

NOTHING LIKE THE SUN

Written by

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FINAL SHOOTING SCRIPT

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ALICE

Yes?

MRS. MANGER, an attractive mid-30s woman, enters.

MRS. MANGER

May we have a word?

Realizing she's half-naked and being looked at, Alice warms up, just coyly smiles; stares at her.

8

INT. MANGER HOME, DINING AREA - DAY

8

Dressed in decent clothes, Alice sits at a small dining table across from her landlord, MANGER (40s), and his wife.

ALICE

Mr. Manger: I appreciate your patience with me so I won't take up more of your time. But if you're willing to overlook this lateness just a while longer, I'll guarantee full payment by the end of the week, plus a bonus added for your trouble.

MANGER

This is the third time --

ALICE

And the last, I assure you.

MANGER

(considering)
What kind of bonus?

ALICE

Five-percent - that's for the late fee. Plus another five for each week it's overdue - that's the gratuity.

MANGER

By this week?

ALICE

This weekend at the latest, but it can be paid sooner on installment just like before. Of course if it takes a bit longer that's just more the bonus that you'll get. I just need to know we're in agreement.

She offers a meager sum. He counts it, dissatisfied; hands it to his wife, also not convinced. Long pause between them.

Alice fondly turns her attention to Mrs. Manger.

ALICE

You look very beautiful today,
ma'am. How long have you been
married?

MANGER

(cutting in)

A few years. Miss Mitchell, what
kind of work is it you do again?

ALICE

... It's domestic work. Caretaking
and Service.

(to Mrs. Manger; sweetly)

If there's any housework you need
done, I'm happy to help. It'll go
faster if we did it together.

MRS. MANGER

If you don't mind, why aren't you
doing this work for a husband?

Alice is caught off guard, pushes a false smile.

MRS. MANGER

Where is your family?

The smile fades despite her effort. Her face conceals a
sadness in her voice.

ALICE

I, I wanted a marriage my mother
and father didn't approve of that
didn't work out.

MRS. MANGER

When was the last time you saw
them?

ALICE

... It's just me now.

9

EXT. DOWNTOWN, FIRST STREET CORNER - DAY

9

Near the STRIP/AVE. Appliance stores, bakeries, repair shops.

Back in prostitute clothes, Alice has set up shop by a
clothing boutique, making up her face with a hand mirror.

She spots an older, gaudier street-walker in the distance
soliciting a well-dressed CLIENT, who declines.

The disappointed street-walker notices Alice; watches her glad-hand him as he approaches her corner.

ALICE
Good day, sir.

CLIENT
Good day.

ALICE
(sweetly)
Are you married?

CLIENT
No, thank you. Not today.

ALICE
Where are you headed?

CLIENT
Back to work.

ALICE
What kind of work?

CLIENT
Car sales.

ALICE
I've been looking for a new car. Is it your lunch break? How about a smoke break for good luck?

CLIENT
Luck's been down this week.

ALICE
Let's make it go up then. How does twenty dollars sound?

CLIENT
My wife would know if I spent that.

ALICE
So what wouldn't she know?

CLIENT
Not enough time.

ALICE
Fifteen's fine; whatever time you have left. Anything you'd like.

She sweetly takes him by the arm. He considers her offer.

10 EXT. DOWNTOWN, REMOTE STREET - DAY 10

Alice steps from his car as it hurries away. She counts her money. Her jaw aches; she spits, wipes her mouth.

11 EXT. DOWNTOWN, MARKET - DAY 11

Alice exits the store with a bag of groceries. A bit further down, the street-walker from before bars her path.

STREET-WALKER

Hello there.

ALICE

Who's that?

STREET-WALKER

I want to talk to you for a moment.
Can you come closer?

ALICE

For what?

STREET-WALKER

I just want to talk. Where are you
coming from?

Alice recognizes her from earlier and becomes wary. She readies her purse like a weapon.

STREET-WALKER

Hehehe. There's no need for that.
Let's be friends. You're so pretty
and you smell so wonderful. Why
don't you come a bit closer?

ALICE

You stay where you are.

STREET-WALKER

I saw you with that horrible man,
you poor girl. Are you working with
anyone else? Let me help you --

A man grabs Alice from behind. She struggles to push him off, and brings them both down to the ground. The street-walker rushes in, kicks her, grabs her purse.

She and her pimp hurry away, TIRES SCREECHING. Alice is left on the ground, a bit bruised and bloodied.

- 12 EXT. DOWNTOWN, CURB - DAY 12
Alice licks her wounds. She gets up, heads down the street.
- 13 EXT. MIDTOWN, RESIDENTIAL STREET - EVENING 13
Alice paces through a suburb as day becomes evening.
- 14 EXT. MIDTOWN, SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT 14
Alice is across the street. She comes here every night to watch her mother and father eat dinner, wanting to join them.
- 15 INT. MANGER HOME, ALICE'S ROOM - DAY 15
Next day. Alice is on her bed, puts LINIMENT to her wounds. Manger KNOCKS, lets himself in, looks her over.

ALICE

There was trouble at work yesterday.

MANGER

Yes.

ALICE

I need another week.

MANGER

I need something now.

ALICE

I can pay something today. What can I offer?

MANGER

What were you offering those others?

She goes quiet, avoids eye-contact.

MANGER

You must be tired from walking.

ALICE

...

MANGER

I want my bonus first.

16 INT. MANGER HOME, BEDROOM - DAY

16

Manger rests in a chair. Alice is on her knees before him.

ALICE

How much do I get for this?

MANGER

I want my money's worth. And there's interest on what you owe.

ALICE

I'm raising my price.

MANGER

I don't need you peddling or talking prices. You take my offer for this bonus or you don't.

Lower on her knees.

MANGER

Nice and slow.

ALICE

It's not nice. Just hurry it up.

She opens her mouth and goes lower; gets it over with.

17 INT. MANGER HOME, DINING AREA - NIGHT

17

Mrs. Manger serves dinner. She passes a glance at Alice, who avoids eye-contact; no appetite - no taste left in her mouth.

18 EXT. DOWNTOWN, SECOND STREET CORNER - DAY

18

In front of a different boutique, two female BOOK-PUSHERS hand out newsletters. One of them sees something; heads over.

At an adjacent corner, Alice has set up new shop, clutching tightly onto a new purse and watching her back. A client is checking out her goods.

He's a florid little man with thick glasses: anxious, excited, trying this for the first time - an easy mark.

BOOK-PUSHER

(waylays them)

Excuse me, Miss. Are you saved?

ALICE

Yes, I'm saving right now.
(to client)

The standard fee is twenty-five dollars, but twenty's my offer to you.

The book-pusher slips a church newsletter into Alice's purse.

BOOK-PUSHER

There can be ways around this, Sister. Why don't you join our Service?

ALICE

Why don't you turn your way and mind your business?

BOOK-PUSHER

And your wife, sir? Wouldn't your family be upset to see this?

The client panics, scuttles off. Alice wrestles the articles from the book-pusher, who stumbles backwards.

BOOK-PUSHER

You shouldn't do that ...

Alice throws a BIBLE back at her. Then another, and another.

BOOK-PUSHER

You should be saved --

ALICE

And who's going to save you? Get away from me.

Alice hurls the last one hard. Newsletters scatter. The book-pusher collects the litter as she hurries away.

BOOK-PUSHER

You've got a terrible thing coming your way ...

Alice is tired from walking with no luck. She steps to the house: her suitcase and clothes all over the porch.

She tries her key; it doesn't fit. She KNOCKS. No answer. Reality dawns on her. She gathers her things and heads off; notices Mrs. Manger watching her from behind curtains.

20 EXT. MIDTOWN, SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT 20

Alice is across the street with her suitcase in hand, looking towards the same midtown suburban home from before.

She hesitates; then finally decides to head over.

21 EXT. PARENTS' HOME, PORCH STOOP - NIGHT 21

Alice reluctantly steps up to the door, afraid to knock. She sits down instead, freezing; uses her FUR COAT as a blanket.

22 EXT. PARENTS' HOME, PORCH STOOP - DAWN 22

Alice has fallen asleep. A PAPER-BOY'S BICYCLE BELL LOUDENS as it approaches. A NEWSPAPER hits her.

DAD answers the door; finds her at his steps like a vagrant. He's stunned, looks her over.

23 EXT. PARENTS' HOME, PORCH STOOP - MOMENTS LATER 23 ***

Alice is at the porch bench, having a cup of warm milk. Dad, ***
a carpenter in overalls, brings out MOM, a homemaker, comes ***
out with a look of disbelief and concern. ***

They take this all in; Mom offers an awkward hug, backs away.***

MOM

You look thin. Have you been eating alright?

ALICE

Just fine. I just had a full meal yesterday.

(looks around)

Everything still looks the same.

DAD

Where are you staying?

ALICE

Not far. I was in the neighborhood for work and I wanted to stop by.

MOM

Are you staying with someone? ...
Have you found a man to marry yet?

ALICE

... Not yet. No. Almost.

Alice scatters for an explanation. Mom and Dad catch on.

ALICE

I've had some bad luck lately and a lot of bad offers, so I've been working on my own a bit.

MOM

What kind of work?

ALICE

Housekeeping, door-to-door: enough to get by.

They notice her FUR COAT and prostitute clothes. She realizes this, ashamed. Their hearts sink. Dad searches for a reason to get away. ***

DAD

I'll be a bit late. I'll stop by the market. ***

Dad kisses them; heads out. ***

ALICE

He always forgets the milk. I remember always reminding you.

Mom's quiet. ***

ALICE

I know I'll find better work on my own. But if you're still here now, maybe ... If there's some work here. I can be out of the way. I won't have anyone over, not like before - not even another girl --

At the mention of "girl", Mom seizes up, anxiously scurries off without saying anything. Alice just watches her go. ***

24 INT. PARENTS' HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY 24 **

A family room, carefully preserved. She's dressed in decent clothes, reminisces over a FAMILY PHOTO of her as a child being held in Mom and Dad's arms. **

She goes through the newspaper's help wanted, pulls a pencil from her purse, discovers the church newsletter from before. Some words grab her attention.

DAD

It's not her fault, Alice. She
can't help it. It's not your fault
either, but --

She turns to the house; ashamed, helpless, frustrated with
herself. Dad's not sure how to help.

ALICE

So what are you saying?

DAD

She's also on medication for her
blood pressure.

ALICE

Just say it to me plainly. I'd like
to just hear you say it.

He becomes quiet and looks away. She catches on.

DAD

... You being a girl, it made sense
for me to leave these sort of things
up to your mother --

ALICE

...

DAD

Do you have money?

ALICE

A little. Not much.

He takes out his wallet, gives her everything he can spare.
She reluctantly accepts it, feeling guiltier.

DAD

Work's been slow for us too. We had
to mortgage the house a bit to keep
up. But I know it won't be long
till things get better.

A tender silence between them.

Alice heads out as day becomes evening.

VEALE

Forgive our curiosity. We don't normally entertain guests who sneak into our rooms and sleep in our beds. Are these yours?

ALICE

Is this your home?

VEALE

It was my wife's, yes. You look like you traveled here.

She moves in, gets friendly.

ALICE

Yes, I've been traveling for work. My name's Alice Mitchell. How do you do? I heard this was the Veale residence. I was hoping to speak to them.

VEALE

I'm Veale.

Delighted, she offers a handshake; smiles and charms him.

ALICE

A pleasure to meet you, sir. I read you're looking for a housemaid.

She hints at the newsletter. He reads through it.

VEALE

You came last night for this?

ALICE

I came to see your beautiful home! I also read that you needed someone quickly ...

VEALE

We just started interviewing. We haven't had much time.

ALICE

I'm saving you the trouble now.

He has a closer look at the newsletter.

VEALE

You came with someone from our church?

She inspects the room, notices a cross hanging behind him.

ALICE

I had other work offers but I wanted to come here first. I, I'm looking for a new church as well.

He softens up upon hearing this.

VEALE

Our faith is always open to strangers, especially one so pretty.

ALICE

Yes. Now, about this housework --

VEALE

You're a God-fearing woman of good character?

ALICE

That's right. And if we could start immediately --

VEALE

Good enough to guide my little girl in the kitchen?

ALICE

In the kitchen and more, yes, sir, I believe I am ... So when would be a good time to start?

He sets the newsletter down, turns his attention to her fur coat. Puts it to his nose. It captivates him.

VEALE

My Mary wore many perfumes but none so strange and lovely as this.

ALICE

Your wife?

He smiles; puts her fur coat away.

ALICE

Your children?

VEALE

Yes, all very fine and well.

Alice extends a hand to Joseph.

ALICE

You have a very handsome son, just like his father. Like my own father too.

JOSEPH

Joseph. Pleasure.

He kisses her hand obviously attracted to her. Repulsed, she pulls away, but realizes the opportunity; flirts with him.

ALICE

So, if I started now and saved you time, you'd have more time with your family. How do you feel about that, Joseph?

JOSEPH

(to Veale; zealously)
Yes, I think so too!

ALICE

Good! So I'll help with the clean up from last night; and we'll start with that.

Veale's pleased.

35

INT. VEALE'S HOME, BATHROOM - DAY

35

Alice washes off the weariness. KNOCK at the door. Annabel enters with an extra apron, hands it over.

