

"BREAKING THE SILENCE"

written by
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Based on
"I'm Ready to Talk, Breaking the Silence"
by Holli Pellman

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

1

A group of REPORTERS are attempting to get into the courthouse. A tall, black man in a nice suit is holding them back with his BADGE up. We will learn that this is RON, honorable, kind. He is being direct with the rabid reporters.

REPORTERS

(over one another)

What is Miss Smith's response to the allegations! How long have the Cincinnati Police been aware of her misconduct? When was she first suspected of these charges?

RON

Get back! Please, respect the family's privacy! A statement will be released!

As the reporters continue to argue and attempt to force their way into the courthouse, Ron keeps them at bay.

2 INT. COURTHOUSE - SAME

2

A sullen 30-year-old WOMAN stands at a table in a COURTROOM, next to her, her LAWYER stares fixedly forward.

This woman is HOLLI SMITH. Dark, intense eyes. She stares blankly at the table in front of her as the JUDGE looks over documents in front of him.

JUDGE

Ms. Smith.

Holli's eyes flick to the man. Her body is shaking. Her lawyer squeezes his hands together, the verdict about to come--

The Judge removes his glasses and folds his hands sternly.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I've considered everything your lawyer has presented, but with your history, I'm afraid I cannot show any more leniency than what the District Attorney is requesting.

Holli stares blankly. Her lawyer scowls. He is not happy to hear this.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

You will serve six months in jail, three years of probation, two years of mandatory group therapy, and are to register for 10 years as a convicted sex offender.

Holli swallows dryly. Her lawyer lowers his head. He was not expecting this.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Ms. Smith, you are now a convicted felon.

As the Judge's GAVEL SLAMS down, we PUSH IN CLOSE on Holli's eyes, tired, sad, defeated--

CUT TO:

3 INT. HOME - NIGHT

3

-- CLOSE ON HOLLI, 4-years-old, standing against the wall of a trashed, low-income home having difficulty breathing - an asthma attack - as her parents DANIEL (28) and ASHLEY (22) have a SCREAMING argument that's been going for some time.

Ashley is holing a screaming BABY in her arms - 2-year-old ZOOEY.

SUPER: 1977

ASHLEY

It's BULL, Daniel! And you know it! Bull! You're so full of crap!

DANIEL

Oh, shut your damn mouth! You're the bullshit here, you dumb bitch!

ASHLEY

You're not even a MAN!

Ashley THROWS an ashtray at Daniel. It barely misses him and shatters on the wall. Daniel's anger cranks up a notch.

DANIEL

You throwing shit now! I can throw shit too!

He picks up a CHAIR and throws it to the wall.

Holli gasps for breath. Neither of them are paying any attention to their panicking daughter.

ASHLEY
Real mature!

DANIEL
What would you know, Ashley!

POUNDING - the neighbors are banging on the wall for the couple to shut up. The baby continues to bawl.

ASHLEY
You hear that? Even the neighbors want you to shut up!

DANIEL
(louder yet)
They can mind their own business!

KNOCKING - At the front door, a new heavy pounding. Ashley storms over and yanks it open. Two POLICE OFFICERS are standing there.

ASHLEY
Thank god! This man is dangerous!

DANIEL
You called the cops on me?? Well, they can arrest you! She started it, Officers! She's a lying bitch!

ASHLEY
He's been threatening me, Officer!
He's drunk!

DANIEL
She's lying! I don't drink!

He does not.

OFFICER 1
Okay, that's enough.

DANIEL
You hear that? He said that's enough!

Holli continues to gasp for breath as one of the Officers kneels down to comfort her. The other Officer moves over to Ashley and Daniel to calm them down.

OFFICER 2
(to Holli, gently)
It's okay, honey. Deep breathes.
You're going to be okay. What's your name, sweetie?

Holli can't speak. The Officer touches her back gently to calm the poor girl.

DANIEL
It's bullshit! I AM calm!

ASHLEY
You're a monster!

DANIEL
If you don't like it, LEAVE!

The Officer picks Holli up and walks out of the Apartment leaving the other Officer to continue to attempt to maintain the situation.

4 EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY

4

A nice, Ohio suburb. A stark difference from the shitty apartment.

Ashley shuts the door on her crappy CAR, packed with boxes of her and her little girls' belongings. They have moved out. Ashley is holding the Zoey as Holli stares sheepishly up at the HOUSE.

GRANDMA and GRANDPA (50's), Ashley's parents, come down the front porch to greet them. They are smiling, happy to see their daughter and grandchildren. Grandma has an OXYGEN TANK next to her and attached to her nose, though she shows no signs of being weak - a strong, matronly woman.

GRANDPA
There they are!

Grandpa HUGS Ashley and tussles Zoey's hair.

ASHLEY
(ashamed)
Hey, dad.

GRANDPA
(warmly)
Hey, it's okay, Ash. We're thrilled you're here. Honest.

ASHLEY
We don't have much.

She moves to get a box.

GRANDMA
Honey, let Dad help with those.

Grandpa swoops over to the car and begins to grab boxes.
Grandma bends down to Holli.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Hi, Holli. I'm happy you're here.

Holli nods, timidly.

ASHLEY
Holli, say thank you.

GRANDMA
(kindly)
It's okay. She just needs to settle
in.

ASHLEY
She's being rude. She hasn't spoken
hardly at all since the divorce.

GRANDMA
(tenderly)
She'll talk when she's ready.
(to Holli)
You want to see your new room,
honey?

Holli nods. Grandma walks her into the house.

5 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

5

The home is as warm and welcoming as Grandma and Grandpa are.

GRANDMA
While your mama's at work, you'll
be spending a lot of time with me
and Grandpa. You can help me take
care of Baby Zooey. Think you'll be
able to handle that?

Holli nods.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
You'll get to stay in your mama's
old bedroom right at the top of the
stairs. We even found some of her
old toys.

Holli smiles.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
And there's room for your own toys
too.

HOLLI
I don't have any toys.

GRANDMA
Oh?

Holli looks at her feet, shy. Grandma has a moment of sadness for the little girl, but she brings her smile back.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Well, you do now. A whole shelf full. Let's go take a look.

As Grandma and Little Holli go up the stairs, Ashley and Grandpa enter.

ASHLEY
Not like there was anything he could withhold. We didn't have anything.

GRANDPA
Well, I'm just sorry it took you so long to leave. If we'd known how bad it was getting, you could've come back ages ago.

ASHLEY
Thank you so much for this, Dad. Really.

GRANDPA
Hey, it's nothing, honestly. Your mom is thrilled to have the girls here.
(to the baby)
You're gonna be safe here.

ASHLEY
It feels like everything is just better already. Like I'm a human being again after everything that "man" did.

Grandpa frowns, angry.

GRANDPA
I swear, if I'd known--

ASHLEY
It's okay, Dad. He's gone now.

GRANDPA

You'll still have to see him when you drop the kids off. If that sack of shit lays one finger on you or the girls, I swear to God--

ASHLEY

He won't. We agreed to always exchange them in public places. I'll never be alone with him again.

GRANDPA

(unsatisfied)

Still don't see why you have to share custody.

ASHLEY

It's fine. We're free now.

Holli calls from the top of the stairs holding up DOLLS.

HOLLI

Mommy! Look!

Ashley offers a lazy smile.

ASHLEY

Yeah, that's nice, Hol. No yelling in the house, okay?
(to Grandpa)
She's such a handful.

GRANDPA

Oh, she's fine. Sh'es four. Let her shout all she wants.

Upstairs, Holli LAUGHS happily with Grandma.

6 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE -AFTERNOON

6

Holli and Zoey play on the floor as Grandma sits in her chair watching them pleasantly.

Out the window, Ashley PULLS UP and walks in the front door. She throws her purse down and pulls off her jacket. She is in a waitress uniform.

HOLLI

Mommy!

GRANDMA

How was work, sweetie?

ASHLEY

Long.

GRANDMA

Well, come relax. Dinner's warming up.

ASHLEY

Can't. A bunch of the girls and cooks asked me to come play on their softball team tonight. Should be cool.

GRANDMA

Oh, that does sound fun.

Ashley vanishes down the hallway. She is going through the closet there.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Do we still have that old glove and bat?

GRANDMA

Should be right there in the back.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Got it.

Ashley reappears with the baseball mitt and a bat and then goes upstairs.

GRANDMA

The girls were great today. Holli helped me make cookies.

HOLLI

Peanut butter!

ASHLEY (O.S.)

(shouting down)

I thought you didn't like peanut butter.

HOLLI

I like Grandma's peanut butter cookies.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Hm. Well, you better not complain the next time I get you them.

HOLLI

I won't.

Ashley comes downstairs in jeans and a tee shirt, her hair in a ponytail.

ASHLEY
(to Grandma)
I'll be back around 9.

GRANDMA
Your Father's working a double shift, so it'll just be us girls.

ASHLEY
Okay. Holli, make sure you go to bed on time. Grandma needs her rest too.

HOLLI
Yes, mommy.

Ashley kisses Zoey on the head and pats Holli's head.

ASHLEY
Night.

She leaves. Holli walks over to the window to wave, but Ashley doesn't look back.

GRANDMA
Hey, let's go check on dinner. It's really smelling good, right?

HOLLI
Yeah.

Grandma takes Holli's hand and they walk to the kitchen.

7 EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

7

CRACK! A bat hits a ball and send it soaring to the outfield. A softball game in full swing. Ashley's friends from her restaurant job playing. Ashley runs across home plate to many cheers.

It is weeks later.

In the bleachers, Holli is playing next to baby Zoey.

TEAMMATE 1
Way to goo, Ash! Nice hustle!

SPECTATOR 1
Let's go, you guys! All tied up!

Ashley is having a great time, although completely ignoring her kids.

8 INT. A BAR - NIGHT

8

While Ashley has drinks and enjoys herself with her friends celebrating their game, Holli and Zoey are at a corner table coloring on place mats.

Ashley is cuddling up close to TRAVIS, one of her teammates.

TRAVIS
(playfully disappointed)
You brought the squirts again.

ASHLEY
(sighing)
Yeah, my mom's sick again. She needed the night off.

TRAVIS
So, does that mean you aren't coming back to my place?

ASHLEY
Oh, you know I wish I could.

TRAVIS
Mmm. I'll get you next time.

He picks her up and swings her around as she squeals.

TEAMMATE 2
Hey, watch it, Travis! You're gonna make me spill my damn beer, asshole!

Travis sets Ashley down, and they make-out.

ASHLEY
You know, my ex has the girls this weekend, if you wanted to celebrate our win a little more privately.

TRAVIS
Oh shit. You know I do.

Holli watches her mom, her young face confused - innocent doubts in her watchful eyes.

9 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY

9

Daniel is standing on the front porch with his arms crossed, annoyed. Holli is standing next to him in a jacket and holding a doll.

Inside, Ashley is trying to put Zooney in a jacket, but the little one is being difficult, which isn't helping anything.

DANIEL

You know, if you had them ready before I got here, I wouldn't have to wait around like this.

ASHLEY

Shut up, Dan. If you ever came on time, maybe I'd know when to get them ready.

DANIEL

Like you can talk about being punctual.

ASHLEY

Big word, for you.

DANIEL

Fuck off.

ASHLEY

You want to watch your mouth, huh?

DANIEL

What? Saying fuck off suddenly a problem for you?

ASHLEY

No, but my parents don't like it.

DANIEL

I don't see them around, so fuck-fuck-fuck.

Ashley aggressively shoves Baby Zooney into Daniel's arms.

ASHLEY

Here. You better not bring them back late.

DANIEL

Their my kids too. I'll bring them back when I'm done with them.

ASHLEY

Whatever.

Ashley slams the door in his face.

Daniel storms off to his TRUCK. Holli follows.

10 INT. DANIEL'S TRUCK - LATER

10

Daniel is smoking as he drives. He's still irate from speaking with Ashley.

DANIEL

You know your mommy's a real bitch,
right?

Holli doesn't say anything.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Shit, she's lucky she ever even
knew me. Who'd even want her now
that she's all used up? Shit out
two kids, living with her parents?
Shit. Who'd want that?

HOLLI

She has lots of friends.

DANIEL

Shit, really? Any friends like me?
Guy friends?

HOLLI

She has a boyfriend.

DANIEL

(scoffing)

Really? Fuck that. Probably some
fag using her for something.

Holli doesn't know what that means.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You know your Uncle Jay was a fag?
I beat the shit out of him for
that.

HOLLI

(quietly)

Okay.

Daniel broods a little while.

DANIEL

Bet she's so fucking happy leeching off some other guy now. Fucking women. You better not end up like her. You get me?

HOLLI

Yeah.

DANIEL

She's just like every other woman. Stupid, mouthy bitches. You know I had another wife before her? Yeah, she was shit too. Took my little girls and ran off with some other dickhead because I knocked her around or whatever and she had to get a c-section. It was bullshit. Shoulda seen her. Her jaw got wired shut because I got her just right.

He grins at his cruelty. Holli stares forward, silent.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Bet that new guy's a fag.

11 EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

11

Daniel stands by his truck as Holli, holding little Zoey's hand, walks up the front porch to Ashley waiting at the door.

Grandma meets the girls and takes them inside with a happy, comforting smile. Ashley gives Daniel the finger and shuts the door.

12 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

12

Another evening, Ashley, a bit of a drunken slur in her voice, is arguing with Grandma. Grandma is tired and weaker now. She can't get up from her armchair.

Holli is listening from the top of the stairs.

GRANDMA

I just don't understand why you keep rushing into these relationships. It's not even been a year since you left Daniel, and you're trying to shack up with this new guy?

ASHLEY

He's different, Mom! I love him!

GRANDMA

You barely know him. What about the girls? Why can't you just settle in and work and be a mom and not have to be in a romance?

ASHLEY

You don't get it! He makes me happy!

GRANDMA

I know you think he does, but--

ASHLEY

Don't you want me to be happy!

GRANDMA

That's not it.

Grandma is exhausted.

ASHLEY

Just stop trying to be my mom, okay! Travis is amazing! And he said we can move in with him!

GRANDMA

Ashley, you cannot move in with this man.

ASHLEY

You can't tell me what to do!

GRANDMA

And I'm not trying to, honey. But he hurts you. I've seen the bruises on your arm--

ASHLEY

That was an accident! I told you!

GRANDMA

Just think about all this, please!

ASHLEY

I gotta go, okay? We have a game tonight.

GRANDMA
 (sighing tiredly)
 Can you please wait until your
 father gets home? I don't know if I
 can handle the girls tonight.

ASHLEY
 Oh, so now you're abandoning me?

GRANDMA
 Ashley--

ASHLEY
 You know what? It's fine. Amanda
 said she'd watch the girls whenever
 I need her to.

GRANDMA
 Don't drag your sister into this
 mess.

ASHLEY
 I'm not dragging her into anything!
 (shouting upstairs)
 Holli! Get your coat! We're
 leaving!

Ashley storms up the stairs and aggressively puts a jacket on
 Holli.

GRANDMA
 Ashley, I can watch them if you
 just wait for your Dad to get home.

ASHLEY
 No, no it's fine. I get it. Come
 on, girls. We're going to Aunti
 Amanda's. You're going to seep over
 there tonight.

Girls in her arms, Ashley storms out the front door without
 shutting it. As they get into Ashley's car, Holli can still
 see her grandma in the front window, the old woman's head low
 and sad.

13 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

13

Ashley stands outside the apartment door as her sweet sister
 AMANDA (20's) smiles at her while holding Zooney.

Just inside, MAX (30's), Amanda's husband, holds Holli's hand
 in his.

AMANDA

No, it's fine, girl. Go have fun. After everything Daniel put you through, you have every right to want to go live it up.

ASHLEY

Right? That's what I was trying to tell mom, but she just doesn't get it.

AMANDA

She's from a different time. Don't worry about it. Max and I got this. The girls can have the guest room.

ASHLEY

You're sure? I mean, I might not be able to get them until tomorrow.

AMANDA

It's fine, seriously.

ASHLEY

God, you're the best.

Ashley gives Amanda a quick hug, kisses Zooney, and hurries off. Amanda waves.

MAX

(to Holli)

Hey, you want to play a board game?

Holli shrugs.

AMANDA

(to Zooney)

Who's a pretty baby? Huh? Huh? I'm going to make some mac and cheese. I'll cut hotdogs into it.

MAX

That sounds yummy. Doesn't that sound tummy, Holli?

HOLLI

(quietly, a small smile)

I guess.

They bring the girls to the table and Amanda starts making dinner.

MAX
(smiling sweetly)
How old are you, Holli?

HOLLI
7.

AMANDA
You just had your birthday, didn't
you?

Holli nods.

MAX
Oh, well we should celebrate!
You're all grown up now!

AMANDA
How about we make some instant
pudding?

MAX
Oh! Would you like that?

Holli can't help but smile.

MAX (CONT'D)
Aw, I think she likes that, Manda.

They all smile as Amanda continues to prepare dinner.

14 INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

14

It is later, and Holli is sound asleep on a fold out bed.
Baby Zooey asleep in a small playpen.

The DOOR to the room opens and closes, momentarily spilling a
sliver of light on Holli's peaceful, childlike face. A FIGURE
steps close to the bed and LAYS DOWN beside Holli.

Ma puts his arm around Holli, and she wakes up with a start.

MAX
(whispering)
Shh. It's okay.

He spoons with the little girl.

HOLLI
(sleepily confused)
What are you--

MAX

Shh.

He puts his hand over her mouth.

MAX (CONT'D)

This is what love it. It's our
little secret, okay?

Holli is frozen in fear. He shakes her with his hand still
over his mouth.

MAX (CONT'D)

Okay? If you say anything, I'm
going to hurt you. You understand?

Holli nods, terrified. She lays there in silence horror as
Max sniffs her hair.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 EXT. DISNEY WORLD - DAY 15

The happiest place on Earth, even in 1979. We see families
laughing and having an incredible time.

Ashley is with one of her GIRLFRIENDS from work happily
walking among the tourists.

16 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY 16

Grandpa opens the door to find Daniel standing there. The two
men have no love between them.

DANIEL

(uncomfortable)

Hey, Jim. I'm here for the girls.
They ready?

GRANDPA

Mary's just getting them ready.

DANIEL

Where's Ashley?

GRANDPA

She went on a trip.

DANIEL

A trip where? What the hell?

GRANDPA

She and some friends went to Florida.

DANIEL

Florida?

Holli walks up to the door, as sullen as ever. Zoey and Grandma walk just behind her.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

What the hell is she going to Florida for without telling me?

GRANDPA

She doesn't have to tell you shit.

DANIEL

Uh, yeah she does. If she was leaving town, I get the girls. I could take her to court for this.

GRANDMA

That's enough, Daniel.

Daniel exhales loudly, but Grandma has that power over all. You can't help but respect her.

GRANDPA

(to Holli)

You have a good weekend, sweetie.

HOLLI

Okay.

DANIEL

Hi, baby.

HOLLI

Mommy went to Disney World.

DANIEL

(flaring)

Are you fucking kidding me!

GRANDPA

That's enough, Dan.

DANIEL

You got a real piece of work daughter, you two. What kind of mother plans a Disney vacation without her goddamn kids?

GRANDMA

It was last minute. A friend of hers had free passes.

DANIEL

A friend? You mean that Travis or whatever shit head she's hooked up with?

HOLLI

She and Travis don't see each other anymore.

DANIEL

Ha! Not surprised at all.

GRANDPA

Just take the girls and have your weekend with them. Like you even give a damn.

DANIEL

Yeah, how long is mother of the year going to be gone?

GRANDPA

Does it matter?

DANIEL

Yes!

HOLLI

She said the 8th.

DANIEL

That's over a week! No, no I'm keeping the girls until then. She can come get them when she gets back from her little vacation.

GRANDPA

Now, you hold on a damn minute.

DANIEL

No, Mike. They're my kids.

GRANDPA

And they're our grandkids.

Grandma touches her husband's arm.

GRANDMA

(exhausted)

It's fine, Mike. Let him.

GRANDPA

But--

GRANDMA

I need the rest, honey.

Daniel smirks smugly, but one look from Grandma wipes the grin right off his ace.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

But I hear one word that these girls were unhappy or not taken care of, and so help me God, there is no end to what I will see done to you, Daniel.

Daniels frowns but nods.

DANIEL

They'll be fine. I'll take better care of them than she ever would.

Daniel walks the girls to his truck. Grandma and Grandpa watch them leave.

17 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

17

Holli sits at a small table in the shit-hole duplex. Zooey is in a highchair. The TV is on. And the "family" eats McDonald's. It is a pathetic tableau.

ASHLEY (V.O.)

I've never been so happy in my life.

18 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY

18

Ashley is beaming, tan from her Florida trip and alive with excitement. Grandma and Grandpa are looking at her in disbelief.

ASHLEY

His name is Dustin, and he's incredible. Mom, Dad, I swear, this is different.

GRANDMA

Honey, it's just... You've said this before.

ASHLEY

He goes to church.

GRANDPA
(surprised)
Well, that IS different.

GRANDMA
Hold on, Jim. Ashley, you just met
this man.

ASHLEY
And I know that. I know, but it's
different. He's different.

At the top of the stairs, Holli listens.

GRANDMA
You leave for a month - twice as
long as you promised - and you come
back talking about a new man, and
you don't expect us to be
skeptical. You don't have the best
judgment, sweetie.

Ashley kneels down in front of her mom.

ASHLEY
Mom, Dustin is a faithful man. He's
in the Army. He's not Daniel.

GRANDPA
And the Army? Jeez, Mary, maybe she
has found someone.

Grandma gives her husband a look to quiet him.

ASHLEY
Just... What if you met him?

GRANDPA
You said he's from Mississippi.
He's going to come all the way to
Ohio, just to make a good
impression on us?

ASHLEY
He wants to meet you. And the
girls. He's serious about all of
this. I'm not asking for your
blessing, but he wants to do this
right.

Grandpa sighs. She touches her oxygen tank and thinks a long
while. For once, Ashley is patient.

GRANDMA
Fine. We'll meet him.

ASHLEY
(smiling)
I'm going to call him!

She hurries to the kitchen. Grandma shakes her head, and Grandpa pats the top of her hand gently.

19 INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

19

It is weeks later, and DUSTIN JONES is standing before Grandma, seated, and Grandpa, standing as well. He is a tall, handsome military man with poise and respect. A far, far cry from Daniel or Travis.

Ashley is off to the side holding Holli's and Zoey's hands, waiting.

DUSTIN
It is a pleasure to meet you both.

GRANDPA
Ashley says you're Army.

DUSTIN
Yes, sir.

GRANDPA
Any tours?

DUSTIN
A tour in 'Nam, sir. I was lucky enough to only see the last months of action before we returned home.

GRANDPA
Thank you for your service.

