

Suburban Renewal

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SUBURBAN RENEWAL

ACT ISCENE I

FADE IN:

EXT. LOCAL BANQUET HALL - ESTABLISHING SHOT - LATE AFTERNOON

SUPERIMPOSITION - 1992

Cars and limousines are packed outside, as the BLARE of MUSIC can be heard from inside.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCAL BANQUET HALL - MAIN HALL - LATE AFTERNOON

Friends and family, all dressed formally and seated silently, as JOE FERRARA, father of the bride, addresses the audience, as he celebrates the union of his daughter, SARAH, and her husband, DAVID JENNINGS.

JOE

(looks tenderly at Annie)

My lovely Sarah. Seems like only yesterday I was holding you in my arms. Now I'm here to give you away.

(raises his glass of champagne)

Sarah, David. On behalf of myself, your mother, and all of your friends and family, may your union be happy, prosperous, and blessed.

EVERYONE lets out a collective SKOAL, as Joe concludes his oration.

JOE

Thank you all so much for being here, and I would like to give the mic over to my new son-in-law, David.

(motions to David)

Dave, come up here, buddy.

David approaches the dais, as he is met with APPLAUSE. He positions himself and starts to speak.

DAVID

Thank you all so much. Thank you,
Joe. Or should I say, Dad?

EVERYONE gives a LIGHT LAUGH, as David continues.

DAVID

All kidding aside, this is probably
the one moment where I am truly
left speechless.

(turns to Sarah)

Sarah, I will make it my life's
work to love, serve, and be with
you forever.

SARAH

Seated a few feet from David, smiles warmly at him.

DAVID

I always searched and envisioned
the perfect day, where all the
people I love and care about would
convene, and the general feeling
would be love and happiness...

(one full beat)

And I found it with all of you here
today. Sadly, my father could not
be here today. Thankfully, my
mother is...

(waves to his mother)

Love you, Mom.

CAROL JENNINGS

Waves and blows a kiss to her son.

DAVID

I am truly honored to have my best
man and best friend, Bruce, here
today.

(motions to Bruce)

Bruce, Jane.

BRUCE AND ANNIE MORRIS

Seated in the audience, raise their glasses and smile.

DAVID
Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone here for making this not only the perfect day, but one that I will remember and cherish forever. Thank you and God Bless.

David descends the dais, as he is followed by a STANDING OVATION.

FADE OUT.

SCENE II

FADE IN:

INT. LOCAL BANQUET HALL - DANCE FLOOR - LATE AFTERNOON

Sarah and David are alone on the dance floor, as they slow dance to Duran Duran's ORDINARY WORLD. They quietly converse with each other.

SARAH
(sotto voce)
You did great up there.

DAVID
(sotto voce)
Thanks. Didn't think I could do it.

SARAH
(sotto voce)
Can I ask you something?

DAVID
(sotto voce)
Shoot.

SARAH
(sotto voce)
Do you think we're ready?

DAVID
(sotto voce; confounded)
For what?

SARAH
(sotto voce)
For marriage?

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 Annie, I don't think that's a great question to ask right now.

SARAH
 (sotto voce)
 What I mean is, everything is happening so fast and...

DAVID
 (sotto voce; intervenes)
 Sarah, honey, everything is happening in perfect fashion. We're married, we both have great jobs, and we even have new houses. Life couldn't be better.
 (one full beat)
 And the best part is, we'll experience it together. Let's cherish this moment, and lay our worries to rest, okay?

SARAH
 (sotto voce)
 I guess you're right. Now I know why I married you.

Sarah and David smile tenderly at each other, then kiss.

INT. LOCAL BANQUET HALL - VACANT BANQUET ROOM - MAGIC HOUR

Sarah sits alone in an empty room, staring pensively at the sunset from a window. A VOICE emerges.

ANNIE (O.S.)
 (abruptly)
 So there's the blushing bride.

Sarah turns around.

ANNIE

Stands firmly in the doorway. She slowly approaches Annie.

ANNIE
 Everybody's been asking for you. They're about to cut the cake.

SARAH
 I'll be there in a minute.

ANNIE
You alright?

Sarah nods silently.

ANNIE
That doesn't look like alright.

SARAH
Can I ask you something?

ANNIE
Of course.

SARAH
Is this how it's supposed to feel?

ANNIE
What?

SARAH
Marriage.

ANNIE
Like what?

SARAH
You know, all of this.

ANNIE
(confounded)
I'm sorry, but I don't follow.

SARAH
Everything. The anticipation, the anxiety, the uncertainty, the happiness, the permanence.

ANNIE
In a sense, yes. A union involves all those feelings and much more.

SARAH
Did you feel like this when you and Bruce wed?

ANNIE
Yes, I did. You must remember this one fact. Marriage is like a scavenger hunt. You know what you want, you do your best to find it, and end up discovering more than you thought.

SARAH
How do you know?

ANNIE
You just know. When he looks into
your eyes, and you don't turn away.
When he kisses you in the morning
even when you have no make up on,
and when you look forward to waking
up next to him.

SARAH
So, that's what it's like?

ANNIE
Yes.
(grab's Sarah's hand)
Now would you please come on? It's
your wedding day.

Sarah, slightly, cheered up, goes back with Annie back
inside, as they exit OUT OF VIEW.

INT. LOCAL BANQUET HALL - MOMENTS LATER

The reception is now over, as guests are headed home. David
sits alone, drink in hand, thinking pensively, when a VOICE
emerges.

BRUCE (O.S.)
There you are.

David slowly turns his head.

BRUCE

Stands a few feet away. He grabs an empty seat and sits next
to David.

BRUCE
(extends his hand)
Congratulations, newly wed.

DAVID
(dryly)
Thanks.

BRUCE
You okay, man?

DAVID
Fine. Why do you ask?

BRUCE
You're a beer guy, and you're
drinking a martini.

DAVID
(takes a sip of martini)
There's always a first time for
something.

BRUCE
Do you need a ride home?

DAVID
Nah. We have the limo for one more
hour. Thanks, anyway.

BRUCE
You sure you're alright? Best man
and best friend, remember?

DAVID
Well, to put it tersely, Sarah's
having second thoughts about the
marriage.

BRUCE
You're kidding.

DAVID
(takes a sip of his
martini)
She started talking about all this
negative stuff.

BRUCE
Is that what this is about?

DAVID
Yeah, talking about this stuff on
our wedding day.

BRUCE
(reassuring)
David, it's just a case of first-
day jitters.

DAVID
What do you mean?

BRUCE
Do you think that every couple is
utterly calm on the big day?
(MORE)

BRUCE (cont'd)
 There'll be day that you'll ask
 yourself why, but then you'll say,
 why not?

DAVID
 Ah, I guess you're right. Just
 making an alp out of an anthill.
 (one full beat)
 Can I ask you something?

BRUCE
 Sure.

DAVID
 When did everything become so
 complicated? I mean, it used to be
 about bikes and baseball cards. Now
 it's work and worrying.

BRUCE
 If life were simple, then why would
 we bother living it?

DAVID
 I would answer, but I gotta give
 the think tank a rest.

BRUCE
 (grabs his arm)
 C'mon, man. Your chariot awaits.

Bruce and David exit the banquet hall to head home.

FADE OUT.

SCENE III

FADE IN:

EXT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT

The Jennings' new home rests idly in Ridgeview Manor, a quiet suburb on the outskirts of Chicago.

CUT TO:

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

The front DOOR begins to UNLOCK, as David, holding Sarah by the threshold, enters. David gently kicks the door shut, as he carefully lays his new bride on a nearby sofa.

SARAH
You're a better transport than the
el.

David smiles warmly, as Sarah reciprocates. A moment of
silence ensues, as they look at each other.

DAVID
Thanks for the perfect day.

Sarah nods silently.

DAVID
Is everything alright?

Sarah again nods silently.

DAVID
I didn't know I married Harpo Marx.

Sarah smiles and breaks her silence.

SARAH
(sotto voce)
I'm sorry, but today was just so,
so...

DAVID
So-so?

SARAH
No. Just so unbelievable. How can
the days that follow ever compare
to today?

DAVID
I doubt that they will. However, if
we share each day, good or bad,
sunshine or clouds, we can make
everyday like today. Just us.

SARAH
Better make it three.

David looks surprised, part serious. Sarah breaks the news.

SARAH
David, I'm pregnant.

DAVID
You're kidding, right?

Sarah nods "no" silently.

DAVID
How long?

SARAH
Three weeks.

David remains silent, as he looks soberly at Sarah.

SARAH
(concerned)
Are you okay?

DAVID
Yeah. Just thinking.

SARAH
About what?

DAVID
Just when I think this day couldn't
be more perfect, you prove me
wrong.

David smiles warmly at Annie, as they kiss tenderly.

CLOCK ON WALL

Reads eleven forty-five p.m.

TIME SEGUE TO:

CLOCK ON WALL

Reads seven forty-five a.m.

SUPERIMPOSITION - 2008

The Morris house is astir, as the family gets ready for work and school. The voices of KATE MORRIS, the oldest daughter, and the youngest, ABIGAIL MORRIS, can be heard.

KATE (O.S.)
(aloud)
Mom, have you seen my red sweater?

ANNIE (O.S.)
Did you check in your closet?

KATE (O.S.)
(aloud)
Yeah. It's not there.

ANNIE (O.S.)
 (aloud)
 Keep looking.

ABIGAIL (O.S.)
 (aloud)
 Mommy, can I have some apple juice?

ANNIE (O.S.)
 (aloud)
 In a minute, baby. You have to get dressed first.

BRUCE (O.S.)
 (aloud)
 Annie, have you seen my pin-striped tie?

ANNIE (O.S.)
 (aloud)
 I put it in the wash.

BRUCE (O.S.)
 (aloud)
 You what? Ah, crap. That's my favorite one!

ANNIE (O.S.)
 (aloud)
 Language! It had ketchup on it. Wear your teal one. It looks good with your suit.

Everyone appears INTO VIEW, as they are about to exit. Annie, with Abigail in tow, is about to exit, when Abigail halts her.

ABIGAIL
 Mommmmy, what about my apple juice?

ANNIE
 (flustered)
 Right, the juice.
 (hands car keys to Katie)
 Katie, start the car and wait for me.
 (goes with Abigail into kitchen; in a baby's voice)
 Apple juice time.

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE - GARAGE - MORNING

Everyone is about to head off to work/school, as a slightly disheveled Bruce heads to his car, when he notices someone.

BRUCE
(aloud)
Hey, Dave!

DAVID

Headed to his car, stops, turns, and waves to Bruce.

DAVID
(aloud)
Morning, Bruce. Running late for work.

BRUCE
(aloud)
Join the club.

DAVID
(motions to Bruce about his tie)
Fix your tie, man.

Bruce looks at his shirt collar, notices his tie, and adjusts it.

BRUCE
(aloud)
Thanks, bud. Hey, what are you doing tonight?

DAVID
(aloud)
Don't know.

BRUCE
(aloud)
How about you come by the house? Annie's making some pot roast.

DAVID
Sounds great. I'll call you. See ya later.

BRUCE
(aloud)
Take care, David.

Annie appears INTO VIEW, Abigail in her arms, as they are about to say goodbye.

ANNIE

Do you have your briefcase?

BRUCE

It's in the trunk. What took you so long?

ANNIE

I'm sorry, Dear. Abby wanted to take Terry Turtle, and I had to find it.

BRUCE

(looks lovingly at Abigail
and kisses her; in a
child's voice)

So, Abby wants Terry Turtle?

ABIGAIL

(laughs coyly)
Yeah! He-he!

BRUCE

(kisses Abigail)
See you later, sweetie.

ABIGAIL

Love you, Daddy.

BRUCE

(kisses Katie)
See you tonight, Katie.

KATIE

(kisses Bruce)
Love you, Dad.

Bruce enters into his car, slowly pulls out of the garage, and drives away OUT OF VIEW.

Annie places Abby in the backseat, adjusting her child safety seat. She closes the door, and enters the car on the driver's side. She pulls slowly out of the garage, as the garage door closes behind her, and drives OUT OF VIEW

MONTAGE - WORK DAY

Bruce is explaining the company's current expenditure with the help of a Power Point presentation, as his colleagues pay close attention.

Annie busily types away at the keyboard in front of her PC at her desk, as she takes a break to rest her eyes.

David is busily putting together a printer, as he is adding it to the company's network.

David grabs a cup of coffee from a nearby street kiosk.

Annie returns to her desk, as she sits down. Her boss appears INTO VIEW, and drops a mound of papers to be filed in front of her. Annie closes her eyes and hangs her head in tired disgust.

David calmly assists a fellow co-worker with a computer question.

Bruce busily write a reply e-mail to his boss.

Katie waits outside in front of school, as she talks with some friends. Annie's car pulls up INTO VIEW. Katie says goodbye to her friends, as she heads towards the car.

Both Bruce and Annie's cars pull into the garage. They both emerge, Annie with the kids in tow, as they look tiredly at each other and head inside.

Moments later, David's car pulls INTO VIEW, into his garage, and turns off. David exits his car, folders in hand, and enters into his house.

END MONTAGE

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone sits calmly at the dinner table, enjoying supper. Bruce breaks the silence.

BRUCE
(puts a fork full of food
in his mouth)
So Katie, how was school?

KATIE
Fine

BRUCE
That's good.
(looks at Katie)
Hey Annie. Guess who I ran into
today?

ANNIE
Who?

BRUCE
Larry Grimm.

ANNIE
Really?

BRUCE
Yup. And in all places, the
bathroom. He's taking a business
seminar in the building.
(beat)
Larry used to go to college with
David and I.
(exclaims)
Ah, crap. I forgot to call Dave!

ANNIE
(upset)
Language at the table!

BRUCE
(gets up from table)
I'm sorry. Excuse me.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

While on the phone, Bruce impatiently waits for David to
answer. Bruce starts to speak.

BRUCE
(speaks into phone)
Dave, it's Bruce.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David serenely rests in a recliner in his living room, as he
speaks to Bruce.

DAVID
What's going on, Bruce?

BRUCE
Not much, man. How about you come
over for dinner?

DAVID
I'm good, thanks. Had a long day at
work. Besides, I already ate.

BRUCE
How are you holdin up?

DAVID
I'm fine. Same old story, new day.

BRUCE
I hear ya. Listen, if you ever need anything at all, you know we're right next door.

DAVID
I appreciate that, Bruce. Tell Annie and the kids I said hi.

BRUCE
Will do. You have a good night, Dave.

DAVID
You too, Bruce.

David hangs up his phone, as he rises from the recliner and into the kitchen.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

David looks pensively at his now finished dinner, then gently throws it in the garbage.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Bruce returns to the dining room, as he sits back down to finish his supper.

ANNIE
Hey there, stranger.

BRUCE
(mouth half full)
Sorry, everyone. Was talking to Dave.

ANNIE
How is he?

BRUCE
He's good. Work's been a grind. He says hi.
(turns to Katie)
Katie, have you decided what sport you want to play this summer?

KATIE

Well, I wanted to try lacrosse, but I'm leaning more towards softball. Tryouts are next week.

BRUCE

Sounds great. Let me know if I can help you practice.

ANNIE

(looks at her watch)
It's getting late. I'm gonna start to clean up. Do you mind, Bruce?

BRUCE

No prob, hon.

ANNIE

(picks up Abigail)
Mommy's going to wash the dishes, then it's bedtime for you.

ABIGAIL

Ah, crap! Bedtime!

ANNIE

(yells angrily at David)
See what I mean?!

ABIGAIL

(starts to cry)
I'm sorry, Mommy!

ANNIE

(tenderly)
That's okay, sweetie. Come now, Mommy's going to wash-wash.

ABIGAIL

Yay! Wash-wash!

Annie exits with Abigail OUT OF VIEW into the kitchen.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Annie gently places Abigail on a stool near the sink, as she starts to place in dirty dishes.

ANNIE

(calls out)
Katie, don't forget to do your homework!

KATIE (O.S.)
 (calls out)
 Alright, Mom!

Bruce appears INTO VIEW, as he hands Annie his dirty dishes and kisses her on the lips.

BRUCE
 (sotto voce)
 I'll be upstairs.

Bruce looks lovingly at Abigail, gives her a kiss, and exits OUT OF VIEW upstairs. Annie starts to wash the dishes, Abby by her side. Suddenly, the KITCHEN PHONE RINGS.

Annie, with soapy hands, turns off the water in the sink, heads over to the phone, and picks up.

ANNIE
 (speaks into phone)
 Hello? Oh, hi Mom. Yeah, just washing the dishes. Yeah, the kids are fine. Bruce's been...

Before Annie can continue, the sound of a GLASS CRASHING emerges, as Annie, slightly jarred, turns around.

ABIGAIL.

Left unattended, knocks over a glass of milk.

ANNIE
 (slightly alarmed)
 Oh, damn it! Abby, honey, stay right there!
 (talks into phone)
 No, it's okay, Mom. Abby spilled a glass.

Annie takes some paper towels, bends down, and starts to clean up the mess. She continues to speak to her mother.

ANNIE
 Yes, of course Abby's spending part of the summer with you. I don't know about Katie. She's thinking about summer camp. Some of her friends from school are going.
 (beat)
 Well, maybe that's for Katie to decide. How's Daddy? Please tell me he's stopped smoking. Mom, you have to get him to quit.
 (MORE)

ANNIE (cont'd)

(beat)

Listen, I hate to cut it short, but
I have to clean up. Call ya this
weekend. Love you, Bye.

Annie hangs up the phone, as she returns to washing the dishes.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

An exhausted Annie slowly makes her way into the bedroom. Bruce lays quietly, reading a magazine, when he notices his wife, who settles in beside him.

BRUCE

You okay, hon?

ANNIE

(tired)

Yeah. David, did you remember to
put the garbage out?

BRUCE

Did it before dinner.

ANNIE

(tired; relieved)

Oh, thank you.

Annie slowly rises from the bed, as she gets ready for bed. She slips into her night gown, as she settles in next to Bruce.

ANNIE

(seductive)

You know, I may be a little beat,
but I'm also feeling amo..

Before Annie can continue, Bruce is already asleep. A visibly disappointed Annie quietly watches her husband.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

An exhausted David, pajama-clad, makes his way into bed. Before lying down, he looks to his left.

SMALL PICTURE FRAME

Sits on a nearby night stand. It contains a small picture of Sarah, with a wilted rose petal inserted.

David picks up the picture frame and looks pensively at it. David lets out a soft sigh, as he places the frame back on the night stand.

He slowly looks around the bedroom, before turning off the lamp on the night stand, as everything FADES TO BLACK.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE IV

FADE IN:

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - ADMINISTRATION OFFICES - MORNING

Annie has arrived into work, as she places her bag on her desk. She is then met with one of her co-workers and good friends, JOAN ADLER.

JOAN
 (hands Annie cup of
 coffee)
 Good morning, sunshine. Got ya some
 java.

ANNIE
 (takes cup from Joan)
 Thanks, Joanie. Anyone know what's
 on the agenda for today?

JOAN
 It's all on your desk.

ANNIE
 Thank you.

JOAN
 How about we do lunch later?

ANNIE
 I'm there.

Joan exits OUT OF VIEW, as Annie sits at her desk and reviews her agenda.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce; complains)
 Oh, not arts and crafts. Anything
 but arts and crafts.

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

A boisterous classroom is filled with SCREAMING CHILDREN, as they work on arts and crafts. Annie and her co-workers try to attend to each child.

EXT. FRONT ARLINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Katie stands in front of her school, talking with some of her friends. Annie's station wagon pulls up INTO VIEW, as Katie says goodbye to her friends and hops in.

INT. ANNIE'S STATION WAGON - FRONT SEAT - AFTERNOON

Annie is attentively driving, when her CELL PHONE RINGS.

ANNIE
(in mock frustration)
Aaahhh!! Katie, say hello, honey.

Katie picks up.

KATIE
(speaks into phone)
Hello? Oh, hey Dad. Okay. Really?
Alright, I'll let her know. School
was fine. Uh-huh. Love you too.
Bye.

Katie hangs up the cell phone, as Annie starts to inquire her.

ANNIE
(watches road)
What did Dad say?

KATIE
He said he'll be in late tonight.
He has a project he needs to work
on. Boss' orders.

ANNIE
(incredulous)
You're kidding me, right?

Katie nods her head in a "no" motion, as Annie pulls over to the side of the road.

ANNIE
Dad was supposed to play princess
and dragon with Abby tonight. I've
got to cook dinner and do the
laundry. Oh, no.

ABIGAIL
No princess and dragon? Why?!

Abigail starts to CRY LOUDLY, as Annie and Katie talk.

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
You know what time it is?

KATIE
(sotto voce)
Terry Turtle time?

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
You know it.

Katie pulls out a plush toy turtle, Terry Turtle, and attempts to entertain her kid sister.

KATIE
(in goofy voice)
Hello there, Abby. I'm Terry
Turtle. Would you like to touch my
shell?

A worried Annie continues to drive home.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

An exhausted Annie starts to load the washing machine, when a VOICE emerges from upstairs.

KATIE (O.S.)
(aloud)
Mom!

ANNIE
(aloud)
Yes, Katie.

KATIE (O.S.)
(aloud)
Abby won't stop crying!

ANNIE
(aloud)
Are you playing princess and
dragon?

KATIE (O.S.)
 (aloud)
 Yes. It's not working. She wants
 dad.

A flabbergasted Annie SIGHS audibly, when the sound of the
 FRONT DOOR OPENING emerges. Annie quickly heads upstairs.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

A visibly exhausted Bruce walks through the door, as he drops
 his briefcase and is greeted by his family.

ANNIE
 (hugs and kisses Bruce)
 Bruce, honey.

KATIE
 (hugs and kisses Bruce)
 Hey, Dad
 (hands him plush dragon)
 Here you go.

DAVID
 Thank you. I'll be back.
 (enters into Abigail's
 bedroom; energetic)
 There she is! The princess and her
 palace!

ABIGAIL
 (exclaims happily)
 Dudley Dragon!

BRUCE
 (in a low voice)
 Where is that pretty little
 princess? I see her!

Bruce closes the bedroom door, as a relieved Annie and Katie
 smile wearily at each other.

ANNIE
 (puts head in Katie's
 shoulder)
 Finish your homework, young lady.

Both Annie and Katie walk OUT OF VIEW from the bedroom door.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

A visibly exhausted Annie lies in bed. The bathroom door
 opens, as Bruce appears INTO VIEW.

BRUCE
(tired)
My, my, what a day, huh?

ANNIE
(tired)
I'm actually feeling muscles that I
never knew I had.

Bruce lies down next to Annie, as he starts to caress her
raven locks.

BRUCE
You okay, sugar?

ANNIE
(tired)
Next question.

BRUCE
I'm sorry, dear. Cunningham has me
working my tail off. I thought
today would never end.

ANNIE
(tired)
Join the club.

BRUCE
Whadya say we go out to eat this
weekend? How about Giovanni's? Best
baked clams in the city.

ANNIE
I like mussels.

BRUCE
Fair enough. Mussels this weekend.
Is it a date?

ANNIE
Mark it down.

BRUCE
Will do.

Bruce looks tenderly at Annie, as they both lock lips.

MYSTERY POV

From his bedroom window in his house, David quietly watches the couple then closes the blinds.

FADE OUT.

SCENE V

FADE IN:

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Bruce sits at his desk, working on his laptop, when the BEDROOM PHONE RINGS. Bruce picks up.

BRUCE
(speaks into phone)
Hello? OH, hey honey. Yeah, trying
to enjoy my early exit from work.
(beat)
Really? Oh, that's good. Katie's
done with school at three. I'll
pick her up. Okay, I love you.

Bruce hangs up, as he continues to work on his laptop.

EXT. FRONT ARLINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATE AFTERNOON

Bruce's car pulls INTO VIEW, as Katie, stands and waits. She hops in.

INT. BRUCE'S CAR - FRONT SEAT - LATE AFTERNOON

Bruce drives and carefully watches the road, as Katie is seated in the passenger's seat and Abigail in her child seat in back.

BRUCE
(watching road)
Got the mail today. Your summer
camp papers came. We'll fill 'em
out tonight.

KATIE
Okay.

BRUCE
So, how was school today?

KATIE
Fine.

BRUCE
Classes going alright?

KATIE
Yup. Math's been a little tough.

