

PARTY OF FIVE

By

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THE SALINGERS:

CHARLIE: At 24, the oldest -- but only numerically. Flannel shirts, work boots, paint in his hair -- sexy that way. Chronically irresponsible, routinely late but with a good excuse, his plans are always a little unrealistic. But he's honest, and he means well, and if he weren't your brother, you'd probably find him irresistibly charming.

BAILEY: 16. In charge, but by default. On the plus side, he's great looking, a running back on the football team, everything you'd want to be at 16, but not a show-off about it. On the negative: not a scholar. He's called upon to have answers for everyone and everything. The truth is, he doesn't. But it's his struggle to get it right that makes him so appealing.

JULIA: 15. The smart one. But these days, she doesn't much like that title. She's pretty, but she doesn't yet know what to do about it. Boys, and clothes, and romance are making college plans, and homework, and nerdy friends seem less and less worthwhile. She could really use an older sister.

CLAUDIA: 12. Teetering on the brink of adolescence. Half her life has been spent with a violin under her chin, and she's beginning to resent it. Her bangs need trimming, her bra needs stuffing. In the past six months, she's formed a special connection to Bailey.

OWEN: 1, a birth control mistake. Now, just on the verge of mobility. What can we say? Adorable.

THURBER: 12 in dog years. In human years, 84 -- and he acts it. He's seen it all, and none of it holds any interest for him, whatsoever.

PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

EXT. CAR LOT - DAY

BAILEY, 16, circles a brand new, shiny black Jeep, checking out every square inch. He sees something he doesn't like.

BAILEY

Is that a scratch? Is it? Is that a scratch? Julia?

(freaking out a little)

It is. It's a scratch. I haven't even driven it off the lot.

JULIA, 15, steps forward to examine it.

BAILEY

No way am I gonna drive outta here in a jeep with a scra--

She reaches out, gingerly removes something from the hood.

JULIA

-- It's not a scratch, Bailey. It's a hair. In fact, it looks like one of Owen's...

CLAUDIA, 12, steps forward, holding OWEN, 1.

CLAUDIA

Where else was I supposed to change his diaper?

Bailey sighs his relief. Polishes a corner with his elbow.

JULIA

She's a beauty, isn't she?

CLAUDIA

A beauty.

BAILEY

(suddenly losing his nerve)

I dunno, guys. I mean, maybe this is a little too flashy. You know, a Volvo station wagon --

JULIA

Hey, how many times does a guy turn sixteen? And what better way to say, "hey, I've arrived," than with a Jeep?

CLAUDIA
I kinda thought "hey, I've arrived" was
a BMW. *

The SALESMAN approaches.

SALESMAN
Mr. Salinger? You're all set. All the
documents seem to be in order. *
(a beat) *
You got one generous brother. *

He dangles the keys, drops them into Bailey's waiting hand.

SALESMAN
Drive safely.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - PACIFIC HEIGHTS -- DAY

Bailey at the wheel, an ear-to-ear grin, powers up one of those 85 degree hills you see in postcards, the San Francisco Bay in the background. Julia and Claudia's long hair flies over the rollbar, even Owen is laughing in his car seat.

The Jeep crests the hill, stops for a red light. A sportscar pulls up in the next lane. Two beautiful girls smile at Bailey in his new Jeep. In this car and for the first time in his life, they seem attainable. Bailey smiles back at them, cocky. Puts his elbow along the window frame, drops his sunglasses a bit. Mine. My Jeep.

The light changes. The girls' sportscar pulls ahead. Bailey accelerates. But the Jeep's not in gear. It drifts backwards a bit. Bailey scrambles to put the car in first, as it gradually begins a downward slide...

JULIA
Bailey...?

CLAUDIA
Bailey...!

SMASH TO BLACK.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. AN OLD VICTORIAN HOUSE - SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

A "Painted Lady" in the Haight. Gone rough around the edges. The SOUND of violin ARPEGGIOS escapes from inside.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - GIRLS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claudia, a violin tucked under her chin, plays arpeggios like an old master. Inside the open case, there is a photograph of a woman, with the same long, brown hair as hers, playing the same violin. She stares intently at her music stand. PAN to the stand -- no music at all, a copy of The Crucible. She's learning lines, and playing her music from memory.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - KITCHEN/WAR ZONE - CONTINUOUS

Dishes languish in the sink. One corner is designated for old pizza boxes, piled three feet high. Bailey and Julia stand over the sink, trading pizza slices. Between them lies THURBER -- an old hound, a carpet scrap with ears.

BAILEY

Double pepperoni or sausage?

JULIA

Uh, pepperoni.... No, sausage!

(he hands it over)

Ucch! Someone left it out overnight.

(bite; grimace)

I hate it when the pizza's not cold.

CHARLIE troops in from outside, yawning.

BAILEY

Just getting home, Charlie?

Signs of life from Thurber. He barks, wags his tail. Charlie's the only one he likes.

CHARLIE

I crashed at Doug's last night.

(rummaging under the sink)

Anyone seen the detergent? I gotta do a wash....

JULIA

(stuffing pizza down the drain)

Seems like the only time we see you is when you run out of underwear.

He shoots her a look. Unzips his big duffle bag, removes: *

CHARLIE *

I got diapers. I got wipes. *

He moves over to a brightly colored, construction paper chart on the fridge -- Claudia's doing -- labeled "THE OWEN WHEEL." Four quadrants: Feeding, Bathing, Shopping, Babysitting, and a dial with each of their names on it. Charlie's chore completed, he turns the dial a quarter rotation. Bailey notices: *

BAILEY *

So I guess I'm up for babysitting detail tonight. *

CHARLIE *

Hey, what's with the jeep in the driveway? *

Claudia marches in, engrossed in a play. A dramatic reading.

CLAUDIA

"I saw Sarah Good with the devil! I
saw Goody Osborne with the devil! I
saw Bridget Bishop with the -- "
(off their looks)
School play. I'm gonna audition.
(to Bailey)
Pepperoni, please.

CHARLIE

What's with the jeep?

BAILEY

What're you talking about? That's the new car!

CHARLIE

That's the car I co-signed a lease for?
I thought you were getting a station wagon.

JULIA *

A station wagon is transportation. But a jeep -- ! *

CLAUDIA *

-- says Bailey's arrived. *

Charlie's about to object. Hesitates. Shrugs, what the hell.

BAILEY *

It's my birthday present. Courtesy of you. *

CHARLIE

Speaking of which --

He hands over an envelope. Bailey inspects the contents.

BAILEY
The '9ers and the Cowboys!

CHARLIE
A week from Sunday. Fifty yard line.
(Bailey is speechless)
Sweet sixteen, Bay.

BAILEY
This is...you don't understand... these
are...this is the greatest!

Charlie grins. Picks up his laundry. Heads out with a wink.

CHARLIE
Take someone special.

Claudia and Julia both look at him and smile. Take me!

BAILEY
Forget it.

WE HEAR the sound of a BABY CRYING.

BAILEY
Mrs. Kelleher! Mrs. Kelleher -- ?

He turns to find himself face-to-face with MRS. KELLEHER, a stern, elderly woman. She holds Owen. She looks ashen.

BAILEY
Is something wrong, Mrs. Kelleher?

MRS. KELLEHER
I'm going to be sixty-five years old tomorrow.

BAILEY
(yeah? so?)
No kidding. Congratulations.

MRS. KELLEHER
It's fifty-two steps to the front door.
It's two flights up to the bedroom.
When I take your brother to the park,
I've got to push his stroller up a
forty-five degree incline.

BAILEY
Gee, Mrs. Kelleher. It's San Francisco. I really don't know what I can do about the hills.

MRS. KELLEHER
My knees can't take any more of this.

BAILEY

Look, I've got this really important paper due today. I'm gonna be incredibly late. Could you just hold out until this evening, and then I promise we'll work everything out?

CUT TO:

EXT. SALINGER HOUSE - DAY

Bailey's friend, WILL, in a beat-up VW, with a football buddy, BRAD, in the passenger seat, is sitting in the driveway with the engine running. Bailey jiggles Owen in his stroller, leans into the driver's window.

BRAD

Now that's a cute picture.

WILL

Hey, Brad, give him a break. I happen to know girls really go for guys who babysit.

BAILEY

Shut up.
(hands him a paper)
Capaluso. History. Fourth period.

WILL

Kelly DeNovi has a baby sister. You guys could double date. Formula and a movie.

BAILEY

Look, just make sure he gets the paper. I've got a solid C-plus going in, but if this is late, I'm dead.

WILL

(gunning the engine)
Salinger, how come only the girls in your family got the brains?

The car tears out of the driveway.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Julia and PRINCIPAL STICKLEY hold a large trophy between them, and shake hands at the same time.

A STUDENT snaps a picture. Polite applause from three MEN IN SUITS, and a couple of TEACHERS. Julia's not paying attention.

STICKLEY

Let me just read the inscription --
"Presented to Julia Salinger, in
recognition of her selection as most
promising sophomore, by the Knights of
Pythagoras, San Francisco Chapter."

Julia's gaze drifts out the window.

