

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY

Written by

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1 AN ENDLESS SKY AT TWILIGHT 1

Foreboding. Heat lightning in the distance. Miles of unforgiving, summer-scorched prairie.

BEVERLY (OS)

..."Life is very long..."

2 MILES OF STRAIGHT ROAD 2

Two lanes, not a car in sight. Cracked asphalt undulates over gentle, browned hills, disappears into an infinite horizon.

BEVERLY (OS)

TS Eliot. Not the first person to say it, certainly not the first person to think it.

3 A LAKE IN THE GATHERING DUSK 3

Flat, still. An empty aluminum rowboat lolls listlessly, tied haphazardly to an old wooden dock.

BEVERLY (OS)

But he's given credit for it because he bothered to write it down.

4 AN OLD FARM HOUSE SITTING ATOP A LOW HILL 4

At the end of a long gravel road. Surrounded by towering black walnuts and lace-bark elms. A farm once, no one's put a plow to earth here in decades.

BEVERLY (OS)

So if you say it, you have to say his name after it. "Life is very long:" TS Eliot. Absolutely goddamn right.

Wrap around porches, forgotten gardens. Imposing in the

gathering gloom. A single downstairs window glows.

BEVERLY (OS) (CONT'D)

Give the devil his due. Very few poets could've made it through Eliot's trial and come out, brilliantined and double-breasted and Anglican.

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4 CONTINUED:

4

And now, a face fills the screen --

5 INT. BEVERLY'S DIMLY LIT STUDY - TWILIGHT

5

BEVERLY WESTON. A craggy, wise and deeply sad Okie. We take a long moment, just to study that face.

BEVERLY

Not hard to imagine, faced with Eliot's first wife, lovely Viv, how Crane or Berryman might have reacted, just foot-raced to the nearest bridge; Olympian Suicidalists.

Stares out the window at the darkening, ominous horizon.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

Not Eliot: after sufficient years of ecclesiastical guilt, plop her in the nearest asylum and get on with it.

He sits at a cluttered desk, his face damp with sweat. Nurses a glass of whiskey, his staggered delivery due more to his careful selection of words than drunkenness. He's talking to someone we do not yet see.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

God-a-mighty. You have to admire the purity of the survivor's instinct.

From somewhere upstairs, a THUD. He looks to the ceiling.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

Violet. My wife. She takes pills, sometimes a great many. They affect... among other things, her equilibrium. Fortunately, they eliminate her need for equilibrium...

6 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - TWILIGHT

6

Full of shadows. She sits up slowly from rumpled sheets. We're on her profile, CLOSE, silhouetted against the faint light from the open bathroom door. She hesitates on the edge of the bed, getting her bearings. Finds a pack of Winstons, lights one. Listens to the voices filtering up from below.

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7 INT. THE STUDY - TWILIGHT

7

Beverly shifts, waiting for the sound of more movement from the rooms overhead. When there is none --

BEVERLY

My wife takes pills and I drink.
That's the bargain we've struck.

INTERCUT WITH:

8 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - TWILIGHT

8

She gathers herself to stand. Moves to the door. We FOLLOW HER CLOSELY. Her hair unkempt, her steps unsteady, into --

BEVERLY

The reasons why we partake are
anymore inconsequential.

The hallway, walls lined with photos of long-dead pioneer ancestors and faded school photographs of three daughters.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

The facts are: my wife takes pills and I drink. That's the bargain we've struck, just one paragraph of our marriage contract... cruel covenant. And these facts have over time made burdensome the maintenance of traditional American routine.

She makes her way to the stairs starts down.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

Rather than once more vow abstinence with my fingers crossed in the queasy hope of righting our ship, I've chosen to turn my life over to a Higher Power and join the ranks of the Hiring Class.

The light from the study slices across the living room.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

It's not a decision with which I'm entirely comfortable. I know how to launder my dirty undies. Done it all my life, but I'm finding it's getting in the way of my drinking.

She can see a portion of Beverly's desk, a woman's legs.

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8 CONTINUED:

8

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

Sorry about the heat in here. My wife is cold-blooded and not just in the metaphorical sense. She does not believe in air-conditioning... as if it is a thing to be disbelieved. I knew your father, you know. Bought many a watermelon from Mr Youngblood's fruit stand. He did pass, didn't he??

JOHNNA

Yes, sir.

BEVERLY

May I ask how?

JOHNNA

He had a heart attack. Fell into a flatbed truck full of wine grapes.

BEVERLY

Wine grapes. In Oklahoma. I'm sorry.

VIOLET

Bev...?!

BEVERLY

Yes?

VIOLET

Did you pullish? Did you...Oh, goddamn
it... did. You. Are the police here?

BEVERLY

No...

She stands in the shadows of the living room, confused.

*

VIOLET

Am I looking through window? A window?

BEVERLY

Can you come here?

She steps into the study, emerging from the darkness into light to reveal: VIOLET WESTON. Dissipated, dishevelled, late sixties. She wears pajamas and a much slept-in robe.

VIOLET

Oh. Hello.

She's staring at a woman sitting in front of Beverly's desk: JOHNNA. Thirty, Native American, simply dressed.

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8 **CONTINUED:**

5.
8

BEVERLY

Johnna, the young woman I told you about.

VIOLET

You tell me she's a woman. Wo-man. Whoa-man.

BEVERLY

That I'm hiring --

VIOLET

Oh, you hire women's now the thing. I thought you meant the other woman.

BEVERLY

To cook and clean, take you to the clinic and to the --

VIOLET

(over-articulating)
In the int'rest of ...civil action, your par-tic-u-lars way of speaking, I thought you meant you had thought a whoa-man to be HIRED!

BEVERLY

I don't understand you.

VIOLET

(winsome, to Johnna)
Hello.

JOHNNA

Hello.

VIOLET

I'm sorry.
(curtsies)
Like this.

JOHNNA

Yes, ma'am.

VIOLET

You're very pretty.

JOHNNA

Thank you.

VIOLET

Are you an Indian?

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8 CONTINUED:

6.
8

JOHNNA

Yes, ma'am.

VIOLET

*
*
*

What kind?

JOHNNA

*
*
*

Cheyenne.

VIOLET

Do you think I'm pretty?

JOHNNA

Yes, ma'am.

VIOLET

(curtsies again)
Like...this?
(curtsies again)
Like this?

She stumbles, catches herself.

BEVERLY

Careful...

VIOLET

You're the house now. I'm sorry,
I took some medicine for my mussss...
muscular.

BEVERLY

Why don't you go back to bed,
sweetheart?

VIOLET

Why don't you go fuck a fucking
sow's ass?

BEVERLY

All right.

VIOLET

I'm sorry. I'll be sickly sweet. I'm
soooooooooo sweet. In-el-abrially sweet.

She smiles at Johnna, goes. Beverly watches her disappear
back up the stairs, then --

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8 **CONTINUED:**

8

BEVERLY

We keep unusual hours here. Try not
to differentiate between night and
day. You won't be able to keep a
healthy routine.

JOHNNA

I need the work.

BEVERLY

I myself require very little
attention, thrive without it, sort
of a human cactus. My wife has been
diagnosed with a touch of cancer, so
she'll need to be driven to Tulsa for
her final chemotherapy treatments.
You're welcome to use that American-
made behemoth parked out in the drive.
Welcome to make use of anything,
everything, all this garbage we've
acquired, our life's work. Do you
have any questions?

JOHNNA

What kind of cancer?

BEVERLY

My God, I nearly neglected the punch

line: mouth cancer.

JOHNNA

What pills does she take?

BEVERLY

Valium. Vicodin. Darvon, Darvocet.
Percodan, Percocet. Xanax for fun.
OxyContin in a pinch. And of course
Diluadid. I can't forget Diluadid.

Beverly wobbles to his feet, explores his bookshelf.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

"By night within that ancient house,
Immense, black, damned, anonymous."

(and)

My last refuge, my books: simple
pleasures, like finding wild onions by
the side of a road, or requited love.

He takes a book from the bookshelf, gives it to her.

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8 **CONTINUED:**

8

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

TS Eliot. Read it or not. It isn't
a job requirement, just for your
enjoyment.

(beat)

Here we go, round the prickly pear...

*

Prickly pear prickly pear...

Here we go round the prickly pear...

9 **OPENING TITLES**

9

We're underwater. Light fractures and scatters above. The
surface undulating gently as we GLIDE through a lake's
dark, tenebrous waters on a moonlit night.

A rowboat SLIPS across our field of vision. It's aluminum
hull cutting through the calm above, sending out small waves
as it makes it's way SLOWLY past.

Oars dip in on either side, propelling the small craft toward
deeper water. It slows. Stops. Bobs gently. We wait, watch --

And then suddenly, something large hits the surface above,
indistinct, exploding the calm, coming towards us, sinking
fast as TITLES END --

Prone, silhouetted against a sunlit window across the room. A body, her back to us. The phone RINGS. Once, twice. The body doesn't move. A girl's voice calls from downstairs.

JEAN (OS)

Mom...?

The phone continues to RING. Still no movement.

JEAN (OS) (CONT'D)

Mom...!

Nothing. The ringing stops. A moment of silence, followed by irritated teenage footsteps on the carpeted stairs.

JEAN (OS) (CONT'D)

...Mom...?

The hallway door opens, we're in --

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JEAN, fourteen, precocious, sticks her head in.

JEAN

...Mom?

A sound from the body, still no movement.

BARBARA

Mmm...

JEAN

You didn't hear the phone?

BARBARA

If it's your father, tell him to fuck off.

JEAN

It's Aunt Ivy in Oklahoma.

New deal. She sits up. CLOSE ON: BARBARA FORDHAM, late-forties, fully dressed. She gropes for the phone.

BARBARA

...Ivy? ...what's wrong?

Barb stands, moves slowly to the window. Outside: identical suburban homes, neutral house colors, lawns.

We STUDY Barb as she listens. Greying roots, no make-up, a few extra pounds. A woman who, for reasons we don't yet understand, has decided to stop giving a damn.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

...When...?

Jean passes in the hall. Stops, watching as her mother slowly dissolves, reaches for the sill, lowers herself to sit.

12 INT/EXT. WESTON HOUSE (PAWHUSKA, OKLAHOMA) - DAY 12

A battered Honda Civic makes it's way up the long drive from the highway below, dust swirling behind it. It's hot. Bright.

The Honda parks. IVY WESTON, forties, shy and soft-spoken, attractive enough but expert at hiding it, climbs out. Stares up at the trees surrounding the old farm house. The precarious old barn out back and untended flower beds.

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13 INT. WESTON KITCHEN - DAY 13

Johnna washes a dish at the sink. Watches Ivy's arrival through the kitchen window. Makes no motion to go to her --

14 INT. THE WESTON HOUSE - DAY 14

Ivy steps into the dark house. Drapes drawn, lights off.

IVY

Mom...?

(no answer)

Mom?

Steps into the open door of her father's study. His vacant desk chair, untouched papers, dust motes settling in the sunlight. She takes a moment, then heads upstairs. CARRYING US with her. Finds Violet, in her bedroom, sitting in front of her vanity in near darkness, smoking and on the phone.

VIOLET

...You've been out there...?

Barely acknowledges Ivy's arrival. The room is unruly. Bed unmade. Clothes draped over chairs. Dresser and night-stands cluttered with pills, tissue boxes, creams and lotions.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

...You're going out yourself...?

*

Ivy wanders into the bath. More pills, wet towels on the floor. She turns off the dripping faucet. Picks up towels.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Stop that...

Violet is off the phone, standing in hall, watching Ivy. Ivy stops, briefly chastened. Violet opens a bottle of pills.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You call Barb? What'd she say?

IVY

She's on her way.

VIOLET

What'd you tell her?

IVY

I told her Dad was missing.

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11.

14 CONTINUED:

14

VIOLET

Did you tell her how long he'd been missing?

IVY

Five days.

VIOLET

What did she say?

IVY

She said she was on her way.

VIOLET

Goddamn it, Ivy, what did she say?

IVY

She said she was on her way.

VIOLET

You're hopeless.

(heads back into her room)

Goddamn your father for putting me through this. Seen that office of his, all that mess? I can't make heads or tails of it. He hired this Indian for some goddamn reason and now I have a stranger in my house. What's her name?

Ivy follows her mother, returns to tidying up.

IVY

Johnna. Who was on the phone?

VIOLET

This house is falling apart, something about the basement or the sump pump or the foundation. I don't know anything about it. I can't do this by myself.

IVY

I called Karen.

VIOLET

What did she say?

IVY

She said she'd try to get here.

VIOLET

She'll be a big fat help, just like you.

(MORE)

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14 CONTINUED:

14

VIOLET (CONT'D)

(takes another pill)

I need Barb.

IVY

What's Barb going to be able to do?

Ivy moves on to hanging clothes back in the jammed closet.

VIOLET

What did you do to your hair?

IVY

I had it straightened.

VIOLET

You had it straightened. Why would anybody do that?

IVY

I just wanted a change.

VIOLET

You're the prettiest of my three girls, but you always look like a schlub. Why don't you wear makeup?

IVY

Do I need makeup?

VIOLET

All women need makeup. Don't let anybody tell you different. The only woman who was pretty enough to go without makeup was Elizabeth Taylor and she wore a ton. Stand up straight.

IVY

Mom.

VIOLET

Your shoulders are slumped and your hair's all straight and you don't wear makeup. You look like a lesbian.

Violet takes another pill.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You could get a decent man if you spruced up. A bit, that's all I'm saying.

IVY

I'm not looking for a man.

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14 CONTINUED:

14

VIOLET

There are a lot of losers out there, don't think I don't know that. But just because you got a bad one last time doesn't mean --

IVY

Barry wasn't a loser.

VIOLET

Barry was an asshole. I warned you

from the jump, first time you brought him over here in his little electric car with his stupid orange hair and that turban --

IVY

It wasn't a turban --

VIOLET

You work at a college. Don't tell me there aren't people coming through the door of that library every day.

IVY

You want me to marry some eighteen year old boy from one of these hick towns?

VIOLET

They still have teachers at TU, right? They did when your father taught there.

Violet takes another pill.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

How many was that?

IVY

I wasn't counting.

Violet takes another pill.

IVY (CONT'D)

Is your mouth burning?

VIOLET

Like a son-of-a-bitch. My tongue is on fire.

IVY

Are you supposed to be smoking?

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14 CONTINUED:

14

VIOLET

Is anybody supposed to smoke?

IVY

You have cancer of the mouth.

VIOLET

Just leave it alone.

IVY

*

(after a moment)

*

Are you scared?

VIOLET

Course I'm scared. And you are a comfort, sweetheart. Thank God one of my girls stayed close to home.

Outside, the sound of a CAR pulling up. Ivy pulls back the drape and the shade, finds a big Cadillac arriving.

IVY

Aunt Mattie Fae's here.

VIOLET

She means to come in here and tell me what's what.

IVY

I don't know how Uncle Charlie puts up with it.

VIOLET

He smokes a lot of grass.

IVY

He does?

VIOLET

He smokes a lot of grass.

15 INT/EXT. CHARLIE'S CADILLAC/WESTON HOUSE - DAY

15

MATTIE FAE

I told Vi, "Take all those goddamn books he's so fond of and make a big pile in the front yard and have yourself a bonfire."

MATTIE FAE AIKEN, sixty-one, Violet's baby sister, larger than life, is in the passenger seat. CHARLIE, Mattie Fae's husband, easy-going, is behind the wheel.

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15 CONTINUED:

15

CHARLIE

You don't burn a man's books.

MATTIE FAE

You do, if the situation calls for it.

CHARLIE

The man's books didn't do anything.

MATTIE FAE

You get any ideas about just up and taking off, Charlie Aiken, you better believe --

CHARLIE

I'm not going anywhere.

Charlie parks, they climb out into the blinding sunlight.

MATTIE FAE

I'm saying if you did, I'll give you two days to get your head straight and then it's all going up in a blaze of glory. Not that you have any books lying around. I don't think I've ever seen you read a book in my life.

CHARLIE

That bother you?

MATTIE FAE

What's the last book you read?

CHARLIE

Beverly was a teacher; teachers read books, I'm in the upholstery business.

Ivy comes out of the house to meet them. Mattie Fae spots her, makes a beeline for her, envelopes Ivy in a hug.

MATTIE FAE

Ah, sweetie. Your daddy's done this before. Just takes off, no call, nothing. I told your mother, "You pack that son-of-a-bitch's bags and have `em waiting for him on the front porch."

Mattie Fae sweeps past Ivy into the --

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Ivy and Charlie follow.

MATTIE FAE

Where's your mother?

IVY

Upstairs.

CHARLIE

They've always had trouble, Ivy.

MATTIE FAE

He'll come back again, I know he will,
he always does. Beverly is a very
complicated man.

IVY

Kind of like Charles.

CHARLIE

Yes, like Little Charles. Exactly --

MATTIE FAE

Oh. He's nothing like Little Charles.

CHARLIE

She just means in their sort of quiet
complicated ways --

MATTIE FAE

Little Charles isn't complicated,
he's just unemployed.

The phone begins to RING. Ivy eyes it apprehensively.

CHARLIE

He's an observer.

MATTIE FAE

All he observes is the television.
(and)
Why is it so dark in here?

CHARLIE

So you can't even see Ivy's point?
That Little Charles and Beverly
share some kind of... complication.

