

A Mike Nichols Film

HOLLYWOOD AND VINE

by

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3/1/89

CREDIT OVER.

INT. SOUTH AMERICAN AIRPORT

WIDE, WIDE SHOT of busy airport FROM HIGH UP. People busy coming and going, standing in line for international departing flights. Customs-Passport Control looms in the center at the end of the hall.

We SLOWLY PUSH IN to a ticket counter where three typically Club Med gals are getting their boarding passes. The AIRLINE EMPLOYEE hands them their tickets. She has a heavy South American accent. The THREE WOMEN have midwestern accents.

AIRLINE EMPLOYEE

There you are, Miss Jennings, Miss Varlane and Miss Peterson. Flight 92 to Miami departing Gate 17. After you pass through Passport Control, you will see it on your right.

MISS VARLANE

(bad Spanish)

Muchos gracias, por favor.

MISS PETERSON

Vicki, the lady speaks English. I don't know why you talk your lousy old Spanish to them all the time.

MISS JENNINGS

It's a courtesy, Janet. We're in their country.

MISS VARLANE

Will you two quit it? You've been bickering all morning.

MISS JENNINGS

She's just upset because she came down here to have a romance with a fiery Latin, and all she got was a fiery case of dysentery.

We FOLLOW the three of them to Passport Control. Three other passengers waiting in line briefly, coming up to an OFFICIAL behind a partition they hand their passports and their tickets to him as they continue chattering.

MISS PETERSON

I had the flu -- not that you would notice -- you two were out carousing in the discos.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISS VARLANE

I'm telling you, if you two are going to be like this the whole way home --

MISS JENNINGS

(interrupts)

Well, stop her. I'm not doing it. Hey, maybe you'll get lucky on the plane, Janet. Have one of those shipboard romances.

MISS PETERSON

C'mon, Mary.

MISS JENNINGS

What? I think she'd be happy with a pilot. All those discount trips, a man in uniform, cute little hat, wings --

The customs official hands Miss Peterson and Miss Varlane their passports and tickets back. He holds Mary Jennings.

OFFICIAL

(interrupting)

Miss Jennings?

MARY

Yes?

OFFICIAL

Mary Jennings?

MARY

Don't tell me. It's a bad picture. I know. It was very last minute and I didn't have time to do my hair on the side so my face doesn't look fat.

OFFICIAL

(interrupts)

One moment please.

MARY

Bad luck again, Janet. All these fiery types seem to be drawn hopelessly to me, bad passport picture and all. But don't despair, honey, it looks like he's got a friend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISS PETERSON

Wait a minute, girls -- what about me?

The SENIOR OFFICER approaches with the other office in tow.

SENIOR OFFICER

Mary Jennings?

MARY

That's my name, don't wear it out.

MISS VARLANE

What's the problem, senor?

SENIOR OFFICER

Come with me, please.

MISS PETERSON

Excuse me, sir, but we have a flight that's just leaving, we're with a group --

SENIOR OFFICER

(interrupts)

You two will continue. We must detain your friend. It is unavoidable.

(to Mary)

Follow me, please.

Mary follows him, continuing to talk:

MARY

Well, girls, you know how I can't resist a man in uniform. Looks like the fleet's in this time. See you on board.

Mary follows the Officer through a few other passengers en route to their flights, through a doorway marked Security in English and Spanish -- and down a hall.

MARY

(continuing)

Wait'll I tell my students back home about this. They think nothing ever happens to me. Well, look at me now. Stopped at the border complete with police escort. Did you see my friends' faces? Boy, did they look surprised.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY (CONT'D)

I bet my friend Janet wishes you had taken her off and frisked her or something. Hope you do whatever you're going to do fast 'cause I don't want to miss this flight. I have a special rate. You know, you get twenty-one days in South America for such and such amount. Excursion rates, they're called.

SENIOR OFFICER

(interrupts)

This way please.

He ushers her into a room where two officers stand behind a table, waiting. On the table is an open suitcase. Mary looks at the suitcase and then the two men. The Senior Officer closes the door behind her.

MARY

Hail, hail, the gang's all here. What the heck is going on here, boys? Wait a minute, wait a goddamn minute -- Is this some kind of Candid Camera thing? Huh? Where's the camera?

She looks around the room.

MARY

(continuing)

C'mon, boys, a joke's a joke, but I'm onto you. The jig is up.

SENIOR OFFICER

Shut up.

MARY

I beg your pardon?

SENIOR OFFICER

I said shut up. This is your suitcase, is it not?

MARY

Why, yes, I believe it is. Those look like my old chinos -- with the rosebuds --

SENIOR OFFICER

Then can you please explain how this came into your possession?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Officer holds aloft a piece of microfilm concealed in a bra.

MARY

Doesn't look like anything of mine, although I'm such a sloppy packer, I'm not surprised at anything --

The Senior Officer slaps Mary hard, sending her halfway across the room where she lands with her head down --

SENIOR OFFICER

Did you think that your affair with a government official would go unnoticed? We are not fools, Miss DuBois.

Mary slowly turns her head, regarding the Officer steadily. Her lip is bleeding. Her demeanor is completely transformed. She is no longer a midwestern Carol Burnett dingbat, but Marianne DuBois, heroic political mole.

MARIANNE

That's your best evidence for not being foolish? You wish you were foolish -- foolish should be a goal of yours. But you're not a fool; not quite. You're nothing more than a thug, a second-rate thug using brute strength to spread the word of your tender leader. Now there's a fool. A powerful fool --

The Officer starts toward Marianne as if to strike her again.

MARIANNE

(continuing)

Go ahead, hit me. But we will survive any humiliation. We have more spirit and more resources than you. All it'll cost us is money, while you... there isn't enough mommy in the world to further a cause like yours --

Marianne pauses. A look of consternation flashes across her face. One of the guards starts to break, causing the Senior Officer to blow. Finally Marianne starts laughing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIANNE/SUZANNE

Fuck... I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

MALE VOICE

Cut!

SUZANNE

(laughing)

You shut up, Raoul! All you have to say is...

(imitates him)

... come with me please -- this is your suitcase, is it not? You'd want your mommy too if you had to say all that.

A bearded man walks INTO THE SHOT and walks over to Suzanne. This is the director, LOWELL.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

I'm sorry, Lowell -- can you use any of it? No, of course you can't; there are no cutaways. You hate me now, don't you?

LOWELL

Don't be silly. It was terrific up to that point.

SUZANNE

I told you, you should never give me inches of talk. One inch at the most, but inches and inches -- it's like a nightmare.

LOWELL

You're one of the few actresses I know that doesn't like acting. And you're so good at it.

The crew has started wandering around. Suzanne invisibly signals her stand-in, a girl barely noticeable, standing by a camera.

SUZANNE

I don't like acting as much as I like hanging around sets.

LOWELL

You should be a grip.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

I would but I don't like beer.
Speaking of which, can I go to the
men's room before we start again?

LOWELL

You bet.

FIRST A.D.

Everybody get back to one. We're
going again.

The SOUNDMAN comes and checks Suzanne's body mike as
she talks to Lowell.

SOUNDMAN

Try not to hit your chest when you
do that last speech, Suzanne.

SUZANNE

Listen, Jerry, I'm lucky to get
through that speech at all -- if I
have to hit my chest to do it,
forgive me.

The Soundman with Suzanne looks at another soundman
seated behind a recorder who is laughing at what
Suzanne is saying. We hear the last part of her
dialogue through his headphones ("cans").

SUZANNE

(continuing)

You'd hit my chest too if you had
this speech.

Hair and makeup come to touch Suzanne up.

BOBBY (FIRST A.D.)

Let's go, people -- work with us
-- get back to your marks as
quickly and quietly as possible.

Lowell has gone over to the video TV and is watching
the take on video.

SUZANNE

(to hair and makeup)

Maybe I shouldn't go to the
bathroom. Maybe I should somehow
use it in the scene -- No, really,
I could play it as though Marianne
had to go to the bathroom -- aside
from everything else, it would
play much faster.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
I don't know, maybe I'm still in
character. Sometimes I can't
tell.

MAKEUP
(smiling, shaking
his head)
Wacko. Definitely wacko.

SUZANNE
I'll be right back.

Suzanne makes her way through the crew regrouping for
the next shot.

CAMERAMAN
Re-load!

SUZANNE
You can say that again.

CAMERAMAN
I probably will after the next
shot.

SUZANNE
Only if I make it all the way
through.

Suzanne is very popular with the crew. They clearly
like her and think she's funny.

Suzanne slips into the ladies' room. The door closes
and an instant later, her stand-in slips out.

We GO BACK to the soundman with the headphones around
his neck. Through them we hear someone snorting
cocaine. Both soundmen look at each other knowingly.
One puts a finger up to his nose. He hears the SOUND
of a TOILET FLUSHING THROUGH the HEADPHONES.

Lowell is directing the Senior Officer.

LOWELL
It was very good, Raoul. This
time, you know, when you say Miss
DuBois -- try not to punch it
quite as hard. Be more victorious
with your discovery than ominous.
You're plenty ominous, as it is.

RAOUL
Yes, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suzanne re-emerges from the bathroom.

FIRST A.D.

We're on a bell.

A BELL RINGS O.S.

SUZANNE

We are on a bell, aren't we,
Bobby? 'Cause that's what it
seems like. A group of people
strung out on a bell. I'm coming,
I'm coming.

(she subtly wipes
her nose)

Show business is my life --

A blood ampule is thrust deep into her mouth.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

-- and boy, are my arms tired.
Where's my plane ticket?

FIRST A.D.

(calls)

Charlie, props!

LOWELL

(low, to Suzanne)

If you fuck up my movie, I'll kill
you.

SUZANNE

(blankly)

Whaa -- ?

LOWELL

(interrupts, angry)

You know exactly what I mean. And
so does everybody else on this
set. I don't care what you do to
your body on your time. But this
is my time. My movie. I care
about what I do. I work very hard
to get good results and I don't
intend to let some spoiled,
selfish, coked up little actress
ruin my movie. Now, there are a
lot of people here trying to work
together to make this a good
movie.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOWELL (CONT'D)

I expect you to pull yourself together for these last couple of days on this film and work with us or... I'll kill you. I'll kill you before you kill yourself. And I'll do a better job 'cause you're so out of it you'd probably even botch that up. Now, do you think you can do the scene straight through this time?

Suzanne just looks at him, humiliated and dumbfounded.

LOWELL

(continuing)

Try to use the humiliation in the scene, it'll give you more depth. Use your vulnerability instead of making jokes to cover it up. Or taking drugs. One more hit of cocaine on this picture and I'm going to make sure that everyone in this town who doesn't already know, knows what a fuck up you are. I'll ruin you forever. and then I'll kill you.

Suzanne nods the smallest of nods.

LOWELL

(continuing)

Okay, everybody, back to one, we'll give it another try.

He spots Suzanne's stand-in standing to one side working hard at being invisible.

LOWELL

(continuing)

And you, what's your name?

GIRL

Cindy.

LOWELL

Perfect. Cindy. What was the one Belushi had? Kathy Smith. Cindy -- get off this set and don't come back. If I catch you on this set supplying her with drugs I'll have you arrested. I'll drop a dime on you. I'll call the police.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cindy slinks away.

LOWELL

(continuing)

Okay, I think that's everything.
Anybody else want to be arrested
or killed before we wrap this
picture?

No one replies, but the general feeling is that they
probably don't.

LOWELL

(continuing)

Then let's do the shot.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

All right, people, we're on a
bell.

Suzanne is trying desperately to pull herself together.

SUZANNE

(solemn, earnest)

Thank you, Lowell. I'm sorry...
for everything. I know you have
no reason to believe me, but I
really heard you and... I'm sorry.

LOWELL

Don't be sorry, be sober. Let's
roll.

SUZANNE

(again, to herself,
a mantra)

I'm sorry.

The third assistant director puts up the clapboard in
front of her face.

CREDITS END.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK BURROUGHS' BEDROOM - MID-MORNING

Medium-sized, Santa Fe style bedroom. Large four-
poster wooden bed. Fireplace in corner. Two people
are in the bed. One is Suzanne. The other is JACK
BURROUGHS, a successful Hollywood producer, early 30's,
energetic, enigmatic, attractive, currently slightly
hungover. He awakens with some difficulty and sits on
the edge of the bed. Suzanne is dead to the world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

Jesus, I feel like I slept under
an elephant's foot.

He turns and looks at the sleeping Suzanne.

JACK

(continuing)

Hey, slugabed -- it's almost
eleven-thirty.

He shakes her.

JACK

(continuing)

Yoohoo -- Sleeping Beauty. What's
the name of the man that slept for
a hundred years -- Rapunzel?
No. Rip Van Winkle -- Mrs.
Winkle, this is your wake-up call.

Jack now looks concerned, to the degree that he can.
It's clear that something is wrong. Jack turns Suzanne
on her back. Her head flops back. She is unconscious.

JACK

(continuing)

Oh, great. Fabulous. Suzanne!
Oh please don't be dead. I don't
need this -- do I need this?

He checks for her pulse on her wrist -- her neck.

JACK

(continuing)

Be there, be there.

It's there.

JACK

(continuing)

Alive! I knew I should stop going
out with actresses. But did I
listen to myself? No.

As he talks, he puts his robe on, looks in her purse
and finds empty bottles of Percodan and Placidil.

JACK

(continuing)

Oh, God.

INT. JACK'S CAR - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Suzanne has been wrapped in a blanket. Her clothes and her purse are in a pile on her lap.

JACK

Never date actresses. Never date actresses.

EXT. CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL

Jack drives his car into the emergency room parking lot. There is an ATTENDANT in the booth.

JACK

(to Attendant)

Delivery.

ATTENDANT

Excuse me?

JACK

(upset)

I'm dropping someone off! I'm dropping someone off! Isn't this the emergency room!?

ATTENDANT

Yes.

JACK

Well, this is an emergency!

INT. CEDARS-SINAI LOADING ZONE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Suzanne is being loaded into a wheelchair by two nurses. A DOCTOR has a clipboard.

DOCTOR

Are you a relation of the patient?

JACK

No. No relation. I barely know her. I found her like this and brought her here. Will she be all right?

Jack is walking backwards to his car.

DOCTOR

I don't know, sir. Where can we reach you?

JACK

I'll call you, okay?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK (CONT'D)

There's some empty bottles of pills in her bag -- that's probably what she took. Thanks!

Jack dives into his car. As he slams the car door, we hear a THUD. It is:

INT. HOSPITAL

A hospital door being pushed open. We see:

A very bright fluorescent light being shined in Suzanne's unconscious face. One of her eyelids is drawn open. A light is shined into it. Her pupil doesn't really react.

DOCTOR

Any idea what she's taken?

NURSE

Pills, sir, as far as we know.
Percodan, Placidil and alcohol.

Suzanne's blood pressure is taken. We see the cuff strapped to her arm.

DOCTOR

(loud)

Suzanne!

Suzanne doesn't respond.

DOCTOR

(continuing; louder)

Suzanne!

Suzanne, unconscious, tries from deep within her to become conscious.

The Doctor slaps her hard across her face. Suzanne reacts. She mumbles.

DOCTOR

(continuing)

What's she saying?

SUZANNE

(slurred)

That's your best evidence for not being foolish? Foolish should be a goal of yours.

Her speech from her fine political torture film.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE

Something about being foolish.

DOCTOR

She can say that again.

(loudly, to Suzanne)

Suzanne! We're going to have to pump your stomach.

Suzanne almost opens her eyes, focusing briefly on the Doctor.

SUZANNE

Do I have to be there?

An oxygen mask is put to her face. Life indicating suction (EKG wires) are stuck on her to monitor her vital signs.

The Doctor reaches for a hose.

Suzanne is being held down by a nurse. A black, chalkish fluid is forced down her. Moments later, we hear her throwing up.

NURSE

Funny. I just rented the video of "Mist on the Lake."

We see Suzanne's vital signs. They are low. Her heartbeat slow.

The Doctor's hand brings the hose into Suzanne's face.

NURSE

(continuing)

She had french fries for dinner, I see.

DOCTOR

And some kind of meat product.
And a pickle.

They begin to insert the hose into her nose.