BRUCE
Yeah, that one's always a killer.

A moment of silence ensues, as the car comes to a red light.

BRUCE
So, are you seeing anyone?

KATIE
(incredulous)
What?

BRUCE
You know. Dating, a boyfriend?

KATIE
(mock upset)
I'm not telling you!

BRUCE
(continues to drive)
Why not? I'm your dad, you're in
high school. Do the math. Even it
it's hard.
(beat)
C'mon. Talk to me.

KATIE
No way. That's sacred.

BRUCE
I can't believe this. My own
daughter's holdin' out on me.
(beat)
C'mon.

KATIE
Absolutely not! Out of the
question.

BRUCE
(starts to tickle Katie)
Guess I'm gonna have to tickle it
outta ya!

KATIE
 (laughs and pushes Bruce)
 Stop! I mean it!!

BRUCE
 I'm not givin' up. You gonna tell me?

KATIE
 (softens)
 Alright, alright. Maybe.

BRUCE
 Maybe? You gotta give me a little more than that!

KATIE
 (sassy)
 Well, that's all you're getting!

BRUCE
 (mock-frustrated)
 My goodness.

Bruce continues to drive home.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Annie, with the help of Bruce, has just finished wasing the dishes. Bruce puts away the last utensil, as they both sit down on nearby stools.

ANNIE
 (tired)
 Thanks for helping with the dishes.

BRUCE
 Thanks for cooking dinner so late.

ANNIE
 I'm sorry. Work seems to never end recently.

BRUCE
 (hugs Annie)
 Oh, sweetheart, relax. You're not a maid for chrissakes.
 (beat)
 How about I draw you a nice bath?

ANNIE
 (tender)
 Really?

BRUCE
I'll get it ready right now.

ANNIE
I don't deserve you.

BRUCE
Shouldn't I be saying that to you?

Bruce looks softly at Annie, as they kiss.

BRUCE
I need to talk to you.

ANNIE
Sure. What about?

BRUCE
I was talking to Katie in the car
today... about boys.

ANNIE
(slightly upset)
Ah crap, Bruce. Boys?

BRUCE
What?

ANNIE
Daughters never talk to dads about
boys! I can't believe you!

BRUCE
That's complete horse shit, and you
know it!

ANNIE
It's common parental etiquette.

BRUCE
Says who?

ANNIE
It's just a rule.
(beat)
Did your mother teach you how to
throw a football?

BRUCE
No, but...

ANNIE
 (quickly interjects)
 Exactly my point. Bruce, there are certain discussions that males and females can and can't have.

BRUCE
 (incredulous)
 I'm not hearing this.
 (gets up from his chair)
 I'm going upstairs to fix your bath. Gonna make the water extra hot.

ANNIE
 (sassy)
 Great. It'll loosen my muscles!

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT

A visibly alleviated Annie lies amid the foamy waters in her bathtub. A calm Bruce looks tenderly at his wife.

BRUCE
 How do you feel?

ANNIE
 (relaxed)
 Like I'm in heaven.

BRUCE
 (contrite)
 Listen, I just want to apologize for my outburst before.

ANNIE
 (relaxed)
 It's okay. I'm sorry if I came off a little tough. I've just had so much on my mind. I'll speak to Katie tomorrow.

A moment of silence ensues, as Annie and Bruce look softly at each other.

BRUCE
 What happened?

ANNIE
 (perplexed)
 Bruce, I don't follow.

BRUCE

It seems the only thing we had to worry about was what diaper gave them rashes.

ANNIE

Children are the best gift in the world. It's watching them grow that makes the gift so much better.

BRUCE

Is it any wonder why I love you so much?

Bruce and Annie kiss each other, as Bruce quickly comes to.

BRUCE

Ah, crap. I forgot to take out the garbage! Be right back, hon.

Bruce exits OUT OF VIEW from the bathroom, as Annie continues to soak in the tub.

EXT. FRONT MORRIS HOUSE - NIGHT

Bruce trudgingly drops two garbage pails to the front of the house, when he notices someone.

BRUCE

(calls out)

Hey, Dave!

DAVID

Across the street, takes out the garbage in front of his house, as he turns and looks at Bruce. He looks both ways, then crosses the street, greeting Bruce.

BRUCE

(extends his hand)

What's happening, man?

DAVID

Not much. Just putting out the trash.

BRUCE

Same here. How you been?

DAVID

Okay. You know how it is. Same old story, different day.

BRUCE
(nods)
Yup.

DAVID
How are Annie and the kids?

BRUCE
Good. The kids are in bed. Annie's
in the tub. Hey, you used to the
same thing for...

Before he continues, Bruce hesitates.

BRUCE
(contrite)
Dave, I'm so sorry.

DAVID
It's fine, Bruce. You don't have to
be afraid to mention Sarah.

BRUCE
Are you sure?

DAVID
Yeah. We all have to move on
sometimes.

BRUCE
Listen, I know this girl at work,
really nice and...

DAVID
(softly interjects)
Bruce, Bruce. I appreciate it, but
I'm just not ready for a
relationship. At least not now.
(beat)
It would be great, but I'm just too
busy at the moment.

BRUCE
Well, if you ever change your mind,
I'll speak to her.
(beat)
You're a great guy, Dave. Any lady
would be lucky to have you.

DAVID
Thanks, Bruce. Take care of
yourself.

BRUCE
Listen, the Bulls' final game of
the season is on Sunday. Why don't
you come over and watch?

DAVID
Sounds great. Can I call you?

BRUCE
Sure. Don't forget now.

DAVID
I won't. Have a good night, Bruce.

BRUCE
You too, Dave.

Bruce departs OUT OF VIEW, as David finishes putting out the
garbage and heads back inside.

FADE OUT.

SCENE VI

FADE IN:

INT. CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS (DOWNTOWN CHICAGO) - BRUCE'S
OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Bruce is seated at his desk, head in his hands, when a VOICE
BECKONS.

FRED (O.S.)
I see we're enjoying work.

Bruce lifts his head and looks up.

FRED HURST, Bruce's co-worker and friend, stands a few feet
away, coffee mug in hand.

FRED
(presents coffee)
Some java, kind sir?

BRUCE
(takes coffee)
Thanks. Where have you been?

FRED
In a meeting with Adelman and
Keyes.

BRUCE
Really? How'd it go?

FRED
Alright. We're already planning for
the fall quarter.

BRUCE
Fall quarter? It's mid April.

FRED
Well, you know. Time is money, and
vice versa, with those two.

BRUCE
Did they say anything about me?

FRED
Actually, your name was featured
prominently in our discussions.

BRUCE
(takes a sip of coffee)
Really? What about?

FRED
Well, you know that trip you were
going to take?

BRUCE
Yeah.

FRED
Well...

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

ANNIE
(upset)
I can't believe this! We had this
trip planned since January. I can't
take those vacation days back.

BRUCE
Annie, I tried everything I could
to talk to my bosses. They won't
budge.

ANNIE
I was even ready to order the plane
tickets tomorrow. Katie will be at
summer camp, Abby's staying with my
parents.

(MORE)

ANNIE (cont'd)

(beat)

Can't anything be done?

BRUCE

Honey, I promise I will make this up to you.

ANNIE

(yells angrily)

Well, can it be for this calendar year?

Annie exits OUT OF VIEW from the bedroom, the BEDROOM DOOR SLAMMING behind her. Bruce remains alone in the bedroom.

BRUCE

(yells loudly)

Fuck!

EXT. FRONT MORRIS HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

A pensive Bruce roosts on the porch swing, can of soda in his hand.

Across the street, David is putting out some old newspapers, when he spots his friend. He waves at Bruce. Bruce waves back warily. Sensing something, David ventures across the street to meet with Bruce.

DAVID

Bruce, what are you doing out here?

BRUCE

Well, I figured we had a swing, why not put it to use?

DAVID

You okay, man?

BRUCE

Yeah. Just some good old-fashioned bullshit.

DAVID

Mind if I take a seat?

BRUCE

Not at all.

David sits down next to Bruce on the swing, as they start to converse.

DAVID

How's work been?

BRUCE
(strong)
Fuck work!

DAVID
Guess I hit a sore spot, huh?

BRUCE
No worries.

DAVID
Is everything all right at home? If
you don't mind me asking.

BRUCE
(disgusted)
Yeah. Remember that vacation Annie
and I were supposed to take?

DAVID
Yeah. You had it planned since New
Year's.

BRUCE
Well, it's a no go.

DAVID
You're kidding me?

BRUCE
Wish I was. Instead of the sandy
beaches of Nassau, I'll be spending
my time in board room in Dallas.

DAVID
Bruce, I'm so sorry. Is Annie okay?

BRUCE
Let's just say I'll be sleeping on
this porch tonight.

DAVID
C'mon. Don't talk like that. I'm
sure Annie understands.

BRUCE
Did Sarah ever get pissed at you
for something like this?
(beat; apologetic)
Listen to me. I'm sorry.

DAVID

Relax, Bruce. When I think about it, there was a time.

(one full beat; reflects)

I remember getting stuck at work. It was a Friday night. I forgot that Sarah had planned a romantic dinner. My favorite foods and dessert. The look on her face will never leave my memory. I felt like the worst human alive.

BRUCE

Oh my God. You never told me that.

DAVID

Yeah. It was kind of personal.

BRUCE

So, what did you do?

DAVID

Well, to make it up to her, I put together a scavenger hunt around the house. The last clue was in our bedroom. Under her pillow.

(beat)

I surprised her with dinner, a ferry ride, and tickets to the ballet.

BRUCE

(incredulous)

Ballet?

DAVID

I know, I know. Sometimes the punishment should fit the crime.

BRUCE

Man, you are something else. Wish I could've thought of that.

DAVID

Don't be so hard on yourself. Just think of something Annie likes and go for it.

(beat)

Just quietly observe her. Believe me. You'll do great.

BRUCE

Thanks, man. I'm starting to feel like I can go back inside my own house.

A moment of silence ensues, as David and Bruce look seriously at each other.

BRUCE

I feel terrible. Here I am imposing my problems onto you, and I didn't ask how things are with you.

DAVID

No worries. It's pretty busy most of the time, which is okay.

BRUCE

(playfully punches David)
Missed you here last Sunday.

DAVID

Sorry. The lawn really needed to be mowed.

BRUCE

Forget it. The Sox are looking great right now. Maybe we can catch a game this year.

DAVID

Sounds great.

BRUCE

You know I'm always here if you ever want to talk.

DAVID

I appreciate that.
(looks at his watch)
Sorry Bruce, but it's gettin' late, and I have work tomorrow.

BRUCE

I didn't mean to keep ya. Don't be a stranger now.

DAVID

I won't. Have a good night.

BRUCE

You too.

DAVID
Take care, Bruce.

David rises from the porch swing, and heads toward his house. Bruce remains seated on the porch swing, as he EXHALES a tired breath, gets up, and re-enters his house of OUT OF VIEW.

FADE OUT.

SCENE VII

FADE IN:

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE - GARAGE - MORNING

Bruce enters his car and is about to drive off to work, when a VOICE halts him.

ANNIE (O.S.)
Bruce, wait up.

Bruce turns to see Annie, standing a few feet from his car.

ANNIE
(sheepish)
I have to be into work a half hour early today. I was hoping you could take Katie to school.

BRUCE
Sure.

ANNIE
Great. I'll tell her to meet you outside. Thanks.

Annie walks OUT OF VIEW from the garage, as Bruce quietly watches her.

EXT. LOCAL ROAD - ESTABLISHING SHOT - MORNING

Bruce's SUV drives steadily along the road.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S CAR - FRONT SEAT - MORNING

Bruce calmly drives, watching the road. Katie sits shotgun, staring pensively out the car window. Bruce breaks the ice.

BRUCE
So, what's your first class?

KATIE
Science.

BRUCE
Do you like it?

KATIE
It's okay.

BRUCE
Do you have a favorite subject?

KATIE
Not really.

BRUCE
(witty)
Mine was recess.

A small smile fissures from Katie's lips.

KATIE
Is everything okay?

BRUCE
It's fine. Why?

KATIE
I heard some screaming from your
bedroom last night. Abby got a
little scared.

BRUCE
Oh, that? It's nothing.

KATIE
Sure didn't sound like nothing.

BRUCE
(slightly embarrassed)
Well, hon, sometimes your mother
and I don't always see eye to eye.

KATIE
Could you elaborate?

BRUCE
(thinks)
Well, we're just having a bit of a
rough time right now. Oh, we're
here. Have a good day at school,
hon.

Katie takes off her seat belt, gathers her book bag, opens the door, then turns to her father.

KATIE

(sober)

I saw you asleep on the couch this morning. You know, Dad, I'm a teenager now. I wish you wouldn't beat around the bush with me.

(one full beat)

Have a good day at work.

Katie exits the car and heads off to school. A quiet and visibly upset Bruce watches his daughter depart.

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - STAFF LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

A visibly upset Annie quietly picks at a salad, when a VOICE emerges.

JOAN (O.S.)

Mind if I sit down?

Annie looks up from her salad to see Joan, lunch in hand, standing beside her.

ANNIE

(sarcastic)

Sure. Misery loves company.

Joan sits down next to Annie, as she starts to eat her lunch.

JOAN

(with mouth half full)

Boy, what a busy morning, eh?

ANNIE

(sarcastic)

Yup. And the fun's just getting started.

JOAN

(concerned)

Are you okay?

ANNIE

Aah. I should've called in sick today.

JOAN

(concerned)

You sure don't look good. Wanna talk?

ANNIE

I don't want to be a bother.

JOAN

(sotto voce)

C'mon now. We've worked together for eight years now. I won't tell anyone. I promise.

ANNIE

(sotto voce)

Well, just to let you know, Bruce cancelled our trip.

JOAN

(astounded; aloud)

You're shitting me!

Everyone in the staff lounge stops cold and looks in Annie and Joan's direction. Joan coyly pardons herself and continues speaking to Annie.

JOAN

(sotto voce)

What happened?

ANNIE

Bruce's boss wants him to met with some corporate bigwigs in Dallas.

JOAN

(sotto voce)

Can't he reschedule?

ANNIE

(sotto voce)

He tried to. His boss won't budge.

JOAN

(sotto voce)

I'm so sorry, Annie.

ANNIE

(sotto voce)

It's okay. We exchanged words the other night.

JOAN

(sotto voce)

Nothing else, I hope.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 No. I just need some time alone
 right now.

JOAN
 (sotto voce)
 Well, if you ever want to talk...

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Thanks.

JOAN
 (sotto voce)
 Why don't you eat something? It'll
 make you feel better. Lunch is
 almost over.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 I will. See you later, Joan.

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - ANNIE'S DESK - AFTERNOON

Annie diligently works at her desk, when a VOICE beckons.

JOAN (O.S.)
 (aloud)
 Annie, you have a phone call.

ANNIE
 Okay, please transfer.

The PHONE on Annie's desk RINGS, as Annie picks up.

ANNIE
 (speaks into phone)
 Hello, Jefferson Intermediary
 School, Annie speaking. Yes. Oh, I
 see. Okay. May I ask when this
 happened? Alright, I'll be there.
 Thank you.

Annie hangs up the phone and puts her head in her hands. Joan notices.

JOAN
 (concerned)
 You okay, Annie?

ANNIE

(exasperated)

No, Joanie, it isn't. That was Abby's school. She's running a fever.

JOAN

So go to her school and pick her up.

ANNIE

I can't. I Have a shitload of work to finish.

JOAN

Why don't you ask Principal Chason?

ANNIE

I can't. I asked for a half-day last week to take Katie to soccer practice.

JOAN

Why don't you call Bruce?

ANNIE

He's got a meeting right now.

JOAN

What about Katie?

ANNIE

She can't drive.
 (one full beat; puts head
 in hands)
 I'm desperate.

Annie, visibly worried, has an epiphany.

ANNIE

Wait a second...

Annie quickly picks up the phone and starts to dial frantically.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The CORDLESS TELEPHONE RINGS in the living room, as a VOICE emerges.

DAVID (O.S.)
(calls out)
Alright! I'm coming!

David emerges INTO VIEW, as he picks up.

DAVID
(speaks into phone)
Hello? Annie, what's up?

ANNIE
Hi, David. Are you busy right now?

DAVID
No. We actually got out of work
early today. Just cleaning.

ANNIE
David, normally I would never call
you, but I have a real emergency.

DAVID
Talk to me, Annie.
(listens over phone)
Okay. Okay. No problem. Just call
her school and tell them I'm
picking her up. I'm on my way. Bye.

David hangs up, grabs his car keys, and departs.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - HOURS LATER

David pours himself a glass of water from the kitchen sink,
when the DOORBELL RINGS. He goes over to answer it.

FRONT DOOR

Opens, as a relieved but concerned Annie stands by.

ANNIE
Hi, David. How is she?

DAVID
Annie, please come in.

Annie enters, as they go to check on Abigail.

ABIGAIL

Covered with a blanket, lies serenely on the living room
sofa.

Annie sidles over to the sofa and kneels next to Abigail.

ABIGAIL
(softly; surprised)
Mommy!

ANNIE
(softly)
How you feelin, pumpkin? Did David
take care of you?

ABIGAIL
I feel better, mommy. It was great.
(shows her coloring book)
I got to color.

ANNIE
(smiles warmly)
That's fantastic. Are you ready to
go home?

Abigail nods her head in a "yes" motion, as Annie gently
lifts her up from the sofa.

Annie, with Abigail in tow, is about to head home, but not
before saying good night to David.

ANNIE
(feels Abigail's forehead)
Her temperature seems to have
dropped.

DAVID
Actually, I had an extra can of
chicken stock in the cupboard. I
made it for Abby.

ABIGAIL
It was yummy!

Annie and David smile at each other.

ABIGAIL
I want the coloring book, Mommy.

ANNIE
(dismayed)
Abby!

DAVID
It's okay, Annie. My niece left it
here when she visited. Abby can use
it more than I can.

A moment of silence follows, as Annie and David look at one another.

ANNIE
I can't begin to thank you enough,
David. I had nowhere else to go.

DAVID
And I'm glad I was able to help.

ANNIE
How are you?

DAVID
Okay. Just keepin' busy.

ANNIE
You look great.

DAVID
Thanks. Must be all of those beer
bottles I lift.

Annie smiles warmly.

ANNIE
Would you like to come over for
dinner?

DAVID
Oh no, Annie. I couldn't.

ANNIE
C'mon, Dave. You're Bruce's best
friend. You haven't been over in a
while now.
(beat)
I'll make my world famous meatloaf.
And some Peptol Bismol for dessert.

David smiles at Annie.

ANNIE
(looks at her watch and
exclaims)
Speaking of dinner, I've gotta
start cooking it now. I'll call
you?

DAVID
Sounds great.

ANNIE
 (looks at Abigail)
 What do you say, Abby?

ABIGAIL
 Thank you.

Annie looks at David

ANNIE
 Thanks again, David. Good night.

DAVID
 Good night, Annie.

Annie exits OUT OF VIEW, the front door closing behind her.
 David remains standing, contemplating the evening.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE VIII

FADE IN:

SUPERIMPOSITION - TWO WEEKS LATER

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - EVENING

FRONT DOOR

Opens, as David appears INTO VIEW, dressed neatly and with a bag in hand.

ANNIE
 (smiles warmly)
 Dave, so great to see you. Please,
 come in.

David enters into the house.

DAVID
 (hands bag to Annie)
 I come baring gifts.

ANNIE
 Dave, you shouldn't have.

Annie hugs and kisses David on the cheek, as the whole family appears INTO VIEW to greet him.

KATIE
(hugs and kisses David)
Hi, Mister Jennings.

ABIGAIL
(hugs and kisses David)
Hi, Mister Jennings.

DAVID
(extends his hand)
Great to see you, Bruce.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone is enjoying dinner, as they chatter idly.

DAVID
Hey, didn't Katie used to love the
Power Rangers?

ANNIE
Love them? She practically lived
them. I can't tell you how many
times I played the bad guy.

BRUCE
(jokingly)
It's morphin time!

Everyone LAUGHS LOUDLY, as an embarrassed Katie buries her head in her hands.

KATIE
(embarrassed)
Oh my God! I can't believe you!!

BRUCE
Remember when we had that themed
birthday party? You and Sarah
brought...
(turns somber)
I am so sorry, Dave.

DAVID
It's fine, Bruce. You can say her
name in front of me. I'm fine with
it.

BRUCE

Annie, is that apple pie you baked ready? I can sure go for a slice.

ANNIE

Yes. I'll check on it right now.

Annie departs OUT OF VIEW into the kitchen, as a once boisterous dining room has now turned silent.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

The evening has now come to a close, as Bruce is ready to leave. Everyone says their goodbyes.

DAVID

(hugs Annie)

Thank you so much for dinner.

ANNIE

(play punches David)

We wanna see more of you.

KATIE

Good night, Mister Jennings.

DAVID

(softly)

Katie, Mister Jennings is my dad.
You and Abby can call me Dave.
Please.

KATIE

Okay, Dave.

DAVID

That's more like it.

(turns to Bruce)

Bruce, it was really great to see you. Thanks for a great time.

Bruce, holding Abigail, smiles warmly and extends his hand.

DAVID

(soft)

Good night, Abby.

ABIGAIL

(shakes his hand)

Good night, Dave

(chants)

Dave, Dave, Dave, Dave!

BRUCE
(in mock anger)
Look what you did!
(pats him on shoulder)
Take it easy, Dave.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Bruce and Annie are getting ready, as Annie, clad in a nightgown, lays down next to David in bed.

BRUCE
I just want to say thanks for
dinner tonight.

ANNIE
Absolutely. It went great.

BRUCE
Is Abby asleep?

ANNIE
I just tucked her in.

BRUCE
Was she still singing...

ANNIE
The Dave song? You bet.

BRUCE
Yeah, good old Dave. I sure do miss
hanging with him.

ANNIE
That shouldn't stop you.

BRUCE
I know, I know. Things changed,
though. He was working, I was laid
off. Then we both worked, then I
got promoted. Then we had kids.

ANNIE
Then Sarah died.

BRUCE
(sheepish)
Yeah, that too.
(one full beat)
I really worry about him sometimes.
It seems like he's holding back
with me. I hate that.

ANNIE

I'm sure he doesn't mean it. It must feel incredibly awkward for him.

BRUCE

I guess you're right. He knows he always has a friend in me.

(one full beat; looks lovingly at Annie)

Wanna know something else? I Have the most gorgeous wife the world has ever known.

ANNIE

(jokingly punches him)
Oh, you do, do you?

BRUCE

That's a fact, Jack.

Annie and Bruce start to cuddle and kiss tenderly beneath the sheets.

WIDE ANGLE - MORRIS HOUSE

As someone watches the house from afar.

MYSTERY POV

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

From his bedroom window, David pensively watches his neighbors' house. He gently closes the blinds as everything
FADES TO BLACK.

FADE OUT.

SCENE IX

FADE IN:

EXT. LOCAL HIGHWAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT - (TORRENTIAL RAIN) -
LATE AFTERNOON

Wall-to-wall traffic clogs the highway, as rain continues to pour incessantly.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S STATION WAGON - FRONT SEAT - LATE AFTERNOON

Annie, behind the wheel, looks haggard at the traffic, as she places her head on the steering wheel in frustration. She then looks toward the back seat.

ABIGAIL

Seated in the back seat in her child safety seat, looks at her mother and smiles.

ABIGAIL

What happened to the sun, Mommy?

Annie smiles warmly at her youngest daughter and re-focuses on the road.

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Annie, Katie, with Abby in her arms, exit out of the car and run straight towards the front door, trying to avoid further soaking.

Annie digs into the mailbox to retrieve today's mail. She pulls out the rain-drenched mail, then looks at it in disgust.

ANNIE

(loudly)

Everybody get inside.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

Annie, Katie, and Abigail sit at the dining room table, quietly eating dinner. Katie breaks the silence.

KATIE

Where can he be?

ANNIE

I'm sure your father's fine.

KATIE

But he didn't pick up when you called his cell. I'll bet he's hurt.

ANNIE

Katie!

Abigail overhears her sister and starts to cry.

ABIGAIL
 (hysterical)
 What happened to daddy?

Annie looks angrily at Katie, as she picks up and comforts Abigail.

ANNIE
 (soft)
 It's okay, honey. Daddy will be home soon. Shh, shh.

