

COMMITTED

by  
Carol Watson

REVISED 3/10/04

Producer: Hal Schwartz  
Director: Ellie Kanner

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - APARTMENT - DAY

The sweet silence of slumber. Suddenly, an alarm clock on a nightstand SHRIEKS the operatic tones of Maria Callas.

A well-manicured hand, nails painted pink, slaps the snooze button and mutes Maria. A few seconds reprieve.

Then, another clock, stationed on a dresser, broadcasts the FORTISSIMO POUNDING of the "William Tell Overture." Toes, also painted pink, swing out of bed and run to the dresser.

LETTY MAYER, late 20s and beautiful, turns off the music. She opens a dresser drawer and surveys panties that are arranged by color, from white to beige to black. Behind the panties are rows of bras, also organized by color. Letty pulls out some taupe undergarments, checks them against her nails and replaces them in favor of a pink bra and panties.

Letty goes to her closet and removes a tailored, pink linen suit. She lays it on the bed. Beast, her cat, jumps on the bed and settles into the jacket. Letty swoops the animal off her clothes and brushes cat hair from the suit.

LETTY

Listen, Beast. What have I told you about linen?

The scolding is cut short by an "Urge Overkill" song that SCREAMS OUT from another room. On cue, Letty heads down the hall, dressing as she goes. She CLUCKS for Beast to follow.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Letty turns off the alarm clock that BLASTS "Urge Overkill" from the counter and checks the time against her watch.

She swings open a cupboard to look at cans of cat food arranged by type. Seafood on the left, chicken in the middle, then, naturally, beef. Letty reaches for a can.

LETTY

(looking at Beast)  
It's liver saute.

Letty considers the cat a moment, and chooses another can.

LETTY

Fine, then, chicken in gravy. But you're going to have to eat the liver tomorrow.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Letty puts the finishing touches on her make-up and pulls back her hair, plastering an errant curl into place with hair spray. Yet another alarm clock sounds, this time BLARING the voice of shock jocks MARK AND BRIAN.

INT. ENTRY HALL - SAME

Letty hurries down the hall and turns off the clock, which is mounted near the front door. She bends down to kiss the cat good-bye, grabs a briefcase and leaves.

EXT. HALLWAY - CHASEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

A school bell BUZZES. Grade-schoolers, clutching lunch pails, scurry past Letty, who stands outside an office door. She straightens her jacket, takes a deep breath and starts to turn the handle.

Letty is stopped cold when CHANDRA, 7, the victim of a bloody nose, runs up to her, bawling.

CHANDRA  
Miss Mayer. Miss Mayer.

Letty looks quickly at Chandra, her watch, the door.

LETTY  
(to Chandra)  
Goodness, this is a bad one. Tip  
your head back.

She bends down and pushes back Chandra's head. Chandra, off balance, places one very bloody hand on Letty's jacket lapel, staining it for all eternity.

Letty, grimacing, takes the bloody hand firmly in her own and guides Chandra down the hall, coaxing the child as she goes.

LETTY  
Come on. Pinch it, Chandra. Pinch  
it.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CHASEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATER

PRINCIPAL GAIL LAUER, 40s, sits in uncomfortable silence with BILL JOHANSEN, the 50-something school Superintendent. Also present are MRS. MONTES, who is a School Board Member, and two other BOARD MEMBERS.

Principal Gail glances at the clock. Mrs. Montes taps her foot. Johansen clears his throat.

JOHANSEN

Well, I have a full calendar today,  
and I'm afraid...

The door bursts open. Letty stumbles into the room. She clutches her briefcase to her chest, trying to cover her blood-smearred lapel.

LETTY

Mr. Johansen, hello. I'm so sorry  
I'm late. It's very nice to meet  
you.

Letty continues to hug the briefcase while awkwardly bending down to shake hands with Johansen and the others.

PRINCIPAL GAIL

The Superintendent was just getting  
ready to leave.

LETTY

I do apologize. A student had a  
crisis.

MRS. MONTES

A crisis, you say?

LETTY

A bloody nose...

There is no response. Letty reluctantly lowers the briefcase and reveals the stain.

LETTY

A bloody nose of epic proportions.

Johansen smiles.

JOHANSEN

OK, Miss Mayer. Ten minutes. Wow  
us.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - CHASEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATER

A bunch of BOYS play kickball in a haze of sawdust. Chandra sits on a bench, clamping an ice pack to her nose. JENNY, a limber 8-year-old, hangs upside down from the jungle gym.

Letty talks on her CELL PHONE. She glances around to monitor her wards, eyes darting like a hawk's toward the kickball game.

LETTY

No cherry drops, Jenny.

(into the phone)

Yes, hi. I'm calling for Paul Lascher.

(beat)

Could you tell him it's Letty?

(beat)

He can't? Um, well, tell him, tell him that they went for my math idea. Thanks.

Letty dials again. She sees two boys fighting over the ball and moves in to break them up.

LETTY

(to boys)

Not so rough, guys.

(into phone)

Mom? Hi. You'll never guess what...I've got the best news.

(beat)

No, about work. How about dinner?

Brawl averted, out of the corner of her eye, Letty catches Jenny make the daring Cherry Drop back flip off the bar. She blows a series of ANGRY, STACCATO NOTES on her whistle.

LETTY

(to Jenny)

You're in trouble, young lady.

(into the phone)

I know, Mom. But it's the only place I can call from.

(beat)

Can you tell Ruth about dinner?

(beat)

Paul's fine, just fine.

The class bell BUZZES.

LETTY

Got to go, Mom. The monsters call.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tuxedoed waiters glide through the tony restaurant, where the patrons dare speak only in hushed tones. Letty sits sipping wine with her mother, MRS. MARTHA MAYER, immaculate in a cream suit, young looking for her 50-odd years.

Letty's sister RUTH--early 20s and pretty, with flyaway hair and an ever-present smile--bounds into the restaurant, oozing happiness. Letty discretely waves her over.

RUTH  
Sorry I'm late.

Letty pours her a glass of wine.

MRS. MAYER  
Letty was just getting ready to tell me her good news.

RUTH  
(to Letty)  
Tell, tell.

MRS. MAYER  
(leaning toward Letty)  
Letty, dear, is that a cat hair on your blouse?

Letty removes the nasty hair from her blouse.

LETTY  
So, I got the district to approve my after-school math program.

Ruth smiles at her, but vacantly.

MRS. MAYER  
How wonderful, darling.  
(beat)  
What does that mean for you?

LETTY  
I'll be running it three days a week, and...

MRS. MAYER  
Will you get time off to do that?

LETTY  
Not now, but maybe later, if they like the program.

Ruth stares around the restaurant, a shit-eating grin plastered across her face.

LETTY  
(to Ruth)  
What's up with you?

RUTH  
Me? Nothing. Tell me more about  
the job.

MRS. MAYER  
(to Ruth)  
Not a job, a promotion.

LETTY  
No, Mom, it's more of a prestige  
thing.

RUTH  
Mmmmmmm.

Letty passes her hand in front of Ruth's eyes.

LETTY  
Ruth. Calling Ruth.

RUTH  
(laughing)  
Sorry.

LETTY  
Just go ahead and tell us.

RUTH  
There's nothing to tell.

MRS. MAYER  
(to Ruth)  
Are you sure, Dear?

LETTY  
Come on.

RUTH  
No, really. Tell me about the  
promotion.

LETTY  
Well, my theory is that people can  
really enjoy math, but they lose  
interest...

Ruth can't hold it a moment longer without bursting.

RUTH  
(almost screaming)  
I'm getting married.

Mrs. Mayer's eyes immediately fill with tears. Ruth leaps up and hugs her mother. Other diners glance toward the table.

One WOMAN IN THE RESTAURANT taps the side of her glass with her fork and raises a silent toast to Ruth. Other DINERS follow suit. Ruth grins back and starts to giggle.

MRS. MAYER

I'm so happy for you. It's just wonderful.

Mrs. Mayer dabs her eyes with her napkin.

MRS. MAYER

My goodness. A wedding. My goodness.

LETTY

Wow. Congratulations.

Ruth dashes around the table to embrace the stunned Letty.

RUTH

(to Letty)

Can you believe it?

Ruth sits back down and pulls a gorgeous ring from her purse. She slips it on and wiggles her finger in front of Letty and her mother, who peers at it with approval.

MRS. MAYER

Tell us every detail.

LETTY

You've only known Jake a few months.

RUTH

Three and a week.

(screaming again)

Isn't it great?

MRS. MAYER

My goodness. What about an engagement party? We must start planning.

(signaling a waiter)

Champagne. Girls, we need some champagne.

Off Letty's frozen smile, we

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LETTY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Letty's in bed, drawing a giant multiplication chart. PAUL LASCHER, early 30s, handsome in a corporate way, shrugs off his expensive suit.

He opens a drawer of Letty's dresser, and removes a neatly pressed T-shirt. He smooths out another shirt he has accidentally rumbled in the process.

PAUL  
So, another one bites the dust.

LETTY  
It's not another one. It's my  
sister.  
(beat)  
Aren't you happy for her?

PAUL  
She's only known the guy a few  
months.

Paul lays his folded trousers across Letty's desk.

PAUL  
Can I put these here for tonight?

LETTY  
(pointing to the closet)  
In there's better.  
(beat)  
It's kind of romantic, don't you  
think?

PAUL  
I really think if you're going to  
spend your life with someone you  
want to know them pretty damn well.

Paul sits on the bed, and leans against a pillow.

LETTY  
Believe me, I know your feelings on  
the matter.

PAUL  
The receptionist said you called  
earlier about something.

Letty holds up her multiplication chart and shows it to Paul.

LETTY  
My math program. The  
Superintendent said he'd fund it.

PAUL  
Good going. I knew you could do  
it.

Paul kisses Letty on the cheek.

PAUL  
It looks like we're both bucking  
for advancement.

LETTY  
Yeah?

PAUL  
Huntley told me today that if I  
come through on the Benton  
deposition, they may consider me  
for senior associate.

Letty hugs Paul.

LETTY  
Congratulations. We should  
celebrate.

PAUL  
I was thinking dinner on Friday  
with James and Meg at the Saint  
Mark.

LETTY  
I mean tonight.

Letty sensually caresses his shoulders.

LETTY  
Like right now...

PAUL  
Actually, I need to review the  
deposition questions tonight.  
Maybe tomorrow?

LETTY  
Oh, ok. Maybe.

PAUL  
But I thought if you don't mind,  
you could listen and see how I come  
across?

LETTY  
(beat)  
Sure. Of course.

Letty continues coloring her multiplication chart.

PAUL  
Letty, please, I need your full  
attention.

Letty puts the chart down and sits up straighter.

LETTY  
Let me have it.

INT. CLASSROOM - CHASEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Letty rubs her eyes with fatigue. Bobby stands next to her holding a crumpled paper bag.

BOBBY  
My dog ate my turtle, and the shell  
went crunch. I brought it for show-  
and-tell.

The children perk up at this news.

LETTY  
I'm sorry about your turtle Bobby,  
but you know we only have show-and-  
tell on Mondays. Today, we're  
scheduled for grammar.

BOBBY  
But my mom says I have to throw it  
away tonight.

Bobby opens the bag. He reaches in to remove the turtle. The children TITTER. Letty's on him in a second.

LETTY  
Don't even think about it.

She grabs the bag. From outside, there is a KNOCK. Letty and the students look toward the window.

It's Ruth. She's been crying. She waves to Letty. Chandra waves back at Ruth.

Letty puts up her finger to signal "just a minute" to Ruth. She sets the turtle bag on Bobby's desk.

LETTY  
Class, why don't you...

Ruth knocks on the glass again. Letty glances at her distraught sister and walks quickly toward the door.

LETTY  
(to class)  
You guys pull out your verb sheets and review them.

Letty leaves the room. The class watches through the window as Ruth throws her sobbing self into Letty's arms.

EXT. HALLWAY - CHASEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - SAME

RUTH  
She says she won't even come if Dad brings Monica.

LETTY  
Mom won't miss your wedding. She'll come around. I promise she will.

Letty glances through the window at her classroom, where Bobby waves the turtle over his head.

RUTH  
How?

LETTY  
I'll talk to her, and to Dad, too.  
(beat)  
A few wisely-chosen guilt tactics and they'll be ours.

RUTH  
Maybe if we had them both to dinner or something.

Letty looks again at the classroom, where the students are lobbing the turtle back and forth.

LETTY  
Maybe.

RUTH  
You always throw the best dinner parties, Letty.

Letty's attention snaps back to Ruth.

LETTY  
Oh, wait a minute, now I see where  
you're going.

RUTH  
Please, Letty.

LETTY  
Mom and Dad? At dinner together?  
Are you crazy?

Ruth starts to sob--big, loud, air-gulping sobs. Letty pats  
her shoulder.

LETTY  
Maybe, though. Maybe it would  
work. I could throw you an  
engagement party maybe.

RUTH  
Really?

Principal Gail, trolling the halls, spies Letty with Ruth.  
She dispatches a stern look in Letty's direction.

LETTY  
(nodding toward Gail)  
You know what, Ruthie? I better get  
back to my class, OK?

RUTH  
And the party?

LETTY  
Yeah, it'll be fun.

Ruth grabs Letty in another hug.

RUTH  
Thank you so much.

INT. CLASSROOM - SAME

Letty strides into the classroom, pulls the turtle away from  
Bobby and drops it in the trash.

LETTY  
Who can come up here and give me a  
sentence with a "to be" verb in it?

ZACH  
Who was that girl?

LETTY  
Come on up, Zach.

Zach approaches the board and begins to write, "I am..." He doesn't get any further before Letty cuts him off.

LETTY  
Neater, Zach.

Zach begins again, but Letty stops him when he reaches "am."

LETTY  
Zach, you know the line by the "a"  
has to come straight down or it  
looks like an "o."

Zach looks back toward his classmates for help.

LETTY  
What's wrong, Zach?

Letty picks up a piece of chalk and writes an "a." She erases it furiously and works at it until the "a" is perfect.

LETTY  
Try again, Zach. Like that.

Letty jabs at the board with a piece of chalk. Zach freezes. He sees Letty's shoes, her arm, her contorted face, and, above all else, that perfect "a" staring right back down at him.

Letty grips Zach's arm, guiding the chalk to form what looks like a pretty good "a."

LETTY  
I don't believe it. You still  
can't do it.

ZACH  
I'm sorry, OK, Miss Mayer?

LETTY  
No, it's not OK. You'll never get  
to college on OK.

Letty's fingers press into Zach's arm. A tear slides ominously down his cheek.

LETTY

It has to be good, Zach. Do you understand me?

Zach wrests free of Letty. He's in full cry now. He backs away, stumbles, then makes a run for his seat. Bobby SNICKERS at Zach's misfortune. Other children glance around, unsure, confused.

Letty looks vacantly at the children, stares at the board and looks at the children again.

She sits down at her desk and buries her face in her hands. Letty's fists, clenched at first, slowly relax. She takes a deep breath and raises her head.

LETTY

I'm very, very sorry, Zach.

Zach continues to cry. Letty looks down at her desk. She grabs a piece of construction paper and a jar of paste.

LETTY

You know what, guys? Wednesday's not a grammar day. It's a collage day. It's a collage ON THE WALL day.

