

SIS

by

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FADE IN

INT. QUINN HOME/GIRLS' ROOM - NIGHT

AUBREY (2) is in the arms of PENNY (12), head on her big sister's shoulder, eyes closed, face content.

Aubrey is round-faced, cherubic, dark-haired. Penny is more fair, skinny arms, an old soul behind her eyes.

Penny slow-dances in a small circle, holds her sister close, sings Bobby Helms's "My Special Angel" in a lovely voice.

PENNY

You are my special angel...sent from
up above...the lord smiled down on
me...and sent an angel to love...

Penny glances at the open bedroom door, closes it.

INT. QUINN HOME/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS / NIGHT

The girls' bedroom door is in the middle of a short hallway. At the end of the hall is the master bedroom, in which MOM (early 40's) yells at DAD (early 50's) MOS while Penny sings.

PENNY (O.S.)

You are my special angel...right
from paradise...

Mom gestures wildly, screams angrily. Dad remains calm.

PENNY (O.S.)

I know that you're an angel...heaven
is in your eyes...

INT. QUINN KITCHEN - MORNING

Aubrey sits in a high chair, eats oatmeal. Penny helps her with the spoon, her own breakfast in front of her.

Mom cleans up at the sink. She glances behind her at Penny.

MOM

Your breakfast is getting cold.

Penny catches some oatmeal running down Aubrey's chin.

PENNY

I know.

MOM

Are you gonna eat it?

Penny smiles at Aubrey, who mirrors the smile back at her.

PENNY

Yes mom, I'm gonna eat it.

Penny continues feeding Aubrey as Mom turns off the water, dries her hands, and SMACKS Penny in the back of the head.

PENNY

Ow!

MOM

You watch your mouth, Penelope!

PENNY

Sorry!

Mom returns to the sink, resumes cleaning.

MOM

And stop being such a worthless little shit. How far do you think you'll get in life with that attitude?

Penny shrinks in her seat, tries to focus on Aubrey.

MOM

No man is ever gonna want you if you talk back all the time.

PENNY

I'm sorry, mom. I know you worked hard to make breakfast.

Mom shakes an angry finger at Penny, her hands wet.

MOM

Is that sarcasm, young lady?!

Penny blinks as drops of water hit her in the face.

PENNY

No, I mean it. Really.

Penny risks looking up at her mother. Mom glares down at her, then regards the rest of the dishes.

MOM

I'm sick of this mess. Finish it later when your sister takes a nap.

PENNY

Okay.

Mom leans back against the counter, dries her hands.

MOM

If I'm stuck with you all winter
break, you might as well make yourself
useful. For a change.

Dad walks in, wears a suit and tie, carries a briefcase.

DAD

Okay, I'm off to work. Have a good
day, ladies.

He kisses Aubrey on the head, who looks up at him cheerfully.

DAD

Bye, penguin.

He moves around the table to Penny, reaches out to caress
her head, but she jumps up and wraps her arms around him.

PENNY

Bye, daddy! I love you.

She holds him tight. Mom sees this, frowns in disapproval.

DAD

I love you too. You're my lucky Penny!

Penny lets go and sits again, happily digs into her breakfast.

Dad gives Mom a quick peck on the lips. She pulls him close
and kisses him passionately, even grabs his butt.

He pulls back, but she still holds him close.

DAD

Easy, honey, the girls are right here!

She pulls him closer again, speaks softly in his ear.

MOM

I just get so wet seeing you all
dressed up like this.

Penny rolls her eyes so her mom can't see, makes faces at
Aubrey. Aubrey laughs.

DAD

I gotta go, hon. See you tonight.

Mom lets him go as he steps away and walks out.

DAD (O.S.)

Bye everyone!

PENNY

Bye daddy!

Mom stands silently as the door closes, and Dad is gone.
Penny takes a big bite of her food, serves Aubrey a spoonful.

MOM

I'm going back to bed. Try to keep
things quiet around here.

PENNY

Okay.

Mom leaves the room.

MOM (O.S.)

And don't make such a fucking mess
this time!

The girls pause and look at each other, reacting to the harsh
tone. Then Penny makes a goofy face, and Aubrey loves it.

EXT. QUINN HOME - DAY

An overcast winter day, clear air, little snow on the ground.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. QUINN HOME - NIGHT

The streetlights are on, and a light snow falls.

INT. GIRLS' ROOM - NIGHT

Penny stands over Aubrey, asleep in her crib. She watches
and listens to the little girl's calm, steady breathing.

Aubrey clutches a stuffed animal, a plush penguin colored
orange and purple.

Mom appears in the bedroom doorway - made up, dressed up,
sexed up. She strikes a pose.

MOM

How do I look?

PENNY

Wow! Mom, you look amazing.

MOM

Damn right I do.

She walks away. Penny runs to the door.

INT. QUINN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS / NIGHT

Penny watches from her door as Mom sashays down the hall to the living room.

Dad sits in his easy chair, reading a book. Mom gets close to him, rubs his face into her chest and tousles his hair.

MOM

Have a good night, lover!

Mom goes out the front door as Dad straightens his hair, smiling. Penny ventures down the hall.

A sparsely decorated Christmas tree stands in the corner of the living room, lights blinking slowly.

Dad wears a thick hand-knit sweater, looks very cozy in his chair as he reads. Penny approaches him.

PENNY

How come you're not going with mom?

DAD

She's having fun with her girlfriends tonight.

He puts down his book, pulls her in with a one-armed hug, trapping her in the crook of his elbow.

DAD

I thought you went to bed.

PENNY

I put Aubrey down, but I'm not tired.

He pats his leg, inviting her to sit. She does, sitting sideways, puts her arms around his neck.

DAD

You take good care of her, Penny.
I'm really proud of you.

PENNY

I wish I didn't have to go back to school so soon.

DAD

Why not? Don't you like school?

PENNY

Yeah, but...I like being home with Aubrey, too.

DAD

Of course you do! You're the best
big sister ever.

There is a hint of sadness in Penny's otherwise smiling face.

DAD

One day, when you're all grown up,
and your mom and I aren't around
anymore, you'll still be her big
sister. Forever and ever.

He runs his fingers through Penny's hair.

DAD

And you'll always be my pretty Penny.

He kisses her forehead.

DAD

All right. Time for bed.

Penny hops off as he leans forward to stand.

PENNY

Goodnight, Daddy.

She scampers down the hall to her room.

Once Dad is on his feet, he has to take a moment to steady
himself - hand to his chest, one long deep breath.

INT. GIRLS' ROOM - NIGHT

Penny wears an ankle-length nightgown, checks on Aubrey who
sleeps happily, still clutching the penguin.

Penny switches off the light, gets into bed.

INT. GIRLS' ROOM - MORNING

Penny sleeps soundly.

MOM (O.S.)

Penelope!

Penny wakes with a start, tries to focus.

Mom stands next to Penny's bed, still dressed up but
disheveled - and still somewhat drunk from her night out.

MOM

Keep your sister quiet so I can sleep.
I don't wanna hear any shit from you
today, got it?

PENNY

Okay.

Penny rubs her eyes and yawns as Mom shuffles out.

Penny approaches the crib, sees Aubrey happily sitting there in her pajamas, playing with the stuffed penguin.

When Aubrey sees Penny she stands up, makes happy sounds.

PENNY

Hey there, sis!

Penny gives Aubrey multiple tiny kisses on her neck. Aubrey scrunches up her shoulders from the tickling.

PENNY

I gotta pee, I'll be right back!

Aubrey giggles as Penny leaves the room.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Penny sits on the toilet, nightgown pulled up.

A horrified SCREAM from Mom cuts into the silence. Penny tenses up, looks frightened.

MOM (O.S.)

No, NO!!!

Penny hops off the toilet.

PENNY

Mom???

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Penny enters to find Mom crying hysterically, kneeling on the bed, furiously shaking Dad, who lies motionless.

PENNY

Mom, what's wrong?

Mom smacks her husband's lifeless face, pounds his chest.

MOM

Wake up, WAKE UP!!!

Penny starts crying.

PENNY

Stop it!!

Penny moves to the side of the bed, takes her father's hand.

PENNY

Daddy?

She drops the heavy limb in horror, recoils.

Mom buries her face in Dad's shoulder, weeps uncontrollably.
Penny wrings her hands in her nightgown, looks at her father.

Mom stumbles off the bed, falls to the floor.

MOM

I can't do this, no no no no, I can't,
I can't...

Penny goes to her mother, looking for comfort. Mom pushes her away and gets to her feet.

INT. GIRLS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS / MORNING

Aubrey stands at the wall of her crib, plays with the penguin, makes noises for it.

She completely ignores the painful cries and moans from elsewhere in the house.

PENNY (O.S.)

Mommy, what do we do?

Mom continues to wail as Penny cries, and Aubrey plays.

PENNY (O.S.)

Mommy, please...

Mom screams again, a horrible sound of pure anguish.

PENNY (O.S.)

Mommy NO!!!!!!

BLAM!! Aubrey flinches at the sound of the gunshot, dropping her penguin outside the crib.

Deathly silence hangs in the air a moment, then Aubrey forgets all about it, reaches toward her penguin a few feet below.

Penny enters, drops of blood spattered on her face and nightgown. She is in shock, her face blank.

Aubrey reaches to Penny, wanting to be picked up.

Penny lifts Aubrey out of the crib, quickly but calmly turns away and carries her little sister out the door.

Aubrey babbles for her penguin, still reaching for it, left behind on the floor.

EXT. QUINN HOME/SUBURBAN STREET - MOMENTS LATER / MORNING

Penny carries Aubrey out the front door, leaves it open as she walks briskly down the sidewalk through falling snow.

Though Penny is barefoot and wears only a nightgown, she doesn't shiver. She stares ahead, a faraway look in her eyes.

Aubrey leans over Penny's shoulder, crying and screaming.

The snow falls thick and heavy, covers everything in white.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY

Mortar boards fall from the sky on a fine summer day.

New graduates cheer, congratulate each other, exchange hugs.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER LAWN - LATER / DAY

AUBREY (22) shakes hands with a PROFESSOR. Aubrey has grown into a svelte young woman with the same dark hair.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

Aubrey!!!

Aubrey sees super-excited fellow graduate JENNIFER bounding her way. The professor departs.

Jennifer leaps on Aubrey and gives her a big hug. Aubrey is clearly uncomfortable, but puts up with it as best she can.

JENNIFER

I thought Keith was gonna be here.

AUBREY

He wanted to be, he's out of town.

JENNIFER

You guys set a date?

AUBREY

Um...not yet. Next summer, probably.

Aubrey sees BOB and JOANNA GRUZEWSKI (50's) approaching.

AUBREY

There's my mom and dad.

Jennifer gives Aubrey another quick hug. Aubrey cringes.

JENNIFER

See you soon! Bye Aub!

Jennifer bounces away.

AUBREY

Bye Jen.

Aubrey's parents reach her.

AUBREY

Please tell me you're ready to go.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

AUBREY

Auughh! I'm so glad that's over with.

Aubrey sits on one side of a booth, parents on the other. Bob eats, Joanna's done. Aubrey picks at her fries.

JOANNA

When do you start work?

AUBREY

Next Monday. I've got a whole week to do absolutely nothing.

JOANNA

Maybe instead of nothing you could do something productive?

AUBREY

Mom -- I have a job lined up, in my field, and I'm lucky to have it. The market's flooded with recent college graduates right now. Tell her, dad.

BOB

It's flooded, dear.

Joanna ignores her husband.

JOANNA

That job's beneath you, Aubrey.

AUBREY

It's entry level, Mom. It's beneath everyone.

Bob chuckles, which Aubrey appreciates.

AUBREY

A week is nothing. Most of my friends are taking the whole summer off. You should be proud of me.

Aubrey drags a fry back and forth through a blob of mustard.

BOB

We are proud of you, sweetheart.

AUBREY

Thanks, dad.

JOANNA

I just want the best for you, honey.

AUBREY

I know, Mom. I know.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Aubrey waves to her parents as they drive away, climbs the steps to the front door of her apartment building.

Aubrey stops as she notices PENNY (32) on the front stoop, sitting on a large suitcase, eyes hidden behind sunglasses.

Penny is somewhat thin with a small frame, weathered by the intervening years but still strong and confident.

Penny hasn't moved or seemed to notice Aubrey.

AUBREY

Can I help you?

Penny stirs as if waking, removes her sunglasses, takes a moment to focus. When she sees Aubrey, she hops to her feet.

PENNY

Aubrey?

AUBREY

Yes...

Penny jumps up and down, screams in utter joy and delight.

PENNY

Oh wow it's really you!! Look at you, you're a woman!!

Penny reaches for Aubrey's hands while jumping up and down, but Aubrey pulls away. Penny quickly moves in close for a tight hug, from which Aubrey recoils, then pushes Penny off.

AUBREY

Hey! Calm down! All right? Calm down.

Penny stops bouncing, still excited, cries a few happy tears.

PENNY

I knew it was you, I just knew it, as soon as I saw you I said that's her, that's my Aubrey!!

AUBREY

Listen, lady -- I don't know you.

Penny pulls back a bit, but still joyously exuberant.

PENNY

Oh, you don't remember me. It's okay,
you were so young.

The two of them look at each other a moment: Aubrey blank and wary, Penny overjoyed and bouncing.

PENNY

I'm your big sister! Penny!

AUBREY

(beat)

I don't have a sister.

PENNY

Yes, you do! Me!

(laughs)

I can't believe it's really you!