DOCTOR

(continuing)

She isn't going to like this; I don't care how unconscious she is.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY ADJACENT TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM -
MOMENTS LATER

A man is mopping the floor. Suzanne's SCREAM ECHOES through the hallway. The man doesn't stop mopping, doesn't look around.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

A woman is running down the hallway, wailing, everything flying -- purse, wig askew, blouse untucked, false eyelashes removed. Clearly this woman was caught mid-something for the apparent emergency. She is DORIS MANN, about 60, formerly beautiful and more than somewhat currently. She was an enormous star in the 50's and 60's and bears that mark.

She is currently very upset, theatrically so. Cutting a wide swath as she makes her way down the hall -- things dropping out of her purse, mostly makeup -- a pack of cigarettes. People watch her as she moves by moving aside to avoid impact. Doris Mann is very upset. Perhaps she has lost a shoe.

DORIS

My baby, my baby.

She is breathless.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Suzanne is unconscious following her procedure. She is still being monitored. An IV runs into her arm.

Suzanne's mother, Doris Mann, has flung herself across her daughter's inert form.

There is something childlike about Doris at the same time as she is theatrical. She is far from a monster as many stars from her generation have been depicted. She is tough, but at the same time, touching, almost adorable. She is a product of complete self-invention. Dirt poor to rich and famous. Though the following has a touch of theatricality about it, almost as though "done" for the two nurses -- there should be no doubt about Doris' sincere feelings and concern for Suzanne.

Several NURSES try to comfort her.

NURSE A

She's resting comfortably, Miss Mann. She should be (fine).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

(not hearing,
interrupting)

How did this happen? I was a good mother. I had my career, but I was there. She had a happy childhood. I can prove it -- I have films.

NURSE B

I'm sure she did, Miss Mann. Now if you'll just --

DORIS

(interrupts)

Unlike her alleged father who was never there, just like he's not here now. Do you see her father here?

NURSE A

No.

DORIS

Of course not. He's not here, that's why. I'm here. That's who. Me. Her mother.

(goes to tuck
Suzanne in)

At least she's sleeping now.

(to Suzanne)

You never could sleep, could you?

(kisses her)

That's my girl.

SUZANNE'S DREAM

Suzanne is wandering down a hospital hallway. There are pictures on the wall. Marilyn Monroe, Lenny Bruce, Elvis Presley, Montgomery Clift, Judy Garland, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, John Belushi, Jim Morrison. She regards them curiously. Suddenly she sees the nurses' station. It is empty. She looks around to make sure the coast is clear then makes her way to an enormous medicine cabinet, which she carefully opens. It is filled with pills. She starts dumping them into her hands -- but then she looks down and her hospital gown has no pockets to put the pills in. She panics that someone is coming. A woman rounds the corner, catching Suzanne in the act. The woman is Nancy Reagan.

INT. SUZANNE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Suzanne wakes up, horrified, sweating from her dream.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A therapist, JULIE, is standing at the edge of her bed. She is middle-aged, dressed rather youthfully, with dark hair and very long red nails. She smokes Lucky Strikes. She is the queen bee in this rehabilitation hive. She carries a pad and pencil.

JULIE

Nasty dream? Everybody has those.
You'll have them for a while.

SUZANNE

(ironic)

Great.

Julie walks over and opens the drapes.

JULIE

(briskly)

I'm Julie Marsden, Director of the
Dawn of New Hope Rehabilitation
Program. I'm here to admit you.

SUZANNE

Nice to meet you.

JULIE

Your blood work was done up in the
emergency room the other night.
Since you've been basically
sleeping since then -- we're going
to have to find out a couple of
things before we officially admit
you to the unit.

SUZANNE

Shoot.

JULIE

All right, we'll start.

She refers to her notes on a clipboard, as she sits in
a chair at the end of Suzanne's bed.

JULIE

(continuing)

Approximately how long have you
been a drug addict?

Suzanne looks at Julie blankly.

SUZANNE

A drug addict?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIE

You've admitted yourself into a drug and alcohol rehabilitation unit. Surely that implies some sort of drug problem.

SUZANNE

Drug problem. Yeah, I guess, but not... not a drug addict. See, I never took any one drug.

(thinks a beat)

I guess that makes me a drugs addict, huh? My doctor told me I didn't so much have a serious drug problem as a drug problem I should take seriously.

JULIE

(raises her eyebrows)

I see. And did you?

SUZANNE

What?

JULIE

Take it seriously?

SUZANNE

I guess so. I got here. You can't get much more serious than this.

Julie makes a note.

JULIE

Did you deliberately try to take your life?

SUZANNE

(flabbergasted)

What?!

JULIE

You know, kill yourself, suicide, overdose.

Suzanne is affronted.

SUZANNE

No.

JULIE

I'm sorry if my question offends you, but having to have your stomach pumped indicates fairly suicidal behavior.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Well, the behavior might be, but
I'm certainly not.

Julie makes a note.

JULIE

You're going to have to learn to
handle a reality without drugs.

SUZANNE

Hey, you teach me how to identify
it, I'll try to learn how to
handle it.

JULIE

Everybody has their own particular
reality. Only you can identify
yours.

SUZANNE

Well, then we're both out of luck.
I'm in the business of fantasy.
My family's in the business of
fantasy -- Fantasy is my reality.

JULIE

Why did you go into show business,
then?

SUZANNE

I didn't go into it -- I've never
been out of it. But --

(Suzanne puts up her
index finger)

I have a plan. I am planning an
escape. I am tunneling out of
show business. Digging under all
the major studios... Say, do we
get any medicine to help us come
off drugs?

Julie gives her a look.

CUT TO:

INT. DRUG REHABILITATION HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

An oversized hospital room which serves as the family
therapy room, or movie room, or cafeteria.

Family night at the Dawn of New Hope Drug and Alcohol
Rehabilitation Center in Century City.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Patients are seated in a circle on cafeteria chairs with two chairs in the middle. In the hot seat (center chairs) are ROB, an agent, and his wife, CAROL, the cocaine addict. JIM, a therapist, is conducting the session. He is an attractive, large black man in his thirties. Rob is impeccably dressed, down to his socks.

He is an ambitious workaholic whose manner is arrogant and cold. Carol is a nervous gentle girl who is intimidated by her husband. She chain smokes. Other addicts and their families sit and watch Carol and Rob in the hot seat.

JIM

(good-naturedly)

It's nice to see you here again,
Rob.

ROB

I'd like to say it's nice to be
here, Jim, but...

JIM

I know it must be very unpleasant
for you to have to deal with all
this.

ROB

Of course it's not pleasant, but
Carol feels that it's important
for me to participate, so I come.

JIM

I see. But it's difficult for you
to see the point, is that it?

ROB

Of course not. It's just that, as
you know, this is Carol's second
visit with you people and the
first time I came down here
happily.

Carol laughs ironically and rolls her eyes.

Suzanne watches Rob and Carol intently.

JIM

Why are you laughing, Carol?

CAROL

Huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM

When Rob said he came down here
happily the last time, you
laughed. Why was that?

CAROL

(laughs again)
Oh, I don't know.

ROB

(confrontive)
What, Carol?

CAROL

(reluctantly)
Nothing. I don't know. I never
felt you were happy to come here
at all, is all.

ROB

That's not true, dear. I
specifically remember you noticing
how involved I was last time.
This time, admittedly, I'm not
quite as enthusiastic. I have a
lot more work that is impossible
to interrupt as easily as last
time and I know I don't have to
remind you that when we married we
had an understanding that my work
came first. You said that you
could live with that arrangement.
You know how important it is for
me to devote a lot of time to my
job in order to do well. And
certainly you benefit from my
success. Don't I give you
everything you want? Don't we
live in a nice house? All I ask
from you in return is a little
support and some peace and quiet
while I read my scripts on Sunday.

As this dialogue continues, the group looks very uncomfortable, squirming in their seats, particularly the women, and most particularly, Suzanne.

CAROL

(barely audible)
I know, I just...

She trails off awkwardly, wishing she were dead or invisible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROB

What? Tell me, Carol. I'm not a mind reader. I'm sorry I'm not able to be more attentive while you're in here. Didn't we go to Barbados last year for Christmas? Didn't I say you could re-decorate the house this year? But now, in light of the expense of the clinic, I'm not sure if that's still feasible.

CAROL

(mortified)

I know, but...

JIM

Is there something you'd like to communicate to Rob, Carol?

Carol can hardly speak. There are tears in her eyes.

CAROL

Nothing really important.

JIM

(to group)

Who here thinks Carol is having trouble communicating with Rob?

Group raises hands.

CARL

Someone ought to bust him in the jaw.

JIM

Now, Carl. These random outbursts of yours do no one any good.

ROB

I don't really see how this process is of any benefit at all. Publicly airing one's difficulties --

JIM

(interrupts gently)

Does anyone here think they could communicate with Rob in Carol's place?

Suzanne, who has been looking furious on Carol's behalf, raises her hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM

(continuing)

Good for you, Suzanne. Rob, this is Suzanne who will be sitting in for Carol. Suzanne and Carol, why don't you trade seats?

Suzanne and Carol trade seats.

SUZANNE

(nervous)

Hi, Rob.

ROB

Good evening.

Jim stands to one side, watching. The rest of the junkies look on breathlessly or not.

ROB

(continuing)

Well?

Carol watches fearfully from Suzanne's seat.

Suzanne starts out haltingly and gains confidence as she continues.

SUZANNE

I wouldn't feel comfortable telling you how I felt. I'd be afraid I might get it wrong. I might make a mistake and say the wrong feeling and then you'd correct me. You talk to me like I'm a child. So officious and grand. I can feel you massing on my borders; a little backward country with a superpower poised for takeover. Russia to my Finland. The implication is that my way is wrong, that I can't do it. It's like dope. I don't mean that's why I take it, but that's what it does. It takes you over, you lose control. It doesn't let you take care of yourself. Like you. You don't let me take care of myself by implying that I can't -- never could. By implying that you -- or anyone -- could do it better. Nothing I do pleases you, so I do nothing to please you anymore.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

I'll spell relief any way I can. I can't be perfect like you. I use drugs to take me out of the game. I don't want to play if I can't win. With you I always feel wrong and stupid and young. I can't win. As long as I stay sick I give you something to be. As long as I'm not good enough you're better. I doubt myself to the degree that you're sure. Well, get this, I'm sick of playing down to your up, failure to your success. Stop looking at my faults as a means of not dealing with your own. Feeling superior to me doesn't make you someone. You're Doctor Frankenstein... and I'm your monster, Frankenstoned. Get off my back. As long as you take care of me I'll never take care of myself. Find a hobby, get a night job, become a Big Brother. Just leave me to myself. Get a life.

Suzanne stops, embarrassed. Jim rescues her.

JIM

Thank you, Suzanne. You make a very lively Carol.

Rob looks a little stunned. Carol looks a little pleased and a little frightened.

JIM

(continuing)

Why doesn't everybody go downstairs and visit with their significant others --

CARL

(interrupts)

Their what??

JIM

Their families, spouses or lovers. You have about fifteen minutes to visit. Carol and Rob, I'd like you to stay behind and talk for a moment, if you would.

The group begins to disperse and move out of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Julie, who has been watching Suzanne sit in for Carol, motions her over to one side.

Suzanne's new drug hospital pal, ARETHA, waits for her. BART and ALLEN, two other family night participants, sit talking.

JULIE

That was very good, Suzanne.
Anger makes you eloquent. You
showed genuine feeling for the
first time here.

SUZANNE

I'm always better as other people.

JULIE

Why are you so afraid of feeling
in yourself?

SUZANNE

(uncomfortable)

I'm a better thinker than a
feeler, I guess. I'm just leading
with my strength.

JULIE

Maybe this strength just hides a
weakness.

SUZANNE

Oh Christ, why does everything
have to be about something? I'm
mental 'cause I'm not emotional --
why can't I be mental 'cause I
am? There are plenty of emotional
people -- I bet no one asks them
why they're not mental.

JULIE

Where were your parents tonight?

SUZANNE

My mother, you mean. My mother is
working. She's coming if she
can. She's coming after work.
And that is not the problem.
That's the good news. She's a
good worker, a great role model
for working, for being
independent, for being tough. You
leave her alone. If it wasn't for
her, I don't know where I'd be.
Certainly not where I am today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Julie just looks at her. Suzanne realizes what she has said -- where she is.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

You know what I mean.

JULIE

Deal with your feelings, Suzanne
-- before they deal with you.

SUZANNE

Do you always talk in bumper
stickers -- or is that just on the
job jargon?

JULIE

You know, Suzanne, alcoholism is
not the problem, it is the
solution -- but until you remove
this solution, you can't see
clearly what the problem is. This
anger isn't about me. Who are you
really angry with?

We hear Doris call gaily from down the hall.

DORIS (O.S.)

Hello, darling.

Julie and Suzanne look at each other.

SUZANNE

I told you she'd come.

Suzanne is joined by Aretha. They both move down the
hall to Doris -- away from Julie.

DORIS

Hello, dear.

SUZANNE

(to Aretha; sotto)

Just when you thought it was safe
to go back into the rehab.

Suzanne moves to Doris and embraces her. There is true
warmth between mother and daughter.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

Hi, Mama.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Am I too late for the family thing?

SUZANNE

Yeah, but that's okay. Let's go back to my room.

Doris and Suzanne start to move down the hall to Suzanne's room.

Doris in her highly coordinated semi-stylish ensemble and fur, Suzanne in her jeans and T-shirt.

DORIS

Oh, sugar, I didn't want to miss that -- how was it?

Aretha hovers to one side, Bart and Allen behind.

DORIS

(continuing; doesn't wait for her reply)

What's the matter with your hair?

SUZANNE

I don't know. It's all the rage in the rehab.

At this moment they are approached by two gay men, Bart and Allen.

BART

Excuse me, Suzanne, but could I meet your mother?

SUZANNE

Sure, Bart. This is my mother, Doris. Mom, this is --

BART

(interrupts)

Oh, Miss Mann. I can't believe I'm meeting you. Ever since I was about seven, I've wanted to be you.

ALLEN

Bart does you in his drag show.

BART

This is my lover, Allen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS
(to Bart)
What number do you do?

BART
"Whistling Pines."

Suzanne starts to move off with Aretha, a girl in her mid-twenties, who dresses very punk.

SUZANNE
Mother...

DORIS
Oh, yes, boys... Nice meeting you.

BART
See you later.

Bart and Allen go giggling down the hallway.

DORIS
Sorry, dear. You know how much the queens like me.

Suzanne, Aretha and Doris are walking down the hall to Suzanne's room.

SUZANNE
Yeah. Uh, Mom, this is Aretha.

DORIS
Oh, hello. How rude of me. I'm just so excited to see my daughter. Aretha. What an unusual name.

ARETHA
I know. I think my family was expecting someone black.

The three women are now standing at the doorway of Suzanne's room.

DORIS
Are you black?

ARETHA
No, I... It's nice to meet you. Suzanne's told me so much about you. I'm going to weave a basket or something and let you two visit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Aretha exits down the hall. Doris and Suzanne enter Suzanne's standard issue hospital room.

INT. SUZANNE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

DORIS

She seems very unusual. What did she say about blacks?

Doris throws her bag on the bed and pulls out a pack of cigarettes. She looks around for an ashtray. Suzanne gets a paper cup, puts a small amount of water in it and hands it to Doris. Doris lights up, sits down and crosses her legs dramatically.

SUZANNE

I think she was making a joke.

DORIS

Oh well, I'm glad you're making friends. Now, did you call Joel?

SUZANNE

Not yet.

Suzanne gets on the bed and sits hugging her knees. She rocks back and forth.

DORIS

Well, you should. You're supposed to start that movie.

SUZANNE

I'm not going to do it.

Doris gets up and starts pacing and smoking.

DORIS

I don't think you should do it, and I'll tell you why.

SUZANNE

Mom, I just said I'm not going to do it.

DORIS

First, I don't think that this is a pivotal project in your career; second, you're going to need time to rest and explore; and C, I think you should change agents. I don't like what they're doing for you. Careers need planning.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS (CONT'D)

Your problem is you're too impatient. You're only interested in instant gratification.

SUZANNE

Instant gratification takes too long.

