

WHITE SCREEN:

JULIA (V.O.)
When I make mistakes, I like them
to be big.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

A woman and a young man are making out like crazy. Very intimate.

The woman is JULIA (29), an elegant, urbane beauty. But right now she's not at her best. She's drunk, her hair is tousled, the straps of her dress are hanging off her shoulders. In short, she looks incredibly sexy and untame.

The young man is DANIEL BLOOM (17). They can't stop kissing.

DANIEL
Wait. There's something --

Between kisses.

JULIA
Yeah?

DANIEL
Just --

JULIA
Yeah?

DANIEL
There's something I should tell
you. I'm a virgin.

JULIA stops. Beat.

JULIA
You're a -- a vi-
(smiling)
...awwwwww.

She jokingly pinches his cheek.

DANIEL
Don't do that.

JULIA
Soooo cute.

DANIEL

No, stop it. Stop! It's not -- it's not like it's by choice.

JULIA

Shhhhh. It's okay. C'mere Daniel.

She grabs him by the belt buckle and gently pulls him closer.

JULIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And when I say big mistakes, I mean like massive, law-breaking, life-changing mistakes. I want to take everything I've worked for and fuck it all up. I want to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

DANIEL

What if I'm not any good?

JULIA

Shhhhh. Don't worry. It's only by making mistakes that you're ever gonna learn anything.

She pulls him into her bedroom by his belt.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: TWO DAYS EARLIER

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE -- DAY

A nice suburban house, in a nice suburban neighborhood.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - FOYER

ARTHUR BLOOM (44), DANIEL's handsome yuppie father, is standing in the foyer with his attractive wife SOPHIE BLOOM (40). He calls upstairs:

ARTHUR

Who wants ice cream?

ROBIN BLOOM (12) -- DANIEL's younger brother, a cute but disarmingly effeminate boy, comes running down the stairs screaming:

ROBIN

Meeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

INT. CAR -- DAY

A tiny VW STATION WAGON. The song *DREAMER* by SUPERTRAMP plays on the car stereo. The whole BLOOM family is singing along. They even put their HANDS ON THEIR HEADS when the lyrics sing, "CAN YOU PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD OH NO". Only DANIEL is unenthusiastic.

ARTHUR

Okay okay okay. Robin, it's your turn.

ROBIN is judiciously scanning the scenery as he speaks.

ROBIN

I spy with my little eye...
something that is...ecru.

ARTHUR

What's ecru again?

SOPHIE

Y'know, ecru. It's like a...like a
chalky sort of...like a rhubarb-
colored --

DANIEL

Egg-shell white.

SOPHIE

Exactly.

ARTHUR

You said 'chalky rhubarb'.

SOPHIE

I meant egg-shell.

ARTHUR

Well that's a bizarre mix-up.

SOPHIE

How about we just play the game.

The boys audibly slink back in their seats.

EXT. MERLIN'S ICE CREAM TRUCK -- DAY

DREAMER still plays.

A perfect sunny day. Outside an old-fashioned MERLIN's ICE CREAM truck the sun-dazzled family lick their rapidly melting ICE CREAM cones, laughing and smiling. ARTHUR and SOPHIE are holding hands. The awkwardness from the car seems to have passed -- just another minor spat. Until...

CU: ARTHUR pulls his hand away from SOPHIE'S.

INT. KITCHEN/LIVING-ROOM -- EVENING

LATER -- ARTHUR is preparing an elaborate dinner as SOPHIE examines info on buying a new car. They're arguing, as usual.

SOPHIE

No no no no no we're not! Uh-uh.
We're not buying this. It looks
like a tank.

She holds up a pic of the SUV HUMMER he wants to buy.

ARTHUR

Yes! Exactly! It's like a safe
urban tank. It's got GPS, back-seat
air-bags --

SOPHIE

We're not in Kandahar, Arthur. I'm
not driving a four by four to the
grocery store.

SOPHIE gets back to her SODOKU puzzle. With the light in her hair she looks so beautiful, so mesmerizing, that ARTHUR just watches her. And then...

ARTHUR

Honey.

SOPHIE

What.

He takes a deep, pained breath. SOPHIE realizes he has something serious to say.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

What is it?

ARTHUR

I made a...a really awful mistake.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE: UPSTAIRS -- NIGHT

DANIEL and ROBIN sit at the top of the stairs listening to ARTHUR and SOPHIE SCREAMING at each other -- hurling brutal accusations. It's ugly.

DANIEL and ROBIN are stone-faced, until...

ROBIN

Want to see my fall line?

DANIEL

Sure.

INT. ROBIN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

DANIEL flips through ROBIN'S portfolio. He has sketched fashionable clothing onto characters that look like SUPER-HEROES.

DANIEL

Nice. Uh-huh. Not bad. What's this one called?

ROBIN

Urban Wookie. What do you think?

DANIEL

What can I say? You're a genius.

Knock at the door. The boys look up and see ARTHUR and SOPHIE, looking morose and battle-fatigued.

ARTHUR

Children, we need you to sit down.

DANIEL

We are sitting.

SOPHIE

Your father and I both love you very, very much.

Everyone knows what's going to happen. DANIEL looks shocked. ROBIN is simply devastated -- his world is falling apart.

DANIEL

Are you getting a divorce?

ARTHUR

No. We're just thinking--

SOPHIE
Yes. Yes we are Arthur.

ARTHUR
I thought we agreed on counseling.

SOPHIE
I changed my mind.

ARTHUR
When? In the hallway?

SOPHIE
Just -- fuck off, okay! Now listen,
we both love you very much.

ROBIN
(pleading)
You already said that.

ARTHUR
Well we do. More than anything.

SOPHIE
We just don't love each other.

ARTHUR
We --

ARTHUR stops short, suddenly choked with emotion. His eyes
tear up. *This is really happening.*

ROBIN
Can I say something?

SOPHIE
Of course Robin.

ROBIN
Don't.

INT. DANIEL'S ROOM -- NIGHT

DANIEL is lying in bed with headphones on, reading *AMERICAN WOMAN* by SUSAN CHOI. ROBIN knocks. He's clearly been bawling.

ROBIN
Can I sleep in here?

DANIEL
Sure.

ROBIN lays out his sleeping bag on the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

ARTHUR lays out on the cot. It ain't going to be comfortable.

INT. DANIEL'S ROOM -- MORNING

DANIEL smacks the alarm. It just gets louder.

INT. DANIEL BATHROOM -- MORNING

Post-shower: DANIEL opens a drawer to grab gel, but his gaze is drawn towards a rainbow-colored BOX.

He opens the box, retrieves a pipe and a baggie of WEED.

CUT TO:

DANIEL stands on the toilet inhaling from his glass PIPE, blowing the smoke up through the bathroom fan. Music plays.

EXT. TREE-LINED STREETS -- DAY

DANIEL is riding his bike, listening to music with headphones on. Sunlight splashes over him as he sails through suburbia. He's in his own teenage world.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS -- MORNING

ROBIN walks on the bus. Clearly boys pick on him.

KID

Fag (fake coughs).

He walks to the back and sits with the slightly-nerdy girls.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. MIDWAY HISCHOOL -- DAY

A SCHOOL BELL rings out over the eyesore of a HIGH SCHOOL.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL: HALLWAY -- DAY

SLO MO: Students skate through the halls like human traffic.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL: MATH CLASS -- DAY

SLO MO: Students sit in their desks -- young awkward faces. But three seats remain conspicuously unoccupied.

INT. TODD'S VAN -- DAY

SLO MO: Smoke rises through a BONG shaped like CARTMAN (SOUTH PARK).

Reveal: DANIEL and his two best friends, JAKE CHANG and TODD, are getting "prepared" for another school day.

JAKE
Was that the bell?

DANIEL
I didn't hear anything.

TODD
It was just the music, retard.

DANIEL
Don't say retard. That's not cool.

JAKE, a talkative young man, is skeptical.

JAKE
The music has a school bell in it?
(adopting a stoner voice)
"Uh, hey guys, you know what would
make this song a hit with the kids?
If we put a school bell ringing
over a guitar solo. Kids love
school...not to mention bells".

DANIEL looks at his watch.

DANIEL
We're totally late.

JAKE
(dripping with sarcasm)
Really? But that's impossible!

TODD
Shut up retard.

They open the back doors. Blinding sunlight fills the frame.

FADE TO WHITE

INT. JULIA'S OFFICE: TENDER FASHIONS MAGAZINE -- DAY

We come out of JULIA's WHITE COMPUTER SCREEN, to see...

JULIA is sitting in her office cubicle, staring at a blank screen...hypnotized by the nothingness. Suddenly her best friend STEPHANIE is hovering over her.

JULIA

I'm completely and utterly stuck.

STEPHANIE

Walk and talk honey. Everyone's waiting.

A moment later: JULIA and STEPHANIE are walking down a hallway, past pictures of gorgeously malnourished models.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I can't believe you're leaving this place without me.

JULIA

It's just a year. Believe me, I'm nervous. Financially this is a bad, bad move.

STEPHANIE

I thought you sold your book idea for a ton of money.

JULIA

Hah! Only if the publishers like what they see. Which so far is zilch. That's why I'm taking time off.

They stop in front of a door marked *Conference Room*. STEPHANIE looks JULIA in the eye.

STEPHANIE

Julia, you're going to be the next queen of chick lit. You're hilarious and talented, your articles are the most popular in the magazine...and you're my best new adult friend.

JULIA

Are you trying to make me cry?

STEPHANIE

Yes. By the way, I got you a date
for the wedding.

Off JULIA's skeptical look.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Sorry, I promised your Mom. Now:
you ready to be surprised by people
you hate?

JULIA

(sarcastically)

What -- there's a surprise?

She gives STEPHANIE a quick kiss on the cheek.

They open the doors to the CONFERENCE ROOM, where a few of JULIA's co-workers are wearing funny-hats, huddled beneath a banner which reads: YOU'RE FIRED JULIA (KIDDING)! Naturally, there's a cake. Everyone shouts with a distinct lack of enthusiasm while doing jazz-hands...

CO-WORKERS

(lamely)

Surprise!

EXT. WEDDING GROUNDS -- NIGHT

A quick journey through a hot summer upper-middle-class wedding like any other: a table of GRANDPARENTS, a grandfather balancing a YOUNGSTER on his knee.

-- A table of fine foods and complex hor d'oevres. The beautiful assortment is being massacred by hungry YUPPIES.

-- A table of singles, flirting and drinking too much.

-- JULIA, looking debonair, is getting very drunk, clearly not enjoying the presence of ROGER (34), her date. ROGER looks sleek and moneyed and successful in some industry that makes the world a much worse place.

-- At the same table: STEPHANIE is with her handsome, laid-back husband MATTHEW, and their six year old ZAK.

-- SOPHIE, looking fabulous in her HEAD CATERER outfit, is instructing her staff. YOUNG CATERERS in funny uniforms are working hard, sweating, rushing, invisible to the guests except as food-and-drink delivery systems. DANIEL is one of them. He's taking drink orders.

EXT. WEDDING -- EVENING

The BEST MAN is doing his speech.

BEST MAN

This guy! Man, can I tell you stories about this guy. Like our infamous trip to Greece. How 'bout that one. We got so drunk we passed out together...

People chuckle as if this is funny.

BEST MAN (CONT'D)

...and when I woke up Steve-o had wet the bed. Well Sharon, that's your marriage bed now, and I've got two words for you: adult diapers.

People laugh in appreciation. A drunken Julia rolls her eyes.

JULIA

Who thinks of this crap. It's like if frat boys wrote Hallmark cards!

STEPHANIE is enjoying it, but enjoying JULIA more.

STEPHANIE

Shhhhhh.

BEST MAN

I just gotta say, I really love this guy.

For the amusement of her table, Julia whisper-shouts:

JULIA

Then fuck him already!

STEPHANIE spits up her drink.

ROGER

Oh come on. Can't you see yourself doing this one day?

JULIA

I'd rather have my ovaries removed. And I love my ovaries.

Off his "you're really drunk" look.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Am I getting a time out? Is it time
for a time out? Okay.

Julia lights a cigarette.

ROGER
You know those are terrible for
you.

JULIA
(super-sarcastic)
What?! When did they find that out?

ROGER
You're funny.

JULIA
Just drink your lemonade big boy.

EXT. BEHIND THE WEDDING TENT -- NIGHT

DANIEL, TODD and JAKE huddle around a LIT JOINT.

JAKE
Hurry. Hurry.

JUAN, their easy-going supervisor, comes around the corner
dressed in full catering regalia.

JUAN
Okay Wu-Tang Clan. Back to work.

JAKE
Nice bow tie.

He plucks the joint from JAKE's hand and takes a puff.

JUAN
Danny, your Mom's looking for you.

EXT. WEDDING TENT -- EVENING

JULIA downs her glass of wine, then reaches for STEPHANIE'S.

STEPHANIE
Gear-down big-rig. Pace yourself.

JULIA sighs dramatically.

MATTHEW

We should jet soon. Zak's getting the poopies.

STEPHANIE grabs the COOKIE ZAK is eating from his hands.

STEPHANIE

What's this? Is there peanuts in this?

MATTHEW

Ummmm...let me see. Hmmmm.
(he pretends to examine it,
listening to it, shaking
it, then tossing it away)
I have no idea. Can you relax?

STEPHANIE

(furious)

Don't tell me to -- are you for real? Our son could die -- DIE -- if he so much as smells a peanut and you're telling me to relax. Jesus Matthew.

(to JULIA)

And you -- why're you so upset?
Your date is gorgeous.

JULIA

Scientifically speaking I know you're right. But he looks like an ad for hair gel. Cheap hair gel.

STEPHANIE

Okay, we have to leave. Try to be nice. And don't drive.

JULIA

Bye handsome.

JULIA waves at ZAK as STEPHANIE and company exit. JULIA picks up her chair and shuffles it towards ROGER.

ROGER

There she is. So you're a writer, huh? You know, I write too.

JULIA

Really?

ROGER

More journaling than anything. And I'm infamous around the office for giving hilarious e-mail. You know what's a great book? Have you read that, uh...the uh...

(snapping fingers)

The Da Vinci Code?

JULIA

I don't read that kind of shit.

ROGER

Now how would you know it's shit if you haven't even read it?

JULIA lunges up and forward with a dramatic hand gesture, spilling a glass of PINOT in the process.

JULIA

Magic!

JULIA stumbles off in search of more to drink.

EXT. WEDDING TENT -- NIGHT

DANIEL stumbles around a corner and finds SOPHIE. She's a bundle of nervous energy. And DANIEL is just very high.

SOPHIE

How's it going?

DANIEL

Really good Mom. I'm just -- I'm just trying really hard to get my life in focus.

SOPHIE

No, sweetie, I meant do we need more shrimp balls.

DANIEL

Right. No. We're cool.

SOPHIE

Hey, come here.

SOPHIE looks DANIEL in the eyes -- his marijuana-reddened eyes. Does she know?

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Your eyes are all red.
Daniel...have you been crying?

DANIEL pauses. Then lies.

DANIEL

Maybe.

SOPHIE

Maybe yes?

DANIEL

I just wish you and Dad would stay
together.

SOPHIE gives him a huge hug. She even cries a little.

SOPHIE

Ohh honey. I'm so sorry. For you
and for Robin, I'm so, so sorry.

On the other side of the hug we see DANIEL, consumed by
guilt. He pats his MOM.

DANIEL

It's okay Mom.

SOPHIE is still crying, holding him by the shoulders.