AUBREY

Penny? Penny -- this isn't funny,
and you need to leave. Please, just
take your suitcase and go.

Penny sits on her suitcase, folds her hands, speaks plainly.

PENNY

You were born Aubrey Quinn on June
4th, 1999. Parents James and Stephanie
Quinn, died December 2000. Placed
into foster care with Robert and
Joanna Gruzewski in January 2001,
eventually adopted and renamed Aubrey
Elizabeth Gruzewski.

Aubrey stares down at Penny, brow furrowed in confusion.

PENNY

Oh shit!

The sudden outburst makes Aubrey flinch.

PENNY

You knew you were adopted, right?
Tell me I didn't just crack the egg
on that one!

AUBREY

Yes, I knew.

Penny sighs, relieved. Aubrey crosses her arms.

AUBREY

How do you know my name was Quinn?
Those records are sealed, nobody
knows that. Just me and my parents.

PENNY

Because I was there when you were
born. I'm your sister.

Aubrey doesn't move. Penny stands, extends her arm to shake
hands, being businesslike instead of a bouncing maniac.

PENNY

Penelope Isabel Quinn. Nice to see
you again.

Aubrey shakes hands, still wary.

PENNY

You don't believe me, do you?

AUBREY

Why would I?

PENNY

Okay then. I'll show you my ID.

Penny digs a wallet out of the suitcase, hands Aubrey a
Colorado driver's license. Aubrey inspects it.

AUBREY

This is expired.

She hands it back. Penny repacks her items.

PENNY

What are you, a cop? I don't even
have a car.

AUBREY

If we have the same biological
parents, why are you from Colorado?

PENNY

I'm not *from* Colorado, I just lived
there for a while. Now I'm back.

Penny opens her arms as if ready for a hug.

PENNY

So do you believe me?

AUBREY

Quinn is not an uncommon name. It
doesn't mean we're related.

PENNY

Then how do you think I know it was your name?

AUBREY

Any number of reasons! Not the least of which is that you could be some crazy stalker identity thief.

PENNY

Well I'm not. I'm your sister.

AUBREY

You keep saying that, but you have no proof. And *I* don't have a sister!

PENNY

I'm not carrying around a portable DNA kit, no. But I can prove it.

AUBREY

No, you can leave now.

Aubrey snags the handle of Penny's suitcase and drags it down the steps. Penny makes no move to stop her.

Aubrey drops the bag on the sidewalk, gestures to it angrily as an indication for Penny to join it.

PENNY

Call your folks. Ask 'em.

Aubrey scoffs, stands her ground.

INT. AUBREY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER / DAY

Aubrey sits in the driver's seat in the parked car, cell phone to her ear. She glances at Penny on the sidewalk, sitting on her suitcase in front of the apartment building.

AUBREY

Hey Dad. I gotta ask you something. I know you're not home yet, this is important. There's a woman here at my apartment...no, she was on the front porch. Just listen for a second. Her name is...

She consults Penny's I.D. in her other hand.

AUBREY

Penelope Isabel Quinn. I don't know what her deal is, but she knows *my* name used to be Quinn, and she says she's my older sister.

She listens for a moment, glances at Penny sitting calmly.

AUBREY

She's just sitting there. With a suitcase.

(beat)

What? No, are you kidding?

(beat)

Dad, I'm not...

She turns to look directly at Penny, who waves cheerfully.

INT. AUBREY'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Aubrey drives on the expressway, Penny in the passenger seat, suitcase in the back. Penny looks at Aubrey with love.

PENNY

You've grown up so beautiful, Aubrey.

She pats Aubrey gently on the shoulder.

AUBREY

Please don't touch me while I'm driving.

Penny folds her hands together.

PENNY

What'd your folks say?

AUBREY

We're going to look through my adoption files.

PENNY

They didn't say "You have an older sister we never told you about"?

AUBREY

Nope.

PENNY

It's all right. You'll see.

AUBREY

Listen, Penelope -- I'm only doing this to prove you wrong. I do not have a sister. You're nobody to me.

Penny looks out her window at a car passing them.

PENNY

I'm going to pretend it doesn't hurt to hear you say that.

Aubrey grips the wheel tighter, speeds up slightly.

INT. GRUZEWSKI FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

Aubrey enters the suburban home with her key. Penny follows.

AUBREY

We're here!

As Aubrey locks the door, Penny sees the older couple approaching from the adjacent living room.

JOANNA

Hello!

Joanna reaches out to shake hands as she approaches Penny.

JOANNA

You must be Penelope!

Penny bypasses Joanna's hand and goes straight for a hug.

PENNY

Call me Penny.

Joanna is surprised, but readily hugs back.

JOANNA

I'm Joanna. My husband Bob.

Penny happily hugs him. He's perfectly comfortable with it. Aubrey waits impatiently through all this.

PENNY

I'm so happy to meet you both.

AUBREY

(to her parents)

So what'd you find?

INT. GRUZEWSKI LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Papers, folders, and assorted official documents are spread out on the coffee table.

Penny sits in a chair, Aubrey on the long couch, parents together on the loveseat. They all lean over the table.

Bob holds one of the papers, reads from it.

BOB

Here it is. One sibling, Penelope Isabel Quinn, age twelve.

Penny smiles at Aubrey as if to say "See? Proof."

AUBREY

Anyone can change their name.

Bob continues reading silently. Joanna finds a photo, holds it gently as if it were fragile.

JOANNA

Oh, look at this.

Aubrey gazes at the photo of her two-year-old self, held by a woman whose face isn't shown. Penny leans over to see.

PENNY

Aww, you look so sad!

Aubrey frowns.

PENNY

(to Joanna)

Is that you holding her?

JOANNA

No, I think it was Aubrey's social worker.

BOB

(reads)

Unable to be placed in standard foster services.

(to Penny)

What does that mean?

PENNY

Is that about me?

Bob nods.

PENNY

It means my parents had just died and they wouldn't let me see my sister, so I got a little upset...then they marked me down as a trouble case.

JOANNA

Oh, how awful.

AUBREY

Why wouldn't they let you?

Aubrey's tone is harsh. Penny's remains even.

PENNY

I was traumatized, Aubrey. I was only twelve.

AUBREY

But what happened, did you attack somebody? Were they afraid you'd hurt me or something?

PENNY

No, because I wouldn't.

AUBREY

Maybe they thought you would.

PENNY

I don't know what they thought.

Aubrey takes the document out of her dad's hands.

JOANNA

Aubrey, don't be rude.

Aubrey reads silently, then sets the paper down.

AUBREY

It doesn't say anything else useful.
(to Penny)
So what happened? You went your way,
I went mine, and now here we are.
Together again.

Aubrey taps her foot against the table leg.

PENNY

You still don't believe any of this,
do you?

AUBREY

If these files say I had a sister
twenty years ago, I suppose I have
to accept that, but I see no reason
to believe it's you. You could be
some random crazy woman who showed
up on my porch.

BOB

Aubrey, that's not nice.

AUBREY

I'm sorry, but this is all just a
little strange to me! Why didn't you
ever tell me any of this before?

BOB

The social worker never mentioned a
sister. We just didn't realize it.

AUBREY

It's right there in the files, dad.

Aubrey angrily taps the papers with a pair of fingertips.

BOB

Aubrey, once you were old enough for us to tell you you were adopted, we hadn't seen these papers for years. We just forgot.

AUBREY

Oh, okay, well, my life's completely different now because you just forgot. That's great, thank you so much!

JOANNA

Aubrey Elizabeth, you drop that attitude this instant.

Aubrey clams up, sulking.

JOANNA

Regardless of how all this happened, we have a guest. And you will not be disrespectful.

Penny smiles awkwardly. Aubrey refuses to look at anyone.

PENNY

I have a picture of us.

She digs in her wallet and locates an old photo from an instant camera, hands it to Aubrey.

It's an image of young Aubrey in young Penny's lap, sitting on the carpet in front of the Christmas tree.

PENNY

This is actually the last photo we took together.

Aubrey shows it to her parents, who gush over it.

AUBREY

How do we know that's you?

PENNY

Doesn't it look like me?

She smiles wide like in the photo.

JOANNA

She has this beauty mark. See?

Aubrey sees the spot on Penny's face, inspects the image.

AUBREY

That could be a smudge on the film.

BOB
It's a Polaroid.

AUBREY
That's still film.

PENNY
It isn't a smudge. That's me. I really
am your sister.

Aubrey and Penny look each other in the eye for a long moment.

AUBREY
We're getting a DNA test.

Penny can't help but be a little hurt, tries to hide it.

JOANNA
Penny, do you have any other family?

PENNY
Nope. Dad's brother died in the army
when he was still a kid, and mom was
an only child. Her parents died before
Aubrey was born, I barely remember
them. And if there's anyone else out
there, I never knew about 'em.

Bob reads another document.

BOB
I always wondered about that.

JOANNA
About what, dear?

BOB
Aubrey didn't have a middle name.
(to Penny)
Why is that?

PENNY
I was named Isabel after my
grandmother, my dad's mom. And my
mother hated her. So when Aubrey was
born, Mom insisted: no middle name.

She turns to Aubrey, happy and proud.

PENNY
You got one now though, don'tcha?

Aubrey smiles awkwardly, forcing it.

BOB
So Penny, where do you live?

PENNY

Well, I'm kind of in between places right now. I had to cash out of a couple things just to get here.

AUBREY

You showed up on my doorstep expecting to stay with me?

PENNY

Only if you want to. If not, I can find somewhere else.

AUBREY

Good, because my fiancée's out of town, and I wouldn't want to--

Penny interrupts with an explosion of joy.

PENNY

You're engaged?!?!

She jumps over to the couch, hugs Aubrey like crazy.

PENNY

My baby sister's getting married!!

Aubrey cringes from this onslaught. Bob and Joanna love it.

JOANNA

I'll tell you what -- why don't you both stay here tonight, and we'll sort out the rest tomorrow.

PENNY

Really?!

BOB

Sure. We're your family now.

PENNY

Thank you so much, you are so wonderful!

Penny gives each parent quick hugs. Aubrey has no enthusiasm.

Penny pulls Aubrey's arm, drags her toward the front door.

PENNY

Let's go get my suitcase!

INT. AUBREY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Penny zips up her suitcase. Aubrey sits on the edge of the queen bed, texts on her phone. Both are dressed for bed.

AUBREY

You know, I'll gladly set up the pull-out couch for you.

PENNY

I like being with you.

Aubrey sets her phone on the nightstand, flinches as Penny leaps past her to land on the far side of the bed.

PENNY

I can't wait to meet your fiancée!

Penny sits with legs folded under her, a bundle of energy.

PENNY

Tell me everything about him.

She pats Aubrey's leg. Aubrey pulls her legs onto the bed, pushes herself back to sit just out of reach of Penny.

AUBREY

Okay, um...we met at school, two years ago. He was a business major.

PENNY

What's his name?

AUBREY

Keith.

PENNY

Is he cute?

AUBREY

I don't feel comfortable talking about him like that.

PENNY

Okay. No big deal.

Aubrey turns off the light, lies down facing away from Penny.

AUBREY

Goodnight.

Penny lies down, keeps her head propped up with her hand.

PENNY

So why'd they name you Elizabeth?

AUBREY

I've had a really long day. Can we go over all this stuff tomorrow?

PENNY

Sure. I mean, you never had a middle name before, and I haven't seen you in twenty years, but...

AUBREY

(sighs)

A long time ago, my parents had a biological daughter, a little girl named Elizabeth. She died when she was two, some kind of rare blood disorder. They tried to get pregnant again, but my mom developed this infection and had a partial hysterectomy, so...no more babies.

PENNY

That's so sad.

AUBREY

They signed up for foster care, and I was the first kid they got. I was about their daughter's age when she died, so I guess I reminded them of her. They decided to adopt me and pull out of the program.

Penny sheds a few happy tears, wipes them away slowly.

AUBREY

Don't say anything about this in front of them, okay? They get emotional.

PENNY

You have no idea how glad I am to know you've been loved and cared for all these years. That's the one thing I held on to, that I had to find you and make sure you were okay. And now that I know you are...I'm just so happy. You've made me happy, Aubrey. Thank you.

Penny kisses Aubrey's head. Aubrey scrunches up her face.

PENNY

Goodnight, sis.

Penny lies flat, relaxes. Aubrey stares at the ceiling.

INT. AUBREY'S ROOM - LATER / NIGHT

Penny is in deep sleep, lies very close to Aubrey -- who is wide awake, and doesn't appear to have even moved.

Aubrey glances at Penny, quietly slips out of bed.

INT. GRUZEWSKI LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Aubrey lies on the couch, the TV on, the volume low. She watches a show about mistreated pets taken in by new families.

INT. GRUZEWSKI LIVING ROOM - MORNING

BING-BONG!! Aubrey jolts awake at the sound of the doorbell.

The TV is on, a show about training dogs. She turns it off, shuffles to the door, barely conscious, hair twisted up.

Aubrey checks the peephole, happily opens the door.

KEITH (23) smiles when he sees her. Keith is a nice-looking fellow, pleasant, with an easy smile. He notices her bedhead.

KEITH

Hiya sugar. Love the hair.

Aubrey feels her crazy hair as he steps in, then hugs him.

AUBREY

I missed you.

Aubrey holds him to her, for a long yet comfortable time.

INT. GRUZEWSKI KITCHEN - MORNING

The five of them sit down to breakfast. Aubrey remains disheveled, the others are showered and dressed.

KEITH

(to Penny)

So how amazing is it to see her again after all this time?

