

FAR FROM HEAVEN

Written by

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Hartford, Connecticut, 1957

EXT. NEW ENGLAND VILLAGE - DAY

The bells of a Gothic church are ringing down upon a comely square near downtown Hartford. The crisp fall day is alive with color, as cornflower skies burst through the autumn reds and golds, setting off the clean brick buildings and freshly painted homes that so proudly distinguish this New England township.

Music over OPENING CREDITS.

We see a powder blue, '56 Chevrolet turn onto the main road its way into town.

EXT. VILLAGE ST. - DAY

The Chevrolet stops in front of a small dance school just off State St. and an attractive, red-haired woman in her mid-thirties emerges from the car, wearing sunglasses and a scarf. She says hello to a mother and daughter exiting the school on her way inside, returning a moment later with a strawberry-haired girl in ballet clothes. CATHY WHITAKER, - having collected her 8-year-old daughter JANICE from ballet class is finally returning home from another busy day.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - LATER

Cathy's car is turning onto a well-tended, residential street, full of traditional black-shuttered, white wood homes, each set back on spacious lawns against, the blaze of autumn color

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LATER

She turns into the driveway of a large, fastidiously landscaped 2-story home, with a slate roof and flagstone walkway. DAVID WHITAKER, a typical 11-year-old boy, with-dark hair like his dad's, is circling around the front of the house on his bright red Schwinn:

DAVID

Mother! Mother! Can I sleep over at Hutch's tonight? Mrs. Hutchinson gave permission.

CATHY

(from the car)
Not tonight, David.
(MORE)

CATHY(cont'd)

Your father, and I are going out
and I need you to, look after your
sister.

DAVID

Aww, shucks.

CATHY

Now move your school bag, David, so
mother can park.

The Whitaker's maid SYBIL, a handsome black woman in her
early 30's, is just coming down the front steps to the car.,

JANICE

(hopping out)

Sherry Seeger says they only' cost
something like five or six dollars
Please mother, please can I?

CATHY

(opening her door)

Oh Sybil, thank heavens!

SYBIL

Well I knew you were going to the
grocery -

CATHY

David, please help Sybil unload the
car.

DAVID

How come Janice doesn't gotta?

CATHY

Doesn't have to. Because Janice is
carrying in all her, belongings an
marching straight upstairs into the
bath.

She steps out of the car loaded down with laundered clothes
and packages.

CATHY

Your father and I have an
engagement so I want you both to
have a nice early dinner. And help
Sybil.

DAVID/JANICE

(not exactly in sync)

Yes, ma'am.

CATHY

Sybil, did Mr. Whitaker call while I was out?

SYBIL

No, Mrs. Whitaker. Not since you've been gone.

CATHY

How do you like that guy. Big time executive and he still can't remember a single social obligation!

JANICE

So mother can I? Please can I get them?

CATHY

Janice I said we'll discuss it with your father. Now hurry on inside. David, put your bike away and help Sybil with the groceries! Where's your jacket?

DAVID

Inside.

Cathy turns to see her best friend ELEANOR FINE, a lean, blond woman in her early 40's, just turning up her drive in a shiny green Imperial.

CATHY

Well hello, stranger! Aren't I seeing you in about three hours time?

Eleanor is stepping out of her car.

ELEANOR

You are. But I just left the caterers this instant and I had to dash over.

CATHY

You have the samples?

ELEANOR

You bet.

CATHY

Ooh. Come inside.

They start into the house.

ELEANOR
I can only stay a second.

CATHY
You just caught me, actually -
David! What did I tell you?

DAVID
I'm getting the last bag!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Inside, Janice is practicing some ballet steps by a large stone fireplace. Eleanor is in the midst of showing Cathy color samples for the big company party it is their annual venture to host.

ELEANOR
And imagine with the table setting
I showed you. The aqua trim? Is
that smart?

CATHY
Oh yes.

ELEANOR
You like?

CATHY
Mmm-hmm.

ELEANOR
(starting to put things
away)
Alright. So I'll call the caterers
in the morning and you confirm with
Dorothy on the deposit - and honey,
we're in business.

CATHY
Magnavox '57, here we come.

ELEANOR
You betcha.

JANICE
Mother, look!

CATHY

Janice I thought I told you to go
start your bath! You know your
father and I -

JANICE

Just this one part, pleeease.

CATHY

Alright, bunt lickety-split.

Janice performs a few steps for her mother and Eleanor as .
David pours over the TV guide on the couch.

ELEANOR

Oh, will you look at that?

CATHY

That's lovely darling.

ELEANOR

She's getting so grown up.

DAVID

Mother, can I stay up and watch The
Californians - Please!

CATHY

Janice, honey, watch the lamp!

JANICE

Ta-da!

Eleanor and Cathy applaud Janice who beams in delight.

ELEANOR

Ohh!

CATHY

That was lovely, dear. Now hurry on
up and get out of those clothes or
mother's going to be late.

Janice turns, still beaming, and dashes up the stairs.

ELEANOR

I better run. I still have loads to
do.

CATHY

Well I can imagine, with Mona
Lauder and that little white glove
of hers...

ELEANOR
 Aren't social mores the most
 dreadful bore? Mona's invited us at
 least three times last year so of
 course there wasn't a thing I could
 do. And Stan sees Fred at the
 club...

Cathy opens the door for her.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LATER

Eleanor starts down the front steps of the house toward her
 car.

CATHY
 Thanks for stopping by.

ELEANOR
 I'll see you at eight!

CATHY
 You know Frank. On the dot!

Cathy waves goodbye and closes the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Janice is curled into an armchair in the soft glow of Cathy's
 vanity, watching her mother do her make-up in the mirror.
 Cathy is dressed for the evening in sleeveless emerald green,
 setting off the tangerine of her hair.

JANICE
 Mother?

CATHY
 (doing her lipstick)
 Uh-huh?

JANICE
 When you were a little girl you
 looked like me, right?

CATHY
 Uh-huh.

JANICE
So when I grow up does that mean
I'll look like you?

CATHY
Is that what you want darling, to
look like me?

JANICE
Yes. I hope I look exactly as
pretty as you.

CATHY
What a lovely compliment coming
from my perfectly lovely daughter.

She picks up her wristwatch and glances at the time.

CATHY
Seven-fifteen!, Where on earth is
your father?

She gets up and walks over to a dresser.

JANICE
Mother?

CATHY
(searching for something)
What is it, dear?

JANICE
Can I try putting lipstick on me?

CATHY
(starting out the door)
Not tonight, Janice. Mother's going
to be late. Sybil!

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Cathy is starting down the stairs.

SYBIL
(off)
Yes, Mrs. Whitaker?

CATHY
Did I leave my gloves on the hall
table?

SYBIL

(off)

Yes, ma'am. I see them.

CATHY

You know it's nearly twenty after
and Mr. Whitaker still hasn't
phoned!

Sybil meets Cathy at the foot of the stairs with the gloves.

CATHY

Thank you, Sybil... - I'm at my
wits end. I even tried calling his
office, though I knew there
wouldn't be anyone -

The phone RINGS. Sybil goes to the hall table to answer it.

CATHY

Well I certainly hope that's him
now. Because if it isn't -

SYBIL

Whitaker residence.

(brief silence, then
stiffly)

Yes sir. One moment, please.

CATHY

Who is it?

SYBIL

(Lowered voice)

Police department.

Cathy frowns, taking the phone.

CATHY

Hello?

OFFICER'S VOICE

(through receiver)

Yes. Am I speaking with a Mrs.
Frank Whitaker?

CATHY

Yes.

OFFICER'S VOICE

Of 1616 Sycamore Drive?

CATHY

Yes.

INT. POLICE STATION BOOKING - EVENING

OFFICER

One moment please.

The OFFICER hands the phone over to FRANK WHITAKER, a dark-haired, big-boned man in his early forties, who has just finished wiping his ink-stained fingers with a rag.

FRANK

Cathy?

CATHY'S VOICE

Frank! Frank, what happened? Are you alright?

FRANK

I'm fine. Everything's fine. It was a big - mix-up, the whole thing. But you gotta come get me. They won't - let me leave on my own.

INT. WHITAKER FOYER - EVENING

CATHY

Oh, Frank. Don't worry, darling. I'll be there as quickly as I can.
(she hangs up the phone)

SYBIL

Is there anything I can do, Mrs. Whitaker?

CATHY

No. Thank you Sybil. Just keep an eye on the children. I'm sure I won't be long.

Cathy grabs her purse and coat and rushes for the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Cathy's car pulls up in front of the lamp-lit police station. She hurries out of the car, still in her evening clothes, and up the stone steps of the precinct.

INT. POLICE STATION FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS

Cathy walks over to the OFFICER at the desk.

OFFICER
Can I help you ma'am?

CATHY
Yes, I'm here to meet my husband.
The name's Whitaker, Frank
Whitaker.

OFFICER
Here we go. Room 103. If you'll
follow me, ma'am.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOOKING - LATER

Cathy signs the report and hands it to the BAIL CLERK.

BAIL CLERK
This is your copy, ma'am, and your
receipt.

CATHY
Thank you.

Then the door opens and Frank walks through it.

CATHY
Oh, Frank!

Cathy rushes to him and they embrace.

As they leave, two of the officers are still watching.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Cathy drives while Frank broods in the passenger seat. REAR-PROJECTED streetlights send charcoal shadows across their faces.

FRANK
I'll tell you one thing. If it
hadn't been for that sniveling
junior cop they'd have never gone
through the whole charade in the
first place!... `
(MORE)

FRANK(cont'd)

Stead of trying to save face. I saw the guy they were after - the 'loiterer'. They wouldn't even listen to me! I tell you, I have half a mind to sue the pants off the whole precinct.

CATHY

Or... you could simply forget the whole thing ever happened.

FRANK

(takes a breath)

I suppose you're right.

Brief silence.

CATHY

(a bit cautiously)

So were there - drinks after work?

FRANK

What do you mean?

CATHY

I thought they said something... Intoxication level, something-or-other - ?

FRANK

Christ! I had a lousy cocktail with Bill after work, going over the portfolio! Should I be arrested for that too?

CATHY

Of course not, darling.

FRANK

The whole thing's just put me in a fowl state.

CATHY

I know, dear. You just try to rest. We'll be home in no time.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER FOYER - LATER

Cathy stands in semi-darkness, on the phone with Eleanor. She finds the police report in her purse.

CATHY

He's fine... The car's fine. Frank says it was the bumper that got hit, but you know me. I can't tell the difference... I'm just sorry we had to miss it... I know...

She drops the papers into the waste-basket.

INT. WHITAKER BEDROOM - LATER

Frank sits in bed with an open book on his lap, staring into space. The door squeaks open and he looks over.

CATHY

She was fine. Said it was a dreadful bore, what with Mona Lauder and her gossip.

FRANK

(depleted)
Cathy, I'm sorry.

CATHY

(embracing him)
Darling, you've nothing to be sorry for. It was all just a silly wretched mistake!

They kiss deeply and he takes her in his arms. Cathy closes her eyes and begins caressing his shoulders and neck. But Frank stops and pulls away. She looks at him.

FRANK

Feel so tired.

He turns and lays down into bed and she caresses the side of his head with her hand.

CATHY

Course you do. You sleep now.

She switches off the light, pulls up his blanket and slowly walks to the bathroom.

INT. BREAKFAST ROOM - MORNING

The Whitaker clan are all seated around the breakfast room table finishing a breakfast of bacon and eggs.

DAVID

Pop, Hutch says if the Russian's drop a bomb on us we couldn't drop one back on them. Is that true?

FRANK

Well, son, I'm afraid Hutch has a point there.

DAVID

Why, pop? Why couldn't we?

CATHY

Drink your orange juice David.

JANICE

I already drank mine. Look father!

FRANK

Attagirl!

DAVID

Pop, why?

CATHY

(glancing at the clock)
Would you look at the time? It's already a quarter after! You kids are going to miss your bus! Sybil can you help me get their coats?

Sybil helps Cathy distribute coats and lunch-boxes, and hurry them out of the kitchen.

CATHY

Alright, now. Say goodbye to your father.

JANICE

Bye, father.
(she kisses him)

FRANK

Goodbye, kitten.

DAVID

Bye, pop!

FRANK

Have a good day at school, son.

David is first out the door.

CATHY
Janice, have you got your notebook?

JANICE
Yes, Mother.

David swings open the front door of the house. We can hear the bus approaching.

DAVID
(off)
The bus is here!

SYBIL
David - your lunch!

Cathy takes it from Sybil and rushes after him.

INT. DEN - MORNING

CATHY
David!

He swoops back in, grabs it, and is off again, followed by Janice.

JANICE
Bye, mother!

CATHY
Have a nice day at school, dear.

Cathy pecks her on the cheek and she runs out the door.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MORNING

The bus pulls up in front of the house as David and Janice go running and Cathy waves.

CATHY
Bye!

The big yellow door closes behind them and the bus pulls off down the street. A small truck is just pulling up to the house which reads DEAGAN GARDEN SUPPLY.

INT. DEN - MORNING

Cathy is walking back' into the house as Frank emerges from the kitchen, gathering his things for work.

CATHY
I thought you were going to have
another piece of toast?

FRANK
It's late. I should get over there.

CATHY
Well can I at least fix you lunch?

FRANK
No, thank you, dear. I've got lunch
meetings all week long. It's
portfolio season!

The doorbell rings.

CATHY
(calling)
Sybil, if that's the milkman, his
check is in the kitchen drawer!

SYBIL
(off)
Yes, ma'am!

Cathy helps Frank on with his overcoat.

CATHY
Well I'm just glad you're feeling
better, dear.

FRANK
Thank you, darling.

Frank embraces Cathy and kisses her warmly just as - BOOM! -
a camera flash ignites them, and they turn.

Standing beside Sybil in the entryway is MRS. LEACOCK , a
grey-faced woman in her 60's, and a young PHOTOGRAPHER with a
camera.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Pardon me, ma'am, sir.

SYBIL
Excuse me, Mrs. Whitaker. This is -
Mrs. Leacock? She says she had an
appointment with you this morning?

CATHY

Oh Jimminy - I completely forgot the time! Yes, of course, Mrs. Leacock, please come in.

MRS. LEACOCK

I do apologize, Mrs. Whitaker, but candid views are always the best.

CATHY

Darling, this is Mrs. Leacock, the lady I told you about, from the Weekly Gazette.

FRANK

Ah, yes. The fine lady who wants to air all our dirty secrets.

(shaking her hand)

How do you do, Mrs. Leacock?

MRS. LEACOCK

Fear not, Mr. Whitaker. We at the Gazette ascribe to only the highest of professional standards.

FRANK

Well I'm glad to hear it. Now if you'll all please excuse me, I have some professional standards of my own to keep up.

(kissing Cathy)

Goodbye, darling.

CATHY

Goodbye, dear.

FRANK

(nodding goodbye)

Mrs. Leacock...

MRS. LEACOCK

Pleasure, Mr. Whitaker.

Franks gives a final wave to the room and is gone.

MRS. LEACOCK

Your husband's a very charming man, Mrs. Whitaker.

CATHY

Thank you. We're rather fond of him ourselves. Please, won't you come in and make yourselves at home.

Cathy escorts them into the living room and over to the couch while untying her kitchen apron.

CATHY

As you can see, I'm just running a bit behind schedule today.

MRS. LEACOCK

That's quite alright, dear.

Cathy sits down opposite her, casually smoothing her hair and dress.

CATHY

I suppose I still can't imagine why in the world you'd want an interview with me in the first place. It couldn't possibly be very interesting for your readers.

MRS. LEACOCK

The readers of the Weekly Gazette, Mrs. Whitaker, are women just like yourself, with families and homes to keep up. A good society paper need not be a gossip rag. You are the proud wife of a successful sales executive, planning the parties and posing at her husband's side on the advertisements.

She refers to a framed magazine advertisement on the wall, showing Cathy and Frank posed in front of their TV with the heading: MR. & MRS. MAGNAVOX CHOOSE NOTHING BUT THE BEST FOR THEIR HOME!

MRS. LEACOCK

To everyone here in Connecticut you are Mr. and Mrs. Magnavox.

CATHY

I suppose I should be flattered. I just don't feel I'm so very different from anyone else, really. I like to shop and wear a pretty dress every now and then. But really my life is just like any other wife or mother's - I don't suppose I've ever really wanted anything -

Suddenly, through the window, Cathy glimpses someone moving through her backyard. She stands.

MRS. LEACOCK
What is it, dear?

CATHY
I think I just saw someone walking
through our yard.

Cathy walks to the french doors leading to the backyard.
There she sees

A tall black man standing outside, hunching over something.

CATHY
What on earth...?

MRS. LEACOCK
(standing, seeing)
Oh my.

Cathy opens the door.

