

WAS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MIDWEST SUBURBAN HOUSE - PRESENT DAY - MORNING

The vintage screen door CREAKS open. MAGGIE (48), exits the well kept Craftsmen, crosses the wrap around porch and heads for a restored '68 Chevy Impala in the flagstone driveway.

Despite a glaring, summer sun, Maggie pulls a Cardigan closed around her thin frame. She climbs into the car.

The screen door SLAPS open. OLIVIA (15), tomboy beautiful, in a pink hoodie takes out one earbud as she jumps off the porch and rushes the car with her arms flung open.

OLIVIA

Rude. You didn't even say good-bye.

Maggie leans out the car window and hugs Olivia.

MAGGIE

I was- I didn't want to- Sorry.

OLIVIA

A real one. Get out of the car.  
Some effort, please. Geez, Mom.

Maggie exits the car and wraps Olivia in her arms.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Hey, listen to what just came on.

She puts the earbuds to Maggie's ears. Smiles immediately widen across their faces. Maggie's head bounces to the beat of the unheard music. Olivia bops her head along...

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Loving it! Reminds me of you.

They eye each other. The moment becomes profound. Deep. Olivia hugs Maggie... Her body crumbles in Maggie's arms.

MAGGIE

Everything will be alright. Better than alright. I promise.

Olivia feigns a smile through sudden tears. It proves too difficult. She bolts back inside the house.

Maggie gets into the Impala. It RUMBLES backing down the driveway. It rolls over the lawn and curb, drops onto the street and jerks away... She's an impossibly shitty driver.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

My mother used to say the same type of things to me. 'Life is good, no, it's great!' 'How can you not meet the morning with a smile, Maggie?' 'Everything is right as rain!' She was a hopeless optimist.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Impala rolls through a neighborhood of Rockwellian houses with wide, manicured lawns.

Maggie's arm dangles out the window. Her hand casually dips and rolls in the wind. The Impala continues down the road...

MAGGIE (V.O.)

I was never convinced that a bright and shiny outlook would rid the world of all its ills. Some. Certainly not all.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF MIDWEST TOWN, RURAL ROAD - CONTINUOUS

A dog, hiding from the summer heat, lies under a shady Willow tree at the side of the road. As the Impala approaches, the dog lazily lifts its head and watches the car go by.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

When I think about the summer my mother passed, my mind becomes a Rolodex of images... Charcoal pencils. Striped Tube Socks. Pop Tarts. Green garden hoses spitting warm well-water. Cicadas buzzing, like electric saws, from the top of shading trees. Lightning bugs...

...A '77 Lincoln Continental, with the windows rolled down, approaches the Impala from the opposite direction.

HENRY DOE (44), every bit the executive, is slapping the steering wheel having a ridiculous fit of laughter. In the passenger seat is a provocatively dressed WOMAN (38).

The Woman, stunningly attractive, is trying to keep her mass of wind-blown, red hair away from her false eyelashes. She's SCREAMING and carrying on like an idiot cheerleader.

Just as the cars pass each other, Henry looks out his window and smiles at Maggie in the Impala...

MAGGIE (V.O.)

I remember our last days together.  
I can recall some of her final  
words to me, and how those words  
would challenge me to the core in  
the weeks that followed.

A change of direction. The Impala drives out of frame. The '77 Lincoln soars along the road leaving a spinning trail of dust and gravel behind it...

GOING BACK IN TIME...

EXT. DOE'S STREET - DAY - 1979

The Lincoln turns the corner at the end of a suburban block. The well kept houses (battered up to the Forest Preserve) have landscaped gardens and ample space between the lots.

Henry SHUSHES the Woman who bounces in her seat LAUGHING.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Lincoln pulls into the driveway of the Doe's two-story traditional home. Henry slams on the brakes to avoid hitting WARREN (12) the self appointed neighborhood landscaper, as he mindlessly rides his lawn mower along the sidewalk.

HENRY

Warren! Pay attention! Jesus!

The ROAR of the mower swells, drowning out Henry's warning. The oblivious boy never looks up and simply glides away passing GRETTA (60) who is watering the rose bushes that line the front of her simple cottage next door.

Gretta's face sours when she sees the Woman. Henry works up a big smile and waves to her... Gretta runs into her house.

Henry's attention is pulled to the OTHER next door neighbor's house. FRANKIE TWEED (19) steps outside, talking on a corded telephone and digging his pudgy hands into a box of cereal.

A pack of DOGS fly out of the door behind him, wrestle on the front lawn, then run laps around Henry's car.

Frankie plucks the mail from its box. The telephone cord twirls up behind, like a rattle snake, as he returns to the house. He WHISTLES. The dogs charge to the house and trample through the door just as he closes it.

INT. LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

Henry turns his attention back to the Woman who is attempting to drink from a can of Tab without ruining her lipstick.

The cola misses her mouth and dribbles into her cleavage.

WOMAN

That'll be a sticky mess.

Henry eyes her like a starving man who has stumbled upon a Carnival Cruise buffet. He dives into her cleavage. The Woman giggles then looks up to the house-

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Henry. Not here. Not now. Someone will see. You're a bad little man!

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

The needle on a yellow 1970 Philips Portable Turntable drops onto a seven inch vinyl. Exile's KISS YOU ALL OVER plays.

The tidy room has a wall lined with framed posters of Sam Shepard, Arthur Miller, Roxy Music, Freddie Mercury, Earth Wind and Fire, Gloria Steinem, and cartoonist, Robert Crumb.

Another wall is lined with portraits made of crayons, pencil, markers, charcoals, acrylics and water colors of CELIA DOE. It's a collection that spans over ten years and "matures" in its placement along the wall.

The artist, Maggie (now 15) is on her bed thoughtfully working on another portrait of her mother, Celia.

The Woman's LAUGHTER draws Maggie to the open window. She hides behind a curtain, eyeing her father and the Woman...

INT. LINCOLN - SAME

The Woman becomes fixed on a fake eye lash that is falling off. She bats her eyes repeatedly.

WOMAN

Wait a sec. Mommy's eye. Wait!

The eyelash falls off. She doesn't know where it has landed and is furiously looking for it as Henry continues his game. She finally whacks the top of his head to make him stop.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Now look what you made mommy do!  
 (in the rear view mirror)  
 Mommy doesn't have a spare set  
 laying around! So, let's find it!

Henry digs around the seat.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Maggie continues watching her father from the window.

MAGGIE

I wish he was the one dying.

The door SLAMS open behind her. She jumps away from the window. It's PU (13), her brother, dressed in a baseball uniform, aiming a water-gun at her.

PU

Freeze!

MAGGIE

Say another word and I will put  
 your eye out with this pencil.  
 Consider it a warning.

PU

(mockingly)  
 Consider it a-

She throws her pencil at him like it was a dagger. It strikes him in the face. Pu slaps his hand over his eye.

PU (CONT'D)

Gah! My eye!

MAGGIE

I warned you, right? Now, get out!

He squeezes the trigger on the water gun, shooting at Maggie. The water stream crosses the Philips Portable Turntable, causing the record to skip.

Maggie lifts the needle, pulls the record off and examines it, wiping away the water. She becomes incensed.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Look what you did! It's scratched!

Maggie picks up a pair of scissors from a dresser top and runs at Pu. He just escapes, slamming the door behind him.

Maggie heaves herself against the door.

PU (O.S.)  
I'm telling mom that you ran with  
scissors in your hand!

She kicks the door and falls against it.

Maggie's hair hangs in her face as she looks to the floor. She takes a handful of hair with one hand and snips it off with the scissors.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Henry comes in the front door, setting down a large suitcase, as the Woman drives away.

Pu appears at the top of the stairwell. He drops his baseball glove, goes to retrieve it and tumbles down the steps just as Henry shuts the door.

Pu lands at Henry's feet. Unfazed, Henry steps over Pu as he shuffles through the mail.

HENRY  
Anything broken? Any pain?

PU  
No... Oh yeah, Mom said you've got  
to drive me to baseball practice.

Henry mindlessly ascends the stairs.

HENRY  
Okie-dokie. Go wait in mom's car.  
I'll be out in a few minutes.

Pu remains on the floor looking up at the ceiling.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Henry grabs the glass knob and swings the door to the master bedroom open. The knob slips out of the spindle hole. He slaps it back into place and enters.

HENRY  
I've got to fix that someday.

The fake eye lash is stuck to the back of his shirt.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Henry walks over to his wife, CELIA (39) who is lying in bed.

HENRY

Hi.

Celia (recognized from Maggie's portraits) wears a nightgown. She's pale, balding and weak from chemotherapy treatments.

CELIA

Hey. Hi. How was your flight?

HENRY

Long. Exhausting. The usual... How are you? Can I get you anything? Did you eat today?

CELIA

I had tomato soup. Grilled cheese.

HENRY

A whole grilled cheese? Wow.

CELIA

Half. Me and Maggie split it.

HENRY

Good. That's good.

They look at each other for a moment... Henry leans in and hugs her. She sees the fake eye lash stuck to his shirt. She slowly pulls herself away from him and rests on the pillow.

CELIA

So... Pu starts baseball tonight. Did you see his uniform? So cute.

HENRY

Yep. I hated baseball. Played it for seven years... Hmmm.

(she smiles)

Oh. I've got someone to come in and do some cleaning. They'll be here later. So, if you hear someone rummaging around downstairs...

Celia smiles at him. He turns and finds Maggie, wearing her mother's wig, in the doorway behind him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

New do, Mags?



MAGGIE

I was combing it out for her.

HENRY

Very chick.

They blankly eye each other... Henry leaves.

CELIA

I think he meant chic.

Maggie's face twists with shame as she slowly pulls the wig from her head, showing her mother the hack job.

CELIA (CONT'D)

Why, Maggie? Why did you do this?

MAGGIE

I don't know. I'm just...

Celia pats the bed, wanting Maggie to join her. Maggie, world wearily, falls onto the bed with a big "Gah!"

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

A light from the house shines onto Celia's car in the driveway. Pu (still in uniform) is sleeping in the front seat. A shadow passes over Pu as Henry walks by the window.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Henry is moving through the house turning off lights in his path. He reaches for the kitchen door and slowly opens it...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The radio plays Peaches and Herb's SHAKE YOUR GROOVE THING.

The Woman is on her hands and knees scrubbing the floor. Her body keeps the rhythm to the music... She stops and perches on her knees, she's having trouble with another eyelash.

Henry picks up one of the rubber gloves, fits it over his erect penis then CLEARS his throat...

Batting her eyes, she focuses on the glove-

WOMAN

Look at you all fancy-smancy.

She crawls to him, grabs the glove's latex finger, pulls it back then releases it with a SNAP!

Henry lets out a pleased and pained "AH". The sound of snapping continues, punctuated by Henry's "AAAAHHHHSSSS".

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Just like a little cowsie-wowsie.

She moves up his body when her EYELASH BEGINS TO FAIL. She gets face to face with him, blinking, blinking, blinking...

She kisses him just as her bare foot steps onto the bristle side of the brush.

She SCREAMS! She slips! She GIGGLES! She falls! Henry topples onto her. He dips his hands into the bucket and ladles the sudsy water onto her chest.

The Woman, fluttering her failed eyelashes, turns her attention to the BLURRED IMAGE in the kitchen doorway.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Ah, Henry. Oh, my God.

HENRY

Oh, my God.

WOMAN

Oh, my God!

HENRY

(off Celia in the doorway)

Oh, my God!

CELIA

A little discretion goes a long way. There are kids in this house.

Embarrassed, the Woman bats her eyes in response. Celia turns to leave and notices Maggie standing behind her.

CELIA (CONT'D)

Go back to bed. Dad and... ah, the cleaning lady slipped on the floor.

HENRY

(off Maggie)

What happened to your hair?

Celia winces and doubles over in pain. She slips on the water and falls to the floor. Henry and Maggie huddle over her.

Celia lies still as the pain passes. She finally looks up at everyone... Embarrassed, she begins to LAUGH.

Celia's laughter is suddenly infectious. Henry giggles. The Woman slaps her hand over her mouth trying to stifle herself.

A very groggy Pu enters rubbing the sleep from his eyes-

PU

Dad? I've been waiting in the car  
for, like, forever.

...Henry and Celia exchange a befuddled look. They burst out LAUGHING. The Woman, once again, hesitates then joins them, blurting out a ridiculous belch of nervous LAUGHTER.

Maggie and Pu do not look happy with the adults in the room.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Maggie is seated at Celia's vanity among Celia's favorite perfumes and beauty supplies. Celia, trying to correct the mishap, takes the last few snips on a much shorter haircut.

CELIA

Okay. Better. Not perfect. But, not  
bad for having never cut anyone's  
hair before... It'll grow back.

Maggie combs her hair with her fingers... It looks awful.

CELIA (CONT'D)

I like it. It shows off your  
beautiful face... Especially when  
you smile.

Maggie refuses to smile. Celia, exhausted, climbs into her bed that is strewn with albums (Gladys Knight & the Pips, Cream, The Byrds...) spread out on the comforter.

CELIA (CONT'D)

It's just hair. Remember what you  
said to me a few months ago? 'You  
are much more than the sum of your  
hair. No need to cry about it.'  
You're a very smart girl.

Henry calls from the stairs...

HENRY (O.S.)

Celia! I'm going out for a little  
while. Do you need anything?

CELIA  
No, thanks. I'm fine.

HENRY O.S.  
Okay. I'll see you later.

Maggie jumps up and SLAMS the door. The door knob and spindle pops out. Maggie picks it up and slaps it back into place.

MAGGIE  
I hate him.

CELIA  
You don't hate him... Come here.

Maggie ignores her plea. Celia winces from a shooting pain. It takes her breath away. Maggie approaches the bed.

MAGGIE  
Alright, you can stop. It's not a soap opera. You've made your point.  
(Celia giggles)  
See? I wish you were more serious about this, instead of screwing around all the time. I don't even know when you're in pain anymore.

CELIA  
How much more serious would you like me to be? Huh?

Celia burps out a fit of laughter despite the pain.

MAGGIE  
Yeah. It's totally funny. Ha. Ha.

Celia breathes in deeply and points to the bottles on the night stand. Maggie lifts one of the bottles, opens the cap and shakes pills into her palm.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
How many?

CELIA  
Three. Four.

Celia swallows the pills.

CELIA (CONT'D)  
Sit. Please.

Celia pats the bed, beckoning Maggie. Maggie obeys.

CELIA (CONT'D)

I want you to know that your father loves you. This has been tough on him. He's got a lot of grown up stuff going on. One day things will become much clearer. You'll see things differently. Because all you see, right now, is me. And this. And the pain. And the anger. And confusion. And frustration. None of us have been functioning as who we are. We've been trying to cope with what we've been handed.

(another pain flares up)

I don't want you to do or say anything that you'll regret.

MAGGIE

I'll be nice to him.

CELIA

Not just him. Everyone. If I leave you with nothing more than this... If you do something wrong, if you hurt someone... You need to fix it.

MAGGIE

Apologize?

CELIA

No. Right your wrongs. There's a huge difference. Apologies only go so far. It's your actions that matter. You have to go out of your way to make sure they know you mean it. It's harder than anyone thinks. Believe me.

MAGGIE

Did you not right your wrongs?

Celia writhes again from the pain. She takes a deep breath.

CELIA

We need something to lighten the mood. Something to chase these clouds away...

A smile spreads over her face as she picks up an album: THE 5TH DIMENSION - GREATEST HITS ON EARTH.

Celia slides the vinyl out of the sleeve and puts it on the Philips Portable Turntable that is now on a bedside stand.