Letty jumps up. She slaps the paper on the wall with some paste. She motions for the students to join her.

The children slowly approach her. Zach lags behind.

LETTY

And, Zach? Zach, I want you to be in charge of paste.

INT. BEDROOM - LETTY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Letty lies in bed. The alarm clock BLASTS opera. Letty fumbles for the switch. She can't turn it off. She yanks out the cord.

Letty gets out of bed, walks to the dresser and turns off the second clock before it rings. She goes to the KITCHEN and snaps off the alarm, then heads down the HALLWAY and shuts that alarm off, as well.

Letty hurries back to her BEDROOM and crawls into bed. Paul, toweling his hair dry, walks in.

PAUL  
What are you doing? You're going  
to be late.

LETTY  
I'm calling in sick.

Paul sits on the bed and puts his hand to Letty's forehead.

PAUL  
You don't have a fever.

LETTY  
I don't feel like going to work  
today.

PAUL  
Won't it be hard for them to get a  
substitute this late?

LETTY  
It'll be OK.

PAUL  
But what about that math project?

LETTY  
Paul, I just can't go. Is that OK  
with you or am I committing some  
horrible crime?

PAUL  
Forget I asked.

LETTY  
I'm sorry.  
(beat)  
I'm just...I'm so tired lately.

PAUL  
Maybe you ought to see a doctor.

LETTY  
No, it's not like that.

Letty starts to cry.

LETTY  
It's just I've got those parent  
conferences, and I'm supposed to  
set up the math program by next  
week.

(MORE)

LETTY(cont'd)

And shopping for Ruth's dress and that, that engagement dinner.

PAUL

You can get out of the dinner.

LETTY

No, I can't. I've already convinced both Mom and Dad to come.

PAUL

Come on, Letty. It'll get done.

Paul touches Letty's shoulder. She pulls away from him.

LETTY

I don't think so.

PAUL

Of course it will. Remember the big talent show you planned last year? And what about the Christmas benefit when Santa canceled at the last minute? But you still pulled it off.

LETTY

Yeah.

PAUL

You just need to get more organized.

LETTY

Maybe.

PAUL

Let's make a list of the things you need to do, OK?

Letty nods her head, and Paul grabs a legal pad from his briefcase.

INT. CLASSROOM - CHASEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

MR. and MRS. ANDERSON, over-eager parents, sit across the desk from Letty, who stares at the legal pad in her lap. As the Andersons talk, Letty twists a lock of hair tighter and tighter.

MRS. ANDERSON

So at home, we've started our own little library for Chandra.

MR. ANDERSON

We thought it would be a good project for her to set up her own card-catalogue.

LETTY

I see.

Letty tries unsuccessfully to extricate her hand from her hair.

MRS. ANDERSON

But what I'm wondering is whether we should also be spending more time on her computer skills at home. What do you think?

LETTY

Well...

MR. ANDERSON

Because we don't want her to get behind her classmates.

MRS. ANDERSON

And we trust your opinion. Chandra's always talking about Miss Mayer.

LETTY

Oh.

MR. ANDERSON

Just the other day she came home and told us about you taking care of her bloody nose.

MRS. ANDERSON

And she went on and on about the collage. That seems very inventive, Miss Mayer.

Letty stares blankly at the couple.

MR. ANDERSON

Miss Mayer?

LETTY

What the fuck. It's my job.

Off Mr. Anderson's raised eyebrow, we

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LETTY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The room is a mess of scattered papers and the math Twister game. Letty sits on the ground crying. She makes a pyramid out of the wadded-up tissues that surround her.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

The upscale shop is festooned with pastels and lace and lots of signs announcing "Sale Day." Frenzied women pick through dresses as "Pachelbel's Canon" plays in the background.

Letty is wedged into a corner, sipping coffee. A CLERK approaches her with a coffee pot and tray of pastries.

CLERK  
More coffee?

LETTY  
Hit me.

CLERK  
Danish?

LETTY  
(rooting through the tray)  
No more bear claws left?

Ruth bounces into the shop.

CLERK  
(to Ruth)  
Danish?

RUTH  
Oh, no thanks, I'm too excited to eat.

The clerk gives Ruth an approving smile as Letty rips into a sweet roll. Ruth looks through a nearby rack of gowns.

RUTH  
(to Letty)  
Where's Mommy?

LETTY  
Do you have to call her Mommy?

RUTH  
Where's the old bag I sometimes call Mommy?

LETTY

She said she'd be here at 10.

Ruth pulls a dress from the rack and holds it up.

RUTH

What do you think of this one?

LETTY

I'd have to see it on.

Ruth looks closer at Letty.

RUTH

Have you been crying? Your eyes  
are all puffy.

Letty self-consciously touches her eyes.

LETTY

Things have been kind of stressful  
lately.

RUTH

But everything's OK?

Ruth is trying on a veil at this point.

LETTY

Yeah, everything's under control.

RUTH

What about the engagement party?

LETTY

Everything's ready for tomorrow  
night--except the artillery.

RUTH

Thanks so much for planning it,  
Letty. Jake's really looking  
forward to it.

Letty sighs, moves to the racks and pulls out a dress.

LETTY

You better start trying on before  
the vultures get all the good ones.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Ruth twirls around in a taffeta gown as Letty picks up  
discarded dresses from the floor and hangs them up.

RUTH  
What about this one?

LETTY  
(with sisterly pride)  
You look beautiful.

RUTH  
Really?

LETTY  
Truly.

Martha Mayer is led in by the clerk.

LETTY  
Hi, Mom.

RUTH  
Look, Mom, I think I've found the  
dress.

MRS. MAYER  
You look just wonderful, Ruthie.  
But I really think you should try  
on a few more, don't you?

Letty and Ruth shoot each other a look of doom.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - LATER

A bedraggled Letty and her mother fight the crowds to look at  
dresses. They are bumped and jostled from all sides.

MRS. MAYER  
Has Paul heard about his promotion?

LETTY  
No, not yet. But you know Paul.  
He's sure to get it.

Ruth comes out of the dressing room in another gown.

MRS. MAYER  
I don't like the bias cut on that  
one.

Mrs. Mayer holds up an ornate dress.

RUTH  
No more. I can't stand to try on  
one more dress.

MRS. MAYER  
 Letty, I think this would be  
 beautiful on you.

LETTY  
 Oh no.

MRS. MAYER  
 Paul could pop the question at any  
 time.

LETTY  
 Mom, please.

MRS. MAYER  
 Especially with a promotion in the  
 offing.

RUTH  
 Go on, Letty. I want to see it on  
 you.

LETTY  
 (to Ruth)  
 Do you think I should?

RUTH  
 Yes, yes. It'll be fun.

Letty takes the gown and disappears into the dressing room.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - LATER

Letty emerges from the dressing room.

LETTY  
 Mom? Mom? Ruth?

Letty peers around the corner, becoming a tad frantic. But  
 neither her mother nor Ruth is to be found. It's just Letty,  
 resplendent in ecru satin.

CLERK  
 I think they went over to the next  
 shop to take a peek at shoes.

Letty pushes back her veil, sits down on the floor and takes  
 a sip of her now-cold coffee.

INT. LETTY'S LIVING/DINING ROOM - EVENING

A "House and Garden" picture of elegance. Letty, Paul, Ruth and Jake stand at nervous attention, decked out in their Sunday best.

A KNOCK marks the first arrival. Letty opens the door to her mother, who does a quick reconnaissance of the room.

MRS. MAYER  
I gather he's late as usual.

LETTY  
(to her mother)  
Can I get you a glass of champagne?

The doorbell RINGS. Letty greets her father, a mid 50s business type, and his wife MONICA, a younger version of Letty's mother.

LETTY  
Hi, Dad, Monica. I'm so glad you could come.

Suddenly, the parents are face-to-face, Letty standing between them.

LETTY  
Mom, this is Monica. Monica, my mother, Martha.

The two Mrs. Mayers make appropriate MURMURS. Letty's parents stare each other down. Ruth shifts from foot to foot. Silence falls in the room with a thump.

LETTY  
Dad, Mother, you've met before, right?

Ruth takes a dramatic gulp of air. The evening hangs in the balance. Finally,

MR. MAYER  
How've you been, Martha?

INT. LIVING ROOM - LETTY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Mr. Mayer and Monica cozy up to each other on the love seat while Mrs. Mayer, Ruth and Paul sit on the opposite couch.

Letty passes hors d'oeuvres, and Jake doles out napkins.

LETTY  
It's mushroom-time, folks.

MR. MAYER  
(biting into one)  
I like the touch of cilantro. It is  
cilantro, isn't it?

LETTY  
You can always call it, Dad.

MONICA  
You must get your cooking skills  
from your father, Letty.

Uncomfortable silence falls on the party. Monica wipes the  
edge of Mr. Mayer's mouth with her napkin.

LETTY  
Ruth's narrowed the dress hunt down  
to two, Dad.

MR. MAYER  
Tell me about them.

RUTH  
One's a silk...

MRS. MAYER  
Not in front of Jake, Ruthie. It's  
bad luck.

Ruth looks at Letty nervously.

MONICA  
I remember how hard it was looking  
for my dress. I must have been to  
100 stores.

Mrs. Mayer clears her throat. More silence.

LETTY  
You know what I think we need?  
Martinis. How about martinis to  
celebrate?

PAUL  
Yes.

MRS. MAYER  
That might be nice.

MR. MAYER  
As long as you have...

LETTY  
Puglia olives. Would I forget?  
(beat)  
A round of martinis coming right  
up.

Letty leaves with Paul hot on her heels.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Letty shakes the martinis while Paul gets out the glasses.  
Ruth enters the kitchen and sidles up to Letty.

RUTH  
How can I help?

LETTY  
Paul, can you hand me the olives?  
Ruth, I need you to, what was it?

RUTH  
What about the souffle? Has that  
gone in?

LETTY  
Yeah, I just put it in. But the  
squab, I think that needs to be  
basted.

Paul hands Letty the olive bottle.

PAUL  
(to Ruth)  
Kind of icy in there.

RUTH  
(to Paul)  
Thank God we have alcohol.

Letty skewers olives and puts them in the martinis. Bits of  
fleck rise from the olives, then swim to the tops of the  
glasses.

LETTY  
Fuck me.

RUTH  
What's the matter?

Letty grabs the olive bottle.

PAUL

Letty?

Letty stands still, fixated on the olive bottle.

PAUL

Let?

LETTY

Olives Aux Herbes De Provence. I  
got the wrong kind of olives.

Ruth holds up a glass.

RUTH

What's all the dreck?

LETTY

Sage, rosemary...  
(in a sarcastic French  
accent)  
Les Herbes.

RUTH

It'll be fine.

LETTY

No, no. They've got to be Puglia  
olives, packed in a light brine  
with a flavor that doesn't  
overpower the palate.

Jake enters. The three turn on him.

LETTY/PAUL/RUTH

You can't leave them alone./Get  
back in there./Are you nuts?

Jake whirls around and exits.

Letty looks for olives, banging open the cupboards one after  
the other. Quicker and quicker. More and more frantic.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Jake, Mr. Mayer, Monica and Mrs. Mayer stare at each other,  
listening with alarm to the wild slamming of cupboards in the  
kitchen.

JAKE

What do you think of those Lakers?

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Letty paws through her purse.

PAUL  
What are you doing?

LETTY  
(wild-eyed)  
Can you loan me a 20?

PAUL  
Sure. Why?

LETTY  
I'm going to the store.

PAUL  
I think you're overreacting.

Letty turns her best school marm look on Paul. He hands over a crisp bill.

RUTH  
Letty, dinner's almost ready. The  
souffle...

LETTY  
I'll be back before you can say  
souffle.

Letty leaves from the kitchen's back door. Ruth heads to the living room. Paul leans wearily against the counter, savoring one of the herb-filled martinis.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Fluorescent lights beat down on Letty. She races through the aisles. She clutches her keys in one hand, a \$20 bill in the other. Letty careens around a corner. At the last second, she avoids smacking into another shopper. She stops.

LETTY'S POV:

Shelf after shelf of olives...black olives...all black.

BACK TO SCENE:

Letty darts up and down the aisle, searching, searching.  
Nothing.

Letty scurries to the front of the store. She taps a STORE CLERK on the shoulder. Six people waiting in line mutter, annoyed.

LETTY  
I can't find martini olives. All  
you have are black.

STORE CLERK  
(without looking up)  
Aisle 2A.

Letty whips down an aisle. She starts to sweat.

An OLD LADY blocks her path.

OLD LADY  
Excuse me, Miss. I can't reach the  
cat food.

Letty pauses. She reaches up and hands the woman a can of food.

OLD LADY  
And a turkey and giblets, too,  
please. She does like her turkey.

Letty grabs another can, throws it in the Old Lady's cart and darts away while the Old Lady continues to talk.

LETTY'S POV:

The sign for Aisle 2A. Olives. Lots of them. Green. All shapes. All sizes.

BACK TO SCENE:

Letty's shoulders relax. She scans the shelf.

LETTY'S POV:

Labels of olives: big, small, with pimentos, without. None from Puglia, Italy.

BACK TO SCENE:

Letty zooms back to the front of the store. To the clerk.

LETTY  
They're not there. I need the ones  
from Puglia.

She gets no response from the clerk, who counts change for a customer. Letty gestures wildly with her hands.

LETTY

They're the ones that are packed in brine, but they don't overpower the, you know, the palate.

STORE CLERK

(without looking up)  
Specialty foods. 7B.

Letty's off again. To the land of pink peppercorns, dehydrated mushrooms and Chinese 5-Spice. But no olives. Not a single bottle.

Letty paws through the shelves, knocking things over as she scours the aisle. She is oblivious to the mess that surrounds her.

An EMPLOYEE with a price checker walks half-way down the aisle. He spots Letty and rushes away.

LETTY

Where are they? Where are they?

More and more items crash to the ground. Letty is beyond frenzied.

EMPLOYEE (OS FILTERED)

Manager to 7B. Manager please.

LETTY

Where are they?

Letty pounds her fist against the shelf. More goods fall. Shoppers stare. The Manager rushes toward Letty.

MANAGER

What's wrong, Miss?

LETTY

Tell me where they are.

She gestures. She knocks over a bottle of fat-free Lingonberry preserves. It crashes to the floor, spewing jam.

MANAGER

I think you should go now.

LETTY

I need my olives.

MANAGER

It's time to leave.

The Manager places his hand on the small of Letty's back as if to guide her out of the store. Letty backs away. The manager grabs hold of her wrist.

Letty whacks him in the shoulder with her free hand. She pushes him away. Hard. He staggers against the opposite shelf.

Customers and employees gather at both ends of the aisle, riveted by the spectacle.

MANAGER

Call security. Where's security, please?

Letty takes her arm and slides a shelf-full of products onto the floor. They crash and break. She screams.

LETTY

Fucking olives. Fucking, fucking olives.

Two SECURITY GUARDS turn the corner. Letty spots them. One creeps closer.

LETTY

No, no, no. Go away.

Guard One continues to approach, cooing encouragingly. Letty throws a jar at him. It clips him in the head. He turns away, bleeding. Guard Two pulls out a billy club.

MANAGER

(yelling)

Call police. Now.

Letty stops. Dazed. She turns around. Guard Two walks toward her. His stance suggests he's stalking a wild animal.

