

SECOND DRAFT

3/28/85

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC

A
Screenplay
by
Wes Craven

based on the novel
by V.C. Andrews

Registered, WGA/w
1985

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC

FADE UP ON:

EXT. CHAPMAN HOME - DAY

A pleasant two-story frame house: picket fence, old tire strung from an Elm, and bikes in the drive. The double garage is empty of cars.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

CORY, 6, rockets through a pleasantly messy bedroom and out the door, cutting to the left. CATHY, 13 — pretty, long-legged and blond — runs past in pursuit.

CATHY (O.S.)

Gonna getcha!

CORY (O.S.)

Nooooooooooooo!

Then Cory's double tears into the bedroom from the opposite direction — Cory's twin, CARRIE — discernable by her machine gun voice and energy --

CARRIE

Can't get meeeeeeeeee!

A lanky blond boy of 14, CHRIS, pounces on her like a cat, throwing her kicking and screaming over his shoulder. Cathy reappears with Cory, and the two haul their catch towards --

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

A big, toy-field bathtub. Cathy and Chris wash the twins with good-natured firmness.

CARRIE

Weeeeeee don't want to take a bath!

CATHY

Tough.

CORY

Gonna give us nah-moon-yah!

CHRIS
Horrible little clones — you want
potatoes growing out of your ears?

BOTH TWINS
Weeeee want icecream!

CATHY
At the party. First we loose ten
ten pounds of dirt.

TWINS
Nooooooooooooo!

FADE SOUND and DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

INT. PARENTS' ROOM - DAY

Cathy crosses, drying her arms on a towel, the light through the window lower now. She stops mid-room, tosses off a fluid series of ballet moves, then plops onto her parents' bed and scrutinizes a picture.

INSERT - THE PHOTOGRAPH.

All four kids, and the parents as well, the woman with long blond hair, a face and body of understated beauty and sexuality, the clothes to pulling it all together into smashing good looks. The man casually matches her. Tanned and muscular, his face is lit with laughter. Both of the older kids lean to him.

CATHY smiles.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

THE MOTHER (CORINE) — arranges the last of the party decorations she and the kids have prepared. They're wonderfully fanciful and inventive. As for Corine herself, she's even more stunning in real life.

WIDENING, REVEALING other PEOPLE and KIDS — all charged by gaiety and mounting anticipation. Corine is the star, beautiful and radiant in a daring dress, the kids her foils.

CORINE
Any minute now. Turn out the lights!

The MUSIC is turned off — someone else gets the lights. In the sudden still and dark, the mystery and ceremony is doubled.

TWINS
It's daaaaark!

CORINE

Shush, Cory, Carrie. Christopher,
go see.

Chris scans the night street.

CHRIS

Not yet.

A NEIGHBOR lights his digital watch.

FAT MAN

He's late. Usually set your watch...

Headlights sweep the curtains.

CORINE

There he is!

CHRIS

Hide - everyone hide!

Stumbling in the dark. Muffled laughter. The twins GIGGLE.

—CORINE (O.S.)

Shhhhhh!

It's so still you can hear the car door slam. And the second one too.

There's a KNOCK.

CORINE

Come in!

No entry. Another KNOCK, louder.

ALL

(singing it)

Come iiiii-in!

MAN (O.S.)

Hello?

Corine gives a self-conscious laugh and shrugs.

CORINE

Aren't we all here?

People venture from hiding; the kids watch their mother open the door.

Two POLICE OFFICERS face her. One looks at his feet, the other takes off his cap.

ON CATHEY & CHRIS —

OFFICER (O.S./CONTD)

Is your name Chapman, Mrs Christopher Chapman?

FREEZE ON THEIR FACES and FADE TO BLACK.

FA2B

BEGIN MAIN TITLES -- with the SOUND OF RAIN; FADE UP ON:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

TITLES CONTINUE -- A downpour -- shining umbrellas, splashed casket, rain-battered flowers with petals in the mud. Chris solemnly quiets the fidgeting twins. Cathy, erect and dazed, listens to --

PREACHER

God came and took Chris Chapman on a rainy highway this week, a long way from his loving wife and children. God has his reasons, and they are beyond us.

INTERCUT to the characters as he names them --

PREACHER (CONTD)

Let's just pray for the strength of Corine, and of Cathy and Christopher Junior, for the twins, Cory and Carrie And may Christopher Chapman's soul rest in peace.

ON CORINE as TITLES END - veiled in black, regal and unreadable. She stoops, cups some muddy soil in her hand and drops it into the grave. Then she doesn't know what to do with her hand, with the wet darkness of the grave.

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

The rain has let up. There's a MOVING VAN out front, and a couple of GUYS carrying a couch into the truck. Cathy leans against the black trunk of the Elm, a small package in her hand. It's a wrapped gift, but torn and scorched.

She opens it slowly, at last revealing a small, beautifully-crafted box of silver. Atop it, frozen in a perfect pirouette, is a porcelin ballerina.

Cathy touches the girl, feeling her perfect lines, and the ballerina begins to move to a beautiful tune. Cathy is mesmerized. Then she's sobbing. She holds onto the tree, the only solid thing, and the floodgates open.

SEEN from the far side of the yard, Cathy is a tiny figure beneath the tree, unnoticed by the moving men throwing the last

rug inside their van. A MAN in a serge suit is on the porch with Corine, the woman far less groomed than the last time we saw her, the man liking her loose robe.

MAN

Hell of a thing, repossession. Hate it every time I do it.

MOTHER

Some of these things we've almost paid off.

MAN

Inch is a mile, though, wouldn't you say?
(flicks his eyes to hers)
Anyway, this stuff ain't gonna get me what you owe. You better think about what else you got you ain't telling...

He flicks a smile of nicotine yellow towards Cathy, then sidles off the porch.

Cathy puts the music box from behind her back.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON THE BALLERINA, spinning slowly to the music, Cathy's face just behind, entranced. Then a hand snatches the thing away.

WIDER — as Corine carries it away, Cathy looking around in shock.

CATHY

That's mine. Daddy left that for me.

CORINE (CONTD)

You live in a dream, Cathy! This will be used to help pay our debts, just like the rest -- I've even sold my wedding ring.

She throws the music box on the table like some profane object to be pawned.

CORINE

Catherine, please.
(lowers her eyes)

A silence falls over the room like a chill cloud. Chris is there as well, and mood is serious. They sit on rusted chairs from the patio, (all other furniture gone), Corine dressed in a black negligee and robe. She picks at an invisible blemish on her leg for an instant, then shrugs to her girl.

CORINE (CONTD)

I'm sorry...but your father is dead.

(more)

CORINE (CONTD)

We've to accept that.

She picks up an envelope as she studies her children.

CORINE

I'm sure it's been a terrible few weeks for both of you. First daddy... and now now these men taking all our things...

CHRIS

How can they do that, Mom?

Corine fingers the letter.

CORINE

Because your father and I were in hock up to our ears, that's why. We both were from very wealthy parents...

(smiles, 'yes, it's true'...)

So we always thought we'd be wealthy too...

(beat)

The fact is we have very little money at all.

Chris watches his mother stroke her hair with a vacant look and gets a little scared.

CHRIS

We could get jobs.

She shakes her head sadly.

CORINE

I... I've been raised like some relic from the past -- and your father kept up the tradition -- pampered me, loved me... But the truth is I've never learned a damn thing about surviving on my own.

(laughs)

Some mother, hmm?

Corine opens the letter and takes out a sheet of creamy paper covered with fine, tall handwriting.

CORINE (CONTD)

But now we have a future -- beyond your wildest dreams!

FA2C

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE / A RAIL LINE - NIGHT

A Harvest Moon illuminates fields and woods. Through this a passenger TRAIN threads its way, the lights of its windows glowing.

INT. THE TRAIN - NIGHT

The five are camped in facing seats, the twins asleep on Corine's lap.

CORINE

We'll be rich as kings. You'll see.
My parents are...

CHRIS

Millionaires?

CORINE

Not just millionaires. B'jillionaires!
(she laughs)
I swear, they don't even know where it all
is. But a railroad here, a shipping line
there, and pretty soon it adds up.

Cathy sighs, excited.

CATHY

Sounds so fantastic...
(tentatively)
I always thought you'd said they
were dead...

Corine looks out the window.

CORINE

I guess I did. It was almost the same.
Your dad and I were cut off by them
(carefully)
They didn't approve of our marriage.
Especially my father...

She turns back and gives Cathy and Chris her most winning smile.
Then just as suddenly grows very grave.

CORINE

He's very sick, you know. My father.
Something with his heart. I forget
what it's called. Angelus... Angin...

CHRIS

Angina pectoris, probably. You get
little paroxysmal attacks of chest pain,
precipitated by deficient oxygenation
in the heart muscles.

He goes back to his book with a smart-ass grin

CORINE

Took the words right out of my mouth.

They laugh at the boy's precociousness, Cathy going back to the
subject.

CATHY

He doesn't sound very nice, your father.
Not liking you and dad getting married.

CORINE

Well, I'll charm him back. I'm sure as
soon as he sees me, he'll realize...

She gives them a look of compelling love and charm.

CORINE (CONTD)

Then one night I'll bring you all down-
stairs into his room. And he'll be
charmed — enchanted by his four
beautiful, perfect grandchildren.

She leans very close to them.

CORINE (CONTD)

And then I'll be the heiress to a
fortune beyond belief. And through me,
every dream you've ever had will come
true.

She's mesmerizing. The soothing, absolutely believable weight
and cadence of her words leaves both Cathy and Chris
open-mouthed. She smiles, seeing the effect she's had. Next
moment the train gives a lurch and begins slowing. A CONDUCTOR
appears.

CONDUCTOR

Your station's next, Ma'am.

EXT. STATION — NIGHT

The train, a huge shape in the welling dark, rolls to a stop, its
headlight revealing trees and nothing else.

Cathy steps off carrying one of the twins, helped by the
conductor. Chris follows carrying the other, then comes Corine,
lugging two large suitcases. The conductor rushes to help her,
carrying them to the empty platform.

CONDUCTOR

You sure someone's meeting you.

CORINE

Of course I'm sure.

The engine gives an impatient blast of its horn. The conductor
shrugs and swings back aboard.

CONDUCTOR

You take care then.

And then the train is moving out, the man gone back inside.

There's no car, only dark trees, and their own breath hanging in the cold night air.

CATHY

Will they be here soon?

Corine hefts the suitcases.

CORINE

No one's coming. We'll walk.
It's not that far.

EXT. THE ROAD / WOODS - NIGHT

WIDE, HIGH ANGLE DOWN ON THEM -- as they straggle down the yellow line. It's a narrow two-lane blacktop. Untraveled. The woods all around are dark and silent. No houses, no road signs, no lights. The only sign of humanity is a high iron fence running through the trees on one side of the road.

CAMERA CRANES DOWN as the group pauses to rest, setting the twins down amid much sleepy protest.

CATHY

They don't want to walk, mom.

CORINE

Then make them walk.

(then much lower)

They'd better enjoy the exercise while they can.

Cathy barely catches this, and Chris misses it entirely, his attention is turned towards the woods. Then Cathy hears the movement too, off in the trees beyond the fence. She swallows.

CATHY

Well, probably the wolves'll eat us.
Then we won't have to worry.

CHRIS

Aren't wolves in Virginia.

CATHY

You know everything, of course.

CHRIS

That's true.

CATHY

Nerd.

CHRIS

Retard.

CORINE

Stop it!

Cory opens his heavy eyes.

CORY

I'm coooold.

CARRIE

Weeeeeeeee don't like it out here!

BOTH

We want to go hooooooooooooome!

Surprisingly it's Cathy who turns on them with a mother's authority.

CATHY

Hush, you two. We are going home.
To our new home. Now shut up and be brave.
This is an adventure — like camping, or
something —

(much lower)

— really stupid like that.

She lifts Cory into her arms. Chris does the same with Carrie, Corine hefts the suitcases, and they're moving again.

FA2D

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

EXT. THE ROAD AND AN ENTRANCE GATE - NIGHT

MOVING WITH THEM - fatigue in their faces, in their labored breathing. One of the twins is whimpering. They seem on an endless trek — a forced march. Then Corine points ahead.

CORINE

There.

Cathy and Chris look in wonder.

IN THEIR POV - we SEE a huge gate, its granite pillars choked with ivy, its gates of ornately-wrought iron.

ANGLE AT THE GATE as Chris walks up and tries the latch. It doesn't move. Corine goes straight to a dark metal box containing a black telephone. She listens on this, seems to hear a voice almost immediately, and says...

CORINE

It's me, mother.

There's a deep rasp of metal, and the huge portal begins swinging open. The drive curves off through brooding trees and vast lawns, with no house in sight.

The mother shepherds her kids inside, and the gate clangs shut with terrible finality. Without a word they start walking again, as fast as they can manage.

EXT. DRIVE & HOUSE - NIGHT

MOVING WITH THEM again, the kids straining for their first glimpse of the house.

CATHY
This all their land?

CORINE
Every rock and tree. Theirs, and pretty soon ours...

CHRIS
And is there a lake or anything?

CORINE
(points)
A beauty, a quarter mile that way.

Christopher smiles.

CHRIS
All right. We can ice skate all winter, swim all summer.

Corine gives a sad smile. Cathy stops, hearing another CRACK and SCRAPE somewhere off in the trees.

CATHY
You sure there aren't wolves in this state?

CHRIS
(quietly)
Fairly sure.

They listen. Nothing.

CHRIS (CONTD)
Probably a racoon, they're nocturnal.

CATHY
Twelve-foot racoon with butcher knives for teeth.

CORINE
Cathy!

The twins screw up their faces.

CARRIE
Weee don't like racoons...

Corine throws up her hands.

CORINE

Great, good work, Cathy!

CHRIS

It's mice for sure. Big fat mice
that couldn't hurt a flea.

The twins look at Cathy for confirmation.

CATHY

(singing quietly)

Three blind mice, three blind mice.

Chris joins in with his variation, and the twins can't help but struggle in too.

CHRIS

(joining in)

Observe how they ambulate, observe how
they ambulate. They all pursued an
agriculturalist's spouse, she amputated
their apendages with a culinary cleaver,
did you...

They all stop. Looking.

CATHY

Oh m'god.

CHRIS

Awesome.

REVERSE IN THEIR POV. A magnificent mansion peeks from around a turn in the drive, so huge and towering it's more castle than home. Its stone-clad walls rise three stories to the eaves, with dormers poking through the slate roofs, and a forest of peaks and chimneys above that. There's something really spooky about it, too. So huge, yet so silent and dark.

CORINE

This is where I was born, children.
This is the Foxworth home. Our home.

CHRIS

You sure somebody's there?

EXT. THE MANSION - NIGHT

It's even more imposing up close, dwarfing them as they reach its walls. Chris has run around front to peak in a window. Corine chases after him, suddenly more frightened than Chris can understand.

CORINE

Chris, don't go out front. Mother
said not to be seen or else...

Again the SOUND of a CRACKING TWIG, off in the shrubbery. Chris freezes. Next moment, from the bushes at Chris's opposite side, a huge black WOLFHOUND rockets INTO FRAME with a terrifying SNARL, knocking Chris flying!

WIDER - amid screams and snarls, as the boy hits the dirt in a sprawl, the big animal wheeling after him with flashing fangs. Chris reacts with surprising quickness, grabbing the suitcase from his petrified mother and bringing it up just in time to catch the dog square in the face mid-leap. This time both go down.

The twins runs screaming into their mother's skirts -- but Cathy, without even thinking, rushes in with the second suitcase, bringing it down over the huge hound's head like a little enraged amazon. The blow distracts the animal for an instant -- but enrages it even more.

It drives in for Chris's throat, and only the quick reflexes of the boy (and Cathy's hauling on the thing's tail) allow Chris to get his arm up in time. The teeth slash through his thick coat and sweater, and the dog dog bulls in harder, knocking the boy flat on his back. He pounces right over him now -- darting his jaws again and again for the throat.

Cathy throws herself over the dog's neck in utter abandon, getting pitched off like a rag doll for her trouble. She struggles up, looking to her mother.

CATHY

Mom - help us!

But the woman is frozen to the twins in mute terror. Then there's a sudden deafening WHISTLE.

The dog releases its jaws and jerks around. Then, hackles bristling like a wild boar, it backs stiff-legged away.

Chris staggers up, clutching his arm, shaking with rage and terror. Cathy is livid. All turn in fury to the man emerging from the trees. Then their fury turns to fear -- this guy is huge, raggedly clothed, and wears a large pruning knife on his belt. And his head, his face, his whole demeanor is somehow off. Only Cathy has the courage to speak to him.

CATHY

What're you trying to do, asshole?

CORINE

Catherine!

Cathy is stung by the rebuke in her mother's voice. Then she turns to Chris. He holds up his hand and wiggles his bloody fingers.

CHRIS
Dog one, people zero.

CATHEY
You okay?

CHRIS
It helped that I'm wearing three sweaters, but...

Corine turns on the man.

CORINE
Who the hell are you?

The man opens his mouth, but only a rasping, garbled sound escapes. Then there is a voice, from behind them. An old woman's voice, cold as the night.

GRANDMOTHER (O.S.)
He's my watchman, Doberman, and he was just doing his job.

A woman in her sixties comes at them from the house. She's well over six feet tall, with her silver hair in a tight bun, and her powerful-looking body strictly confined inside a long gray dress.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)
I told you to come straight to the back door. You choose to come around front in direct disobedience.

She looms over them with the most piercing eyes imaginable, fixed now on the children as if they were vermin.

CORINE
That damn dog nearly killed Chris.

The woman snaps around.

GRANDMOTHER
-- I won't have that kind of language in my house. Ever. From adult and --
(glares at Cathy)
certainly not from a child.

The words cut Corine off as cleanly as a cleaver.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)
Now, inside before you're seen.

MOVING WITH THEM -- as the old woman takes them around the rear, past potting sheds and garages, greenhouses and outbuildings, until they reach a servants' entrance. Cathy nervously watches something else.

IN HER POV - Doberman and the big dog keep pace with them, blocking the way out.

WIDER as the Grandmother gestures the family inside. Just before she closes the door she glances back at Doberman.

GRANDMOTHER

Guard.

The big man nods, eyes gleaming. The old woman goes inside, and the door is double-locked.

INT. A HALLWAY - NIGHT

She leads Corine and the children down a narrow servants' corridor, using only an flashlight to show the way.

CHRIS

At least it's warm in here.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

There will be no talking!
I warn you.

There's a terrible finality to the way she hisses this in the children's faces, and she holds their eyes until the utter truth and weight of it sinks to their bones. Then she leads them on, now silent as stones.

FA2E

INT. A LANDING & SERVICE AREA -

They move through a labyynth of dark wood and dim light. Only once do they pass a doorway which gives a glimpse into a living area. Chris peeks through and sees glowing furniture, oriental rugs, paintings, and a broad staircase sweeping up in the background, wide as a boulevard. But the old woman hurries him on, up a narrow wooden staircase into greater darkness.

