

PAPER AIRPLANE

by
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OVER BLACK:

CAROLYN (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, fasten your
seat belts.

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN CHICAGO HIGHWAY - MORNING

Speeding cars. Heavy traffic. In the middle lane, a
RUSTY VOLVO STATION WAGON drives ridiculously slow.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
We begin our journey at a low
cruising rate of twenty-five miles
per hour.

INT. THE VOLVO - CONTINUOUS

HENRY TRIPP (45) tightly wound and always nervous,
clutches the wheel. He wipes his forehead and glances at
his hand. It's covered in sweat.

Cars HONK and drivers YELL out their window as they speed
past. Henry concentrates on ignoring them.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
As you can see, our captain has
illuminated the "I'm a douche"
sign.

Henry's wife, JOYCE TRIPP (39) sits in the passenger
seat. Her vacant expression suggests she's been through
this a hundred times before.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If you haven't already done so,
please stow all emotional baggage
and make sure your secrets are
safely put away.

An enormous aircraft suddenly WHOOSHES directly over the
Volvo. Henry white knuckles the wheel and tries not to
look.

Henry's daughter, CAROLYN TRIPP (17) cute but with a dark
side, slouches in the backseat. She looks out the window
and watches the plane become smaller in the sky, her mind
somewhere else.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Unfortunately, there are no
emergency exits. Anywhere.

Henry sees a sign: "O'HARE AIRPORT - THIS EXIT."

JOYCE
Here it is, Henry.
(loud)
Henry.
(louder)
Henry!

It's too late. Henry zooms right past. Joyce sits up.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
Right here!

Joyce and Carolyn look out the window as the airport passes. Traffic is too thick to turn back.

Joyce fills with anger and glares at Henry. A tiny blood vessel in her forehead just may explode.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
Forecast calls for dark clouds...

Carolyn looks at the rear view mirror and sees the fear in her Dad's eyes. She turns away, contemptuous.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...heavy winds...

Henry HYPERVENTILATES. He makes a loud WHEEZING sound with each breath.

HENRY
I'm...(WHEEZE)...sorry. I
(WHEEZE) can't...

Close on Henry's wide eyes.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
...And lots of other fucked up
shit.

EXT. HENRY'S HOUSE - LATER

Modest suburb. As the Volvo pulls into the driveway, Carolyn's door flings open. She gets out and races inside.

INT. THE VOLVO - CONTINUOUS

Henry parks. Joyce contemplates murder. Or worse.

With an odd calm, she gets out of the car and SLAMS the door in his face.

Henry slumps over the steering wheel, defeated, as he watches Joyce stomp inside the house.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

Okay, so the poor dude has this little problem. He certainly doesn't deserve anything that's about to happen to him. But then...neither do I.

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JOYCE

Bullshit!

Joyce tears the comforter off her and stands. Henry sits in bed wearing button down pajamas.

HENRY

Relax. I'm just saying we have plenty of travel options.

JOYCE

I don't understand how you could do this to me. And your daughter. Again!

Henry stands.

HENRY

We can drive up to Door County for Fall Fudge Fest. You guys used to love that.

JOYCE

By the way, if you haven't noticed, you drive too god damned slow.

HENRY

(sing song)

Twenty's plenty. And I've never gotten a ticket in my life.

JOYCE

Henry, I need adventure. I want to go somewhere exotic. Like Cancun or the Bahamas.

HENRY

Why don't we drive down to
Springfield? When was the last
time you visited a state capital?
Come on, historical road trip.

JOYCE

I'm sick of driving. I want to
fly, Henry. In an airplane.
Thirty thousand feet in the air.

Henry starts to HYPERVENTILATE. The WHEEZING returns.
Joyce just stares at him.

HENRY

(between wheezes)

I know a guy...at the airline...he
can get us...our money back.

Joyce is over it.

JOYCE

My father was right. You really
are a chicken shit.

She grabs the comforter and a pillow and SLAMS the door
behind her.

Henry sits on the bed, hangs his head. And WHEEZES.

INT. CAROLYN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

An artful, cluttered mess. Comic books, markers and
sketch pads. Carolyn's deadpan drawings of teenage life
taped on her walls. Clearly, she has talent.

A horror movie plays on TV.

CAROLYN (O.S.)

I don't believe she would actually
go for that guy.

Carolyn sits at the foot of her bed, watching with her
boyfriend ETHAN (17) artsy, over-confident. You could
say a tad pretentious.

ETHAN

He's far superior to her.

CAROLYN

She's the coolest camp counselor.
And he's cheating on her.

ETHAN
I'd hang with him.

CAROLYN
Major dick.

Carolyn watches as Ethan begins nuzzling her neck. She likes it. His hand slowly slips down her jeans.

ETHAN
(softly)
I've come equipped.

Ethan pulls a condom from his jeans and waves it. She pulls his hand out. Ethan is disappointed.

CAROLYN
Please. I'm not losing my
virginity while someone gets axed
with a chain saw.

ETHAN
So, turn it off. You've seen
this.

CAROLYN
It has to be somewhat special.

Ethan sighs, frustrated. He has a thought.

ETHAN
Thanksgiving night.

CAROLYN
Maybe.

ETHAN
We can be thankful you didn't go
on your trip.

She stares at the TV, unsure.

CAROLYN
Did you miss me?

ETHAN
You were gone five hours.

CAROLYN
So, you didn't.

ETHAN
(fake)
I mean, yeah. Totally.

The sounds of a CHAIN SAW and a woman's SCREAM on TV. Carolyn can't look away. Ethan is disgusted.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
I'm getting a Red Bull.

CAROLYN
Get me one?

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Frustrated, Joyce tries to get comfortable in her makeshift bed on the sofa. She hears a THUMP in the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Ethan pulls out two Red Bulls from the fridge. As he turns around--

ETHAN
(startled)
Joyce.

Joyce stands in the shadows. Tank top and pajama bottoms.

JOYCE
Hello, Ethan. I didn't know you were here.

Her sexy bedtime look is not lost on him.

ETHAN
I was procuring liquids.

JOYCE
Excuse me?

ETHAN
Just getting some drinks.

JOYCE
Well, remember to turn the lights off when you're done.
(and then)
You know, I find it curious you always call us by our first names.

ETHAN
Oh, I don't believe in parent/child hierarchies.

JOYCE
(thinking it over)
Never thought of it that way.

ETHAN
My parents are both therapists.
They raised me as their peer.

She cocks her head and looks at him in a new light.

JOYCE
'Night, Ethan.

ETHAN
Goodnight, Joyce.

She watches him go.

JOYCE
Banana Republic? No, J. Crew.

ETHAN
Huh?

JOYCE
Your pocket tee.

He looks down at his T-shirt.

ETHAN
I don't know...J. Crew?

JOYCE
Thought so.

Ethan throws a cocky smile and goes.

Joyce goes to open the fridge but stops. She stares at an old photograph stuck under a magnet. Young Carolyn showing off a snowman with a smiling Joyce and Henry by her side.

They used to be happy.

INT./EXT. THE VOLVO - MORNING

Brilliant autumn day. Henry drives down the street so slow a line of cars pass him.

INT. NORTHBROOK COURT - EARLY MORNING

Henry's older sister GAIL and her husband BRUCE MILLER (both late 40s) speed walk around the empty shopping mall in matching Nike shirts and short shorts.

Henry follows behind them, sporting a seriously outdated track suit.

GAIL

Henry, I'm absolutely disappointed in you.

BRUCE

On the bright side, we're happy you'll be joining us for T-day, Hen.

HENRY

Let's just not bring the trip up again. Especially on Thanksgiving.

GAIL

I want you three joining us in Hawaii in February. It's time you got over your...thing.

HENRY

My *thing* is not something I can just get over. You know that.

GAIL

Well, your little phobias are getting worse. Now you can barely drive down the highway? How'd you get here? Green Bay Road?

BRUCE

Don't nag him, hon.

HENRY

I'm allergic to pills. Hypnotherapy never takes. What do you want me to do?

GAIL

You need to get your life on track, Henry.

HENRY

What exactly is wrong with my life?

Henry's ancient cell phone rings. He slides out the antenna and slows down to answer.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

AAAA Travel. This is Henry...Hi,
Dr. Rumulu...No, no, the hotel
should have you in for seven days
and six nights...

GAIL

Keep walking, Henry.

Henry gestures for them to go ahead.

INT. AAAA TRAVEL AGENCY - LATER

Posters of Paris, Beijing, Sydney and a dozen other cities hang on the walls. A sign above them reads: "AAAA Travel - We Travel Anywhere!"

A nameplate on a desk reads: HENRY TRIPP. Next to it is an older photo of Henry, Joyce and Carolyn posing in denim shirts.

Faded post cards from around the world to Henry from satisfied customers are neatly tacked on a cork board.

Hanging on his wall is a row of "Travel Agent of the Year" framed certificates. For the last seven years.

Henry cradles the phone to his ear, his fore fingers slowly peck away at the computer. The colorful images of cities surrounding him contrast his gray cubicle.

HENRY (O.S.)

(into phone)

Okay, Cynthia, I have you
departing out of Atlanta at 5:30
a.m. and arriving at your final
destination of San Diego at 10:24
p.m. Did you know San Diego
International Airport was built in
1929 and is the 30th busiest
airport in the world?

No response.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Okay then...What type of credit
card would you like me to book the
flight with, Cynthia?

WOMAN ON PHONE (O.S.)

...I think I'm gonna look online again.

HENRY

Cynthia, AAAA Travel can offer you much better service than anything you're going to find on the web. Guarant...

She hangs up.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(to a dead phone)

Have a safe flight.

Henry's email BEEPS. Excitement washes over his face as he reads: **EVERYONE MEET IN THE BREAK ROOM AT 10AM TO ANNOUNCE THE TRAVEL AGENT OF THE YEAR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Yeah right, big mystery.

Henry's co-worker DEBBIE (36), suburban mom, stands behind Henry.

HENRY

Would you mind not reading my personal emails?

DEBBIE

It's a mass email. I got one too. See?

She points her stubby finger on Henry's computer monitor. Henry wipes off the fingerprint with a tissue.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Still can't get on?

HENRY

Worst one yet. I thought I was going to crash the car.

DEBBIE

You didn't even make it to the airport?

Henry looks guilty.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Maybe you need this.

Debbie pulls a pamphlet from her drawer and drops it on Henry's desk. It reads: Freedom To Fly.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

We learned about it at last year's expo in Vegas.

HENRY

(reads the pamphlet)

I don't need a class to help me fly.

(points to his post cards.)

I can travel the world right here.

DEBBIE

Two clients of mine did the program and now I can't get them off a plane. They're my bread and butter. Sleep on it.

Henry grins thanks and sets the pamphlet aside.

INT. LOVE'S YOGURT - DAY

Carolyn and her best friend APRIL (18), theater geek, stand at the counter. A MALE WORKER (21) waits on them.

CAROLYN

He's a pussy. I think he needs electroshock. (to worker) Can I try the boysenberry?

APRIL

You didn't exactly want to go anyway. (to worker) Can I try the mango?

CAROLYN

I just don't know how my mother deals.

The Worker behind the counter hands the girls two tiny spoon samples.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

Speaking of boys and berries, guess what Ethan wants to do on Thanksgiving?

Carolyn slips the spoon in her mouth seductively and grins.

APRIL

Shut it down. Finally. You better do it.

CAROLYN

Undecided.

APRIL

What? Why are you so scared?

CAROLYN

I'm not scared. It's just a penis.

APRIL

So what's the problem?

CAROLYN

I just want to make sure he's the one.

APRIL

You guys have been together for three whole months. Obviously, he's the one.

CAROLYN

I hope so.

APRIL

Just hope Ethan lasts longer than Zach.

CAROLYN

Hello. Vomit.

WORKER

(annoyed)

Are you guys going to buy anything?

CAROLYN/APRIL

No thanks. We're good.

INT. STATIONARY STATION - THAT MOMENT

Rows of high end paper products and greeting cards.

Joyce sits behind the counter angrily filling boxes of colored stationary.

Next to Joyce is her one employee, SOON-YI (16) who speaks the way certain young girls do...in lilted questions.

SOON-YI

Alls I know is? You and Carolyn should've just gone to Mexico by yourselves.

JOYCE

It was too late. We couldn't turn back. The idiot ruined another vacation.

SOON-YI

No offense? But your husband sounds like a total mess? And probably needs help.

JOYCE

Thank you, Soon-Yi. Finally, someone smart who knows what I'm talking about.

SOON-YI

If you ever need a good therapist? My older brother who's bat shit crazy? He goes to a really good one.