DORIS

(not hearing her)

But I don't want you to think about any of this now. I'm handling everything while you're in here. No pressure. I want you to feel absolutely clear -- nothing hanging over your head.

Doris' eyes suddenly fill with tears.

DORIS

(continuing)

Oh dear, look at me. I promised myself I wouldn't do this and now look. I didn't want you to see me upset. I hate getting upset. I just hate for you to go through this is all. I wish I could do it for you. I never wanted you to go through any pain. I tried so hard to shield you, protect you. I always worried that I'd lose you. That you'd be taken from me early.

Suzanne watches her mother tensely from the bed.

SUZANNE

I know, Mama.

DORIS

I know you blame me for all this drug scene.

SUZANNE

Mom, I do not. I don't blame anyone. I take full responsibility.

DORIS

You're just saying that because that psychiatrist taught you that. You don't really believe it. Just because I drank for a while when you were younger...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

(sotto; sarcastic)

A while.

DORIS

Well, it couldn't have been more than five years at the outside. Golly, are you tough. Just like Grandma. Always judging me. You've never forgiven me for that. Maybe I did drink a lot then, but I don't now. I just enjoy my wine.

SUZANNE

Look, Ma, I don't think that we need to go over this anymore.

DORIS

You never let me talk, do you?

SUZANNE

It's just that I don't feel like I'm talking to you. I feel like I'm talking to your drama coach.

DORIS

Don't make fun of your Aunt Sylvia, dear. She was wonderful at character breakdown.

SUZANNE

(sighs)

Forget it, Ma.

DORIS

You should try not to be so mad at me, dear.

Suzanne is silent, rocking. Doris picks up some of Suzanne's underwear from her open suitcase on the floor.

DORIS

(continuing)

Ah, I'll just rinse these out. I brought some Woolite packets. They're so handy for the road.

Suzanne grabs her underwear from her mother's hands.

SUZANNE

Leave them. I can do them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suzanne and Doris wrestle with the underwear for a moment. They gaze at one another silently for a beat. Suzanne's face is red. She isn't breathing. Doris breaks the moment by going over and retrieving her purse by the chair, talking as she goes.

DORIS

I'm having some clothes and a quilt brought over tomorrow afternoon and your tape cassette thing for music. Mary is coming over Sunday with a video machine and some tapes... and maybe a plant -- it's so blah here, I don't know how you can stand it. Everything one color.

Suzanne stands where her mother left her, not breathing, clutching her underwear.

INT. DRUG HOSPITAL - DAY

Converted room where all the windows have been shut and the lights are out.

The junkies are watching a drug VIDEO called "Hooked On A Line" about cocaine addiction. All the junkies are present.

GIRL ON SCREEN

And then I went from snorting to slamming.

SAM

Yeah! That's my kind of girl!

GIRL ON SCREEN

And then one night, I found myself sitting with a kilo under the floorboards and a gun in my lap.

Girl On Screen speaks in monotone. She has very greasy hair.

SID

If they're going to get real people for these things, they should at least get interesting real people.

GIRL ON SCREEN

... with the air-conditioner turned up full blast, sweating with all the windows shut with cellophane.

CLOSEUP - CAROL, ARETHA AND SUZANNE
watching video.

SUZANNE
(whispers)
I was up for this film.

ARETHA
What happened?

SUZANNE
Not ordinary enough. It's one of
the reasons I turned to dope.

CAROL
That's understandable.

BART
Did you see the original of this
with Merle Oberon? It's one of my
favorites.

The group laughs.

INT. SUZANNE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

transformed with Doris' additions. Satin and velvet
quilt, pink tape deck, several plants, a trunk of
clothes, etc. Suzanne is seated on the bed reading the
"Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous. There is a TAP on
the door and NURSE DOTTIE comes in with a huge bunch of
flowers and a tiny stuffed dolphin tied to them.

DOTTIE
Flowers for you, Suzanne! Big,
pretty flowers!

Suzanne rises from the bed.

As the door opens, we become aware of Carl's ever-
present voice. He is on the pay phone which is located
just outside Suzanne's room.

Aretha follows Dottie into the room.

ARETHA
Who died?

Dottie laughs as she puts the flowers on the window-
sill.

DOTTIE
Both of you almost did, for a
start.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dottie goes out laughing and talking to herself in her singsong, annoying voice.

DOTTIE
(continuing)
Big, pretty flowers.

The girls look at each other as she exits. Dottie is annoying.

Suzanne is opening the card that came with the flowers.

SUZANNE
(referring to Dottie)
Big fish in a little rehab.

ARETHA
Who are they from?

SUZANNE
(reading)
They're from the guy who pumped my stomach.

ARETHA
Bullshit.

Suzanne hands Aretha the note as proof.

ARETHA
(continuing;
reading)
You are a warm and sensitive person.
(looks up)
He can tell all that from the contents of your stomach?

SUZANNE
I'd have to be sensitive to need all that Percodan. I'm tempted to marry him to tell people how we met.

CARL (O.S.)
Miss Suzanne. Your mama's on the phone.

A look of consternation passes over Suzanne's face.

SUZANNE
(calls)
Tell her I'm de-toxing.

Aretha is watching Suzanne.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

(continuing)

Well, I am aren't I? You know something that drives me crazy? I can't remember how I got here. I know I left Wallis' party with someone, but I must have gone into a blackout 'cause I can't remember anything about it and Wallis is out of town.

ARETHA

Tell me about it. The last thing I remember doing was smoking dust in the office bathroom -- next thing I know, I'm handcuffed and in an ambulance.

SUZANNE

Why handcuffed?

ARETHA

Apparently, I threatened to rob a liquor store. I didn't have a gun, though.

INT. DRUG HOSPITAL - TELEVISION ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

All the junkies are in the television room on a brief afternoon break before group therapy. Carl, Sam, Bart, Aretha, Suzanne, Carol, Alex and Sid. They are all glued to the TV -- rapt, a lost generation has found its favorite TV show.

CLOSEUP - TELEVISION SCREEN

OPENING CREDITS for "The Outer Limits."

TELEVISION (V.O.)

"You're traveling in another dimension. Not a dimension of sight and sound, but of mind. A place that lies between the pit of a man's fears and the peak of his imagination. There's a signpost up ahead. Next stop: The Outer Limits."

We PAN SLOWLY across the faces of our junkies as they absorb "The Outer Limits."

INT. DRUG HOSPITAL - COUNSELING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Hospital office. Julie sits at a desk with her chair facing Suzanne and Doris, who sit in other chairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They have just begun a meeting. Julie has begun explaining something to Suzanne.

JULIE

So the upshot of the whole thing is that, having been so recently in a clinic, you're a very high risk for a movie.

SUZANNE

But they want me to do the movie. I talked to the director and --

JULIE

The director isn't the problem. It's the insurance company. They refuse to cover you in the event you do drugs (and alcohol).

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

I'm not going to do drugs and alcohol.

DORIS

We know that, dear. But these are businessmen who have no knowledge of creative personalities. Actors are not treated well, and actresses are treated like... Well, I hate to say the word, but... shit. Why, I remember when I was fifteen years old, Mr. Mayer called me in for a meeting and he was on the toilet, and we had to conduct the meeting with him on the toilet. You can be sure he wouldn't have done that to John Garfield.

SUZANNE

(irritated)

Mom...

DORIS

(to Julie)

My daughter doesn't like to talk to me.

JULIE

Miss Mann, maybe I'd better handle this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Of course. She'll listen to you
-- you're not her mother.

JULIE

Unfortunately, other actresses and
actors have not come to work due
to a drug and alcohol problem, and
it's cost the insurance company a
lot of money. Try to see it from
their point of view.

SUZANNE

I do see. I'm being punished.

JULIE

There is a difference between
punishment and accepting the
consequences of our actions.

DORIS

What comes around goes around,
dear.

SUZANNE

(to her mother)

How do you figure having my
stomach pumped going around to my
not working again?

JULIE

Suzanne, if you'll let me finish,
you'll see it's not all bad news.

SUZANNE

(sulking, to herself)

What comes around goes around.

JULIE

I talked to the insurance company
this morning and they've agreed to
cover you if you stay with a
responsible party for the duration
of the film.

SUZANNE

Meaning what? I should stay here?
Punch out in the morning and in at
night?

JULIE

It's not quite that extreme,
Suzanne.

(MORE)

—(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIE (CONT'D)

They thought it would be appropriate to stay with one or both parents -- since your father lives in New York, your mother said you could stay with her.

Suzanne looks totally confused.

SUZANNE

Excuse me?

DORIS

She couldn't stay with her father anyway. He's worse than she is.

(to Suzanne)

Not that you're bad, dear.

SUZANNE

Stay with my mother? I'm thirty-four years old!

DORIS

Dear, I lived with my mother and father 'til I was twenty-three, and we all shared one bathroom.

JULIE

Suzanne, maybe it would be better to wait a couple of months to go back to work, when you're feeling better equipped to deal with the world.

SUZANNE

But I want to do this film. I do better when I work. I feel like I belong. I feel necessary. I know how to do that.

DORIS

She's just like me when I was her age. I did film after film. I never stopped. It was wonderful therapy after my divorce and my miscarriages. Of course, in those days, the material was better.

(to Suzanne)

I think, dear, to do a cop film at this point in your career is a poor choice. You've just done an interesting political film; don't you think now it would be wiser to relax and compose yourself like Julie suggests?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

(But) I want to work now.

DORIS

My daughter doesn't listen to me.
Forty-two years in the business
and she doesn't listen.

JULIE

You understand the conditions for
doing this film, then? The
duration of the film, you stay at
your mother's.

DORIS

You can have your old room.

SUZANNE

(ironic)

Great. Okay, okay. I'll stay
with her. You. Great. Okay.
Fine.

DORIS

What do you say? No pain, no
gain.

SUZANNE

No wonder I'm so hefty.

DORIS

Hefty? If anything you're too
thin. Look at me -- my stomach --

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

I was kidding, Mother.

DORIS

Well, I don't get your generation's
humor half the time --

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

I don't have a generation.

JULIE

Then I suggest you get one.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The junkies are playing volleyball. Sid, Aretha and
Bart against Carl, Sam and Carol. Dottie supervises to
one side on a blanket with a RADIO playing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK, a new resident junkie, pushes Suzanne in a swing. Mark is 18 years old and looks moderately insane. He has very bad skin and hair parted down the center.

MARK

So, you're getting out tomorrow.

SUZANNE

Yup.

MARK

That's so cool. I come in yesterday, you go out tomorrow. Changing of the guard.

SUZANNE

Addict relay.

MARK

You know, I identify with you. You seem different. Well, that's how I feel. I feel how you seem.

SUZANNE

Uh-huh.

MARK

Did I tell you I was in prison with Manson?

SUZANNE

Yes, you told me.

MARK

He feels different, too. He told me that.

SUZANNE

Really.

MARK

Yup. Right to me. "I'm different, Mark." He said that.

SUZANNE

Wow.

MARK

So you're starting a movie soon, Carl said.

SUZANNE

Next week.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK

That's so cool. Are you nervous?

SUZANNE

Well, I'm always a little bit nervous, so...

MARK

You don't seem nervous. You seem different. Like Manson.

SUZANNE

Uh-huh. That makes a certain kind of sense.

Mark pushes Suzanne higher and higher. The light sparkles through the trees.

MARK

Did I tell you what Manson said about Redwoods?

SUZANNE

Yes.

Mark pushes Suzanne high into the sky. We STAY in the sky.

As we PAN DOWN, we hear... the BUSTLE of a film setting up. Men SHOUTING at one another, equipment being moved, generators humming, lights being set up.

EXT. MOVIE SET - BACK LOT OF STUDIO - DAY

Several camera equipment and wardrobe trucks, prop truck, makeup and hair truck, toilet truck, catering truck, and one long trailer which contains six compartments. These are the artists' dressing rooms, all with names on the doors. Among the names are the stars' names, ROBERT MUNCH and SUZANNE VALE.

We see a car approaching from a distance as we watch the hum and activity of the film set organizing for its first day. The station wagon that has been approaching now drives up. Suzanne is in the back seat with wet hair. The car is met by a young man with a beard, TED, carrying a walkie-talkie.

TED

Yep, she just got here. I'll show her to her trailer.

(to Suzanne)

I'm Ted, designed to make your life a more annoying place to be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE
(bowing slightly)
Suzanne, designed to be annoyed.

TED
(laughs)
Then we ought to get along great.

Ted leads Suzanne to the long trailer with the row of doors. Each door has a name on it.

TED
(continuing;
indicating door)
And this, of course, is your...

SUZANNE
(interrupts)
My hamster cage.

Suzanne climbs the three little steps that lead into her allotted space. Ted follows her.

TED
I was going to say resting place.

SUZANNE
(laughs)
My final resting place. I always suspected it would end like this -- alone in a tiny room with an air-conditioner, a toilet and an A.M. radio in the middle of nowhere.

INT. LITTLE ROOM

The little room is very little. Along one wall is a sort of makeshift bed with a cushion to lie down on or be used as a couch. There is a makeup mirror with a counter under it and a chair beneath that. There is a small closet on the left as you enter at the foot of the bed, and in the right-hand corner is a little roomette containing a toilet and a sink. The air-conditioner is over the door, the radio on the wall.

Ted stands in the doorway as Suzanne surveys her space.

TED
Hopefully it won't end like this;
it'll just middle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Yeah, hopefully, it'll end in a large, air-conditioned room with an A.M./F.M. radio.

TED

I know what'll cheer you up. The producer is coming to see you. I mean, one of the producers.

SUZANNE

How many producers are there?

TED

Three. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

SUZANNE

And which am I endearing myself to this morning?

Before Ted can answer, a large man, JOE PIERCE, appears at the door and knocks. He is middle-aged and looks like someone's stepfather. He is followed by Rob Sonnenfeld, the agent Suzanne lambasted in the drug hospital.

JOE

Anybody home?

SUZANNE

Who is it?

JOE

Joe Pierce. Just came to welcome you aboard.

Ted squeezes past Joe and Rob as he exits.

TED

(to Joe)

Morning, sir.

(to Suzanne)

So, can I tell them you're about ready?

SUZANNE

I guess.

Joe Pierce walks into the trailer and sits largely on Suzanne's small trailer bed.

JOE

Any more people in here and we'll need a lubricant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suzanne laughs uneasily. Joe laughs heartily, slapping his thigh. Ted exits.

JOE
(continuing; calls)
See you later, Ted!
(to Suzanne)
Suzanne, this is my agent, Rob
Sonnenfeld, who's just come to
make sure we're all A-okay.

ROB
(testily)
We've met.

Rob remains as aloof as possible considering the tight quarters.

SUZANNE
(awkward)
Good to see you.

JOE
We just came by to say hello and
make sure everything is up to
snuff.

SUZANNE
Everything's great.

JOE
And we're going to need a drug
screen.

SUZANNE
Excuse me?

Joe shifts his large body heavily.

JOE
It's not for us, you understand.
We aren't worried about you at
all. It's that damn insurance
company. They refuse to cover you
without a screen.

SUZANNE
I see.

JOE
Of course, we're behind you one
hundred percent. It's just one of
the formalities of the business.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

I understand totally. Do you want urine or blood?

JOE

I'm sure urine will do just fine.

SUZANNE

Great. Do you have a cup or something I can put it in?

JOE

Oh, don't worry about that. The nurse'll come by and get it from you later today.

Joe slaps his thighs and stands up.

JOE

(continuing)

Well, I'm glad we had the chance to have this little talk. Well, I'll leave you to get ready. See you out there.

SUZANNE

Okay. Thanks.

We HOLD on Suzanne's face as she watches Rob, Joe and Joe's enormous ass disappear out of her tiny trailer.

EXT. FILM SET - DAY (ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES LATER)

Gaffers and electricians, setting up a shot around a large cactus. The lights are being arranged with paper in front of them or screens to dim the lights. Stand-ins are tied to the cactus. The D.P. checks the lights on their faces with his meter. He shouts instructions to his assistants, one of whom is checking the distance between camera and stand-ins with a tape measure. It's a movie set, for chrissakes.

Suzanne wanders to the edge of the set, watching them set up. Her hair and makeup have been done and she is in costume. She looks rather attractive for an undercover cop.

Ted appears at Suzanne's elbow.

