

SHania!

Written by

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INT. CONCERT ARENA - NIGHT

We are in a dark and empty concert arena, its scope vast and world-class. The outline of the stage is just visible in the shadows, an impressive HD video display mounted above.

For a moment, we wait.

Then a harsh BANG breaks the silence as CONCERT LIGHTS flood the stage, illuminating a dazzling "SHANIA!" logo projected on the video screen.

A still image of SHANIA TWAIN mid-performance fills the space below the logo. She's stunning, electric, larger than life - a 90's Aphrodite at the height of her power.

A beat of silence.

QUIET FOOTSTEPS sound across the stage.

A YOUNG GIRL (12) - sporting a shag haircut, ill-fitting 70's clothes and clutching a microphone - emerges from the wings.

The girl stops just left of center stage, nervously eyeing the spotlight. She squints in the light, the mic in her hand shaking uncontrollably as she raises it. When she speaks, her voice is barely above a whisper.

YOUNG GIRL

My name is Eilleen and I have a
song I'd like to sing for you
tonight.

Then EILLEEN steps center stage so that the shot of adult Shania superimposes on her own face...

As Eilleen looks out into the audience, the projector WHIRS TO LIFE and starts scrolling through various media moments of adult Shania's greatest triumphs.

Accepting her 1999 Grammy Awards. The iconic "Man! I Feel Like A Woman!" video. Performing at the Super Bowl. Sitting with the likes of Elton John and Prince Charles...

Images rippling faster and faster layered over Eilleen's overwhelmed expression. Suddenly, she puts her hand up in front of her face to block the onslaught.

And with that, we -

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK, we hear a gentle humming...

Title Card: EILLEEN

FADE IN:

EXT. ONTARIO HIGHWAY 101 - DAY

WHOOSH! A crappy GMC Jimmy, mattresses strapped to the roof, blasts past a "Welcome to Timmins" sign (French and Ojibwe translation are listed beneath, as well as a reminder: "Please don't feed the bears").

The humming continues as we pass spruce trees and granite boulders alongside the roadway. This is wilderness country, as far away from any music biz hotspot as could be.

INT. GMC JIMMY - DAY

The humming turns to singing. The voice belongs to an even younger Eilleen (6), harmonizing effortlessly along to Karen Carpenter singing "**SUPERSTAR**" on the radio. For one so tiny, Eilleen's musical sense is astounding.

EILLEEN

*Don't you remember, you told me you
loved me baby?*

Eilleen's mom SHARON (26, worn beyond her years, blotchy skin visible beneath a layer of makeup) lowers the radio volume to better hear her daughter. Birdlike and full of nervous energy, Sharon's granny glasses are an odd complement to her vulnerable and childlike demeanor. She holds a lit cigarette in her hand as she leans forward in her seat, hanging on to Eilleen's every note.

SHARON

Louder.

Eilleen's thrown off by her mother's direction, rushing the next part.

EILLEEN

(louder, but too fast)

*You said you'd be coming back this
way again baby.*

SHARON

Slower.

EILLEEN
(too slow)
Baby, baby, baby, baby, oh baby.

SHARON
Not that slow!

Now Eilleen finds her groove again.

EILLEEN
I love you, I really do.

As Eilleen hits her stride, Sharon's eyes well with emotion.

SHARON
That's it, that's PERFECT! That's
my little singer!

EILLEEN
Mom!!!

A HORN BLASTS - the GMC is swerving into the path of a loaded
LOGGING TRUCK!

SHARON
Jesus effin' Christ!!!

Sharon jerks the steering wheel back on track just in time.
She takes a deep drag on her cigarette, hands shaking. In the
backseat, JILL (a wise 8) clings on to CARRIE ANN (4), both
girls crammed in amidst a bunch of suitcases.

JILL
Holy crap, you almost killed us!

Sharon takes her eyes fleetingly off the road to throw a
glare at Jill.

SHARON
Hey! You girls make sure not to use
that kind of language around Jerry,
you hear me?!

JILL
Whatever you say...

CARRIE ANN
Mommy?

Sharon's face softens as she glances in the driver's mirror
at her youngest daughter.

SHARON
Yes, sweetie pie?

CARRIE ANN
 Is Jerry an arrogant drunken
 bastard like our daddy was?

Sharon starts hacking on her cigarette smoke, as Jill and Eilleen stifle their giggles. Finally, Sharon recovers.

SHARON
 Of course not. Jerry is a nice
 friendly man, and we're all going
 to try living with him awhile.

The sisters react according to their respective levels of innocence: Carrie Ann's face shows mild interest; Eilleen's gaze drops to her hands, wanting to believe her mom has it under control; Jill rolls her eyes and stares out the window.

JILL
 Why did we have to leave Grandma's?
 I liked it there.

SHARON
 Because.

EXT. TIMMINS STREETS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

We follow the GMC as it passes mining supply stores, dive bars, the Maple Leaf Hotel ("Home of Country Western Music"). Everything is a little rough around the edges.

SHARON (O.S.)
 We might finally have found a man
 to take care of us...

EXT. TWAIN HOUSE - DAY

The GMC pulls up to a modest, featureless clapboard home on a residential street. Barely bigger than a cabin.

INT. GMC JIMMY - DAY

The girls stare out the window, skeptically taking in the house and its slightly overgrown yard.

SHARON
 Come on, he won't bite.

PRE-LAP: the DING DONG of a doorbell.

EXT. TWAIN HOUSE - DAY

Sharon nervously pats her hair as she waits with the girls on the doorstep. At the sound of footsteps approaching, she jerks her hand down from her hair and pastes on a wide smile.

JERRY TWAIN (24, Ojibwe Indian with a kind twinkle in his eye) opens the door. The girls give him a shrewd once-over. His hands are rough-hewn from years of life as a laborer, his hair short so that he looks ambiguously ethnic. But he has the gentle manners of a Native American.

JERRY

Hi.

SHARON

Hi!

Sharon leans in to give Jerry a self-conscious peck on the cheek. As she steps back, there's an awkward beat of unease - nobody's really sure how to play this.

JERRY

Uhh...

Jerry inclines his head toward the trio of sisters staring him down. Sharon snaps into action.

SHARON

Oh! Jerry, these are my girls.

Sharon herds the girls forward.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Here's Jill, and Carrie Ann...and
this is Eilleen.

Jerry peers at Eilleen with particular interest.

JERRY

Ah, the little singer. I've heard
about you.

Eilleen manages a small smile, while Sharon swells with pride. Jerry squats down to the girls' level.

JERRY (CONT'D)

What do you think? Want to check
the place out?

With a tentative nod, the sisters step over the threshold.

INT. TWAIN HOUSE - DAY

Inside is clean and simple, the bare bones of a bachelor pad.

JERRY
It's not much, but it's home.

Jerry notices an overlooked pile of dirty laundry and sheepishly stuffs it out of the way.

Meanwhile, the girls venture further inside the house, taking in their new surroundings: work boots drying on the stove in the kitchen, mounted antlers on the wall. And only one bedroom. Carrie Ann tugs on Sharon's hand.

CARRIE ANN
Mommy. Where are we going to sleep?

SHARON
Shhh! We'll figure it out.

Jerry emerges from around the corner.

JERRY
And over by the door are some presents from Grandma and Grandpa Twain.

The girls look at each other excitedly: presents?! Now he's talking...they trot over to the door and gasp in delight at the sight of three adorable pairs of MUKLUKS.

JILL
(whoa)
Hey, these are handmade.

CARRIE ANN
Mommy, can I try them on? Pleeeease please?!

SHARON
Only if you remember your manners.

Sharon nods toward Jerry. Carrie Ann throws herself around Jerry's middle, squeezing him in a hug.

CARRIE ANN
Thankyouthankyouthankyou, Jerry!!!

Jerry chuckles as Carrie Ann detaches herself, and starts kicking off her boots. Then he turns to Eilleen.

JERRY
And I got this for you, Eilleen.

Jerry hands Eilleen a HANSDOME NOTEBOOK. Eilleen is genuinely impressed, running her fingers over the pattern on its front. She looks up at Jerry earnestly.

EILLEEN
Thank you. It's beautiful.

Eilleen opens the book and flips through. Then frowns.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
But there's nothing in it.

Jerry smiles.

JERRY
That's because it's not just any
old book. It's a book for writing
songs.

Eilleen draws in a deep breath, now staring at the book as if it contains magic spells. For a moment, she's lost in her own world. Then she looks back at Jerry, a little choked up.

EILLEEN
I love it.

Sharon looks fondly upon Jerry as Eilleen hugs the book tightly to her chest.

INT. BASEMENT - TWAIN HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

Eilleen sits on the bottom bunk huddled in the blankets with her songwriting book open in her lap. She hums a melody, then scratches down a few words.

EILLEEN
*Just like the storybook says.
Like little girls when they lose
their boys, and then they cry...*

CARRIE ANN (O.S.)
But I want to sleep on the top
bunk!

JILL (O.S.)
No way, you'll wet the bed.

As Jill and Carrie Ann enter the room bickering, Eilleen stuffs her notebook under the pillow.

CARRIE ANN
Do not.

JILL

Do too!

Jill sticks her tongue out at Carrie Ann and hoists herself up the ladder to the top bunk.

EILLEEN

Come on, Carrie, you can share with me. It'll be fun.

Reluctantly, Carrie Ann climbs into bed next to Eilleen.

JILL

See how much better that is? Now we don't have to worry about your pee dripping down on Eilleen's face.

Carrie Ann screws up her face in anger.

CARRIE ANN

I'm telling Mom you're a meanie!

EILLEEN

Shhh, don't bug Mom. Listen to how happy she is.

The girls pause, listening to Sharon and Jerry's laughter floating down from upstairs.

JILL

Yeah, it's always happy. At first.

(sighs)

You know what I saw in the garbage? Job applications. There's no money here.

This sails right over Carrie Ann, but Eilleen stares out the window, troubled. Carrie Ann snuggles closer to Eilleen.

CARRIE ANN

Leeny, will you sing me a lullaby?

EILLEEN

Sure, what song?

CARRIE ANN

Something good. My first lullaby in our new house.

Eilleen thinks.

EILLEEN

Ok. I know a good one.

Softly, Eilleen begins singing the familiar opening phrase of "OUR HOUSE" by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
*I'll light the fire. You'll put the
 flowers in the vase that you bought
 today...*

Eilleen pauses; Carrie Ann's eyes are already closing. Even Jill lies still, soothed by her sister's voice. Then Eilleen continues, for herself as much as anyone else.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
*Staring at the fire for hours and
 hours, While I listen to you play
 your love songs all night long -*

Now Graham Nash's vocals take over from Eilleen.

CROSBY, STILLS NASH & YOUNG (PRE-LAP) (V.O.)
For me, only for me...

TRANSITION TO:

EILLEEN AGES 6-12 MONTAGE

Continue playing "Our House" over the following sequence.

- On the shores of Lake Temagami, Sharon and Jerry share an adoring kiss while wrapped up in blankets at their wedding (a Native tradition), with Jill, Eilleen and Carrie Ann next to them dressed in cute-as-a-button buckskin flower girl outfits. NATIVE and WHITE RELATIVES smile and clap alongside each other. A blended ceremony for a blended family.
- Eilleen (8) sings shyly at a school talent show to a rapt audience including her proud parents, sisters and two bouncing baby brothers, MARK (2) and DARRYL (6 months).
- We move past EMPTY KITCHEN CUPBOARDS as Sharon yells at Jerry (wearing the soot-streaked uniform of a miner), sliding a fistful of Past Due bills across the table toward him. At first, Jerry ignores Sharon, swiping away the bills. But as she keeps needling him, he SLAMS a fist down on the table. Sharon throws a slap, and Jerry counters with a shove.

CROSBY, STILLS NASH & YOUNG (V.O.)
Such a cozy room...

- As the thin walls SHAKE from the violence in the kitchen, the kids huddle together on the couch. Jill and Eilleen wipe away the tears of Carrie Ann, Mark and Darryl.

- In a bar, Eilleen (in a buckskin dress and cowboy boots) sings to a half-drunk crowd of MINERS AND LOGGERS, a look of pure terror on her face. Sharon nods along proudly, while Eilleen squeezes her knees together in an attempt to hold in her pee. As a wet patch forms on her dress, Eilleen reacts in horror, shifting her guitar so it covers up her crotch!

- Another night, another fight: Sharon pushes Jerry, he grabs her hair and BANGS her head against the living room wall. All sickeningly in time to the music.

CROSBY, STILLS NASH & YOUNG (V.O.)
*Our house is a very, very, very
 fine house...*

- On the doorstep, POLICE LIGHTS flicker from blue to red on the face of a flustered Sharon. She covers a bruise on her neck with her hand as she answers questions from TWO POLICE OFFICERS, eyes downcast, shaking her head no. The officers shrug, turn and walk away.

- Inside the house, Jerry sweeps up glass from a broken picture frame while Eilleen watches him unnoticed from the door. He briefly catches her eye and looks away, embarrassed.

CROSBY, STILLS NASH & YOUNG (V.O.)
*Life used to be so hard. Now
 everything is easy cause of you.*

- Sharon winces as Eilleen dabs foundation on her mom's bruises. Up close, we can truly see how Sharon's skin is a patchwork of broken blood vessels from a lifetime of abuse.

- Eilleen (now 12) sits on the porch with her back to the house. She plays her guitar as a fight between Sharon and Jerry rages in the kitchen window. She blocks it all out with furious guitar playing building into a crescendo...

EILLEEN/CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG
LA-LA, LA-LA-LA-LA LA LA -

Eilleen breaks off her strumming abruptly, staring in shock at DROPLETS OF BLOOD leaking from her fingertips.

END MONTAGE (END MUSIC).

As the SHOUTING continues relentlessly in the b.g...

INT. KITCHEN - TWAIN HOUSE - DAY

A pitiful-looking pot of boiled milk, bread and sugar bubbles on the stove.

The thermometer on the windowsill reads -20 Celsius. We're in the middle of a Northern Ontario winter, and it's not for the faint of heart.

Jerry (30), wearing the nondescript garb of an employee of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, sits at the table in front of the five Twain kids: Jill (a sulky 14), Eilleen (still 12), Carrie Ann (10), Mark (7) and Darryl (4).

JERRY

We'll all have to tighten our belts this winter.

SHARON (O.S.)

(on phone)

I know she's underage, but this is a special case -

Jerry throws a dirty look at Sharon (32), who's talking into the wall-mounted phone, smoking a cig per usual. He raises his voice, trying to keep a smile on his face for the kids.

JERRY

But it's like I always say, there's no 'step this, half that' in this family. We're in this together.

In return, Sharon sticks her finger in her ear and starts speaking louder.

SHARON

Yes, I can assure you she'd wait outside the bar.

Jerry shakes in silent fury at Sharon's obstinance. Eilleen shrinks into herself, avoiding the gaze of her siblings.

JERRY

Because we're the Twain Gang. We never take a handout and -

GODDAMNIT WILL YOU SHUT THAT PHONE UP, SHARON?!

On Jill, shaking her head.

JILL

I'm so sick of this shit.

JERRY

You watch your mouth, young lady!

Jill folds her arms and glares back at Jerry. Meanwhile, Sharon covers up the receiver in indignation.

SHARON

Honey, this is a very important show for Eilleen. Mary Bailey will be there. Mary Bailey, the country singer on the Canada Top 40 -

Jerry scowls, cutting her off.

JERRY

Maybe if you spent more of our money on groceries than Eilleen's shows, we wouldn't have an empty fridge! Not to mention I got a call for the third time this month about Eilleen missing school -

SHARON

She has a gift, Jerry -

EILLEEN

(whisper to self)

Stop it. Just please stop it.

Jerry SLAMS down his fist and leaps up from the table.

JERRY

There are four other kids in this family! Not just Eilleen!

The kids watch in dread as Jerry closes in on Sharon.

JERRY (CONT'D)

If you take her to sing in that bar tonight, you will regret it for the rest of your life.

With that, Jerry pries Sharon's fingers off the phone.

SHARON

NO! Give me that -

But Jerry's already yanking the phone jack out of the wall.

SHARON (CONT'D)

You selfish bastard!!!

Sharon tries to stop Jerry from dismantling the phone, but he shoves her roughly out of the way. As they continue tussling, Eilleen turns wearily to her siblings.

EILLEEN

Ok, everybody to the basement.

INT. HALLWAY - TWAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

With Darryl in her arms, Eilleen herds Carrie Ann and Mark toward the basement stairs.

EILLEEN
It's ok. Me and Jill will be right there...

Eilleen notices Jill rolling a SUITCASE out of the closet.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
Jill? What are you doing?

Avoiding eye contact, Jill starts slipping on her parka.

JILL
Mom's going to get herself killed over your music and I don't want to be around to see it.

EILLEEN
So you're just leaving!?

Eilleen watches helplessly as Jill zips up her parka.

JILL
The next bus to Sudbury leaves in ten minutes. If I start walking now, I can make it.

Eilleen follows Jill from the closet to the front door.

EILLEEN
You can't leave me here with them!
I need your help -

Jill turns to face Eilleen head-on.

JILL
You take care of your dreams,
Eilleen. I'm taking care of mine.

