

NEAR DEATH TANGO

By

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EXT. A MISTY, FAR AWAY PLACE - NIGHT (FANTASY)

The eyes of a woman pierce something in the distance. Though thoroughly painted, they seem natural, wild, predatory.

INT. MILLER HOUSE-- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- DAY (REALITY)

The eyes of a "different" woman, clamped shut, middle-aged, soft crow's feet, dark circles, pale skin.

EXT. A MISTY, FAR AWAY PLACE -- NIGHT (FANTASY)

The painted eyes belong to SULTRY LIZ (an amazingly youthful 41). Her auburn hair cascades in wild curls down her back. Her corseted dress is tight on her voluptuous body, and she struts fiercely.

INT. MILLER HOUSE-- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- DAY (REALITY)

The tired eyes belong to LIZ MILLER (41). Though roused, she keeps her eyes shut, hangs on to her fantasy.

INT. A MISTY, FAR AWAY PLACE -- NIGHT (FANTASY)

Sultry Liz strikes a smoldering pose. She then strides urgently toward her object: a broad-chested LATIN MAN in a suit and fedora. He eyes every part of Sultry Liz, nods approval.

INT. COMPUTER SUPPLY STORE -- DAY (REALITY)

Liz Miller's husband, BOB MILLER (44), eyes a web cam as if trying to see its innards. He has pasty, round cheeks and a balding head. His mechanic's shirt is a bit too tight for his hefty body. He piles numerous items on the check-out counter and gives the CASHIER a pleasant smile.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- DAY (REALITY)

Liz is sprawled across a love seat, exhausted, but not too tired to fantasize.

EXT. A MISTY, FAR AWAY PLACE -- NIGHT (FANTASY)

Sultry Liz thrusts her body against the Latin Man's broad chest and grabs his face with both hands.

He sweeps her into a seething dip. They dance Argentine tango. Shimmering. Passionate. Almost violent.

EXT. BOB'S TRUCK ON LEVITTOWN, PA ROAD -- DAY (REALITY)

Bob drives his red tow truck. The door says LARRY'S GARAGE. Bob is satisfied just swigging a coke.

EXT. A MISTY, FAR AWAY PLACE -- NIGHT (FANTASY)

Sultry Liz and the Latin Man bring their stunning tango to a climax. Then, a LOUD SHOT-LIKE SOUND.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- DAY (REALITY)

In her love seat, Liz startles awake and sees Bob falling to the floor. Boxes and bags from the computer store, as well as his can of Coke, are going down with him.

BOB
 (on the floor)
 Liz! That's the fourth time I
 tripped on this damned table!

The table is against the counter that divides the dining area from the kitchen.

BOB (CONT'D)
 Will ya stop moving it over here?
 It doesn't fit!

Still in her love seat, Liz rolls her eyes, ignores Bob.

Bob sits beside a pool of spilled coke, a laptop computer box clenched to his round belly, store bags on the floor beside him. As Bob gets up, Liz sees two large, fleshy "love handles" protruding from the back of his too-tight shirt.

She stands, strides urgently to Bob, and yanks down hard on his shirt, disgusted by his public display of fat!

Bob goes outside.

Liz is a rounder, frumpier, tired version of the sultry beauty in her dream, but she's not nearly as chubby as her husband. Her hair is limp. Her clothes are utterly plain. She plods to the kitchen.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Liz jerks open the microwave and pokes at a frozen lasagna. Bob re-enters the dining area carrying a big box. Liz can easily see and hear him, since only the counter separates the kitchen from the dining area.

BOB

Went ahead and got the all-in-one.
It's a fax, a copier, a laser
printer and it has special
capabilities for digital photos.

Liz SLAMS the door to the microwave, jabs at a few buttons.

LIZ

(bitterly to self)
But we don't even own a digital
camera.
(a second thought)
Of course. The camera's next.

Bob pulls items from a bag, plops them on the dining table.

BOB

(busy with new stuff)
CDs, clip art, a mouse that works
with a light beam, a web cam! And
a hand rest so we don't get no
carpal tunnel...

LIZ

(with fake cheer)
So, what did you spend?... On all
this?

BOB

Don't worry, we still got some
left.

LIZ

Good. I'll take that money and get
something for myself. Something
form-fitting, with a plummeting
neck line, and a slit, that soars.

Bob is busy admiring his purchase, not listening to Liz. She tries to get a jealous reaction out of him by giving more details on her slinky dream dress.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 Maybe red velvet, blood red, with spaghetti straps. Ah, forget the straps. Who needs straps when you're wearing a red, velvet tango dress.

(Bob doesn't react)
 And maybe four inch heels with lots of straps!

(still no reaction)
 Bob!

Bob responds to his name, but has no idea what Liz just said.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (blurts angrily)
 Get that stuff off the table!
 (composing herself)
 Dinner's ready.

Liz notices the soda still on the dining room floor. She wets a dish towel and trudges to the dining room.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Throughout the following, Liz wipes up the soda as Bob goes back and forth, taking his stuff from the dining area to the den. (The living and dining areas are like one big room, and the den is right off the dining area.)

LIZ
 (back to fake cheer)
 I'm so glad it doesn't bother you.

BOB
 What?

LIZ
 Just, I'm about to slip into a provocative dress, then slip into the arms of other men.

BOB
 Aw, Liz! Not tango again!

LIZ
 Exotic men.

BOB
 You're a secretary at Truman High School, not Jennifer Lopez.

LIZ
 (snidely)
 Sophisticated men.

She goes to the kitchen, returns with lasagna and a salad.

BOB
 You been talking about this tango
 thing for months.
 (motioning to the empty
 dining room)
 Made your little dance floor. Don't
 see you dancing on it.

Bob continues to stand, piling food on his plate. Liz sits at
 the table, sizes Bob up, then speaks.

LIZ
 The beautiful thing about tango...
 It takes two.
 (points to self)
 One.
 (points to Bob)
 Two.

BOB
 Didn't sleep last night, did ya?
 (heads to den with plate)
 Go to the doctor and get some
 hormones. You're getting wackier by
 the minute.

LIZ
 (with fake cheer)
 By the way, dear, I'm re-
 instituting the Twenty Minute Rule.

In response, Bob grimaces with his whole body.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (sweetly)
 It's no big deal. Just a twenty
 minute conversation, with your
wife.

BOB
 (groaning)
 But every day! I thought we were
 done with that when Jelly left for
 college.

LIZ
Yeah, and you didn't mind doing it
when Jelly was here, or even
Robert.

BOB
That's because Robert, our over-
educated son, did all the talking.
All I had to do was watch.

LIZ
(openly hurt)
Then, what about Jelly? You spend
glorious hours chatting with our
daughter, but you don't have twenty
minutes for me.

A silent face off. Bob succumbs to guilt.

BOB
OK, honey.... Alright. I'll do
your Twenty Minutes.
(kisses her on the cheek)
But can we start tomorrow?
Survivor's coming on.

A tense beat. Then, Liz attacks.

LIZ
You do realize, you'd be the first
one voted off their island.

Bob shrugs as if he doesn't care and heads to his den. A
FLICKERING, BLUE GLOW and VOICES suddenly emanate from the
den: Bob has turned on the TV.

Still sitting, Liz slumps over the table, closes her eyes,
drifts into a fantasy about her annoying husband.

EXT. A MISTY, FAR AWAY PLACE -- NIGHT (FANTASY)

Sultry Liz and the Latin Man react fiercely to a GUN SHOT.

Jealous, Bob has shot at the Latin Man, but missed. Now,
he's lost his nerve and whimpers at the gun in his own hand.

The Latin Man deftly SHOOTs Bob's gun to the ground.

The bullet clips Bob's hand. It barely bleeds, but Bob runs
off whimpering anyway.

Sultry Liz and the Latin Man continue their shimmering tango. Then, an ominous LOUD GRINDING. They react with primal fear.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS
(REALITY)

It's just the GRINDING of the blender (O.S.) in the kitchen.

Bob enters with two glasses, one large, the other small. He gives Liz the small glass. It's a milkshake.

BOB
A little extra. Double fudge.

Bob slips off into the Blue Glow of the TV in the den.

Drinking the shake, Liz practices tango steps in the middle of her dining room dance floor.

She suddenly stops and looks soberly in a full-length mirror on the wall. She gets close to the mirror, touches the lines on her face, tries to smooth them out, and then gives up.

She roots through the drawer of a large hutch, grabs a hidden pack of cigarettes, puts on her coat, and exits.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Liz closes the door, lights a cigarette. She studies the TV's Blue Glow coming from the windows of Bob's den.

She looks through a window at Bob, frozen in his chair with his mouth dropped open. The Blue Glow makes him look grey, zombie-like. It seems to be sucking the life out of him.

EXT. THE MILLER NEIGHBORHOOD -- CONTINUOUS

It's a breezy, fall night. Liz trudges down the street.

The depressing Blue Glow flickers from every house, except one. This unique house emits a soft, GOLDEN GLOW, and someone inside is playing a melancholy TUNE on a piano. Liz longingly studies this beautiful home.

The breeze blows Liz's hair across her face. As she brushes it aside, she accidentally burns the back of her hand on her cigarette. She examines the burn closely.

Then, she methodically presses the cigarette into her hand, makes a burn next to the accidental one. She takes a deep breath, absorbs the pain.

Finally, she comes to her senses, freaked out by her self-destructive behavior. She puts out the cigarette, shoves it in her pocket, hurries, panicked, back to her house.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz enters, faces two large pictures on the living room wall. One is of their son Robert; the other is of their daughter Jelly. Both kids are in full high school graduation regalia.

LIZ
 (whispers to pictures)
 Well, Robert, Jelly... I've
 accomplished one good thing: you
 both got away.

Liz drops listlessly into her love seat, her burnt hand in a fist. The Blue Glow flickers from the den. Besides Liz, the only life in the room is her abundant plants.

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- LOBBY -- THE NEXT DAY

STUDENTS swarm, brushing by Liz, as she trudges to the main office. She is invisible to them. She wears lifeless hair, beige clothes, and flat shoes. She enters the main office.

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- MAIN OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

HAL WINDSLOW (late 60s), the security guard, greets Liz. He's kind of short, but his presence is big.

HAL
 Here comes the sun.

LIZ
 (gratefully)
 Morning, Hal.

She notices an empty desk.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 No! She quit?!

Hal nods yes. Liz looks around. There are other empty desks in the office; it has clearly been deserted.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Now I have to do the work of two secretaries and a receptionist! Why did she quit?!

HAL

You know why.

MR. SWEENEY rushes from his office, which is attached to the main office. His door says, "MR. RONALD SWEENEY, PRINCIPAL." He is forty-ish, good looking, nervous, obnoxious.

MR. SWEENEY

You're late!

LIZ

(cautious, polite)
But it's only five 'til.

MR. SWEENEY

(exiting)
Be on time, next time.

Liz and Hal exchange exasperated, knowing glances.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- THAT NIGHT

Liz's burnt hand sets an egg timer to twenty minutes. She and Bob stare at each other across the table: this is their first attempt at the Twenty Minute Rule.

Liz waits for Bob to initiate the conversation. Bob obstinately swigs a milkshake, silent.

LIZ

C'mon, Bob. We haven't had a decent conversation in two decades, just you and me.

BOB

(disagreeing)
Pff.

LIZ

Then, give me one example of a good conversation!

A beat, while Bob scours his brain.

Bob

Your parents! When they died, we had some real tear-jerkers.

Liz becomes nostalgic remembering these tender moments.

LIZ

True. You were very... good. You kept saying, "At least they died in their sleep."

(returns to reality)

That was five and a half years ago! And we haven't had a good talk since!

BOB

Oh, yeah? What about Dad's heart attack? We were stuck in that waiting room for hours. Talking, talking, and talking...

LIZ

So a heart's got to stop for us to exchange more than just... grunts!

BOB

OK, OK, I'll talk.

Bob thinks hard, searching for something to say.

LIZ

What about that computer you just bought. Tell me something about it.

Bob brightens up for a nanosecond.

BOB

Well,... I played solitaire on it. Won once.

LIZ

Great. And what else?

BOB

Um... Well...

(defensive)

It's almost impossible to win at solitaire.

LIZ

(can't help herself)

You don't need to buy a thousand dollar computer just to play solitaire!

BOB
 (sputters)
 Liz, don't start with me--

LIZ
 Yeah, because we know how much Bob Miller hates to start anything... Oh wait, I forgot! He starts lots of things. He just never finishes them!

And they're off on a good argument...

NINETEEN MINUTES LATER

The timer TICKS; it only has a minute left on it.

Liz angrily watches Bob play a game on his cell phone. He's angry too, ignoring her. She makes a show of grabbing a hidden pack of cigarettes from the hutch, lighting up.

BOB
 Liz?!

LIZ
 I'll worry about my cigarettes!
 You worry about your milkshakes!

She snatches her coat, bolts out. The timer RINGS.

EXT. THE MILLER NEIGHBORHOOD -- A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Liz studies the house with the Golden Glow, takes in its soft MUSIC. The house seems warm, gentle, alive next to the others, with their cold, sharp Blue Glows.

A familiar, eerie feeling overtakes her; and she presses her cigarette, this time, into the palm of her hand. Then, out of nowhere, Hal's voice.

HAL (O.S.)
 Sweety, you shou'nt be out here at night. By yourself.

Liz drops the cigarette, throws her hands up like a thief. And there's Hal in his truck.

LIZ
 (points to house with Golden Glow, lies)
 My, uh, good friend lives here.

Hal waves, drives off. Suddenly, Liz gets an exciting idea. She marches up to the house, KNOCKS eagerly on the door. The piano music stops. The door flies open.

And there's a PALE WOMAN who looks a lot like Liz, except she's older, angry, and clearly in the midst of a nervous breakdown. She scowls at Liz, scaring her, making her tongue-tied.

A beat, as Liz tries to find the words to introduce herself.

PALE WOMAN

Lady, you better have something
miraculous to say or to sell,
'cause you don't know how much of
my life's already been wasted!

The Pale Woman glares murderously. Creeped completely out, Liz runs the whole way home.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz SLAMS the door behind her, runs straight up the stairs.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

In the sickening florescent light, Liz examines her pale, aging face. She SLAPS at it, trying to make it look more alive. She slaps so hard that she leaves welts. With trembling hands, she furiously covers them with make-up.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- THREE NIGHTS LATER

Liz's face is brightly painted. She wears gaudy jewelry, lace gloves, a black dress, fish nets, high heels. Liz has become Sultry Liz, only rounder, self-conscious, overdone.

The timer TICKS: Liz and Bob sit at the table doing their Twenty Minutes. Liz has furnished background music: TANGOS play from a CD.

Bob scowls, scornful of Liz's gaudy, new appearance. Liz types quickly at the computer and then tries to engage Bob.

LIZ

(shows Bob computer)

Look.

CLOSE ON the screen. It's a YOUTUBE clip of a couple dancing Argentine tango. The woman kicks her leg effortlessly over her head, and then the couple swirls into a contorted pose.

LIZ (CONT'D)
I wonder if I could ever kick that high... Maybe if I did some yoga.

Bob rolls his eyes, jumps out of his seat, heads for the den.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Hey, wait! Your Twenty Minutes isn't up yet.

BOB
If I remember it right, the Twenty Minutes is supposed to be a "decent conversation." This is more like the Crazy Liz Show!

Liz follows Bob, stumbling in her four inch heels.

LIZ
(feigns sweetness)
You can insult me all you want, or you can keep your mouth clamped shut like you usually do. But you're not getting out of your Twenty Minutes.
(refers to her own, strange outfit)
Obviously, we've got lots to talk about.

BOB
(takes the bait)
OK! You wanna talk. Let's talk... Third day in a row, you're wearin' the same dress. And you're not goin' nowhere?!

LIZ
Nope. Just trying to get a feel for the tango. Then, I'll work my way up to the steps. Then...
(almost threatening)
I'll find myself a dance partner. A smoldering one.