STICKLEY

And, in addition -- here's a check for
\$250 dollars, to put toward your
college savings.

He hands her the check. SNAP! Another picture.

STICKLEY

Julia -- we're very proud of you here.
not just for your scholarship, but also
for your work as a student leader.

(teachers all nod)

What you've done is all the more
remarkable in light of the...events...
of the past six months...

She looks away again.

STICKLEY

Is there anything you'd like to say?

She thinks, shrugs. Wishes she were someplace else.

JULIA

Not really. No.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bailey's going through the yellow pages. Charlie comes upstairs
with an armload of laundry. Sees that Owen's already gotten into
his waiting basket of folded clothes.

CHARLIE

-- OWEN! What're you --
(turning to Bailey)
-- Hey, Bay, could you watch him?

BAILEY

Hey, Char, I've been watching him.
Can't you watch him while I find
someone else to watch him?

CHARLIE

(checking his watch)
What do you need? Like, twenty
minutes?

BAILEY

No, like tomorrow.

CHARLIE

Don't you think we'll have hired someone by then?

*
*
*

BAILEY

Hey, man, news flash. It's not like calling up for a pizza. It takes a little time. I'll cancel practice if you can't stay past three.

CHARLIE

Look, the thing is I can't stay at all tomorrow. Doug and I got a house painting gig. It's the only thing I've gotten since last week -- and it's pretty good money.

BAILEY

(reaching for the phone)

You just better hope there's a Domino's Nanny Agency out there...

He picks up the phone. Listens for a second.

BAILEY

Great!

He punches the speaker phone button so Charlie can hear.

TELEPHONE OPERATOR (V.O.)

-- "has been disconnected for non-payment. Please contact your local" --

Bailey slams his fist on the button, silencing the voice.

CHARLIE

Why didn't you pay the bill?

BAILEY

Why didn't I pay the bill?

Bailey surveys the chaos around him, looking for a good excuse. All he sees are pizza boxes, newspapers, baby toys, laundry.

BAILEY

Where the hell is the bill?

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Rows of students in mid-test. We FIND Julia among them. She concentrates, scribbles some calculations. Trig. She notices a guy, P.K., seated to her right, straining to catch a glimpse of her paper. He's a cause-less rebel - unkempt, moody, beautiful.

TEACHER (O.S.)

Remember, if you show the process by which you arrive at your results -- even if the answer is wrong -- I will be awarding partial credit.

She notices his paper. Blank. She ponders his unspoken request. Studies him a second time. She moves her paper all the way to the right side of her desk, lifts her arm -- a clear view.

He smiles. He-lllo! She smiles back.

CUT TO:

EXT. PALACE OF FINE ARTS - DAY

An outdoor afternoon concert. A string quartet is finishing the Brandenburg Concerto. PUSH in on the first violinist: handsome, dark-haired, twenty-nine, wire-rimmed glasses. This is ROSS. He plays intensely. The piece ends. The crowd applauds.

The musicians begin packing up their instruments. Two pretty girls, art students probably, approach Ross to flirt. But he sees someone he knows in the crowd. He waves. He picks up his violin case, extracts himself from the girls and weaves his way over to the edge of the group.

ROSS

Hey.

It's Claudia.

CLAUDIA

Hey.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSS' CAR - DAY

Something cool, but beat up. Maybe a used Saab convertible. U2 blares from the radio. Claudia rides in the passenger seat.

ROSS

How's the Dvorak coming?

CLAUDIA

Okay. The bowing's kinda hard.

ROSS

We'll work on it.

He smiles at her. In another year, she'll be in love with him.

ROSS

Hey, I've got something for you. Look in the back seat.

Laundry. Fast food wrappers. A stray sneaker. Sheet music.

CLAUDIA

I'm afraid.

ROSS

Come on...manilla envelope.

She reaches back, pulls it out. Reads the return address.

CLAUDIA

The William T. Foster Classical
Competition?

ROSS

It's an application. I think we should
enter you. It's in January, though,
which doesn't give us much time...We
could add another day after school,
huh?

CLAUDIA

(panicked)

Another day?

ROSS

I was thinking we get the Vivaldi into
shape -- I won the Melchior with
Vivaldi. What do you think?

A beat. Quietly.

CLAUDIA

They're doing The Crucible at school.
For Christmas. I was gonna audition.

ROSS

(nice, not critical)

Yeah? Since when do you wanna be an
actress, kiddo?

CLAUDIA

I don't. It's just...everybody's
trying out and maybe I could get a
small part or something...I thought
it'd be...you know...fun.

ROSS

The thing is, Claud --

He stops at a light. Turns the music down.

ROSS

-- the thing is -- if you work really
hard on this, I know...I just know
you're good enough to win.

Claudia looks out the window, trapped. The light changes. The car behind honks. Ross moves on without an answer.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Julia and P.K. are just hanging out. He's casual, not exactly a talker. She's nervous. She laughs to herself.

JULIA

It's funny how you see someone every day...I mean, they're one stupid row away from you...and you never actually notice them...

P.K.

(beat, casual)
I noticed you.

JULIA

You did?

P.K.

I copied off you in Health. Twice.

JULIA

Great.

P.K.

Yeah, I meant to thank you.

He lights a cigarette. Offers one to her.

JULIA

No, thanks.

(a beat)

I quit.

(a beat)

All that research about secondary smoke...it just seemed wrong...

(he looks at her blankly)

Not that it isn't a personal choice --

P.K.

-- You wanna go out sometime?

He touches her face, gently, brushes hair out of her eyes. Completely unexpected. Her heart stops.

JULIA

Uh-huh.

(afraid of seeming too innocent)
Whenever you want.

P.K.

Whenever I want, huh?

(beat)

What if I wanna show you the middle of the Golden Gate Bridge at three in the morning?

JULIA

...I'll be there.

P.K.

Really? You mean your folks --

(it dawns on him)

Oh, right. I heard -- I heard about that.

(beat)

A car accident?

JULIA

I don't wanna talk about it.

P.K.

(nods, then)

My Dad left a couple of years ago --

JULIA

-- That's not the same thing.

P.K.

Guess not.

(beat)

Whenever I want, huh?

JULIA

No one tells me what to do.

CUT TO:

INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY

A grownup lives here. Real furniture. Art, not posters. A view. In the corner, a drafting table, above it, a bulletin board with a selection of type-styles.

We FIND Charlie in bed.

CHARLIE

I did something very wrong.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL a woman wrapped around him. JOANNA. Thirty-one, pretty. This was a spur-of-the-moment tryst. She still wears her watch, knee socks.

JOANNA

Oh, I don't know. Shall we put that to a vote?

He gets out of bed, stands naked in front of the mantle.

CHARLIE

Jesus, it's way off. Would you look at that, Joanna? Doesn't that look crooked to you?

JOANNA

It's fine. Really. You're looking at a very satisfied customer.

They both smile at the double-meaning.

CHARLIE

I was going to build a mantle like this at the place on Potrero.

JOANNA

I thought you weren't gonna get fancy. Just go in, clean it up, slap some paint on the walls -- and stick a For Sale sign in the window.

CHARLIE

I think with a little craftsmanship we can jack up the price.

She's about to give him some advice, thinks better of it. She tosses him his pants instead.

JOANNA

Hey, I got a four o'clock at the Embarcadero. You gotta go.

CHARLIE

Howard? You know, the guy who's arranging the deal? He says the place'll be ours in a couple of days. You maybe wanna take some Chinese or something over there on Friday? I could show you what we plan to do.

JOANNA

It's gonna get pretty crazy for me by the end of the week.

(feeling guilty)

I guess I could do dinner tonight.

CHARLIE

Great.... No, wait, I can't tonight. I forgot. Family thing.

JOANNA

Okay. So, we'll leave it vague then.

CHARLIE

Vague's good.

He pulls her in for a kiss, looks at her. An afterthought:

CHARLIE
Hey, you cut your hair...

She smiles. This is how well they know each other.

JOANNA
No.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

START ON a backed up sink, and PAN DOWN to the lower portion of a man's body, wearing plumber's overalls, lying on the kitchen floor. Bailey and Claudia pace nervously back and forth.

PLUMBER (O.S.)
Well, your verticals are shot to hell.
(he emerges)
I tried to snake 'em, but they're thin
as toilet paper. We're gonna have to
do some major re-piping.

He starts knocking on the walls, notices the doormat, a.k.a. Thurber.

PLUMBER
What's with him?

CLAUDIA
He's a little moody --

BAILEY
-- Look, is this gonna be expensive?

PLUMBER
(turning to him; sincere)
You worried Mom and Dad are gonna take
it out of your allowance, son?

BAILEY
Something like that, yeah.

PLUMBER
Conservative estimate...six hundred
bucks.
(off their shock)
And I'm gonna need half of that up
front to pay for materials.
(they haven't blinked)
A check'd be just dandy.

Bailey numbly sits down with the checkbook. Stares at it.

BAILEY
What happened to check 917?

CLAUDIA

Don't look at me. I pay cash.

BAILEY

Plus, there's a thirty-five dollar balance...