INT. SERVANTS STAIRS - NIGHT

They climb higher and higher, the twins lagging in exhaustion.

COREY

'M sleepy...

CORINE

Shush, Corey.

INT. UPPER LANDING - NIGHT

They're winded by the time they gain the landing, feeling their way in the dark. The old woman opens a door, its SQUEAK ECHOING...

into dark expanse.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

The north wing is unused now, Corine.
It's where they'll stay.

INT. NORTH WING, UPPER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

As soon as they enter they can see their breath.

CARRIE

Cooold.

With a quick move the old woman clamps her hand over the child's mouth. Carrie's eyes go wide, but when the narrow hand comes away, no sound comes from her lips.

She pokes a light switch, and a line of dim wall sconces LIGHTS down one long wall, revealing a hallway fifteen feet wide and eighty or a hundred feet long. Chairs and chandeliers are draped in muslin, and the floors are bare. It looks like a classic haunted house.

ANGLE AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR, at the darkest reach. The grandmother unlocks a door.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

The old woman throws on a light, revealing a single room crammed with Highboys, two double beds, bureaus and tables. Its windows are draped in heavy velvet.

Corine urges the children in. The old lady scrutinizes them.

GRANDMOTHER

As you wrote, Corine. Your children
are beautiful.

(ignoring Corine's
hopeful smile)

But they have an invisible affliction...

CORINE

My children are perfect, mother. Now,
where can I find soap and water to clean
Chris's wounds?

The old woman gestures towards the bathroom.

GRANDMOTHER

You'll find whatever you need there.

With Corine and Chris gone there, the Grandmother looks at the twins. Then at Cathy. Cathy holds her eye for a long moment. Too long for the old lady's taste.

GRANDMOTHER

I smell arrogance here. The sins
of the parents...

Cathy turns away and begins helping the twins off with their coats and sweaters. At last the grandmother goes off into the bathroom. Cathy listens to the old woman's voice booming from O.S.

GRANDMOTHER (O.S.)

This is the only bedroom with its own adjoining bath, and the only place my husband won't hear them walking overhead or flushing the toilet. They are to stay in here at all times.

There's a look of dawning horror on Cathy's face.

CORINE

You can lock the door at the end of the corridor -- at least give them the wing -- he won't hear.

GRANDMOTHER

The closing of the wing can't coincide with your arrival. The help would grow suspicious. I've given this a great deal of thought, Corine. This is the only safe room.

Chris looks to Cathy. Both can't believe what the old woman is saying.

INT. BATHROOM

A stark place of ancient plumbing and porcelain. A huge claw-footed tub, a cold throne of a toilet. There are towels, stacked neatly. Lots of soap, also stacked in its packages. Toothpaste. It looks like someone has stocked it for a year.

CORINE

What if the dog was rabid?

The old woman doesn't think it worth an answer.

GRANDMOTHER

It's the children that are corrupt,
not the dog.

INT. ROOM

CLOSE ANGLE ON A print of a Hieronymus Bosch. Bizarre damnation and tortured sexuality. Cathy looks away from it as the others return from the bathroom, Chris now bandaged. The Grandmother summarizes to Chris and Cathy, her voice cold as ice.

GRANDMOTHER

You two are responsible. If your grandfather learns you're up here, he'll throw you all out without a red cent. You will be quiet as church mice. You are here...
(eyes them carefully)

But you don't really exist.

She keeps their eyes until the significance sinks in. Cathy and Chris look at their mother in barely-contained panic. Corine strokes their hair, whispering so the old woman can't hear.

CORINE

Trust me, kids. Please, please trust me. You'll be here just one night, then I'll be back and make peace, and my father will welcome you into this house, to use it as your own -- every room, and the gardens too!

CATHY

You're staying too, aren't you?

Corine smiles.

CORINE

You didn't even notice, did you? I gave my suitcase to the conductor to drop in Charlottesville. Don't you see, Cathy? It wouldn't look right for me to arrive in the dead of the night after not seeing my father for fifteen years, would it?

She caresses Cathy again. Chris licks his lips, eyeing the old lady.

CHRIS

You're going to go away and then come back?

CORINE

First thing in the morning I'll take the train to Charlottesville, and get back here with my suitcase by ten, ready for a dramatic prodigal's return home. I'll turn on the old charm then, and pretty soon the old man will come around, and I'll be ready for the introduction of you angels.

(winks)

You think I haven't thought this out?

She laughs, and then Cathy and Chris do too. But the kids don't really understand it at all. Nor do they recognize quite this new tone of cool appraisal and manipulation.

Corine sighs and crosses to the beds, to the twins spooned

together in sleep. She kisses them gently, then pulls her coat back on and goes to Chris. He accepts her kiss, but his chin starts to shake.

CHRIS

I gotta go, um, wash up for bed.

He goes into the bathroom and locks the door.

INT. BATHROOM

Chris leans against the door, looking very much now like the young child he is. Then he lurches across the room and begins retching into the huge toilet.

INT. THE ROOM & CORRIDOR BEYOND.

At the door, Corine kneels and hugs Cathy, tears cascading down her cheeks.

CORINE

You be good.

CATHY

It'll be okay, mom, really. I'll take care of the twins and Chris. We'll be fine.

CORINE

I'm just afraid it might take more time than a day. Maybe two days, maybe more.

Cathy takes a beat.

CATHY

Maybe more?

CORINE

Maybe a week, I don't know, but not longer. It won't be long, you can count on that.

(hugs her)

Meanwhile get some sleep. I'll see you tomorrow.

(lower, in her ear)

Every second I'm gone I'll be thinking of you, and praying for you, and loving you.

She kisses Cathy, then rushes from the room, virtually vanishing. An instant later the grey skirt of the Grandmother steps between.

GRANDMOTHER

Stay away from the windows -- don't you

(more)

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

dare open the drapes. No noise, no rowdiness. I'll bring you food each morning. Say your prayers.

(takes a fat envelope from her bodice)

The rules. Memorize them.

(leans closer, eyes gleaming)

God has Xray eyes. He sees everything. Thoughts. Deeds. Everything.

She hands the envelope over, then steps out and closes the door.

The SOUND of the Grandmother's feet recedes down the corridor. Cathy looks at the envelope, then throws it across the room.

CLOSE ON THE GIRL, her face pale and beaded with sweat.

FA2F

EXT. FRONT OF MANSION - NIGHT

Corine slips out from the side of the house, glances up once, then rushes down the dark drive.

SEEN FROM HIGH ABOVE, she disappears into the darkness like a ghost. A CURTAIN begins to CLOSE FRAME.

INT. THE ROOM

REVERSE ON CATHY & CHRIS closing the drape. They have the faces of orphans.

INSIDE THE ROOM - Cathy bustles a moment with the sleeping twins, tucking them under the blankets, giving them a kiss. Then she flops down on the only other bed, where Chris is already sprawled out, reading a book.

CATHY

Move your legs, you mind?

He shakes his legs. They fall still again in the same spot. Cathy shoves them over hard —

CHRIS

Ow!

CATHY

Well move then.

She sits down and kicks off her shoes. Blows out a sigh. Sniffs. Makes a face.

CATHY

Did you cut one?

CHRIS

Must've been one of the twins.

CATHY

Gross.

Silence. Cathy notices the book.

CATHY

That's my book, you know.

CHRIS

(not looking up)

You weren't reading it.

CATHY

Since when do you read Nancy Drew mysteries?

(Chris still doesn't look up)

The guy who owns the boat house, he's the killer.

Chris throws down the book.

CHRIS

Thanks a lot.

CATHY

You're welcome.

(beat)

Did you throw up?

CHRIS

What you talking about?

He pulls the covers over himself and turns off the light. Only the little rose lamp remains lit on Cathy's side.

CATHY

Just before Mom left.

CHRIS

No.

CATHY

Liar.

He rolls over and punches her -- whack! -- in the arm.

CATHY

Ow!

CHRIS

No one calls me a liar.

Cathy rubs her arm. It was a hard punch. And she begins to cry. Not for pity. Just cries.

At last Chris rolls back over.

CHRIS

Will you stop the blubbering? Okay, I threw up. Big green globs of slime, too.

Cathy rolls her eyes.

CATHY

Gross me out, why don't you?

But she smiles.

CHRIS

No, really. And some weird pink spongey stuff with greenish pustules hanging off it, and an old meat ball from last Tuesday.

She laughs outright and pulls the covers over her head, burrowing into the bed.

CATHY (muffled)

Disgusting!

CHRIS

That had turned green too. Except for the worms, of course. Those were red.

No response from Cathy. He studies the lump across the bed a long moment, then says -

CHRIS (CONTD)

So when she supposed to get back? She say ten in the morning?

Cathy surfaces and pulls the covers around her chin.

CATHY

Something like that.

Then the two kids just stare at each other.

EXT. MANSION - DAWN

A morning mist softens the place into a fairytale castle. Doberman paces INTO FRAME midground, followed by the big dog. They check a door's lock, then pass on.

There's lights in a few downstairs windows in the southern end of the place, but as CAMERA PANS to the northern wing, we can see the difference. Drapes pulled. No light.

We CRANE UP to the third floor window at the far end and HOLD.

INT. THE ROOM

The room is very dim, scant light seeping through the heavy drapes. The rose lamp still burns.

The children sleep where exhaustion dropped them, the twins in their bed, Chris and Cathy in the other. Each of these two is on a far side of the bed, still half-dressed, as if ready to jump up and leave as soon as some adult says it's all been a mistake.

ANGLE TO THE DOOR. A key turns the lock, and the Grandmother enters, carrying a covered tray. She's two steps into the room when she stops as if seeing the worst imaginable sin in the world. She storms across the room and grabs Cathy by the hair, pulling her out of the bed. The girl, startled from a dead sleep, is terrified.

The old woman flings her to the floor, then goes for Chris, pulling him out by his hurt arm. When he comes up swinging in sleepy rage, she boxes his ears, instantly snapping him into the reality of where he is.

When she has them both cringing before her, she levels her boney finger in their faces, her own face pinched with anger and threat.

GRANDMOTHER

Never, ever are the two of you to sleep in the same bed. God knows what evil is in your minds. God knows everything. The boys will sleep in one bed, the girls in the other, and so it shall be. Understand?

Cathy and Chris look at each other, mystified.

CATHY

Sure.

GRANDMOTHER

Yes, Ma'am.

Cathy blinks, then understands.

CATHY

Yes Ma'am.

The Grandmother turns her piercing gaze to Chris. He swallows. She's a big woman, her grip powerful, and her eyes snap raw bolts of willpower.

CHRIS

Yes Ma'am.

The woman nods, and turns to Cathy.

GRANDMOTHER

Recite the rules.

CATHY

The rules?

GRANDMOTHER

You deaf? The rules I gave you.

Realizing.

CATHY

Oh... Um..

The girl casts about desperately, then races to fetch the envelope from under the table where it landed the night before.

GRANDMOTHER

You were to have read and memorized these.

CATHY

Yes, Ma'am.

GRANDMOTHER

Then what were they doing on the floor?

(Kathy just looks down)

I knew immediately you were a willful girl, Catherine. Now I see you're recalcitrant as well.

The old lady takes the envelope and begins opening it. Cathy sneaks a look to Chris, and the two whisper a quick exchange.

CATHY

What's 'recalcitrant' mean?

CHRIS

Trouble.

THE GRANDMOTHER rises INTO FRAME with the rules, reading them in a loud voice that roots the kids to the floor and wakes the twins.

GRANDMOTHER

dressed. One: you are always to be fully

Two: you will never take the Lord's name in vain, you will always say grace before each meal. Three: you are never to open the draperies, not even to peek out.

ANGLE ON Cathy and Chris -- looking to the window.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

idle. Four: you will keep this room neat and orderly. Five: you are never to be

Six: you are to read the Bible every day and memorize one verse per day.

Chris yawns. The Grandmother comes over and takes him by the

ear, tweeking him to full wakefulness.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

Seven: if I ever catch boys and girls using the bathroom at the same time, I will quite relentlessly and without mercy peel the skins from your backs.

Chris goes pale.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

Eight: you will not handle or play with the private parts of your bodies; nor will you look at them in the mirrors; nor will you think about them, even when you are cleansing those parts of your bodies.

CARRIE

What parts?

CATHY

(softly)

Shut up, Carrie.

GRANDMOTHER

Nine: you will eat all the food I bring you, and not waste one single bit, or throw it away, or hide it away. It is sinful to waste good food when so many in this world are starving...

Her voice ECHOES as we CUT TO:

FA2G

EXT. THE MANSION - DAY

HIGH ANGLE.

GRANDMOTHER (V.O.)

Ten: you will not look at members of the opposite sex unless absolutely necessary, you will keep your minds pure and clean, away from subjects that would corrupt you morally...

As the GRANDMOTHER' VOICE ECHOES OFF into the sound of WIND, CAMERA MOVES FROM THE ROOM'S WINDOW, ON ALONG THE ROOFLINE, ALSO MOVING BACK WIDER AND WIDER, until the whole North Wing is REVEALED.

INT. THE BATHROOM

CATHY dresses the twins in the bathroom. Looks away when buttoning Cory.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

CHRIS peeks out at the world, then puts the heavy drapes back, looking suddenly over his shoulder, then falling into a chair and picking up the Bible and cracking it reluctantly.

CHRIS

Here's a good one to memorize. 'Jesus wept'. That's the whole verse, 'Jesus wept.'

(serious)

I wonder if he knew Grandmother?

INT. THE BATHROOM

Cathy soaks in the tub, washing thoughtfully. We glimpse her slender undeveloped body.

CATHY

(imitating her Grandmother's voice)

You will bathe daily, you will clean the tub afterwards, you will not abuse the toilet, and if it backs up you will use chamber pots for ever after, for no plumber will be called.

We've PANNED to Carrie, getting off the pottie, flushing it gingerly, watching it with baited breath.

CARRIE

Worked, Cathy. I didn't break it.

CATHY

Don't worry, Carrie, you won't.

(lower, as Carrie runs out)

I hope.

(much louder)

Close the door!

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

Chris is in different clothes, marking off a home-made calendar. Five days.

WIDER. The kids lounge about, Cathy reading to the twins.

There's the SOUND of a distant door OPENING. Of sharp FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING. The kids leap to their feet and line up facing the door, backs straight, arranged in order of height.

The Grandmother enters with the tray of food. The children's faces go blank.

GRANDMOTHER

(eyeing them)

You will not clench your fists in my
presence.

CLOSE ON THE KIDS' FACES --

CATHY

Sorry, Grandmother.

CHRIS

We're just nervous. We weren't thinking
bad thoughts about you or anything...

The old woman shakes her head.

GRANDMOTHER

And don't you try to win my friendship,
or my mercy or leniency.

She wheels on them all; their eyes never flinch from straight
ahead.

GRANDMOTHER

Good, you've learned the rules at last.
Never meet my eyes, or speak to me unless
spoken to.

She glances at Cathy -- who returns her look with clear, bold
eyes.

GRANDMOTHER

You will not look at me!

Cathy looks slowly away. The old woman comes over to her, her
eyes violent. Suddenly there's the SOUND of a car outside. The
room freezes. There's the trace of a woman's VOICE.

ALL

Mother!

They fly to the window as a single body -- throwing open the
curtain, pressing their faces to the forbidden glass, squinting
into the strange brightness of daylight.

EXT. THE DRIVE - DAY / INT. THE WINDOW FROM OUTSIDE - INTERCUT

ANGLE DOWN IN THEIR POV -- Corine is exiting a taxi, beautiful in
the sunlight, her long hair flowing, her dress stylish and fair.

REVERSE ON THE KIDS -- crazy with joy. They knock on the
window.

CHRIS

Mom! Hey!

REVERSE TO CORINE - looking up, her face going through guilt,

joy, love, hate -- god knows what else -- all in a split second. And then sudden alarm.

REVERSE ON THE WINDOW --as the Grandmother looms up and shoves the children away, slamming the drapes closed.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

GRANDMOTHER

You know the rules -- the drapes are never to be opened!

Chris makes for the door. He's almost there when the old lady leaps between, slamming the door shut and barring it with her body.

GRANDMOTHER

She's not here to see you. She's here to see her father.

The children look from the old woman to the door, then back to her face.

GRANDMOTHER (O.S.)

Remember the rules.

The kids look away. They hear their grandmother go out. They hear the door lock, and the footsteps go away.

The kids sink to the beds, distributed according to the rules. Waiting. Chris sneaks a look at the clock. It reads 9:00.

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

A crow flaps past the slate roofs, CAWWING noisily.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

FA2E

INT. THE ROOM - DAY.

CLOSE SHOT OF CLOCK. Now reading 10:30.

WIDER, on the room. Carrie fussing, eating one of the donuts from the tray, Corey sleeping on Chris's lap. The kids have changed clothes again -- have gotten into their Sunday best. Chris eats a piece of toast, glancing at Cathy. Cathy looks at the door.

Then there's the SOUND of FOOTSTEPS in the hallway outside the room.

Everyone snaps to attention, eyes wide. The steps are excruciatingly slow, but unmistakably their mother's. The kids

spill from the bed as the door opens. The Grandmother steps into it. The kids fall back, chagrined. Then they suddenly are transformed. In the doorway, the grandmother steps aside, and Corine is there.

She leans against the doorframe with a faint, beautiful smile. There's something changed about her, different from when the kids glimpsed her just an hour or two before. But they don't notice it.

CORINE

Kids.

They race for her, pouring into her arms. The grandmother comes in behind and closes the the door.

CLOSE ON CORINE and the CHILDREN. Hugs, kisses. Heartbreaking tenderness. Corine looks slightly puffy, and very, very pale. Her movements are stiff and careful. But the eager children can only think that she's back, that she's with them. She looks in approval at the clean-scrubbed twins, at the ribbons Cathy has put in their hair.

CORINE

The twins look beautiful, Cathy. Good work. And Chris, don't you look handsome?
(to the twins)

Did you have a good time while I was gone?

For the first time the twins absolutely come alive.

CARRIE

Noooooooo!

CORY

(louder)

Weeee don't want Cathy for our mother!

CARRIE

(deafening)

Weeee want to go outside -- Cathy won't let us go outside and play!

The Grandmother steps forward, face coloring.

GRANDMOTHER

Corine, silence her this minute.

That does it. Carrie lets loose with a wail that would crack plate glass. Chris and Cathy smile despite themselves, and Corine just rolls her eyes as if to say 'Can't you see how unhappy they are?' But the old woman responds with just the opposite of pity. She darts over and snatches Carrie straight off the floor by the hair. The startled child increases her volume -- and next second Cory dives at the woman's ankle like an enraged Yorkshire Terrier.

CLOSE ANGLE as his teeth sink into her flesh.

GRANDMOTHER

What -- !?