PENNY

It's so wonderful! I can't even describe it.

She smiles at Aubrey, who is focused on cutting her pancakes.

KEITH

How you feelin' Aub?

Aubrey doesn't look up.

AUBREY

Tired.

JOANNA

Honey, why don't you eat something?

Aubrey half-heartedly takes a bite.

JOANNA

You'd have more options if you start eating meat again. Or eggs.

AUBREY

This is fine. I'm just not hungry.

PENNY

(to Keith)

She still won't eat eggs? At all?

KEITH

Nope. Not hard-boiled, french toast, nothin'. Won't touch it.

AUBREY

Must we talk about me like I'm not here?

PENNY

(to Aubrey)

Wanna know *why* you don't eat eggs?

Aubrey frowns.

AUBREY

Sure.

Aubrey keeps her eyes on her plate, so Penny addresses everyone else, all of whom pay rapt attention.

PENNY

This one day when Aubrey was a baby, I was feeding her scrambled eggs, and she really liked 'em. So I kept feeding her, but I wasn't really paying attention to how much, you know? I figured she'd stop asking for more when she got full. Then all of a sudden, outta nowhere: BLEHH!

Penny mimes baby Aubrey puking.

PENNY

All over the table. And I mean *all* over, it was everywhere. It was like she threw up her own body weight.

Aubrey puts down her fork with a bite of pancake on it.

PENNY

After that...never took another bite.

Penny smiles at Aubrey. Aubrey fakes one back.

JOANNA

We used to think she was allergic.

PENNY

Can that happen?

JOANNA

Oh sure, people can be allergic to anything. I have a friend who'll die if she eats pork.

That conversation continues in the background as Keith and Aubrey speak to each other in hushed tones.

KEITH

Your folks said you're not sure you're okay having her stay with us.

AUBREY

Oh no, I'm sure. I am definitely not okay with it.

KEITH

She doesn't seem to have anywhere else to go. And we've got that second bedroom.

Aubrey sighs heavily.

AUBREY

For how long?

KEITH

A DNA test takes about a week.

Aubrey looks at Penny excitedly talking to her parents.

INT. AUBREY'S CAR - DAY

Keith drives, Penny next to him. Aubrey lies in the back with her eyes closed.

Penny glances back at Aubrey, smiles.

PENNY

How's she doing with all this?

KEITH

Umm...she's all right. Doesn't quite know what to make of it yet. Kind of a shock, you know?

PENNY

Yeah.

Aubrey opens her eyes, listens to the conversation.

KEITH

She doesn't do well with major disruptions in her life.

PENNY

Who does?

Aubrey rolls her eyes.

PENNY

You know, I spent so many years dreading that she was going through what I went through...living in foster homes, trying to survive. But now that I know she's been loved and cared for, every day of her life? All that dread just disappeared.

Penny looks out the window at the cars passing them by.

PENNY

Still...I do wish she could remember me. At least in some small way.

Aubrey closes her eyes again.

INT. APARTMENT/PENNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Aubrey, Keith & Penny shuffle about among a bare mattress & box spring, an old desk, many boxes, various unused items.

KEITH

It isn't much, but it's all yours.

PENNY

Are you kidding? This is a palace compared to some of the places I've stayed.

Penny taps a box marked PENGUINS, beams at Aubrey.

AUBREY

Yeah, I used to collect 'em.

Penny starts to open the box, but Aubrey picks it up and carries it toward the door.

AUBREY

It's just a bunch of figurines, calendars, stickers, I don't know...anything with penguins on it. Seems silly to keep it all, but...I can't bring myself to throw it away.

Aubrey takes the box out of the room and out of sight.

KEITH

She used to have all of it out. It was like penguin central.

AUBREY (O.S.)

It was not!

Keith mouths "Everywhere" to Penny and splays his fingers. Penny stifles a giggle.

Aubrey returns, flips the lid on an unmarked box and digs through to see what's in it.

PENNY

That reminds me. Aubrey, I have something for you.

Penny unzips her suitcase, digs around in it. Aubrey watches.

Penny pulls out the old orange and purple plush penguin, young Aubrey's favorite toy, and hands it to her.

AUBREY

Was this mine?

PENNY

It is yours. You just lost it for a while.

Aubrey looks over the stuffed animal, checks it out.

AUBREY

You saved this for me? All these years?

PENNY

Of course, it was your favorite. We had to leave it behind when we...when we left, but I was able to go back later and get a few things.

Aubrey holds the penguin to her face, smells it. Smiles.

PENNY

Does it seem familiar?

AUBREY

Kind of. Yeah.

KEITH

All right, what do you say we get started on this mess?

They all start moving boxes and things out of the room.

INT. AUBREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith and Aubrey lay side by side in bed.

KEITH

I'll pick up that DNA kit tomorrow.

AUBREY

I'm not sure I can wait a whole week.

KEITH

I'll bribe 'em for a rush job.

A moment of silence passes. Aubrey turns to face him.

AUBREY

Where do you think she's been all this time?

KEITH

Don't know. Sounds like she's had a rough life.

AUBREY

Still...if she was so worried about me, why wait until now to find me?

Keith yawns.

AUBREY

Why now, when she's broke, has nowhere to live, no job, no car...no friends? Kinda suspicious, don't you think?

KEITH

No.

AUBREY

Oh, what do you know...you see the good in everybody.

KEITH

Yeah, I do. Marrying you, aren't I?

AUBREY

Shut up.

Keith chuckles. Aubrey puts her hand on his shoulder.

They lie comfortably for a moment, and in the silence, hear Penny crying softly in the other room.

Aubrey picks up her head, looks Keith in the eyes, concerned.

AUBREY

Do you think she heard me?

KEITH
No, she didn't hear you.

AUBREY
Should I go talk to her?

KEITH
Wait until tomorrow.

After a moment, Aubrey puts her head down, snuggles closer to Keith, shuts her eyes.

AUBREY
I love you.

KEITH
Love you too.

They hold each other silently, hearing Penny's muted cries.

INT. PENNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Penny sleeps, sprawled on the covers, wears a bra and boxers. The room is mostly cleared out and reorganized.

Aubrey, dressed, peeks in the half-open door. Penny stirs. Aubrey enters, steps lightly, carries a steaming mug.

PENNY
Hey...

AUBREY
Hello.

Aubrey sits on the edge of the bed as Penny fights her way into the waking world. It's a struggle.

PENNY
Ohhhh, it's too early...

AUBREY
It's after one.

PENNY
Really?

AUBREY
Yeah. But I figured I'd let you sleep.

Penny sees the mug in Aubrey's hands.

PENNY
Is that for me?

Penny sits up, stretches.

AUBREY

Uh, sure. If you want it. I drink coffee all day, so, it's always fresh.

PENNY

What's in it?

AUBREY

This? It's black, I didn't know if...

Penny rubs her eyes.

PENNY

Can you do me a favor, hon, put in four packets of sugar and a handful of ice cubes? Stir it up for me?

AUBREY

Okay. Sure.

Aubrey stands, heads for the door, turns back.

AUBREY

Ummm...we don't have packets, so like, a spoonful?

PENNY

Yeah. The little spoon.

AUBREY

Okay.

Aubrey exits. Penny puts her feet on the floor, lightly slaps her cheeks and rubs her face.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Aubrey measures out four precise spoonfuls of sugar, stirs them in, adds ice to a bigger mug, pours in the coffee.

Penny enters, still partially undressed. She takes the mug as Aubrey offers it, tries a sip.

PENNY

Mmm...perfect.

She smiles at Aubrey. Aubrey pours another cup of coffee for herself, looks rather perturbed.

AUBREY

Do you always walk around like that?

PENNY

Like what?

AUBREY

In your underwear.

PENNY

Usually I sleep naked. At least in the summer. Didn't seem appropriate, though, bein' a guest and all.

AUBREY

Uh-huh. When Keith's home, could you put on a shirt? Pair of shorts, maybe?

PENNY

Keith's not here?

AUBREY

No, he's at work.

PENNY

Oh, then I can take this off.

She moves to unhook the bra but stops, smirking at Aubrey's confused look of slight alarm.

PENNY

I'm just messin' with ya, kiddo.

Aubrey nods, not seeing the humor.

PENNY

Hey you're not takin' off work 'cause of me, are you?

AUBREY

No, I don't start until next Monday.

PENNY

Oh great! So we have a whole week to hang out together!

Aubrey nods, sips her own new mug of coffee.

PENNY

Come talk with me while I get dressed!

Penny heads back to her room. Aubrey pauses, follows her.

INT. PENNY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER / DAY

Penny pulls clothes out of her suitcase.

PENNY

You know, the last time I saw you, I didn't even have a training bra yet! And now here you are, a grown woman.

Penny puts on a pair of shorts and a t-shirt.

PENNY

I'm so proud of you. I wish I could have been there to see you grow up.

Aubrey sits on the bed.

AUBREY

Yeah, so...what happened after they wouldn't let you see me?

Penny brushes her hair.

PENNY

I was in a bunch of different foster homes, then I went out on my own.

AUBREY

Did you try to find me?

PENNY

Yes. But I didn't know how.

Penny sets down the brush, turns to face Aubrey.

PENNY

I have more pictures. Wanna see 'em?

AUBREY

Sure.

Penny finds a plastic bag in her suitcase, folded many times. She unravels it and removes a small stack of instant photos.

Aubrey looks through them while Penny talks. She takes her time on each photo, absorbing the images.

PENNY

I ran away from my first foster home and went back to our old house. Nobody else had moved in yet, so some of our stuff was still there. I took as much as I could carry.

Most of the photos are of both girls, some with just Aubrey, most inside the house, some outside in the snow.

Aubrey comes across one with both girls and Mom - Mom striking a sexy pose, Aubrey on the floor next to her. Penny's face is obscured as she tries to place Aubrey in the same pose.

AUBREY

Is that your mother?

PENNY

Yup. That's her.

Penny waits for Aubrey to look at another photo. When Aubrey does, it's the first one she saw. She looks up at Penny.

AUBREY
Is this all of them?

PENNY
That's all I have. There were a couple
albums a long time ago, but I don't
know what happened to them.

AUBREY
So you don't have any pictures of
your father?

PENNY
Our father.

AUBREY
Right. Sorry.

Aubrey hands the photos back to Penny. She re-wraps them.

PENNY
No. They're all gone.

AUBREY
Oh. Too bad.

PENNY
One of the sad things in life. You
never see the person behind the
camera.

Penny stares at the wrapped pics in her hand, lost in reverie.

AUBREY
How did they die?

Penny maintains her empty stare.

PENNY
He had a congenital heart defect.
She had...other health issues.

AUBREY
So they died around the same time?

Penny remains lost in thought a moment. Aubrey doesn't know what to do. Penny finally looks at her.

PENNY
Wanna take a ride?

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET/FORMER QUINN HOME - AFTERNOON

Aubrey and Penny exit their parked car. Penny stands a moment, looks at her old house across the street. Aubrey waits.

PENNY

It looks exactly the same. Yet somehow, completely different.

AUBREY

You sure you want to do this?

PENNY

Yeah. Come on.

They walk to the house, notice kids playing in the neighborhood, the fun and happy environment around them.

As they approach the front door, JIMMY (8) calls to them.

JIMMY (O.S.)

That's my house!

They look around for the source, spot the little boy sitting up in a tree in the front yard.

Aubrey rings the doorbell and stays near the door, while Penny walks into the yard and looks up at Jimmy.

PENNY

Hey cutie-pie! Whatcha doin' up there?

JIMMY

Nothin'.

PENNY

How'd you get so high?

JIMMY

I climbed up. Duh!

PENNY

Hey, my name's not Duh! It's Penny!

JIMMY

Penny? That's a weird name.

The door opens, Jimmy's dad TOM (late 30's) greets Aubrey.

TOM

Yes?

Aubrey is a bit flustered, hadn't expected to do the talking.

AUBREY

Hi, um...we were wondering if...I guess this sounds a little weird, but...I think we used to live here, a long time ago, and...maybe we could, I don't know, look around, a little?

Tom looks skeptical.

TOM

When did you live here?

AUBREY

Um...about twenty years ago.

TOM

You don't look more than twenty. Were you born in the moving van?

AUBREY

No, I'm twenty-two. And Penny, my...my sister...says this was our house.

She indicates Penny, in the yard. Penny waves, super-friendly.

TOM

Jimmy! Where are ya?

Jimmy dangles from a branch like a monkey.

JIMMY

Right here!

TOM

Why don't you come down now?

JIMMY

I don't wanna. You come up!

Tom chuckles, embarrassed. Penny joins Aubrey at the door.

PENNY

We won't be long. I promise.

Tom thinks it over. Penny's smile proves impossible to resist.

TOM

Okay, sure. Come on in.

He steps aside so they can enter. Once they're in he looks out at Jimmy in the tree. Jimmy makes monkey noises at him.

Tom leaves the door open as he follows the girls inside.

INT. FORMER QUINN HOME/LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

On one side is typical living room furniture, on the other side a basic home office.

TOM

I've been here about five years. Guy before me, maybe about that long too. Not sure who bought it from your folks back in the day.

JIMMY (O.S.)

Dad! Watch this!

TOM

I'll, uh...leave you ladies alone for a bit. Let you have a look around.

PENNY

Don't worry, we won't steal anything big.

She laughs, fun and flirty. He smiles, charmed.

TOM

If you need anything, I'll be up in the tree.

He chuckles at his own joke. So does Penny. Aubrey smiles politely as he exits through the front door.

