

HOW TO MAKE AN AMERICAN QUILT

Screenplay by

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from the novel
"How To Make An American Quilt"
by Whitney Otto

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3RD DRAFT
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CHARACTERS

FINN - 26, a young graduate student, engaged to be married.

SALLY - 46, Finn's mother [flashback, 10, 22]

THE QUILTERS

HY - early 70's [flashback: 17, 50's]. FINN's grandmother

GLADY JOE - 70 [flashback: 15, 50's] HY's younger sister. FINN's great-aunt.

SOPHIA - early 70's [flashback: 17, 20's, 40's].

EM - early 70's [flashback, 20's].

CONSTANCE - early 50's.

ANNA - early 70's [flashback: 10, 16, 50's], a black woman -- formerly worked for GLADY JOE.

MARIANNA - 50's [flashback: infant, 26, 30's], ANNA's daughter. Her father, no longer in the picture, is white.

THE MEN NO LONGER AROUND

JAMES - 50's, HY's husband.

ARTHUR - 50's, GLADY JOE's husband.

PRESTON - 20's to 40's, SOPHIA's husband.

HOWELL - 60's, CONSTANCE's husband.

BECK - 17, ANNA's one-night-stand, MARIANNA's father.

WINSTON - early 20's and early 40's, ANNA's first love and MARIANNA's last

MEN STILL AROUND

SAM - late 20's, FINN's fiance. A carpenter.

LEON - 20's. A young latino man.

DEAN - 60's [flashback: 20's] EM's husband. A painter and a rascal.

FADE IN:

EUREKA, CALIFORNIA - 1969

EXT. WILL & SALLY'S HOMESTEAD -- DAY

We see a cabin at the end of a dirt road. It's surrounded by a litter of unfinished carpentry projects. We see a well-worn quilt hanging on an improvised clothesline.

WILL, a long-haired, bearded young man is hanging out on the porch trying to fix a chair he's dragged up from somewhere.

SALLY, a young woman with hair down to her waist is working bare-breasted in a weedy vegetable garden.

ANGLE ON: A naked GIRL TODDLER, grimy with dirt, wandering around the yard, dragging her blankie, a small hand-made quilt.

FINN V.O.

I guess you could say that I didn't grow up with very much order in my life. My parents didn't believe that the rules of their parents worked. So they invented their own.

TODDLER'S P.O.V.: we see Will, ready for a little afternoon love-making, lazily getting up and ambling over to Sally. He nuzzles the back of her neck and as he pulls her down, they disappear into the weeds. A beat.

SALLY O.S.

Will, when are you gonna fix the pump?

WILL O.S.

I'll get to it.

SALLY O.S.

I have a bunch of shitty diapers I have to wash.

WILL O.S.

Jesus, Sally, quit hassling me.

SALLY O.S.

Hey, I can't be the only one who gets things done around here.

WILL O.S.

That is such bullshit and you know it.

TODDLER'S P.O.V.: We see Will get up out of the weeds. He walks over to an old truck, gets in, starts up the motor, yanks it into gear. Sally throws a garden trowel at the truck.

SALLY O.S.

I'm sick of you! Wash your hair!

FINN V.O. CONT.

The marriage didn't last very long. They said that they didn't love each other anymore.

The toddler has wandered over to Sally who's sitting in the weeds crying furiously.

FINN V.O. CONT.

Or maybe they were just afraid that their relationship had become just like everyone else's.

TIGHT CLOSE ON: on the toddler's grimy face, utterly confused, ready to cry. Finally she gives up and puts her quilt-blankie over her head. We can see her peeking out through a small hole. 192

FINN V.O. CONT. A.M.O

My parents eventually made peace, and decided to stay friends. And I eventually stopped thinking that it was all my fault.

TODDLER'S P.O.V.: we're looking through the hole in the quilt, watching the truck drive away, leaving a trail of dust in it's wake..

FINN V.O. CONT.

The truth is, it's no one's fault. Sometimes, love simply dies.

FADE TO:

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA -- PRESENT

CLOSE PAN on a crazy-quilt collage of dozens of handwritten notes on colored index cards which have been tacked up on a wall in some special and mysterious order.

WE HEAR the steady THUMP of a mallet hitting a wall. ▶

FINN V.O.

At this moment in time, I'm working on my third and I hope final attempt at my college dissertation.

PULL BACK TO:

INT. BUNGALOW - DAY

We're in one of those funky, old 20's-style Berkeley bungalows. At the moment the place is in chaos -- all the furniture, even the refrigerator, has been moved in to one room. Everything's covered with plastic sheets and plaster dust.

We see an improvised desk piled with books and papers where a young woman in a baggy sweater is packing everything into boxes. This is FINN, 26 -- our toddler grown up. She's a striking young woman, but has the eccentric, distracted look of someone who's dealing in all loose ends. She has a keen, tough intelligence and is a dogged seeker of truth but like a lot of kids who've grown up too fast, she has a hard time keeping all the parts of her life in focus. She flips through one of the books to see if she wants to take it. She stops at a page. 107

FINN V.O. CONT. AMQ

I keep switching my majors. First it was English, then it was history. Now it's anthropology...

EXTREME CLOSE ON a photo of an aboriginal tribes woman staring fiercely in to the camera.

THUMP...THUMP...we hear a plaster wall falling down.

Finn shuts the book, tosses it in the box.

ANGLE ON: a plastic sheet draped over a doorway to another room where we can make out the figure of SAM, who's swinging a mallet, happily humming to himself as he busts through a wall.

FINN V.O. CONT.

On top of that, Sam, my current sweetheart, is taking our home apart and putting it back together in some mysterious new form.

THUMP, THUMP...

Finn is now taking down the colored index cards.

FINN V.O. CONT.

This is not helping my already borderline ability to focus. I've decided to go away for the summer. This makes Sam nervous. He thinks I'm leaving because last night he proposed to me.

CLOSE PAN on each card as it's untacked, leaving a fade mark on the wall.

FINN V.O. CONT.

He doesn't understand why I can't just go work in the library. He even offered to get me a computer so my work would be more portable. I told him, I don't trust computers. They lose things.

Finn puts a rubber band around the index cards, drops ¹⁰² them in the box. She steps over to the plastic sheeting, her feet crunching on bits of plaster.

She leans her face against the plastic, looking in on Sam.

FINN'S P.O.V.: we see the abstracted figure of Sam moving around.

FINN V.O. CONT.

Sam is a good man. No, he's a great man. I love him truly...And I'm twenty-six. This is not an unreasonable age to get married. Especially if you've found your possible soul mate.

FINN'S P.O.V.: Sam lifts the plastic. His face fills the screen. He's 30, a big, robust, solidly built man with a beard and a wonderfully, good-natured face.

Sam gives Finn a kiss. With the way the light's hitting, we can see that he's standing in a cloud of demolition dust that's spilling into Finn's space.

Finn waves the dust out of her face, puts the plastic back down. Looks at Sam again through the plastic.

CLOSE ON: a photo in one of Finn's books left open on her desk -- we see an Amazonian tribesman surrounded by all of his wives. The heading reads: "Tribesman with his six wives."

FINN V.O. CONT.

But then again, how do we even know if we're supposed to be with only one person for the rest of our lives?

CUT TO:

EUREKA, 1969 -- Finn as the toddler has lifted her quilt-blankie and has it tented over her head. She watching:

Sally walking away, furiously trying to twist off her wedding band. She finally gets it off, throws it at the pump. CLINK.

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE PAN ON: several pairs of women's hands stitching a quilt.

FINN V.O. CONT.

I'm spending the summer with my grandmother and great aunt who live in Grasse.

CLOSE ON: 6-YEAR-OLD FINN hiding under a quilting frame.

FINN V.O. CONT.

I used to stay with them when I was a kid. My mother would dump me there when she took off with her latest throb. For as long as I can remember, my grandmother and her friends have been a part of a quilting bee.

From the girl's P.O.V., all we can see the legs of all the women seated around the quilting frame.

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S.M.U

FINN CONT.

I remember sitting under the quilting frame and pretending that I was surrounded by a forest of friendly trees...

FINN'S P.O.V.: looking straight up at the underside of a quilt, needles poking in and out of the fabric, forming patterns with the threads.

FINN CONT.

...and that their stitches were messages from giants written across the sky.

We see an older black woman (ANNA) peek at us under the table. Her hand looks very large as she hands us a scrap of fabric with a needle and thread and gestures for us to go ahead and sew.

FADE TO:

INSERT: A QUILT SQUARE with an appliqued farm landscape, the fabric very faded, bleached out by the sun. Stitched into the fabric:

GRASSE QUILTING BEE

The landscape in the patch FADES TO:

the actual landscape -- miles and miles of Central California farmscape surrounded by dry, grassy hills in beiges and golds, dotted with the occasional Oak tree. We see an old VW van driving down a road.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S HOUSE -- EARLY JUNE, DAY

CLOSE ON: Sam unloading a box of Finn's box from the van¹⁹² which is parked outside of an old, porched farm house. We FOLLOW as he carries the box into the house.

FINN V.O. CONT.

The day Sam drove me to my grandmother's, her friends were there, setting up to make a new quilt.

INT. GLADY JOE AND HY'S - CONTINUOUS

Sam carries the box of books through the living room of a gracious old farm house where we see a group of older women, mostly in their early 70's, moving furniture, making room for their work tables and sewing equipment. At first glance we peg them for a bunch of conservative, rural homemakers -- good wives, good grandmas, good churchgoing souls. But as we PAN AROUND, we start to pick up that there's something slightly off about this group.

FINN V.O. CONT.

These women have been stitching and bitching together for over fifty years.

ANGLE ON: ANNA, a black woman in her early 70's -- still remarkably beautiful but all business -- unrolling a quilt plan at a high drafting table which she stands behind like a judge.

FINN V.O. CONT.

I think the only reason they've lasted this long is because of Anna, who taught them how to quilt and who keeps the group in line.

ANGLE ON: Finn's grandmother and great-aunt, HY and GLADY JOE, putting down two saw horses and unfolding a hinged quilt frame. They clearly are sisters, have the same body-type -- Hy is two years older, a degree shapelier, considered the more stylish of the two. Glady Joe is considered the chatterbox. They're bickering over where to place the frame. We see Glady Joe lean over, give Hy a mean little pinch.

FINN O.S. CONT.

They've always met here at my great-aunt Glady's. My grandmother moved in with her after they lost their husbands. They've both confessed to me that they don't get along and if you ask them, "then why do you live together?" they'll point to the other and say, "she needs me."

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CLOSE ON: two women in their early 70's, SOPHIA and EM -- one, tall and heavy-boned with a dour, stoop-shouldered presence, the other a more delicate lady. They're grunting as they push a couch to the side.

FINN O.S. CONT.

The others in the group are Sophia -- who I remember, would always make me cry -- and Em, who, for some reason, was someone I was supposed to feel sorry for.

ANGLE ON: MARIANNA, an oddly striking woman in her early 50's, bringing in boxes overflowing with fabric scraps. She looks completely out of place here, dressed in layers of bright silks, wearing big pieces of jewelry from distant countries. Her coloring, her manner, her style of dress is so utterly exotic that it's hard to pin down her race or even her country of origin.

FINN O.S. CONT.

And then there's Anna's daughter, Marianna, who I always idolized. When I was a kid, she taught me French and made me cafe au laits, making the dose of coffee stronger as I got older. And the summer I got my period she rewarded me with a glass of red wine.

PAN OVER to the dining room which is just off the main room. We see Sam bringing in another box for Finn who's arranging her books and stacks of colored note cards on the dining room table.

FINN V.O. CONT. *AMQ*

I'm setting up my office in the dining room. It's not very private but it's the only room in the house where I can spread out.

Finn sets down a funky old portable typewriter, looks over at the women in the next room who are now quietly sorting through the boxes of fabrics.

FINN O.S. CONT.

I don't mind working side-by-side with the quilters. As I remember they're a very disciplined bunch.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - A FEW MINUTES LATER

We see Sam, getting into his van, not looking very happy.

FINN O.S. CONT.

Someone like me has to ~~learn~~
how to complete one thing
before going on to the ~~next~~.
I told Sam that I can't ~~marry~~
him until I finish my ~~paper~~.

Sam calls back to Finn.

SAM

I'll pick you up September
first, twelve noon?

Finn gives him a thumbs up, blows ~~him~~ a kiss.

As Sam drives away, Finn stands on ~~the~~ porch with Gladys Joe
and Hy, and waves goodbye.

FADE TO:

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S -- A WHILE LATER

We hear a radio tuned to an easy-listening station.

The women have settled down, all ~~working~~ on their
individual quilt patches, drinking ~~from~~ ~~sweaty~~ glasses of
iced tea, trying to stay cool in ~~the heat~~.

ANGLE ON: Anna standing self-consciously at her drafting
table, being interviewed by Finn, ~~who's~~ taking notes. 192

ANNA

...the challenge of a quilt
like this is that all the
squares are made by different
hands. See. So I have to
find a way to bring all ~~these~~
squares together in to a
balanced and harmonious
design.

She stops, suspiciously eyes Finn's ~~note~~ pad. Finn looks
up at her, nods for her to go on.

ANNA CONT.

First, we assign a theme.
Which for this particular
quilt is, "Where Love
Resides."

EM

(singing)
"Where love resides, I know
not where..."

ANNA

Next we choose colors that
will complement one another.

ANGLE ON: Marianna who's cutting a piece of bright purple
silk.

ANNA CONT.

(glancing in her
direction)

One hopes that all the
quilters will honor this rule
to avoid antagonism of hues.

MARIANNA

(in French)

Chacune a son gout. Chacune a
son metier.

Anna looks annoyed.

FINN

So would you say that
harmonizing these different
elements is a way of creating
a kind of continuity in the
piece?

Anna looks at her for a beat.

ANNA

No, I'm saying that I'm trying
not to end up with one damn
ugly quilt.

GLADY JOE

(to Finn)

Sweetie, explain to us again
what kind of book this is
you're writing?

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FINN

It's a thesis. I'm looking at
women's handiwork in various
tribal cultures and showing
how making a basket, or a
blanket or a digging stick,
whatever, is done with a sense
of ritual.

SOPHIA

I thought you were writing
something about the
Victorians.

FINN

That was a different thesis.

SOPHIA

What happened to that one?

FINN

(getting
defensive)

I became more interested in
this subject.

SOPHIA

You didn't finish it?

FINN

No.

SOPHIA

Well why not?

HY

Chill, Sophia.

GLADY JOE

Ooh! By the way, I spotted a
fellow for Anna.

ANNA

I don't want some old man.

GLADY JOE

No, he's darling. Does anyone
know Frank Ipsey who comes by
here with the eggs?

HY

Glady, Frank has cancer.

GLADY JOE

He does?

ANNA

Oh, good, found me a sick one
too.

GLADY JOE

Finn, do you think you'll
start having babies?

FINN

No, not yet.

SOPHIA

Are you using protection?

FINN

Excuse me?

SOPHIA

If you don't want babies, you
better use protection.

GLADY JO

Sophia, you filth-monger,
leave my grand-niece alone.

FINN

(back to her
notes)

Um, this quilt you're all
working on -- is this
something you're making for
the state fair...?

HY

It's your wedding quilt,
Honey.

FINN

Oh.

HY

You didn't know that?

FINN

No.

Glady Joe smiles at Finn, gives her a little pat. Finn,
starts to pick her way around the quilters back to the
dining room.

EM

(singing again)

Here comes the bride, busting
with pride...

Finn winces, sits back down at the dining room table, tries
to go back to organizing her notes.

Marianna glances up at Finn, knows exactly what's going
through her head. She gives her a wink.

Silence as the women continue to stitch. The easy-
listening station drones on. We hear a carbine in a
distant field.

SOPHIA
 (yawning noisily)
 Hnah, hnah, hnah, hnah, too
 hot to live, too hot to
 breathe.

WE HEAR a car pull up. We see the quilters glance up from their bifocals and reading glasses.

Em looks disturbed, purses her lips. She tries to concentrate on her work:

CLOSE ON: Em's quilt patch -- she's tensely trying to embroider some flowers on a square of green velvet fabric. The stitches are uneven, it's a mess.

WE HEAR footsteps on the porch. The screen door opens and slams.

We see Em stiffen.

CONSTANCE, a slim, cool, elegant woman in her 50's comes through the door. She's a relative newcomer to the group, a deeply private and independent person.

CONSTANCE
 Sorry I'm late.

GLADY JOE
 (cooly)
 Quite all right.

Constance finds a place next to Marianna. She gets out her work, slips on a pair of men's reading glasses. There's dead silence in the room except for the easy-listening music.

Sophia is glaring at Constance.

Em hasn't looked up, her stitching is getting tighter. ⁹²

Anna glances at Marianna, who looks away, refusing to get involved. ^{AMG}

Finn looks up from her notes, wondering why everyone is so quiet.

Suddenly Em takes a seam ripper and furiously rips all the stitches out of her quilt piece. She throws it down, gets up to leave the room.

EM
 Well, the hell if I know where
 love resides.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

LONG SHOT: Finn is out on the porch with Gladly Joe and Hy. It looks like they're just lounging, enjoying the night air.

CLOSE ON: Gladly Joe -- she has a cardboard box on her lap and we see that she's cleaning an ounce of marijuana with a kitten-theme playing card from an old bridge deck.

GLADY JOE

I don't know why people get divorced and then stay friends. If you still like each other, then why don't you just stay married?

