

Infinitely Polar Bear

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EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

A man strides up a grassy hill. He is in his late-30s, clean-shaven with shaggy hair. He wears a well-cut tweed riding jacket, jodhpurs and riding boots. He carries a large shillelagh which rests on his shoulder.

This is CAM STUART. He sings with gusto, a Civil War marching song.

CAM

*...John Brown's body lies a-
mouldering in the grave/
John Brown's body lies a-mouldering
in the grave
John Brown's body lies a-mouldering
in the grave
His soul is marching on/
Glory, glory hallelulah/
Glory, glory hallelulah...*

At the top of the hill there is a boulder. It catches his eye and he cocks his head, bemused.

Laid out on the surface of the rock is a cheap fake beard. He looks around. There is not a person or a building in sight. The tall grass bends in the wind.

EXT. HILLSIDE. DAY

Cam, now wearing the fake beard, stands on the rock, gazing out imperiously. He takes several deep breaths through his nose, appreciating the fresh air. Then he lights a cigarette. He jumps off the boulder and continues his song as he marches down the hill.

CAM

*He's gone to be a soldier in the
army of the Lord/
He's gone to be a soldier in the
army of the Lord/
He's gone to be a soldier in the
army of the Lord...*

He disappears from view.

INT. CHILDS' BEDROOM. NIGHT

In the darkness, we hear:

CAM (O.S.)

Girls, wake up. Wake up.

A flashlight clicks on. It swings between two sleeping children.

Two bi-racial girls are sprawled out asleep on their beds. AMELIA is ten; FAITH is eight. Cam shakes them. They resist waking. He pulls their twisted covers off.

CAM
Rise and shine.

Finally they sit up. They blink at him, disoriented, shielding their eyes from the glare of the flashlight.

CAM (CONT'D)
Happy birthday, Amelia.

Amelia turns on her bedside lamp.

AMELIA
It's not my birthday.

Cam is disheveled and dirty, still wearing the tweed riding jacket, jodhpurs, riding boots and fake beard. His eyes are wide, wet and burning.

AMELIA
You look ridiculous. Where did you get that stupid beard?

CAM
Do you like it?

FAITH
No.

CAM
Then it's history!

He rips off the beard and throws it to the floor. The girls eye him warily.

AMELIA
Where were you last night? Mommy was worried.

FAITH
You smell like mothballs.

CAM
Good nose, Faithie. This riding outfit belonged to Great-Grandpapa. We're exactly the same size.

Cam admires the craftsmanship of the jacket.

CAM
Hand-stitched by blind nuns.

AMELIA
Wasn't everything hand-stitched
back then?

CAM
Not by blind nuns.

FAITH
Where's Mommy?

CAM
Sleeping. Shhh.

Faith collapses back onto her pillow, whimpering.

EXT. HILL. DAY

Cam marches up the hill as the sun comes up. His daughters hurry behind him, still half-asleep. They both wear sweaters over their nightgowns. He stops to look at the sunrise and takes a long drag on his cigarette.

CAM
It's going to be one hell of a hot
day.

FAITH
I'm freezing.

She looks like she's going to cry.

CAM
Take my jacket, Faithie. I don't
need it. Are you cold, Amelia?

He puts his jacket on Faith. Teeth chattering, Amelia shakes her head no. Cam pats her approvingly on the head.

CAM
Tough cookie.

She smiles with pride, shivering.

EXT. FOREST. DAY

Cam and the girls traipse through the woods, each one of them searching for something on the ground. Sunlight filters through the hundred-year-old trees. The air is humming and buzzing. It feels like summer.

Suddenly Cam kneels by a rotten tree trunk. He gives a sharp WHISTLE.

His daughters run to him. The ground is covered with bright orange chanterelles. They are beautiful. They seem to glow in the shade of the tall trees. The girls are mesmerized.

FAITH

I wish I had a gown that color.

He holds out his hand and they each slap him five, laughing.

INT. HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - KITCHEN. DAY

The chanterelles sizzle in a cast-iron pan. Cam stirs them gently, still wearing the jodhpurs but no jacket or shirt. He also wears a battered old gray fedora with a small freshly-picked flower stuck in the band. A cigarette dangles from his lips. His gut hangs out. An attractive African-American woman in her mid-30s leans against the kitchen counter. She wears a housecoat. She looks tired. This is MAGGIE.

CAM

That's what education should be about. Hands-on, in the field.
(calling loudly)
You girls are fierce mushroom-hunters!

MAGGIE

They're in bed. Exhausted.

CAM

It's good for them to see the sunrise. They're too stuck in their cozy little routines.

MAGGIE

They're ten and eight.

A long loaded silence. Then:

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You haven't been taking your lithium.

Cam picks up the cast iron pan and slams it down hard on the burner. Maggie jumps and screams, startled. She turns and runs away.

CAM

God damn it!

INT. HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - LIVING ROOM. DAY

Toys are scattered everywhere. A coffee table lies on its side. Cam holds a pack of cigarettes in each hand. His face is enraged. Maggie rushes away from him. He follows her. The girls watch from the upstairs landing.

CAM

My grandfather started the Harvard Forestry School -- I'm trying to bestow some of his legacy to my children -- and you're hassling me about lithium!

MAGGIE

I'm calling Dr. Wendell.

Cam steps in front of her and smashes the phone out of the wall. He kicks a zebra skin drum across the floor.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

We live in this house --

He jabs his finger in her face.

CAM

You're just like my parents. You want to keep me doped! Depressed! Fat! Slow! You'd neuter me if you could!

MAGGIE

(like speaking to a child)
Your parents let us live in this house on the condition that you remain stable --

CAM

To hell with the house then! I'm not going to let my goddamn parents use it as a choke chain!

MAGGIE

How could you not take it?! How could you do that to us?!

He suddenly drops to his knees, maudlin and melodramatic and overcome with sincere emotion. He holds onto her housecoat.

CAM

It kills me, Maggie. The girls and I had a beautiful morning. It was magical. That doesn't happen when I take my lithium.

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)
 Don't you understand? Please tell
 me you understand.

He looks so desperate that she wants to say she understands. But she can't. He reacts with another 180-degree turn, back to anger. He pounds the floor repeatedly.

CAM (CONT'D)
 You know what? Forget it. I'm
 going to find someone who gets it.
 Who gets *me*!

Cam turns and rips open the front door. He marches down the sloping lawn, swiftly and stiffly like a soldier.

Maggie runs to the open door.

MAGGIE
 That's just an excuse to get laid!

CAM
 (without looking back)
 It's a chance to be understood!

MAGGIE
 By getting laid!

CAM
 Boo hoo hoo! Poor bourgeois Maggie
 and her bourgeois monogamous
 fantasy!

EXT. DRIVEWAY. LATER

Maggie, wearing a crochet dress and knee-high boots, throws garbage bags stuffed with clothes and toys into the trunk of a pale blue Saab. The two little girls watch their frantic mother. Amelia holds the entire "Little House on the Prairie" series; Faith hugs eight different Barbie Dolls. Cam appears at the end of the long driveway, riding his bicycle uphill. He is now wearing a red Speedo, thin-soled canvas tennis shoes, and a red bandana tied around his neck. It is a ridiculous get-up. When he sees Maggie, he starts shouting.

CAM
 Hey! Hey! Hold it, god damnit!
 Hold it!

MAGGIE
 (to her daughters)
 Get in, get in!

CAM

That is my car and those are my children! Feeble, Maggie, pretty fucking feeble!

He pedals faster as Maggie pushes her daughters into the car. She dives in after them, pulls the door shut and locks all the doors.

INT. SAAB. SAME TIME

Cam races up and crashes his bike hard into the car. He and the bike go sprawling. Maggie and the girls scream. He untangles himself from the bike, raises it into the air and hurls it at the car. Maggie and the girls scream.

Maggie slides into the driver's seat and fumbles for the right key. She drops her key ring on the floor.

Cam circles the car, gesturing wildly. He sounds faraway through the glass but he is roaring. The girls stare at him.

CAM

Goddamnit, Maggie! I am a man! I am a man! Men like to screw! That's what we do!

MAGGIE

Amelia, Faith. Cover your ears.

They don't. They watch in disbelief as Cam pounds his chest and roars unto the skies:

CAM (CONT'D)

That's why we have balls!

Then he rips open the hood and reaches into the engine.

Maggie finds the right key, puts it in the ignition and turns it. Nothing. She turns it again. Nothing.

Cam slams the hood down and grins through the windshield. He comes around to her driver's side window. His eyes are bright and wet and insane. He holds the distributor cap.

CAM (CONT'D)

I'm never going to let you go. I love you all too much.

Both girls stare at him, completely still. Cam looks back at them and sees their terrified faces looking out at him and his face changes. A profoundly sad expression comes over him. An expression of regret.

He staggers backwards, puts his hands in front of his face and sinks to the driveway cross-legged. He doesn't move.

INT. SAAB. LATER

Maggie sits in the backseat, between the girls. Faith is on her knees, braiding her mother's hair. Amelia looks out the window. Cam hasn't moved. His bare shoulders are beet red.

AMELIA

He's sitting on the gravel and all he's wearing is a bathing suit.

MAGGIE

Sweetie, your father is very sick right now. He's not himself.

AMELIA

He's really sunburned.

MAGGIE

Listen. Look at me.

She does.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I don't want you to tell your friends or teachers about any of this. We know your father's a good person and he would never hurt us, but it's hard for people to understand and it's very sad. Okay? Okay?

Amelia nods.

EXT. DRIVEWAY. DUSK

Two policeman lay a blanket over Cam's shoulders and help him into the back of their police car. Cam is docile and does not resist. The girls watch from an upstairs bedroom.

INT. MCLEAN HOSPITAL - VISITING ROOM. DAY

Maggie and the girls sit side-by-side on the couch of the visiting room of McLean Hospital. Amelia is engrossed in "Watership Down." Faith is making two Barbie dolls kiss passionately and whispering. The room is pale green, filled with tranquil watercolors.

A nurse holds the door open. Cam enters. He moves slowly and he is hunched over, bloated and slow. He has a shaggy beard. He wears an oversized stained t-shirt with an idiotic logo and sweatpants. His hands tremble.

AMELIA/FAITH

Daddy!

They run to him and hug him around the waist. He pats their heads with swollen hands. His speech is thick and slurred.

CAM

Oh, my girls. My darling girls. I loved your letters. And I'm feeling much better.

They are disturbed by his appearance.

FAITH

Your stomach is really big.

He stands tall and sticks his lithium gut out. Slaps it.

CAM

Hard as you can.

They shake their heads. He slaps it again to show how hard it is.

CAM

Come on. Give me your best.

They take turns punching him half-heartedly in the stomach.

CAM

I can barely feel that.

They punch him again. He tenses his muscles.

CAM

You're stronger than that. Come on! Show me what you got!

Faith shakes her head, but Amelia goes at him with a flurry of little fists. Maggie and Cam share a look, laughing.

MAGGIE

That's our little fighter.

CAM

Remember, never ever do that when someone's not expecting it. That's what killed Harry Houdini.

He sits down across from Maggie and the girls climb into his lap. He lights a cigarette with unsteady hands and smiles at Maggie through the smoke.

CAM (CONT'D)

You're a sight for sore eyes.

MAGGIE

What happened to the clothes I brought you?

CAM

There were too many buttons on all the shirts. And...
(searching)
...latches on the trousers.

Cam laughs. Maggie nods, resigned. Cam's jaw is tight and rigid. He has extreme dry mouth.

CAM (CONT'D)

What do you want me to say? I know I look like shit. You think I like being on all the crap they're pumping into me? I've had diarrhea for a fucking month! Christ!

Faith and Amelia hurry off his lap and huddle next to their mother. She puts her arms around them and looks at Cam beseechingly. He nods back at her and hangs his head.

CAM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I hate being locked up in here. I miss my family. I want to be home with my family.

AMELIA

You will, Daddy!

Cam looks up and smiles at them. Then, abruptly, he starts to sing in a deep, dramatic baritone intended to be rousing.

CAM

"Oh! My pa-pa, to me he was so wonderful/ Oh! My pa-pa, to me he was so good..."

He holds his arms out. The girls climb back into his lap. He urges them to sing along with him. They do, hesitantly.

ALL THREE

"No one could be, so gentle and so lovable/ Oh! My Pa-pa, he always understood..."

Their singing continues over:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX. DAY

Two large brick apartment buildings face each other across a parking lot. It is an urban environment.

INT. WALDEN STREET APARTMENT - KITCHEN/DINING ROOM. DAY

Maggie and the girls have moved in. The apartment is clean and spare. Marimekko prints cover simple swedish furniture. The sunniest corner is full of hanging plants. Maggie has made it pleasant.

Maggie is in the kitchen cooking dinner.

The girls sit at the dining room table. Amelia is doing her math homework. Faith wears an all-lavender outfit and she is carving a flower design into the antique mahogany table with the pointy handle of a fork.

They pepper Maggie with questions and complaints.

AMELIA

The roof lights come in our window at night and it's too bright. I can't sleep. It's bright as day.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I'll make a curtain for your room.