They look around the room.

PENNY

You know what's weird?

AUBREY

Hmm.

PENNY

Usually when you see places you knew as a kid, everything looks smaller. But this house feels so big to me.

Penny leans back into an open corner to view the whole room.

PENNY

Maybe I'm shrinking.

Aubrey glances around the room again.

AUBREY

How did it used to look?

PENNY

(points)

Dad's chair was over here, with a little couch next to it...tv there.

She gestures to the area now taken up by the home office.

PENNY

That was empty, we'd play on the carpet when we got tired of being in our room. Ooh let's go see it!

She pulls Aubrey by the arm toward their old room.

INT. FORMER QUINN GIRLS ROOM - AFTERNOON

Penny sits on the floor in the center while Aubrey looks around. The room is redecorated to be very much a boy's room.

PENNY

My bed was there, and your crib over here...we had a toy chest in that corner. It was this big plastic frog, and the top opened up like a mouth.

Penny lies down on the floor.

PENNY

We'd climb in there sometimes. It was big enough we could both fit, if I curled up just right.

She demonstrates her method of curling up.

PENNY

We played hide and seek with Dad, and he'd pretend not to know where we were. He'd wander around the house, yelling out "Where's my lucky Penny? Where's my little penguin?"

AUBREY

He called me penguin?

PENNY

Yeah. When you started walking you had this cute little wobble.

Aubrey sits on Jimmy's bed, pushes a toy aside.

PENNY

That's why he got you that stuffed animal.

Penny uncurls, lies flat on her back.

PENNY

He liked giving us silly names. Mom wouldn't let us have any pets, so he said you and I were his pets. I still wanted a cat, but...Mom said animals were filthy.

AUBREY

Hey, um...you know how you explained why I didn't have a middle name?

Penny rolls onto her side to face Aubrey.

AUBREY

What about Aubrey? Was I named after someone?

Penny smiles wide, happy.

PENNY

Nope. I gave it to you.

Aubrey's eyes light up a little - this is kind of sweet.

AUBREY

You named me?

PENNY

Dad said he didn't want me to feel left out when you were born.

AUBREY

What did...Mom...say?

PENNY

She liked it.

Penny's tone is flat, her face blank. Aubrey doesn't notice.

AUBREY

You think this guy would mind if we looked in the master bedroom?

Penny rolls over, sits up, but remains on the floor.

PENNY

No, go ahead.

This time Aubrey is aware how disconnected Penny sounds.

AUBREY

You all right?

Penny doesn't answer right away.

PENNY

I'm hungry. You ready to go?

AUBREY
You want to leave?

Penny nods.

AUBREY
All right. We can go.

She reaches down to Penny to help her up. Penny takes her hand, gets up, and hugs her, taking her by surprise.

AUBREY
Okay, easy does it.

Aubrey tries to extricate herself, but Penny holds on tight.

Penny ends the hug, then takes Aubrey's hands as she suddenly explodes with joy - her old bubbly self returns in an instant.

PENNY
Let's go get a pizza!

INT. SUBURBAN PIZZA RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON

Aubrey and Penny sit in a corner booth of the clean family restaurant. Each has a tall soda in a red plastic tumbler.

Penny still has that childlike glee.

PENNY
Dad used to take me here a lot, just the two of us. Before you were born.

AUBREY
Mom didn't come with?

PENNY
No. She'd hang out with her friends when she wasn't at home with us.

AUBREY
So, you were telling me before how they died around the same time?

Penny's glee slips away. She sips her drink.

PENNY
Yes.

AUBREY
Can you tell me what happened?

PENNY
I told you, they were sick. They died.

AUBREY

You don't have to talk about it if
you don't want to.

PENNY

What's to talk about? They're dead.
It's just you and me now.

AUBREY

Okay.

PENNY

I didn't kill them, if that's what
you're wondering.

AUBREY

I wasn't thinking that! Are you okay?

They see the WAITRESS approaching. Penny brightens.

WAITRESS

Here we are. Medium deep dish, half
three cheese, half sausage & pineapple.

She sets the pizza on the metal stand, serves Aubrey a slice.

Penny looks at the pizza with utter joy, at first...then
tears come from nowhere and she bursts out crying.

Both Aubrey and the waitress look at Penny with concern.

After barely a second Penny slides out of the booth. She
rushes to the restroom, bangs the door open as she steps in.

Aubrey watches all this, turns to the waitress.

AUBREY

You can set it down, we'll be back.

Aubrey hurries out of the booth.

INT. RESTAURANT RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER / LATE AFTERNOON

Aubrey enters to find Penny at the sink, crying fairly hard.
Seeing Aubrey, Penny calms down, gradually.

AUBREY

I shouldn't have brought it up.

PENNY

No, it wasn't you.

Penny turns on the water, washes her face.

PENNY

That pizza. It's what Dad and I used to get.

Aubrey hands Penny paper towels to dry her face.

PENNY

I was fine when we ordered it, but when she brought it over, I...I don't know. It really got to me.

Aubrey watches Penny as she checks herself in the mirror.

INT. RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER / LATE AFTERNOON

Aubrey and Penny slide into the booth, pizza waiting. As Penny eyes the slice on her plate, her exuberance returns.

PENNY

Sausage and pineapple, oh yeah!

She digs in like she hasn't eaten for days.

AUBREY

Forgive me for saying so, but that sounds really weird.

PENNY

It's great, try some!

AUBREY

I don't eat meat.

PENNY

Oh that's right!

Aubrey takes a bite of her three cheese.

PENNY

Wait, you don't, or you can't?

AUBREY

I stopped because I wasn't digesting it well. I felt sick all the time.

PENNY

Last couple years, right?

AUBREY

Uh, yeah.

PENNY

Mm-hmm. Same thing happened to Dad.

Aubrey blows on her pizza to cool it.

AUBREY
He was vegetarian?

PENNY
Not by choice. He liked meat, but his body just stopped processing it around your age. That's what he told me, anyway. It was long before I was born. So when we came here, he'd get the three cheese. Just like you.

Aubrey looks at her half of the pizza, smiles.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Aubrey and Penny enter. Keith calls from the kitchen.

KEITH (O.S.)
Hi ladies! If you're hungry, I'm making dinner!

Penny trots to the kitchen. Aubrey locks the front door.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS / EVENING

Penny glides in. Keith is at the stove, and quite cheery.

PENNY
Whatcha got here?

KEITH
Garlic pasta with black beans and shrimp, some tomatoes, peppers...Aubrey doesn't eat the shrimp, but you're down, right?

Aubrey enters. Keith brightens at the sight of her, then notices the box of leftover pizza in Aubrey's hand.

KEITH
You ate already?

AUBREY
I'm sorry. I should've texted you.

She really does feel bad about it. Keith is perfectly genuine.

KEITH
No, don't worry about it. This'll be just as good tomorrow. You should try it cold!

PENNY
Ooh, I love this guy!

Penny hugs him, presses her face to his. Aubrey is a bit taken aback, but Keith is comfortable.

PENNY

I'm feelin' really hyper, I gotta clean somethin'. You two spend a little time together.

Penny skitters off toward her room.

KEITH

She's chipper. What'd you do today?

Aubrey puts the pizza in the fridge.

AUBREY

We need to talk.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER / EVENING

Aubrey sits with Keith while he eats, keeps her voice low.

AUBREY

I think Penny is seriously disturbed.

KEITH

Why do you think that?

AUBREY

The woman starts crying hysterically at the sight of a pizza! She's bouncing around laughing one minute, then bawling her eyes out the next!

Keith nods, chewing.

AUBREY

It's like watching a complete mental breakdown and recovery in the space of thirty seconds.

KEITH

You're cute when you're judgemental.

AUBREY

I'm serious! She has major issues!

Keith stabs some pasta and shrimp onto his fork.

AUBREY

She said when they first placed her in foster care, she got "a little upset." I think maybe she undersold us on that state of mind.

KEITH

Was she perhaps traumatized by the death of her parents? And being separated from her baby sister?

AUBREY

Yeah, and you know why orphaned siblings get separated? When one of them's dangerous.

Keith sets his fork down.

KEITH

Aubrey...

AUBREY

She said it herself -- she wasn't allowed to see me because I wouldn't be safe with her.

KEITH

That was twenty years ago!

AUBREY

I didn't feel safe with her today!

KEITH

I think you're overreacting.

AUBREY

I think she needs professional help.

KEITH

I think she needs you.

Aubrey sighs.

KEITH

She adores you, Aub. You should see the way she looks at you.

AUBREY

I do see it. That's what scares me.

KEITH

It's just love. It can't hurt you.

Aubrey looks away from him, takes a deep breath.

KEITH

All she wants to do is get to know you. Find out what she missed.

AUBREY

She didn't miss anything. I've had a normal, boring, happy life.

KEITH
But maybe she hasn't.

Aubrey takes a good long look at Keith.

INT. PENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aubrey enters the doorway, watches Penny scrub the wall.

AUBREY
Hey Penny...

Penny turns to look at her but doesn't stop scrubbing.

PENNY
Oh hey...do you guys have one of
those magic erasers?

AUBREY
Umm...I don't think so. What is it?

PENNY
It's this little pad that'll clean
anything. We'll get some tomorrow.

AUBREY
Okay...

Aubrey ambles over to the bed, sits down. She watches Penny wipe down a section of the wall with a large sponge.

AUBREY
I didn't realize this room was so
dirty.

PENNY
Oh it isn't, I just like to clean.
It's relaxing.

She tries vigorously to scrub out a scuff mark.

AUBREY
So...I'm kinda wondering, uh...what's
your life been like? All this time.
You know, after...we got separated.

Penny dips the sponge into a plastic bucket of soapy water, wrings it out.

PENNY
Well...they stuck me in a bunch of
foster homes until I was sixteen,
then I took off on my own...moved
around a bit...few years later I was
livin' with this guy, got my G.E.D....

Penny hops on the bed to clean the wall above it.

PENNY

Almost got married, actually, but that didn't work out. Took off again, ended up in Colorado. Had a few good years out there, but eventually I just had to come back. To find you.

Penny stops scrubbing, stares at the blank wall.

PENNY

Wow...twenty years goes by, just like that.

She tosses the sponge into the bucket, sits on the bed close to Aubrey, who tries to get a little more space between them.

PENNY

Every time I thought about you I pictured you in a nice house, with good people who took care of you.

Penny pats Aubrey on the leg.

PENNY

I'm so happy that turned out to be the case.

Aubrey forces a smile.

PENNY

I was always afraid you'd end up in the kind of places I had to live.

AUBREY

You mean like Colorado?

PENNY

Ha! No, when I was in foster care.

Penny grabs the bucket, leaves the room. Aubrey follows.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS / NIGHT

Penny dumps out the bucket, rinses it in the tub.

Aubrey sits on the closed toilet seat.

PENNY

Colorado's really nice. I lived outside Boulder a few years ago.

Penny puts the cleaning supplies under the sink, digs around to see what other stuff is in there.

AUBREY

Did you...ever go to college?

PENNY

Nah. I tried taking a couple classes,
but didn't really see the point.

Penny shows Aubrey a bottle of spray cleaner.

PENNY

Don't buy any more of this. Doesn't
clean shit.

AUBREY

Uh...okay.

Penny keeps digging, finds a cleanser she likes.

PENNY

A-ha!

She steps into the tub, draws the curtain, sprays it down.

AUBREY

So what kind of work do you do?

PENNY

Oh, you know, the kinda stuff you
can do anywhere...tend bar, waitress,
receptionist...nothing interesting,
but enough to earn a living.

Penny steps out of the shower, puts the cleanser away.

PENNY

We're gonna let that sit for a while.

Penny takes Aubrey's hands, pulls her to her feet.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS / NIGHT

Penny leads Aubrey to the living room.

PENNY

I love to sing, though, do you sing?

AUBREY

No, not really.

Penny stops and spins around.

PENNY

Hey do you have a camera?

Penny flops onto the couch, doesn't wait for Aubrey to answer.

PENNY

I'm really into photography. I used to do a little freelance work, publicity shots, things like that...I had a great old camera, 'til some asshole boyfriend smashed it.

Aubrey sits down in a nearby chair.

AUBREY

Was that the guy you were gonna marry?

PENNY

Hell no! Just some random asshole I was seein'.

AUBREY

Doesn't sound like you were that fond of him.

PENNY

He was all right at first. All men are all right at first. Only the good ones last more than a few months.

Aubrey nods.

PENNY

Like Keith. A guy like that'll be there for you the rest of your life.

KEITH (O.S.)

My ears are burning!!

PENNY

Then take 'em off the stove!

Penny laughs as Keith approaches from the kitchen.

KEITH

I thought I heard my name.

Penny sits up, mocks outrage.

PENNY

Were you eavesdropping?

Keith leans over the back of Aubrey's chair, puts his head on her shoulder.

KEITH

No, just cleaning up.

AUBREY

Oh, I meant to help you with that.

KEITH

It's fine, spend time with Penny. I made the mess, I can clean it up.

PENNY

You see? One of the good ones.

Keith smiles. Aubrey kisses him.

PENNY

So what do you guys do around here, when you're not all over each other?

KEITH

You know, between work, and school, and just spending time together...nothing, really.

PENNY

We should go out then!

Keith stands upright behind Aubrey's chair.

KEITH

I gotta work tomorrow.

Penny leaps up, grabs Keith, shakes him.

PENNY

You're young, you'll be fine! Aubrey, come on, let's go somewhere fun!

AUBREY

Ummm...okay. I'm up for it.