SOPHIE

Nobody wants this. You think I want
this? We were a great family.

DANIEL

I know Mom.

SOPHIE

Okay, now go serve. And after
tonight you're throwing out that
shirt -- it smells like mildew.

EXT. TENT: DANCE FLOOR -- NIGHT

DANIEL carries a tray of martinis and serves the guests.
Suddenly he spots JULIA -- and he can't take his eyes off
her. Her sharp good-looks cut through his marijuana haze.
With his tray of drinks he jets past some THIRSTY-LOOKING
people and goes right to this gorgeous woman.

DANIEL

Can I offer you a martini?

JULIA
OhmyGod yes. Thank you sir.

She eagerly grabs the martini from him.

JULIA (CONT'D)
I probably don't need this. Will
you join me?

DANIEL
Um...why not.

DANIEL puts down the tray, grabs a drink for himself.

JULIA
Cheers -- to the most boring, self-
indulgent wedding ever!

She clinks her glass against DANIEL's. She takes a longer
look at DANIEL, who is staring back at her, wide-eyed.

DANIEL
Are you one of the bride's friends?

ROGER walks up behind them to interrupt, but his BLACKBERRY
goes off.

ROGER
Oh -- crackberry!

He does an immediate 180 and walks away.

JULIA
I have no friends here. That's a
cute tie.

DANIEL
Oh -- you like my tie? I think it
looks kinda dorky.

JULIA
Not at all. Classic never goes out
of style. I'm telling you, if I was
fifteen years younger...

Beat.

DANIEL
What?

JULIA
Hmmmmmm? Wha -- ?

DANIEL

If you were fifteen years younger
you'd what?

JULIA is swaying to the loud music.

JULIA

Huh? (smiling slyly) Oh, I can't
tell you that.

DANIEL

What do you mean? We're at a party,
it's cool. What happens at the
wedding stays at the wedding.

JULIA leans in close, right into his ear.

JULIA

If I was fifteen years younger I'd
take you upstairs and ruin you for
anyone else.

DANIEL almost chokes on his drink. JULIA walks away, a sexy,
cocky strut interrupted only by a tiny drunken stumble. With
her back to DANIEL we see she's smiling mischievously.

DANIEL regains his composure. He sees that JULIA is talking
with a semi-circle of wedding-goers. He looks the other
direction and sees his MOM walking away. The coast is clear
to go after JULIA.

DANIEL approaches JULIA, catching the end of what the ROGER
is saying to the crowd.

ROGER

I think there really might be
something to this global warming
business --

DANIEL

Excuse me.

JULIA

Yes?

DANIEL

Do you uh...would you like to, uh,
to dance.

JULIA

(playfully formal)

It would be my pleasure.

She hands her glass to one of the men she was chatting with.

JULIA grabs DANIEL's hand and leads him to the dance floor. The song Doin' It, by LL COOL J plays -- and it's pure sex. At first JULIA and DANIEL stand away from each other. She is dancing sexily, dirtily, while DANIEL is hesitant and awkward. But then she reaches forward and grabs his hips and rubs against him. He reaches for her but she shimmies seductively out of his grip and starts dancing even more provocatively. Her moves are SUPER-HOT and totally inappropriate. He's not so bad either.

They're really connecting. It's SEXY!

TODD
OhmyGod, dude. They're freakin'.

TODD and JAKE are eating it up.

JAKE
Hit that shit.

JULIA dances in and out of DANIEL's sphere. DANIEL sees and OLDER COUPLE watching him with SHOCK. DANIEL grabs JULIA's hand and pulls her outside through a flap in the tent.

EXT. OUTSIDE WEDDING TENT -- NIGHT

Now they're on their own. Through the tent we can see the silhouettes of people dancing, like shadow-puppets.

DANIEL
My name's Daniel.

JULIA
I'm Julia.

DANIEL
I want to kiss you Julia.

JULIA
Nooo...you don't want to do that.

DANIEL
I don't?

She shakes her head, no.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Okay, why don't I want to kiss you?

JULIA

Because if you kiss me, you'll fall for me, and then life gets very messy.

He leans in to kiss her, she leans the other way; he backs off, then moves in again. They kiss. He's nervous, over-eager.

JULIA (CONT'D)

No. Not like that. I'm not a teenager. Take your time. Like this.

She grabs him by the back of his head and kisses him hard. Devouring him. As they kiss the noise from the party increases until the screen gets blurry.

FADE TO WHITE SCREEN

FADE IN:

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- MORNING

A very hung-over, (scantly clad JULIA wakes up to her PHONE RINGING. She answers. It's STEPHANIE.

STEPHANIE

Hey babe. How was the rest of the wedding?

JULIA

(groans)

Ooooooooooooo. My liver hurts!

STEPHANIE

That good, huh?

JULIA

I think I used my body for the powers of evil.

STEPHANIE

Who was he?

JULIA gets up and goes right for the COFFEE-MAKER.

JULIA

Not the man I came with. I'm telling you, it'd be safer for me to drink and fly a plane than talk to cute boys.

STEPHANIE
Can I get that embroidered on a
pillow?

JULIA groans.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
So did you sleep with Mr.
Mysterioso?

JULIA
Oh God no. Nooooooo no no no no no.
Just...charmed him.

STEPHANIE
What was he like? Tall? Sexy?

JULIA
Umm...flesh-colored. Kind of
blurry.

STEPHANIE
Yikes.

JULIA
And young. I think he was very
young.

STEPHANIE
I'll leave you to your shame-over.
Drinks later?

JULIA burns herself on the stove. The coffee hits the floor.
She stares as the molten-black puddle spreads over the white
tile. An omen?

JULIA
Ouch. Yeah, I guess. Wait -- no! My
Mom's having some kind of function
and I need need need you to come
protect me.

STEPHANIE
I'll be your wing man anytime. Now
go write your masterpiece.

JULIA
Good-night. I mean...good-
bye...shit.

INT. JULIA'S OFFICE -- DAY

JULIA, freshly showered, sets an alarm clock and then opens up her LAPTOP.

She sits in front of the blank computer. CU on the white screen. CU on JULIA, stressed. What to write?

JULIA

Come on.

Beat.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Come on, come on, come on...magic time...WRITE!

HARD CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

JULIA is aggressively scrubbing the kitchen drawers.

INT. OFFICE -- DAY

JULIA is watching something sick and voyeuristic on YouTube.

JULIA

Ewwwww.

EXT. JULIA'S BACKYARD -- DAY

JULIA is smoking, watching workmen construct a neighbor's house. She takes pleasure in watching sunlight splash over their muscles. But then the CAMERA wanders, and we realize she's ACTUALLY WATCHING the TREE BRANCHES sway in the slight breeze, leaves splaying the golden particles of sunlight -- and for a moment JULIA finds a hint of peace. Until...

INT. OFFICE -- DAY

JULIA is drinking wine and surfing a *CELEBRITY LOOKS-MATCHER* on the net.

JULIA

(while typing)

Who is the celebrity I most closely resemble?

The answer comes up unflattering.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Well fuck you internet! You've
never liked me.

INT. JULIA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Still staring at the profoundly blank screen, but now
accompanied by a glass of wine.

JULIA
Forget quality. Just start typing.

She starts typing...

Over voice over we see...JULIA in an all white NETHERWORLD.
There's simply nothing there. Parts of her body -- her face,
her left arm, her chest -- are STATIC and pixilated: not
fully there. They keep disappearing into the white-
nothingness as she fades into the background.

JULIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
By virtually any standard, Jessica
Bartelby was an interesting woman.
She was smart and funny and wildly
charismatic, but despite these
qualities, or perhaps even because
of them, she was incredibly lonely
at heart. Something essential was
missing from her life and deep down
she worried she was rotten to the
core. And then...stuff happened to
her...and stuff. Shit!

Door-bell rings! DINNNNG-DONGGGGG!

The image of the half-formed woman (JULIA) fizzles away.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. JULIA'S DOORWAY -- DAY

DANIEL is standing there, smiling.

DANIEL
Hey. Remember me?

JULIA is tentative. She doesn't like this one bit.

JULIA

Welllllllll, if it isn't the make-out bandit. What are you...

He just stands there, smiling obviously.

JULIA (CONT'D)

This is my house!

DANIEL

Yeah -- great lawn.

JULIA

How'd you find me?

DANIEL

I googled you.

JULIA

Very crafty.

DANIEL

I even read some of your magazine articles -- they're like super-hilarious.

JULIA

Well gee, thanks. You smoke?

She pulls out her pack of cigarettes.

DANIEL

Been thinking of taking it up.

DANIEL reaches for them. JULIA snatches them away.

JULIA

No -- I'm not gonna be that girl.

DANIEL

Why not? I love it.

JULIA

I'm closing the door now.

DANIEL

Don't you want a break from work?

JULIA casts him a look.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I happen to be a great way to procrastinate.

INT. ROBIN'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

A classroom full of kids. We see ROBIN, his leg shaking with nervous energy as the heftily-built teacher, MRS. HOOPER, examines the class list. On the chalkboard we see the word: PUBLIC SPEAKING.

MRS. HOOPER

Okay class, I know we're all in a tizzy about the public speaking contest. So here's the deal: ten of you will get to recite your speech in front the entire school, and from those ten we'll choose a winner. Topics will be assigned in alphabetical order. So...Arbor, Jay -- your topic is patriotism. Baker, Jessica -- you're Global Warming. Bloom, Robin...

ROBIN looks up.

MRS. HOOPER (CONT'D)
Your topic is family...

As MRS. HOOPER drones on, ROBIN looks desperate and sad.

INT. SCHOOL: LUNCH-ROOM -- DAY

Kids are chattering, joking around, eating, enjoying lunch. ROBIN is alone, unfolding his meticulously wrapped sandwich. Then he sees DEXTER, a cute, sporty-looking boy who's also eating on his own.

CUT TO:

ROBIN sits down with DEXTER.

ROBIN
Hey -- I'll trade you my Snickers
for your apple.

It is very suddenly the best day of DEXTER's life.

DEXTER
You serious?

ROBIN
Dead serious. I don't like the nougat.

DEXTER

Okay.

ROBIN

Your name's Dexter, right?

DEXTER

Yup.

ROBIN

I'm Robin. You want to play tetherball at recess?

DEXTER

Okay. Sure.

ROBIN bites into his shiny new apple with a loud CRUNCH.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

TWO MEN in suits are sitting at a table talking to each other, but we hear JULIA and DANIEL ventriloquizing:

MAN IN SUIT #1 (JULIA'S VOICE)

My suit is better than your suit.

MAN IN SUIT #2 (DANIEL'S VOICE)

No it's not. NASDAQ is down.

Profits are decelerating. You're fired!

MAN IN SUIT #1 (JULIA'S VOICE)

What? Fuck you bitch. How will I pay for my Rogaine?

Suddenly MAN IN SUIT #1 turns and looks at them, scowling.

JULIA

Oh no. They're looking at us.

MAN IN SUIT #1

We can hear everything you're saying.

JULIA

Well then stop listening in.

The men leave. JULIA and DANIEL crack up in hysterical laughter. BEAT, as they look at each other.

DANIEL

So are you honestly a writer?

JULIA
I'm honestly a writer.

DANIEL
That must be like the best job
ever.

JULIA
Yeah...noooo. Not so much.

DANIEL
But at least your job has passion,
you know! My Dad's a dentist.
That's like a...like a janitor for
teeth.

JULIA
Still, he's a doctor.

DANIEL
Yeah, who dedicated his life to
fighting tooth decay. The man
carries floss in his wallet and
calls teeth "chompers". And just
to, y'know, complete the ol' middle-
age cliche, guess what he did a few
months after his fortieth B-day.

JULIA
Had an affair with...

DANIEL
(finishing her sentence)
...a younger woman, yeah. So
unoriginal. I mean what's an
affair: it's a poor man's version
of a real adventure.

JULIA finds this intelligent. And then...

JULIA
I hate flossing. There's got to be
a better way. Are you restless? I'm
restless. Wanna go for a walk?

EXT. PARK -- DAY

A perfect blue day, as DANIEL and JULIA are stroll through
the park. DANIEL can't help but notice her sexy strut -- and
she can't help but notice him noticing.

JULIA

So what do you teenagers read
nowadays anyway -- like blogs?
Comic books? *Maxim* magazine?

He gives her a *Come On* look.

DANIEL

Gimme some credit. I'm very
literary. You would be too if you
wrote about stuff a little more
ambitious than (mocking) "hilarious
dating stories".

JULIA

Okay bigshot. So who do you like?

DANIEL

I like Tolstoy. Ummmmm...Chekov,
Graham Greene's kinda cool.

JULIA

Hemingway?

DANIEL

Nah, I hate that macho shit. I'd
take Alice Munro over him any day.
Can I see that?

He points to her phone. She absently hands it to him.

JULIA

You like Alice Munro?

DANIEL

Totally. She's the bomb.

JULIA gives him a good look.

JULIA

You've got pretty good taste for
someone your age.

He moves the hair out of her face. They connect.

DANIEL

(smiling slyly)

So do you. Hey look!

DANIEL points to multi-colored AIR-BALLOONS achieving lift-off over the park. A few of them at various heights -- drifting beautifully in the lucid blue sky.

Another AIR-BALLOON is still grounded, getting ready to go.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
We should ask if they'll take us
for a ride.

JULIA
How about a raincheck.

DANIEL
Come on -- carpe diem! You know how
these things work. If we don't do
it now it'll never happen.

JULIA
I should really go.

DANIEL
Wait -- at least tell me what your
book's about?

JULIA
Nothing. It's about nothing because
I'm totally stuck and I'm really
scared and I have no idea what I'm
doing.

She looks at DANIEL.

JULIA (CONT'D)
What am I doing?

She finally notices he's typing something into her phone.

JULIA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?!

DANIEL
Programming my number into your
cell.

She grabs it from him.

JULIA
What do you think's going to happen
here Daniel?

DANIEL
I know we connected last night.

JULIA
Ok--maybe we did. You're cute and I
was hammered.

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

But do you really think we're gonna date? You think I'm gonna introduce you to my friends and then take you home and fu...and have an affair with you like we're in some French film.

DANIEL

Yes! Yes! That sounds amazing.

JULIA

No! It's creepy and maybe possibly illegal. I gotta get going.

DANIEL reaches to grab her hand, looks her in the eyes.

DANIEL

If you're crazy enough to be with me, I'm crazy enough to be with you.

JULIA stands.

JULIA

Look kiddo, you're a great guy and a real good kisser. But I already went to the prom once and I can't handle the hang-over again. I'm sorry, but I guess I'm less crazy than I seem.

She exits. The air-balloons float above DANIEL's head.

INT. UPSCALE HOME -- NIGHT

Well-dressed women stand drinking wine and cocktails. JULIA's MOM, MAGGIE (62), a stylish socialite rarely spotted sans martini, is chatting with her friend BARBRA (65 -- sporting oversized glasses) when they see JULIA enter.

MAGGIE

There she is. And look what she's wearing.

JULIA

Hi Mom.

MAGGIE

Look what you're wearing.

JULIA is instantly offended by MAGGIE's criticism.

JULIA

I thought I looked nice.

BARBRA
You look beautiful.

MAGGIE
Of course she looks beautiful. She
has beautiful bone structure. But
she dresses like a lesbian.

JULIA
Goddamnit Mom! Not tonight.

MAGGIE
Did you stop taking your --
(mumbles, as if it's a code)
-- anti-mmmhhhhpresentsss?