MATTIE FAE

You have to be smart to be
complicated.

16 CONTINUED:

16

The phone STOPS. Violet's answered it upstairs.

CHARLIE

Are you saying our boy isn't smart?

MATTIE FAE

Yes, that's what I'm saying.

Ivy steals glances upstairs, concerned about the phone.

MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)

I'm sweating. Are you sweating?

CHARLIE

Hell, yes, I'm sweating, it's ninety degrees in here.

MATTIE FAE

Feel my back.

CHARLIE

I don't want to feel your back.

MATTIE FAE

Sweat is just dripping down my back.

CHARLIE

I believe you.

MATTIE FAE

Feel it.

CHARLIE

No.

MATTIE FAE

Come on, put your hand here --

CHARLIE

Goddamn it --

MATTIE FAE

Sweat's just dripping...

Mattie Fae pulls back a set of drapes, finds the light is blocked by shades sealed with tape.

MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)

Ivy, when did this start? This

business with taping the shades?

IVY

Been a couple of years now.

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16 CONTINUED:

16

Mattie Fae starts peeling off the tape.

MATTIE FAE

Is it that long since we've been here?

CHARLIE

Do you know its purpose? You can't
tell if it's night or day.

IVY

I think that's the purpose.

Ivy goes, Charlie notices Mattie Fae pulling off tape.

CHARLIE

Don't do that. This isn't your place.

MATTIE FAE

The body needs sunlight.

A17 INT/EXT. RENTAL CAR (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

A17

*

Jean has on headphones, listening to her Walkman in the back.

*

Barbara's estranged husband, BILL FORDHAM, drives the rental.

*

Barb's in the passenger seat beside him, watching the brown

*

countryside pass by.

*

BARBARA

*

What were these people thinking... the

*

jokers who settled this place. Who

*

was the asshole who saw this flat hot

*

nothing and planted his flag? I mean

*

we fucked the Indians for this?

*

BILL

*

Well, genocide always seems like such
a good idea at the time.

*

*

BARBARA

*

Right, you need a little hindsight.

*

BILL

*

If you want me to explain the creepy
character of the Midwest, you're --

*

*

BARBARA

*

Please, the Midwest. This is the
Plains: a state of mind, right? A
spiritual affliction, like the Blues.

*

*

*

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A17 CONTINUED:

A17

BILL

*

"You okay?" "I'm fine. Just got the
Plains."

*

*

They laugh. He reaches across, touches her tenderly.

*

BARBARA

*

Don't.

*

He withdraws quickly.

*

17 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY

17

Violet hangs up the phone. Sits for a long moment, absorbing what she's heard. Mattie Fae watches from her spot sitting

*

on the corner of the bed, concerned. Ivy is in the door.

*

VIOLET

They checked the hospitals, no Beverly.

MATTIE FAE

Who's this now? The highway patrol?

*

VIOLET

No, the sheriff, the Gilbeau boy.

IVY

What else did he say?

VIOLET

The boat's missing.

IVY

Dad's boat?

VIOLET

I asked the sheriff to send a deputy out to the dock to check if anybody had seen him and his boat is gone.

Ivy watches her mother being comforted by Mattie Fae.
Wants to go to her. Doesn't.

18 **MOVED TO A17**

18 *

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19 **INT/EXT. RENTAL CAR/WESTON HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

19

Bill slows the rental car to turn. Barb looks down the road
* and across the field to where the farm house peeks out
* through the trees, beckoning, threatening, ominous.
*

* Bill pulls the rental in front of the house. Turns off the ignition. Neither moves to get out. Jean realizes they've stopped, pulls off her headphones.

JEAN

I'm gonna grab a smoke.

Jean heads for the relative privacy of the fence at the edge of the yard. Leaving Bill and Barb alone, watching.

BARBARA

You've encouraged that.

BILL

I haven't encouraged anything.

BARBARA

You admire her for getting hooked at fourteen, makes her seem even more mature.

Barbara climbs out. Bill follows.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Goddamn, it's hot.

Bill unlocks the trunk, begins unloading luggage.

BILL

Suppose your mom's turned on the air conditioner?

BARBARA

You kidding? Remember the parakeets?

BILL

The parakeets?

BARBARA

I didn't tell you about the parakeets? She got a parakeet for some insane reason, and the little fucker croaked after two days. So she went to the pet store and raised hell and they gave her another parakeet. That one died after one day.

(MORE)

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19 CONTINUED:

19

BARBARA (CONT'D)

So she went back and they gave her a

third parakeet and that one died too.
So the chick from the pet store came
out here to see just what in the hell
this serial parakeet killer was doing
to bump off these birds.

They head for the house with suitcases, wilting in the heat.

BILL

And?

BARBARA

The heat. It was too hot. They were
dying from the heat.

BILL

Jesus.

BARBARA

These are tropical birds, all right?
They live in the fucking tropics.

He laughs. Barb looks over to Jean smoking by the fence.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

What, is she smoking a cigar?

BILL

Are you ready for this?

BARBARA

No. No way.

20 INT. WESTON HOUSE - AFTERNOON

20

Charlie is poking around the old stereo, finds an LP, the TV
beside him is tuned to a Royals game.

CHARLIE

Violet's a Clapton fan?

Johnna passes through, Charlie holds up his empty bottle.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

`Scuse me, dear...could I trouble you
for another beer?

MATTIE FAE

Goddam it, she's not a waitress.

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20 CONTINUED:

20

CHARLIE

I know that.

MATTIE FAE

Then get your own beer.

JOHNNA

(takes the empty/goes)

I'll get it.

MATTIE FAE

I don't believe you. Watchin' a ball game, drinkin' beers. You have any sense of what's going on around you?

CHARLIE

Am I supposed to sit here like a statue? You're drinking whiskey.

MATTIE FAE

I'm having a cocktail.

CHARLIE

You're drinking straight whiskey!

MATTIE FAE

Just... show a little class.

BARBARA

...Mom?

Barbara and Bill have entered, are quickly descended upon by Mattie Fae and Charlie. Hugs, overlapping dialogue.

MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)

Oh my God, Barbara --! You give me some sugar!

BARBARA

Hi, Aunt Mattie Fae --

MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)

Bill! Look how skinny you are!

BILL

Hi, Mattie Fae.

BILL

Hi, Charlie.

Jean enters behind her parents, stands sheepishly.

MATTIE FAE

Oh my gosh, will you look at this one? Come here and give your Aunt Mattie Fae some sugar!

MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)

My gosh, you're so big! Look at your boobs! Last time I saw you, you looked like a little boy!

CHARLIE

`Lo, Bill. Man you have dropped some weight, haven't you? Hello, sweetheart.

BARBARA

Hi, Uncle Charlie.

CHARLIE

How was the flight from Denver?

BILL

Fine...

Violet appears on the stairs, rushes to Barbara.

VIOLET

Barb...

BARBARA

It's okay, Mom. I'm here, I'm here. Shh, it's okay, I'm here.

Ivy appears at the top of the stairs, watches her mother in her sister's arms. Bill turns to Charlie, quietly:

BILL

No word then?

CHARLIE

No.

MATTIE FAE

No, huh-uh.

VIOLET

What am I going to do?

BARBARA

It's okay, Mom.

BARBARA

Did you see Bill and Jean?

Violet takes them in, disoriented.

VIOLET

Yes. Hi, Bill.

BILL

Hello, Violet.

VIOLET

I'm just so scared.

MATTIE FAE

Of course you are, poor thing.

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20 CONTINUED:

20

VIOLET

(sees Jean)

Well, look at you.

MATTIE FAE

Isn't she the limit? Look at her
boobs!

JEAN

O-kay, we've all stared at my
tits now.

MATTIE FAE

They're just so darn big.

Vi hugs Jean. Johnna slips in, leaves a beer for Charlie.

VIOLET

You're just the prettiest thing.
Thank you for coming to see me.

BARBARA

Ivy, I didn't see you up there.

Ivy, still standing above on the stairs.

IVY

It looked crowded.

BARBARA

God, you look good. Doesn't she
look good, Bill?

BILL

Yes, she does.

BARBARA

I love your hair, that looks
great.

VIOLET

She had it straightened. Barbara,
or Bill, it doesn't matter, I need
you to go through Beverly's things,
help me with this paperwork.

BARBARA

Well... we can do that, Mom.

IVY

I was going to help with --

VIOLET

No, now that desk of his is such a mess and I get confused --

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25.
20

20 CONTINUED:

BILL

I'll take care of it, Violet --

BARBARA

(to Charlie)

Which room are you in?

MATTIE FAE

We're gonna head home soon.

VIOLET

You're going back to Tulsa?

MATTIE FAE

We have to, we left in such a rush we didn't get anyone to take care of the damn dogs. Anyway, I know you want to spend some time with these girls.

VIOLET

How about Little Charles, can't he take care of the dogs?

CHARLIE

Well, yeah, I guess he could --

MATTIE FAE

No, he can't. We have to get back.

CHARLIE

Maybe we should call him, Mattie Fae --

MATTIE FAE

We talked about this.

BARBARA

Mom, can Jean stay in the attic?

VIOLET

No, that's where what's-her-name lives.

IVY

Johnna.

BARBARA

Who's Johnna?

VIOLET

She's the Indian who lives in my
attic.

BARBARA

She's the what?

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21 EXT. THE YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

21

Jean steps out onto the porch. Sees Johnna across the road
by the fence. Heads for her --

JEAN

Hi...

Johnna is cutting off sprigs of wild mint entangled in the
fence, standing in what was once a vegetable garden.

JOHNNA

Hello.

JEAN

*

I'm Jean.

*

JOHNNA

*

Johnna.

*

Johnna keeps working, Jean watches.

JEAN

I like your necklace.

A beaded pouch in the shape of a turtle.

JOHNNA

*

Thank you.

*

JEAN

Did you make that?

JOHNNA

My grandma.

JEAN

Is there something in it?

JOHNNA

My umbilical cord.

Jean recoils. Johnna smiles.

JEAN

Ewww, are you serious?

JOHNNA

When a Cheyenne is born, their umbilical cord is dried and sewn into a pouch.

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27.

21 **CONTINUED:**

21

JEAN

You're Cheyenne. Like that movie Powwow Highway. Did you see that?

JOHNNA

*

Yes. We wear it for the rest of our

*

lives. If we lose it, our souls belong nowhere and when we die our souls walk the Earth looking for where we belong.

Johnna starts back for the house with her mint.

Off Jean --

22 **INT. THE BACK PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON**

22

A screened in back porch off the kitchen. Bill and Barb sit at an old linoleum table.

BILL

This was when?

Violet stands smoking, unhappily watching Charlie and Mattie Fae climb into the Caddie and disappear down the gravel drive, heading back to Tulsa.

VIOLET

Saturday morning. The Indian girl made us biscuits and gravy. We ate some, he walked out the door, this

door right there. Got into his truck. And that was it.

Johnna enters with her mint, crosses into the kitchen.

BARBARA

He just left...?

VIOLET

I went to bed Saturday night, got up Sunday... still no Beverly. I didn't make much of it, thought he'd gone out on a bender.

BARBARA

Why would he do that? Not like he couldn't drink at home. Unless you were riding his ass.

VIOLET

I never said anything to him about his drinking, never got on him about it.

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28.

22 CONTINUED:

22

BARBARA

Really.

VIOLET

Barbara, I swear. He could drink himself into obliv-uh, obliv-en-um...

BARBARA

Oblivion.

BILL

So Sunday, still no sign of him...

VIOLET

Yes, Sunday. No sign. I started getting worried, don'tcha know. That's when I got worked up about that safety deposit box. We kept an awful lot of cash in that box, some expensive jewelry. I had a diamond ring in that box appraised at seven thousand dollars --

Johnna returns with glasses of iced tea, each with a sprig of mint, delivers them to Bill and Barbara.

BARBARA

Wait, wait, wait, I'm missing something. Why do you care about a safety deposit box?

VIOLET

Well, I know what you'll say about this, but, your father and I had an urge-ment... arrangement. If something were to ever happen to one of us, the other one would go empty that box.

BARBARA

Because...

BILL

The money and jewelry gets rolled into the estate, bank seals the box until probate is settled. Can take months.

VIOLET

Right, that's right --

BARBARA

You're such a fucking cynic.

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22 CONTINUED:

22

VIOLET

I knew you would disapprove --

Johnna cuts into a freshly baked apple pie in the kitchen.

BARBARA

Okay, what about the safety deposit box?

VIOLET

I had to wait for the bank to open on Monday. And after I emptied that box, I called the police and reported him missing. Monday morning.

BARBARA

And you only had Ivy call me today?

VIOLET

I didn't want to worry you, honey --

BARBARA

BILL

Jesus Christ.

Vi, you sure there wasn't
some event that triggered his
leaving, some incident.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You mean like a fight.

Johnna places pieces of pie in front of Bill and Barb.

BILL

Yes.

VIOLET

No. And we fought enough... you
know... but no, he just left.

BARBARA

Maybe he needed some time away
from you.

VIOLET

That's nice of you to say.

BARBARA

Good old unfathomable Dad.

VIOLET

Oh. That man. What I first fell of
with -- fell in love with, you know,
was his mystery. I thought it was
sexy as hell.

(MORE)

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30.

22 CONTINUED:

22

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You knew he was the smartest one in
the room, knew if he just said
something... knock you out. But he'd
just stand there, little smile on his
face... not say a word. Sexy.

INTERCUT WITH:

23 INSIDE THE KITCHEN

23

Ivy enters with her coffee cup, runs water in it at the sink.
Outside, her mother, sister, and Bill on the back porch.

BILL

You can't think of anything unusual --

Johnna sits at the kitchen table behind Ivy. Johnna stands, joins Ivy at the sink. Ivy hadn't seen her there.

VIOLET

He hired this woman. He didn't ask me, just hired this woman to come live in our house. Few days before he left.

BARBARA

You don't want her here.

VIOLET

She's a stranger in my house. There's an Indian in my house.

Ivy looks to Johnna, embarrassed. But Johnna just takes Ivy's cup from her, finishes cleaning it.

BILL

You have a problem with Indians, Violet?

VIOLET

I don't know what to say to an Indian.

BARBARA

They're called Native Americans now, Mom.

VIOLET

Who makes that decision?

BARBARA

It's what they like to be called.

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31.

23 CONTINUED:

23

VIOLET

They aren't any more native than me.

BARBARA

In fact, they are.

VIOLET

What's wrong with Indian?

BARBARA

Why's it so hard to call people --

VIOLET

Let's just call the dinosaurs "Native Americans" while we're at it.

BARBARA

She may be an Indian, but she makes the best goddamn apple pie I ever ate.

Johnna smiles, nods to Ivy. Leaves the kitchen.

VIOLET

He hired a cook. It doesn't make any sense. We don't eat.

BARBARA

And now you get biscuits and gravy. Kind of nice, huh?

VIOLET

Nice for you, now. But you'll be gone soon enough, never to return.

BARBARA

(a warning)
Mom...

VIOLET

When was the last time you were here?

BARBARA

Don't get started on that --

VIOLET

Really, I don't even remember.

BARBARA

I'm very dutiful, Mom, I call, I write, I send presents --

VIOLET

You do not write --

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23 CONTINUED:

23

BARBARA

Presents on birthdays, Mother's Day --

Ivy eavesdrops at the sink, unsure if she should stay or go.

VIOLET

Because you're "dutiful."

BILL

All right, now --

VIOLET

I don't care about you two. I'd like to see my granddaughter every now --

BARBARA

Well, you're seeing her now.

VIOLET

But your father. You broke his heart when you moved away.

BARBARA

That is wildly unfair.

Bill stands, picks up a plate, pushes his way back into the kitchen. Ivy hears him coming, but doesn't have time to escape. Goes to the refrigerator instead.

BILL

Am I going to have to separate you two?

VIOLET

You know you were Beverly's favorite; don't pretend you don't know that.

Barbara follows Bill. Ivy finds iced tea, pours herself some. Tries to make herself invisible -- it's not hard to do.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I'd prefer to think my parents loved all their children equally.

Violet trails behind them into the kitchen.

VIOLET

I'm sure you'd prefer to think that Santy Claus brought you presents at Christmas, too. If you'd had more than one child, you'd know a parent always has favorites. Mattie Fae was my mother's favorite. Big deal. I got used to it. You were your Daddy's favorite.

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23 CONTINUED:

23

Barbara notices Ivy, standing there, Christ. This isn't a conversation she'd like to be having in front of her sister. Violet sees Ivy too -- could care less.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Broke his heart.

BARBARA

What was I supposed to do?! Colorado gave Bill twice the money he was making at TU --

BILL

Why are we even getting into this?

BARBARA

You think Daddy wouldn't have jumped at the chance Bill got?

VIOLET

You're wrong there. You never would've gotten Beverly Weston out of Oklahoma.

BARBARA

Daddy gave me his blessing.

VIOLET

`S what he told you.

BARBARA

Now you're going to tell me the true story, some terrible shit Daddy said behind my back?

BILL

Hey, enough. Everybody's on edge --

VIOLET

Beverly didn't say terrible things behind your back --

BILL

Vi, come on --

VIOLET

He just told me he's disappointed in you because you settled. He thought

*

you had talent, as a writer.

*

BARBARA

Daddy never said anything like that to you. What a load of absolute horseshit.

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34.