AMELIA

Mommy, they're huge security lights. Like you would see at a prison.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Did you know there's a public pool right around the corner? It opens on Memorial Day.

AMELIA

They leave the lights on all night long.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Amelia, I also wish we could've stayed out in the country, but there were no good jobs in Sudbury.

FAITH

Your job here isn't good.

MAGGIE (O.S.)
I'm going to find a better one.

AMELIA
Why can't Daddy live here with us?

FAITH
I don't like visiting him at the
halfway house.

MAGGIE (O.S.)
Your father is still recovering
from his breakdown.

FAITH
He's a way better cook than you.

IN THE KITCHEN

Maggie sighs heavily.

MAGGIE
Girls, let's have a little quiet.
A few moments of quiet.

IN THE DINING ROOM

Amelia watches as Faith digs in to the table harder and with
more determination.

AMELIA
Daddy told me they injected him
with Thorazine at the hospital and
it made him bite the insides of his
cheeks until his mouth was filled
with blood.

Beat.

MAGGIE (O.S.)
It's still quiet time.

AMELIA
What's Thorazine?

Maggie comes out with two bowls of pasta and sees what Faith
has been doing. She drops the bowls down on the table and
grabs Faith by the shoulders.

MAGGIE

Faith! What are you doing? Why would you do that? Why would you do that?

FAITH

It's a flower. It's pretty.

Maggie sinks into a dining room chair, lays her head on the table and sobs. After a moment, the girls take their pasta bowls and start eating in silence.

AMELIA

Now we're being quiet, Mommy.

FAITH

Yeah, Mommy, now we're being quiet.

EXT. VINYL-SIDED HOUSE. DAY

Amelia, wearing a backpack and raincoat, approaches a three-story house. She rings the doorbell. She is dripping wet from the rain. One of Cam's HOUSEMATES answers the door. He has an unfriendly, suspicious manner and bad skin.

AMELIA

My father... lives here?

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE KITCHEN. DAY

Amelia's clothes hang over the hissing radiator, drying off. Upbeat posters and work wheels decorate the walls of the utilitarian kitchen. Cam stands at the stove, stirring a small pot of soup. Amelia sits at the table wrapped in a big towel. As Cam opens a tin of biscuits and arranges them on a plate:

CAM

What's my plan? My plan is... get out of this halfway house. That's number one.

Amelia nods her approval.

CAM

I'll get a job and get my own apartment. Then you girls can come for sleepovers and I'll make crepes for breakfast *and* dinner.

Amelia nods her approval.

CAM

And then I'll move back in with you
and Faith and Mommy. That is, if
Mommy will have me.

He holds the plate of biscuits out to her. She takes one.

AMELIA

I feel like Lucy visiting Mr.
Tumnus.

Cam smiles, pleased.

CAM

That's the nicest thing anyone's
ever said to me.

AMELIA

Mommy says you have a drinking
problem.

Cam bristles, offended.

CAM

Most people I know drink far more
than I do.

AMELIA

I think if you could stop drinking
and take your lithium then Mommy
would let you come home.

CAM

(sighing deeply)
I don't know if Mommy loves me
anymore.

AMELIA

But she says she loves you!

CAM

Really? Does she say it a lot?

AMELIA

She always says she loves you. But
that you're impossible to live
with. That you're like a child.

CAM

(frowns)
Do you think she should be
confiding in you like this?

AMELIA

I don't know.

CAM

The thing is I can see all this from Mommy's point of view. I certainly understand why she slept with Jake Beal when I was in the hospital. Sleeping with Gordie Taylor was pushing it, but I still forgive her.

AMELIA

But Mommy says you slept with somebody in the hall closet during a party when I was eight months old. She says you started it.

CAM

(defensive)

I was manic. I was high as a kite when I did that. I wasn't even attracted to that woman.

Amelia looks down and reaches for another biscuit. Cam sighs, sorry and sad.

CAM

Do you still feel like Lucy visiting Mr. Tumnus?

AMELIA

Not really.

INT. DREARY OFFICE. DAY

Maggie stands at a large metal filing cabinet, organizing color-coded files. A square-shaped woman in her 50s deposits a tall stack of files next to Maggie's head: CAROL.

CAROL

These too.

The phone rings. Maggie tenses.

CAROL

Probably one of your kids again. Tell them you're working.

Carol trundles away. Maggie answers, professionally.

MAGGIE

Hello, Keller Brothers --

(quietly)

Faith, is it important, sweetie?
You can't call me so much. They
don't like it. No TV... Okay, one
show -- two shows, but please don't
call again unless you have to. I
love you.

INT. APARTMENT. EVENING

Cam makes dinner: crepes filled with creamed chicken and
spinach. Amelia sets the table. Faith plays the piano.

The front door key turns in the lock.

AMELIA

Mommy's home!

Maggie opens the door and walks in with a bag of groceries.
Amelia gestures to the table with a flourish. Maggie nods,
impressed, and then she sees Cam in the kitchen and reacts,
surprised, but not unpleasantly.

INT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS

Maggie joins Cam in the kitchen.

MAGGIE

Hello.

CAM

Guess who showed up on my doorstep
today?

He nods toward Amelia. Maggie puts her groceries down.

MAGGIE

How did she get there?

CAM

Walked.

MAGGIE

All the way from school?

He nods. They share a look of parental concern. Then:

CAM

I think we should find a therapist
for her to talk to.

MAGGIE

Do you think that's something your
parents might pay for? Mine can't
help anymore.

CAM

I'll ask them.

Maggie smiles at him gratefully and unpacks the groceries.
They move around the tiny kitchen. In the living room, Faith
starts playing a jaunty version of "The Entertainer."

CAM

She's getting good.
(calling)
That sounds great, Little!
(to Maggie)
How's the job going?

She laughs.

MAGGIE

Oh, the job.

She hangs her head.

MAGGIE

I graduated magna cum laude from
Sarah Lawrence. I can't believe
what I'm doing.

Maggie looks sad and tired. Cam puts his arm around her and
Maggie leans into his shoulder. Amelia walks in and puts her
arms around both parents, joining them in this sweet moment.
Then Maggie deflates.

MAGGIE

I forgot the mail --

AMELIA

We'll get it!

INT. HALLWAY. MOMENTS LATER

The metal door slams. Amelia and Faith walk down the hall.
They look at each other hopefully.

INT. LOBBY. NIGHT

Amelia and Faith walk up to their mailbox. Three children
are playing cards on the carpet in the lobby by the
mailboxes. KIM, 10, and ALI, 8, are Korean sisters.

Also with them is THURGOOD, 12, who is black and very tall, friendly and fey.

KIM
Hi.

AMELIA/FAITH
Hi.

KIM
I'm Kim. This is Ali. This is Thurgood. He lives in the building across the way.

THURGOOD
(with a floppy wave)
Hey there.

AMELIA
I'm Amelia and this is Faith.

KIM
You guys go to Lincoln?

AMELIA
No. We go to Peabody.

Kim squints angrily.

KIM
Peabody is the best public school in the city. We're not in the Peabody School district.

Thurgood puts his hand to his mouth, mock afraid.

THURGOOD
(sing song)
Uh oh. Somebody's lying about their address!

KIM
If you live here, you're supposed to go to Lincoln. A school that is totally one hundred percent terrible.

THURGOOD
(mock confidentially)
Unless you like getting your 'A' kicked by Irish kids.

Faith looks perturbed.

AMELIA

Well... we go to Peabody.

Amelia and Faith head to the elevator with their mail. Kim, Ali and Thurgood stay hanging out.

FAITH

Bye.

THURGOOD

(super-friendly)

See you later, soul sisters!

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

The family sits at the table, eating the dinner Cam made. Music plays on the record player.

AMELIA

What if someone asks me where I live? I don't want to lie.

MAGGIE

Peabody is the best public school in the city --

AMELIA

I don't care. I don't want to lie.

CAM

You're not lying, sweetheart. Your mother is lying.

Maggie furrows her brow at him.

FAITH

I don't want to go to Lincoln! They said we're going to get beat up.

CAM

Don't worry, Faithie. I'll teach you how to fight.

AMELIA

What if my teacher finds out I'm lying?

MAGGIE

Miss Kendricks loves you. You're her best student.

FAITH
 (wailing)
 They said we'd get our 'A' kicked
 by Irish kids!

MAGGIE
 You're not going to get your 'A'
 kicked --

CAM
 (riled up)
 -- you'll be kicking 'A'!

AMELIA
 If you want us to go to the Peabody
 School so bad, why didn't we move
 into the Peabody School district?

MAGGIE
 We can't afford the Peabody School
 district! We're lucky to have
 gotten a rent-controlled apartment!

AMELIA
 But Daddy's family is so rich --

MAGGIE
 (losing it)
 Yes, but we have no money! Can you
 girls understand that! We have no
 money! I send out my resume and I
 get nothing! I just spent my last
 twelve dollars! You want to be
 poor and get a bad education?

The neighbor below bangs very angrily on the ceiling. They
 all sit in silence. Maggie recovers her poise.

MAGGIE
 Who wants seconds?

Faith holds out her plate. Cam serves.

MAGGIE
 Thank you, Cam, for this delicious
 dinner.

CAM
 Could be like this every night...

Maggie stiffens.

MAGGIE

That would be nice, but I need a husband, not a wife.

CAM

I'd like to be a husband but my wife won't let me.

MAGGIE

Girls, go play in the lobby.

FAITH

But --

MAGGIE

Go!

As they scurry out of the apartment:

CAM

I'm lonely, Maggie. I don't want to move to some shitty apartment, I want to come home!

EXT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

The girls listen at the door with concern as their parents continue to argue.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I'm lonely too, Cam! This, here, is lonely, but you have to show me that it'll be different this time --

The neighbor downstairs bangs angrily on the ceiling.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Maggie lays out three Business School applications on the dining room table: Harvard, Columbia, Wharton.

EXT. STREET. DAY

Cam is on a pay phone on Mass Ave. He is leaving an answering machine message. He wears a green polo shirt and madras shorts.

CAM

Hi, Maggie. It's me. It's a beautiful day.

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)
 I'm skulking around Harvard Square.
 Anybody home? Pick up if you're
 there.

He waits. No answer. He continues his message.

CAM
 Just wanted to see...

EXT. STREET. DIFFERENT DAY

Cam stands at a different pay phone, leaving another message.
 He wears a battered corduroy sportcoat.

CAM
 ...what you and the girls are up
 to. Thought we could go sailing.
 I think Eliot Perkins would let me
 borrow his sailboat...

EXT. STREET. DIFFERENT DAY

Cam is at a different pay phone, leaving another message. He
 wears an overcoat and a beret.

CAM
 ...Or "Bringing up Baby" is playing
 at the Orson Welles and there's
 also a Buster Keaton festival --

A loud BEEP. The machine hangs up on him. Cam hangs up the
 phone and walks out alone into the bustling street.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE. DAY

Amelia sits on a bench outside the Principal's Office,
 hugging her backpack, trying not to cry. Maggie exits the
 Principal's Office and sits down next to Amelia.

AMELIA
 What'd he say?

MAGGIE
 (lightly)
 He said we're not in the Peabody
 School district so you and Faith
 have to go to Lincoln.

Amelia's face crumples.

AMELIA
I'm sorry, Mommy.

Maggie hugs Amelia to her.

MAGGIE
Don't apologize to me. Please
don't apologize to me. It's my
fault --

AMELIA
He asked where we lived and I
wasn't sure what to say so I told
him. I'd never been to the
principal's office before --

MAGGIE
You did the right thing. I never
wanted you to lie.

AMELIA
He said it was illegal what we were
doing.

MAGGIE
I guess I wasn't thinking of it
that way. I just wanted you to go
to the best school.

Maggie sits back and wipes at Amelia's tears.

AMELIA
What if Faith gets beat up and it's
all because of me?

MAGGIE
Don't worry about Faith. Faith
bites.

Amelia laughs, then:

AMELIA
I love my teacher.

MAGGIE
And she loves you. She stopped me
in the hall and told me...
(her voice breaks)
She was so sorry. And she would
miss you very much.

Amelia nods and leans against her mother.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Cam and Maggie stand in the living room. He wears his coat and holds two rolled-up sleeping bags.

MAGGIE
(calling off)
Do you have your pajamas?

AMELIA (O.S.)
We have everything. Books, games,
stuffed animals...

MAGGIE
Toothbrushes?

Silence.

MAGGIE
Pack toothbrushes!

CAM
I took two big cardboard boxes and
set them up like little beds.
They're going to flip.

MAGGIE
Cam...

CAM
Now that I have my own apartment,
I'd be happy to have them stay over
whenever you want. There's room
for you too...

Cam notices that Maggie looks anxious.

CAM
Just kidding. Not till you're
ready.

MAGGIE
I got into business school.

Cam nods, impressed.

CAM
Maggie Stuart, you are some
punkins. I wish I had some of that
bourgeois midwestern can-do.

MAGGIE
But I didn't get into Harvard. I
got a big scholarship to Columbia.

Cam is thrown.

CAM

Wait. You can't take the girls to New York.

