

**AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY**

Written by

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**1 AN ENDLESS SKY AT TWILIGHT 1**

Foreboding. Heat lightning in the distance. Miles of unforgiving, summer-scorched prairie.

**BEVERLY (OS)**

..."Life is very long..."

**2 MILES OF STRAIGHT ROAD 2**

Two lanes, not a car in sight. Cracked asphalt undulates over gentle, browned hills, disappears into an infinite horizon.

**BEVERLY (OS)**

TS Eliot. Not the first person to say it, certainly not the first person to think it.

**3 A LAKE IN THE GATHERING DUSK 3**

Flat, still. An empty aluminum rowboat lolls listlessly, tied haphazardly to an old wooden dock.

**BEVERLY (OS)**

But he's given credit for it because he bothered to write it down.

**4 AN OLD FARM HOUSE SITTING ATOP A LOW HILL 4**

At the end of a long gravel road. Surrounded by towering black walnuts and lace-bark elms. A farm once, no one's put a plow to earth here in decades.

**BEVERLY (OS)**

So if you say it, you have to say his name after it. "Life is very long:" TS Eliot. Absolutely goddamn right.

Wrap around porches, forgotten gardens. Imposing in the

gathering gloom. A single downstairs window glows.

**BEVERLY (OS) (CONT'D)**

Give the devil his due. Very few poets could've made it through Eliot's trial and come out, brilliantined and double-breasted and Anglican.

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4 **CONTINUED:**

4

And now, a face fills the screen --

5 **INT. BEVERLY'S DIMLY LIT STUDY - TWILIGHT**

5

BEVERLY WESTON. A craggy, wise and deeply sad Okie. We take a long moment, just to study that face.

**BEVERLY**

Not hard to imagine, faced with Eliot's first wife, lovely Viv, how Crane or Berryman might have reacted, just foot-raced to the nearest bridge; Olympian Suicidalists.

Stares out the window at the darkening, ominous horizon.

**BEVERLY (CONT'D)**

Not Eliot: after sufficient years of ecclesiastical guilt, plop her in the nearest asylum and get on with it.

He sits at a cluttered desk, his face damp with sweat. Nurses a glass of whiskey, his staggered delivery due more to his careful selection of words than drunkenness. He's talking to someone we do not yet see.

**BEVERLY (CONT'D)**

God-a-mighty. You have to admire the purity of the survivor's instinct.

From somewhere upstairs, a THUD. He looks to the ceiling.

**BEVERLY (CONT'D)**

Violet. My wife. She takes pills, sometimes a great many. They affect... among other things, her equilibrium. Fortunately, they eliminate her need for equilibrium...

6 **INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - TWILIGHT**

6

Full of shadows. She sits up slowly from rumpled sheets. We're on her profile, CLOSE, silhouetted against the faint light from the open bathroom door. She hesitates on the edge of the bed, getting her bearings. Finds a pack of Winstons, lights one. Listens to the voices filtering up from below.

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7 INT. THE STUDY - TWILIGHT

7

Beverly shifts, waiting for the sound of more movement from the rooms overhead. When there is none --

**BEVERLY**

My wife takes pills and I drink.  
That's the bargain we've struck.

**INTERCUT WITH:**

8 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - TWILIGHT

8

She gathers herself to stand. Moves to the door. We FOLLOW HER CLOSELY. Her hair unkempt, her steps unsteady, into --

**BEVERLY**

The reasons why we partake are  
anymore inconsequential.

The hallway, walls lined with photos of long-dead pioneer ancestors and faded school photographs of three daughters.

**BEVERLY (CONT'D)**

The facts are: my wife takes pills and I drink. That's the bargain we've struck, just one paragraph of our marriage contract... cruel covenant. And these facts have over time made burdensome the maintenance of traditional American routine.

She makes her way to the stairs starts down.

**BEVERLY (CONT'D)**

Rather than once more vow abstinence with my fingers crossed in the queasy hope of righting our ship, I've chosen to turn my life over to a Higher Power and join the ranks of the Hiring Class.

The light from the study slices across the living room.

**BEVERLY (CONT'D)**

It's not a decision with which I'm entirely comfortable. I know how to launder my dirty undies. Done it all my life, but I'm finding it's getting in the way of my drinking.

She can see a portion of Beverly's desk, a woman's legs.

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8 CONTINUED:

8

**BEVERLY (CONT'D)**

Sorry about the heat in here. My wife is cold-blooded and not just in the metaphorical sense. She does not believe in air-conditioning... as if it is a thing to be disbelieved. I knew your father, you know. Bought many a watermelon from Mr Youngblood's fruit stand. He did pass, didn't he??

**JOHNNA**

Yes, sir.

**BEVERLY**

May I ask how?

**JOHNNA**

He had a heart attack. Fell into a flatbed truck full of wine grapes.

**BEVERLY**

Wine grapes. In Oklahoma. I'm sorry.

**VIOLET**

Bev...?!

**BEVERLY**

Yes?

**VIOLET**

Did you pullish? Did you...Oh, goddamn it... did. You. Are the police here?

**BEVERLY**

No...

She stands in the shadows of the living room, confused.

\*

**VIOLET**

Am I looking through window? A window?

**BEVERLY**

Can you come here?

She steps into the study, emerging from the darkness into light to reveal: VIOLET WESTON. Dissipated, dishevelled, late sixties. She wears pajamas and a much slept-in robe.

**VIOLET**

Oh. Hello.

She's staring at a woman sitting in front of Beverly's desk: JOHNNA. Thirty, Native American, simply dressed.

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8 **CONTINUED:**

5.  
8

**BEVERLY**

Johnna, the young woman I told you about.

**VIOLET**

You tell me she's a woman. Wo-man. Whoa-man.

**BEVERLY**

That I'm hiring --

**VIOLET**

Oh, you hire women's now the thing. I thought you meant the other woman.

**BEVERLY**

To cook and clean, take you to the clinic and to the --

**VIOLET**

(over-articulating)  
In the int'rest of ...civil action, your par-tic-u-lars way of speaking, I thought you meant you had thought a whoa-man to be HIRED!

**BEVERLY**

I don't understand you.

**VIOLET**

(winsome, to Johnna)  
Hello.

**JOHNNA**

Hello.

**VIOLET**

I'm sorry.  
(curtsies)  
Like this.

**JOHNNA**

Yes, ma'am.

**VIOLET**

You're very pretty.

**JOHNNA**

Thank you.

**VIOLET**

Are you an Indian?

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6.

8 CONTINUED:

8

**JOHNNA**

Yes, ma'am.

**VIOLET**

\*

What kind?

\*

**JOHNNA**

\*

Cheyenne.

\*

**VIOLET**

Do you think I'm pretty?

**JOHNNA**

Yes, ma'am.

**VIOLET**

(curtsies again)  
Like...this?  
(curtsies again)  
Like this?

She stumbles, catches herself.

**BEVERLY**

Careful...

**VIOLET**

You're the house now. I'm sorry,  
I took some medicine for my mussss...  
muscular.

**BEVERLY**

Why don't you go back to bed,  
sweetheart?

**VIOLET**

Why don't you go fuck a fucking  
sow's ass?

**BEVERLY**

All right.

**VIOLET**

I'm sorry. I'll be sickly sweet. I'm  
soooooooooo sweet. In-el-abrially sweet.

She smiles at Johnna, goes. Beverly watches her disappear  
back up the stairs, then --

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8 CONTINUED:

8

**BEVERLY**

We keep unusual hours here. Try not  
to differentiate between night and  
day. You won't be able to keep a  
healthy routine.

**JOHNNA**

I need the work.

**BEVERLY**

I myself require very little  
attention, thrive without it, sort  
of a human cactus. My wife has been  
diagnosed with a touch of cancer, so  
she'll need to be driven to Tulsa for  
her final chemotherapy treatments.  
You're welcome to use that American-  
made behemoth parked out in the drive.  
Welcome to make use of anything,  
everything, all this garbage we've  
acquired, our life's work. Do you  
have any questions?

**JOHNNA**

What kind of cancer?

**BEVERLY**

My God, I nearly neglected the punch

line: mouth cancer.

**JOHNNA**

What pills does she take?

**BEVERLY**

Valium. Vicodin. Darvon, Darvocet.  
Percodan, Percocet. Xanax for fun.  
OxyContin in a pinch. And of course  
Diluadid. I can't forget Diluadid.

Beverly wobbles to his feet, explores his bookshelf.

**BEVERLY (CONT'D)**

"By night within that ancient house,  
Immense, black, damned, anonymous."

(and)

My last refuge, my books: simple  
pleasures, like finding wild onions by  
the side of a road, or requited love.

He takes a book from the bookshelf, gives it to her.

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8 **CONTINUED:**

8

**BEVERLY (CONT'D)**

TS Eliot. Read it or not. It isn't  
a job requirement, just for your  
enjoyment.

(beat)

Here we go, round the prickly pear...

\*

Prickly pear prickly pear...

Here we go round the prickly pear...

9 **OPENING TITLES**

9

We're underwater. Light fractures and scatters above. The  
surface undulating gently as we GLIDE through a lake's  
dark, tenebrous waters on a moonlit night.

A rowboat SLIPS across our field of vision. It's aluminum  
hull cutting through the calm above, sending out small waves  
as it makes it's way SLOWLY past.

Oars dip in on either side, propelling the small craft toward  
deeper water. It slows. Stops. Bobs gently. We wait, watch --

And then suddenly, something large hits the surface above,  
indistinct, exploding the calm, coming towards us, sinking  
fast as TITLES END --

Prone, silhouetted against a sunlit window across the room. A body, her back to us. The phone RINGS. Once, twice. The body doesn't move. A girl's voice calls from downstairs.

**JEAN (OS)**

Mom...?

The phone continues to RING. Still no movement.

**JEAN (OS) (CONT'D)**

Mom...!

Nothing. The ringing stops. A moment of silence, followed by irritated teenage footsteps on the carpeted stairs.

**JEAN (OS) (CONT'D)**

...Mom...?

The hallway door opens, we're in --

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JEAN, fourteen, precocious, sticks her head in.

**JEAN**

...Mom?

A sound from the body, still no movement.

**BARBARA**

Mmm...

**JEAN**

You didn't hear the phone?

**BARBARA**

If it's your father, tell him to fuck off.

**JEAN**

It's Aunt Ivy in Oklahoma.

New deal. She sits up. CLOSE ON: BARBARA FORDHAM, late-forties, fully dressed. She gropes for the phone.

**BARBARA**

...Ivy? ...what's wrong?

Barb stands, moves slowly to the window. Outside: identical suburban homes, neutral house colors, lawns.

We STUDY Barb as she listens. Greying roots, no make-up, a few extra pounds. A woman who, for reasons we don't yet understand, has decided to stop giving a damn.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

...When...?

Jean passes in the hall. Stops, watching as her mother slowly dissolves, reaches for the sill, lowers herself to sit.

**12 INT/EXT. WESTON HOUSE (PAWHUSKA, OKLAHOMA) - DAY 12**

A battered Honda Civic makes it's way up the long drive from the highway below, dust swirling behind it. It's hot. Bright.

The Honda parks. IVY WESTON, forties, shy and soft-spoken, attractive enough but expert at hiding it, climbs out. Stares up at the trees surrounding the old farm house. The precarious old barn out back and untended flower beds.

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**13 INT. WESTON KITCHEN - DAY 13**

Johnna washes a dish at the sink. Watches Ivy's arrival through the kitchen window. Makes no motion to go to her --

**14 INT. THE WESTON HOUSE - DAY 14**

Ivy steps into the dark house. Drapes drawn, lights off.

**IVY**

Mom...?

(no answer)

Mom?

Steps into the open door of her father's study. His vacant desk chair, untouched papers, dust motes settling in the sunlight. She takes a moment, then heads upstairs. CARRYING US with her. Finds Violet, in her bedroom, sitting in front of her vanity in near darkness, smoking and on the phone.

**VIOLET**

...You've been out there...?

Barely acknowledges Ivy's arrival. The room is unruly. Bed unmade. Clothes draped over chairs. Dresser and night-stands cluttered with pills, tissue boxes, creams and lotions.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

...You're going out yourself...?

\*

Ivy wanders into the bath. More pills, wet towels on the floor. She turns off the dripping faucet. Picks up towels.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Stop that...

Violet is off the phone, standing in hall, watching Ivy. Ivy stops, briefly chastened. Violet opens a bottle of pills.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

You call Barb? What'd she say?

**IVY**

She's on her way.

**VIOLET**

What'd you tell her?

**IVY**

I told her Dad was missing.

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11.

14 **CONTINUED:**

14

**VIOLET**

Did you tell her how long he'd been missing?

**IVY**

Five days.

**VIOLET**

What did she say?

**IVY**

She said she was on her way.

**VIOLET**

Goddamn it, Ivy, what did she say?

**IVY**

She said she was on her way.

**VIOLET**

You're hopeless.

(heads back into her room)

Goddamn your father for putting me through this. Seen that office of his, all that mess? I can't make heads or tails of it. He hired this Indian for some goddamn reason and now I have a stranger in my house. What's her name?

Ivy follows her mother, returns to tidying up.

**IVY**

Johnna. Who was on the phone?

**VIOLET**

This house is falling apart, something about the basement or the sump pump or the foundation. I don't know anything about it. I can't do this by myself.

**IVY**

I called Karen.

**VIOLET**

What did she say?

**IVY**

She said she'd try to get here.

**VIOLET**

She'll be a big fat help, just like you.

**(MORE)**

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14 CONTINUED:

14

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

(takes another pill)

I need Barb.

**IVY**

What's Barb going to be able to do?

Ivy moves on to hanging clothes back in the jammed closet.

**VIOLET**

What did you do to your hair?

**IVY**

I had it straightened.

**VIOLET**

You had it straightened. Why would anybody do that?

**IVY**

I just wanted a change.

**VIOLET**

You're the prettiest of my three girls, but you always look like a schlub. Why don't you wear makeup?

**IVY**

Do I need makeup?

**VIOLET**

All women need makeup. Don't let anybody tell you different. The only woman who was pretty enough to go without makeup was Elizabeth Taylor and she wore a ton. Stand up straight.

**IVY**

Mom.

**VIOLET**

Your shoulders are slumped and your hair's all straight and you don't wear makeup. You look like a lesbian.

Violet takes another pill.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

You could get a decent man if you spruced up. A bit, that's all I'm saying.

**IVY**

I'm not looking for a man.

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14 CONTINUED:

14

**VIOLET**

There are a lot of losers out there, don't think I don't know that. But just because you got a bad one last time doesn't mean --

**IVY**

Barry wasn't a loser.

**VIOLET**

Barry was an asshole. I warned you

from the jump, first time you brought him over here in his little electric car with his stupid orange hair and that turban --

**IVY**

It wasn't a turban --

**VIOLET**

You work at a college. Don't tell me there aren't people coming through the door of that library every day.

**IVY**

You want me to marry some eighteen year old boy from one of these hick towns?

**VIOLET**

They still have teachers at TU, right? They did when your father taught there.

Violet takes another pill.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

How many was that?

**IVY**

I wasn't counting.

Violet takes another pill.

**IVY (CONT'D)**

Is your mouth burning?

**VIOLET**

Like a son-of-a-bitch. My tongue is on fire.

**IVY**

Are you supposed to be smoking?

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14 CONTINUED:

14

**VIOLET**

Is anybody supposed to smoke?

**IVY**

You have cancer of the mouth.

**VIOLET**

Just leave it alone.

**IVY**

\*

(after a moment)

\*

Are you scared?

**VIOLET**

Course I'm scared. And you are a comfort, sweetheart. Thank God one of my girls stayed close to home.

Outside, the sound of a CAR pulling up. Ivy pulls back the drape and the shade, finds a big Cadillac arriving.

**IVY**

Aunt Mattie Fae's here.

**VIOLET**

She means to come in here and tell me what's what.

**IVY**

I don't know how Uncle Charlie puts up with it.

**VIOLET**

He smokes a lot of grass.

**IVY**

He does?

**VIOLET**

He smokes a lot of grass.

**15 INT/EXT. CHARLIE'S CADILLAC/WESTON HOUSE - DAY**

**15**

**MATTIE FAE**

I told Vi, "Take all those goddamn books he's so fond of and make a big pile in the front yard and have yourself a bonfire."

MATTIE FAE AIKEN, sixty-one, Violet's baby sister, larger than life, is in the passenger seat. CHARLIE, Mattie Fae's husband, easy-going, is behind the wheel.

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**15 CONTINUED:**

**15**

**CHARLIE**

You don't burn a man's books.

**MATTIE FAE**

You do, if the situation calls for it.

**CHARLIE**

The man's books didn't do anything.

**MATTIE FAE**

You get any ideas about just up and taking off, Charlie Aiken, you better believe --

**CHARLIE**

I'm not going anywhere.

Charlie parks, they climb out into the blinding sunlight.

**MATTIE FAE**

I'm saying if you did, I'll give you two days to get your head straight and then it's all going up in a blaze of glory. Not that you have any books lying around. I don't think I've ever seen you read a book in my life.

**CHARLIE**

That bother you?

**MATTIE FAE**

What's the last book you read?

**CHARLIE**

Beverly was a teacher; teachers read books, I'm in the upholstery business.

Ivy comes out of the house to meet them. Mattie Fae spots her, makes a beeline for her, envelopes Ivy in a hug.

**MATTIE FAE**

Ah, sweetie. Your daddy's done this before. Just takes off, no call, nothing. I told your mother, "You pack that son-of-a-bitch's bags and have `em waiting for him on the front porch."

Mattie Fae sweeps past Ivy into the --

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Ivy and Charlie follow.

**MATTIE FAE**

Where's your mother?

**IVY**

Upstairs.

**CHARLIE**

They've always had trouble, Ivy.

**MATTIE FAE**

He'll come back again, I know he will,  
he always does. Beverly is a very  
complicated man.

**IVY**

Kind of like Charles.

**CHARLIE**

Yes, like Little Charles. Exactly --

**MATTIE FAE**

Oh. He's nothing like Little Charles.

**CHARLIE**

She just means in their sort of quiet  
complicated ways --

**MATTIE FAE**

Little Charles isn't complicated,  
he's just unemployed.

The phone begins to RING. Ivy eyes it apprehensively.

**CHARLIE**

He's an observer.

**MATTIE FAE**

All he observes is the television.  
(and)  
Why is it so dark in here?

**CHARLIE**

So you can't even see Ivy's point?  
That Little Charles and Beverly  
share some kind of... complication.

**MATTIE FAE**

You have to be smart to be  
complicated.