To emphasize her point, Liz tries to strike a sexy pose, but she loses balance and almost falls. Bob catches her.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (chokes back tears,
 disgusted with herself)
 These heels! I can't even walk in
 them, let alone dance?!

Holding Liz up, Bob softens at his wife in distress. At this moment, Liz realizes she might get Bob to dance with her out of pity. Pouting, she places a hand on each of his biceps and pulls him around the floor. It's as if they are dancing.

As they "dance," Bob fixates lustfully on her exposed cleavage. Liz gives Bob a vulnerable little smile. He pulls her close, chest to chest.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 Yes, honey, that's exactly the way
 they dance, heart to heart...

Bob buries his head in her neck, kissing wildly. Liz almost falls pushing him away.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 What are you doing?!

BOB
 What do ya think I'm doing?

LIZ
 I thought we were dancing.

BOB
 (sexually frustrated)
 Dancing?

Bob notices Liz sweating. He pats at her face and arms.

BOB (CONT'D)
 Look at you! Look! That's a hot
 flash! It's a hot flash!

LIZ
 Bob, I'm not hot. I'm just sweaty!
 Why ya always pushing me into
 menopause! I'm only forty one!

BOB
 Well, you're goin' early! I hear
 the guys at the shop talking 'bout
 their wives. The sleepless nights.
 The wacky behavior. The hot
 flashes! Please! Go to the
 doctor! Get some hormones!

LIZ

OK.

(Bob is shocked by her
easy compliance)

If you do the tango with me, I'll
go to the doctor.

A long beat, while Bob considers her proposal.

BOB

(with extreme reluctance)

Alright. But only during our
Twenty Minutes.

LIZ

Plus an hour on Saturdays!

BOB

Don't push it, Liz.

LIZ

OK. Twenty Minutes. You promise?

BOB

I... I promise.

Bob escapes to his den. Liz plops triumphantly into her love seat. Since Bob never does much of anything, this promise is a big step. Hopeful, Liz dreams of his tango potential.

EXT. A MISTY, FAR AWAY PLACE -- NIGHT (FANTASY)

Sultry Liz and the broad-chested Latin Man are dancing.

Bob has bandaged his hand, regained his gun. He may be round and bald, but he is now dressed as a gaucho (an Argentine cowboy), which gives him a certain renegade flare. He SHOTS the fedora right off the Latin Man's head.

Before the Latin Man can draw his gun, Bob challenges him to a dance battle. Bob strikes a formidable pose, then does an impressive display of footwork. The Latin man does his own fancy footwork, and the two men go back and forth, increasing the difficulty level with each round.

Out of the blue, the Latin Man trips. Not a big trip, but an undeniable one. The battle is over. Bob has won.

Sultry Liz strides into Bob's arms. He throws her into a seething dip. Sultry Liz is full of pride: her husband has "fought" for her and won.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS
(REALITY)

Still in her love seat, Liz is awakened by Bob.

BOB (O.S.)
(calls from den)
... Honey! We got any of that
Rocky Road?

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Alone, Liz daydreams. She wears bland clothes. No slinky tango dresses in public; she's too insecure for that.

The DOCTOR (30s) opens the door. He takes one look at Liz and shrugs with frustration.

DOCTOR
(calls to a nurse)
Lucy! You got me the wrong chart
again!

LIZ
Um... Where's Doctor Waverly?

DOCTOR
He retired. You didn't know?
(offers a hand shake)
Doctor Griswald.

LUCY the nurse (30s) scurries cheerfully in.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(to Lucy, re: Liz)
Does she look like a Robert Miller,
(pointing to the chart)
Date of birth, nineteen eighty
seven? C'mon, she's not a male,
and she's clearly not that young!

Liz reacts silently, feeling hopelessly old. Lucy rolls her eyes, smiling, happily conceding her mistake. She grabs the chart and exits.

LIZ
Robert. That's my son. He's a
senior at American University. My
daughter's in college, too. Her
first year.

DOCTOR
Two kids in college, you must be
very proud.

LIZ
(tears burst from nowhere)
Yes...

Doctor Griswald grabs a tissue box. It's empty.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(still crying)
Jelly calls all the time, but
Robert hasn't called in over a
month.

DOCTOR
(searches cabinets for
tissues)
Why don't you call him?

LIZ
All grown up, a senior in college,
and Mommy calling to make sure he's
eating right. Noooo!

The doctor pulls a paper towel from a dispenser. Deciding
it's too rough to offer her, he throws it in the trash.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(still crying)
Truthfully, I don't care what he
eats!

DOCTOR
Mrs. Miller... Uh... Do you have a
dog? Maybe you should get a dog!

LIZ
We can't have hairy pets! Jelly's
allergic!

The doctor is tongue-tied. He keeps looking for tissues.

LIZ (CONT'D)
It always seemed like Robert should
be the allergic one. He's so
sensitive.

DOCTOR
Mrs. Miller, do you cry a lot?

LIZ
 (still crying)
 No. Never. Not anymore.

Lucy re-enters, oblivious to Liz's tears. She triumphantly reads Liz's chart out loud.

LUCY
 Elizabeth Miller. Forty one. Bad insomnia. Irregular cycle... Hot flashes.

LIZ
 (whimpering)
 No, it's just, I'm sweaty.

Liz tries to pull herself together. Lucy sympathetically coos at her.

DOCTOR
 Lucy! Go get some tissues!

Lucy hurries out, openly offended by Dr. Griswald's outburst.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 Now, Mrs. Miller, what do you do for fun?

Liz thinks hard, trying to find an answer. When she finally finds one, she is disgusted with herself.

LIZ
 I eat! Everything! Anything sweet, soft, or creamy. I eat!

DOCTOR
 Hmm...

Liz shoots Dr. Griswald a desperate, questioning look.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 (carefully)
 It, uh, looks like you've had a, small, small... weight gain since your last visit.

Liz's tears burst forth again.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 From, from your chart, I can see, but --

LIZ
It's the truth. I have gotten fat.

DOCTOR
But you're not real fat, yet. I
mean, you look... fine.

Liz is still defeated.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
You look.... good. You look...
(lies)
Great.

Liz offers him an sweet, thankful, almost coquettish look.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(unnerved)
I... I think you may be depressed.

LIZ
Depression! That's worse than
menopause!

DOCTOR
Well, it could be complicated by
menopause. We are gonna check your
hormones. And try you on some
antidepressants.

Liz wilts, abject, says nothing.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Mrs. Miller? Maybe you should see
a therapist.

Liz clearly doesn't like the idea of a therapist, but before
she can protest, Lucy returns and hands Liz a box of tissues.

LUCY
(sotto voce, re: doctor)
Don't worry, Miss Miller, he makes
me cry all the time!

Lucy is a real piece of work.

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- MAIN OFFICE -- LATER THAT DAY

Liz enters and squeezes past a group of STUDENTS. The
students surround Hal and a BRAUNY BOY, who are engaged in a
spirited thumb wrestling contest.

Mr. Sweeney opens his office door and, in response, the kids scatter. Hal rolls his eyes, already annoyed by the principal.

Mr. Sweeney and a mousy RECEPTIONIST exit his office.

MR. SWEENEY
 (introducing)
 Well, Liz, we just hired ourselves
 another receptionist.
 (smirks, to receptionist)
 I hope you're more dedicated than
 the last one.

The nervous woman is taken aback by his comment. Hal shakes his head at Mr. Sweeney's rudeness, and Liz tries to make up for the principal with super friendliness.

LIZ
 So nice to meet you--

Mr. Sweeney interrupts Liz to give her an order.

MR. SWEENEY
 I need you in the kitchen, a-sap.
 One of the lunch ladies just quit.

Before Liz can say a word, Mr. Sweeney slaps a wad of hair nets on her desk.

MR. SWEENEY (CONT'D)
 (re: hair nets)
 And wear one of these. We're due
 for an inspection. No hair in the
 stew!

In the background Hal works hard to bite his tongue. Trying not to alarm the receptionist, Liz protests with fake cheer.

LIZ
 (points to a large pile of
 files)
 But Mr. Sweeney, I have to finish
 all of these by tomorrow.

MR. SWEENEY
 (pointedly)
 You have my utmost contrition!

He exits quickly to his office and SLAMS his door behind him. Liz pretends he is funny.

LIZ
 (chuckling, to
 receptionist)
 Contrition? I don't even know what
 that means!

HAL
 It means he's a bully, Liz!
 Purposely using words people don't
 understand.

Overwhelmed, the receptionist runs out of the office. Liz chases her, but the mousy woman is way too fast. Liz gives up and watches her escape.

When the receptionist opens the door, the blue-gray lobby is filled with intense, GOLDEN SUNLIGHT. The light is so divinely beautiful that Liz spontaneously imagines a CHORUS OF ANGELS SINGING. When the door closes, the light is gone, and Liz is stuck in her drab reality.

HAL (CONT'D)
 (resigned)
 Another one has flown the coop.

Liz trudges to her desk and puts on a hair net. She is doomed to be forever frumpy.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- THAT NIGHT

Absorbed in depressing thoughts, Liz gets ready for bed. Already in bed, Bob watches her take off a provocative dress and fishnets. Her silhouette -- in only a bra and panties -- moves languidly, almost sensually, toward him.

Getting closer, Liz pulls off her bra. Excited, Bob rips off his T-shirt. Is she actually initiating sex?!

Then, Liz grabs a flannel gown from the dresser, puts it on, and falls into bed. She clamps her eyes shut, as if trying to force sleep or shut Bob out. He feels the rejection.

HOURS LATER

Liz is sitting up in bed while Bob snores beside her. She fiddles with one of her gaudy broaches, making it sparkle.

She looks around sadly. Her dresser is cluttered with colorful jewelry and clay creations from her kids' childhood.

Prominent on the dresser: a picture of her late parents somewhere outside, laughing, a breeze playing with their hair. The frame says, "IN LOVING MEMORY, MOM AND DAD."

Bob's entertainment center holds a TV and lots of his high school football trophies. Also, a photo of young, proud Bob in football gear, a teenaged Liz gushing proudly beside him.

Liz continues playing with her broach, sad and alone.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- THE NEXT DAY

Liz charges in, tosses her purse on the bed. She unleashes a red velvet, strapless dress from a big, department store bag. This is her dream dress (that she described in the opening scene), and she's thrilled to put it on!

As she takes off her plain clothes and squeezes herself into the tight dress, she fantasizes about dancing a lively tango (called milonga) with Bob on a dock in Buenos Aires.

EXT. A DOCK IN BUENOS AIRES -- NIGHT (FANTASY)

Sultry Liz, in the red dress, and Gaucho Bob dance exuberantly. Lots of other DANCERS join them, celebrating. Even the broad-chested Latin Man dances, with a new woman.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- BOB'S DEN -- CONTINUOUS -- DAY

Bob's den is dark, twilight zone-ish. Liz positions her red, velvet self between him and the TV. The TV's Blue Glow turns her into a silhouette, a statue to be reckoned with. She slaps a wad of papers in Bob's face.

LIZ

Proof. I'm fully functioning.

Bob is shocked by her sudden, demanding presence.

LIZ (CONT'D)

The lab results. No menopause.

BOB

(utter disbelief)

None?

LIZ

(adjusts her tight dress)

I've got more estrogen than you can handle!

Bob examines the papers closely, trying to find a mistake.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Now, get moving!

Bob screws up his face. He doesn't understand.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Remember? You promised to dance
the tango.

BOB
(utter distaste for tango)
Aw, Liz!

LIZ
Ya know, Bob, tango is a man's
dance. Al Pacino does it.

BOB
Pff!

LIZ
You saw Scent of a Woman. Or Shall
We Dance? Richard Gere does the
tango, too!

BOB
They did it 'cause they got paid.
Big bucks!

LIZ
Then, Robert Duvall. He lives and
breaths it, for real!

BOB
Now you're just pickin' names out
of a hat.

LIZ
He does! I saw it on the internet.

Liz suggestively cozies up to Bob.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Come on, honey, I bet you could do
better than any of those guys.
You've got more... grit.

BOB
(pushing her away)
Don't start that crap. Look at
you.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)

You look like a hooker, but when push comes to shove, you act like the Virgin Mary!

LIZ

So that's what it all boils down to!

Bob

Liz, something's wrong with you! Very wrong! And I'm not dancing with ya 'til ya get fixed!

LIZ

Well, I guess ya know what I'm not doin' with you!

Bob glares into the Blue Glow. Furious, Liz charges out, struggling to stay upright in her heels.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz grabs her cigarettes from the hutch, throws open the back doors, exits to the patio.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- BACK PATIO -- CONTINUOUS

Liz lights up, pacing awkwardly in her heels.

LIZ

(muttering to self)

No, you get fixed, Bob. You get fixed.

She trips, almost falls. She throws herself into a lawn chair, rips off her shoes, hurls them at the house.

Then, she is interrupted by a tiny voice.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

Grandma, what's a matter with that lady?

The Miller house is on a corner lot, so a sidewalk borders the back yard. The Pale Woman, from the house with the Golden Glow, stands on the sidewalk with the LITTLE GIRL. They hurry away.

Liz sees herself in the glass patio door: dishevelled, barefoot, a cigarette in one hand, burn marks on the other.

LIZ
 (whispers to herself)
 No, you get fixed.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOME -- NIGHT

Liz knocks shyly on the front door. MAGGIE CHANTELLE, a therapist, greets her with a warm smile. A thin woman in her early 60s, she is professionally dressed in soft colors.

MAGGIE
 You must be Liz.
 (Liz nods "yes")
 I'm Maggie.

INT. MAGGIE'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The living room is bright, neat, luxurious. As they walk through, Liz fixates on Maggie's elegant high heels. Maggie walks expertly. Liz is already jealous.

A cat jumps on a table. Maggie pets it, cooing lovingly at it. She then leads Liz through a door to her waiting room.

INT. MAGGIE'S WAITING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

An outside door is visible.

MAGGIE
 You can use this door from now on.
 It's easier.

LIZ
 (offended)
 The back door?

MAGGIE
 (cheerfully)
 It's actually on the side. I need a
 separate entrance for my office.
 State regulations require it.

Maggie escorts Liz into her office.

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie shows Liz to a seat, plops onto one nearby, and throws her feet onto a plush ottoman. Trying to ignore Maggie's shameless display of fancy footwear, Liz gets down to business.

LIZ
(abruptly)
Do you have any afternoon hours?

MAGGIE
I'm sorry, honey, but I work at the hospital during the day.

Liz is obviously disappointed.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
You work at night?

LIZ
No, it's just... Well, I'd rather my husband didn't know I was coming here. It would, you know, give him more ammunition.

MAGGIE
So, you might need marriage counseling?

LIZ
No. I'd have to knock him out and throw him into the trunk of the car to get him to marriage counseling!

Maggie stares inquisitively at Liz.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(extremely defensive)
I mean, I'd never do that for real.
I'm not... crazy.

Maggie takes a deep breath, levels her eyes at Liz, and settles in for what appears to be a challenging session.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Liz has clearly been crying. Dr. Griswald is tense, uncomfortable with her tears.

LIZ
I don't like her!

DOCTOR
Dr. Chantelle?

LIZ
She's a doctor? Her card just said
"Maggie."

DOCTOR
She's a very good psychologist.

LIZ
She makes you go in the back door!
The back door!
(thinks)
Isn't depression just part of life,
anyway? Really, I'm just so tired.
What about sleeping pills?

DOCTOR
Sleeping pills are addictive. How
many times have you seen Dr.
Chantelle?

A long beat.

LIZ
Once.

DOCTOR
Once?
(a beat)
This is what I'm gonna do. I'm
gonna give you five sleeping pills,
not enough to cause any damage.

LIZ
What kind of damage?

DOCTOR
Well--

LIZ
(offended)
You think I'm gonna kill myself?!

DOCTOR
(masks his exasperation)
No. I just, as a policy, don't give
sleeping pills to people who are so
depressed.

LIZ
 (listless)
So depressed?

DOCTOR
 Please, give Dr. Chantelle a
 chance, and try some Tylenol PM.
 If things haven't improved in a few
 weeks, we'll explore other
 possibilities.