ANNABEL

This looks about your size.

Alice sees her clearly now: very pretty, sweet, angelic in a Pre-Raphaelite innocence. She's captivated, skips a breath.

ALICE

Thank you, ah ...

ANNABEL

Annabel.

ALICE

Annabel. I like your name.

ANNABEL

I like your scent.

Annabel turns to the FUR COAT in the open suitcase.

ANNABEL

Was it very cold where you're from?

ALICE

It's warmer here. Was that your bed? You have a very warm bed.

ANNABEL

We have oatmeal and milk if you're hungry.

ALICE

Milk would be just fine. Thank you.

Alice lavishes a loving gaze; holds a look over her.

ANNABEL

I will warm up some milk.

She leaves. Alice watches her go.

36

INT. VEALE'S HOME, FAMILY ROOM - DAY

36

Alice and Annabel clean up: fold chairs, collect dishes and trash into a tub. Annabel brings it into the next room.

FAMILIAR VOICE

Good morning. You drank a bit much last night. Are you feeling better?

Alice turns about, immediately recognizes the Book-Pusher from the street corner, with Joseph beside her. This is LILLIAN JOHNSON, about Alice's age.

She doesn't seem to recognize Alice.

ALICE

... Much better. Thank you.

LILLIAN

Lillian. How do you do?

(re: Joseph)

You've met my husband. Are you here for the housemaid work?

ALICE

I'm the new housemaid. Yes.

Lillian recalls something.

LILLIAN

You seem familiar. We've met before somewhere.

ALICE

No, I don't think so. No ...

Lillian looks harder, can't put her finger on it.

LILLIAN

(to Joseph)

Mother's brought some things for
your father outside.

Joseph leaves. She turns back to Alice.

LILLIAN

I will help with the clean up also.

She heads into the adjacent room where Annabel went.

37

INT. VEALE'S HOME, DINING AREA - DAY

37

They take a break from cleaning. Annabel serves oatmeal.
Alice has finished ahead of everyone; drinks milk.

Lillian sits across from her, beside Joseph and MS. JOHNSON,
her mother. Lillian hasn't touched her meal, just watches
Alice, who's aware of this and keeps an eye out.

MS. JOHNSON

Dr. Veale tells us you're looking
for a new church.

Alice hesitates; all eyes on her.

ALICE

... Yes. I just left my old one not
long ago.

MS. JOHNSON

What church was it?

ALICE

It was out of town, far away. And
very small. Not as wonderful as
yours here ...

Alice is all smiles, charms. Lillian sees this, looks around
the table, with quiet disbelief.

MS. JOHNSON

What was their faith?

Alice ignores her, has a drink, wipes her mouth.

MS. JOHNSON

Can you tell us more about their faith?

ALICE

... Well, our faith was that we never talk about our faith openly, nor do we ask others about theirs.

MS. JOHNSON

My daughter and I have a church we go to downtown.

Alice nods, feigns interest, goes back to her milk.

VEALE

I would've preferred my son had a wife from my own church. But even the Lord can't stop true love. Yes?

Joseph nods, takes Lillian's hand. She mildly reciprocates.

MS. JOHNSON

What about your husband?

ALICE

In my family, we marry when it's appropriate for us to do so.

MS. JOHNSON

In ours, we marry when the Holy Spirit calls us to seek Him out.

ALICE

... That's fine.

MS. JOHNSON

My daughter also counsels women from our church with their marriages and families. They confess to her first.

Alice turns to Lillian, goes quiet. Ms. Johnson continues;

MS. JOHNSON

We're having an outreach ministry later downtown, if you'd like to join us for that?

ALICE

Thank you, ma'am, for your kind offer. But, according to my faith, a woman finds the Lord by being at home first - and through housework - and then she considers things like church and marriage later ...

Lillian suddenly speaks up.

LILLIAN
May I ask something?

ALICE
Yes, Lillian?

LILLIAN
What does your faith say about
wearing perfume to Service?

ALICE
...

LILLIAN
In my church, perfume means a
strange and powerful temptation is
nearby and is being used to deceive
others. Was there anything like
that at yours?

ALICE
No, there wasn't.

She's not sure what to say next, so she gets up from the
table, collects the dishes, quickly ends this conversation;

ALICE
There are plenty of dishes to wash
and dinner to get started, so if
you'll excuse me --

LILLIAN
We appreciate your time coming by.
Once everyone is interviewed, we
will decide and get back to you --

ALICE
-- It's just a trial for the day.
Payment for all your kindness.

VEALE
That's a very good idea! Very
thoughtful. Thank you.

Veale's sentiments cascade to everyone at the table. Lillian
and Alice just stare at each other, clearly annoyed.

Alice crudely sweeps the porch with a broom. Dust gets in her
face, she coughs, stops a moment. Then sees Lillian and Ms.
Johnson leave in the distance. Joseph sees them off.

Lillian notices Alice watching them, catches one last look.

39 INT. VEALE'S HOME, BEDROOM - DAY 39

Alice pretends to clean as she comes across a small maid's room. The bed's comfortable; just what she's looking for.

Except for a bedside prayer altar, decorated with religious articles: a cross, pictures of Joseph, Mary, Jesus.

Beside it are holy texts including a BIBLE. She thumbs through, gets irritated just looking at it; sets it aside.

40 INT. VEALE'S HOME, OFFICE - DAY 40

Veale is with a church woman and her son, who he looks over for pneumonia - puts a stethoscope to his chest.

VEALE

There are rales in the lungs; not just a congestion. That's the irregular breathing.

Joseph assists, listens in, prepares an ice compress. The mother is nearby, comforts her son with her bible.

Alice enters with a serving tray, offers the son a milk toddy. He drinks it down; she falsely consoles him. His mother prays, takes Alice's hand to join in. Alice has no choice.

41 INT. VEALE'S HOME, KITCHEN - DAY 41

Alice, in an apron, blankly stares into an empty pot of water over a stove - holding a raw chicken, completely clueless.

Annabel enters with a grocery bag and bread loaf.

ANNABEL

This was their last loaf. I also bought some potatoes.

ALICE

Potatoes are fine. Better for the flavor ...

Alice hems and haws, looks through the bag, unsure. Annabel excitedly watches the "cooking".

ANNABEL

My mother taught me some cooking. I'm still learning though.

A thought comes to Alice - she jumps on it.

ALICE

Give it a try and I'll show you! No better way to keep learning.

Alice hands over the chicken, dresses Annabel in an apron. Annabel's very excited.

ANNABEL

We should boil some water first and cut the vegetables.

ALICE

Yes, fine! So ... How would you cut them?

ANNABEL

Mother cut them small so they would boil faster.

ALICE

You boil and I'll cut.

They get started. Alice dices the vegetables, very slowly ... Veale enters, his church suit in his lap, delighted to see them cooking together.

VEALE

Hm! For a moment I caught my wife's aroma again.

ALICE

I'm fixing it her way. Celery and carrots. With potatoes.

ANNABEL

Is this enough salt?

ALICE

Yes, almost, well, ah --

ANNABEL

It looks enough?

ALICE

It's enough. Yes. Ahuh ...

Veale holds up his church suit to her, embarrassed.

VEALE

I'm afraid the Lord no longer agrees with my waistline. And our last housemaid was allergic to sewing needles.

42 INT. VEALE'S HOME, BEDROOM - DAY

42

Alice stitches buttons back onto Veale's church suit. She fumbles, pricks her finger, drops a button. She tosses the shirt, licks her wounds.

ALICE
God damn it ...

43 INT. VEALE'S HOME, DINING AREA - DAY

43

Alice sets a tablecloth, lays out plates. They slip from the pain in her fingers, almost shatter. She gets on her knees: a look of defeat, considers leaving.

Annabel enters from the kitchen with a bowl, very excited. Alice tastes the broth, worried it's also a failure. But it's delicious. Alice is overjoyed; hugs her.

44 INT. VEALE'S HOME, BEDROOM - DAY

44

They sit by the bed. Annabel explores her suitcase; holds the FUR COAT to her nose. Alice discreetly eases the pain from her fingers, tightly holds an ice compress.

ALICE
You like your new coat? It's warmer
if you wear it.

Alice puts the compress away, goes to Annabel.

ALICE
You're a good girl. You're doing a
good job for your family. Are you
cold? Let me show you.

Alice wraps the coat around her. Annabel's excited. A deep feeling stirs in Alice. Realizing this, she resists, lets go.

ALICE
So. We'll get your father to agree
to a living arrangement here, then
we'll do the housework together and
share it between us. You show me
what you know and I'll teach you
better as we go along.

ANNABEL
Like sisters?

ALICE
Well, yes, what? ...

ANNABEL

I've always prayed for a sister To
teach me like mother did!

ALICE

... Yes, yes ... How was your
mother with the sewing?

ANNABEL

As good as she was with cooking.
I'm still learning that too.

Alice is very happy at this. Annabel moves in, gets closer.

ANNABEL

You smell so nice ...

Alice's temptation grows. She fights herself, keeps her
distance, grabs the sewing kit, puts it in front of Annabel.

45 INT. VEALE'S HOME, FAMILY ROOM - DAY

45

Veale's by an altar, puts up a photo of his wife.

Alice enters; delivers his suit and shirts, ironed, buttons
double-stitched - like new again.

VEALE

Just like my Mary. Thank you.

She looks out the window; sees Joseph welcome Ms. Johnson
back. But Lillian's nowhere to be seen.

46 INT. VEALE'S HOME, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

46

Alice heads to her room. At a distance, she catches Annabel
inside with Lillian, who's snooping around.

She goes through Alice's suitcase; nothing of interest. Sees
a purse nearby, goes through it, finds the newsletter. She
takes a second look at the purse - recognizes it immediately.

She pulls Annabel closer and whispers something. Annabel's
mood suddenly changes to despondence.

Alice sees this; a fear washes over her.

47 INT. VEALE'S HOME, DINING AREA - NIGHT

47

Everyone is seated around the table, just after dinner. Alice
is jittery, keeps an eye on Annabel and Lillian.

VEALE

A wonderful meal! Thank you.

ALICE

(off Veale's satisfaction)
If I may, there's something I'd like
to speak to you about in private.

VEALE

About our offer for the housework?

ALICE

That's right.

VEALE

My family has a say in this. You
can say to them what you say to me.

Alice collects herself, calms her nerves, glances at Annabel
who's still despondent. Lillian looks ready for something.

ALICE

You have such a beautiful home. I
love housekeeping. I've always
wanted to house keep for a man who
does good work himself.

Alice pushes forward, struggles to stay composed.

ALICE

Your ad called for three days a
week at a modest pay. I'll offer
full-time work; that's seven days
for the same wage with room and
board.

VEALE

You're asking for a room instead?

ALICE

No, no. I'm not asking, I'm giving;
in exchange for any other service
you may need.

Alice lets her offer sink in, urges Annabel to agree. But
Annabel gets anxious, troubled by something all night.

ANNABEL

(to Alice)

Excuse me, may I ask something? --

ALICE

We'll try it a month first on your
terms and if it proves successful --

Annabel repeatedly turns to Lillian for confirmation.

ANNABEL

There was a woman we came across recently downtown with the same perfume you were wearing. And she was soliciting money from men on the streets. Do you know something about this?

ALICE

... Something about what?

ANNABEL

About this other work I heard you did?

ALICE

There are plenty of other women you could've come across; with a similar perfume.

(to Veale)

Now let's discuss these terms --

ANNABEL

I was helping Ms. Johnson's church pass out their newsletters with our ad --

VEALE

Is this true?

Everyone skips a beat, unsure if they heard correctly. Alice is taken back, being found out, down-plays it.

ALICE

A room and board are very expensive to come by --

ANNABEL

But that's not allowed.

ALICE

-- Even more expensive without a home or family to go to. Imagine if that were your situation ...

VEALE

No. There's no room for that here.

ALICE

That's all finished for good now. It's just the good Lord's company from now on. No more of those men.

Alice sweetly smiles to Annabel, who weakens her stance.

ANNABEL

Lillian, if she needs our help, we should try.

VEALE

Annabel, will you excuse yourself and go wash up? --

ANNABEL

(pleading)

She's blessed us with this meal!

Annabel's plea cascades to her father who reconsiders this a bit more. Alice rides on this, pushes it along.

ALICE

Yes, Sister, I have! Thank you. Now what we can do is try it for five days a week to begin with --

LILLIAN

No.

ALICE

You've got someone else who can do it for less? Cook all this like I have?

LILLIAN

...

ALICE

As I said, we'll try it for six days a week --

LILLIAN

The work offer was for three.

ALICE

I'm offering you more; six days a week for room and board only. An honest woman's work for an honest stay is my offer to you now.

Alice reaches for Veale's hand. Lillian reaches for Annabel's hand, pulls her back.

LILLIAN

Why do you really want this work with our family?

Alice brushes Lillian aside; brings Annabel back again.

ALICE

For God's forgiveness; through His work. Amen ... Now of course with the sewing, the room next to yours would be better --

LILLIAN

Forgiveness for this confession? Or is there something more?

ALICE

I don't know.

LILLIAN

CONFESS WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW THEN.