(back to the plumber)

Excuse me.... Is there any way you could get started on the job and we could maybe get you a check...tomorrow?

PLUMBER

Sorry, gang. That's not the way I work. You know what -- why don't you give me a call when your folks are back in town, okay?

(packing up his tools)

I'll just need fifty.

(off their shock)

For the estimate.

(they haven't blinked)

Cash'd be dandy.

Owen toddles in, starts crying. Bailey scoops him up.

BAILEY

Fifty. Right.

(digging in his pants)

I got seventeen...

CLAUDIA

(doing the same)

Six.

Bailey opens a drawer, comes up with a roll of quarters.

BAILEY

That's ten more.

CLAUDIA

Great for those parking meters....

The plumber stands there, tapping his foot. Bailey and Claudia exchange a look of panic. Bailey hands Owen over.

BAILEY

He's yours.

CUT TO:

INT. STORE - NIGHT

A bored SALESGIRL, sits behind her register. An unseen hand drops a leather jacket on the counter in front of her. The salesgirl looks up. Checks the jacket.

REVEAL Julia on the other side of the counter. She pulls something from her wallet.

JULIA
 Can I sign over a check for 250?
 (hands it over)
 Knights of Pythagoras. It's good.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER'S BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

A neighborhood hangout. Crowded, noisy, friendly. Over the bar, a sign that tells us this is "Salinger's" -- it used to be their dad's place. Bailey, Claudia, and Charlie, carrying Owen, enter.

BAILEY
 All I'm saying is, there's no way we're gonna make the next fifteen thousand bucks last six months if we're all writing checks.

CHARLIE
 And leasing Jeeps.

CLAUDIA
 We like the Jeep.

BAILEY
 (pissed)
 My point is, I could've swung the Jeep and the phone bill and the plumber if I'd known what everyone else was spending.

CHARLIE
 That's not the problem, Bailey. Your problem is we've got thirty five bucks left in the account.

JOE MANGUS, the owner, comes over. Swats Bailey with a towel.

JOE
 If it isn't the Salingers, right on time! Where does the week go?

BAILEY
 Hiya, Joe. Julia here?

JOE
 Haven't seen her. Save room for dessert, Claud -- I got your dad's mud pie.

Joe steers them toward the back. As they weave their way around tables, nodding to the waitresses and regulars:

CHARLIE
 Face it, Bay, it's a mistake to hand
 (more)

CHARLIE (cont'd)
 you guys the next six month chunk all
 at once. Not when you don't know how
 to make it last.

BAILEY
 Oh, really, Mr. Can You Spot Me Twenty
 'Til I Get A Job?

Bailey and Claudia slide into a back booth. Charlie straps Owen
 into a waiting highchair and joins them.

CLAUDIA
 (looking around)
 Where is she?

CHARLIE
 Look, I'll go to the bank tomorrow and
 get twenty five hundred. But it's got
 to last you all October. That's the
 way we're gonna do it from now on --
 one month at a time.

BAILEY
 Wait a sec. Since when is that your
 decision?

CHARLIE
 As the executor of the estate, Mr.
 Graham worked it so that I'm the legal
 guardian.

BAILEY
 (getting pissed)
 Yeah, on paper. You're our guardian on
paper, Charlie.

CLAUDIA
 And only 'cuz someone had to be.

Charlie looks at them. Tries a different, less belligerent tack.

CHARLIE
 The fact of the matter is: you guys've
 spent practically every cent you've
 got.

(Bailey starts to interject)
 -- It's true, Bailey. I'm not blaming
 you. I mean, what do a bunch of kids
 know about managing money, huh?

CLAUDIA
 Are we in trouble?
 (turning to him, nervous)
 Bailey? Are we?

CHARLIE

Look, Mr. Graham gives me the check
twice a year, so it's up to me to say
how the money's doled out.

(off their looks)

I'm sorry, guys. That's just how it
is.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bailey is watching the sports report on T.V., while lobbing a basketball into the regulation hoop secured over a doorway, when Julia enters wearing her new leather jacket.

BAILEY

Where were you?

JULIA

Union Square. Shopping.
(modeling it)
What do you think?

BAILEY

(a fleeting glance)
I think you better not have paid for
that with check 917.

JULIA

I paid for it with my own money, thank
you very much.
(a beat)
It's for tomorrow night.

Her face says "ask me, ask me." He doesn't.

JULIA

I've got a date.

But Bailey's not listening. Something interests him on T.V. She tries again.

JULIA

This guy in trig. P.K. -- ?

BAILEY

-- You missed dinner, you know.

JULIA

(studies him; irritated)
'S'okay. I grabbed something.

BAILEY

You know what I mean, Julia. You
missed dinner.

JULIA

So what? It's not the end of the
world.

BAILEY

We agreed it was gonna be the one thing
we all did --

JULIA

-- Why? Twice a week, we sit around Dad's restaurant and eat with napkins instead of paper towels. That's about being a family?

BAILEY

It's about checking in with each other, making sure everyone still has a pulse.

Julia raises a hand to her neck, takes her pulse.

JULIA

Yup. Still beating. Satisfied?

She moves past him, and heads upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING (NEW DAY)

Claudia is solemnly considering the box of cereal in front of her. Bailey's trying to scrounge up breakfast. Thurber sits on a kitchen chair, eating kibble from a cereal bowl on the table.

CLAUDIA

Servings per box: 14.

Bailey pours himself a bowl. A huge bowl.

CLAUDIA

Okay, let's say 10 servings per box. At \$4.79, cost per serving is 48 cents.

BAILEY

Hey, Ow, you want some banana, pal?

CLAUDIA

Versus, a large pizza...With assorted toppings -- let's say, sausage, onions, peppers --

BAILEY

-- Look, if you're calling in an order, you'll have to use payphone. Phone's not gonna be hooked up til Tuesday.

CLAUDIA

I figure nine bucks for eight slices. What's that per slice?

Julia enters.

JULIA

F.Y.I. --

CLAUDIA
-- By my calculations --

JULIA
F.Y.I.! --

BAILEY
(head in the fridge)
-- How 'bout I mush up some -- what're these, apricots?

CLAUDIA
-- cereal's much more economical for breakfast than pizza is.
(noticing Owen's disinterest)
Hey, Bay, check out the wheel! Charlie fed him before he took off this morning.

JULIA
AHEM! I moved into Mom and Dad's room. For all the time Charlie spends here, he can put his stuff in the attic and sleep on the sofa.

A beat of silence. Bailey withdraws from the fridge.

JULIA
I'm fifteen, I'm almost a woman, and I need my privacy.

BAILEY
Hey, if anyone's gonna get that room --

JULIA
My stuff's already in it. And possession is nine tenths of the law.

CLAUDIA
What's that supposed to mean?
(to Bailey)
Do you know what that means?

JULIA
It means, it's my room now. So get used to it.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - PAYPHONE - DAY

Claudia jiggles Owen on her hip as Bailey struggles to have a phone conversation, one ear plugged against the street noise.

BAILEY
Isn't there anyone you could send sooner?...Uh-huh...Uh-huh...No, I
(more)

BAILEY (cont'd)
 totally agree...the right
 qualifications are key...but immediate
 availability is also a top priority...

An ambulance SCREAMS by.

BAILEY
 I'm sorry, what about an agency fee?
 Oh, no, not at all. That seems very --
 (swallows hard)
 -- reasonable. Can I call you back?

He hangs up.

CLAUDIA
 An agency fee?

BAILEY
 Fifteen percent of a full year's
 salary.
 (Claudia whistles)
 Well, what choice to we have?
 Department of Social Services says
 Owen's gotta have a qualified nanny.
 So whatever it costs...

CLAUDIA
 You know, I thought of a way to cut
 back. I could, you know, give up my
 lessons. Thirty five bucks, twice a
 week -- that's a lot of money...

BAILEY
 You don't need to do that, Claud.

CLAUDIA
 No, it's okay. I mean...it's kinda
 getting to be a drag anyway. All that
 practicing.

BAILEY
 Really? A drag?
 (she nods)
 Yeah, I hated those stupid piano
 lessons Mom made me take. Mrs.
 Gotfrend. "Poise, posture, position..."
 (he shudders)
 Boy, every time I get a whiff of
 peppermint schnapps --

CLAUDIA
 -- It'd be nice to have some free time,
 too, you know? Everyone in my class is
 auditioning for this play...
 (a beat)
 So, I guess I'll tell Ross.

Sounds like a statement, but really, she's asking.

BAILEY

Great. Seventy bucks a week'd help a lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALF-PAINTED HOUSE - DAY

Charlie and his friend, DOUG -- paint-splattered and exhausted -- clean up a job-site. Charlie grabs a ladder --

CHARLIE

You wanna give me a hand?
(Doug's oblivious)
YOU WANNA GIVE ME A HAND WITH THIS?

DOUG

Alright, for Christ -- I'm coming!
(goes over)
What's eating you?

Charlie shoots him a look.

DOUG

He's late! I know he's late.
(picking up the ladder)
Howard's like that.

CHARLIE

Oh, yeah? Great. Maybe you should've said something before we each forked over twelve thousand bucks and trusted him to arrange this thing.