MAGGIE

No. I can't even afford a studio apartment in New York. Tatiana said I can stay at her place for two months and then I'm going to try and rent a room or something.

CAM

So what about the girls?

MAGGIE

Here's my proposal. I can get my degree in eighteen months if I do the summer session. So I go to New York this September. You move in here and take care of the girls.

He looks at her for a long beat. Then:

CAM

...Me?

MAGGIE

Yes. You. You miss them. And they miss you so much. It's just eighteen months. When I get my MBA, I'll get a job in Boston and move back in here.

(gripping his arm)

I know it sounds crazy, Cam, but I think you can do it. I know you can.

Cam considers this. He sits down, exhales.

CAM

I suppose it might be good for me to have a purpose. Getting meals on the table. Taking them to school every morning, making sure they brush their teeth regularly...

He looks exhausted.

CAM

I can't do that. It sounds like a lot.

MAGGIE

It is a lot. But we're sinking deeper and deeper into a hole and I have to do something.

CAM

The new school does feel a bit like a reformatory.

MAGGIE

It's grim. You and I went to good schools, we had piano lessons --

CAM

I never had any lessons.

MAGGIE

But you learned how to fence and ski and sail and ride and play chess...

CAM

But I never took lessons. My family taught me those things.

MAGGIE

The point is we both got a good education. I want that for our children, Cam. And I'm going to get it.

CAM

Well, I want that too. But eighteen months is a really long time.

MAGGIE

I will come back every weekend and help you.

Cam looks at her.

CAM

Every weekend? And stay here with us?

MAGGIE

Yes.

CAM

So it would be like we were a family again.

Cam looks off into the distance and nods, a determined look on his face. He feels the importance of his mission.

CAM

I am their father, after all.

INT. RESTAURANT. DAY

Maggie sits across from MURRAY and PAULINE STUART, Cam's parents. Murray wears a corduroy jacket with a pipe tucked into the pocket. PAULINE wears a red turtleneck with a large, elaborate jade necklace over it.

PAULINE

I'm afraid we need to intervene on our son's behalf and say: no. He's just not up to the task.

MAGGIE

No one thinks he's up to any task. He's almost forty and no one even expects him to clean his own room.

MURRAY

Exactly. Can't clean his own room. Can't hold a job. Cannot care for young children.

Reveal that Cam is also at the table. He takes umbrage at his father's remark.

CAM

You don't seem to think I can do anything.

PAULINE

We just don't want you to tax yourself, darling boy.

CAM

But I love my children. I hate being away from them.

PAULINE

I loved my children too. But I couldn't take care of them. Caring for children is exhausting.

MAGGIE

We met with Dr. Wendell. He said Cam has made an excellent recovery from his breakdown and he felt he could do this.

CAM

He thinks I need more
responsibility, not less.

MURRAY

But you're a *man*. Even if you
could do it, why would you want to?

MAGGIE

He loves to cook. He loves to tell
stories and play games. He's a
good father. And I absolutely
believe he can do this. I would
never ask him if I didn't believe
he could do it.

Cam smiles at her gratefully. He puts his hand on hers.

PAULINE

We believe in him too, but what if
he has a breakdown?

MAGGIE

He won't. Because we're all going
to help him. We need to keep a
close watch and support him and
make sure he takes his lithium.
I'll check in every day on the
phone and I'll be there on the
weekends.

MURRAY

(shaking his head)
So this is Feminism.

PAULINE

I must say, Maggie. It seems very
selfish. Running away like this.

CAM

You left when I was a child.

PAULINE

But just to go into the hospital.
I couldn't stop weeping. I didn't
choose to go. I didn't run away.

Maggie is struck by that.

MAGGIE

I'm not running away. We're living
at the poverty level.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (cont'd)

They are at a school where the kids
scream and swear at the teachers
and fifth graders sell joints.

(pointed)

I could never leave my children if
I weren't utterly and completely
desperate.

She looks at them directly. Murray and Pauline shift in
their seats, speaking quickly.

MURRAY

We can't touch our capital, you
understand.

PAULINE

Our money is locked up.

MURRAY

We live off the interest.

PAULINE

We'd let you move back to the
Sudbury house but your brother
Johnny is moving in. He's starting
an alpaca business.

MAGGIE

Cam is a trust fund baby with no
trust fund. And my parents have
done all they can, so one of us is
going to have to earn a living.

Pauline looks very sad. She pats Maggie's hand with genuine
emotion.

PAULINE

Oh, my dear, it all just sounds so
dreary!

EXT. PARKING LOT. DAY

Cam, wearing jade swimming trunks and a bright green shirt,
is putting Maggie's suitcases in the back of a small U-Haul.
A nervous, skinny man in his 40s looks on, biting his
fingernails. He is PETER.

PETER

We need to go, Maggie. We're
heading into miserable traffic.

Maggie nods. Peter gets into the passenger seat. Cam looks
toward him suspiciously.

CAM
Who is this wimp?

MAGGIE
Carol Webber's cousin. He's moving
to New York to live with his
mother. I'm lucky he's splitting
the cost of the truck.

CAM
He's making you drive?

Cam seems unconvinced. Maggie ignores Cam. She hugs Amelia
and Faith and tries to be upbeat.

MAGGIE
You can call me anytime day or
night. And I'm going to come home
the weekend after next, so don't be
too sad because you're going to see
me before you know it.

They nod. Faith wipes away her tears. Amelia is stone-
faced.

MAGGIE
Amelia, you have to brush your
hair. Faith, will you make sure
your sister brushes her hair?

Faith nods. Amelia shakes her head.

MAGGIE
You are going to have a lot of fun
with Daddy.

Peter honks the horn. Cam reacts angrily.

CAM
Hey!

Maggie stands quickly.

MAGGIE
Cam --

CAM
(re: Peter)
You're saying goodbye to your
daughters! What kind of a cold-
hearted S.O.B. honks the horn?

MAGGIE

Please. I'm about to spend five hours in very close quarters.

Cam sighs and nods. Then:

MAGGIE

Cam, I know this is big. Thank you.

Cam wears a stoic expression. He wraps her up in a big hug. The horn honks again.

CAM

Go. Seriously. Or I'm going to kick the living shit out of this guy.

Maggie gets into the driver's seat.

MAGGIE

I love you. I love you girls!

CAM

We love you too.

The truck starts up. It pulls out into the street. They all stand waving.

INT. MOVING TRUCK. MOMENTS LATER

Maggie wipes a tear away. Peter is oblivious.

PETER

The air conditioning wreaks havoc on my sinuses --

Suddenly Cam is running alongside the open passenger window. He shouts across Peter.

CAM

Take the Wilbur Cross Parkway!

Maggie is stuck moving forward in the flow of traffic. She doesn't know what to do.

MAGGIE

The what?

CAM
 Remember, Maggie? We were going to
 Tom and Linda's wedding and we
 thought we'd be late but I took the
 back roads and we made it in the
 nick of time? The Wilbur Cross
 Parkway!

She's looking for a place to pull over. People behind her
 are honking now.

MAGGIE
 I don't know if I remember....

CAM
 (shouting)
 At New Haven, shoot across 34 West
 to the Wilbur Cross! It becomes
 the Merritt Parkway!

EXT. STREET. CONTINUOUS

The truck keeps moving and Cam can't keep up. He shouts
 after them.

CAM
 You can avoid Bridgeport and the
 trees are twice as green!

Cam lights a cigarette. He stares after the truck as it
 disappears from view.

EXT. PARK. DAY

The girls sit on a bench, eating ice cream cones. Faith is
 crying. Amelia is not letting herself. Cam watches them
 with concern.

CAM
 Want to see a movie?

They shake their heads.

CAM
 We could drive out to Plum Island
 and look for sea glass?

They shake their heads.

CAM

We could go to the Museum of Fine Arts and look at Great Grandpapa's portrait.

AMELIA

Why is his portrait hanging at the museum?

CAM

Because a very important artist named John Singer Sargent painted it.

FAITH

Why?

CAM

(indignant)

"Why?" Don't you know who we are?

EXT. BEACON HILL. DAY

Cam and the girls are in his Fiat. The car is filled with trash: food wrappers, used napkins, empty containers, orange peels, mail. They are parked outside a large freestanding mansion on Beacon Hill.

CAM

That's where your great-grandmother grew up.

FAITH

In that whole house?

CAM

The whole thing. It's the grandest house on Beacon Hill. Designed by Bulfinch, a very famous architect.

AMELIA

How did they get so rich?

CAM

Railroads. Your great-great-grandfather was the richest man in Boston from 1882 to 1886.

AMELIA

So how come we're so poor?

Cam opens his mouth to answer, then sighs.

CAM
...it's hard to explain.

The girls stare at the house in awe.

CAM
You want to see the inside?

They look excited and confused.

FAITH
Are we allowed?

AMELIA
You can't just walk up and knock on
people's doors.

CAM
(tickled by her ignorance)
Sweetheart... this is Boston.

INT. ENTRY HALL. DAY

The girls look around the grand entry hall, amazed. Cam has
a hand on each of their shoulders. A MAID comes in.

MAID
Mr. Fabrini will be out in a
minute.

CAM
(to girls)
On the second floor are the parlors
where they would have huge fancy
dress balls...they would lay thick
canvas down to protect the wooden
floors and it looked like snow...

A man in his mid-40s comes out of a study. This is MR.
FABRINI. He wears a business suit. He seems annoyed.

MR. FABRINI
Can I help you?

CAM
Hello. My name is Cam Stuart. My
great-grandmother grew up in this
house and I was wondering if I
could show it to my daughters.
It's an important part of their
family history.

MR. FABRINI

I'm sorry, Mr. Stuart. But this is my home. I don't give tours.

The girls are mortified. They both start for the door, but Cam holds them in place. He is defiant.

CAM

This house was in my family for more than five generations. My great-great grandfather was born in this house on Boxing Day in 1842.

MR. FABRINI

And would your great-great-grandfather give tours to anyone who came along?

CAM

Certainly. If they had a personal connection going back more than five generations.

MR. FABRINI

Then he's a better man than me.

CAM

(pointed)
"Than I."

The girls wince.

INT. FIAT. LATER

Cam drives much too fast down Storrow Drive, weaving in and out of traffic. Everyone is shouting.

CAM

We're going back there again! I'm going back every day till he shows you that house!

AMELIA

Slow down!

CAM

Our family lived there for more than a century for chrissake! We built that house!

FAITH

But it's his house now and he doesn't want to show it to you!

AMELIA

That was so embarrassing!

CAM

You shouldn't be embarrassed! He should be embarrassed!

FAITH/AMELIA

No! You should be embarrassed!

Cam reacts as if they are speaking a foreign language.

CAM

Me? I'm not embarrassed! I'm the eldest son of the eldest son of the richest man in the world!

INT. ELEVATOR. NIGHT

The family rides the elevator in silence. All three of them look furious.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

The apartment is filled with boxes. Amelia is on the kitchen phone. Faith is on the phone in the living room. They are both unhappy, talking low, as Cam lurks about.

FAITH

We want you to come home.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I'll be home in twelve days...

AMELIA

We want you to come home right now.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

This is a big adjustment --

AMELIA

Why aren't you coming home this Friday? You said you'd come home every single weekend. That's what you said.

INT. MAGGIE'S NEW YORK ROOM. SAME TIME

Maggie stands in a grim little room with a bed and a desk and a bright overhead light. Her suitcases surround her. You can hear loud traffic noise.

MAGGIE

I have registration and orientation
-- next weekend is really not that
far away...

INT. LIVING ROOM. MORNING

Cam is snoring on the couch still wearing the bright green shirt and jade swimming trunks. The TV is on. Faith stands over him, near tears, in her nightgown.

FAITH

Daddy, wake up. Daddy. We slept
too long and we're going to be late
for school.

Cam opens his eyes and blinks at her, disoriented.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ELEVATOR. DAY

The elevator opens. A disheveled Cam puts his hand on the door to keep it from closing. In his other hand he has a box of cereal. On the elevator is an attractive woman professionally dressed. This is BECCA. She wears a turtleneck sweater and big brown glasses. She smiles at Cam.

CAM

You're Maggie's friend. I'm Cam.

BECCA

Becca. Kyle's mother.

Faith runs onto the elevator.

FAITH

I hate being late for school.

CAM

Don't worry, bunchkin. You won't
be late.

Cam holds out the box of cereal. Faith reaches in, grabs a handful, stuffs it in her mouth.

CAM

(calling)
Amelia! Let's go!

BECCA

I just have to say: my ex-husband
would never do what you're doing.
I think it is so evolved.

Cam puffs up.

CAM

You do?

Tousled Amelia runs onto the elevator. Cam steps on.

BECCA

Absolutely. Most men would be extremely emasculated having their wife go off to be the breadwinner.

CAM

(deflates)

Oh. Thanks.

The elevator doors close.

EXT. SCHOOL. DAY

Cam pulls up with a screech in front of the school. He jumps the curb so the passenger side wheels are on the sidewalk. The girls tumble out. As they sprint off:

CAM

You want me to pick you up after school?

AMELIA/FAITH

No!

He watches the girls run up the deserted steps of the school.