JULIA
Six months ago.

MAGGIE
Six months, oh Jube-Jube. That's
why you're moody. And when you're
moody you blimp up.

MAGGIE inflates her cheeks. JULIA is about to respond when...

DALIA, a well-heeled socialite, starts clinking her glass to
get everyone's attention. She stands beside a handsome man in
a white smock.

DALIA
Okay ladies, ladies listen up. Can
I have your attention please. Okay.
This is Doctor Rhufi -- should I
call you doctor or do you prefer
magician?

DOCTOR RHUFI
Doctor, please.

DALIA
Okay -- hahaha. And the doctor will
be in the bedroom waiting to inject
us with youth. So wait your turn,
play nice, and enjoy the party.

STEPHANIE
Man, that guy has a creepy smile.

It's true: DOCTOR RHUFI has one big perma-smile.

JULIA
What's going on? I don't get it.

MAGGIE

Dear, you're utterly clueless.

MAGGIE walks away, rolling her eyes.

BARBRA

When you go into the bedroom that's when he does the Botox.

STEPHANIE

No way! This is a Botox party?
Hilarious!

Off Julia's look.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

What? It's just like make-up you never have to take off.

JULIA starts clicking her heels a la *The Wizard Of Oz*.

JULIA

There's no place like home, there's no place like home.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

DANIEL walks in the door. He sees SOPHIE sitting on the couch, her eyes red from crying. ROBIN is standing at the stairwell. He gives DANIEL a look: *something is wrong*.

DANIEL

Where's Dad?

SOPHIE

(sniffling)

He's staying at your grandparents' place while they're in Florida. If you want you can visit him next week.

DANIEL

Shit.

SOPHIE

Don't swear.

DANIEL

Well! Fuck! Now I don't have a Dad.

SOPHIE
Of course you do. Don't be
overdramatic.

DANIEL
You two are really doing this, huh?
Goddamnit!

DANIEL storms off towards the stairs where ROBIN is sitting, watching everything. He follows behind DANIEL.

ROBIN
Hey guess what? I'm going to the
finals of the speech contest. I get
to do it for the whole school and
everything.

DANIEL
Those contests are stupid. The best
ones never win.

ROBIN
Yeah. You want to play *Battleship*?

DANIEL closes the door on him.

INT. DANIEL'S BATHROOM -- DAY

CU: Drawer opening, revealing baggy of pot.

CU: Smoke being blown into the fan.

INT. UPSCALE HOME -- NIGHT

Glasses clink. JULIA, STEPHANIE, MAGGIE and BARBRA sit drinking martinis, waiting their turn. JULIA is still upset.

JULIA
Mom -- you're a feminist. How can
you condone this?

MAGGIE
Aren't feminists allowed to look
good?

JULIA
Within reason. And even then -- no!

MAGGIE

Here's how it breaks down -- the longer I live the uglier my face gets. And then some genius at NASA invents a solution and here we are.

DOCTOR RHUFI approaches them.

DOCTOR RHUFI

Okay ladies -- who's next?

He looks directly at JULIA.

JULIA

Me? Oh no. No no no no no.

DOCTOR RHUFI

Don't be shy dearie. It's perfectly safe.

JULIA

No, you don't understand -- I'm her daughter.

DOCTOR RHUFI doesn't stop smiling.

DOCTOR RHUFI

Fantastic.

JULIA

What would you...do anyway?

DOCTOR RHUFI

Generally? Eleven on the brow. Relax your forehead, here and here. Maybe puff up the lips. We can knock off ten years.

SOPHIE

My treat Jube-Jube. Life is short -- might as well feel young.

DOCTOR RHUFI walks back to the room. He pivots, and in SLO-MO he waves her in with that ceaselessly optimistic smile.

JULIA

I'm gonna...I have to go.

Rattled, JULIA stands up and knocks over a cheese-plate. She stumbles out of the room, dejected.

INT. JULIA'S CAR -- NIGHT

JULIA pulls out her phone. CU: YR NEW BOYFRIEND?? -- obviously DANIEL's number. Should she?

INT. ROBIN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

ROBIN and DANIEL are hanging out together playing BATTLESHIP. Music plays softly.

ROBIN

B-27.

DANIEL

Nope.

ROBIN

You're supposed to say miss.

DANIEL

Nope.

Suddenly DANIEL's phone rings.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Hello?

JULIA

Hi cutie. What cha' up to?

DANIEL

Oh hey -- hi -- Julia! Hi.

DANIEL hops off the bed, unsettling the gameboard, and turns up the music. Unfortunately, it's not the coolest music ever.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Just chillin' at a party.

ROBIN rolls his eyes.

JULIA

Sounds like you're at a gay bar. Is this a bad time?

DANIEL

Huh. No -- it's perfect.

He turns the music down.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
There. I stepped outside.

INT. JULIA'S CAR -- NIGHT

JULIA
Soooooooo...I was kinda
wondering...

DANIEL
Yeah?

She smiles, embarrassed.

JULIA
Do you want to watch a French film?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. DANIEL'S HOME -- NIGHT

Moody music plays. Feels like MARTIN SHEEN's hotel scene in *APOCALYPSE NOW*.

RAPID CUTS: 1. DANIEL is staring in the mirror intently. He douses himself in waaaay too much body-spray. 2. He gels his hair. 3. He grabs a ribbon of twelve condoms and takes them all. 4. DANIEL in a vaguely martial-arts-like pose.

DANIEL
You can do it. Be a man. You're a
great big shining star.

When he moves we see ROBIN in the doorway, watching him.

ROBIN
...dork.

DANIEL slams the door in his face.

INT. JULIA'S CAR -- NIGHT

JULIA pulls up.

JULIA
Hop in.

DANIEL slams the car door shut.

They lean in and do a complicated, unsuccessful kiss.

DANIEL

Both cheeks? I don't get it. Am I supposed to kiss the air or...

JULIA grabs him and kisses him on the lips. It lasts awhile. Finally she releases him.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Sorry -- I ate a bag of Doritos earlier.

INT. ROBIN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

ROBIN is watching all this from his window. He's shocked.

INT. JULIA'S CAR -- NIGHT

DANIEL

Sooo...what made you decide to call?

JULIA

It was either that or get Botox.

DANIEL

You look super-hot!

She steals a look at DANIEL

JULIA

You're pretty cute yourself.

DANIEL'S dying of embarrassment.

DANIEL

Blushing.

JULIA

You should lose the necklace though.

DANIEL

You don't like the necklace?

JULIA

Nix the necklace. And while we're at it ease off on the cologne. I'm telling you, these are great life lessons I'm giving you.

Suddenly the song *Gigantic* by *The Pixies* plays on the radio. JULIA turns it up. She drives faster and bobs to the tune. Streetlights paint flowing patterns on her face.

JULIA (CONT'D)

OhmyGod, I love this song? Do you know this song?

DANIEL

Umm...I think, maybe...

JULIA

The Pixies! Come on Danny! When I was your age I was such a little rocker chick. I had the Doc Marten boots, the black nail polish -- before it was chic. I mean, I literally cried when Kurt Cobain killed himself.

DANIEL is just watching her, enthralled.

JULIA (CONT'D)

So what do you feel like doi-

DANIEL suddenly lunges at her, giving her a big messy KISS and grabbing at her right BREAST. The car swerves slightly and his elbow hits the HORN. A truck drives by and HONKS too!

DANIEL

Sorry.

JULIA

No it's okay. We're okay.

DANIEL

Umm...I wasn't sure if you had anything to drink, so I stole this from my dad's cabinet.

He pulls out the golden bottle from his knapsack. JULIA smiles slyly.

JULIA

Tequila, huh? Could be dangerous.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. JULIA'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

INDIE-ROCK music is blaring. JULIA and DANIEL are half-undressed, obviously hammered-drunk, laughing, having fun. They're playing QUARTERS.

DANIEL
Bulls-eye!

JULIA
Again. Damn kid! You're merciless.

DANIEL
Drink up.

She gives him a look, then sucks back a shot of tequila. Her face squints like she's in pain. She beats her chest.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Lime?

JULIA
Limes are for sorority chicks.

DANIEL
Right. Of course.
(clutching his head)
Wow -- so much knowledge all at once!

JULIA pours two more shots.

JULIA
Okay -- whose turn? Keep it coming.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Obviously smashed, DANIEL and JULIA dance to THE KINKS' "I'm Not Like Everybody Else", undressing each other in the process. It's a nasty, sexy, slinky, drunken dance.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

No music -- just heavy breathing. SAME shot we saw at the beginning: JULIA and DANIEL making out in her hallway. Long, wet, drunken kisses. Their clothing already half off.

Finally, after much kissing...

DANIEL

There's something I should tell
you. I'm a virgin.

JULIA

You're a -- awwwww.

DANIEL

Don't do that.

JULIA

That's so cute.

DANIEL

Stop it. It's not -- it's not like
it's by choice.

JULIA

It's okay. Shhhh. C'mere.

JULIA BEDROOM -- NIGHT

She has led him into the bedroom by his belt. Both their tops
are off. Everything is quiet.

DANIEL

-- I'm kind of nervous.

JULIA

Me too.

DANIEL

Liar. Don't...y'know -- nothing too
fast.

JULIA

I'll go nice and slow.

DANIEL

Wait. Wait. I want to remember this
moment. Exactly like this.

DANIEL uses his fingers as a view-finder, framing her
beautiful body.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

This isn't how I pictured this
would happen.

JULIA

It never is.

DANIEL
No, I mean...it's better.

JULIA is touched.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

A tasteful sexual-montage quickly leads to DANIEL and JULIA lying in bed. We see them chatting intimately, smiling, laughing, as JULIA's VOICE-OVER guides us.

JULIA (V.O.)
So after our illicit sex Daniel and I talked and talked as he confessed the details of his young life. And it was on account of this that later, once he'd fallen asleep, I suddenly felt an idea for a story come to me like a jewel dropped from the sky.

We see DANIEL fast asleep.

We see JULIA get out of bed and open her LAP-TOP. She starts typing:

TITLE CARD: THE JAWS OF LIFE

INT. ARTHUR'S DENTAL OFFICE -- DAY

ARTHUR sits behind a desk interviewing a beautiful, slightly-aggressive looking blonde, LESLIE PECK.

JULIA (V.O.)
The story was about a dentist who, despite being married with kids, hires a beautiful blonde assistant to help with his work load.

ARTHUR
You got the job.

LESLIE PECK
Yessssssss!

LESLIE cheers, pumping her fist (the same way ROBIN did during *Battleship*).

JULIA (V.O.)

Right from the beginning it's obvious they're crazy about each other, but like most office affairs they keep it to some mild flirting and overly polite gestures, laughing too hard at each other's jokes.

1. ARTHUR opens the door for LESLIE. What a gentleman.
2. LESLIE laughs too hard at ARTHUR's joke, as some poor patient lies there getting a root canal.

ARTHUR

Pick.

She hands him the pick.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Suction.

LESLIE

Here you go Doctor.

ARTHUR

Breath mint.

LESLIE laughs uproariously -- more than the joke deserves. The PATIENT's panicky eyes dart between the two burgeoning lovebirds.

JULIA (V.O.)

But pretty soon Doctor Dentist is telling his assistant things he would never say to his wife. His secrets, his dreams, his plans to sail the world. Something about confessing to her makes him feel young again. And what's more, she *understands him!*

3. ARTHUR'S OFFICE - DAY

ARTHUR pours LESLIE a glass of wine and points to his GLOBE, explaining his plans to sail the world. CU: GLOBE -- the oceans. LESLIE is rapt.

INT. ARTHUR'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

ARTHUR lies in bed, trying to show specs on a new SUV to SOPHIE, who couldn't care less.

JULIA (V.O.)

Meanwhile at home the Dentist and his wife are having terrible arguments about what new car to buy. She wants something practical and environmentally kosher, whereas he wants an urban tank.

INT. VW STATION WAGON -- TWILIGHT

ARTHUR is driving his VW STATION WAGON, looking haggard. The sky is rose colored, beautiful, and he's distracted by the refracting light.

JULIA (V.O.)

Then at twilight one evening, after a particularly grueling day at the office, Doctor Dentist is driving home in his VW when...

An SUV races through a red, just misses ARTHUR, and pummels the car behind him. Horns honk. Metal grinds and squeals.

JULIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

After using the jaws of life the driver of the Mini dies on the stretcher.

MOMENTS later: ARTHUR gets out of the car. Ambulances and police command the scene. The car behind him is no more. The JAWS OF LIFE are being utilized. ARTHUR is in shock. He sees the bloody carcass of a man in a stretcher. Dead.

JULIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That night the Dentist goes home, shocked and awed. All he wants is to tell his family how much he loves them, how close to death he was, how every moment of life is rich and precious and something to be treasured!

INT. KITCHEN/LIVING-ROOM -- NIGHT

SOPHIE, ROBIN, DANIEL and ARTHUR sit around the dinner table.

JULIA (V.O.)

But his wife will barely look at him, his eldest son reeks of marijuana, and his youngest son is just a bit too fabulous for words.

SOPHIE ignores him. DANIEL's a space-cadet. ROBIN is telling a story with wild hand gestures, like he's Capote on the *Dick Cavett Show*. ARTHUR looks lost.

INT. ARTHUR'S DENTAL OFFICE -- DAY

ARTHUR invites LESLIE into his office. He sits her down and they have a heart to heart. They're really talking.

JULIA (V.O.)

So the next day at work he invites the new blonde assistant into his office and rhapsodizes about the jaws of life. And the moment he confesses, the second he sees that flicker of understanding in her big green beautiful blank eyes, their affair has begun.

LESLIE takes his hands. Emotion floods their eyes.

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM -- DAWN

JULIA is still typing as dawn light paints the room pink and fiery. DANIEL sleeps.

JULIA (V.O.)

And that was it: my first story in months. I had no idea of it was good or not, but some floodgate inside me had opened up and I never wanted it to close again.

JULIA gets in bed with DANIEL. She's happy. Suddenly his arm goes over her. She finds this interesting, to say the least.

FADE TO:

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- MORNING

JULIA and DANIEL lie in bed. JULIA looks at DANIEL, his cute young face. He opens his eyes and looks straight at her. They share a moment. And then...

PHONE rings. JULIA answers it. DANIEL hops out of bed and starts wandering around.

JULIA
Hello.

STEPHANIE
I have the perfect guy for you.

JULIA
I'm doing great thanks. How are you?

STEPHANIE
No time for pleasantries. I'm serious.

JULIA
I don't want him.

STEPHANIE
Why? Did you meet someone?

JULIA
No.

JULIA looks at DANIEL, who is fishing around in her drawers. DANIEL has found her VIBRATOR. He makes a skeptical face.

DANIEL
OhmyGod -- a robot penis. You have a robot penis in your drawer.

JULIA covers the phone and whisper-yells at DANIEL.

JULIA
Put that down!

STEPHANIE
You lying bitch, you met someone, didn't you.

JULIA
No I didn't.

DANIEL
This makes me feel very small.

DANIEL starts waving the vibrator at her, chasing her playfully as she slaps him away.

STEPHANIE

Well then, you have to meet my guy. I told him about you and he's super-excited. He's sweet and incredibly handsome. And he's a doctor. Or he has a doctorate. One of those.

JULIA runs into the BATHROOM. Momentarily opens the door and sprays SHAVING CREAM in DANIEL's face, then shuts it again.

JULIA

He's handsome?

STEPHANIE

Stunning. And wealthy. Totally brilliant too. A Mensa man.