JOYCE

I appreciate that. And thanks for giving me a hand on your break, Soon-Yi. It helps having girlfriends like you. We should grab a drink sometime. You and me. Girls night out.

SOON-YI

My aunt and uncle just got divorced? They've never been happier. Also? I'm not allowed to drink.

Joyce stops. Light bulb.

SOON-YI (CONT'D)

Technically, I've had wine before? But that was only at my friend Ariel's Passover dinner? Do you celebrate Passover, Mrs. Tripp?

Soon-Yi looks up at Joyce. A look of concern on Soon-Yi.

SOON-YI (CONT'D)

Mrs. Tripp?

Joyce is frozen in thought.

INT. AAAA TRAVEL AGENCY BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Henry's six CO-WORKERS, who'd rather be anywhere else, routinely applaud.

RON, 50's, Henry's boss and owner of the agency, presents Henry with yet another certificate of the year. A sad computer print out.

RON

Congratulations, Henry.

Ron pumps Henry's hand and smiles like a politician in a photo op. BEVERLY, the receptionist (50) cuts slices of soggy, store-bought coffee cake.

As everyone starts eating.

RON (CONT'D)

Sorry you missed your big vacation buddy, but luckily you're on board through the Thanksgiving holiday. And for that, here's another little token of our appreciation.

Ron hands Henry an envelope. He opens it.

HENRY

(giddy)

Feels like Christmas.

(opens the envelope)

A twenty dollar gift card to Barnes and Nobles? You guys!

Everyone is too focused on their slices of cake to care. Ron cuts himself a gigantic piece.

Henry eyes his certificate and gift card. He beams with pride. This is the highlight of his year.

EXT./INT. THE VOLVO - LATER

Henry drives, proudly admiring his paper certificate propped on the dashboard. Oblivious to the angry, elderly WOMAN in the Buick passing him.

INT. TRIPP KITCHEN - LATER

Henry hangs his certificate on the refrigerator with an AAAA Travel magnet. Looking for someone to share his good news, he enters...

THE LIVING ROOM. Joyce is there, sitting on the sofa.

HENRY

Guess who's the Travel Agent of
the Year for only the eighth year
in a row?...Guilty!

No response. And then...

JOYCE

(cold)

The Lean Cuisines should hold you
both over for at least two weeks.
After that, there's pasta. Then
you're on your own.

Henry sees a large rolling suitcase next to the sofa. He
senses what's happening but covers it with a cheesy
salesman grin.

HENRY

No congratulations?

JOYCE

(calling out)

Carolyn!

She pulls out a neatly hand written letter on golden
yellow stationary.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Carolyn! I need you to come down
here right now!

HENRY

What's going on with you?

Carolyn walks downstairs, sullen.

CAROLYN

What?

Joyce dramatically clears her throat.

JOYCE

(reading)

Dear Henry and Carolyn, please
forgive...

Joyce stops. Her hands shake.

HENRY

Are you alright?

CAROLYN

(evil smile)

Oh, this is gonna be good.

JOYCE

(deep breath, reads)

Dear Henry and Carolyn, please forgive me for what I'm about to say. I've been unhappy for many years now. Because of this, I would like to excuse myself from this family. Carolyn, you are off to college next year and barely need me now. Henry, your fears have ruined our lives. At first, I was okay with the flying but now it's the driving and who knows what next. Unless you do something about it now, I can't go on living with you. Therefore, I have left my house keys on the bedroom dresser. I will continue to make car payments on the Cherokee and take it with me. The cable, phone and electric bills are all paid for this month. You can keep the Pottery Barn sofa that I bought with my own money as well as the Crate & Barrel entertainment unit.

Joyce takes a deep breath and continues.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

You know how much I love that unit but I'm afraid there is no room for anything old in my life now. "Out with the old and in with the new." That is my new motto. I will be staying with my parents until I find an apartment on my own. I know you both will probably be upset with me but I also know that in time you will understand. This is what I have to do and I hope you respect that. Love...

Joyce looks up with sad eyes.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

...Mom slash Joyce.

Henry is stunned silent. Carolyn is fuming.

CAROLYN

Is this a joke?

Joyce bites her lip.

HENRY

(shocked)

I don't think anyone's laughing,
Carolyn.

CAROLYN

You can't just excuse yourself
from the family. If I knew that
was an option I would've done it
years ago.

Henry moves in.

HENRY

Joyce, I don't understand. Let's
talk about this. I said I was
sorry about the trip.

JOYCE

It's not just the trip, Henry.

Joyce and her suitcase go.

Henry and Carolyn are left standing there.

They turn and stare at each other. For a moment it sets
in they are about to be left alone together and then...

HENRY/CAROLYN

Wait!

EXT. TRIPP HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Joyce heaves her enormous suitcase into the trunk of her
Cherokee.

Henry and Carolyn run after her.

HENRY

Honey.

CAROLYN

Mom.

HENRY

Joyce, don't do this.

JOYCE

Henry. Stop. I just explained everything. And I used my good Martha Stewart Modern Classic stationary to do it.

Henry tries to pull her suitcase out.

CAROLYN

You can't just leave your only child here alone.

Henry looks at Carolyn, disappointed.

HENRY

What do you mean...alone?

CAROLYN

You're hardly ever here.

Henry ponders this. Joyce slips into the driver's seat.

JOYCE

(tears in her eyes)

Carolyn, it would only be worse if I stayed. And you're not a child anymore.

Carolyn is stung.

HENRY

Joyce. Come on, now. Look what you're doing.

Joyce starts the car, trying to keep it together.

JOYCE

(to Carolyn)

You can have my subscription to People Magazine.

Joyce throws the car in reverse. Henry follows.

Joyce pulls out of the driveway, gives them one last look. And PEELS off.

HENRY

Joyce!

Carolyn sprints inside.

Henry looks across the street and sees his NEIGHBOR, standing in her doorway, watching with pity.

HENRY (CONT'D)
(forced smile)
Everything's fine, Mrs. T! Good
night!

Henry walks back to the house. He stumbles on a crack in the pathway.

HENRY (CONT'D)
God dammit.

He regains composure and enters the house, a lone figure.

INT. CAROLYN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Carolyn sits at the foot of her bed with her phone to her ear.

CAROLYN
(into phone)
Mother...When are you coming home?
You can't do this. Call me back.

A KNOCK on the door. She hangs up and doesn't move.

HENRY (O.S.)
Carolyn, honey?

She waits for him to leave.

HENRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Open the door...C'mon, Care-Bear,
let me in...Carolyn?...

After a moment, he gives up and walks away. She cradles her knees. And cries.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - LATER

Henry plays Sudoku. He accidentally tears through the paper with his pen and CHUCKS the pages against the wall.

He looks on his night stand and sees Joyce's yellow letter. He picks it up and reads it.

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Henry, disheveled in his pajamas, stares into Joyce's closet. It's empty except for a couple outdated jeans. He cradles the phone to his ear.

RON, HENRY'S BOSS (O.S.)
Are you sick?

HENRY
(into phone)
Yeah. I think I got that bug
that's going around.

RON (O.S.)
What bug?

HENRY
There's a bug. That's going
around.

RON (O.S.)
You realize, Henry, in your twenty
two years of working here you
haven't missed a single day?

HENRY
I'm just...maybe it was bad milk.

RON (O.S.)
Well, we need you around here,
buddy. Get some rest and we'll
see you tomorrow.

Henry beeps off the phone. He can't move.

INT. NORTHBROOK COURT - MORNING

Gail and Bruce speed walk. Henry trails behind.

GAIL
We're not doing a fake tree.

BRUCE
Every year we buy a Christmas
tree, it lasts a month, we throw
it out. Save the environment.
Global warming and all that.

GAIL
Since when do you care about the
environment?

BRUCE
I almost always recycle.

HENRY
Joyce left me.

Gail and Bruce stop, turn around.

BRUCE

What?

GAIL

Are you kidding?

HENRY

Keep walking.

Tears spill down Bruce's face.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Don't start crying. You'll scare people.

An ELDERLY COUPLE passes them as Henry politely nods.

GAIL

(wipes Bruce's tears)

I knew it. I never wanted say it but I knew this day would come.

HENRY

What do you mean, you knew?

GAIL

I always thought she was too young for you. She always wanted to live the life she never had. And frankly I never thought she seemed like Mom material to me.

HENRY

Well. Let's just say how we really feel.

GAIL

Henry, did you honestly think she was going to stick around and enable your little phobias?

HENRY

Stop calling them my little phobias. Seriously.

GAIL

Carolyn is staying with you I hope?

HENRY

She has to if she wants to graduate high school.

GAIL

You can do better. I've always thought that.

HENRY

It's classic mid-life crisis stuff. She'll lease the convertible she's always wanted or get her lower back tattooed or whatever it is that women do and she'll be back.

Henry continues. Gail looks at Bruce like, "She ain't comin' back."

EXT. HILL ABOVE TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

Carolyn and Ethan sit overlooking railroad tracks. They both smoke cigarettes like amateurs.

CAROLYN

She should win Worst Mother on the Planet Award. I mean the way she read that letter? It's like she learned it from her friggin' Danielle Steele books.

Carolyn waits for a response but Ethan just puffs away.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

Did you hear anything I just said? This is possibly the worst day of my entire life. My mother abandoned me.

ETHAN

Everything is temporary.

CAROLYN

Wouldn't you be upset if your parents split?

ETHAN

The only thing my parents have in common is their therapy practice. Beyond that, they barely speak.

CAROLYN

My parents are so different from yours.

Carolyn inhales too much of her cigarette and coughs.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
I cannot wait for college.

A train SOUNDS in the distance.

Carolyn hurls herself onto Ethan as if they were the last two people on Earth.

They wildly make out as the enormous blur of steel BARRELS past.

INT./EXT. THE VOLVO - DAY

Henry drives Carolyn past well manicured houses into a more upscale neighborhood. Henry does a double take toward Carolyn.

HENRY
You're not wearing your seat belt.

CAROLYN
And?

HENRY
And do you want your head through the windshield?

CAROLYN
(amused)
Graphic visual, Henry.

Carolyn puts on her seat belt.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)
How long is this thing going to last?

HENRY
I have no idea. This thing is Thanksgiving dinner and we don't rush it.

Carolyn takes out her phone and starts typing.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Who are you emailing on that? You know I don't like that.

CAROLYN
It's called texting and don't worry about it.

Henry's car pulls into the driveway of...

GAIL AND BRUCE'S HOUSE

A giant inflatable turkey on the front lawn sways in the wind. Dozens of Thanksgiving decorations dot the lawn: pumpkins, corn, life-sized pilgrim and Indian mannequins reenacting the first Thanksgiving.

INT. THE VOLVO - THAT MOMENT

HENRY

(excited)

Look at that. It's the Mayflower.

CAROLYN

It's like Thanksgiving puked all over their yard.

INT. GAIL AND BRUCE'S HOUSE - DAY

Wall-to-wall Native American decorations.

Gail and Bruce sit at the dining room table with their perfectly well-behaved kids HANNAH (17) and ADAM (14). They're all dressed as pilgrims. The dog lies on the floor, unhappily wearing an Indian headdress.

ADAM

May I have the dark meat?

Bruce passes Adam a plate of turkey.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Thanks, Dad.

HANNAH

Pass the creamed corn?

Gail passes the corn.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Thank you, Mom.

Carolyn stares at this polite exchange in disbelief. Henry recognizes the absurdity of it but plays along.

HENRY

Please pass the yams, Carolyn.

CAROLYN

(not having it)

They're right in front of you.

Everyone buries the awkward moment with sips of milk.

ADAM

Who'd like some dark meat?

HENRY

What the hell, I'll try some dark meat.

CAROLYN

Dangerous, Henry.

BRUCE

Why don't we go around the table and say what we give thanks for. It's Miller tradition.

Hannah eagerly raises her hand.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Hannah, you start.

HANNAH

I'm thankful for the bountiful food that has found its way onto our dining room table. And I'm thankful for my kind and generous family, including Mom, Dad and Adam. As well as my beautiful extended family, Uncle Henry and cousin Carolyn.

Gail and Bruce smile proudly at Hannah. Carolyn rolls her eyes and stabs a piece of turkey meat.

INT. THE VOLVO - LATER

Henry drives. Carolyn sits in the passenger seat with tin foil-wrapped leftovers in her lap.

HENRY

Wasn't that nice?

CAROLYN

That was beyond retarded.

HENRY

C'mon, now.

CAROLYN

What? They're all so fake. And those costumes...ugh...

HENRY

So they're a little into the holiday spirit. They're family. It's nice to have all of us together.