Suddenly, the DOORBELL RINGS. Annie places down Abigail and goes to answer. Annie opens the door and is met with a drenched Bruce.

ANNIE
 (takes his bags and coat)
 Bruce, we were worried sick! Where have you been?!

BRUCE
 (a little out of breath)
 My car stalled in the parking lot. I had to have Ronnie give me a boost.

ANNIE
 I called your cell.

BRUCE
 It only had two bars.

ABIGAIL
 (exclaims)
 Daddy's home, Mommy!

BRUCE
 (picks up Abigail)
 Yay, daddy's home!
 (kisses her)
 How is my little munchkin?
 (hands her back to Annie)
 Time to go to mommy!
 (looks at Annie)
 Let me get changed and I'll be right down.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

David, with Annie by his side, slowly eats his dinner, as they begin to converse.

ANNIE
(exasperated)
I had the worst day.

BRUCE
(with mouth full)
Join the club. Our meeting lasted
an extra forty-five minutes, the
car broke down in the rain, and I
hit heavy traffic. At least my Visa
bill is paid.

ANNIE
(worried)
Uh-oh...

BRUCE
What do you mean, uh-oh?

ANNIE
Do you mean your Visa gold?

BRUCE
That's the one.

ANNIE
That ends in 1206? I paid the one
ending in 4761.

BRUCE
You're kidding me, right?

Annie looks soberly at Bruce.

BRUCE
(upset)
I can't believe you, Annie. Where
are the Tums?

Bruce rises from the table and exits OUT OF VIEW from the
dining room, Annie right behind him.

ANNIE
Bruce, I'm so sorry. I just got the
numbers mixed up.

BRUCE
Do you know they charge a late fee
of fifty bucks? Fuck!

ANNIE
Bruce, please keep your voice down?
The girls are still up.

BRUCE

Yeah, yeah.

(takes a seat on a stool)

Shit! That's more money out of my pocket.

ANNIE

(angrily)

Bruce, I'm very sorry. I don't know what I can do to...

BRUCE

(angrily intervenes)

Yeah, get me a wife with a brain!

Bruce stares upset at Annie, as silence ensues.

ANNIE

(starts to cry; softly)

The brainless wife will be upstairs.

Annie departs OUT OF VIEW upstairs, as Bruce sits pensively on a stool.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Abigail and Katie are seated at the kitchen table, eating breakfast, as Annie serves them some food.

Bruce appears INTO VIEW, dressed in his suit, as he picks up a glass of orange juice.

BRUCE

Honey, have you seen my pin-striped tie?

ANNIE (O.S.)

Did you check your closet?

BRUCE

Yeah.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Maybe it's in the laundry? I think you spilled ketchup on it last week.

BRUCE

Okay. I'll wear my red with blue stripes. Thanks, hon.

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE - GARAGE - MORNING

Annie and Bruce, with the kids in tow, head off to work and school. Annie places Abby in her child safety seat, as Katie sits in front.

Bruce approaches his wife to say goodbye.

BRUCE

Honey, what time are you in tonight?

ANNIE

Six the latest. I have some work to catch up on and I have to pick up Katie from softball practice.

BRUCE

I might be late tonight. I have a meeting about my Dallas trip. Don't know how long it'll be.

A moment of silence follows, as Annie and Bruce stare at each other. Bruce grins slightly and moves forward to kiss Annie, who quickly moves away and heads to her car.

Bruce stands, slightly abased, as he slowly walks over to his car.

MYSTERY POV

Across the street, David, taking in his empty garbage pails, looks curiously at the scene.

INT. CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS (DOWNTOWN CHICAGO) - CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

A visibly distracted Bruce sits at his meeting, as he reviews his upcoming trip to Dallas. A VOICE, JERRY SCHOEN, Bruce's boss, calls his attention.

JERRY

(aloud)

Bruce?

Bruce, hearing the voice, re-directs his attention.

BRUCE

(comes to)

Huh?

JERRY

Well Bruce, for those of us with an attention span, we were reviewing the main focal points for the merger deal with the Dallas people.

(beat; wry)

Would you care to join us?

BRUCE

(sheepish)

Yes, of course.

JERRY SCHOEN

(sarcastic)

Wonderful. As I was saying, in order to peak their interest...

The meeting continues, as the executives plan ahead.

INT. CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS (DOWNTOWN CHICAGO) - BRUCE'S OFFICE - EVENING

An exhausted and seated David runs his fingers through his hair, as he gets up from his desk, and heads toward the water cooler. David pours himself a cup, takes a sip, and turns around, where he is met with Jerry.

BRUCE

(slightly alarmed)

Mister Schoen. I'm sorry. I was just getting some water...

JERRY SCHOEN

(calmly interjects)

Not to worry, Bruce. I won't call the authorities.

BRUCE

Can I help you, Sir?

JOE

Actually, Bruce, I wanted to ask you that.

BRUCE

I'm sorry, but I don't follow.

JERRY SCHOEN

Well, David, I've noticed that you've seemed a bit distracted lately.

(one full beat)

(MORE)

JERRY SCHOEN (cont'd)
To your credit, your work has been
as stellar as ever, you're putting
in very productive hours, and
you've certainly made strides up
the corporate ladder.

BRUCE
Well, thank you, Mister Schoen. I
certainly try the best I can.

JERRY SCHOEN
Please, call mer Jerry.

BRUCE
Of course, Jerry.

JERRY SCHOEN
However, our company has enlisted
you with one of its biggest
challenges in recent memory
(one full beat)
I don't have to remind you that the
Dallas account is one of the most
prominent and coveted in the
nation.

BRUCE
Of course.

JERRY SCHOEN
(stern)
We want this account. We need this
account, Bruce. And we will cease
at nothing to acquire it.
(beat)
I want you so attentive on this
trip you can see the paint chips on
the corners of the fucking wall.

BRUCE
Yes. I'll put my job on it.

JERRY SCHOEN
Great. Because your job is riding
on this. Have a great night.

Jerry pats Bruce on the shoulder and departs OUT OF VIEW. A
visibly shaken Bruce looks on pensively.

FADE OUT.

SCENE X

FADE IN:

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Annie and the girls eat dinner, as they make small talk.

ANNIE
(mouth half full)
So, how was school?

KATIE
Fine.

Katie continues to eat her supper, when she notices her mom looking at her.

KATIE
(confounded)
What?

ANNIE
That's all? Anything special happen today? Homework? Projects? A fight?

KATIE
Not really. We had gym today.
Played some basketball.
(one full beat)
Oh, and today in social studies,
Cavlin Brody threw the biggest
fart.

ANNIE
(starts to laugh)
You're kidding?

KATIE
(puts her hand on her
heart)
I swear to God. You could hear it
from Jupiter.
(laughs hard)
He went running to the bathroom and
didn't return for ten minutes.

Everyone starts to LAUGH LOUDLY, as Annie speaks.

ANNIE
(laughs hardly)
One time your father and I went to
Taco Bell to eat. He had four tacos
and a quesadilla.

KATIE
Oh my God. Don't tell me...

ANNIE

I slept on the couch that night.
 (laughs loudly)
 I went to fix the bed in the
 morning. You needed a haz mat suit
 to get in there!

KATIE

One time, we went to Easter mass. I
 swear, I had one big one brewin
 down below.
 (laughs; one full beat)
 I let it go in the pew. An old
 lady was sitting right behind me!

ANNIE

Talk about a mortal sin!

Everyone ERUPTS into LAUGHTER. Abigail starts to make FART
 NOISES with her MOUTH.

DINING ROOM DOOR

Opens, as Bruce appears, just home from work.

The LAUGHTER CEASES, as everyone turns serious.

BRUCE

(soft)
 Hey, honey. Girls. Sorry I'm late.

Bruce sits down at the dinner table, as everyone continues
 eating.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A pensive Bruce sits at the kitchen counter, mug of hot
 chocolate by his side. He takes a sip, when a VOICE emerges.

ANNIE (O.S.)

What's wrong?

Bruce gently places down his mug, and turns around.

ANNIE

Stands a few feet away, as she approaches her husband.

BRUCE

What makes you think something's
 wrong?

ANNIE
You're drinking hot chocolate.

BRUCE
So?

ANNIE
You only drink hot chocolate with the girls on Christmas.

BRUCE
You were always the observant one.

ANNIE
Give it to me straight.

BRUCE
If I don't kill em in Dallas, I'm out of a job. Schoen told me tonight.

ANNIE
Honey, you'll do great.

BRUCE
How do you know?

ANNIE
Because I know you too well. You've come from working as a temp to the company's top rep. Not too shabby.

BRUCE
This will be my first real out-of-state assignment.

ANNIE
And you'll do fine. We've been through tougher times. And look at us now. A wonderful home, two beautiful girls, and most importantly, each other.

BRUCE
I never thought of it that way. I'm sorry I blew up at you. Things have been so stressful, and with this trip comin' up...

ANNIE
(softly interjects)
It's okay. I know how this trip has been prying on your mind.
(MORE)

ANNIE (cont'd)
I also know that you wanted to go
away for our anniversary.

BRUCE
Annie, I did everything I could
to...

ANNIE
(softly interjects)
Bruce, I understand. We could
always plan another trip. I just
don't want you to worry so much.
(one full beat)
Know that you have family which
will always love and care about
you, regardless of what occurs.

Annie looks at Bruce and softly kisses him on the lips.

ANNIE
Get to bed now. It's late and
you've got work. I'll be upstairs.

Annie departs towards the stairs, but not before turning to
Bruce.

ANNIE
By the way, I called Visa. They're
waving the late fee.

Annie smiles slightly before heading OUT OF VIEW upstairs.
Bruce pensively watches her.

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
I don't deserve you.

SUPERIMPOSITION - TWO MONTHS LATER

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT

The Morris house lies still in the evening.

CUT TO:

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie and Bruce busily prepare David's baggage for tomorrow's
flight.

ANNIE

(places socks in suitcase)
I'm putting some extra pairs of
socks for you. You always complain
that you're out.

BRUCE (O.S.)

Thanks, hon. Did you see my shoe
polish kit?

ANNIE

I already placed it in your bag.

BRUCE

You're the best. I have to look
extra-sharp when I'm down there.

Bruce packs some more clothes into his bag, when he stops to
talk to Annie.

BRUCE

Annie, I'll be right back. I have
something important to do.

ANNIE

(objects)
But Bruce, your flight leaves
tomorrow.

BRUCE

It won't take long. I promise.

Bruce departs OUT OF VIEW from the bedroom, as a concerned
Annie looks on.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David sits quietly on his living room sofa, enjoying a good
novel, when the DOORBELL RINGS. David puts down his book and
goes to answer it.

FRONT DOOR

Opens, as Bruce stands in the doorway.

DAVID

(slightly surprised)
Bruce? What's up?

BRUCE

Not much. Can I come in?

DAVID

Of course.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bruce and David sit at the table, sharing a beer and commiserating.

DAVID

So, you're going to Dallas? Boy, that's a pretty big deal.

BRUCE

Yeah. I can't believe it myself.

DAVID

How long will you be gone?

BRUCE

Two weeks. I'm hoping we can close the deal sooner.

DAVID

That's a pretty long time. Are Annie and the kids okay with it?

BRUCE

That's actually part of the reason I came here tonight.

(one full beat)

Dave, this is the first time I've been away from Annie and the kids. You're my best friend, and I trust you more than anyone.

(beat)

If it's not asking too much, could you check on the family every now and then while I'm away?

DAVID

Bruce, I don't know what to say. I would be honored.

BRUCE

I know they'll be in the best of hands.

DAVID

You have my word.

BRUCE

Thank you. Do you want me to bring you anything back from Dallas?

DAVID
How about a stetson and a Romo
jersey?

BRUCE
You got it.

Bruce finishes up his beer.

BRUCE
(looks at his watch)
Oh, man. Look at the time. I'm
sorry, Bruce, but I've gotta get
home.
(hands David a piece of
paper)
Here's my cell phone number and the
hotel where I'll be staying. If you
need anything, just give me a call.

DAVID
Will do.

BRUCE
I can't thank you enough.

DAVID
My pleasure. Have a safe trip.

EXT. FRONT O'HARE AIRPORT - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

Cars and taxi cabs line the busy streets in front of the
airport.

CUT TO:

INT. O'HARE AIRPORT - BOARDING GATE - DAY

Bruce, his family and carry on in tow, approaches the gate
for his flight. He turns to face his family.

BRUCE
Well, looks like this is my flight.

KATIE
We're gonna miss you.

BRUCE
(gently pats her shoulder)
Don't worry. I'll call every day.

ABIGAIL

(sad)

I want you to stay, Daddy.

BRUCE

(soft)

Oh, Abby honey, I don't want to go either. Just know that no matter how far away, daddy loves you.

ABIGAIL

Will you be back for Summer?

BRUCE

(places his hand on his heart)

I promise.

Bruce turns to a saddened but smiling Annie

BRUCE

I'll miss you most of all.

ANNIE

Ditto.

BRUCE

Are you sure you'll be okay?

ANNIE

I'll be fine. Work and the kids should keep me busy.

BRUCE

I'll be home before you know it.
Love you, hon.

Bruce leans in and kisses Annie tenderly.

BRUCE

(looks at his watch)

Looks like I gotta go.

ANNIE

Ever the businessman.

Bruce kisses the girls and Annie before heading towards the gate. Bruce gives his boarding pass to the gate clerk. Before boarding, he turns to his family and blows them a kiss.

Annie and the girls give a collective goodbye.

INT. AIRPLANE - FUSILAGE - DAY

From his window seat on the plane, a visibly pensive Bruce looks out at the tarmac.

INT. ANNIE'S STATION WAGON - FRONT SEAT - DAY

Returning from the airport, Annie drives along the highway, as Katie, riding shotgun, enjoys a corn dog.

KATIE

(eats corn dog)

Man, this is the best corn dog I've ever had! We should go to the airport more often.

ANNIE

(focuses on road)

Not a chance. I just beat the afternoon rush.

(beat)

Do you know what tomorrow is?

KATIE

(mouth half full)

Friday.

ANNIE

Yes. But something else?

KATIE

It's the last day of school.

ANNIE

Correct. And do you know what that means?

KATIE

(tired)

Time to get ready for Summer camp.

ANNIE

Yes. And how much packing have you done?

KATIE

Next question.

ANNIE

No excuses, young lady. We are filling up your suitcase right after dinner tonight.

KATIE

I planned on packing sooner. Things have been so busy, though.

ANNIE

So, I guess My Space has new feature that helps you pack your bags.

KATE

(mock-indignation)
Mom!!

ANNIE

You know I always loved Lake Onawanda.

ABIGAIL (O.S.)

(repeats aloud)
Onawanda! Onawanda!

KATIE

Uh-oh, here we go again!
(puts her hands over her ears)
Earmuffs!

ANNIE'S CAR

Continues down the highway home.

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT

The house remains still in the evening air.

CUT TO:

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KATIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie and Katie busily prepare her bags for her first day of camp.

ANNIE

Did you pack your toothbrush?

KATE

For the hundredth time, yes!

ANNIE

(whispers angrily)
A little louder. I just put Abby to bed.

KATIE

Sorry.

ANNIE

What about bug spray?

KATIE

(presents spray bottle)
Affirmative.

ANNIE

Great. I swear we could hang our
keys on your legs last year.

KATIE

I still think we should pack the
night before I leave.

ANNIE

Not a chance. You are not going to
camp under-packed.

KATIE

At least my last day of school is
tomorrow. Yay!

ANNIE

(hands Katie books)
Here.

KATIE

(looks perplexed at books)
What are these?

ANNIE

Your Summer reading. I spoke to
Mrs. Heinrich, and she gave me the
list. I got the ones I thought you
would enjoy most.

KATIE

(mock complains)
Summer reading? Could there be a
bigger oxymoron?

ANNIE

Think of Summer reading as a way of
putting some work into a typical
time of fun for kids.

(beat)

Let's finish up. You got one more
day of school, kiddo.

Mother and daughter smile warmly at each other and continue packing.

EXT. JET PLANE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT

Flight 126 to Dallas flies smoothly along the night skies.

CUT TO:

INT. JET PLANE - FUSILAGE - WINDOW SEAT - NIGHT

A visibly uncomfortable and pensive Bruce looks out of the airplane window. Suddenly, he hears a LOUD COUGH. He turns to his left.

PLANE PASSENGER

Named LARRY, seated next to Bruce, COUGHS and SNEEZES into a tissue. He looks over at Bruce.

LARRY
(nasally)
How are ya, pal?

BRUCE
(sheepishly)
Fine, thanks.

LARRY
(extends his hand)
My name's Larry.

Suddenly, Larry SNEEZES loudly, covering his nose with his hands. He quickly grabs a tissue and cleans himself off.

LARRY
(nasally)
Don't you just hate air travel?

BRUCE
Just as long as we land safely.

LARRY
(nasally)
I hear ya. Airplanes are the worst
places for...
(sneezes loudly)
Acchoooooo!!!

Bruce looks disgustedly at Larry, and quietly shakes his head in a "yes" motion.

LARRY
 Would you excuse me?
 (coughs loudly)
 I have to use the rest room.

Larry rises from his seat and exits OUT OF VIEW to the bathroom.

Seeing his chance, Bruce motions to a FLIGHT ATTENDANT, who moves toward him.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 Can I help you, Sir?

BRUCE
 Yes. Could I please have a scotch on the rocks? Double. And some Purell. Stat.

JET PLANE

Continues on its way to Dallas.

FADE OUT.

SCENE XI

FADE IN:

MONTAGE - AROUND LAKE ONAWANDA

Trees lie still in the bright summer sun.

A chipmunk gnaws busily at a fallen acorn.

Leaves fly across the sky, pushed by the delicate summer breeze.

END MONTAGE

EXT. CAMP ONAWANDA - CAMPSITE - DAY

Crowds of children, accompanied by their parents, talk amongst each other, as the CHATTER grows.

Annie, with Abby in her arms, and Katie make their way through the throngs of campers. Katie notices someone.

KATIE
 (exclaims)
 Melanie!

MELANIE JAMES, Katie's best friend from school, approaches and hugs Katie. Katie introduces Melanie and her mother, SHEILA, to Annie and Abby.

MELANIE
(hugs Annie)
Hello, Missus Jennings.

ANNIE
Melanie, how are you?

MELANIE
(introduces her mom)
Missus Jennings, I would like for you to meet my mother.

ANNIE
(warmly extends her hand)
Hello, Miss James.

SHEILA
(warmly shakes her hand)
Please, call me Sheila.

ANNIE
Hi, Sheila. I'm Annie. It's nice to meet you.

SHEILA
I've heard so much about you, Katie.
(looks at Annie)
I think it's just wonderful how they still have camps like this.

ANNIE
Tell me about it. You'd think our kids are vampires the way they avoid sunshine and air.

SHEILA
(looks lovingly at Abby)
And who is this little one?

ANNIE
This is our youngest, Abigail.
(in a child's voice)
What do we say, Abby?

ABIGAIL
(shy)
Hello.

SHEILA
Such a cutie.

ANNIE
Thank you.

SHEILA
Is your husband here?

ANNIE
Oh, he's away on business. Dallas.

SHEILA
Wow, that's quite a trip.

ANNIE
He's been gone only a day, but it
seems like forever. Is your husband
here?

SHEILA
No. Mel's father and I divorced two
years ago.

ANNIE
I'm so sorry.

SHEILA
Mel sees him on the weekends, and
on holidays. It was amicable.
(one full beat)
If you don't mind me asking, where
do you live?

ANNIE
Twelve zero six Johnson Street.

SHEILA
Get out of here! I just bought a
condo on Bernard Place.

ANNIE
Really? That's like ten minutes
from my house.

SHEILA
Why don't we make a date for coffee
some time?

ANNIE
Sounds wonderful. I'll get your
number.

SHEILA
(looks at her watch)
Oh, it's time for orientation.
Let's grab some seats.

Annie, Sharon, and the girls depart to the orientation session.

EXT. LAKE ONAWANDA - CAMP GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

Parents say one last goodbye to their kids before departing. Annie and Abigail are with Katie.

ANNIE
I'm gonna miss you, sweetie.

KATIE
I'm gonna miss you, too.

ANNIE
If you ever need anything, just call the house. Okay?

KATIE
Okay. You're coming up for the annual softball game, right?

ANNIE
I wouldn't miss it for the world.

ABIGAIL
Bye, Katie.

KATIE
(kisses Abigail)
See ya soon, kiddo. Watch after mom and the house while I'm gone.

ABIGAIL
You got it, kiddo.

ANNIE
Have fun and stay out of trouble, okay?

KATIE
I will.

Annie and Katie enfold in a warm embrace, as Annie kisses her on the cheek.

ANNIE
 (a little emotional)
 This is the toughest part of being
 a mom.

INT. ANNIE'S STATION WAGON - FRONT SEAT - AFTERNOON

Annie carefully watches the road while driving home, as
 Abigail sits in the back seat.

ANNIE
 So, Abby honey, whadya say we go
 for some ice cream?

ABIGAIL
 (cheerful)
 Yay, ice cream! I want strawberry!

ANNIE
 You got it, munchkin.

Annie continues to ride home.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The front door gently opens, as Annie and Abigail, ice cream
 cones in hand, enter INTO VIEW.

ANNIE
 (places Abigail on a
 chair)
 Now sit right there and enjoy your
 ice cream. Don't spill any on the
 floor. Mommy has to use the phone.

ABIGAIL
 Okay, mommy.

Annie heads over to the phone and dials the number for the
 answering machine.

ANSWERING MACHINE (V.O.)
 You have three new messages. To
 hear your messages, press...

Annie presses a button to hear the messages.

COURTESY CALL (V.O.)
 Hello, this is Discover Card, with
 a new offer for...

Before the message can continue, Annie presses a button.

ANSWERING MACHINE (V.O.)
Next message...

The VOICE of Annie's mother, HELEN NICHOLS, emerges.

HELEN (V.O.)
(on answering machine)
Annie, dear, it's mom. Long time,
no hear. Hope you, Bruce, and the
kids are well. Call me. Love you.

Annie listens to the next message.

BRUCE (V.O.)
(on answering machine)
Hi, hon. It's me. My flight landed
twenty minutes ago. Just thought
I'd check in with you.
(one full beat)
I'm gonna grab a taxi to the hotel.
Give me a call when you get in.
Love you.

Annie hangs up the phone and pulls out a piece of paper with Bruce's hotel phone number. She starts to dial and waits for him to answer. Bruce picks up.

ANNIE
(speaks into phone)
Bruce, it's me.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. RAMADA INN (DALLAS) - HOTEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

An exhausted David lies sluggishly on his hotel room bed, as he speaks to Annie.

BRUCE
Besides the uncomfortable seat,
germ-ridden seat mate, and one-hour
delay, I think it went pretty well.

ANNIE
That bad, huh?

BRUCE
Let's hope the flight home is
better. How's everything?

ANNIE
Okay. Dropped off Katie at camp
today. She sends her love.

BRUCE

And of course I'm not there.

ANNIE

Bruce, please. Stop being so hard on yourself. Katie understands.

BRUCE

This job can really be the pits sometimes.

(beat)

How's my little munchkin?

ANNIE

She's good. Just having some ice..

(turns and exclaims)

Shit!!

BRUCE

Abby's eating iced shit?

ANNIE

No, no.

Annie drops the phone and goes over to Abigail, who has just stained the living room rug with ice cream.

ANNIE

Abby, honey.

(takes her by the hand and shows her carpet)

Look what you did. Oh my goodness.

I just had this shampooed.

BRUCE

(concerned)

Annie, hon, you there?

Annie, paper towel in hand, cleans up the ice cream and Abby's face, when she remembers Bruce.

ANNIE

(comes to)

Bruce!

(runs over to phone and picks up)

Bruce, I'm so sorry. Abby made a mess with her ice cream.

BRUCE

(relieved)

Oh, thank God. I thought my baby was eating shit.

ANNIE
(laughs lightly)
No. Of course not.

BRUCE
Can I talk to Abby?

ANNIE
Sure.
(hands phone to Abby)
Here, baby. Talk to daddy.

ABIGAIL
Hi, Daddy.

BRUCE
Abby, baby. How's my little
pumpkin?

ANNIE
Great, Daddy. I miss you.

BRUCE
Aaahh. Daddy misses you, Katie, and
mommy very much. I promise I'll be
home soon.