The phone STOPS. Violet's answered it upstairs.

**CHARLIE**

Are you saying our boy isn't smart?

**MATTIE FAE**

Yes, that's what I'm saying.

Ivy steals glances upstairs, concerned about the phone.

**MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)**

I'm sweating. Are you sweating?

**CHARLIE**

Hell, yes, I'm sweating, it's ninety degrees in here.

**MATTIE FAE**

Feel my back.

**CHARLIE**

I don't want to feel your back.

**MATTIE FAE**

Sweat is just dripping down my back.

**CHARLIE**

I believe you.

**MATTIE FAE**

Feel it.

**CHARLIE**

No.

**MATTIE FAE**

Come on, put your hand here --

**CHARLIE**

Goddamn it --

**MATTIE FAE**

Sweat's just dripping...

Mattie Fae pulls back a set of drapes, finds the light is blocked by shades sealed with tape.

**MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)**

Ivy, when did this start? This

business with taping the shades?

**IVY**

Been a couple of years now.

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16 CONTINUED:

16

Mattie Fae starts peeling off the tape.

**MATTIE FAE**

Is it that long since we've been here?

**CHARLIE**

Do you know its purpose? You can't  
tell if it's night or day.

**IVY**

I think that's the purpose.

Ivy goes, Charlie notices Mattie Fae pulling off tape.

**CHARLIE**

Don't do that. This isn't your place.

**MATTIE FAE**

The body needs sunlight.

A17 INT/EXT. RENTAL CAR (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

A17

\*

Jean has on headphones, listening to her Walkman in the back.

\*

Barbara's estranged husband, BILL FORDHAM, drives the rental.

\*

Barb's in the passenger seat beside him, watching the brown

\*

countryside pass by.

\*

**BARBARA**

\*

What were these people thinking... the

\*

jokers who settled this place. Who

\*

was the asshole who saw this flat hot

\*

nothing and planted his flag? I mean

\*

we fucked the Indians for this?

\*

**BILL**

\*  
\*  
\*

Well, genocide always seems like such  
a good idea at the time.

**BARBARA**

\*  
\*

Right, you need a little hindsight.

**BILL**

\*  
\*  
\*

If you want me to explain the creepy  
character of the Midwest, you're --

**BARBARA**

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Please, the Midwest. This is the  
Plains: a state of mind, right? A  
spiritual affliction, like the Blues.

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**A17 CONTINUED:**

**A17**

**BILL**

\*  
\*  
\*

"You okay?" "I'm fine. Just got the  
Plains."

They laugh. He reaches across, touches her tenderly.

\*

**BARBARA**

\*  
\*

Don't.

He withdraws quickly.

\*

**17 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY**

**17**

Violet hangs up the phone. Sits for a long moment, absorbing what she's heard. Mattie Fae watches from her spot sitting

\*

on the corner of the bed, concerned. Ivy is in the door.

\*

**VIOLET**

They checked the hospitals, no Beverly.

**MATTIE FAE**

Who's this now? The highway patrol?

\*

**VIOLET**

No, the sheriff, the Gilbeau boy.

**IVY**

What else did he say?

**VIOLET**

The boat's missing.

**IVY**

Dad's boat?

**VIOLET**

I asked the sheriff to send a deputy out to the dock to check if anybody had seen him and his boat is gone.

Ivy watches her mother being comforted by Mattie Fae.  
Wants to go to her. Doesn't.

18 **MOVED TO A17**

18 \*

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19 **INT/EXT. RENTAL CAR/WESTON HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

19

Bill slows the rental car to turn. Barb looks down the road  
\* and across the field to where the farm house peeks out  
\* through the trees, beckoning, threatening, ominous.  
\*

Bill pulls the rental in front of the house. Turns off the  
\* ignition. Neither moves to get out. Jean realizes they've  
stopped, pulls off her headphones.

**JEAN**

I'm gonna grab a smoke.

Jean heads for the relative privacy of the fence at the edge  
of the yard. Leaving Bill and Barb alone, watching.

**BARBARA**

You've encouraged that.

**BILL**

I haven't encouraged anything.

**BARBARA**

You admire her for getting hooked  
at fourteen, makes her seem even  
more mature.

Barbara climbs out. Bill follows.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Goddamn, it's hot.

Bill unlocks the trunk, begins unloading luggage.

**BILL**

Suppose your mom's turned on the air  
conditioner?

**BARBARA**

You kidding? Remember the parakeets?

**BILL**

The parakeets?

**BARBARA**

I didn't tell you about the parakeets?  
She got a parakeet for some insane  
reason, and the little fucker croaked  
after two days. So she went to the  
pet store and raised hell and they  
gave her another parakeet. That one  
died after one day.

**(MORE)**

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19 CONTINUED:

19

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

So she went back and they gave her a

third parakeet and that one died too.  
So the chick from the pet store came  
out here to see just what in the hell  
this serial parakeet killer was doing  
to bump off these birds.

They head for the house with suitcases, wilting in the heat.

**BILL**

And?

**BARBARA**

The heat. It was too hot. They were  
dying from the heat.

**BILL**

Jesus.

**BARBARA**

These are tropical birds, all right?  
They live in the fucking tropics.

He laughs. Barb looks over to Jean smoking by the fence.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

What, is she smoking a cigar?

**BILL**

Are you ready for this?

**BARBARA**

No. No way.

20 INT. WESTON HOUSE - AFTERNOON

20

Charlie is poking around the old stereo, finds an LP, the TV  
beside him is tuned to a Royals game.

**CHARLIE**

Violet's a Clapton fan?

Johnna passes through, Charlie holds up his empty bottle.

**CHARLIE (CONT'D)**

`Scuse me, dear...could I trouble you  
for another beer?

**MATTIE FAE**

Goddam it, she's not a waitress.

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20 CONTINUED:

20

**CHARLIE**

I know that.

**MATTIE FAE**

Then get your own beer.

**JOHNNA**

(takes the empty/goes)

I'll get it.

**MATTIE FAE**

I don't believe you. Watchin' a ball game, drinkin' beers. You have any sense of what's going on around you?

**CHARLIE**

Am I supposed to sit here like a statue? You're drinking whiskey.

**MATTIE FAE**

I'm having a cocktail.

**CHARLIE**

You're drinking straight whiskey!

**MATTIE FAE**

Just... show a little class.

**BARBARA**

...Mom?

Barbara and Bill have entered, are quickly descended upon by Mattie Fae and Charlie. Hugs, overlapping dialogue.

**MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)**

Oh my God, Barbara --! You give me some sugar!

**BARBARA**

Hi, Aunt Mattie Fae --

**MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)**

Bill! Look how skinny you are!

**BILL**

Hi, Mattie Fae.

**BILL**

Hi, Charlie.

Jean enters behind her parents, stands sheepishly.

**MATTIE FAE**

Oh my gosh, will you look at this one? Come here and give your Aunt Mattie Fae some sugar!

**MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)**

My gosh, you're so big! Look at your boobs! Last time I saw you, you looked like a little boy!

**CHARLIE**

`Lo, Bill. Man you have dropped some weight, haven't you? Hello, sweetheart.

**BARBARA**

Hi, Uncle Charlie.

**CHARLIE**

How was the flight from Denver?

**BILL**

Fine...

Violet appears on the stairs, rushes to Barbara.

**VIOLET**

Barb...

**BARBARA**

It's okay, Mom. I'm here, I'm here. Shh, it's okay, I'm here.

Ivy appears at the top of the stairs, watches her mother in her sister's arms. Bill turns to Charlie, quietly:

**BILL**

No word then?

**CHARLIE**

No.

**MATTIE FAE**

No, huh-uh.

**VIOLET**

What am I going to do?

**BARBARA**

It's okay, Mom.

**BARBARA**

Did you see Bill and Jean?

Violet takes them in, disoriented.

**VIOLET**

Yes. Hi, Bill.

**BILL**

Hello, Violet.

**VIOLET**

I'm just so scared.

**MATTIE FAE**

Of course you are, poor thing.

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20 CONTINUED:

20

**VIOLET**

(sees Jean)

Well, look at you.

**MATTIE FAE**

Isn't she the limit? Look at her  
boobs!

**JEAN**

O-kay, we've all stared at my  
tits now.

**MATTIE FAE**

They're just so darn big.

Vi hugs Jean. Johnna slips in, leaves a beer for Charlie.

**VIOLET**

You're just the prettiest thing.  
Thank you for coming to see me.

**BARBARA**

Ivy, I didn't see you up there.

Ivy, still standing above on the stairs.

**IVY**

It looked crowded.

**BARBARA**

God, you look good. Doesn't she  
look good, Bill?

**BILL**

Yes, she does.

**BARBARA**

I love your hair, that looks  
great.

**VIOLET**

She had it straightened. Barbara,  
or Bill, it doesn't matter, I need  
you to go through Beverly's things,  
help me with this paperwork.

**BARBARA**

Well... we can do that, Mom.

**IVY**

I was going to help with --

**VIOLET**

No, now that desk of his is such a mess and I get confused --

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25.  
20

20 CONTINUED:

**BILL**

I'll take care of it, Violet --

**BARBARA**

(to Charlie)

Which room are you in?

**MATTIE FAE**

We're gonna head home soon.

**VIOLET**

You're going back to Tulsa?

**MATTIE FAE**

We have to, we left in such a rush we didn't get anyone to take care of the damn dogs. Anyway, I know you want to spend some time with these girls.

**VIOLET**

How about Little Charles, can't he take care of the dogs?

**CHARLIE**

Well, yeah, I guess he could --

**MATTIE FAE**

No, he can't. We have to get back.

**CHARLIE**

Maybe we should call him, Mattie Fae --

**MATTIE FAE**

We talked about this.

**BARBARA**

Mom, can Jean stay in the attic?

**VIOLET**

No, that's where what's-her-name lives.

**IVY**

Johnna.

**BARBARA**

Who's Johnna?

**VIOLET**

She's the Indian who lives in my  
attic.

**BARBARA**

She's the what?

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**21 EXT. THE YARD - LATE AFTERNOON**

**21**

Jean steps out onto the porch. Sees Johnna across the road  
by the fence. Heads for her --

**JEAN**

Hi...

Johnna is cutting off sprigs of wild mint entangled in the  
fence, standing in what was once a vegetable garden.

**JOHNNA**

Hello.

**JEAN**

\*

I'm Jean.

\*

**JOHNNA**

\*

Johnna.

\*

Johnna keeps working, Jean watches.

**JEAN**

I like your necklace.

A beaded pouch in the shape of a turtle.

**JOHNNA**

\*

Thank you.

\*

**JEAN**

Did you make that?

**JOHNNA**

My grandma.

**JEAN**

Is there something in it?

**JOHNNA**

My umbilical cord.

Jean recoils. Johnna smiles.

**JEAN**

Ewww, are you serious?

**JOHNNA**

When a Cheyenne is born, their umbilical cord is dried and sewn into a pouch.

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27.

21 CONTINUED:

21

**JEAN**

You're Cheyenne. Like that movie Powwow Highway. Did you see that?

**JOHNNA**

\*

Yes. We wear it for the rest of our

\*

lives. If we lose it, our souls belong nowhere and when we die our souls walk the Earth looking for where we belong.

Johnna starts back for the house with her mint.

Off Jean --

22 INT. THE BACK PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON

22

A screened in back porch off the kitchen. Bill and Barb sit at an old linoleum table.

**BILL**

This was when?

Violet stands smoking, unhappily watching Charlie and Mattie Fae climb into the Caddie and disappear down the gravel drive, heading back to Tulsa.

**VIOLET**

Saturday morning. The Indian girl made us biscuits and gravy. We ate some, he walked out the door, this

door right there. Got into his truck. And that was it.

Johnna enters with her mint, crosses into the kitchen.

**BARBARA**

He just left...?

**VIOLET**

I went to bed Saturday night, got up Sunday... still no Beverly. I didn't make much of it, thought he'd gone out on a bender.

**BARBARA**

Why would he do that? Not like he couldn't drink at home. Unless you were riding his ass.

**VIOLET**

I never said anything to him about his drinking, never got on him about it.

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28.

22 CONTINUED:

22

**BARBARA**

Really.

**VIOLET**

Barbara, I swear. He could drink himself into obliv-uh, obliv-en-um...

**BARBARA**

Oblivion.

**BILL**

So Sunday, still no sign of him...

**VIOLET**

Yes, Sunday. No sign. I started getting worried, don'tcha know. That's when I got worked up about that safety deposit box. We kept an awful lot of cash in that box, some expensive jewelry. I had a diamond ring in that box appraised at seven thousand dollars --

Johnna returns with glasses of iced tea, each with a sprig of mint, delivers them to Bill and Barbara.

**BARBARA**

Wait, wait, wait, I'm missing something. Why do you care about a safety deposit box?

**VIOLET**

Well, I know what you'll say about this, but, your father and I had an urge-ment... arrangement. If something were to ever happen to one of us, the other one would go empty that box.

**BARBARA**

Because...

**BILL**

The money and jewelry gets rolled into the estate, bank seals the box until probate is settled. Can take months.

**VIOLET**

Right, that's right --

**BARBARA**

You're such a fucking cynic.

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22 CONTINUED:

22

**VIOLET**

I knew you would disapprove --

Johnna cuts into a freshly baked apple pie in the kitchen.

**BARBARA**

Okay, what about the safety deposit box?

**VIOLET**

I had to wait for the bank to open on Monday. And after I emptied that box, I called the police and reported him missing. Monday morning.

**BARBARA**

And you only had Ivy call me today?

**VIOLET**

I didn't want to worry you, honey --

**BARBARA**

**BILL**

Jesus Christ.

Vi, you sure there wasn't  
some event that triggered his  
leaving, some incident.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

You mean like a fight.

Johnna places pieces of pie in front of Bill and Barb.

**BILL**

Yes.

**VIOLET**

No. And we fought enough... you  
know... but no, he just left.

**BARBARA**

Maybe he needed some time away  
from you.

**VIOLET**

That's nice of you to say.

**BARBARA**

Good old unfathomable Dad.

**VIOLET**

Oh. That man. What I first fell of  
with -- fell in love with, you know,  
was his mystery. I thought it was  
sexy as hell.

**(MORE)**

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30.

22 CONTINUED:

22

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

You knew he was the smartest one in  
the room, knew if he just said  
something... knock you out. But he'd  
just stand there, little smile on his  
face... not say a word. Sexy.

**INTERCUT WITH:**

23 INSIDE THE KITCHEN

23

Ivy enters with her coffee cup, runs water in it at the sink.  
Outside, her mother, sister, and Bill on the back porch.

**BILL**

You can't think of anything unusual --

Johnna sits at the kitchen table behind Ivy. Johnna stands, joins Ivy at the sink. Ivy hadn't seen her there.

**VIOLET**

He hired this woman. He didn't ask me, just hired this woman to come live in our house. Few days before he left.

**BARBARA**

You don't want her here.

**VIOLET**

She's a stranger in my house. There's an Indian in my house.

Ivy looks to Johnna, embarrassed. But Johnna just takes Ivy's cup from her, finishes cleaning it.

**BILL**

You have a problem with Indians, Violet?

**VIOLET**

I don't know what to say to an Indian.

**BARBARA**

They're called Native Americans now, Mom.

**VIOLET**

Who makes that decision?

**BARBARA**

It's what they like to be called.

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31.

23 CONTINUED:

23

**VIOLET**

They aren't any more native than me.

**BARBARA**

In fact, they are.

**VIOLET**

What's wrong with Indian?

**BARBARA**

Why's it so hard to call people --

**VIOLET**

Let's just call the dinosaurs "Native Americans" while we're at it.

**BARBARA**

She may be an Indian, but she makes the best goddamn apple pie I ever ate.

Johnna smiles, nods to Ivy. Leaves the kitchen.

**VIOLET**

He hired a cook. It doesn't make any sense. We don't eat.

**BARBARA**

And now you get biscuits and gravy. Kind of nice, huh?

**VIOLET**

Nice for you, now. But you'll be gone soon enough, never to return.

**BARBARA**

(a warning)  
Mom...

**VIOLET**

When was the last time you were here?

**BARBARA**

Don't get started on that --

**VIOLET**

Really, I don't even remember.

**BARBARA**

I'm very dutiful, Mom, I call, I write, I send presents --

**VIOLET**

You do not write --

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32.

23 CONTINUED:

23

**BARBARA**

Presents on birthdays, Mother's Day --

Ivy eavesdrops at the sink, unsure if she should stay or go.

**VIOLET**

Because you're "dutiful."

**BILL**

All right, now --

**VIOLET**

I don't care about you two. I'd like to see my granddaughter every now --

**BARBARA**

Well, you're seeing her now.

**VIOLET**

But your father. You broke his heart when you moved away.

**BARBARA**

That is wildly unfair.

Bill stands, picks up a plate, pushes his way back into the kitchen. Ivy hears him coming, but doesn't have time to escape. Goes to the refrigerator instead.

**BILL**

Am I going to have to separate you two?

**VIOLET**

You know you were Beverly's favorite; don't pretend you don't know that.

Barbara follows Bill. Ivy finds iced tea, pours herself some. Tries to make herself invisible -- it's not hard to do.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

I'd prefer to think my parents loved all their children equally.

Violet trails behind them into the kitchen.

**VIOLET**

I'm sure you'd prefer to think that Santy Claus brought you presents at Christmas, too. If you'd had more than one child, you'd know a parent always has favorites. Mattie Fae was my mother's favorite. Big deal. I got used to it. You were your Daddy's favorite.

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23 CONTINUED:

23

Barbara notices Ivy, standing there, Christ. This isn't a conversation she'd like to be having in front of her sister. Violet sees Ivy too -- could care less.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Broke his heart.

**BARBARA**

What was I supposed to do?! Colorado gave Bill twice the money he was making at TU --

**BILL**

Why are we even getting into this?

**BARBARA**

You think Daddy wouldn't have jumped at the chance Bill got?

**VIOLET**

You're wrong there. You never would've gotten Beverly Weston out of Oklahoma.

**BARBARA**

Daddy gave me his blessing.

**VIOLET**

`S what he told you.

**BARBARA**

Now you're going to tell me the true story, some terrible shit Daddy said behind my back?

**BILL**

Hey, enough. Everybody's on edge --

**VIOLET**

Beverly didn't say terrible things behind your back --

**BILL**

Vi, come on --

**VIOLET**

He just told me he's disappointed in you because you settled. He thought

\*

you had talent, as a writer.

\*

**BARBARA**

Daddy never said anything like that to you. What a load of absolute horseshit.

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34.