Out of the blue, nurse Lucy barges in with a PATIENT.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 Wrong room, Lucy!

Lucy sees that Liz has been crying.

LUCY
 (sotto voce)
 Really, Dr. Griswald, you've got to
 work on your bedside manner!

INT. GROCERY STORE -- DAY

Liz tosses a bag of chocolate bars into her cart, then
 strolls to the bakery. Almost lovingly, she places fresh-
 baked, chocolate muffins in a bag.

Then, she spies Maggie in the distance and cringes at the
 plethora of junk food in her own cart. She ducks down the
 nearest aisle, sneaks around the store, and frantically
 replaces every item of junk food with comparable health food.

She then garnishes the shopping cart with greens and feigns
 surprise as she strolls up to Maggie in the check-out line.

LIZ
 Oh, Dr. Chantelle.

MAGGIE
 (munches on a cookie)
 Liz! How are you?
 (offers her a cookie)
 Butter cookies. My favorite.

Liz feels the irony of the cookie.

LIZ
 (acting a bit superior)
 No, thank you.

A moment of awkward silence. Then, Maggie offers Liz her place at the front of the check-out line.

MAGGIE

You go on ahead, dear. My husband just ran back for some smoked ham.

LIZ

(doesn't want to get stuck with all the right food)
No, that's alright. I can wait.

MAGGIE

(pulls Liz's cart ahead of hers)
Really, Liz, go ahead.

LIZ

But I... I wouldn't want to inconvenience you.

MAGGIE

No problem. No problem at all.

Liz gives up, places organic kale and bean sprouts on the conveyer. Then, she sees Bob's parents approaching.

LIZ

Grandma, Grandpa Miller!

They have just checked out and are exiting the store.

GRANDMA MILLER (70s) has long since let herself go. Her clothes don't quite match, and she wears slippers with holes cut in them to make room for her bunions.

GRANDPA MILLER (70s) isn't exactly grumpy. He's just absent, bored, disengaged.

Grandma Miller notices the unusual foods on the conveyor. She picks up the kale, not quite sure what it even is.

GRANDMA MILLER

(cheerfully)

Looks like we're gonna have a healthy Thanksgiving.

Liz looks back at Maggie. Her Husband, DOUG CHANTELLE (mid-60s), has returned from the deli. He's tall, distinguished, physically fit. He gives Maggie an affectionate little hug.

Liz is stuck between her perfect therapist and her imperfect in-laws.

INT. LARRY'S GARAGE -- LOBBY -- DAY

CLOSE ON a life-sized cardboard cutout of Larry Miller. A caption across its belly says, "LARRY MILLER, OWNER-OPERATOR." Larry's voice can be heard.

LARRY (O.S.)
 (joking... mostly)
 Since I'm your only brother -- your younger, smarter, better looking brother -- I feel a duty to give you a little guidance when it comes to Liz.

And then, LARRY MILLER (early 40s) for real. He is somewhat better looking than Bob, but he's sloppier and fatter than his cardboard cutout.

Larry relaxes in his seat behind the counter and plays with a broken fan belt. Bob listens intently.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 Ya see, Liz is a woman. And a woman needs to feel... Romantic. Pretty.
 (cracks belt like a whip)
 Even if she isn't...
 (a beat)
 Now here's what you should do...

Larry opens a supply closet. On the inside of the door is a poster of a Victoria's Secret model, wings and all. He points to it like a teacher points to a chalk board.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- THE NEXT DAY

Liz waters her plants in a brand new tango dress.

Bob enters eagerly, holding a pink bag. He slips perilously on the living room floor, which is missing its rug.

BOB
 (annoyed)
 Where's the darn rug?

Liz is still angry because he broke his promise to dance tango with her.

LIZ
 (flatly)
 Sold it on e-bay.

BOB
But it was almost new!

LIZ
(with fake cheer)
Remember, a long time ago, we made
a deal. And you agreed: this is my
room. I can do whatever I want
with it.
(points to the den)
That's your room.

BOB
(bewildered)
But why'd you sell it?

LIZ
(keeps watering plants)
I've developed an expensive taste
in apparel.

A beat, while Bob reluctantly gives up the argument and shifts his attention to the pink bag in his hands.

BOB
(holds up the bag)
You know which store this came
from, don't you?
(Liz ignores him)
Victoria's Secrets.

Liz is already annoyed by his supposed gift. Bob makes his bumbling move.

BOB (CONT'D)
If you had a pretty, pink, lacy
gown, would you--

LIZ
Sprout big, white wings and fly
outa here like one of their models?

BOB
Nooo.

LIZ
Those wings would never lift this
body anyway.

Bob wraps his arms awkwardly around Liz. She tenses up.

BOB
 (trying hard)
 We could, uh... light some
 candles... play some of your
 romantic music...

Liz takes the bag, pulls out an utterly skimpy negligee.
 With a smile, she hangs the top of the negligee on Bob's head
 and secures it with the thong bottoms.

LIZ
 I'll be your whore by night when
 you start being a real husband by
 day!

Liz runs up the stairs, desperate to get away from her
 pathetic husband.

Bob rips the negligee off his head. His suspicions spring
 into focus.

BOB
 (to himself)
 Another man?

He spies her purse on the table and can't resist looking
 through it. He finds a hidden pack of cigarettes and shakes
 his head at her bad habit. He finds her cell phone, starts
 pressing buttons, looking for covert calls.

Suddenly, ROBERT (21), their son, appears in the dining room.
 He's a serious, handsome young man, and he can't figure out
 why Bob is going through Liz's purse.

BOB (CONT'D)
 Robert! You're home!

An awkward beat, then Bob tries to cover.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (grabs Liz's cigarettes)
 Can you believe it? Your mother's
 at it again.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- THE DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING

Liz watches a ROBUST YOUNG COUPLE load her dining room hutch
 onto the back of a pick-up truck.

They drive off. She enters the house, counting the money.

INT. MILLER HOUSE-- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz hears Robert reciting poetry in the dining area. She creeps into the living room, inconspicuous, listening.

ROBERT (O.S.)

"Strong and content, I travel the open road. The earth-- that is sufficient; I do not want the constellations any nearer..."

Robert stands in the middle of Liz's dining room dance floor as if it were a stage. He holds a book entitled SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD AND OTHER GREATS by WALT WHITMAN. He feels Liz watching him and protests impatiently.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Mother!

LIZ

You have such a strong voice.

One moment with Liz, and Robert regresses into whiney teenager.

ROBERT

I have a right to my privacy!

LIZ

Not here in my room. This room is for human interaction.

ROBERT

We had enough interaction yesterday, for Thanksgiving!

LIZ

If you want privacy, you'll have to go to your room, or you can take a nice walk outside.

(observes his book title)

Find an open road!

ROBERT

Oh, yeah, Mom, I'm gonna walk through the streets of Levittown reciting Walt Whitman. People will think I'm schizophrenic.

LIZ

Nah, they'll just think you're talking on your cell.

Robert shoots her a stubborn, tortured look.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Then, I guess it's your room,
Robert.

Robert storms to his room.

Throughout the following, Liz goes back and forth from the kitchen to the dining room setting the table.

Bob and JELLY (18) charge in from outside. Jelly is curvy like her mother, but athletic. She exudes an uncommon lightness of spirit. So does her big, naturally curly hair. She has a brand new camera, and she takes pictures of everything with it.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(disgruntled, sotto voce)
OK, Bob, now that you went and bought her an expensive camera, for no reason at all, what are we gonna get her for Christmas?!

Liz has toned down her slinky tango dress for the kids with a simple sweater, but she is still rich photographic material.

JELLY
(taking pictures of Liz)
Beautiful!
(running out)
Robert! Say cheese!

LIZ
(to Bob, re: camera)
When ya gonna grow some self control?

BOB
Me?! You're the one selling off everything in the house to finance your weird dress habit.

LIZ
Yeah, I'm selling my things, things we don't ever use. I wear these dresses! I use these dresses!

BOB
(exiting to the den)
Pff. You won't even leave the house in one of those get-ups!

ROBERT (O.S.)
Jelly! Get your fat ass outa here!

Robert SLAMS his door while Jelly GIGGLES (O.S.).

Jelly joyfully charges into the dining area and stretches her arms out as if trying to fill the whole room.

JELLY
Feels so big in here! Whadya do
with the hutch, and all the china?

Liz declines to reply. Finished setting the table, she collapses into a chair.

JELLY (CONT'D)
(hollers to everyone)
Dinner's ready!

Bob enters from his den, sits, and sullenly dishes food onto his plate. Jelly digs voraciously into her dinner.

JELLY (CONT'D)
Why are Thanksgiving leftovers
always so much better than the
actual feast?!

ROBERT
(appearing from nowhere)
Because you don't have to listen to
Grandma Miller chatter on about her
diverticulitis. And you don't have
to witness Uncle Larry undo his
belt as he lunges for helping
number three. And--

BOB
Stop right there, Robert! Uncle
Larry's garage is paying for that
uppity school of yours!

They all eat in silence. Liz tries to smooth things over.

LIZ
Well then... Why don't we each say
something we're thankful for.

Bob and Robert roll their eyes in unison: impatience with Liz is about the only thing they have in common.

ROBERT
Mom, Thanksgiving was yesterday.

LIZ

Well, shouldn't we be thankful for what we have every day?

ROBERT

No. It's Black Friday, and the season for wanting more. Let's run out and spend a lot of money we don't really have on a lot of junk we don't really need. Then, wrap it all up in shiny paper, which by the way, makes good land fill, and put it under a dying tree. Then, after gorging ourselves silly, let's open all our pretty presents and say, "Ooh, aah," as we think to ourselves, "What a fucking piece of junk."

Bob jumps up, hulks over Robert. Liz holds him back.

BOB

You watch your damn mouth!

LIZ

Robert, "Damn" or "Shit," maybe, but not "Fuck." At least not at the table.

They all eat in tense silence, except Jelly, who is amused by this little piece of family drama.

JELLY

(whispering to Liz)

Mom, I never heard you say the "F" word before.

LIZ

I didn't say it. I just referred to it.

BOB

You said it loud and clear. Why ya gotta make it all so complicated?

LIZ

But I was just quoting Robert.

BOB

You, said, "Fuck."

LIZ

OK! I said it. I didn't mean to.

ROBERT
 (protesting)
 But I can't say it.

BOB
 Just don't say it in front of your
 mother. Have some respect!

ROBERT
 But isn't it a little sexist to
 think she can't handle it just
 because she's a woman.

BOB
 She's your mother!

ROBERT
 She's not the Virgin Mary.
 (mumbles, referring to
 Liz's tango outfit)
 God, look at her.

BOB
 (hulking over Robert)
 Another word outa your mouth, and
 I'll knock you out!

Liz restrains Bob, who nervously takes his seat.

A very long, silent, tense beat. Then, Robert gets up,
 defiantly leaving the table.

BOB (CONT'D)
 Hey! Your Twenty Minutes isn't up!

LIZ
 (dejected)
 That's alright, Bob. If he wants
 to leave, let him go.

ROBERT
 (storming out)
 Don't worry, Mom, I'm taking your
 guilt trip with me.

BOB
 What about your sacred Twenty
 Minutes!

LIZ
 Forcing him to hang out with us
 isn't gonna make him want to.

BOB

He doesn't have to want to. Some things you do outa obligation.

To Liz, Bob's statement is like a punch to the gut. Speechless, she absorbs the blow.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER

Liz sadly studies a photo. CLOSE ON the photo: it's a black and white picture of Liz in her tango garb. A caption reads, "ONE HOT MAMA." Liz turns the photo over. The back says, "SEE YA X-MAS! LOVE, JELLY."

Liz puts the photo in her purse and pulls out a pocket calendar. CLOSE ON the calendar: it says, "MAGGIE 8 PM."

She wears her boring, public clothes, but she looks in the mirror trying to make her limp hair look more stylish.

Bob enters from the den and leans against the door jam. The Blue Glow flickers behind him.

BOB

Going for your little drive?

LIZ

Yep.

BOB

You been takin' an awful lotta drives lately.

(Liz offers no response)

It's gotta be boring driving around and around all alone.

(suspicious)

You are alone, aren't you?

Liz freezes, raising Bob's suspicions further.

BOB (CONT'D)

Hey, how 'bout I go with you?

LIZ

(attacks)

I go for my drives because you won't walk with me! It's not safe out there at night.

BOB

I'll drive with you.

LIZ
I don't wanna drive! I wanna walk.
I wanna walk outside in the open
air!

BOB
Sometimes, you gotta take what you
can get.

LIZ
And sometimes, you don't.

Liz grabs her coat and huffs her way out of the house.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Liz hurries to the car, SLAMS the door, REVS the engine.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Bob spies out the window. He's already wearing his coat.
He watches Liz pull out of the driveway. Then, he charges
out of the house.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Bob gets in his truck, but thinks twice.

BOB
(sarcastic)
Duh! Like she won't notice a big,
red truck!

He jumps out of the truck and opens the garage. It's full of
junk. He throws some of the junk aside to reveal a
motorcycle. He hops on, REVS the engine, drives off.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- A SHORT TIME LATER

Liz parks, gets out of her car, and walks to the side, office
entrance of the house.

Bob parks his motorcycle behind a van and spies, agitated.

BOB
(under his breath)
Sneakin' through the back, are ya?

INT. MAGGIE'S WAITING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Pleasant as always, Maggie greets Liz.

MAGGIE

Liz! You can wait in my office.
I've gotta get my husband some
cough syrup.

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Liz sits and studies Maggie's chair with disdain. She stands, plops into the chair, and throws her feet up on Maggie's ottoman.

LIZ

(mockingly)

Well, Liz, how are things going for
you today?

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Bob takes note of the name and address on Maggie's mail box: CHANTELLE, 715. He sneaks to the side of the house and tries to see through the window of the waiting room door, but the smoked glass of the window blurs his view. He tries to see in other windows, but the blinds are shut. He then heads toward the back of the house.

INT. MAGGIE'S KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie puts honey in a cup of tea, which is on a tray with the cough syrup. She carries the tray out of the kitchen.

Just as she is out of view, Bob's head pops up in the window.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Vexed by the empty kitchen, Bob sees a Golden Glow in an upstairs window, where the shadows of two people embrace. It's Maggie and Doug, but Bob thinks the woman is Liz.

Enraged, Bob is determined to catch Liz in the throws of infidelity; but when he tries to climb a trellis to see in the window, it BREAKS LOUDLY. He scurries behind a bush.

INT. MAGGIE'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie heads down the stairs and across the living room toward her office.

Just as Maggie goes through her office door, Bob's head pops up in a window. He doesn't see her.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, Bob jumps, cutting short a shriek.

The cause of his scare? Maggie's cat rubs lovingly at his feet and MEOWS eagerly.

INT. MAGGIE'S WAITING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie enters the waiting room and can hear Liz talking.

LIZ (O.S.)
 (she's in full gear)
 Don't bother with that silly Doctor
 title. I'm so hip...

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie stands in the doorway, somewhat shocked, yet amused.

LIZ (CONT.)
 ...You can call me Maggie.

Seeing Maggie, Liz freezes, then scrambles out of her seat.

MAGGIE
 (half-laughing)
 So, you're mocking me!

Liz struggles for words, grabs her coat, ready to flee.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 You don't like me?

LIZ
 You don't like me either!

MAGGIE
 But why wouldn't I like you?

LIZ

You always ask me questions and then just stare. It's too quiet in here.

MAGGIE

But you said you wanted quiet.

LIZ

Peace and quiet. This quiet is not peaceful! It's awkward. It's forced.

MAGGIE

(pleasantly)

Well, that's no good at all.

LIZ

There you go again. Here I am suddenly attacking you, and you're so... pleasant! You can't possibly be this happy! It's... it's... condescending!

Liz stares at the floor, scared of Maggie's reaction.

MAGGIE

But still, why wouldn't I like you?

Liz steals a look at Maggie, who is kind, curious, careful.