ABIGAIL
Daddy?

BRUCE
Yes, baby?

ABIGAIL
What's shit?

BRUCE
(taken aback; one full
beat)
Something we all see, hear and do,
baby.

Annie looks on disapprovingly, as her youngest has learned a
new word.

ABIGAIL
Okay, Daddy. Please come home.

BRUCE
I sure will, pumpkin.

ABIGAIL
Love you.

BRUCE

Love you too, honey. Put mommy back on.

Abigail hands the phone back to Annie.

ANNIE

Honey, do you need anything?

BRUCE

I'll be alright. Just can't wait to get back home.

ANNIE

You'll be home before you know it. Just relax and try to make the best of it. Get some rest.

BRUCE

I will. I love you.

ANNIE

Love you too. Bye.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Annie and Abigail sit at the kitchen table, eating dinner.

ABIGAIL

Mommy, can I watch Dragon Tales?

ANNIE

Yes. We'll watch Dragon Tales after you help mommy with the dishes.

ABIGAIL

Okay.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Annie sits on the living room sofa with Abigail, struggling to stay awake while watching Dragon Tales.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE -ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie tucks Abigail into bed and says good night.

ANNIE

(sotto voce)

Are you comfy, hon?

ABIGAIL
 (sotto voce)
 Yes. Thanks, Mommy. Mommy?

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Yes, baby?

ABIGAIL
 (sotto voce)
 Will Daddy be home soon?

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Of course he will, sweetie. He's
 just very busy right now. Just know
 that daddy and I love you with all
 of our hearts.

A brief moment of silence follows, as Annie smiles at her daughter.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Get some rest, hon. Maybe we can go
 to the park if the weather's good.

ABIGAIL
 (sotto voce)
 Can I go on the swing?

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Of course you can.

ABIGAIL
 (sotto voce)
 Good night, Mommy.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Good night, baby.

Annie kisses Abigail on the forehead and heads toward the bedroom door.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie lies wide awake in her bed, staring pensively up at the ceiling.

SEGUE TO:

INT. RAMADA INN (DALLAS) - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A restless Bruce also stares up at the ceiling while in bed. He turns to a lamp on the night stand and switches it off, as everything FADES TO BLACK.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

SCENE XII

FADE IN:

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Annie, with Abigail in tow, is ready to head out the door to the park, when the TELEPHONE RINGS. Annie scurries over to the phone.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Crap.
 (picks up phone and
 speaks)
 Hello? Hi, Mom. Listen, can I call
 you back? Yes, I promise this time.
 Okay, bye.

Annie hangs up and departs OUT OF VIEW with Abigail.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

The front door slowly opens, as Annie and Abigail enter, beaming smiles, after a day of fun.

ANNIE
 Did you have fun today, sweetie?

ABIGAIL
 Yeah!

ANNIE
 I'm so happy, peanut.

Suddenly the TELEPHONE RINGS, as Annie goes to pick up.

ANNIE
 (picks up phone and
 speaks)
 Hi, Mom. How are you?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. NICHOLS' HOUSE (JOLIET) - LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

HELEN NICHOLS, Annie's mother, sits comfortably in a recliner.

HELEN
 Fine, dear. How about yourself?

ANNIE
 Just came in from the park with Abby.

HELEN
 How's my little peanut?

ANNIE
 Great. Her last day of school was Wednesday.

HELEN
 My, I can't believe summer's here already. How are Katie and Bruce?

ANNIE
 Good. Katie's in summer camp, and Bruce is on a business trip in Dallas.

HELEN
 Dallas? My, that's quite a trek. For how long?

ANNIE
 Two weeks.

HELEN
 My goodness. Are you okay on your own?

ANNIE
 I'll manage. How's daddy?

HELEN
 Oh, you know. Hip is always bothering him.

(MORE)

HELEN (cont'd)
He's taking a nap right now. Just finished mowing the lawn.

ANNIE
Mom, you know daddy shouldn't be doing that.

HELEN
Honey, you're dad is like a mule. Not to worry. He'll be fine.
(beat)
Annie, honey, what's Abby doing for the summer?

ANNIE
Not too much. We're basically going to spend it together. Why?

HELEN
Well, I was thinking that maybe she can spend the summer at our place.

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
I don't know, Mom. I mean, Abby can be a real handful sometimes, and...

HELEN
(interjects)
Don't be silly, Annie. It'll be great. Daddy and I will play toys with her, take her to the park near the lake, you name it.

ANNIE
That's really sweet, Mom, but...

HELEN
Come on now, hon. Don't make me beg. You could use a break from the kids.

ANNIE
(hesitant)
Let me talk to Abby. If she says yes, then she can go. Deal?

HELEN
Deal. Don't forget to call me now.

ANNIE
I won't. Tell Daddy I said hello.

HELEN
I will. Love you, hon.

ANNIE
Love you too, Mom.

Annie hangs up the phone, heads toward Abigail, and picks her up.

ANNIE
Boy, you are getting so big.

ABIGAIL
Mommy, can I have some juice,
please?

ANNIE
Of course, peanut.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Annie goes to the fridge, gets out the grape juice, gets a glass from the cupboard, and serves Abigail.

Suddenly the kitchen PHONE RINGS.

ANNIE
Oh, not again.

Annie heads over to the phone.

INT. INSURANCE COMPANY BUILDING (DALLAS) - AFTERNOON

Bruce, accompanied by RANDALL NANCE, an insurance executive, gets a tour of the facilities.

RANDALL
(in Texas drawl)
And it is here where our corporate
and customer service headquarters
are based. Since 1958, we have
provided nearly 90 percent of the
Dallas-Fort Worth region with
medical and dental coverage for
their everyday needs.

(one full beat)
And now we are looking to
consolidate our resources with
another successful firm. And we're
hoping that's you.

BRUCE
Well, Mister Nance, I...

RANDALL
(interjects; in Texas
drawl)
Please, call me Randy.

BRUCE
Randy, this seems to be quite an
endeavour. Do the owners of the
company understand what a merger
can result in?

RANDALL
(in Texas drawl)
Well, Bruce, that's where Debbie
Parson comes in.

BRUCE
Debbie Parsons?

RANDALL
(in Texas drawl)
Deborah Parson inherited the
company after her father, Gerald
Parsons, passed in 1982. Since
taking over, our company has seen
its profits and quality of service
increase each year.
(one full beat)
You have the task of being able to
persuade Debbie into merging with
your company. The Dallas-Fort Worth
branch is the only one to be
independently operated since its
establishment.

BRUCE
Okay. So who am I dealing with
here?

RANDALL
(in Texas drawl)
Put it this way. You'll be
negotiating with a pit bull in high
heels.

BRUCE
Sounds pretty intense. When will I
meet the savage beast?

RANDALL
(in Texas drawl)
Friday. She's in Miami on a real
estate venture.

BRUCE

Sounds goo. At least I'll have a
day to plan

(beat)

I'm sorry, Randy, but I'm starving.
How about lunch on me?

RANDALL

(in Texas drawl)

Well that sounds dandy. Thank you.

BRUCE

What do you recommend?

RANDALL

(puts his arm around
Bruce)

How about the best barbecue in
Texas?

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie sits with Abigail on her bed, as they play with some
toys.

ANNIE

(sotto voce)

Did you have fun today, sweetie?

ABIGAIL

The best, Mommy. Summer's always
fun!

ANNIE

(sotto voce)

I'm so glad, baby. Listen, I spoke
to Grandma today.

ABIGAIL

You did?

ANNIE

(sotto voce)

Uh-huh. Grandma asked me if you
wanted to stay with her and grandpa
for a while. Do you want to honey?
Remember, only if you want...

ABIGAIL

(shouts loudly)

Yes!!!!

ANNIE

(sotto voce)

Okay. We'll go on Saturday. I'm the only one left in this house. Good night, baby.

Annie kisses Abby on the forehead and heads toward the door, gently closing it behind her.

INT. RAMADA INN (DALLAS) - HOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

HOTEL ROOM CLOCK

Reads one forty-five a.m.

A visibly tired but intensely focused Bruce continues to burn the midnight oil, preparing for his big meeting with Debbie Parsons.

BRUCE

Pit bull, huh? Well, I'm gonna throw her one helluva bone!

EXT. NICHOLS HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - SATURDAY MORNING

ANNIE'S STATION WAGON

Pulls up in front of the house. The CAR HORN sounds.

FRONT DOOR

Opens, as Helen and her husband, GERALD, appear INTO VIEW, as they head towards the car.

The driver's side door opens, as Annie steps out to greet her parents.

ANNIE

(hugs and kisses her parents)

Mom, so great to see you. You look great.

HELEN

(hugs and kisses Annie)

How's my little girl? So good to see you?

GERALD

(hugs and kisses Annie)

How are you, pumpkin?

INT. NICHOLS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Annie is seated in a chair on the left-side corner of the living room. Helen enters, tray of tea and cookies in tow, as she places them down on a nearby table. Gerald has Abigail on his lap.

HELEN

(pours tea)

So, Annie, how are things with you?

ANNIE

You know, same old same old. Work, pick up the girls from school, dinner, laundry, then bed.

GERALD

Sounds like a blast.

(beat)

How's Bruce been?

ANNIE

He's fine. He's been pretty stressed out lately. This business trip doesn't really help matters.

HELEN

I'm sure he'll be fine. Daddy used to go away on business periodically, and we always managed. He'll be home before you know it.

GERALD

How's work been for you?

ANNIE

Nothing really changes. Just lots of paperwork and phone calls. It's okay.

HELEN

Just as long as you're happy.

(turns to Abigail)

And how's my little Abby angel?

ABIGAIL

I'm fine, Grandma. Can I play in the backyard?

HELEN

You sure can, kiddo. How's school been?

ABIGAIL

Okay. I'm really happy summer's here.

HELEN

(looks at Annie)

My goodness. She talks just like an adult.

ANNIE

Abby's second grade teacher told me she's already reading at a fourth-grade level.

HELEN

Your teacher, Miss Fleming, said the same thing about you at that age. It's all in the genes.

(presents plate of cookies)

Have a cookie, hon. Oatmeal raisin, your favorite.

ANNIE

Thanks, mom, but I have watch my figure.

HELEN

You're as thin as a reed. C'mon, now. Just have one for me.

ANNIE

Okay, just one.

Annie takes a cookie off of the plate, and takes a small bite.

ANNIE

(mouth half full)

Delicious. You haven't lost your touch.

EXT. FRONT NICHOLS HOUSE - MAGIC HOUR

Helen and Annie stand outside near her car, to say goodbye.

HELEN

You know, I don't see or hear from you as often as I'd like to.

ANNIE

I know, Mom. It's just been so busy with everything, and I...

HELEN
 (slowly interjects)
 I understand. Actually, that's part
 of the reason why I asked to look
 after Abby.

ANNIE
 (perplexed)
 I don't follow.

HELEN
 Annie, honey, when was the last
 time you actually took some time
 for yourself?

ANNIE
 I guess a little after I had Abby.

HELEN
 Do you know how long ago that was?
 Why don't you relax, read a good
 book, exercise, shoot just have
 some me time?

ANNIE
 I just wouldn't feel right putting
 Abby on you and Dad.

HEN
 Don't be foolish. I love spending
 time with my grankids every chance
 I get.
 (beat)
 After spending so much time with
 your father, it would be nice to
 have someone else in the house.

ANNIE
 You really don't have to.

HELEN
 I want to. Don't make me beg now.

ANNIE
 Very well. I prepared a bag with
 all of Abby's toys and snacks. I
 also put instructions for bed,
 bath, and play time. I also put a
 list of emer...

HELEN
 (interjects)
 Annie, hon.
 (MORE)

HELEN (cont'd)
 You're talking to someone who fed
 and changed you. Trust me.

ANNIE
 Sorry. Mother's instinct.

HELEN
 I know.

A moment of silence follows, as mother and daughter look at each other.

ANNIE
 Thanks for everything, Mom.

HELEN
 That's what I'm here for. I'll call
 everyday to keep you updated.

ANNIE
 I love you.

HELEN
 Love you too.

Annie and Helen embrace in a warm hug, and kiss each other on the cheek.

HELEN
 (lightly pinches Annie on
 cheek)
 Enjoy yourself now.

ANNIE
 I will.

EXT. FRONT MORRIS HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MAGIC HOUR

ANNIE'S CAR

Slowly pulls up into the garage and comes to a halt. Annie exits the car and heads inside.

MONTAGE - AROUND THE HOUSE

Annie enters the living room, where she warily examines the surroundings.

Annie pokes her head into Abigail's room, and looks at her bed and toys.

Annie enters Katie's room and gives it the once over. She notices strewn candy bar wrappers on the bed, and quietly scoops them up.

In the basement, Annie looks at the water heater, then the storage closet, then at the washer and dryer, which are both hard at work.

Annie sits in the dining room, as she enjoys a rare solo supper. She carefully takes a nearby bottle of wine and begins pouring it into a goblet. She takes a sip.

END MONTAGE

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Annie sits quietly on the living room sofa, processing her being alone.

ANNIE
(softly; shocked)
I'm all alone. Well I'll be damned.

FADE OUT.

SCENE XIII

FADE IN:

INT. RAMADA INN (DALLAS) - CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Bruce carefully prepares his laptop and papers, as the most important conference of his career is about to begin. Bruce's co-worker, HAL WEDMAN, makes small talk with him.

HAL
(sotto voce)
So, are you ready or what?

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
Ready as I'll ever be. I think we've got this one in the bag.

HAL
(sotto voce)
You're that confident?

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
Hey, if I don't believe in myself, who else will?

HAL
(sotto voce)
Good point.
(MORE)

HAL (cont'd)
 (looks to his left)
 Wait's here comes somebody.

A short, well-dressed man, LESLIE READING, approaches and ascends the dais, and calls attention to the convened.

LESLIE
 (speaks into microphone;
 in Texas drawl)
 Good morning, everyone. My name is Leslie Reading, Deborah Parsons' assistant. I would like to thank you all for attending this morning.
 (one full beat)
 Unfortunately, I come as the bearer of bad news. I regret to inform you that Miss Parsons has fallen ill upon her return from Florida, and will need to re-schedule this meeting for another date and time. My apologies and thank you.

A COLLECTIVE GASP comes over those in attendance. A dejected Hal and David chatter.

HAL
 (sotto voce)
 Can you believe this shit?

BRUCE
 (sarcastic; sotto voce)
 Form an exec? Yep. C'mon, Hal. Back to the drawing board... again.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A casually-dressed Annie busily dusts underneath the furniture, while listening and singing to the RADIO PLAYING. The song is SHATTERED DREAMS by JOHNNY HATES JAZZ.

ANNIE
 (dusts and sings along)
 You've given me shattered dreams,
 shattered dreams, nothing but
 shattered dreams...

Annie accidentally inhales some dust particles and begins to COUGH LOUDLY. Annie places the dust in a nearby waste basket. She then looks up at the top of the massive China cabinet, and notices a thick cake of dust. Annie takes a nearby chair, and props herself up.

She still cannot reach the top. Annie notices a nearby cardboard box.

She takes it and places it on the chair and begins to prop herself up. Annie reaches the top, stretching strenuously with all her might.

ANNIE
(strenuous)
Just a few more inches...

CARDBOARD BOX

Collapses underneath Annie's feet.

Annie starts to fall backwards and let out a distressed SCREAM. She falls onto the living room floor. Annie takes a minute to absorb the fall, then rises, painfully rubbing her butt.

ANNIE
(in pain)
More like shattered cheeks!

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

David is pouring himself a glass of iced tea, when the KITCHEN PHONE RINGS. He heads over and picks up.

DAVID
(speaks into phone)
Hello? Hey, Annie. What's up?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Annie sits uncomfortably in a chair in the living room, on the phone.

ANNIE
David, I was wondering if you were busy right now?

DAVID
No. I'm actually idle right now.
Can I help you with something?

ANNIE
Yes. I'm having a bit of trouble reaching some spots on my furniture. Could you stop by the house when you can?

DAVID
Of course. I'll be there in five.

ANNIE

Thank you.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Annie looks frustratingly at some of the furniture, when the DOORBELL RINGS. She heads over to answer. She opens the door, as David appears.

ANNIE

(hugs and kisses David)
David, how are you? Thanks so much
for coming.

DAVID

Hi, Annie.

ANNIE

(leads David to furniture)
Here are the problem spots.

DAVID

(looks carefully at
furniture)
Alright. I think I see 'em.
(steps on top of chair)
Just let me get a cloth and nice
and easy...

Annie quietly watches David clean the top of the furniture. David gently alights from the chair, dust-filled rag in hand.

DAVID

(hands Annie rag)
And we're done here.
(beat)
Is there anywhere else I can help
you clean?

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Annie and David walk towards the door, as David is set to leave.

ANNIE

I can't thank you enough.

DAVID

No problem.

ANNIE

As you can see, my housekeeping
speaks for itself.

DAVID
Stop. You have nothing on my
basement. I think National
Geographic can do a documentary on
it.

Annie and David share a laugh, as a moment of silence
follows.

DAVID
So, the kids must be happy being
home?

ANNIE
Actually, Katie's at summer camp
and Abby's with my mom.

DAVID
Oh. So you're hear all alone?

ANNIE
Yup. Just little old me.

DAVID
Well, if you ever need anything
else, you know where to find me.

ANNIE
Thanks, Dave. I will.

DAVID
Take care, Annie.

ANNIE
You too.

David exits OUT OF VIEW, closing the door behind him. Annie
stares silently at the door.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Annie looks blankly at her freezer.

ANNIE'S POV

FREEZER

Contains only a box of baking soda and a box of deeply-frozen
fish sticks.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -NIGHT

David busily works on his computer at his desk, when the TELEPHONE RINGS. He rises from his desk and picks up.

DAVID
(speaks into receiver)
Hello? Hey, Annie.

ANNIE (O.S.)
(from over phone)
Dave, you hungry?

INT. LOCAL TGI FRIDAY'S - NIGHT

A MAITRE'D leads Annie and David to their corner booth. Annie goes to take off her coat, when David intervenes.

DAVID
(takes Annie's coat)
Please, allow me.

ANNIE
Thank you.

Annie and David sit next to each other.

DAVID
(looks around restaurant)
This place looks pretty nice.

ANNIE
Don't tell me this is your first time?

DAVID
I guess I'm a TGI virgin.

ANNIE
(waxes nostalgic)
Bruce and I used to come here all the time when I was pregnant with Abby. I recommend the mozzarella sticks.

A WAITRESS name CINDY appears INTO VIEW and greets Annie and David.

WAITRESS
(hands them menus)
Hello. How are you this evening? My name is Cindy, and I'll be your waitress tonight.
(MORE)

WAITRESS (cont'd)
 Can I interest you any of our
 specials for tonight? Or an
 appetizer?

ANNIE
 Yes, can we have a large order of
 mozzarella sticks, please?

WAITRESS
 (writes down order)
 Excellent choice. Can I interest
 you in a beverage?

DAVID
 Yes, I'll have a Michelob Light,
 please?

WAITRESS
 (writes down order)
 Okay.
 (turns to Annie)
 And for you, maam?

ANNIE
 I'll have a pina colada, please.

WAITRESS
 (writes down order)
 Okay. May I interest you in our
 entrees? We actually have specials
 for couples to share. They're quite
 app..

DAVID
 (softly interjects)
 I'm sorry, but we're not a couple.

WAITRESS
 Oh, I'm so sorry. You two look very
 swell together, if you don't mind
 me saying.

ANNIE
 Thank you. Can we order our entrees
 later?

WAITRESS
 Of course. So it's one large order
 of mozzarella sticks, one Michelob
 Light, and one pina colada. Coming
 right up.

The Waitress departs OUT OF VIEW, as Annie and David make
 small talk.

DAVID

So, enjoying having the house to yourself?

ANNIE

Yeah. But it feels so strange. There's only so much tv to watch and books to read. But on the other hand...

DAVID

Enjoy it, Annie.

Annie notices a small jukebox on the table. She and David start to flip through the song titles.

ANNIE

I'm in a nineties kind of mood. How about you?

DAVID

Sounds good to me.

Annie sorts through the songs, then comes to one.

ANNIE

Wow, I haven't heard this one in ages. I've gotta play it.

Annie pulls a quarter from her purse, inserts it into the jukebox, and plays the song FOUND OUT ABOUT YOU by the GIN BLOSSOMS.

DAVID

Yeah! I so remember this one. Summer of '91.

ANNIE

We used to pile in to my dad's Chevy Suburban and drive all over town. Memories.

DAVID

Good times. So, have you heard from Bruce?

ANNIE

No, actually. Let me check my cell.
(rummages through her purse)
If I can find it. Shit, I think I left it at home. Oh well, I'll try him later.

DEBORAH
 (in Texas drawl)
 I happen to think they're pretty
 good. Who's your team?

BRUCE
 Bulls, baby.

DAVID
 (in Texas drawl)
 Are you a big sports fan?

BRUCE
 Ah. It's hard these days to follow
 it. It seems all about the money.
 What isn't these days?

DEBORAH
 (in Texas drawl)
 My, you seems pretty perturbed.
 What's got your horns?

BRUCE
 Well, I'm from Chicago. Insurance
 and funds broker. I was supposed to
 meet with one of the heads of a
 company here. I was all set with my
 company's proposal, when the bitch
 cancels with a cold.
 (one full beat; extends
 his hand)
 I'm sorry, my name's Bruce Morris.

DEBORAH
 (extends her hand; in
 Texas drawl)
 I'm Debby Parsons. The bitch who
 cancelled.

A visibly abashed Bruce looks coyly at Deborah.

BRUCE
 Listen, I can't begin to...

DAVID
 (in Texas drawl; slowly
 interjects)
 It's fine. That's one of the better
 ice breakers I've heard in a while.

BRUCE
 Are your feeling better?

DEBORAH
 (in Texas drawl)
 Yes, thank you. I had one of those
 24-hour bugs.
 (lifts her glass)
 As you can see, I'm taking some
 medicine.
 (beat)
 What room are you staying in?

BRUCE
 1206. Why?

INT. RAMADA INN (DALLAS) - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Deborah and Bruce sits on Bruce's hotel room bed, sorting through some papers and having some room service.

BRUCE
 (mouth half full)
 Thanks so much for the room
 service.

DEBORAH
 (in Texas drawl)
 Don't mention it. Owning a forty
 percent stake in this place has its
 perks.
 (beat)
 Enough small talk. Why should I
 take you on as a client?

BRUCE
 Well, Missus Parsons, I believe
 that over the course of five years,
 our...

DEBORAH
 (in Texas drawl)
 Bruce, Miss Parsons is my mama.
 Call me Debbie.

BRUCE
 Okay, Debbie. Over the course of
 five years, our company has
 provided its customers with...

DEBORAH
 (in Texas drawl; sternly
 interjects)
 Bruce, Bruce. I hear the same spiel
 about service and statistics with
 every person I meet.
 (MORE)

DEBORAH (cont'd)
Now, tell me why I should really partner with you.

BRUCE
(one full beat; composed)
Because we are the best fucking insurance firm in the Midwest, and will bring you and your company shitloads of cash. Period.

DEBORAH
(in Texas drawl)
Seems like the turtle is coming out of his shell. Just what I wanted to hear.
(beat; moves closer to David)
You seem to be a real go-getter and straight-shooter. Just what I like.
(one full beat)
What would you say to a full-time position here in my company? Six figure salary, benefits, and lots of perks.

Deborah moves in to kiss Bruce, who quickly moves away.

BRUCE
(stern)
Debby, I'm greatly honored by your offer. But my roots are in Chicago.
(presents wedding band)
And my heart belongs to another.

Deborah starts for a moment, then gets up from the bed and moves toward Bruce.

DEBORAH
A loving and loyal husband. Another admirable quality. I respect your decision. I'll be leaving now.

Deborah heads towards the door, when Bruce halts her.

BRUCE
Debby?

Deborah stops and turns to Bruce.

BRUCE
Will this effect your business decision at tomorrow's meeting?

DEBORAH
You'll see tomorrow. Good night.

Deborah exits OUT OF VIEW as a visibly worried but composed David looks on.

FADE OUT.

SCENE XIV

FADE IN:

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - MORNING

BED

Remains still, when a figure emerges. Annie has awoken, as she painfully rubs her head. Suddenly, the bedroom PHONE RINGS. Annie picks up.