CELIA (CONT'D)  
Let the sunshine in...

She drops the needle. LET THE SUNSHINE IN plays.

Maggie listens to Celia sing. She can't help but to smile.

Celia's eyes suddenly swell with tears. She pulls Maggie to her and holds her in her arms.

CELIA (CONT'D)  
Let the sunshine in, Maggie.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - LATER THAT DAY

The album has played. The needle scratches the spinning record. A HAND turns the Philips Portable Turntable off.

Maggie is tucked under her mother's arm. The HAND reaches to Maggie and gently shakes her awake. It's Gretta from next door. She guides Maggie out of the bedroom.

GRETTA  
Come on, Mags. I've got the tea all ready, it's on the kitchen table.

MAGGIE  
Should I wake Mom up?

GRETTA  
Let her be, honey.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

There is a plate of homemade short bread cookies, a teapot and three cups set on the Formica table. Maggie and Gretta sit in silence sipping from their cups... Until-

GRETTA  
You cut your pretty hair.

MAGGIE  
Oh. Yeah. That.  
(off Gretta's teary eyes)  
Oh, don't worry. It will grow back.

Gretta sips her tea and avoids Maggie's stare... Then-

GRETTA  
Have you seen your brother?

MAGGIE

He's probably at Marko's. He rode off on his bike earlier.

GRETТА

...And you father?

MAGGIE

He went out. Why?

(Gretta's eye swell)

Why? Why did you ask where he's at?

Gretta can't hold back anymore. She bursts out crying.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Gretta? What's wrong? What is it?

Maggie's eyes widen. She gets up and bolts from the room.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie scales the stairs in a blind panic.

MAGGIE

Mom!

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie flings the door open. She's suddenly paralyzed, staring at her mother's body lying on the bed.

She hears Gretta coming up behind her. Maggie slams the door shut, (the doorknob pops out) locks it and moves to the bed.

MAGGIE

Mom. Mom, wake up. Wake up.

Maggie shakes her, then tries sitting Celia up in bed.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Mom. Come on. Please.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - SAME

Gretta collapses against the door crying.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

Maggie curls up, cradling her mother's head in her lap.

MAGGIE  
 Mom. No. Not yet. Mom. No!

Maggie buries her face in the pillows SCREAMING.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - THREE DAYS LATER

A line of parked cars flank the tarred and concrete street.

REGGIE (13) Buck toothed and scrawny, rides by on a bicycle doing a wheelie... He drops, rides up a curb, becomes air born, pedals to the Doe's house, skids to a stop, meeting...

Marko (13), slight mustache, "Fly Like An Eagle" Steve Miller Band T-shirt, straddles a bike while stroking his feathered hair with a pocket comb. He raises his open palm to Reggie...

MARKO  
 Cool riding. High five, man.

REGGIE  
 What the fuck is a high five?

MARKO  
 You do it when something's cool.  
 Slap my hand. Cool. High five, man.

Reggie stares Marko down. Marko drops his hand and turns his attention to Pu (wearing a suit) who is on the front porch.

MARKO (CONT'D)  
 Let's go. Get your bike.

PU  
 My dad said I've got hang out here  
 for awhile.

TWO WOMEN (40's), dressed in black, approach the house carrying homemade meals in Tupperware.

WOMAN IN BLACK 1  
 You're Pubert, right?

PU  
 It's Pu.

WOMAN IN BLACK 1  
 I'm sorry about your mother.  
 (a long beat, then)  
 Your father hasn't mentioned  
 anything about the house?  
 Selling? Any plans to move?



Maggie overhears the questioning and steps onto the porch.

MAGGIE

Another realtor? It's like an open house. If you'd like to leave a business card we'll be pulling the name of a lucky winner for a graveside picnic.

The women look at Maggie with horror, then join the other MOURNERS inside the house.... Then-

REGGIE

(to Pu)

What the fuck is a Pubert?

Marko laughs and throws his hand up...

MARKO

Pubert. That's funny. High five.

Reggie dismisses Marko with a look and leaves him hanging. The guys ride away. Pu goes inside the house.

Maggie picks up the CAT that's curled up in a wicker chair.

TIRES SCREECHING ON PAVEMENT pulls Maggie's focus. A 1978 Toronado slams to a stop, whipping MARIA BECKER'S (38) "Farrah Hair" around the car.

Reggie and Marko have ridden into her path. She's stopped within inches of hitting them. The boys speed away as Maggie runs down the sidewalk-

MAGGIE

Are you alright, Mrs. Becker?

MARIA

They jumped right in front of me!

She takes a deep breath and fans herself with her hands, then-

MARIA (CONT'D)

I always hoped she'd pull through.  
I did. I'm so sorry, Maggie.

Maggie watches her pull into a driveway several properties down. Maria exits the car and rushes into the house.

VAL (O.S.)

Maggie. Hey, Maggie.

Gretta's daughter VAL (36) is in Gretta's driveway. She wears a black, Stevie Nicks inspired, dress, black boots and hooped earrings. She lights a smoke and shakes her head, making her feathered bangs fall away from her face.

VAL (CONT'D)

So close! She almost got them boys!

BILLY (15) in a Blue Oyster Cult T-shirt, jeans and converse jumps off the porch, runs to his mother and hands her a Tallboy can of Pabst Blue Ribbon.

VAL (CONT'D)

Billy, you remember Maggie? You two used to play together when you were itty-bitty babies.

Billy and Maggie quietly wave to each other.

VAL (CONT'D)

I came to pay my respects. Your mom was so sweet. Man, that cancer shit ruins people's lives, huh?

Val takes a drag off her cigarette and exhales. She snaps open the tab on the PBR. The beer sprays from the can-

VAL (CONT'D)

See what that running with the can did? That's a waste of good beer!

Billy grabs the cigarette from Val as she shakes beer drops off her dress. He takes a drag off the smoke. She discovers a wet spot on the dress.

VAL (CONT'D)

I have to dry this. Okay, we'll be over in a little while.

Billy and Maggie look at each other. Billy smiles and takes another drag off the cigarette. Val hits him upside his head.

VAL (CONT'D)

Get your own.

They go into Gretta's house.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT ROOM - LATER

Gretta escorts the NEWEST ARRIVALS into the room where extended FAMILY, FRIENDS and NEIGHBORS are gathered.

Henry, looking dazed and harried, is huddled with a SOMBER LOOKING GROUP OF PEOPLE.

Maggie, in her multi colored smock and matching pants, blends into the patchwork of the sofa where she's seated.

She spies a clutch of gossiping COUNTRY CLUB TYPE WOMAN gathered in a circle. NANCY ROBERTS (50's), a raspy, scotch induced voice, slurps off the cocktail in her hand, then-

NANCY ROBERTS

My god, what if one of us girls-

A pear shaped TINA ROGERS (50's) -her flared skirt is wedged between the back of her upper thighs- slaps at Nancy's arm.

TINA

Girls like us don't get things like that. We just don't. Honestly, I think it's a manifestation from one's poor image of oneself.

She spots Maggie looking her way. She tries to cover her embarrassment with a curt smile.

Maggie gets up and moves into the dining room...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

There is a catered buffet on the table. The GUESTS mill about, conversing as they fix their plates...

Frankie and his obese mother, MRS. TWEED (55) are camped out at the corner of the table eating. They are oblivious to a SMALL FRAMED WOMAN trying to get past them.

Mrs. Tweed smiles at Maggie, who stands in the doorway.

MRS. TWEED

Cute haircut, Margie. You're lucky it grows so fast.

Maggie smiles benignly and leaves.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Celia's sister MAUREEN (42) preppy, and put together, is making room in the freezer for donated meals in Tupperware.

There are TWO OTHER WOMEN helping her with the task.

Maureen pulls out an item covered with ice. She rubs away some of the frostbite on the packaging and reads-

MAUREEN

...1977. How does that happen?

MAGGIE (O.S.)

She obviously had more pressing matters to deal with.

Maureen and the ladies are rendered silent.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Why are you all in the kitchen? Go in the other room. Stay with the herd. No one needs to be in here.

MAUREEN

People dropped off meals for you. I'm making room in the freezer.

MAGGIE

Is that the price of admission these days? Pasta in Tupperware?

The girls are stunned. Maggie walks out of the kitchen.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie sees Val tipsily make her way through the front door with a beer can in her hand. She trips into Warren (the kid on the lawn mower) nearly knocking him over.

VAL

Careful there, young man. Everyone will think you've been drinking.

Maggie moves to avoid Val, maneuvering through a GROUP OF PEOPLE overhearing SOMEONE-

SOMEONE

She pursued him. Not a secret.

Without identifying the voice, Maggie runs up the stairs.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie slows as she passes the Master bedroom. The door is ajar. She pushes it open and cranes her neck inside...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie sees a few of Celia's outfits laid out on the bed. She steps into the room and finds Celia's sister, KATE (32) with her toddler son, JASON holding up a dress on a hanger.

MAGGIE

What are you doing?

KATE

I was looking for a quiet place for Jason's nap and ended up in here... Trying to wrap my head around it.

MAGGIE

By picking through her things?

KATE

I'm not picking- She wore this dress to my wedding. I'm surprised she still had it. She usually didn't hang on to things.

MAGGIE

Apparently she couldn't part with a frozen roast for about two years. So, don't be too surprised about what you find in here.

Jason's sticky fingers grab a perfume bottle from Celia's vanity. Maggie sees him spilling it onto the floor. The kid throws the bottle across the room.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Get him out of here! NOW!

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...Maggie shouts down from the top of the steps.

MAGGIE

GET OUT! EVERYBODY OUT! NOW!

Henry bolts to the stairs.

HENRY

Maggie? What are you doing?

MAGGIE

They're gawking! They're picking through her things! Judging her! Judging us! Get all of them out of here, right now!

She stomps off to her bedroom and SLAMS the door.

Henry's head drops, chin to his chest, as he sighs. The stunned crowd is completely silent... Until-

VAL

Boy! Tell us how you really feel!

Val punctuates her outburst by lifting the PBR into the air.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - DAYS LATER - NOON

The Philips Portable Turntable is set up next to Maggie's dresser. Gilbert O'Sullivan's ALONE AGAIN (NATURALLY) is palying. Maggie, in a KEEP ON TRUCKIN' T-Shirt, is next to her window examining a record in the sunlight.

Holding the record by the edges, she cautiously slides the vinyl into the paper sleeve and then carefully puts it into The 5th Dimension - Greatest Hits on Earth, cardboard jacket. She adds the album to her collection.

A CAR HORN SOUNDS through the open window. She pulls back the curtain and finds a TAXI waiting on the street below.

A KNOCK AT HER BEDROOM DOOR pulls her focus.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - SAME

Henry, in an expensive tailored suit, KNOCKS on the door.

HENRY

Maggie. Look, I don't know how to do this either. I wish I could lock myself in my room too, but I can't. I've got to get back to work. I'm going out of town... Could you, please, open the door?

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Maggie stares at the door.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - SAME

HENRY

When did I become the enemy? When?

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Maggie walks toward the door, then stops...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - SAME

Henry, frustrated, EXHALES deeply.

HENRY

Alright. Gretta's going to check on you. I left numbers by the phone if you need to get a hold of me. There's some cash on the table for groceries and a blank check in case of an emergency. Okay? Maggie?

The volume on the stereo increases.

Defeated, Henry heads for the stairs... THE LOCK IS UNDONE. The DOOR OPENS, stopping Henry at the top of the steps.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I've been so worried. You're my-  
(she shut/locks the door)  
...little girl.

Henry is crushed.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Maggie hides behind the window curtain watching her father walk to the Taxi. The DRIVER takes Henry's suitcase and loads it into the trunk. Henry climbs into the back seat.

Maggie eyes the Taxi as it disappears down the block.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - LATER

Maggie descends the stairs. She sees doughy-with-a-comb-over ERNIE (the MAILMAN) approaching the house. Maggie opens the front door and steps outside as he trips up the sidewalk...

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Ernie hands Maggie the mail.

MAGGIE

Thanks, Ernie.  
(sifting through the mail)  
Oh, wait.

She sifts through the mail holding out a few of the letters-

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
She doesn't live here anymore.

ERNIE  
Right. So sorry for the family... A forwarding address?

They exchange a series of awkward looks.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY

Maggie is blankly looking through the cabinets at items.

Her focus turns to the repetitive DITTY off the ICE CREAM TRUCK that bleeds into the house through the open windows.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

The ICE CREAM TRUCK nears. Frankie shoots out his house waving money at PHIL(30) the disgruntled driver.

The truck rolls to a stop. Phil jumps from the vehicle and slaps back the metal latch that holds the freezer shut.

Frankie rudely steps in front of Warren and his BROTHER (9).

FRANKIE  
I'll take a Push Up Pop.

PHIL  
You'll take my foot up your ass if I see you push any of these kids again. End of the line. Go. Fucker.

Frankie begrudgingly steps away. Phil attends to Warren and his brother then gives Frankie his ice cream.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
I hope you choke on it.

Frankie passes Maggie at the curb. She holds a dollar bill.

MAGGIE  
I'll take an Ice Cream Sandwich.

Phil reaches into the freezer and pulls out the ice cream. He presses his belt change maker and hands Maggie the coins.



MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Thanks... Hey, are you going to be around later? Like, dinner time?

PHIL

I don't know. Why?

MAGGIE

I shouldn't count on you showing up at mealtimes? Right?

PHIL

No. That's what grocery stores are for. Freezers. Ever hear of them?

He dismisses her with a look and climbs into the truck.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie picks up the money and blank check that Henry left on the table and puts them into her pocket.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-Maggie rides her Schwinn bike over the lawn, down the driveway, into the street and up the block.

-Maggie rides by a LADY who is unintentionally soaking herself with a sprinkler that she's dragging across her lawn holding the green garden hose.

-Maggie rides on the graveled shoulder that is butted up along a portion of open fields and Forest Preserves.

-Maggie passes a smattering of single story office buildings, Lonnie's Used Car Lot, a Dairy Queen, a Leather/Shoe Repair store. She turns into a Grocery Store parking lot.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

MUZAK overhead. Maggie pushes a cart filled with cans of Pringles and a couple dozen pints of ice cream.

CARMEL (16), a new wave type, bounces up the aisle...

CARMEL

Migglet? Oh. My. God! Your hair!

(she gasps, then)

I'm so sorry about your mom.

(MORE)

CARMEL (CONT'D)

Did your dad tell you I called? He said you locked yourself in your room for a week because shit got so heavy. I wish I could have been there for you. I was at my cousin Jiffy Pop's house. Remember him? His puffy hair. He's, like, a stoner now. Anyway, his friend Matty Matt Matt is so cute. I had, like, a huge make out session with him. I'm going back up there. Do you want to go? Milwaukee rules.

MAGGIE

I don't know if I'm up for it.

CARMEL

Think about it. I'll call you later. I've got to go find my mother. The last time we were here she spent an hour asking strangers to squeeze the Charmin bath tissue with her. Mortified much? I guess you're kind of lucky.

MAGGIE

Lucky?

CARMEL

You don't have a weirdo mother around to embarrass you like that.

MAGGIE

Yes, the perks of parental demise.

CARMEL

Yeah. Okay, bye!

Carmel bounces down the aisle.

INT. GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

A CASHIER counts the pints of ice cream on the conveyor belt as the BAG BOY strategically puzzles them into paper bags.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie exits with the cart of five grocery bags. She stops as she nears her bike realizing the presented commuting dilemma.

She hooks the bag handles onto the handle bars of the bike, two on each side. She rests the fifth bag on the seat and slowly steers the bike through the parking lot.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie tip toes her way onto the gravelly shoulder of the road. A slit appears in one of the bags. A pint of Neapolitan falls to the asphalt. She stops and condenses the bags.