LIZ

(softens to Maggie's kindness)

Well, for one, I come in here and moan and groan, week after week. You've already listened to, I don't know, five hours worth.

MAGGIE

But that's what you're supposed to do here. Why would you come if you didn't have something to moan about?

They both smile cautiously.

LIZ

(a few tears welling up)

But I don't want to be a moaner. I want to be... something else.

MAGGIE
 (with great affection)
 You, my dear, are definitely
 "something else!"

They both laugh freely. The real therapy finally begins.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- AN HOUR LATER

Bob is still behind a bush, shooing away Maggie's persistent cat. A SOMBER WOMAN walks by on the sidewalk. Bob sinks further into the bush as the cat PLEADS LOUDLY. The woman stops, crouches, looks toward Bob.

Bob freezes, about to be caught.

Then, the cat saves him by running to the Somber Woman, MEOWING eagerly. The cat ekes a sad smile out of the woman, who lingers to pet it and then walks off.

Bob hears the sound of a DOOR OPENING. He pops up and sees Doug Chantelle, Maggie's husband, in the living room. He is distinguished, even in his bath robe.

BOB
 (mumbles bitterly)
 But he's so old!

Bob hears quick FOOT STEPS. It's Liz headed for her car. She gets in and drives off.

Bob jumps on his bike, tries repeatedly to start it, but it's dead. He jumps off, kicks it, grabs his cell, and dials.

BOB (CONT'D)
 Larry, it's me. Look, I need your tow truck. I'm stuck out here on Forsythia Drive... No, I'm on my bike... I do too ride my bike!... When? What do you care when I last rode it?!... Six months ago, a year, maybe... Larry, just shut up and get out here!...

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Bob and Larry are loading the bike onto Larry's truck. Bob is rushing like mad.

LARRY

Woah, slow down. What're you gonna do anyway? Run home and scream at her? She'll just weasel out of it.

BOB

But I practically caught her in the act!

LARRY

"Practically." Liz is one of these women with an overactive mind. She'll come up with an alibi in three seconds. No, you gotta catch her in the undeniable act.

BOB

I don't wanna catch her in the "undeniable" act!

LARRY

Well, you gotta. It's the only smart thing to do. We'll get your bike fixed up tomorrow, and then, you can follow her everywhere.

(a command)

Stick to her like glue.

Larry has enjoyed this conversation way too much.

INT. LARRY'S GARAGE -- LOBBY -- THE NEXT DAY -- DUSK

Larry types at a computer. Bob leans over the counter staring, agitated, at the screen.

CLOSE ON the computer screen. Larry Googles the name CHANTELLE with the address 715 FORSYTHIA DRIVE. The first entry is CHANTELLE CONSULTING. Larry clicks on it. Doug Chantelle's handsome face pops up and smiles at them.

LARRY (O.S.)

Doug Chantelle. Is that your man?

Bob stares at the computer screen, trying not to punch it.

His cell phone beeps. It's a text message from Liz. CLOSE ON the cell phone: it says, "WORKIN L8. DONT MISS ME 2 MUCH."

BOB

Workin' late, huh?

LARRY
Go get her, dude.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- LATER -- NIGHT

Bob is already behind the house spying in every window, but no one is there. Perplexed, he hops on his bike, drives off.

EXT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- LATER

Bob looks in a large window to the main office, keeping a safe distance. Liz works at her desk. Mr. Sweeney barks orders at her, clearly nothing romantic.

Suddenly, a flashlight shines in Bob's face.

HAL
(demanding)
Hey there, mister, what kinda
business you got out here?

BOB
I, uh... I... ran outa gas...
Just... walking to the gas station.

HAL
Where's your car?

Hal looks toward the parking lot, sees Bob's motorcycle.

HAL (CONT'D)
A little cold, isn't it, for a
bike?

BOB
Us bikers, ya know, can't get
enough.
(turns away to escape)
Well, I better get going.

Then, Hal surprises him.

HAL
(referring to Liz)
I was awestruck, too, first time I
saw her.

Bob does a double-take.

HAL (CONT'D)
 (beholding Liz)
 Such beauty!
 (a thoughtful beat)
 And a lovely person too...

Skeptical of Hal's adoration, Bob takes a closer look at his wife. It's as if they are watching a big screen TV.

HAL (CONT'D)
 (talks man to man)
 Anyway, you're outa luck. She's married. And if she wasn't, I'd have her... Except she's gotten to be like a daughter to me. It would be too weird.

BOB
 (provoked)
 I'm sure her husband loves her very much.

HAL
 (still focused on Liz)
 Aah, bet he's a real slug. Never once showed up here, bring her flowers, take her to lunch... Nothin'.

BOB
 (masks defensiveness)
 So, she rattles on about him? Some women are never satisfied.

HAL
 Not our girl. She never complains, not much anyway. Just works her tail off and goes home. But I wonder...

Hal gets absorbed in wondering. Bob's eyes quietly pop out of his head waiting for Hal to continue.

BOB
 (pressured)
 About what?

HAL
 Don't know, something different 'bout her, like she's going through something...

BOB
 (pointedly)
 What kinda something?

HAL
 The way she carries herself, she's
 more... I don't know, feminine,
 more... Aah, can't put my finger on
 it!

Bob tries hard not to twitch as he waits for Hal to figure it out.

HAL (CONT'D)
 Think she's in love.

BOB
 (trying not to lose
 control)
 With who?

Hal shrugs. He doesn't know, but he likes to ponder it.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (plays it cool)
 Hey, you don't know anyone by the
 name of Doug Chantelle? I think,
 maybe, he does some work here for
 the school.

HAL
 Don't ring no bell. And I know
 just about everyone who goes
 through those doors.

BOB
 Old friend. Thought I might catch
 up with him.
 (with an edge)
 Good guy, that Doug. Good guy.

They watch Liz work. Mr. Sweeney lords obnoxiously over her. Bob suddenly feels protective of Liz, annoyed by Mr. Sweeney.

BOB (CONT'D)
 What's with him?

HAL
 Aah, he's always blowin' off steam.

Hal takes one last, loving look at Liz and then turns to Bob.

HAL (CONT'D)
 Why don't I give you a lift? Too
 cold to be walking.

 BOB
 Hey, buddy, thanks...

They walk off together.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- A FEW NIGHTS LATER

Bob is behind the house. He has duct taped a small video camera to a long pole. He raises the camera to the second floor, bedroom window, certain he's about to catch Liz in the "undeniable act."

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Liz sits awkwardly, hands folded tightly over her coat.

 MAGGIE
 (supportive)
 This is a big step: your first time
 wearing a tango dress in public.

Liz nods yes, but full of insecurities, she pulls her coat more tightly around her body.

 MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 Just a quick peek?

They lock gazes. Maggie's face is full of encouragement. In response, Liz stands up cautiously, takes a deep breath.

 MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 That a girl!

Liz takes another deep breath and throws open her coat. Her dress is provocative, yet soft, elegant. She is not overdone or gaudy like she has looked in her tango dresses at home.

 MAGGIE (CONT'D)
 (delighted)
 Wow!

 LIZ
 I know, I look like an over-the-
 hill prostitute.

MAGGIE
 (earnest)
 Noooo! More like a woman poised
 for adventure!

LIZ
 Really?

MAGGIE
 A striking woman!

LIZ
 You think so?

Maggie's big smile says, "Yes."

LIZ (CONT'D)
 I have gotten better at... not
 overdoing it.
 (adjusts her tight dress)
 I wish they were a little more
 comfortable, though. I've gotta
 wear this full-body girdle to even
 out all my fat. Plus, the shoes!
 I think I'm getting bunions.

MAGGIE
 Just keep going, Liz. You'll
 figure it out.

Grateful to Maggie, Liz smiles girlishly.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT -- CONTINUOUS

Crouched behind a bush, Bob views his recording. CLOSE ON
 the video: a shaky scene of an empty bedroom. Bob shrugs,
 painfully bewildered. Maggie's cat comes to pester him.

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Maggie encourages Liz to take the next tango step.

MAGGIE
 I wonder what would happen if you
 took that dress for a spin in real
 life, at a real tango party.

LIZ
 Instead of spending the best part
 of my life in my little tango
 fantasy world.

MAGGIE

What's the worst that could happen?

Liz ponders Maggie's question with a new sense of hope.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Liz exits. Bob jumps from behind a bush, startles Liz.

BOB

(blurts furiously)

So, how's little Dougy?! Did you use the guest room tonight?!

LIZ

What?!

BOB

Don't play dumb with me. I practically saw you all wrapped in his arms last week!

They square off. Bob seethes with jealousy.

LIZ

(disbelief)

You think I'm cheating on you?

BOB

And don't try to weasel out of it!

Though Liz is strangely flattered by his accusation, she pretends to be offended.

LIZ

Bob, hold on tight, cause you're about to feel real stupid!... That's my therapist in there.

BOB

(skeptical)

Doug? Your therapist.

LIZ

No, Maggie, his wife.

(sarcastic)

I'm getting fixed, just for you.

Bob is so utterly provoked that he spits his words out.

BOB
 (refers to Liz's
 provocative dress)
 Great alibi! 'Cept, who goes to
 therapy dressed for sex?!

LIZ
 She's helping me take pride in my
 body!

Bob doesn't buy it, so Liz grabs him and drags him toward
 Maggie's door. Bob resists vigorously.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 Alright, I'll introduce you. This
 is great! I never in a million
 years thought I'd get you to
 marriage counseling. Maybe she can
 do a session right on the spot!

Bob unleashes himself from Liz in a panic: no marriage
 counseling for him.

They lock eyes. Now convinced, Bob clearly feels foolish.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (victorious)
 Ok, then. I'm gonna go do a little
 shopping. And when I get home, I
 expect you to be groveling!

Liz smugly totters to her car in her heels.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- THE NEXT NIGHT

Liz writes on a large post-it note.

LIZ
 (aloud to herself,
 sarcastically)
 Dear Bob, I'm off to my very first
 tango party full of exotic,
 sophisticated men. I would have
 told you in person, but I didn't
 want you jumping out from any
 bushes and scaring off my new
 friends. Don't wait up. Love,
 Liz.

Liz sticks the note to the blender. Her dress has a soaring
 slit, but it's camouflaged with a frumpy coat.

EXT. BROAD STREET DANCE ACADEMY -- LATER

Liz gets out of her car, beholds the dance academy. It's a dignified, elegant old building. A sign says THURSDAY NIGHT: ARGENTINE TANGO PARTY.

INT. BROAD STREET DANCE ACADEMY -- TANGO PARTY -- CONTINUOUS

The tango party is shadowy, subdued. Most DANCERS move languidly around the floor. A few show off: posing, swirling, doing fancy footwork.

Some women wear traditional dresses, but others wear funky pants or jeans, more modern than Liz's fantasies.

SEVERAL WOMEN sit at small tables along the walls. They seem desperate to dance, but there aren't enough men for all these women. They snobbishly look away from Liz when she tries to make eye contact.

Liz sits at an empty table, unwelcome and utterly awkward.

LATER

Still seated, Liz finally encounters some kindness: a gorgeous woman (SHARON, 30s) gives her a nervous smile. A HANDSOME MAN approaches Sharon, who is reluctant to dance. Liz nods to her, encouraging her to take the floor.

As the couple moves away, a strange man (FRED, 50s) asks a SEATED WOMAN to dance. She turns him down.

LATER

Still seated, Liz notices an older, giggly woman (CORINA, 60s) dancing with an invisible partner until an AMUSED MAN scoops her up.

In the background, strange Fred is rejected by another woman.

LATER

Still seated, Liz sees a sultry woman (MELENA, mid-30s) and a broad-chested Latin man (PABLO, mid-50s) enter the salon.

This couple seems to have stepped right out of Liz's fantasy. They are clearly stars: the whole room notices their haughty entrance. They strike a pose, and then dance into the crowd as Fred gets rejected again.

LATER

Liz feels bored, tired, invisible: she hasn't been asked to dance all night. Suddenly, Fred is in her face.

FRED

Dance?

Liz tries to graciously turn down this odd man, but he aggressively clutches her hand and pulls her onto the floor.

An awful dancer, he leads her with jerky, chaotic movements. They bump into other dancers, who scowl, disgusted with Fred.

LIZ

(to Fred)

I'm sorry, but I'm a beginner--

FRED

(impatient)

You, miss, need dance lessons.

He escorts her off the floor mid-song, a humiliating insult. Devastated, Liz grabs her coat and escapes the tango party.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- LATER

Liz, distraught, stops at the front door and breaks into tears. Then, she braces herself and opens the door, expecting Bob to be ready for a fight.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The room is curiously quiet, the Blue Glow streaming as always from the den. Liz, on edge, looks in the den.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DEN -- CONTINUOUS

Bob chuckles at something on TV, apparently not bothered by Liz's absence. Disgruntled, Liz heads for the kitchen.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

The blender has clearly not been used, and Liz's note has not been read. An empty bag of cookies sits on the counter.

LIZ
 (mutters bitterly)
 Cookies tonight, not your customary
 milkshake, huh! Glad to see you're
 making some changes!

BOB (O.S.)
 (calls from den)
 Honey, we got any Tums?

That question is the final straw. Liz snatches the note from the blender, grabs a pen, and writes.

LIZ
 (reads aloud to self)
 "P.S. By the way, I'm leaving
 you!"

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- LATER

Liz frantically throws toiletries and clothes into suitcases. In the process, she throws several pairs of tango shoes in the trash. She's done with Bob, and she's done with tango!

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Liz waters plants at lightning speed.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Loaded down with suitcases and a small plant, a grim Liz sneaks out of the house. The Blue Glow flickers, undisturbed.

BOB (O.S.)
 (calls from den)
 Liz! Couldn't you find any Tums?

MONTAGE -- LIZ SPENDS THE NIGHT AT A MOTEL

-- Night - Liz enters, drops her bags, exhausted.

-- Night - It's 2 AM. Liz is sitting up in bed. She plays with a broach, makes it sparkle. Her cell phone RINGS. CLOSE ON the phone: the call is from BOB. She doesn't answer.

-- Morning - Liz drags herself out of bed, into the shower.

-- Liz is in the shower. She pulls the curtain open. Her hair is wild with natural curls.

-- Liz somberly blow dries her curly hair straight. Then, realizing that she hates her straight, limp hair, she defiantly puts her head in the sink.

-- Her curly hair dripping, Liz goes through her suitcase, throwing aside numerous beige garments. She finds a pair of red, flowing pants. They still have the price tag. She rips it off.

-- Liz puts on a pair of comfortable, flat shoes.

END MONTAGE

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- LOBBY -- A SHORT TIME LATER

Liz marches to the main office in her flat shoes, angry, yet grounded. Her red pants and matching top scream, "I am done being beige!" Her curls bounce wildly.

Liz has made a transformation, but she has not become Sultry Liz. She has instead become herself, and she is so intense that STUDENTS do double-takes as she passes.

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- MAIN OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Liz goes straight to her desk, grabs a pile of hair nets, and storms into Mr. Sweeney's office.

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- MR. SWEENEY'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Mr. Sweeney is startled by Liz's rude interruption, then by her changed appearance.

MR. SWEENEY

Liz?

She throws the hair nets on his desk and fluffs her curls.

LIZ

First of all, Mr. Sweeney: this hair, never going in a net again!

(MORE)

LIZ (CONT'D)

Second, it's time you haul your butt to a remedial class in "People Skills!" 'Cause your attitude's been wearing me out!

(menacingly)

And I'm already dangerously tired.

Mr. Sweeney tries to make an arrogant rebuttal, but Liz is too fast. She marches out, SLAMS his own door in his face.

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- MAIN OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

And there's Hal, wowed by Liz's obvious fury.

Mr. Sweeney bolts out of his door.

MR. SWEENEY

You don't talk to me like that!

Ignoring Mr. Sweeney, Liz gives Hal a proud look.

MR. SWEENEY (CONT'D)

You're fired!

Liz impudently grabs a Xerox box and loads it with stuff from her desk. Obviously, she is glad to go.

MR. SWEENEY (CONT'D)

(losing steam)

If I don't, at least, get a proper apology!