This just hangs there.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Almost all of us.

INT. TRIPP KITCHEN - NIGHT

Henry sits at the kitchen table eating a piece of pumpkin pie, playing Sudoku.

INT. CAROLYN'S BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Carolyn, at her computer, scans the Smith College web site.

Her phone BEEPS. A text from Ethan reads: **u cumming...?**

Conflicted, she puts the phone down and goes back to her computer.

After a few moments, she stops. She quickly grabs a candle and her iPod, stuffs them into her backpack and goes.

INT. TRIPP KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Carolyn excitedly runs downstairs and heads for the door.

CAROLYN

Hasta.

HENRY

Don't tell me you're going to Ethan's now.

CAROLYN

Totes.

HENRY

What? You don't have time to finish the word?

Carolyn's gone.

EXT. ETHAN'S HOUSE - LATER

Ethan opens the door. Carolyn has put on makeup and throws him a sexy smile.

CAROLYN

I've come equipped.

Ethan grins.

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Sade's "No Ordinary Love" plays on an iPod speaker. A red candle lights the room.

Ethan lays in bed, staring at the ceiling. Frustrated. Slightly annoyed. He shifts uncomfortably and then...

ETHAN

C'mere.

Carolyn surfaces and slides next to Ethan.

CAROLYN

I thought that's how you liked it.

Ethan unwraps a condom. Puts it on. Gets on top of her.

ETHAN

Ready?

Carolyn nods. Ethan slowly shifts his weight and enters her.

Carolyn winces from the initial pain. A few awkward thrusts. It ends as quickly as it started. And Ethan CLIMAXES loudly.

He falls on the bed next to her. Carolyn covers her disappointment with a smile. Tries to be upbeat.

CAROLYN

That was...

And fails.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

...horrible.

ETHAN

Yeah, that wasn't very good. Not what I'd imagined breaking in a virgin would be like.

CAROLYN

You and me both. Was I at least better than Sarah Ambraowitz?

Ethan shrugs.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

How about Ashley Willner?

No response.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

Heather Petterelli?

He thinks.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

Oh my god, I'm mortified. I wasn't as good as Heather Petterelli?

ETHAN

I don't screw and tell.

She rolls over.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Don't be mad.

CAROLYN

I'm not mad. I just wanted my first time to be special.

ETHAN

That was special. We have a candle and everything. By the way...Sade?

Ethan leans in and begins kissing her neck.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I still can't believe you were a virgin before this.

Ethan kisses her as Carolyn stares at the ceiling.

CAROLYN

(empty)

Me neither.

INT. TRIPP KITCHEN - DAY

Henry drinks coffee. Carolyn enters with her backpack.

HENRY

I didn't get the memo that you
were spending the night with that
boy.

CAROLYN

I didn't write a memo.

Henry sees Carolyn open the fridge and take out a Red
Bull. He stands.

HENRY

Have a seat.

CAROLYN

(paranoid)

Why?

HENRY

We're going to have lunch.
Together. Like a family.

CAROLYN

What family eats lunch together?

Carolyn pops open the Red Bull and checks her phone.
Henry opens the fridge and only sees stacks of Lean
Cuisines. He shuts it.

HENRY

C'mon. I'm taking you somewhere.

Henry puts his jacket on. Carolyn just stares at him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Put your coat on.

CAROLYN

I can't go anywhere. Ethan and I
are hanging out later.

HENRY

You just left that kid. Let's go,
I'm taking you to your favorite
place.

EXT. ADVENTURE ISLAND MINI GOLF AND SAFARI - LATER

An over-the-top interpretation of an Amazon rain forest.

The Volvo pulls into the crowded parking lot.

INT. THE VOLVO - CONTINUOUS

Henry smiles fondly as he finds a parking space. Carolyn is stunned silent.

CAROLYN

You must be joking.

HENRY

You love this place.

CAROLYN

Yeah. Then I turned seven.

HENRY

You're never too old to play mini-golf with your Dad.

CAROLYN

I don't do anything with the word "mini" in front of it.

HENRY

Technically, it's "miniature."

Henry excitedly gets out of the car. Carolyn sighs and follows.

INT. ADVENTURE ISLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Henry and Carolyn through a lion's mouth as a loud "GRRRRR!" is heard over JUNGLE MUSIC.

Carolyn is mortified.

MINI GOLF AREA

FAMILIES play golf at various themed holes.

A volcano bubbles up fake lava. Henry steps up to the tee like an earnest pro-golfer, measuring the distance to the hole with his putter.

Carolyn sits on a nearby bench, bouncing a golf ball, not having it.

Henry hits the ball, getting close to the hole.

HENRY

Bet you can't beat that shot.

With a sudden burst of defiance, Carolyn steps up to the tee. She places her ball down and focuses. Henry is impressed.

Carolyn swings and hits the ball HARD. It flies across the park into a FAMILY of four.

Carolyn smirks. Henry waves "sorry" to the family and glares at Carolyn.

CUT TO:

RESTAURANT AREA

Henry and Carolyn in a booth. Henry eats a burger and fries while Carolyn texts on her phone.

Henry searches for something to say.

HENRY

Who are you texting to now? Can't you put that away while we eat?

Carolyn stashes her phone, annoyed.

CAROLYN

This food is nauseating.

HENRY

You realize Mom's just going through a phase. This will all blow over and she'll be back before we know it.

CAROLYN

(not buying it)

I just can't believe you brought me here.

HENRY

Hey, how about after this we go home and jump in a pile of leaves?

CAROLYN

Seriously. When are you going to realize I'm not a child?

HENRY

While we're waiting for Mom to come back, it wouldn't hurt for us to...you know, do stuff. And things. Like that. You know?

CAROLYN

You are way in denial, dude.

HENRY

That's your boyfriend talking, not you.

CAROLYN

If it weren't for you, Mom would still be with us.

HENRY

Carolyn, this is not my fault.

CAROLYN

Of course this is your fault. How can you say that with a straight face?!

Henry sees a young FAMILY of four in a nearby booth, laughing and eating.

HENRY

Well. I have a plan. To get her back.

CAROLYN

She doesn't want us back.

HENRY

We're gonna get her back.
(convincing himself)
We will. I have a plan to get Mom back.

With that, Henry takes a bite out of his burger.

CAROLYN

(yeah, right)
Awesome.

They eat in silence. Like two strangers.

MONTAGE:

- Joyce lines a bookshelf with dozens of hard copy Danielle Steele books in her new apartment. Every one she's ever written.

- Henry tries on a "hip" track suit and running shoes at Foot Locker.

- Joyce scrubs down the kitchen counter tops. Lets out a little too much aggression and rage on her SOS pad.

- Henry sits in the Volvo, parked across the street from Joyce's apartment. He watches Joyce enter with a mop and cleaning supplies.

- Joyce hangs a shower curtain and places new towels on a rack.

- Henry jogs by Joyce's apartment in his new track suit and shoes. Then he jogs back the other way. Clearly trying to be seen.

- From inside her apartment, Joyce watches Henry jog past. She rolls her eyes and shuts her blinds.

END MONTAGE.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Boiling water. Joyce slides in a box of pasta.

Doorbell BUZZES.

Joyce peers through the eye hole and opens the door.

JOYCE

Welcome to Single Gal Central!

Carolyn and Ethan awkwardly stare.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Carolyn and Ethan eat spaghetti and meatballs. Joyce sips a glass of red wine and studies her glass.

Uncomfortable silence between them and then...

JOYCE

Aren't these glasses fun? I got them at Gracious Home Outlet in Palatine.

CAROLYN

Since when do you drink wine?

JOYCE

We used to drink all the time until your father decided it made him too out of control.

ETHAN

Beaujolais. It's my favorite.

JOYCE

You know about fine wines?

ETHAN

We have a wine cellar. My parents are connoisseurs. And by connoisseurs I mean functioning alcoholics.

JOYCE

You two need some.

Joyce grabs two glasses and pours. Ethan sips and swirls, deciding if he likes it. Carolyn gulps hers down.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

It's young. But I like it.

Joyce suddenly realizes the double meaning. So does Ethan. They share a quick glance as Ethan smiles into his sip.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

And how is your father?

CAROLYN

Annoying. Suffocating.
Ridiculous...

JOYCE

So nothing's changed.

CAROLYN

When are you coming back?

JOYCE

(dodging the
question)

Ethan, are your parents together?

ETHAN

They live in the same house, yes,
but I wouldn't exactly call them
together.

Joyce is impressed with his answer.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - LATER

A loud ACTION MOVIE plays on on the DVD player. Joyce and Ethan munch on popcorn, clearly loving the movie. Carolyn is visibly in disbelief at how bad it is.

CAROLYN

Why would the French guy be there?

No response.

CAROLYN (CONT'D)

Hello? Anyone? Why is French guy there? That makes no sense.

ETHAN

He's the hit man.

JOYCE

I thought he was the bodyguard.

CAROLYN

He's not the bodyguard or the hit man. What movie are you two watching? Jesus.

Carolyn gets up and goes to the bathroom.

Joyce and Ethan barely notice. Ethan pours Joyce another glass of wine without taking his eyes off the screen. Joyce smiles, appreciative.

INT. JOYCE'S GUEST BEDROOM - LATER

Ethan, now a little drunk, tries to get on top of Carolyn in the guest room's single bed. The small bed makes it difficult.

CAROLYN

So not happening.

ETHAN

Why not?

CAROLYN

My mom's in the next room. It's weird.

Ethan gets off of Carolyn with a defeated SIGH and lays next to her.

ETHAN

Red Bull?

CAROLYN

I'm okay.

He quietly exits.

Carolyn puts her head on the pillow. Her eyelids slowly close as she falls asleep.

INT. JOYCE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ethan shuts the refrigerator, Red Bull in hand.

And there's Joyce, standing there as she was earlier, holding an empty wine glass.

JOYCE
Didn't scare you this time.

ETHAN
Hello, Joyce.

Joyce stumbles slightly, a little more than tipsy.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
More Beaujolais?

Joyce doesn't answer. Just grins.

JOYCE
Exactly what I need.

Ethan goes into the fridge, pulls out the bottle and pours the rest of it into Joyce's glass.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
All gone.

ETHAN
Guess we drank a lot.

JOYCE
Ethan?

ETHAN
Joyce.

JOYCE
I have a very serious question I need to ask you.

Ethan is ready for it.

ETHAN
Yes?

And then...

JOYCE
Are you in love with my daughter?

ETHAN

What?

JOYCE

Are you in love. With Carolyn.

ETHAN

It's only been a couple months.

JOYCE

Is that a no?

ETHAN

I've never really thought about it...

He thinks about it.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I'm not sure I believe in love. I mean, what is it other than some false cultural phenomenon society created so we can trick ourselves into pretending we're not alone when we die.

Joyce is slightly confused. Too heady. She smiles, thinking he's being cute.

JOYCE

You're a doll.

Joyce reaches past Ethan and puts her hand on his neck. She leans in and checks the tag on his t-shirt.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

J. Crew again. You certainly are consistent.

She doesn't move her hand. Ethan doesn't move. They lock eyes.

She lightly brushes the back of his neck.

ETHAN

Um...

She leans in farther. Her lips in line with his.

And he kisses her. A peck on the lips. But a kiss nonetheless.

She pulls back, stunned sober. Realizes what just happened.

JOYCE

I think...we should go to bed.

ETHAN

Yeah, that's an excellent idea.

Ethan goes just as quickly as Joyce flips out the lights.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ethan slips into bed with Carolyn. Carolyn is fast asleep. Ethan stares at the ceiling. Turned on.

EXT. TRIPP HOUSE - DUSK

Sun rises. Autumn leaves FLY through the air.

Henry pushes an electric leaf blower, clearing out the back yard leaves.

INT. TRIPP HOUSE - MORNING

Henry sits at the kitchen table, sipping coffee and reading the Freedom To Fly brochure as Carolyn enters.

HENRY

How was Mom's place?

CAROLYN

It's okay.

HENRY

Is it nice inside?

CAROLYN

Ish. I guess. It's in a weird part of town.

HENRY

I know that building. Her rent's not cheap.

(under his breath)

Thanks to her father. Didn't do crap for us.

(holds up pamphlet)

Anyways, guess what this is?

CAROLYN

Single Parenting For Dum Dums?

HENRY

It's my new plan on how to get Mom back.

CAROLYN

Sweet. Let me know how that goes.

And she heads upstairs.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER HALLWAY - DAY

Henry nervously walks down a generic brick hallway. He has second thoughts and turns around. He stops. Turns back and heads in the original direction.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nine PEOPLE sit on folding chairs in a circle. The instructor, DAWN, relentlessly Midwestern upbeat, leads the group.