They stare at each other.

ALICE

So what's fair for you, Lillian?

LILLIAN

Saving my family. Saving my Sister from your sin.

Alice notices Lillian's firm grasp on Annabel's hand, pulling her closer. She also senses Veale's doubt linger and grow.

ALICE

With this wonderful work with your family, if there's time I'll try and have your wonderful Faith also.

LILLIAN

That's not enough --

ALICE

That's six days a week, "Sister", seven for the Service: the Book and the prayers; everything I give my Word on - God willing. So does that seem fair to all of you?

Alice pulls Annabel closer, signals her to agree. Annabel appeals to her father.

ANNABEL

She's offered to teach me, just like Mother did.

JOSEPH

Yes. I think it's fair!

Alice is surprised, delighted; reaches out to him.

ALICE

Thank you, Joseph. Now let's pray a moment together. Think it over.

She puts her hands together in a prayer-like fashion; watches Veale's reaction. He opens up a bit more, looks her over.

VEALE

You'll do all the housework here; and you'll become part of our church to repent properly. Is this right?

She bites her tongue, looks directly at him.

ALICE

... That's right, sir. Seven days at your service, just like your Mary.

He regards her again, long and hard, then considers his children, especially Annabel;

VEALE

Alright. We'll try.

ALICE

Good! This will be good for all of us. Better if we start right away.

She reaches out to thank him then clears the table. Lillian spitefully reaches over and crosses her. Alice is fuming.

48 EXT. VEALE'S HOME - DAY 48

A New-England style home of a Puritan-Conservative family.

49 INT. VEALE'S HOME, DINING AREA - DAY 49

Alice proudly serves refreshments to Veale, Joseph and DR. Z.B. HENNING (50s), a jovial man in a suit and spectacles.

She receives their praises, takes their plates away.

50 INT. VEALE'S HOME, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 50

Annabel's washing a sink half-full of dirty dishes. Alice enters, goes to her with more. Annabel removes her apron and heads off with her school bag.

LATER. A full-sink of dirty dishes. Alice is overwhelmed.

57 INT. VEALE'S HOME, ANNABEL'S ROOM - DAY 57

Alice gathers laundry into a hamper: Annabel's undergarments. She buries her face in the bed sheets, fighting her emotions.

58 INT. VEALE'S HOME, DINING AREA - NIGHT 58

After dinner, Veale's family gathers around Alice, prays for her. Alice stares vacantly into the distance. The pretense is made worse with Annabel close beside her.

59 INT. VEALE'S HOME, ANNABEL'S ROOM - NIGHT 59

Alice reads a bedtime story to Annabel in her bed. Annabel drifts to sleep. Alice strokes her hair, moves in closer.

But then fights it off, gets up and leaves.

60 EXT. VEALE'S HOME - DAY 60

A month later, a few days before Easter.

61 INT. VEALE'S HOME, FAMILY ROOM - DAY 61

Annabel and church friends unpack CHURCH PROGRAMS from boxes. ELLE, a socialite about Annabel's age, gossips with the girls instead of working.

Alice unwillingly helps them, assists Annabel stuff programs into envelopes. Alice takes a closer look.

ALICE

Do you have families coming for this?

ANNABEL

It's mostly new families coming for the Easter banquet.

A thought comes to her.

ALICE

Where's that done?

ANNABEL

At the reverend's home. His family usually does it.

ALICE

Can it be done here?

ANNABEL

I can ask.

Annabel hands Alice a bible.

ANNABEL

The reverend wants us to add a passage to the programs for the newer members.

ALICE

(preoccupied)

You can choose it.

ANNABEL

Father wants you to do it. Since you're also new.

Alice looks the church program over again. She reluctantly takes the bible - no choice.

62 INT. VEALE'S HOME, BEDROOM - DAY 62

Alice shifts her focus between writing a letter, the FAMILY PHOTO from before, and the bible.

63 EXT. CHURCH - DAY 63

A larger-than-normal gathering of churchgoers head inside.

64 INT. CHURCH, ANTECHAMBER - DAY 64

A transition room between the entrance and pews. Alice pens notes at a table; scans churchgoers as they enter. Annabel approaches with a stack of program.

ALICE

Who are these other people?

ANNABEL

Families who've just moved to the neighborhood, I think.

Annabel scans the newcomers, nervously prepares herself by reviewing her own notes from her bible.

ANNABEL

I made out a welcome --

ALICE

I'll speak first.

ANNABEL

...?

ALICE

These people who've come: they'd appreciate someone as new as they are to pray with them first.

Annabel hesitates, looks through all her hand-written notes.

ANNABEL

... I know Father will want me to do it. And I spent all last night --

ALICE

My thanks to your father and the Lord and all He's done. Just a moment then you can speak.

Annabel sneaks a peak at Alice's notes, smiles with warmth.

ALICE

Did you pass by the address I gave you?

ANNABEL

I tried again but no one was home. I left the program with your name on it - and the letter you wrote.

Alice quickly scans the crowd then checks outside.

ALICE

You sure they got it?

ANNABEL

I left it at their door. Maybe they'll be by later?

ALICE

They should be here, not these other people. I don't have time for these people ... We'll wait for them to come first.

ANNABEL

The Service is about to start.

Alice scrambles for time, still waiting for someone to arrive. She turns back to the crowd, unsure what to do.

Annabel recalls something.

ANNABEL

One other thing: a woman asked to speak with you the other day.

ALICE

What woman?

ANNABEL

She says her name's Myra.

ALICE

Who?

ANNABEL

Myra Ward. I passed her home on the way and she saw your name on the program. She says she was your closest friend. I told her you were here.

Alice becomes paranoid, suspicious.

ALICE

Is she here?

ANNABEL

She wants you to arrange a time to see her and her husband at their church.

Alice winces at the word "husband"; finishes her writing.

ALICE

One church is enough. I don't have time for this woman either. You did a wonderful job, Annabel. Thank you.

Time's up. Alice alters her strategy.

ALICE

Keep the door open a bit for anyone coming later.

65

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

65

Alice heads up to the lectern. She reconsiders speaking but it's too late. She eyes the door as she speaks;

ALICE

Ladies and gentlemen. It's such a pleasure to be here with you today. Now before we receive the sermon of our wonderful Reverend Grant, I'd like to say a few words: I've been found. I have been.

I've searched for a home and a family for many years. And I've found that a person without Faith can't make a family. It takes all of us coming together, and praying, just like this. And this is good; this is the best way! Fathers, mothers, children, grandchildren - the Lord blesses us in our family most of all ...

*

Ill at ease, she buys time with a false prayer, turns to the door again; still nothing. She pushes forward against herself, addresses Veale.

ALICE

So bless our happy home together.
Bless all your faith. And of course
bless you all --

*

She wraps in a hurry, obviously disappointed, quickly nods to Grant, not caring to wait for Annabel to come up.

66

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

66

Alice searches the crowd as late-comers arrive, disappointed.

In the distance, she spots Annabel passing out home-baked treats to church friends, mostly boy-girl couples, including Elle who's showing off her new boyfriend, AMOS.

Annabel's the odd one out, the only girl without a boy; until Elle introduces Amos's friend, who kisses her hand. Alice goes over to stop this but is stopped by Veale.

VEALE

Thank you for your kind words!

He introduces her to the same mother and son from before.

VEALE

Some friends of ours who've also
joined recently. I promised you'd
introduce and show them around.

Alice shakes his hand; he kisses hers. Alice is fuming, bites her tongue as Annabel and the boy walk off together.

67

INT. VEALE'S HOME, OFFICE - DAY

67

Alice receives a check-up from Veale, Henning and Joseph. She gulps down a foul-smelling MEDICINAL TONIC as they prepare a tourniquet and SYRINGE.

ALICE

Oh, God! ... What's that for?

JOSEPH

It's testing for sexual or venereal diseases. Anything irregular.

ALICE

Sexual diseases? ... How irregular?

JOSEPH

We'll do your regular checkup after but we need a blood sample first.

Joseph brings the syringe closer. She backs away.

VEALE

This is for your good and ours. Healing is central to our faith.

ALICE

Yes! But, my new faith teaches that a woman never allow her body to men not her husband. Even if they are so decent and faithful --

VEALE

This will be important for your husband as well when you marry.

She reluctantly extends her arm. He starts the blood draw.

HENNING

Ten milliliters. Not too quickly.

Henning collects the blood work as Veale comforts her.

VEALE

The Lord's blessed us with you here.

(to Joseph)

We have a few others to finish before everyone gathers. Can you finish on your own?

JOSEPH

Yes, sir, I think so.

They leave. Joseph pours her another cup of tonic, bandages her arm, then puts a stethoscope to her chest. She's too distracted from the tonic's effects to notice.

ALICE

Ughhhgh! That stuff's not normal.

JOSEPH

It's Father's brand of tonic that improves blood circulation. It was his work as St. Joseph's missionary doctor before his injury ... I'll have this over with quickly.

ALICE

You're doing a nice job. Your father ought to be proud.

He moves in closer, slips the stethoscope over her breasts.

JOSEPH

You smell very nice today ... Did you wear that scent for the work you did before you came here?

ALICE

It's my natural scent.

She notices him caressing her breasts with the stethoscope.

JOSEPH

What did you charge for it?

ALICE

Depends.

JOSEPH

What did it depend on?

ALICE

What I offered - what their wives didn't offer at home.

He stares at her chest, entranced, circles the same spot. She sees this, smiles it off, gives him the benefit of the doubt.

ALICE

Something wrong with them?

JOSEPH

No, no. Yours are a very good and healthy pair. God bless them.

ALICE

Better than your wife's?

JOSEPH

Yes! -- No, no. They are both very equal. Very well ... Just a moment longer ... It'd help better if you'd remove your blouse --

She HOLDS a deranged look on him - then lunges forward, wrestles him to the ground.

ALICE

Aren't you the faithful doctor and husband? Splash your tonic in your wife's mouth; see how she likes it!

JOSEPH

Wait, let us - let us discuss this.

She doesn't give him an inch; holds him down.

ALICE

Don't even try it, little man --

She restrains herself, looks deep into him: the same angst she had for her clients. A suspicion stirs in her.

ALICE

I want you to tell me something, Joseph. About your wife ...

68

INT. VEALE'S HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

68

Alice soaps the dishes as Annabel towel-dries.

ANNABEL

Elle says most of the senior girls plan to marry once school finishes. Now she wants a marriage too.

Alice is quiet a moment, uninterested.

ALICE

How many times did you pass by that address I gave you?

ANNABEL

Twice, on the way back. I think they were out for the day. I know if my family could forgive the work you did, so could yours.

Alice considers something, speaks up;

ALICE

How much do you know about your brother's marriage?

ANNABEL

What do you mean?

ALICE

His wife's never around him much.
Not even in the same bed.

ANNABEL

Lillian says her faith's better if
she had her own bed again, now that
they've been married a while.

ALICE

That's not normal for a husband and
wife ...

ANNABEL

She attends our Service sometimes
for his sake, and even invites me to
stay over when her mother's away.

Alice pauses a moment hearing this.

ALICE

What about her father?

ANNABEL

... He's with a different woman
now. My brother wouldn't do that to
her though.

ALICE

You think you'll marry?

Annabel weakly smiles, looks away, continues washing.

ALICE

I'm asking you, Annabel.

ANNABEL

Mother married about my age, but
she never taught about dating or
finding a husband. And Father's
very protective.

Alice is curious, looks her over.

ANNABEL

I thought, maybe, from your work
... If you could tell me more about
men? What a married man would want?

Annabel appears genuinely confused, curious.

ALICE

What are you asking?

ANNABEL

There was a boy I knew before you came here, from my school. He was my first kiss. But I didn't know ... What else I should've done?

ALICE

... So, what are you asking?

Annabel's unsure how to answer.

ALICE

Maybe he wasn't the right boy?

ANNABEL

Maybe the Lord's preparing someone better for me?

Alice nods some sort of understanding. But something suddenly stirs in her mind - she just watches Annabel ...

69

INT. VEALE'S HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

69

Alice and Annabel are in aprons, stirring a soup broth. Annabel's completely oblivious to Alice's affection.

ANNABEL

It boils better when you stir evenly. Is that right?

Alice nods, smiles.

ALICE

You need to know anything you ask me first and I'll show you, alright? No more worrying about those boys either, or their offers.

Their hands touch; warm smiles between them. The same feeling stirs. She moves in, tries to pull away, too hard to resist.

Veale enters smelling the aroma. Alice backs off, flinching and nervous; clumsily drops the ladle, quickly picks it up.

VEALE

Wonderful! May I?

Annabel gives him a taste. He's satisfied; turns to Alice.

VEALE

Thank you for all your trouble.

Alice gives an exaggerated nod. He hands a list to Annabel.

VEALE

Ms. Johnson will be starting her desserts soon. She could use your help. Alice can finish on her own --

ALICE

No, no, please. Let me -- You need more practice in your own kitchen first - to do the practicing.

She takes the list from him, reads it over - it's simple.

VEALE

It's just pastry cooking. It shouldn't take more than an hour --

ALICE

Half-an-hour if I do it. You finish up here, Annabel. Just like I taught you.