ANGLE ON: Hy, her eyes magnified through her reading glasses, delicately crumbling marijuana leaf on to a rolling paper.

HY

Some people like to buy a new car every other year.

FINN

According to my mother, love and friendship aren't the same thing.

HY

Well, that's ridiculous.

She licks the paper, rolls it into a joint, seals it in her mouth, gets red lipstick all over the paper.

GLADY JOE

(taking the
joint)

Hy, look what you did.

HY

We're family.

(back to Finn)

When your mother and father got married they were very immature. I don't think that's the case with you and Sam.

Gladly Joe lights the joint, holding it like a cigarette.

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FINN

Do you know what else she said
-- God, she's so crazy, how'd
she get to be so crazy?

HY

Don't look at me.

FINN

She said that as soon as I get
married, I'll want to have an
affair.

HY

Oh, she doesn't know what
she's talking about.

GLADY JOE

Well, that which is
forbidden...

HY

Oh quit being a cynic.

GLADY JOE

I'm not. My great-niece wants
to know why the marriage vow
is considered such a sacred
thing when in fact, to many
people it means nothing at
all.

HY

(dryly)

I took my marriage very
seriously.

GLADY JOE

Well.

HY

(ignoring her, to
Finn)

You were too young to remember
your grandfather. He and I
had a very special love for
each other that I think even
your Aunt Gladiola was aware
of.

GLADY JOE

No, very much, aware. That's
what made the whole thing so
stunning.

AMQ

192

HY
Why are you bringing this up
right now?

GLADY JOE
You're the one who brought it
up.

HY
Oh please, you have a one-
track mind.

GLADY JOE
All roads lead to Rome.

HY
Fine, go ahead, tell her, I
really don't care.

FINN
Tell me what?

Hy and Gladly Joe clam up. A beat. Gladly Joe is still
holding the joint.

FINN
Is this a mistake, letting you
two smoke?

HY
No, Honey, we get along better
we're I'm high.
(to Gladly,
annoyed)
Are you sharing that with
anyone?

Gladly Joe passes the joint to Hy. Hy takes a delicate hit,
hands to Finn.

GLADY JOE
You're going to need more than
that.

HY
Oh shut up.

Hy stretches out on the chaise lounge, laces her fingers
across her stomach.

HY CONT.

(to Finn)

I'll tell you what happened.
But if your aunt will let me,
I'd like to say one thing
first.

GLADY JOE

Be my guest.

HY

When you've spent your life
with someone and they start to
die and you feel that
terrible, terrible severing,
you do things without thinking
because what you must face is
so deeply unthinkable...

Hy stops, stares off for a beat, fingers her wedding ring.

Finn and Gladly Joe watch her, wait for her to go on.
Finally,

GLADY JOE

(quietly, to
Finn)

Your grandfather was dying,
Honey.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT, 1972

EXTREME CLOSE ON: A MAN'S HAND with a gold wedding band.
Someone is giving him a manicure. WE HEAR two people
talking, very intimately, almost in whispers.

JAMES O.S. AD

...last night I dreamed I was
inside you.

HY O.S.

Yes, my love.

JAMES O.S.

I had my face in your neck.
You were wearing your perfume.
Musky.

WE PAN up the man's arm, see an IV attached, finally we
come to the man's face, once handsome but now grey and
sunken from a wasting disease. This is Finn's grandfather,
JAMES, 50's.

JAMES CONT.

Bend down, let me smell you.

We see Hy, now in her 50's, move into frame as she bends over James and opens her blouse for him, letting him smell the scent she's placed between her breasts. He breathes her in, then lets out a heavy sigh.

JAMES CONT.

It's all over so soon.

INT. GLADY JOE & ARTHUR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS, NIGHT

Glady Joe, now 50, is at her dressing table, wiping off her make up. On her dressing table we see a collection of porcelain figurines. In the B.G., through a bathroom door, we see her husband ARTHUR, standing at the sink in his P.J.'s.

GLADY JOE

...when James finally goes, I think we should take Hy away on a trip.

ARTHUR

All right. We could do that.

ANGLE ON: Arthur, a good-looking man in his 50's, very fit, examining his face in the mirror, checking out the wrinkles, contemplating his mortality.

GLADY JOE

I'm worried about Hy. I think she's falling apart.

Glady Joe is also looking at herself in the mirror.

GLADY JOE CONT.

Oh isn't life just a terrible bitch.

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Arthur appears at her side, bends down and impulsively kisses her neck. Glady Joe holds his face against hers.

Arthur kisses her mouth, whispers to her.

ARTHUR

(hoping for more)

Glady...?

Glady Joe looks at him sadly.

GLADY JOE

Sweetie...

Arthur, used to playing the gentleman, straightens up, gives her a kiss on the cheek.

ARTHUR
(the ritual)
In case you have a heart
attack before next we meet.

Arthur goes to his bedroom. Gladys Joe gets up and goes to hers. We hear them both shut their doors.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NEXT DAY

Hy is sitting in a chair, keeping watch over James while he sleeps. Suddenly she covers her mouth, starts to sob.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Hy is now walking rapidly down the hall. She stops at a nurse's station, asks to use the phone.

INT. GLADY JOE & ARTHUR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The phone is ringing. ANNA is vacuuming, doesn't hear it.

INT. ARTHUR'S OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Arthur is at his desk, on the phone.

ARTHUR
That you Hy? What's
wrong?...No, Gladys must be out
shopping. Did James -- he
hasn't...

192

INTERCUT: Hy at the hospital. ^{P.M.O} She's now sobbing out of control.

HY
...no, no, he's still here. I
just...I need someone to come
get me. I'm sorry...I have to
get out...

EXT. HOSPITAL - A WHILE LATER, DAY

Arthur pulls up in his Buick. Hy is waiting for him, wearing her sunglasses, clutching her purse. Before the car even stops, she yanks the door open.

INT. BUICK - CONTINUOUS, DAY

Hy gets in next to Arthur, slams the door.

HY
Drive me out of town.

ARTHUR
Hy, why don't I take you home?

Hy starts banging her feet on the floor like a little girl.

HY
(hysterical)
NO! Don't you dare! Just get
me out of here! Drive, just
keep driving!

Arthur looks rattled, isn't sure what to do. He puts the car into gear, drives off.

EXT. GRASSE OUTSKIRTS - A FEW MINUTES LATER, DAY

We see the Buick heading past farmland towards the dry, oak-covered hills.

INT. BUICK - CONTINUOUS, DAY

Hy has calmed down some. There's a pile of crumpled kleenex on her lap. She's looking in her makeup mirror, trying to scrub the mascara trails off her face.

Arthur is driving, looking straight ahead, very uncomfortable.

ARTHUR
Hy, do you know where you want
to go?

HY
I don't know. I just want you
to keep driving. *192*

ARTHUR
I have to get back to the
office soon. What if I take
you back to our house...

HY
No!

ARTHUR
All right.

HY
I want to lie down somewhere
before I go back. Find me a
shade tree. I need some peace
before I go back.

EXT. PASTURE - A FEW MINUTES LATER, DAY

Arthur is sitting on the dry grass in the partial shade of an oak tree, his suit coat off, his sleeves rolled up. He checks his watch, chews impatiently on a piece of grass. He looks over at:

Hy, who is lying just a few feet away on an old blanket, her eyes shut, hands folded across her chest. Her face is at peace and she actually looks quite lovely.

CLOSE ON: Hy's chest, a little bit of cleavage showing above the low cut of her summer dress. Tiny beads of perspiration are starting to gather on the skin.

Arthur is studying Hy. He leans over her, sniffs her perfume. He sits back, pulls out his handkerchief, mops his head. He looks at Hy again and slowly, very slowly, trying not to disturb her, he bends down and lightly brushes her lips with a kiss.

Hy opens her eyes. Arthur stops, embarrassed. They stare at each other for a beat.

ARTHUR

I'm sorry. I forgot how much
Glady and you look alike.

Hy suddenly reaches up and pulls him down to her.

INT. GLADY JOE & ARTHUR'S - LATER THAT EVENING

Anna, who works there as a housekeeper, is gathering her things to go home. She skirts the living room as she leaves where we see Glady Joe, Arthur and Hy having cocktails. They're all sitting apart from each other in an oddly formal way.

GLADY JOE

G'night, Anna, thank you.

ANNA

(giving Arthur a
dirty look)

Uh-huh.

Glady Joe turns back to Hy, distracted, suspecting that something is off. She glances over at:

Arthur, who's sitting in his chair, dead quiet, keeping his eyes on his drink.

GLADY JOE

(to Hy)

I was at the hospital today. James didn't know where you had gone. I told him you had to scoot off to town for something. He was quite upset.

HY

Yes, I know. I've talked to him.

GLADY JOE

Well, I just find it odd that you just left the hospital and didn't even leave him a note, that you just took off for a ride with my husband.

Arthur's eyes nervously flit up. Gladly Joe stops, catches his look.

Arthur pales, looks down.

Gladly Joe gets up, goes over to Arthur and grabs his hand, starts smelling it. Arthur lets out a nervous laugh, pulls his hand away.

ARTHUR

Gladly, what're you doing?

Gladly Joe holds on to him, starts sniffing him all over.

ARTHUR CONT.

Honey, what're you doing? C'mon.

Gladly Joe flings his arm back at him. She starts to shake.

GLADY JOE

I have to go think for a minute.

HY

(looking ill)

Gladly...

GLADY JOE

I don't want to hear a word from either of you.

She grabs Arthur's drink and pours it all over him.

192

LMQ

GLADY JOE CONT.

You stink of her.

She slams the glass down and storms out of the room.

INT. GLADY JOE & ARTHUR'S - LATER THAT NIGHT

Arthur is standing outside Gladly Joe's bedroom door, looking wretched.

ARTHUR

Gladly? I'd like to find a way we can work this out. If you want me to go away, I'll do that, but if you want me to stay that's what I want...

INT. GLADY JOE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE PAN of a collection of ceramic and porcelain figurines arranged on a bureau.

ARTHUR CONT. O.S.

I'm so truly, truly sorry, Gladly, but our marriage...we haven't shared the same bed in ten years.

Continue to PAN past the bureau over to Gladly Joe who's sitting up rigidly in bed.

ARTHUR CONT. O.S.

It's been hard on me. I've been lonely. What could I do?

GLADY JOE

(screaming)

SHE WAS MY SISTER!

CUT TO:

192

Arthur still standing outside, listening to the sound of ceramics being smashed to bits against the door. It finally stops. A beat.

ARTHUR

Gladly?

He tries the knob, is surprised to see that it isn't locked. He opens the door, looks in:

INT. GLADY JOE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

ARTHUR'S P.O.V.: the floor in front of the door is littered with the broken pieces of Gladly Joe's figurine collection.

Arthur looks up, horrified. He sees Gladly standing by her bed, clutching a ceramic dog, still seething.

Arthur ducks behind the door just as the dog is hurled after him and smashes to the floor.

INT. GLADY JOE & ARTHUR'S - NEXT MORNING

Gladly Joe is at her dressing table, attending to her morning toilet. She can hear Arthur brushing his teeth in the bathroom. She stares at a porcelain shepherd girl set next to her cold cream. She's suddenly seized with another fit of rage, grabs the figurine and flings it against the bathroom door.

The brushing stops. A beat. The brushing starts again.
INT. GLADY JOE & ARTHUR'S - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

WE HEAR GLADY JOE humming.

CLOSE ON: the head from the same shepherd girl being set in a glob of plaster of Paris.

PULL BACK to Gladly Joe standing on a step ladder in the laundry room, setting the broken ceramics into the wall, creating a grotesque mosaic.

Anna is at the washing machine, going about her business, acting as if the Mrs. is just on to a new art project.

Arthur comes in, dressed to go to the office. He stands there uncomfortably.

ARTHUR
I'm going to work.

GLADY JOE
As you wish, Dear.

ARTHUR
(the wall)
This is really creepy, you know. Can't you just toss all that junk out?

GLADY JOE
Self expression heals the wounded heart.

ARTHUR
For God's sake, Gladly.

Anna shoves past Arthur with an armful of laundry, tossing a couple of shirts back at him.

192

ANNA

You can iron your own.

INT. GLADY JOE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT, LATER

Glady Joe is in bed, reading and having a cigarette. There's a soft knock on the door. Arthur comes in. He looks at Glady with a terrible sadness.

ARTHUR

I can't live like this.

GLADY JOE

You made your own bed.

ARTHUR

Don't you see? Don't you understand why I did it?

GLADY JOE

Frankly, the reason eludes me.

ARTHUR

Your sister was the closest I could get to you.

Glady looks at Arthur. There's a perceptible change in her face. Her lips part as if she trying to decide if this is the moment to forgive him. Then she changes her mind, reaches for a souvenir ashtray on her bedside table, throws it at Arthur. We hear it crash.

CUT TO:

CLICK. A light goes on. CLOSE PAN of the mosaic wall. We see the remnants of the ashtray embedded in the plaster. PULL BACK TO:

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - PRESENT, NIGHT

Glady Joe and Finn are standing in the laundry room, studying the wall that now covers all four sides. Glady Joe is holding the remains of the roach in a bobby pin.

FINN

Did you ever forgive Uncle Arthur?

GLADY JOE

Yes, I forgave him. But that's what you do when someone dies.

FINN

Did Grandpa ever find out...?

GLADY JOE

I had decided I was going to tell him everything, let the man die enlightened.

FINN

Jesus, Aunt Glady.

GLADY JOE

I was crazy, Finn, I would have done anything.

1972

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Glady Joe is clicking down the hall in her heels, gripping a bag of ice cream. Her mouth is set in a determined, angry line.

She stops in front of the door to James' room, looks in, sees:

Hy, curled up on the bed with James, her body cradling his. She's talking softly to him, stroking his bristly cheek. James, too weak to move, has his head tilted so he can gaze into her face.

Glady Joe steps back, overwhelmed by the scene. She's thinking of turning away but looks down at the damp bag of ice cream she's holding. Finally she knocks lightly on the door, goes in.

Hy sees Glady Joe, a look of panic comes over her face. She puts a protective arm on James, afraid of Glady Joe might do.

Glady Joe looks at Hy, lets her twist in the wind for a beat. Finally she turns to James.

GLADY JOE

I brought ice cream. Your favorite. Pralines and cream.

Glady Joe takes out two plastic spoons, offers one to Hy. Hy takes the spoon and finally relaxes. Glady Joe opens the melting ice cream and she and Hy take turns feeding it to James.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S DINING ROOM - NEXT DAY

CLOSE ON: Finn's hand, digging for an ice cube in a glass.

PULL BACK TO: Finn, overwhelmed by the heat, rubs the ice cube over her neck and wrists. She plunks it back in the glass, resumes typing.

HY O.S.

Honey, it's too hot to work,
come swimming with us.

Finn looks up, sees Hy standing there in her bathing suit and cover-up.

Finn doesn't even argue, shuts her books.

INT. STATION WAGON - A WHILE LATER

It's a blazing hot day. Gladys Joe is driving her enormous old station wagon. Finn, dressed to go swimming is sitting on the wide front seat between Gladys Joe and Hy. They're all wearing sun glasses and look cranky from getting stoned last night.

WOMEN'S P.O.V., STREET: we're passing brown yard after brown yard. Suddenly we see a lush garden brilliant with cosmos, zinnia's, hollyhocks, roses...the car slows as we see Constance, wearing a sun hat, bent over, working in the flowers.

On the other side of the road, we see DEAN, a handsome older man, bearded, early 70's. He's working at a portable easel, painting Constance in her garden, wearing a straw hat like a Latter-day Monet. As we pass by, he sees us gives us a salute.

Hy waves back, Gladys Joe keeps driving, her jaw set.

GLADYS JOE

You shouldn't have waved.

HY

Oh leave it.

EXT. PUBLIC POOL, - DAY

The pool is filled with KIDS. MOTHERS are sitting around the perimeter, gossiping, taking in the sun.

Hy and Gladys Jo have ensconced themselves in lounge chairs, both laying back with plastic cups over their eyes.

192

EXT. CONCESSION STAND, POOL - CONTINUOUS

Finn, in her bathing suit, is standing in line at the concession stand. She's joined by LEON, a slim-hipped, young Latino man in his 20's with a wonderfully muscled torso and a dancer's grace. He's just gotten out of the pool his black hair slicked back like a seal's. He's highly energized, a romantic, throws off a lot of unchecked heat.

He shakes the water off his arms and without worrying about introductions, turns to Finn.

LEON

Oh man! You know what I just did? I did thirty laps doing the butterfly stroke. You know what my arms feel like?

FINN

(a little taken aback)

No.

LEON

They feel like I could take off and fly.

Finn can't help it, keeps glancing at his chest. He catches her. She looks away.

LEON

So what's your name?

FINN

(hesitates)

Finn.

LEON

Ah, like on a fish?

FINN

No, with a double N. It's one of those bizarre hippie names.

LEON

No, it's a beautiful name. Fin! That's the thing that slices through the water. That's what gives the fishys their speed. Are you good in the water?

FINN

Am I good in the water...

192

AMQ

LEON
How come I've never seen you
before?

FINN
I'm only here for the summer.

LEON
You're from the city, I bet.

FINN
Berkeley.

LEON
Ahhhh, where the smart people
live.

FINN
Not really.

LEON
Oh yeah, I can tell that
you're one of them.