DUSTIN
Thank you, sir.

GRANDMA
You gonna be good to our little girls?

DUSTIN
(smiling)
Yes, ma'am.

(MORE)

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
I was nervous to meet all of you,
but I was looking most forward to
meeting these two.

Dustin kneels before Holli and Zooley.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Hello.

ASHLEY
(sternly)
Say hello, you two.

Zooley reaches out and HUGS Dustin.

DUSTIN
Oh! Haha. Which one are you?

ASHLEY
That's Zooley. Holli, say hello to
Dustin.

Holli steps behind Ashley, frightened, tears forming.

DUSTIN
It's okay, Holli. I'm your mom's
friend. I would really like to be
your friend too. How old are you?

He reaches out to her, and Holli recoils.

HOLLI
No!

Holli runs across the room and into her Grandma's arms.

ASHLEY
Holli! That is enough!

DUSTIN
It's okay. She's just a little shy.

GRANDPA
It's okay, Hol.

HOLLI
No!

ASHLEY
Holli! You stop that right now and
say hello to Dustin. He is going to
be your new daddy, and you will
respect him!

HOLLI

(sobbing loudly)

NO! I don't want a new daddy! I don't want to move to Mississippi! I want to stay here with Grandma and Grandpa!

GRANDMA

Shh. It's okay, sweetie. It's okay.

ASHLEY

Don't baby her, Mom.

GRANDMA

She's just taking it all in. It's a lot to ask an eight year old.

ASHLEY

You don't see Zoey having a tantrum.

(to Dustin)

I'm sorry, babe. She's so difficult.

DUSTIN

I understand.

GRANDMA

(gently)

Baby, what is it? It's okay.

HOLLI

I don't want to leave you.

GRANDMA

It'll be okay, sweetie. I'm going to miss you too. You can call me every night, if you want. Every morning too.

HOLLI

If I was here, I wouldn't have to call. Zoey can go. I'll stay. I want to stay with you and keep seeing Daddy.

ASHLEY

(scoffing)

You actually want to see him?

HOLLI

Why does everything have to keep changing?

GRANDMA
That's life, Holli. Things are going to change a lot. And you just have to accept that.

HOLLI
(sniffing)
But what if I don't like it?

GRANDMA
Then you just have to get through it, and things will change again. That's life, baby.

GRANDPA
(gently)
He is a good man, Hol. He's going to take good care of you and your sister.

Holli looks at Grandpa and then to Dustin. Dustin smiles hopefully.

DUSTIN
If you'll let me.

Grandma wipes the tears off Holli's cheeks.

GRANDMA
You can call me every day. I'll be right here to talk whenever you need me. Okay.

Holli looks at her, so much uncertainty on such a small, young face.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Okay?

Holli nods. She hugs her grandmother, afraid to let go.

Ashley touches her shoulder--

CUT TO:

20 EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

20

Ashley guides Holli up the front walk of a large PRIVATE SCHOOL in MISSISSIPPI on the first day of classes. There are KIDS running around everywhere, parents dropping off children alongside BUSES. Teachers mill about, and Holli is in NEW CLOTHES. For the first time, she looks nice, clean. Her hair cut a brand new backpack on her tiny shoulders.

Even Ashley looks cleaner and nicer. Her new relationship changing everything about her mood and attitude, though her sharp personality is never far from the surface.

SUPER: 1981

MISS CURRY (20's), a young, kind teacher meets Ashley and Holli as they reach the front door.

MISS CURRY

Hello there, you must be Mrs. Jones and Holli. I'm Miss Curry. I teach 3rd grade. You're going to be in my class, Holli. Are you excited?

ASHLEY

She's very excited.

MISS CURRY

Well, we're very happy you were able to squeak in for enrollment.

ASHLEY

Us too. We weren't sure we'd find the right school. We've only been in public, but I really wanted to find a good Christian one for our family.

MISS CURRY

Of course.

ASHLEY

(to Holli)

I'll be picking you up right out front here this afternoon. You be good and pay attention, okay?

(to Miss Curry)

You'll have to forgive her. She's a little slow.

MISS CURRY

(kindly)

I'm sure she'll be wonderful.

Ashley gives Holli a halfhearted squeeze of a hug and steps back.

ASHLEY

Be good.

MISS CURRY

Bye!

Miss Curry waves and attempts to encourage Holli to do the same, but Holli just looks around at all the strange kids in this strange place.

21 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

21

Holli is seated in the middle of the class. She is uncomfortable. Many of the kids look at her, knowing she's an outsider. Miss Curry is teaching at the front of the class. Everything is muted. Holli is just sitting there, sad and uncomfortable.

MISS CURRY

Max? How about you?

A little boy next to Holli laughs.

LITTLE MAX

I built a fort in the back woods with my best friend. It's our castle, and we spent the whole Summer making it. We even got to sleep out there a bunch of times.

MISS CURRY

Thank you Max.

Holli stares at the boy. He looks and acts nothing like Holli's Uncle Max, but the name is a trigger.

MISS CURRY (CONT'D)

Holli? Would you like to tell us about your Summer? Holli is from Cincinnati, everyone.

They all turn to look at her. Tears form and she begins to cry - to see the new girl crying.

MISS CURRY (CONT'D)

Holli?

Miss Curry comes over to her and gently touches her shoulder. Holli recoils and slaps the teacher's hand away.

HOLLI

No!

Holli covers her head and sobs into her chest. Miss Curry looks deeply concerned.

22 INT. SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER 22

Miss Curry walks Holli to the Office.

23 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY 23

Holli sits in a chair as Miss Curry and Ashley talk.

MISS CURRY

I'm sorry to pull you away, but she just wouldn't talk to anyone.

ASHLEY

It must be the move. It's been really hard on her.

MISS CURRY

I can imagine. Saying goodbye to all her friends and all.

ASHLEY

I don't think she really had any friends.

MISS CURRY

Well, hopefully she settles in here and finds some. Your husband works at the base, right? You're not going to be moving around, are you?

ASHLEY

Oh no, we're here to stay.

MISS CURRY

Good. Good, that'll help her, I'm sure. This will all become familiar real soon.

ASHLEY

Yes, thank you.

They walk to Holli. She looks up to see the hopeful and kind smile of her teacher, and the stern, unkind fake smile of her Mom.

MISS CURRY

Your mama's going to take you home, sweetie.

HOLLI

(meekly)

Thank you.

MISS CURRY

We'll see you in the morning, okay?

Holli nods. Ashley takes her hand and pulls her out of the office.

24 INT. SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

24

Walking down the hall, Ashley's face embarrassed.

ASHLEY

I had to leave choir practice for this, you know that? Jesus help you. I need you to stop fighting this. This is going to be your school. This is your home now.

HOLLI

I don't want it to be.

Ashley lets go of Holli's hand and faces her.

ASHLEY

Well, it is. The Lord guided us here, and this is where we were meant to be. I would think you'd feel blessed to have new clothes and a new home with your own room.

HOLLI

That's stuff you wanted. I wanted to stay in Ohio.

ASHLEY

You are so stubborn. Just like your father. Why did the Lord punish me with such an ungrateful child?

Ashley looks to the heavens and shakes her head before turning and marching toward the exit.

Holli looks into a classroom and sees all the kids listening to the teacher. They all look so peaceful and happy.

Holli is not.

SOUND: A PHONE RINGING

25 INT. THE JONES HOME - NIGHT

25

A very nice Mississippi suburban home. Holli is in the hallway and has the phone pressed to her ear.

She is waiting for someone to pick up on the other end. No one does. She places the receiver back on the cradle.

In the dining room, Dustin is seated as Ashley is preparing dinner. It is a whole new world. Ashley, the homemaker.

DUSTIN

Wasn't too bad today. Brooks was being a jerk, but that's normal. He yells, but he gets results. The newbies fall in line quick, and it leaves me with very little disciplining to do.

ASHLEY

Well, church was wonderful today. Pastor Craig gave this lovely sermon on the coming holidays and how to be thankful all year round.

DUSTIN

That's great. I hope he gives the same one tomorrow. I'm going to the 6 a.m. service.

ASHLEY

Zoey, Holli, wash up please. Dinner's nearly ready.

The now 6-year-old Zoey runs out of the backroom and to the bathroom to wash.

ZOOEY

Okay, mommy!

Holli sulkily walks past.

DUSTIN

Hey, Holli, how's school?

HOLLI

(shrugging)
It's okay, I guess.

She continues down the hall.

DUSTIN

Settled in finally?

ASHLEY

Yes, but her teacher says she's always distracted and daydreaming. She's falling behind.

DUSTIN

Hm. I was hoping she'd have gotten comfortable by now.

ASHLEY

Hey, if she wants to fail, then she'll just have to repeat the grade. That's that.

The PHONE RINGS. Holli comes running in.

HOLLI

I got it!

ASHLEY

No, finish washing up for dinner! I'll get it.

HOLLI

But--

ASHLEY

Go!

Holli pouts away. Ashley answers the phone.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Hello?

Her face slowly changes, shock and sadness filling her eyes. Dustin sits up, worried.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Oh...

Holli and Zoey come back and see their mother standing there, and they too can see something's wrong.

HOLLI

What's wrong?

Ashley looks at her daughters.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

What is it?

26 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

26

It is a cloudy day as the funeral procession files past the headstones. At a freshly dug grave-site, a CASKET sits beside it. Holli's Grandma is peacefully laying inside, passed.

A PRIEST stand before the congregation and speaks solemnly. Holli sits in the front row, numb and silent, between her mother and Grandfather. Dustin is a couple seats over beside Amanda, Zooey between them.

PRIEST

Do not stand at my grave and weep
 I am not there. I do not sleep.
 I am a thousand winds that blow.
 I am the diamond glints on snow.
 I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
 I am the gentle autumn rain.
 When you awaken in the morning's
 hush
 I am the swift uplifting rush
 Of quiet birds in circled flight.
 I am the soft stars that shine at
 night.
 Do not stand at my grave and cry;
 I am not there. I did not die.

As the gathered rise and file past the casket, it comes to Holli's turn. She throws herself on the casket weeping.

HOLLI

(sobbing)

Open your eyes, Granma. Open your
 eyes.

Grandpa, in a suit and looking so sad, take Holli and pulls her off the casket.

GRANDPA

Shh. I know, honey. I know.

HOLLI

I just want her to open her eyes.

GRANDPA

Me too, baby.

Holli cries into her grandfather, and he cries too, though he tries to keep himself together.

HOLLI

I don't want to go back. Don't make
 me go back.

The clouds move through the sky. The wind blows. It is a very sad day.

DISSOLVE TO:

27 INT. CHURCH - DAY

27

Holli, now 13-years-old, stands in the choir and sings with the other kids. There isn't much effort in her singing.

Near the front row, Ashley is singing joyfully, a good Southern Christian woman now. Beside her is 11-year-old Zoey.

SUPER: 1986

As the congregation sings the Lord's praises, Holli shows barely hidden apathy for it all.

28 EXT. CHURCH - DAY

28

Service ended, Ashley is talking happily with several WOMEN.

ASHLEY

That was so lovely, wasn't it?

WOMAN 1

Oh, yes indeed. And the choir today. Bless their hearts.

ASHLEY

I'm hoping my Zoey will be in next year. She's got the voice of an angel.

WOMAN 2

I've heard her. She surely does.

A short distance away, Holli is walking with some friends toward the parking lot.

ASHLEY

If you'll excuse me.

Ashley walks after her daughter.

HOLLI

(to a friend)

I got a few bucks. We could hit up Gillie's.

FRIEND

(spotting Ashley)

Ugh. Head's up.

Holli turns and sees her mom approaching.

ASHLEY
And where are you going?

HOLLI
Out.

ASHLEY
You have counseling with Pastor
Evans.

Holli coughs and pulls her mother away from her friends. They are now off to the side of the others in front of the church, and they hiss at each other trying not to make a scene.

HOLLI
Mom, I don't need to go. I just
want to go hangout.

ASHLEY
You'll get to hangout on Friday at
the game.

HOLLI
That's for cheer-leading. This is
just to, you know hang out or
whatever.

ASHLEY
You know I don't like you spending
time with those kids. They listen
to the wrong music and they take
you to the mall.

HOLLI
We're not going to the mall, mom.

ASHLEY
Oh? And where's Gillie's?

HOLLI
It's--

ASHLEY
At the mall.

HOLLI
God, mom.

ASHLEY
(scolding)
None of that, now.

HOLLI
God-God-God!

Ashley looks around embarrassed and pulls Holli's arm.

ASHLEY

(hissing)

That is enough, young lady. It's bad enough you're getting held back, don't you dare make a scene here.

HOLLI

Only one making a scene is you.

ASHLEY

Why do you keep doing this? How have you not gotten better, huh? Will you just accept Jesus into your heart and stop being a curse on me and this family?

HOLLI

Maybe I don't want Jesus shoved down my throat all the time. You ever think of that? I got all my regular school work and then I gotta study the stupid Bible too?

Ashley is turning red with brimming anger.

ASHLEY

Don't you dare. The church has made us whole. It has made us better people.

Holli scoffs.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

I'm about two seconds away from taking you out of cheer-leading.

This connects. Holli looks afraid.

HOLLI

You can't.

ASHLEY

Watch me.

HOLLI

Fine, I'll-I'll go to counseling. I'll behave.

ASHLEY

Good. Say goodbye to your heathen friends.

Holli looks at her feet, defeated. She turns to her friends--

HOLLI
(calling)
Hey, go on without me. I gotta go
do something.

FRIEND
Okay, Hol. See you at school!

They leave, and Holli sulks toward the church. Ashley smiling, pleased with her supposed victory.

29 INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

29

A football team and cheer-leading squad on their way to an away game. Holli sits with SYDNEY, a friend, in the back laughing and enjoying herself. She is free here.

SYDNEY
You going to have to repeat
seventh?

HOLLI
Maybe.

SYDNEY
Ugh, that's such bullshit. There
are so many dumber people in your
class.

HOLLI
I know, right?

SYDNEY
Look, you don't even need school.
Just find a good boyfriend and
he'll take care of you. That's what
my sister did, and she's great.
Shit, isn't that even what your mom
did with your step-dad?

HOLLI
Yeah, but I don't date.

SYDNEY
You don't? That 'cause your mom
too?

HOLLI
Yeah, and I just never did.

SYDNEY
Never ever?

HOLLI
Nope.

SYDNEY
So, you've never had a boyfriend?

HOLLI
No.

SYDNEY
Oh my God, Hol. You should have
one!
(to one of the boys)
Gabe, you have a girlfriend?

GABE, one of the football players turns around to face them.

GABE
No. Why? You wanna?

SYDNEY
No, but Holli's single.

GABE
(grinning)
Oh yeah?

HOLLI
(giggling)
No! Go away!

Sidney and Holli giggle. Gabe shrugs and turns back around.

SYDNEY
You should!

HOLLI
My mom would be so pissed off.

SYDNEY
All the more reason, you little
sinner.

HOLLI
Good point.

They giggle.

30 EXT. FOOTBALL GAME - NIGHT 30

Holli cheers enthusiastically with the other girls as the TEAM charges across the field. She is free here - alive.

31 INT. THE JONES HOME - NIGHT 31

It is LATE in the evening. Holli comes stumbling into the house. Outside, a truck of squealing teenagers rumbles off.

HOLLI
(giggling, waving)
Shh!

She shuts the door and turns to find Ashley standing there.

ASHLEY
You're late.

HOLLI
We went and got dinner to celebrate. We won.

Ashley marches up to her and sniffs her.

ASHLEY
You smell like cigarettes and beer.

HOLLI
No I don't.

ASHLEY
You don't think I know what those things smell like?

HOLLI
Oh, I know you do.

ASHLEY
Watch that tone.

HOLLI
Whatever. I'm going to bed.

ASHLEY
No you are not. You are going to sit down and pray with me.

HOLLI
No, I'm not. Goodnight.

Ashley grabs Holly by the arm and YANKS her to the living room. She shoves her onto the couch.

ASHLEY

I have had just about enough of this!

HOLLI

Enough of what?

ASHLEY

This attitude.

HOLLI

(sarcastic)

Maybe if I went to church more.

ASHLEY

Maybe!

HOLLI

I don't want to go to church at all! I want to go to the mall and listen to good music and watch TV! I want to do all the Satanic stuff

ASHLEY

Don't you dare say things like that?

HOLLI

Why not? You'll pray for me. Saves me the trouble.

ASHLEY

Maybe I won't pray for you!

HOLLI

Oh, I'll tell Pastor Evans on you.

ASHLEY

Good! At least that means you'll be talking with him.

HOLLI

I don't want to talk to him! I want to talk to you!

ASHLEY

We're talking now. Talk to me!

HOLLI

No, you just want to pray!

ASHLEY

Is that so terrible?

Dustin appears at the bottom of the stairs, woken by the shouting.

DUSTIN
Girls, it's late.

ASHLEY
Oh, we'll be done in a moment.
Right after I ground Holli.

HOLLI
Ugh, you're so annoying! I can't
strand you sometimes!

ASHLEY
Well, I hate you too!

DUSTIN
(sternly)
Ashley.

ASHLEY
No, I've had enough. I can't stand
to even look at her. She looks just
like him, and it makes me sick.
She's got the devil in her, Dustin!
Just like her father!

Tears in her eyes, Holli lashes out.

HOLLI
Then maybe I should just go live
with him then!

ASHLEY
Don't tempt me.

HOLLI
No, I mean it. I want to live with
him. I can't stand it here anymore!
I want to go live with Dad in
Cincinnati! You said it yourself,
I'm a curse on the family. So, send
the curse away. It's what you've
been praying for!

The two stare at one another with hate between them, Holli's lip trembling, tears threatening to come. Ashley clenches her jaw. Dustin steps close to Ashley and puts her arm around her.

DUSTIN
Let's just go to bed. We can talk
about this in the morning.

Ashley huffs and brushes his hand off her shoulder. She storms up the stairs.

Dustin looks at Holli, but he has no words for her - nothing that would help. He sighs and follows Ashley. Holli stands there, alone.

32 EXT. NASHVILLE GAS STATION - DAY

32

Holli and Ashley stand side-by-side in the middle of a parking lot waiting. Next to Holli are two pieces of luggage and some boxes - all of her belongings.

ASHLEY

Late, of course.

Holli doesn't say anything. It is a long awkward minute. Ashley tries to find words, until--

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

You know I don't want you to leave.

HOLLI

(scoffing)

Yeah, you do.

ASHLEY

I've been praying, and I know I've said some terrible things, but you leaving is not what I wanted.

HOLLI

(spitefully)

It's what I want.

Another long, uncomfortable moment.

ASHLEY

You know he can be very aggressive.

HOLLI

Yeah, I remember.

ASHLEY

The lip you give me isn't going to fly with him either. So, watch your mouth.

HOLLI

As long as he doesn't force me to pray or go to church, we'll probably be best friends.

Ashley's jaw twitches.

Daniel pulls up into the same piece of shit PICK-UP TRUCK. He gets out, and they all face one another awkwardly.

DANIEL
That all your shit?

HOLLI
Yeah.

DANIEL
Toss it in back.

Holli picks up her luggage and walks it to the truck. Daniel eyes Ashley.

ASHLEY
What?

DANIEL
You look different.

ASHLEY
Well, a better life can change a person.

DANIEL
(snorting)
Still a bitch though, I see.

ASHLEY
Go to hell, Dan.

DANIEL
Tsk. Tsk. You'll make Baby Jesus cry saying shit like that.

ASHLEY
I have a strong bond with Jesus.
What do you have.

Daniel pulls out a cigarette and lights it.

DANIEL
Two of these.

He flicks her off with both hands.

Holli puts the last box in the truck and Daniel climbs back into the driver's side, slamming the door.

Holli looks at her mom.

ASHLEY
I...

HOLLI
Bye.

ASHLEY
Look... if you ever want to come
back, you can.

HOLLI
Fine.

Mother and daughter look at one another, an ocean between
them.

Daniel HONKS his horn.

DANIEL
Come on. We got a four hour drive.

Holli looks at her mom one last time and gets in the truck.
Daniel hits the gas, and they're gone. Ashley stands there,
watching them drive off.

33 INT. DANIEL'S TRUCK - LATER

33

Daniel is listening to his MUSIC loudly. Holli watches the
world zip past her window. Finally turning down the music--

DANIEL
What grade you in now?

HOLLI
Eighth.

DANIEL
Hm. 14?

HOLLI
Next month.

DANIEL
Hm.

HOLLI
You, um, working?

DANIEL
Na. I'm on disability. Had a heart
attack last month. Your step-mom
works.

Holli is surprised.

HOLLI
Your married?

DANIEL
Oh, yeah.

He holds up his left hand showing his ring.

HOLLI
Oh.

DANIEL
You got two new brothers. They're
real excited to meet you.

HOLLI
Oh. Cool.

DANIEL
Yeah.

HOLLI
Um... What's my, um, your wife's
name?

DANIEL
Raven.

HOLLI
Raven. That's cool.

DANIEL
(shrugging)
It's alright.

They drive in silence.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Your mom didn't tell you that?

HOLLI
No.

DANIEL
Figures. What a bitch.

HOLLI
Heh. Yeah.

DANIEL
Shoulda never married her. She's
fucked me out of a bunch of shit.
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I got this shit heart because of
her. Her and your grandpa.

HOLLI
Grandpa--?

DANIEL
My dad. Not that prick your Grandpa
Jim.

HOLLI
Oh.

DANIEL
You never met my dad.

HOLLI
Yeah, no. I know.

DANIEL
You know why?

HOLLI
Um, no?

DANIEL
Your Uncle Jay shot him in the
head.

Holli swallows, shocked, scared.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
(pointing at his head)
Pow. Saw it happen too.

HOLLI
Oh.

They sit in silence. Daniel turns the music back up loudly.
Holli stares out the window watching the world go by.

34 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

34

Daniel is in the same crappy House, though now there is a lot
more stuff all over the place - four people living there.

He enters with a box of Holli's stuff, Holli right behind
him.

DANIEL
Hey, we're here!

Running down the hall comes two little kids - NICK (5) and JAKE (6), Holli's new stepbrothers.

JAKE Yay!
NICK Is this her?

DANIEL
No, stupid. I picked up a hooker on the way here. Yeah, it's her.
(to Holli)
Hol, that's Nick, and that's Jake.

The two little boys gleefully hug Holli.

NICK Do you like Legos? I have a whole bunch, and you can share them, if you want!
JAKE I got a bike for my birthday! Mom bought it, and I gotta share it with Nick, but it's a boy's bike, so you can't ride it.

DANIEL
Shit, let her get in the door at least.

Holli smiles, she's overwhelmed by the affection.

HOLLI
Nice to meet you, guys.

NICK
She sounds funny!

JAKE
It's her accent, stupid!