She drops Carrie and lurches sideways, trying to shake free. Carrie seizes the chance, hauls off and kicks the big woman square in the shins.

GRANDMOTHER

Oh!

CORINE

Children!

The old woman shoves the little girl straight in the face, sending her flying, then grabs Cory by the wrist and raises her ring-encrusted hand to strike.

CHRIS

No!

Chris flies in, grabbing the old woman's wrist in both hands. She lets go of the littler child and turns on him, sending him reeling with a blow to the face.

Chris crashes over a low table and falls to the floor. Cathy runs to him, the twins wail like sirens. The grandmother skewers the twins with a look of terrible intensity and shouts --

GRANDMOTHER

I will whip you both until the blood
runs from your skin if you don't stop
that yelling this very instant!

Chris sits up, dizzied and stunned, a dark line of blood running from his red nose.

The twins fall utterly silent.

The Grandmother smiles with grim satisfaction and turns to her daughter.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

Take off your blouse.

The kids blink. The young mother looks down.

CORINE

No, mother, please. It's not necessary.

The grandmother makes her lips into a razor slash of disapproval.

GRANDMOTHER

Not necessary? You will do whatever I tell you to do, Corine, for what I see are four

(more)

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

children possessed by awful, spiteful, unruly natures. Completely disrespectful of their elders.

Corine's voice is like a child's.

CORINE

But they're quiet now.

GRANDMOTHER

They need to see what happened to you.

Corine faces her mother, her eyes sparking with growing fire, her voice low and steady.

CORINE

If you're cruel to my kids, I'll pack our bags, and we'll walk straight out of here, I swear it.

CATHY

(fervently)

Please.

The single, intense prayer strikes the mother like a velvet blow. Then she hears the hard laughter of her own mother.

GRANDMOTHER

Go ahead, pack your bags. And where will you go? How will you feed and clothe them? Where will you live?

Corine looks away, and some central stay gives way. Her head lowers. Her eyes well with tears. Slowly her fingers come up to her buttons.

She takes off her blouse, painfully, stiffly, and holds it to her breast. Her entire back from neck to waist is a mass of raw stripes. The kids are beyond words.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

Thirty three lashes, children, one for every year of her life. And fifteen more for each year of sin in her abomination of a marriage. And though the word was given by your grandfather, I assure you it was I that held the whip and gave the strokes --

(smiles)

Look at them very carefully -- and see what a marriage creates that was a sacrilege -- and worse, that made four children -- spawn of the Devil himself!

She makes a gesture. Corine pulls her blouse back around her, her face bathed in shame. Cathy turns to the woman with pure hate in her eyes. The old woman looks right back at her, gauging

the power, meeting it with her own.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

We will dole out food, drink and shelter,
but never kindness, sympathy or love.
It's impossible to feel anything but
revulsion for the unwholesome.

(eyes them)

Keep to my rules, children, or feel the
bite of my whip.

She tosses the room key into Corine's lap and goes out.

ON CATHY'S FACE.

CATHY

She doesn't know us...

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

INT. BATHROOM

Cathy baths her mother, gingerly, slowly, in the huge tub, the woman covered with a white mountain of bubbles. Cory and Carrie watch from a distance, solemn mirror images. Chris is at the mirror, prodding his nose gently. It's a moment of stolen intimacy for all of them. Delicious.

CORINE

A bubble bath's such luxury. It was
a smart thing to bring.

Cathy nods proudly.

CATHY

Six packs, for special ccasion. I
put them all in.

The woman smiles. The girl almost touches a wound. Pours water over it gently instead.

CORINE

How's your nose, Chris?

CHRIS

Bloody but unbowed.

He sits on the closed toilet and broods.

CHRIS (CONTD)

She's got one real problem. As she gets
older she'll get weaker and smaller. I'll
get bigger and stronger. Then one day...

He smacks his fist into his palm with sudden ferocity. Corine flinches.

CORINE

You won't have to wait that long. I'm going to get a job, as a secretary. Then we'll all get out of here.

CHRIS

Really?!

CORINE

Really.

CATHY

I thought you didn't know how to do anything.

CORINE

(laughs)

I don't, yet. But I'm going to go to Charlottesville and enroll in secretarial school -- tomorrow morning. Then I'll get a good job. Nothing fancy, but good enough to get us out on our own.

CHRIS

All right!

-- CARRIE

Daylight!

Cathy kisses her mother.

CATHY

How long will that take, you suppose?

Corine turns and studies the girl's careful face.

CORINE

Well, a little time, Cathy, to be sure. Not that long.

CATHY

About?

CORINE

A number of weeks, I suppose. Maybe six or seven. But not longer.

(brightens)

Now, boys outside, so I can get out of here -- I have a something to show you -- to make your staying here a little more interesting!

FA2I

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

Chris and Cory wait.

CORY

Mommy got a 'prise for us?

CHRIS

Something.

The women exit the bathroom. Cathy shrugs 'she didn't tell me' to Chris. Corine points to the largest Highboy.

CORINE

That's got to go.

She grabs an end of it and pushes. Chris, loving the mystery, jumps in to help, and Cathy too. Soon a narrow door is revealed behind it.

CHRIS

Where's that go to?

CORINE

The attic.

INT. THE ATTIC STAIRS - DAY

ANGLE DOWN, as they wedge into the narrow passage, looking up in curiosity and wonder. They follow their mother up the wood stairs, shoulders rubbing against the wainscoting.

ANGLE AT FLOOR LEVEL, as their faces brink the floor. Cathy and Chris peek from behind their mother, eyes wide.

WIDER - as they all come up and stand.

CHRIS

Oh, man...

REVERSE on an enormous cobwebbed space, chambers and galleries taking off in several directions, disappearing into darkness. There's a forest of chimnies, too, angling from the floor through the roof -- huge trunks of brick and mortar. And sunlight -- beautiful sunlight banking through half a dozen dormer windows front and back, illuminating a wonderland of steamer trunks -- enough for an army -- ranks of armoires, ancient bicycles, a rocking horse, books, clothing, a globe, old paintings, a stuffed Moosehead -- a hundred other things hidden in shadow and nook.

CATHY

It's hot as all get out up here.
And I think I heard a rat.

TWINS

Weeeeeee don't like rats!

CHRIS

Probably nice. We could train them
to do tricks.

Cory smiles.

CORY

I want a mouse.

CARRIE

Look!

They see a heap of old, dusty toys and race to them.

CORINE

Those used to be mine...

She sees Chris and Cathy watching her and almost blushes.

CORINE (CONTD)

Anyway, I thought it would give you a place to stretch your legs. You deserve that, my little flowers. Flowers in the attic.

She embraces them, kissing their faces. Chris laughs and pulls away. Cathy remains solemn.

CATHY

Why did Grandmother say those things, about you and daddy's marriage? What was so bad about it? What's so bad about us?

Corine caresses the girl's hair.

CORINE

Nothing is bad about you kids. You're perfect as there is, I swear it.

(shrugs)

But there's something about your father and me I've never told you...

She walks across the clutter to a doorway, into a plastered little room.

INT. SCHOOLROOM - DAY

It's an old schoolroom, Cathy and Chris see, complete with tiny old desks and a blackboard. Corine opens the window, letting in a breath of fresh air.

CORINE (CONTD)

When my grandfather died, his oldest son, my father, your grandfather, took in his widow and their young son. He immediately set about getting control of the will, and by the time the widow died of a lingering illness, my father held all of the fortune that was really hers and

(more)

CORINE (CONTD)

her son. It all happened right here, in this house. When the widow died, her son, my half-uncle, was 17. I was 14.

CATHY

What was his name?

Corine smiles.

CORINE

His name was Garland Christopher Foxworth the Fourth. But that was such a mouthful, I always just called him Chris --

CHRIS

You making this up?

She shakes her head.

CORINE

Even though it sounds like a fairy tale now. Anyway, Chris was so beautiful. Blond hair, blue eyes like crystal, and a laugh...

(looks to them)

Even though my father treated him like a poor relation and never hinted that he was heir to great wealth -- Chris was irrepressible, a breath of sunlight in a dark, dark house.

Lowers her head.

CORINE (CONTD)

And from the first time we saw each other...

She looks at the kids. Their faces are rapt.

CORINE (CONTD)

You know who I'm talking about?

CHRIS

Daddy?

Corine nods.

CORINE

Your father. We'd meet in the gardens right out there and share every secret. Including that we loved each other. We kept that secret a good long while.

(beat)

Then we eloped.

CORINE

And when your grandfather found out, he went absolutely crazy. So did mother.

(more)

CORINE (CONTD)

(she touches one of the
wounds on her arms)

Daddy cut me off without a penny.

She turns from the window, and forces a smile.

CORINE (CONTD)

But we made our way, didn't we? And
look at you -- your grandfather expected
cloven hooves and horns -- but each of
you was born perfect. Perfect -- join
hands!

She takes their hands and puts them together, her eyes earnest
and rimmed with tears.

CORINE (CONTD)

Repeat after me -- we are perfect children...

CATHY/CHRIS

We are perfect children...

CORINE

Mentally, physically, emotionally, we are
wholesome and godly in every way.

(not waiting for them to
repeat)

We have as much right to live, love and
enjoy life as any other children on this
earth. Amen.

She opens her eyes, seeing Cathy watching with those solemn
eyes.

CORINE (CONTD)

Cathy, trust me, please. And please try
to understand. Know that downstairs, in
a small room behind a great library, there's
a sick old man who controls our destinies.
And if he wants me contrite and crawling
before he allows you and Chris into his
house and fortune, I will gladly do that
for you.

CATHY

You don't have to do that. Not for me.
I don't want you to crawl.

Corine stands and brushes off her clothes.

CORINE

I'll do what I have to. An old man
can't remain hard-hearted forever. Not
forever.

She calls the twins and starts back down the stairs. Cathy runs
after.

CATHY

Will you stay with us tonight?

CORINE

Just can't.

She waves a kiss.

CHRIS

You can have my bed. I'll sleep on the floor!

She shakes her head.

CORINE

I have to sleep in my own room or the servants will wonder where I am. I'll see you all real soon!

Then she's gone. Cathy calls after.

CATHY

Come say goodbye before you leave tomorrow!

The only answer is a distant door closing.

FA21

EXT. THE MANSION - NIGHT

THE HOUSE is still. A few lights on in the servants quarters over the huge garages. Doberman prowls through, testing a lock, passing on, accompanied by the dog.

CLOSER ANGLE, as he pauses near the foot of the north wing, curious. He peers up, straining to see in the dark.

ANGLE STRAIGHT DOWN ON HIM, FROM THREE STORIES UP -- he gives a slow smile.

REVERSE ANGLE, ON CHRIS -- watching down. Pale faced. He pulls back inside.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

Chris sinks to the bed, in his P.J.'s., pulling the covers over him, making room for himself between the edge of the bed and Cory. Everyone else seems to be asleep.

CHRIS

(quietly)

Cory? You go potty before you went to bed?

Cory's dead to the world. Chris sighs to himself.

CHRIS

You wet the bed like you did last night,
and I drown...

There's a giggle from the other bed. Chris rolls over and sees
Cathy watching him.

CATHY

Hi.

CHRIS

Hi. I thought you were asleep.

CATHY

Nope. Thinking.

CHRIS

You don't think. That's what I do.
You worry. Fantasize. Obsess, brood,
stew, ruminate, speculate.

He falls silent. There's a beat of silence. Then.

CATHY (CONTD)

You think we're evil?

CHRIS

You mean like little monsters -- spawn
of the devil? No.

Cathy considers.

CATHY

You think Mom and Dad could've avoided
what they did? Or did they do right?

Chris rolls back over, turning his back to her.

CHRIS

Who knows?

EXT. THE MANSION - DAY

Leaves spill through the sky. Many of the trees are
bare-limbed. Doberman rakes leaves into a pile of fire, the
smoke drifting along the cold walls of the the north wing.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

Corine, dressed very smartly, pours boxes and bags from chic
stores onto the bed, and the kids gather around like kids at
Christmas, tearing open the packages with glee.

CORINE

Sorry I've got so little time -- but

(more)

CORINE (CONTD)

it's a long train ride to school, and by the time I'm back, I'm sure you all are fast asleep. Now, anything else you want, you just say.

CATHY

How about the key to the door?

Corine gives Cathy a look.

CORINE

Anything possible.

She kisses them and goes out, the twins running after her, bumping into the grandmother with her basket of food for the day. They back away.

GRANDMOTHER

Have you memorized your scripture for the day?

CHRIS

Yes, Ma'am.

GRANDMOTHER

Then let me hear it. You.

Chris rises, his eyes empty of malice, but holding coolly on the old woman.

CHRIS

Psalms 25:19. Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

The old woman sniffs.

CATHY

Psalms 26:20. O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

Chris finishes the passage without pause. His eyes still on the old woman. In fact neither of them has taken eyes from her.

CHRIS

Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

She looks at them both carefully, just the slightest color rising in her cheeks.

GRANDMOTHER

Don't look at me.

The kids look away like robots. The grandmother watches them, looking for any snicker that will justify her smashing them to atoms. But there are none.

GRANDMOTHER

Pure minds. Neat minds. Remember,
God has Xray eyes...

She goes out. Cathy smiles to Chris, taking the food and spreading it before the others.

CHRIS

That's it. We learn the rules, live like she asks, and keep our dignity and selfhood as well.

CATHY

I just hope mama finishes school soon...

They poke at the tray of donuts, juice and rolls, not really hungry. They're altered by the time, by the strain. Cathy a pinch thinner. Chris less full of smiles. All very pale. The twins complain, but it seems more like ritual now, their voices weaker and less spirited.

CORY

We want cereal.

CARRIE

With raaaaaai-sens!

Chris looks up from his book and shoves a couple of donuts covered with powdered sugar across to them.

TWINS

Weeee don't want donuts!

CHRIS

Eat them or your noses will fall off.

CATHY

Chris.

(shakes her head)

Those things're terrible anyway.
They'll get cavities.

The twins, hearing they might be eating something forbidden, start stuffing donuts into their mouths with glum abandon. Chris looks over at the window, drifting away.

CHRIS

She must be typing up a storm by now
-- she's got good hands.

CATHY

Suppose so.

CHRIS

(miming her)

Suppose so. What an attitude. She's working hard. You think it's easy?

CATHY

No.

He studies her. Burps.

CHRIS

You know what you need?

She looks at him in annoyance.

CATHY

Absolutely nothing. I love being locked up in a room with two little brats who need constant attention, and a stupid brother who burps like a cow, reads books I can't understand, hangs out up in some stupid attic, coming down dirty as a coal miner, and who's always telling me what I need to do to be happy.

Chris nods.

CHRIS

I eructate. I'm human. I sometimes break wind, it's true...

CATHY

I don't even want to go into this.

CHRIS

Maybe it's the food she gives us.
(thinking further)
Maybe it's a means of expression.

CATHY

Try talking. It'd be a lot easier on the rest of us.

CHRIS

But I don't tell you what you need to do to be happy.

CATHY

Hah.

CHRIS

(grins)
Even though I know what you need to be happy.

He gets up and goes to the Highboy, fishing in the back. Despite herself, Cathy watches with mounting interest.

CATHY

What?

CHRIS

Beh heh.

He crosses back with something wrapped in an old towel..

CATHY

Is that a dead rat or something gross?

Chris reaches into the towel and flips something. A slight RATCHETY RASPING comes from within. Cathy cocks her head. Then the MUSIC starts -- a tiny, muffled waltz from deep within the towel. And there's movement under there too.

Cathy's mouth drops open. She pulls away the towel, afraid to believe her ears, and suddenly the figure of the ballerina is spinning before her, pure and pristine and unbroken on the table. And the music, achingly beautiful, fills the darkened room.

Chris laughs outright.

Two sudden splash from Cathy's eyes onto the table, without her expression.

CATHY

Where'd you get that? I thought Mom turned that in for money.

CHRIS

She did. And I stole it back. Thought I'd give it to you on some day special.

Cathy touches it as it falls silent. A smile, a beautiful slow one, lights her shining eyes.

CATHY

Is today special?

CHRIS

Isn't it?

He jumps up.

CHRIS (CONTD)

Come one, I've got something to show you.

FA2K

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

ANGLE TO THE STAIRS, as Cathy comes up. The twins run ahead, delighted with what they see. PAN CATHY as she walks into the middle of the area directly ahead. The nearby area of the attic has been cleaned and cleared away. And just off to the side is a tall, square chest, with a crank in its side.

Cathy turns in the middle of the area, arms out a little.

CATHY

Not bad, actually... It's nicer
now that it's cooler.

Chris crosses, pleased she likes it.

CHRIS

I've got all the windows cracked
a little. Can't see it from the
ground, so no one'll know.

He stops at the chest.

CATHY

What's that?

Chris lifts the lid at its top. A Victrola is revealed. He
cranks it up and drops the needle. The attic is filled with the
sound of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker.

Scratchy, wobbly, but wonderful.

Chris shouts above it -- the grinning impresario.

CHRIS (CONTD)

You need to dance!

Cathy looks at him, something really beautiful dawning in her
eyes. He runs over to her, looking into them.

CHRIS

You used to dance all the time when dad
was alive. You studied -- you were
doing something! Why stop? Let's not
die in this dump! Dance!

Cathy smiles shyly, and then begins to move. At first her
movements are stiff, her arms close to her body. But as Chris
flops down with the twins, watching rapt as any audience at the
Royal Opera House, Cathy begins to merge into the music, and is
borne up on it, on its grace and humor and life -- like a bird on
a spring wind. And then she's airborne, dancing like an angel in
that shaft of pure sunlight pouring through the window.

As she dances, we FADE TO BLACK, the MUSIC ECHOING.

NEW MUSIC UP -- the same Nutcracker Suite, but now CLEAR and in
HIGH-FIDELITY --

FADE UP PICTURE FROM BLACK ON CATHY -- now in dance togs,
stretching, dancing, always moving. Falling, failing, getting up
and trying again. Getting better.

The dance montage builds to a climax, with Chris watching more
and more intently, amazed at Cathy's progress, and at the
beauty. At the end she does a long, near-perfect 'string of
pearls' toe step to him, balancing directly in front of him like

a statue. Then she laughs and breaks out of it, puffing.

CHRIS

Not bad, not bad.

ANGLE ON CATHY AND CHRIS - moving out of the lighter section of the attic, into a darker, more shadowy, more jumbled section. Chris sweeps a huge cobweb out of the way and presses on. Cathy reacts to an enormous SPIDER crawling up a beam. Chris drops his fingers on the back of her neck while she's preoccupied with this, wiggling his fingers like a 'spider'. She jumps in terror. He laughs and goes on; she swallows her panic and follows.

ON THEM -- stumbling into a sudden explosion of BATS. Cathy stumbles back with a SCREAM as they swarm past her with hypersonic SHRIEKS. She punches through the rotten planking and sinks to her knee. Chris grabs her, leaning over her with a wild laugh --

CHRIS

They won't hurt you!

