or aren't you?

LUCY. None of your business.

JANEK. I'm dying and you're having an affair.

LUCY. Did you kiss Porter last night?

JANEK. Yes.

LUCY. While he was drunk?

JANEK. We were both drunk.

LUCY. He's not gay.

JANEK. Now we know for sure.

LUCY. Not funny.

JANEK. Stay.

LUCY. No.

JANEK. Stay.

LUCY. No.

Scene 12. In Lucy and Janek's cabin

Lucy comes back.

JANEK. Did you fuck him?

LUCY. Jesus.

JANEK. How was it?

LUCY. There are other things to do on this ship, you know.

JANEK. Like what?

LUCY. Shoot yourself in the shoulder.

JANEK. Did you do that? I think you heal faster than me.

LUCY. Cause I'm a girl.

JANEK. Stay with me.

LUCY. I'm with you.

JANEK. When we dock.

She turns from him.

JANEK. If you don't, what are you gonna do?

LUCY. I'll manage.

JANEK. I know you'll manage . . . but . . . why make things harder on yourself?

LUCY. How's your shoulder?

JANEK. We can get two places, you can be with whoever you want, I won't pry.

LUCY. Then what are you and I?

JANEK. It's not always in a definition.

LUCY. I don't want two places.

JANEK. I won't even have to come over, you can get a place I don't know about.

LUCY. Stop.

JANEK. Anywhere you want, just to know you're in the same city . . .

LUCY. What if you get mad at me?

JANEK. When have I ever gotten mad at you—

LUCY. Ooohhh—

JANEK. Recently.

LUCY. You're mad at me all the time.

She is leaving.

JANEK. Back for more, huh? He must really have you wound up tight.

LUCY. Save your strength.

JANEK. I'm feeling much better, maybe we can make this a threesome.

LUCY. I'll ask.

JANEK. Please don't go.

She closes the door, leaving Janek alone in the cabin.

Scene 13. In Lucy and Janek's cabin

Janek is sleeping. Lucy comes in.

LUCY. Do you need anything?

JANEK. Get me out of this room.

LUCY. Let's get some dinner.

JANEK. You came to check on me, you do love me.

LUCY. Of course I love you.

JANEK. I love you, too.

LUCY. Okay.

JANEK. Listen, I would never want to push things ...

LUCY. Then don't.

JANEK. What's for dinner?

LUCY. That's my boy.

JANEK. Ahh!

LUCY. Sorry.

JANEK. What have you been doing? Not prying, not prying,
how's the weather?

LUCY. Crappy. Raining.

JANEK. Really?

LUCY. Actually, it's beautiful.

JANEK. Good. Let's eat outside.

LUCY. Wherever you like.

JANEK. You're in a pleasant mood.

LUCY. Don't start.

JANEK. No, it's fine, invite him. I don't care. Even invite that
waiter.

LUCY. We might have to get a different waiter.

JANEK. You don't think he'll hold that against me.

LUCY. I think he is holding it against you.

JANEK. You talked to him.

LUCY. I listened.

JANEK. He had a lot to say?

LUCY. Very colorfully. I told him you were manic-depressive.

JANEK. Did that help?

LUCY. Didn't seem to care.

JANEK. Tell him I'll tip a lot.

LUCY. He asked to work in the kitchen tonight.

JANEK. He's going to poison me.

LUCY. No. Porter's going to poison you.

JANEK. Why?

LUCY. So he can be with me.

JANEK. Fuck a man's wife and then you want to poison him.
Doesn't seem right.

LUCY. Is this okay?

JANEK. Yeah. Lucy.

LUCY. Yeah.

JANEK. When we de-board—

LUCY. Answer's still the same.

JANEK. Think about it.

LUCY. I've been thinking about it for a long time.

JANEK. Is Porter gonna be there, at dinner?

LUCY. Do you want him to be?

JANEK. Why not.

LUCY. I'll ask him.

JANEK. Thanks.

Scene 14. Outside, evening, at a table

This evening, Janek and Porter are drinking, and Lucy is not.

PORTER. Are you really manic-depressive?

JANEK. Term's bipolar.

PORTER. Well are you?

JANEK. Nah, I just like guns.

PORTER. Where is our little guy tonight?

JANEK. Lucy says he asked to work in the back.

PORTER. Too bad, that was a lot of fun yesterday.

JANEK. My shoulder stings like a bitch though.

PORTER. Sure do love your wife's pussy though.

Porter raises his glass to toast Janek. Janek matches him. Lucy punches porter in the arm.

LUCY. Stop it you all, Jesus, you stuck a gun in that kid's face.

JANEK. Probably get arrested when we come ashore.

LUCY. Probably.

JANEK. Worth every penny.

LUCY. That doesn't make any sense.

JANEK. But it doesn't matter . . . we're aboard the Zygos Taverna.

LUCY. You know they really are probably going to arrest you when you get back.

JANEK. Only if I survive.

Lucy takes Porter's drink from him.

LUCY. Lay off the vodka, Jesus.

PORTER. Hey!

JANEK. Give it back.

LUCY. Since when are you two asshole buddies?

JANEK. Very clever.

LUCY. So to speak.

JANEK. There's my girl. Life doesn't always have to be a trial.

LUCY. This coming from you.

The waiter comes out.

WAITER. How is everything?

PORTER. Want a haircut?

LUCY. Leave him alone.

JANEK. I thought you were working the back tonight.

WAITER. We're short-staffed, believe me, I'd prefer to wash dishes tonight.

PORTER. Don't be like that.

JANEK. No harm was meant.

LUCY. That was my first time cutting hair.

WAITER. It wasn't the cutting of hair that was a problem, miss.

JANEK. Look, I said I was sorry.

WAITER. Given that you're clearly crazy, I accept your apology.

JANEK. Term's bipolar.

WAITER. Whatever. Would you all like another round of vodkas?

LUCY. Nothing for me.

WAITER. Or would you rather a dish of crack cocaine?

JANEK. The vodkas are fine.

PORTER. I'll have the crack though.

WAITER. Silver tin okay?

PORTER. Bring a straw.

WAITER. Very good sir.

The waiter leaves.

PORTER. When he comes back offer to shave his head.

Janek and porter fake-fight, but it's on that cracking edge.

JANEK. Did you fuck my wife!

PORTER. Yes!

JANEK. Did you fuck my wife?!!

PORTER. Yes!

JANEK. I know you did you shit. You're lucky I didn't shoot you yesterday.

PORTER. You're lucky I didn't shoot you in self defense, you faggot.

LUCY. Boys, boys, I can't take this! Stop, please. Please, my head hurts.

JANEK. Sorry, dear. Have porter here give you a backrub, it'll help.

LUCY. How convenient it is for this all to come to a head right now.

JANEK. You couldn't be giving head to a better man than my friend Porter.

LUCY. Please. And you make him stop, this stopped being cute an hour ago.

JANEK. But what else do people talk about in an age with no integrity?

PORTER. Unfortunately I'm woven into precisely the things I rail against.

JANEK. The thing to do is find some moderation, some happiness inbetween . . .

PORTER. It's true you can't navigate at all with too rigid a stance.

Waiter comes back.

WAITER. Vodkas. I brought one for you just in case, miss.

LUCY. On second thought, thank you.

She downs it.

LUCY. Thank you sir may I please have another.

WAITER. Right away, and for you, and you.

He passes out the other vodkas. Lucy stands and goes to the railing.

LUCY. Of all the oceans of the world, we find ourselves in this one.

Janek starts to grimace, to choke.

PORTER. You okay?

LUCY. Baby?

PORTER. Took it in the wrong pipe?

JANEK. So to speak.

PORTER. Are you choking?

Janek shakes his head.

LUCY. What's wrong baby? He's choking!

PORTER. He wouldn't be able to talk if he was choking. Just breathe out.

JANEK. There's something in the drink.

LUCY. There's not something in the drink, you just breathed it in the wrong way.

JANEK. It's . . . the drink.

PORTER. Is there something in this drink?

WAITER. There's nothing in the drink, he's choking.

LUCY. Baby!

PORTER. Hit him!

LUCY. You do it!

Janek seems to be expiring.

LUCY. Jesus! What is in the drink?

WAITER. It's just vodka!

The waiter starts giving Janek the Heimlich.

JANEK. Get off me. Get off me.

Janek brushes himself off, stands up.

JANEK. I just wanted to see if you assholes would sit there and let me die.

Everyone is shocked.

JANEK. Looks like I was wrong.

Janek walks off, down the stairs, below deck.

Scene 15. Janek and Lucy's cabin

He's already there. She comes in and starts packing.

LUCY. You're evil.

JANEK. Not really, baby, I'm just a scientist.

LUCY. That makes it all better. We were scared.

JANEK. You're not coming back to live with me?

LUCY. I am not.

JANEK. Well, consider your account dead.

LUCY. Bummer.

JANEK. You don't care?

LUCY. I don't.

JANEK. Yes you do.

LUCY. I'll manage. I'm getting another room.

JANEK. Surely you can sleep with me for one more night.

LUCY. No.

JANEK. Then we de-board, then you and Porter run off together.

LUCY. I'm not running off. I'm not even sure I'll be with Porter.

JANEK. Just make sure he's not gay before you marry him.

LUCY. Don't worry, I made double sure last night.
JANEK. Oh yeah? What does he do that I don't?
LUCY. New subject.
JANEK. What?
LUCY. The account.
JANEK. What about it?
LUCY. Will you leave what's in there in there?
JANEK. This is you not-caring about the account.
LUCY. I don't care about you keeping it going, that wouldn't be fair.
JANEK. This is you . . . not-caring about the account.
LUCY. A simple question. Will you leave what's in there in there?
JANEK. Or what? You're forced to go whoring with Porter?
Lucy slaps Janek.
JANEK. Sucks, doesn't it? Without me your options change.
She goes to him, slowly, gently, and kisses his forehead.
LUCY. I did love you.
She leaves the room.
JANEK. Don't go.
She closes the door.

Scene 16. Misty night, Porter and Lucy on deck

PORTER. Tomorrow, I have two train tickets heading down the coast.
LUCY. Is one of them for me?
PORTER. If you want for it to be. Do you want it to be?
LUCY. Maybe.
PORTER. Just maybe.
LUCY. Isn't maybe good enough sometimes?
PORTER. It depends on how closely you're involved with the person who says it.
LUCY. I know, I'm sorry, but it is just maybe.
PORTER. What about tonight, is tonight just maybe also?
LUCY. Tonight is most definitely definitely.
PORTER. Yeah?
LUCY. Definitely most definitely.
PORTER. Our last night aboard the Zygos Taverna . . . maybe not our last night . . .

LUCY. It's not our last night. It just might be our last night for a while.

PORTER. Live with me.

LUCY. It's too soon.

PORTER. You'd like my place.

LUCY. What would I like about it?

PORTER. You'd like the rocking chairs on the front porch ... cracking paint ...

LUCY. Mm.

PORTER. You'd like the beach. There's a broken fence the dogs trample over.

LUCY. You have dogs!?

PORTER. I love my dogs.

LUCY. What kinds?

PORTER. A scottish terrier and a golden retriever.

LUCY. I love golden retrievers.

PORTER. So do I.

LUCY. That must make the other one jealous.

PORTER. I don't let on.

LUCY. What are their sexes?

PORTER. Both girls.

LUCY. You like girls better.

PORTER. I do.

LUCY. They like you too, don't they?

PORTER. They have, some. From time to time some of them have liked me.

LUCY. Will you miss me?

PORTER. Not if you come with me.

LUCY. I'm a bad partner.

PORTER. The past does not predict the future.

LUCY. I don't mean him, I mean, in general.

PORTER. I could try to argue with you but I think I won't.

LUCY. Thank you.

PORTER. Animal cracker?

LUCY. Where did those come from?

PORTER. I stole them from your room.

LUCY. You did not!

PORTER. They have them in the kitchen, believe it or not.

LUCY. Magic! Thank you!

PORTER. What should I eat first?

LUCY. Eat the whole thing whole, tonight, I'd say, definitely.

PORTER. What does that mean?

LUCY. It means life is short.

PORTER. So eat the whole thing now in case there's no chance to eat the rest?

LUCY. No. You're the animal.

PORTER. Oh.

They both swallow an animal whole.

LUCY. I remember my first boyfriend in high school.

PORTER. Don't tell me about your ex-boyfriends.

LUCY. No, you'll like this. I remember my very first time.

PORTER. Where did you do it?

LUCY. That's not the point. We did it in my parent's basement.

PORTER. Congratulations. I wish I had been there.

LUCY. That's not the point. The point is . . . in all that time

...

PORTER. Just kiss me.

LUCY. In all that time I've never been with someone I liked as much as you.

PORTER. Now you're lying.

LUCY. No.

PORTER. Let's go.

LUCY. Okay.

PORTER. Let's go right now.

LUCY. We're going.

PORTER. Let's hurry.

LUCY. Ooh, I like this. You gonna tie me up?

PORTER. No.

LUCY. Spank me?

PORTER. No.

LUCY. What then?

PORTER. I'm gonna make love to you.

She puts her finger over his lips-shhh.

LUCY. I'll be right back.

Lucy goes. Porter speaks to the audience.

PORTER. She never did come back.

Scene 17. Sound of Lucy screaming

Lucy and Janek's cabin. Janek is slumped on the floor. Lucy kneels over him. Porter comes in.

PORTER. What is it?

LUCY. He's not breathing!

PORTER. For how long?

LUCY. I don't know, I just came in and he was like this!

Porter feels Janek's neck. His hand retracts from the cold. The waiter comes in.

LUCY. Try to get help!!

Porter embraces her.

PORTER. It's too late.

Scene 18. Janek and Lucy's cabin

LUCY. It's the first thing any normal person would think.

PORTER. Absolutely not.

LUCY. What about you.

WAITER. How could I?

LUCY. I don't know, I don't know, I'm just asking, there could be reasons.

WAITER. I mean, just, logistically—

LUCY. You're sticking by your answer?

PORTER. Did not, did not, have anything to do with this.

LUCY. Okay, and that's possible, it's even likely . . . that crazy bastard . . . but—

PORTER. I would tell you.

LUCY. I think you might. And if you did, I don't want to hear about it.

PORTER. But—

LUCY. I'm just saying if. After this moment it's a closed deal. From all sides.

WAITER. Did you do it?

LUCY. No. I could have, but I didn't.

PORTER. He probably did it to himself.

LUCY. I'm sure he probably did . . . but things happen, aboard ships . . .

PORTER. What did he do it with?

WAITER. He could have just swallowed gasoline.

LUCY. Please.

PORTER. Gasoline? You think he swallowed some of the ship's gasoline?

WAITER. It's possible.

LUCY. Please, please, who cares. I don't want to think about the specifics.

WAITER. I'm sorry.

LUCY. Anyway it doesn't matter, seeing that he shot himself yesterday.

PORTER. In the chest.

WAITER. At point blank.

PORTER. But he missed.

LUCY. But he didn't mean to miss. Look we're not gonna figure this out.

PORTER. He killed himself, there, it's figured out.

LUCY. I agree.

WAITER. Why do I feel like we're congress voting to pass a bill?

LUCY. It's not congress.

WAITER. They're going to do an autopsy.

LUCY. No doubt, and they're going to find a man who shot himself in the chest.

PORTER. And has had too much to drink, and who swallowed the ship's gasoline.

WAITER. Really?

PORTER. I'm just saying. Maybe he's had something to drink other than vodka.

WAITER. Has he?

PORTER. Not that I know. But if he has, they'll find it.

LUCY. Whatever the details, this is a man who clearly wanted to commit suicide.

PORTER. And who probably now has.

LUCY. Right. Anything else is beyond us.

WAITER. Ok.

The guys trade a glance.

LUCY. Can I be alone with my husband now?

The guys leave. Porter closes the door.

LUCY. I'm sorry baby, it's better this way.

Scene 19. The ship is at port

The waiter comes upstairs with his bag.

PORTER. Have plans?

WAITER. Nothing special.

PORTER. Me neither. Seen Lucy?

WAITER. She might be downstairs or something.

PORTER. Strange girl.

WAITER. Seems to be.

PORTER. Coming back to this ship soon?

WAITER. Nah, this ship is bad luck.

PORTER. Think so?

WAITER. Had a gun held to my face.

PORTER. That's right. Least the guy didn't pull the trigger.

WAITER. True. So you're an optimist then?

PORTER. That's right. Smoke?

WAITER. Nah, better get my bag.

PORTER. Tsn't that your bag right here?

WAITER. My other one. Have a nice trip.

PORTER. Yeah, you too.

The waiter goes downstairs. Lucy comes on deck. She saunters up next to Porter.

LUCY. Beautiful day.

PORTER. Beautiful day.

LUCY. I'm Lucy.

PORTER. Porter.

LUCY. Fall in love much, Porter?

PORTER. I'm finding it to be an increasingly rare event.

LUCY. You may have overcomplexified the concept.

PORTER. You think so?

LUCY. Maybe, it's possible. My problem is I simplify it down too much.

PORTER. My problem is I can't stay innocent about it.

LUCY. Well that is a problem.

PORTER. Why?

LUCY. Cause you can't stay innocent.

PORTER. I suppose you're right.

LUCY. The more time passes, more you know, the less innocent you must be.

PORTER. Do you think it's possible to maintain an innocent outlook on it?

LUCY. On life?

PORTER. On falling in love.

LUCY. I don't know, it's too early in the morning for philosophy.

PORTER. Sorry.

LUCY. If you'd like to join me and my husband for drinks, however ...

PORTER. That's awful. How are you?

LUCY. I expected it.

PORTER. Still . . .

LUCY. For a long time.

PORTER. Still . . .

LUCY. I'll be ok.

The waiter comes upstairs carrying Lucy's bag. Lucy kisses the waiter.

LUCY. Say hi to your dogs for me.

Porter nods. Lucy takes the waiter's arm. Lucy and the waiter go down the ship's ramp together. Porter puffs his pipe.

PORTER. My ancestors used to say "make every encounter a fatality". Some part of you, and some part of the person you encounter, should die in the meeting. Otherwise the meeting was less than it could have been. That is why I say, on that particular crossing, there were two fatalities aboard the Zygus Taverna.

Porter de-boards.

11

A Simple Love Story (2006)

CHARACTERS

DANIEL (male, 50)
AMERICA (female, 21)
SANDRO (male, 30-70)
ANOTHER STUDENT (18-30)
DEAN (male, 50-60)
RACHEL (female, 30-50)
MARY (female, 40-50)
LACY (female, 18-30)

Scene 1. Daniel's office

A student leaves.

DANIEL. Next!

AMERICA. I'm from Special Topics in Organic Chemistry.

DANIEL. Which one?

AMERICA. Friday mornings.

DANIEL. Friday mornings.

AMERICA. America.

DANIEL. Ahhh, Miss Jones.

AMERICA. Yes.

DANIEL. Perfect Test Score Jones.

AMERICA. So far.

DANIEL. Never Speaks in Class Jones.

AMERICA. Not so far.

DANIEL. Why is that?

AMERICA. I haven't had any questions.

DANIEL. Not so far.

AMERICA. No.

DANIEL. Well, I guess you have one now.

AMERICA. I'm sorry.

She goes for the door.

DANIEL. What's wrong?

AMERICA. I do have a question.

DANIEL. Please.

AMERICA. Have lunch with me.

DANIEL. You'd like to ask me your question over lunch?

AMERICA. No, that's my question.

DANIEL. You said, "Have lunch with me." That's not a question.

AMERICA. Will you have lunch with me, please?

DANIEL. To talk about Special Topics in Organic Chemistry?

AMERICA. No.

DANIEL. America.

AMERICA. I thought you were going to say no.

DANIEL. I have to.

AMERICA. I know. I had to ask anyway. I'm sorry.

DANIEL. America.

AMERICA. Yes?

DANIEL. Stay, talk.

AMERICA. About what?

DANIEL. Special Topics.

AMERICA. Special topics in what?

DANIEL. Organic chemistry.

AMERICA. No. Bye.

DANIEL. See you in class?

AMERICA. Of course.

She leaves.

DANIEL. Bye.

Scene 2. A bar

DANIEL. She's smokin.

SANDRO. Oooh.

DANIEL. Her name's America.

SANDRO. Jesus.

DANIEL. Do you believe that?

SANDRO. No.

DANIEL. America Jones.

SANDRO. Oh shit.

DANIEL. Yeah.

SANDRO. And she's smokin' Jesus. So what are you gonna do?

DANIEL. Nothing.

SANDRO. You're not gonna do nothing.

DANIEL. That's exactly what I'm going to do.

SANDRO. She asked you to lunch?

DANIEL. That's right.

SANDRO. Take her to lunch.

DANIEL. If she asked me, wouldn't it be her taking me?

SANDRO. Go to lunch with her.

DANIEL. No.

SANDRO. Pussy.

DANIEL. I'd lose my job.

SANDRO. You wouldn't lose your job for taking her to lunch, what?

DANIEL. Lunch.

SANDRO. What?

DANIEL. Lunch.

SANDRO. What?

DANIEL. It's not just lunch.

SANDRO. How do you know? Maybe she doesn't sleep with you, is that foregone?

DANIEL. What about Rachel?

SANDRO. She never had an affair?

DANIEL. No.

SANDRO. You sure?

DANIEL. Do you think Rachel would have an affair?

SANDRO. No, never.

DANIEL. Never. Plus, the kids.

SANDRO. What do the kids have to do with it?

DANIEL. If I had an affair.

SANDRO. Right.

DANIEL. Kids have an idea about their parents.

SANDRO. People have affairs all the time.

DANIEL. Kids have an idea about their parents, though.

SANDRO. People get divorced all the time.

DANIEL. It fucks up the kids.

SANDRO. You don't have to stay monogamous for your kids.

DANIEL. I want to though.

SANDRO. Respect, respect.

DANIEL. This girl, though.

SANDRO. You like her, don't you?

DANIEL. I do.

Scene 3. Daniel's office

America comes in.

AMERICA. I was thinking.

DANIEL. Miss Jones.

AMERICA. If we talk about Special Topics in Organic Chemistry, is it okay?

DANIEL. Is what okay?

AMERICA. If we go to lunch.

DANIEL. I shouldn't tell you this, but . . . I do like you.

AMERICA. Then come to lunch with me.

DANIEL. I can't.

AMERICA. Why, because we might fuck?

DANIEL. If that happened, I could lose my job.

AMERICA. Sometimes teachers fuck students.

DANIEL. If that happened, I would lose my job.

AMERICA. Do teachers lose their job for having lunch with students?

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. Well, I'm not inviting you to fuck, I'm inviting you to lunch.

DANIEL. But we might fuck?

AMERICA. We might.

She closes his office door.

DANIEL. Open that.

She opens it.

AMERICA. Alright.

DANIEL. Alright?

AMERICA. I'll talk about Special Topics in Organic Chemistry.

DANIEL. You will.

AMERICA. Sure. Pick a topic.

DANIEL. Heterocyclic chemistry.

AMERICA. Nope.

DANIEL. Medicinal chemistry.
AMERICA. Too boring.
DANIEL. You pick one then.
AMERICA. You're the teacher.
DANIEL. I thought you wanted to talk.
AMERICA. I want to talk over lunch.
DANIEL. I can't.
AMERICA. I have to go then.
DANIEL. Why?
AMERICA. I'm hungry.
DANIEL. I'm hungry too.
AMERICA. Then eat.
DANIEL. What are you eating?
AMERICA. Steak.
DANIEL. I'm a vegetarian.
AMERICA. Too bad.
She goes out.
DANIEL. Wait.
He grabs his coat.

Scene 4. At lunch

DANIEL. You said we were eating steak.
AMERICA. I lied, I can't afford it. This is what I can afford, so we're here.
DANIEL. This is fine.
AMERICA. Anyway, aren't you a vegetarian?
DANIEL. No, I lied too.
AMERICA. Get a salad.
DANIEL. No, I really did lie. I lie sometimes.
AMERICA. I do too. I lie about stuff that doesn't even matter.
DANIEL. Like what?
AMERICA. Like what my favorite color is. Why should I tell people that?
DANIEL. What is your favorite color?
AMERICA. Blue.
DANIEL. So it's really red or something.
AMERICA. Right. Why do people even care?
DANIEL. Do people ask you that a lot?
AMERICA. You're making fun of me.
DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. You are, I can feel it.
DANIEL. I was. I'm sorry.
AMERICA. It's okay. You think I'm too young.
DANIEL. Too young for what?
AMERICA. To talk to. You think I'm stupid.
DANIEL. I know you're not stupid.
AMERICA. Not about Chemistry.
DANIEL. America, I didn't mean to offend you.
AMERICA. It's okay. Give me a bite.
DANIEL. Sure.
AMERICA. Here ... there ... oooh ... perfect.
DANIEL. Like it?
AMERICA. Love it. Mmm. Have a bite of mine.
DANIEL. Mmm.
AMERICA. I'm getting that next time.
DANIEL. I'm getting that next time.
AMERICA. Seriously?
DANIEL. Yeah.
AMERICA. Let's switch.
DANIEL. Okay.
AMERICA. You seem young.
DANIEL. I'm not though.
AMERICA. Your mind ... just seems young. Do you feel young?
DANIEL. Mostly. Not my knees.
AMERICA. What's wrong with them?
DANIEL. They hurt.
AMERICA. Are they still the originals?
DANIEL. Sadly.
AMERICA. Originals are better.
DANIEL. Not in knees.
AMERICA. We connect.
DANIEL. I feel we do.
AMERICA. I feel it too.
DANIEL. Promise me something.
AMERICA. What.
DANIEL. Don't be mad at me if we can't be ... whatever we might have been.
AMERICA. So we can't be polo buds.
DANIEL. I have a wife.
AMERICA. Does she play?
DANIEL. You're not married. You don't know what it's like.

AMERICA. I'm not her. I'm not gonna try to live her life, or live—

DANIEL. And it's not like I don't love her.

AMERICA. —or live how it'll be convenient for her, how could I do that?

DANIEL. You're wise beyond your years.

AMERICA. Gimme another bite.

DANIEL. You're not mad?

AMERICA. Don't want to talk about it.

DANIEL. Do you have a boyfriend?

AMERICA. (*with her mouth full*) Yeah I suck dick every night, don't you wish it was you?

DANIEL. Do you really have a boyfriend?

AMERICA. No.

DANIEL. What are we gonna do after this?

AMERICA. I didn't know we were going to do anything after this.

DANIEL. I have a class at eight-forty, but . . .

AMERICA. We don't have to do anything.

DANIEL. We could take a walk. If you want.

AMERICA. Good.

DANIEL. Good.

AMERICA. But, what if people think we're lovers?

DANIEL. They might think we're just talking.

AMERICA. What would you and I be talking about?

DANIEL. Special Topics.

AMERICA. Very special topics.

DANIEL. In organic chemistry.

AMERICA. Of course.

DANIEL. Let's go.

Scene 5. Their walk, publicly, on the green

DANIEL. I saw this woman today. She was about forty-five years old, maybe fifty, and . . . you know how time makes us tired? She wasn't tired like that. At twenty-eight, you can start to see sadness on the face, but this woman, no. Some people have grace. It's not born, and it's not bred. I think maybe it's cultivated. Anyway, she had it, and . . . it was beautiful.

AMERICA. Keep talking.

DANIEL. What about?

AMERICA. Anything. You're a wonderful talker. You talk in essays. Not essays, but full paragraphs. That's something I noticed about you on the first day. You talk like a book. You're not dry, but ... It's like a book has already been written and you stand in front of the class and recite it.

DANIEL. Do you ever feel like you missed a moment?

AMERICA. Missed a moment?

DANIEL. You should have, you didn't though, there was something you could have—

AMERICA. Yeah, no, yeah. I mean, yeah. Sure. All the time. You feel that?

DANIEL. Yeah.

AMERICA. Wha'd you miss?

DANIEL. A kiss.

AMERICA. When?

DANIEL. Long ago.

AMERICA. Describe it for me.

DANIEL. I was near your age—how old are you?

AMERICA. Twenty-one. How old are you?

DANIEL. Fifty. I was twenty-one. There was this girl.

AMERICA. You were in college?

DANIEL. Yes.

AMERICA. Where?

DANIEL. It doesn't matter.

AMERICA. Was this when you were at Amherst?

DANIEL. Stalker!

AMERICA. It's on your site, sorry.

DANIEL. There was this girl. I should have kissed her. I didn't.

AMERICA. You're right you should have.

DANIEL. I know.

AMERICA. Did you make the same mistake twice though?

DANIEL. I've made that one a couple of times.

AMERICA. Never do that.

DANIEL. I know.

AMERICA. That's the only sin.

DANIEL. Murder?

AMERICA. Don't ever make the same mistake twice.

DANIEL. You've killed someone?

AMERICA. Only one time that I shouldn't have, and I learned my lesson.

DANIEL. You're a sage.

AMERICA. People always say that.
DANIEL. It's true.
AMERICA. Doesn't feel like that from the inside.
DANIEL. What does it feel like?
AMERICA. Confused. Disconnected.
DANIEL. I have that.
AMERICA. Which one?
DANIEL. Disconnected.
AMERICA. Who do you hang out with? Who are your friends?
DANIEL. Faculty.
AMERICA. Which ones?
DANIEL. Sandro, he's the head of the—
AMERICA. Math department.
DANIEL. You take math?
AMERICA. No, my friend takes him, says he's weird.
DANIEL. He's a nut, but—
AMERICA. What's his specialty again? Something like ...
DANIEL. Numbers between zero and one.
AMERICA. Right, that's ... Do you do math?
DANIEL. No.
AMERICA. What do you guys do?
DANIEL. We play pool.
AMERICA. No shit, that's what me and my friends do!
DANIEL. Where at?
AMERICA. In the quad. It's a dollar an hour on Thursdays.
DANIEL. Is it.
AMERICA. Where do you play?
DANIEL. A townie bar on Court Street.
AMERICA. Which one?
DANIEL. The Smiling Skull.
AMERICA. Ewww.
DANIEL. What.
AMERICA. I got too drunk there.
DANIEL. Yeah?
AMERICA. I was going to say once but it was more than once.
DANIEL. You drink a lot?
AMERICA. Once I get started.
DANIEL. What do you drink?
AMERICA. Whatever. What do you drink?
DANIEL. Whatever.
AMERICA. Now you're lying.
DANIEL. My drink makes me sound old.