The boys start wrestling. Daniel breaks them up.

DANIEL
Alright, alright. Go grab her shit out of the truck, okay?

Nick and Jake race out of the house. Daniel goes to the fridge and grabs a soda.

Holli looks around the house and takes it in. It's small and cramped, and there are boxes and junk strewn about. It's nowhere near as nice as her home was in Mississippi.

At the hall entrance, RAVEN (24), fierce, dark eyes and bleached hair, a don't fuck with me aura, stands with her hands on her hips.

HOLLI
Oh. Hi, uh, you must be Raven.

RAVEN
I must be.

DANIEL
Raven, Holli. Holli, Raven.

HOLLI
It's nice to meet you.

Raven just glares at her.

DANIEL
Hey! She said it was nice to meet you!

RAVEN
Yeah, I heard her!
(forcing a smile)
Nice to meet you too, sweetie.

Holli can feel the heat.

Nick and Jake come running back in with Hollis' bags.

NICK
Where should we put her stuff?

DANIEL
Oh, right. Look, we got a back room we use for storage I'm gonna clear out for you, but for now, you can crash on the couch here, and we'll put your stuff in the basement.

HOLLI
Okay.

Nick and Jake throw her stuff on the living room floor and run down the hall. Raven is still just standing and staring at Holli.

Daniel walks to the couch and sits down. He turns on the TV and drinks his soda.

Raven turns and walks away. Holli looks at her dad and the house and her stuff.

Heading down to the basement carrying a box, Holli bites her lip knowing she's made a huge mistake.

DISSOLVE TO:

HOLLI (CONT'D)

Dad! My clothes! They've been ruined! Someone threw them on the floor and poured bleach all over them!

DANIEL

Shit, stop yelling. I haven't had my coffee yet.

HOLLI

Dad!

Raven appears at the hallway.

RAVEN

I think your little brothers must've gotten into the chemicals down there and fucked around with your shit.

HOLLI

(incredulous)

Oh yeah?

Jake and Nick are immediately shouting.

JAKE

No! That's not true! We didn't!

NICK

We didn't do it! We know not to touch anything!

DANIEL

Stop yelling!

Holli glares at Raven, but Raven just smirks.

HOLLI

Dad, it's the first day of school. What am I gonna wear?

DANIEL

Wear something from Raven.

RAVEN

What?? No!

Daniel grins wickedly at her.

DANIEL

Why not?

RAVEN

(face turning red)

Because... Because nothing'll fit.

DANIEL

You wear shit three sizes too small. She'll fit with room to spare.

(to Holli)

Go pick something out.

Holli sneers at Raven as she pushes past her and down the hall.

RAVEN

You can't just let her steal my clothes!

DANIEL

She's not stealing nothing. Relax.

Raven turns on Jake and Nick who flee into the living room.

RAVEN

You little shits.

NICK

We didn't do it!

RAVEN

Yes you did!

JAKE

We swear!

She chases them, and it turns into a scramble, Raven stumbling all over to get them. Daniels begins LAUGHING at the mayhem.

Holli returns wearing jeans and a shirt.

RAVEN

Get over here!

NICK

No!

HOLLI

If the boys did it, then maybe they need better super supervision.

RAVEN

You shut the fuck up, bitch! What do you know about being a parent!

HOLLI

More than you, apparently.

RAVEN

More than your own mom! She didn't even want you. Had to dump you here because she didn't want you. I'd like to see her come back here and try to take this all back. This is MY life now! Not hers! Only downside is having to get you out of the damn deal!

Holli clenches her fists, and Daniel walks between them waving his hands like a referee.

DANIEL

As much as I want to see you two fuck each other up, Hol's got school, and I got shit to do.

RAVEN

Like what? Sit on your ass all day watching The Price is Right?

Daniel raises a hand as if to hit Raven, and both she and Holli flinch at the threat. But he doesn't hit her.

DANIEL

Hol, go to school.

Holli grabs her backpack and slams the front door as she leaves.

36 INT. SCHOOL - DAY

36

Holli walks through the halls of her new school. Like the difference in her homes, this public school is dirty and packed with students. She is a nervous wreck and keeps her head down as she finds her classroom.

37 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

37

She takes a desk near the back, but quickly catches the attention of a girl, MARTA, a bubbly 8th grader.

MARTA

Hey, you're new!

HOLLI

Um, yeah.

MARTA

I'm Marta.

HOLLI
Holli. Nice to meet you.

MARTA
Oh my God, you're Southern?

HOLLI
Um, yeah.

MARTA
(smiling)
You sound so proper. Like a real
Southern Belle.
(attempting the accent)
I've always depended on the
kindness of strangers.

Holli smiles, thankful that her twang isn't gaining ridicule.
Marta pulls another girl, CAROL, to them.

HOLLI
I'm glad you like it.

MARTA
(calling a friend)
Carol, listen to Holli. Holli, say
something Southern.

HOLLI
Um, I don't know what to say.

MARTA
How cure it that!

CAROL
I love it! Where are you from?

HOLLI
I was born here, but I grew up in
Mississippi.

A boy named DARIUS leans over.

DARIUS
Damn, girl, you sound sexy.

CAROL
Go away, Darius. We're talking.

DARIUS
Talkin' to my new girlfriend.

He holds his hand out to her and winks. Holli blushes.

HOLLI

Hi.

DARIUS

Mmm-mmm. All day with that voice.

The girls giggle. Another BOY leans over.

BOY

I knew a girl from Texas who had an accent like that. Sexiest thing I ever heard.

(mimicking a girl's moans)

Oh yeah, y'all! Oh yeah!

Several kids laugh. Holli smiles too. This is going well.

DARIUS

(to Holli)

So, you my girlfriend?

HOLLI

(shy)

We'll see.

The girls giggle. Darius grins.

DARIUS

That ain't a no!

At the front of the class, a TEACHER strolls in just as the BELL RINGS.

TEACHER

Alright, settle down. Let's get started with some roll call.

Holli sits and continues to blush, relieved.

38

EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

38

Holli is walking out with Marta and Carol and some other new friends. They are chatting and having a good time. As they are reaching the parking lot, a tall, furious girl storms toward Holli. This is LILY, and she's pissed. She pulls her fist back and--

WHAM! Punches Holli right in the side of the head. She grabs Holli's hair and yanks it back sending the poor girl right to the pavement.

LILY

Stay away from my boyfriend, bitch!

Lily gets one good KICK right into Hollis back before she is pulled away by some students.

Holli is curled up on the ground, Marta quickly trying to help her up.

HOLLI
Wha-what was that??

MARTA
Lily. Darius's girlfriend!

Holli looks all around. Students are laughing and pointing at the New Girl. Holli is mortified.

39 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

39

Holli comes hurrying in. She is still shaken from the attack. She's been crying.

Daniel is on the couch watching TV.

DANIEL
How was your first day?

HOLLI
Fine.

DANIEL
What the hell happened to you?

Holli doesn't want to say, but she blurts out--

HOLLI
I... I got hit.

DANIEL
Got hit by what?

HOLLI
(trembling mad)
By this girl. She just came up and hit me and kicked me because her stupid boyfriend said he liked my accent. She just attacked me!

DANIEL
Well, did you kick the shit out of her?

HOLLI
What? No? I... I just...

DANIEL

Hey, if somebody hits you, you better beat their ass or I will. I ain't gonna have no pussy for a daughter. You stand up for yourself.

HOLLI

(meekly)

I don't know how to...

Daniel turns off the TV and walks over to Holli. He grabs her hands roughly and pulls them up.

DANIEL

Make a fist.

Holli is hesitant, but she makes a fist. He adjusts them.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Keep your thumb on the outside. And when you swing, aim past them, like you're gonna punch through them. And don't hold back. Just fucking swing. Like this.

He mock swings just past her head. She flinches, but she nods.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Somebody wants to fight you, you finish the fight. You got me?

Holli nods.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

(shouting)

You got me??

HOLLI

(startled)

Yes!

Daniel nods. He pats her shoulder roughly.

DANIEL

Come on. I want to show you something.

He grabs his jacket and walks out the front door. Holli follows.

40 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

40

Holli and Daniel are standing in the parking lot of a 24-hour diner and an abandoned store with a SOLD sign over the window.

DANIEL

(re: the restaurant)

That's where your step-mom works.

(re: the SOLD building)

And that's where you're gonna work.

HOLLI

But, it's nothing.

DANIEL

I bought it.

HOLLI

You did?

DANIEL

Yeah. I'm sick of living off welfare and Raven's shitty tips like some bitch. I always wanted to run a place, and there used to be a pizza place right here. Ovens are still inside. So, I bought it.

HOLLI

You're going to open a pizza place?

DANIEL

Yeah, and it'll be up and ready to open for business in a week.

HOLLI

(genuinely impressed)

Wow, Dad. That's really cool.

DANIEL

I know.

HOLLI

And you're gonna let me work there?

DANIEL

I sure as shit ain't gonna let Nick and Jake work here. Yeah, you.

Holli looks at the place. She can't help but smile.

41 INT. DANNY'S PIZZERIA - DAY

41

It is MONTHS LATER. The Pizzeria is doing very well. Daniel is working the back kitchen and barking orders--

DANIEL

Two large sausage and pep! One medium cheese! One medium half-cheese, half-pep!

--while up front, Holli is on the register helping CUSTOMERS. She looks frazzled and tired.

HOLLI

Two large cheese. That'll be about 45 minutes. Is that okay?

CUSTOMER

Of course, sweetie.

HOLLI

(taking the cash)
Thank you.

She rings up the order. The customer slides a couple BUCKS back at her.

CUSTOMER

That's for you.

HOLLI

Thank you.

As the customer walks away, Daniel walks up and takes the TIP out of Holli's hand and puts it in his pocket.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

Aw, come on, Dad.

DANIEL

Boo-hoo. You don't work for tips.

HOLLI

I don't work for anything.

DANIEL

Yeah, you do. You work because I tell you to.

Holli sighs. It's the hundredth time they've had the argument.

HOLLI

Can I please work on my homework
when we get some downtime?

DANIEL

Yeah, fine. Just don't leave your
books out. It's unprofessional.

HOLLI

I don't think anyone cares.

DANIEL

I care. That's all that matters.
You think I want people thinking I
got some kid working here?

HOLLI

But you DO have a kid working here.

DANIEL

(flaring)
You being smart?

Holli lowers her head submissively.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You can work on your homework,
okay?

HOLLI

Can I keep my tip too?

DANIEL

What the hell do you need tips for?

HOLLI

Dad, it's been months! I'm still
wearing Raven's hand-me-downs. I
want to buy new clothes. Can you at
least let me have some money to buy
some shirts and jeans?

Daniel exhales annoyed. He thinks about it.

DANIEL

Well... we are getting really
caught up on bills and shit...

Holli looks at him hopefully.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

I'll think about it.

He walks away, Holli sighs, knowing she'll never get a thing.

As she turns back to the register, a DELIVERY BOY enters the front carrying a red pizza delivery BAG. TOMMY (17), a senior and very cute. He grins seeing Holli.

TOMMY

Hey, Holli.

HOLLI

Oh, hey, Tommy. How's it going?

TOMMY

Not bad. Busy tonight, huh? You get any time for homework?

HOLLI

(sighing)

No.

TOMMY

Well, I got a few minutes. I can work the register if you want to crank out an assignment.

HOLLI

(considering it)

No, that's alright. My Dad would probably get mad.

Tommy sits on a stool near her. She blushes, liking his attention.

TOMMY

He's got you working every day. Least he could do is let you have a couple minutes for school.

HOLLI

Heh. Was just talking to him about that. I get the feeling he'd pull me out of school and chain me to the counter.

TOMMY

I'm sorry. I know it sucks.

HOLLI

It does. I tried asking him for a little money too, and he blew me off. I thought it was only fair for him to take me shopping for school clothes since I'm not being paid for working. I work my ass off every single day, seven days a week.

Tommy shrugs and pulls out some of his own CASH.

TOMMY
If you wanted...

HOLLI
No, Tommy, that's so nice, but no.
It's fine.

TOMMY
You sure? I don't mind, honestly.

HOLLI
Yeah, it's fine. I'm just venting.
It's really not that bad.

Tommy looks at her and touches her hand with a smile.

TOMMY
Well, I'm here for you anytime you
want to vent.

Holli smile sin return.

DANIEL (O.S.)
(shouting)
Tommy! We got five orders ready to
go! Move your ass!

They both jump at the sudden outburst from Daniel, and Tommy hurriedly goes to the pick-up window. Holli still smiles and pulls out one of her TEXTBOOKS. She opens it just as the PHONE RINGS. Her faces drops, and she answers the call.

HOLLI
Danny's. Can I take your order?

42 INT. SCHOOL - DAY 42

Holli listens to the TEACHER, but her eyes droop. She's struggling to stay awake.

43 INT. DANNY'S PIZZERIA - NIGHT 43

Holli sits at the register with her face rested on her fist, eyes closed. The phone RINGS and she is startled awake.

44 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 44

The house is full of SMOKE. Daniel's is having a POKER NIGHT with some friends - GARY, PACKY, RICH, and HAL.

They are all smoking cigars and getting drunk, except Daniel, who is drinking coffee and a Pepsi.

Holli enters, inhaling and coughing from the cloud of smoke.

DANIEL
Oh hey! Dinner has arrived!

GUYS
Yay! Alright! Gimme!

Holli walks over with two LARGE PIZZAS that she sets on the counter near the guys.

DANIEL
(annoyed)
It's almost 2. What took so long?

HOLLI
I had to walk.

DANIEL
Well, get us some plates.

PACKY
How about we let someone else deal this hand. Hal, you deal like a fucking woman.

HAL
Shut the fuck up. You're just mad cos I'm owning your ass tonight.

PACKY
(grabbing his dick)
Own this.

RICH
He might you keep playing this shitty!

They all laugh.

DANIEL
It's my night, boys. You've all paid my car insurance for the month. Who's gonna buy me some new tires?

HAL
Fuck off. I gotta win my rent back.

Hal deals the cards.

Holli is exhausted. She goes to her couch ready to lay down and finds Raven sleeping on it.

HOLLI
(sotto)
You kidding me?

She looks at her dad to say something but decides not to. She wanders down the hall to--

45 INT. DANIEL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 45

Holli shuts the door and turns the A/C on to circulate some cool air. She lets it hit her face before she falls into bed, so tired.

46 INT. DANIEL'S ROOM - LATER 46

Daniel has tiredly come to bed and is snoring next to Holli. There is space between them, and Daniel is over the sheets. There is nothing inappropriate about their situation.

WHAM! Holli is YANKED off the bed by her ankles by Raven - Holli's head BANGING the bed frame.

RAVEN
Get the fuck out of my bed, you
Little whore!

47 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 47

Raven drags Holli into the living room

RAVEN
What if somebody walked in the
house and saw you and your dad in
the bed together? Huh?

Holli tries to kick herself free from Raven. Raven throws the girl's legs aside banging them on the coffee table.

HOLLI
What the fuck, Raven!

RAVEN
They would think you two were
fucking, or is that what you want?

HOLLI
Are you crazy, you bitch??

RAVEN
You want to fuck your dad don't
you? Don't you!

Holi is laying on the floor, dazed and confused. She has a big gash on the side of her head.

DANIEL
(screaming)
What the fuck is going on out here!

RAVEN
Your little bitch daughter is in MY
bed!

DANIEL
Well, YOU were on HER bed, you dumb
butch!

RAVEN
Your daughter is a whore and wants
you to fuck her, that's why she is
in the bed with you!

Daniel storms right across the room in two strides and PUNCHES Raven right in the mouth. She hits the floor and immediately goes silent. She just lays there bleeding.

Daniel looks at her to make sure she stays down. Holli looks up at him, horrified. He doesn't look at her. He just walks back to his room.

DANIEL
(muttering)
Goddamn mouthy bitch.

He SLAMS the door.

Holli is just laying there on the floor, alone. She just needs a hug - she needs a parent to her they love her and everything was going to be okay. She is all alone.

48 INT. DANNY'S PIZZERIA - AFTERNOON

48

Holli is seated at the register. It is a slow afternoon. She has a textbook open. The side of her face is bruised pretty badly.

Tommy enters with his typical smile.

TOMMY
Hi, Holli.
(his smile drops)
Oh my God!

He hurries over to her with great concern.

HOLLI
(sheepishly)
Is it that bad? I tried covering it
with makeup, but I don't got a lot.

TOMMY
Jesus, Hol, what happened?

HOLLI
It was stupid.

TOMMY
Tell me. Please.

HOLLI
It was my step-mom. She flipped out
because I was in her bed. IT was
stupid.

TOMMY
She did this to you because you
were in her bed?

HOLLI
My Dad was playing poker all night,
and she was sleeping on my couch
when I got home, so I went to his
room. Like, two hours later, she
dragged me off it and I hit my head
on the bed frame. She was screaming
that I wanted to fuck my DAd. It
was so stupid.

TOMMY
(exhaling)
Jesus Christ, I hate that woman.
She's insane.

HOLLI
My Dad knocked her out with one
punch.

Tommy LAUGHS suddenly, but he feels guilty.

TOMMY

Oh shit. I mean, that's not funny,
but holy shit that's funny.

Holli can't help but smile.

HOLLI

Yeah.

TOMMY

I'm so sorry you have to deal with
that shit. I wish I could do
something, Holli. You don't deserve
this.

HOLLI

Thank you, Tommy.

He touches her face gently.

TOMMY

I mean it. How can you live in such
a crazy and violent environment,
that's just not normal! You need a
vacation.

Holli looks at her textbook and the register.

HOLLI

Yeah. I do. Let me take you
somewhere.

TOMMY

What?

HOLLI

Let me take us somewhere on
vacation. Let's - Let's go to
Disney world. I always wanted to go
there.

TOMMY

(laughing)

Oh yeah? And how are we going to do
that? I don't have that kind of
money.

HOLLI

I'll take care of that. All you
have to do is drive.

TOMMY

You're serious?

HOLLI

Yes.

Tommy looks at her. He can see that she is.

TOMMY

Okay. Okay, yeah.

HOLLI

Yeah?

TOMMY

Sometimes you just gotta say, "What the fuck?"

She leans over and KISSES Tommy on the mouth. He is surprised, but he soon kisses her back.

49 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 49

It is many hours later. Holli has quietly packed a BAG and carefully opens the DOOR to her Dad's room. She reaches in a quietly takes his KEYS off the dresser.

She stealthily sneaks out of the house.

50 INT. DANNY'S PIZZERIA - NIGHT 50

Holli steals all the money out of the register.

51 EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 51

KNOCK-KNOCK. The front door to Tommy's opens and he is standing there grinning like a fool, adrenaline pumping.

TOMMY

(whispering)

I didn't think you'd come!

HOLLI

Are your ready?

TOMMY

Almost! And you got money to do this?

Holli holds up \$1500 in cash.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Holy shit! Did you steal that from work??

HOLLI
It's not stealing. It's my back
pay.

Tommy laughs.

TOMMY
Come on in. My mom is working third
shift. I just gotta pack a few
things.

She goes in.

52 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 52

Daniel walks out into the kitchen to get something to drink.
He pauses and looks at the couch. Holli is not there.

DANIEL
The hell?

He looks around the house. She is gone. He notices his keys
are missing. He scowls.

53 EXT. TOMMY'S HOUSE - SUNRISE 53

Holli and Tommy walk to his car. He takes her hand and pulls
her close - kisses her.

TOMMY
This is the craziest thing I've
ever done.

HOLLI
It'll be amazing. I've wanted to
run away like this for so long.

TOMMY
With me?

HOLLI
With whoever would go with me.

She kisses him.

They turn to get in the car when DANIEL'S TRUCK comes
SCREECHING to a stop right in Tommy's driveway.

TOMMY
Oh fuck!

Holli looks right into Daniel's eyes and sees his utter fury. She RUNS.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Holli!

Daniel leaps out of his truck and sprints after her.

BACKYARDS

Father chases daughter through the neighborhood. He is moving so fast, catching up to her.

HOLLI

Leave me alone!

As Holli attempts to climb a fence, h catches her - grabs her by the waste and THROWS her to the grass. He KICKS her in the ribs knocking the wind out of her.

DANIEL

Where's my money! Where is it!

my dad caught me and pulled me down off the fence.

Holli writhes in pain, barely able to move. He picks her up by the hair and drags her back to the truck. Tommy is nowhere to be seen.

54 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - SUNRISE

54

Daniel kicks the door open, still dragging Holli by the hair. He THROWS her to the ground. She kneels there, sobbing into her hands.

WHAM! - HE PUNCHES her in the back of the head, sending her to the floor.

DANIEL

Get up!

He grabs a chair from the kitchen and slams it next to her.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Sit down!

Holli drags herself crying into the chair as Daniel takes off his BELT. As soon as she's on the chair and facing him - WHAP! - HE whips her.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

No kid of mine is gonna steal from me!

WHAP! WHAP! WHAP! He swings the belt, hitting her anywhere and everywhere all over her body. She finally falls to the floor covering her head and face with her hands and arms.

Daniels reaches down and picks her up -forces her to stand.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You look me in the goddamn eye!

Somehow, she does it.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Why'd you steal from me?

HOLLI

(through tears)

I earned it! I work 50 hours a week for you, and I get nothing but my ass kicked by your crazy bitch wife! I'm failing school because of you! I don't want to live with you anymore! You pay everyone but me! It's not stealing, it's what you owe me!

DANIEL

You ungrateful little bitch.

WHAM! Daniel punches her in the face. They are standing just as they were when he taught her how to throw a punch.

She hits the floor, and he walks out the front door without another word.

Holli lays there, sobbing. She slowly crawls to the PHONE and pulls it down to herself on the floor. She makes a call.

VOICE

Hello?

HOLLI

(weakly)

Mama?

55

INT. ASHLEY'S HOME - MORNING

55

Ashley is still in her pajamas. She is rubbing the sleep from her eyes and is surprised to hear her daughter's voice.

ASHLEY

Holli, is that you?

INTERCUT between Ashley and Holli.

HOLLI

Mama, I want to come home. I want to come back home.

ASHLEY

Baby, what happened? What's wrong?

HOLLI

Dad hit me. He hit me so hard mama. I tried to take some money and runaway, and he beat me up.

ASHLEY

(shaken)

Oh my Lord...

HOLLI

Please, I wanna come home.

As Holli cries, Ashley begins to cry too.

ASHLEY

Shh. It's okay, Holli. It's going to be okay.

HOLLI

Please... Please... You said... please...

ASHLEY

(voice shaking)

Shh. Shh. It's going to be okay.

HOLLI

I'm sorry I was so bad. I want to come home.

Ashley takes a breath and steels herself. She takes a deep breath to calm down.

ASHLEY

Honey, this is the choice you made, and you have to live with your choices.