DAWN

Okay, next. Last one's always a toughie.

NICK

(pointing to each person)

I'm Nick, Dawn, JoAnne...uh...

MAN

Manuel.

DAWN

No helping. Everyone has to learn on their own.

NICK

Manuel, Lilly, Waleed, Roshanda...Jeremy...

GEREMY

It's Jeremy. With a hard G.

NICK

Sorry, Jeremy, um...

WOMAN

(dark)

Rhymes with death.

NICK

Beth.

DAWN
 (clapping)
 Very good.

Henry pushes open the double doors as everyone turns around.

HENRY
 Is this the uh...fear of flying class?

DAWN
 Sure is. Don't be scared. The water's warm. Hop in!

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Henry sits with the group.

HENRY
 I'm Henry (pointing)...Nick, Dawn, JoAnne, Manuel, Lilly, Waleed, Roshanda, Beth and Jeremy.

GEREMY
 Jeremy.

HENRY
 Jeremy.

DAWN
 Impressive.

Henry shrugs.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

A soap opera-handsome, silver-haired AIRLINE PILOT (50) walks through a commercial plane, talking to camera.

PILOT
 Afraid to fly? Afraid of airplanes? Afraid that the thirty tons of steel you're strapped into at thirty thousand feet in the air is going to break a wing and crash into the ground? Or worse, somehow spontaneously combust into a flaming ball of fire?

Henry and the class watches this instructional video on a flat screen TV with terrified looks on their faces.

PILOT (CONT'D)

If so, you're not alone. Almost 25 million Americans would prefer not to fly on commercial aircraft. Your fear of flying is real. Flying goes against basic, deeply-rooted human instincts, including fear of falling, which is the earliest and most fundamental of all fears. Through the three E's, empathy, education, and experience, the "Freedom to Fly" clinic offers fearful flyers the tools to cope with their phobia and their fear to fly comfortably. I should know. I used to be afraid to fly myself. And now I'm a commercial airline pilot. So fasten your seat belts everyone, because it's going to be a smooth ride.

A WHEEZING noise is heard as the class turns to see Henry HYPERVENTILATING with his eyes closed.

DAWN

Oh my gosh, somebody get him a Sprite!

A couple people gather around Henry.

Henry opens his eyes and sees LILLY, a kind-looking brunette his age, popping open a can of Sprite.

LILLY

You okay?

Henry nods and sips.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER PARKING LOT - DUSK

Henry unlocks the Volvo. He looks over his shoulder and sees Lilly unlocking her car, also a Volvo. They share a laugh.

HENRY

Safest car on the road.

LILLY

You should really look into a newer model. Air bags for every seat.

HENRY

Is that the one with the heated,
uh...

Lilly has already slipped into her car and drives off.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(to himself, watching
her go)

Oh, okay...Safe travels.

MUSIC begins.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joyce spins on a stationary bike to a HIP HOP song.

Doorbell BUZZES.

Confusion on her face. Who could it be?

She turns down the music, peeks through the blinds and
sees Ethan standing there, fixing his hair, nervous.

A smile twists into place. She opens the door.

JOYCE

Ethan. What brings you here?

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Joyce and Ethan sit on the couch. Joyce pours him a
glass of wine.

ETHAN

I could really use a woman's
perspective.

Ethan takes an over-confident gulp of wine. He regards
Joyce. Sees how sexy she looks in workout clothes.

JOYCE

I'm a woman. And I have
perspective.

ETHAN

(averting his eyes)
Carolyn...Your daughter...My...
girlfriend...

JOYCE

All true so far.

ETHAN

Remember when you asked me if I
was in love with her? And I said
I wasn't sure?

JOYCE

I think I was a little wasted that
night.

ETHAN

Well, I'm not.

JOYCE

You're not wasted?

ETHAN

I'm not in love. With Carolyn.
Your daughter. And I never will
be.

Ethan feigns disappointment. Joyce puts her hand on
Ethan's knee, consoling him.

JOYCE

Sweetie, it's okay. Not everyone
is meant to be in a relationship.

ETHAN

Is that why you split up with
Henry?

JOYCE

Among other reasons.

Ethan looks at Joyce's hand on his knee. He looks back
at her with intense eyes. She takes her hand away.

Ethan downs the rest of his wine. Nothing left to say.

ETHAN

I should go.

Joyce stands and walks Ethan to the door.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Thanks for the wise advice, Joyce.

JOYCE

I know you'll do what's right.

Ethan reaches for the door but turns back, about to say
something. They lock eyes. They know what they're about
to do is wrong. But they do it anyway.

And they start to kiss. This time, it's more than a peck. It's messy. Uninhibited.

He pulls off her tank top and they fall back onto the couch together.

Ethan ravages Joyce like an oversexed school boy. Because that's what he is. And she loves it.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Ethan and Joyce lie in bed, staring at the ceiling.

Ethan wears a blissful smile. Joyce's mind has been blown.

JOYCE

Wow. Wow. Wow. That was just...(LAUGHS)

And now she feels guilty.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Have you told Carolyn what you told me?

ETHAN

I will.

JOYCE

You should do it now. It's not right to lead women on.

ETHAN

Okay.

JOYCE

But be a gentleman about it.

ETHAN

Right.

JOYCE

Maybe write her a letter.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Carolyn stands at her locker, holding her cell phone.

A text from Ethan.

It reads: **hey...we need 2 break up.....**

INT. THE VOLVO - MOMENTS LATER

Henry drives, overwhelmed.

HENRY

Are you...gonna be okay, sweetie?

Carolyn, in the passenger seat, SOBBING.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Should I pull over?

CAROLYN

(through sobs)

No!...Don't...pull...over...

HENRY

Well, you're making me nervous,
honey. I can't drive like this.

CAROLYN

He...stole...

HENRY

What? He stole what?! (to
himself) I need to pull over.
Carolyn, what did that a-hole
steal? Did he shoplift? Have you
two been shoplifting?

CAROLYN

(huge sobs)

He stole my vir...gin...it...y...

Not what Henry was expecting. Their car swerves, almost
colliding with an oncoming car.

INT. CAROLYN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Carolyn hides under the covers, still SOBBING. Henry
sits by her side, trying his best to console her, holding
a hot mug of tea.

HENRY

Sweetie...

Carolyn kicks and SCREAMS. Henry awkwardly tries to keep
the tea from spilling.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I'll just...come back.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Carolyn and April carry lunch trays and find seats near the artsy/theater crowd.

APRIL

A text message?!

CAROLYN

He's a total abortion.

APRIL

I am so sorry.

CAROLYN

Honestly, I'm relieved. I can't imagine marrying the first guy I ever did it with anyway. That's just gross.

APRIL

You're better than him, Carolyn. He's a male slut.

CAROLYN

I should probably get tested for chlamydia.

APRIL

Congratulations. Your first boyfriend, sexual experience and breakup all within three months.

Carolyn looks up.

CAROLYN

Don't move. Question Mark.

April sees Soon-Yi walking towards them, carrying a lunch tray. They quickly scarf down their food.

SOON-YI

What's up you guys? Can I sit with you?

CAROLYN

Grab wood, Soon-Yi. We were just about to leave.

They start to get up.

SOON-YI

Carolyn? I just wanted to say?
Sorry about your recent break up
with Ethan?

CAROLYN

How the hell did you know?

SOON-YI

Word travels fast?

Carolyn can't believe it.

APRIL

Is that a question or a statement?

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Heavy BREATHING.

Henry and his class sit cross-legged on small mats on the floor.

DAWN

Aviaphobia. Aeroanxiety. Or,
fear of flying. Like any phobia,
it's extremely treatable. These
simple breathing exercises will
help you relax when it comes time
to treat your fear. I'm not only
a certified fear anxiety
counselor, I'm also a trained
yogi. Now if you all position
yourself in child's pose...

Dawn sits on her feet. The group tries to follow suit but none of them are very limber, which results in an awkward contortion of bodies.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Everyone close your eyes and
continue to inhale through your
nose and out.

Everyone closes their eyes and breathes. Henry slowly opens his eyes and stares at Lilly, intrigued.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carolyn draws in her pad at the kitchen table. Henry enters.

HENRY
Well, hello. Are you feeling a
little better?

CAROLYN
(defensive)
I'm great. Over it.

HENRY
(suspicious)
That was fast.

CAROLYN
I realized today I could never be
into someone who wasn't into
comics.

HENRY
Your Mother never liked my
crossword puzzles or Sudoku. She
calls them time-suckers.

CAROLYN
He had a sick case of buttne too.

HENRY
Buttne?

CAROLYN
Butt acne.

Henry and Carolyn share their first laugh.

HENRY
The sad thing is, I'm willing to
forgive her.

Carolyn bursts out crying.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Aw, honey...

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The group sits in a circle. JoAnne (40s) is in the
middle of a confession.

JOANNE
...And I looked around, at all the
tattered luggage and burning
carcasses and I realized--I was
the only survivor.

The group GASPS.

JOANNE (CONT'D)

A hundred and ten passengers. I don't know why Jesus picked me. Seems unfair. I lost my entire rugby team that day. State champions, three years undefeated.

DAWN

And how did that make you feel?

JOANNE

Haven't been able to get on a plane since. Or coach rugby.

The group politely CLAPS.

DAWN

Thank you for sharing, JoAnne.

Dawn looks at Henry and smiles. He shifts in his chair, uncomfortable.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Henry, would you like to participate in Share Circle? No judgements.

HENRY

Well...my name is Henry. And I'm a travel agent.

The group chuckles, confused looks.

MANUEL

You're a what?

DAWN

You never told us that.

WALEED

How is that technically possible?

BETH

You're a travel agent. And you're afraid to fly.

Henry sighs. He's gotten this response before.

HENRY

Since I was a kid I was always fascinated with air travel. I used to say the two biggest miracles in life were airplanes and babies. But babies don't give me panic attacks.

ROSHANDA

That is some weird ass shit.

DAWN

Share with us.

He swallows.

HENRY

When I was twelve years old, my aunt and uncle retired on the same day. Both school teachers. So to kick off their retirement, they booked a Mediterranean cruise.

DAWN

What happened?

HENRY

Their plane touched down in Miami, landed the wrong way, skidded off the runway and crashed. They didn't make it. Our family was devastated. And since then I've tried everything. I even became a travel agent. But I was never able to get on a plane. Now it's ruined my marriage. And my life.

Roshanda dabs her eyes with her sleeve.

DAWN

(moved)

Thanks for sharing, Henry.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joyce and Ethan naked in bed. Staring at the ceiling.

JOYCE

My. God! The way you did that thing with the thing?

ETHAN

(bragging)

You're definitely the oldest person I've done it with.

Joyce smacks Ethan with mock anger.

JOYCE

Fuck you very much!

ETHAN

In a good way.

Joyce takes the compliment.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Girls my age don't understand sex.
They don't get me. I'm beyond
them.

Joyce frowns. She has a thought.

JOYCE

You didn't...I mean...

ETHAN

What?

JOYCE

Never mind. I don't want to know.

ETHAN

Have sex with Carolyn?

Joyce leaps out of bed, starts to get dressed.

JOYCE

Oh, this is horrible. I'm a
horrible, horrible person! What
was I thinking?!...Did you?

Ethan starts to answer.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Don't answer that! No. No, no,
no, no. It's better if I don't
know.

ETHAN

It's not like it matters. We
broke up.

JOYCE

It does matter! It means I'm an
awful mother who can't control her
sexual urges. I wanted new
experiences. I wanted to go
Bungee jumping or do hot yoga.
But this? This is sick. I'm
sick!

Ethan stands, puts on his boxers.

ETHAN

Okay, maybe this is not exactly the societal norm. But basic sexual desire transforms all moral and ethical codes.

JOYCE

Oh, don't justify this with Mommy and Daddy's psychiatry bullshit. Please.

Ethan stares at Joyce.

ETHAN

Why did you leave Henry?

JOYCE

When I married him I knew he couldn't fly. But over the years he became afraid of practically everything.

ETHAN

That's a lie.

Joyce is skeptical, but all ears.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You left him because you wanted to live the life you gave up. Because you got married and had a kid younger than you thought you would.

This strikes a chord. Joyce sits.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

And you ended your marriage because you wanted to know what it felt like to be free, right?

Joyce looks at Ethan like he can see inside her soul. And it's turning her on. She nods.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

So be free.

She forms a mischievous smile.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A red sporty convertible speeds down an empty street.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
 Ladies and Gentlemen, once again,
 please make sure your seat belts
 are securely fastened as we are
 about to experience some minor
 turbulence...Seriously, buckle
 that shit up.