Jill takes ahold of her suitcase firmly, and opens the front door. A blast of cold air whips through the house. She pauses to give Eilleen one last pitying look, as the O.S. CRASH of broken plates starts to sound from the kitchen.

JILL (CONT'D)
Tell everyone I said goodbye.

Eilleen shivers on the doorstep clutching Darryl, watching Jill march stubbornly down the street without looking back.

EILLEEN
 Jill! JILL!!!

Barraged by turmoil on all sides, little Darryl starts whimpering. Eilleen rocks him in her arms, tears bubbling up in her own eyes.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
 Shh, shh...
 (broken)
Jill.

INT. KITCHEN - TWAIN HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

Sharon, vacantly puffing a cigarette, waits anxiously with Eilleen as Jerry hangs up the phone (now plugged in again).

JERRY
 She's at cousin Kenny's.

Sharon exhales in relief.

SHARON
 Thank God.

EILLEEN
 Aren't you going to get her?

JERRY
 (quietly)
 They'll take better care of her
 than we can.

Lost in his own thoughts, Jerry retreats to the bedroom and shuts the door. Sharon turns to Eilleen, forcing a smile.

SHARON
 All this on the night of your big
 concert!

Eilleen stares at her mom, is she for real?

EILLEEN
 (incredulous)
 Mom. I can't sing tonight.

Sharon takes a tense drag of her cigarette.

SHARON
 What do you mean? You love singing.
 (urgent)
 You have to sing.

With the cigarette in her hand still smoldering, Sharon stuffs a new cigarette in between her lips and lights it tensely. Fresh anger mounts in Eilleen.

EILLEEN

Tell me how I'm supposed to sing
when Jill just left and Dad's so
mad and -
(suddenly startled)
Jesus Mom, what's wrong?!

Sharon's hands are shaking like a nervous wreck, both cigarettes dropping ash all over the table.

SHARON

Don't you understand? What do I
have to live for if you don't sing?

In turning to face Eilleen, Sharon reveals the fresh black-and-blue welt on her cheek. Eilleen instantly wilts. She takes her mom's hand, steadyng it until it stops quaking.

EILLEEN

It's ok, Mom. I'll go.

INT. KITCHEN - TWAIN HOUSE - NIGHT - A FEW HOURS LATER

Sharon sits in the darkness at the kitchen table, puffing on a cig. After a beat, the bedroom light goes off. Sharon pauses. The sign she's been waiting for. Then she pads softly to the basement door and gives three knocks.

INT. BASEMENT - TWAIN HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eilleen - still sharing a bed with Carrie Ann - stirs in the darkness. She's wearing a parka under the sheets. Careful not to wake her sister, Eilleen lowers the window, and squirms her way out on her belly onto hard-packed snow.

EXT. TWAIN HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eilleen, bent double in the cold, runs over to the GMC Jimmy that Sharon's warming up.

EILLEEN

Holy frick. Coldcoldcold.

INT. GMC JIMMY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eilleen slides into the passenger seat, holding her freezing hands up to the heater. Sharon is a ball of energy, impervious to the cold in her enthusiasm.

SHARON
Got your sheet music?

Eilleen stares at her mother, who's wearing nothing but a thin sweater in the icy temps.

EILLEEN
Mom. It's minus 30. Where the hell
is your coat?

SHARON
My coat? Oh!

Sharon looks down at her coat, lying forgotten in her lap. She gives a girlish giggle and slips it on. Eilleen shakes her head in disbelief.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Now we're in business. Let's do
this thing!

EXT. MAPLE LEAF HOTEL - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

RAUCOUS CHEERS sound from inside. As the GMC pulls into the parking lot, PRE-LAP "TOO MUCH, TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE"...

INT. MAPLE LEAF HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

MARY BAILEY (31), a spirited redhead, croons her signature song into the mic. She's got a lovely mellow voice, and is undeniably good, but this is as far as she's going to go.

INT. MAPLE LEAF HOTEL BAR SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

Eilleen gets a glimpse of Mary's performance, standing awkwardly to the side as Sharon talks to the BAR MANAGER.

SHARON
Here we are, just in time! I'm
Sharon and this is Eilleen.

A couple DEAD-EYED STRIPPERS in skimpy clothing walk by. Eilleen avoids eye contact.

SHARON (CONT'D)
We'll wait outside like you said.

BAR MANAGER
Don't bother. She's up next.

As Mary ends her song to a round of APPLAUSE, Eilleen stands frozen to the spot, seizing up with nerves.

SHARON
Leeny, they're waiting!

Sharon heaves an almighty sigh, then practically yanks Eilleen's coat off and pushes her on-stage.

INT. MAPLE LEAF TAVERN BAR - NIGHT

Eilleen (in the same outfit as the opening scene) sways nervously on stage, the HOUSE BAND tuning up behind her. Smoke and stale beer fill the air. The audience - mostly DRUNK MINERS - throws back another round of shots. A couple COWBOY TYPES nudge each other and laugh as they notice Eilleen - this some kind of joke? We stay on Sharon's proud face as Eilleen makes her bashful intro.

EILLEEN (O.S.)
My name is Eilleen and I have a
song I'd like to sing for you
tonight.

Mary Bailey looks on politely from the bar, as the band strikes up the warbling opening notes of Hank Williams's "**I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY.**"

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
*Hear that lonesome whipporwill,
He sounds too blue to fly. The
midnight train is whining low, I'm
so lonesome I could cry.*

A DRUNK GUY calls out from the audience.

DRUNK GUY
I'll keep you warm, honey!

Sharon scowls at the drunk.

SHARON
She's 12 years old, pervert!

Meanwhile, an OLD TIMER nods along happily in the front row. Eilleen attempts a smile his way.

Thrown off by the sizable gap in her front teeth, his smile droops away. He closes his eyes to enjoy the rest of the music without distraction.

Though the drunks continue to remain relatively oblivious to Eileen's singing, the LEAD GUITARIST gives an impressed nod to his bandmates. This kid's got chops.

EILLEEN

*And as I wonder where you are, I'm
so lonesome I could cry.*

Eilleen bows awkwardly to SCATTERED APPLAUSE. Sharon looks anxiously at Mary to gauge her response, while the Lead Guitarist helps Eilleen put the mic back in the clip.

LEAD GUITARIST

You sure can carry a tune, little lady.

EILLEEN

(genuinely pleased)

Thanks.

SHARON (O.S.)

Leeny!

Sharon motions Eilleen to meet her off-stage.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Great job, sweetheart. But let's move before we miss our chance.

EILLEEN

What chance?

Sharon seizes Eilleen's arm in an iron grip and jostles her way through the crowd to Mary's seat at the bar.

SHARON

Hi - hi - hi, excuse me. Mary, this is my daughter Eilleen who was just on stage. We're such big fans.

Mary nods to Sharon and smiles at an embarrassed Eilleen.

MARY

Hi, Eileen. That was very brave of you to get up there tonight.

SHARON

I just wanted to ask, what did you think of her singing?

Mary answers politely but guardedly.

MARY
I think she was just wonderful.

Sharon's nails dig urgently into Eilleen's shoulder.

SHARON
You really do?

MARY
(smiles)
She's got a bright future.

EILLEEN
(sotto)
Ow, Mom!

Sharon releases Eilleen, almost in a daze.

SHARON
Thank you. Thank you very much.

INT. GMC JIMMY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Sharon chatters away feverishly to Eilleen as she drives home through the empty streets.

SHARON
That's all you need, Leeny. A mentor, a guide. Somebody to take you under their wing, who believes how talented you are, but knows a lot more than I do.

Eilleen's head lolls wearily on the headrest.

EILLEEN
Mom, I just want to go to sleep...

Sharon pulls into the driveway and puts the car in park, a wistful smile crossing her face.

SHARON
You've got big things ahead of you, little girl. Things that will save you from a life like this. A life like mine -

A sudden LOUD BANG against the car door cuts her off.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Shit!!!

Jerry looms in the driver's side window, his face a mask of rage, clutching a CROWBAR! Eilleen SCREAMS.

SHARON (CONT'D)
(to Eilleen)
Stay back!

CLICK! Sharon locks the car doors, but Jerry starts wrenching the driver's side door open with the crowbar.

JERRY
(through efforts)
I told you - not to - go!

POP! The door gives. Jerry tosses the crowbar aside, wrenches open the handle and grabs Sharon roughly by the hair.

SHARON
Get off me, you bastard -

Enraged, Jerry drags Sharon out of the car. Eilleen watches aghast through the windshield as Jerry slams Sharon against the hood. He slaps Sharon in the face, his anger incandescent in the headlights.

EILLEEN
Stop! You're hurting her!

Eilleen flicks her door lock and jumps out of the car. She runs to the front of the car, where Sharon is slumped on the hood, helplessly taking Jerry's beating.

JERRY
You sneaking, lying bitch -

EILLEEN
DAD! STOP!!!!

WHACK WHACK go Jerry's fists.

JERRY
You disrespect me - you disrespect
our family -

And suddenly, Eilleen can't take it anymore. She takes a running jump and lands on her dad's back, throwing him off-balance. He loses his grip on Sharon and she slips to the ground. Jerry shakes Eilleen off. She falls in a SOFT SNOWBANK, scrambles up and plants herself between her parents. Jerry takes a lunging step forward, but Eilleen puts her hand up.

EILLEEN
Don't you touch her.

Jerry glares sullenly at Eilleen.

CLOSE ON Eilleen's hand - trembling, but projecting authority. Without taking her eyes off Jerry, she bends down to Sharon.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
Come on, Mom. We're going inside.

Eilleen props her mother up and helps her to the door. A deranged Sharon smiles at Jerry through a missing tooth, blood flowing down her chin.

SHARON
Mary Bailey said she was
wonderful...

Jerry stands alone in the frozen air. Then turns and kicks the car door shut with a WHAM!

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Morning sunlight streams through the window. Eilleen quietly approaches the couch, where Sharon is sleeping with a cold compress on her jaw. Eilleen gently shakes her mother awake.

EILLEEN
Mom, time to get up. Mark and
Darryl have to get to school.

Sharon mumbles something indistinctly and pulls the blanket over her head. Eilleen sighs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Eilleen enters the kitchen, when she sees Jerry already seated at the table. She freezes, about to back out of the room unnoticed when -

JERRY
Morning, Eilleen. You sleep ok?

Jerry looks up at Eilleen. He's refreshed and ready for the day. As if everything last night were only a dream.

EILLEEN
(wary)
Yeah. Eventually.

Eilleen stares at Jerry, but he just takes another bite of cereal. An O.S. car HONKS and Jerry gets up.

JERRY

That's my ride. Have a good day at school, kiddo.

With that, Jerry grabs his bag and heads out the door - kissing Eilleen on top of the head as he exits.

Off Eilleen's nonplussed expression -

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Carrie Ann, Mark and Darryl blink awake as Eilleen THUNDERS WILDLY downstairs.

EILLEEN

Get up. We're leaving.

INT. / EXT. TWAIN HOUSE - VARIOUS

QUICK CUTS: Eilleen tears around the house packing clothes and necessities (including her songwriting notebook and guitar), zipping up a suitcase, heaving it all in the car.

EILLEEN (O.S.) PRE-LAP

Mom.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

SHARON'S POV: Eilleen's face comes into focus. Something glints in her hand - the CAR KEYS. Sharon raises herself up on her elbows, bewildered.

EILLEEN

We're in the car ready to go. All you need to do is drive.

Eilleen forces the keys into her mom's hands. For a moment, they hold eye contact. Then Sharon nods numbly.

SHARON

Where are we going?

EXT. GARDINER EXPRESSWAY - TORONTO - DAY

The Twain kids hang out the side of the GMC's window, gazing in wonder at the newly built CN Tower lording over a cluster of skyscrapers. A long, long way from Timmins...

INT. TORONTO WOMEN'S SHELTER - DAY

Eilleen stands by impassively as an AIDE checks in the Twains, giving Sharon the run-down.

AIDE

The door locks automatically behind you whenever you leave. You get three hot meals daily with fresh milk for the children.

Mark stares wide-eyed at the Aide.

MARK

You mean we get milk three times a day?

AIDE

You can have as much milk as you want.

For a moment, the kids are stunned. Then it sinks in.

DARRYL

Awesomeee!

MARK

Score!

INT. TORONTO WOMEN'S SHELTER (PAYPHONE) - DAY

Eilleen smiles shyly at some FELLOW RESIDENTS. She opens the phone book and runs her finger down the list, stopping at "Bars." She drops in a coin, picks up the phone and dials.

EILLEEN

Hello, are you hiring? I'm a singer-

CLICK, dial tone. Eilleen sighs, then moves her finger down to the next entry. She drops in another coin and dials again.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)

Hi, I sing and wanted to know -

CLICK again! Eilleen scowls at the receiver, hangs it up aggressively. She takes out a whole handful of coins, dropping them on the base of the payphone with a KERPLUNK, then starts feeding them rapid-fire into the coin slot. Over the PLINK PLINK PLINK of coins, we hear the opening notes of the country standard "**DELTA DAWN**" - made famous by Tanya Tucker, Helen Reddy and many others.

EILLEEN (O.S.) PRE-LAP (CONT'D)
*Delta Dawn, what's that flower you
 have on?*

TRANSITION TO:

INT. CONCEPTION BAY CLUB - NIGHT

Eilleen, mustering a little more intrigue and maturity, stands on-stage before a crowd of IRISH SUPPER CLUB DINERS.

SUPER: 2 years later.

Sharon weaves her way across the floor in a waitress outfit, one eye on Eilleen and the other on a plate of boiled pigs' feet and cabbage. She plunks the plate in front of a DINER, smiling at Eilleen working the stage.

SHARON
 (proudly to diner)
 That's my daughter up there, you
 know.

DINER
 That's great, lady. Can you get me
 some ketchup?

Looking daggers at the diner, Sharon takes a small ketchup bottle from her apron and sets it roughly on the table. Up on stage, Eilleen sings her heart out to the crowd.

EILLEEN
 ...She's forty-one and her daddy
 still calls her -

Eilleen suddenly spots a familiar plaid shirt in the audience. Her voice falters as she stares at **Jerry in the crowd watching her sing**. The mic emits an AWFUL SCREECH!!! A COUPLE DINERS plug their ears, and the BAND exchanges a nervous look. Eilleen takes a closer look, and sees it's not Jerry - just A GUY who looks like him. She breathes a relieved sigh, jerks back to life.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
 (recovering)
 - her daddy still calls her baby.
 All the folks around Brownsville
 says she's crazy...

Relieved, the band picks back up.

INT. CONCEPTION BAY CLUB - NIGHT - A LITTLE LATER

Her set done, Eilleen - still on edge - joins her siblings at a corner booth. Carrie Ann's in the middle of doing homework, while Mark and Darryl wolf down plates of potatoes.

CARRIE ANN

What happened? You looked like you
saw a ghost.

EILLEEN

It was nothing.

Carrie Ann puts her pencil down, knowing exactly what Eilleen's thinking without her having to say a word.

CARRIE ANN

It's been two years. You really
think he's out looking for us?

Eilleen lowers her voice out of range of the boys' hearing.

EILLEEN

I still have nightmares about him
finding us.

Across the room, Eilleen notices Sharon look furtively around and slip out a side door. Eilleen's eyes narrow.

EILLEEN

Be right back...

INT. HALLWAY - CONCEPTION BAY CLUB - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Eilleen quietly approaches Sharon as she talks on the payphone, a huge smile on her face.

SHARON

Alright, goodnight love.

As Sharon hangs up, she nearly jumps out of her skin to see Eilleen leaning against the phone booth.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Jesus! You almost gave me a heart
attack.

EILLEEN

Who was that?

SHARON

I - I have to get back to my shift.

Sharon pushes past Eilleen.

EILLEEN
It was him. Wasn't it?

Sharon stops in her tracks. Eilleen speaks coldly to her mother's back, anger rising.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
You promised this time you'd keep
us safe -

Sharon whips around, bursting with emotion.

SHARON
He wants us to come home.

Eilleen shakes her head in disbelief.

EILLEEN
No. We're happy here. We have food
and heat, and the boys are doing
well in school -

SHARON
The boys need their father.
(pleading)
And I need him, too.

Eilleen simmers silently, wishing her mother were stronger.

SHARON (CONT'D)
He's changed, Leeny. I can hear it
in his voice.

EILLEEN
(bitterly)
And when will you change?

SHARON
(firm)
Eilleen. We're going home.

HOLD ON Eilleen's defeated reaction.

INT. GMC JIMMY - DAY

Eilleen props up her guitar between herself and her mother, scowling out the window, which is reflected with the Toronto skyline as it recedes into the background...PRE-LAP the opening chords of Foreigner's "**FEELS LIKE THE FIRST TIME.**"

CUT TO:

QUICK CUTS

- From behind, Eilleen's hands fasten the clasp of a bra.
- Still from behind, she yanks a simple sweater over her head.
- Her hands fluff out a mop of shoulder-length hair.

EXT. J.P.'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

From behind, we follow Eilleen with guitar case in hand as she hurries up to a small bar. A sign reading "JP's" blinks above the entrance.

SUPER: 4 years later

INT. J.P.'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP on the shining grille of a microphone. PULL OUT as Eilleen steps into frame up to the mic (18, the actress used for the rest of the film). Eilleen bobs her head confidently to the music. She's thankfully outgrown the shag, but is still sporting that uneven smile. She's backed by her FELLOW MEMBERS of the cover band Longshot (all guys, late teens).

