

KATIE's CHOICE

By Deborah Amelon

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LAST RIGHTS is inspired by the true story of Karen, a sixteen-year-old girl who chose to die.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. "LOUNGE" - DAY

Two worn, comfy leatherette lounge chairs are lined up against a wall. KATIE CARRIGAN, a charmed and charming fourteen-year-old Midwestern lassie sits in one staring up at a TV or maybe into nothingness. She looks bored, as if she is waiting.

Suddenly a rugged young man of eighteen, DANIEL, looking like he might have just returned from a hiking trip, enters the scene. He sees her. Not having seen her before, he is pleasantly surprised. She sees him, reacts shyly, then coolly. He starts to walk past her to another chair as the scene opens up. She looks away with that certain aloofness with which most females are born. He catches it and returns to sit in the chair next to her. She likes that. As if to pick her up:

DANIEL

So, you come here often?

She breaks into laughter. So does he. We can't figure out why until the camera pulls back to reveal more leatherette chairs. People relax in them. A NURSE walks by. We are not in any lounge. There people are hooked up on life-saving blood cleansing machines. We are in a dialysis unit.

DANIEL

Hi, I'm Daniel. I just moved here from Wisconsin. This is my new unit.

KATIE

Katie. I'm a regular. I get so bored. You'd think with all these machines in here one could be a Pac Man.

DANIEL

Think I'll petition for a Space Invaders. How long have you been on it?

KATIE

Four months.
(he reacts)
You?

DANIEL

On and off for eight years.

(she reacts)

I'm back on it until the infection
heals from the CAPD.

KATIE

They didn't tell me about CAPD.

He rolls up his sleeve.

DANIEL

The Bag. You carry it around attached
to your belly and change it four times
a day. It's based on the Advance
Diaper Theory.

KATIE

Sounds better than sitting here.

DANIEL

This is real romantic talk, isn't it?

KATIE

There's no need to pick me up or
anything. We're gonna be here awhile.

The nurse, LYNNE SHAEFER, a rounded, comfy woman in her
forties, walks over with a smile.

LYNNE

Hello, Daniel. Welcome to Illinois.
Isn't this nice, Katie, you have a new
friend.

Katie smirks shyly. Daniel smiles back.

LEGEND: Spring, 1983

INT. DANCE ROOM - DAY

Grouped at the barre are eight fourteen-year-old girls. They
center around Katie as they obediently perform their routine
to the classical yet conventional strains of Bach's Fourth
Piano Concerto.

Katie rolls her eyes to her best friend, ANNIE, then looks at
the clock. The back door is opened out onto a beautiful
spring day. The music tape is next to the door.

MS. GILVERSHAM, a tight-lipped but competent busy woman of
thirty-eight, struts around the room with her baton,
correcting arms, chins, and beat legs.

Katie gets her chin raised an inch by Gilversham's stick. Just what she wanted. Gilversham starts toward the other girls.

A beat later, Katie again looks at the clock. She starts doing crazy, awkward things with the steps, disobeying all the rules of graceful classical ballet. Gilversham is mortified. She rushes over to correct Katie with the stick. While she struggles to perfect Katie, a plucky nine-year-old boy, SCOTTY, jumps out of hiding from behind the door to the outside.

Fumbling and nervous, he pops a tape into the machine. He figures out how to turn off the classical music and then turns on this new tape of a Madonna favorite. The chorus of girls immediately begins a wildly choreographed modern ballet number led by Katie.

Gilversham is horrified. She turns to the tape machine just in time to see Scotty disappear. She watches the girls bop enthusiastically around her for just a moment then retreats disgustedly to the machine to turn it off. The girls moan.

EXT. A JOLIET MAIN STREET - DAY

Joliet stands proud as one of the small-big towns that grows from a horizon glowing with the great wheatfields of the Midwest. Many main streets crisscross a magical, bustling town center. Katie, Scotty and Annie walk victoriously down one.

KATIE

The woman just doesn't know great art.

ANNIE

She wouldn't even look at us.

SCOTTY

Maybe we should go back to the easier things, like putting bubble bath in the mall square fountain.

KATIE

That dance will be in the recital. This town has to get into the eighties!

Her energy suddenly spent, she sits down on a building stoop. Scotty and Annie look at each other. They've come to expect this.

ANNIE

Is it the fever?

KATIE

That only comes at night. I'm like anybody else. I just like to sit down more.

Katie shrugs. They wait it out with her. Katie suddenly smiles.

KATIE

But it was funny, huh?

She imitates. The way her face just dropped. They all laugh. A real coup.

EXT. CARRIGAN HOME - DAY

Set into a street that has housed and properly nurtured four generations, the Carrigan home is an original. Copies may have been built of this homey Dutch Colonial, but none can appear as sturdy. Ae LeBaron sits in the driveway. Katie and Scotty part ways with Annie as they head up their driveway. Annie continues down the street to her own home.

INT. CARRIGAN LIVING ROOM - DAY

PATRICK passionately kisses his wife PEGGY in the living room. He has his tie loosened. She is also fortyish, stylish. They make a good couple, ordered, well-meaning, sacrificing, loving, imperfect. Katie and Scotty enter. Peggy breaks away, giving a stern smile.

PATRICK

Hi, kids.

KATIE

Hi.

PEGGY

Your dance teacher just called.

KATIE

Really? How is she?

PEGGY

She told me that you played a trick on her.

PATRICK

A trick?

KATIE

What trick?

She settles into the sofa.

PEGGY

Changing the music in the tape machine
for your dance.

KATIE

How could I change it? I was dancing.
The music came on by accident and we
were all inspired.

PEGGY

Scotty changed it.

KATIE

Impossible. He doesn't even know how
to use a tape machine.

He shoots her a look.

PEGGY

She saw him, Katie. Just because
we're adults, kiddo, doesn't make us
stupid.

Peggy looks especially stern. Patrick muffles a chuckle.

PATRICK

Looks like you owe Ms. Gilversham an
apology.

KATIE

Ms. Gilversham is a prune.

PATRICK

Impossible. She's only thirty-five.
You don't dry into a prune until
you're forty. Ask around.

Katie smiles at him.

PEGGY

Patrick!

PATRICK

Call her up. Say you won't do it
again.

KATIE

We just wanted to show her the number
we want to do in the spring recital.
It could have been a victorious moment
for all.

PEGGY

Her phone number is in the kitchen on
the wall, next to the phone.

As Katie gets up, she seems to be as peppy as at the beginning
of her dance class.

KATIE

(sarcastically)

Why don't we just ask her over for
dinner. You seem to like her so much.

PATRICK

Go on.

KATIE

Maybe we should adopt her.

PEGGY

You go in, too, Scotty.

KATIE

She can live in the maid's room.

PEGGY

We don't have a maid.