ANNIE
(groggy)
Hello?

DAVID (O.S.)
(over telephone)
Annie. Good morning, it's David.

ANNIE
(groggy)
Dave, what happened?

DAVID (O.S.)
(over phone)
Well, let's just say you had a really good time last night.

ANNIE
(groggy)
What time is it?

DAVID (O.S.)
(over phone)
Twelve-twenty.

ANNIE
(worried)
Twelve-twenty! Shit, I'm late for...

DAVID (O.S.)
(over phone)
Don't worry.
(MORE)

DAVID (O.S.) (cont'd)
I called the school earlier today
and told them you were taking a
sick day.

ANNIE
(relieved)
Oh, thank you, Dave. How much did I
drink last night?

DAVID (O.S.)
(over phone)
How about I tell you over lunch?

ANNIE
Sounds great. How about two?

DAVID (O.S.)
(over phone)
Works for me. See you soon. Bye.

Annie hangs up the PHONE, when it RINGS again. She picks up.

ANNIE
(groggy)
Hello?

BRUCE (O.S.)
(over phone)
Annie, it's Bruce.

ANNIE
Honey, how are you?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. RAMADA INN (DALLAS) - HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Bruce lies in bed, as he enjoys a hearty breakfast.

BRUCE
I'm okay. I haven't heard from you.
I was getting worried.

ANNIE
I'm fine. Work's been kinda busy,
and there's just been so much
housework.

BRUCE
How's my little Abby?

ANNIE
She's not here. She's actually with
my parents.

BRUCE
Really? When did this happen?

ANNIE
Last Thursday. My mom called and
said she wanted to see Abby.

BRUCE
So you're all by yourself?

ANNIE
Yup. I'm okay, though.

BRUCE
Just as long as your safe.

ANNIE
How's Dallas?

BRUCE
Hot weather, good barbecue, a
pretty decent hotel.

ANNIE
Just try and make the best of it.
How'd the meeting go?

BRUCE
It's actually today at one. Figured
I'd get a good breakfast in before
then.

ANNIE
Good luck, hon.

BRUCE
Thanks. Any word on Katie?

ANNIE
Nothing. Parent-camper day is next
Thursday.

BRUCE
Hopefully I'll be back by then. I'm
just gonna finish up eating and get
ready. I'll call you tonight.

ANNIE
Sounds good. Knock 'em dead, baby.
I love you.

BRUCE
I love you too.

Annie hangs up and puts her fingers through her hair. The TELEPHONE RINGS again.

ANNIE
 My God! Did somebody put my number
 in the paper!
 (picks up; calm)
 Hello? Abby, hon, how are you?

EXT. BORDER CAFE - TERRACE AREA - DAY

David sits alone at a table, when a slightly out-of-breath Annie appears INTO VIEW.

ANNIE
 (out of breath)
 David, I am so sorry...

DAVID
 No worries, Annie. Can I get you a
 drink?

ANNIE
 Please. A Diet Coke with a lemon
 twist.

David beckons a nearby waiter and gives him Annie's drink order.

Annie settles in a chair, as David attempts to calm her.

DAVID
 (calm)
 Easy now. Take a deep breath.

ANNIE
 I just finished speaking to my mom,
 then I cleared out the fridge, then
 I...

DAVID
 (calmly interjects)
 Annie, Annie. It's fine. We're
 here, and that's all that matters.
 (beat)
 How's your mom?

ANNIE
 She's good. Abby's having a great
 time there.

DAVID
 (reviews menu)
 Great. It's always nice to see the
 folks when you can.

ANNIE
 Dave?

DAVID
 (places down his menu and
 looks at Annie)
 Yes?

ANNIE
 (gently grabs his hand)
 I just want to thank you for last
 night. I just hope I didn't
 embarrass you or myself.

DAVID
 That I wish I could say.

ANNIE
 What do you mean?

DAVID
 Well, not only were you drunk, you
 also danced on a table, threw a
 drink at our waitress, and flashed
 an elderly couple celebrating their
 fortieth anniversary.

ANNIE
 (worried)
 Really?

David presents his fingers in a crossed motion and smiles
 kiddingly at Annie.

ANNIE
 (jokingly hits him on the
 shoulder)
 That's not funny.

DAVID
 Annie, you just had a little too
 much. I brought you inside, tucked
 you in bed, and put the top lock on
 the door. That's it in a nutshell.
 (one full beat)
 If you don't mind, could we order
 now? I'm a bit famished.

EXT. LOCAL SIDEWALK - PROMENADE - EARLY EVENING

Annie and David walk together, ice cream cones in hand, as they enjoy the brisk evening.

ANNIE
Don't you just love the summer
wind?

DAVID
You mean the song or the breeze?

ANNIE
You know what I mean.

DAVID
It just makes the perfect Windy
City summer day.

Annie and David look out at Lake Michigan and reminisce.

ANNIE
Do you know that Bruce proposed to
me at this same spot fifteen years
ago?
(beat)
It was one of the coldest nights
ever. Bruce's teeth were chattering
so hard I didn't realize he was
asking my hand in marriage.

DAVID
That's really sweet.

ANNIE
(watches the lake)
Watching this water reminds me of
the cruise we took on our
honeymoon. Antigua. I then got
pregnant with Katie. It's a kinda
magic, you know?
(one full beat; turns to
Bruce)
You mind if we head home?

EXT. FRONT MORRIS HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - EVENING

Annie and David stand at the front door, as they are about to say their good nights.

ANNIE
Here we are.

DAVID

Yup.

A brief silence ensues, as they look coyly at each other.

ANNIE

I had a lovely time tonight. Thank you.

DAVID

My pleasure. It's been a while since I've seen the Big M.

ANNIE

Are you doing anything after work tomorrow?

DAVID

Well, I was thinking about cleaning out the gutters in back and...

Before David can finish, Annie kisses him tenderly at on the lips.

DAVID

Of course, the gutters can always be cleaned some other time.

ANNIE

Call me. I'll be waiting. Good night, Dave.

Annie unlocks the front door, smiles warmly at David, and closes the door. A visibly effected David looks on, as he slowly departs home.

FADE OUT.

SCENE XV

FADE IN:

INT. RAMADA INN (DALLAS) - CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Bruce and his colleagues sit soberly at their table, making last minute preparations for their big meeting.

CONFERENCE ROOM DOOR

Slowly opens, as Deborah and her associates enter. They arrive at a table across from David and his crew and are seated.

DEBORAH

Good morning, and thank you all for attending this meeting. My name is Deborah Parsons, President of DalTech.

(beat)

I look forward to conferring with you in hopes of establishing a long-lasting, and fruitful partnership.

Members of Bruce's team gently nudge Bruce to rise from his seat and greet Deborah. Bruce slowly rises from his chair. He greets Debbie.

BRUCE

(looks straight at Deborah and shakes her hand)

Hello, Missus Parsons. I'm Bruce Morris, and I represent our Chicago-based company's firm.

DEBORAH

(shakes his hand)

Hello, Bruce. Please, call me Debby.

DEBORAH

I must inform you that I have another professional commitment. We will be adjourning at two.

BRUCE

That is fine. If we may, we have prepared some diagrams and a presentation that basically underscores our firm, business purposes, statistics, and benefits from merging with our company.

DEBORAH

Very well then. Proceed.

BRUCE

Thank you. Let me begin by saying..

Bruce trails off, as he begins giving a very important presentation.

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - STAFF LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

A visibly distracted Annie fiddles her fork through her lunch. A VOICE intervenes.

JOAN (O.S.)
Hello? Earth to Annie!

ANNIE
(comes to and turns
around)
Yes?

JOAN
Annie, is everything okay? You
haven't touched your salad.

ANNIE
Oh, yeah. I'm just thinking.

JOAN
You look really tense. It's summer.
The school is more relaxed. Loosen
up, Annie.

ANNIE
Really, Joan, I'm fine. I'm just
thinking about what I want to do
after work.

JOAN
How about we go to Murphy's
tonight? Margaritas, karaoke. It'll
be awesome!

ANNIE
Thanks, Joanie, but I've got plans.

JOAN
Plans? With who? Bruce and the kids
are away. Is there some secret
lover?

ANNIE
(angrily; sotto voce)
Damn it, Joan, I just don't want to
go! Now drop it!

Annie departs, as a visibly upset Joan remains seated.

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - ADMINISTRATION OFFICES -
LATE AFTERNOON

Annie works busily at her desk, sorting through some papers,
when her CELL PHONE VIBRATES. She picks up.

ANNIE
 (speaks into phone)
 Hello, this is Annie. Hey, how are
 you?

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - SCHOOL CORRIDOR - LATE
 AFTERNOON

Annie continues to talk on her cell phone.

ANNIE
 (speaks into phone)
 I'm off in about an hour. Are you
 working late tonight? Get out of
 here! Really? Yay! I'll call you as
 soon as I get in. Bye.

INT. RAMADA INN (DALLAS) - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Bruce and his colleagues sit patiently but pensive, as they
 await the big decision.

CONFERENCE ROOM DOOR

Slowly opens, Randall enters and walks towards Bruce and his
 group.

RANDALL
 (in Texas drawl)
 Bruce, on behalf of Deborah Parson
 and DalTech Enterprises, we are
 pleased to announce that we are
 joining your firm in a merger to
 take affect in August. Papers will
 be signed tomorrow, as well as
 logistical workings. Thank you.

Randall warmly extends his hand.

BRUCE
 (shakes his hand)
 Thank you very much.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The front door opens, as a frantic Annie enters and quickly
 grabs a bag on the sofa. She is about to head out the door,
 when the PHONE RINGS.

ANNIE
 (yells loudly)
 Fuck me!!

Annie heads over to the phone and picks up.

ANNIE
 (talks into phone)
 Hello? Hi, honey.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. LOCAL CHILE'S RESTAURANT (DALLAS) - LOBBY - AFTERNOON

An exultant Bruce tries to talk to his wife above the DIN of the MUSIC PLAYING.

BRUCE
 (joyous; aloud)
 How are ya, honey? We did it! We got the merger!

ANNIE
 That's so wonderful, honey.
 Congratulations!

BRUCE
 (joyous; aloud)
 I'm on top of the world, baby. I haven't heard from you.

ANNIE
 I'm sorry, hon. It's been super busy for me.
 (beat)
 Listen, I've really gotta go. I'll call you later. Pickin you up on Saturday, right?

BRUCE
 (dejected)
 Yeah. Talk to you later.

Bruce hangs up, visibly upset, when one of his co-workers, RONNIE ADELMAN, hugs him from behind.

RONNIE
 (happy)
 Bruce, buddy! Whadya doin here?
 Bobby just ordered a round of Mojito shots for the table. C'mon.

Ronnie pulls Bruce back to the party.

EXT. LOCAL PARK (CHICAGO) - FOOT PATH - AFTERNOON

Annie walks slowly down a spoor, quietly looking for any sign of Bruce. Discouraged, Annie starts to walk back, when a VOICE beckons.

DAVID (O.S.)

There you are.

Annie quickly turns around and finds David, standing by a tree. She runs over to him and hugs him tightly.

ANNIE

I thought you were a no-show.

DAVID

I would never do that to you. So,
what do we do first?

MONTAGE - AROUND PARK

Annie and David play peek-a-boo behind a tree.

They play tag, as Annie furtively eludes David's grasp.

In a shaded corner of a nearby tree, Annie and David lie next to each other, as they look at the clouds in the sky.

Annie feeds some acorns to a squirrel, as David looks on approvingly.

END MONTAGE

EXT. LOCAL PARK (CHICAGO) - LAKE SIDE - MAGIC HOUR

Annie and David amble slowly by the lake, as they start to converse.

ANNIE

(looks and walks around
the lake)

Larkin pond. It hasn't changed a
bit.

DAVID

I remember when my dad and I used
to fish her every summer. It was
actually on the opposite side of
here. Miss those days.

ANNIE
 In junior year of high school,
 Bruce and I had a full picnic in
 the fall. We brought a cheesecake
 for dessert. But it got covered
 with ants.

Annie starts to take off her blouse, then slowly pulls down her jeans. She saunters over to the lake and takes the plunge.

ANNIE
 (rejuvenated)
 Why can't we have good times now?

David looks surprised and perplexed at Annie.

ANNIE
 Well?

DAVID
 (perplexed)
 What?

ANNIE
 Aren't you comin' in?

DAVID
 (slightly surprised)
 Me?

ANNIE
 I don't see anyone else here,
 sweetie.

DAVID
 (reluctant)
 Gosh, I don't think it would be
 such a smart...

ANNIE
 (clucks like a chicken)
 Buc, buc, buc, b-guh!

DAVID
 (takes off his shirt)
 Since you put it that way.

David is about to jump in, when he is halted.

ANNIE (O.S.)
 Uh, uh, uh.

David stops in his tracks.

ANNIE
 (motions with her hands)
 Drop trow!

An abashed David slowly takes off his pants and socks, as Annie looks on.

ANNIE
 Woo-hoo! That's more like it!

David slowly saunters over to the pond and prepares to dive in.

ANNIE
 Are you comin in or what?

David dives in, as Annie watches approvingly.

ANNIE
 (cheers happily)
 Woo!

Annie smiles, as she looks for David.

ANNIE
 Dave. Dave?

Annie looks around frantically, but finds no sign of David.

ANNIE
 (frantically)
 Dave!

Suddenly, a figure emerges from underneath the water. Annie turns around and discovers David, who spits some water at her and beams.

ANNIE
 Oh my God! You sonuva bitch!

Annie angrily splashes water at a hysterical David.

DAVID
 Don't ever call me chicken.

ANNIE
 Don't scare me like that!

DAVID
 You gonna punish me? First you gotta catch me.

ANNIE
I'm gonna get you!

David starts to swim, as Annie splashes after him.

SAME - MOMENTS LATER

Annie and David relax in the waters of the lake and start to converse.

ANNIE
Isn't this beautiful?

DAVID
What's that?

ANNIE
I mean, all of this. I never
thought being away from my family
would be the best thing for me.
(one full beat)
Thank you.

DAVID
For what?

ANNIE
For helping me find myself again.
(one full beat)
I've had more fun this week than at
any time I can remember.

DAVID
Annie, it's been wonderful. But I
don't feel right.

ANNIE
Yet you've done nothing wrong. I
feel like a mirage to Bruce most of
the time.

DAVID
Have you ever told him?

ANNIE
No. He's never been one for deep
conversation.
(one full beat)
Can I ask you something?

DAVID
Sure.

ANNIE
Are you happy?

DAVID
I don't follow.

ANNIE
I mean, are you happy with your
life?

DAVID
Well, I have all my basic needs
met.

ANNIE
Let me re-phrase. Do you miss
Sarah?

A moment of silence ensues, as the two look strongly at each other.

DAVID
Everyday.

ANNIE
(a little emotional)
I mean, to have the one person
you've ever loved just taken away
from you like that. Don't you think
how unfair that is?

DAVID
Sure. I always convinced myself
that nothing serious would ever
happen. I was never really ready
for it. But then again, nothing is
ever guaranteed.

ANNIE
How do you cope?

DAVID
I just try and keep myself as busy
as possible. The busier I am, the
less I have to think about it. I
know Sarah would want me to move
on.

ANNIE
You are as strong as steel, Dave.

DAVID
Yet sometimes I feel like tissue
paper. Thanks for always being
there for me.

Annie and David look tenderly at each other. Annie moves in
to kiss Bruce, who quickly halts her.

DAVID
Annie, this is very wrong.

ANNIE
Then why does it feel so right?

Annie kisses David on the lips. She pulls away, as David
looks hesitantly at Annie.

DAVID
I stand corrected. This is so
right.

Annie and David are about to kiss again, when a VOICE
emerges.

PARK EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
(yells loudly)
Hey, what are you doing? There's no
swimming in the lake!

Annie and David quickly make their way out of the water,
frantically grabbing their clothes.

EXT. MORRIS HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - EARLY EVENING

Annie and David are seated on the porch swing, as they
converse.

ANNIE
I had a great time today.

DAVID
It was fun.

ANNIE
You know what's so galling? It all
goes back to normal tomorrow.

DAVID
What do you mean?

ANNIE
I'm picking up Bruce from the
airport on Saturday. Back to old
pedestrian marriage.

DAVID
It doesn't have to end, Annie. Not
now, not ever.

David leans in to kiss Annie, when her CELL PHONE RINGS.

DAVID
I think I better go.

ANNIE
No, no. Please stay.

DAVID
I'll call you.

ANNIE
Don't forget.

David nods, as she departs OUT OF VIEW to his house. Annie
picks up.

ANNIE
(speaks into her cell
phone)
Hello? Mom, what's up? Yeah, I can
talk...

Annie trails off, as she stands and talks to her mother.

FADE OUT.

SCENE XVI

FADE IN:

INT. FRONT NICHOLS HOUSE - DAY

Annie's parents, with Abigail in tow, wait for their
daughter.

Annie's car pulls up INTO VIEW and stops. Annie gets out and
heads toward her parents. An exultant Abigail runs to and
embraces her mother.

ABIGAIL
(exclaims)
Mommy, mommy! I missed you so much!

ANNIE
 (hugs Abigail)
 Oh, baby, I missed you too!

ABIGAIL
 Daddy's coming home tomorrow!

ANNIE
 He sure is, hon. And he can't wait
 for see you.
 (one full beat)
 Did you say goodbye to grandma and
 grandpa?

ANNIE
 Can I now?

ANNIE
 (points her toward her
 parents)
 Go on now.

ABIGAIL
 (hugs Grandparents)
 Thank you, Grandma. Thank you,
 Grandpa.

HELEN
 (hugs Abigail)
 Oh, sweetie, your welcome.

ANNIE
 (picks up Abigail)
 Okay, honey. Mommy's putting you in
 the car while she talks to grandma.

ABIGAIL
 Okay.

HELEN AND ANNIE

Stand with each other.

HELEN
 So, enjoying your time off?

ANNIE
 Yeah. Just staying at home.

HELEN
 Not one phone call. Surprising,
 since you always phone to check up
 on Abby when she stays here.

ANNIE

It's just been so hectic for me.
Now that David's back, things'll be
easier.

HELEN

Is something wrong?

ANNIE

No. Why?

HELEN

You have this look in your eye.

ANNIE

Mother, please.

HELEN

Sorry. Maternal instincts.

ANNIE

I hate to cut it short, Mom, but I
have to pick up Bruce tomorrow from
the airport. Tell Daddy I love him.

HELEN

Very well. Give my best to Bruce
and Katie.

ANNIE

I will. Love you, Mom.

HELEN

Love you too, hon.

Annie hugs and kisses her mother, smiles, and heads toward
her car.

HELEN

Watches her daughter depart, a weary look in her eyes.

EXT. O'HARE AIRPORT - ARRIVAL GATE - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Annie, Abigail in tow, waits for her husband to arrive.

BRUCE

Emerges INTO VIEW from the arrival gate, carry-on bag in tow,
sees his family, and heads towards them.

BRUCE
 (embraces and kisses
 Annie)
 Annie, hon. I missed you so much.

ANNIE
 (hugs and kisses Bruce)
 Welcome home, honey.

ABIGAIL
 Welcome back, Daddy!

BRUCE
 (picks up and hugs
 Abigail)
 Munchkin, I missed you so much.

INT. ANNIE'S STATION WAGON - FRONT SEAT - NIGHT

Annie drives home from the airport, as she and Bruce start to converse.

BRUCE
 So, how've things been?

ANNIE
 Fine.

BRUCE
 (looks in back at Abby)
 Abby's out like a light.

ANNIE
 I figured she would be. I'm
 surprised she made it from the ride
 to the airport.

BRUCE
 That's all?

ANNIE
 What?

BRUCE
 Just fine?

ANNIE
 What do you want me to say? I
 robbed a bank and joined the Peace
 Corps?

BRUCE
 Sorry for showing some interest.

ANNIE
It's okay. Just stayed home and
chilled.

BRUCE
How's Katie?

ANNIE
Good. Her softball game is in two
weeks.

BRUCE
We have front-row seats.

ANNIE
You know it.

A moment of silence follows, as Bruce continues.

BRUCE
I can't wait to get home.

ANNIE
Really? How come?

BRUCE
Cause this one of the lousiest
rides I've ever taken.

The silence continues, as Annie proceeds home.

INT. ROSEBUD STEAKHOUSE - CORNER TABLE - SATURDAY NIGHT

Annie and Bruce enjoy a rare night out, as they sit together.

BRUCE
(eats his steak; mouth
half full)
Dallas has some great barbecue, but
there ain't nothin' like a steak at
the Rose.

Bruce looks up from his dinner at Annie.

ANNIE

Visibly despondent, looks down at her salad, as she plays
with some lettuce with her fork.

BRUCE (O.S.)
Annie?

ANNIE
 (comes to and looks up)
 Huh?

BRUCE
 Are you a horse?

ANNIE
 Of course not.

BRUCE
 Then why the long face?

ANNIE
 I just have a lot on my mind. Had a rough week.

BRUCE
 C'mon, don't be a damper. I mean, I just got the Dallas account, I'm back home, it's still summer, we're having a nice night out.
 (beat)
 Say, how about I order us some nice dessert? Anything you want.

ANNIE
 (gently objects)
 No really, Bruce, I'm fine.

BRUCE
 C'mon, hon. Have some with me.

The deliberating continues, until Annie ends it.

ANNIE
 (yells loudly)
 Alright, we'll have some dessert!!

EVERYONE in The Rosebud stops still, as they look over at Bruce and Annie. They both lower their heads in embarrassment.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie, clad in a night gown, gets ready for bed. Bruce appears INTO VIEW after using the bathroom, as he grabs his pillow and heads towards the bedroom door, but not before Annie halts him.

ANNIE (O.S.)
 Where are you going?

BRUCE

(cross)

I'm sleeping on the couch. It'll
feel a lot more comfy tonight.

Bruce SLAMS the BEDROOM DOOR, as a visibly upset Annie looks on.

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - ADMINISTRATION OFFICES -
DAY

Annie sorts through some papers, when the PHONE on her desk RINGS. She picks up.

ANNIE

(speaks into phone)

Hello, Jefferson Intermediary,
Annie speaking, how can I help you?

(excitedly)

Katie, honey, how are you?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. CAMP ONAWANDA - DINING HALL - DAY

Katie, on her cell phone, sits at a nearby table, as she speaks to her mother.

KATIE

(speaks into phone)

Hi, Mom! How's it going?

ANNIE

Great, honey! Daddy's home. He got
the Dallas account.

KATIE

Awesome. Are you coming on
Thursday?

ANNIE

Thursday?

KATIE

My softball game. You didn't
forget, did you?

ANNIE

Of course, not. You can count me
there. How's camp?

KATIE
It's been great. Fishing, arts and
crafts, camp fires, you name it.

ANNIE
How about boys?

KATE
Nice try, Mom.

ANNIE
Sorry, babe. Worth a shot.

KATIE
(looks at her watch)
Oh, look at the time. We have
swimming now. I'll talk to you
later. See you at the game. Love
you.

ANNIE
You bet. Love you too.

Annie hangs up the phone, and continues with her work.

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - SCHOOL CORRIDOR - LATE
AFTERNOON

Joan walks down the school corridor after another day's work.
She is about to head out, when an arm emerges INTO VIEW and
pulls her aside.

ANNIE
Hi.

JOAN
(upset)
Hi. Wanna yell at me again?

ANNIE
Listen, I'm sorry for being such a
turd. Wanna have dinner? On me?

Joan hesitates, as a small smile fissures from her lips.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The front door opens, as an exuberant Annie enters.

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
Oh man, what a night!

Annie heads upstairs to the bedroom.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom door opens, as Annie enters.

ANNIE
(exuberant)
Bruce, honey, you won't believe the
time I...

Before Annie can continue, she stops in her tracks.

ANNIE'S POV

BRUCE

Sits pensively in a corner chair in the bedroom, silver
relaxation balls in his left hand, looking downward.

ANNIE
(concerned)
Bruce, honey, what's the matter?

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
I'm fine, hon. Don't worry.

A concerned Annie gently goes over to her husband and kneels
down beside him.

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
Bruce, please tell me. Are you mad
that I went out tonight?

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
Of course, not. Abby and I ate
dinner. It was delicious. Thank
you. She's sleeping.

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
Then what is it honey?