Holli is stunned. She breathes through her tears, but she is speechless.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

I pray for you every day, baby. I pray so hard you'll come to Jesus. He has a plan for you, I just know he does.

HOLLI

You... You're not... You're serious?

ASHLEY

I'll pray with you right now, baby. Give your heart to the Lord God.

HOLLI

How can you call yourself a Christian? How can you call yourself my mother and just let me stay here?

ASHLEY

You made this choice.

HOLLI

I'm 14, mama. What the hell do I know, huh? What the hell do I know?

ASHLEY

Lord Jesus, please watch over my baby. Bring her to the light and save her soul from the path of evil she walks. Bring her to your glory and eternal love. My your beloved Son and our savior Lord Jesus Christ welcome her with his loving embrace...

Holli hangs up the phone while her mother is still talking. She lays there, shock washing over her - a hardness forming over her heart and soul.

She crawls to her couch and pulls a blanket over her body, curling into the fetal position.

DISSOLVE TO:

56 INT. SCHOOL - DAY

56

Holli sits in her seat. She does not have her book open. She is not paying attention to the teacher. She is just glaring into the middle distance in apathy.

THEACHER

Holli? Holli, can you answer the question?

Realizing she's being spoken to, Holli looks up.

HOLLI
I dunno.

THEACHER
Do I need to repeat the question?

HOLLI
No.

THEACHER
I wish you'd pay a little more
attention please.

HOLLI
Whatever.

The Teacher frowns and continues the lesson. Holli doesn't care.

57 INT. ART ROOM - DAY

57

Art Class. The students are working on PAINTINGS. Holli is lazily putting strokes on her own canvas. She doesn't care.

She looks around at the other kid's work, and her eyes fall on Lily who is staring with a sneer at Holli.

HOLLI
What? Huh? What do you want?

Lily scoffs. Holli marches right over to her and SHOVES her. Lily immediately lashes back, and they begin fighting, much to the excitement of the other students, all cheering them on.

TEACHER
Girls! Girls! Someone get security!
Stop it!

58 INT. ART ROOM - LATER

58

The class is gone now. Holli is seated on one of the stools with her arms folded and a fat lip facing PRINCIPAL SANDERS, a middle-aged man who is trying to do right by his students, but losing the battle every day. He is looking at a file - Holli's file.

SANDERS
Holli, what is going on?

HOLLI
It was just a fight.

SANDERS
Your grades are slipping. You're acting out. What is wrong?

HOLLI
I just don't give a shit. That's what's going on.

Sanders rubs his face.

SANDERS
Well, your suspended. I suggest you take this time to maybe start giving a shit again.

Holli picks up a can of blue PAINT. She walks over to Sanders and POURS it on his head. He is so stunned, he can't even move out of the way. He just sits there as Holli walks out of the room.

59 EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

59

Holli is walking across the parking lot when two girls shout over at her. DIANA and KARA, two burnouts smoking near the dumpsters wave to her. Holli looks at them and walks over.

KARA
Hey, your that Southern girl. Holli, right?

HOLLI
Yeah? So?

KARA
I'm Kara. This is Diana.

DIANA
You really kick the shit out of Lily Holtz?

HOLLI
Yeah.

DIANA
(to Kara)
Damn, I told you.

KARA
Alright, alright.
(to Holli)
You ditching?

HOLLI
Just got suspended.

KARA
Right on.

DIANA
You smoke?

She offers a cigarette to Holli. Holli takes it and expertly lights it up, inhaling. She's a natural.

HOLLI
You two ditching?

KARA
Every day, baby. You wanna hangout?

Holli smokes her cigarette and thinks about it a moment.

HOLLI
Yeah.

60 EXT. THE CITY - DAY 60

Holli and her new friends walk the streets like little rebels.

61 INT. DANNY'S PIZZERIA - DAY 61

Holly flicks a cigarette and walks into the pizzeria. She goes to the register and sits down.

From the back, Daniel sees her.

DANIEL
Hey, how was school?

HOLLI
Fine.

He shakes his head and returns to his work. Holli leans forward and leans on the counter, bored.

62 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - MORNING 62

Holli dully gets ready for the day. Jake and Nick are eating breakfast. They avoid looking at her, afraid of her now - or maybe told to ignore her by Raven.

Holli grabs her jacket and heads for the door. Daniel calls after her.

DANIEL
Hey, don't forget you're closing tonight.

HOLLI
Yeah, I know.

63 EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING 63

Holli walks right past the front door and to the dumpsters to meet Kara and Diana. The three of them walk away, flicking the school off as they go.

64 EXT. THE PARK - DAY 64

Sitting on a picnic table smoking, Holli is painting her nails.

KARA
Your suspension ends tomorrow?

HOLLI
Yeah. I'm not going back though. What's the point? It's way more fun just hanging out all day with you two and doing whatever I want.

DIANA
Damn right.

KARA
Why you still working for your Dad though. It's bull shit.

HOLLI
(shrugging)
I dunno. Just because.

KARA
You want to stay with us, you totally can.

DIANA
Yeah, you should. The Light House is awesome.

HOLLI
What's that?

Holli looks at her friend. Diana grins.

65 INT. THE LIGHT HOUSE - DAY

65

A SHELTER for runaways. There are small rooms with bunks, a soup kitchen, and a rec room. There is graffiti on the walls, but there is a touch of love to the place. There are kids of all ages there. A hippy looking WOMAN is sitting at the front desk. STAR (30's) is a laid back and groovy.

Kara and Diana lead Holli into the building.

STAR

Hey, girls. Who do you got here?

KARA

Star, this is Holli. She's our friend.

STAR

Welcome to the Light House. This is a safe place. You can always come here.

HOLLI

Thanks.

Diana takes Holli by the hand and leads her into the place. Holli takes it all in - the other kids sitting around playing cards or reading. There is music playing. It is a camp for wayward souls.

Holli smiles. She likes it here.

66 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

66

Holli sits on her couch playing with a lighter while Nick and Jake play on the living room floor at her feet. Daniel stands in the kitchen opening mail.

DANIEL

The fuck... Holli!

Holli looks up, but she doesn't stand.

HOLLI

Huh?

Daniel rises and walks over to her holding a letter.

DANIEL

This says you failed eighth grade?

HOLLI

I don't know. Does it say that?

Daniel throws the letter at her.

DANIEL

Yes, it fucking says that!

He KICKS her. Nick and Jake RUN out of the room.

HOLLI

Oh well. So I failed. Not like I need a diploma to work your damn cash register for the rest of my life.

Daniel GRABS her by the hair and SLAPS her. She throws her hands up in defense.

DANIEL

What'd I tell you about that mouth, huh? HUH??

He shoves her face down on the couch. He storms out of the room. Holli just lays there, the letter on the couch next to her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

67 EXT. NASHVILLE GAS STATION - DAY

67

Holli and Daniel are standing in the same lot her mom dropped her off in so long ago. Her hair is dyed black, the right side completely buzzed and the rest hanging down covering her left eye. She is wearing jean shorts two sizes too big with holes in them sagging with boxer shorts underneath, a tank top that shows her bra, and some high top converse shoes.

SUPER: 1988

ASHLEY'S CAR pulls up with ZOOEY inside. They get out, and Ashley gasps seeing Holli standing there. She didn't recognize her at first.

Holli walks away from the truck and up to her mom, hugging her.

HOLLI

Hey, mom. Hey Zooey.

Zooey, now 13-years-old is amazed by Holli's look.

ZOOEY
You look amazing!

ASHLEY
If you come back looking like that,
I'll lock you in your room for the
rest of the summer.

HOLLI
Well, if we cut it and dye it
today, her hair will grow back in
the month.

ASHLEY
Not. Funny.

The girls laugh.

Ashley looks over at Daniel. He isn't even bothering to look
at her. Ashley hugs Zooley.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
You be good. Call me if you need
anything.

Holli takes Zooley's hand and BAG and pulls her to the truck.

HOLLI
She'll be fine. Come on, Zo!

ZOOEY
Bye, Mom! Love you!

As the girls climb into Daniel's truck, Ashley clenches her
jaw nervously.

ASHLEY
Dear God, watch over my baby girl.

68 INT. DANIEL'S TRUCK - DAY

68

Cruising down the highway, Zooley is looking for a radio
station. She finds one playing ROCK.

ZOOEY
Oh thank God. Real music. I just
spent 5 hours listening to Mom's
Christian music. I thought I was
going to die.

Daniel laughs, a cigarette bobbing on his lip.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)
Could I have one of those?

Daniel gives her a side-eye.

DANIEL
Since when do you smoke?

ZOOEY
I smoke all the time.

HOLLI
Here.

Holli gives her sister a light.

DANIEL
We got a new blow-up mattress for
you so you can sleep next to Hol.

HOLLI
Yeah, just stay out of the Dragon
Lady's way.

ZOOEY
Who's that?

HOLLI
Our Step Monster.

Daniel laughs.

ZOOEY
Oh yeah. Mom said she's crazy.

DANIEL
Well, look at that. Your mom
actually said something that wasn't
bullshit.

ZOOEY
(smiling)
So, Raven IS crazy.

DANIEL
Crazy as shit!

HOLLI
You'll be able to identify her by
her fangs and claws.

DANIEL
She looks like Cruella De Vil.

ZOOEY

Really?

HOLLI

Yeah, but she doesn't have white hair on one half of her head.

DANIEL

It's be all white if she'd stop dyeing it. She went gray, like, five years ago.

ZOOEY

I thought she was only, like, 20 something.

DANIEL

Yup.

They all laugh. In this moment, you'd never think there was any dysfunction here. Just a father and his two loving daughters sharing a smoke and rolling down the highway with music playing.

69 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

69

Holli and Zoey are sitting on the couch going through cassettes. Daniel is in the kitchen drinking a mug of coffee.

HOLLI

This one's great. It's U2. They're Irish, and I'm pretty sure they're Catholic, soooo...

ZOOEY

I can tell mom it's Christian music.

They laugh.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

Is this Guns and Roses?

HOLLI

It's Gun "N" Roses. "N" not and.

ZOOEY

Oh, I really like the Axle Rose.

HOLLI

No way. Slash! That hair.

ZOOEY
I guess you know hair better than
me.

HOLLI
We should cut your hair. Just a
little.

ZOOEY
(grinning)
You think?

HOLLI
Dad?

Daniel shrugs.

DANIEL
Sure.

The girls giggle excitedly.

The front door opens, and Raven comes home. She looks at the
two girls and snorts, annoyed.

RAVEN
She's still here?

HOLLI
Yeah, all month. Stop asking that.

Raven rolls her eyes and goes to her room.

ZOOEY
(whispering)
I tried saying hi this morning and
she flicked me off.

HOLLI
That's her being nice. You're lucky
she didn't spit in your cereal.

ZOOEY
(worried)
Would she do that?

Holli laughs.

RAVEN (O.S.)
What the fuck!

Raven comes storming back into the living room holding
TOWELS.

RAVEN (CONT'D)
What is this shit!

Zoey's eyes go wide. Raven throws the towels on the floor.

ZOOEY
I... I did the laundry. I thought--

RAVEN
I'm not your fucking mother, and that's not the way I fold the towels!

ZOOEY
I just - I was trying to--

RAVEN
You were trying what? Huh? You think you're gonna move in here too and take over the place? Look at me, bitch!

Zoey just stands there in shock at the outburst.

Holli jumps up and SMACKS Raven right in the face.

HOLLI
Don't you EVER talk to her like that!

Daniel nearly chokes on his drink laughing at the smack.

RAVEN
(to Daniel)
You just gonna sit there and laugh, asshole?

DANIEL
(shrugging)
Hit her back.

RAVEN
Don't think I won't!

HOLLI
Go ahead! Try me!

DANIEL
Do it now, while you still can, 'cause Hol here's gonna beat your ass when she turns 18.

Raven shoves Holli's shoulder, and Holli shoves her right back. They begin to scuffle.

Daniel laughs hysterically, loving the confrontation.

Zoey sits uncomfortably on the couch.

RAVEN

You know what? Fuck this!

Raven storms back down the hall and SLAMS her door.

DANIEL

(wiping a tear)

What a baby. She's so jealous of you, Hol.

He goes to the fridge for another drink.

ZOOEY

How can you live like this?

HOLLI

I don't have a choice.

ZOOEY

Maybe you could come back home with me?

HOLLI

I asked. Mom said no.

(blowing it off)

Whatever. All this is normal.

Zoey looks sadly at her sister.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's go meet up with Carol. We can check out the arcade.

Holli grabs her jacket and Zoey follows her out the door.

70

INT. ARCADE - DAY

70

Zoey and Holli are surrounded by a half dozen or so FRIENDS, including Carol, Kara, and Marta.

MARTA

Oh my God! You two look like twins!

HOLLI

We're a year apart.

CAROL

Her hair looks just like yours used to.

KARA

Even wearing those stupid bows.

HOLLI

We were thinking about cutting it like mine.

ZOOEY

Oh, I don't know if I want it exactly like yours--

CAROL

We can shave the side a little from the bottom. Then you can cover it up if you wear it to the side, like this.

MARTA

You should dye it black. You two really would be twins then!

The girls giggle and stroll around the arcade. Some BOYS check them out; they smoke outside; they eat pizza. It is a nice afternoon.

71 EXT. THE CITY - DAY

71

Zoey is walking down the sidewalk on her own smoking and holding a CARTON of cigarettes. TREVOR, a black teenager from Holli's school shouts from across the street--

TREVOR

Hey, Hol!

He jogs up to her. Zoey smiles, amused to be mistaken for her sister.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Yo, girl. What's up?
(doing a double take)
Hey, you ain't Holli.

ZOOEY

No, I'm her sister.

TREVOR

Shit, you look just like her. I'm Trevor.

ZOOEY

Zoey.

TREVOR
What're you up to?

ZOOEY
Not much.
(holding up the carton)
Just getting my step-mom some
cigarettes.

TREVOR
How come I never seen you around
before? You don't go to our school.

ZOOEY
I'm just visiting for the summer. I
live in Mississippi.

TREVOR
Yeah, you got that sexy accent like
Holli does.

ZOOEY
(blushing)
Oh yeah?

TREVOR
We should hangout sometime.

ZOOEY
(smiling)
Okay.

72 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

72

Zooey walks in the door. Daniel is standing there - face red
in anger, smoking.

DANIEL
What the hell was that?

ZOOEY
(surprised, confused)
What are you--

SLAP! Daniel HITS Zooey in the face,

DANIEL
I saw you talking to that nigger
out there!

Zooey clutches her face. Her nose is BLEEDING.

ZOOEY

(crying)

I was just - I was just talking to him. He thought I was Holli.

DANIEL

Holli knows not to talk to those animals!! I ain't gonna let my daughter get raped by some savage!

ZOOEY

(through her tears)

He was just - just thought I was Holli. We just talked. It was just talking.

Holli walks in the door in her Pizzeria uniform to find Zoey crying and Daniel fuming.

HOLLI

What the hell is going on?

DANIEL

You been talking to some nigger boy! Huh??

HOLLI

What the hell are you talking about?

Daniel grabs Zoey roughly by the arm and jerks her around.

DANIEL

Your sister said some nigger came up to her and thought she was you!

HOLLI

Yeah, so what?

Daniel shoves Zoey aside and charges over to Holli to scream in her face.

DANIEL

That shit is gonna STOP! You hear me? We don't talk to niggers in this family!

HOLLI

Fine!

Daniel FLICKS his cigarette in Holli's face and charges out the front door.

Holli stands there a beat, waiting for him to come back, but he doesn't. She turns to her sister, who is sobbing on the couch, nose still bleeding. Holli sits next to her and pulls out a TISSUE to help dab the blood.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry about that.

Zoey pushes her hand away.

ZOOEY
(sniffling)
How can you live like this?

Holli sighs and shakes her head.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)
(softly, sad)
I want to go home.

HOLLI
Zo...

ZOOEY
I don't want to stay here all
Summer.

Holli lowers her head, saddened--

73 EXT. CINCINNATI AIRPORT - MORNING

73

--and lifts her eyes to look at Zoey standing at the entrance to the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. Her little sister has her bags packed. She's leaving.

ZOOEY
I'm sorry, Holli.

HOLLI
I know. I get it. I feel horrible
about all this. I sorry I got you
in trouble.

ZOOEY
You didn't do anything.

HOLLI
I'm still sorry.

ZOOEY
I wish you could come too.

HOLLI
Yeah. Me too.

The two girls HUG, both of them crying, and Zoey walks into the airport. Holli watches her go, puts her hands in her pockets, and walks sadly away.

74 INT. DANIEL'S TRUCK - MORNING

74

Daniel drives, and Holli stares out her window thinking how Zoey had just been rescued, and she's still trapped. They sit in silence. Holli realizes they're driving somewhere other than home.

HOLLI
Where are we going?

DANIEL
The Pizzeria.

HOLLI
(confused)
But it's not even 8.

DANIEL
I got a friend I want you to meet.

Holli screws her face up, confused.

HOLLI
Okay...

He turns up some MUSIC. Conversation over, as far as he's concerned.

75 INT. DANNY'S PIZZERIA - MORNING

75

Daniel enters the shop and points to a chair.

DANIEL
Sit down.

He goes to the back as Holli sits, perplexed.

After a minute, Daniel reappears with a MAN in blue jeans and a flannel shirt - DAVID (30's), a thin, slimy looking man, with thin lips and white-blond hair. He smiles with a much too neighborly smile - he almost looks like a lizard.

DAVID
Hello, Holli. My name is David.

Holli looks confusedly from the man to her dad. She tentatively shakes David's clammy hand.

Daniel stands just behind him.

HOLLI
Hi.

DAVID
Do you know who I am?

HOLLI
No.

David smiles.

DAVID
That's okay. I'm a friend of your dad's. I am a Grand Dragon. Do you know what that is?

She does not. She shakes her head.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It means I'm a leader in the Ku Klux Klan.

She knows what that is, and her eyes widen.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You father tells me you've been talking to some people.

DANIEL
(angrily)
You're not fucking niggers, are you?

David continues to smile but his eyes betray his true evil.

HOLLI
What? No! Dad, I told you, it was just some kid from school. He thought Zoey was me.

DANIEL
And why was he trying to talk to you?

HOLLI
I don't know. He has a crush on me. He's a nice guy.

WHAP! Daniel SMACKS Holli in the face.

DANIEL

If I ever catch you having sex with
a nigger, you wanna know what'll
happen?

Holli looks at her feet, not wanting to look at her dad.

DAVID

Holli, the Klan knows that the true
race is white. When we see blacks
trying to defile or take our women,
well, it makes us mad. Real mad.
And when our own race betrays us
and is friendly with those savages,
well, that makes us mad too.

David leans close, his voice icy, but that smile still on his
face.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Sometimes, we like to catch
ourselves a nigger, tie their arms
and legs to the backs of our
trucks, and drive away real fast.
It's like watching a firework go
off. Just... pop.

Holli trembles in fear. She keeps her head down.

DANIEL

Don't think for a second that we
won't do that to you.

DAVID

We were going to have your mom
killed back when she and your dad
were going through the divorce. Did
you know that?

Holli shakes her head.

DAVID (CONT'D)

But your father here, he didn't
want us to do it, because you and
your sister might've been in the
car.

David leans even closer.

DAVID (CONT'D)

But they aren't here anymore. It's
just you Holli.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

And if we ever find out that you are involved in any type of way with a nigger, we'll kill you.

DANIEL

And we'll get away with it too, because the Klan has the police and judges and lawyers.

Daniel and David stare down at Holli. She just nods and quietly says--

HOLLI

Okay.

DISSOLVE TO:

76 INT. THE LIGHT HOUSE - NIGHT

76

Holli is sitting on a cot doodling in a notebook. There are CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS all around - 'Tis the season.

Holli's been in juvenile detention for three months.

SUPER: WINTER 1988

Kara plops down next to Holli.

KARA

Welcome back, criminal.

HOLLI

(grinning)
Heh. Yeah.

KARA

How was it?

HOLLI

Three months not having to live in that goddamn insane asylum? Great.

KARA

What's that say about your home that juvie is better?

HOLLI

No shit.

KARA

Well, Carol and I are going to take you out to celebrate tonight. No excuses.

HOLLI
 (smiling)
 Sounds great.

They get up and walk around the rec room.

KARA
 You going back to school?

HOLLI
 Star's making sure I go. I'm trying at least. But, I dunno. It feels weird. Seeing all my friends but not having classes with any of them. I'm 15. I'll be 16 by the time the school year's over. You know dumb I feel sitting there with a bunch of 13-year-olds as classmates?

A GROUP of kids at the BILLIARDS TABLE--

KIDS
 Hey, Holli! Welcome back! Missed you, girl! Etc.

Kara and Holli sit on a bench and light cigarettes.

KARA
 You go home at all?

Holli points at a BRUISE on her cheek.

KARA (CONT'D)
 Shit. Your Dad?

HOLLI
 Dragon Lady. She's all pissed because I'm not helping out. Dad had another heart attack while I was away. Didn't kill him, but he lost his pizza place.

KARA
 Shit.

HOLLI
 Whatever. I don't care.

She looks around the Light House. A hint of a smile.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
 I should bring Jake and Nicky here.

KARA
 (smiling)
 That'd be cool.

They sit a bit, but enjoying the peace.

77 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

77

Daniel is on the couch. He has a full growth of a beard. He is depressed and wallowing in it. There is one pathetic string of Christmas LIGHTS over the window.

Holli walks in the door.

DANIEL
 Hey, you get a job yet?

HOLLI
 No.

She walks to the kitchen.

DANIEL
 (angry)
 Hey! I'm talking to you.

Holli turns around.

HOLLI
 Yeah? What then?

DANIEL
 You gotta get a job.

HOLLI
 Why? I have school. I just want to focus on school, you know. Pass 8th grade.

DANIEL
 You gotta start pulling your weight.

HOLLI
 Dad, I like not working! I want to go to high school with my friends. It's too hard to do both. I'm always tired. I just need a break, okay?

DANIEL
 You're such a lazy bitch. You can get a when you die.

HOLLI
Or when you do.

Daniel's anger flares. He reaches out and SMACKS Holli in the face. She stands there, hurt. She looks at the floor.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
(sarcasm)
Yeah, why would I even want to go to school. People might ask me where all these bruises keep coming from.

DANIEL
(threatening)
You say something smart?

HOLLI
(mutter)
Merry Christmas.

Daniel sits back on the couch and drinks his soda.

DANIEL
You know we don't celebrate Christmas.

HOLLI
(scoffing)
You can't call yourselves Jehovah's Witnesses just so you don't have to buy presents.

Daniel just shrugs.

Holli scowls and shakes her head. She goes to the front door.

DANIEL
Where you think you're going?

HOLLI
Out.

And she leaves.