AMERICA. What is it?

DANIEL. Scotch.

AMERICA. Never tried it.

DANIEL. It's disgusting, till you get used to it.

AMERICA. All tastes are that way.

DANIEL. What do you drink?

AMERICA. Beer.

DANIEL. Ewww.

AMERICA. Why?

DANIEL. I can't drink it.

AMERICA. You can't drink any of it?

DANIEL. It's disgusting.

AMERICA. I bet Scotch is impossible.

DANIEL. It's fairly impossible.

AMERICA. You should date me.

DANIEL. What do you think this is?

AMERICA. This is just a walk.

DANIEL. I shouldn't have said that.

AMERICA. Why?

DANIEL. You're less than half my age.

AMERICA. I thought you didn't do math.

DANIEL. I don't.

AMERICA. Liar.

DANIEL. Tease.

AMERICA. You love it.

DANIEL. I do.

AMERICA. You should kiss me.

DANIEL. Here?

AMERICA. Yes.

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. Yes. Kiss me.

DANIEL. I can't.

AMERICA. Why not? It's just a kiss.

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. Kiss me on the lips, no tongue.

DANIEL. Why no tongue?

AMERICA. Ewww, we're in public, that's disgusting!

DANIEL. Okay.

AMERICA. No P.D.A.

DANIEL. But kiss you?

AMERICA. No tongue P.D.A.

DANIEL. You could get me fired.

AMERICA. I know, that's not my goal.

DANIEL. I know.

AMERICA. Kiss.

They kiss.

Scene 6. Daniel's and his wife's bedroom

Daniel comes into the bedroom, his wife is in bed.

RACHEL. How was it?

DANIEL. Same.

RACHEL. Are you gonna have time to go with us on Saturday?

DANIEL. Sure.

He climbs in bed.

Scene 7. At the bar

DANIEL. I've got a real problem.

SANDRO. And what would that be?

DANIEL. This girl is hot for me.

SANDRO. You've got a simple choice to make.

DANIEL. It's not that simple.

SANDRO. I didn't say it was easy. I said it was simple.

DANIEL. It's not simple.

SANDRO. Does the girl like you.

DANIEL. I just said she was hot for me.

SANDRO. Are you hot for her?

DANIEL. What does that matter?

SANDRO. It matters everything.

DANIEL. But my wife.

SANDRO. Doesn't she know?

DANIEL. No!

SANDRO. You haven't told her.

DANIEL. Why would I tell her?

SANDRO. Because you love her.

DANIEL. I would tell her because I love her? It would kill her if she knew.

SANDRO. If she knew? What do you mean if she knew?

DANIEL. If she knew that I like this girl!

SANDRO. I'm sure she knows that already.

DANIEL. No.

SANDRO. Wives know.

DANIEL. I've never even mentioned her name.

SANDRO. Women are very sensitive.

DANIEL. I know.

SANDRO. They can tell.

DANIEL. I know.

SANDRO. They can, trust me. She knows. And your little girlfriend knows too.

DANIEL. What does she know now?

SANDRO. That you haven't told your wife.

DANIEL. What the fuck difference does that make?

SANDRO. It makes a difference . . . if . . . she thinks you're keeping her at a distance.

DANIEL. Another shot of this, right away. A double.

SANDRO. I'll go again as well.

DANIEL. It's on me.

SANDRO. It's always on you.

DANIEL. I make more.

SANDRO. And you're more stressed.

DANIEL. No shit. How's your love life?

SANDRO. Nonexistent.

DANIEL. Fabulous, why don't you get laid.

SANDRO. Give me your little hottie's number.

DANIEL. No chance.

SANDRO. Then get with the girl.

DANIEL. No chance. That girl is trouble.

SANDRO. Girls are never trouble.

DANIEL. Girls are always trouble.

SANDRO. You're right.

DANIEL. No, you are right. They're wonderful. I love them.

SANDRO. Not all of them.

DANIEL. Of course not, but the beautiful ones.

SANDRO. I love them too my friend.

DANIEL. How's your love life?

SANDRO. I told you, nonexistent.

DANIEL. Any students to speak of?

SANDRO. Not that are hounding my bones my friend.

DANIEL. Too bad.

SANDRO. That is too bad.

DANIEL. You want her number?

SANDRO. Too much chaos for me.

DANIEL. Yeah, right. Thank you, we'll go ahead another round.

SANDRO. On me.

DANIEL. No.

SANDRO. On me this time.

DANIEL. Yes? Sweet, on him, make those triples.

SANDRO. You are an addict, my friend.

DANIEL. I'm fully aware of that.

SANDRO. As long as you know.

DANIEL. Believe me, I know.

SANDRO. You need to get with that girl.

DANIEL. Why?

SANDRO. It'll make you sane again.

DANIEL. I am sane.

SANDRO. But you've lost something.

DANIEL. I know.

Scene 8. Daniel's office

A student leaves.

DANIEL. Next!

AMERICA. I'm from Special Topics in Organic Chemistry?

DANIEL. Special topics, huh?

AMERICA. Yeah.

DANIEL. Close the door.

She closes the door.

AMERICA. Come play pool with me tonight, with me and my friends.

DANIEL. I can't.

AMERICA. Why not?

DANIEL. At the quad? Everyone will see me.

AMERICA. Like anyone cares.

DANIEL. Am I flattering myself?

AMERICA. Maybe.

DANIEL. It's too public.

AMERICA. Somewhere else.

DANIEL. Where?

AMERICA. A dive bar.

DANIEL. Which one?

AMERICA. Some dive bar, I don't know. You pick one.

DANIEL. You think I know dive bars?

AMERICA. In and out.

DANIEL. Your last paper was perfect, Miss Jones.

AMERICA. It's Mrs.
DANIEL. You're married?
AMERICA. Didn't you know?
DANIEL. Tell me you're not.
AMERICA. I'm not.
DANIEL. Is that the truth?
AMERICA. Come out with me.
DANIEL. With them.
AMERICA. Us.
DANIEL. Who.
AMERICA. It's poets, you'd like them.
DANIEL. I'd probably hate them, I hate everyone.
AMERICA. Lovely.
DANIEL. Especially poets.
AMERICA. Come out.
DANIEL. We'd have to go somewhere private.
AMERICA. Pick a place.
DANIEL. There's only one place.
AMERICA. Where?
DANIEL. Hoek's.
AMERICA. Where the fuck is that?
DANIEL. It's private.
AMERICA. Good.
DANIEL. It's a dive bar.
AMERICA. Great.
DANIEL. You won't like it, the men are disgusting.
AMERICA. That's the draw?
DANIEL. Spot on.
AMERICA. You're such a faggot.
DANIEL. All professors are.
AMERICA. Really?
DANIEL. Yeah, we're all sexually weird.
AMERICA. Really.
DANIEL. Part of the job description.
AMERICA. Come with me.
DANIEL. Who are these friends?
AMERICA. Poets.
DANIEL. You said.
AMERICA. They are.
DANIEL. But who.
AMERICA. Andrew. Don't worry, he's a fag.
DANIEL. Be careful.

AMERICA. Will I lose you now?

DANIEL. You might, if you introduce sufficiently attractive fag-gots.

AMERICA. He's goth.

DANIEL. I hate goth.

AMERICA. So I'm safe then.

She presses herself to him.

DANIEL. You're insane.

AMERICA. Tell me something I don't know.

DANIEL. Do you play rugby?

AMERICA. Why?

DANIEL. Cause all the craziest girls I know play rugby.

AMERICA. Rugby players are all lesbians.

DANIEL. Not your game?

AMERICA. No.

DANIEL. Why'd your parents name you that?

AMERICA. I don't know. They're patriotic.

DANIEL. Really?

AMERICA. No, they're leftist revolutionaries.

DANIEL. Like you said.

AMERICA. Let's talk about you.

DANIEL. Me?

AMERICA. Politically.

DANIEL. Let's not.

AMERICA. Why?

DANIEL. One clue, I'm not a leftist revolutionary.

AMERICA. I don't mind if we vote for different people.

DANIEL. You're barely old enough to vote.

AMERICA. Does that excite you?

DANIEL. Does it excite you? You really find me appealing?

AMERICA. Shut the fuck up.

DANIEL. No, how? How do you like me? I'm an old man.

AMERICA. Fifty isn't old.

DANIEL. I wish that was true.

AMERICA. You need to shut the fuck up, right now. Kiss me.

They kiss, he pulls away.

DANIEL. I'm sorry.

AMERICA. What?

DANIEL. I have a job. This is my job.

AMERICA. The door is closed.

DANIEL. Teacher-student conference?

AMERICA. Yeah.

DANIEL. No. Seriously, no. How did you get to be such a nymph?

AMERICA. It's innate.

DANIEL. Genetic?

AMERICA. Yes.

DANIEL. How'd you get to be so smart?

AMERICA. No idea.

DANIEL. Your last test was perfect, again, but you already know that, don't you.

AMERICA. See, this is a teacher-student conference.

DANIEL. Um, no.

AMERICA. Relax.

DANIEL. Did you lock the door?

AMERICA. Does it have a lock?

DANIEL. You need to go.

AMERICA. You might need me to go. I don't need to go.

DANIEL. I'm going to introduce you to my wife.

AMERICA. When is this?

DANIEL. Whenever. I want you to see what I'm up against.

AMERICA. I don't give a shit about your wife.

DANIEL. And you shouldn't.

AMERICA. I really don't. That's your problem.

DANIEL. You would like her if you met her.

AMERICA. I hope I never do.

DANIEL. That's nice.

AMERICA. I'm not nice.

DANIEL. I noticed.

AMERICA. Nice is severely overrated.

DANIEL. So you say.

AMERICA. Nice is always the predecessor to an insult.

DANIEL. Poets, huh?

AMERICA. She's such a nice person, but, I hate her. Yes. Poets, pool, drinks.

DANIEL. What are we gonna drink?

AMERICA. It's your bar, motherfucker.

DANIEL. Scotch.

AMERICA. Fine.

DANIEL. You'll drink Scotch.

AMERICA. If you are.

DANIEL. I'll get fired.

AMERICA. Do you like your job?

DANIEL. No, I like you.

AMERICA. Right answer. Grab my tit.
DANIEL. Not now.
AMERICA. Fool.
DANIEL. I know.
AMERICA. This is one of those missed moments, one of those moments . . .
DANIEL. I know.
AMERICA. You'll look back on this moment.
DANIEL. I'm looking back right now.
AMERICA. Be with me. Be here.
DANIEL. I am.
AMERICA. Be here. Now.
DANIEL. I am.
AMERICA. Come with me.
DANIEL. America, you are beautiful. Why'd your parents name you that?
AMERICA. They're hippies.
DANIEL. Really.
AMERICA. Yeah. We smoke pot together and everything.
DANIEL. You smoke pot with your parents?
AMERICA. We used to, I stopped smoking.
DANIEL. Why?
AMERICA. I'll tell you later.
DANIEL. Tell me now.
AMERICA. What got you into chemistry?
DANIEL. Just fascinated me.
AMERICA. Are you kinky Daniel?
DANIEL. Define kinky.
AMERICA. Choking, tying up. Punching in the face.
DANIEL. Punching in he face? Jesus.
AMERICA. That's what Sandro says.
DANIEL. Jesus? Yes. Have you met Sandro?
AMERICA. My friend says he says that.
DANIEL. Is your friend a boy?
AMERICA. Do you care?
DANIEL. Yes.
AMERICA. My friend is a boy.
DANIEL. Are you together?
AMERICA. Define together.
DANIEL. Do you fuck.
AMERICA. No.
DANIEL. Good.

AMERICA. Are you jealous?
DANIEL. Yes.
AMERICA. What about your wife?
DANIEL. Don't bring her up.
AMERICA. I thought you were going to introduce me.
DANIEL. Changed my mind.
AMERICA. Yeah?
DANIEL. Decided to keep you to myself.
AMERICA. Good.
DANIEL. So this boy.
AMERICA. He's not my boyfriend.
DANIEL. No?
AMERICA. He might be gay.
DANIEL. Good.
AMERICA. Kiss me again.
DANIEL. You'll end me.
AMERICA. Kiss me.
ANOTHER STUDENT. Dr. Drake?
A knock at the door.
DANIEL. Go.
AMERICA. Are we still on for pool?
DANIEL. Yes.
AMERICA. You'll regret making me go.
DANIEL. I might.
AMERICA. No. You will.
She goes.

Scene 9. America's place - Some night

DANIEL. What is that?
AMERICA. A pill.
DANIEL. What is it?
AMERICA. Taste.
DANIEL. Is that ecstasy?
AMERICA. Give me your tongue.
DANIEL. You take that?
AMERICA. I have.
DANIEL. How many times?
AMERICA. Give me your tongue.
DANIEL. Maybe in a minute.
AMERICA. Are you mad?

DANIEL. You like drugs?

AMERICA. I've only tried a few.

DANIEL. Love is a drug.

AMERICA. A potent one.

DANIEL. I'm gonna brush my teeth.

AMERICA. You don't have to.

He kisses her.

AMERICA. I'm gonna change. You stay here, I'll leave this with you.

DANIEL. Uh-oh, do you have one for you?

AMERICA. Just eat it.

She gets under her covers, she's changing clothes. He considers the pill, but puts it down. He gets comfortable in her room. He picks up a paperweight, a glass ball filled with water and snow. She is still under the covers.

AMERICA. Did you take it?

DANIEL. Yeah, I found your stash, they're all gone.

She sticks her head out. He puts down the paperweight.

AMERICA. Good.

DANIEL. Do you need help? That looks difficult.

AMERICA. Stay.

DANIEL. When did you first try ecstasy?

AMERICA. Two weeks ago.

DANIEL. Who with?

AMERICA. My friends. I was always curious about it.

DANIEL. Yeah. Me too.

AMERICA. Have you rolled?

She's done changing, but she keeps her body hidden under the covers for now.

DANIEL. I probably shouldn't say this. But ...

AMERICA. It's okay, a lot of people have tried it.

DANIEL. I definitely shouldn't say this.

AMERICA. So what, you tried ecstasy.

DANIEL. You know I'm a chemist ...

AMERICA. You make it?

DANIEL. I make ... other things.

AMERICA. You sell stuff?

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. You sell it to someone who sells it.

DANIEL. I make it for myself.

She gets out of bed and goes to him.

AMERICA. So, these are some of the special topics you don't cover in class.

DANIEL. You're covering some special topics yourself.

AMERICA. Did you eat it?

DANIEL. Here.

AMERICA. I want what you're having. Do you have something with you?

DANIEL. This cannot go beyond us.

AMERICA. We're alone.

DANIEL. It'll hurt. What I have to give you will hurt.

AMERICA. What is it? When does it hurt?

DANIEL. It ... will ... hurt.

AMERICA. I ... like ... pain.

DANIEL. It will hurt ... going in ... so to speak.

AMERICA. It's a shot?

DANIEL. Yes.

AMERICA. And you'll give it to me.

DANIEL. You must think I'm insane.

AMERICA. It turns me on.

DANIEL. Well yeah. That's the whole point.

AMERICA. Have you done this with other women?

DANIEL. Like students?

AMERICA. Like ... your wife.

DANIEL. No. She doesn't like shots.

AMERICA. Well I do. Give it to me, let's go in the bathroom.

DANIEL. We'll do it right here.

AMERICA. We'll do it right here?

DANIEL. And here ...

AMERICA. Give it to me.

DANIEL. Okay.

AMERICA. Will I still be myself?

DANIEL. You don't have to do this.

AMERICA. Where's that pill?

DANIEL. Don't mix and match.

AMERICA. We used to say don't trick or treat when I went to A.A.

DANIEL. You went to A.A.?

AMERICA. In high school.

DANIEL. What's trick or treat?

AMERICA. Hooking up with an addict. It's bad, you always relapse.

DANIEL. How much did you used to drink?

AMERICA. That's how I met my last boyfriend.
DANIEL. At an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting?
AMERICA. Yeah, then we went to Denny's and dropped acid.
DANIEL. God.
AMERICA. Do people really say dropped cause I always say took but I figured—
DANIEL. That I would know, somehow.
AMERICA. That since you grew up in the sixties . . .
DANIEL. In the sixties I was five.
AMERICA. I'm less nervous now. You're good with people.
DANIEL. My bedside manner coming through.
AMERICA. Pretend you're my doctor.
DANIEL. That's sick, that's sick. I knew you were a freak. I love that about you.
AMERICA. Check me for cancer.
DANIEL. Jesus!
AMERICA. (pleading for the wait to be over, she's nervous) Is that shot ready?
DANIEL. Hold on. You really want to do it this way?
AMERICA. Would you stick the needle in my fucking arm.
DANIEL. This might be different than things you've tried before.
AMERICA. Why, because it's laced with strychnine?
DANIEL. This isn't something standard, it's something I made.
AMERICA. Genius, you're a genius. What is its chemical shape, tell me.
DANIEL. It contains barium.
AMERICA. That's a muscle relaxant, right?
DANIEL. In small doses.
AMERICA. Is this gonna be a small dose?
DANIEL. Yes. A large dose would paralyze you.
AMERICA. Don't make it too small though.
DANIEL. I'll make it medium.
AMERICA. What else does it have?
DANIEL. Let's not talk shop.
AMERICA. Really, you made this? You're a genius. What does it do to you?
DANIEL. It just feels good.
AMERICA. Where?
DANIEL. You'll see.
AMERICA. Where?
DANIEL. Everywhere.

AMERICA. It's not not gonna make me stupid is it?
DANIEL. No.
AMERICA. If it did why would you take it.
DANIEL. Not right away anyway.
AMERICA. Seriously.
DANIEL. It won't make you stupid.
AMERICA. Might paralyze me though.
DANIEL. Right.
AMERICA. I'm okay with paralysis.
DANIEL. Okay. Hold this.
He gives her the paperweight.
AMERICA. Like this?
DANIEL. Squeeze.
AMERICA. Got it.
DANIEL. Tighter. Hold.
AMERICA. Phew.
DANIEL. You okay?
She nods.
DANIEL. You sure?
AMERICA. Go. Wait. I want to tell you something. There's one problem.
DANIEL. You don't want to.
AMERICA. I want to, I want to, I've been dying to.
DANIEL. I am insane.
AMERICA. Would you shut the fuck up. I've been meaning to tell you this.
DANIEL. You always surprise me, every time we're together, I love that.
AMERICA. There's something about me that I want you to know. I'm a virgin.
DANIEL. That's okay.
He gives her the shot. Her arm goes limp, her head rolls back. The paperweight hits the floor.

—INTERMISSION—

Scene 10. A month later, her place

They're kneeling on the floor. Silently, ritually, she shoots him up.
AMERICA. Here we are.
DANIEL. Yes, here we are.
She does herself.

AMERICA. Damn.
DANIEL. What?
AMERICA. I love what it does to your ears.
DANIEL. Describe how it seems to you.
AMERICA. Like we're in a tube.
DANIEL. Is the music okay?
AMERICA. The music is more than okay.
DANIEL. Tell me if you want me to change anything.
AMERICA. Change nothing, just lie.
DANIEL. Just lie.
AMERICA. Yeah. Be. Be be be.
DANIEL. Sing for me.
She half-sits up to try.
AMERICA. I can't right now.
DANIEL. That's okay. I love your voice.
AMERICA. Thanks.
DANIEL. You have a spunk-ness about you. It's like ... I saw
this singer once.
AMERICA. A girlfriend?
DANIEL. I saw her on T.V.
AMERICA. I like it when you tell me about women.
DANIEL. She had this same spunk-ness as you.
AMERICA. I like to hear about women you've loved.
DANIEL. Well I never loved this one.
AMERICA. You loved her through the television.
DANIEL. True.
AMERICA. I bet you kissed the T.V.
DANIEL. I should have.
AMERICA. No, you might have electrocuted yourself.
DANIEL. Only if I kissed with tongue.
AMERICA. I wouldn't want that to happen to my baby.
DANIEL. Anyway you two are similar. You have the same
... it's a spark ...
AMERICA. I think children can see auras.
DANIEL. Children see more than we do. We've been taught
not to see.
AMERICA. These children in the park this weekend, they were
looking at me.
DANIEL. They were looking at you because you are beautiful.
AMERICA. They were like angels. They stopped playing and
stared right at me.
DANIEL. They looked like angels?

AMERICA. Yes.
DANIEL. You were an angel to them.
AMERICA. No.
DANIEL. You were, I know it.
AMERICA. You think so?
DANIEL. I know it. Children can see angels. And you . . . are an angel.
AMERICA. You think I am, for real?
DANIEL. Trust me, you are.
AMERICA. I know.
DANIEL. I was hoping you did. It's sad when people don't . . .
AMERICA. When people don't . . .
DANIEL. . . know who they are.
AMERICA. What are you? Tell me you know.
DANIEL. I know.
AMERICA. What.
DANIEL. I'm insane. I'm a fool. I'm a doctor. I'm the father of time.
AMERICA. No doubt.
DANIEL. I am the father of time.
AMERICA. Yes you are. I'm glad you know that.
DANIEL. I'm glad you can hear that.
AMERICA. I can.
DANIEL. I'm a scientist.
AMERICA. You are.
DANIEL. I mean, I'm a real scientist.
AMERICA. I know.
DANIEL. I'm real.
AMERICA. You are real.
DANIEL. You're real yourself.
AMERICA. I'm too young to be real.
DANIEL. No.
AMERICA. No?
DANIEL. No. There is no too young to be real.
AMERICA. I'm glad you think so.
DANIEL. There isn't.
AMERICA. I need you to like me.
DANIEL. Why is that? You could have any boy out there.
AMERICA. Because you're not a boy.
DANIEL. You could have any boy you want.
AMERICA. Because you're not a boy.

DANIEL. And why do I like you? Do you have the foresight to know, my sage?

AMERICA. Hmmm.

DANIEL. Choose carefully.

AMERICA. Why, what happens if I'm wrong?

DANIEL. I have no idea. Nothing.

AMERICA. What's the fun in that?

DANIEL. Fine, I'll spank you.

AMERICA. That's not a punishment.

DANIEL. I'll stab you in the neck.

AMERICA. With a syringe?

DANIEL. Sure.

AMERICA. You will. If I'm wrong? You'll stab me in the neck?

DANIEL. Sure.

AMERICA. What was the question again?

DANIEL. Why do I like you.

AMERICA. And this is where I should choose carefully?

DANIEL. Yes.

AMERICA. You will inject me in my jugular?

DANIEL. Yes.

AMERICA. If I choose wrong.

DANIEL. Yes.

AMERICA. You will.

DANIEL. Yes.

AMERICA. You're sure.

DANIEL. Yes, I will!

AMERICA. Okay, why do you like me? Because I'm young
... no.

DANIEL. That's not your answer?

AMERICA. No.

DANIEL. Fine.

AMERICA. Because I ... no. Because ... This is too much pressure.

DANIEL. I'll stab you in the neck either way.

AMERICA. No you won't you'll only stab me in the neck if I'm wrong.

DANIEL. Oh.

AMERICA. Fine.

DANIEL. Fine?

AMERICA. Stab me in the neck either way.

DANIEL. I thought so.

AMERICA. I'll still guess.

DANIEL. Good.

AMERICA. You like me because . . . it's not because I'm young?

DANIEL. Is that your guess?

AMERICA. Young implies so many things. You could like me cause I'm innocent.

DANIEL. Except you are not innocent.

AMERICA. Anymore. Not since you.

DANIEL. No, not since me.

AMERICA. I think that's still the reason.

DANIEL. What.

AMERICA. Because I'm young.

DANIEL. You're wrong.

AMERICA. Not literally that I'm young. Like I'm twenty-one doesn't get you off—

DANIEL. Are you sure?

AMERICA. That isn't it.

DANIEL. Well . . .

AMERICA. That might be part of it.

DANIEL. That's part of it.

AMERICA. I'm okay with that.

DANIEL. You're a strange one.

AMERICA. No, I'm typical.

DANIEL. You're not.

AMERICA. Young women love old guys.

DANIEL. Oh.

AMERICA. Not that you're old.

DANIEL. But I am.

AMERICA. You're aged . . .

DANIEL. And what are you?

AMERICA. . . there's nothing wrong with that.

DANIEL. I'll stab you in the neck.

AMERICA. Go.

DANIEL. Answer my question.

AMERICA. Because I'm young.

DANIEL. You said that.

AMERICA. The color of my hair.

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. My breasts.

DANIEL. No. That's . . . part of it.

AMERICA. I can't answer your question.

DANIEL. Try.

AMERICA. Because. I was a virgin.

DANIEL. That is special. But that's not the real reason.

AMERICA. Just shoot me up.

DANIEL. This stuff ...

AMERICA. Stop.

DANIEL. ... this ...

AMERICA. Stop. Shut up.

DANIEL. ... this stuff ...

AMERICA. Go. In my neck, go in my neck.

DANIEL. You have to hold very still.

AMERICA. I will.

DANIEL. I'm talking very still.

AMERICA. I'm still.

DANIEL. Okay.

AMERICA. Go.

DANIEL. This will hurt.

AMERICA. I know.

DANIEL. Not like before.

AMERICA. Just go.

DANIEL. Promise me you will not move.

AMERICA. Shoot the fucking vein.

DANIEL. Last time for tonight.

AMERICA. Fine.

DANIEL. I'm serious.

AMERICA. Fine.

DANIEL. Be very still.

She is still, he shoots her in the neck.

DANIEL. How is that?

AMERICA. That is fine.

DANIEL. Yeah?

AMERICA. Now you go.

DANIEL. I will.

AMERICA. I'll help you, or ...

DANIEL. Enjoy yourself.

AMERICA. I'll shoot you.

DANIEL. Enjoy yourself.

AMERICA. Oh ...

DANIEL. I've done this more than you.

AMERICA. ... okay ...

She lies back. He shoots himself.

AMERICA. You good?

DANIEL. Yeah.

AMERICA. Yeah?

DANIEL. Yeah.
AMERICA. Good, baby, good. Lie down.
DANIEL. Okay.
AMERICA. Now. I'm gonna tell you a story.
DANIEL. What kind of story?
AMERICA. A happy one.
DANIEL. You want to know something?
AMERICA. Tell me.
DANIEL. I'll tell you why I like you.
AMERICA. Not now.
DANIEL. I'll tell you why I like you.
AMERICA. Mmm.
DANIEL. You don't want to know . . .
AMERICA. Tell me later.
They trip out.

Scene 11. Daniel's office

Daniel comes into his office. Sandro is sitting in his chair.

DANIEL. Jesus!
SANDRO. That's my word.
DANIEL. You scared me.
SANDRO. I meant to scare you.
DANIEL. Well it worked. You meant to scare me? Don't be a psychopath.
SANDRO. I am a mathematician, and my study is the numbers between zero and one.
DANIEL. I know.
SANDRO. I know you know. But, do you know what it is that you do not know?
DANIEL. What's that?
SANDRO. That your barium girl will kill you.
DANIEL. My barium girl.
SANDRO. Your barium girl.
DANIEL. Your English is breaking up, Sandro, you need to talk more slowly.
SANDRO. You understand me fine.
DANIEL. My barium girl.
SANDRO. Correct.
DANIEL. My barium girl.
SANDRO. You know what I mean.

DANIEL. I do, and I don't like it.
SANDRO. What you don't like?
DANIEL. That you're sitting in my chair.
SANDRO. Sorry.
DANIEL. How'd you get in?
SANDRO. I know the dean.
DANIEL. The dean let you in here?
SANDRO. I am not going to lie to you, my friend. The dean is close to me.
DANIEL. He's close with me too.
SANDRO. Better be sure.
DANIEL. I am sure. What the fuck is your point?
SANDRO. You need to watch out with that girl.
DANIEL. Why?
SANDRO. People see.
DANIEL. Who.
SANDRO. Me.
DANIEL. Who?
SANDRO. The dean.
DANIEL. How?
SANDRO. He sees.
DANIEL. How?
SANDRO. Who knows? People are talking, though, I warn you.
DANIEL. Who.
SANDRO. That Amber White.
DANIEL. Political Theory? That bitch.
SANDRO. Yes.
DANIEL. That bitch? She's talking?
SANDRO. She's not the only one.
DANIEL. The dean?
SANDRO. He's mentioned it.
DANIEL. Jesus.
SANDRO. That's my word.
DANIEL. Consider it stolen.
SANDRO. Fag.
DANIEL. I am not a fag.
SANDRO. That seems to be the problem.
DANIEL. What are they saying?
SANDRO. They know about the barium.
DANIEL. It's not barium.
SANDRO. It's something, and they know about it.
DANIEL. What could they possibly know?

