

COMMITTED

by
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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. EMLEE
...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. EMLEE
(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--gaze 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