TED

We're about ready for a line-up.

SUZANNE

Are we going to get a rehearsal, by any chance?

(CONTINUED) —

CONTINUED:

TED

I think you've got this film confused with a big budget film. The lower the budget, the fewer the rehearsals, the worse the food. Get the picture?

SUZANNE

(from the song "Leader of the Pack")

Yes, we see.

Ted guides Suzanne over to the cactus and she is tied up to it with Robert Munch.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

Hi, I'm Suzanne.

ROBERT

Morning. Robert.

Rocky, the First A.D., shouts over the bullhorn.

ROCKY

Quiet please. We're going to do a block for camera, everybody. There's a lot of dialogue, so we'll need your total cooperation. Also, keep in mind, there are live snakes in this shot, so we'll need you to be very, very careful.

Robert and Suzanne look at each other. Live snakes?

INT. SUZANNE'S DRESSING ROOM

It is the end of the day. Suzanne is removing her makeup in front of the mirror and eating a doughnut and drinking a Coke. There is a KNOCK at the door.

SUZANNE

(calls)

Yeah.

TED (O.S.)

Your mom's here.

Suzanne gives her reflection a perplexed look.

EXT. SUZANNE'S TINY ROOM

Suzanne descends the little stairs to her tiny home carrying the doughnut, and gazes out to the parking lot in the dusk light.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her mother's Cadillac is parked at the curb surrounded by a little group of crew folks.

Suzanne approaches. We hear Doris talking.

DORIS

I haven't been on this lot since Tony Randall and I shot "The Ghost of Rubber Boot Farm" in 1952.

WOMAN

I remember that one. You rode a donkey in it.

DORIS

Oh, that donkey! I even remember her name. Stella. Stella the donkey. Her trainer couldn't get her to do anything. Except pee. All it seemed to do was pee. I said where is it all coming from? It can't be the straw.

Doris sees Suzanne.

DORIS

(continuing)

Oh, hello, dear, surprise. Your old mother came to pick you up, see?

Suzanne flushes in embarrassment at her mother's public persona. She gets into the car next to her mom. Ted sticks his head in through the window. Doris kisses Suzanne.

TED

So I take it you don't need your driver, Miss Vale.

DORIS

No, she doesn't. I'm her driver. I'm her reason.

SUZANNE

Ted, this is my mother, Doris.
Mom, this is Ted.

TED

A pleasure, Miss Mann. I'm a huge fan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

You're a poet. "A fan, Miss Mann." You're a poet like my daughter. Have you heard my daughter talk yet? She's so verbal. Oh, of course, you've heard her talk; you're working with her.

SUZANNE

Mom...

DORIS

I'm embarrassing my daughter. She hates when I talk.

SUZANNE

Only when you talk about me like I'm not here. Like I've passed on to my great reward.

TED

(to Suzanne)

You know your call for tomorrow, right?

SUZANNE

Yeah. Thanks.

Doris starts the car. Suzanne eats her doughnut.

DORIS

Bye-bye, all.

INT. DORIS' CADILLAC - DRIVING AWAY

DORIS

You shouldn't eat so much, dear. You're starting to look years older than yourself.

SUZANNE

Great. I'll just have some heroin, then. No, better yet, some of that near-heroin that just came on the market. You know, like near beer?

DORIS

You've made your point, dear. Don't let's fight. Well, how was your day, darling?

SUZANNE

They made me do a drug test.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

I knew it. I knew you shouldn't do this film.

SUZANNE

Yeah, but you knew I shouldn't do it because it was a bad film, not because they were gonna make me do a drug test.

DORIS

I don't analyze like you do. It just felt wrong to me. I had a dream that it wasn't right.

Suzanne rolls her eyes.

DORIS

(continuing)

I know you don't take my dreams seriously; not even the one that predicted your kidney stone. You know, I had a dream the other night that I was drowning. Sinking to the bottom of the ocean, with a heavy sequined dress dragging me down.

SUZANNE

What does that mean?

DORIS

I'm not trying to alarm you, dear, I'm just trying to prepare you. You know, I didn't want to tell you before, 'cause you were in the clinic and all that, but you know the hysterectomy I had?

SUZANNE

Yeah, the one last year?

DORIS

They found tumors.

SUZANNE

Really?

DORIS

(nodding)

Fibroid tumors.

SUZANNE

But, isn't that normal?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Usually. Usually it is normal.
But you know, dear, in our family
all the women die young. All have
weak systems.

SUZANNE

But Gramma's still alive.

DORIS

Barely. And don't contradict me,
dear. I'm trying to tell you I
might not be here much longer.
I'm not trying to alarm you, dear,
I just want to prepare you for my
death.

SUZANNE

(sotto)

Fuck me, what are you gonna wear.

DORIS

(not hearing her)

It's important you understand how
precious your life is. I left you
my emeralds and the rehearsal hall
in my will, so when I die, I can
look down from heaven and watch
you pay off your house. Although
if you keep spending money like
you do, I'm not going to leave you
anything. Or if I do I'll leave
it to you in trust.

SUZANNE

Great. Then you can even have
control from beyond the grave.
How did we end up talking about
your death from my drug test?
Could we just not talk, Mother? I
don't feel very well.

DORIS

You should let Dr. Feldman look at
you; maybe you have tumors. I had
one the size of a grapefruit.

(sighs)

My own daughter won't even listen
to me. If only you'd change back
to my business manager, I bet
you'd feel better. I certainly
would.

SUZANNE

I'm going to kill myself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Don't even say that in jest, darling. Particularly right after you've gotten out of a drug clinic. People might take it the wrong way.

EXT. DORIS MANN'S ENCINO HOME - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Doris and Suzanne drive up. Many cars are in the driveway. It looks as though there's a party going on.

SUZANNE

It looks as though there's a party going on.

DORIS

Surprise! I thought I'd invite a few people over to celebrate your coming home.

SUZANNE

But, Mom, I have to get up in the morning...

DORIS

All right, if you want me to, I'll go in there and tell them all to go home.

INT. DORIS MANN'S FRONT ENTRANCEWAY - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

The door flies open and Doris stands there with her arm around Suzanne.

DORIS

(calls)

My little girl is home!!!

About twenty people or so stand around. Mostly friends of Doris. Also her friend Aretha from the clinic. Suzanne looks mortified.

Her grandparents are there, PEARL and OWEN, as is her housekeeper/nanny, MARY, a black woman about the same age as her mother. Her grandmother is seventy-five. Suzanne's stepfather, Sid Roth, sits drinking and watching television. Sid essentially never speaks. Suzanne's grandmother, Pearl, is an extremely critical woman. Her grandfather, Owen, has the beginnings of Alzheimer's Disease, and doesn't quite know where he is, but has a general idea that he wishes that his wife (or whoever she is) wasn't there too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All converge on Suzanne. Except Sid who watches TV and Owen who smokes and perhaps plays some senile version of solitaire.

EXT. DORIS MANN'S HOME - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Suzanne stands outside with Aretha, looking in through the windows at the assembled guests. Suzanne is eating. Suzanne eats a lot now. Candy, potato chips, Coca Cola.

SUZANNE

(chewing)

I mean, there are people here I haven't seen since high school. Nor would I want to. Louis Karasik, for chrissakes! Where did she come up with Louis Karasik -- the last time I saw him, he threw up scrambled eggs out of his nose on the way to the library.

ARETHA

Your mom's a trip.

Suzanne's grandparents, Pearl and Owen, come out onto the patio. Owen is holding an empty can of cashew nuts.

PEARL

Let me look at you, lovebug, before your fat old grandmother hauls her rear off to bed.

Pearl smells Suzanne as she embraces her.

PEARL

(continuing)

Mmmm. You sure do stink pretty.

SUZANNE

You're not going, Grandma?

PEARL

Well, your mother's started drinkin' her wine and unless I want to sit up all night listenin' to her rattle off at the mouth, I thought I'd high tail it outta here. Hey, now that you're better why don't you try to get her to stop?

Suzanne gives Pearl a look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEARL

(continuing)

Oh, I know, she's as ornery as a mule, just like Owen.

OWEN

I heard that!

PEARL

Well, you are bullheaded, honey.

SUZANNE

Hey, Grandpaw, want some more cashews?

OWEN

Did I have some already?

Pearl shakes her head.

PEARL

He gets worse every day.

OWEN

Who gets worse -- I heard that!
Get off my back, woman. I want to go home.

PEARL

We're going, dear.

OWEN

Not with you! I wanna go home.
(to Aretha)
Are we going soon?

ARETHA

Soon, Mr. Harmon, very soon.

OWEN

(to Aretha)
Know what my daddy did?

ARETHA

What?

OWEN

(confused)
What're we talking about?

PEARL

(to Suzanne)
I told you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

I heard that! Get off my back.
Yap, yap, yap, yap, yap. Yap,
yap, yap, yap, yap. That's all
you do all the live long day.

Owen wanders back into the house singing.

OWEN

(continuing)

And the farmer hauled another load
away.

Pearl shakes her head.

PEARL

The other day he punched me when I
was trying to put some clean
pajamas on him.

(embraces Suzanne)

Well, babydoll, I'm gonna
skeeaddaddle.

(to Aretha)

You ought to eat more, young lady.
You're no bigger than a pound of
soap after a hard day's wash.

(to Suzanne)

Good night, sugar. Have to let
the dogs out. Howdy has worms.

Pearl exits. Suzanne looks at Aretha.

SUZANNE

I have nothing to say.

ARETHA

The same can't be said for the
rest of your family. What's the
matter with your grandfather?

SUZANNE

Psychologically my grandmother --
medically Alzheimer's. A very bad
combination. He seems to be
losing every part of his brain
except for the one that realizes
that the rest of it is going. And
what he doesn't notice, she points
out. As though he's doing it
deliberately. Like Alzheimer's is
an evil vice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARETHA

He should go to a senility detox unit. They could send him to meetings with other Alzheimer victims. AA. Alzheimers Anonymous. So anonymous, even you don't know who you are. "Hi, I'm ... and I'm... I'm... uh... Hi, I'm... what're we talking about?"

Suzanne laughs.

Doris' drama coach, SYLVIA RICHTER, comes out of the house and joins them on the patio. Sylvia is ninety years old and very dramatic. Doris is very like Sylvia sometimes.

SYLVIA

There you are, Suzanne darling. Well, dear, I was just saying to your mother that your taking the cure makes up for everything. Give me a kiss good night, dear.

Sylvia embraces Suzanne roughly.

SYLVIA

(continuing)

You remind me so much of your mother as a young girl in this light -- it makes me want to weep. In those early days at the studio, when she first came to me for elocution lessons. As soon as she walked in the door I knew she was going to be an enormous star. Just as I knew it about you, dear, when your mother brought you out at parties and you did the twist.

Mary comes out of the house.

MARY

Miss Suzanne, your mama wants you inside to cut the cake.

Suzanne looks at Aretha. What cake?

INT. DORIS MANN'S LIVING ROOM

Suzanne stands in front of a cake of her face with candles around it. She blows out the candles, which had essentially made her hair look like it was on fire. Doris embraces her daughter proudly. Suzanne looks exhausted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A very gay-looking OLDER MAN starts up a chant.

GARY
Sing something, Suzanne!

A large body of the group murmur: "Yes! Yes, sing!"

SUZANNE
(humiliated)
No, really, please, I can't.

DORIS
C'mon, sweetheart. Do one of your
old numbers from my act.

SUZANNE
No, Mama, really.

DORIS
Just one number to please your old
mother.

INT. DORIS MANN'S LIVING ROOM - SOME MOMENTS LATER

Suzanne is standing next to the piano, singing. Doris' accompanist, ROGER, accompanies. Her voice is soulful, beautiful. She holds onto the piano for dear life. She is almost visibly trembling. She keeps her eyes trained on the ground.

Doris' face is a mixture of emotions from pride to envy. Sometimes she mouths the words to the song with her daughter. She occasionally shushes the other guests, even if they aren't talking. As Suzanne finishes her ballad, Doris is in tears. Suzanne is miserable. She finishes and gives her mother a helpless, caught look.

The song she sings is a ballad like "If I Loved You," "Skylark" or "Better Luck Next Time," a yearning, sad song.

SUZANNE
... So don't say
Better luck next time
That could never be
Because there ain't gonna be
No next time for me.

All are visibly moved. The room explodes in applause. Doris runs to her daughter's side, embracing her.

DORIS..
That was lovely, dear. I don't
know why you don't sing anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

I get so nervous.

DORIS

But you shouldn't be. You've got
a terrific voice -- a terrific
talent -- a much bigger talent
than mine.

Now Gary starts another chant.

GARY

Now, Doris, Doris, sing something!

The room chimes in once again: "Yes! Oh, yes!"

DORIS

No, no I couldn't. Really, it's
my daughter's night.

SUZANNE

(knowing she wants to)
Go on, Mama. Sing.

DORIS

(to Suzanne)
You think I should?

SUZANNE

Yes.

DORIS

All right. You sang for me; I'll
sing for you.

(to Roger)
"Gee But It's Good To Be Here" --
in A-flat.

Doris wows them with her song, completely eclipsing
Suzanne. She is a true performer -- loving it, born to
do it. Nerves of steel, she plays completely to the
crowd.

Suzanne watches. The room is electrified, whipped up
as they can only be in the face of a great and true
entertainer.

DORIS

(continuing)

Gee but it's good to be home
Frankly I feel right at home
This is where all the excitement is
This is the champagne with all the fizz
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS (CONT'D)

Gee but it's good to be here
I really feel in rare form
There's nothing like it not anywhere
There's a magic that fills the air

She finishes on top of the piano, the assembled company cheering. We HOLD on Suzanne's happy, defeated face. Doris casts a long shadow.

INT. SUZANNE'S ROOM - HALF HOUR LATER

The party has dispersed. Suzanne has miraculously escaped. She enters and closes the door behind her, looking enormously exhausted and relieved. She moves to the sink intending to prepare for bed.

A voice startles her from a chair in the corner of the room.

TONY

Hi, baby.

Suzanne jumps in fright and looks around, seeing her father, TONY VALE, seated in the chair. He stands. He is in his late fifties, short, dark and formerly handsome. He has tremendous boyish charm.

SUZANNE

Jesus, Daddy, don't do that -- you frightened me.

TONY

Sorry, baby, you know I wouldn't want to upset my little girl.

SUZANNE

I know.

They move together and embrace.

TONY

You sounded great down there, sweetheart.

SUZANNE

How did you get up here?

TONY

You know your old dad. Where there's a will, there's a way.

(sings; low)

"And down that way I'll wander --
Wander, my love, to your side."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Dad --

TONY

I snuck into the yard and climbed a tree. Pretty good for your old dad. But they can't retire me yet.

He lifts up his shirt, showing his stomach.

TONY

(continuing)

Feel.

Suzanne reaches out tentatively, feeling her father's stomach.

SUZANNE

Pretty good, Pop.

TONY

Pretty good. Why, it's hard as a rock. Well, maybe not a rock.

SUZANNE

A pet rock.

Tony laughs.

TONY

Oooh, there's that terrific mind again. You got a terrific head on your shoulders, baby.

SUZANNE

I've got a head on my neck.

TONY

What?

(gets it; laughs)

A head on your neck.

(shakes his head
in wonder)

What was that thing you said that time? Something about a martyr?

SUZANNE

(slightly impatient)

A glib martyr. Dad -- What're you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Can't I come see my daughter? Oooh
-- you look great, baby.

(whistles)

That's some get-up.

SUZANNE

How'd you find me?

TONY

Your service in New York referred
your mother's number, so I put two
and two together and... I thought
I'd surprise you.

SUZANNE

Well, you did. You really did.
How come you're out here?

TONY

I'm meeting with Mory Shenk -- you
know who he is -- he owns the
Marquis Hotel chain -- they want
me to meet with them about putting
one of my deli's in their hotels.

SUZANNE

That's great, Dad.

TONY

So, how's my little girl? Still
haven't done any drugs?

SUZANNE

Yup. You clean?

TONY

As a whistle. You got a great
body, baby -- just like your mom.

SUZANNE

Dad...

TONY

Yes, sweetheart.

SUZANNE

Is there something you want?