SANDRO. I am not a chemist, my friend, and I know.
DANIEL. What do you know?
SANDRO. That you're shooting barium.
DANIEL. It's not just barium.
SANDRO. But you're shooting it.
DANIEL. So what?
SANDRO. So what?
DANIEL. So what.
SANDRO. You are shooting barium and you think it's so what?
DANIEL. No one knows.
SANDRO. The dean.
DANIEL. How the fuck does the dean know?
SANDRO. He knows.
DANIEL. How?
SANDRO. Was that girl a virgin?
DANIEL. No.
SANDRO. That girl was a virgin.
DANIEL. What does that have to do with anything?
SANDRO. How old is she?
DANIEL. Doesn't the dean know? If he's complaining, hasn't he looked it up?
SANDRO. How could I know that?
DANIEL. She's over age.
SANDRO. If you say she is, she is.
DANIEL. She's twenty-one.
SANDRO. You are sure?
DANIEL. Should I ask for I.D.? Before I fuck a girl? I have to ask for I.D.?
SANDRO. What you do is up to you.
DANIEL. I know it is. Thanks, thanks.
SANDRO. I hope she was hot, this one.
DANIEL. Don't worry, she was.
SANDRO. I hope she was very very hot.
DANIEL. She was.
SANDRO. I hope she was.
DANIEL. She was.
SANDRO. This chemistry you are shooting, it's not—
DANIEL. You know jack about chemistry.
SANDRO. It's not sustainable.
DANIEL. Neither is sober life.
SANDRO. It kills you.
DANIEL. So does sober life.

SANDRO. It's less sustainable than sober life.
DANIEL. So.
SANDRO. It kills you faster than sober life.
DANIEL. It also ...
SANDRO. What?
DANIEL. It blows the lid off sober life.
SANDRO. I'm sure.
DANIEL. It does.
SANDRO. Whatever you say.
DANIEL. I'm trying to make my life better—
SANDRO. Better than what?
DANIEL. What do you know? What do you know about young girls?
SANDRO. I know they make you crazy.
DANIEL. You know shit about young girls.
SANDRO. You think no?
DANIEL. No.
SANDRO. You think what you want.
DANIEL. What girls do you know?
SANDRO. I have daughters.
DANIEL. Please.
SANDRO. What is this please? Fuck.
DANIEL. I'm sorry. Jesus.
SANDRO. And you stealing my word! Fuck you!
DANIEL. Fuck me?
SANDRO. Fuck you for stealing my word. I want you still working here—
DANIEL. I want you out of my office.
SANDRO. I want you to still keep this job.
DANIEL. Jobs aren't everything, you know that? This job is shit.
SANDRO. This job got you the girl you like.
DANIEL. She's not because of my job.
SANDRO. You think that? She is.
DANIEL. Get out.
SANDRO. If you weren't a professor—
DANIEL. Professors are weird.
SANDRO. If you weren't a professor—
DANIEL. She and I connect.
SANDRO. Because of what?
DANIEL. Our souls.
SANDRO. There's no such thing.

DANIEL. Get out.

SANDRO. You believe in the soul?

DANIEL. (*laughing—he really doesn't believe in it*) No.

SANDRO. You should.

DANIEL. You're a mathematician.

SANDRO. So?

DANIEL. You believe in the soul?

SANDRO. Yes.

DANIEL. That's absurd.

SANDRO. You are a chemist. How can you say as a mathematician I cannot believe in the soul?

DANIEL. Our domain is the earth, it's physicality!

SANDRO. Math is abstract!

DANIEL. Of what, though? The earth! Space!

SANDRO. Of time, too.

DANIEL. Of days, they are concrete. Of years, they are concrete.

SANDRO. And of love, is that concrete? The heart?

DANIEL. There is no such thing as the heart.

SANDRO. No?

DANIEL. There is no such thing.

SANDRO. Then why are you crazy with this girl?

DANIEL. Because she's young.

SANDRO. You would risk your job?

DANIEL. Job??

SANDRO. Job!!

DANIEL. Have you ever been in love? Have you ever been in love!?

SANDRO. I won't make claims to you.

DANIEL. Afraid to make the abstract real?

SANDRO. You will lose everything.

DANIEL. Some student has flirted with you, I know, and you left her behind—

SANDRO. You will lose it all for this girl, and you don't care—

DANIEL. Mathematics is supposed to be hardcore!

SANDRO. Fuck her without the barium!

DANIEL. Why do you care?

SANDRO. The school—

DANIEL. The school—

SANDRO. They're going to let you go.

DANIEL. I've been teaching here for fifteen years.

SANDRO. My friend, this is the cardinal rule of professorship.

DANIEL. What's that?
SANDRO. Your students. Don't fuck them.
DANIEL. This girl, though.
SANDRO. It doesn't matter who she is.
DANIEL. This girl is special.
SANDRO. The dean—
DANIEL. This girl—
SANDRO. The dean says—
DANIEL. You should meet her.
SANDRO. That's a bad idea.
DANIEL. Why?
SANDRO. Because.
DANIEL. The dean says what? Why's it a bad idea?
SANDRO. If she's as cool as you say she is . . . between friends
. . . it's a bad idea.
DANIEL. And the dean?
SANDRO. The dean . . .
DANIEL. Mathematically speaking, what are my chances?
SANDRO. Not good.
DANIEL. Not good.
SANDRO. No.
DANIEL. Jesus.
SANDRO. That's my word.

Scene 12. Daniel's office

DEAN. Are you with this girl?
DANIEL. No.
DEAN. You are with the girl.
DANIEL. No.
DEAN. You are with the girl, we know.
DANIEL. Who's we? Anyway, so what, yes, I'm with the girl.
DEAN. You admit you're with that girl?
DANIEL. I'm with the goddammn girl. What the fuck do you care?
DEAN. Are you recording in this room?
DANIEL. Are you?
DEAN. It's a P.R. issue. It hurts our image.
DANIEL. Doesn't look good on the catalogue?
DEAN. No. It doesn't.
DANIEL. Too bad.

DEAN. We pay you.
DANIEL. To teach.
DEAN. Not to fuck.
DANIEL. I am teaching.
DEAN. We are not paying you to fuck those you teach.
DANIEL. You are paying me to teach ...
DEAN. Yes.
DANIEL. And I teach, I teach for you. Did she say something?
DEAN. You do teach.
DANIEL. Did she say something?
DEAN. She didn't say anything.
DANIEL. Someone must have said something to you.
DEAN. Someone has.
DANIEL. Who.
DEAN. Someone has.
DANIEL. Who.
DEAN. I've seen you two together.
DANIEL. Where?
DEAN. The green.
DANIEL. When.
DEAN. Last week, all the time, Jesus.
DANIEL. That's Sandro's word.
DEAN. Could you show some tact?
DANIEL. Tact?
DEAN. Tact.
DANIEL. Love has no tact.
DEAN. Is this love?
DANIEL. Have I tact?
DEAN. None at all.
DANIEL. It must be love.
DEAN. Hide it.
DANIEL. Why?
DEAN. Hide it from me.
DANIEL. Why?
DEAN. You force my hand.
DANIEL. Act then.
DEAN. I have to act. Students can't ...
DANIEL. Do what?
DEAN. Students can't ...
DANIEL. Students do more than you think.
DEAN. They can't be in love with teachers.
DANIEL. But they are.

DEAN. No.

DANIEL. They are.

DEAN. No.

DANIEL. They are. That's your problem. They can't be, but they are.

DEAN. Is she really in love with you?

DANIEL. Yes.

DEAN. Then hide it.

DANIEL. Hide?

DEAN. Hide it from your wife, hide it from me. Hide it from everyone.

DANIEL. Why would love hide?

DEAN. Please.

DANIEL. Why would it? Love never hides!

DEAN. Because love is crazy, case in point.

DANIEL. Dismiss me, fine.

DEAN. You have my nod.

DANIEL. Mm.

DEAN. You have every respect from me.

DANIEL. Mm.

DEAN. You are the top. We couldn't have gotten better than you.

DANIEL. No.

DEAN. No.

DANIEL. Well.

DEAN. It's still a problem.

DANIEL. What about Pythagoras?

DEAN. What about him?

DANIEL. Sex with students.

DEAN. That was 50 A.D. or something. This is two-thousand years later!

DANIEL. So?!

DEAN. You can't fuck students anymore.

DANIEL. The world has changed so much?

DEAN. Are you a chemist or a philosopher?

DANIEL. Chemistry is everything. What about her?

DEAN. Her?

DANIEL. What does she say?

DEAN. She who?

DANIEL. She, she, come on, she, Jesus.

DEAN. That's Sandro's word.

DANIEL. I know. What does she say? Have you talked to her?

DEAN. We've talked to her.
DANIEL. And what does she say?
DEAN. She says nothing.
DANIEL. Now that I can't believe.
DEAN. It's true. She protects you.
DANIEL. Good girl.
DEAN. You fucked her?
DANIEL. You wouldn't have done the same?
DEAN. You gave her barium?
Daniel is startled.
DEAN. Did you mix her barium?
DANIEL. Have you ever fucked around?
DEAN. Of course.
DANIEL. Would you like that of course to come to light?
DEAN. Of course not.
DANIEL. Well.
DEAN. Did you feed this girl barium?
DANIEL. She likes it.
DEAN. I don't care.
DANIEL. It's about your reputation.
DEAN. Yes. It's about our reputation.

Scene 13. At the bar

DANIEL. What should I do?
SANDRO. Be careful.
DANIEL. Yeah.
SANDRO. I'm serious. You be very careful this time.

Scene 14. Daniel's office - Night

He's working. The door opens, he looks up. It's his wife.
DANIEL. Hi.
RACHEL. You're alone.
DANIEL. What did you think?
RACHEL. I've talked to the dean.
Rachel sits in the same chair that America sits in when she comes.
DANIEL. You went to him?
RACHEL. He came to me.
DANIEL. How does he know?

RACHEL. I don't know.
DANIEL. How long have you known?
RACHEL. Since the beginning.
DANIEL. What exactly do you know?
RACHEL. Please.
DANIEL. Did the dean hit on you when he talked to you?
RACHEL. Oh, don't you wish that he did, that would make this so easy for you.
DANIEL. No harm was meant.
RACHEL. What about our kids!
DANIEL. I thought of that.
RACHEL. Children have an idea . . . of who their parents are. You can mess kids up.
DANIEL. Since when did you become a puritan?
RACHEL. You gave this girl barium?
DANIEL. What's your point?
RACHEL. My point—
DANIEL. You don't even know what barium is.
RACHEL. So you cut me.
DANIEL. I didn't mean—
RACHEL. This is hard for me.
DANIEL. I didn't mean to cut—
RACHEL. We are . . .
DANIEL. Calm down.
RACHEL. . . you and me are married!
DANIEL. I know.
RACHEL. We're married.
DANIEL. I'm sorry.
RACHEL. Were the drugs her idea?
DANIEL. What drugs?
RACHEL. The barium.
DANIEL. It's not even barium.
RACHEL. Whatever.
DANIEL. Did the dean tell you that?
RACHEL. Was it her idea? Tell me that part was her idea. At least tell me that.
DANIEL. You want me to lie?
RACHEL. Yes.
They embrace.
DANIEL. Oh, baby, I love you.
RACHEL. I love you, too.
DANIEL. I'm so sorry.

RACHEL. What are we gonna do?

DANIEL. What did the dean tell you?

RACHEL. He told me so many things.

DANIEL. Did he say I'm fired?

RACHEL. He said you might be.

DANIEL. He told you that?

RACHEL. He indicated.

DANIEL. If I get fired—

RACHEL. Don't get fired.

DANIEL. We can do something else.

RACHEL. I like it here.

DANIEL. I know.

RACHEL. I don't want to move again. I imagined us getting old here.

DANIEL. I know.

RACHEL. I like the river. And you've liked it here, haven't you?

DANIEL. Did he say I was definitely getting fired?

RACHEL. I like those little shops by the river.

DANIEL. Did he say I was definitely getting fired?

RACHEL. He was saying very scary things.

DANIEL. I don't mean to scare you.

RACHEL. You have your life—

DANIEL. We have a life together.

RACHEL. Your life is beyond my life. My life is simple.

DANIEL. This is us.

RACHEL. It's not us anymore.

DANIEL. Come on . . .

RACHEL. Baby, no. Your life is something else. I'm just your tagalong.

DANIEL. I've loved you.

RACHEL. Our love is different.

DANIEL. Love . . .

RACHEL. We mean different things when we say the word.

DANIEL. What do you mean when you say it?

RACHEL. Do you love this girl?

DANIEL. It's complex.

RACHEL. Fuck. Be straight with me.

DANIEL. I love her.

RACHEL. Jesus.

DANIEL. You asked for the truth.

RACHEL. I know.

DANIEL. I'm sorry.

RACHEL. I might go back to school ... get my masters ...

DANIEL. For what?

RACHEL. What do you think?

DANIEL. Well. Of course, yeah ...

RACHEL. You're such a dick. You and me were hot once, you know.

DANIEL. I remember.

RACHEL. I hope you think of that next time you're with her.

DANIEL. Grief.

RACHEL. I hate that fucking bitch.

DANIEL. Rachel.

RACHEL. Next time you're with her, you think of the first time we fucked.

Rachel goes for the door.

DANIEL. Baby.

RACHEL. Make up your mind.

DANIEL. Baby ...

RACHEL. When you make up your mind, let me know.

DANIEL. Where are you going?

RACHEL. I'm going home, to our home, where we live.

DANIEL. I'll meet you later.

RACHEL. Do whatever you like.

DANIEL. If ...

RACHEL. If what? If you don't come home?

DANIEL. If I get fired. I'll take care of you.

RACHEL. I don't care.

DANIEL. I don't want you to worry.

RACHEL. I'm not looking to be taken care of.

DANIEL. What? What?

RACHEL. I want you to be with me.

DANIEL. I'm sorry.

RACHEL. I know, I know, you can't.

Rachel leaves. Daniel dials a number.

DANIEL. Hey, it's me. Yeah, I know. I'm sorry. No. I'm ... I'm ... finishing up. Well. Really? How long has this been going on? You're such a freak. I know, I know. No. You'll never guess. Jesus, how did you know that? I know. Jesus. I'm sorry I know. No, well. Sure, okay. Fine, but. Listen, wait, there's one problem. Of course there can't be. No, shit, she's, my wife, she's. God damn it, I don't know, baby. Soon. Very soon. Yesterday. I would, I would. Of course I will, baby, you know me better than that. Of course.

Of course. I'll be right there. Of course. Listen. Listen. Yes. Look lovely, I may be held up. Because, because, because . . . because my wife is sitting outside in the Range Rover shining the lights at my window. Fuck!

Scene 15. Daniel's office - The next morning

Daniel is sleeping. A syringe and tourniquet next to him. Little bottles, cotton.

SANDRO. Daniel, get up. Daniel.

Daniel stirs.

SANDRO. You have an eight o'clock class.

DANIEL. What is it?

SANDRO. It's your survey class.

DANIEL. I need a shower.

SANDRO. There's no time for your shower. There's no time.

Wash in the bathroom.

DANIEL. Are you sure it's my survey class?

Sandro gathers the drug tools.

DANIEL. Don't touch that! What?

SANDRO. Sorry.

DANIEL. What are you doing?

SANDRO. Cleaning up.

DANIEL. Leave it.

SANDRO. The dean is in the hallway. I'm just cleaning up a little.

DANIEL. I'll do it.

SANDRO. Go wash.

DANIEL. Just leave it. Don't touch it!

SANDRO. Alright.

DANIEL. Did you talk to the dean? Don't lie.

SANDRO. I wouldn't lie to you. Yes. I told him about the girl.

DANIEL. Thank you.

SANDRO. That's all, though.

DANIEL. That is all you told him.

SANDRO. You are killing yourself my friend.

DANIEL. That's none of your business. In fact, you know what?

SANDRO. What.

DANIEL. Why don't you get the fuck out of my office.

SANDRO. I think if you will get a little distance—

DANIEL. Did you have an appointment scheduled with me?
No. No you don't.

SANDRO. Just a little distance from your present life, and come back.

DANIEL. Now I'll thank you for that wonderful advice, professor, but leave.

SANDRO. Hide that.

DANIEL. What's the point.

SANDRO. He doesn't know about it.

DANIEL. Yes, thanks for not telling him everything! Get the fuck out of here.

SANDRO. I will go, hide that.

DANIEL. Don't touch it!

SANDRO. Fine.

DANIEL. If you touch it again I'm going to slap you in the face.

SANDRO. Okay.

DANIEL. You act like a bitch and I am going to slap you like a bitch.

SANDRO. The dean is outside.

DANIEL. You think I care about the dean?

SANDRO. He's right outside your door.

DANIEL. Oooh, the dean.

SANDRO. The dean.

DANIEL. Send him in on your way out.

Sandro leaves.

DANIEL. Come in if you're coming in.

The dean comes in. He sits in the chair that Rachel sat in.

DANIEL. How are you?

DEAN. Fine. How are you?

DANIEL. Were you thinking of sitting in on my class?

DEAN. I'm sure that would be interesting, but no, thank you.

DANIEL. You're welcome to drop by anytime.

DEAN. I'll keep that in mind.

DANIEL. I don't think I'm having class today, though.

DEAN. No.

Daniel sits at his desk, straightens his shirt.

DEAN. I have something to ask you. I'd like if you'd be calm about it.

DANIEL. Fire away.

They both smile.

DEAN. May I have your keys?

Daniel fishes for them.

DANIEL. I'll send someone by to pick up my books.

He gives over his keys.

DEAN. We'll send them to you.

The dean stands, waiting for Daniel to leave first. Daniel stands, he takes America's paperweight off his desk and leaves.

Scene 16. Daniel and Rachel's bedroom

Daniel comes in carrying the paperweight, Rachel is packing. He sits on the bed and puts the paperweight beside him.

RACHEL. Don't put that there.

DANIEL. What? Geez.

RACHEL. That's our bed.

DANIEL. Not anymore, apparently.

RACHEL. Not anymore for you either.

DANIEL. Well, people get tired of things.

RACHEL. Yes, I know.

DANIEL. If you would just be reasonable, allow a man the occasional fling.

RACHEL. She's more than a fling. Take that off the bed.

DANIEL. Not everyone can be like you. We're not all professionally monogamous.

RACHEL. A little part time monogamy is all I wanted from you.

DANIEL. It's stifling. Where are you going?

RACHEL. Somewhere I can sleep.

DANIEL. Sleep here.

RACHEL. You know what it does to me? Thinking of you with her?

DANIEL. Baby, why would you do that to yourself?

RACHEL. I imagine the two of you together, sharing the most intimate thing.

DANIEL. It's just sex.

RACHEL. I hope for her sake that isn't true.

DANIEL. Sometimes it is just sex.

RACHEL. No. It never is.

DANIEL. You never want it anyway.

RACHEL. Yes I have.

DANIEL. Not for years.

RACHEL. It's not just the lack of sex between us. Take that off the bed.

She takes it off and puts it in his hands. As they talk, he plays with it and eventually sets it back down.

DANIEL. They took my keys today.

RACHEL. You knew they would.

DANIEL. Yeah.

RACHEL. Why don't you clean up?

DANIEL. I'm clean.

RACHEL. They love you there. You know the dean loves you. And Sandro.

DANIEL. I'm through with Sandro.

RACHEL. Since when?

DANIEL. Today.

RACHEL. You call him right now and make up. You've known him forever.

DANIEL. No.

RACHEL. Baby.

DANIEL. He crossed a line.

RACHEL. Consider cutting him some slack right now. He's trying to help you.

DANIEL. When you help people, you have to respect them at the same time.

RACHEL. We are all of us clumsy around someone who demands so much.

DANIEL. What? Only one thing, that's loyalty from my friends.

RACHEL. You've got yourself in such a state right now.

DANIEL. Congratulations to you on staying calm.

RACHEL. I'm trying to maintain my sanity.

DANIEL. This world favors the insane.

RACHEL. That may very well be.

DANIEL. I have to stop.

RACHEL. I'll help.

DANIEL. From where?

RACHEL. From here. Just stop with that girl and we'll work on the drugs together.

Rachel picks up the paperweight. Daniel gets up from the bed, crosses, looks out the window. He comes back to his wife.

RACHEL. We can stay here. I know you love this house.

DANIEL. What about my job?

RACHEL. They'll let you back.

DANIEL. No.

RACHEL. If you want, I'll move anywhere in the world with you.

DANIEL. I can't.

He takes the paperweight.

DANIEL. I can't.

Scene 17. America's place - Dusk

DANIEL. What do you mean?

AMERICA. I mean that's it.

DANIEL. Gimme that. It's flatter than before.

AMERICA. It's getting flatter and flatter all night.

DANIEL. I mean it's getting flatter faster than it should.

AMERICA. Build that tolerance, baby. Are you ready?

DANIEL. Going again?

AMERICA. Going again.

DANIEL. Are you ready already?

AMERICA. Yeah, I think I am.

DANIEL. Stuff wears off quick.

AMERICA. It does these days. Will you mix mine for me?

DANIEL. Gimme that. What happened to this thing?

AMERICA. What are you talking about?

DANIEL. This thing is flat.

AMERICA. You're gonna handle the mixing this time.

DANIEL. It's only been thirty minutes.

AMERICA. It was longer than that.

DANIEL. I looked at the clock.

AMERICA. It'll take you five minutes to mix it. We'll be ready by then.

DANIEL. Hold this. Geez.

AMERICA. What?

DANIEL. Just wanna lie down.

AMERICA. I'll mix.

DANIEL. No. Wait one second.

AMERICA. I kinda can't.

DANIEL. Grief.

AMERICA. What?

DANIEL. You're a fiend.

AMERICA. I'm a fiend for shots, you're a fiend for pussy.

DANIEL. We both fiend shots.

AMERICA. Does that mean I also have to fiend for pussy?

DANIEL. No, the shots belong to me.

AMERICA. The pussy, on the other hand ...

DANIEL. The pussy on the other hand?

AMERICA. You want to fuck while we do it?

DANIEL. Get me hard.

AMERICA. I'm just gonna sit on you this time.

She sits on him.

DANIEL. Are you gonna mix that?

AMERICA. Yeah.

DANIEL. Good.

She mixes two shots on her desk. He can't see because he's lying on the floor.

DANIEL. Give us a bigger one than last time.

AMERICA. I know.

DANIEL. Not too much more.

AMERICA. I know how much to give us.

DANIEL. Are you gonna shoot yourself?

AMERICA. I'm gonna shoot us both.

DANIEL. You're gonna do me first?

AMERICA. Yes.

DANIEL. How much more are you giving?

AMERICA. A good amount.

DANIEL. How much is left? Just split the bag.

AMERICA. I did.

DANIEL. Good girl. What time is it.

AMERICA. Two minutes after the last time you asked me.

DANIEL. We need to wait a little longer.

AMERICA. There's no way.

DANIEL. Just ten minutes.

AMERICA. Ten minutes isn't gonna make any difference. We'll be fine.

DANIEL. I don't know.

AMERICA. Even if I said yes you wouldn't wait ten minutes.

DANIEL. No?

AMERICA. You'd wait five.

DANIEL. How's that coming?

AMERICA. Done.

She kneels over him with his shot. He gets his arm ready.

AMERICA. Some people are drug addicts, some people are love addicts.

She puts the needle in.

DANIEL. What if you fall in love with a love addict?

She shoots him.

AMERICA. Trick or treat.

Scene 18. The chemistry supply room at the college

The door is broken. They're rooting around with a flashlight.

DANIEL. There's nothing here!

AMERICA. What do you mean there's nothing here? You have everything here!

DANIEL. I can't see! I'm sorry! I can't see!

AMERICA. Here's something.

DANIEL. That's nothing!

AMERICA. Yes!

DANIEL. No, you can't use that.

AMERICA. Why.

DANIEL. It'll kill you.

AMERICA. Will it get me high?

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. Fuck! What the fuck good is this place!?

DANIEL. Hold on.

AMERICA. What.

DANIEL. This might be—

AMERICA. What is it?

DANIEL. Hold this.

AMERICA. What is it.

DANIEL. Open it. Get two out.

AMERICA. This better be something.

DANIEL. By itself it's nothing.

AMERICA. What do you mix it with?

DANIEL. Something that's so much like itself, it explodes.

AMERICA. You've done it before?

DANIEL. Well, not really explodes, but—

AMERICA. What is it?

DANIEL. It's a crazy reaction.

AMERICA. Is it good?

DANIEL. Pff.

AMERICA. Yeah?

DANIEL. Crush those.

AMERICA. Fine.

DANIEL. And you need to produce the reagent.

AMERICA. How?
DANIEL. How do you think? A cyclic reagent and its pair ...
AMERICA. That's like us.
DANIEL. Which one are you?
AMERICA. You're the cyclic reagent, I'm the pair. What's that part?
DANIEL. Ammonia.
AMERICA. What's that part?
DANIEL. Magnesium.
AMERICA. This better get me fucking high.
DANIEL. And if it doesn't?
AMERICA. Don't play with me.
DANIEL. No not that.
AMERICA. This?
DANIEL. Yes.
AMERICA. Oh.
DANIEL. That would have been a short trip. Give me that.
She holds it tight, then gives it to him. He tosses it in the trash.
AMERICA. You've done this before, right?
DANIEL. Not in a long time.
AMERICA. When you were my age?
DANIEL. Even younger.
AMERICA. Why'd you quit?
DANIEL. Got married.
AMERICA. Oooh!
DANIEL. Not to her.
AMERICA. I don't care, I like hearing about your wives.
DANIEL. That's sick.
AMERICA. Here.
DANIEL. Got it?
AMERICA. Yeah, it's done.
DANIEL. Get a flame. And one of those.
AMERICA. Please, professor, use proper names.
DANIEL. You forget ...
AMERICA. Otherwise how will I learn my vocabulary?
DANIEL. You forget that I am no longer a professor.
They kiss and stuff.
AMERICA. Mmm, I like that. Now we can do anything we want.
DANIEL. Cept I don't have a job.
AMERICA. I'll whore myself out on the street.
DANIEL. No you won't.

AMERICA. Fine, we'll whore you out.
DANIEL. Much better. Turn that up.
AMERICA. Here?
DANIEL. Higher. Stop.
AMERICA. I like it when you boss me around.
DANIEL. Would you stop with that?
AMERICA. Seriously?
DANIEL. Keep heating.
AMERICA. Who's the fiend now? Fuck you!
DANIEL. Heat it ten more seconds.
AMERICA. I really hate your moods.
DANIEL. Sorry.
AMERICA. You need to be nice to me, and at all times.
DANIEL. Look at you though, earlier ...screaming until we found a solution.
AMERICA. I wasn't scream—
DANIEL. Stop, take it off the heat!
AMERICA. Here.
DANIEL. Careful!
AMERICA. Sorry! Did I mess it up?
DANIEL. No, you're fine. Get yourself comfortable.
AMERICA. It's almost there?
DANIEL. Almost.
She lifts herself onto the counter.
DANIEL. Excited?
AMERICA. I love to try new things.
DANIEL. This qualifies.
AMERICA. I'll be the judge of that.
DANIEL. Give me your arm.
America closes her eyes and exhales.
DANIEL. Scared?
AMERICA. A little.
He shoots her.
DANIEL. How's that, baby?
AMERICA. Oh, fuck.
DANIEL. Feel it?
AMERICA. Jesus fucking god.
She slides herself off the counter, down to the floor.
DANIEL. Yeah?
AMERICA. That's insane, I mean ... Wait, it's really hitting now.
DANIEL. You okay?

AMERICA. Hold me.
DANIEL. You feeling alright?
AMERICA. Just stay with me. I just want someone to stay
with me right now.
DANIEL. Okay.
AMERICA. Jesus.
DANIEL. Hold my hand.
AMERICA. Jesus.
DANIEL. You feel me?
AMERICA. No.
DANIEL. You feel my hand?
AMERICA. A little. This is amazing.
DANIEL. I know.
AMERICA. Why didn't we do this before?
DANIEL. I don't know.
AMERICA. Baby?
DANIEL. Yeah?
AMERICA. It's really hitting now.
DANIEL. You okay?
AMERICA. No.
DANIEL. What's happening?
AMERICA. It's hitting.
DANIEL. Remember where you are. Feel this. Feel this texture.
Baby. Can you hear me?
AMERICA. A little.
DANIEL. Baby?
AMERICA. Ohhh ...

—INTERMISSION—

Scene 19. A hospital waiting area

Daniel goes to a middle-aged woman.

DANIEL. There's nothing I can say.

MARY. I don't think I want to see you right now.

DANIEL. I'm so sorry.

Daniel leaves.

MARY. Wait. Tell me how she's been. Has she been happy?

Daniel sits beside her.

DANIEL. She's been up and down.

MARY. She said she's happy with you. She said she really likes
you.

DANIEL. She means the world to me.

MARY. Oh, America, why are so so stupid? Sometimes you're so stupid.

DANIEL. We've both been stupid. I really wish—

MARY. This isn't the start of this for her, you know that.

DANIEL. I never ever meant for anything bad to happen to her.

MARY. She's been in trouble since before this. She's had such a hard time.

DANIEL. There's no excuse for what I did.

MARY. You know this isn't the start of this for her. For many years, she's been—

DANIEL. I shouldn't have acted the way I did with her.

MARY. She's never learned to take care of herself. Which is my fault.

DANIEL. No.

MARY. If she didn't learn that better by her age, that's me.

DANIEL. No.

MARY. That's all me. Yes. Yes, it is. You know she's been to A.A.?

DANIEL. Yeah, she said.

MARY. That's not all she's been to. You know she took a year off school?

DANIEL. When?

MARY. Before this year. This has been going on with her since she was fourteen.

DANIEL. She told me some things, but . . .

MARY. Not this exact thing. No doubt you two have encouraged each other.

DANIEL. I'm so sorry.

MARY. But this kind of thing. She's so reckless. You have to wonder, as a mother—

DANIEL. She loves you very much.

MARY. You know I used to drink? When she was little.

The weight of it all, not just this last fact, hitting him.