MRS. LEACOCK
Mrs. Whitaker - Perhaps you should
call the police -

EXT. WHITAKER BACKYARD - DAY

The Whitaker backyard is an ample, two-tiered expanse, with
flagstone walkways and fastidiously landscaped hedges, trees
and flower-beds bordering the swimming-pool and lawn.

Cathy takes a few cautious steps in the direction of the
stranger.

CATHY
Excuse me. Can I help you?

The man looks up from a shrub of evergreens, squinting. This
is RAYMOND DEAGAN, 40 years old, good-looking. He steps
toward her, looking slightly irritated himself.

Cathy takes an involuntary step back.

CATHY
Who are you?

RAYMOND
Ma'am, I'm sorry. My name's Raymond
Deagan. I'm Otis Deagan's son. I've
just been - taking over some of his
jobs since he -

CATHY
You're Otis's son?

RAYMOND
Yes.

CATHY
Well I'm - terribly sorry for speaking to you in that manner. I didn't know who was in my yard.

RAYMOND
No need.

CATHY
How is your father? I knew he was in the hospital.

RAYMOND
Yes, I - My father passed away, I'm afraid.

CATHY
No! I had no idea! I'm so very sorry.
(putting her hand on his arm)
Please accept our deepest condolences. Your father was a wonderful, dedicated man.

RAYMOND
Thank you.

The phone rings from inside the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

We hear Sybil answering it as Mrs. Leacock watches Cathy through the window - just removing her hand from Raymond's arm.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Sybil steps out to the porch from the kitchen door.

SYBIL
Mrs. Whitaker? I have Greenhill Caterers, on the line!

CATHY
 Thank you, Sybil!
 (to Raymond)
 I'm sorry. Would you excuse me a
 moment?

RAYMOND
 Of course.

Cathy hurries back inside.

CATHY
 Mrs. Leacock, I'm terribly sorry!
 I'll just be a minute more!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAGNAVOX OFFICES - DAY

Frank is walking briskly down the wide passageway of his floor at Magnavox, passing secretarial pools and other employees with a smile. Triangles of morning sun bleach the wood-paneled walls of the floor's lean, modern decor.

He passes a spry little secretary named Kitty.

KITTY
 Good morning, Mr. Whitaker.

FRANK
 Morning Kitty. Lovely dress you're wearing.

KITTY
 Thank you, sir.

Frank continues on towards the outer office of the executive suite where his secretary, MARLENE, is stationed beneath a large abstract wall-hanging.

Standing opposite, peering over a file is STAN FINE, Eleanor's husband, a tall, slightly greying man with a belly, who works right below Frank in the Hartford division.

FRANK
 Morning, Marlene, Stan!

MARLENE
 Good morning, Mr. Whitaker.

STAN

So how's the second best golfer in
Hartford this morning?

FRANK

Someone break the books already?
Don't tell me our wives' party
budgets have finally come in.

STAN

Almost as fatal. Millstein called.
Looks like New York just shaved a
week off portfolio deadline.

FRANK

You gotta be kidding me.

STAN

I wish I were.

FRANK

What're they trying to do, strangle
us to death?! Does Dennis know?

STAN

Called him first thing.

FRANK

Alright. Get Dennis and the others
and call a portfolio meeting for
lunch today. Marlene, see if you
can move production review to
dinner.

MARLENE

Yes, sir.

FRANK

And would you get my wife on the
phone?

(to Stan)

Thanks, Stan.

Frank pats Stan on the shoulder and marches through the large
wood-paneled door of his office.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Frank drops his briefcase and sits down heavily at the large,
handsomely ornamented desk.

He takes a breath before turning and quietly opening a lower drawer, pulling out a quart of Jack Daniels and pouring a swig into his coffee. As he stashes it away we hear

MARLENE

(on intercom)

Sir? I have Mrs. Whitaker on line 1.

FRANK

Thank you, Marlene.

Frank takes a slurp, swallows and pushes line 1 on his phone.

FRANK

Cathy, is that you, dear?

INT. WHITAKER FOYER - MORNING

Cathy speaks to Frank from the phone in the hall.

CATHY

Did you forget something?... Oh, Frank... I'm sorry, dear... No, I understand... I just wish you wouldn't overwork yourself, Frank. Especially after... I know - I know, dear... I will... See you then... Goodbye, dear.

Cathy hangs up the phone and starts back into the living room.

CATHY

I'm terribly sorry for the interruptions. Where was it you wanted me?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Just one more at the fireplace.

Cathy walks over to the fireplace where she puts one hand on the mantle and turns toward the photographer.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Right there. Now smile.

Cathy smiles.

MRS. LEACOCK

Isn't that darling.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Hold it...

FLASH.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN HARTFORD - NIGHT

We descend from a moonlit night past the Hartford skyline to the awning of Sammy's Steakhouse, where Frank and four STAFF MEMBERS are just emerging.

FRANK

(slightly slurred)

Well I guess that about wraps it up.

(shaking hands))

Bob, Rick. Gentlemen.

STAFF MEMBER 1

You're sure you're alright getting home, sir?

FRANK

Thank you, Davis. But as 2nd in command of the US McMillan I do feel equipped to locate my car without cover.

STAFF MEMBER 1

Very good, sir.

FRANK

Bright and early gentlemen!

They say goodnight and we follow Frank as he proceeds down the pink, lamplit blocks of downtown Hartford.

He passes teenagers clumped in cars, making out.

He passes a HOOKER.

HOOKER

Where ya headed, tiger?

Frank looks away as he passes. When he looks up again he sees

The marquee of a movie theater glowing up ahead.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Frank approaches the tungsten awning of the old, 20's-style cinema, currently featuring half-price double-bills. He stops.

The marquee reads: THREE FACES OF EVE and MIRACLE IN THE RAIN.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LATER

ONSCREEN: We are in the middle of THREE FACES OF EVE. Raymond Burr is questioning one of Joanne Woodward's more timid personalities.

Frank is walking in from the rear of the theater. He stops along the back wall and stands watching, muted in shadow like Edward Hopper's usherette.

ONSCREEN: Joanne Woodward is becoming agitated. She starts switching into another personality.

A dark-haired man is getting up from his seat and walking in the direction of the Gentleman's Lounge. Frank notices him pausing a moment at the foot of the small, carpeted stairway just as a second man approaches. The dark-haired man spots the second one and proceeds briskly down the stairs. The second man follows, looking around nervously as he goes.

Frank stares darkly down the empty corridor.

INT. WHITAKER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cathy sits in the lilac glow of her lamp-lit writing table, addresses party gunshots can be heard from downstairs.

Cathy turns the face of her desk-clock to see the time. It reads 10:36.

CATHY
(getting up)
Oh, for heavens sake... DAVID!

INT. WHITAKER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Music escorts us from the dark of the living room to the chestnut glow of the den where David sits watching television.

Sybil inventories serving ware in the dining room, as Cathy makes her way downstairs with writing tablet and pen.

CATHY

David, this is the third time I've told you to turn that infernal racket off and get into bed! Do you know what time it is?

DAVID

Mother please can I just this once stay up and watch the -

CATHY

No, David, you most certainly may not and that is final.

DAVID

(reluctantly turning it off)

Ah, jeez...

CATHY

That's not the sort of language we use in this house! Now march! And don't forget to wash your teeth!

As David swaggers off Cathy straightens up the couch.

CATHY

Oh, Sybil, be sure and check dinner forks as well. I seem to recall being short last year.

SYBIL

I thought it was salad forks we were short on.

Cathy begins closing drapes in the living room windows.

CATHY

Perhaps you're right. Whatever it was, I'd like to try and order a set before the party.

SYBIL

That shouldn't be a problem.

CATHY

You know, Sybil, I think this may just turn out to be our best one yet.

SYBIL

Well I'm sure Mr. Whitaker will be
extremely proud.

Cathy turns off a lamp by the window and parts the drapes a moment.

She glances out into the silent, blue-edged night.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A man on a ladder is replacing the letters on the theater marquee as Frank files out of the theater amid the strange week-night crowd. He stops a moment beneath the canopy of bulbs.

There's a trill of laughter from down the street and Frank turns.

The two men from the movie theater are walking off, one of them laughing. They turn the corner.

Frank squints, looking after. And with a frown of curiosity and some unsteadiness, he begins to follow.

EXT. DARK STREET - NIGHT

The two men are crossing the shadowy side-street. One of them can still be heard as they approach a dark, inconspicuous door, a few steps down from street-level. They open it, sending a sudden flood of green into the darkness, then quickly vanish inside.

Frank stares after, stuck between intrigue and fear. He follows.

INT. FRAN'S - NIGHT

Fran's is a small, burgundy-walled `gentlemen's bar', with black upholstery and a mint-green light embalming its well-groomed clientele - most of whom take subtle notice of Frank as he enters the room. Out of nowhere a voice is heard -

VOICE

Identification please.

FRANK

(turning, startled)
What?

A thin man in his 50's with a pencil-thin mustache stands beside the door.

MAN WITH MUSTACHE
Identification, drivers license.

FRANK
Oh. Sure.

Frank shows him his wallet.

MAN WITH MUSTACHE
Thank you, sir. Have a pleasant evening.

FRANK
Thank you.

Frank proceeds cautiously into the room, heading to the bar. A SPANISH BARTENDER accent nods slowly as he approaches.

SPANISH BARTENDER
Yes, sir? What can I get you this evening?

FRANK
Just a Johnny Walker, please. Neat.

SPANISH BARTENDER
Yes, sir.

Frank takes out a cigarette and lights it. He glances stiffly across the room.

The plucked and coiffed patrons, seated mostly alone, glance back with the same stiff, self-consciousness. The men from the theater sit in some corner rapt in conversation.

Frank's drink is set on the bar and he takes a fast, deep sip, shiny with perspiration.

Frank puts down a bill and takes a long, relaxing drag off his cigarette.

VOICE
One more of the same.

Frank looks over and sees a clean-cut BLOND MAN (early 30's) at the bar. He exhales.

The blond man glances over and smiles cautiously. Frank smiles cautiously back.

BARTENDER

There you are, sir.

The blond man remains looking at Frank a moment before picking up his drink and starting back to his table.

Frank watches him go.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER FOYER - NIGHT

Frank closes the front door behind him and starts slowly up the stairs of the house, black on shadowy blue, as a slow burden of music rises.

He stops at the foot of his bedroom door and stares at

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cathy, copper and blue, asleep in bed.

Music lightens as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - DAY

We float out from a newspaper photograph of Frank and Cathy kissing in the latest Hartford Weekly Gazette to reveal Eleanor, reading aloud from the paper. The door to the house is open as Cathy and her arriving guests, DOREEN and NANCY, stand around listening, having obviously been stopped in their tracks to do so. Cathy holds a lilac scarf under her chin as a feisty wind whips through the trees and sends a circus of leaves through the sky.

ELEANOR

'So does the fabled maxim hold that behind every great man there resides a great lady? In this case - wife, mother and Mrs. Magnovox herself - Cathleen Whitaker proves that it does, a woman as devoted to her family as she is kind to Negroes'!!

They burst into laughter.

DOREEN
To Negroes?!

CATHY
(grabbing the paper)
Let me see that! Oh my heavens.
What on earth was that woman
thinking?

NANCY
How did that come up?

ELEANOR
Cathy? Oh she's been liberal ever
since she played summer stock at
college with all those steamy
Jewish boys! Why do you think they
used to call her red!

CATHY
Oh for heaven sakes, come inside.
Before Joe McCarthy comes driving
by!

Eleanor laughs and Cathy hands her back the paper.

ELEANOR
Here.

Suddenly a strong gust of wind sweeps Cathy's scarf right off
her head and up over the side of the house.

DOREEN
Uh-oh!

CATHY
Oh, no! I love that scarf!

DOREEN
Oh, I'm sure it just blew behind
the house somewhere.

CATHY
Oh, for heaven's sake.

They continue back inside the house.

ELEANOR
This really isn't your day, is it?

NANCY
So did they really call you 'red'?

Eleanor laughs some more.

CATHY
Oh Nancy, honestly!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The ladies are just finishing lunch, a bit tipsy from the daiquiris.

CATHY
Can I get anyone another daiquiri?

NANCY
Oh no. One's my limit.

DOREEN
Better not.

CATHY
El?

Eleanor holds out her glass. Cathy smiles, refilling it.

ELEANOR
Thanks doll.
(takes a sip)
Alright now girls, no more beating
around the bush. Nancy?

NANCY
I can't.

ELEANOR
Come on now. Can't be that bad.

NANCY
Alright.
(she smiles bashfully)
Well... Mike insists on once a
week.

The laddies giggle, except for Cathy, who stands holding the pitcher of daiquiris.

ELEANOR
Ah, you got off easy!

CATHY
Once a week?

DOREEN
 Yea, you're lucky. Ron's more like
 two or three.

NANCY
 Really? Three?

DOREEN
 And how.

ELEANOR
 That's nothing. Girlfriend of mine?
 (to Cathy)
 Shirley Dawson -
 (back to everyone)
 Her husband? Every night-o-the-
 week... plus three times more on
 the weekend! Can you imagine?

Cathy returns the pitcher to the bar.

NANCY
 Oh, my.

DOREEN
 How long have they been married?

ELEANOR
 Well, long enough! Seven years?
 Eight?

Doreen and Nancy break into more giggles as Cathy stands a moment, reflected in thought in the marbled mirror, a note of music accompanying.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LATER

Cathy stands in front of her house waiving goodbye to Eleanor, Doreen and Nancy, who make their way to their cars.

DOREEN
 It was lovely, Cathleen!

CATHY
 Thanks, girls.

DOREEN
 Bye, now.

ELEANOR
Chicken was divine.

CATHY
Thanks, El.

ELEANOR
I'll call you tomorrow!

CATHY
Bye.

ELEANOR
Thanks again, hon! It was all too
divine!

CATHY
Thanks, El. I'll call you tomorrow.

ELEANOR
Bye!

Cathy is about to turn back into the house when she puts a hand to her head, remembering her scarf. She glances over toward the side of the house and starts slowly down the front steps, glancing around the yard as she goes.

By now the wind has died down and a pale opal light has taken the edge off the sun.

A soft spell of music begins.

She doesn't see it along the front hedges and continues on to the side of the house. She turns the corner, glancing up at the roof.

Suddenly

RAYMOND
Could this possibly -

Cathy turns with a start.

Raymond is standing along the side of the house holding her lilac scarf.

RAYMOND
I'm sorry.

CATHY
No - You found it!

RAYMOND

Yes - It was...
(starts walking toward
her)
hanging off one of the birch's down
front.

CATHY

It's just been so windy. I was just
going back in the house when it
just -

Raymond hands Cathy the scarf.

CATHY

... sailed off my head - Thank you.

RAYMOND

I had a feeling it might have been
yours.

CATHY

Who else could have been so
absentminded?

RAYMOND

No. The color. Just seemed right.

CATHY

Well thank you, Mr. Deagan. For
finding it.

RAYMOND

Please. Call me Raymond.

CATHY

Thank you. Raymond.

She smiles and they begin walking back to the front yard.

CATHY

Everything looks wonderful by the
way.

RAYMOND

Well good. Pop's a tough act to
follow when it comes to his work.
But I think we got everything
pretty under control.

Cathy looks at him a moment.

CATHY

I'm sure it hasn't been easy.
Taking over for your father so
quickly.

RAYMOND

Well I guess between pa's business,
my shop, and looking after my
little girl, there's not much time
left for reflecting.

CATHY

I didn't know you had children.

RAYMOND

Just the one. Sarah's her name.

CATHY

And how old is Sarah?

RAYMOND

Eleven years old, yea. And the sun
and the moon to me.

CATHY

Well I'm sure she's a lovely child.
You and your wife must be very
proud.

RAYMOND

Well, Mrs. Deagan - my wife - she
passed away when Sarah was about
five.

CATHY

Oh Raymond. I'm so sorry.

RAYMOND

Well. Thank you. We do - we do just
fine, Sarah and I.

(reaching for his wallet)

I have a - picture somewhere...

(opening it for Cathy)

There. That's Sarah.

CATHY

Oh, she's darling. Look at those
eyes... And what's this I hear
about a shop?

RAYMOND

The plant shop? Yea. It's just a
little place, down on Hawthorn.

(MORE)

RAYMOND(cont'd)

Started out as a service for gardeners, ordering plants and fertilizer. 'Til I opened the store. 'Bout six years ago. The only thing that business degree's been good for yet.

CATHY

Well that's marvelous, Raymond. You should be very proud.

RAYMOND

Well. If you're ever in the neighborhood you be sure and stop by. We have some lovely houseplants.

CATHY

Well I certainly will.

RAYMOND

Alright then.

She smiles goodbye and walks back into the house.

INT. WHITAKER FOYER - LATER

Cathy closes the door behind her. Right away we hear Sybil from the kitchen door.

SYBIL

(off)

Mrs. Whitaker? I have that list whenever you're ready!