Letty tries to brush off the jam that dribbles down her skirt. She looks to both ends of the aisle.

LETTY'S POV:

Faces, dozens and dozens of faces, stare down at her. People point. One boy LAUGHS.

BACK TO SCENE:

Letty backs against the shelf. She slides down it until she is sitting on the floor. She buries her head in her knees, sobbing.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

The room is furnished like a Hyatt Hotel minus anything you might use to kill yourself. Letty sleeps.

MICHAEL, mid 30's, in jeans and T-shirt, sits in a chair next to the bed. He looks intently at Letty, checks his watch and taps her on the shoulder. She stirs.

MICHAEL  
Miss Mayer? Miss Mayer?

LETTY'S POV:

Everything's a morning blur. Gradually, items come into focus -- the intercom for the nurse, the door with a window in it, the three tissue boxes on the bedside table. It's a hospital, all right. Letty's vision is filled suddenly by Michael's concerned face peering into hers.

BACK TO SCENE:

MICHAEL  
I know you've had a rough night,  
but I have a few questions for you,  
Miss Mayer, or Letitia.

Letty pulls herself up to a sitting position.

MICHAEL  
Do you mind if I call you Letitia?

LETTY  
Letty.

MICHAEL  
(consulting his notes)  
First off, Letty, can you tell me  
where you are?

LETTY  
I answered these questions last  
night.

MICHAEL

I know this can be a real drag, but the attending physician on day shift is required to do his own prelim exam when a patient is admitted during the night.

LETTY

Hillview Psychiatric Hospital.

MICHAEL

Great. Now, Letty, I'd like you to remember three items. I'm going to ask you to repeat them in just a few minutes. They are chair, cup and ball. Did you get that?

Letty nods.

MICHAEL

OK, let's subtract 6 from a succession of numbers starting with 91.

LETTY

85.

MICHAEL

And 85 minus 6?

LETTY

59.

Michael waits.

LETTY

No, 79. Sorry, this makes me nervous.

MICHAEL

It's OK. It's not a pass-fail kind of thing.

Letty smiles uncomfortably.

MICHAEL

Now the three things I asked you to remember.

LETTY

Chair, cup and ball.

MICHAEL  
Terrific.

Letty smiles, a real smile this time.

MICHAEL  
Let me shift gears here a minute...  
(beat)  
Do you ever hear voices that other  
people don't hear or see things  
they don't?

LETTY  
No.

MICHAEL  
What about patterns? Do you find  
yourself checking and re-checking  
locks? Or washing your hands over  
and over again?

Letty shakes her head "no."

MICHAEL  
How about arranging your  
possessions in a certain way?

Letty pauses.

MICHAEL  
Yes? Go right ahead.

LETTY  
Sometimes my food, and my clothes,  
and my underwear.

Michael leans closer.

MICHAEL  
How do you sort it--by lace and  
cotton?

LETTY  
By color.

MICHAEL  
What if it's got a pattern?

LETTY  
Is this really important? Because  
I don't think it's a problem.

MICHAEL

I see.

(looking at his notes)  
How long has it been since you've  
done something you've enjoyed,  
Letty?

LETTY

(beat)  
A while, I guess.

MICHAEL

That must be really difficult.

Letty tears up. Michael puts his hand lightly on her arm.

MICHAEL

Hey, it'll be OK. We'll make sure  
of that.

Letty gives him an appreciative look.

MICHAEL

For now, why don't you just take it  
easy while I confer with my  
colleagues. A nurse should be in  
shortly.

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - LATER

Letty, dressed and made up, sits rigidly on the bed. She  
writes in her organizer. DR. ROBERT EMLEE, early 40s and in  
jeans, enters with his own organizer.

DR. EMLEE

Hello, Letitia. I'm Dr. Emlee, and  
I have some questions to ask you...

LETTY

I did this already.

DR. EMLEE

It's hospital policy...

LETTY

To be interviewed every hour?

DR. EMLEE

I'm the only doctor making rounds  
this morning.

LETTY

Well, I don't have hallucinations.  
Honest.

DR. EMLEE

This doctor, was he tall, with dark  
hair?

LETTY

Yeah, and a dimple.

Dr. Emlee shifts uncomfortably.

DR. EMLEE

I'm afraid he's not a doctor.

LETTY

Psychologist, therapist, whatever.

DR. EMLEE

Patient.

LETTY

What?

DR. EMLEE

Michael, the man who came to see  
you, is a patient.

LETTY

What kind of place is this?

DR. EMLEE

I apologize for the inconvenience,  
but I must ask you some...

LETTY

I want to see my mother  
immediately.

DR. EMLEE

We discourage family visits for the  
first 48 hours after an emotional  
trauma like the kind you've  
experienced.

LETTY

I don't think you understand. I  
won't wait.

DR. EMLEE

You'll have to. Your family agreed to the conditions not to see you when they admitted you to Hillview, Letitia.

(beat)

We can talk about how that makes you feel, but we can't change the rules.

Letty sinks back on her pillows, the wind knocked out of her.

DR. EMLEE

Dr. Stone's evaluation from last night indicates you're experiencing a great deal of anxiety, probably related to depression...

LETTY'S POV:

Dr. Emlee continues to talk. His words become more and more distant as the RINGING in Letty's head grows louder.

DR. EMLEE

We need to talk about starting you on drug therapy. Most depressive personalities benefit from a drug like Prozac or maybe Zoloft...

CUT TO:

INT. REC ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - SAME

It's a bigger version of a waiting room you'd find in a doctor's office. And it has more games.

Some patients watch television. Others play pool. Several form a group around Michael, who holds the same notebook he used in his session with Letty. JOHN, unkempt in a bathrobe, hands him a few ratty dollar bills.

JOHN

I'm in for 5 for manic depressive.

THOMAS, late 40s and in a suit, waves a \$5 bill at Michael.

THOMAS

I'll go with that as well.

Michael takes the money, and turns to MARIE, late 30s.

MARIE

(to John and Thomas)  
You two always bet manic  
depressive.

(to Michael)  
Tell me more about the guard she  
strangled.

MICHAEL

No, just hit in the head.

JOHN

What about voices? Does she hear  
voices?

MICHAEL

Not that she admits to.

MARIE

Is she a washer?

MICHAEL

No, but she is exceptionally  
organized.

THOMAS

How organized?

MICHAEL

She arranges her underwear by  
color.

Michael motions to MRS. HALLSTROM, mid 50s, who shuffles by.

MICHAEL

Mrs. Hallstrom, you want in?

MRS. HALLSTROM

All tapped out.

MICHAEL

I'll float you.

Mrs. Hallstrom keeps walking.

MARIE

(to Michael)  
It's been weeks since she played.

MICHAEL

What about you, Marie?

MARIE

(handing Michael a \$20  
bill)

I'll say major depression  
complicated by obsessive compulsive  
disorder.

(beat)

And could I get my change in ones?

INT. HALLWAY - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Letty lags behind NURSE GATES, early 30s and in civilian  
clothes, as they walk down the hall.

NURSE GATES

Treatment schedules are posted on  
the bulletin board. Dinner at 6,  
lights out at 10 and no  
fraternizing between patients.

Letty nods.

NURSE GATES

(pointing as she goes)

That's the rec room. We show  
movies there on Wednesdays and  
Fridays...And this is the dining  
hall.

Letty stops in her tracks at the sight of the room, an  
upscale version of a college cafeteria. Groups of people eat  
and talk. A paper airplane sails from one table to another.

LETTY

I'm really not that hungry.

NURSE GATES

Just eat whatever you want. This  
will give you a chance to meet some  
people.

LETTY

You know, my mom's coming to get me  
tomorrow. I'll be leaving.

NURSE GATES

It's OK, Letty. I'll be right here  
with you.

INT. DINING HALL - SAME

Nurse Gates guides Letty to a table where John, Mrs.  
Hallstrom, Marie and Thomas sit.

THOMAS

So I said to my publisher this afternoon, I said, don't you even--

NURSE GATES

(interrupts)

Hi, gang. I want to introduce you to Letty.

(to Letty)

Letty, this is Mrs. Hallstrom and Marie, and John and Thomas.

THOMAS

(to Letty)

Just discussing my pesky publisher. May I ask what you do when you're not vacationing?

MARIE

(to Thomas)

Let the poor girl get some food, for Heaven's sake.

LETTY

I'm a teacher.

THOMAS

As you may have gathered, I'm a writer.

John snorts. Thomas ignores him. Mrs. Hallstrom stares down at her plate.

THOMAS

I don't like to say novelist. That sounds a little grandiose, but I am on my third novel and...

NURSE GATES

Excuse me for interrupting, Thomas, but we really should get some food...

Nurse Gates leads Letty to a table, and hands her a plate. Letty looks up to see Michael at the other end of the table, doing a card trick for two OTHER PATIENTS.

MICHAEL

(to patients)

Now I'm going to say that the card you picked was the Ace of Spades.

He flips the top card up and it's the Ace of Spades. The patients chortle.

NURSE GATES  
Michael.

Michael turns toward the nurse.

NURSE GATES  
Michael, this is Letty. She just arrived yesterday.

Letty stares at Michael coldly.

LETTY  
We've met.  
(to Michael)  
I missed you during rounds this morning.

Letty turns and leaves, carrying her empty plate with her.

NURSE GATES  
(to Michael)  
This doctor thing has got to stop.

Nurses Gates hurries after Letty.

EXT. HALLWAY - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty stands outside the waiting room door. She tucks her blouse into her jeans and enters.

INT. WAITING ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty's mother sits on the edge of a couch in a room that looks much like the library of an English country manor. She springs up as soon as she spots Letty. They rush to each other. Letty's mother strokes her hair.

MRS. MAYER  
I'm here, Sweetheart. I'm here.  
It's going to be OK.

LETTY  
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

MRS. MAYER  
Oh, Letty, what happened?

LETTY  
Mom, I was there, and I just, I was so...

(MORE)

LETTY(cont'd)

They didn't have the olives, and I, I got so upset. I don't know how it happened.

MRS. MAYER

I've talked to Doctor Emlee, and he says...

LETTY

I'm so glad to see you. You can't believe the people in here. They've got patients posing as doctors...

MRS. MAYER

Everyone says it's the best facility in the area for this sort of thing.

LETTY

I just want to go home. Can we go home now?

MRS. MAYER

I think the best thing for you right now is to stay here and get well.

LETTY

Maybe I should talk about this with Ruth, or Paul.

MRS. MAYER

We all agree with the doctor, Dear. He thinks it's safer for you to stay here for a while.

Letty listens, waits, can't absorb it.

LETTY

You all really think I need to be here?

MRS. MAYER

Yes.

LETTY

But what about Beast? Who'll...?

MRS. MAYER

Ruth's already taken him home.

LETTY

And my class. It'll be hard to find a good substitute. And what about my math program?

MRS. MAYER

Paul said he'd call the school.  
(beat)

And your father thinks he's convinced the guard not to press charges as long as you get help.

LETTY

Charges?

MRS. MAYER

For his injuries. I guess you...I guess he got hit in the head.

Mrs. Mayer holds out a duffel bag to Letty.

MRS. MAYER

I packed up some of your clothes, and I can bring whatever else you need.

Letty refuses to accept the duffel bag. Her mother sets it on the floor and stands. Letty is five again.

LETTY

Mom, no, please don't go. Please.

Letty's mother holds her. Mrs. Mayer, crying, pulls away from Letty. She kisses her daughter on the cheek.

MRS. MAYER

I'll see you soon.

LETTY

Tomorrow?

MRS. MAYER

As soon as Dr. Emlee says.

Letty's mother walks out the door. Letty stares after her.

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Letty, crying, unpacks her duffel bag, laboriously smoothing and refolding every item she puts in the drawer.

Finishing her task, Letty goes to the mirror and stares at her reflection. Finally, she fixes her makeup.

Letty leaves her room. We follow her FOOTSTEPS down the hallway. In the distance, Letty sees the Rec Room. She hears the CLAMOR of voices. Every step is agony.

Letty stops herself just before entering, trying to collect herself.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Four people bet OCD and clinical depression so I split the pool.

JOHN (O.S.)

Yeah, her diagnosis was no mystery.

MARIE

Especially the OCD.

Sick realization spreads over Letty's face.

JOHN (O.S.)

Fuck, I mean, anyone who color-codes her panties has big problems.

Letty freezes. Michael rounds the corner. He stops when he sees her, falters, recovers his composure.

MICHAEL

Hey there. They're showing "Groundhog Day" if you...

LETTY

You took bets on my diagnosis?

MICHAEL

It's no big deal. We all compare.

LETTY

(voice rising)

Who do you think you are?

INT. REC ROOM - SAME

Patients are grouped in front of the TV, watching Bill Murray. Heads turn as they hear shouting in the hallway. Not even a moment's hesitation before, one by one, they get up and hurry to the hall. Only Mrs. Hallstrom remains.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

John, Marie and others gather around the fighters.

MICHAEL

Don't take it personally.

LETTY

You have no right, no right to take  
the worst thing that's ever  
happened to me and make it into  
some kind of game.

MICHAEL

Stop acting like you're someone  
special. You're just like the rest  
of us.

LETTY

I'm not the one who's masquerading  
as a doctor. I'm not the one  
who's, who's...

JOHN

(to Letty)

He's schizophrenic.

LETTY

I'm not the one who's  
schizophrenic. I don't see people  
who aren't there or run around  
acting crazy.

Letty pounds her fist against the wall.

PATIENTS

Go, Girl!/ Come on, Michael.

MICHAEL

Oh, no, you're perfectly sane.  
That's why you're here.

Letty looks like she's been slapped. She thinks for a  
moment. The patients wait, breathless, for her retort.

LETTY

Go fuck yourself.

Michael grins at Letty. She turns, and strides down the  
hall. There's a smattering of applause. It grows stronger.

We see Letty's eyes fill with tears as, behind her, the  
patients yell.

PATIENTS

Bravo./Encore./Re-match.

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Letty, unable to sleep, tosses and turns. She gets out of bed and paces the room nervously, trying to hold herself together. She slumps to the floor and starts to cry.

INT. GROUP THERAPY ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Dr. Emlee and seven patients sit in a circle of metal folding chairs. Michael, who sits next to Emlee, practices rolling a quarter back and forth across his fingers.

Letty sits across from Michael and Emlee, her legs and arms crossed tightly. The group concentrates on Mrs. Hallstrom.

MRS. HALLSTROM

I can't stop thinking about the things I did wrong when my daughter was little.

DR. EMLEE

And how's that make you feel?

MRS. HALLSTROM

I just feel like sleeping. All the time.

THOMAS

Hell's bells, you can count me in on that. I haven't had enough Z's since I ran those sleep disorder experiments at Stanford back in the 70s.

MARIE

We really miss doing things with you, Mrs. Hallstrom.

Michael, sitting next to Mrs. Hallstrom, squeezes her arm.

MRS. HALLSTROM

Maybe when I hit my manic phase again.

Group members smile.

JOHN

I've noticed Letty doesn't much like to do things with us.

The group looks expectantly at Letty.

LETTY  
Oh, no. Of course I do.

JOHN  
Then why are you so defensive?

MICHAEL  
(to John)  
I don't think we need to sacrifice  
Letty to pep up a slow session.