She turns away from him, hurries away before he can ask for more. He takes out another list of unfinished chores.

VEALE

The tables need to be cleaned before we set out refreshments. We'll need seating for about sixty --

She goes back to him with an evasive smile, grabs the list from him then rushes off quickly before he can finish.

Veale persists as she trails off.

VEALE

The reverend's looking forward to your cooking too. His wife enjoyed your reading earlier. They have a bible study I promised you'd help with tomorrow --

She's steaming - the last straw - hurries away faster.

70 INT. VEALE'S HOME, PANTRY - DAY

70

Alice goes through the cooking list; gathers SUGAR, CINNAMON and SPICE into MASON JARS; packs them into a SATCHEL.

71 EXT. LILLIAN'S HOME - DAY

71

Alice arrives on foot, protective of the SATCHEL like a purse, reluctant to go in. She knocks; no answer.

Alice comes across a large room with unfamiliar churchgoers gathered in a circle, mostly husband-wife couples.

Lillian paces the center with a SATIN WEDDING PILLOW. She exerts a powerful charisma over the captive audience. Many of the women follow her words, including her mother.

LILLIAN

... Then He came to me in my sleep that night; into my bed: the Devil and His Mistress. She grabbed my body, touched all over, reached down, put her hands to my mouth ... But I reached up and grabbed the Lord's hand as He whispered, "Let no one say that He is never tempted, but blessed are those who do not submit." And I turned to that Whore and said, "I Will Not Submit."

She reaches to the crowd; moves in on JAMESON, a frail man, and his feeble wife, who appears very ill and upset.

LILLIAN

Mr. Jameson, sir. You've been tempted again, haven't you? Your wife has told me you've strayed from her and paid for the temptations of other women.

Quiet rasping, gasping from the crowd; they pray for him.

LILLIAN

Your wife also became sick from this sin, didn't she? From this sickness you brought home? Medical Science cannot save you. But there is a new way, and the new Faith will give you a new strength to drive this illness out. We will drive it out together.

She stirs the crowd, reaches for him and his wife.

LILLIAN

I've betrayed my wife. I've sickened my wife, Lord, and I've betrayed her. Return me home to hold her with these hands.

She puts the pillow to his hands. He tensely follows along.

LILLIAN

Take them and pray: forgive my
sickness. For I have sinned. And I
was unfaithful. And I have betrayed
-- Do not turn away! Look and say,
I Have Betrayed My Wife.

JAMESON

I'VE BETRAYED MY WIFE. I'VE
BETRAYED THE WIFE I LOVE.

She forces his hands to prayer with a pantomime frenzy.

LILLIAN

DO YOU TAKE THIS WOMAN TILL DEATH
DO YOU PART? Yes you do! Because
this is what's correct. This man
and woman and union!

She draws him closer then leads him to his wife.

LILLIAN

There she is. Go to her. It's okay.

He delivers the pillow like a new-born into his wife's arms.

LILLIAN

And he is home again!

ALL

HALLELUJAH. IT IS A MIRACLE. BLESS
THIS MAN, LORD. BLESS THIS FAMILY.

The crowd gathers around and hug him ... Except Alice, who's
just holding a SUGAR JAR, watching this show.

Lillian moves in on Jameson's wife, holds her face, then rests
her head on the pillow in the wife's lap; blesses her stomach.

73

INT. LILLIAN'S HOME, FAMILY ROOM - LATER

73

Lillian and Ms. Johnson see everyone off, then Jameson and
his wife.

LILLIAN

Bless you all for coming. And bless
you for joining us today, sir. The
Gospel of Light Church would love to
welcome you as well ...

Lillian takes his wife's hand, kisses them.

Alice is last, puts on a smile, regards the churchgoers who
just left, takes in what's just happened.

ALICE

Lillian, change of plans. Banquet's at five.

LILLIAN

Yes, I've heard.

ALICE

For a moment I thought I had the wrong church.

LILLIAN

They're a few from our church downtown - women who I counsel. We come together here sometimes.

Alice inspects this mother/daughter couple, unsure what to think or say. She hands over the satchel and jar to Ms. Johnson. Lillian intercepts them.

LILLIAN

See the others off then wait in the kitchen. I'll be there in a moment.

Lillian stares her down. Ms. Johnson leaves. Alice watches her go, stunned to see this.

ALICE

Annabel's having trouble cooking without me so if you'll help here instead, I'll be on my way --

LILLIAN

She tells me you've been reaching out to your family lately. And that your mother's become ill.

ALICE

...

Lillian offers a silent prayer, then looks up. Alice looks for an excuse to get away.

ALICE

There's plenty of work around the house till then: tables and chairs to clean; so if you'll excuse me --

LILLIAN

Alice, some of those men you had for your work had families of their own too, didn't they?

Alice tries to go around but Lillian dogs her.

LILLIAN

I've seen these troubles spread to many families including mine. Don't you think if you were saved that all this could have been prevented?

ALICE

Yes it could have been. Those men came to me and wouldn't have done it if their wives had offered better --

LILLIAN

Yes, it is a shame Mother's faith couldn't keep Father with us --

ALICE

Shouldn't speak about your mother that way --

LILLIAN

-- And awful to think that your own mother must be suffering for what you've done --

The last straw. Alice is ready to blow, holds herself back.

ALICE

-- A wife absent from her husband's bed leads him astray also --

LILLIAN

Joseph is a fine husband with a fine bed.

ALICE

(disregards her)

-- Then there won't be any marriage or mother or father --

LILLIAN

You've been spending a lot of time with Annabel lately. Do you think this is wise?

ALICE

-- Then there won't be a "Sister"; or any family anywhere.

Lillian goes quiet. They just stand there a moment.

ALICE

That's five o'clock in the yard. If you'd like to come early and help, that should be fine. Thank you.

Alice leaves.

74 EXT. VEALE'S HOME, BACK YARD - DAY 74

Holy Saturday banquet. Men set up tables, benches, chairs.
Annabel and other women bring out plates, utensils, cups.

75 EXT. VEALE'S HOME, FRONT YARD - DAY 75

Alice greets arriving guests with a welcoming smile. She
sulks to herself as they pass.

In the distance, she catches Mom and Dad; goes to them - only
a long silence between them.

76 INT. VEALE'S HOME, DINING AREA - DAY 76

Alice, Mom and Dad sit, take in the decor. Veale's family
enters, surprised to see them. Everyone shakes hands.

ALICE

My father and mother: George and
Ellen Mitchell.

DAD

Thank you for looking after her.

VEALE

Her service has been wonderful.

DAD

Yes, we heard.

Mom shows them the CHURCH PROGRAM and LETTER. Alice turns to
Annabel, satisfied.

DAD

Your children?

ALICE

Yes, all fine and well. This is the
wonderful family I've been taking
care of.

(re: Joseph)

Yes?

JOSEPH

Yes, yes! ...

Alice rallies her parents.

ALICE

The banquet's starting in a moment.
But we also have a family dinner
afterwards ...

Alice nods to Dad, cascades to Mom. Mom's anxious; turns to each person, then Alice, still unsure of the situation.

77

EXT. VEALE'S HOME, FRONT YARD - DAY

77

Alice walks Mom and Dad away from everyone.

MOM

Have you been eating well?

Mom looks Alice over with concern.

MOM

We heard about your new church ...
Have they been helping you with it?

ALICE

I haven't needed to tell anyone.
They're a very good family here.
I've been doing their housework.
And that's their church, see? It's
all helped.

Mom's relieved; so is Dad.

ALICE

It's just between us, alright? I'll
take care of this --

Alice helps Mom with her pills. They stare at each other,
with hope on both sides.

MOM

Is it really getting better now and
really you're going to be alright?

Alice is unsure, doesn't answer, just hugs and reassures her.

MOM

You'll have your own family and
children someday. We just want you
to be healthy and happy again.
That's all we've wanted.

Mom gets closer, hugs her.

78 EXT. VEALE'S HOME, BACK YARD - DAY

78

Everyone gathers by the main entree table. Veale's up front, chimes a wine glass with a spoon to get everyone's attention. As he's about to speak, Alice goes to him.

ALICE

If I may say a word?

Veale notices her happiness with her parents here, gives way. She takes the wine glass, offers a toast.

ALICE

Thank you all so much for being
with us here to start this --

She pulls out her bible and the notes from before, fumbles with them. She reads through it; occasionally stammers.

ALICE

A person can't lead a faithful life
praying on their own. It's family that
makes an endeavor most rewarding. And
this is the most important thing! So
lets bless these mothers and fathers
who've come here today.

*
*
*

Mom and Dad smile at her. She faces them directly.

ALICE

Bless their children. Bless their
faith in their children ... Amen.

ALL

Amen.

Alice gulps down the wine. Churchgoers scatter to the food. Alice thanks Veale, hugs him, goes to her parents.

Lillian is with her mother off to the side, holds her bible like a doll; watches Alice lead her parents to the tables.

79 EXT. VEALE'S HOME, BACK YARD - DAY

79

Everyone gathers around the tables. Alice coordinates serving entrees with Annabel and other church women.

80 EXT. VEALE'S HOME, BACK YARD - DAY

80

Alice introduces Mom and Dad to Grant and his family. Veale, Joseph and Henning are nearby with other churchgoers, including the veteran and wife they healed from earlier.

ANNABEL

They're outside, having a word with everyone.

Annabel inspects Alice's empty wine glass.

ANNABEL

How much did you have to drink?

ALICE

Help me up.

Annabel reaches out; Alice affectionately pulls her down to a seated position on the bed, pulls her close, nearly puts her head in her lap. Annabel thinks nothing of it.

ANNABEL

Are you feeling alright?

Alice rests in Annabel's lap, deeply inhales her scent.

ALICE

Just a bit sick. I'm just so sick always feeling this way ...

ANNABEL

I'll get some water.

Annabel tries to leave but Alice won't let go and pulls her closer. Annabel gently pries her off, then leaves.

84 INT. VEALE'S HOME, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

84

Annabel passes Lillian who's been watching them, realizing there's more to Alice's affection toward Annabel.

ANNABEL

She must be overworked from Father's chores, and pushing hard for her family to be here.

Lillian takes Annabel by the shoulders, suspiciously looks her over but sees no reaction; lets her go. She turns back to Alice dozing off. This triggers a paranoia in her.

85 EXT. VEALE'S HOME, FRONT YARD - LATE EVENING

85

It's a bit later. Churchgoers leave for home.

Alice is still hung over, rests on the porch with water, watches them all go. Lillian approaches from the house.

LILLIAN

May I have a word, Alice?

Alice just drinks; doesn't make eye-contact or say anything.

LILLIAN

I'm glad to see you have your parents again. They look like a wonderful mother and father.

ALICE

...

LILLIAN

I think, sometimes, if you were more faithful and confessed to the Lord properly, they would've never been lost to you to begin with.

ALICE

...

LILLIAN

If there's something you'd like to confess now, He is listening.

ALICE

...

LILLIAN

I hear that you've never even been engaged to marry. When do you think that will happen?

Alice finishes the water, turns to the house, sees Mom and Dad inside happily mingling. Alice smiles, picks herself up.

ALICE

You're a worthless wife, Lillian. And your mother deserves better than anything you've given her. I'll have my parents back again soon. So I want you to stay away from me. Go back to your church - whatever church you belong to - and stay the hell away from my family.

Alice heads in. Lillian confirms her suspicions.

Veale's family and Henning, Alice's family, Lillian's family and Grant gather by the altar for a private memorial service.

Veale cradles his wife's photo. Annabel and Joseph by his side. Grant reads a passage;

GRANT

... And from this, each man and his kin gathered together to receive remission for their sins in the name of Jesus Christ who gave His Body for them and said: "I am the Lord and the Sun risen over the earth, the resurrection and the Light of Life! And whoever receives me, though they die, shall never die, but live on." For the Word became Flesh and took residence among this family who kept their home with Him, in spirit and health ...

Lillian sharply turns to Alice and her family.

LILLIAN

What about your home?

Alice, caught off guard.

LILLIAN

What about your inversion?

ALICE

... What is it?

LILLIAN

Homosexuality. That's not healthy.

Alice is stunned, plays it calmly;

ALICE

No, it's not. So what do you mean?

LILLIAN

You're a homosexual. That's not allowed. You shouldn't be allowed here either --

Everyone skips a beat, unsure if they just heard correctly.

ALICE

That's not --

LILLIAN

(to Mom, Dad)

You've never taken a husband or been with child.

ALICE

Just because there's nothing
doesn't mean there's something --

LILLIAN

(to Veale)

And being separated from your home
and family because of it, your
prostitution would have been a
means for you.

VEALE

Is this true?

Disbelief gives way to suspicion. Mom sinks away, speechless.
Alice quickly takes hold and pacifies her.

LILLIAN

(reaches for Mom, Dad)

Yes! It is a shame more wasn't done
sooner. I am so sorry for you both.

Lillian offers a prayer. Humiliated, Mom loses it, groans in
pain. Alice has a hard time holding her.

MOM

Let me go. I want to go ...

ALICE

It's alright. It's alright.
Everything will be fine --

Dad helps restrain Mom but it's too late. She becomes manic,
takes Alice to the ground with her. They inadvertently bump
the altar, knocks over candles, family photos. It's a mess.