Joyce speeds behind the wheel with Ethan in the passenger
 seat. The top is down and she cranks up the heat.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 As we travel past the flat plains
 of rural Illinois, consider
 yourself lucky that you are so
 prepared for something like this.
 Because I certainly didn't see any
 of it coming.

Joyce and Ethan LAUGH without a care in the world.

JOYCE
 Henry would never let me rent one
 of these.

ETHAN
 Hit it.

They speed off.

INT. APPLEBEE'S - NIGHT

Joyce and Ethan sit in a booth, feeding each other Mile
 High Ice Cream Pie®.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
 This was going on for a couple
 weeks. I guess my mother's idea
 of adventure is sharing a nasty
 dessert with...

JOYCE
 You're eighteen, right?

ETHAN
 (lying)
 Yep. Why?

CAROLYN (V.O.)
 ...a seventeen-year old.

JOYCE
 Just checking.

ETHAN

You need to be eighteen to eat
Oreo crusted pie?

She stuffs more in his mouth.

JOYCE

(laughing)

Shut up.

INT. STATIONARY STATION - DAY

Joyce rings out a customer with Soon-Yi, animatedly
talking.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

...And she wouldn't shut up about
it...

SOON-YI

You're so lucky? That you found
someone? It sounds so romantic?
What's his name?

JOYCE

(mischievous)

That's my little secret, Soon-Yi.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The group stands around a line of folding chairs with
numbers on them.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

Meanwhile, Henry didn't have a
clue anything was happening
outside of his own new world...

DAWN

It's aircraft simulation day! I
Photoshopped mock boarding passes
that you'll each take and proceed
to your "seat."

Dawn laughs at her use of air quotes. Everyone grows
nervous, including Henry.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Let's start with Manuel...

One by one each person gets their boarding pass and sits
in their assigned seats.

Henry and Lilly sit next to each other and smile.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
...and was probably feeling pretty
studly himself.

INT. IMAX MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Loud ACTION movie. Joyce and Ethan eat popcorn, loving it.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
And apparently, this is a thing.
The older women with younger boys
thing. Florida being the most
concentrated area of May-December
romances.

INT. METRO CHICAGO - NIGHT

Rock club. An obscure emo BAND performs a love ballad on stage in front of a young CROWD.

Ethan sways to the music with his eyes closed. Joyce pretends to enjoy it, nodding her head in parts.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
Or should I say, the most-
disgusting-thing-you-could
possibly-imagine romances. I'm
allowed to judge. She's my
mother.

BELL RINGS.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Carolyn and April carry their books down the crowded hallway.

APRIL
Don't get upset.

CAROLYN
That pretty much guarantees I'm
about to get upset.

APRIL
Fuck Face. Twelve o'clock.

They stop. Carolyn looks sick to her stomach.

In the distance Ethan chats up MS. MARGOLIES, Spanish teacher (20s). She's sexy in a way that suggests her last job may have been at Hooters. She LAUGHS at everything Ethan says.

Soon-Yi appears behind them.

SOON-YI

Rumor has it? They're boning.

CAROLYN

Señora Margolies? She is so ew.

APRIL

Supposedly fake tits.

CAROLYN

She's so old. And he's terrible in Spanish. I don't believe it.

SOON-YI

That's what I heard?

With that, Soon-Yi walks away.

APRIL

You really think they're doing it?

CAROLYN

That is so wrong on about a million levels.

APRIL

It kind of makes sense. He's done everyone else.

They can't stop staring.

CAROLYN

I like her baby sweater.

EXT. GAIL AND BRUCE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Enough Christmas lights to power a small country. Plastic snowmen mingle with twelve plastic reindeer on the snow-covered yard. Instead of the inflatable Thanksgiving turkey there is an enormous snow globe filled with a Nativity scene.

The Volvo pulls into the driveway.

INT. GAIL AND BRUCE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Christmas explosion. Every inch of the house is decorated.

The dog runs by wearing antlers.

Gail, Bruce and their two kids, Adam and Hannah, sit at the table in their best Christmas sweaters. Henry and Carolyn sit at the opposite end.

GAIL

I want you to really think about joining us on our trip, you two.

CAROLYN

Where are you going?

BRUCE

You haven't told her?

GAIL

You and your father are coming with us to Hawaii in January.

HENRY

Let's just wait and see.

Gail gives Henry a look: *You WILL join us.*

HANNAH

Carolyn, are you coming with us to midnight mass tonight?

CAROLYN

Yeah, no.

HANNAH

Come on, cuz, family tradition. We used to go when we were kids, remember?

HENRY

Come on, Care. It'll be a nice family outing.

CAROLYN

I wasn't planning on worshipping Jesus tonight. They won't let me in dressed like this anyway.

GAIL

You can wear something of
Hannah's. You girls are about the
same size.

BRUCE

You have to come, Carolyn. We all
come home and have ice cream cake
afterwards. It's the one night a
year we break all the rules.

Carolyn sighs, caving in.

HANNAH

Mom? Dad? May I be excused?
I'll go prepare some outfits for
Carolyn.

GAIL

Absolutely. Oh, pick out
something festive.

HANNAH

I have just the thing. Meet me in
my room in five minutes, Carolyn.

Hannah goes upstairs. Carolyn mimes Hannah's polite
demeanor to herself.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Carolyn walks and sees Gail and Bruce's perfect family
photos taken around the world: The London Bridge, a
Mayan temple, a Venetian gondola. The family wears
outfits to match each city. Carolyn fake gags.

She stops at the closed door at the end of the hallway
and knocks.

HANNAH

(from behind the
door)

Who is it?

CAROLYN

Who do you think?

Hannah suspiciously opens the door a crack, makes sure
she's alone.

INT. HANNAH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carolyn enters. Hannah locks the door, paranoid.

CAROLYN
Why are you being weird?

HANNAH
(casual)
I'm not.

Carolyn walks in and looks around the pristine bedroom.

CAROLYN
You got rid of your princess bed.

HANNAH
We're not children anymore,
Carolyn.

Carolyn looks down on the bed and sees two Christmas sweaters laid out on the bed. She slowly looks up.

CAROLYN
What smells like...?

She whips around and sees--

Hannah take a huge toke off an eight inch bong, a fan blowing the smoke out an open window.

HANNAH
Acapulco Gold.
(exhaling)
This shit is not cheap.

Carolyn is shocked and amused.

INT. GAIL AND BRUCE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Henry helps Gail and Bruce clean and put dishes into the dishwasher.

HENRY
It's really helping me with my
problem.

GAIL
It's not AA.

BRUCE
Hon.

GAIL
What? I just don't understand why
he needs a class.
(MORE)

GAIL (CONT'D)

The only way to actually learn something is to do it, Henry. Come with us to Hawaii. Problem solved.

HENRY

Why can't you be supportive of this?

GAIL

Just seems like a waste of time.

INT. HANNAH'S BEDROOM

Carolyn and Hannah both stand in matching Christmas sweaters in front of a full-length mirror, GIGGLING.

CAROLYN

(stoned)

We look like elves.

HANNAH

Evil elves.

CAROLYN

I can't believe you get high.

Hannah goes to her drawer, pulls out a couple joints and gives them to Carolyn.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

A row of solemn churchgoers listen to the PRIEST speak.

Henry sits next to Gail, Bruce and Adam. Behind them, Hannah and Carolyn sit trying to hold in giggles.

Finally, Carolyn laughs out loud.

The entire congregation looks back.

INT. CAROLYN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carolyn lays in bed, examining her joints, still high. Henry opens the door. Carolyn discreetly slips them under the cover.

CAROLYN

(laughing)

Who's that knockin' at my door?

HENRY

I just had to tell you something.

CAROLYN
What up, chicken butt?

HENRY
(squinting)
Did you have some egg nog tonight?

CAROLYN
Yeah. That. Egg nog. Mm-hm.

Henry kneels down by her bed.

HENRY
Anyway, I'm going on a plane.

CAROLYN
Where to?

HENRY
Nowhere, actually. But my fear
instructor is making us all get on
an actual plane.

CAROLYN
Fear instructor. That's
hilarious. I should be impressed,
right?

HENRY
Some of these people can't even
stand to look at planes let alone
sit on them.

CAROLYN
(actually sincere)
I'm so proud of you, Dad.

HENRY
Aw, honey. Thanks. You should
tell your mom.

Carolyn looks down.

CAROLYN
Is my bed melting?

Henry looks confused and stands.

HENRY
You certainly had fun tonight.
I'm so glad you and Hannah are
chummy again. Why don't you get
some sleep.

Henry looks back at her. She's already fallen asleep.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A MARIACHI BAND serenades tables.

Henry and Lilly sit in a booth, reading their menus.
Henry looks up.

HENRY

I'm married.

LILLY

...Okay.

HENRY

Well, technically separated but
it's short term. I just wanted
you to know that before...

LILLY

Before we have a Mexican dinner as
friends?

HENRY

(put in his place)

Right.

(looks at menu, then)

How about you? Are you...?

LILLY

Divorced, actually. Three years
going strong.

HENRY

Sorry to hear that.

Lilly shrugs.

LILLY

First you say "taking a break,"
then you say "separated." Before
you know it you're signing papers
and it's legal.

HENRY

Well, I'm pretty sure it's not
going to end like that for me.

A busboy places a basket of chips and two kinds of salsa
on the table. They start munching.

LILLY

So, travel agent.

HENRY

(proud)

Assistant manager at AAAA Travel.
Twenty two years and counting.

LILLY

And afraid to fly.

HENRY

That's me.

(eating the salsa)

Whoa. Have the brown one.

Lilly tastes.

LILLY

That is really incredible.

HENRY

A little spicy but I like it.

LILLY

No, I mean you being a travel
agent.

HENRY

I've heard that...What do you do?

LILLY

Real estate. I sell all those big
houses on the lake. Although, not
lately.

The mariachi band suddenly appears at their table,
SERENADING them. Henry enjoys it but Lilly is clearly
uncomfortable. Henry politely waves them off.

HENRY

You okay?

LILLY

Just not a big fan of Mariachi
bands.

HENRY

Yeah, they were kind of out of
key.

LILLY

I'm afraid of them, Henry.

HENRY

I thought you were afraid of
flying.

LILLY

I am. But also Mariachi bands.
And wax museums.

HENRY

Wax museums I can see. But
mariachi bands?

LILLY

I'm also afraid of heights. And
elevators and escalators. And
snakes. And microwaves. And
pickles. I cannot go near a
pickle.

HENRY

I guess I'm not a fan of
microwaves either. But what has a
pickle ever done to scare you?

LILLY

I also can't watch any movie with
Liam Neeson.

HENRY

You're afraid of Liam Neeson?

LILLY

If I met him in real life I'd
probably do that hyperventilating
thing you do. Even his name
scares me. *Liam. Neeson.*

Lilly shudders. Henry is fascinated.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Joyce spins on her stationary bike as Carolyn watches TV.

CAROLYN

Aunt Gail wants us to go to Hawaii
with them.

JOYCE

Last time I checked, you can't
drive to Hawaii.

CAROLYN

I guess he's taking some flying
class.

JOYCE

Like getting his pilot's license?

CAROLYN

No, they beat the fear out of you.
It's like AA for freaky people.

JOYCE

That doesn't sound like your
father at all.

CAROLYN

I know. I think he might even
have a *lady friend*.

Joyce peddles faster, avoids the topic, getting jealous.

JOYCE

Any plans for New Years?

CAROLYN

I don't know. Hang out.

MUSIC begins.

INT. APRIL'S CAR - NIGHT

April drives Carolyn, MUSIC playing. They are more made
up than usual and dressed for a big night out. Carolyn
wears all black.

APRIL

Soon-Yi said she saw his car at
Strike 'n Spare last night.

CAROLYN

Sexing up Spanish teacher, no
doubt.

APRIL

It's New Years. Don't let him
upset you.

CAROLYN

I'm not. I have better things to
do. Next.

APRIL

Maybe you'll make out with a
hottie tonight.

Carolyn shrugs.

CAROLYN

I just can't believe your parents
let you go to college parties.

APRIL

They want me to go to
Northwestern. I'm going to
Northwestern.

They laugh and turn up the radio.

CAROLYN

I cannot wait for freedom!

APRIL

Are all your applications in?

CAROLYN

University of Chicago, U of I,
Northwestern, Art Institute, and
Smith.

APRIL

Smith? Isn't that a little
lesbian?

CAROLYN

They have a great art program.
And I just need the complete
opposite of here.

APRIL

I worship this song.