JOHN  
(to Michael)  
You're the one who told everyone  
about her panties.

Michael grimaces at John. Letty's head is bent down.

DR. EMLEE  
Maybe you'd like to share some of  
your feelings about OCD or  
depression with us, Letty.

Letty eyes the doctor. She's dangerously close to tears.

LETTY  
Do we have to talk about this?

DR. EMLEE  
I think in the spirit of group  
therapy, it's beneficial for each  
of us to open ourselves up to the  
others.

Michael reaches his hand behind Dr. Emlee's head, catching Letty's eye in the process. Michael pulls a silver dollar out of Emlee's ear.

Letty looks but doesn't respond. The other patients ignore Michael. Emlee is oblivious.

DR. EMLEE  
You never know, Letty, how the  
person sitting next to you may be  
able to shed light on one of your  
problems...

Michael goes for a bigger trick. Reaching again behind the doctor's head, he produces a small bouquet of paper flowers. Letty, almost against her will, smiles.

DR. EMLLEE  
 ...by revealing something that's  
 going on in his or her own life.

Michael waves the flowers back and forth behind the doctor's head. Letty's smile broadens.

DR. EMLLEE  
 (responding to her smile)  
 There, now, I knew you'd feel  
 better once we discussed group  
 process. Let's talk a little about  
 your OCD.

INT. LIBRARY - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty ponders a shelf of ratty paperbacks. Michael turns the corner, thumbing through a dog-eared book. Letty spots him and moves away. Michael sidles up next to her.

MICHAEL  
 Looking for a romance?

LETTY  
 Excuse me?

MICHAEL  
 What are you looking to read?

LETTY  
 Anything interesting.

Michael holds out his book to her.

MICHAEL  
 This is good.

Letty glances at the title, "101 MAGIC TRICKS."

LETTY  
 But you're checking it out.

MICHAEL  
 I've already checked it out 17  
 times.

Michael reaches behind Letty. She pulls away. He produces a scarf from behind her back, and presents it to her. She doesn't take it.

LETTY  
 You keep the book. I'm looking for  
 Emily Dickinson.

Letty walks away. Michael follows.

MICHAEL

Hey, if you take the magic book,  
I'll feel like maybe you accept my  
apology and don't hate me anymore.

Letty hesitates.

LETTY

I haven't heard an apology.

Michael drops to one knee.

MICHAEL

I'm really sorry I hurt your  
feelings. I got a little carried  
away. Can you ever forgive me?

Letty takes the book from him and walks away.

INT. REC ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty sits in an arm chair staring out at the garden. Her attention is drawn to a nearby couch where Michael sits opposite Mrs. Hallstrom, apparently playing cards.

Michael lays a card down.

MICHAEL

Mrs. Hallstrom, I'm pretty sure you  
could use that.

She shakes her head slowly back and forth. Michael places it in her hand of cards.

MICHAEL

Now, don't you have a gin rummy,  
Mrs. Hallstrom?  
(beat)  
Go ahead, now, just lay those cards  
down.

Mrs. Hallstrom slowly spreads her hand of cards on the couch.

MICHAEL

Hot damn. Gin rummy. I told you  
so. You're three games up on me.

Mrs. Hallstrom smiles. Michael catches Letty watching them, and Letty quickly looks away.

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Letty opens her drawer to pull out a T-shirt. Several are rumpled. She starts refolding them when she spots it.

There, nestled among her clothes, is a book of Emily Dickinson's poetry. Letty picks it up, runs her hand over the cover and starts reading.

EXT. COURTYARD - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Paul and Letty walk onto a postcard-perfect stone terrace overlooking the garden. Paul pulls up a chair for Letty and stares out at the scenery.

PAUL

It's prettier here than I thought it would be.

LETTY

Yeah, I guess it's all right.

PAUL

Are you all right?

LETTY

That's a big question.

PAUL

I hope it wasn't something I did.

LETTY

Something you did?

PAUL

That put you in here.

LETTY

Of course not, no.

(beat)

Is that why you're here?

PAUL

I think we need to talk about some things.

LETTY

Yes, I suppose so.

PAUL

This has been really difficult, this whole thing.

(MORE)

PAUL(cont'd)

These past few weeks, it's made me really go back and examine our whole relationship.

(beat)

I mean, we've been going out for four years, and it hasn't always been so easy.

LETTY

No.

PAUL

Especially this last year.

LETTY

(softly)

Especially now.

PAUL

So, I've been thinking a lot...

LETTY

I have too, Paul.

PAUL

I talked to Ruth a little bit, and I think it's about time...

LETTY

I know. We can't just keep going through the motions.

PAUL

Exactly. It's time to make decisions.

LETTY

You don't have to say anything else. I've known for a while that this was coming.

PAUL

I just wish we'd done it sooner.

Paul takes Letty's hand in his.

PAUL

Will you marry me?

Paul pulls a diamond ring from his pocket and puts it on Letty's finger. She stares at it, mesmerized.

PAUL  
I had to smuggle it in here. I guess you're not really supposed to have jewelry.

LETTY  
(by rote)  
Or be up past ten or fraternize with other patients.

PAUL  
I hope you like it. It's a Marquis cut, 1.5 carats. They had one with emeralds around it, but this was simpler, more classic in its lines.  
(beat)  
Letty?

LETTY  
It's, it's really nice, Paul.

PAUL  
You can take it back and we can have one custom made if you want.

LETTY  
No, you've done a perfect job.

PAUL  
So, what do you say, Let?

Letty looks him in the eyes for the first time.

LETTY  
Do you think, really, that it's OK to get engaged when I'm in here?

PAUL  
Sure. We'll save the formal announcement for when you're out. I already told your mother. I hope you don't mind.

LETTY  
No, no.

PAUL  
So will you?

LETTY  
(working up a smile)  
Of course. Yes. I will. I do.

Paul and Letty kiss, then hug.

EXT. COURTYARD - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - LATER

It's completely dark. Letty sits in the same position we saw her in hours ago. Michael walks up to her.

MICHAEL

You missed out on some great  
broccoli florets at dinner.

LETTY

I wasn't hungry.

MICHAEL

John even managed to lob a load of  
mashed potatoes into Mrs.  
Hallstrom's milk.

LETTY

(smiling)

Finally. I was getting tired of  
watching him try every night.

MICHAEL

Was it bad news--the visit from  
Peter?

LETTY

Paul.

MICHAEL

He looked pretty serious.

LETTY

He asked me to marry him.

MICHAEL

Very romantic setting.

LETTY

It was romantic. He's very  
romantic.

MICHAEL

So are you engaged, or what?

Letty holds out her hand, where the diamond glistens. Michael bends forward to look at the ring, caressing her hand as he does so.

Letty pulls away. The ring is gone.

LETTY  
What have you done with the ring?

MICHAEL  
It's magic.

Letty stands up.

LETTY  
This isn't funny. Paul would kill me.

Michael holds his hands in fists toward Letty.

MICHAEL  
Guess which hand.

LETTY  
Enough with the abracadabra.

MICHAEL  
Guess.

LETTY  
The left one.

Michael opens his hand. It's empty. Michael addresses an imaginary audience.

MICHAEL  
(to audience)  
The fair maiden guesses  
incorrectly. Should we give her  
one more try?  
(to Letty)  
The audience says one more try.  
What guess you now?

LETTY  
The right one.

Michael opens his right hand. A plastic, Cracker-jack ring rests in it.

LETTY  
Come on, Michael.

Michael grabs Letty's hand and slides the ring onto her finger.

MICHAEL  
With this ring, I thee...

Letty pulls her hand away.

LETTY  
Really, this isn't funny.

MICHAEL  
OK, OK, I'll give it back.

Letty holds out her hand.

MICHAEL  
For a price.

LETTY  
Good God.

MICHAEL  
A small price.

LETTY  
I won't do your portion of kitchen  
cleanup.

MICHAEL  
No.

LETTY  
And I'm not covering for you when  
you sneak out to call Dominos.

MICHAEL  
I want a kiss.

Letty stares at him. She laughs.

LETTY  
Get serious.

Michael moves close to her.

MICHAEL  
I'm serious.

Letty looks into his eyes.

LETTY  
(softly)  
Everything's a joke with you.

Michael and Letty kiss, long and deep. Letty pulls back.  
She gazes at Michael. She steps closer to him.

They kiss again, longer and deeper.

They separate. Letty looks ready for another kiss. Michael caresses her cheek.

He walks back toward the hospital door. He stops, comes back to Letty. He hands her the diamond ring.

MICHAEL

Here.

He walks inside. Letty watches him go.

INT. DR. EMLEE'S OFFICE - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Dr. Emlee and Letty sit across from each other.

LETTY

The medicine's still bothering me.  
It feels like I have cotton wrapped  
around my brain.

DR. EMLEE

We'll see about adjusting the  
dosage if that doesn't clear in the  
next week.

(beat)

How are other things going?

LETTY

I think I've told you all the news.  
Let's see--the engagement. Oh, and  
my sister's coming to visit me, and  
they say my cat misses me.

DR. EMLEE

The question, Letty, is how are you  
feeling?

LETTY

I miss Beast a lot, too.

INT. MICHAEL'S ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Darkness. Michael sleeps. A Christmas Carol BLASTS through  
the intercom system.

INTERCOM

Hark the Herald Angels sing...

Michael bolts awake. He stumbles out of bed, in wildly  
striped boxers, and races toward the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - SAME

Doors open like kernels of popcorn exploding. Michael, Marie, Thomas, John, then Letty.

The music BLARES on. Nurse Gates runs down the hall and shouts to Michael.

NURSE GATES  
What are you doing?

MICHAEL  
(yelling)  
Not me.

The music lowers. Mrs. Hallstrom, in a Santa cap, appears. She distributes erasers as she threads through the patients.

MRS. HALLSTROM  
Sorry, sorry. Candy canes are out  
of season.

NURSE GATES  
Mrs. Hallstrom?

Mrs. Hallstrom gives an eraser to the nurse.

NURSE GATES  
Come on. Come with me, Mrs.  
Hallstrom.

Nurse Gates leads Mrs. Hallstrom away as the older woman continues tossing erasers down the hall.

Marie stares at Michael's shorts.

MARIE  
Hot boxers.

Michael smiles awkwardly at Letty. She returns to her room.

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - SAME

Letty climbs into bed. She opens the bedside drawer, and pulls out a Tiffany's ring box. There, cradled in the satin lining, is the diamond from Paul. Right beside it is Michael's Cracker Jack special.

Letty puts on Paul's ring. She studies her hand. With an air of secrecy, she slips on Michael's ring. She quickly takes it off. Wearing Paul's ring, she turns off the light and snuggles into bed.

EXT. GARDEN, HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Afternoon light casts long shadows in the garden of pruned hedges and tea roses. Letty and Ruth power-walk down a cobblestone path, heading away from the English Tudor hospital that looms large in the background.

Letty wears a sweatshirt emblazoned with the logo for the University of South Carolina Cocks.

LETTY

I can't believe you finally gave me the shirt.

RUTH

Loaned you. And it's only 'til you get out of here.

LETTY

That settles it. I'm never leaving.

RUTH

I can hardly wait 'til you're free. Planning the wedding without you has been a disaster.

LETTY

You're slowing.

RUTH

(picking up the pace)  
Mom and I fought for 20 minutes over whether we should go with ecru invitations or brilliant white.

Letty checks her stop watch.

RUTH

What do you think?

LETTY

Ecru.

RUTH

And then the gold scroll or the black Romanesque print?

Letty completely stops and faces Ruth.

LETTY

Do we have to talk wedding details?

RUTH  
Oh, no, of course not.

LETTY  
I mean, you can always send me fabric samples to look at or pictures of dresses. But, it's been so long since we've seen each other.

RUTH  
Of course. You're right. Besides, we should be talking about your engagement.

They start walking again.

LETTY  
Tell me more about Beast beating up that other cat.

RUTH  
Bloody furry mess, like I said.  
(beat)  
Aren't you so excited about Paul?  
(beat)  
Letty?

Ruth stops this time.

RUTH  
What's going on with you, Letty?

LETTY  
Ruthie, do you ever wonder if you'll meet someone else...someone besides Jake?

Power walking's forgotten. Ruth and Letty start to amble.

RUTH  
What's his name, Letty?

LETTY  
I didn't say...

RUTH  
Don't even try. What's his name?

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Nurse Gates passes by the open door, and pokes her head in.

## NURSE GATES

Lights out, Letty.

Letty closes the door. She pulls a nightshirt from a drawer, disrupting a perfectly-folded T-shirt. Letty bends down to straighten it, but changes her mind. She shuts the drawer.

Letty puts on the nightshirt, crawls into bed and snaps off the light. She fluffs her pillow, and turns over. She rolls back.

Letty turns on the light. She goes to the drawer, opens it, pulls out the T-shirt and refolds it. She shuts the drawer. Letty yanks open the drawer again and looks at her handiwork.

It's a fight with the drawer. Opened and closed. Until Letty takes a deep breath, pulls it open a final time, hesitantly ruffles the T-shirt and slams the drawer shut.

She runs to bed and hops in, turning off the light and burying her head under the pillow.

A few moments pass.

A KNOCK on the door. Letty opens it to find Michael.

LETTY

We're supposed to be asleep.

MICHAEL

Exactly.

Michael takes Letty's hand and pulls her toward the door.

LETTY

We'll get caught.

MICHAEL

No rounds for another three hours.

Michael checks the hallway and pulls Letty into it.

MICHAEL

Nervous? Scared? Worried you're not fit for a caper of epic proportions?

LETTY

Don't be ridiculous.

MICHAEL

Rendezvous at the closet in 30.

Letty forges ahead to the nurses' station, while Michael turns a corner in the hall, peeking out so he can watch Letty approach Nurse Gates.

NURSES' STATION - SAME

NURSE GATES  
Letty, you should be in bed.

LETTY  
There's a spider in my room.

NURSE GATES  
Yeah?

LETTY  
It's got a green dot on its back.  
I can't go to sleep with it  
watching me.

NURSE GATES  
Sounds awful. I guess we better  
check it out.

Letty and Nurse Gates walk down the hall to Letty's room, passing the alcove where Michael lurks in the shadows. He sneaks into the main hall and pads up to the nurses' station.

NURSES' STATION - SAME

Michael wanders around the desk, crouches on the floor so he can't be seen from the hallway and pulls the phone down to his level. He dials.

MICHAEL  
Extra large pepperoni and  
mushrooms.  
(beat)  
And two cokes.  
(beat)  
Hillview Psychiatric Hospital on  
Glenfield. Off the Fourth Street  
exit.

Michael reaches up to a hook and grabs a white lab coat. He puts on the coat, which identifies him as "Val Williams."

CUT TO:

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - SAME

Letty and Nurse Gates, sprawled on their stomachs, peer under the bed.

LETTY  
It had this red spot on its back.

NURSE GATES  
Green spot.

LETTY  
Mottled really. Green and red.

Nurse Gates looks Letty squarely in the eye.

NURSE GATES  
I don't know why you feel you have  
to lie, Letty.

LETTY  
Lie?

NURSE GATES  
If you feel lonely, or need to  
talk, all you have to do is say so.

LETTY  
To talk?  
(beat)  
Well, OK, that might be good.