DOUG

Watch the curb --

CHARLIE

The bank's gotta be closed by now. I wanted to sign all the papers today. The place should've been ours today.

They load the ladder onto their truck.

DOUG

You're wound a little too tight, you know that, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Yeah? It's a lot of money!

DOUG

This is a business relationship. You gotta be flexible. We'll sign the papers tomorrow.

CHARLIE

Hey, you know what -- I don't wanna hear it, okay? He's your friend. He said he would be here three hours ago. I thought you called him --

DOUG

-- And he told me he was coming over.

CHARLIE

That makes me nervous.

DOUG

Howard's like that.

CHARLIE

Would you STOP!

A woman peaks her head out from the front door.

CLIENT

Is everything okay? Is there a problem, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Everything's fine, Mrs. Ellison. We'll be back tomorrow morning to finish up.

(turns to Doug; calm)

I wanna have the time to do really good work in the place. Something we can show off -- be proud of. I don't wanna lose time while this guy jerks us around!

Doug claps him on the shoulder -- not to worry.

DOUG

Chill out. He'll be here.

CUT TO:

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Claudia moves through the junky shop, up to the counter. She hoists her violin case onto the glass counter, opens it.

CLAUDIA

How much?

She's seen too many movies. The pawnbroker smiles.

PAWNBROKER

I dunno. What were you hoping to get?

CLAUDIA

It's a Guiniveri. 1871. See? Inside? It's signed.

She tips the violin so that he can peer inside. He thinks for a moment.

PAWNBROKER
Two seventy five.

CLAUDIA
That's all?! It's worth way more than that!

PAWNBROKER
Not to me.

CLAUDIA
The bow's got real mother of pearl...
And you can have the case. Six hundred.

PAWNBROKER
Honey, I buy it from you for six, I gotta sell it for seven. And no one comes in here looking to buy a seven hundred dollar fiddle, see? I can go three fifty, that's it.

A long beat.

CLAUDIA
Okay.

He counts out the money.

PAWNBROKER
There you go. Your ticket.

She nods solemnly, starts for the door. Remembers something. Stops. Claudia returns to the desk, opens the violin case, removes the photograph of her mother. She looks at the picture, before slipping it into her pocket. She turns back to the broker. *

CLAUDIA
You're not gonna put it in the window, are you?
(he looks up)
Could you put it somewhere in the back?
Just so it doesn't sell right away... *

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER PHONE BOOTH - EVENING

Bailey's still there, this time with Will -- who's rocking an unhappy Owen in his stroller. Bailey's on the phone. On hold. *

WILL
He's squirring.

BAILEY

So? Talk to him, sing to him. For God's sake -- haven't you ever taken care of a baby before?

WILL

No.

BAILEY

His formula bottle's in the diaper bag.
(into the phone)
Yeah, I'm holding.
(to Will)
Give me a quarter.

*
*
*

WILL

I thought you came prepared.

BAILEY

I have been here all day! I ran out!
Now give me a quarter!!

WILL

(handing him one)
Coach said, if you miss another practice, you don't start on Saturday.

*
*

BAILEY

Did you explain the situation?

WILL

I told him you were changing diapers.
He didn't seem to get it.

BAILEY

(back on the phone)
I'm still here. One baby, that's right. A year old. Should I give you the address again?
(beat)
Is there an agency fee? Of course.

He hangs up. Will looks at him.

WILL

Is there an agency fee? Do I know you?
(Bailey shoots him a look)
Listen -- about Kelly -- either you make a move -- or I'm moving in --

BAILEY

-- Would you relax?

WILL

No. I am not throwing away my chances with one of the top...five prospects in the entire class --

BAILEY

-- Fine. She's yours! Make your move.

A beat. Actually, this torture's just pretend.

WILL

Nah, forget it! You like her. Come on, do it tonight. Call her up. Right now --

(hands him a quarter)

We'll go to the movies. Cruise around in your jeep --

BAILEY

(returns the quarter)

-- Sorry. Nanny interview at seven o'clock. Besides I'm getting rid --

The phone RINGS. He picks it up.

BAILEY

Speaking.

(beat)

That's right -- a '94. Brand-spanking new. A mere four hundred a month...

(back to Will)

...I gotta dump the jeep.

And he drops Owen back in Will's arms.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a potential NANNY -- a lovely woman in her thirties.

NANNY

The agency told me about your...situation. I'd love to help.

Thurber pads through, like Hamlet following his father's ghost. She follows him with her eyes.

BAILEY

Don't mind him. He's in a mood.

NANNY

(nods, I see)

Owen seems like a very sweet little boy.... So much younger than the rest of you....

*
*
*

BAILEY

Yeah, he was kind of an accident.
(let's get to the point)
Look, when can you start?

*
*
*

NANNY

I have...a few questions first. I think it's essential that my child-rearing philosophy coincides with the family's.

Bailey just nods -- playing along.

NANNY

For example -- I'm wondering what your feelings are about pro-actively teaching a child Owen's age.

BAILEY

You know -- whatever.

NANNY

.... Whatever?

(moves past that)

I'm from the developmental school. I believe in allowing a child to progress at his own pace -- with an emphasis on building self-esteem.

BAILEY

That would be great! Self-esteem would be great!

NANNY

(a long beat)

What about potty training? Do you plan to force the issue, or permit Owen to say when he's ready?

BAILEY

(smiles)

Actually, my sister Claudia cleans up most of the poop around here. You ought to ask her that question.

NANNY

(a long, dead-pan beat)

...Have you read any Piaget?

BAILEY

(stumped)

Piaget? I don't think --

(beat)

Tell me how it starts, maybe I'll remember.

NANNY

(rising swiftly)

I'm afraid this isn't the ideal situation for me.

BAILEY

(stands, panicked)

YES IT IS! Sure it is -- we're an incredible family...and, and you get weekends and holidays off...and I'll go to the library tonight and read Pia...Pia...

NANNY

Thank you so much for your time. I think I need to work in a more structured environment.

(shakes his hand)

There's an odor coming from your kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

A packed, dark, sweaty sardine can of a club. The music LOUD beyond belief: treble, inaudible, just a throbbing base. One tempo segues into another, unending.

We FIND Julia and P.K. in the middle of the dance floor. He's into the music, eyes closed, in his own world. Julia dances next to him, trying to mirror his moves. She looks a little out of her element -- but the leather jacket's helping. He puts his hands on her waist and pulls her close, and pelvis to pelvis, they dance.

JULIA

IT'S HOT IN HERE....

P.K.

YEAH, THEY'RE A PRETTY EXCELLENT GROUP. YOU WANT SOMETHING TO DRINK?

JULIA

WHAT? I'M SORRY...

P.K.

LIKE A BEER OR SOMETHING?

JULIA

WHATEVER.

And he heads over to the bar leaving her stranded in the middle of the dancefloor. She self-consciously makes her way to the edge, where she bumps into --

CHARLIE

-- JULIA?

JULIA

CHARLIE, HEY!

CHARLIE
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE? YOU
SHOULDN'T --

JULIA
(so casual)
-- DATE. I'M ON A DATE. HOW 'BOUT
YOU?

CHARLIE
(ignoring that)
HOW'D YOU GET IN?

JULIA
GUY I'M WITH KNOWS THE BOUNCER.

CHARLIE
WHICH ONE IS HE?

JULIA
DARK HAIR, RED SHIRT -- BY THE BAR?

Charlie spots him at the bar, ordering drinks. Julia sees Doug enter the club, look around for Charlie. Julia waves to him.

CHARLIE
THIS GUY, HE DRIVE YOU?

JULIA
WHAT'RE YOU, MY BIG BROTHER?
WE TOOK THE BUS, OKAY?
(as Doug approaches)
HEY, DOUGIE.

DOUG
JULS. COOL JACKET.

CHARLIE
JULIA, I REALLY DON'T THINK --

JULIA
(a peck on the cheek)
-- I KNOW, BUT I LOVE YOU ANYWAY.
LATER.

And she breezes past them, over to P.K. at the bar. He hands her a drink.

P.K.
YOU KNOW THOSE TWO GUYS?

JULIA
(flirting)
MAYBE I DO. WHY? YOU JEALOUS?
(he shrugs)
THE ONE IN THE BASEBALL JACKET'S MY
BROTHER. THE OTHER GUY...

She hesitates. Comes up with a lie.

JULIA
...WE KINDA WENT OUT FOR A WHILE OVER
THE SUMMER.

An older guy. He's impressed.

P.K.
NO KIDDING.

He turns back to look at them. Charlie and Doug are engaged in an animated screaming match -- over what, we're too far away to hear. Charlie's the aggressor here, red-faced, seething. He hauls off and slugs Doug. We can barely make out:

CHARLIE
YOU SON-OF-A-BITCH!

Charlie tears out of the club. Doug stands there, trying to catch his breath. P.K. turns to Julia.

P.K.
THAT ABOUT YOU?

JULIA
I don't think so.
(a sigh)
THAT'S JUST MY BROTHER...

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Bailey and Claudia stand on the stairs -- looking up toward the second floor.