EXT. COMMERCIAL ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

A CEMENT TRUCK blows passed Maggie SOUNDING THE HORN. Startled, she jumps, causing another bag to split.

As she collects the runaway items, SOMETHING in the near distance catches her eye...

EXT. LONNIE'S USED CAR LOT - MOMENTS LATER

A cherry-red 1973 Camaro is parked outside the trailer/sale's office. Maggie's bike is stuffed in the trunk. Maggie is seen, through the window, seated at the desk of a SALESMAN.

INT. LONNIE'S USED CAR LOT - SAME

LONNIE (46) adjusts his tinted Foster Grant glasses and slicks back his VO5 treated hair. He taps a Bic pen on the faux wood-grained desk top as he reads over sales papers.

LONNIE

Bang! Bang! You got me. Be picking out the bullets for weeks.

He offers the Bic to Maggie. She accepts the pen and fills out the blank check.

LONNIE (CONT'D)

Two Ns. L-o-NN-i-e. People write it with one N... I get some people who write 'Lonely". Can you imagine?

He smiles widely. Too widely. She hands over the check-

LONNIE (CONT'D)

Paid in full. Nothing prettier than that. Except, maybe cash. Cash is THE prettiest thing ever. I thank you for your business.

She snatches the keys. Lonnie extends his hand. She dismisses him with a look and gets up from the folding chair.

EXT. LONNIE'S USED CAR LOT - A MOMENT LATER

Maggie starts the engine. She scans the dashboard, clicks on the indicators, the windshield wipers, checks the floorboard-

LONNIE  
Brakes is on the right. Sweet Mary  
of Magdalene, do not let her fuck  
up on my property.

Maggie taps the gas and the car lunges forward.

LONNIE (CONT'D)  
Always use your turn signal when  
entering traffic! That's right!

The turn signal flashes as a cluster of cars speed by...

The road is clear. The car lunges forward. The tires spin. The car fishtails and careens over the road, just missing a truck in the oncoming lane, bounces down the opposite shoulder and jerks through the open field...

The car shoots into a Billboard with LONNIE'S IMAGE on it, pointing out the car lot across the street.

The billboard swings forward and falls flat to the ground creating a cloud of dandelion florets spinning in dust.

There's a POLICE CAR (speed trap) behind the billboard.

LONNIE (CONT'D)  
Son of a Billy Goat Gruff!

The lights FLASH. FEEDBACK off the patrol car's speaker, then-

KENWOOD  
Police Department. Please, stay in  
your vehicle.

A buzzed-cut, barrel-chested, OFFICER KENWOOD (40's) pulls himself out of his patrol car and swats at the dusty air.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - LATER THAT DAY

Warren brings his lawn mower to a stop, letting it idle as he watches the patrol car (with Maggie's bike in the trunk) pull over and park at the curb.

A handful of curious ONLOOKING NEIGHBORS wander from their houses and property lines, moving closer to the Doe's yard.

Frankie Tweed steps out on his front porch sloppily depthroating a Popsicle.

Gretta, undoing her apron and hanging it over the front porch banister, hurries toward the patrol car.

Officer Kenwood climbs out and casually stretches before he opens the back door for Maggie.

GRETTA

Officer, is everything alright?

Maggie steps out of the car. She's clinging to the ripped bags of groceries. A pint of ice cream falls. The cap comes undone, the melted Neapolitan spills over the cement.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Officer Kenwood is speaking into the phone. The phone cord is stretched stiff.

KENWOOD

...A Camaro. Yes, sir. Cherry Red.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

The phone cord reaches between Gretta and Maggie, who are seated at the table, and crosses out the room.

GRETTA

It hardly constitutes an emergency.

MAGGIE

The ice cream was melting. I had to do something. And, once I pass Drivers Ed, I'll need a car.

GRETTA

What happened to your mother's car?

MAGGIE

My father drives it.

GRETTA

What happened to your father's car?

MAGGIE

The cleaning lady drives it.

The cord gets slack, they stop talking, as Officer Kenwood returns. He hangs up the phone, digs into his breast pocket and slaps the check made out to Lonnie on the table.

KENWOOD

Your father said there's been some extraneous circumstances in the household... I'm sorry about your mother. No charges will be filed.

Gretta escorts Kenwood out of the house...

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - SUNSET - CONTINUOUS

Lightening bugs show and fade in the dark patches of the landscape. Gretta and Kenwood exit the house.

KENWOOD

He's got someone to stay with the kids. They'll be here tomorrow.

GRETTA

Who? One of their Aunts?

KENWOOD

Didn't say. Evening, ma'am.

Kenwood excuses himself and heads to his patrol car.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT DAY

A record spins on the Philips Portable Turntable. The Hues Corporation's ROCK THE BOAT wafts out of Maggie's cushioned head-phones.

Maggie is on the floor making flowers out of layered tissue paper and wire...

She reaches for a spool of ribbon on her desk across the room. The headphones snap off her head and bungee back to the stereo. The record skips.

MAGGIE

Damn it.

She grabs the spool and begins unraveling the ribbon... A NOISE IN THE HOUSE draws her attention.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie looks down the stairwell.

MAGGIE  
Pu? Gretta? Is that you?

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie walks through the room. There's ANOTHER NOISE. She heads for the kitchen.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie enters the kitchen. There's two grocery bags on the counter. The freezer door is open. SOMEONE is behind it. Maggie pushes the door closed. The Woman SCREAMS!

WOMAN  
Oh! I think I piddled myself!

The Woman, in mini shorts, a tube top and corked platform shoes, cups her hand to her crotch. Her knees turn in-

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Oh, no! The bathroom is..?

Maggie reluctantly points to a door off the kitchen.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The woman flings the bathroom door open, unzips her shorts, yanks her underwear down and sits on the toilet-

WOMAN  
Chimichanga! That was close!

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

The sound of PISS HITTING TOILET WATER echoes out at Maggie. Her face sours. Her mouth falls agape.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
This piddle-my-pants thing really keeps me on my toes. Any surprise, any scare sends me off and running.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - SAME

The woman leans toward the open door as she speaks.

WOMAN

One time I sneezed and tinkled at the same exact second. Didn't know what to cover first. I froze!

Her eyes widen, her arms stiffen. She reenacts the moment.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Honey, you ever done that? Piddled your pants by mistake?

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Maggie looks confused and grossed out.

MAGGIE

As opposed to intentionally urinating on myself?

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - SAME

The woman winds a catcher's mitt amount of toilet paper around her hand.

WOMAN

I hate that word. Urinating. Eww. Like nails on a chalk board. Makes my skin crawl. Piddle is much cuter. Or Tinkle. Use cute words, honey. Cute is where its at.

She dabs herself while discovering the flower motif walls.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh my god, this is the same exact wallpaper that I've got in my bathroom. How funny. Maybe that's why I feel all comfy-cozy in here.

Silence... Then-

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Honey..?

The Woman leans off the toilet and peeks into the kitchen. Maggie is gone.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - SAME

Maggie runs from the house SCREAMING, disappearing into the line of trees that borders the yard and Forest Preserves.



EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - LATER

Reggie and Marko are at the curb on their bikes. Pu is helping the Woman lift her suitcases out of the Lincoln.

WOMAN

Heavier than they look, huh?

Pu struggles with a steamer trunk, yanking it to the ground.

PU

Geez, what's in this thing?

WOMAN

Handkerchiefs. Wands. Leotards. I was a magician's assistant for awhile. There's those collapsible boxes, the ones you assemble and-

PU

-Climb into and disappear? Cut people in half? Stab with a sword?

WOMAN

Yep. Oh, honey, it's crazy how many tricks you can do with a good box.

The Woman leans into the trunk for another bag. Her shorts creep up her ass. The boy's mouths drop.

Marko holds his hand up-

MARKO

High five, man.

REGGIE

(slapping his hand)  
High five.

INT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Gretta and Maggie watch the boys and the Woman from a window.

MAGGIE

She's got suitcases. What is she doing? Is she staying?  
(Gretta stays quiet)  
He sends HER to baby sit? Really?

Gretta drops the curtain and shoos Maggie away.

GRETTA

Maybe he had to think of something on the spot. He was on the phone with a police officer-

MAGGIE

Oh, so, this is my fault?

GRETTA

I didn't say it was your fault. And, watch your tone with me.  
(Maggie scowls)  
There's going to be a lot of unanswered questions for awhile. Be patient. Your father needs to work and he needs an adult in the house.

MAGGIE

Why can't I just stay with you?

GRETTA

Because.

MAGGIE

Because why?

GRETTA

Because of a lot of reasons. And he's your father-

MAGGIE

He wouldn't care. He wouldn't even notice if I wasn't around.

GRETTA

He cares. And he would notice... Adults are complicated. And this situation is, unfortunately, more complicated than most. He's trying to do the best by you and your brother. Try to extend yourself to him and the... cleaning lady.

A long beat... Then-

MAGGIE

You've known about her?

Gretta's prolonged silence hangs heavily in the air. She returns to the meal cooking on the stove. Then-

GRETTA

It's not my place to talk about other people's relationships.

(MORE)

GRETTA (CONT'D)

(a beat)

You know who would be really nice  
to her? Huh?

MAGGIE

...I know.

Maggie lays her head on the table as if surrendering.

EXT. GRETTA'S HOUSE - LATER

Maggie walks through the side yard. Her mouth purses when she  
hears the Woman's LAUGHTER from inside her house.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie stops and peers into the living room. Marko is secured  
in a guillotine. He and Reggie have turned their attention  
across the room to Pu and the Woman...

Pu is holding up a sword. The Woman is inside a Magician's  
box. Her head, hand (holding a silk scarf) and wiggling foot  
are exposed. There are three sword handles/blade tips jettied  
out the sides of the box-

PU

Are you sure you want me to do it?

WOMAN

Sure, honey. Stick it in me!

MARKO

(aside to Reggie)

High five.

REGGIE

(slapping his hand)

High five.

The Woman shakes the scarf and wiggles her toes as Pu lifts  
the sword and sticks it into the box-

THE WOMAN LETS OUT A BLOOD CURDLING SCREAMS!

Pu SCREAMS! Marko SCREAMS! Reggie faints.

WOMAN

Fellas! Wait. I'm fine. Part of the  
act. See? I'm still alive!

MAGGIE

Unfortunately.

The Woman laughs uncontrollably seeing Reggie on the floor.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - EVENING

Maggie is tacking a hand written "DO NOT ENTER" sign to the master bedroom door. Pu appears behind her.

PU

I can go in there if I want.

MAGGIE

The signs not for you.

PU

Who is it for, then?

MAGGIE

Who do you think?  
(off his shrug)  
The cleaning lady.

PU

That's stupid. What if she wants to go in and vacuum or dust?

MAGGIE

You know what's stupid? You are. You're stupid for being so damn gullible. She's not a cleaning lady. You know that, right?

PU

Yeah. Duh. She's a baby sitter.

MAGGIE

It doesn't matter what she is. She's not allowed in mom's room. And, don't go getting all chummy-chummy with her. I saw you helping her with her suitcases.

PU

You can't tell me what to do. You're not the boss of me. And, just for your info, I'm not getting all chummy-chummy with her.

MAGGIE

It doesn't matter. When dad gets home I'll make him make her leave.

PU

Why do you want her to leave? She didn't do anything wrong. She's funny. She laughs a lot. Like Mom-

MAGGIE

She's nothing like mom! I never want to hear you say that again!

The Woman, wearing a low-cut sequined Leotard and heels (an outfit from the Magician trunk) is waving a Top Hat at Pu.

WOMAN

Pu, look. I found it! I've helped pull many a rabbit from this hat.

She examines the inside of the hat...

WOMAN (CONT'D)

See? Petrified pellets in the secret compartment. Rabbits are so cute, but they poopsy-doopsy a lot.

Pu smiles. A contemptuous look crawls across Maggie's face.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING

The Woman (in Leotard and high heels) strains vodka into an "up" glass, drops in an olive and holds it up for Pu to see.

WOMAN

That itty-bitty sheet of ice means it's perfecto-mundo.

(she sips the drink)

Yummy-yum-yum! I've got my dinner, what would you and Maggie like?

The MUSIC from the ICE CREAM TRUCK seeps through the window.

PU

Hey, we should have ice cream. Maggie loves ice cream.

WOMAN

I heard. I picked some up for her. The freezer is packed with it.

PU

No. From the ice cream truck.

WOMAN

What, honey?

PU  
(cupping his mouth)  
The. Ice. Cream. Truck.

The Woman turns her head, to hear him out of her "good" ear.  
She crosses to the open window and sticks her head outside...

WOMAN  
There it is. Yeah. Let's go.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Woman grabs her purse off the stairs by the front door  
and follows Pu outside.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

The MUSIC from the ice cream truck gets Maggie's attention.  
She slaps her MAD MAGAZINE down and looks out the window.

She sees the Woman in the Leotard, bouncing down the front  
walkway behind Pu. Then she sees the handful of NEIGHBORS who  
are also eyeing the Woman for the first time.

Maggie watches as MOUTHS DROP and EYES WIDEN...

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - SAME

Phil slams on the brakes when he sees the Woman running  
toward him. He leaps from the truck and bows.

WOMAN  
Hi, honey.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Maggie watches the reactions from the neighbors as Phil makes  
a fuss over the Woman and Pu.

MAGGIE  
Great. More to whisper about.

She returns to her bed and magazine.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Pu stops at the bottom of the stairs...

PU

Maggie! Dinner's ready! We're  
having ice cream!

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Lucky for you! It shouldn't hurt  
when I stick it up your ass!

Pu reacts. The Woman spit laughs.

WOMAN

I know I shouldn't be laughing,  
honey. But that was pretty good.  
Oh, she's funny. Oh, I like her.

The woman continues to giggle.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Simon and Garfunkle's BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER plays.  
Maggie is drawing a picture of Celia off a Black & White  
photo that shows her healthy and happy.

Something pulls her focus. She puts the pencil down...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Pu's bedroom door is left ajar. Maggie peeks into his room  
and sees him sleeping. She pulls his door shut.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The lights are turned off on the first floor. Maggie tip toes  
down the stairs into the darkened room. She heads for...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie pushes the kitchen door open. The glow of a cigarette  
appears like a comet moving across the night's sky.

Maggie's hand searches the wall for the on/off switch.

MAGGIE

(whispers)

Mom?

The light goes on. The Woman, in a silk robe, is nest to an  
open window smoking. She looks equally surprised.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Oh... I smelled the smoke.

The Woman turns her "good ear" toward Maggie.

WOMAN  
The smoke bothers you?

MAGGIE  
No. My mother smoked... She used to have a cigarette right before she went to bed. It was always around this time of the night.

The Woman looks a bit confused, then offers her a cigarette.

WOMAN  
You want a smoke, honey?

MAGGIE  
(louder)  
I said my mother smoked. What are you deaf or something?

WOMAN  
Only in the one ear.

Her response silences Maggie.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
I'm getting real good at reading lips. So, be careful what you say about me from across the room.

The Woman's smile widens. She snubs out the cigarette-

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Hey, you've got to be starving. I haven't seen you eat since I've been here. Can I make you a sandwich. I'm a terrible cook, but I can make a really good PB&J.

MAGGIE  
I've taken care of myself for the last year. I don't need anyone's help. As far as I'm concerned you're here to watch Pu, not me.

WOMAN  
Okay. I understand.

Maggie rifles through a cabinet looking for something...