NURSE GATES  
I understand you just got engaged.  
Maybe that's where we should start.

Off Letty's look of dismay, we

CUT TO:

EXT. GUARD STATION - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - SAME

Michael pays the DOMINO'S PIZZA MAN and tries to walk past  
the guard, JIM, who blocks his path.

JIM  
I'm afraid I can't let you take  
that in without the proper invoice.

MICHAEL  
It's a pizza.

JIM  
All the same, rules are rules.

MICHAEL

You don't understand. This is a very important, very special, morale-boosting pizza.

JIM

What I understand is how low morale gets when you're posted at a guard station all night, Val.

Reluctantly, Michael opens the pizza box, and Jim helps himself to two slices. Michael starts to shut the box. Jim reaches in for a third slice.

CUT TO:

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - SAME

Letty and Nurse Gates sit cross-legged on the bed, facing each other. Letty's face is puffy from crying.

LETTY

I don't mean to go on and on like this.

NURSE GATES

It's OK. It's good to let it out.

Michael passes the open door with the pizza box and points down the hall. Letty stares right through him.

NURSE GATES

Did you ever tell Paul how you felt?

LETTY

He was graduating from law school, and he just assumed I was OK with dropping out.

(beat)

We never really talked about it. But I know he was disappointed in me.

CUT TO:

INT. LINEN CLOSET - LATER

The roomy closet houses an inconceivable number of white sheets and towels, arranged on wide, tall shelves.

The pizza, cokes and a candle sit in the middle of the floor, which Michael has draped with a sheet. Michael stares at the dwindling candle.

CUT TO:

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - SAME

LETTY

I mean I'm just not sure I want the same things now that I did even a month ago.

Nurse Gates nods sympathetically.

LETTY

Is that so wrong?

Michael passes the open door again, waving his hands wildly to attract Letty's attention. She doesn't notice him.

NURSE GATES

You can only do what feels best to you now.

LETTY

I guess so. I think that's right.

CUT TO:

INT. LINEN CLOSET - SAME

Michael blows out the candle.

CUT TO:

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - SAME

Letty blows her nose as she walks Nurse Gates to the door.

LETTY

You've been so great. I just feel a lot clearer about things.

NURSE GATES

I'm glad.

LETTY

And if I need to talk again...

NURSE GATES

Yes, of course. Whenever you want.

Letty gives Nurse Gates a hug.

INT. LINEN CLOSET - SAME

TAPS on the door. Michael looks up. He jumps to his feet and lets Letty in, gesturing for her to sit. They lean against a stack of pillows.

LETTY  
Sorry I'm late...

Michael puts his finger to Letty's lips.

MICHAEL  
Shhh.

A SERIES OF SHOTS THAT FADE INTO EACH OTHER:

A.) The two munch on pizza. Michael picks off black olives and hands them to Letty, who plops them on top of her pizza.

B.) Michael hands Letty a cigarette. She gestures no. He lights one for himself and begins blowing smoke rings.

C.) Michael offers Letty pizza. She clutches her stomach to show that she's full.

D.) Letty indicates she wants a cigarette. Michael demonstrates how to smoke, affecting the style of a 1930s movie star. Letty follows suit.

E.) Letty grabs a pillow and hits Michael over the head. He pulls the pillow away from her. Letty stands up, grabs another pillow and hits Michael again. He whacks her in the back of the knees and she falls on top of him.

Enough of the fighting. They kiss. Michael strokes the back of Letty's neck.

FOOTSTEPS approach the door and stop. Michael and Letty stop kissing and look at the door. The FOOTSTEPS continue on.

Michael pulls Letty's shirt up. She starts to pull it over her head, but can't get it all the way off in the cramped space. Michael kisses Letty's mouth through the shirt. She GIGGLES. Michael helps Letty off with the shirt.

He kisses her chest. Letty bites him lightly on the shoulder.

Michael pulls away in surprise, grinning. Letty reaches up and bites him again. Michael bites her back.

Letty reaches her hands behind her head, searching for something to hold onto. She grabs a stack of sheets, which topple onto Michael.

Michael sits up, trying to clear the sheets off himself and Letty. Letty pushes him down and crawls on top of him.

CLOSE ON her hands as they unbutton Michael's Levis, and we

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. REC. ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Mrs. Hallstrom sits close to the television, watching Joan Rivers hawk jewelry on the Home Shopping Network. Michael drapes the room with streamers, and surveys his work.

MICHAEL

How's it look?

MRS. HALLSTROM

Shhh. They're coming to the cubic zirconium.

MICHAEL

I like those sapphire earrings myself.

MRS. HALLSTROM

Simulated sapphires. I bet my daughter would love those, too.

Michael sees Letty pass by the room as she heads down the hall. He follows her.

INT. WOMEN'S ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Marie enters with her toothbrush and toothpaste. She moves towards the sink but stops as...

GIGGLES come from the stall. She looks closer, sees two pairs of feet and one familiar pair of boxers.

MARIE

Jesus...just get a room.

Marie walks out.

INT. STALL - WOMEN'S ROOM - SAME

Letty and Michael, partially disrobed and hugging each other tight, burst into GUFFAWS.

INT. EMLEE'S OFFICE - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty sits on the couch. Emlee leans forward in his chair.

DR. EMLEE

I think it's a problem that you never told me about Michael. I had to hear it from another patient.

LETTY

I couldn't really say anything because of that fraternizing rule.

DR. EMLEE

Well, Letty, this does present a liability issue for the hospital.

LETTY

I'm a grown woman, Dr. Emlee. I can take care of myself.

DR. EMLEE

What about Michael? Do you know the extent of his...

LETTY

I know Michael's a schizophrenic, and Mrs. Hallstrom's manic-depressive, and John Lockyer has episodes of psychosis, and I heard a rumor that you suffer from delusions of grandeur.

DR. EMLEE

Go ahead and put the guard back up, Letty. But you need to know what you're dealing with.

LETTY

I don't need a lecture. I care about Michael.

DR. EMLEE

Then that's even more reason to listen. Look, schizophrenics tend to withdraw from reality. They experience emotional disturbances that result in personality changes.

(MORE)

DR. EMLEE(cont'd)

(beat)

You could be lying next to Michael in bed one night, and he could have a hallucination, or a delusion. It might happen when you're driving or...

LETTY

Look, I know he's almost through with treatment here. And, he's on medication.

DR. EMLEE

Drugs can help suppress symptoms. But lots of patients stop taking them when they're on their own because the side effects are so harsh.

(beat)

And, Michael's condition is often worsened by periods of stress. He's been in and out of...

LETTY

I don't want to hear anymore.

DR. EMLEE

I'd like you to promise you won't carry on a relationship with Michael. Otherwise, I'll consider moving one of you to another ward.

LETTY

First you tell me to do what I want to, then you tell me to stop.

DR. EMLEE

All I want you to do is think about what's best for you. Really think about it.

EXT. GROUNDS - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty lies in the middle of a copse of trees, reading Emily Dickinson. Michael walks up and hands her a dandelion.

MICHAEL

A daisy for the lady.

LETTY

The lady knows this is a dandelion.

MICHAEL

A rose is a rose.

Letty kisses him on the cheek.

LETTY  
Thanks. Where've you been all day?

MICHAEL  
Back-to-back sessions with the  
shrink.

LETTY  
Sounds important.

MICHAEL  
I'm not allowed to see you anymore.

LETTY  
Really? Me too.

MICHAEL  
I had to sneak by the guards to get  
here. They say you're highly  
unstable, have a depressive  
personality, and may hold back my  
own recovery.

LETTY  
Wow. I'm bad news.

MICHAEL  
What's my rap?

LETTY  
Schizophrenic recidivism marked by  
hallucinations and paranoid  
delusions.

MICHAEL  
Fuck. That's all true.

Letty laughs.

MICHAEL  
Really, though. My thoughts go  
haywire sometimes.

LETTY  
What are the delusions like?

MICHAEL  
I think people are after me, crap  
like that.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

MICHAEL(cont'd)

When I was 18, my mom came home and found me sitting naked on the kitchen table. I thought I was God.

He waits for Letty to register the information.

MICHAEL

Shocking, huh?

LETTY

Sure. But I took out a whole grocery store.

MICHAEL

I wish I could have seen that.

LETTY

I'm starting to think that everyone's crazy to some extent.

MICHAEL

My Grandma Rosa says that some trees get planted in rich top soil, and they grow right up to the sun, tall and straight. Other trees, they start as seeds in the crevices between rocks so they have to twist and bend to reach the light.

(beat)

But even though they end up crooked, they're still trees, just like the straight ones.

Lying on their backs, Michael and Letty stare up at the leaves overhead.

MICHAEL

(with a start)

Why in the world did you let me start talking in metaphors? That's no way for us to break up.

LETTY

Break up? They wish.

Michael and Letty hug.

INT. NURSES' STATION - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Nurse Gates pours tablets from a potpourri of pill bottles into little paper cups. A Federal Express delivery man with a bunch of boxes stops at the station.

DELIVERY MAN  
I need a signature, please.

Nurse Gates looks at the form.

NURSE GATES  
What is all this stuff?

DELIVERY MAN  
I just deliver it, Ma'am.

NURSE GATES  
Well, who exactly is it for?

DELIVERY MAN  
A Mrs. Eunice Hallstrom.

NURSE GATES  
I see. Can you wait a moment?

Nurse Gates locks the medication in a cupboard, and hurries down the hallway.

INT. GROUP THERAPY ROOM - SAME

Our usual cast of characters.

DR. EMLLEE  
But how does that make you feel,  
John, what Letty said about your  
hostility?

JOHN  
She doesn't know what the hell  
she's talking about.

Nurse Gates barrels in. The group looks up.

NURSE GATES  
I'm sorry, Doctor. I just need a  
moment with Mrs. Hallstrom.

DR. EMLLEE  
What seems to be the problem?

NURSE GATES  
They say she ordered...Mrs.  
Hallstrom, did you order a bunch of  
stuff, because Federal Express...

Mrs. Hallstrom's face glows.

MRS. HALLSTROM

It's here, everyone. Come along.  
It's here.

She runs out. Nurse Gates follows her. A moment passes. The patients look expectantly at Dr. Emlee.

DR. EMLEE

Oh, fine, let's see.

They storm the door.

INT. NURSES' STATION - SAME

By the time the patients round the corner, the Federal Express man is leaving, and Mrs. Hallstrom has ripped open one of the boxes. She clutches a handful of jewelry.

MRS. HALLSTROM

For you, John. And, Letty. And,  
Michael, I know you'll love these.

She hands Michael a pair of faux sapphire earrings. He clips them on. Letty and several others carry necklaces. Thomas sports a rhinestone tiara. The patients compare jewelry.

DR. EMLEE

Mrs. Hallstrom, you ordered all  
this?

JOHN

(to Mrs. Hallstrom)

Thomas got a crown and all I got  
was a lousy bracelet?

DR. EMLEE

You must have spent thousands of  
dollars.

MRS. HALLSTROM

Don't worry, Doctor, I didn't  
forget you.

Mrs. Hallstrom hands Dr. Emlee a fake ruby hair comb.

DR. EMLEE

Mrs. Hallstrom, you can't possibly  
afford to pay for this. It must go  
back.

Chatter in the hallway stops.

MRS. HALLSTROM

Why, no, Doctor. It can't. Most of it's for my daughter, Lily. She's coming to family day tomorrow...all the way from Cleveland with my grandson.

(beat)

You can't be taking away their "Welcome to California" presents.

DR. EMLEE

It's going back. We'll contact the company this afternoon.

(to patients)

Take the jewelry off, please.

The patients reluctantly remove their gifts.

MRS. HALLSTROM

But I have to keep something for my daughter.

DR. EMLEE

Let's go back to group, and discuss it there. Back to group, everyone.

The patients head back to group. Dr. Emlee turns to Nurse Gates.

DR. EMLEE

(to Nurse Gates)

Increase her lithium to 600 milligrams, three times a day. Oh, and Nurse, let's see about canceling the cable.

EXT. PATIO - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

The place buzzes with festivity. A "WELCOME FAMILIES" sign hangs from a patio beam. A table is laden with cookies and lemonade and platter after platter of carrot curls.

Letty takes a cookie and looks toward the lawn where Michael plays frisbee with his family, even his grandmother, ROSA. Nurse Gates walks up to Letty.

NURSE GATES

Your mother's in the rec room, Letty.

INT. REC ROOM - SAME

Letty passes Mrs. Hallstrom, who sits by herself, holding one small gift on her lap.

Letty spots her Mom across the room, and walks up to her. Her mother has covered a table with swatches of fabric.

MRS. MAYER

It's so good to see you,  
Sweetheart.

LETTY

You too, Mom.

MRS. MAYER

You're looking good. A little  
thin, but good.

Letty examines a fabric sample.

MRS. MAYER

Thanks so much for doing this.  
Ruthie and Jake are up to a million  
things. And I just can't decide.

Letty rearranges the fabric samples on the table by color.

LETTY

Which flowers did you order?

MRS. MAYER

We haven't. I wanted to talk that  
over with you, too.

LETTY

Oh, OK, well, better to choose the  
table cloths first anyway.

MRS. MAYER

I was thinking either the peach  
moire or cream damask.

Letty holds up a swatch of bright yellow.

LETTY

This would complement the blue in  
the bride's maids' dresses. Look.

MRS. MAYER

Where's your ring, Sweetheart?

LETTY

We aren't allowed to wear jewelry  
in here, Mom.

MRS. MAYER

Just think, pretty soon, we'll be  
doing all these wedding  
preparations for you.

(beat)

Of course, if that's what you still  
want. Ruthie told me some silly  
story about a crush on some boy  
here.

Letty pulls out a cigarette, lights it and starts smoking.

LETTY

I haven't had a crush since I was  
12.

MRS. MAYER

When did you start smoking?

LETTY

I'll put it out if it bothers you.

MRS. MAYER

The puckering, dear. It doesn't  
seem so now, but in time, it will  
cause wrinkles around the mouth.

Letty grinds the cigarette beneath her heel. She bends over  
the fabrics.

MRS. MAYER

You know, your life isn't about  
being in a mental hospital.

LETTY

What?

MRS. MAYER

I hear this Michael fellow is  
schizophrenic.

LETTY

Mom, please.

MRS. MAYER

Don't forget that Paul's a  
promising young attorney who loves  
you very much...

LETTY

Mom, look, if I want to dump Paul,  
I'll dump him. If I want to screw  
Michael or live with him or marry  
him, then I'll do that.

Thomas, who sits across the room, looks up from his book.

MRS. MAYER

(whispering)

I'm only looking out for you.

LETTY

(yelling)

And if I want to smoke, I'll  
fucking smoke.

Letty races out the door and into the garden. In the distance, Michael spots her and jogs over. Letty's mother watches them. Thomas approaches Mrs. Mayer.

THOMAS

Mrs. Mayer, I'm sorry but I  
couldn't help overhearing. I just  
wanted to say, not that it's any of  
my business...

MRS. MAYER

Yes?

THOMAS

I think, really, I think I'd go  
with the cream damask.

INT. REC ROOM - LATER

Letty and Michael walk through the rec room toward the dining hall. Nurse Gates bends down in front of Mrs. Hallstrom, who sits where we last saw her.

NURSE GATES

It's OK to be upset.