BAILEY
Did you see what he looked like?

CLAUDIA
Did you smell what he smelled like?

BAILEY
They've got the door closed.

CLAUDIA
Don't you think you oughta do
something?

BAILEY
I guess... I don't know... Like what?

He looks to her for guidance. She shrugs. She's twelve, for Christ's sake.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - THE PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julia stands with her back against the wall. P.K. moves around the room, around the large double bed, looking at things.

P.K.
So, this is your room, huh?

He stops at a wedding picture on the bureau.

P.K.
Those your folks?

JULIA
Yeah.

P.K.
Geez, get a load of those lapels.
(another beat)
She's pretty, your mom.

Julia looks at the picture, then quickly looks away. It hurts too much. *

JULIA
You wanna kiss me? *

He looks at her, and laughs.

P.K.
Sure. Sure I want to.
(as he walks to her)
You got some music?

JULIA
I haven't moved my stereo in yet.
There's the radio...

She starts for it, but P.K. stops her.

P.K.
Forget it. Doesn't matter.

He presses up against her. Looks at her for a long moment. Then leans in. And kisses her. Only Julia's eyes are wide open. Her first kiss and she wants to know: is this the way it's done? ...Until something else takes over and her eyes close.

Julia's hands go to his hips, and she pulls him toward her. P.K. stops kissing her, startled by this forwardness.

JULIA
What? What'd I do?

P.K.
Nothing. You just...

JULIA
 (God, I screwed up)
 What?

P.K.
 ...Surprise me, is all.

JULIA
 Oh.
 (she smiles)
 Oh.

And they stand there against the wall, kissing. The lights of the whole world just outside the window.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie's just come in, agitated. At the foot of the stairs:

CLAUDIA
 She's kinda busy. I wouldn't inter --

CHARLIE
 -- JULIA, WOULD YOU GET DOWN HERE?

Julia appears at the top of the stairs.

JULIA
 What the hell are you screaming -- ?

CHARLIE
 Family conference. Now!

P.K. appears next to her.

JULIA
 You are un-friggin-believable!
 (to P.K.)
 I'm sorry about this.

She leads him to the door. Wishes it were private.

P.K.
 Golden Gate Bridge. Three A.M.?

JULIA
 (she smiles)
 Not tonight.
 (a beat; hopeful)
 See ya tomorrow?

P.K.
 Sure.

He leaves. She turns, all eyes on Charlie now.

JULIA

This better be so good.

He takes a long beat -- getting up the nerve. Hesitantly:

CHARLIE

We, uh -- we got a problem we gotta talk about. And it's gonna work out -- I'll work it out --

JULIA

-- For God's sake, Charlie -- you already screwed up my night! You wanna tell us what's going on -- or are we just gonna stand here?

CHARLIE

Me and Doug and a friend of his were gonna buy this condo...fix it up and sell it. The whole thing was gonna take a month, tops. We would have doubled our money...no question. Except the guy took the money...and split.

BAILEY

How much money did you lose?

CHARLIE

Twelve. Thousand.

JULIA

Of your own money, right?

A long beat of silence.

JULIA

You are an incredible jerk, you know that, Charlie?

CLAUDIA

What does this mean? Are we in big trouble?

BAILEY

(anger building)
So much for your lectures on responsibility, huh? Is that why you wanted control of the account -- so you could PISS it away yourself?

CHARLIE

Hey -- I was trying to do something good, here! This investment was for all of us --

BAILEY
 (exploding)
 -- Oh, SAVE IT, Charlie!

JULIA
 What are we gonna do for the next six
 months, until we get another check?
 (a beat)
 How much do we have left?

BAILEY
 Well, we got twenty-five hundred
 yesterday. That's it.

JULIA
 That's it? We have to hire a nanny --
 fix the sink, pay the phone bill --

BAILEY
 -- and we got a mortgage payment next
 Friday. No way we're gonna make that.

A beat of silence.

JULIA
 So we go to Mr. Graham and ask for an
 advance. *

BAILEY
 No! *

JULIA
 Why not? It's an emergency! *

BAILEY
 'Cause we gotta seem in charge, Julia!
 We gotta seem like we can handle
 everything ourselves -- like a normal
 family. Or else they have an excuse to
 split us up. *

Julia gets to her feet. Turns to look at Charlie, disgusted. *

JULIA
 Great, Charlie. Thanks. Thanks a lot. *

And she storms out. A beat. Bailey takes a deep breath. *

BAILEY
 So, I guess, whatever we have to give
 up, we'll give up. And we'll let
 everyone think that you're this great
 guy who's trying to keep his family
 together. That you're just like a
parent to us. *

(looks Charlie in the eye)
 Even if we know it's a lie. *

A sudden, WRENCHING SOB.

Charlie and Bailey turn to see Claudia, taking in heaving breaths, choking back tears.

CHARLIE
Claudia, what is it -- ?

BAILEY
-- What's the matter?

CLAUDIA
-- I'm scared.... I'm so scared...

Bailey and Charlie look at each other, their anger instantly diffused.

BAILEY
Don't be.

CHARLIE
We'll work it out somehow.

But Claudia shakes her head, unconsolable.

CLAUDIA
This wouldn't have happened if Mom and
Daddy were here.
(struggling)
Why aren't they here?
(a whisper)
I miss them...

Charlie goes to her.

CHARLIE
We all do, Claud.
(holding her)
But we're going to be okay. I promise
you. I promise you.

She buries her head in his neck, and he holds her as tight as he can. Like a father.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - THE GIRLS' ROOM - NIGHT

Claudia, dead asleep. A hand comes in, shakes her gently.

BAILEY

(a whisper)

Hey, Claud.... Claud....

Claudia reluctantly half opens her eyes, hears from down the hall the SOUND of Owen CRYING. This is her cue.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - THE GUYS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claudia finishes changing Owen's diaper, without so much as opening her eyes. Bailey can't bear to watch -- some things are too disgusting to even contemplate. Claudia drops the dirty diaper in the bin.

BAILEY

Thanks, Claud...

CLAUDIA

Nnnnnnn.

And she staggers, zombie like, back down the hall.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - BATHROOM - NEW DAY

Bailey's in the shower, trying to wake up, by letting a stream of water pound his forehead. A KNOCK on the bathroom door.

BAILEY

Yeah? What?

JULIA (O.S.)

You've been in there forever. Can I just get my stuff?

Julia barges in, routes in the drawers for some toiletries. Bailey peers around the shower curtain, sees it's her.

BAILEY

Hey, Julia? You know that guy you were with last night...P.J.?

JULIA

K.... P.K.

Bailey resumes showering.

BAILEY

Anyway...he seems like...you know...
don't take this the wrong way or
anything...but kinda a creep, don't you
think?...Will knows him from shop class
and said for his final project, he made
a gun rack...A gun rack. What's that
about, huh? He just seems like not the
kinda guy to get too hung up on or
anything...you know what I mean?
Julia?

(nothing)

Julia?

He peers around the curtain. She's long gone.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Claudia's eating cereal in front of the T.V., Bailey's shooting
hoops, and Julia's playing peek-a-boo with Owen as she gets him
dressed. Charlie walks in front of the set, snaps it off.

*
*
*

JULIA

What? Another announcement?

BAILEY

What did you do this time? Lose the
house in a poker game?

Charlie lets that go.

CHARLIE

Look, I know I screwed up...So, uh --
I'm gonna do what I should have been
doing all along. I'm gonna be around
here a lot more. I'm gonna take more
responsibility. I'm gonna look after
you guys.

(beat)

Okay, Claud?

*
*
*
*
*

A beat. They are momentarily stunned. Thurber barks excitedly.

CHARLIE

At least someone's happy about it.

He starts upstairs. Remembers something.

CHARLIE

Oh, and Julia, you gotta clear your
stuff out of Mom and Dad's room, and
you better put my stuff back where you
found it.

JULIA

What?!

CHARLIE

If I'm gonna be here every night, I'm not sleeping on the sofa.

JULIA

What gives you the right?

CHARLIE

-- I'm twenty-four years old. I'm the only adult here. End of story.

(beat)

Either you move your stuff out, or I throw it out.

He heads upstairs, Thurber following. They sit in dumb silence. Owen waddles over and turns the television back on.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - THE GIRLS' ROOM - DAY

Claudia's on her bed, feet against the wall, head hanging over the bed, glumly watching Julia move her stuff back in.

CLAUDIA

You ever see those people with like ten dogs on a leash? I could do that. Dog-walking. What do you think that pays?

JULIA

Beats me. You wanna clear out these drawers?

CLAUDIA

Have you figured out what kind of job you're gonna get to help? Maybe something in a store.

JULIA

Look, would you just shut up for a few minutes. Please?

CLAUDIA

What's your problem?

(off her silence)

Hey, it's not like I want you to move back in here, either.

JULIA

Whenever P.K. comes over, you'd better get lost.

Claudia's hurt by this. So, to hurt back:

CLAUDIA

He's kinda stupid, isn't he? Bay thought he was held back a year.

JULIA

He's not stupid. He just doesn't care about school. He cares about having a good time, doing crazy things just to do 'em, just 'cuz it's a rush.