DANIEL. Oh, god.

MARY. I think it affected her most of the three of them.

She breaks up.

MARY. Do you have children?

DANIEL. Yes.

MARY. So you know, you blame yourself.

DANIEL. You don't have to blame yourself for this.

MARY. Oh, I don't know.

DANIEL. I was a huge part of this.

MARY. No.

DANIEL. Who gave her the shit?

MARY. She wanted that anyway.

DANIEL. I don't think you understand the specifics of what we were doing.

MARY. I've talked with her friends. She was doing it with them too.

DANIEL. I don't think she was doing exactly the level of stuff that we did.

MARY. You don't think I went through an experimentation phase in college?

DANIEL. I wouldn't expect you to ever forgive me.

MARY. She liked you. I'm glad she was with you.

He breaks up.

DANIEL. She's so special.

MARY. Do you know what she told her sister? She said . . .

DANIEL. I don't expect you to ever forgive me for this.

MARY. She's been writing her sister letters about you.

DANIEL. She has?

MARY. We get one in the mailbox about every two days.

DANIEL. Ohh.

MARY. Has she told you how she feels about you?

DANIEL. You should hate me. You should want me dead.

MARY. Are you suicidal?

DANIEL. Yeah.

MARY. I am too. But I'm not gonna do that. For her.

DANIEL. I know.

MARY. You know she really loves you.

DANIEL. I love her more than anyone I've met.

MARY. She's in love with you. She said that.

Daniel exhales vocally.

MARY. She said so in her letters. To her sister. She's told us many times.

DANIEL. You should want me dead.

MARY. Has she ever told you?

DANIEL. We've never said that to each other.

MARY. You should have.

DANIEL. I know. I'm sorry.

MARY. You both should have.

DANIEL. I'm so sorry this happened.

MARY. I think she really may have done it to herself this time.

DANIEL. Do you want me to go?

MARY. No, I want you to be here, it's good for me.

DANIEL. I don't see how that is.

MARY. It feels good to be around someone she was close to.

DANIEL. She's gonna be okay. I know she's gonna be okay.

MARY. I don't know.

DANIEL. What's the last thing they're saying?

MARY. They don't know. Are you hungry?

DANIEL. No.

MARY. I am. Come down with me and get some fries.

DANIEL. Okay.

They start to get up but she sits immediately back down.

MARY. No. I can't walk right now. How's she doing in school?

DANIEL. She's doing great in my— She's doing fine.

MARY. That's what I meant. How's she doing in your class?

DANIEL. She's phenomenal.

MARY. I know. She always has been smart. I hear your class is hard, too.

DANIEL. She scores perfect on every test.

MARY. She's good at memorizing.

DANIEL. Yes, but it's more than that.

MARY. She used to recite television commercials to us at dinnertime.

DANIEL. She did?

MARY. I mean every single commercial she knew. It was cute the first day.

DANIEL. She doesn't even watch T.V. now.

MARY. I think she got tired of having commercials stuck in her head.

DANIEL. But she used to recite them?

MARY. It was annoying, trust me. Does she ever do stuff like that to you?

DANIEL. Like what?

MARY. Hound you with something until you have to give in.

DANIEL. Well . . .

MARY. No?

DANIEL. Maybe.

MARY. Maybe she's mellowing in her old age. I hope she makes it out of this.

DANIEL. Do you want to be alone?

MARY. No. Walk me, let's get a sandwich.

They get up. A doctor comes in.

DOCTOR. She's coming out of it.

MARY. Can I see her?

DOCTOR. There's more I have to tell you.

Scene 20. Daniel's bedroom

He and America are in bed, it's dark.

AMERICA. Baby. Baby. I need more water, baby. Bring me a glass of water.

She switches on a bedside light. A folded wheelchair leans against the wall. America nudges Daniel, he doesn't budge. Using only her arms and torso, she drags herself out of bed. She falls on the floor face down, Daniel wakes.

DANIEL. Merica, what happened?

AMERICA. I need some water. I tried to wake you up.

DANIEL. I'm sorry, I didn't hear you.

AMERICA. I've been trying for hours.

He helps her back into bed.

DANIEL. I'm sorry. Come on. Just a second. Okay?

He goes.

AMERICA. Bring the Vicodin.

DANIEL. I'll bring one.

AMERICA. Bring two. No, bring three.

DANIEL. Are you hurting?

AMERICA. *(under her breath)* I'm always hurting.

He comes back.

DANIEL. What hurts?

AMERICA. My head. Give me two.

DANIEL. Like a headache?

AMERICA. Like a very bad headache, yes.

He gives her two. She takes them with a tiny bit of water.

DANIEL. Drink some more.

AMERICA. I'm fine.

DANIEL. You don't want to fuck up your stomach.

AMERICA. My stomach's fucked, baby, who gives a shit.

DANIEL. It is not. Drink some more.

AMERICA. Lay off!

DANIEL. You want juice?

AMERICA. Forget it.

DANIEL. I'll bring you juice.

AMERICA. Back to bed, no juice. Back to bed, lights out.
What are you doing?

DANIEL. Putting this away.

AMERICA. Leave it, save yourself a trip. You know what you need to do?

DANIEL. What.

He sets the Vicodin down.

AMERICA. Mix me some of that good shit.

She picks the Vicodin up and shakes out a few more.

DANIEL. Please don't say that.

AMERICA. I'm serious, what is this bullshit?!

She throws the open Vicodin bottle across the room, pills scatter.

AMERICA. I know you've got the stuff somewhere.

DANIEL. I don't.

AMERICA. You've got it in the basement.

DANIEL. I don't have it anywhere.

AMERICA. Get it then.

DANIEL. Your mom would kill me.

AMERICA. What the fuck is that? My mom?? Do you see my mom anywhere?

DANIEL. You should have seen her.

AMERICA. My mom doesn't give a shit about me. She never has.

DANIEL. She does.

AMERICA. My mom doesn't even know me. Neither do you by the way.

DANIEL. She's trying to.

AMERICA. If you mention her again— Don't you fucking mention her again.

DANIEL. Let's sleep.

AMERICA. That's what I just said. Bring me one of those.

DANIEL. You've had enough.

AMERICA. My head . . .

She laughs insanely.

AMERICA. My head hurts.

DANIEL. Wait twenty minutes.

AMERICA. Six of these isn't gonna do shit to me. I need another one. Please.

He brings her one more.

AMERICA. What a ripoff.

He gets in bed, turns out the light.

AMERICA. What you need to do—

DANIEL. What?

AMERICA. Mix me some of that good shit.

DANIEL. Stop saying that.

She's laughing.

AMERICA. That would be great wouldn't it, if we had some of that. Just a little . . .

DANIEL. I think maybe you should go back with your mom.

AMERICA. I'm not sure if you heard me from before, but she hates me.

DANIEL. You know that isn't true.

AMERICA. Hates me.

DANIEL. She doesn't—

AMERICA. Absolutely hates me. Has since birth.

DANIEL. She sounds worried.

AMERICA. She's just acting like she is, she feels like she has to!

DANIEL. I think she is really very worried about you.

AMERICA. You're just trying to get rid of me.

DANIEL. I'm not—

AMERICA. Also, stop talking to my mother.

DANIEL. I think you should call her.

AMERICA. I will call her, when I'm dead.

DANIEL. What's wrong?

AMERICA. Everything's perfect.

DANIEL. Talk to me.

AMERICA. Perfect.

DANIEL. I'm going to bed.

AMERICA. No.

DANIEL. What does that mean, no.

AMERICA. It means you're not going to bed.

DANIEL. Why is that?

AMERICA. Because I don't want you to.

She crawls over him and flips on the light. They stare at each other with animosity.

Scene 21. Their bedroom - Night

She's sleeping alone, he comes in.

DANIEL. How is it?

AMERICA. It's really bad.

DANIEL. I'm sorry baby. I brought you something.

AMERICA. Did you? Oh, you're so nice. Did you really.
DANIEL. How bad is it?
AMERICA. It really has been bad today.
DANIEL. I'm so sorry. I'm sorry this happened to you.
AMERICA. It's not your fault. Will you mix it for me.
DANIEL. Of course I'm gonna mix it for you.
AMERICA. Where'd you get the stuff?
DANIEL. I bought it off the Internet.
AMERICA. You bought it yourself?
DANIEL. Yeah, I bought it.
AMERICA. How much was this?
DANIEL. It was a lot.
AMERICA. How much did you get?
DANIEL. I want you to go slow with this, this time.
AMERICA. I'm no good at going slow.
DANIEL. I know, but . . .
AMERICA. I'll try.
DANIEL. I need you to.
AMERICA. I will.
DANIEL. For me—
AMERICA. I know, I will. I'm sorry.
DANIEL. There's nothing for you to be sorry about.
AMERICA. I actually don't want to do this.
DANIEL. Then don't. Do you know how happy that would
make me?
AMERICA. Do it with me.
DANIEL. Okay.
AMERICA. You will?
DANIEL. I hate seeing you like this.
AMERICA. I'm fine. You'll be with me?
DANIEL. Yes.
AMERICA. Baby. Thank you.
DANIEL. Please don't thank me.
AMERICA. You're gonna love it. God, it's like nothing else.
DANIEL. I know.
AMERICA. But let's do a little less this time.
DANIEL. Jesus.
AMERICA. Mix it.
He nods. He mixes it.
AMERICA. You really don't want me to do this?
DANIEL. I really don't.
AMERICA. But you still bought it for me, because I want it?

DANIEL. What can I do?

AMERICA. That says something great about you.

DANIEL. I wish we didn't have to be saying something great.

AMERICA. But it does.

DANIEL. I wish we could just be happy. In a simple way this time.

AMERICA. We are happy. Be happy with me.

DANIEL. It's risking your life, every time you do it.

AMERICA. Risk with me.

DANIEL. I want to! I want nothing more! I wish I had your pain!

AMERICA. You're close to me without my pain, you have always been a part of me.

DANIEL. Can I talk you out of this?

AMERICA. You don't know how bad this is.

DANIEL. I'm so sorry.

AMERICA. What they give me doesn't even help.

DANIEL. It helps some though doesn't it?

AMERICA. What they give me is nothing, compared to this.

DANIEL. What they give you is safer.

AMERICA. You know that isn't true, statistically speaking.

DANIEL. You are my best student.

AMERICA. I just had a bad run.

DANIEL. I know.

AMERICA. It's just luck. Get in a car, plug in a hairdryer, go swimming.

DANIEL. Sharks?

AMERICA. Drowning. Whatever. You can die from taking Aspirin.

DANIEL. This is so much more dramatic.

AMERICA. You think dying in a car accident isn't dramatic? I bet it is.

DANIEL. You don't have to do this, though. You have to drive.

AMERICA. We could all stop driving if we wanted to.

DANIEL. That would be a lot harder than everyone stopping doing drugs.

AMERICA. Not if you include prescription drugs and alcohol.

DANIEL. Then let's just do a Prozac and a beer!

AMERICA. No chance.

DANIEL. None?

AMERICA. Not after you put that in my face.

DANIEL. I shouldn't have.

AMERICA. I'm glad you did.

DANIEL. I'm not.

AMERICA. I'm really glad you did. Thank you. Thank you, this is gonna help me.

DANIEL. We're doing a smaller amount this time.

AMERICA. Yes.

DANIEL. A much smaller amount.

AMERICA. Okay, but not too small.

DANIEL. Grief, woman.

AMERICA. Is it mixed?

DANIEL. Yeah.

AMERICA. Let me see the size.

DANIEL. Do you want less?

AMERICA. No. Anyway what about skydiving?

DANIEL. What about it?

AMERICA. It's extremely dangerous, but no one thinks bad of you for doing it.

DANIEL. I'm'onna have to get back to you on that one.

AMERICA. It's a totally optional activity. Are you gonna do me first?

DANIEL. You're first.

AMERICA. Then you?

DANIEL. Then me.

They have a long look.

AMERICA. Do it.

He hits her slowly.

DANIEL. Is this okay?

AMERICA. Yes.

DANIEL. Still okay?

AMERICA. Do the rest of it.

DANIEL. You feel it?

AMERICA. Yeah. Enhh. There it is.

DANIEL. You with me?

AMERICA. Mmm.

She lies back. Daniel puts the syringe down and lies beside her.

AMERICA. Are you doing it now?

DANIEL. Yeah.

AMERICA. Did you do it yet?

DANIEL. I did it.

Scene 22. Their bedroom

She's in bed, he comes in. He sets a new batch of chemicals on the bedside table.

AMERICA. Shoot me up.

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. Stay.

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. Stay for a minute.

DANIEL. I can't.

AMERICA. Sure you can.

DANIEL. I can't watch you—

AMERICA. Don't, then. Close your eyes.

DANIEL. Don't do it.

AMERICA. I'll wait till you're gone.

DANIEL. Don't do it.

She mixes.

AMERICA. I'm in a good run now.

DANIEL. What if I said you're hurting me?

AMERICA. Look, I'm getting better.

She raises one leg.

DANIEL. That's wonderful!

AMERICA. Wanna see the other one?

DANIEL. Yes. Wow. When did this happen?

AMERICA. Today.

DANIEL. That's amazing.

AMERICA. I know, aren't you proud of me?

DANIEL. How's your pain?

AMERICA. Better. Somewhat.

DANIEL. Then—

AMERICA. Not all better.

DANIEL. America, then, stop with this shit.

He puts a hand on hers, she stops mixing.

DANIEL. You don't need it.

AMERICA. Just one more.

His hand falls off as she goes back to mixing.

AMERICA. Don't say it.

DANIEL. It's always just one more.

AMERICA. I told you not to say it.

DANIEL. Please. Please, you can move. Doesn't that make you happy?

AMERICA. I'm happy all over.

DANIEL. Good. Good, then stop.

AMERICA. You brought it to me.

DANIEL. I thought you needed it.

AMERICA. I do need it, just not where you think. I want you to fuck me.

DANIEL. Can you?

AMERICA. Yes I can.

DANIEL. That's wonderful.

AMERICA. No, it's not wonderful, you sound like my doctor, geez.

DANIEL. I'm sorry.

AMERICA. Put your tongue in me while I go.

DANIEL. I'll put my tongue in you.

AMERICA. Go with this time.

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. You can't say no.

DANIEL. I will put my tongue in you.

AMERICA. You can't say no!

DANIEL. Let's make love, since we can. Isn't that enough for today?

AMERICA. We will. We will, we'll make love.

DANIEL. That's all I want.

AMERICA. We'll make love all day.

DANIEL. Good.

AMERICA. You'll have to do most of the work.

DANIEL. I'll do all of it.

AMERICA. Where's the fun in that?

DANIEL. Oh yeah, what are you gonna do for me?

AMERICA. I'm gonna suck you off while you shoot.

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. Fine, I'll just put my mouth on it then.

DANIEL. I'm not gonna shoot.

AMERICA. Come on.

DANIEL. No.

AMERICA. Come on.

DANIEL. No, really, stop. I'm not gonna shoot. You go ahead if you have to.

AMERICA. I don't have to. I want to.

DANIEL. Go ahead.

AMERICA. I want to do it with you.

DANIEL. I'll be with you.

AMERICA. I want you to do it with me.

DANIEL. I can't.
AMERICA. Why.
DANIEL. It's too scary.
AMERICA. I know it is.
DANIEL. I can't afford to be that scared anymore.
AMERICA. Just do it with me this time. Then we'll go for a walk.
DANIEL. Could you?
AMERICA. No. But we could go for a drive.
DANIEL. Let's do that.
AMERICA. We will.
DANIEL. Let's do it now.
AMERICA. Can I shoot in the car?
DANIEL. No.
AMERICA. Why?
DANIEL. You'll get arrested!
AMERICA. Shoot me in the car.
DANIEL. I'm not doing that.
AMERICA. Then shoot me here.
DANIEL. Shoot yourself.
AMERICA. I'm gonna do this one way or the other. You might as well help.
DANIEL. I'm thinking differently on that now.
AMERICA. Fine. I'll do it.
DANIEL. Please listen to me.
AMERICA. I'm listening.
DANIEL. I have something to ask you.
AMERICA. Shoot. Get it?
DANIEL. I get it.
AMERICA. Hit me and then ask your question.
DANIEL. I can't.
AMERICA. Why.
DANIEL. Because of my question.
She's about to shoot herself.
AMERICA. Which is?
DANIEL. Will you stop with that?
AMERICA. Ask your question.
DANIEL. That is my question. Will you stop?
AMERICA. Will I stop . . . this?
DANIEL. Will you stop. Doing that. Will you stop doing it forever.
AMERICA. Why don't you stop bringing it to me?

DANIEL. Because you want it . . .

AMERICA. I love you for that.

DANIEL. . . and I would do anything you asked.

AMERICA. I'm mixing you a shot.

DANIEL. Don't.

AMERICA. You need one. I know you want to too. You can use me for an excuse.

DANIEL. It's so nice today. It's a perfect day for a drive.

AMERICA. Wanna see me move my legs again?

DANIEL. Yes. Go. Doesn't that feel good?

AMERICA. It feels wonderful. So will this, don't try to be sneaky.

DANIEL. Walk with me around the room.

AMERICA. Don't try to be sneaky.

DANIEL. How long since you've walked?

AMERICA. Walking is overrated.

DANIEL. No it isn't.

AMERICA. Fuck you! I was joking. You want to make me feel bad?

DANIEL. I'm sorry.

AMERICA. I never made you stop. Have you thought of that?

DANIEL. Stop with what? Sex?

AMERICA. Maybe sex. Maybe this.

DANIEL. I think you wanted the sex part.

AMERICA. Maybe I wanted sex and to split an ecstasy pill with you, not this shit.

DANIEL. It wasn't this to start with.

AMERICA. Don't be technical. Maybe I never wanted to stick my arm!

DANIEL. You shouldn't have let me.

AMERICA. I wanted to let you. I wanted to do whatever you wanted us to do. Together.

DANIEL. Tell me at least you wanted the sex. You did invite me to lunch.

AMERICA. Oh, baby, I want sex with you right now, I always wanted the sex.

DANIEL. This shit is no way to live your life, believe me.

AMERICA. You're doing fine.

DANIEL. No, I'm not. It might seem that way to you but I'm not.

AMERICA. You can get another job.

DANIEL. I shoulda stopped this shit a long time ago.

AMERICA. You lived through it.

DANIEL. You almost didn't.

AMERICA. But I did.

DANIEL. That would have been the end of my life.

AMERICA. But it wasn't.

DANIEL. I would have never gotten over that.

AMERICA. Lucky for you, you didn't have to.

She hands him a syringe and picks hers up off the table.

AMERICA. Here we are.

DANIEL. Yes, here we are.

He puts down the syringe.

DANIEL. I'm going for a drive.

AMERICA. I'll meet you.

DANIEL. I'll be in the car.

AMERICA. Good.

DANIEL. I'm only waiting five minutes.

AMERICA. I'll see you there.

DANIEL. I have nothing else to say.

AMERICA. When you have nothing left to say, say nothing.

He leaves. She shoots herself up. With the energy it gives her, she gets out of bed and stands. She slides back onto the bed in her high. She takes the other syringe. She fiddles with it. She looks away, thinking of Daniel. Then she preps her arm and shoots it.

Scene 23. Daniel's bedroom

All the furniture is gone, drapes, everything. Daniel stands at a window, staring out. He is holding America's paperweight. He strikes the window, turns. He throws the paperweight, it smashes, water and snow spilled on the floor.

Scene 24. It snows on Daniel

DANIEL. I saw this woman today. She was like you but ... she was maybe forty-five, fifty, somewhere in there. And ... You know how time has a tendency to wear us down? This woman ... it was like she had somehow resisted that. Some people, even when they smile, there's this ... sadness in their eyes. But then there's this rare example, every ten-thousand people you cross paths with, who have ... a spark ... of some sort ... an elegance, an ease about them. I used to think only some people had it, but now I think that

everyone is born with that spark. What's rare is to find someone who over all those years would never let it be taken away.

America is there.

AMERICA. Keep talking.

America is there with him, walking in the snow.

DANIEL. What about?

AMERICA. Anything you want.

DANIEL. Do you have any regrets?

AMERICA. I'm too young to have regrets.

DANIEL. Even an eight-year-old has regrets.

AMERICA. Like, I wish I hadn't traded my P.B.J. for that cupcake?

DANIEL. I'm sure there's something you wish you hadn't done.

AMERICA. Yeah, there is.

DANIEL. You don't have to tell me.

AMERICA. This wasn't something recent.

DANIEL. No?

AMERICA. This was long ago, in college.

DANIEL. Wha'd you miss?

AMERICA. A kiss.

DANIEL. Describe it for me.

AMERICA. There was this guy. I should have kissed him, but ... I didn't.

DANIEL. Why didn't you?

AMERICA. I was scared.

DANIEL. You should have kissed him anyway.

AMERICA. I know.

DANIEL. And, since then, have you made that same mistake?

AMERICA. No I haven't.

She kisses Daniel.

Scene 25. Daniel's office

Daniel and the dean come in together. The place is cleaned out except the furniture.

DANIEL. Is that a concern?

DEAN. Somewhat.

DANIEL. How much of a concern is it?

DEAN. It's somewhat of a concern. I can't measure the precise quantity.

DANIEL. What's been the impact on our reputation?

DEAN. Oh, this is something you concern yourself with now, reputation?

DANIEL. No, I was just asking to be polite.

DEAN. I'll handle the reputations thanks. Although ...

DANIEL. Have I made things difficult for you?

DEAN. You could help me out a little.

DANIEL. When do I get my keys?

DEAN. You get them now.

DANIEL. Thank you.

DEAN. Although ...

DANIEL. They feel a bit lighter.

DEAN. ... you'll notice there's one missing.

DANIEL. I didn't need a key before.

DEAN. Please don't.

DANIEL. I won't. I promise.

DEAN. That would be the end.

DANIEL. How'd you handle the press on that one?

DEAN. There wasn't any press, that's how I handled it.

DANIEL. Thanks.

DEAN. Reputation is my department.

DANIEL. I'm glad to be back in mine.

DEAN. I don't doubt it.

DANIEL. Thank you.

DEAN. Just remember how glad you are to be back and we'll be fine.

DANIEL. I will.

DEAN. If you need help, ever, tell me.

DANIEL. Can you have my books shipped over from the house?

DEAN. How bout you ship them this time.

DANIEL. Fine.

DEAN. You know how dear you are to me.

DANIEL. I didn't know that.

DEAN. You are.

DANIEL. Is that why I'm back?

DEAN. No.

DANIEL. No?

DEAN. You're back cause I can't find anyone else.

DANIEL. Please, less honesty.

DEAN. You're a wonderful teacher.

DANIEL. And the students love me.

DEAN. You are quite the charmer.

DANIEL. I know, and it's inappropriate ...

DEAN. Well . . .

DANIEL. It won't happen again.

DEAN. Well . . .

DANIEL. It's just, with this one . . .

DEAN. You loved her, didn't you?

DANIEL. Yes.

DEAN. I wish she was still with you.

DANIEL. No. It was wrong of me in the first place.

DEAN. Oh, I don't know. She loved you too I think.

DANIEL. I hope so.

DEAN. Think of Pythagoras.

DANIEL. Oh?

DEAN. Come on. You think I'm gonna tell you not to bang your students?

DANIEL. Are you?

DEAN. It's an ancient tradition of the academic world!

DANIEL. Do you bang the students?

DEAN. It's harder for a dean. But I would if they were coming onto me.

DANIEL. I could send some your way.

DEAN. No.

DANIEL. I'll send you all of mine.

DEAN. No.

DANIEL. Every other girl that walks in that door.

DEAN. That's the problem.

DANIEL. What?

DEAN. Every other girl.

DANIEL. Oh.

DEAN. So you see.

DANIEL. Really?

DEAN. Yes.

DANIEL. I can't help you there.

DEAN. Didn't think you could.

The dean nods, smiles, and gets up.

DEAN. That's between us.

DANIEL. Figured.

DEAN. Reputations and all.

DANIEL. Of course.

The dean leaves. Daniel settles into his office. He sits in his chair, leans back. Something on a top shelf catches his eye. He gets up, climbs on the counter to get it. It's a tourniquet. He takes

it down, wraps it around his hand. Then he puts it in the trash and leaves.

Scene 26. At the bar

They're playing pool (or darts).

SANDRO. You've lost your touch.

DANIEL. I don't think so.

SANDRO. You play better when your mind is less occupied, that's the problem.

DANIEL. I'm sorry I just disappeared.

SANDRO. Don't worry about it.

DANIEL. It's like I'm not a human when I'm on drugs.

SANDRO. Understood.

DANIEL. I'm sorry I said . . . whatever I said to you.

SANDRO. Now that apology I will accept.

DANIEL. What did I say?

SANDRO. Hmmm.

DANIEL. I'm just kidding. Don't tell me.

SANDRO. I have forgotten anyway, my memory is too bad.

DANIEL. Your memory is fine.

SANDRO. I remember you being better at pool, so I think there is a problem.

DANIEL. You've been practicing.

SANDRO. Of course. Every Thursday I come here. And I think, where is my friend?

DANIEL. I'm sorry.

SANDRO. But every week, you are not here. So? I still play.

DANIEL. Next week I'm gonna kick your ass.

SANDRO. Not at this rate.

DANIEL. She used to play pool with her friends.

SANDRO. You went with her?

DANIEL. No. She invited me once but I didn't . . .

SANDRO. It's probably better.

DANIEL. . . . I didn't go.

SANDRO. I am sorry for what happened. If you don't want to talk about it—

DANIEL. I brought it up. Maybe next week.

SANDRO. Get a drink.

DANIEL. That's okay.

SANDRO. It's on me.

DANIEL. No thanks.
SANDRO. Have a beer.
DANIEL. No.
SANDRO. A scotch.
DANIEL. I'm fine.
SANDRO. Something you need to understand, my friend . . .
DANIEL. What?
SANDRO. . . the importance, for former drug addicts, of being an alcoholic.
DANIEL. Jesus.
SANDRO. You have stolen my word.
DANIEL. I'm just borrowing it.
SANDRO. That is so not cool.
DANIEL. Is it my turn?
SANDRO. You would like that, wouldn't you.
DANIEL. Just another chance to miss.
SANDRO. Another chance to win.
DANIEL. I'm too far down.
SANDRO. Make one run.
DANIEL. Yeah, okay.
SANDRO. One run is all you need. One turn, and you win the game.
DANIEL. Easy for you, edge master. How do you always make those shots?
SANDRO. I don't always make them.
DANIEL. Yes, you always to.
SANDRO. Not always.
DANIEL. Yes you do.
Sandro takes a shot, he intentionally hits the ball way off.
SANDRO. See? You are wrong, my friend.

Scene 27. Daniel's office, fully furnished

Daniel is already there. A student comes by tentatively.

DANIEL. Come in.
LACY. I'm from your class.
DANIEL. Yes, I recognize you. Miss Brothers. C average.
LACY. Lacy.
DANIEL. Lacy Brothers. Always sits in the back of the class.
LACY. Gives a better overall vantage point on the room.
DANIEL. You sit in the same seat every single week.

She smiles.

DANIEL. Why is that?

LACY. Once you find something you like you should keep it.

DANIEL. Even a chair?

LACY. I like my chair. It has graffiti I like, and gum.

DANIEL. What does it say?

LACY. It says the dean sucks cock.

DANIEL. And what do you think?

LACY. I don't know the dean.

DANIEL. But I do.

LACY. And?

DANIEL. People write all sorts of things. Who knows if any of it means anything.

LACY. Look, I came here for a reason, so ... I ...

DANIEL. You're not happy with your C—

LACY. I don't care about the C.

She kisses him, a peck, then pulls back, trying to judge his reaction.

LACY. I'm sorry. It was a mistake to come here.

She goes.

DANIEL. I don't believe it's possible, not to make mistakes.

LACY. You don't.

DANIEL. The key for me, is ...

LACY. What?

DANIEL. Making the right ones.

He goes for her.

12

The Atlas Interview (2007)

CHARACTERS
HANNAH (female, 21)
HANNAH'S MOM
ANNOUNCER
ATLAS (male, 13)
RATHMAN
COANCHOR
MASUDA (male)
JESUS (male)
ATLAS' MOM
MARCY (female)
GRETCHEN (female)
LITTLE GIRL FAN
BABY (male)
FANS
NINA (female)
MARSHALL (male)
LITTLE GIRL
STARCK (female, 47)
COORDINATOR (female)
BRENDAN
CARRIE (female, 10)
CLERK
INDIAN

SOMEONE SHE KNOWS
MATRON
ASSISTANT
TONY
STRANGER
SCHIZOPHRENIC
GREYHOUND ATTENDANT

INT. FIVE-STAR SUITE - NIGHT

HANNAH Gonzalez, 21, lies on a bed watching TV in one room of a five-star hotel suite. She talks on the phone. The phone is impossibly huge against her face.

HANNAH. I can't. We're in rehearsals.

HANNAH'S MOM. (*O.S.*) Just know you're always welcome.

HANNAH. No. Mom. Shut up.

HANNAH'S MOM. (*O.S.*) I'm just saying . . .

HANNAH. Be nice. You're making me feel guilty.

Hanna ups the volume on the TV. Julian ATLAS, 13, fills the screen. He is black. His gestures are meticulous, his eyes alert, intelligent.

ANNOUNCER. (*O.S.*) . . . when acclaimed biographer Julian Atlas takes on quarterback Andrew Rathman, recently coined All Star of the Universe by The Sports Minute.

HANNAH'S MOM. (*O.S.*) I'm not trying to make you feel guilty. It's just an invitation and you don't have to say yes. We just miss you. You there?