CATHY

Tell them that!

ANOTHER ANGLE AND TIME -- ON THEM ALL -- finding ancient costumes and artifacts. WE SEE CATHY -- in an old velvet dress, moths flying out -- CHRIS -- in a Union Army uniform, complete with clanking sword. THE TWINS -- Carrie rolling a hoop through the cleared section of the attic, Cory watching, laughing.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

Corine, on one of her visits, blinks. She pulls at the pearls around her neck.

CORINE

You want what?

CATHY

Paints. Colored paper. Scissors.

CHRIS

Mops. Cleaning supplies. Scissors. Paste. Art books.

She hovers at the door, wanting to leave.

CORINE

I've brought you dance costumes, records, a phonograph. You want to bankrupt me again?

CATHY

Will you? Please?

The mother shrugs and smiles her perfect smile.

CORINE.

Whatever.

Cathy smiles.

CATHY

How many words a minute you up to typing?

The woman falters. Chris scowls at Cathy.

CORINE

Oh, I just do twenty, I think, and four or five mistakes even then.

(laughs)

I'm all thumbs yet. It's going to be just a little while...

She kisses Cathy and goes.

CHRIS

You nerd. Leave her alone.

CATHY

I'm just asking.

CHRIS

And asking, and asking...

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

ON CATHY, cutting out a huge flower. PAN TO THE TWINS, pasting, with great gleeful mess, centers in other flowers of paper, all of different colors. CUT TO CHRIS -- stapling up a tall sunflower of paper among a score of others. The attic is beginning to blossom.

ON THEM ALL, lifting a paper maché tree, trunk branches and all, and fixing it in place. They stand back with a cheer. Cory runs up with a paper bird.

CORY

For the tree -- put it in the tree!

Cathy takes it and puts it on the first branch, perched in all its zany glory. WIDEN to show other trees, flowers, birds, snails, rabbits -- a profusion of forest and animal -- all of colored paper.

CHRIS

Now the piece d'resistance!

ON CHRIS -- high in the great beamed rafters, rigging ropes for swings, teetering, nearly falling. CATHY -- reacting, afraid, then laughing -- CHRIS -- back in balance, sliding down the ropes

and showing the twins the seats of the swings.

ON THE TWINS -- swinging higher and higher, laughing and soaring, pushed by Cathy and Chris.

THE TWINS, rocking on the horse, CHRIS BACKGROUND, reading medical textbooks. Cathy dances even faster, whirling and whirling.

FA2L

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

The woman, in still more beautiful clothes, fringed with fur, sparkling with diamonds --

CORINE

These?

(touches the diamond ring)
Goodness, Cathy, you think I could afford the real thing? It's all fake. A secretary has to be half worker, half fashion model, didn't you know that?

Cathy nods, watching her mother look around the stuffy room uneasily, descretely keeping one of the twins from climbing onto her lap with his dusty shoes. Avoiding even looking at him, pale as paper.

CATHY

How's the lessons coming?

CORINE

Fine, just fine. I just wish the typewriters had letters on the keys. It's really a pain.

CATHY

How many words a minute?

The woman colors.

CORINE

Really, Cathy. I thought the quizzes were bad at school...

CHRIS

(brightly)

You want some cheese? We've got tons of cheese and crackers.

CORINE

God, no! Look at me, I'm getting so fat, eating with my father and his friends. I swear half of business is done over the dinner table. And me

(more)

CORINE (CONTD)

always having to make up excuses, saying
I have to go nap, go read my lessons,
so I can really come up here and see
my treasures.

She kisses Chris. He blushes.

Cathy bites her lower lip.

CATHY

You haven't told your father about us?

Corine twists her pearls, voice tightening.

CORINE

Let me choose the time, Cathy, please.
He's so sick, for godsakes, just wait
and be a little patient.

Cathy swallows.

CATHY

You mean you're not going to try to win
him over?

Her mother's eyes are suddenly rimmed with tears.

CORINE

Cathy... Always so suspicious.
(shakes her head)

Your grandfather...

(lower)

wrote once that the only good thing
about my marriage to your father was
that it produced no children. I never
told you that...

(looks into Cathy's eyes,
pleading for understanding)

Please trust me, I know him. He will
never, ever change his mind, never
forgive me. It's not in him.

(touches her hair,
softer)

But he's very old and very sick. He
can't live long. In fact... He's in
a crisis right now.

Cathy smiles.

CATHY

Really?

CORINE

The doctors don't think he can...

She can't finish. Chris puts his arm over her shoulder, his
glare to Cathy a warning. The woman can barely speak.

CORINE (CONTD)

I'll do what I can to make your lives bearable. But meanwhile, think of the riches you'll have some day soon. And have pity on me!

She breaks into sobs, stifles them as best she can, and runs out.

CHRIS

Well, I hope you're happy now.

CATHY

Delerious.

ON CATHY'S SAD FACE we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ATTIC - DAY

CATHY dances, superbly now. Possessed.

CHRIS is at the attic window -- folding an intricate oragami bird. He looks a little older, or at least more subdued. The window is closed. He wears a sweater, and snow falls in the still air outside. Cathy appears, out of breath, wrapping herself in a towel. She sits, looking out the window. Chris ignores her.

CATHY

Not even a letter. She could at least write a letter. She must be back at school by now.

CHRIS

She must be living at school, otherwise she'd come up and visit.

CATHY

Maybe she's just too busy to write.

Chris rubs his nose on his sleeve.

CHRIS

Secreteries have a lot to learn. Or maybe she's too poor to buy stamps, you ever think of that?

He still hasn't looked up. Cathy wipes her forehead. Looks away.

CATHY

What if she's dead?

Chris looks at her, like she might have gone crazy.

CATHY

I mean it. What if a truck's hit her,
for instance? Who would know we were
even here?

(lower)

We could die here.

CHRIS

Your optimism is downright overwhelming.

Cathy picks at her lower lip. Next instance the silence is
pierced by a deafening scream from Carrie.

CARRIE

Caaaatheeeeeeee!

The child comes running over, flinging herself into Cathy's lap.
Cathy scowls in annoyance.

CATHY

What is it, Carrie?

CARRIE

Cory hiding too good!

CATHY

What do you mean Cory hiding too good?

CARRIE

We play hide and seek, and I can't
find him!

CATHY

Well go look. I'm busy.

CARRIE

I did look a long time!

Suddenly a maternal switch flicks on somewhere inside Cathy. She
looks at the fretting twin.

CATHY

Where were you playing?

The twin points back into the darkness of the 'untamed' attic.

CARRIE

He went way into the dark.

Cathy and Chris rise as one. They trot over to the edge of the
cleared area and shout back —

CATHY

Cory!?

No answer.

CHRIS

Cory -- call out -- this is Chris!

No answer at all.

CATHY

I'll check the room!

She goes off on the dead run -- Chris tears into the dark, throwing open wardrobes and looking behind boxes.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

Cathy races through the room, looking under the bed, into the bathroom. Nothing. She tears back up the stairs.

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

She crashes through the junk and trunks calling for Chris, lost in the jungle of dark and shapeless shadows. Then she sees him, bent over a trunk he's just thrown open. He lifts out something limp and unmoving. It's Cory.

He turns, his face white, then he shakes himself into action. He lowers the child to the floor and clamps his mouth over Cory's face, applying artificial respiration. Cory looks dead.

CLOSER, as Cathy kneels by them.

CATHY

Oh my god, oh my god -- what happened?!

CHRIS

(between breaths)

Lid fell closed on him... latched. Wasn't any... air...

Carrie appears behind them, sees Cory limp and blue lipped, and lets out a god-awful WAIL. Chris jerks round to Cathy between breaths --

CHRIS

Draw a bath -- a hot bath!

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

Chris lays Cory on the bed, continuing the artificial breath -- Cathy sprints into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM.

ANGLE AT THE TUB, the girl's fingers twisting the faucets like mad, urging the gush of water faster, praying into the tub --

CATHY

Please god, please, please, please,
god, not Cory. Me, not Cory!

Chris appears in the doorway with the child.

CHRIS

He's breathing.

Cathy whirls around.

CATHY

Oh thank god.

CHRIS

Now all we have to do is get him warm.

She helps undress the little blue kid and lower him into the tub. Cory struggles, and his eyes pop open drunkenly.

CORY

Mama.

CATHY

I'm here, baby. I'm right here!
Right here. Always.

And Cathy cradles the little boy against her shoulder, rocking him, rocking him.

FA2M

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

ON CATHY -- still rocking Cory, Carrie with her head on Cathy's lap. From up in the attic comes a terrific POUNDING.

CARRIE

What's Chris doing?

CATHY

(smiles)

From the sounds of it, I'd say he's
knocking the locks off every trunk
in the attic.

Carrie snuggles deeper into Cathy's arms.

CARRIE

Good.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

EXT. THE MANSION - DAY

HIGH ANGLE DOWN ON THE DRIVE, as CAR after expensive CAR pulls

up, disgorging a stream of minked and tuxedo'd gentry. A heavy snowfall makes it look like a scene out of Dickens.

CATHY (O.S.)

He must have died. They're coming for his funeral.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

REVERSE ON THE WINDOW - Cathy and Chris watching down with great interest. They're thinner, more pale. Chris's hair is getting long.

CHRIS

It's Christmas, dummy. They've probably planned a big dinner or something.

The door bursts open behind them -- they jerk away from the window in terror, sure they've been caught with the drapery open.

CORINE

Good grief, it's only me!

Corine rushes to them, her tanned arms outstretched wide. Her pale silk clothes gleam in dramatic contrast to her gold skin, her sparkling eyes and her even more sparkling jewels.

She's the picture of robust, sun-tanned health. Chris races into her arms. The twins look at her like she's an apparition. Cathy stares in disbelief.

CATHY

Where you been?

Corine takes on the look of a person plagued by an ungrateful, suspicious child. She struggles to remain patient, fair.

CORINE

I left you a note, Cathy. I had to get away. It was so awful, seeing him suffer.

Cathy approaches her mother without a smile.

CATHY

Can we go down now? Are we rich?

Corine shakes her head sadly.

CORINE

I'm sorry you see it only in those terms, Cathy. But no, your Grandfather recovered.

Cathy's face falls. Corine regards her cautiously.

CORINE (CONTD)

He's a tough old man, Cathy. Even in

(more)

CORINE (CONTD)

sickness.

(brightens)

But how about the presents!?

She retreats to the door and starts bringing in box after box. The twins open them in a frenzy of torn paper and exclamations.

Chris smiles, goes to the highboy and comes back with the laquered origami bird he made --

CHRIS

Not much, but I hate the crowds in the stores.

Corine treasures it, and turns him towards his pile of gifts.

ANGLE ON GIFTS -- mounting -- Monopoly sets, checkers, chess, dolls, more toys than a child could imagine, and clothing, and a full, adult's microscope for Chris. And for Cathy, although she seems reluctant to even open the box at first, a special present.

CLOSE as Cathy takes out a beautiful white-sequined ballet costume, pale pink leotards, white-leather shoes with pink ribbons, and a white feathered headpiece.

CORINE

For my little ballerina. Now you can dance Swan Lake in style.

Despite herself, Cathy's moved. She goes to her mother and hugs her.

CATHY

It's so beautiful. Thanks.

The woman hugs her back lavishly, kissing the girl's long blond hair and stroking her. Then she brightens, glancing at the twins, seeing they're completely preoccupied now.

CORINE

(low, happy)

And now I must go. Tonight there's going to be a great party downstairs. I'm sure you've seen the people arriving already.

Chris nods.

CHRIS

Yeah, we thought...there must be something going on.

CORINE

My mother has invited many guests, and ordered all sorts of food and drinks -- and I just suspect there might be a

(more)

CORINE (CONTD)

big announcement tonight!

Cathy perks up.

CATHY

What kind of announcement?-

Corine catches herself, as if she slipped and let some cat almost out of the bag.

CORINE

What sort? Why, I think maybe tonight my father could even find the charity in his heart to welcome me back into his will -- who knows?

She tosses off a smile, kisses them both and tiptoes to the door. The twins see her and begin to wail. She darts out the door, nearly closes it in their faces, and whispers through the crack.

CORINE (CONTD)

I must go! I'll try to bring you some food later!

The twins set up a din.

TWINS

Weeeee want to come with you!

Cory puts her fingers right in the doorway, preventing Corine from closing the door. The mother looks at Cathy in desperation

CORINE

Cathy -- please -- help me -- I really must get down!

Cathy pulls the child and away. Corine backs out with a crooked smile of of gratitude, then, as Carrie launches another deafening scream for her mother, Corine rushes off.

CORINE

I really must go!

Cathy looks back to Chris.

CATHY

Must gonna be some great party. She was so anxious to get going she didn't lock the door.

She turns and looks at her brother. He looks right back at her.

CHRIS

Really?

INT. THE BALL CENTRAL HALL

CLOSE ON A SMALL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA -- striking up a Strauss waltz. PULL back as Corine swirls INTO FRAME, dancing with a white-haired gentleman, joining scores of other rich and handsome couples. The decorations are in the Christmas theme, garlands of pine and mistletoe, gold globes, artificial snow. The usual sort of ideas, but of a grand and opulent scale and quality.

After all the time in the closed room and dusty attic, it's even more striking. Brilliant and gay and free.

INT. AN UPPER HALL NEAR A CIRCULAR RAILING

ANGLE ON a square balcony of sorts, ringed in its center by a railing protecting a stunning prospect to the dance floor three stories below. A COUPLE walks by, chatting, flirting. They kiss, and the kiss becomes serious enough for them to set their glasses down on an ornate, long chest set at the rail. Then the woman breaks away, giggling, and the man chases her down the corridor, calling and laughing himself.

CAMERA MOVES IN ON THE CHEST. A door opens at its front ever so slightly. A HAND eases out and removes the first glass of champagne, then comes back out for the second.

CAMERA CRANES UP AND OVER THE CHEST as the second glass disappears and the door closes again, CONTINUING OVER THE RAIL, then TILTING DOWN in a giddy sweep of the dance floor far below. Now out over the dancefloor, CAMERA TILTS 180 DEGREES THROUGH THE BOTTOM OF THE ARC, COMING BACK TO THE CHEST FROM BEHIND, now SEEING it through the rail. The back of the chest is covered with a dark open screening. We can just make out the two youngsters inside, especially Cathy, her face pressed to the mesh.

INT. THE CHEST

Chris taps her on the shoulder.

CHRIS

Present for you.

She turns and sees the champagne. All dialogue is in whispers.

CATHY

Where'd you get that?

CHRIS

Santa Claus.

She takes it. He touches his glass to hers. They drink. Cathy wrinkles her nose, laughing.

CATHY

Tickles.

Chris smacks his lips.

CHRIS

So this is champagne...

He drinks the entire glass. Cathy is already back at the screen.

CATHY

She's so beautiful. I wish I didn't hate her.

Chris snaps a look at her.

CHRIS

What?!

CATHY

Just kidding.

She looks to her mother. Chris looks too.

INT. THE DANCE FLOOR / THE CHEST - INTERCUT

IN THEIR POV, DOWN TO THE DANCE FLOOR - we SEE Corine now spinning gracefully with still another man, obviously the belle of the ball. Then the MUSIC stops, and a string FANFARE of the 'Pomp and Circumstance' variety begins. Next moment the Grandmother makes her entrance. Her hair is uncustomarily 'done', swept up atop her head in a mountain of curls, and her gown is scarlet.

Both kids react in amazement.

CHRIS

My god, that's the first time I've ever seen her in anything but gray.

CATHY

She looks awful.

CHRIS

She looks like Santa Claus in drag.

Cathy stifles a giggle.

CATHY

Like a bag lady trying to turn hooker.

This sends them into gails of giggles. They have to clamp their hands over their mouths and hang on for dear life, especially when they hear VOICES approaching.

MAN (O.S.)

Yes, but you never do.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Well not in this place, it's too Charles Adams. Where's my champagne?

The kids freeze.

EXT. THE BALCONY

The man looks frustrated, the woman a little drunk.

MAN

What?

WOMAN

My drink. I put it down right here.

The man looks at the chest, nods.

MAN

So did I...

(shrugs)

The help probably took them. Come on, we'll get you more.

He leads her away, and their voices fade...

WOMAN

You know the Evelyn thinks this place is haunted. Ghosts. In the attic...

INT. THE CHEST

MAN (O.S.)

Well then maybe the ghosts drank them...

And then they're gone. Cathy breaths a sigh of relief and looks back down. Then reacts.

CATHY

Oh my god...

Chris joins her. Reacts as well with growing revulsion and fear.

CHRIS

It's him.

IN THEIR P.O.V. -- we SEE an old man with silver hair and a pale face wheeled into view in a wheel chair. He's pushed up and left by the Grandmother. She puts his hand on his shoulder, and they exchange words. Then the old man looks up -- and you would swear he's looking right at the kids' hiding place! He gives a faint smile, then looks away.

ON THE KIDS INSIDE THE CHEST -- Cathy sinks back. Looks at Chris.

CATHY (O.S.)

Has to be...

CATHY (CONTD)

He doesn't look very sick at all.

Chris studies through the screen a moment longer, then gives his sister his best smile.

CHRIS

You can't tell with heart disease. He could go at any time.

CATHY

Or live to be a hundred.

Cathy looks back out glumly, then reacts again, this time very differently. Possessively. Offended.

CATHY (CONTD)

Who's that bozzo?

FA2N

IN THEIR P.O.V. to the dance floor. The ORCHESTRA is playing another waltz now, and Corine is dancing with a tall, darkly handsome young man. He has flashing blue eyes, a dashing mustach and holds her close.

CATHY (O.S.)

Too close.

CHRIS (O.S.)

What?

CATHY (O.S.)

He's holding her too close -- he doesn't have to do that. Probably a pickpocket or something.

THE KIDS -- watch the adults like hawks.

CHRIS

He's not a pickpocket.

Cathy bites her lower lip.

CATHY

Well then who does he think he is?

IN THEIR P.O.V. -- the MUSIC finishes. Couples drift apart. But Corine and the handsome stranger stay in each others' arms. And kiss.

Cathy turns away.

CATEY

Gross.

CHRIS

She's entitled, I guess.

There's a smattering of LAUGHTER and applause.

BACK TO THE DANCE FLOOR. Corine and the stranger break the kiss, Corine blushing at the applause. She laughs, hugging the man.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

Cathy comes in like a bombshell, slamming the door, flinging herself onto the bed. Chris comes in behind her.

CHRIS

Why don't you wake the dead?

CATEY

I'd like to make some dead!

He sits next to her.

CATEY (CONTD)

You think she's told him about us?
That she has four little kids stuck
upstairs in the north wing?

CHRIS

(trying to believe it)

I'm sure she has.

CATEY

(sneers)

I'm sure she has too. I'm sure she's
told him all about us. Just like she's
told her father.

Chris turns away.

CHRIS

Do you know what this is?

Cathy blinks.