Liz gives Hal an unexpected hug. He is awestruck.

LIZ

If only you were my boss.

Hal touches her hair, a fleeting moment he's dreamed about. Liz takes her box and exits swiftly.

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Liz strides toward the door, eager to escape. Mr. Sweeney chases her, dodging several STUDENTS as he goes.

MR. SWEENEY

(panicked)

OK. Liz. Maybe I've been a little heavy handed. But can't we just talk, like two reasonable people.

LIZ
Reasonable? You've been through
six secretaries in 2 years!... And
a lunch lady!

MR. SWEENEY
Ok... I'll be more reasonable!

Liz doesn't buy it. She continues toward the door.

Suddenly, Mr. Sweeney grabs desperately at Liz, whimpering
and making a spectacle of himself in front of hoards of
students.

MR. SWEENEY (CONT'D)
I promise, Liz! I'll do better!
I'll do anything you want!

Liz is shocked by his breakdown. He keeps whimpering.

LIZ
(gives in)
I'll be back tomorrow. I need a
vacation day.

Liz hands him her box, opens the door, floods the drab lobby
with intense, GOLDEN SUNLIGHT. The light is so beautiful, so
divine, that Liz practically hears ANGELS SINGING. Liz walks
into the light as if she's walking into heaven, bathed in
glorious freedom.

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- MAIN OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Having just watched Liz free herself from Mr. Sweeney, Hal is
thrilled. He does a little dance.

EXT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- PARKING LOT -- HOURS LATER -- DUSK

Hal notices Liz's car still parked in the lot. He decides to
check it out.

INT. LIZ'S CAR IN SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

Liz sits, frozen, emotionally paralyzed. Hal KNOCKS on the
window. She leaps out of her skin. Concerned, he motions
for her to roll down the window.

LIZ
I've got nowhere good to go.

EXT. HAL'S HOUSE -- LATER -- NIGHT

The house looks and feels like the one with the Golden Glow on Liz's street. Hal carries all of Liz's bags as they make their way to the porch.

 HAL
I always keep a few lights on
for...

INT. HAL'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON a sweet, beagle-mutt face.

 HAL (O.S.)(CONT.)
...Freckles.

FRECKLES excitedly greets Hal and Liz.

INT. HAL'S HOUSE -- GUEST ROOM -- LATER

Liz unpacks her suitcases. She spies a copy of Robert's Walt Whitman book on a shelf. She opens the book.

 LIZ
(reads softly)
"Afoot and lighthearted I take to
the open road. Healthy, free, the
world before me. The long brown
path before me leading wherever I
choose."

The door is half open, but Hal respectfully knocks anyway. He enters with a pile of plush linens, Freckles at his feet.

 HAL
Just in case you need 'em.

Liz gratefully takes the linens.

 HAL (CONT'D)
(sees the book)
Oh, my wife was a reader. We got
books everywhere.
(a soft beat)
She's been gone nine years, and I
still have every one. It's like
she's in those books... Silly, I
know.

Liz is eager to hear more, but Hal changes the subject.

HAL (CONT'D)

Hey, I got a date with a cheese
cake in just a few minutes. You
could bring your sweet smile and we
could double date.

Liz smiles sweetly, thankfully.

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- MAIN OFFICE -- THE NEXT DAY

Liz is busy with paperwork. SEVERAL BOYS sit along the wall
waiting for Mr. Sweeney. One of the boys is a CLASS CLOWN
and he decides to mess with Liz.

CLASS CLOWN

(a sarcastic joke)

Hey, Mrs. M, we're just sittin'
here fighting over who gets to take
you to the prom.

The boys laugh coolly. Liz rolls her eyes, but she actually
likes the attention, no matter how twisted.

Some of the boys notice Bob pacing in the lobby and snicker
at him. When he realizes that he is the subject of their
amusement, he composes himself and enters the office. Liz's
back is to Bob; he doesn't recognize her from behind.

BOB

Excuse me, miss. I'm looking for--
(Liz faces him)
Liz! Your hair?!

LIZ

(bitterly)
What about it?

The boys immediately pick up on the argument. Reacting to
their stares, Bob and Liz continue arguing in pressured
whispers. The boys watch as if following a tennis match.

BOB

You can't just leave!
(suspicious)
Who are you staying with?

LIZ

You broke a promise!

Bob does not understand.

LIZ (CONT'D)
You said you'd dance with me.

BOB
This is because of tango?!

Mr. Sweeny opens his door, and Liz shoots him an impatient look. He tries his best to stay out of her way.

MR. SWEENEY
(to a boy)
You, in here.

Mr. Sweeney hurries the boy into his office. Liz pounces back into the argument.

LIZ
This is about a lot more than
tango! It's... It's...

Liz can't find words big enough for her discontent, so she attacks something concrete.

LIZ (CONT'D)
You know what? There are no
flowers in those hands.

Bob is confused. Liz grabs Bob's hands and holds them up.

LIZ (CONT'D)
There are no flowers in these
hands!

Fed-up, Bob unleashes himself from Liz. He then sees Hal in the lobby headed for the office. He doesn't want Hal to recognize him as the motorcycle man, so he grabs tissues from a box on the counter and blows his nose to cover his face as he passes Hal on the way out.

CLASS CLOWN
(deadpan, to Liz, re: Bob)
Guess he's not taking you to the
prom.

EXT. BROAD STREET DANCE ACADEMY -- NIGHT

Hal and Liz climb the dance academy steps.

LIZ
I don't know why I let you drag me
here. I told you, I'm done with
tango!

HAL

You're not giving up so easy. You
got more fight than that.

Like a gentleman, Hal opens the door for Liz. They lock gazes until Liz gives up and goes in. Hal follows.

INT. BROAD STREET DANCE ACADEMY -- TANGO SALON -- CONTINUOUS

Hal and Liz enter. The STUDENTS are dancing. Corina, the old, giggly woman from the tango party, teaches. She directs the students in a soft Argentine accent.

CORINA

Sharon, slow down, give yourself to
him.

(jokes)

Make him chase you after class...

The students laugh. Corina approaches Hal and Liz with a welcoming smile.

HAL

The lady at the desk said we could
watch your class.

Corina

Great! I'm Corina. I've been
teaching here forever. But this
month, we have Pablo and Melena,
from Buenos Aires.

(points them out)

They don't know English, so I'm
translating.

Liz recognizes these teachers as the stars at the tango party. Pablo is more rugged than handsome, but he has a broad chest, seductive eyes. He sends Liz a smoldering nod.

A beat, while Liz catches her breath.

HAL

(heading for a seat)

Well, thank you, Corina.

Corina gently grabs Hal and guides him to the floor.

Corina

(flirting)

It just won't do, sir, for you to
sit. You see, we never have enough
men.

Hal is taken off guard. This was definitely not in his plan.

HAL
 (referring to Liz)
 But no, she's the dancer. I don't
 know anything, 'cept a little
 jitterbug.

Hal looks back at Liz, almost in a panic. Liz smiles at the irony in his plight as Corina drags him away.

Liz spies strange Fred from the tango party. He suddenly pulls away from his dance partner.

FRED
 (to his partner)
 Are you sure you don't have
 neurological problems?

The partner is Sharon, the gorgeous woman from the party. She runs out in distress. Liz follows poor Sharon, while Corina chews Fred out.

EXT. BROAD STREET DANCE ACADEMY -- CONTINUOUS

Sharon rocks herself on a bench near the door. Liz exits the building and gives Sharon a sympathetic look.

SHARON
 God! I need a cigarette!
 This is no time to quit.

She doesn't care that Liz is a stranger: she needs to vent.

SHARON (CONT'D)
 You know what they call him?!

Just then, Fred charges out of the door, gives them a dirty look, and keeps going.

SHARON (CONT'D)
 Fred A-Scare. Even Fred A-Scare
 hates dancing with me!

Liz can't get a word in edgewise; Sharon talks fast.

SHARON (CONT'D)
 Corina, she's always telling me,
 "slow down, be in the moment."
 (as if Corina's advice is
 ridiculous)
 (MORE)

SHARON (CONT'D)

I don't know how to "be in the moment!"

(a beat)

All the men tell me I'm awful! They may not say it out loud the way Fred does, but they say it alright, with their looks and their gestures. They might wanna sleep with me, but they definitely don't wanna dance with me!

LIZ

(trying to see the positive)

You have an impressive way with words.

SHARON

Yeah, well, I'm a lawyer...

Sharon realizes she just poured her feisty heart out to a complete stranger.

SHARON (CONT'D)

And you're a great listener!

(a second thought)

You're not a shrink, are you?

LIZ

No, but I know a really good one, if you're ever in need.

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Maggie listens attentively to Liz, who has a lot to say.

LIZ

Anyway, I came across that poetry book that Robert always reads. It explains so much, and now I really understand... He just wants to be free, and... alive! Majestically alive. But he doesn't know how, not yet.

(suddenly wound up)

They'll be home for Christmas next week and I don't know how I'm gonna tell them I left Bob.

(a searching beat)

Jelly'll be crushed! I think she still believes in love. I can't be the one who takes that from her!

INT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- MAIN OFFICE -- DAY

The office is decorated for Christmas. Liz works, while the Class Clown sits by himself against the wall.

Jelly suddenly pops her head over the front desk counter.

JELLY
 (reaching for Liz's new,
 natural hair)
 Geez! Mom!

LIZ
 Jelly! What are you doing here?

JELLY
 (playing with Liz's hair)
 Got done early.

LIZ
 Four days? You're not having
 academic problems, are you?

JELLY
 (lying)
 No, I just wanted to surprise you.

Liz looks Jelly in the eye, trying to read her mind. Then, she sees the Class Clown eavesdropping.

LIZ
 (to the Class Clown)
 You!
 (points to Mr. Sweeney's
 office)
 In there!

The Class Clown trudges into Mr. Sweeney's office.

JELLY
 (avoids academic
 discussion)
 What we gonna bake? Sugar cookies?
 Pecan pie! Dad loves pecan pie!

Liz tries to muster the courage to tell Jelly she left Bob.

LIZ
 (serious, scared)
 Jelly... Your dad and I--

JELLY
 (misinterprets Liz's
 intention)
 Don't worry, Mom. If I flunk out,
 you'll be the first to know.

They lock gazes, each afraid to say another word. Liz gives up, grabs a twenty from her purse, and hands it to Jelly.

LIZ
 Go get the sugar and flour and all
 that stuff, and we'll start baking
 tonight.

Jelly regains her happy self. She fluffs her mom's hair and heads for the door. Suddenly, she takes a picture of Liz.

JELLY
 Good one!

Jelly continues on her way. Liz watches her wonderfully naive daughter bounce across the lobby as Hal enters the office.

LIZ
 Well, I guess my little rebellion
 is over. Time to sneak back home.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- THE NEXT DAY

Liz, Jelly, and Bob arrange a huge, wooden nativity scene on the front lawn. They mount an angel with a great wing span to the roof of the manger. All the while, Liz and Bob steal dirty looks at each other as Jelly races around, her camera dangling from her neck.

Robert scowls at his family from his bedroom window.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- THAT NIGHT

The house is decorated for Christmas, colorful lights all around. The Blue Glow fills the windows of the den. Liz stares out a living room window. Robert stares out his bedroom window. They are both tiny against the house and sky. Insignificant, miserable, they both want to escape.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

The whole family -- Liz, Bob, Robert, Jelly, Larry, Grandma and Grandpa Miller -- are finishing Christmas Dinner. Bob has two pies in front of him and a big knife.

BOB

OK. What'll it be. Pumpkin or pecan?

LARRY

I'll take a little of both.

Bob looks to Grandpa Miller for his choice of pie.

GRANDPA MILLER

I'll take... whatever.

This answer sends Grandma Miller into a tizzy.

GRANDMA MILLER

(to Grandpa)

He asked what you want! It's impossible to want "whatever!" It's either pumpkin or pecan or both.

She jumps up, starts clearing away the dinner plates.

GRANDMA MILLER (CONT'D)

(mutters to self)

He's skipping over the golden years and going straight to dead!

(demands to Bob)

Bobby, don't give him any pie if he can't make a real choice!

Grandpa Miller has the vacant look of a veteran depressive.

GRANDPA MILLER

(defeated)

Pecan.

Distracted, Grandma takes Robert's plate although he is still eating. Liz gently eases Robert's plate back onto the table.

LIZ

(consoling Grandma)

You don't have to do the dishes. I'll get 'em later.

Grandma sits down, deflated, beside her depressed husband.

A beat. Then, Robert has an announcement to make.

ROBERT
 (cautious, guilty)
 I'll help with the dishes, but
 then... I've got packing to do...
 (defiant)
 You all may as well know, I'm
 spending the rest of my vacation in
 New York City. I'm leaving
 tomorrow.

BOB
 You are not! It's Christmas.

Liz is suddenly eager to give Robert his freedom.

LIZ
 No, it's OK.

Bob shoots Liz a hateful look for contradicting him.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (cheerfully to Robert)
 I know I've always been a clingy
 mother, but no more!... You're
 young. You should be exploring new
 places, having adventures.

Robert is speechless, shocked by Liz's new attitude.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (shooing him away)
 Go ahead, get packing!

ROBERT
 But, what about our Twenty Minutes?

LIZ
 (happily)
 One great minute is worth a
 thousand Twenty Minutes.

Robert exits, blown away by Liz's sudden gift of freedom.

BOB
 No Twenty Minutes! In that case...

Bob jumps up with his pie and heads to the den. Larry and Grandpa Miller follow suit. And of course, no Christmas would be complete without the Blue Glow.

The SOUNDS OF A FOOTBALL GAME on TV can be heard. Then, something big happens in the game.

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Oh, no! Brickman has fumbled!

JELLY
(overhearing the action)
Brickman?! But he's our best receiver!

Jelly springs to the den doorway, looking into the Blue Glow.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
He's Philadelphia's rising star.
But not today! He can't even catch the ball!

Jelly watches, engrossed in the football drama; but Liz is convinced that her daughter is sinking into a TV stupor. Horrified, Liz intercedes.

LIZ
Jelly!
(Jelly reacts)
It's not fair! Robert's getting away and you're stuck here.

JELLY
I don't mind. I like being home.

LIZ
(flabbergasted)
Why?!

Both Jelly and Grandma are taken aback by Liz's reaction.

LIZ (CONT'D)
You could take a road trip! Head south, find a nice, warm beach.

JELLY
Road trips are boring, sitting forever in the car.

LIZ
Ya know, when you're fifty, you're gonna look back and wish you had seized the day!

JELLY
(genuinely concerned)
Mom, are you Ok?

LIZ
 (on a roll)
 You've got so many friends who'd
 love to road trip with you. All
 you gotta do is call them.
 (Jelly isn't moving fast
 enough for Liz)
 Now!

JELLY
 (gives in, bewildered)
 OK.

Jelly walks off, wondering what has gotten into Liz.

Grandma Miller opens up the laptop.

GRANDMA MILLER
 (puts on a happy face)
 How about a solitaire contest...
 Bet I can win.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- THAT NIGHT

Liz is sitting up in bed, as far away from a snoring Bob as she can get. She has been reading the Walt Whitman book, but now she plays with a colorful broach, making it sparkle.

Bob lets out an unusually loud snore. Liz gives him a dirty look, goes back to her broach.

INT. GRANDPARENT'S HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- SAME NIGHT

Wearing a slinky night gown, Grandma Miller climbs cautiously into bed with Grandpa Miller, who lies with his back toward her. She strokes his arm awkwardly, trying to rekindle his passion.

He tenses up, clamps his eyes shut. In response, Grandma Miller cries softly. Grandpa remains physically withdrawn, but surprises Grandma with a few mumbled words.

GRANDPA MILLER
 It's not you, honey. I'm just...
 tired of everything.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- HALLWAY -- THE NEXT DAY

Liz peeks furtively through Robert's door, which is half open. His coat is on, his suit case is packed, and he reads from his Walt Whitman book.

ROBERT (O.S.)

