

GOING SOLO
An original screenplay by
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FADE IN:

EXT. DEBBIE HAMMEL'S HOUSE SOMEWHERE IN BROOKLYN - MORNING

A 'Hammel's Happy Home Realty' sign on a manicured front lawn: the subtitle on the sign says 'Buy One Get One Free'.

Early morning traffic passes by as an alarm clock SOUNDS in the distance.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A living room, converted into a realty office, has 3 desks each with a PC. Family photos hang on the wall along with NYC wall maps. Wall cabinets finish the office look.

EXT. PORCH AND FRONT YARD AREA - CONTINUOUS

A flower delivery van pulls up and stops at the curb. DAN TARENTINO, 50s, wearing a ill-fitting company uniform, steps out with a bouquet of roses. He hustles up the steps and onto the porch, and lays the roses on the settee bench.

He straightens his tie, then takes off his cap and combs his hair with his fingers. He produces a floral aerosol can and sprays the flowers with two quick hits. He sprays both his underarms with a quick spurt. He looks in the window, then at his watch. He shrugs his shoulders and leaves.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The sound of footsteps coming down the stairs ends with DEBBIE HAMMEL, 50s, dressed in business casual, entering the office. She turns on the PCs then hits the message machine on the telephone. A message plays.

TAPED MESSAGES (V.O.)

Debbie, the two-family on Front St.
is now in contract. We gotta talk.

DEBBIE

You can't afford it, Jeremy. Stop
bothering us.

She exits.

KITCHEN

A mini CD player, CDs, a headset and sun-glasses lie on the kitchen table. A beach hat hooks on the arm of a chair.

Debbie enters, flips through a pile of CDs and selects one.

INSERT A CD LABEL

WENDY'S 2011 AUDITION TAPE: BOSTON PHILHARMONIC

BACK TO SCENE

Debbie inserts the CD and listens to cello music. She looks at a magnetized photo on the fridge showing herself and her daughter Wendy on the back yard swing set. She sighs, then she WASHES the dishes.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT SOMEWHERE IN BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

WENDY HAMMEL, mid-twenties, WASHES her hands in the kitchen sink while a two-year old boy, STEVEN, sits next to her on the counter. He's in pull-ups. The radio plays--

RADIO (V.O.)

If the Yankees didn't beat the Red Sox two days ago, Ortiz would've had a shot at most RBIs in post season. Now the question is, 'Who do we root for in the World Series?' Yankees or the Angels?

Wendy shuts the radio off and dresses Steven. She latches her suitcase before heading out the door. As she leaves she looks at the same photo on her fridge her mother just looked at.

WENDY

Here I come, Mom, ready or not.

INT. DEBBIE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A reflection of Debbie's face on the underside of a pot reveals a distortion of her image creating the illusion of rippling tears running down her cheek. A clearer view of her face just shows her misty-eyed.

She looks at the clock, then hurriedly dries her hands. She puts on the headset and plugs it into the CD player and tucks it under her arm. She dons her sun glasses and beach hat.

EXT. DEBBIE'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Debbie exits the house looking like a scarecrow. She spots the flowers on the bench. She reads the card, smiles and takes the flowers inside the house.

A BUS passes by (establishing shot for later scenes.) Debbie comes back out and sits on the settee bench and listens to the CD.

INT. LOGAN AIRPORT - BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

Steven is dragging Wendy by the hand through a crowd of travelers. MS. MASON, 40s, well-dressed, appears and takes Steven from Wendy. As they walk together--

WENDY

Oh, thank you, Jackie. He's getting stronger every day.

MS. MASON

He's going to be a football player.

EXT. DEBBIE'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

She sits, waiting. The postal van pulls up. The uniformed mailman, RALPH, 50s, hits the horn then gets out and puts the mail in the mailbox. He walks up to Debbie who stands and places the CD and headset on the settee bench.

RALPH

Good morning, Mrs. Hammel.

DEBBIE

Good Morning, Ralph. What do you have for me today?

RALPH

Well, let's go see.

Ralph takes her hand and she slowly steps off the porch and follows his lead.

DEBBIE

Don't step on the cracks.

RALPH

I know. You'll break your mother's
back. We got this, Mrs. Hammel.

Debbie appears very apprehensive.

DEBBIE

Mrs. Aldrich isn't looking, is she?

Ralph pretends not to see Mrs. Aldrich staring from a window
from a house nearby.

RALPH

No. Not today, Mrs. Hammel.

DEBBIE

Good.

Halfway to mailbox, a large gap (crack) in their path causes
Debbie to hesitate.

RALPH

Three breaths now. One. Two. Three.

They hop over the crack and continue their slow trek.

INT. PLANE AT LOGAN AIRPORT - BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Mason adjusts the seat belt for Steven while Wendy looks
out the window watching Airport PERSONNEL wearing RED SOX
hats as they hustle baggage into a plane. A sign taped on a
luggage carrier reads "YANKEES SUCK".

WENDY

(To Mrs. Mason)

So, you'll take Steven with you to
the rehearsal at Carnegie Hall and
I'll meet you there after I connect
with my mother. Is that OK?

MRS. MASON

Sure.

A MALE ATTENDANT approaches Mrs. Mason and Wendy.

MALE ATTENDANT

Would you like a pillow?

Ms. Mason takes one and Wendy shakes her head. Seconds later
a FEMALE ATTENDANT walks by. Wendy stops her.

WENDY

May I have pillow, please?

Mrs. Mason reaches over and strokes Wendy on the hand.

EXT. MAILBOX - CONTINUOUS

Ralph and Debbie are at the mailbox.

RALPH

Okay. Let's see what we got?

Ralph pulls out the mail and flips through it.

RALPH

Bills. Bills. Garbage. Garbage. Oo!
What's this? From your daughter!
Overnight mail. Wow!

Long pause. Whispering--

DEBBIE

Would you open it for me, Ralph?

Ralph opens the envelope and unfolds the one-page letter. A photo falls out and he picks it up.

INSERT PHOTO

of Wendy and Stephen, both with Yankee hats on. Stephen sits in his crib behind Wendy who holds three tickets in her hand.

BACK TO SCENE

Debbie takes the photo and stares at it.

MAILMAN

She looks good. Haven't seen her in
what ... two years.

DEBBIE

Would you read it to me, please?

Ralph opens the letter and reads.

RALPH

Hi, Mom. The three tickets I'm holding in my hand in the enclosed photo are for a Boston Philharmonic concert this Friday night at Carnegie Hall. I'm coming home Thursday to deliver them personally so you and Pat and a friend can see me play my cello solo which, by the way, is mentioned in a personal interview the Brooklyn Tribune should run in Thursday's paper. Don't be too upset with me for not calling or writing earlier. We have not spoken in a while, but now it's time to discuss something that's kept me pretty busy. Talking this weekend is better than not talking at all. See you soon. Wendy.

Debbie appears stoic, undiscerning.

RALPH

Are you OK, Mrs. Hammel?

DEBBIE

Yes. Yes. I'm fine.

RALPH

It's wonderful news, isn't it?

DEBBIE

Yeah. Absolutely.

RALPH

Are you ready to go back?

DEBBIE

I'll manage, Ralph, thank you.

RALPH

Are you sure?

DEBBIE

Yes. See you tomorrow.

Ralph leaves. Debbie grabs the mailbox for support, stares at the photo, and moves slowly to the porch.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Debbie breathes a sigh of relief as she enters the office. She slams the letter on her desk and pockets the photo. She reaches in the drawer for her portable tape player and turns it on.

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

The deep breathing exercises you learned in Part-One help counteract irrational thoughts that sometimes provoke feelings of panic and helplessness in our daily lives...

She deep breathes, settles down, then goes upstairs.

EXT. THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Loud, muffled voices - arguing - introduce unseen characters. The back door displays the "VA" emblem with an American flag. PATRICIA O'NEIL, 50s, spirited and casually dressed, bursts through her back door carrying a briefcase.

PAT

Tenure in 2 years, Trevor. Two more freaking' years. You'd throw that away on this half-assed idea that one more man with a gun is going to make a difference in this world. I know I raised you with more smarts than that! And now I'm late, dammit!

TREVOR'S VOICE (O.S.)

It's 9:01 and you only work next door, Mom. Chill.

Pat storms down the back porch, then turns back to the house. She forgot something. TREVOR O'NEIL appears, 20's, boxer shorts and a muscle T-shirt, holding a mug. He takes a sip and makes a face as if to say, "Tastes awful." He hands her the mug.

PAT

This, coming from a grown man who still drinks kool-aid at lunch.

TREVOR

You know, Mom. I'm not enlisting. It's only an interview.

She groans, then grabs the mug, walks around the front of Debbie's house and sees the bus passing down the street. She looks at her watch and enters the house.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pat enters the office and sees the roses sitting on the desk.

She picks up the roses and hides them inside the wall closet. She looks up at the clock which reads 9:03. The self-help tape is still playing.

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

Relaxation is a source of personal stability. The stress response is a manageable reaction if the interior difficulty is met with a positive concern for your own well-being...

Pat turns the tape off. A call comes in while she looks out the window and sees KATE DEVINE, heavily built, 50s, waddling quickly from the bus stop and heading towards the house. Pat resets the clock from 9:03 to 9:10.

TELEPHONE MESSAGE

Hello. I'm calling for Pat O'Neil. We met at the VFW cake sale last week. I'm selling my house. I need to know one thing right off: are you Republican? I only do business with conservatives. I'll call back later.

The machine clicks off and --

PAT

I remember you. I can't get that raspberry frosting out of my dress. Debbie! I'm here.

Pat looks out the window to find Kate stomping up the porch. Pat feigns work at her desk as Kate explodes into the room.

KATE

Oh, Pat, what a morning. Samantha ... Whew... catch my breath... Samantha was in labor and ... I had to--

PAT

I don't want to hear it, Kate. It's always something with you and the damn cats. Get rid of them?

KATE

I will not. Every one of those cats stays with me for a reason. They're all soul mates from a previous life.

PAT

If you had a life you wouldn't need the cats. You're ten minutes late. Now go check the MLS listings.

Kate looks up at the clock and mumbles.

KATE

Dear Dorothy, give me patience
(sniffs)
I smell flowers.

PAT

It's all in your head.

KATE

Don't forget that go-see at eleven.

PAT

He cancelled. His dog died.

KATE

How sad. When Celine passed on...

PAT

Enough with your cats already.

KATE

Alright. But I just have to ask you now if I could leave a little early today? The new kittens need a warming pad, and I...

FOYER

Debbie sneaks down the stairs and quietly exits the house wearing hat, shades and head set--

PAT (O.S.)

Shit, Kate. This is a business, not the ASPCA.

KATE (O.S.)

Hey. Cats are people, too.

PAT (O.S.)

Unless they buy a house or pay rent, they are not an item of interest in this office. Go check the damn listings. Now. Chop, chop.

IN THE OFFICE

Kate reads the letter lying on Debbie's desk.

KATE

Oh, my God! Look at this. Wendy is playing at Carnegie Hall tomorrow.

Pat rushes to her side and reads the letter.

PAT

She's coming to town with the Boston Philharmonic!

(Yelling)

Debbie!

Undetected by Kate and Pat, Debbie is seen through the window slowly measuring her steps down the driveway to the street.

KATE

Carnegie Hall! Imagine! I'll need something formal to wear.

PAT

Why don't you do a séance and summon Vera Wang to help you find a dress?

KATE

Psychics don't do seances. Why are you being so difficult?

PAT

Look! We got a crisis on our hands. Debbie hasn't seen Wendy in 2 years. That letter must have freaked her out. Where the hell is she?

EXT. STREET BY DEBBIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Debbie hesitates curbside and forces her breathing exercises. An ambulance is some distance down the road, and its siren is getting louder. Debbie's breathing quickens.

Interlacing her present-day experience with her FLASHBACK--

EXT. A ROAD SOMEWHERE IN BROOKLYN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

An ambulance with sirens blaring speeds down a dark street. Behind it a car swerves buffeted by torrential rain and raging winds. Lighting bolts stab the darkness. A falling tree just misses the speeding car and a GUTTURAL NOISE inside the car seems unrelated to the present danger.

A whirlwind blows a garbage can at the car. The unseen driver rides the sidewalk to pass an accident. A GROAN turns into a GROWL which turns into a SCREAM.

BACK TO PRESENT-DAY

Debbie steps off the curb. The siren gets louder.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT - CONTINUING THE FLASHBACK

Ambulances are lined up and block the EMERGENCY ENTRANCE. HARRY HAMMEL, 38, frazzled, parks the car on the lawn, gets out and braces himself against the flying debris. He struggles to get a pregnant Debbie out of the car.

BACK TO PRESENT-DAY

Debbie crosses the street; the ambulance bears down on her.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUING THE FLASHBACK

Harold maneuvers Debbie inside where medics, doctors and nurses are yelling orders at each other. The power goes out and the hospital lights sputter and fail.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY -- END OF FLASHBACK

INT. STREET BY DEBBIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The ambulance comes to a SCREECHING halt just as Debbie falls curbside into several garbage cans. The ambulance DRIVER bolts out of his car and runs over to Debbie.

MAN

Lady, I almost hit you. Are you OK?

In the background Pat and Kate are running out of the house, down the walkway and across the street. As they reach Debbie--

MAN

I'm so sorry. She came out of nowhere.

PAT

It's not your fault. Go.

(to Debbie)

Stay still. Don't move.

(to the Driver)

We got this.

The man hesitantly leaves, and Pat hovers over Debbie. An upended garbage can has spewed its contents on Debbie's lap. Coffee grinds and smashed tomatoes stain her clothes.

As Pat picks up Debbie's hat and glasses--

DEBBIE

I'm okay. Too fast. Things move too fast.