Claudia picks up Julia's trophy.

CLAUDIA

Gee, you two have so much in common.

JULIA

Maybe we do.

CLAUDIA

Sure. Teacher's pet....

JULIA

That's right, and what has it gotten me? A pathetic, lousy trophy?

She grabs it out of Claudia's hands.

JULIA

It's stupid. It's all just a stupid waste of time. Because, tomorrow, it could all be over -- just like that.

She tosses the trophy in the waste basket.

JULIA

(a beat; then, sadly)

It could be over...before I've had any fun at all.

Claudia doesn't know what to say. Julia returns to unpacking her things.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Bailey is sorting bills on the kitchen table.

CHARLIE

What's this?

BAILEY

(pointing to the two piles)

Pay now. Pay later.

CHARLIE

Cable? That's a "pay now"?

BAILEY
Hey, man. ESPN.

Point taken.

BAILEY
Besides, we're up seventy a week from
Claudia's lessons.

CHARLIE
She's giving up her lessons?
(Bailey nods, distracted)
And you said she could do that?

BAILEY
If she wants to quit, why shouldn't
she?

CHARLIE
Because she's good, you moron. She's
really good. You can't just let her
give it up...It's a priority.
(a beat)
You know what else, Bay? It's also a
connection she has to Mom. *
*

Bailey picks up the cable bill, puts it in the "pay later" pile.

BAILEY
I guess if I wanna watch a game, I can
go to Will's.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

A TENT, half-assembled, has appeared in the middle of the room.
It moves. It's alive!

CHARLIE (O.S.)
No, Claud... Claud!... Don't loosen
that! Wait, wait! Just pull this thing
tight -

CLAUDIA (O.S.)
-- I'm pulling! I'm pulling!

CHARLIE (O.S.)
And I'll snap --

-- The whole tent snaps into place. Perfect. Claudia pokes her
head out. Charlie pokes his head out next to hers. She smiles.

CLAUDIA
Pretty neat, huh?

CHARLIE
Yeah. Not too shabby.

In the background, the doorbell RINGS.

CLAUDIA

(climbing out)

I'll just move my sleeping bag in. One side can be my bedroom, the other'll be my living area. I might even invite you over for dinner one night.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BAILEY is giving nanny candidate #2, MRS. PICK -- think Mary Poppins, a tour of the house. She carries Owen.

MRS. PICK

Ooohh. Isn't he a perfect love?

BAILEY

Oh, absolutely. A love.

They move into the dining room, sidestepping four foot high piles of newspapers and assorted magazines strewn like a minefield. Mrs. Pick steps over a whimpering Thurber.

MRS. PICK

Is your dog ill?

BAILEY

Moody. Claudia, Charlie, this is Mrs. Pick.

Mrs. Pick's face registers fleeting disapproval as she surveys Claudia's new bedroom.

MRS. PICK

Well, hello, Claudia. I see your family's going on a camping trip?

CLAUDIA

Uh...no. We've kinda got a space problem, my sister and me.

CHARLIE

This is gonna be her room from now on. We believe in creative solutions around here.

Mrs. Pick turns to Bailey.

BAILEY

We never really eat in the dining room anyway.

MRS. PICK
 (still smiling)
 You know what? I think I neglected to
 leave my emergency parking break on.
 It's okay -- I can see myself out.

She hands Owen back to Bailey and quickly exits. A beat.
 Perhaps they look out the window to see her scurrying away as
 fast as she can.

BAILEY
 She's history, right?

CLAUDIA
 Ancient.
 (a beat)
 Should I lose the tent?

CHARLIE
 Neh.

BAILEY
 The hell with her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHOE STORE - DAY

Bailey sits on a bench, holding a clipboard, filling out a job
 application. Will sits beside him, practicing gripping a
 football.

BAILEY
 Mind if they contact you in case of an
 emergency?

WILL
 It's a shoe store. What kinda
 emergency are they expecting?

Bailey shoots him a look, writes something on the application.

WILL
 Hey... Sonya Woodruff's on the rebound.
 She and the Ox broke up.

BAILEY
 No kidding...

WILL
 So... ask her out.

BAILEY
 Sonya? I thought you had me and Kelly
 walking down the aisle.

WILL
 You know what? I had study hall with
 Kelly yesterday.
 (leaning forward conspiratorially)
 The elevator only goes to the
 mezzanine, if you get my drift. But
Sonya... She's not gonna be unattached
 for long.

BAILEY
 I'll have to take my chances.

WILL
 Oh come on, man, don't let life pass
 you by.

Bailey looks away, spots a pretty girl, window shopping, a few
 yards away. She chooses that precise moment to turn around and
 smile at him. The kind of smile that makes you feel better about
 everything. Bailey smiles back. Turns to Will.

BAILEY
 You know what? The right girl'll wait.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Owen sits on Charlie's lap, and together they peruse the
 classifieds.

CHARLIE
 What about this, tiger: Quality
 cabinet maker requires highly skilled
 carpenter. Ten years experience.
 (beat)
 Owen, man, it is tough out there.

The front door opens. Julia.

CHARLIE
 What are you doing?

JULIA
 Walking in the front door. What about
 that is confusing you -- ?

CHARLIE
 -- School was over two hours ago! Next
 time you're gonna be late, I want to
 know.

JULIA
 Who do you think you are?

CHARLIE

Your big brother. And while we're on the subject -- I don't think you should be staying out late on school nights. And definitely no hanging around bars -- no matter who knows the bouncer.

JULIA

You are really pushing it!

CHARLIE

No I'm not. I'm just looking out for you.

(a beat)

Tell me Mom and Dad wouldn't have done the same thing!

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CLAUDIA'S TENT - EVENING

Claudia's laid out a nice little spread for Bailey, Thurber and herself -- pizza all around.

CLAUDIA

Guess what? I'm gonna be a screaming girl in "The Crucible."

BAILEY

No kidding, Claud -- a screaming girl. Sounds like a great part.

CLAUDIA

Yeah, well -- I don't actually have any lines. I just...scream a lot...Wanna hear?

(he nods)

"Stop it! Stop it!"

BAILEY

God, you're good.

(a beat)

Listen, what we talked about before... I was wrong. Your violin lessons are real important. You shouldn't quit.

CLAUDIA

(looks away)

Thanks, but...we can't afford them.

BAILEY

We'll figure out a way. We'll scrimp on something else.

CLAUDIA

No. I don't think that's a good idea.

BAILEY
Sure it is! It's no problem, Claud --

CLAUDIA
Wait! I thought you were on my side!

BAILEY
Your side? What are you talking about?
I don't want you giving up something
you love.

CLAUDIA
I don't love it! I'm sick of it! I
can't ever do anything else.
(a beat)
No one's gonna be disappointed if I
quit, anyway. Not anymore.

CUT TO:

INT. HAIGHT-ASHBURY COFFEE HOUSE - NIGHT

P.K. and three of his friends are getting up from a table,
putting their coats on when Julia comes in.

JULIA
Hey, P.K.!

P.K.
(embarrassed by her zeal)
Hey.

The guys stand there looking at her. No introduction is
forthcoming.

P.K.
We were just heading out.

She looks at her watch, confused. They had a date.

JULIA
Where're you guys going?

P.K.
Berkeley.

JULIA
Cool.
(a beat; assuming she can:)
Can I come?

P.K.
Actually, we're gonna camp out for some
Pyro tickets at the Greek, so....

JULIA

Oh. Sure.
 (a beat)
 You want to get together tomorrow
 maybe?

P.K.

Tomorrow...?

JULIA

(trying to keep it light)
 You know, day after today? We could
 see a movie...Get a bite to eat or
 something...

P.K.

Can't. Busy.

P.K. shoots a look over to his friends, who linger at the door,
 impatient.

JULIA

Okay. But you'll call me later?

She's not getting it.

P.K.

Look, just so you understand, we're not
 going out or anything.

JULIA

What?

P.K.

I mean...the other night, that was fun
 and everything, but I don't want you
 hanging around all the time like
 we're...you know...together or
 something...

JULIA

I thought --

P.K.

-- Look --
 (he puts his jacket on)
 I gotta go.

And he leaves her standing there, the wind knocked out of her.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - THE GUYS' ROOM - NIGHT

Bailey's putting a sleeping Owen to bed. Patting him. Whispers:

BAILEY

Sshh...ssh...

(beat)

Listen, just to keep you up to date.
And don't take this the wrong way. But
I'm going crazy, here. So unless I
come up with some kinda nanny soon...
I'm gonna have to sell you off to white
slave traders. I know that's not how
you pictured yourself growing up --
but, hey...welcome to the club.

(beat)

Sleep well.

He gives him a kiss...and quietly walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Claudia sits at the entrance to her tent. A notebook on her lap.
Bailey's doing his homework nearby. Charlie's watching TV,
flipping channels.

CLAUDIA

I'm supposed to come up with three ways
our life has been made better by the
"continuing exploration of space."

(long, long silence)

Three ways.

BAILEY

How about satellites? Like TV?