KATIE

She can be the maid.

As Scotty and Katie disappear into the kitchen.

PEGGY

And no dinner tonight!

INT. KITCHEN

As Katie and Scott enter.

KATIE

They always think that's such torture.
Groan.

KATIE AND SCOTT

Oh, no, Mom. Please, Dad, please.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Parents react. Groan throughout.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Between groans:

KATIE

Let's store up.

They fill their backpacks up with peanut butter and jelly. Katie finds the phone number near the receiver. She dials bravely.

KATIE

(too sweetly)

Hello, Ms. Gilversham.

Scotty reacts to the saccharine sweetness.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Katie and Scotty sit up on the only flat part of the roof eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches by flashlight. They can scan the neighborhood from above.

KATIE

I love it up here. I feel so much a part of life.

SCOTTY

It was the best day of my life when you first showed me your secret spot. Mom and Dad will never know, will they?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Together, Patrick and Peggy prepare the evening's repast.

PATRICK

Where are the kids?

Peggy checks the cupboard for the peanut butter.

PEGGY

Up on the roof eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Katie carefully watches any action from above. Katie looks at her hands disapprovingly, then pulls on her ring. It won't come off.

KATIE
Shoot. They're fat again. I hate it
when they get like this.

SCOTTY
Mom thinks if you dialyzed more--

KATIE
I hate that machine.

She turns away.

SCOTTY
I'm sorry, Katie.

KATIE
Oh, don't worry about it. I'm on to
bigger things. I heard a rumor today.
Roz is coming home this weekend.

SCOTTY
With a stupid guy, of course.

KATIE
Number 392. I hope this one doesn't
take three showers a day like the last
one.

Katie spots something down at a neighbor's.

KATIE
(continuing)
Shhh. Sarah Williams had a date
tonight. She's coming home.

ANGLE STREET

A 17-year-old neighbor girl, SARAH, is helped out of a new VW
by her date, MIKE. They move to the door. Young love.

INT. CARRIGAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Patrick is wooing his wife. Not-so-young love but, in many
ways, much more wonderful.

PATRICK
The old 'no dinner' worked again.
She's becoming soft on him. She loves his romancing.

PEGGY

Don't try to soft talk me. You know I'm mad at you for leaving the disciplining to me. You always do that.

PATRICK

Kids need balance. Somehow we give them both. A firm foundation with a glint in its eye. We're perfect together.

She wants him.

PEGGY

You want to skip dinner, too?

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Katie is intently watching Sarah kiss her date goodnight. Scotty seems jealous.

SCOTTY

When you get a boyfriend are you going to leave me?

KATIE

Nah, you can hang out with us. We'll look like the Thompson Twins.

Sarah goes on in the house. Her date leaves. Katie gets up and scrambles down the slope of the roof to its edge. It is dangerous.

SCOTTY

What are you doing?

Katie leans over the side. Scotty is alarmed.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peggy and Patrick enter. They are sexy with each other.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Katie hangs over the edge. She studies one of the windows. And, just for a moment, she seems dizzy.

SCOTTY

Katie, please come back here.

KATIE

I knew it. You could've seen Sarah making out from Roz's room. From my room I would have missed it.

SCOTTY

Please, give me your hand. Let's go inside.

Katie is oblivious to the danger. There are greater issues at stake here.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Patrick has undone Peggy's blouse. She kisses him back with passion.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Katie slips. She almost falls over the edge.

SCOTTY

Katie!

She recovers herself just in time.

KATIE

What are you worried about? I've seen Indiana Jones five times.

She scrambles up to him, loving the adventure. Scotty is wide-eyed and out of breath. Katie is revitalized.

KATIE

(continuing)

There's no doubt about it now. We have to make the move.

SCOTTY

Roz will kill us.

KATIE

She's had it her whole life. These things are meant to be handed down. You'll get it after I go to college.

SCOTTY

Can we go in now?

She shrugs Yes, still surveying her territory, the neighborhood.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Katie slips into bed as if fearful of the night. She tries to fall asleep.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peggy gets out of bed, goes to the door, exits.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Peggy looks in on Katie. Katie is asleep and seems okay. Peggy exits. A beat later, a bead of sweat appears on Katie's brow. Another bead.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peggy crawls into bed.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Katie sweats profusely.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Chirpy, happy junior high-schoolers rush to their lockers and to each other in between classes. Katie stands in front of hers, staring at its contents. Annie comes up beside her and hurriedly opens her own. She looks at Katie.

ANNIE

What's the matter with you? You weren't even listening to Haines.

KATIE

Who needs Algebra anyways.

ANNIE

It was like you weren't there. Are you in love or something?

KATIE

I did meet a guy.

ANNIE

Oh, yeah?

KATIE

But my parents said I have to wait
until I'm sixteen to date.
(almost sarcastically)
We have so much in common. We dialyze
together.

ANNIE

Well, it all has to start somewhere.

A beat. Kastie is worried.

KATIE

The fever was worse last night.

Katie lets a book drop out of her locker without apparently
trying to catch it. Her reactions are slow. Annie looks
alarmed at her as they both reach down to pick up the book.

ANNIE

They still don't know where it comes
from?

KATIE

They seem to know so much, then they
sometimes know nothing at all.

EXT. CARRIGAN HOME - DAY

A brand-new Camaro pulls up in the driveway. A new day.

INT. "KATIE'S ROOM" - DAY

Katie sits anxiously in a room that we will learn in a minute
is not hers.

SCOTTY (O.S.)

Katie! Roz is home! What do we do?

He runs in, breathless, excited.

EXT. CARRIGAN HOME - DAY

ROZ, 19, a pretty sorority girl who works at being seen rather
than seeing others, gracefully gets out of the car. She
greet's her mother, Peggy.

INT. "KATIE'S ROOM" - DAY

Katie and Scotty watch their sister. She reacts to Roz's latest flame.

KATIE

Not bad, Roz. But the socks have to go.

EXT. CARRIGAN HOME - DAY

Roz's latest, JEFF, now laden down with luggage, shakes Mrs. Carrigan's hand. He wears the very-preppie alligator-speckled socks. They look like polka dots. Roz sweeps into the house.

INT. "KATIE'S ROOM" - DAY

Katie steers Scotty out of the room.

KATIE

Why don't we step out the back way?
She'll need some time to get used to it.

EXT. CARRIGAN BACKYARD - DAY

Katie and Scotty sneak out of the house and sit on the back porch.

KATIE

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3,...2...

Roz SCREAMS from inside the house.

KATIE

One.

ROZ (O.S.)

Katie Carrigan, I hate you!

KATIE

She'll get over it... in sixty years.

Roz runs out of the house.

ROZ

I'm going to kill you.

She starts to chase Katie. Katie escapes her grasp and runs.