PENNY

(to Keith)

What about you, party pooper?

KEITH

(beat)

Okay, I'll go.

Penny bounces with excitement. Aubrey looks pleased.

KEITH

But what's there to do on a Monday?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Penny SINGS karaoke, and she's good: great voice, engages the crowd. Aubrey and Keith, at the bar, are impressed.

Penny takes a bow at the end of her song, to great applause. She drunkenly hops off the platform, nearly loses her balance.

ZACH (20's), a typical post-fraternity dude, holds her up.

ZACH
Whoa, I gotcha!

PENNY
Hey, who moved the floor?

She looks Zach in the eye, flirts without shame.

PENNY
Well hello there! C'mere, I want you
to meet someone.

Penny leads Zach to the bar, amid support from his BUDDIES.
Aubrey directs Keith's attention to Penny as she approaches.

PENNY
(to Aubrey)
This is my new hero.

Penny leans on Zach, shows him a lot of affection. He grins.
The next DRUNK SINGER begins. He and his song are very loud.

AUBREY
(to Penny)
I think maybe it's time to go.

PENNY
What?

AUBREY
I think we should go home now!

PENNY
Okay! I'll just hang out with my
friend here!
(to Zach)
Hey what's your name?

ZACH
Zach!

PENNY
Zap?

Aubrey wants to interrupt but can't find her moment.

ZACH
Zach!

PENNY
Hi Zach! I'm Lucy Van Pelt!

AUBREY
Penny!

Penny smiles, leans on Aubrey, speaks close to her ear.

PENNY
No, tonight I'm Lucy.

KEITH
Penny, come on. It's time to go.

PENNY
I don't want to go! I want another
drink.
(to Zach)
Buy me a drink!

ZACH
Sure, baby, what do you want?

She gloms onto him again.

PENNY
Anything sweet!

Keith steps closer to Zach. Aubrey stays by Keith's side.

KEITH
We're gonna take her home, okay?

ZACH
Relax, dude. She's in good hands.

Zach puts an arm around Penny, waves to the bartender.

KEITH
She's had enough. Come on, Penny.

Keith gently takes her hand, tries to lead her away.

Zach puts a hand on Keith's chest, arm fully outstretched.

ZACH
Dude. Back off.

Penny slaps Zach's hand away from Keith.

PENNY
Hey don't touch him!

ZACH
Whoa, take it easy!

Penny pokes Zach in the chest with a soft fist.

PENNY
Stupid asshole! Get outta here!

ZACH
Whatever. Crazy bitch.

Zach turns his back and rejoins his buddies, who boo him. He merely shrugs.

Penny gives Zach both middle fingers, then resumes her drunken bliss as she turns to Keith and puts her arms around him.

PENNY

We almost got in a fight! Can you believe it?

KEITH

Nope. Can't believe it.

Penny laughs. Aubrey doesn't. Keith supports some of Penny's weight on their way out.

INT. PENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith carries Penny to the bed. Aubrey stands in the doorway as Keith sets Penny down, removes her shoes.

PENNY

Did you have fun tonight?

KEITH

I did. But now it's bedtime.

PENNY

Okay. Make sure the room stops spinning before you go to sleep.

AUBREY

I'm gonna get her a bucket.

Aubrey walks away.

PENNY

Hey, that was a joke! I'm not gonna get sick.

AUBREY (O.S.)

Just in case, then.

PENNY

I never get sick. Iron stomach.

She drums on her belly. Aubrey returns with the bucket.

KEITH

Goodnight, Penny.

Keith shuffles tiredly out of the room. Aubrey sets the plastic bucket next to the bed with an angry CLUNK.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Aubrey works on her computer in the living room.

Penny emerges slowly from her bedroom, still dressed in last night's clothes, holds her head in both hands.

PENNY

Ooh...

Aubrey spins around in her chair.

AUBREY

Hi there. Feeling good today?

Penny shuffles to the bathroom.

PENNY

I've felt worse. It's all those sugary drinks, you know?

Penny pees with the door open. Aubrey resumes working.

PENNY (O.S.)

Your bucket's still empty, by the way. Told you I wouldn't need it.

AUBREY

Hooray.

Penny flushes, washes up. Aubrey types. Penny approaches, leans over Aubrey's shoulder to look at the screen.

PENNY

Whatcha doin'?

AUBREY

Just getting some work done.

Aubrey types away. Penny leans on the back of the couch.

PENNY

Are you mad at me?

AUBREY

No.

PENNY

Really?

Aubrey stops typing.

AUBREY

Maybe a little.

PENNY

Did I embarrass you last night? I'm kind of a flirty drunk.

AUBREY

Yeah, I noticed.

PENNY

Sorry 'bout that. Always been a lightweight.

Penny stands, stretches a bit.

PENNY

So is this what you do all day?

AUBREY

When I have the opportunity.

PENNY

You mean when like when I'm still asleep and not bothering you?

She playfully pokes Aubrey, repeatedly. Aubrey chuckles despite herself.

AUBREY

Exactly.

PENNY

Well, that part of the day's over! Let's enjoy the sunshine! Go to the park or something.

AUBREY

We could do that.

Aubrey turns around to face Penny.

AUBREY

Actually, uh...I was wondering if you'd given any thought to how long you'll be staying here?

PENNY

I don't know. Do you want me to leave?

AUBREY

No, I just...want to get an idea how long you plan to stay.

Penny takes a moment to consider.

PENNY

Not really sure. But when it's time for me to go, I'll go. Okay?

Aubrey nods.

PENNY

I'm gonna take a shower. I smell like a diseased raccoon.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

A perfectly healthy RACCOON sits on the limb of a tree, licking its paws. Many other raccoons are also present.

Penny and Aubrey walk casually through the park. Penny wears shorts and a tank top, Aubrey in jeans and t-shirt.

PENNY

It's so lovely out. I can't believe you were gonna sit inside all day.

AUBREY

I might've gone out for something.

PENNY

Uh-huh. Come on, what would you be doing right now if I weren't here?

Aubrey considers this.

PENNY

You'd be at home, on the computer.

AUBREY

Okay, okay...

PENNY

You don't have to be at work until next week. Enjoy the time off.

AUBREY

Speaking of work, um...we were thinking it'd be good if you could...you know. Find a job?

PENNY

I can do that.

AUBREY

I mean if you're gonna be staying a while, we can't afford to--

Penny briefly touches Aubrey's shoulder.

PENNY

Aubrey, I get it. I can pull my own weight. I was a full-time cocktail waitress when I was sixteen.

AUBREY

Don't you have to be twenty-one for that?

PENNY

Not when they pay you under the table.

AUBREY

Did they even know how old you were?

PENNY

No, I lied. But I could pass for older. Places I lived as a kid, you grow up fast.

AUBREY

You moved around a lot, right?

PENNY

Yeah, different foster families, children's homes...which is really just an orphanage, but they don't call 'em that anymore.

AUBREY

What's it like there?

PENNY

Like a prison without the bars.

Penny runs her hands through her hair.

PENNY

I never stayed long. If I didn't get placed right away I'd just take off for a while.

AUBREY

Where would you go?

PENNY

I knew some people, I'd make friends. Crash in someone's living room for a week, earn some money. Not the most glamorous life, but...you survive.

AUBREY

I'm sorry you had to go through all that.

PENNY

Naw, don't worry about it. Whatever doesn't kill me makes me stronger, right?

AUBREY

I suppose, yeah.

Penny watches a plane overhead. Aubrey looks at her.

PENNY

Actually, it eats you up inside until you can't feel anything. Then you wait for the feeling to grow back.

She stops watching the plane, looks back to Aubrey.

AUBREY

That doesn't sound easy.

PENNY

Well it comes in cycles, you know? You heal during the good times. Things are good now!

She touches Aubrey's arm, smiles.

EXT. CITY PARK - MOMENTS LATER / DAY

Aubrey and Penny sit on a bench.

AUBREY

How many different homes did they place you in?

PENNY

Six or seven, I think. I lost track. They weren't all terrible.

Penny watches two dogs running and playing together, while Aubrey looks at Penny.

PENNY

Still, I am *SO* happy you ended up where you did. Because nothing in my life was ever as bad as the idea of you going through the same thing. Just the thought of it was horrifying.

Penny takes Aubrey's hand, holds it tight, fingers entwined.

PENNY

You've been blessed. Aubrey. Don't ever forget how lucky you are to be loved.

Penny looks into Aubrey's eyes, her own eyes beginning to tear up. Aubrey holds her sister's gaze.

Their reverie is broken by HUNTER the dog as he greets them, front legs up on the bench, tail wagging.

PENNY

Hello puppy! Hey there puppy dog!

Penny lets him sniff her hand, then rubs his head, scratches behind his ears. Aubrey simply looks on.

PENNY

Whatcha doin' over here, huh? Whatcha doin'?

Penny takes up his leash, which lays behind him. Aubrey looks out into the park, spots JOSH (40's) jogging toward them.

AUBREY

I think he's with that guy.

Penny watches Josh approach them. He's a good-looking guy in designer athletic wear. Penny stands to greet him.

PENNY

Hi. Lose something?

Josh smiles at her.

JOSH

Yeah. Got away from me.

He holds out his hand.

JOSH

How ya doin', I'm Josh.

Penny shakes his hand. He pats his dog's head.

JOSH

This is Hunter.

PENNY

Oh! I guess that makes you the gatherer.

She slaps the leash into his palm.

PENNY

Here you go.

Aubrey observes Penny's flirtation with some amusement.

JOSH

Thanks.

Hunter sniffs at Aubrey's knee. She is wary of him.

PENNY

If you need any help training him,
I've got a few tricks up my sleeve.

Josh looks at her tank top.

JOSH
What sleeve?

PENNY
Oops. Busted.

They smile at each other. Aubrey looks on from the bench.

JOSH
I'll tell you what.

He digs a business card out of a pocket, holds it to Penny.

JOSH
When you've got some free time, give
me a call.

Penny snatches the card.

PENNY
We'll see.

Josh gives her one last grin.

JOSH
Come on, Hunter. C'mon, boy!

He walks off with a happy Hunter in tow.

PENNY
Can you believe that guy?

AUBREY
Him? What about you?

PENNY
You don't really think the dog "got
away from him," do you?

Aubrey shrugs.

PENNY
He sent him over here, to meet us.

AUBREY
That's crazy!

PENNY
Aubrey, it's the oldest trick in the
book! Guys don't walk their dog in
the park just to walk their dog in
the park.

AUBREY
I'm pretty sure they do.

PENNY

Then why was he flirting with me?

AUBREY

He was flirting *back* at you.

Penny gives Aubrey a sly smile and a friendly nudge.

PENNY

It's hot out here. Are you hot? You look hot. Let's get a drink.

EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

The outdoor seating is separated from the sidewalk by a short fence, with all manner of PEDESTRIANS walking past.

Penny has a pink concoction with a straw. Aubrey sips water.

PENNY

Is that all you're gonna have?

AUBREY

I don't want a midday hangover.

PENNY

You can't sit in a restaurant with just water. It's pathetic.

Penny twiddles her fingers at a HANDSOME MAN passing by.

AUBREY

Excuse me for not trying to finagle free drinks out of every horny, stupid guy in arm's reach.

PENNY

They don't mind! Besides, name one guy who's not horny and stupid.

AUBREY

Keith isn't like that.

PENNY

I meant single guys.

She gives a flirtatious look to a couple GUYS walking past on the sidewalk. They smile, give her a "What's up" nod.

Aubrey takes a sip. Penny looks her over, curious.

PENNY

Keith's horny for you though, right?

Aubrey almost does a spit-take, gets it under control.

PENNY

I mean you do live together, you must be gettin' *some* action.

AUBREY

Penny!

Penny shrugs, takes a sip.

PENNY

What, you're an adult.

AUBREY

Are *you*?

Penny spots a group of FOUR GUYS (20's) dressed for the beach.

PENNY

Hey guys! Blowin' off work today?

The guys lean on the short fence. They seem nice, and normal.

BEACH GUY 1

What's work?

Penny lifts her glass to that guy.

BEACH GUY 2

How you doin', ladies?

He looks to Aubrey. She smiles politely, but dismissively.

AUBREY

Fine, thank you.

BEACH GUY 2

We're headed down to the beach, why don't you come hang out with us?

AUBREY

I don't think so.

PENNY

Come on, why not?

AUBREY

We just met them five seconds ago!

PENNY

So, they're okay. Look at 'em!

The guys put on their best friendly smiles.

PENNY

See? Let's go to the beach.

AUBREY
I'd rather go home.

PENNY
Then go home, Aubrey.

AUBREY
(beat)
Fine. You have your keys?

PENNY
Yes.

AUBREY
You have money for a cab?

BEACH GUY 3
We'll give her a ride, it's cool.

Aubrey finds some cash in her pocket, hands it to Penny.

PENNY
I don't want your money.

AUBREY
Then give it back to me when you get home.

Penny takes the cash.

PENNY
Okay, mom.

Aubrey gives her a strange look, stands up.

AUBREY
I'll see you later. Have a seat, guys.

The guys hop over the short fence and join Penny at the table as Aubrey weaves her way past other tables, leaves the patio.

BEACH GUY 4
(to Aubrey)
We'll catch you next time, okay?

Aubrey forces a smile, walks past them along the fence.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Aubrey sits staring at the tv, not quite watching it.

She hears a noise at the front door, turns to it immediately. Keith enters, smiles as soon as he sees Aubrey.

KEITH

Hiya!