"...From this hour, freedom! From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits--"

Liz interrupts him by continuing his poem.

LIZ

(reads from Hal's copy of the book)

"...And imaginary lines, going where I list, my own master, total and absolute, listening to others, and considering well what they say."

Robert is shocked that she knows this poem. Then, he gives her an unexpected, warm smile.

ROBERT

My mom, reading poetry?
(studies her)
You look like a poet, especially with all Granny's jewelry. It's like you're trying to get inspiration from the dead.

LIZ

(plays with her broach)
How'd you know this was Granny's?

ROBERT

Granny's jewelry? Hard not to notice. It's... well, ugly.

LIZ

That's 'cause Pop-Pop got it for her. They had a silent pact, I think. He'd go out and find her the ugliest thing imaginable. She'd show how she loved him, wearing it with a smile.

ROBERT

So love isn't blind. It just pretends to be.

Liz smiles gently, proud of her son's wit. A beat. Robert reaches out and gives his mother a good, long hug.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
I miss them, too, Mom.

He grabs his suit case and heads out. Liz watches him go, a mixture of melancholy, love, relief. She follows him.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Liz watches Bob and Robert engage in a surly hand shake. Jelly pushes Robert from behind, forcing father and son into a hug. She shoots her camera.

Bob and Robert join forces to scoop Jelly off the ground. Laughing heartily for a moment in time, they look like such a happy family. Drawn into this fantasy, Liz goes outside and helps Bob and Robert deposit Jelly on top of the manger with the big angel.

Liz is touched by the sight of her precious daughter on the manger. The angel's wings seem to be Jelly's. It's as if she is flying, majestically alive, clicking away with her camera at her heavy, earth-bound family.

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

LIZ
I'm proud of myself for letting go
of them.

MAGGIE
And you're back home, with Bob.

LIZ
(correcting)
Home alone.

MAGGIE
For the kids?

Liz shrugs with fake acceptance.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
So you'll do your tango. Bob'll do
his thing.

LIZ
Whatever that is.

MAGGIE
 (skeptical)
 And you'll just live parallel lives
 in the same house.

LIZ
 Why not. Lot's of couples do.

MAGGIE
 Well, let's see how that goes.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- DUSK

Liz gets out of her car and walks to the house. She opens the door, then out of the blue, descends into a full-blown panic attack: short breath, racing heart, profuse sweat.

EXT. HAL'S HOUSE -- LATER -- NIGHT

Liz knocks on the door. She is loaded down with suitcases.

INT. HAL'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Hal answers the door in a T-shirt and boxer shorts.

LIZ
 I couldn't even get myself to go in
 my house until I promised myself
 I'd run right back out!

Corina enters from the hallway, giggling. She's wearing a silky bath robe. Liz has interrupted something.

LATER

Liz, Hal and Corina have settled into a good talk. Hal and Corina snuggle on the couch. Liz snuggles with Freckles.

HAL
 (to Liz)
 Honey, what you need is a vacation.

CORINA
 Yes, you're young. You should be
 exploring new places, having
 adventures.

LIZ
 "Young?"

HAL
Come with us to Argentina!

LIZ
Argentina?!

CORINA
We're going in just a few weeks.

Liz is thrilled at the thought of this trip. Then, she thinks twice.

LIZ
But I don't have the money for a trip like that.

CORINA
It's summer in Argentina, dear.
You'll find a way.

INT. HAL'S HOUSE -- GUEST ROOM -- THAT NIGHT

A clock says 3 AM. Liz paces, stares out the window, paces more. Freckles keeps her company. Then, she gets the idea!

MONTAGE -- LIZ SELLS BOB'S STUFF ON EBAY -- SAME NIGHT

-- Liz pulls up e-Bay on "Bob's" laptop (which she has kept for herself, since he never uses it). She stares at the screen, reluctant, uneasy. She then takes a deep breath and starts typing fast. In the field that says, "START SELLING," she types, "POOL TABLE, ALMOST NEW."

-- Liz is still on eBay. In the field that says, "START SELLING," Liz types, "EXERCISE EQUIPMENT, ALMOST NEW."

-- Liz is still on eBay. In the field that says, "START SELLING," Liz types, "MOTORCYCLE, ALMOST NEW."

-- Liz closes the eBay sight and thinks hard, unsure about what she's just done. Then, she lays her fears to rest.

LIZ
He'll never even miss them.

END MONTAGE

INT. LARRY'S GARAGE -- LOBBY -- DAY

Bob tells Larry his woes.

BOB

I talked to her on the phone, but she won't tell me where she's staying. Says she doesn't want me causing any trouble.

Larry can't believe how gullible Bob is.

LARRY

You shoulda called her bluff.

Bob doesn't understand.

LARRY (CONT'D)

(such a know-it-all)

I told ya, Liz is a smart lady. She played the ultimate bluff. She knew you wouldn't let her knock on Doug's door if ya thought you were signing up for marriage counseling.

BOB

(defensive)

But I did what you said. I've been following Doug every God-damned place, for the past three days! And she's not sneaking around with him. At least, not anymore.

LARRY

You gotta follow Liz from work!

BOB

(sick of Larry's goading)

It's daytime when she leaves work! She'll see me.

LARRY

What kind of a jealous husband are you?! You should be doing everything you can to catch her!

Bob reaches his limit. He covers his ears with both hands.

BOB

Shut up, Larry!! Enough advice!

Larry is taken aback. Bob removes his hands from his ears.

BOB (CONT'D)

(gets deep)

So I catch her with some guy. Then what?

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)

I get into a fist fight, knock the guy out, call Liz a hussy. Is that gonna make our marriage any better?

LARRY

You're giving up so easy! Where's your pride, man?!

BOB

(scoffs)

Pride?... I lost my pride a long time ago. If Liz hadn't of gotten pregnant with Robert. Nineteen years old! She woulda stayed in college and married some guy with a tie. She woulda been a lot happier, and maybe a little less crazy. I always knew my wife didn't really want me. She mighta needed me, but she didn't want me.

Larry shows genuine concern. For once, he's really listening!

BOB (CONT'D)

I should just let her go, 'cept, we always been there for each other. At least, when it really counted.

Larry shakes his head, full of empathy.

EXT. TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL -- LATER SAME DAY

It's the end of the school day and students are swarming. Bob walks with a huge bouquet of flowers to the entrance. As he is about to open the door, he sees Liz in the parking lot. She gets in her car and drives off.

Bob runs to his truck, gets in, and follows Liz.

EXT. HAL'S HOUSE -- LATER

Liz gets out of her car and goes in the house. Bob parks his truck and walks to the front door, flowers in hand. He starts to knock, but when he hears Liz giggle, he can't resist peeking in a window.

He sees Liz and Hal pasted up against each other in a tango embrace! Then, Hal throws Liz into a dip.

LIZ
 (laughing, delighted)
 Hal! Oh, Hal.

That's all Bob needs to see. He throws the flowers to the ground, BANGS on the door.

INT. HAL'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

HAL
 (as he answers door)
 Corina taught me that dip!

Hal recognizes Bob, who immediately takes a swing at him. Hal ducks to the floor, evading the punch.

LIZ
 Bob?!

BOB
 (screaming at Liz)
 You're a liar! And a hussy!

Bob's head spins with jealousy. He's lost all reason. Freckles springs into action, biting viciously at him.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (fighting off Freckles)
 Caught in the act! The undeniable
 act!... First Doug!
 (refers to Hal)
 Now him? You got some kind of
 fetish for old men?!

Bob charges out, whimpering, his hand bleeding, courtesy of Freckles.

Hal is still on the floor.

HAL
 That's your husband?

Liz's exasperated expression says, "Yes."

HAL (CONT'D)
 Ya know, he was spying on you?!
 Outside the school!

LIZ
 Outside the school, too?!... He
 has been a very busy man!

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DEN -- THAT NIGHT

Bob paces in the Blue Glow still raging over Liz and Hal.

BOB
(mocking Liz)
"Oh, Hal! Oh, Hal!"

He then gets an idea and runs out of the den.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- GARAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The garage is piled with junk, no room for a car. Bob climbs his way through the junk to the hook that used to hold his punching bag. He looks all over the place.

BOB
(utterly vexed)
Where's that punching bag?!

Bob keeps looking, scours his brain, looks more, gives up.

BOB (CONT'D)
OK, then, the next best thing.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DEN -- CONTINUOUS

Bob grabs a pool cue, aggressively chalks it up, rips the cover off of the pool table. It's not there: just some folding tables propping up the cover.

BOB
Liz!

Cold, hard reality sinks in: Liz has truly left him. She's been liquidating their assets.

BOB (CONT'D)
I, I, I need air!

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Bob is ready to ride his bike. He needs to ride. He pulls open the garage door. What does he find? A neat little rectangle of cement where his bike used to be, surrounded by impressive piles of junk.

Bob would yell obscenities, but his words are choked off at the throat.

INT. LARRY'S GARAGE -- LOBBY -- THE NEXT DAY

Larry is seated, relaxed. Bob is slumped over the counter.

LARRY

... I got that Harley out front I
been fixin' up. Might as well sell
it to you. It's better than your
old bike anyway. Bigger.

BOB

Yeah, and I'll sell off her stuff
to pay for it!

LARRY

You can start with her goofy
looking exercise bike.

A beat.

BOB

(bitterly)

That's an elliptical trainer, and
it's mine... And she sold that too.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

DOCTOR

You only sleep three hours a night!
I told you to come back in a few
weeks if your insomnia didn't
improve, not two months!

LIZ

(excitedly)

I've been busy. Now, do I need
any shots for Argentina?

DOCTOR

(notices something in her
chart)

You've lost weight. Have you been
dieting?

LIZ

(proudly)

I've been dancing!

DOCTOR

(grabs prescription pad)
On three hours of sleep?!

LIZ
 (with a big, happy yawn)
 I don't know where I'm getting the
 energy!

Troubled by her strange energy, he hands Liz a prescription.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (reads)
 Sleeping pills?
 (pointedly)
 I won't be sleeping in Argentina!

The doctor worries: has Liz had some kind of manic break?

DOCTOR
 I hope you're still seeing Doctor
 Chantelle. I know you don't like
 her, but--

LIZ
 (correcting him)
 No, you're wrong about that! I
 love her!

Dr. Griswald is dumbfounded by Liz's miraculous turnaround.

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Liz and Maggie are mid-session. Liz is still excited about
 her trip to Argentina.

LIZ
 I've got so many new outfits for
 Argentina! And you know what? I
 threw away my full-body girdle. I'm
 just gonna let it all hang out!

Liz stops short, an imposing thought has crossed her mind.

MAGGIE
 What?

LIZ
 (lost in thought)
 My... mom used to always say that.
 "I'm just gonna let it all hang
 out!"

MAGGIE

We haven't really talked much about your parents. I know they died suddenly. That's difficult...

Liz looks like a deer in the headlights.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You're not ready to talk about them, are you?

LIZ

(pained)

It's just... too hard... And I'm finally having so much fun.

Maggie smiles gently and lets Liz off the hook. Liz tries to return the smile, but she is still swimming in grief.

EXT. CEMETERY -- SMALL ROAD -- SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Liz parks her car at the foot of a big hill that is studded with gravestones. She gets out of the car, holding a bouquet of flowers. The tag says "TO MOM AND DAD, LOVE, LIZ." With severe apprehension, she starts climbing the hill.

She suddenly stops, overwhelmed. She then charges back to her car and drives away.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT -- DAY

Sharon's fully loaded BMW winds its way through the tangle of ramps to the airport. The hood of the trunk is held down with bungee chords to make room for excessive luggage.

INT. SHARON'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

The car is loaded with people. Sharon drives. Liz is in the passenger seat. Pablo, Melena, Hal, and Corina share the back, Corina on Hal's lap.

A dramatic TANGO CD plays. Everyone laughs while Corina and Sharon melodramatically sing the final words to a song.

LIZ

(to Sharon)

You know Spanish?!

SHARON
 (gets a fun idea)
 Hey! I'll be your own, personal
 translator! You're goin' in style,
 baby!

INT. AIRPLANE -- LATER

Liz and Sharon sit together; Hal and Corina share the seats
 in front of them; Pablo and Melena are across the aisle.
 Pablo gets out of his seat, takes his coat off, lets his eyes
 linger on Liz, then sits back down.

SHARON
 I saw that! What's going on?!

A beat. Liz is speechless: Pablo has powerful eyes.

LIZ
 (breaks out of his spell)
 Ah, he's just a pig!

Sharon is surprised by Liz's reaction.

LIZ (CONT'D)
 I don't get it. He's got this
 incredible woman sitting next to
 him. She's half his age. Lucky,
 lucky, lucky to have her! And he's
 messing around trying to get me all
 worked up. Someone like me!
 (Sharon laughs)
 What?
 (Sharon laughs harder)
 What?!

SHARON
 Liz. Melena is his daughter.

Liz, shocked, contemplates new possibilities.

EXT. BUENOS AIRES AIRPORT-- RUNWAY -- EARLY MORNING

The plane lands. Heat radiates off the concrete.

INT. BUENOS AIRES HOTEL ROOM -- LATER

Liz and Sharon are playing loud TANGO MUSIC, like teenagers
 playing rock. They both gleefully unpack colorful clothes.
 Sharon opens a bag, pulls out wigs of every color and style.

SHARON
 (referring to the wigs)
 I've got seven different disguises!
 (tries to put a wig on
 Liz)
 Here, try one.

LIZ
 (playfully shoos Sharon
 away)
 Oh, no! This hair does not belong
 in a wig.

SHARON
 You don't need one anyway. You're
 a natural at tango.

Liz can't make a connection between wigs and tango ability.

SHARON (CONT'D)
 (holding up a blond wig)
 Don't you see? On Thursday,
 they'll pursue Sharon, the blustery
 blonde. Then, they'll discover
 that she sucks! And they'll avoid
 her the rest of the night. So, on
 Friday, they'll go after Bridget,
 (holding up a brown wig)
 The bodacious brunette. And if
 they're not inspired by Bridget on
 Friday, they'll get...
 (holding a red wig)
 Rachel on Saturday... Got the
 picture?

INT. BUENOS AIRES TANGO SALON -- THAT NIGHT

Liz (in funky pants and comfortable shoes), Sharon (as a blustery blonde), Hal, and Corina enter the salon. It's big and shadowy, like the tango party in Philadelphia, but it's jammed to capacity with dancers. Men and women laugh with each other at the tables drinking alcohol, almost oblivious to the dancers in the center of the room.

Lots of people puff away on cigarettes, filling the room with smoke. Sharon deeply inhales the smoky air, savors it.

LIZ
 (chides Sharon)
 Don't even think about it! We
 quit. Remember?

A HOST guides them to a table. As they settle into their seats, a TANGO SONG ends and BIG BAND MUSIC plays.

HAL
Hey, that's jazz!

CORINA
Yes, it's a little intermission
between tangos. Could be almost
any kind of music. It's time for
people to choose partners.

Corina points out an ARGENTINE GENTLEMAN seated nearby. As he scans the room with his eyes, Corina narrates.

CORINA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
See how his eyes cross the room.
He is aloof, but searching. He's
looking for just the right one...
(spotting Melena)
Oh, there's Melena. She's doing
the same.

Melena and the Argentine Gentleman lock gazes from across the room. Then they nod to each other, barely perceptible.

CORINA (CONT'D)
See them nod. That means they have
accepted each other.

Melena and the Gentleman saunter across the floor to each other, take a tango embrace as the floor fills with other dancers doing the same. A TANGO begins.

Out of the crowd, Pablo appears. He greets everyone the Argentine way: one kiss on the cheek, even for Hal. When he reaches Liz, his kiss strays a little too close to her lips.

LATER

Sharon sits in between Liz and Pablo, translating for them.

SHARON
He says your eyes are very green,
like... sea water.

Liz sends Pablo a coy smile.

Hal and Corina dance by. The TANGO ends with a JAZZ intermission. Sharon scopes the room. Suddenly her gaze freezes: someone has given her the tango nod.

LIZ
 You caught one!
 (commands Sharon)
 Nod!