At a nearby table, Sharon (38) and Jerry (36) hold hands. Mary Bailey (37) sits next to them, nodding to the music.

EILLEEN

*I would climb any mountain, Sail
across the stormy seas...*

MARY

She's got great energy tonight.

Sharon beams, while Jerry gives a grumpy harumph.

JERRY

It's a nice hobby.

SHARON

Jerry. It's more than a hobby.

JERRY

She should be thinking about what she's going to do after graduation.

SHARON

You should be thinking about your daughter. All she needs is an opportunity, and she'll grow into the star she was born to be.

Sharon stubs out her cigarette a little aggressively.

MARY
(gently)
The truth is, no matter how good
she is, no talent scout's going to
find her north of the Arctic
watershed.

Sharon jangles her foot to the music for a second, as opportunity dawns on her.

SHARON
You're right, she needs help closer
to home.
(craftily)
What about you, Mary?

MARY
Me? Me what?

JERRY
Sharon, just leave it -

But Sharon presses on relentlessly.

SHARON
There's no one's advice we trust
more on Eilleen's career. What
about being her manager, too?

Taken aback, Mary turns away from Sharon's intense gaze.

MARY
I - I'd have to think about it.
That would be a huge change for
everyone. For starters, she'd have
to move to Toronto...

Sharon looks pleadingly at Jerry. Meanwhile, Longshot is wrapping up their song.

EILLEEN
Tip your bartender! We're Longshot!

As a SMATTERING OF APPLAUSE begins, Eilleen turns to the guys.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
Nice job on the solo, Rick. But we
were late on the cue to the second
verse. Let's regroup in the back
room and work it out -

RICK shares an eye-roll with the other guys.

RICK

Twang, it's Saturday night. Let's get some Molsons and RELAX!!!

EILLEEN

But we're still not together on that section -

Rick puts his hands on Eilleen's shoulders, giving her a small shake.

RICK

Twang. *Eilleen*. Nobody cares. We're still the best band in Timmins.

EILLEEN

Yeah but it's...Timmins.

But the guys are already walking to the bar, leaving Eilleen on-stage. As Eilleen aims a frustrated kick at the amp, we -

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. TREE PLANT - DAY

Eilleen jams her work boot onto a shovel, digs out a mound of dirt and kneels on the ground, carefully planting a tree seedling in the hole she's dug.

A crew of NATIVE PLANTERS works around her, surrounded by a grid of freshly dug trees. Eilleen looks up at the sun. She takes off her hat and wipes her sweaty brow with her forearm.

EILLEEN

Great job, guys. Let's break for lunch.

Eilleen casts aside the shovel and takes a long drink of water. She gives Jerry a wave as he unloads new seedlings from a CHEVY PICKUP with "Twain Reforestation" stenciled on its side. But rather than join the workers walking to the lunch tent, Eilleen grabs her guitar and heads off into the bush.

EXT. BUSH (CLEARING) - DAY

Eilleen strums on her guitar, stopping occasionally to write down notes. Jerry pokes his face into the clearing.

JERRY

Got time for a chat?

EILLEEN
Sure, Dad.

Eilleen puts her guitar aside as Jerry takes a seat. He takes in a deep breath of wilderness air and closes his eyes.

JERRY
I've always loved the bush. I come for the solitude. To think. To find answers.

Jerry opens his eyes and clears his throat uncomfortably.

JERRY (CONT'D)
You know, I haven't always been the greatest example of a father. Or a husband.

Eilleen cringes: uh oh, awkward Dad talk coming up.

EILLEEN
It's ok, Dad.

JERRY
But there's one thing your mother and I do agree on. It's time you got serious about music.

Jerry takes an envelope out of his shirt pocket and holds it out to Eilleen, a twinkle in his eye.

JERRY (CONT'D)
It's enough for your first few months' rent.

On Eilleen: staring at the envelope, too stunned for words.

JERRY (CONT'D)
You're going to Toronto, Eilleen.
And Mary's going to manage you.

Eilleen's hand trembles as she takes the envelope.

EILLEEN
You don't have to do this.

Jerry smiles as he looks at Eilleen.

JERRY
I hate to lose my best crew boss.
But your mother wants this for you more than life itself.
(emotional pause)
And so do I.
(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)
(recovering)
So go follow your dreams, kiddo.
Make us proud -

Eilleen flings herself on Jerry in a hug. She speaks earnestly in his ear.

EILLEEN
I'm gonna make it, Dad. No matter what it takes.

Eilleen and Jerry break apart, both misty-eyed.

JERRY
Just one more thing we have to take care of before you leave.

Jerry gets a mischievous grin on his face. Off Eilleen's perplexed reaction -

INT. DENTIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Eilleen lies nervously on a dentist chair.

DENTIST (O.S.)
And open wide...

As Eilleen gives a reluctant grimace, revealing her gap tooth, we -

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK, we hear Eilleen's voice.

EILLEEN (O.S.)
No...no...hell no!

Title Card (we roll these names out one-by-one):

ELLIE

SOPHYA

TWANG

???

INT. TORONTO MCDONALD'S - DAY

INSERT - SERIES OF HEADSHOTS of Eilleen flashing her newly straightened pearly whites. Each smile wider than the rest. The surgery really made a difference.

EILLEEN (O.S.)
That one.

REVEAL: We are with Mary Bailey sitting at a table in a mall McDonald's. Mary smiles and marks the shot Eilleen picked.

MARY
We'll send them with your demo.

REVERSE ON Eilleen (now 21) sitting across from Mary, wearing a frumpy McDonald's uniform. A far cry from the girl in the headshot. Eilleen fiddles with a cup of black coffee.

MARY (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

EILLEEN
We've been at this three years. I
can't even book a gig at my
neighborhood coffee shop.

Mary folds her arms and looks Eilleen up and down.

MARY
Ok. So you want to give up?

EILLEEN
(a little sullen)
No...

MARY

Then you need to get tough, honey.
Because it might be another three.
It might be 23. But we keep at it
because we simply cannot imagine
our lives without music.

Mary leans forward, looking Eilleen directly in the eye.

MARY (CONT'D)

And if I didn't believe you had
what it takes, I wouldn't manage
you. So believe in yourself,
alright?

Eilleen nods grudgingly. Mary softens her expression.

MARY (CONT'D)

I know. Why don't we work on your
stage name?

EILLEEN

Stage name?

MARY

Well, you can't be "Eilleen" when
you're a famous singer. Too
grandma. Too librarian. Just like I
couldn't be Eveline Kasner.

Mary pulls a face, and Eilleen smiles back. Friends again.

MARY (CONT'D)

What about...Ellie?

EILLEEN

(wrinkles her nose)

Ellie was the girl who bullied me
in junior high. Um...the guys in
Longshot called me "Twang"?

Mary mouths this in horror: "Twang?"

EILLEEN (CONT'D)

Never mind.

MARY

I'm sure we'll think of something.

Eilleen's gaze falls outside the window at a PAIR OF HOOKERS talking on the street corner. She looks at them - just for a second. Then looks quickly back down at her coffee. Mary leans forward, sensing Eilleen's frustration.

MARY (CONT'D)

Listen, I have an idea. It's a shot in the dark but there's someone who might be able to help you.

Eilleen looks up, flooded with hope.

MARY (CONT'D)

You're legally native and he's a conductor setting up an aboriginal arts program. What do you think?

MCDONALD'S SUPERVISOR (O.S.)

Eilleen, break's over! We need you on the fryer!

EILLEEN

(deadpan)

I think I'd like to meet him.

EXT. KIM BELL'S HOUSE - DAY

Guitar in hand, Eilleen rings the bell of a fancy house on a leafy street. JOHN KIM BELL (34, half Mohawk Indian, wearing a blazer with a pocket square as loungewear) opens up.

EILLEEN

Hello, I'm -

KIM

I know who you are. Mind the Persian.

Eilleen stares after Kim as he abruptly turns and walks away, leaving the door open for her to follow him inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - KIM BELL'S HOUSE - DAY

Eilleen stands strumming her guitar before a massive Steinway in a grand living room, finishing a rendition of "**OVER THE RAINBOW**" by Judy Garland. Kim, accompanying her on the piano, ends the song with a flourish. At first, he betrays no reaction. Just gives her a once-over.

KIM

What's your name again?

EILLEEN

I'm thinking of going by...

(impulsively)

Sophya.

KIM

Sophya? That was my ex-girlfriend's name.

EILLEEN

Forget it. Just call me Eilleen.

KIM

Well. Eilleen. Here's what I think.

(pause)

You've got no stagecraft. And your guitar-playing is - barely elementary.

On Eilleen: each comment like a shot in the chest.

KIM (CONT'D)

But, your face has a rather pleasing symmetry to it...

Except Kim's looking more at her boobs than her face. Eilleen sighs and crosses her arms in front of her chest.

KIM (CONT'D)

And your voice - it's quite remarkable. I think we can find something for you.

The magic words. Now he's got Eilleen's attention. Kim considers her for another moment.

KIM (CONT'D)

Sophya. Eilleen. Whatever your name is.

(pause)

Do you have dinner plans?

Off Eilleen's bemused expression, we -

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - TWAIN HOUSE - NIGHT - A FEW MONTHS LATER

Eilleen and Kim sit next to each other as they dig into a home-cooked dinner, sitting around the table with Sharon, Jerry, Carrie Ann (19), Mark (16) and Darryl (14). Kim's spiffy suit contrasts sharply with the Twains' practical attire. Eilleen fidgets in her seat, aware of Jerry scrutinizing Kim's every move.

JERRY

How do you like your steak, Kim?

Kim swallows and nods vigorously.

KIM
Amazing. Best beef I've had in a
long time.

Kim notices the Twains staring at him, and looks
questioningly at Eilleen.

JERRY
It's not beef. It's moose.

KIM
Moose?

Kim stops chewing in surprise. Mark and Darryl let out a
snicker. Jerry eyes Kim skeptically.

JERRY
I thought you said you were half
Mohawk?

KIM
I am. Just never had moose before.

EILLEEN
It's ok.
(glares at Jerry)
A lot of people have never had
moose.

Jerry shakes his head incredulously and digs back into his
meat. Kim clears his throat and shift gears.

KIM
In honor of meeting the family for
the first time, I have a special
announcement to make. In a few
weeks, Eilleen will be performing
in a concert I'm putting on with
the Toronto Symphony.

Now it's Sharon's turn to gape at Kim.

SHARON
The symphony? Why?

KIM
Pop music isn't worthy of Eilleen.
Nor anyone for that matter.

Eilleen looks down at her food, self-conscious.

SHARON

But Kim, Eilleen's not a classical
singer -

EILLEEN

Mom. It's an opportunity. There'll
be a lot of important people there.

Off Eilleen's look, Sharon forces a smile.

SHARON

Well. We can't wait to see it.

EXT. TWAIN HOUSE - NIGHT (AFTER DINNER)

Sharon wraps Eileen in a tight hug. As Sharon lets go, she nods warily toward Kim - shining off Timmins dirt from the side of his sleek, out-of-place OLDSMOBILE in the driveway.

SHARON

Be careful. He doesn't know you.

EILLEEN

Don't worry, Mom. I know me.

Eileen squeezes her mom's hand and heads for the car.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)

Call you when we get back!

As Sharon takes one last look at Eileen -

PRE-LAP: "**LA VIE EN ROSE**" by Edith Piaf.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. ROY THOMSON HALL - NIGHT

Eileen sings center-stage. Behind her, Kim solemnly conducts the full-piece TORONTO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. Sharon, Jerry and Mary look on from the front row.

CLOSE ON Eileen, supremely uncomfortable in a tight-fitting gown, clutching a somewhat cheesy rose prop.

EILLEEN

*Quand il me prend dans ses bras,
Qu'il me parle tout bas, Je vois la
vie en rose...*

Kim risks a peek over his shoulder at Eilleen and balks. She's not making any eye contact with the audience, just singing to the rose! Kim looks back to the orchestra, shaking his head. Sharon glares lividly at Kim from her seat.

EILLEEN (O.S.) PRE-LAP (CONT'D)
 "Miss Twain has a promising voice,
 but her stiff demeanor made her
 almost unwatchable."

INT. LIVING ROOM - KIM BELL'S HOUSE - A FEW NIGHTS LATER

CLOSE ON the Entertainment Section of the *Toronto Star*, with a grainy picture of Eilleen's concert performance. Eilleen sits at the table, reading the review aloud. Kim tinkers nearby on the Steinway.

EILLEEN
 (horrified)
 Jesus, this guy's ripping me to
 shreds.

KIM
 The man has a point, Eilleen. You
 sang beautifully. But you have the
 stage presence of a robot.

Eilleen glares at Kim as he stops playing, realizing too late that he's done himself in.

EILLEEN
 (calm but deadly)
 If that's what you really think,
 why the hell did you put me up
 there?

KIM
 Eilleen -

EILLEEN
 (over Kim)
 I never should have let you talk me
 into this - !

The phone RINGS, providing Kim an escape.

KIM
 I'll get it.

Eilleen glares after Kim as he exits the room.

KIM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Hello?

Meanwhile, Eilleen scowls back down at the review, then flings the newspaper roughly across the table.

EILLEEN
Damn it, Eilleen! How could you be
so STUPID -

Frantic footsteps signal Kim's return. Eilleen looks up. His face is utterly stricken.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
What?

HOLD ON Eilleen's confused reaction.

CUT TO:

EXT. TIMMINS MEMORIAL CEMETERY - DAY

TWO CASKETS lie side by side on lowering devices before a single headstone. Eilleen, Carrie Ann, Mark, Darryl and Jill (24) stand huddled together, living out every child's worst nightmare. Mary stands nearby wiping her eyes with a tissue. But Eilleen doesn't cry. She's in soldier mode.

Before the caskets descend, Eilleen stoically lays her DEMO TAPE on top of her mother's coffin. As the caskets are lowered, HOLD ON the stone's inscription: "Jerry and Sharon. Together Forever."

EXT. TIMMINS MEMORIAL CEMETERY - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Eilleen says goodbye to Kim on the edge of the cemetery while Jill waits in the b.g.

KIM
I have to get back to work. I'm
sorry. I'll call you later and
we'll figure this out, ok?

Eilleen nods numbly. Kim gives her a swift peck on the cheek and departs for his Oldsmobile. Eilleen joins Jill to walk her toward the parking lot.

JILL
Never guessed it would end in a car
wreck. I thought for sure he'd kill
her first.

Eilleen avoids eye contact with her sister.

EILLEEN

They couldn't help it. They didn't
know any different.

Eilleen and Jill have reached the lot. Jill turns to Eilleen.

JILL

Call if you need anything, Leeny.

Eilleen nods. She looks toward Jill's car, where TWO LITTLE GIRLS (Jill's daughters) are waiting.

EILLEEN

You were lucky.
(off Jill's look)
You got out while you could.

Jill gives Eilleen a hug and tight smile, then continues to her car. Eilleen raises a hand in farewell, knowing that, once again, the family burden will fall on her shoulders...

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

An officious LAWYER thumbs through a bulging sheaf of legal documents. He looks up, frowning.

LAWYER

Miss Twain.

Eilleen, sitting across from the Lawyer, sits up expectantly.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

With regards to your profession as a Toronto-based "musician"...will your income be sufficient to take on guardianship of two minors?

Eilleen shifts uncomfortably in her seat before answering.

EILLEEN

Actually, I'm going to stay here and run my dad's company.

LAWYER

I think that's a wise decision.

Eilleen stares ahead poker-faced.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

We'll also need to discuss the remaining mortgage payments on your parents' house. Would you please sign here to transfer ownership?

(MORE)

LAWYER (CONT'D)

(beat)

Miss Twain?

On Eilleen, her head swimming with all the jargon.

EILLEEN

What's a mortgage?

Off the lawyer's reaction -

INT. KITCHEN - TWAIN HOUSE - DAY

Eilleen kneads her forehead as she pores over a mountain of paperwork, her guitar leaning forgotten against the wall in the background. An O.S. BLAST OF MUSIC makes her jump.

EILLEEN

Jesus effin' Christ!

Eilleen walks over to the basement door and yells through it.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)

Mark; Darryl; will you PLEASE keep it down?! I'm trying to deal with this estate bullshit!

MARK/DARRYL (O.S.)

Sorry!

The music lowers in volume, just as the phone starts ringing. Eilleen picks it up.

EILLEEN

Hello?

KIM (O.S.)

Hi Eilleen.

EILLEEN

(relieved sigh)

Thank God you called. The boys are driving me insane.

INT. KIM'S HOUSE - DAY

Kim paces nervously around his house.

KIM

Eilleen, we need to talk.

INTERCUT EILLEEN/KIM

Eilleen grips the phone.

EILLEEN
(suddenly wary)
So let's talk. What's up?

Kim winces, then takes the plunge.

KIM
I think we should take a break.

EILLEEN
(incredulous)
A break? Seriously? My parents just
died, Kim.

KIM
Look, I need to focus on my career.
You understand, don't you?

A beat of icy silence. Then -

EILLEEN
GO TO HELL!

Eilleen SLAMS DOWN the phone, then lets loose a long-festering PRIMAL SCREAM. Almost instinctively, she grabs her guitar and barges out the door.