KATE

Oh, Dorothy. Help us.

Pat helps Debbie up and leans her against a parked car.

DEBBIE

Is Mrs. Aldrich looking?

PAT

Really. That's what's worrying you?

What were you trying to do?

DEBBIE

Oh, Pat... Wendy... She's... You don't understand. She's... She's...

PAT

Take a breath. Easy. In...out

DEBBIE

OK. OK. I was just trying to get the paper. Wendy ... Wendy ... She's ...

KATE

We read the letter. Wonderful news about your daughter.

PAT

Not now, Kate.

DEBBIE

I was trying to get the paper...

PAT

God. You haven't gotten past the mailbox in umpteen years, Debbie.

DEBBIE

Wendy has tickets. I had to try... to see if I could make it. But I can't. It's too hard.

KATE

You must be so proud of her.

Pat grabs Kate and pulls her aside.

PAT

I'm sure you mean well with your comments but Debbie is uncomfortable having you see her this way. Let me handle this. You disappear.

KATE

I want to help. I know I'm only here two weeks, but...

PAT

If you want to help, go steal Mrs. Aldrich's paper off her porch and then get hot tea ready for Debbie.

Kate leaves. Pat turns to Debbie. With hands on hip--

PAT

You good to go back?

DEBBIE

A minute more.

Debbie hands the photo to Pat.

PAT

What's this?

DEBBIE

It came with the letter.

PAT

Who's the kid?

DEBBIE

Probably baby-sitting. She made a bundle in high school that way.

As Pat hands the photo back--

PAT

She looks good. I can't wait to see her.

DEBBIE

Ha. You know how many times I've seen her since she left for Boston. Zip. Zero. Goose egg. We never talk.

PAT

So this visit will change all that. Be happy she wants you at her concert. Will you go?

DEBBIE

I thought if I could get the goddamn paper then, maybe. But look at me. I can't make it across the street without an accident.

She brushes the loose garbage off her blouse.

PAT

Wendy will understand.

DEBBIE

No she won't. Damn it.

A rumble of distant thunder unnerves Debbie. The sky grows dark.

DEBBIE

She's never forgiven me for all the MIAs at the school PTAs and her past recitals. I missed too much of her growing up.

PAT

I'll talk to her. And find out why she dumped Trevor while I'm at it.

DEBBIE

Her silence has been a two year payback. But I know she thinks I blame her for my condition.

PAT

Why would she think that?

Rain begins. Another roll of thunder. Debbie stands.

DEBBIE

Help me across the street.

Pat steadies Debbie and they start to cross the street. Traffic is heavy. Car lights pierce the darkness. Car horns blare at them.

DEBBIE

Oh, God...

PAT

Hold on. Almost there.

Debbie slips from Pat's grasp, falls in the street and cuts her knee. A car screeches to a halt and the driver yells. Pat tries to pull Debbie up. She sees her bloody leg.

PAT

You have to help me, Sweetie. Push yourself up. Push. Push, Debbie. Come on, push!

A blast of lightning. Debbie laboriously pushes herself up.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

A crowded hospital lit by flickering emergency lights: people run and scream while Debbie is giving birth on a gurney.

DOCTOR
Push ... PUSH

Blood travels down Debbie's leg.

BACK TO SCENE -- END FLASHBACK

Debbie is in a full-blown panic attack and hallucinating.
Pat half carries her up the walkway and towards the porch.

DEBBIE
Help me. My baby is bleeding.

PAT
Hang on, Debbie.

DEBBIE
Where's a doctor?

PAT
You're okay. You're here with me.

DEBBIE
All these people screaming. Someone
help me.

PAT
Look! It's me. Pat. You're safe with
me.

DEBBIE
The lights. Flickering. Stabbing my
eyes. Where's my baby? Where's my
baby?

Pat and Debbie reach the porch and collapse on the bottom
step. Kate runs out with a blanket and Debbie holds it tight
to her chest.

KATE
You know, we all have something
we're fighting. Pat has cat-a-
phobia, I have claustrophobia, and
you have agoraphobia. No big deal.

PAT
Good grief, Kate. Go get some tea.

Kate goes back into the house.

PAT

You're home. You're fine. No hospital. Open your eyes.

Debbie looks at Pat who cradles Debbie in her arms.

PAT

That was scary, honey. Very scary. What just happened, Deb?

DEBBIE

I was back in the hospital again, somehow, giving birth to Wendy. So stormy and dark. I struggled against the pain, afraid someone would steal her if I passed out. Then I did.

PAT

Oh, sweetie.

DEBBIE

First time I held Wendy was the day I left the hospital. I had been delusional for three days and the doctors wouldn't let me have her. The whole ride home I wasn't sure she was mine. Now... crowds... flashing lights, speeding cars... it all comes back. I get disoriented, nauseous, lose my balance.

Kate brings Debbie tea and the paper.

DEBBIE

Oh, bless you, Katherine. Just what I need.

KATE

Wonderful interview, and a beautiful shot of your daughter in here. She looks just like you.

DEBBIE

Thank you.

Kate lingers.

PAT

That's all, Kate. See you inside.

KATE

(to Pat)

Wendy knows Trevor?

PAT

What? You talked to Wendy? She called here?

DEBBIE

(to Pat)

Why would Wendy talk to Kate and not me?

KATE

She didn't.

Kate opens the paper and points to Wendy's photo.

KATE

We just connected.

PAT

Oh! It's that psychic thing again, Debbie.

DEBBIE

What do you know about my daughter?

KATE

Only that she wants to reach out. I look at this picture and feel Wendy's frustration. She's lost...

(to Pat)

... and she misses your son.

PAT

You can't tell that from a picture!

KATE

That photo of Trevor that sits on your desk? I asked where he got those beautiful blue eyes. Remember?

PAT

Yes. OK. So what?

KATE

You said, from his father who passed away. Why would you say that?

Silence. Pat looks away.

DEBBIE

Pat?

PAT

(to Debbie)

We agreed. A long time ago we agreed, right? Not to ask questions. Not to go places the other wanted off limits.

DEBBIE

Right.

PAT

So, Joey was off the radar, for Trevor's sake. And you never wanted to talk about your "condition", for Wendy's sake.

DEBBIE

But I just did.

PAT

Uh, huh. Now everything's changed.
(scowling at Kate)
And who do I have to thank for that? Look, what's done is done. My relationship with Joey is none of anybody's business.

Kate starts back into the office.

DEBBIE

Thanks again for the tea.

KATE

I couldn't find the sugar.
(looking at Pat)
We're short on anything sweet around here.

DEBBIE

How did you like your roses?

PAT

Oh, good grief.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate enters, closes her eyes like a clairvoyant detective, then moves to the closet, retrieves the flowers, and deliberately places them Pat's desk. The phone rings.

BACK TO THE PORCH

DEBBIE

Why are you so tough on her?

PAT

Between the kitty litter smell on her clothes and an office filled with flowers, I feel like I'm working in a funeral home for cats.

DEBBIE

I'm sitting here stinking of garbage so don't expect me to criticise Kate for animal odors.

(pause)

What does she know about Joey that I don't?

PAT

(changing the subject)

Tell me why Wendy dropped Trevor.

DEBBIE

I honestly don't know. Wendy and I stopped talking when I missed her graduation.

PAT

I thought things got easier when your kids got older.

DEBBIE

Harry should have stuck around a little longer. I need that man now.

PAT

He'd be proud how well you've done. Wendy got off to college. She's big time with the Philharmonic. The business is doing great...

DEBBIE

Thanks to you. I was a wreck when Harry died. You stepped in and kept the business running.

PAT

We got close, didn't we? Both single parents... No men around.

A difficult pause. Pat stands.

DEBBIE

You didn't answer me, Pat. What does Kate know about Joey?

PAT

We need to get back inside.

Pat goes to enter the house, but Debbie grabs her and swings her around. Pat sits.

DEBBIE

Tell me.

PAT

Joey isn't dead. He's out there somewhere, God knows where.

DEBBIE

What! Joey is alive. And you never told me?

PAT

If you saw him, when he came back years ago, you'd understand. I'm sorry. I did what I thought was best for Trevor. Now let it go!

Pat grabs Debbie by the hand and they stand.

PAT

It's too quiet in there. Let's go.

INT. DEBBIE'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Pat and Debbie enter the house--

KATE (O.S.)

No. A house next to a sump cannot be listed as waterfront property. Would you swim in that filth?

DEBBIE

I'll be upstairs taking a shower.

Debbie disappears upstairs as Pat enters the office.

REALTY OFFICE

KATE

(into the phone)

Francine, save the placenta! It's nutrient-rich and great for my cactus. Keep the kittens together and put them in the empty diaper box that's on the porch. Oh, got another call. Hold on. Hello! Hammel's Happy Homes. Buy one, get one free.

PAT

Kate!

KATE

(Into the phone.)

Come in and see what we have. Can you hold? I have another call. Hello, Hammel's Happy-- What did you say-- You better watch your tongue, young man. Leaky pipes are your problem, not ours.

Pat sees the flowers, picks them up from her desk and plops them down on Kate's desk.

KATE

(into the phone)

That's disgusting. If I could do that to myself I'd have my own reality show. Good bye!

PAT

KATE!

Kate holds up one finger and hits another line.

KATE

Hey, Fran, I'm sorry, I have to go.
I'm being paged.

Kate hangs up and--

KATE

You had a call from the VA. A guy
named Marty wants to know if you'll
be there tonight.

PAT

Marty? I don't know a Marty.

KATE

He said he enjoyed riding you around
the rehab ward on his wheelchair
last night and wants you back for
tonight's basketball game.

PAT

Oh, that Marty.

KATE

And there was a sub-leaser who
wanted to sublet her sublease. Can
she do that?

PAT

No, she can't.

KATE

Good. That's what I told him.

PAT

(pointing to the flowers)
I believe these are yours.

Pat rubs her temples.

KATE

Relax, Pat. You know what they say?
Take time to smell the roses.

PAT

(faking calmness)
Peachy. These flowers, my dear, they
add such a fragrance in this office,
don't you think?

KATE

Yes, I do. Since when do you care?

PAT

Oh, but I do. And I simply want to emphasize this is a work environment. I would prefer your personal business be conducted during the four regularly scheduled 15 minute breaks.

KATE

Huh?

PAT

And I would strongly suggest any information regarding Samantha's breeding habits or birthing rituals, or Leroy's urination problems--
 (back to her normal self)
 --be kept out of the fucking office.

KATE

Oh, that reminds me. I have to be home by four to get Samantha neutered.

PAT

Goddamn it, Kate. Go ... go see if there are any "for- sale" signs on Hoover Street.

KATE

My job is to answer phones, remember?

PAT

Then work the phones and find some leads. And get rid of those--

Pat points to the flowers.

KATE

You're just jealous because I'm getting romantic attention from someone and you're not.

PAT

You really think I'm jealous over some nut job with a flower mania?

The doorbell rings.

PAT

Why didn't you see that coming?

KATE

The doorbell? I don't know.

HALLWAY

Pat enters, opens the front door and finds Dan holding a bouquet of flowers.

PAT

We were just talking about you. What is it, fourth time this week? Twice today!

DAN

Roses this morning. Now, it's mums.

PAT

Yeah, yeah! She's inside, Danny-boy.

REALTY OFFICE

Pat leads Dan into the office.

KATE

Dan. What a surprise!

PAT

Yes. Isn't this a surprise? Let me give you my oozing-with-joy look.

KATE

Shush. What do you have now, Dan?

DAN

Chilean white and Peruvian yellow chrysanthemums in a reusable, lavender-scented, glass-lined holding bowl with matching white and yellow striped ribbon and baby's breath throughout. A big seller.

KATE

Heavenly. And the card?

DAN
Still signed, "A secret admirer."

KATE
This is driving me nuts, Dan, not knowing who he is.

PAT
You have no idea, Katherine?

KATE
No. I'm totally blocked.

DAN
Doesn't surprise me you're getting flowers, Ms. Devine. You're an attractive woman, if I may say so.

KATE
You can say it all day long.

DAN
You're a very attractive woman--

PAT
Enough, cowboy. She was being rhetorical.

KATE
Don't listen to her, Dan. She's very crotchety this morning. Can you investigate this? It's important.

DAN
Sure. But maybe the sender just wants to stay anonymous.

PAT
Is there something you're not telling us, Danny-boy?

DAN
No, no. Nothing. Look, I gotta go. Enjoy the flowers. Bye!

Dan exits. Pat inspects the flowers.

PAT

Hey, listen, if I'm the teeniest bit jealous you have an anonymous admirer, it's not because I don't have my pick of men, you know.

KATE

If you mean your friends at the VA? I've never quite understood that arrangement.

PAT

You can't find men more loyal--

KATE

And unavailable! It's not like you'll ever bring one of them home. Why did you start volunteering at the VA anyway? Were you hoping to find... what's his name?

PAT

His name is Joey, and that's none of your business.

KATE

(pause)

I guess I keep my cats hoping to find a reincarnated lover, so who am I to talk. Truth is I'm a frustrated spinster whose libido was crushed years ago by some high school jerk who called me thunder thighs.

Pat's demeanor softens.

PAT

I'm sorry for being so bitchy. I had a hard morning with Trevor. So, tell me. Why can't you get a psychic reading on this mystery flower guy?

Kate fusses with the flowers while talking.

KATE

It's rare I'm at a loss like this, but it's happened before. Like when I'm sexually aroused, I lose my psychic introspection.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

It comes back to me after I'm in a relationship for a while, but in the beginning, I'm blocked somehow.

PAT

I think they call that being sexually challenged.

KATE

You know, you're a very hard person to like.

PAT

So I'm told.