CAM

I love you!

EXT. PARKING LOT. DAY

Cam has the hood of his car open. The girls walk up, wearing their backpacks, not talking to each other.

CAM

You girls want to learn how to change an oil filter?

AMELIA/FAITH

No./Not really.

CAM

Just don't be helpless.

He shuts the hood. A woman in her mid-50s is taking many grocery bags out of her car. This is RUTH-ANN MCKAY.

CAM
Who's that?

AMELIA
Ruth-Ann.

FAITH
Please don't introduce yourself.

CAM
Why not?

FAITH
Because you talk too much and nobody wants to talk to you.

CAM
I'm just being friendly. Don't you want to know your neighbors? We live in a world with other people.

He approaches Ruth-Ann. The girls follow.

RUTH-ANN
Hello girls.

AMELIA/FAITH
Hi.

CAM
Hi, Cam Stuart --

Ruth-Ann shakes hands warmly.

RUTH-ANN
Yes, Maggie told me. Welcome to 205. Ruth-Ann McKay.

CAM
Can we help you with your bags?

RUTH-ANN
(grateful)
Are you kidding?

As they pick up the bags:

CAM
See, girls? People appreciate a little kindness. That's all I'm talking about.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY. NIGHT

Cam carries three bags and the girls each struggle to carry one down the hall to Ruth-Ann's apartment. She unlocks her door and starts taking the bags from them.

CAM

Do you need us to help you put them away?

RUTH-ANN

No, this is fine. Just put the bags down.

CAM

Are you sure? We're happy to do it.

RUTH-ANN

No, this has been so helpful. Thank you.

CAM

You need anything moved? A desk or something like that?

RUTH-ANN

No I'm happy with where my desk is...

She starts to close the door.

CAM

Sometimes mixing up an arrangement freshens a space --

RUTH-ANN

No, thank you. I have to start dinner. So if you'll excuse me.

CAM

You need anything chopped? An onion?

RUTH-ANN

No. I'm not using onions tonight.

She closes the door in his face.

FAITH

What is wrong with you?

AMELIA

You made her slam the door in your face.

CAM

(oblivious)

She had to go cook dinner.

FAITH

She had to get rid of you!

CAM

Get off my case! I'm just being a good neighbor!

FAITH

You're an annoying neighbor. People are going to see you and run in the other direction!

CAM

They're going to run toward me! Because I'm going to make sure they know that I'm the kind of guy who's willing to move heavy furniture! Or clean out a storage locker!
(yelling)
Because I'm a good neighbor!

He storms off down the hallway. Ten strides later.

CAM

This is bullshit!

He goes into the stairwell and slams the door.

INT. DINING AREA. NIGHT

They sit at the dining table, eating in silence.

CAM

I learned to cook this on a Norwegian steamship headed down the Amazon.

AMELIA

When did you do that?

CAM

Summer after I got kicked out of Harvard.

AMELIA

I thought you got kicked out of Exeter.

CAM

I got kicked out of both. For very different reasons...

The girls' interest is piqued.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM. NIGHT

Cam sits in the reading chair. The girls are in their beds, listening intently to their father's story. Faith has curlers in her hair and a net over them.

CAM

I was on my way to my Ec 10 exam and I hear this bag-pipe music so I follow the sound into The Square and a street musician is playing Scottish ballads and he's got his hat out. People are walking by and putting money in it and I think *that's a good idea*. So I put my hat out and sit next to him and I start singing along in my best Scottish brogue and he tells me to scam.

AMELIA

Because he didn't ask you to sing and he wants to make all the money.

CAM

Exactly. Well, we exchanged a few words and then...the bastard jumped me! This scrawny little guy and he jumped me! We got into a major brawl on top of the bag pipes and I got so excited I shit my pants.

AMELIA/FAITH

Ew!

Cam laughs.

CAM

Needless to say, I didn't make the exam.

AMELIA

And they kicked you out for missing
one exam?

CAM

Well...then the next semester I
registered for seventy-five
courses.

He chuckles, then:

CAM

That's when they determined I might
not be Harvard material.

CUT TO:

Both girls are asleep, breathing steadily. The clock ticks.
Cam turns out the light.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Cam walks into the living room of the apartment, which is now
full of all his boxes. He stares at them.

Cam opens a box. It is filled with magazines, pieces of
paper, phone books, tools. It is completely disorganized.
He blinks at it. It fills him with despair.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Dirty dishes are piled in the sink and all over the counters.
Cam stares at it in despair.

INT. HALLWAY. DAY

The laundry hamper is overflowing, dirty clothes piled
halfway up the wall. Cam stares at it in despair.

INT. FRONT DOOR. NIGHT

Cam grabs his coat and scarf from the coat-stand.

CAM

(loudly)

Girls, I'm going out for a couple
of hours. You get some good rest.
I'll be back before midnight, okay?

No answer.

CAM
Around midnight. Love you!

He opens the door, closes it quietly behind him.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT

Cam steps out into the cool air. He takes a deep breath, lights a cigarette, and heads out into the night.

INT. BAR. NIGHT

A bar full of aging professors, shaggy poets and intense poetesses.

Cam sits at the bar, drinking a can of beer. He has an animated conversation with two friends. One wears a bow-tie, horn-rimmed glasses and a tweed jacket; the other wears a grimy coat and ragged hat. The homeless-looking friend laughs, revealing no front teeth. Cam gestures to the bartender, indicating another round.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY. NIGHT

Cam, drunk and smoking, walks down the long hall to the corner apartment. He takes out his keys and opens the door. But it stops; the chain-lock has been fastened.

All the lights in the apartment are on.

CAM
(pissed off)
Oh, shit.

He knocks.

CAM
Unchain the door, please.

Amelia comes running from the living room, crazy-haired, wielding a baseball bat.

AMELIA
Where did you go?

CAM
Unchain the fucking door.

AMELIA
We woke up and you were gone.
Faith was really scared.

Cam grows more irritated.

CAM
Don't use the chain. Anyone who
really wants to come in won't be
stopped by this dinky chain.

As she unchains it:

AMELIA
It stopped you.

As he enters:

CAM
I didn't really want to come in.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam stumbles in and crashes into the wall. Amelia looks concerned. She points to the living room.

AMELIA
Mommy's on the phone.

CAM
(bitterly)
Thank you. Thanks a lot.

He walks to the living room where the receiver lies on the sofa cushion and puts the phone to his ear.

CAM
(to phone)
Hello.
(beat)
Everything's fine, Maggie. Nobody
is hurt.
(beat)
I told them I was going out, but
they were sleeping! Should I wake
them up every time I want to go
out?
(beat)
I went to The Phoenix and had a
drink with David Jay and Fred
Tucker! Oh, big f-ing deal...you
don't get to move to New York and
dictate what I can and can't do...

As he continues to argue with Maggie on the telephone, Amelia goes back to her room.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM. NIGHT

Amelia sits down on the bed next to Faith.

FAITH

She's going to know he's doing a bad job.

AMELIA

He's drunk.

FAITH

Do you think it's good for Mommy to know that?

Amelia shrugs.

AMELIA

She's coming home a week early.

Faith gasps with excitement and hugs her sister tight.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Cam opens the medicine chest and takes out his enormous bottle of lithium. He stares at it for a long time.

EXT. SCHOOL. DAY

The Fiat screeches up in front of the school. The girls jump out of the car. Before Amelia slams the door:

CAM

Remember, girls. Mommy's coming Friday. Let's make the apartment nice for her.

AMELIA

You have to unpack your boxes.

CAM

(lighting a cigarette)
I'm just saying, we all need to pitch in --

Both girls look bratty and pissed-off.

AMELIA

But they're your boxes...

FAITH

We don't know what to do with
them...

AMELIA

We don't ask you to clean up our
room...

Cam cannot handle the onslaught of attitude.

CAM

Fuck it, forget it. Have a nice
fucking day.

Cam puts the Fiat in gear and zooms off, way too fast. The girls watch him go, stunned and self-conscious, worried that other kids might have heard.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

Cam looks at all the boxes. The place is a disaster. He goes to the window and looks out. It is a beautiful day. Cam sighs.

CUT TO:

THE RECORD PLAYER

Cam drops the needle on Olatunje's Drums of Passion. A heavy rhythmic beat fills the room as he opens up the first box and pulls out a rusted old machete.

INT. APARTMENT. LATER

The girls enter the apartment. They can't believe their eyes. It is spic and span. A large new bookshelf lines the front hall. They jump up and down like crazy.

FAITH/AMELIA

Daddy! Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!

Cam enters from his bedroom. He wears a grimy, oil-stained jumpsuit. The girls throw themselves into his arms.

CAM

Pretty good, right?

FAITH

It's beautiful. We love it!

CAM
Just don't look in my bedroom.

The girls hurry to his bedroom.

INT. CAM'S BEDROOM. MOMENTS LATER

Cam's room looks like a garage. Large industrial metal shelves house paint-thinner, spray paint cans, motor oil, etc. Stacks of mail and magazines cover the desk and there are clothes all over the bed. Amelia points at the bed.

AMELIA
Is that a machete?

FAITH
We'll keep this door closed...

She closes the door.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Spirits are high. Amelia clears the dining room table. Faith washes the dishes and Cam dries and puts the dishes away. They sing a World War II marching song.

ALL THREE
*Hitler! Has only got one
ball...Goering! Has two but very
small...Himmler! Has something
sim'lar...But Josef Goebels has no
balls at all...*

EXT. BUS STATION. NIGHT

Cam and the girls stand in front of the bus station. Cam is trying to untangle some of the massive snarls in Amelia's hair. Maggie gets off a bus. The girls take off, running for her.

Maggie drops her suitcase and drops to her knees and holds them tight. Cam walks toward them, smiling. He holds a bunch of orange gerberas. She accepts them and kisses him on the cheek. She kisses both girls on the head.

He picks up her suitcase and they walk toward the car. The girls skip alongside, holding their mother's hand, happy to be all together.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

The family bustles into the apartment. Maggie stops dead when she sees how cozy and warm it is. She looks at them with amazement. The girls are gleeful.

MAGGIE
Who built these shelves?

AMELIA
Daddy.

Cam looks modest but he is bursting with pride.

CAM
They're just shelves.

EXT. PARK. DAY

Faith and Amelia play on the monkey bars. Cam and Maggie sit on a bench. Maggie looks happy.

MAGGIE
It was hard to come this weekend.
I'm so glad I did. I think this is
just what you needed, Cam! I think
this is going to be a great thing
for us.

He smiles at her and takes her hand. She smiles back at him. They sit holding hands as they watch the girls play.

CUT TO:

UNDOING THE APARTMENT MONTAGE

Cam lays out a bunch of newspaper on the living room floor and goes to work, taking apart an old phone. He walks away from the tools and parts of the disassembled phone and it never moves.

CUT TO:

The girls come in with a large hamper of laundry. They dump it on the sofa and start folding it, but then they run off and it stays where it is.

CUT TO:

The family sits in the living room eating dinner in front of the television.

A large roll of paper towels that is sitting on the coffee table is knocked over and rolls to the floor, leaving a long trail of paper towel. Nobody picks it up.

CUT TO:

Cam lies on the sofa, drinking a beer and watching television. His head rests on the pile of clean laundry. Amelia and Faith roller skate around the room.

CUT TO:

The phone parts have been pushed under the piano bench to make room for Cam's bicycle, which stands upside down as he fixes the brake mechanism. He puts his glass down on top of the piano, in front of a large model ship. The top of the piano is now filled with dirty glasses, beer cans and empty yogurt containers with spoons sticking out of them.

CUT TO:

Cam, smoking a cigarette, sits down in his armchair and starts taping wide silver duct tape over a large tear in the arm.

Pull back on the living room. Nothing has been picked up or put away. It is a disaster.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam sits in his armchair. The TV is on. He is trying to brush the snarls out of Amelia's hair.

AMELIA

Ow! Daddy!

CAM

Sorry.

AMELIA

OW!

CAM

This is what happens when you don't brush your hair for two weeks.

Faith marches out of the kitchen, furious.

FAITH

Daddy, if you're not going to do the dishes, then I'm doing them.

Cam blinks at her. It is an odd threat. He shrugs.

CAM

Okay.

Faith marches into the kitchen. A cupboard opens and slams shut. He turns his attention back to Amelia's hair.

AMELIA

You're hurting me! I'll do it!

She turns and rips the brush from his hand.

CAM

Fine. You do it.

Amelia stomps away to the bedroom. Seconds later Faith marches back to the living room with a filthy, ragged sponge held between two fingers.

FAITH

Where are the sponges?

Cam becomes immediately stern.

CAM

What's wrong with that sponge?

FAITH

It smells!

CAM

Then don't smell it!

FAITH

My hands stink just from touching it!

She sniffs the sponge and gags.

CAM

That's because someone left it soaking in the dishwasher! I keep telling you girls, it needs to be rinsed and squeezed when you're through with it!

FAITH

You brought it from your old apartment! It's probably five years old! It's disgusting!

CAM

We are not the kind of people who throw perfectly useful things away!

FAITH
You won't throw anything away!