23 CONTINUED:

23

VIOLET

Oh, horseshit, horseshit, let's all
say horseshit. Say horseshit, Bill.

BILL

Horseshit.

Violet goes. Barb and Bill exchange a look. Barb looks to
Ivy, who's blank. Barb takes a beat, follows Violet.

24 INT. BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

24

Violet is closing the bathroom door. Barb stops her.

BARBARA

Are you high?

VIOLET

Excuse me.

BARBARA

I mean literally. You taking
something?

VIOLET

A muscle relaxer.

BARBARA

Listen to me: I will not go through
this with you again.

VIOLET

I don't know what you're talking
about.

BARBARA

These fucking pills? Calls at three

*

AM about people in your backyard?

VIOLET

Stop yelling at me!

BARBARA

The police, all the rest of it?

VIOLET

It's not the same thing. I didn't have
a reason.

BARBARA

So now it's okay to get hooked because
you have a reason.

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24 CONTINUED:

35.
24

VIOLET

I'm not hooked on anything.

BARBARA

I don't want to know if you are or
not, I'm just saying I won't go --

VIOLET

I'm not. I'm in pain.

BARBARA

Because of your mouth.

VIOLET

Yes, because my mouth burns from
the chemotheeeeahh --

BARBARA

Are you in a lot of pain?

Violet starts to break down, sits on the lidded toilet.

VIOLET

Yes, I'm in pain. I have got...
gotten cancer. In my mouth. And it
burns like a... bullshit. And
Beverly's disappeared and you're
yelling at me.

BARBARA

I'm not yelling at you.

VIOLET

You couldn't come home when I got
cancer but as soon as Beverly
disappeared you rushed back --

BARBARA

I'm sorry... you're right. I'm sorry.

Barbara kneels, takes her mother's hand.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Know where I think he is? I think he
got some whiskey, a carton of
cigarettes, and a couple of good spy

novels... I think he got out on the boat, steered it to a nice spot, close to shore... and he's fishing, and reading, and drinking, maybe even writing a little. I think he'll walk right through that door any time.

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25 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY/STAIRS/ATTIC ROOM - TWILIGHT 25

Jean walks down the hall, perusing photos of her ancestors. Rail-thin, sunburned dust bowl farmers, WWII GIs standing in front of battered Packards before shipping out to die on the beaches of Normandy. Violet and Bev on their wedding day. Jean's mother and aunts in grade school, with prom dates.

The photos end in a doorway that leads to a narrow, wooden staircase. Jean climbs it to --

26 INT. THE ATTIC BEDROOM - TWILIGHT 26

Finds Johnna on her bed in the small ascetic attic room, reading T.S. Eliot. Jean KNOCKS on the open door.

JEAN

Hi, again... Am I bugging you?

JOHNNA

No, do you need something?

JEAN

No, I thought maybe you'd like to smoke a bowl with me?

JOHNNA

No, thank you.

JEAN

Okay. I didn't know.

(beat)

Do you mind if I smoke a bowl?

JOHNNA

I. No, I --

JEAN

Mom and Dad don't mind. You won't get into trouble or anything.

Johnna is clearly a bit uncomfortable. But:

JOHNNA

Okay.

JEAN

Okay. You sure?

From her pocket, Jean takes a glass pipe and a bud.

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37.

26 **CONTINUED:**

26

JEAN (CONT'D)

I say they don't mind. If they knew I smuggled this on the plane? And sat there sweating like in that movie Midnight Express. Did you see that?

JOHNNA

I don't think so.

JEAN

I just mean they don't mind that I smoke pot. Mom kind of does. I think cause Dad smokes pot too, and she wishes he didn't.

(smokes, offers pipe)

You sure?

JOHNNA

Yes. No. I'm fine.

Jean notices a framed photo on the night stand.

JEAN

Wow, are those your parents?

JOHNNA

Mm-hm, their wedding picture.

JEAN

Their costumes are fantastic. Are they still together?

JOHNNA

My father passed away last year.

JEAN

Oh. Sorry.

JOHNNA

That's okay. Thank you.

JEAN

Were you close?

JOHNNA

Yes. Very.

JEAN

My Mom and Dad are separated now.

JOHNNA

I'm sorry.

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38.
26
26

CONTINUED:

JEAN

He's fucking one of his grad students. I don't care --aside from the pathetic English and Humanities cliché, like all those departmental dicks fucking their students -- he can fuck who he wants and that's who teachers meet, students. He was just a turd the way he didn't give Mom a chance to respond or anything. What sucks now is she's on my ass cause she's afraid I'll have some post-divorce freak-out and become some heroin addict or shoot everybody at school. Or God forbid, lose my virginity. I don't know what it is about Dad splitting that put Mom on hymen patrol.

(then)

Don't say anything about Mom and Dad; okay? They want to play it low key.

A27 INT. BEVERLY'S STUDY - NIGHT
A27

Bill stands in Beverly's empty study. Absorbing the room, the man, the stillness. Picks at the papers on the desk without specific purpose. Turns to one of the many bookcases, eventually finds a book, smiles.

27 EXT. WESTON HOUSE FRONT PORCH - NIGHT
27

Barbara sits on the front steps. It's dark now, but still very hot. Moths bat at the porch lights. Bill comes out

*
*
carrying a Coke, shares it with Barb.

BILL

Ivy leave?

BARBARA

(she nods)

I'd forgotten about the lightning bugs.

Around the yard, flitting in and out of the low hanging boughs of the trees.

BILL

Look what I found...

She turns, he holds a thin hardback copy of Meadowlark.

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39.

27 **CONTINUED:**

27

BARBARA

We have copies.

BILL

I don't remember a hardback edition. Think this is worth something... first edition, hardback, mint condition? Academy Fellowship, Wallace Stevens Award? This book was a big deal.

BARBARA

It wasn't that big a deal.

BILL

In those circles, it was.

BARBARA

Those are small circles.

He opens the book, perusing the first pages.

Reads.

BILL

"Dedicated to my Violet." That's nice. Christ, probably every word he wrote after this he had to be thinking, "What are they going to say, are they going to compare it to Meadowlark?"

BARBARA

Jean go to bed?

BILL

Just turned out the light. You'd think at some point, you just write something anyway and who cares what they say about it. I don't know --

BARBARA

Will you shut up about that fucking book?! You are just dripping with envy over these thirty poems my father wrote back in the late sixties, for God's sake. Y'hear yourself?

Bill's taken aback, but doesn't want to overreact.

BILL

I have great admiration for these poems --

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27 CONTINUED:

27

BARBARA

My father didn't write anymore for a lot of reasons, but critical opinion was not one of them, hard as that may be for you to believe.

BILL

What are you attacking me for? I haven't done anything.

BARBARA

I'm sure that's what you tell Sissy, too, so she can comfort you, reassure you, "No, Billy, you haven't done anything."

BILL

Why are you bringing that up?

BARBARA

They're all symptoms of your male menopause, whether it's you struggling with the "creative question," or screwing a girl who still wears a retainer.

BILL

All right, look, I'm not going to be

held hostage here while you attack me. And her name is Cindy.

BARBARA

I know her stupid name -- do me the courtesy of recognizing when I'm demeaning you.

BILL

Violet really has a way of putting you in attack mode, you know that? You feel such rage for her you can't help dishing it --

BARBARA

Psychoanalyze me right now, I skin you.

BILL

You may not agree with my methods, but you know I'm right --

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27 CONTINUED:

27

BARBARA

"Your methods." Thank you, Doctor, but I actually don't need any help from my mother to feel rage.

BILL

You want to argue? Is that what you need to do? Pick a subject, alright, let me know what it is, so I have a fighting --

BARBARA

The subject is me! I am the subject, you narcissistic motherfucker! I am in pain! I need help!

Barbara heads into the yard to get away from him.

28 INT. WESTON HOUSE, UPSTAIRS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

28

Jean's on the small bed in the darkened room. Staring at the ceiling, listening to her parents argue.

29 EXT. WESTON HOUSE FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

29

Bill chases Barbara into the yard.

BILL

I've copped to being a narcissist.
We're the products of a narcissistic
generation.

BARBARA

You can't do it, can you? You can't
talk about me for two seconds --

BILL

You called me a narcissist!

BARBARA

You do understand that it hurts,
to go from sharing a bed with you
for twenty-three years to sleeping
by myself.

BILL

I'm here, now.

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42.

29 CONTINUED:

29

BARBARA

Oh, men always say shit like that,
as if the past and the future don't
exist.

Jean listens in the dark to her parents fighting -- as she
has many times before. Heads out into the hallway to screen
door leading to the upstairs porch.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

It's just horseshit, to avoid
talking about the things they're
afraid to say.

BILL

I'm not necessarily keen on the notion
of saying things that would hurt you.

BARBARA

Like what?

BILL

We have enough on our hands with your
parents right now, let's not revisit
this.

BARBARA

When did we visit this to begin with?
I still don't know what happened. Do
I bore you, intimidate you, disgust
you? Is this just about the pleasures
of young flesh, teenage pussy? I
really need to know.

BILL

You need to know now? With Beverly
missing, and your mother crazy as a
loon? You want to do this now?

BARBARA

You're right. I'll just hunker down
for a cozy night's sleep upstairs.
Next to my husband.

BILL

This discussion deserves our care.
And patience. We'll both be in a
better frame of mind to talk about
this once your father's come home.

Bill turns, starts back for the house.

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43.

30 INT. WESTON HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT
30

Jean sees her father coming, hears his footsteps approaching
across the wooden porch below, the screen door opens quietly.
She slips back into her room and bed, but he doesn't stop.

Jean waits, listening for her mother. She doesn't come.

31 EXT. SKIATOOK LAKE - NIGHT
31

We're on the old wooden dock, watching a man walking away
from us toward an aluminum rowboat tied haphazardly to the
dock in the moonlight. He leans down to untie the boat,
looks back at us, directly into camera -- Beverly.

Now we're traveling BELOW the surface of the lake, through
its dark, tenebrous waters on the moonlit night. The
rhythmic SLAP of gentle waves. We're underwater, light
fractures and scatters above us. We've been here before as --

A rowboat SLIPS across our field of vision. It's aluminum bottom cuts through the calm above.

Oars dip on either side, propelling the small craft. It slows. Stops. Bobs gently. We wait, watch --

Until, suddenly, something hits the surface above, exploding the calm, coming at us fast, sinking.

32 INT. THE ATTIC - NIGHT
32

Johnna wakes with a start. Sits up, listens intently.

33 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - NIGHT
33

Johnna steps out onto the second floor porch balcony, finds a police car approaching in the distance, headlights cutting through the dark country night.

34/35 INT. WESTON HOUSE STAIRWAY - NIGHT
34/35

Barefoot, Johnna quietly descends the stairs. Approaches the front door, left open to let in the cool night air. Undoes the screen door latch. Steps outside.

Watches the car arrive. The driver's door opens, a sheriff gets out, silhouetted against the police flashers behind him.

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36 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

36

Barbara, bleary-eyed, moves quickly down the dark hall in her robe. Bill follows in his boxers and T-shirt, pulling on pants. Barb goes to Vi's door, KNOCKS.

BARBARA

Mom?

She opens the door. Over her we FIND: Violet, entombed in her room. Squinting against the intrusive hall light.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Mom, wake up, the sheriff's here.

VIOLET

Did you call them? I dig in call them.

BARBARA

Mom. The sheriff is here.

VIOLET

Inna esther?

BARBARA

What?

VIOLET

Inna esther broke. `N pays me `em...sturck...struck.

BILL

Come on. Leave her there.

Barbara does, starts for the staircase, meets the just awakened Jean coming out of her room, concerned.

BILL (CONT'D)

Go back to bed, sweetheart....

Barbara descends the stairs, trailed by Bill. The SHERIFF waits on the porch, late-forties, handsome, Stetson in hand.

They go to him, but WE HANG BACK with Jean, watching the scene outside unfold. Bill shakes the Sheriff's hand. The Sheriff speaks earnestly to Barbara and Bill.

We can't hear what's being said, only murmurs until -- Barbara sinks to her knees. Bill holds her. Jean watches.

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37 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

37

Johnna enters, snaps on the light, starts a pot of coffee. Stoic, inscrutable.

38 EXT. WESTON HOUSE DRIVEWAY - JUST BEFORE DAWN

38

A big pre-dawn sky is changing from black to blue. The Sheriff walks to his cruiser, kills the flashers. Bill joins him, still barefoot.

BILL

What happened?

SHERIFF

Couple old boys running jug lines in the lake hooked him. Pulled him up.

BILL

He drowned. That's how he died, from drowning?

SHERIFF

Looks it. Yes, sir.

Bill looks off. Song birds begin their pre-dawn chatter.

BILL

Is there any way to determine if he... I mean is this an accident, or suicide --?

SHERIFF

There's really no way to tell.

BILL

What's your guess?

SHERIFF

...Suicide.

And now the full weight of it hits Bill. After a moment --

BILL

How does a a person jump in the water... and choose not to swim?

39 INT. WESTON GIRL'S BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN

39

Barb pulls on clothes, rakes a brush through her hair. Jean appears in the door, watches her. After a moment:

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39 CONTINUED:

39

JEAN

What about Aunt Ivy?

BARBARA

I guess we'll stop on the way.
Christ, I need to call Karen, too.
Why the fuck am I brushing my hair?

She drops the brush. And then an odd sound intrudes from downstairs, a song: "Lay Down, Sally" by Eric Clapton.

The music is LOUD. We follow Barbara and Jean halfway down the stairs to REVEAL: Violet, high as a kite, doing a jerky little dance by the stereo. The Sheriff stands uncomfortably by the door, his hat in hand. She shuffles over to him.

VIOLET

Izza story. Barely's back. Did sum
Beer-ley come home?

SHERIFF

Ma'am?

VIOLET

Gizza cig... some cigezze? Cig-zezz,
cig-zizz... cig-uhzzz...

She laughs at her inability to speak. He takes a Pall Mall from his shirt pocket, hands it to her. Lights it for her.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

In the archa, archa-tex? I'm in
the bottom. Inna bottom of them.
(and)
Mm, good beat, right?

He nods. Bill comes back in from outside.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Barbara?! Is Barbara here?!

BARBARA

(quietly)
Right here, Mom...

Johnna steps in from the kitchen, pensively observing.

VIOLET

Mm, good beat, right? Idn't it's a
good beat?

(MORE)

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VIOLET (CONT'D)

Mmmm, I been on the music... pell man
onna sheriff. Armen in tandel
s'lossle, s'lost? Lost?! From the day,
the days. Am Beerly... and Beverly
lost?

Violet abandons her dance, separates invisible threads in the air. The others stand frozen, staring at her.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

And then you're here. And Barbara, and then you're here, and Beverly, and then you're here, and then you're here, and then you're here, and then you're here, and then you're here...

41 EXT. SKIATOOK LAKE ROAD - DAWN 41

The sun's just topped the horizon, throws long early shadows across the flat expanse of prairie. Scattered trees, a ribbon of asphalt leading to a distant lake, telephone poles.

We're HIGH ABOVE the country road, following the Sheriff cruiser below. Barb's rental sedan trails behind.

BARBARA (OS)

I used to go out with that boy.
That man.

42 INT. RENTAL CAR (MOVING) - EARLY MORNING 42

Bill drives, Ivy up front with him. Barbara sits in the back with Jean. Watches the sheriff's car ahead.

JEAN

What man? The Sheriff?

BARBARA

In high school. He was my prom date.

JEAN

You're kidding.

BARBARA

Day of the prom, his father got drunk and stole his car, stole his own son's car, went somewhere, Mexico. Deon showed up at the door. He'd been crying. Confessed he didn't have a way to take me to the prom.

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42 CONTINUED: 42

The cruiser slows, pulls through a pipe gate and over a cattle-crossing, heads for a small collection of emergency vehicles parked around a brush-strewn cove. Bev's old Chevy

pick-up truck sits to one side.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

So we got a six-pack and broke into the chapel, stayed up all night talking and kissing. Now here he is, showing me --
(fights her emotions)
It's so surreal. Thank God we can't tell the future. We'd never get out of bed.

The cars stop. The Sheriff gets out.

BILL

Let me go first, see what they need.

Bill goes. Barb fixes Jean with a look.

BARBARA

Listen to me: die after me, all right?
I don't care what else you do, where you go, how you screw up your life, just... survive. Outlive me, please.

They watch the men. A resolute Bill returns to get Barbara and Ivy. The sisters climb out, follow him to the water's edge. Jean waits a moment, then steps out of the car.

Watches her father lead her mother down the small cracked concrete boat ramp to where the Sheriff waits by a covered body. As the Sheriff pulls back the tarp --

43 INT. A STERILE ROOM - DAY 43

White walls, bright overhead light. We're CLOSE on a man's pale, lifeless hand. Another hand enters frame with a sponge, begins cleaning off the mud, filth.

44 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - DAY 44

The Weston clan walks to Beverly's Lincoln, Bill, Jean. Barb and Ivy help a distraught Violet. All wear mourning black.

45 INT. THE STERILE ROOM - DAY 45

Beverly's sodden shoes are removed, his socks.

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45 CONTINUED:
45

His limp, greyish arm is guided into a starched white shirt-sleeve. The buttons carefully buttoned.

46 INT. BEVERLY'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY
46

Bill drives. Jean beside him. Barbara and Ivy sit in the back seat, flanking Violet. They ride in silence. We study their faces, the brown countryside outside.