We see Atlas sitting with RATHMAN in a locker room, talking like old friends, Rathman throwing a 60-yard pass to completion in a national game, Atlas alone in his library.

HANNAH. Yeah.

ANNOUNCER. (*O.S.*) In this special two-hour Interview, Atlas will examine Rathman's meteoric trajectory . . .

HANNAH. Mom. I gotta go.

ANNOUNCER. (*O.S.*) . . . from the athlete's simple beginnings in a Pennsylvania mining town to his current status as unprecedented innovator of the pigskin.

HANNAH'S MOM. (*O.S.*) OK. Call us soon, OK? Wait, your dad's here. . . Your father wants to talk to you. . . Hannah?

HANNAH. What? What I can't hear you. There's stuff going on here.

HANNAH'S MOM. (*O.S.*) Your father wants to talk to you.

HANNAH. Hello?

HANNAH'S MOM. (*O.S.*) Your father would like to talk with you.

HANNAH. No, I don't think so.

HANNAH'S MOM. (*O.S.*) Baby.

HANNAH. I'm gonna have to call you back.

HANNAH'S MOM. (*O.S.*) Just talk with him a minute.

HANNAH. I'll call you tomorrow.

HANNAH'S MOM. (*O.S.*) Please take good care of yourself.

Hannah disconnects. She watches Atlas and Rathman in an interview setting.

ATLAS. When was it that you knew it was love?

RATHMAN. We met in a field, little field outside Tulsa, most beautiful woman I'd ever seen, I knew right then—

It cuts to Julian, live, at a newsdesk in the studio.

ATLAS. Join me this Sunday, and take a deeper look at Andrew Rathman.

It cuts to a slow-motion video of Andrew Rathman throwing a football in his back yard.

ANNOUNCER. The Atlas Interview, Sunday at eight, only on NBC.

One of RATHMAN'S YOUNG SONS attempts to tackle him, while the other completes the pass. It cuts to Atlas in the studio. His COANCHOR turns to him.

COANCHOR. That looks like an exciting segment, one I'll be sure not to miss. What's next for The Atlas Interview?

ATLAS. I'm currently interviewing the painter, Hiromi Masuda.

COANCHOR. Can you tell us a little about him?

ATLAS. He's the most reclusive of the contemporary abstractionists, born in Japan, his compositions to the Western eye are . . . stronger than what we've become accustomed to. I'll save further details for the Interview but I can tell you that he has a show opening this weekend at Starck in New York.

COANCHOR. Well, we look forward to it.

To the camera:

COANCHOR. We'll be right back.

It cuts to a preview of the Hiromi MASUDA interview. The screen shows images of Masuda: Camping in the Canadian outback. Caught on film while getting into a car.

ANNOUNCER. (*O.S.*) Two weeks from now, the painter Hiromi Masuda. Reclusive, eccentric. Critics have compared his work to Rothko, detractors have accused him of sexual deviancy.

Hanna touches the screen. The screen fills our entire field of view.

ANNOUNCER. (*O.S.*) Take a deeper look, when Julian Atlas speaks with Hiromi Masuda. The Atlas Interview. May nineteenth. Only on NBC.

It cuts to commercial. Hannah grabs her keys and phone and speed-dials a number. When she leaves her hotel room, the TV is still playing.

EXT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hannah comes into the hallway. Her bodyguard, JESUS, muscular, overweight, stands from a stool he has been spilling over outside Hannah's door. Another GUARD, with a CIA-like earpiece, sits on a chair nearby. This one checks the suite's door to make sure it's locked and he and Jesus follow Hannah down the hall. Hannah's call connects.

HANNAH. What's up with you, my nigga? ... It's my turn on the contest, right?

Hannah is at an elevator. Her guards back her up. She presses the button (there is only one—the elevator can only go down from here).

HANNAH. He is rich. He's an artist. A painter. ... I saw him on TV. ... Of course he's cute. ... Arrright. No. No. That's fine. ... It's on.

Hannah disappears into the elevator. Her guards follow.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The blue light of a TV is the only light in the room. Atlas wakes up on the couch. Sitting next to him, his YOUNGER BROTHER zones out holding a PlayStation controller. He's playing Final Fantasy.

ATLAS. What time is it?

His brother shrugs. Atlas gets up from the couch.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - DAWN

The sky is coming to life along a horizon fragmented by buildings. Only a thin vertical shaft of sky seems to reach all the way to the ground. Atlas comes outside, shlepping video recording equipment. He sets his stuff down next to a bike which is chained to the stoop's handrail. ATLAS' MOTHER comes out after him in her slippers and bathrobe.

ATLAS' MOM. What's so important? What's so important you don't have ten minutes? Atlas . . .

ATLAS. I'm not responding. Thank you, but I'm not responding.

ATLAS' MOM. Baby . . .

ATLAS. I'm not dying of scurvy, here, Mom! I eat!

ATLAS' MOM. But when do I get to see you? Is your brother still awake. I'm gonna take that damn thing away, you mark my words. Can't get Andre to eat a TV dinner, he won't take his eyes off that machine. When you coming home tonight? Huh? Oh, Atlas, baby, look at me.

ATLAS. I already told you, I'm not having this conversation.

Atlas unlocks a thick silver chain and wraps it around the frame, locking it back. He puts the recording equipment in a basket on the back of the bike. He goes back inside the house. His mother watches him go inside, then sits on the porch and fishes in her pocket for her cigarettes. She lights one. When Atlas comes out he's loaded up with more equipment, pads of paper, a laptop. He sees his mother smoking.

ATLAS' MOM. Don't say anything.

ATLAS. I wasn't going to.

Atlas puts all this stuff into the basket on the front of the bike. Both baskets are packed to the gills like a stack from a Dr. Seuss book. There's no way they could be stable. Yet they hold. He avoids looking at his mom. When he's done packing, ready to mount the bike, he does look at her.

ATLAS. I'll see you tonight?

Atlas' mom nods. Atlas saddles up and rides away. The mom stands and watches her son go.

ATLAS' MOM. I think you work too hard, my boy.

Atlas' mom goes inside the house.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

The opening credits of the movie play over a sequence of Atlas riding from the upper west side to midtown Manhattan, the streets becoming more crowded as he goes. The sun rises.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

NBC Studios. Atlas steps out of an elevator, his bike beside him. Desks, people everywhere. Atlas goes down the main aisle. A woman, MARCY, joins him.

ATLAS. Am I late?

MARCY. You're all set up in two.

She takes his bicycle.

ATLAS. I need that camera patched into c-p-twelve-eighty-seven.

MARCY. OK.

ATLAS. And whatever's on my notebook in the transfer folder—

MARCY. . . . in the transfer folder . . .

They have a moment: Atlas tries to figure out whether she's making fun of him or not. The look on her face indicates that she cares what determination he makes in this regard.

ATLAS. That's right.

They part ways.

INT. EDITING BAY - DAY

Atlas sits at his console and puts on a pair of headphones . . . they dwarf his head. He taps in a key sequence on the board before him: fingers lighting quick. Without looking at him, Atlas speaks to one of the TECHS nearby.

ATLAS. I'm missing hot-store on Avid three.

There are a million screens before him. Atlas glances over them. Video fragments pop up all over.

ATLAS. This thing is two weeks out, two weeks out and we have maybe thirty-five percent of what we need that's not your fault. That's my fault cause for some reason I'm sucking wind in these interviews. I'll take care of that part just help keep me get what we already got cut down in nice little modular chunks so we can swap it around at the last minute OK?

Atlas breathes in and then out at the magnitude of the impending work. Marcy rushes into the seat beside him, straps on her headpiece. Atlas is so engaged with the screens he doesn't notice her.

ATLAS. *(looking to the wrong side)* Where's Marcy?

Marcy waves at Atlas. Atlas sees her. He momentarily disengages from psychic overdrive.

ATLAS. How are you?

MARCY. I'm fine.

Atlas smiles curtly and turns back to his screens.

ATLAS. I've got two hours.

INT. HANNAH'S LIMOUSINE - DAY

Hannah checks herself in a huge dressing mirror that has been permanently installed in her limo. Nothing is good enough: she adjusts her skirt. Next to Hannah in the back of the limo is a GRETCHEN, 24, a starlet-looking vixen, white girl, with the calm and the clothes of someone who has a lot of money in the bank. Gretchen flips through a magazine. She has a cigarette burning. Hannah speaks to her DRIVER.

HANNAH. Stop a block away.

Jesus sits in the front next to the driver. He has a baby face, sensitive eyes.

JESUS. It's better if we stop in the same block, you won't have to cross the street.

HANNAH. The point is I don't want to pull up right in front.

JESUS. *(mainly to the driver)* We can stop right after the intersection.

HANNAH. Whatever.

Jesus speaks into a walkie-talkie.

JESUS. Pull in front of us when we stop.

Gretchen shows Hannah something in the magazine.

GRETCHEN. Look at this. Do you believe him?

Unintelligible static comes back over Jesus' walkie-talkie.

JESUS. Copy that, I need four, two and two, make a box. You're out first, on us, street side, I repeat, street side, copy?

More unintelligible static comes over the air. Hannah continues fidgeting with her dress.

HANNAH. Is this OK?

Jesus looks through the sliding window.

JESUS. You look beautiful.

GRETCHEN. Liar.

Hannah hits Gretchen.

HANNAH. Shut up.

GRETCHEN. I'm serious. I hate to say this, but you're gonna lose this one.

HANNAH. Have I ever lost?

GRETCHEN. I'm just sayin'.

HANNAH. OK. We'll see then.

GRETCHEN. Yeah, we will see.

They lock pinkie fingers and shake, gangsta-style. Gretchen shakes her head and smirks. Hannah punches Gretchen in the chest. The magazine falls.

GRETCHEN. Fuck, bitch!

And Gretchen is going for Hannah, reaching for her hair. Jesus' phone rings. He checks the caller id.

JESUS. Baby. For you.

Hannah leans up and kisses Jesus on the cheek. She takes the phone and ducks into the back. Gretchen retrieves the fallen magazine. She is shaking her head as she looks back to it. Hannah is primping when Gretchen fakes a punch at her. Hannah flinches, then makes a punchy move in at Gretchen which is really a display of her middle finger. Gretchen is face-down in the magazine, making a slow middle finger back. The limousine pulls through an intersection and stops in the red zone on the corner. One black sedan pulls around front, the other stays in the intersection. Four concealed-carry security guards exit the sedans, two from each car. They form a box next to the limo door, two near the door on each side and two standing in the street. It's Saturday at 11am; Manhattanites are already forming crowds to see who gets out of the limousine. Jesus gets out of the limo and goes in-between the box. He opens the door for Hannah. Hannah gets out. Gretchen stays inside.

EXT. HANNAH'S LIMOUSINE - DAY

HANNAH. *(to Gretchen)* Bye girl.

INT. HANNAH'S LIMOUSINE - DAY

Gretchen hasn't moved. Her eyes are on the magazine in her lap.

GRETCHEN. Good luck.
Gretchen reaches for the cigarette.

EXT. HANNAH'S LIMOUSINE - DAY

A LITTLE GIRL FAN on a leash comes up to Hannah (those leashes parents use to avoid losing their kids in a supermarket).

LITTLE GIRL FAN. Hannah!! I love you!
Hannah is all smiles, shining as the sun, in her reply.

HANNAH. I love you too!
The guards hold back a throng of fans as Hannah steps onto the sidewalk. Everyone knows who she is. She flips open the cellphone that Jesus handed her.

HANNAH. Baby.
On the other end, we hear Hannah's producer, BABY.

BABY. (O.S.) Where the fuck are you?
HANNAH. I'm doing a sighting.

BABY. (O.S.) There's no sighting on the schedule.
HANNAH. It's impromptu.

Hannah strolls along the sidewalk.
HANNAH. Can you hold on for a second.

BABY. (O.S.) I've got a room full of dancers here ...
HANNAH. Yep, just one second, OK?

She pulls down the door on a mailbox and drops the phone inside. Lets the door slam shut. The phone echoes a thundering thud at the bottom of the mailbox. Fans are screaming:

FANS. Hannah!!
Girls swoon. Men stop in their tracks. Hannah's guards hold back the mob as Hannah smiles and reaches to all of them.

INT. ROBYN STARCK GALLERY NYC - DAY

Robyn STARCK, art dealer, forty-seven, at a massive desk. She hears the screams of "Hannah!" from outside, turns her head. Bold stenciled capitals spell out "STARCK" on the glass of her SOHO storefront. A shoe hits the window. Starck marches to the front. On the way, she passes Hiromi Masuda, who is kneeling on the floor, barefoot, applying cryptic strokes in permanent marker directly to the wall. Two ASSISTANTS stand nearby. Ploosh hair. Insane

NY fashion. Julian Atlas kneels beside Masuda, capturing the detail of Masuda's hand with his camera. When Starck gets to the front of her gallery, she can see the crowd. The guards shield Hannah as the six of them come into the gallery. Two of the guards hold back to block the door.

STARCK. What the fuck is going on?

She sees Hannah. Her demeanor changes.

STARCK. Miss Gonzalez. Next time let us know.

HANNAH. Is that him?

They both look at Masuda.

STARCK. That's him.

HANNAH. What's he doing?

STARCK. We try to keep him in canvas, but he prefers the wall.

HANNAH. Can I talk to him?

STARCK. You're welcome to try.

The assistants take notice, but play it coolly, as Hannah passes them. Hannah comes up beside Hiromi. Julian keeps his camera in place, but follows Hannah with his eyes. Hiromi keeps his eyes on his work. Hannah glances around the gallery.

HANNAH. This is nice.

Hiromi keeps working.

HANNAH. I could imagine this in my kitchen.

Atlas' camera tracks to Hannah. She sees this, but pretends not to have; she acts as if she's all alone with Masuda.

HANNAH. You wanna come to my show?

Hiromi does not turn his head.

MASUDA. I'm ignorant about music.

HANNAH. There's a little party after. You could be my date.

Masuda changes markers. His eyes narrow; he is hardening himself to outside influence.

STARCK. I doubt he'll attend your party, but you are certainly welcome to attend ours. Just a little get-together for the opening of the show.

Hannah's brow furrows. She stands and goes to Starck.

HANNAH. Is this for sale?

Robyn doesn't understand which thing Hannah means: everything in the gallery is for sale.

STARCK. Is what for sale?

Hannah gestures toward Hiromi.

HANNAH. That.

STARCK. That what? The wall?

HANNAH. Yes, what he's working on, the wall.

STARCK. See, Hiromi, I told you, someone's going to want to buy that and now what can I tell them? We'll have to paint over it in a month. You're throwing your work away.

HANNAH. That's OK.

Hannah gestures to Jesus. He is by her side instantly.

HANNAH. Get Jeffrey in here to move that.

Starck doesn't believe this. Even Jesus is unsure.

HANNAH. He'll know how to do it.

STARCK. That's shared with the shop next door.

HANNAH. We'll replace it.

STARCK. I would love for you to have that, but it's part of the show. We need it for the opening.

HANNAH. *(like: what's the problem?)* Move it after the opening.

Starck motions to one of her assistants. The assistant comes over with a pen and a pad of paper. Hannah walks away, looking at the paintings. Starck says something to the assistant. The assistant scribbles something on the pad of paper. Hannah faces Hiromi Masuda.

HANNAH. *(nonplussed)* Is the rest of this stuff for sale?

INT. ROBYN STARCK GALLERY NYC - NIGHT

The gallery is abuzz. Socialites mingle and browse. Robyn Starck laughs with a small crowd. Tuxedoed waiters bring drinks around. Hannah is there, Jesus standing close by. Hannah's other bodyguards are there, but now they blend into the crowd. This crowd is versed enough to pretend not to notice Hannah. Hannah's producer, BABY, is there with her. Also Gretchen, in a designer evening gown, one arm across her chest, the other craning up to hold a bowl-like wine glass to her lips. Hannah is further flanked by young woman, NINA Williams, hip-hop looking, Euro style, and a young man, MARSHALL Law, in basketball garb with designs chiseled into his head.

BABY. Who is this guy?

Marshall makes his hand into the shape of a gun.

MARSHALL. *(duh)* That's Masuda, cutty.

Hannah gestures around the room.

HANNAH. *(isn't it obvious?)* A painter?

BABY. What is “cutty”?

Photographers swoop deftly in, snap them, flash, take another, swoop away, take another from a distance.

GRETCHEN. How long you here?

NINA. *(she has a British accent)* Doin’ twelve weeks hard time, cutty.

Baby has the show’s flyer in his hand.

BABY. What is this term?

Everyone stares at him like he’s a sheltered child.

BABY. What? What is it?

He turns the flyer over to the back. It’s blank.

BABY. I’ve never heard of this guy.

MARSHALL. No one can help you if you’re visually illiterate.

HANNAH. He’s a New York guy.

BABY. Still, I woulda heard of this guy.

NINA. *(a toss-off)* How’s your fuck?

GRETCHEN. *(so sick of it)* That fuck is so fucked up.

Starck swings by Hannah and Baby. She leans in confidentially to Hannah.

STARCK. You haven’t happened to see—

BABY. Hi. I’m—

STARCK. Hello.

BABY. Baby Garafolo.

STARCK. Robyn Starck.

MARSHALL. Mr. Garafolo here is an art critic with the San Francisco Chronicle.

Starck seems impressed. Baby looks at Marshall. Hannah sees Julian Atlas at the gallery door. He’s pushing a wheelchair. The man seated in the chair is dressed in a wickedly tacky suit, something from the seventies.

STARCK. You haven’t happened to see our Mr. Masuda, have you?

Hannah nods toward the door. Masuda is wearing a wig: dark brown hair parted weightily to one side. A brown plaid suit, something horrible, something from the seventies. Gretchen’s knees buckle, and simultaneously she grabs Nina’s arm and wine sprays out of her mouth—laughing.

NINA. Fucking hell.

GRETCHEN. *(her mouth still full)* Sorry . . .

Masuda wears dark glasses, no shoes, holds a tall red-tipped white cane, feigns blindness, and drinks from a bottle wrapped in a brown paper bag. Nina is wiping off her dress. She’s good-naturedly

shaking her head at Gretchen, who is trying (with futility) to be discreet as she sets her glass on the floor. Julian Atlas pushes Masuda into the showroom. Gallery-goers cast wondering and disapproving glances in his direction. Starck is mortified. Atlas stops the wheelchair near a crowd. When Masuda haltingly stands, Atlas comes to his aid. Using the cane, Masuda sloppily rises from the chair, trips, and falls into the crowd. His cane clacks to the floor. The crowd reels back. Masuda catches the arm of a GENTLEMAN to break his fall. The gentleman reluctantly helps Masuda stand. Another guest hands Masuda his cane. As soon as the artist is righted, he falls again. This time, while he's being helped up, he manages to knock the dark glasses off his own head. Starck rushes over. Atlas busts out his camera.

STARCK. *(to the gentleman)* I'm so sorry. *(to Masuda)* What's in the bag?

MASUDA. It's a free country, lady.

Masuda takes a big swig. Gallery-goers gawk.

STARCK. Ladies and gentlemen, believe it or not, this is—

MASUDA. Save it. We all know who I am.

Masuda jumps on the wheelchair and throws his wig straight up into the air. He speaks into his drink like a rockstar holding a microphone.

MASUDA. I am Atlas! God of weightlifting and heavy burdens!

Masuda jumps off the chair and leans in close to Starck's face.

MASUDA. Join me tonight as I take a deeper look at the gallery-owner, Robyn Starck.

Masuda sticks the microphone in Starck's face.

MASUDA. Are you a lesbian, Miss Starck?

Starck is taken off her guard. She says nothing. Atlas catches all this on his camera. Hannah comes into frame. It's as though she's taking over Starck's character in the interview.

HANNAH. Define lesbian.

Masuda doesn't miss a beat.

MASUDA. A woman with a predilection for members of her own sex.

HANNAH. Now for members of our viewing audience who aren't familiar with that term, Mr. Atlas ...

MASUDA. Which term is that?

HANNAH. Predilection.

MASUDA. It means she eats bush.

Starck slumps into the background. A WELL-DRESSED MIDDLE-AGED MAN asks her something. From his body language we get

that he's asking what's going on.

HANNAH. (*grabbing Masuda's bottle*) Can I have some of that?

MASUDA. (*disdainfully*) You only had eleven steps to go!

As Hannah swigs from the bottle, the paper bag falls off. Hannah sees that it's Dasani and makes a sour face.

STARCK. Have your fun, just don't do it here.

This time Masuda is speaking to Starck.

MASUDA. There you are.

Starck frowns.

MASUDA. Can I call you Robyn?

INT. GALLERY STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

Atlas and Masuda in the stock room, sitting on wooden crates, a bottle of wine between them. Masuda has shed his disguise; his mannerisms are now his own. Atlas has his camera beside him, but he is not filming.

MASUDA. She lives with you?

ATLAS. Yeah, the three of us. I can't leave the house. She thinks I should still be in school.

MASUDA. Is Andre smart like you?

ATLAS. He's smart.

MASUDA. But not like you.

The door opens and Starck leans in.

STARCK. Hello.

MASUDA. Hello.

STARCK. I have people who'd like to meet you.

MASUDA. In a minute.

STARCK. Help me help you sell these paintings.

MASUDA. Those paintings are already sold.

STARCK. Help me sell the next ones.

MASUDA. Who said there's gonna be any next ones?

Starck is fed up. She leaves and shuts the door.

INT. ROBYN STARCK GALLERY NYC - NIGHT

Starck pulls shut the stock room door. Hannah is in her face. Hannah's crew is visible in the background: Gretchen drunkly confides

in Nina, Baby uncomfortably endures the conversation of an AG-ING PLAYBOY.

HANNAH. Can I go in?

STARCK. It's boy time, I'm afraid.

Starck goes out into the gallery to rub shoulders. Hannah knocks on the door. No response. She knocks louder.

ATLAS. Come back later!

MASUDA. Go away!

HANNAH. Please. There's no one to talk to out here.

She waits a bit. The door opens two inches. She pushes it open more and goes in.

INT. GALLERY STOCK ROOM - NIGHT

Hannah comes in tentatively and closes the door.

HANNAH. Not filming?

MASUDA. Just friends tonight.

HANNAH. How's the interview going?

MASUDA. If you're gonna be like that go back out there with the reptiles.

Hannah plays her next moment carefully. She thinks about sitting down. She thinks about going back into the gallery. She looks from Atlas to Masuda, then back at Atlas. She turns her back to them, walks measuredly to the back entrance of the stock room. It's a door with a horizontal release bar. Without looking back, she pushes the door open and goes out into the darkness of the alley. The door closes behind her. Masuda and Atlas look at each other. Masuda smiles. They both get up and head for the door.

EXT. HANNAH'S LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Atlas leans out of one of the limousine's back windows. The vehicle is cruising north on Broadway, headed through Times Square. This is the first time we see him when he looks like a kid. Masuda is looking out of the window on the other side. Lights reflect in the black glass and lacquer paint of the limousine.

INT. HANNAH'S LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Hannah is kneeling on the floor near an extensive inlaid bar. She pours three full shots of Bacardi 151 and makes her way to the middle of the back bench seat between the boys. Atlas is still leaning out the window. Hannah gives Masuda a chunky shot glass and downs her own, tossing the glass toward the floor at the front of the limo. Masuda, keeping his eyes locked with Hannah's, nonchalantly throws his shot (glass and liquid, both) out the window. Hannah laughs. Atlas leans back in. Hannah gives him a shot glass. Atlas sees that neither of the other two has one. He smells it, recoils, and gives it to Hannah. She drinks that one too and hands the glass to Masuda. Masuda tosses it out the window. Hannah smiles. She takes the hands of both her new friends, but she gives Masuda a special look.

INT. FIVE-STAR SUITE - NIGHT

Hannah is kneeling on the floor near an extensive inlaid bar. She pours three full shots of Bacardi 151 and makes her way to the middle of the back bench seat between the boys. Atlas is still leaning out the window. Hannah gives Masuda a chunky shot glass and downs her own, tossing the glass toward the floor at the front of the limo. Masuda, keeping his eyes locked with Hannah's, nonchalantly throws his shot (glass and liquid, both) out the window. Hannah laughs. Atlas leans back in. Hannah gives him a shot glass. Atlas sees that neither of the other two has one. He smells it, recoils, and gives it to Hannah. She drinks that one too and hands the glass to Masuda. Masuda tosses it out the window. The TV in Hannah's room is on, as though it's been on this whole time. Hannah is standing on the giant bed holding a gallon of strawberry ice cream. Masuda sits on the bed, with his bare feet on her covers. Atlas squats on a chair, filming.

HANNAH. Do you want some food?

Masuda shakes his head. The door opens. Jesus leans in with a call.

JESUS. It's your mothe—

HANNAH. Jesus! Jesus. Don't. Interrupt me.

Hannah looks at him harshly. She is not kidding. Jesus bows out, pulling the door closed.

HANNAH. Atlas. Food?

ATLAS. What do you have?

Atlas keeps filming, she faces him: they talk through the camera.

HANNAH. Well ... we have ... what do you want?

ATLAS. Grilled cheese.

Hannah bends to remove a room service menu from one of the side tables. When she opens it, it is very big in her face.

HANNAH. Catch of the Day, Please inquire. Napoleon of Sauted Veal, With Wild Mushrooms and Grilled Tomatoes ... Fresh Mozzarella Gratin Red Wine Sauce that sounds pretty good. And on the kids menu we have ... a Cavatappi Pasta with Tomato Sauce.

Hannah raises her eyebrows.

HANNAH. And ... ah ... grilled cheese. You really want one?

ATLAS. Please.

Hannah fishes around in the covers. She finds her phone, speed-dials Jesus.

HANNAH. Jesus. I want a grilled cheese sandwich with a slice of tomato on it.

ATLAS. No tomato.

HANNAH. Thank you Jesus.

ATLAS. No tomato.

Hannah clicks off and drops the phone on her bed. The phone is huge by modern standards.

HANNAH. Trust me, you'll like it better with the tomato.

HANNAH. Don't you think he'll like it better with the tomato?

ATLAS. I don't eat vegetables.

HANNAH. Well a tomato isn't technically a vegetable. Or is that ketchup?

Masuda shrugs.

HANNAH. You're a man of few words, Hiromi. Can I call you Hiromi? *(to Atlas)* Isn't he a man of few words?

ATLAS. You have to ask the right questions.

HANNAH. And what would these right questions be.

Atlas comes over to the bed to get a better shot of Masuda. When he interviews, it's like he's just talking to you.

ATLAS. Your style ... the style you paint with now ... you developed that when you were twenty-six.

Masuda opens up. Hannah watches intently.

MASUDA. I'm a slave to the groove, man.

Jesus leans in. He's holding the phone, covering the mouthpiece with his hand.

JESUS. Hannah. It's Baby.

Hannah throws a shoe from the bed at Jesus's head. It glances off his neck and shoulder and ricochets into the hall.

HANNAH. You're fired. OK? Leave us the fuck alone.

Jesus backs away, pulling the door shut. Hannah sits on the bed, intent on the interview.

ATLAS. Don't you get tired of continuing to repeat that same style?

MASUDA. I was tired of it when I was twenty-six.

ATLAS. *(an imperative)* Change.

MASUDA. That's like you changing the format of your show to be stand-up comedy. *(to Hannah)* Or the first song you had on the radio . . . don't you find yourself characterized by that, even now?

HANNAH. But you can paint anything you want.

MASUDA. But not sell it.

HANNAH. You tell Robyn Starck to go fuck herself. If I don't smile at every single one of these people do you know how many people will see pictures of it the next day? "IS HANNAH DEPRESSED? . . . HANNAH SNUBS FANS! . . . HANNAH PREGNANCY SCARE" . . . who knows what the fuck what.

An ad for The Atlas Interview comes on television. Atlas glances over. He's the only one who sees it.

HANNAH. Do you know what would happen if I did what you did tonight at one of my shows?

Masuda goes to the door. Opens it. Gestures for them to follow.

MASUDA. Let me show you something.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Going up, lights outside the elevator illuminate the threesome. Atlas films.

HANNAH. You don't have bodies stored in here or something.

MASUDA. The frozen corpses of beautiful young women? Regretfully, no. Unless you'd like to submit an application.

Hannah bends to retrieve a pack of cigarettes from her boot. Masuda notices a tattoo on the small of Hannah's back. When Hannah comes up she sees Masuda looking at it. She offers Masuda a cigarette. Masuda takes it. Hannah lights it for him, then lights her own. Then she lifts her shirt and pushes down her skirt so he can get a clearer view of the tattoo. It's a caterpillar. Masuda touches Hannah's skin, and he lets his touch depart. Hannah leans against

the elevator wall opposite Masuda. There are stares between them. The elevator stops. Masuda opens the elevator doors.

HANNAH. What is this place for real?

MASUDA. My hideout.

Masuda goes out.

INT. MASUDA'S PRIVATE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Hiromi switches on the lights. They're in a warehouse space, maybe 5000 square feet, two stories tall, with a room built inside it and stairs leading up to the interior room. Paintings everywhere, the walls are painted, the stairs are painted, the floor is amess with color, tarps, woodslabs. He's stretching canvasses. The windows are blacked out. Hiromi picks up a tiny remote that was on a shelf and turns on music. The place is dense with books; he has free-standing bookshelves perpendicular to the wall, old movie posters. There's a wide chair swing mounted from the ceiling with chain. It is plushly cushioned like a most comfortable couch. Empty wine bottles litter the floor. The place is ridiculously appointed, eclectic, messy, lived in. Atlas films. Hannah goes in. She sees a large-format book of underwater animals, opens it. There's writing over every page in the book: Masuda's notes, a cryptic mesh of English and Japanese. Hannah closes the book. Next to it is an unopened bottle: the 1787 Chteau d'Yquem, plain label, bottle a bit too wide and round for modern tastes.