She goes to greet him, kisses him hello as he locks the door.

KEITH

How were things today?

He kicks off his shoes.

AUBREY

I just don't understand her.

Aubrey follows him toward the bedroom.

KEITH

What happened?

INT. AUBREY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS / EVENING

Keith changes out of his suit. Aubrey stands in the doorway.

AUBREY

She went to hang out with four random guys she doesn't even know.

KEITH

And this bothers you because...?

AUBREY

Because it's a stupid thing to do! I mean, they could be dangerous!

KEITH

Aubrey...

He puts his hands on her shoulders, holds her.

KEITH

You cannot control Penny. No one can. Not even Penny.

Aubrey sighs.

KEITH

Just give it time.

He kisses her forehead. She flops onto the bed.

AUBREY

You're either very wise or very stupid.

KEITH

I like to think I'm optimistic.

He flops down next to her, and she holds him close.

INT. AUBREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aubrey lies awake, holds Keith as he sleeps.

She caresses his chest, kisses his neck. He stirs awake.

AUBREY

I need you...

He turns to her, and returns her affection. They kiss more passionately, yet tenderly.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER / NIGHT

Dark and quiet. Penny enters, moves softly. She hears the sounds of lovemaking through the closed bedroom door.

Penny smirks, tiptoes into her room, shuts the door.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Aubrey and Keith make breakfast, show each other affection. Penny enters, still in yesterday's clothes.

PENNY

Good morning, lovebirds!

Penny pours herself some coffee, adds the ice and sugar. Keith and Aubrey sit down to eat.

PENNY

You know I can always make myself scarce if you want some alone time.

Penny sits, sips her coffee.

AUBREY

What do you mean?

PENNY

I mean if you want to get busy, just hang a sign on the door, you know?

Penny winks at Keith. He looks at Aubrey for her reaction.

AUBREY

You were listening?

PENNY

Of course not.

She sees Aubrey glaring at her.

PENNY

Relax, kiddo. I heard you for like two seconds. It's a beautiful thing!

AUBREY

It's supposed to be private! And I thought you were still out with those four guys!

PENNY

I don't know what you're so upset about. I only slept with two of 'em.

Aubrey looks shocked. Keith raises an eyebrow.

Penny lets them sweat a moment, then laughs.

PENNY

I'm kidding! We hung out at the beach, then they took me to a club.

AUBREY

Still...they were complete strangers.

PENNY

Yeah, but I knew they were okay.

AUBREY

How do you know that?

PENNY

I can read people.

AUBREY

Penny...

Aubrey sighs, too exasperated to know what else to say.

AUBREY

I'm only trying to look out for you.

PENNY

Well guess what, sis - I can look out for myself. I've been doing it all my life.

AUBREY

Yet you blindly get into situations that--

PENNY

I'm not the one who's blind here, little girl!

Both Aubrey and Keith are taken aback by her vehemence.

PENNY

I've been abused by enough rotten excuses for human beings that I can spot one like that!

She snaps her fingers in Aubrey's face.

PENNY

So don't tell me how to stay out of trouble. I know it when I see it.

Penny drinks her coffee, stares out the window.

KEITH

I think you two should finish this conversation another time. Or just consider it finished.

He kisses Aubrey on the head as he stands.

KEITH

I need to get going. Sorry I can't help you clean up.

AUBREY

That's okay.

She caresses his arm, pulls him in for a kiss.

KEITH

Love you, sweetheart.

He touches Penny's shoulder as he walks behind her.

KEITH

Penny, I'll see you tonight. Okay?

Penny stirs her coffee. Keith exits the kitchen.

As Keith gathers his things and exits the apartment, Penny stares at her coffee while Aubrey plays with her food.

A brief uncomfortable silence pervades the room.

PENNY

Why are you so selfish?

AUBREY

I'm what now?

PENNY

A selfish little brat. Sometimes.

Aubrey stands, cleans up the breakfast mess.

AUBREY

I'm not two years old anymore. Try talking to me like a grown-up.

PENNY

Try acting like one.

Aubrey scoffs, cleans items in the sink, her back to Penny.

PENNY

Not everything is about you, Aubrey. I love you more than anything, but you are not the center of the universe.

Aubrey focuses on the dishes. Penny approaches the sink.

PENNY

What is it you think I'm doing here? You think I'm on vacation?

Aubrey holds a dish without cleaning it, just holding it.

PENNY

You're the only family I have. I just want to know you.

Aubrey sets down the dish, shuts off the water.

AUBREY

I'm not used to sharing my space. That's what happens when you grow up an only child.

Aubrey dries her hands on a towel.

PENNY

You're not an only child. You're my sister.

Aubrey throws the towel to the floor, turns to face Penny.

AUBREY

But I don't remember you! I don't remember our parents, or that house, or the little penguin you gave me! They're all part of another life, which is gone! It's all gone!

Aubrey's outburst hangs in the air a moment, the two sisters looking at each other.

Aubrey picks up the towel, hangs it on its hook. Penny looks at the dish in the sink, turns on the water and washes it.

AUBREY

I was gonna take a shower. Do you wanna go first?

Penny doesn't respond in any way, keeps focus on the dishes.

AUBREY

Okay, well...I'm gonna get in, then.

Aubrey leaves the room as Penny continues washing.

INT. BATHROOM/SHOWER - DAY

Aubrey shuts off the water, wrings a few drops from her hair, and slides open the shower curtain.

She is startled by the sight of Penny at the mirror.

Penny is dressed up, and quite cheerfully puts on makeup.

PENNY

I know, I'm up your ass again. But I decided I'm gonna get a job today.

Aubrey grabs a towel, wraps it around her.

PENNY

I'll get a phone and a bus card too. So I won't have to rely on you for everything.

Aubrey dries her hair with a second towel.

AUBREY

Maybe you should take my car. The buses can get confusing.

PENNY

Expired license, remember?

AUBREY

Oh. Well I could drive you.

PENNY

I'm trying to give you your space, you little shit. Just relax, enjoy your day. Be lazy. You've earned it.

Penny kisses Aubrey on the cheek, surprising her.

PENNY

Love you, kiddo.

Penny happily trots out of the bathroom.

The front door closes. Aubrey looks in the mirror, sees the lipstick on her cheek. She cleans it off, pleased.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Aubrey emerges from her bedroom, dressed casually but fully.

She approaches the computer, debates turning it on. She looks out the window at the nice, sunny day.

EXT. APARTMENT/BACK PORCH - DAY

Aubrey sits in a deck chair, wears shorts and a bikini top, sunglasses and a straw hat.

She looks out onto the dirt, weeds, and torn-up grass of the small enclosed yard. She sips lemonade.

She watches a squirrel run across a power line.

AUBREY
I feel ridiculous.

She takes off the hat, goes inside.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Aubrey types away at the computer, a tank top over the bikini.

Her eye catches the stuffed penguin, sitting on the desk.

She pulls up a search window, types in PENELOPE ISABEL QUINN. Clicks some of the links.

AUBREY
Hmm. Not her.

She enters the address they visited, the former Quinn home.

She reads through the links, leans closer to the monitor.

Her cell phone RINGS. She looks at the number, answers.

AUBREY
Hello?

PENNY
(filtered)
Hello, this is Penny Quinn calling!
Please leave a message for me after
the THPPPBT!

Aubrey rolls her eyes.

AUBREY
Hi Penny, I'm saving your number now.

Aubrey puts Penny on speaker, scrolls through more links.

PENNY

I got a job, too. Starting tonight!

AUBREY

Already? Wow.

PENNY

Are you doin' anything later?

AUBREY

Um...no. Why?

INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

Noisy, flashy, many bodies in motion - a typical club.

Aubrey makes her way through the crowd. Her outfit is nice and classy, but not dressed-up sexy like other girls there.

Aubrey squeezes through to the bar, behind which are Penny and MELIA (20's, platinum blonde), both showing some skin.

Penny wears a short skirt, strappy heels, and a tight shirt with plenty of cleavage. She spots Aubrey, gets excited.

PENNY

Hey, you made it! They let you in free, right? I told 'em they'd better!

AUBREY

I can't hear you!

Aubrey touches her ear to convey the message.

Penny says something to Melia, indicates Aubrey. Melia nods her understanding and resumes mixing drinks.

Penny leans over to speak directly into Aubrey's ear.

PENNY

What do you want to drink?

AUBREY

I don't want anything!

PENNY

I'll just make you something!

Penny leans back to mix and shake a drink. Aubrey tries not to get pressed against the bar by the throng behind her.

Penny pours the shot, puts the glass in Aubrey's hand.

PENNY
So what do you think? This place
kick ass or what?

AUBREY
It's really loud!

PENNY
Yeah! WHOOO!!!

The crowd behind Aubrey cheers along with Penny. Aubrey waits for them to quiet down.

AUBREY
I want to talk about something later!
What time will you be done?

PENNY
Maybe about two thirty!

AUBREY
I'll come back and pick you up!

PENNY
It's okay, I'll get a ride!

Penny starts to move away, but Aubrey gently holds her arm.

AUBREY
Penny...let me pick you up.

Penny can see Aubrey is serious. Penny nods, smiles. Aubrey returns the smile. Penny returns to serving patrons.

Aubrey picks up her drink, looks at it, knocks it back. She sets the glass down, reacts to how strong the shot is.

EXT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

Aubrey parks her car at the curb across the street, with a view of the club's front door. She cuts the engine.

INT. AUBREY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS / NIGHT

Aubrey checks the time on her phone - 2:29 am. She lets out a deep breath. Sits and waits.

The club door opens. Aubrey notices. TWO MEN IN SUITS exit.

Aubrey yawns. She checks the time again - 2:30 am.

AUBREY
Tooth hurty...time to see the dentist.

She chuckles at her silliness. Stretches her neck, leans back.

INT. AUBREY'S CAR - LATER / NIGHT

Aubrey taps the steering wheel impatiently. She checks the time - 2:51 am. She grabs her phone, dials.

PENNY

(filtered)

It's Penny Quinn, leave the details!

Aubrey purses her lips, waits for the TONE.

AUBREY

Penny, it's Aubrey, I've been outside for about twenty minutes, just wondering when you're gonna be done. Let me know. Thank you.

She hangs up. She resumes impatiently tapping the wheel.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUBREY'S CAR - LATER / NIGHT

Aubrey glares at her phone - 3:07 am. She bolts from the car, slams the door.

EXT. DANCE CLUB - CONTINUOUS / NIGHT

Aubrey tries the club doors - locked. She bangs on them with a fist, waits. No response.

She dials her phone while storming back to the car.

AUBREY

It's after three, and I'm going home. I don't know where you are or what you're doing, I can only hope you get home in one piece. See you then.

INT. AUBREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aubrey lies awake, stares at the ceiling. She cuddles up to Keith, who is sound asleep.

INT. AUBREY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Aubrey sleeps while Keith gets dressed for work.

The front door opens, shuts a bit too noisily, wakes Aubrey.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS / MORNING

Penny tiptoes in as Keith steps out of the bedroom, Aubrey right behind him. Penny stops when she sees them.

AUBREY
What the hell, Penny?!

PENNY
I'm sorry. I lost track of time.

Penny continues to her room. Aubrey follows her in.

INT. PENNY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS / MORNING

Keith stands in the doorway, buttons his shirt.

PENNY
We had a little after party. I coulda got you in, you should have called.

Penny sits on the bed to take off her shoes.

AUBREY
I did call! I left two messages during the forty minutes I waited for you!

PENNY
I'm sorry, okay? You don't have to get all pissy about it.

Penny sets her shoes aside, unzips her skirt.

As Penny takes off the skirt, Aubrey glances back at Keith. He walks away from the door.

AUBREY
I can't believe you're older than me. Why are you such a child?

Penny throws the skirt at the wall. Aubrey cringes, thinking it was going to be thrown at her.

PENNY
Because I never had a fucking childhood!

Tears form and flow. Penny makes no effort to wipe them away.

PENNY
When you were little, I'm the one who took care of you! Our mother was a horrible bitch who hated me!

Aubrey takes a step back. Keith reappears in the doorway.

PENNY

Then suddenly my whole family was gone and I was all alone! So excuse the shit outta me for not being little miss perfect all the time!

Penny sits on the edge of the bed, head down as she weeps.

Aubrey stares a moment, then glances back at Keith, who gestures for her to come to him.

AUBREY

(to Penny)

Why don't you get some sleep. We'll talk later.

Penny cries, doesn't respond. Aubrey exits, shuts the door.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Aubrey works on the computer.

Penny emerges from her room, in suitable sleeping clothes. She heads to the kitchen, can be heard knocking about.

Aubrey continues working. Penny returns with her iced coffee, approaches Aubrey from behind. She hugs Aubrey with one arm.

PENNY

I'm sorry, penguin.

Aubrey flinches, stiffens. Penny notices, backs off.

PENNY

Why do you do that?

AUBREY

Do what?

Aubrey keeps working.

PENNY

Shrink away from me like that.

AUBREY

I just didn't know you were gonna come over me that way.

Penny takes Aubrey's hands off the keyboard, pulls her up.

PENNY

C'mere. Right here.

She backs up a step, points to the floor in front of her.

AUBREY

Penny, come on, I'm right in the middle of something.

PENNY

Come over here and give your big sister a hug.

Penny opens her arms. Aubrey sighs, steps into the hug.

Penny holds her tight, closes her eyes, sways a little bit. Aubrey simply waits it out, barely touching Penny.

Penny ends the hug, holds Aubrey out at arm's length.

PENNY

Now why is that so horrible for you?