78 EXT. THE PARK - NIGHT

78

Holli, Kara, and Carol are hanging out in the park well after dark. They are sitting in a PAVILION listening to a WALKMAN and smoking.

A GROUP of teens and 20-somethings wander over - three GUYS and two GIRLS. All of them looking like troublemakers.

R.J. (early 20's), a rebellious look about him and the leader of the pack, walks to the girls.

R.J.
Hey, what're you girls up to?

KARA
Nothing. Just hanging.

R.J.
Me and my boys here were gonna go build a fire in the woods and set off some fireworks. Wanna come?

The three girls exchange looks. Why not?

Holli and Kara step down. Carol hesitates.

KARA
Come on, Carol.

Carol follows, and the GROUP walk off to the WOODS.

79 EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

79

A large FIRE in a pit blazes, and the group sits around it. All the girls are cuddled up close to the guys.

GARRET hands out BEERS to everyone, and they laugh and drink, MUSIC playing from a BOOM BOX.

It's SNOWING now, and getting heavier. JOEL, the guy snuggling with Kara squeezes her close.

JOEL
Hey, it's getting bad out here. We should go back.

R.J. Has his arm around Holli.

R.J.
You need a ride home?

HOLLI
(shrugging)
No home to go to.

GARRET
Shit, you can come back to our place.

CAROL
I dunno, guys...

R.J.
Yeah, it's cool. You can crash with
us.

HOLLI
(looking to Kara)
What do you think?

Kara shrugs. Carol nervously shakes her head.

R.J.
Come on. You can't stay out here
freezing. It'll be fine.

Holli smiles at R.J. As he nods kindly.

CAROL
I think I want to go home.

KARA
Carol, come on. It's fine.

CAROL
No... No, I want to go home, Kara.

One of the other girls - BETTY - tosses her beer aside.

BETTY
We're heading out too. We'll take
you.

Carol stands. She looks apologetically at Kara and Holli.
Kara looks up at her with disappointment.

80 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

80

A two family house - a bachelor pad. The three guys are
roommates. R.J., Garret, and Joel enter with Holli and Kara.

KARA
(impressed)
Nice place.

JOEL
Yeah. Cool, huh?

Garret goes to the kitchen and starts mixing some DRINKS.
Joel flips on the STEREO, cranking up some MUSIC.

R.J. hands Holli a drink.

R.J.
Merry Christmas.

They clink glasses and both take a big swig.

KARA

Woo!

Kara jumps up on the coffee table and dances. Holli joins her. It is a raucous time - Holli and Kara quickly begin to stumble around drunk. The guys laugh it up.

AFTER SOME TIME

Holli leans into R.J.

HOLLI

(groggy)

Hey, I'm getting tired. Is there somewhere I could just lay down?

GARRET

Tired? We're just getting this party started, girl!

JOEL

Yeah, relax!

R.J. offers her a smile and a nod.

R.J.

Yeah, babe. You can lay down in my room.

He walks her down a hall. She is really dizzy and can barely walk now.

HOLLI

I feel... weird... I think... I think I'm gonna pass out...

81 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

81

R.J. guides Holli to the BED.

R.J.

It's alright. Lie down.

He gently places her on the bed. She can barely keep her eyes open. He leans close and kisses her. She makes a halfhearted effort to push him away.

HOLLI

(groggy)

Stop...

He begins to kiss her more. She tries to fight him off, but she is too weak.

R.J.
Shh. It's okay.

HOLLI
(weakly)
No... Stop...

Holli has been drugged. Through her blurry eyes, we see Garret and Joel enter the room.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
Kara?... Where's... Where's
Kara?...

R.J. starts pulling Holli's clothes off. And he rapes her. She can do nothing to stop him. And the other two take turns on her.

82 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

82

Holli, naked and beaten, is thrown into the SNOW in the back of the house. They SLAM the door, leaving her there. She lays in the snow crying.

Through the TREES, she can see the tops of a CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Somehow, she gets to her feet and begins to walk through the snow toward the church. There is a NATIVITY in front, and decorations.

83 EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

83

Her finger presses the DOORBELL. A moment passes, and the door OPENS. A PRIEST is standing there.

PRIEST
(gasping)
Oh!

Holli, shaking and crying falls into the Priest's arms. He catches her - grabs his coat and wraps it around her.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
It's okay, honey. Deep breathes.
You're going to be okay. What's
your name, sweetie?

Holli can't speak. The Priest holds her gently to calm the poor girl.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
I'm going to call the police.

HOLLI
No... Please don't...

PRIEST
But--

HOLLI
Please... Just take me home...
please take me home...

The Priest holds her and nods an "Okay."

84 INT. CAR - NIGHT

84

Holli is curled up in the front as the Priest drives. He looks at her often, but he does not push. She looks out the window at all the Christmas lights passing by.

AFTER MOMENTS - They pull up to Daniel's House.

PRIEST
Is this it?

Holli looks at the house. She nods minutely.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
(softly)
I'm going to make sure someone is
home, okay? I'll be right back.

He gets out of the car and goes up to the house. Holli watches him knock, and her father answer. The two men speak for a moment. Daniel looks greatly annoyed. He pushes past the Priest and to the car.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
You need to take her to the
hospital.

DANIEL
(irate)
Alright, fine! Jesus Christ!

Daniel opens the door and picks Holli up - carries her like a child to his truck. Holli looks back at the Priest who stands there helplessly watching her go. She manages to WAVE to him.

85 INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

85

In an examination room, Holli has been bandaged up. She is curled up on the bed facing the wall, her back to the room.

A DOCTOR is speaking to Daniel.

DOCTOR

(solemnly)

We did a rape kit on her. She's been assaulted pretty badly. We need to keep her here overnight.

DANIEL

(exhaling)

How much is that gonna cost me?

DOCTOR

(clearing his throat)

You don't need to worry about that, sir. We'll take care of her.

Daniel huffs and nods in agreement.

DANIEL

Fine.

DOCTOR

There are a couple officers here who would like to speak to you and Holli, if she's able.

DANIEL

Fuck, are you serious? What're they doing here? I didn't want to call no cops. She did this to herself by running off.

The Doctor clears his throat again, maintaining professionalism.

DOCTOR

It's standard for assaults like this.

DANIEL

Fine. Whatever.

The Doctor leaves. A moment later, TWO OFFICERS enter. OSTLER, a female, and ALDAPA, male.

ALDAPA

Hello, sir. I'm Lieutenant Aldapa. This is Lieutenant Ostler.

DANIEL

The doctor said she has to rest.

ALDAPA

We know. We just have a couple questions about your daughter.

DANIEL

Fine.

OSTLER

Do you understand that she has violated her parole and will have to go back on probation?

DANIEL

(apathetic)

Yeah.

OSTLER

Are you going to want to press charges on the men who did this?

DANIEL

No.

Ostler and Aldapa exchange a look.

ALDAPA

Sir...

DANIEL

Is there anything else?

Ostler looks at her partner. Aldapa exhales and hands Daniel a business card.

The Officers continue to speak to Daniel, but Holli doesn't hear them. She stares at the wall, her eyes trembling. She squeezes them tight to shut out the world.

86 EXT. MISSISSIPPI AIRPORT - DAY

86

SPRING now, Holli walks out of the airport smoking and carrying a single bag.

SUPER: SPRING 1989

Holli looks up and gasps. Ashley is there, but more importantly, Zooney, 14-years-old now, is standing there 7 months pregnant and about to pop.

HOLLI
Holy shit.

ZOOEY
Yay! Holli!!

Zooey runs up and hugs her sister. Ashley smiles with a hint of embarrassment.

HOLLI
And here I thought you brought me down here as a birthday present.

ASHLEY
Well, I wanted you to know, but I didn't want your father to.

Holli scoffs at the hypocrisy of her better than thou mother with the pregnant 14-year-old.

HOLLI
Real classy, mom.

She gives her mother a perfunctory hug and they walk to the car.

87 INT. THE JONES HOME - DAY

87

Zooey excitedly shows Holli around the baby's room. Everything is so nice.

ZOOEY
And I can read to her in this rocking chair. It's got a really comfy cushion, so if I end up falling asleep, I'll be comfortable. And over here, these toys are all educational. She'll be learning while she plays. And this crib can fold down into a bed when she gets older. Dustin has been so excited. More than me I think. He's been buying all these teddy bears.

Holli smiles for the benefit of her sister, but she is not happy. There is a tension building.

ASHLEY
I think that enough for now, honey. Let your sister relax a little. IT was a long flight.

ZOOEY

We set up the guest room for you.

Zooey takes Holli's hand and brings her across the hall.

The room is nice. There is a bed and a dresser and a large window to the backyard. It's bigger than the living room Holli has spent years sleeping in.

HOLLI

(dully)

It's nice.

Zooey smiles and exhales happily.

ZOOEY

Jeez. Maybe I should lay down for a bit too.

ASHLEY

That's a good idea. You're riling yourself up too much.

ZOOEY

(hugging Holli)

I'm just so happy you're here.

Holli pats her back.

HOLLI

Me too.

Zooey leaves the room. Ashley and Holli are left facing one another.

ASHLEY

She's very excited you're here.

HOLLI

Yeah.

An awkward beat.

ASHLEY

There're towels and soap in the linen closet. And you can use anything in the bathroom. Make yourself at home.

Holli steels herself.

HOLLI

I'd like to, if you'd let me.

Ashley tightens her lips.

ASHLEY
I meant make yourself comfortable.

HOLLI
Mom, why can't I come back?

Ashley exhales. Not this again.

ASHLEY
Holli--

HOLLI
(tears coming)
I'm failing school again. All I want to do is pass and go to high school, and I can't do that living with dad. It's hell, Mom. He beats me. Raven beats me. I've run away. I'm living in hell. I'm begging you, please, let me come home.

Ashley can't even look at her. She folds her hands and sighs.

ASHLEY
I'm sorry, sweetie, but I can't.

HOLLI
(crying)
I was raped, Mom. I was drugged and raped, and Dad didn't do anything about it!

Ashley stands there, silent. Holli just stares at her, tears flowing down her face.

ASHLEY
You can't come back because Zoey and the baby. There just wouldn't be room for you.

HOLLI
But--

ASHLEY
And I will not tolerate your behavior problems.

Holli lowers her gaze. She has failed to reach this woman.

HOLLI
(muted)
Fine.

Ashley looks at her daughter, but there is no sign of empathy.

ASHLEY

The linen closet is just across the bathroom door.

HOLLI

Yeah. Thanks.

Ashley gives a curt nod and walks out of the room. Holli just stands there.

88 EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

88

Holli is sitting on the back patio smoking. Through the window behind her, Ashley is cleaning up dinner. Dustin and Zoey are happily chatting at the dinner table. It is a perfect world behind Holli's back.

Holli sits there and stares at the garden that takes up half of the yard. Everything is so pretty. There are pear and fig trees, grape vines, pretty flowers in flower pots sitting around the patio, and wind chimes everywhere. It is peaceful.

Slowly, Holli's passive face grows darker, frustration filling her. She mutters angrily to herself.

HOLLI

(sotto)

Fucking perfect.

The anger overwhelms her. Holli bolts over to one of the potted plants, grabs it, and THROWS it to the ground. She SCREAMS!

Ashley and Dustin rush to the patio door as Holli begins to trash the yard screaming at the top of her lungs.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

(screaming)

I could finish school! I could be fucking happy here, you bitch!

DUSTIN

Holli--

She WHIPS a plant at Dustin, and he falls back.

HOLLI

You'd let me live in that prison!
What kind of Christian are you,
huh?

(MORE)

HOLLI (CONT'D)

That's 'cause there is no fucking God! What kind of fucking God let's a girl get raped! Let's a girl get beat! All the possibilities and potential that I could have here, but you're making me go back to that hell!

ASHLEY

Holli, you stop this right now!

HOLLI

Fuck you! I hate you! I hate you so much!

Holli starts throwing the patio furniture at the house, shattering a window - throws all the flower pots and tearing down the wind chimes.

NEIGHBORS have stepped outside to see what the commotion is.

INSIDE, Ashley calls the police.

Dustin GRABS Holli, but she only lashes out more. She is in complete hysterics.

THE POLICE arrive, rushing into the backyard and helping control the crazy girl.

89 INT. THE JONES HOME - LATER

89

Holli is curled up on the couch, a blanket over her. One of the OFFICERS is speaking wit Ashley and Dustin.

OFFICER

The neighbors are frightened. We should arrest her, you know.

DUSTIN

She's calm now.

ASHLEY

She's just a guest. She doesn't live here.

DUSTIN

She's not staying long.

OFFICER

How long?

ASHLEY

She's leaving tomorrow.

The Officer appears to accept that.

OFFICER

We don't want to have to come back
out here.

DUSTIN

You won't. We're a peaceful family.
This was just... It won't happen
again.

As the Officers walk out the door, Holli gets up and
wordlessly goes upstairs. Ashley watches her go. As the
BEDROOM DOOR SLAMS--

90 EXT. MISSISSIPPI AIRPORT - DAY

90

--Holli slams her car door.

Ashley steps out of the car and attempts to help get Holli's
bag from the back, but Holli grabs it first.

ASHLEY

Holli.

HOLLI

What?

Ashley pulls out her CHECKBOOK. She rips a check out and
hands it to Holli.

ASHLEY

I want you to have this. It should
help. And I can send a little more
every month.

Holli looks at the check and then her mother. She RIPS the
check in half and drops it.

HOLLI

I'd rather have nothing than have
your pity money.

ASHLEY

Holli--

HOLLI

I don't need your money. I don't
need your worthless prayers. I just
need YOU, mom. You.

Ashley lowers her head, ashamed, but she says nothing.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
Yeah, that's what I thought.

Holli storms into the airport, leaving her mom standing there alone.

91 EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY 91

Holli steps out of a cab and pays the driver. She walks up to the house carrying her only bag from the trip south--

92 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 92

She walks into the house. Daniel is in the kitchen taking SOME PILLS. He looks over at her with slight interest that she is returning from her trip.

DANIEL
Hey. You're back already?

HOLLI
Yeah.

DANIEL
Hm.

She takes off her coat.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Why?

HOLLI
Because it was bullshit down there.

DANIEL
Shit, I coulda told you that.

Holli sits on the couch. Daniel tries not to show how interested he is.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
What happened?

HOLLI
She's a bitch. I hate her.

DANIEL
(laughing cruelly)
You know she never even wanted you?
When she got pregnant, she wanted
an abortion, but I wouldn't let
her.

Holli sits there brooding. She believes him.

He sits next to her and hands her a PEPSI. They drink, side-by-side.

Holli looks at him out of the corner of her eye. She hates him, but she considers that maybe, in his own fucked up way, he cares about her.

DISSOLVE TO:

93 INT. DANNY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

93

It is a year later. Danny has a new 24-Hour Diner, and it's doing very well. Holli is a waitress among many other servers.

SUPER: 1990

Holli sets a PLATE of food down in front of kind-faced, black COP seated at a booth. His name is RON (late-20's). He is tall and strong.

HOLLI

Here you go.

RON

Thanks. Hey, you're always working, aren't you?

HOLLI

I guess.

RON

(smiling)

I'm in here all the time, and I always see you, is all. Just noticing.

HOLLI

Oh, yeah. It's my Dad's place. He owns it.

RON

Don't you got school?

HOLLI

No, I... graduated.

He looks at her carefully. She has makeup covering a BRUISE on her face.

RON
Hey. You good?

HOLLI
(blowing it off)
Yeah. Let me know if you need a
refill.

Ron watches sympathetically as she walks away.

At another BOOTH, a smiling woman waves her over. This is SOPHIA (40), a loving mom with a bubbly personality. Holli smiles seeing her. She is a regular.

SOPHIA
Holli, dear.

HOLLI
Hey, Sophia. How's it going?

SOPHIA
Oh, you tell me. How did things go
with Jason? He's been smiling all
week.

HOLLI
(blushing)
We had a really nice time.

Sophia claps.

SOPHIA
Oh, I KNEW you two would hit it
off. When's the next date?

Holli can't help but smile a little.

HOLLI
I don't know.

SOPHIA
He hasn't called you and set
something up? Oh, that is not how I
raised him. I'm going to tell him
to call you right when I get home.

HOLLI
No, it's okay. I mean, he DID ask
me out again. I mean... he asked me
to go to Homecoming with him.

Sophia squeals excitedly.

SOPHIA

Oh! That's wonderful.

HOLLI

(shushing her)

My Dad hasn't said I could go yet.
Don't get too excited.

SOPHIA

Where is he? I'll talk to him right
now. You deserve a night out.
Always working yourself ragged
here. He can spare you for one
night.

HOLLI

Well, I don't know if I'll go even
if he does.

SOPHIA

What? Why not?

HOLLI

I... I don't have a dress or
anything.

SOPHIA

Honey, you let me take care of
that.

HOLLI

You don't have to--

SOPHIA

Not buts, young lady. I'm your
fairy godmother, and you are going
to the ball in style.

Holli smiles, her face red.

HOLLI

I gotta take care of my tables.
I'll come back in a bit.

SOPHIA

Shoo. Go work. We'll talk this all
out. Shoo.

Holli has a little pep in her step as she walks away.

94 INT. DANIEL'S NEW HOME - NIGHT

94

A NEW HOME, Holli finally has her own room with a bed and a dresser. IT's not as nice as her Mom's place, but it is nicer than the couch. She is standing in front of the full length mirror in a new red, V-cut back dress. Her hair and nails are done. She looks beautiful.

Raven appears at the bedroom door.

RAVEN
You look like a whore.

HOLLI
Go away, Raven.

RAVEN
(shouting down the hall)
Dan! You gonna let your daughter go
out looking like a whore?

Daniel appears.

DANIEL
The hell you yelling for?

RAVEN
You see this shit?

DANIEL
Where you think you're going
looking like that?

HOLLI
Homecoming. With Jason.

DANIEL
That tonight?

HOLLI
Yeah.

RAVEN
She's not going to no dance. She's
gonna be working some corner.

HOLLI
Shut up.

RAVEN
Seriously, I've seen strippers with
less makeup.

HOLLI

Shut up!

RAVEN

Don't talk to me like that, whore!

Daniel exhales in exasperation.

DANIEL

Alright! Shit! Stop yelling! Holli, take that shit off your face.

HOLLI

What?? But, Dad!

Daniel charges into the room and grabs Holli by the neck. He bends her over and uses his shirt to SMEAR the makeup off her face.

DANIEL

I said take it off!

HOLLI

Okay! Okay! I will! Stop!

Holli doesn't fight him. She checks her hair and begins wiping off the makeup. Daniel, satisfied walks out of the room. Raven gives a smug look of victory and walks after him.

Holli puts her makeup in her purse and checks the mirror one last time.

95 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

95

JASON (17) stands in a nice suit holding a corsage for Holli.

Nick and Jake are poking at him, but Jason isn't bothered by them. He's good with them.

Holli walks out, and he smiles seeing her.

JASON

Wow. You look great.

Raven snorts.

NICK

You look like a princess!

HOLLI

Thanks, Nicky.

JASON
My mom says we have to take a bunch
of pictures.

HOLLI
Oh. I don't have a camera.

Jason smiles kindly.

JASON
It's okay. They'll take them at
school.

HOLLI
Oh. Good.

JASON
You ready?

Holli looks around. Her dad is nowhere to be seen. Raven is sneering at her, jealous. Holli shrugs.

HOLLI
Yeah, let's go.

She takes Jason's arm, and they head out the door--

96 INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

96

--and enter the lavishly decorated private school dance. Music blasting, kids in dresses and suits. It's lovely. Jason waves to some friends, and he and Holli join them. They all laugh and cheer and take pictures. They all dance and sing. It's a wonderful night.

97 INT. GYM - LATER

97

Off at a side table, a brief reprieve from the party, Holli is drinking punch with some GIRLS.

GIRL 1
Fun, right?

HOLLI
Yeah! This is amazing. Public
school dances don't look anything
like this.

GIRL 2
What school do you go to again?

HOLLI
 (thinking quickly)
 Oh, uh, Western Hills.

GIRL 1
 My cousin goes there. Do you know
 Tim Nickel?

HOLLI
 I don't know. Maybe. There's a lot
 of kids.

GIRL 2
 How did you and Jason meet?

HOLLI
 At my dad's restaurant. I'm a
 waitress there.

GIRL 2
 Oh my god, cuuuute!

Holli is slowly feeling more and more out of place.

GIRL 3
 You work and go to school. How do
 you manage that?

HOLLI
 I manage.

GIRL 3
 How?

GIRL 1
 It's public school. Not like she
 has as much homework as we do,
 right, Hol?

HOLLI
 I wouldn't know. You get a lot of
 homework here?

They laugh. Holli nervously laughs too, not knowing what's so
 funny.

Jason swoops over.

JASON
 Want to dance?

HOLLI
 (smiling nervously)
 Um, sure.

He takes her to the dance floor. The dance a little, and he can see she's sad.

JASON
Are you having a good time?

HOLLI
Yeah... I'm just getting tired. I'm sorry.

JASON
That's okay. Do you want to go?

Holli is ashamed, but she nods. He smiles, kindly.

JASON (CONT'D)
It's okay. Yeah, let's go.

He holds her hand, and they leave the dance.

98 INT. JASON'S CAR - NIGHT

98

Music softly plays on the radio. Jason still holds Holli's hand.

JASON
What is it? Am I that bad of a dancer?

HOLLI
No, no you were amazing. Everything was like a dream, tonight.

JASON
What;s wrong then?

Holli looks out the window at the darkness.

HOLLI
I just felt stupid. I lied and said I was still in school. It was all fake. I'm fake.

Jason pulls the car to the side of the road. He faces Holli and takes her face in his hands.

JASON
Hey, you are so, so beautiful. You were the prettiest girl there. And you are special to me. That's not fake. That's real.

He leans over, and they KISS. He hugs her. She is thankful, but she still looks ashamed and insecure.

99 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

99

Holli walks into the house from the dance. She is floating, her spirits lifted, but they immediately come crashing down when she walks into her room.

Her room is TRASHED. Someone had taken a butcher knife to the mattress - the springs and cushioning ripped out of it, the TV is on the floor with the screen shattered, the dresser drawers broken up, the windows busted out, clothing shredded.

RAVEN
(dripping with sarcasm)
Uh oh. Looks like something
happened to the princess's castle.

Holli's face goes red. The STORMS to the kitchen and begins pulling all the dishes out of the cabinets and throwing them at Raven.

HOLLI
You fucking bitch! I am so sick of
this shit! You want to fuck with
me, then let's go! Right now!

RAVEN
Stop it!

Daniel watches from the top of the stairs LAUGHING and loving the melt down.

HOLLI
Put your hands on me! I dare you! I
will fucking kill you!

Raven slaps her way to Holli and gets a hold of her. Daniel keeps laughing as the girls wrestle to the ground.