MRS. HALLSTROM

(gaily)

Upset? Why of course not. My  
goodness, no. I'm sure she just  
got hung up.

Letty and Michael stop.

MICHAEL

Mrs. Hallstrom, why don't you join my family for dinner. You'll love my Grandma Rosa.

MRS. HALLSTROM

That's so sweet, Michael. But, really, I've so many things to do.

LETTY

If you change your mind, we'll be in the dining hall.

Michael and Letty walk on, exchanging a sad look.

INT. DINING HALL - LATER

Mr. Santucci and Mrs. Santucci sit at the heads of the table. Letty sits between Rosa and Michael.

ROSA

(to Letty)

What do you need now?

(to Mr. Santucci)

Send down the lamb. This girl's as thin as a stick.

LETTY

Oh, no. I'm stuffed.

ROSA

Tell her to eat, Frank.

MR. SANTUCCI

Mangia. Mangia.

MICHAEL

(whispering to Letty)

You can't turn down Grandma Rosa's lamb.

ROSA

Or my eggplant. I make the best eggplant in L.A. The mozzarella I use, it's so fresh it sweats.

Letty heaps more food on her plate.

MRS. SANTUCCI

Michael says you're a teacher.

LETTY

I was. I'm hoping I'll still have  
a job when I get out.

Mrs. Hallstrom walks into the room, wearing her Christmas  
stocking cap. She starts to dispense erasers.

LETTY

What's she doing?

Mrs. Hallstrom, practically skipping, zeros in on Grandma  
Rosa. She hands Rosa the gift meant for her daughter.

MRS. HALLSTROM

Rosa, Rosa, you must have this,  
Rosa.

ROSA

Grazie.

MICHAEL

Mrs. Hallstrom, join us. Please.

But, by this point, Mrs. Hallstrom's already bounded away,  
divesting herself of more and more erasers to bewildered  
parents and delighted children.

She clambers onto a table in the middle of the room. Marie  
gets up from another table and leaves the room to get help.

MRS. HALLSTROM

Merry Christmas to all. Ho, ho,  
ho, ho.

LETTY

Michael, we've got to stop her.

Michael pushes back his chair. He's trapped between the  
table and the wall.

MRS. HALLSTROM

My goodness, it's so very warm in  
here. So warm.

She takes off her cap and tosses it to a surprised looking  
man. But she doesn't stop there. With haphazard abandon, she  
begins to disrobe, first her blouse, then her skirt.

MRS. HALLSTROM

Way, way, way too warm for  
December. Now, let's sing Jingle  
Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the  
way...

The group looks on in horror, mesmerized by her behavior. Then, almost as one, the patients spring into action.

Michael bolts over his dining table and runs to Mrs. Hallstrom. He jumps onto her table, trying to restrain the dancing woman so he can wrap his sweater around her.

By this time, John, Thomas and Letty have surrounded her in a protective enclave. Michael sets Mrs. Hallstrom on the ground. She looks up at the group, and continues belting out "Jingle Bells."

INT. LINEN CLOSET - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Letty and Michael lie on the floor next to each other, trading puffs on a cigarette. The glowing ember is the only light in the room.

MICHAEL

You must have thought about it.  
Everyone does.

LETTY

I just want to see Beast.  
(beat)  
Where would you go?

MICHAEL

The mission up in Santa Barbara.

LETTY

No way.

MICHAEL

That's where I always go when I get out.

LETTY

Why?

MICHAEL

My dad used to take me there when I was little. It's totally quiet. And you can see the ocean for miles.

They smoke for a while.

LETTY

What else would you do?

MICHAEL

I'd like to drink a bottle of red wine with you and then make love to you and spend the whole night together. And we'd get up in the morning and spend hours lounging around and reading the paper.

LETTY

And we'd eat Spaghetti-O's in bed from the can.

MICHAEL

How can you even mention Spaghetti-O's after eating Grandma Rosa's dinner tonight?

LETTY

I have a terrible confession.

MICHAEL

Tell the doctor.

LETTY

I don't like lamb.

Michael sits up.

MICHAEL

Then it's over.

LETTY

Lie down.

Michael lies down.

MICHAEL

It's a good thing my family loves you.

LETTY

Your family just met me.

MICHAEL

You're right. I guess I was projecting. What I should have said is, "It's a good thing I love you."

LETTY

Do you?

MICHAEL

I do.

LETTY

Michael, I...

MICHAEL

It's OK. You don't have to say anything.

LETTY

But I do. I love you, too.

Michael and Letty lie still, looking into each others eyes.

INT. MICHAEL'S ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Posters of Harry Houdini and Doug Henning. Handcuffs and card decks all over.

MICHAEL

Your Honor, I feel I should be released. I'm sufficiently able to look after...

Michael stops. His eyes glaze over. His head darts toward the corner of the room.

MICHAEL

(to the corner)

What? What?

Nothing's there. Nothing at all. But Michael keeps staring.

A KNOCK on the door. Michael's eyes refocus. He opens the door to find Letty.

LETTY

John and Nurse Gates are waiting for you.

MICHAEL

Oh, right. I'm ready. How do I look?

LETTY

(straightening his tie)

Great. I came to tell you to break a leg, and to give you this for good luck.

Letty hands him the Cracker Jack ring.

INT. COMMITMENT COURT - DAY

Michael sits near the front of the courtroom with half a dozen other patients from various institutions.

Nurse Gates sits a few rows back near JOHN'S MOTHER and Michael's family--Mr. and Mrs. Santucci and Grandma Rosa.

JUDGE MILTON, 60s, questions John, who's on the stand.

JUDGE MILTON  
Why have you petitioned to leave  
the institution?

JOHN  
I haven't had an episode in more  
than a month, Sir.

JUDGE MILTON  
How do you plan to support  
yourself?

JOHN  
My family's helping me out, Your  
Honor.

JUDGE MILTON  
Where will you live upon release?

JOHN  
Live?

John's mother nods encouragingly at him.

JUDGE MILTON  
Where do you plan to reside, Mr.  
Lockyer?

JOHN  
With my mother.

JUDGE MILTON  
Is your mother here today?

John points to her. John's mother waves at the judge.

JOHN  
That's the bitch. That cock-  
sucking bitch. She put me here.  
She did. She's the Satan that did  
this all.

As bailiffs remove John from the stand, Michael offers a wan smile to his family.

INT. COMMITMENT COURT - LATER

Michael, outwardly poised and collected, sits on the stand. His hands are clenched in tight fists.

JUDGE MILTON

The records indicate no major episodes in the past four months. And it seems you have the support of the staff.

MICHAEL

Yes, Sir.

JUDGE MILTON

But I see you've been in and out of the hospital more than ten times.

MICHAEL

Eleven, Your Honor. But I'm on a new medication now.

JUDGE MILTON

Do you feel ready to re-enter the world?

MICHAEL

Yes, Sir. My family is prepared to support me until I find a job. They've already located an apartment for me that's very near them.

JUDGE MILTON

Very well, then. By order of the court, you are released. I wish you good luck.

Michael's shoulders relax. He opens his fist. Inside is the Cracker Jack ring, and the magenta circle it has imprinted on his palm.

EXT. COMMITMENT COURT - LATER

Michael walks to the car with his mother, father and grandmother, who keeps tousling his hair with pride.

INT. VISITING ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty stands awkwardly in front of Paul, who sits in a wingback chair.

PAUL  
What's so urgent? You've got me worried.

LETTY  
I need to tell you something, and I'm not sure how.

Paul stands.

PAUL  
You can tell me anything.  
(beat)  
Do you want to postpone the wedding? Is it too much pressure?

LETTY  
No...

PAUL  
That's a load off my mind.

LETTY  
Paul, I want to break off the engagement.

PAUL  
You what?

LETTY  
I don't mean to hurt you. I know this is a terrible thing. And I have really loved you.

PAUL  
Whoa. Whoa. Have really loved me? Letty, it's natural to be nervous. But we're going to work through our problems.

LETTY  
I've met someone else.

PAUL  
Who?

LETTY  
It doesn't matter who.

PAUL  
Have you been seeing another  
teacher?

LETTY  
No.

PAUL  
It's a doctor, isn't it? That's  
unethical. I'll have him rung up  
on malpractice charges so fast his  
head will spin.

LETTY  
He's a patient here.

Paul considers this a moment.

PAUL  
Of all the crazy things. I  
understood when you dropped out of  
law school. And during this whole  
mess, I've tried to be supportive.  
But, really, Letty, what can you be  
thinking?

LETTY  
I love him.

PAUL  
You're going to throw away our life  
together for some shared experience  
with a looney-tune that you  
misguidedly think is love?

LETTY  
Here's the ring.

PAUL  
No way. You keep the ring. You'll  
come to your senses.

LETTY  
I've made my decision, Paul.

PAUL  
You keep it, Letty. This is not  
over. Our life is not over.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - SAME

Paul walks out the door and down the steps past Michael, who  
runs up them two at a time.

MICHAEL  
How's it hanging, Paul?

Paul turns to watch Michael as Michael swings open the door and sails into the institute.

INT. VISITING ROOM - SAME

Letty waits as a NURSE opens the door to the ward. Letty is about to step through, when Michael enters.

MICHAEL  
Visitor for Ms. Mayer.

Letty whirls around.

LETTY  
Well?

MICHAEL  
Home free.

Letty and Michael hug.

NURSE  
Letty, Michael, you have about five minutes until visiting hours end.

The nurse retreats.

LETTY  
Tell me all.

MICHAEL  
I was brilliant, or at least boringly sane.

LETTY  
So there were no problems?

MICHAEL  
Not a one.

LETTY  
And did you go to the mission?

MICHAEL  
No, you goof, I came to see you.

LETTY  
Just checking.

MICHAEL  
I saw Paul leaving. Did you do the  
dirty deed?

LETTY  
Yeah.

MICHAEL  
So, it's over?

LETTY  
All over.  
(beat)  
Did you see your new apartment?

MICHAEL  
One bedroom, second floor, no view.

LETTY  
Furnished?

MICHAEL  
No, I need some serious household  
advice.

LETTY  
First off, you'll need to go to  
Target. And, let's see, what  
should you buy?

MICHAEL  
I better make a list.

LETTY  
List schmist. You'll remember.

INT. HALLWAY - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Letty sits in the corridor opposite Marie and Thomas. They  
are playing BLACKJACK. Letty deals.

THOMAS  
Hit me.

Letty hands one over. Thomas flips over his cards.

THOMAS  
I'm over.

Letty looks to Marie, who waves her off. Marie is fine with  
her cards. They look down the hall. Nurse Gates walks beside  
JAMIE, a man in his late 20s, who wears the same dazed  
expression Letty did the morning after she was admitted.

NURSE GATES  
(to Jamie)  
Dr. Stone will ask you some  
questions, and then we'll get you  
settled.

Nurse Gates and Jamie come upon the gang.

NURSE GATES  
(to Letty/Bill)  
Lights out in 15, Guys.

Nurse Gates continues down the hall, hand firmly planted  
under Jamie's elbow as he weaves unsteadily beside her.

MARIE  
Wow, that first night is hard.

LETTY  
It's going to be a difficult few  
weeks for him.

THOMAS  
It really makes you think.

LETTY  
It really does.

They look down the hall at the retreating figures. They look  
at each other.

MARIE  
I'll put in 5 that it's a straight  
diagnosis of depressive  
personality.

LETTY  
Are you kidding? With those glazed  
eyes? I'm willing to bet 10 there  
was some break with reality going  
on there. Psychosis. Without a  
doubt, psychosis.

INT. DR. EMLEE'S OFFICE - DAY

Letty is curled up in a chair opposite Dr. Emlee.

LETTY  
But what I really can't believe is  
that I'm starting to actually miss  
work.

DR. EMLLEE  
Have you been in contact with the  
principal about your job?

LETTY  
I thought about calling, but I want  
to wait until I know when I'll be  
out.

DR. EMLLEE  
Then, you should call.

LETTY  
What?

DR. EMLLEE  
I think it's about that time,  
Letty. The charges against you  
have been dropped, the drugs have  
evened out and you seem to be  
dealing with your life quite well.

LETTY  
Are you saying I'm through with  
therapy?

DR. EMLLEE  
Let's not be hasty.  
(beat)  
I'm saying we should plan a release  
date for early next week.

Off Letty's excited face, we

CUT TO:

EXT. TARGET - DAY

Crowds, crowds and more crowds. Michael pulls unsuccessfully  
at a shopping cart that is stuck to another.

A MATRONLY WOMAN walks up, nudges Michael out of the way and  
yanks the cart out of its row. She rolls it toward Michael,  
grabs one for herself and is on her way into the store.

Michael takes several deep breaths. With trepidation in his  
step, he heads into the great unknown of the crowded store...

EXT. TARGET - 30 MINUTES LATER

Michael emerges from the store, quite pleased with himself that he made it out alive. He commands a cart heaped full of useless gadgets and trinkets, a half dozen picture frames and about 20 decorative pillows.

EXT. GROUNDS - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty and her mother walk briskly through the gardens.

MRS. MAYER  
Must you walk so quickly?

LETTY  
It's good exercise, Mom.

MRS. MAYER  
I've got 26 years on you. If we could just slow down, we could talk so much easier.

Letty slackens her pace.

MRS. MAYER  
I'm so thankful you'll be leaving next week. If you want me to pick you up, I will.

LETTY  
I've already made arrangements.

MRS. MAYER  
Ruthie mentioned that Michael might be coming for you.

Letty stops and wags her finger at her mother.

LETTY  
Mom, we agreed. You can visit, but you're not allowed to mention Michael.

MRS. MAYER  
Not even if it's something positive?

LETTY  
Nyet. That's the condition.

Mother and daughter keep walking in silence.

MRS. MAYER  
Have you spoken to Paul at all?

LETTY  
One more and you're out.

MRS. MAYER  
Honestly, Letty.

LETTY  
A deal's a deal.

The two walk on in silence.

Silence.

More silence.

MRS. MAYER  
Have you heard the figure on how  
much Queen Elizabeth's going to pay  
in taxes this year?

Letty stops walking. She turns a sunny smile on her mother,  
then hugs her.

LETTY  
I knew you had it in you.

INT. LETTY'S ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty neatly folds garments and lays them in a suitcase. Dr.  
Emlee looks on.

DR. EMLEE  
So, we'll meet every Tuesday and  
Friday. And if you have any kind  
of emergency, you can page me.

LETTY  
OK, good. That's good. Thanks an  
awful lot for everything, and for  
coming down here to see me off.

DR. EMLEE  
It was just a little going-away  
gesture.

LETTY  
I have a going-away gesture for  
you, too.

DR. EMLEE  
Oh?

Letty puts her hand in her suitcase and rummages through the clothes, creating a jumbled mess. She snaps the luggage closed. Bits of clothing hang out. They LAUGH.

INT. NURSES' STATION - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty sets her duffel bag down next to two suitcases. She hugs Marie, John, Thomas, then walks over to Mrs. Hallstrom, who hangs back from the group. Letty embraces her.

LETTY  
I'll miss you, Mrs. Hallstrom.

There's no response. Letty goes to Nurse Gates and hugs her.

NURSE GATES  
Take care, Letty. And, let me know if you need help with any spiders.

LETTY  
You know I will. Thanks for everything.