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
The boss called me into his office
today...

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Don't tell me he fired you?

BRUCE
 (sotto voce)
 No. He told me he was thrilled with
 the Dallas trip.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 That's wonderful. So, what's wrong?

BRUCE
 (looks up Annie; sotto
 voce)
 He's sending me to Cleveland for a
 week, starting tomorrow.

ANNIE
 (gets choked up; sotto
 voce)
 Bruce, I'm so sorry.

BRUCE
 (sotto voce)
 Shouldn't I be apologizing to you
 and the kids? It's just not right.
 This was supposed to be our summer
 together...

ANNIE
 (reassuring; sotto voce)
 Oh, hon, it's okay. There's always
 next summer.

BRUCE
 (livid; sotto voce)
 I should've quit years ago.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce; places hand
 on his shoulder)
 Don't be absurd, Bruce. We'll be
 just fine.

BRUCE
 (chokes up; sotto voce)
 Where would I be without you?

Bruce places his head on Annie's shoulder, as she gives him a
 hug of re-assurance.

INT. O'HARE AIRPORT - DEPARTURE GATE - MORNING

A visibly despondent Bruce says goodbye to Annie and a sobbing Abigail, as he heads to Cleveland.

EXT. LAKE ONAWANDA - CAMP GROUNDS - DAY

Parents crowd the camp grounds, as they meet and speak with their children. Annie and Abigail are with Katie.

KATIE
 (excitedly hugs Annie and
 Abigail)
 Mom, Abby!

ANNIE
 (happily hugs Katie)
 Katie, hon, how are you?

KATIE
 Fantastic. Where's Daddy?

ANNIE
 (sober)
 Katie, Daddy's in Cleveland on
 another business trip. He told me
 he is so sorry.

KATIE
 (upset)
 Really? That sucks!

ANNIE
 (looks at Katie and points
 to Abby)
 Language.
 (beat)
 So, where's your bunk?

KATIE
 C'mon, let me show you.

EXT. LAKE ONAWANDA - PICNIC AREA - DAY

Annie and the girls sit at a picnic table, enjoying some barbecue and catching up.

ANNIE
 (mouth half full)
 This macaroni salad is phenomenal.

KATIE
(mouth half full)
Have you tried these roasted
potatoes?
(hands some to Abigail)
Try some, Abby.

ANNIE
Have you had great weather?

KATIE
It's been gorgeous.

ANNIE
Yeah, it's been pretty good so far.

A lull in conversation ensues, when a VOICE emerges.

SHEILA (O.S.)
Annie, is that you?

Annie turns around, as she hears the voice. Sheila smiles and approaches Annie and the girls.

SHEILA
Annie, how are you?

ANNIE
(hugs Sheila)
Sheila, so great to see you! What
are you doing here?

SHEILA
My youngest goes to camp here.

ANNIE
Really? Katie's been here since
June.

SHEILA
Listen. My youngest has a birthday
next week. We're having a party at
the house. Can you make it?

ANNIE
Sounds wonderful. Abby and I would
be honored.

SHEILA
Great. Your invitation will be in
the mail.

ANNIE
We can't wait.

SHEILA
I'm sorry, but I must be going. I
have a dentist appointment. Take
care.

ANNIE
Thanks, Sheila. See you soon.

EXT. LAKE ONAWANDA - BASEBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

Parents CHEER LOUDLY for their children, as they watch from
the stands.

KATIE

Bat in hand, steps up to the plate.

ANNIE
(cheers loudly)
C'mon, Katie, hon. Knock one out!

Katie looks at her mother and nods silently.

PITCHER

Checks in for the sign, winds up, and delivers.

KATIE

In full swing, connects.

The ball bullets into the left field corner, as the left
fielder has trouble digging it out.

Katie rounds first into second, as the CROWD ROARS. Katie
looks into the stands.

KATIE'S POV

ANNIE AND ABIGAIL

Watch and cheer Katie, as they give her a thumbs-up.

SAME - LATER

It's the bottom of the ninth, two outs and the bases are
loaded. Katie is up to bat.

ANNIE

Watches closely from the stands, as Abigail naps beside her. Suddenly, Annie's CELL PHONE VIBRATES. Annie picks up and looks.

INSERT SHOT - TEXT MESSAGE

From David, reads WHAT R U DOING?

BACK TO SCENE

Annie smiles and starts texting back.

KATIE

Looks over into the stands at Annie, when her coach BECKONS.

COACH (O.S.)

(aloud)

Katie, focus on the pitcher, not on
the stands!

Katie refocuses and steps into the batter's box.

PITCHER

Looks in for the sign, winds up, and delivers.

KATIE

In full swing, swings and misses, as the UMPIRE YELLS.

UMPIRE

(yells loudly)

Strike one!

Katie takes a step back, and looks into the stands

KATIE'S POV

ANNIE

Still in the stands, continues to text.

BACK TO SCENE

Katie steps back in and waits for the next pitch.

PITCHER

Looks in for the sign, winds up, and throws.

KATIE

Watches the pitch hit the catcher's glove, as the Umpire makes his call.

UMPIRE
(yells loudly)
Strike two!

Katie again pulls back to compose herself. She looks into the stands.

KATIE'S POV

ANNIE

Continues texting on her phone.

BACK TO SCENE

Katie looks on concerned, when her Coach BECKONS.

COACH (O.S.)
(calls out)
Focus, Katie, focus! You're in the
hole, now!

Katie takes a deep breath and sidles up to the plate. She stands in and waits for the pitch.

PITCHER - SLOW MOTION

Winds up, moves forward, and throws.

KATIE - SLOW MOTION

Watches the pitch, swings, and connects.

The ball bullets past the first baseman, as Katie dashes softly into first. Her teammates crowd around her, as the CROWD APPLAUDS. Katie has just won the game.

Katie looks into the stands.

KATIE'S POV

ANNIE

Finally looks up from her phone and cheers along with the crowd.

BACK TO SCENE

A visibly despondent Katie looks on.

EXT. LAKE ONAWANDA - CAMP GROUNDS - LATE AFTERNOON

The day is drawing to a close, as parents are saying goodbye to their children. Annie, with a sleeping Abigail in tow, sits with Katie.

ANNIE
You did great out there.

KATIE
You missed it.

ANNIE
Missed what?

KATIE
My game-winning hit.

ANNIE
Of course I saw it.

KATIE
No, you didn't. I saw you texting
on your cell in the stands.

Annie looks quizzically at Katie.

KATIE
You didn't hear my coach yelling at
me?
(one full beat)
Who were you texting?

ANNIE
Joan from work. We have a staff
meeting at three on Thursday.
That's it.

KATE
Oh. Abby okay?

ANNIE
Yeah, she's just a little spent. Do
you need anything before I go?

KATIE
Do you have daddy's number to the
hotel? I wanna call him.

ANNIE

Sure, hon.

(pulls out piece of paper)

Here it is Try not to call him too late.

KATIE

I won't.

ANNIE

Really miss you, hon.

KATIE

I'll be home soon. Love you, mom.

ANNIE

Love you, too.

Annie kisses her daughter on the forehead, as she starts to depart. Katie watches her mother leave, a worried/suspicious look on her face.

FADE OUT.

SCENE XVII

FADE IN:

MONTAGE - TWO WEEKS LATER

Annie and David kiss each other tenderly, as they meet after work.

A visibly exasperated Bruce goes over paper work for a meeting in his hotel room.

Annie goes out her front door to go to work, when she notices a pink cupcake in the shape of a heart with a note attached, reading LUV U MUCH. Annie licks some icing off the cupcake, smiles, and heads off to work.

Bruce runs down a corridor, coffee cup in hand, when he collides with someone, spilling the coffee all over his suit. He looks the mess and shakes himself off.

Annie answers the front door, as there is a bouquet of wildflowers on her doorstep.

Annie and David start to kiss, grope each other, as they lie on the bed after dark.

Bruce lies awake in his hotel room bed, as he stares pensively at he ceiling.

END MONTAGE

INT. SHERATON HOTEL (CLEVELAND) - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Bruce picks at some room service, when his HOTEL PHONE RINGS.
He picks up.

BRUCE
(speaks into telephone)
Hello? Hi, Katie!

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. CAMP ONAWANDA - DINING HALL - NIGHT

Kaite, in a vacant dining hall, speaks to her father from her
cell phone.

KATIE
(sotto voce; speaks into
cell phone)
Hey, Daddy. How's Cleveland?
Whatcha doing?

BRUCE
Mild and boring. I'm having
something that resembles chicken
Parmesan. How's camp?

KATE
(sotto voce)
Great. I got the game-winning hit in
softball.

BRUCE
That's my girl. I wish I could've
been there, hon.

KATIE
(sotto voce)
It's okay, Daddy.

BRUCE
Katie, why are you speaking so
softly?

KATIE
(sotto voce)
Well, I'm not supposed to be out at
this hour.

BRUCE
My daughter the rebel.

KATIE
 (sotto voce)
 Actually, there's a reason why I'm
 calling.

BRUCE
 Talk to me.

KATIE
 (sotto voce)
 Mom and Abby visited me at camp
 today. Have you heard from mom at
 all?

BRUCE
 Only once in the past week.

KATIE
 (sotto voce)
 Mom's been acting really strange
 lately. Do you think she's okay?

BRUCE
 I'm sure it's just stress. I'll
 call her tonight.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie happily talks on the phone while in bed.

ANNIE
 (talks into phone)
 Yeah. Abby's asleep. She's been
 getting to bed really early lately.
 I better enjoy it while it lasts.
 (beat)
 Yup, he's in Cleveland for three
 more days. When the cat's away...
 (beat)
 Hold on a sec. Someone's on the
 other line.

Annie presses the call waiting button and takes the call.

ANNIE
 (speaks into phone)
 Hello? Hi, honey!

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. SHERATON HOTEL (CLEVELAND) - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Bruce sits on his hotel room bed, as he speaks to Annie.

BRUCE
(speaks into phone)
Annie. How's it going?

ANNIE
I'm fine, Bruce. Just getting ready
for bed.

BRUCE
I got the busy signal. Who were you
talking to?

ANNIE
My mom.

BRUCE
Your mom is up at this time?

ANNIE
She's been having trouble sleeping,
and just gave me a call.

BRUCE
I spoke to Katie.

ANNIE
That's great. We visited her today.
She's having a great time at camp.

BRUCE
She told me she's worried about
you.

ANNIE
Worried about me? When should a
daughter worry about her mother?

BRUCE
You tell me. Is everything okay?

ANNIE
Of course, Bruce. Listen, can I
call you back? Mom's on the other
line.

BRUCE
(cross)
Sorry, Annie, but your mom has to
wait a little longer.

ANNIE
(cross)
Bruce, you are being very rude.
(MORE)

ANNIE (cont'd)
If you'll excuse me, this phone
call is over.

BRUCE
(yells)
Don't hang up, Annie. Annie, wait!

Despite his pleas, Annie hangs up, as the DIAL TONE sounds.
Bruce gently places down the phone.

BRUCE
(yells loudly)
Fuck!!

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The front door opens, as Annie, with Abigail in tow, arrives
home.

ABIGAIL
I had the best time today, Mommy.

ANNIE
(kisses her on cheek)
I'm so glad honey. You like going
to work a lot more than mommy does.

Annie places Abby in a chair and speaks to her.

ANNIE
Mommy's just going to read her
mail, okay?

ABIGAIL
Okay, Mommy.

ANNIE
Love you, baby.

Annie heads over to the living room table and sorts through
the mail.

ANNIE
(reads envelopes)
Bill, junk, bill... ooh, an
invitation.

Annie carefully opens the envelope and removes its contents.

INSERT SHOT - BIRTHDAY INVITATION

Reads, "YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO EMILY'S SIXTH BIRTHDAY"

SEGUE TO:

EXT. ADLER HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

INVITATION

Rests in Annie's hand, as she and Abigail, presents in tow, head towards the backyard area.

SHEILA

(greet's them warmly)

Annie, Abigail. Welcome. Thank you for coming.

ANNIE

(presents birthday gift)

We come bearing gifts.

SHEILA

(takes gift from Annie)

Thank you so much. Please come in. The hot dogs are almost done.

DAVID

Appears INTO VIEW and heads over to the backyard. He is halted by Sheila.

SHEILA

Hello. Can I help you?

DAVID

Yes, I'm here with Annie Jennings.

SHEILA

I'm sorry, but are you a guest?

Annie notices David and heads over.

ANNIE

Sheila, I'm sorry, but this is my neighbor, Dave. I hope it's okay if I invited him.

SHEILA

Of course. The more the merrier.

(extends her hand)

Hi, David, I'm Sheila.

DAVID
 (shakes her hand)
 Hello, Sheila. I'm Bruce. Thanks
 for the invite.

SAME - MOMENTS LATER

A clown entertains the party CROWD, as they OOH AND AAH accordingly.

Annie sits with Abigail, as they quietly watch the clown. Annie turns around.

ANNIE'S POV

DAVID

Sitting a few rows back, watches the clown, as he turns his attention to Annie.

BACK TO SCENE

Annie looks at David and raises her eyebrows.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Abby, mommy has to use the
 bathroom. Stay right here and I'll
 be back.

Abby nods, as Annie rises to go into the house.

INT. ADLER HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

Annie quietly skulks around the bedroom, when a pair of hands emerges INTO VIEW.

DAVID (O.S.)
 What are you doing here?

ANNIE
 (yells)
 Oh my God!

Annie turns around, and sees a smiling David.

ANNIE
 (lightly punches him)
 Don't do that.

DAVID
 (in soft/squeaky voice)
 I'm sorry, Annie.

Annie smiles, as she and David look tenderly at each other, and start to kiss.

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
Do you know you're a very good
kisser?

DAVID
So I've been told.

Annie and Bruce plop down on a bed and start to kiss and grope each other. They continue to do so when Annie halts.

ANNIE
(angrily slaps David)
Dave, stop it now!

DAVID
(painfully feels his face)
What gives, Annie?

ANNIE
(upset)
That was very inappropriate. We're
not ready for that yet.

David presents a balloon animal, which got in the way during the makeout.

DAVID
(presents balloon animal)
You mean this?

Annie looks at the balloon, then at Bruce.

ANNIE
(apologetic)
Dave, I am so sorry.

DAVID
(starts to laugh)
It's okay.

Annie starts to laugh along with David, as they collapse on the bed.

INT. SHERATON HOTEL (CLEVELAND) - HOTEL BAR - AFTERNOON

A visibly crestfallen Bruce sits alone at the end of the bar, nursing his drink and casually watching the hi-def tv. The BARTENDER approaches him.

BARTENDER
Can I get you another?

BRUCE
Yeah. Make it a double.

BARTENDER
You got it.

Before the Bartender departs, a VOICE beckons.

DEBORAH (O.S.)
It's on me, barkeep. Can I have a
seven and seven?

A curious Bruce hears the voice and turns around.

DEBBIE

Stands a few feet from Bruce.

DEBORAH
Hello, Bruce.

BRUCE
What the hell are you doing here?

DEBORAH
Well, this is a public place, and I
am bit parched.
(beat)
Mind if I pull up a stool?

BRUCE
Be my guest.

DEBORAH
Thank you.

The Bartender returns with the drinks.

BARTENDER
(places down drinks)
One seven and seven, for the lady,
and a double Chivas for the
gentleman. Anything else, Maam?

DEBORAH
(hands Bartender money)
That'll be all for now. Thank you.

The Bartender departs OUT OF VIEW, as Debbie and Bruce
converse.

BRUCE
(raises his glass)
Thanks for the drink.

DEBORAH
(raises her glass)
My pleasure.

They CLICK GLASSES in a toast.

DEBORAH
So, what brings you to Cleveland?

BRUCE
Another possible merger. What about you?

DEBORAH
(takes a sip of her drink)
I own apartment complexes here and in Akron. I'm thinkin' about renovating them.
(beat)
Also wanna check the safety conditions.
(one full beat)
So, how do you like it here?

BRUCE
(scoffs)
Pssttt. All they got here are the Cavs and Lake Erie.

DEBORAH
So, I guess you've never really experienced Cleveland, have you?

BRUCE
(gulps down his drink)
Well, I guess not.

DEBORAH
Take it easy with the sauce, Trigger. That ain't Ovaltine, you know.

BRUCE
No, but it's a hell of a lot better.

DEBORAH
Are you doing anything tonight?

BRUCE

No. I have a seminar in the morning.

DEBORAH

Whadya say we go out for a night on the town? Just as friends. I'll have you back in time to get a good night's rest. How's seven sound?

BRUCE

(extends his hand)

Deal.

Bruce and Debbie shake hands.

INT. CAMP ONAWANDA - DINING HALL - AFTERNOON

Katie, along with her fellow campers, enjoy their lunch. Katie stares longingly at one of her fellow bunkmates, VANESSA CAROL.

VANESSA

Can I help you, Katie?

KATIE

(snappish)

Quit watchin' me eat.

VANESSA

(snappish)

Excuse me?

KATIE

(snappish)

Did I stutter, bitch?

VANESSA

(snappish)

You better watch it, Katie. I'll tell Counselor Davis.

KATIE

(bold)

Excuse me while I tremble in fear.

Another fellow camper, HILARY BLOCKER, attempts to make peace.

HILARY

(calm)

Can't we eat in peace?

KATIE

(bold)

Keep outta this, Hil. This is
between me and Nussy.

VANESSA

Is is that time of the month?

KATIE

Maybe for you.

VANESSA

I'm gonna say this one last time.
Quit it, Katie.

Katie looks in silence at Vanessa, as she goes back to eating
her lunch.

VANESSA

That's what I thought.

Katie takes a spoonful of mashed potatoes and is about to
place it in her mouth, when she flings it at Vanessa.

Vanessa feels her now stained face, and looks incredulously
at Katie.

KATIE

That's a really good look for you.

Vanessa takes her milk and angrily flings it in Katie's face.
Katie hops over the lunch table and pins Vanessa to the
floor, as they both grapple with each other.

Fellow campers look on and CHEER.

VANESSA

(angry)

You bitch!

COUNSELOR EDGAR MUNOZ appears INTO VIEW and halts the girls.

EDGAR

(stern)

Okay, break it up right now!
Campers, return to your seat and
finish your lunch.

(looks at girls)

Katie, Vanessa, in my office, now!

INT. ADLER HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Annie and Bruce lie next to each other, as they chat idly.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 I'm having a great time.

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 With me or the party?

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Both.

DAVID
 (looks at his watch)
 Oh, I think we missed the puppet
 show.

ANNIE
 You're much more fun.
 (one full beat)
 Can I ask you something?

DAVID
 Shoot.

ANNIE
 I was...

Before Annie can continue, there is a LOUD KNOCK on the
 BEDROOM DOOR, as a VOICE emerges.

SHEILA (O.S.)
 (from behind door)
 Hello? IS anyone in there?

Annie and David look alarmed at each other, as they quickly
 rise from the bed.

DAVID
 (sotto voce; worried)
 What do we do?

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Just stay calm.
 (looks around; sotto voce)
 I got it! Get in the closet. Stay
 quiet and don't move.

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 Okay.

David heeds Annie, and enters into the bedroom closet and shuts it behind him.

Sheila's KNOCKING continues.

SHEILA (O.S.)
(from behind door)
Hello? Is anyone in here? Open the door now!

Annie scurries over to the door and opens up.

ANNIE
Sheila, hi.

SHEILA
Annie, are you okay? This door was locked.
(beat)
I've been looking all over for you.

ANNIE
I'm sorry, Sheila, but I've been in the bathroom. I think the door accidentally locked behind me.

SHEILA
Are you okay?

ANNIE
(painfully rubs her stomach)
Yeah. I think that spinach dip caught up to me.

SHEILA
I knew I shouldn't have made it. Are you feeling better?

ANNIE
Off and on.

SHEILA
Can I get you some Kaeopectate? I think I have some in the medicine cabinet.

ANNIE
Oh, that's fine, Sheila. Thank you.

SHEILA
Are you sure?

ANNIE
Positive.

SHEILA
I just came to get some paper
towels from the closet here.

Sheila heads towards the closet, when Annie halts her.

ANNIE
(yells)
Oh, no!!

Sheila stops and looks at Annie.

SHEILA
Are you okay, Annie?

ANNIE
(grabs her stomach)
On second thought, can I have that
Kaeopectate?

SHEILA
My goodness. Of course. I'll be
right back.

Sheila departs OUT OF VIEW, as Annie waits until she departs,
then opens the closet door.

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
Give me the paper towels.

David hands Annie two rolls of paper towels.

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
Don't make a move or sound.

Sheila returns, bottle of Kaeopectate in hand.

SHEILA
(hands bottle to Annie)
Here you are, Annie.

ANNIE
(takes bottle)
Thanks so much, Sheila.
(gives her paper towels)
I got you some paper towels.

SHEILA
 (takes paper towels)
 Thanks, Annie. Actually I need
 three sheets.
 (goes toward closet)
 I'll get the other.

ANNIE
 (gets in her way)
 Please, allow me, Sheila. It's the
 least I could do.

SHEILA
 Really, Annie, it's fine.

ANNIE
 I really want to, Sheila.

SHEILA
 Okay. We're just about to cut the
 cake.

ANNIE
 Wonderful. I'm just going to use
 the bathroom.

SHEILA
 Of course.

Sheila departs OUT OF VIEW, as Annie goes to the closet and
 opens it, and speaks to David.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 I need another roll of paper
 towels.

DAVID
 (sotto voce; hands her
 roll)
 Here. Anything else?

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 I need you to wait for me to leave
 the house, then follow me out.
 Okay?

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 You got it.

EXT. ADLER HOUSE - BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

EVERYONE sings HAPPY BIRTHDAY IN UNISON to Emily, as she looks at the cake and blows out the candles, as EVERYONE APPLAUDS.

Annie looks at her cell phone, as she sits with Abby.

ANNIE
Oh. Cell phone's been off.

Annie turns on her CELL PHONE, as it BEEPS, indicating a new message.

ANNIE
A new message.

Annie listens to the message.

ANNIE
Oh, my goodness.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - ESTABLISHING SHOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Annie's car drives down the road.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNIE'S STATION WAGON - FRONT SEAT - AFTERNOON

Annie quietly drives, as Katie stares out the passenger seat window. Abby sits in back. Katie stares at her mother, who is focusing on the road. Katie initiates conversation.

KATIE
What's the matter?

ANNIE
(focuses on road)
What's the matter? I receive a call from camp saying you're starting fights. I leave a birthday party and drive all the way upstate to pick you up. And on top of that, Abby's getting sick.

ANNIE'S CAR

Veers to the side of the road and comes to SCREECHING HALT.

Annie turns and looks intensely at Katie.

ANNIE
 (intense)
 Anything else you wanna ask me?

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KATIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

The bedroom door opens, as Katie, Annie behind her, drops her luggage and plops down on her bed.

KATIE
 (sighs)
 Man, it's good to be home. Back in my old room.

ANNIE
 Good. Cause you'll be spending a lot of time in here. You're grounded for a month.

KATIE
 (vaults up)
 What?! You're kidding, right? Mom, you're being unfair.

ANNIE
 I'm calling your father and telling him. You'll do chores while you're in. No tv, music, Facebook, or e-mail.

KATIE
 You gonna give me a bed time too?

ANNIE
 Good idea. In bed at exactly 9:30. Starting tonight.
 (checks her watch)
 You've got 30 minutes left. Better get washed.

Annie heads toward the bedroom door, before turning to Katie.

ANNIE
 Welcome to Camp Morris. Enjoy your stay.

Annie departs OUT OF VIEW, as Katie soberly watches her.

FADE OUT.

SCENE XVIII

FADE IN:

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

David quietly peruses a book, when DING NOISE emerges. David continues reading, when the NOISE re-emerges. David puts down his book, heads towards his bedroom window, and looks out.

BRUCE'S WINDOW POV

ANNIE

Stands in the backyard, stones in her hand, as she waves at David.

BACK TO SCENE

David looks incredulously at Annie.

DAVID
(sotto voce)
Annie?! What are you doing here?

ANNIE
(sotto voce)
Come down. I need to talk to you.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TEAPOT

Pours some warm water into a ceramic mug.

David finishes pouring some tea for Annie, as he places the teapot on a cozy.

DAVID
There's some cream, sugar, and
lemon if you want.

ANNIE
Thanks.