Bill notices something in his rearview, a red speck, coming up fast, very fast. A sports car.

It's suddenly right behind them, filling his mirrors. It waits for a semi loaded down with massive circular hay bales to pass in the opposite lane, then --

ROARS around. A Ferrari, it's throaty V-10 RUMBLING as it SCREAMS past, accelerates down the road. Bill and Jean exchange a look, watch it disappear.

47 INT. THE STERILE ROOM - DAY
47

Strong male hands lift Beverly's now dressed body carefully and place it into the casket. Adjust the pillow, comb his hair into place, fold his hands across his chest.

We never see his face, never see his whole body. Only these small, intimate pieces.

48 INT/EXT. CAR/FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PAWHUSKA - DAY
48

A few mourners enter the church as Bill pulls in to park, discovers the Ferrari already there. A woman emerging.

BARBARA

Holy shit, that's Karen.

KAREN WESTON, forty, lithe, climbing from the car.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Do you remember your Aunt Karen?

JEAN

Kind of...

STEVE HEIDEBRECHT, fifty, greying, athletic, tan and handsome, gets out of the driver's side.

BARBARA

*

That must be this year's man.

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48 CONTINUED:

48

Mattie Fae and Charlie are waiting for them, start over as Violet emerges into the blinding sun. Recoils slightly. Mattie Fae catches her, whispers comforts into her ear, helps her toward the church steps.

We stay back, watching the Westons enter the church --

KAREN (VO)

I spent so much time in our bedroom
pretending my pillow was my husband
and did he like the dinner I made and
where were we going to vacation that
winter and he'd surprise me with
tickets to Belize and we'd kiss.

49 INT. BEVERLY'S LINCOLN (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

49

Barbara drives, Karen beside her. Heat radiates off the road. They follow Charlie's Caddie, Vi and Ivy visible in the Caddie's back seat window ahead of us.

KAREN

I mean I'd kiss my pillow, and then
I'd tell him I'd been to the doctor
that day and I'd found out I was
pregnant. I know how pathetic that
sounds, but it was innocent enough.
Then real life takes over, cause it
always does --

BARBARA

-- uh-huh --

Here comes the red speck in the rearview again. The Ferrari ROARS up behind them, pulls around to pass, HONKS as it goes. Barb catches a glimpse of Jean in the passenger seat, Bill jammed into the tiny back seat.

KAREN

Things don't work out like you planned. That pillow was a better husband than any real man I'd ever met; this parade of men fails to live up to your expectations, all of them so much less than Daddy or Bill. You punish yourself, tell yourself it's your fault you can't find a good one. I don't know how well you remember Andrew...

BARBARA

No, I remember.

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49 CONTINUED:

49

KAREN

I loved him so intensely, so the things he did wrong were just opportunities for me to make things right. If he cheated on me or called me a cunt, I'd think "No, love is forever, so here's an opportunity to make an adjustment in the way you view the world."

The AC isn't working, Barb's sweating, rolls down her window, let's the wind whip her hair around.

KAREN (CONT'D)

And thank God one day I looked in the mirror and said, "Moron," and walked out, but it kicked off this whole period of reflection, how hard I had screwed it up, where'd I go wrong. That's when I got into those books and discussion groups --

BARBARA

And Scientology too, right, or something like that --?

KAREN

Exactly, and finally one day, I threw it all out, I said, "It's me, just me with my music on the stereo, my glass of wine and Bloomers my cat. I don't need anything else, I can live my life with myself." I got my license, threw myself into my work, sold a lot of

Barbara heads for the fan on the dresser, flips it on.

BARBARA

What's the kicker?

KAREN

We're going to Belize on our
honeymoon!

Barb sticks her face into the fan. Karen watches, what?

BARBARA

Sorry. Hot flash.

51 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY

51

Violet pulls a dress from the closet; Mattie Fae sits,
rooting through a box of photos; Ivy stands by the door.

VIOLET

It won't kill you to try it on --
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51 CONTINUED:

51

MATTIE FAE

Oh, this is a sweet one, Vi --

IVY

I find this a tidge morbid, frankly --

MATTIE FAE

Look at this, Ivy --

VIOLET

What's morbid about it?

IVY (CONT'D)

It's not my style, Mom.

VIOLET

You don't have a style, that's the
point.

MATTIE FAE

Where was this taken?

VIOLET

New York. On the first book tour.

IVY

I don't have your style, I have a
style of my own.

VIOLET

You wore a suit to your father's funeral. A woman doesn't wear a suit to a funeral.

IVY

God, you're weird; it's a black suit.

VIOLET

You look like a magician's assistant.

MATTIE FAE

Little Charles has been talking about moving to New York. Can you picture that?

VIOLET

Don't discourage him now --

MATTIE FAE

He wouldn't last a day in that city. They'd tear him apart.

MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)

I could kill that kid --

IVY

Why do you feel it necessary to insult me?

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51 CONTINUED:

51

VIOLET

Stop being so sensitive.

MATTIE FAE

He overslept? For his Uncle's funeral? A noon service?

IVY

I'm sure there's more to the story --

MATTIE FAE

Don't make excuses for him. That's what Charlie does. Thirty-seven years old and can't drive? Who can't drive?

Violet pulls more and more clothes from the closet, dumping them on the bed. The pile is getting very large.

MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)

I've seen a chimp drive.

IVY

Why are you giving away your clothes?

VIOLET

All this shit's going. I don't plan to spend the rest of my days looking at what used to be. I want that shit in the office gone, I want these clothes I'm never going to wear gone. I mean look at these fucking shoes --
(holds up spiked heels)
Even if I didn't fall on my face, can you imagine anything less attractive, my swollen ankles and varicose veins? And my toenails, good God: anymore they could dig through cement.

52 INT. THE KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

52

Johnna's at the sink, washing and breaking beans, every kitchen surface is covered with the large dinner she's preparing. Barbara enters, Karen still pursuing her.

KAREN

You get a read off Steve? Did you like him?

BARBARA

We said two words to each other --
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52 CONTINUED:

52

KAREN

You get a feel, though, don't you? Did you get a feel?

BARBARA

He seemed very nice, sweetheart --

Barb grabs a glass from the cabinet, opens the freezer for ice, lets her head linger in the cold.

KAREN

He is, and --

BARBARA

-- but what I think doesn't matter. I'm not marrying him --

KAREN

I guess what I'm telling you is that I'm happy. I've been unhappy most of my life, my adult life. I doubt you've been aware of that. I know our lives have led us apart, you, me and Ivy. Maybe we're not as close as, as close as some families --

Barb gives up on the freezer, fills her glass with iced tea.

BARBARA

Yeah, we really need to talk about Mom, what to do about Mom --

KAREN

-- but I think I haven't wanted to live my unhappiness in view of my family. But now I'm just really happy. I'd like us to get to know each other a little better.

Barbara stares at her, what is she talking about?

BARBARA

Yes. Yes.

Karen wraps her arms around Barbara.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Okay. Yes.

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53 **EXT. PAWHUSKA LIQUOR STORE PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON** 53

The Ferrari pulls into the lot. Bill crawls out, heads for the store. An anxious Jean calls after him.

JEAN

Hurry, okay?

BILL

I will, sweetheart.

Steve joins Jean, leans against the car. Throughout the following they watch Bill shop for wine inside.

STEVE

Is it always this hot?

JEAN

Usually it's hotter.

STEVE

Hard to imagine.

(a beat)

How old are you, about, seventeen?

JEAN

Fourteen.

STEVE

Fourteen, right... Know what I was doing when I was fourteen? Cattle processing. Know what that is?

JEAN

It doesn't sound good.

STEVE

Slaughterhouse sanitation.

JEAN

That's disgusting.

STEVE

I don't recommend it. But hey.

Put food on the table. Get it?

An impatient Jean watches her father comparing wines inside.

STEVE (CONT'D)

What's that smell?

She sniffs. Doesn't smell much of anything really.

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53 CONTINUED:

53

JEAN

Dumpster over there?

STEVE

Nah, that's not what I'm smelling.

He sniffs the air, then sniffs her.

JEAN

What are you doing?

STEVE

Do I smell what I think I smell?

JEAN

What do you smell?

STEVE

What do you think I smell?

JEAN

I think you smell that dumpster.

He whiffs, hard, breathing her in.

STEVE

Is that... pot? You smoking pot?

JEAN

No.

STEVE

You can tell me.

JEAN

No.

STEVE

You a little dope smoker?

(beat)

Then you are in luck. Because I
just happen to have some tasty shit.
And I am going to hook you up.

Bill pays inside, motions to Jean that he's hurrying.

JEAN

That'd be so great. I just smoked my
last bowl and I really need to get
fucked up.

STEVE

You what?

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53 CONTINUED:

53

JEAN

I really need to get fucked up --

STEVE

You need to get what?

JEAN

You're bad --

Bill hustles out of the store, carrying several bags.

BILL

No Pinots, but they had some decent
California Merlots.

Crawls into the car. Steve grins to Jean over the roof of
the car, climbs in behind the wheel.

54 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - DAY

54

The closet is mostly empty now, the bed overflowing with
discarded clothes. Mattie Fae nurses a cocktail, hands a

*

photo to Violet.

VIOLET

Look at me.
(shows photo to Ivy)
Look at me.

IVY

You're beautiful, Mom.

VIOLET

I was beautiful. Not anymore.

MATTIE FAE

Oh, now --

IVY

You're still beautiful.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

One of those lies we tell to give us
comfort. Women are beautiful when
they're young and not after. Men can
still preserve their sex appeal into
old age. Not those men like you see
with shorts and those little purses
around their waists. Some men can
maintain a weary masculinity. Women
just get old and fat and wrinkly.

MATTIE FAE

I beg your pardon?

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54 CONTINUED:

54

VIOLET

Think about the last time you went to
the mall and saw some sweet little gal
and thought she's a cute trick. What
makes her that way? Taut skin, firm

boobs, an ass above her knees.

MATTIE FAE

I'm still very sexy, thank you very much.

VIOLET

You're about as sexy as a wet cardboard box, Mattie Fae, you and me both. Look, wouldn't we be better off if we stopped lying about these things and told the truth? "Women aren't sexy when they're old." I can live with that. Can you live with that?

MATTIE FAE

What about Sophia Loren? What about Lena Horne? She stayed sexy till she was eighty.

Violet finds something else in the closet for Ivy to try.

VIOLET

The world is round. Get over it. Now try this dress on.

IVY

I'm sorry, I won't.

VIOLET

You don't know how to attract a man. I do. That's something I always --

IVY

We just buried my father, I'm not trying to attract --!

VIOLET

I'm not talking about today, dummy, this is something you can wear --

IVY

I have a man. All right? I have a man.

VIOLET

You said you weren't looking for a man --

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54 CONTINUED:

54

IVY

And I'm not. Because I have one.
Okay? Now will you leave it alone?

VIOLET

No, I won't leave it alone.

MATTIE FAE

No, let's not leave it

IVY (CONT'D)

I wish you both could see the
brainsick looks on your faces --

VIOLET

Who is it?

IVY

Nobody. Forget it --

MATTIE FAE

Tell us, is he someone from school?
How old is he, what's he do --?

IVY

I'm not telling you anything so --

MATTIE FAE

You have to tell us something!

IVY

No, I really don't.

VIOLET

Are you in love, Ivy?

IVY

I...I don't...I'm...

Ivy bursts into awkward laughter, Vi and Mattie squeal.

55 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - AFTERNOON

55

The Ferrari ROARS up the drive. Jean jumps out, races into
the house. Bill and Steve emerge, grab the wine.

STEVE

No, we maintain the accounts off-
shore, just until we get approvals.

BILL

To get around approvals?

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55 CONTINUED:

55

STEVE

To get around approvals until we get approvals. There's a lot of red tape, bureaucracy, I don't know how much you know about Florida, Florida politics --

BILL

Only what I read and that's --

STEVE

Right, right, this kind of business in particular.

Charlie, keys in hand, comes out, heading for his Caddie.

BILL

...Charlie?

CHARLIE

Picking up Little Charles.

Charlie climbs in behind the wheel, pulls away.

STEVE

Little Charles?

BILL

His son. I'm sorry, what is your

*

business again?

They start up the porch steps with the wine.

STEVE

You know, it's essentially security work. The situation in the Middle East is perpetually dangerous, so there's a tremendous amount of money involved.

BILL

Security work. You mean... mercenary?

56 INT. KITCHEN/WESTON LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

56

Bill and Steve enter. Barbara's in the dining room with Karen and Mattie Fae setting the table. Goes for the men.

BARBARA

Give. Me. The wine.

She pulls a bottle of Merlot from Bill's grocery bag. Hears something, looks into the living room as she passes. Jean has just turned on the TV, LOUD. Barbara stares for a beat.

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56 CONTINUED:

56

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Is that what you were in such a hurry to get home for? What the hell's on TV that's so important you?

JEAN

Phantom of the Opera, 1925.

BARBARA

For God's sake, you can get it at any Blockbuster.

JEAN

They're showing it with the scene in color restored.

Steve's appeared in the living room archway.

STEVE

Cool.

BARBARA

Let me make sure I've got this: when you threw a fit about going to the store with your dad... Hey, look at me.

(Jean does)

And you were so distraught over the start time of your Grandpa's funeral. Was this your concern? Getting back here in time to watch Phantom of the Fucking Opera?

JEAN

I guess.

Barb gives Jean a withering look, exits. Bill takes the wine from Steve, follows. Steve lingers, watching the TV.

STEVE

Phantom of the Opera, huh?

JEAN

Huh-uh.

Karen enters from the dining room, sidles up to Steve.

KAREN

Hi, doodle.

STEVE

(focused on the TV)

Hey, baby.

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56 CONTINUED:

56

KAREN

(in super-baby-voice)

Hi, doodle!

Steve turns to her, embraces her. They kiss. His hands wander, squeeze her ass. She giggles, then breaks it.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Come on, I want to show you our old fort. Man, the air in here just doesn't move.

She goes. He starts, but stops. Quietly to Jean:

STEVE

Hook you up, later.

57 INT/EXT. GREYHOUND BUS/PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

57

We're inside the bus, sitting next to a man, LITTLE CHARLES, thirty-seven, rangy and awkward. He stares pensively out at the passing Pawhuska storefronts as the bus SLOWS, pulls into a parking lot next to the bank.

He spots Charlie, waiting, drinking a Coke. Little Charles exhales, stands. Steps reluctantly out into the heat.

LITTLE CHARLES

I'm sorry, Dad.

CHARLIE

No need to apologize.

LITTLE CHARLES

I know Mom's mad at me.

CHARLIE

Don't worry about her.

LITTLE CHARLES

What did she say?

CHARLIE

Your mother, she says what she says.

LITTLE CHARLES

I set the alarm. I did.

CHARLIE

I know you did.

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57 CONTINUED:

57

LITTLE CHARLES

I loved Uncle Bev, you know that.

CHARLIE

Stop apologizing.

LITTLE CHARLES

The power must've gone out. I woke up and the clock was blinking noon. That means the power went out, right?

CHARLIE

It's okay.

LITTLE CHARLES

I missed his funeral!

CHARLIE

It's a ceremony. It's ceremonial. It doesn't mean anything compared to what you have in your heart.

(and, then)

Hold on, comb your hair.

Charlie hands Little Charles his comb.

LITTLE CHARLES

Uncle Bev must be disappointed in me.

CHARLIE

Your Uncle Bev has got bigger and better things ahead of him. He

doesn't have time for spite. He
wasn't that kind of man anyway --

Charlie starts for the driver's side, stops when he sees
Little Charles weeping. Returns to him, comforts him.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Hey, hey. It's okay. It's okay, now...

LITTLE CHARLES

Just... I know how things are. I
know how they feel about me and
something like this... you want to be
there for people, and I missed Uncle
Bev's funeral, and I know how they
feel about me --

CHARLIE

How who feels about you? Feels what
about you?

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57 CONTINUED:

57

LITTLE CHARLES

All of them. I know what they say.

CHARLIE

They don't say things about you --

LITTLE CHARLES

I see how they are. I don't blame
them. I'm sorry I let you down, Dad.

CHARLIE

You haven't let me down. You never
let me down. Now listen...you're
wrong about these people, they love
you. Some of them haven't gotten a
chance to see what I see: a fine man,
very loving, with a lot to offer. Now
take this...

(a handkerchief)

Give me my comb. Stand up straight,
look folks in the eye. Stop being so
hard on yourself.

LITTLE CHARLES

I love you, Dad.

CHARLIE

Love you too, son.

Barbara bursts out of the back porch screen and into the yard, heading to the old barn. Bill follows.

BARBARA

Phantom of the Opera --

BILL

You don't remember what it was like to be fourteen?

BARBARA

She's old enough to exhibit a little character. But that's something you normally learn from your parents.

BILL

That's a shot across my bow, right? I missed something.

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58 CONTINUED:

58

BARBARA

Really? Instilling character: our burden as parents.

BILL

I got that part.

BARBARA

And you really haven't been much of a parent lately, so it's tough to --

BILL

Just because you and I are struggling with this Gordian knot doesn't mean --

BARBARA

Nice, "Gordian knot," but her fourteen-year-old self might view it differently, might consider it "abandonment" --

BILL

Oh, come on, she's a little more sophisticated than that, don't you think?