JULIA

Sounds too good to be true.

STEPHANIE

He is.

DANIEL pries open the door, enters, and starts trying to peel her towel off.

JULIA

(at DANIEL)

No!

STEPHANIE

What?

JULIA

Not you.

STEPHANIE

Okay, so, what do you think?

JULIA

Oh y'know Steph, I'm really not all that interested.

STEPHANIE

Are you sure you're okay? Press three if it's a hostage situation.

DANIEL finally catches her and rips off her towel as JULIA rushes off the phone.

JULIA

I'm good. Thanks anyway. Gotta run.

DANIEL pounces on her. They dissolve in laughter.

DANIEL
No more automated sex -- okay.
These things just wind up in
landfills. If you care about the
Earth you'll go organic. Promise?

JULIA
Pinky swear.

As their pinkies connect she sprays him with SHAVING-CREAM!

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE: KITCHEN -- DAY

STEPHANIE is sitting at the table over breakfast as MATTHEW reads the SPORTS section.

STEPHANIE
I'm worried about Julia.

MATTHEW
(Not looking up)
Her drinking?

That's not what she meant, but...

STEPHANIE
Ummm...yeah. That too.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE -- DAY

DANIEL bursts into the house, smiling ear to ear.

DANIEL
Good day at school today. Oh yeah!

He sees ROBIN and SOPHIE sitting on the couch, coats on.
SOPHIE hops up.

SOPHIE
Get in the car.

DANIEL
What's going on?

ROBIN
Mom wants us to go see a therapist.

DANIEL
Uh uh. No way!

SOPHIE grabs his ear and twists violently, pulling him forward.

SOPHIE

I said get in the car.

DANIEL

Owwwwwwwwww.

INT. SAUL'S OFFICE -- DAY

DR. SAUL ROBERTS (32), a THERAPIST, sits behind a desk. He's baby-faced and handsome in a *Jon Stewart* kind of way.

The office walls are covered with SAD CHILDREN's DRAWINGS: a child being torn apart as Mom and Dad pull him in different directions; a child in court, crying; a plane flying with a child waving out the window, while below his father stands next to a CHRISTMAS TREE, a tear in his eyes. Rarely have stick figures seemed so poignant.

ROBIN -- eating from a bag of chips -- is moved by these portraits of divorce. DANIEL's just grumpy, simmering.

DANIEL

So are you supposed to be our therapist?

SAUL

Yes. I'm Doctor Roberts. But if you like you can call me Saul. Your mother thought it might be a good idea for you two to have someone to talk with.

ROBIN

Are you like a massage therapist?

SAUL

Not at all, no.

ROBIN

So you can't help with the kink in my neck.

SAUL

No.

DANIEL

Can you fix anything or do you just talk about it?

SAUL

I would argue that it's only by talking that anything can be fixed.

ROBIN

But not the kink in my neck.

SAUL

No. We're here so you have a safe place to explore your feelings. Robin, let's start with you.

ROBIN

I feel bloated from these chips.

DANIEL spurts out a laugh.

SAUL

And how do you feel about your parents divorce?

ROBIN

They're not divorced yet. Just...everyone just stay calm. I'll handle it.

SAUL

You know they both love you very much.

DANIEL suddenly can't contain his angst.

DANIEL

(shouting)

That's such bullshit!

SAUL

Daniel, do you have something to say?

DANIEL

Eat my ass!

ROBIN

Ha! Such a drama queen.

DANIEL

Sorry, Sir Elton John.

ROBIN

What's that supposed to mean?

DANIEL

(imitating ROBIN)

What's that supposed to mean?

ROBIN

Oh, go pork your old lady.

DANIEL is shocked.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

You thought that was a secret? You can't keep anything from me. I'm omniscient.

DANIEL

No you're not.

ROBIN

Don't set limits on me.

SAUL looks lost. He gazes at the pencil-crayoned picture of the child being torn apart by his parents...and relates.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE -- AFTERNOON

JULIA, STEPHANIE, YVONNE (a cute 22 year old blonde working as STEPHANIE's assistant) and MOM/MAGGIE are exiting a matinee screening of the hit new pun-heavy film LADY'S KNIGHT.

MAGGIE

That was a lovely film.

JULIA

Are you crazy? It was a chick flick.

STEPHANIE

Yeah but we're chicks.

JULIA

Fine. But did she really have to wind up with the handsome guy with the square-jaw and the hair?

STEPHANIE rolls her eyes, and the other girls laugh.

STEPHANIE

(very sarcastic)

I know -- wasn't it awful. That poor girl.

MAGGIE pats JULIA's back.

MAGGIE
That's what's we in the business
call a happy ending, dear.

JULIA
Why can't she just be happy on her
own...like, contemplating her soul
or something?

MAGGIE
Can't wait to read your novel.

INT. BAR -- EVENING

JULIA drinks with her friends. With booze on the table,
everyone is laughing and having fun. (MAGGIE, in particular,
is happy-drunk -- enjoying the young crowd.)

STEPHANIE
So -- this new guy. What's he like?

JULIA
He's great. (beat) He's young.

YVONNE
Rarrrrrrrr! Cougar. Go girl.

JULIA
(to STEPHANIE)
Can you ask your assistant not say
cougar?

MAGGIE
Well I think it's wonderful.

JULIA
Thanks Mom.

STEPHANIE
How young?

JULIA
I'm not telling.

YVONNE
Twenty-six, twenty-five?

JULIA gives a thumbs down. STEPHANIE jumps in (maybe to save
JULIA).

STEPHANIE

What's the sex like? Sorry to pry,
but I have no romantic life of my
own.

JULIA

Oh please, you and Matthew are the
only happy couple I know.

STEPHANIE's face blanches for a quick beat. Obviously her
marriage is not the bastion of bliss JULIA imagines.

YVONNE

So how's the sex?

JULIA

It's...getting better. It's tiring.

YVONNE

Your man goes all night. Let me at
him.

JULIA winces.

STEPHANIE

And what's he do?

YVONNE

Is he sexy?

JULIA

He's a (coughs) student. And he
makes me feel sexy. So yes.

MAGGIE takes JULIA's hand. She's clearly drunk.

MAGGIE

Now now. The important thing dear,
is do you like him?

JULIA

Yeah. I really do.

INT. DANIEL'S HOME: LIVING-ROOM -- NIGHT

SOPHIE is sitting on the couch doing the SODOKU, and ROBIN is
beside her working on his speech.

HONK. A car horn.

SOPHIE looks out the window and spots JULIA in her car.

DANIEL comes running down the stairs ready for the date.

SOPHIE

Well don't you look nice. Who's that woman outside?

DANIEL

That's my...French teacher.

ROBIN

Ha!

SOPHIE

You're learning French?

DANIEL

For extra credit, yeah. It's the best.

ROBIN

Oh yeah. And he's really great at it. You should hear him.

SOPHIE

Yeah, say something.

DANIEL

Huh?

SOPHIE

Come on. Tell your mother something in French.

DANIEL

(awful fake French)

Ah, mama -- Les French language et tres difficultay.

SOPHIE gives him a skeptical look, but then her cell phone rings. She answers.

SOPHIE

Hello? Oh, I'm surviving I guess.

DANIEL's off the hook. He exchanges a meaningful look with ROBIN (who is a little disgusted) then goes out the door.

EXT. LOOK-OUT HILL -- NIGHT

JULIA's car is parked on what could be construed as a *romantic* bluff overlooking the suburbs. We hear moaning.

INT. JULIA'S CAR -- NIGHT

DANIEL and JULIA are having sex in her car.

JULIA

Oh yeah. Yeah! Oh yeah! (Suddenly in pain) Oww...owww...seat-belt -- seat-belt --

DANIEL

Sorry.

She removes the seat-belt from behind her back.

JULIA

No, don't stop. Keep going.

DANIEL continues to thrust until the sex reaches its logical conclusion. He rolls off her. They're both red-faced and smiling, giddy, out of breath.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Wow.

DANIEL

Whew! That was...that was fun, huh?

JULIA gives him a loud affirmative kiss -- SMACK. Suddenly there's knock on the window. JULIA jumps.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

It's okay.

DANIEL rolls down the window.

PIZZA GUY

Pizza guy.

DANIEL

Yep, hold on. (Getting money) Here you go. Thanks man.

JULIA

You ordered a pizza?

DANIEL

Yeah, was that stupid?

JULIA

No. You're like...some kind of Stephen-Hawking-super-genius. You're perfect!

With a mouth full of hot pizza.

DANIEL
(happily; sheepish)
Yeaah.

JULIA is content as she too bites into a pizza slice.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD -- MORNING

Saturday morning in the 'burbs: people are out mowing lawns, tending gardens, washing cars, etc., enjoying the sparkling sunshine.

DANIEL has a puff of his ONE-HITTER of marijuana, then rides his bike through the 'hood, marveling at the beauty of middle-class life and this new love inside him. His revery is interrupted when he spots...

SAUL is washing his shitty HONDA PRELUDE on his driveway. He's covered in suds and slightly annoyed. DANIEL approaches.

DANIEL
Hey Doc. Hey, remember me?

SAUL
Of course. Nice ride.

DANIEL
You too. This where you live?

SAUL is hesitant to answer.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Don't worry, I'm not a stalker. My girlfriend lives in your 'hood.

SAUL
Cool.

DANIEL is still smiling, his head filled with JULIA.

DANIEL
Yeahhh. You have a wife or a special lady friend?

SAUL
Not at the moment.

DANIEL
Ohhh man -- best thing that ever happened to me. Truth.
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)

My girl -- totally changed my life.
You gotta get yourself one.

SAUL

So I've heard. Well, I'm happy you
have someone to confide in.

DANIEL

Totally, yeah. And she's so smart
and beautiful. She's like a
chocolate sundae of a woman, you
know?

SAUL

I believe I do.

DANIEL

Sorry I was such a dick the other
day. But no one even asked me if I
wanted a therapist.

(getting over-excited)

Y'know, my mom -- I mean, I get
home, for once in my life I'm
happy, and she like rips off my
ear. And dad is starting to dress
like a yuppie bike-messenger --

SAUL

(interrupting)

Danny, Danny: I'm gonna wash my car
now, but I'd love to hear more. Why
don't you come by my office next
week.

DANIEL considers.

DANIEL

Mmmmm, I'll think about it. Adios
Doc.

DANIEL salutes SAUL, who salutes back.

DANIEL gets on his bike and starts to ride. He cuts off a CAR
that breaks hard and HONKS, almost hitting him. DANIEL,
however, is entirely oblivious as he happily rides away. SAUL
shakes his head, jealous of DANIEL's stupid teenage joy.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- EARLY EVENING

JULIA is lying on her couch, talking to DANIEL on the phone.
She feels like a teenage girl.

JULIA
So what's our next date?

INT. DANIEL'S ROOM -- EARLY EVENING

DANIEL sits at his desk, books open.

DANIEL
Have you ever played laser tag?
It's kinda like paintball except it
doesn't hurt.

JULIA
Why don't you just come on over?

DANIEL
I would, but it's a group project
and this one girl is a total
science-Nazi.

JULIA makes a sound somewhere between a sigh and the mewl of
a very turned-on woman.

JULIA
Argggggghhhh. I'm so horny.

DANIEL starts to re-think.

DANIEL
You are? Well, I guess I could --

JULIA
Hold on. Call waiting.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT -- TWILIGHT

MAGGIE is sitting on the floor of her apartment. She's
dishevelled and INCREDIBLY DRUNK. Not a pretty picture. Her
words are very slurred.

MAGGIE
(wildly slurred)
Jube-Jube? Jube-Jube I'm drunk.

JULIA
Mom? Oh Jesus -- did you have vodka
for dinner again?

MAGGIE
Someone slipped a mickey in my
drink.

JULIA

Yeah, I bet. I'm sure men are just dying to rooph a seventy year old.

MAGGIE

I need food.

JULIA

Just -- that's -- just stay there. I'll be right over.

She hangs up and takes a deep, pained breath, followed by a long sip of wine, steeling herself. This is stressful.

INT. SUPERMARKET -- EARLY EVENING

JULIA is shopping, rushing to get sustenance for MAGGIE. Dressed in jogging pants, she's pushing her cart through the aisles at a rapid pace, occasionally riding it. As she sails past the FLORAL section she (literally) floats by a casually-dressed SAUL.

SAUL can't help but notice this beautiful woman coasting past like an apparition.

SAUL follows her through the various aisles: a well-choreographed game of cat and mouse. She looks up at him; he picks up a can of lentils and pretends to read.

SAUL

Love these things.

At the CHECKOUT:

The CHECK-OUT LADY is sloooowly pushing products across the scanner. JULIA quickly nudges a few items across the scanner herself, until she receives a NASTY LOOK.

Her phone rings. She winces at caller ID.

JULIA

Daniel, hi, shit, hi, sorry. I'm so so sorry I forgot to call you back. I'm such a bitch but my Mom is, like, super-drunk and she thinks someone gave her roophies and -- and --

(to CHECK-OUT LADY))

-- hey, those Oreos are on special!

(into phone)

And-and-and I'm just panicking to death here.

INT. DANIEL'S BATHROOM -- EVENING

DANIEL is sitting on his toilet, fully dressed, obviously high.

DANIEL
Ummmmm...can I help?

INT. SUPERMARKET -- EVENING

JULIA
You're a doll, but no. Gotta jet.

JULIA hangs up. Keeps rushing.

INT. DANIEL'S BATHROOM -- EVENING

DANIEL looks stoned, alone and melancholy on his toilet.

INT. SUPERMARKET -- EVENING

JULIA hurries past the check-out, while SAUL lingers at the automatic doors. He's psyching himself up to say hello.

JULIA goes to leave, but his cart is in her way.

SAUL
Excuse me, hi.

JULIA steers her cart around him, barely looking up.

SAUL (CONT'D)
I don't usually approach girls in grocery stores, but I just wanted to say--

JULIA
Bite me, pervert.

SAUL
No. Wha-? No you don't understa-

JULIA
No, you don't understand. I saw you with the lentils buddy.

SAUL
Yeah, but --

JULIA

Look -- I'm sure you're a real swell guy and all the ladies at the office love ya, but I'm really not in the mood, 'kay. So...

JULIA shoos him away, then hurries off. SAUL looks crushed -- much sadder and more lonely than we might have expected from seeing him at work. *This is his life.*

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

JULIA bursts in the door. MAGGIE is on the couch with a BLOOD-SOAKED-towel wrapped around her hand. Beside her is a bottle of wine with the top broken off.

JULIA

You're bleeding.

MAGGIE

I couldn't get it to open.

JULIA grabs her MAGGIE.

JULIA

Listen to me! You can't do this to yourself, okay! OKAY! You can't...

MAGGIE closes her eyes. JULIA realizes it's not the time.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Let me see the cut. There is no cut. Mom, this is just wine.

MAGGIE

Oh, thank God. I'm so exhausted Jube-Jube.

JULIA gives her a hug.

JULIA

You're okay now. Everything's going to be okay.

INT. HOTEL BAR -- EVENING

SAUL is alone at the bar, melancholy.

SAUL

Jameson on ice please.

We hear a WOMAN crying. SAUL looks around. Everyone is with someone but him.

CAMERA tracks slowly: in a corner table we see ARTHUR and LESLIE drinking red wine. LESLIE is the one CRYING. Clearly she's just been dumped.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

DANIEL is walking through the hallway with TODD and JAKE.

TODD
See that girl.