KATIE

This isn't going to impress your new
boyfriend very much.

Peggy appears on the porch.

PEGGY

What's going on?

Nonchalantly, like these arguments occur frequently:

SCOTTY

Katie moved all her things into Roz's
room and put Roz's things in her room.
I tried to stop her.
(sure, he did)

PEGGY

Oh, dear.

Roz attacks Katie, pulls her hair.

PEGGY

Girls! Katie, be careful! Roslyn,
leave her alone.

ROZ

You let her get away with too much!

Katie skillfully unleashes herself from Roz.

Roz chases Katie around a neat backyard, a family nest
complete with barbecue and pool. They play cat and mouse
around the yard but mostly they argue.

Jeff comes up, stands behind Scotty and Peggy. Roz and Katie
seem oblivious to them.

ROZ

Move your junk out now. I was born
first.

KATIE

That's not my fault!

PEGGY

Stop this!

ROZ

Being an older sister to you is tough.
I deserve something.

KATIE

But you're away at school!

ROZ

Where am I supposed to sleep tonight?

Peggy starts to come after them.

PEGGY

Girls! Let's talk about this inside.

KATIE

I made up my bed for you with your lavender daisy sheets. Wasn't that nice of me?

Roz storms toward her mother. Katie touches her head, as if dizzy and balancing herself.

ROZ

Mom, do--

She trips on a chaise lounge and nearly goes flying into the pool. Everyone gasps, but she recovers.

ROZ

I hate you, Katie!

KATIE

I think I have a case here. I'm taking it to a higher court. Mom?

But all Mom does is point sternly toward the house. Katie obediently trudges inside. She stops to shake Jeff's hand.

KATIE

How do you do? I'm Roz's lovely sister, Katie. I'm sure she's told you all about me.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Katie and Roz walk the pathway between their bedrooms carrying bundles of their own belongings to their respective rooms. Scotty sits in the middle, watching. Roz is still angry. At one point, Katie winces and touches her forehead. Roz and Scotty don't notice.

KATIE

Okay, so I lost this time. I'll find a way around it.

ROZ

You'd do anything to make me look stupid. Now was not the time to pull a stunt like this.

KATIE

You overreacted.

ROZ

I really like this guy, Kate. Now he probably won't want to see me again.

KATIE

He's not for you anyway. Did you see him put his elbows on the table at dinner?

ROZ

I like him... His family owns the largest Chevrolet dealership in Chicago.

KATIE

So what are you going to do? Sell cars?

Scotty laughs. Roz dumps a pillow on his head.

KATIE

You're too impulsive. You fall in love on first dates.

ROZ

Your eyes look puffy. Aren't you sleeping?

KATIE

Don't try to change the subject. You should start with a new guy and take your time.

ROZ

You haven't even gone out on a first date. What makes you think you know anything?

KATIE

I watch your mistakes very carefully.

Roz has finished taking her things out of Katie's room. She walks into her own room and slams the door, shutting them out.

KATIE

I did her a favor. She'll see.

INT. DANCE CLASS - DAY

The girls do their classical routine with Mrs. Gilversham studying them. As usual, they look to Katie for leadership.

INT. CARRIGAN'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Carrigan's is the kind of place you could take both your lover and your grandmother on their respective birthdays. Warm, friendly, romantic, earthy, woodsy. Polished relics from the farming past that once fed the land the establishment now sits on -- an ox cart, tools, a washboard -- decorate the softly lit room.

Patrick stands talking with a patron who is enjoying a coffee. The place is packed. Katie walks in. He pats the patron on the shoulder and comes over to Katie, joining her at the bar. She climbs up on the stool. The bartender, CHARLES, nods to her.

CHARLES

The regular?

KATIE

(nodding)

Two cherries this time, please. I need 'em.

He smiles at her. Patrick kisses her.

PATRICK

So how's my Ginger Rogers?

KATIE

Terrible. Ol' prune Gilversham won't put my dance in the recital. She won't even watch it.

PATRICK

Well, you know what to do.

KATIE

What?

PATRICK

You don't? I thought you were just like me when I was a kid. I'd have a solution to any problem.

KATIE

Okay, Carrigan. What would you do?

He thinks.

PATRICK

Well, let's see. If I was fourteen again -- I'd tell her the dance was lousy. There's no point in her seeing it anyway.

KATIE

It's not lousy!

PATRICK

Of course not! But you tell her that and she'll want to see it. She'll want to make it better. You take just a couple of her suggestions and wham! You suddenly think it's great. You gotta let people keep their pride. She'll put it in the recital.

KATIE

How do you know?

PATRICK

I know human nature. I run a successful restaurant, don't I? Let's drink to Ms. Gilversham.

Charles has put a Coke in front of Patrick and a Shirley Temple with two cherries in front of Katie. Patrick and Katie clink glasses and drink up. Like father, like daughter. He's proud of her.

INT. CARRIGAN'S FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Scotty and Katie watch a TV program. Katie doesn't seem very interested. Peggy walks in.

PEGGY

Have you done your homework?

Yes GRUNTS from both Scotty and Katie.

PEGGY

Your counselor called me today.

KATIE

You keep getting calls about me. I'm real popular.

SCOTTY

Sshh. Can you wait for a commercial?

He is ignored.

PEGGY

(to Katie)

Can you be serious for a moment? She says your teachers have been complaining that you haven't been paying attention.

SCOTTY

There. Now there's a commercial. You can talk.

KATIE

Einstein never paid attention either. He nearly flunked third grade. He was bored.

PEGGY

Do you think you're Einstein?

KATIE

I don't know. Let's check into it.

She gets up to leave the room

KATIE

Don't worry so much about me, Mom. You'll grow warts.

Peggy follows her out.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

As Katie climbs the stairs for the bathroom, Patrick comes out of the den.

PEGGY

Something's wrong.

Patrick watches her disappear upstairs.

PATRICK

She's at that age. Roz went through it.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Katie sleeps soundly.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lights out. Seemingly asleep.

PATRICK
Peggy?

PEGGY
Yeah?

PATRICK
How much is she really hurting? She
hides it so much.

PEGGY
I don't know. I really don't know.

INT. DIALYSIS UNIT - DAY

Katie and Daniel are being dialyzed.

DANIEL
I hiked down the Grand Canyon once.

KATIE
You don't have to impress me.

DANIEL
I'm not trying to. It's just a fact.
You ever been to the Grand Canyon?

Katie seems preoccupied.

DANIEL
Hello, anybody there?

KATIE
Ah, no.

DANIEL
(to the nurse Lynne)
Hey, you better turn up Katie's
machine. Her head stopped working.

Lynne Shaefer comes over.

KATIE
Cut it out. My head's fine. I was
thinking about something else.

DANIEL
I bore you that much?