FINN
Naaa.

Finn laughs, has to look away. She's already wildly
attracted to this person.

They both stand in line for a beat, forced close to each
other by the other SWIMMERS in line. They're very aware of
each other's skin. Finn can't stand it anymore, shifts,
trying to make a little more space between them.

FINN
(finally)
Long line.

LEON
Yeh, it is.

FINN
God, it's hot.
(starting to back
away)
I have to go jump in the pool.

LEON
(calling after
her)
My name's Leon.

FINN
 OK, Leon, maybe I'll see you
 around.

CUT TO:

Finn jumping in the pool. She comes up for air, shakes her head, keeps throwing water on her face, trying to bring herself back to her senses.

As she comes up, she bumps into Sophia who's plowing through the water, doing laps. Sophia looks up, scowls.

EXT. POOLSIDE -- A WHILE LATER

Finn is now sprawled out on a towel next to Gladys Joe and Hy, reading a magazine.

GLADYS JOE
 Who's that young man we saw
 you with?

FINN
 (staying focused
 on her magazine)
 Oh, just someone who wanted to
 talk.

Gladys Joe gives Hy a look. Hy frowns at her to leave Finn alone.

ANGLE ON: Sophia in the pool, still doing her laps. Some
 GIRLS jump in the water, start splashing and squealing.

SOPHIA
 (barking at them)
 Little girls, that's not
 allowed!

The girls swim away from Sophia like she's the witch lady of the pool.

Gladys Joe, Hy and Finn are watching this.

FINN
 Is Sophia still scaring
 children?

HY
 That's how she lives so long.

Sophia is pulling herself up a ladder out of the pool, the water pouring off her big body.

GLADY JOE
Whup, here she comes, bring
'er up, bring 'er up.

FOLLOW ON Sophia as she walks the perimeter of the pool.

GLADY JOE CONT.
(to Finn)
You should have seen her when
she was your age. My God she
had a stunning figure.

HY
She looks like her mother now.

CLOSE ON: Sophia walking by the diving boards. She
hesitates at the high dive, touches the hand rail, walks
on.

1941

EXT. PUBLIC POOL - DAY

Stay on the hand rail of the high dive. We see a young
woman's hand gripping the rail. PAN UP to the top to the
diving board as a tall, slim, athletic young woman appears
at the top of the ladder. Water is dripping from her chin,
her short, dark hair is slicked back off her forehead.
This is SOPHIA at AGE 17.

Sophia walks to the end of the board. Her toes grip the
edge. She tugs the rear of her suit down, clips the end of
her nose, then throws her arms out and takes off into a
beautiful free-floating dive. 42

We FOLLOW as she hits the pool, slicing into the water.

ANGLE ON: PRESTON, 20, a young man in bathing trunks
sitting on a towel and watching Sophia, so overwhelmed by
what he see that he involuntarily grasps at his chest. He
watches as Sophia starts swimming to side of the pool.

ANGLE ON: Sophia reaching the edge, eyes squinting from the
water. She puts her hands on the concrete to push herself
up. Suddenly Preston bends into frame, reaches down and
pulls Sophia straight out of the water.

Sophia stands there dripping wet, blinking, staring at this
stranger. She lets out a surprised laugh.

SOPHIA
Well!

Preston, suddenly shy, holds out his hand.

PRESTON
I'm Preston Richards.

Sophia doesn't take his hand, plops down at the edge of the pool, dangles her feet in the water.

PRESTON CONT.
What's your name?

SOPHIA
Sophia Darling.

Preston squats down next to her.

PRESTON
Did you say, Darling?

SOPHIA
Yeh, like the family in Peter Pan.

PRESTON
Oh, I thought...

SOPHIA
What.

PRESTON
...that you called me "darling."

SOPHIA
(laughs)
Oh, God no. No, no, no.

Sophia leans her head back, starts swirling her legs around in the water.

PRESTON
Well, I like your name. I like it very much.

SOPHIA
Do you, now?

PRESTON
When we get married, we'll break tradition so you can keep it.

Sophia stops moving her legs, looks at Preston, cocks her head.

SOPHIA
Excuse me?

AMQ 192

PRESTON
(changing the
subject)

Do you dive competitively?

Sophia looks at him for a beat, then goes back to swirling her legs.

SOPHIA
No. I just do it for myself.
I like the sensation of
falling.

PRESTON
You swim like a mermaid, you
know.

SOPHIA
(laughs)
I do?

PRESTON
What do you want to do with
your life?

SOPHIA
I dunno. Marry you I guess.

She slips off the side and down under the water.

Preston leans over, looks for her. She's gone.

INT. DARLING HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

We're in a very modest house, the furnishings fussy but threadbare.

We see Sophia sitting at an improvised dressing table in the kitchen, trying to curl her hair with a hot iron. There's a tense, sour expression on her face.

MRS. DARLING O.S. *102*
...a college man, that's good
that he's a college man.

We see her mother, MRS. DARLING, a large, heavysset, dour-looking woman in her 40's, hovering behind her.

MRS. DARLING CONT.
But listen, Honey, let him do
most of the talking. Men,
especially smart men, like a
good listener.

Mrs. Darling reaches out, fusses with one of Sophia's curls.

SOPHIA
Ma, don't.

MRS. DARLING
It's all right to shine a little though. Men like to think they've found a treasure.

SOPHIA
It's only a date, I'm not gonna marry him.

MRS. DARLING
Well, you never know if this is the one. I love you Baby, but you're not pretty enough to be on your own.

Sophia looks at her mother, can't believe she just said this.

MRS. DARLING CONT.
I know whereof I speak.

EXT. DARLING HOUSE - LATER, EVENING

It's evening, still light out.

Sophia now dressed for her date -- a dress in a blue fabric with a distinctive waterdrop print -- is rushing Preston down to his car, to get him away from Mrs. Darling, who's standing on the porch, watching, the imperious presence.

Preston, trying to be a gentleman, starts to go around to the passenger side to open the door for her.

SOPHIA
I'll get my door, just get us out of here.

Sophia yanks open her door, scoots in, while Preston goes around to his side. As Preston gets in and starts the car, he turns to Sophia.

PRESTON
You hungry?

SOPHIA CONT.
No. Let's go to the quarry.

EXT. QUARRY - EARLY EVENING

Sophia is carrying her shoes, walking barefoot as she leads Preston over a stony path to the quarry. The sun is just starting to set. It's the magic hour.

SOPHIA

...my dad left home seven years ago. We don't know where he is.

PRESTON

I'm sorry. What happened, he just...?

SOPHIA

The Depression, I guess. He couldn't get a job and, I don't know...Well, you saw my mother.

PRESTON

Aw, she's not that bad.

SOPHIA

Sure she is. I liked my father. He used to sing to me.

As they continue to walk, Sophia starts humming BYE BYE BLACKBIRD.

PRESTON's P.O.V. of Sophia, walking ahead of him, the flesh of her neck exposed below her short haircut.

Preston can't stand it, catches her and kisses her on that spot.

Sophia dives ahead of him through a wall of leaves follows her. On the other side we see: 192

THE QUARRY -- a still, dark lake of water set between high walls of layered rock turned pink in the sunset.

SOPHIA

This is where I usually come to swim. You're lucky you saw me at the pool.

Preston stands, looking at the quarry, breathless.

SOPHIA CONT.

You like it?

PRESTON
I'm a geologist. That's my
major. Rocks.

SOPHIA
It is? Oh God, I didn't even
ask. I'm sorry...

PRESTON
No, that's all right.

SOPHIA
No, I shouldn't have been
doing all the talking. So,
tell me, tell me more.

PRESTON
Well, this is what I'd like to
do. I'd like to travel over
the whole planet and study
every part of her. Especially
where rock has met up with
water -- see, that's when you
have the most spectacular
effects. That's when you get
the Grand Canyon. There's
nothing like water to wear
down a mountain and open up
its secrets to you...

SOPHIA
Stay right here, don't move.

Sophia starts climbing up some rocks. As she reaches the top, she unzips her dress and pulls it off. She stands there at the edge of the rock in her underwear. She tugs at the back of her panties, clips the end of her nose and makes a spectacular, daredevil dive into the water.

Preston can't believe she just did this. He runs down to the water, frantically looking for her to come back up. He can't find her, panics and dives into the water fully clothed.

Sophia bobs up in the water, laughing at Preston as he splashes over to her. She swims away from him, playing a game. He finally catches up, pins her between himself and a flat wall of rock. She lets him kiss her. She slides down into the water, comes back up like a mermaid, laughing. She lets him kiss her again. Preston whispers to her:

PRESTON

Let's go around the world
together...I'll study rocks
while you can swim down to the
bottom of canyons, swim across
the middle of old volcanoes...

SOPHIA

(whispering back
to him)

Get me away from here.

Preston holds her, presses her close to the rock. He
cradles her hips against him as Sophia lets out a soft
gasp.

EXT. DARLING HOUSE - NIGHT

Sophia and Preston are walking up to the house from
Preston's car. They're whispering to each other, giggling.

Sophia opens the front door. The screen door creaks. They
try to sneak in to the dark house.

INT. DARLING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A lamp goes on.

Mrs. Darling is sitting in her chair in her bathrobe, her
hair bobby-pinned against her head. She looks the couple
over:

In the light we see that Preston's suit has dried out but
is completely misshapen. Sophia's dress still has a few
wet patches showing through from her damp underwear.

Mrs. Darling doesn't say anything. Sophia waits for the
axe to fall.

MRS. DARLING CONTI

(finally, to
Preston)

Do you love my daughter?

SOPHIA

(answering for
him)

No.

PRESTON

Actually, Mrs. Darling, I do.

MRS. DARLING

You aren't from around here,
are you?

PRESTON

No, I'm still in college in Arizona. But I can take her with me.

MRS. DARLING

And that's supposed to be a comfort to me? That you'll take my only child?

Preston doesn't know what to say, turns to Sophia. Sophia looks away.

PRESTON

I love her, Mrs. Darling. I think I might even need her.

MRS. DARLING

And I'm to be left.

Mrs. Darling heaves herself out of her chair, starts to shuffle to her room. As she passes Sophia, she stops, takes another look at the wet patches showing through her dress.

MRS. DARLING CONT.

Well, you've done it. You're stuck now, you know that.

Sophia doesn't say anything.

MRS. DARLING CONT.

G'night.

Mrs. Darling shuffles off to her room.

INT. SOPHIA'S ROOM - LATER, NIGHT

INT. SOPHIA & PRESTON'S BUNGALOW - A YEAR LATER, EVENING ¹⁰²

CLOSE ON: a crying baby girl, DUFF, her nose snotty, her chin dripping baby food.

PULL BACK: to Sophia impatiently spooning food into the baby's mouth.

Preston is sitting next to her at the dinner table, picking at his food.

SOPHIA

...where are you going this time?

PRESTON

They want to send me up to Colorado to check out the sight of a dam.

SOPHIA

While I'm stuck here? It isn't fair.

PRESTON

Honey, this is my career.

SOPHIA

I'm not gonna raise this kid alone. You have to get a job in town.

PRESTON

Sophia, I can't spend my life doing soil tests for farmers.

SOPHIA

And I'm not going to be left behind like some old bag.

PRESTON

Look, as soon as the baby gets a little older you can come along too.

SOPHIA

How do I know you won't run off?

PRESTON

(bewildered)

Why would I do that?

SOPHIA

That's what you say now.

PRESTON

This is crazy, why would I run away?

SOPHIA

Because it happens!

AMQ

Sophia, furious with everything, throws the spoon down, starts to cry.

Preston is even more confused, touches her arm.

PRESTON CONT.

Sophia, what's wrong?

Sophia, hating that she's crying, yanks her arm away.

Preston looks at Baby Duff who's also crying. He picks up her spoon, wipes it off, tries to continue the feeding.

CUT TO:

SOPHIA & PRESTON'S BUNGALOW - 4 YEARS LATER

Same dinner table. Sophia is feeding another crying baby, PRES. A toddler, EDIE is in a high chair, making a mess of her plate, and DUFF, now a restless four-year-old, kicking the legs of her chair.

Preston's place has moved to the end of the table. He's wearing a business suit, apparently now tied down to a regular job.

SOPHIA
(the kicking)
Duff, stop that.

Duff stops.

PRESTON
Duff, if you're done, you can go.

SOPHIA
Not until I've finished eating.

PRESTON
(a beat)
Duff, stay in your seat.

They continue to eat in silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOPHIA & PRESTON'S BACKYARD -- 8 YEARS LATER, 1958

Preston is digging a large hole in the back yard with a shovel.

12-YEAR-OLD-PRES, a repressed, accommodating boy, is helping.

ANGLE ON: 34-YEAR-OLD SOPHIA pinning wet laundry up on the clothesline. She's gained weight and her looks are starting to go. DUFF, now 17, long-limbed like her mother, and EDIE, now a sullen 15-year-old are helping, obviously resenting every moment of it.

DUFF
I want to go to college.

SOPHIA
We can only afford to send one
of you. It's more important
for Pres to go.

DUFF
I'm the oldest.

SOPHIA
A girl doesn't need to go to
college. You can get married.

DUFF
That's not what I want.

SOPHIA
Well, we don't always get what
we want.

EDIE
You can't stop us, you know.

SOPHIA
I didn't say that I could.

Sophia picks up the laundry basket, starts walking back to
the house. She pauses at the hole that Preston is digging.
Preston stops, wipes the sweat off his face, looks up at
Sophia, waiting for her to say something. She has no
comment, keeps walking.

INT. SOPHIA & PRESTON'S - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Sophia is in the kitchen, starting up dinner.

Through the kitchen window, we can see Preston in the back
yard, stirring cement in a wheel barrel.

Eddie comes in, opens the fridge and drinks some orange
juice out of the bottle. She's wearing an oversized car
coat, even though it's a hot day.

Sophia glances at her, annoyed that she's drinking out of
the bottle.

SOPHIA
Honey, use a glass.

192
AMQ

Sophia stares at Edie, notices that her figure has
broadened around her belly and hips.

EDIE
What.

SOPHIA
(quietly)
Oh my God.

Eddie defensively puts the orange juice back.

EDIE
Look, I didn't mean to drink
from the bottle...

SOPHIA
Eddie...

EDIE
I said I was sorry.

Eddie splits for the stairs, runs up to her room.

Sophia turns off the stove. Her hands are trembling. She takes a breath, trying to compose herself. Then she tugs the back of her dress down, clips the end of her nose and slowly ascends the stairs.

EXT. SOPHIA & PRESTON'S BACK YARD - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Preston is now standing over his home-made pond, filling it with water from an old rubber hose.

Sophia comes out, stares at the pond.

SOPHIA
I looked into a home in
Colorado where Eddie can go
while she's pregnant. They'll
also take care of the
adoption.

PRESTON
The adoption?

SOPHIA
She has to, Pres. She refuses
to marry the boy. Do you want
her raising an illegitimate
child?

192

PRESTON
The hell if it's legitimate,
it's still one of ours.

SOPHIA
And who do you think would be taking care of it while she's at school and you're at work? Whose responsibility do you think it will be?

PRESTON
Well, obviously you want this to be your decision.

SOPHIA
No, it's not my decision. I've never been allowed to make any decisions.

PRESTON
Oh for God's sake, Sophia, quit acting so helpless. You're one of the toughest gals I know...

SOPHIA
It has nothing to do with being tough, it has to do with spending your life between a rock and a hard place...

PRESTON
A rock and a hard place? What the hell kind of cliché is that?

Sophia shrugs. A beat. The water continues to dribble from the hose. 192

PRESTON CONT.
(the pond)
I was thinking of throwing in a few gold fish. Were there fish in the quarry?

SOPHIA
I don't remember.

PRESTON
Well, there should be some fish, so we don't get mosquitos.

SOPHIA
Do what you want.

Sophia turns, goes back into the house.

INT. SOPHIA & PRESTON'S - A MONTH LATER, EVENING

Sophia, Preston and Pres are eating dinner. They have the RADIO on, tuned to the Farm Report to fill the silence.

The PHONE RINGS. Sophia gets up to answer it.

Preston and Pres continue to eat.

Sophia comes back in, sits back down at the table.

SOPHIA

Edie ran away from the home.
They need one of us to go out
there.

A beat.

PRESTON

I'll drive up there tomorrow.

SOPHIA

All right.

Pres looks from parent to parent, waiting for more of a reaction.

Preston drains his beer, stares at his plate.

Sophia shakes her napkin out, puts it back in her lap and continues to eat.

INT. SOPHIA & PRESTON'S BEDROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

Sophia and Preston are in bed. Preston is fast asleep. Sophia is wide awake. The moon is full and throwing a light across the room. Sophia bends over Preston, touches his face.

SOPHIA

Preston?

Preston stirs.

SOPHIA CONT.

Pres? Let's go down to the
quarry. Pres?

Preston, still in a deep sleep, opens his eyes but doesn't register her.

Sophia touches him again. Preston moans softly for her to get away, rolls over to his side.

Sophia lies back down, stares at the moonlight on the wall.

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AMU

INT. SOPHIA & PRESTON'S - LATER, DAWN

Sophia is now fast asleep.

We see Preston, fully dressed, quietly shutting his suitcase. He bends down to Sophia, gives her a kiss and without making a sound, picks up his suitcase and leaves.

WE HEAR the first bird of the day start to chirp. The walls are starting to turn pink from the sunrise. Sophia stirs.