CATHY

Thanks, Sybil. I'll come get it now. Where has this day gone to?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER BREAKFAST ROOM - EVENING

From just outside the blaze of the kitchen we find Cathy and Sybil busily serving dinner to the children.

CATHY

Elbows off the table, David!

JANICE

Euu - I hate those!

CATHY

I'm sorry, Janice. But for a growing girl, who needs her vitamins and is studying ballet -

JANICE

Oh mother! You said... You said -

CATHY

I said we would discuss it and we discussed it. Now I don't want to hear another word about it. I certainly don't like thinking I've raised such spoiled children.

DAVID

What do you mean children? I'm not the one who wants some dopey ballet shoes!

JANICE

Slippers!

The telephone rings. Sybil is carrying a tray of food.

CATHY

If that's your father... Don't worry, Sybil, I'll get it.

(she picks up the phone)

Hello? Frank? You haven't left?...

Oh no, not again... I know Frank,

but every week... I know, I know

darling... I won't... Alright...

Goodnight, dear.

(she hangs up the phone)

DAVID

What! He's not coming home again?

JANICE

Father never wants to come home!

CATHY

Oh Janice, he most certainly does.

It's just a terribly busy time for

your father right now, and he's

under a great deal of strain.

DAVID

(to Janice)

Yea!

JANICE

Shut up.

CATHY

You know what, Sybil? Wrap up a plate for Mr. Whitaker. I'm just gonna go and take it over there myself.

SYBIL

All the way downtown?

CATHY

It's really not so far. Anyway, the children are nearly through, and knowing Mr. Whitaker, I'll at least be sparing him another night of pretzels and coffee.

Cathy picks up her coat from a corner chair and starts out the door as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OFFICE BLDG. LOBBY - NIGHT

Cathy, emerging through the shimmer of a revolving door, as quiet dissonance emerges, building slowly throughout the scene. She walks across the large marble-floored lobby, Tupperware in hand, to the night-watch's table.

CATHY

I'm just dropping something off to my husband on the twelfth floor. Mr. Whitaker.

The NIGHT-WATCH motions her in and Cathy continues briskly to the elevators.

INT. 12TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The elevator doors open. Cathy steps out onto the darkened floor and starts down the central corridor toward the executive suite.

As she approaches the outer office she realizes there is no one else in sight, no lights, no sign of work.

CATHY

(to herself, perplexed)
Frank?

She glances around as she continues, doubtfully, in the direction of his office. Then she notices

A soft strip of light coming from beneath his office door.

CATHY
(shaking her head)
Oh, Frank...

In a rush of wifely sympathy she walks up to the door and politely opens it.

CATHY
Frank - ?

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Instantly she sees it: a shirtless blond man with loosened pants locked in a writhing kiss with another man in shirtsleeves, who appears to be fondling him. Immediately they turn and jolt apart. It takes her a moment to register that the man in shirtsleeves is Frank.

All at once Cathy gasps, pulling back and turning, dropping her Tupperware. She shuts her eyes and struggles for breath.

Inside we can hear the men scrambling to dress, knocking something over in the process.

Suddenly Cathy turns facing the door, reeling, horrified. Music burns with the weight of realization as she starts backstepping slowly, staring out in confusion and disbelief.

She glimpses something through the crack of the door and stops.

Frank catches sight of her from inside.

Cathy stares.

He looks down. Suddenly the blond man slips out past him, darting briskly down the hall. He disappears down the stairwell where we can hear his echoey steps slowly fading away.

All at once Cathy turns and runs, music returning with thunder and storm.

FRANK
Cathy!

She runs down the hall to the elevator, bangs on the button until it opens and throws herself inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - LATER

Cathy gasps for air inside the dim, mirror-lined elevator, trying to pull her hair over her eyes and shut out the world forever.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LATER

Music bathes the shadowy quiet of the Whitaker exterior, its darkness brushed blue with moonlight, as we glide in slowly toward the living room window.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Music continues as we creep in slowly on Cathy silhouetted against the glass, frozen in thought. Suddenly there's the sound of keys at the door and we stop, silent. Cathy doesn't move.

Frank quietly shuts the door behind him and turns around.

Dead, eerie silence.

He removes his coat, hangs it on the rack, and takes a quilt out of the closet. He turns and stops, sensing something. Then he sees her.

Cathy just stares. But there's a new kind of death in her face.

Frank drops his head. He remains still for several seconds.

Finally

CATHY

(from a strange distance)
Mr. Maynard... left an estimate...
for the roof. I put it in the
kitchen.

(silence)

Twelve hundred something. I assume
you'll want -

(silence)

a second opinion...

FRANK
Cathy -

CATHY
I can't -

Silence.

FRANK
I know.

Silence. He drops his head.

FRANK
I don't -
(doesn't finish)

CATHY
What?

FRANK
I don't even...

Frank looks up. He sighs with resignation.

FRANK
See... Once. Long time ago. Long
long time ago. I had... problems. I
just figured... that was - that was
it.
(shaking his head)
I never... imagined...

CATHY
You had... problems?

FRANK
Yes.

CATHY
You never... spoke to anyone? A
doctor?

FRANK
No.

CATHY
No one?

Frank shakes his head.

CATHY
I don't... I don't understand.

FRANK
I don't either.

CATHY
What if... I mean there must be
people who - who...

FRANK
I don't know.

CATHY
There must be.

Frank suddenly seems a hundred miles away.

CATHY
Frank?

Frank can barely look at her let alone respond.

CATHY
Because...
(suddenly shaky)
Otherwise, I just - I don't know
what - Oh Frank!

Soft music begins. Frank closes his eyes and quietly nods.
Cathy exhales a tiny breath of relief.

CATHY
(softly)
Thank you.

He slowly-turns and Cathy watches as he starts up the stairs,
music expanding.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

The last Autumn leaves are falling on this bright, blustery
afternoon in the Hartford business district. Cathy's car can
be seen turning onto the main road and continuing into town.

EXT. MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

The large, modern medical complex stretches out against crisp
blue skies and white clouds. Down below we see Cathy pulling
into the Municipal lot. The white-capped attendant hands her
a ticket, raises the gate and smiles as she proceeds in.

Cathy walks up to the front of one of the buildings, checks her watch and glances around for Frank.

In a small park opposite, a young couple can be seen leaning against a tree, kissing. The girl pulls away but the boy pursues eagerly, stroking the girl's hair and whispering into her ear.

Cathy watches, closer (with a rear-projected background).

The boy tries kissing her again, but the girl turns away, glancing toward Cathy self-consciously.

Cathy looks down. She checks her watch again and glances around one more time for Frank.

We see him now, just crossing the street.

Cathy waves, starting over in his direction. They meet and begin walking up the slope of stairs.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DR. BOWMAN'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - DAY

The RECEPTIONIST is swinging open the door of the waiting room.

RECEPTIONIST
Mr. and Mrs. Whitaker.?

CATHY
Yes.

Cathy and Frank get up from their chairs.

DR. Bowman, an imposing man in his fifties with a distinctive streak of white in his hair, is just stepping through the door as music fades.

RECEPTIONIST
This is Dr. Bowman.

BOWMAN
(shaking Frank's hand
firmly)
Mr. Whitaker? How do you.
(politely taking Cathy's)
Mrs. Whitaker? How lovely.

CATHY
Thank you.

BOWMAN

Mr. Whitaker, Mrs. Whitaker. As someone who's been around numerous couples like yourselves, I realize how difficult these things can be at times, particularly at the beginning. It's been said the first steps are always the hardest ones to take. But as I'm oft to remind my patients, without them, of course, why we wouldn't even be walking! So allow me first to commend you both... for taking those steps today.

CATHY

Thank you, doctor.

BOWMAN

Before we sit down, are there any questions I can answer?

Cathy looks to Frank who vaguely gestures 'no.'

BOWMAN

No? Alright.

(to Frank)

I suppose we may as well get started.

Dr. Bowman gestures to the door and Cathy starts in first.

BOWMAN

Actually, Mrs. Whitaker, I think it might be best if your husband and I conversed - in private.

CATHY

Oh. In private. Of course.

BOWMAN

I think it's best.

CATHY

Certainly. Then I'll - see you later, dear.

FRANK

See you later.

And they close the door behind them.

Cathy is motionless for a moment before turning back into the waiting room and sitting down. She smiles at the receptionist who vaguely smiles back.

She looks back at the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DR. BOWMAN'S OFFICE - A BIT LATER

BOWMAN

Today, the general attitude regarding this sort, of behavior is, naturally, more modern, more scientific than it's ever been before. After all, we're not living in the dark ages. But for those who do seek treatment, who possess the will and desire to lead normal lives, there still remains only a scant, 5-to-30 percent rate of success. For complete heterosexual conversion. Interestingly, for many, it's the treatment itself that often changes the patient's mind. One thing is certain. A successful outcome is only ever achieved when it's what the patient himself desires more than anything else in the world.

FRANK

What does it - comprise of? The treatment.

BOWMAN

Treatment is usually comprised of psychiatric sessions, twice a week, sometimes more.

FRANK

Just - talking?

BOWMAN

Yes. Though some patients have explored additional, more behavioral methods.

FRANK

Behavioral?

BOWMAN

Electro-shock aversion therapy, for instance, or hormonal re-balancing procedures. But neither of these would be part of any standardized treatment.

Silence. Frank looks down in thought.

BOWMAN

I know it can all seem rather daunting at first.

(leaning back in his chair)

I suggest you take some time, think over the various options we discussed, discuss it with your wife -

FRANK

No, I - I already know - I want to go ahead. Begin treatment.

Frank tries to gather his thoughts.

FRANK

I can't - let this thing destroy my life - my family's life! I know it's a sickness because it makes me feel - despicable, dirty. I promise you Dr. Bowman, I'm gonna beat this thing. I'm gonna break it. So help me God.

The doctor is listening.

CUT TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

The door swings open and Cathy turns to see Frank and Dr. Bowman step into the waiting room.

BOWMAN

So why don't you go ahead and confirm the times we discussed with Rosalyn. And I'll see you here same time next Tuesday.

(they shake)

FRANK

Thank you, doctor.

Cathy listens on, beaming with pleasure.

BOWMAN
Mr. Whitaker.
(leaning out toward Cathy)
Mrs. Whitaker!

CATHY
Thank you, doctor!

Frank walks right past her. Cathy turns to catch up with him.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Cathy joins Frank in the paneled elevator. The door closes as a soft stir of music begins. Cathy looks over at Frank who stares ahead, blankly.

CATHY
Frank.

FRANK
What?

CATHY
I'm just proud of you, that's all.

FRANK
Don't say that.

CATHY
Well I am. And he seems like a very
decent man, Dr. Bowman. Don't you
think?

He doesn't answer.

CATHY
Frank?

FRANK
I don't know, Cathleen. I suppose
he's decent.

The elevator doors open and Frank stalks through the lobby and out the door, music thickening. Cathy follows.

EXT. MEDICAL BUILDING - DAY

Frank and Cathy walk out of the building into a strong wind. Behind them an obscure, REAR-PROJECTED Hartford feels a million miles away.

CATHY

But Frank, you must have liked him enough to want to see him again.

FRANK

Who else am I going see?

CATHY

Well - I'm sure there are numerous doctors - in Hartford or in Springfield - if you don't - if you aren't certain about -

He stops sharply and turns to her.

FRANK

Look! I just want to get the whole fucking thing over with! Can you understand that?!

Cathy stares at him in shock and fear.

CATHY

(eyes filling)
Frank! Please don't -

Frank takes her hand. Suddenly his eyes fill as well.

FRANK

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

He embraces her.

FRANK

Cathy, I'm so sorry.

The music opens up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAGNAVOX OFFICES - MORNING

We pull out from a large, framed version of the Mr. & Mrs. Magnavox ad, to a view of the whole bustling floor.

The elevator doors open and we follow Frank as he walks down the central aisle toward his office.

He nods to the regular cycle of greetings ('Good morning, Mr. Whitaker... Morning, sir'). He approaches Kitty's desk.

KITTY
Good morning, Mr. Whitaker.

FRANK
(a bit faintly)
Kitty.

KITTY
I hope you have a pleasant day,
sir.

FRANK
(glancing back vaguely)
Thank you.

He continues on to his office.

There, he discovers Marlene standing at her desk holding a broken desk lamp.

MARLENE
Good morning, Mr. Whitaker.

FRANK
Marlene.

MARLENE
I found this in the cupboard, sir.

FRANK
What's that?

MARLENE
Your desk lamp. Sir. The one that
was missing.

Frank lingers a moment, absently.

FRANK
Ah.

MARLENE
Should I have it repaired, sir?

FRANK

Yes. Yes -
(continuing into his
office)
Thank you, Marlene.

MARLENE

Uh - Mr. Whitaker, Mr. Fine's been -

The door closes behind him.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - MORNING

Frank stands a moment facing the door in silence.

STAN

(off)
Frank?

Frank turns around to see Stan seated on a leather couch by the window.

FRANK

Didn't see you there!

STAN

(slight beat)
Everything alright?

FRANK

With me?
(brushing it off)
Oh...

Frank sits down at his desk as Stan gets up, holding a large flat folder.

FRANK

What's up.

STAN

Just picked up the galleys from the printer.

FRANK

How do they look?

STAN

Great. Just great.

FRANK

Fine. Fine.

(flipping through his
appointment book)

Why'n't you leave 'em here and I'll
- have a look the first chance I
get.

STAN

(slightly perplexed)

Sure.

Stan walks over to the desk and sets down the folder.

STAN

You'll... let me know what you
think?

FRANK

Course I will. You're first on my
list.

STAN

(before leaving)

So what's it gonna take to get you
back on that course, anyway? We
haven't seen you for weeks!

FRANK

I know it. I've just been...

STAN

Sunday. No excuses.

FRANK

Alright.

STAN

I'm holding you to it!

Stan leaves Frank alone at his desk. Staring straight ahead,
he reaches down to the bottom drawer and pulls out the bottle
of Scotch. He unscrews the top, closes his eyes and takes a
long, dark swig, music rising.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FINE'S HOUSE - DAY

It's a cold, overcast day in the quiet, tree-lined neighborhood of the Blue Hills district, as Cathy and Eleanor emerge from the house carrying serving trays. Cathy's car is parked in the driveway of Eleanor's modern Ranch-style home.

CATHY

Thanks again, El.

ELEANOR

You sure that's all I can give you?

CATHY

Oh, yes. The caterers should have everything. I just thought a few extras would be nice.

They approach Cathy's car.

ELEANOR

Oh - And don't forget! The art show's Saturday so start working on Frank tonight.

Cathy opens the car door and starts putting the trays inside.

CATHY

I swear he's the kind of man you have to pin messages to!

ELEANOR

Though I'm sorry to say Mona Lauder will be attending. Turns out her uncle's in town, some hot-shot art-dealer from New York. I think I met him at one of Mona's soiree's. A bit flowery for my tastes.

CATHY

How do you mean?

ELEANOR

Oh, you know. A touch light on his feet?

CATHY

You mean...

ELEANOR

Yes, darling. One of those. Of course I could be mistaken. Just an impression I got.

CATHY

You don't care for them particularly?

ELEANOR

Well, no, not particularly. Not that I actually know any. Call me old-fashioned, I just like all the men I'm around to be all men. Say! Why the third degree?

CATHY

It's not the third degree, I just -
(climbing into her car)
I'm interested, that's all. In your views.

Eleanor doesn't look convinced.

CATHY

I read an article recently. In a magazine.
(she closes the car door)
- What?

ELEANOR

Nothing! I'm just delighted to see you taking interest in yet another civic cause! I can see it now: 'Cathleen Whitaker and her kindness to Homosexuals'!

CATHY

Oh - that word.

Cathy begins pulling out.

ELEANOR

See you Sunday. And bring Frank!

CATHY

I'll try.

Eleanor waves and starts back into the house as Cathy drives off.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WHITAKER HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

Afternoon shadows stretch across the Whitaker's block as Cathy turns the corner. She pulls into the driveway just as Frank is getting out of his car and David, dressed in his baseball uniform, and Janice, in ballet clothes, come running to greet him.

JANICE
Father's home! Father's home!

FRANK
Well look who's here. The little ballerina herself.

DAVID
Hi-ya, pop!

FRANK
(to David)
Whaduya say, kiddo?

Cathy steps out of her car just as Sybil appears to meet her.

CATHY
What a lovely surprise, having you home at a decent hour. Thank you, Sybil.

FRANK
Marlene had me set for another dinner meeting but I just said to reschedule.

CATHY
Oh, Frank. I'm so pleased you did.

They embrace and Frank kisses her as the whole family follows Sybil into the house.

INT. WHITAKER DINING ROOM - EVENING

The Whitaker family are in the midst of a spirited dinner, though it's clear all the enthusiasm in the room has begun to drain Frank of his.

DAVID
Then Billy Hutchison stole a pass at the ten yard line, pop. Ran it all the way for a touch down. You shoulda seen it!