MOM

NO. NO. NO. NO. NO.

Dad and Henning drag her out. Alice remains, picks herself
up, nothing to say to this disaster she's created.

Alice looks to Lillian, who's satisfied, then looks away,
avoids eye-contact. All eyes on her, shocked.

87

INT. VEALE'S HOME, BEDROOM - DAWN

87

Alice holds Mom down on the bed for Henning to examine. Dad
holds her by the legs. Mom's sobbing, hurting, struggling.

Alice pulls her close, tries to settle her, gives her water
and medicine. Looks to her with hope, but sees only anguish.

88 EXT. VEALE'S HOME - DAY 88

Dad and Henning help Mom into Dad's truck. Alice watches from a distance, helpless.

89 EXT. PARENTS' HOME - DAY 89

Alice is beside Henning's car parked in the driveway. She can only watch as he and Dad bring Mom into the house.

LATER. Henning returns, gets in the car.

HENNING

I gave her a chloral hydrate
sedative to settle her nerves.

She's weary; exhausted. He sees this, aware of the situation.

HENNING

You need a ride back?

90 INT. HENNING'S HOME, OFFICE - DAY 90

A room with some chairs, an examination table littered with books. There are stacks of papers and folders, disorganized.

He makes room for her to sit, takes a seat beside her, goes over her last physical and other documents.

HENNING

Any history of serious illness?

ALICE

No.

HENNING

What about mental disorders?

ALICE

I don't know ... I need a drink.

HENNING

You shouldn't drink when you're
sick.

ALICE

Is that what I am?

HENNING

If all this about you is true.

She looks to him, catches on to the meaning, turns away.

ALICE

You're a doctor. You can treat me.
I've seen you treat others.

HENNING

This is different.

Alice looks around the room.

ALICE

You're not living with anyone here.
And there are a few extra rooms ...
Why don't you treat me here?

He's not sure how to respond. Alice warms up to him.

ALICE

There are dishes in the sink and
floors to clean ... I can take care
of these things for you.

HENNING

I don't need a housemaid. And I
have other patients to look in on --

ALICE

I'll help with your work then and
keep you organized. I'm good with a
phone and know some typing. I hear
you're the best doctor. Your
patients should come to you, like I
am. You can have your practice here.

HENNING

These patients can't get out of
bed. They need me to go to them. I
haven't the time.

She moves in, tries something else with him.

ALICE

I came because I needed your help.

HENNING

I'd like to help, but --

ALICE

My mother's been sick. Her doctors
say she needs me better so she can
be better ... There's no other
doctor to help with this.

He sees her desperation. Ponders something but isn't hopeful.

HENNING

Our church has a place that's vacant; a sick home we put up as a hospice for soldiers after the war. But they won't be comfortable with you the way you are.

ALICE

We'll go to them together. You can tell them about treating me --

HENNING

My faith's in medicine first. But Dr. Veale's my partner; and his faith --

ALICE

Your faith's more forgiving. You can be more reasonable.

He softens up, weighs his options.

HENNING

Let me ask about your condition. If it's hormonal. Something that can be done. Just to clarify.

She's relieved. He considers one last thing.

HENNING

You'd need permission regardless.

Her face changes, tenses up. She looks over and sees a bible amongst other medical books, pulls it to her, flips through its pages a bit.

91

INT. VEALE'S HOME, FAMILY ROOM - DAY

91

Veale and Joseph clean the mess left at the prayer altar.

They stop in their tracks as Henning enters with Alice. Veale in particular isn't happy to see her. Alice goes to him.

ALICE

I've come for your forgiveness. I'd like to try again.

He closes up. Henning goes over, whispers to him. Veale's not convinced. Alice steps forward.

ALICE

I know you've struggled with your injury, like I've struggled with mine. Without my family; or your Mary.

She takes a breath, gauges his reaction, continues;

ALICE

I know if the Lord could bring her back for your sake - and your health - you'd also pray He'd return my family for mine.

Veale's expression softens. He looks at the mess around him, then to his legs, recalls his "injury".

VEALE

If you'll continue earnestly with our faith, you have my blessing.

They look each other over with some understanding.

92

INT. CHURCH - DAY

92

Veale, Joseph and Henning converse in private with Grant. They occasionally acknowledge her.

Alice sheepishly searches the aisle for a seat, catches odd looks from some of the crowd.

She takes a seat in the back by herself, tries to look busy with her bible, keeps an eye out. Up front, Annabel sits with Elle and a group of church girls.

Elle's ribald gossip provokes dirty looks from the others except Annabel, who wants to stop them but doesn't dare say anything. She looks away but occasionally looks back.

Alice looks hard at them, fuming. Their giggling is the last straw. She approaches them, moves in - they go quiet.

ALICE

Look there. I want you to look.

Bible in arms, she points to the cross up front.

ELLE

Good morning, Alice. We were just talking --

ALICE

That's the Lord over on that wall, see Him?

Alice leans forward. Elle fearfully misinterprets a sexual advance, backs away into Amos in the pew behind her.

ELLE

... Let me introduce you. This is my boyfriend --

ALICE

He says there are few things more sinful than a whispering girl who breathes out lies ... You see Him there? Do you all see?

ELLE

... Yes.

ALICE

And that's a doctor over there. SEE? So I'm going to get better now and I'm going to make my family better.

Elle goes quiet; so does the church, looking over to them.

ELLE

We're very glad to see you haven't given up on the Lord - and pray that your mother get better --

ALICE

Don't talk about my family.

ELLE

I was only offering a prayer --

ALICE

Did you hear what I said?

ELLE

Yes, and I was telling everyone --

ALICE

Don't Ever Talk About My Family.

ELLE

We weren't talking anything. I'm sorry if you misunderstood.

Alice turns to Annabel, who sheepishly lowers her head and looks away, then scowls at the other girls as she moves off.

ALICE

I'll show you what I'll do.

ALICE
About? ...

ANNABEL
You?

Alice searches for the right words.

ALICE
Don't you know?

ANNABEL
If you know better, I'd like to
hear it from you.

Alice goes quiet. It's very awkward between them:

ANNABEL
Are you that way around me?

ALICE
...

Alice takes a moment; goes back to the bed.

ALICE
When I'm close enough. When it's
quiet and no one's watching.

Annabel's stunned, takes a seat; too stunned to even move or
say anything. Alice turns away, embarrassed.

95 EXT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BACK YARD - DAY

95

Alice's laundry hangs on clotheslines. Alice is by a wash
basin and clothes hamper, pulling clothes off the line.

Annabel watches this from behind a corner many yards away.

ALICE
It's alright. You can come as close
as you like ... Annabel?

Annabel ducks away when she spots Lillian approaching in the
distance with Elle.

Lillian and Alice stand off.

LILLIAN
I've come to take my Sister home --

Alice throws a wet towel at her. Lillian falls to the ground.
Alice moves in, grabs her, shoves the towel into her face.

ALICE

You're the Lord's Confessor: so
what about my mother's confession?
Isn't there a blessing to make her
better again?

LILLIAN

Don't you dare touch me ...

Alice drags her to the tub and pushes her face-down into it.
Lillian breaks free, crawls away. They wrestle.

LILLIAN

You should've confessed and been on
your way. I warned you away from my
family --

Alice drags her back, thrusts her face-down into the mud.

ALICE

I'll smite you down for this,
Lillian. You're as dirty as I am.

Elle charges forward to help Lillian pry Alice off.

Alice FIRMLY HOLDS; then gets off, grabs the hamper, heads
back to the house. Lillian frantically cleans herself off.

Alice passes Annabel; their eyes meet. Alice tries to sway
her but Annabel shies away, goes to help Lillian.

96 EXT. CHURCH HOSPICE - DAY

96

Annabel helps her father into a car while Henning sees the
colleague off. Henning has a word with Joseph, gets in
Veale's car; drives off.

**
**

Joseph heads back inside.

**

97 INT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BEDROOM - DAY

97

Joseph sets the medicine tray beside Alice's cot bed. He goes
to her open suitcase on the bed, sniffs some of her clothes,
intoxicated by the scent.

Alice moves up behind him. He's unaware of her presence.

ALICE

BED, just fine?

JOSEPH

(gasps for breath)
Just fine. I was just --

She stares him down, accusingly. He catches on, folds the clothes he dropped neatly back into her suitcase.

ALICE
Fold it down the middle first. And
the sleeves. Tighter. That's it.

JOSEPH
(re: medicine tray)
That's an iron supplement. You
should take that after a meal.

ALICE
Stay focused.

JOSEPH
Alice, this is silly --

ALICE
Don't talk. Don't smile.

JOSEPH
I need to finish and be going --

ALICE
You need to keep quiet and keep
folding ... Do it like you mean it.
DO IT LIKE I'M YOUR WIFE.

He's petrified; realizes the predicament he's in, again.

ALICE
Get your things and ready the car.

JOSEPH
... Alice --

ALICE
You want this quiet? Then you keep
quiet and come with me.

98

EXT. PARENTS' HOME, PORCH STOOP - DAY

98

Alice approaches with a SMALL WHITE BAG. She hesitates,
knocks on the door. No answer. Knocks again. Still no answer.

A man approaches with a LARGE BROWN BAG. This is JACOB, a
carpenter apprentice, about Alice's age: a young version of
Dad - dresses identical to him.

JACOB
Are you Alice?

ALICE
Who're you?

JACOB
Your father sent me here for some things.

ALICE
Is my mother here? Where is she?

JACOB
She's resting; inside.

Alice is quiet; looks him over.

JACOB
Won't you come in?

99 INT. PARENTS' HOME, BEDROOM - DAY

99

Jacob nurses Mom in her bed with chicken soup.

Alice enters with water and MEDICINE from the SMALL WHITE BAG. Joseph follows in with a doctor's bag.

ALICE
The doctor says these will help.
Take it after a meal.

JACOB
Allow me.

She watches his every move with Mom.

ALICE
Where's my father?

JACOB
At work. He asked for me to stay here and look after her.

Alice looks to Mom for confirmation.

ALICE
How'd you know about me?

JACOB
She's told me. You're pretty just like her.

Alice is unsure how to respond. Mom reaches out, draws Alice closer. Alice kneels to her.

ALICE
This is Joseph, you remember? I'm going to have him help you and take care of this.

Joseph greets them. Alice moves in, takes Mom's hand.

ALICE

I'm having his father and Dr.
Henning help with my illness also.
I'm going to see to it now; what
can be done. For us --

Alice promptly sets him to work.

100

EXT. PARENTS' HOME - DAY

100

Alice waits by the car, going through documents. Joseph approaches, packs his things into the back seat.

JOSEPH

She's doing better than before. Her
blood pressure's gone down.

ALICE

But?

JOSEPH

It's still high enough to worry if
she gets worse.

Alice worries, goes back to the documents, searching.

ALICE

Who is he?

JOSEPH

His name's Jacob. He says he works
for your father.

ALICE

Carpenter work?

JOSEPH

House work mostly; building and
digging. He got hurt on the job
recently so he's helping here for
room and board.

Alice sees a similar scenario.

JOSEPH

She seems better with him here.

ALICE

It was good medicine you
recommended. But she's not your
mother, Joseph. Don't tell me
what's better for her.

JOSEPH

She said she wanted to thank you
for coming.

Her face changes a bit; goes back to the documents.

JOSEPH

That's the dossier from the blood
work we did. Everything looks fine.
No sexually transmitted diseases.

ALICE

What're these here?

JOSEPH

That's the other blood from your
physical. Your hemoglobin level's a
bit low - about ten. That's low
even for pregnant women.

Alice shows relief but also concern.

ALICE

Can my inversion be gotten?

JOSEPH

How do you mean?

ALICE

A sexual disease: something in my
blood or body ... If it's gotten
the same way, can it be treated?

JOSEPH

If it's a symptom of something,
maybe. It might be hemolytic.

She studies the document closer.

JOSEPH

We can do another blood work if we
had a better idea what we were
looking for. If there were another
woman like you who was already
cured - and ask their doctor?

A thought comes to her. She recalls something important.

ALICE

Who'd he say he was?

JOSEPH

He's about your age. Your mother
says he's single; not married. A
good man, doing good work ...

You really think my father and Dr.
Henning can help you with this?

She packs everything up. They head out.

101

EXT. WARD HOME - DAY

101

A home similar to Alice's. She approaches with her bible,
church fliers; and a church peddler's grin.

At the porch is a middle-aged man smoking a cob pipe. Two
boys fix a truck nearby. They immediately recognize her.

ALICE

Mr. Ward? Good day, sir. I'm with
Saint Joseph's Missionary Church.
I'm looking for Myra. Is she home?

The two boys block her. One of them, FRED, speaks up:

FRED

She ain't here.

ALICE

You're her brothers?

FRED

Half-brothers. What do you want?

ALICE

When will she be back?

FRED

She doesn't live here anymore.

ALICE

Where can I find her?

FRED

She's got her own place.

ALICE

Where?

FRED

Somewhere downtown. You're Alice
Mitchell, aren't you?

ALICE

That's right. She asked to speak to
me. I'd like to speak to her now,
about her church.

FRED
What about it?

ALICE
... I'll speak to her about that.
What's her address?