LYNNE

What is it?

KATIE

I didn't know if I should say anything. I thought it might be bad luck.

DANIEL

Well, now you have to tell us.

KATIE

(a jubilant secret)

Last night was the first night I didn't have the fever.

LYNNE

Oh, that's wonderful!

DANIEL

Hey, that's great. If you stop having them you can get a transplant.

KATIE

Yeah, I know.

LYNNE

You should be happy.

KATIE

I didn't know about a transplant. I just really liked not having the fever.

DANIEL

Don't be scared. I lived through two.

KATIE

I said you don't have to impress me.

Lynne smiles warmly at them both.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

She sleeps soundly.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Peggy makes breakfast. Katie walks in. She smiles sunshine. Peggy hugs her.

INT. DANCE CLASS - DAY

Katie leads her dance class in the jazzy routine she choreographed. We think for a second that they are doing their steps in secret, as before. But the camera turns to see Ms. Gilversham watching very carefully. The routine ends. Katie and the girls wait for the verdict. Gilversham comes onto the floor and starts correcting and polishing their moves. Katie smiles. Her dad might be right.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Katie and Scotty watch again as neighbor Sarah kisses her date. The same seen with her before, Mike. Sarah pushes him gently away.

KATIE

Ol' Sarah is taking it slow with this one. Roz should be here taking notes.

Katie starts to laugh.

SCOTTY

What's wrong?

KATIE

I'm just happy.

They look to see Sarah pulling her date back and kissing him. Then she lets go of him and goes inside the house.

KATIE

Awright, Sarah! Keep the dude in line.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It's a three-member family meal. Katie, Scotty and Mom. Katie and Scotty have finished everything else on their plates but the broccoli - Katie stares into hers. Scotty picks at his.

PEGGY

Scotty, eat your broccoli.

SCOTTY

It's hard eating it without the sauce.

KATIE

Just because I can't have it doesn't mean he can't. He's a growing boy.

Peggy goes in the kitchen. Katie grabs Scotty's water and gulps it down.

SCOTTY

Katie! You're not supposed to drink so much.

She sets down the empty glass in front of him.

KATIE

Enjoyed your water, didn't you?

Peggy comes out with a saucepan. She covers Scotty's broccoli with a cream sauce. With a glance at Katie she exits. Scotty finds he can't enjoy his broccoli.

SCOTTY

You want some?

Katie stuffs her face with her own barren broccoli. There's his answer.

KATIE

It's been two weeks. Just like that, the fever is gone. Can you figure that one out, Scotty?

SCOTTY

Nope.

KATIE

Neither can anyone else.

INT. WYNDYM'S OFFICE - DAY

Scholarly, the walls are lined with degree plaques, a resident here, a specialist there. A long road has been traveled to be able to sit behind this desk. Patrick, Peggy, and Roz are assembled in the office.

WYNDYM

I've asked you all to come here because what is happening and is going to happen to Katie is a family matter. It's going to touch each of you in a very personal, emotional, and perhaps physical way. We must be prepared and it is best if you can make decisions as a family.

PEGGY

You're talking about the transplant, aren't you?

WYNDYM

Now that the fever is gone, we can go ahead.

PEGGY

Shouldn't Katie be here?

WYNDYM

This is something we have to discuss without Katie. I'll talk to her myself later... We favor transplanting kidneys from the living. With those we have a ninety-percent success rate or better, especially with relatives who have the best antigen match. The cadaver match-ups have a wait time of between one week to a year, and it only has a seventy percent success rate.

PEGGY

I want to give mine.

PATRICK

No, it should be me.

WYNDYM

We can't make that decision now. First we have to do a work-up on you one at a time to find out who is the best match.

ROZ

Don't parents have... I mean, she has their genes. I would think they would be best.

WYNDYM

Not necessarily. Siblings often have a four-antigen match whereas parents only have a two. Your brother is too young. A donor must be over eighteen.

Roz looks away.

PATRICK

I don't want you involving Roz. Katie has a healthy dad here. I want to be tested first.

PEGGY

And a healthy mom
(to Patrick)
We can't afford to have you take that
time off work, honey.

PATRICK

We'll find a way. It's for our
daughter.

PEGGY

I brought her into this world.

PATRICK

It's my responsibility, too. Dr.
Wyndym, what if we're both tested at
the same time?

WYNDYM

It's highly unusual.

ROZ

This is a highly unusual family.

WYNDYM

We still should do a work-up on
Roslyn. You are our best chance.

Close on Roz's face. It is too frightening to contemplate.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - DAY

Katie is on the phone practically whispering.

KATIE

Well, what did you tell them?... Hey,
remember it's happening to me. Are
you going to use that tone again? I
thought we were buddies.

We assume she is talking to a peer.

INT. WYNDYM OFFICE - DAY

Wyndym is on the phone.

WYNDYM

I told them transplants weren't
exactly something bought at the drug
store. We have to find one that
matches your tissue.

INTERCUT as necessary:

KATIE

You mean one of them. My mom or dad?

WYNDYM

Don't pry into this one, Katie. You won't be able to control the outcome and you might get hurt or hurt someone else. Leave it to medicine.

The sound of someone in house coming up the stairs. She freezes.

KATIE

Thanks, Richard. I'll call you later, okay? They're home. I gotta go.
Thanks, bye.

She hangs up.

He hangs up, shaking his head wistfully. What other patient could or would talk to him like that?

Patrick comes into her room.

PATRICK

Hi.

KATIE

How did it go?

PATRICK

We can handle it.

KATIE

I read in the information they gave me that thousands of transplants have been done with great success.

PATRICK

Yes.

KATIE

It's not so bad, is it?

PATRICK

No.

KATIE

That's what we have to do.

PATRICK

Everything will be fine.

Katie suddenly looks at her father in fear.

KATIE

Oh, daddy...

She's the little girl we haven't seen yet. She folds into her father's protective arms. But they can't protect her from this. For the first time we see her cry.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CARRIGAN KITCHEN NIGHT

The Carrigan kids have been trained to bring their own plates in after dinner. Katie, Scotty and Roz enter to put their plates in the sink.

SCOTTY

It's Roz's night.

ROZ

I eat here twice a month. I shouldn't be on the wash schedule.

Just as Mom enters.

KATIE

I think this was your first dinner with us that you didn't have a guy glued on your arm. See, it wasn't difficult.

ROZ

Shut up.

She runs out of the kitchen.

PEGGY

Katie, sometimes you go too far.

She follows Roz out.

PEGGY (O.S.)

Scotty, you do the dishes. Katie, you rest.

KATIE

What's going on around here?
Everyone's so uptight.

SCOTTY

I'm not.

KATIE

Good. Move over. I'm not an invalid.

He steps aside as she starts to do the dishes.