EXT. PORCH - TWAIN HOUSE - DAY

On the ground, a small TWIG FIRE crackles to life. Eilleen sits on the porch gazing down at her miniature campfire, her breath coming in foggy puffs in the freezing December air.

A WOLF'S HOWL echoes in the distance. Almost like the animal understands her pain. Eilleen pauses to listen. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. The words come before she knows it, taking on their own proto-melody.

EILLEEN
*Hallelujah, God bless the child who
suffers...*

Then Eilleen picks up her guitar and starts strumming. This is an early version of "**GOD BLESS THE CHILD.**"

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
*Hallelujah hallelujah. God bless
the child who suffers. Hallelujah
hallelujah. God bless the young
without mothers...*

A requiem for her parents. A requiem for her siblings.

A requiem for herself.

Sensing a new presence, Eilleen opens her eyes. Mary Bailey is behind her, listening from the porch door.

MARY
Don't stop.

Eilleen keeps strumming, but gives a sad smile as Mary takes a seat next to her.

EILLEEN
I'm done with music, Mary. I have to take care of my family.

Mary listens to Eilleen's strumming for a beat.

MARY
I've been making some calls. I found you a gig. 45K a year - not much, but enough. Yours if you want it.

Eilleen abruptly stops playing, stares at Mary in shock.

MARY (CONT'D)
You're a singer. You need to sing.
(then)
Let me know what you want to do.

With that, Mary gets up and walks away. HOLD ON Eilleen's face as the twig fire flickers away, illuminating all the hopes, dreams and fears churning in her eyes. Then PRE-LAP the sound of car doors SLAMMING...

EXT. TWAIN HOUSE - DAY

Carrie Ann, Mark and Darryl squeeze into the GMC Jimmy with all their worldly belongings, while Eilleen lingers outside. She rifles through the book Jerry gave her, every page filled with song lyrics.

EILLEEN
Time for a new chapter.

Eilleen looks up from her notebook to take one last look at her parents' house. Then gets into the driver's seat.

TRANSITION TO:

4-YEAR DEERHURST HUSTLE MONTAGE

- The GMC Jimmy pulls up to the main lodge of Deerhurst, a playground for the rich and idle in the 80's cocaine era. Eilleen hops out of her truck in her work boots and jeans, taking in the scene: GOLFING RETIREES, WAYWARD HUSBANDS meeting their MISTRESSES, BRATTY KIDS. All turning up their noses at Eilleen and her beat-up GMC.

MARY (V.O.)

There's a place called Deerhurst,
up on the shores of Peninsula Lake.
It's a resort where they're running
a Vegas-style show.

- In the dressing room, Eilleen (wearing a glitzy rhinestone dress, itchy fishnet stockings, her hair back-combed to *Dynasty* heights) clumsily practices some dance moves in front of the mirror.

MARY (V.O.)

You'll be in the stage show,
working the dance bar and piano
bar, six nights a week, everything
from Broadway to bossa nova. Enough
to pay your family's rent. But
you'll have to work your ass off.

- Eilleen trips on her 3-inch stilettos as she rushes through the hallways from the stage to the dance bar.

MARY (V.O.)

Because hon, you've got a helluva
lot to learn...

- Backstage, TWO DEERHURST BITCHES (dancers) wearing elaborate Vegas-style feather headdresses give Eilleen the stink eye as everyone lines up backstage for their cue.

MARY (V.O.)

The other girls would kill to get
ahead.

As the Bitches walk on-stage, Bitch 1 purposely bumps her headdress into Eilleen, almost knocking her off-balance.

MARY (V.O.)

So you're gonna have to hang tough.

- In the dressing room, Eilleen goes to put on her dress and is dismayed to see one of the sleeves is slashed off - clearly an act of sabotage. Until the fast-thinking NATIVE WARDROBE MISTRESS just rips off the other arm to match.

EILLEEN

Thank you.

Eilleen looks gratefully at the girl. CLOSE ON Eilleen as she clocks her name tag: **Shania**. HOLD ON that momentous word...

- In the dance studio, Eilleen hustles through an off-hours dance routine practice in legwarmers and 3-inch stilettos.

- Eilleen steps out on stage again: except this time, she walks flawlessly without tripping on her stilettos.

MARY (V.O.)

And most of all, you need to keep working on your own music. Somehow, somehow.

- Bitch #2 approaches the bathroom, stops short when she sees a sign: "Diarrhea explosion, stay away!!!" With a look of horror, she turns away!

Inside the bathroom, REVEAL Eilleen singing into a mic and pop filter as a DEERHURST SOUND ENGINEER records her on a boombox. The two are squashed into a STALL! The engineer listens along on his headphones and gives her a thumbs up.

- Mary sits in the audience like a proud mother, watching Eilleen perform on stage. Eilleen is carried across the stage by TWO MALE DANCERS, smiling and making eye contact with the audience. Something she's been too afraid to do in the past.

MARY (V.O.)

Because at the end of the day, you'll only get one shot. And you'll be singing for your life.

At the end of the song, the guys tip Eilleen down. With a flash of her stilettos, she sticks the landing perfectly! The audience breaks into APPLAUSE. Mary watches everyone clapping and gives a tiny but decisive nod.

MARY

(to herself)

It's time.

END MONTAGE.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DEERHURST - NIGHT

Eilleen (25), wearing a dramatic floor-length gown, peeps out from backstage at a dapper-looking Southern gentleman in the audience (this is DICK FRANK). She starts pacing nervously, as Mary spritzes her with a final hairspray touch-up.

EILLEEN
 A Nashville music lawyer? But you
 know I'm more than country.

MARY
 Honey, all I know are Nashville
 people. And Dick Frank was the only
 one crazy enough to travel 700
 miles to get here. If you don't
 sing for him, I don't see anybody
 else lining up to take his place.

Eilleen gives a frustrated sigh and picks up her mic.

CUT TO:

Eilleen waits for her cue as the Deerhurst Bitches pass by.

DEERHURST BITCH 1
 (snide)
 Good luck, orphan.

Bitch 2 snickers beside her. Eilleen's jaw clenches, but she stays focused on the stage.

EXT. MAIN STAGE (AUDIENCE) - DEERHURST - NIGHT

Mary takes her seat next to Dick, watching together as Eilleen walks on-stage. Eilleen finds the spotlight, turns and looks out into the audience, her voice full of intent.

EILLEEN
 This song is for my parents, who
 always believed in my music.

Then Eilleen begins the most emotional, heartfelt and heart-breaking rendition you've ever heard of "**WIND BENEATH MY WINGS**" as made famous by Bette Midler.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
*...Did you ever know that you're my
 hero? And everything I would like
 to be? I can fly higher than an
 eagle, For you are the wind beneath
 my wings.*

And as Eilleen reaches the end of her song, she doesn't just feel Sharon and Jerry with her that night, **she sees them** - sitting right in the front row of the audience.

HOLD ON Eilleen as the APPLAUSE begins -

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DEERHURST - NIGHT

Eilleen decompresses in front of her mirror. Mary walks in with Dick. Eilleen hops out of her chair nervously.

MARY
Eilleen, I'd like to introduce you to Dick Frank.

Dick shakes Eilleen's hand warmly.

DICK
You could have heard a feather fall after that number, Miss Twain. I don't think I've ever experienced so much natural talent in one person.

EILLEEN
Thank you. It was so kind of you to come.

DICK
If you don't mind, I'd like to make a call to one of our producers.

Eilleen gapes at Dick.

MARY
Go right ahead, Dick.

Dick steps over to a corded phone on the wall and begins dialing, while Mary glances excitedly at Eilleen. Eilleen looks like she's about to puke from nerves.

DICK
Henry, Dick Frank. You remember that demo tape from the gal up north? Well, she's something even more special in person.
(beat)
Yeah, she's right here next to me.

Dick hands the phone to Eilleen. Eilleen's hand shakes with anticipation as she puts the receiver to her ear.

EILLEEN
Hello, this is -

INSERT - FLASHBACK to the wardrobe mistress's name tag.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
(hesitates)
Shania.

Mary stares at Eilleen, mouthing: "What?!" Eilleen shrugs, rolling with it.

EILLEEN (CONT'D)
That's what I go by for music,
anyway.

A slow, measured drawl rings out from the phone. This is HENRY ROLAND, producer at Mercury Records.

HENRY (O.S.)
Well, Shania. How'd you like to come down to Nashville and talk about getting yourself signed to the label?

As Eilleen clutches the phone, too overwhelmed to speak, we

CUT TO BLACK.

(Note: from now on in the script, Eilleen will be known as "Shania").

OVER BLACK, we hear COUNTRY MUSIC on the radio.

Title Card: SHANIA

EXT. NASHVILLE - DAY

Mary drives, as Shania (now wearing a 90's scrunchy, still a little dorky and fresh-faced) breathlessly takes in all the sights and sounds of Nashville: triple rail fences, horse ranches, muddy rivers, roadside rib shacks.

EXT. STREETS OF NASHVILLE - DAY

And of course, Music Row. Shania walks in a daze down streets where Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton recorded, and a honky tonk sits on every corner. History and music flowing from every doorway.

INT. MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

Shania enters the Mercury Records office, gazing starstruck at the framed platinum records lining the walls. She checks in nervously with the RECEPTIONIST.

SHANIA

Shania Twain to meet with Henry Roland.

RECEPTIONIST

Just one moment.
(into phone)
Miss Twain's in the lobby.

As Shania waits, GLEN CAMPBELL in the flesh passes by, giving her a polite nod and smile. Shania turns back to the receptionist, barely able to contain her excitement.

SHANIA

Is that -

RECEPTIONIST

(bored)

Rhinestone Cowboy? Yeah, he did a record with MCA Nashville.

Shania shakes her head in disbelief.

SHANIA

Frig, I am not in Timmins anymore!

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

As Shania walks in, Henry Roland (50's, an old-fashioned Georgia boy) gets up from his desk to greet her.

HENRY

Shayna! So nice to meet you in person, sugardoll.

SHANIA

Shania. It means "on my way" in Ojibwe, my father's language.

HENRY

Well, ain't that the sweetest thing. Please, sit.

Henry motions to an armchair by his desk. But rather than stay behind his own desk, he lounges in a chair opposite her - a little closer than she'd like. But Shania keeps her smile bright and launches into a speech at a mile-a-minute.

SHANIA

I'm really excited to be here, I just have soooo many ideas for the album. I never thought of myself as a country singer, actually, so maybe there's a way we can do it more outlaw country, not tart in a haybale, you know what I mean?

Henry seemingly nods along.

HENRY

We have ideas, too.

SHANIA

Great! So we start tomorrow?

Henry gives a patronizing smile.

HENRY

(correcting)

Tomorrow.

Shania pauses, isn't that what she said?

HENRY (CONT'D)

Not 'to-more-row.' Need to lose that accent.

Henry leans over and gives Shania an unsolicited pat on the knee. She lets out an uneasy laugh.

SHANIA

I bet you don't get too many
Northern girls down here. You're
probably surprised I haven't
already melted into a puddle of
water -

Henry puts a finger up, cutting Shania off again.

HENRY

Need to lose that motormouth, too.

Shania stares as Henry speaks into his intercom.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Blanche, let's set Shania up for a
media training appointment tomorrow
before the studio session. Thanks,
sugardoll.

Off Shania's reaction.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MUSIC MILL STUDIOS - NEXT DAY

Shania hustles into the studio, still practicing her American accent. Henry and some SOUND ENGINEERS are already there.

SHANIA

(to self)

"It's not far to the car." "I'm
sorry to hear that story."

Shania stops short as she looks through the glass and notices some STUDIO MUSICIANS trading riffs in the live room.

SHANIA (CONT'D)

Oh! You already started.

HENRY

Just getting in tune. Let's get you
mic'd up.

INT. LIVE ROOM - MUSIC MILL STUDIO - DAY

An engineer mics Shania as Henry talks to her from the talkback system in the control room.

HENRY (ON INTERCOM)

We'll start with "When He Leaves
You." The boys have already worked
out the opening chord progression.

Shania looks down at the music on her stand and double takes.

SHANIA

Excuse me, I thought I was going to get to sing my own songs. This is a cover.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MUSIC MILL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Henry speaks patiently to Shania through the intercom.

HENRY

You'll get to sing your own songs, sugardoll. Eventually. But formulas work for a reason. Let's give it a whirl.

INT. LIVE ROOM - MUSIC MILL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The musicians START UP "**WHEN HE LEAVES YOU**" before Shania can protest. It's horribly trite and laconic, but Shania gamely sings along.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MUSIC MILL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Henry nods along to the music with his eyes closed, looking almost like he's asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MUSIC MILL STUDIO - DAY - LATER

Henry opens his eyes as the notes dwindle to the final strum.

HENRY

And that's a wrap on Track 7. First class job, boys, let's take a break.

INT. LIVE ROOM - MUSIC MILL STUDIO - DAY

The musicians amble amiably out of the live room, but Shania stays behind, frustrated. She jabs the intercom.

SHANIA

Henry, when are we going to try some of my songs?

Shania sees Henry and the engineers talking in the control room, ignoring her. She repeatedly presses the intercom.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
Hello? Henry?

Shania practically shouts into the intercom.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
You listen to me, Henry Roland.
I've lived in a homeless shelter,
sang at strip clubs, supported my
siblings, buried my parents -

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MUSIC MILL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The musicians stare in shock at the diatribe exploding through the intercom.

SHANIA (O.S.)(ON INTERCOM)
- cleaned houses, flipped burgers -

With a glazed smile, Henry presses the mute button on the system. Shania continues ranting animatedly behind the glass!

INT. LIVE ROOM - MUSIC MILL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Shania's tirade has now reached a fever pitch.

SHANIA
- in short, worked my ass off for
15 years, just to get here and
record my songs - MY SONGS, Henry!

Boiling over with anger, Shania tears off her headphones.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHANIA'S APARTMENT - NASHVILLE - DAY

INSERT: SHANIA TWAIN ALBUM COVER, a hot-off-the-press copy with a photo of Shania and a wolf next to a snowy campfire.

MARY (O.S.)
The cover's quite striking.

Shania is seated next to Mary on the couch. Shania grimaces down at the album.

SHANIA
Ten songs. Only one is mine.

MARY
At least they gave you a video budget.

Mary leans over with a conspiratorial smile.

MARY (CONT'D)
Don't forget, Henry won't be on set.

Shania looks at Mary, a smile slowly forming on her face.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

INSERT - **"WHAT MADE YOU SAY THAT?"** MUSIC VIDEO. Shania cavorts on a beach with an imaginary boyfriend. Suddenly, the **screen freezes** on Shania mid-shimmy. Henry, no longer avuncular, glowers at Shania and Mary from across his desk.

HENRY
What do you have to say for yourself, young lady?

SHANIA
About what?

Henry grabs a laser pointer and aims it at Shania's bared midriff on the screen.

HENRY
About THAT!!!

SHANIA
(huh?)
It's a belly button.

Henry jabs his finger at the screen.

HENRY
That belly button is costing me a fortune from all the hell it's causing with Standards & Practices.

SHANIA
It's 1993. Maybe they need to enter the 20th century.

Henry SLAMS HIS FIST on the desk, making Shania jump.

HENRY

You talk big for a singer with an album that's barely sold 100,000 copies, and a video that CMT refuses to play. The only channel that will play it is CMT Europe, goddammit!

On Shania, shocked by his anger. Remorse starts to creep in.

SHANIA

Henry, I'm sorry -

HENRY

Just get out. So I can call my boss, so he can call *his* boss, to explain why we shouldn't just drop you off the label already.

Shania hangs her head and slinks out of the office. Mary starts to follow her, pausing at the doorway to look back angrily at Henry.

MARY

You're not being fair, Henry. She deserves to sing her own songs.

HENRY

Those songs aren't finished. And even if they were, they're not good enough. Plain and simple.

Henry returns to his paperwork. Mary stares at him for a beat.

MARY

Am I the only one who knows how good she can be?

Henry doesn't even look up. As Mary leaves, we TRUCK IN on the "What Made You Say That" video...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LONDON BAR - NIGHT

4,000 miles away, "What Made You Say That" plays on CMT Europe on the TV screen of a London bar. SOMEBODY with their back to us watches Shania, rapt with attention. For now, we only see a crown of shaggy, rocker-length blonde curls, and his drink: a steaming hot cup of tea. A teetotaler.

The BARTENDER, wiping down the bar, notices our Somebody staring at the video. He grins and gives a nod to the TV.

BARTENDER
Lovely voice.

The Somebody nods. He scrawls down "Shania Twain" on a napkin, then looks up abruptly.

THE SOMEBODY
I'd like to make a call.

INT. SMALL COUNTRY BAR - NASHVILLE - NIGHT

A honky tonk with a photo shrine to country stars on the walls and a wooden dance floor. Shania finishes up awkwardly singing karaoke to her song "**DANCE WITH THE ONE THAT BROUGHT YOU**" - she doesn't even get the courtesy of a band. Shania looks at the empty dance floor, disappointed.

SHANIA
Thanks everyone, that's the second single off my debut album, in stores now.