CATEY

What?

He grins.

CHRIS

It's the perfect time to explore the house.

Cathy looks at him like he's crazy.

CHRIS (CONTD)

Think about it. Mom's preoccupied,
so's grandmother and the old man.
It's the perfect time to poke around.
Who knows?

(smiles a strange smile)

Some day we might want to know our way
out of here...

Cathy swallows.

CATHY

You'd be crazy to do that. If grand-
mother caught you, she'd skin us alive.

CHRIS

Skin me alive, maybe. If I was caught,
I'd take full responsibility for it.
But I won't be.

(grins)

Besides, I'll be in disguise.

CATHY

What?

INT. THE ATTIC - NIGHT

ANGLE ON CHRIS -- going through a huge steamer trunk, throwing
out old suits and shirts.

ON CATHY -- finding an old wig, dusting it off

CLOSE ON CHRIS -- pulling on a shirt

WIDER, ON CATHY -- holding up a moth-eaten old suit jacket.
Chris steps into it. He already has dark pants and a shirt and
tie on.

CHRIS

Check the door.

Cathy races off, caught up in the escapade.

INT. THE ROOM

Cathy eases open the door and looks out. Coast is clear. She
turns around, hearing foot steps.

Chris steps from attic passageway. Or we should say, a tall,
strangely-garbed man does, with dark hair and a weird mustach,
and a shapeless suit hanging on him a size too big.

CHRIS

What d'you think?

CATHY

Stick to the shadows.

Chris does a Groucho Marx move, then takes her hand like a knight about to joust for his lady.

CHRIS

I'll be back soon, my fair beauty, with
all the dark secrets of this old house.

He plants a kiss on her cheek, catching her by surprise. She wipes it off with mock hysteria, then soberes.

CATHY

We're the secrets of this house.

(grins)

Don't be gone too long. I don't like
it here without you.

CHRIS

Fraidy cat.

That's not at all how she feels, but she's just as glad Chris didn't catch her true feeling.

INT. THE HALLWAY

Chris steps out, Cathy leaning from the door.

CHRIS

Keep it unlocked. I might have to make
a quick reentry.

Then he trots down the hallway and is lost in the gloom.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

Cathy crosses to the bed and sits. The two twins are fast asleep. The light low. She turns to the music box, touching the dancer, the glowing silver.

CATHY

Take care of him, Dad.

She flicks the switch, the ballerina twirls, and the MUSIC pours out.

FA20

INT. CORRIDOR / LANDING

Chris exits the north wing at the same door through which they first entered, a lifetime ago. Only when he starts down the

wooden stairs so we start to feel his fear.

INT. SERVICE STAIRS

A LOWER LANDING - Chris has just reached the bottom of the stairs when he hears footsteps coming towards him from the other direction. There's no time or place to hide, so he just freezes. Next moment a MAID bustles towards him, carrying a tray loaded with Champagne. She sees him, and gives a quick curtsy, and steps back for him to pass.

MAID

S'cuse me, sir.

Chris looks half away, and strides past her, snaring a glass of champagne as he passes.

CHRIS

Very good.

The maid shrugs and rushes on. Chris gulps down the glass and darts through the first door he sees.

INT. A CORRIDOR.

Chris emerges into a wide corridor of unexpected splendor. At its end is a drawing room full of smart people. Several wander his way, so Chris heads in the opposite direction, leaving his glass on a table, and taking another he finds there.

MOVING WITH HIM -- a strange Charlie Chaplin figure sipping his new-found favorite drink.

CHRIS

(low)

Keep to the shadows, keep to the shadows...

He turns down another corridor. Several men are strolling his way, puffing huge cigars. Chris wheels without breaking step and goes through a doorway.

INT. TROPHY ROOM

He finds himself in near total darkness, inching along a wall. He finds a cigarette lighter on a table and snaps it on. He turns around and reacts --

IN HIS P.O.V. -- we SEE a huge LION snarling right in his face!

CHRIS drops the lighter with a cry and hits the floor, crawling behind a dark couch. A moment later all the LIGHTS COME ON, instantly revealing a huge trophy room filled with the heads and complete bodies of animals from every corner of the globe -- all.

frozen in leaps of snarling ferocity. Two MEN have entered to admire them.

MAN 1

Incredible, don't you think?

MAN 2

Absolutely marvelous. God, what a collection.

ON CHRIS, behind the couch, dying with fear. The men pass right by him, never seeing him.

MAN 1 (O.S.)

Old Foxworth's got an eye for the spectacular.

MAN 2 (O.S.)

(laughs)

In the case of his daughter, certainly.

MAN 1 (O.S.)

Ah... spoken for, unfortunately.

CHRIS is all ears.

MAN 2 (O.S.)

Damn shame. Magnificent creature. A trophy of trophies.

MAN 1 (O.S.)

(laughing)

Indeed. Astonishing pelt.

Chris colors deep red.

ANGLE BACK ON THE TWO OLD MEN — walking back past the couch, enjoying their randiness.

MAN 2 (O.S.)

And a rack worthy of the old trophy hunter! She — Oh!

Mid-stride the man pitches forward, clawing for balance. He grabs the second man half-way down, and the two crash to the floor.

ANGLE AT THE FLOOR.

MAN 1 (O.S.)

What in blazes happened?

The second looks back to his feet, dumbfounded.

MAN 2 (O.S.)

I lost my footing, is what. Must've been the rug.

They struggle up.

ANGLE BEHIND THE COUCH. Chris withdraws his foot.

MAN 2 (O.S./CONTD)

Damn, I believe I've cracked my Rolex.

INT. THE CORRIDOR

The two men emerge from the room, shaken and complaining. As they hobble away from camera, CHRIS emerges behind them, and walks away towards camera.

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR -- just as grand. Chris peeks down. Nobody. He ventures down it. Halfway down the corridor he stops, seeing a door open. He gazes at the room, venturing into the doorway.

INT. CORINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ANGLE TO THE DOOR. Chris enters into a truly fabulous room, white and gilt, with a huge glazed fireplace and polished furnishings of antique beauty.

But the eye-popping stunner of it all, its very centerpiece, is a gorgeous one-of-a-kind bed rendered in the shape of a swan. Its long curving neck rises from the foot of the bed, head turned sideways, staring down at the boy with a graceful, dreamy red eye. The wings sweep to the pillows, holding back a sweep of gauzy drapery hung from each side and rising to frame the bed at its rear. The bed itself forms a sort of ovular pleasure boat so arresting the boy can hardly believe his eyes. Tossed on its silk comforter is a fine dressing gown trimmed in black, a pair of silk stockings, an evening purse.

His eyes go to the the marble top of the bedside table. There by the gold lamp, near the jewelry and money carelessly strewn, is a photograph. Of Corine and Bart, smiling into camera from the deck of a large sailing sloop. The setting is tropical. Chris picks it up and studies it solemnly a moment. Then he smiles. He sets it down, looks around the room one final time as if to memorize it, then starts out.

CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM as he leaves, then PANS to a silver waste basket at the foot of the bed table. MOVING IN ON IT, we SEE Chris's beautifully fashioned paper bird, his Christmas present to Corine.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CORINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris emerges in a sort of daze. It's several seconds before he hears the apppproaching VOICES and looks up. Then he freezes in his tracks.

REVERSE IN HIS P.O.V. -- Corine and Bart walk arm in arm towards him. Bart has his face buried in her hair and doesn't see anything else. But Corine is watching where she's going, and she stops dead in her tracks, astonishment and horror coming over her face. There's no way her maternal radar is fooled by that get-up.

CHRIS -- backs away a step, then turns and bolts blindly through a door.

Bart looks up, feeling Corine's shock.

BART

What?

CORINE

Oh, my god...

BART

Wait, don't tell me. You forgot your purse again.

She spins around, aware of him for the first time.

CORINE

Yes -- I'll be right back!

She's running by these last words.

INT. SERVICE STAIRS

Chris barrels down the stairs in pure panic, hitting the bottom and careening around a corner without looking back. Half-way down his wig flies off, and by the time Corine slams through the door above, she glimpses of her son.

CORINE

Chris! Get back here!

INT. A SERVICE CORRIDOR

Chris runs down another corridor like a deer in full flight. He veers into a large kitchen storage area and slams the door behind him.

INT. STORAGE ROOM

Chris listens at the door, gasping for breath. He eases the door open and looks out through the crack.

CORINE (O.S.)

(approaching)

Christopher!

He slips the door shut. A moment later he hears his mother right outside --

CORINE (O.S.)

Christopher, where are you? Answer me... It's not safe down here for you...

Chris pulls back from the door. Spooked by the way she said that. He turns to look for some possible back way out. There's just a table there, an open bottle of Jack Daniels on it. And a hat. Chris goes to the table. Fingers the hat. Trying to remember where he's seen it. Then he does.

CHRIS

Doberman...

He eases back. Next second Doberman lunges out at him from behind the pantry shelves with an ungodly shriek!

Chris just manages to duck the brunt of it, a reflexive move that sends the big man cartwheeling over the boy and throws both to the floor. Chris skitters away, fueled by pure panic -- and makes it to the door.

He dives through and slams it behind him. A split second later Doberman smashes against the wood with a concussion that would kill a civilized man.

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR

Chris is knocked flying by the impact, but hits running. A millisecond after he disappears around the corner his mother races back from the stairs, just in time to see Doberman explode through the storeroom door and rage out of sight.

She races after them.

INT. A KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chris rockets in one end of the empty room, flashes through and out the other side. A SERVANT carrying a huge tray of empty plates and glasses enters from a side door a moment later, and is blindsided by the charging Doberman. The impact sends men and glassware flying in all directions.

INT. A HALLWAY - NIGHT

Corine spins at the clatter -- Chris shoots behind her. She wheels around just in time to see Doberman barrel across the corridor from one doorway to another.

INT. A STAIRCASE IN THE LIVING QUARTERS, SECOND LEVEL

Chris -- coat flying off -- runs for his life, up the stairs two at a time, half the time on hands and feet -- with Doberman gaining behind him. The boy makes the top of the stairs and flings a vase from a table, down the stairs. It catches Doberman square in the head and sends him flying ass over teakettle back down the stairs. But he starts to get up right away, bloodied and triply enraged. Chris turns to run, only to see his mother emerge from a small elevator dead ahead -- pointing her finger at him like a pistol --

CORINE

Christopher, you little bastard!

He doubles back the other way -- through a door. Doberman streaks after him, even closer than before.

FA2P

INT. SERVICE STAIRS -- THIRD LEVEL

Chris is near exhaustion now -- the lack of exercise, good food and sunlight taking their toll. He gasps his way up the stairs on pure adrenelin -- but Doberman is gaining fast.

INT. THE UPPER LANDING / THE NORTH WING ENTRANCE

Chris makes the landing, dives through the door and slams it behind him -- Doberman reaches it three seconds later and throws it open so hard it splinters on its hinges.

INT. THE NORTH WING CORRIDOR.

Chris falls, gets up and runs-crawls for the room --

CHRIS

(gasping it)

Cathy! The door!

Chris claws against the door. There's no response from inside.

Doberman grins, licking the blood off his lips. He's got the kid and he knows it. He trots in for the kill.

Chris reaches for the knob and falls, legs turned to rubber. He tries to pull himself through with his hands, but then Doberman is over him, unclasping that big knife from his belt, grabbing Chris by the hair and pulling him over to expose his throat.

The door at the far end of the corridor flies open.

CORINE

No! Doberman!

Doberman turns away from the woman and puts the blade to the boy's jugular. But then there's a second much more powerful voice, much much nearer.

GRANDMOTHER

Don't.

The man looks up. The great red shape of the Grandmother steps out from the shadows of the room. She's twisting a length of white adhesive tape in her hands, and her face is very red.

Doberman stands away from the boy. Chris lurches into the room and falls in a heap.

The Grandmother doesn't close the door. And she speaks to Doberman so the boy and his mother hears every word.

GRANDMOTHER

There are rats in this room, Doberman. Dirty filthy little rats in this room, and in the attic, too.

(glances back to Chris)

But that's all right. So long as they stay there and only there.

(back to Doberman, and to Corine, too)

But if ever you see any of them in the house itself, then I want you to kill them instantly. You have my full permission. Do you understand?

Doberman eyes the terrified boy one last time, then wags his head to the Grandmother and makes a savage, eager little grunt through his bloody teeth. The Grandmother smiles.

GRANDMOTHER

Yes, I know that means yes, you will.

Corine charges into the room past Doberman and her mother. The Grandmother just gives one of those awful, chill smiles and closes the door.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

Corine crosses to Chris, who stands up shaking and crying. The twins wail on their bed like claxons of terror. Cathy is nowhere in sight. Chris holds out his hands in supplication.

CHRIS

I'm sorry, Mom. I --

Corine strikes him hard across the cheek -- a cracking slap that jerks the boy's head over like a punch. It's followed instantly by one from her other hand that whiplashes him in the other direction. Chris staggers back, stunned, fighting to regain his balance. He has two big blotches on each cheek, the rest of his face is white. He stares at his mother in astonishment and shock.

Tears spring into Corine's eyes.

CORINE

You humiliated me. You betrayed every trust I put in you. You endangered everything, everything we've worked for.

Chris starts crying, hard, helpless little boy's tears. But no sound. Just body-shaking sobs of shame and hurt.

CHRIS

I'm... sorry.

He looks at her so piteously she breaks. She throws open her arms with a gasp of feeling and takes him to her breast, falling to her knees and rocking him against her breasts like an infant.

CORINE

There. There. Chris.

Now he bawls outright, and she sobs.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP ON THE DOOR from outside. Corine comes out, smiling again. The boy appears behind her, not setting even a toe into the hall. He's even whiter.

CHRIS

I love you, Mom.

CORINE

I love you too, Chris. Now sleep.

CHRIS

Okay. Come visit us soon, okay?
We miss you.

Corine kisses him on the lips, and smiles seductively.

CORINE

Night.

CHRIS

Night.

It's like a date. The only difference is, she closes the door on the boy. And she locks it.

INT. THE ROOM.

ON CHRIS as he hears the lock turn closed. He stays there a long moment. Then he seems to realize something.

CHRIS

Cathy?

The twins watch him with wide, hollow eyes.

CHRIS

Hey, guys... where's Cathy?

They just shake their heads slowly.

INT. THE ATTIC - NIGHT

Chris races up the stairs -- running into the dance area.

CHRIS

Cathy!

His voice echoes back to him from the dark reaches. Nothing else.

Suddenly he twists around into CLOSE UP -- his eyes focusing on something totally different.

FLASH CUT -- TO THE GRANDMOTHER at the door as she stops Doberman

FLASH CUT -- TO THE ADHESIVE TAPE she's twisting in her hands.

XCU ON CHRIS'S FACE.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

Chris bombs back down from the attic and leaps on the twins like a tiger, shaking them both.

CHRIS

Where is she? What did Grandmother
do with her?!

Cory, his eyes wider than ever, jams his thumb in his mouth. Carrie, shaking like a leaf, says in a tiny, tiny little voice.

CARRIE

Granma say she drown us if we tell.

A tear plunges from the child's eye. Next moment Chris hears a deep, metallic THUMP. The sort of sound one makes if one were to, say, kick a bathtub full of water. The boy drops the twins and screams across the room to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

She's half naked, bound by tape hand and foot, and silenced by it as well -- a broad band of it run around her head and through her mouth again and again. She's been laid across the toilet, back down, head hanging off into space. Her legs are taped at the knee to the faucets of the tub, and from the calves on down she's

under the boiling water of the brimfilled tub, water that rolls up steam as if it had been poured from a witch's cauldron.

Cathy twists around, seeing Chris run in, her face deep purple, her eyes glazed with agony.

Chris lets out a cry of rage and pain, tearing at the tape on her legs, trying to break it and not being able to. He lets out a scream of frustration and panic, flings open the medicine cabinet looking for a blade -- then, not finding anything -- drives his fist into the mirror of the thing, plunging into the bowl of the sink for the biggest shard of glass he can find, flying back to his sister.

He saws at the tap like a madman, sobbing, his fingers bleeding until she's free. He pulls her away, gasping and cursing and wild-eyed, lifting her up and taking her out of there as fast as his shaking legs can carry him.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

He lays her on the bed, the twins screaming again at the blood, and at the sight of Cathy. He tears the tape off her face as gently as he can, letting her breath, off her wrists -- then flies away.

INT. BATHROOM

Chris grabs several towels, drenching them in the coldest water he can run, runs back out.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

He wraps her feet and legs in the towels, cooling them as best he can.

CHRIS

Cathy. Cathy I'm so sorry. Cathy.

He looks at her face. It's wreathed in tears, her eyes shining with some terrible realization. Then she sees his hands.

She groans, suddenly moving by pure will, taking one of the towels and wrapping the boy's torn fingers with infinite care. When the bleeding is stopped, the two just hold each other.

FADE TO BLACK

FA2Q

MUSIC FADES UP, rich and heart-breakingly beautiful. Tchaikovsky's second masterpiece, Swan Lake.

FADE UP ON:

EXT. ATTIC WINDOW - DAY.

SNOW FALLS.

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

The attic has changed. The paper flowers and trees of green and rainbow colors have been taken down. There are snowflakes and snowmen in their place.

WIDE ON CATHY AND CHRIS. The girl's feet are wrapped in bandages, the boy's hands the same. She's in street clothes, struggling to dance in spite of the pain of her scalded feet, Chris hovering over her like an olympic coach spotting his prize pupil. She spins, winces, tries for a simple allegro movement and nearly falls.

CHRIS

Keep trying.

She tries a soubresaut, a mild springing jump which lands her on two feet. She collapses in agony. Chris is instantly down with her, urging her up.

CLOSE ON THEM, their faces inches from each other, the girl's covered with sweat.

CHRIS

Get up.

CATHY

I can't. Anyway, you're getting blood all over everthing --

He ignores his bleeding hands -- hauls her up --

CHRIS

Dance, Cathy -- I mean it! She didn't just do this to you to get to me. She did this to stop you from dancing, too. Don't let her get away with it.

WIDER -- she grits her teeth and gets back on her feet. Glaring at him. She's in different clothes from the previous shot -- a ballet costume now -- a worn leotard and thick layers of sweat socks. Chris is different too -- it's some time later. The snow has stopped. His bandages are clean again.

CATHY

Asshole.

CHRIS

Wimp.

She flinches at that -- nearly spits fire at him with her eyes -- and launches into a reckless series of three Grand Jeté en arabesque cruisé that leaves her gasping on the floor once

more. Chris is instantly on her side --
CLOSER, LOW WITH THEM -- he leans to her.

CHRIS
That was much better.

She fights back the tears.

CATHY
I'm not a wimp?

CHRIS
Maybe not.

CATHY
Well you're still an asshole.

WIDE -- she leaps INTO FRAME in still different clothes -- a new costume -- blue leotards -- and dance shoes. And Chris's hands have only light bandages on them now -- we can see the scars are healing.