(beat)

You wanna pitch in, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Huh? I don't know -- better planes.

CLAUDIA

I guess so... That's only two.

Beat. Beat. Are they stuck?

BAILEY

Tang.

Smiles all around. Claudia slams her book shut. Julia walks in,
drops her coat. Quiet. Downcast. They barely notice her.

CLAUDIA

(glancing up)

Where you been?

JULIA

Out.

(beat; hoping for attention)

With that guy -- P.K.

BAILEY
That didn't take long. You've been gone an hour. What, he break up with you?

Her silence says he's hit the nail on the head. Charlie glances up from the TV.

CHARLIE
Well -- I think you're better off.

CLAUDIA
Definitely.

Everyone nods. Julia looks like she's going to cry. Shrugs.

BAILEY
You're not surprised are you?

JULIA
Well --

BAILEY
-- Forget it. You're too good for him anyway.

Not what she needs to hear. She starts out of the room.

CHARLIE
Hey! What happened to our rule -- no going out on school nights?

JULIA
Oh -- piss off, Charlie!

She walks out. Silence. Charlie checks his watch.

CHARLIE
Lights out time, Claudia. Come on.

CLAUDIA
No way! I never go to bed this early! Bailey?

CHARLIE
Starting tonight.

CLAUDIA
Forget it! You can't tell me what to do!

CHARLIE
Oh, yes I can. Read the guardianship agreement --

BAILEY

(he's had enough)
-- Would you shut up about that! A piece of paper doesn't make you a parent.

CHARLIE

You know what, Bailey -- I'm sick of hearing that from you. You gotta problem with this arrangement -- fine. It doesn't have to be this way. You just won't be able to stay together. There'll be no one in charge -- and they'll come in and split you guys up!

(beat)

I'm responsible for this family, and I'm gonna take that responsibility seriously.

BAILEY

Give me a break! You lost the money, not me! You wanna do something for us? We don't need your rules. Go out and get a job!

CHARLIE

I am getting a job!

BAILEY

What?

CHARLIE

...I've got some carpentry stuff in the wings.

BAILEY

Oh, you've always got something in the wings, Charlie. I saw what jobs you circled in the paper -- construction foreman, master carpenter! You're not looking for a job -- you're looking for a career. Well, we need money -- now! You wanna help? -- get a job. Come through for once!

Charlie, seething, doesn't say a word. He grabs his car keys, walks out the front door. Bailey turns to Claudia.

BAILEY

It's late. You should get ready for bed.

She doesn't complain. Not a peep. She turns and heads out.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - THE GIRLS' ROOM - NIGHT

Julia's crying on her bed. A knock at the door.

BAILEY (O.S.)

Hey, Jul, can I come in for a second?

JULIA

No. Leave me alone.

BAILEY (O.S.)

Julia, come on. Just for a sec...

He opens the door, enters.

BAILEY

Are you okay?

JULIA

Fine. Never better. What does it look like?

BAILEY

What's going on with you?

(silence)

Is it about that jerk, P.K.?

JULIA

Is that supposed to make me feel better? Calling him a jerk?

BAILEY

Look, I didn't mean...I'm sorry...

(struggling)

What do you want me to say?

JULIA

I don't know. Something. Something to make me feel better.

BAILEY

The guy made a gun rack in shop class, Jul. He's not for you.

JULIA

That's really the best you can do, isn't it?

(a beat)

I really liked this guy, and he dumped me, Bailey. You don't know what to say because you don't know how that feels. And you can't tell me everything's gonna be okay, because you don't know that it is.

Bailey stands there, trying to come up with a counter argument. She sees him struggling and that makes it worse.

JULIA

(in tears)

God, there's no one...I don't have anyone...there's no one to tell me what to do.

(a beat)

Please, Bailey. Please. Go away.

What else can he do? He leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. JOANNA'S APARTMENT - NEW DAY

Charlie's sitting on the side of the bed -- pulling up his jeans, tucking in his shirt, putting on his work boots. Joanna's at her mirror, checking herself out in a tight skirt.

JOANNA

You think this skirt makes my butt look too big?

CHARLIE

(another world)

What?...No. You look great.

(beat)

You wanna have kids?

JOANNA

(a wave of panic)

You mean in the abstract?

(he smiles)

Someday. Sure. Girls.

CHARLIE

I got a feeling I'm not cut out for it.

(beat)

Too selfish.

JOANNA

I don't know about that. You're pretty generous in bed.

CHARLIE

Not the point. But, thanks.

JOANNA

Hey, you live with them. You're there for them --

CHARLIE

-- They need money. And there's no money in building houses. Not right now. Which means -- if I wanna help,
(more)

CHARLIE (cont'd)

I gotta give that up.

(beat)

The thing is, I really think things are about to take off for me, work-wise. If I could just focus on it. Just for a solid year.

She walks over to the bed. Kisses him. Semi-sympathetic.

JOANNA

It's not fair. I know.

Charlie falls back on the bed. Pulls a cover over him.

CHARLIE

I like it here. It's very peaceful. No one yells at me -- no one calls me a big idiot.

(covers over his head)

Why can't I stay here forever?

Joanna walks over. Pulls the covers off him.

JOANNA

Because I don't trust you with my valuables.

CUT TO:

EXT. SALINGER HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

A WOMAN

Twenty-five years old. So beautiful, it makes your teeth hurt.

WOMAN

Is this the Salinger residence? I'm here to interview for the nanny position?

REVERSE ANGLE

Bailey is standing at the open front door, holding Owen, his mouth agape. Bailey blinks. Thurber perks up, barks -- could this be love? The woman extends her hand.

WOMAN

Kirsten Bennett.

Bailey shakes her hand. She's real.

BAILEY

I'm Bailey. He's Owen. Won't you come in?

And they move into:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

KIRSTEN
He's adorable.

Bailey's having trouble breathing.

BAILEY
Uh-huh...

An awkward pause.

KIRSTEN
So....
(a gentle prompting)
Is there anything you'd like to ask me?

A beat. His mind is a total blank. After a second:

BAILEY
Did you have any trouble getting here?

CUT TO:

INT. ROSS' LOFT - DAY

Ross stands there, in a T-shirt and shorts, drying his hair with a towel. Around him, the artifacts of a single life: an unmade bed, a set of weights. Claudia arrived early -- with news.

ROSS
What do you mean -- you pawned it?

CLAUDIA
-- I had no choice. Lessons are real expensive. And we're kind of strapped right now. Owen has no one to take care of him. I guess I just had to choose between my violin and a nanny for my baby brother.
(beat)
Sorry, Ross. I'm sorry.

ROSS
(a long, long beat)
I know what we need to do. I need to take you on as a scholarship student. No charge...Until you get un-strapped.

CLAUDIA
No! You -- you can't afford to do that.

ROSS
Of course I can. I don't want you stopping your lessons, Claud. Not now. You're right on the verge --

CLAUDIA
Please don't make me do this!

He takes a beat. At last, he gets it.

ROSS
 I would never do that. It's your
 choice. If it's really something you
 don't want to do, then you should stop.
 (a beat)
 But, Claudia, listen to me: you have
 something so rare. You have it... your
 mom had it. That makes it even more
 special.

*
*
*
*

This hits home. Her eyes fill with tears. She knows.

CLAUDIA
 (struggling)
 But it's a big drag sometimes. I can't
 be in the play. I can't do anything
 every other kid does.

He smiles. Takes a second. Then:

ROSS
 You know what? Instead of thinking
 about what you're missing -- try
 thinking about what you have, that
 everyone else is missing. When you
 pick up a violin --
 (he does)
 -- you can make something beautiful
 whenever you want...You know how lucky
 you are?

CLAUDIA
 Not really.

ROSS
 Trust me. The luckiest.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

Joe and Charlie sit at the bar. Joe casually leafs through the
 sports section. Charlie plays with a bowl of chili. Nervous
 stomach.

CHARLIE
 (after a moment)
 I...I need to ask a favor, Joe.

Joe watches him struggle with the question. Finally:

JOE
 How much we talking about?

CHARLIE

Couple thou.

(a beat)

Actually, three thousand would help a lot. I wouldn't ask if we weren't in kinda a tough spot right now.

(quickly)

I'll pay you back, Joe, I swear. I'm waiting for a job to come through right now and as soon as it does....

(it occurs to him)

Or you can have it in trade. You've been talking about having the bar refinished...I could do that for you.

Joe gets up, slowly walks around to the other side of the bar, considering this. *

JOE *

Actually, I kinda like it the way it is. It's got...character. *

He runs his finger over a vertical column of nicks along the back of the bar -- a height chart, with corresponding names, dates and ages of the Salinger clan.

JOE

I've known you for a lot of inches, kiddo.

(a beat)

Three thou? Okay, you got it.

CHARLIE

Really? God, thanks, man. That's great. I really appreciate it.

JOE

Every week I'll just take a little chunk out of your paycheck.

CHARLIE

Yeah, once I get a paycheck, right?

Joe reaches under the bar, tosses Charlie a bartending guide.

JOE

You got one. Quick. How d'ya make a Singapore Sling?