WE HEAR a car starting up. Sophia opens her eyes. As she looks over at the empty side of the bed WE HEAR Preston driving away.

FADE TO:

INT. STATION WAGON - PRESENT, LATE AFTERNOON

Finn, Gladly Joe and Hy are now driving back from the pool.

FINN

What happened to the daughter?

HY

Sophia doesn't talk about it.

FINN

What about her husband?

HY

Sophia doesn't talk about it.

Finn stares out the window, utterly depressed by the story.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - CONTINUOUS, DAY.

The station wagon is pulling up. We see Sam sitting on the front porch waiting for them. He has a stack of rolled blueprints next to him. He stands up, waves.

Gladly Joe and Hy get out of the car, full of welcomes, obviously adore him. Sam greets them with big bear hugs.

HY

Hello, Sam, hello! What are you doing here?

GLADY JOE

You poor thing, it's blazing hot out here! Get this man some iced tea!

Finn, surprised to see Sam, still disturbed by Sophia's story, is hanging back a bit.

SAM

Hi, Finn.

Sam goes over to give her a hug.

FINN

How come you're here?

SAM

I missed you.

Finn doesn't say anything. Sam holds the blueprints up.

SAM CONT.

And I wanted to go over the house with you.

GLADY JOE

(calling over)

Sam are you staying for dinner?

SAM

Sure, if you'll have me.

(back to Finn)

You go swimming?

Finn remembers Leon, feels vaguely uncomfortable.

FINN

Swimming, yeh.

INT. GLADY JO & HY'S - A WHILE LATER

Sam is at the dining room table clearing all of Finn's books and papers to the side so he can roll out his blueprints. Some of her note cards fly off.

FINN

Sam --

SAM

Sorry.

(the blueprints)

OK, I took out this wall down here for the kitchen.

FINN

OK...

SAM

And you see this section here?
This will be your office.

FINN

But I told you, I want a
separate room.

SAM

I know, I tried to work that
out but the house isn't big
enough.

FINN

(pointing on the
blueprint)
What about this?

SAM

That would be a guest room.

FINN

Screw the guests, let them
sleep on the couch.

SAM

OK, I just thought we should
have an extra room, for
whatever, you know, for a work
room or if we have a baby.

FINN

Wait a minute, this is a
baby's room?

SAM

No, I was just saying it was a
possible use of the space.

FINN

Do you expect me to have
babies right away?

SAM

I don't expect you to do
anything.

FINN

But you said this would be a
baby's room.

SAM

Jesus, Finn, I'm just going
over blueprints.

FINN

OK.

A beat.

SAM

Does that mean you don't want to have kids?

FINN

Not right now, no.

SAM

Does that mean, not now or never?

FINN

I don't know. Why is that something I have to answer right now?

SAM

If you don't want to have kids, we should talk about it.

FINN

Fine, but that's not what I want to think about right now. I'm trying to finish my paper.

SAM

But you went swimming.

FINN

So?

SAM

So you obviously have time to do other things beside work.

FINN

I can't believe this. Did you come down here to check on me?

SAM

No. I came down to show you some blueprints --

FINN

(over him)

-- I go for a swim with my grandma, I'm supposed to apologize for that?

SAM
(over her)
-- you give me this attitude,
Jesus, I thought you'd be
happy to see me.

FINN
(over him)
-- I asked for three months,
you were supposed to give me
three months so I could get my
head together....

SAM
Bullshit, you're getting cold
feet.

FINN
Oh, man.

SAM
I saw that look in your face.

FINN
What look?

SAM
That look your mother gets
when she's decided it's time
to unhook one of her
boyfriends.

FINN
Oh, please.

SAM
(over her)
"Hmm, what am I doing with a
carpenter? Hmm, could I get
someone smarter? Hmm, why are
his feet so big?"

FINN
-- you are so wrong.

Sam grabs a pencil, starts angrily scratching out a section
the blueprints.

SAM CONT.
(the blueprints)
Let's take care of this, then
I'll get out of here.

FINN
Sam, I'm not like my mother.

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AMG

SAM
 We'll put your office in ~~the~~
 extra room. You want a built-
 in desk? Shelves? What do
 you want?

Finn stares at the blueprints.

FINN
 I don't care.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, KITCHEN - LATER, EARLY EVENING

Finn and Sam are sitting side by side at the kitchen table,
 eating dinner in silence, eyes to their plates.

Glady Joe and Hy are on the other side of the table also
 eating in silence, completely run out of small talk.
 Everyone is painfully aware of the sound of their own
 chewing.

GLADY JOE
 (finally)
 Sam, will you be spending the
 night?

SAM
 No, I don't think so.

They continue to eat.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, PORCH - A WHILE LATER, EVENING

Finn is sitting on the swing, deeply miserable, watching:
 Sam's van driving away, disappearing up the road.

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE ON: a needle and thread going in and out of a
 piece of old blue fabric with a waterdrop pattern. (we
 recognize it as the dress Sophia wore when she met
 Preston.)

PAN UP, we see Sophia appliqueing ~~the~~ blue fabric to her
 quilt patch.

ANNA O.S.
 What you should understand
 about the construction of a
 quilt is that it's made up of
 what you would normally throw
 out...

CLOSE ON: Hy sewing a patch made from a man's pin-striped shirt.

ANNA V.O. CONT.
...scraps, old clothing that you or someone else has worn, used things that are no longer useful.

CLOSE ON: Constance, a pair of men's reading glasses perched on her nose, cutting a shape out of an old yellow bandanna.

ANNA V.O. CONT.
You take the best part of these pieces and bind them all together and now you have something you can use again. That's the only true motivation for making a quilt.

FADE TO:

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, LIVING ROOM - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER, DAY

The Quilters are gathered. Gladly Joe is pulling some curtains shut.

Constance is fiddling with the RADIO, trying to find a decent station. Em is looking annoyed. Sophia finally barks at her.

SOPHIA
C'mon, Constance, Fish or cut bait.

CLOSE ON: Anna pinning the women's quilt squares to the curtain.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Finn is working out on the porch, sitting on the swing, note pad and pencil at her side. She's leafing through a book on aboriginals.

CLOSE ON the book: we see a photo of a primitive bark painting of men with enormous penises coupling with smiling, spread-eagled women.

Finn, of course, stops at this picture. She studies it, bends down for an even closer look.

We hear someone on the porch. Finn shuts the book, looks up:

Leon is standing there holding a basket full of beautiful, ripe strawberries.

Finn is startled to see him. She feels a deep blush rising to her ears.

LEON

I don't want to bother you —
I just picked these. I was
just going to leave them here
for you.

FINN

Why don't you stay for a
minute? I'm on a break.

Leon nods, shyly stands there still holding the berries. Finn makes room for him on the swing. She throws the aborigine book behind her. Leon sits down next to her. They're both careful to keep a space between them.

FINN CONT.

(the berries)

Did you grow these?

LEON

My family has a field.
These are the first of this
season, very sweet...

Leon holds the basket up to Finn, so she can smell the strawberries. She shuts her eyes, breathes in their scent.

Leon selects a berry, holds it up to Finn. She hesitates for a beat, then takes it in her mouth.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - CONTINUOUS

The quilt squares are all pinned up together. Glasses are being pushed up on noses. The quilters fall silent and study the curtain:

Anna is standing back, frowning, assessing what they have. She walks up to the curtain, examines Constance's patch, which is all done in yellow fabrics.

ANNA

Well I don't know what to do
with that yellow thing, it's
pulling the whole damn balance
off. Constance, what are you
doin' to me?

CONSTANCE

(unruffled)

As I understood it, the theme is supposed to be "where love resides," and for me love resides in Chickie's garden.

ANNA

Well, that's fine, but you should have made some Chickie's flowers blue or pink.

CONSTANCE

Chickie's roses were yellow.

GLADY JOE

Well, Constance, there are a lot of colors we'd all like to use but we have to respect Anna's opinion.

Marianna is sprawled on the couch, annoyed by it all.


MARIANNA

Why are we being so strict? This is a love quilt for God's sake.

ANNA

I don't care if we're making a quilt for the First Lady or a whore on the street, we will still follow the rules of design.

MARIANNA

Sometimes you have to break the rules to keep the work  alive.

(speaking French
just to annoy
her)

Une couleur villaine n'existe pas.

ANNA

Oh, stop with that french crap.

Em is trembling.

EM

I live with someone who's been
breaking the rules for thirty
years and I don't come here to
have it rubbed in my face!

She retreats to the bathroom. Silence.

GLADY JOE

(finally)

You know, Constance, Em has
been a part of our group
longer than you have and we're
all in a rather uncomfortable
situation here...

Constance, bored by the drama, walks over to the curtain
and unpins her quilt square.

CONSTANCE

Fine, I'll leave. I really
don't care.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Leon has left. Finn is still sitting on the swing. She
has a big red stain on her t-shirt from the strawberries.

Constance comes out to the porch. She leans against the
rail, lights up a cigarette.

FINN

You want a strawberry?

CONSTANCE

Mm? No. Thank you. You want
a cigarette?

FINN

Sure.

Constance hands her a pack of Virginia Slims. Finn takes
out a cigarette and lights it up. Constance notices that
she barely inhales.

CONSTANCE

You haven't smoked much, have
you.

FINN

Only what you used to sneak to
me.

CONSTANCE
 Good, I'm glad I didn't ruin
 you.

She flicks her cigarette impatiently.

CONSTANCE CONT.
 Let's walk.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S NEIGHBORHOOD - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Finn and Constance are walking down the dusty street where
 we see a few sprinklers dribbling water over parched yards.

CONSTANCE
 Isn't this a God awful town.
 If Howell wasn't buried here
 I'd be out of here in a
 minute.

Constance reaches in her pocket, hands Finn the quilt
 square.

CONSTANCE CONT.
 Here. You can do what you
 want with it.

FINN
 Isn't this going in the quilt?

CONSTANCE
 Don't ask.

Finn unfolds the patch, looks at it.

CONSTANCE CONT.
 I call it Chickie's Garden.
 When we were moving around a
 lot, Howell got me Chickie to
 keep me company while he was
 on the road. She was a
 wonderful dog, very smart,
 elegant, not a yapper. When
 she died, we buried her under
 a yellow rose bush in my
 garden.

FINN
 Why isn't this going in my
 quilt?

CONSTANCE

Because I've been spending time with someone else's husband. It's all utter nonsense, you know, because Howell was the love of my life.

Finn and Constance keep walking past us, stay on their backs as they continue up the dusty street.

FADE TO:

A home movie, somewhat choppy, color altered, circa 1980. We're in a back yard. A yellow rose bush in the B.G. We see Constance in her early 40's, standing next to HOWELL, a handsome, sweet-faced man in his mid-50's. He's in gardening clothes wearing a yellow bandanna around his neck (same one we saw Constance cutting for her quilt square.) He's digging a hole while he talks to the camera.

HOWELL

Today...is my first day of retirement...and we're laying to rest, the symbols of my many long years on the road. My sample case...

Constance holds up his old sample case, drops it in the hole.

HOWELL

Thank you, my sweet...
(calling)
Chickie, c'mere Girl, bring 'em here...

CONSTANCE

-- Chickie, that's a girl.

CHICKIE, a small apricot-colored poodle, comes into frame, dragging a pair of men's laced business shoes.

Constance picks up the shoes, shows the holes forming on the bottoms of the soles to the camera.

HOWELL

And my shoes. Please take note, they've been resoled three times.

Constance ceremoniously drops the shoes in the hole, takes up a shovel.

HOWELL CONT.

My lovely wife and helpmate
will drop the first shovel-
full of earth.

(to the shoes)

So long, old friends.

Constance shovels dirt on the shoes and pretends to cry,
causing Chickie to howl.

HOWELL CONT.

(to camera)

I'm looking forward to years
of working in the garden and
sitting around the house,
driving my wife crazy.

CONSTANCE

That's why I'm crying.

Chickie continues to howl.

CONSTANCE O.S.

Howell? Oh Christ, Howell?

PULL BACK from the screen to:

INT. CONSTANCE & HOWELL'S HOUSE - NIGHT, 1992

Constance is kneeling in front of the screen, shaking 60-
YEAR-OLD HOWELL who's slumped down in the couch,
unconscious. While the movie continues to play in the B.G.
Constance madly unbuttons Howell's shirt, puts her mouth
over his trying to resuscitate him.

EXT. CEMETERY - A FEW DAYS LATER

We're in one of those newer cemeteries that have flat
plaques imbedded in to the grass instead of headstones.
Across the road is a cluster of agricultural storehouses
where a couple of trucks are dumping loads of onions.

Constance is sitting on the grass next to Howell's newly-
turned grave where she's placed a spray of yellow roses
over the mound. She's kicked her heels off and is staring
off, tearless, absently pulling at bits of grass.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Constance is sitting at a booth with her dark glasses on,
drinking a cup of coffee and having a cigarette.

DEAN, a very handsome older man in his early 60's, keenly intelligent, a crusty old boheme, is sitting at the counter. He's been watching Constance. He finally gets up, comes over to her booth.

DEAN

Em told me about Howell. I'm so sorry...

CONSTANCE

Thank you.

Constance sips her coffee.

DEAN

Are you all right? Is there anything I can do?

A beat.

CONSTANCE

(plainly)

You can take me dancing.

Dean is taken aback, doesn't know what to say.

Constance, indifferent, pokes at her cigarette.

CONSTANCE CONT.

I'm sorry. Howell was a good man and I loved him. But he's gone now and I don't believe in grief.

DEAN

How can you not believe in grief for God's sake. Either you grieve or you don't.

Constance shrugs, snaps open her purse, puts some money down for the bill. She starts to scoot out of the booth. Dean is still standing there, blocking the way.

DEAN

You want me to drive you home?

CONSTANCE

No thank you, I feel like walking.
Excuse me.

Constance gets up, walks out the door.

Dean watches her through the window, as she crosses the street, staring straight ahead, clearly not all there.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER,
AFTERNOON

Constance is in her work clothes, systematically sorting through Howell's closet, pulling pants and jackets off the hangers and folding them into piles.

She starts to take one of Howell's cardigans off the hanger, takes one of the sleeves, holds it to her nose, taking in his scent. She reaches into the pockets, looking for other evidence of him. She finds a scrap of paper, opens it up, studies it.

CLOSE ON the scrap -- we see that Howell had sketched out a plan for his new vegetable garden, the rows labeled, "Radish, tomatoes, beets, carrots..."

EXT. CONSTANCE'S BACK YARD - A WHILE LATER

Constance, wearing Howell's cardigan, is kneeling in front of Howell's garden plot, holding the scrap of paper. The seeds he had planted are just starting to sprout. Constance reaches over, touches them.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER, LATE AFTERNOON

Constance is carrying a box full of Howell's toiletries. She stops, sees Dean through the screen at the back door.

DEAN

Hello?

Constance puts the box down on the kitchen table, opens the door. Dean holds up his tool box.

DEAN

I just thought I'd drop by,
see if you needed anything
done.

CONSTANCE

(still in a fog)
Well no, but come on in.

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Constance sits down at the table, exhausted by her grief, stares at the box.

CONSTANCE

His hair is still in his
shaver. I don't know what to
do with it.

DEAN

Would you like me to take it
away for you?

CONSTANCE

Yes. If you go in the
bedroom, there are some
jackets and ties...they're
laid out on the bed. Please
take whatever you want. I
don't want to give them to the
Goodwill.

Dean nods.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - LATER, DUSK

Constance and Dean are sitting in the living room, having a
cocktail. Dean has one of Howell's jackets next to him on
the couch. Constance is sitting across from him, talking,
relaxed from her drink.

CONSTANCE

I don't know, I don't know...
with Howell gone, I was
thinking maybe I should move
back east. I miss the
seasons.

DEAN

This miserable place. I've
tried to paint the landscape
here but there's nothing going
on.

He makes paint brush jabs in the air.

DEAN CONT.

Brown, brown, brown, brown,
green, brown, brown brown...
Same thing with the people --
farmer, farmer, farmer,
farmer, banker, farmer,
farmer, farmer...

Constance smiles, reaches over for her cigarettes.
Howell's big watch slides down her wrist.

AMQ

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DEAN CONT.

And the kids I teach at the college, God have mercy on their poor prosaic souls. If I could get one of them to paint a still life without counting the petals on the geraniums.

CONSTANCE

Why do you still live here?

Constance lights her cigarette, offers one to Dean.

DEAN

Em wants to be here. She has her friends, you know...

They both are quiet for a moment. The room is starting to get dark. The smoke from their cigarettes is catching the amber light.

DEAN CONT.

Magic hour.

CONSTANCE

Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and I wonder how exactly I got here.

DEAN

Why don't you go? Why not just go?

(a beat)

Why don't we both go? We aren't dead yet.

Constance looks at him, surprised. He holds her gaze. She finally leans over, turns on a lamp.

CONSTANCE

It's getting late. I'm kicking you out.

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - A FEW MINUTES¹⁰² LATER

Constance is at the stove, stirring something in a pan for dinner. She's sunken back in to a melancholy. The RADIO is tuned to a golden oldies station.

There's a knock at the back door. Constance looks up:

Dean comes in.

DEAN
Forgot my tool box.

CONSTANCE
Are you trying to have an
affair with me, Dean?

Dean, taken aback by her honesty, lets out a surprised
laugh.

DEAN
Well, I suppose I am.