Letty walks toward Michael, who gathers up her bags.

MICHAEL  
See you later, guys.

Michael and Letty walk through the VISITING ROOM...

MICHAEL  
Aren't you supposed to throw a bouquet or something?

LETTY  
Aren't you ever quiet?

They walk out the doors onto the FRONT STEPS OF THE HOSPITAL. Michael grabs Letty's hand as they hurry down the steps.

MICHAEL  
Where to?

LETTY  
I've heard the mission in Santa Barbara is the place to go.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA MISSION - MAGIC HOUR

In the background, the Spanish-style mission blends into the hillside. Letty and Michael sit on a bluff, holding hands. They look out at the ocean, where the sun heads toward the waves in a fiery red glow.

INT. HALLWAY - MICHAEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Michael and Letty walk down the hall. Michael stops at a door and showcases it. He jingles the keys.

MICHAEL  
This is it -- 3B. Check it out.

LETTY  
Open up. I want to see.

MICHAEL  
Close your eyes.

Letty claps her hands over her eyes. Michael opens the door and guides her into his castle.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - SAME

MICHAEL  
OK. Open them.

Letty surveys the territory. Forget tables, chairs and couches. Throw pillows are strewn everywhere.

LETTY  
Wow.

MICHAEL  
You like it?

Letty picks up a pillow and runs her hand over the fabric. She pauses a moment before speaking.

LETTY  
I love the pillows.

MICHAEL  
Throw pillows, Letty. The sales lady said they're the latest thing.

LETTY  
Very trendy. Let's see the rest.

Michael leads Letty to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

A futon bed, draped with a mosquito net, rests in the corner. Two TVs take center stage.

LETTY  
It's TV heaven.

MICHAEL

I was tired of watching what everyone else wants to watch. Now we can watch two shows at once.

LETTY

Let's try out the bed.

Michael grabs her hand and pulls her toward the door.

MICHAEL

You've got to see the kitchen first.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

MICHAEL

Do you like it?

LETTY

I love your apartment.

MICHAEL

Really?

LETTY

You'll never get rid of me.

Michael kisses Letty on the lips.

LETTY

What do you say we go out to dinner to celebrate?

MICHAEL

Out? Are you kidding? I've got all the fixings here.

Off Letty's look of surprise, we watch Michael open a cupboard door. The shelves are filled from top to bottom with cans of Spaghetti-O's.

Letty squeezes Michael in a bear hug.

INT. BEDROOM - MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Letty, in a T-shirt, and Michael, in boxers, lounge on the futon. They watch both TVs -- one tuned-in to Jay Leno, the other to David Letterman.

Michael eats from a can of Spaghetti-O's. Letty reaches over with her fork and snags a mouthful from Michael's can.

LETTY  
How can you not like the Top 10  
List?

MICHAEL  
I like it. But Headlines are  
better.

LETTY  
You're so wrong.

Letty takes her remote and increases the volume on her TV.  
As Letterman gets louder, Michael zaps his volume.

It's a war. Letterman then Leno get LOUDER and LOUDER and  
LOUDER until Letty makes a might lunge. She wrests Michael's  
remote from him. Letty MUTES both TVs.

MICHAEL  
Hey.

LETTY  
It's sex time.

Michael mockingly checks his watch. Letty climbs on top of  
him. Michael rolls on top of her.

MICHAEL  
I think it's my turn.

CLOSE on their faces as Michael gently licks the side of  
Letty's mouth.

LETTY  
Did I get spaghetti sauce on my  
face?

MICHAEL  
No.

Michael licks Letty's nose.

LETTY  
Michael.

MICHAEL  
Shhhh.

Michael and Letty look into each other's eyes, bathed in the  
blue light thrown off by the twin televisions.

Michael places a pillow gently beneath Letty's head. He  
caresses her face.

Letty's eyes are alive to every look, every touch. Michael kisses her slowly on the forehead, the nose, and the lips.

CLOSE on Letty's hands as she reaches up to stroke Michael's forehead and caress his temple.

CLOSER on her hands as Letty runs them through Michael's hair, then twists a curly lock around her finger.

SOFT MOANS as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSE on Letty's hand, resting on the comforter on Michael's bed. The alarm clock RINGS. Letty's hand slaps it into submission.

INT. BEDROOM - MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - LATER

Letty's still in bed, a look of bliss across her face.

MICHAEL  
Letty? Rise and shine.

LETTY'S POV:

Michael's face fills her vision.

BACK TO SCENE:

Letty's eyes close.

LETTY  
Not yet.

MICHAEL  
I'll be forced to tickle you.

Letty opens one eye and glares at him.

LETTY  
Go away.

MICHAEL  
How about this? It's 10:30.

Letty bolts upright.

LETTY  
I'm supposed to meet the principal  
in half an hour.

MICHAEL  
I'll see you tonight.

Michael gives her a kiss and walks into the LIVING ROOM.

Michael adjusts his tie. Letty, naked, runs into the room and throws her arms around his neck.

LETTY  
Good luck.

MICHAEL  
You, too. Kick ass today.

Michael walks out the door. Letty thinks for a minute. She flings open the door and yells to Michael's retreating back.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

LETTY  
My apartment tonight. You can meet  
Beast.

Michael swings around.

MICHAEL  
Sounds good. Oh, and Letty?

LETTY  
Yeah?

MICHAEL  
(yelling)  
You've got one hell of a great  
body.

The door across the hall opens. A LITTLE OLD MAN stares at Letty's naked figure. She slams Michael's apartment door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - SAME

Letty collapses in GIGGLES.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CHASEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Letty sits across from the principal.

PRINCIPAL GAIL  
I didn't have any choice but to  
include the parents' letters in  
your file.

LETTY

Well, I understand. I know my behavior was poor.

PRINCIPAL GAIL

So, in light of how the parents feel, and the fact the students are doing so well with the substitute, I don't think I can put you back in the classroom just yet.

LETTY

Look, Gail, I've been a good teacher.

PRINCIPAL GAIL

I know, Letty. But the incident with Zach was frightening for the children.

(beat)

Now if you'd come to me, explained what was going on...

LETTY

Believe me, I wish I'd understood what was going on. I've worked really hard to get better.

PRINCIPAL GAIL

I'm glad you're doing well.

LETTY

I've already thought about how to tell the kids where I was.

Letty hands the principal a letter.

LETTY

And I'd like to send the parents this letter of explanation. With your support, I think they can accept me.

The principal reads the letter.

PRINCIPAL GAIL

It's a very nice letter. But I have to go with what's best for the students.

LETTY

What does that mean?

PRINCIPAL GAIL  
I need someone to work on budget  
projections.

LETTY  
Office work?

PRINCIPAL GAIL  
Or, of course, you could take a  
sabbatical the rest of the year.

INT. BANK - DAY

Michael sits at a back desk with MR. SMYTHE, who wears a  
three-piece pin-striped suit and taps a pencil on his knee.

MR. SMYTHE  
It's not that we're doubting your  
intelligence, Mr. Santucci. But  
your work history shows so many  
interruptions.

MICHAEL  
I know, but as I said...

MR. SMYTHE  
I appreciate your candor about your  
illness, but my bosses are  
concerned.

MICHAEL  
I can do the job.

MR. SMYTHE  
Between you and me, my uncle, he  
has some mental problems, and I  
know what you're going through. If  
it were up to me, I'd hire you.

Michael's already standing.

MICHAEL  
Right. Thanks for your help.

He shakes Mr. Smythe's hand, and, downcast, gets out of the  
bank as quickly as he can.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LETTY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Letty sits on the floor. She gulps down some aspirin, then  
hauls Beast into her lap. The doorbell RINGS.

LETTY

It's open.

Michael walks in, and looks around.

MICHAEL

Gosh, Letty, this is a great place.

LETTY

Thanks.

He kisses her, and lies down on the floor to stroke the cat.

MICHAEL

This must be Beast.

LETTY

That's Mr. Beast to you.

MICHAEL

How was your day?

LETTY

I bombed. It's either work in the office or nothing.

MICHAEL

Sounds grim.

LETTY

Yeah. How was the job search?

Michael makes a thumbs-down gesture.

LETTY

Who ever said sanity was fun?

MICHAEL

It doesn't matter. It'll work out.

LETTY

Promise?

MICHAEL

Promise.

(beat)

As long as we have steak.

LETTY

Steak?

MICHAEL

It's a well-known fact that a red-meat dinner can cure the blues.

(beat)

You and Beast wait here. I'll be back in a jiff.

Letty gives Michael a tired smile. Michael jumps up and leaves. A moment passes. The door opens again.

MICHAEL

While I'm gone why don't you slip into something a little more naked?

EXT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Michael walks out of the grocery store, loaded down with bags. He carries a bottle of wine and a bunch of flowers.

He passes two ladies who gossip outside the store.

LADY ONE

I can't believe he did that.

LADY TWO

What a weirdo.

Michael stops abruptly. He turns back and looks at the women. They LAUGH.

Michael starts toward the car. He hears more LAUGHTER from the women. He turns back and walks up to them.

MICHAEL

Don't ever talk about me again, you hear me?

The women pull back in fright.

INT. KITCHEN - LETTY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Letty, in a skimpy negligee, lights candles on the table. Michael enters with the groceries and wine.

LETTY

I thought maybe you got lost.

MICHAEL

The store was busy.

LETTY

You got wine. That's great.

MICHAEL

Would you mind if we just called it  
an early night?

LETTY

You go ahead and relax. I'll cook.

MICHAEL

I think I should go home.

LETTY

Are you OK?

MICHAEL

Big restaurant interview tomorrow.

LETTY

But what about the red meat-blues  
thing?

MICHAEL

You know, we've got that dinner  
with my parents tomorrow, too. I  
should really get some rest  
tonight.

Michael gives Letty a kiss good night. He leaves. She  
stares after him. Reluctantly, she blows out the candles and  
starts putting the groceries away.

LETTY

(to Beast)

How's filet sound?

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The coffee shop hasn't opened for business yet. Michael and  
six people in their early 20s fill out applications.

Michael stares blankly at his application. He fills out his  
name. He can't get any further.

TWO OTHER APPLICANTS glance toward him. Michael tries to  
write. He can't.

MICHAEL

(under his breath)

No, no, no. Not now. No.

The other applicants look toward Michael and quickly avert  
their eyes. The RESTAURANT MANAGER walks up to the group.

Michael grabs his briefcase and walks out of the restaurant. His application, incomplete, remains on the table.

INT. KITCHEN - SANTUCCI HOUSE - NIGHT

This kitchen is the heart of the home--copper pots, two pasta makers and every size wooden spoon made.

Letty, lightly dusted with flour, mixes fresh pasta with her hands. Mrs. Santucci peers into the bowl.

MRS. SANTUCCI  
More water. It's too pasty.

Letty pours in more water.

LETTY  
I'll never get the hang of this.

MRS. SANTUCCI  
All the Santucci women go through this.

Letty smiles at her and kneads harder. Mr. Santucci enters and kisses his wife.

MR. SANTUCCI  
Hi there, Letty.

LETTY  
Hi, Frank.

Mr. Santucci looks in the pasta bowl.

MR. SANTUCCI  
It needs more water.

He dumps some in. Letty looks sadly at the gloppy mess.

LETTY  
(to Mrs. Santucci)  
Maybe we should make lamb next week.

Michael walks in.

MRS. SANTUCCI  
Hi, Sweetheart.

LETTY  
How'd it go?

Michael takes his tie, holds it up like a noose and lets his tongue loll out of his mouth.

LETTY  
What happened?

MICHAEL  
Four interviews. Four no-gos.

LETTY  
The restaurant, too?

MICHAEL  
I couldn't even face that one.

Mr. and Mrs. Santucci look at each other.

LETTY  
That's OK. We can call and reschedule in the morning.

MICHAEL  
You don't have to take care of me, you know.

An uneasy silence falls in the room.

MRS. SANTUCCI  
Maybe we should save the job talk for after dinner.

Michael looks in the bowl of pasta dough that Letty continues to labor over. He reaches in to help with the mixing.

MICHAEL  
(to Letty)  
Just promise you'll love me even if I end up in a job where I have to wear a blue polyester cap.

LETTY  
I think you know I'd love you even more in a blue polyester cap.

INT. BATHROOM - MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Michael finishes brushing his teeth. He opens the medicine cabinet, pulls out a prescription bottle and pours a pill into his hand.

LETTY (OS)  
You're going to miss the Top Ten.

MICHAEL

Coming.

He raises the pill to his mouth, then opens his hand and lets it drop in the sink. Michael runs the water and watches the pill swirl slowly down the drain.

LETTY (OS)

Michael, hurry.

Michael stuffs the pill bottle in a bottom drawer. He opens the door, sprints into the bedroom and leaps onto Letty, who lies on the futon. Letty SCREAMS and LAUGHS.

INT. MCDONALD'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Michael sits in a booth drinking coffee. He bows over an application, pen in hand. About a third is filled out.

INT. SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Letty and Superintendent Johansen sit on the floor, which is covered with math games, posters and charts.

LETTY

I think I could get the program up and running in the next two weeks.

JOHANSEN

From what I understand the principal has removed you from student activities.

LETTY

She's worried that I'm unstable.

Johansen studies her.

LETTY

But I wouldn't push for the program if I wasn't ready.

JOHANSEN

What about the office work?

LETTY

I'd have to do that, too. But I've gotten better at pacing myself.

JOHANSEN

Are you sure?

LETTY  
I'll call you if I have problems.  
Scout's honor.

JOHANSEN  
I have to say I'm inclined to give  
it another try.

Letty hugs Johansen.

JOHANSEN  
But, Letty, why don't you give  
yourself three weeks to set it up  
this time?

INT. MCDONALD'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Michael sits in the same booth, eating a hamburger. About half of the application is now completed.

INT. TUXEDO SHOP - NIGHT

Letty and her mother sit in silence. Letty smiles at her mother. Her mother gives her a very tiny smile back.

Michael hurries in.

MICHAEL  
Hey, Letty. Mrs. Mayer.

LETTY  
I got worried. Are you OK?

Michael pulls a blue polyester hat out of his pocket and puts it on.

MICHAEL  
How may I help you?

LETTY  
Congratulations.

MRS. MAYER  
Michael, the shop's about to close.  
Maybe you could try on your tux.

Michael heads to the dressing room in the back of the store.

LETTY  
(to Mrs. Mayer)  
Michael just got a job. Couldn't  
you congratulate him?

MRS. MAYER  
 I will, Dear. I promise.  
 (beat)  
 Why McDonald's?

LETTY  
 He's been looking everywhere for  
 weeks, Mom. It's not that easy  
 after you've been locked away.

Letty looks toward the back of the store. Her mother looks  
 at her. Letty ignores her mother.

MRS. MAYER  
 I've read that lots of people my  
 age are supplementing their incomes  
 these days by working at McDonald's  
 and Burger King.

Letty looks at her mother, tries to read her.

LETTY  
 I'm going to take that as an honest  
 effort at being open minded.

MRS. MAYER  
 Don't be fresh.

LETTY  
 Just remember that I love him.

Michael walks out of the dressing room and advances toward  
 the two women, bowing in Cary Grant fashion as he nears.

Letty's mother turns to her daughter, who beams brightly at  
 the dashing Michael.