TONY

Do I have to want something to
come see my daughter? Aren't you
glad to see your old dad?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (CONT'D)

You were always thrilled to see me when you were little.

SUZANNE

I was always thrilled to see you partly because I never saw you enough. I mean, that often.

TONY

That was your mother's fault. I wanted to see you, but she wouldn't let me -- you were in Palm Springs or somewhere. Ugh, I'm defending myself and I don't want to. It's just that when you say things like that, you twist the knife in my heart. I mean, I don't really care who hurts me, but when you hurt me --

SUZANNE

Dad, all I said was that I didn't see you that often.

TONY

Remember your sixteenth birthday -- I bought you six fucking rings and you gave them to all your friends -- I had to pay them off.

SUZANNE

I didn't give them to all my friends.

TONY

I was in love with you when you were a little girl and now your mother has turned you against me.

SUZANNE

No, she hasn't. I do love you, Dad. I just don't see you that much. We were supposed to see each other a month ago. I called you and you never called me back.

TONY

I never got a message. Who'd you leave the message with?

SUZANNE

Some woman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Ah -- Margie.

SUZANNE

Who's Margie?

TONY

The woman I've been living with
for the past four years.

SUZANNE

Oh.

TONY

Baby, is there anyone in your New
York apartment?

SUZANNE

What happened to yours?

TONY

Oh that landlord is crazy -- he
kept my furniture. Says I was
screaming. I was screaming
because my finger was infected.

SUZANNE

He's keeping your furniture 'cause
your finger was infected?

TONY

Oh, he's an asshole. You know I
wouldn't come to you if I had
somewhere else to go -- and once
this Marquis thing goes through,
I'll be out of your hair -- Baby,
when I get my money back, I'll buy
you castles and cars.

SUZANNE

I know, Dad.

TONY

(sings)

"My best girl is the girl who's
got eyes like a stone." Give your
old dad a kiss.

She kisses him.

TONY

(continuing)

I'm telling you, kid, you got a
great ass.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Bring me the head of Beverly
Hills. I love you, Angel.

SUZANNE
I love you, Dad.

He starts to turn away.

SUZANNE
(continuing)
Pop?

TONY
Yes, mommy?

SUZANNE
What kind of after shave do you
wear? Someone asked me and I
don't know.

TONY
Vetiver.

SUZANNE
Vetiver.

TONY
Good night, sweetheart -- thanks.

SUZANNE
(to herself)
Vetiver.

Tony climbs out of the window as Suzanne looks on.

INT. CAR - THE NEXT MORNING

Suzanne is dressed and made up, about to do a chase scene through the desert in the rain. The soundman is putting a mike in the car. ROGER, the hair dresser, wets down her hair, SIMON approaches and crouches down next to Suzanne's open car door. He looks embarrassed.

SIMON
Hello, darling.

SUZANNE
Hey, Simon.

He looks at his hands. The soundman finishes and walks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

(continuing)

What's happening? Did you have to take a drug test, too?

Simon looks confused.

SIMON

Oh, no, no, no. It's nothing really. They just... the producers saw the rushes last night and had some rather interesting notes.

Roger gives Suzanne one last spritz, sees that Simon wants to talk to Suzanne privately and discreetly removes himself. Suzanne tries to seem calm.

SUZANNE

Well, what?

SIMON

Now, don't take it the wrong way. I saw them this morning and you were fine.

SUZANNE

(gloomily)

It was my first day.

SIMON

(emphatically)

It was your first day, absolutely. I couldn't agree with you more. The producers simply felt you should have fun with it.

(he smiles)

Just have more fun with it, that's all.

SUZANNE

Simon, if I knew how to have fun with stuff, I wouldn't be in therapy. I wouldn't need to take drug tests.

SIMON

Now, now. I think they had some very interesting comments. Maybe I'm not saying it properly. What I think they meant is that you could own your performance. Make it more your own. Just sort of have fun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suzanne stares at her feet.

SUZANNE

(sarcastically)

Really? And here I thought everything I did had to be fraught with incredible torment. This is amazing. Why didn't one of my shrinks tell me this?

SIMON

(patiently)

Now, Suzanne, you shouldn't be in this business if you can't take criticism.

Suzanne stares at her feet.

SUZANNE

But, Simon, please. Have fun with it. Don't you think I would do that with everything I did if it was at all possible?

Simon puts his arm around Suzanne.

SIMON

I know you can do this part. Just relax into it. Be yourself and you'll be wonderful.

Simon kisses the top of Suzanne's head and walks off to talk to BUDDY, the D.P., as Ted arrives with a can of Diet Coke.

TED

Nutrasweets for the sweet.

SUZANNE

You know what I think? Actors are the lowest of the low. Unless they have box office, in which case, they're treated with respect without being respected.

Suzanne takes a swig of soda and pulls a candy bar out of her pocket, taking the wrapper off and taking a big bite.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

At least with me, there's an honest level of contempt. They don't respect me and they don't treat me with respect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ted nods sympathetically.

TED

You ought to be an assistant director if you want to sample the motherlode of contempt. And preferably a second assistant director.

Ted takes Suzanne's arm.

TED

(continuing)

We need to get you touched up. You're in the next shot.

EXT. BACK LOT OF STUDIO - THAT AFTERNOON

Suzanne is headed to the prop truck. She moves through the warm hum of the crew as they check lights, change lenses, position extras. She is humming "Gee But It's Good To Be Here" as she arrives at the prop truck for her Diet Coke. As she rounds the corner of the truck heading for the metal steps at the back, Suzanne almost collides with NEIL BLEENE, the youngest of the producers.

NEIL

(stepping aside)

Well, fancy meeting you here.
Neil Bleene, associate producer.

Suzanne smiles a startled smile and goes up the steps. She gets a Coke out of the ice chest, opens it and stands on the edge of the truck looking down on Neil Bleene.

SUZANNE

I understand my enjoyment levels are down.

Neil looks at his shoes and clears his throat.

NEIL

Well, no, we felt the performance was fine, but...

(he searches for
the right word)

You're holding something back.

SUZANNE

(repeats solemnly)
Holding something back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEIL

It felt like you weren't... that you didn't make a choice. You made a non-choice. Like you were concentrating more on not doing something than on doing something.

SUZANNE

I see.

NEIL

I've been in theatre. I've also directed theatre. I'm producing this basically to make money. I'm actually a theatre director. From what I was told, you spontaneously hit Bobby during a rehearsal, and Simon stopped you. I don't think he should stop your impulses. The other thing is that sometimes certain line readings are appropriate, like in comedy, it's a rule that inflections go up at the end.

Suzanne kneels down to look in Neil's eyes.

SUZANNE

There's a comedy rule?

Neil runs his hands through his hair.

NEIL

Well, there's not necessarily rules so much as guidelines.

(beat)

You were very good in "Public Domain." What did you do there?

SUZANNE

(defensive)

I had Magda Valnepov as my director. I didn't have fun with it. We had a month of rehearsals. We worked very hard. We hardly ever relaxed.

Suzanne stops, realizing she's gotten pretty defensive and loud.

SUZANNE

(continuing; calmer)

Look, I may not take criticism well, but that doesn't mean I'm not hearing it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Right now, I'm storing it in my delayed response area, because it's hard for me. I wish I was someone who welcomed criticism and immediately understood its value, but I'm not and if I look unhappy about this, I am. I've had one day of work on this and this is my second conversation about what's missing in my performance.

NEIL

(shaking his head)
We're talking about two minutes of film. Two minutes of screen time out of ninety.

SUZANNE

Is it correctable?

NEIL

(reassuringly)
Come on, it's not as though you farted during all your dialogue and we all sat in rushes and said, "What's that noise all over her lines?"

SUZANNE

(ironically)
I'm so relieved. That analogy has bathed me in relief.

Suzanne jumps down off the prop truck, careful not to spill her Coke.

SUZANNE

(continuing)
Thanks for the acting tips and the pep talk. I'm feeling much more relaxed now.

Suzanne heads back in the direction of the set, leaving Neil and his leather pants at the prop truck.

We FOLLOW Suzanne as she takes a swig of soda and rounds another corner of a truck. This is the wardrobe truck. As she approaches the back of it, she hears what turns out to be Simon's voice. Suzanne slows, eavesdropping on the ongoing conversation. She pulls a bag of honey roasted cashews out of her pocket and eats them quietly as she listens to the two voices.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON (O.S.)

Can't you get her into a girdle or something?

WARDROBE MISTRESS (O.S.)

Not with that dress, sir. We might be able to use a pantyhose with a control top. Although, I'm not sure if that will be sufficient.

SIMON (O.S.)

All right, all right -- anything. Just try to do something. And we're going to have to put her in pants instead of shorts. The tops of her legs are very...

Simon trails off, searching for a polite term for the tops of bad legs. Suzanne stops chewing, in suspense. Somehow she knows they are talking about her.

WARDROBE MISTRESS (O.S.)

Bulbous. She has cellulite.

Suzanne winces. Bulbous? Cellulite?

SIMON (O.S.)

I do wish we could get her to stop eating so much. But then, I suppose having just given up drugs, she has to do something. Maybe we could get her to start smoking.

Suzanne stops eating. It is her they're talking about. Oh, God. She slowly puts the cashews back in her pocket.

WARDROBE MISTRESS (O.S.)

What are we going to do about the bed scene, Mr. Woodruff?

SIMON (O.S.)

Cheat the angle somehow, I suppose. Her breasts are rather .. out of shape, aren't they?

WARDROBE MISTRESS (O.S.)

If you have her on her back, like the script indicates, her tits will just move off into her armpits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON (O.S.)

How unpleasant. Well, perhaps you should purchase some sort of camisole or something. I had no idea when I hired her that she was this... out of shape. Though, I suppose we couldn't have gotten her if she was still... in her prime.

WARDROBE MISTRESS (O.S.)

If you'll forgive me, Mr. Woodruff, with her reputation she is lucky to have a job at all. She pretty much destroyed the career she had. This is a break for her.

SIMON (O.S.)

I suppose you're right. It's sad, isn't it, really. She was so good in "A Night Full Of Shoes." Well, I hope all this isn't too much trouble for your wardrobe department. I'm almost sorry we didn't get Valerie Rogers, at this point.

WARDROBE MISTRESS (O.S.)

Valerie has a terrific body.

SIMON (O.S.)

Yes. Well, Alma... I must get back. Thank you.

Suzanne hears Simon START TO EXIT the truck and moves away quickly.

A tall, thin MAN approaches her from the opposite direction.

GEORGE

(to Suzanne)

George Lazan. Executive producer of "Kitchen Sink." How are you?

SUZANNE

Fine... Suzanne --

GEORGE

(interrupts)

Vale, I know. Anyway, have I caught you at a bad time?

George is silent for a moment, then just suddenly launches into the purpose of his visit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks as he talks. Suzanne follows, puppy-like.

GEORGE

(continuing)

Well, look, I saw the rushes and frankly, you're holding back. See, I think of this piece as a light fluffy piece, a kind of "What's Up, Doc?" for cops. So you just gotta relax. You gotta just enjoy yourself and trust the process.

Suzanne is incredibly uncomfortable as she walks alongside George Lazan through the back lot of the studio.

SUZANNE

(evenly)

Well, I can't promise you I'm going to turn in a Barbra Streisand performance.

GEORGE

No, no, no. You see, I think of Robert Munch as a kind of Ryan O'Neal type. He's a reactive actor. What we need is for you to be the one who governs the pace of the piece. If you dictate the pace, then Bob will follow you.

SUZANNE

I hardly think I'm responsible for the pace of the piece.

GEORGE

(impatient)

Well, look, it's a "Happened One Night" kind of thing. You know what I mean. Look, do you think you can do this part?

SUZANNE

(tiny voice)

Yeah. Why?

GEORGE

I always ask my actors that. Look, just because we imagined Goldie Hawn or a Marilyn Monroe kind of thing in this part... now we've got to deal with what you have to bring to it.

(MORE)

—(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE (CONT'D)

We hired you, now we have to go with what you have.

SUZANNE

(sighs)

I appreciate your comments, Mr. Lazan. I'll certainly give relaxing my best shot. If I'm not enjoying myself, though, it's not because I'm deliberately trying to sabotage your film.

GEORGE

I realize that. Just do the best you can. Oh, and, by the way, do you need the name of a good dermatologist?

SUZANNE

I don't know -- do I?

GEORGE

Well, you've got a collection of bumps on your face there. The cinematographer is doing the best he can, but I think it would help if we got you to a doctor.

SUZANNE

Okay.

We NOTICE a car and driver parked across the street.

George sticks out his hand for shaking.

GEORGE

I'll see you on the set.

SUZANNE

Yes.

George turns and climbs into the car waiting for him. The driver holds open the door. Suzanne watches him go.

Suzanne walks back onto the set and approaches Simon, the English director.

SIMON

Hello, darling. What's the problem?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

(stern)

The problem, Simon, is that hundreds of people have had conversations with me concerning my low enjoyment levels and my skin... and... and it bothered me. I would prefer to receive direction solely from you.

Simon looks concerned and the wind almost blows off his straw hat.

SIMON

(affronted)

Really? Hundreds of people? That shouldn't be. I'll have to have a word with them.

SUZANNE

I mean, we're talking about one day of work here. A scene where I was tied to a cactus and assaulted by snakes all day. As if I were a child! I mean, why don't I give them my mother's phone number? She can stand by and make sure I'm relaxed!

Simon snaps his fingers.

SIMON

That's it! This is exactly her! This is the quality I want for your character. Right there. What you're doing now. See?

SUZANNE

But, Simon, this is not relaxed. This is incredibly upset. If this is the quality, then maybe...

Simon puts his arm around her and walks her toward the platform where the crew waits.

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

Darling, just be yourself and you'll be fine. I know it sounds trite, but trust me. I'll talk to the producers and make sure what occurred yesterday is not repeated. Now try to calm down.

Suzanne looks at Simon like one of them is insane.

INT. SUZANNE'S TINY TRAILER

Suzanne is once again removing her makeup at the end of a long, overwhelming day.

She takes a last look at her reflection, and then exits her dressing room/hamster cage.

EXT. BACK LOT STUDIO SUNSET - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Suzanne is walking down a western street, then turns a corner into a suburban street, reminiscent of "Leave It To Beaver."

Jack Burroughs appears behind her, catching up to her. Suzanne looks at him blankly for a second. She has no idea who he is. Then seeing as how she'd better conceal that fact until, through conversation, she can best determine his identity, she smiles.

JACK

Hi!

SUZANNE

Hello.

JACK

It's me. Jack.

SUZANNE

Sure.

She clearly doesn't remember and he knows it.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

Jack. How've you been?

JACK

Good, good. You?

SUZANNE

Oh... well, you know, okay. I've just had this long weird day, so -- God. I haven't... when was the last time we saw each other?

Jack knows she's trying to figure out who he is.

JACK

Too long. Too, too long.

SUZANNE

Yeah... well... it's good to see you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She has no idea who he is, but maybe if she keeps talking to him, it'll come back to her through something he says.

JACK

You too. Are you going to the reunion?

SUZANNE

What reunion?

JACK

High school.

SUZANNE

You went to Beverly High?

JACK

Sure. Where'd you think you knew me from?

SUZANNE

No, I didn't mean it like a question -- like you went to Beverly, more like a "you went to Beverly." I meant it in a nostalgic way. When is the reunion?

JACK

End of the month. God! Remember Mr. Cravelly?

SUZANNE

(doesn't)
Mr. Cravelly?

JACK

Our biology teacher. The one that made us do all those science projects on mammals.

SUZANNE

(concentrating)
Science projects on mammals...

JACK

Good old Mr. Cravelly. Terrible about what happened to him.

SUZANNE

What happened to him?

JACK

Oh. I thought you knew.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

No.

JACK

Well, he went to this party, and met a girl. She seemed kind of tired... sick maybe. So, he took her from the party to a restaurant to get something in her stomach -- maybe she'd feel better. Anyway, next thing you know, she comes home with him, and -- are you sure you haven't heard this?

SUZANNE

She goes home with him and then what?

JACK

They have what he thinks is a perfectly wonderful evening together, after which she takes a handful of pills and overdoses.

SUZANNE

And then he drove her to the hospital.

JACK

The next morning.