TODD points to HEATHER, an awkwardly cute blonde student.

DANIEL
Yeah, she's in my science group.
What, she's weirdly cute, right?

TODD
At the party on Friday she drank a
Big Gulp's worth of SoCo and then
gave Ron Henderson and his brother
a BJ.

DANIEL
His brother? Noooo. Really?

As they walk by HEATHER, TODD coughs.

TODD
(cough)
Slut!

HEATHER looks up and locks eyes with DANIEL. He feels terrible. His phone rings and saves him from her pleading gaze.

He looks at his call display, then answers.

DANIEL
Hello there Mrs. Robinson.

EXT. JULIA'S CAR -- DAY

JULIA is driving and talking and listening to music.

JULIA

Hey there Jail-bait. How's high school?

DANIEL

(still looking at HEATHER)
Kind of harsh actually.

JULIA

Sorry about yesterday. But put on something low-cut, 'cause I'm taking you out tonight.

DANIEL

Actually I thought we'd stay in.
I've got a surprise for you.

JULIA

Mmmmm. How mysterious.

DANIEL

Yeah, I really think you're gonna love it.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

A bag of MARIJUANA. REVEAL -- DANIEL is rolling a big joint. JULIA looks squeamish, skeptical. She sips her vodka martini.

JULIA

Ohhhh....Danny, I don't know.
(sigh) I'm really a lot more comfortable as a boozier.

DANIEL

Yeah I know. I just thought it'd be fun to...y'know...I mean, I've done everything else high, why not sex?

JULIA

(playful)
Pretty confident you're getting lucky.

He shrugs and grins.

DANIEL

I'm wearing my good body-spray.

JULIA

I just don't get your obsession with marijuana.

DANIEL

Well...it's like this: God made this sort of difficult, evil, morally complex world, but then within world that he planted this awesome plant of awesomeness. And when you put that plant in a bong or a one-hitter and smoke it, it just makes everything a little funnier. It's like you're finally in on God's big joke. Plus, it helps with my moods.

JULIA

Hmph. Just makes me paranoid and hungry.

DANIEL

That 'cause you don't smoke enough. Weed's actually a great way to deal with inhibitions.

JULIA

(suspicious)

Riggggght. 'Cause I have so many of those. This doesn't end with me wearing a costume, does it?

DANIEL

Could it?

JULIA shakes her head no as DANIEL lights the joint and takes a long haul. He offers it up to her.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

(jokingly)

Come on. Everyone's doing it.

JULIA

Well if everyone is.

She takes the joint from him, puts it to her mouth, hesitates.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Only because I want in on the joke too. (kidding) This better be good shit.

She wraps her lips around it. SLO MO of her exhaling smoke.

FADE TO:

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

In SLO MO:

STONED LOVE: DANIEL undresses JULIA as they slow-dance. CLOTHING falls to the floor.

JULIA falls backwards onto the bed from a SURREAL height.

DANIEL is on top her, going down on her, when...JULIA looks over and sees their reflection in her mirror. As DANIEL kisses her body she looks at herself, transfixed -- she's disturbed by what she sees. *WHAT AM I DOING!*

JULIA

Wait! Wait wait. Stop.

JULIA looks at herself and walks towards the mirror.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

DANIEL

Wha'?

JULIA

I look like my Mom.

DANIEL lamely tries to lighten things.

DANIEL

Your Mom must have a hot bod...

JULIA

No, I mean... (she almost tears up)
I look like my Mom. This chin.
This fucking family chin. And my
wrinkles and these neck rings,
ohmyGod.

DANIEL is at a loss.

DANIEL

Should I...you want me to order a
pizza?

JULIA

I've turned into my Mom.

JULIA starts weeping. DANIEL has no idea what to do. He comes up behind her, goes to put his hand on her shoulder.

DANIEL

No baby, baby no, you're just
having a bad stoner moment--

She slaps his hand away -- snaps! He jumps back.

JULIA

Don't!

DANIEL

Sorry.

JULIA

No -- just -- You need to leave.

EXT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

DANIEL steps out the door. He locks it with the KEY and then places it under the WELCOME MAT. He stops and thinks about going back in. Just then the sprinkler on the neighbor's lawn comes to life. DANIEL turns around and looks up: the sky is filled with twinkling stars. It's like they're calling to him -- the perfect STONER MOMENT!

DANIEL decides against bothering JULIA and instead walks away -- strolling through the SUBURBS at night like the last teenager on an empty planet.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

JULIA is still staring in the mirror. This fades into:

JULIA (V.O.)

That night, after I sent Daniel packing, I sat down to write another short story. This one was about a girl much like myself who lives in a town that's suddenly plagued by a wave of sleep. For some mysterious reason wedding-rice starts falling from the sky, like snow. And something sedative in the wedding-snow makes it so everyone it touches falls into a deep, deep sleep and can never awaken.

EXT. CITY STREET -- NIGHT

A street lit by globe-like lanterns.

We see JULIA walking down the street, where all the characters from the film -- SOPHIE, ARTHUR, MOM, STEPHANIE, ROBIN, DANIEL, the BRIDE and GROOM from the wedding, et al. -- are lined up along the walls. JULIA is wearing a WEDDING DRESS. A dreamy snow descends on them like WEDDING RICE. As it strikes each character they collapse to the ground and fall asleep. JULIA keeps walking.

JULIA (V.O.)

The only thing keeping our hero from suffering the same fate is that she is an incorrigible insomniac, owing to the fact that all her life she's been filled by an uncontrollable anger. Why, she doesn't know.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

JULIA tossing and turning in bed. She gets up and pours herself some whiskey. She smokes. She's restless.

JULIA (V.O.)

Pretty soon the whole town is fast asleep from the storm of wedding-rice, and our poor hero is left all alone with her rage. In a fit of despair she tries burying herself in a snow-ditch, hoping she'll sleep too. But even that doesn't work.

EXT. CITY STREET -- NIGHT

JULIA lies down in a snowbank. She tosses and turns. The strange dream-snow still falls around her. She closes her eyes. Then opens them again, upset.

JULIA (V.O.)

Finally, she pulls herself up, only to see that the impression she's made in the snow is that of an angel, and she finds this sight so beautiful and moving and utterly perfect that she's suddenly filled with happiness -- and all at once her rage just floats away.

(MORE)

JULIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The story ends with her closing her eyes as tufts of snowy wedding-rice drift gently all around her, and she eases into her eternal slumber. Just like everybody else.

She stands up. She's made the perfect imprint of a snow angel -- way too beautiful and precise to be real. A tear, like a snowflake, falls from her eye, and then suddenly, as if she's been shot, she falls to the ground.

She's lying there, eyes closed, smiling in her WEDDING DRESS.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

JULIA is typing away at the computer. Then she gets up and gets into bed, smiling. Mirroring the image we just saw.

JULIA (V.O.)
After much debate I called the story "The Wedding-Angel". I couldn't tell if it was any good or not, but mostly I didn't even care. For the first time in a long while I felt something close to what religious-types might call a revelation. And I knew what I had to do.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE: KITCHEN -- DAY

A new day. Sunlight slants through the window. JULIA is sipping coffee with the phone to her ear. She looks nervous.

INT. TENDER FASHIONS MAGAZINE: OFFICE -- DAY

STEPHANIE picks up the phone.

STEPHANIE
Stephanie Gordon's office.

JULIA
Hey Steph. You know that brilliant, rich, handsome blah blah guy you were telling me about?

STEPHANIE
Yeah yeah.

JULIA
He's close to my age -- right?

STEPHANIE
Ballpark-ish.

JULIA
Cool. Um...is he still single?

STEPHANIE smiles.

INT. JEWELRY STORE -- DAY

Shots of various expensive necklaces, earring, etc. Finally we rest on a relatively cheap (but nice) pair of earrings.

DANIEL
No, no, no, good Lord no. Yes.
Those are the ones.

Reveal -- DANIEL looking at them, being helped by a CLERK.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I'll take 'em.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL BAR -- EVENING

JULIA steps out of a cab. With her stylish dress, high heels, gleaming legs, and elegantly disheveled hair she is vision of beauty. Only her expression betrays her anxiety.

She takes a deep breath, then enters.

INT. HOTEL BAR -- EVENING

A posh hotel lounge. SAUL is sitting alone at the bar, drinking. JULIA spots him, assumes he's the guy, and makes her approach.

JULIA
(to bartender)
Jameson on the rocks please.

She smiles SAUL's way, sly and flirtatious.

JULIA. (CONT'D)
Hi.

SAUL is disarmed. Does she remember him?

SAUL

Hi.

JULIA

Are you...is your name Peter by any chance?

SAUL

Sorry, no. (beat) Blind date?

JULIA

No. Nooooo. Well, yes. You too?

SAUL

No. Just...meeting friends. They're late of course.

JULIA

Have I met you before?

SAUL lies.

SAUL

Nooo. I-I-I'd remember you.

JULIA

I hate this. Why am I doing this?

SAUL

Why are you doing this?

JULIA

He's supposed to be a great guy.

SAUL

Well he's certainly lucky.

JULIA

(suddenly sarcastic, mean)

You got all the lines, don't ya.

JULIA walks away, almost resentful, leaving SAUL slightly stunned.

JULIA accosts the maitre-d'.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Can I get a table for two please,
and uh...more.

She taps her glass with her finger-nail.

LATER: JULIA is sitting alone at a table for two. She's annoyed. Cutlery is set out in front of the empty seat.

SAUL watches from the bar. Finally, he approaches her. JULIA crunches on a bread-stick.

SAUL

Hi.

JULIA

Hey -- it's the guy who's not my date.

SAUL

Right, yeah. Hey can I ask you something?

JULIA

Shoot.

SAUL

What are the chances the guy you're meeting is more interesting than me?

JULIA

Pretty good, I imagine.

SAUL

See I don't think so. Most guys are reaaaally unattractive. They smell bad, they have weird nose hair. I don't know how you girls do it. But --

JULIA

(interrupting)

But on the other hand if they're too good-looking they're assholes, right? And you're the perfect medium?

SAUL smiles. She understands.

SAUL

I know a ridiculously good sushi place close by. Why don't you join me?

JULIA

Because you're not the guy I'm supposed to meet.

SAUL

Maybe I am.

JULIA

Awwww...how existential.

SAUL

I'm absolutely serious.

JULIA

And your friends?

He waves off that notion.

SAUL

I hate my friends. I see 'em all the time.

JULIA

I'm sorry...I really do have a da-

SAUL

He's late, I'm punctual. Right there it tells you something!

JULIA

He might be the man of my dreams.

SAUL

See, that's the problem with dating: you're always looking over your shoulder, wondering if there's something better. But what would happen if you stopped waiting for that dream person and chose the guy right in front of you?

Beat.

SAUL (CONT'D)

I mean me.

JULIA

Yeah I got that. Okay. Okay -- sure, let's go.

SAUL

Yeah?

JULIA

Yeah. Quickly, before my buzz wears off!

As they start to walk away they pass an OLD MAN.

SAUL

Was he your date? A little
geriatric, no? You like older men,
huh.

JULIA

I wish.

The camera lingers for a moment on the empty table where JULIA was supposed to meet her dream man. Cutlery set, candles lit, like two ghosts dining. A melancholy moment.

INT. DANIEL'S BATHROOM -- NIGHT

DANIEL is doing his weed routine: standing on the toilet and blowing the smoke into the ceiling fan. Then he pulls out his cell and dials JULIA's number.

JULIA

(answering machine)
*Bonjour! You've reached Julia. Keep
it short and pithy.*

He hangs up, and then tries again.

INT. STYLISH SUSHI PLACE -- NIGHT

JULIA and SAUL are drinking sake, laughing, having a great time at the FANCY sushi place -- a very sophisticated milieu. They're both a bit drunk, and happy!

JULIA

Okay -- worst Halloween: I went as Marilyn Monroe, but at the time I was so fat everyone thought I'd gone as Anna Nicole Smith. It was so humiliating that I got drunk and cried and my mascara ran, and then they thought I was Courtney Love. It was awful.

SAUL

You look nice now.

JULIA's smile is interrupted by her phone vibrating: it's DANIEL. She doesn't answer. Instead she stares at SAUL, and he stares, seeing who will blink first. JULIA flinches.

SAUL (CONT'D)
So why's a girl like you going on
blind dates anyway?

Suddenly Julia's full of manic energy.

JULIA
I'm just gonna to tell you flat
out, okay. I'm crazy. I'm a...you
hafta run...I mean RUN away from
me. I'm -- a baaaaad girl.

SAUL
That's --

JULIA
I'm a shit. I'm a -- I'm in a
horrendous situation right now.
With a boy.

SAUL
That's okay.

JULIA
A boy!

SAUL
You need to ease up on yourself
right now. You have to chill.

Now they're both getting excited.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Whatever you did -- whatever
relationship you're trying to get
out of -- it's all within the realm
of romantic mistakes. Y'know,
you're looking -- we're all just
looking --

JULIA
You're nice...which is bad.

SAUL
Oh fuck that! Fuck the nice-boring-
nice-guy thing. I'm not so nice.

JULIA
No...it's sweet.

SAUL playfully tries to be tough.

SAUL

Fuck you.

JULIA

You're not convincing me.

SAUL

No? Not aggressive enough?

JULIA

You and your cheesy pick up line.

SAUL

You have a better one?

She looks at him flirtatiously, smiling.

JULIA

Come closer.

SAUL

Yeah.

JULIA

Closer.

He obeys.

JULIA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

I've lost my virginity, but if you want I can show you the box it came in.

INT. ROBIN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

ROBIN and DANIEL are playing BATTLESHIP again.

ROBIN

E 13.

DANIEL

Hit.

DANIEL looks upset.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

JULIA and SAUL come crashing through the door, tearing each other's clothing off.

Within in moments they're on the kitchen table, knocking everything over. This is not like sex with DANIEL -- it's VERY, VERY ADULT.

INT. ROBIN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

ROBIN
E 14.

DANIEL is growing increasingly less enthusiastic.

DANIEL
Hit.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The sex is getting louder, harder, wilder.

INT. ROBIN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

ROBIN
E 15.

DANIEL
Hit.

ROBIN
E 16.

DANIEL sighs.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Say it. Come on. It's no fun if you don't say it.

DANIEL
You sank my battleship.

ROBIN
Yes!

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

JULIA
Yes!

SAUL

Yes!

JULIA reaches over to turn out the light, and knocks it over. Fizzle...then BLACKNESS.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- MORNING

JULIA wakes up, looks over, and sees SAUL lying next to her. Suddenly his arm wraps around her (like DANIEL). She's slightly alarmed. And then...SAUL looks at his watch and bounces up, still very out of it.

SAUL

Whoa! I really gotta get
to...work...okay, no pants...don't
look at my bum.

SAUL gets out of bed half-naked, stumbles towards the bathroom, and shuts the door. Very endearing.

INT. SCHOOL: BOY'S BATHROOM -- DAY

ROBIN and DEXTER are joking around in the boy's bathroom.

ROBIN

And then Andy Samburg's all like
(high pitch singing)
"I got my dick in a box..."

They crack up. ROBIN most of all.

DEXTER

No way.

ROBIN

It was so frickin' hilarious.

DEXTER

My parents would never let me watch
that.

Suddenly two older students, TED and IAN, bust through the door. They're big, loud, obnoxious.

IAN starts pissing in the sink.

TED

Hey fagatron! What's so funny?

IAN

You guys pulling each other's
noodles.

ROBIN is disgusted by IAN's sink-pee. He's also nervous.