The phone rings just as Debbie enters fiddling with her bracelet.

KATE

That's Mr. Smolich, your go-see guy.

PAT

(into the phone)
Mr. Smolich, what a surprise.

DEBBIE

Be a dear and help me with this, Katherine. I'm a little shaky.

As Kate helps Debbie--

DEBBIE

I've been meaning to ask you, how do you know who's on the phone and things like that?

KATE

A gift from my grandmother. She had the same intuition. She thought it was a curse, actually.

Pat hangs up and--

PAT

Are you feeling better?

DEBBIE

Much.

EXT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Wendy, wearing a NY Yankee's cap, gets out of a Taxi.

WENDY

I won't be too long. I'll pay for
your wait.

The TAXI DRIVER nods as Wendy walks to the back of the house.

BACKYARD

Two swings are wrapped around the pole nearest each swing.
Wendy walks up to one of the swings and unwraps it.

WENDY

Some things never change.

She sits and slowly swings. After taking a couple of deep
breaths, she gets up and heads towards the back entrance.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate finishes fastening the bracelet.

KATE

Nice bracelet. Where did you get it?

DEBBIE

From my Harry. A gift on our
twentieth.

(looking up)

Thanks, Harry.

KATE

It that your dead husband?

PAT

Oh, that's just ducky. Now you two
have something in common. You both
talk to dead people.

KATE

I don't talk to the dead. I feel
their presence. It's a difference.

Wendy appears at the door and Pat runs to her for an embrace.

PAT

So good to see you, Wendy. It's been way too long.

WENDY

Good to see you too, Pat.

PAT

Come in. Come in. This is Kate. A new team member. She's a cat-lover, so pardon the smell, and she's a bit on the clairvoyant side, so watch what you think.

KATE

(sighing)

Nice to meet you, Wendy. I heard so much about you. A Yankee fan living in Boston! Isn't that dangerous?

WENDY

People are nice in Beantown, but it's a tough place to be a Yankee fan, especially since they beat the Red Sox for the pennant.

Wendy faces Debbie - both reluctant to make the first move.

DEBBIE

You're looking well.

WENDY

You too, Mom.

DEBBIE

I got your letter.

WENDY

Good. I was worried you wouldn't get it on time.

DEBBIE

Why didn't you tell me earlier? Why didn't you call? I deserve that much at least ...

WENDY

Glad to see you too, Mom! But I figured the later you knew, the less you'd worry. Was I wrong?

(MORE)

WENDY (CONT'D)

(beat)

OK. Let's try this.

Wendy pulls tickets from her purse and--

WENDY

Here. For tomorrow night. We have a rehearsal and the taxi's waiting outside, so I don't have much time.

PAT

Oh, you can't visit?

WENDY

I'll be back later today. I wanted to drop off the tickets and ...

PAT

Trevor will be so happy you're home. You should call him and--

WENDY

Yes. Yes. I will. We haven't talked in a while. I'm looking forward to seeing him. But right now I have something important to say. I ...

PAT

Do you need his number?

WENDY

I have it, Pat. I'll call.

KATE

Imagine! Carnegie Hall! Isn't this exciting.

PAT

Yes. Exciting.

WENDY

(a tense pause)

I want to explain the picture, Mom.

DEBBIE

Yes. The picture. Who is that boy?

Trevor, in a jogger's suit, bursts through the office door with a box in his hand.

TREVOR
Mom, I brought over ...

Trevor and Wendy lock on to each other.

TREVOR
Wendy ...

WENDY
Trevor ...

TREVOR
How are you?

WENDY
Fine.

TREVOR
Did you lose your cellphone?

WENDY
I'm sorry. I have to go. We'll do
this later. I have some good news to
share with everyone.

She exits and Debbie collapses in a chair.

PAT
What the hell was that, Trevor? "Did
you lose your cellphone?" Really?
That's the first thing you want to
ask?

TREVOR
It just came out. Leave me alone.

DEBBIE
You see the way she looked at me?

KATE
I felt it too. Bad vibes.

PAT
Everyone shut up. There was no vibe.

DEBBIE
Her eyes were judging me. Her voice.
Didn't you hear it?

KATE

Most definitely. Her voice was so tense and--

PAT

SHUT UP. Everyone just shut up.

DEBBIE

I need to think.

Debbie exits outside to the swing set in the backyard.

EXT. SWING SET - CONTINUOUS

She sees the unattached swing and gently touches the seat.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A awkward silence is interrupted by--

PAT

I should go buy a lottery ticket. My luck has got to turn.

(To Trevor)

I'm sorry. I promise I won't push you about Wendy. Are you OK?

TREVOR

I'm fine.

PAT

Well, this is a surprise. What's in the box?

TREVOR

I wanted to drop this off before I went out for a jog.

Trevor hands the box to Pat.

TREVOR

A peace offering for this morning. Homemade fudge. I made it myself. Some for you too, Kate. And Debbie if she wants it.

KATE

Men bearing gifts. Cool. But ... why aren't you at work?

TREVOR

I have an appointment with the Army recruiter, so I called in sick.

PAT

Kate, some tea would go well with this, if you please. Water is already hot on the stove.

Kate grabs a piece of fudge and eats it.

KATE

Right. Trevor, this is delicious.

Kate exits but stands close to the door to eavesdrop.

PAT

I know you're upset. But is it so hard to understand I don't want you in the military?

TREVOR

I told you it's just an interview. I'm not signing anything. What are you so afraid of, Mom?

PAT

I'm afraid of you lying dead in a ditch somewhere in Afghanistan or some other God-forsaken place.

TREVOR

Dad would've approved. You said he signed up on principle.

PAT

God, this is deja vu all over again.

Kate steps in.

KATE

Did you want milk and sugar with that, Trevor?

TREVOR

I'm not staying. Maybe next time.

(To Pat)

What did Wendy want?

PAT

She's in town with the philharmonic for a concert tomorrow. She just came by to drop off these tickets.

TREVOR

Is there a ticket in there for me?
(Awkward silence.)
I see. Just another reason to keep my appointment. Gotta run.

Pat waits for Trevor's exit.

PAT

That went well, don't you think?
(pause)
I have to prepare for that go-see. Help me find the comparative listings.

KATE

You said his dog died.

PAT

He just called. He bought a goldfish and he's feeling much better.

KATE

Ooo! I don't trust animals without eyelids. Creepy.

PAT

Would you please stop with those stupid remarks. I'll need the plot assessment as well. Come on. Let's go. Chop, chop.

KATE

I'm not moving until you tell me why you never told Trevor about his father.

PAT

I swear, Kate. Keep your nose out of my business.

KATE

He needs to know his father's alive.

PAT

What gives you the right to tell me what to do? Being a surrogate for a houseful of cats may make you an expert on fur balls, but you know nothing about how to raise a son.

KATE

I agree, but I feel how much you're aching inside to find Joey. I can help. I'm good at finding people. Talk to me.

PAT

The only man in your life is an anonymous flower freak, so get away from me with that psychic crap.

Pat sits and buries her face in her hands. Kate gently embraces her.

KATE

You might not believe this, but I was in love once.

Pat looks up.

KATE

Really. To a part-time dance instructor. We met on a conga-line at an Animal League benefit.

PAT

Joey was a wonderful dancer.

KATE

Really! Tell me more.

Pat growls.

KATE

Come on. Loosen up. Talk to me.

PAT

It was a long time ago. I was 23. We met at a church social. I saw how well he moved, so went over and introduced myself. So few men can dance well, you know?

KATE

Frank's specialty was the lindy. We spent our first night together on a blanket on a beach in Red Hook. It was spectacular!

PAT

How long were you two together?

KATE

For one orgasm.

PAT

That was it? One orgasm.

KATE

Don't start. This conversation is going nicely so far.

(pause)

It's your turn. Did you see any action your first night with Joey?

Pat bites her lip.

KATE

Loosen up, for crying out loud. I'm not taking your blood.

PAT

Ah, what the heck. That first night led to one long, hot, passionate summer. Right out of a Harlequin novel. We screwed like gerbils. By the end of August we had marriage on our agendas. Then Grenada happened.

KATE

That sounds like a vacation resort. What the hell happened in Granada?

PAT

It was no vacation. There were 19 US casualties and 116 more troops were wounded. One of them was Joey.

KATE

Is that how you lost touch?

PAT

This is why I didn't want to start this conversation. Now I have to tell you everything.

KATE

Why is this so hard?

PAT

Because I wanted to get married before he shipped out.

Kate sits back, folds her arms and waits for more.

PAT

We argued over it and he left without even saying goodbye. If he loved me, he could've given me a ring. Or some kind of hope.

KATE

Why not wait until he got back?

PAT

I just couldn't do that.

KATE

Why the hell not?

PAT

BECAUSE I WAS PREGNANT.

Pat takes a single rose from the bouquet; snaps it in half.

PAT

The last thing I told him was marry me or leave. God, Kate, if I could only take those words back.

KATE

You didn't tell him you were pregnant?

PAT

He was gone before I could.

KATE

That was the last time you saw him?

Pat unlocks a desk drawer, takes out a photo and holds it to her breast. She walks slowly over to Kate.

PAT

I started volunteering at the VA Hospital in Manhattan after he left. A year later he shows up as a patient. His convoy was caught in a fire fight. His face was mangled by a grenade. He couldn't even talk.

She hands the photo to Kate. Tears come easy.

PAT

The doctor hoped he might be able to speak as he healed. But his mind, the man I remembered, wasn't there.

INSERT PHOTO

of Pat and Joey looking happy together.

PAT (O.S.)

He was so irrational it was pointless to pursue a relationship.

BACK TO SCENE

Pat takes the photo from Kate and locks it back in the desk.

PAT

That's enough. No more. Now let me ask you something.

KATE

Ok. What?

PAT

Who's Dorothy?

Kate bends down and picks up the broken rose. She tries unsuccessfully to piece it back together.

KATE

Some things can't be fixed.

Pat takes the comparative listings and puts them into the case, starts to leave, then turns back.

PAT

If you want to do that psychic thing of yours to look for Joey, go ahead. I appreciate you listening.

(as she leaves)

This hasn't changed the fact that you're still a pain in my ass.

KATE

Naturally.

EXT. BACKYARD - SWING SET - CONTINUOUS

Pat appears and--

PAT

Knock, knock.

DEBBIE

Go away.

Pat unwraps the other swing and sits on it.

PAT

Do you feel like talking?

DEBBIE

Was that two-minute, "Hi-mom-I'm-home-gotta go", visit appropriate for a daughter who has hardly spoken to her mother in two years?

PAT

She would've talked to you if Trevor didn't show up.

DEBBIE

Talking to her is like talking to a robot. We're both programmed to say the same things.

PAT

Are you okay out here?

DEBBIE

Yeah. This is the only safe place I can go outside without freaking out. Do you know how much time I spent pushing Wendy on this swing? I remember her eighth birthday.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

We counted each swing. One, two, Three. Counted to 500. I get so angry. No one remembers the good times.

Pat gets up and pushes Debbie from behind.

PAT

Let's just swing for a bit.

DEBBIE

I have to close my eyes, or else I'll get sick.

PAT

I love you and Wendy both and it hurts so much to see you so distant from each other.

DEBBIE

There's a wall between us. She blames me for everything. Everything revolves around her. Don't push so fast. Slow down.

Pat slows the swing.

PAT

Come with me on the "go-see"?

DEBBIE

Oh, no! First panic attack I ever had, way before Wendy's birth, was in a car.

PAT

Is this going to be painful?

DEBBIE

It was for me. I was in a car wash with my mother. When the brushes began sweeping the car, I started crying hysterically because I thought the car was being crushed. So, now I have to distract myself whenever I'm in a car ... hey slow down. You're pushing too fast.

Pat gives one final push and walks around to stand in front of Debbie. As the swing slows--

PAT

If you could only see that wonderful smile on your face.

DEBBIE

What you're looking at is unadulterated fear.

PAT

Well, that's what friends do. They push each other through their fear. It's how they show love. So, what do you say? Come with me on the go-see.

DEBBIE

After what I just told you?

PAT

I'll be there to help you. We'll make it fun.

DEBBIE

Like the time I threw up in your car?

PAT

I forgot about that. Come anyway. I'll take the chance.

DEBBIE

I'll come if you talk to Trevor about Joey.

PAT

I'll think about it, but don't pressure me.

DEBBIE

If I go, I'll need a few things first, like a bottle of pepto ...

PAT

And a quart of tequila. I'll start the car. You get ready.

Debbie and Pat enter the house together.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pat enters and walks to her desk and Debbie heads upstairs.

PAT

Debbie's coming with me to the go-see.

KATE

How did you convince her to go?

PAT

I can sell sand in the Sahara. Now you're in charge. No phone calls about your cats, understand?

KATE

Absolutely.

PAT

If Debbie makes this, she just might make it to the concert. Who knows?

Pat heads out the front door. Kate grabs the phone.

KATE

Francine? You still there? Good. Here's my list of names for Samantha's litter. Lorenzo, Samson, Ferdie, and Sweetness for the kitten with the different color eyes ...

EXT./INT. PAT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Pat drives up Debbie's driveway. Debbie exits the house with a gym bag. Pat gets out to fetch her.

DEBBIE

Pat, I'm not sure about this, so go easy on me, all right?

PAT

Have I ever steered you wrong? Trust me? OK. Checklist: bottled water.

Debbie opens her gym bag.

DEBBIE

Got it.

PAT

Cold compress?

DEBBIE

Check.

PAT

Tissues, towel, paper bag?

DEBBIE

Got it.

PAT

Blindfolds?

Debbie and Pat get into the car. Debbie pulls out a few blindfolds from her purse. She puts one on her forehead.

PAT

All right. Now, Smolich has already been to two agencies before us. He's very particular. And very rich.