WOMAN (CONT'D)

I love your hair, honey. It's so adventurous.

MAGGIE

It's a mistake.

WOMAN

Well, I see what you were going for. A pixie cut. I've seen it in a bunch of magazines. It's so cute on you. I can fix it. Just cut some off the back and then layer the top a little. Easy-peasy. I was a hair dresser for awhile. The right haircut can change a woman's entire life. Open a lot of doors. Turn a lot of heads. Get you noticed. Fun.

MAGGIE

Is that what he noticed about you? Your hair?

(the Woman is taken aback)

I guess that makes sense. Her's fell out. I imagine, if she'd ever been able to leave the house, her "look" would have opened a lot of doors, turned a lot of heads, gotten her noticed. Fun.

Maggie grabs a box of Pop Tarts from the cabinet and leaves. The Woman is left breathless. Sucker punched.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MORNING

Maggie is emptying a can of cat food onto a plate. The cat enters the room and rubs against Maggie's legs.

MAGGIE

Hey, I haven't seen you for awhile. Avoiding the chock-full of crazy around here? Huh? Good idea.

Maggie puts the plate down for the cat. She moves to the sink to rinse the spoon and sees the Woman in the back yard.

The Woman is in a bathing suit and platform shoes, watering the plants along the back of the house.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Does she ever wear normal clothes?

The phone RINGS. Maggie picks it up-

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 Hello? Hey... Yeah... How long are  
 you going to stay? ...What time are  
 you leaving? Really? Um...

A stream of water shoots through the kitchen window and  
 sprays the counter top and Maggie-

WOMAN (O.S.)  
 Oopsies! Did I get you, honey?

Maggie blinks the water from her eyes-

MAGGIE  
 I'll be ready in an hour.

INT. 1975 CHEVROLET NOVA - AN HOUR LATER

JUDY (16) wearing a Blondie T-shirt adorned with The B 52s  
 pins is riding shotgun keeping the beat to the RADIO. Carmel,  
 in a STP T-shirt and overalls, drops her jaw as the Nova  
 approaches the Doe's house.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - SAME

Frankie is in his doorway, Warren is on his idling lawn  
 mower, KIDS straddle bikes in the middle of the street,  
 Gretta is potting plants on her porch, NEIGHBORS from the  
 block ARE ALL FOCUSED on the Doe's house...

The Woman, in a risque bathing suit and large sunglasses, is  
 washing the Lincoln in the driveway.

Judy and Carmel park the Nova.

JUDY  
 Oh. My. God.

Carmel gets out of the car and approaches the house. The  
 Woman, wet with suds, waves to her.

CARMEL  
 Hi. I'm here for Maggie.

WOMAN  
 Sure, honey. She's inside.

Carmel ogles the Woman once more, then enters the house.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie is blow drying her hair in an attempt to make it look good. It doesn't. Carmel jumps into the room...

CARMEL  
Migglet! Ready to rock and roll?

MAGGIE  
Give me a minute.

Carmel looks out the window. The Woman is talking to Judy.

CARMEL  
Um, Migglet, what's that about?

Maggie follows Carmel's gaze and looks out the window.

MAGGIE  
Oh, yeah. She's the baby sitter.

CARMEL  
I don't remember Mary Poppins ever  
having tits like that.

Maggie throws a few toiletries into a bag on the bed.

MAGGIE  
Alright. I'm ready.

CARMEL  
Let's go! Let's go! L-E-T-S-G-O! I  
could've made cheer leading if I  
wanted to. Don't you think?

MAGGIE  
Are you high?

CARMEL  
Maybe. No. Yep. Maybe... A little.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - A MOMENT LATER

The Woman turns from Judy as Maggie and Carmel approach.

MAGGIE  
I'm going away for a few days.

Carmel gets in the car as Maggie opens the back door.

WOMAN  
Oh, your father never said anything  
about it. Where you going, honey?

MAGGIE

Carmel, that's her.  
 (Carmel waves)  
 They have a place on the lake.  
 Milwaukee. I go up there a lot.

WOMAN

Just you girls? Any adults? Are her  
 parents going to be there?

Maggie hesitates-

CARMEL

No. I mean, yes. Absolutely. There.

WOMAN

So, it's okay, if I give them a  
 call and check in with them?

CARMEL

Yeah. But, they won't answer.  
 They'll be in the car. It's way  
 far. They're meeting us. Up there.

Judy sinks in her seat. Carmel eyes the rearview mirror.

WOMAN

(waving Maggie over)  
 Can I talk to you for a moment?

Maggie doesn't move away from the car.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Fine. They're stoned. And you're  
 lying. So, I can't let you go  
 because they're stoned and you're  
 lying. See how that works, honey?

MAGGIE

They're not stoned. And I'm not  
 lying. We're going to Wisconsin...  
 Okay, I honestly didn't know if her  
 parents were going to be there. I  
 should have just said I don't know,  
 because I didn't know.

CARMEL

Or let me do the talking. Duh much?

Maggie and the Woman both dismiss Carmel with a look.

WOMAN

Why don't we give your father a  
 quick call.

(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

If he says yes, then by all means,  
go to the land of beer and cheese  
wheels.

MAGGIE

He doesn't always answer those  
phones. They're job sites. Most of  
the time you leave a message and  
then wait for him to call you back.  
That could take hours.

WOMAN

I can't give you permission to stay  
some place without any grown-ups  
being around.

MAGGIE

I'm not asking your permission. I'm  
going and there's not a whole lot  
you can do about it.

Maggie gets in the car.

WOMAN

You're right. Have fun! Of course  
you'll have fun. The joint in the  
ashtray. The cooler of beer in the  
back seat. Party, party, party!  
(leaning in the car)  
Carmel, was it? honey, keep an eye  
in the rear view mirror.

INT. 1975 CHEVROLET NOVA - SAME

The girls eye each other as the Woman moves behind the car.

CARMEL

What is Ms. Poppins talking about?

JUDY

She obviously saw the stuff. I  
didn't realize she was a narc.

WOMAN

VGL 938. VGL 938. VGL 938.

Judy turns to Maggie.

JUDY

What is she doing? VGL 938?

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - SAME

The Woman heads back to the Lincoln.

WOMAN

License plate. When I call the cops-

MAGGIE

You would not. I don't believe it.

WOMAN

Honey, after all the crazy shit I've done in my life -and I've done a lot- I honestly don't believe it myself. But, it's exactly what I'm going to do.

MAGGIE

Let's go.

The Nova pulls away from the curb. The Woman jogs along side the car for a second, yelling-

WOMAN

You'll get arrested for the grass. Juvie Hall! You know what they do to fishies like you in Juvie?!

The car cruises down the block... It comes to a sudden halt.

Judy gets out of the car. The girls argue. Maggie reluctantly gets out of the car. Judy climbs back into the car... Maggie storms back to the house as the Nova drives away.

MAGGIE

Which one is your good ear?

The Woman points to her left ear.

WOMAN

This one, honey. Why?

MAGGIE

(into her left ear)

I HATE YOU!

Maggie storms into the house. The Woman looks absolutely crushed. She picks up the hose, feigns a broad smile for the onlooking neighbors as she squirts the car-

WOMAN

Kids. Always kidding.

The Woman chokes up. Her chin trembles. Tears form in her eyes as Gretta approaches from the side of the house.

GRETTA

If she sees you cry you'll never  
have the upper hand with her again.  
My kitchen. Post-haste.

Gretta goes to the water spigot and twists it closed as the Woman rushes toward Gretta's house.

INT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Gretta has made iced tea from a mix. She pulls the clumsy metal handle of the ice tray, collects the shattered cubes that have fallen onto the orange laminated counter top and tosses them into the glass pitcher.

The Woman SNIFFLES. Her eye lashes have come undone. She's peeled them off and placed them on a paper towel. She looks at her reflection in the toaster oven on the counter-

WOMAN

The second day on the job and look  
at me. Puffy. Blotchy. My lashes  
are ruined. I stubbed my toe  
chasing that damn car.

GRETTA

It's very difficult.

WOMAN

What was that, honey?

GRETTA

(loudly)  
Saying no to them is hard. But, I  
would've done the exact same thing.

WOMAN

I have no idea what I'm doing. Keep  
them alive. That's my goal. Make  
sure they're still breathing when  
their father gets home. I've been  
feeding the boy soft foods, ice  
cream, Jello, syrup because I'm  
afraid he's going to choke on  
something more solid.

Gretta looks befuddled.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

The moment I said yes to this thing, watching them, I could feel my nerves unraveling. I've had panic attacks. Hyperventilating. Heart palpitations. Wanting to run down the street screaming-

She staggers across the room.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Here it comes again. Just thinking about it! My throat is closing! My heart is pounding!

Gretta grabs the Woman's flailing arms-

GRETTA

Breathe. Inhale. Exhale.

The Woman collapses into the chair. She's deep breathing.

GRETTA (CONT'D)

Drink some iced tea.

The Woman drinks the iced tea... She exhales. Then-

WOMAN

I don't want to sound like an ingrate, but, do you have anything stronger? I've got a lot going on here. This Wyler's Instant Iced Tea Mix ain't going to cut it.

Gretta produces a bottle of Jack hidden in a cabinet.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Private stash?

GRETTA

My daughter was in town for the funeral. She never stays too long if there's no liquor in the house.

Gretta spills whiskey into a glass. The Woman drinks.

WOMAN

Woo. Oh. Better. Thanks, honey. Boy, when she screamed, 'I hate you'. It had bite. Venom. She can be really mean, can't she?



GRETTA

She's always been a very strong personality. Willful.

WOMAN

That's how Henry describes her. He said she's willful, expressive and whip-smart... Just like her mother.

GRETTA

That's true. Just like Celia...

They eye each other.

WOMAN

It feels odd for me to say anything about her. Everything about the situation is so sad. You know?

(Gretta agrees)

I've learned so much about her over the last few months. Henry talks about her all the time. I've never heard him say a bad thing about her. Never. And the kids- Oh. He loves them so much.

(she finishes the drink)

I don't expect anyone to understand how things are. No one ever understands people's situations unless they're directly involved.

The FRONT DOOR opens...

GRETTA

In the kitchen!

STEPS APPROACHING... The door swings open. Billy enters.

BILLY

Hey, Gram.

His eyes pop when he sees the Woman in her bathing suit.

GRETTA

Billy. Is everything alright?

BILLY

Yeah. Why? What? Hi.

The Woman smiles and waves at him.

GRETTA

I didn't know you were coming back.

BILLY

Mom went to Milwaukee. Some concert or party. She said I'm supposed to crash with you for awhile.

The Woman pours another drink into her glass.

WOMAN

Milwaukee? When did Milwaukee become such a destination hot spot?

Gretta shrugs. Billy keeps his eyes on the Woman.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Maggie is drawing the landscape from her window. She sees Billy hop off Gretta's front porch and head for the backyard. She drops her pencil and exits...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE SECOND FLOOR BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She inches the frosted window open and watches Billy as he strolls by the clothesline that dissects the yard.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - SAME

Billy comes across the Woman's bra and panties, hanging from single pins. Mesmerized, he reaches for this trove just as...

Pu rounds the corner of the garage.

PU

Hey, you can use this other bike.

Billy retracts from the underwear. He meets up with PU.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR BATHROOM - SAME

Maggie watches Billy and Pu ride out of sight.

She moves to the sink mirror. She examines her face. Runs her fingers through her terrible haircut. She scowls.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie steps out of the bathroom. She looks down the stairs, and spots the telephone cord that is stretched across the room. The Woman passes by sipping a cocktail...

WOMAN

(into the phone)

In her room... Just doing her best  
to avoid me... Summer camp? No. She  
seems too grown up for that...

Maggie slips into her mother's bedroom- the doorknob falls  
out, she slaps it into place- and locks the door behind her.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie is in Celia's closet looking at the outfits...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie is at Celia's vanity looking at the cosmetics and  
perfumes, picking up one of the bottles and sniffing it.

She twists the cap off a mascara, and brings the wand to her  
eye. She dabs her lash.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-Maggie's eyes are coated with mascara.

-She wipes her eye lashes with a tissue then reapplies.

-There's a pile of wadded, black smeared tissue on the  
vanity. Maggie's eyes are thick with mascara.

-Blue eye shadow is dabbed onto a foam tipped applicator.

-Maggie applies foundation to her face.

-Maggie swirls a brush into a compact of blush.

-Tubes of lipstick are looked at and pondered.

-Maggie slips into a number of different dresses.

-Maggie is looking in a full length mirror. The outfit is ill-  
fitting. The make up is heavy. Blotchy. Caked.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

Maggie hears the front door slap open through the window. She  
hides behind the curtain watching the Woman approach Ernie.

WOMAN

Hi, honey.

Ernie, at his truck, does a triple-take seeing the Woman.

ERNIE

Hell-oh!

WOMAN

Got a couple questions for you...

Ernie trips on the curb. Letters spill from his bag. The Woman bends to help him.

Maggie makes a break for the door.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Maggie flies down the steps, jumps the last four and lands in front of the door. She looks out the open door.

A GAGGLE OF CHIVALROUS NEIGHBORS have miraculously showed up to help the Woman and Ernie collect the dropped letters.

Maggie dashes into the...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie immediately grabs the items for a PB&J. She stops to drink milk from the carton and bites into cookies she's swiped out of a jar. She's starving.

So focused on her food, she doesn't notice Pu and Billy coming inside... She locks eyes with Billy just as she sups a huge spoonful of peanut butter.

Pu is filling a glass with water from the tap. He takes a drink just as he notices Maggie's cosmetological efforts. He spits the water across the room.

PU

Holy shit. It's Ziggy Stardust!

Maggie is immediately self conscious as the boys laugh.

MAGGIE

Shut up!

Her mouth is stuck from the amount of peanut butter-

PU  
 (mocking her)  
 Thut-uppp? Really Ziggy?

She gathers the plate, the milk, the cookies and barges through the boys as she runs from the room.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie drops the milk. The bottle shatters on the floor.

The Woman hears the commotion, races up the side walk and enters the house. She sees Maggie. The splattered milk. Pu and Billy standing in the doorway trying not to laugh.

WOMAN  
 What happened?

PU  
 Maggie got into a slap fight with the Avon lady. She obviously lost.

The Woman quietly smiles at Maggie. She understands.

WOMAN  
 That's not nice. Pu, go grab some quicker-picker-upper. I'll take care of this, Maggie.

Maggie disappears up the stairs.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Celia's dress is hung on the closet door with the other outfits. Maggie's face is scrubbed clean.

She drops the Philips Portable Turntable needle... Roberta Flack's THE CLOSER I GET TO YOU begins.

Maggie opens her window and climbs outside onto the roof.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

The music wafts through a light summer breeze. Maggie stares at the stars with wonder. Then-

BILLY (O.S.)  
 I wasn't laughing at you.

Maggie looks around-

BILLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Up here.

She finds Billy in Gretta's second floor window.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I was laughing at Pu spitting out the water. It wasn't about you.

MAGGIE

That. I was trying something I saw in a magazine. I guess it takes a lot of work being a Cosmo girl.

BILLY

A what?

GRETTA (O.S.)

-I smell smoke. Is he smoking?

They look down. Gretta has pulled the curtain back from her front room window. She looks at Maggie expecting an answer.

BILLY

(he snores)

He's sleeping. Sound asleep.

GRETTA

Hmmph. You better not be smoking!

Gretta allows the curtains to fall.

BILLY

She sure is fun. Speaking of fun... What do you guys do for fun around here? Movies? Go-carting? Bowling? Swimming? Anything like that?