As Shania heads off-stage, Billy Ray Cyrus's "**ACHY BREAKY HEART**" starts blasting from the radio. CUSTOMERS CHEER and instantly rush out past Shania to dance. Shania sighs and joins Mary at the bar, where her drink is waiting.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
Only two more shows and this promotion torture is over.

MARY
Just finish on a high note, hon.
We'll push to do more of your music on the next album.

Shania stares glumly into her whiskey, then speaks quietly.

SHANIA
There's not going to be a next album, Mary. I'm 28. There's girls half my age on top of the charts. They get to mess up and try again. I don't.

It's the cold hard truth. Shania takes a depressed slug of her drink, while Mary flounders to think of a response.

MARY
Listen, you have a big fan in England who's been trying like crazy to reach you. Some guy with a funny name...Spot? Spike?

Mary consults her notebook, ripping out a page.

MARY (CONT'D)
 "Mutt." Claims to be a music
 producer. Why don't you give him a
 call? Maybe it'll cheer you up.

On Shania, reluctantly looking at the piece of paper.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - SHANIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shania collapses on her couch, exhausted. She unfolds the sheet of paper Mary gave her, looks at it skeptically.

SHANIA
 "Mutt" Lange? (sighs) One fan is
 better than no fans.

Shania sighs and dials her phone.

MUTT (O.S.)
 Hello?

SHANIA
 Hi, I'm looking for Mutt? This is
 Shania Twain.

MUTT (O.S.)
 Shania. Oh great, I've been trying
 to reach you for ages.

While on the phone, Shania wanders over to the fridge and helps herself to a midnight snack: orange soda and yellow cheddar cheese popcorn.

SHANIA
 Yeah, so my manager said you're a
 fan.

MUTT (O.S.)
 Yes, I'm a big fan. I'm also a
 producer.

SHANIA
 Oh, very cool.

On Shania's face: yeah, sure you are.

MUTT (O.S.)
 I think you sound just like Karen
 Carpenter.

Shania freezes with a piece of popcorn halfway to her mouth.

SHANIA

You shitting me? I've been matching
her voice since I was five years
old.

MUTT (O.S.)

I can hear it exactly.

(cutting to the chase)

Look, what I really want to know
is, do you write your own songs?

Shania clutches the phone, a little spooked.

SHANIA

(with conviction)

Yes. My whole life.

MUTT (O.S.)

Well, can I hear something?

SHANIA

(hesitant)

Ok - I'll send you a tape.

MUTT (O.S.)

No, I mean right now. If it's
possible.

(beat)

Please.

Shania stares at the phone, taken aback.

INT. SHANIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (A FEW MOMENTS LATER)

Shania sets up her phone receiver on the pillow.

SHANIA

I must be crazy for doing this, but
- here's a song I've been working
on for a few years. It's called
"This Man of Mine."

Shania closes her eyes, takes out her guitar and begins
singing "**THIS MAN OF MINE**". (Superfans will recognize the
vestigial flicker of "Any Man of Mine" in the chorus).

SHANIA (CONT'D)

*...When he says he'll be somewhere
he's always on time. He's too good
to be true this man of mine. This
man of mine is a walking talking
angel -*

Shania opens her eyes, realizing she's gotten carried away with the music, and stops playing abruptly.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
(self-conscious)
Anyway, something like that.

A beat as Mutt takes it all in.

MUTT (O.S.)
The way you're singing right now,
even though it's over the phone,
that's the voice I've heard bits
and pieces of. That's how you
should be sounding all the time,
doing your own stuff.

Shania holds the phone breathlessly.

SHANIA
You really think so?

MUTT (O.S.)
Absolutely. None of that bollocks
that was on your first album.

Shania can't help breaking into a smile.

SHANIA
I can't tell you how much that
means to me.
(suddenly intrigued)
Are you really a producer?

MUTT (O.S.)
(laughs)
I'm afraid so.

SHANIA
Ok. Then play me something.

MUTT (O.S.)
Only fair. Here we go then.

A beat. Then the intro for Mutt's rough track for "**AIN'T GOT NOTHING IF YOU AIN'T GOT LOVE**" (eventually by Michael Bolton) sounds through Shania's receiver. Shania's visibly impressed. As Mutt wraps up, Shania gives a little ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

SHANIA
Wow, that was really good! Keep at
it and I think it could be really
big someday.

An amused silence from Mutt.

MUTT (O.S.)
Thanks, I'm glad you liked it. And, would it be alright if I called you again?

A big grin spreads over Shania's face.

INT. DIVE BAR - NASHVILLE - NEXT NIGHT

Another dive bar, another karaoke promo appearance. This time Shania's singing "**GOD AIN'T GONNA GETCHA FOR THAT.**" Except it's a whole new Shania tonight. She shimmies up to a COWBOY, borrowing his hat to wear while dancing around, returning it just as the music ends. He looks after her, totally smitten, as she flounces over to Mary at the bar.

MARY
What happened to you?

Shania laughs and shrugs, throws her hands up.

SHANIA
Mutt!

INT. SHANIA'S BEDROOM - SHANIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Shania sits in bed in her pajamas, furiously scribbling down notes as she talks to Mutt on the phone.

MUTT (O.S.)
...I think if you work in some guitar riffs on "This Man of Mine" and punch up the lyrics, it'll really come together.

SHANIA
Right, riffs and a punch up...

Shania rips out the sheet of paper, lays it amongst the mandala of pages already scattered around her. She leans back on her pillow with the phone, spent.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
(a little coy)
You know, Mutt - if I didn't know better, I'd say you'd want to work with me on this.

MUTT (O.S.)
 I'm absolutely and positively
 convinced that we should work
 together, Eileen. But I should
 warn you, I haven't broken a new
 act since Def Leppard.

Shania laughs out loud.

SHANIA
 That's ok, I haven't worked with a
 new producer since Quincy Jones.

Suddenly, Shania's gaze falls on the Def Leppard album
 sticking out of her bookshelf. Almost on impulse, she pulls
 it out. CLOSE ON a name on the back of the album: "Produced
 by Robert John 'Mutt' Lange." On Shania's expression as her
 blood suddenly runs cold -

SHANIA (CONT'D)
 Can you hold on one second?

QUICK CUTS: Shania frantically pulls the megahit albums of
 Foreigner, AC/DC, Bryan Adams, Boomtown Rats, Def Leppard off
 the shelf, **all with Mutt's producer credit stamped on them.**

SHANIA (CONT'D)
Holy shit!!

HOLD ON Shania's horrified expression.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) PRE-LAP
 Welcome to the Nashville Fan Fair,
 it's a great day to be a country
 music fan...

EXT. OUTDOOR STAGE - NASHVILLE FAN FAIR - DAY

Shania bows to a MODEST CROWD after finishing her set.

SHANIA
 Thanks, you guys were great!

Shania runs down the steps and disappears behind the stage.
 She anxiously scans the crowd as Mary un-mics her.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
 Have you seen him?

MARY
 Not yet.

SHANIA

He said he had long hair and would
be wearing a blue shirt.

Mary joins Shania in trying to pick Mutt out of the crowd.

MARY

Uh...

Many LONG-HAIRED BLUE-SHIRTED DUDES wander by.

SHANIA

(bummed)

Maybe he couldn't make it.

Then suddenly, the crowd parts, REVEALING the real MUTT LANGE (45, tall, thin and unpretentious. A bit odd-looking, but possessing an eccentric charm). Shania knows it's him by instinct. They lock eyes, and even though they've never met, the spark reaches instantly across the 20 yards between them.

MARY

Is that him?

But Shania's already moving toward Mutt. MARY'S POV: WIDE SHOT of Mutt and Shania as they share a hug and start talking. Eyes only for each other. Mary watches them with a bittersweet smile, aware of the seismic shift about to ripple through their world...

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - NASHVILLE FAN FAIR - DUSK

The ferris wheel lights flicker on, illuminating the state fairgrounds. Shania and Mutt wander past rides and carnival games, the only two people not wearing cowboy hats. They take turns gazing at one another when the other isn't looking.

SHANIA

I feel like an idiot for not
knowing who you were. But in my
defense, I checked all the trades.
Not one interview. Not one photo.

Mutt gives a wry grin and chuckles.

MUTT

I like my privacy.

Shania stares at Mutt, this enigma that's walked into her life who lives so self-assuredly by his own code. He catches her looking and she glances away, embarrassed.

SHANIA

Ok mystery man. Tell me how a boy
from a mining town in South Africa
gets into country music.

Mutt smiles, a faraway look in his eye.

MUTT

Slim Whitman. Loved him since I was
a kid. "Rose Marie," "Indian Love
Call"....I couldn't get enough of
it. What about you?

SHANIA

I grew up singing country music.
But I've always seen myself as more
of a -

SHANIA/MUTT

- crossover. / Crossover?

Shania looks at Mutt, startled.

SHANIA

Yes. Exactly.

MUTT

That's why I'm here.

Shania reacts as Mutt stops walking, looks at her intently.

MUTT (CONT'D)

We need to get you out of here.
Come over to London. Two weeks and
we'll get all your original stuff
ready for the next album.

Shania hesitates.

SHANIA

I don't know. I should probably run
it by Mary...

MUTT

Mary will support whatever takes
your career to the next level.
Eilleen, you're going places. You
might as well start now.

Shania considers Mutt, suddenly deadly serious.

SHANIA

If I come to London, it's on my terms. No one foots my bills, I pay my own way.

Mutt raises an eyebrow, but doesn't fight it.

MUTT

You're the boss.

Off Shania's smile -

INT. PLANE - DAY

Shania stares out the window at the tarmac.

STEWARDESS (O.S.)

Excuse me, Miss Twain? You've been upgraded to first class.

Shania takes the ticket the STEWARDESS is holding out and stares at it in confusion. Then she sees Mutt's name on the price summary.

SHANIA

(sotto)

Bastard!

But Shania can't help smiling.

INT. LONDON CAB - DAY

Shania is whisked away in a cab, giddily snapping away pictures as scenes of London whip by her window.

EXT. MUTT'S COTTAGE-STYLE HOUSE (ENGLAND) - DAY

Shania stands nervously on the doorstep with her suitcases. A HOUSEKEEPER (60's) opens the door.

SHANIA

Hi, I'm -

HOUSEKEEPER

Miss Twain. Welcome to England.

SHANIA

Please, call me Eilleen.

HOUSEKEEPER
Do come in, Eilleen. Let me get
your bags.

The housekeeper grabs ahold of Shania's suitcases. Shania protests, not used to this kind of pampering.

SHANIA
Really, I'm perfectly fine to -

MUTT (O.S.)
Careful there, Sophie. This one
likes to crack her own whip.

Distracted from the suitcases, Shania looks up and sees Mutt walking into the doorway. They smile at each other, as the housekeeper shrinks back demurely with the suitcases.

MUTT (CONT'D)
You made it.

SHANIA
As far as your doorway.

Mutt grins and inclines his head inside.

MUTT
Then come in and let's get started,
shall we?

SHANIA
You don't waste any time, do you?

Shania smiles as she steps over the threshold.

INT. HOME STUDIO - MUTT'S HOUSE - DAY

Shania and Mutt, holding their guitars, sit close together before a state-of-the-art mix console. Shania can't help staring around giddily at pictures of Mutt with BRYAN ADAMS, BON SCOTT, etc on the walls.

MUTT
Let's get down those riffs on "This
Man of Mine." I've been working on
something.

Shania snaps to attention as Mutt plays her a catchy guitar riff. She lights up excitedly.

SHANIA
That's it, that's the hook!

MUTT

Then let's make it your first
number one hit.

On Shania, unnerved by his confidence.

EXT. GARDEN - MUTT'S HOUSE - DAY (LATER)

Shania and Mutt sit at a table on the patio with guitars out and cups of tea in front of them. Mutt is bent over a page of lyrics, deep in study.

MUTT

Let's lean lyrically more into this
idea of a book of rules for men.
Take this line out, move that one
here, put in this part from your
other song...

Mutt takes out a pen and starts marking up the page. HASH. HASH. HASH. Shania looks over his shoulder in horror. It's totally covered in strikeouts.

SHANIA

You only kept two lines from my
original song!

MUTT

And those are the two most
important lines that will make it a
hit. Look, give it a sing. If you
don't like it, we'll go back to
square one.

Her ego a little bruised, Shania picks up her guitar. Mutt accompanies Shania on guitar and backing vocals.

SHANIA/MUTT

*Any man of mine better walk the
line...He's gotta be a heartbeatin'
fire breathin' breathtakin'
earthquakin' kind, Any man of mine.*

Mutt and Shania fade out. It's magic, and Shania knows it.

MUTT

What do you think?

SHANIA

You're scary good.

MUTT

We're scary good.

An intimate beat. Shania looks down at her guitar, self-conscious.

MUTT (CONT'D)
(softly)
I have an idea.

Shania looks back up, meeting Mutt's eyes.

MUTT (CONT'D)
Why don't we finish this in Spain?

Off Shania's staggered reaction.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. BEDROOM - COASTAL VILLA (MAJORCA) - NIGHT

In the soft moonlight, we move across a tiled floor past two guitars, pages of song lyrics, and now a pile of discarded clothes. We reach a bed and CRANE UP to reveal TWO PAIRS OF INTERTWINED FEET sticking out from a bedsheets...Shania and Mutt are lying naked in bed together, listening to the waves lapping the shore.

SHANIA
I can't believe we wrote a whole
album in two weeks.

MUTT
(half-asleep)
We did a lot more than write an
album.

Shania turns to Mutt. He's clinging to her like John and Yoko on the cover of Rolling Stone. She whispers in his ear.

SHANIA
I'm scared I'm falling in love with
you.

MUTT
And that's a bad thing?

Mutt grazes Shania's neck with a soft kiss, but something's still nagging her. She looks up at the ceiling.

SHANIA
You've done this before. You've
been married. Twice.

MUTT
Somebody's been doing their
homework.

Shania's brow only furrows deeper.

SHANIA
How do I know I'm not the next bad
decision?

Mutt opens his eyes, turns Shania's face toward him.

MUTT
Nothing's been like you. Nothing's
been even close.

As Mutt pulls Shania in for another kiss, PRE-LAP the sound
of SLEIGH BELLS.

EXT. DEERHURST RESORT (CANADA) - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

The resort is decked out in Christmas finery.

SUPER: Six Months Later.

As we RACK FOCUS on the Christmas tree out front, we notice
it's covered in more than just Christmas decorations - it's
also draped in WEDDING BELLS and WHITE TULLE...

INT. MAIN LODGE - DEERHURST RESORT - NIGHT

Shania looks up adoringly at Mutt as the two cut their
wedding cake in a rustic hall, surrounded by family and
friends - Native and white relatives alike. Shania's never
looked happier in her entire life. Over at a corner table,
Mary sits alone, lost in the music. Shania walks over to her
with a slice of cake.

SHANIA
Mary? You alright?

MARY
I just wish your mother could be
here to see you so happy.

Shania puts the cake on the table and sits next to Mary.

SHANIA
She's here. And she's even happier
that you're with me.

Mary smiles, dabs a tear away with her napkin.

MARY

Everything's happened so fast.
I just hope it's not too fast.

Mary looks like she wants to say more, but suddenly Shania feels Mutt's gaze, waiting for her on the dance floor. She looks up, catches his eye. He gives her a nod: *get over here*. Shania grins and starts to rise.

SHANIA

We'll talk later.

Shania squeezes Mary's shoulder and beelines for Mutt. Mary watches them dance, a hint of worry in her eyes.

EXT. DEERHURST RESORT - NIGHT

Mutt and Shania push their way through a CHEERING crowd tossing rice over their heads. A town car festooned with ribbons and "Just Married" banner waits for them. Shania pauses to take a moment with Carrie Ann (26).

CARRIE ANN

Well, you're finally getting out.
It's for good this time, isn't it?

Shania gives a bittersweet smile.

SHANIA

I'll be back to visit.

CARRIE ANN

If you get too "Shania," I'll kick
your ass.

SHANIA

You better.

Shania and Carrie Ann share a smile and a hug. PRE-LAP the shrill sound of a PHONE RINGING.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VILLA (ANGUILLA) - DAY

Out on the patio, Shania swings lazily in a hammock while Mutt plays around on his guitar. Shania looks over her shoulder as the phone goes to voicemail.

HENRY (O.S.)

Shania, it's Henry again. What the hell are you doing in Anguilla?

(MORE)

HENRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
We need you in Nashville, now, to
talk about the new album. Get your
ass down here, you hear me?!

Click. Unconcerned by the voicemail, Shania hops out of the hammock, takes a running leap and dives into the pool.
UNDERWATER SHOT: Shania drifts blissfully, hair floating around her...just as she's about to break surface, we -

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

We follow the back of a WOMAN as she walks purposefully through the hallways. Familiar faces stop and stare.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

Henry sits at his desk engrossed in paperwork.

SHANIA (O.S.)
Hello Henry.

Henry looks up grumpily and double takes.

HENRY
What did you do to your hair?

It's not a compliment. REVEAL Shania standing in the doorway looking a little...different. Hair sleeker and more blown out, everything a touch more glam. But it's more than just the glow of a newlywed. Shania's also got an aura of newfound confidence about her. She gives Henry a sarcastic smile.

SHANIA
Glad to see you too, Henry.

INT. HALLWAY - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

Henry and Shania walk-and-talk on their way down the hall.