DEBBIE

Why does Smolich sound so familiar?

PAT

Plumbing goods. The name's on your toilet bowl. By the way, his dog just died.

DEBBIE

That's not a good omen. What's he looking for?

PAT

A fixer-upper. He'll do a total rehab and decorate outrageously for a shot at an article in "House and Gardens". Then he'll rent it out. Or flip it.

DEBBIE

We could snag get a commission on both ends.

PAT

I like the way you think. Don't mention the dead dog Okay. We're off to see the wizard. Pull your blindfold over your eyes.

Debbie pulls the blindfold down as Pat starts down the driveway.

DEBBIE
Oh, God! Slow down.

PAT
I haven't gone ten feet. Ease up girl.

Debbie peeks over her blindfold, then resets it.

PAT
Calm down. Remember the swing.

DEBBIE
I don't think I can do this, Pat.

PAT
You can, and you will. If all goes well, maybe tomorrow...

DEBBIE
First things first. Now, slow down for crying out loud.

PAT
Wait. Let me make this traffic light.

DEBBIE
(yelps)
This is so unfair! Why am I being punished like this?

Pat jams on the brake and pulls Debbie's blindfold up.

PAT
Look at me, dammit! Look at me. Count to five. On five, I slap you.

DEBBIE
What? Why?

PAT
Do it. Do it now.

DEBBIE
One. Two. Three.

PAT
Finish!

DEBBIE
Four ... Five.

Pat slaps Debbie in the face.

DEBBIE
Ow. What the hell was that for?

PAT
A slap in the face is punishment for being a pain in my ass. Your phobia is not punishment. God has not given you this affliction. What the hell do you think you've done to deserve this? What?

DEBBIE
I can't breathe. Oh, sweet mother of God.

PAT
Look at me. Count to five.

DEBBIE
Not again.

PAT
Do it.

Debbie counts briskly (AD-LIB) to five. She closes her eyes and waits for the slap. She opens her eyes and--

DEBBIE
You didn't--

Pat slaps her harder than before. Debbie wails.

PAT
Now you have someone to blame for being hurt. Not yourself, not Wendy, not God. Blame me. See if that helps. Now put your blindfold back on. We don't want to be late.

She slips the blindfold back on as Pat continues driving. Debbie sings Jingle Bells (AD-LIB).

PAT
Debbie, will you please ...

Debbie gropes for the radio and turns it on. She changes the station repeatedly until Polka music plays. Pat reaches over and turns the radio off.

After a beat, Debbie turns it back on and finds country western (hee haw) music. Debbie shrieks out the lyrics.

Pat quickly turns it off. As Debbie reaches for the radio again--

PAT
I swear if you touch that radio one
more time I'll beat you silly on the
count of one.

Now Debbie reaches for the window controls and flips the window up and down.

PAT
Stop it!

Debbie ignores her and Pat reaches over to smack her hand and loses control of the car.

SCREECHING sounds--

PAT
OH, MY GOD!

--IMPACT sounds. Metal, glass.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Danny stands in front of Kate holding a bouquet of flowers.

DAN
Notice the red carnations are
shorter-stemmed than the white. The
note was specific about that. I
think he's saying his feelings for
you are nothing compared to the
warmth of your smile.

KATE
How do you interpret that from just
the grouping, Dan?

DAN

I'm getting to know this guy pretty well. We think alike - in the arrangement of the flowers, I mean.

KATE

Well, it's all very flattering, but--

DAN

This person has deep feelings for you. Look at the careful pruning of the carnation leaves. Five leaves to a stem - no more, no less. They represent his five senses which take delight in the person for whom this bouquet is intended - you!

KATE

That poetic sentiment was in the note as well?

Dan nods.

KATE

Could I see it? The note.

DAN

Well, ah ... I'm afraid I lost it.

KATE

Keep the next one for me. OK?

DAN

OK. This guy has lousy handwriting.

KATE

Sometimes I can get a reading from a person's handwriting.

Dan hands her a rose from the bouquet. As he leaves--

DAN

That's a very attractive dress.

EXT. SIDE OF A ROAD SOMEWHERE IN BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

Pat holds a wad of tissue to Debbie's head.

DEBBIE

It was your fault. You were driving.

PAT

Of course, Deb. I wasn't the least bit distracted by your imbecilic behavior.

DEBBIE

Oh, now I'm an imbecile?

PAT

Would you prefer a 'whack-o'? Why don't you take your meds and fight your phobia?

DEBBIE

Oh, no! My cousin takes the same meds for her vertigo and all it does is give her black teeth and skin blotches.

PAT

The way your head bounced off the dash, black teeth might be your problem anyway. Just look at my car. Where the hell is my bumper?

DEBBIE

I put it in the back seat.

PAT

I belongs on the front, damn it.

DEBBIE

Trevor can attach it in 5 minutes. Don't be so dramatic.

PAT

Look who's calling who dramatic. Stop bleeding and get in the car.

Debbie pulls a bandage from her gym bag and Pat applies it to Debbie's forehead. They get into the car and drive away.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Wendy walks in from the foyer and hears Kate on the phone. Kate waves her in while--

KATE

Well, thank you. Your phone voice is sort of Cary Grantish, if I may say so ... Yes, I'm always here ... Maybe we will. Thanks for calling.

Kate hangs up. Her thoughts provoke a smile.

WENDY

You're blushing. What did he say?

KATE

He said I had a bedroom voice.

WENDY

You did sound flirtatious. It must come in handy when you're selling homes, doesn't it?

KATE

I don't sell homes. I don't have a license.

WENDY

Maybe you should get one. When is my mom due back? I promised the harpsichordist I'd have her car back by six.

KATE

That's not much time. Your mother will be disappointed.

WENDY

Well, I have some special news.

KATE

I sense you're happy but anxious. Confused might be a better word.

WENDY

I haven't told you the news yet.

KATE

No. I'd say congratulations, but I shouldn't until your mother knows.

WENDY

That's scary. You are weird, you know that?

Debbie and Pat walk into the office and--

KATE

Oh, my God. Debbie, what happened to you?

PAT

We had an accident. I sideswiped a huge walnut tree while I was trying to deal with this crazy lady ...

(pointing)

... who was playing with the radio and windows. You nutcase.

KATE

How did it go with Smolich.

PAT

We didn't make it to the go-see.

KATE

Well then, there's no reason for me to stay. Let me bid everyone a fond farewell. Gotta go.

Kate exits to an awkward silence.

DEBBIE

I'm glad you stopped back, Wendy.

WENDY

Yes. I'm sure you are.

DEBBIE

What's that supposed to mean?

WENDY

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Listen. If the accident becomes an excuse to miss my solo, you'll be pleased to know that PBS will be broadcasting the concert live.

DEBBIE

Why do you have to be so damn ...

WENDY

Well ... are you going to make it to the city tomorrow?

(no response)

(MORE)

WENDY (CONT'D)

Didn't think so. So what do you want from me? I thought you might be pleasantly surprised you can hunker down here and watch it on TV with a bowl of popcorn and a box of juicy fruits. Aren't you happy about that?

DEBBIE

Why can't you be a little more ...

WENDY

... Compassionate?

DEBBIE

No. Optimistic.

WENDY

Optimistic!? Hmm. Let's rewind the clock and replay my softball championship when I was very optimistic you'd be there too.

DEBBIE

That's cruel. You have no idea of the time I spent running this business so you could have a good education.

WENDY

All aboard. Train to nowhere is leaving the station. Don't start Mother or...

DEBBIE

Or what? Going to leave for another two years? You have no gratitude. This is your senior class recital all over again.

WENDY

You've gotta be kidding me.

DEBBIE

You never told me about that performance either.

PAT

Oh, boy. I think I better go.

WENDY

Stay, Pat. She may need emotional support after I'm finished.

PAT

My day just isn't getting any better.

WENDY

Let me tell you what it was like in high school with everyone talking behind my back.

DEBBIE

Oh, really? You're gonna go there? You were a musical savant, for chrissakes. If they were talking behind your back it was because twenty colleges were tripping over each other to give you a scholarship. Five orchestras were offering you a full time position before you even graduated. 'Oh, poor me, people are talking about me because I'm so wonderful.'

WENDY

Really, Mother. How did you get so enlightened being a recluse? FYI, my cello playing didn't impress my classmates, not as much as your condition. You never came to a single Parent-Teachers meeting because of your condition. Not one recital in four years because of your condition. Not one softball game because of your condition. Not even graduation.

PAT

Wendy, all this is a bit unfair, don't you think?

WENDY

Is it fair my own mother blames me for her ... condition?

DEBBIE

I told you your birth was difficult. I don't blame you--

WENDY

Dad thought you did.

DEBBIE

Never! Your father never thought that.

Wendy takes a framed photo of a youthful and happy Wendy in a frilly dress off the wall.

WENDY

Dad took this picture before I left for my first recital. I was twirling and laughing right here in this room. You left, crying.

DEBBIE

Yes. I remember.

WENDY

We talked about how you met and I asked him how he knew you both would marry. He said as soon as he kissed you at your senior prom there was no question.

Wendy hands the framed photo to Debbie.

WENDY

He said, "Your mother's eyes always show what she's thinking. She can never lie," and two weeks later you were engaged.

DEBBIE

(softly)

Yes. That's true.

WENDY

Then he said I shouldn't be upset if you weren't there at the recital. I started to cry. And he took my hands in his and explained that anyone who suffers in childbirth like you did comes out it... changed. He gave me all the details about that day. He told me how scared you were.

DEBBIE

I was. I was afraid I lost you.

WENDY

But he also explained how scared you were to leave the house, and that's why you couldn't come to the recital.

Debbie replaces the photo on the wall.

WENDY

Anytime I've asked you about my birth, you've had this look in your eyes. Anytime we've argued about your absence at a school concert or ball game, you've had that same look. Your eyes go flat. You're looking at me but you don't see me. Most of my life, you haven't seen me.

DEBBIE

No, no! That's not true!

WENDY

OK, then. Let me ask you again. Do you blame me for your condition?

Debbie looks away.

WENDY

Do you?

Debbie looks at the floor. Wendy pulls Debbie's head up looking fiercely into Debbie's eyes.

WENDY

Do you?

DEBBIE

Yes! Yes. God help me, but I do.

Debbie flicks Wendy's hand away

DEBBIE

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

WENDY

Dad was right. Your eyes never lie.

Debbie collapses in her chair and sobs. Pat goes to her.

PAT

You didn't have to do that, Wendy.

WENDY

Two years of therapy convinced me I should do it.

No one speaks for several seconds. As Debbie regains her composure.

DEBBIE

Therapy, Wendy. Really?

Debbie bangs her fist on the desk.

DEBBIE

I'm your mother. I should know what's going on in your life.

WENDY

My shrink warned me I might not be ready for this.

DEBBIE

Ready for what? To tell your mother the truth? You spoiled brat.

WENDY

Truth, Mother? You got it. Here comes the whole nine yards. Let me tell you about one of those many performances you missed.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

A younger Wendy leaves the high school alone. PEOPLE are getting into their cars. A half moon provides a little light. Wendy shuffles past some people, hustles across a lawn to a shadowy street, and down an alley.

WENDY (V.O.)

Remember that night at the Centennial Concert when no one showed up to give me a ride home? I was too embarrassed to let people know I didn't have a ride, so I snuck away.

(MORE)

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

I figured the walk home was only a mile because I knew which yard to cut through and which dark alleys to avoid. Maybe you remember that night, Mom? The night my pants were torn and I had black and blues all over my legs.

DEBBIE (V.O.)

You said you hopped a fence and fell.

WENDY (V.O.)

I was in a hurry to get home to finish my book report. I cut through Simpson Street, past the Silver Dollar Lounge.

She hears noises and hesitates. A cat crosses her path. She comes to a street sign marked, "Simpson Street".

As she walks past the "Silver Dollar Lounge", the neon sign hums, sputters and offers little light. She ignores the rowdy noise and quickly walks past the bar. A SHADOW follows her. Her pace quickens, and the shadow stays with her.

WENDY (V.O.)

A man from the bar followed me.

A picket fence ahead provides a barrier, but some missing slats provide hope. Behind it is a busy street, and her escape. She runs to it but just as she gets one leg through the fence, the shadow reaches her and pulls her back. Her pants rip as she's being yanked to the ground.

From her POV, on her back, she watches a cloud drift in front of the moon. His one fist has a knotted rope wrapped around it. She starts to scream, but he punches her twice in the stomach to silence her. He brings the knotted rope to her face. In a gravelly, horrifying voice -

SHADOW

I'll kill you if you scream.

As he rubs the hard knots on her cheek with one hand, he unbuckles his filthy jeans with his other.

She inhales quickly as if to yell but nothing comes out. She inhales quickly again ... and again ... and again, until we realize these are the convulsions of a woman being raped.

Then he finishes with a sickly whimper. And he lays on top of her for a few seconds, enjoying his conquest. He finally gets up and buckles his pants, and walks away, whistling.

END OF FLASHBACK

Debbie deep breathes and waves her arms as if she doesn't want to hear anything more. She covers her ears, but Wendy crosses to Debbie and removes her hands so she can hear.

WENDY

I laid there for awhile, Mother, the misty stink of cigarettes and beer still choking me.

Debbie yelps and Wendy backs away to a stunned silence in the room.

WENDY

Nothing to say, Mom?

DEBBIE

I told you to never go on Simpson Street.

WENDY

Really, Mother. That's all you have to say.

DEBBIE

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?

Debbie tries to speak through her sobs. Finally--

DEBBIE

Why didn't you tell me, Wendy? That's what I want to say. Why didn't you tell me?

WENDY

I was scared that if I breathed a word of it he might come back and do it again. Or something worse.