Sharon is frozen in her seat. Liz pushes Sharon to her feet and directs her to the dance floor.

Pablo lumbers his way seductively into Sharon's vacated seat, closer to Liz.

LATER

Liz and Pablo are still sitting together. Pablo is taking long, slow, seductive drags on a cigarette. Liz keeps trying to give him the tango nod, but he doesn't seem to notice.

Sharon returns from her dance.

SHARON
 (grim, disgusted)
 I think... I already need a new
 disguise.

Sharon throws herself into a seat beside Liz, and they both look longingly at Pablo. Liz wants Pablo and his cigarette. Sharon just wants his cigarette.

MONTAGE -- BOB BECOMES AN EASY RIDER -- DAY

-- Larry's Garage - Bob wears a fringed biker jacket. The GUYS at the shop surround his new bike, impressed. He rides off.

-- Bob rides his bike down his street toward his house. He skids on some winter slush, almost wipes out. He looks around to make sure no one saw him.

-- Ext. Miller House - Bob adds some chrome to his bike. He jumps on, rides off hopefully.

EXT. LEVITTOWN ROAD -- DAY

Even though he's on his cool, new bike, Bob feels depressed, deserted by Liz. He stops at a red light, notices a PRETTY WOMAN in a sports car, and decides to take a chance on love.

He REVS his bike, trying to catch the woman's attention. When she doesn't respond, he REVS some more.

Finally, she rolls down her window and speaks.

PRETTY WOMAN

(annoyed)

A little cold, isn't it, for a
bike... especially at your age?

She drives off as the light turns green.

The car behind Bob HONKS: Bob, forlorn, has missed the light.

INT. BUENOS AIRES TANGO SALON -- NIGHT

Liz, Sharon (now a brunette), Hal, Corina, and Pablo sit at a table. Topsy, they laugh at every little thing.

An ATTRACTIVE WOMAN approaches Pablo. They greet each other with the customary kiss on the cheek. They chat, laughing flirtatiously, while a jealous Liz furtively watches.

LIZ

(whispering to Sharon)

He's been following me around like
a shadow, flattering me constantly.
What did he say? I was "like a
soft light...?"

SHARON

(whispering)

"On a foggy night, una noche
brumosa."

LIZ

(whispering)

But he hasn't given me one little
nod, in two days. Not one little
dance.

Pablo and the Attractive Woman get on the dance floor and proceed with a beautiful tango.

LIZ (CONT'D)

(threatened)

Oh God, look how she moves!

CLOSE ON Pablo and the Attractive Woman dancing.

CORINA (O.S.)

She's a lovely dancer! She knows
how to be right there in the
moment: with her man, with the
music. She gives herself over
completely.

CLOSE ON Liz, consumed by jealousy. Hal picks up on Liz's distress and comes to her rescue.

HAL

Look, that guy over there. He's practically begging you.

Liz gives Hal an appreciative smile, gives the BEGGING MAN a perfunctory nod, and gets on the dance floor.

EXT. GRANDMA AND GRANDPA MILLER'S HOUSE -- DAY

Bob shows his bike off to his parents. Grandpa Miller, typically vacant and bored, has taken an unusually keen interest in it. He examines it closely while Grandma chats.

GRANDMA MILLER

(charmed by her son)

You're so proud! I bet you're showing it off to all your friends.

(thinks twice)

But isn't it a little cold for a bike?

Bob shrugs: he's heard this question before.

Grandpa suddenly gets an exciting idea. He walks off, opens the garage door to reveal impressive piles of junk. He roots through the junk, some of which rolls down the driveway. He throws on an old helmet, marches back to the bike, jumps on.

GRANDPA MILLER

(bursting with life)

C'mon, Bobby, make my day!

GRANDMA MILLER

You're not riding that thing!

MOMENTS LATER

Bob takes off on his bike, his Dad on the seat behind him. As they go, Grandpa Miller blows Grandma a little kiss. She is surprised, touched by it, but she is still worried.

EXT. LEVITTOWN ROAD -- LATER

Bob and his dad argue, exasperated, at the side of the road.

BOB

No, Dad, absolutely not! You haven't driven a bike in thirty years!

GRANDPA MILLER

Don't you talk to me like that! I'll knock you out, boy!

MOMENTS LATER

Grandpa Miller drives the bike, hooting and hollering like a wild man. Bob sits behind him, holding on for dear life.

INT. BUENOS AIRES TANGO SALON -- NIGHT

The TANGO ends with a JAZZ intermission. Liz graciously leaves her DANCE PARTNER, makes her way to her table.

Sharon is still entangled in the arms of a GORGEOUS DANCE PARTNER, half-dancing, half-walking, definitely flirting.

SHARON

(to Liz)

He says I'm heaven in his arms.

(joyfully)

'Course, he's a liar!

Sharon tosses her red wig to Liz and sets her real hair free.

In the distance, there's Pablo. He stares unmistakably at Liz, asking her to dance. Immediately flustered, she pulls herself together and nods "yes." She's as ready as she'll ever be!

As Pablo takes Liz into a sultry tango embrace, the room seems to spin away from them; and they are alone, together, breathing, touching, moving. It's like a love scene, without the bed. This is the stunning moment Liz has longed for. She lives her fantasy, completely enthralled and adored by her broad-chested Latin Man. She could stay here forever.

When the tango ends, Pablo escorts a dazed Liz to her seat and takes one beside her. The MUSIC and laughter in the room seem muffled, far away, as Liz tries to hold onto her stunning moment. Then, a BEEPING sound makes its way into her consciousness.

It's Liz's cell phone. CLOSE ON the cell phone: It's a text message from Robert. It says, "CALL HOME NOW!"

INT. BUENOS AIRES HOTEL ROOM -- HOURS LATER

Liz sits on her bed in her pajamas, staring at the floor.

LIZ
(sad and frustrated)
Poor... old codger.

SHARON
(pacing)
Do you really have to cut your
vacation short? Were you even
close to him?

LIZ
I've said ten, maybe fifteen, words
to him my entire life. Happy
Thanksgiving, Grandpa Miller.
Merry Christmas, Grandpa Miller.

SHARON
So, then, you're not obligated to
go to his funeral.

LIZ
(pathetically)
Happy Easter, Grandpa Miller.

SHARON
I mean you're thousands of miles
away.

LIZ
It's Bob. He'd never forgive me
for missing that funeral. He
practically carried me to my
parents' funeral, I was so far
gone.
(choking back tears)
I mean, most of the time, Bob makes
me miserable. But we've always
been there for each other, at least
when it really counted.

Sharon sits beside Liz, puts her arm around her, gives in.

SHARON
OK, but take my car and drive
directly from the airport to the
funeral. Stay here and dance until
the last possible minute.
(like a lawyer)
(MORE)

SHARON (CONT'D)

You're not giving him one minute
you don't have to!

INT. BUENOS AIRES TANGO SALON -- THE NEXT NIGHT

Liz sits by herself, sulking. Hal approaches, sits beside her, offers her a sympathetic look. They watch the dancers until Liz is ready to speak.

LIZ

How many times I've wished I could
fly as far away from Levittown as
possible. And tomorrow, that's
exactly where I'll be: in
Levittown, again, still trying to
sprout wings.

HAL

(gently)

Liz, honey, we're people. None of
us can fly. We walk. We crawl.
We run 'til we're completely out of
breath. We drag ourselves around
with stiff joints, aching backs.
We jump as high as we can and hang
on to anything we can grab hold
of... We dance, but we don't fly.

Hal looks peacefully over the room, having long ago accepted the grittiness of reality. He sees Pablo at a distance giving Liz the tango nod. He points Pablo out.

Mournfully, Liz gets up to dance one last time with Pablo.

EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

A small, shivering CROWD, including Liz, Grandma Miller, Larry, Robert and Jelly, is assembled around Grandpa Miller's grave. Bob is noticeably missing.

The Preacher closes his eulogy and the crowd disperses. Jelly, agitated, approaches Liz.

JELLY

(incredulous)

Mom, you went all the way to
Argentina? And you didn't tell us?

LIZ

(defensively)

It was a spontaneous trip.

JELLY
But Dad didn't go?

LIZ
(losing patience)
Can you imagine your father dancing
tango for two weeks?

JELLY
Well, no, but--

LIZ
(spinning it with all her
might)
We didn't have enough money for
two, so your father said I should
go. He knew it would make me happy.

Jelly studies Liz, not sure she believes Liz's explanation.
Grandma Miller sobs loudly. Jelly rushes to console her.

Robert joins Liz.

ROBERT
Granny and Pop-Pop's grave is just
up over that hill.

LIZ
(tries to avoid discussion
about her parents)
Today is Grandpa Miller's funeral,
not Granny and Pop-Pop's.

ROBERT
But since we're already here, we
could put flowers on their grave.

Liz feels cornered, still not prepared to face her own grief.

LIZ
(impatient)
Robert, let's just focus on the
living.

ROBERT
(taken aback)
But Mom, they're your parents.

LIZ
(angry)
Are you guilt-tripping me?!

ROBERT
 (earnest)
 No, it's just... You're avoiding
 them... Is that healthy?

Liz squares off with Robert, but she has no good answer for him. Robert searches Liz's face, trying to understand.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- THAT NIGHT

Bob lies in bed, all bandaged up. A leg and an arm are in casts. The TV is on, but he doesn't pay attention to it. He's in a different kind of stupor.

Liz enters. He doesn't seem to notice.

LIZ
 I'm so sorry, Bob. About your Dad.
 (no response from Bob)
 The funeral was... just right.
 Robert really stepped up to the
 plate, helped Grandma and Larry
 with all the arrangements. He's
 like... a man.
 (still no response)
 I'm sorry you couldn't go.
 (heads for the door)
 Well, I'd be mad at me, too, if I
 were you.

Liz is almost gone when Bob finally speaks.

BOB
 I never shoulda let my Dad on that
 bike, let alone drive it!

LIZ
 (surprised)
 He was driving?

Bob grimaces with guilt over letting his dad drive.

BOB
 I shoulda put my foot down! But he
 wouldn't take "no" for an answer!

A beat. Bob goes deep into thought. His current feelings of loss and guilt stir up old ones about Liz's parents.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (blurts)
 You must hate me.

Liz is caught off guard by Bob's statement.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (makes a confession)
 I should have gotten your parents
 that carbon monoxide detector.
 (a beat)
 I told your Dad ten times to get
 one. But he never took a damn
 thing I said serious, always joking
 around.
 (getting angry)
 You don't install a gas fireplace
 unless you know what you're doing.
 But no, your dad, a regular handy
 man, a real Mister Fix-it!
 (guilt crashes in again)
 Carbon detectors are just fifteen
 dollars at Home Depot. I'm always
 at Home depot!

Bob's confession jars Liz's soul, but she tries to console Bob anyway.

LIZ
 (softly)
 At least they died in their sleep.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Liz sits down soberly at the laptop.

LIZ
 (suddenly hopeful)
 Pablo!

Finding an e-mail from Pablo, she excitedly dials her phone.

INT. BUENOS AIRES HOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Sharon is sleeping off a hangover, with her Gorgeous Dance Partner. The phone rings.

SHARON
 Hola... Liz!... An e-mail from
 Pablo?... Sure, forward it. I'll
 translate.

LATER

Sharon's Gorgeous Dance Partner is still asleep in bed. Sharon sits at a desk with her laptop. She's in the process of translating Pablo's e-mail for Liz over the phone. The e-mail is terribly disappointing.

SHARON (CONT'D)

(distressed)

Let's go to the second paragraph.

(translates with
trepidation)

"I've had the... sexiest women, but now that I am getting older, I want someone... like you. I prefer the dignity of a... simple love, with a... unique woman."

INTERCUT -- LIZ'S DINING ROOM/SHARON'S HOTEL -- CONTINUOUS

LIZ

(angrily, accusingly)

No, that does not say "unique woman!" I just looked it up in the dictionary. It says "ordinary woman!"

Sharon cringes. Liz has caught her "editing" Pablo's e-mail.

LIZ (CONT'D)

God! Were you lying in Argentina, with all your translations?!

SHARON

(defensively, desperately)

Noooo!... Mostly, not. He was being romantic. He just sucked at it! So I added... better words.

LIZ

Sharon!

SHARON

Welll! He's kind of a... schmuck!

(a beat)

I'm so sorry. I just wanted you to have fun. Ya know, I figured we'd never see him again, at least not for a long time.

Profoundly disappointed, Liz hangs up the phone and deletes the e-mail.

Sharon grabs a tango shoe from the floor, hurls it at her sleeping dance partner.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Men!

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

LIZ

I didn't sleep at all last night.

MAGGIE

Even with a sleeping pill?

LIZ

I should've taken one, but sometimes I feel like God, or whatever, is keeping me awake for a reason, like I'm supposed to figure something out, but I never do.

MAGGIE

What are you trying to figure out?

LIZ

I guess... how to live with disappointment.

(a beat)

No. No, that's not it at all. It's the regrets. The things I wish I had done differently. That's what causes me such...

Maggie reads Liz's distant, pained expression.

MAGGIE

Despair?

Tears come to Liz's eyes.

LIZ

My mom and dad, they were always, always there... so... close by. But I had sort of, let go of them. I was so preoccupied: all my little worries over the kids, work, laundry, Bob... I told myself, "Once the kids are grown, we'll take a vacation together, just me, Mom, and Dad. We'll... re-connect."

(a beat)

(MORE)

LIZ (CONT'D)

Well, my kids are grown, and...

(with heaving sobs)

They'll be no vacation, unless I figure out how to take one in heaven.

Maggie's eyes fill with sympathetic tears. Her kindness gives Liz a breath of relief. With relief comes gentle humor.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Maybe someday, with all the wonders of modern technology, we'll be able to take little vacations in heaven. Little one minute holidays. See all your dead relatives, milling around in some glowing, celestial room. Behold the great, white light. Get your heart all fixed...

(a beat, then Liz chuckles)

My mom, she used to laugh, she would say, "Oh, that Bob, it would take a divine intervention to get him off that couch!" A divine intervention. Maybe that's what I need.

INT. LIZ'S CAR IN FRONT OF THE MILLER HOUSE -- NIGHT

Liz parks the car in the driveway. Bob is in the passenger seat. The car radio is on.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Bundle up folks. Ten degrees and dropping. And we're not talkin' wind chill. This is for real.

Liz turns off the engine.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Liz gets out of the car. Bob's leg and arm are still in casts, so Liz carries his bags as he hobbles to the house.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz and Bob enter. They are greeted by a crowd of shiny, gold balloons. Feeble balloons: not one has enough helium to reach the ceiling.

LIZ
 (referring to balloons)
 That's strange. They were all up
 at the ceiling when I left.

A cake on the table says, "WELCOME HOME, DAD!"

LIZ (CONT'D)
 The kids made you a little welcome
 home party before they went back to
 school.
 (takes off her coat)
 It's freezing in here!

BOB
 The heater shouldn't be broke.
 It's only a year old.

LIZ
 (puts coat back on)
 I'll call the gas company.

BOB
 (reluctant)
 Uh... I think the service contract
 ran out.

Liz doesn't understand why.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (anticipates a bad
 reaction from Liz)
 I... forgot to pay the bill.

Liz takes a deep breath, trying hard to be patient with her
 injured husband.

BOB (CONT'D)
 (defensive)
 It's no big deal. I can fix the
 heater.

LIZ
 (skeptically refers to
 Bob's casts)
 Like that?

BOB
 I might be busted up, but I'm not
 completely helpless.

Liz can't help herself: she shoots Bob a sarcastic look that
 says, "Oh, really?" He doesn't see it.

She grabs some potted plants, heads for the kitchen.

LIZ
 (with as much cheer as she
 can muster)
 Fix it soon. Some of these plants
 are tropical!

Bob cuts himself a piece of cake. His cell phone rings.

BOB
 Hello... Jelly! Thanks for the
 cake. Double fudge, my favorite...