CONSTANCE
You know, for years, I thought
that the secret to my marriage
to Howell was that he was
always on the road. It's
easier to stay excited about
someone who isn't always
around.

DEAN
I agree. Was he faithful to
you?

CONSTANCE
Yes, Dean, he was faithful.
Let me get to my point. When
he retired, I felt crowded, I
wanted my solitude back. As a
matter of fact I secretly
wished that he would run
around so I'd have an excuse
to ask for a separation.

DEAN
Were you always faithful...?

CONSTANCE
Oh stop, of course, let me
finish. Then one day I was
watching him pick a radish out
of his garden -- it was the
first thing that had come up,
and it was so ridiculously
small that he tried to put it
back in the dirt so it would
grow some more. And he made
me laugh so hard that all
those other feelings went
away. I felt such an
overwhelming love for this
man... and I realized that all

those years I had with Howell
before, I

CONSTANCE CONT.
wasn't happy, just merely
content...and now it's all
changed again. I wasn't
asking for an affair, Dean, I
was just asking for someone to
dance with.

She nods to a tweed jacket that's hung on the back of a
chair.

CONSTANCE
You still want Howell's
jacket?

DEAN
Sure.

Constance picks up the jacket. She holds it out for Dean
to put it on. He slips his arms in.

CONSTANCE
It fits you.

Constance looks at him, trying to hold back another wave of
grief.

Dean holds his arms out and gently draws her in. Constance
lays her cheek against Howell's jacket, now inhabited by
Dean's shoulder. As they begin to slow dance to the radio,
Constance finally allows herself to cry.

PRESENT

EXT. STREET - DAY

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Constance and Finn are walking back to the house.

FINN
But let me throw this out...

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CONSTANCE

Yes.

FINN

In one of my books, I came across this thing about Australian aboriginals -- in this one particular tribe they have a very strong belief in extramarital affairs. It's expected that married people might be attracted to other people so they sanction this whole underground system of sexual liaisons. They understand human nature, they know that we're aroused by the new and unfamiliar so they allow for the possibility of taking on lovers. Without guilt.

CONSTANCE

It would also be nice, on a hot day like this, to walk down the street without any clothes. But I wouldn't, would you?

Finn doesn't say anything. As they approach the house, we see that Marianna waiting for them out front. She hands Finn the quilt patch she was making.

MARIANNA

I'm sorry, I quit.

CONSTANCE

You didn't have to.

MARIANNA

I can't look at those old women anymore.

(to Finn)

You'll come visit me?

Finn nods, disturbs. Marianna smiles, touches her on the nose.

As Finn climbs up on the porch, Hy comes out. They watch Constance and Marianna walking together up the street.

HY

Well, this happens with groups.

Hy glances down at the strawberry stain on Finn's shirt.

HY CONT.

Honey, what did you get on
your blouse?

FINN

(embarrassed)

I was eating strawberries.

HY

Put some salt on it before it
sets in.

Hy goes back in. Finn is still holding the two quilt patches Constance and Marianna gave to her. She stares at Chickie's Garden, traces her finger around the design.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - LATE THAT NIGHT

CLOSE ON: the quilt squares still pinned to the curtain -- now there are only five instead of seven. Marianna and Constance's patches have been replaced by blank squares of cloth.

The house is silent except for the sound of Finn typing.

WE PAN past the dark living room over to the dining room where we see a single light over Finn, who's hunched over her typewriter. We can hear the faint whine of a mosquito circling her head. She stops, yawns. Her eyes wander over to a book on African art that's open to a page of male figures with oversized phalluses. Finn shuts the book, gets up.

FOLLOW on Finn to the kitchen where she picks up the phone, starts impatiently dialing - it's a rotary dial. We hear RINGING on the other end. A machine picks up.

SAM ON MACHINE O.S.

This is Sam. This is the
machine. You know what to do.
(BEEP)

FINN

Hi, it's me again. Are you
there? You there?...I guess
you're still out...OK...I just
want to say that I'm sorry
about the fight we had, and I
want you to know that I'm
sorry I was a horrible bitch
to you.

FINN CONT.

(she chokes up)

And I really, really love you
and I appreciate you and I
think you're an incredible
person and I'm going to hold
on to you, and yes, I think I
really do want to get...

BEEEEEP.

The machine cuts her off. Finn is annoyed, hangs up the phone.

INT. GLADY JO & HY'S - MUCH LATER, NIGHT

Finn is still at the typewriter, her eyes red from fatigue.

Without bothering to take her eyes off the screen, she reaches down for the phone, which she has stretched out on its cord from the kitchen, dials.

We hear RINGING. And RINGING. The machine hasn't picked up -- Finn looks hopeful. We hear someone pick up on the other end.

YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE

(drowsy)

Hello?

Finn doesn't say anything. There's silence on the other end, as if the other woman has been caught, doesn't know what to do either. Finn hangs up.

FINN

Shit.

CUT TO?

EXTREME CLOSE ON a pencil running along a ruler pressed against a long piece of cloth.

ANNA V.O.

Never underestimate the importance of your border and your sashing.

CUT TO: EXTREME CLOSE ON a pair of scissors cutting the cloth along the pencil line.

ANNA V.O. CONT.

Their function is to keep the blocks apart while binding them together.

CUT TO: EXTREME CLOSE ON the strip of cloth being laid next to the edge of a quilt square (we only see a fragment of the square.)

ANNA V.O. CONT.

Study the colors of the blocks. The right sashing will enhance them, bring out the best in them. The wrong sashing will dull them, hide their original beauty.

We see a pair of hands lay a strip of cloth of a different color next to the quilt square.

ANNA V.O. CONT.

There are no rules you can follow. You have to go by instinct.

EXTREME CLOSE ON: the needle of a sewing machine bobbing up and down, stitching the strip of cloth to the quilt square.

ANNA V.O. CONT.

And don't be hasty, because you'll have to live with your choice for the rest of your quilt's life.

FADE TO:

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY, LATE MORNING

The easy-listening music is tuned on the radio.

The quilters, minus Constance and Marianna, are back at work. PAN OF the room, we see that they're all at their sewing machines, stitching together triangles, squares and strips of cloth that will make up the border.

Em is the only one not doing this. She's bent over in a chair, miserable, still working on her quilt square like a school girl who hasn't finished her homework.

There's a knock at the screen door. It's the UPS man, an older Latino man.

UPS MAN

'Morning ladies.

GLADY JOE

Hello John! Hold on...

As Glady Joe gets up, she passes Anna, nudges her to take a look at the UPS man. Anna checks him out, shakes her head.

While Glady Joe signs for the package, Finn wanders in with her coffee. She's just gotten up, looks exhausted.

SOPHIA

Wish I could stay in bed that late.

Finn heads straight out to the porch, not wanting to engage.

SOPHIA CONT.

What's going on with her?

GLADY JOE

(sotto voce)

She was up all night trying to call Sam. Some girl answered.

SOPHIA

Uh-huh.

Everyone continues to sew, except for Em, who's staring at her quilt square. Finally, she tosses it down, gets up.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Finn is hunched on the swing, cradling her coffee cup.

Em comes out on the porch.

EM

Honey, I just want to say one thing -- I used to think that if you loved someone enough they'd behave themselves. Well, that, my dear, is a bunch of crap.

Finn looks at her, a little taken aback.

EM

May I join you?

Finn nods, scoots over. Em sits down on the swing with her.

192

EM

I'm sure you know about this little involvement between my husband and what's-her-name.

(before Finn can respond)

Look, I'll tell you something that I've never discussed with the girls. This isn't the first time that he's fooled around. Dean is not a conventional man. He's an artist. He acts out. He's been acting out since the first month we were married.

FINN

Then why have you stayed with him?

She looks out at the street. A bored, heat-exhausted DOG shuffles by, lifts his leg on a flower pot.

EM

Look at where I live. Being married to Dean makes me feel unusual.

1947

INT. DEAN'S STUDIO - DAY

LA BOHEME is blasting on a turntable.

PAN OF Dean's studio. We see rolls of canvas, stretcher frames, tubes of paints, jars of brushes, art prints and photographs tacked up on the wall.

We see 25-YEAR-OLD DEAN standing behind his easel in an undershirt and paint-stained khakis. He's slapping the canvas with his brush while he keeps looking over at:

23-YEAR-OLD EM, up on a platform, posing in the nude against an old theatre curtain of green velvet (the same material Em is using in her quilt square.) She's gazing off, the transported muse, enjoying the drama of being the focus of Dean's artistic fury.

EXT. DEAN'S STUDIO - LATER, DAY

Dean is coming out of the studio, which is actually an old garage set in an ugly yard. We can hear the grind of farm tractors in a field across the road. He stretches, flexes his back, looks up at the sky -- another dull, dry day.

Em follows him out, wearing an old robe. She goes over to the clothes line, starts taking down the wash.

Dean squints at Em who's now just another housewife. He scratches his stomach unhappily.

INT. EM & DEAN'S BUNGALOW - A FEW DAYS LATER

We're in a cramped little kitchen. Sophia (23) is sitting at the table trying to monitor toddler Duff. Em is pouring them both jet black coffee.

SOPHIA

God, I love your coffee.
Gives me such a kick I almost
think there's hope in my life.

EM

Dean won't drink American
coffee. He makes us drive all
the way to San Francisco to a
store in the Italian section.
Last week we went up there and
went to museums then stayed up
all night with some of his
friends. We didn't get home
until five in the morning, God
it was fun.

SOPHIA

(a little
envious)
Sounds like it.
(a beat)
Where is he right now?

EM

He's in the studio with a
student.

SOPHIA

Uh-huh.

EM

What's that supposed to mean?

SOPHIA

I'd just keep my eyes on him,
that's all.

EM

You sound like your mother.

Sophia shrugs, continues to sip her coffee.

Em goes to the window, looks out at the yard.

EM'S P.O.V.: we see the studio-garage. The door is shut tight. The lights are on inside. We can hear OPERA playing.

Em stares out for a minute, feels a twinge of suspicion, shakes the feeling off, goes back and pours herself another cup of coffee.

INT. EM & DEAN'S BUNGALOW, BATHROOM - SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER

Em is sitting in a bathtub full of dead bubbles, sobbing, her hands all puckered from being in the water too long.

Dean is crouched next to the tub, hanging his head.

EM

(between sobs)

I don't understand...is it me?
Is it something I did...?

DEAN

No, Baby, no, it's me.

EM

...I thought we loved each other...I thought...we were having fun...

DEAN

Oh Baby, I'm so sorry.

EM

...I never thought I'd be someone who'd get a divorce...oh God, what am I going to do...

DEAN

(over her)

Em, oh Em honey, no...sweet baby, no, it's not gonna happen, no...

EM

...I have to leave you, I can't do this...

192

Dean gets in the tub with her, fully clothed. Water sloshes all over the floor. He cradles Em in his arms, starts crying louder than her.

DEAN CONT.

...no Honey, don't leave me,
please I'll never do it again,
don't leave me, oh Baby...

Em looks surprised that he's in the tub with her, almost forgets that she's upset.

EM

...Dean, what are you doing?

Dean starts kissing the tears on her cheeks, licking them, trying to make them stop. Em can't help it, is starting to enjoy it.

DEAN CONT.

Oh sweet baby, sweet baby...

EXT. EM & DEAN'S, BACK PORCH - SIX MONTHS LATER, DAY

Em is sitting on the back porch, shelling peas into a big pot she's holding between her legs. She's six months pregnant.

Dean is sitting across from her in the yard with his sketch pad, working on a drawing of Em while he sips a cup of his dark coffee.

We hear the phone RING in the house. Dean starts at the sound.

DEAN

I'll get it.

Em watches Dean as he bounds up the porch in to the house. The screen door slams.

A beat. Em continues to shell the peas. She frowns, looks back into the house. She gets up. FOLLOW on Em as she picks up the pot and quietly enters the house.

INT. EM & DEAN'S, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Em eases the screen shut so it doesn't make a sound. She stops and listens to Dean who's on the phone in the other room. His voice is low, secretive. We can just make out:

DEAN

...you shouldn't call here...I know...I know Baby, it's hard for me too...

192
IMO

Em drops the pot. Peas are bouncing all over the linoleum.

EM
Oh God, oh my God, you son-of-a-bitch!

Dean runs in to the kitchen, looking scared.

DEAN
Em, what's wrong?

EM
I can't believe you're doing this. Why do you keep doing this?

Dean drops to his knees in front of her. Tears start to come out of his eyes.

DEAN
Em, I'm a man out of control, I'm frustrated, I don't like living here, my only adventure is romance...

EM
Then leave!

DEAN
But I love you! I look at other women so I can stay here with you!

EM
Bastard!

Em pushes him out of the way, storms out of the kitchen.

EXT. EM'S PARENTS, BACK YARD - TWO MONTHS LATER, DAY

It's late August. Em is now eight months pregnant. She's sitting under a tree in one of her mother's old slips, huge-bellied and limp from the heat, while her FATHER is mowing the lawn around her.

EM'S MOTHER, comes out, throws a wet wash cloth on Em's forehead, hands her a fresh glass of iced tea

EM
Will I ever stop feeling so tired?

EM'S MOTHER
Sure, Sweetie.

Em's mother pats her leg, goes back in.

AMG
192

Em slips the wash cloth over her eyes, lays her head back against the tree.

WE HEAR a car with a bad motor drive up. Em recognizes the sound, sits up, lifts the wash cloth up.

We see Dean driving up to the end of ~~the~~ dirt driveway. He gets out of the car and starts to walk towards Em. -

Em is struggling to stand up and get away from him. Dean walks over to her, takes her hands and pulls her up.

DEAN

Hey, Em.

EM

What are you doing here?

Dean gets down on his knees and lays his head against her belly.

EM CONT.

I swear to God, if you start crying, I'll never come back to you.

Dean looks up at her, eyes clear, smiling -- he's never looked happier.

Em's mother comes out with a glass of iced tea.

EM'S MOTHER

You thirsty, Dean?

DEAN

Thanks.

Em looks at her mother, incredulous. ~~Em~~ Dean takes the iced tea and gulps it down. **AMC** 192

EM

Mama, tell him to go away.

EM'S MOTHER

Well, Honey, I could do that, but who's going to take care of your baby?

Em's father comes up, carrying Em's suitcase. He hands it to Dean.

DEAN

(to Em)

You ready?

Em looks helplessly at her parents. Dean puts his arm around her, leads her back to the car.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, PORCH - PRESENT, DAY

Finn and Em are still sitting on the swing together.

FINN
(outraged)
Unbelievable...

EM
Well, I've come to believe that Dean is more typical than not. It's the pattern of nature. The female keeps the nest while the male goes out and flaunts his feathers. Well screw that.

FINN
Good for you.

EM
I've decided to finally leave him.

Em reaches over, squeezes Finn's hand.

EM CONT.
Please don't tell anyone.

Finn nods. Em gets up to go back in the house.

FINN
Good luck.

EM
You too, Honey.

Em goes inside. Finn nervously rocks the swing back and forth with her leg. Suddenly she gets up. Stay on the empty swing as we --

CUT TO:

A great splash of water...we're under water, aqua light bobbing around us. We see Leon glide in front of us, graceful, kicking his legs slo-mo. He does a somersault while he blows bubbles out his nose. With a rush of water, we surface back up to the top.

EXT. PUBLIC POOL - DAY

Finn's head bobs up from the water. Leon swims up and joins her. They're both circling around each other, while they tread water.

FINN

Look, just so you know, I'm engaged to be married.

LEON

So you just want to have a friendship thing?

Finn doesn't answer. They tread water for a beat. Leon slides down into the water, disappears.

Suddenly Finn lets out a gasp. Leon bobs back up, grinning. Finn laughs, starts swimming away.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, KITCHEN - THAT EVENING

Finn is sitting at dinner with Glady Joe, Hy and Anna. She's picking at her food, distracted. She's dressed up a little bit -- nothing too obvious, just enough to look good without tipping off to anyone that she's having a rendezvous.

HY

You look pretty tonight,
Honey. Is there an occasion?

FINN

No, I thought I'd go in to town see a movie.

HY

Oh.

Finn keeps her eyes to her plate.

Hy, Glady Jo and Anna glance at each other, aware that something is going on.

GLADY JOE

You know, Anna was going to show you some of her quilts. And she doesn't just take them out for anyone. I had to twist her arm to bring them out.

Anna doesn't look up, keeps eating.

ANNA
Mm-hm, that's right.

Finn glances at the clock, chews on her lip.

The phone RINGS.

Hy gets up and answers it.

HY
Hello?
(a beat)
Yes Sam, she's right here,
just a minute.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, KITCHEN - A WHILE LATER

Glady Joe, Hy and Anna are clearing the table. Finn is coming back from the dining room with the phone, which she took in there for privacy.

FINN
...he was spending the night
at his brother's because he
took all the plumbing apart.

HY
There, you see? I knew it
wasn't anything.

GLADY JOE
Who was the girl?

FINN
A wrong number. He said I
dialed a wrong number.

Glady Joe and Finn look at each other for a beat ¹⁰² neither one of them believes this.

We hear a KNOCK at the front door. ⁴⁰

FINN CONT.
I'll get that...

Finn leaves the kitchen.

A beat. Nobody says anything. Hy goes to the sink, starts on the dishes. Anna sits back down, pours herself another cup of coffee. Glady Joe goes over and stands at the doorway, trying to listen to what's going on.