She rockets through some basic pointe-work, the moves near-perfect -- échappé-relevé passé; pas de bourrée-assemblé; piqué en arabesque -- right through the drill. And she's starting to look really good, really fine.

ON CHRIS, beaming.

CHRIS
All right. All right, girl. Now
you're talking.

CATHY -- moves into full dance -- moving with the music with total freedom. The MUSIC swells towards ecstasy, CONTINUING as we

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

EXT. THE MANSION - DAY

It's spring. The trees are laced with new buds, the cerulean sky is a cumulous glory dome.

THE MUSIC NEARS the CLIMACTIC PASSAGE.

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

CLOSE -- as Cathy's face moves INTO FRAME IN CLOSEUP -- hovering in decision -- undecided. Then she makes up her mind.

REVERSE -- as she tears open the Christmas box from her mother and takes out the white costume from Swan Lake. The light pink leotard. The white sequined bodice. The snow-white-feathered --

headress.

ON CHRIS -- in a rickety chair at the edge of the dance floor, half-reading his medical book, half playing the Dance Master. His hands are without bandages. We notice there's just the slightest peach fuzz on his upper lip, that his voice is ever-so-slightly lower.

CHRIS

(without looking up)

Let's go. Break's over -- get dancing again.

The MUSIC SWELLS to the MAIN THEME of SWAN LAKE. Chris looks up to see if his sister is following his orders -- and is frozen in place.

REVERSE ON CATHY -- in the white swan outfit, a stunning vision of youth and womanhood combined. She's taller, and the thin cotton leotard reveals a shape to her that wasn't there before. There's an astonishing grace to her movements, a wholeness of beauty and grace.

Back on Chris -- mouth open. The MUSIC reaches its peak.

ON CATHY -- spinning and spinning like the ideal figure her father gave her so long ago. Then she sinks into the final death of the swan, a series of lowering, grace-filled moves that leaves her like a fallen flower on the sunlit floor of the attic.

The MUSIC STOPS.

ON CHRIS. His big adams apple bobs. He turns away.

There's silence in the attic.

Cathy looks up, grins.

CATHY

What do you think?

Chris's voice cracks.

CHRIS

I think it's time we got out of here.

He walks away from her, over to the window. A silhouette against the sunlight, he leans to the glass and looks out.

CATHY looks after him, breathless, radiant, confused.

CATHY

(very low, so only she
can hear)

Thank you Chris.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

CATHY strips a bed -- a large stain in the center of the sheets. Cory lies listlessly in the other, pale to the point of being bluish.

CATHY

You have another nightmare, Cory?

CORY

Un-uh.

CARRIE

Yes he did.

Cathy sits and looks at the children. Shakes her head.

CATHY

Cory, you with bed wetting and nightmares, Carrie with diarrhea. You make a fine pair.

(looks closer)

And you should be growing faster, too...

Carrie stands up straight. Thin and pale.

CARRIE

We're bigger.

CORY

We are.

Cathy just hugs them both.

CATHY

Of course you are. But you should get some sunlight, should run in the woods and chase a dog -- something.

Cory grins.

CORY

We have a pet.

Carrie smiles mysteriously.

CARRIE

Mickie.

INT. THE ATTIC SCHOOLROOM - DAY

THE TWINS lead Cathy among endless toys, flopping down exhausted but smiling at a little bird cage they've wrapped in screening. Their thin, pale faces are lit by smiles.

CARRIE

We found him in a trap, caught by his tail.

CORY

And Chris made him better for us.

Cathy looks off.

HER POV TO CHRIS - up among the huge beamed rafters, catwalking along with a coil of rope. There's a strange knap-sack sort of thing on his back, home-made from what looks like a sheet.

CATHY -- looks back from the twins.

CATHY

Well Chris doesn't seem to talk to me that much any more.
(leans down and examines the mouse)
What do you feed him?

CLOSE ON THE MOUSE.

CARRIE

Bread, fruit.

CORY

I gave him a donut once, but Carrie yelled at me.

CARRIE

Mickey shouldn't eat donuts. They make him fat.

Cathy smiles, relieved to see the two have something. She turns and walks away.

ANGLE IN THE MAIN AREA --

Cathy enters and looks up at Chris, still high above.

CATHY

What's in the thing on your back?
Books?

CHRIS

Nope. Cory. Or Carrie. Take your pick. You take one, I take the other.

He swings out into space.

CATHY

Chris!

But he hangs on, and lowers himself down the rope. It's knotted every several feet -- and he uses these as steps for his crossed.

feet. Within seconds he's on the floor. He takes the heavy pack off his back and pours the books onto the floor as if it was they were passengers and he was the trained elephant.

CHRIS

Voila!

Cathy blinks.

CATHY

You planning on robbing libraries when you grow up?

CHRIS

Something better than that. And I'm already grown up. You just haven't noticed.

He walks away. Cathy looks after him, her voice softly to herself again.

CATHY

I noticed.

FADE TO BLACK

FA2R

FADE UP ON

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

Corine, in tennis outfit, tan and the picture of health, unloads another armful of gifts. Exotic things, from exotic lands this time.

CORINE

There, what do you think?

Cathy, Chris and the Twins gaze at the boxes, the souvenirs and trinkets with polite indifference.

CHRIS

Great, Mom. Where'd you get all this?

The twins, almost by habit, start tearing open some of the boxes. Chris leafs through a thick medical text. Cathy stays on her mother.

CORINE

Oh, all over Europe.

(smiles sadly)

I've been rather ill, I'm afraid. Your grandfather was hanging on the brink of death, and... well, it took its toll on me. Your grandmother thought I might

(more)

CORINE (CONTD)

die instead of him, so she sent me to this ridiculous spa in Switzerland...

Chris gets up and stretches self-consciously.

CORINE (CONTD)

Goodness knows, I never could've afforded such money!

Chris strolls into the bathroom. Cathy never takes her eyes from her mother. Corine looks away.

CORINE (CONTD)

He's hanging on by his fingernails, Cathy. He could go at any moment. That's why I'm back.

CATEY

Not to see us.

Corine flinches. Hurt.

CATEY

Of course to see you. And... to marry, while daddy's still alive.

Cathy's mouth opens and closes.

CATEY

The guy you danced with Christmas...

Now it's Corine's turn to be surprised.

CORINE

So you were out too...

(composes herself)

Yes. His name is Bart. You'll like him.

CATEY

Have you told Bart about us? Tell him he's got four stepkids rotting in an attic?

The woman shakes her head. Lowers her eyes. Chris is back out of the bathroom now, and listening, even as he does something over by the door. All so silently Corine doesn't even notice him.

CORINE

Bart's my father's lawyer. It would hardly make sense to tell him until... after.

Corine straightens.

CORINE (CONTD)

There's some big news, Cathy, at first so good I would have rushed right up here to tell you...

Corine starts to twist that string of pearls again, her face torn. The look scares Cathy.

CATHY

What... what is the news?

CORINE

Your grandfather finally changed his will... so that when he dies, I come into my full heritage.

Cathy widens her eyes ever so slightly.

CATHY

You serious? You mean we're rich as soon as he dies?

Corine smooths the girl's hair. Cathy allows it.

CORINE

But he added one other thing. If I ever have children... I loose everything.

Cathy swallows so loudly Chris notices it. Corine nods, seemingly understanding.

CATHY

That creep.

CORINE

Bart's been so good about it already, I couldn't add that to it all. I mean, he wants me so much, he'll marry me even if we can't have...

She stops. Cathy finishes it for her.

CATHY

Children of your own?

Corine smooths her spotless white skirt.

CORINE

I think you know what I mean.

CLOSE ON CHRIS — as he eases the key from the lock and presses it into the bar of soap in his hand.

CORINE (CONTD/O.S.)

Anyway, we're to be married a week from next Sunday, in this very house.

CLOSE ON THE BAR OF SOAP as the key is lifted from it for the second time. The key has left a perfect impression of itself, front and back, in the soft material.

ON CORINE -- as she stands.

CORINE

And I know in my heart of hearts that once my father sees us married, his heart will open up to us in a new way...

BG Chris slips the wiped key back in the lock, then comes back into the bathroom.

CORINE (CONTD)

And I will be able to call you all down at last to join us.

She turns to see Chris emerge from the bathroom, wiping his hands. The Toilet FLUSHES descreetly BG. She takes him under her wing, cuddling him to herself.

CORINE

Then won't we be a happy family again?

She gives him a squeeze, then opens the door, pausing only as she notices the tray of half-eaten food near the door.

CORINE (CONTD)

You all eating your food? You'll need your nourishment for the tennis courts! There's some wonderful donuts -- have you tried them?

She smiles at her son. He doesn't smile back. Cathy sees this look, and captitalizes on it.

CATHY

Y'know, Mom, Cory's awful sick. He could use some fresh air. You could sneak him out in your car --

Corine jerks around, looking at Cathy as if she'd uttered gibberish.

CORINE

Impossible.

(turning away)

You always want the impossible, Cathy. That's your problem.

CATHY

That is.

Corine ignores this.

CORINE

(to Chris)

See that the twins eat.

CHRIS

I will.

CORINE

And remember I love you.

CHRIS

Promise.

She looks at him a beat.

CORINE

Night.

She kisses his hair and is gone. Chris turns and looks at Cathy, his face ashen. Bereft.

CHRIS

After the twins are asleep. Tonight.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. THE ATTIC / NEW AREA - NIGHT

FADE UP ON a dark jumble of old furniture and shadows. This is a different section of the attics, one we haven't seen before. Chris, his climbing rope coiled over his shoulder, picks his way through its maze confidently. Cathy follows close behind, not liking the dark or the thick gauze of spiderwebs.

CATHY

Where the hell are we?

CHRIS

Over the south wing -- the main living section.

(taps a chimney)

This is for the fireplace in Mom's bedroom, two stories down.

(grins)

I found the original architect's blueprints to the place, in a trunk last week.

ANGLE AT A WINDOW -- Chris opens it very, very quietly. Cathy looks scared.

CATHY

What about Doberman?

CHRIS (CONTD)

He watches the windows of our attic, the north wing. I don't think

(more)

CHRIS (CONTD)

he's got the brains to realize we have
access to the whole place from up here.
(looks at her carefully)
You up for this?

Cathy nods.

CATHY

If we can't do this alone, we sure
can't do it with two kids on our backs.

CHRIS

Exactly.

EXT. THE MANSION / SOUTH WING - NIGHT

The wing is dark and silent. TILT UP TO ROOF WINDOW - as Chris
lets himself out over the edge of the slate roof and starts
down.

CLOSE ON CATHY - scanning the perimeter from her high perch,
looking for Doberman. Nothing. Then she looks down and sees the
drop she's teetering over.

CATHY

Oh, please...

REVERSE IN HER P.O.V. - three stories straight down to Chris,
just now dropping easily to the cement of a utility area. He
recons with a glance, then looks up to her.

CHRIS

(whispered, urgent)

Come on!

Cathy starts down, eyes closed.

CLOSER ANGLES - as she descends, down, down, petrified.

AT THE GROUND - as her feet come INTO FRAME - and she's helped
the last few feet by Chris. When her feet touch ground she opens
her eyes and looks around. Both their faces light with a sublime
wonder.

CATHY

Oh... Smells wonderful.

CHRIS

Remember the world?

She bends to a flowering bush and buries her nose in a blossom.
Chris gives one of his devilish grins.

CHRIS (CONTD)

Feel like a swim?

She looks up, eyes widening, remembering.

CATHY
There's a lake, isn't there?

CHRIS
Mama said so, first night we were here.
(pointing)
That way.

FA2S

EXT. THE LAKE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON BEAUTIFUL, SHIMMERING WATER - the moon reflected off its glass surface. TILT UP AND RACK FOCUS to Chris and Cathy emerging from the trees. Seeing it for the first time.

CHRIS
Dy-no-mite.

Cathy grins.

CATHY
Last one in's an old lady.

She runs like a deer to the water's edge, then brakes and sticks her toes in.

CATHY (CONTD)
Oh my god — ice water!

Chris throws off his pants.

CHRIS
I knew you'd chicken out —
(laughing)
Doesn't count 'till you get your
head wet!

He flashes past her and knifes into the water, disappearing without a trace. Cathy recoils from the splash.

CATHY
Oh very smart. Could'a smacked
yourself on a rock for all you know.

He doesn't come up. She waits as long as she can, then wades into the frigid water, heart in her throat.

CATHY (CONTD)
Chris!

She's pulled under from beneath, shrieking. Then he's up laughing and snorting, and they're two teenagers goofing around as if they didn't have a care in the world.

WIDER - VARIOUS SHOTS: they swim, float, spit geysers, laugh.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO SHORE --

THEY lay out together, spent. Their bodies gleam in the moonlight, Cathy's soaked nightgown hiding very little, Chris still only in jockey shorts. They both enjoy the evening cool after the stuffiness of the attic and locked room.

CATHY

So. When do we really do it?

Chris opens his eyes. Looks at her. She looks at him.

CATHY (CONTD)

Escape. When do we go over the old wall?

He sinks back down.

CHRIS

During the wedding, I figure. Lots of confusion and people. First we need money. Four kids wandering around without money are going to draw attention, and we'd end up in custody, and either returned to mom or split up.

Cathy winces at the thought.

CATHY

I'd kill myself.

CHRIS

I would too.

She looks and him and grins. Then --

CATHY

We rob the old man?

Chris shakes his head.

CHRIS

Our mother. She's loaded.

Cathy looks at him; he looks away.

CHRIS (CONTD)

We take, say, five hundred, in either cash or jewels...

(he's was staring again,
and now seems lost)

Um, or, say five or six hundred...

Uh...

Cathy has sat up, her body peeking through the wet cotton, her

eyes fascinated. She giggles.

CATHY

Ewww, that's weird. How you doing that?

Chris looks down and reacts in alarm to the bulge in his shorts.

CHRIS

Jeez!

He jumps up, red as a beet, throwing on his pants.

CHRIS (CONTD)

Don't you know anything?

He hops off towards the mansion, half in, half out of his pants. Cathy shakes her head, totally confused, and not at all aware of why her heart's drunk like it is.

CATHY

I guess not.

EXT. THE MANISON - NIGHT

Chris begins to climb the rope as soon as he gets to it, his face set in angry embarrassment. He's out of sight ABOVE FRAME by the time Cathy reaches it.

ANGLE UP TO HIM -- ten feet up, hurrying. He looses the rope with his feet for an instant, kicks out in panic, and puts his shoe through a quarter-pane of glass.

CHRIS

Shit!

The glass clatters inside the room, the boy looks down to Cathy in desperation.

CHRIS (CONTD)

Come on -- climb!

Before Cathy can move a pale plane of light flicks on across her face. She turns to see a window over the garages light up. Then the curtain pulls back and the hideous face of Doberman presses to the glass, joined a second later by the big dog.

Cathy hits the rope, climbing fast.

Doberman and the dog run from the window.

Halfway up the rope Cathy nearly looses it, the rope jumping and twitching madly from Chris's climb above. She grits her teeth and hangs on.

Above, at the eaves, Chris hauls himself over the gutter onto the

slate shingles of the roof, turning back instantly to call down to his sister.

CHRIS

Cathy -- move it!

IN HIS POV DOWN TO HER - we SEE Cathy frozen on the rope.

CATHY

I... can't, Chris. My arms are like rubber...

Chris looks up in panic.

IN HIS P.O.V. -- Doberman rounds the corner of the garage, looking around for the source of the noise.

CHRIS

(whispering)

Just hang on tight, then!

He plants his feet in the gutter and starts pulling his sister's dead weight up towards him, had over hand.

ON CATHY - slipping, slipping.

HER FEET - loosing the rope -- flailing to find it again.

AT GROUND LEVEL - Doberman races for the rope, leaping into the air and snagging onto its end like an enraged gorilla.

ON CHRIS - taking the sudden new weight with incredible shock, bracing back against the shingles, veins popping out on his neck, eyes wide in terror.

HIS FEET IN THE GUTTER - the metal starting to GROAN and collapse under the great weight.

CATHY - looking up, seeing her brother's precarious hold -- looking down, reacting in panic and fury --

HER P.O.V. DOWN TO DOBERMAN - swinging like the hunchback of Notre Dame, looking up at her with murderous glee, the huge dog snarling and leaping beneath him, waiting for the girl's fall.

CATHY - she starts to climb again - adreneline pouring into every fiber.

ON CHRIS - as one set of Cathy's fingers grabs the gutter -- then her head becomes visible.

ON CATHY -- her face twists in new dismay, and she starts moving backwards, the rope beginning to pay back out.

ON CHRIS'S HANDS - the rope burning through them, bloodied now.

CHRIS

Cathy -- let loose of the rope --
grab my legs!

DOWN TO DOBERMAN -- climbing now -- reaching for the girl's feet
-- inches away.

WIDE ON CHRIS AND CATHY - as the girl grits her teeth and grabs
her brother's ankles, barely hanging on. Instantly Chris lets go
of the rope and grabs his sister's wrists. The rope shoots out
to its full length again --

DOWN TO DOBERMAN - as the startled man literally hits the end of
his rope -- the jolt sending him flying and crashing down into
the bushes - his startled dog scrambling to avoid annihilation.

ON CATHY AND CHRIS - safe at last, the girl hugging her brother
-- Chris hauling up on the rope fast as he can.

DOBERMAN - staggers out of the bushes as LIGHTS blink on and the
rope withdraws up THROUGH TOP FRAME.

CHRIS takes in the last of the rope, and steps inside. Cathy
closes the window, and an instant later both are gone from
sight.

INT. THE ATTIC - NIGHT

CATHY AND CHRIS sink together against the wall, spent, shaking.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE SOUTH-WING ATTIC - DAY

CHRIS is working at the chimney leading from his mother's
bedroom. He's managed to dislodge a dozen or so bricks, and now
sticks his head right into the cavity.

Cathy, arriving with the daily picnic basket of food, appears
behind him.

CATHY

What in the world you doing?

Chris jerks his head back out, whacking it good. Then he sees
who it is and scowls.

CHRIS

Gathering information, what's it look
like?

(taps the chimney)

When Mom's in her bedroom, I can hear
her.

CATHY

Sick.

CHRIS
Informative. Right now I happen to know
she's going out tomorrow night.

CATHY
So?

CHRIS
So no one will be in her bedroom when
I clean her out.

He shows Cathy a wooden key, half-finished. She examines it as
he wolfs down a powdered-sugar donut.

CATHY
Think it'll work?

CHRIS
(that's not worth an answer)
I don't want to be disturbed tonight.
I'm going to finish this thing off.

She straightens.

CATHY
So who's disturbing you?

She turns and goes off. He makes a snotty face and turns back to
his work.

FADE TO BLACK.

FA2T

FADE UP

EXT. THE MANSION - DAWN.