JANICE
 Father, wanna see my routine for
 the ballet recital?

DAVID
 I was talking to pop!

CATHY
 Children. Give your father a moment
 to eat his dinner.
 (to Frank)
 Another lambchop, dear?

FRANK
 I'm fine.

CATHY
 You sure? I have plenty in the
 oven.

FRANK
 I'm fine. Thank you.

Small silence.

DAVID
 We're playing Lincoln on Saturday,
 pop. If you're not working.

CATHY
 Oh heavens, that reminds me!
 Darling, this Saturday is that
 reception I told you about, for the
 modern art show Eleanor's group was
 sponsoring. You remember?

FRANK
 Oh God.

CATHY
 I know how you hate these things
 but I simply have to go and Eleanor
 pleaded with me to ask you.

DAVID
 What about me! No one cares one bit
 what I'm doing Saturday! Like
 playing one of the toughest teams
 in the whole entire league!

CATHY
 David I'm sorry but this one
 Saturday your mother has an
 engagement that simply can't be
 changed -

DAVID
 Pop could come.

Cathy looks at Frank who is looking down.

DAVID
 Couldn't you, pop?

CATHY
 We'll see, David.

No one talks for several seconds.

CATHY
 Janice, would you please pass the
 butter?

Janice passes the butter to her mother.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER BEDROOM - LATER

Frank watches TV from bed. Cathy sits at her vanity doing a
 hundred strokes, looking over at him while brushing.

CATHY
 Frank?

FRANK
 Hmm.

CATHY
 (brief silence)
 Did you see him?

FRANK
 Yea.

CATHY
 When?

FRANK
 Yesterday.

CATHY
You didn't say a word.

He continues staring at the TV.

CATHY
So how was it? With Bowman? Did you
feel -

FRANK
It's fine.

CATHY
(putting down the brush,
coaxing)
And there's nothing more you care
to share with your very own adoring
wife?

FRANK
Cathleen, what I discuss with this
doctor. It's private. That's - part
of it. Alright? I'm sorry.

CATHY
I understand, dear. I do.

Cathy looks at him a moment before lifting up the brush and
turning back to the mirror.

CATHY
Oh and Frank, wait'll you see the
hors d'oeuvres! The caterers are
doing such a marvelous job. I think
you're going to be very pleased
this year, darling. I really do.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARTFORD CENTER FOR THE ARTS - DAY

A frolic of music rises as we survey a busy corner within the
Hartford cultural district.

A small bustle of ladies and their husbands are milling
around the entrance to a spacious, private gallery. The
easled sign in the front window reads:

- HARTFORD LADIES AUXILIARY PRESENTS -
20 PRINTS BY THE MASTERS OF MODERN ART
WORKS BY PICASSO, CHIGAL & OTHERS

Finally, Cathy comes running up to the door of the gallery.

INT. GALLERY - DAY

Cathy squeezes past clusters of visitors holding glasses of wine when she spots Eleanor standing in front of a large Christmas tree. Eleanor is chatting with MONA LAUDER, an imposing, chinless brunette (fortyish), and MR. FARNSWORTH, Mona's uncle, a rotund middle-aged man with died ginger hair and a waxed mustache.

CATHY

Eleanor - darling! I'm so sorry I'm late.

MONA

Cathleen!

CATHY

Hello Mona.

MONA

Darling, I want to introduce you to my uncle, Morris Farnsworth, a wickedly successful Gotham art dealer who was kind enough to attend our provincial little gathering. Morris darling, allow me to introduce my dear little friend Cathleen Whitaker - whose face and civic fancies are hardly strangers to the society pages of Hartford!

CATHY

Oh Mona, really. You must ignore her, Mr. Farnsworth.

Mr. Farnsworth extends his hand.

FARNSWORTH

(rather affected)

Charmed.

CATHY

I hope you enjoy your stay.

MONA

Morris was just telling us the most delightful tale. All about a forged Rembrandt!

FARNSWORTH

Well there's really not much more to it than that. You can only imagine my utter disdain in discovering the gifts of so masterful an impersonator in as base and uncivilized a character as the man ultimately convicted of the crime.

MONA

It's fascinating, isn't it?

ELEANOR

Cathy, darling, don't let us keep you. I know you want to see the show.

CATHY

I am dying to see it.

MONA

Oh yes. It's simply charming. Eleanor you should be so proud.

ELEANOR

Why thank you, Mona.

CATHY

Lovely meeting you, Mr. Farnsworth.

FARNSWORTH

Likewise, my dear.

Cathy throws Eleanor a little smile as she starts off into the gallery.

MOMENTS LATER

Cathy stands in front of a beautiful Picasso 'crying woman'.

Suddenly - FLASH! - Cathy turns to see

Mrs. Leacock standing beside her photographer.

MRS. LEACOCK

Pardon me, dear, but it was too lovely to resist: Wife of Hartford Executive Communing With Picasso!

CATHY

Mrs. Leacock. Lovely to see you again.

MRS. LEACOCK
And how is that charming husband of yours?

CATHY
He's very well, thank you -

Cathy stops suddenly, spotting someone across the room.

Raymond is standing with his daughter SARAH (age 11), leaning over her and discussing one of the pictures on the wall. (Not surprisingly, they're the only black faces in the room.)

CATHY
Mrs. Leacock, would you excuse me a moment?

MRS. LEACOCK
Certainly, dear.

Cathy smiles and starts over to Raymond and his little girl as Mrs. Leacock and the photographer observe.

Raymond looks up and sees Cathy approaching. He smiles and stands.

RAYMOND
Mrs. Whitaker! Hello!

CATHY
Raymond. What a tremendous surprise - finding you here. Is this your daughter?

RAYMOND
Yep. This is Sarah. Sarah, this is Mrs. Whitaker. Mrs. Whitaker owns one of the gardens I look after.

CATHY
Hello, Sarah.

SARAH
Hello.

RAYMOND
(spotting something out front)
Say, Sarah, isn't that Hutch and his little brother I see, playing out front?

Raymond directs Sarah's attention to the front of the gallery where Billy Hutchison. (HUTCH, age 11) and two other white boys can be seen through the glass, playing with paper airplanes.

RAYMOND

You remember them, don't you, baby?

Sarah shakes her head, sullenly.

RAYMOND

Sure you do. The day we went to Mrs. Hutchison's house.

SARAH

(softly)

Oh, yea.

RAYMOND

What do you say about going out and seeing if they'd like to play for a little while? How does that sound?

Sarah looks at her father. It's clear it's the very last thing she wants to do, but is too shy to say anything in front of Cathy.

RAYMOND

Aww, there's nothing to be afraid of.

SARAH

(softly)

I know...

RAYMOND

It's only polite to say hello to people you've met in the past. Ah, go on, give it a try. For daddy.

Sarah looks down, turns slowly and starts reluctantly toward the front of the gallery.

RAYMOND

Attagirl!

CATHY

Oh Raymond, she's lovely.

RAYMOND

Thank you.

CATHY

And how wonderful of you to expose her - to art and culture this way.

RAYMOND

Well, my mother, she was always trying to expose my brothers and I to the finer things, and we fought her every step of the way. I guess I'm sort of making up for bad behavior.

CATHY

But how on earth did you hear about this show?

RAYMOND

Well I do read the papers.

CATHY

Well of course you do. I just meant - it was such a coincidence.

RAYMOND

I know. I was just teasing you.

CATHY

(slightly lower voice)

Because you know I'm not prejudiced.

Raymond smiles at her.

CATHY

(quite serious)

My husband and I have always believed in equal right for the Negro, and support the NACP.

RAYMOND

Well I'm glad to hear that.

CATHY

I just - I wanted you to know.

RAYMOND

Well thank you.

CATHY

Not at all.

As they start into the final room of the gallery we see Sarah through the window outside, watching as the boys try unsuccessfully to launch their paper airplane.

EXT. GALLERY - DAY

Close on Hutch's paper airplane as his friend, Tommy, gives it a throw.

HUTCH

Go!

The plane nosedives and Hutch goes to get it.

HUTCH

Straighter, Tommy! You gotta throw it straighter. And hard! One, two, three - GO!

Tommy throws it hard but it sputters down once again.

Sarah giggles to herself.

SARAH

It's too heavy!

The boys stop and turn.

HUTCH

What?

SARAH

On the end. Your airplane!

HUTCH

Who asked you?! C'mon, Bobby.

Hutch motions to the others and the boys start back into the gallery.

INT. GALLERY - DAY

Hutch and his brother return to their parents as Sarah watches from outside, alone.

MEANWHILE

Cathy and Raymond are looking at a Miro.

RAYMOND

So what is your opinion on modern art?

CATHY

It's hard to put into words really. I just know what I care for and what I don't. Like this - I'm not sure how you pronounce it - Mirra?

RAYMOND

Miro.

CATHY

Miro. I don't know why but I just adore it. The feeling it gives. I know that sounds terribly vague.

RAYMOND

No. It actually confirms something I've always wondered about modern art, abstract art.

CATHY

What is that?

RAYMOND

That perhaps it's just picking up where religious art left off. You know. Trying to somehow show you divinity, put it up there on the wall. The modern artist just pares it down to the most basic elements of shape and color. But when you look at that Miro, you feel it just the same.

CATHY

Why that's lovely, Raymond.

We hear the brief shriek of a woman's laugh. Cathy turns to see

Mona Lauder, Mr. Farnsworth and two other women, one stifling her giggles, snickering amongst themselves over Cathy and her friend.

Eleanor, who is standing listening to an ELDERLY WOMAN, also notices the commotion.

ELDERLY WOMAN

To tell you the truth, I was rather shocked by the prices.

(MORE)

ELDERLY WOMAN(cont'd)

But then I've always preferred the
work of the masters... Rembrandt,
Michelangelo -

Eleanor spots Cathy saying goodbye to Raymond and starting
off down the hall.

ELEANOR

I'm terribly sorry - Would you
excuse me a moment?

ELDERLY WOMAN

Certainly.

Eleanor starts after Cathy.

ELEANOR

Cathleen!

CATHY

El, honey. It all looks just
marvelous -

Eleanor whisks Cathy to the side.

ELEANOR

Cathy, who on earth was that man?
You have the whole place in a
clamor!

CATHY

Oh for heavens sake, why? Because
of that ridiculous story?

ELEANOR

(squinting off at Raymond)
Who is he?

Raymond is now introducing Sarah to a smiling, middle-aged
woman in a hat.

CATHY

His name's Raymond Deagan. He's
Otis Deagan's son.

ELEANOR

Your gardener?

CATHY

Yes. He passed away very recently
and Raymond's taken over his
business.

ELEANOR

Well you certainly seem on familiar terms with the man.

CATHY

Oh what does that mean? Familiar terms? He happens to have some very enlightening views on Miro.

(glancing at her watch)

Oh, jeepers, would you look at the time! El, I have to fly.

They start walking toward the door.

CATHY

I'm having the carpets cleaned for tomorrow.

ELEANOR

What time are the caterers showing?

CATHY

They said four.

ELEANOR

I'll come early too. For moral support!

CATHY

You're a doll.

Cathy waves bye and dashes out of the gallery.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - DUSK

Music accompanies a slow and stately ascent upon the Whitaker house, trimmed with cars and bursting from inside with the exuberance of the annual company party. We can even hear the distant clamor of merriment and laughter churning from within.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

The house, impeccably decorated, is swarming with people in evening dress, drinking, smoking, chatting, laughing. An overstuffed Christmas tree glistens in the corner as an endless parade of hors d'oeuvres are passed solemnly by the all-black, formally uniformed, serving staff.

Cathy shimmers in a gown of sapphire blue, standing surrounded at one end of the room, while Frank stands with drink in hand, surrounded at the other.

We see various faces from the Magnavox office, including Marlene. Cathy is listening to a middle-aged Elderly Woman.

ELDERLY WOMAN

... Not to say that I'm against integration mind you. I do believe it's the Christian thing to. But I still say what happened in Little Rock could just as easily have happened here in Hartford.

A stout, red-faced man answers.

RED-FACED MAN

Nonsense!

ELDERLY WOMAN

And why is that?

RED-FACED MAN

Well for one thing, there's no Governor Faubus in Connecticut. But the main reason - They're no Negroes!

(laughs)

Two of the serving staff close enough to have heard his remark continue serving.

DICK DAWSON, a tall, strapping man in his mid-30's, is leaning on a chair beside Cathy.

DICK

No, but I do hear there are some rather dangerous pro-integration types. Right here in Hartford!

ELDERLY WOMAN

Dangerous?

DICK

Oh yes. Some very attractive ones in fact. Noted, I'm told, for their kindness to Negroes!

CATHY

(slapping his arm)

Oh Dick, stop! Where on earth did you hear about that?

DICK
Shirley read it to me.

CATHY
I should have known.

RED-FACED MAN
What's all this?

CATHY
Absolutely nothing! Here, let me
freshen those.

Cathy takes Dick and the red-faced man's glasses and starts off toward the bar. Frank is at the couch with Stan Fine, Doreen and her husband RON. As Cathy passes, Stan calls out to her.

STAN
By golly there she is now!
Prettiest gal in the room!

CATHY
Oh, Stan! Liquor does bring out the
Texan in you. I just hope Eleanor
isn't listening.

STAN
(putting an arm around
her)
So what if she is! I still say
Frank's the luckiest guy in town.

RON
Here, here!

Frank is hunched over listening, noticeably intoxicated.

FRANK
(thinking he's being
witty)
Smoke and mirrors, fellas! That's
all it is. You should see her
without her face on!

Frank laughs at his own joke and a few join in awkwardly.

DOREEN
Frank!

CATHY

No, he's absolutely right. We ladies are never really what we appear. And every girl has her secrets!

DOREEN

I'll say.

FRANK

(thrusting his glass at her)

Well how 'bout this girl going and getting her husband another drink? How 'bout that?

CATHY

(still smiling)

You don't think you might have - already had enough, darling?

FRANK

No, I don't think I've already had -

DOREEN

(interrupting, raising her glass)

Well I'd just like to take a moment to raise a glass to our marvelous host and hostess and another glorious Annual Party at the Whitaker's! To Frank and Cathy, truly Mr. and Mrs. Magnavox!

Everyone around them raises their glasses 'To Frank and Cathy' and toasts. Cathy and Frank smile and nod at their guests, but the strain is evident.

CATHY

Thank you... Now who can I freshen up? Ron?

RON

I'm fine.

STAN

Me.

CATHY

I think you're fresh enough.

Cathy starts off toward the bar. Sybil is crossing with a tray.

LADY
Wonderful party, Cathleen.

CATHY
Thank you.

SYBIL
Here, Mrs. Whitaker, let me take those.

CATHY
Thank you, Sybil.

Eleanor approaches Cathy as she finishes giving Sybil the empty glasses.

ELEANOR
Cathy?

CATHY
Hi.

Eleanor pulls her aside, by a window.

ELEANOR
Honey? Is everything alright?

CATHY
What do you mean?

ELEANOR
Frank. I've never seen him so soused.

CATHY
Oh, no. He's just been - working so hard lately. He's been under such tremendous strain.

ELEANOR
You sure that's all?

CATHY
Oh, yes.

ELEANOR
You'd tell me if there was anything more?

CATHY
Of course I would.

Eleanor puts a hand on Cathy's back as they start back into the party.

ELEANOR

By the way, kid. I think we just threw ourselves one class-A swanky function.

CATHY

It did turn nicely, didn't it.

A WOMAN calls out to Cathy.

WOMAN

Cathleen, darling. You've simply outdone yourself - once again!

DISSOLVE TO:

WHITAKER LIVING ROOM - LATER

Cathy stands at the door waving goodbye to the last guests (probably Eleanor & Stan).

CATHY

Thanks for everything! I'll call you tomorrow! Goodnight!

Cathy closes the door and steps into the half-darkened house, still strewn with party debris. She takes a deep breath of relief, and notices Eleanor's serving-ware by the bar.

CATHY

Oh, shoot - I forgot to give Eleanor her servers.

Frank sits in an armchair, rouged in shadow.

Cathy walks toward the stairs and stops, looking at him.

CATHY

Frank?

He doesn't respond, and she continues on toward the stairs.

CATHY

Well, if I do say so myself, I think it was a very lovely party, all considering.

She stops to gather her wrap at the foot of the stairs. She looks off a moment, very still.

CATHY

(quiet and level)

I just don't understand. Why it has to turn ugly. In front of our friends.

(silence)

Honestly, Frank. If you didn't insist on -

She stops, hearing something, and turns - Frank is suddenly approaching.

CATHY

What is it - ?

But all at once he's upon her - rolling into her arms and kissing the side of her neck, music rushing. Cathy is stunned, but gradually begins returning his affection.

CATHY

Oh Frank...