MASUDA. Open that if you want.

Masuda picks up an empty wine bottle.

MASUDA. *(his pronunciation of the German is perfect)* This is Maximin Grunhaus Abtsberg Spatlese, 1989.

He throws the bottle at a wall and it shatters.

MASUDA. That's what I drink.

Hannah closes the book. She sees the paintings in this studio. They're completely different than what was in the gallery. These are not Masuda's signature style. Those were technical, those were industrial. These are still abstract, but these are biological. Those were black and white and shades of gray. These are green, and blue, and deep red. Those were brushed and marked and photocopied. These were applied solely with hands and feet; Masuda's fingerprints, literally, are in them. Hannah is overwhelmed.

HANNAH. Why don't you show these.

MASUDA. *(he makes quote marks with his fingers)* “Hiromi Masuda” didn’t paint those.

Hannah sits on the floor. Masuda dials a number.

MASUDA. I need a grilled cheese sandwich and another case of Grunhaus.

Hannah turns to Masuda. Masuda hangs up the phone. Atlas films everything.

INT. MASUDA’S PRIVATE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

They all sit on the chair swing, Hannah in the middle. Masuda expertly refreshes Hannah’s glass. He admonishes Atlas for continuing to film.

MASUDA. Atlas, drink your drink.

Atlas puts the camera in his lap. He has some of the wine.

MASUDA. How close are we, anyway?

ATLAS. We have a long way to go.

MASUDA. Weeks? Days? Doesn’t it air in like thirteen days?

ATLAS. Indeed it does.

Atlas hits the wine, hard. Hannah picks up Atlas’ camera. It’s still recording.

MASUDA. Don’t worry man, you’ll get it. How does it look so far?

Hannah points the camera at Atlas.

ATLAS. *(looking into the lens of his own camera)* I don’t usually discuss that with the subject.

MASUDA. That’s OK, I was just being polite.

Atlas goes back to a normal conversation stance with Masuda; he seems to ignore the camera’s presence.

ATLAS. Are you gonna watch it?

MASUDA. I’ll watch it.

ATLAS. Do you have a television?

MASUDA. I’m sure someone . . . on this floor . . . has a television. I will watch it.

HANNAH. Why don’t you do an interview on me?

ATLAS. Cause someone stole my camera.

HANNAH. There’s probably a big review board or something to decide Who is the Next Subject of the Atlas Interview. How do they decide?

ATLAS. I decide.

HANNAH. What made you pick Hiromi here.

ATLAS. The review board told me to.

MASUDA. Is that true?

ATLAS. Nah I just liked your art.

HANNAH. Saw his painting in a window?

ATLAS. Saw him painting on a window.

MASUDA. Really?

ATLAS. Yeah, I was riding my bike and you were out there with masking tape and sharpies decorating someone's window. I'm pretty sure your contribution was not solicited by the owner of the window.

MASUDA. What gave you that idea?

ATLAS. Um, I don't know, maybe the fact that you were wearing a ski mask?

MASUDA. I get this nice letter in the mail saying Julian Atlas would like to interview me ...NBC letterhead ...had no idea you were scouting me out on the street.

Atlas hesitates ... then he goes ahead and says it.

ATLAS. I'd been filming you for eleven days before they sent that letter.

MASUDA. Is that illegal?

ATLAS. Not once you've signed the release forms.

Masuda isn't concerned, he's just interested in the technicalities.

MASUDA. But that ...retroactively ...?

ATLAS. It's hard to prove. Who can say when that stuff was filmed. Unless you were filming me filming you.

MASUDA. Maybe I was.

Atlas chuckles. Masuda finds, for the first time, a shred of concern.

MASUDA. What kind of stuff were you filming?

Atlas takes a long swig of the wine.

INT. MASUDA'S PRIVATE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Atlas has passed out from the wine. His camera is back in his sleeping hand. Hannah moves Atlas' leg so she can get up from the swing. She takes a wine glass from Atlas' other hand and sets it down quietly. Masuda gets up from the swing, standing politely. Hannah stretches. She and Masuda trade glances.

MASUDA. Let's take a walk.

EXT. ATOP THE ROOF OF MASUDA'S WAREHOUSE - DAWN

Hannah and Masuda come out of a stairway onto the roof of the warehouse. The bottom parts of the sky are starting to show yellows and blues. Hannah carries a fresh bottle of wine. She skips to the edge of the roof. There's a small raised lip around the perimeter. She looks over, then climbs up and sits on the edge. Masuda is not worried. He sits with her. They drink together, sharing the bottle. He looks down and sees Hannah's limousine parked across the street.

MASUDA. That must get annoying.

HANNAH. Just wait.

The front seat, passenger-side door of the limo door opens. Jesus steps out. His phone is to his ear. Hannah's phone rings.

HANNAH. Yes Jesus.

Jesus is gesticulating rather wildly with his free hand.

HANNAH. I know Jesus. I will. Don't sweat it.

She hangs up. Jesus shakes his head and gets back in the car.

MASUDA. He's worried you'll jump?

HANNAH. He's worried someone will see me.

MASUDA. And if someone does?

HANNAH. He doesn't have any backup security so it's just him and the driver. They wouldn't be able to handle the mob.

MASUDA. Mob?

HANNAH. Oh yes.

MASUDA. *(he says it like a prayer, he's giving thanks)* I am glad to be invisible.

Someone screams up from below. It's a LITTLE GIRL walking with HER BROTHER to school. They're maybe in the first or second grade.

LITTLE GIRL. Hannah Gonzalez!

HANNAH. *(raising the bottle of wine)* Hello little girl!

Jesus gets out of the car. He raises his arms and shrugs like: what are you doing? Hannah yells down to him.

HANNAH. What? *(to the little girl)* Have a nice day at school!

Someone opens a window and looks out. The girl's brother drags her onward. He opens a giant umbrella over them, as if in protection from the voice from above. Hannah thwarts their progress.

HANNAH. What's your name little girl?

The little girl's face lights up like a Christmas tree. She turns and stops, beaming up at Hannah.

LITTLE GIRL. It's Hillary!

Hannah stands up on the ledge. She balances herself with outstretched arms, one hand still gripping the wine. Jesus' phone goes to his ear.

HANNAH. Hillary!

Masuda takes Hannah's free hand in his, encouraging her off the ledge.

HANNAH. *(on the surface, energetic and believable, but obviously something she's said a thousand times)* I love you Hillary!

LITTLE GIRL. *(totally sparked, totally genuine)* I love you too Hannah!

The girl's brother drags her onward. They do go, but Hillary keeps stealing glances at the roof. Similarly, Masuda leads Hannah from the ledge. She takes a large gulp of wine. Masuda takes the bottle from her and sets it on the roof. Hannah's phone is ringing.

HANNAH. *(angrily)* What is it?

EXT. STREET - DAWN

By the limousine, a couple of ONLOOKERS are already starting to take note. One tries to peer inside the limo. The other looks up at the roof. Jesus stands on the street. For the moment he benevolently ignores the onlookers. He speaks into his phone.

JESUS. We gotta go.

EXT. ATOP THE ROOF OF MASUDA'S WAREHOUSE - DAWN

Hannah and Masuda go into the stairway and down the stairs.

HANNAH. Bitchin wine.

MASUDA. Yeah, those Germans know their stuff.

The mostly-full bottle of Grunhaus 1989 sits on the roof as they go out of sight.

EXT. I-95 SOUTH OF MANHATTAN - DAY

ALL IN ONE SHOT: Hannah's caravan of tourbusses, limousines, and 18-wheelers is parked along the side of interstate highway 95. Drivers and roadies and security guards all stand and sit around. Fields and then factories and then the Manhattan skyline lie behind the caravan. Hannah, Masuda, and Atlas are the only ones moving: all the crew people are stationary. Atlas is filming Hannah take Masuda's hand and try to lead him into her bus. Masuda won't go.

HANNAH. Come on.

MASUDA. You're drunk.

HANNAH. So what?

MASUDA. I don't hold hands.

HANNAH. Just come inside for a second.

MASUDA. Why?

HANNAH. I wanna lie down, I'm tired.

MASUDA. Go ahead, then. Lie down.

HANNAH. I wanna show you something.

MASUDA. Uh-oh.

HANNAH. Not that. Fine. Whatever.

She goes inside the bus. Masuda turns to Atlas.

MASUDA. You OK?

Atlas nods silently behind the camera.

MASUDA. Let's take a little break.

Atlas lowers the camera and watches Masuda go inside Hannah's bus. The door closes.

HANNAH. *(O.S.)* See this? This is what I wanted to show you. *A moment passes.*

MASUDA. *(O.S.)* Wow. That is beautiful. *Another moment.*

MASUDA. *(O.S.)* Can we show Atlas?

HANNAH. *(O.S.)* No. Come with me to LA.

MASUDA. *(O.S.)* We're filming the interview.

HANNAH. *(O.S.)* Film it on the way.

MASUDA. *(O.S.)* This interview is my first priority right now.

HANNAH. *(O.S.)* I'll leave you two alone.

MASUDA. *(O.S.)* The thing is, it's the other way around: he has to be with me. All the time. Whatever I'm doing, he's there.

HANNAH. *(O.S.)* I understand that.

During this time, Atlas has gotten bored and discouraged, has kicked the dirt, looked around at the roadies who look at him like he's a freak, and finally sat down on the ground. Atlas' back is to Hannah's bus when the door opens and Masuda leans out.

MASUDA. Wanna go to Los Angeles?

Atlas doesn't realize Masuda is speaking to him.

MASUDA. Atlas!

Atlas turns.

MASUDA. *(smiling)* You wanna go to Los Angeles?

Atlas stands. Masuda holds the door open for him. Atlas goes to the bus, walks up the steps, and disappears inside.

EXT. I-95 SOUTH OF MANHATTAN - DAY

WIDE ANGLE FROM STREET LEVEL: Hannah's bus pulls onto the road. The caravan is on the road. Clear skies. Limos turn up dust as they peel out and join the 18-wheelers and busses in a long line.

INT. TOURBUSSES - DAY

MONTAGE: HANNAH SHOWS OFF HER STUFF. IT'S MTV CRIBS ON CRACK TO FUN ROAD MUSIC, MAYBE DEVIL'S HAIRCUT—BUT SOMETHING WITH THAT TONE I THINK. Masuda and Atlas follow her through narrow hallways lined with mirrored closets. Hannah models dresses for them. They climb stairs that lead to the roof of one bus where she has a jacuzzi semi-recessed in the roof. They are miraculously in another bus now. In this one Hannah has a dance club with a full bar, strobelight, blacklight, disco balls. Atlas strikes a pose. Masuda takes a shot on a red felt-topped pool table. He's a pro. Atlas opens a refrigerator and looks at Hannah like she's crazy: it's stocked to the gills with Red Bull cans, their labels all facing the same direction. Hannah takes a Red Bull and pops the cap. Atlas opens the next refrigerator: the whole thing is full of chewy toys for infants, rubber ducks, water toys. Masuda goes to the third refrigerator; Hannah blocks him from opening it, her back against the door. Masuda forces her out of the way. Hannah struggles to cover the lens of Atlas' camera. It's not cold inside this refrigerator: this one has been converted

into a closet lined with diamonds. It's full of whips, vibrators, masks, straps. Hannah closes it.

HANNAH. End of interview.

Atlas drives one of the busses for a split second. We see him seated before the huge steering wheel, facing enormous windows, speeding along the open road. The three of them are inside another bus. Hannah flips on the lights: it's a bowling alley with two lanes. Atlas ties on a pair of bowling shoes way too big for him. Out of nowhere, he has on a bowling glove. He stumbles up the lane and launches the ball. It hits hard when it falls. Hannah gets a strike. Masuda bowls backward, through his legs. The caravan crosses over the bridge south of Philadelphia, heading toward the airport and the refineries. The three of them chill in Hannah's dining room. Hannah has three pairs of clothes on, all on top of each other, two different shoes, huge dark sunglasses. Masuda wears one of Hannah's fur coats and no shoes. Atlas straightens his jacket. Two formal waiters serve the threesome lobster while they smoke long cigarettes and drink champagne and laugh and generally act the fool (Mad Hatter tea party feel). Now they speed through Pennsylvania hills as the sun goes down.

INT. MASUDA'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

In a compartment that Hannah has designated for Hiromi Masuda, Hiromi sits on a massive couch while Atlas interviews him. The camera sits on a shelf, framing Masuda.

MASUDA. We wrote letters, I mean she must have written me thirty letters that summer. She had such neat handwriting, print, very artistic/visual. My first kiss was with that girl.

ATLAS. Really.

The door opens. Hannah tip-toes in, sits gingerly.

MASUDA. Yeah, in a church! Our church youth group was having a sleepover and she conveniently forgot to bring her sleeping bag, so we had to share.

Atlas notices Hannah, and is visibly made uncomfortable by her presence, but he says nothing.

ATLAS. What about your parents, or . . . Were there adults at this sleepover?

MASUDA. They weren't paying much attention to us. We used to get away with all kinds of things. We used to ditch church and go across the street to Rite Aid and steal makeup and horoscopes,

those ones that come in the little rolls? The guys would steal makeup for the girls to impress them. Shit, in Vancouver we used to break into soda machines and steal the cash box, this is on a church outing. I won't even tell you what we used to get into at national conferences, these Christian youth conventions.

ATLAS. What did you get into?

MASUDA. That same type of shit.

Atlas waits. Masuda's not going into it.

MASUDA. I don't want to bore you. All I have to say about that is that pastor's kids are the craziest people you'll ever meet.

ATLAS. Who's the minister in your family?

MASUDA. My mother.

ATLAS. Do you consider yourself to be crazy?

MASUDA. Of course.

ATLAS. Let's take a break.

Atlas goes to the camera and switches it off.

ATLAS. I don't usually interview with an audience.

HANNAH. I'm sorry.

Hannah gets up.

ATLAS. We're done for the moment.

Hannah stays.

ATLAS. I thought we had an understanding here. You can see that I'm working.

Atlas wipes his forehead.

ATLAS. You can see that, right?

Hannah goes to him, takes his hands in hers.

HANNAH. I'm sorry. When you want to be left alone, just let me know.

Atlas takes his hands back.

ATLAS. The assumption should be that unless I tell you otherwise, I am working. I appreciate your hospitality but if I'm in a room and the door is closed . . .

Atlas is totally flustered. He tries to keep the surface calm, though.

ATLAS. Can you have them stop? Have them stop.

EXT. OHIO HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The bus and Hannah's limo pull off to the side of the road. The bus door opens, Atlas steps out. Headlights approach from a long way off, pass, and vanish in the night. Atlas breathes to relax. Hannah

comes to the door and looks out. Masuda comes outside and goes to Atlas.

MASUDA. You OK?

ATLAS. I'm rethinking the angles on this one.

Another car flies by. Atlas watches it go, then looks the other way, into the darkness. He turns and goes back to the bus, past Hannah, who stays looking at Masuda. Masuda turns to Hannah and it's like, somewhere deep within, he's trying to discern something.

INT. MASUDA'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Masuda situates himself on the couch. Atlas goes over his notes. Hannah lingers at the door.

MASUDA. Do you want her to leave now?

Atlas doesn't look up from his notes.

ATLAS. What? No. No, Hannah . . .

He looks at her.

ATLAS. Please stay, if you like.

HANNAH. I can go.

ATLAS. No, stay and help.

Hannah goes to Atlas.

HANNAH. OK. What can I do?

ATLAS. Sit on that couch.

Hannah considers this. Atlas doesn't wait for her to decide. He presses record on the camera.

ATLAS. What's something you've never told anyone?

MASUDA. I had two snakes once. They were California King snakes. I fed one to the other.

Hannah goes to the couch and sits.

MASUDA. It's a cannibalistic species, they eat snakes, even other kingsnakes. I was tired of having them, they were making my room stink, so I put them in the same cage together.

INT. MASUDA'S PRIVATE WAREHOUSE - DAY

We see the act Masuda is describing as he tells it: the two snakes, one thrown in with the other, instantly poised for death or killing: the albino clings to the roof of the cage.

MASUDA. (V.O.) The most beautiful one is the one who lost.
Lightning strike—instant fast! The melanistic snake hits the albino. The albino's head is caught in his jaws.

MASUDA. They do this to each other naturally, in the wild, they eat each other.

Masuda is standing above the cage. This is his doing.

INT. MASUDA'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Masuda is staring at the surface of the couch.

MASUDA. In nature, this would have happened anyway.

Masuda looks directly into camera.

MASUDA. But those two wouldn't have eaten each other if I hadn't put them in together.

INT. MASUDA'S PRIVATE WAREHOUSE - DAY

The melanistic snake mercilessly devours the albino. There is no hope for the loser.

INT. MASUDA'S COMPARTMENT - NIGHT

Atlas looks at Hannah.

ATLAS. What about you?

HANNAH. What about me what?

ATLAS. What's something you've never told anyone?

HANNAH. I don't know.

ATLAS. Sure you do. Tell us a secret.

HANNAH. Don't you have to get me to sign a release form or something?

ATLAS. Only if I want to use it.

HANNAH. I wanna hear more about Hiromi's first kiss, that girl in the church, what was her name?

MASUDA. Her name was Adele.

HANNAH. You wanna kiss me now?

Hannah moves in on him on the couch.

MASUDA. Don't you have a boyfriend?

HANNAH. No.

MASUDA. I was sure I read you had a boyfriend . . . or a relationship . . . with . . . a . . . Baby?

HANNAH. God no.

MASUDA. Is that his whole name?

HANNAH. Are you gonna kiss me or not?

MASUDA. Is it OK with Atlas?

ATLAS. Do whatever you like.

HANNAH. I'm gonna ask you a question right now and I want you to answer honestly.

ATLAS. He always answers honestly.

Hannah takes off her shirt.

HANNAH. Do you like my body? Do you want to fuck me?

The camera hones in on Masuda's face.

MASUDA. Yes.

Hannah kneels over Masuda and they kiss. Atlas stops recording.

ATLAS. Interview's over.

Atlas goes out of Masuda's compartment into the hallway. Hannah crawls off Masuda and puts her shirt on. Masuda stands up and turns away from Hannah. Hannah leaves the compartment. Masuda thinks.

EXT. OHIO CORNFIELD - DAY

The caravan is stopped beside and in a cornfield. The bulk of the busses and trucks are parked on the side of a two-lane road, but Hannah's bus and limo are in the field. Roadies, guards, assistants are everywhere, smoking, playing cards, reading, watching TV, drinking beer, women crew flirting with the men crew, chilling, it's the afternoon. Hannah, Masuda, Atlas, and Jesus sit in giant lawn chairs, sunning. Jesus has his shirt off, the wide glass in his hand cradling a frozen, fruit-filled Marguerita. Atlas is on the phone.

ATLAS. Everything's fine. We'll coordinate that by phone. I hired those guys to cut, I don't have to edit every single shot. I'll give it a once-over. Besides . . . you're sending my laptop . . . and a bunch of other stuff. I'll message you a list when we get off the phone. I have no idea. *(to Hannah)* Where are we?

HANNAH. Yellow Springs.

ATLAS. We're in Ohio. Yellow Springs. *(to Hannah)* How long are we gonna be here?

HANNAH. Leaving tonight.

ATLAS. Where are we gonna be tomorrow?

HANNAH. Jesus.

JESUS. Kansas City, Kansas.

ATLAS. Send my stuff to Kansas City overnight. Kansas. Actually, fuck it I'm not gonna text you a list just send me everything in the cage. And send my bike.

Atlas hangs up.

ATLAS. Hannah. Can one of these guys run an errand for me?

Hannah slurps her drink through a wide straw.

HANNAH. Jesus.

Jesus motions to one of the security guards. The GUARD comes over and kneels beside Atlas. As Atlas is relaying his list to the guard, a helicopter descends. The guard leans in close to Atlas and Atlas yells his list. Masuda looks up at the helicopter. Hannah and Jesus are nonplussed. The helicopter lands in the middle of the cornfield, sixty feet from where they're sunning themselves. BABY, 34 and balding, gets out of the helicopter. He's wearing a black suit and designer sunglasses. Gretchen also gets out of the helicopter. She brushes off her shoulder and looks freakishly at the corn: where the fuck is she? Baby carries a violet nylon laptop computer bag, cheesily out of place with the rest of his attire. He tears across the cornfield, man on a mission. A new set of trucks and busses arrives. A COORDINATOR, a woman in a skirt suit, gets out of an SUV from this new caravan and meets Baby in the field. She carries a stack of ruled yellow pads. Somehow, she is using them all at the same time. Baby points to a place in the field.

BABY. I want the big tent right there and get those air conditioning guys in here. Talk to Mandy. Get the dancers ready. We need crew food. I thought I saw a Quiznos on the way in, get everybody subs. Find me an Indian place, there's a huge Indian community here. I want chicken vindaloo, no spice. The tent. Get the tent up right away.

The coordinator leaves. She goes to the people getting out of the vehicles of the new caravan and starts coordinating. Baby continues to where Hannah and friends are sunning. Masuda is the only one paying Baby any attention.

BABY. These your friends?

Hannah keeps her glasses on.

HANNAH. Hiromi Masuda. Julian Atlas.

BABY. Baby. Nice to meet you. *(to Hannah)* Where the fuck you been?

Hannah looks around like: we've been right here. Gretchen sits on Masuda's lap. Hannah is not happy about that. Gretchen takes Masuda's drink. Masuda lets Gretchen take it, but he doesn't seem interested in her.

BABY. Playtime's over. Thirty-five minutes. Thirty . . . five . . . minutes. In the tent. The new choreography.

Baby and Hannah keep each other's gaze. Neither wants to back down first. The helicopter noise has subsided somewhat. Baby turns and goes. Masuda sizes up Baby, looks to see Hannah's reaction to him. Atlas finishes relaying his list.

ATLAS. Just get all the batteries they have. And I need a very long extension cord, you know, hardware store, like a hundred feet, get two. And get me some qtips. Q-Tip brand qtips, wooden stem if they've got it. And a bottle of witchhazel and some Panna waters.

Hannah watches Atlas, especially when he says "witchhazel". Atlas meets her gaze; he's not embarrassed. Nor is Hannah judging him. Gretchen leans back on Masuda. Her hand falls on Masuda's leg.

GRETCHEN. Jesus, I can feel your dick.

Hannah punches Gretchen in the leg.

HANNAH. Step off, bitch!

Atlas is unphased.

ATLAS. Throw in a bottle of witchhazel for my friend here.

Hannah smirks. The guard is writing this all on a scrap of paper. He catches up, nods. Atlas hands him his American Express card. It seems especially large in the thirteen-year-old hand.

ATLAS. Thanks, man.

INT. THE TENT - DAY

The tent is set up. There are fifty people inside. Some sort of modular air-conditioning system has been assembled inside. There are racks of lights, stadium speakers mounted from frames, technicians at a huge mixer. Dancers lounge everywhere, stretching. Baby is sitting at a folding table with his face in a laptop. The cheesy nylon case is open, papers and junk sticking out of it, and he has photos of dancers strewn around the desk. Baby checks his enormous, tacky watch. The coordinator comes to him.

BABY. Find Hannah.

The coordinator goes, but before she gets to the door of the tent Hannah comes in. She's dressed in a zip-off athletic warmer, a baseball cap, dohpe Nikes. Atlas is in tow, but he quickly splits off from Hannah and finds a large water cooler to sit on. He finds GUS, one of Hannah's road crew, and sits with him. Gus is one of the roadies who looked at Atlas like a freak when he and Masuda first went to Hannah's caravan. By now the two have developed a rapport: Gus greets Atlas like he's one of the boys. Gretchen is with them. She plays Final Fantasy on a portable console; Atlas takes notice. Baby notes Atlas' presence and motions to the coordinator. She goes to Baby. Hannah goes to the front/center of the portable floor. The other dancers take their positions, the litter of them suddenly becoming rigid, organized.

BABY. Thank you.

Hannah zips off her suit top. She has a sleeveless spandex top on underneath. Someone takes her suit top away and leaves a Dasani at her feet. The choreographer, BRENDAN, steps up beside Hannah. He nods to someone at the sound board, and music starts. Baby leans in toward the coordinator.

BABY. That kid tries to film anything in here I'll fuck NBC so far up the ass they'll be storing toasters.

Atlas intently observes Brendan and the rest of the dancers executing a series of moves. Hannah watches Brendan for the moves, but it's a relaxed thing for her, it's not like she has to work too hard to learn them. Baby gives the coordinator two stacks of oversized photos.

BABY. These are probablys, these are maybes. Get em all in a studio Wednesday and have Brendan take a look.

The coordinator takes the photos and starts making calls. As Brendan and the other dancers go through the moves, Hannah picks them up, she executes portions of the sequence.

BRENDAN. Grrl, you been eatin' ice cream, I can see it on your ass. Two and three and. *(a chant, in time with the music)* Strawberry ice cream makes me fat. Chocolate ice cream makes me fat. Good. Good. Now just watch me on this next part.

Just Brendan does this part of the sequence. Hannah picks up her Dasani and, while drinking, looks at Baby. Baby winks.

INT. HANNAH'S BUS - DAY

Hannah rushes into the bus. She throws down her workout gear, goes to the back—no one there. She makes her way to the very front of the bus. She pulls back a curtain. Atlas is there, sitting cross-legged in the passenger seat. He's watching footage on his camera's viewfinder. His clipboard is out. He's taking notes with a pencil.

HANNAH. Where's Hiromi?

Atlas nods out the massive front windows. A storm is brewing.

ATLAS. In the field.

Hannah leaves him.

EXT. OHIO CORNFIELD - DAY

Hannah comes traipsing through the field. The sky is gray behind her. Wind sweeps the tall stalks back and forth. Hannah looks ragged. She looks this way, goes that way. She doesn't see him. Then she comes upon him. Masuda is lying on his back staring at the brewing storm. There's a brown paper bag beside him, ripped such that most of its original form is lost. Hannah kneels beside Masuda and looks in the bag.

HANNAH. What is this?

Tears are streaming down the sides of Masuda's face.

HANNAH. Baby. You should have found me.

Hannah puts her arms around him, she sits him up from behind. The rearrangement that happens as Hannah sits him up causes a knife—a plain black rectangle with cord wrapped around one end meant to serve as a handle—to fall on the dirt. Hannah sees Masuda has cut his legs. He has bled, but tentatively. He didn't cut himself all the way. Masuda is broken down—the drugs have un-earthed his rawest self.

MASUDA. I'm done. I'm fucking done.

Hannah checks Masuda's pulse on his neck. She tosses the knife aside. Masuda scrambles to pick it up. Hannah goes after him.

HANNAH. Stop!

Masuda gets the knife. He stands, staggers. Hannah catches him and he throws her off. She hits the ground.

MASUDA. I am a SUPERMAN. I am a sane extraordinary human FUCKING being THESE PEOPLE have NO IDEA how to talk to ME and they haven't for quite SOME TIME!

Hannah watches fearfully. Then Masuda falls. Hannah picks him up again, holding her in his arms. Masuda is terrified. Hannah comforts him.

MASUDA. You've been nice to me.

Hannah just holds him; she rocks him back and forth. Masuda gently picks up the knife. They both look at it. Masuda lets it fall.

MASUDA. I was watering the earth.

Hannah picks it up and tosses it out of view, into the corn.

MASUDA. I've been as far out as a person can go. Now, if I can only find my way back again.

Hannah tries to stand him up.

HANNAH. Come on.

MASUDA. No. I'm fine. Stay here. We'll stay here. We'll watch the storm.

They settle, and Hannah wipes Masuda's tears and holds him in her arms as the wind and the rain and the sky begin to unfold.

INT. HANNAH'S BUS - DAY

Hannah and Baby are in Hannah's private bus. Baby plays a full-sized portable keyboard: the melody of some cheesy pop song. It's bright outside.

HANNAH. That's not all it's about.

BABY. That's what it's about, baby. You're not gonna sit there and tell me—

HANNAH. I know that's part of it. But there's more to it than that.

BABY. OK.

HANNAH. *(as in what's that mean: "OK")* What's "OK"?

BABY. Forget it. Don't get hyperactive.

Hannah stands and backs away.

HANNAH. I'm just asking you what "OK" means.

BABY. It means nothing. Sit down.

She won't move.

BABY. Come on. We got ten days on this.

HANNAH. You do it.

BABY. I think you might be the most immature person I know.

HANNAH. Fuck you.

She sits down.

BABY. *(as in, "OK, here we go")* OK.

He plays with one hand on the keyboard.

BABY. (*singing*) ... like we're on a rollercoaster ...

HANNAH. And you think that's about sex.

BABY. It implies it.

HANNAH. Oh, come on. Little kids listen to this shit you think they think it's about sex?

He thinks a sec.

BABY. Yes.

Hannah pushes herself back from their sprawling work area.

HANNAH. Oh, god.

BABY. On a certain level, on a certain level yes.

Hannah's gathering her things, going for the door.

HANNAH. We can do this later.

BABY. If this Dasani deal falls through—

HANNAH. I need a massage. Maybe tonight we can finish this up—

BABY. Jesse has to approve the lyrics before the concert tie-in deal is approved—

HANNAH. Yeah?—

BABY. The script for the commercial is based on these lyrics—

HANNAH. Uh huh, OK—

BABY. And if these lyrics aren't finalized—

HANNAH. I'll talk to you in a couple hours.

BABY. Hannah.

HANNAH. Why don't you blow me.

BABY. This is eighteen million dollars.

HANNAH. Um, yes, I know that.

BABY. Come on ... I need you. Sit. Sit.