No one speaks. Pat stands.

PAT

Is this the good news you wanted to share with us, Wendy?

Wendy reaches into her purse, retrieves a photo, and hands it to Pat who shows it to Debbie.

DEBBIE

It's the picture you mailed to me.

WENDY

Yes, Mother. The good news I have to share is the boy in the photo is my son. His name is Steven.

DEBBIE

Steven?

WENDY

Named him after the maestro. He and his family helped me through a lot.

DEBBIE

How can you ever forgive me? This is all my fault.

WENDY

Please, mother. Steven is no one's fault. Steven is a joy.

Debbie stands, faces the wall and sobs.

WENDY

Cat got your tongue, Mom?

DEBBIE

Steven. Who's the ... who's ...

WENDY

The father? Well, that's a good question. Could be Trevor's or the rapist's.

Pat clears her throat. Finally--

PAT

Does Trevor know about this?

WENDY

He's always known about the rape, but not about Steven.

PAT

Wendy, I'm very sorry about what happened to you, but ... I want to know if I'm a grandmother.

Wendy shrugs, then crosses to the window and peers out.

WENDY

When Steven's sleeping, I bring him into bed with me and just watch him. For hours, sometimes. I know every nuance of his breathing. Every expression in his face. He consoles me in my loneliness. I ask him who his father is and he can't tell me of course. But I don't want to know the answer. My world shrinks to the size of his blanket when I hold him close to me. He is my world. I don't want anything to change that.

DEBBIE

When can I see him?

WENDY

I haven't worked that out yet, Mom. This was my first step. My doctor assures me one step at a time is the way to go.

Wendy starts to leaves but turns and--

WENDY

One thing hasn't changed, Mom. I can still leave the house knowing you won't follow me.

DEBBIE

I love you, Sweetheart. I want us to have a relationship. I want us to be close. I feel so lost without you.

WENDY

If I see you sitting in the audience tomorrow night, then I'll know we can have a relationship. Until then--

She exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TREVOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Trevor sits at a small desk next to his bed correcting students' papers. Pat appears at the door and enters.

She sits on his bed, and he hands her a folder with the US Army crest on the cover. She skims through it and looks up at Trevor. He shrugs his shoulders as if to say "maybe".

Pat reaches into her pocket and pulls out the photo of Wendy and Steven, and slides it across the desk to Trevor. Trevor stares at it, uncomprehending. He looks up at Pat, and she raises a speculative eyebrow. They begin to talk, muted.

EXT. CARNEGIE HALL STAGE DOOR ENTRANCE - MORNING

Wendy appears wearing a Yankee hat. She knocks and the door opens and as she enters--

WENDY

Good morning.

EXT. NYC SUBWAY EXIT - CONTINUOUS

As Trevor exits, there is a poster on a building wall advertising the Boston Philharmonic playing at Carnegie Hall.

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE OF CARNEGIE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Trevor appears, opens the door and enters.

INT. CARNEGIE HALL REHEARSAL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Wendy sits alone in the basement studio playing her cello. She starts and stops several times, having difficulty with a particular piece. Trevor enters, unnoticed. Wendy, frustrated, flings the bow across the room.

TREVOR

Temper. Temper.

WENDY

Trevor, my God! What a surprise.

TREVOR

Hello, Wendy.

They meet in an awkward embrace.

WENDY

How did you find me?

TREVOR

A guy at the desk said you were rehearsing downstairs. I listened for the cello and saw the baseball cap. Having trouble with the piece?

WENDY

The maestro wants a tempo change and I'm trying to improvise a little.

TREVOR

Ah, yes. The maestro. Heard he's one hell of a great guy. You named your son after him, right? Imagine that.

Wendy returns to her seat.

WENDY

Don't make this any more difficult than it is.

TREVOR

Why would I do that? Except for our chance meeting yesterday, I haven't heard a word from you in two years. All my phone calls and letters were ignored. Birthdays and holidays? Not a peep. No reason for me to be upset, right? Shit, Wendy, you couldn't let me know you had a kid?

WENDY

This isn't the time, Trevor.

TREVOR

You're right. Two years ago would've been better.

Wendy looks away.

TREVOR

Your son's old enough to need a father by now. And just who might that be, Wendy?

WENDY

Don't use that tone with me?

TREVOR

I came home late yesterday and my mother bombards me with a thousand questions. She asks me if I got you pregnant. I'm in the twilight zone wondering what universe I'm in. So, excuse me if I seem upset.

WENDY

You'd better go!

TREVOR

Sorry I bothered you before your big gig. I just thought we had something important to discuss.

Trevor turns to leave in anger.

WENDY

Wait. Don't go. Not yet.

Wendy pats the seat next to her and he sits.

WENDY

I don't know if you're Steven's father. Is that the only reason you came here? To find out?

TREVOR

No. I wanted to return this.

He takes a toy figure from his pocket.

WENDY

Peter Pan! My prom gift to you?

TREVOR

Yes. That night we had a marathon talk. Six kids and a pumpkin patch in the back yard. Remember?

WENDY

I don't want that back, Trevor.

TREVOR

Take it. You're lucky it's still in one piece. I almost ripped this thing apart more than once, but then I'd think: how childish.

(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Peter Pan never grew up but I had to. I had to let you go.

WENDY

Better to find someone else.

TREVOR

I gave it a try, actually.

WENDY

That's good. Keep trying.

TREVOR

But Heather wasn't a good kisser. She's a fashion designer. Loves to shop. This evening dress in a store window caught her eye one night as we passed by. She raved about the cut and the fabric. She was so vibrant and alive at that moment. I thought of you and how you look when you're playing on stage. I grabbed her and kissed her right there, and ... Well, I opened my eyes and saw it wasn't you. There was nothing in that kiss. No excitement. We sort of rubbed lips and she smiled in the middle of it, like I was doing her a favor.

WENDY

When things end badly, you move on.

TREVOR

It didn't end badly for her. She bought the dress.

(pause)

If we didn't bump into each other yesterday, were you going to see me before you went back to Boston?

WENDY

Had to see my mom first, then maybe.

TREVOR

Maybe? Do you feel anything for me at all, Wendy? How did I go from the love of your life to a 'maybe' kind-of-guy?

WENDY

No one in the world would have cared for me the way you did after what happened. I'll never forget that.

Trevor takes out a Zippo lighter and flips the cover open and closed.

TREVOR

So, I'm just a fond memory?

WENDY

I'm not the same person. Don't expect me to have the same feelings.

TREVOR

All I expect is some answers.

WENDY

What will that change? You willing to be a dad to Steven regardless if you're his father? I doubt it.

TREVOR

What right do you have to make that decision for me?

WENDY

What about his rights? Or mine? What rights did I have when I was thrown on the ground, violated? You can't understand the darkness that hides in my soul. Sometimes, when I'm in the subway or a crowded elevator, I smell his sweat and my stomach turns. I feel his weight pressing into me and I can't breathe. That horror won't leave. Until it does--

TREVOR

So, the lesson about moving on applies just to me?

WENDY

I deal with that horror by thinking about Steven, okay? His smile helps me through the rough spots.

TREVOR

I understand that, Wendy. But right now I can't help but feel Steven has replaced me as the man in your life.

WENDY

He has. After the rape I didn't have a life again until he was born.

Trevor continues to fiddle with the Zippo lighter.

TREVOR

I would've been there for you. Didn't I prove that before you left for college?

WENDY

Yes. You did. But would you have married me if I told you I was pregnant? Out of pity, perhaps? I was too broken, Trevor. I didn't have a direction until Steven was born. Now I do.

TREVOR

You've worked it all out. I'm happy for you. But I haven't spent any time with him to help me decide if I want to be a father.

WENDY

No one's asking you to decide. I thought you got that point.

Static on the LOUDSPEAKER, then--

VOICE (O.S.)

Five minute call. Musicians on stage in five minutes.

WENDY

Rehearsal's starting. I have to go.

TREVOR

Wendy, for God's sake, don't leave me like this. What do I do?

WENDY

I can't tell you that. Two years of silence is unforgivable and I will apologize to you and my mother for that, but not right now. No apologies today!

Wendy begins to collect her things: music sheets, back pack, water bottle, jacket.

WENDY

I'm not asking for forgiveness, Trevor. I worked too hard to get here to start feeling sorry now. I focus on Steven and my music and I move forward. Suggestion: do what's best for yourself, same as I did.

TREVOR

This isn't fair.

WENDY

Fair? Ha. My rape isn't fair. My mother's agoraphobia isn't fair. My solo isn't fair to the flutist who wants one as well. And so it goes.

TREVOR

So that's it? It's over between us? OK, don't you worry about me, Wendy. I'll get through this. Being alone is something I've gotten good at. But I hope you do what's right for your son, because at some point in his life he'll start to think it's his fault his father is gone.

WENDY

Why should you feel it's your fault your father is dead?

TREVOR

Oh, didn't I tell you. After my mom demanded to know if I was Steven's father, she told me my father wasn't dead. He got messed up in the military, but he's alive somewhere and obviously never wanted a son in his life.

(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)

So, you run back to Boston after your solo and take good care of little Steven. But don't you tell him his dad is dead because sometime he'll find out different and feel as screwed up as I do now.

Wendy sits and sobs. Trevor places the Peter-Pan figure on a music stand and leaves. Her sobbing has her unaware of his exit.

WENDY

I'm sorry, Trevor. I don't mean to push you away. I'm just scared I'll lose you forever if Steven isn't yours. Oh, but once you hold him, there's no way you won't ...

(turns to an empty room)
... love him.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The front door SLAMS and Kate and Pat enter with shopping bags. They start separating the office supplies from groceries. Kate knocks over a coffee can.

PAT

Will you be quiet. Debbie's sleeping.

KATE

I'm sorry. I don't want to wake Debbie up with all she's been through.

PAT

Look. I gave a sleeping pill and she'll be up soon. When she comes down, let's not talk about Wendy. Or the baby. Let's be upbeat today, OK?

KATE

Let's talk about that gorgeous hunk who came in a week ago. Remember? The guy who was looking to rent by Yankee Stadium so he could watch the World Series from his window.

PAT

How could I forget? He was a younger Sean Connery with bushy red hair. You stammered like a school girl. Got all flushed and mumbly.

KATE

At least I wasn't drooling all over myself like a puppy-dog.

PAT

I was not. But did you notice his big hands? And you know what they say about men with big hands?
(silence)
You see? This is why we don't have sex talks. Your sex life is like you owning a dachshund.

KATE

I don't own a dachshund.

PAT

Exactly.

Pat takes a sip from her tea cup.

PAT

Ew! This tea is not doing anything for me. Follow me.

Kate grabs her purse and follows Pat outside.

EXT. BACKYARD SWING SET - CONTINUOUS

Pat puts her cup on the picnic table and walks to the fence post, takes off the top, reaches down deep and pulls out a bottle of booze.

KATE

How long has that been there?

PAT

Since the Yankees won the pennant two years ago. Want some?

She grabs the cup, pushes it to Pat, who fills it and takes a swig. Kate takes a sip then reaches into her purse and takes out a joint.

PAT

Well, look at you. Is that what I think it is?

KATE

My next door neighbor grows his own. I don't do this very often.

Kate lights it up, takes a 'hit' and hands the roach to Pat. They exchange roach and cup.

KATE

May I ask you something without you getting upset?

PAT

Go for it.

KATE

How can you stay attached to a man you've only seen once in 30 years?

Pat takes a toke.

PAT

I don't know. The memories make me feel good, I guess.

(moans)

Oh, who am I kidding. I never came to closure with him emotionally. I just haven't allowed myself to feel for a man ever since Joey. I wanted us to marry, Kate. So much.

KATE

He probably loved you too much to get married. He didn't want to make you a widow if he never came back.

They continue to smoke and drink.

PAT

I would've taken that risk. I don't know why he couldn't.

KATE

I bet if you had told him you were pregnant, he would've married you to provide for Trevor if something did happen to him in Granada.

PAT

You could be right, Kate. I messed up, didn't I? Screwed it all up. Let's not talk about him.

Pat pours a drink and raises the cup for a toast.

PAT

To Dan-the-Man. Your secret admirer.

Kate refuses the cup.

PAT

Come on! You must know.

KATE

I suppose.

PAT

Why don't you just go for it?

KATE

I don't know how to just go for it.

PAT

I think Danny-boy's ready to come out. With a bit of encouragement he might be ready for the fourth move.

KATE

What the hell is the fourth move?

PAT

Well, let me see. First move is tongue in the mouth. Second move is take off your bra. Third move is Clinton sex. You know, Cunnilingus.

KATE

Oh, my cousin works for Aer Lingus.

They both laugh, and they both take a swig.

KATE

I'm just not good with men, Pat. Every damn time I feel something, you know, the "twang", it never works out. I can't seem to survive the courtship.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

At first I lose my power, but when it eventually returns it just seems to get in the way. Like the time I was being courted by Tim, the lawyer. That could've amounted to something.

PAT

A lawyer. Impressive. What happened?

KATE

We dated for a while. Once my estrogen levels were normal, my psychic abilities returned. He was overcharging a client. When I called him on it he freaked out and split.

PAT

I don't think you'll have to worry about that with Danny-boy.

KATE

What should I do, Pat?

PAT

Relax. Be yourself. You're a good-looking woman, although you should dress better. Accent your assets.

KATE

Oh, here comes the shit-sandwich.

PAT

What's that suppose to mean?

KATE

You compliment me a couple of times and stick shit in the middle.

PAT

'Shit?' I don't think I've ever heard you use that word. You're usually very lady-like.

KATE

See what I mean? 'Oh, Kate, you're so good-looking - you dress like crap - you're very lady-like.' Shit sandwich.