April BLASTS the music and they speed off.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

COLLEGE KIDS drink and play beer-pong. April leads
Carolyn through the crowd as they step up to the bar.

APRIL

What do we want?

Carolyn seems overwhelmed by the options of booze and
then...

CAROLYN

Shot of Jager. Makers Mark
chaser. Neat.

APRIL

(laughing)
Okay then.

They each do a shot and Carolyn remembers something. She
reaches into her pocket and waves a joint. April grins.

INT. ETHAN'S HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Joyce looks around: A Rothko painting, a grand piano, a wall of first edition, classic, leather-bound books.

Joyce sips her wine, impressed.

A hand holding two small pills interrupts Joyce's tour. Ethan stands there with his hand extended and a big grin on his face.

Joyce looks up.

ETHAN

Xanax.

JOYCE

Drugs?

ETHAN

It's a muscle relaxant. You want to try something else? There's a Walgreens in my mother's bathroom.

Joyce seems unsure.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Come on...adventure.

Convinced, Joyce pops the pills, washing them down with wine and a smile.

JOYCE

This house is unbelievable.

ETHAN

I cannot wait to get my own apartment. I want to live in North Korea.

JOYCE

North Korea? Why the hell would you want to live there?

ETHAN

It just seems like the weirdest place to go.

JOYCE

And where did you say your parents were?

ETHAN

Santa Barbara. They go every year until mid-January.

JOYCE

I thought we can take a little trip somewhere. I'm thinking snowboarding?

ETHAN

I don't snowboard.

JOYCE

I thought every kid did snowboarding.

ETHAN

I'm not a kid.

JOYCE

That's not what I meant. Anyway, we can learn together. Plus, I bought a really cute outfit.

ETHAN

I don't know. Seems pedestrian.

JOYCE

Kahlua and cream. Cozy nights by the fire...

Joyce feels the effects of the pills and wine. She moves in for a kiss. Ethan, of course likes it.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

On TV, Anderson Cooper and Kathy Griffin chat and wait for the ball drop.

Henry sits on the couch, lost in a game of Sudoku.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - LATER

The New Years COUNTDOWN is heard from outside the door followed by CHEERS and NOISEMAKERS.

Carolyn takes another hit off their joint and passes it to April. Uncontrollable GIGGLING as they blow smoke out a crack in the window.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Streamers and confetti cover the floor. The crowd has thinned. A COUPLE makes out on a love seat.

Carolyn and April sit across from them, stoned and staring intensely.

APRIL

Why is everything zig zag?

CAROLYN

Acapulco Gold. Quality shit.

APRIL

I am so thoroughly impressed you scored this. You beat me in the drugs department but I'm still one up on you in the sex department.

CAROLYN

Zach is kinda good for you.

APRIL

P.S. We're off again. Turns out being chemistry partners wasn't the best chemistry.

CAROLYN

You didn't tell me that.

APRIL

So not a big deal.

They focus on the making out couple.

CAROLYN

Are we forever going to be single?

APRIL

PDA's are not my thing, but that's actually kinda hot.

CAROLYN

The guy or the girl?

April contemplates this.

APRIL

Both, actually.

The girl wraps her leg around the guy.

CAROLYN

How does one even bend like that?

As a joke, April mimics the leg action on Carolyn. Carolyn plays along and dramatically rubs April's hair. April caresses Carolyn's cheek intensely. They both crack up.

As the couple continues, so do the girls. April tilts her head and opens her mouth as if to kiss Carolyn. But Carolyn actually goes in for the kiss.

And they start to kiss.

They laugh at first, but for Carolyn, it's real. April pulls away. She BURSTS out laughing. Carolyn sits back, dejected.

APRIL

(fake laugh)

Wait, was that...? You know we were just kidding, right?

CAROLYN

Yeah. No. It was funny.

It's uncomfortable. Carolyn gets up and leaves.

APRIL

(to herself)

Fuck.

INT. TRIPP HOUSE - MORNING

Sun rise. Snow FLIES through the air.

Henry walks into frame, clearing the white driveway with his snowblower.

He stops, looks around the neighborhood. The quiet is deafening. Being alone on New Years feels empty.

And then...

April's car in the distance. Henry waves as she pulls into the driveway. Carolyn gets out and hurries to the house without acknowledging Henry.

HENRY

Happy New Years, sweetie!

Carolyn speaks without looking or breaking stride.

CAROLYN

Is it?

HENRY

Hey, it's a new year! That means
I'm not going to be mad you came
home past your curfew.

Carolyn doesn't respond. Henry quickly makes a snowball and lovingly tosses it at her. His aim is off and it hits her square in the face.

CAROLYN

Ow! What the fuck, dude?!

HENRY

Oh my gosh, I'm sorry, honey! I
didn't mean to throw it at your...

Carolyn goes inside and SLAMS the door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Henry slowly opens the door to Carolyn's room. She's fast asleep. He sees a can of Red Bull on her night stand and grabs it.

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Henry sits on his bed and reads Joyce's goodbye letter.

He sips the Red Bull without thinking. He actually likes it. He sips more.

EXT. THE VOLVO - LATER

A line of slow moving cars. Speeding up behind them is Henry, moving faster than he ever has before. He HONKS, making them swerve out of his way.

INT. THE VOLVO - THAT MOMENT

Henry gulps down another can of The Bull.

HENRY

(mock commercial)
Red Bull! It's like a teeny tiny
cherry explosion in your mouth
area!

Henry finishes his Red Bull and cracks open another one.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 Wooooohooooooo!

EXT. THE VOLVO

Henry's swerves and speeds past a minivan full of kids.
 The minivan HONKS.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Henry does donuts with the Volvo around the snow.

INT. THE VOLVO

Henry's giddy. Out of breath. Alive.

INT. AAAA TRAVEL AGENCY - MORNING

Henry enters and takes off his jacket.

Ron stands there, slurping down a Cup O' Noodles.

RON
 Listen, Henry I need you to step
 in for me at the expo this year
 while I hold down the fort.

HENRY
 (nervous)
 Vegas again? I'm not exactly
 ready...Flying isn't...

Ron drops a pamphlet on his desk that reads Travel Agent
 Convention & Expo - Madison, Wisconsin.

RON
 No worries, buddy. It's up north.
 You can drive.

HENRY
 Oh. Good deal. Is Debbie going?

RON
 (serious)
 Henry...

Henry reads the look on Ron's face, sits back in his
 chair.

HENRY
 Yes?

RON

You should know that this may be
our last trip to the expo.
Internet business is just kicking
our ass.

HENRY

(in denial)

You can have the world wide web,
Ron. Nothing compares to
friendly, real life, human
service.

RON

I'm afraid that business model is
a thing of the past.

HENRY

So what's the plan?

RON

Cut backs. We may even have to
let one or two people go. Most
likely four. No more than seven.

HENRY

That's...almost everybody.

Ron goes back to his office, slurping the last noodle in
his cup.

Debbie enters from the break room.

DEBBIE

You heard about the blood bath?

HENRY

Ron just told me.

DEBBIE

I don't know what I'm going to do.
Larry was laid off last Spring and
my kids aren't old enough to work.

HENRY

You'll be fine.

(covering)

I think it'll be mostly support
staff.

Henry logs onto his computer, avoiding the conversation.

INT. THE VOLVO - DAY

Henry drives with Lilly in the passenger seat.

LILLY

Thanks for inviting me.

HENRY

You don't have a fear of
convention centers with lots of
people do you?

LILLY

Strangely, I'm okay with that.

HENRY

That makes one of us.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - LATER

A group of DANCERS dressed in traditional African garb stage an elaborately choreographed dance. Behind them a huge display reads "Kenya Airways."

Lilly walks past carrying two Starbucks coffees. She passes well designed booths from every possible company connected to the travel industry. Airlines, air travel web sites, insurance companies, etc.

Henry's booth is the smallest in a far corner. He sits on a chair, holding flyers, in front of a dated plastic sign that reads "AAAA Travel - We travel anywhere!"

Lilly approaches, hands him a coffee.

LILLY

Any customers yet?

HENRY

Only thing anyone's interested in
is all that internet gunk. Lots
of new booths this year that I've
never heard of. Like that one
over there. I can't even
pronounce it.

They both sip their coffees and look across the room.

LILLY

"Snickr doodle dot com. The
number one online, eco-friendly
sustainably green virtual air
travel agency."

HENRY

What does that even mean?

Two WOMEN approach Henry. Henry stands and gives them a hearty welcome.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(handing them flyers)

Hello, gals. Can I interest you
in the services of AAAA Travel?
We travel anywhere!

WOMAN #1

We're looking for the ladies room.

HENRY

(forced cheer)

Bathrooms are right out that exit
door.

Henry watches them go and sees them throw the flyers into a garbage can.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Another satisfied customer.

Lilly feels bad.

INT. RUBY TUESDAY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Henry and Lilly sit in a booth, drink strawberry daiquiris and enjoy each other's company.

HENRY

She decided she needed to figure a
few things out. Mid-life crisis
stuff. But once I get on a plane
I'm pretty certain everything's
going to be fine.

LILLY

Have you discussed that with her?

HENRY

Not yet.

(off Lilly's look)

I know she's thinking the same
thing.

(back pedaling)

I'm giving her some space to
figure it out.

Henry downs his drink. Lilly sips, not sure if even Henry believes what he's saying.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I'm ready for another one. Not
driving tonight. Woo!

LILLY
I could do another one.

HENRY
(looking around)
Where's our waitress? I'll be
back.

Henry gets up, tipsy, and walks through the restaurant,
looking for their waitress. He spots her on the opposite
end of the restaurant taking another woman's order.

It's Joyce.

She's wearing a fur ski vest and matching ski boots. The
waitress blocks Henry's view of Joyce's companion and
after a moment, the waitress leaves.

But Joyce is alone.

Henry ducks behind an ATM machine and watches her. His
curiosity morphs into nostalgia. He misses her.

He looks back at Lilly. Paranoia sets in. He doesn't
want Joyce to see him.

Keeping his head low, Henry hurries back to his booth.

LILLY
(confused)
What's wrong?

HENRY
Nothing! I'm having a great time.

LILLY
Did you find our waitress?

HENRY
She quit. Um, tell you what...

Henry throws down a couple bills onto the table.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I am seriously pooped. And I
thought we'd head back tonight.

Lilly recognizes something is up.

LILLY
Tonight? What's going on?

HENRY

(uneasy)

Ahahaha. That's funny. You're funny.

Henry puts Lilly's jacket on her and shuffles her out.

CUT TO:

Ethan returns to Joyce's booth. Joyce spots Henry walking Lilly out. She quickly slouches down in her seat.

ETHAN

What are you doing?

Joyce covers her face with the salt and pepper shakers and slides down in the booth until they leave.

She sits back up as if nothing happened.

JOYCE

Shall we have a night cap?

Ethan eyes her strangely.

ETHAN

Anyway, I have never seen so many unattractive people in my life...

As Ethan speaks, Joyce watches Lilly get into the Volvo, unnerved. Then she sees Henry. And smiles to herself.

INT. MARRIOTT LOBBY - LATER

Vaulted ceiling. A glass elevator rises to the top.

Henry lounges in a chair with his head back, looking up at the elevator, lost in thought. His AAAA Travel sign and luggage are by his side.

Lilly arrives, wheeling in her suitcase.

LILLY

All set?

Henry doesn't move.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Henry?...Are you alright?

Henry slowly snaps out of it and stares at Lilly.

INT. THE VOLVO - LATER

Henry pulls up to Lilly's apartment complex.

HENRY

See you in class?

Henry flashes a non-committal salesman smile. Lilly searches his face, wanting more. But he's not giving it.

LILLY

See you in class, Henry.

Disappointed, Lilly pats him on the shoulder and slips out. Lilly looks back but Henry quickly drives away.

EXT./INT. THE VOLVO - NIGHT

Henry drives along the expressway, heading home. Frustrated, Henry hits the steering wheel with his fist, CURSING himself.

Henry flips on the radio, trying to find something to calm his nerves. He lands on George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," AKA the United Airlines song.

Suddenly, he looks up and sees a sign: "O'HARE AIRPORT - 1/2 MILE." Henry looks at the radio, and back to the sign.

Henry turns up the radio volume and, with all his strength, exits toward the airport. He starts to sweat but holds the wheel firmly, pushing through.

Suddenly, he sees a plane coming directly towards him, growing larger and larger. He panics, sweats harder and can barely breathe, HYPERVENTILATING. WHEEZING.

The plane looks as if it's about to hit his car when it suddenly WHOOSHES directly over him.

He loses control of the Volvo, swerves in and out of his lane and CRASHES into car next to him.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Henry lays in bed with his wrist in a brace. He plays Sudoku and eats Jello.