HY
Glady, get away from there.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, PORCH - CONTINUOUS, EVENING

Finn is with Leon out on the porch. Leon is looking very handsome in a white embroidered shirt, jeans and cowboy boots.

FINN
I'm going to have to meet you
somewhere later.

LEON
OK.

They move to a darker area to the porch. Leon gives her a long delicious kiss. They finally break for air.

FINN
This is crazy.

LEON
(simply)
What's so crazy? This is
life. This is love.

FINN
No, no, no, no, this is not
love. This is fooling around.

Leon grasps his chest in mock pain, starts singing a Mexican love song.

LEON
"Tengo un amor,
Que en mi vida dejo para
siempre amargo dolor...."

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Anna is laying her quilts out on a bed. She stops and looks out the window, down to the porch and listens to Leon serenading below. We can hear Finn shushing him and laughing.

LEON O.S.
"Pobre de mi!
Pobre de mi!
Cuanto sufre me picho
Que late tan solo por ti..."

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - A WHILE LATER, NIGHT

Finn is now with Anna, looking at a remarkable old quilt laid out on the bed.

ANNA

My Aunt Pauline passed this
quilt on to me. It was made
by my great-great-grandmother.
She called it, "The Life
Before." It's a story quilt.
It's meant to be read.

CLOSE PAN: of the LIFE BEFORE, laid out in fifteen squares
which are filled with scenes in naive, appliqued forms. We
see angels blowing trumpets, blazing suns, Adam and Eve and
the snake, elephants and giraffes, African warriors doing
battle, men and women in chains inside a ship on a choppy
sea...

ANNA O.S.

(as we follow
each square)

...the creation of the
world...Adam being a fool with
Eve...my family's
homeland...them being taken
away...

A young girl's hand comes in to frame, traces her finger
over the panels, stops at a scene with a black bird flying
over a man and a woman holding hands. Anna's voice is
replaced by another older woman's voice.

AUNT PAULINE O.S.

...those are your great-great
grandparents. A crow flew
over them on their wedding
day...

PULL BACK TO:

1934

INT. SACRAMENTO RANCH HOUSE, AUNT PAULINE'S ROOM - NIGHT

We see TEN-YEAR-OLD ANNA, a very serious-looking little
girl, studying the LIFE BEFORE which is laid out on a
single bed in a tiny room which is obviously meant to be
the servant's quarters.

Anna's great-aunt PAULINE, a formidable woman in her 60's,
is sitting in a wooden chair next to the bed, rubbing her
tired, swollen feet.

AUNT PAULINE

...a crow means either a beginning or an end. In this case it was the end. Next day, your great-great-grandfather was sold off to another farm and your great-great grandmother never saw him again. But she had a child who was your great-grandmother. And when she was grown, slavery was ended and she was able to travel where she pleased.

INTERCUT: EXT. ROAD - 1860's, DAY. ANNA'S GREAT-GRANDMOTHER, a young African-American woman with a satchel on her back, is walking down a country road bordered by fields.

AUNT PAULINE CONT.

So your great-grandmother went from farm to farm trying to find her father which was a near-impossible task because negroes at that time were left to scatter in the wind...

INTERCUT: EXT. FIELD - 1860's, DAY. We see a huge black CROW sitting on a fence post.

AUNT PAULINE V.O.

One day, after many months of travel, she saw a crow sitting on a fence. And something told her to follow that bird.

We FOLLOW the crow as it hops from post to post. It takes off and flies over to the adjoining field where we see a tall, young African-American FARMER chopping the soil with a pick axe.

AUNT PAULINE V.O. CONT.

And she saw a young man working on his acre.

The farmer looks up, wipes the sweat off his face with a rag.

AUNT PAULINE V.O. CONT.

And she knew in her heart that she was meant to stop right there. It seemed that the search for her father led her to a different man...

Anna's great-grandmother is staring at the farmer -- her P.O.V.:

The farmer looks straight at us, breaks out in a big smile.

AUNT PAULINE V.O. CONT.

...the man that God had intended her to marry.

There's a KNOCK at the door. We're back in the room. Aunt Pauline stops talking. There's another knock. Pauline looks to Anna, holds her finger up to her lips not to make a noise. Anna covers her mouth and giggles. We hear a lady on the other side of the door calling out in a sing-songy voice.

THE MRS. O.S.

Pauline? I know you're in there, can I talk to you for a moment?

AUNT PAULINE

(under her breath)

Oh, find someone else to bother.

The door opens. THE MRS. of the house sticks her head in. She's an earnest, comfortably plump white woman in her 40's wearing the latest in marcelled coifs.

192

THE MRS.

(the quilt)

Oh goody, you have it out.

The Mrs. goes over and fingers the quilt.

THE MRS. CONT.

Pauline, how much would you sell this for?

AUNT PAULINE

It's not for sale.

THE MRS.

But you shouldn't just hide it away in your bedroom. People should see it.

AUNT PAULINE

People do see it.

Aunt Pauline pulls the quilt out of The Mrs.' hands and starts folding it up.

The Mrs. smiles at Anna, gives her an absent pat on the shoulder, carefully avoiding her nappy hair.

THE MRS. CONT.

Well, let me know if you
change your mind.

The Mrs. leaves without bothering to close the door.
Pauline slams it shut.

AUNT PAULINE

Fool woman.

Anna touches the quilt.

CLOSE ON: Anna's finger tracing a star applied on dark blue wool.

CUT TO:

CLOSE PAN ON: a star chart, with the constellations delicately etched out in white ink on dark blue paper.

PULL BACK TO:

INT. RANCH HOUSE, STUDY - A FEW DAYS LATER

Anna is looking at a book of constellations that's been left open on The Mr.'s desk while Aunt Pauline dusts in the Mr.'s study.

ANNA

Aunt Pauline?

AUNT PAULINE

Mm?

ANNA

Those stars in the quilt, were they all part of Africa?

AUNT PAULINE

No, Baby, the sky is different from the earth. It doesn't belong to nobody. The sky is free.

ANNA

Then that's where I want to be.

AUNT PAULINE
Well, Baby, then you better
start growing yourself a pair
of wings.

CUT TO:

A night sky filled with stars.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Anna is looking up at the sky, standing by THE MR., who's focusing a telescope that's been set up in back of the house. He's a soft-looking man, somewhat chubby like his wife, a gentleman farmer and a pedant.

THE MR.
Would you like to take a look
at Mars?

Anna peers in to the lense.

THE MR. CONT.
Yep, some day people are gonna
make it up there in space
rockets. Won't just be
something you read about in
the comic books. It could
even happen in our lifetime.

ANNA
I'm gonna be one of those
people.

THE MR.
Well, that isn't very likely,
is it?

He pulls the lense away, focuses on something else.

Aunt Pauline is standing just inside the house, listening to this, lips tight, furious at The Mr.'s patronizing remark.

AUNT PAULINE
Anna, you come in now.

ANNA
I want to look at the stars.

AUNT PAULINE
You've seen enough, now come
on in.

Pauline takes Anna by the arm, pulls her into the house.

AUNT PAULINE
 You stay away from him. I'm
 getting you your own
 telescope.

INT. RANCH HOUSE, KITCHEN - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

CLOSE ON: the LIFE BEFORE quilt, neatly folded, placed on
 top of the kitchen table.

Anna is sitting at the table, peeling potatoes while Aunt
 Pauline and The Mrs. negotiate over a price.

AUNT PAULINE
 I won't take any less than
 twenty-five dollars.

THE MRS.
 Pauline, now you know with the
 circumstance of the times we
 just don't have that kind of
 money.

Anna glances at a ruby and pearl bracelet on The Mrs.' fat
 wrist.

THE MRS. CONT.
 I'll give you fifteen. I
 think that's a very good
 price.

Pauline is silent for a beat, thinks this over.

The Mrs. is growing impatient. She glances down at Anna,
 notices that she's cutting away more potato than skin.

THE MRS.
 Dear, try just to peel away
 the skin, we don't want to
 waste.

Pauline has had it.

AUNT PAULINE
 I'll take twenty.

THE MRS.
 I'll give you eighteen dollars
 and that's the very, very best
 I can do.

Aunt Pauline, refusing to look at The Mrs., nods her head
 once and turns away.

The Mrs. snaps open her purse. We hear the rustling of money as she unfolds the bills.

Anna, feeling responsible for all of this, bows her head wretchedly over the potatoes.

The Mrs. picks up the quilt, walks out of the kitchen.

Anna starts to cry.

ANNA

Auntie, I never asked you for a telescope.

Aunt Pauline solemnly tucks the money into her bosom.

AUNT PAULINE

Well, it's too late now, isn't it?

FADE TO:

SIX YEARS LATER, 1940

INT. RANCH HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

CLOSE ON: the LIFE BEFORE quilt, hanging on a wall. We hear people chatting, the sound of dining.

PULL BACK TO: ANNA, now 16 and truly stunning, walking around the dining room table, serving The Mr. and The Mrs. and their GUESTS roast beef from a large platter.

The LADY GUEST is admiring the quilt on the wall.

LADY GUEST

(to the Mrs.)

Where did you get that marvelous piece? You know, in Chicago, naif art is all the rage.

Sitting next to the Lady Guest is her son, BECK, 17, a good-looking young man, still callow but with the confidence of privilege. His eyes are following Anna.

THE MRS.

You know, it's very old. And each of those panels tells a little story. I have it all written down somewhere...

Anna holds the platter out for Beck. He glances up at her, taking his time taking a slice of meat. Anna is flattered, can't help cracking a smile.

The MALE GUEST turns to The Mrs.

MALE GUEST

Now don't let that son of mine
just laze around here all
summer, I'm expecting him to
do some honest work.

THE MR.

(winking at Beck)
Oh, don't worry, we'll have
him cleaning out the stables.

BECK

(laughing)
Oh, come on now!

Anna takes this opportunity to escape, pushes through the swinging door to the kitchen.

INT. RANCH HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Aunt Pauline is setting more food out on platters. She notices the distracted look on Anna's face, knows what's going on. She picks up a platter, nods her head at the sink.

AUNT PAULINE

Go ahead, start on the pots.

Anna goes to the sink, turns the water on hard as Pauline heads out to the dining room. *192*

EXT. RANCH - SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER

Anna is taking one of her nightly walks *190* out beyond the stables. She stops, looks up at the sky, studies the stars.

We hear someone walking towards us. Anna turns around, sees:

Beck approaching in the shadows, hands in his coat pockets, trying to look like he just happened to be out on a walk.

BECK

Nice night, huh?

Anna doesn't say anything.

BECK CONT.
It's OK, we can talk as equals. I don't believe in that servant-master sort of thing.

ANNA
You think I thought you were my master?

BECK
Well, no...

ANNA
Maybe I just didn't answer you because I wanted to be left alone.

BECK
Touche.

ANNA
Excuse me?

BECK
It's a French expression.

ANNA
That supposed to make me feel ignorant?

BECK
No, not at all.

He steps closer, stands next to her, pretending to be interested with what's up in the sky.

BECK CONT.
So whatcha lookin' at?

Anna rattles off the constellations, trying to impress him with her knowledge.

ANNA
Pegasus, Andromeda,
Cassiopeia, Hercules, the
Herdsman with the star
Arcturus in his knee. Over
there is Scorpio with the star
Antares, Vega in Lyre...

Beck leans in and touches her cheek. Anna moves away.

BECK CONT.
Sorry.

192
AMQ

Anna hugs her arms. Lets out a shiver.

BECK CONT.
You cold?

ANNA
I'm OK.

Beck takes his coat off, puts it around her.

BECK
I once took my coat off, put
it around this girl and she
told me she could feel the
heat from my body still in the
lining. You feel it?

ANNA
Yeh, it's there.

INT. STABLE - LATER, NIGHT

Anna is lying on Beck's jacket which is spread out on top
of some hay. Beck is lying next to her, slowly, very
slowly running his fingers along the inside of her arm.
Anna reaches over, touches his hair, plays with it.

BECK
You ever been with a boy
before?

Anna shakes her head.

Beck moves his finger over the top of her breasts.

BECK CONT.
This OK?

ANNA
Mm-hm.

Beck carefully unbuttons her dress, gently opens it up,
runs his fingers along her belly, enchanted by her color.
He bends over, touches her skin with the tip of his tongue.

BECK
You scared?

ANNA
Of what?

AKC 103

EXT. RANCH HOUSE -- SIX MONTHS LATER, DAWN

Anna is six months pregnant. She's standing at the back door with Aunt Pauline. The sun is barely up. No one else in the house awake yet. Anna has a suitcase and is wearing one of Pauline's old dresses to accommodate her growing belly. Pauline hands her a square bundle wrapped in brown paper. They hug each other good bye and Anna walks off down the road.

FOLLOW ON: Pauline as she goes back in to the house.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

Aunt Pauline is bringing some polished silver in to the dining room. The Mrs. is standing there, staring at a large, square shadow on the wall where the quilt once hung. She looks like she's about to cry.

THE MRS.

Pauline...?

Pauline reaches in to her apron pocket, hands The Mrs. a roll of bills.

PAULINE

There's your eighteen.

Without another word Pauline takes her tray, goes back to the kitchen.

INT. RUBENS HOUSE, KITCHEN - GRASSE, SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Anna is sitting in a kitchen, her hands folded in her lap.

She looks up at a box of pancake mix that's up on a shelf with a picture of Aunt Jemimah, grinning back at her with her wild eyes and shiny black cheeks.

INT. RUBENS HOUSE, SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MRS. RUBENS, a genteel, very composed lady is sitting on the edge the sofa talking softly to 17-YEAR-OLD HY and 15-YEAR-OLD GLADY JOE. Hy is fashionably dressed with the airy sophistication of a popular young woman. Gladly Joe is a bit plainer, considered the brain of the two. She's an incessant talker with that younger-sister need for attention.

MRS. RUBENS

The church sent us over another girl. She'll be staying with us until it's her time and as usual I expect both of you to treat her with kindness and tolerance. Anna is a negro and we must be especially nice to her.

Glady Joe is taking this all in with great seriousness. Hy is daydreaming about something, twisting a strand of her hair.

MRS. RUBENS CONT.

Hyacinth, are you listening?

Hy flings her hands in her lap, makes a show of looking attentive.

INT. RUBENS HOUSE, ANNA'S ROOM - SEVERAL EVENINGS LATER

Anna is sitting on her bed, working on a baby quilt. There's a knock on the door. Anna looks up, doesn't say anything, goes back to sewing.

There's another knock.

ANNA

(mumbling to herself)

Oh find someone else to bother.

GLADY JOE O.C.

Anna, it's Glady Joe. Are you in there?

Anna gets up, yanks open the door. Glady Joe is standing there. She shyly holds a book up to Anna.

GLADY JOE CONT.

I was wondering if you ever read this. Would you like to borrow it? It's the best book I've ever read.

Anna glances at the title -- Wuthering Heights.

ANNA

(not taking the book)

Huh.

Glady Joe is hurt but decides to press on. She sees the baby quilt, steps into the room to look at it. Anna bristles at the invasion of her space.

GLADY JOE
Oh my gosh this is very artistic. How long have you been doing this?

ANNA
(flatly)
The women in my family quilt.

GLADY JOE
Gee, I'd love to know how to do that.

Glady Joe sits on the bed which is covered with the LIFE BEFORE.

GLADY JOE CONT.
Is this from your family too?

ANNA
Yes.

GLADY JOE
(with great earnestness)
I've been reading about the great injustice of slavery in America. It makes me so angry I just want to weep.

ANNA
Look, I got to finish this quilt for my baby. I'm in kind of a hurry...

GLADY JOE
Oh, all right. Well, I'll leave the book for you. Tell me how you like it.

Glady Joe leaves.

Anna shuts the door behind her. She can hear Mrs. Rubens talking to Glady Joe out in the hall.

MRS. RUBENS O.S.
Sweetie, leave Anna alone.

GLADY JOE O.S.
We were just talking.

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Anna picks up the book, looks at it, then tosses it on the shelf.

INT. RUBENS, KITCHEN - TWO MONTHS LATER, EVENING

Anna is at the sink, her belly even bigger. She's washing the dinner dishes, ignoring Gladly Joe who's sitting at the kitchen table chattering away while she does her homework.

GLADLY JOE

...everyone says that Thomas Jefferson was a great man but he had slaves just like all the rest of them. I brought this up with my teacher and she says to me, "Well, Gladly Joe, everyone owned slaves back then. It was considered normal." Can you believe that? What a dimwit. I swear, the world is full of ignorami.

Hy comes sweeping in to the kitchen with a group of her FRIENDS. They're all madly talking and goofing with each other. Em is there and also Sophia, who's laughing louder than any of them, acting absolutely wild. Hy's boyfriend, 18-YEAR-OLD JAMES is trying to steal a few kisses from her.

HY

(grandly)

Ice cream! We all must have our ice cream!

EM

I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!

There's much loud talking, gathering up of bowls and spoons.

Gladly Joe slams her books shut, starts helping with the ice cream, wanting to be a part of her older sister's gang.

Hy leads the whole group out the back door to the yard. Gladly Joe follows after them.

Anna is left at the sink. She looks out the window at all these kids her own age, angry that she's excluded from their good time:

ANNA'S P.O.V.: Sophia is sharing a cigarette with a BOY while he cranks an ice cream maker. Hy and James are practicing a new dance step. Em is laughing wildly at some joke another BOY is telling her.