PAT

I didn't say you were 'sooo' good looking. I said you were good looking. If you were 'sooo' good looking men would be tripping over themselves to get to you.

A noise from the house startles Pat.

PAT

I hear Debbie coming. Get rid of this stuff.

Pat runs to the fence post and jams the bottle back in. Kate tosses the roach, fans the air, and runs to catch up to Pat.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pat and Kate enter the office just as Debbie does.

DEBBIE

Good morning, ladies.

PAT AND KATE

Good morning.

DEBBIE

Okay. I've cried half the night, so I have no more tears left. But I'm better this morning. You don't have to tip-toe around me. Understood?

(To Pat)

I assume you told Kate everything.

Pat nods.

DEBBIE

Good. Now I have something to say. I've decided to go tonight.

PAT

Want to say that again?

DEBBIE

I want to see Wendy's performance.

Pat laughs in disbelief.

KATE

Yes! You can do it.

Debbie is waiting for Pat's response.

PAT

The only way I will drive you to Carnegie Hall in my car is if I tie your hands and feet to the armrest, and put duct tape over your mouth.

DEBBIE

I promise I won't touch anything. I'll just sing and hum. And you can wear earplugs.

PAT

I can't do another day like yesterday.

DEBBIE

And neither can I.

Pat flicks her fingers off her temple indicating a bomb is exploding.

DEBBIE

Good. Nothing left to say right now, so let's try and ...

Debbie searches for the right word.

KATE

Make merry!

PAT

'Make merry?' What are we, in 18th Century England?

DEBBIE

Let's keep things low on the Richter Scale today, OK? Yes, let's 'make merry.' What's that smell? Patricia, you look like you've been drinking.

PAT

Maybe. A tiny bit. Just a tiny bit.

Pat points to Kate and giggles with exaggeration--

PAT

A lot. And she's been smoking pot.

KATE

Hey. So has she.

Debbie throws both hands to her face in disbelief.

PAT

You should join us.

DEBBIE

Just sober up. Both of you. This is a business, not Woodstock.

KATE

I've decided I want to sell houses. I want to get my realty license.

The room falls silent to that incredulous statement.

PAT

People are not going to buy homes from someone who smells like kitty-litter?

KATE

Don't start, Patricia.

PAT

Then stick to what you do best. Answer phones.

DEBBIE

Ladies, please stop your bickering.

The doorbell rings. After a brief pause--

DEBBIE

Is someone going to get the door?

The doorbell rings again. Pat and Kate stare at each other.

PAT

You're the office flunkie, so answer the door. Ooo. You don't know who it is? That can mean only one thing.

The doorbell rings again.

DEBBIE

I'm counting to three. If somebody isn't hauling ass to the front door, you'll both lose a day's pay, I swear. One--

PAT

One-and-a-half--

KATE

I'm looking for a day off anyway.

DEBBIE

Two ...

PAT

Better get it, Kate, or I swear, I'll sneak in your basement and sterilize your cats.

KATE

You do that and I'll tell your gynecologist that you're thinking of leaving her because her chin hairs are driving you crazy.

DEBBIE

Three ...

KATE

Excuse me. I have to get the door.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Kate enters and opens the front door and sees Dan carrying yet another magnificent display of flowers.

DAN

These will need water right away.

KATE

They're heavenly. The colors are dazzling. Is it your arrangement?

DAN

Yes, but the choice of flowers is per instructions of your admirer. He has a fine sense of floral compatibility.

KATE

Tell me who is he, Dan. You must know by now.

DAN

He pledged me to secrecy.

KATE

Then you'll just have to return the bouquet. I can't keep accepting these gifts without knowing who to thank. It's embarrassing.

DAN

No, don't feel that way.

KATE

Is there a card enclosed this time?

Dan nods and checks his pockets but is slow in the search.

KATE

Let's put these down for a sec. There. Sit with me on the bench for a quick rest. You must be tired, doing deliveries all day long.

DAN

Actually, it's harder than most people think. Some of these weigh over 20 pounds, like the cacti ... That's cactus - in the plural.

KATE

You seem quite intelligent.

DAN

Well, I do have my degree in botanical science. Ohio U.

KATE

Very impressive. What else should I know about you, Dan?

DAN

Had a couple of stories published in the Mystery Writers magazine.

KATE

Now, isn't that fascinating. Who's your favorite author?

DAN

Agatha Christie. No one matches her intrigue and suspense in a story.

KATE

Yes, I agree.

Dan finds the card and hands it to Kate.

DAN

It came off when I loaded the van.

KATE

"Beauty begets beauty. Flowers will fade, but your beauty never could." What a splendid compliment. And the hand writing, quite a flourish. Very unique if I may say so.

DAN

Ms. Devine, tell me something about yourself.

KATE

Not much to tell. Have a stable of cats. A few more since yesterday. Love to read plays. I collect autographs of writers. Have a Thornton Wilder, a John Steinbeck.

DAN

What's your favorite play?

KATE

Cyrano de Bergerac! The romance and noble sentiment in that play always give me chills. Now, if I had that playwright's autograph. Hmm. Maybe you'd oblige me with your signature now that I know you're an author?

DAN

Me? Oh, I don't know.

KATE

Here, sign your name on this card.
I'll add it to my collection.

Dan signs the card. He fiddles with it as he talks.

KATE

I'd very much like to meet the man
who fancies me as his Roxanne. I'd
say to my secret Cyrano, should I
ever meet him, that the poetry he
bestows on me with his beautiful
flowers are like fragrant words that
deserve to be spoken face-to-face.
How else can a romance blossom
unless the lovers-to-be reveal
themselves to each other?

DAN

The best mysteries are solved only
after the suspense is savored.

KATE

Exactly. But at my age I have a
habit of reading the last pages of a
book first, so I don't waste time
with an ending I don't like. May I
have the card back?

Dan returns the card.

KATE

Thanks. Tell me, Dan. As a mystery
writer, has handwriting analysis
ever been a technique you've
employed in any of your stories to
solve a mystery?

DAN

Of course.

KATE

And if I turn this card over and
compare the hand writing, do you
think I might finally solve the
mystery of who my admirer is?

DAN

That depends if you could ever
imagine me as your Cyrano.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

Could you care for someone who
hides himself in roses and
daffodils to conceal his own
unattractiveness?

KATE

No mystery there. Anyone who sends
such loveliness could never be less
than beautiful. Tell me what's on
your mind, Dan?

Dan leans in to kiss Kate.

PAT (O.S.)

Kate. Where the hell are those
quarterly reports.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Patricia, in a dress, fusses with the day's paper work.
Debbie walks in half-dressed and hair in rollers.

DEBBIE

I'm so nervous. Do I look okay?

PAT

Take the rollers out. Then ask me.

The doorbell rings.

DEBBIE

I hope that's not business. We've
got to go soon. Pat, I'm scared.

PAT

We'll do this together, okay. Just
as we planned. Now, finish up and
I'll be quick with whoever this is.

Debbie scampers upstairs as the doorbell rings again.

PAT

The door's open. Come on in.

Pat doesn't look up at first and, when she does, she doesn't
recognize JOEY, 50s, because of his disfigured face. He walks
with a slight limp.

JOEY

Hello?

PAT

Come in. I'm about to lock up. Got a few seconds, I guess.

Joey sits and Pat stares hard at him.

PAT

Have we met before?

JOEY

I haven't heard that pick-up line in thirty years.

PAT

It's just that ... never mind. What brings you by?

JOEY

I'm selling our home on Conklin.

Joey hands Pat the photo. She doesn't look at it right away.

JOEY

My dad bought it new. I'm selling because my mom recently died.

PAT

I'm sorry. A single owner then?

JOEY

And no mortgages or liens, either.

PAT

Give me a couple of days. I'll put together a comparative listing of homes in the neighborhood.

JOEY

You have to see it. It has an oversized plot ... a backyard pool.

PAT

And, of course, I will. But I'm in a bit of a rush. We're going to Carnegie Hall. In fact, we were about to close when you rang the bell.

JOEY

Okay. Do you think you could give me--
- you know, a ball-park figure so I
could start to plan-- start to plan--

Joey's thoughts trail off. Pat just stares.

PAT

Is this move difficult for you?

JOEY

No, I haven't lived there in years.
I live in a rooming house in
Manhattan. I'm an outpatient at the
VA facility in the city. You know,
Post Traumatic Stress, kind of hard
to shake. Got the Purple Heart.

PAT

I volunteer at the VA in Manhattan
sometimes. I never saw you there.

JOEY

I'm only in there an hour a week.
Maybe two.

Pat studies Joey with increasing alarm. Looks at the photo.

PAT

Do I know you from the neighborhood?

JOEY

What's your name?

PAT

Patricia O'Neil.

Shocked, Joey stands and begins backing away.

JOEY

No. This is impossible. I'm not
ready for this. Forget I came.

PAT

This house. I know this house. I've
been there. The address is 145
Conklin, right?

JOEY

I told you, I don't live there.

PAT

But you grew up there.

JOEY

I ... I ... gotta go.

PAT

You just can't drop into my life and then leave! I have to tell you something, Joey. You're a father.

Joey hesitates on his exit.

PAT

You have a son.

JOEY

No. That's impossible. I didn't hear that. I can't do this.

He bolts from the office just as Debbie enters. He almost knocks her over. Pat runs to Debbie.

DEBBIE

Whatever did you say to that man?

PAT

Debbie! That was Joey.

DEBBIE

As in 'your' Joey. Trevor's father?

In response to the sound of a car peeling off--

PAT

I have to catch him. He can't just run away. Again.

DEBBIE

Jump in your car and go after him.

PAT

But I'm supposed to take you ...

DEBBIE

I'll take a taxi. Go before you lose him again. Just go!

Pat kisses Debbie and leaves. Debbie takes the phone, dials.

DEBBIE

Hello, I need a taxi. Quick-- World Series, my ass. I can't wait an hour. Never mind.

Debbie hangs up, dials another number and waits.

DEBBIE

Come on Kate. Pick up. Kate, this is Debbie. If you're there, pick up. Come on. Pick up. Pick up. Kate? Oh, thank God! You're there. Listen, Pat had to leave suddenly and I can't get a cab. I'm all alone and I can't...I can't...

(Cries.)

I have to be there! There's no one else I can...

(listens)

I know you don't drive, but we'll work something out. Just hurry, will you, please. I can't do this alone.

Debbie hangs up and paces.

DEBBIE

Dear God, not the bus.

She reaches over to turn on the tape recorder.

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

The deep breathing exercises you learned in Part 1 help counteract the irrational thoughts that sometimes provoke feelings of panic and helplessness in our daily lives. Relaxation is a source of ..."

(Fades.)

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

The tape fades in, indicating time has passed. Debbie is still at her desk, but a wine bottle and a half-filled glass sit beside her.

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

With the warm morning sunrise, the night shadows take flight and the fresh dawn breezes usher in the promise of a stress-free workday made possible by your personal resolve to be the master of your mental environment.

The door SLAMS and Kate, dressed to kill, walks in. Debbie snaps off the tape.

KATE

Looks like you've already started.
Let me catch up.

Kate plops down a paper bag next to Deb, pulls out a pint of whiskey and takes a swig right out of the bottle.

KATE

Aagh. That hits the spot. Hey, that's a drop-dead dress you got on. So, we're going, right?

DEBBIE

No. I decided I'm not.

Kate pours the booze in a stray cup and takes another swig.

KATE

Why did you call me, then? Go bother Pat.

DEBBIE

Excuse me?

KATE

I got a date with Dan. He's meeting me at the concert. If I don't go to the bus right now, I'll be late. And I'm not missing him. Not for anyone.

DEBBIE

If my daughter wasn't playing, you wouldn't be going at all.

KATE

Now, that's not exactly true, is it? I could go to Carnegie Hall any time I want to.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

You on the other hand are stuck in this house going nowhere. Same old, same old. Am I supposed to feel sorry for you?

Debbie throws her hands to her face.

KATE

You and Terrence. Two of a kind.

DEBBIE

And who the hell is Terrence? One of your strays?

KATE

All day long, he'll stay by the screen door, watching and mewing. But open the door for him? He'll just sit there and look at me like I'm crazy.

DEBBIE

Open doors scare the shit out of me.

KATE

Me too, actually.

Kate walks to the front door with her cup and Debbie's wine glass. She opens the door. Debbie does a slow walk to her.

KATE

Let's face our fears together. Join me in a toast to our daughters.

DEBBIE

What? You have a daughter?

KATE

To Wendy and Dorothy--

Kate hands her cup and they toast.

DEBBIE

I'd like to meet her.

KATE

One reunion at a time. First Wendy.

DEBBIE

What? You and Dorothy aren't close?

KATE

Very. She's with me all the time.

DEBBIE

I don't understand.

They go back to the desk and sit. Kate takes a swig. Sighs.

KATE

My little girl, Dorothy, she had a sparkle in her eyes that told you she was going to be someone special when she grew up: a philosopher, a doctor, someone worth knowing. She was so inquisitive, a thousand questions about the simplest things. I saw her once gently pick up an ant between her fingers. She put it real close to her face and said in this gravelly voice--

(Using a gravelly voice.)

Wow!

(Normal voice.)

And she stared at it for minutes on end. When she finally put it down, it scurried away, better off for its encounter. She was that intense sometimes. She'd look into my eyes and see straight into my heart and I'd be forced to go--

(In a gravelly voice.)

Wow.

(Normal voice.)

I would feel worthy by the simple stare that caught me off-guard. I wondered who or what this child was who could see so far into my soul. A smile from her gave me the confidence that God lived. When she started talking, there was no end to her questions. Her adventure became my adventure. She'd look in wonderment at the birds in the tree branches and demand to know their names. "Wutsdat" ... "Wutsdat", she would always ask. About everything. Sticks, leaves, birds, cement, cars. The wind against her face. She'd wander off after anything that caught her eye.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

Those precious eyes that saw such a fascinating world we all take for granted. A butterfly. A floating feather.