MRS. MAYER  
 (to Letty)  
 I'll say this, Dear. He looks damn  
 good in a tuxedo.

EXT. TRACK - DAY

Letty and Michael jog.

MICHAEL  
 Aunt Lily is the one who married  
 your father's cousin?

LETTY  
 No, that's Aunt Connie. Lily is  
 the one who looks like a hooker.

MICHAEL

Oh. And, Harry, he's the one who likes magic?

LETTY

You don't have to know all this by Saturday. It took me years.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Every inch of every pew in the Baroque church is stuffed with guests. Michael sits in the second row. He cranes his head around as "Pachelbel's Canon" RINGS OUT and the FLOWER GIRL advances.

Letty, in the first part of the bride's maids' procession, heads down the aisle next. The bride is nowhere in sight.

But even so, as soon as Michael spots Letty, he stands. Everyone else remains seated. They look at him. Michael doesn't notice. He has eyes only for Letty.

Letty's mother looks at Michael with more than annoyance. Begrudgingly, she also stands.

Following the lead, the entire church stands for Letty. She smiles at Michael.

INT. BALLROOM - COUNTRY CLUB - LATER

A parade of guests pass through the receiving line to greet Mr. Mayer, Monica, Letty, Mrs. Mayer, Ruth and Jake.

Michael hovers close to Letty. AUNT LILY, with fluorescent red hair and a silver lame miniskirt, spots him.

AUNT LILY

(to Michael)

What a beautiful wedding.

As she passes out of earshot,

MICHAEL

(to Letty)

Aunt Lily?

LETTY

Bingo.

Mrs. Mayer talks to her brother CORT.

MRS. MAYER

Oh, and have you met Michael? He's  
Letty's boyfriend.

Letty and Ruth overhear this. They make eye contact. Ruth  
raises her eyebrows toward Letty. Letty smiles back.

INT. BALLROOM - LATER

Ruth and Letty talk while Michael twirls across the dance  
floor with Monica.

RUTH

The worst was when I stammered  
Jake's name.

LETTY

I don't think people even noticed.  
I thought the ceremony was perfect.

RUTH

That's thanks to all your help.

Cort, overweight and red from drink, approaches Ruth and  
Letty.

LETTY

Uh oh, Uncle Cort at 6 o'clock.

RUTH

Sorry to do this to you. But I am  
the bride.

Ruth turns and flees. CORT pounces on Letty and plants the  
wettest kiss ever on her mouth.

CORT

(to Letty)

I don't think I've seen you in two  
or three years.

LETTY

Has it been that long?

CORT

You were with that lawyer.

LETTY

I'm dating Michael now.

CORT

Met him in the receiving line. What  
is it that he does for a living?

Michael walks up to Letty and Cort as they speak.

LETTY  
Well, he just got a job...

MICHAEL  
In the restaurant business.

Letty looks at Michael, surprised.

CORT  
Speak of the devil.  
(beat)  
How did you guys meet again?

LETTY  
At the psych hospital.

CORT  
I would've sent a card, but your  
aunt and I, we weren't sure if that  
was the thing to do.

LETTY  
That's fine, Uncle Cort.

CORT  
(to Michael)  
So you were a volunteer over at the  
hospital?

MICHAEL  
Something like that.

LETTY  
When he could get time off from the  
restaurant business.

MICHAEL  
(to Letty)  
How about a dance?

CORT  
You two go ahead. I'm going to go  
bother that pretty sister of yours  
for a dance.

Cort gives Letty another big, wet kiss.

LETTY  
Bye, Uncle Cort.  
(to Michael)  
What's with the lie?

MICHAEL  
It wasn't exactly a lie.

LETTY  
Pretty close.

MICHAEL  
People at weddings don't want the truth.

Michael grabs a glass of champagne from a passing waiter.

LETTY  
It's not good to drink so much with the medication you're on.

MICHAEL  
What's with this music? I'll go talk to the D.J. and see if we can't get something good going.

Michael heads toward the D.J. and confers with him. Mr. Mayer walks up to Letty.

MR. MAYER  
It's good to see you so happy.

LETTY  
Thanks, dad.

Michael then walks back to Letty and pulls her out onto the dance floor as "Twist and Shout" BOOMS OUT from the speakers.

Letty's mother departs the dance floor, grimacing. Ruth shoots Michael a look of pure pleasure. And everyone begins twisting, as we

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Completely dark. Silent.

Letty, in a nightshirt, wanders in, and stumbles through the room. She fumbles for the switch on the floor lamp.

The light comes on, illuminating a small circle. Just outside of it sits Michael.

He stares straight ahead. Letty kneels down in front of him.

LETTY

Michael?

(beat)

Michael? You should come to bed.

Michael remains focused on the space directly in front of him.

LETTY

Did you take the aspirin and water?  
You don't want to feel awful in the  
morning.

(beat)

I'll get you some.

Letty begins to stand up. The movement breaks Michael's  
trance. He pulls her back down.

LETTY

What is it? Are you OK?

MICHAEL

(strangely calm)

Always the drugs.

LETTY

What?

MICHAEL

I saw you talking to my Mom.

LETTY

We both talked to her, Michael.  
And your dad.

MICHAEL

Why'd you tell her I wasn't taking  
my meds?

LETTY

What do you mean not taking your  
meds?

MICHAEL

Why'd you tell?

LETTY

I didn't talk to her about  
medications, Michael. Don't be  
silly.

Michael beats his hand on the floor.

MICHAEL  
Silly? Silly am I?

LETTY  
Michael, take it easy.

MICHAEL  
Silly, silly, silly.

LETTY  
I think I should call someone.

Michael reaches out, grabs the floor lamp, and pushes it over. He lurches to his feet and pulls Letty to a standing position.

MICHAEL  
(screaming)  
Don't upset my Mom. Don't you  
upset my Mom.

LETTY  
Michael, calm down. Please. It's  
OK.

Michael knocks some flowers over, then rips apart a pillow.

Letty hovers in back of him. He pauses. She puts her hand on his back.

Michael whirls around. He slaps Letty's hand away. She stumbles backward.

LETTY  
Michael, stop.

He stares in her direction, but he doesn't respond. Letty can't make a connection.

Michael shoves his fist through a window.

Letty grabs the phone.

MICHAEL  
Not my Mom. Not my silly silly  
Mom.

Letty runs with the phone. Michael follows her. Letty trips. She rights herself. She locks herself in the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM, MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - SAME

Michael POUNDS on the bathroom door. Letty dials 9-1-1.

LETTY  
I've got an emergency. I'm at...

Michael HOWLS -- a long, piercing inhuman sound.

LETTY  
1450 North Jenkins. Apartment 2.  
My boyfriend's out of control.

On the other side of the door, Michael SCREAMS. Another window SHATTERS.

NEIGHBOR (OS)  
What's going on in there?

LETTY  
(into phone)  
Please, please, send someone.  
(beat)  
No, he's having an attack. He's  
schizophrenic...

INT. LIVING ROOM - MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - LATER

Letty, wearing Michael's tux jacket, is curled up on the floor in a fetal position.

She stares...at the upset flowers, at the ripped-up pillows, at a fist-sized hole ripped through an unsturdy wall. Her gaze stops on a Spaghetti-O's can, lying empty on the floor.

KNOCKS on the door. Letty rises slowly, padding to the door like an old woman.

The KNOCKS grow urgent. Letty opens the door to Ruth.

Letty throws herself into Ruth's waiting embrace. Immediately, Letty cries.

After a moment, Letty steps back.

LETTY  
I'm sorry, so sorry. I never  
should have called.

Ruth looks into Letty's eyes.

RUTH  
You did the right thing.

LETTY  
I ruined your wedding night.

RUTH  
I'm glad you called. Now, not  
another word about it.

Ruth pulls Letty into the apartment and shuts the door behind them. It is only then that she sees the destruction in the living room. Horror flashes across her face.

RUTH  
Oh my God.

Tears stream down Letty's face. Ruth starts to cry.

RUTH  
Did he hurt you?

Letty shakes her head "no." Her sobbing intensifies. Ruth puts her arm around Letty, and together, they sit on the floor.

Ruth holds Letty until the crying eases.

LETTY  
Oh, Ruthie, what am I going to do?

RUTH  
You don't have to make any  
decisions tonight.

LETTY  
But what am I going to do?

RUTH  
Do you want to go see him? I'll  
take you if you want to go.

LETTY  
I can't. I can't see him there.

Ruth holds her close again.

LETTY  
I was so sure. I really thought it  
would work.  
(beat)  
We have plans, Ruth.

RUTH  
I know. I know.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA MISSION - DAY

Letty sits on the same bluff she once shared with Michael. She smokes a cigarette, and stares out at the ocean.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA MISSION - LATER

Letty remains on the bluff, crying. A priest, passing in the background looks over at her, and continues on his way.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA MISSION - NIGHT

In the darkness, Letty lies on her back. She stares up at the moon and stars, bright against the night sky.

EXT. BOTANICAL GARDENS - DAY

Letty walks along a pathway with Paul.

PAUL

I'm glad you agreed to see me.

LETTY

I'm just glad there aren't any hard feelings.

PAUL

Oh, none. None. I completely understand what was going on.

LETTY

Oh.

PAUL

How's work going? Are you back at school?

LETTY

I start on Monday.

PAUL

So things are back on track?

LETTY

Getting back.

PAUL

I heard about your friend.

LETTY

What?

PAUL  
I heard your friend was back in the hospital.

LETTY  
Michael. Yes.

PAUL  
I just wondered, well, if this meant there was a chance for us. Because I think about you a lot, and I still feel...

LETTY  
Our relationship meant a lot to me, too, Paul. But it's over.  
(beat)  
And Michael being in the hospital doesn't really change things.

PAUL  
I think I've heard this speech before.

LETTY  
I'm really sorry.

Letty reaches up to hug him. He quickly disengages himself.

PAUL  
I've got a deposition that I really need to get cracking on, so if you don't mind...

LETTY  
Sure, I understand.

Paul starts down the path.

LETTY  
Wait. Wait.

Letty runs up to Paul.

LETTY  
I need to give you this.

Letty hands Paul the engagement ring. He takes it and continues walking as she stares after him.

EXT. HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Letty walks up the steps to the imposing facility. We follow her journey through the VISITING ROOM, past families conversing with patients, to the NURSES' STATION.

Letty walks up to Nurse Gates, who gives her a quick hug. John and Bill watch as Letty signs the visitors' register.

NURSE GATES  
He's in Jamie's old room.

Letty walks down the HALLWAY and pauses outside Michael's door. She KNOCKS.

MICHAEL (OS)  
Come in.

INT. MICHAEL'S ROOM - HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - SAME

Michael is in the middle of taping up the same Houdini poster we saw in his last room when Letty enters.

LETTY  
Hi.

MICHAEL  
Hey.

Letty and Michael kiss awkwardly. Dead silence.

LETTY/MICHAEL (TOGETHER)  
How are you?

They smile nervously.

LETTY  
I guess we need to talk.

MICHAEL  
I guess so.

LETTY  
It's hard to know where to start.

MICHAEL  
Pretend like I'm your shrink.

Letty rolls her eyes.

MICHAEL  
Sorry. I'll be quiet.

LETTY  
I think about you all the time.

MICHAEL  
I sure know what that feels like.

LETTY  
And all the plans we have.

MICHAEL  
Yeah, the plans.

Letty looks out the window.

LETTY  
I've been thinking I could try to visit you at night after work, and then there'd be more time on weekends to see...

MICHAEL  
Letty, please.

LETTY  
What?

MICHAEL  
Like I've told you before I don't want you taking care of me.

LETTY  
Someone has to take care of you right now, Michael. You tore up the apartment. You stopped taking your medications.

MICHAEL  
But that wasn't me. I didn't mean to do that.

LETTY  
Well then why'd it happen?

MICHAEL  
I don't know. I don't fucking know.

Letty and Michael glare at each other. Letty looks away.

LETTY  
I'm sorry. I didn't come here to blame you.

MICHAEL

I didn't mean for any of this to happen.

LETTY

Oh, God, Michael, I know.  
(softly)  
Why does everything have to be so hard?

Michael shakes his head.

LETTY

What are we going to do?

MICHAEL

What do you want to do?

LETTY

I know I don't want to lose you. I don't think I could stand it.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but can you stand to be with me like this?

Letty waits. She looks away. She turns back and stares into Michael's eyes. Finally, she says it.

LETTY

No. I can't, Michael. I'm so sorry, but I just can't handle all this right now.

Letty starts to cry. Tears well up in Michael's eyes.

MICHAEL

I know. I can't either.

Michael sits down on the bed and they hold each other.

LETTY

I love you so much.

MICHAEL

I love you too, Letty. I love you, too.

Letty and Michael grip each other. Finally, they pull apart.

LETTY

Maybe we could just run away to Tahiti and live on the beach.

MICHAEL

That's the best idea I've heard in  
a long time.

Letty wipes a tear from Michael's cheek.

LETTY

Don't you HAVE a magic trick or  
something to make this easier?

MICHAEL

How about something better? Like a  
kiss.

The couple kisses more tenderly than ever before.

LETTY

I can still come visit you, you  
know.

MICHAEL

Would that really be such a good  
idea for either of us?

LETTY

Just promise me you'll be OK, OK?

MICHAEL

I will. And you make sure you take  
care of yourself.

Michael puts his hand under Letty's chin and draws her head  
up so he can look into her eyes.

MICHAEL

Promise you won't fall for any guys  
pretending to be doctors.

Letty shakes her head "no" as tears stream down her face.

LETTY

I guess I should go now.

MICHAEL

You should go.

Letty stands up and walks toward the door. She comes back  
and embraces Michael again. Slowly, they separate, and Letty  
leaves the room. Michael stares out the window.

EXT. HILLVIEW PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - SAME

Letty walks out the door, down the steps and along the front walkway -- until, finally, the hospital recedes in the distance.

INT. CLASSROOM - CHASEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Letty sits on top of a desk. Children of all ages stare her down. A few familiar faces--Bobby and Jenny--grace the room. Principal Gail passes outside the window and glances in.

LETTY

First of all, I want to welcome you to MathShop. I have lots of fun games planned for us.

(beat)

Let's see, Bobby, can you help me pass out these cards?

Bobby doesn't move.

LETTY

Is something wrong, Bobby?

BOBBY

Why were you gone so long?

JENNY

My mom said you went crazy.

LETTY

I had what some people call a nervous breakdown. I wasn't dealing with life so well so I went...

BOBBY

To a place for psychos.

LETTY

To a psychiatric institution.

JENNY

What's that?

LETTY

It's a place where you figure out what you want, and what things in your life aren't working. You learn to look out for yourself and not get...

Letty trails off. She sees that she's lost the class. Bobby launches a spit wad that hits the boy in front of him.

LETTY

Let me show you the best thing I  
learned.

She walks up to Bobby. He twists around in his seat, trying to hide the rest of his supply of spit wads.

Letty waves her hand around Bobby's head. The children, stare, delighted. She pulls a bright coin out of his ear, and hands it to him.

CHILDREN (TOGETHER)

Wow./ Neat./ Do it again, Miss  
Mayer.

Letty puts her hands behind her back and produces a bouquet of paper flowers. Now, she's got the class hooked.

FADE OUT

THE END