23 CONTINUED:

23

**VIOLET**

Oh, horseshit, horseshit, let's all  
say horseshit. Say horseshit, Bill.

**BILL**

Horseshit.

Violet goes. Barb and Bill exchange a look. Barb looks to  
Ivy, who's blank. Barb takes a beat, follows Violet.

**24 INT. BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

**24**

Violet is closing the bathroom door. Barb stops her.

**BARBARA**

Are you high?

**VIOLET**

Excuse me.

**BARBARA**

I mean literally. You taking  
something?

**VIOLET**

A muscle relaxer.

**BARBARA**

Listen to me: I will not go through  
this with you again.

**VIOLET**

I don't know what you're talking  
about.

**BARBARA**

These fucking pills? Calls at three

\*

AM about people in your backyard?

**VIOLET**

Stop yelling at me!

**BARBARA**

The police, all the rest of it?

**VIOLET**

It's not the same thing. I didn't have  
a reason.

**BARBARA**

So now it's okay to get hooked because  
you have a reason.

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24 CONTINUED:

24

**VIOLET**

I'm not hooked on anything.

**BARBARA**

I don't want to know if you are or  
not, I'm just saying I won't go --

**VIOLET**

I'm not. I'm in pain.

**BARBARA**

Because of your mouth.

**VIOLET**

Yes, because my mouth burns from  
the chemotheeeeahh --

**BARBARA**

Are you in a lot of pain?

Violet starts to break down, sits on the lidded toilet.

**VIOLET**

Yes, I'm in pain. I have got...  
gotten cancer. In my mouth. And it  
burns like a... bullshit. And  
Beverly's disappeared and you're  
yelling at me.

**BARBARA**

I'm not yelling at you.

**VIOLET**

You couldn't come home when I got  
cancer but as soon as Beverly  
disappeared you rushed back --

**BARBARA**

I'm sorry... you're right. I'm sorry.

Barbara kneels, takes her mother's hand.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Know where I think he is? I think he  
got some whiskey, a carton of  
cigarettes, and a couple of good spy

novels... I think he got out on the boat, steered it to a nice spot, close to shore... and he's fishing, and reading, and drinking, maybe even writing a little. I think he'll walk right through that door any time.

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**25 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY/STAIRS/ATTIC ROOM - TWILIGHT 25**

Jean walks down the hall, perusing photos of her ancestors. Rail-thin, sunburned dust bowl farmers, WWII GIs standing in front of battered Packards before shipping out to die on the beaches of Normandy. Violet and Bev on their wedding day. Jean's mother and aunts in grade school, with prom dates.

The photos end in a doorway that leads to a narrow, wooden staircase. Jean climbs it to --

**26 INT. THE ATTIC BEDROOM - TWILIGHT 26**

Finds Johnna on her bed in the small ascetic attic room, reading T.S. Eliot. Jean KNOCKS on the open door.

**JEAN**

Hi, again... Am I bugging you?

**JOHNNA**

No, do you need something?

**JEAN**

No, I thought maybe you'd like to smoke a bowl with me?

**JOHNNA**

No, thank you.

**JEAN**

Okay. I didn't know.

(beat)

Do you mind if I smoke a bowl?

**JOHNNA**

I. No, I --

**JEAN**

Mom and Dad don't mind. You won't get into trouble or anything.

Johnna is clearly a bit uncomfortable. But:

**JOHNNA**

Okay.

**JEAN**

Okay. You sure?

From her pocket, Jean takes a glass pipe and a bud.

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26 **CONTINUED:**

26

**JEAN (CONT'D)**

I say they don't mind. If they knew I smuggled this on the plane? And sat there sweating like in that movie Midnight Express. Did you see that?

**JOHNNA**

I don't think so.

**JEAN**

I just mean they don't mind that I smoke pot. Mom kind of does. I think cause Dad smokes pot too, and she wishes he didn't.

(smokes, offers pipe)

You sure?

**JOHNNA**

Yes. No. I'm fine.

Jean notices a framed photo on the night stand.

**JEAN**

Wow, are those your parents?

**JOHNNA**

Mm-hm, their wedding picture.

**JEAN**

Their costumes are fantastic. Are they still together?

**JOHNNA**

My father passed away last year.

**JEAN**

Oh. Sorry.

**JOHNNA**

That's okay. Thank you.

**JEAN**

Were you close?

**JOHNNA**

Yes. Very.

**JEAN**

My Mom and Dad are separated now.

**JOHNNA**

I'm sorry.

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26  
26

**CONTINUED:**

**JEAN**

He's fucking one of his grad students. I don't care --aside from the pathetic English and Humanities cliché, like all those departmental dicks fucking their students -- he can fuck who he wants and that's who teachers meet, students. He was just a turd the way he didn't give Mom a chance to respond or anything. What sucks now is she's on my ass cause she's afraid I'll have some post-divorce freak-out and become some heroin addict or shoot everybody at school. Or God forbid, lose my virginity. I don't know what it is about Dad splitting that put Mom on hymen patrol.

(then)

Don't say anything about Mom and Dad; okay? They want to play it low key.

**A27 INT. BEVERLY'S STUDY - NIGHT**  
**A27**

Bill stands in Beverly's empty study. Absorbing the room, the man, the stillness. Picks at the papers on the desk without specific purpose. Turns to one of the many bookcases, eventually finds a book, smiles.

**27 EXT. WESTON HOUSE FRONT PORCH - NIGHT**  
**27**

Barbara sits on the front steps. It's dark now, but still very hot. Moths bat at the porch lights. Bill comes out

\*  
\*  
carrying a Coke, shares it with Barb.

**BILL**

Ivy leave?

**BARBARA**

(she nods)

I'd forgotten about the lightning bugs.

Around the yard, flitting in and out of the low hanging boughs of the trees.

**BILL**

Look what I found...

She turns, he holds a thin hardback copy of Meadowlark.

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27 CONTINUED:

27

**BARBARA**

We have copies.

**BILL**

I don't remember a hardback edition. Think this is worth something... first edition, hardback, mint condition? Academy Fellowship, Wallace Stevens Award? This book was a big deal.

**BARBARA**

It wasn't that big a deal.

**BILL**

In those circles, it was.

**BARBARA**

Those are small circles.

He opens the book, perusing the first pages.

Reads.

**BILL**

"Dedicated to my Violet." That's nice. Christ, probably every word he wrote after this he had to be thinking, "What are they going to say, are they going to compare it to Meadowlark?"

**BARBARA**

Jean go to bed?

**BILL**

Just turned out the light. You'd think at some point, you just write something anyway and who cares what they say about it. I don't know --

**BARBARA**

Will you shut up about that fucking book?! You are just dripping with envy over these thirty poems my father wrote back in the late sixties, for God's sake. Y'hear yourself?

Bill's taken aback, but doesn't want to overreact.

**BILL**

I have great admiration for these poems --

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27 CONTINUED:

27

**BARBARA**

My father didn't write anymore for a lot of reasons, but critical opinion was not one of them, hard as that may be for you to believe.

**BILL**

What are you attacking me for? I haven't done anything.

**BARBARA**

I'm sure that's what you tell Sissy, too, so she can comfort you, reassure you, "No, Billy, you haven't done anything."

**BILL**

Why are you bringing that up?

**BARBARA**

They're all symptoms of your male menopause, whether it's you struggling with the "creative question," or screwing a girl who still wears a retainer.

**BILL**

All right, look, I'm not going to be

held hostage here while you attack me. And her name is Cindy.

**BARBARA**

I know her stupid name -- do me the courtesy of recognizing when I'm demeaning you.

**BILL**

Violet really has a way of putting you in attack mode, you know that? You feel such rage for her you can't help dishing it --

**BARBARA**

Psychoanalyze me right now, I skin you.

**BILL**

You may not agree with my methods, but you know I'm right --

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27 CONTINUED:

27

**BARBARA**

"Your methods." Thank you, Doctor, but I actually don't need any help from my mother to feel rage.

**BILL**

You want to argue? Is that what you need to do? Pick a subject, alright, let me know what it is, so I have a fighting --

**BARBARA**

The subject is me! I am the subject, you narcissistic motherfucker! I am in pain! I need help!

Barbara heads into the yard to get away from him.

28 INT. WESTON HOUSE, UPSTAIRS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

28

Jean's on the small bed in the darkened room. Staring at the ceiling, listening to her parents argue.

29 EXT. WESTON HOUSE FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

29

Bill chases Barbara into the yard.

**BILL**

I've copped to being a narcissist.  
We're the products of a narcissistic  
generation.

**BARBARA**

You can't do it, can you? You can't  
talk about me for two seconds --

**BILL**

You called me a narcissist!

**BARBARA**

You do understand that it hurts,  
to go from sharing a bed with you  
for twenty-three years to sleeping  
by myself.

**BILL**

I'm here, now.

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29 CONTINUED:

29

**BARBARA**

Oh, men always say shit like that,  
as if the past and the future don't  
exist.

Jean listens in the dark to her parents fighting -- as she  
has many times before. Heads out into the hallway to screen  
door leading to the upstairs porch.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

It's just horseshit, to avoid  
talking about the things they're  
afraid to say.

**BILL**

I'm not necessarily keen on the notion  
of saying things that would hurt you.

**BARBARA**

Like what?

**BILL**

We have enough on our hands with your  
parents right now, let's not revisit  
this.

**BARBARA**

When did we visit this to begin with?  
I still don't know what happened. Do  
I bore you, intimidate you, disgust  
you? Is this just about the pleasures  
of young flesh, teenage pussy? I  
really need to know.

**BILL**

You need to know now? With Beverly  
missing, and your mother crazy as a  
loon? You want to do this now?

**BARBARA**

You're right. I'll just hunker down  
for a cozy night's sleep upstairs.  
Next to my husband.

**BILL**

This discussion deserves our care.  
And patience. We'll both be in a  
better frame of mind to talk about  
this once your father's come home.

Bill turns, starts back for the house.

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**30 INT. WESTON HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT**  
**30**

Jean sees her father coming, hears his footsteps approaching  
across the wooden porch below, the screen door opens quietly.  
She slips back into her room and bed, but he doesn't stop.

Jean waits, listening for her mother. She doesn't come.

**31 EXT. SKIATOOK LAKE - NIGHT**  
**31**

We're on the old wooden dock, watching a man walking away  
from us toward an aluminum rowboat tied haphazardly to the  
dock in the moonlight. He leans down to untie the boat,  
looks back at us, directly into camera -- Beverly.

Now we're traveling BELOW the surface of the lake, through  
its dark, tenebrous waters on the moonlit night. The  
rhythmic SLAP of gentle waves. We're underwater, light  
fractures and scatters above us. We've been here before as --

A rowboat SLIPS across our field of vision. It's aluminum bottom cuts through the calm above.

Oars dip on either side, propelling the small craft. It slows. Stops. Bobs gently. We wait, watch --

Until, suddenly, something hits the surface above, exploding the calm, coming at us fast, sinking.

**32 INT. THE ATTIC - NIGHT**  
**32**

Johnna wakes with a start. Sits up, listens intently.

**33 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - NIGHT**  
**33**

Johnna steps out onto the second floor porch balcony, finds a police car approaching in the distance, headlights cutting through the dark country night.

**34/35 INT. WESTON HOUSE STAIRWAY - NIGHT**  
**34/35**

Barefoot, Johnna quietly descends the stairs. Approaches the front door, left open to let in the cool night air. Undoes the screen door latch. Steps outside.

Watches the car arrive. The driver's door opens, a sheriff gets out, silhouetted against the police flashers behind him.  
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**36 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER** **36**

Barbara, bleary-eyed, moves quickly down the dark hall in her robe. Bill follows in his boxers and T-shirt, pulling on pants. Barb goes to Vi's door, KNOCKS.

**BARBARA**

Mom?

She opens the door. Over her we FIND: Violet, entombed in her room. Squinting against the intrusive hall light.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Mom, wake up, the sheriff's here.

**VIOLET**

Did you call them? I dig in call them.

**BARBARA**

Mom. The sheriff is here.

**VIOLET**

Inna esther?

**BARBARA**

What?

**VIOLET**

Inna esther broke. `N pays me `em...sturck...struck.

**BILL**

Come on. Leave her there.

Barbara does, starts for the staircase, meets the just awakened Jean coming out of her room, concerned.

**BILL (CONT'D)**

Go back to bed, sweetheart....

Barbara descends the stairs, trailed by Bill. The SHERIFF waits on the porch, late-forties, handsome, Stetson in hand.

They go to him, but WE HANG BACK with Jean, watching the scene outside unfold. Bill shakes the Sheriff's hand. The Sheriff speaks earnestly to Barbara and Bill.

We can't hear what's being said, only murmurs until -- Barbara sinks to her knees. Bill holds her. Jean watches.

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**37 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT**

**37**

Johnna enters, snaps on the light, starts a pot of coffee. Stoic, inscrutable.

**38 EXT. WESTON HOUSE DRIVEWAY - JUST BEFORE DAWN**

**38**

A big pre-dawn sky is changing from black to blue. The Sheriff walks to his cruiser, kills the flashers. Bill joins him, still barefoot.

**BILL**

What happened?

**SHERIFF**

Couple old boys running jug lines in the lake hooked him. Pulled him up.

**BILL**

He drowned. That's how he died, from drowning?

**SHERIFF**

Looks it. Yes, sir.

Bill looks off. Song birds begin their pre-dawn chatter.

**BILL**

Is there any way to determine if he... I mean is this an accident, or suicide --?

**SHERIFF**

There's really no way to tell.

**BILL**

What's your guess?

**SHERIFF**

...Suicide.

And now the full weight of it hits Bill. After a moment --

**BILL**

How does a a person jump in the water... and choose not to swim?

39 INT. WESTON GIRL'S BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN 39

Barb pulls on clothes, rakes a brush through her hair. Jean appears in the door, watches her. After a moment:

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39 CONTINUED: 39

**JEAN**

What about Aunt Ivy?

**BARBARA**

I guess we'll stop on the way.  
Christ, I need to call Karen, too.  
Why the fuck am I brushing my hair?

She drops the brush. And then an odd sound intrudes from downstairs, a song: "Lay Down, Sally" by Eric Clapton.

The music is LOUD. We follow Barbara and Jean halfway down the stairs to REVEAL: Violet, high as a kite, doing a jerky little dance by the stereo. The Sheriff stands uncomfortably by the door, his hat in hand. She shuffles over to him.

**VIOLET**

Izza story. Barely's back. Did sum  
Beer-ley come home?

**SHERIFF**

Ma'am?

**VIOLET**

Gizza cig... some cigezze? Cig-zezz,  
cig-zizz... cig-uhzzz...

She laughs at her inability to speak. He takes a Pall Mall from his shirt pocket, hands it to her. Lights it for her.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

In the archa, archa-tex? I'm in  
the bottom. Inna bottom of them.  
(and)  
Mm, good beat, right?

He nods. Bill comes back in from outside.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Barbara?! Is Barbara here?!

**BARBARA**

(quietly)  
Right here, Mom...

Johnna steps in from the kitchen, pensively observing.

**VIOLET**

Mm, good beat, right? Idn't it's a  
good beat?

**(MORE)**

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**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Mmmm, I been on the music... pell man  
onna sheriff. Armen in tandel  
s'lossle, s'lost? Lost?! From the day,  
the days. Am Beerly... and Beverly  
lost?

Violet abandons her dance, separates invisible threads in the air. The others stand frozen, staring at her.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

And then you're here. And Barbara, and then you're here, and Beverly, and then you're here, and then you're here, and then you're here, and then you're here, and then you're here...

**41 EXT. SKIATOOK LAKE ROAD - DAWN 41**

The sun's just topped the horizon, throws long early shadows across the flat expanse of prairie. Scattered trees, a ribbon of asphalt leading to a distant lake, telephone poles.

We're HIGH ABOVE the country road, following the Sheriff cruiser below. Barb's rental sedan trails behind.

**BARBARA (OS)**

I used to go out with that boy. That man.

**42 INT. RENTAL CAR (MOVING) - EARLY MORNING 42**

Bill drives, Ivy up front with him. Barbara sits in the back with Jean. Watches the sheriff's car ahead.

**JEAN**

What man? The Sheriff?

**BARBARA**

In high school. He was my prom date.

**JEAN**

You're kidding.

**BARBARA**

Day of the prom, his father got drunk and stole his car, stole his own son's car, went somewhere, Mexico. Deon showed up at the door. He'd been crying. Confessed he didn't have a way to take me to the prom.

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**42 CONTINUED: 42**

The cruiser slows, pulls through a pipe gate and over a cattle-crossing, heads for a small collection of emergency vehicles parked around a brush-strewn cove. Bev's old Chevy

pick-up truck sits to one side.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

So we got a six-pack and broke into the chapel, stayed up all night talking and kissing. Now here he is, showing me --  
(fights her emotions)  
It's so surreal. Thank God we can't tell the future. We'd never get out of bed.

The cars stop. The Sheriff gets out.

**BILL**

Let me go first, see what they need.

Bill goes. Barb fixes Jean with a look.

**BARBARA**

Listen to me: die after me, all right?  
I don't care what else you do, where you go, how you screw up your life, just... survive. Outlive me, please.

They watch the men. A resolute Bill returns to get Barbara and Ivy. The sisters climb out, follow him to the water's edge. Jean waits a moment, then steps out of the car.

Watches her father lead her mother down the small cracked concrete boat ramp to where the Sheriff waits by a covered body. As the Sheriff pulls back the tarp --

**43 INT. A STERILE ROOM - DAY 43**

White walls, bright overhead light. We're CLOSE on a man's pale, lifeless hand. Another hand enters frame with a sponge, begins cleaning off the mud, filth.

**44 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - DAY 44**

The Weston clan walks to Beverly's Lincoln, Bill, Jean. Barb and Ivy help a distraught Violet. All wear mourning black.

**45 INT. THE STERILE ROOM - DAY 45**

Beverly's sodden shoes are removed, his socks.

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45 CONTINUED:  
45

His limp, greyish arm is guided into a starched white shirt-sleeve. The buttons carefully buttoned.

46 INT. BEVERLY'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY  
46

Bill drives. Jean beside him. Barbara and Ivy sit in the back seat, flanking Violet. They ride in silence. We study their faces, the brown countryside outside.

Bill notices something in his rearview, a red speck, coming up fast, very fast. A sports car.

It's suddenly right behind them, filling his mirrors. It waits for a semi loaded down with massive circular hay bales to pass in the opposite lane, then --

ROARS around. A Ferrari, it's throaty V-10 RUMBLING as it SCREAMS past, accelerates down the road. Bill and Jean exchange a look, watch it disappear.