HENRY
While you were off gallivanting with your mystery husband, we had a reshuffle at the top. Luke Lewis will be joining us for this meeting. Our new label president. He and I'll be working hand in hand.

Shania and Henry have reached the conference room door. Henry pauses before he opens it.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Best to let me do the talking, if
you know what's good for you.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

Shania bites her lip as Henry lays out the plan to new label president LUKE LEWIS (50's, well-tanned, well-groomed).

HENRY
We learned from our mistakes on the debut. So for the follow-up we're thinking of returning to country roots with a more conservative image -

LUKE
If you don't mind, Henry, I'd like to hear what Shania thinks.

Shania looks at Luke with new respect. His lack of accent shows he's an out-of-towner, a carpetbagger like herself.

SHANIA
Actually, I've already written the whole album.

Henry gives Shania the world's most condescending eye-roll.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
There's going to be rock songs, country songs, country-rock-pop songs, a song I wrote for my parents after they died -

HENRY
Luke, we haven't vetted any of these songs -

SHANIA
And I know who I want to produce it. The same guy I've been cowriting with these past few months.

LUKE
Uh, ok...
(intrigued)
And who is that?

SHANIA
(airily)
Mutt Lange.

Luke almost falls out of his chair.

LUKE
The AC/DC Def Leppard Mutt Lange?
That's your producer?

SHANIA
That's my husband.

Henry coughs uncomfortably. On Luke, still flabbergasted.

LUKE
Can you give us a minute, Shania?

INT. HALLWAY - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Shania stifles a smile as she listens to Henry ranting inside the conference room.

HENRY (O.S.)
First it was the belly button.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Luke watches Henry pace angrily about the conference room.

HENRY
Now she wants to grind across the stage in Spandex flashing everyone the devil horns. She's supposed to be making country records, for Chrissakes!

LUKE
You can't argue with 100 million album sales, Henry. Lange has the Midas touch. Everything he touches turns 10x platinum.

The receptionist pops her head in the door.

RECEPTIONIST
A fax from a Mr. Robert Lange?

Luke practically tears the fax out of her hand and starts reading it.

LUKE

Holy shit.

HENRY

Now what?

LUKE

He wants privileges to record
outside of Nashville.

HENRY

Of course he does.

LUKE

And a proposed budget of 750K.

HENRY

Is he insane? That's five times the
average cost of a Nashville album!

LUKE

He's also offered to personally
cover everything over 200K.

On Henry, the smirk wiping off his face.

HENRY

My God. He's buying creative
control.

(SLAMS fist down!)

This is robbery!

LUKE

This is the coolest thing ever.

Off Henry's enraged look -

INT. HALLWAY - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

Luke steps out of the conference room.

LUKE

Miss Twain, your album contract.
(for her ears only)
Now go show these old country farts
what you can do.

Luke gives Shania a wink. She smiles.

SHANIA

I think we're really going to like
working together, Luke.

Shania gives Luke's hand a hearty shake.

INT. BEDROOM - MUTT'S COTTAGE (ENGLAND) - NIGHT

Shania and Mutt make love, rolling over pages of sheet music scattered all around them on the bed. Mutt pauses above her, the tips of their noses touching.

MUTT

You know how amazing you are?

Mutt plants a row of kisses all down Shania's body.

MUTT (CONT'D)

Soon the whole world will know...

Shania doesn't answer, just shivers with pleasure.

INT. LIVE ROOM - ARP TRACK PRODUCTIONS (MONTREAL) - DAY

Shania sings while the SESSION MUSICIANS lay down their parts for "**(IF YOU'RE NOT IN IT FOR LOVE) I'M OUTTA HERE!**" Almost like a school cafeteria, the musicians are split into two cliques (rock and country) on separate sides of the studio. Mutt sits behind the glass, choreographing it all.

SHANIA

*Let me make it clear to you my
dear, If you're not in it for love
I'm outta here -*

MUTT (ON INTERCOM)

Cut, cut, cut.

The musicians stop playing. Mutt and Shania talk to each other through the glass.

MUTT (CONT'D)

Honey, I think you're waiting a little too long after "love" to come in.

SHANIA

Well honey, I think that because the words are very decisive, I should come in on the downbeat.

MUTT

But honey, I really think you're just a *fraction* too late with your entrance -

The COUNTRY GUITARIST leans over to the ROCK GUITARIST.

COUNTRY GUITARIST
Who's gonna win this time?

ROCK GUITARIST
Not us.

Shania and Mutt have reached a consensus.

MUTT
Ok, split the difference. Measure
70, take 150.

Off the musicians' weary looks, we -

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

Playback session for Mercury executives.

SUPER: 914,527 takes later.

"ANY MAN OF MINE" plays. Shania, Mutt and Luke bob along enthusiastically while Henry's scowl grows ever darker.

SHANIA (V.O.)
*And when I cook him dinner and I
burn it black, He better say yeah,
mm, I like it like that.*

Henry recoils and shuts off the tape player.

HENRY
I don't get it. He's supposed to
like it when she burns his dinner?

SHANIA
It's about women having an anthem
for men to treat them with respect.

HENRY
But it's so - *demanding*.

MUTT
Wait until you hear it five times
in a row on every radio station in
Davidson County.

Henry turns to Mutt, seething.

HENRY

You don't know how this town works,
 "Mutt." Our DJ's play country. Not
 a fiddle stadium rock sandwich!
 Mark my words, no DJ is going to
 play this record without a fight.
 (glares at Shania)
 It's *deja vu all over again* with
 you!

Before Shania can respond, Luke jumps in.

LUKE

I'll fight for it.

HENRY

What?!

LUKE

You heard me. It deserves a chance.

Henry throws up his hands, dissociating himself.

HENRY

Your funeral, Luke.

Shania turns to Mutt with an excited smile.

EXT. SANTA YNEZ RANCH (CALIFORNIA) - DAY

Mary and Shania walk up to a beautiful California ranch home.

MARY

If you want millions of album
 sales, the cover better look like a
 million bucks.

Shania stops short, watching the eccentric JOHN DEREK setting up camera equipment in his bathrobe with the help of his much younger wife BO (as in, "10") DEREK.

SHANIA

Remind me how you found this guy?

MARY

He's married to Bo Derek. He knows
 a thing or two about photographing
 beautiful people. They say he's
 tough, but he'll get you the best.

SHANIA
Bring it on.

CUT TO:

John glares at Shania from behind his camera as she holds for a close-up wearing a simple white blouse.

JOHN
Damn it! What am I going to do about that crooked nose?

CUT TO:

Shania poses with a horse as John tries to find an angle.

JOHN (CONT'D)
For Chrissakes, this isn't working.
Let's try the pool so we don't see how overweight you are.

Shania puts her hands on her hips, mortified.

SHANIA
Excuse me?!

But John's already walking over to the pool. Bo gives Shania an apologetic smile.

BO
You're doing great. Raquel Welch had already left in tears by now.

CUT TO:

Shania poses in the pool wearing a cowboy hat as John keeps SNAPPING PHOTOS.

JOHN
Damn it to hell! Somebody get me a knife so I can cut off that goddamn nose!!!

SHANIA
(still posing)
Not before I cut off your balls!

JOHN
Ok, enough. I can't take this anymore.

Shania climbs out of the pool in a huff, cursing silently, and wraps herself in a towel.

MARY
Eilleen!

Mary beckons from John's tripod. Shania stomps angrily over.

SHANIA
What an asshole!

MARY
What a photographer...

Shania joins Mary in looking at the camera's LCD preview image.

SHANIA
(gasps)
Oh my God. It's perfect.

REVEAL the image, Shania in the pool wearing the cowboy hat and looking straight into the camera.

INT. NASHVILLE RADIO STATION - DAY

INSERT - the ANY MAN OF MINE single and WOMAN IN ME album covers (with John's photos) on a desk. A NASHVILLE DJ listens skeptically on his headphones. He takes the headphones off and picks up the phone, talking to Luke.

NASHVILLE DJ
I don't know, man. This doesn't
sound like country to me.

INT. LUKE'S OFFICE - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

Luke pleads into the phone, with Shania and Mutt sitting beside him.

LUKE
Just go with me on this. Long enough
to get a reaction from the public.

INTERCUT LUKE/DJ

The DJ grudgingly surrenders.

NASHVILLE DJ
You get one spin.

The DJ puts down the phone, puts his headphones back on and speaks into his mic.

NASHVILLE DJ (CONT'D)
 Gooood morning Nashville. Here we
 go with a new single from Shania
 Twain.

The DJ hits play on "**WHOSE BED HAVE YOUR BOOTS BEEN UNDER?**"

BACK TO Luke, Shania and Mutt listening to faint music from the DJ's line. Shania fidgets uneasily in her seat. After a couple more beats, Luke speaks into the receiver.

LUKE
 What's happening?

RING RING RING! The DJ can barely keep track of all the different phone lines lighting up at the same time!

NASHVILLE DJ
 Dude, it's blowing up-

The DJ hops quickly off onto another phone line.

NASHVILLE DJ (CONT'D)
 Yeah, yeah, I got your replay
 request!

In his office, Luke turns to Mutt and Shania, elated.

LUKE
 Looks like you've got a dynamite
 single, Mr. and Mrs. Lange.

Mutt wraps his arm around Shania and plants a kiss on her cheek as she looks at Luke with a stupid grin on her face. As the song continues over the following few scenes-

INT. NASHVILLE RECORD STORE - DAY

The Woman In Me album disappears off the shelf by the armfuls as FANS load up on Shania swag.

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

A SALES VP shows a disgruntled Henry a record sale chart.

SALES VP
 Usually record sales work like an
 EKG machine - up, down, down, up.
 But this...it's just an exponential
 rise.

HENRY
 I still hate it. But I'll take the
 10 percent.

End "Boots" music as we -

TRANSITION TO:

INT. TNN STUDIO (NASHVILLE) - NIGHT

Shania, poised and professional, sits before interviewer DEBRA MAFFETT filming a segment for *TNN Country News*. She's still got a whiff of country to her wardrobe, but her style is clearly evolving in a more trend-savvy direction.

DEBRA
 Your sophomore album just became
 the best-selling album by a female
 artist in the history of country
 music. Yet you've chosen not to
 tour. Why is that?

SHANIA
 I bet you're thinking it's because
 "Shania can't sing live...she's a
 puppet under the influence of her
 producer husband..." Yeah, I've
 heard it all. When the real reason
 is, I just want enough hits for a
 great show and happen to be totally
 in love with my co-writer. It's as
 simple as that!

(laughs)
 And when I do tour, I'm going to
 give it all I've got to make it
 everything the fans have been
 waiting for.

Shania looks ahead confidently, assured in her process.

EXT. TNN STUDIO (NASHVILLE) - NIGHT

Shania slips on a leather jacket as she exits the studio and begins walking down the street, when she hears ROWDY CHEERING from a nearby bar. Curious, she pauses and pokes her head in.

INT. COUNTRY BAR - NASHVILLE - NIGHT

SHANIA'S POV: A cross-section of NASHVILLE WOMEN - from faded debutantes to Vanderbilt sorority girls to poor coal miners' daughters - are all up on the bar, singing along in round robin karaoke to "**ANY MAN OF MINE.**" Any woman who's ever wanted to hear a man say simply:

WOMEN
Yeah, I like it that way!!!

EXT. COUNTRY BAR - NASHVILLE - NIGHT

Grinning so hard it hurts, Shania skips the rest of the way down the street.

EXT. SAINT REGIS FALLS ESTATE (NEW YORK) - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A sprawling Adirondack-style estate on a peaceful lake - Shania and Mutt's new combined home and workplace.

INT. HOME STUDIO - SAINT REGIS FALLS - DAY

Of course, this isn't your run-of-the-mill home studio. Everything is absolutely top-of-the-line professional. Shania and Mutt stand before a squeaky clean whiteboard.

MUTT
Isn't it beautiful? The blank board. Everything out ahead of us...

Shania doesn't look quite as enthused. She's tapping her pencil on her notebook, biting her lip.

SHANIA
We've got 16 tracks to fill up. I'm gonna need new material.

Mutt watches Shania flip through the pages of her notebook.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
I'm not even sure what to write about.

Mutt touches Shania's hand gently.

MUTT
Life has robbed you of your childhood. So write about being a woman.

Shania stops turning pages, looks up at him.

SHANIA
I want one song from my childhood.

"COME ON OVER" SONGWRITING/RECORDING MONTAGE

- In the home studio, Shania gives her all to "**BLACK EYES BLUE TEARS.**" She's alone with her music in the vocal booth with only Mutt listening to this very personal song.

SHANIA
Black eyes I don't need 'em. Blue tears gimme freedom....I'd rather die standing Than live on my knees. Begging please, no more...

- Mutt crosses off "Black Eyes" on the board and eyes all the other song names listed below it.

- In the live room, Shania sings a verse of "**ROCK THIS COUNTRY**" with SESSION MUSICIANS. The instrumentation is noticeably slicker, almost totally de-countryfied.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
We're gonna rock this country...Ah, ooh, na, na, na...

- Mutt crosses off "Rock This Country" on the board. All songs are crossed out except "Come On Over." The title track.

- Back in the live room of the home studio, Shania sings "**COME ON OVER.**" She's having more fun now, dancing around between the musicians, who smile along with her. Mutt grins from the control room as he watches her.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
Get a life, get a grip...You can unwind, take a load off your mind.

- **QUICK, CLOSE CUTS:** Shania getting touched up in a photo studio. Hair, eyes, lips all tweaked to perfection.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
Make a wish, make a move...Come on over, come on in...

Shania poses for the international Come On Over album cover. No more mom jeans, no more scrunchies - just a bare shoulder, half-smile and simple, direct look into the camera. Her transformation into musical goddess is complete.

END MONTAGE (END MUSIC).

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HENRY'S OFFICE - MERCURY RECORDS - DAY

Luke and Henry have just finished listening to playback. Henry picks up the phone and starts dialing angrily.

LUKE
Give it up, Henry...

Henry ignores Luke, barking into the phone.

HENRY
Shania, we need to talk about this
"Honey I'm Home" demo.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - HOME STUDIO - SAINT REGIS FALLS - DAY

"Come On Over" plays softly in the b.g. as Shania talks on the phone to Henry, kicking her feet up on the console.

SHANIA
Oh yeah, what's up?

INTERCUT HENRY/SHANIA

HENRY
We can't have a song with lyrics
about PMS. Nobody wants to hear
about your female troubles.

On Shania's amused face. Then RING RING! Shania has another call. She swivels in her chair like a busy executive.

SHANIA
Hold on, call coming in.
(on other line)
Hello, this is Shania?

INT. DOUG MORRIS'S OFFICE (LOS ANGELES) - DAY

Universal President DOUG MORRIS talks to Shania on the phone from his lavish office with views of the Hollywood Hills.

DOUG
Shania, Doug Morris - new head of
Universal Music Group.

INTERCUT SHANIA/DOUG

DOUG (CONT'D)

I just wanted to congratulate you on all your success thus far and wish you luck on the upcoming album.

SHANIA

Thanks, Doug, we're really excited about it, too.

(innocently)

Just having a little trouble getting final approval on a lyric.

DOUG

That so? What seems to be the problem?

Back to Mercury Records. RING RING! Another call comes in on Henry's phone. Luke glances at the ID, smirking.

LUKE

It's the boss.

Terrified, Henry picks up the other phone line.

DOUG (O.S.)

Henry? The PMS stays on the album.

HENRY

Yes sir, absolutely, sir.

SPLIT-SCREEN REVEAL that Shania is on the line, too.

SHANIA

(to Henry)

Thanks, sugardoll.

Off Luke's amused, Henry's defeated and Shania's jubilant reactions, we start the working girl's anthem "**HONEY I'M HOME.**"

COME ON OVER TOUR PREP/PROMOTION MONTAGE

INT. CD PROCESSING PLANT - DAY

One by one, THOUSANDS OF CD'S are pressed and color-printed with the Come On Over artwork.

INT. MALL - DAY

INSERT - COME ON OVER ALBUM COVER, as Shania smiles while signing away multiple copies for FANS at a promo appearance. A REPORTER covers the story live from the scene.

MALL REPORTER

Shania Twain's new album Come On Over is taking the world by storm, breaking her own record as best-selling country album -

INT. FRENCH CANADIAN TV STUDIO - DAY

A FRENCH CANADIAN REPORTER speaks in the studio with an image Shania on the cover of Rolling Stone in the b.g.

FRENCH CANADIAN REPORTER

(in subtitled French)

- and setting a new record for best-selling album by a female artist in any genre ever.

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - NASHVILLE - DAY

Mary opens the front door and is instantly besieged by a MOB OF SHANIA FANS thrusting CD's and pens in her face! She shuts the door fast and collapses against it, out of breath.

SHANIA

The car won't start, it's falling apart, I was late for work and the boss got smart...

EXT. NASHVILLE STREETS - DAY

Shania is walking down the street in sunglasses, when an EAGLE-EYED FAN recognizes her and stops her. It doesn't take long before an entire MOB OF FANS had surrounded her, begging for autographs! A SECURITY GUARD pushes through the crowd and helps Shania force her way through.

SHANIA

...With all this stress, I must confess, This could be worse than PMS.

INT. HOME GYM - SAINT REGIS FALLS - DAY

Shania does a grueling dance workout in front of the mirror, lip-syncing along to her song.