INT. ROZ'S ROOM - NIGHT

Roz lies face down on her lavender flowered comforter. Peggy enters, shuts the door.

PEGGY

Roz...

Roz turns. She's not sad, she's angry.

ROZ

I don't know why it has to be me. I didn't bring her into this world. I didn't give her the disease. I'm young too. I gotta live my life on one kidney? I have to go through a dangerous surgery. For her! She hates me anyway. She's never going to appreciate it. She's never even going to say thank you.

Peggy tries to comfort her.

PEGGY

Don't say that. Don't say anything until you know. Until we all know who it's going to be.

ROZ

Why can't she just stay on dialysis?

PEGGY

Dialysis can only clean ten percent of the blood. Transplant are the preferred treatment for children because their growing bodies can more easily adapt to a new kidney and live a full life.

A beat.

ROZ

I'm sorry, Mom. It's just that I don't know how I'm responsible. Like it's my fault.

PEGGY

It's nobody's fault. And nobody's forcing you. If you're this much against it then you won't go in for testing.

Roz starts to cry.

ROZ
But I'm her best chance.

Peggy hugs her, rocks her.

PEGGY
We don't know that.

ROZ
(a whisper)
I'm so scared.

PEGGY
I know, honey. I know.

They hold onto each other.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Scotty sits outside, eavesdropping with a glass. He has heard every word.

INT. SCOTTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Scotty lies awake in bed, concentrating on the ceiling. Finally he gets up, exits.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Patrick and Peggy are fast asleep. Scotty walks in, shakes them awake.

SCOTTY
Mom. Dad.

Ever ready for an emergency, Dad turns on the light. Peggy looks at the clock: 2:20.

PATRICK
What's the matter?

SCOTTY
Nobody around here ever tells me anything. I don't know why you didn't ask me.

PEGGY
What are you talking about?

SCOTTY
I want Katie to have my kidney.

PEGGY

Oh, sweetheart. Come here. How did you know?

He crawls up on the bed between them, probably something he hasn't done for a long time.

SCOTTY

I heard you and Roz.

PEGGY

How many times have I told you to stop eavesdropping?

SCOTTY

Millions. But she was screaming. I couldn't help it.

PATRICK

Scotty, you are too young to give your kidney to Katie. You have to be 18.

He is crushed.

SCOTTY

Who says?

PATRICK

Doctors, lawyers.

SCOTTY

They don't know what they're talking about.

PEGGY

Let's get some sleep, honey. You want to sleep in here?

SCOTTY

No.

He gets out of bed.

PATRICK

Sure?

Scotty nods as he goes toward the door. Patrick turns off the light. Scotty looks out into the lonely, dark hallway. He comes back into his parents' bed, climbs in.

SCOTTY

Well, if it makes you feel better.

Mom and Dad gladly make room for him.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Peggy and a new doctor, DR. SIMPSON, stand in a secluded section of the corridor, near the windows. They look over papers and charts. Peggy has a medical book she is referring to.

PEGGY

And how about the electrolyte study?

He's a little surprised at her knowledge.

SIMPSON

It's fine. She'll be able to tolerate the surgery.

PEGGY

Now, these punch biopsies... it says here that sometimes they only reach the diseased part. It may be only a small portion, and the rest of the kidney is healthy. That would mean only that portion has to be removed, right?

SIMPSON

Yes, that would be right. But that is not your daughter's case. Her kidneys have approached total uselessness.

Peggy goes limp, looks down at all her now useless research.

PEGGY

There has to be better for her than what's on these pages.

SIMPSON

I'm sorry. I know how much you wanted a second opinion to be more hopeful.

A beat.

PEGGY

(shaking)

Thank you, Dr. Simpson, for coming in to examine Katie.

INT. CARRIGAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Katie waits at the bar. It's jolting to see such a young girl sitting up at the bar, but then it is her father's restaurant and it is mid-morning. WAITERS are setting up for lunch.

They look up at Katie warmly, as if they know what she is going through.

KATIE

I can't have the regular. Water is fine.

She is handed water. Patrick enters, surprised to see her.

PATRICK

Why aren't you at school?

KATIE

This is more important than school.

PATRICK

What's wrong, honey?

KATIE

From now on, I want to be told everything. This is happening to me. Whose kidney will I have?

PATRICK

It's a medical decision. We don't decide.

KATIE

Whose?

He takes her hand and leads her to the end of the bar. Quietly, it hurts him.

PATRICK

It will not be me. I didn't even pass the physical exam. I have high blood pressure. I didn't know it.

KATIE

Oh, Dad, does it hurt?

PATRICK

Listen to you, worried about your old daddy...

He ruffles her hair.

PATRICK

I wanted it to be me. I really wanted it to be me.

A beat.

KATIE

What will it mean--
(forming her words)

PATRICK

Yes?

KATIE

To Mom. I don't want her to hurt.

PATRICK

It will be painful. And it will take
a few months to recover from. And
Katie... Roz is being tested, too.

A beat as Katie takes this in.

KATIE

Maybe I should go on the waiting list
for a living will kidney.

PATRICK

Would you donate your kidney to me or
to Mom or to Roz if we needed it?

KATIE

Of course.

PATRICK

Discussion closed.

INT. CLINIC - DAY

Outside the X-ray room Peggy walks in a white hospital gown
as a nurse, JOHNNY, announces through a small window to the
room.

JOHNNY

Smile, Ms. Carrigan. You're on Candid
Camera.

EXT. CARRIGAN HOUSE - DAY

Katie stands in the doorway and watches Scotty play catch with
his friend, TED. Ted is obviously more athletic than Scotty.
She's thinking hard. After a moment she jerks up and goes
into the house.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Katie enters and goes straight to the phone. She finds a number listed next to it and dials.

INT. LAB #2 - DAY

Roz is having her blood drawn. She is queasy. Another nurse, BETSY, tries to distract her.

BETSY

Now, where do we send the results?

ROZ

University Medical Center, Warrington
Avenue, Joliet, Illinois.

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - DAY

Off to one side is the living room, where the girls congregate. Off to another are the stairs leading to their rooms. Roz enters and rubs her arm as if to make it feel better. NELL, a fellow sorority girl, is rushing past on her way to class. She stops when she sees Roz.

NELL

What are you doing here? We got chem now.

ROZ

I'm a little tired.

Nell pulls a piece of paper out of her notebook.

NELL

I was going to bring this to class.
Your sister called.

ROZ

Katie?

NELL

She gave me a weird message. I tried to write it down so it made sense.

(referring to note)

She said she was sorry. She didn't know. Scotty just told her. And to tell you you don't have to. But to say thank you. What's this mean?

ROZ

I'll tell you about it someday, Nell.
Thanks.