ROBIN
No. We're talking about SNL.

TED
SNL is gay like you, faggot. MAD TV
is way better.

ROBIN
You can't be serious. I mean, the
magazine's *fantastic*, but the show--

TED
Careful Ian. He might try to suck
you off.

IAN
Ewwwwwww. That's so gay.

He does up his pants. He and TED storm out. As they pass
DEXTER, TED bumps into him hard.

ROBIN
What a bunch of jerks, huh? You
okay?

ROBIN follows and reaches out to him. DEXTER recoils.

DEXTER
Don't.

ROBIN
What?

DEXTER
You're not going to try to touch my
wiener, are you?

ROBIN
Why would you even say that?

DEXTER
No reason. Forget it.

DEXTER exits, clearly feeling guilty.

ROBIN is devastated. He looks like he's going to cry as he
leans back against a graffiti-covered wall. It's a portrait
of LONELINESS -- his tiny body framed against rude drawings
and black-marker expletives.

And then ROBIN sees it...the red FIRE ALARM. He walks across the room, raises his hand, and pulls it. RINGGGGGGGGG.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. NICE RESTAURANT -- DAY

FIRE TRUCKS go by as DANIEL, dressed quite nicely, enters the semi-swanky restaurant. He sees JULIA alone at a table and for a brief moment he drinks in her beauty. His revery is interrupted when...

WAITER

Can I help you Sir?

DANIEL

Just meeting my girlfriend.

(with pride)

That's her.

JULIA looks at her reflection in the plate. DANIEL appears.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Hey babe.

He goes to kiss her cheek, but she shirks.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Am I doing it wrong? Okay, I need to settle this once and for all --

JULIA

Daniel.

DANIEL

Do I kiss the air or do I kiss your actual cheek French styles or what?

JULIA

Daniel.

DANIEL

Yeah, uh-uh? I'm listening.

JULIA

Daniel, we can't do this anymore.

Beat.

DANIEL

Cool. Okay.

He takes a deep breath. Sighs.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I knew we couldn't...do this --

The news is slowly sinking in.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Wait. Are we...

He looks around the room. A woman at another table lets loose a shrill laugh.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Are we breaking up?

JULIA
Yes. We are.

DANIEL
Just like that? We can't even have sex anymore?

She shakes her head no.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Y'know -- we all get high and freak out sometimes. It's part of the fun, but --

JULIA
Daniel, you were the exact right person for me at the exact right time. But that time has passed. You're gonna be a a real heartbreaker one day.

DANIEL
Oh, gee, thanks. Did you read that in a...in a fortune cookie. Or did you... did you google "how to dump your teenage boyfriend"?

JULIA
Don't get testy.

DANIEL
Goddamnit! Is there another guy?

JULIA
I don't know. Maybe. I know I want to see what else is out there.

DANIEL is outraged, but pleading. Some people at a neighboring table look over.

DANIEL

What else is out there?! Have you watched CNN lately? It's terrible out there. Don't go out there. Stay here. With me.

(his eyes are tearing up)

Shit Julia, you're happy with me. I understand you.

JULIA

I know you do.

He holds out a small black box.

DANIEL

I got you this.

JULIA smiles sadly.

JULIA

I would have been happy with flowers.

DANIEL

I saved and I...anyway, they made me think of you.

He stops talking. JULIA opens the box and looks at the shimmering heart-shaped EARRINGS, and then at DANIEL. Something in her face has changed.

JULIA

Daniel, I don't have pierced ears.

DANIEL is devastated. He knows he's made his final mistake.

CUT TO:

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE -- DAY

ARTHUR, in a too-tight hip T-shirt, is standing at the doorway of his former house. He's nervous -- and what's more, he appears contrite. He tries to fix himself up, then rings the DOORBELL. Behind him we see his shiny new HUMMER.

SOPHIE answers the door. When she sees ARTHUR she calls out:

SOPHIE
(shouting)
Robin!

ARTHUR
Hi honey.

She won't make eye contact. She looks like she's in pain. She spots the HUMMER.

SOPHIE
So you finally bought it. Does that mean you'll get rid of your "my other car's a Hummer" bumper-sticker

ARTHUR
Yeah I'm -- Sophie, I made a mistake. I realize that now. But when we said 'til death do us part...I mean, that's gotta allow for some screw ups.

SOPHIE
Screw ups? Arthur. You lied, and you...you embarrassed me.

ARTHUR
(bites his lip, attempting not to cry)
I'm sorry.

SOPHIE
Be sorrier!

ARTHUR
I love you... still. I know it's changed, but love changes. There should be different names for love. And the children --

SOPHIE
Don't throw that at me!

ARTHUR
I'm not throwi-

SOPHIE
How dare you throw that at me.

ARTHUR

I'm not throwing. I'm talking!
If it seems like I'm throwing it's
because I'm really really nervous --

SOPHIE

No. You know what? No. That's -- I
can't stand here and let you be the
victi-

(off ARTHUR's upset look)
What?

SOPHIE moves, revealing that ROBIN's been standing there
watching this fight the whole time. Both parents feel guilty.

INT. HUMMER: SCENIC BACK ROAD -- DAY

ARTHUR's HUMMER is speeding along a pastoral back road,
blasting *SUPERTRAMP*. ROBIN rides shotgun. ARTHUR shuts the
SUPERTRAMP off, and both of them look sad as they watch the
scenery pass.

ROBIN

Dad, can you turn my heat seat off?
My butt's on fire.

ARTHUR shuts it off. They drive in silence.

ARTHUR

Hey -- want to see something cool?
See this digital dot?

ARTHUR points to the GPS map.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

This digital dot is us -- and if
you were up in the sky this is what
our town would look like.

CU: GPS system -- they are but a small dot amidst a network
of lines. This is making ROBIN even more sad and disturbed.

ROBIN

That's what we look like to God?

ARTHUR is obviously uncomfortable with the word "God".

ARTHUR

Or to a bird, yeah. See. Here's us
in the city, then the state, and
then...it's loading...the whole
world.

ECU: The map pulls out to reveal them in relation the city, state, then world. It's overwhelming.

ROBIN
We're so small.

CU: ROBIN looks like he is having his own private existential crisis as the GPS MAPS are reflected in his fear-filled eyes.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

JULIA is TYPING on her laptop. A new story is emerging.

JULIA (V.O.)
For Julia, sex had always been a kind of pleasurable power struggle between the two genders -- but never was that struggle more apparent than with her new boyfriend, Saul.

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Sex: SAUL is on top of JULIA, ramming her rhythmically. The bed squeaks, and SAUL moans loudly as he approaches climax.

SAUL
Oh yeah. Uh huh. Yes. That's right.
Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah.

JULIA practically rolls her eyes. He speeds up.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Yes, yes, yes -- I WIN!

He pumps his fists in victory, then rolls off her. They each retreat into their post-coital world. SAUL shuts his eyes. But JULIA looks bothered.

JULIA
Wow. That was...that was...
(annoyed)...excuse me but did you just say "I win"??

SAUL
(half-asleep)
Huh? No. Uh uh.

JULIA
I think uh...yeah...I think you did.

SAUL

Did I? Oh.

JULIA

What does that mean: "I win". Sex isn't a competition, you know.

SAUL

Of course not. Noooo. All I meant was...you know, I'm beating you twenty-seven to nothing.

JULIA

What?

SAUL

Oh yeah. Look.

From out of nowhere SAUL wheels over a CHALKBOARD. He's right: the score reads SAUL:27, JULIA:0.

JULIA

You keep score! That's insane!
That's so...that's...wait a second.
I'm pretty good. How come I don't ever win?

SAUL

Because when we have sex I'm the one who gets to orgasm, while you're the one who gets pregnant.

DING DONG (doorbell rings).

HARD CUT TO:

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

JULIA

Ahhh!

JULIA GASPS as if waking from a nightmare. In fact she's still sitting at her computer.

DING-DONG.

EXT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

SAUL is standing at her door in a SUIT, looking dapper.

SAUL
Ready to go?

JULIA is still in her own twisted writer-head-space.

JULIA
Yeah I was just...whooooosh.
(twirling finger at head)
Cra-zaaa--zee.

SAUL
Well, I hope you like opera.

JULIA
I like rock-opera.

SAUL
Seriously?

JULIA
(lying, awkwardly)
No. Noooo. I was...(sneering) who
likes rock opera?

As she's speaking he leans in and gives her a long kiss,
rescuing her from her bad lie.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE PARTY -- NIGHT

The ROCK-OPERA song TOMMY ("Tommy Can you Hear Me") is blasting through a HOUSE-PARTY. Teens stumble around drunk and high, doing things they'll regret and things they'll never remember. By the light of a BONFIRE TODD, JAKE and a very depressed DANIEL are getting steadily hammered.

TODD
I know you can't see it now, but
breaking up with her was the best
thing that could have happened.
Bro's before ho's, man!

DANIEL shakes his head. He just doesn't see it.

DANIEL
Yeah I just don't...I just don't --

TODD
Bro's before ho's!

JAKE
Bro's before ho's.

TODD and JAKE clink beers. DANIEL takes a toke of a joint.

INT. OPERA HOUSE: FOYER -- NIGHT

JULIA is with SAUL. They're about to enter the opera when her CELL PHONE rings. She answers.

JULIA

Hello?

REBECCA

Julia, it's your favorite agent.

JULIA

Rebecca. Hi.

JULIA indicates to SAUL that she'll meet him in the there. She walks through the ornate foyer, chatting on the phone. (Note: we never see REBECCA.)

REBECCA

Sorry to call so late honey, but I just got off the phone with your publishers, and they are so excited to read your first few chapters.

JULIA

(worried)

Are they? Great. But you know, it's coming out a little different than I expected. I'm writing these really weird stories about marriage and sex and adultery... I feel like a singer that can't stop clearing her throat.

REBECCA

"A singer that can't" -- they're going to love that. Now promise me you'll send what you have tomorrow, okay?

JULIA

But it's still super-rough.

REBECCA

They love that raw funny stuff.

Suddenly JULIA gets an earful of STATIC.

JULIA
Rebecca? You there?

REBECCA
Julia? Can you hear me?

JULIA
Hello? Damn.

JULIA hangs up. The phone rings again immediately. She answers.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Rebecca?

INT. HOUSE PARTY -- NIGHT

A typical suburban house, except this one is filled with drunk teenagers, red light-bulbs, and vodka and Red Bull. DANIEL looks WASTED. Beside him someone dances the ROBOT.

DANIEL
(slurring)
Who's Rebecca?

INT. OPERA HOUSE: FOYER -- NIGHT

The lights start flicking ON AND OFF, indicating that the performance is about to begin.

JULIA
Daniel. I'm sorry but I can't talk now.

DANIEL
I need to speak to someone. I think I'm really depressed.

JULIA
Well you can't talk to me about me. It just doesn't work like that.

DANIEL
You broke my heart.

JULIA
I know. I'm really sorry.

JULIA hangs up. The lights keep FLICKERING on and off, but her face is frozen in sadness.

INT. HOUSE PARTY -- NIGHT

DANIEL pockets his cell and stumbles over to a group of TEENAGERS gawking at what appears to be an ASTRONAUT'S HELMET.

TERRI

I think her Dad was an astronaut or some shit.

TAKATO

That's bullshit. He was a props guy on movie sets.

DANIEL grabs the helmet and puts it on.

TERRI

I don't think you should touch that.

DANIEL ignores TERRI.

SLO MO: As the spacey music plays (i.e. *Spiritualized*) DANIEL FLOATS through the party, high as kite. Everyone is staring at him. Still SLOW-MO: We see HEATHER (the girl from school) SLOPPILY-DRUNK, pointing and laughing with appreciation at DANIEL'S joke as her embarrassed friends drag her out.

Finally LISA, a pert and high-strung young teen (and the host of the party) comes running up to him.

LISA

What are you doing! Are you retarded! My Dad would shit in your mouth if he saw you wearing that --

DANIEL speaks in a DARTH VADER VOICE.

DANIEL (VADER VOICE)

Luke, I am your father.

LISA starts slapping him.

LISA

Take it off.

DANIEL (VADER VOICE)

Stop it. Desist...you...bitch. You smell...like a tampon. Your Daddy doesn't love you.

LISA
(shrill)
Bobby! Bobby get over here.

BOBBY, a hulking jock, rushes over. DANIEL struggles to take off the helmet in a hurry...

DANIEL
NO, no, no --

Too late. BOBBY punches him in the gut. DANIEL lurches for a second and then...

LISA
Oh crap --

DANIEL throws up inside the helmet. The entire front visor goes green.

INT. SAUL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

SAUL is in bed, fast asleep. PHONE rings. He answers.

SAUL
Hello?

DANIEL
I need to talk to you right now.

SAUL
Unless it's an emergency --

BAM! A rock hits his second-story window.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Did you just throw a rock at my window?

DANIEL
I'm afraid I'm gonna do something bad.

SAUL
Be down in a second.

He hangs up the phone. For the first time we see JULIA lying there naked, fast asleep. She mumbles something unintelligible.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Sweetie, I have to see a patient.
Back in no time.

EXT. SAUL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

DANIEL is pacing on SAUL's driveway. He's lost it!

DANIEL

Here's the thing. Okay. They say they love each other -- people say they love each other all the time -- but so then so why can't they keep it together?

SAUL

Well it's a funny thing Daniel. When people get together it takes a miracle of timing. But life doesn't stop -- it keeps going and changing and you have this thing, this love, but --

DANIEL

(furious; screaming)
You're not answering me!!!

SAUL worries about waking the neighbors.

SAUL

Shhhhh. Okay.

DANIEL

People'll get lonely and they'll just fucking fuck anybody!

SAUL

I don't get it. Your parents are...?

(confused)
I lost you.

DANIEL

My girlfriend dumped me!

SAUL

Oh. Well. Do you like her?

DANIEL

Are you kidding? That girl is in my plasma.

SAUL claps.

SAUL

Alright then! Now you're talking
you...insane little bastard you.

DANIEL

So what do I do?

SAUL

You go after her...man. You fight
for what you love. Seduce her.

DANIEL

Okay.

SAUL

Mac her. Write a song for her, buy
her flowers.

DANIEL

Right. (troubled) I'm not
instrumentally inclined.

SAUL

No song! But do kid stuff. Go
skateboarding with her. Write a
romantic text message.

DANIEL almost laughs. SAUL grabs his shoulder paternally.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Just remember, you got to fight for
what you love. Okay?

We see from DANIEL's face that he agrees -- passionately.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE -- DAY

SOPHIE is doing her SODOKU when DANIEL storms in.

DANIEL

Mom -- can you get me a deal on
bulk flowers.

SOPHIE

Of course. What for?

DANIEL

It's private.

DANIEL storms away rudely, leaving SOPHIE shut out and hurt.
We see ROBIN is watching this with intense curiosity.

INT. DANIEL'S ROOM -- DAY

DANIEL is tearing his room apart, searching for something. ROBIN comes to the door.

ROBIN

Dad's wearing really tight shirts.
You want to hear my speech?

DANIEL

Not now. Actually: I need you. The logistics of this thing are way beyond me.

ROBIN

Does this have to do with your old lady?

DANIEL snaps.

DANIEL

Whose side are you on? Are you gonna help or what?!

INT. DANIEL'S ROOM -- NIGHT

DANIEL, ROBIN, TODD and JAKE are all gathered around a large sheaf of paper -- plans that ROBIN has drawn up.

TODD

Danny, as your friend its incumbent on me to tell you: this is the most retarded plan ever.