HANNAH. It's not gonna be "like a rollercoaster."

BABY. Fine, we'll punch it out together.

HANNAH. We're not gonna punch it out, either, this is not how I do this.

BABY. (*musically*) I'll take you out after ...

HANNAH. Joy.

She sits. Baby starts to play.

BABY. (*singing*) like a rollercoaster / feels just like you are inside me

HANNAH. Exactly how is that a Dasani tie-in.

BABY. Don't fuck me on this Hannah. You agreed—

HANNAH. I didn't agree to that!

BABY. OK, your little Enzo? You know who paid for that?

HANNAH. I did!

BABY. Who got you the Dasani deal?

Hannah is quiet.

HANNAH. Ron Murphy called me the other day—

Baby explodes.

BABY. I DON'T GIVE A FUCK ABOUT RON MURPHY!!

Baby lifts one end of the keyboard and throws it down on the table. The sheet music and music stand fall off.

BABY. RON MURPHY HAS MAURINE WONDERBITCH! THAT'S ALL HE'S GOT. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT GIRL IS GONNA BE IN EIGHTEEN MONTHS!?

Baby kicks the chair he was sitting in.

BABY. YESTERDAY'S WHORE.

Hannah stares at Baby.

BABY. This is the industry. This is how this is done.

HANNAH. Fuck it, lemme hear your version.

BABY. You can tweak it . . .

Hannah just sits. Baby puts the music stand back on the keyboard and the sheet music back on the stand. He rights his chair. He starts to play and sing. Hannah glares at him.

BABY. I'm inside you / you're inside me / rolling over / roller-coaster

HANNAH. What about that part.

Baby stops. He puts his hand on Hannah's leg. Hannah pulls her leg away, looks at him like "why did you do that?" He looks at her like "what did I do wrong?"

HANNAH. Is that part in the contract?

INT. HANNAH'S BUS - NIGHT

Hannah, Masuda, and Atlas are lounged in the bedroom part of Hannah's private bus. Atlas isn't filming, but his camera lies close to hand.

HANNAH. Come on. Come on in.

Jesus is at the door. He comes in hesitantly. The room is filled with smoke, red lights are on. Masuda is taking drags off a joint.

HANNAH. Join us, Jesus, relax yourself.

Jesus sits on the edge of the bed, the only place other than the floor to sit. Hannah and Masuda are on the floor. Atlas is also on the edge of the bed. Hannah spreads herself out on the expanse of floor.

HANNAH. Come down, down. Down to the floor. You'll be much more comfortable.

Jesus uncomfortably settles onto the floor. Hannah rolls over. Masuda offers Jesus the joint. Jesus takes it, smokes.

HANNAH. We were just thinking of playing a game.

Jesus looks at Hannah with something like fear. He takes the joint from his mouth. Hannah goes to him.

HANNAH. Don't worry, don't worry. It's just pot.

Hannah laughs. She guides Jesus' joint hand to his mouth. This last comment elicits interest from Masuda.

HANNAH. Now. Is that better?

Jesus coughs. Smoke fills the air. Hannah is dancing around the room.

HANNAH. What game should we play?

JESUS. Guitar Hero.

HANNAH. (*really scolding; she's not gracious here*) Don't be a dickfuck I'm not playing Guitar Hero.

Jesus starts to get up.

JESUS. I'm tired, Hannah. Got a long day tomorrow.

HANNAH. Sit the fuck down. You can take tomorrow off.

Masuda is fascinated.

HANNAH. Now. We're gonna play my game.

Hannah goes to her closet, the one that looks like a refrigerator but is really for toys. She opens it. Only she can see what's inside. She takes something out and puts it behind her back. She comes back to the pseudo-circle of visitors and sits on the floor. She addresses everyone.

HANNAH. This is the middle of buttfuck Indiana, and I'm trying to forget that.

As she speaks, Hannah takes a matte black bag from behind her back. It is closed with a drawstring. Perhaps 1/3 of the total volume of the bag is full . . . unknown items. Poky edges and bulges shape the cloth surface.

HANNAH. Jesus and I have invented a foolproof method . . .

Hannah sets the bag on the carpet before her.

HANNAH. . . for transporting ourselves far away from places like these. When we happen to find ourselves in them. (*to Masuda*) Bring us a drink.

Masuda goes to her bar.

HANNAH. (*looking not at Masuda but at Jesus*) Jesus gets to choose.

Jesus says nothing.

HANNAH. Go ahead, choose.

Jesus looks like he's about to crack.

JESUS. Everclear.

HANNAH. Oh, that's an appropriate choice. Geographically, I mean.

Masuda is confused.

HANNAH. It's in the cabinet.

While Masuda is looking Hannah tugs open the drawstring on the bag and peers into it.

HANNAH. In the Tupperware container?

Masuda selects a tall rectangular container from the cabinet. It's 3/4 full of clear liquid. He peels back the lid and inhales.

HANNAH. Jesus. This is your part of the show.

To Masuda's and Atlas' shock, Jesus stands up and takes off his shirt. He shuffles off his pants. Jesus standing, Hannah takes the Tupperware container from Masuda and gives it to Jesus. Jesus starts chugging. He drinks more Everclear than the average-sized person could survive. Hand shaking, he sets the Tupperware container down. Hannah looks up at Jesus. His forehead is covered in sweat.

HANNAH. Now. Let's begin.

Hannah empties the bag onto the floor. We don't see what was in the bag, only the sounds of its contents hitting each other as they fall into a pile. There are flat plastic sounds. Perhaps dice. Some items make no sound at all. The most prominent sound is clinking steel . . . chain links. Atlas stealthily goes for his camera. Hannah shakes her head severely. Atlas puts the camera down.

INT. UNDERGROUND LOADING AREA - NIGHT

An enormous underground loading area, like what would be under a stadium or concert hall. Hannah's bus, flanked by security vehicles, limos, and other busses, is parked there. Neon lights show concrete columns and floors. The space seems to recede forever, as though there isn't a back wall. A door on Hannah's bus opens. Jesus comes out, half dressed, holding his shirt to his chest. He's been crying. He makes his way down the stair. Masuda comes out after him, puts an arm on Jesus' shoulder. Jesus recoils. Masuda backs off. Masuda stands watching as Jesus goes to one of the other busses and goes inside. The sound of Jesus closing the door makes a cavernous echo. Masuda holds open the door to Hannah's bus,

then steps back, closes it, and walks off in the opposite direction that Jesus went. The caravan is completely silent from the outside.

INT. HANNAH'S BUS - NIGHT

Hannah sits on the edge of her bed smoking a cigarette. Atlas stands opposite Hannah, facing her, in shock.

HANNAH. What?

ATLAS. Nothing.

HANNAH. We do this all the time.

ATLAS. Fine.

HANNAH. He's used to it. Get Hiromi.

ATLAS. You get him.

Hannah smiles.

HANNAH. Does Hiromi have a girlfriend?

ATLAS. Why?

HANNAH. I'd like to submit an application.

ATLAS. I'm not his secretary.

Atlas starts to go.

HANNAH. Wait.

She pats the bed beside her. Atlas stays, but he doesn't sit on the bed.

HANNAH. Tell me about him.

Atlas holds the camera out to Hannah.

ATLAS. Are you interviewing me?

Hannah looks at Atlas down her nose (you're crazy). Atlas shrugs and starts, again, to go.

HANNAH. I wouldn't be on camera?

ATLAS. No.

Atlas goes to her. He puts the camera in her hand.

ATLAS. You record me.

Hannah turns on the camera, points it at Atlas.

HANNAH. You won't use this?

ATLAS. For what? Hannah Gonzalez interviews Julian Atlas? I express my opinions on the painter Hiromi Masuda and make a joke of my credibility?

HANNAH. If you use this we will sue you.

ATLAS. I know how it works.

HANNAH. Someone will. It won't be me, but someone will.

Atlas settles onto the bed with Hannah. He poses: his impression of an interview subject. Hannah presses a giant record button.

HANNAH. Ha!

She trips out laughing at the circumstance (and because she's high), falls over sideways on the bed. Rights herself.

HANNAH. I'm here tonight with Julian Atlas. We're taking a deeper look at the painter, Hiromi Masuda.

Atlas smiles politely.

HANNAH. Thanks for being with us, Mr. Atlas.

ATLAS. I'm glad to be here.

HANNAH. Tell me, how well do you know Hiromi Masuda?

ATLAS. I've been interviewing him for five weeks.

HANNAH. No shit. So, is he like a pervert or what.

ATLAS. What do you mean by pervert.

HANNAH. Does he suck on little boys' pee-pees, I have no fucking clue . . .

Hannah falls over laughing. She continues the interview on her side.

HANNAH. Do you think he likes me, Atlas?

ATLAS. I don't know. What makes you so into him?

HANNAH. Has he talked with you about me?

ATLAS. No.

HANNAH. Oh, fuck you, I know he has.

ATLAS. He's very closed-lipped about some things. Do you want me to bring you up in conversation and see what he says?

HANNAH. Would you?

ATLAS. If you like.

HANNAH. Well if it seems natural. What kind of girls does he like?

ATLAS. Young ones.

HANNAH. How young are we talking about here?

ATLAS. Your age. Plus or minus about ten years.

Hannah is still lying on her side. The way she's speaking with Atlas is intimate and quiet, as though they're lovers lying in bed with each other.

HANNAH. Who's he seeing now.

ATLAS. He says he's on sabbatical.

Hannah's voice is sleepy.

HANNAH. What's sabbatical.

ATLAS. When you take a year off work.

HANNAH. Oh.

ATLAS. Why did you do that to Jesus?

HANNAH. He likes doing it. Everyone likes doing it. Don't you—oh, wait, you're thirteen, you don't know anything. About that I mean. Do you?

ATLAS. When's the first time he did that with you?

HANNAH. I have no idea. Do you know what happened to me in Fresno? I'm at this venue, this is last year. A guy throws his underwear on stage and they had shit in them.

ATLAS. What else have people thrown at you?

HANNAH. Bottles, shoes, Chapstick, wallets, knives, tampons, umbrellas, condoms—not often, but sometimes. I mean all the time in the wrapper. Only sometimes used. Water bottles . . . fucking . . . crumpled receipts, whatever, people are crazy.

Hannah lets the camera fall out of her hands. She spaces out. Atlas picks up the camera and turns it on Hannah. She looks at him, she sees that he's recording her.

ATLAS. Do you mind if I take a closer look at you?

HANNAH. What do you want to know about me? That I'm a tainted psychopathic freak? I am.

Hannah covers the lens. Her hand fills the frame, blacking it out.

HANNAH. End of interview.

She lets the lens come uncovered. She laughs, then settles down. Julian films her in silence for a moment before he speaks.

ATLAS. Where'd you meet Jesus?

Hannah looks straight into the camera. She answers sincerely, and soberly.

HANNAH. He's a relative, actually.

INT. ATLAS' COMPARTMENT - DAY

In some bus, Hannah has apportioned a compartment for Atlas to use. His editing station is set up in there. A million screens before him, though not quite as many as in New York. He sits in the dark, reviewing footage. It's the tape that he and Hannah recorded the other night. In this footage, Atlas is behind the camera.

ATLAS. (O.S.) He's a quiet guy.

HANNAH. Not with you.

ATLAS. (O.S.) With me he knows it's gonna be on TV.

HANNAH. Don't you think he would find me cute?

ATLAS. (O.S.) I imagine so.

HANNAH. Have you seen him with anyone?

Masuda comes to the door of Atlas' compartment. He looks in.

ATLAS. (O.S.) I don't sleep over the guy's house.

HANNAH. He doesn't talk about anyone?

ATLAS. (O.S.) I try never to force a question.

Masuda quietly steps into the editing room. Atlas doesn't notice.

HANNAH. Maybe I'm too Latina. Do Japanese people hate Mexicans or something?

ATLAS. (O.S.) If he doesn't think you're beautiful—

HANNAH. What?

ATLAS. (O.S.) Nothing.

HANNAH. What were you saying?

ATLAS. (O.S.) If he doesn't see that you're beautiful, then he's crazy.

HANNAH. Awww ... you're so cute.

ATLAS. (O.S.) No I'm not.

HANNAH. But you are. If you were a couple years older, who knows.

Hannah smiles warmly into the camera.

HANNAH (CONT'D). Anyway, it seems the trail's gone cold.

ATLAS. (O.S.) I wouldn't know.

HANNAH. You don't think he would have made a move by now?

ATLAS. (O.S.) I wouldn't know.

Atlas jumps back to an earlier point in the footage and re-watches it.

HANNAH. Awww ... you're so cute.

ATLAS. (O.S.) No I'm not.

HANNAH. But you are. If you were a couple years older, who knows.

Hannah smiles warmly into the camera. Behind Atlas, Masuda quietly backs out of the room.

INT. HANNAH'S BUS - NIGHT

Hannah and Masuda are in Hannah's bedroom. Hannah and Masuda are on the bed. Hannah is feeding Masuda strawberry ice cream.

HANNAH. Atlas says you don't like Mexicans.

MASUDA. I never said that.

HANNAH. I'm pretty sure he said he had you on tape, saying that.

MASUDA. It's possible. I can't remember.

They're laughing. Atlas comes in, shlepping his equipment. He has better sound equipment than he's been using the last day or so. Everything seems unwieldy in Atlas' arms.

ATLAS. Can I come in?

HANNAH. Aww, Atlas, it's really not a good time.

MASUDA. Nah, let him in.

Hannah glares at Masuda.

HANNAH. But leave the techno-dweeb junk outside, OK, this is where I sleep.

ATLAS. We're working on our interview.

HANNAH. There is no interview, I was just playing—

ATLAS. Not that interview.

Masuda sits up.

MASUDA. You want to work now?

ATLAS. Stay where you are. I want to get you in your natural habitat.

Hannah plops the ice cream container down dejectedly.

MASUDA. How did the footage from last night come out? Do we need to reshoot any of it?

ATLAS. No, that's stuff's fine. I was just feeling inspired.

Jesus ducks in with a call.

JESUS. It's your mom.

HANNAH. I'll call her back.

Jesus goes. Atlas is checking the focus on his camera.

HANNAH. Actually, Atlas. I really don't want you in my room right now.

Masuda and Atlas look at Hannah.

MASUDA. We've got eight days left on this thing, and it's airing.

ATLAS. That means we've got three days left for interviews, cause I don't like to work last minute.

MASUDA. So?

HANNAH. So what?

MASUDA. Can we interview in here?

HANNAH. Well, I was kindof in here right now.

ATLAS. Is that yes or no?

Hannah sighs.

ATLAS. *(to Masuda)* Why don't you get back up there on the bed.

Masuda gets back on the bed. As Julian busts out the lights, Hannah tries to act natural. She leans in to Masuda.

HANNAH. I really don't want him in here right now.

MASUDA. I told you my first priority is the interview.

HANNAH. Atlas, leave. OK. Just leave. I don't care about your deadline. This is my bedroom. This is my friend. We were in here, and you can't be in here.

Atlas starts to pack up. Masuda gets up from the bed.

HANNAH. What's your problem?

MASUDA. We've got eight days.

Hannah shakes her head.

HANNAH. Oh, fuck.

She motions (with the ice cream container) for Masuda to return to bed. Atlas continues setting up to shoot.

INT. BASKETBALL ARENA - DAY

Inside a basketball arena, Hanna, Baby, the coordinator, Brendan, and the dancers are assembled. Baby has his makeshift work center operational. Music blares. Hannah and the dancers execute a routine. Brendan faces them, talking through a large electric megaphone.

BRENDAN. Ladies, someone must be running a sale on peanut butter. Peanut butter makes you fat. Stacy, I'm going to send you back to Wisconsin if you ruin that step one more time. That's right. You'll be making cheese on your family farm in Wisconsin. Carolyn, you can go make cheese with Stacy in Wisconsin cause I don't know where you're from. Fabulous, that looks better. Six days from now you'll be on stage. Six days from now you'll be on stage. People are paying eighty dollars for these tickets.

Brendan looks to the coordinator. She makes an "up" sign with her fingers.

BRENDAN. Correction, people are paying one-hundred dollars for these tickets.

The coordinator makes an "even-higher-up" sign with her fingers.

BRENDAN. I have no idea what people are paying but they don't want to see you fuck up your moves. Jennifer, Julie, Whatever the Fuck your Name Is With the Eighties Leg Warmers, get off my stage. That's right. Now. Thank you. Don't come back. Thank you. Good and one and— Hannah, you can dance but that's not the choreography. Stop everything.

The music stops.

BRENDAN. Let's see it again, this time with the real moves.

The music starts, but Hannah walks off the basketball court toward Baby's mobile work center. Brendan narrates.

BRENDAN. Hannah, those are not the moves. Baby cannot help you now. Hannah, please, back on stage. Baby, please, send her back. Rehearsal is not over yet.

Baby makes a "cut it" sign to Brendan. The music stops. Everyone stops dancing. Hannah leans in to baby.

HANNAH. Tell him to take ten minutes off.

BABY. Why?

HANNAH. Can't we get a choreographer who's not a faggot?

BABY. I'm not even sure that he is gay.

HANNAH. It's not that he's gay. It's that he's a faggot. *(yelled)* Brendan, can you please take ten minutes off?

BABY. Stay put Brendan. *(to Hannah)* What is going on with you?

HANNAH. I'm sick of this faggot telling me what to do.

BABY. Can you please not say the word faggot.

Hannah goes back on the basketball court. Baby stands up.

HANNAH. Brendan, just . . . take ten minutes off.

BABY. Hannah what the fuck is this?

Hannah takes the megaphone from Brendan. Brendan does the motion of a Vegas dealer showing that his hands are empty, and he steps back toward the bleachers.

HANNAH. *(to the dancers)* We're gonna change this part, OK, the other thing's not working for me—

BABY. Look, honey—

HANNAH. Brendan, what you do is wonderful, don't take this personally—

BRENDAN. I'm not taking it personally—

BABY. The way Brendan has it is fine—

HANNAH. OK, you're not a choreographer.

BABY. Neither are you.

HANNAH. Why don't you . . . work on getting us an Evian tie-in or something.

BABY. Just calm down.

He puts his hand on her shoulder. She shrugs out from under it.

HANNAH. I'm calm. Don't fucking touch me.

BABY. Excuse me?

HANNAH. Don't fucking touch me. Brendan take a break. We're changing a few of the steps. I can lead rehearsal for the next few minutes—

BABY. Everybody, take five minutes, we'll be back in FIVE MINUTES.

HANNAH. *(to Baby)* What is this? *(to the dancers)* There's no break.

The dancers enter a state of confusion.

BABY. There is a break. *(to the sound people)* DON'T play the song. *(to the dancers)* Everyone TAKE FIVE. Thank you.

The dancers disperse. Only Hannah and Baby are left.

BABY. This is not the time for this.

Hannah skulks.

BABY. Brendan and everyone else but you has learned the new choreography—

HANNAH. I know the choreography—

BABY. Has learned and accepted the choreography.

HANNAH. This'll take five minutes.

BABY. It's not the five minutes. It's the introduction of changes at the last minute. You can learn it like that. *(he snaps)* Some of these kids need a couple days for it to look natural.

HANNAH. We have six days.

BABY. But what's tomorrow, see? More changes? It's not just your whim that's at play here.

HANNAH. I don't even know why you're in rehearsals. This is not your part of the business.

BABY. Well it's not necessarily yours either. You're not a choreographer. *(he points at Brendan)* That guy has done twenty—

Hannah turns.

BABY. —twenty Broadway musicals—

Hannah turns back.

HANNAH. This isn't a musical!

Brendan hears this. Hannah and Baby stare each other down for a moment.

BABY. Are you gonna push this?

They stare each other down for a moment more. Then Hannah shoves the megaphone at Baby.

HANNAH. Have Brendan drill em. I'm outta here.

Hannah goes toward the exit at one end of the court. Baby gives a head nod to Brendan. Brendan gets up from the bleachers and goes toward Baby.

BABY. *(to Hannah)* We're gonna do it the old way.

HANNAH. Fine.

Hannah gives a middle-finger sign to Baby without turning around, on her way out of the stadium.

INT. SEDONA TRINKET SHOP - DAY

Her face covered with huge dark glasses and wearing a baseball cap, Hannah browses greeting cards in a trinket shop in Sedona, Arizona. She reads one of the cards and laughs to herself. A little girl, CARRIE, 10, is beside Hannah, looking up at the superstar. Hannah has been recognized. Hannah pulls her glasses down a smidgen.

HANNAH. Yes?

CARRIE. You're Hannah Gonzalez, aren't you?

HANNAH. And who are you?

CARRIE. I'm Carrie McCarty Harrison.

HANNAH. Well, Carrie McCarty Harrison, do you think I look like Hannah Gonzalez?

CARRIE. You are her, aren't you.

HANNAH. I don't know. I've never seen what (*Hannah makes quote marks with her fingers*) "Hannah Gonzalez" looks like. So I wouldn't know.

Hannah puts her glasses back over her eyes. Carrie pulls a heart-shaped locket out from under her shirt. Hannah pretends to browse the cards but Carrie opens the locket and holds it out for Hannah to see. Inside is a tiny picture of Hannah Gonzalez, snipped from a magazine. A CLERK speaks to Hannah.

CLERK. Can I help you find anything?

Hannah ignores the clerk.

HANNAH. Carrie!? Is that you?

Carrie blinks.

HANNAH. Carrie McCarty Harrison. I knew it was you.

Hannah holds out her hand.

HANNAH. How have you been?

Carrie takes Hannah's hand. Hannah leads the two of them out of the trinket shop to the street.

HANNAH. I haven't seen you since we graduated. How've you been?

The clerk watches them as they go.

CARRIE. Um. Fine.

HANNAH. Didn't you used to date Kevin . . . what was his last name? Ramsey?

CARRIE. I don't know.

HANNAH. How could you forget your own boyfriend's last name?

Hannah stops walking and bends to Carrie.

HANNAH. Was it Ramsey or was it something else?

CARRIE. I think it was Ramsey.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL - NIGHT

An Arizona motel. A \$20/night place. Masuda and Julian are watching TV. It's a rerun of The Atlas Interview. There's a half-drunk six pack on the bed. The boys are laughing. A RICH MAN in a stylish Tyvek windbreaker plays poker in the high-roller room of some casino. Atlas interviews him. The man is some past subject of The Atlas Interview.

ATLAS. Fuck. That guy owns the Houston Astros.

MASUDA. I don't think I've ever heard you cuss as much as tonight.

ATLAS. Stop feeding me beer.

Atlas tosses aside his beer can. It hits the floor and sloshes on the carpet. Masuda and Atlas look at each other and laugh. Knocking at the door. It opens.

HANNAH. I hope you boys are dressed, I have company.

Hannah comes in, still with her baseball cap and dark glasses. Carrie is riding on Hannah's shoulders.

HANNAH. Carrie, these are the boys.

Atlas and Masuda look upon Carrie with interest. Hannah lets Carrie down on the bed and Carrie sits down, trying to make herself smaller in the room. Hannah closes the external door. Her movements seem drunk.

HANNAH. Carrie, this is Julian Atlas. Say hi.

CARRIE. Hi.

ATLAS. Hi.

HANNAH. And this is Hiromi.

MASUDA. Hello.

HANNAH. Boys, this is Carrie. We went to school together.

ATLAS. What school is that?

CARRIE. High school.

ATLAS. Really?

HANNAH. Atlas. Be good. We went to high school together. I just happened to see her downtown and we've been catching up.

Are you drinking this?

Hannah picks up the half-drunk six pack.

MASUDA. Have one.

HANNAH. Thanks.

Hannah pops one out of the plastic holder and hands it to Carrie.

HANNAH. What are you watching? Oh, god, Atlas, that's pathetic.

Carrie fiddles with the pop top but has trouble opening it.

MASUDA. It's the only thing on. Unless you count music videos.

HANNAH. Oh you should have seen the sunset out there. I get that, by the way, and you . . .

Hannah throws her arms around Masuda and speaks directly in his ear.

HANNAH. . . can fuck yourself.

Carrie is staring at this interaction. Hannah disengages and sees that Carrie cannot open the beer can. Hannah takes it and opens it, then gives it back to Carrie.

MASUDA. We did get that for the two of us, you know.

HANNAH. I'll get more.

Hannah picks up the phone.

MASUDA. It's broken.

Hannah hangs up. Carrie looks uncomfortable. Hannah helps the can to the girl's mouth, helps her tip it back.

HANNAH. I'll go out then.

CARRIE. I'm sorry.

HANNAH. It's fine.

Hannah puts on her hat and is about to put on her glasses. She's going to the door.

HANNAH. Don't be rude to my friend. *(to Carrie)* I'll be back in a minute.

Masuda lets Hannah get halfway out the door.

MASUDA. There's more in the bathtub.

Hannah comes back in.

HANNAH. Why the bathtub?

MASUDA. Fridge is broken.

Hannah sits.

HANNAH. So what's in there?

MASUDA. Beer.

HANNAH. *(to Carrie)* Why don't you get me a beer.

Carrie sets hers down politely and goes.

MASUDA. What are you doing?

HANNAH. Seriously, this is about as pathetic as me watching concert videos.

ATLAS. Which I'm sure you do.

MASUDA. Who is she?

HANNAH. I told you.

MASUDA. Do her parents know she's here?

HANNAH. Atlas, change this.

Atlas shoves the remote in Hannah's direction. Hannah flips through channels.

MASUDA. You're seriously going to get us in trouble.

Hannah grabs Masuda's beer. The three of them space out looking at the TV. Nature shows. A news show about a mass shooting at a college. A Dasani commercial featuring Hannah. Hannah quickly flips past it.

ATLAS. How pathetic is that?

HANNAH. At least I'm not watching it.

Carrie comes back into the main room holding a fresh beer for Hannah.

CARRIE. *(tentatively, fearfully)* Hannah?

Hannah turns warmly to the little girl.

HANNAH. Come here, baby. Get your beer. Have you ever been on TV? Atlas here'll put you on TV if you're good.

Hannah can't open her own beer. Masuda sees that she's already been drinking. She's holding the can out.

HANNAH. Can you help?

Masuda takes the can from her. Hannah puts Carrie on her lap and holds the little girl, putting her arms around her like a big doll. Hannah kisses her on the cheek and sways the two of them back and forth.

HANNAH. *(to Masuda and Atlas)* Carrie and I used to play soccer together.

CARRIE. I was goalie, right?

Hannah turns Carrie around so the two of them are facing.

HANNAH. Do you remember the goalie on the other team? He was sooo cute ...

CARRIE. He kissed me once.

HANNAH. No ...

CARRIE. In my mom's basement.

Masuda looks over at Atlas like "what the fuck is going on?". Atlas picks up his camera. Masuda gives Atlas a look of warning.

Atlas removes the lens cap, presses record, and points the camera at Hannah and Carrie.

CARRIE. He wanted to do more but I wouldn't let him.

HANNAH. You might have liked it if you had.

Carrie leans in to Hannah and whispers in her ear so quietly that only Hannah can hear it.

CARRIE. *(whispering)* What do you do when you do more?

Hannah lights up. She pulls Carrie close like sisters.

HANNAH. Oh, let me tell you . . .

INT. HANNAH'S BUS - NIGHT

Masuda comes into the bus from outside. Hannah, following close, closes them in.

HANNAH. There's nothing like a hostage.

She throws her arms around Masuda's neck.

MASUDA. Oh, boy.

Masuda takes her arms off him.

MASUDA. I don't know what you're talking about.

HANNAH. She's not really a hostage.

MASUDA. She's your guest.

Hannah takes off her shoes.

HANNAH. Right.

MASUDA. You can't really keep her.

HANNAH. Just for the night.

MASUDA. Not even.

HANNAH. She reminds me of my sister.

MASUDA. I thought you were an only child.

Hannah loosens her hair.

HANNAH. I know, I know. But she reminds me of my sister anyway. I should have had a sister.

MASUDA. What would you have done with her?

HANNAH. Whipped her.

Masuda looks at Hannah.

HANNAH. I'm kidding.

MASUDA. You might be.

HANNAH. Do you think they'll do anything?

MASUDA. Who? Atlas and . . . her?

HANNAH. If I was that boy I would get my jim off in that little pussydog.

MASUDA. Do you think Atlas has sex?

HANNAH. The great Julian Atlas? Pillar of journalistic integrity? I'm'onna have to guess no on that one. How old is he?

MASUDA. Thirteen.

HANNAH. I bet she has a tight little hole, too.

Hannah moves up on Masuda.

MASUDA. How old is she?

HANNAH. I have no fucking clue.

Masuda turns away from Hannah.

HANNAH. Why. You wanna fuck her?

MASUDA. You, my friend, are warped.

HANNAH. Don't you love it?

Hannah goes up on Masuda. He seems to yield. They start to do it. Masuda stops.

MASUDA. No.

HANNAH. What?

MASUDA. It isn't me.

HANNAH. It isn't you?

MASUDA. I don't ... I never ...

Hannah hangs back. She understands what he's saying.

HANNAH. Make an exception.

Masuda goes for the door. Hannah thinks he's leaving her, but when he gets to the door, he turns around.

MASUDA. Walk with me.

EXT. RESERVATION LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

On an Indian reservation, blinding neon light spills through plate glass onto cracked sidewalk pavement. An overweight native American INDIAN exchanges a brown paper-wrapped package for some of Masuda's cash in front of the store. Hannah hangs back behind Masuda, looking awkward. The Indian takes one of Masuda's bills and gives it back to Masuda, briefly holding it up like a toast.

INDIAN. To life being a full circle.

The Indian, remaining cash in hand, goes off. Masuda leaves in the opposite direction, taking Hannah by the hand, leading her.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Hannah and Masuda wander in the desert.