Anna can't stand it any more, throws the dish rag down.

ANNA
(mumbling to
herself)
Damn kids, always in my face.

EXT. STREET - A FEW MINUTES LATER, NIGHT

Anna is taking one of her night walks.

We hear someone trotting behind her. Anna glances back.

It's Gladly Joe.

Anna swears to herself, keeps walking faster.

Gladly Joe catches up to Anna, breathless.

GLADLY JOE
Anna, do you want some ice
cream?

ANNA
Doesn't it occur to you when
you see someone out in the
dark that they don't want no
one bothering them?

GLADLY JOE
I'm sorry...

ANNA
And what am I gonna do,
sittin' with a bunch of white
kids eatin' ice cream? Who's
gonna talk to me except for
you, goin' blah, blah, blah,
blah, just keep jabbering away
at me because you know the
negro girl is never gonna
interrupt.

GLADLY JOE
That's not true. What a lousy
thing to say.

ANNA
...like I don't have enough
occupying my own head, blah,
blah, blah.

GLADLY JOE
Well, the hell with you.

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ANNA
Hell with you too.

Glady Joe doesn't move.

ANNA CONT.
Well go on, get outta here
then.

GLADY JOE
This is my street, I don't
have to move.

ANNA
What, you own it?

Anna kicks some dirt at Glady Joe. Glady Joe kicks back. They start shoving each other. They lock arms, struggle, trying to pull each other down. Glady Joe feels Anna's big belly press in to her, stops.

GLADY JOE
We shouldn't be doing this.
You might break something.

ANNA
I'm all right.

Anna feels her belly.

ANNA CONT.
Shoo, we got it all excited.
It's moving all over the
place.

Glady Joe puts her hand on Anna's belly

GLADY JOE
(quietly)
Oh my Gosh.

ANNA
Yeah, well. It ain't that
special.

Anna glances up at the sky.

THE SKY: There's a shooting star.

Glady Jo sees it too.

GLADY JOE
Quick, make a...

ANNA

Yeh, I know.

Anna and Glady Joe both shut their eyes, concentrate on making a wish.

GLADY JOE

I wished that your baby will be healthy.

ANNA

I wished that it be like the sky, belong to no one.

GLADY JOE

Then I'll wish that too.

ANNA

Make your own damn wish.

Anna starts walking back to the house. Glady Joe follows at a respectful distance.

INT. RUBENS HOUSE - SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER

We see Glady Joe sitting on Anna's bed, working on her own little quilt piece while Anna works on her baby quilt. Anna glances up to check on Glady's work, frowns, takes Glady's piece, rips the stitches out then hands it back to her.

ANNA

You're sewing crooked. Do it again.

INT. RUBENS HOUSE - TWO MONTHS LATER, DAWN

It's early morning. No one in the house is up yet.

Anna is coming out of her room, bent over. A large wet spot is on the back of her nightgown. She's broken water. She goes straight to Glady Joe's door, starts knocking on it.

ANNA

Glady Joe?

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

We're in the non-white maternity ward. BLACK and LATINA WOMEN are in rows of beds. The walls are painted a drab color.

We see Anna holding BABY MARIANNA. Gladys Joe and Hy are standing by the bed. Gladys Joe is fussing over the baby, Hy is pulling at the fingers of her gloves, impatient to leave.

Mrs. Rubens is sitting in a chair, talking to Anna.

MRS. RUBENS
Some ladies from the church
are coming to see you, Anna.

ANNA
I'm not sending my baby out.
I'm bringing her up myself.

MRS. RUBENS
But don't you want what's best
for your child?

ANNA
Yes M'am'. That's why I'm
keeping her.

Anna turns away from Mrs. Rubens, making it clear that the audience with her is over.

Mrs. Rubens purses her lips, looks to her girls, signals that it's time to leave.

INT. HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - EVENING

Anna is walking up and down the hall in a robe, exercising her legs. She passes WINSTON, a young black orderly, who's mopping the floor. He glances up at her. He has remarkable eyes -- poet's eyes that look older than the rest of him. There's a scar on his forehead that looks like it's been newly stitched.

Anna looks back at him, intrigued. She turns around at the end of the hall and walks back so she can pass by him again. He plays a game with her, mops the floor in front of her feet to slow her down. She laughs, tries to dodge him.

ANNA
Hey, you watch out, I'm still
in a delicate condition.

WINSTON
Then what are you doing out of
your bed?

AMQ 92

ANNA
That stuffy old ward is making
me crazy. They won't even
open a window for us.

WINSTON
'The windows don't open. Never
did. It's the colored ward,
M'am', lest we forget.

A WHITE NURSE is walking towards them down the hall.
Winston automatically bows his head, goes back to mopping.

WHITE NURSE
(to Anna)
Please go back to bed.

ANNA
Yes M'am'.

The Nurse keeps walking. Anna walks silently behind the
Nurse imitating her white-woman walk. She looks back at
Winston, sees that he's amused by her.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - LATER THAT NIGHT

The lights are out in the ward.

The women are asleep, except for Anna, who's sitting up and
talking in whispers with Winston, who's managed to sneak in
to the ward. They're holding hands, playing their fingers
around each other.

WINSTON
...Paris is the place to be.
They love American negroes.
They love our jazz, they love
our words, they love the way
we move. You can walk in to a
bistro, the waiters don't give
a damn what color you are.
There are negro men of letters
over there who'd still be
pushing a broom, doing the
Yessir if they were living
back here.

Anna reaches up and touches the scar on Winston's forehead.

ANNA
What happened here?

WINSTON
That's where a bottle had a
meeting with my skull.

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AMG

ANNA

Huh, guess you like to get yourself in trouble.

WINSTON

No, I'm a black man who write poems. I'm the nail sticking out that people feel obliged to hammer down.

ANNA

Tell me one of your poems.

WINSTON

All right...

(his poem)

I've walked a long way, so far,
the blisters on my feet polished in to rocky corns,
But when some, sweet beauty shines my way,
My soles slide down a path of pure velvet.

A beat.

ANNA

It doesn't rhyme.

WINSTON

Oh now you're a critic.

We hear a women in the ward say "Hey, we're trying to sleep.".

ANNA

(quietly)

Take me with you.

WINSTON

Hoo! Don't waste much time, do you?

ANNA

I can learn french. I know a word already. Touche.

WINSTON

Uh-huh. Where's the father of your baby?

ANNA

He's not around.

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AMQ

WINSTON
You planning on keeping that
child?

ANNA
Yeah, is that a problem?

WINSTON
Oh sweet lady, I'm just barely
keeping my own stomach fed. I
wasn't prepared to take on
another man's indiscretion.

They lapse in to a silence.

ANNA
Then just put your arms around
me. I've been missing that.

Winston lays on the bed next to Anna, adjusts her pillows
so she can lie next to him, cradled in his arms.

ANNA CONT.
Hey, what's your name?

WINSTON
Winston. Winston Graves.

ANNA
Well damn, Winston, I'll tell
you, a person can die if they
don't ever get touched.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - LATE MORNING

Anna is standing at her bed, now dressed in a cotton dress
and hand-me-down hat.

Glady Joe, Hy and Mrs. Rubens are there, helping her pack
her things up.

MRS. RUBENS
...we found a very decent room
for you in a house. The woman
will give you board in
exchange for housework.

Anna isn't listening. She's looking out at the hall,
hoping to see Winston.

A NURSE comes in with baby Marianna, wrapped up in the baby
quilt that Anna made. She hands her to Anna.

NURSE

We've all been admiring your quilt. Do you make them for other people?

MRS. RUBENS

(to Anna)

Take her name down, Dear.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Anna is walking down the hall, carrying the baby, flanked by Hy and Mrs. Rubens who's keeping them moving at a good clip. Gladly Joe is right behind them, futzing with the mechanism of a Brownie camera.

Anna is glancing down every corridor as they pass by, looking for Winston.

Suddenly Winston comes out of a ward carrying two bed pans. He automatically stops and steps aside to let the white women pass.

Mrs. Rubens and Hy brush past him. Anna stops, looks at Winston, waiting for him to save her.

Winston glances at Mrs. Rubens and the girls, looks down at the baby, notes how light the skin is. Something crosses his face. He looks away, keeps walking down the hall.

MRS. RUBENS

Anna, let's go, Dear.

Anna stands there, numb, trying to sort through this terrible moment.

Gladly Joe turns around with her camera.

GLADY JOE

Anna, let me get a picture of you and the baby.

FLASH. FREEZE FRAME in to a black and white photo of Anna holding baby Marianna, a look of blank confusion frozen on her face.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S PORCH - PRESENT, NIGHT

Finn and Anna are out on the porch, sitting on the steps, eating leftover pie.

FINN

Did you ever go back, try to find Winston?

ANNA
 Wasn't meant to be. He had
 other things he had to do. So
 did I.

Finn looks up at the sky: there's a huge, eerie-looking,
 orange-colored moon peeking in and out of a bank of moving
 clouds.

FINN
 Look at that.

ANNA
 I never liked full moons.
 Shines out the rest of the sky
 so you can't see anything
 else.

We see a few lightening flashes...a few seconds later,
 THUNDER.

FINN
 (thinking about
 her rendez-vous)
 Is it going to rain?

ANNA
 No, this is just an electrical
 storm.

FINN
 Oh, good.

Finn realizes she might have said too much, winces to
 herself. Anna keeps eating her pie.

ANNA
 Other thing I don't like about
 the moon, it gives people an
 excuse to do foolish things.

FINN
 I'm young, I'm supposed to do
 foolish things.

ANNA
 That's right and pay for them
 the rest of your life.

FINN
 And what about spending your
 whole life wondering what you
 missed?

ANNA

I'd rather wonder than be
kicking myself.

FINN

I'd rather kick myself.

ANNA

Fine, but you're going to have
one deeply sore backside.

Anna grunts as she gets up. She picks up her empty plate,
goes back into the house. We hear the screen door slam.

Stay on Finn. She nervously scratches her arm, stares up
at the moon.

EXT. FIELD - LATER THAT NIGHT

The moon is now bright white and illuminating the scattered
clouds. Every few seconds, we see lightening lace across
the sky.

LONG SHOT:

We see Finn walking in the middle of a tomato field with
Leon, the bright white of his shirt picked out in the
moonlight. We hear him singing.

LEON

"Hay unos ojos si me miran,
Hacen que me alma tiemble de
amor..."

We see Leon taking his shirt off, laying it on the ground.
Then we see the two of them lowering down, Finn slipping
off her dress, the moonlight bouncing off of her skin.

A M O
CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE ON: a rose stalk with a tiny node being
slipped in to the slit of another stalk, a strip of white
rubber being wrapped around, joining the two.

PULL BACK TO:

EXT. MARIANNA'S - LATE NEXT MORNING

Marianna is grafting a rose bush. Finn is watching her,
her neck spotted with hickeys. They're in the yard of
Marianna's small house which is surrounded by a magnificent
rose garden.

The flower heads are bouncing against a wind that's kicked
up this morning.

MARIANNA

My mother will tell you that I wasted my life by coming back here, that I should have stayed in France. But everything in France was beautiful. Even the pissoirs were beautiful. So what could I really add? That's why I like it here. This miserable place needs me.

She glances at the love marks on Finn's neck.

MARIANNA CONT.

It's too windy out here, let's go inside.

INT. MARIANNA'S KITCHEN - A WHILE LATER

We're in a kitchen with a wonderful sense of chaos -- bunches of dried herbs and roses are hanging from the ceiling among the cooking pots. There are jars of plant cuttings on all the windowsills, all in various stages of sending out roots.

Finn and Marianna are sitting at the kitchen table, sipping cafe au lait from French bistro cups and looking at some of Marianna's old photos.

CLOSE ON: a photo, circa 1958. We see 22-YEAR-OLD MARIANNA, absolutely beautiful, and a handsome young WHITE MAN having a picnic in a field of lavender somewhere in the south of France.

FINN

Who's this?

MARIANNA

Alec. My lover.

Finn looks at another photo.

FINN

And this?

PHOTO: We see Marianna with an intense-looking young BLACK MAN, sitting on a bench outside a greenhouse.

MARIANNA

Noe. A Frenchman. Another lover.

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AMG

Marianna takes the stack of photos, starts laying them down on the table like baseball cards -- they're all shots of Marianna with different men, all races, all ages and types.

MARIANNA CONT.

That's Giles who lived in Morocco; Eric who made perfumes in Grasse; Michel the fisherman from Marseille; Paco who raised bulls in Spain; Luciano who did marvelous things with olive oil...

Finn laughs. Marianna shuffles all the photos together.

MARIANNA CONT.

Ooh la, I was a wild thing. All these men trying to tie me down, "marry me, marry me," in five different languages. I refused to be held down by anyone.

FINN

Good. Good for you.

MARIANNA

Oh, you think so?

FINN

Are you kidding? To have that kind of courage? Especially in the 50's?

MARIANNA

Really.

AMG 192

FINN

(taking off on a
verbal tear)

See, what no one tells us is that marriage is an anachronistic institution which was created for the sole convenience of the father, who needed to pass off his daughters over to the care of another man -- like "here, here, she eats too much, take her off my hands!" But now that we've found our independence, now that we earn our own livings, there's no purpose to being someone's wife. And why shouldn't we love many people over a lifetime? Monogamy is really a very unnatural state that's been forced on us for centuries by screwed up religious leaders who are completely out of touch with their own sexuality. You know what I mean?

MARIANNA

You been talking to your fiancée about any of this?

FINN

Well, no, what I'm saying is, that I think that what you did was ahead of your time. You proved that it's possible to love more than one person at the same time.

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MARIANNA

No, I proved that I could function on three hours of sleep.

FINN

All right, let me ask you this. If you had to make the choice between marrying a lover or a friend, who would you chose?

MARIANNA

I would marry my soul mate.

Marianna swirls the coffee in her cup.

Finn is watching her.

FINN CONT.
(finally)
Who was it?

Marianna takes her time, lifts her cup to her lips.

CLOSE ON: the cup, we see the logo of a French cafe.

FOLLOW CLOSE on the cup as it's returned to the saucer.
We're now in:

PARIS, 1964

INT. CAFE -- LATE AFTERNOON

We're in a busy cafe that's a hangout for BLACK ARTISTS and EXPATRIATES. We see MARIANNA, now 27, sitting alone at a small table having her cafe au lait and smoking a Gauloise. She keeps wiping at her eyes with a sodden paper napkin, trying to disguise the fact that she's crying.

ANGLE ON: a man sitting alone at the table next to hers. He's a very distinguished-looking black man in his early 40's, wearing a beautiful vest and a tweed coat. There's the ghost of an old scar on his forehead. It's WINSTON. He's writing in a notebook but keeps glancing over at Marianna, compelled by the sight of her crying. He notices that her paper napkin is in shreds. Finally he pulls out his handkerchief, offers it to Marianna.

WINSTON
Mademoiselle?

MARIANNA
(taking the
hankie)
Merci.

WINSTON
Americaine?

Marianna nods, wipes her eyes. A WAITER sets a chocolate pastry down in front of Winston.

WINSTON CONT.
Merci.
(to Marianna)
I've found that chocolate is
good for a broken heart.

MARIANNA
Is your heart broken too?

WINSTON
No, I'm just working on making
myself fat.

He slides the pastry over to Marianna.

WINSTON CONT.
Go ahead.

MARIANNA
How do you know that's what
I'm crying about?

WINSTON
Well, when someone is mourning
a death, they go to the grave
yard to cry. When someone is
mourning the end of a love
affair, they go to their local
cafe hoping their lover will
show up.

Marianna smiles. She starts picking at the pastry.

MARIANNA
I'm the one who left. I don't
know why I should be so sad.

WINSTON
Of course you're sad. When
something is over, it's always
sad.

MARIANNA
I don't even know why I left.

WINSTON
Because most of us would
rather miss a lover than be
bored with them.

MARIANNA
Then we're doomed.

WINSTON
No we aren't. Eat your cake.

MARIANNA
What were you writing?

WINSTON
Just some verse.

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MARIANNA
May I read it?

Winston smiles, shakes his head.

MARIANNA CONT.
Was it about me?

Winston stirs his coffee.

WINSTON
(finally)
I haven't figured that out
yet.

EXT. TUILLERIES - A WHILE LATER

Winston and Marianna are now walking through the Tuilleries, past the rose gardens which are in full bloom. Marianna is walking closely to Winston with an assumed intimacy. He has his hands in his pockets, trying to keep his distance.

MARIANNA
...when I graft roses I take a branch from one plant and bind it to another. And after they grow in to each other, they become a third plant which is the best of both. I think the biggest mistake is to think that the same can be done with people.

WINSTON
That's a wild thought, but I have to disagree.

MARIANNA
Then disagree with me.

WINSTON
That's a discussion that belongs to a long evening with many bottles of good red wine.

MARIANNA
Then have dinner with me tonight.

Winston stops, lets out a long breath, kicks at the path.

WINSTON

Look, I already have a dinner to go to, with my wife.

MARIANNA

(unfazed)

I'm known for my independence. I don't make hysterical calls to husbands in the middle of the night.

WINSTON

Marianna, I'm a poet, and poets believe in sweet love encounters more than anyone else. But I have a son. And if I messed around on his mother, what would that do to his ideas about love?

MARIANNA

I don't think this would be just messing around.

WINSTON

And how do you know that?

MARIANNA

It's a certain kind of ache.