David sits next to Annie on the living room sofa. A moment of silence ensues, as the two look coyly at each other.

ANNIE
That was great birthday party.

DAVID
Yup. Felt like I was at the circus.

ANNIE
(takes a sip of tea)
Yeah.

Another moment of silence follows.

DAVID
Annie, about today. I...

ANNIE
(interjects)
No, Dave. I really should be the one apologizing. I mean...

DAVID
(softly interrupts)
No, no, no. It's my fault.

ANNIE
Why are we doing this? We've been friends and neighbors forever. We shouldn't have to apologize to each other.

DAVID
If you say so.

ANNIE
You know, I have never seen the inside of your house in ages.

DAVID
Really? You're winding me up.

ANNIE
I'm serious. Show me around, please.

SAME - MOMENTS LATER

David continues to give Annie an excursion of the house, when they come to a closet.

ANNIE
(looks at closet)
Wow, this is a pretty big closet.

DAVID
Yeah. It has Sarah's clothes. I never got rid of them, even after she died.

A faint smile fissures from David's lips, as Annie smiles faintly as well.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Annie and David sits in silence as they stare away. Their eyes meet.

ANNIE

Can I ask you something?

DAVID

Of course.

ANNIE

What happened to us?

DAVID

We became adults.

ANNIE

I remember when we were all in college. Not a care in the world, all the hope for the future, and nothing to get in our way.

(one full beat)

Hey, remember the toast we all made?

DAVID

How can I forget? To keep our feet on the ground, our eyes on the prize, and our hears in the right place.

ANNIE

Remember our last night of college? We all went to Brian Clayton's big bash. We had the time of our lives.

DAVID

I remember the dress you wore. Lilac satin. You were breathtaking that night.

ANNIE

You remember what I wore?

DAVID

Yeah.

ANNIE

My God. I couldn't even remember that. You are unbelievable.

DAVID
Speaking of that night, I always
wanted to ask you something.

ANNIE
Sure. What is it?

DAVID
I'm not sure if you remember, but
there was a song playing on one of
the last dances.
(one full beat)
I wanted to ask you, but I got shy.
Will you do a slow dance with me?

ANNIE
Of course I will.

Annie slowly rises from the sofa, and gently takes David by
the hand.

ANNIE
Do you want to dance in the middle
of the floor? Music, no music?

DAVID
Actually, I was hoping we could
dance outside, in the moonlight.

ANNIE
(one full beat)
Okay.

EXT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Annie and David look around the backyard at the night sky.
David, with radio in hand, places it down on a nearby table.

ANNIE) (O.S.)
You have a beautiful yard.

DAVID
(sets up radio)
Thanks. I mow and water every day.

Annie and David stand next to each other, and peer at the
night sky.

ANNIE
(looks up at the sky)
It's such a beautiful night.
(turns to David)
So, how about that dance?

DAVID
 (places CD in radio)
 This is one from the last age of
 great music. Hope you enjoy it.

RADIO

Sits on a picnic table, as David's finger presses the play
 button.

David approaches Annie, as ALL I WANT by TOAD THE WET
 SPROCKET starts to play.

ANNIE
 Toad. This is a classic.

DAVID
 And classics never grow old.

Annie and David start to slow dance, as they look at each
 other.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Thank you.

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 For what?

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 For being everythin you are. This
 has been the most magical time of
 my life.

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 It's been great. But I can't help
 but feel guilty. You're my best
 friend's wife. I wonder how he's
 been.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Let's enjoy this dance.

Annie moves in and kisses David passionately on the lips.

INT. SHERATON HOTEL (CLEVELAND) - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The hotel room door opens, as David and Debbie return from a
 night on the town. They laugh enjoyably.

BRUCE

Man, I never thought I'd have a
blast in Cleveland.

DEBORAH

Glad you enjoyed it.

Debbie walks over and pours herself a glass of water. Bruce
plops down in a chair.

DEBORAH

(takes a sip of water and
looks at Bruce)
Are you sure you're okay?

BRUCE

Yeah, I'll live. Can anybody keep
up with you?

DEBORAH

Many have tried, but few have
endured.

Debbie takes a seat across from Bruce and looks quietly at
him.

DEBORAH

Can I ask you something?

BRUCE

Shoot.

DEBORAH

You're married, right?

BRUCE

(shows her his ring)
This didn't come out of a cracker
jack box.

DEBORAH

Cause I saw you gettin' pretty
close some of the girls in the club
we went to.

BRUCE

What the hell? Just thought I'd
have a good time for once. It's
always about work, work, work.

DAVID

That's fine. If you don't mind me
asking, how are things at home?

BRUCE

Well, Deb, to put it tersely, we've seen better days.

DEBORAH

Lay it on me.

BRUCE

You're in insurance and real estate. Don't tell me you're a shrink to boot.

DEBORAH

No, but I do take an interest in my clients beyond the boardroom.

BRUCE

If you are interested, I think my marriage is on the rocks.

DEBORAH

How can you tell?

BRUCE

My wife's been dodging me like the IRS. I've been away from my kids for nearly a month.

DEBORAH

Must be agonizing.

BRUCE

How about you? Missing your family at all?

DEBORAH

I don't have any kids. My last marriage ended in '98.

BRUCE

I'm sorry.

DEBORAH

It seems I've had success everywhere but in my personal life. Guess you can't have everything.

(gets up to leave)

Well, I guess I'll be on my way. Have a good night.

Debbie makes her way to the door, when Bruce halts her.

BRUCE (O.S.)
 (calls out)
 Wait...

Debbie stops and turns around.

BRUCE
 Why don't you stay a little longer?

DEBR
 Don't you have a conference in the morning?

BRUCE
 I still have some midnight oil to burn.

DEBORAH
 Okay, then.

Debbie heads back in Bruce's direction. He rises from his chair and kisses Debbie on the lips.

A moment of silence follows, as Debbie looks intently at Bruce.

DEBORAH
 You're a married man, Mister Morris.

Bruce takes his wedding band off of his finger, and tosses it.

BRUCE
 Not tonight.

Bruce grabs Debbie and places her on the bed, as he follows and starts to kiss passionately.

SAME - NEXT MORNING

Bruce sleeps peacefully after a long and memorable night. Suddenly, the hotel room PHONE RINGS, awaking him. Bruce fumbles for the phone, but recovers and starts to talk.

BRUCE
 (groggy; talks into phone)
 Hello?

HOTEL CONCIERGE (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 Good morning, Mister Morris. This is the hotel concierge.
 (MORE)

HOTEL CONCIERGE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 We're giving you a wake up call for
 a conference beginning at ten.

BRUCE
 (groggy; talks into phone)
 Okay. Thanks.

Bruce hangs up and plops down into his pillow. He looks to his left.

INSERT SHOT - NOTE

Along with David's wedding band, lies on the night stand.

BACK TO SCENE

Bruce picks up the wedding band, and places it back on his finger. He cleans his eyes, then unfurls the note and begins to read it.

DEBORAH (V.O.)
 (from note)
 Bruce, I just wanted to thank you
 for a wonderful time last night. I
 placed your wedding band with this
 note, just in case you forgot. I
 scheduled a wake up call so you
 wouldn't be late.
 (one full beat)
 Sorry I had to split, but I have to
 check out my apartment complexes
 and then I have a plane to catch
 this afternoon. Here is my cell
 phone number if you ever wanna
 talk. Take care of yourself. Love,
 Debbie.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT IV

ACT V

SCENE XVIII

FADE IN:

MONTAGE - NEXT TWO MONTHS

Bruce arrives home from his trip, as he is greeted by his family.

Annie tiredly rubs her head during another stressful day at work.

David is about to cross the street to go his car, when a passing car goes over a large puddle, drenching his entire suit.

Bruce tiredly sits through another conference at work.

Annie drives Katie to her first day back at school. Katie kisses her mom good-bye before exiting the vehicle.

Abigail cries hysterically after falling outside. A vigilant Annie picks her up and starts to treat her wounded leg.

David starts to fall asleep in front of his computer monitor before coming to. He takes a sip of coffee and returns to his work.

The Morris family has dinner, as barely any conversation or eye contact is made.

Annie is about to depart for work, when she sees David, also leaving for work. The two stare fondly at each other, before going into their cars.

Annie, clad in her night gown, is about to go to bed, as she settles in next to Bruce, whose body is turned away from her. Annie shuts the lamp on the night stand, as everything FADES TO BLACK.

END MONTAGE

INT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - ADMINISTRATION OFFICES - DAY

Annie sits at her desk, as she busily types at her computer. Joan emerges behind her and says hello.

JOAN

Hey, there.

ANNIE

(types and focuses on
computer screen)

Hey.

JOAN

You have lunch in half an hour.

ANNIE

(looks at her watch)

Whadya know?

(looks at Joan)

You want anything?

JOAN
I'm good. Thanks. Whatcha been up
to?

ANNIE
Just workin'.

JOAN
Can you believe we're in October on
Sunday?

ANNIE
I can believe it. I'm probably
taking Abby for her Halloween
costume next week.

JOAN
How about we catch a cup of coffee
later?

ANNIE
Sounds great.

Annie continues typing, when her CELL PHONE BEEPS, indicating
a text message. Annie halts her typing to read it.

INSERT SHOT - CELL PHONE SCREEN

Contains text message from David, reading "MISS YOU :-("

BACK TO SCENE

Annie smiles tenderly at the message, when a VOICE EMERGES.

JOAN (O.S.)
Oh, a text message. Who's it from?

Annie turns around to find an enthusiastic Joan standing over
her.

ANNIE
(calm; stern)
Joanie, please.

JOAN
Oh, sorry. See ya later.

EXT. JEFFERSON INTERMEDIARY SCHOOL - SCHOOLYARD - LATE
AFTERNOON

Annie paces back and forth while on her cell phone, as she
gets David's voice mail. She leaves a message.

ANNIE

(talks into cell phone)

Hey, Dave. It's me. Got your text message. Things have been real hectic lately. School's back in session, the girls and Bruce are home, and I've been swamped with work.

(one full beat)

Can't wait to see you again. Love you, hon.

EXT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

David slowly hauls a stuffed garbage bag from his garage to the front side of his house. He returns to his backyard and closes the door to the shed. Bruce emerges INTO VIEW from behind the door.

DAVID

(slightly alarmed)

Bruce. Hi.

BRUCE

What's new, pal?

DAVID

Not much. Just clearing out the shed. How was Cleveland?

BRUCE

Okay. No major excitement. Got another merger.

DAVID

Knew you would.

BRUCE

Can I ask you something?

DAVID

Sure.

A moment of silence follows, as David awaits Bruce's query.

BRUCE

(presents tickets)

Two tickets. White Sox, Indians.
Last game of the season. You in?

David thinks it over and looks long at Bruce.

DAVID
I'm in. How much for my ticket?

BRUCE
It's on me. I'll call you. See you
later, man.

DAVID
Thanks. See you soon.

Bruce shakes David's hand before departing. David calls out
to Bruce as he walks.

DAVID (O.S.)
(calls out)
Hey, Bruce.

Bruce stops in his tracks and turns to David.

DAVID
How's the family?

BRUCE
Wish I knew.

Bruce smiles faintly before departing.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Morris family quietly enjoys a warm dinner. Bruce breaks
the ice.

BRUCE
(mouth half full)
Just a heads up. My boss informed
me that I'll be working on Columbus
day.

ANNIE
(soft)
Okay.

The silence returns, as everyone continues dining. Bruce
continues.

BRUCE
Has anyone seen American Idol
lately? I was watching it in
Cleveland, and they've got some
pretty good talent.

KATIE
(mouth half full)
I love the show, but I can't watch
it.

BRUCE
Why not?

KATIE
I'm grounded.

BRUCE
Grounded?! For what?

KATIE
I got into a fight at camp.

BRUCE
(turns to Annie)
And when did this happen?

ANNIE
(soft)
Recently.

BRUCE
I thought you finished camp early.

KATIE
Well you thought wrong, pop.

BRUCE
(turns to Annie; upset)
Anything else you forget to tell
me? Did Abby take a shit in the
washing machine?

ANNIE
(angrily raises her voice)
That's enough, Bruce. Don't curse
in front of the kids at the dinner
table.

BRUCE
(upset)
For a couple that's been together
fifteen years, you've been avoiding
me like the plague.

ANNIE
(sasses)
Well, I haven't exactly been on a
cruise to St. Barth's, Bruce!
(MORE)

ANNIE (cont'd)

(beat)

I work, take care of our children,
clean, and on top of that, put a
God damn meal on the table every
night!

BRUCE

Well excuse me for taking an
interest in my family. I go away on
business and everything's topsy
fuckin turvy!

(gets up from table)

Screw this shit! Dinner's over.

Bruce storms OUT OF VIEW from the dinner table, as Annie and
the girls sit quietly. Annie looks up at her daughters.

ANNIE

(soft)

Let's clear the table.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie rests comfortably on her bed, channel surfing.

BEDROOM DOOR

Slowly opens, as Bruce enters INTO VIEW. He gently closes the
door behind him, grabs the remote out of Annie's hand and
turns off the tv.

ANNIE

I was watching that, you know.

BRUCE

(stern)

I'm gonna say this once and only
once. Dont' you ever make a dick
out of me in front of the girls. Is
that understood?

ANNIE

(strong)

Then stop acting like one.

BRUCE

(stern)

I smell a fuckin rat. I don't know
who, but it fuckin reeks.

ANNIE

Are you sure it's not your armpits?

BRUCE

(stern)

I'm in no mood for fuckin jokes,
Annie.

ANNIE

Oh, really? Cause I can go all
fuckin night!

BRUCE

(raises his voice)

Don't get smart. In fifteen years
of marriage, you've never avoided
me like you have now.

ANNIE

(raises her voice)

Well, maybe it's because you're
always too busy at that fuckin job.
If you're not working from home,
you're busy sucking your boss'
cock!

BRUCE

(yells angrily)

I work all year round to make sure
this family's needs are met. The
last thing I need is more
condescending from you for every
little...

ANNIE

(screams)

Here we go again. You and your sob
stories...

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Abigail sobs uncontrollably, as she and Katie listen to their
parents arguing. Katie holds Abby in her arms.

KATIE

(sotto voce)

It's okay. You can sleep in my bed
tonight.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

Katie quietly makes her way through the kitchen, as she opens
the refrigerator door. Pulling out some milk, Katie pours
herself a glass. She takes a sip when a VOICE emerges.

BRUCE (O.S.)
(sotto voce)
Can't sleep either, huh?

An alarmed Katie spits out some of her milk, as it spills on her pajamas and the kitchen counter. She looks to her left.

BRUCE

Sits alone near the kitchen window, the moonlight illuminating his face.

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
Come sit with me.

Katie slowly makes her way to her father.

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
Sorry if I scared you. I'll clean up the milk.

KATIE
(sotto voce)
It's okay.

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
Sorry if mom and I were a little loud tonight.

KATIE
(sotto voce)
A little? Abby was a little shaken, but she's sleeping like a log.

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
Really? Can I ask you something?

KATIE
(sotto voce)
What is it?

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
Have you seen your mother with anyone while I was away?

KATIE
(sotto voce)
I was away at camp, Dad.

BRUCE
 (sotto voce)
 Maybe when you were home?

Katie hesitates for a moment, then looks directly at her father.

KATIE
 (sotto voce)
 No.
 (one full beat)
 Can I ask you something?

BRUCE
 (sotto voce)
 Of course, hon.

KATIE
 (sotto voce)
 What's happening to us?

BRUCE
 (sotto voce)
 I don't know, sweetie. But whatever
 it is, I'll be damned to let it
 bring us apart.

KATIE
 (sotto voce)
 I hope so. Good night, Dad.

Katie gets up and exits OUT OF VIEW from the kitchen. Bruce remains seated, as he looks pensively out the kitchen window.

EXT. FRONT MORRIS HOUSE - DAY

A CAR HORN HONKS, as the front door opens, as Bruce, dressed in full White Sox gear, emerges.

BRUCE
 I'm all set. Let's go Sox!

David enters the passenger side seat of Bruce's car.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - FRONT SEAT - DAY

BRUCE
 (slaps David five)
 My man, Dave. We gonna win today or
 what?

DAVID
 You know it.

BRUCE

Thanks for driving, man. I'm just not in the mood. Alright, let's do this!

BRUCE'S CAR

Pulls out onto the road and drives off.

SEGUE TO:

SAME - HOURS LATER

BRUCE'S CAR

Returns from the game, as it parks and comes to a stop.

Bruce and David joyously exit the car.

BRUCE

(excited)

What a game! I think we can win another World Series. Just you watch next year.

DAVID

It was a great game. Thanks so much for the invite.

David heads home, when Bruce halts him.

BRUCE

Where you going, man?

DAVID

Home. I've gotta clean up the basement.

BRUCE

(looks at his watch)

C'mon, man. It's still light out, and the Bears kick off in ten minutes. Whadya say?

DAVID

Sure. C'mon in back.

EXT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

David, tow beers in hand, gives one to Bruce, as the two sit and enjoy the day.

BRUCE
 (takes a sip of beer)
 Man, ain't nothin like a cold one
 on a day like this.
 (raises his bottle)
 Cheers, Dave.

The two CLICK their BOTTLES, as they reminisce.

BRUCE
 Speaking of baseball, let's see if
 you remember.

DAVID
 Ah shit, Bruce. You know how bad my
 memory is.

BRUCE
 C'mon, now. Just see if you can.
 July twenty-sixth, 1983.

DAVID
 (thinks it over)
 I'm drawing a blank, man.

BRUCE
 (takes a sip of beer)
 You've gotta remember. The old
 Commiskey Park. Angels, White Sox.

DAVID
 (refreshed)
 Oh, yeah. Your uncle Tim took us.

BRUCE
 No, my uncle Marty took us. We had
 tickets on the third base side near
 the visitors' dugout.

DAVID
 (takes a sip of beer)
 Yeah. Didn't we get some autographs
 before the game?

BRUCE
 We sure did. Who were the players?

DAVID
 (thinks hard)
 My gosh. Bobby Grich.

BRUCE
 That's one.

DAVID
(thinks hard)
Doug DeCinces

BRUCE
That's two. Two more.

DAVID
(thinks hard)
A pitcher. I can't remember for the
life of me.
(comes to)
Geoff Zahn.

BRUCE
Yup. One more. He was the biggest
prick.

DAVID
(comes to)
Oh yeah...

BRUCE AND DAVID
(at the same time)
Reggie Jackson!

Bruce and David start to laugh at the memory, as they
recollect.

BRUCE
We broke his balls through the
entire batting practice.

DAVID
(laughs a little)
Yeah. When he finally came over to
sign, all he kept sayin was why we
weren't in school.
(takes a sip of beer)
Memories.

A moment of silence follows, as Bruce gets serious.

BRUCE
(serious)
Dave, Annie's cheating on me.

DAVID
(taken aback)
I'm sorry.

BRUCE

Annie's cheating on me. She's been acting real strange since I went away. I think she's been seeing someone on the side.

DAVID

Are you sure?

BRUCE

Yeah. We barely speak. She never calls me from work, and don't get me started on sex.

DAVID

If you don't mind me asking, do you think you know who it is?

BRUCE

(takes a sip of beer)
Haven't a clue. I was thinking about hiring a private investigator.

DAVID

Bruce, maybe you shouldn't jump to conclusions. You know how it is with ladies.

BRUCE

Yeah, but this is my wife, Dave.
(turns to David)
Have you seen Annie with anyone while I've been away?

David looks for a moment at Bruce, then replies.

BRUCE

Nobody.

BRUCE

Make me a promise. If you do see Annie with anyone, promise you'll tell me?

DAVID

I promise.

BRUCE

You're my best friend, and I trust you with anything.

DAVID
I appreciate that, Bruce.

The two look soberly at each other.

BRUCE
(looks at his watch)
Hey, the Bears kick off in about five.

DAVID
(calm)
Maybe you should go home and spend some time with Annie and the kids. I mean, we were at the ballpark all day today.

BRUCE
Maybe you're right. We can catch next Sunday's game.

DAVID
You got it.

BRUCE
(extends his hand)
I just wanna say thank you for a great day.

DAVID
(shakes his hand)
Thanks for the invite. Listen, don't worry about Annie. I'm sure things'll work out.

BRUCE
Yeah. If and when I catch this prick, he's gonna live to regret it. Take care of yourself, Dave.

Bruce walks toward home, as a slightly worried David watches him.

FADE OUT.

SCENE XX

FADE IN:

INT. NICHOLS' HOUSE (JOLIET) - DINING ROOM - THANKSGIVING DAY

The entire family enjoys Thanksgiving dinner, as they talk amongst themselves.

GERALD
How about them Bears, Bruce?

BRUCE
Helluva lot better than the Lions!

Bruce turns and smiles at Annie, who looks at her husband.

BRUCE
(sotto voce)
Honey, I just wanted to say how
sorry I am for all of the fighting
lately. It's been so great to be
with you and kids.

ANNIE
(warmly)
I'm sorry too, hon. Let's not
fight.

Bruce and Annie kiss tenderly, when a VOICE emerges.

HELEN
C'mon you two. Not at the table!

Everyone continues to enjoy dinner, as they start to
converse.

BRUCE
(mouth half full)
So, Helen, have you been sleeping
better?

HELEN
(confounded)
Bruce, I haven't the slightest clue
what you're talking about.

BRUCE
Well, Annie told me that you were
having trouble sleeping this past
summer.

HELEN
Not me, hon. I've been sleeping
like wood.

Bruce looks suspiciously at Annie.

BRUCE
Oh. Well, I just hope you're okay.

HELEN
 (looks hungrily and picks
 up pie)
 My goodness, I can't wait for a
 piece of this sweet potato pie.

ABIGAIL
 Mommy and I made it this morning.

HELEN
 You did? Well, then I know it's
 gonna be good.
 (looks at David)
 Can I offer you a slice, Bruce?

BRUCE
 (mouth half full)
 No, thank you. I think it might be
 poisoned.

The whole table falls silent, as everyone hangs their heads
 in embarrassment.

INT. ANNIE'S STATION WAGON - FRONT SEAT - EVENING

Annie, in the driver's seat, carefully watches the road, as
 Bruce sits shotgun and the kids are in back.

BRUCE
 Do you need to fill up on gas? I've
 got some money.

ANNIE
 No, thanks. I filled up this
 morning.

BRUCE
 Are you telling the truth?

Annie breaths a LOUD SIGH, as she continues the ride home.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Annie, dish of leftovers in hand, goes over to the
 refrigerator to put them away, with Bruce right behind her.

BRUCE
 See you're putting away the lies, I
 mean leftovers.

Annie hesitates, turns around and angrily SLAMS the DISH down
 on the floor, SHATTERING it, as Bruce jumps up.

BRUCE

Wow, I see we're a bit feisty this turkey day.

ANNIE

(stern)

You shut the fuck up right now. You embarrass me in front of my parents and the kids.

BRUCE

It was well-deserved. Something's fishy, and I'm getting to the bottom of it.

(one full beat)

There's someone else. And I'm gonna find out who. I can't trust you anymore.

ANNIE

Then divorce me, Bruce.

BRUCE

I couldn't.

ANNIE

Why not?

BRUCE

(yells loudly)

I care too much about this family!
And I love you too much!

ANNIE

Are you telling me the truth?

BRUCE

More than you ever will. Happy Thanksgiving.

Bruce exits OUT OF VIEW from the kitchen, as Annie quietly looks on.

INT. ANNIE'S STATION WAGON - FRONT SEAT - NEXT MORNING

Annie drives Katie to softball practice, as there is silence between them.

ANNIE

Gettin' ready for the holidays?

KATIE

Yeah. They should be fun.

The silence continues, as Annie pulls up in front the local park.

ANNIE

Okay, here we are. Have fun at practice.

Annie leans in to give her daughter a kiss. Katie hugs but does not kiss her mother.

KATIE

You're not worthy of my kisses. At least not now.

Katie opens the passenger side door and exits toward the soccer field. Annie somberly watches Katie depart, as small tears start to run down her cheeks.

INT. LOCAL SUPERMARKET - MEAT SECTION - EVENING

Annie carefully inspects the ware in the butcher section, as she slowly but unknowingly pulls her shopping cart.

Annie's CART COLLIDES with another shopper's cart.

ANNIE

(embarrassed)

I am so sorry. Please let me get that for...