ROBIN

Don't say retarded.

TODD

It just means slow.

ROBIN

Still.

JAKE

I think this plan is cool.

Everyone looks at JAKE with surprise.

EXT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

DANIEL, ROBIN, TODD and JAKE pull up to JULIA's house in TODD's van. They hop out and DANIEL reaches under the WELCOME MAT and pulls out a SPARE KEY.

They begin unloading what appear to be boxes and boxes of FLOWERS.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

The boys keep walking in with boxes and boxes of flowers. TODD stops and picks up a framed photograph.

TODD

Ewww. Dude. Your girlfriend is ancient.

DANIEL looks at the photo. It's of MAGGIE.

DANIEL

That's her Mom, jerk-off.

TODD

Is this her Dad?

As DANIEL speaks CAMERA moves in on old photos of JULIA and her FATHER hung on the wall: a tall, well-dressed, sporty looking man. DANIEL is quite EARNEST as he examines the pic.

DANIEL

That's him. He was a complete asshole. The stories she's told me, the stuff that's happened to her -- it's amazing she turned out so well.

INT. JULIA'S CAR -- DAY

JULIA is listening to music, driving, talking on the phone to SAUL.

JULIA

Hey babe.

SAUL

What's up?

JULIA

I think I might drop the car at home so I can have a few drinks. Will you come grab me?

INT. SAUL'S OFFICE -- DAY

SAUL

On my way.

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

DANIEL is looking at the wall with pride. (We never see what he's looking at.) It's finished.

DANIEL

(to himself)

Perfect.

JAKE approaches wearing JULIA's underwear on his head.

JAKE

Your girlfriend's underwear is hot!

DANIEL

Dude, that's not cool.

TODD is rifling through the drawers.

TODD

Why's she have a robot penis.

He holds up the VIBRATOR.

DANIEL

Please put that down.

JAKE smells the pair of UNDIES in his hands does his best ROBERT DUVALL.

JAKE

Sniff. Smells like...victory.

DANIEL punches his arm. As this happens they leave the bedroom and enter the LIVING ROOM.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Ow. You douche. (beat) That hurt.

JULIA (O.S.)

Hello? Hello? Is someone...

JULIA enters. She sees DANIEL and his two friends. JAKE is still wearing the underwear on his head.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Daniel? Daniel what are you doing here.

DANIEL
Hi Baby. I'm just...surprise!

He does jazz-hands. JULIA's shock is turning to rage.

JULIA
You can't be here! This is my house! And you -- take my panties off your head.

JAKE
Yes Ma'am.

JULIA
Don't "Ma'am" me! I'm barely thirty. This is...this is such an invasion of privacy.

DANIEL
Privacy?! I've seen you naked.

JULIA looks at his friends -- embarrassed. Furious!

JULIA
Out! Everyone out!

DANIEL
Julia, I love you. And I have another, much better surprise --

JULIA
Are you insane?

DANIEL
Yes -- but so are you!

JULIA
Out! Out!
(hysterical scream)
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!

SAUL rushes in.

SAUL
What's going on? Julia, is everyth-

He rushes over to JULIA. Holds her. Then he sees DANIEL.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Daniel?

(to JULIA)

Sweetie, why's that boy wearing
your panties.

(to DANIEL)

What are you doing here!?

DANIEL

Fighting for what I love!

SAUL

Okay. Well...I'm confused.

DANIEL

That's my girlfriend. And
seriously, I love her with every
particle of my being.

SAUL's face goes through the range of emotions as he tries to compute what's happening.

He looks to JULIA for confirmation, but she's about to have a nervous breakdown. She looks at him, pleadingly. And then...

JULIA

Can't you all please leave?! I
don't belong to you or you -- I
don't belong to anyone!

DANIEL still doesn't get it.

DANIEL

Chillax. No one's suggesting you
belong to my therapist...

SAUL

Julia, honey? Breathe...breathe...

DANIEL watches SAUL and JULIA. It dawns on him what's happening. He approaches SAUL and --

DANIEL

Judas.

-- punches SAUL in the face. The two of them start fighting. It's awkward and messy: SAUL is trying to subdue DANIEL, but the boy is too wily. For a moment SAUL breaks free --

SAUL

Daniel, no. Stop.

SAUL backs away. DANIEL lets out a primal scream, runs, and pushes SAUL out the front door and they spill onto the lawn.

EXT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

SAUL and DANIEL roll around on the fresh-cut grass, leaves tangling in their hair, neither of them landing any punches. A MERLIN's ICE CREAM TRUCK drives by playing its ice cream song, then hits the breaks abruptly to watch the fight.

TODD, JAKE, ROBIN and JULIA come rushing out. Everyone just stands there, mesmerized by this ridiculous battle. Finally JULIA reacts.

JULIA
Break them up!

TODD
Right.

TODD taps JAKE, and the two of them jump in.

SLO MO: Melancholy music plays. JULIA turns her back on the fighting (which in slo-mo seems more absurd than ever) and drifts into the house, her hair flowing in the summer breeze, caramelized by the sunlight.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

SLO MO: Once inside, the door jamb perfectly frames the fight so it becomes a tableaux of chaos. Some KIDS with ice cream are now gawking at the fight as the DRIVER of the MERLIN's ICE CREAM truck joins the fray. JAKE sprays DANIEL and SAUL with a GARDEN HOSE.

JULIA shuts the door, locks it, and sails through the house until she enters her BEDROOM.

As she glides into the room her eyes widen in amazement. A golden light is cast over her. The CAMERA swivels around to REVEAL...

A wall of glorious FLOWERS: roses, lilies, peonies, magnolias, snapdragons, tulips, orchids, gerbera. The room is alive with beautiful, bright flowers -- hundreds and hundreds of them! Flowers spill from the ceiling and explode from the bed. It's unbelievable!

An overwhelmed JULIA enters this ocean of flowers and lets them wash all over her. She COLLAPSES BACKWARDS onto her bed.

From ABOVE: a SHOT exactly like the one of her being buried in snow (from the WEDDING-ANGEL story), but this time it's flowers she's drowning in. As a lone TEAR falls from her eye she immerses herself in this rainbow-hued panoply until they seem to swallow her. And then, with an air of defeat, she closes her eyes. She rests.

FADE TO WHITE SCREEN

A PHONE IS RINGING.

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Slow fade in on JULIA's messy bedroom. We find JULIA fast asleep in semi-prone position on the FLOOR next to her bed, fully dressed. The flowers, which looked so beautiful the night before, now seem like so much litter.

Phone is still ringing. JULIA stirs. Groans.

JULIA

Go away!

PHONE stops. Beat. Then RINGS again. She gets up and answers it, knocking over an empty WINE BOTTLE in the process. Needless to say she looks HORRIBLE. I repeat: HORRIBLE!

JULIA (CONT'D)

Hello.

REBECCA

(stern)

Julia, what the fuck did you send them?

JULIA

Huh? ... Rebecca?

REBECCA

And not even a novel, but short stories! Come on girl.

JULIA

They didn't like it?

REBECCA

Didn't like...? They despised it! They're fucking apoplectic! They're looking for Candace Bushnell, and you gave them Kafka.

JULIA
(nervous)
Is that really bad?

REBECCA
Yes! Unless you're a fucking
freshman -- yes! This is the
leading publisher of chick-lit. You
know what they like. Romance! Men!
Lurid descriptions of hand-bags and
shoes. It's not rocket-surgery.
What you gave them is worse than
useless -- it's breach of contract.

JULIA
What's that mean, "breach of
contract"?

REBECCA
It means they're not gonna pay ya
honey.

JULIA looks like she's been it by a bus.

JULIA
Wow. I just...Rebecca, I really
need that money.

REBECCA
And your articles were so fresh and
funny.

JULIA's grasping at straws.

JULIA
You like my early funny work. I can
still do that! J-j-just...you gotta
convince them --

REBECCA
(interrupting)
Julia? Julia are you there?

JULIA
Yes. I'm right here. Hello?
(shakes her phone)
No way!

REBECCA
Julia, if you're talking I can't
hear you. Oh, forget it.

REBECCA hangs up. JULIA looks sick.

CUT TO:

INT. SAUL'S OFFICE -- DAY

A YUPPIE COUPLE are bickering wildly, as SAUL "listens". He looks despondent, with a big PURPLE BRUISE under his eye. Finally he can't take it anymore.

SAUL

Wait. Wait! Hold it.

He points at the YUPPIE GUY.

SAUL (CONT'D)

You: do you want out of this thing?

YUPPIE GUY

Oh yeah. I am so out.

SAUL

You?

YUPPIE GIRL shrugs.

SAUL (CONT'D)

We've been doing this a long time, and let's face it: you two are just not happenin'.

YUPPIE GIRL

But --

SAUL

Not 'buts'. Listen: you're an amazing, beautiful, sensuous woman. Don't waste your time being sad or-or-or analyzing what you may or may not have done wrong. Go out there, meet someone new, and have some fun, 'kay? We're done here. That's all I got.

YUPPIE GIRL seems strangely touched. YUPPIE GUY gives him a happy thumbs up.

SAUL stands in the doorway and lets them out. The open door reveals --

JULIA is sitting in the lounge, still haggard. She and SAUL lock eyes as the YUPPIE COUPLE departs. She stands.

JULIA
I lost my book deal. They took it away from me.

SAUL
I don't think...(sighs) Y'know, I don't think I can help you.

He closes the door, shutting her out.

EXT. ROBIN'S SCHOOL -- DAY

SOPHIE is picking up ROBIN in front of the school's soccer field.

SOPHIE
You ready for your speech tonight?

ROBIN looks anxious and stressed.

ROBIN
Oh yeah! You're gonna drive me right.

SOPHIE
Of course.

ROBIN
'Cause I can't be late.

SOPHIE
Don't worry honey --

SOPHIE is interrupted by MRS. CRYSTAL CHANG (JAKE's mom), a well-dressed Chinese woman with her DAUGHTER (ROBIN's age) in tow. MRS. CHANGE seems slightly perturbed.

MRS. CRYSTAL CHANG
Sophie, hi there. Hi.

SOPHIE
Crystal, how are you?

MRS. CRYSTAL CHANG
Not great actually. Jake came home last night and his glasses were broken. He said he was breaking up a fight your son was in.

SOPHIE looks at ROBIN, at MRS. CHANG, and at MRS. CHANG's daughter.

As she does this the school's MARCHING BAND storms by playing loud MUSIC (the "ROCKY THEME"!), drowning out the need to hear any more of their conversation. Their faces tell the story.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE -- DAY

ROBIN comes crashing into the house screaming:

ROBIN
Daniel! Daniel!

He bounds up the stairs.

INT. DANIEL'S ROOM -- DAY

Robin bursts in.

ROBIN
Daniel, Mom knows!

No one is there, but the bed is dishevelled. ROBIN sniffs. SNIFFS again. There's a weird smell coming from the bathroom.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Fire?

The bathroom door is open a crack.

INT. BATHROOM -- DAY

ROBIN opens the door and sees DANIEL standing on the toilet, smoking his pipe, blowing the smoke up into the fan.

DANIEL
What are you doing!

ROBIN
Are you smoking crack?

DANIEL
The door was locked.

ROBIN
No it wasn't. I thought there was a fire. Why are you smoking crack?

DANIEL

It's just pot.

ROBIN

Are you hooked...man!?

DANIEL

I don't think you can be. But I
like it a lot.

ROBIN

Gimme the pipe.

DANIEL

Get out of here.

ROBIN

Not until you gimme the pipe
crackhead. Just gimme --

ROBIN reaches for it. DANIEL pushes him down -- hard.

DANIEL

Leave me alone! Why are you always
in the way -- huh?

ROBIN starts crying. DANIEL immediately feels bad.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Shit, don't -- no tears, no tears!

ROBIN is bawling.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

This wouldn't happen if you weren't
always up in other people's
business. I mean -- come on Robin!

DANIEL storms out. ROBIN is left crying in the corner of the room. Out the window: SOPHIE's CAR screeches loudly away.

And then, surprisingly, DANIEL re-enters on a more conciliatory note.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Hey -- you want to go for a walk?

EXT. PARK -- DAY

ROBIN and DANIEL wander through a pastoral park, surrounded by greenery. Trees sway; frisbees soar. A perfect day.

ROBIN

You got to get it together.

DANIEL

I know.

ROBIN

Everyone's really worried about you.

DANIEL

I know. Like who?

ROBIN

Everyone. Me! I worry like crazy.

DANIEL

You don't need to stress.

ROBIN

It's not so easy being your brother, you know.

DANIEL

Hey look.

DANIEL points to a group of men filling up an enormous multi-colored HOT-AIR BALLOON. As that's happening two other balloons are achieving lift off.

It's clearly some kind of event, but to DANIEL and ROBIN it feels like a gorgeous summer-dream.

ROBIN

But I have my speech soon.

DANIEL just pats him on the back and walks on.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOT AIR BALLOON -- DAY

Clear blue sky...and then quite suddenly a rainbow-hued air balloon fills the frame: we see DANIEL and ROBIN riding in the basket with the pilot. They're laughing and smiling.

We watch as the fleet of balloons rise and rise over the tree-line -- carried away on the breeze.

In the balloon: DANIEL and ROBIN are overjoyed, shouting to be heard.

ROBIN
Is that our house?

DANIEL
I don't know.

ROBIN
(thrilled)
It's so small.

DANIEL
I think it's that one.

ROBIN
It's so small.

As music swells we see their town, their neighborhood, their lives reduced to a grid pattern as they continue to ascend into the lucid blue sky. It may be the best day of their lives -- a relief from all the tension.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE -- DAY

JULIA is sitting in front of her computer, very distinctly not-typing. She's a mess. DOORBELL rings. She bolts up, happy to escape the clutches of writer's block.

EXT. JULIA'S DOORWAY -- DAY

Door swings open, and there's SOPHIE, ready for combat.

SOPHIE
Who do you think you are? He's just
a child.

JULIA
I'm sorry. I --

She can't think of what to say. SOPHIE looks her up and down.

SOPHIE
You're very pretty. I can see why
he likes you.

JULIA is caught off-guard. With great difficulty she manages to say:

JULIA
Would you like some tea?

SOPHIE

No.

JULIA

How 'bout a glass of wine?

INT. JULIA'S LIVING-ROOM -- DAY

JULIA is pouring hugely generous glasses of chardonnay.

SOPHIE

Did he tell you we're having
troubles at home? Of course he did.
He probably tells you everything.
He tells me nothing.

JULIA

I really do like him.

SOPHIE

Of course you do. He's very
likeable. You broke his heart you
know. And I was so happy he was
learning French.

JULIA

I realize it's no excuse, but our
connection was...it was the most
fun thing that's happened to me in
years. For a second I even thought
I might...I'm just -- I'm just very
screwed up right now!

Something about this sends SOPHIE off again.

SOPHIE

Oh spare me the Oscar moment! I
know all about girls like you.
Educated beyond your intelligence,
fashionable beyond your
income...please! You're like the
Coles Notes to a book of cliches.

JULIA is being crushed, and showing her belly.

JULIA

You think?

SOPHIE

You need to grow up. When I was
your age Daniel was five years old.

JULIA starts to cry.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Crying won't help you.

JULIA
I'm not crying.