Bob goes to the den with his cake and the phone.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Liz has opened the oven. She turns it on and places the plants near it. She goes back to the dining area.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz grabs more plants, then studies the ailing balloons: they are milling about like ghosts in purgatory. Then, she realizes what their problem is.

LIZ
 Oh! It's so cold, your helium
 shrunk. That's it: you've lost
 your life force.
 (a beat)
 Join the club.

Then Liz hears Bob talking in the den. She can't quite make out what he is saying because he is practically whispering.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DEN -- CONTINUOUS

BOB
 (to Jelly on the phone)
 Go ahead, she's in the kitchen...
 Intercept your grades? How many Fs
 you get?... Ya know, honey, you
 could just work in the shop with me
 and Uncle Larry, you're a great
 mechanic... OK, keep trying, but
 if you ever need work, you got
 it... Love you, too.

Liz is suddenly in the den, staring Bob down.

LIZ
How many?
(Bob is speechless)
How many did she fail?

BOB
Two, Liz, just two.

Liz panics at the thought of Jelly failing college.

LIZ
That's half her classes!

BOB
Liz, calm down, if she flunks out,
she can work in the shop...

Liz is horrified by this idea.

BOB (CONT'D)
Just 'til she figures things out...

LIZ
(blurts uncontrollably)
Yeah, like you did. No way!

Bob feels the insult. Liz can't stop herself now: the proverbial dam has broken.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(disgusted)
You were gonna be some big football
star, donate to charity like Ron
Jaworski! Now all you do is sit
around all night staring at a box!

BOB
I work hard all day! I'm tired
when I get home.

LIZ
Tired? Or just brain-dead?!
(a beat)
Ya know, sometimes I watch you in
there. After a while, your mouth
drops open. It just stays lulled
open, like someone hit you over the
head with a baseball bat!

BOB
Shit, Liz!

LIZ

You can spend the rest of your life
in a TV induced coma, but Jelly is
still alive! And you're not
sucking one ounce of life out of
her!

BOB

(furious)

Oh, yeah?! Just watch me.

Bob holds up his cell phone, starts to dial, but Liz
impulsively grabs it, hurls it at the wall, breaks it.

She runs out. Bob hobbles after her in his casts.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- LIVING/DINING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz paces, tries to calm herself down.

BOB

(grabs the house phone,
sarcastically)

Oh, look! Another phone!

Bob picks up the phone, starts to dial, but suddenly stops.

LIZ

(edging toward kitchen)

Look at you! You don't even know
your own daughter's number.

Liz bolts to the kitchen. Bob follows her.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

She grabs a phone list (with Jelly's number on it) from the
fridge. Bob aggressively grabs at the list, but can't get it.
She rips it to shreds, shoves it down the drain, turns on the
GARBAGE DISPOSAL, runs out of the kitchen.

Bob shuts off the garbage disposal and awkwardly chases Liz.

BOB

I'll talk to her sooner or later,
and make her an offer she can't
refuse...

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The dining table is, as always, pushed against the counter where it doesn't quite fit. Bob trips on it, almost falls.

BOB

This damn table don't belong here!

He starts pushing it to the center of the room. Liz gets on the other side of the table, pushes back. Several balloons hover peacefully over the table. Bob and Liz bat them out of the way as they argue.

Bob may be weakened by his injuries, but he's a big man and Liz works hard to keep from being pushed across the room.

LIZ

It belongs exactly where it is.
(refers to dining room)
This is my dance floor!

BOB

You're gonna stop this airy
bullshit, or I'm gonna break this
damned table over your head!

LIZ

Go for it, Mr. Universe! You're so
atrophied, you couldn't reach my
head.

BOB

Your crazy, crazy head!

LIZ

Oh, oh, oh! You're just oozing
with mental illness, but you're too
far gone to know it!

BOB

Oh, yeah...

He gives the table a big push, knocking Liz to the floor. The cake slides off the table and lands on Liz.

BOB (CONT'D)

(asserts his power)
I say what's oozing!

He limps to the den.

Liz is alone. Furious. Exhausted. Cold. Losing it. She shoves the table back against the counter with a loud CRASH.

She leans against the table, descending into a panic attack: choppy breath, profuse sweat, utter confusion.

Searching desperately for relief, she grabs a pack of cigarettes, lights one. She studies her scarred, trembling hand, deciding whether to regress back into self-mutilation.

Then, she suddenly becomes eerily hopeful. She puts out her cigarette and heads for the kitchen.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Liz finds her sleeping pills, pours all of them into a bowl, and crushes them with a spoon. She makes a milkshake in the blender, pours it into a big glass, and stirs the powdered pills into the shake. She then carries her poisonous concoction into the den.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DEN -- CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Bob, his cold breath visible, the Blue Glow in his face.

A shadow overtakes him. It's Liz standing between Bob and the TV. She gives him the milkshake, like a peace offering.

LIZ
Double fudge, your favorite.

BOB
I'm really, really sorry about that
in there...

Liz smiles feebly, waves him off, and walks out.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz sets the timer for about 20 minutes.

She then gets her cell phone and slowly dials "9-1-1." Without pressing "SEND," she sits in her love seat, carefully holding the phone with both hands. She closes her eyes and lets several long minutes pass.

Liz opens her eyes. The shiny, gold balloons create a shimmering display. They could be Liz's dead relatives, milling around in a glowing, celestial room.

Two balloons have approached Liz. One is a smiley face; the other says, "WELCOME HOME." They stare at her in loving judgement with their shrunken, wrinkled faces.

LIZ
Oh, my God!

She jumps up, looks in the den. Bob is shivering, swigging his shake. She runs in.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- BOB'S DEN -- CONTINUOUS

Liz grabs Bob's milkshake. It's almost gone.

LIZ
Thirty degrees in here, and you sucked down that milkshake like it's summer. Why ya hafta be such a fuckin' pig!

She runs out. Bob is confused and very aggravated.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz digs through piles of junk beneath the sink. She finds a first aid kit, grabs a bottle of ipecac from it, runs out.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- BOB'S DEN -- CONTINUOUS

Liz positions herself between Bob and the TV, pours syrup from the bottle into a little measuring cup.

LIZ
Drink this. Fast!

He screws up his face, looks closer at the bottle, jumps up, freaked out.

BOB
Ipecac?!

A beat.

LIZ
(reluctant, full of shame)
I just... slipped you... a mickey.

Bob can't begin to process what she just said.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Well... about fifteen... mickeys.

Bob is frozen in disbelief.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(shoves little cup in his
face)
I just poisoned you!
(Bob is still frozen)
C'mon. Every second counts!

He grabs the cup, drinks for his life, heads to the bathroom.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Bob slams the bathroom door in Liz's face. Liz frantically reads the bottle of Ipecac.

LIZ
Oh, oh, it says take with water!
Make sure you drink some water!

She runs toward the kitchen.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Liz turns off the oven, grabs her purse, runs out.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Liz puts her ear to the door. She winces at the sounds of Bob THROWING UP. Eventually, Bob stumbles out of the bathroom. Liz grabs his arm, guides him.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Liz guides Bob through the living room to the front door.

LIZ
The hospital can pump your
stomach...

BOB
(resisting)
Nothing else could possibly come
outa this stomach.

LIZ
They can watch your vitals.

BOB
(unleashes himself from
her)
I ain't goin' nowhere!

LIZ
This is your life, Bob!

BOB
I probably threw 'em up before they
got in my system, and I'm not
having our name in the paper: "Mad
Woman, Murders Husband!... Then
changes her mind!"

LIZ
This wasn't murder. I was gonna
call nine one one... After about
twenty minutes...

Liz grabs the still-ticking timer and shoves it in Bob's face
as proof.

LIZ (CONT'D)
See? So they could revive you. I
was just giving you, a little...
intervention.

Liz is aghast at what just came out of her mouth.

BOB
A little intervention?! My God
Liz, what were you thinking?

LIZ
Thinking?! You think I was
thinking!
(she starts to think)
No, it just fell into place, all on
its own. It made so much sense,
for one minute...

Sure that Liz has lost her mind, Bob takes charge.

BOB
OK. We're gonna stay up all night.
(sets timer for 20
minutes)
(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)
 We'll keep setting it, in case we
 both fall asleep. And the cold,
 the cold'll keep us awake.

Perplexed by her own semi-homicidal break, Liz thinks aloud.

LIZ (CONT.)
 ... A lot can happen in a minute...

Bob rushes to the kitchen, fumbles with the coffee maker.

BOB	LIZ (CONT.)
If I start to get drowsy, or I start to pass out, that's when you call nine-one-one.	... You just have to keep yourself alive and awake long enough to get to that...

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (a spacey epiphany)
 ...One minute that changes your
 life forever.

A beat, while Bob tries to figure out how Liz got so crazy.

BOB
 I'm voluntarily putting my life in
 your hands, your loony hands, when
 you just tried to kill me.

LIZ
 See, you always leave the living
 part up to me.

Liz collapses into a dining room chair.

MONTAGE -- INT./EXT. MILLER HOUSE -- BOB STAYS ALIVE -- NIGHT

-- Ext. Miller House - The Blue Glow flickers.

-- Living Room - Bob paces with his coffee cup, stumbles in
 his cast. The timer RINGS, startles Liz, who has been
 sleeping in her love seat. Bob re-sets the timer.

-- Bob is still pacing, stumbling, trying hard to think. The
 Blue Glow flickers from the den. He suddenly faces the Blue
 Glow, annoyed and distracted by it. He then marches straight
 into it, and in seconds, the Blue Glow vanishes.

-- Ext. Miller House - Bob stares out the window. No Blue
 Glows anywhere. Bob is tiny against the house and sky.

END MONTAGE

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- AN HOUR LATER

Bob is still staring out the window, deep in thought. Suddenly deciding he needs some answers, he turns to Liz, who sleeps in her love seat. He shakes her awake.

BOB

I know I'm far from perfect, but I've taken my obligations seriously. I mean, we got a good roof over our heads, we're putting the kids through college. And... I, I, I... Did your Twenty Minutes!

Liz's words come from a quiet, sleepy place. They aren't charged with anger or hurt. They're just telling the truth.

LIZ

What I want to know is, when did I become such an obligation? I'm done with all that.

She rolls over, drifting back to sleep.

BOB

Wait, wait, if you're so done being my obligation, why'd you come back? All the way from Argentina to poison me.

LIZ

I came back... out of obligation.

Bob and Liz both absorb the irony of that answer.

LIZ (CONT'D)

I poisoned you out of...
(surprises herself)
Love?... Yes, my heart aches when I see how alone you are: just you and that TV, a box full of... digital people, who don't even know you exist... Sorry I didn't have the guts to go through with it, to let you die, even for a second. You might have encountered something... spiritual, something life-altering.

She drifts back to sleep. Bob is touched by her words, but horrified by her near-fatal craziness.

MONTAGE -- BOB LEAVES LIZ

-- Utility Room - Morning - Bob repairs the heater.

-- Living Room - Liz wakes up on the love seat, sees Bob awkwardly maneuver suitcases out the door. The house is warm; the balloons are at the ceiling. Liz gets up, looks out the window. Bob is loading his truck with his stuff. He's moving out.

-- Maggie's Office - Liz bursts into tears.

-- Liz watches as a YOUNG COUPLE load Bob's big screen TV onto a pick up truck. They pay her and she counts the money sadly as they drive off.

-- Bedroom -- Liz sleeps deeply.

END MONTAGE

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Liz sits alone, melancholy, still recovering from her "Divine Intervention." Dr. Griswald enters.

DOCTOR
(greet's Liz)
Mrs. Miller.

Liz gives him a depressed look, which makes him nervous.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(frustrated)
I ran every test I can think of.
Nothing physical explains your
insomnia.

LIZ
It's OK. Out of the blue, I've
been sleeping like a baby. I
somehow managed to fix myself.
(heads for the door)
Oh... Where's Lucy? She wasn't
here the last time, either.

DOCTOR
She... resigned.

LIZ
You mean you fired her.

DOCTOR

No... There was a... conflict of
interest.

The doctor has a strange, boyish look on his face. He pulls their wedding picture from his pocket and shows it to Liz.

LIZ

(pleasantly surprised)
No! You married her?!

EXT. MILLER NEIGHBORHOOD -- DAY

It's a bright day. Hal and Corina are taking a walk. They smile softly at each other and hold hands.

Liz and Sharon walk several paces behind them. They pass the Pale Woman from the house with the Golden Glow. She is also taking a walk. Liz stops and calls to her.

LIZ

Hey, you're the one who plays that
sad piano.

PALE WOMAN

(smiling)
And you're the one who throws
shoes. At houses.

Sharon doesn't understand what they're talking about. Liz explains as the Pale Woman joins them on their walk.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER -- DAY

Liz pets a German shepherd puppy.

INT. MILLER HOUSE -- DINING/LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Liz enters with the puppy. Jelly charges in behind her.

LIZ

(taken off guard)
Jelly?!

Jelly crouches to pet the dog, who licks her face.

JELLY

Aren't you the cutest little
thing...

LIZ

No, Jelly, get away from him!
You know you're allergic!

LIZ (CONT'D)
 (closing dog in den)
 Go wash your face. Go.
 (Jelly complies at kitchen sink)
 You're supposed to be at school!
 Now, what's goin' on?

Liz assumes a strict, motherly stance. In response, Jelly gets very serious, then talks fast so Liz can't interrupt.

JELLY
 You know college is a waste for me, at least for now. I want to be a photographer and there's so much I can learn on my own, without burying myself in a library.

LIZ
 You're not working in that garage!

JELLY
 (popping a CD into the computer)
 That's the thing. Dad wants me to. But... It's too noisy in there.
 (pulls her photography up on the computer)
 Look.

CLOSE ON the computer. Jelly has taken all kinds of poignant family pictures. Many of them show Liz and Bob locked in covert conflict: Jelly has seen far more than Liz realized. Liz questions Jelly with worried eyes.

JELLY (CONT'D)
 (the eternal optimist)
 Don't worry. You and Dad love each other. You'll work it out. Whatever it is.
 (suddenly)
 Hey dad!

She runs into the den. The dog escapes. Liz braces herself.

Jelly steps back out. Her face is pained, searching. She can see that something is undeniably wrong.

JELLY (CONT'D)
 Where's Dad? And the TV?

LIZ
 C'mon, sweetie, let's go for a walk.

EXT. THE MILLER NEIGHBORHOOD -- MOMENTS LATER

Liz and Jelly walk the dog down the street, talking intensely. Jelly is not happy, but she's still full of life.

EXT. CEMETERY -- GRANDPA MILLER'S GRAVE -- TWO MONTHS LATER -- DAY

It's early Spring. The trees have lush, new leaves on them. Bob puts flowers on his dad's grave. His movements are labored; his face, grief-stricken. He sees a glistening light just over a hill and follows it.

EXT. CEMETERY -- LIZ'S PARENTS' GRAVE -- CONTINUOUS

Liz arranges an elaborate display of flowers and golden balloons around a large, double grave stone. The display is as gaudy as her mother's jewelry. It glistens in the sun.

Bob suddenly appears: the glistening display has led him to her. They are surprised to see each other.

BOB

Liz!

LIZ

Bob!

They haven't seen each other in a long while. Unsure what to say, they give each other careful smiles. Then, Liz speaks.

LIZ (CONT'D)

It's brave of you to come here so soon. It took me five years to get the courage.

Bob's regrets about his dad weigh heavily on him. He clenches his jaw, fights tears, tries to mourn like a man.

Liz is struck by his pain, determined to comfort him.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Bob, I may have my gripes against you, but you're not reckless! You take care of the people you love.

Bob keeps fighting tears.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Your dad's death is not your fault!
He died because he needed to break
free. And he did, at least for a
minute.

Bob melts into heaving sobs. Liz hugs him for a long moment. When his crying slows, she gives him a gentle smile full of love, a hint of tears in her own eyes.

LIZ (CONT'D)

C'mon, honey, let's go for a walk.

Liz and Bob make their way down the hill to the road. Liz's display glistens in the background. The road stretches out ahead of them, lined with lush trees and ivy covered grave stones.

FADE OUT.