The shopper turns around, as it is David.

ANNIE

(slightly surprised)

Dave. Hi.

Annie warmly enfolds David and leans in to kiss him, when he squirms away.

ANNIE

(sotto voce; annoyed)

Do I have mono or something? What is it?

BRUCE

(sotto voce)

Annie, I can explain...

ANNIE

(interrupts)

Nobody wants to kiss me. Katie did the same thing this morning.

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 Annie, you shouldn't be seen with
 me. Or anyone else for that matter.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 What are you talking about?

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 Bruce was talking to me after the
 ball game. He's onto us, Annie.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 I know, Dave. But why should it
 change how we feel?

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 Annie, this is getting way too
 risky to continue.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce; stern)
 You are my true love. I won't let
 anything or anyone get between us.

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 Of course.

David stares pensively and aimlessly, as Annie notices.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Already you're thinking about it.

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 Oh, I'm sorry. I just noticed
 Ritzes were on sale. Three for five
 dollars.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Annie and Abigail happily prepare for the holidays, as they
 decorate and set up the Christmas tree. Katie appears INTO
 VIEW from downstairs, as Annie notices.

ANNIE

Katie, Abby and I are setting up the tree and decorations. Wanna join us?

KATIE

No, thanks. I'm not in the spirit. Where's Dad?

ANNIE

He called. He's working late tonight. C'mon, honey, don't be a scrooge.

ABIGAIL

Yeah. Deck the halls.

KATIE

(looks angrily at Abby)
I can think of other things I'd like to deck.

(one full beat)

I'm staying at Lily's house on Saturday. She's having a small holiday party with friends.

ANNIE

You can't go.

KATIE

Why not?

ANNIE

Our Christmas party is this weekend. Invite your friends over.

KATIE

Yeah right, Mom. I wanna call Dad.

ANNIE

Katie, he's very busy.
(presents cell phone)
Plus, he forgot his cell phone.

KATIE

I'll be in the kitchen.

ANNIE

Okay.

Katie departs OUT OF VIEW into the kitchen.

ANNIE
 (looks lovingly at
 Abigail)
 Promise Mommy you won't grow up too
 fast.

ABIGAIL
 I promise, Mommy.

Annie smiles warmly at Abby and kisses her on the cheek. They continue to decorate when Bruce's CELL PHONE RINGS. Annie answers.

ANNIE
 (speaks into cell phone)
 Hello?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. SHERATON HOTEL (CHICAGO) - HOTEL SUITE - EVENING

Debbie, champagne flute in hand, speaks over the BLARE of Christmas MUSIC in the background, as she celebrates with her co-horts.

DEBORAH
 (in Texas drawl)
 Hello? Is Bruce there?

ANNIE
 (speaks into phone)
 I'm afraid not. He's working late.

DEBORAH
 (in Texas drawl)
 I shoulda figured that. Do you know
 what time he'll be home?

ANNIE
 (speaks into phone)
 No, I do not.

DEBORAH
 (in Texas drawl)
 Well, me and a couple of my
 partners in crime are in town and
 havin a holiday shindig. We would
 love for him to come.

ANNIE
 (speaks into phone)
 Excuse me, but who are you?

DEBORAH

(in Texas drawl)

Please forgive me. I'm Debbie.
Bruce and I met in Dallas on
business last May. May I ask who
you are?

ANNIE)

(speaks into phone;
sternly)

This is his wife, Annie.

DEBORAH

(in Texas drawl)

A pleasure, Annie. Could you please
tell Bruce that I called and that
you are both welcome to attend our
party. Chicago Sheraton. Suite
1206.

ANNIE

(speaks into phone)

I'll tell Bruce that you called.
Thanks for the invite. Happy
Holidays.

Annie ends the phone call, as she places the cell phone on a
nearby table. She goes back to decorating.

ABIGAIL (O.S.)

Is everything okay, Mommy?

ANNIE

(looks at Abigail;
cryptic)

Never better, hon. Never better.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It is the night of the Morris' Christmas party, as family and
friends eat, drink, and converse with each other above the
DIN of CHRISTMAS MUSIC.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Annie, dressed in a green gown, takes some appetizers out of
the oven, as her mother looks on.

ANNIE

(turns appetizers)

Thank God I picked up an extra box
of these. I didn't think there'd be
this many here!

HELEN
Are you okay?

ANNIE
(unhearing)
What?

HELEN
(speaks louder)
Are you okay?

ANNIE
I just want to make sure everyone
has a good time.

HELEN
Have you spoken to Bruce?

ANNIE
Not at all. He's working the room.

HELEN
(takes pan from Annie)
Let me take those. Go and enjoy
yourself
(motions to Annie)
Go on now!

The DOORBELL RINGS, as Annie hears it.

ANNIE
Oh, the door.

FRONT DOOR

Opens, as David stands, gifts in hand.

ANNIE
(smiles warmly)
Dave.

DAVID
(smiles warmly)
Happy Holidays, Annie.

ANNIE
(hugs and kisses David)
Merry Christmas, Dave.

DAVID
(hands gifts to Annie)
I come bearing gifts.

ANNIE
 (takes gifts from David)
 Dave, you shouldn't have.

DAVID
 How are things?

ANNIE
 (meekly)
 Okay, I guess.

DAVID
 How's Bruce?

Annie motions over to Bruce.

BRUCE

Sits with a coterie of friends, as he laughs and converses.

DAVID
 I'm gonna say hello.

ANNIE
 I'll be in the kitchen.

Annie exits OUT OF VIEW, as David slowly ambles over to Bruce and his friends.

DAVID
 Hi, Bruce. Happy Holidays.

BRUCE
 (drunk; rises from his
 chair)
 Dave! Glad you could make it.
 (motions to everyone)
 Fellas, please give a warm holiday
 welcome to my best friend and
 neighbor, Dave.

DAVID
 (waves to everyone)
 Hi, everyone. Happy Holidays.

BRUCE
 You thirsty, Dave?

DAVID
 I'm good, Bruce. Thanks.

BRUCE
 Come on. Have a drink.
 (looks at everyone)
 I'll be right back, guys.

Bruce and David head over to the bar.

BRUCE
 (fills a cup with ice)
 What's your poison tonight?

DAVID
 I really don't feel like drinking
 tonight, Bruce.

BRUCE
 C'mon, Dave. Have a drink with me.
 Tis' the season.

DAVID
 (fumbles)
 Okay. I'll have a.a.a.... Jack and
 coke.

BRUCE
 Sounds good.

Bruce prepares David's drink, as they start to talk.

DAVID
 So, how's your holiday been?

BRUCE
 Not too bad. Not speaking to the
 battle ax. She's been avoiding me
 like cold germs.
 (hands David his drink)
 Here you go.

BRUCE
 (raises his glass)
 Cheers. To a safe holiday and great
 New Year.

DAVID
 (toasts with Bruce)
 I'll drink to that.

A moment of silence follows, as Bruce and David enjoy their
 drinks.

DAVID

If you don't mind me saying,
Annie's looking great tonight.

BRUCE

Thanks. She's a perfect ten,
despite everything. Still trying to
figure out who she's banging behind
my back.

DAVID

Ah, Bruce. Don't worry.

BRUCE

(takes a sip of his drink)
We'll soon see.

SAME - HOURS LATER

Bruce is completely drunk, as he mumbles incoherently to his friends, as he struggles to get up and walk straight. Gerald appears INTO VIEW to try and help Bruce.

GERALD

(concerned)
Bruce, why don't you take a nap
upstairs?

BRUCE

(drunk)
Relax, Gerry. Ain't nothing wrong
with a little holiday spirit.

Bruce loses his balance, stumbles, and HITS the FLOOR hard, as EVERYONE watches and GASPS.

GERALD

(helps Bruce up)
I think you've had enough, Bruce.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

David washes his hands and splashes some water on his face. He turns off the sink, and dries his hands on a nearby towel. He carefully looks at himself in the mirror.

Suddenly, a hand emerges INTO VIEW and pinches him on the backside.

DAVID
 (vaults up and yells)
 Oh, my God!!

David turns around to find a smiling Annie.

ANNIE
 Thought you might like a nice
 Christmas goose!

DAVID
 (worried; sotto voce)
 Annie, what the hell are you doing
 in here?!

ANNIE
 Well, it is my house! Relax. I just
 wanted to see you. C'mon, where's
 your Christmas spirit?

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 Annie, I don't think you should be
 here. Can we talk later?

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 When do we ever get time alone?

Annie leans in to kiss David, as he reverts back.

DAVID
 (worried; sotto voce)
 Annie, please.

ANNIE
 Guess I need a mistletoe, huh?

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Gerald slowly helps Bruce up the stairs.

GERALD
 Are you okay, Bruce?

BRUCE
 (drunk)
 I'm fine, Gerry. Thanks for
 everything, man.
 (one full beat)
 Listen, can I stop and take a leak?

GERALD
Are you sure you'll be okay?

BRUCE
(drunk)
I'll manage just fine. See you
downstairs in a few.

GERALD
Okay, Bruce. Just be careful.

BRUCE
I will. Thanks again, Ger.

Gerald departs OUT OF VIEW, as Bruce takes a DEEP BREATH and heads toward the bathroom door.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Annie continues to kiss and fondle David, who reluctantly attempts to push her away.

CLOSEUP - BATHROOM DOOR KNOB

Slowly begins to turn and open.

Bruce slowly enters into the bathroom and catches Annie and David in their tracks.

DAVID
(astounded)
Oh, my God. Bruce, please let me
explain...

Bruce stares intensely at Annie and David and quickly flees OUT OF VIEW from the bathroom.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone continues to enjoy the Christmas party, when Bruce returns and calls everyone to attention.

BRUCE
(calls loudly)
Excuse me, excuse me. May I have
your attention. I would like for
all of you to know that my wife of
fifteen years has been cheating on
me with another man.

Annie and David arrive downstairs, as they listen to Bruce.

BRUCE

But not just any man. My own
neighbor and best friend, David
Jennings.

David approaches Bruce.

DAVID

Bruce, I can explain...

Bruce grabs David and angrily tosses him into a nearby table
with food, as EVERYONE GASPS.

BRUCE

Relax, Dave. Enjoy some hors `d
euvres. Better yet, get the fuck
out.

ANNIE

Bruce, that's enough.

BRUCE

(looks intensely at Annie)
Keep outta this. I'll deal with you
in a minute.

David carefully gets to his feet and goes to approach Bruce.

DAVID

Bruce, please.

Before he can continue, Bruce angrily punches him, as he
falls to the floor.

BRUCE

Shut up and get the fuck out!

Annie goes to try and help David, but is restrained by her
father.

BRUCE

You ain't even gettin' your coat.
Walk home in the cold, asshole.

David looks calmly but intensely at Bruce, then turns to
everyone.

DAVID

(composed)
I'm sorry for ruining this grand
evening, folks. Happy Holidays.

David heads to the front door and exits OUT OF VIEW, the door closing behind him.

Bruce turns his attention to his wife.

BRUCE

(intense)

Now to you. This was one super gift you got me. I'd have taken a bag of reindeer shit instead.

ANNIE

Even that would be too good for you, you sonuvabitch.

HELEN

Bruce, why don't we discuss this at a better time and place?

ANNIE

No, Mom. I wanna talk about this right here, right now. Everyone should know that my wife's a two-timing, no good whore!

ANNIE

(yells loudly)

Oh, really?

(turns to everyone)

Well, I've got an announcement of my own to make. What my bastard husband hasn't mentioned is that he's been cheating on me.

(beat)

That's right. While away on business, my husband had an affair with a good 'ole Texas gal named Debbie Parsons.

Bruce looks quietly and astounded, as Annie continues.

ANNIE

(turns to Bruce; bold)

Pot and the kettle, dickhead. I guess you really did Dallas, and Debbie too. That would make for quite a porno, I'm sure!

Bruce angrily SLAPS Annie, who falls to the floor. Annie feels her face, as blood slowly trickles down her lip. She slowly rises, then looks at her own blood on her finger, then at Bruce.

ANNIE

(calm)

Since we're making announcements, I thought I'd make one more. I'm divorcing you, Bruce. Effective January first. Might as well start off the new year right.

BRUCE

You're shitting me.

ANNIE

(strongly)

Oh, no. Consider this my gift to you. Merry Christmas, hon.

(turns to everyone)

Sorry for all of this, everyone.

Annie departs OUT OF VIEW from the living room, as Bruce stands front and center.

BRUCE

(calmly)

Party's over, folks.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT V

ACT VI

SCENE XXI

FADE IN:

MONTAGE - WEEK OF CHRISTMAS

Annie somberly assists with setting up some Christmas decorations in the school offices.

Katie and Abigail watch Christmas specials on television.

David takes out his garbage, as he looks across at the Morris' house.

At the office Christmas party, Bruce sits quietly in a corner sipping ginger ale.

Annie does some last-minute Christmas shopping, as she receives long stares from neighbors/friends.

END MONTAGE

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

David sits on the living room sofa, reading the newspaper, when there is a KNOCK at the DOOR. He rises to answer it.

FRONT DOOR

Opens, as Katie stands in the doorway.

DAVID
(slightly surprised)
Katie, hi.

KATIE
Hi, Mister Jennings.
(presents coat)
Thought I'd bring this back to you.

DAVID
(takes coat)
Thanks. I've been freezing my butt
off the past few days.

A moment of silence follows, as David and Katie look coyly at each other.

DAVID
So, getting ready for the holidays?

KATIE
Yup. They don't look too merry or
bright.

DAVID
Katie, I just want to say how sorry
I am to you, Abby and all of your
family.

KATIE
I appreciate the apology. But it's
a little too late. Happy Holidays.

EXT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

David, clad in a robe, sips some coffee, as he watches the night winter sky. Suddenly, an arm with a gun in hand, emerges INTO VIEW, CLICKS, and points directly at David's head.

DAVID
 (calm)
 I gather that's not a mistletoe.

BRUCE (O.S.)
 (intense)
 Not by a long shot, pal.

DAVID
 Can I at least turn around?

BRUCE (O.S.)
 Slowly.

David calmly pivots and faces Bruce, who continues to point the gun at him.

BRUCE
 Whadya think? Got it on sale at the
 Sports Authority.
 (one full beat)
 A word to the wise. Stay away from
 me and my family. Or you'll live to
 regret it. Happy Kwanzaa, bud.

Bruce slowly puts the gun down and into his coat and walks away, as David soberly watches him.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CHRISTMAS EVE

The entire family, with Helen and Gerald, are seated together at the dining room table, ready to enjoy a Christmas Eve dinner.

HELEN
 My goodness, Annie. You outdid
 yourself this year.

GERALD
 That's my girl. Would somebody like
 to say grace?

ANNIE
 I will.

Everyone bows their heads in silence, as Annie begins.

ANNIE
 Lord, we thank you for this
 blessing of nourishment. May you
 bless us with better times, and
 most importantly, better people in
 the new year.

BRUCE

Hearing the prayer, opens his eyes and looks disgusted at Annie.

ANNIE

Amen.

The prayer is over, as everyone starts to eat.

HELEN

So girls, are you getting ready for tomorrow?

KATIE

(sober)

Yup.

GERALD

So Bruce, who do you think will win tomorrow?

BRUCE

(mouth half full)

Not sure, Gerry. Should be a good one. I'll take Dallas by a touchdown.

ANNIE

Figures you would go with Dallas.

BRUCE

What was that? Is that the witch of Christmas present?

ANNIE

Maybe you're still hungover.

HELEN

So Annie, what are you cooking tomorrow?

ANNIE

(mouth half full)

I'm thinking about it. I was considering just heating up some leftovers from tonight.

BRUCE

(mouth half full)

Heaven forbid you would have to cook on consecutive days.

ANNIE
Please, stop.

BRUCE
You started.

SAME - HOURS LATER

The house is completely dark, as everyone is asleep awaiting Christmas morning.

STAIRCASE

Is visible in the moon light, as dark figure emerges INTO VIEW. It's Annie, as she quietly and furtively goes down to the staircase over to the front door.

GRANDPARENTS AND KIDS

Sleep comfortably on the living room sofa.

Annie carefully watches them, as she makes her way to the front door. She quietly unlocks the door, opens it and exits OUT OF VIEW.

DARK CORNER OF LIVING ROOM

Lies still, when a figure emerges INTO VIEW. It's Bruce, who watched Annie depart.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -NIGHT

David sleeps comfortably in a chair by the lit Christmas tree. There is a KNOCK at the FRONT DOOR. David sluggishly gets up to answer it.

DAVID
(groggy)
Who is it?

ANNIE (O.S.)
(from behind door)
It's Annie.

David opens the door, as Annie enters and embraces him.

ANNIE
I am so sorry for what happened.
I'm divorcing Bruce.

DAVID
(looks incredulously at
her)
(MORE)

DAVID (cont'd)
Annie, don't. Think about the
girls, your parents, your
happiness.

ANNIE
I'm happiest with you.

DAVID
Annie, I've had the best time of my
life with you. But we can't be
together. We just can't.

BRUCE (O.S.)
And you won't.

Annie and David hear the voice and turn around.

BRUCE

Stands in the doorway, gun pointed to David.

BRUCE
I warned you, didn't I? It seems
you only learn the hard way. Annie,
step away.

ANNIE
(defiant)
No, Bruce. Leave us alone.

DAVID
Bruce, please don't shoot.

BRUCE
Just walk away, Annie.

ANNIE
No.
(pulls out her cell phone)
I'm calling the cops.

Bruce CLICKS his GUN, and continues to wield it.

BRUCE
Just get away from my wife.

David calmly steps away, as Annie moves with him.

DAVID
(cautious)
Annie, please listen to Bruce.

ANNIE

(strong)

No. He doesn't control me. Matter of fact, shoot us.

BRUCE

What?

ANNIE

You heard me. Shoot us. If it makes you that much of a man, pull the trigger.

(one full beat)

But before you do, just clean that disgusting snot on the side of your face.

Bruce heeds Annie and looks and wipes his nose. Having the chance, Annie grabs a fireplace poker and hits Bruce in the arm, freeing the gun from his grasp.

BRUCE

(painfully)

Aaahhhh.

ANNIE

(grabs David)

Come on.

Annie and David depart upstairs, as Bruce painfully recovers and follows them.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - ATTIC - NIGHT

Annie and David sit quietly in the attic, as they converse.

ANNIE

(sotto voce)

Just wanted to tell you that I love you.

DAVID

(sotto voce)

I love you too, Annie. I just don't want to see anyone get hurt.

ANNIE

We won't.

(presents gun)

Not as long as I have this.

The two kiss tenderly, as they anticipate Bruce's arrival. They gently walk along the attic.

ANNIE
 (sotto voce)
 Maybe we can go on vacation.

DAVID
 (sotto voce)
 Annie, right now we should try and
 talk to Bru...

Before David can finish, a figure emerges INTO VIEW and
 tackles him to the floor. It's David, out for revenge.

BRUCE
 (intensely)
 Didn't think I remembered the
 secret way into the attic, huh?

Bruce punches David hardly, as he proceeds to slam his head
 into the floor.

ANNIE
 (watches and yells)
 Stop it! Stop it now!

Annie pulls out the gun and aims it.

Bruce takes a loose piece of wood and is about to hit David,
 when a SHOT is FIRED, hitting him in the shoulder.

BRUCE
 (drops wood and yells)
 Fuck!!

DAVID
 (checks on Bruce)
 Bruce, are you okay?

Bruce punches David, who falls. Bruce is about to attack
 David, when David trips him, making him fall.

David vaults to his feet and heads to the attic window. He
 quickly opens it and climbs out.

ANNIE (O.S.)
 (yells)
 Dave, what are you doing?

EXT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - ROOFTOP - NIGHT (SNOW)

David carefully scales the snow-covered roof, as he tries to
 escape Bruce.

INT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - ATTIC - NIGHT

Bruce heads toward the attic window, as Annie tries to stop him.

ANNIE
What are you doing?

BRUCE
(pushes her off him)
Get away from me!

Bruce goes toward the window, as Annie watches on worried.

EXT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - ROOFTOP - NIGHT (SNOW)

David tentatively tiptoes along the edge of his roof, as he tries to elude capture. He looks up at the side, which is a very high climb. A VOICE emerges.

BRUCE (O.S.)
(calls out)
Thought you could escape, huh?

David turns around.

BRUCE

Stand a few fee away, knife in hand.

BRUCE
Time to finish what was started.

DAVID
(loudly)
What do you want from me?

BRUCE
Well, it is the season of giving.
How about a pound of flesh?
(looks at knife)
This puppy should do the trick. Got
it from the kitchen. Cuts
everything. Steak, chicken roasts.
But best of all, home wreckers.
(wields knife upward)
Feliz Navidad, fucko!

Bruce inches closer to David, ready to stab him, when a VOICE beckons.

ANNIE (O.S.)
(yells loudly)
Leave him alone, Bruce!

Bruce looks over.

ANNIE

Stands in the backyard, pointing the gun at Bruce.

ANNIE
(yells loudly)
Move again and I'll shoot. I mean
it!

BRUCE
(bold)
Pull the trigger, hon.

Bruce moves toward David.

Annie pulls the trigger, but the gun CLICKS.

BRUCE
(yells loudly)
Gotcha!
(turns to David)
I was so sure I'd get you with one
shot, I put only one bullet. Oh,
well. I didn't get that gift, so
I'll get something better.

Bruce lunges toward David, attempting to stab him. David grabs Bruce by the arm, knocking his arm against the roof, jostling out the knife. Bruce punches David in the face, as he falls back.

Bruce goes for the knife, but David trips him. Bruce stumbles, but keeps his balance. Bruce pushes David.

DAVID'S LEFT FOOT

Loses balance on the tip of the roof. David slips and is about to fall, when his left hand grabs hold of the edge of the roof.

DAVID

Hangs on by his hand, looking down at the ground.

DAVID
(yells loudly)
Somebody help me!!

ANNIE (O.S.)
 (yells loudly)
 Bruce, help David!!

Bruce carefully goes over to David and tries to pull him up.

BRUCE
 (strenuous)
 Just give me your other hand.

DAVID (O.S.)
 Okay.

Bruce tries to pull David up using both arms and trying to keep his balance on the roof.

ANNIE (O.S.)
 (yells loudly)
 Don't let go!

CLOSE UP - DAVID AND BRUCE'S HANDS

Covered with snow and red, tightly clench. Suddenly, Bruce's hand makes contact with the knife, cutting him and loosening his grip.

BRUCE
 (painfully)
 Aahhh!

David falls back, as Bruce frighteningly looks on.

DAVID
 (yells loudly)
 Oh, God!!

BRUCE
 (exclaims)
 Daaavveee!!!

EXT. JENNINGS' HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT (SNOW)

Annie looks on, trembling and crying.

DAVID

Lies lifeless on the ground, the old rake bursting through his stomach, a pool of blood around him.

ANNIE
 (hysterical; into cell
 phone)
 Yes. 911. There's been an accident.
 (MORE)

ANNIE (cont'd)
1206 Mane Street. Please come
quick!!

FADE OUT.

SCENE XXII

FADE IN:

EXT. LOCAL CEMETERY - DAY (SNOWING)

SUPERIMPOSITION - THREE DAYS LATER

Family and friends surround the casket of David, bowing their heads in silence, as FATHER THEODORE MCLEAN read the eulogy.

FATHER MCLEAN

(sober)

We will remember David as a loving
and devoted husband, esteemed
neighbor, and lifelong and loyal
friend.

(beat)

A human life is not defined by the
number of heart beats, but by the
words, deeds, and special moments
one shares throughout the course of
their life. David's life, albeit
brief, was one that will persist
and endure now and forever. Ashes
to ashes, dust to dust....

Father McLean continues with the prayer, as David's casket is lowered into the ground. Abigail throws a rose on the casket.

CLOSEUP - ROSE

Covered with droplets of snow, rests idly on the casket.

INT. MORRIS HOUSE - ADULTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie quietly reads a book, as she lays in bed.

BEDROOM DOOR

Opens slowly, as Bruce calmly enters.

Annie places down her book and looks intently at him. Bruce calmly makes his way over to the bed, as he gets under the covers.

He looks pensively at Annie. Annie and Bruce look at each other, as Annie turns off the lamp on the night stand, as everything FADES TO BLACK.

FADE OUT.

THE END

(MORE)

(cont'd)