They look her over.

FRED
She ain't interested in girls
anymore.

ALICE
Neither am I. So where is she?

FRED
We told you she ain't interested.

ALICE
Does she have a telephone?

FRED
Maybe.

ALICE
You've got a telephone here ...

They consider this, wanting to get rid of her.

FRED
We'll let her know if she ever
comes by.

ALICE
And when will that be? I'll come by
myself.

FRED
Not sure.

Alice steps forward; threatening.

ALICE
I'll speak with your neighbors
about her then, see if they know.

They're anxious; look to each other, to Mr. Ward.

FRED
She comes by every week or so with
her husband. You can leave your
number.

ALICE

Tell her I'd like to speak with him
as well. Tell her it's for the
Lord's work - nothing else.

She writes a phone number on a flier, hands it to him.

ALICE

God bless you, young man. And your
family.

She heads back, sneaking peeks through windows and fences.

102

INT. CHURCH HOSPICE, OFFICE - WEEK LATER

102

An examination office similar to Veale's. Henning squares up
reports and results of another blood test.

Alice references medical books sprawled over the table,
making sense of it all. She's clearly been at this a while.

ALICE

Who can we get to do "hormone
therapy"? Oestrogen or something
that could - a pill - something
quicker to take care of this. How
could we do that?

HENNING

There's "chemical castration" that's
been done in Britain - suppressing
the libido. But it's only been done
in men and not very successfully.
Not sure how it'd work for you.
It'll take time regardless.

ALICE

What time?

HENNING

Your monthly cycle's much longer
than normal.

ALICE

You sure this is working?

HENNING

Try this.

He pours a mixture of tonic. She recognizes the foul smell.

ALICE

That stuff's not normal.

HENNING

It's a blood tonic made from burdock extractives and liquorice. We prescribe it to anemic patients to increase the blood count and cleanse the kidneys. There's sarsaparilla added to help with the taste.

It's very strong. She forces it down, nearly spits it out.

ALICE

How much longer does this take?

HENNING

It'll take time to get your bleeding regular again. Sexual deviation affects those areas first. We should start there.

ALICE

You said that before and I haven't felt any different since we started.

She's frustrated, impatient, looks around for answers.

ALICE

So, what else? What's next?

HENNING

Hold still a moment.

He readies the sphygmomanometer, checks her blood pressure.

ALICE

What about hypnosis? Psychotherapy?

He looks to the book in her lap, amused.

HENNING

Well, that's all just laying about and speculation. Freud had his successes but rejected the idea.

Hope fades from her. He comforts her, directs her to the BIBLE, the other book beside her.

Her spirits lift reading its pages; but the tonic's effects get to her.

ALICE

It'll go faster if I drank more.

HENNING

One a day's enough. Relax your arm.

He records the test results.

HENNING

Cut down on salt and high-glycemic carbohydrates. Try a lean protein diet: red meat, beets, dark greens. Iron-deficiency's also more common during menstruation - so's insomnia. These should help.

He hands her a bottle of SLEEPING PILLS.

ALICE

This isn't enough.

HENNING

One more time.

ALICE

May as well be praying --

He starts the test again. She looks down to her stomach and crotch. Her frustration is made worse by the tonic's effects.

He finishes up. She pulls the cuff off, gets up and leaves.

ALICE

A husband and marriage solves these problems.

103 INT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BEDROOM - DAY

103

Alice is hunched over, on her knees, by an altar on the far end of the room. She tries to get something going: blesses herself with the BIBLE, CROSS; not sure what she's doing.

Her impatience grows. She tosses the BIBLE aside.

ALICE

Damn it ... God damn it ...

LATER. By her bedside, she fashions a mixture of tonic into a bigger bottle, adds sleeping pills, then forces it down.

104 EXT. CHURCH HOSPICE - DAY

104

Alice staggers about in the front yard, gets a breath of fresh air. She has more to drink; gets drowsy.

Heading back, stumbling a bit, Alice catches someone around a blind corner by the door. A sweet voice calls out:

SWEET VOICE

Alice?

ALICE

Who's that?

Coming closer: it's Annabel, carrying some books and a small box. They don't say anything for a moment.

ANNABEL

I brought some of Joseph's medical books.

ALICE

Dr. Henning's out on call.

ANNABEL

I thought you'd like to read them.
I made you some lunch.

Alice regards her. She looks around, wary on her toes.

ALICE

You came with your father?

ANNABEL

He's with Joseph.

ALICE

Where?

ANNABEL

Downtown, on call.

ALICE

They know about you coming here --

ANNABEL

No, I didn't tell. Not to anyone.

ALICE

... You came over just for these?

ANNABEL

I wanted to see if you were okay
... Don't you want to see me?

Alice is touched by Annabel's warmth; reaches for her hand then gives way to hugging her.

ALICE

Come inside.

She pulls back and sees something in the girl's eyes.

ANNABEL

Alice: I need to ask something ...

106

EXT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BACK YARD - DAY

106

They sit out-of-sight by a BUSH HEDGE. Alice is a bit drunk from the tonic.

ALICE

Did anyone else know about it? What did you know?

ANNABEL

There were girls from my school. But none of us really knew anything or ever tried.

Alice considers this. Quiet between them for a moment.

ANNABEL

What was your first time like?

Alice takes a deep breath and another drink.

ALICE

She was a senior at the Higbee school I went to named Myra. She slept over and we woke up in the same bed somehow.

ANNABEL

Did you go away together?

Alice dredges up bitter memories.

ALICE

Just for a while after, before she went away somewhere, with someone else. I don't remember ... How was it you never tried?

ANNABEL

I was taught to be quiet about things I didn't know about.

Alice HOLDS on her for a moment. Then;

ALICE

I used to dream about marriage and chase after her. Now it makes me sick to still want these things. I've had nothing but disappointment from it since then. I've buried my anger deep inside and held my breath completely. All these years putting on this fraud; smiling to these people and working them over just to scrape by ...

She has another drink. Annabel contemplates this.

ANNABEL

What will you do about your mother?

ALICE

Maybe she'd get better if a doctor could fix me somehow ... Could a doctor do that?

She peers into the bottle with hope, like an alcoholic.

ANNABEL

If there was another girl like her that came by ...? You'd still rather be home with your family?

ALICE

I thought I'd be better off doing things my own way, but now I'd be happier to be home ... And without these feelings ...

She takes a gulp, offers a drink. Annabel reluctantly takes a sip, coughs. They burst into laughter; let it all out.

107

INT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BEDROOM - DAY

107

Alice is by the altar. She's delirious, nearly passed out from the tonic. Annabel gently rocks Alice in her arms.

ALICE

"There is one Father, one Husband and one Son" ... But I can't even make a son with this body.

ANNABEL

What do you mean?

ALICE

My uterus is so dried and broken
up. How's a child going to grow
inside it?

Alice can barely open her eyes; takes a breath.

ALICE

My mother couldn't either. She
must've wanted me as a boy, seeing
how bad a girl I was in the kitchen
... Could you make one? Your mother
made Joseph well enough.

Alice turns her way, holds her face, wants to try something
but hesitates. After a moment, Annabel pulls her closer,
kisses her, trembles with excitement, unbuttons her blouse.

ALICE

Help me up.

108

INT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BATHROOM - DAY

108

Alice sits nude in a tub of mild-running water. Annabel's in
her underwear, holds Alice from behind, then reaches down to
her crotch, gets to work.

ALICE

Damn it. God damn it ...

Their rhythm increases.

ALICE

Oh, God ...

Alice loses it, convulses, pulls Annabel closer, tighter.

She collapses into the tub. Annabel cleanses her all over.
Alice pants into Annabel's breasts then reaches for her face.

ALICE

You ready?

Annabel slips out of her underwear and enters the tub.

109

INT. CHURCH HOSPICE, DINING AREA - DAY

109

Alice and Annabel sit at a table going through the box of
muffins, smiling to each other. Alice's mood is a post-coital
elation. Annabel's restless, legs and hands shaking.

ALICE

Are you feeling alright?

115 INT. CHURCH - DAY 115

The congregation in full service. Everyone's praying, eyes closed. Except Annabel, who vacantly stares to the front of the room with a look of shame and guilt.

116 INT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BATHROOM - DAY 116

Sex. Alice and Annabel collapse in the tub together.

117 INT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BEDROOM - DAY 117

Resting in the cot bed, Annabel uses Alice's bare chest as a pillow, like two 18th-century Parisian salon prostitutes.

Alice is caught in the moment, clearly fighting her better judgment and trying to convince herself of something.

She anxiously looks at Annabel then darts her eyes around the room and then to her suitcase. She lays out her plans aloud;

ALICE

We'll get a place of our own
somewhere, with our own bed. You
have any money?

ANNABEL

(confused)

About four-hundred I've saved -- ?

ALICE

Should be enough to get us started.
Maybe in Tennessee or Arkansas.
We'll find some work there and be
away from all this ...

Alice grabs her by the face and speaks directly at her, trying to reach an understanding between them.

ALICE

Get your things ready. We'll leave
as soon as we can, alright? Alright?

Annabel just smiles some sort of understanding. Alice holds her closer, kisses her again and again.

ALICE

So how's my sweet girl? How's my
sweetheart?

Annabel looks away, considers all this.

118 INT. VEALE'S HOME, DINING AREA - EVENING 118

Annabel serves dinner. They enjoy her meal, but she's unable to eat, guilt-ridden over what she's done.

Veale chokes a bit. She panics, goes to him with water. He reaches for her: his sweet little girl.

She goes to Joseph, offers seconds, then takes her seat, smiles at them both. The guilt deepens into a dread.

119 INT. CHURCH - LATE EVENING 119

An evening service, empty except for a few people. Annabel's by herself in the back. She feverishly prays, hands shaking.

Elle comes over and comforts her. And a familiar voice comes from behind;

FAMILIAR VOICE

Hello, little Sister.

ELLE

Lillian, she's burning up.

Annabel notices Lillian standing over her - she's followed her here. She takes Annabel by the face, feels her forehead.

ELLE

I think she needs a doctor.

LILLIAN

No she doesn't ...

ELLE

But her body's hot all over --

LILLIAN

BE QUIET.

Lillian moves in close, gets right in Annabel's face.

LILLIAN

You listen to me, Annabel, because I know where you've been hiding and I know what you've done.

Annabel's paralyzed with fear, wants to get away.

LILLIAN

That woman has defied the Lord and she's tempted His Wrath. But you can be saved if you confess now.

120 INT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BEDROOM - DAWN 120

Alice is still asleep, her suitcase packed beside her.

A PILLOW descends from above, right over her face.

ANNABEL

(loud whispering)

It's alright. Please, listen: you
have to leave. I'll give this to you
... But you have to leave and forget
everything.

Alice tries to break free, gets violent. Annabel has trouble holding on. Alice shoves the pillow off and breaks free.

Annabel's terrified, no idea what to do. She has an ENVELOPE of money that she drops it in front of Alice then darts out. Alice runs after her.

121 EXT. CHURCH HOSPICE, BACK YARD - THAT MOMENT 121

Annabel takes cover behind the BUSH HEDGE from before. Alice catches up, catches her breath.

She charges forward, right, left; then leaps through the hedge, tackles Annabel to the ground, screams to her face.

ALICE

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT HAVE YOU
DONE? TELL ME.

122 INT. VEALE'S HOME, OFFICE - DAY 122

Alice slumps in a chair across from Henning and Veale's family with an ice bag to her head and suitcase by her side.

Annabel's off to the side, aware of the trouble she's in.

Alice looks to her, then to Veale, who's steaming. She tries to apologize but can't; instead picks herself up and leaves.

Everything goes quiet. Veale reaches for the telephone.

123 EXT. STREET, PARENTS' HOME IN THE DISTANCE - DAY 123

Alice anxiously approaches with suitcase in hand. Sees Jacob and Dad bring Mom into the backseat of a car. Jacob hurries off. Dad goes to his truck, prepares to follow.

Alice heads over. He's overwhelmed to see her, his patience all but gone.

ALICE

What's happened? Where's her medicine?

DAD

Doctor Veale called; about you --

She scrambles for an explanation.

ALICE

Did he tell you about that other girl - that she started all of it?

DAD

Alice: she's tried. She can't continue being sick like this again.

He shakes his head, sees her desperation. He gets into his truck and drives off. She just stands there a while.

124

INT. VEALE'S HOME, DINING AREA - DAY

124

Veale, Joseph, Henning and Lillian sit around the table to a meal Ms. Johnson has cooked. Annabel is absent.

Lillian's in an apron, across from Joseph, scowls at him with a deranged look. He's eating a potato, avoids eye-contact.

LILLIAN

I heard a confession last night, and I prayed, "What have you given to me, Lord, when I prayed for a husband and all I got for this effort was a weak and gullible idiot who eats and wipes his mouth and says, 'I have done no wrong'."

JOSEPH

She said she needed help. I didn't know.

LILLIAN

A better doctor would have known. A better husband would have known better. She came in to our family, spread her sickness to your sister; and you are a weak and gullible idiot for letting this happen.

Lillian swells up; a terrible anxiety builds up inside.

HENNING

I checked on her medical record. There's insanity in her family.