Finally, Raven breaks free and runs up the stairs to Daniel.

RAVEN
You think this shit is funny! Your
fucking retard daughter is insane!

WHAM! Daniel backhands Raven and send her into the wall.

DANIEL
You got anything else to say?

Raven shakes her head.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Good.

(down to Holli)

Clean that mess up.

He walks to his room. Holli, kneeling on the floor, her beautiful dress torn, can't even cry. She just reaches out for one of the broken dishes--

100 INT. JASON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

100

Holli picks up a bowl of mashed potatoes from the center of the table. She is having dinner with Jason, Sophia, and Jason's dad FRED (40's), a former high school jock and Realtor. Hollii's hair is combed to one side to hide a bruise on her cheek.

FRED

It's just nice to see the results of Reagan's last term get some follow through with Bush. He's doing a great job.

SOPHIA

I just don't see why we need to be bothering with all that trouble in the Middle East.

FRED

It's important, sweetie. We shall be as a city upon a hill--the eyes of all people are upon us.

SOPHIA

I suppose.

FRED

Holli, what do you think? Did your Dad vote for Bush?

HOLLI

I don't think he's ever voted, if I'm being honest.

FRED

Well, that's a damn shame. Every voice matters.

HOLLI

Not sure I'd agree with that/ He'd probably vote wrong anyway.

Fred laughs appreciative of the girl's wit. She smiles and brushes her hair out of her face.

SOPHIA
(seeing the bruise)
Holli, sweetie, what happened to
your face?

HOLLI
Oh, nothing. I, uh, hit my dresser.

Sophia frowns. She looks to her husband.

JASON
(tenderly)
It's okay, Hol. They'll understand.

HOLLI
No, it's fine.

FRED
(frowning)
Understand what?

Holli looks down in shame.

JASON
(boldly)
It's her Dad. HE hits her.

Fred's jaw tightens.

SOPHIA
(gasping)
Oh, Holli, no. I thought you were
just, I don't know, clumsy. Lord,
you always have bumps and cuts. Is
that from him?

JASON
And her step-mom.

HOLLI
Jason, stop. Please.

Fred wipes his mouth and pushes away from the table.

FRED
Sophia, get my car keys, please.

SOPHIA
Fred--?

FRED
Now, please.

101 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

101

Daniel is on the couch, as always, watching TV. The front door opens, and Fred walks right in.

DANIEL
What the fuck!

Holli and Jason appear at the front door. Sophia is just behind them.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
What the fuck is this, Holli!

FRED
(forcefully)
Pack up everything from Holli's room, Jason.

Holli looks from her dad to Fred. Jason takes her hand and pulls her into the house.

DANIEL
Hey! What is this!

FRED
Holli is coming with us.

DANIEL
The hell she is!

FRED
(raising his voice)
She is coming to live with us.

DANIEL
Who the fuck do you think you are!
I'll call the cops right now--

FRED
SIT DOWN!

Daniel is stunned by the force of the man. His face is beading with sweat - his heart thumping in his chest. He wobbles back and sits down.

FRED (CONT'D)
You want to beat on a little girl?
Make yourself feel like a big man?
Cal the cops.
(MORE)

FRED (CONT'D)
I'll tell them all about the child
abuse happening here.

Fred stands over Daniel like a giant. Daniel's breath comes in gulps - he is sweating. His heart is giving out.

Holli and Jason reappear, and Sophia takes Holli by the hand. Jason looks at his dad in shocked admiration.

They leave. Daniel winces and shakes on the couch.

102 INT. DANNY'S RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

102

It is days later. Holli is serving. Ron is at the counter.

RON
Looking good, Holli. You look
happy.

HOLLI
Thanks, Ron.

She moves over to a table and checks on some customers.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
You three good over here?

CUSTOMER 1
Yeah.

CUSTOMER 2
Could I get another pop?

HOLLI
Sure thing.

She turns and heads to the kitchen, stopping short at the sight of Raven. Holli's joy falls. She glares at her step-mom.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
What do you want?

RAVEN
(sneering)
Enjoying your new place?

HOLLI
Like you give a shit.

RAVEN
(spitefully)
It's been great without you there.

HOLLI
What do you want, Raven?

RAVEN
Your Dad's in the hospital.

Holli doesn't even flinch.

HOLLI
And?

RAVEN
He had another heart attack last week.

HOLLI
And?

Raven's lip twitches.

RAVEN
So, they found a donor heart, and he's having a transplant, and I thought you might give a god damn, but I guess you don't, so have a good fucking day.

Raven storms out of the diner. Holli watches her go.

103 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

103

Holli is sitting in the lobby waiting. Jason is next to her.

JASON
You sure about this?

HOLLI
Jason, I don't want to argue about this again. He's still my dad.

JASON
(resigned)
Okay, okay.
(a beat)
I don't have to go in too, right?

Holli pats his knee and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

HOLLI
Why don't you go look around the gift shop.

Jason smiles gratefully and hurries off. Holli sighs and continues to wait.

104 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

104

Daniel is sitting up in a chair. HE looks really good. The surgery a success.

Holli knocks lightly on the door.

DANIEL
(surprised to see her)
Huh. Didn't think I'd be seeing
you.

HOLLI
Hey, Dad.

Holli sits down opposite him. It is an awkward moment

HOLLI (CONT'D)
How's it going?

DANIEL
New heart's doing good. Two days
out, and no complications.

HOLLI
Good. Good.

DANIEL
(smirking)
Figured I'd get some smart ass
remark about not having a heart in
the first place.

Holli grins.

HOLLI
Figured I'd give you a couple more
days before I started laying into
you again.

He laughs a little. It is a moment of calm in the stormy relationship.

RAVEN (O.C.)
Shit, you actually came. Wow.

Raven walks into the room. She and Holli glare at one another. Raven stands there a moment.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

You know what?

She walks over to Daniel and begins to pull the IV out of his arm.

DANIEL
Whoa! Woman!

HOLLI
What are you doing!

RAVEN
We don't have the money to keep you here anymore! The gas and electricity got turned off today because you didn't pay the goddamn bills!

Holli pulls Raven's hands away from Daniel. Raven gives up and stomps her feet.

HOLLI
Stop!

RAVEN
Whatever!
(to Daniel)
You've missed too much work, dickhead! Get off your ass and get back to work!

Holli wants to hit her, but instead hurries to the door and shouts--

HOLLI
Could I have security in here please!

A NURSE and a GUARD hurry in.

RAVEN
Oh, you're calling the cops on me? What the fuck, Dan!

HOLLI
(firmly, adult even)
Raven, leave. Get out of here and so not come back.

Raven slaps the guard's hands away. She looks at Daniel.

RAVEN
You gonna let her speak for you?

He looks at her and shrugs passively.

DANIEL

I'll see you at home, Raven.

Raven grits her teeth. She turns and storms out.

The Nurse bends down to fix the IV.

NURSE

Well, that was exciting.

GUARD

Are we good in here?

HOLLI

Yes, thank you.

The Guard leaves. Daniel looks at Holli with a small, thankful smile. Holli exhales, relieved and accomplished.

DISSOLVE TO:

105 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

105

Holli, now 21-years-old, is in a BED with a white gown on. She is tired, her hair a mess. She is looking down at--

A BABY BOY

Jason is seated next to her beaming with pride at his little boy.

SUPER: 1994

Holli looks terrified at the baby.

JASON

Hol, you were amazing. Look at him.
Just look at what we made.

Holli's lip trembles, a tear rolls down her face.

JASON (CONT'D)

Honey, what is it? What's wrong?
Are you hurting? I can get a nurse.

HOLLI

(whimpering)
What if I'm a bad mom?

JASON

Holli, don't say that. You'll be amazing.

HOLLI
 What if I'm not capable of loving
 another human being
 unconditionally? The way my parents
 raised me? How could I do this?

Jason take hold of Holli and kisses her.

JASON
 Look at him, Hol.

Holli looks at the baby.

JASON (CONT'D)
 What do you feel?

HOLLI
 (sniffling)
 Love. I love him. I think I finally
 did something right in my life.

JASON
 Damn straight you do.

She holds the Baby close and looks at him with love and
 pride. The family all hold one another in a loving moment.

DISSOLVE TO:

106 INT. JASON & HOLLY'S HOME - DAY

106

A nice home, made awful by the SCREAMING of little Baby
 JONATHAN. Jason is in the kitchen trying to prepare a bottle.
 Holli is nowhere to be found. The love is already fading -
 Jason is at his wit's end.

SUPER: 1995

JASON
 (mad)
 Holli! Would you PLEASE help me
 down here!
 (picking up the baby)
 Shh. Please, please stop crying.
 (shouting)
 HOLLI

This makes Jonathan cry even louder.

Holli appears. She is in her waitres uniform.

JASON (CONT'D)

What the fuck? Are you going to work?

JASON (CONT'D)

Yeah, I picked up a shift.

JASON (CONT'D)

Hol, you need to spend more time with the baby! I can't do this on my own.

HOLLI

I'm sleeping in his room, how is that not helping? You get to sleep while I go without any? And then I gotta go to work exhausted.

JASON

You don't have to go to work! You are choosing to go to work!

HOLLI

We need the money.

JASON

We NEED to work together with Jonathan. You are coming home later and later. I'm about ten seconds away from asking your mother to come stay with us.

HOLLI

That's not funny.

JASON

You went back to work too soon. You need to be here.

HOLLI

I had to get out of the house. I felt like I was going crazy sitting here all day with a screaming baby and fighting all the time with you.

JASON

Yeah, so runaway, like you always do.

He puts the baby in his pen and faces Holli.

JASON (CONT'D)
 I am sick of your bullshit, Hol.
 And don't say it's the postpartum
 depression. You got your pills.
 You're just being selfish.

HOLLI
 (shouting)
 I'm sorry you're unhappy with
 Jonathan, Jason!

HOLLI (CONT'D)
 I'm unhappy because of you!

He PUSHES her. Holli doesn't even think twice. She PUNCHES him right in the face sending him reeling and crashing to the ground.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
 (screaming)
 You do not touch me like that! You
 NEVER touch me like that, you
 fucking bastard!

The DOOR BELL sounds followed immediately by LOUD KNOCKING.

Holli yanks the door open to find TWO COPS.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
 Oh wow, you little bitch! You
 called the cops on me?

JASON
 When would I have done that, huh?

COP 1
 We got some noise complaints from
 the neighbors, ma'am.

COP 2
 (seeing Jason)
 Sir, are you okay?

JASON
 No, I'm not. I'd like to press
 charges against my wife here for
 assaulting me.

Holli reels around and goes to charge at him. But the Cops quickly intervene, grabbing her.

HOLLI
 You want to see an assault? You'll
 never touch me again!
 (MORE)

HOLLI (CONT'D)

There is no way in hell I'll ever
let another man put his hands on
me!

107 INT. JAIL - DAY

107

Sitting in a cell, Holli has been arrested. A COP walks up
and opens the gate.

COP 3

Smith. You made bail.

Holli walks out of the cell and to the--

LOBBY - where Ron, the cop from the diner is standing. He
gives a friendly wave, and Holli offers an embarrassed
smile.

HOLLI

I'm sorry to just call like that, I
had your number in my wallet, and I
didn't have anyone else.

RON

I told you on the phone, it's no
problem.

(waving to the cop)

Thanks, Brian.

COP 3

(nodding)

Night, Ron.

Holli and Ron walk to his car.

RON

I grab a few necessities from
Walgreen's. Just to hold you over a
few nights.

HOLLI

Why can't we just swing by my
house?

RON

Sorry, honey. Your husband got a
restraining order against you, and
you aren't allowed to go back to
the house. But you can stay at my
place as long as you need to.

Holli looks at Ron. His heroic quality unfamiliar to her.

108 INT. RON'S HOUSE - DAY

108

Officer Ron's place is nice - a small, one bedroom condo. He's laid out bedding on the couch and some toiletries.

Holli looks at the effort and smiles, crushed by the sweetness of it.

Ron is in the kitchen making some eggs.

RON

I usually work third shift, so you'll always have the place to yourself at night. My neighbor is a little old man, so you can put the TV up as loud as you want. He sure does.

He chuckles at his joke.

Holli sits on her new couch. It's nicer than the one she grew up on, but tears still fill her eyes.

HOLLI (V.O.)

You're divorcing me? Are you fucking kidding me?

JASON (V.O.)

WE married too young, Hol. You know it. I know it.

CUT TO:

109 EXT. THE PARK - DAY

109

Holli is standing facing her soon-to-be ex.

HOLLI

I want to see Jonathan.

JASON

No.

HOLLI

No?

JASON

Legally, I don't have to let you see him, because there is no visitation in place.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)

And that's the best you'll get. I'm going for full custody.

HOLLI

You can't do this!

JASON

Go ahead and make a scene, Holli. That's why I wanted to meet in public, so you couldn't have one of your bipolar episodes.

HOLLI

(tears coming)

You can't take Jonathan from me. What am I going to do without my son? What am I supposed to do?

JASON

I don't give a shit what you do.

HOLLI

(pleading)

I just want to see him and hold him. Are you trying to kill me? Is that what you want?

JASON

Honestly, Holli, I just want you to get your life together.

Holli sniffles and glares at him.

HOLLI

I have my life together.

JASON

Oh yeah? Where are you staying? Back at your dad's?

HOLLI

No, I'm at my friend Ron's house?

JASON

Ron? Who the fuck is Ron?

Holli glances over her shoulder toward the parking lot. Ron is there waiting patiently by his car.

Jason's jaw tightens. He leans in close and hisses--

JASON (CONT'D)

You're shaking up with some black guy?

HOLLI
Why does that even matter?

JASON
You think I want Jon anywhere near
one of those people?

HOLLI
(loudly)
What the hell does that mean?

JASON
(quickly)
Nothing. Nothing.

HOLLI
If I get my own place, can we split
custody? Please, Jason. I don't
want anything from you. Keep the
house, the car, everything. I just
need Jonathan in my life. Please.

Jason exhales loudly. He thinks a moment.

JASON
Shared parenting until you get your
own place.

HOLLI
Yes.

Holli shakes in relief, but Jason just looks at her in
disgust. He turns from her and walks away.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
When will you bring him over?

Jason keeps walking.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
Jason! When will you bring him
over?... Jason!.... Jason...

She is left there, shouting after him.

DISSOLVE TO:

110 INT. RON'S HOUSE - DAY

110

Holli is on the phone. She is a bit older now - 26-years-old.
She is aggravated.

HOLLI

Yes, officer, Jason Jones. J-O-N-E-S. Yes, hee was supposed to bring our son over, and he's missed three weekends in a row now... No, I don't have the visitation order. It was something we agreed on... Yes, I've called before, but they've sent people out before...

SUPER: 1999

Holli listens to the person on the other end of the phone and huffs.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

You know what? Forget it I'm coming down there.

She SLAMS the phone on the cradle. She is still living at Ron's, the living room now her full bedroom, decorated and comfortable.

She grabs her coat and goes to the front door. Just as she opens it, she finds a MAN standing there in a SHERIFF'S uniform. This is WHITNEY BUTLER (30's), lean, not overweight, but not fit. A dopey grin on his face.

BUTLER

Ma'am, we've received some complaints about some noises coming from this condo.

Holli shakes her head and punches Butler playfully in the shoulder.

HOLLI

If you're going to keep coming over, you could at least bring more beer.

Butler scoops Holli into his arms in a big hug. She enjoys it for a moment and then starts fending him off. She looks around to make sure none of the neighbors are looking.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

Stop it. Stop it. Someone will see.

BUTLER

So what? I'm just a friend hugging a friend. It's not like you're married to Ron.

HOLLI
I don't want people talking.
Now, cut it out.

She pulls him inside the condo.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

BUTLER
To ask a pretty lady out on a date.
(covertly)
That's you.

HOLLI
I told you, I'm working.

BUTLER
Ha! I didn't tell you WHEN the date
is.

Holli shakes her head with a smirk. Butler continues to attempt to be cute.

BUTLER (CONT'D)
Super Cop gonna be home anytime
soon?

HOLLI
No, he's working a stakeout.

BUTLER
Corrupt bastard's probably casing a
place.

HOLLI
He's not corrupt, Whit.

BUTLER
Well, if he's not, his partner is.
All those cops are bullshit.

He sits on the couch.

BUTLER (CONT'D)
When are we going to hang out
again? You're always working or
just vegging out in front of the
TV.

HOLLI
(sighing)
It's my pills.
(MORE)

HOLLI (CONT'D)

They turn me into a zombie, and I just want to lay here.

BUTLER

Well, if you moved in with me, I could see you AND you could be a zombie.

HOLL

I'm not moving in with you. I like it here.

BUTLER

(exhaling exaggeratedly)

Well, as long as we get to keep having fun.

He reaches over and tickles her. She squeals and slaps him back.

HOLLI

Ack! Stop!

BUTLER

I'm taking you out tomorrow night. No excuses.

Before Holli can protest, Butler hops up and whistles as he goes to the fridge to get a beer. She sighs, resigned to his playful nature.

111 INT. RON'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

111

Holli sits on her couch watching TV. She stares at it bored.

Ron is in the KITCHEN making dinner.

RON

Did you talk to Jonathan today?

HOLLI

He called me Holli today. I'm not "Mom" anymore. I'm Holli.

RON

I'm sorry, honey. That must've stung a bit.

HOLLI

At least he's not calling you the n-word anymore. Got that poison from Jason out of him at least.

Ron shakes his head, disappointed. He walks a bowl of PASTA over to Holli.

RON
You going out at all today?

She shrugs, depression holding her there.

Ron SCOOPS her up and puts her on her feet.

RON (CONT'D)
How about we go for a jog before I
have to go to work?

He jogs in place playfully trying to get her moving. She shakes her head at him.

HOLLI
I think I'll just stay in.

RON
Aw, c'mon, you. How about a bike
ride? I'll just plop you on the
seat and push you around. The fresh
air will do you good.

Holli looks at him. He smiles, encouragingly.

HOLLI
Sometimes I feel like the only
reason you keep me in your life is
because you feel sorry for me.

RON
Tsk. That's not true. I love you.

HOLLI
But why? You got a college degree,
a career; You could have any woman
you wanted. What do I even have to
offer you other than sex.

Hhands.

RON
Hey, look at me. I care about you.
And I think you're amazing, even if
you don't. I want you to be happy.
I want you to live your life, okay?

Holli nods, unable to look him in the eye.

RON (CONT'D)
Eat, drink, and be merry!

college graduate, who had a good career wanted to be in a relationship with me. He

could have had any woman he wanted. I had nothing to offer him, but sex. Even

though sex always made me feel dirty, it was the only way I knew how to express

my love.

112 INT. PARTY - NIGHT

112

Holli is in a nice dress, her hair done up. She is holding onto Butler's arm as they mingle at a gathering of Butler's fancy friends. They LAUGH and drink. It's a nice party.

One couple - SAL and MISSY talk with Butler and Holli. Butler has a bottle of whiskey that he continuously pours into his glass.

MISSY

Whit says you two are an item?

HOLLI

Allegedly.

MISSY

(laughing)

Oh, I like her, Whit.

BUTLER

Me too. I've been trying to get her to move in for months now.

SAL

You know, this place is for sale.

Butler is getting obnoxiously drunk. Holli is trying to laugh it off, but it's getting difficult.

BUTLER

You hear that, babe? We could be living in style here. If I buy this place, will you just pull this trigger on this already?

HOLLI

(playfully)

I'm more of a river front girl. Do you have anything uptown?

SAL

I do.

MISSY

Sal's got properties all over town.
If you're serious, we can set
something up,

HOLLI

We're just goofing around.

Butler is still downing his whiskey.

BUTLER

I'm not goofin'! I'm serious!

He BUMPS Missy and spills her drink.

HOLLI

I think you've had enough, Officer
Butler.

He falls into her.

BUTLER

C'mon, Hol. Why are you being such
a bitch about all this? Just move
in with me. I'm a good man. Better
than that dirty city cop you're
fucking on the side.

Holli takes him by the arm and smiles at the others.

HOLLI

I think it's time we got going.

She pulls him toward the door.

BUTLER

I don't want to leave. We live here
now.

HOLLI

Give me your keys.

BUTLER

No!

HOLLI

You can't even walk straight.
You're not driving.

BUTLER
 (shouting)
 Why won't you move in with me!
 You've insulted me enough and I
 won't take it anymore!

He falls out the front door and trips down the steps.

Holli waves awkwardly to the others.

HOLLI
 Thank you for a lovely night.

move in with me, you are my wife"? He said that I had
 insulted him enough and he
 couldn't take it anymore.

113 INT. BUTLER'S CAR - NIGHT

113

Holli is driving, and Butler is wasted in the passenger's
 seat. He is sobbing and angry at the same time.

BUTLER
 You fucking embarrassed me! You
 made me look so stupid in front of
 my friends!

He reaches under his shirt and pulls out his service
 revolver.

HOLLI
 Whitney! Why the fuck do you have
 that?

BUTLER
 We're not supposed to when we
 drink, but you like bad boys,
 right? You like dirty fucking cops.

HOLLI
 Put that away! Right now!

BUTLER
 You can't tell me what to do!

He reaches over and grabs the steering wheel. Holli tries to
 maintain control of the car, and Holli intentionally crashes
 them into somebody's front yard.

She JUMPS out of the car and runs up to the nearest house's
 front door.

HOLLI
Help! Please!

A MAN and WOMAN open their front door, and Holli rushes up to them.

HOLL
Please, call 911. My date is drunk
and has a gun.

MAN
Get inside, quickly!

They pull her inside and slam the door.

BUTLER
Holli! Where;d you fucking go,
Holli!

Outside, Butler is stumbling around waving his gun. He trips, and the gun flies out of his hand. He gets in the car and drives off, swerving all over the road.

Holli sobs in the arms of the WOMAN as her husband talks to 911.

114 INT. RON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

114

RON is sound asleep in his BED when Holli crawls in next to him still in her dress. She pulls him close, crying in his chest. Ron wakes and immediately comforts her.

RON
Hey, shh. What's wrong? What is it?

HOLLI
(through sobs)
Whit. He nearly killed me. He was
drunk and had his gun.

Ron sits up and turns the light on.

RON
Oh my God, are you okay?

She cries on him for a bit.

HOLLI
It was just supposed to be an
affair, but he wants it to be more,
and I can't... I can't...

RON

It's going to be okay. We can get through this.

Holli just keeps crying.

HOLLI

Jonathan is calling me Holli, and he doesn't even think I'm his mommy anymore. He thinks Jason's new goddamn wife is his mommy. He grew in my belly, not hers. He's four, and they're poisoning him against me! And you're not any less a man because you're black. Why is everyone in my family a fucking racist? My dad, my mom, Jason, and now Jonathan wants to know when I'll marry a white man? God, my little baby. What have I done?