47 INT. THE STERILE ROOM - DAY  
47

Strong male hands lift Beverly's now dressed body carefully and place it into the casket. Adjust the pillow, comb his hair into place, fold his hands across his chest.

We never see his face, never see his whole body. Only these small, intimate pieces.

48 INT/EXT. CAR/FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PAWHUSKA - DAY  
48

A few mourners enter the church as Bill pulls in to park, discovers the Ferrari already there. A woman emerging.

**BARBARA**

Holy shit, that's Karen.

KAREN WESTON, forty, lithe, climbing from the car.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Do you remember your Aunt Karen?

**JEAN**

Kind of...

STEVE HEIDEBRECHT, fifty, greying, athletic, tan and handsome, gets out of the driver's side.

**BARBARA**

\*

That must be this year's man.

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**48 CONTINUED:**

**48**

Mattie Fae and Charlie are waiting for them, start over as Violet emerges into the blinding sun. Recoils slightly. Mattie Fae catches her, whispers comforts into her ear, helps her toward the church steps.

We stay back, watching the Westons enter the church --

**KAREN (VO)**

I spent so much time in our bedroom  
pretending my pillow was my husband  
and did he like the dinner I made and  
where were we going to vacation that  
winter and he'd surprise me with  
tickets to Belize and we'd kiss.

**49 INT. BEVERLY'S LINCOLN (MOVING) - AFTERNOON**

**49**

Barbara drives, Karen beside her. Heat radiates off the road. They follow Charlie's Caddie, Vi and Ivy visible in the Caddie's back seat window ahead of us.

**KAREN**

I mean I'd kiss my pillow, and then  
I'd tell him I'd been to the doctor  
that day and I'd found out I was  
pregnant. I know how pathetic that  
sounds, but it was innocent enough.  
Then real life takes over, cause it  
always does --

**BARBARA**

-- uh-huh --

Here comes the red speck in the rearview again. The Ferrari ROARS up behind them, pulls around to pass, HONKS as it goes. Barb catches a glimpse of Jean in the passenger seat, Bill jammed into the tiny back seat.

**KAREN**

Things don't work out like you planned. That pillow was a better husband than any real man I'd ever met; this parade of men fails to live up to your expectations, all of them so much less than Daddy or Bill. You punish yourself, tell yourself it's your fault you can't find a good one. I don't know how well you remember Andrew...

**BARBARA**

No, I remember.

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49 CONTINUED:

49

**KAREN**

I loved him so intensely, so the things he did wrong were just opportunities for me to make things right. If he cheated on me or called me a cunt, I'd think "No, love is forever, so here's an opportunity to make an adjustment in the way you view the world."

The AC isn't working, Barb's sweating, rolls down her window, let's the wind whip her hair around.

**KAREN (CONT'D)**

And thank God one day I looked in the mirror and said, "Moron," and walked out, but it kicked off this whole period of reflection, how hard I had screwed it up, where'd I go wrong. That's when I got into those books and discussion groups --

**BARBARA**

And Scientology too, right, or something like that --?

**KAREN**

Exactly, and finally one day, I threw it all out, I said, "It's me, just me with my music on the stereo, my glass of wine and Bloomers my cat. I don't need anything else, I can live my life with myself." I got my license, threw myself into my work, sold a lot of

houses, and that's when I met Steve.

Charlie slows, signals, turns onto the gravel road leading to the Weston house. Barb follows, Karen still going strong --

**KAREN (CONT'D)**

That's how it works, you only find it when you're not looking, you turn around and there it is: Steve. Ten years older than me, but a thinker, and he's just so good. He's a good man and he's good to me and he's good for me.

50 INT. WESTON HOUSE STAIRWAY/UPSTAIRS HALL - AFTERNOON 50

Barbara leads Karen upstairs, Karen carries her suitcase, Barbara carries Steve's. Karen's still talking.

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**KAREN**

The best thing about him, for me, is that now what I think about is now. I live now. My focus, my life, my world is now. I don't give a care about the past anymore, the mistakes I made, the way I thought. And you can't plan the future cause as soon as you do, something happens, some terrible thing happens --

**BARBARA**

Like your father drowning himself.

They enter a bedroom, dump the luggage on the bed.

**KAREN**

That's exactly what I mean. You take it as it comes, here and now! Steve had a huge presentation today for some big-wig government guys who could be important for his business, something he's put together for months, and as soon as we heard about Daddy, he cancelled his meeting. He has his priorities straight. And you know what the kicker is?

(beat)

Do you know what the kicker --?

Barbara heads for the fan on the dresser, flips it on.

**BARBARA**

What's the kicker?

**KAREN**

We're going to Belize on our  
honeymoon!

Barb sticks her face into the fan. Karen watches, what?

**BARBARA**

Sorry. Hot flash.

**51 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY**

**51**

Violet pulls a dress from the closet; Mattie Fae sits,  
rooting through a box of photos; Ivy stands by the door.

**VIOLET**

It won't kill you to try it on --  
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**51 CONTINUED:**

**51**

**MATTIE FAE**

Oh, this is a sweet one, Vi --

**IVY**

I find this a tidge morbid, frankly --

**MATTIE FAE**

Look at this, Ivy --

**VIOLET**

What's morbid about it?

**IVY (CONT'D)**

It's not my style, Mom.

**VIOLET**

You don't have a style, that's the  
point.

**MATTIE FAE**

Where was this taken?

**VIOLET**

New York. On the first book tour.

**IVY**

I don't have your style, I have a  
style of my own.

**VIOLET**

You wore a suit to your father's funeral. A woman doesn't wear a suit to a funeral.

**IVY**

God, you're weird; it's a black suit.

**VIOLET**

You look like a magician's assistant.

**MATTIE FAE**

Little Charles has been talking about moving to New York. Can you picture that?

**VIOLET**

Don't discourage him now --

**MATTIE FAE**

He wouldn't last a day in that city. They'd tear him apart.

**MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)**

I could kill that kid --

**IVY**

Why do you feel it necessary to insult me?

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51 CONTINUED:

51

**VIOLET**

Stop being so sensitive.

**MATTIE FAE**

He overslept? For his Uncle's funeral? A noon service?

**IVY**

I'm sure there's more to the story --

**MATTIE FAE**

Don't make excuses for him. That's what Charlie does. Thirty-seven years old and can't drive? Who can't drive?

Violet pulls more and more clothes from the closet, dumping them on the bed. The pile is getting very large.

**MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)**

I've seen a chimp drive.

**IVY**

Why are you giving away your clothes?

**VIOLET**

All this shit's going. I don't plan to spend the rest of my days looking at what used to be. I want that shit in the office gone, I want these clothes I'm never going to wear gone. I mean look at these fucking shoes --  
(holds up spiked heels)  
Even if I didn't fall on my face, can you imagine anything less attractive, my swollen ankles and varicose veins? And my toenails, good God: anymore they could dig through cement.

52 INT. THE KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

52

Johnna's at the sink, washing and breaking beans, every kitchen surface is covered with the large dinner she's preparing. Barbara enters, Karen still pursuing her.

**KAREN**

You get a read off Steve? Did you like him?

**BARBARA**

We said two words to each other --  
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52 CONTINUED:

52

**KAREN**

You get a feel, though, don't you? Did you get a feel?

**BARBARA**

He seemed very nice, sweetheart --

Barb grabs a glass from the cabinet, opens the freezer for ice, lets her head linger in the cold.

**KAREN**

He is, and --

**BARBARA**

-- but what I think doesn't matter. I'm not marrying him --

**KAREN**

I guess what I'm telling you is that I'm happy. I've been unhappy most of my life, my adult life. I doubt you've been aware of that. I know our lives have led us apart, you, me and Ivy. Maybe we're not as close as, as close as some families --

Barb gives up on the freezer, fills her glass with iced tea.

**BARBARA**

Yeah, we really need to talk about Mom, what to do about Mom --

**KAREN**

-- but I think I haven't wanted to live my unhappiness in view of my family. But now I'm just really happy. I'd like us to get to know each other a little better.

Barbara stares at her, what is she talking about?

**BARBARA**

Yes. Yes.

Karen wraps her arms around Barbara.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Okay. Yes.

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53    **EXT. PAWHUSKA LIQUOR STORE PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON**    53

The Ferrari pulls into the lot. Bill crawls out, heads for the store. An anxious Jean calls after him.

**JEAN**

Hurry, okay?

**BILL**

I will, sweetheart.

Steve joins Jean, leans against the car. Throughout the following they watch Bill shop for wine inside.

**STEVE**

Is it always this hot?

**JEAN**

Usually it's hotter.

**STEVE**

Hard to imagine.

(a beat)

How old are you, about, seventeen?

**JEAN**

Fourteen.

**STEVE**

Fourteen, right... Know what I was doing when I was fourteen? Cattle processing. Know what that is?

**JEAN**

It doesn't sound good.

**STEVE**

Slaughterhouse sanitation.

**JEAN**

That's disgusting.

**STEVE**

I don't recommend it. But hey.

Put food on the table. Get it?

An impatient Jean watches her father comparing wines inside.

**STEVE (CONT'D)**

What's that smell?

She sniffs. Doesn't smell much of anything really.

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53 CONTINUED:

53

**JEAN**

Dumpster over there?

**STEVE**

Nah, that's not what I'm smelling.

He sniffs the air, then sniffs her.

**JEAN**

What are you doing?

**STEVE**

Do I smell what I think I smell?

**JEAN**

What do you smell?

**STEVE**

What do you think I smell?

**JEAN**

I think you smell that dumpster.

He whiffs, hard, breathing her in.

**STEVE**

Is that... pot? You smoking pot?

**JEAN**

No.

**STEVE**

You can tell me.

**JEAN**

No.

**STEVE**

You a little dope smoker?

(beat)

Then you are in luck. Because I  
just happen to have some tasty shit.  
And I am going to hook you up.

Bill pays inside, motions to Jean that he's hurrying.

**JEAN**

That'd be so great. I just smoked my  
last bowl and I really need to get  
fucked up.

**STEVE**

You what?

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53 CONTINUED:

53

**JEAN**

I really need to get fucked up --

**STEVE**

You need to get what?

**JEAN**

You're bad --

Bill hustles out of the store, carrying several bags.

**BILL**

No Pinots, but they had some decent  
California Merlots.

Crawls into the car. Steve grins to Jean over the roof of  
the car, climbs in behind the wheel.

**54 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY**

**54**

The closet is mostly empty now, the bed overflowing with  
discarded clothes. Mattie Fae nurses a cocktail, hands a

\*

photo to Violet.

**VIOLET**

Look at me.  
(shows photo to Ivy)  
Look at me.

**IVY**

You're beautiful, Mom.

**VIOLET**

I was beautiful. Not anymore.

**MATTIE FAE**

Oh, now --

**IVY**

You're still beautiful.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

One of those lies we tell to give us  
comfort. Women are beautiful when  
they're young and not after. Men can  
still preserve their sex appeal into  
old age. Not those men like you see  
with shorts and those little purses  
around their waists. Some men can  
maintain a weary masculinity. Women  
just get old and fat and wrinkly.

**MATTIE FAE**

I beg your pardon?

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**54 CONTINUED:**

**54**

**VIOLET**

Think about the last time you went to  
the mall and saw some sweet little gal  
and thought she's a cute trick. What  
makes her that way? Taut skin, firm

boobs, an ass above her knees.

**MATTIE FAE**

I'm still very sexy, thank you very much.

**VIOLET**

You're about as sexy as a wet cardboard box, Mattie Fae, you and me both. Look, wouldn't we be better off if we stopped lying about these things and told the truth? "Women aren't sexy when they're old." I can live with that. Can you live with that?

**MATTIE FAE**

What about Sophia Loren? What about Lena Horne? She stayed sexy till she was eighty.

Violet finds something else in the closet for Ivy to try.

**VIOLET**

The world is round. Get over it. Now try this dress on.

**IVY**

I'm sorry, I won't.

**VIOLET**

You don't know how to attract a man. I do. That's something I always --

**IVY**

We just buried my father, I'm not trying to attract --!

**VIOLET**

I'm not talking about today, dummy, this is something you can wear --

**IVY**

I have a man. All right? I have a man.

**VIOLET**

You said you weren't looking for a man --

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54 CONTINUED:

54

**IVY**

And I'm not. Because I have one.  
Okay? Now will you leave it alone?

**VIOLET**

No, I won't leave it alone.

**MATTIE FAE**

No, let's not leave it

**IVY (CONT'D)**

I wish you both could see the  
brainsick looks on your faces --

**VIOLET**

Who is it?

**IVY**

Nobody. Forget it --

**MATTIE FAE**

Tell us, is he someone from school?  
How old is he, what's he do --?

**IVY**

I'm not telling you anything so --

**MATTIE FAE**

You have to tell us something!

**IVY**

No, I really don't.

**VIOLET**

Are you in love, Ivy?

**IVY**

I...I don't...I'm...

Ivy bursts into awkward laughter, Vi and Mattie squeal.

**55 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

**55**

The Ferrari ROARS up the drive. Jean jumps out, races into  
the house. Bill and Steve emerge, grab the wine.

**STEVE**

No, we maintain the accounts off-  
shore, just until we get approvals.

**BILL**

To get around approvals?

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55 CONTINUED:

55

**STEVE**

To get around approvals until we get approvals. There's a lot of red tape, bureaucracy, I don't know how much you know about Florida, Florida politics --

**BILL**

Only what I read and that's --

**STEVE**

Right, right, this kind of business in particular.

Charlie, keys in hand, comes out, heading for his Caddie.

**BILL**

...Charlie?

**CHARLIE**

Picking up Little Charles.

Charlie climbs in behind the wheel, pulls away.

**STEVE**

Little Charles?

**BILL**

His son. I'm sorry, what is your

\*

business again?

They start up the porch steps with the wine.

**STEVE**

You know, it's essentially security work. The situation in the Middle East is perpetually dangerous, so there's a tremendous amount of money involved.

**BILL**

Security work. You mean... mercenary?

56 INT. KITCHEN/WESTON LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

56

Bill and Steve enter. Barbara's in the dining room with Karen and Mattie Fae setting the table. Goes for the men.

**BARBARA**

Give. Me. The wine.

She pulls a bottle of Merlot from Bill's grocery bag. Hears something, looks into the living room as she passes. Jean has just turned on the TV, LOUD. Barbara stares for a beat.

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56 CONTINUED:

56

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Is that what you were in such a hurry to get home for? What the hell's on TV that's so important you?

**JEAN**

Phantom of the Opera, 1925.

**BARBARA**

For God's sake, you can get it at any Blockbuster.

**JEAN**

They're showing it with the scene in color restored.

Steve's appeared in the living room archway.

**STEVE**

Cool.

**BARBARA**

Let me make sure I've got this: when you threw a fit about going to the store with your dad... Hey, look at me.

(Jean does)

And you were so distraught over the start time of your Grandpa's funeral. Was this your concern? Getting back here in time to watch Phantom of the Fucking Opera?

**JEAN**

I guess.

Barb gives Jean a withering look, exits. Bill takes the wine from Steve, follows. Steve lingers, watching the TV.

**STEVE**

Phantom of the Opera, huh?

**JEAN**

Huh-uh.

Karen enters from the dining room, sidles up to Steve.

**KAREN**

Hi, doodle.

**STEVE**

(focused on the TV)

Hey, baby.

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**56 CONTINUED:**

**56**

**KAREN**

(in super-baby-voice)

Hi, doodle!

Steve turns to her, embraces her. They kiss. His hands wander, squeeze her ass. She giggles, then breaks it.

**KAREN (CONT'D)**

Come on, I want to show you our old fort. Man, the air in here just doesn't move.

She goes. He starts, but stops. Quietly to Jean:

**STEVE**

Hook you up, later.

**57 INT/EXT. GREYHOUND BUS/PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON**

**57**

We're inside the bus, sitting next to a man, LITTLE CHARLES, thirty-seven, rangy and awkward. He stares pensively out at the passing Pawhuska storefronts as the bus SLOWS, pulls into a parking lot next to the bank.

He spots Charlie, waiting, drinking a Coke. Little Charles exhales, stands. Steps reluctantly out into the heat.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I'm sorry, Dad.

**CHARLIE**

No need to apologize.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I know Mom's mad at me.

**CHARLIE**

Don't worry about her.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

What did she say?

**CHARLIE**

Your mother, she says what she says.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I set the alarm. I did.

**CHARLIE**

I know you did.

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64.

57 CONTINUED:

57

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I loved Uncle Bev, you know that.

**CHARLIE**

Stop apologizing.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

The power must've gone out. I woke up and the clock was blinking noon. That means the power went out, right?

**CHARLIE**

It's okay.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I missed his funeral!

**CHARLIE**

It's a ceremony. It's ceremonial. It doesn't mean anything compared to what you have in your heart.

(and, then)

Hold on, comb your hair.

Charlie hands Little Charles his comb.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Uncle Bev must be disappointed in me.

**CHARLIE**

Your Uncle Bev has got bigger and better things ahead of him. He

doesn't have time for spite. He  
wasn't that kind of man anyway --

Charlie starts for the driver's side, stops when he sees  
Little Charles weeping. Returns to him, comforts him.

**CHARLIE (CONT'D)**

Hey, hey. It's okay. It's okay, now...

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Just... I know how things are. I  
know how they feel about me and  
something like this... you want to be  
there for people, and I missed Uncle  
Bev's funeral, and I know how they  
feel about me --

**CHARLIE**

How who feels about you? Feels what  
about you?

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57 CONTINUED:

57

**LITTLE CHARLES**

All of them. I know what they say.

**CHARLIE**

They don't say things about you --

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I see how they are. I don't blame  
them. I'm sorry I let you down, Dad.

**CHARLIE**

You haven't let me down. You never  
let me down. Now listen...you're  
wrong about these people, they love  
you. Some of them haven't gotten a  
chance to see what I see: a fine man,  
very loving, with a lot to offer. Now  
take this...

(a handkerchief)

Give me my comb. Stand up straight,  
look folks in the eye. Stop being so  
hard on yourself.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I love you, Dad.

**CHARLIE**

Love you too, son.

Barbara bursts out of the back porch screen and into the yard, heading to the old barn. Bill follows.

**BARBARA**

Phantom of the Opera --

**BILL**

You don't remember what it was like to be fourteen?

**BARBARA**

She's old enough to exhibit a little character. But that's something you normally learn from your parents.

**BILL**

That's a shot across my bow, right? I missed something.

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66.

58 CONTINUED:

58

**BARBARA**

Really? Instilling character: our burden as parents.