Barbara kicks at an old, stuck, door. Enters --

59 INT. THE WORKSHOP AT THE BACK OF THE BARN - DAY
59

Makes her way to the back where old dinner chairs hang from nails pounded into the overhead beams.

BARBARA

Pretty fucking sophisticated, the restored whatever from Phantom of the Opera, I know that makes your dick hard --

BILL

Barbara --

BARBARA

Precocious little shit.

BILL

I'm not defending her.

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59 CONTINUED:

59

BARBARA

(voice rising)
I'm not blaming her, because I don't expect her to act any differently when her father is a selfish son-of-a-bitch.

BILL

(voice rising)
I'm on your side. How can we fight when I'm on your side? Barbara...Barbara, settle down!

BARBARA

Be a father! Help me!

BILL

I am her father, goddamn it!

BARBARA

Her father in name only!

BILL

I have not forsook my responsibilities!

Barbara hands dusty battered chairs back to Bill.

BARBARA

It's "forsaken," big shot!

BILL

Actually, "forsook" is also an

acceptable usage --!

BARBARA

Oh, "forsook" you and the horse
you rode in on --

Each now with chairs in hand, head out into --

60 **EXT. THE BACK YARD - DAY**

60

And the blinding sunlight. Start back for the house.

BILL

You don't fight fair.

BARBARA

I've seen where that gets me! I'm
sick of the whole notion of the
enduring female. GROW UP! Cause
while you're going through your fifth
puberty, the world is falling apart
and your kid can't handle it!

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60 **CONTINUED:**

60

BILL

Our kid is just trying to deal with
this goddamn madhouse you've dragged
her into.

BARBARA

This madhouse is my home.

BILL

Think about that statement for a
second, why don't you?

BARBARA

Jean is here with me because this
is a family event.

BILL

Jean's here with you because she's
a buffer between you and the shrill
insanity of your mother.

BARBARA

Y'know, you'd have a lot more
credibility if you had any
credibility.

BILL

You can't resist, can you?

BARBARA

You're a pretty easy mark.

BILL

You're so goddamn self-righteous,
you know? You're so --

BARBARA

Surely you must've known when you
started porking Pippi Longstocking
you were due for a little self-
righteousness, just a smidge of
indignation on my part --

BILL

Maybe I split because of it.

They've reached the back porch stairs. She turns on him.

BARBARA

Is this your confession, then, when
you finally unload all?

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60 CONTINUED:

60

BILL

You're thoughtful, Barbara, but you're
not open. You're passionate, but
you're hard. You're a good, decent,
funny, wonderful woman, and I love
you, but you're a pain in the ass.

Bill pushes past her up the stairs, disappears inside.

61 INT. BEVERLY'S STUDY - AFTERNOON

61

Violet stands in the middle of the room. Sunlight streams in
through the windows surrounding her. Approaches Beverly's
swivel chair, touches the back, ...slowly spins it ...sits.

VIOLET

August... your month. Locusts are
raging, "Summer psalm become summer
wrath." `Course it's only August out
there. In here... who knows?

(and then)

All right... okay. "The Carriage held
but just Ourselves," dum-de-dum...mm,

best I got... Emily Dickenson's all I
got... something something, "Horse's
Heads Were Toward Eternity..."

Produces a bottle of pills, shakes one out, takes it.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

That's for me. One for me.

Surveys the photos behind his desk. The girls. Vi and Bev
together in happier times. Picks up the hardback Meadowlark
Bill left. Finds Beverly's reading glasses on the desk, puts
them on. Thumbs through it, finds the dedication: simply:

VIOLET (CONT'D)

For My Violet...

Violet smiles ruefully, takes another pill.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

For the girls, God love `em.

Surveys the book with something bordering on disgust.
Another pill. Sits. Waiting. For what? She's not sure.

BARBARA (OS)

Mom?! Food's on the table!

She takes a final look around, takes one last pill.

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62 INT. DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

62

Johnna, Karen, Steve and Mattie Fae carry in serving dishes,
set them down on the already overladen table. Charlie pours
himself a sweet tea.

KAREN

This is lovely! You do all this?

JOHNNA

Mm-hmm.

MATTIE FAE

She's a wonder, this one.

Bill passes through, carries us into the living room where he
finds Jean, still watching the movie.

BILL

Turn that off, it's time to eat.

JEAN

Don't suppose I could eat in here?

BILL

You suppose right.

Ivy comes down the stairs, looking.

IVY

Did I hear Little Charles?

CHARLIE

He went back out to the car.

63 EXT. BACK YARD - AFTERNOON

63

Ivy steps out onto the porch. Little Charles is by his father's car, retrieving a Pyrex dish.

LITTLE CHARLES

Mom's casserole.

Shuts the door, rests the casserole on the hood.

IVY

They said you overslept.

LITTLE CHARLES

Maybe I purposely accidentally overslept. I don't know. I'm sorry.

IVY

Please.

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63 CONTINUED:

63

LITTLE CHARLES

I know you had one of the worst days of your life and I'm sorry if I --

IVY

We don't have to do that with each other.

She embraces him, kisses him. He looks toward the house.

LITTLE CHARLES

You're breaking our rule.

IVY

They're on to me. Not us, just me. I told them I was seeing someone. I didn't tell them who. I just wanted

you to know, in case it came up.
(he stares at her)
What?
(beat)
Charles...

LITTLE CHARLES

I adore you.

64 INT. DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

64

Barbara, Bill, Mattie Fae, Charlie, Karen, and Steve are already seated. The men have removed their suit coats.

CHARLIE

Pass the casserole, please?

MATTIE FAE

My casserole's coming.

CHARLIE

I'll eat some of yours, too --

BARBARA

(calling out)
Mom?! Let's eat!

Little Charles and Ivy enter with the casserole.

MATTIE FAE

There he is. I wanted to put you at a kid's table but they wouldn't let me.

LITTLE CHARLES

Where do you want this?
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72.

64 CONTINUED:

64

Ad-lib greetings, hugs, handshakes, Karen's introduction of Steve. Ivy slips in and takes her seat. Little Charles goes to put Mattie Fae's casserole on the table, but drops it.

It lands on the floor with a sickening SPLAT.

LITTLE CHARLES (CONT'D)

Oh Jesus --!

BILL

Whoops.

MATTIE FAE

Goddamn it --!

STEVE

O-pah!

MATTIE FAE

You goddamn clumsy goofball!

LITTLE CHARLES

Mom, I'm so sorry --

CHARLIE

All right, nobody's hurt.

Little Charles helps Johnna clean up the mess.

MATTIE FAE (CONT'D)

What about me? I'm hurt.

CHARLIE

You're not hurt.

LITTLE CHARLES

Mom, Jesus, I'm sorry --

IVY

It's just an accident.

MATTIE FAE

That's my casserole!

CHARLIE

Let it go, Mattie Fae.

STEVE

It's not a party until
someone spills something.

CHARLIE

Jean, you didn't get any chicken.

BARBARA

No, she won't --

JEAN

I don't eat meat.

CHARLIE

You don't eat meat.

STEVE

Good for you.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

"Don't eat meat." Okay. Who wants
chicken? Little Charles, chicken?

MATTIE FAE

Just put it on his plate for him or
he's liable to burn the house down.

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64 CONTINUED:

64

CHARLIE

All right, Mattie Fae.

BARBARA

Mom...!

Violet enters with a small framed photo of her and Bev.

VIOLET

Barb... will you put this?

BARBARA

Yeah, sure.

Barbara takes it, places it on the sideboard.

MATTIE FAE

That's nice.

KAREN

That's sweet.

VIOLET

I see you gentlemen have stripped
down to your shirt fronts. I thought
we were having a funeral dinner, not
a cockfight.

An awkward beat. The men glumly put their suit coats back on.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Someone should probably say grace.
(no response)
Barbara?

BARBARA

Uncle Charlie should say it. He's
the patriarch around here now.

CHARLIE

I am? Oh, I guess I am.

VIOLET

By default.

CHARLIE

Okay.
(clears his throat)
Dear Lord...

All bow their heads.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We ask that you watch over this family
in this sad time, O Lord...

(MORE)

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74.

64 CONTINUED:

64

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

that you bless this good woman and
keep her in your, in your... grace.

A cell phone RINGS, playing the theme from Sanford and Son.
Steve digs through his pockets, finds the phone, checks it.

STEVE

I have to take this.

Steve hustles into the kitchen to talk on the phone.

CHARLIE

We ask that you watch over Beverly,
too, as he, as he... as he... makes
his journey. We thank thee, O Lord,
that we are able to join together to
pay tribute to this fine man, in his
house, with his beautiful daughters.
We are truly blessed in our, our
fellowship, our togetherness, our...
our fellowship. Thank thee for the
food, O Lord, that we can share this
food and replenish our bodies with...
nutrients. We ask that you help us...
get better. Be better people.

Steve reenters from the kitchen, snapping his phone shut.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We recognize now more than ever the
power, the... joy of family. We ask
that you bless and watch over this
family. Amen.

STEVE

Amen. Sorry folks.

BILL

Let's eat.

They begin to eat. Everyone but Violet, who smokes instead.

VIOLET

Barb, have any use for that sideboard?

BARBARA

Hm?

VIOLET

That sideboard there, you have any
interest in that?

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BARBARA

This? Well... no. I mean, why?

VIOLET

I'm getting rid of a lot of this stuff and I thought you might want that sideboard.

BARBARA

No, Mom, I... I wouldn't have any way to get that home to Colorado.

KAREN

Really pretty.

VIOLET

Mm. Maybe Ivy'll take it.

IVY

I have something like that, remember --

VIOLET

Clearing all this out of here. I want to have a brand new everything.

BARBARA

I. I guess I'm just sort of... not prepared to talk about your stuff.

VIOLET

Suit yourself.

STEVE

This food is just spectacular.

KAREN

It's so good --

LITTLE CHARLES

Yes, it is --

IVY

You like your food, Mom?

VIOLET

I haven't tried much of it, yet --

BARBARA

Johnna cooked this whole meal by herself.

VIOLET

`S what she's paid for.

A silent moment.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Y'all did know she's getting paid, right?

CHARLIE

Jean, so I'm curious, when you say you don't eat meat, you mean you don't eat meat of any kind?

JEAN

Right.

CHARLIE

And is that for health reasons, or...?

JEAN

When you eat meat, you ingest an animal's fear.

VIOLET

Ingest what? It's fur?

JEAN

Fear.

VIOLET

I thought she said --

CHARLIE

How do you do that? You can't eat fear.

JEAN

Sure you can. What happens to you, when you feel afraid? Doesn't your body produce all sorts of chemical reactions?

CHARLIE

Does it?

LITTLE CHARLES

It does.

IVY

Yes.

LITTLE CHARLES

Adrenaline, and, and --

JEAN

Your body goes through a whole

chemical process when it
experiences fear.

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64 CONTINUED:

64

LITTLE CHARLES

-- yep, and cortisol --

JEAN

Don't you think an animal
experiences fear?

STEVE

You bet it does. I used to work in
a cattle processing plant, lot of
fear flying around that place.

JEAN

So when you eat an animal, you're
eating all that fear it felt when
it was slaughtered to make food.

CHARLIE

Wow. You mean I've been eating fear,
what, three times a day for sixty
years?

MATTIE FAE

This one won't have a meal `less
there's meat in it.

CHARLIE

I guess it's the way I was raised,
but it just doesn't seem like a
legitimate meal `less it has some
meat somewhere --

MATTIE FAE

If I make a pasta dish of some kind,
he'll be like, "Okay, that's good for
an appetizer, now where's the meat?"

VIOLET

"Where's the meat?" Isn't that some
TV commercial, the old lady says,
"Where's the meat?"

KAREN

"Beef," "Where's the beef?"

VIOLET

(screeching)

"Where's the meat?!" "Where's the
meat?!" "Where's the meat?!"

BARBARA

That's pleasant.

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78.

64 CONTINUED:

64

CHARLIE

I thought the services were lovely.

KAREN

Yes, weren't they --?

STEVE

Preacher did a fine job.

Vi sticks her hand out, flat, wiggles it back and forth.

VIOLET

Ehhhhh! I give it a...

(repeats gesture)

Ehhhhh!

KAREN

Really? I thought it was --

BARBARA

Great, now we get some
dramatic criticism.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Too much talk about poetry, teaching.
He hadn't written any poetry to speak
of since '65 and he never liked
teaching worth a damn. Nobody talked
about the good stuff. Man was a world-
class alcoholic, more'n fifty years.
Nobody told the story about that night
he got wrangled into giving a talk at
that TU alumni dinner...

(laughs)

Drank a whole bottle of Ron Bocoy
White Rum -- don't know why I remember
that -- and got up to give this talk,
and he fouled himself! Comes back to
our table with this huge --

BARBARA

Yeah, I can't imagine why no one told
that story.

STEVE

I don't know much about poetry, but I
thought his poems were extraordinary.
(to Bill)

And your reading was very fine.

BILL

Thank you.

VIOLET

(to Steve)

Who are you?

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64 CONTINUED:

64

KAREN

Mom, this is my fiance, Steve, I introduced you at the church.

STEVE

Steve Heidebrecht.

VIOLET

Hide-the-what?

STEVE

Heidebrecht.

VIOLET

Hide-a-burrr...German, you're a German.

STEVE

Well, German-Irish, really, I --

VIOLET

That's peculiar, Karen, to bring a date to your father's funeral. I know the poetry was good, but I wouldn't have really considered it date material --

BARBARA

Jesus.

KAREN

He's not a date, he's my fiance. We're getting married on New Years. In Miami, I hope you can make it.

VIOLET

I don't really see that happening, do you? Steve. That right? Steve?

STEVE

Yes, ma'am.

VIOLET

You ever been married before?

KAREN

That's personal.

STEVE

I don't mind. Yes, ma'am, I have.

VIOLET

More'n once?

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80.

64 CONTINUED:

64

STEVE

Three times, actually, three times
before this --

VIOLET

You should pretty much have it down
by now, then.

STEVE

(laughs)
Right, right --

Everybody's eating, passing food. Vi turns to Mattie Fae.

VIOLET

I had that one pegged. I mean,
look at him, you can tell he's
been married.

KAREN

I took Steve out to show him the
old fort and it's gone!

IVY

That's been gone for years.

KAREN

That made me so sad!

BILL

What is this now?

KAREN

Our old fort, where we used to play
Cowboys and Indians.

IVY

Daddy said rats were getting in there.

VIOLET

Karen! Shame on you! Don't you know not to say Cowboys and Indians? You played Cowboys and Native Americans, right Barb?

BARBARA

What did you take? What pills?

VIOLET

Lemme alone --

Charlie's silverware clatters to the floor. He appears to be having some kind of attack.

CHARLIE

Uh-oh!

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64 CONTINUED:

64

MATTIE FAE

What is it?

CHARLIE

UH-OH!

MATTIE FAE

What's the matter?

LITTLE CHARLES

Dad --?

IVY

You okay, Uncle --

CHARLIE

I got a big bite of fear! I'm shakin' in my boots! Fear never tasted so good.

Laughter. Charlie digs into his plate ravenously.

STEVE

Right, right, it's pretty good once you get used to the taste.

BARBARA

I catch her eating a cheeseburger every now and again.

JEAN

I do not!

BARBARA

Double cheeseburger, bacon, extra

fear.

JEAN

Mom, you are such a liar!

More laughter. Violet stares at Jean.

VIOLET

Y'know...if I ever called my mom a liar? She would've knocked my goddamn head off my shoulders.

Silence.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You girls know there's a will.

BARBARA

Mom...

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64 CONTINUED:

64

VIOLET

We took care of it some time back.

BARBARA

Mom, we don't want to talk about this.

VIOLET

I want to talk about it. What about what I want to talk about, that count for anything?

(beat)

Bev made some good investments, believe it or not, and we had money for you girls in his will, but we talked it over after some years passed and decided to change things, leave everything to me. We never got around to taking care of it legally, but you should know he meant to leave the money to me.

BARBARA

Okay.

VIOLET

Okay?

(looks to Ivy, Karen)

Okay?

IVY

Okay.

VIOLET

Karen? Okay?

Uncertain, Karen looks to Steve, then Barbara.

BARBARA

Okay.

KAREN

Okay.

VIOLET

Okay. But now some of this furniture, some of this old shit you can just have. I don't want it, got no use for it. Maybe I should have an auction.

MATTIE FAE

Sure, an auction's a fine idea --

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83.

64 CONTINUED:

64

VIOLET

Some things, though, like the silver, that's worth a pretty penny. But if you like I'll sell it to you, cheaper'n I might get in an auction.

BARBARA

Or you might never get around to the auction and then we can just have it for free after you die.

IVY

Barbara...

Beat. Violet coolly studies Barbara.

VIOLET

You might at that.

LITTLE CHARLES

Excuse me, Bill? I'm wondering, the reading you did, those poems --?

VIOLET

Where are you living now, Bill? You want this old sideboard?

BILL

I beg your pardon.

VIOLET

You and Barbara are separated,
right? Or you divorced already?

BILL

...We're separated.

VIOLET

(to Barbara)

Thought you could slip that one
by me, didn't you?

BARBARA

What is the matter with you?

VIOLET

Nobody slips anything by me. I know
what's what. Your father thought
he's slipping one by me, right? No
way. I'm sorry you two're having
trouble, maybe you can work it out.
Bev'n I separated a few times, course
we didn't call it that.