CAM
That is a perfectly good sponge
with plenty of life left in it!

FAITH
Then you do the dishes!

She throws the sponge down at his feet. Cam scoops it up.

CAM
Fine! I will! With this sponge!

The downstairs neighbor pounds on the ceiling. Cam angrily pounds back.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Maggie, wearing her coat and holding her suitcase, stares with dismay at the wreckage of the apartment.

CAM
We lost some momentum, but we'll
get it back.
(beat)
I did get a new sponge.
(pointed, to the girls)
Even though I washed the old one
with soap and it smelled fine.

They glare back at him.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

Maggie, wearing yellow rubber gloves and her hair tied back, cleans furiously. Cam and the girls make piles.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Amelia helps her mother make her bed on the sofa. Faith practices her pirouettes.

AMELIA
Faith and I thought of the perfect
job for Daddy. A crepe cart in
Harvard Square. Like they have in
Paris.

Maggie and Cam look at each other, amused.

MAGGIE

You do make the best crepes.

CAM

And I do love standing outside in
January.

Maggie laughs.

FAITH

We're working on the menu.

MAGGIE

I like chocolate and coconut.

FAITH

We have that!

She does a dramatic pirouette. Her parents laugh.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

It is late. Maggie sits up in her bed on the sofa. Cam sits
at the other end of the sofa. The girls have gone to bed.
Cam is feeling sorry for himself.

CAM

...and the building is packed with
single mothers who are always
checking in with each other and
getting together for coffee but do
any of them ever ask how I'm doing?
Do they ever invite me for coffee?
I'm pretty sure they all got
together for wine and cheese two
nights ago.

Maggie has to bite her lip to keep from laughing.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry, it's not funny.

CAM

(smiling)

It is funny. It's pathetic. I'm a
pathetic whiner. Which is probably
why they don't invite me.

MAGGIE

They're leery of men, that's all.
Especially married men with
children.

CAM
I'm not exactly a married man.
(beat)
Am I?

MAGGIE
Well. We're a family.

Cam slides his hand up her leg. She shifts away.

CAM
So is this really how we're going
to do it? You come every weekend
and take up residence on the sofa?

MAGGIE
For now.

CAM
Come on, Maggie. We haven't slept
together since before my breakdown--

He leans forward and kisses her, but after a moment she rolls
off the sofa and moves away from him. He chases after her,
playful, flirting.

MAGGIE
I don't know what will happen, Cam.
I just want to get through this
period. Can't we see how it goes?

As he attempts to unbutton her top:

CAM
And what happens at the end? You
move back in here and what happens
to us? Where do I go?

MAGGIE
I want you to be the person we all
know you can be. It will take
steady, sustained effort. You can
do it, Cam. If you want to do it.

He puts his hand on her breast.

CAM
Sexy, sexy answer.

She laughs at his unrelenting flirtation.

MAGGIE
Honest, honest answer.

CAM
So what is this? Some big test?

MAGGIE
Don't think of it like that. You
hate tests --

CAM
Not if this was on the test...

He kisses her. This time she kisses him back.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY. NIGHT

The girls stand outside the closed door to Cam's bedroom,
listening and whispering to each other.

FAITH
Are they having sex?

AMELIA
I think maybe.

The girls celebrate silently. Then they hear raised voices:

MAGGIE (O.S.)
I'm sorry, Cam. I just can't make
promises right now --

CAM (O.S.)
What a bunch of baloney. You must
think I'm the biggest sucker on the
planet.

The girls scurry into their room as Cam's bedroom door is
ripped open. Cam walks out, pulling his shirt on. He grabs
his coat. Maggie runs after him.

MAGGIE
Are you taking your lithium?

CAM
Oh, shit. Lithium doesn't stop you
from feeling lonely and
unappreciated. Enjoy your sofa.

He exits. The front door slams.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Maggie is back on the couch. Amelia walks up to her. Maggie smiles sadly then lifts the covers. Amelia happily gets under the blankets next to her mother.

AMELIA

When you and Daddy met at WGBH, was he the way he is now?

MAGGIE

(delicately)

In some ways. He was funny. Compassionate. He knew everything about the outdoors. But back then he had a job, which was good for him. He was a terrific lighting designer. But in the end, it was too much pressure... I didn't understand about the manic-depression. Besides, everyone was having nervous breakdowns in the 60s, so I didn't realize what a big deal it was.

AMELIA

You're probably sorry you married him.

MAGGIE

No. Never.

Amelia snuggles in closer.

AMELIA

You know, he's not usually so angry like he just was. We yell at him way more than he yells at us.

This information is not comforting to Maggie.

EXT. STREET. DAY

A cold winter day in a run-down part of Somerville, Massachusetts. The Fiat is parked on the street behind a dented and rusty Plymouth Valiant. The Fiat now has a driver side window taped up with plastic and duct tape.

A MAN leans against the Fiat, arms crossed, as Cam examines the engine of the Valiant. He wears a grimy green parka with a gray three-piece suit poking out underneath. He wears nice leather shoes. A cigarette hangs out of his mouth. His hair is combed.

He shuts the hood.

Amelia and Faith watch him apprehensively from the back seat of the car.

INT. VALIANT. DAY

Amelia wears a parka over white tights. Her snarly hair is pulled back in two barrettes. Faith wears a long wool coat and has her hair neatly combed under a velvet headband.

A large flap of vinyl hangs down between them, revealing the foam underneath.

They look through the window as their father negotiates with the MAN selling the car.

AMELIA
(through window)
There's no floor!

Cam peers through the grimy window. On either side, the floor well is a rusty hole with ragged, rusty edges. He looks up at the girls. They shake their heads. Cam looks at the man.

CAM
I'll give you three hundred and you
deal with the Fiat.

The man nods. Cam reaches for his wallet.

INT. VALIANT. DAY

Cam revs the engine. As the Valiant pulls away, Amelia kneels on the backseat and waves out the back window.

AMELIA
Goodbye, Fiat! Goodbye, Fiat!

Cam honks the horn in rapid succession for a cheerful, triumphant goodbye. They drive out into the street. Faith sits down and opens a "Harper's Bazaar" but Amelia stays kneeling on the seat, looking out the back window. Her eyes fill with tears.

FAITH
Daddy, Amelia's crying.

AMELIA
You always cry.

Faith looks out the window, an angry expression on her face.

FAITH

Not anymore. I vowed never to cry
again.

Cam looks in the rear-view mirror with concern.

CAM

My little Stoic? What's wrong,
darling? Ma petite pamplemousse?

The tears roll down Amelia's face and she can't wipe them
away fast enough.

AMELIA

It's just... What's going to happen
to the Fiat? Nobody's going to
want it.

FAITH

I thought you were crying because
this car sucks.

Amelia shakes her head and says in a small voice:

AMELIA

That car sucked too.

She watches as the Fiat gets smaller and smaller and then
they turn a corner and it's gone.

INT. VALIANT. DAY

The girls lie across the backseat, leaning against either
door, huddled beneath an old army blanket. They wear hats.
Faith has the "Harper's Bazaar" magazine on her chest and
Amelia holds a book called "Turning Your Dream Into A Small
Business".

They are both mesmerized by the sight of the highway rushing
by through the rusty holes in the floor.

EXT. WESTON ESTATE. DAY

The Valiant turns onto a long driveway and drives past an
enormous lawn and a large weeping willow and an unattached
four car garage and parks in the circle in front of the
house, behind a maroon Bentley.

INT. DINING ROOM. DAY

A regal old lady sits at the head of a long mahogany table, a little silver bell by her water glass. She is 92 and of another era, extremely patrician. She wears a long-sleeved black dress, pearls and a blonde wig that looks like hair swirled into a bun. This is GAGA.

A BUTLER brings around a silver bowl of mashed potatoes.

Faith spoons a huge amount onto her plate next to the roast beef and the peas. The butler continues around the table.

GAGA

I propose a game of crazy eights
after lunch.

FAITH

Yeah!

GAGA

We don't say 'yeah,' dear. We say
'yes.'

CAM

Thank you, Gaga. Their mother
keeps fighting that battle.

GAGA

And how is their mother?

CAM

She's well. She's been home every
weekend. But she has finals so she
stayed in New York to study. We're
muddling through without her.

(to the butler)

Tell Betty the roast beef is
perfect.

The butler nods silently and disappears to the kitchen.

GAGA

Do you girls think it's unusual
that your mother is in New York?

AMELIA

She wants to have more career
opportunities.

FAITH

Mommy says women can do anything.

GAGA
 She's quite a "striver," isn't she?

That hangs in the air for the moment.

CAM
 We prefer the word "fighter."

FAITH
 (pointing)
 Is that a painting of Grandma
 Paulie when she was little?

GAGA
 Yes. And it's pronounced
 (very patrician)
 'Paulie.'

FAITH
 Polly.

GAGA
 Paulie.

FAITH
 (trying hard)
 Polly. Polly.

GAGA
 She's not a parrot!

FAITH
 Polly.

Amelia thinks she's got it.

AMELIA
 Polly!

GAGA
 (frustrated)
 Paulie. Pauline.

The little girls are really trying but they are unable to
 hear the distinction.

AMELIA
 Polly.

FAITH
 Polline.

GAGA
 What is the world coming to?

INT. BENTLEY. MOMENTS LATER

Amelia and Faith are scrambling all over it, touching everything. They push every button. They run their hands over the smooth wood. They rest their cheeks against the leather and inhale. Amelia sits in the driver's seat and waves through the windshield at her father, who is outside, looking at the car with apprehension, smoking a cigarette.

INT. LIVING ROOM. MOMENTS LATER

Gaga looks extremely displeased, both hands on her cane. Cam stands across from her, hands in his pockets.

CAM

We live in a rent-controlled apartment.

GAGA

I know that. I pay your rent.

CAM

And we're very grateful --

GAGA

Piffle. It's dirt-cheap.

CAM

The point is...I can't afford to take care of the Bentley. I can't even afford to fill up its gas tank.

GAGA

If you're asking me for gas money --

CAM

I'm not asking for gas money, Gaga.

Cam suddenly becomes nervous, uneasy. This is hard for him.

CAM

The girls are both phenomenal students... they're not being challenged. If you really want to help, I think they would flourish in private school.

Beat. She scowls at him.

GAGA

I don't think that's teaching the girls a very good lesson, do you?

CAM
(hanging his head,
resigned)
I suppose not.

Gaga takes his hand in an attempt to be supportive:

GAGA
We all believe in you, Cameron. We
know it's not too late for you to
amount to something.

INT. VALIANT. NIGHT

They drive home in silence. The girls pout in the back seat.

CAM
Girls, look. I'm sorry we can't
take the Bentley. It just doesn't
make sense. I know it's
disappointing.

They don't respond. Then, in a coldly rational voice:

AMELIA
You should've taken it and then
sold it and bought the crepe cart
and then you could've made lots of
money and we wouldn't be so poor.

CAM
Sweetie, although crepes may be
delicious, they're not exactly the
goldmine you think they are.
Especially during a recession.

AMELIA
Well, then we could've sold the
Bentley and just had some money.

CAM
(sighing)
Gaga would never let me sell that
car.

AMELIA
But she was giving it to you.

CAM
That's not how it works. It's hard
to explain.

Beat.

FAITH

It was our one chance to have something that other people might want. Nobody wants what we have.

They ride on in silence.

EXT. BUS STATION. DAY

Maggie walks out of the station, with Cam and the girls. Cam carries her suitcase. The girls brim over with excitement.

AMELIA

We have a surprise for you.

They can't contain themselves. They run to the Valiant. Maggie slows as she approaches the car. Inside, a DOG is barking like mad and scrambling back and forth over the seats. Cam whistles and when the dog sees him, he starts whining and wagging his tail, scratching at the windows.

FAITH

That's Jock! That's our dog!

AMELIA

Daddy got him for us!

FAITH

Amelia named him!

MAGGIE

Why is he acting like that?

AMELIA

He was abused by his last owner. So any time Daddy leaves him he gets really upset.

FAITH

Because he loves Daddy. Because Daddy saved him.

As Cam puts the suitcase in the trunk:

CAM

We're working on it.

Maggie looks unenthusiastic.

MAGGIE

And this is the new car?

Cam opens the passenger side door for her, with a flourish. Jock streaks out and tears down the sidewalk, going after another dog who is on a leash. Cam races after him.

CAM

Jock! No! Bad dog! Jock!

It is chaos.

EXT. RAYMOND PARK. DAY

Bundled up, the family kicks a soccer ball around. Jock runs between them. Some distance away Kim and Ali watch from the swings. Cam sees them.

CAM

Don't those little girls live in our building?

AMELIA

Yes. But they're really mean.

CAM

(amused)

Mean? They're wearing identical pink parkas. How mean can they be?

(calling)

Hey! Hey!

He waves at them to come over. Hesitant, they do.

EXT. RAYMOND PARK. LATER

Maggie sits on a bench with Faith in her lap. Cam plays a spirited soccer game with all the little kids in the park. The ball comes toward Cam, who is smoking. He throws down his cigarette and dodges a kid, then passes the ball to Kim, then picks up his cigarette again when the ball is gone.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY. NIGHT

The girls both hold onto Jock's leash as they walk toward the apartment. Cam and Maggie follow behind.