There's a pause... Then-

BILLY (CONT'D)

Cause I'm going to be here tomorrow, do you want to hang out?  
(she still doesn't answer)  
Oh, man, I'm sorry. Do you have a boyfriend or something?

MAGGIE

A what? A boyfriend? Me?  
(she laughs)  
Are you kidding me? No. I don't have a boyfriend.

BILLY

Cool. Do you want to hang out then?

MAGGIE

(getting serious)

Yeah. Sure. Cool. We can hang out.

BILLY

Cool. I'll come by in the morning.

Yeah. Well, good night.

MAGGIE

Good night.

He pulls the shade down. She looks back up to the stars.

TRACK DOWN TO AN OPEN WINDOW ON THE FIRST FLOOR... The Woman has been listening. She exhales and snubs out her cigarette.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MORNING

The Woman is wearing an apron over one of her skimpy outfits.

Bacon sizzles, pops and spits grease onto the WOMAN. She SCREAMS/LAUGHS and swats at the air with tongs.

Pu is next to her, also dodging the bacon grease spatters.

WOMAN

Why is it doing that so much?!

Maggie enters and turns the flame on the stove top down.

MAGGIE

The fire is too high.

WOMAN

Pu asked for bacon and eggs. How could I say no? Unfortunately, I've never done it before-

MAGGIE

You're kidding. You've never made bacon and eggs before?

WOMAN

No. I thought it would be fun.

MAGGIE

That's the problem. You thought.

Maggie steps in front of the stove, shooing off the Woman.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Move. And take that off. That's my mother's apron. You shouldn't be wearing it. Leave her stuff alone.

WOMAN

Sorry, honey. Pu gave it to me.

Maggie reprimands Pu with a look.

MAGGIE

Pu, make yourself useful and get me fresh eggs.

(to the Woman)

Can you make coffee without electrocuting yourself?

WOMAN

I can try, honey.

They silently go about their tasks. Maggie takes over the cooking. Pu sets the table. The Woman makes the coffee.

The Woman is watching Maggie, in between scoops of coffee grinds, trying to catch her eye. She's smiling widely...

WOMAN (CONT'D)

So. Here we are-

MAGGIE

No talking!

WOMAN

Okay. Whatever you say. But, I was-

MAGGIE

I said no talking!

The Woman "locks her mouth and throws away the key" then turns back to the coffee pot and giggles uncontrollably.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie, Pu and the Woman are eating in silence. Maggie ignores the Woman's attempts to (visually) engage. Pu seems oblivious to the tension at the table.

Maggie takes her plate to the sink...

MAGGIE

I cooked. You can clean up. Try not kill anyone in the process.



WOMAN

Oh my God, I was just saying that to the neighbor lady. Keep everyone alive! How funny! Great minds think alike! Am I right? Right? Me and you? Great minds!

Maggie scowls at her, then exits the room.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(to Pu)

See how much fun we can have? That was almost a conversation. I knew she'd come around. She's a doll. So funny. That droll sense of humor...

Pu has taken two strips of bacon and fashioned them into large fangs hanging from inside his upper lip...

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Good thing you're cute, honey.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - THAT DAY

Maggie looks in a mirror and pulls at her hair as if demanding it to grow... No such luck.

Andy Gibb's I JUST WANT TO BE YOUR EVERYTHING is spinning.

Maggie sticks her head out the window and looks over at Gretta's house. The pulled shade in the second floor window gently flaps in the breeze. Her face sours.

EXT. DOE'S BACKYARD - LATER THAT DAY

Maggie comes out of the back door...

Her mouth drops when she sees the Woman sunning herself on a fold out chaise lounge.

The Woman is wearing string bikini bottoms and pasties with plastic propellers. She flips through GOOD HOUSEKEEPING.

MAGGIE

What are you doing?

WOMAN

(cups her good ear)

What's that, honey?

MAGGIE

We have neighbors! They have eyes!

WOMAN

Geez, I guess I'm just so used to it. I walked around like this all the time in Las Vegas. No one ever batted an eye. I was a show girl.

Maggie remains tongue-tied.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Honey, would you be a doll and get me some of that Wyler's Instant Lemonade in the fridge? I don't want to touch anything, I'm all Johnson's Baby-Oiled up.

Maggie is still unable to speak. She goes inside the house.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie pours a glass of lemonade. She looks out the window at the Woman, who is crazily swatting at an annoying bee.

MAGGIE

Catch more bees with honey. I'm onto you, Ms. Poppins.

Maggie downs the drink then dumps the remaining lemonade into the sink. She exits the house through the front door.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Maggie surveys the front yard. She spots Phil sitting across the street in his Ice Cream Truck conversing with MR. HOMB, looking like something out of Far Side, as he waters his lawn. They're both focused on the Doe's house.

Maggie dismisses them when she sees Billy on Gretta's front porch. He's patching a bicycle inner tube. He looks up from his task and smiles when he sees her-

BILLY

Hey. I was going to come over earlier, but she put me to work.

As Maggie wanders over, she sees Marko, Reggie and Pu huddled on the border of the properties peeking into the backyard.

Reggie fires a water gun through the bushes at the Woman.

REGGIE

It's a hit!

Reggie and Marko try to stifle their laughter. Pu looks a little uncomfortable about the whole thing.

MARKO  
Make her things twirl.

REGGIE  
Her tits?

MARKO  
No. The propellers, man.

Reggie fires another shot. The Woman SQUEALS.

REGGIE  
Bulls eye!

The boys throw themselves on the ground laughing.

MAGGIE  
Get out of there!

The boys jump up and run to their bikes. They ride between the houses, passing between Maggie and Billy.

MARKO  
High five!

Reggie rides up next to him and slaps his hand,

REGGIE  
High five!

Billy watches them make their escape, then-

BILLY  
What did I miss?  
(Maggie shudders)  
Oh. Is that woman in the backyard?

MAGGIE  
Yes. Which is definitely better  
than her being in the front yard.

BILLY  
...I've seen her before.

MAGGIE  
Where?

BILLY  
On TV. That Wella Balsam Shampoo  
commercial. I think that's her.

MAGGIE

Apparently she's been a magician's assistant, a hair dresser, my father's mistress and a Las Vegas show girl. But, I don't know about a commercial actress.

The REVVING OF A CARBURETOR pulls their focus up the street.

A MUSCLE CAR approaches. Val hangs out the passenger side window (a Tallboy of PBR in hand) waving to Billy-

VAL

There's my Billy the Kid! Hi, baby!

As the car nears Val pulls out a duffel bag. The car slows down just enough for Val to toss the bag onto the lawn. The car continues to drive along and Val waves.

VAL (CONT'D)

Some of your things! Hi Maggie!

Maggie offers a half-hearted wave in return.

VAL (CONT'D)

Be back soon!

Billy and Maggie watch the car disappear down the road.

BILLY

...I guess I'm staying for awhile.

(a beat)

Did you say your father's mistress?

A beat.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Magsies? How's it going with the Wyler's Instant Lemonade?

A beat.

MAGGIE

I've got to get out of here.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES BEHIND THE HOUSES - LATER

Billy and Maggie approach a mound of dirt, under a hill of strategically placed branches, shadowed by a line of trees.

MAGGIE

I usually come out here when things get to be too much. When I want to scream at the top of my lungs.

She stops and presents-

BILLY

It's, like, a mound of dirt.

MAGGIE

To you it's a mound of dirt. To everyone it's a mound of dirt...

She moves the branches and feels her way along side of the mound grabbing onto something. She pulls open a DOOR OF THE CAR buried underneath.

BILLY

A portal? Time travel?

Maggie climbs into the car and slides across the front seat. Billy sits beside her.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Maggie turns on a battery operated camping light. A slip cover is fastened over the front seat, pictures of Maggie and her mother line the dashboard, curtains hang from the windows, a few of Maggie's smaller sketches are on display...

BILLY

Cool. Whose car?

MAGGIE

Mine now. Squatters rights. It's been here for awhile. Fortunately, most of the kids around here are complete imbeciles. The rumor is that there's a body in the trunk so they all stay away.

BILLY

Is there? Have you looked?

MAGGIE

Why would I? Even if there was. Big deal. As long as it keeps the others away, I'm all for it.

His eyes bounce around the car's interior. They stop on a photo of Maggie and Celia.

BILLY

Oh, yeah. Sorry I didn't come to the house the other day. The whole idea of that is weird to me. If my mom died, I'd want to be left alone. I wouldn't want to be standing in a room full of people I didn't really know. So...

MAGGIE

I wish more people gave it some thought before just showing up for the spectacle. Assholes.

BILLY

I get it. I mean, I didn't really know her. But, she seemed pretty cool. From what I remember.

MAGGIE

You remember her? When?

BILLY

Last summer.

MAGGIE

You were here last summer?

BILLY

Just for a few days. In July. I remember her and my mom spiking a punch bowl. They spilled vodka all over. Gram got pissed off. It was for some party. All your neighbors were there. I think someone moved in across the street?

MAGGIE

The Langdons. Yeah. I wasn't here. I was in Michigan. With my cousins. Me and Pu kept getting shipped off last summer... My parents weren't getting along at the time.

BILLY

They seemed happy when I saw them.  
(he smiles suggestively)  
Like really, REALLY, happy.

MAGGIE

What does that mean?

He smiles trying to shrug off his response.

BILLY

I saw them outside your house. You know. All kinda'...  
(ala Marvin Gaye)  
Let's get it on. Owwww.

MAGGIE

Gross. They don't even do that.

BILLY

Sure, they do. You just never catch them. Anyway, she saw me and they cut out. They seemed pretty wasted.

MAGGIE

Now I know you're wrong. My dad hardly ever drinks.

BILLY

Just telling you what I saw... Do you party?

MAGGIE

Like smoke? Drink?

BILLY

Yeah. Party.

MAGGIE

I've had Armaretto Di Saronna. And I've tried a hit of grass once with my friend Carmel. I bet you party.

BILLY

Why do you say it like that?  
(she shrugs)  
Well. You're right. My mom's friends party a lot. A real lot. I end up hanging out with them, so...

MAGGIE

Why do you hang out with them?

BILLY

My mom brings me around with her. It's cool. I mean, I don't mind. I can keep an eye on her. You know? Keep her out of trouble. She certainly has a way of finding it.

MAGGIE

Why? Has she ever been arrested?

BILLY

A few times. Yeah. It's mostly the people she hangs out with. Some of them are cool. But, some of them are complete assholes. You know?

He touches to the metal Impala insignia on the dashboard.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Impalas are cool? Does it run?

MAGGIE

I don't know. No keys.

BILLY

Hot wire it.

MAGGIE

Do I look like someone who knows how to hot wire a car?

BILLY

It's easy. We need pliers, a wire cutter, a screwdriver. I'll show you how to do it. See if it runs. But first, do you want to go grab something to eat? I'm starving.

MAGGIE

You didn't have breakfast?

BILLY

Gram cooked. So, I just picked.

MAGGIE

Oh, yeah. I totally get it.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - SAME

Gretta holds a basket under a cloth napkin.

The Woman, in her bikini, having replaced the pasties with the bikini top, answers the door. Gretta's eyes pop. Then-

GRETTA

I made zucchini nut bread.

WOMAN

Good for you, honey.

They eye each other awkwardly. Phil and the Ernie are in the far background, eyes fixed in the Woman. Then-



GRETTA

We had tea together. Celia, Maggie and I. Almost everyday. I found myself making bread, I guess out of habit. Then it dawned on me. She's gone... I still expect to see her. That'll take some getting used to.  
(she ekes out a smile)  
But, maybe you'd like the bread.

Gretta hands her the basket.

GRETTA (CONT'D)

Make sure Maggie gets some. She loves my cooking.

WOMAN

Sure, honey. Thanks.

The Woman watches Gretta exit the porch.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Hey. We could make some tea right now, if you want?

The Woman holds the door for Gretta.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The kettle WHISTLES. Gretta (her back to the Woman) turns the burner off and pours the boiling water into the tea pot.

The Woman's face twists as she chews on the terrible bread.

WOMAN

...I've got a room at the Howard Johnson. Been there for about a month. I'll stay there on the weekends when Henry comes home. We agreed that we don't want to be under the same roof at the same time. You know, too much for the kids... Real cute rooms. They got that big pool. It's a nice place to relax... You know what? People in the Midwest stare a lot, don't they? That's one thing I noticed.

GRETTA

Maybe it has something to do with what you're wearing?

A beat. The Woman searches her bathing suit for a label.

WOMAN

It's a Pucci.

GRETTA

Pucci?

WOMAN

The bathing suit. Wait. Did you just ask me what I'm wearing?

GRETTA

No. I said-

(loudly)

How much hearing loss do you have?

WOMAN

The one ear is completely shot. My good one? Still pretty good.

GRETTA

What's the loss from?

WOMAN

A left hook. My ex. Bobby.

GRETTA

No! Someone did this to you? Why?

WOMAN

Does anybody really know why a man would ever hit a woman?

GRETTA

Who was he? Were you married?

WOMAN

Just some guy I was seeing. Very handsome. Very connected. A big shot in Vegas. Knew everyone. Took me to all those fancy-shcmancy parties you hear about. Viva Las Vegas! I saw him for about a year. And in that time he beat up more people for just looking at me. I should've seen that as a red flag, huh? It was terrible. Those poor waiters, valets, guys in casinos, walking down the street, one tough looking broad. 'Why you looking at her like that?' And he'd hit them so quick. A left hook. They never saw it coming. Like me. I never saw it coming neither.

GRETTA

He hit you?

WOMAN

And how. I remember him yelling. 'After all this time, it wasn't the guys.' It was me. I wanted them to look at me. I showed too much skin. I smiled at them. Flirted. Was being disrespectful to him... Then the left hook. Powie! I saw stars. Knocked out. I woke up in the hospital. My jaw was broken. I had a concussion and a black eye. I couldn't hear out of this side. The eardrum was gone, just shattered.

GRETTA

That's terrible.

WOMAN

Yeah. But, it could have been worse. I could've stayed with him. Right? The bastard shows up at the hospital with flowers and an engagement ring. Textbook abuser.

(Gretta winces)

You can call me a lot of things, honey, but I ain't no dummy. That left hook, and what it did to me, told me all I needed to know.

Gretta grabs a bottle of Crown Royal from a cabinet.

GRETTA

I'm so sorry you went through that.

She pours a shot into both their teacups.

WOMAN

...We all go through something, don't we, honey? No one gets out of this life unscathed.

They lift their cups- "cheers" -and take a deep drink.

INT. THE PLUSH PUP - THAT DAY

The hamburger joint is a teen hangout. The CASHIER (17) (TUMOR on his name tag) who looks like he's slathered in cooking oil, takes an order from TWO TEENS.

Despite its shoebox size, orders are called over a microphone. The grease-covered FRY GUY (17) dips a basket of onion rings into the deep fryer. The oil bubbles, splatters and pops causing Fry Guy to take cover.

The Cashier's body twists as he eyes the fryer waiting for it to explode into an out of control inferno.

CASHIER

Two Plushie Combos, no onions-  
(he gets hit by grease)  
Ow! Fuck!

He ducks and dodges a few more splatters.

A TABLE OF SQUEALING TEENS, sitting close to the counter, wipe dots of grease off themselves with paper napkins.

A TABLE OF GIRLS eye Billy and laugh (at Maggie's haircut).

Billy and Maggie are seated by the front window, seemingly oblivious to all the activity.

MAGGIE

I didn't feel like hanging out with my friends. I hung out with my mom.

BILLY

...So, how did it happen? How did she know she was sick? Do you even want to talk about it? We don't have to talk about it. It's cool.