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64 CONTINUED:

64

BARBARA

Help us to benefit from an
illustration of your storybook
marriage.

VIOLET

Truth is, you can't compete with a
younger woman. One of those unfair
things in life. Is there a younger
woman involved?

BARBARA

You've said enough on this topic,
I think.

BILL

Yes. There's a younger woman.

VIOLET

Y'see? Odds're against you there,
babe.

IVY

Mom believes women don't grow
more attractive with age.

KAREN

Oh, I disagree, I --

VIOLET

I didn't say they "don't grow more
attractive," I said they get ugly.
And it's not really a matter of
opinion, Karen dear. You've only
just started to prove it yourself.

CHARLIE

You're in rare form today, Vi.

VIOLET

The day calls for it, doesn't it?
What form would you have me in?

CHARLIE

I just don't understand why you're
so adversarial.

VIOLET

I'm just truth-telling.
(to Barbara)
Some people get antagonized by
the truth.

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64 CONTINUED:

64

CHARLIE

Everyone here loves you, dear.

VIOLET

You think you can shame me, Charlie?
Blow it out your ass.

BARBARA

Three days ago... I had to identify
my father's corpse. Now I'm supposed
to sit here and listen to you
viciously attack each and every member
of this family --

Violet rises, her voice booming.

VIOLET

Attack my family?! You ever been
attacked in your sweet spoiled life?!

Tell her `bout attacks, Mattie Fae,
tell her what an attack looks like!

MATTIE FAE

Vi, please --

IVY

Settle down, Mom --

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Stop telling me to settle down, goddam
it! I'm not a goddamn invalid! I
don't need to be abided, do I?! Am
I already passed over?!

MATTIE FAE

Honey --

VIOLET

(points to Mattie Fae)
This woman came to my rescue when
one of my dear mother's many gentlemen
friends was attacking me, with a claw
hammer! You think you been attacked?!
What do you know about life on these
Plains? What do you know about hard
times?

BARBARA

I know you had a rotten childhood,
Mom. Who didn't?

VIOLET

You DON'T know! You do NOT know! None
of you know, `cept this woman right
here and that man we buried today!

(MORE)

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64 CONTINUED:

64

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Sweet girl, sweet Barbara, my heart
breaks for every time you ever felt
pain. I wish I coulda shielded you
from it. But if you think for a
solitary second you can fathom the
pain that man endured in his natural
life, you got another think coming.

*

Do you know where your father lived
from age four till about ten? Do you?

No one responds.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Do you?!

BARBARA

No.

IVY

No.

VIOLET

In a Pontiac Sedan. With his mother, his father, in a fucking car! Now what do you want to say about your rotten childhood? That's the crux of the biscuit: we lived too hard, then rose too high. We sacrificed everything and we did it all for you. Your father and I were the first in our families to finish high school and he wound up an award-winning poet. You girls, given a college education, taken for granted no doubt, and where'd you wind up?

(jabs a finger at Karen)

Whadda you do?

(jabs a finger at Ivy)

Whadda you do?

(jabs a finger at Barbara)

Who're you? Jesus, you worked as hard as us, you'd all be President. You never had real problems so you got to make all your problems yourselves.

BARBARA

Why are you screaming at us?

VIOLET

Just time we had some truth's told `round here. Damn fine day, tell the truth.

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87.

64 CONTINUED:

64

There's a long pause as everyone gathers themselves, then:

*

CHARLIE

Well, the truth is... I'm getting full.

STEVE

Amen.

JOHNNA

There's dessert, too.

KAREN

I saw her making those pies.
They looked so good.

Little Charles suddenly stands.

LITTLE CHARLES

I have a truth to tell.

VIOLET

It speaks.

IVY

(softly pleading)
No, no --

CHARLIE

What is it, son?

LITTLE CHARLES

I have a truth.

MATTIE FAE

Little Charles...?

LITTLE CHARLES

I...

IVY

Charles, not like this, please...

LITTLE CHARLES

The truth is...I forgot to set the
clock. The power didn't go out, I
just...forgot to set the clock.
Sorry, Mom. I'm sorry, everyone.
Excuse me...I...I.

He stumbles from the room. A long moment, then --

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88.

64 **CONTINUED:**

64

VIOLET

Scintillating.

MATTIE FAE

(to Charlie)
I gave up a long time ago... Little
Charles is your project.

IVY

(near tears)
Charles. His name is Charles.

VIOLET

Poor Ivy. Poor thing.

IVY

Please, Mom...

VIOLET

Poor baby.

IVY

Please...

VIOLET

She always had a feeling for the
underdog.

IVY

Don't be mean to me right now, okay?

VIOLET

Everyone's got this idea I'm mean
all of a sudden.

IVY

Please, mamma.

VIOLET

I told you, I'm just telling the --

BARBARA

You're a drug addict.

VIOLET

That is the truth! That's what I'm
getting at! I, everybody listen... I
am a drug addict. I am addicted to
drugs, pills, specially downers.

She pulls a bottle from her pocket, holds them up.

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64 CONTINUED:

64

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Y'see these little blue babies? These

are my best fucking friends and they never let me down. Try to get `em away from me and I'll eat you alive.

Barbara lunges at the bottle, she and Vi wrestle for it.

BARBARA

Gimme those goddamn pills --

VIOLET

I'll eat you alive, girl!

Bill and Ivy try to restrain Barbara; Mattie Fae tries to restrain Violet. Others rise, ad-lib. Pandemonium.

STEVE

Holy shit --

IVY

Barbara, stop it --!

CHARLIE

Hey, now, c'mon --!

KAREN

Oh God --

Violet wrests the pills from Barb. Bill pulls Barb back into her seat. Violet shakes the bottle, taunting Barb. Barb lunges again, grabs her mother by the hair, toppling chairs, they crash into the --

65 INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

65

Tumble to the floor. Pandemonium, screaming. The family rushes after them into the living room. Barb has her mother pinned on the floor and is strangling her. Bill and Charlie struggle to pull Barbara off, pry her fingers off Violet's throat and get her away.

Johnna and Mattie Fae rush to Violet, get her to a chair.

VIOLET

Goddamn you... goddamn you, Barb...

BARBARA

Shut up!

(silence)

Okay. Pill raid. Johnna, help Ivy in the kitchen; Bill and Jean upstairs with me.

(to Ivy)

You remember how to do this, right?

IVY

Yeah...

BARBARA

Go through everything. Every closet,
every drawer, every shoebox.

CHARLIE

What should we do?

BARBARA

Get Mom some black coffee, a wet
towel and listen to her bullshit.
Karen, call Dr. Burke.

VIOLET

You can't do this! This is my
house! This is my house!

BARBARA

You don't get it, do you?

She strides to her mother, looms over her.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I'M RUNNING THINGS NOW!

66 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

66

The hallway is empty, but we hear the sounds of the search
coming from the bedroom. Barbara appears, looks through the
linen closet, looking behind stacked towels and old electric
blankets. Finds a bottle of pills in the back.

Ivy comes upstairs, followed closely by Karen. Hold out pill
*
bottles, Barb adds them to the ones she's already collected
in a large Ziplock bag.

IVY

That's all we could find.
*

Barb heads for the bathroom, lifts the toilet seat. Begins
*
dumping pills into the bowl. Karen examines the bottles.
*

KAREN

*
Why'd Dr. Burke write her so many
*

prescriptions? Doesn't he know --?

*

IVY

*

It's not just him. She's got a doctor
in every port.

*

*

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66 CONTINUED:
66

BARBARA

You knew this was going on again?

Ivy shrugs. Finished emptying the pills, Barb flushes the
toilet, steps to her mother's open bedroom door, looks in.

*

67 INT. VIOLET'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON
67

Violet lays motionless on the bed in the semi-darkness,
facing the wall, still fully clothed. Ivy and Karen join her.
They stare at their mother's comatose form. Finally:

*

KAREN

Now what?

BARBARA

*

Wine... lots of wine.

*

A68 OMIT
A68 *

68 OMIT
68 *

69 OMIT
69 *

A70 EXT. WESTON HOUSE YARD/GAZEBO - NIGHT
A70 *

* Barbara, Ivy, Karen and the remains of the dinner wine sit
* around the table in the backyard gazebo.

* **BARBARA**

* Think we can goad Mom into giving
* Burke her "greatest" generation
* speech tomorrow, tell him about the
* claw hammer?

"August" 11/11/12 Yellow Pages 92.

A70 CONTINUED:

A70

IVY

Won't do any good, he's part of the
same generation.

BARBARA

* "Greatest Generation," my ass. What
* makes them so great? Because they
* were poor and hated Nazis? Who
* doesn't fucking hate Nazis? Remember
* when we checked her in the psych ward,
that stunt she pulled?

IVY

* Big speech, she's getting clean,
making this incredible sacrifice for
her family, she's let us down but now
* she'll prove she's a good mother.

KAREN

I wasn't there.

BARBARA

She smuggled Darvocet into the psych
ward ...in her vagina. There's your
Greatest Generation for you. She

made this speech to us while she was
clenching a bottle of pills in her
cooch, for God's sake.

KAREN

God, I've never heard this story.

"August" 11/11/12 Yellow Pages 93.

A70 CONTINUED:

A70

IVY

Did you just say "cooch"?

BARBARA

The phrase "Mom's pussy" seems gauche.

IVY

You're a little more comfortable with
"cooch," are you?

BARBARA

What word should I use to describe
our mother's vagina?

IVY

I don't know, but --

BARBARA

"Mom's beaver"? "Mother's box"?

IVY

Oh God --

KAREN

Barbara!

As their laughter slowly dies down --

*

KAREN

One thing about Mom and Dad. You have
to tip your cap to anyone who can stay
married that long.

IVY

Karen. He killed himself.

BARBARA

Is there something going on between
you and Little Charles?

IVY

I don't know that I'm comfortable
talking about that.

"August" 11/09/12 Pink Draft 93A.

A70 CONTINUED:

A70

BARBARA

Because you know he's our first
cousin.

IVY

Give me a break.

KAREN

You know you shouldn't consider
children.

IVY

I can't anyway, I had a hysterectomy
last year.

What? Barbara and Karen stare at Ivy.

"August" 10/23/12 BLUE Draft 94.

A70 CONTINUED:

A70

KAREN

*

Why?

IVY

Cervical cancer.

KAREN

I didn't know.

BARBARA

Neither did I.

IVY

I didn't tell anyone except Charles.
That's where it started between us.

BARBARA

Why not?

IVY

And hear it from Mom the rest of my
life? She doesn't need another excuse
to treat me like some damaged thing.

BARBARA

You might have told us.

IVY

You didn't tell us about you and Bill.

BARBARA

That's different.

IVY

Why? Because it's you, and not me?

BARBARA

Because divorce is an embarrassing public admission of defeat. Cancer's fucking cancer, you can't help that. We're your sisters.

IVY

*

I don't feel that connection very keenly.

*

*

KAREN

*

I feel very connected, to both of you.

*

IVY

*

We never see you, you're never around, you haven't been around --

*

*

"August" 10/23/12 BLUE Draft 95.

A70 CONTINUED:

A70

KAREN

*

I still feel that connection!

*

IVY

I can't perpetuate these myths of family or sisterhood anymore. We're just people, some of us accidentally connected by genetics, a random selection of cells.

*

BARBARA

When did you get so cynical?

IVY

That's funny, coming from you.

BARBARA

Bitter, sure, but "random selection
of cells?"

IVY

Maybe my cynicism came with the
realization that the responsibility of
*
caring for our parents was mine alone.

BARBARA

Don't give me that. I participated --

IVY

Till you had enough and got out,
you and Karen both. I'm not
criticizing. Do what you want. You
did, Karen did.

BARBARA

And if you didn't, that's not my
fault.

IVY

That's right, so don't lay this sister
thing on me, all right? When I leave
*
*
*
here I won't feel any more guilty than
you two did.

KAREN

*
I can't believe your world view is
*
*
this dark.

IVY

*
You live in Florida.
*

*
"August" 11/09/12 Pink Draft 96-97.

A70 CONTINUED:
A70

BARBARA

You're thinking of leaving?

IVY

Charles and I are going to New York.

Barb bursts out in derisive laughter. Karen joins her.

BARBARA

What are you going to do in New York?

IVY

We have plans.

BARBARA

Like what?

IVY

None of your business.

BARBARA

What about Mom?

IVY

What about her?

BARBARA

You feel comfortable leaving Mom here?

IVY

Do you?

(then)

You think she was tough when he was alive? Think what it's going to be like now.

*

(to Karen)

You're going back to Miami, right?

KAREN

Yes.

Ivy stands, gathers up her wine glass.

"August" 10/23/12 BLUE Draft 98.

A70 CONTINUED:

A70

IVY

*

There you go, Barb. You want to know

*

what we're doing about Mom? Karen and

*

I are leaving. You want to stay,

*

* that's your decision. But nobody gets
* to point a finger at me. Nobody.

* Ivy starts back for the house.

70 OMIT 70

*

71 OMIT 71

*

72 EXT. WESTON HOUSE YARD - NIGHT 72

*

* The Weston women head for the house.

*

* VIOLET

*

* My girls all together. Hearing you
* just now gave me a warm feeling.

*

* Violet, sits on the swing in the semi-darkness, smoking, her
* hair wrapped in a towel. They hadn't seen her. How long has
* she been there?

*

"August" 10/23/12 BLUE Draft 99.

72 CONTINUED:

72

* BARBARA

*

* You had a bath?

*

* VIOLET

*

* Uh-huh...

*

BARBARA

You need something to eat? More
coffee?

VIOLET

No, honey, I'm fine.
(then)
This house must have heard a lot of
Weston girl secrets.

Karen moves to her mother, sits next to her on the swing.
Barb leans against a fence post, Ivy hangs back.

KAREN

I get embarrassed just thinking
about it.

Karen takes a tube of hand creme from her purse.

VIOLET

Oh... nothing to be embarrassed
about. Secret crushes, secret
schemes. Province of teenage girls.
I can't imagine anything more
delicate, or bittersweet. Some part
of you girls I always identified
with... no matter how old you get, a
woman's hard-pressed to throw off
that part of herself.
(to Karen, re: hand creme)
That smells good.

KAREN

It's apple. You want some?

VIOLET

Yes, please.

Violet puts out her cigarette. Karen passes her the creme.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I ever tell you the story of Raymond
Qualls? Not much story to it. Boy I
had a crush on when I was thirteen or
so. Rough-looking boy, beat-up Levis,
messy hair. Terrible underbite.

(MORE)

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 100.

72 CONTINUED:

72

VIOLET (CONT'D)

But he had these beautiful cowboy

boots, shiny chocolate leather. He was so proud of those boots, you could tell, way he'd strut around, all arms and elbows, puffed up and cocksure. I decided I needed to get a girly pair of those same boots and I convinced myself he'd ask me to go steady. He'd see me in those boots and say "Now there's the gal for me."

Violet lights another cigarette.

*

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Found the boots in a window downtown and just went crazy: praying for those boots, rehearsing the conversation I'd have with Raymond when he saw me in my boots. Must've asked my momma a hundred times if I could get those boots. "What do you want for Christmas, Vi?" "Momma, I'll give all of it up just for those boots." Bargaining, you know? She started dropping hints about a package under the tree she had wrapped up, about the size of a boot box, nice wrapping paper. "Now, Vi, don't you cheat and look in there before Christmas morning." Little smile on her face. Christmas morning, I was up like a shot, boy, under the tree, tearing open that box. There was a pair of boots, all right... men's work boots, holes in the toes, chewed up laces, caked in mud and dog shit. Lord, my momma laughed for days.

Silence.

BARBARA

Please don't tell me that's the end of the story.

VIOLET

Oh, no. That's the end.

Ivy shakes her head, goes inside. She's had enough of Violet to last a lifetime.

KAREN

You never got the boots?

72 CONTINUED:
72

VIOLET

No, huh-uh.

BARBARA

Okay, well, that's the worst story I ever heard. That makes me wish for a heartwarming claw hammer story.

VIOLET

My momma was a nasty-mean old lady. I suppose that's where I get it from.

An awkward moment.

KAREN

You're not nasty-mean. You're our mother and we love you.

VIOLET

Thank you, sweetheart.

Karen leans her head against her mother's shoulder, takes her mother's hand. Off Barbara, watching this --

73 INT. GUEST ROOM - EARLY MORNING
73

Barbara wakes, takes a moment to get her bearings. Early sunlight pours in. Bill's still asleep. She sits up, studies him. Surprised to find him beside her.

74 OMIT
74 *

75 OMIT
75 *

76 INT/EXT. BACKYARD - EARLY MORNING
*

76

*
Barbara stands in the door. Closes her eyes, letting the early morning sun warm her. After a long moment, Johnna

appears with a coffee mug. Barb takes it, nods her thanks.

BARBARA

Last time I spoke with my father, we talked about the state of the world, and he said, "You know, this country was always pretty much a whorehouse, but at least it used to have some promise. Now it's just a shithole." I think maybe he was talking about something else, something more specific, personal... this house? This family? His marriage? Himself? There was something sad in his voice-- not sad, he always sounded sad -- hopeless. As if it had already happened. As if whatever was disappearing had already disappeared. And no one saw it go. This country, this experiment, America, this hubris: what a lament, if no one saw it go.

JOHNNA

Mrs. Fordham, are you going to fire me?