CAM

They seem like nice girls. You should have them over sometime.

Both girls scowl at him over their shoulders.

AMELIA
No fucking way.

FAITH
I'd rather die than have people
over to our shithole.

The girls take off running down the hall. Cam looks exhausted. Maggie looks over at him; he shrugs, resigned.

CAM
They can be real little cunts
sometimes.

Maggie laughs in spite of herself. Cam laughs too, but wearily.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

Spring. The early crocuses are coming up.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

The apartment is a disaster. Art materials lie all over the table. Faith plays piano. Amelia is absorbed in a book on the couch. They are both in their nightgowns.

CAM (O.S.)
(calling from the kitchen)
Faithie-bear, could you clean your
stuff off the dining room table?

FAITH
(at the piano)
I'm busy.

Cam emerges from the kitchen, a mixing bowl in his arms. He is whisking something and wearing a utilitarian apron.

CAM
Dinner will be ready soon. It would
be awfully nice to have a place to
sit down and eat it.

FAITH
(absently)
Later.

CAM
Now. Now.

She doesn't respond or even look at him. Cam explodes, HURLING THE BOWL AT THE WALL.

CAM

NOW!

Faith is startled out of her musical reverie. She turns to him in outraged disbelief. They stare at each other for a long time, both steaming mad. Then:

FAITH

(exploding)

You are so MEAN! I am not your SERVANT!

CAM

I'm the goddamn servant! All I do is cook for you and drive you around and tend to your every need...

He watches, furious, as she stomps by him.

CAM

...you treat me like a goddamn maid!

The neighbor downstairs bangs on the ceiling. Amelia hasn't even looked up from her book during these outbursts. Cam turns off the stove. Grabs his overcoat and scarf.

CAM

I've got to get out of here.

Amelia looks up from her book, suddenly urgent, blinking.

AMELIA

We don't have a babysitter.

CAM

You don't need a babysitter.

AMELIA

But it's night-time. We get scared. Faith gets scared.

Cam looks for his keys, wallet.

CAM

You need to toughen up. What is there to be scared of? Wolves? Vampires?

AMELIA

Rapists.

Cam shakes his head and puts on his coat. Jock starts barking and jumping around.

CAM

If a rapist knocks, don't let him in.

AMELIA

What if they force their way in? That's what rapists do!

CAM

Just kick 'em in the balls.

Amelia drops to the ground and grabs Cam's leg as he walks forward.

AMELIA

(panicked)

No, Daddy. Don't go, don't go.

CAM

I don't get it. You never want to be seen with me, you won't have your friends over, you won't let me talk to people -- I can't take it anymore! I need to spend time with adults, not a bunch of bossy brats!

Cam shakes his leg free and leaves the apartment, slamming the door behind him. The dog barks constantly.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

Cam steams down the hall. Punches the elevator button. Waiting at the elevator, he pulls a pack of cigarettes from his pocket.

He looks up. At the end of the hall his daughters stand in their nightgowns and look at him silently, mournfully. The elevator door opens. From behind the door, we can hear the dog whining incessantly.

He gives them the finger. Charges onto the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR. NIGHT

Cam is agitated. He runs his hands through his hair. He punches the wall.

INT. LOBBY. NIGHT

Ruth-Ann waits for the elevator. The door opens to reveal Cam, sitting dejected on the floor. She hesitates.

RUTH-ANN

Going up?

CAM

(defeated)

I guess so.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

Cam walks back down the hall to the apartment. He unlocks the door, but the chain is up. It stops him. He sighs with frustration, then hurls his shoulder into the door, busting the chain and sending the door smashing open.

The girls scream, alarmed. Then they see it's him.

INT. APARTMENT. CONTINUOUS

As he lights a cigarette:

CAM

(worn-down)

You see? That chain is worthless. The only thing it provides is a false sense of security, and that's the last thing you girls need.

Amelia hugs him.

AMELIA

We'll be braver, Daddy, I promise.
Next time we'll be braver.

He nods and heads back toward the kitchen.

CUT TO:

Cam cleans up the bowl and its contents that are spilled all over the wall and floor.

CUT TO:

Cam replaces the chain on the door with a dead-bolt lock.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam lies on the sofa, watching TV, drinking a beer, smoking. He flips through the channels. He finishes the beer and crumples it. It joins four other crumpled cans. He reaches for another.

INT. VALIANT. EVENING

Cam, ruffled and low-energy, sits behind the wheel. The girls sit in the back seat, pouting. As Maggie gets in the car, she sees that Cam has a huge bandage that covers his entire hand and forearm. It looks like a giant q-tip.

MAGGIE

What happened?

CAM

What? Oh. Broke up a dog fight.
Stupid.

(beat)

We had to give Jock away.

EXT. PUBLIC POOL. DAY

The swimming pool is being filled. All the kids from the building stand outside the chain link fence watching with excitement.

INT. VALIANT. DAY

Cam, still low-energy, waits in the car. Maggie opens the door. The bandages on his hand are gone.

MAGGIE

The girls didn't want to come?

CAM

It got old.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

Maggie carries her suitcase over to the sofa in the living room. She surveys the messy room, which now has a mini-trampoline in the middle of the rug. She stares at the mini-trampoline, incredulous. Faith runs in.

FAITH

Look what we found in the trash!

Faith happily starts jumping up and down on it, doing splits in the air.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Cam stands at the open fridge, staring into it, uninspired. Amelia and Faith, wearing bathing suits, charge into the kitchen full of energy. Amelia grabs bread, peanut butter, jam and milk. Faith hops up on the counter and pulls down two glasses, two plates. Amelia slaps together two sandwiches and Faith pours two glasses of milk. The girls leave the kitchen, each gingerly carrying a plate and a very full glass of milk. Cam still stares into the fridge.

EXT. TRAIN STATION. DAY

Cam waits in the car double-parked. He is driving a red Toyota station wagon with one gray door. Maggie is confused as she gets into the car.

MAGGIE

What happened to the Valiant?

CAM

Didn't I tell you? It caught on fire.

EXT. MUNICIPAL POOL. DAY

The swimming pool is being drained. Amelia, Faith, Kim, Ali and Thurgood stand outside the chain link fence with their bicycles, watching sadly. After a few moments, they hop on their bikes and pedal away.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Cam sits in his red armchair, watching TV, smoking. He is unshaven and unkempt. He wears tube socks, a red smoking jacket and tight tennis shorts. Amelia marches in and tapes a sign on the TV screen that reads "SMOKING SUCKS AND THEN YOU DIE!" Faith tapes one underneath with a picture of a big black lung that says: "DEAD SMOKER'S ACTUAL LUNG!"

Cam stares blankly at the signs taped to the television. He does not stop smoking. Then:

CAM

I'm depressed.

Amelia sits down on the floor and starts tying her sneakers.

AMELIA

Of course you are. You don't work. Your family gives you just barely enough money to live on, you sleep on a pile of garbage and you annoy people.

CAM

You left out my hemorrhoids.

FAITH

(to Amelia)

Where are you going?

AMELIA

Out. I'm meeting Kim and Ali.

FAITH

Can I come?

AMELIA

(half-hearted)

I guess.

CAM

Can I come?

AMELIA/FAITH

(outraged)

No! God! We're going to hang out with our friends!

CAM

How come you never invite your friends over here?

FAITH

To this shithole?

CAM

Stop saying that.

FAITH

Daddy, you can't hang around with kids. It's weird.

AMELIA

We need to have our own lives. And you need your own life --

CAM

How am I supposed to have my own life when you won't let me *do* anything --

They leave, slamming the door.

INT. HALLWAY. MOMENTS LATER

Amelia and Faith wait by the elevator. Cam opens the apartment door and stands at the end of the hall, looking at them mournfully. They are both furious. They look away. They look back. He is still staring at them. They exchange a look. They are pained by his misery. Finally, they relent:

AMELIA

Fine. We're hanging out at the picnic tables.

The elevator doors open. The girls get on.

EXT. CONCRETE PARK. DAY

Kim, Ali and Thurgood sit at the metal picnic tables. Faith and Amelia are across from them. Amelia has her Tarot cards and she is doing a Tarot reading.

AMELIA

The Death card. But Death can actually signify positive change...

Cam stands at the end of the table, watching, hands in the pockets of his tennis shorts, a glum look on his face. Just as he lights a cigarette, a light rain starts to fall.

CAM

Fuck me.

Amelia starts gathering her Tarot cards. The kids look disappointed.

AMELIA

(to Kim)

Can we finish this at your apartment?

KIM

Our parents don't want us to have anyone over. We just got a new sectional.

Amelia looks at Thurgood who shakes his head.

THURGOOD

My older brother is studying for law school -- he freaks out if there's kid noise.

CAM

You're all welcome to come over to our house...

Faith and Amelia look at each other, furious. They both glare at him.

AMELIA

Cam, can we speak to you for a minute?

Faith and Amelia pull him aside, away from the other kids. Cam looks uneasy.

AMELIA

I am about to lose my shit. We said you could come hang out with us. We did not say you could invite people into the apartment.

CAM

But I think it could be fun --

AMELIA

No. Not fun. Humiliating.

FAITH

Do we need to spell it out for you?

CAM

But I'll make tea for everybody. And cinnamon toast. We've got lots of board games --

AMELIA

(hissing)

We don't want people to see how we live!

CAM

(exploding)

Big deal how we live! It's not your fault! Tell them your Dad's manic-depressive or bi-polar or whatever they're calling it these days! Don't not have friends because of me!

The girls are thrown by this outburst. Cam slumps.

CAM

Fuck it. Forget it. Never mind.

He turns and walks back to the building, defeated. Faith and Amelia look at each other, considering.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY. DAY

Amelia and Faith stand outside their apartment with Thurgood, Kim and Ali. Amelia takes her keys from around her neck.

AMELIA

I'm warning you. You've never seen anything like this.

THURGOOD

I've been to messy houses before.

AMELIA

Not like this.

(whispering)

Run and close Daddy's door.

Faith nods and gets in position. Amelia opens the door. Faith darts in.

INT. APARTMENT - CAM'S BEDROOM. DAY

Cam sits at his desk. A radio has been pulled apart and he is soldering a circuit board. His room looks like a bomb exploded.

Faith pokes her head in the door.

FAITH

Good. You're still dressed. We brought some friends over.

Cam blinks, surprised.

CAM

Really?

Faith smiles and nods and closes the door.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

Amelia and Faith stand in the middle of the squalor with Thurgood, Kim and Ali, who seem stunned by the mess.

KIM
Why do you have so much stuff?

FAITH
(with authority)
Our Dad is totally Polar-Bear.

AMELIA
(to Faith, correcting)
Bi-polar.
(to the rest, explaining)
Manic-depressive.

THURGOOD
I have an uncle with that. He also
lives like a pig.

KIM
Hey! This is cool!

Kim happily bounces on the mini-trampoline in the middle of all the squalor.

CUT TO:

The children fill the living room:

Faith plays the piano and sings along with the Andrew Sisters record that's playing.

Amelia and Ali play Roulette.

Thurgood sits cross-legged on the mini-trampoline, bouncing gently and staring at the album cover of "Guys and Dolls."

Kim examines an old wooden cane. She pulls the handle and a sword comes out. She is totally amazed.

Cam emerges from the kitchen with a teapot and a plate of cinnamon toast points. He serves them all toast and refills their teacups.

Cam has never seemed happier.

CAM
Would anyone like to learn how to
make chocolate truffles from
scratch?

THURGOOD
Me!

He leaps to his feet and follows Cam into the kitchen.

EXT. HILLSIDE. DAY

Cam comes into view, striding up the hill, whacking at the tall grasses with his machete. Behind him, the children begin to appear; they march behind him, fanning out on either side, talking and laughing: Amelia, Faith, Kim, Ali, Thurgood, and three other kids from school.

EXT. WOODS. LATER

The gang of children spreads out, searching the ground for mushrooms and playing.

CUT TO:

The children sit on a fallen tree trunk, watching, as Cam demonstrates on Amelia how to twist someone's arm behind their back. Amelia grabs his arm and does it to him.

CUT TO:

The kids are crammed into the Toyota. The boys lie down in the way back like logs. The engine turns over twice and starts. The car is weighed down and drags in the back as Cam drives slowly down the dirt road.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Amelia watches as Maggie frosts a birthday cake. She starts to pipe "Happy Birthday Faith" in white icing on the top.

AMELIA

I don't think I'm black.

MAGGIE

Of course you're black.

AMELIA

But I look white.

MAGGIE

Sweetie, you're black.

AMELIA

Nobody thinks I'm black. When I tell them.

MAGGIE

Amelia, I am black. Your mother is black. So you're black.

Maggie runs out of room on the cake, halfway through "Faith."

MAGGIE

Damn it!

She throws down the pastry bag. Amelia feels guilty.

AMELIA

You know, you and Daddy could go out to dinner some time. We don't need a babysitter.

MAGGIE

You don't?

Amelia shakes her head.