They fold into the couch, kissing, and suddenly Frank is on top of her. At first she's unsettled by his strong urgency but she allows it to continue, stroking his head and trying to slow him down. But he becomes only more persistent, panting and thrusting and turning red from the effort. Cathy closes her eyes and tries to weather it. Then with a sudden half-choked cry, Frank surrenders, turning away from her and muttering aloud in exhaustion and defeat.

FRANK

Oh Jesus! Jesus, what's happening!
I can't even... Oh God!

CATHY

Frank! Frank, it doesn't matter, darling! The important thing is to keep... trying. Keep -

FRANK

(sitting up suddenly, his back to her)

Don't -

CATHY

Frank!

She puts her hand on his shoulder but he shakes it off.

FRANK

Don't.

(silence)

(MORE)

FRANK(cont'd)

Because I'm sure - you know - Dick Dawson wouldn't mind... lending his services every now and again!

CATHY

Oh, Frank.

She reaches for his arm again and he tries to wriggle free, but she holds on.

FRANK

I mean, you wouldn't mind that so terribly much, would you? Good-lookin' guy like Dick. Maybe even Stan would pitch in!

CATHY

(holding tighter)

Frank, please. You're the only man I'd ever -

FRANK

Let go!

CATHY

You're all men to me, Frank! And all man!

FRANK

STOPPIT!

Furiously he swipes her hand away and accidentally strikes, her hard in the face with his cufflink.

CATHY

(covering her face)

Oh, Frank!

FRANK

I'm sorry. Cathy, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to -

Cathy grabs a cloth napkin from the coffee table and presses it to her head.

CATHY

It's alright. I'm alright. It was an accident.

FRANK

Is it bleeding?

CATHY

Just the littlest bit.

FRANK

Oh, Jesus.

Frank just stands there, helpless.

CATHY

Perhaps you could get me a little ice, dear.

FRANK

Ice?

CATHY

Yes.

FRANK

Cathy, I'm...

CATHY

I know, dear. It's alright. I'm alright.

Frank slowly backs away, toward the kitchen, music expanding. Cathy just closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER BEDROOM - LATE MORNING

Cathy stands before the mirror in her bedroom vanity brushing her hair over the small wound on her forehead. She puts down the brush, takes one last look and starts out of her room.

INT. LANDING - LATE MORNING

As Cathy passes an upstairs window she sees Eleanor's car just pulling up to the house. Cathy takes a breath and starts down the stairs.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE DOORWAY - LATE MORNING

Eleanor is just ringing the doorbell when Cathy opens the door, holding her friend's serving-ware.

CATHY

Hi.

ELEANOR

Hey there, honey. Listen, I can't stay. I'm meeting Stan for lunch at the club.

CATHY

That sounds nice. I can't believe I let you get away last night without these.

ELEANOR

It's cute, your hair that way.

CATHY

Yea? I experimented. Here.

ELEANOR

It's adorable.

As Cathy hands the servers to Eleanor a serving spoon falls out.

ELEANOR

Whoopsie!

Cathy picks it up from the ground and puts its back in the dish.

ELEANOR

Thanks.

Eleanor smiles at Cathy. Suddenly she stops smiling.

ELEANOR

Cathy?

Cathy's hair no longer conceals the bruise on her forehead.

CATHY

What?

ELEANOR

What happened to your head?

Cathy's hand flies up to cover it.

CATHY

Nothing, I - hit the door. It was the silliest thing.

Eleanor continues staring with concern.

ELEANOR

Cathy.

CATHY

What.

ELEANOR

Did something happen - between you
and Frank?

CATHY

What do you mean?

ELEANOR

Cathy I'm your best friend.

CATHY

Nothing happened. Nothing at all.

ELEANOR

Oh, Cathy.

CATHY

(suddenly quivery)

Eleanor!

ELEANOR

(looking hard at her)

Cathy I'm your dearest and closest
friend in the world. You can call
me. Day or night. You hear?

Cathy nods.

Eleanor remains looking, worriedly at her friend. Then she
sighs and turns to go.

Cathy watches, unable to move. She can't contain it any
longer and starts after - but stops herself again.

Eleanor is climbing into her car. She shuts the door.

Cathy turns around facing her house, eyes flooding, as we
hear Eleanor driving off. Not ready to go back in, she
proceeds down the steps to the side of the house, under a
tree.

There in the shade she takes a few short breaths, trying to
gather herself. She begins to focus on something on the
ground in front of her.

It's a pair of black boots.

Raymond stands a couple yards away watching, not knowing what to do.

She sees him and the tears spill from her eyes.

RAYMOND
Oh - Mrs. Whitaker...

He takes a step toward her and stops.

RAYMOND
Is there - anything I can do?

She shakes her head no, wiping the tears and trying to shield her forehead from view.

RAYMOND
You sure?

CATHY
Thank you, no. I'm fine, really.
It's just - been a difficult time.
With my husband.

RAYMOND
It does happen. Between married
people.

CATHY
I know it does. I just...
(she turns away)
It's so embarrassing. Please
forgive me.

RAYMOND
Forgive you for what?

He looks off for a moment, then back at Cathy.

RAYMOND
Mrs. Whitaker, listen. I have to go
deliver some shrubs to a farmhouse
just out of town. Which means I
have to get a move on. Why don't
you come on along for the ride?
Little fresh air, change of
scenery? Might help take your mind
off things.

Cathy feels a sudden guard.

CATHY
 No. I couldn't. But thank you,
 Raymond. For offering. That's very
 kind of you.

RAYMOND
 You sure?

SYBIL
 (off)
 Mrs. Whitaker? Are you out here?

Cathy turns, calling out toward the porch.

CATHY
 Yes, Sybil!

SYBIL
 (off)
 It's Mrs. Barker on the phone!

CATHY
 Thank you, Sybil! I'll be right in!
 (back to Raymond)
 I should get back.

RAYMOND
 Okay.

She turns to leave. From Raymond's view beneath the tree we can see her legs striding back to the porch and up the steps into the house.

INT. WHITAKER'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cathy walks over to the table by the window and picks up the phone.

CATHY
 Hello?... Yes. How are you, Mrs
 Barker... Not at all...

As Cathy talks she steps over toward her vanity and glances at herself in the mirror. She adjusts her hair so that it covers her forehead as before.

CATHY
 Yes, I was planning to pick them up
 at five... I see. So you'd like to
 switch for Thursday? No, I don't
 think that would be a problem...
 (MORE)

CATHY(cont'd)

Well I'm glad I could be of help...
Certainly... Bye now.

Cathy steps back to the table and hangs up the phone, still for a moment. She glances out the window into the yard.

Raymond can be seen throwing his toolbag over his shoulder and setting off for the day.

Cathy remains looking out, in thought.

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Raymond is just shutting the door of his truck when Mrs. Whitaker comes walking briskly from the house. She is wearing her coat and her lilac scarf.

CATHY

Raymond!

Raymond turns, sees her coming.

RAYMOND

Mrs. Whitaker...

Cathy stops a couple of yards from his truck, feeling suddenly rather awkward.

CATHY

Hi.

RAYMOND

Hello.

CATHY

Well, wouldn't you know it. I just received a call and suddenly everything's changed. Anyway. I just...

She's doesn't even know what to say.

RAYMOND

You changed your mind?

Cathy smiles, shyly.

RAYMOND

(smiles back)

Well good!

Raymond opens his door and gets out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE MORNING

Through the living room window, Sybil catches sight of Raymond helping Cathy into his truck. She stops what she's doing a moment as

Raymond's truck takes off down the street, music swirling.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RURAL VISTA - DAY

We see Raymond's truck driving down a road flanked by golden hills. He turns up the drive of an old ranch house, and drives up to the top.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - A BIT LATER

A large, rustic ranch-house sits on a bluff overlooking the late-Autumn vista of faded gold. Raymond's truck is parked in front of the house where Raymond stands with the ranch owner signing a receipt. Cathy has begun strolling past the house toward a clearing in the trees.

[Throughout the following exteriors REAR-PROJECTED facsimiles succor the close-ups, but all 'natural splendor' should shimmer with process.]

Raymond shakes hands with the ranch-owner and starts over to where Cathy stands, looking out. On the way he breaks off a branch from a tree with white bark and round, golden yellow leaves which he presents to her.

CATHY

It's lovely. What is it?

RAYMOND

It's called a Quaking Aspen. Fairly rare in these parts.

CATHY

(admiring the branch)

It's beautiful.

(looking out at the vista)

And you were right. What a perfectly lovely spot.

RAYMOND

Sometimes a little green, some fresh air, just helps put things back on the shelf. 'Cause it sure can be a disheveling world out there, every now and again.

CATHY

I'll say it can.

Cathy looks over toward a clearing in the grove.

CATHY

Is that a path?

RAYMOND

Looks like it.

CATHY

Oh let's have a peek.

RAYMOND

Alright.

They start off down the path, Cathy leading, music burgeoning.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODED TRAIL - LATER

Cathy and Raymond stroll down the gently winding path, red carpeted by the last of autumn while cloaked in an early winter mist.

As they stroll they are each aware of the diminished formalities between them.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODED TRAIL - LATER

They come upon a cluster of wildflowers.

RAYMOND

So you say he's seeing a specialist?

CATHY

Yes, well... A psychiatrist, really.

(MORE)

CATHY(cont'd)

My husband's been suffering from a great deal of strain, recently. Uncertainty.

RAYMOND

I'm sorry.

CATHY

I know he's in good hands - It's just... what with everything that's been going on recently, it just - I don't know - feels at times like there's no one left in the world I can talk to!

Cathy smiles to herself and looks back at him.

CATHY

(lightly)

Except you!

Raymond smiles.

RAYMOND

Well. Sometimes it's the people outside our world we confide in best.

CATHY

Why? Just because they're outside?

RAYMOND

And because they may have had experiences similar to ours. Because they care to listen.

CATHY

And once you do. Confide. Share those experiences with someone. They're no longer really outside, are they?

They've come upon a small wooden bridge under which a perfect stream passes. They stop for a moment.

CATHY

It's lovely, isn't it?

She kneels down and looks into the stream.

Raymond is looking down at her. There's a sadness in his eye, and he squats down beside her, music waking.

RAYMOND
(with great gentleness)
Did he cause that?

He is looking at the mark on her forehead.

Cathy puts her hand over it and stands, silent for a moment.

CATHY
He didn't mean to strike me.

She looks down at the stream and takes a step away.

RAYMOND
I'm sorry.

CATHY
No. Heaven knows we all have our troubles. I'm sure you yourself...

RAYMOND
What?

CATHY
Oh, I don't know. Ever since running into you at the exhibition... Well I just kept wondering what it must be like. Being the only one in a room. Colored, or whatever it was. How that might possibly feel. I'm sure I've never -

She stops, glancing out again at the hills.

Raymond looks out as well.

RAYMOND
Well, I suppose it's something you sort of grow accustomed to. Over time. Don't get me wrong. There is a world - even right here in Hartford - where everybody does indeed look like me. Only trouble is, very few people ever leave that world. I just want what any father wants for his child, the opportunities growing up I never had.

CATHY
Naturally.

RAYMOND
 But I'll tell you something - If
 you're really interested -

CATHY
 Oh I am.

RAYMOND
 (has a sudden thought)
 Are you hungry? Could you eat
 something?

CATHY
 (brief silence)
 I suppose I could.

RAYMOND
 Tell you what. Let me take you to
 one my favorite spots, not far from
 here. On good days they got hot
 food, cold drink, and just about
 discernible music.

CATHY
 Well it's hard to beat that!

RAYMOND
 (smiling)
 There you go!

Cathy smiles back as they start back up the path.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ERNIE'S BAR & GRILL - LATE AFTERNOON

Against the gray, industrial side of town, gleams the pink
 and green neon of Ernie's Bar&Grill. We see Raymond's truck
 just pulling into the driveway.

EXT. CAR WASH - LATE AFTERNOON

Across the street at a Car Wash, a young black attendant
 gives two short honks from a shiny black Edsel and looks
 around.

A woman in a black feathered hat approaches. It's Mona
 Lauder.

MONA
 Here I am! Yoo-hoo?

The attendant takes her ticket and escorts her to the driver's seat but Mona tarries a moment, catching sight of something across the street. The attendant looks off in the same direction.

Outside Ernie's, Raymond is seen helping Cathy out of his truck, taking her arm and escorting her into the club.

Mona remains devilishly fixed as she steps into the car and the attendant shuts the door.

MONA
(handing him a nickel)
Thank you... very much, indeed.

Mona starts her engine with a contented little smirk.

INT. ERNIE'S - LATE AFTERNOON

The front door opens and Cathy and Raymond step into the entry way of the club.

CATHY
(fixing her hair)
Well I'm hardly dressed for a restaurant.

RAYMOND
You look fine.

The main room at Ernie's is a smoky den of small square tables and black booths, colored mostly by neon overspill and Christmas lights. Most notably, everyone in the room is black.

As Raymond and Cathy enter everyone in sight turns and looks.

CATHY
Raymond.

Raymond contains a little smile.

RAYMOND
Don't worry. It's a very friendly place.

Raymond starts in and Cathy follows, reluctantly. A small blues band is just setting up as an old jukebox plays and one couple dances.

Raymond passes ESTHER, a dolled-up waitress in her late 20's, who scowls at him as he stops, glancing around the room for a table.

RAYMOND

Say there Esther, darling. What?
You don't say hello any more?

ESTHER

(checking out Cathy)
Looks like you're speakin' fine for
yourself.

RAYMOND

Oh, you're just sore 'cause I
haven't been coming around like I
used to.

ESTHER

Is that so?

RAYMOND

Now what do you say about bringing
us over a couple of drinks.

(to Cathy)

What would you like?

CATHY

Oh. A daiquiri? If they -

RAYMOND

One daiquiri, and a bourbon on the
rocks. Thank you, doll.

Esther rolls her eyes and turns.

As Raymond escorts Cathy to a table, a GLARING MAN stands up from his table just as Raymond is passing.

GLARING MAN

(to Raymond)

What d'you think you're doing, boy?

Raymond passes him without looking, continuing with Cathy to a corner table below a mirror and helps Cathy into her chair. He sits down opposite her.

The glaring man stares after a moment, then takes off adamantly toward the bar.

CATHY
 (a little tense)
 Well I hope you find this very
 amusing.

RAYMOND
 What do you mean? It's a very
 welcoming place!
 (spotting someone and
 nodding)
 How you doin' Gus.

A middle-aged man at another table (looking fairly soused)
 raises his glass to Raymond, then to Cathy.

Cathy smiles back at him.

RAYMOND
 See what I mean?

Cathy watches as a second couple step up to the dance-floor.
 Meanwhile Esther returns with drinks and menus.

CATHY
 Thank you.

RAYMOND
 Thank you, Esther.

She leaves.

RAYMOND
 (raising his glass)
 Well. Here's to being the only one.

Cathy looks at him a moment and then smiles, shaking her
 head. She toasts his glass and he laughs.

RAYMOND
 Really. We don't have to stay if
 you're not comfortable.

CATHY
 No. As long I keep away from
 Esther, I think I'll be fine.

RAYMOND
 Alright, then.

The jukebox song has ended and the band kicks into its first
 number, a tender "I'll Be Seeing You." Raymond turns to
 watch, smiling.

A few men in blue-collar uniforms are sauntering out of a smoke-filled pool-room, beer bottles in hand. They also stop to listen to the band, while two more couples head up to the floor to dance.

Cathy looks over at Raymond, and smiles to herself.

CATHY
Thank you, Raymond.

He turns to her.

CATHY
For a lovely afternoon.

RAYMOND
Well thank you, Mrs. Whitaker. I've had one as well.

CATHY
'Mrs. Whitaker.' Sounds so formal.
Would you -

She stops.

RAYMOND
(gently)
Would I what?

Brief silence.

CATHY
Ask me to dance?

Raymond smiles and slowly stands.

Cathy does the same and turns, leading as Raymond follows unhurriedly to the dance-floor.

The men in blue-collar uniforms watch Raymond pass with contempt in their eyes, before finally turning and filing out of the bar.

Cathy stops beneath a blossom of rosy light and turns, smiling as Raymond joins her. She takes his hand and they begin to dance, tenderly, in the soft glow of Ernie's, surrounded by other dancers and other lovers.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP ON:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE MORNING

We follow a vase displaying the golden Quaking Aspen branch as Sybil carries it into the living room. Cathy is gathering her belongings, getting ready to leave the house.

CATHY

Oh, doesn't that look lovely. Let's see now, where should we put it...? How about there, Sybil, by the window?

Sybil places the vase on a high end-table near the window.

CATHY

Oh yes, that's lovely.

SYBIL

It certainly is.

CATHY

(checking her purse)
Now where is that list you gave me - Though I swore to Janice I wouldn't be late for her recital.

SYBIL

You can't miss that.

CATHY

(finding the list)
Here it is.
(walking over to her coat)
You know, Sybil, I've been meaning to ask you...