**BILL**

I got that part.

**BARBARA**

And you really haven't been much of a parent lately, so it's tough to --

**BILL**

Just because you and I are struggling with this Gordian knot doesn't mean --

**BARBARA**

Nice, "Gordian knot," but her fourteen-year-old self might view it differently, might consider it "abandonment" --

**BILL**

Oh, come on, she's a little more sophisticated than that, don't you think?

Barbara kicks at an old, stuck, door. Enters --

59 INT. THE WORKSHOP AT THE BACK OF THE BARN - DAY  
59

Makes her way to the back where old dinner chairs hang from nails pounded into the overhead beams.

**BARBARA**

Pretty fucking sophisticated, the restored whatever from Phantom of the Opera, I know that makes your dick hard --

**BILL**

Barbara --

**BARBARA**

Precocious little shit.

**BILL**

I'm not defending her.

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59 CONTINUED:

59

**BARBARA**

(voice rising)  
I'm not blaming her, because I don't expect her to act any differently when her father is a selfish son-of-a-bitch.

**BILL**

(voice rising)  
I'm on your side. How can we fight when I'm on your side? Barbara...Barbara, settle down!

**BARBARA**

Be a father! Help me!

**BILL**

I am her father, goddamn it!

**BARBARA**

Her father in name only!

**BILL**

I have not forsook my responsibilities!

Barbara hands dusty battered chairs back to Bill.

**BARBARA**

It's "forsaken," big shot!

**BILL**

Actually, "forsook" is also an

acceptable usage --!

**BARBARA**

Oh, "forsook" you and the horse  
you rode in on --

Each now with chairs in hand, head out into --

60 **EXT. THE BACK YARD - DAY**

60

And the blinding sunlight. Start back for the house.

**BILL**

You don't fight fair.

**BARBARA**

I've seen where that gets me! I'm  
sick of the whole notion of the  
enduring female. GROW UP! Cause  
while you're going through your fifth  
puberty, the world is falling apart  
and your kid can't handle it!

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68.

60 **CONTINUED:**

60

**BILL**

Our kid is just trying to deal with  
this goddamn madhouse you've dragged  
her into.

**BARBARA**

This madhouse is my home.

**BILL**

Think about that statement for a  
second, why don't you?

**BARBARA**

Jean is here with me because this  
is a family event.

**BILL**

Jean's here with you because she's  
a buffer between you and the shrill  
insanity of your mother.

**BARBARA**

Y'know, you'd have a lot more  
credibility if you had any  
credibility.

**BILL**

You can't resist, can you?

**BARBARA**

You're a pretty easy mark.

**BILL**

You're so goddamn self-righteous,  
you know? You're so --

**BARBARA**

Surely you must've known when you  
started porking Pippi Longstocking  
you were due for a little self-  
righteousness, just a smidge of  
indignation on my part --

**BILL**

Maybe I split because of it.

They've reached the back porch stairs. She turns on him.

**BARBARA**

Is this your confession, then, when  
you finally unload all?

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60 CONTINUED: 60

**BILL**

You're thoughtful, Barbara, but you're  
not open. You're passionate, but  
you're hard. You're a good, decent,  
funny, wonderful woman, and I love  
you, but you're a pain in the ass.

Bill pushes past her up the stairs, disappears inside.

61 INT. BEVERLY'S STUDY - AFTERNOON

61

Violet stands in the middle of the room. Sunlight streams in  
through the windows surrounding her. Approaches Beverly's  
swivel chair, touches the back, ...slowly spins it ...sits.

**VIOLET**

August... your month. Locusts are  
raging, "Summer psalm become summer  
wrath." `Course it's only August out  
there. In here... who knows?

(and then)

All right... okay. "The Carriage held  
but just Ourselves," dum-de-dum...mm,

best I got... Emily Dickenson's all I  
got... something something, "Horse's  
Heads Were Toward Eternity..."

Produces a bottle of pills, shakes one out, takes it.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

That's for me. One for me.

Surveys the photos behind his desk. The girls. Vi and Bev  
together in happier times. Picks up the hardback Meadowlark  
Bill left. Finds Beverly's reading glasses on the desk, puts  
them on. Thumbs through it, finds the dedication: simply:

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

For My Violet...

Violet smiles ruefully, takes another pill.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

For the girls, God love `em.

Surveys the book with something bordering on disgust.  
Another pill. Sits. Waiting. For what? She's not sure.

**BARBARA (OS)**

Mom?! Food's on the table!

She takes a final look around, takes one last pill.

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**62 INT. DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

**62**

Johnna, Karen, Steve and Mattie Fae carry in serving dishes,  
set them down on the already overladen table. Charlie pours  
himself a sweet tea.

**KAREN**

This is lovely! You do all this?

**JOHNNA**

Mm-hmm.

**MATTIE FAE**

She's a wonder, this one.

Bill passes through, carries us into the living room where he  
finds Jean, still watching the movie.

**BILL**

Turn that off, it's time to eat.

**JEAN**

Don't suppose I could eat in here?

**BILL**

You suppose right.

Ivy comes down the stairs, looking.

**IVY**

Did I hear Little Charles?

**CHARLIE**

He went back out to the car.

**63 EXT. BACK YARD - AFTERNOON**

**63**

Ivy steps out onto the porch. Little Charles is by his father's car, retrieving a Pyrex dish.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Mom's casserole.

Shuts the door, rests the casserole on the hood.

**IVY**

They said you overslept.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Maybe I purposely accidentally overslept. I don't know. I'm sorry.

**IVY**

Please.

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**63 CONTINUED:**

**63**

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I know you had one of the worst days of your life and I'm sorry if I --

**IVY**

We don't have to do that with each other.

She embraces him, kisses him. He looks toward the house.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

You're breaking our rule.

**IVY**

They're on to me. Not us, just me. I told them I was seeing someone. I didn't tell them who. I just wanted

you to know, in case it came up.  
(he stares at her)  
What?  
(beat)  
Charles...

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I adore you.

**64 INT. DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

**64**

Barbara, Bill, Mattie Fae, Charlie, Karen, and Steve are already seated. The men have removed their suit coats.

**CHARLIE**

Pass the casserole, please?

**MATTIE FAE**

My casserole's coming.

**CHARLIE**

I'll eat some of yours, too --

**BARBARA**

(calling out)  
Mom?! Let's eat!

Little Charles and Ivy enter with the casserole.

**MATTIE FAE**

There he is. I wanted to put you at a kid's table but they wouldn't let me.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Where do you want this?  
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72.

**64 CONTINUED:**

**64**

Ad-lib greetings, hugs, handshakes, Karen's introduction of Steve. Ivy slips in and takes her seat. Little Charles goes to put Mattie Fae's casserole on the table, but drops it.

It lands on the floor with a sickening SPLAT.

**LITTLE CHARLES (CONT'D)**

Oh Jesus --!

**BILL**

Whoops.

**MATTIE FAE**

Goddamn it --!

**STEVE**

O-pah!

**MATTIE FAE**

You goddamn clumsy goofball!

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Mom, I'm so sorry --

**CHARLIE**

All right, nobody's hurt.

Little Charles helps Johnna clean up the mess.

**MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)**

What about me? I'm hurt.

**CHARLIE**

You're not hurt.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Mom, Jesus, I'm sorry --

**IVY**

It's just an accident.

**MATTIE FAE**

That's my casserole!

**CHARLIE**

Let it go, Mattie Fae.

**STEVE**

It's not a party until  
someone spills something.

**CHARLIE**

Jean, you didn't get any chicken.

**BARBARA**

No, she won't --

**JEAN**

I don't eat meat.

**CHARLIE**

You don't eat meat.

**STEVE**

Good for you.

**CHARLIE (CONT'D)**

"Don't eat meat." Okay. Who wants  
chicken? Little Charles, chicken?

**MATTIE FAE**

Just put it on his plate for him or  
he's liable to burn the house down.

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64 CONTINUED:

64

**CHARLIE**

All right, Mattie Fae.

**BARBARA**

Mom...!

Violet enters with a small framed photo of her and Bev.

**VIOLET**

Barb... will you put this?

**BARBARA**

Yeah, sure.

Barbara takes it, places it on the sideboard.

**MATTIE FAE**

That's nice.

**KAREN**

That's sweet.

**VIOLET**

I see you gentlemen have stripped  
down to your shirt fronts. I thought  
we were having a funeral dinner, not  
a cockfight.

An awkward beat. The men glumly put their suit coats back on.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Someone should probably say grace.  
(no response)  
Barbara?

**BARBARA**

Uncle Charlie should say it. He's  
the patriarch around here now.

**CHARLIE**

I am? Oh, I guess I am.

**VIOLET**

By default.

**CHARLIE**

Okay.  
(clears his throat)  
Dear Lord...

All bow their heads.

**CHARLIE (CONT'D)**

We ask that you watch over this family  
in this sad time, O Lord...

**(MORE)**

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74.

64 CONTINUED:

64

**CHARLIE (CONT'D)**

that you bless this good woman and  
keep her in your, in your... grace.

A cell phone RINGS, playing the theme from Sanford and Son.  
Steve digs through his pockets, finds the phone, checks it.

**STEVE**

I have to take this.

Steve hustles into the kitchen to talk on the phone.

**CHARLIE**

We ask that you watch over Beverly,  
too, as he, as he... as he... makes  
his journey. We thank thee, O Lord,  
that we are able to join together to  
pay tribute to this fine man, in his  
house, with his beautiful daughters.  
We are truly blessed in our, our  
fellowship, our togetherness, our...  
our fellowship. Thank thee for the  
food, O Lord, that we can share this  
food and replenish our bodies with...  
nutrients. We ask that you help us...  
get better. Be better people.

Steve reenters from the kitchen, snapping his phone shut.

**CHARLIE (CONT'D)**

We recognize now more than ever the  
power, the... joy of family. We ask  
that you bless and watch over this  
family. Amen.

**STEVE**

Amen. Sorry folks.

**BILL**

Let's eat.

They begin to eat. Everyone but Violet, who smokes instead.

**VIOLET**

Barb, have any use for that sideboard?

**BARBARA**

Hm?

**VIOLET**

That sideboard there, you have any  
interest in that?

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**BARBARA**

This? Well... no. I mean, why?

**VIOLET**

I'm getting rid of a lot of this stuff and I thought you might want that sideboard.

**BARBARA**

No, Mom, I... I wouldn't have any way to get that home to Colorado.

**KAREN**

Really pretty.

**VIOLET**

Mm. Maybe Ivy'll take it.

**IVY**

I have something like that, remember --

**VIOLET**

Clearing all this out of here. I want to have a brand new everything.

**BARBARA**

I. I guess I'm just sort of... not prepared to talk about your stuff.

**VIOLET**

Suit yourself.

**STEVE**

This food is just spectacular.

**KAREN**

It's so good --

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Yes, it is --

**IVY**

You like your food, Mom?

**VIOLET**

I haven't tried much of it, yet --

**BARBARA**

Johnna cooked this whole meal by herself.

**VIOLET**

`S what she's paid for.

A silent moment.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Y'all did know she's getting paid, right?

**CHARLIE**

Jean, so I'm curious, when you say you don't eat meat, you mean you don't eat meat of any kind?

**JEAN**

Right.

**CHARLIE**

And is that for health reasons, or...?

**JEAN**

When you eat meat, you ingest an animal's fear.

**VIOLET**

Ingest what? It's fur?

**JEAN**

Fear.

**VIOLET**

I thought she said --

**CHARLIE**

How do you do that? You can't eat fear.

**JEAN**

Sure you can. What happens to you, when you feel afraid? Doesn't your body produce all sorts of chemical reactions?

**CHARLIE**

Does it?

**LITTLE CHARLES**

It does.

**IVY**

Yes.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Adrenaline, and, and --

**JEAN**

Your body goes through a whole

chemical process when it  
experiences fear.

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64 CONTINUED:

64

**LITTLE CHARLES**

-- yep, and cortisol --

**JEAN**

Don't you think an animal  
experiences fear?

**STEVE**

You bet it does. I used to work in  
a cattle processing plant, lot of  
fear flying around that place.

**JEAN**

So when you eat an animal, you're  
eating all that fear it felt when  
it was slaughtered to make food.

**CHARLIE**

Wow. You mean I've been eating fear,  
what, three times a day for sixty  
years?

**MATTIE FAE**

This one won't have a meal `less  
there's meat in it.

**CHARLIE**

I guess it's the way I was raised,  
but it just doesn't seem like a  
legitimate meal `less it has some  
meat somewhere --

**MATTIE FAE**

If I make a pasta dish of some kind,  
he'll be like, "Okay, that's good for  
an appetizer, now where's the meat?"

**VIOLET**

"Where's the meat?" Isn't that some  
TV commercial, the old lady says,  
"Where's the meat?"

**KAREN**

"Beef," "Where's the beef?"

**VIOLET**

(screeching)

"Where's the meat?!" "Where's the  
meat?!" "Where's the meat?!"

**BARBARA**

That's pleasant.

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78.

64 CONTINUED:

64

**CHARLIE**

I thought the services were lovely.

**KAREN**

Yes, weren't they --?

**STEVE**

Preacher did a fine job.

Vi sticks her hand out, flat, wiggles it back and forth.

**VIOLET**

Ehhhhh! I give it a...

(repeats gesture)

Ehhhhh!

**KAREN**

Really? I thought it was --

**BARBARA**

Great, now we get some  
dramatic criticism.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Too much talk about poetry, teaching.  
He hadn't written any poetry to speak  
of since '65 and he never liked  
teaching worth a damn. Nobody talked  
about the good stuff. Man was a world-  
class alcoholic, more'n fifty years.  
Nobody told the story about that night  
he got wrangled into giving a talk at  
that TU alumni dinner...

(laughs)

Drank a whole bottle of Ron Bocoy  
White Rum -- don't know why I remember  
that -- and got up to give this talk,  
and he fouled himself! Comes back to  
our table with this huge --

**BARBARA**

Yeah, I can't imagine why no one told  
that story.

**STEVE**

I don't know much about poetry, but I  
thought his poems were extraordinary.  
(to Bill)

And your reading was very fine.

**BILL**

Thank you.

**VIOLET**

(to Steve)

Who are you?

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64 CONTINUED:

64

**KAREN**

Mom, this is my fiance, Steve, I introduced you at the church.

**STEVE**

Steve Heidebrecht.

**VIOLET**

Hide-the-what?

**STEVE**

Heidebrecht.

**VIOLET**

Hide-a-burrr...German, you're a German.

**STEVE**

Well, German-Irish, really, I --

**VIOLET**

That's peculiar, Karen, to bring a date to your father's funeral. I know the poetry was good, but I wouldn't have really considered it date material --

**BARBARA**

Jesus.

**KAREN**

He's not a date, he's my fiance. We're getting married on New Years. In Miami, I hope you can make it.

**VIOLET**

I don't really see that happening, do you? Steve. That right? Steve?

**STEVE**

Yes, ma'am.

**VIOLET**

You ever been married before?

**KAREN**

That's personal.

**STEVE**

I don't mind. Yes, ma'am, I have.

**VIOLET**

More'n once?

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80.

64 CONTINUED:

64

**STEVE**

Three times, actually, three times  
before this --

**VIOLET**

You should pretty much have it down  
by now, then.

**STEVE**

(laughs)  
Right, right --

Everybody's eating, passing food. Vi turns to Mattie Fae.

**VIOLET**

I had that one pegged. I mean,  
look at him, you can tell he's  
been married.

**KAREN**

I took Steve out to show him the  
old fort and it's gone!

**IVY**

That's been gone for years.

**KAREN**

That made me so sad!

**BILL**

What is this now?

**KAREN**

Our old fort, where we used to play  
Cowboys and Indians.

**IVY**

Daddy said rats were getting in there.

**VIOLET**

Karen! Shame on you! Don't you know not to say Cowboys and Indians? You played Cowboys and Native Americans, right Barb?

**BARBARA**

What did you take? What pills?

**VIOLET**

Lemme alone --

Charlie's silverware clatters to the floor. He appears to be having some kind of attack.

**CHARLIE**

Uh-oh!

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64 CONTINUED:

64

**MATTIE FAE**

What is it?

**CHARLIE**

UH-OH!

**MATTIE FAE**

What's the matter?

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Dad --?

**IVY**

You okay, Uncle --

**CHARLIE**

I got a big bite of fear! I'm shakin' in my boots! Fear never tasted so good.

Laughter. Charlie digs into his plate ravenously.

**STEVE**

Right, right, it's pretty good once you get used to the taste.

**BARBARA**

I catch her eating a cheeseburger every now and again.

**JEAN**

I do not!

**BARBARA**

Double cheeseburger, bacon, extra

fear.

**JEAN**

Mom, you are such a liar!

More laughter. Violet stares at Jean.

**VIOLET**

Y'know...if I ever called my mom a liar? She would've knocked my goddamn head off my shoulders.

Silence.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

You girls know there's a will.

**BARBARA**

Mom...

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64 CONTINUED:

64

**VIOLET**

We took care of it some time back.

**BARBARA**

Mom, we don't want to talk about this.

**VIOLET**

I want to talk about it. What about what I want to talk about, that count for anything?

(beat)

Bev made some good investments, believe it or not, and we had money for you girls in his will, but we talked it over after some years passed and decided to change things, leave everything to me. We never got around to taking care of it legally, but you should know he meant to leave the money to me.

**BARBARA**

Okay.

**VIOLET**

Okay?

(looks to Ivy, Karen)

Okay?

**IVY**

Okay.

**VIOLET**

Karen? Okay?

Uncertain, Karen looks to Steve, then Barbara.

**BARBARA**

Okay.

**KAREN**

Okay.

**VIOLET**

Okay. But now some of this furniture, some of this old shit you can just have. I don't want it, got no use for it. Maybe I should have an auction.

**MATTIE FAE**

Sure, an auction's a fine idea --

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83.

64 CONTINUED:

64

**VIOLET**

Some things, though, like the silver, that's worth a pretty penny. But if you like I'll sell it to you, cheaper'n I might get in an auction.

**BARBARA**

Or you might never get around to the auction and then we can just have it for free after you die.

**IVY**

Barbara...

Beat. Violet coolly studies Barbara.

**VIOLET**

You might at that.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Excuse me, Bill? I'm wondering, the reading you did, those poems --?

**VIOLET**

Where are you living now, Bill? You want this old sideboard?

**BILL**

I beg your pardon.

**VIOLET**

You and Barbara are separated,  
right? Or you divorced already?

**BILL**

...We're separated.