MAGGIE

No... She... Yeah, how she found out- It was um- now that I'm saying it, it sounds so stupid. Pu was- you know how you cup your hand in your armpit and clap-?

BILLY

Armpit farts.

MAGGIE

I was trying to avoid using that word, but, yes-

He demonstrates. The girls from the table across the room bust out laughing. Maggie squirms in embarrassment.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Thanks for the demonstration.

He does it again. Maggie sees the girls falling out of their seat over Billy. He has no idea how attractive he is to them.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I'm sure they thank you too.

Billy armpits-farts again. The girls clap. He bows.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Yes, Pu was pumping out WE WILL ROCK YOU. So, my mom tried. The noises were crazy, but not exactly-

BILLY

Fart noises?

MAGGIE

Yes. Thank you, again. She kept flapping her arm and cupping the other... And then she stopped. She kept her hand inside her shirt and went "Hmm"... I knew something was up. It was one of things, those moments, that you know you'll remember for the rest of your life... She found a lump. And, then everything changed.

BILLY

Wow... I'm so sorry.

Billy tries to take it in. Their eyes connect...

Behind them, the cashier speaks into the mic-

CASHIER

Large fries- Ow! Fuck that's hot!

He dodges the hot oil and jumps away from the microphone.

EXT. DOE'S STREET - LATER

Maggie and Billy are wandering up the street toward the house. They see the Ice Cream truck idling toward them.

Kids on bikes weave up and down the street. Warren rides his mower on the parkways. Neighbors talk over hedges...

They pass the Becker's house just as Maria opens the door.

MAGGIE

Hi, Mrs. Becker.

Maria looks preoccupied. She ducks back into the house.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 Something's going on with her. I  
 heard Mr. Becker moved out.

The odd looking guy, from across the street, is still working on his lawn. Maggie and Billy ignore him as they pass.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 (whispers)  
 Serial killer. Everybody says so.

They reach the driveway that separates Gretta's and the Doe's house. The front door is flung open... The Woman spills out the front door. Gretta is running a few steps behind her.

GRETTA  
 Stop. Drop. And roll!

The Woman stumbles down the steps, holding a lit cigarette, batting at her head. Her hair is slightly smoldering.

The Woman flings herself on the ground and rolls around.

Phil jumps from his truck, runs to the lawn and gets into a wrestlers stance, readying himself for, God only knows.

Maggie and Billy, the serial killer, Warren, the kids on the bikes, Frankie and his mother are suddenly all staring at the Woman. She stands up, furiously shaking her head.

WOMAN  
 Is it out? Gretta?

Gretta inspects the Woman's hair.

GRETTA  
 It's out. Just a couple singed  
 edges. Still beautiful.

The Woman looks at Maggie and Billy.

WOMAN  
 My head was on fire. The stove. I  
 go to light a cigarette. Powie!

The Woman takes in the blank stares from all around her...

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 Everybody stares in the Midwest.

Gretta and the Woman laugh uncontrollably. They're tipsy.

INT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, GARAGE - LATER

The doors are wide open allowing the sunlight to show onto a pegboard wall of tools.

Billy rummages through drawers in the "workshop" area.

BILLY

Found the wire cutters.

He pulls out a box that's tucked under the cabinet.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Let's see... Oh, man! I remember where I saw her. You're not going to believe it. Close your eyes.

MAGGIE

Why?

BILLY

Just close your eyes. Or turn around. Just don't look for a second until I pull something out.

Her eyes widen.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Sorry. That didn't sound right.  
(he turns her around)  
Just for a second.

He reaches further under the cabinet and retrieves another storage box. He takes off the top.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I found these last time I was here.  
Gramp's old stash.

Billy flips through a 1969 PLAYBOY MAGAZINE. He stops and lets the centerfold fall open.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Okay. You can look.

Maggie turns. Her mouth drops. She can't form a word.

BILLY (CONT'D)

See? I knew I've seen her before.  
(off the Centerfold)  
Hey, she's a Libra.

Maggie's mouth is still agape. Still can't get a word out.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES BEHIND THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Billy, carrying two shovels, follows Maggie through the weed flanked path. Maggie still looks freaked out.

BILLY

It's not that bad. Farrah Fawcett was on the cover. And Marilyn Monroe. She was in Playboy a lot.

MAGGIE

Neither of them was ever my father's mistress. Give me a moment to let the shock wear off, okay?

He follows her in silence.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Billy is working the wire cutters under the steering wheel. Maggie is in the passenger seat.

BILLY

These wires have to connect here. Can you see? Twist that. Then we...

He sticks the screw driver into the ignition.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Ready?

She nods. He turns the screwdriver like a key... The engine TICKS... It stops. Maggie exhales loudly. He turns the screw driver again... Nothing.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Okay. Three times the charm.

He tries again... The engine COUGHS to a start.

BILLY (CONT'D)

See the USA in your Chevrolet!

He "cowboy" HOOTS and REVS the engine.

EXT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie and Billy dig around the car, unearthing the Impala...



EXT. MAGGIE'S CAR - LATER

Maggie and Billy jump into the car. They roll the windows down in both the front and back seats.

BILLY  
You ready? Let's go!

Billy REVS the engine, puts the car into gear and floors it. The wheels spin, shooting the loose dirt into a cyclone that follows behind them as they steer away from the area.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES - CONTINUOUS

The Impala emerges from the shallow row of trees and rumbles through the field of foxtails and dandelions.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Billy is elated.

BILLY  
Let's see what its got.

He pumps the gas, speeding into the field. The car "donuts" until it takes off, leaving a shower of dust lingering in the air. Billy weaves through the field, it makes Maggie SCREAM!

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The car skids to a stop. Billy jumps out-

BILLY  
Alright. Your turn.

She slides over in the seat as Billy climbs back inside.

MAGGIE  
Just so you know. I flunked Drivers  
Ed. Twice. So-

She throws the car into drive and mercilessly presses the gas. The car lurches forward. Billy is immediately thrown around in the seat. He nervously let's out a "cowboy" howl.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES - CONTINUOUS

The car jerks and stops and spins out of control. Billy appears to enjoy it until they head to a row of trees...

BILLY

The other way. Steer! The wheel!

The car just misses the row of trees.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Stop! Stop! Hit the brakes! NOW!

The car hits a dip in the landscape and bounces, bucking them in their seats. Maggie grabs the wheel and spins it. The car heads straight for the patch of trees again.

Billy grabs the wheel. He pulls Maggie's leg off the gas and presses his foot on the brakes.

The car slams to a stop in a cloud of dust. He looks at Maggie in disbelief as they catch their breath.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You should never drive. Ever.

EXT. DAIRY QUEEN - LATE AFTERNOON

The dusty Impala is parked.

The EMPLOYEE (40) struggles squeezing out the service window, losing her paper hat as she attends to Billy and Maggie.

DAIRY QUEEN EMPLOYEE

What can I get for you boys?

BILLY

I'll take a Dilly-Bar and she'll have a chocolate dipped.

DAIRY QUEEN EMPLOYEE

Oh. Sorry. The hair. Kind of threw me for a moment.

She squeezes back into the window to get their order.

MAGGIE

It was longer before... I don't look like a boy. Do I?

BILLY

...Um. Well... Let me get this.

Maggie becomes very self conscious. Billy digs in his pocket and pulls out some money.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES BEHIND THE HOUSE - LATER - SUNSET

The Impala rolls through the field, returning to its place in the row of trees... Billy and Maggie climb out of the car.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie and Billy emerge from the row of trees.

BILLY

...I made sixty dollars from it.

MAGGIE

That's a lot of beer cans.

BILLY

Three Glad Trash bags. I spent the money on stocks, invested in gold. I don't care what I do. I just want to make a lot of money. What about you? What do you want to be?

MAGGIE

An artist.

BILLY

So, you don't want to have money?

Her shrugged off response is interrupted by-

WOMAN (O.S.)

Yathzee!!

Pu, Reggie and Marko's happy protests bellow out an open window. Billy and Maggie peek inside.

The Woman (cocktail in hand) and the boys are at the dining room table playing the board game.

THE CAT IS CROUCHED ON THE SOFA INTENSELY EYEING THE KNOT ON THE WOMAN'S HEAD SCARF THAT'S SECURING HER HAIR CURLERS.

Maggie sees the cat preparing to launch...

MAGGIE

This is not going to end well.  
Let's get out of here.

The head down the driveway--

RRRRROOOWWWWWW! The cat attacks. The Woman SCREAMS! GLASS BREAKS. The boys try to help... The cat attacks them.

MORE SCREAMS, FALLING FURNITURE, HISSING beckons Gretta out of her front door. She spots Maggie and Billy-

GRETTA  
What on earth..?

MAGGIE  
They're playing Yathzee... Sounds like she's pretty competitive.

GRETTA  
I guess... Anyway, where have you two been? I've kept dinner warm. Come on. It's Lasagna Surprise.

Billy and Maggie's eyes pop a little.

INT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Billy and Maggie are at the table staring at the Lasagna on their plates. They exchange a series of concerned looks.

GRETTA  
...You don't want to over cook the pasta. The Italians have a name for it. It's, um... It'll come to me...

Billy signals for Maggie to eat as Gretta goes into the kitchen. Maggie signals back to Billy. "You first."

Gretta returns from the kitchen. Billy puts a spoonful into his mouth... IT'S CRUNCHY.

GRETTA (CONT'D)  
Al Dente! That's it! Al Dente!

She smiles proudly as Billy chews. Maggie crunches down on the lasagna, chews slowly, then deeply swallows.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - THAT NIGHT

Maggie pushes the door open, waves to Billy on Gretta's porch and steps inside.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The HUMMING OF AN ENGINE draws her attention to the living room. See peeks inside...

The Woman (cocktail in hand) is strapped at the ass to a vibrating exercise machine belt. She waves at Maggie-

WOMAN

Has he tried to kiss you yet?

MAGGIE

What? Kiss me? No.

WOMAN

Not even a peck?

MAGGIE

I said no... He probably thinks I'm a boy. Everybody else does.

WOMAN

I'm sure he knows you're all girl. I think he is cutesy-cute-cute.

MAGGIE

Yeah? Well, I think he's a little too young for you.

WOMAN

(erupts with laughter)

So funny! That's a good one! honey, you should be a comedienne! You've got great delivery! Real zingers!

She spills her drink. She turns off the machine.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I can't drink and exercise at the same time. I'll spill too much.

She slips out of the belt. Maggie eyes her.

MAGGIE

You know those belts don't actually help you lose weight.

WOMAN

Oh, I know, honey. I just like the way it feels.

She giggles. Maggie's shudders as she climbs the stairs.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Hey, wait. Where you going, honey?  
(Maggie ignores her)  
To your room? Okay. It was nice talking to you.

Maggie's bedroom door SLAMS shut.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Maggie hides behind the curtain and looks over at Gretta's. The shade in the window springs up... Billy stretches.

Maggie reels away from the window. She eyes Celia's outfits. Maybe she'll give this Cosmo thing another shot. She selects a beautiful sundress.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - THAT MORNING

The Woman and Pu are waiting by the toaster anticipating the spring to be sprung. POP! They both grab the pastry-

WOMAN/PU

Leggo my Eggo! You Leggo my Eggo!

Maggie enters. She's wearing (better applied) make-up and the sundress. The Woman is immediately thrilled.

WOMAN

Oh my goodness! So beautiful!

MAGGIE

No talking!

WOMAN

But, honey, you look so cutesy-

MAGGIE

I said no talking!

Maggie grabs a box of cereal... No one talks.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - THAT MORNING

Maggie pages through a book and eyes Gretta's front door... It finally opens. Billy comes out and waves at Maggie as he heads between the two houses.

Maggie immediately perks up... Billy passes her up.

Maggie leans over the porch railing. She sees Billy meet up with Pu, Marko and Reggie... She ducks back to her seat before the boys see her. A moment later-

Pu, Marko and Reggie fly by on their bikes... Billy follows.

Maggie deflates watching Billy ride off with the boys.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - SAME

The Woman has seen what's unfolded. She grabs a magazine from her "by-the-pool-sunning" bag and steps outside.

WOMAN

Look, honey, this is what I was talking about. So cutesy-cute-cute.

The Woman shows a picture of a model with a Pixie cut.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

She absolutely, positively doesn't look like a boy... What do you say? Let's give it a try.

Maggie eyes her or a moment.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR BATHROOM - LATER

Maggie is in a folding chair with her back to the mirror. The Woman makes the final snips of the new hair cut.

WOMAN

...I think I've outdone myself.  
It's Gor-gee-o-so. You look so fresh. Like a little daisy.  
(adds a dab of VO-5)  
There we go... Oh, honey...

Maggie turns to the mirror. The Woman stops her.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Wait. Let me do a little something.  
(grabs mascara)  
Make sure you get the excess off, then gently roll it up from the eye. Just a smidge is all you need. You don't want to cover your beauty. You want to enhance it.

She eyes Maggie's face, then grabs a tube of...

WOMAN (CONT'D)

A touch of lip gloss...  
(applying it)  
My beauty comes from a can or a tube of something. Hair spray. Lipsticks. Blush. There's always been a price tag on it... Not you. You've got that natural beauty. Just like your mother.

MAGGIE

Please, don't talk about my mother.

The Woman shakes her head in agreement. Still too soon. She undoes the towel from Maggie's shoulders...

WOMAN

There you go, honey.

Maggie runs out of the bathroom. The Woman looks rather defeated as she collects her scissors and make up.

Maggie suddenly returns. She can't look at the Woman... Then-

MAGGIE

Thank you.

She darts away. The Woman's eyes immediately spill tears.

WOMAN

...You're welcome, honey.

She presses the door closed and cries into a towel.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - LATER THAT DAY

Maggie grabs letters from the mailbox, sits on the steps and sorts through the mail.

She sees Billy making his way up the street. As he nears he notices the change in Maggie...

BILLY

Hey.

MAGGIE

Hi.

Billy definitely notices. He ghost rides the bike onto the front lawn. He can't get to Maggie quick enough.

BILLY

Hey. So. Wow. What happened? -I mean, what's going on? What are you up to? Do you want to hang out?

Maggie smiles.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES BEHIND THE HOUSE - LATER

The Impala (with its windows rolled down) rumbles away from the trees and onto the road. Billy and Maggie go for a ride.



EXT. ROAD - LATER

The Impala soars down the sparsely populated road...

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - SAME

Maggie pulls a cigar box from the back seat and flips the top open. It holds a number of "treasures" and keepsakes. She picks up a jeweled brooch.

MAGGIE

I got this for my mom when I was six. Sold lemonade to raise the money. She loved it.

She picks up a matchbox and RATTLES it by Billy's ear.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Guess what this is?

BILLY

(wryly)

Um. Match sticks? Duh.

MAGGIE

They're my baby teeth.

BILLY

What? Gross! Why would you keep your baby teeth?

She picks up a photo of Maggie holding tightly onto Celia.

MAGGIE

This is my favorite picture. Ever.

Billy leans over to look... The car swerves. As Billy corrects it, Maggie slides against the door and drops the picture out the open windows.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Oh, no! Wait! Stop! Stop!!

BILLY

What happened?

MAGGIE

It dropped! Stop!

The Impala squeals to a stop on the shoulder of the road. Maggie opens the door and backtracks along the pavement.

Billy climbs out-

BILLY  
We'll find it! Don't worry.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-Maggie and Billy run... baby step... tip toe along the road in search of the picture... To no avail.

-A TRUCKER pulls over and joins the search.

-A FAMILY pulls over and joins the search.

-A VW BUG pulls over. Three NUNS join the search.