BARBARA

What? No. But I'll understand if you want to quit. I mean, there's work. And then there's work.

JOHNNA

I'm familiar with this job. I can do this job. I don't do it for you or Mrs. Weston. Or even for Mr. Weston. Right? I do it for me.

BARBARA

Why?

JOHNNA

I need the work.

BARBARA

Johnna, did my father say anything to you?

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 103.

76 CONTINUED:

76

JOHNNA

He just seemed like maybe he had... he

*

talked about...

(beat)

He talked a lot about his daughters,
his three daughters, and his
granddaughter. That was his joy.

BARBARA

Thank you. That makes me feel better.
Knowing that you can lie.

Johnna smiles.

77 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE/WAITING ROOM - DAY

77

Barbara sits opposite DR. BURKE, a genial, charming and
remotely creepy small town doctor. Ivy stands. Violet is
visible out in the waiting room, Karen sitting with her.

DR. BURKE

The chemotherapy and the radiation,
coupled with the overuse of pain
medications --

BARBARA

-- right --

DR. BURKE

-- and without the benefit of more
thorough testing, an MRI or CT scan, I
believe your mother is showing signs
of Mild Cognitive Impairment.

BARBARA

Mild Cognitive Impairment?

DR. BURKE

Brain damage. It may be time to
consider placing her in a long term
care facility. I'd certainly feel
more comfortable knowing she was
receiving that level of supervision.

BARBARA

That would make you comfortable? You
would be comfortable with that?

DR. BURKE

Of course, it's a family decision.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

77 CONTINUED:
77

BARBARA

You want us to send her to where, a psychiatric hospital?

DR. BURKE

Well, Beverly's gone.

BARBARA

Right. Not "gone" so much as "dead," but I see your point.

Ivy suppresses a laugh. Burke looks at Ivy, confused.

DR. BURKE

Legal guardianship for you and your sisters, with my recommendation, should be a simple --

IVY

Leave me out of this, thanks.

BARBARA

So you're thinking that if the three of us cooperated with you on a commitment end-around, we'd be less likely to sue your ass?

DR. BURKE

I'm sorry?

BARBARA

"Mild Cognitive Impairment?" Are you fucking kidding me? You really want to go before a judge and make a case for a couple radiation treatments and some chemo causing brain damage? Think you can make that stand up in court? When I'm sitting at the other table, doing this?

Barbara pulls out the Ziplock bag, throws a pill bottle at Dr. Burke, bouncing it lightly off his head.

DR. BURKE

All right, I think --

Throws another pill bottle at him.

BARBARA

Know whose name is on these bottles?

She hits him with another pill bottle.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 105.

77 CONTINUED:

77

DR. BURKE

Your mother is a very --

She hits him with another pill bottle.

IVY

Barb...

She hits him with another pill bottle. He relents, waits for her to get it out of her system. Only one problem with that idea, though --

She hits him with another pill bottle.

Another pill bottle. And another pill bottle.

She pauses. It seems she's done.

But then, another pill bottle. And another.

BARBARA

We'll hang on to the bucket of these we have at home. For evidence. For your trial.

She gets up to go, gets to the door, turns and fires one last pill bottle at him. Leaves. Ivy lingers, grins at Burke.

78 INT/EXT. TALLGRASS PRAIRIE PRESERVE/BEV'S LINCOLN - DAY

78

The sun parched Indian grass and Turkey Toot are wilting but stirred by prairie winds. Bev's old Lincoln follows a thread of blacktop through the tall grass. Barb drives, Ivy up front. Karen's in the back with Violet.

VIOLET

Pull the car over.

BARBARA

We'll be home in a few minutes.

VIOLET

Pull the car over.

(beat)

I'm going to be sick.

Barbara looks back, sees her mother means this literally, pulls to the side of the road. Violet gets out quickly.

We stay with Barbara as she climbs out of the car, stares across the road, waiting for Violet, who can be heard retching. Karen and Ivy still in the car.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 106.

78 **CONTINUED:**

78

The sound fades as Barbara contemplates the prairie and for a long moment... loses herself, back to this land, to her home. Her expression is unreadable, enigmatic.

Then behind her, out of focus, we become aware of Violet running away, across the prairie, through the tall grass.

Barbara turns, simply to get back in the car, sees Violet running through the field.

BARBARA

Mom?

Violet keeps running.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Mom?! Where are you going?

Barbara watches for another moment.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Goddamn it. Mom!

Barbara takes off after her. Ivy and Karen climb out, but don't follow. Shield their eyes to watch the chase.

It's an odd sight, the two women, racing through the grass. One almost seventy, the other nearing fifty.

Barbara is slow in her pursuit at first, maybe because of her shoes, or maybe because she just feels silly. Then realizes that Violet is not stopping... not unless Barbara stops her.

Violet runs through the tall grass, puts a foot wrong, goes down. Barbara catches up, out of breath, collapses. They lay on the ground, wheezing, sweating.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Where the fuck are you going, Mom?

And now we see the full beauty of the land, the distant horizon, the high cumulous clouds, the endless blue sky.

Barb and Violet two dots, lost in the unforgiving prairie.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

There's nowhere to go.

79 INT/EXT. LINCOLN/WESTON HOUSE DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

79

Barb pulls the Lincoln in beside Charlie's Caddie and Ivy's Honda. Shuts off the engine. Ivy and Karen climb out, start back for the house. Barbara turns to Violet.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

107.

79 CONTINUED:

79

BARBARA

I'm sorry.

VIOLET

Please, honey --

BARBARA

No, it's important I say this. I lost my temper at dinner and went too far.

*

VIOLET

Barbara. The day, the funeral... the pills. I was spoiling for a fight and you gave it to me.

BARBARA

So... truce?

VIOLET

(laughs)

Truce.

They take a long moment, then --

*

BARBARA

What now?

VIOLET

How do you mean?

BARBARA

Don't you think you should at least consider a rehab center?

Karen turns, realizing they're not following. Should she go back to the car? She decides no, continues inside.

VIOLET

I can't go through that again. No, I can do this. You got rid of my pills, right?

BARBARA

All we could find.

VIOLET

I don't have that many hiding places.

BARBARA

Mom, now, come on.

VIOLET

You wanna search me?

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

108.

79 CONTINUED:

79

BARBARA

Uh... no.

VIOLET

If the pills are gone, I'll be fine. Just need a few days to get my feet under me.

BARBARA

I can't imagine what all this must be like for you right now. I just want you to know, you're not alone. If you need any help --

VIOLET

I don't need help.

BARBARA

I want to help.

VIOLET

I don't need your help.

BARBARA

Mom.

VIOLET

I don't need your help. I've gotten myself through some... I know how this

goes: once all the talking's through,
people go back to their own nonsense.
I know that. So, don't worry about me.
I'll manage. I get by.

Violet gets out, heads inside. Barbara watches her go.

80 **INT. WESTON HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**
80

Ivy finds Little Charles watching television.

IVY

Is the coast clear?

LITTLE CHARLES

Never very.

Ivy waits until Karen passes through, heads upstairs.

IVY

What are you watching?

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

109.

80 **CONTINUED:**
80

LITTLE CHARLES

Television.

IVY

Can I watch it with you?

LITTLE CHARLES

I wish you would.

She sits beside him on the couch.

LITTLE CHARLES (CONT'D)

I almost blew it last night.

(she nods)

Are you mad at me?

IVY

Nope.

They hold hands.

LITTLE CHARLES

I was trying to be brave.

IVY

I know.

LITTLE CHARLES

I just... I want everyone to know
that I got what I always wanted.
And that means... I'm not a loser.

IVY

Hey. Hey.

He turns to look at her.

IVY (CONT'D)

You're my hero.

He considers this... then breaks into a huge smile, mutes the
TV, goes to the ancient, oak, electric piano, turns it on.

LITTLE CHARLES

Come on, help me push the pedal.

She joins him on the piano bench.

LITTLE CHARLES (CONT'D)

I wrote this for you.

He plays, and quietly sings a gentle but quirky love song.
It's charming, touching.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 110.

80 CONTINUED:

80

She smiles, he smiles back. Midway through, Mattie Fae
enters, watches for a moment. Then breaks the spell.

MATTIE FAE

Liberace. Get yourself together,
we have to get home and take care
of those damn dogs. They've probably
eaten the drapes by now.

Charlie comes down the stairs with their overnight bag.

CHARLIE

I'm sure the house is fine.

MATTIE FAE

(notices the TV)
Oh, look, honey, Little Charles has
got the TV on.

LITTLE CHARLES

No, I was just --

MATTIE FAE

This one watches so much television,
it's rotted his brain.

IVY

I'm sure that's not true.

MATTIE FAE

What was it I caught you watching the
other day?

LITTLE CHARLES

I don't remember.

CHARLIE

Mattie Fae --

MATTIE FAE

*
You do so remember, some dumb talk
show about people swapping wives.

LITTLE CHARLES

I don't remember.

MATTIE FAE

You don't remember.

(to Ivy)

Too bad there isn't a job where they
pay you to sit around watching TV.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 111.

80 CONTINUED:

80

CHARLIE

C'mon, Mattie Fae --

MATTIE FAE

(still to Ivy)

Y'know he got fired from a shoe store?

CHARLIE

Mattie Fae, we're gonna get in the
car and go home and if you say one
more mean thing to that boy I'm going
to kick your fat Irish ass onto the
highway. You hear me?

MATTIE FAE

What the hell did you say--?

CHARLIE

You kids go outside, would you please?

Ivy and Little Charles go.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I don't understand this meanness. I look at you and your sister and the way you talk to people and I don't understand it. I can't understand why folks can't be respectful of one another. I don't think there's any excuse for it. My family didn't treat each other that way.

MATTIE FAE

Maybe that's because your family --

CHARLIE

You had better not say anything about my family right now. I mean it. We buried a man yesterday I loved very much. And whatever faults he may have had, he was a good, kind, decent person. And to hear you tear into your own son not even a day later dishonors Beverly's memory. We've been married thirty-eight years. I wouldn't trade them for anything. But if you can't find a generous place in your heart for your own son, we're not going to make it to thirty-nine.

He goes. She takes a moment to collect herself, turns to follow, finds Barbara standing out in the open kitchen door.

*

There's an awkward moment.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

112.

80 CONTINUED:

80

BARBARA

I didn't mean to eavesdrop. I froze.

MATTIE FAE

That's -- you have a cigarette, hon?

BARBARA

No, I quit years ago.

MATTIE FAE

So did I. Just sounded good to me.

I thought at dinner... at that horrible dinner last night, seemed like, something might be going on between Ivy and Little Charles. Do you know if that's true?

BARBARA

Oh, this is...I'm not sure what to...

MATTIE FAE

Look, just. Is it true?

BARBARA

Yes. It's true.

MATTIE FAE

Okay. That can't happen.

BARBARA

This is going to be difficult, uh...
Ivy and Little Charles have always
marched to their own... and I'd expect
this to be toughest on you --

MATTIE FAE

Barb...?

BARBARA

They're in love. Or they think they
are. What's the difference, right?

MATTIE FAE

Honey --

BARBARA

I know it's unorthodox for cousins to
get together, at least these days --

MATTIE FAE

They're not cousins.

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

113.

80 CONTINUED:

80

BARBARA

-- but believe it or not, it's not as
uncommon as you might --

MATTIE FAE

Listen to me. They're not cousins.

BARBARA

Beg pardon?

MATTIE FAE

Little Charles is not your cousin.
He's your brother. He's your blood
brother. He is not your cousin. He
is your blood brother. Half-brother.
He's your father's child. Which
means that he is Ivy's brother. Do
you see? Little Charles and Ivy are
brother and sister.

Karen and Steve enter from outside.

BARBARA

Go away.

KAREN

We're just going to --

BARBARA

Go away! NOW! GO AWAY!

Karen and Steve retreat. Barbara stares at Mattie Fae.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

You and Dad.
(Mattie Fae nods)
Who knows this?

MATTIE FAE

I do. And you do.

BARBARA

Uncle Charlie doesn't suspect?

MATTIE FAE

We've never discussed it.

BARBARA

What?!

MATTIE FAE

We've never discussed it. Okay?

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

114.

80 CONTINUED:

80

BARBARA

Did Dad know?

MATTIE FAE

Yes. Y'know, I'm not proud of this.

BARBARA

Really. You people amaze me. What, were you drunk? Was this just some --

MATTIE FAE

I wasn't drunk, no. Maybe it's hard for you to believe, looking at me, knowing me the way you do, all these years. I know to you, I'm just your old fat Aunt Mattie Fae. I'm more than that, sweetheart, there's more to me than that. I don't know why Little Charles is such a disappointment to me. Maybe he, well, I don't know why. I'm disappointed for him, more than anything. I made a mistake, a long time ago. Okay? I paid for it. But the mistake ends here.

BARBARA

If Ivy found out, it would destroy her.

MATTIE FAE

I'm sure as hell not gonna tell her. You have to find a way to stop it. You have to put a stop to it.

81 EXT. WESTON HOUSE BACKYARD - NIGHT

81

It's late, the house still. We MOVE through dark rooms, drawn to the murmur of SOUND and a faint sound coming from outside the kitchen --

JEAN (OS)

You weren't kidding, this stuff is strong.

STEVE (OS)

Florida, baby. Number one industry.

JEAN

Who cares?

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 115.

81 CONTINUED:

81

Slowly DISCOVER: Jean and Steve sharing a joint, out by the

fence. She wears a long T-shirt; he wears sweat pants and a sleeveless T-shirt. Both are barefoot.

STEVE

Number one by far. Want a shotgun?
(off her look)
You don't know what a shotgun is?

JEAN

I know what a shotgun is.

STEVE

Not that kind of shotgun, here. Just
put your lips right next to mine and
you inhale while I exhale.

JEAN

Okay.

He puts the joint in his mouth, lit end first. Their lips nearly touch as he blows marijuana smoke into her mouth in a steady stream. She nearly chokes.

STEVE

Hold it. Don't let it out.

She finally gasps, exhales, coughs.

STEVE (CONT'D)

That's a kick, huh?

82 INT. THE ATTIC ROOM - NIGHT 82

Johnna wakes. Listens. Sits up.

83 INT. ATTIC STAIRS/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT 83

Johnna makes her way down the attic stairs and into the second floor hallway, the whispers below unintelligible.

84 INT. MAIN STAIRCASE/HALLWAY 84

Johnna steps into the main hallway. Drawn to whispers, and giggling from outside in the yard.

STEVE (OS)

...Show `em to me... I won't look.

84 CONTINUED: "August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 116. 84

JEAN (OS)

If you won't look, there's no point
in showing them to you.

STEVE (OS)

Okay, okay... I'll look.

JEAN (OS)

You're just an old perv...

STEVE (OS)

Christ, you got a great set. Show you
mine if you'll show me yours.

JEAN (OS)

I don't want to see yours, perv.

Johnna approaches carefully, can't yet see them.

STEVE (OS)

You ever seen one?

JEAN (OS)

What are you doing?

STEVE (OS)

Nothing.

JEAN (OS)

You're gonna get us both in trouble.

STEVE (OS)

I'm white and over thirty. I don't
get in trouble.

Johnna pushes out the screen to DISCOVER: Steve kissing and
groping Jean, sliding his hand down between her legs.

Johnna grabs a shovel leaning against the storm cellar door.
Jean and Steve, clothes in disarray, quickly separate.

JEAN

Oh my God...

STEVE

Ho, fuck!

Johnna approaches Steve menacingly.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hold up there, lady, you don't --

Johnna SWINGS the shovel, barely misses Steve's nose.
Bedroom lights above SNAP ON.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey, goddamn it, careful!

She swings again, HARD. The shovel SMACKS into the arm he puts up to block her smashing his head with the spade.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Ow, goddamn --!

He holds his arm in pain. She wades in with a strong swing and CONNECTS with his back. He goes down. Johnna stands above him, arm cocked, watching for him to try and get up. He doesn't. Karen rushes out, sees Steve on the floor.

KAREN

What happened?!

JOHNNA

He was messing with Jean --

KAREN

Honey, you're bleeding, you okay?

He groans, tries to sit up. Bill and Barbara run in.

BARBARA

Jean, what are you doing up?

JEAN

We were, I don't know --

BARBARA

Who was? Are you alright?

BILL

Do I need to call a doctor?

JEAN (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm fine.

KAREN

I don't know.

BARBARA

Johnna, what's going on?

JOHNNA

He was messing with Jean, so I tuned him up.

BARBARA

Messing with, what do you mean, messing with?

BILL

What...what's that mean?

JOHNNA (CONT'D)

He was kissing and grabbing her.

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118.

84 CONTINUED:

84

This information settles in... then Barbara attacks Steve, who's just gotten to his feet. Karen gets between them. Bill grabs Barbara from behind, trying to pull her away.

BARBARA

I'll murder you, you prick!

STEVE

I didn't do anything!

JEAN

Mom, stop it!

KAREN

Settle down --!

BARBARA

You know how old that girl is?

STEVE

(to Jean)

Tell them I didn't do anything!

BARBARA

She's fourteen years old!

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Are you out of your goddamn mind?

KAREN

Barbara, just back off!

Karen manages to get Steve up the porch steps and into the house. Barbara, Bill, Jean, and Johnna remain.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Son-of-a-bitch is a goddamn sociopath!

JEAN

What is the matter with you? Will you please stop freaking out?

BILL

Why don't you start at the beginning?