**VIOLET**

(to Barbara)

Thought you could slip that one  
by me, didn't you?

**BARBARA**

What is the matter with you?

**VIOLET**

Nobody slips anything by me. I know  
what's what. Your father thought  
he's slipping one by me, right? No  
way. I'm sorry you two're having  
trouble, maybe you can work it out.  
Bev'n I separated a few times, course  
we didn't call it that.

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64 CONTINUED:

64

**BARBARA**

Help us to benefit from an  
illustration of your storybook  
marriage.

**VIOLET**

Truth is, you can't compete with a  
younger woman. One of those unfair  
things in life. Is there a younger  
woman involved?

**BARBARA**

You've said enough on this topic,  
I think.

**BILL**

Yes. There's a younger woman.

**VIOLET**

Y'see? Odds're against you there,  
babe.

**IVY**

Mom believes women don't grow  
more attractive with age.

**KAREN**

Oh, I disagree, I --

**VIOLET**

I didn't say they "don't grow more  
attractive," I said they get ugly.  
And it's not really a matter of  
opinion, Karen dear. You've only  
just started to prove it yourself.

**CHARLIE**

You're in rare form today, Vi.

**VIOLET**

The day calls for it, doesn't it?  
What form would you have me in?

**CHARLIE**

I just don't understand why you're  
so adversarial.

**VIOLET**

I'm just truth-telling.  
(to Barbara)  
Some people get antagonized by  
the truth.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 85.

64 CONTINUED:

64

**CHARLIE**

Everyone here loves you, dear.

**VIOLET**

You think you can shame me, Charlie?  
Blow it out your ass.

**BARBARA**

Three days ago... I had to identify  
my father's corpse. Now I'm supposed  
to sit here and listen to you  
viciously attack each and every member  
of this family --

Violet rises, her voice booming.

**VIOLET**

Attack my family?! You ever been  
attacked in your sweet spoiled life?!

Tell her `bout attacks, Mattie Fae,  
tell her what an attack looks like!

**MATTIE FAE**

Vi, please --

**IVY**

Settle down, Mom --

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Stop telling me to settle down, goddam  
it! I'm not a goddamn invalid! I  
don't need to be abided, do I?! Am  
I already passed over?!

**MATTIE FAE**

Honey --

**VIOLET**

(points to Mattie Fae)  
This woman came to my rescue when  
one of my dear mother's many gentlemen  
friends was attacking me, with a claw  
hammer! You think you been attacked?!  
What do you know about life on these  
Plains? What do you know about hard  
times?

**BARBARA**

I know you had a rotten childhood,  
Mom. Who didn't?

**VIOLET**

You DON'T know! You do NOT know! None  
of you know, `cept this woman right  
here and that man we buried today!

**(MORE)**

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64 CONTINUED:

64

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Sweet girl, sweet Barbara, my heart  
breaks for every time you ever felt  
pain. I wish I coulda shielded you  
from it. But if you think for a  
solitary second you can fathom the  
pain that man endured in his natural  
life, you got another think coming.

\*

Do you know where your father lived  
from age four till about ten? Do you?

No one responds.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Do you?!

**BARBARA**

No.

**IVY**

No.

**VIOLET**

In a Pontiac Sedan. With his mother, his father, in a fucking car! Now what do you want to say about your rotten childhood? That's the crux of the biscuit: we lived too hard, then rose too high. We sacrificed everything and we did it all for you. Your father and I were the first in our families to finish high school and he wound up an award-winning poet. You girls, given a college education, taken for granted no doubt, and where'd you wind up?

(jabs a finger at Karen)

Whadda you do?

(jabs a finger at Ivy)

Whadda you do?

(jabs a finger at Barbara)

Who're you? Jesus, you worked as hard as us, you'd all be President. You never had real problems so you got to make all your problems yourselves.

**BARBARA**

Why are you screaming at us?

**VIOLET**

Just time we had some truth's told `round here. Damn fine day, tell the truth.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

87.

**64** CONTINUED:

**64**

There's a long pause as everyone gathers themselves, then:

\*

**CHARLIE**

Well, the truth is... I'm getting full.

**STEVE**

Amen.

**JOHNNA**

There's dessert, too.

**KAREN**

I saw her making those pies.  
They looked so good.

Little Charles suddenly stands.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I have a truth to tell.

**VIOLET**

It speaks.

**IVY**

(softly pleading )  
No, no --

**CHARLIE**

What is it, son?

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I have a truth.

**MATTIE FAE**

Little Charles...?

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I...

**IVY**

Charles, not like this, please...

**LITTLE CHARLES**

The truth is...I forgot to set the  
clock. The power didn't go out, I  
just...forgot to set the clock.  
Sorry, Mom. I'm sorry, everyone.  
Excuse me...I...I.

He stumbles from the room. A long moment, then --

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88.

64 **CONTINUED:**

64

**VIOLET**

Scintillating.

**MATTIE FAE**

(to Charlie)  
I gave up a long time ago... Little  
Charles is your project.

**IVY**

(near tears)  
Charles. His name is Charles.

**VIOLET**

Poor Ivy. Poor thing.

**IVY**

Please, Mom...

**VIOLET**

Poor baby.

**IVY**

Please...

**VIOLET**

She always had a feeling for the  
underdog.

**IVY**

Don't be mean to me right now, okay?

**VIOLET**

Everyone's got this idea I'm mean  
all of a sudden.

**IVY**

Please, momma.

**VIOLET**

I told you, I'm just telling the --

**BARBARA**

You're a drug addict.

**VIOLET**

That is the truth! That's what I'm  
getting at! I, everybody listen... I  
am a drug addict. I am addicted to  
drugs, pills, specially downers.

She pulls a bottle from her pocket, holds them up.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 89.

64 CONTINUED:

64

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Y'see these little blue babies? These

are my best fucking friends and they never let me down. Try to get `em away from me and I'll eat you alive.

Barbara lunges at the bottle, she and Vi wrestle for it.

**BARBARA**

Gimme those goddamn pills --

**VIOLET**

I'll eat you alive, girl!

Bill and Ivy try to restrain Barbara; Mattie Fae tries to restrain Violet. Others rise, ad-lib. Pandemonium.

**STEVE**

Holy shit --

**IVY**

Barbara, stop it --!

**CHARLIE**

Hey, now, c'mon --!

**KAREN**

Oh God --

Violet wrests the pills from Barb. Bill pulls Barb back into her seat. Violet shakes the bottle, taunting Barb. Barb lunges again, grabs her mother by the hair, toppling chairs, they crash into the --

**65 INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

**65**

Tumble to the floor. Pandemonium, screaming. The family rushes after them into the living room. Barb has her mother pinned on the floor and is strangling her. Bill and Charlie struggle to pull Barbara off, pry her fingers off Violet's throat and get her away.

Johnna and Mattie Fae rush to Violet, get her to a chair.

**VIOLET**

Goddamn you... goddamn you, Barb...

**BARBARA**

Shut up!

(silence)

Okay. Pill raid. Johnna, help Ivy in the kitchen; Bill and Jean upstairs with me.

(to Ivy)

You remember how to do this, right?

**IVY**

Yeah...

**BARBARA**

Go through everything. Every closet,  
every drawer, every shoebox.

**CHARLIE**

What should we do?

**BARBARA**

Get Mom some black coffee, a wet  
towel and listen to her bullshit.  
Karen, call Dr. Burke.

**VIOLET**

You can't do this! This is my  
house! This is my house!

**BARBARA**

You don't get it, do you?

She strides to her mother, looms over her.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

**I'M RUNNING THINGS NOW!**

**66 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON**

66

The hallway is empty, but we hear the sounds of the search  
coming from the bedroom. Barbara appears, looks through the  
linen closet, looking behind stacked towels and old electric  
blankets. Finds a bottle of pills in the back.

Ivy comes upstairs, followed closely by Karen. Hold out pill  
\*  
bottles, Barb adds them to the ones she's already collected  
in a large Ziplock bag.

**IVY**

That's all we could find.  
\*

Barb heads for the bathroom, lifts the toilet seat. Begins  
\*  
dumping pills into the bowl. Karen examines the bottles.  
\*

**KAREN**

\*  
Why'd Dr. Burke write her so many  
\*

prescriptions? Doesn't he know --?

\*

**IVY**

\*

It's not just him. She's got a doctor  
in every port.

\*

\*

"August" 11/09/12 Pink Draft 91.

66 CONTINUED:  
66

**BARBARA**

You knew this was going on again?

Ivy shrugs. Finished emptying the pills, Barb flushes the  
toilet, steps to her mother's open bedroom door, looks in.

\*

67 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON  
67

Violet lays motionless on the bed in the semi-darkness,  
facing the wall, still fully clothed. Ivy and Karen join her.  
They stare at their mother's comatose form. Finally:

\*

**KAREN**

Now what?

**BARBARA**

\*

Wine... lots of wine.

\*

A68 OMIT  
A68 \*

68 OMIT  
68 \*

69 OMIT  
69 \*

A70 EXT. WESTON HOUSE YARD/GAZEBO - NIGHT  
A70 \*

\* Barbara, Ivy, Karen and the remains of the dinner wine sit  
\* around the table in the backyard gazebo.

**BARBARA**

\* Think we can goad Mom into giving  
\* Burke her "greatest" generation  
\* speech tomorrow, tell him about the  
\* claw hammer?

"August" 11/11/12 Yellow Pages 92.

A70 CONTINUED:

A70

**IVY**

Won't do any good, he's part of the  
same generation.

**BARBARA**

\* "Greatest Generation," my ass. What  
\* makes them so great? Because they  
\* were poor and hated Nazis? Who  
\* doesn't fucking hate Nazis? Remember  
\* when we checked her in the psych ward,  
that stunt she pulled?

**IVY**

\* Big speech, she's getting clean,  
making this incredible sacrifice for  
her family, she's let us down but now  
\* she'll prove she's a good mother.

**KAREN**

I wasn't there.

**BARBARA**

She smuggled Darvocet into the psych  
ward ...in her vagina. There's your  
Greatest Generation for you. She

made this speech to us while she was  
clenching a bottle of pills in her  
cooch, for God's sake.

**KAREN**

God, I've never heard this story.

"August" 11/11/12 Yellow Pages 93.

**A70 CONTINUED:**

**A70**

**IVY**

Did you just say "cooch"?

**BARBARA**

The phrase "Mom's pussy" seems gauche.

**IVY**

You're a little more comfortable with  
"cooch," are you?

**BARBARA**

What word should I use to describe  
our mother's vagina?

**IVY**

I don't know, but --

**BARBARA**

"Mom's beaver"? "Mother's box"?

**IVY**

Oh God --

**KAREN**

Barbara!

As their laughter slowly dies down --

\*

**KAREN**

One thing about Mom and Dad. You have  
to tip your cap to anyone who can stay  
married that long.

**IVY**

Karen. He killed himself.

**BARBARA**

Is there something going on between  
you and Little Charles?

**IVY**

I don't know that I'm comfortable  
talking about that.

"August" 11/09/12 Pink Draft 93A.

**A70 CONTINUED:**

**A70**

**BARBARA**

Because you know he's our first  
cousin.

**IVY**

Give me a break.

**KAREN**

You know you shouldn't consider  
children.

**IVY**

I can't anyway, I had a hysterectomy  
last year.

What? Barbara and Karen stare at Ivy.

"August" 10/23/12 BLUE Draft 94.

**A70 CONTINUED:**

**A70**

**KAREN**

\*

Why?

**IVY**

Cervical cancer.

**KAREN**

I didn't know.

**BARBARA**

Neither did I.

**IVY**

I didn't tell anyone except Charles.  
That's where it started between us.

**BARBARA**

Why not?

**IVY**

And hear it from Mom the rest of my  
life? She doesn't need another excuse  
to treat me like some damaged thing.

**BARBARA**

You might have told us.

**IVY**

You didn't tell us about you and Bill.

**BARBARA**

That's different.

**IVY**

Why? Because it's you, and not me?

**BARBARA**

Because divorce is an embarrassing public admission of defeat. Cancer's fucking cancer, you can't help that. We're your sisters.

**IVY**

\*

I don't feel that connection very keenly.

\*

\*

**KAREN**

\*

I feel very connected, to both of you.

\*

**IVY**

\*

We never see you, you're never around, you haven't been around --

\*

\*

"August" 10/23/12 BLUE Draft 95.

**A70 CONTINUED:**

**A70**

**KAREN**

\*

I still feel that connection!

\*

**IVY**

I can't perpetuate these myths of family or sisterhood anymore. We're just people, some of us accidentally connected by genetics, a random selection of cells.

\*

**BARBARA**

When did you get so cynical?

**IVY**

That's funny, coming from you.

**BARBARA**

Bitter, sure, but "random selection  
of cells?"

**IVY**

Maybe my cynicism came with the  
realization that the responsibility of  
\*  
caring for our parents was mine alone.

**BARBARA**

Don't give me that. I participated --

**IVY**

Till you had enough and got out,  
you and Karen both. I'm not  
criticizing. Do what you want. You  
did, Karen did.

**BARBARA**

And if you didn't, that's not my  
fault.

**IVY**

That's right, so don't lay this sister  
thing on me, all right? When I leave  
\*  
here I won't feel any more guilty than  
\*  
you two did.  
\*

**KAREN**

I can't believe your world view is  
\*  
this dark.  
\*

**IVY**

You live in Florida.  
\*

"August" 11/09/12 Pink Draft 96-97.

A70 CONTINUED:  
A70

**BARBARA**

You're thinking of leaving?

**IVY**

Charles and I are going to New York.

Barb bursts out in derisive laughter. Karen joins her.

**BARBARA**

What are you going to do in New York?

**IVY**

We have plans.

**BARBARA**

Like what?

**IVY**

None of your business.

**BARBARA**

What about Mom?

**IVY**

What about her?

**BARBARA**

You feel comfortable leaving Mom here?

**IVY**

Do you?

(then)

You think she was tough when he was alive? Think what it's going to be like now.

\*

(to Karen)

You're going back to Miami, right?

**KAREN**

Yes.

Ivy stands, gathers up her wine glass.

"August" 10/23/12 BLUE Draft 98.

**A70 CONTINUED:**

**A70**

**IVY**

\*

There you go, Barb. You want to know

\*

what we're doing about Mom? Karen and

\*

I are leaving. You want to stay,

\*

that's your decision. But nobody gets  
to point a finger at me. Nobody.

Ivy starts back for the house.

70 OMIT 70  
\*

71 OMIT 71  
\*

72 EXT. WESTON HOUSE YARD - NIGHT 72  
\*

The Weston women head for the house.

**VIOLET**

My girls all together. Hearing you  
just now gave me a warm feeling.

Violet, sits on the swing in the semi-darkness, smoking, her  
hair wrapped in a towel. They hadn't seen her. How long has  
she been there?

"August" 10/23/12 BLUE Draft 99.

72 CONTINUED:  
72

**BARBARA**

You had a bath?

**VIOLET**

Uh-huh...

**BARBARA**

You need something to eat? More  
coffee?

**VIOLET**

No, honey, I'm fine.  
(then)  
This house must have heard a lot of  
Weston girl secrets.

Karen moves to her mother, sits next to her on the swing.  
Barb leans against a fence post, Ivy hangs back.

**KAREN**

I get embarrassed just thinking  
about it.

Karen takes a tube of hand creme from her purse.

**VIOLET**

Oh... nothing to be embarrassed  
about. Secret crushes, secret  
schemes. Province of teenage girls.  
I can't imagine anything more  
delicate, or bittersweet. Some part  
of you girls I always identified  
with... no matter how old you get, a  
woman's hard-pressed to throw off  
that part of herself.  
(to Karen, re: hand creme)  
That smells good.

**KAREN**

It's apple. You want some?

**VIOLET**

Yes, please.

Violet puts out her cigarette. Karen passes her the creme.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

I ever tell you the story of Raymond  
Qualls? Not much story to it. Boy I  
had a crush on when I was thirteen or  
so. Rough-looking boy, beat-up Levis,  
messy hair. Terrible underbite.

**(MORE)**

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72 CONTINUED:

72

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

But he had these beautiful cowboy

boots, shiny chocolate leather. He was so proud of those boots, you could tell, way he'd strut around, all arms and elbows, puffed up and cocksure. I decided I needed to get a girly pair of those same boots and I convinced myself he'd ask me to go steady. He'd see me in those boots and say "Now there's the gal for me."

Violet lights another cigarette.

\*

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Found the boots in a window downtown and just went crazy: praying for those boots, rehearsing the conversation I'd have with Raymond when he saw me in my boots. Must've asked my momma a hundred times if I could get those boots. "What do you want for Christmas, Vi?" "Momma, I'll give all of it up just for those boots." Bargaining, you know? She started dropping hints about a package under the tree she had wrapped up, about the size of a boot box, nice wrapping paper. "Now, Vi, don't you cheat and look in there before Christmas morning." Little smile on her face. Christmas morning, I was up like a shot, boy, under the tree, tearing open that box. There was a pair of boots, all right... men's work boots, holes in the toes, chewed up laces, caked in mud and dog shit. Lord, my momma laughed for days.

Silence.

**BARBARA**

Please don't tell me that's the end of the story.

**VIOLET**

Oh, no. That's the end.

Ivy shakes her head, goes inside. She's had enough of Violet to last a lifetime.

**KAREN**

You never got the boots?

72 CONTINUED:  
72

**VIOLET**

No, huh-uh.

**BARBARA**

Okay, well, that's the worst story I ever heard. That makes me wish for a heartwarming claw hammer story.

**VIOLET**

My momma was a nasty-mean old lady. I suppose that's where I get it from.

An awkward moment.

**KAREN**

You're not nasty-mean. You're our mother and we love you.

**VIOLET**

Thank you, sweetheart.

Karen leans her head against her mother's shoulder, takes her mother's hand. Off Barbara, watching this --

73 INT. GUEST ROOM - EARLY MORNING  
73

Barbara wakes, takes a moment to get her bearings. Early sunlight pours in. Bill's still asleep. She sits up, studies him. Surprised to find him beside her.

74 OMIT  
74 \*

75 OMIT  
75 \*

76 INT/EXT. BACKYARD - EARLY MORNING  
\*

76

\*  
Barbara stands in the door. Closes her eyes, letting the early morning sun warm her. After a long moment, Johnna

appears with a coffee mug. Barb takes it, nods her thanks.