A NURSE leads Carolyn in.

NURSE
Is this yours?

HENRY
Hi, sweetie.

Nurse exits. Henry offers some Jello to Carolyn.

CAROLYN
No blood? No broken bones?

HENRY
Some minor sprains and bruises.
I'm fine. The Volvo on the other
hand...

CAROLYN
What the hell were you thinking?

HENRY
I was thinking I wanted to fly.

CAROLYN
Just like that, you thought you
could get on a plane?

HENRY
If that's what it takes to get Mom
back.

CAROLYN
(frustrated)
We're not getting Mom back. Stop
being delusional. She put you in
a hospital bed.

HENRY
Well, maybe this would not have
happened if we had been more of a
family.

Carolyn is floored.

CAROLYN
So now you're blaming me?!

HENRY
I'm just saying we could've all
made a little more effort.

CAROLYN
Ugh. I cannot believe what a wuss
you are!

Carolyn throws up her hands and leaves.

HENRY

Carolyn.

Henry struggles to get up and hurts his wrist. He lies there, defeated and alone.

INT. LOVE'S YOGURT - NIGHT

Joyce and Ethan sit in a corner booth. Ethan wolfs down a large yogurt.

ETHAN

Can I finish?

JOYCE

Just hurry. You could not have picked a more obvious place. The whole world comes here.

ETHAN

Why are you so paranoid all of a sudden? No one's going to see us.

SOON-YI (O.S.)

Mrs. Tripp?

Soon-Yi and her parents stand in front of them, holding yogurts.

Joyce is caught. She puts on a happy face.

JOYCE

Soon-Yi! Nice to see you.

Ethan continues to eat, uncaring.

SOON-YI

This is my Mom? And this is my Dad?

JOYCE

Nice to meet you, Mr. and Mrs. Ling. I've heard so much about you.

The Lings smile and nod hello.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I am a huge fan of your daughter. She's my hardest worker. Actually, she's my only worker.

Soon-Yi and Ethan share a look.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
You know Ethan, Soon-Yi.

Ethan throws Soon-Yi a flirtatious nod and smile. She melts.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
Well, this has been a real treat.
Nice to see you, Soon-Yi. And
nice meeting you, Mr. and Mrs.
Ling.

SOON-YI
See you Thursday Mrs. Tripp?

The Lings head for the door. Soon-Yi looks back at Joyce. She's onto her. And exits.

JOYCE
Thank you very much. How the hell
am I going to explain that?

Ethan scoops the rest of his yogurt, making an irritating scraping noise against the cup.

ETHAN
Why hide our love?

Joyce looks at him in disbelief.

JOYCE
What did you say?

Ethan finished his yogurt and slides it across the table.

ETHAN
Remember when you asked me if I
was in love with your daughter?
And I said I wasn't sure what love
even was? Well, now I'm sure.

A look of worried confusion on Joyce's face. Realization washes over her: He's just a kid.

He grabs her hands.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
I am one hundred percent,
completely and totally in love
with you, Joyce Tripp.

Joyce is frozen. *This is not happening.*

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joyce soaks in a bubble bath, drinking wine and holding a photo.

It's the picture of her and Henry with Carolyn and the snowman.

Joyce's hardened shell cracks. She smiles at the fond memory. Then finally--

She starts to cry. Uncontrollably.

INT. MCCORMICK HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Dawn leads Henry and the group inside the massive hangar. Their faces go white as they look up and see--

A gigantic airplane. Scary. Larger than life. From a distance, the group is dwarfed by the huge jet.

They stop. A few class members start their breathing exercises, a couple look down.

Henry powers on, takes the lead of the group.

Dawn dabs a tear of joy, knowing her work has paid off. Waleed trails behind. And throws up.

INT. AIRPLANE - MOMENTS LATER

Dawn stands at the back of the plane as the group files into their seats.

DAWN

Gang, just think of this as
another vehicle like your car or
the bus or a train.

ROSHANDA

I hate trains too.

DAWN

Just a vessel to get you from
point A to point B.

Henry sits in an aisle seat next to Roshanda.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Okay, once you're all seated, then Rachel, our flight attendant for today will take you through the procedure.

A male FLIGHT ATTENDANT stands in the front.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Welcome, passengers. The captain has turned on the seat belts fastened sign. So if you could all buckle up, I can begin.

We hear the group jostling and fastening.

ROSHANDA

Oh, Lord.

BETH

What do we need those for?

WALEED

I thought we were just having dinner.

BETH

Are we actually flying?

DAWN

Don't be alarmed. We're just going through the procedure.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

If you'll all reach into the seat pockets in front of you and pull out the safety instruction card.

Henry pulls out a laminated card. Except it's not a safety card. It's a graduation certificate. One by one, everyone reads their cards. Faces light up.

DAWN

Congratulations, everyone! You are now official graduates of Freedom to Fly!

CHEERS.

DAWN (CONT'D)

Of course, now it's up to you to actually fly. So go home tonight and book a flight with Henry!

HENRY

Ten percent discount for
everybody!

ROSHANDA

Yeah, I'll get right on that.

Congratulates all around. Dawn passes out plastic
glasses of sparkling wine.

Henry tries to get Lilly's attention but she turns a
blind eye and chats with others.

INT. AAAA TRAVEL AGENCY - MORNING

Henry enters. His face falls. Debbie's desk is cleared
out. In fact, all the desks are totally empty. Without
taking his off his jacket, he rushes into...

RON'S OFFICE

Ron is talking to Beverly who is in tears. Henry enters
and Beverly quickly leaves.

Ron tears into a Filet O'Fish sandwich.

HENRY

What's going on?

RON

(mouth full)

Have a seat, Henry.

HENRY

I don't want to sit. Tell me
what's going on.

RON

Beverly's been with me for almost
thirty years. But we just can't
keep her on any more.

HENRY

And Debbie?

Ron finishes his sandwich, opens another one and gravely
nods.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Am I...?

RON

You're safe, pal. I need you to
keep the day to day.

(MORE)

RON (CONT'D)

It's quite possibly going to be
just me and you for a while.

The front door DINGS. Henry looks up and sees...

Joyce.

She enters, looking around the empty room.

INT. AAAA TRAVEL AGENCY - BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Henry and Joyce sit at a small table as Joyce reads a new letter.

JOYCE

(reading)

Dearest Henry...In my two months
away from you and Carolyn I have
grown and matured and learned a
thing or two. I've learned that
starting a new life, playing the
dating field and having your own
apartment in a weird part of town
is not all that it's cracked up to
be. I've also learned from
Carolyn that you are taking a
flying class, which shows you
really care about me. Therefore,
I propose you give me a second
chance to make things right and to
come live with you and Carolyn
again and remain the family that
we once were. Love always, Joyce
slash the love of your life.

Joyce looks up at Henry, hopeful.

Henry stares back at Joyce with no expression.

After a moment, his eyes fill with tears.

HENRY

I knew you'd come back.

He stands and hugs her.

INT. NORTHBROOK COURT - MORNING

Henry speed walks faster than we've ever seen with a Red
Bull in hand, wearing his new track suit. Bruce is by
his side. Gail tries to keep up.

GAIL

Can we slow down please?

HENRY

It's called speed walking for a reason.

GAIL

It's race walking. And please stop racing.

They pass the speedy older couple.

HENRY

Mornin', good afternoon and good night!

GAIL

Henry, we have to talk about Hawaii.

HENRY

Already booked.

GAIL

Shut up.

HENRY

Leaving on the 14th. Returning on the 19th. United Airlines. Three round trip tickets.

BRUCE

Nice job, man!

GAIL

Wait--three tickets?

Gail hurries to catch up with Henry. Henry has the biggest smile we've seen.

Gail and Bruce look at each other as Henry speeds ahead.

HENRY

Keep walking.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Joyce places her Danielle Steeles in a box. Ethan is frustrated, pacing around her.

ETHAN

Could you just stop and talk about this for one second?

JOYCE

I don't how many different ways I
can say it!

ETHAN

You can't just make this decision
unilaterally. You're clearly
heavily in denial and obviously
experiencing extreme counter-
transference.

Joyce stops and looks at him.

JOYCE

You know, sometimes I don't even
think you understand what the
hell's falling out of your mouth.

ETHAN

What, you're just going to go back
to your pointless little life with
your retarded husband and lesbo
daughter?!

JOYCE

My daughter is not a lesbian. And
even if she were I would be one
hundred percent accepting of that.

ETHAN

I thought you wanted adventure!
You wanted to give your life some
meaning!

JOYCE

I do want my life to have meaning.

ETHAN

Then marry me and let's move to
North Korea.

JOYCE

Not that kind of meaning.

ETHAN

Joyce.

JOYCE

Too many people know about us now.
And I don't want it getting
around.

ETHAN

What, one little Chinese girl sees
us and that's it?

JOYCE

Ethan. Don't be racist.

He's beside himself.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Honey. Go to college. Join a
fraternity. Start a rock group.
I guarantee you will completely
forget about me.

ETHAN

Marry me.

JOYCE

(yeah, right)

I'm not going to marry you, Ethan.
I'm already married.

ETHAN

Me and you. In North Korea.

JOYCE

You have to leave now, Ethan.
This is upsetting both of us.

Joyce starts to lead Ethan towards the door.

ETHAN

You're making a big mistake,
Joyce. Huge!

JOYCE

I don't think so.

Joyce opens the door, physically pushing Ethan out.

ETHAN

I've never loved anyone before
you! I love you, Joyce Tripp!

JOYCE

Just...go.

Joyce shuts the door on him.

EXT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT

Ethan stands in the freezing cold, staring at the door.
No one treats him like this. He leaves.

INT. TRIPP HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

Henry, Joyce and Carolyn sit at the dinner table. Henry has a huge smile on his face. Joyce is relaxed with a glass of wine. Carolyn picks at her food, unsure of what to make of this.

HENRY

Would you like more wine, honey?

Joyce smiles and extends her glass.

JOYCE

Thank you.

HENRY

You guys excited for the big trip?

JOYCE

I'm ready to just get on that beach and do nothing.

CAROLYN

Don't either of you find this remotely creepy?

JOYCE

Carolyn, I know you don't approve of me leaving but I needed to go through some changes. Now we've all been together for seventeen years minus two months and I don't see why we can't just pick up where we left off.

CAROLYN

How do we know you're not just going to pick up and leave again?

HENRY

Your mother and I have made some decisions and we are going to stick it out.

A cell phone RINGS.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Not mine.

Joyce gets up and goes to the kitchen. She picks up her phone and reads: **E.**

EXT. TRIPP PATIO - CONTINUOUS

Joyce steps outside, making sure Henry and Carolyn are not watching.

JOYCE
(into phone)
Why are you calling me?

ETHAN (O.S.)
Joyce, it's Ethan.

JOYCE
I know. I can't talk now.

ETHAN (O.S.)
Joyce, just listen to me.

JOYCE
Fine. Go.

Silence.

ETHAN (O.S.)
Do you miss me?

JOYCE
Oh, for god sakes, is that why you called me? Ethan, go back to your own life.

ETHAN (O.S.)
I want us to be together. Like before.

JOYCE
We were only together for a couple months. Jesus, we only slept together maybe fifteen times. And it was just sex, Ethan. Not love. When you get older you realize there's a difference.

ETHAN (O.S.)
Have you ever been with anyone else?

JOYCE
What are you talking about?

ETHAN (O.S.)
Kids. Like me? Anyone else my age?

JOYCE

You are sick, you know that? Of course not. You were the only one. Sure, I've had Justin Timberlake fantasies like anyone-- wait--are you trying to psychoanalyze me again? That crap will not work on me. I have to go. We're leaving tomorrow morning for Hawaii and I don't want you calling me anymore. Goodbye, Ethan.

INT. TRIPP HOUSE

Joyce beeps off her phone and enters, shivering from the cold. She takes a deep breath. Regains her composure and enters the dining room.

JOYCE

It is cold out there tonight. Just think we'll be on a beach in less than twenty four hours!

CAROLYN

Who was that?

JOYCE

Who was who?

CAROLYN

On the phone. Just now.

JOYCE

Oh, work stuff. Paper supply company screwing me over again.

Joyce looks at Henry and Carolyn, happy to be back.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. To both of you.

They smile back.

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Henry and Joyce have their bags opened on their bed, packing in unison. They look up at each other and smile. This could actually work.

INT. CAROLYN'S BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Carolyn places two of her joints into a sock and buries it among her clothes.

She sits at her desk and resumes drawing.