-A VAN pulls over. HIPPIES join the search.

-A BUS PULLS OVER. JAPANESE TOURISTS join the search.

-A BOY SCOUT TROUPE joins the search.

-An ELDERLY COUPLE join the search... Until-

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. ROAD - SAME

Billy sees the photo lift in the wind. He chases it down.

BILLY  
Got it!

Big CHEERS!

EXT. ROAD - LATER

The searchers take turns looking at the picture. Laughter. Tears. Joy. Blessings. Hugs... Life can be bigger and more profound than Maggie could have ever imagined.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - LATER

Maggie hold onto the photo with both hands. She smiles at Billy. He returns a smile.

MAGGIE  
Thanks again.

BILLY  
You might want to bring it in with you. Put it somewhere safe.

She agrees.

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - LATER

Billy and Maggie (holding the photo) emerge from the bushes. They head for the house just as the Woman pulls the Lincoln into the driveway.

The Woman and Pu exit the car, move to the trunk, pop it open and unload shopping bags.

PU

You missed out. We went shopping. I got a ton of new stuff. We also went to the Howard Johnson and had lunch on the patio by the pool.

WOMAN

(to Maggie)

You're welcome to go there whenever you'd like and use the pool. Open invitation. I've got a room there.

MAGGIE

Is that where my dad is putting you up? The Howard Johnson?

WOMAN

He's not putting me up anywhere, honey. I take care of myself. I guess you don't know that I'm a self made millionaire. A couple times over. I've been investing in electronics. I'm loaded, honey. Of course I'd rather stay in the fancy-shcmancy penthouse at the Hyatt Regency. But, the Howard Johnson is just a hop, skip and a jump from here. Much more practical.

Pu is stacked with bags. He hobbles to the house-

PU

Hey, can we order pizza for dinner.

WOMAN

Whatever you want, Pu-Boy.

The Woman follows Pu inside the house.

MAGGIE

...She's rich, too?

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

The Philips Portable Turntable spins a song. Maggie holds THE BEST OF ARETHA FRANKLIN by the cardboard cover and carefully slides the vinyl out. She examines the grooved surface.

MAGGIE

See?

She holds the album under the light for Billy to examine.

BILLY

Oh, yeah. But, this...

She slides the record back into the cover and puts it down. She carefully (almost reverently) picks up The 5th Dimension GREATEST HITS ON EARTH album.

MAGGIE

This is the one.

She sits down on the bed next to Billy.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

It's weird knowing its one of the last things she held in her hands.

She carefully slides the vinyl out of the cover and paper sleeve. She tilts it toward the light.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

She played this album all the time.  
LET THE SUNSHINE IN. Her favorite.  
(tilts the record again)  
See? That one is perfect. Every  
time I look at this, I see her...

BILLY

Do you want to put it on?

MAGGIE

I don't know. I'm worried that the needle will grab a little bit of it every time the record goes around. Taking it away. Taking part of her away. Once her fingerprints are gone there's no way to get them back... I'm not ready for that.

She slides the vinyl back into the sleeve, then puts the album back with a small stack of Celia's other records.

SERIES OF SHOTS

-Billy and Maggie sort through her record collection.

-They listen to music.

-Pu brings delivery pizza to them.

-Maggie and Billy select a new record. They play it.

-Billy looks at Maggie's art work on the wall.

-Billy and Maggie crawl out the window and look at the stars.

-They put on another record.

-Maggie sketches Billy as he reads some of the album covers.

-Billy eyes his portrait. He likes it. He likes Maggie.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The sun is showing under the window shade. The turntable spins without any record. There are sketches splayed out on the floor with portraits of Billy drawn on them.

Billy has crashed out on the floor. Maggie has fallen asleep holding her sketch pad... She stretches and awakens.

She carefully slides out of bed as to not disturb Billy. She leaves the room.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie quietly moves through the hallway. She looks into Pu's room. Pu's sleeping. She moves further down the hallway...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie enters. The doorknob slides from the spindle hole. Maggie taps it back in place.

She looks around the room. She closes the door and moves to the bed. She climbs on the bed. She puts her face into the pillow and inhales deeply. She grabs the other pillow and wraps her body around it. She closes her eyes.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER THAT MORNING

Pu and Billy are sitting at the table eating a very burnt breakfast. The Woman (wearing Celia's apron) and Gretta are cleaning up the dishes.

There's a joyousness about them. Pu is laughing at something Billy says. The Woman is WHISTLING a little tune...

Gretta prepares a plate for Maggie-

GRETTA

We'll let her sleep for as long as she wants. I'll put this in the fridge for her. I'm sure she'll be happy we saved her something.

BILLY

Or not.

He comments with his eyes to Pu.

GRETTA

What do you mean?

BILLY

Maybe if it were ice cream. She'd be happy.

GRETTA

Oh. I thought you were saying something about my cooking.

BILLY

(wryly)

I would never do that.

He laughs. Pu laughs. The Woman laughs.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, STAIRWELL - SAME

Maggie is wandering down the steps listening to the OUTBURST OF LAUGHTER.

She gets to the bottom and cranes her neck, peeking into the kitchen. She sees all the smiling faces. The Woman and Gretta working side by side. Pu and Billy goofing off at the table.

The expression on her face turns from curiosity to sadness.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Billy is poking at a plate on the table-

BILLY

Make sure you save her a hockey  
puck- I mean a sausage patty.

GRETTA

Hey, now-

The LAUGHTER builds... SOMETHING catches Billy's eye outside the window. He sees Maggie running through the yard, heading for the forest preserves behind the house.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES - SAME

Maggie runs, dodging tree limbs and bushes as she heads for the Impala...

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - SAME

Billy jogs toward the forest preserve, following Maggie...

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie is sitting behind the wheel of the Impala, staring off into the field. Billy approaches-

BILLY

Didn't want breakfast?  
(she doesn't respond)  
I mean, I don't blame you for  
skipping out. That woman might be a  
worse cook than Gram.

A long stretch of silence...

BILLY (CONT'D)

Are you alright? Maggie?

MAGGIE

Everyone playing house in her  
kitchen... It's hard to look at.

He sits down next to her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

It hasn't even been two weeks.

Billy leans back and settles in the seat. He's there for her.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT ROOM - THAT DAY

The phone cord extends through the kitchen door and across the front room. The Woman, trying to contain her excitement, talks into the phone.

WOMAN

I can do that. Yes. And Henry...

(softly)

I miss you so much.

(she gets emotional)

Okay. Yes. You too. Bysie-bye.

She runs the phone back into the kitchen and hangs up. She looks around for a clock. Takes the time in.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(up the stairs)

Pu-sie-pu! We got to skip the pool today. Sorry.

Pu appears at the top of the stairs in his bathing suit.

PU

Aw, man! Why?

WOMAN

That was your father on the phone. He's coming in a day early. He'll be here this afternoon. And you're still breathing! Ain't that great? You didn't even choke or anything!

Pu looks confused.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES - THAT DAY

Billy writes "WASH ME" with his finger in the caked dirt/dust on the car.

Maggie is lying across the front seat with her feet sticking out of the window.

BILLY

Wash me! Let's give it a bath. See what it looks like without all the dirt caked on.

She pulls her feet in from the window.

MAGGIE

I was going to bury it again.



BILLY

Why?

MAGGIE

...What if I have to scream?

BILLY

Then scream.

A look of uncertainty crosses her face as she eyes him.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie's hand dangles out the passenger side window as the Impala emerges from a shallow row of trees. It rolls over a clearing and climbs onto the gravel road.

EXT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Billy pulls the Impala into the driveway. Gretta exits the house and greets Maggie and Billy-

GRETTA

What in the world?

Maggie and Billy get out of the car.

EXT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A radio is on the porch... Chic's GOOD TIMES plays.

Billy carries a bucket of sudsy water. Maggie sprays the Impala with the garden hose.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT ROOM - SAME

The Woman picks up the rolled up, unread newspapers and pairs of shoes by the front door.

WOMAN

(sotto)

I've got to get moving here.

She runs to the stairs and shouts up-

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Hey, Pu!

Pu comes to the top of the stairs.

(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I need a helping hand. And some music, it makes me work faster.

PU

Sure. Hold on.

The Woman grabs a broom and sweeps the floor in the foyer area. Pu comes down the stairs with the Philips Portable Turntable and a couple albums under his arm. He sets the stereo up in the front room.

PU (CONT'D)

Here we go.

He flips through his records and selects a seven inch vinyl of Kiss's I WAS MADE FOR LOVING YOU.

PU (CONT'D)

Here. This one rocks. I just got it, like, three weeks ago.

Pu loves the music. The Woman deplores the song.

WOMAN

How about something I've heard before. Something that doesn't make me want to gouge out my good ear.

PU

Like, old people stuff?

WOMAN

Hey, watch it, wise guy.

She playfully swipes at him. He runs up the stairs.

EXT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie and Billy wipe sudsy sponges over the Impala to the beat of the music off the radio.

A CARBURETOR drowns out the song. They look up the street. It's the muscle car that Val was in. It parks at the curb. Val climbs out of the driver's seat.

VAL

There he is! There's my Billy The Kid! Always good to see my baby!

BILLY

Hey, Mom.

MAGGIE

Hi.

Val takes in Maggie and Billy for a second-

VAL

Don't tell me you two went and fell  
in love in just a few days?

Billy and Maggie brush her off with a roll of the eyes.

VAL (CONT'D)

The love bug bites, just like that!  
(she SNAPS her fingers)  
No use trying to stop it.

They grow more embarrassed for her.

VAL (CONT'D)

Pretty car.  
(pointing to her car)  
If you want, that one could use a  
good cleaning. I'm gonna check in  
with the old lady.

She enters the house. Billy and Maggie exchange glances.

BILLY

She's buzzed. Not a good sign.

They continue washing the car.

The Woman comes out, taking a trash bag to the cans next to the garage. She sees Billy and Maggie on her return to the house. She stands in the driveway waving-

WOMAN

Hey, Mags, your dad's flight just  
landed. So, he should be here any  
time now. Isn't that great news?

Maggie clearly feigns a toothy smile. The Woman's face sours. She returns to the house.

INT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Gretta is folding laundry at the kitchen table.

Val is looking through the refrigerator for something to drink. She closes the door empty handed.

GRETTA

See? I told you.

VAL

How dumb do you think I am? You've got a stash around here somewhere.  
(she opens her bag)  
It's okay though. I've got my own.  
I never like to show up anywhere empty handed. Bad manners.

She cracks the tab on a can of Hamm's Beer and drinks.

GRETTA

Maybe Billy would like to stay here until school starts back up.

VAL

Why are you taking such an interest in him all of the sudden. He hasn't seen you in a year and-

GRETTA

You're going to start with that, again? Really, Val?

Gretta SNAPS the laundered shirt and folds it, punctuating her remark.

EXT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - SAME

The radio plays Sister Sledge's WE ARE FAMILY.

Maggie and Billy are drying off the car. They step back and admire their efforts.

BILLY

It's held up pretty good. Nothing that a little TLC can't fix.

A NOISE from inside Gretta's house pulls their focus. An ARGUMENT has broken out.

Billy runs into the house. Maggie follows.

INT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Gretta is picking up pieces of the broken iced tea pitcher. Val is finishing off her beer as Billy and Maggie enter.

VAL

Not even here for five minutes and she starts in on me.

GRETTA

If you ever showed up sober-

VAL

And here come the judgment calls!  
She's so perfect! Right, mother?

(to Billy)

Go get your things. We're leaving.

BILLY

I don't want to leave.

VAL

Fine! Stay! But, I'm leaving!

Val storms out of the room, and out of the house.

BILLY

Mom. Hold on.

EXT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

The REVVING of the engine on the muscle car beckons Billy onto the porch. Val BEEPS to be annoying. He calls out-

BILLY

Just a minute. God-

Maggie comes outside. Gretta stays in the doorway.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Sorry, Gram.

GRETTA

I'm sorry too. Come back soon. I  
love having you around.

Gretta and Billy embrace. Val BEEPS the horn again. Gretta releases him, scowls at Val, then enters the house.

Maggie and Billy look at each other.

BILLY

God, this sucks. I really don't  
want to leave. We didn't even  
finish cleaning the interior.

MAGGIE

I'll finish it. But, you should  
come back to visit Gretta-

BILLY

And you.

They eye each other...

MAGGIE  
Thanks for hanging out with me.

BILLY  
Yeah. It's cool.

He leans in and kisses her.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
See you later.

MAGGIE  
Okay. Bye.

He climbs into the car and waves as they pull away.

A smile widens across Maggie's face. She wanders to her house in a bit of a daze.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie enters and heads up the stairs, passing...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT ROOM - SAME

...The Woman, in a cocktail dress, is in the dining room setting up a small spread of fruits and cheese and crackers for Henry's arrival. Pu assists her, by pouring a bottle of Johnny Walker Black into a crystal decanter.

The Philips Portable Turntable is on a mid-century sideboard playing The 5th Dimension's LET THE SUNSHINE IN.

Maggie gets to the top of the stairs when she realizes the song being played. She stops. She descends the stairs. She gets to the arched doorway and looks into the dining room...

The purple album cover tops the stack of records next to the Philips Portable Turntable.

She approaches the sideboard watching the vinyl spin. She lifts the needle off the record, startling Pu and the Woman.

MAGGIE  
My record.

PU  
Well, it's mom's record.

WOMAN

Pu brought it out for me. I asked him for some real music. Good stuff. I'm crazy about the 5th Dimension. Love to dance to them.

She dances a bit... It's not until Maggie takes the record off the turntable that the Woman realizes something is wrong.

MAGGIE

Did you..? Somebody cleaned it.

WOMAN

Oh, I wiped it off, honey. It was covered with fingerprints. But, I was real careful not to scratch it.

Maggie looks like she's been gut-punched. She stops breathing. She might fall over... She walks out of the room.

Pu and the Woman are completely confused by her actions.

Maggie barges back into the room. She frisbees the record against the wall. It shatters.

MAGGIE

Get out! Now!

Maggie bolts from the room...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie runs through the kitchen...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, GUEST ROOM/DEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie flings the door open. The room has floor to ceiling bookcases behind a desk on one side of the space and a day bed on the opposite wall.

The Woman's outfits and leotards and head-pieces and jewelry are draped over an easy chair and hung from shelves.

Maggie scoops up articles of clothing in her arms, runs them out of the room and throws them on the kitchen floor.

The Woman follows her.

WOMAN

What happened? Please, honey, tell me what's wrong.

MAGGIE

You're wrong! Everything about you  
is wrong!

She returns to the room and grabs a suit case....

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie flings open the back door and kicks the suitcase into  
the yard.

The Woman stands in the kitchen watching Maggie as she  
crosses back and forth with more of the Woman's belongings  
and tossing them outside...

WOMAN

What brought this on? I thought we  
were making some progress.

MAGGIE

We were never making progress. You  
really are delusional, aren't you?  
You think you can just show up and  
slip into somebody else's life and  
nobody would notice?

WOMAN

I'm not trying to slip into  
anybody's life.

Maggie leaves and comes back with more items that she chucks  
out the door.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Can we please just stop this? Maybe  
you don't understand everything.

MAGGIE

What don't I understand? My father  
is out with his mistress while my  
mother is dying in bed. What did I  
miss about it?

WOMAN

A lot. You're missing a whole other  
side to the story. That's why  
you're so upset. You don't know  
about the other stuff, do you?

MAGGIE

What other stuff?



WOMAN

Okay. Now it makes sense. I thought you would have had at least a small idea of what was going on. But, you really don't know.