AUBREY

It isn't horrible, don't say that.

Aubrey drops into her chair.

AUBREY

I'm just not all...lovey-dovey. I never have been.

PENNY

Not true. You used to love being held. Whenever you started crying, you would always stop the second you were in my arms.

Aubrey glances at the computer. Penny's voice breaks a little.

PENNY

I held you every day of your life, until you were taken away from me. Now all I want to do is hold you again...and you push me away.

Penny turns away before the tears come. She goes into the bathroom, locks the door.

Aubrey shrugs, hands in the air, approaches the bathroom.

AUBREY

Penny...it isn't you, okay? Just give me time. It'll get better.

She listens for a moment. Silence. Returns to the computer.

INT. APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Aubrey shuts down the computer, stands, stretches. She ambles over to the bathroom door, stops and listens, hears nothing.

AUBREY
You still alive in there?

She waits for a response. There is none.

AUBREY
I really gotta pee.

There is a loud SNIFFLING, then WATER RUNNING, briefly.

Penny emerges, eyes red, walks past Aubrey without looking at her. She enters her bedroom, locks the door.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Aubrey watches tv. It goes to a commercial and she mutes it.

She looks at Penny's closed door, listens. Nothing.

Keith enters the front door.

KEITH
Hi! How'd it go today?

He leans over the back of the couch to kiss her.

AUBREY
Not very well.

He sits next to her, places a hand on her leg.

AUBREY
She...wanted to give me a hug, and then she got upset 'cause...you know, I don't do well with that sorta thing.

KEITH
Right...

AUBREY
I tried, but...can you talk to her?

KEITH
I think you should talk to her.

AUBREY
I've been talking to closed doors.

Aubrey is startled slightly as Penny's door opens and Penny steps out, dressed up and made up.

PENNY
Hey there, friends and neighbors!

Aubrey shrugs, exasperated. Penny drops down next to her.

PENNY

I'm really sorry about last night,
Aubrey. If I promise to be there
tonight will you pick me up?

Aubrey looks to Keith, then back to Penny.

AUBREY

Okay.

PENNY

Yay! You are the best!

She gives Aubrey a quick sideways hug and cheek-kiss, then
hops up and heads for the front door.

PENNY

Love you both!

Penny exits, locks the door from outside.

AUBREY

She didn't actually promise.

KEITH

But she meant it.

AUBREY

I guess we'll see.

KEITH

There's something else we need to
talk about.

He takes her hand, leads her toward the bedroom.

AUBREY

Ooh, I like this kind of talk.

INT. AUBREY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS / NIGHT

Aubrey sits on the bed, Keith stands facing her.

KEITH

I've been thinking about you and
Penny today, and...I think it's best
if I get out of your hair for a while.

AUBREY

What do you mean?

KEITH

I mean, I'm gonna stay somewhere
else for a few days. Maybe a week.

Aubrey stares up at him for a moment.

AUBREY

No. No, I need you here.

KEITH

You need to work things out with Penny.

Keith locates and packs a suitcase.

KEITH

Call me anytime, for any reason. And if you really need me I'll come right home, okay?

AUBREY

No, this is not okay. I don't know how to talk to her.

KEITH

You'll figure it out. I have faith in you.

He kisses her, continues packing. She watches helplessly.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Keith waves to Aubrey on the front porch from the back of a departing cab. Aubrey goes back inside.

INT. AUBREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aubrey wakes with a start to the alarm on her phone. She kills the noise, sees the time - 2:00 am.

EXT. DANCE CLUB/INT. AUBREY'S CAR - NIGHT

Aubrey parks across the street, checks the time - 2:27 am.

She's about to cut the engine when Penny exits the club with Melia, spots Aubrey. The two of them approach the car.

Penny opens the passenger door but doesn't get in.

PENNY

Hiya gorgeous! Remember Melia?

Melia leans down into view, waves hello.

AUBREY

Yeah, of course. Did you need a ride home? I don't mind.

MELIA

There's a 24-hour diner a few blocks from here, we could all hang out!

Aubrey hesitates to respond.

PENNY

Your kinda place. Coffee and pie.

AUBREY

Okay. Yeah, sounds good.

PENNY

Sweet! Hop in!

Penny gestures for Melia to take the front seat, quickly jumps in the back. Melia smiles at Aubrey.

Aubrey pulls away from the curb as the other two buckle up.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

A popular late-night joint half-filled with twenty-somethings.

The three ladies laugh it up in a booth, Aubrey inside next to Penny, Melia opposite them. Each has her coffee and pie.

MELIA

So then he tells me he wants to wrestle! And I'm thinkin', okay, this could lead to somethin', rollin' around on the floor together...just his way of makin' a move, right?

Penny steals a bite of Aubrey's pie.

MELIA

I get down on all fours, booty in the air...I give him one of these:

Melia turns around in her seat to give the sisters a coy look over her shoulder.

MELIA

In two seconds he's all over me. But then I realize, this fool is actually trying to wrestle me! Like it's an olympic event or something!

Melia sips her coffee.

MELIA

Next thing I know, he's rushin' me to the hospital with a dislocated elbow. I couldn't do this for a week!

She holds up her forearm and turns her wrist back and forth. Penny and Aubrey laugh at this display.

Melia downs the rest of her coffee, climbs out of the booth.

MELIA

That's it for me, girls, I gotta run. Told my boyfriend I'd stop by, wake him up for the early shift.

She leans down to Penny, they give each other a kiss on each cheek. She waves to Aubrey on her way to the door.

MELIA

Thanks for comin' out, Aubrey!

Penny smiles after Melia, waits until she's out of sight.

PENNY

Don't be fooled by that talk about a boyfriend, she's totally gay.

AUBREY

Really? What about that guy she wanted to...wrestle?

PENNY

Okay, mostly she's a total lesbian. Mostly.

AUBREY

If you say so. Um...do you wanna switch sides?

Penny stares at her for a moment, then notices the empty side of the booth across from them.

PENNY

Oh you mean sit over there!

Penny slides out and takes the empty seat.

AUBREY

Yeah. Not that I mind sitting next to you, it's just, you know...easier to talk face to face.

PENNY

No, I get it. That's cool. I thought you meant switch teams, like go lesbo.

Penny laughs her loud, raucous laugh. Aubrey laughs too.

PENNY

I could never do it. Women are too complicated.

AUBREY

Yeah, well...men can be a mystery too.

PENNY

Something happen with Keith?

Aubrey takes a bite, her head down. She nods.

PENNY

What?

Penny puts her hand on Aubrey's arm.

AUBREY

He's staying somewhere else for a few days. Says we need to figure this out, and he's just in the way.

PENNY

That's stupid. How are you supposed to work things out if he isn't there?

AUBREY

No, not me and him. Me and you.

PENNY

Oh.

Penny leans back, hands in her lap.

PENNY

I'm sorry, Aubrey. I'm ruining everything.

AUBREY

It isn't your fault. He's probably right, I just wasn't expecting this.

PENNY

Still...I feel bad. What can I do?

AUBREY

There's nothing you need to do.

PENNY

Sure there is. Come on. Let's talk.

Aubrey hesitates.

AUBREY

Okay. I want you to tell me something.

PENNY

Sure! Anything.

AUBREY

I want to know what happened to our parents.

Penny stiffens, breaks eye contact.

AUBREY

I have a right to know, Penny.

PENNY

Not now, okay? Not here.

AUBREY

I did some research online, but those old news stories don't really say anything. I need you to tell me.

PENNY

Dad died in his sleep and Mom had an accident. That's all there is to it.

Penny's hands shake. She grips her coffee mug to steady them.

AUBREY

But what happened, Penny?

PENNY

I can't do this now, Aubrey.

AUBREY

I need to know the truth.

PENNY

Please...

AUBREY

Penelope Isabel Quinn, you tell me the truth right now!

Aubrey's harsh tone is more than Penny can take -- she lets out a SHRIEK as she SMASHES her mug onto an empty plate, shattering them both and spilling coffee.

Aubrey is startled by the outburst. Everyone in the diner turns to them as Penny looks at her hand, now bleeding.

Aubrey grabs some paper napkins, presses them onto Penny's bloody hand. She gets out of her seat, pulls Penny along.

AUBREY

It's okay. Come on.

INT. DINER RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER / NIGHT

Aubrey washes Penny's hand. Penny is calm, but distant.

AUBREY

See? It was just a little cut.

Aubrey looks at Penny, sees only a faraway look in her eyes.

AUBREY

Does it hurt?

Penny doesn't respond, or seem to hear. Aubrey shuts off the water, dabs the cut with a clean paper towel.

AUBREY

Okay. Let's go home.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Penny enters ahead of Aubrey, shuffles to her room. She has a first-aid-kit bandage on her hand. Aubrey follows her.

INT. PENNY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS / NIGHT

Penny lies on the unmade bed, fully dressed.

AUBREY

Don't you want to change clothes?

No response. Aubrey removes Penny's shoes, sets them on the floor. She stands at the foot of the bed.

AUBREY

I shouldn't have kept asking like that. I should have listened to you.

Aubrey takes a few steps toward the door.

PENNY

Aubrey?

Aubrey stops.

PENNY

Will you stay with me until I fall asleep?

AUBREY

Sure.

Aubrey removes her shoes, sits on the bed next to Penny. Penny holds Aubrey, closes her eyes.

Aubrey puts a hand on Penny's arm, lies silently, eyes open.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Aubrey, clean and dressed, cuts a sandwich in half and adds it to a plate of fruit.

INT. PENNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Aubrey sets the plate on the nightstand, sits on the bed next to Penny, who lies awake and alert but with low energy.

AUBREY

Do you have to work tonight?

Penny shakes her head.

AUBREY

I was thinking maybe we could go see my parents later. They can tell you about when I was little.

PENNY

Not today.

Aubrey plucks some fruit off the plate, eats.

AUBREY

I could get their photo albums. Bring them back here.

PENNY

That'd be nice.

AUBREY

Yeah? Okay. I guess I could go now. Sure you don't want to come with me?

PENNY

No, I'm gonna rest a while.

Aubrey nods, approaches the bedroom door, stops and turns.

AUBREY

Will you be all right while I'm gone?

PENNY

Yes, Aubrey, I'll be fine.

AUBREY

You won't do anything crazy?

PENNY

No.

AUBREY

Promise?

PENNY

I promise.

AUBREY

Okay. I won't be long.

Aubrey hesitates. Penny smiles at her. She smiles back.

AUBREY

Be back soon.

Aubrey exits the bedroom.

INT. AUBREY'S CAR - DAY

Aubrey drives in the middle lane on the expressway. Cars and trucks pass her left and right.

Aubrey checks her speedometer, speeds up a bit.

INT. GRUZEWSKI FRONT DOOR - DAY

Aubrey enters with her key. She listens to the silent house.

INT. GRUZEWSKI LIVING ROOM - DAY

Aubrey pulls photo albums out of a cabinet, stacks them up.

INT. GRUZEWSKI HOUSE/UPSTAIRS - DAY

Aubrey approaches the door to her old room - it's closed. She opens it. In the room are Keith's clothes and suitcase.

AUBREY

Oh, Keith. I should have known.

INT. APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Aubrey enters with photo albums and childhood mementos.

AUBREY

I'm back! Found some really neat stuff in my old room.

Aubrey sets everything down, sticks her head in Penny's room.

AUBREY

And you'll never guess who's...

She trails off upon realizing Penny isn't in there.

AUBREY

Penny?

Aubrey checks the bathroom, the kitchen.

AUBREY

Penny?!

PENNY (O.S.)

Out here.

EXT. APARTMENT/BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS / AFTERNOON

Aubrey steps out to find Penny on the deck chair, bare legs and feet curled up inside the only thing she appears to be wearing: a hand-knit sweater that is way too big for her.

The sweater her father wore the night before he died.

AUBREY

Hey. Did you eat anything?

Penny stares out into the city.

AUBREY

I found a lot of good stuff at the house.

PENNY

You were right. You deserve to know the truth.

Aubrey leans against a stack of crates.

PENNY

Mom was out with her friends all night. The sun was up when she came home. Drunk. She woke me up and told me to keep you quiet. But you were always quiet. Always happy.

A sad smile finds its way to Aubrey's face.

PENNY

Next thing I know, she's screaming like crazy. Dad won't wake up. I see him lying there, and he's...blue. I knew right away what that meant, but...I didn't want to believe it. So I held his hand...just to prove it wasn't real, that he was okay. But he was so cold.

Aubrey fights a losing battle to prevent tears from spilling.

PENNY

His hands were never cold. Not even outside, in the snow. That's when I knew for sure that he was gone.

Penny pulls her legs in closer, inside the sweater.

PENNY

And Mom was...I don't know. She lost it. Before I even knew what she was doing she had a gun to her head.

Aubrey shudders with an intake of breath.

PENNY

I didn't have a chance to stop her. I just carried you to the neighbor's and told them to call an ambulance.

Aubrey finds something to sit down on.

PENNY

I used to think it was my fault. After you were born, she was so different. The way she neglected you...I hated her. I kept wishing something would happen to her, that she'd go away. And I thought, at the time, that somehow I'd gotten my wish. But it took my father away from me too. Then they took you away.

Penny turns to look at Aubrey, whose tears continue to flow freely, while Penny's eyes are dry and empty.

PENNY

After that...I had nothing. I'd lost everything that mattered to me. And I know now...I'll never get it back.

Penny holds Aubrey's gaze for a moment, then rises from the chair. She kisses Aubrey on top of her head, and goes inside.