BARBARA

What are you even doing up?

BILL

Please, sweetheart, we need to know what went on here.

JEAN

Nothing "went on." Can we just not make a federal case out of every thing? I came down for a drink, he came in... end of story. All right?

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84 CONTINUED:

84

BARBARA

That's not the end of the story.

BILL

That's not the end of the story.

JEAN (CONT'D)

We smoked pot, alright? We smoked a little pot, and we were goofing around, and then everything just went crazy.

BARBARA

What have I told you about smoking that shit?! What did I say?

BILL

Then Johnna just chose to attack him with a shovel?

JEAN (CONT'D)

It's no big deal, nothing happened.

BARBARA

Just tell me what he did!

JEAN

He didn't do anything! What's the big deal?

*

BILL

The big deal, Jean, is that you're fourteen years old.

JEAN

Which is only a few years younger than you like `em.

Barbara SLAPS Jean; Jean bursts into tears.

JEAN (CONT'D)

I hate you!

BARBARA

Yeah, I hate you too, you little freak!

Jean tries to head into the house. Bill grabs her.

BILL Jean--
JEAN Let me go!

Jean pulls free, runs off. Bill gets in Barbara's face.

BILL
What's the matter with you?
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120.

84 CONTINUED:

84

Bill exits, pursuing Jean. Barbara and Johnna are left standing there, then:

WE FOLLOW Barb into the kitchen and up the stairs to --

85 INT. THE GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

85

Karen is pulling on a sweatshirt, grabbing their clothes, stuffing them into a suitcase.

KAREN
I can do without a speech.

BARBARA
Where is he?

KAREN
Out at the car. We're leaving.
Back to Florida, tonight, now.
Me and Steve, together. Want to
give me some grief about that?

BARBARA
Now wait just a goddamn --

KAREN
You better find out from Jean exactly
what went on before you start
pointing fingers. Cause I doubt
Jean's blameless in all this. And
I'm not blaming her, just cause I
said she's not blameless doesn't mean
I've blamed her. I'm saying she
might share in the responsibility.
It's not cut and dried, black and
white, good and bad. It lives where

everything lives: somewhere in the middle. Where the rest of us live, everyone but you.

BARBARA

Karen--

KAREN

He's not perfect. Just like the rest of us, down here in the muck. I'm no angel myself. I've done some things I'm not proud of. Things you'll never know about. I may even have to do some things I'm not proud of again. Cause sometimes life puts you in a corner that way.

(MORE)

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121.

85 CONTINUED:

85

KAREN (CONT'D)

And I am a human being, after all.
Anyway. You have your own hash to settle.
Before you start making speeches to the rest of us.

BARBARA

Right...

KAREN

Come January... I'll be in Belize.
Doesn't that sound nice?

Karen pushes past Barb, rolling her suitcase behind her.

86 EXT. WESTON HOUSE AND DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

86

Karen bursts through the screen door, rushes down the steps to Steve's waiting Ferrari, it's lights already on, engine running. Throws her suitcase in the back.

Barb steps out onto the porch as it reverses, SLAMS into gear and accelerates down the drive, spewing gravel as it goes.

Bill comes out, watches it disappear with Barbara. Then:

BILL

I'm taking Jean with me, heading back to Colorado in the morning.

But Barb's still focused on the distant Ferrari.

BILL (CONT'D)

She's too much for you right now.

BARBARA

Okay.

BILL

I'm sure you'll find a way to blame me for all this.

BARBARA

Yeah, well...

(beat)

I can't make it up to Jean right now. She's just going to have to wait until I get back to Boulder.

BILL

You and Jean have about forty years left to fight and make up.

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122.

86 CONTINUED:

86

BARBARA

(confused)

Why, what happens in forty years?

BILL

You die.

BARBARA

Oh, right.

BILL

I mean --

BARBARA

No. Right. I fail. As a mother, as a daughter, as a wife. I fail.

BILL

No, you don't.

BARBARA

I've physically attacked Mom and Jean in the span of twenty-four hours. You stick around here and I'll cut off your penis.

BILL

That's not funny.

He starts back inside.

BARBARA

You're never coming back to me, are you, Bill?

BILL

Never say never, but...

BARBARA

But no.

BILL

But no.

BARBARA

Even if things don't work out with you and Marsha.

BILL

Cindy.

BARBARA

Cindy.

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86 CONTINUED:

86

BILL

Right. Even if things don't work out.

BARBARA

And I'm never really going to understand why, am I?

Bill struggles... seems he might have more to say, but then:

BILL

Probably not.

Bill goes. She watches him leave. Fights back tears.

87 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - DAY

87

A blistering hot late August day. The Weston house sits in bucolic, heat-weary silence. The driveway no longer crowded with cars. Barb stands nearly where she did the night before, in her sweats and robe. Watching yet another car go.

Their rental, Bill behind the wheel, backing up. Jean in the seat beside him. Jean stares blankly at her mother, as she rolls past. Bill never looks back.

The rental heads down the drive, passing Ivy's Honda arriving. Bill slows for a moment to let Ivy pass. Then continues on it's way back to Tulsa and the airport.

Ivy pulls in next to Bev's big Lincoln. Climbs out. Walks to her sister, looks back to the rental leaving.

IVY

Where are Bill and Jean going?

Barbara doesn't answer, just stands there.

IVY (CONT'D)

Karen, too?

BARBARA

Yeah...

Barb turns, heads for the house, Ivy follows --

IVY

Is she clean?

BARBARA

She's moderately clean.

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124.

87 CONTINUED:

87

IVY

Moderately?

BARBARA

You don't like moderately? Then let's say tolerably.

IVY

Is she clean, or not?

BARBARA

Back off.

IVY

I'm nervous.

BARBARA

Oh Christ, Ivy, not today.

IVY

I have to tell her, don't I? We're leaving for New York tomorrow.

BARBARA

That's not a good idea. For you and Charles to take this any further.

IVY

Where is this coming from?

Barbara heads up the porch steps and into --

88 INT. THE WESTON HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY
88

BARBARA

Lot of fish in the sea. Surely you can rule out the one single man in the world you're related to.

IVY

I love the man I'm related to--

BARBARA

Fuck love, what a crock of shit. People can convince themselves they love a painted rock.

They find Johnna cooking in the kitchen.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Looks great. What is it?

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88 CONTINUED:

88

JOHNNA

Catfish.

BARBARA

Bottom feeders, my favorite. You're nearly fifty years old, Ivy, you can't go to New York, you'll break a hip. Eat your catfish.

IVY

I have lived in this town, year in and year out, hoping against hope someone would come into my life--

BARBARA

Don't get all Carson McCullers on me. Now wipe that tragic look off your face and eat some catfish.

They head into the dining room, find Violet smoking, working on her jigsaw puzzle.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Howdy, Mom.

VIOLET

What's howdy about it?

BARBARA

Look, catfish for lunch. Johnna!
(to Violet)
You hungry?

VIOLET

Ivy, you should smile. Like me.

Johnna enters from the kitchen.

BARBARA

Mom needs her lunch, please.

VIOLET

I'm not hungry.

BARBARA

You haven't eaten anything today.
You didn't eat anything yesterday.

VIOLET

I'm not hungry.

IVY

*

Why aren't either of you dressed?

*

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

126.

88 CONTINUED:

88

BARBARA

*

We're dressed. We're not sitting here

*

naked, are we?

*

VIOLET

*

Yeah...

*

Johnna reenters with plates, then goes.

BARBARA

Eat.

VIOLET

No.

BARBARA

Eat it. Mom? Eat it.

VIOLET

No.

BARBARA

Eat it, you fucker. Eat that catfish.

VIOLET

Go to hell.

BARBARA

That doesn't cut any fucking ice with me. Now eat that fucking fish.

IVY

Mom, I have something to talk to you--

BARBARA

No you don't.

IVY

Barbara--

BARBARA

No you don't. Shut up. Shut the fuck up.

IVY

Please--

VIOLET

What's to talk about?

IVY

Mom--

"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft

88 CONTINUED:
88

BARBARA

Forget it. Eat that fucking fish.

VIOLET

I'm not hungry.

BARBARA

Eat it.

VIOLET

NO!

IVY

Mom, I need to--!

VIOLET

NO!

IVY

MOM!

BARBARA

EAT THE FISH, BITCH!

IVY

MOM, PLEASE!

VIOLET

Barbara...!

BARBARA

Okay, fuck it, do what you want.

IVY

I have to tell you something.

BARBARA

Ivy's a lesbian.

IVY

Barbara--

VIOLET

No, you're not.

IVY

No, I'm not--

BARBARA

Yes, you are. Did you eat your fish?

IVY

Barbara, stop it!

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88 CONTINUED:

88

BARBARA

Eat your fish.

IVY

Barbara!

BARBARA

Eat your fish.

VIOLET

Barbara, quiet now--

IVY

Mom, please, this is important --

BARBARA

Eatyourfisheatyourfisheatyourfish--

Ivy stands, hurls her plate of food, smashes it.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

What the fuck --

IVY

I have something to say.

BARBARA

Are we breaking shit?

Barbara takes a vase from the sideboard, smashes it.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

`cause I can break shit --

Violet throws her plate, smashes it.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

See, we can all break shit.

IVY

Charles and I --

BARBARA

You don't want to break shit with me,
muthah-fuckah --

IVY

Charles and I --

BARBARA

Johnna?! Little spill in here!

Ivy gets in Barbara's face.

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129.

88 CONTINUED:

88

IVY

Barbara, stop it!
(returning to Violet)
Mom, Charles and I --

BARBARA

Little Charles --

IVY

Charles and I --

BARBARA

Little Charles --

IVY

Barbara --

BARBARA

You have to say Little Charles or she
won't know who you're talking about.

IVY

Little Charles and I...

Barbara relents. Ivy will finally get to say the words.

IVY (CONT'D)

Little Charles and I are --

VIOLET

Little Charles and you are brother
and sister. I know that.

Freeze. Silence.

BARBARA

Oh... Mom.

IVY

What? No, listen, Little Charles --

VIOLET

I've always known that. I told you,
no one slips anything by me.

IVY

Mom --

BARBARA

Don't listen.

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88 CONTINUED:

88

VIOLET

I knew the whole time Bev and Mattie
Fae were carrying on. Charlie should
have known too, if he wasn't smoking
all that grass.

BARBARA

It's the pills talking.

VIOLET

Your father tore himself up over it,
thirty some-odd years, but Beverly
wouldn't have been Beverly if he
didn't have plenty to brood about.

IVY

Mom, what are you...?

BARBARA

Oh honey...

VIOLET

Better you girls know now though,
now you're older. Never know when
someone might need a kidney.

Ivy looks from Violet to Barbara... suddenly lurches away
from the table, knocking over her chair.

IVY

Why in God's name did you tell
me this?

VIOLET

Hey, what do you care?

IVY

You're monsters.

VIOLET

Come on now --

IVY

Monsters...

VIOLET

Who's the injured party here?

Ivy flees from the dining room, pursued by Barbara --
"August" 9/21/12 FINAL WHITE Draft 131.

89 INT. FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

89

BARBARA

Ivy, listen --

IVY

Leave me alone.

BARBARA

When Mattie Fae told me, I didn't
know what to do --

Ivy runs from the house.

90 EXT. WESTON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

90

Ivy rushes to her car, still followed by Barbara.

BARBARA

I was trying to protect you --

IVY

We'll go anyway, we'll still go away.

Ivy gets in the car, starts it, revs the engine. Barbara
tries to open the car door.

BARBARA

This is not my fault.

Barbara pounds on the car window.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I didn't tell you, Mom told you!
It wasn't me, it was Mom!

The car window slides down.

IVY

There's no difference.

Ivy floors the car, roars out of the driveway, leaving Barb standing there. After a moment, Barb turns, stares up at the house, angry, resolute. Starts back inside.

91 INT. WESTON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 91

Finds Violet still at the table, lighting a cigarette.

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91 CONTINUED: 91

VIOLET

We couldn't let Ivy run off with Little Charles. Just wouldn't be right.

Barbara doesn't respond, keeps her distance.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

She'll be back. She's a sweet girl, Ivy, and I love her to death. But she isn't strong. Not like you. Or me.

BARBARA

You knew about Daddy and Mattie Fae?

VIOLET

Oh sure. I never told them I knew. But your father knew. He knew I knew. But we never talked about it. I chose the higher ground.

(and then)

If I'd had the chance, there at the end, I would've told him, "I hope this isn't about Little Charles, cause you know I know all about that." If I'd reached him at that motel, I would've said, "You'd be better off if you quit sulking about this ancient history."

BARBARA

...what motel?

VIOLET

I called over there on Monday after I got into that safety deposit box. But it was too late, he'd checked out.

BARBARA

How did you know where he was?

Violet is growing agitated with the interrogation.

VIOLET

The note. He said I could call him over at the Country Squire Motel --

BARBARA

He left a note?

VIOLET

And I did, I called him on Monday.
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133.

91 CONTINUED:

91

BARBARA

After you got the money out of your
*
safety deposit box...

VIOLET

We had an arrangement. You have to
*
understand, for people like your
*
father and me, who never had any
*
money, ever, as kids, people from our
*
generation, that money is important.
*

BARBARA

*
If you could've stopped Daddy from
*
killing himself, you wouldn't have
*
needed to get into your safety deposit
*
box.
*

VIOLET

*
Well, hindsight's always twenty-
*

twenty, isn't it?

*

Barbara stares at her mother for a long moment.

Then --

BARBARA

Did the note say he was going to kill himself?

No response.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Mom?

VIOLET

If I had my wits about me, I might've done it different. But I was, your father and me both, we were...

Barbara looks off, quietly:

BARBARA

You were both fucked-up... You were

*

fucked-up... You are fucked-up.

*

VIOLET

You'd better understand this, you smug little ingrate. There's only one reason Beverly killed himself and that's you. Think there's any way he would've done what he did if you were still here? No, just him and me, here in this house, in the dark, left to ourselves, abandoned, wasted lifetimes devoted to your care and comfort.

(MORE)

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91 CONTINUED:

91

VIOLET (CONT'D)

So stick that knife of judgment in me, go ahead, but make no mistake, his blood is just as much on your hands as it is on mine.

Barbara is reeling, trying to comprehend.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

He did this though, not us. Can you imagine anything more cruel, to make me responsible? Just to weaken me,

make me prove my character? So I waited, to get my hands on that safety deposit box. But I would have waited anyway. You want to show who's stronger, Bev? Nobody's stronger than me, goddamn it. When nothing is left, when everything is gone and disappeared, I'll be here.

Violet YELLS up to the empty house.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Who's stronger now, you son-of-a-bitch?!

Barbara feels sick, the floor giving away beneath her. She takes a moment. Then:

BARBARA

You're right, Mom. You're the strong one.

She goes to her mother, kisses her. Turns, heads into the hall, grabs her purse and Bev's keys from the dish.

Violet only slowly realizes Barbara's gone.

VIOLET

...Barbara?

Hears the sound of the screen door opening and SLAPPING shut.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Barbara?

Violet follows her into the hall, stops at the screen door.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You and me. We're alike.

Barb doesn't turn around, keeps moving. Quietly:
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135.

91 CONTINUED:

91

BARBARA

No...

Sees Barb heading across the yard for Beverly's pick-up.

VIOLET

Barbara, please.

BARBARA

I'm nothing like you...

VIOLET

Please, Barbara.

Watches Barbara climb into the truck, back slowly out, go.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

...Barbara?

Barbara drives off. The driveway now empty again. Violet alone outside on the walkway. She turns back to the house, yelling, moving from empty room to empty room.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Ivy?! Ivy, you here?!

Silence. The dining room, the kitchen.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Barb?! Ivy?!

And into the living room, Bev's study.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Bev?! ...Bev?!

She stumbles to the stereo, puts on her Clapton... stares at the spinning album...

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Johnna?!

She reels to the stairs, crawling up --

92 INT/EXT. BEVERLY'S PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY

92

Barbara is nearly catatonic as she drives, the house receding in the rear window behind her.

A few large rain drops splatter her windshield, the rumble of distant thunder, lightning and towering, ominous clouds in the distance.

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93 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY/ATTIC STAIRS - DAY

93

Violet climbs the staircase on all fours.

VIOLET

Johnna... Johnna... Johnna...

Johnna sets down her TS Elliot, goes to Violet, holds Violet's head, smooths her hair, rocks her. Quietly --

VIOLET (CONT'D)

And then you're gone, and Beverly,
and then you're gone, and Barbara,
and then you're gone, and then
you're gone, and then you're gone --

Johnna quietly sings to Violet.

JOHNNA

"This is the way the world
ends..."

VIOLET

--and then you're gone, and
then you're gone --

94 INT. BEVERLY'S PICK-UP - DAY

94

ON Barbara as she drives --

JOHNNA (OS)

"...this is the way the world ends,
this is the way the world ends..."

VIOLET (OS)

--and then you're gone, and then
you're gone...

We stay on Barb as she slowly pulls herself back together. Brushes tears from her cheeks. Laughs darkly. Notices her hands are shaking from the adrenaline.

Slows, pulls the pick-up to the side of the road at the top of a small rise. Climbs out, stares out over the miles of prairie. The wind gently ruffles her clothing, her hair.

CLOSE ON her as she settles into exhausted relief, unsure of what comes next, but finally on her way as we --

FADE TO BLACK