RON

Shh. Shh. It's okay, honey. It's okay. You're going to be okay. We should go to the park tomorrow. Just go for a long walk.

Holli's crying subsides. She whimpers into Ron's chest.

HOLLI

Jason's attorney found out about the few times I was hospitalized and the medications I'm on, and they used it in court to prove that I was emotionally unstable. He has full custody of Jonathan. He's the only thing in my life that mattered, and he's gone.

RON

(softly)

You'll get through this, Holli. You will.

HOLLI

(weeping)

Why are you so good to me?

RON

I tell you all the time and I'll keep saying it until you know it. Because you're good. I know you are, even if you don't.

She looks at him, and he smiles at her tenderly. She hugs him and stares off into the middle distance...

DISSOLVE TO:

115 INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

115

Holly walks up a front walkway to a GROUP HOME for kids and teens. A much nicer, City funded Light House. Holli enters with a smile. She is at ease here.

SUPER: 2002

There are 10-12 boys ages 13-19 in the Home, and always two employees working. There are photos on the walls of outings - Pictures of the kids and adults playing basketball, softball fishing, roller skating, swimming, and water balloon fights. And Holli is in several of the photos smiling. There are photos of her being hugged by the boys. They love her.

As she walks the hallway, several wave to her. Her boss MONICA (40's) meets her at Holli's office door.

HOLLI

Morning, Monica.

MONICA

Great job on the arts and crafts yesterday. The boys wouldn't stop talking about it last night.

HOLLI

I'm glad they enjoyed it.

MONICA

Ali is on right now. Lindsay is replacing her around lunch time so she can go to the dentist.

HOLLI

Great.

MONICA

And you have a guest waiting for you.

Monica smiles and nods to Holli's office.

Inside, seated in front of the desk is ANDREW (14), thin and timid.

HOLLI

Thanks, Mon. I'll see you tomorrow?

MONICA

Yep. Don't forget to get your time sheet in.

HOLLI

I won't. Thanks.

Monica walks away, and Holli enters her office. Andrew sits up straight seeing her.

ANDREW

Good morning, Miss Smith.

Holli sets her purse down and sits at her desk.

HOLLI

Morning, Andrew. What's up?

ANDREW

Matt used my skateboard again and didn't give it back.

HOLLI

You could've told Monica that.

ANDREW

Aw, she's not as cool as you, Miss Smith. Matt listens to you.

HOLLI

Did you ask him for it back?

Andrew shrugs.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

(smiling amused)

Why don't you try that.

ANDREW

(shrugging)

Okay.

Holli claps and stands up.

HOLLI

Tell you what, let's go tell him right now.

Andrew's eyebrows shoot up.

ANDREW

Right now?

HOLLI
Yeah, come on.

She punches his shoulder and walks out the door.

116 EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

116

Holli walks out to the basketball court. Some boys wave and run up to her. Andrew is right behind her.

On the court MATT (18) is shooting hoops against some smaller kids. Holli STEALS the ball from him much to everyone's amusement. She begins DRIBBLING around Matt.

MATT
Aw, c'mon, Miss Smith!

HOLLI
What? Stealing skateboards is pay,
but not basketballs?

Matt shoots Andrew a dirty look. In that moment, Holli dribbles around him and scores a lay-up. The kids cheer.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
Ask before you take, Matt. You know better.

MATT
Yeah, yeah.

She tosses him the ball.

HOLLI
And work on your footwork. You're getting slow on the left.

Matt grins and shakes his head. As Holli walks past Andrew, she tussles his hair.

As she reaches two of the smallest kids, one of them XAVIER - is crying. Holli bends to his level.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
What's wrong, Xavier?

XAVIER
M-my Dad...

HOLLI
You want to go talk about it?

The little kid nods. Holli puts an arm around him and guides him to the building.

117 INT. RON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

117

Ron and Holli are on the couch, Ron seated in his uniform, and Holli laying back with her head in his lap. They are relaxing.

HOLLI

I volunteered for the softball game next weekend for the boys, if you want to bring ice cream again.

RON

I thought you hated softball.

HOLLI

I used to. Seeing the kids have so much fun, it changed my mind about it.

RON

I'm glad you're enjoying your time there.

HOLLI

It's nice. I have so much experience that I can apply to what they're all going through. I just listen and they talk. God, I wish I had something like that when I was younger.

RON

You got it now though, right?

She smiles and touches his cheek.

HOLLI

Yes, I do.

RON

Are you going out at all this week?

Holli looks away, ashamed.

HOLLI

You know you don't have to ask about that. It's weird, right? You don't want to hear about me going on dates.

RON
I don't mind. When I see you happy,
I'm happy.

Holli smiles again, thankful.

HOLLI
No, no dates. Just working at the
Group Home. That's all I want to do
now. It keeps me distracted from
Jason's bullshit.

RON
Jonathan still not going to visit?

Holli shakes her head, sadly.

She sighs, and they sit for a moment.

HOLLI
Where's this one boy, Andrew. Real
tough kid. His mom is an addict.
Every time he leaves and comes
back, I can see a little more of
him wilting away. It's
heartbreaking.

RON
You've mentioned him. He's the one
you let eat in your office?

HOLLI
Yeah.

RON
Just be careful. Don't piss Monica
off by showing special treatment
for him.

HOLLI
He's a good kid. She doesn't mind.

Ron looks at his watch.

RON
I gotta go.

He gets up. Holli squeezes his hand and he kisses her on the
top of the head.

RON (CONT'D)
I'll be home around sun-up. Lock up
if you leave before I get back.

HOLLI
Yup. Night.

Ron leaves. Holli lays back on the couch and stretches out. She is there for a bit when-- her PHONE RINGS.

Holli answers the phone. From the other end there is loud MUSIC playing, and Andrew speaks loudly over it.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
Hello?

ANDREW (V.O.)
Miss Smith? It's Andrew.

HOLLI
Andrew? How did you get my number?

ANDREW (V.O.)
I got it off a list I found at the office. I hope that's okay.

HOLLI
Where are you? It's really loud. I thought you were staying at a church with your mom.

ANDREW (V.O.)
That's why I called. I need your help, Miss Smith. She didn't take us to no church. We're at some motel.

HOLLI
(muttering)
Jesus Christ.

ANDREW
There's a bunch of people here, and my mom is in the bathroom blowing guys, and I don't want to be here, and there's drugs everywhere.

Holli grabs her jacket. She is angry.

HOLLI
Tell me where you are, honey. I'm coming.

Holli pulls up to a flea bag motel just off the highway. She gets out and walks up the second floor.

She can see the room Andrew is in - several strung out junkies hanging around the open door.

Holli pushes through them and enters the motel room.

There are people doing HEROINE on the bed. The TV is cranked up loudly.

The bathroom door is open, and there are a pair of legs sticking out. SUE, Andrew's mom, is BLOWING a guy sitting on the toilet. Curled under the sink, Andrew is in a ball.

Holli's face is red with anger. She marches right over to Sue and YANKS her off the guy she's blowing. Holli THROWS her against the wall.

SUE

Who the fuck are you!

Andrew opens his eyes and sees Holli.

Holli grabs Sue and yanks her to her feet.

ANDREW

Miss Smith! Don't hit he! Please!

Holli really wants to, but she doesn't She drops Sue back to the ground.

HOLLI

(to Sue)

You're a real piece of shit!

The JUNKIE Sue was blowing pulls his pants up and shouts--

JUNKIE

The fuck you think you are, bitch!

HOLLI

Grab your shit, Andrew, we're going back to the Group Home.

She guides him to the door.

SUE

You can't take my son away from me!

The Junkie grabs Holli by the shoulder and turns her around. He has a GUN and points it right in her face. Holli looks at her shoulder and then at the Junkie.

Holli pulls back and PUNCHES the junkie right in the face, knocking him on his ass and out cold. She grabs Andrew by the hand and walks him right out the motel.

119 INT. CAFE - NIGHT

119

Holli and Andrew sit in a booth facing each other. Holli has bought them food. She has her hand in a glass of ICE.

HOLLI

I'd appreciate it if you didn't tell anyone I did that.

ANDREW

I won't tell.
(grinning)
That was real cool, though.

Holli smiles grimly.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

She's not a bad person. She just has a problem. And she hangs out with bad people. But she's not bad.

HOLLI

My Dad was an violent guy. I know what it's like living with someone who can't control themselves.

ANDREW

She wasn't always like that. It's her addiction. The drugs did it to her.

HOLLI

(sadly)
I know. I know.

ANDREW

I'm not gonna give up on her.

Holli smiles, admiring the kid.

HOLLI

You're stronger than I was at your age.

They eat a bit.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

I should take you back to the Group Home after this. I'm not sending you back to that damn motel.

ANDREW

(smiling)
Thank you, Miss Smith.

HOLLI

You know, you can call me Holli, if you want.

He blushes a little.

Holli waves for the check.

ANDREW

You're not gonna turn my mom in, are you? This is her last chance, and if she messes it up, the State is gonna take away all her paternal right, and I'll never get to see her again.

Holli sighs and shakes her head. She can see the desperation on his face.

HOLLI

(seeing his worry)
No, I won't turn her in.

ANDREW

Because you think she can change?

HOLLI

(hesitant)
Maybe she can. I hope she can.

Andrew smiles.

120 INT. RON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

120

Ron and Holli are laying on the bed facing each other. It is a platonic laying.

HOLLI

And he just kept saying how thankful he was.

RON

(frowning)
I don't know, Hol. I think you should've just brought him back to the Group Home.

HOLLI

I did. He just needed that meal, you know. He needed someone to tell him everything was going to be okay.

(MORE)

HOLLI (CONT'D)

I just see so much of myself in him, Ron. And I can see Jonathan in him too.

RON

I understand, honey, but you have to be careful. You can't give the kid special treatment.

HOLLI

I just don't want to be the reason he can never see his mom again. I feel so sorry for him.

RON

I know. I get it.

HOLLI

I just think about how hard it must be to carry the weight of his mom's addiction around. I guess if I can be thankful for one thing, it's that my dad was only an asshole naturally, and not some fucking junkie.

RON

Jeez. All he did, and he was sober...

Holli sighs and lays there thoughtfully.

121 INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

121

Holli is in her office at her desk mulling over some paperwork when Andrew walks up. He is sheepishly looking at his feet.

ANDREW

Miss Smith?

HOLLI

Hey, Andrew. What's up? You doing better today?

ANDREW

Yeah.

HOLLI

Good. I'm glad.

ANDREW
I, um, I wanted to thank you for,
you know, everything you've been
doing for me.

HOLLI
You're very welcome. It's what I'm
here for.

ANDREW
I really, really appreciate it
though.

HOLLI
(sweetly)
I know.

ANDREW
I mean... we connect. You GET me.

HOLLI
(sincerely)
I see a lot of me in you, Andrew.

Andrew blushes.

ANDREW
I don't think, um, I can put it in
words right, so I, uh...

He holds a FOLDED LETTER out to her.

HOLLI
What's this?

ANDREW
I can express me feelings better on
paper.

She opens the letter and begins reading. It's a LOVE LETTER.

HOLLI
(touched)
Oh, Andrew...

ANDREW
I'm falling in love with you, and
you've helped me so much.

Holli looks at him and smiles. She laughs a little. It is
cute, but silly.

piece of paper. He told me he could express his feelings
better on paper. It was a

HOLLI

This is very sweet. But--

ANDREW

I know I can be a good boyfriend,
if you let me!

HOLLI

It's kind of depressing. You're the
only date I've had in months.

ANDREW

So it was a date?

HOLLI

(chuckling)

No, Andrew, they weren't dates. I
was just kidding. Look, I'm
flattered, but you're just
confused. You have mixed-up
feelings for me because I've been
helping you with your mom.

ANDREW

I'm not mixed-up!

Holli looks at the boy kindly.

HOLL

(gently)

Honey, I don't think I can help you
anymore. I can't keep babysitting
you when your mom is doing drugs.
I'm not turning my back on you, but
I don't think we can hangout
anymore. If she does anything like
she's been doing again, I want you
to call the police, okay?

Andrew looks at the floor and nods sadly.

HOLLI

Go hangout with the other boys now?
I'll see you at lunch.

ANDREW

Okay, Miss Smith.

Andrew walks away sadly defeated, heartbroken. Holli smiles,
amused by the whole thing. She slips his letter into her
PURSE and returns to her paperwork.

Her PHONE RINGS. She picks it up.

HOLLI

Hello?

BUTLER (V.O.)

Hey, Holli, it's Whit.

HOLLI

(surprised)

Whit? Oh my gosh, hi. It's been awhile. How are you?

BUTLER (V.O.)

I'm good. I'm real good, actually. I just got hired at another police station, and, well, I was wondering if you would come to dinner with me to celebrate?

Holli opens her mouth to immediately decline, but she stops herself. She bites her lip...

HOLLI

You know what? Yeah, why not? Yeah.

BUTLER (V.O.)

Really?

HOLLI

Yeah. It'll be fun. I could use a night out.

BUTLER (V.O.)

Okay, wow. That's great.

Holli smiles, excited by the possibility of a real night out with adults.

122 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

122

A fancy restaurant/ Butler is wearing a sports coat and tie. Holli is in a nice dress. They have wine and their meals. They seem to be having a good time.

BUTLER

--and so the penguin says: 'Dude, he's not an eggplant. He's retarded.'

They laugh at the punchline.

HOLLI

You're right, I've never heard that one before.

BUTLER

God, I've missed this. I know we ended things a little rocky, but tell me you haven't missed this.

Holli shrugs with a coy smile.

BUTLER (CONT'D)

You still shackled up with the cop?

HOLLI

Yeah. Ron's a good man.

BUTLER

You know, you could move in with me. WE click.

HOLLI

Whit, come on, don't ruin the night bringing this up again.

BUTLER

It's a big joke with my friends and family that you and me are a thing, but we don't pull the trigger on it.

HOLLI

I think we've pulled enough triggers as a couple.

BUTLER

Poor choice of words.

HOLLI

Can't we just have a nice meal and hang out? Why does it have to be more than that?

BUTLER

I dunno. I just... My friends say I'm a fool to let you lead me on. They call me stupid.

HOLLI

I'm sorry they do that but I feel safe with Ron. You're so great, but I just don't want to move in with you.

BUTLER

You have trust issues. You know that?

HOLLI

Yeah, I know. But I never doubt that things will be interesting when I'm with you.

She leans over and kisses him on the cheek.

He sighs.

BUTLER

You drive me nuts, you know that?

HOLLI

Well, how about we drive to your place and watch a movie?

Butler grins and waves for the check.

123 INT. BUTLER'S CONDO - NIGHT

123

Holli is asleep on Butler's couch, a movie on the TV. Butler is standing over her, an incredulous look on his face.

Holli yawns and awakens. She looks up at him.

HOLLI

What are you doing?

Butler holds up Holli's purse and Andrew's letter.

BUTLER

What am I doing? What the fuck are YOU doing? What is this shit?

Holli is suddenly fully awake. She leaps up and reaches for her things, but Butler pulls them away.

HOLLI

Hey! What the hell? You're going through my stuff now?

BUTLER

Is this why you won't fucking move in with me? You're having some affair with a goddamn KID??

HOLLI

I don't want to move in with you because I can't fucking trust you! Seeing as you just violated my privacy, I'd say I have every reason to feel that way!

BUTLER

Yeah, who's violating who, you pedophile!

HOLLI

You're a psychopath!

BUTLER

I lost my job because of you! IT was YOUR fault my gun went off! You were falling all over yourself!

HOLLI

You're a drunk! That's not how it happened, and you know it! You got the D.U.I., not me! Now, gimme my shit back!

He stays out of her reach.

BUTLER

Why do you even have this??

HOLL

It's from one of the kids at work. He gave it to me at the end of my shift. I put it in my purse, and I didn't think anything else about it.

BUTLER

Some boy?

HOLLI

Yeah, some boy. He's been having a hard time, and I've helped him out. I help kids out. You know, like my fucking job requires me to do?

BUTLER

Oh yeah, you care about kids so much? When's the last time you saw your OWN bastard kid, huh? Mother of the year, right?

That sets Holli over the edge.

HOLLI

(screaming)

Give me my purse!

Butler pulls out his lighter and urns the letter. He throws Holli's purse at her. She catches it and storms out the door.

BUTLER

Yeah, run away, bitch! Just like you always do! Run away! You think you got the last word! I'll get the last fucking word! You'll see!

He SLAMS his front door.

124 INT. HOLLI'S CAR - NIGHT

124

Holli is angry and driving home. She pulls out her cellphone.

HOLLI

Jason, it's Holli.

JASON (V.O.)

Christ, Hol. It's after midnight. What the fuck?

HOLLI

I want to talk to Jonathan.

JASON (V.O.)

He's asleep, you psychopath.

HOLLI

You can't keep him from me, Jason. He's my son too!

JASON (V.O.)

And he doesn't want to see you!

HOLLI

Because you've turned him against me!

JASON (V.O.)

Goodnight, Holli. Pop some more of those bipolar pills and call tomorrow.

Jason ends the call.

HOLLI

God! Dickhead!

She goes to dial him back, but her phone RINGS instead.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

Hello?

ANDREW (V.O.)

Miss Smith?

HOLLI
 (sighing)
 Jesus, Andrew. You can't keep
 calling me.

ANDREW (V.O.)
 My mom picked me up again for her
 weekend with me.

HOLLI
 I'm not coming and babysitting you
 or your damn mom anymore, Andrew.

ANDREW (V.O.)
 Oh... Okay... Sorry...

HOLLI
 You sound funny... Are you high?

ANDREW
 Yeah. Mom gave me a bag of weed and
 whiskey and told me not to bother
 her.

Holli cringes.

HOLLI
 Where are you? I'm coming to get
 you.

125 INT. MOTEL - NIGHT 125

Holli enters the motel room to find several junkies partying,
 and all of them smoking crack. Holli finds Andrew and takes
 him by the hand.

126 INT. DINER - NIGHT 126

Holli and Andrew sit in a booth together eating a meal.

ANDREW
 I like this place.

HOLLI
 I used to work here.

ANDREW
 Cool.

Holli looks at Andrew. She shakes her head.

HOLLI

I want you to understand me that this is the last time this can happen. I need you to call the police next time she does this, okay?

Andrew nods.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

And me helping you like this doesn't mean anything. I don't want to be your girlfriend or anything like that. I'm just looking out for you as a friend. Just a friend.

ANDREW

(sadly)
I know.

HOLLI

Okay...

They continue to eat their meal.

127 INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MORNING

127

Holli walks into the center, and immediately, she can tell something's off. The other WORKERS are giving her sidelong glances. She sits at her desk, and Monica walks up.

MONICA

Holli?

HOLL

Hey, Monica. What's going on. Everyone seems weird.

MONICA

The police were here this morning.

Holli's face goes white.

HOLLI

Why?

MONICA

They took Andrew Haug in for questioning. Apparently there's been some calls about some inappropriate behavior going on.

HOLLI

Oh?

Monica looks sternly at Holli. Holli swallows, attempting to keep her face neutral.

MONICA

Holli? Do you know anything about that?

HOLLI

No.

MONICA

The officers were asking about you.

HOLLI

They were?

Monica rubs her chin, an irritation bubbling below the surface.

MONICA

They will likely be picking you up as well. I think you'd better take the rest of the day off and go home.

Holli offers a small nod. Monica shakes her head and walks away. Holli sits there for a moment. She looks around, several of her coworkers glancing over at her. She starts breathing harder - a panic attack brewing. She quickly picks her phone up.

128 EXT. THE PARK - DAY

128

Holli is seated on a park bench beside Ron, who is in uniform. He rubs his face.

RON

Jesus, Hol.

HOLLI

(worried)

She just said she took him. She didn't say they wanted to talk to me. Just that she said they might call.

RON

(sighing heavily)

They call.

HOLLI
(hesitant)
...I think this is Whit.

RON
Whit? What does he have to do with
this?

Holli wrings her hands. Ron faces her.

RON (CONT'D)
Holli?

HOLLI
Andrew, the boy, he wrote me a love
letter. I had it in my purse, and
Whit found it and accused me of
fucking around. And I told him we
were through, and he got really mad
and said I'd pay for breaking his
heart, and... and I think he
must've called the police or Monica
something.

Ron closes his eyes, cringing.

RON
What did the love letter say?

HOLLI
That he was in love with me, and
he's loved talking to me and
spending time with me. It was
silly, really.

Ron sits in silence for a long moment. He looks at her dead
in the eyes.

RON
Listen, if the police pick you up
or ask you to come in for
questioning, you don't say a word.
You hear me? You don't say one word
until you got an attorney.

HOLLI
But I can't afford an attorney--

RON
Holli, of all the times I have
given you advice, please listen to
what I'm saying now, because it
sounds like they are trying to
build a case against you.

Holli chokes back tears. She is scared.

HOLLI
But I didn't do anything. I was
just trying to help him.

Ron has tears in his eyes too.

RON
I know, sweetheart.

He HUGS her.

RON (CONT'D)
Everything's going to be okay. Just
promise me if the police pick you
up, you stay dead quiet. No matter
what, because they can twist
whatever you say, and use it
against you.

HOLLI
I promise.

Ron looks at her.

RON
I have to go. I'm still on duty.
We'll talk tonight, okay?

Holli nods. Ron kisses her on her forehead and walks off.

129 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

129

Holli is seated in an interview room - a table and chairs.
She is alone, hands folded, nervous. TWO COPS enter - GRANT
and DAVIS. They sit down opposite her.

DAVIS presses RECORD on a tape recorder.

DAVIS
This is Lieutenant Davis with
Lieutenant Grant interviewing Holli
Smith.
(to Holli)
Miss Smith, do you know why we've
asked you to speak with us today?

Holli doesn't say a word.

DAVIS (CONT'D)
You're not under arrest. There's no
reason for you to remain silent.
(MORE)

DAVIS (CONT'D)
We just want to ask you a few questions.

No response. Holli just sits with her hands folded.

DAVIS (CONT'D)
This will go a lot faster if you just speak with us.

GRANT
We've already talked to Andrew, so you might as well give us your side of the story.

Holli just sits there, jaw clenched. Davis and Grant both frown, annoyed.

DAVIS
You're not doing yourself any fucking favors here.

GRANT
We just need to clear up a few details about the past week and what you and Andrew have been up to. That's all. So, just cut this shit out and talk to us.

DAVIS
You're only making things worse. We already have video of you and the kid leaving the hotel together. What were you doing there?

GRANT
I know what you were doing there. You were just "helping" him with some "homework" right? A little extracurricular activity?

Holli remains silent.

DAVIS
(re: the tape recorder)
Is this bothering you? IS that what this is? We can turn this off, if that'll help. Will you talk if we stop recording this?