SYBIL

Yes, ma'am?

CATHY

What is the name of that church group you belong to - the one you've mentioned so often...?

SYBIL

You mean at Ebenezer? The bible group?

CATHY

(putting on her coat)
Yes, I believe that was it.

SYBIL

Or was it South Green Baptist.
During the Fair Drive. The ladies
auxiliary?

CATHY

I didn't realize there was more
than one.

SYBIL

Oh, yes. I always seem to be
signing up for something.

CATHY

Well I think that's marvelous,
Sybil. That you even find the time,
what with all you do for us.

(putting on her scarf)

We just have so much up in the
attic I've been meaning to go
through. I thought you might know
of a church or civic group that
could benefit from a donation.

SYBIL

Well - certainly, Mrs. Whitaker. If
that's what you're looking for.
Places in need are never too hard
to find.

CATHY

(opening the door)

Well I suppose you're right about
that -

Cathy stops with a start.

A young black couple are standing in the doorway.

CATHY

Yes? May I - help you with
something?

Sybil looks on suspiciously, observing the couple's
conservative attire and officious clipboards.

YOUNG MAN

Is this the Whitaker residence?

CATHY

Yes.

YOUNG MAN

Are you -
 (glancing at a clipboard)
 Mrs. Frank Whitaker?

CATHY

Yes.

YOUNG MAN

(reciting his standard
 introduction)

Good afternoon, ma'am. Allow me to
 introduce myself. My name's
 Reginald Carter and this is Martha
 Livingston and we're members of the
 Hartford branch of the National
 Association for the Advancement of
 Colored People. As a charitable
 organization we rely heavily on the
 aid of volunteers and membership
 revenue from the general public.
 Perhaps you'd be interested in
 reading over our complimentary
 brochure which explains more about
 the N-A-A-C-P, its many
 achievements and goals for the
 future.

CATHY

Well - certainly, I'm familiar with
 your organization - I just... May I
 ask how you obtained our name and
 this address?

YOUNG MAN

You gave it to us ma'am.

CATHY

I did?

YOUNG MAN

When you signed our petition,
 supporting the funding initiative.

CATHY

(thinks for a moment,
 then)

Oh. Yes, I do remember signing for
 that.

YOUNG MAN

Perhaps you'd be interested in
 reading over our complimentary -

CATHY
Yes, I would -

YOUNG MAN
... If you wouldn't mind signing
our roster?

CATHY
Perhaps - Sybil, would you mind
signing for this? I'm terribly late
at it is.

Sybil, who has tried busying herself at the hall table, looks
up, just as the phone starts to ring.

CATHY
(starting out the door)
Whoever it is I'm gone! Thank you,
Sybil - I should be back by five!

SYBIL
(stepping to the door)
Yes, ma'am.

As Cathy scurries off the three look after, music hanging.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Cathy drives down Hawthorne street looking out her window
eagerly, music stirring softly.

The red-and-green Christmas decorations on the lamp-posts
only seem to accentuate the greyness of the neighborhood.

Then she spots it.

A small storefront with Christmas trees out front reads
DEAGAN GARDEN SHOP.

She smiles to herself as she continues on, picking up speed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARTFORD STREET - DAY

A wind whistles through downtown Hartford as Cathy hurries
out of the local Stop-&-Shop carrying groceries. She smiles
at a WOMAN passing on the street, and hurries on to her car.

The woman stops and turns, looking back at Cathy as she goes.

Two ladies are passing down the street - the same two ladies who stood snickering with Mona and her uncle at the art show. One of them spots Cathy and whispers something to the other.

Cathy notices, stopping a moment before shutting the trunk of her car, then rushes on.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DANCE SCHOOL - LATER

Cathy dashes in the front door of the building where a sign is posted. It reads: BALLET RECITAL TODAY

INT. DANCE SCHOOL - LATER

Inside the dimly-lit recital room mothers sit in rows of folding chairs watching as a class of 10 and 11-year-old girls perform a routine.

Cathy steps into the main room, hushed in attention, and stops to watch. Janice comes running over.

JANICE

Mother!

A ballet instructor turns and shh's them.

CATHY

(whispering)

Hello, dear.

Janice embraces her and then turns to face the recital, curling around her mother and keeping hold of her hand.

CATHY

Did the recital just begin?

Janice nods.

CATHY

So where are the other little girls from your class?

JANICE

Over there.

A queer fog of music forms as Cathy looks over to the other side of the room.

All the other girls Janice's age are standing with their mothers at the opposite end of the room.

The mothers all seem to be looking over at Cathy (or pretending not to) while clutching their daughter's hands or pulling them close. And all the little girls are quiet, staring sleepily at their estranged classmate and her silently tainted-mother.

Music spills over

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WHITAKER HOUSE - LATER AFTERNOON

We MOVE IN from a slow distance, angled toward the garage, as Cathy follows Janice up the porch steps into the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The front door opens and Cathy and Janice enter the house, dank with late afternoon.

CATHY
Sybil, we're home!

There's no answer. Suddenly Janice goes running into the house and straight up the stairs. The phone starts to ring.

CATHY
Janice? Janice?

Cathy watches her go. The phone continues ringing and Cathy sighs, putting down her purse and scarf and starting into the kitchen.

CATHY
Sybil?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cathy enters the kitchen, lit only by the late-day sun. There is no sign of Sybil as she goes to answer the phone.

CATHY
Hello?

ELEANOR
 (through receiver)
 Cathy!

CATHY
 El?

INT. FINE'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Eleanor crouches on the phone, pane shadows lining her face.

ELEANOR
 Oh Cathy, thank heavens you're
 home. I've been trying you all day.

INT. WHITAKER KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

CATHY
 El, what is it?

ELEANOR
 (through receiver)
 So you haven't heard. You haven't
 heard a thing?

CATHY
 No - About what? Eleanor, what
 happened?

INT. FINE BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

ELEANOR
 Oh Cathy, there's been talk.
 Vicious talk.

CATHY
 (through receiver)
 What do you mean? About what?

ELEANOR
 About you!

CATHY
 (through receiver)
 Oh, for heaven's sake - What now?

ELEANOR
 Oh, honey, I wish you never even
 had to know.

(MORE)

ELEANOR(cont'd)

It's Mona, Cathy, she's - Well, she's just been on some kind of rampage, swearing up and down she saw you and a colored man, somewhere out on Franklin, coming out of a truck or some such thing -

INT. WHITAKER'S KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Cathy closes her eyes.

ELEANOR

(cont'd through receiver)
The same colored man, she claims, you were talking to at the art show!

CATHY

But that's - that's preposterous! I mean yes I've spoken to Mr. Deagan on occasion. But this makes it sound like -

ELEANOR

(through receiver)
Cathy, believe me, I've been at my wits end. You have no idea what it's been like around here - the phone's been ringing off the hook since eight this morning!

CATHY

But Eleanor - the entire thing - is so absurd!

ELEANOR

(through receiver)
Darling, I know.

CATHY

But what in the world can I do?

ELEANOR

(through receiver)
Well. I suppose you could start by getting yourself another gardener.

Cathy suddenly turns.

Frank is standing in the shadows off the kitchen, looking down.

CATHY
 Frank! What on earth - I didn't
 even hear you -
 (to Eleanor)
 Eleanor, Frank just walked in. Can
 I call you back?

ELEANOR
 (through receiver)
 Of course. You go ahead.

CATHY
 I'll call you later.

Cathy hangs up the phone.

CATHY
 Frank, what are you doing home? Is
 everything alright - ?

He starts toward her, out of the dark, a drink in his hand.

FRANK
 Just tell me one goddamn thing.

CATHY
What?

FRANK
 Is it true? What they're saying?

CATHY
 Oh, Frank, I can't believe you even

FRANK
 Because if it is, even the
 slightest bit, so help me God,
 Cathleen -

CATHY
 Frank I'm sorry you ever even had
 to hear of such nonsense!

FRANK
 Yea', well, Dick Dawson didn't seem
 to think it was such nonsense when
 he snuck away from his desk today
 to phone me -

CATHY
 Good heavens -

FRANK

He says the whole friggin' town's been talking!

CATHY

Frank, Sybil will hear you.

FRANK

I sent her out. - Christ, Cathleen! Do you even have the slightest idea what this means? Do you realize the kind of effect this could have on me and the reputation I've spent the past eight years of my life trying to build? For you and the children and the company?

CATHY

Frank, I swear to you, whatever Mona Lauder saw or thought she saw was entirely a figment of that woman's hateful imagination! Yes, I'd spoken with Raymond Deagan on certain occasions - he brought his little girl to Eleanor's art show! But evidently, even here in Hartford, the idea of a white woman even speaking to a colored man is more than any -

FRANK

Please! Spare me the Negro rights!

CATHY

Frank, you know what that woman is capable of. Besides I - I've already given him notice. We won't be seeing the man again.

FRANK

Fine.

Silence.

CATHY

Is that why you're home? Because of what Dick said?

Frank just looks down at his drink, jiggling the glass.

CATHY

Frank?

He looks up at her with a little smirk, downs the rest of his drink, and walks out of the kitchen toward the bar.

CATHY

What, Frank.

(she follows)

Did something happen at work?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank is at the bar refilling his drink when Cathy approaches. She stops and looks at him.

CATHY

Frank?

FRANK

I guess you could call it sort of an early Christmas bonus.

CATHY

What do mean?

Frank takes his drink over to the couches and flops into it.

FRANK

A month of rest and relaxation'!
Can you imagine? During the busiest season of the year?! I mean what a goddamn honor!! But I guess when you consider the bang-up job I've been doing, ever since good ole Dr. Bowman entered the scene! And for being, as Millstein put it - what? - 'years overdo'! -

CATHY

But Frank you do deserve a vacation, after all you've given them.

FRANK

Well, Palm Springs is supposed to be nice, says the word from on high.

CATHY

Frank, I know it might not seem it now, but with everything that's happened, a trip somewhere, away from it all...

(MORE)

CATHY(cont'd)

Frank, it might just be the best thing in the world. For both of us.

He just looks down.

CATHY

Oh, Frank. What a wretched day it must have been for you, darling -

All at once the front door bursts open and David rushes in. Cathy stands up.

DAVID

Say! What do you know, pop's home! What're you doing home, pop?

Cathy approaches David, gathering up her purse and scarf and starting up the stairs.

CATHY

Your father has work to do, David. It's best you help yourself to a glass of milk and get started straightaway on your studies.

DAVID

Yes, mother. Say, pop -

FRANK

Mind your mother, David.

DAVID

Yes, sir.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE DAY

Cathy closes the bedroom door behind her and stops. A low tremor of music rises as the late day sun filters through curtains a peach and purple fume. Cathy walks slowly toward the window and stops, looking out.

Dusk has cast an early freeze over the Whitaker yard.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DEAGAN GARDEN SHOP - EARLY EVENING

Raymond stands outside his shop in the opaline dusk, showing a Christmas tree to a middle-aged man. JAKE, a teenage employee, steps out from inside.

JAKE
Say, Mr. Deagan!

RAYMOND
Yes, Jake?

JAKE
There's a lady on the phone for
you.

RAYMOND
I'll be right there.
(to the customer)
Would you excuse me a moment? I'm
terribly sorry.

INT. GARDEN SHOP - EARLY EVENING

Raymond picks up a wall-phone near the front door, as
Christmas colors bleed through the Garden Shop windows behind
him.

RAYMOND
Yes? This is Raymond Deagan.

It's Cathy, and Raymond can't conceal his pleasure.

RAYMOND
Oh, hello... That's right. Is
everything - ?
(he listens)
Yea. I think I could... Alright...
I'll see you tomorrow then.

He hangs up the phone but remains a moment, music bridging.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KELLER'S DRUG-STORE - DOWNTOWN HARTFORD - DAY

Through the large, Christmas-trimmed windows of Keller's Drug-
store we see Cathy, wearing sunglasses and scarf, crossing
the street.

Raymond waits at the corner of the old-fashioned, seasonally
adorned establishment, moderately busy for the middle of the
day. The door opens and Cathy walks directly over, stopping
beside him.

RAYMOND
Hello.

CATHY

Hello.

(silence)

Thank you for meeting me. I realize
you have a busy schedule.

RAYMOND

Worked out fine. I was glad you
called.

He turns to her with a smile, but Cathy darts a glance to the
counter where

Two women are glaring and whispering.

RAYMOND

You sure everything's alright?

Cathy exhales, closing her eyes. She shakes her head.

RAYMOND

What is it?

The SODA JERK has been watching them from the other end of
the counter.

SODA JERK

Uh - Is there something I can do
for you folks?

CATHY

(quietly)

Can we leave here?

RAYMOND

Of course.

Raymond quickly escorts Cathy, head ducked into her collar,
out to the street.

SODA JERK

Maybe that isn't such a bad idea!

Several customers turn and glare as they go.

EXT. KELLER'S DRUG STORE - DAY

Raymond and Cathy are turning down the first corner.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - LATER

The 20's-style movie theater stands across the street, streaked in winter light. The marquee reads HILDA CRANE and THE BOLD AND THE BRAVE.

Cathy and Raymond cross over to the theater and stop under its awning.

Cathy looks down.

RAYMOND

What is it? What happened?

CATHY

I wanted to see you in person
Raymond. I just - I can't -
(she stops)

RAYMOND

Can't what?

CATHY

It just isn't plausible, Raymond,
for me to be friends with you.

Raymond tenses.

CATHY

You've been so very kind. To me.
And I've been perfectly reckless
and foolish in return... thinking -

RAYMOND

What? That one person could reach
out to another? Take an interest in
another? And that maybe, for one
fleeting instant, could manage to
see beyond the surface - beyond the
color of things?

Cathy sighs and thinks a moment.

CATHY

Do you think we ever really do? See
beyond those things? The surface of
things?

RAYMOND

'Just beyond the fall from
grace/Behold that ever shining
place.' Yes, I do. I don't really
have a choice.

CATHY

(softly)
I wish I could.

She takes his hand, a bit formally.

CATHY

Good luck to you, Raymond.

She starts to turn away to leave when Raymond grabs her arm.

RAYMOND

Mrs. Whitaker!

A passing couple with a stroller turn and stop.

Schoolgirls waiting to buy tickets do the same.

CATHY

(still softly)
Raymond - please don't -

A TALL MAN in shirt-sleeves and suspenders shouts from across
the street.

TALL MAN

You! Boy! Hands off!

Raymond turns.

TALL MAN

Yea, you!

Cathy puts her hand over Raymond's and gently removes it. She
takes a step back.

Raymond stands helplessly, everyone watching.

CATHY

Oh Raymond -

He looks at her with such sadness.

CATHY

(as much to herself)
You're so beautiful.

She mouths 'bye' and turns, starting off briskly down the street.

Spectators break into murmurs.

The tall man across the street slowly turns and continues on his way.

Raymond looks back in Cathy's direction as she disappears around the corner.

Music booms, sweeping us inexorably forward.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNIOR LEAGUE FOOTBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

It's a brisk winter day and light flurries are just starting to sprinkle up the sky. David's junior-football team has broken and he and the others are walking back from the field. Along the sidewalk a row of black school-kids in uniform are making their way down the street.

One of the children is Sarah Deagan, Raymond's daughter, who is walking with another little girl her age.

SARAH'S FRIEND

Which' is how come I almost fell asleep during Math-class, on account of my brother playin' his records all night long - until my mama came and made him switch it off. And I don't even like that type of music!

Sarah's attention has turned to a powder blue Chevrolet slowing down near the football field. It's Cathy's car, who Sarah recognizes as it comes to a stop. She watches as David, walking back with his friend Hutch, calls out to his mother in the car.

DAVID

Mother! Can I sleep over at Hutch's tonight? Please!

CATHY

Not tonight, David. Your father's home and we're having a family dinner.

SARAH'S FRIEND

Who's that?

SARAH

Oh, just some friends of my daddy.
You don't have to wait, I'll catch
up.

Sarah's friend continues on as Sarah remains for a moment watching.

DAVID

You never let me stay over!

CATHY

Next time, David, I promise. Now
please get in the car, I'm late as
it is.

David climbs into the back-seat - Janice is seated in front - and the car begins to pull out.

Sarah smiles as it approaches. But as she lifts her hand to wave hello only Janice seems to notice her - whisking past the window as they go.

Sarah watches as the car speeds off down the road. She looks back in the direction of her group, but now her classmates are a good block away. And the snow has begun picking up. So she plunges her hands in her pockets and starts up after them.

Up ahead where the block narrows, Hutch and two of his friends stand leaning against the fence, sharing a cigarette.

Sarah notices them ahead.

Hutch is the first one to spot her, and he stares hard as she approaches. A chill of music is felt as Hutch leans over and starts whispering to the others. As they look back at her and laugh the music picks up a jazzy beat.

Sarah approaches, tucking her head down sullenly.