EXT./INT. THE VOLVO - MORNING

The damaged Volvo speeds along the highway. Henry is behind the wheel, drinking Red Bull. Joyce hangs on tight. Carolyn puts her seat belt on in the backseat.

JOYCE

I am liking the new you.

HENRY

See what you've been missing?

CAROLYN

Take it easy on the Bull. We don't want you having a heart attack before you get on the plane.

HENRY

You see that? You said 'plane' and 'heart attack' in the same sentence and nothing happened. Totally fine!

CAROLYN

You know cops can track your speeding now without you even knowing. Cameras are everywhere.

HENRY

I think the cops will agree I'm making up for loss time.

EXT. O'HARE AIRPORT - DAY

Joyce and Carolyn roll their suitcases through the sliding doors. They look back. Henry stands outside, frozen. Joyce grabs his hand and pulls him inside.

INT. O'HARE AIRPORT - UNITED AIRLINES TERMINAL

Chaos. PEOPLE everywhere.

Henry, Joyce and Carolyn descend a long escalator into the United Airlines Terminal. Henry looks straight ahead into the vast space before him, concentrating on his breathing. No hyperventilating. No wheezing.

HENRY

O'Hare airport. Second busiest airport in the world after Atlanta. 972,246 aircraft operations with an average of 2,663 per day.

JOYCE

And you haven't been on a single one of those ever.

The faint sounds of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" can be heard.

HENRY

It's The Song.

They reach the bottom of the escalator, bathed in a sea of colored neon light. Henry is in awe.

HENRY (CONT'D)

The famous Terminal One. Built by Helmut Jahn in 1987.

CAROLYN

Are you going to do this the whole time?

Henry, Joyce and Carolyn step onto the moving walkway. Henry spins around and looks in every direction like a little kid. Carolyn and Joyce are amused.

Under the Gershwin, we hear a electronic female voice.

FEMALE VOICE

Keep walking...keep walking...keep walking...

Henry laughs to himself.

Joyce looks at her boarding pass. She grabs Henry's wrist and checks his watch.

JOYCE

We're supposed to board in five minutes!

They all look at each other and take off down the walkway.

Henry runs after them but takes a moment to look back at the magical colored walkway behind them.

INT. O'HARE - MAIN GATE AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Henry, Joyce and Carolyn arrive at their empty gate, out of breath and sweating.

CAROLYN
(to attendant)
Flight 832!

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
(attitude)
You have about one minute to spare.

Joyce hands over boarding passes. Flight Attendant processes them.

Gail, Bruce, Hannah and Adam appear. All wearing Hawaiian shirts.

BRUCE
You made it!

GAIL
We thought maybe you had a panic attack and died. We didn't want to get on without you.

Everyone turns to see a commotion as people part ways for a team of POLICE OFFICERS and AIRPORT SECURITY. They're clearly on a mission and headed straight for...

The Tripp family.

Carolyn starts to sweat.

CAROLYN
(caught)
Balls.

She and Hannah share a knowing look.

HANNAH
You didn't...?

Everyone looks at Carolyn.

CAROLYN
It's just a couple joints. I'll say I have glaucoma.

GAIL

What?!

JOYCE

You brought marijuana through
airport security? She's doing
marijuana now, Henry!?

Henry is just as nervous.

HENRY

They're not coming after her.
They saw me speeding.
(defiant)
And if I have to get my first ever
speeding ticket, then so be it.

But the police pass right by Henry and Carolyn. Their
relief turns to confusion as they...

Handcuff Joyce.

JOYCE

Ow! You're hurting me! What the
hell?!

POLICE OFFICER #1

Ma'am, please cooperate and
everything will be just fine.

Everyone watches, in shock.

JOYCE

Excuse me, but you are not allowed
to treat people this way.

POLICE OFFICER #2

Please, ma'am. We do not want to
have to tase you.

HENRY

Tase her? Sir, can you tell us
what's going on?

POLICE OFFICER #1

Are you related to this woman?

HENRY

She's my wife.

POLICE OFFICER #1

We're placing your wife under
arrest. Ma'am, you have the right
to remain silent.

(MORE)

POLICE OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
Anything you say can and will be
used against you in a court of
law...

HENRY
Why?!

JOYCE
What is this for?

POLICE OFFICER #1
Illinois penal code section
261.5a.

Joyce, Henry and Carolyn are confused.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ETHAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ethan is on the phone. A tape recording device sits next
to him.

ETHAN
(into phone)
I want us to be together. Like
before.

JOYCE (O.S.)
We were only together for a couple
months. Jesus, we only slept
together maybe fifteen times. And
it was just sex, Ethan. Not love.
When you get older you realize
there's a difference.

Ethan looks back at his PARENTS who listen to the call in
shock and disgust. Next to them are two DETECTIVES who
nod approvingly.

END FLASHBACK.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Sexual relations with persons
under the age of consent.

JOYCE
Fuck.

HENRY
(to Joyce)
Is that true? I mean, I know that
can't be true. But...is it?

JOYCE
 (through gritted
 teeth)
 Henry, do something!

CAROLYN
 Sex? With a minor?

HENRY
 (in disbelief)
 Who the hell were you sleeping
 with?!

JOYCE
 No one. It didn't mean anything!
 Ethan's eighteen anyway!

A house lands on Carolyn.

CAROLYN
 (serious)
 What?

GAIL
 What is she talking about? Henry,
 what is she saying?

CAROLYN
 You had sex with Ethan? My ex-
 boyfriend? Who I lost my
 virginity to?

GAIL
 Oh my god.

POLICE OFFICER #2
 Jesus, lady.

JOYCE
 Sweetie, he didn't love you. And
 I certainly didn't love him.

HENRY
 Joyce, is this true?

GAIL
 She's a criminal, Henry. Period.
 Now we're getting on that plane.
 I suggest you do the same.

Gail boards the plane.

BRUCE
 (to Henry)
 I'm...sorry, buddy.

Bruce, Hannah and Adam reluctantly follow Gail's lead.

JOYCE
I didn't want to hurt you,
Carolyn.

CAROLYN
You know what? You are seriously
lucky I like chicks. By the way,
I like chicks.

Joyce takes a moment to process this.

JOYCE
(forced)
And I'm...one hundred percent
accepting of that!

Carolyn walks away, boarding the plane.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
Carolyn!

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir, final boarding. We're going
to have to close the gate. Are
you boarding the plane or not?

JOYCE
Henry! Help me! It was just a
fling. I got it out of my system.
Don't let them take me!

POLICE OFFICER #1
Okay, guy. We gotta bring her to
the station.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir...?

HENRY
(perplexed)
Joyce, I'm not sure how this
happened. But--

JOYCE
(pleading)
I saw you. With that woman,
Henry. In Alpine Valley. You
cheated on me too! It's okay.

Henry turns cold.

HENRY
(disgusted)
I didn't cheat on you.

He finally comes to his senses.

HENRY (CONT'D)
In fact, I would never cheat on
you. That's the difference
between you and me, Joyce.
(confident)
And guess what? I'm not missing
this plane if your life depended
on it.

Henry turns and starts to board.

JOYCE
Wait!

Henry disappears onto the plane.

INT. AIRPLANE - MOMENTS LATER

Henry and Carolyn sit silently. Shell-shocked. They
barely notice the plane taking off.

HENRY
(to Carolyn)
So. How long have you known that
you like girls?

They turn to each other and smile. After everything that
just happened, somehow they're both calm. And connected.
Henry reaches over and grabs Carolyn's hand.

The plane ascends as fluffy clouds drift past at an
accelerated rate.

They pass through the clouds and burst into a
dramatically blue sky.

For a moment, Henry tries to enjoy it.

FADE TO WHITE.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, as we begin
our descent, I would like to take
this time to say we were all
pretty fuckin' freaked out.

EXT. MAUI BEACH - DAY

Clear blue skies. Ocean waves.

Henry sits under an umbrella, generously applying sun screen all over his face and legs. Carolyn holds her note pad and draws under a large floppy hat. Hannah listens to her iPod while Gail and Bruce play cards.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

You know what's really barfy? Now every time I hear that George Gerswhin United Airlines song, I can't help but think of my mother boning my ex-boyfriend.

BRUCE

Who's going in?

Bruce, Gail and Hannah stand and head to the water. Carolyn follows.

Henry stays behind and watches them have fun.

Henry looks as if he's finally stepped into one of his travel agent posters. He takes a deep breath and exhales.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Carolyn walks through the hallway carrying her books.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

I knew it was only a matter of time that the truth would get out when we got back.

She passes Soon-Yi who avoids eye contact.

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

Luckily, I only had to endure the evil hell they call high school for just a couple more months.

Carolyn sees April standing at her locker. She stops to chat but clearly the friendship isn't the same.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - DAY

A Lean Cuisine spins around and around. Joyce stares blankly at it.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

My mother, which is putting it nicely, moved back into her apartment in that weird part of town.

Joyce unwraps her freshly nuked meal and sits in front of her laptop. She takes a bite and flinches as she burns her tongue.

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

After the trial, she was sentenced to one year of house arrest and another year of community service.

Frustrated, Joyce slides her dinner away from her, falls back into the couch and puts her feet on the coffee table.

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

She so desperately wanted to fly the coop. Now she's no longer allowed to freely move about the cabin.

Her right ankle is now shackled to a cumbersome, highly unattractive electronic ankle bracelet.

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

Don't feel bad for her. That May-December romance she wanted? Well, she finally got it.

She opens her laptop and smiles as she opens a new message on e-cupid.com

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

Just not the way she expected.

In the message window is a smiling, silver-haired, much older GENTLEMAN.

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Henry digs into his side table drawer and takes out Joyce's goodbye letter.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

They say if you love someone, set them free. If they come back, they're yours.

He folds the letter in half, over and over, until it forms a paper airplane.

And lets it fly.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Whoever said that should be
stabbed.

EXT. THE NEW VOLVO - DAY

Henry steps out of his brand new Volvo and heads into--

INT. AAAA TRAVEL AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

He enters the empty office.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
My dad's boss Ron was in the
middle of all you can eat seafood
buffet when he had a massive heart
attack. So he retired and left
the business to his best employee.

He passes his old desk and enters the boss's office.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He got Debbie her job back and for
the first time in seven years, he
wasn't the Travel Agent of The
Year.

Henry hands Debbie a framed certificate. She jumps up
and down like a contestant on "The Price Is Right."

INT. BARNES AND NOBLE BOOK STORE - DAY

Henry stands at the check-out counter buying several new
Sudoku books. He hands the cashier the gift card he
received from work.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
He even started to date.

As Henry heads for the exit he sees...

Lilly. Browsing the fiction section. Henry smiles to
himself then taps Lilly on the shoulder. She's excited
to see him. They hug.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
She's legal age so it's cool.

INT. HENRY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A stack of Liam Neeson DVDs sit on the table. *Taken. Kinsey. Batman Begins.*

Henry and Lilly sit on the sofa watching a movie.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
And now he's even helping others
overcome their own fears.

Liam Neeson comes on screen. Henry holds Lilly's hand as she fights her way through her phobia.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They're so adorable I could puke.

EXT. FORREST - DUSK

CAROLYN (V.O.)
Thank God I never saw Fuck Face
again.

Ethan, now bearded and dirty, walks with a large backpack along the base of a mountain.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I heard he skipped college and
went to live in the woods like the
kid in that Sean Penn movie.

He passes a sign that reads: North Dakota State Park
Camping Grounds.

CAROLYN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Not exactly North Korea.

EXT. ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO - DAY

Carolyn, now urban chic and looking slightly happier, walks the streets of Chicago.

CAROLYN (V.O.)
I totally got into Smith you guys,
but I decided it wasn't nearly as
cool as The Art Institute of
Chicago where I'm now a proud
freshman.

INT. ART CLASS - MOMENTS LATER

Carolyn draws at a drawing table. Images of Henry, Joyce and Carolyn, with narration and dialogue bubbles. It's an impressive graphic novel telling the family's story.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

It's got everything Smith has to offer...

She spots a CUTE GIRL with purple hair staring at her from across the room. Cute girl flashes a flirtatious smile.

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

...yep, everything.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Fortune cookies are placed on the table. Henry and Lilly take one. Carolyn and Cute Girl sit across from them and each take one.

CAROLYN (V.O.)

And as we approach our final destination, forecast calls for clear blue skies. With a ten percent chance of rain. Just to keep things interesting.

They read their fortunes to each other, laughing together. Like a family.

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

We realize you have a choice in seriously fucked-up family stories and we'd like to thank you for choosing ours. You can turn your cell phones back on now, bitches.

HARD CUT TO BLACK.

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

Buh-bye.