SHANIA

*This job ain't worth the pay...Hey,
hey, hey, hey...*

INT. HOME STUDIO - SAINT REGIS FALLS - DAY

Shania and her ROAD BAND are practicing live show choreography to "Honey I'm Home" as Mutt supervises. It's a demanding performance for Shania, complete with high kicks and Freddie Mercury "punch a hole in the sky" moves.

SHANIA

*Honey, I'm home and I had a hard
day. Pour me a cold one and oh, by
the way...honey, I'm home.*

Shania strikes a final pose. Mutt grins and gives a thumbs up of approval. Shania flops down, exhausted.

END MONTAGE (End Music).

INT. TV STUDIO - AUSTRALIA - DAY

Shania is being interviewed by an AUSTRALIAN REPORTER on Hey Hey, It's Saturday.

AUSTRALIAN REPORTER

Come On Over is currently #1 in Australia, and on track to release an incredible 12 singles! And Shania's here today to tell us about her plans for her first ever concert tour.

Shania smiles with gratitude at the praise.

EXT. STREETS OF LONDON - DAY

A UK REPORTER speaks to camera live from the streets.

UK REPORTER

As London gets ready to welcome Shania, tickets for some dates sold out in an incredible 30 minutes.

In the b.g., a London bus with Shania's face plastered on it goes rolling by.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HOME STUDIO - SAINT REGIS FALLS - DAY

Shania sits curled up on the couch watching the image of the UK reporter on the TV screen.

MUTT (O.S.)
They're waiting for you.

Shania turns down the volume as Mutt enters and sits before the mix console, giving her a smile.

MUTT (CONT'D)
Just need to take a bit more twang
out of the international mixes.
(joking)
And you'll be ready for
world domination.

Shania fiddles with the fringe of the pillow, watching Mutt work, the levels on the console jumping up and down.

SHANIA
Can't you just come for the first
leg?

Mutt keeps his eyes on the level he's adjusting.

MUTT
Darling, you know I don't like
being away from the studio. You'll
have a world class team looking
after you. And we'll talk after
every show.

Mutt swivels in his chair to face Shania, suddenly serious.

MUTT (CONT'D)
Just one last thing to take care
of.

SHANIA
(sighs)
I know. I just wish there was
another way.

Mutt scoots over and puts a sympathetic hand over Shania's.

MUTT

This kind of thing is never easy.
But the sooner you do it, the
better for everyone.

On Shania, troubled and torn.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. MARY'S OFFICE - NASHVILLE - DAY

A flustered Mary tries to field a barrage of phone calls. The place is a total mess. Merch boxes are stacked everywhere, piles of mail unopened. Mary winces at the sound of an angry rant coming indistinctly from her phone receiver.

MARY

I know I'm behind on the sales report but I just need a little more time.

(beat)

Hello? Are you still there?

(no response)

Damn!

SHANIA (O.S.)

Mary?

Mary turns. Shania approaches Mary's desk, twisting her fingers nervously. Mary reads in her face what's coming. Slowly, she puts the phone down with a resigned click.

EXT. NASHVILLE PARK - DAY

Mary sits on a bench next to Shania, frozen in anger.

SHANIA

Please try and understand.

MARY

I gave up *everything* for you. My finances. My marriage. Time with my kids.

SHANIA

I'm going on tour. *International* tour. You don't have experience in either of those things.

MARY
 (desperate)
 Give me one more shot, Eilleen.
 I'll get a handle on everything -

SHANIA
 Mutt's already hired a new manager.

On Mary, stunned and heartbroken. Shania grasps for some form of reparations.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
 Look, I'll keep you on the payroll
 until you get on your feet -

MARY
 You can't put a price on loyalty,
 Eilleen. If there's any Eilleen
 still in you.
 (coldly)
 I'll have my lawyer get in touch
 with you. And Mutt.

Mary gets up and walks away stiffly. She looks back briefly.

MARY (CONT'D)
I thought of you as my daughter.

Shania sits, feeling terrible, watching Mary walk away.

EXT. ONTARIO HIGHWAY 101 (CANADA) - DAY

Shania's TOUR BUS, a monster on wheels with blacked out windows, shoots along Shania's hometown highway.

EXT. SUDBURY COMMUNITY ARENA - DAY

A "Welcome Home, Shania!" sign signals the communal pride in the return of a native daughter. The sense of excitement among FANS mobbed around the entrance is palpable.

INT. BACKSTAGE - SUDBURY COMMUNITY ARENA - DAY

We weave past ROADIES and GUITAR TECHS in a beehive of pre-concert activity until we find Shania's posh new manager BARBARA going over Shania's concert rider with a STAGEHAND.

BARBARA
 Six large ripe California oranges
 suitable for juicing, six lemons,
 three papayas, three mangoes -

SUDBURY STAGEHAND
Wait a minute. No booze?

BARBARA
Not even a root beer.
(back to list)
One small watermelon, three pounds
carrots, three medium beets -

We continue past Barbara down the hall into:

INT. SHANIA'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Shania stares into the mirror, jaw tight with nerves, with Carrie Ann (32) standing next to her for moral support.

SHANIA
How do I look?

CARRIE ANN
Like a nervous wreck.
(then)
A *superstar* nervous wreck.

Shania manages a self-deprecating smile. Carrie Ann takes her by the shoulders, speaking earnestly.

CARRIE ANN (CONT'D)
Eilleen, you're gonna be great. You
worked your whole life for this.
It's your time now.

Shania nods. Her gaze falls on a picture of her parents pinned up on her mirror. She reaches out to touch it.

EILLEEN (V.O., AGE 18)
I'm gonna make it. No matter what
it takes.

Carrie Ann gives Shania's shoulders a squeeze.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) PRE-LAP
Ladies and gentleman, please
welcome Shania Twain!

INT. SUDBURY COMMUNITY ARENA - NIGHT

Shania high-fives FANS on the way to the stage as the band plays the iconic opening notes of "**MAN! I FEEL LIKE A WOMAN!**" She runs up on stage and bounces around, full of energy.

SHANIA
Are you ready, Sudbury?!

The crowd ROARS IN RESPONSE!

SHANIA (CONT'D)
I SAID, ARE YOU READY, SUDBURY?!?!

Now comes the real music cue: *do do, do-do do, do do*. Shania strikes a pose, silhouetted against a pyrotechnic waterfall.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
*Let's go, girls. I'm going out
tonight, I'm feelin'
alright...Yeah, I want to scream
and shout - Uh.*

An EXPLOSION OF FIREWORKS launches, and the crowd LOSES IT!

COME ON OVER TOUR/MUSIC VIDEO MONTAGE

For the next verse, we break into a GRID DISPLAY showcasing Shania's many venues and outfits (including her affinity for vinyl pants, leopard print and tracksuit bottoms): **Toronto**. **Montreal**. **Philadelphia**. **Dallas** (sporting elaborate braids in her hair). **Atlanta**. **Madison Square Garden**. **Las Vegas**. **Miami** (singing with **ELTON JOHN**). **Sydney**. A who's who list of the biggest and most famous arenas in the world - she plays them all.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
*No inhibitions...Is the prerogative
to have a little fun and -*

TRANSITION TO:

In the chorus, we embark on a SHOT-FOR-SHOT recreation of the iconic "Man I Feel Like A Woman" video, a gender-bending parody of Robert Palmer's "Addicted to Love" video.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
*Oh, oh, oh, go totally crazy...
Man! I feel like a woman!*

EXT. ARENA - DAY

AERIAL SHOT of the ARMY OF FANS lining up outside a stadium with a larger-than-life Shania poster draped on its front.

SHANIA (O.S.) PRE-LAP
(on phone)
I wish you could see this. It's
totally insane.

INT. LIVING ROOM - TOUR BUS - DAY

Shania, on the phone with Mutt, stares out the window at all the fans. A beat as a melancholy expression crosses her face.

SHANIA
I really miss you.

EXT. CHATEAU DE SULLY (SWITZERLAND) - DAY

Mutt talks to Shania on an old school flip phone, standing on the grounds of a magnificent Swiss lakeside chateau.

MUTT
I wish I could be there, too -

Mutt waves wildly to a group of CONSTRUCTION GUYS carrying a bunch of 2x4's toward the back patio.

MUTT (CONT'D)
Whoa! Non, non! Là-bas!

Mutt points in the opposite direction, and the Construction Guys interlock in a brief pile-up as they attempt to reverse their route. Mutt sighs and speaks back into the phone.

MUTT (CONT'D)
Listen, darling, gotta go. Just
enjoy it. And the Chateau will be
all ready for you when it's over.
Have a great show.

Mutt snaps the phone shut and runs after the workers.

INT. LIVING ROOM - TOUR BUS - DAY

Shania hangs up the phone with a sigh. She stares out the window, watching the CROWDS mill outside through the tinted glass. ONE FAN gazes through the window without realizing he's looking right at Shania. She stares impassively back, then lowers the shade. Feeling more lonely and disconnected the more famous she gets...

TRANSITION TO:

COWBELL INTRO of "**THAT DON'T IMPRESS ME MUCH.**" Launch into a SHOT-FOR-SHOT recreation of the equally iconic video. Over the first verse, we see another GRID DISPLAY of Shania's accolades and more concerts: holding up **Grammys**. Performing at the **CMA Awards** in an all-pink cowgirl outfit. On **Jay Leno**. **Ottawa**. **Hollywood Bowl**. **Chicago**. **Boston**. **Wembley**. **Dublin**.

SHANIA

*I've known a few guys who thought
they were pretty smart...Oh, oh,
you think you're something else...*

Over the chorus, we go back to the music video.

SHANIA (CONT'D)

*Okay, so you're Brad Pitt?...That
don't impress me much.*

INT. STAGE - COREL CENTRE (OTTAWA) - NIGHT

As we break into the bridge, Shania raises the arm of a YOUNG GIRL guest singer (Pre-fame Avril Lavigne, age 14).

SHANIA

*Let's hear it for Avril Lavigne,
this concert's youth contest
winner!*

EXT. CORAL SKY AMPHITHEATER - WEST PALM BEACH - NIGHT

Shania works the stage at her final concert.

**SUPER: West Palm Beach. 165 shows later. Final concert on
Come On Over tour.**

We feature the road band, working the crowd just as hard as Shania. FANS SPANNING GENERATIONS sing along.

SHANIA

*You're one of those guys who likes
to shine his machine....That don't
impress me.*

FIREWORKS and CONFETTI EXPLODE on the stage as Shania, wearing a Florida Panthers jersey, sings her final note!

SHANIA (CONT'D)

*Thank you so much, everyone! I'll
be back!*

Shania wave to the audience as she runs off backstage.

INT. SHANIA'S DRESSING ROOM - TOUR BUS - NIGHT

Shania takes off her mic, wipes off her make-up and crumples into a heap in front of her mirror. No joy. No relief. Just utter exhaustion. She stares at her cellphone for a beat.

Nothing. Then picks it up and dials Mutt. Mutt's line RINGS and RINGS. But nobody answers...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHATEAU DE SULLY (SWITZERLAND) - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

The newly repaired chateau towers grandly over the lake.

SUPER: 2 years later.

The ballad "**FROM THIS MOMENT ON**" begins faintly in the b.g.

SHANIA (V.O.)
From this moment, life has begun.
...From this moment on.

We PUSH SLOWLY IN on the balcony.

INT. NURSERY - CHATEAU DE SULLY - DAY

Shania (35), sporting a baby bump, and Mutt (52) are giving a tour of their new nursery to their neighbors and best friends: the similarly pregnant MARIE-ANNE (35) and her model-handsome husband FREDERIC THIEBAUD (30). Shania reaches out and spins around a baby mobile.

SHANIA
...And we're going to hang a guitar
on this last rod.

MARIE-ANNE
Ah! *Trop mignon.*

Mutt smiles but looks noticeably bored. He turns and claps Fred on the back.

MUTT
Let's leave the girls to their
nurseries, eh Fred? Fancy a drink?

Fred looks torn but obliges. His English is adorably broken.

FRED
Ladies, we will see you for dinner.

Mutt and Fred exit. Shania looks after them fondly, then turns to Marie-Anne.

SHANIA

Marie-Anne, I can't thank you enough. We couldn't have got the place ready without you.

Marie-Anne takes a little time to respond.

MARIE-ANNE

I was happy to translate for Mutt. You are lucky to have such a good man.

SHANIA

He's going to be a great dad. They both will be.

Marie-Anne smiles back, though it doesn't reach her eyes.

EXT. PATIO - CHATEAU DE SULLY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Mutt stands with Fred at the bar, uncorking a bottle of wine.

FRED

It's a boy right? Have you picked a name?

MUTT

(shrugs)

You'd have to ask Eilleen. It was her idea in the first place.

On Fred's befuddled reaction to this strange comment.

MUTT (CONT'D)

Pinot ok?

Mutt doesn't wait for an answer, just starts pouring.

INT. NURSERY - CHATEAU DE SULLY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The baby mobile rotates in a breeze passing through the open window. Shania closes her eyes and exhales. Then turns and smiles at Marie-Anne.

SHANIA

Fresh air. Mountains. Nature. Could there be a better place to raise our kids?

Marie-Anne gives a tight smile back.

MARIE-ANNE

I hope you will be happy here.

SHANIA

Are you kidding? To be away from it all? It's paradise...

Shania walks over to the balcony, leaning over it as she watches some distant boats out on the lake.

SHANIA (CONT'D)

Selling millions of albums...world tours...what are those compared to good friends? A home? Family?

(smiles)

That's what really matters. And I can't wait to start.

In the b.g., Marie-Anne watches Shania in an almost calculating way.

SHANIA (V.O.)

*I will love you long as I live,
From this moment on.*

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK, we a hear a relentless TICK, TICK TICK...

Title Card: SUNSHINE

(Or Shania)

(Or Eilleen)

Or all the above

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE (SWITZERLAND) - DAY

We move down from the clock on the wall to Shania (45) staring blankly out a window at the ever-serene Lake Geneva.

SUPER: 9 years later.

Shania's still beautiful, but it's not as easy to keep the weight off as it used to be.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Eilleen?

SHANIA

Oh. Sorry.

Shania refocuses her attention on an inscrutable THERAPIST sitting in a chair across from her.

SHANIA (CONT'D)

I even asked her, "Do you think he's having an affair?" And she looked me straight in the eye and said -

(faux French accent)
"Of course not."

Shania smiles bitterly. There's a jaded edge to her voice.

SHANIA (CONT'D)

Husband and best friend. How do you trust again after a betrayal like that?

The therapist makes a note.

THERAPIST

And how is your health?

SHANIA

Well, the Lyme disease symptoms are subsiding. But I'm still dealing with the dysphonia.

THERAPIST
Dysphonia?

SHANIA
"Tightened vocal box muscles from withheld emotions" is how they explained it.

THERAPIST
When was the last time you sang?

Shania's eyes drift back to Lake Geneva. A beat.

SHANIA
Six years ago.

Shania continues blankly staring out the window.

INT. CAR - STREETS OF CORSEAUX (SWITZERLAND) - DAY

Shania drives past idyllic churches, vineyards, chalet-style houses and views of the Alps. Without seeing any of it.

SHANIA (O.S.) PRE-LAP
(on phone)
The divorce was finalized last week. I found a smaller place a couple minutes away.

INT. HALLWAY - CHATEAU DE SULLY - DAY

Shania walks through the house, talking on the phone. Many rooms are empty or stacked with boxed-up furniture.

SHANIA
I'm halfway moved out of the house and totally exhausted.

CARRIE ANN (O.S.)
Why don't you take a break? Come stay with me and Jeff at the cabin.

Shania holds the phone under one ear as she sifts through a shelf containing a vast collection of albums, separating them into boxes marked "To Keep" and "Garbage."

SHANIA
I don't know. I'd have to take Eja out of school, find someone to watch the house...

Shania pauses, staring down at Mutt's name on a Def Leppard album. She slides the record out of the sleeve, thinking.

CARRIE ANN (O.S.)
Just promise me you'll think about it.

Moved by a sudden rage, **Shania cracks the record over the side of the box like an egg - splintering it into pieces!**

INT. KITCHEN - CHATEAU DE SULLY - EVENING

CLOSE ON a pot of steaming tofu stir-fry. Shania stirs vigorously, then plates the food.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHATEAU DE SULLY - EVENING

Shania and EJA (8, lively, a dead ringer for his dad) eat from plates on the couch - since there's no longer a table.

SHANIA
Kind of like camping, huh?

Eja pauses, staring at a set of grand double doors down the hall, shut fast. The doors to the master bedroom...

EJA
Mommy. When are you going to sleep in your own bedroom again?

Shania stiffens. Then smiles.

SHANIA
When I have time to clean it out.

INT. EJA'S BEDROOM - CHATEAU DE SULLY - NIGHT

While Eja soundly sleeps, Shania lies awake next to him, staring sleeplessly at the ceiling.

EXT. CHATEAU DE SULLY - NEXT DAY

Shania pastes a smile on her face as she walks with Eja to school. On their way, they pass Fred (40), en route to drop off his own daughter JOHANNA (8).

EJA
Johanna, let's go see if the ducks are out this morning.

As Eja and Johanna go bounding off to the path along the lake, Shania and Fred exchange awkward pleasantries.