HUTCH

Hey fellas, look who's comin'! It's
daddy's girl! Hey there daddy's
girl! Where do think you're going?

SARAH

(a mumble)
Home.

HUTCH

Home to see your daddy?... Yea, and
his white girl?

Suddenly Sarah tears off, running down the street, music turning fast and brassy. The boys exchange brief smiles before grabbing rocks from the ground and taking off after her.

HUTCH

Hey! Where ya goin'? We just want to play!

Sarah looks back as she runs and sees them following. She starts to panic but continues running, dropping her schoolbooks along the way.

She comes to a busy intersection and turns off into an alley.

EXT. ALLEY -AFTERNOON

Sarah tears around a trash dumpster only to discover that the alley doesn't go through. She turns around just as Hutch and the others arrive, sealing her off, music simmering. The snow falls steadily now.

HUTCH

Uh-oh! Wrong turn, daddy's girl!

2ND BOY

Hey daddy's girl! Over here!

With their stone-wielding arms in the air, the boys begin slowly tightening around her, music building. Sarah begins backstepping toward the wall.

HUTCH

Yep! She made a wrong turn alright!

He doubles back with his rock, pitcher style, as the music explodes into wild rhythm, and the other two follow.

HUTCH

Just like her daddy!

All at once their rocks go hurling at Sarah, with Hutch's coming last and hard and hitting her in the head. It knocks her back and she falls to the ground.

For a split-second the boys are frozen. Then all at once they take off down the street, music reaching a brassy, frantic peak.

RAPID FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP TO:

INT. WHITAKER LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS DAY

Music shimmers suddenly as the top of an unwrapped present is lifted, revealing amid a blossom of tissue a satiny pair of new ballet slippers. We ascend.

JANICE

Oh, it is them, it is! Oh thank you, mother! Thank you, father!

Kaleidoscopic light multicolors the rosy, Christmas-strewn living room as Janice scurries over to Frank on the couch and Cathy returns with an egg nog. David sits on the rug, pooling over his new electric train-set. Outside, the backyard glistens with snow.

CATHY

Merry Christmas, darling!

JANICE

Now I'll be as good as all the other girls in class.

CATHY

(handing him his drink)
There you are, darling. Just the way you like it.

DAVID

(holding up one of the cars)
Pop! Look at the steam engine!

FRANK

Wonderful!

CATHY

Well, look at that.
(walking over to the fireplace)
I knew I was forgetting something!

Cathy returns with Frank's Christmas stocking.

CATHY

There you are, darling! A little something for Mr. and Mrs. Clause!

Frank overturns the stocking and a handful of travel brochures slip out onto the table.

FRANK

What've we got here? Acapulco,
Miami, Palm Springs, Bermuda.

Cathy sits down beside him on the arm of the couch.

CATHY

Take your pick, darling. It's your
choice.

FRANK

This mean you're paying?

CATHY

Well Rio, I know, is a bit
extravagant, but the rest are
really all quite affordable. As far
as warm weather goes. This time of
year.

FRANK

I don't know. Stan's always raving
about Miami.

CATHY

Oh, Frank I think Miami would be a
dream! El says it's just darling.
Everything's pink.

FRANK

Oh yea?
(tiny pause)
Then maybe we oughta consider
Bermuda.

Cathy looks at him.

Frank cracks a little smile. Music sweeps up as Cathy
embraces him.

CATHY

Oh, Frank! I do love you, darling.
I do.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MIAMI RESORT - NEW YEAR'S EVE NIGHT

Music can be heard spilling out from the glittering supper-
club, jutting off the side of the modern, palm-lined resort.

EXT./INT. TERRACE - RESORT SUPPER-CLUB NIGHT

Cathy and Frank dance together on the terrace of the sparkling venue, all decked out for New Year's, under the stars. A small band is playing and several other couples are dancing. And though it's not without tension it's clear they are each trying to make the vacation as pleasant as can be.

CATHY

I must say you look extremely fetching all gussied up in your white tux and tie.

FRANK

Well it's a good thing, since I can hardly breath in it.

CATHY

Oh it's not that bad.
(silence)
You like my dress?

FRANK

Yes. Very much. Didn't I say?

CATHY

You did not.

FRANK

Well it's a ravishing dress. And a ravishing girl to go with it.

CATHY

That's more like it.

The song ends and everyone claps for the band. Frank kisses Cathy tenderly on the lips, under the stars, and she smiles into his eyes. Frank puts his arm around her gently and escorts her back to their table.

As they near their table they are intercepted by a large family being seated. The handsome middle-aged parents sit down first, followed by five blond, handsome children, ranging from late teens to late 20's in age. The BLOND FATHER addresses Frank and Cathy:

BLOND FATHER

Excuse us.

FRANK

No problem at all.

One of the middle sons, the prettiest, watches Frank closely as he passes.

Cathy doesn't notice. But Frank does.

FRANK
You have a lovely family.

BLOND FATHER
Thank you. Happy New Year.

FRANK
Happy New Year to you.

Frank nods to the table, catching another glimpse of the pretty blond boy's stare. And he and Cathy take their seats.

CATHY
Frank, do you remember that summer?
At your uncle's in Vermont? Janice
wasn't even born yet. When David
broke his finger on the water pump?

FRANK
(remembering)
Oh yea.

CATHY
Whatever happened to that house?

FRANK
Think Margaret eventually put it on
the market.

CATHY
That was a wonderful old place. All
those wonderful barbeques.

FRANK
It was a good summer -
(distracted by the noise)

CATHY
It must be almost time.

Cathy lifts her glass and Frank refills it, then refills his own. He glances over toward the ruckus from other tables.

The blond table is awash in champagne and the pretty son now fully absorbed in the festivities.

From the bandstand, the M.C. leads the room in a rousing countdown.

EVERYONE
 ... Five - four - three - two - one
 - HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Cathy and Frank toast their champagne and kiss through the rain of pale blue confetti and all the shimmering cheer surrounding them.

CATHY
 Happy New Year, darling!

FRANK
 Happy New Year, dear!

Music swirls.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POOLSIDE - MIAMI HOTEL - DAY

We are surveying a pleasing aqua-blue scene of pleasure-goers by the pool. A girl with a pink bathing cap swan-dives into the sparkling water, which is littered with swimmers and children frolicking by the steps.

Frank is just finishing some laps and stops at the shallow end to catch his breath. He sits down on a step, still half-submerged, and smiles at the mothers of the splashing toddlers. He notices something at the other end of the pool.

A few members of the blond family are just coming out, dressed in swimwear and robes. They grab a few lounges and chairs and start to settle. The pretty son doesn't seem to be among them.

Frank stands, stretches. He steps out of the water and reaches for his towel just as a small black boy, age 4 or 5, goes skipping past him into the first step of the pool.

His father, a HOTEL WAITER, is running over from the hut-style snack-bar.

HOTEL WAITER
 (calling out)
 Martin! Martin, get outa there! You
 know you're not allowed in there!

Cathy, who sits among a row of lounges under an umbrella, looks up from her magazine.

A woman with a baby is already stepping efficiently out of the pool while others stand, dumbstruck.

Everyone else in the water, save one man doing laps, just stares at the tiny intruder. Instantly the waiter arrives and yanks his son out of the water.

HOTEL WAITER
(forcefully)
Now what did I tell you about going
in that pool?! You know you're not
allowed in there!

He carries his crying boy off.

Frank turns toward Cathy and shrugs. He starts back, drying himself off on the way.

CATHY
Hello, there.

FRANK
Well hello.

Frank plops himself down on the lounge, flat on his back, and exhales.

CATHY
Mmmm. Good swim, darling?

FRANK
(eyes closed, nodding)
Mmm.

CATHY
Feel good?

FRANK
Mmm.

CATHY
Isn't the sun just marvelous?

But her expression changes when she glances back toward the pool.

Kids who were playing now stare across the pool to the shallow end blankly. The last few bathers near the steps are just stepping out of the water, leaving the entire area cleared.

A MOTHER in an unbecoming swimsuit calls out to her DAUGHTER.

MOTHER
Donna?

DAUGHTER

What?

MOTHER

Time to get out.

DAUGHTER

But why?

MOTHER

(sharply)

Because I said so.

The daughter starts swimming reluctantly to the edge, just as the man doing laps makes his final pass.

We see the girl in the pink swimming cap climbing up the small ladder in the deep end. Within moments the pool is completely empty.

Frank and Cathy observe in silence.

Before turning back, Frank takes a final glance at the blond family gathering.

The pretty son has just arrived, wearing a white terry-cloth robe and a beach bag over his shoulder. He doesn't notice Frank.

We hear Cathy slap shut her magazine.

CATHY

Well that does it.

Frank turns.

CATHY

I think I've heard quite enough about fashion and advice for one afternoon! I do believe it's time for my Miss Mitchell.

Cathy opens up her canvas bag but doesn't see her book.

CATHY

Oh, heavens.

FRANK

What?

CATHY

I must have left it in the room. So silly.

FRANK

You want me to go?

CATHY

No, darling. You just sat down.

FRANK

I don't mind.
(he sits up)

CATHY

What? No, Frank. I'll go.

Frank stands up and flexes.

FRANK

It's fine. I want to get a paper
anyway.

CATHY

You sure?

FRANK

Yea.

He grabs his shirt and room-key and starts off toward the room - in the opposite direction of the blond boy by the pool.

CATHY

Thank you, darling. I'm sure it's
just there on the night-stand.

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - DAY

Frank has left the door ajar as he gathers his wallet and Cathy's book. He stops for a second in front of the mirror and regards himself in his wear. Not bad, for a man his age.

Then suddenly he senses something. A hum of music hangs in the air as he turns his head to the gap in the door.

There, standing and staring at Frank, is the blond boy. He holds his robe in one hand, revealing a lithe, white body squeezed into pale orange swim-trunks.

Frank stares back, captive.

The boy's fingers are quietly grazing his crotch.

Slowly, like a sleepwalker, Frank begins to approach, music deepening.

FADE TO BLACK.

WE HEAR

JANICE

They're here! I see their car!
They're here!

FADE UP ON:

INT. WHITAKER LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Music lightens as David, Janice and Sybil all hurry to the door which flies open on Cathy and Frank, armored with gifts and luggage.

JANICE

Mother! Father!

DAVID

Hi-ya pop! Hey mother!

SYBIL

Welcome home, Mr. And Mrs.
Whitaker.

CATHY

Well look at you all! What a lovely
greeting!

JANICE

So mother was it dreamy?

CATHY

Listen to you! Dreamy!

SYBIL

(taking Mr. Whitaker's
suitcase)
Did you have a nice time Mr.
Whitaker?

FRANK

Yes, Sybil. It was very relaxing.

DAVID

Say, pop!

CATHY

David, help Sybil with the luggage.

Frank sits down on the living room sofa as Sybil starts up the stairs with a suitcase.

DAVID

Pop, you'll never guess what happened at school this week? Try and guess!

FRANK

I give up.

CATHY

David!

JANICE•

(lugging a suitcase up the stairs)

I'm helping, mother!

DAVID

Billy Hutchison and these two other boys all got expelled from school!

FRANK

You mean suspended.

Sybil is starting back down the stairs.

DAVID

No! Expelled! I swear! For throwing a rock at a girl's head.

CATHY

That's terrible. A little girl from school?

DAVID

No. She was a Negro.

CATHY

What? Who told you such a thing?

DAVID

Tommy Hawkings. He saw. So he had to tell the principal.

Cathy glances up at Sybil who continues slowly down the stairs.

CATHY
Sybil? Is this true?

Sybil glances over to Frank and back to Cathy.

SYBIL
Yes, ma'am. I'm afraid it is.

Cathy looks over at Frank incredulously.

CATHY
What in heaven's name has gotten
into this town?

FRANK
It's just a couple of foolish kids.

DAVID
Hutch said they were just trying to
teach her a lesson.

Sybil continues on into the kitchen.

CATHY
Well I think it's dreadful. And
you're certainly not to see that
Hutch boy again. You understand me?

DAVID
Yes, ma'am.

FRANK
While you're there David, how about
flipping on the set for your old
man.

DAVID
Sure, pop.

Cathy sighs, picking up the mail from the hall table, and starts upstairs.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cathy enters the dark room, flips on the light and puts down her things. She walks over to the small desk by the window and puts down the mail.

There, among the bills, she notices the NAACP brochure. She picks it up.

Close on brochure, music taking.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER DINING ROOM - LATE DAY - TWO WEEKS LATER

Cathy's finger is scanning the telephone book for a listing and comes to rest on a number for the NAACP Information Line. Then she lifts the receiver off the phone and starts dialing.

She is sitting at the dining room table, half-toned by a bath of wintery light, while Janice sits at the coffee table doing her homework.

JANICE

Mother, how do you spell 'skirt'?

CATHY

One minute, dear. Mother's making a call.

(she finishes dialing and waits)

Yes - hello. I was wondering if you could help me possibly. I just recently received your brochure - which I found extremely informative - and was curious to learn a little more about what was entailed precisely - in your volunteer program - in terms of particular skills and so on. You see I - what?... Yes, I can hold.

Cathy hears the front door opening and turns.

Frank is walking in the door wearing a snow-dusted coat and hat, looking beat.

JANICE

Father's home!

CATHY

(complete surprise)

Frank? What happened to the match?

Tiny smile.

FRANK

Oh, my shoulder's been acting up. I couldn't sit there any longer.

CATHY

You didn't say anything.

He starts taking off his coat and mittens by the coat-rack.

JANICE

Father, I did the splits today.
Wanna see?

CATHY

(hanging up the phone)
Janice, your father just walked in
the door. And you have schoolwork
to finish.

JANICE

Yes, mother.

CATHY

You know, Frank. You never had that
physical. I certainly think you're
due for one, dear. Can I call Dr.
Ellis? It's been three years,
Frank.

Frank doesn't answer as he walks over to the couch and sits
down with the TV guide.

CATHY

You know my brothers had physicals,
every year on their birthday, all
during school. Father insisted.

He doesn't respond.

CATHY

Did I tell you the pediatrician
thinks Janice is going to need
braces?

JANICE

Father, do I have to!

CATHY

Apparently our little girl has an
over-bite.

David rushes in from the backyard carrying a bucket and rags.

DAVID

Say, pop! You'll never guess what
I'm doing?

CATHY
David, where is your coat?

DAVID
In the garage.

CATHY
And what's it doing there?

DAVID
I'm waxin' pop's car! It's gonna
look swell, pop.

CATHY
David! How many times do I have to
tell you children - you are not
permitted outdoors in this kind of
weather if you're not properly
dressed. It's ten below zero
outside, they're expecting
flurries! Do you understand me?
David?

DAVID
Yes ma'am.

CATHY
Because I give up. If you children
want to go and catch your death of
cold then so be it. I mean you try
talking sense to them, Frank,
because nothing I say ever seems to-

All of the sudden Frank bursts into tears.

CATHY
Frank!

Janice and David are stunned, staring at their father.

CATHY
Frank! What's the matter - !

She gets up from her chair and starts over to him, a dark
mist of music forming.

FRANK
Oh - God!

Janice begins to cry.

CATHY
 (urgently)
 Janice. David. Go upstairs to your
 rooms.

Janice stands, sobbing. David remains, transfixed.

CATHY
 Now!

Janice runs up the stairs and David follows in a trance.

Cathy stands frozen near the foot of the stairs.

FRANK
 (crying)
 Oh - Cathy...

She approaches him but slowly, with a strange foreboding.

CATHY
 What, Frank. What is it?

FRANK
 Something happened...

CATHY
What?
 (nothing)
 What.

Frank cries almost like a baby.

FRANK
 I've fallen in love with someone.

Cathy stares.

FRANK
 Who wants to be with me.

For a moment, just having said it sobers him some, and he looks back at her. Then he crumbles again.

FRANK
 Oh Cathy, I think I might have to
 go!

Music deepens as Cathy numbs, staring flatly, unable to move.

FRANK

I just - I never knew... what it was like - I know how cruel that's sounds. But I'm not... - Oh God, Cathy. I tried! I tried so hard to make it go away... I thought I could do it... for you and the children... But I can't! I can't!...

He buries his head in his hands.

After several seconds she responds.

CATHY

(lifeless)

I assume then... you'll be wanting a divorce?

Frank looks up at her, puffy-eyed. But suddenly the tears seem to have stopped.

Cathy looks back at him like a stone.

FRANK

(softly)

Cathy I'm so sorry.

But all at once she turns, and picking up a glass from the table walks straight-headed up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

Cathy enters, closes the door and stands frozen, in the dark for several seconds.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

We look down at Frank who stands alone in the empty living room. He turns and walks over to the bar and limply pours himself a drink. He stands frozen a moment, drink in hand, as music gathers, softly. Then he throws it back, walks over to his coat and hat and opens the front door of the house. He turns back around for one last look - and closes the door behind him.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

Cathy stands outside her door looking out the landing window. She hears the sound of Frank's car starting off.