INT. THE ROOM - MORNING

ON CATHY - sitting up in bed, hearing the SOUND of harsh COUGHING
APPROACHING. Chris comes out of the attic passageway and heads
for the bathroom. He's fully dressed.

CATHY
Chris? You work all night?
(as he goes on without
answering)
You all right?

He's sick in the toilet for answer.

She gets out of bed and goes to him, wondering if she should ask
another dumb question, when the lock turns behind her and her
Grandmother enters, followed by Corine. The Grandmother
instantly fixes on Cathy and Chris in the bathroom at the same

time.

GRANDMOTHER

There is to be no cohabiting in the bathroom -- you know the rules!

Cathy turns, but ignores the older woman.

CATHY

Chris's sick, mother. So's Cory, I think...

GRANDMOTHER

Indeed. Perhaps an illness caught in the cold night air.

Cathy still keeps her eyes only on her mother.

CATHY

You'd better get a doctor up here.

Corine looks nervously from Chris to Cathy.

CORINE

It's because you're not eating, I'm sure. You must see that the twins eat, Cathy. I'm trusting you to do that.

Cathy lowers her eyes.

CATHY

The don't want food any more. They want their mother.

CORINE

You have to be the mother for a while longer. Try to grow up a little.

She goes out with a quick glance at Chris. She never once looks back at Cathy, and not at all to the twins.

The grandmother looks to Chris retching BG.

She makes a face, (it's hard to tell if it's one of satisfaction or repugnance), then gives Cathy one last withering look -- saying with her eyes -- 'I can see through your lies, and I'm going to get you, sooner or later.' Then she leaves. Cathy looks at Chris.

EXT. THE MANSION - NIGHT

The waning MOON illumines Doberman limping beneath the North Wing, his eyes casting back and forth between the uppermost windows. His dog keeps a nervous distance.

From inside and above, we HEAR COUGHING.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON THE KEY IN CHRIS'S HANDS - as his penknife shaves away the last invisible burr. The copy looks exactly like the original now.

WIDER - as Chris admires his handiwork. Then he doubles over in more hacking COUGHS. Cathy looks at him, her face set.

CATHY

Won't get ten feet before somebody hears you.

Chris tries to look normal, then doubles in another paroxysm.

CHRIS

Then tomorrow night.

Cathy shakes her head.

CATHY

They won't be going out two nights in a row. It's too close to the wedding. Besides, we don't have another day.

CHRIS

Okay, okay, I'll go tonight.

CATHY

No. I'll go.

Chris jerks around, fighting back a cough.

CHRIS

Give me a break.

CATHY

I can't do any worse than you did. Besides, take a look at the twins, then tell me we should wait.

He gives the pale, listless little pair a long look, then turns to Cathy and hands over the key.

CHRIS

I'll draw you a map.

(beat)

And I'll take care of Doberman, too.

EXT. THE MANSION - NIGHT

PAN TO DOBERMAN, still watching. Suddenly there's the SOUND of BREAKING GLASS, behind them, over by the garages. Both he and

his dog go on full alert, running towards the sound.

EXT. THE ROOF

ON CHRIS - dressed totally in black, a muffler knotted tight around his mouth. He hacks once, but the sound is almost totally cut off by the thick wool. He calmly fits another broken-off piece of brick into the home-made sling in his hand, whirls the thing around his head three quickening spins and lets fly. The shard shoots off into the night sky with a soft hum of velocity and mass.

EXT. THE GROUNDS - NIGHT

Doberman is peering into a broken window when there's a new CLATTER and BASH off to his right a hundred yards away. He whirls around and goes chasing after it, his dog racing ahead.

EXT. THE ROOF - NIGHT.

CHRIS watches with amusement, hacks soundlessly, catches his breath, then starts fitting another rock into his sling.

INT. CORINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CATHY, map in hand, enters. She gazes in shock and wonderment at the opulence, the panoply. She takes in the Swan bed in a long stare of disbelief -- (the curtains are drawn all around it, making it even more mysterious and romantic) -- then she makes herself go to the bureau near the bed.

CLOSER ANGLE, AT THE BUREAU. Cathy sweeps the loose bills and change there into her sack (a pillowcase), then eases open the top drawer. There's a wallet. She takes that out and sets it on the top of the bureau, then looks back in the drawer. There's a couple of books in there, a paperback -- 30 DAYS TO SLIMMER THIGHS', and a second, hardbound book beneath. That one catches Cathy's eye.

CLOSE as she raises it to her face, (and we SEE the title -- SWEDISH ECSTASY -- IN COLOR). The girl's eyes go wide. She turns the page. They go wider. She turns the book upside down, then back right side up and zips through half a dozen pages -- her hands shaking, her eyes bugging. She shuts the book tight.

CATHY

Totally gross...

LOW ANGLE ON THE FLOOR. Cathy SITS INTO FRAME and opens the book back up, burying her nose in it, scrutinizing some incredible puzzle.

CATHY (CONTD)

(low)

What is he doing?

(holds book sideways;

(more)

CATHY (CONTD)

the light dawns)

Oh. Holy shit.

She shuts the book again. Looks straight ahead, stunned.

Then she hears the SNORE.

It's as if a snake bit her. She wheels around and sprawls into the closet without even looking. Sits back up and looks through the crack in the door.

REVERSE IN HER P.O.V. -- TO THE BED. Somebody's in there. A male somebody. There's just a soft breathing now, a low sort of moaning breathing.

CATHY gets up, not even breathing, and tip-toes to the bed.

ANGLE FROM INSIDE THE BED -- as the curtain is parted ever so slightly and Cathy peeks in.

REVERSE IN HER P.O.V. -- to Bart, in full evening dress, sprawled out on the bed. Fast asleep, and evidently having a very pleasant dream as well. His tall, lithe body undulates once. His handsome face -- the handsomest, most masculine face Cathy has ever seen since her father's -- reacts to some languorously erotic stroke from deep inside his cerebellum.

CLOSE ON CATHY. Awe-struck.

CLOSE ON BART -- his lips part. A soft groan comes out.

HIS HAND floats over his thighs.

CATHY'S EYES WIDEN.

HER MOUTH -- parts, her tongue licks dry lips.

JUST SLIGHTLY WIDER, as her face floats down as if of its own will, over the bed, over the sleeping man, to his lips.

VERY, VERY CLOSE - as she brushes his lips with hers, soft as a feather. He reacts as if in ultra-slow motion -- thrusting up ever so slightly, and their mouths fit together and come apart. The girl is breathing faster.

His tongue is visible. Slowly, so slowly she's barely moving at all, she touches it with her own.

Not fast, but certainly not in slow motion, his left hand brushes the girl's blouse at the breasts, and his right hand slides right up her leg and disappears.

Cathy's eyes go wide and she jerks away in total panic, falling off the bed and hitting the floor like a sack of bricks. Instantly she rolls under the bed, feeling the man SNORT and contort and then sit up directly above her.

WIDE -- as Bart opens his eyes, dazed, looking around. Then his head clears another notch and he suddenly looks at his watch.

BART

Good lord.

He staggers out of bed, damn near stepping on Cathy's hand. She snakes farther back into the shadows beneath the great bed as the man looks shakes his head.

BART (CONTD)

Can't believe I fell asleep -- supposed to just be finding my wallet. Ah.

He finds it right where Cathy left it, snatches it up and goes out of the room, shaking his head.

BART (CONTD/FADING)

(laughs)

One hell of a dream, though.

Then he's gone.

INT. THE ROOM - NIGHT.

Cathy comes in, shuts and locks the door, then just leans against it as if pole-axed. Chris runs over, happy to see her back.

CHRIS

How'd it go?

No answer. He takes the sack, his face falling at the lack of heft, and pulls out --

CHRIS (CONTD)

(incredulous)

Fifteen dollars and twenty three cents?

Cathy looks at him as if he was an absolute stranger.

CATHY

That's all there was.

CHRIS

There was a whole drawer full of jewelry, for godsakes -- bottom drawer. Did you even look there?

The girl looks away.

CATHY

Well, sure...

Chris looks at her long and hard. Then a slow grin dawns on his face.

CHRIS

Wait a second...

(comes up behind her)

Did you find something in the top
drawer? A book, let's say?

She goes deep red.

CATHY

Chris, take the pipe, would you?

She storms into the bathroom and locks the door. Chris doubles
over with a combination of coughing and laughter.

CHRIS

It's okay -- it's always a shock at
first. I'll show you something about
it in my medical books, if you like.

CATHY (THROUGH DOOR)

Go away -- you're gross!

CHRIS

Me? What I do?

CATHY (THROUGH DOOR)

You're a man.

Chris stops at that.

CHRIS

You got me there.

He walks away. We HOLD ON THE DOOR.

FADE TO BLACK

FA2UFADE UP ON CATHY lying wide awake in bed next to Carrie, staring
at the ceiling.

She rolls over and finds herself staring at Chris.

CHRIS

Hi.

CATHY

Hi.

Beat.

CATHY (CONTD)

It looked awful.

He nods.

CHRIS

From what I hear, it feels better
than it looks.

CATHY

It's gross. Disgusting. Ridiculous.

He considers this a long moment.

CHRIS

So's a cheeseburger with everything
on it. But it still tastes good.

She stares at him, incredulous at the logic, then rolls over with
a groan.

INT. ATTIC - DAY.

The twins sleep in the schoolroom, curled around Mickey's cage.
Cathy watches from a distance, leaning against the window. Chris
is reading a medical text book, engrossed.

She goes down stairs.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

CATHY enters, mildly distracted. She turns off a light,
straightens the bedspread. Then walks into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Before the broken shard they've been using for a mirror, she
turns this way and that, pressing her blouse to her body, trying
to see her shape. It's hopeless, the piece of mirror is just too
small.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY.

Cathy walks to the middle of the room, in front of the one tall
mirror they have. And in the soft illumination of her mother's
rose light she undresses.

She walks naked in front of the mirror and looks at herself.
Swallows. She's really quite beautiful, even she can see it.

She smiles, shakes her new breasts. Turns and looks at herself
over her shoulder. Likes that too.

CLOSER, ON HER FACE -- as she assumes a variety of poses --
sultry, mysterious, vampish, the ingenue.

WIDE AGAIN -- she closes her eyes and wraps her arms about
herself, bending her head back for a kiss from an invisible,

beautiful lover. It's about then that Chris barges in from the attic.

CHRIS

Cath, I was wondering if you knew where...

He stops, frozen in his tracks. She backs up against the wall, not able to find a word to say. He somehow manages to complete his question.

CHRIS (CONTD)

... where my ballpoint pen was.

She tips her head to indicate, petrified not so much of him as she is of the feeling in the room.

CATHY

On the table by the bed please don't look.

He turns his head a little, really trying, but his eyes never leave her, and his head comes back. His voice is just as strained as hers.

CHRIS

You're beautiful. Cathy. I mean, I just gotta to say that. I...

He charges over to the table and gets his goddam ballpoint pen, then turns back to her --

CHRIS

I didn't mean to --

The door to the hallway is flung open -- and the Grandmother fairly leaps into the room.

GRANDMOTHER

I knew it!

Pandemonium. Chris protesting -- Cathy diving for her dress, getting hung up in the sleeves with it half over her head.

The woman storms across the room and seizes the girl by the arm, spinning her around, jerking the dress over her body in spasmodic haste. Then she raises her huge ringed hand to strike. Chris is after her in an instant, a chair over his head and murder in his eyes --

CHRIS

You touch her and I swear to god I'll break this fucking chair over your head!

The woman reels around at the threat -- at the obscenity. She points a trembling finger at the boy -- her face twisting in truly frightening rage. She's a big woman -- well over six feet --

-- and we begin to realize she could take the boy.

GRANDMOTHER

I knew it all along -- you are truly
the spawn of the devil --

CHRIS

We didn't do anything!

GRANDMOTHER

Knew it all along -- and you'll pay!
You'll feel the whip until your soul
is purged!

The terror shows in Chris's eyes -- in the crack of his voice

CHRIS

You're not going to whip anyone, you
old bag!

The woman leans around the doorframe into the hall -- and returns
with the whip in her hand -- a thin rod of cane. The light in
her eyes is completely, coldly insane.

GRANDMOTHER

Oh I will. I will or Doberman will
be in this room in an instant --
you will cease to say anything --
he will get your sister -- and I
will get the twins -- yes I will!

Chris swallows hard. He looks to the open door. And Doberman is
there, a dark, huge figure in silhouette. Only the glint from
his eyes shining, his eyes locked on Cathy.

All the color drains from Chris's face. His voice breaks
entirely.

CHRIS

Grandma please, don't let him in here...

CATHY

Chris...

GRANDMOTHER

You will do exactly as I tell you.
You know that I know -- I can hurt
you best through your sister.

A long beat. Then --

CHRIS

All right.

The big woman closes the door on Doberman, never taking her eyes
from Chris. The twins are wailing in the doorway from the attic.
Cathy goes to them, trying to comfort them. The old woman puts

her face right up to Chris's.

GRANDMOTHER

Take off your clothes and lean over
the bathtub like a good boy.

INT. BATHROOM

ANGLE AT THE TUB -- Chris, naked and shivering, kneels INTO FRAME
and leans over the rim of the tub.

CHRIS

Don't touch Cathy or the tw --

The first lash cuts him off mid-word. He recoils in agony,
writhing. The old woman bellows in his ear --

GRANDMOTHER

If you move I'll double it for all of
you!

Chris, blotched and pale, forces himself back over the tub. The
old woman raises the cane high over her head.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

CATHY buries her face in the wailing twins as blow after blow
falls.

DISSOLVE --

THE BATHROOM DOOR is flung open and Chris is shoved out like so
much trash.

The boy has no strength, no awareness. He falls moaning right
there. The woman, her face flushed and sheened with sweat,
motions to Cathy.

GRANDMOTHER

You next, Harlot. You or the children,
whichever you want.

Chris tries to move. The grandmother puts her foot on him and
shoves him back down. He passes out. Cathy reaches for him --
the old woman thrusts the cane between them --

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)

Touch him and I'll cane the little
brats.

And Cathy goes into the bathroom. The door closes. The SOUND of
the cane CRACKS out through the wall. The twins scream.

SCREEN FADES SLOWLY TO BLACK.

THE SOUNDS of the CANING FADE.

We HEAR distant BIRDS.

Then the shattered, dull voices of Chris and Cathy. Barely audible. Hoarse and shocked. And extraordinarily tender as well.

CHRIS

She got you fifteen times.

CATHY

I counted ten, then...

FADE UP ON:

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

A soft spring morning's light filters through the windows, falling across a mattress. Cathy and Chris are there, Chris applying disinfectant and balm to the many wounds on Cathy's back. He himself is equally marked. Both are dazed, deeply in shock.

CATHY

I was trying to remember, the other day...
How'd I get from the bathroom up here?

Chris shrugs.

CHRIS

Me.

Cathy winces, struggling to keep her mind on other things.

CATHY

And how long's it been since she brought us food?

Chris shakes his head, his voice a rasp.

CHRIS

Six days for food, three days for water.

The boy begins to shake.

CLOSER - as Chris half-falls back onto the mattress. Cathy, her eyes filled with pain, lifts the sheet over him, letting him next to her, then easing the sheet down over them both with infinite care. Any contact with their skin causes them agony, and neither wears clothes.

CLOSER STILL - as Chris is taken in against her breast, his eyes filled with tears. She strokes his hair with infinite gentleness.

His body is wracked by tremendous chills.

She wraps her arms around him.

CLOSE ON HER FACE. Strangely, utterly at peace.

ON CHRIS -- eyes staring ahead into space. Then closing. Opening, and looking up to hers.

ON CATHY as her face alters. A tear rolls out of her eye and down her cheek. At the same time a slow, ancient light spreads through her eyes, across her lips. Chris COMES INTO FRAME drawn by a gravity as powerful as earth's. Comes over her. A look of slow-motion astonishment moving across his face as she pulls him down to her. Their lips meet. Their bodies come together. There's a subtle jolt.

Cathy gives a little cry and pulls the sheet over them both.

FADE THROUGH WHITE TO:

FA2V

FADE UP FROM WHITE ON:

EXT. THE MANSION - DAY

WIDE P.O.V. DOWN TO THE FRONT DRIVE and grounds of the mansion, as a large LIMOSINE empties itself of giggling BRIDESMAIDS. They walk towards other GUESTS arriving or chatting BACKGROUND. There are many other expensive cars and people in the drive. The Big Day.

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

CLOSE ON CHRIS - slumped near the window in the attic, his eyes hollow and haunted as an El Greco monk. He has a thin stubble of beard. His blond hair is long enough to fall over his shoulders now. He's thin as a rail, and his open shirt reveals painfully-prominent ribs and long ugly scars. Outside, far away in another world, we can HEAR the LAUGHTER and CHATTER of the gathering wedding party.

Cathy appears, moving painfully, slowly. She sees him, hesitates, then approaches close enough to reach for him. He twists away.

CATHY

Chris...

He looks at her at last, and croaks out his first words in days.

CHRIS

The old lady was right. We're as bad as our parents. Worse. We deserve

(more)

CHRIS (CONTD)

this.

Cathy's eyes flash, but her hoarse voice still remains remarkably compassionate.

CATHY

What a load, Christopher. Our parents weren't bad people. Neither are we. And no one deserves this -- no one.

He looks away.

CATHY (CONTD)

What they've done to us isn't natural. What we did was...

(softer)

...my fault, Chris. It won't happen again. Don't worry.

Chris looks back to her with the strangest look.

CHRIS

Don't you get it? That's not what worries me. What worries me is I want it to happen again.

He gets up and starts to move away, his movements stiff and agonized. Cathy's eyes gleam with sudden tears -- and then with fear. Chris has doubled over and is sinking to his knees. Cathy rushes to him, nearly falling herself, she's so lightheaded.

CATHY

You should've taken some of the food, Chris.

CHRIS

The twins needed it.

CATHY

It could be another six days before she decides to feed us again.

He straightens despite the pain, his eyes burning.

CHRIS

You think I'm waiting to find out?

He staggers for the stairs to their room.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

Chris crosses from the attic passageway to the bed, reaching under his pillow and coming up with the wooden key. Then he stops, seeing the state of the twins. The two lie together, looking up at him with sad, sunken eyes. He makes his voice as light as he can.

CHRIS

Hey, guys. How ya doin'?

Carrie's the only one that moves.

CARRIE

(faintly)

Cory won't talk to me...

Chris looks at Cory. Waves his hand in front of the child's face. Cory slowly turns his face away without blinking. Chris straightens. Licks his dry, caked lips. Then he suddenly lifts the child, bringing him across to the bathroom, gesturing for Cathy to follow. It's as if he's suddenly awakened from a dream.

INT. BATHROOM

Chris nods to the toilet.

CHRIS

Sit down, Cathy.

Cathy sits; Chris sets the little guy on her lap. Cory's head falls against her shoulder, dead weight.