FREDE
How've you been?

SHANIA
(stiff)
Fine. Ok. How are you and Johanna?

FRED
Surviving.
(sincerely)
If you ever need anything, or just
to talk, I'm here...

As Fred talks, his face goes OUT OF FOCUS. Shania's gaze hones in instead on a COUPLE ON THE LAKEFRONT. She double takes as she sees **it's Mutt and Marie-Anne, standing arm-in-arm.** Fred's voice starts sounding further and further away...

FRED (CONT'D)
Shania? Eilleen?

Fred follows Shania's gaze, but from FRED's POV, there's nobody by the lake but Eja, Johanna and the ducks.

FRED (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

Suddenly, Shania's breath starts coming in short, panicked bursts. Her purse slips from her fingers as her knees buckle underneath her. She'd slip to the ground, too - if Fred wasn't there to catch her.

INT. TIMMINS AIRPORT (ONTARIO, CANADA) - DAY

Carrie Ann (43) waits at Arrivals, scanning the crowd.

EJA (O.S.)
Aunt Carrie!

Carrie spots Eja and Shania, looking incognito and travel-worn, heading toward her across the terminal. Eja runs over into Carrie's arms.

CARRIE ANN
Hey kiddo! I'm so glad you guys
decided to come.

Carrie Ann squeezes Eja then wraps Shania in a hug. As they let go, Shania clocks a nearby tabloid rack with headlines screaming: "Shania Betrayed!" She gives a humorless chuckle.

SHANIA
Even Timmins isn't far enough.

CARRIE ANN
Just ignore it...

Carrie Ann grabs Shania's arm and steers her to the door.

EXT. CARRIE ANN'S CABIN - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A cozy but unpretentious rustic cabin by the lake. Melodic but tentative piano music drifts through the house.

INT. CARRIE ANN'S CABIN - DAY

Carrie Ann sits on the couch listening as Shania plays and sings to the piano, her voice coming in hoarse gasps. After a couple strained measures, Shania stops playing. She traces aimless patterns along the keys.

SHANIA
I have no voice. No music. No husband, no best friend. And the worst part is, all I could say when she finally admitted it was, "You are a bad person!"
(small laugh)
That's all I could get out.

Carrie Ann smiles sympathetically.

CARRIE ANN
(matter-of-fact)
So say it with me now, "she's a selfish bitch."

Shania turns to Carrie Ann and laughs out loud.

SHANIA
"She's a - "
(stops, hushed)
Wait. What if Eja hears?

CARRIE ANN
C'mon, he's heard a lot worse. Let it out.

Carrie Ann starts tapping a beat on the couch.

CARRIE ANN (CONT'D)
She's. A...

SHANIA
(quietly)
Bitch.

CARRIE ANN
I can't hear you.

SHANIA
(little louder)
I said, she's a bitch.

CARRIE ANN
That's right, she's a bitch. A
selfish bitch.

SHANIA
A heartless selfish BACKSTABBING
SECRETARY BITCH!

The sisters dissolve into giggles, real belly-aching laughter like Shania hasn't felt in a very long while. As it subsides, Shania's laughter trails off into a wistful expression.

CARRIE ANN
You ok?

SHANIA
Yeah. There's just something I have
to do.

Off Carrie Ann's questioning look -

EXT. SMALL CABIN - KIRKLAND LAKE (CANADA) - DAY

Shania knocks on the door and waits nervously. Mary's husband BOB KASNER (70) opens up. His face darkens as he sees Shania.

SHANIA
Hello Bob.

BOB
She doesn't want to see you.

Bob tries to shut the door, but Shania steps closer.

EILLEEN
Please. I just need to speak to
her.

Then Mary Bailey (65) pokes her head around the door.

MARY
 (to Bob)
 It's ok.

Bob stumps away grumbling, as Mary slips outside and turns to Shania, taking her in.

MARY (CONT'D)
 Eilleen. It's been a long time.
 (beat)
 How are you?

SHANIA
 Can we take a walk?

Shania looks at her old friend with pleading eyes.

EXT. SHORE OF KIRKLAND LAKE - DAY

Mary stares silently across the lake as Shania stands next to her, hands jammed uncomfortably in her pockets.

SHANIA
 I just came to say how sorry I am.
 For hurting you. For abandoning
 you. And I'm sorry it took my whole
 world falling apart to say it.

Shania looks at Mary, but she gives no reaction. A beat of silence as a breeze passes through the trees. Then Mary quietly begins to speak.

MARY
 Was I angry at you? Of course. For
 a long time.
 (small smile)
 But the truth is, I never quit on
 you Eilleen. Your career or your
 heart.

Mary turns to Shania and touches her lightly on the arm.

MARY (CONT'D)
 So do me a favor. Don't quit on
 yourself.

Shania eyes well with emotion. She bows her head, overwhelmed by Mary's generosity.

EXT. CARRIE ANN'S CABIN - DAY

Shania relaxes on a deckchair with a view of the lake, enjoying a glass of wine with Carrie as they watch Eja and CARRIE'S KIDS swimming at the dock.

CARRIE ANN
Hey! No running on the dock!

Shania's phone PINGS with a new message, sending a smile spreading over her face as she reads it.

CARRIE ANN (CONT'D)
Who's that?

Shania looks up from her phone, embarrassed.

SHANIA
Nobody.

CARRIE ANN
Come on. I know that smile.

With reflexes like a ninja, Carrie Ann snatches the phone.

SHANIA
Hey! Gimme that.
(sighs)
It's just Fred checking in, ok?

CARRIE ANN
(reading aloud)
"A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words." C.S. Lewis. Aww, that's sweet.

Shania rolls her eyes as Carrie returns the phone.

CARRIE ANN (CONT'D)
(mischievously)
And how do we feel about friendly Fred?

Shania spit takes on her wine, letting out a strained laugh.

SHANIA
Hell no, a million times no. I don't need that. I have no desire to be with another man ever again after all this.

CARRIE ANN

All I'm saying is he's the one who knows what you're going through the most.

Shania thinks. Then sighs.

SHANIA

It's our last night. Let's just get drunk.

Shania grabs the bottle and gives herself a generous pour.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CHATEAU DE SULLY - DAY

We open in a shadowy room, just as Shania cautiously pushes open the door. For a beat, she stands silhouetted in the doorway. Then we recognize it's the bedroom she used to share with Mutt. She enters with a GARBAGE BAG and RUBBER GLOVES, moving about the place like a crime scene.

QUICK CUTS: Shania sweeps off all the marriage self-help books on her side of the bed in disgust. Plans for an extravagant property in New Zealand? Also a hard toss.

But as Shania claws back into the deepest recesses of her drawer, she pulls out something unexpected: **her childhood songwriting notebook**. She pauses, staring down at it. A portal to a little girl from long ago...

SHANIA

Well, hello there.

Shania sinks onto the bed, flipping through all the innocent titles of her childhood lyrics like, "Just Like The Storybooks" and "Is Love a Rose?"

SHANIA (CONT'D)

Mutt never knew any of you...

Shania begins singing softly.

SHANIA (CONT'D)

Just like the storybooks say, Like little girls when they lose their boys, and then they cry -

Shania suddenly stops, unable to continue. Her bottom lip quivers. And at last, **at long last, she breaks into tears**. We haven't seen her cry the whole movie, and here come decades worth of it like a full-on tsunami. She rocks back and forth, clutching the book to her chest as she sobs.

EJA (O.S.)
Mommy, are you ok?

A startled Eja runs into the room, hugging Shania in concern.

EJA (CONT'D)
I've never seen you cry.

SHANIA
Don't worry, son. It's a good thing.

Shania clings to Eja, kissing him, smiling through her tears.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHATEAU DE SULLY - LATER

Shania sits cross-legged with her guitar amongst heaps of boxes in the sparse room. She hesitantly tries a chord and winces. It's way out of tune from years of inactivity. After tuning up, she starts playing a simple chord progression (this will be "**TODAY IS YOUR DAY**"). Then, ever so slowly, she begins singing, surprising herself when the notes ring true.

SHANIA
*Don't give up here don't you quit
The moment is now this is it...*

FRED (O.S.)
That's beautiful.

Shania looks up, startled. Fred's standing in the doorway.

FRED (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I just came to bring your mail.

Shania watches Fred awkwardly put down the bag of mail and turn to leave.

SHANIA
You don't have to go.

Fred stops uncertainly. Shania takes a breath, then gives him a shy smile. Allowing herself to be vulnerable.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
I keep thinking about where it went wrong. Maybe because so much of what Mutt and I shared was music. When the music was gone, what was left?

Fred looks surprised but appreciative at Shania opening up.

FRED

I know exactly what you mean.

Shania looks up, meeting Fred's eye. A beat of understanding. Then she gestures down at her guitar.

SHANIA

That's the first time I've been
able to sing in six years.

FRED

Don't stop.

Shania smiles. She picks up her guitar again and begins to play, losing herself in the music.

SHANIA

*...Life's going to kick you around,
Then kick you again when you're
down...*

Fred settles down and watches Shania, respectfully quiet.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAVID FOSTER HOME STUDIO - DAY

SUPER: Los Angeles, 3 weeks later.

Shania, looking totally herself in comfy sweatpants, sings in a vocal booth, while music producer DAVID FOSTER (60) adjusts levels from the control room. Carrie Ann and Eja look on.

SHANIA

*...I said today, yeah. Today. Today
is your day.*

David gives Shania a thumbs up through the glass.

DAVID

Cut. Beautiful. That's a wrap!

Shania takes off her headphones, beaming, and opens the door to the vocal booth. Eja runs up to Shania to give her a hug.

EJA

I'm so proud of you, Mommy.

Carrie Ann wipes away a tear. Then Shania turns to David.

SHANIA

David, I can't thank you enough.
It's been 18 years since I wrote a
song by myself. You helped me find
my voice again.

David looks at Shania with a shrewd smile on his lips.

DAVID
That's just one single. I think
you've got albums to go.

Shania returns the smile.

EXT. PATIO - CHATEAU DE SULLY - NIGHT

Shania multitasks playing guitar and swing dancing as she, Fred, Eja and Johanna dance around the campfire together. As the song finishes, Fred catches Shania and dips her, their faces almost touching. As Shania pops back up and composes herself, face flaming, the kids WHOOP and APPLAUD. Eja beckons to Johanna and points up at the balcony.

EJA
Let's go look for shooting stars!

Shania and Fred smile as Eja and Johanna scamper off. Then look a little self-consciously at each other. Shania wraps her shawl tighter around her, staring out across the lake.

SHANIA
I'm gonna miss this place.

FRED
We'll miss having you as neighbors.

SHANIA
We'll still be neighbors. Just a
little further down the road. At
least for the next six months.

FRED
After that?

SHANIA
Who knows.

Shania looks up at the starry sky. Fred watches her for a beat. Then takes a step closer, an urgency in his voice.

FRED
Eilleen.

Shania turns. They're close. They share a look. Something there between them.

EJA (O.S.)
HEY!

The moment broken, Fred and Shania look up at the kids on the balcony.

EJA (CONT'D)
Why don't you guys just kiss
already?

Fred and Shania look at each other, stunned.

FRED/SHANIA
What?!

JOHANNA
He said, "why don't you guys just
kiss already?!"

Eja and Johanna disappear inside, GIGGLING mischievously. Fred laughs uneasily.

FRED
I didn't put them up to it. I swear-

Fred stops as Shania steps closer to him, as if drawn by a force. Fear in her eyes and in her heart. CLOSE ON their eyes, searching each other's. Then Fred's expression softens.

FRED (CONT'D)
Hey. It's ok.

Shania nods, speechless. Then Fred lifts Shania's chin so her lips meet his. As he wraps an arm around her to pull her in for a kiss, their profiles silhouetted against the stars -

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

A shell-shocked Shania sits before the therapist.

SHANIA
I think I'm in love with my ex-
husband's mistress's ex-husband.

Even the normally unflappable therapist can't stop a slight eyebrow arch at that one.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
But on the plus side, I'm singing
again.

Shania attempts a winsome smile. As we cue the opening of the timeless **"YOU'RE STILL THE ONE."**

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. PUERTO RICO BEACH - SUNSET

WEDDING GUESTS (including Mary, Carrie Ann, Johanna, etc) watch full of emotion as Eja walks Shania up the sandy aisle to meet Fred at the oceanfront "altar" between two palms.

SHANIA (V.O.)

*Mmm, yeah. Looks like we made it.
Look how far we've come my baby.
We mighta took the long way
We knew we'd get there someday.
They said, "I bet. They'll never
make it."*

Fred and Shania look earnestly into each other's eyes as they read their vows. Then just as the sun sets, Fred lifts Shania up into a romantic wedding kiss.

EXT. VILLA (SWITZERLAND) - DAY

Fred and Shania stand aside as MOVERS roll up the door of a MOVING TRUCK parked outside a charming Swiss villa, revealing a wall of boxes inside the cargo hold.

SHANIA (V.O.)

*But just look at us holding on.
We're still together, still going
strong.*

Shania rolls up her sleeves and lifts up a box.

INT. VILLA (SWITZERLAND) - DAY

Shania, Fred, Eja and Johanna collapse sitcom family-style onto a couch, happy in their newly furnished home together.

INT. COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME - JUNE 2011 - DAY

INSERT - "YOU'RE STILL THE ONE" MUSIC VIDEO, playing on a projection screen. A 90's classic.

SHANIA (V.O.)

*You're still the one I run to...I'm
glad we didn't listen, look at what
we would be missin'...*

We reveal Shania sitting at a press conference with AEG Live President JOHN MEGLEN, cameras CLICKING LIKE CRAZY around them. John speaks into his microphone.

JOHN MEGLEN

We're happy to announce that Shania will be performing a 2-year residency at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace!

Shania pauses to acknowledge a round of EXCITED CLAPPING, then speaks into her mic.

SHANIA

Today is a very big turning point for me. I feel as though I'm about to step into a world of endless creative possibilities. Making the most of that has really given me a huge freedom and -
(laughs out loud)
I'm going to go nuts!

JOHN MEGLEN

That's ok, we want her to.

As the cameras resume FLASHING with an even greater frenzy -

EXT. CAESARS PALACE (LAS VEGAS) - NIGHT

SHANIA FANS are lined up around the block of Caesars Palace.

SUPER: December 2012.

SHANIA (O.S.) PRE-LAP
What the hell was I thinking?!

INT. DRESSING ROOM - CAESARS PALACE - NIGHT

Shania's pacing in front of her dressing room mirror in a bejeweled catsuit, while Fred looks on sympathetically.

SHANIA

In ten minutes, I'm about to be lowered onto stage suspended from a motorcycle for my first live performance in seven years. Why didn't I just stick with walking out on stage like a normal person?!

Suddenly, the walkie on Shania's dresser crackles.

VEGAS STAGEHAND (O.S.) (ON WALKIE)
Safety check, one minute warning.

SHANIA
 Jesus effin' Christ!
 (into walkie, sunnily)
 Ok be right there!

Fred takes Shania by the shoulders.

FRED
 Sunshine, you will be *magnifique*.
 And I'll be right there with you.

Fred holds Shania tight, burying his face in her hair.

INT. CAESARS PALACE THEATER - NIGHT

Fred slips into his seat, shaking hands with Luke Lewis as he climbs over him. A long line of Shania's supporters over the years take up the row: Mary, Carrie Ann, Eja and Johanna...

INT. UPPER LEVEL BACKSTAGE - CAESARS PALACE - NIGHT

Shania is hooked up to a harness next to the motorcycle, surrounded by a hovering team of STAGEHANDS. Starting to feel claustrophobic, Shania turns to the group of handlers.

SHANIA
 Can I have a minute?

Almost in unison, the handlers nod and slip out of frame. Shania turns back to the motorcycle. She can see the HUGE CROWD through the hole in the ceiling from which she'll descend. Long way down. She gives a little nervous whimper.

Suddenly, FOOTSTEPS patter across the floor. Shania looks into the shadows, but nobody's there.

SHANIA (CONT'D)
 Hello?

Then into the light steps a little girl.

One we know from many years ago...

12-year-old Eilleen.

Shania's breath catches in her throat. She watches incredulously as Eilleen approaches with her shy gap-toothed smile. Eilleen takes Shania's hand.

EILLEEN
 Don't worry. Everything's gonna be alright.

As if it's the most simple truth in all the world.

Then Eilleen wraps Shania in a hug. Shania's still stunned, but going with it. She squeezes Eilleen extra tight.

SHANIA
For you too.

VEGAS STAGEHAND (O.S.) ON WALKIE
Ten seconds!

Downstairs, the theater lights dim and the crowd lets out an ANTICIPATORY CHEER.

EILLEEN
You better get ready.

Silhouetted by the light, Eilleen lets go of Shania's hand and disappears into the shadows. Shania nods to herself, misty-eyed. Then grabs the motorcycle handles and hops on.

SHANIA
(to self)
Let's go.

And as the opening notes of "**I'M GONNA GETCHA GOOD**" swell, Shania descends toward the stage to THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE...

SHANIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(to crowd)
Let's go!

AUDIENCE POV: SPOTLIGHTS FLOOD on, illuminating Shania standing fearlessly before the crowd. Back in her element.

A singer.

A fighter.

A survivor.

THE END.