(Slight pause.)

One day I'm on the couch, exhausted from trying to keep pace with her as she darts from room to room. She was wearing a pair of pink sneakers with pale blue laces. Unless those laces were firmly tied, Dorothy would put up a fuss and sit on the floor saying, "Pleeeese, Pleeeese" until they were fastened. That day I found myself falling asleep just as she tugged on my sleeve to tie up the lace on her left sneaker. The room was barricaded and I was so sleepy ... I tied the lace, watched her turn on the TV, and I fell asleep. But the child-gate was loose. And the kitchen door was unlocked. And the street was...busy. And my child with her inquisitive mind and voice calling out 'Wutsdat ... Wutsdat' to a slumbering mother, found her way into the unknown. That's the day God died for me.

(Slight pause.)

For years, I thought about the shoelace I tied and the gate I left loose. Drove myself insane with grief and blame.

DEBBIE

Sweet Jesus!

KATE

We lose what we have because it's never ours to begin with. It's only on loan. But what's never taken away is the love we have for one another. Dorothy's gone now, but her love is here with me always. Her face. Her voice. Those eyes.

DEBBIE

That's quite a story, Kate. I'm sorry. I'm very sorry.

KATE

It took a while, but I'm OK now.

DEBBIE

I wish I could say the same. My Wendy, she can't forgive me.

KATE

Forgiveness? Ha! Hardest thing to do in life. Barking up the wrong tree on that one, sister. I've spent years seeking it. You can't forgive, especially yourself, unless you change something inside.

Kate pounds her chest.

DEBBIE

Change what?

KATE

We better go. We'll be late.

DEBBIE

No. I want to know. What do I have to change?

KATE

After Dorothy was gone I couldn't go anywhere. Saw no one. Dorothy's father was a fly-by-night-guy. No help there. Then one morning an emaciated alley cat crept into my kitchen. Poor thing was starving. So I left the house to buy some milk and when I got back the cat had curled up asleep between Dorothy's pink sneakers. And I knew it was time to move on.

DEBBIE

Dorothy forgave you?

KATE

It's not about forgiveness, Debbie. It's about acceptance. Accept your daughter for who she is and you for who you are. Do that and then you'll have the heart to forgive.

Kate taps Debbie on the hand. Looks at her watch.

KATE

It's six-fifty.

Debbie takes a deep breath and sighs. She grabs her purse.

DEBBIE

Pat was the only one I trusted to do this with. Now you...

KATE

A half-glass more and you won't care who you're with.

Kate pours. They drink again one last time.

DEBBIE

Wait, you're the psychic. Tell me if I make it in one piece.

KATE

Doesn't work that way. I'm going to tell you stories about how Cleveland lost his tail, and how Samantha needs to be neutered and how...

They slowly walk out the door.

EXT. DEBBIE'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

They slow-step their way across the porch and down the steps. Debbie holds tight to Kate. The cloudy sky indicates the possibility of rain.

KATE

...She only nurses on the yoga mat, and, you'll love this, how once my precious Dandelion cornered a squirrel in the laundry room and actually backed it into a bucket of bleach, and all about...

DEBBIE

Oh God, I can't think!

KATE

... and all about Missy and her trick of catching mice with her back paws ...

Kate's voice fades as we transition to --

EXT. BUS STOP - TWO BLOCKS AWAY

The bus shelter has plexiglass walls and an overhang to protect patrons from the weather. The bench is full. Two well-dressed WOMEN in their 20s are texting while waiting.

A gum-chewing teenage BOY with ear phones glued to his head is oblivious to the outside world.

And a MAN in his 50s also sits reading his newspaper.

KATE (O.S.)

... and speaking of the bus we're gonna catch, I once found the cutest calico kitten under the driver's seat on the M44 to Astoria in the middle of the first tornado to actually come through Queens and do you know what I did...?

DEBBIE (O.S.)

I don't care. I'm cold. I feel like I'm going to die. And now it's drizzling.

Kate and Debbie squeeze under the overhang of the shelter. They stand waiting in silence. The noise of passing cars unnerves Debbie.

DEBBIE

When's the next bus?

KATE

In fifteen minutes.

Debbie grabs Kate's arm and squeezes. The distant thunder has her wobbly and disoriented.

DEBBIE

I need to sit. I feel sick.

Kate taps the boy on the shoulder and points to Debbie and the bench. He shakes his head and continues to ignore them.

Kate nudges one of the girls who looks up for a brief second.

KATE

My friend needs a seat.

The girl looks back uncaringly at her cell phone.

MAN

Oh, for chrissakes. Take my seat.

He gets up and Debbie quickly sits. She puts her purse down next to her and bends her head down close to her knees.

MAN

What's the matter with her?

KATE

She doesn't get out very often.

After a beat the bus arrives. One of the girls gets up and no one notices that she inadvertently knocks Debbie's purse behind the bench. Kate helps Debbie to her feet. They stand last on the line leading into the bus. They enter and Kate swipes her card for her and Debbie.

DEBBIE

Oh. My purse. I forgot my purse.

KATE

Don't move. I'll get it.

As Kate gets off the bus--

BUS DRIVER

Can't wait lady.

Kate frantically looks for the purse. The bus waits for a few seconds, but takes off just as Kate spots the purse.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Debbie, trapped inside the bus, is wide-eyed and frantic as the flickering lights stab her eyes. She falls onto a patron who curses and pushes her away.

BACK TO THE BUS STOP

Kate impatiently waits for the next bus. A LADY approaches.

LADY

When's the next bus to Manhattan?

KATE

Not soon enough.

BACK ON THE BUS

As the bus approaches the Williamsburg Bridge Debbie deep breaths and bangs her head against the window.

DEBBIE

(mumbling)

No crazy thoughts. No crazy thoughts. No crazy thoughts.

LADY NEXT TO HER

Are you okay?

BACK TO THE BUS STOP

The bus stop is full again. The bus arrives and Kate pushes her way to the front of the line.

BACK ON THE BUS

The bus hurtles through Manhattan. The swaying bus, the street noise, the crowded interior, and the flicking lights sicken Debbie.

She pulls up her dress up and vomits into it, and the people around her back away in collective disgust.

The bus stops, the back doors open, and Debbie bolts out into the streets of Manhattan.

EXT. TWENTIETH STREET - NYC - CONTINUOUS

Debbie immediately bumps into a Bag Lady who carries an umbrella and a small garbage bag of clothes.

BAG LADY

You look worse than I do lady.

The Bag Lady carefully scrutinizes Debbie.

DEBBIE

Oh, what makes you say that? The smell of my vomit?

BAG LADY

Yeah. That's pretty wicked. Where you headed?

DEBBIE
Carnegie Hall.

BAG LADY
Wow. That's thirty blocks, Sister.
For twenty bucks I'll walk you
there.

DEBBIE
What?
(Pause)
OK. But I'll have to pay you when we
get there.

BAG LADY
Let's go. Got nothing else to do.

As they walk, Debbie appears hesitant at a street crossing. They step off and a car approaches. The Bag Lady bangs her umbrella at the hood of the car and--

BAG LADY
Hey. Watch it.

MONTAGE OF SCENES (MUTED) -- BAG LADY BONDING WITH DEBBIE

-- As the Bag Lady talks, Debbie careens into a passerby and the Bag Lady catches her before she falls.

-- A kid on a skateboard almost runs into Debbie and the Bag Lady saves her from falling.

-- Debbie steps off a curb as a car approaches. The Bag Lady shields Debbie and stiff-arms the car with her umbrella.

-- Debbie has lost herself in a big crowd and the Bag Lady takes her hand and maneuvers her to the next crosswalk.

-- Debbie leans against a street sign exhausted. The Bag Lady sits her to a park bench and offers her a bottle of water.

DEBBIE
I wasn't always like this. At least
not this bad ...

END OF MONTAGE and transition to --

EXT. CARNEGIE HALL - EARLY EVENING

Kate is frantically looking up and down the street for Debbie. She has Debbie's purse hooked to her shoulder.

After a beat, Debbie and the Bag Lady turn the corner and approach the line of well-dressed concert-goers. Kate spots Debbie and sees her soiled dressed. She pulls out her cell phone.

KATE

(into the phone)

Wendy, she's here. She's had some kind of accident so bring a change of clothes.

Kate runs to Debbie.

KATE

What happened to you?

DEBBIE

Long story. Give me my purse.

Kate hands her the purse. As Debbie rummages for money,

DEBBIE

Kate, I want you to meet...

Debbie turns but the Bag Lady is already in retreat.

DEBBIE

Louise. Where are you going?

BAG LADY

I don't belong here. Time to leave.

DEBBIE

But I owe you money.

Waving her hand, the Bag Lady continues walking away. Kate turns and escorts Debbie into Carnegie Hall.

INT. CARNEGIE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Just as they walk into the hall Wendy approaches with a dress draped over her arm. Wendy reacts to Debbie's condition with tears in her eyes. Debbie looks down at her soiled dress.

WENDY

Mom. Come with me. I'll get you changed. Kate! We'll be right back.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

They enter. Debbie cowers and shields her eyes from the bright lights. Wendy helps Debbie change her clothes--

DEBBIE

This is impossible for me. I'm so sorry for all of this. I never should have tried.

WENDY

But you're here. You made it. That means everything to me.

DEBBIE

Sweetie, I've been such a fool. Can you forgive me?

WENDY

I already did. The minute I saw you.

She hugs Debbie.

DEBBIE

I'm not sure I can make it.

Wendy hands Steven's Yankee cap to Debbie and whispers into Debbie's ear.

WENDY

There's someone special waiting for you after the concert. Can you stay for him?

INT. CARNEGIE MUSIC HALL -- MOMENTS LATER

Pat and Trevor are sitting together and talking (AD-LIB). Kate enters from the back of the hall with Debbie holding tightly on her arm. They find their seats.

PAT

The concert is about to start.

TREVOR

I better get back to my seat.

Trevor leaves. As Debbie sits--

DEBBIE

Did you find Joey?

PAT

I went up and down every stinking block in the neighborhood. He vanished. How the hell did he end up coming to our office, anyway?

Kate raises her hand halfway and--

KATE

That would be me. A little psychic snooping. Slam, bam and I found him. Don't give me that look. You gave me permission.

Kate looks behind her and spots Dan who sits six rows behind her. They nod and smile at each other.

ON THE STAGE

The Maestro taps his baton against the music stand and holds up his arm like an evangelist.

Debbie nervously twists in her seat as the lights come up full on the orchestra. She looks for Wendy and their eyes lock on each other. Debbie holds up Steven's cap. Wendy smiles.

The music plays, and we JUMP CUT the audio to different pieces of music until the lights dim for intermission.

EXT. CARNEGIE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Trevor comes out of the crowd just as Joey appears.

JOEY

Excuse me. How much have I missed?

TREVOR

Intermission just started.

Joey twirls an unlit cigarette between his fingers.

JOEY

Thanks. Got a light?

Trevor offers the Zippo. Joey lights up and hands it back.

JOEY

Much obliged. Hey, I haven't seen an old Zippo like that in a long time.

TREVOR

A keepsake. Belonged to my father.

JOEY

I had one. I had one. I know I had ... Sorry. Sometimes I can't ... Never mind. How's the concert going?

TREVOR

Amazing. A good friend of mine has a solo performance in the second half that should be outstanding.

JOEY

Good. I'll keep that in mind but I don't actually have a ticket. I know it's a sold out house. You think standing room is OK?

TREVOR

This must be your lucky day. The guy sitting next to me is a doctor and he got called out on an emergency.

JOEY

Oh, that'd be nice.

(pause)

I have a friend inside as well. We met today after a very long time apart. Didn't handle it very well. I'm here to change that, if I can. She's in the audience somewhere. I thought I'd surprise her by coming.

TREVOR

It's that kind of a night. My soloist friend must be very surprised her mother showed up. Long story. You from around here?

JOEY

Born and raised in Brooklyn. But I'm looking to sell the family home. All I need is an apartment for myself.

As Trevor frisks himself--

TREVOR

My mom's a realtor. I'm sure I have her card on me somewhere.

JOEY

The soloist. She's a close friend?

TREVOR

We were engaged once. Been trying to get our relationship back on track. I don't mean to be so personal...

JOEY

No, no. It's interesting, actually. I came here to settle a piece of the past also. I let a relationship die a long time ago because I felt ... unworthy, I guess.

Joey points to his face referencing his scars.

TREVOR

Oh, here's the card.

Joey takes the card but doesn't look at it.

JOEY

Thanks. So, what do you do?

TREVOR

I'm a teacher. High school drama.

JOEY

Bet you're good at it. You seem very personable. Folks raised you right.

TREVOR

My mom is a single parent. I never knew my dad.

JOEY

Yet you carry his lighter?
Interesting! Let me see it again.

Hands Joey the lighter back.

TREVOR

What makes you feel 'unworthy', if you don't mind me asking?

JOEY

You ever go somewhere and suddenly realize you don't know where the hell you are or how you got there? Happens to me a lot. Doctor says I get lost physically because I feel lost emotionally. Hard to explain, but it makes me keep to myself.

Trevor thumbs the theatre and--

TREVOR

So the person you know inside understands this?

JOEY

No, but it's my fault she doesn't. I don't stick around long enough to talk things out.

TREVOR

Just the opposite with me. She's the one who leaves and gets lost. If I told you what I found out yesterday--

JOEY

Tell me. You got nothing to lose.

Trevor thinks hard, but finally caves.