SUZANNE

And he didn't leave his name.

They look at each other.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

Mister Cravely, I presume.

JACK

At your service.

SUZANNE

I don't have a service, I have a machine.

JACK

I'm glad to see you're all right.

SUZANNE

I suppose I should thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

I could apologize to you for not leaving my name when I dropped you off at the hospital.

SUZANNE

Under the circumstances, it was probably a secondary issue. I don't know whether there's a polite way to behave during an overdose with a complete stranger or not.

JACK

Well, not a complete stranger. More a relative one. And with relatives like that --

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

Look, I don't know what happened that night... I can only guess -- No, I don't even want to do that -- but I want you to know that I'm not like that. I'm not exactly sure what I am like, but I'm not in the practice of... going home with --

JACK

(interrupts)

What if I told you that nothing happened?

Suzanne stares at him.

SUZANNE

Nothing... what?

JACK

Nothing happened. We just talked and then you took my Placidil and fell fast asleep.

SUZANNE

Why? -- was I -- am I so unappealing to you?

JACK

Quite the contrary. But you were a little the worse -- or better -- for substances and I have rules about that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

That sounds -- didn't Jimmy Stewart say that to someone in a movie?

JACK

If he didn't, he should have.

SUZANNE

Are you sure I didn't... sleep with you?

JACK

Sleep, yes.

SUZANNE

Kiss?

JACK

What? Here? Now?

SUZANNE

No. Then. That night.

JACK

See if this rings a bell.

Jack goes to kiss her. Suzanne starts to resist, but her need for affection and his charm overwhelm her. They kiss gently, shyly.

SUZANNE

It rings something, but I don't know if it's a memory bell, or --

JACK

(interrupts)

How about this?

He kisses her again, this time more passionately.

SUZANNE

It certainly reminds me of something I should've done before.

JACK

It reminds me of something I want to do later, so I can look back on it after that.

SUZANNE

I'm sort of nostalgic already.

JACK

Nostalgic for the present.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Memories of now.

JACK

Remember that time that I saw you after seeing you before, only you didn't remember 'til I kissed you and you awoke into the dream that was reality that we looked back on without leaving the moment? This is then.

SUZANNE

Are you Southern?

JACK

Half Jewish, why?

SUZANNE

You talk so colorful. What's the other half?

JACK

Currently, you.

SUZANNE

Ah, well then, that explains it. I can see why I went home with you that night, unless you've had some success recently and changed.

JACK

I always say, success doesn't change people, it just gives them permission to become more fully, truly, who they are. Assholes become gigantic assholes and good people can become great. It's a form of magnification.

SUZANNE

So, what about you?

JACK

I haven't had enough success yet to go either way. I'm just a lizard, a lone lizard. I have all the pride of the B+ student. You?

SUZANNE

Me?

(shrugs)

I'm an asshole, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

I doubt that.

SUZANNE

I don't know, maybe I'm a lizard too. Certainly if you go by the skin on my elbows I am.

JACK

(sings)

"You say asshole, and I say lizard."

SUZANNE

(laughs)

Let's call the whole thing off. Well, we've found our theme. For what it's worth.

JACK

For what it's worth! Don't you know that people spend years searching for their theme, and here we've achieved it in under an hour. Now we'll just have to find our credo.

SUZANNE

Our credo?

JACK

And once we've determined that, we'll have to invent the secret handshake and have the special tour jackets made. Oh, we have our work cut out for us. Has anybody ever told you that you smell like Catalina? Like a hippy? Like good sense?

SUZANNE

As a matter of fact, only this morning.

JACK

Really? Has anybody ever told you you smelled like... the future?

SUZANNE

But I break just like a little girl.

(sighs)

Oh, look, it'll never work.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

Why?

SUZANNE

We come from two totally different backgrounds. You were brought up as a boy, while I was brought up as a girl.

They smile at each other. It might work.

INT. DORIS MANN'S HALLWAY - BACK OF FRONT DOOR -
FOLLOWING AFTERNOON

The door is opened by Doris, revealing Jack Burroughs. Doris is decked out once again in her Doris regalia.

DORIS

Hello. May I help you?

JACK

I'm here to pick up Suzanne. I'm Jack.

DORIS

Jack. I'm Suzanne's mother. Was she expecting you?

JACK

I think so. We were going to drive out to my ranch.

Doris lets him in the house, leading him into the living room.

DORIS

Come in, come in. I'll call her. I'm sorry if I seem rude, but you know how protective mothers can be. Did you say you had a ranch?

JACK

Yes, ma'am. Out in Malibu.

DORIS

Ah. All the way out in Malibu. How nice for you. Have you known Suzanne long?

JACK

Nope. Just met her last month in fact. Feels like longer though.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

I know what you mean. I have actually known her a long time though. Her whole life. She's an interesting woman, don't you think? Authentic. Last month you met her?

An old stepfather-looking guy, Suzanne's stepfather, Sid Roth, wanders down the hall and into the living room and turns on the TV.

DORIS

(continuing)

Oh, good morning, dear. This is my husband, Sid Roth; Sid, this is Suzanne's little friend, Jim.

JACK

Jack. Nice to meet you, Mr. Roth.

Sid Roth grunts something in reply, in keeping with his hardly ever talking. Suzanne comes down the hall. Sid watches TV.

DORIS

Oh, there you are, dear. I was just coming to get you. Your friend is here.

Suzanne glares slightly at her mother.

SUZANNE

(to Jack)

Hi, could you just wait one second? I wanna tell my mother something.

JACK

Sure.

DORIS

(to Jack)

My daughter wants to talk to me.

Suzanne and Doris go into the kitchen. Jack stands awkwardly beside Sid, who continues watching TV.

JACK

What're you watching there, Mr. Roth?

Sid points to the TV as he watches in explanation of what he is watching.

INT. DORIS MANN'S KITCHEN - SEVERAL MOMENTS LATER

SUZANNE

Why didn't you tell me he was here?

DORIS

I was just coming to get you.

SUZANNE

You were making him like you, weren't you?

DORIS

What're you talking about?

SUZANNE

You have to make everybody like you. Even my people.

DORIS

Dear, you're tired. You didn't get a lot of sleep.

SUZANNE

I just want to have some people of my own is all. Without them having to like you so much.

DORIS

Can't we share people? You can't blame me for trying to find out a little bit about him, can you? Your taste in men has not always been that healthy.

SUZANNE

Oh, and yours has? How could anyone choose healthy men around you? Remember my seventeenth birthday party? You lifted up your skirt in front of everyone, including that guy Michael that I --

DORIS

(interrupts)

I didn't lift up my skirt, dear, it twirled up. You only remember the bad stuff, don't you, dear? What about the big band I got that played at that party? Do you remember that? No. You just remember that my skirt accidentally twirled up and that --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

And that you weren't wearing any underwear! Why do you have to take over every situation that you're in? Why do you have to overshadow me?

DORIS

I haven't overshadowed you! What have I done to deserve such a bitter daughter? It twirled up, I tell you! And that fellow just got here -- I was just coming to get you! And I don't care if he likes me or not!

SUZANNE

Sure you do! You want everyone to like you.

DORIS

Why couldn't you have married that nice boy that wanted to marry you? That what's-his-name that I liked so much.

SUZANNE

Wally Meyerson. And you only liked him 'cause he would sit and drink with you and listen to your stories.

DORIS

Stories about you as a little girl! -- and some stories about Hollywood -- he asked me to tell them. At least Wally was a gentleman and not some sort of make-out artist like your friend out there. With bedroom eyes.

SUZANNE

Right. And a living room nose and a kitchen forehead and den ears.

Suzanne storms out.

INT. JACK BURROUGHS' CAR - HEADING TOWARD MALIBU -
FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

Suzanne is sulking slightly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

Your stepfather is a very dynamic man. We had quite a chat while you were gone.

SUZANNE

(distracted)

Yeah, right.

JACK

I didn't realize your mother was Doris Mann. What's it like having a mother that's a movie star?

SUZANNE

Compared to what? When I didn't have a mother that was a movie star -- when I had a normal mother and said naw -- this is so blah -- can't we go with something that has a little more pizzazz?

Jack's car tears down the highway.

INT. JACK'S MALIBU RANCH - LATER THAT NIGHT

Pitch dark. A match is struck, illuminating a joint stuck squarely in Jack's face. He inhales deeply. Suzanne lays by his side. He passes her the joint. She just looks at him.

JACK

Oh, that's right. Sorry.

He takes a swig from a bottle of vodka by the bed.

SUZANNE

I don't know, sometimes I feel as though I'm trapped in the tower of my head and the wind is howling around my ears and I have to be dragged screaming from my burning brain.

JACK

Okay.

SUZANNE

Okay, what?

JACK

I'll drag you from your burning head. But please, no screaming. I don't want to wake the neighbors.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

How will you do that?

JACK

Throw some more endorphins on the fire.

He rolls over on top of her and kisses her.

SUZANNE

I really should go.

JACK

Why? I'll drop you in the morning.

SUZANNE

No, I should go. It's already late.

JACK

What is it -- your parents -- can't you call?

SUZANNE

I should just go.

INT. JACK'S CAR - HALF AN HOUR LATER

Jack is driving Suzanne home. He is smoking a joint.

JACK

There's this new thing I've been saying lately -- I don't mean to quote myself, but if I don't maybe no one else ever will. In India they say that the body is the envelope of the spirit, and the spirit I guess is essentially who you are. Well, we live in L.A., a city of envelopes. The thing is that you are a letter. I mean, it takes a letter to know a letter and I can see that we're really two letters in a town of envelopes.

Jack takes a hit off his joint. Suzanne watches him.

SUZANNE

(laughs)

The envelope, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

So, when you find someone who actually has an interesting letter, you want to read it. The only problem is, you've gotten so conditioned to reading your own mail, you just...

He takes another hit off the joint.

JACK

(continuing)

Sometimes I think maybe I've met her and I just can't see it 'cause I'm so busy looking at myself to make sure I look all right in case she should arrive.

He passes her the joint.

JACK

(continuing)

Oh, that's right. Jesus, I'm sorry.

INT. DORIS MANN'S HOME - HALF AN HOUR LATER (4 A.M.)

Suzanne opens the front door very quietly and shuts it very quietly behind her. She tiptoes gingerly down the hall, past the living room, where Doris Mann sits in the dark, smoking.

DORIS

(evenly)

Have you any idea what time it is, dear?

Suzanne jumps, startled.

SUZANNE

Jesus, Mother, don't do that! You scared me!

Doris turns on the light on the table next to her. She is in her robe. There is a bottle of wine on the floor next to her and she holds a glass. The ashtray is almost full and she smokes.

DORIS

I suppose it never occurred to you that you might have scared me by staying out so late. I was about to call all the emergency rooms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

I'm sorry, Mother. I didn't call 'cause I thought you might be asleep and I came home 'cause I didn't want to worry you.

DORIS

Well, you did worry me. Look at me; I'm a wreck.

SUZANNE

I'm sorry.

DORIS

What if you had taken drugs or something? I'm supposed to be taking care of you now. You're my responsibility. You're my daughter. What was I supposed to think when you didn't come home?

Doris starts pouring herself another glass of wine. She looks up to see Suzanne watching her.

DORIS

(continuing)

Do you mind if I have a drink?

SUZANNE

Do you mind if I drop acid?

DORIS

Dear, I drink socially.

SUZANNE

I took acid socially.

DORIS

I hardly think my drinking can be compared with your drug taking, dear. And even if it could be, I think your involvement with drugs has vindicated me. I hardly think you're in a position to judge me.

SUZANNE

Mom...

DORIS

I hope you weren't out sleeping with someone.

SUZANNE

No, I wasn't out sleeping with someone, Mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Well, if you were, I hope you used condoms. I didn't bring you up to act this way, but I hope if you are, that your morals are in question and not your judgment.

SUZANNE

Mother, I am thirty-four years old!

DORIS

(interrupts)

And you just got out of a drug clinic, so obviously you don't know what's best for you.

SUZANNE

Oh, and I suppose you do?

DORIS

I think I do, yes.

SUZANNE

That's the drunk calling the kettle stoned.

DORIS

How did we become so estranged, Suzanne? I have always tried to be a good mother to you, only to be met with this fresh, superior attitude of yours. You have felt my intellectual superior since you were fourteen years old -- and rightly so; you were always more verbal than I. Me. Whatever. But why have you turned away from me? I just want you to like me. I just want to be your friend.

SUZANNE

I didn't need a friend. I needed a mother.

DORIS

Well, you can accuse me of many things, but not of not being your mother. What is the thing that annoys you about me? Isn't it that I mother you? You know, dear, it's very hard to have a conversation with you. Do you hear how you're talking to me? Like I'm a moron.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

That's how I think you talk to me.
Could we have this conversation
tomorrow? I'm tired.

DORIS

Every time I try to get close to
you, you push me away. Every
time --

SUZANNE

(upset)

Oh shut up! Please shut up. It's
impossible to talk to you when
you're drunk.

DORIS

I'm not drunk! I may be drinking
but I'm not drunk! How would you
like to have Joan Crawford for a
mother? Or Lana Turner? I think
you had it pretty good.

SUZANNE

Oh please, these are the options?
You, or Lana, or Joan?

DORIS

You'll never forgive me for
falling under the pressures of
life. For not living up to the
standards I set for myself. For
being the person I am in your
looking-glass, for not remaining
that person -- so I broke under
the money pressure. If it wasn't
for you, I would've killed myself.

SUZANNE

There -- see, it's like that that
you say. I don't know what to do
with that.

DORIS

Just know how much I love you.
Oh, I know, maybe you needed a
different mother, one that baked
cookies. I don't knit, I don't
embroider, but I have always tried
to give you the best and you throw
it away. I came from nothing and
made something out of my life.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS (CONT'D)

You came from somewhere and are trying to make nothing out of yours. You're going to have to get over what happened to you in your adolescence, dear. It's time to move on.

Suzanne looks at her mother for an odd beat. There is some truth to what she says.

DORIS

(continuing)

I want you to like me.

SUZANNE

I'm not a fan, Mother.

DORIS

That's for darn sure.

Doris and Suzanne gaze at one another.

SUZANNE

I'll see you in the morning, Ma.

EXT. MOVIE SET - MID-MORNING (MONDAY)

Suzanne and Robert Munch are in a car driving frantically, Robert has been shot in the arm. Blood oozes. Suzanne is shooting a gun out the window at a car that is pursuing. The car that Robert and Suzanne are in is on a platform being towed by a camera truck.

The camera and crew on the truck film the scene. Robert and Suzanne have a conversation above the din of the scene.

ROBERT

Jack Burroughs?

SUZANNE

Yeah, why?

ROBERT

The one that produced that South American film?

SUZANNE

I guess, yeah. Do you know him?

ROBERT

Ask Evelyn Ames about him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Evelyn Ames who's playing the prostitute?

SIMON (O.S.)

Cut!

EXT. MOVIE SET - CATERING TRUCK - LUNCH TIME

The cast and crew are having lunch. Standing in line or sitting at tables, they eat, drink and socialize. At one table to one side sits a table of actors in costume. Among them is EVELYN AMES, a bawdy, attractive actress in her early thirties. Suzanne approaches the table as Evelyn is finishing up a story.

EVELYN

... So, I'm just about to leave and he looks over at me and says, "What am I going to do without you?" So I say, "I don't know -- juices, I guess. Lots and lots of juices."

Suzanne stands above Evelyn awkwardly, waiting for the appropriate moment to interrupt. Evelyn notices Suzanne.

EVELYN

(continuing)
Hello. What's up?

SUZANNE

Could I talk to you for a second?

EVELYN

Sure.

EXT. MOVIE SET - MOMENTS LATER

Suzanne and Evelyn walk down an old street, a New York street of the forties, a discarded set. The prostitute and the cop.

EVELYN

C'mon, honey, it can't be that bad.

SUZANNE

No, it's just... it's about this guy.

EVELYN

It usually is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Bobby said you might know him.

EVELYN

I guess I might then. Who?

SUZANNE

Jack Burroughs.

Evelyn makes a small expression of dismay and amusement.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

You know him...?

EVELYN

You might say that.

SUZANNE

You've... slept with him?

EVELYN

Well, I don't know how much of a rest I got.