Roz takes the piece of paper. Nell nods and runs out. Roz stands looking at the message. Her eyes get watery. There is some sweetness in that little bratty sister of hers.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Katie is crying softly. Then loudly, but letting all she has out.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY

Roz and Peggy pick at their food, waiting expectantly. Wyndym enters. He finds them, sits down with them.

WYNDYM

(to Roz)

You were the best antigen match, as
suspected.

Roz stares down into her food. No response. But Peggy is stung.

WYNDYM

But there is still another test that
has to be done. An angiogram. It
lets us know the placement of your
kidney and the amount of blood vessels
connecting it.

Peggy is clearly wracked with anguish.

PEGGY

I don't want her to take the test.

ROZ

What?

Even Wyndym is surprised at her outburst.

PEGGY

Schedule me for the angiogram.

ROZ

Mom... Dr. Wyndym, what do you think?

WYNDYM

Your kidney is a full match. Meaning it has a 95% chance of succeeding. Your mother has a 90%, as a half match.

PEGGY

It's not a far jump from ninety to ninety-five percent.

ROZ

I don't know, Mom. I don't know what to do.

PEGGY

I could not feel right about you living life on one kidney. You have a full life ahead of you. You will have to live it with added risks. I cannot have you giving up that fullness for something I should have done.

Peggy hugs Roz.

INT. DANCE CLASS - DAY

The dance class performs the routine choreographed by Katie. Katie is dancing but is fighting to finish. It is painful for her. At one point she stops. Everyone looks at her in fright. But she breathes heavily and keeps on going. The number ends. Ms. Gilversham looks approvingly on it. For the first time the girls are hopeful.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Katie and Annie make their usual trek down Main Street. Annie eats ice cream. Katie tries not to look.

KATIE

She said yes! I can't believe it!
So she isn't a prune.

ANNIE

I knew she'd put it in the recital.
It's a good dance. The Dance of the Future.

Annie licks it vigorously. Katie has to say something.

KATIE

After the transplant I'll be able to eat that again.

Annie tosses it away. Katie looks after it longingly.

ANNIE

I'm sick of ice cream anyway.

(beat)

Why aren't you telling people about it?

KATIE

Huh? Uh. I don't know... Maybe 'cause I don't want to look at their worried faces. And, anyway, people are going to know what they're going to know. I don't have to say anything.

ANNIE

Yeah, that's true.

They keep walking.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Roz's three-year-old Firebird races to Joliet. Inside is the tear-streaked face of Roz. She's on her way to:

INT. PATIENT WAITING ROOM - DAY

Peggy waits to be prepared for the angiogram. She wears the standard white hospital gown. The door opens. Roz, now wearing a similar white hospital gown, enters.

Peggy is stunned, then proud and overwhelmed. She takes her daughter's hand.

INT. CARRIGAN HOME (HALLWAY) - NIGHT

Katie knocks very carefully on Roz's door. Waiting a moment, but not receiving an answer, Katie enters.

INT. ROZ'S ROOM

Roz lies in bed under the covers. Katie comes in.

KATIE

I just wanted to say... thanks.

ROZ
It hurt like hell.

KATIE
I'm sorry.

ROZ
It's not your fault.

Scotty runs in.

SCOTTY
The doctor called.

The girls are expectant. He lets them wait. He stands there.

KATIE
Yeah. Okay, so...

ROZ
Do you know or don't you? Don't play
around with this.

SCOTTY
I've been left out of this whole
thing.

KATIE
So now you're going to torture us.
Mom!

Katie starts to run out but both Peggy and Patrick appear in
the doorway. Scotty blurts it out.

SCOTTY
It's Mom!

PEGGY
Oh. Thank you very much, Scotty.

PATRICK
(to Roz)
They found too many arteries
surrounding your kidney. It will be
too hard to get at.

PEGGY
They found mine much more suitable.

KATIE
Oh, Mom...

She reaches out to Mom. Roz begins to cry, tears of relief, tears of guilt. Patrick holds her. Katie finds she has to lighten up the moment.

KATIE (Cont'd)

Mom, we're going to be twins!

She makes them smile.

ROZ

Katie... I did... I would have given it up.

KATIE

I know.

ROZ

You still want the room?

KATIE

You want it.

ROZ

It's yours.

Katie beams at her sister.

INT. OPERATING ROOM HALLWAY - DAY

Two operating rooms have been set up on either side of this hallway. Peggy is in one; Katie is in the other. We know who is in which as a nurse exits one and enters another. In her hands was an object packed in ice and covered in white. We aren't quite sure we saw it -- such a small, seemingly insignificant piece of life.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Patrick and Scotty play checkers.

SCOTTY

When will she be better?

PATRICK

Both Katie and your mom will not be feeling well for awhile. We have to help them out.

SCOTTY

(the big man)

Okay.

A young man enters the room to wait also. He sits at the other end. It is Daniel. Then a young junior PASTOR enters. Patrick stands, shakes his hand.

PATRICK

Thank you for coming, Pastor Wilkins.

WILKINS

Certainly. Hello, Patrick. Hello, Scotty. How are the both of you holding up?

SCOTTY

Oh, we're fine.

Wilkins casually pulls up a chair. Scotty is bewildered.

SCOTTY

Shouldn't we pray or something? I thought every time we see you we have to pray.

WILKINS

Okay, Scotty, we'll pray.

Together they bow their heads in prayer. So does Daniel.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Peggy is propped up in bed. The door opens. Katie enters carrying soup.

PEGGY

Katie, you have to stop waiting on me. Did you take your pills? You should be in bed. Be careful.

Katie sets the soup down on Peggy's TV table, then gets in bed beside her.

KATIE

There. I'm in bed. Scotty did all the work. He opened the can.

Peggy reaches for the soup, groans. Katie helps her. We see by the pain on her face that she knows her mom is in pain.

KATIE

I can't stand to see you in pain.

PEGGY

You want me to take it back?

Katie looks a little surprised. She's used to saying the funny lines. She cozies in toward her mom a little more and switches the TV on by remote. They watch "Search for Tomorrow" together. Scotty enters with the mail. He looks with interest at the return address on one of the cards.

SCOTTY

Who's Daniel?

Katie blushes, swipes the card from him. Mom and brother are curious.

KATIE

He's my friend at the hospital. He's been waiting a year for a transplant. He tells me how lucky I am. He's right.

She wants privacy. She exits with the card. Peggy and Scotty look at each other. Scotty comes and slides into the bed next to her.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A banner over the stage proclaims it is now time for the SPRING DANCE RECITAL. The small rented auditorium is jampacked. One group, the ten-year-olds, has just finished their number. They exit the stage. Annie comes on and takes the microphone. She reads from a piece of paper.

ANNIE

Ladies and Gentlemen. Our class is proud to present the work of one of our own. She can't be with us up here this year, but she will be next year. We'd like to dedicate this dance to Katie.