Filtered through a new snowfall, the red of his brakes tint the dusky sky and rouge her silent profile. Music deepens.

Cathy walks to the window and stares hard at the telephone. She lifts the receiver to her ear. She dials.

CATHY
(quivery)
Eleanor? Eleanor it's me, Cathy.

Music opens as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FINE HOUSE - NIGHT

A soggy snowfall continues as we glide through shiny branches outside the Fine's house toward the rosy glow of an upstairs window. There we see Cathy in the glow of Eleanor's bedroom, telling her friend the whole story.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor reaches for Cathy's hands, music settling.

ELEANOR
Oh, Cathy.

CATHY
So you see, El. You see why I couldn't tell you anything. Anything at all.

ELEANOR
Oh you dear, sweet kid. In a million years I couldn't have imagined. Not Frank! I suppose divorce really is the only option - if only to keep it as far from the children as possible.

CATHY
I think that's what's been the hardest of all. The endless secrecy. Our entire lives just - shut in the dark.

ELEANOR
Are there savings?

CATHY

Nothing much to speak of. And certainly not with Frank's job on the line.

ELEANOR

Well honey, you know, if there's anything you need, anything at all -

CATHY

Oh, El...

ELEANOR

I mean it. We're here. Alright?

CATHY

Thank you, El. For always having been.

Cathy reflects a moment and stands, walking toward the window.

CATHY

You know it's funny.

ELEANOR

What's that.

CATHY

This whole time, the only person I've been able to talk to. About any of this.

(turning back to her)

Was Raymond Deagan.

Eleanor looks at Cathy in disbelief.

ELEANOR

What?

CATHY

It's true. Well, not in the way Mona intended - Nothing like that! We would just talk! But... Somehow it made me feel - oh, I don't know. Alive somewhere.

She glances out the window at the rain-dampened snow.

CATHY

Oh Eleanor, I know it sounds ridiculous and mad...

(MORE)

CATHY(cont'd)

But I do, I think of him. What he's doing, what he's thinking. I do -

Cathy turns back to her friend with the wistful smile of a girl.

Eleanor glances off.

CATHY

El?

Eleanor gets up and starts tending to the tray of empty cups.

ELEANOR

What can I say? You're so full of surprises. I'm speechless.

Cathy looks at her.

CATHY

What do you mean?

ELEANOR

(little laugh)

Though I'm sure I must have looked entirely the fool, crusading away against Mona Lauder and all her so-called inventions-!

CATHY

Eleanor! - How can you say such a thing?

ELEANOR

I didn't say a word! Who am I to tell anyone how to lead their lives?

CATHY

But El! Nothing happened between us! I told you that!

ELEANOR

Cathy it's none of my business. But you certainly make it sound as if something had.

A soft bed of music rises as Cathy looks back at her, disarmed.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Music continues as Cathy returns home, hanging up her coat and stepping into the dark, silent house.

She walks toward the french doors, etched in silver, and stops.

There, filtering moonlight through its gilded maze, the branch of Silver-tip spruce still sits in a vase by the window.

SYBIL

(off)

Mrs. Whitaker?

Cathy turns toward the kitchen.

Sybil stands in the shadows near the kitchen door.

CATHY

Sybil.

SYBIL

I'm sorry to disturb you ma'am, I just...

CATHY

Yes, Sybil?

SYBIL

It's something I've been wanting to tell you, ma'am, for some time - Something I believe you'd surely want to know - even if it isn't... exactly my place...

CATHY

Sybil, what is it?

SYBIL

It's about the little colored girl, ma'am. The one that got hit?

CATHY

Yes. What about her?

SYBIL

I'm sorry, ma'am, but it was Mr. Deagan's little girl, Sarah -

CATHY

What! Oh God, Sybil, it wasn't!

SYBIL

The neighbors tell me she's doing
just fine -

CATHY

Oh that dear, sweet little girl.
(to Sybil, suddenly
incensed)
How in God's name, Sybil, could you
not have told me this? That was
weeks ago - !

She turns and marches to the entry hall, Sybil following.

SYBIL

Oh, Mrs. Whitaker, please don't be
cross with me! I didn't want to -
makes things any worse!

CATHY

(throwing on her coat)
Sybil, Sybil do you have any idea
where Mr. Deagan lives?

SYBIL

I believe he's been at his father's
old place on 12th and Governor.

CATHY

12th and Governor. Thank you,
Sybil.

Cathy grabs her purse and opens the door, rain falling.

SYBIL

You're going there now?

CATHY

Please just keep an eye on the
children for me. I won't be long.
(she starts out)

SYBIL

Mrs. Whitaker!

CATHY

(turns back, hurriedly)
What?

SYBIL

Would you like me to go with you,
ma'am?

CATHY

No, Sybil. No. I'll be fine. Thank
you.

Music billows as Sybil watches her go.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DEAGAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rain falls upon the inky, lamp-lit night as we loom down slowly upon a small, wood bungalow, the front windows of which appear to have been boarded up.

Through the window downstairs we can just glimpse Raymond walking past.

INT. DEAGAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Raymond is bringing a freshly made cup of hot chocolate into the living room, stirring as he goes.

RAYMOND

And here we have it! Your daddy's
super-duper world-renowned hot
cocoa specially prepared for his
super-duper number one girl!

He hands the cup to Sarah who is stretched out on the couch with pillow and blanket watching TV. A small, square bandage on her forehead still marks her injury.

SARAH

Thank you, daddy.

RAYMOND

How you feeling, baby?

SARAH

Fine, daddy.

RAYMOND

What's that you're watching,
anyway?

There's a knock at the door. Raymond stops.

RAYMOND
Who on earth...?

He walks to the front.

RAYMOND
Yes?

The door opens on Cathy, turning suddenly to face him.

CATHY
Raymond! Oh Raymond I just heard.
Just this instant. I heard and I
got in my car.
(she stops)
How are you? How's Sarah?

RAYMOND
We're fine. Thank you.

A car passes and Raymond looks out nervously.

RAYMOND
(semi-whisper, gesturing)
Meet me around the side.

Cathy nods and starts back down the steps as Raymond steps back inside the house.

RAYMOND
(grabbing his coat)
Sarah, everything's alright, honey.
I'll just be outside for a minute.

SARAH
Okay daddy.

EXT. DEAGAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Cathy stands facing away, softly illuminated by an outdoor lamp, along the side of Raymond's bungalow. She hears footsteps and turns.

Raymond stands near the corner of the house, looking at her.

CATHY
Oh Raymond.
(taking a few steps
closer)
What you must have been through.

Raymond looks down and shuffles forward some as well.

CATHY

What's being done, to the boys
who-?

RAYMOND

Nothing. I won't make her go
through it again. Not now. Not with
rocks coming through the window
every night.

CATHY

Raymond, that's hateful.

RAYMOND

It's not white's throwing them -
it's coloreds.

CATHY

No.

RAYMOND

Oh, yea - Seems to be the one place
where whites and coloreds are in
full harmony. Anyway, we'll be out
of here soon enough, once and for
all.

CATHY

You're moving?

RAYMOND

Yea.

CATHY

Where to?

RAYMOND

I have a...
(emptying some flooded
trash-lids)
... brother in Baltimore. Says he
can find me work out there. So
we're packing up the house. Two
weeks Friday we'll be on the 4:30
train, heading South.

CATHY

But what about your business, your
shop?

RAYMOND

The business is through. No one's
gonna hire me.

(MORE)

RAYMOND(cont'd)

So I'm selling the shop to a cousin
of mine. No...

(he looks off)

It's pretty well finished for me
here.

(a thought stops him)

I've never lived anywhere but
Hartford.

CATHY

(all vulnerability)

Perhaps... sometime in the
future... after you're settled - I
could... perhaps come for a visit.
See Baltimore? You see I... Well it
looks as if I'm to be single again.

Raymond looks at her. It makes him sad. He smiles softly.

RAYMOND

Oh, Mrs. Whitaker.

CATHY

(softly)

Please call me Cathy.

RAYMOND

(softly)

Cathy.

Silence.

CATHY

No one would know us there.

RAYMOND

I'm just not sure... it would be
such a wise idea. After... well,
everything that's -

Cathy looks at him, feeling the first chill of an impending
loss.

RAYMOND

All that matters now - what's got
to matter most - is what's right
for Sarah. I've learned my lesson
about mixing with other worlds. And
I've seen the sparks fly...

(tenderly)

All kinds.

Cathy turns away, hiding sudden tears.

Raymond puts a hand on her shoulder, which she covers with hers.

RAYMOND
Have a proud life. A splendid life.
Will you do that?

She closes her eyes.

He kisses her fingertips.

RAYMOND
Goodbye Cathy.

His fingers slip from hers.

She stands a moment, the black, liquid sky continuing its downpour, then starts walking, hurriedly, to her car. She doesn't look back.

Raymond watches gravely, then turns and starts slowly back inside.

To which a rising music as bottomless as the sea suddenly answers, spilling over and engulfing what follows.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WHITAKER BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The curtains are drawn and Cathy lays across the shadowy surface of her bed, sobbing. Everything she's kept inside seems to spill from her now, as we move in gently through aquanautic shadows.

Music fades, leaving us alone with her sounds - when the phone starts ringing. Cathy stops, listening. Then sits up in bed and looks over at it, wiping her eyes. Then she slips off the edge of the bed and walks over to the writing table to answer it. Outside, the rain appears to have stopped.

CATHY
Hello?

FRANK
(through receiver)
Cathy? Did I wake you?

CATHY
Frank?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank sits on the phone against blue floss hotel wallpaper, his face in shadow.

FRANK
I'm sorry to call this late. I hope
I didn't...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

CATHY
No. I was awake.

FRANK
(through receiver)
I didn't want to - upset the
children.

CATHY
No. Of course.

FRANK
(through receiver)
How are they, by the way?

CATHY
Fine. Just fine. They still ask
when you'll be coming home.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

FRANK
I know. I know. I guess that's -
partly why I was calling...

Frank sits hunched-over a little table in the dark. Behind him, spread out in bed with newspapers and a half-eaten box of chocolates, the pretty blond boy watches a large TV.

FRANK
I, uh - I got a call from Dick
yesterday. Said everything was...
set, papers drawn up.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cathy just listens. Expressionless.

FRANK

(through receiver)

He wanted to know... how Thursday was for you. Three o'clock sometime. I told him I thought you might have carpool Thursdays but I wasn't absolutely certain. So I said I would check.

CATHY

(distantly)

You never could remember my carpool days. And they've always been the same, Wednesdays and Fridays, as long as I can remember.

FRANK

(through receiver)

Wednesdays and Fridays. Of course. Same old absent-minded -

CATHY

What time... did you say on Thursday?

FRANK

(through receiver)

What?

CATHY

The appointment? What time?

FRANK

(through receiver)

Oh - Three. Three o'clock.

CATHY

(brief silence)

Alright.

FRANK

(through receiver)

Okay. Well... Great. That was it, really. I know it's late.

CATHY

It is.

FRANK

(through receiver)

So I guess I'll see you on - Thursday, then.

CATHY
See you Thursday.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

FRANK
Goodbye, Cathy.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Music rises like a steam.

CATHY
Goodbye, Frank.

She hangs up the phone and sits very still for several seconds.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

INT. WHITAKER BEDROOM - DAY - TWO WEEKS LATER

Outside, through the bedroom window, we can see the new gardener - an Asian man - watering the plants. We slowly move inside to find Cathy sitting at her bedroom table finishing up the bills.

CATHY
(writing)
Sixty-seven dollars and thirty-two cents.
(looking up a moment)
Now what is today...?

She glances over at her desk-calendar, turning the page to the proper day. It reads: SATURDAY, MARCH 1.

She copies the date down in her checkbook, then stops a moment. She looks back at the calendar as if trying to remember something. Snapping back to business, she tears out the check, places it in an envelope and seals it. She gathers up her other mail and stands, glancing once around the room before grabbing her purse and sunglasses and starting out the door.

INT. WHITAKER FOYER - DAY

The soft sunlight shimmers through windows as Cathy comes down the stairs.

Sybil is busy polishing the dining room table.

CATHY

Oh, Sybil. You don't need to be doing that.

SYBIL

It's Friday.

CATHY

I know it is, but... There's just so much more to do now. I can hardly expect you to be polishing the table every week.

SYBIL

No reason not to keep things up Mrs. Whitaker. No reason at all.

CATHY

I know.

Cathy stops in front of the mirror to fix her hair and put on her sunglasses.

SYBIL

Don't forget the grocery list.

CATHY

Oh! Thank you, Sybil -
 (she starts checking her
 pockets)
 I don't know how in the world I'd
 ever manage - Here it is.

She takes out the shopping list but finds something else in the pocket. She pulls out a scarf - the lilac scarf - forgotten there since her afternoon with Raymond. Music whispers.

She looks at it a moment, then up at the mirror where it's reflected in her hand. She puts it on over her hair and glasses and stops a moment, looking at herself.

CATHY

I shouldn't be long, Sybil.

SYBIL

(still bent over,
 polishing)
 Alright, Mrs. Whitaker.

Cathy turns, music rising, and starts out the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Cathy drives up in front of the large green field, stuffed with boys in red, sauntering back to the bleachers. David is amongst them, walking arm-in-arm with another boy, when he spots his mother's car and waves.

DAVID

Say - Mother!

CATHY

Go and gather your things, David.
Mother's in a hurry!

David races his friends to the bench where he grabs his knapsack and goes running to the car. He hops in the front and we ascend as Cathy takes off down the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DANCE-SCHOOL - DAY

Cathy is walking Janice, dressed for ballet, out the door of her dance-school.

CATHY

See you next week!

The door shuts behind them as Cathy hurries Janice into the car. She rushes around to the driver's side, hops inside the car, and is off again, zipping down the road.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

A soft, new sun warms the brick of the Hartford Train Station, standing proudly in the center of town. We see Cathy's car just pulling up and turning into the parking section.

INT. CAR - DAY

DAVID

Say! Why are we turning in here?

Cathy is pulling into a parking space.

CATHY

Mother just needs to dash inside
for two shakes while you and your
sister wait inside in the car.

DAVID

No fair!

JANICE

Where are you going?

CATHY

(getting out of the car)
I'll be right back. Now stay put.
Both of you. And lock the door.

Cathy shuts the door of the car and looks up at the clock
outside.

It reads: 4:24.

She hurries on inside.

[Music continues in some form through to the end of the film]

EXT. PLATFORM - DAY

Cathy emerges out of the stairway onto the platform, a jumble
of boarding and goodbyes. She looks back and forth anxiously,
then starts walking down the platform toward the front of the
train.

She hurries along, looking every-which-way, past all the
others.

Then suddenly she stops.

Raymond stands on the platform, gingerly helping Sarah up the
steps of the train while a black attendant loads their
luggage into an open compartment.

Cathy starts over to them, but Raymond slips inside the train
without seeing her.

Cathy just stares at the door, watching others continue
inside. Right in front of her

A heavy-set Italian man is saying goodbye to his wife and two
sons. The wife is crying.

A CONDUCTOR is passing.

CONDUCTOR

All aboard! Southbound train to New
York and Washington now departing.
All aboard!

Cathy looks back at the train door just as

Raymond reappears, stepping out of the train and addressing
the young attendant, who hands him his baggage slip.

Cathy takes a few unconscious steps in his direction.

Raymond tips the attendant and shakes his hand and starts
back to the door of the train. He takes one step up and
stops, turning around again.

CONDUCTOR

All aboard! All aboard!

He sees her.

She smiles for being seen. Raymond smiles warmly back.

And suddenly - cruelly - the train begins to move. Though for
one luxurious moment it actually sweeps them together - with
Raymond gliding toward Cathy and then crossing her - before
setting off on its inexorable pull.

Cathy lifts a tiny hand goodbye.

Raymond lifts his in return.

She smiles, tears starting, as Raymond continues shrinking
from view before vanishing entirely with the snaking engine.

Suddenly everything is still.

Cathy stands for several seconds, alone in the sudden
stillness.

Then all at once she turns and begins walking away, down the
platform.

Music resumes with sad resolution.

CATHY (V.O.)

That was the day I stopped
believing in the wild ardor of
things. Perhaps in love, as well.
That kind of love.

EXT. TRAIN-STATION - MOMENTS LATER

From a great height we see Cathy walking decisively out of the station on her way back to her car, late afternoon sun burning orange upon the town.

CATHY (V.O.)

The love in books and films. The love that tells us to abandon our lives and plans, all for one brief touch of Venus.

Cathy climbs into her car, shuts the door and begins driving out of the lot.

CATHY (V.O.)

So often we fail in that kind of love. The world just seems too fragile a place for it. Or perhaps it's only we who are too fragile.

Finally Cathy is turning onto the main road, amid all the other cars heading home. Her powder-blue Chevrolet is engulfed.

All around, trees are starting to bloom. Spring has arrived.

END