Evelyn looks into Suzanne's face. Something in it frightens her.

EVELYN

(continuing)

Why? -- What's the matter? Has he got -- (AIDS)?

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

No, no, no... I mean, God, I hope not.

They both walk for a beat, contemplating death.

EVELYN

God, you scared me for a minute. I thought you were from some celebrity AIDS notification board or something.

SUZANNE

Can I ask you a personal question?

EVELYN

(thinks a moment)

You mean asking me who I sleep with isn't personal anymore? What do you want to know -- if I smoke?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

When did you see him last?

EVELYN

I don't know. A couple of days ago. Saturday. Saturday afternoon.

SUZANNE

(echoes)

Saturday afternoon.

EVELYN

Yeah, why?

SUZANNE

I was with him Saturday night. That's two girls in one day.

EVELYN

(laughs)

And that's just the ones we know about. Imagine what you could pick up about him if you got one of those satellite dishes.

SUZANNE

How can you laugh? It's disgusting. Especially in this day and age.

EVELYN

(reassuring)

You look like someone that can take care of herself. Buy some condoms. Don't feel bad. He probably really likes you. He didn't give you his big Chekhov speech, did he? The one about light hair and dark hair?

SUZANNE

I don't think so.

EVELYN

See, that's a good sign. That's his standard pick up line. That and the big Peru speech and the thing about two letters in a town of envelopes.

SUZANNE

That I've heard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EVELYN

Well, that's not bad. One out of three. You're obviously getting some new stuff, which means he must like you.

SUZANNE

But, so, he goes out with a lot of people.

EVELYN

Well, sure, that's his big thing. Women. And if you can just accept yourself with him like he's enjoying himself with you. That's what I do. I'm in it for the endorphin rush.

SUZANNE

Endolphin.

EVELYN

Whatever.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - THAT THURSDAY MORNING

Suzanne and Jack sit on the bed fully clothed watching "The Outer Limits" (or "Star Trek") with deep concentration, reminiscent of our junkies in the drug clinic. Jack nurses a beer and smokes a joint; Suzanne sips a diet soda.

SUZANNE

(watching TV)

I saw someone you know the other day.

JACK

(watching TV)

Really?

(a beat)

Who?

SUZANNE

Evelyn. Evelyn Ames.

JACK

Oh yeah?

He sips his beer.

JACK

(continuing)

Where'd you see her?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

At the set. She's in the movie
I'm doing.

JACK

How's that going?

SUZANNE

Okay. Now that my relaxation
levels are stabilized.

JACK

Those assholes. I don't know how
you can stand them.

SUZANNE

I don't either.

JACK

I would have quit.

SUZANNE

You can't quit. You know that.
If you quit no one will hire you
again. I like working, so...

She shrugs, watches TV. Jack takes a hit on his joint.

JACK

Hmmm.

SUZANNE

I like Evelyn.

JACK

Yeah. Me too.

SUZANNE

I know. She told me.

JACK

(laughs)
She told you?

SUZANNE

She told me you fucked her.
Saturday. Saturday afternoon.

JACK

Oh, Jesus. Here we go.

SUZANNE

No, here you go. Straight from
fucking her on Saturday afternoon
to fucking me on Saturday night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize you had exclusive rights to me.

SUZANNE

What ever happened to discretion?
What ever happened to moderation?

JACK

Well, I can't vouch for moderation, but as far discretion goes, what were you and Evelyn doing, comparing notes on the set?

Suzanne gets up and starts putting on her sweater and her shoes.

SUZANNE

We weren't comparing notes. She told me she fucked you Saturday afternoon.

JACK

Just like that? She just marched right up to you between scenes and blew her wad? Or did you nose it out of her?

SUZANNE

She said you were both envelopes in a town of letters and that you wrote in endorphin ink. No, I'm sorry -- endolphin ink.

Jack gets off the bed and goes over to Suzanne.

JACK

(interrupts)

This is ridiculous. I think we should can this little topic. I don't like this side of you.

SUZANNE

I'm not a box. I don't have sides. This is it. One side fits all.

Suzanne starts out of the bedroom. Jack follows her.

JACK

You're very competitive, you know that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Oh, and I suppose you're not.

JACK

No, I'm not.

SUZANNE

You're just a reaction to me, is that it?

JACK

You bet.

SUZANNE

Yeah, and I bet you got as far as you did in show business by not being competitive.

JACK

That's not competitive. That's ambition. Ambition combined with talent.

Jack follows Suzanne through his house, toward the front door and down the driveway to her car. This should take a while, as it is a large house.

SUZANNE

If you do say so yourself!

JACK

You know what this is? This is just a jealous tantrum.

SUZANNE

I'm not jealous, I'm humiliated. How could you fuck me and Evelyn Ames on the same day?

JACK

What especially bothers you? That it was on the same day, or that it was Evelyn Ames?

SUZANNE

I have to stop this. I have to stop this with you.

She walks out the front door.

JACK

(ironic)
Are we breaking up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

We can't break up, we were never together.

JACK

That should be news to you; you're acting like a wife.

SUZANNE

It's better than acting like a whore.

JACK

You're in no position to judge me. How dare you lecture me about moderation -- you just got out of a drug clinic.

SUZANNE

Where you fucking belong! Mr. Pothead, Mr. Vodka, Mr. Bedroom Eyes.

JACK

Ha! What're you, a virgin? You weren't too hard to convince that first night!

Suzanne gets into her car and slams the door.

SUZANNE

I thought we didn't do anything that first night.

JACK

I lied.

SUZANNE

You bastard.

JACK

Great. You know, you were much nicer when you were loaded. Not so goddamn tense, with a fucking stick up your ass. Call me if you get a hold of a couple Valium.

Suzanne starts her car and drives away.

INT. SUZANNE'S CAR - EN ROUTE TO HER MOTHER'S

Suzanne drives; she is extremely upset. What's the use? Fuck it. At least when you're loaded, you can't feel how weird your life feels. She drives up to her mother's house and parks.

INT. DORIS MANN'S HOME

Suzanne sneaks into the house quietly. The house is quiet. She tiptoes down a hallway lined with pictures of her mother with other celebrities -- younger -- in films -- plaques commemorating her, etc. She sneaks into her mother's room -- Sid is sleeping with the television on. Where is Doris?

INT. DORIS MANN'S ROOM

Suzanne sneaks by their bed, careful not to wake him. And into:

INT. DORIS MANN'S BATHROOM

Suzanne fumbles quietly in the dark for the medicine cabinet. She opens it. It SQUEAKS. She pauses, listening. Nothing. No one stirring. Sid still snores loudly. Suzanne peeks into the medicine cabinet for pills. Sees some Darvon. Not her favorite, but why not? She removes the bottle, opens it. Pours pills into her hand and pauses. She looks at her face in the mirror. Is this what she wants? No. But something. She must have something. She puts the pills back into the bottle, puts the bottle in her pocket, closes the medicine cabinet. This time, however, it makes a loud SQUEAK.

DORIS (O.S.)

Who's there?

Suzanne rolls her eyes. Great. Caught in the act and she didn't even do it. The light flips on and Doris stands there.

SUZANNE

Hi, Mama. I was just looking for some aspirin.

Doris eyes her daughter suspiciously.

DORIS

Did you find it?

SUZANNE

Yes.

DORIS

Good.

They eye each other. Suzanne exits. Doris follows.

INT. DORIS MANN'S KITCHEN

Doris and Suzanne enter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

I have some news, dear.

SUZANNE

What happened? You dreamt I lost
some weight? Endorsed a line of
clothing? Did an exercise tape
for alcoholics?

Suzanne gets a Coke and some cookies. Doris gets some
wine from the fridge.

DORIS

Don't be fresh, dear. Have you
forgotten that you have looping
this afternoon?

SUZANNE

(clearly has, sotto)

Shit.

DORIS

How do you expect to get anywhere
in this business if you don't show
up? Dear, I have something...
inevitable to tell you and I don't
want you to be angry at me for
predicting it.

SUZANNE

What?

DORIS

Your beloved business manager,
Mort Weiner, the man you insisted
on staying with and the one I
begged you to leave --

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

Mother, just skip to the part
where I'm an asshole.

DORIS

I see no reason why you have to
use language like that, dear. I
do wish you would try to avoid
it. If for no other reason than I
am starting to employ some of
those words myself.

SUZANNE

Mother?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Yes, darling?

SUZANNE

The news.

DORIS

I know, dear. I'm not anxious to tell you, because I know how upset you'll be. I know how upset I am. Mort Weiner has disappeared.

SUZANNE

Disappeared?

DORIS

The police called here today to say that he couldn't be found and neither could any of his clients' money.

SUZANNE

Meaning what? That I have no money? Can't they find him, can't I sue him?

DORIS

I'm telling you everything I know, dear. I, of course, have contacted your stepfather's lawyer, Samuel Stone, who's terrific, and so he's on it now. But I'm afraid for the moment there's nothing more that we can do.

SUZANNE

What does this mean? That I'm broke?

DORIS

Not broke, per se. Your salary for this film is still in escrow, pending your completing it without a hitch -- thank God, and, of course, you have your New York apartment, that you own outright, thanks to me. If I'd left it up to Mort, the bank would own that place and then you'd really be strapped.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

It sounds like I'm pretty strapped now. Oh, it's perfect. This is perfect. Thank God I got sober now, so I could be hyper conscious for this series of humiliations, this... this purification process from Hell.

DORIS

It's no good feeling sorry for yourself, dear. You'll have to overcome these difficulties and you might as well do it with some style. You know, you could easily make an enormous amount of money if you'd only sing. You have a God-given talent that you just throw away. You could be as big a star as that... that Madonna girl. She hasn't got half your voice. I keep telling you, if you would only make an album, I could produce it. We could make one of those videos.

Suzanne has heard this speech before and it drives her crazy. She might mouth some of the words as her mother recites them.

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

I'm not going to be a singer, Mom. I'm getting out of the business. If I don't, I'll never have any kind of chance at having a normal life.

DORIS

Now let's take this one thing at a time. First, everyone is always getting out of the business, and B, you're just like me. Some days I wake up and feel like I'm talking to my armpit.

SUZANNE

Could you please stop telling me how to live my life for at least a couple of minutes? Isn't it enough that you were right? Now you have to deprive me of some precious stolen moments of self pity for having lost my money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Stolen moments?! You've been feeling sorry for yourself half the time for having a monster of a mother like me. Everything about you says look what you've done to me --

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

Mother, I never said you were a monster.

DORIS

No, you don't say it; you're even too smart to think it. But, you feel it. You somehow lay the entire blame of your drug taking on me.

SUZANNE

I do not, Mother. I took the drugs, nobody made me.

DORIS

Oh, sure, that's your logical brain telling you that, but in your heart you feel that I'm an... alcoholic and that's what's to blame for your... weakness, isn't it?

Suzanne is silent.

DORIS

Go ahead, say it -- you think I'm an alcoholic!

SUZANNE

Mother...

DORIS

Well, maybe I was an alcoholic -- when you were a teenager. I had a nervous breakdown when my marriage failed and I lost all that money. But I got over it. Now I just drink like an Irish person--

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

I know, I know, like an Irish person -- you just enjoy your wine -- you drink to relax -- you've told me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Don't be fresh.

SUZANNE

Is there a cut off age for fresh or does it just go on indefinitely as long as you have older relatives? You don't want me to be a singer Mother, you're the singer -- you're the performer. I can't compete with you. What if somebody won? Oh, you want me to do well -- just not better than you.

DORIS

Maybe you're just jealous, cause I can drink and you can't take drugs anymore. I can handle it and you can't.

SUZANNE

Handle it!?! How the hell do you handle it?

DORIS

(interrupts)

My drinking doesn't interfere with my work, like it did with you. My drinking doesn't interfere with my life.

SUZANNE

What do you call this?!?

DORIS

I call this... You're sitting in judgement over me. What I do is my business. What I drink is my business.

SUZANNE

And what I do is mine. If you want me to get off your back, then get off mine.

DORIS

I'm your mother!

SUZANNE

And I'm your daughter! And I'm long past the age where it's appropriate for you to tell me what to do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Look at this! A woman my age,
struggling to grow up -- to break
free of her mother! This is
tragic.

DORIS

I wish my mother had been as
concerned about me when I was a
girl.

SUZANNE

Your mother beat you and locked
you in closets!

DORIS

One closet! And she didn't beat
me, she used a strap on me
sometimes when I talked back to
her. You're lucky you had me as a
mother and not her -- if you think
I'm tough.

SUZANNE

Oh, you'll do.

DORIS

And just what is that supposed to
mean?

SUZANNE

Nothing...

DORIS

No, tell me, this awful thing that
I did to you when you were a
child! I want to know.

SUZANNE

You want to know? Fine. You gave
me sleeping pills when I was nine
years old.

DORIS

I gave you sleep eze! Over the
counter medication and I gave it
to you cause you couldn't sleep!!

SUZANNE

You don't give children sleeping
pills when they can't sleep!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

They're not sleeping pills,
they're store bought -- perfectly
safe! It's not fair to blame me
for your drugs. I don't blame my
mother for my misfortunes -- for
my drinking.

SUZANNE

You don't acknowledge you drink,
how could you blame your mother
for something you don't do? You
know why I took drugs? Because I
never wanted to end up drinking
like you.

DORIS

Dear, I'm sorry if you think I
hurt you. Everything I did, I did
out of love for you. I may have
done wrong sometimes. How can you
do everything right? That time
with the dress -- I'm ashamed of
that. But what can I do? So, I
made some mistakes, I'm human.
You've never forgiven me for not
being the perfect mother you
thought you had before you were a
teenager -- before my breakdown.

Suzanne's eyes fill. This is true.

SUZANNE

Please stop.

DORIS

If I did wrong giving you those
pills, I'm sorry. How was I to
know? We didn't have self-help
books then like they do now. The
only place I had to learn from was
my own childhood.

Suzanne starts out of the house.

DORIS

(continuing)

Where are you going? Suzanne,
come back here, I'm talking to
you.

SUZANNE

I'm going to make an album, okay?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I'm going to have some fibroid tumors removed, okay? I'm going to have a hysterectomy so that we can break this chain of destructive, dominating women. I'm going to fucking loop! Happy now?

Suzanne gets into her car and drives away.

INT. LOOPING STAGE - HALF AN HOUR LATER

Lowell sits behind a table with two other men -- the editor and the sound editor. The room is in semi-darkness. There is a music stand with some script pages on it under a microphone. Also on the music stand are some headphones.

Suzanne enters, slightly bedraggled and harassed.

SUZANNE

I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

LOWELL

What're you sorry for?

SUZANNE

Aren't I late? I thought I was late.

LOWELL

No, as a matter of fact, you're early. We weren't expecting you for another half an hour.

SUZANNE

Oh... but... so... is it okay now?

Lowell looks at her strangely. Almost with compassion.

LOWELL

Yes, it's okay now.

Lowell pushes an intercom button.

LOWELL

(continuing)

Victor, Miss Vale is here, could we put up her reels now, please.

(back to Suzanne)

There now, wasn't that simple? Suzanne, this is our editor, Phil Hartley, and our sound editor, Elliot Morse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suzanne and Phil and Elliot shake hands and exchange greetings.

Suzanne continues to look uncomfortable as the scene progresses. As though she had sand in her soul.

VICTOR (O.S.)

Ready, Lowell.

LOWELL

Thank you, Victor.

(to Suzanne)

Well, shall we begin?

SUZANNE

Okay.

Suzanne stands in front of the little music stand.

LOWELL

You're really much better in the film than you deserve to be.

Suzanne looks distressed and nods.

SUZANNE

Good. I mean, thank you. I'm sorry that I was such a nightmare.

LOWELL

Well... you seem -- better now.

SUZANNE

Really? No, I don't.

LOWELL

Better because you're sober and --

SUZANNE

(interrupts)

Worse because I'm sober.

LOWELL

Yes. But worse in a good way.

The movie comes up on the screen that we saw filmed at the beginning of the movie only in black and white. Suzanne is being slapped by the prison guard. She flies across the room, turns her head slowly and says her speech. We see Suzanne see herself with a mixture of fascination and horror. Her eyes squint and she takes a step backward as though to protect herself from herself. This version of herself. She is good in the scene until she fucks up the line.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE (V.O.)