SOPHIE
Sure you're not. Liar. You really want to know what love is? Love is sacrifice. I made billions of sacrifices when I had Daniel, and I held a difficult marriage together for nineteen years. And we'd still be together if it wasn't for the fact that getting older scared the bejesus out of my husband -- excuse me: ex-husband -- just like it's scaring the sense out of you. Well guess what -- aging scares me too. But I deal with it and I make sacrifices and I don't indulge every stupid whim, and I do it for love. So stop being such a dilettante and talk to me when you've sacrificed something.

RING. Phone. JULIA is looking at SOPHIE, absorbing her ragged wisdom. And then...

JULIA
(in tears)
Excuse me.

JULIA answers the phone.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Hello. (suddenly in shock)
What? When? Is she...? OhmyGod.
I'll be right there.

She hangs up.

JULIA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, you can yell at me more later, I promise. But my Mom had a heart-attack.

SOPHIE gasps, covering her mouth with her hand.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

DANIEL and ROBIN return home from balloon-riding. ROBIN looks nervous and jittery.

ROBIN
(calling)
Mom? Hello?

DANIEL
Doesn't your speech thing start soon?

ROBIN gives his bro a sharp look, then nods: yes.

ROBIN
(trying to keep it together)
I have to throw up now.

He runs to the bathroom. DANIEL texts his mom.

INT. HOSPITAL: HALLWAY -- DAY

A NURSE leads JULIA and SOPHIE down the hallway and gestures towards a room. STEPHANIE is waiting at the door. SOPHIE makes her retreat as JULIA enters the HOSPITAL ROOM.

SOPHIE gets a text message.

CU: PHONE: WHERE THE F. ARE YOU? D.

SOPHIE
Oh crap.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

MAGGIE is sitting up on a gurney, fully-dressed, as JULIA enters. MAGGIE greets her with a sad, lame...

MOM
Surprise!

Tears stream down JULIA's face. She notices an ELDERLY MAN sleeping in the bed next to MAGGIE, snoring.

MAGGIE
Don't let the doctors scare you. It was just minor heart failure.

JULIA

Oh Mom!

She rushes over and gives her a hug.

MAGGIE

No no no no no. You're supposed to comfort me.

MAGGIE starts crying too.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Now...see...now look what you've done. I'm leaking. And your make-up will run, and that cute doctor will know you're a basket-case.

JULIA

Stop. Oh Mom. I don't want to lose you.

MAGGIE

No one's losing anyone. Honey -- you look worse than usual. Tell me what's wrong.

JULIA

Oh, y'know, nothing -- my life. I have no money, no job --

STEPHANIE

You're always welcome back at work.

JULIA

Thanks.

MAGGIE

Oh, don't go back there!

Everyone looks at MAGGIE.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Life's too short to hate what you do. Or to be stuck with the wrong person -- trust me. You're a great writer Jube-Jube. Rent a cabin up north, finish your novel.

JULIA

But they hated it so much.

MAGGIE

Fuck 'em, Jube-Jube.

STEPHANIE laughs.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Don't let people with no taste tell
you what's good and what isn't.
Let me ask you: what makes you
happy?

JULIA

(shrugging)

Photos of tiny kittens?

MAGGIE

It's the easiest question in the
world and you don't have an answer.

JULIA's face changes. The answer dawns on her. Could it be?
JULIA reaches over and gently touches MAGGIE's chin.

JULIA

I have to...I have to go. Right? Am
I doing the right thing?

MAGGIE

Go!

STEPHANIE

Go!

JULIA goes!

CUT TO:

INT. DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY

SOPHIE comes crashing through the door. DANIEL and ROBIN hop
off the couch simultaneously.

SOPHIE

Sorry, I'm sorry.

ROBIN

Let's go!

EXT. FREEWAY: JULIA'S CAR -- DAY

JULIA is racing down the freeway towards DANIEL's house.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

SOPHIE's car is whipping through the traffic, driving way too
fast! SOPHIE is focused on the road -- a woman on a mission.
ROBIN's face is green. He puts his head between his knees.

EXT. FREEWAY: JULIA'S CAR -- DAY

JULIA, still racing, checks her messages on speakerphone.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
One new message.

SAUL (O.S.)
Hi Julia? Did it beep? I didn't
hear a beep. Y'know, all day long I
tell people to listen to each other
and then I didn't even listen to
you. I'm sorry.

INT. HOTEL BAR -- TWILIGHT

We see SAUL sitting at "their table" at the Hotel Bar. He's dressed rather nicely.

SAUL (O.S.)
I mean, we all make mistakes,
right? Anyway, if you're interested
I'm going be at the Hotel Bar where
we met. *Our place*. It's never too
late to --

BEEP. The voice-mail has cut him off.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE -- DAY

ARTHUR is on the driveway, clearly sneaking some of his stuff (clothing, etc.) out of the house and into his SUV.

JULIA's car comes careening into the driveway, and in one swift motion she hops out.

JULIA
Is Daniel here?!

ARTHUR is shocked to see this beautiful, fierce woman looking for his son.

JULIA (CONT'D)
I'm his French teacher. It's
important I see him *tout suite*.

ARTHUR
He's at his brother's performance.
I'm actually heading there now. Can
I deliver a message?

JULIA

Could I maybe just follow you
there?

ARTHUR

Wow -- you're very...dedicated.
Okay, great. That's great.
(suddenly serious)
Can I ask you...how do I look?

He poses for JULIA -- but we see how vulnerable he is,
obviously nervous to see SOPHIE.

JULIA

I would -- there.

She removes his *young* sunglasses, fixes his hair, etc. Makes
him look like what he is: a handsome forty-something man.

ARTHUR

I don't look too, uh, square?

JULIA

Classic never goes out of style.

ARTHUR

Let's go!

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL -- LATE AFTERNOON

CU: a sign reading "SPEECH CONTEST" is wreathed in twinkling
Christmas lights. An individual BULB expires.

All is motion -- SOPHIE is holding ROBIN by the back of the
neck, steering him through the backstage crowd towards his
teacher, MRS. HOOPER. DANIEL follows behind.

SOPHIE

Here he is.

MRS. HOOPER

And just in time. Come this way.

MRS. HOOPER leads ROBIN away. SOPHIE pumps her fists
triumphantly.

SOPHIE

Yes!

INT. AUDITORIUM -- DAY

SOPHIE and DANIEL are grabbing seats when they see ARTHUR and JULIA come in together. Naturally, they're shocked.

But before either of them can process what's happening...

Applause. ONSTAGE -- ROBIN walks to center stage.

ARTHUR

Here we go.

ROBIN looks out over the audience. We can hear his heartbeat. He's incredibly nervous.

ROBIN
(unsteady voice)
The topic of my speech...blah...

He falters. Stops. Someone yells something (fag?).

ROBIN (CONT'D)
(awkward)
Feedback. Okay. The topic of my speech tonight is family. Why is family important...you may ask? Because most people in life probably hate you.

A light snicker comes from the audience.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Yeah. Most people are stupid and mean, and they disappoint you. People screw you over and they don't even care. And when that happens they just float out of your life because there's nothing tying them to you. They just flake out. It's sad, but that's what happens. For real. But with family, you're kind of stuck.

People laugh again. This bolsters his confidence.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
Yeah, that part's funny.
(back to speech)
But I mean that in a good way -- it's good to be stuck to people.
(MORE)

ROBIN (CONT'D)

You mess up, you fall down, and
they pick you back up. That's the
idea anyway.

People laugh again -- responding to his innate charm. In the audience, JULIA is moved.

ROBIN smiles. The worst is over. He takes a deep breath and opens his mouth to say more when...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL -- EARLY EVENING

The whole family -- ARTHUR, SOPHIE, DANIEL and ROBIN -- BURSTS out the auditorium doors, smiling and laughing! ROBIN is holding a modest plastic TROPHY.

DANIEL scans the crowd for JULIA.

SOPHIE

Whoo-hoo! Honey, I am so proud of you.

ARTHUR

That's my little runner-up.

ROBIN

But I didn't get first.

ARTHUR

Ahhh -- first place is for telling people what they want to hear. Runner-up means not everyone understood you, but the ones who did thought you were fucking cool.

SOPHIE

Language!

As DANIEL searches for JULIA, he is accosted by HEATHER as she leads her little sister BRIANNE (10) by the hand.

HEATHER

Hey Daniel. Hey, I loved your brother's speech.

It's strange for DANIEL to see Heather in *family* mode.

DANIEL

You have a little sister. Cute.

HEATHER

Ohh, she's kind of a terror. (beat)
Thanks for being so cool in our
science group. You were the only
who even tried. I can't believe
high school's almost over.

DANIEL

Yeah, it's awesome.

HEATHER

I think it's sad. I mean..I never
even got to know you.

DANIEL sees how brave it is of HEATHER to say this. It hits
him: *this girl likes him!* It's thrilling.

DANIEL

(enthusiastic)

Yeah, well...what are you talking
about? Crazy! We have the rest of
our lives to get to know each
other.

HEATHER

You think?

DANIEL

Totally. I'm telling you, the worst
part's over.

Other end of hall:

JULIA is looking everywhere for DANIEL. She spots him smiling
and bouncing around and playing the joker for HEATHER's
benefit. Something in JULIA softens. She wants to cry. *He's
just a young boy flirting with a young girl.*

Their eyes lock. DANIEL leaves HEATHER and rushes to JULIA,
plowing through a group of small children.

JULIA

Hi.

DANIEL

Hey you're not dating my Dad now,
are you?

JULIA

What? No. Nooo. I came here for
you. But I...I think made a
mistake.

This cuts to the core of DANIEL's being.

DANIEL

Oh -- because of...she's not
...she's just a kid. I-I-I still
love you Julia.

JULIA leans in, gives him a kiss on the cheek, then whispers:

JULIA

I always knew you'd be a heart-
breaker.

She turns and retreats slowly down the school hallway,
leaving DANIEL confused, elated, and utterly desperate.

DANIEL

JULIA!!!

She turns, perhaps ready to go back to him.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Au revoir.

They both smile sadly. She waves, then walks down the empty
school hallway, flanked by children's lockers.

EXT. SCHOOL -- TWILIGHT

The BLOOM family is in the parking lot, enjoying the fresh
air and the celebratory mood, when DANIEL catches up with
them. As the sun sets the sky is fiery pink.

SOPHIE

You okay?

He nods, worried that if he speaks he might cry.

ARTHUR

Alright -- who here wants ice
cream?

SOPHIE shoots him a skeptical look.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

It's just ice cream. Come on, we'll
take my car.

ROBIN

Yeah Mom. Let's go.

SOPHIE smiles warily.

SOPHIE
Okay, just ice cream.

INT. JULIA'S CAR -- TWILIGHT

JULIA hangs up the phone. She looks at her car's compass.

CU: NORTH.

She starts the engine. The sound segues into...

INT. HUMMER -- TWILIGHT

Twilight -- the hardest time of night to see. The whole family is aglow with that strangely magic light. Everyone is laughing and smiling as they drive through the thin traffic.

ROBIN
Okay okay okay okay okay okay.
I spy with my little eye (he casts
a look) something that is...puce.

ARTHUR
What's puce again?

SOPHIE
It's like a...like a dark
red...like a tawny purplish
eggplant --

ARTHUR turns towards SOPHIE, half-kidding, half-admiring her beauty -- the way the light catches her eyes.

ARTHUR
How can it be dark red and
purple...
(he stops himself, softening)
Maybe you're right --

IN AN INSTANT -- SOPHIE's smiling face changes to fear. With ARTHUR'S head turned towards SOPHIE he can't see that a CAR has raced through a red light and is shuttling towards him. He just has time to recognize SOPHIE's fear when...

SMASH! The shriek of metal on metal.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- TWILIGHT

The HUMMER spins around violently and collides with another CAR. And then...

Silence. We could hear a pin drop.

FADE IN:

EXT. BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CITY -- DAY

Fluffy clouds slowly part to reveal a BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CITY. This must be what God sees -- tiny dots scurrying along the grid pattern (like the GPS MAP). And then...

THE CAMERA PLUMMETS as the dots on the grid take shape, the angular lines become city blocks...until finally we see THE ACCIDENT in all its apocalyptic beauty.

INT. HUMMER -- TWILIGHT

ARTHUR and SOPHIE both have their faces buried in snow-white AIR BAGS.

Like awakening from a dream, ARTHUR slowly raises his head. He reaches over and touches SOPHIE.

ARTHUR

Sophie, are you alright?

SOPHIE

Yes.

ARTHUR pokes his into the back, now frantic.

ARTHUR

Robin? Daniel? Daniel?

We see them for the first time.

ROBIN

Okay Dad.

DANIEL

Yeah. I'm totally fine.

ROBIN

Can you turn the heat seats off?

ARTHUR

Okay. Okay. We're all okay.

ARTHUR reaches back and tries to hug them. SOPHIE joins in.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
(tearing up)
We're all okay.

INT. JULIA'S CAR -- TWILIGHT

JULIA is driving at break-neck speed, the warm air wafting through the open windows. Free!

JULIA (V.O.)
When I make mistakes, I like them to be big.

INT. HOTEL BAR -- TWILIGHT

SAUL sits at a table. The chair next to him is conspicuously empty, awaiting JULIA. He munches on a bread-stick.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- TWILIGHT

JULIA's car is now on the coastal highway, carving a path northward.

INT. HOTEL BAR -- EVENING

Later -- SAUL looks depressed, forlorn, lost in his own thoughts. *She's not coming.* Suddenly he's approached by a bookishly-dressed (and very cute) woman.

CUTE WOMAN
(shy and embarrassed)
Excuse me...this is so embarrassing. But your name's not Max, is it?
(nervous smile)
I'm really hoping it is.

SAUL looks up at this nice-seeming woman and tears form in his eyes. We see the faintest hint of a smile as he opens his mouth to respond...

EXT. HIGHWAY -- TWILIGHT

JULIA drives into the sunset, a small black fleck in a rainbow of color.

INT. HIGHWAY DINER -- DAY

JULIA is eating and watching:

1. CU -- a very regular looking FAMILY.
2. CU -- an attractive young WAITRESS. Not a model-type! Just a very casually beautiful person.
3. CU -- a very WRINKLED MAN (but not too old), whose face tells a life time of stories.

JULIA (V.O.)

But it's only through mistakes that you learn. Like maybe I'd finally write about something great -- like that family, or that girl. Or that guy with the face. Why would I write about shoes and purses when I could write about a face like that?!

EXT. LOG CABIN IN THE MOUNTAINS -- TWILIGHT

The OWNER of the cabin hands JULIA her keys. Behind them the mountains and trees flaunt their beauty.

JULIA (V.O.)

Because even when things were life-alteringly shitty, I could still look around and think that deep down, in those hard to reach places, the world is a pretty beautiful place.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- TWILIGHT

The family slowly step out of the HUMMER as an AMBULANCE arrives. Everything around them is chaotic, but they are calm.

INT. LOG CABIN -- TWILIGHT

Through the window -- tree-tops swaying. Then we slip into the quaint cabin. With a glass of wine beside her and a fire in the hearth, JULIA sits in front of her LAPTOP, typing.

CU - COMPUTER SCREEN: "When I make mistakes, I like them to be big."

EXT. INTERSECTION -- DAY

JULIA (V.O.)
You just have to know where to
look.

ROBIN and DANIEL walk in front, away from the wreckage.
SOPHIE and ARTHUR follow.

ALL VERY QUICKLY -- DANIEL turns back and looks...

SOPHIE's heel gets caught and she stumbles. ARTHUR reaches
out his hand to help her.

CU -- SOPHIE's HAND goes out to ARTHUR's. But before they
connect...

BLACK

The End