The rest of the class assembles on stage. The music begins. They go all out to please not their parents or their aunt from Chicago, but one particular audience member.

Katie sits in the front row, studying their every move. The number ends. The crowd cheers and cheers. They loved it! Gilversham comes onstage and indicates for Katie to stand up. She does and accepts her applause surprisingly shyly.

EXT. CARRIGAN - BACKYARD - DAY

Annie suns herself in the backyard while Katie does leg exercises with weights to get back in shape. It is summer. There is music playing from a radio.

ANNIE

Does high school scare you?

KATIE

Nah. It just means we have to walk farther between classes.

ANNIE

What are you going to wear the first day?

KATIE

I don't know. It's three months away.

(a beat)

My new mini-skirt with the lace stockings and my gray boots. Hot, huh?

ANNIE

I thought so. I can't wait to see all the boys.

KATIE

Two thousand kids altogether! Not quite the third grade, is it?

ANNIE

I'm so excited!

KATIE

So am I!

Scotty calls from the patio door. He holds the phone.

SCOTTY

Katie! It's Roz. She wants to talk to you.

KATIE

Moi?

Surprised, she gets up and takes the phone.

KATIE

Hi.

INT. ROZ'S COLLEGE ROOM - DAY

Roz finally has her sorority room to herself.

ROZ

Katie, guess what? I think I met him. The real one.

INT. BACKYARD - DAY

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY:

Katie is surprised. Scotty is trying to listen into the receiver, making a pest of himself.

KATIE

Really? That's great, Roz.
(there've been so many
others) (beat)
But why are you telling me?

Roz has to think it over.

ROZ

I don't know. You seem older now.

Katie swells with pride. Scotty can sense it. A beat.

ROZ

How are you doing?

KATIE

Good. I have to start off slowly, but
I'm back to normal.

A favorite song comes on the radio.

KATIE

Hold on a sec. It's Madonna.

She hurries to the radio, turns it up, then happily dances back to the phone. Annie gets up and dances, happy for her friend.

KATIE

(to Roz and the world)
Yep, ol' Katie's back in her dancing
feet. Dr. Wyndym said I can do
anything I want now!

She's beaming!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

LEGEND: Six Months Later

Katie and Daniel walk the sidewalk Katie has trampled down so many times before in her "single" days. It looks real different when you're on a date. They're shy with each other. It's strange being together outside of the dialysis unit. They don't know what to say. It is cold. They are bundled up in coats and can see their breath. Finally:

KATIE

How am I doing so far?

DANIEL

What do you mean?

KATIE

On my first date. Haven't you guessed? I guess I should have paid attention to my sister more. I'd know what to say and do right now. You know she's getting married next summer. A whole year and a half away! And she's already looking at dresses! It will take her longer to find a dress than it did a guy.

DANIEL

Hey, slow down, you're doing fine. Your parents were the ones who were nervous. They asked me a million questions. Especially your mom. I lied about my age. I said I was seventeen. Eighteen might have scared her off.

KATIE

That's okay. I'm going to be sixteen in three days.

DANIEL

No kidding?

They just passed a Baskin-Robbins Ice Cream Parlor. Daniel quickly gets an idea; he pulls her back into the store.

DANIEL

Come on.

KATIE
Wha-? No, it's too cold!

INT. ICE CREAM STORE - NIGHT

Daniel pulls Katie up to the counter. The place is practically empty. Daniel points to an ice cream cake.

DANIEL
One of those, please. And some candles.

KATIE
Oh, no.

EXT. STORE - NIGHT

Through the glass we see Katie trying to retreat, Daniel holding her back. The candles get lit. He starts to sing!

INT. STORE - NIGHT

The employees join in. Katie blushes. Soon everyone is boisterously singing, "Happy Birthday, Katie."

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Bundled up, Katie sits on the edge of the slide, a slide she probably enjoyed as a seven-year-old, and tries to enjoy her ice cream cake. She tries to ignore its coldness. There is a small group of youngsters nearby.

KATIE
That was really nice of you.

Daniel sits on a nearby swing. He eats no cake.

KATIE
I can't enjoy this if you can't have any.

DANIEL
That's okay. Think of all the cavities I won't get.

KATIE
I will.

She gets up and hands the rest of the cake to one of the kids.

KATIE

(continuing)

It's the thought that counts.

He smiles. She comes back, sits on the swing next to him. They look up at the stars together.

KATIE

It's weird how we met, huh?

DANIEL

It's cooler than my parents. My dad met my mom at a bowling alley.

KATIE

How do your parents take all this?
I mean, you.

DANIEL

They're divorced.

KATIE

Oh.

DANIEL

So much for bowling.

(a beat)

My illness was like a test they couldn't pass. I used to spend a lot of time talking to shrinks about it. No one had any answers. I stopped going. They both felt so guilty because both of their kidneys did not work.

KATIE

It's tough waiting, being on the list, isn't it?

DANIEL

Tough on me, nah. But you should see my dad. Nearly every day he gives me this stupid grin.

(imitating)

'Hey, Daniel. Today might be it.'
I mean, I know he's trying to be helpful, but give me a break. What about your parents?

KATIE

My mom's acting like she personally gave me my disease. I don't know. It just seems like...

DANIEL

What?

KATIE

That we're really separate from our parents. I mean, they can give us a home, do things for us, take us to dance classes or make us dinner, but they can't give you the world, you know? They can't make it perfect for you.

DANIEL

It's so nice to be able to talk to you this way.

Her teeth chatter.

DANIEL

I'm sorry. I didn't notice how cold it was. We should go.

He comes to her and holds her to warm her up. They look at each other closely.

DANIEL

Is it okay if I kiss you?

KATIE

I... I guess so.

He gently places a kiss on her cheek. Katie looks disappointed.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Spring has come again to Joliet. Families join other families in the clean, crispy air outside the auditorium.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

The same dance class of fifteen-year-olds has grown into sixteen-year-olds. A year makes much difference at this age. They wear a little eye make-up now, but more importantly their breasts are developing. They change into their costumes. Katie's breasts are not as developed. Gilversham directs the menagerie. No mothers are in sight except for Mrs. Carrigan, who hovers over Katie. She helps her on with her costume.

KATIE

Mom, I can do this myself.

PEGGY

I just want to make sure it goes on right, after I stayed up until three sewing it.

KATIE

All the other mothers sewed. You see them in here?

PEGGY

Did you take your pills?

KATIE

You don't have to keep asking me that! You put a note up on my dresser. That's enough.

Some of the girls look.

PEGGY

I don't deserve to be spoken to in that way.

KATIE

I don't deserve to be treated like a little kid. I took them. I took them.

PEGGY

All right. I'm leaving. Good luck.