(on screen)

... We will survive any humiliation. We have more spirit and more resources than you. All it'll cost us is money, while you... there isn't enough mommy in the world to further a cause like yours --

SUZANNE

Shit.

LOWELL

That's as good as it got all day. We didn't get one full take after that. You only got progressively worse.

SUZANNE

I know. I'm... sorry.

LOWELL

Don't be sorry... fix it.

SUZANNE

What?

Lowell motions for Suzanne to put on the headphones.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

Oh.

Suzanne puts on the headphones and they run the film back. Suzanne watches herself backwards. The film starts forward again. We hear the three beeps before the words "there isn't enough mommy in the world" and after which Suzanne says it correctly.

SUZANNE

There isn't enough money in the world.

ELLIOT

Perfect.

LOWELL

Let's look at it.

The film is run again. This time with the sound correction. It is "perfect." Normal. It has an odd effect on Suzanne. Her eyes fill with tears. She controls herself and looks down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOWELL

(continuing)

Lucky for you we can cut away to the guard.

Lowell looks over and notices that Suzanne is more than somewhat upset. He very quietly sends the two editors away -- clearing the room. Lowell moves to Suzanne.

LOWELL

(continuing)

What could possibly be the matter? Here you've gone back and corrected the past -- at least in your work. What could be a better metaphor? It couldn't be something I said.

SUZANNE

(crying)

Nothing you to say to me is as horrible as what I say to myself and at least it's happening outside my head where I can deal with it easier.

LOWELL

So, what is it? Do you want me to abuse you more?

SUZANNE

Help me. I can't do it. Any of it. I don't know how and I can't ask.

LOWELL

What are you doing now?

SUZANNE

Don't you get it? I just know how to talk. I give self-awareness a bad name. You've got to find me in back of what I'm saying.

LOWELL

The trouble with you is you've had it easy and you don't even know it.

SUZANNE

No, I do know it. That's the trouble. I torture myself over it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOWELL

You're not going to get too much sympathy from anyone. Do you know how many people would give their right arm to be in show business? To lead the kind of life you lead?

SUZANNE

The trouble is I can't feel my life. I can see it all around me and I see that so much of it is good and I just... take it the wrong way. It's like this thing with my mom -- I know she does all this stuff 'cause she cares about me, but I can't seem to... believe it. And... other stuff.

Lowell hands Suzanne a Kleenex and she blows her nose hard.

LOWELL

I don't really know what's happening with your mother, but maybe she will stop mothering you when you grow up.

SUZANNE

You don't know my mother.

LOWELL

No, but I know you. You could make a mother out of anybody. Look, your mother did it to you and her mother did it to her and back and back and back all the way to Eve and at some point you have to just stop it and say, "Fuck it, I start with me."

SUZANNE

Did you just make that up?

LOWELL

I was working on it when you came in. If you'd come a half an hour later when you were supposed to I could have made it better.

SUZANNE

It sounds pretty good as it is.

LOWELL

You just like it 'cause it sounds a little like movie dialogue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Yeah, that's me. I don't want life to imitate art, I want life to be art.

LOWELL

And so it is. Abstract art.

SUZANNE

Maybe I should just go back into the clinic.

LOWELL

Speaking of art? Look, growing up is a process, not an event. It's not like in the movies, where you have a realization and your life changes. In life you have a realization and your life changes a month or so later.

Lowell and Suzanne look at each other.

SUZANNE

So, I just have to wait a month?

LOWELL

Of course, it all depends on the realization. Some of them, you only have to wait a couple weeks, maybe.

They look at each other. How did this happen?

LOWELL

(continuing)

It's better out here coping than in the clinic giving up -- 'cause you'll end up out here coping eventually anyway. So why not start now? Anyway, you can't go back into the hospital, I have a job for you.

SUZANNE

A job? You wouldn't be ashamed to work with me again?

LOWELL

Well, it doesn't start for a couple of months, so you have plenty of time to have your realization, grow up, and leave your mother.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOWELL (CONT'D)

Although I must admit I was a little taken aback when you did a second rate cop film after you worked with me.

SUZANNE

How do you know about that?

LOWELL

I know everything... Except.

He looks at her.

SUZANNE

What?

He smiles.

LOWELL

You know.

Suzanne smiles and nods slowly.

They move together and kiss.

INT. SUZANNE'S CAR - DRIVING HOME

Suzanne is feeling much better as she drives back to Doris'. The fever is broken. She is hopeful, inspired. Possibly the song "Don't Worry, Be Happy" is on the radio as she drives down Doris' street. At the end of the block, where Doris' house is, Suzanne notices lights. What is that? Police cars? No. Oh no. What's happening? Many people are in the street as Suzanne drives up. She rolls down her window and calls to a POLICEMAN.

SUZANNE

(calls)

What happened?

OFFICER

Lady plowed her car into a tree.

Suzanne looks. It is her mother's car.

SUZANNE

Where is the lady? Is she all right?

OFFICER

Who're you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

I'm her daughter.

OFFICER

She hit her head. Ambulance took her to Cedars Sinai. I'm afraid we had to book her for driving under the influence.

Suzanne looks panicked.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

Suzanne's old stomping grounds. Suzanne runs into the admitting area and up to the ADMITTING NURSE. Deja vu.

ADMITTING NURSE

May I help?

(recognizes Suzanne)

Ah yes, Miss Vale, your mother is just getting patched up. I'll take you to her.

INT. HALLWAY - CEDARS SINAI EMERGENCY ROOM

ADMITTING NURSE

I'm afraid some members of the press have been alerted to your mother's presence here -- and her arrest.

SUZANNE

Great.

A policeman is sitting in front of a door. Doris' hospital room. A Doctor comes out of the door with a chart in his hand.

ADMITTING NURSE

Doctor, this is Miss Mann's daughter.

DOCTOR

Ah yes, Miss Vale. Your mother will be just fine. A contusion -- a superficial head wound. She's more frightened than anything else.

Suzanne does not recognize him as the Doctor from her overdose.

SUZANNE

Can I see her?

INT. DORIS MANN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Suzanne enters. Doris looks tiny and frightened sitting in her bed. There is a bandage on her head. We are seeing her without her wig and makeup for the first time. She looks startled and vulnerable as Suzanne enters -- her eyes fill with tears. When she talks, she sounds very childlike and unaffected.

Pearl sits on the bed near her looking victorious and smug. Sid sits watching TV, Owen sits playing solitaire or reading a Louis L'Amour novel. It is a tableau of vivid women and shadow men.

PEARL

There she is. My other monster.
I can't seem to keep you two out
of the hospital lately.

SUZANNE

(to Doris)
Are you okay?

PEARL

She's fine. She just bumped her
head is all. She was worried
about you, so, fathead that she
is, she got into her car and
backed it up a tree. I don't know
how I got into this family -- I
got a wino daughter and a doped up
granddaughter.

DORIS

Mother --

PEARL

(interrupting,
to Doris)

Oh, hush up. I swear, I don't know
where you get it from.

(to Suzanne)

But you. You're just plain spoiled.
All your advantages and you just
throw them away.

(to Doris)

I told you not to bring her up that
way, but would you listen? No siree
Bob. Well, don't come running to me
-- neither of you. I got my hands
full with Grandpaw --

SUZANNE

(interrupts)
Shut up, Gramma.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEARL
I beg your pardon.

SUZANNE
I should think you would.

PEARL
(to Doris)
You see there? You should have washed her mouth out with soap when she was little like I told you. Then maybe she'd have some respect --

SUZANNE
(interrupts)
I'm simply suggesting we try to enjoy each other without trying to assign blame.

PEARL
(to Doris)
Woooo, listen to Miss Snooty Britches. "Assign blame."

Doris gives Suzanne a helpless look. Suzanne starts to usher Pearl out of the room.

PEARL
(continuing)
And just what do you think you're doing, young lady?

SUZANNE
Moving you out of here and into the waiting room.

Suzanne physically ushers Pearl out of the room.

PEARL
There's no need to shove, I'm going. You know what you need? A good pop on the butt like I used to give your mother --

Pearl is gone.

OWEN
Yap, yap, yap, yap, yap, yap, yap,
yap, yap, yap.

Owen continues reading and perhaps smoking. Sid continues watching TV, perhaps noting briefly that Pearl has exited.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

If I thought I made you feel like that, I'd kill myself.

SUZANNE

Don't even say that in jest, Ma. Particularly while you are in a hospital. People might take it the wrong way.

Doris recognizes what Suzanne said as something she said to her earlier. Both women smile at each other.

DORIS

I suppose she means well.

SUZANNE

She sounds like that voice in your head that tells you you can't do anything.

DORIS

Yes. That's true, isn't it? Where did you go to?

SUZANNE

Looping. I shouldn't have gone that way. I'm sorry.

DORIS

You don't really think that I don't want you to do well, do you, dear?

SUZANNE

No, Mama. And you were right about that guy.

DORIS

I'm right about your doing a music video, too. Just wait and see. That's where your big success will come from. Oh, dear, there's blood on my wig and all my makeup has come off -- look at me. Do I have any eyebrows left?

SUZANNE

Let's see.

Suzanne sits on the bed and looks at her mother.

SUZANNE

(continuing)
Some. It's not all rubbed off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

I hate having no eyebrows. Ever since the studio shaved them off and they never grew back.

Suzanne goes through her purse.

SUZANNE

C'mon, let's put some makeup on you.

DORIS

Are you less mad at me now?

SUZANNE

I'll always be less mad at you, Mama.

DORIS

You know, dear, I'm really sort of... jealous of you. You know, because, well, it being your turn. It's your turn now and it's tough for me to face that mine is almost up. It's so important to enjoy your turn, dear. And it would help me so much to know that... one of us enjoyed her youth.

Suzanne applies base on her mother's face -- avoiding her little bandage.

DORIS

(continuing)

Do you have a mirror?

Suzanne hands her a mirror.

DORIS

(continuing)

Oh, my lord, look at me. Tsch, tsch, tsch. You know, I don't mind getting older -- I never thought I'd live this long -- but what I do mind is looking older. Do you have an eyebrow pencil?

Suzanne hands her mother an eyebrow pencil.

DORIS

(continuing)

It's in my will that they don't bury me without eyebrows. I don't go in the ground without them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doris draws on her eyebrows. Suzanne brushes Doris' hair back in a knot. Doris pulls at the flesh under her chin.

DORIS

(continuing)

Maybe I should have that
lyposuction under here...

SUZANNE

There's press out there, Mama.

Doris looks dismayed.

DORIS

I figured. The Enquirer, I bet.
The Star.

SUZANNE

Doris Mann in drunken brawl with
tree.

DORIS

Doris Mann, still distraught over
divorce from Tony Vale twenty-five
years ago, attempts suicide with
lethal oak.

Both are laughing. Doris applies lipstick. She is beginning to look like her old young self. Suzanne ties a scarf around her head -- turban-like, concealing the bandage.

SUZANNE

We should get a family rate at
this emergency room.

DORIS

At least.

Doris turns and faces Suzanne. She looks like Doris again.

DORIS

(continuing)

How do I look?

SUZANNE

Great, Ma.

DORIS

Not bad for an old-timer. Never
let them see you ache --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS (CONT'D)

-- that's what Mr. Mayer used to say.

(she frowns)

Or was it ass? Never let them see your ass. Anyway -- get your old mother her shoes, dear.

Suzanne gets her mother's shoes.

DORIS

(continuing)

Okay, baby, let's go get 'em.

Suzanne opens the door. Doris walks toward her, finishing her hair.

DORIS

(continuing)

You know what my mother said to me yesterday? She said that I put on airs, that I use big words like devastate and gesture. I don't think those are so awfully big, do you?

SUZANNE

No, Mama.

DORIS

What am I supposed to do? Sound like a hick all my life just to make her happy?

Doris walks to the door. Owen sings.

OWEN

(sings)

And the farmer hauled another load away.

DORIS

Oh, well, compared to the end of the world. It seems to take a crisis to bring us together lately.

SID

Like war buddies.

Doris and Suzanne exchange a look. Who said that?

SUZANNE

Sid speaks!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Don't laugh, dear, he's also a dynamo in bed. Still waters, you know.

(she sighs)

-- Do you see my scarf? Oh yes, I'm wearing it.

SUZANNE

Mama, what does no siree Bob mean?

Both women walk through the door.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Doris emerges and strides down the hall. She is met by police and press. Suzanne watches her from a slight distance, impressed. She is joined by the emergency room doctor -- JESSE.

JESSE

She seems to be feeling better.

SUZANNE

We're designed more for public than private.

A beat.

JESSE

Did you ever get my flowers?

Suzanne looks at him blankly.

SUZANNE

You're not...

JESSE

(nodding)

I pumped your stomach.

SUZANNE

Well, God, I mean, thanks for the flowers and for... that. You know, everything.

JESSE

I thought... I don't know... maybe we could see a movie sometime or something.

Suzanne writes her number on a piece of paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Sure. We could see Days of Wine
and Roses, or Snake Pit.

(she hands him her
number)

We could say fate brought us
together.

JESSE

Fate and too many painkillers.

SUZANNE

Always my favorite combination.

They smile at each other.

SUZANNE

(continuing)

But don't really... I mean, this
can't really be a date date. It's
really a good idea, but I'm not
exactly idea oriented.

JESSE

Is there someone else?

SUZANNE

Yes.

JESSE

What, like a producer?

SUZANNE

(shakes her head)

Director.

JESSE

So, I'll wait.

A charged beat as they look at one another. Should
she?

JESSE

(continuing)

Well... so....

SUZANNE

(smiles)

Thanks, Doc.

Suzanne starts down the hall, turns, reaches into her
pocket and throws the bottle of pills to Jesse who
catches them.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - STUDIO - SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

Suzanne is getting into a costume to do a musical number. Doris is seated watching her get dressed. Doris is in the middle of giving Suzanne some last minute advice on how to do the number.

DORIS

... and remember to breathe from your diaphragm. Like this.

Doris breathes with her hand on her stomach, showing her the breath filling her out.

DORIS

(continuing)

Of course, you won't be able to make it go out that far, 'cause you're not as fat as me. Maybe I should have some of that liposuction here. I just can't seem to lose this blob.

She grabs a handful of her stomach.

DORIS

(continuing)

Oh well, compared to the end of the world. Now, darling, you're going to do like I told you, aren't you? Keep your head up during the beginning part of the song, but not too far up or the camera will just be staring up your nose. And on the intro --

SUZANNE

Mother, why don't you just see how I do it. I think you'll like it.

DORIS

You never listen to me.

SUZANNE

I listen to you some of the time and other times I don't.

DORIS

A lot you don't listen. But I suppose that's your right. Is that how you're going to wear your hair?

SUZANNE

Yes. Ready?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORIS

Oh, I suppose so. I'm so nervous,
you'd think I was the one
performing. I'm just happy you're
finally singing.

Doris follows Suzanne out of the dressing room and onto
the soundstage. Lowell is there preparing the shot.
He sees Suzanne.

LOWELL

(calls)

Okay, everybody, let's try one.

He crosses to Suzanne and embraces her.

LOWELL

(continuing)

Ready, Gail?

SUZANNE

Yes, Joseph.

LOWELL

C'mon, Mrs. M.

DORIS

Okay, baby, make me proud.

SUZANNE

I will, Mama.

DORIS

You're a good girl.

SUZANNE

I'm not a girl, Mama. I'm a
chick.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Okay, everybody, try and work with
us, we're on a bell.

Doris kisses Suzanne and hurries with Lowell to behind
camera. Suzanne goes to her mark.

LOWELL

(calls)

Let's hear playback.

MUSIC starts playing. Something like "I Got No
Strings." Lowell gives Suzanne a reassuring smile.
Suzanne looks at him and then away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOWELL
(continuing)
ACTION!

Suzanne begins singing, performing. Reminiscent of her mother, but wholly herself.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE CATWALK

Several crew members watch the number from above, most notably a grinning bald guy. We see the set from their vantage point.

WE PAN down through the scenery and down to the crew, all watching the number from their own particular point of view.

SUZANNE
(sings)
I got no strings
To hold me down.
Etc. etc. etc.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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Place

(We Satisfy)

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