WIDER - Chris comes to the sink FOREGROUND, picking up the shard of mirror, blocking what he's doing with his body. his voice is rushed yet dead calm, like a doctor's in an emergency.

CHRIS (CONTD)

I don't want to scare you, Cathy, but
Cory's in worse shape than I thought.

Unseen by her he takes a breath and draws the jagged piece of mirror across his wrist. His voice tightens only imperceptibly.

CHRIS (CONTD)

He's badly dehydrated. We could lose
him unless he gets food. Cover his eyes.

He turns back to her, his wrist dripping red. Cathy reacts in shock and horror, but she covers Cory's eyes before the child sees.

CATHY

My god, Chris --

Chris just puts his wrist to the child's mouth. Cory draws back weakly at first, then begins to suck at the rich fluid, taking it in by instinct. He says only one little, hardly-hearable thing.

CORY

Soup salty...

Chris smiles; Cathy starts to cry big silent tears, holding

Chris's hand.

CHRIS

Good warm salty soup, Cory. The soup of life. Make you a big strong boy again.

Cathy lays her head on Chris's shoulder. He doesn't move away.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

They come out, Cory sleeping now, Chris tying a bandage at his wrist. He looks weak, but more at peace than we've seen him in a long time.

Then both stop. There before them just inside the door is the old familiar picnic basket, not seen in six days, but now filled to overflowing with fruits, milk, bread -- you name it. Topped by a baker's dozen of the fat, powdered donuts.

They instantly start feeding the twins, Cory first, then Carrie.

MISC SHOTS -- as they all eat and drink, savoring every bite. Even the mouse is produced, still alive, and given some of the bounty.

Where'd he come from? I was looking for him the other day.

CARRIE

You wanted to eat him.

Chris laughs.

CHRIS

Maybe I did.

Carrie breaks off a piece of her donut and feeds it to the mouse. Cory, almost too weak to eat, smiles

CORY

Mickey will get fat.

CATHY

Maybe Mickey deserves to get fat. It's a special day today.

The SOUND OF WATER starts in the bathroom. Chris smiles.

CHRIS

It sure as hell is.

INT. BATHROOM

Chris runs in and buries his face in cold, clear water. Cathy

joins him and together they wash away seven days of blood sweat and tears. Then Chris starts to laugh. And it grows until he can hardly stand -- a strange, deep, hoarse laugh that almost scares Cathy.

CHRIS

Wouldn't you know it -- just like her!

(eyes lighting)

She must think we're good and beaten now, ready to roll over and die up here.

CATHY

(suspecting something)

Chris, I don't like that tone...

CHRIS

(turning to her, possessed)

I'm gonna hit mom's room, just like we said. Right now, too.

Cathy reacts in shock.

CATHY

In broad daylight? That's crazy -- you haven't eaten for six days -- you're hurt, too.

CHRIS

Just why the old lady won't expect us to try anything.

CATHY

Doberman --

CHRIS

-- Doberman's gonna kill me in front of two hundred wedding guests?

(holds up key)

Besides, no one knows we have this. Doberman watches the windows, remember?

He gives a grim smile and crosses to the door.

CHRIS

Chris!

Not listening anymore, he unlocks it and eases it open. But he gets only about two inches when it stops with a metallic CLINK.

CHRIS

(incredulous)

What?!

REVERSE TO THE DOOR - SEEN FROM OUTSIDE. Chris is just visible through the crack, looking at the big silver PADLOCK AND HASP bolted to the door and frame outside.

BACK INSIDE - as Chris slams the door, enraged.

CHRIS
That sneaking, low-down witch!
(then he smiles, intrigued)
So she wants to play, hmmm?

He stalks out of frame. Cathy stumbles after him.

CATHEY
Chris, what are you up to?

INT. THE SOUTH-WING ATTIC - DAY

Lurching like a madman now, Chris tests the knot on his climbing rope. He's got one end tied around a beam, and throws the other down the hole in the chimney. Cathy sees the hole's been enlarged now. Big enough for a man to get through. She looks at her brother with mounting concern, then sticks her head in the hole.

INT. CHIMNEY

This is a huge chimney, serving Edwardian-sized fireplaces -- and its interior looks like a sooty elevator shaft. Two stories down, once can see the block of LIGHT from Corine's bedroom pouring though the hearth. The rope ends just above.

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

Cathy pulls her head back out, terrified.

CATHEY
We can go now -- out the windows just the way we are -- we don't need the stupid money -- we've got each other.

CHRIS
Don't you remember what Mama said, Cathy? It's not love that makes the world go round, it's money.

He pulls on gloves, and a stocking cap over his head, then climbs in.

CATHEY
Chris -- don't leave me -- I've got a bad feeling about this -- please.

He stops, looks at her hard.

CHRIS
I'll be right back.

Then he's gone.

FA2W

INT. CHIMNEY

Chris lowers himself inch by painful inch, his muscles screaming, his entire body quickly smeared with black soot. A draft moves up the shaft from the ash pit in the cellars, making a long, hollow, and terribly spooky soughing on its way to the roof. And in this sound are mixed ghostly, ECHOED VOICES, LAUGHTER, WHISPERS -- amplified by the strange accoustics of the shaft.

Then Chris hears his mother's VOICE. Just audible, though not yet understandable.

He reaches the brick juncture between the flu just above his mother's fireplace and the main shaft of the chimney. Chris balances on this, letting go of the rope now and leaning down to hear the voices.

WOMAN 1 (O.S.)

You must be so happy, Corine -- Bart's such a hunk!

Corine laughs, lighthearted.

CORINE (O.S.)

I just hope I can hold on to him, he's such a horney bastard.

Chris straightens, shocked by his mother's speech. Almost loses his balance.

ANGLE ON HIS FEET -- Balanced precariously on the peak of an inverted 'V' of fire brick, one side dropping just a few feet to Corine's empty hearth, the other, larger side dropping away into blackness, to what must be a still larger fireplace on the first floor.

WOMAN 2 (O.S.)

You're so bad, Corine. Really! It's a good thing you've never had children.

INT. CORINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Corine is adjusting her garter not five feet from the fireplace. She laughs at the thought.

CORINE

Children? Me?

Although all he thinks about is sex.
(great titters)

Well it's true! Even when he sleeps!
(lowers her voice so no one
in the hall might overhear)

(more)

CORINE (CONTD)

Last week he told me he had a, what do you call it, a wet dream, of a young girl with long blond hair coming into this very room and kissing him while he slept --

The half-dozen young women are leaning in for every juicy detail.

INT. THE CHIMNEY

So is Chris, outrage dawning ever hotter.

CORINE (CONTD/O.S.)

-- Put her little pink tongue right in his mouth, he said, so real he could almost taste it.

Chris looks like he's going to have a stroke. He punches his fist into his hand like it's Cathy's nose -- hard.

Too hard. The slight jar is just enough to tip his balance. One second he's flailing wildly for the rope, the next minute he misses its tip, falls backwards and shoots out of sight down the main shaft of the chimney.

CHRIS

Shit!

INT. CORINE'S ROOM - DAY

The women stop.

FIRST WOMAN

You hear something?

They hear nothing.

CORINE

Bats in the chimney, probably.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

CLOSE ON -- a really huge hearth -- baronial. Chris plunges down out of it like a huge black soot bomb.

A beat. Then Chris sits up, dazed and pitch black. Looks around, getting his bearings.

WIDE -- REVEALING a huge library. Dark. Somber. Deserted.

Chris limps to the center of the room, looking around in amazement. Then he stops, remembering. He speaks the words his mother said so very long ago.

CHRIS

Just know that downstairs, in a small room behind a great library, there is a sick old man who controls our destinies...

ANGLE AT THE HEARTH. Chris picks up the poker. His mother's voice from long ago CONTINUES the quote as Chris crosses the library towards a small door at its rear.

CORINE (V.O.)

And if he wants me contrite and crawling before he allows you into his house and fortune, I will gladly do that for you...

INT. THE SMALL ROOM - DAY

Chris bursts in, the poker held at the ready. He's no longer a boy. The look in his eye is that of a young man, ready for murder.

But no blow falls. He just stops, staring.

There's a hospital bed in the middle of the room, all right. But it's empty, its mattress rolled over upon itself. The entire room looks like it's been scrubbed clean and then abandoned months ago.

CLOSE ON CHRIS. Lost. Then there's a low, old voice right behind him.

OLD MAN (O.S.)

Can I help you?

Chris wheels around to see an old man, all right, but a black old man, with a gentle and somewhat frightened face. Chris lowers the poker.

CHRIS

Where's Mr Foxworth?

The old man looks at the long-haired boy with his filthy stocking cap and sooty clothes.

OLD MAN

Who's askin'?

Chris licks his lips, sticks out his black hand.

CHRIS

Rick Kobritz, Bay Area Chimney Maintenance. Get a call, come out on a Sunday, fix the damn chimney so the bride can burn her old love letters or somethin', and now I can't find nobody to give me a check.

The old man lights up with a wonderful smile and laugh.

OLD MAN

Shit, I thought you was a second story man or somethin'.

He slaps five and a cloud of soot puffs out from the impact.

OLD MAN

You must be looking for Mrs Foxworth.
The old man's been dead since New Years.

Chris's mouth drops open.

CHRIS

Dead?!

The old man scrutinizes him a moment, then grins.

OLD MAN

What, she tell you he was alive? Tells a lotta people that -- so does her daughter. Shit, both so rich they's crazy, y'know? Rich folk get like that. Hell, they's about as 'centric as you can get. Old lady got half the help convinced they's ghosts in th'attics, f'rinstance. Got a whole wing no one'll go in 'cept the crazy gardner. She even go so far as t'put up food for 'em, every day, too.

Chris nods.

CHRIS

Weird.

The old man laughs.

OLD MAN

Bet you ass. But that daughter, she a sly one.

Chris looks at him. Swallows.

CHRIS

What about the daughter?

The old man looks at him closer.

OLD MAN

You feelin' okay? You look awful white under that black.

Chris leans against the wall, his hand creeping to his stomach. The cramps are back.

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

Cathy is still waiting by the chimney when she hears the Carrie --

crying. She turns to see the little girl, thin as a rail, white as if there was no blood in her, tottering toward her with the battered birdcage.

CARRIE

Mickey's dead.

Cathy looks into the cage. Mickey the mouse is indeed dead, curled around the big piece of powdered donut that was his last, most profound windfall.

CATHY

Oh my god.

INT. THE SMALL ROOM - DAY

Chris straightens up with a look of enormous pain and concentration.

CHRIS

What about the daughter?

The old man licks his lips.

OLD MAN

Well, she a sly one. See, she figure, the old lady gonna put all that food up there for the ghosts, she gonna put it to some pract'al use. So she, the daughter, go after the rats with it.

Chris looks like he's going to pass out.

CHRIS

What you mean, 'go after the rats with it'?

The old man grins.

OLD MAN

They's rats in the attic -- you can hear 'em sometimes, moving 'round. So every day the old lady pack the food, every day the daughter load it up with enough ars'nic to kill a horse. In the donuts, see, mixed with the sugar, same color an' everythin', so those rats or those ghosts neither, they don't stand no chance in hell --

He doesn't get any farther. The young man collapses at his feet, convulsing.

SOUND OVERLAP OF:

CATHY, SCREAMING --

FA2X

EXT. THE ROOM - DAY

CATHY kicks at the door in blind fury, Cory limp and white in her arms.

CATHY
Heelllp! Goddamit! Help!

She kicks again on the door -- then stops. There's a RATTLING of the lock and hasp, then the door swings open and the Grandmother is there.

GRANDMOTHER
What is it?

CATHY
You bitch! You've poisoned Cory!

The woman blinks, then takes a look at the child. Then back to Cathy, and the most evil smile imaginable spreads over her lips.

GRANDMOTHER (CONTD)
You raised your voice. Against the rules. Someone could have heard you. Very foolish.

She stalks out of the room. She doesn't lock the door. Cathy hesitates only a moment, then goes out the door after her.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE ROOM

Cathy stops. Down the corridor, the grandmother is leaning to Doberman. She gives him only one, simple order.

GRANDMOTHER
Get rid of them.

The Grandmother walks away. Doberman gives a little squeak and starts for Cathy, his knife coming out. Cathy lurches back for the room, Doberman after her on the run.

INT. THE ROOM

Cathy slams the door, grieving and terrified at the same time -- grabs the key right where Chris left it and throws the lock home. An instant later Doberman hits the door, knocking it half off its hinges. Cathy races to the bed, leaves the corpse of Cory and snatches up Carrie, running into the attic. The door begins to splinter in the room behind her.

EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

THE WEDDING -- a perfect setting in the beautiful gardens of the estate. The guests are gathered, the bride and the groom are standing beneath sprays of blossoms. The Minister opens his spotless white New Testament.

MINISTER

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today in the presense of god...
 (pauses a beat, frowning at the distant POUNDING from the mansion)
 to join this man and this woman in holy matrimony...

Corine looks around, just with her eyes, just ever so slightly suspecting something.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Chris, bent over and retching, bursts from the library, falls, and claws his way back up. The old black man pursues him this far -- scared now.

OLD MAN

Sir! Say there, where you think you goin'?

Chris has the poker in his hand and looks wild as hell. The Old Man turns to a frightened MAID who's come from a room.

OLD MAN (CONTD)

Call the po-lice, girl! Right now!

She takes off on the run.

INT. THE ROOM - DAY

Doberman smashes through the door in a spray of wood splinters, races across the room and flings open the door to the attic. One step in and he's hit square in the head with the wooden hobby horse, and goes down hard.

INT. THE ATTIC - DAY

Cathy races back to Carrie and swings her up on her back, piggy-back style. The dazed little girl looks scared and doubtful.

CARRIE

Weeee don't like this game!

CATHY

This is no game, Carrie -- the goddam boggieman's after us, and we gotta get

(more)

CATHY (CONTD)

away.

Carrie squirms.

CARRIE

You're fibbing!

Suddenly Doberman, his head bloodied, his eyes red with hatred and bloodlust, tops the stairs, knife in hand. Carrie does a take on this and lets out the most god-awful SCREEEEEEEEAM imaginable! Doberman homes in on it like a missile.

Cathy, Carrie now a clinging rider, steps out the window onto the roof, grabbing for some handhold she can't quite find.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Something black and cursing spills out of the back door. Chris looks around, sees which direction the wedding is, and staggers for it. PAN to a nearby raggedy doghouse. Doberman's big Wolf Hound grunts from sleep, and lurches out to the end of his chain, barking savagely. He leaps with such savagery the chain breaks and he's racing across the yard like a lion in full charge.

EXT. THE DRIVE -- DAY

Among Rolls Royces and Mercedes, the dog impacts the boy from behind. Drivers scatter, servants SCREAM. The dark savage boy tears away from the dog and leaps to his feet, and just as the dog charges again, brings the poker down over its head with a ringing thud.

The big dog is stunned. The kid leaps into the back of a Rolls -- the dog right behind.

Chris rolls out the far side and slams the door in the animal's face. The dog plasters himself to the window, slavering it with fangs and hate. Chris wheels, leaps across the car's roof and slams the far door, imprisoning the dog. Before any of the astonished drivers can do any more, the boy is moving again, poker back in hand. Moving for the wedding.

INT. ATTIC OF NORTH WING - DAY

Doberman eases out onto the roof. Cathy, (Carrie half-falling off her back, the little girl's hands coming into her eyes and face,) claws her way up the flashing of the roof.

CATHY

Chris!

But Chris is not there, only Doberman. And he starts up after her.

EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

The Grandmother has just joined her wealthy friends. She looks to her daughter and gives a subtle nod. The minister is intoning in his most dulcet manner --

MINISTER

If anyone here gathered can give good
reason why this man and this woman
should not be joined...

His voice trails off, his eyes focusing on something over Corine and Bart's shoulder.

REVERSE IN HIS P.O.V. to the sight of a young woman with a child clinging to her back, clattering precariously up the slippery slate roof to its highest peak. There's a big man coming after her, also in a big hurry.

BACK ON THE MINISTER. He tries to go on...

MINISTER (CONTD)

Let him or her now speak, or forever
hold his peace.

(rushed beat)

Then I now pronounce you --

A VOICE shatters the moment, stopping the minister dead --

CHRIS (O.S.)

MOTHER!

Everyone turns to see a ragged, besooted young man tearing down the aisle at the woman -- poker raised over his head, eyes blazing. The place goes into pandemonium -- several big men leap in front and grab the boy -- and the poker goes flying.

ON CORINE, madness sweeping over her face.

CORINE

He's not mine. He's not mine.

But then the girl on the roof above them all reaches the peak and screams in a voice of stunning clarity --

CATHY

We are Corine's children!

The wedding, needless to say, goes right to hell. Chris twists around with his captors to see --

EXT. THE ROOFS - DAY

CATHY AND CARRIE -- clinging to a lightning rod for their only support. Cathy turns to face her tormentor, her face a study in maternal rage and courage.

CATEY

Come on, you ugly mother!

She puts up her dukes. Doberman tests the edge of his knife with his thumb, enjoying it. He reaches the peak and starts walking it, one foot on each side, straight to her. She has no where to go with herself and her little sister but four stories straight down to flagstones.

EXT. THE GARDEN -- DAY

Women are screaming -- Chris is going nuts --

CHRIS (O.S.)

Cathy!

Doberman wheels around. Looks down at the wedding. It gives Cathy her only chance. She twists the lightning rod off its bracket and races at him. catching him in the chest with it just as he twists back to her.

He lets out a strangled gurgle, wheels into the air, and pitches into space.

ANGLE ON HIM -- cascading down the shale cliffs in a shower of sparks from the the lightning rod. He flies off the eaves and pinwheels into space.

EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY.

CORINE, THE GRANDMOTHER AND BART -- along with everyone else -- watch with petrified fascination as the man falls out of the sky and scores a direct hit on the grandmother, killing her as quickly as if she had been hit by a boulder off a cliff. There's an explosion of screaming women and splattered men.

ANGLE ON CORINE - as she begins to WAIL in an insane, utterly mad ululation. Bart backs away -- the minister stares at her in disbelief.

CORINE

Noooooooooooooooo!!!!

EXT. THE ATTIC - DAY

CATHY and CARRIE scramble into the window.

EXT. THE GARDENS - DAY

Chris is screaming.

CHRIS

You imprisoned us! Poisoned us!

(more)

But you couldn't kill us, mother!

The SOUNDS of SIRENS thread into shocked silence of the wedding. And now Cathy is running across the lawn, past the stunned guests, to her brother.

The men holding him fall back. The resemblance between these children and the bride is just to much.

Chris and Cathy and Carrie embrace -- in tears of gratitude and rage. And Corine just wails at the sight.

CORINE

They are not mine -- they are not
my children.

She reaches for Bart -- but he just backs farther away. Everyone backs away from her.

And the three children are wrapped in a soundless, seamless cloak of arms and an endless blue spring sky.

PICTURE FREEZES ON THEM and we

ROLL END CREDITS.