**BARBARA**

Last time I spoke with my father, we talked about the state of the world, and he said, "You know, this country was always pretty much a whorehouse, but at least it used to have some promise. Now it's just a shithole." I think maybe he was talking about something else, something more specific, personal... this house? This family? His marriage? Himself? There was something sad in his voice-- not sad, he always sounded sad -- hopeless. As if it had already happened. As if whatever was disappearing had already disappeared. And no one saw it go. This country, this experiment, America, this hubris: what a lament, if no one saw it go.

**JOHNNA**

Mrs. Fordham, are you going to fire me?

**BARBARA**

What? No. But I'll understand if you want to quit. I mean, there's work. And then there's work.

**JOHNNA**

I'm familiar with this job. I can do this job. I don't do it for you or Mrs. Weston. Or even for Mr. Weston. Right? I do it for me.

**BARBARA**

Why?

**JOHNNA**

I need the work.

**BARBARA**

Johnna, did my father say anything to you?

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76 CONTINUED:

76

**JOHNNA**

He just seemed like maybe he had... he

\*

talked about...

(beat)

He talked a lot about his daughters,  
his three daughters, and his  
granddaughter. That was his joy.

**BARBARA**

Thank you. That makes me feel better.  
Knowing that you can lie.

Johnna smiles.

**77 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE/WAITING ROOM - DAY**

**77**

Barbara sits opposite DR. BURKE, a genial, charming and  
remotely creepy small town doctor. Ivy stands. Violet is  
visible out in the waiting room, Karen sitting with her.

**DR. BURKE**

The chemotherapy and the radiation,  
coupled with the overuse of pain  
medications --

**BARBARA**

-- right --

**DR. BURKE**

-- and without the benefit of more  
thorough testing, an MRI or CT scan, I  
believe your mother is showing signs  
of Mild Cognitive Impairment.

**BARBARA**

Mild Cognitive Impairment?

**DR. BURKE**

Brain damage. It may be time to  
consider placing her in a long term  
care facility. I'd certainly feel  
more comfortable knowing she was  
receiving that level of supervision.

**BARBARA**

That would make you comfortable? You  
would be comfortable with that?

**DR. BURKE**

Of course, it's a family decision.

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77 CONTINUED:  
77

**BARBARA**

You want us to send her to where, a psychiatric hospital?

**DR. BURKE**

Well, Beverly's gone.

**BARBARA**

Right. Not "gone" so much as "dead," but I see your point.

Ivy suppresses a laugh. Burke looks at Ivy, confused.

**DR. BURKE**

Legal guardianship for you and your sisters, with my recommendation, should be a simple --

**IVY**

Leave me out of this, thanks.

**BARBARA**

So you're thinking that if the three of us cooperated with you on a commitment end-around, we'd be less likely to sue your ass?

**DR. BURKE**

I'm sorry?

**BARBARA**

"Mild Cognitive Impairment?" Are you fucking kidding me? You really want to go before a judge and make a case for a couple radiation treatments and some chemo causing brain damage? Think you can make that stand up in court? When I'm sitting at the other table, doing this?

Barbara pulls out the Ziplock bag, throws a pill bottle at Dr. Burke, bouncing it lightly off his head.

**DR. BURKE**

All right, I think --

Throws another pill bottle at him.

**BARBARA**

Know whose name is on these bottles?

She hits him with another pill bottle.

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77 CONTINUED:

77

**DR. BURKE**

Your mother is a very --

She hits him with another pill bottle.

**IVY**

Barb...

She hits him with another pill bottle. He relents, waits for her to get it out of her system. Only one problem with that idea, though --

She hits him with another pill bottle.

Another pill bottle. And another pill bottle.

She pauses. It seems she's done.

But then, another pill bottle. And another.

**BARBARA**

We'll hang on to the bucket of these we have at home. For evidence. For your trial.

She gets up to go, gets to the door, turns and fires one last pill bottle at him. Leaves. Ivy lingers, grins at Burke.

78 INT/EXT. TALLGRASS PRAIRIE PRESERVE/BEV'S LINCOLN - DAY

78

The sun parched Indian grass and Turkey Toot are wilting but stirred by prairie winds. Bev's old Lincoln follows a thread of blacktop through the tall grass. Barb drives, Ivy up front. Karen's in the back with Violet.

**VIOLET**

Pull the car over.

**BARBARA**

We'll be home in a few minutes.

**VIOLET**

Pull the car over.

(beat)

I'm going to be sick.

Barbara looks back, sees her mother means this literally, pulls to the side of the road. Violet gets out quickly.

We stay with Barbara as she climbs out of the car, stares across the road, waiting for Violet, who can be heard retching. Karen and Ivy still in the car.

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78 **CONTINUED:**

78

The sound fades as Barbara contemplates the prairie and for a long moment... loses herself, back to this land, to her home. Her expression is unreadable, enigmatic.

Then behind her, out of focus, we become aware of Violet running away, across the prairie, through the tall grass.

Barbara turns, simply to get back in the car, sees Violet running through the field.

**BARBARA**

Mom?

Violet keeps running.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Mom?! Where are you going?

Barbara watches for another moment.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Goddamn it. Mom!

Barbara takes off after her. Ivy and Karen climb out, but don't follow. Shield their eyes to watch the chase.

It's an odd sight, the two women, racing through the grass. One almost seventy, the other nearing fifty.

Barbara is slow in her pursuit at first, maybe because of her shoes, or maybe because she just feels silly. Then realizes that Violet is not stopping... not unless Barbara stops her.

Violet runs through the tall grass, puts a foot wrong, goes down. Barbara catches up, out of breath, collapses. They lay on the ground, wheezing, sweating.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Where the fuck are you going, Mom?

And now we see the full beauty of the land, the distant horizon, the high cumulous clouds, the endless blue sky.

Barb and Violet two dots, lost in the unforgiving prairie.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

There's nowhere to go.

**79 INT/EXT. LINCOLN/WESTON HOUSE DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON**

**79**

Barb pulls the Lincoln in beside Charlie's Caddie and Ivy's Honda. Shuts off the engine. Ivy and Karen climb out, start back for the house. Barbara turns to Violet.

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107.

**79 CONTINUED:**

**79**

**BARBARA**

I'm sorry.

**VIOLET**

Please, honey --

**BARBARA**

No, it's important I say this. I lost my temper at dinner and went too far.

\*

**VIOLET**

Barbara. The day, the funeral... the pills. I was spoiling for a fight and you gave it to me.

**BARBARA**

So... truce?

**VIOLET**

(laughs)

Truce.

They take a long moment, then --

\*

**BARBARA**

What now?

**VIOLET**

How do you mean?

**BARBARA**

Don't you think you should at least consider a rehab center?

Karen turns, realizing they're not following. Should she go back to the car? She decides no, continues inside.

**VIOLET**

I can't go through that again. No, I can do this. You got rid of my pills, right?

**BARBARA**

All we could find.

**VIOLET**

I don't have that many hiding places.

**BARBARA**

Mom, now, come on.

**VIOLET**

You wanna search me?

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79 CONTINUED:

79

**BARBARA**

Uh... no.

**VIOLET**

If the pills are gone, I'll be fine. Just need a few days to get my feet under me.

**BARBARA**

I can't imagine what all this must be like for you right now. I just want you to know, you're not alone. If you need any help --

**VIOLET**

I don't need help.

**BARBARA**

I want to help.

**VIOLET**

I don't need your help.

**BARBARA**

Mom.

**VIOLET**

I don't need your help. I've gotten myself through some... I know how this

goes: once all the talking's through,  
people go back to their own nonsense.  
I know that. So, don't worry about me.  
I'll manage. I get by.

Violet gets out, heads inside.            Barbara watches her go.

80    **INT. WESTON HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**  
80

Ivy finds Little Charles watching television.

**IVY**

Is the coast clear?

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Never very.

Ivy waits until Karen passes through, heads upstairs.

**IVY**

What are you watching?

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80    **CONTINUED:**  
80

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Television.

**IVY**

Can I watch it with you?

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I wish you would.

She sits beside him on the couch.

**LITTLE CHARLES (CONT'D)**

I almost blew it last night.

(she nods)

Are you mad at me?

**IVY**

Nope.

They hold hands.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I was trying to be brave.

**IVY**

I know.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I just... I want everyone to know  
that I got what I always wanted.  
And that means... I'm not a loser.

**IVY**

Hey. Hey.

He turns to look at her.

**IVY (CONT'D)**

You're my hero.

He considers this... then breaks into a huge smile, mutes the  
TV, goes to the ancient, oak, electric piano, turns it on.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

Come on, help me push the pedal.

She joins him on the piano bench.

**LITTLE CHARLES (CONT'D)**

I wrote this for you.

He plays, and quietly sings a gentle but quirky love song.  
It's charming, touching.

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80 CONTINUED:

80

She smiles, he smiles back. Midway through, Mattie Fae  
enters, watches for a moment. Then breaks the spell.

**MATTIE FAE**

Liberace. Get yourself together,  
we have to get home and take care  
of those damn dogs. They've probably  
eaten the drapes by now.

Charlie comes down the stairs with their overnight bag.

**CHARLIE**

I'm sure the house is fine.

**MATTIE FAE**

(notices the TV)  
Oh, look, honey, Little Charles has  
got the TV on.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

No, I was just --

**MATTIE FAE**

This one watches so much television,  
it's rotted his brain.

**IVY**

I'm sure that's not true.

**MATTIE FAE**

What was it I caught you watching the  
other day?

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I don't remember.

**CHARLIE**

Mattie Fae --

**MATTIE FAE**

\*  
You do so remember, some dumb talk  
show about people swapping wives.

**LITTLE CHARLES**

I don't remember.

**MATTIE FAE**

You don't remember.

(to Ivy)

Too bad there isn't a job where they  
pay you to sit around watching TV.

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80 CONTINUED:

80

**CHARLIE**

C'mon, Mattie Fae --

**MATTIE FAE**

(still to Ivy)

Y'know he got fired from a shoe store?

**CHARLIE**

Mattie Fae, we're gonna get in the  
car and go home and if you say one  
more mean thing to that boy I'm going  
to kick your fat Irish ass onto the  
highway. You hear me?

**MATTIE FAE**

What the hell did you say--?

**CHARLIE**

You kids go outside, would you please?

Ivy and Little Charles go.

**CHARLIE (CONT'D)**

I don't understand this meanness. I look at you and your sister and the way you talk to people and I don't understand it. I can't understand why folks can't be respectful of one another. I don't think there's any excuse for it. My family didn't treat each other that way.

**MATTIE FAE**

Maybe that's because your family --

**CHARLIE**

You had better not say anything about my family right now. I mean it. We buried a man yesterday I loved very much. And whatever faults he may have had, he was a good, kind, decent person. And to hear you tear into your own son not even a day later dishonors Beverly's memory. We've been married thirty-eight years. I wouldn't trade them for anything. But if you can't find a generous place in your heart for your own son, we're not going to make it to thirty-nine.

He goes. She takes a moment to collect herself, turns to follow, finds Barbara standing out in the open kitchen door.

\*

There's an awkward moment.

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80 CONTINUED:

80

**BARBARA**

I didn't mean to eavesdrop. I froze.

**MATTIE FAE**

That's -- you have a cigarette, hon?

**BARBARA**

No, I quit years ago.

**MATTIE FAE**

So did I. Just sounded good to me.

I thought at dinner... at that horrible dinner last night, seemed like, something might be going on between Ivy and Little Charles. Do you know if that's true?

**BARBARA**

Oh, this is...I'm not sure what to...

**MATTIE FAE**

Look, just. Is it true?

**BARBARA**

Yes. It's true.

**MATTIE FAE**

Okay. That can't happen.

**BARBARA**

This is going to be difficult, uh...  
Ivy and Little Charles have always  
marched to their own... and I'd expect  
this to be toughest on you --

**MATTIE FAE**

Barb...?

**BARBARA**

They're in love. Or they think they  
are. What's the difference, right?

**MATTIE FAE**

Honey --

**BARBARA**

I know it's unorthodox for cousins to  
get together, at least these days --

**MATTIE FAE**

They're not cousins.

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**80 CONTINUED:**

**80**

**BARBARA**

-- but believe it or not, it's not as  
uncommon as you might --

**MATTIE FAE**

Listen to me. They're not cousins.

**BARBARA**

Beg pardon?

**MATTIE FAE**

Little Charles is not your cousin.  
He's your brother. He's your blood  
brother. He is not your cousin. He  
is your blood brother. Half-brother.  
He's your father's child. Which  
means that he is Ivy's brother. Do  
you see? Little Charles and Ivy are  
brother and sister.

Karen and Steve enter from outside.

**BARBARA**

Go away.

**KAREN**

We're just going to --

**BARBARA**

Go away! NOW! GO AWAY!

Karen and Steve retreat. Barbara stares at Mattie Fae.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

You and Dad.  
(Mattie Fae nods)  
Who knows this?

**MATTIE FAE**

I do. And you do.

**BARBARA**

Uncle Charlie doesn't suspect?

**MATTIE FAE**

We've never discussed it.

**BARBARA**

What?!

**MATTIE FAE**

We've never discussed it. Okay?

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80 CONTINUED:

80

**BARBARA**

Did Dad know?

**MATTIE FAE**

Yes. Y'know, I'm not proud of this.

**BARBARA**

Really. You people amaze me. What, were you drunk? Was this just some --

**MATTIE FAE**

I wasn't drunk, no. Maybe it's hard for you to believe, looking at me, knowing me the way you do, all these years. I know to you, I'm just your old fat Aunt Mattie Fae. I'm more than that, sweetheart, there's more to me than that. I don't know why Little Charles is such a disappointment to me. Maybe he, well, I don't know why. I'm disappointed for him, more than anything. I made a mistake, a long time ago. Okay? I paid for it. But the mistake ends here.

**BARBARA**

If Ivy found out, it would destroy her.

**MATTIE FAE**

I'm sure as hell not gonna tell her. You have to find a way to stop it. You have to put a stop to it.

81 **EXT. WESTON HOUSE BACKYARD - NIGHT**  
81

It's late, the house still. We MOVE through dark rooms, drawn to the murmur of SOUND and a faint sound coming from outside the kitchen --

**JEAN (OS)**

You weren't kidding, this stuff is strong.

**STEVE (OS)**

Florida, baby. Number one industry.

**JEAN**

Who cares?

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81 **CONTINUED:**

81

Slowly DISCOVER: Jean and Steve sharing a joint, out by the

fence. She wears a long T-shirt; he wears sweat pants and a sleeveless T-shirt. Both are barefoot.

**STEVE**

Number one by far. Want a shotgun?  
(off her look)  
You don't know what a shotgun is?

**JEAN**

I know what a shotgun is.

**STEVE**

Not that kind of shotgun, here. Just  
put your lips right next to mine and  
you inhale while I exhale.

**JEAN**

Okay.

He puts the joint in his mouth, lit end first. Their lips nearly touch as he blows marijuana smoke into her mouth in a steady stream. She nearly chokes.

**STEVE**

Hold it. Don't let it out.

She finally gasps, exhales, coughs.

**STEVE (CONT'D)**

That's a kick, huh?

**82 INT. THE ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT 82**

Johnna wakes. Listens. Sits up.

**83 INT. ATTIC STAIRS/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT 83**

Johnna makes her way down the attic stairs and into the second floor hallway, the whispers below unintelligible.

**84 INT. MAIN STAIRCASE/HALLWAY 84**

Johnna steps into the main hallway. Drawn to whispers, and giggling from outside in the yard.

**STEVE (OS)**

...Show `em to me... I won't look.

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**84 CONTINUED: 84**

**JEAN (OS)**

If you won't look, there's no point  
in showing them to you.

**STEVE (OS)**

Okay, okay... I'll look.

**JEAN (OS)**

You're just an old perv...

**STEVE (OS)**

Christ, you got a great set. Show you  
mine if you'll show me yours.

**JEAN (OS)**

I don't want to see yours, perv.

Johnna approaches carefully, can't yet see them.

**STEVE (OS)**

You ever seen one?

**JEAN (OS)**

What are you doing?

**STEVE (OS)**

Nothing.

**JEAN (OS)**

You're gonna get us both in trouble.

**STEVE (OS)**

I'm white and over thirty. I don't  
get in trouble.

Johnna pushes out the screen to DISCOVER: Steve kissing and  
groping Jean, sliding his hand down between her legs.

Johnna grabs a shovel leaning against the storm cellar door.  
Jean and Steve, clothes in disarray, quickly separate.

**JEAN**

Oh my God...

**STEVE**

Ho, fuck!

Johnna approaches Steve menacingly.

**STEVE (CONT'D)**

Hold up there, lady, you don't --

Johnna SWINGS the shovel, barely misses Steve's nose.  
Bedroom lights above SNAP ON.

**STEVE (CONT'D)**

Hey, goddamn it, careful!

She swings again, HARD. The shovel SMACKS into the arm he puts up to block her smashing his head with the spade.

**STEVE (CONT'D)**

Ow, goddamn --!

He holds his arm in pain. She wades in with a strong swing and CONNECTS with his back. He goes down. Johnna stands above him, arm cocked, watching for him to try and get up. He doesn't. Karen rushes out, sees Steve on the floor.

**KAREN**

What happened?!

**JOHNNA**

He was messing with Jean --

**KAREN**

Honey, you're bleeding, you okay?

He groans, tries to sit up. Bill and Barbara run in.

**BARBARA**

Jean, what are you doing up?

**JEAN**

We were, I don't know --

**BARBARA**

Who was? Are you alright?

**BILL**

Do I need to call a doctor?

**JEAN (CONT'D)**

Yeah, I'm fine.

**KAREN**

I don't know.

**BARBARA**

Johnna, what's going on?

**JOHNNA**

He was messing with Jean, so I tuned him up.

**BARBARA**

Messing with, what do you mean, messing with?

**BILL**

What...what's that mean?

**JOHNNA (CONT'D)**

He was kissing and grabbing her.

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**84 CONTINUED:**

**84**

This information settles in... then Barbara attacks Steve, who's just gotten to his feet. Karen gets between them. Bill grabs Barbara from behind, trying to pull her away.

**BARBARA**

I'll murder you, you prick!

**STEVE**

I didn't do anything!

**JEAN**

Mom, stop it!

**KAREN**

Settle down --!

**BARBARA**

You know how old that girl is?

**STEVE**

(to Jean)

Tell them I didn't do anything!

**BARBARA**

She's fourteen years old!

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Are you out of your goddamn mind?

**KAREN**

Barbara, just back off!

Karen manages to get Steve up the porch steps and into the house. Barbara, Bill, Jean, and Johnna remain.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Son-of-a-bitch is a goddamn sociopath!

**JEAN**

What is the matter with you? Will you please stop freaking out?

**BILL**

Why don't you start at the beginning?