Her mother suffered from a postpartum psychosis after childbirth. And her aunt was discharged from the Women's Army Corps as a field operator - over an illicit affair with a Russian.

VEALE

Enough. That's enough.

Joseph's unsure what to say or do. Ms. Johnson hands Lillian a tray of bread rolls to serve to everyone.

JOSEPH

This is very good, ma'am.

Lillian reaches her tipping point as she reaches Joseph. She grabs him, drags him off the side of the table.

LILLIAN

YOU FAITHLESS BASTARD. I'LL BREAK YOU FOR THIS.

Joseph tumbles to the floor, crawls away terrified as Lillian advances on him. The others can only watch in horror. *

LILLIAN

Why was she able to get to Annabel like this? Do You Know Why? BECAUSE IT WAS YOU WHO LET HER DO IT. *

Lillian gets right in his face, grabs him by the wrists, intimidates him. *

JOSEPH

Dear, please, don't do this -- *

LILLIAN

YES YOU DID, JOSEPH -- YES. You let that dirty woman have her way with us - with your little sister - and you failed your family when they needed you most. A gullible idiot brother and husband ... *

125 EXT. MIDTOWN, RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT 125

Alice is weary, exhausted. She takes a moment then heads down the street towards a familiar dimly lit home.

126 EXT. WARD HOME - NIGHT 126

The porch lights are on. Alice approaches, stands there a while, very reluctant, doesn't dare knock.

LATER. Darkness except for the porch lights. She's made a bed by a bench; goes through the FAMILY PHOTO of her as a child, being held in her parents' arms.

On the back are notes: "November 26, 1933 ... Happy Birthday, Love Mom & Dad ... Our home ... Our family ... Our child ..."

Her stomach growls. She aches all over, starts to cry.

She takes one of the SLEEPING PILLS Henning gave her, and contemplates taking them all. She goes unconscious ...

127 EXT. WARD HOME - DAWN 127

LOUD ALARM BELL RINGING. Alice falls away in a panic. Above her is an imposing FIGURE holding an ALARM CLOCK.

This is MYRA WARD. Beside her are Mr. Ward, Fred and his brother. She has the CHURCH FLIER Alice gave them from before.

MYRA

Hello, Alice. You alright? You remember me?

ALICE

... Yes. Myra. I came to see about your husband. I came here before but you weren't ...

MYRA

There was a girl who came before that, who told me about you.

ALICE

She told me about you too.

MYRA

She told me you've been living with her in her home.

Alice quickly articulates something.

ALICE

I'm a housemaid helping her family.
Her father's a doctor and my mother's
been ill. So, I'm helping ...

MYRA

I know about your mother ... Is it
true then? That your inversion is
still with you?

Alice struggles along her back, still numb from the ringing.

ALICE

The doctor says it's something with
our bleeding and can be fixed; just
like you've done for your husband --

MYRA

The Lord has sent you here for this ...

ALICE

Yes. Now let me finish --

Her stomach growls; she has a hard time focusing. Myra offers
a bread roll; then reaches down, crosses her like Lillian did.

MYRA

I was hoping to reach out to you
first and keep this quiet between
us, before these troubles could
reach your family like this - and
continue troubling mine.

Myra holds out Alice's church flier. Alice turns to the
family with gratitude. They're very annoyed.

ALICE

I'd like your help now.

MYRA

I'd like you to try your faith at
my church and be baptized into our
Service.

Alice looks her over, baffled.

ALICE

... But that's not it -- Was it a
treatment ...? What did your doctor
do? What can I do?

MYRA

Confess. And save yourself from this
other sin you were about to commit.

ALICE

Save myself - from what else? My
menstruating?

Myra holds out a handful of SLEEPING PILLS that were
scattered over the floor, bottles them.

MYRA

It was when my mother had succumbed
to leukemia and passed on that I
confessed for the first time and
was born again.

ALICE

I'm very sorry to hear that, but --

MYRA

Confess to God, before it's too
late. This is your only way: give
your body to God.

Myra extends a hand.

MYRA

You can come to our home and clean
up first.

Alice notices another MAN nearby, holding a LITTLE BOY. He
walks to Myra - her husband and son.

128 INT. MYRA'S HOME, DINING AREA - DAYS LATER

128

Alice is cleaned up. She's around a table with Myra's family
after a meal.

Myra clears the table, kisses her husband, feeds her boy: a
loving family. Alice is touched to see this.

MYRA

I spoke with our Pastor and he's
agreed. There's someone you should
confess to first, like I did. And
then be blessed into our faith.

Alice is happily curious, hopeful.

129 INT. LILLIAN'S HOME, FAMILY ROOM - DAY

129

The same "circle of faith" from before, but larger. Lillian's
up front with a LARGER SATIN PILLOW, adorned with a cross.

LILLIAN

"For I am the Sun, says the Lord, and the light of the world that no darkness shall overcome. Flee from sexual immorality as every other sin is committed outside the body but the sexually immoral sins against it." And the Flesh is weak. And it is a sin. For us to obey God is to disobey ourselves and to Deny Temptation.

Lillian works up the crowd, directs everyone's attention to Alice. Alice relents, remains seated; stunned to see this.

MYRA

It's alright. Go on.

LILLIAN

Thank you for bringing her to us.
Welcome, Sister Alice.

Alice receives a welcome. Lillian offers her the pillow to hold and pray to.

ALICE

Is this alright?

LILLIAN

Alice: you've come forward for a new start but you've also fallen backward on old vices. You've betrayed your faith - and your family - who took you in when no one else would. You've betrayed their faith for your own pleasure and your own sin.

ALICE

... Yes I have.

LILLIAN

So confess now. Hands together and confess: I have betrayed my family.

A deep feeling stirs in Alice. The crowd urges her to say it.

ALICE

... I've betrayed my family.

LILLIAN

I have sickened my mother, and I have betrayed my family.

ALICE
I've betrayed my family ...

LILLIAN
Forgive me, Father - I have
betrayed my family!

ALICE
I've betrayed my family.

Lillian stirs the crowd into a fervor; holds Alice from behind
and makes her pray harder.

LILLIAN
I relinquish my flesh.

ALICE
I relinquish my flesh.

LILLIAN
I deny Temptation.

ALICE
I deny Temptation.

LILLIAN
The Lord is the light and He will
save me.

ALICE
The Lord's the light and He'll save
... Let go of me --

LILLIAN
I am weak and I am sick.

ALICE
That's enough --

LILLIAN
I am sick. Say it!

ALICE
I'm weak and I'm sick --

Lillian breaks off, circles Alice like a vulture.

LILLIAN
I have sinned against my body,
Lord, and I have sinned against
you. I have sinned in pleasure
because my flesh is weak and I am
sick. So say it again.

ALICE
 (grumbling; to the ground)
 ... I'm sick and I've sinned.

LILLIAN
 Say it to Him.

ALICE
 (shouting; to the sky)
 I'm sick and I've sinned, Lord.

Lillian holds her from behind again; closer, harder.

LILLIAN
 I Have Sickened My Mother And I
 Deny Temptation.

Alice is boiling - fights off Lillian's hold. She clenches her fists, bites her tongue.

LILLIAN
 Confess it.

ALICE
 I deny Temptation. Now let me go --

LILLIAN
 Confess it again, everything -
 EVERYTHING TO HIM NOW.

ALICE
 I'VE SICKENED MY MOTHER AND I DENY
 TEMPTATION.

LILLIAN
 FILTHY SIN. GET IT OFF. OFF THIS
 WOMAN --

Lillian squeezes her hard from behind, lifts her from her seat and wrings her body out like dirty wet laundry.

LILLIAN
 DIRTY SIN. DIRTY SICKNESS. DIRTY
 FILTHY SICK SIN.

Alice is fighting, pushing, suffocating. She tries to escape but Lillian won't let go; and gets dragged along as she pulls her back. The crowd urges her on with a prayer.

LILLIAN
 OFF THIS BODY; AND OFF THIS FLESH.
 AND LET THIS SICKNESS NEVER RETURN.

Lillian forces them down to their knees, offers a prayer;

LILLIAN
THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND HE WILL
SAVE ME.

Alice breaks free, choking for breath. Myra helps her up and embraces her, helps her breathe again.

MYRA
May I help somehow? ... I'll go
back with you to your family and
we'll put this behind us ...

Still out of it, Alice concedes with a nod. The crowd gathers around: fathers, mothers, children. Their warmth touches her.

ALL
Amen. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord.

Alice and Lillian stare at each other, both out of breath; exhausted. Alice backs down and moves off.

She's greeted by Jameson who gives way to hugging her and introduces her to his wife, who seems better now.

LILLIAN
Thank you all for your faith. Sister
Alice will join us from now on, and
return home to her family again once
she is healed completely ...

Something changes in Alice. She reaches out to each person.

130 EXT. PARENTS' HOME - WEEKS LATER 130

Dad and a worker load tools into his truck.

Jacob pulls up in a car. Dad goes over, helps Mom out onto a wheelchair, hugs and kisses her.

Jacob shows Dad a DOCUMENT. Dad hands him money then helps Mom into the house. Jacob heads off in the car.

131 EXT. MYRA'S HOME - DAY 131

Jacob pulls up. Alice greets him at the porch. He appraises her of the situation and she invites him in.

132 INT. MYRA'S HOME, DINING AREA - DAY 132

Myra boils a pot of coffee. Jacob drinks as Alice examines the DOCUMENT: Mom's PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION LIST.

ALICE
When did she get back?

JACOB
Just earlier. She'll have to be in bed a while. I'm heading to the pharmacy now.

Reading it over, her face fills with worry.

ALICE
Is my father alright?

JACOB
He's been worried. But now that she's better, he's better. There's new construction on some bungalow homes downtown. It should be good work for us.

ALICE
He should have more time at home.

JACOB
It's better for him to work to get his mind off things.

ALICE
Rebuilding our family's more important. You're his best worker and you're like a son to him so I want you to tell him that.

She returns the prescription list.

ALICE
I want to thank you for coming here these past weeks and telling me all this. You've done a good job.

JACOB
You're welcome. My pleasure ...

He smiles at her. She sees this, makes an offer.

ALICE
I'll make some dinner tonight for us. For all your hard work. You're off at five?

JACOB
Six today.

ALICE
Come by at seven.

JACOB
 (excited)
 ... Yes! Thank you.

133

INT. MYRA'S HOME, DINING AREA - NIGHT

133

Jacob is well-dressed, seated at the table with Myra and her husband. Alice enters, also well-dressed, serves them bowls of chicken soup; then takes a seat next to Jacob.

Awkward silence. Alice looks around the table, prepares to speak grace. They follow her lead, close their eyes and pray.

ALICE
 We thank you, Lord, for this bounty
 we are about to receive ... Amen.

They eat. The awkward silence continues for a moment. Alice breaks the silence, searches for something to say.

ALICE
 So! So, so ... Work's alright?

JACOB
 Work's fine. It's been a while
 being out like this again.

She searches harder, fishes up a compliment. Flirts with him.

ALICE
 You look very nice tonight.

JACOB
 I like your dress.

ALICE
 I like your hair. A lot of women
 like that type of hair. Ahuh ...
 Are you sure you don't already have
 a girlfriend somewhere?

JACOB
 No one special.

ALICE
 Not yet?

They just look each other over for a while.

Alice notices Myra's eyes on her and Jacob, encouraging her to push forward.

MYRA

She made her hair special just for tonight.

JACOB

Yes, I like your hair too. Very nice ...

MYRA

He's a very nice-looking man. You both look very nice together.

Alice has nothing to say, keeps an eye on Myra who initiates a kiss with her husband.

They get close while Alice and Jacob remain stiff and awkward. Alice tries to move closer to him but can't.

Myra and her husband get closer, whisper to each other. Annoyed, Alice repeatedly taps her wine glass with her fork.

ALICE

I can see your lips moving.

Myra and her husband stop, turn back to Alice and Jacob, as if waiting for something to happen between them.

Alice turns to Jacob, who's baffled by her behavior. She takes a deep breath, reaches over, kisses his mouth: her first real kiss with a man.

Myra and her husband watch this. Alice finishes, trying to feel something, but it's very awkward for her.

Jacob is flustered; satisfied. Alice inches her seat closer to him against her will. They quietly continue dinner.

134 EXT. MYRA'S HOME - NIGHT 134

On the porch, Jacob kisses Alice then heads back to the car. She stands there a moment; heads inside.

135 EXT. PARENTS' HOME - WEEKS LATER 135

The house looks settled from weeks before.

136 INT. PARENTS' HOME, DINING AREA - DAY 136

Alice sits at the table beside Jacob. Myra's also here, with her husband and son. Dad wheels Mom in.

Alice gets up; she and Mom look each other over. Dad pushes Mom closer - they've arranged all this.

Alice goes to her; holds her tightly.

ALICE

Thank God ... Thank God for this.

Alice reaches for Dad, hugs him. Then directs Mom to Myra.

ALICE

Do you remember Myra? That's her husband and her little boy. See? I've been staying with her church. They're helping me get better, just like her.

She pulls a seat beside Mom, takes Jacob by the hand, signals him to go along with her. Mom sees this, curious.

ALICE

I've been getting better with him too. Better than I've ever been. We've been going out a while.