Holli bites her tongue.

GRANT

This shit's getting us nowhere.
What the fuck, Davis? Helen Keller
here retarded or some shit?

DAVIS

She can talk. I know she can.

GRANT

We're gonna be walking circles in
here all fucking day.
(shouting at Holli)
You know how much prison time
you're gonna get when some fucking
jury finds you guilty of sex crimes
with a minor!! Huh!

Davis SLAMS his hand on the table. Holli jumps, but she stays
quiet.

DAVIS

Enough with the silent treatment,
Miss Smith! TALK!

Holli closes her eyes.

GRANT

Oh, is it fucking nap time now? Are
we not making ourselves clear here?

DAVIS

I don't think we're getting through
to here, Grant.

Eyes closed, other VOICES mingled with the shouting officers.

DANIEL (V.O.)

You'll never amount to shit!

MAX (V.O.)

It's our little secret. Shh...

PACKY (V.O.)

My turn.

R.J. (V.O.)

Just relax, you stupid bitch...

Tears start falling from Holli's closed eyes.

The DOOR opens, and a THIRD officer enters. Davis and Grant
back down. BOOTH waves a thumb--

BOOTH
Take a breather, guys.

The two cops leave. Booth sits down - CLICKS off the recorder. Holli opens her eyes to him.

BOOTH (CONT'D)
Hi, Holli. I'm Detective Booth.

He takes out cigarettes - offers one.

BOOTH (CONT'D)
You smoke?

Holli nods. He lights it for her.

HOLLI
(weakly)
Thank you.

BOOTH
Holli. This is a bad day. Something tells me you've had a lot of bad days. I saw your jacket. Juvi, couple of arrests. Those two jackasses want to come in here and yell and scream, and you just sitting here silent is only riling them up. But they're not wrong. And you're making everything just a little bit harder on yourself by not talking to us.

Booth pulls a CAN of SODA from his pocket and opens it for Holli. He gives it to her and pulls out another for himself. He drinks it.

He offered me another cigarette and lit it for me and gave

Holli sips hers.

BOOTH (CONT'D)
You're very pretty. If I was a teenager still, I wouldn't be able to control myself. If I was at that group home where you work, I'd be... heh... well...
(he chuckles and sighs)
Just tell me what happened, and we'll make this a lot easier on you. We have the videos. It doesn't look good for you.

Holli sits quietly.

Booth sighs heavily.

BOOTH (CONT'D)
You want an attorney?

Holli nods.

BOOTH (CONT'D)
(resigned)
Okay, Holli. Okay. You should
lawyer up. You're facing criminal
charges and a trial. And you're
going to be going away for a long,
long time.

He gets up and shakes his head sadly.

BOOTH (CONT'D)
You're free to go. We'll be in
touch.

130 EXT. LOOKOUT POINT - NIGHT

130

Holli has parked at a secluded spot all alone overlooking the river. She is sitting on the hood of her car. She's shaking, her body slipping into a panic attack. She squeezes her eyes shut and finally just SCREAMS at the top of her lungs to heaven.

HOLLI
What do you want from me, huh? What
the fuck do you want from me! What
kind of God are you, you piece of
shit! Even when I do the right
thing, it's wrong! Why! WHY!

She collapses, sobbing.

HOLL
Just let me die. Just let me
fucking die.

She cries for a while, and then crawls back into her car.

131 INT. RON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

131

Holli is still alone. She pours a glass of water and holds her PRESCRIPTION PILLS. She looks at a picture of Jonathan hanging on the fridge.

HOLLI
 Goodbye, baby. You'll be better off
 without me.

She swallows the entire bottle of lithium and klonopin.

She slowly closes her eyes, and drifts off to death...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

Ron is over her, panicked. Shaking her. Shouting inaudibly.
 He has his phone in his hand and against his ear.

DISSOLVE TO:

132 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

132

Holli's eyes flutter open. She finds herself in a hospital
 bed. There is an IV in her arm.

Ron is sitting next to the bed. He looks at her warmly.

RON
 Hey, honey. How you feeling?

HOLLI
 (groggy)
 Where...?

RON
 You're in the hospital.

HOLLI
 How long?

Ron smiles and touches her cheek. He looks away from her and
 speaks to someone else in the room.

RON
 She's still a little groggy when
 she wakes up. Give her a second.

Holli looks across the room. A man in a suit - a lawyer names
 GILBERT is seated there.

GILBERT
 That's fine. Take your time, Holli.

RON
 This is Gilbert, Hol. I hired him
 to represent you.

HOLLI
Represent me?

She rubs her head, and the memories come back.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
Christ... Andrew.

GILBERT
Your "friend" Lieutenant Booth has put a plea deal on the table. Either we take our chances with a jury to decide if you spend the next five years in prison, or you serve 6 months in jail with a big possibility of just probation.

HOLLI
Jesus Christ.

GILBERT
I do not recommend we take this to a jury trial. Not with the--
(he clears his throat)
--exposure this is getting.

HOLLI
What exposure?

Ron bites his lip nervously. He hands Holli a NEWSPAPER. Her FACE is plastered across it.

RON
You're all over the local news.

Holli stares at the paper in utter disbelief.

HOLLI
I need a minute.

GILBERT
I think we should discuss--

HOLLI
I need a minute!

Gilbert shuts up and gives a curt nod. Ron gets up, and the two of them leave the room.

As Holli stares at the newspaper and the TV news coverage, VOICES from PHONE CALLS float in and out.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Nice photo. You look just the whore
you always pretended to be.

HOLLI (V.O.)

Did you call just to tell me I'm
some joke?

ZOOEY (V.O.)

They aren't saying a word about it
down here. It's not national news.
You could come stay here, if you
want.

HOLLI (V.O.)

I can't leave the city, Zo.

ASHLEY (V.O.)

I don't have any money for an
attorney, and I won't be able to
make it to the trial.

HOLLI (V.O.)

I didn't ask you for money. Or to
come. Did you just want to tell me
that before I could ask?

ASHLEY (V.O.)

Well, we're praying for you.

Holli lays there, numb. She looks up, and Gilbert is there in
a different suit - A DIFFERENT DAY.

HOLLI

I don't want to prolong it any
longer. I don't want to take a
chance on not being able to see my
son for another five years. Let's
take the plea.

GILBERT

I feel really confident, Holli.
Probation. I'm sure of it.

133 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

133

Ron and Gilbert walk Holly up the stairs of the courthouse as
REPORTERS fire off cameras and SHOUT to Holli for a quote.

Ron steps in front of them all to let Holli and Gil race
past. Ron pulls out his badge and waves it at the reporters.

RON

That's enough! Give her some space!
I'm CPD! And I don't want my face
on camera. I am a Vice cop, and you
will all put me in danger if you
photograph me. Now, back up!

REPORTERS

Are you Miss Pellman's boyfriend?

RON

I'm just a friend helping a friend
into court. Now back-up!

134 INT. COURTHOUSE - SAME

134

We've caught up to the beginning of the film. Holli stands at a table in a COURTROOM, next to Gilbert, staring fixedly forward.

The JUDGE looks over documents in front of him.

JUDGE

Ms. Smith.

Holli's eyes flick to the man. Her body is shaking. Her lawyer squeezes his hands together, the verdict about to come--

The Judge removes his glasses and folds his hands sternly.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I've considered everything your
lawyer has presented, but with your
history, I'm afraid I cannot show
any more leniency than what the
District Attorney is requesting.

Holli stares blankly. Her lawyer scowls. He is not happy to hear this.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

You will serve six months in jail,
three years of probation, two years
of mandatory group therapy, and are
to register for 10 years as a
convicted sex offender.

Holli swallows dryly. Her lawyer lowers his head. He was not expecting this.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Ms. Smih, you are now a convicted felon.

As the Judge's GAVEL SLAMS down, we PUSH IN CLOSE on Holli's eyes, tired, sad, defeated--

CUT TO:

135 INT. A JAIL CELL - DAY

135

Holli sits in an orange jumpsuit in her jail cell. She sits there like a statue, hearing the echos of her life all around her.

ASHLEY (V.O.)

And I will not tolerate your behavior problems...

DANIEL (V.O.)

You're no daughter of mine. You're a bitch just your mom was...

DAVID (V.O.)

And if we ever find out that you are involved in any type of way with a nigger, we'll kill you...

RON (V.O.)

Time will go fast. We'll get through this.

JERMEY (V.O.)

Why can't you just love me back?

JOHNATHAN (V.O.)

Whatever you say, Holli...

A tear rolls down her cheek.

DISSOLVE TO:

136 INT. MILLIE'S - DAY

136

Holli is a waitress once again - back at her old job, though now her name tag says MANGER. She looks tired, but she is still good at serving. She sets plates on a table--

SUPER: 2003

HOLLI
Eggs over easy. Toast. Half stack
and bacon. French toast and
peaches. Can I get anything else
for y'all?

CUSTOMER
Looks great, thanks.

Holli smiles politely and returns to the server's station.
One of the other waitresses - KELLY - walks over to her.

KELLY
Hey hon, there's a gentlemen here
to see you.

Holli looks over at the entrance. Daniel is standing there
looking uncomfortable.

HOLLI
(to Kelly)
You mind watching my tables?

KELLY
Sure. Go ahead.

Holli walks over to her father.

HOLLI
What do you want?

DANIEL
You working here again?

HOLLI
What do you think?

Daniel grunts and nods stupidly.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
What do you want?

DANIEL
I thought I'd come see you. I heard
you got out, and--

HOLLI
I got out over a year ago.

DANIEL
Yeah, well...

HOLLI

Just say whatever you came to say
and leave. I have tales.

DANIEL

I wondered if you wanted to move
back in with me.
My dad asked me if I could move in
with him, because he was sick and
needed

Holli laughs loudly.

HOLLI

Why the hell would I want to do
that?

DANIEL

I got this dialysis while I'm
waiting for a kidney, and I thought
we could help each other out.

Holli stares at him. She wants him to go away, but she bites
her lip. She could use the help, financially.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

It was just a thought. Forget it.

He turns to leave.

HOLLI

Wait.

He looks back at her.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

Just... Gimme a second.

She thinks hard. Daniel gets annoyed.

DANIEL

Look, don't do me any fucking
favors--

HOLLI

Fine. I'll do it.

DANIEL

(surprised)
You will?

Holli sighs heavily, resigned to this. She nods.

HOLLI
Yeah... Yeah, Dad.

137 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY 137

Holli stands in her old bedroom for the first time in 13 years. The house is different, Raven and the boys gone - Daniel living alone now.

She looks ill, pained to be back in this place. She looks at the dents and holes in the walls.

She sits on her old bed, misery on her face.

138 INT. GYM - NIGHT 138

A GROUP THERAPY session - chairs in a circle with a dozen sad looking women. Holli is seated listening to a BETTE (50's) speak solemnly.

BETTE
I stole every last dime, and he died with nothing. The whole family wants nothing to do with me now, not even my kids. And I don't blame them. I threw it all away thinking I could just win it all back. And I'm paying for it every day, and maybe - I dunno maybe I'll get to see my grandkids this Christmas. Anyhow... that's all... thanks.

Alice finishes lamely and sits down. The group offers murmurs of gratitude for her sharing. The GROUP LEADER, CANDACE looks around the room.

CANDACE
Thank you, Bette.
(looks at Holli)
Holli, you haven't shared yet tonight.

HOLLI
I don't have anything new.

CANDACE
Holli, you know if you don't participate, I have to report you as violating your probation.

Holli nods knowing she has to talk. She stands, clears her throat.

HOLLI

Still doing 60-80 hours a week trying to pay bills and catch up on my child support. Been back at my dad's for a month now. It's... terrible, if I'm being honest. He still yells a lot. And he hasn't thanked me once for driving him to dialysis. Least he doesn't have the strength to beat me anymore...

(thinking a beat)

Kinda feels good to be able to come to this though. I know it's all shitty - I mean we all have shitty things happening, but... I dunno... It's nice knowing I'm not alone. That other women have experienced the abuse that I've gone through. Just to have people listen and care feels good, because I got all this pain to release, and... well... that's all. Thank you.

She sits back down. The WOMAN all looks at her, understanding her.

139 INT. A BAR - NIGHT

139

Holli is out with Kelly and some friends from work. She is happy and smiling. They are drinking and dancing. Kelly pulls Holli over to the bar where CURT, a handsome 30-year-old black man, is standing.

KELLY

Holli, this is Curt. Curt, this is the girl I was telling you about.

HOLLI

(laughing)

Kelly!

KELLY

What? He's cute. You're cute. He's single. You're single. Talk, interact, be cute. Go-go-go!

Kelly laughs and dances off. Holli shakes her head in amusement.

CURT

It's nice to meet you.

HOLLI
What'd she really tell you about
me?

CURT
Nothing but good.

Holli smiles. Curt is very attractive.

HOLLI
You want to dance?

CURT
(shy)
Um...

Holli grabs his hand, and they are soon on the dance floor among their friends. Holli is alive and happy, and her and Curt are soon all over each other like a couple of teenagers.

140 EXT. A BAR - LATER

140

Holli and Curt are kissing. She looks into his eyes. He smiles breathlessly.

CURT
I have this time share down in the
Keys. WE should go sometime.

HOLLI
(giggling)
You asking me to run away already?

CURT
No, I - I was just saying - I mean--
- I just--

HOLLI
(laughing)
You're really cute. You know that?

He blushes, and she kisses him.

141 INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

141

Holli walks into the house smiling from her night out. Daniel is on the couch.

DANIEL
Where've you been all night?

She ignores him and walks to her room. He grunts, annoyed that she ignored him. He stands up to shuffle to the kitchen.

HOLLI (O.S.)

Dad! Where's my computer!

Holli comes storming back into the living room.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

Where's my computer!

DANIEL

I sold it.

HOLLI

You what??

DANIEL

Not like you were fucking using it!

HOLLI

I just fucking bought it! I was going to hook it up when I had time! You had no fucking right to do that!

DANIEL

You gonna tell me what I can and can't do in my own damn house?

HOLLI

It's OUR house now, Dad! I fucking pay the bills too! You can't keep treating me like I'm a kid, goddammit!

DANIEL

Whatever.

She gets right in his face.

HOLLI

No! Not whatever!

Daniel SPITS right in Holli's face. Holli PUNCHES him, and Daniel falls to the ground in a heap.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

That's IT! I'm leaving!

Holli storms to her room. Daniel SCREAMS at her from the floor.

DANIEL

Boo-fucking-hoo, you goddamn nigger lover! You don't have none of my blood running through your veins! You hear me! Your some bastard's baby! You ain't my girl!

Holli comes out of her room with two BAGS of her things.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You gonna go cry about this at therapy? Have a bunch of bitches bow smoke up your ass to feel good about yourself?

Holli towers over the old man. She is seething with fury.

HOLLI

I'm done, Dad. I'm done letting you make me feel worthless. You've drained enough life out of me. You've beat me like a dog sine the day I was born. It's over. Have s good life.

Holli storms out of the house leaving Daniel there alone.

DANIEL

(screaming viciously)

Fine! Leave! You all fucking leave! All of you! I don't need no one, you hear me! I don't need a goddamn thing from anyone! Don't you come crawling back to me when you fuck it all up again, you worthless bitch! You'll be back! You always come back!

142 INT. HOLLI'S CAR - NIGHT

142

Daniel's words echo in Holli's ears as she drives, tears streaming from her face. She looks out the window as the world moves past her. She is on the same road - the same path one more time...

It starts to SNOW.

143 EXT. LOOKOUT POINT - NIGHT

143

Holli stands staring out at the city. It twinkles at her and the snow gently falls from the darkness above.

women who had experienced the abuse that I had gone through.
Just to have people

144 EXT. RON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

144

Holli is standing on the porch in the snow. She is just staring at the door. The door OPENS - Ron standing there. He looks at Holli with concern and steps outside.

RON

Hol? You okay? What's wrong?

Holli looks at him. She shakes her head.

HOLLI

I didn't have anywhere else to go.

RON

It's okay. You can always come here.

HOLLI

I know....

She closes her eyes, pained.

RON

Come in. You're going freeze out here.

Holli is resolute. She shakes her head, sad - disappointed.

HOLLI

I can't keep doing this over and over.

Ron looks at her.

HOLLI (CONT'D)

I have to stop, Ron. If I don't stop running away... I'm going to die.

RON

(tenderly)

What are you talking about, sweetie. I won't let that happen.

HOLLI

I know. I know. But it's time. I have to do this myself. I'm ready.

She takes his hand and squeezes it. She gives it a kiss.

He looks at her, uncertain but as caring as always.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
(deeply sincere)
Thank you, Ron.

RON
(quietly)
You're welcome.

HOLLI
(with deep affirmation)
It's time.

As the snow falls, Holli hugs Ron one last time.

DISSOLVE TO:

145 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

145

The WAITING AREA, Holli stands with a new haircut, clean and adult. She looks so mature now. A woman. She is holding a BABY - her daughter SARAH. A NURSE nods to her.

NURSE
Ms. Pellman. You can go in now.

Holli nods and turns to set Baby Sarah on Curt's lap. They both are wearing wedding bands.

SUPER: 2008

CURT
You sure you want to go in there alone?

HOLLI
(nodding, softly)
Yeah. I'll come get you in a bit.

He nods. Holli walks down the hall.

146 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

146

Daniel is once again in a hospital bed. He looks terrible, weak - an old man at the end of his life. He sees Holli at the door and grunts.

DANIEL
Hmph. Didn't think you'd come.

Holli enters and sits next to the bed.

HOLLI
How you feeling, Dad.

DANIEL
Like hammered shit.

HOLLI
You look like it.

DANIEL
Thanks.

Holli smiles weakly.

A DOCTOR enters the room.

DOCTOR
Okay, Dan -- Oh. My apologies. I
didn't realize you had a guest.
(to Holli)
I'm Doctor Wilson.

HOLLI
Holli Pellman. I'm Daniel's
daughter.

DOCTOR
I was just going to go over his
chart.

HOLLI
(to Daniel)
Should I step out?

DANIEL
Stay.

Holli nods. They look at Dr. Wilson. The Doctor speaks honestly, his bedside manner exceptional.

DOCTOR
Dan, I'm sorry to say that none of
the treatment is working. You've
been beating this back for months,
but the chemo isn't working
anymore. The cancer's to your
esophagus.

Daniel sits there staring at his hands in his lap. Holli chokes back sudden tears. She nods to Wilson.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 (gravely)
 You have about two weeks. Maybe
 more. Maybe less. I'm very sorry,
 Dan.

Holli looks at her father. He is still looking at his hands.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 I'll give you two some time.

HOLLI
 Thank you, Doctor.

Wilson leaves. Holli looks at her father, words escape her.

And Dan begins to cry. Tears fall from his eyes, and Holli is
 even more shocked.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
 (nearly a whisper)
 Dad?

Daniel weeps. Holli takes his hands.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
 Dad.

He can't even look at her.

DANIEL
 (trembling)
 I'm sorry... I'm so fucking sorry.
 For everything. God dammit. I
 fucked up everything. I'm so sorry,
 Holli. I'm so sorry.

He puts his arms around her and hugs her tightly. He sobs
 like a child.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
 Forgive me. I just didn't know how
 to express love because I just
 hated the whole fucking world.
 How'd you ever manage to make it
 out of all this alive? I'm so proud
 of you. I love you, Holli. I do. I
 love you. I'm sorry... I'm sorry...

Holli holds her father, and she is filled with love for him.
 She squeezes him, and allows herself to cry with him, gentle
 tears falling from her eyes onto his feeble back.

HOLLI
 (whispering)
 Do you want to meet your grand
 daughter?

Daniel looks up at her.

DANIEL
 Really? You... you want me to?

HOLLI
 It doesn't matter if we only have a
 couple of weeks left or not, we can
 start over.

Daniel looks into her face with trembling, grateful eyes. He
 nods, another childlike gesture.

CURT enters the room holding Baby Sarah, and Holli gently
 places her in Daniel's arms. Holli stands back as Daniel
 softly kisses Sarah's head.

He looks up to Curt.

HOLLI (CONT'D)
 Dad, this is Curt.

CURT
 Hello, sir.

DANIEL
 Call me Dan.

Daniel and Curt shake hands.

Holli sits next to her father as Baby Sarah smiles and
 giggles. With Curt standing near them, it is a beautiful
 tableau that we hold on for as long as we can.

DISSOLVE TO:

147 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

147

Holli stands at Daniel's grave. She is stoic, strong. She
 sets FLOWERS down on his grave and a PEPSI. She stands there
 quietly thankful for the tie they had in the end.

DISSOLVE TO:

148 INT. HOLLI'S HOME - NIGHT

148

It is CHRISTMAS. Holli's home is decorated. There is a little 3-year-old boy - JESSE - playing happily at her feet. Curt is sitting by the tree counting the many presents with Sarah, now 5-years-old. It is a happy, peaceful home full of love.

Holli has the phone in hand.

SUPER: 2013

HOLLI

Yes, Mom, we got the sweaters,
thank you.

ASHLEY (V.O.)

Well, they're hand knit, so just
don't machine dry them.

HOLLI

I read the card, Mom. I know.

ASHLEY (V.O.)

Your sister washed hers, and they
shrank. She won't even wear them
now.

HOLLI

Mom, I will dry clean them.

ASHLEY

Well, you don't have to spend that
kind of money.

Holli covers the phone with her hand and whispers to Curt.

HOLLI

Stick those sweaters in the
dishwasher please.

Curt laughs.

CURT

Be nice.

HOLLI

(to the phone)

Yeah, mom. We're going to the
midnight service.

ASHLEY (V.O.)

You're not working this week, are
you?

HOLLI
 We're taking the holidays off.
 We'll open back up for business on
 the 2nd.

ASHLEY (V.O.)
 And business is good?

HOLLI
 It's fantastic, Mom.

ASHLEY (V.O.)
 Good. Good.

There is an awkward beat. That same gulf in their
 relationship, though no longer poisonous.

ASHLEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Well, my love to Sarah and Jesse
 and Curt.

HOLLI
 Merry Christmas, Mom.

ASHLEY
 Merry Christmas.

Holli hangs up the phone and exhales. It is not exasperation.
 It is... thankful.

She scoops up Jesse and kisses his laughing face. She goes
 over to Sarah and Curt and sits near them.

HOLLI
 Mom sends her love.

CURT
 Did Johnathan get back to you?

HOLLI
 (sighing)
 He's Staying with Jason.

Curt rubs her leg lovingly.

CURT
 He just needs more time.

HOLLI
 (smiling sadly)
 I know.

Baby Jesse squeals, and Holli laughs joyfully at him. She
 sets him next to Sarah, and the two play with their Daddy.

Holli sits back and just watches her beautiful family. And she smiles, truly. She is happy. She is whole.

FADE TO BLACK.