(a beat)

Do you feel that ache for your wife?

WINSTON

The ache is not supposed to be the part that lasts. It's only there so we can pick each other out.

MARIANNA

But if you feel it again, aren't you meant to move on?

WINSTON

How many times can you dig up a rose bush and plant it somewhere else? It would eventually die from shock, wouldn't it?

Winston opens his note book and tears out a page.

WINSTON CONT.

This is what I wrote today.

He folds it up and puts it in to Marianna's hand and then turns and quickly leaves. Stay on Marianna as she watches Winston walk away.

EXT. MARIANNA'S - PRESENT, DAY

We're back on the front porch. Marianna hands Finn the piece of paper from Winston's notebook, now a little fragile with age.

MARIANNA

Read it.

Finn unfolds the note.

FINN

"Young lovers seek perfection,
Old lovers learn the art of
sewing shreds together,
and of seeing beauty in a
multiplicity of patches."

MARIANNA

What do you think?

Finn is overwhelmed, wipes her eyes.

FINN

It doesn't rhyme.

MARIANNA

I know.

Marianna gives her a kiss on both cheeks, picks up her clippers and goes back to her roses.

EXT. HY & GLADY JOE'S - A WHILE LATER

Finn is now walking back to the house. It's still windy. There's an odd, dusty light to the sky.

Up on the porch we see a woman sitting on the swing with Hy. She's a very young 46, dressed in jeans, looks a little bit like Finn. This is SALLY.

Finn comes up on the porch, surprised to see her mother.

SALLY

Hi, Baby, how are you?

FINN

I'm doing all right.

SALLY

How's your paper?

FINN
It's coming along.

SALLY
How's Sam?

FINN
He's fine. Why are you here?

SALLY
C'mere, sit down with me.

FINN
Oh, is this supposed to be something heavy?

SALLY
Don't get smart, just come over here.

Finn settles on the swing next to her mother. Sally reaches over, starts playing with her hair.

SALLY CONT.
Was your hair always this color?

FINN
Yeh, Ma.

SALLY
Oh. It's pretty.

Sally gently rocks the swing for a beat.

SALLY CONT.
Your father and I are getting remarried.

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FINN
Jesus. What does grandma think about this?

SALLY
That's kind of an odd response.

FINN
Well, give me a minute. I don't know what I'm supposed to say.

SALLY
(surprised)
Are you upset about it?

FINN
No, I'm just surprised.
Especially after you've been
telling me all these years
that marriage is bullshit.

SALLY
I never said that.

FINN
You did. Just a few months
ago, in your kitchen, you were
pouring me that awful Bancha
tea and I was telling you that
Sam and I were thinking about
getting married and you said -
- I remember the words
exactly, you said this, Ma --
you said, how ordinary of you,
how ordinary.

SALLY
Why would I say such a bizarre
thing?

FINN
You say things like that all
the time!

SALLY
Then you shouldn't listen to
me.

FINN
God, Mom, you have no idea how
crazy you've made me.

SALLY
(deadpan)
No, Honey, I don't. How crazy
are you?

FINN
Don't make fun of me.

SALLY
I'm not. Talk to me.

FINN
What's the point? The imprint
has been made. I'm a mess.

AMC 192

SALLY

Finn, give it a break. First of all, for a twenty-six-year-old, you're not a mess. I hate to tell you this, Honey, but you're completely age appropriate.

FINN

Oh come on, you're just passing the buck.

SALLY

Let me finish. And as far as blaming Mommy, it's a popular sport and I played it myself, but it's a spectacular waste of time. Baby, I know I've been a flake and if you want to tie me up and do a slide show of my crimes, fine. But then move on and live your life. Don't make my screw-ups part of your baggage. It's not worth it.

FINN

(a beat)

Why don't you and Dad just live together?

SALLY

We want the tax break. I don't know, Finn.

FINN

Make the effort, Ma.

SALLY

Because your father and I need the ritual.

FINN

Do you like Sam?

SALLY

Yes, I do. I like him a lot. He's a good man.

FINN

I've been fooling around on him.

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AMQ

SALLY
Don't be stupid, Finn.

FINN
I know.

SALLY
And don't ever tell him.

The wind suddenly kicks up in to a full-blown windstorm. Dust and leaves are being whipped around. We hear all the windows rattling on the house. Finn and Sally stand up, shield their eyes, start making their way to the door.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

We see Gladly Joe by the clothes line, struggling to get the sheets in which are wildly flapping.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - CONTINUOUS

We see a neat stack of typed pages on the dining room table -- Finn's thesis, almost complete. The wind whips through the windows in the dining room, starts blowing the pages, along with all her note cards, off the table.

ANGLE ON: Hy in the living room, struggling to shut a window that's stuck. She doesn't notice the tide of papers blowing in from the dining room.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - CONTINUOUS

Finn and Sally are trying to get into the house. As they open the screen door, they're hit by hundreds of white pages and colored note cards as they're sucked out of the house. In the chaos, it takes a moment for Finn to realize what this is.

FINN
NOOOOOO!!!!

ANGLE ON: the street. We see pages and cards being blown up into the sky, getting stuck in trees, other pages being carried off to God knows where.

ANGLE ON: one of the pages stuck against the windshield of an old pickup as it lumbers past us.

EXT. EM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We see Em in her driveway, struggling against the wind as she hauls a suitcase to her car. She's dressed in her travel clothes, complete with a hat which blows off. She looks for her hat, gives up, tries to get her car door open, but the wind is too strong.

A twig flies into her, hits her in the face. Em is scared. She abandons the suitcase, runs for the nearest shelter which is the Dean's studio/garage.

EXT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dean is in front of Constance's front yard trying to gather up his portable easel and canvases that have been blown over by the wind.

We see Constance standing in the middle of the garden in a storm of thousands of flower petals that have been torn loose by the wind. She looks like a figure in an Impressionist's shaker globe.

Dean looks up, watches this, completely smitten by the sight.

CONSTANCE

DEAN!

We see Constance motioning for him to come inside. Dean hesitates, then he waves back at her, bows his head against the wind and heads for home.

EXT. SOPHIA'S BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

We see Sophia trying to take in her laundry.

We see some of Finn's papers already blowing across her yard. One of the papers plasters against Sophia. She grabs at it, annoyed, but checks to see what it is, recognizes it as part of Finn's thesis. She abandons her laundry, starts chasing after the papers.

INT. DEAN'S STUDIO GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Em is huddled on one of the old couches where she used to pose, listening to the wind outside. Her eyes wander up to the walls of the studio.

CIRCLE PAN of the studio. We see portraits of Em in every kind of pose, clothed and unclothed, in every stage of her life: Em at nineteen, open-eyed and sexy, trying to look sophisticated with a sweeping forties do; Em pregnant; Em nursing their child; Em getting heavier, getting older; posed elegantly in pearls and a cocktail dress; Em in a house dress looking tired; Em in a recent portrait of her sitting in a chair, her eyes angry. There are canvases all over of just parts of her body - hands, face, elbows, portions of her back and torso...

Em is taking in her husband's work, completely overwhelmed by what he knows of her.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

We see more of Finn's papers and note cards blowing down another street. They blow past Anna who's trying get home. The wind is pushing against her, blowing dust in her eyes. She has her hand to her face, blinded. For the first time she looks quite vulnerable and frail. She walks in to a parked car, badly bangs her shins on the bumper. We see her crumple over in pain.

ANGLE ON: Marianna, striding down the street, her scarves whipping around her, looking like the French Goddess of Liberty. She finds Anna, helps her up. And sheltering her mother under her arm, she walks her home.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - CONTINUOUS

Glady Joe, disheveled from the wind is coming into the laundry room with the odd mosaic wall, the sheets bunched in her arms. We hear a crack outside the laundry room window. A large tree branch falls against the window and breaks the glass. Glady Joe lets out a startled yell.

INT. DEAN'S STUDIO/GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Dean is coming in to his studio, sees Em who's curled up on the couch, fast asleep, looking very peaceful, even lovely. Dean takes in his wife, draped on the couch like an Odalisque with a storm raging outside...he goes over to her. Em wakes up, sees her husband standing over her. For a moment, Dean almost goes back to his old habit of dropping down on his knees. Instead, he sits on the couch with Em. He reaches over and touches her face, taking in the all the beautiful lines and the wrinkles. He then slowly bends down and gives her a gentle kiss.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - CONTINUOUS

The wind has passed through, leaving everyone's yards junked up in debris.

We see Finn in the front yard, some salvaged pages in her hand, staring out at the mess.

Way up the street we see Sally gathering whatever stray pages she can find.

ANGLE ON: Hy coming out of the house with a few more pages in her hand.

HY

Honey, I found these inside.
I'll keep looking out here...

Finn looks up at her grandmother, completely numb.

FINN

We're never going to find it all. I didn't even make a copy. A year and a half of my life -- it's gone.

HY

I hope you aren't saying that you're giving up.

FINN

Grandma, my notes are all over the place, I'd have to go back and write and try to reconstruct the whole thing. I can't do that.

HY

So you'd rather start all over again on something else.

FINN

I don't know, yes.

Hy looks at her, doesn't change her expression.

HY

Well, isn't that nice to have so little attachment to something.

Hy lays Finn's papers down on the swing, goes back in the house.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S, LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Glady Joe is bringing a broom and dustpan into the laundry room to sweep up the broken glass. She stops and looks at the walls, finally takes in how truly ugly they are. She opens a drawer, finds a hammer and starts banging at the wall. The plaster cracks and a big hunk of the mosaic breaks off and tumbles to the floor.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - CONTINUOUS

Hy is still cleaning up in the living room. She hears Glady Joe's banging. We FOLLOW as she goes through the dining room to the kitchen. She stops and sees Glady Joe through the door of the laundry room, tearing down the wall. She watches for a beat, doesn't say a word. Then she turns back around, letting her sister finish undisturbed.

EXT. SOPHIA'S BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Sophia is still searching for parts of Finn's thesis.

She spots a pink 3x5 card floating in the pond that Preston had built for her. She kicks off her orthopedic sandals, wades into the pond to retrieve the card. After she gets the card, she doesn't want to get out. She stays there with her dress hiked up, the pond water up to her knees, slowly moving her legs around, thinking about her days at the quarry.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Finn is walking along the side of a tomato field, following a trail of papers, now resigned to gathering every one of them up.

Leon's truck pulls up beside her.

Finn looks up, sees Leon smiling down at her.

FINN
Leon, don't get out.

LEON
Why?

FINN
Because I'll want to kiss you.
Please stay in your truck. I
can't do this anymore.

Leon doesn't say anything. He lifts a basket of strawberries up to the window, offers it to Finn. Finn doesn't move. Finally, Leon picks up a single berry, and holds it out so she can take it in her mouth. Finn hesitates, then allows herself to take one last bite.

CUT TO:

LONG SHOT: tomato field. We see Leon's truck driving away from Finn who continues to pick up her papers which we see are spread across the entire field.

FINN V.O.
That summer, the Grasse
quilting bee did something
they had never done before.

FADE TO:

CLOSE ON: Anna pinning the wedding quilt to her curtains. We don't see the entire quilt -- it's partly blocked by Anna.

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FINN V.O. CONT.

Anna decided that the quilt was incomplete. Constance's square had been rejected, Marianna, in protest, quit and took hers away and Em's was missing because she said she couldn't finish it.

Anna is now standing back, glasses pushed to her nose, frowning at the quilt.

FINN V.O. CONT.

As Anna said...

ANNA

(mumbling to herself)

...damn thing has no balance.

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE on a seam ripper pulling up threads.

FINN V.O.

So Anna called all the quilters back and wouldn't let them go home until they got it right.

PULL BACK TO:

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - NIGHT

We see Finn's quilt stretched out on the quilt frame, the border still intact, but the middle section under total reconstruction. All the quilters -- including Constance and Marianna -- are seated around the quilt, ripping seams and sewing in silence, all of them staying very focused on their work, all on their best behavior.

PAN AROUND the circle of women:

We see Em stitching her completed patch in to the quilt. She glances up at:

Constance, who's sewing her patch in to the quilt, Howell's oversized glasses balanced on her nose.

Em is taking a good look at Constance. She leans over to her.

EM

You know, you're not as attractive as I thought you were.

Constance looks up, a bit surprised.

CONSTANCE

Well, thank you.

They go back to ignoring each other.

We see Sophia. She looks different. Her scowl is gone. There's color in her cheeks, her face has lightened, like the terrible weight in her has finally been lifted.

We see Marianna sewing her patch in to the quilt. Anna is sewing next to her. We see her glance over at her daughter's work with her judgmental eye. Marianna stops sewing, looks at her mother. Anna looks at her, nods, like, "that's fine, what you're doing."

We see Gladys Joe and Hy sitting next to each other for the first time, sharing a pair of scissors, the wall finally down between them.

PAN OVER to the dining room. We see Finn piecing together her thesis, sorting through hundreds of wind-whipped cards and pages.

FINN V.O. CONT.

And that summer I did something I never did before. I didn't change my thesis.

Finn looks up. Sophia is standing there. She hands Finn the cards and pages she had gathered for her and without a word, goes back to the living room.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S PORCH - LATER THAT NIGHT

It's about three in the morning. Everyone is whispering their good nights. Cars are starting up. We see Constance wave to everyone, start walking home up the moonlit street.

Gladys Joe and Anna are sitting down together on the steps of the porch. They're watching Marianna drive off in her old Citroen.

ANNA

You remember when I had her in my belly?

GLADY JOE

Yes I do.

ANNA

And we saw a falling star and
I made this wish for her?

GLADY JOE

No, I don't remember.

ANNA

I wished that she'd be free
like the sky, belong to no
one. Remember that?

GLADY JOE

Oh, yes.

ANNA

Well, I think it made her
lonely.
(looks up at the
sky)
Now find me another one of
those stars so I can take it
back.

As Gladly Joe and Anna stare up at the sky, we:

PAN over to one of the windows in the house -- we look into
the living room. One lamp has been left on.

We see Finn stretched out on the couch, fast asleep. Hy
lays the finished quilt on top of her, tucks her in and
turns out the light.

INT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - DAWN

CLOSE ON Finn, still asleep under the quilt. We hear a
sound, TAP, TAP, TAP.

Finn opens her eyes. She sits up, sees:

A huge black CROW tapping at the window.

Finn gets up with the quilt wrapped around her goes to the
window.

FINN'S P.O.V.: the crow hops over to a fence, croaks at
her.

EXT. GLADY JOE & HY'S - CONTINUOUS

Finn is now coming out of house, barefoot, the quilt still
wrapped around her. She starts following the crow who's
hopping up the road.

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EXT. FIELD - A FEW MINUTES LATER, DAWN

We see Finn, wrapped in the quilt, following the crow as it hops from fence post to fence post.

At the end of the fence, we see Sam's van parked at the side of the road, silhouetted against the dusty sunrise. We see crow fly away.

ANGLE ON: Finn approaching the van. She looks in the open window, sees Sam asleep in the front seat. She touches his face. He wakes up, looks at her.

SAM

(drowsily)

I know I'm not supposed to pick you up until noon. But I couldn't sleep, decided to drive.

Finn opens the door, climbs into the front seat with Sam.

FINN V.O.

I'll tell you what makes me happy about marrying Sam and about marrying in general...

Finn wraps the quilt around Sam, lets him settle in her arms and fall back asleep.

FINN V.O. CONT.

I know that our marriage has as good a chance of being wonderful as it does of missing the mark. There is a strong possibility that it will be both.

CUT TO:

CLOSE PAN ON: FINN'S QUILT. We see, stitched across the top: "Where Love Resides." Each of our quilter's names have been stitched in to their work. First is Gladys Joe's -- an appliqued rendering of her house with the porch, two people sitting on the swing, using a scrap from one of Arthur's old ties. Next is Hy's, a repeating wedding ring pattern sewn from all of James' old shirts. Sophia's, using the raindrop fabric from her old dress, is a mermaid swimming in a deep blue ocean. Constance's is Chickie's garden made with Howell's bandanna. Marianna's is a block of hearts, each one a different color. Em's square is on the same green velvet, but is a paint brush and two enormous eyes.

FINN V.O. CONT.

(over this)

However, I'm banking on our love for each other to weigh a bit heavier on the wonderful side. I don't expect to be wrong about this. It's a matter of faith.

We PAN down to the last square, which is Anna's. We see a man and a woman with a black bird flying over head.

We see the quilt being folded back and Finn and Sam slipping into bed, naked. Sam reaches over, turns off a light. As Sam and Finn slide down together under the quilt, PULL BACK TO:

INT. SAM & FINN'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

We're in Sam and Finn's bedroom. We see that Sam got carried away with his renovation -- the roof has been lifted out entirely and there's a giant skylight at the top, exposing the room to the sky. It's night and we can see the stars...hold for a moment, there's a tiny blip, barely visible, as one of the stars falls and disappears.

FADE TO:

EXT. POOL - DAWN

We see Sophia in her bathing suit, staring at the pool. Not another soul is there.

She walks over to the high dive. We see her slowly climb the ladder, rung by rung. She gets to the top, stands at the edge of the board, trying to muster the courage to make the leap.

She looks down at the water which is rippled with the orange dawn light.

She wavers, wonders if she's out of her mind to be doing this. Then, what the hell, she tugs at back of her suit, clips the end of her nose, strikes her arms out from her sides and takes off in to the air in to a marvelous free-falling dive.

FADE OUT

THE END