**BARBARA**

What are you even doing up?

**BILL**

Please, sweetheart, we need to know what went on here.

**JEAN**

Nothing "went on." Can we just not make a federal case out of every thing? I came down for a drink, he came in... end of story. All right?

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84 CONTINUED:

84

**BARBARA**

That's not the end of the story.

**BILL**

That's not the end of the story.

**JEAN (CONT'D)**

We smoked pot, alright? We smoked a little pot, and we were goofing around, and then everything just went crazy.

**BARBARA**

What have I told you about smoking that shit?! What did I say?

**BILL**

Then Johnna just chose to attack him with a shovel?

**JEAN (CONT'D)**

It's no big deal, nothing happened.

**BARBARA**

Just tell me what he did!

**JEAN**

He didn't do anything! What's the big deal?

\*

**BILL**

The big deal, Jean, is that you're fourteen years old.

**JEAN**

Which is only a few years younger than you like `em.

Barbara SLAPS Jean; Jean bursts into tears.

**JEAN (CONT'D)**

I hate you!

**BARBARA**

Yeah, I hate you too, you little freak!

Jean tries to head into the house. Bill grabs her.

**BILL** Jean--  
**JEAN** Let me go!

Jean pulls free, runs off. Bill gets in Barbara's face.

**BILL**  
What's the matter with you?  
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**84 CONTINUED:**

**84**

Bill exits, pursuing Jean. Barbara and Johnna are left standing there, then:

WE FOLLOW Barb into the kitchen and up the stairs to --

**85 INT. THE GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT**

**85**

Karen is pulling on a sweatshirt, grabbing their clothes, stuffing them into a suitcase.

**KAREN**  
I can do without a speech.

**BARBARA**  
Where is he?

**KAREN**  
Out at the car. We're leaving.  
Back to Florida, tonight, now.  
Me and Steve, together. Want to  
give me some grief about that?

**BARBARA**  
Now wait just a goddamn --

**KAREN**  
You better find out from Jean exactly  
what went on before you start  
pointing fingers. Cause I doubt  
Jean's blameless in all this. And  
I'm not blaming her, just cause I  
said she's not blameless doesn't mean  
I've blamed her. I'm saying she  
might share in the responsibility.  
It's not cut and dried, black and  
white, good and bad. It lives where

everything lives: somewhere in the middle. Where the rest of us live, everyone but you.

**BARBARA**

Karen--

**KAREN**

He's not perfect. Just like the rest of us, down here in the muck. I'm no angel myself. I've done some things I'm not proud of. Things you'll never know about. I may even have to do some things I'm not proud of again. Cause sometimes life puts you in a corner that way.

**(MORE)**

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**85 CONTINUED:**

**85**

**KAREN (CONT'D)**

And I am a human being, after all.  
Anyway. You have your own hash to  
settle. Before you start making  
speeches to the rest of us.

**BARBARA**

Right...

**KAREN**

Come January... I'll be in Belize.  
Doesn't that sound nice?

Karen pushes past Barb, rolling her suitcase behind her.

**86 EXT. WESTON HOUSE AND DRIVEWAY - NIGHT**

**86**

Karen bursts through the screen door, rushes down the steps to Steve's waiting Ferrari, it's lights already on, engine running. Throws her suitcase in the back.

Barb steps out onto the porch as it reverses, SLAMS into gear and accelerates down the drive, spewing gravel as it goes.

Bill comes out, watches it disappear with Barbara. Then:

**BILL**

I'm taking Jean with me, heading back to Colorado in the morning.

But Barb's still focused on the distant Ferrari.

**BILL (CONT'D)**

She's too much for you right now.

**BARBARA**

Okay.

**BILL**

I'm sure you'll find a way to blame me for all this.

**BARBARA**

Yeah, well...

(beat)

I can't make it up to Jean right now. She's just going to have to wait until I get back to Boulder.

**BILL**

You and Jean have about forty years left to fight and make up.

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86 CONTINUED:

86

**BARBARA**

(confused)

Why, what happens in forty years?

**BILL**

You die.

**BARBARA**

Oh, right.

**BILL**

I mean --

**BARBARA**

No. Right. I fail. As a mother, as a daughter, as a wife. I fail.

**BILL**

No, you don't.

**BARBARA**

I've physically attacked Mom and Jean in the span of twenty-four hours. You stick around here and I'll cut off your penis.

**BILL**

That's not funny.

He starts back inside.

**BARBARA**

You're never coming back to me, are you, Bill?

**BILL**

Never say never, but...

**BARBARA**

But no.

**BILL**

But no.

**BARBARA**

Even if things don't work out with you and Marsha.

**BILL**

Cindy.

**BARBARA**

Cindy.

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86 CONTINUED:

86

**BILL**

Right. Even if things don't work out.

**BARBARA**

And I'm never really going to understand why, am I?

Bill struggles... seems he might have more to say, but then:

**BILL**

Probably not.

Bill goes. She watches him leave. Fights back tears.

87 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - DAY

87

A blistering hot late August day. The Weston house sits in bucolic, heat-weary silence. The driveway no longer crowded with cars. Barb stands nearly where she did the night before, in her sweats and robe. Watching yet another car go.

Their rental, Bill behind the wheel, backing up. Jean in the seat beside him. Jean stares blankly at her mother, as she rolls past. Bill never looks back.

The rental heads down the drive, passing Ivy's Honda arriving. Bill slows for a moment to let Ivy pass. Then continues on it's way back to Tulsa and the airport.

Ivy pulls in next to Bev's big Lincoln. Climbs out. Walks to her sister, looks back to the rental leaving.

**IVY**

Where are Bill and Jean going?

Barbara doesn't answer, just stands there.

**IVY (CONT'D)**

Karen, too?

**BARBARA**

Yeah...

Barb turns, heads for the house, Ivy follows --

**IVY**

Is she clean?

**BARBARA**

She's moderately clean.

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**87 CONTINUED:**

**87**

**IVY**

Moderately?

**BARBARA**

You don't like moderately? Then let's say tolerably.

**IVY**

Is she clean, or not?

**BARBARA**

Back off.

**IVY**

I'm nervous.

**BARBARA**

Oh Christ, Ivy, not today.

**IVY**

I have to tell her, don't I? We're leaving for New York tomorrow.

**BARBARA**

That's not a good idea. For you and Charles to take this any further.

**IVY**

Where is this coming from?

Barbara heads up the porch steps and into --

**88 INT. THE WESTON HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY**  
**88**

**BARBARA**

Lot of fish in the sea. Surely you can rule out the one single man in the world you're related to.

**IVY**

I love the man I'm related to--

**BARBARA**

Fuck love, what a crock of shit. People can convince themselves they love a painted rock.

They find Johnna cooking in the kitchen.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Looks great. What is it?

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**88 CONTINUED:**

**88**

**JOHNNA**

Catfish.

**BARBARA**

Bottom feeders, my favorite. You're nearly fifty years old, Ivy, you can't go to New York, you'll break a hip. Eat your catfish.

**IVY**

I have lived in this town, year in and year out, hoping against hope someone would come into my life--

**BARBARA**

Don't get all Carson McCullers on me. Now wipe that tragic look off your face and eat some catfish.

They head into the dining room, find Violet smoking, working on her jigsaw puzzle.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Howdy, Mom.

**VIOLET**

What's howdy about it?

**BARBARA**

Look, catfish for lunch. Johnna!  
(to Violet)  
You hungry?

**VIOLET**

Ivy, you should smile. Like me.

Johnna enters from the kitchen.

**BARBARA**

Mom needs her lunch, please.

**VIOLET**

I'm not hungry.

**BARBARA**

You haven't eaten anything today.  
You didn't eat anything yesterday.

**VIOLET**

I'm not hungry.

**IVY**

\*

Why aren't either of you dressed?

\*

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**88 CONTINUED:**

**88**

**BARBARA**

\*

We're dressed. We're not sitting here

\*

naked, are we?

\*

**VIOLET**

\*

Yeah...

\*

Johnna reenters with plates, then goes.

**BARBARA**

Eat.

**VIOLET**

No.

**BARBARA**

Eat it. Mom? Eat it.

**VIOLET**

No.

**BARBARA**

Eat it, you fucker. Eat that catfish.

**VIOLET**

Go to hell.

**BARBARA**

That doesn't cut any fucking ice with me. Now eat that fucking fish.

**IVY**

Mom, I have something to talk to you--

**BARBARA**

No you don't.

**IVY**

Barbara--

**BARBARA**

No you don't. Shut up. Shut the fuck up.

**IVY**

Please--

**VIOLET**

What's to talk about?

**IVY**

Mom--

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88 CONTINUED:  
88

**BARBARA**

Forget it. Eat that fucking fish.

**VIOLET**

I'm not hungry.

**BARBARA**

Eat it.

**VIOLET**

**NO!**

**IVY**

Mom, I need to--!

**VIOLET**

**NO!**

**IVY**

**MOM!**

**BARBARA**

**EAT THE FISH, BITCH!**

**IVY**

**MOM, PLEASE!**

**VIOLET**

Barbara...!

**BARBARA**

Okay, fuck it, do what you want.

**IVY**

I have to tell you something.

**BARBARA**

Ivy's a lesbian.

**IVY**

Barbara--

**VIOLET**

No, you're not.

**IVY**

No, I'm not--

**BARBARA**

Yes, you are. Did you eat your fish?

**IVY**

Barbara, stop it!

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88 CONTINUED:

88

**BARBARA**

Eat your fish.

**IVY**

Barbara!

**BARBARA**

Eat your fish.

**VIOLET**

Barbara, quiet now--

**IVY**

Mom, please, this is important --

**BARBARA**

Eatyourfisheatyourfisheatyourfish--

Ivy stands, hurls her plate of food, smashes it.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

What the fuck --

**IVY**

I have something to say.

**BARBARA**

Are we breaking shit?

Barbara takes a vase from the sideboard, smashes it.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

`cause I can break shit --

Violet throws her plate, smashes it.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

See, we can all break shit.

**IVY**

Charles and I --

**BARBARA**

You don't want to break shit with me,  
muthah-fuckah --

**IVY**

Charles and I --

**BARBARA**

Johnna?! Little spill in here!

Ivy gets in Barbara's face.

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**88 CONTINUED:**

**88**

**IVY**

Barbara, stop it!  
(returning to Violet)  
Mom, Charles and I --

**BARBARA**

Little Charles --

**IVY**

Charles and I --

**BARBARA**

Little Charles --

**IVY**

Barbara --

**BARBARA**

You have to say Little Charles or she  
won't know who you're talking about.

**IVY**

Little Charles and I...

Barbara relents. Ivy will finally get to say the words.

**IVY (CONT'D)**

Little Charles and I are --

**VIOLET**

Little Charles and you are brother  
and sister. I know that.

Freeze. Silence.

**BARBARA**

Oh... Mom.

**IVY**

What? No, listen, Little Charles --

**VIOLET**

I've always known that. I told you,  
no one slips anything by me.

**IVY**

Mom --

**BARBARA**

Don't listen.

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88 CONTINUED:

88

**VIOLET**

I knew the whole time Bev and Mattie  
Fae were carrying on. Charlie should  
have known too, if he wasn't smoking  
all that grass.

**BARBARA**

It's the pills talking.

**VIOLET**

Your father tore himself up over it,  
thirty some-odd years, but Beverly  
wouldn't have been Beverly if he  
didn't have plenty to brood about.

**IVY**

Mom, what are you...?

**BARBARA**

Oh honey...

**VIOLET**

Better you girls know now though,  
now you're older. Never know when  
someone might need a kidney.

Ivy looks from Violet to Barbara... suddenly lurches away  
from the table, knocking over her chair.

**IVY**

Why in God's name did you tell  
me this?

**VIOLET**

Hey, what do you care?

**IVY**

You're monsters.

**VIOLET**

Come on now --

**IVY**

Monsters...

**VIOLET**

Who's the injured party here?

Ivy flees from the dining room, pursued by Barbara --  
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**89 INT. FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

**89**

**BARBARA**

Ivy, listen --

**IVY**

Leave me alone.

**BARBARA**

When Mattie Fae told me, I didn't  
know what to do --

Ivy runs from the house.

**90 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

**90**

Ivy rushes to her car, still followed by Barbara.

**BARBARA**

I was trying to protect you --

**IVY**

We'll go anyway, we'll still go away.

Ivy gets in the car, starts it, revs the engine. Barbara  
tries to open the car door.

**BARBARA**

This is not my fault.

Barbara pounds on the car window.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

I didn't tell you, Mom told you!  
It wasn't me, it was Mom!

The car window slides down.

**IVY**

There's no difference.

Ivy floors the car, roars out of the driveway, leaving Barb standing there. After a moment, Barb turns, stares up at the house, angry, resolute. Starts back inside.

91 INT. WESTON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 91

Finds Violet still at the table, lighting a cigarette.

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91 CONTINUED: 91

**VIOLET**

We couldn't let Ivy run off with Little Charles. Just wouldn't be right.

Barbara doesn't respond, keeps her distance.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

She'll be back. She's a sweet girl, Ivy, and I love her to death. But she isn't strong. Not like you. Or me.

**BARBARA**

You knew about Daddy and Mattie Fae?

**VIOLET**

Oh sure. I never told them I knew. But your father knew. He knew I knew. But we never talked about it. I chose the higher ground.

(and then)

If I'd had the chance, there at the end, I would've told him, "I hope this isn't about Little Charles, cause you know I know all about that." If I'd reached him at that motel, I would've said, "You'd be better off if you quit sulking about this ancient history."

**BARBARA**

...what motel?

**VIOLET**

I called over there on Monday after I got into that safety deposit box. But it was too late, he'd checked out.

**BARBARA**

How did you know where he was?

Violet is growing agitated with the interrogation.

**VIOLET**

The note. He said I could call him over at the Country Squire Motel --

**BARBARA**

He left a note?

**VIOLET**

And I did, I called him on Monday.  
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**91 CONTINUED:**

**91**

**BARBARA**

After you got the money out of your  
\*  
safety deposit box...

**VIOLET**

We had an arrangement. You have to  
\*  
understand, for people like your  
\*  
father and me, who never had any  
\*  
money, ever, as kids, people from our  
\*  
generation, that money is important.  
\*

**BARBARA**

\*  
If you could've stopped Daddy from  
\*  
killing himself, you wouldn't have  
\*  
needed to get into your safety deposit  
\*  
box.  
\*

**VIOLET**

\*  
Well, hindsight's always twenty-  
\*

twenty, isn't it?

\*

Barbara stares at her mother for a long moment.

Then --

**BARBARA**

Did the note say he was going to kill himself?

No response.

**BARBARA (CONT'D)**

Mom?

**VIOLET**

If I had my wits about me, I might've done it different. But I was, your father and me both, we were...

Barbara looks off, quietly:

**BARBARA**

You were both fucked-up... You were

\*

fucked-up... You are fucked-up.

\*

**VIOLET**

You'd better understand this, you smug little ingrate. There's only one reason Beverly killed himself and that's you. Think there's any way he would've done what he did if you were still here? No, just him and me, here in this house, in the dark, left to ourselves, abandoned, wasted lifetimes devoted to your care and comfort.

**(MORE)**

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91 CONTINUED:

91

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

So stick that knife of judgment in me, go ahead, but make no mistake, his blood is just as much on your hands as it is on mine.

Barbara is reeling, trying to comprehend.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

He did this though, not us. Can you imagine anything more cruel, to make me responsible? Just to weaken me,

make me prove my character? So I waited, to get my hands on that safety deposit box. But I would have waited anyway. You want to show who's stronger, Bev? Nobody's stronger than me, goddamn it. When nothing is left, when everything is gone and disappeared, I'll be here.

Violet YELLS up to the empty house.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Who's stronger now, you son-of-a-bitch?!

Barbara feels sick, the floor giving away beneath her. She takes a moment. Then:

**BARBARA**

You're right, Mom. You're the strong one.

She goes to her mother, kisses her. Turns, heads into the hall, grabs her purse and Bev's keys from the dish.

Violet only slowly realizes Barbara's gone.

**VIOLET**

...Barbara?

Hears the sound of the screen door opening and SLAPPING shut.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Barbara?

Violet follows her into the hall, stops at the screen door.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

You and me. We're alike.

Barb doesn't turn around, keeps moving. Quietly:  
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**91 CONTINUED:**

**91**

**BARBARA**

No...

Sees Barb heading across the yard for Beverly's pick-up.

**VIOLET**

Barbara, please.

**BARBARA**

I'm nothing like you...

**VIOLET**

Please, Barbara.

Watches Barbara climb into the truck, back slowly out, go.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

...Barbara?

Barbara drives off. The driveway now empty again. Violet alone outside on the walkway. She turns back to the house, yelling, moving from empty room to empty room.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Ivy?! Ivy, you here?!

Silence. The dining room, the kitchen.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Barb?! Ivy?!

And into the living room, Bev's study.

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Bev?! ...Bev?!

She stumbles to the stereo, puts on her Clapton... stares at the spinning album...

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

Johnna?!

She reels to the stairs, crawling up --

**92 INT/EXT. BEVERLY'S PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY**

**92**

Barbara is nearly catatonic as she drives, the house receding in the rear window behind her.

A few large rain drops splatter her windshield, the rumble of distant thunder, lightning and towering, ominous clouds in the distance.

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**93 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY/ATTIC STAIRS - DAY**

**93**

Violet climbs the staircase on all fours.

**VIOLET**

Johnna... Johnna... Johnna...

Johnna sets down her TS Elliot, goes to Violet, holds Violet's head, smooths her hair, rocks her. Quietly --

**VIOLET (CONT'D)**

And then you're gone, and Beverly,  
and then you're gone, and Barbara,  
and then you're gone, and then  
you're gone, and then you're gone --

Johnna quietly sings to Violet.

**JOHNNA**

"This is the way the world  
ends..."

**VIOLET**

--and then you're gone, and  
then you're gone --

94 INT. BEVERLY'S PICK-UP - DAY

94

ON Barbara as she drives --

**JOHNNA (OS)**

"...this is the way the world ends,  
this is the way the world ends..."

**VIOLET (OS)**

--and then you're gone, and then  
you're gone...

We stay on Barb as she slowly pulls herself back together. Brushes tears from her cheeks. Laughs darkly. Notices her hands are shaking from the adrenaline.

Slows, pulls the pick-up to the side of the road at the top of a small rise. Climbs out, stares out over the miles of prairie. The wind gently ruffles her clothing, her hair.

CLOSE ON her as she settles into exhausted relief, unsure of what comes next, but finally on her way as we --

**FADE TO BLACK**