Alice kisses Jacob - flickers with unease - brushes it off.

ALICE

We're going to take care of all of this for good this time. Because I need your faith for this now. I need your help ...

Mom lights up with hope seeing Alice and Jacob holding hands. She reaches for Alice's hands, pulls her closer.

137 INT. LILLIAN'S CHURCH - DAY 137

Alice is half-submerged in a BAPTISMAL TUB, hands to the choke of her neck. The PASTOR reads a passage as she's dunked.

138 EXT. LILLIAN'S HOME - DAY 138

The Pastor delegates passing out church fliers. Alice is here with Jacob, who's escorted her.

She steps away a moment to take a handful of fliers, goes back to hug him farewell. He departs, and she prepares to leave with some of the churchgoers.

She spots Lillian and Ms. Johnson speaking with Myra and the Pastor. Alice heads off. Lillian goes to her.

LILLIAN
Hello, Alice. Has everything been
alright with everything?

ALICE
Fine.

Lillian pauses a moment; looks her over.

LILLIAN
I'm glad to hear that.

ALICE
Are things fine for you?

LILLIAN
Yes. I've been summoned to the
Goodwives Charity Hospital in
Whitehaven for missionary work on
behalf of our church. The Lord is
reaching out to the world and has
asked that I join Him ... I'm going
to bring Annabel with me.

ALICE
...

LILLIAN
She's been having trouble at home
lately and wanders away sometimes,
so her father also thinks this is
best ... Has she spoken to you in-
person about this?

Alice is perplexed, has no idea.

ALICE
No, she hasn't.

LILLIAN
I know it wouldn't be good for
either of you to see each other
again.

Alice just stares at her, absorbs the meaning. Lillian
searches Alice's face; then smiles it off.

LILLIAN
It's good to see that you've been
doing better.

ALICE
Thank you for all your help. Good
luck to you both.

Myra's husband leads in Annabel and ROBERT (20s). Alice looks right at them as they enter - she's ready for something.

ALICE
Come in. Make yourselves at home.

ANNABEL
Can we have a minute?

Both men leave. Alice and Annabel look each other over.

ANNABEL
It's good to see you again ... Is
it also good to see me?

ALICE
I heard you've been skipping school
and church lately. Where have you
been?

ANNABEL
... Can we talk somewhere else? I'd
like this to be secret.

ALICE
There's no secret. The Lord's
everywhere. He hears everything. So
why don't you just tell me.

Annabel searches for the right words.

ANNABEL
This has been very difficult for
me. But I know you'll understand
and forgive what I've done.

ALICE
...

ANNABEL
I've learned a lot about myself
from you. I've learned to be honest
with who I've always been. And I
know now that I have to be honest
with the Lord before I can be
faithful to Him.

ALICE
So what about him over there?

ANNABEL
Robert is a sweet man, sweet like
Jacob. But if I could have a
marriage, I'd rather go away with
you and have you as a spouse than
as a Sister --

ALICE

You need a husband for that.

ANNABEL

You've taught me to be a good wife.

ALICE

I didn't teach you this ... So, so what are you here for?

ANNABEL

I came for your blessing.

ALICE

You came for a feeling between your legs.

ANNABEL

No, you don't understand. Please listen --

ALICE

This is so stupid what you're doing.

ANNABEL

My family will forgive me.

ALICE

You'll have no family after this.

Alice's face changes - she's fighting herself.

ALICE

You'll just be a whore living in a hovel.

ANNABEL

It won't be like that --

ALICE

Just a whore living on her knees in a hovel ... A whore with no family and a hovel for a home.

ANNABEL

You'll forgive me and be my sweetheart again.

Annabel moves in, discreetly hands over an address.

ANNABEL

I know if my Faith stops me this time, I'll have the Lord's own strength to push it down.

She leaves. Alice considers all this.

144

INT. MYRA'S HOME, MYRA'S ROOM - DAY

144

Alice brings in the clothes she's just mended. Myra's folding family laundry; Alice joins in.

MYRA

What did she ask for?

ALICE

She should've stayed home. Now she wants to leave like this.

MYRA

She's just like we were back then, hoping it would work out somehow.

Alice thinks this over.

ALICE

She shouldn't have come here ...
How long did it take for you?

Myra doesn't say anything, goes quiet a moment.

ALICE

If Jacob and I married, would it happen faster? ... To be like you are with your husband?

MYRA

... It might be more important for you now that your father has someone to help with his work; and care for your mother as much as you do.

ALICE

...?

Alice is puzzled. Myra stops her work, looks directly at her.

MYRA

I'm sure it hasn't changed for me, even with marriage. But I have a faithful husband. And my son is happy, and he'll always make me happy. And I know that I'm happy enough.

Alice gives Myra a second look, stunned to hear this.

145 EXT. ROBERT'S HOME - DAY 145
 Similar to Manger's home, a bit dirty, worn down, in squalor.

146 INT. ROBERT'S HOME, FAMILY ROOM - DAY 146
 KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Annabel answers. Alice stands there, very nervous, carrying a LARGE BROWN BAG and a SMALL WHITE BAG.

ALICE
 I was in the neighborhood to pick up some things and thought I'd stop by. Is this his home?

ANNABEL
 Robert's gone for work.

They are quiet for a moment.

ANNABEL
 Come in.

INSIDE. Cramped and desolate like Manger's home. Annabel's the only bright spot. Alice looks around, sees the bedroom.

ANNABEL
 Thank you for coming.

ALICE
 It's just one bed for both of you?

ANNABEL
 Yes ...

Overjoyed, Annabel hugs and kisses her. Alice is reluctant, still taking this all in.

147 INT. ROBERT'S HOME, BEDROOM - DAY 147

Alice sits along the edge of the bed, in her underwear. She's tense, still has trouble making up her mind; until Annabel rubs up against her, completely nude - a perfect fantasy.

Annabel makes her way down between Alice's legs.

LATER. Annabel uses Alice's bare chest as a pillow. She speaks up, very excited.

ANNABEL
 We'll have our own bed in our own house far away from here. I can do housework for money.

157 INT. ROBERT'S HOME, FAMILY ROOM - DAY 157

Annabel waits on the couch, pretends to knit something; she checks the window, still waits for Alice.

158 EXT. PARENTS' HOME - DAY 158

Dad helps put Mom into the truck.

**

LILLIAN

Sister Alice: my prodigal Sister,
home again. After so many years! So
many challenges the Lord besets
upon us ...

ALICE

Are you being challenged, Lillian?

LILLIAN

Not me, no; but there's been some
trouble in our family lately.
Annabel and I were to go away
together for missionary work but
she's run off. Have you heard this?

ALICE

...

LILLIAN

There is a man she's been with
recently who seems to be a terrible
influence on her. But ... She
thinks she's in love! She thinks so
many strange things, doesn't she?

Mention of Annabel makes Lillian uneasy. She sweats a bit,
eats a muffin, wipes her mouth. Alice sees this.

LILLIAN

I heard she came to see you again.

ALICE

Just a few times.

LILLIAN

Have you spoken with her lately?
Where has she gone?

ALICE

She's gone her own way.

LILLIAN

Away with this man? With another
man? ... Another woman?

ALICE

...

LILLIAN

Alice; now that I know this about
her, I must know. You must tell me.

Alice goes quiet, ignores her, turns back to her suitcase.

LILLIAN

Sister: God is calling to us. He is asking that we guide His child back to Him --

(off Alice's silence)

-- He is calling for you to bring her back to me - back to her home and family where she belongs.

ALICE

I can bring you to her immediately.

LILLIAN

(startled)

You could?

ALICE

That's best for everyone.

LILLIAN

Yes ... Yes, it is! Thank you.

ALICE

But I want you to do something for me first.

LILLIAN

Alright.

ALICE

I'd like you to ask for forgiveness.

LILLIAN

For what?

ALICE

I'd like you to confess and do what's best for your family.

LILLIAN

I don't know what you mean?

ALICE

Confess what you don't know then.

Lillian takes a moment, ponders this, baffled.

ALICE

Confess that you lust.

Lillian's stunned; remains quiet.

ALICE

Confess that you covet.

LILLIAN
Alice, I really don't --

ALICE
About Annabel.

LILLIAN
This is ridiculous.

Lillian slowly absorbs the meaning, uncomfortably laughs it off. She darts her eyes, finishes the muffin.

LILLIAN
So where is she now?

ALICE
Not far.

LILLIAN
And we can go to her right away?

ALICE
She's with this man right now.

LILLIAN
Where?

ALICE
She's been staying with him in his home downtown.

LILLIAN
Downtown.

ALICE
In his bed.

LILLIAN
... What?

ALICE
She's sleeping with him in his bed.

LILLIAN
... No she's not ... They've only met a few weeks, why would she do that?

ALICE
She's fornicated a lot since running off. A lot more just yesterday.
(sly grin)
And once she's pregnant she'll have to marry into his family.

LILLIAN

No, no, no - this is Sister
Annabel, my Sister. She can't --

ALICE

But you can. So confess now.

Lillian still holds back. Won't say it.

ALICE

Because she's not your "Sister"
anymore. And she's not your bride.

Lillian's at a loss, takes this in. Something crumbles apart
inside her. She turns back to Alice with a look of despair,
realizes she's been found out.

Very slowly, she breaks down and weeps like a little girl.

LILLIAN

Oh, Alice; please, I'm in such
terrible trouble.

Alice gathers her suitcase, prepares to leave.

LILLIAN

Her father's asked me to bring her
home. But now that I know this about
her, I can't -- I'm sick. I'm such a
sinner ... If you could see how sick
he's been praying for her to return --

Hearing Veale's family troubles, Alice stops in her tracks.

ALICE

What sickness?

LILLIAN

-- Sick and worried and everything
else he's stopped because of this:
his work and church and family --

ALICE

...

Alice's face changes, despondent considering her own family;
goes into the pit of her stomach, recalls everything.

LILLIAN

They need her home again. But I
must have her first.

Annabel, she must -- I've done everything to be faithful but still, these dirty filthy things I've done with my body watching hers - I have so much sin. Alice, please, if there's something more I could offer her, you must tell me. Because the Lord, He won't listen! He just keeps talking and talking -- Always more of my Faith for His!

Lillian holds her BIBLE to her chest like a shield.

LILLIAN

BUT THERE IS NOTHING THERE. NOTHING TO BE DONE -- !

ALICE

Because you're not the Sister she prayed for, Lillian. You're just a frigid wife and a fraud ... I saw what you were and I got Annabel to confess to me first. I'm the Lord's confessor. I'm the Sister she chose, not you.

LILLIAN

This isn't true. Stop saying this --

ALICE

But it's my family I chose instead. So where's yours, Lillian? Who's going to save you? Who's still faithful to you now? The meek mother and husband you've backhanded?

Lillian sinks lower, hangs her head and whimpers, "no, no".

ALICE

Annabel's fixed with a man now just like us. She's having sex too. Lots of it. Twenty-four hours a day.

LILLIAN

Don't say these things to me --

ALICE

The Lord's not giving her back. He's taken her from both of us. She's Gone From You For Good.

LILLIAN

If she'd go on this missionary work with me, our family would accept --

ALICE
SEX, LILLIAN. LOTS-AND-LOTS OF SEX!
 Adam and Eve just like it says in
 your Gospel, isn't that right?

LILLIAN
 ... That's right --

ALICE
 (grabs the bible from her)
 THAT'S RIGHT, JUST LIKE US. So
 she'll never be yours, and you'll
 never be her family. Just your
 mother's misbegotten child. Daddy
 and the Doctor should've slapped
 you and shoved you back into the
 hole you crawled out of.

Alice raises the bible, offers a mock blessing.

ALICE
 Look at me. Look at the Lord, right
 here. Are you sick? Are you a sinner?

Lillian lifts her head to speak but no words come out. Alice
 smacks her with the book, throws it back at her.

ALICE
 WHAT'S WRONG "SISTER"? PUSSY-CAT-
 GOT-YOUR-TONGUE?

LILLIAN
 STOP SAYING THIS TO ME. PLEASE. I
 NEED YOUR HELP --

Alice grabs a pillow from her bed, beats and smothers Lillian
 with it. Lillian is hysterical: kicking, fighting, pushing.

ALICE
 AREN'T YOU JEALOUS OF ME? COVET
 WHAT I HAD WITH HER? I TOOK HER
 FROM YOU AND I GAVE HER WHAT YOU
 COULDN'T. AND NOW YOU HAVE NO ONE,
 LILLIAN. AND YOU HAVE NOTHING. HOW
 DARE YOU CALL ME "SISTER"?

Alice slips her hand beneath Lillian's skirt. Lillian lets
 out a muffled moan of sexual frustration.

ALICE
 Here's the blessing. Here it comes!

Alice gives it one last shove; leaves Lillian nearly passed out and panting for breath. Alice limps away, notices menstrual blood on her fingers.

She wipes it off on her apron, then takes the photo/toy out of the satchel and places it back on the fireplace mantle. **

FOOTSTEPS. Jacob enters, dressed for work. He slowly takes in this mess, baffled. **

She's hunched over, exhausted, looks to her crotch; satisfied.

ALICE

Amen.

THE END.