HANNAH. I'm not sure you really know me.

MASUDA. What is there to know?

HANNAH. That's funny. That's real funny. What's your middle name?

MASUDA. You stopped making sense somewhere in the last vicinity.

HANNAH. You've never made sense from the moment I saw you on television.

MASUDA. You saw me on television?

HANNAH. Sure. It was a preview for The Atlas Interview.

MASUDA. I've seen you on TV too.

HANNAH. What did they say about me? I mean . . . What was I doing?

MASUDA. You were singing.

HANNAH. Oh, fantastic, some bullshit, it's ridiculous, a concert? I hate that motherfucker. But he's OK, really, he's OK.

Masuda takes the brown paper bag from Hannah.

MASUDA. Cowgirl, take it easy.

HANNAH. Don't even bother. I ate it all.

Masuda looks in the bag. Hannah is true: the bag is empty.

HANNAH. Sorry, did you want some?

MASUDA. I had some.

HANNAH. Right. That's right. I remember that. Well, I ate the rest.

MASUDA. So it seems.

HANNAH. Was that OK?

MASUDA. OK with me.

HANNAH. When you were a kid, I mean . . . Did you think you were gonna turn out like this?

MASUDA. Yeah, I think I always knew it.

HANNAH. When did you know?

MASUDA. In some way, I always did. I mean I doubted I really was who I imagined people could become, but . . .

HANNAH. But you did it.

MASUDA. *(laughs)* I did something.

HANNAH. No. You did it.

MASUDA. What about you, Pop Queen? Do you feel like you did it?

HANNAH. No.

MASUDA. Yeah, but—

HANNAH. You don't know what I do, it's this ridiculous . . . It's farcical pretentious bullshit—

MASUDA. Yeah but—

HANNAH. At least what you do is real—

MASUDA. Would you shut the fuck up I'm saying something.

HANNAH. Sure. What are you saying?

MASUDA. What I'm saying is: when is the last time anyone I know walked into a room . . . and did something that made forty-thousand people stand up and scream?

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Hannah has a flash-forward to her LA concert. A grand auditorium filled with fans. Spotlights search the crowd. The stage explodes in firework tracers, sparks. Hannah appears. Forty-thousand people stand up and scream.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Hannah and Masuda trip over each other as they descend a broad stone face. Hannah almost falls, but Masuda has her, and they pause looking out at the sky.

HANNAH. I think we're lost.

MASUDA. I know we are.

Hannah falls again.

HANNAH. I'm really high.

Masuda catches her.

MASUDA. So am I.

A white-tailed rabbit runs across the rocks below them. It's like he's in a spotlight.

HANNAH. Look! A bunny!

MASUDA. Hold onto me.

They continue their descent.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

They've lit a fire. Big sky desert is black behind them. Masuda sits, looking at Hannah approvingly. Hannah raises her arms to the sky, going around the fire.

HANNAH. When I was born I never—when I was born I was twisted. Do you know what I'm saying? I know I'm not making any sense. But that's OK because neither are you. No, I know, no

... don't say anything. I'll curl up in the sky and just cuddle. I think you know what I mean. I think I met you in a notebook, once, as a sketch. You were all lines and a little bit of cross-hatching. I think you could see me, out from the pages.

They share a look.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Masuda is holding Hannah in his arms and Hannah is so tripped out it takes her a second to realize that Masuda is holding a rattlesnake.

HANNAH. Oh!

MASUDA. Move slowly.

HANNAH. Where'd he come from?

MASUDA. He just saddled up here a minute ago.

HANNAH. That's—oh my god—is that real?

MASUDA. I think so. I'm pretty sure—

HANNAH. He's real. You know he's real.

MASUDA. Move slowly.

HANNAH. Can I pet him?

MASUDA. I wouldn't recommend it.

HANNAH. And yet—he seems to like you.

The snake goes up Masuda's arm, around his face, and Hannah is with them, intertwined.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

The fire wanes. Masuda pulls his shirt over his head. Hannah cuddles up to him. He puts his arm around her.

HANNAH. It's like this little night's a poetry.

MASUDA. Moonlight sonnet, and—come close.

He pulls her close.

EXT. CHEAP HOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Jesus knocks quietly on the door. There's no answer. He tries the handle and, finding it unlocked, opens the door and goes in.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL - DAWN

Inside the room, Jesus sees Atlas asleep on the floor, six pack expired beside him, part of the bed's comforter pulled down and somewhat around him. In the bed is Carrie, this little child, wrapped in a sheet. The light is on in the bathroom. The TV plays without sound. The room is a wreck. Jesus takes Carrie in his arms and leaves the room.

INT. CARAVAN BUS - DAWN

A nasty roadie compartment. Gretchen wakes up next to a fat Mexican who is still snoring. She looks at who she just slept with, framed by the sobriety of the next morning. He has a fat belly and slobber runs out the side of his mouth.

GRETCHEN. Jesus goddamn motherfucking Christ.

Gretchen grabs her shirt and gets up. She's leaving the compartment.

GRETCHEN. I'm a terminal goddamn psychopath.

INT. BLACK SUV - DAWN

Jesus places Carrie in the front passenger seat. She is still wrapped in the sheet, sleepy-eyed. The sound of Jesus closing the door wakes her up a little. Jesus opens the driver's side door and gets in. He puts his hands on the steering wheel. The weight of the world is on him.

JESUS. Can you tell me how to get to your house from here?

Carrie nods. Jesus starts the car.

EXT. DESERT - SEDONA SUNRISE

Hannah and Masuda are sleeping in the desert. Godlight comes from the east, stunning the canyons with orange. Hannah wakes first. She and Masuda are tangled, but like brother and sister. Their clothes are in place. Hannah stands up, walks away from Masuda. She is looking at the sun. Masuda wakes, behind her, and somehow Hannah can sense it.

HANNAH. I never knew about this place.

MASUDA. They say it's magnetic.

HANNAH. Yeah?

Masuda stands.

MASUDA. There are poles, magnetic poles ...

HANNAH. It's quiet.

Masuda is with Hannah, behind her, next to her.

MASUDA. ...they say if you stand at one of the poles ...

HANNAH. What happens?

Masuda steps in front of Hannah. He bends to the ground, letting sand run through his fingers. There is a shell there, a shell that looks like it comes from the ocean.

MASUDA. People come here from all over.

Hannah kneels to be close to Masuda.

HANNAH. What happens when you stand at the poles?

MASUDA. It's like ... mineral baths ... hot water ... coming from the earth.

HANNAH. Do you have any more of that stuff?

MASUDA. You haven't had enough?

HANNAH. I think I want to return to the ocean.

Masuda stands, facing away from Hannah.

MASUDA. It grows ... it grows all over here.

HANNAH. Does it?

Masuda takes Hannah's hand.

MASUDA. It grows from the earth.

They are beaming, holding hands, looking at the sun.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Hannah, Masuda, and Atlas are on the beach. A pair of girls run in an arc that contains our threesome, then return to their parents, laughing. There isn't a single bodyguard in sight. Hannah wears her glasses propped up on her head. Atlas' camera is strapped to his hand as always, but he's not filming right now. Hannah grabs hold of Masuda's arm. Masuda cups the back of Atlas' head in his hand, a filial slap. Atlas smiles. The Santa Monica pier is before them, dead ferris wheel, stopped rollercoaster. Hannah hums. It is a song of her own creation. Then she breaks from Masuda and runs ahead, skipping, does a cartwheel in the sand and falls. Masuda is pointing at something on the horizon, and Atlas looks to see it. Hannah, alone for a moment, pinches her arm and swears to herself the following:

HANNAH. Don't you ever forget this.

Then Masuda and Atlas are with her.

MASUDA. We brought you something.

ATLAS. It's a shell.

Atlas hands her something from the ocean, about the size of Atlas' hand. It's pink and smooth and curved.

MASUDA. I don't know, I think it's a tooth.

Atlas views the specimen through his camera, recording it in Hannah's hands.

ATLAS. This might be *strombus sinuatus*, but it's a little too big.

MASUDA. It looks like a shark tooth to me.

HANNAH. Give me that.

Hannah takes the camera from Atlas and turns its focus on the biographer.

HANNAH. You know what this is Atlas?

ATLAS. What.

HANNAH. This is a beach. That's the ocean. This is sand.

ATLAS. So.

HANNAH. You're on vacation.

ATLAS. Can I have my camera back please?

HANNAH. No. You can sit right there and answer my questions.

Masuda shakes his head and smiles. He puts his arms around Hannah from behind her.

HANNAH. Now. My name is Hannah Gonzalez and today I'm taking a deeper look at Julian Atlas. Atlas. Where were you born?

ATLAS. New York.

HANNAH. Have any brothers or sisters?

ATLAS. I have a brother.

HANNAH. When did you start interviewing?

ATLAS. I don't remember.

HANNAH. What's the first interview you gave, huh? How long have you had this thing? Don't you ever run out of questions?

ATLAS. I'd like my camera back.

HANNAH. No.

Hannah stops recording. She uses the longer strap on the camera and strings it over her shoulder.

HANNAH. We're having a picnic. I'll give it back later.

MASUDA. We don't have any food.

ATLAS. Please give me my camera.

MASUDA. We don't have picnic blanket.

Atlas turns and walks away, toward the ocean. Hannah looks to Masuda for approval, disapproval, advice, something. Masuda won't give it to her. Hannah goes to Atlas. He's intent on the horizon, he won't look at her. It takes Hannah a second to be able to say this.

HANNAH. Look, I'm sorry.

Hannah gives Atlas his camera. Atlas straps it around his neck and shoulder, placing the camera body behind him, on his back. Hannah and Atlas go back to Masuda together. Hannah sits.

HANNAH. Now. Picnic.

Atlas sits. Masuda follows.

ATLAS. We don't have any food.

HANNAH. It's a pretend picnic.

ATLAS. A pretend picnic.

HANNAH. Don't you ever play pretend?

Masuda pulls an imaginary something out of somewhere.

HANNAH. What's that?

MASUDA. Maximin Grunhaus.

Masuda corks the bottle.

MASUDA. 1989?

HANNAH. I remember.

Hannah holds out an imaginary wine glass. Masuda pours her some, then hands her the bottle. She pours him a glass. Then Hannah offers to pour Atlas a glass. Atlas hesitates. Then he grabs the bottle and drinks from that. Hannah and Masuda laugh. Atlas wipes some wine from his lips with the back of his arm.

ATLAS. Can I have a pretend cigarette.

HANNAH. You can have a real cigarette.

MASUDA. Can you have real cigarettes at a pretend picnic?

HANNAH. Oh yeah.

Hannah lights it for Atlas.

ATLAS. Thank you.

And then they're all having one, and they're smiling and talking in a triangle on the beach.

EXT. ROBYN STARCK GALLERY LA - NIGHT

A black-tie art crowd is gathering outside Starck's LA gallery. Starck is among them. The gallery doors are closed, and have been covered

with paper from inside. Hannah's black, superstretch limousine arrives. The crowd takes subtle notice. Jesus gets out and opens the door for Hannah. She is dressed to the hilt. We haven't seen her like this before. Formal, black, with her hair up, heels, dark lipstick. Jesus helps her out of the car. She waits. Atlas is with her. He is also dressed formally, but in a more contemporary way: a buttonless, collarless shirt and dohpe Nikes. His camera is with him. Hannah's guards keep a close eye, but also some distance, as she and Atlas enter the crowd. Hannah sees SOMEONE SHE KNOWS. They lean toward each other.

HANNAH. What's up!

SOMEONE SHE KNOWS. Aren't you going to introduce me?

HANNAH. This is Julian Atlas.

Atlas shakes the person's hand but smirks.

SOMEONE SHE KNOWS. *(to Hannah)*. I'll call you.

HANNAH. Great.

Gretchen arrives at the show in a 2010 Rolls Royce prototype. She has a RAPPER BOYFRIEND on her arm, and she's decked out like a triple-x whore. Photographers descend. Hannah and Atlas make their way to Starck, at the gallery doors.

STARCK. Hannah, thanks for coming.

HANNAH. Is he here?

STARCK. He's doing some last minute adjustments.

HANNAH. Can you let us in?

STARCK. Even I'm not allowed in until the stroke of nine. Strict orders, sorry. Help yourselves to snacks.

Starck leaves them. Julian films the crowd. People's interest is obviously fake ... a nubile cradles her dog like a human ... disdainful looks from one clique to another.

HANNAH. People need to stop being from LA.

ATLAS. *(from behind the camera)* I can't see how you do it.

A MATRON approaches Atlas.

MATRON. Do you have a permit to film here?

Hannah leans in to the Matron and speaks so others can't hear her.

HANNAH. He doesn't need a permit to film your fat ass.

The matron is appalled.

MATRON. You can't have that camera—

Jesus steps in.

JESUS. Please. Back away.

MATRON. He needs a permit.

JESUS. I'm gonna need to ask you to back away, Ma'am, or else I'll have to involve the police.

MATRON. The police!? I'll call the police.

JESUS. I would welcome that.

Jesus hands her his cell phone. The matron shakes her head. Starck's voice pierces the crowd's chatter.

STARCK. Everyone, thank you for waiting. Sometimes we have to indulge the whims of the eccentric, but, I assure you, as always, that tonight's show will be spectacular. Hiromi has been putting some last minute touches in place—what they are remain something of a surprise, even to me. For the last hour I have been locked out of my own gallery with strict orders not to open the door until nine o'clock, on the dot. Nine o'clock has come, so I suppose we should be allowed to see the show. The only problem is I don't have the key.

Restrained laughter from the crowd.

STARCK. I'm serious, I don't have the key.

Atlas looks at Hannah strangely. Hannah opens her purse. She pulls out a small gift box. Opens the wrapping. Takes out a key. Atlas and Hannah are already at the front. Hannah gives the key to Starck.

HANNAH. He gave it to me yesterday.

STARCK. *(nonplussed)* Brilliant.

Starck unlocks and opens the doors. Hannah and Atlas are the first to go in.

INT. ROBYN STARCK GALLERY LA - NIGHT

Inside the gallery, the place is lit like a nightmare. "Hiromi Masuda" style is nowhere to be seen. It's all his secret style, the one from the warehouse in New York. Work lamps crudely illuminate the work. Masuda has turned paintings upside down, slashed some of them. His handprints are on the wall in red. Hannah and Atlas are at the gallery entrance. Hannah sees it first. She stops moving, her mouth open. In the middle of the gallery is Masuda's body, dead. A dozen rattlesnakes, coiled and stretched, lie throughout the room. Masuda is barefoot. His arms and ankles are covered with bites. Starck steps back. People in the crowd see the snakes and react backwards. Hannah goes in. Starck grasps Hannah's wrist but Hannah shuffles it off. She takes a few steps into the gallery,

impervious to the snakes, and collapses. The rest of the way to Masuda she crawls, stumbling, and she shrieks, once. In this moment, though, it isn't sadness she feels—she's not crying—her shriek is one of rage. The snakes are nothing to her. She throws them off, one flying in the direction of the crowd. And she takes Masuda in her arms. Gretchen and her rapper boyfriend are at the front of the crowd. Starck pushes them back from the door as the thrown snake goes into the lawn in front of the gallery. Atlas takes a few measured steps forward, to get a better angle. He is not unaware of his emotions, he's not callous, but this is his job. He kneels. And brings the camera to his face. He films the paintings. He films the snakes. He films Hannah holding Masuda in her arms. She is quiet now, and she looks at Julian without flinching, openly, devastated, empty, without anger or judgement. She lets Masuda's body go, and she stands. There's a stain on the wall. Hannah goes to it and follows the trail of red to the floor. Kneeling, she touches the broken glass that was a bottle of Grunhaus 1989.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Spotlights sweep over the crowd in a massive auditorium. Fans scream unintelligibly, their cries mixing in a deafening wash. The stage is set up for a performance, but no one is there to perform. Other than the brief swipe of a spotlight, the stage is dark.

INT. BACKSTAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Some ASSISTANT talks with a radio.

ASSISTANT. No. No. I can't! She won't come out!

INT. PRODUCTION BOOTH - NIGHT

Baby is in a room where a team of engineers occupy a mixing board eight feet wide. The room is set up to control a live television broadcast, monitors everywhere, an army of people. The coordinator is at Baby's side. Baby slams his headset down on the desk as he stands.

BABY. Motherfucker!

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Baby is almost running down the hallway, coordinator, assistant, and other assistants in tow.

BABY. I don't care. Get her out of the room. And don't tell me you can't get her out of the room.

Baby throws himself against the wall, hitting, kicking. It looks like the wall, or him, or both, are coming apart.

BABY. GET HER OUT OF THE MOTHERFUCKING ROOM!!

INT. BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Baby and crew come to the end of a hallway. One of Hannah's shoes is outside the door. There's a little sign on the door that very simply says "HANNAH GONZALEZ". Gretchen is knelt at the door; she's been pleading with the cell's occupant.

GRETCHEN. Oh, Hannah . . .

Baby pushes Gretchen aside and knocks rapidly on the door. He speaks with a faux-calm, faux-loving voice.

BABY. Hannah?

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Baby bangs on the door.

BABY. (O.S.) This is gonna cost us both a lot of money.

Hannah is scrunched up, sitting on the floor, cradling a small TV. Her face is red with tears. She is watching the Hiromi Masuda episode of The Atlas Interview. We see the opening graphics for the show.

ANNOUNCER. (O.S.) . . . this timely episode of the acclaimed Atlas Interview, focusing on the internationally-renowned pop artist . . . Hiromi Masuda.

It cuts to Atlas, face huge, in a 2-chair interview setting.

ATLAS. Thank you for joining me. This week, I take a deeper look at the Japanese-born abstract painter Hiromi Masuda.

Atlas turns to Masuda.

ATLAS. You're a man of few words.

MASUDA. The verbal detracts from the visual. The visual detracts from the verbal. You are either in one room or the other.

ATLAS. Some have said your art is too popular to be truly serious.

MASUDA. What do we mean when we say art is serious or not serious? When we say that art is serious, aren't we really saying that people are serious about it?

ATLAS. Don't you care whether people like your paintings?

MASUDA. I'm of the mind that you should always be destroying yourself. If I do my job well, then at the end there will be nothing of me left.

ATLAS. Do you mean that literally? Explain.

MASUDA. I mean it in every way. The proper conclusion to a play is that the stage be left empty. At the end of a great speech, there is silence. With my work it is the same. I aim to make a painting after which it will not be possible to paint again.

It cuts to Masuda walking backward through an Ohio cornfield. The footage is handheld. Hannah holds the camera, following Masuda.

MASUDA. You've gotta give that up, caring. It's what you make for yourself, that's the only reason to do it.

HANNAH. (O.S.) But you've gotta get paid.

MASUDA. Not really. You are compelled to sing. You are compelled to write. Death is better than not writing if you are a writer. Sometimes, even death is a project you take on for yourself. It is something that disregards others, something that applies fully to you.

Masuda comes close to the camera. Hannah stops walking. Masuda's arm comes close to the camera, his hand on Hannah's shoulder, off-screen.

MASUDA. (smiling) Suicide is probably the most individual act there is.

Hannah stays where she is. Masuda continues away from her, through the corn.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A rich but bleak office, the whole thing is open space. Gray-blue carpet. The entire back wall is top-to-bottom windows. It's bright outside, dark inside, and we can't see out. Hannah sits in an armchair in front of a huge desk. A man we haven't seen before, TONY, sits behind the desk. Baby and a few other people dressed like LAWYERS, are sitting or standing around. But Tony is on one side of the desk, and everyone else is on the other side. There's a short stack of paper, a contract of some sort, on Tony's desk.

TONY. From the business side this is outside the realm of what we can manage. It goes on TV . . . It goes on TV it could ruin you. And us. This isn't the Mickey Mouse Club anymore. This isn't you and your friends putting on a show for Mom. This contract, if this is real—and don't tell me if you signed it cause I don't want to know if you signed it—we can come to a consensus on that later. Hannah, listen to me. This is how people like you get forgotten by the world. The Atlas Interview is a weekly ritual of celebrity bloodletting.

Baby touches the contract.

BABY. If this release holds up in court . . .

Hannah is deep in her own thoughts. She doesn't even hear Baby talking.

BABY. At this point, there may be nothing we can do to protect you.

Hannah's eyes come into focus.

BABY. It's simple procedure. And last night . . . If that happens again I'll walk.

Something in Hannah snaps.

HANNAH. Tony. Cut Baby a check.

Tony is confused; but he works for Hannah.

TONY. For how much?

HANNAH. Forty-thousand dollars.

Hannah stands up. She shakes Baby's hand.

HANNAH. Nice knowing you.

Hannah walks out, simply, quietly. Everyone in the room looks at each other like "what the fuck is going on?"

BABY. Hannah. Hannah.

EXT. PARK AVENUE - DAY

Hannah comes out of the glass front of a tall building. Dark glasses cover her face. Baby comes out after her.

BABY. Hannah.

A STRANGER comes up to Baby.

STRANGER. Are you Baby Garafolo?

BABY. And who the fuck are you.

Baby pushes the stranger off. The limo is waiting, and Jesus is leaning against it reading a novel. He goes to the door and opens it.

BABY. Who's gonna write your music now? You?

Hannah walks around the back of the limousine and into the street. She crosses carelessly over two lanes of traffic. Drivers slow their vehicles so not to hit her. She has her hand up and a yellow cab stops for her on the side opposite Jesus. Jesus stands behind the limo, New York traffic between them. Hannah looks at him over the top of the cab before she gets in. Baby watches, and Jesus watches, as Hannah's cab drives off, down the avenue, and hers is lost among the other cars.

INT. NEW YORK GREYHOUND STATION - DAY

The Port Authority bus station at 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue. Hannah stands in line to buy a ticket. Someone notices her. She pulls the hood of her sweatshirt over her head and waits. A SCHIZOPHRENIC on a nearby bench sees his attacker. He throws himself onto the floor, victim to the invisible menace. Everyone stares as the schizo flails around.

SCHIZOPHRENIC. Oh, God in heaven. Save me from this demon. I renounce you. In the Revelation. Sickness . . .

Hannah gets to the front of the line. The GREYHOUND ATTENDANT looks at her funny. He recognizes her (he knows who she is).

GREYHOUND ATTENDANT. Where you headed?

Hannah looks at the schizo writhing on the floor.

HANNAH. You wanna call an ambulance?

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

In the last seat of an almost-empty Greyhound Bus, Hannah's face is shrouded by the hood of a big sweatshirt. She stares out the window at the grass going by. Her eyes are glassy, and everything moving outside—fences, a stream, a stand of trees, cows, a modern farm—are a blur.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The bus drives along a nighttime highway.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The bus pulls into a gas station. The pumps here don't take credit cards. There's a rusty truck abandoned in the station's garage. The logos are still from the 1950s. It's a foggy morning. A boy waits on a bench with a crew cut and an olive drab duffel bag. He is 18 years old. This is his first time leaving town. The Greyhound's door opens. The crew-cut boy stands. The bus driver steps out. He's overweight, aging, and it takes him some time to get down the stairs. He fishes around for his cigarettes. Hannah steps off the bus. The bus driver smiles approvingly at her, like a proud father. Hannah and the boy peer at each other, but they are strangers. He looks away, gets his bag, and approaches the bus with his ticket in hand. Hannah goes on down the road. She doesn't look back.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Hannah walks through a small cemetery on a hill. The fog envelops her and the headstones. She doesn't seem to be looking for anyone in particular. She walks aimlessly, not in a straight line, and without care. She lets her feet be lazy . . . she stumbles around.

EXT. QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Hannah goes down a residential street in a country town. The houses are beautifully painted, there are plants and flowers on the porches, and swings, and mailboxes, and lawns. But no one is outside, no cars driving, no sounds of people, only Hannah, walking by herself.

EXT. HANNAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Outside the neighborhood, she comes to a lone house. She stops in front of this house. There are no cars visible, no lights on inside. But a front window is open, and the curtain blows in and out with the breeze.

INT. EDITING BAY - NIGHT

LEDs and blue-ish screens punctuate the otherwise dark room. Atlas is the only one there. He watches a rough cut of his show on one of the monitors.

ATLAS. Hi, I'm Julian Atlas. Thanks for joining me. This week I take a deeper look at the American pop star, Hannah Gonzalez. Hannah Gonzales was born in the rural outskirts of Bloomington, Indiana, and before going into the music business earned a degree in English Literature, having graduated from high school a full two years early.

This monitor plays footage of Atlas speaking, establishing shots of Bloomington, Indiana, and pictures of Hannah as a little girl. A monitor next to it plays raw footage of Hannah and Carrie in the hotel room. Hannah and Carrie drink beer together. Hannah hugs Carrie as though they're friends. Hannah dances around on the bed with half her clothes on. Atlas' camera follows Carrie, drunk, into the bathroom to get another beer, where we see the bathtub has been made into a giant icebox, and is filled with beer.

ATLAS. A performer from an early age, Hannah first starred in musicals at her high school, then won several lead roles in productions by the renowned music college of Indiana University. Among others, she played Juliet in an operatic Romeo and Juliet.

Atlas taps his keyboard. The first monitor switches to some footage of Hannah we have seen before. It's the footage Masuda caught Atlas looking at over and over. (Nighttime, in Hannah's bus, Atlas behind the camera.)

HANNAH. Maybe I'm too Latina. Do Japanese people hate Mexicans or something?

ATLAS. If he doesn't think you're beautiful—

HANNAH. What?

ATLAS. Nothing.

HANNAH. What were you saying?

ATLAS. If he doesn't see that you're beautiful, then he's crazy.

HANNAH. Awww . . . you're so cute.

ATLAS. No I'm not.

HANNAH. But you are. If you were a couple years older, who knows.

Hannah smiles warmly into the camera. Atlas pauses the feed on that monitor. He turns on the sound on the other monitor. It's a shot of Jesus, disheveled, in a compartment in one of the busses, bawling his eyes out in confession to Atlas.

JESUS. She doesn't know, it's just because someone did it to her, maybe, I don't know that for a fact—she's just alone—no one really talks to her like she's a person—ohh—

It cuts to a shot of Hannah at her refrigerator that is really a closet full of sex toys. She's taking one thing out, then another, showing them off, cutesy-like. It cuts to a shot of Hannah in the bus-top jacuzzi. Masuda is next to her. They're kissing. Hannah looks across the jacuzzi.

HANNAH. Come here, Jesus.

It cuts to a shot of Jesus in the jacuzzi, looking nervous.

HANNAH. Come here, come here come here come here.

Atlas pauses this. He sits back in his chair. He exhales deeply and sits staring at the screens for a long time. Then he flips off the computers and the monitors go blank. He grabs his sweater and leaves the editing bay. When the door closes behind him, everything is dark except for LEDs, and monitors tuned to nothingness.

INT. HANNAH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hannah's childhood bedroom. Her mother has kept it exactly as it was when Hannah last lived there. Stuffed animals and boy-band posters line the walls. Everything's pink. Hannah comes into the room. Her eyes trace over the toys and posters. Then she goes to the bed and takes her sunglasses off the top of her head. She puts the glasses down. She lies down on the bed with her shoes still on, and she pulls the comforter around her without getting under it properly. She buries her head deep, and shuts out the light with her eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The family living room. Family pictures: a mother, a daughter, and a father. Beautiful dishes and a wood table that was probably passed down for a couple generations. A moth plays against a window screen, trying to escape. Hannah enters, sleepily. There's a piano in the room. Hannah sits at the piano, opens the cover on the keys. She looks as though she's going to play a song. But, instead, she only plays a single note. Then she hangs her head and she covers her face, shaking. The sound of a car outside. It pulls up, the engine turns off. HANNAH'S MOTHER appears in the living room doorway, stands for a silent moment, then walks to the piano. She

bends to Hannah and puts her arms around her daughter. Their faces are close together. Hannah's mom kisses her on the cheek and gently rocks back and forth, back and forth.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Under the Santa Monica pier. Almost sunset. Atlas studies—with his naked eye—the layers of barnacles attached to the bottoms of the wooden posts supporting the pier. Empty-handed, barefoot, he walks out from under the pier. He sits on the sand, reaches into his pocket, manages to come up with a receipt and a pen. He writes, intermittently looking out over the ocean. Waves lap the sand. Julian's phone rings. He puts it to his ear.

HANNAH. (O.S.) Atlas?

ATLAS. Yeah.

HANNAH. (O.S.) It's me.

Atlas takes the phone away from his ear and stands. He surveys the horizon. Then puts the phone back to his ear.

HANNAH. (O.S.) What are you doing?

ATLAS. Pretend picnic.

Hannah laughs. Atlas walks along the beach as they talk.

HANNAH. (O.S.) I was gonna watch your show, but . . . it's not on.

Atlas is quiet.

HANNAH. (O.S.) I thought this week you were taking a deeper look at the pop star Hannah Gonzalez.

ATLAS. Couldn't get the footage I needed.

They're both quiet.

HANNAH. (O.S.) You couldn't.

Atlas waits for Hannah to speak.

HANNAH. (O.S.) So . . . who's the next subject of The Atlas Interview?

ATLAS. I'm not doing interviews.

This stumps Hannah.

HANNAH. (O.S.) What are you doing?

Atlas stops walking. He holds his arm in front of him, palm open. He's not marking a frame, but, still, it's like he's pitching his story to the ocean, envisioning it before him.

ATLAS. I'm doing a story about a thirteen-year-old biographer who develops a crush on one of his interview subjects.

Atlas lets his hand drop to his side.

HANNAH. (*O.S.*) Really?

ATLAS. No.

Silence.

ATLAS. No, I'm not doing that story.

Hannah understands.

HANNAH. (*O.S.*) Really.

ATLAS. Yeah.