AMELIA

We used to get scared, but we're not scared anymore.

Maggie puts her hand on Amelia's head and looks at her.

MAGGIE

You've gotten so old.

AMELIA

(smiling)

If it makes you feel better, I'll tell people I'm black. Even if people think I'm delusional.

EXT. STREET. DUSK

Cam and Maggie walk to a restaurant. They are both nicely dressed, wearing scarves and overcoats.

MAGGIE

I think the last time we were at Legal Seafood, Faith pulled shrimp scampi all over my silk blouse.

CAM

You were so sad.

MAGGIE

It was my best shirt.

CAM

That was the same dinner where she trundled across the room and punched me right in the nuts.

MAGGIE
(laughing)
You were so sad.

He nods, laughs.

MAGGIE
Amelia told me she doesn't think
she's black.

CAM
That's ridiculous. Her mother's
black, she's black.

She smiles at him with real gratitude. She links her arm
through his.

MAGGIE
The girls seem to be in a really
good place.

CAM
No kidding. Amelia beat up the
class bully last week. Kicked him
so hard in the knee she put him on
crutches.

MAGGIE
Wow.

CAM
I felt quite proud.

MAGGIE
You seem good too, Cam.

CAM
So do you. Well whaddaya know.

MAGGIE
I'll be happy when I get a job and
I'm back in Cambridge. But I've
done really well in grad school.
Thanks for making it possible.

Maggie smiles at Cam. He pulls her closer.

CAM
Stop sleeping on the sofa. Let's
sleep in a bed together.

Maggie laughs but doesn't pull away.

MAGGIE

Cam, I can't go in your room.

CAM

Why not?

MAGGIE

It's beyond belief. You have three bicycles in there.

Cam looks flabbergasted.

CAM

That's your reason?

MAGGIE

Yes! There are cans of paint thinner -- and the last time I went in there I got motor oil on my pants. I mean it's... it's ridiculous.

CAM

Then I'll clean it up.

Maggie laughs, teasing him.

MAGGIE

That would be nice. It would make it more inviting.

CAM

You never said anything about this before.

MAGGIE

I'm done nagging you to clean your room, you're a grown man and it's your room.

CAM

And my room is not inviting to you?

MAGGIE

(amused)

No! Not to me or anybody else. Probably not even to you.

Cam laughs, good-naturedly.

CAM

Definitely not to me. I'm cleaning it up.

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)
 It'll take me two days tops.
 You'll see. It'll be a thing of
 beauty.

They walk on.

INT. FINANCIAL FIRM. DAY

Maggie sits in a waiting room, professionally dressed, with a conservative hairstyle; she is an entirely different version of herself. Across from her sit three handsome 24-year-old white men. Suits, ties, polished shoes. They are talking, laughing.

YOUNG MAN 1
 ...of course I know Jim Quincy! We
 were in the Delphic together at
 Harvard...

RECEPTIONIST
 Maggie Stuart?

Maggie stands. The young men look at her like she's a curiosity.

INT. PLUSH OFFICE. DAY

Maggie sits across from three fifty-year-old versions of the young men in the waiting room.

MAGGIE
 ...I've actually been offered a
 futures job at E.F. Hutton in New
 York, but Howard and Company is
 where I want to be.

BUSINESSMAN 1
 E.F. Hutton, that's terrific. Why
 come back to Boston?

MAGGIE
 My children are here --

Beat. Their eyes glaze over. Maggie instantly regrets mentioning her children.

BUSINESSMAN 1
 (politely)
 And how old are your children?

MAGGIE
 Twelve and ten. Very independent.

BUSINESSMAN 1

(smiling)

Thank you so much. We'll let you know.

The men stand up, signalling the end of the meeting.

INT. FINANCIAL FIRM. DAY

As Maggie walks past three young men in their nice suits and ties, she understands her prospects.

EXT. STREET. DAY

Maggie waits on a corner in downtown Boston. She looks cold and unhappy. She looks up the street and sees the red Toyota wildly backing down the one-way street.irate drivers honk at Cam. He stops in front of her. She gets into the car.

INT. TOYOTA. CONTINUOUS

CAM

How'd the interview go?

Maggie puts on an upbeat front.

MAGGIE

Really well I think! I know a lot of people are vying for this position, but I think I'm very qualified.

CAM

They'd be lucky to have you.

She smiles at him gratefully.

INT. CAM'S BEDROOM. DAY

Cam stands in the middle of his filthy bedroom, pulling excess books off the shelf and putting them in a box. He comes across The Collected Poems of Robert Frost. He opens the book. He sits down on the edge of the bed, reading.

Amelia calls from the kitchen:

AMELIA (O.S.)

Daddy, do I add more butter for each omelette?

As Cam turns the page:

CAM
(yelling)
Half a tablespoon and make sure you
let it get nut-brown.

Faith steps into the doorway. She is festooned with gold and pink ribbons wrapped around her arms and upper torso.

FAITH
Did you start my costume?

CAM
...What costume?

FAITH
You know. My Flamenco dancer
costume for the talent show.
You're making me a skirt.

Beat.

CAM
Right.

FAITH
(concerned)
Daddy, it's tomorrow.

CAM
(lamely)
Right. I know.

FAITH
I knew it! You're not making it.

CAM
I am making it. I said I would
make it and I will.

FAITH
Can you even sew?

CAM
Hey, I was in the army.

FAITH
I want it to be all sparkly and
ruffly.

CAM
You got it, buggins.

Faith claps her hands and excitedly breaks into her stomping Flamenco dance. The neighbor below bangs on the ceiling.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam opens a closet door and hauls the sewing machine off the top shelf.

CUT TO:

Dining room table. Cam sits in front of the sewing machine, a cigarette dangling from his lips. He studies Faith's Flamenco doll.

CAM

I just have to make this skirt, two hundred times bigger.

He draws a pattern on the pink satin fabric.

CUT TO:

He cuts out the pattern, smoking all the while. A huge amount of ash drops on the fabric. He doesn't notice.

CUT TO:

He tries to thread the needle. His hand shakes like crazy.

CUT TO:

He pushes the fabric through the sewing machine. This way. That way. The table is covered with dirty coffee cups. His ashtray overflows with cigarette butts. He screws up a seam.

CAM

Goddamnit! I can't do it! I can't fucking do it!

He yanks the fabric out of the sewing machine, throws it on the floor, jumps on it, picks it up, throws it at the wall, it flutters to the floor. This only fuels his rage. He spastically grabs it, crosses to the open window and hurls out the unfinished skirt. He pushes his hair back, looks around wild-eyed and crazy.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT

He wades through a bush to retrieve the skirt.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam has returned to working on the skirt. He sews a ruffle on. He turns to the flamenco doll.

CAM

Your skirt is a joke compared to what this skirt is going to look like.

Cam downs the last of a cup of coffee, cracks open a beer and takes a swig.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Cam stands at the open window, drinking a beer. He picks up the phone and dials.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

(sleepily)
...hello?

CAM

(into phone)
Guess what I did?

INTERCUT WITH MAGGIE

She turns on her bedside lamp and sits up, trying to orient herself.

MAGGIE

Cam...it's almost four in the morning.

Cam examines the skirt with pride.

CAM

I just made your daughter an incredible skirt. Sparkles, ruffles...It's probably my greatest achievement since I rebuilt the engine to my Dad's Studebaker in college.

MAGGIE

That's terrific, Cam. You should probably get some sleep.

CAM

I don't want to sleep.

MAGGIE

But you must be tired --

CAM

But I'm not tired.

MAGGIE

Cam, you know how important sleep is to maintaining your stability --

CAM

Come on, Maggie! Name me one other father in America who is up right now sewing their daughter a flamenco skirt!

MAGGIE

Cam... You are taking your lithium...aren't you?

Beat.

CAM

Actually, I haven't taken my lithium since you left.

Maggie hangs her head.

CAM

I find that if I take small, steady sips of beer throughout the day, it keeps me on an even keel...

He takes a long, loud, defiant sip of his beer.

CAM

Ahhh...

Maggie looks stricken.

INT. APARTMENT. MORNING

Cam sits on the floor surrounded by bits of fabric.

Faith manages to squeeze into the very beautiful and way too tight skirt. It is so tight all the way down, she can barely move her legs. She finally gets it on and stares down at it. She wiggles to make the ruffle move. Then:

FAITH

I look like a flamenco mermaid!

With tiny little steps, she gets over to Cam, throws her arms around his neck and says dramatically:

FAITH
It's the most glorious skirt I've
ever known!

EXT. STATION. SAME DAY

Maggie walks out of the train station. Cam is double-parked. He wears his battered corduroy jacket and an Oxford shirt. Maggie gets in the car, closes the door.

INT. TOYOTA STATION WAGON. LATER

They sit in silence.

CAM
I'm not manic.

MAGGIE
But you could be.

CAM
I was excited. People are allowed
to get excited when they can't sew
worth a damn and they manage to
pull off a flamenco skirt that gets
their daughter the second-most
applause at the talent show.

INT. RESTAURANT. DAY

A tony Boston restaurant. The lunch crowd is well-dressed. Cam and Maggie cross to sit down at the bar. Cam is angry.

MAGGIE
You promised to take your lithium.

CAM
And you promised to love me for
better or for worse.

The MAITRE D' hurries over to them.

MAITRE D'
Excuse me, sir. But our dress code
requires you to wear a tie...

Without missing a beat, Cam pulls an untied bowtie out of his jacket pocket. As he ties it without looking:

CAM

Let me say one thing about lithium -
 - no one even knows if it works.
 I'm just a guinea pig. And you
 never would've known I'd stopped
 taking it if I hadn't opened my
 fucking mouth. I'm an idiot. A
 fucking self-destructive fuckhead.

His bowtie is perfectly tied. The Maitre D' nods and quickly
 retreats.

MAGGIE

Cam, you said you would take
 responsibility for your condition --

CAM

The way you've taken responsibility
 for your children?

MAGGIE

That's not fair. You know how hard
 this was for me.

CAM

I know, I know, it was hard to come
 every weekend...

MAGGIE

No! It wasn't hard to come, it
 wasn't hard to come...

Tears suddenly roll down Maggie's face. Cam is startled.

MAGGIE

...it was hard to leave. Every
 weekend. And have people think I
 was the worst mother in the world
 because I wanted my children to
 have a better life and I didn't see
 any other way to get it. You're
 from an old blue-blood family.
 When you live in squalor, it's
 "eccentric." When black people
 live in squalor, believe me, no one
 is charmed.

Cam is quiet for a moment as that sinks in.

CAM

If it's any consolation, no one
 seems charmed by my squalor either.

(beat)

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)

I haven't made much headway on my bedroom.

Maggie looks at him and nods, resigned. Then:

MAGGIE

I'm going to take the E.F. Hutton job. In New York. It's my only offer.

CAM

New York? I can't keep doing this all by myself --

She puts her hand on his arm.

MAGGIE

I'm not asking you to. You've done an amazing job. It's time for me to take the girls.

Cam reacts.

CAM

To New York?

MAGGIE

You can come visit us. They can come visit you...

CAM

But what about me and you? What about us?

Maggie looks away. She is anguished.

MAGGIE

I just can't do it.

Cam seethes.

CAM

I knew it. I knew it.

MAGGIE

There's so much I love about you, Cam. And I don't want to give up on you. But I just... I just can't.

CAM

So were you even trying to get a job here? Or was this your plan all along?

MAGGIE

No! My plan was to come home and maybe I'd be with you and maybe I wouldn't, but we'd still be a family. But none of that matters. These Boston firms don't want me.

CAM

Why don't they want you?

She looks at him for a beat.

MAGGIE

Because Boston is a small town, Cam. They want people like you.

This hits Cam like a ton of bricks. His face hardens.

CAM

You want a job in Boston? I'll get you a job in Boston!

Cam stands and storms out of the restaurant.

INT. J.M STUART -- DICK'S OFFICE. DAY

DICK, 40, sits behind a large oak desk with a view onto the financial district. He wears a suit and tie. He is tall, handsome and athletic. The walls are hung with pictures of sailboats. Cam sits down across from him. Cam is agitated.

DICK

You look well, Cam. Everything good down your way?

CAM

Not really, Dickie. No.

DICK

Sorry to hear that --

CAM

As you know, Maggie's just gotten her MBA.

DICK

I heard. Good for her.

CAM

I was wondering why there isn't a place for her here. It is a family firm, after all.

Dick sighs and looks sorry.

DICK

Well, Cam, I wish there were. But we just don't have the position at the moment.

CAM

So you're telling me that when Dickie Jr and...the other one... graduate from college, they won't land here?

DICK

Sumner. That's my other son --

CAM

God damn it, Dickie! I know how it works! You create the position!

DICK

I have to say, Cam, this is why we never invite you to the Christmas party.

CAM

I don't give a shit about your Christmas party. I want you to hire my wife. She works fifty thousand times harder than any of you!

Dick gets up from the desk.

DICK

I'm afraid I have to ask you to leave.

CAM

Do you have any idea how hard it is? Do you have any idea what sacrifices she's made? She needs a job here! In Boston!