MAGGIE

What don't I know?

WOMAN

I'm not saying anything else. It's not my place. You should be talking to your father about this.

MAGGIE

About what? Huh?

The Woman doesn't respond.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

See? There's nothing more to say! There's no other side to the story. You're lying. Take your lies and your sequents and your fake eyelashes and get out of here!

Maggie moves to the woman's "good ear"-

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I WILL ALWAYS HATE YOU FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE! ALWAYS!

The Woman is rendered speechless. Maggie exits through the back door. She walks through the backyard... She suddenly sprints for the forest.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES BEHIND THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Maggie runs, swiping branches and twigs out of her way.

EXT. FOREST PRESERVES BEHIND THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Maggie arrives at the spot where the Impala was buried. Breathless, she surveys the piles of dirt... She SCREAMS!

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - LATER

A TAXI pulls over to the curb. Henry climbs out of the vehicle and looks at the house. The quiet is unsettling.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, FRONT HALLWAY - A MOMENT LATER

Henry opens the front door. Pu is sitting on the stairs. His eyes are red. He's been crying.

Henry puts his suitcase down. He opens his arms for Pu. Pu gets up and rushes to his father. Henry holds him tight.

PU

Dad.

HENRY

It's okay. We'll be okay.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Henry is on the end of the bed looking off into space.

The door creeps open. Maggie steps inside. The glass knob and spindle slip from the grated hole. She slides it into place.

HENRY

That doorknob has been broken the entire time that we've lived here.

MAGGIE

Get a new one.

HENRY

I guess I could. But, I like that one. I like the carved glass knob. And, it's been here for all these years. So, you know, why throw it away now? ...I guess I'm not very good at getting rid of things... Your mother had an easier time with that. She could let things go.

Maggie steps further into the room.

HENRY (CONT'D)

It feels so odd talking about her in the past tense. She used to. She had. She did. She was... So hard to believe that she's gone... I'm glad she decided to stay here. With me.

MAGGIE

...Where else would she be?

Henry finally looks at Maggie.

HENRY

In the city. They had an apartment.  
On Lake Shore Drive.

MAGGIE

They? Whose they?

HENRY

...I never saw it coming. Never...  
Maggie, she wanted out of the  
marriage. She signed papers. Had me  
served. Divorce. I had no idea-

MAGGIE

Why would she want a divorce?

HENRY

I thought I knew everything about  
her. I didn't.

MAGGIE

Dad? Why was she leaving?

HENRY

...Your mother was having an  
affair. With Mr. Becker.

MAGGIE

She was not. I don't believe you-

HENRY

She was. And, then she got sick-

MAGGIE

You're lying. Why are you lying?

HENRY

I'm not. She got sick and I told  
her to stay. That she should stay  
to be with you and Pu. That we'd  
all help her get better-

MAGGIE

No. Stop it! Stop lying!

HENRY

I loved her. I loved your mother-

MAGGIE

You were the one. You were the one  
that was cheating. You were the one  
that ruined it! You're a liar!

Maggie bolts from the room...

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Maggie flies down the steps...

EXT. DOE'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Maggie runs out the back door. She trips on one of the woman's high heels that was left behind on the lawn. She picks up the shoe and flings it across the yard.

She sees Gretta in her kitchen window looking out at her.

Maggie runs for Gretta's house.

INT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie runs inside. Gretta has an idea what's transpired. She looks sad and worn as she makes tea.

Maggie breathes deeply, trying to collect herself, then-

MAGGIE

Gretta. Do you remember last summer, a party for the Langdons? Do you remember that?

GRETTA

Yes.

MAGGIE

Was my father at that party?

Gretta chokes back her tears.

GRETTA

...No.

MAGGIE

Gretta? Was... Mr. Becker?

Gretta nods her head "yes".

Maggie unravels. Her legs give out. She slowly collapses to the floor. Her body writhes with pain. She sobs. Gretta drops to the floor next to Maggie, trying to comfort her.

INT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

Gretta pours Maggie a cup of tea and joins her at the table. Maggie looks spent. She stares at the table. Her finger etches along the geometrical design on the Formica top.

GRETTA

Here you go.

Gretta slides a plate of homemade (burnt) scones with jam toward Maggie.

Maggie eyes the scones. She eyes Gretta. She eyes the scones.

MAGGIE

Since everyone is being so honest today, I should tell you...

GRETTA

...Tell me what, dear?

MAGGIE

Your cooking is...  
(she can't do it)  
...exceptional.

GRETTA

Thank you, dear. I know it's not. But, thank you. I know why you said it. You love me. You don't want to hurt my feelings. We all do that. We hide truths to spare each other's feelings.

Maggie understands what she's saying.

GRETTA (CONT'D)

You idolized her. She didn't want that to change. So, she never told you... It got very complicated very quickly. Her illness... They knew. They knew right away that it was terminal. At the time she had already planned to move out. Your father asked her to stay. He told her he'd take care of her... He loved her, Maggie. The kindness that he showed. The understanding he displayed. That's real love.

MAGGIE

Then why did he go off..?

GRETTA

I don't know. Maybe, he needed somebody away from the situation. He spent a lot of time doing for others. Taking care of you kids and your mother. The house. His job. Traveling. That's a lot.

(MORE)

GRETTA (CONT'D)

Maybe he needed someone to be nice to him for a change... And she was there.

MAGGIE

He should have waited.

GRETTA

So the timing wasn't perfect. Who cares? She's good to your father. He deserves something nice for a change. And she's nice. I like her. She's good. She's fun. Everything she does comes from a such a loving place. She doesn't have a mean bone in that wonderfully voluptuous body of hers.

Maggie fights of a smile.

GRETTA (CONT'D)

Your mother was a very smart woman. Outspoken and expressive. Like you. If she wasn't alright with your father's choice, she would have let it be known. I'm sure of that.

They sip their tea in silence.

INT. DOE'S HOUSE, STAIRWELL - LATER

Pu is on the steps. He's got a Rotary Telephone (extended from the front room) in his lap, anxiously winding his finger in the curls of the cord, talking into the handset.

PU

Could you, please, try her room again? Thank you...

As he waits, Maggie enters the front door.

PU (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Are you sure? How long ago? Yes. If you could... Before she leaves. Yes, it's very important. Thanks.

He hangs up the phone.

PU (CONT'D)

She's gone, you idiot. What did you say to her?

MAGGIE

She's probably at the Howard Johnson. I'm sure she'll be back.

PU

No. She won't. The guy at the front desk said she's checking out right now. There's a bell boy helping her load up the car. Thanks a lot. She was crying. She was so upset. You really hurt her, Maggie.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry, Pu. I'm...  
(realizing)  
I'm sorry.

She flings the door open and runs outside...

EXT. GRETTA'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie mad dashes it to the Impala...

MAGGIE

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

She climbs into the driver's seat. She nervously grabs at the wires under the steering panel-

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

This one goes here...

She sticks the screwdriver into the ignition and turns it. The engine ROARS to a start.

She throws the car in reverse, hits the gas and jerks down the driveway. She backs onto the parkway across the street. The serial killer sprays at her car with his garden hose.

The tires spin. Rubber peels. Smoke rises from the pavement.

Frankie stuffs a handful of Captain Crunch cereal into his mouth watching Maggie's spectacle.

The Impala fishtails back and forth in front of the house.

Warren slows his mower to a stop watching the maneuvering.

Maggie punches the gas again. The car soars down the middle of the street, almost taking out the kids on bikes...

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - A MOMENT LATER

The Impala blurs down the street. It squeals to a halt at a STOP SIGN... completing the stop at mid-intersection. Maggie looks both ways and counts-

MAGGIE

One. One thousand. Two. Two thousand. Three. Three thou-

She pumps the gas and peels away...

EXT. COMMERCIAL ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

The Impala merges into TRAFFIC. It passes the other cars with great speed. It weaves. It cuts off. It tailgates. A CHORUS OF BEEPING follows in Maggie's path.

EXT. HOWARD JOHNSON, PARKING LOT - SAME

A BELLBOY is pressing the trunk of the Lincoln closed. The Woman is digging in her purse, gathering money for a tip.

WOMAN

Thanks, honey.

The Bellboy leaves as the Woman climbs into the car. She begins backing out of the parking space...

The Impala squeals into the lot. A PEDESTRIAN LADY SCREAMS after being pushed out of the vehicle's way, by a MAN.

The Impala jerks, and jerks, and jerks through the lot.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - SAME

Maggie's eyes are darting back and forth looking at the parked vehicles.

Maggie spots the Lincoln as its backing out-

MAGGIE

Oh, thank you!

In her excitement she steps onto the gas pedal...

EXT. HOWARD JOHNSON, PARKING LOT - SAME

The Impala careens forward...



The Woman sees the car torpedoing at her. She SCREAMS!

Maggie's unable to stop the car in time. She SCREAMS!

The Impala crashes into the Lincoln... Just as the Woman escapes the front seat.

A DULLED SILENCE FALLS OVER THE LOT. A broken water pump HISSES steam from under the hood of the Impala. FOOTSTEPS of ONLOOKERS running toward the accident.

The Woman gets up from the pavement and runs to the Impala.

WOMAN

Maggie!

EXT. COMMERCIAL ROAD - LATER

An ambulance soars down the road.

INT. HOSPITAL, EMERGENCY ROOM - THAT DAY

Maggie is sitting on an examination table. She has a small cut on her forehead that has been attended to. A DOCTOR is looking at X-rays clipped on a light-box.

DOCTOR

You got really lucky. Nothing too serious. Someone must be watching over you, young lady.

The Doctor leaves as a NURSE pulls back the curtain and enters the area.

NURSE

We've contacted your father, he'll be here shortly.

MAGGIE

Thanks... Um, there was a woman in the accident. Is she alright?

NURSE

She's fine. A little distraught. Loud. She's in the waiting area. She's been asking about you.

The Nurse smiles benignly and leaves. She fails to pull the curtains completely closed. Maggie has a view into the waiting room, when the doors swing open.

A DOCTOR passes through the doors. Maggie gets a glimpse of the Woman looking wired and worried. Her eyelashes are gone. Her make up is ruined from crying. She's trying to light a smoke, but her hand is shaking...

Another NURSE passes through the doors. This time the Woman sees Maggie. She drops the smoke and stands immediately-

WOMAN  
Maggie! Oh, Maggie!

The doors swing closed, the Woman pushes them open, but never steps inside...

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Are you okay? I can't come in!  
(the doors swing)  
I've been so worried! They won't  
tell me a thing because-  
(the doors swing)  
I'm not family. Oh, honey-

INT. HOSPITAL, WAITING AREA - SAME

A NURSE behind a desk in the waiting area interrupts.

NURSE  
Ma'am, could you step away from the  
doors. Not a good place for a  
conversation. Please.

WOMAN  
Sure, honey. It's just that-

NURSE  
Step away.

The doors swing to a shut. The Woman looks through the window and waves to Maggie. They lock eyes. Maggie REALLY looks at the Woman for the first time.. Maggie mouths "I DIDN'T MEAN IT". The Woman reads her lips... Maggie's head drops. Then-

WOMAN  
Aw, honey. I know. You didn't mean  
it. I know. It was an accident.

The Woman turns to the nurse behind the desk.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Honey, could you go in there and  
tell her it's okay? Could you?

NURSE

I'm sure she knows that.

WOMAN

I don't think she does. Could you, honey? She's in a lot of pain.

The Nurse reluctantly gets up and goes to Maggie.

The Woman watches from the waiting area. Maggie says something to the Nurse... She returns, looking annoyed and put upon. She approaches the Woman.

NURSE

She told me it was important for you to hear this, so, which one is your good ear?

WOMAN

(points out her left ear)  
This one, honey.

The Nurse leans into the Woman's left ear... At that second, the Woman and Maggie keep their eyes on each other, through the door windows...

NURSE

I'm sorry.

Maggie nods her head as the Nurse returns to her desk. The Woman's face lights up. Her smiles widens her. Her eyes fill with tears.

A PARAMEDIC comes through the SWINGING DOORS.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL CENTER - PRESENT DAY

...SWINGING DOORS OPEN. Maggie enters and walks down a long corridor. She pulls the cardigan tightly around her waist as she passes a NURSE.

At the end of the corridor, she pushes through a set of doors. The sign at the door reads: CANCER CENTER & WELLNESS.

INT. CANCER CENTER & WELLNESS, RECEPTION AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie sits in a chair. A NURSE appears and beckons Maggie from an open door. Maggie jumps up.

NURSE 2  
How are you? Wow. You look good.

MAGGIE  
I'm feeling good. Thank you.

NURSE 2  
Your hair came back.

MAGGIE  
It did. A little thicker too.

The nurse glances at a file in the folder she's carrying.

NURSE 2  
Let's see. Six months out. Had  
blood work and a PET scan on  
Monday. Results are... Oh, you're  
getting results today.

Maggie smiles anxiously. The nurse holds the door open...

INT. CANCER CENTER HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...Maggie steps inside. The nurse follows her.

NURSE  
Where's your entourage?

MAGGIE  
On my own. There's something about  
the result day. You know? It's too  
much. Emotional. I couldn't even  
imagine... If it's not great news.

NURSE  
Check ups are always nerve-racking,  
but I'm sure you're doing fine.

MAGGIE  
Let's hope so.

The Nurse holds a door open for Maggie...

INT. CANCER CENTER & WELLNESS, EXAM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie stares at the perfectly monochromatic schemed walls  
and cabinets... She listens to the faint BUZZ off the  
computer that sits on the small desk in the corner.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

She's been gone for more than thirty years now... And, even though time has soften some of the images of her in my mind, I've never felt closer to her since waging this personal war of my own. She's been with me the entire time. Helping me, guiding me, whispering those incredibly optimistic phrases into my ear. 'Everything will be alright. Better than alright.'

FOOTSTEPS coming up the hall cause her sit up straight in the leather tulip chair.

The DOCTOR, in his blinding white coat, rounds the corner of the door and steps inside.

DOCTOR

Good morning. Nice to see you.

He closes the door behind him.

INT. CANCER CENTER & WELLNESS, BATHROOM - LATER

Maggie is leaning on the subway tile in the corner of a stall. She's crying... SOMEONE ENTERS the rest room. Maggie stifles any noise she's making with a Kleenex to her mouth.

INT. CANCER CENTER & WELLNESS, RECEPTION AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie pushes through the door and approaches the elevator.

EXT. MEDICAL CENTER, ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie exits the building and heads for the parking lot. She digs through her purse and fishes out her cell phone. She presses a contact number...

MAGGIE

Hey. So... I'm good. I'm clean.  
There's nothing there.

SCREAMING RINGS out in the parking lot. Maggie looks up. The WOMAN, still able to turn heads all these years later, has her cell phone in her hand, jumping out of a Mercedes-Benz.

WOMAN

Honey, I told you! I couldn't sit and wait at home. I just couldn't.

She grabs Maggie. They embrace.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

What a relief. Wowsie-wow-wow.

(her eyes tear up)

Oh, no. Now, my lashes are going to fall off. Its okay. I'm so happy!

She bats her eyes repeatedly. Then-

WOMAN (CONT'D)

We've got to call your father right away. He keeps texting me, asking if I've got any news. So, just for the kicks of it, look what I sent back to him as my reply.

She holds out her phone for Maggie to see.

MAGGIE

Your centerfold.

WOMAN

He probably piddled his pants when he opened that. Huh? -God, I'm so happy, honey. I've been thinking about you all morning!

MAGGIE

I've been thinking about you too.

Maggie slides her arm around the Woman's arm as they stroll to the car...

FADE TO BLACK.