Aubrey shakily moves to the chair, looks out at the sunset.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Aubrey enters from the porch, wipes her eyes. She spots the closed bathroom door, approaches it.

AUBREY

Penny? You okay? I understand why you didn't want to tell me before. I'm sorry I tried to force you.

She listens for a response, but gets none.

AUBREY

It isn't your fault, okay? She did it to herself. You were just a kid.

Aubrey takes a deep shuddering breath, trying not to cry.

AUBREY

I know we can't get the last twenty years back. But we're together now.

Behind the door is a loud SMASH of BREAKING GLASS.

AUBREY

Penny?!

Aubrey tries the door. Locked. She bangs on it with an open palm, tries to force the handle.

AUBREY

Penny, what happened? Open the door!

She pushes the door with her shoulder, then backs up and kicks it, starts to panic.

AUBREY

Penny, please!!

Aubrey looks around frantically, finds her phone, dials. She bangs on the door again while she waits to connect.

AUBREY

Just let me in, okay?!

(into phone)

She locked herself in the bathroom and I think she broke the mirror. She's not answering me, I don't know what to do!

KEITH

(filtered)

All right, just take a breath, calm down, I'm coming over right now. There's a key on top of the door frame, okay?

Aubrey looks up at the door frame.

KEITH

Just reach up there and get it. I'll stay on the phone.

Aubrey stretches for it but can't quite reach. She jumps a couple times until she grabs the key.

She unlocks the door with shaking hands, opens it.

She sees Penny kneeling on the floor, in underwear and a t-shirt, her upper body slumped over the edge of the tub.

AUBREY
Penny, what happened?

Shards of the broken mirror are strewn across the floor and the counter. The large sweater has been tossed in the corner.

Aubrey lays the sweater over the broken glass, steps on it to get to Penny without cutting herself.

A long gash in Penny's arm bleeds heavily into the tub.

AUBREY
She's bleeding!

KEITH
Grab a clean towel and press it against the wound. You gotta hold it tight, okay?

Aubrey does as instructed, sees that Penny's eyes are open and looking at her.

KEITH
Aubrey, you need to hang up and call 911. Do exactly what they tell you. I'm in the car, I'll be there soon.

AUBREY
Keith, wait! Keith?

He's hung up. The apartment feels suddenly silent.

PENNY
Don't call them, Aubrey...

Aubrey looks down at Penny, who is calm. Aubrey cries.

AUBREY
Come on, you gotta sit up.

Aubrey lifts Penny's torso from the tub, holds the towel on her bleeding arm. She leans Penny against the wall.

AUBREY
Keep your arm up.

She lifts Penny's arm over her head.

PENNY
You don't need to save me.

Aubrey puts more pressure on the towel, on Penny's arm.

AUBREY

I'm not gonna let you go like this.
You understand? I'm not gonna let
you go.

Blood trickles down Penny's arm, soaks into her shirt.

AUBREY

Shit! Don't move, okay?

Aubrey dials 911 and sets the phone down, on speaker, while she resumes pressure on Penny's wound.

OPERATOR

(filtered)

Nine one one emergency...

AUBREY

Um, my sister cut her arm, she's
bleeding a lot, I need an ambulance.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Keith screeches to a halt in the Gruzewski's sedan, quickly hops out of the car.

Two paramedics place Penny, strapped to a gurney, into a waiting ambulance as Aubrey watches.

Aubrey spots Keith and runs to him. They hold each other tight as the ambulance drives off.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Aubrey leans on Keith's shoulder, his arm around her. They huddle together in a sea of empty chairs.

KEITH

Oh, I meant to tell you...the DNA
test results came back.

Aubrey sits up to look at him, her face tense and worried.

KEITH

They're a match. She's definitely
your sister.

Aubrey smiles, showing both sadness and joy.

AUBREY

I know.

They look into each other's eyes, a profound love and understanding between them.

A DOCTOR (male 50's) enters and approaches them.

DOCTOR
She's fine. The cut wasn't too deep.

Aubrey and Keith breathe a sigh of concerned relief.

DOCTOR
We have to keep her overnight, but she'll heal just fine. There may be a scar, but you'll hardly notice it.

AUBREY
Can we talk to her now?

DOCTOR
She's sedated. You'll have to come back tomorrow.

KEITH
Thank you, Doctor, we really appreciate it.

Keith offers his hand. The doctor shakes it.

DOCTOR
There is one other thing. I looked into your sister's medical records...were you aware this was not her first suicide attempt?

AUBREY
No...when?

DOCTOR
Apparently she tried to hang herself a few years ago, then spent some time in a psychiatric hospital in Colorado. In fact, I'll have to transfer her tomorrow.

AUBREY
To Colorado?!?

DOCTOR
No no no, I'm sorry, to a local facility. All suicide attempts resulting in a hospital stay require psychiatric observation.

Aubrey shakes her head.

AUBREY
No. No, you cannot have her committed.

KEITH
Aubrey...

AUBREY

She just got upset, okay? She isn't crazy, she doesn't belong there!

DOCTOR

She isn't being committed, it's just for a few days. No one thinks she's crazy. But this was an attempted suicide, so I'm obligated by law to have her transferred.

Aubrey holds Keith tighter. He pats her shoulder.

DOCTOR

However, you can ask them to release her in your care. I wouldn't recommend it, but you do have that right.

Aubrey thinks this over, takes a deep, shuddering breath.

AUBREY

I want to see her now.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Penny is sound asleep. Aubrey stands at the bedside, Keith a step behind her.

Aubrey looks at Penny's bandaged arm, her closed eyes.

AUBREY

I'm not leaving her side until we get her home.

KEITH

Do you want me to stay with you?

She faces him, shakes her head.

AUBREY

My mom's probably worried about you.

He smiles. She responds in kind, as best she can.

KEITH

How'd you know I was there?

AUBREY

Because I know you. And I love you.

She pulls him close for a hug. He holds her tightly.

AUBREY

And I was at the house today.

He chuckles, releases their embrace.

KEITH

I wasn't trying to keep it secret,
you know, I just...

AUBREY

I know. Why don't you go on back.
I'll call you tomorrow.

She kisses him. He heads for the door, lingers a bit, love
in his eyes. Then he's gone.

Aubrey stands over Penny for a moment. She gingerly touches
Penny's hand, lightly grasping her fingers.

Penny's grip slowly tightens on Aubrey's hand, holding it.
Aubrey looks at Penny's face, but she's still asleep.

Aubrey keeps hold of Penny's hand while she drags a chair
closer to the bed, then gets comfortable.

INT. HOSPITAL VAN - DAY

Penny lies on a gurney in the back, Aubrey sitting next to
her, holding Penny's hand.

Penny is awake, looking at Aubrey, as Aubrey watches the
road go by outside the window.

PENNY

I want to tell you something...

Aubrey turns to face Penny with a curious gaze.

PENNY

When I went back to our old house,
twenty years ago...I wasn't looking
for pictures, or toys. I ran away
from my foster home because they
told me you'd been adopted...that I
would never see you again.

Aubrey squeezes Penny's hand.

AUBREY

Hey...you don't have to tell me now.

PENNY

I was only twelve. I was stupid enough
to think the gun would still be there.

Penny rubs her eyes with one hand, not letting go of Aubrey.

PENNY

I didn't want to live without you.

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

When I couldn't find what I went there for, I took everything else I could. But I left so much behind.

Penny looks out the window.

PENNY

And for a long time, the only thing that kept me going was...that I had to make sure you were okay. And you are. You don't need me anymore.

AUBREY

I do need you, Penny. I just didn't know it.

Penny looks into Aubrey's eyes, takes her hand again.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY/OFFICE - DAY

Aubrey holds Penny's hands with both of hers, as they sit opposite the desk of the PSYCHIATRIST (female 60's).

The psychiatrist reads a hospital form, looks over her glasses at the two younger women. She sets the form on the desk.

PSYCHIATRIST

Are you taking any prescription medication?

Penny shakes her head.

PSYCHIATRIST

Recreational drugs?

PENNY

No. Not for a long time.

The psychiatrist makes a quick note on the form.

PSYCHIATRIST

Did you deliberately harm yourself with the intent to commit suicide?

Penny glances at Aubrey, shamefully turns away.

PENNY

Yes.

PSYCHIATRIST

Do you intend to cause further physical harm to yourself?

PENNY

No.

PSYCHIATRIST

Do you intend any physical harm to others, especially your sister?

PENNY

No! Never.

Penny tightens her grip on Aubrey's hands.

The psychiatrist holds her gaze on Penny, appraising her. After a beat, she signs the form in front of her.

PSYCHIATRIST

I've seen more than enough clinical cases to know you're not one of them. You're clearly better off with family.

She hands a copy of the signed form to Aubrey.

PSYCHIATRIST

Give this to the admissions nurse at the front desk.

(to Penny)

Don't make me sorry I signed that. I don't like to be wrong.

Penny and Aubrey push back their chairs and stand.

PENNY

You won't be. I promise.

AUBREY

Thank you so much!

INT. GRUZEWSKI'S CAR - DAY

Keith drives, Aubrey and Penny in the back seat. Penny lies with her head in Aubrey's lap, holds Aubrey's hand.

Aubrey's other hand caresses Penny's head.

They ride silently for a moment, enjoying the breeze rushing in through open windows.

Penny moves her head to get a better look at Aubrey. Their eyes meet, and they look into each others' healing souls.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Penny and Aubrey pick up the pieces of broken mirror, drop them in a hard plastic wastebasket.

PENNY

I'm really sorry about this.

AUBREY

It's okay. We'll get another one.
You would be harder to replace.

PENNY

Careful, watch your foot.

Penny picks up a shard so Aubrey won't step on it.

PENNY

Are they gonna make you pay for it?

AUBREY

No, I just told the landlord it fell.
They'll put another one in later
this week.

They are silent a moment, still gathering up broken glass.

PENNY

Guess we'll have to do each others'
makeup until then, huh?

AUBREY

I guess we will.

Aubrey looks at Penny, pushes Penny's hair out of her eyes.

AUBREY

But that's what sisters do, right?

They share a wonderful, loving smile.

INT. AUBREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Aubrey lies on her side, asleep.

Outside the room, the floor CREAKS under Penny's feet as she approaches, stops in the doorway.

Aubrey stirs, picks up her head and tries to focus her eyes.

Penny walks softly to the bed, lies down in front of Aubrey.
Aubrey puts her arm across Penny, and they snuggle together.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Aubrey folds an omelette onto a plate, sets it in front of
Penny at the table.

AUBREY

There you are! Sausage and pineapple.

Penny cuts into the steaming eggs with a fork, blows on a
large bite, eats it like the finest delicacy imaginable.

PENNY

Mmmm! How do you make something so good that you can't even eat?

Aubrey sits down with her own breakfast, a large pancake. She shrugs, smiling.

PENNY

So when's Keith coming back?

AUBREY

When we're ready for him.

Aubrey indicates Penny's bandages.

AUBREY

How's your arm?

PENNY

Oh it's fine. Kinda itches, though.

She scratches her arm with the handle of her fork.

PENNY

I thought you started work today?

AUBREY

I told them I need another week. Had to spend some time with family.

Penny is all smiles.

PENNY

Feel like goin' out tonight?

AUBREY

Are you well enough for that?

PENNY

I'm fine! What would you like to do?

Aubrey thinks it over for a moment.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Aubrey sings a fun, upbeat number on the karaoke stage.

While not a great singer, she has a pleasant voice, and only seems a little self-conscious.

Penny is in the CROWD, loving this.

The song ends, and Aubrey receives a healthy applause. She smiles and bows as Penny leaps on stage and takes the mic.

PENNY

All right, let's hear it for my little sister!

The crowd cheers and applauds again. Aubrey graciously accepts the renewed enthusiasm for her performance.

PENNY

Thank you Aubrey, that was lovely. And in return, I would like to dedicate this song to you. Because every word of it is as true now as the day you were born...when I first sang it to you.

The song begins: Bobby Helms' "My Special Angel". Penny sings in her lovely voice, her gaze focused on Aubrey.

PENNY

You are my special angel...sent from up above...

Aubrey smiles.

PENNY

The lord smiled down on me...and sent an angel to love...you are my special angel...right from paradise...

Aubrey is suddenly flooded with happy tears, as memory and emotion hit her like a wave.

PENNY

I know that you're an angel...heaven is in your eyes...

Aubrey looks up at Penny, eyes dripping over with love.

PENNY

A smile from your lips brings the summer sunshine...the tears from your eyes bring the rain...

Aubrey wipes away the tears on her face.

PENNY

I feel your touch...your warm embrace...and I'm in heaven again...

Aubrey can't take anymore and goes onstage, wraps her arms around Penny and holds her tighter than ever.

Penny drops the mic and hugs Aubrey, holding her just as tightly.

With the lights on them and the crowd in the dark, it's like they're the only ones in the room.

The Bobby Helms version of the song continues on the soundtrack.

BOBBY HELMS (V.O.)
You are my special angel...through
eternity...

Aubrey and Penny rock back and forth on their feet, slow-dancing, holding each other close.

BOBBY HELMS (V.O.)
I'll have my special angel...here to
watch over me...here to watch over
me...

Aubrey and Penny are in each other's arms, Aubrey's head on her big sister's shoulder, eyes closed, face content.

BACKUP SINGERS (V.O.)
Angel, angel...whoah-oh-oh-oh-oh...

The song comes to a beautiful, gentle conclusion, with the two sisters as close again as they once were.

FADE OUT