Cam picks up a model sailboat and hurls it at the wall. He picks up a chair and throws it at the bookcase, which comes down. Dick tackles him to the floor.

CUT TO:

Two SECURITY OFFICERS escort Cam out. Dick puts his hand on Cam's shoulder.

DICK
Just so you know, I won't mention
this to Gaga.

Cam nods.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Maggie lies on her sofa bed, awake. The front door opens. She sits up. Cam walks into the living room. He has bloody gauze wrapped around his hand. His suit is dirty and torn. He and Maggie look at each other.

CAM
Girls asleep?

Maggie nods. Cam exits.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM. NIGHT

Cam stands looking at himself in the mirror. Maggie comes to the doorway of the bathroom.

CAM
Faith show you the skirt?

Maggie nods. Cam takes out his bottle of lithium. He empties three large pills into his hand and swallows them.

CAM
I couldn't get you a job in Boston.

He walks past her into --

INT. CAM'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

-- His pit of a bedroom. He sits down on his bed among the piles of clothes, lights a cigarette, looks around at his room, the manifestation of failure.

CAM
I need to rest.

Maggie gently closes the door.

EXT. POND. DAY

Maggie, Amelia and Faith are sitting on the sandy beach, looking out at the water. Cam stands a little apart, skipping rocks across the surface of the pond.

AMELIA
Isn't New York really expensive?
Where are we going to live?

MAGGIE
I'll find an apartment in a very
safe neighborhood.

FAITH
Where will we go to school?

MAGGIE
I'll figure that out.

AMELIA
We can't ride bikes in New York.

MAGGIE
You can ride your bikes when you
come here.

AMELIA
What about Daddy? Who's going to
take care of him?

MAGGIE
Daddy will take care of himself.

CAM
I'll go to dinner parties, movies,
I'll have escapades.

Faith and Amelia look disapproving.

AMELIA
I think escapades are a bad idea.
You could end up in jail.

FAITH
If we're not here, he'll drink too
much and stop taking care of
himself.

CAM
That's not true --

AMELIA
He'll be lonely without us.

CAM
Well, that's true.

MAGGIE

Taking care of you alone has been a lot of pressure for your father.

AMELIA

How? We get to school...

FAITH

...he drives us anywhere we want to go...

AMELIA

...we've seen more r-rated movies than any of our friends...

FAITH

...plus he makes us french toast for dinner.

MAGGIE

He needs a break.

AMELIA

When I had the flu, he cut up strawberries and kiwis for me. And he arranged them on the plate like little flowers.

Maggie looks at Cam. He shrugs modestly.

CAM

I did do that.

MAGGIE

Daddy will visit and you'll visit him. New York is an incredible city. You'll like it. I promise.

AMELIA

(shaking her head)

What a crock.

Maggie is speechless. Cam nods at her.

CAM

Get used to it.

EXT. CONCRETE PARK. DAY

A hibachi engulfed in flame. PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Cam grills shishkebabs by the metal picnic tables. Though it is a chilly day, he wears denim overalls, a striped denim workshirt and a denim cap. The girls play chinese jumprope with Kim and Ali at the other end of the park. Maggie sits at the picnic table, near Cam, watching her daughters play with their friends.

Thurgood runs into the park area and stops in front of Cam.

THURGOOD

You've been working on the railroad.

CAM

All the live-long day.

Thurgood laughs and runs off to join the other kids. Maggie smiles. Cam stares into the fire.

CAM

I can't visit you in New York. Too much speed and noise and all the people out on the streets all night. Knocks me off track.

MAGGIE

I was just thinking about that.

CAM

I do understand why you don't want to live with me. I'm a much better father than I was a husband.

MAGGIE

You know what Faith said to me last night? She said: "You don't lose your temper like Daddy and you keep the apartment nice, but the thing about Daddy is he's always around. He's always there."

CAM

I thought that irritated them.

He reaches through the flames and turns the shishkebabs with long metal tongs.

MAGGIE

I have a plan. I take this job and earn some money. The girls stay here with you. They keep riding their bikes. They stay with their friends.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (cont'd)

But we get them into a good private school so at least they're being challenged. I insist on that.

CAM

Maggie, are you sure?

MAGGIE

If they come to New York they'll be shut up like house pets in some dark apartment and I'll be working till eight every night. I don't want that.

Maggie looks over at the girls. Her heart breaks.

MAGGIE

They're my babies.

Maggie buries her face in her hands. Cam holds out his arms.

ANGLE ON THE CHINESE JUMPROPE

Amelia is jumping. Kim looks over Amelia's shoulder.

KIM

I thought your parents were divorced.

FAITH

(sighing)

No, they're married.

KIM

But your Mom doesn't live with you?

AMELIA

No. Except on the weekends.

THURGOOD

So are they married on the weekends?

AMELIA

Sort of, not really...

Amelia turns to look at her parents at the other end of the park. Maggie has collapsed into Cam's arms and she is sobbing. Cam is sobbing too. He still holds the metal tongs. Amelia watches them for a long time. Then:

AMELIA

It's hard to explain.

EXT. NEW ENGLAND. DAY

Autumn. The leaves have turned orange and red. The Toyota station wagon drives up Route 89.

INT. TOYOTA. DAY

Cam drives the car on the highway, smoking. A CAT is draped over Cam's shoulders while he drives. The girls are lying in the backseat under a blanket. Amelia yawns and stirs.

AMELIA

Daddy? How much longer?

CAM

(pleasantly surprised)

You're awake. I thought you might sleep the whole way.

He quickly stabs out his cigarette. Faith squirms awake.

CAM

We just crossed over into Vermont.
We're making great time.

Cam pats the cat that sleeps on his shoulders.

FAITH

When is Mommy coming?

AMELIA

She's flying from New York on Thursday. Daddy will pick her up in Burlington.

FAITH

Why does she have to come on Thanksgiving?

CAM

The markets are open Wednesday, so Mommy has to work.

It's quiet for a moment.

AMELIA

Do you know that we once threatened one of Mommy's boyfriends with a baseball bat?

Cam lights up; he looks absolutely delighted.

CAM
 You rapsCALLIONS. That sounds like
 one of my stories.

FAITH
 Both of us.

CAM
 Which boyfriend?

AMELIA
 Eddie. You never met him. He
 didn't last long.

CAM
 I'll bet. Poor Mommy.

AMELIA
 Why poor Mommy?

CAM
 Because it's hard to conduct a
 romance when your children are
 threatening your lover with
 baseball bats.

AMELIA/FAITH
 Ew! Lover!

CAM
 Lover, swain, beau, whatever.

AMELIA
 How come you always feel so sorry
 for Mommy?

Cam sighs and looks sad.

CAM
 Because Mommy tries hard. She
 wanted things to go differently.

AMELIA
 Me too.

FAITH
 Me too.

Cam smiles.

CAM
 Me three.

The girls laugh. Then Faith looks at her sister and rolls her eyes with irritation.

FAITH

Daddy, Amelia's about to cry.

Cam looks in the rearview at Amelia who is crying.

CAM

Sweetie... what is it?

AMELIA

I just... I worry about you.

CAM

Please, darling. Don't worry about me. I'll be fine.

Then, starting in an absurdly deep voice, Cam breaks into "Annie Laurie." He sings in a full Scottish brogue, his voice getting very high and squeaky and forlorn on the chorus.

CAM

*Maxwellton Braes are bonnie
Where early lies the dew
Twas there that Annie Laurie
Gave me her Promise True
Gave me her promise true...
And ne'er forgot shall be...
For Bonnie Annie Laurie, I'd lay me
doon and dee...*

The girls join in, also in Scottish brogue. As they sing, a series of cuts:

-- Cam teaches the girls to sail in a Herreshoff 12-footer, a beautiful sailboat. He encourages Amelia to take the tiller, which she does reluctantly at first, but then she enjoys it.

-- Cam, Faith and Amelia fly a kite on the beach in the winter. They are bundled up against the cold and the wind. They are the only people out there.

-- Cam proudly leads Amelia, Faith, Thurgood, Kim and Ali on a tour through the grand old mansion on Beacon Hill. The children are blown away by the splendor. As they file past Mr. Fabrini on their way out, thanking him, he nods curtly and gives them all a very tight smile. He is clearly extremely annoyed by Cam and can't wait to get rid of him. Cam grins back at him, victorious.

BACK TO:

INT. TOYOTA. DAY

They sing together.

ALL THREE

*Like dew on the gowan lying
Is the tread of her fairy feet
And like winds in summer sighing
Her voice is low and sweet
Her voice is low and sweet...
(high and squeaky)
She's all the world to me...
And for bonnie Annie Laurie, I'd
lay me doon and dee...
For bonnie Annie Laurie, I'd lay me
doon and dee...*

They speed down the highway.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHADY HILL SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELDS. DAY

A field hockey game. Shady Hill plays Nobles. AMELIA, hair pulled back in a tidy french braid, sprints down the field with the ball. Her team thunders toward the opponents' goal. A loud thwack as Amelia passes to a team-mate who shoots and scores.

A title card reads: **two years later**

SIDELINES

The girls on the SHS bench leap to their feet. Cam stands with FAITH who is wearing an SHS field hockey uniform and an SHS sweatshirt. Cam is the only parent watching the game.

CAM

Nice assist, Amelia! Great shot,
Amelia's friend!

FAITH

Her name is Lexi.

CAM

Great shot, Lexi!

He drops to one knee and snaps a few pictures of the triumphant girls as they walk back to midfield.

CUT TO:

The SHS girls celebrate their victory. Amelia is laughing with her friends. Faith is talking to a group of girls her age. Cam is putting a new roll of film in his camera. His girls come running over to him as the rest of the girls head toward the gym.

AMELIA

Daddy, Annie invited me for a sleepover, can I go? Please?

FAITH

And Fifi asked if I wanted to go with her family to the movies.

CAM

But I finally convinced Eliot Perkins to let me borrow his boat. I thought we could have a picnic on the river.

AMELIA

It's too late to go out on a boat.

CAM

It's four o'clock.

AMELIA

I really want to go to Annie's.

CAM

Maybe Annie wants to take a ride down the Charles River.

AMELIA

Daddy...

CAM

I'm serious. She lives in Boston. How many times has she gotten a ride home on a boat? I can take you right to Beacon Hill.

Now they are the only ones left on the field.

AMELIA

She takes the subway.

CAM

(to Faith)

What about Fifi, do you think she'd like to have a picnic on the water?

FAITH

Her mom's picking her up in twenty minutes. Please can I go?

CAM

We may never get to borrow this boat again and you will never find a more beautiful boat or a more perfect day to go out on the river.

They are unmoved. Cam shakes his head, giving up.

CAM

Okay, well, I guess I'll tell the Charles river to go fuck itself.

Both girls laugh at his ridiculous reaction.

AMELIA

Well, I have heard that the Charles River is a real asshole.

Cam chuckles at that.

AMELIA

Thanks, Daddy.

He nods. They both hug him. He hugs them back.

FAITH

Bye, Daddy.

CAM

Oh, darlings, I'm so proud of you. So's Mommy.

AMELIA

Why?

CAM

We just are.

They back away from him, waving, then turn and head across the field. He stands, watching them go. They glance back over their shoulders, smile and wave again quickly. He waves mournfully. They quicken their pace. Then he calls out:

CAM

I love you!

They stop dead. Then they whirl around and steam toward him. They are enraged.

AMELIA
Don't do that.

CAM
Do what?

AMELIA
Watch us walk away.

CAM
I'm just watching you.

FAITH
Please don't.

CAM
Why?

FAITH
You make us feel bad.

CAM
I don't want you to feel bad.

FAITH
(stamping her foot)
Yes, you do! That's why you stand
there looking all pathetic!

CAM
I'm just watching you walk across
the field, for chrissake! I think
I'm allowed!

The girls sigh, frustrated. Amelia steps toward him, looking
him dead in the eye. She is stern, deliberate.

AMELIA
Daddy. We are going to walk away
now. And we are not turning
around. We are not looking back.

CAM
I'm not asking you too!

They shake their heads.

FAITH
(angry)
We love you, Daddy.

AMELIA
(furious)
We love you. Goodbye.

The girls turn and link arms. They huddle close together and walk away from him as quickly as they can. As they go, Faith glances at her sister with concern. She puts her hand over Amelia's and squeezes it.

FAITH

Don't cry. Don't cry.

Tears stream down Amelia's face.

AMELIA

(shakes her head)

Can't help it.

ANGLE ON CAM

Hands in his pockets, he watches them walk away.

Pressed together, in lock-step, they cross the playing fields. Autumn leaves skitter around their feet.

They keep walking. They do not turn around. They do not look back.

Then, just before they recede from view, they stop and turn. They face him from this great distance. He brightens and holds up his hand. They each hold up a hand. He makes a fist in the air as if to say *courage, onward*. The girls do the same. The three of them stand like that for a moment. Then Amelia and Faith turn and run in the opposite direction, disappearing into the gymnasium.

Cam looks up at the sky. He smiles to himself. He pulls a tam o'shanter with a red pompom from his pocket and puts it on his head. He lights a cigarette and walks toward the river.

FADE OUT.