CHARLIE

You want me to bartend? Here? Come on, Joe, I said I'd find a way to pay you back and I meant it.

(Joe smiles)

What?

JOE

Deja vu, huh? How many times -- back when your dad owned this place -- have I seen you stand right there in that spot and say exactly that?

*
*
*
*
*

CHARLIE

What? You gonna call me a flake, too?
(a beat)
He and I never had a fight that he didn't call me that.

JOE

You need the money, Charlie, it's yours. But you gotta work for it. I'm willing to give you a job, not a handout. But it means you gotta take this seriously, show up on time, work a regular shift like everyone else.

Charlie thumbs through the bartending book.

JOE

O.J., shot of gin, splash of sweet and sour and a cherry brandy float.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAWN SHOP/BUS STOP - DAY

Claudia comes out of the pawn shop with her violin case, moves over to wait for the bus.

She waits. And waits. She glances at her violin. Peers down the street. Nothing. Another look at her violin. Then she opens the case, takes it out, places it under her chin.

She begins to play, right there on the street, just for the sheer joy of it: it's a reunion of sorts. Not a whole piece, just some tricky passage. People begin to assemble around her, amazed.

She finishes with an exuberant flourish. Everyone applauds. Claudia smiles. And bows.

CUT TO:

INT. SALINGER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Bailey has been cornered by Claudia.

BAILEY

Kirsten.

CLAUDIA

Uh-huh. Kirsten what?

(a dumb look)

Okay. What are her qualifications?

BAILEY

...She's a nanny.

CLAUDIA

What's her criminal record?

BAILEY

She doesn't have one!... I don't think.

CLAUDIA

Bailey! What's your problem?

(the front door opens; whispers)

How can you turn Owen over to a total stranger? I mean, I know you're desperate, but why -- ?

KIRSTEN (O.S.)

Hello --

Claudia turns to this beautiful blonde -- her dazzling smile.

KIRSTEN

You must be Claudia.

Claudia turns to Bailey. An "I've got your number" smile.

BAILEY

Wha -- ?

KIRSTEN

Listen, Owen was a dream. And the jeep runs great. You're sure you don't mind me driving it to school every night?

BAILEY

It's yours. That's the deal.

KIRSTEN

Well, someone needs his diaper changed...

BAILEY

(waits til she's gone)

Now I remember: she's in grad school. Child psychology. Two years teaching pre-school. Plus three nanny jobs -- with recommendations.

He winks; it was all an act. He moves into the living room.

CLAUDIA

You gave her the jeep?

BAILEY

And seventy-five dollars less a week. Two birds with one stone. Plus I get driving privileges. Pretty smart, huh?

They're in the living room. Kirsten looks up.

KIRSTEN

Major poop!

CLAUDIA

You better keep that away from Bailey.
He never --

BAILEY

(lending a hand)
-- Let me help you with that.

KIRSTEN

You don't mind?
(he shakes his head: me?)
I really think it's great you've
created an unstructured environment for
Owen. Studies show that can foster
creativity in children.

BAILEY

I guess you've read Piaget, too.

KIRSTEN

(she looks at him, dazzled)
It's terrific that a guy isn't hung up
on some stupid gender roles. I mean,
why can't a man change diapers?

BAILEY

(lending a hand)
Why indeed?

On Claudia watching this incredible scene --

BAILEY (O.S.)

Say, Kirsten... you a 49ers fan?

CUT TO:

EXT. SALINGER HOUSE - DAY

Thurber sits in the bed of Charlie's truck, as Charlie hoses down
both simulatiously. Doug soaps windows, trying to be helpful.

DOUG

I swear I'm gonna make this up to you,
Charlie.

(Charlie shrugs)

No, I mean it.

(a beat)

Look, Larry Farina's doing this job in
Cow Hollow. Told me the contractor's
subbing out a whole lot of cabinetry
work. Says they're getting bids
that're out of sight, and if we were to
come in low....

CHARLIE

I dunno, Doug.

DOUG

Larry thinks if we bid it for around twelve, maybe thirteen thousand bucks, it's ours. What do you say?

CHARLIE

(getting sucked in)

I guess we could go down, take a look.

DOUG

Excellent. I'll just make a call, get the address. We'll check it out.

CHARLIE

Now?

(he checks his watch)

I can't do it right now, I got this job...I can't just blow it off. How's first thing in the morning?

DOUG

Too late. As it is, we'd just be slipping in under the wire. It's gotta be today.

(sees him wavering)

Come on, Char. We get the job, we'd walk outta there with three thousand bucks today. Three thousand bucks. It's pretty much a sure thing.

Charlie's tempted. He checks his watch again.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - PLAYGROUND - DAY

Late afternoon. A few kids climb on the jungle gym. Julia sits on a swing set, twisting herself up in the chain, then letting it untangle. Bailey sits down on the swing next to her. They sit there for a minute, saying nothing. After a while:

BAILEY

I had a thing for Gina Lewin last year.

(off her look)

I didn't talk about it much. But I was...you know...nuts about her. I kept asking her out...until finally she kinda told me to buzz off. She wasn't mean about it...but still, you know.... I was in bad shape.

JULIA

What did you do?

+thinks for a second.

BAILEY

Actually, I think I went to Dad. Yeah,
(more)

BAILEY (cont'd)
 I did. And he told me...
 (a beat; nothing's coming)
 He said...

JULIA
 What?

BAILEY
 (laughs; amazed and sad)
 I don't remember. Something.
 Something great. Something that made
 it hurt less.
 (a beat)
 I don't remember, I'm sorry.

JULIA
 Yeah...well...

BAILEY
 (frustrated)
 Hey, I'm trying. There's no one to
 tell me what to do either. I'm feeling
 my way through this -- same as you.

Julia says nothing for a moment. Then she turns to him, quietly.

JULIA
 Do you think about them, Bailey?
 (starting to cry)
 'Cause I think about them every single
 day. Every single minute. Sometimes
 it hurts so much it's hard to breathe,
 you know?

Bailey nods, fighting back tears himself. He wipes his eyes.

BAILEY
 Yeah, I know.

JULIA
 Well, why don't we ever talk about it?
 Why don't we ever talk about them?

BAILEY
 Maybe because we think we gotta put on
 a brave face for Claud and Owen.
 (a beat)
 But maybe that's stupid. Maybe we
 should talk about it. Maybe it would
 help.

JULIA
 Sometimes I wonder if this feeling's
 ever gonna go away.

BAILEY

I don't know. I hope so. But I don't know.

(a beat)

Julia, I figure there's so much I don't know, that I gotta hang on to the stuff I'm sure about. Like the five of us. We gotta try to stay together as long as we can. I mean, that just feels right, doesn't it? And like this dinner thing. It feels like we've gotta keep that going.

JULIA

Why?

BAILEY

Because it matters. It matters to me. And to the others. And it would've mattered to Mom and Dad.

Julia has no response. She just swings back and forth, back and forth. And he joins her, swinging beside her. And slowly, they begin to swing in sync.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SALINGER'S BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

The place is humming, as Bailey and Claudia come in. Bailey's carrying Owen. A WAITRESS rushes over.

WAITRESS

Oh, my God! He looks more and more like your dad every week. So cute! Let me show him off. Please?

BAILEY

(handing him off)

Don't forget to bring him back, Janet. We're kind of attached to him.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Hey, guys!

They turn to see Charlie -- in an apron.

BAILEY

Charlie, what's with the -- ?

CLAUDIA

-- You planning on ordering lobster?

CHARLIE

That's a bib, Claud. Not an apron.

(beat)

No. I'm working here. Joe gave me a job, tending bar.

A look between Bailey and Charlie. A moment of respect.

BAILEY

No kidding?

CHARLIE

No kidding.

Joe walks by.

JOE

Hey! Hey! You slacking off already?

CHARLIE

I'm taking ten, Joe. How about showing your best customers to their booth.

JOE

(with a flourish)
Salinger, party of five --

They follow him to the back of the restaurant.

CHARLIE

Julia flake again?

BAILEY

It's a tough time. Give her awhile.

CLAUDIA

She oughta be here.

As they reach the booth, the waitress returns with Owen.

WAITRESS

If you ever need a baby sitter.
(they exchange looks; now she offers?)
So -- what are we having to drink?

CLAUDIA/BAILEY/CHARLIE

The usual.

Bailey straps Owen in his highchair. Turns to Charlie.

BAILEY

What about building houses, Charlie?

CHARLIE

(as he slides in)
Just figure me for five-fifty a week,
with tips.

Bailey nods, respectfully.

BAILEY

(sliding in second)
I should get about fifty at the shoe
store --

CLAUDIA
(sliding in third)
Twenty-five from dog-walking.

CHARLIE
Joe spotted me a couple thou. I sent
the mortgage payment off this
afternoon.

BAILEY
How about that -- we might actually
manage.

The three of them look at each other, pleased.

JULIA (O.S.)
What's everyone having?

They look up to see her.

JULIA
Shove over, Claud.

And they do. Julia casually slides into the booth beside them.
And we PULL BACK on the Salinger family, the five of them,
together, as they are every week at exactly this time.

FADE OUT.

THE END