TREVOR

She had a child two years ago and never told me.

JOEY

This is way too weird. I just found out I have a kid. So, are you the father?

TREVOR

Not sure.

JOEY

I know it's none of my business, but something tells me you can see yourself as the child's father, or we wouldn't be having this talk. Don't walk away just because he may not have your DNA. If this girl loves you, her son will too. That's all the love you'll ever need.

Joey inspects the lighter more carefully.

JOEY

Hey, this lighter. The initials on the back. Same as mine.

Joey quickly inspects the card just as the lights flash indicating intermission is over.

JOEY

And this card? It says Pat O'Neil.

The door flings open and Pat sticks her head out.

PAT

Trevor. Time to get ... Oh!

JOEY

Pat!

INT. CARNEGIE HALL STAGE - LATER

The orchestra finishes a piece, indicating time has passed in the performance. Wendy rises and the musician next to her takes her cello and accompanies her to a seat in front of the stage.

Wendy sits on her chair and positions her cello. After a few seconds of solo play, the lights dim on stage except for a pinlight on Wendy.

A montage captures the intensity of Wendy's play; that is the reactions from wonder of the audience and the orchestra, especially Debbie whose eyes begin to fill with tears.

Wendy finishes the piece to a stunned silence, then the drummer taps his stick gently on the rim of his bass drum.

MAESTRO POV

He tries to signal the drummer to "knock it off", but the other members start to tap their instruments as well. Before long they all clap, tap or stomp their feet, and the Maestro surrenders and starts to clap himself.

DEBBIE POV

She bolts to her feet and claps wildly as the rest of the audience follows her lead.

WENDY POV

She takes a bow and extends her hand to her mother, as if the audience should be applauding her as well.

MOMENTS LATER

The concert has finished, and the audience begins leaving.

PAT
(to Debbie)
Come on. Let's go backstage.

Pat assists Debbie, but they are separated in the rush of the audience members seeking a fast exit. Debbie "freaks" as she is jostled about and almost falls to the floor.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Debbie pushes past the cast and crew members and finds herself outside the WARDROBE ROOM. The CRIES of a baby lead her inside.

INT. WARDROBE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Debbie enters and hugs the wall. She watches Mrs. Mason (introduced from an earlier scene at Logan Airport) while she logs in props and costumes from the cast members.

Steven sits on top of the clothes, crying. Debbie slowly approaches him and picks him up.

DEBBIE
Oh, boy. Aren't you a heavy one.
What's your name.

STEVEN

Steven.

Wendy enters and she sees her mother holding Steven. She backs off and just watches. Pat enters suddenly and stands next to Wendy. They both watch Debbie playing with Steven and savor the moment.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - LATE EVENING

A large bouquet of flowers sits center on one of the desks. Kate enters humming a tune while she places paper plates, napkins, and cups on one of the desks. She exits.

Dan enters carrying several pizza boxes which he deposits on one of the office desks. Kate re-enters holding candles.

DAN

I got one plain, one with mushrooms
and bacon, one half sausage, one
pineapple, one anchovies ...

KATE

Anchovies? Dan!

DAN

I hear they're an aphrodisiac. Don't
look at me at that way. It was hard
sitting six rows away from you for
so long.

They stare at each other. Kate drops the candles on the desk and runs to Dan. They join in a Rhett/Scarlett kind of kiss.

INT. DEBBIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Debbie lies in bed while Wendy holds a compress to her head. The dress she recently wore lies at the foot of the bed.

WENDY

Better?

DEBBIE

Headache's gone. Pat's a crazy
driver, isn't she?

WENDY

Not half as crazy as one of the
passengers.

(MORE)

WENDY (CONT'D)

(chuckles)

Thanks for the party, especially on such short notice.

DEBBIE

You deserve a celebration. Who knew my little angel could play like one.

WENDY

You deserve all the applause, Mom.

Debbie sits up.

DEBBIE

Steven is such a charmer.

WENDY

Isn't he?

DEBBIE

When will I see him again?

WENDY

Mrs. Mason is dropping him by later.

DEBBIE

Good. I can give her back that dress then. Is everyone here?

WENDY

Mom, before we go down, let's talk a bit more.

(Pause.)

Regardless of who Steven's father is, I hope you can still love him.

Debbie sits down and touches Wendy's lips.

DEBBIE

Shhh. There's not a force on this planet that can stop me.

WENDY

Oh, Mom, I was so afraid you would want me to give him up.

Debbie gets up and crosses to look out a window.

DEBBIE

Your solo tonight? You wrote that didn't you?

WENDY

I wrote it the night before Steven was born.

DEBBIE

It's so enchanting. Made me think of the times I'd sing to you each night at bedtime when you were little.

WENDY

I remember those nights, Mom. That's what inspired me to write my solo. I hum it to Steven all the time.

DEBBIE

I lost my inspiration when I shut myself up in this house.

Wendy meets her mother at the window and gives Debbie a kiss on the forehead.

WENDY

I'm glad you made it, Mom.

DEBBIE

(smiling)

Do you sing to Steven.

WENDY

All the time.

DEBBIE

Sing a little of your solo now.

Wendy begins to hum softly.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate is arranging glasses and Dan is emptying wastebaskets into a garbage bag.

Pat enters with a large cake box and places it on the desk.

PAT

Bakery stayed open just for me.
Where's Debbie and Wendy?

KATE

Upstairs. Everyone's here: the beauty, the boss, and the brains.

PAT

And which am I, pray tell?

KATE

Take your pick.

Dan points to the outside swing set.

DAN

Someone's waiting for you outside.
He looks a little lost.

EXT. DEBBIE'S BACKYARD SWING SET - CONTINUOUS

Joey perks up as he sees Pat coming out of the house. She walks up to him and--

PAT

If I say anything, you won't run away, will you?

Joey smiles and shakes his head.

JOEY

Couldn't find you after the concert.
Trevor invited me to this party.
Hope it's okay. You live close by?

PAT

Next door.

JOEY

Never left the neighborhood.

PAT

Never got the chance. I was pregnant. Where was I going?

JOEY

He keeps my lighter. Why?

PAT

Told him you were killed in combat.
You were his hero for a long time.

JOEY

Not any more, I bet. But in my
defense, how could I know?

(pause)

You want me to go?

PAT

Leaving is your M-O, isn't it?

JOEY

Whatever anger you have, I deserve
it. Fire away. But I'd like to say
goodbye to Trevor before I go.

PAT

Look, I give you credit for coming.
Trevor's on his way so just stick
around.

(pause)

I saw you once, you know. A long
time ago at the Manhattan VA
hospital.

JOEY

I don't remember seeing you.

PAT

You were unconscious for the most
part. I barely recognized you.

JOEY

I had a long road ahead. I'm still
on that journey.

PAT

You look pretty good for what you
went through.

JOEY

You look terrific.

Pat sits on the swing next to him.

PAT

Trevor will want to know why I told
him you were dead.

JOEY

Can I be there when you answer that
question. Sorry. I take that back.

PAT

There were a lot of questions I didn't want to answer at the time.

JOEY

And now you'll have to.

PAT

You're trouble six ways from Sunday, you know that?

JOEY

I didn't plan this. I was just looking to sell the house, that's all. Now, I have second thoughts.

PAT

Debbie will handle the sale, if that's what's bothering you.

JOEY

I meant I'd like to stay and get to know Trevor.

Pat stands and faces him.

PAT

Don't start anything you can't finish. I warn you...

JOEY

I'd like to get to know you as well.

PAT

I couldn't handle another walk-out and neither could Trevor.

JOEY

Any questions Trevor has I'll answer them. And you get to listen, if you want. If he likes what he hears and you and I connect, then you decide how this all works out. Fair enough?

She traces the outline of one of the scars on his face.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Wendy comes from downstairs while Kate is preparing the room.

KATE

How's your mom?

WENDY

Better. I want to thank you for the help with the party.

KATE

It was all your Mom's idea.

Dan enters carrying a tray of condiments. He stops upon seeing Wendy.

KATE

Wendy, this is Dan.

WENDY

This is your secret admirer, right?

DAN

Prettier than her mother, if that's possible. I loved your performance.

WENDY

Thank you.

Dan points to the flowers on the desk.

DAN

Those are for you. Hand picked in Peru and flown here express for your special night.

WENDY

They are beautiful. Kate told me absolutely nothing about you. How did you two meet?

DAN

I was shopping the fresh fish selection at Gristede's, picking through a pile of red salmon, and there, holding a fist-full of scrod, was this beauty dressed in a yellow taffeta dress, her shapely figure outlined by the display lights of the lobster counter. I tried to stammer a "hello", but floundered.

KATE

Don't mind him. Sweet phrases grace his mind and fresh flowers are his business.

WENDY

I think we're going to have to keep a close eye on him.

Trevor enters with the bag of ice and a grocery bag.

TREVOR

Whoever heard of "7-11" running out of coke. Wendy! Hi! Hey, you were fantastic!

WENDY

Thank you. I'm glad you came.

TREVOR

Wasn't sure if you wanted me there.
(Awkward pause.)
This has been a long day.

KATE

Why don't we put these flowers in the kitchen for you?

Starts to leave but sees Dan is not following.

KATE

Dan? The ice is melting!

DAN

Oh, right. Later...

Dan and Kate exit to the kitchen with the groceries and ice.

TREVOR

Your mom? You have to be proud of her.

WENDY

I am. And to top it off your dad is alive. My God!

TREVOR

Unbelievable, right? Quite a night all around, I'd say.
(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)

(looks around)
So, where's Steven?

WENDY

A friend is dropping him off.

TREVOR

Good.

(pause)

You know, I was thinking. If you wanted ... I could drive you both back to Boston.

WENDY

Why?

TREVOR

I was out of line yesterday. So much has happened. All I know is if I could spend some time with you and Steven, I think I'd like to do that.

Kate enters and begins to slice up the pizza. Dan sneaks up behind her and steals a kiss. Debbie starts down the stairs.

WENDY

If you're having second thoughts about being a father to Steven...

TREVOR

I see this as a package deal, so there's no way I can lose by signing up. We'll start slow. A road trip to feel things out.

She reaches into her pocket and hands Trevor the toy Peter Pan figure. Trevor pulls her in and kisses her.

Debbie sees them kissing. She tiptoes past Kate and Dan who are also kissing. She moves to go outside and sees Pat and Joey locked in an embrace. She reverses her direction, and sits at a desk, rips out a slice of pizza and, as she chews, the phone rings.

Kate and Dan separate. Kate reaches for the phone but Debbie gets to it first.

DEBBIE

I got it! Everyone else around here has a mouthful of someone else.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Hello ... Yes, all of Brooklyn ... I see. I don't think we have that listing. Let me check. Please hold.

Debbie hits the 'hold' button and yells--

DEBBIE

Pat! Could you come in here, please?

KATE

If that is business, tell them we're closed.

DEBBIE

I seem to have a little free time on my hands. Don't let me interrupt your, uh, "negotiations". PAT!!

Pat enters and Joey follows. Kate exits to the kitchen.

PAT

I'm here. What's so damn important?

DEBBIE

Lady on line one saw a "For Sale" sign on a front yard with no agency number. She's calling around to find out who's got the listing.

PAT

Did you tell her we're closed?

DEBBIE

If one more person tells me that ... She wants the house bad. Her chiropractor lives next door.

Trevor and Wendy come over to listen.

PAT

What's the address?

DEBBIE

It's 145 Conklin. You know it?

Pat looks at Joey who looks at the floor.

PAT

I swam naked in the backyard pool a long time ago.

(to Joey)

So what have you got to say? What are you doing with your house?

Joey takes a few seconds to think, then steps up and takes the phone and --

JOEY

Hello, Ma'am. The owner has changed his mind. The house is not for sale.

Joey hangs up and faces Pat. A pause, then--

DAN

Pizza's getting cold.

DEBBIE

I need a drink.

EVERYONE

Me too. Same here. Got that right. What have you got?

Kate enters from the kitchen.

KATE

Trevor! Diet root beer and a six pack of Bud does not a party make. What were you thinking?

TREVOR

I only had ten bucks.

KATE

Then it's time to uncover the secret stash.

DEBBIE

Where are you going?

KATE

Some things you don't want to know, Debbie.

Kate exits to the backyard.

WENDY

I wonder where Mrs. Mason is?
Traffic probably.

DAN

Pizza anyone?

Kate enters with the whiskey bottle.

KATE

OK, let's grab a glass and gather
round. That's right. Everyone take a
glass. I'm proposing a toast to...
shit, so many intangibles here.

JOEY

We can toast to just being together.

DEBBIE

Wait, I want a picture.

PAT

With the cake! Get one of the cake.

Debbie pulls a camera from a desk drawer. Pat holds the cake
box in front of Kate.

PAT

Open it. Take a shot.

Kate opens the box and starts to laugh.

KATE

It says "Happy birthday, Leah".

Pat looks inside.

PAT

Oh damn, I never looked inside. Some
birthday girl has a congratulations
with a cello on her cake.

Laughter all around.

DEBBIE

All right everyone. Chop, chop.
Let's do this before Pat and Kate
get drunk.

DAN

I always wondered. You can't really buy one and get one free, can you?

Kate smacks him in the head.

DEBBIE

Everyone smile...

Dan nibbles on Kate's neck.

KATE

Dan, stop it. He's so romantic, isn't he?

PAT

Romantic my ass. He's gnawing at your neck like it's a hot dog. A little advice, Kate: better practice safe sex with this guy.

KATE

We already discussed it. We're installing handrails around my bed.

Laughter, then the doorbell rings. Debbie squeals.

DEBBIE

Don't say anything, Kate. I know who that is.

She bolts to the front door.

DEBBIE

Coming Steven...

THE END