Peggy leaves. Katie feels bad.

MRS. GILVERSHAM

Okay. Let's assemble. It's almost time.

The girls hurry to the entrance. Katie positions herself in the little crowd. A couple of the girls move a few inches away from her. Katie detects their uncomfortableness and is hurt. Annie comes up to her and stands close.

MRS. GILVERSHAM

Everybody ready? Hurry, let's go.

She opens the door, and the girls file out.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The class of sixteen-year-olds dance their heart out to a new number choreographed by Katie. It is more advanced than last year's. Katie is at the helm. Peggy, Patrick and Scotty cheer extra loud. Daniel is also there cheering.

INT. CARRIGAN FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Peggy, Patrick and Scotty watch television. Katie steps through the hallway into the kitchen.

PEGGY

What's the matter?

KATIE (O.S.)

I just want some juice. Don't go all paranoid.

SCOTTY

(concentrating on TV)

Shhh.

PATRICK

Let her be. She knows the rules.

PEGGY

(much lower)

That fever showed up again today.

PATRICK

What did Wyndym say?

PEGGY

He wants to see her. He has to watch it very closely.

Katie comes back down the hallway.

PEGGY

How much juice did you have?

KATIE

Will you lay off, Mom? You're acting like I'm tied to you now or something. It's bad enough I couldn't go to the Pizza Stop with everybody tonight.

PATRICK

You don't have to use that tone on your mother.

KATIE

Oh, great. Now you're on her side.

SCOTTY

SSHHH.

KATIE

Oh, you shut up. Just all of you shut up. I shoulda just gone out. I don't have to listen to any of you.

She hurries up the stairs. Peggy and Patrick are frustrated.

INT. BRIDAL STORE - DAY

LEGEND: Next Winter

Peggy, Roz and her sorority friends, including Nell, are rummaging through the racks of bridesmaids' dresses. One of the girls looks through a bride magazine. Katie sits on a chair, bored by it all, but also looking very tired, as if she is in another world. Peggy looks at her, worried. The girls are shouting out different colors that they want.

GIRLS

'Tawny Rose,' no the 'Clover Green'
no 'Royal Blue,' no the 'Dusty Peach.'

ROZ

Quiet! You're not helping me decide.
Katie. What do you want?

Katie looks up.

KATIE

How about stripes? Red and white.
We can look like barber poles.

ROZ

Very funny. Mom, do something about
your daughter.

PEGGY

She's not feeling well.

KATIE

I do, too!

ROZ

She's been making fun of us all day.

PEGGY

Leave her alone.

ROZ

You'd think she'd care about what
she's going to wear on my wedding day.

PEGGY

She's got much bigger things to care about, young lady.

All fall silent. Peggy feels bad the second she says it. A tense moment. Roz fights tears. Katie feels awful. But she saves the day. She gets up, pulls out one of the dresses.

KATIE

I love this one, Roz. I really do.
I didn't know how much you cared about what I thought.

Roz looks so disappointed in her mother. Peggy tries to make amends.

PEGGY

It is beautiful.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

LEGEND: The Following Spring

Katie and Annie sit up on the roof studying the situation across the street. Katie has binoculars. She is sweating slightly, as if with the fever.

HER POV - ACROSS THE STREET - DAY

At neighbor Sarah's house, Sarah and her once "date," Mike, sit out on the front lawn, very comfortable and loving with each other.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

KATIE

They've been together two years. Last month he gave her a ring. Last week they had a fight. I guess they forgot about it. Kissy, kissy. Lovey-dovey.

ANNIE

Katie, I think this is sick. What do they call girls who are Peeping Toms?

KATIE

Look. They're French kissing.

Annie eagerly grabs the binoculars.

POV: Mike is cajoling Sarah to get in his VW.

KATIE (V.O.)
You know, I think they've done it.

ANNIE (V.O.)
How can you tell?

KATIE (V.O.)
By the way they move. Careful-like.
Oh, I don't know. How do I know?
Daniel kisses me on the cheek.

Mike and Sarah get into his tiny Volkswagen.

Katie grabs back the binoculars.

KATIE
Well, they certainly won't be doing
it in there.

The car starts up.

ANNIE
End of free show.

KATIE
No. We have to follow them. Come on.

She hurriedly gets up.

ANNIE
Sure, like how?

Katie opens up the roof hatch.

INT. CARRIGAN KITCHEN - DAY

Katie grabs a set of keys off the counter.

EXT. CARRIGAN HOME - DAY

Katie hurries to the Sunbird. Annie and Scotty follow.

SCOTTY
I'm going to tell Mom and Dad.

KATIE
If I let you come will you tell?

Of course he thinks this over. A second later he smiles
deviously and jumps in the car.

ANNIE

Katie, you don't have your license.

KATIE

I got my permit that says I can drive with an adult. Just pretend you're an adult. Hurry.

She jumps in the car.

KATIE

(continuing)

Come on, we haven't done anything crazy in a while. Mom and Dad won't be back for hours. Those sorority house parents' day things go on and on.

Annie sighs and gets in the car. Just as it is about to take off, Scotty jumps in. The car jolts over the curb as it hurries to follow the Volkswagen down the street.

EXT. SUNBIRD - DAY

In traffic, stopped at a red light, next to the VW, our crew tries to look nonchalant. The light turns green. The car takes off with an inexperienced squeal.

INT. SUNBIRD - DAY

Scotty clutches his seat, wide-eyed. Katie tries to mask her tenseness, smiles at him. Annie looks nervous.

EXT. SUNBIRD - DAY

The Sunbird weaves in traffic to stay with the VW.

The VW shoots ahead. The Sunbird is forced to stay behind because of blocking cars.

EXT. TRAFFIC - DAY

The traffic becomes heavier. The VW is long gone. The Sunbird moves along slowly.

INT. SUNBIRD - DAY

Katie is sweating more. Annie and Scotty are worried. Not only about her, but about the traffic blocked on either side of them.

ANNIE

Katie, are you okay?

KATIE

So this is what it's like to be stuck in rush hour traffic.

ANNIE

We lost them. Let's just go home.

SCOTTY

Yeah.

They've come to a new standstill.

KATIE

We aren't going anywhere.

Her eyes are closing sleepily.

ANNIE

Katie! Wake up!

KATIE

I'm okay.

ANNIE

No, you're not. We have to get you to your doctor.

SCOTTY

Annie, you drive.

ANNIE

Katie, stop the car. Put it in park.

KATIE

We're in the middle of the road.

ANNIE

Put on the blinkers. Now!

Katie manages to set it in Park. Then she passes out. Annie and Scotty SCREAM.

EXT. TRAFFIC

Their screams mesh with the harsh HORNS trying to get the little defenseless Sunbird out of their way.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Annie sits with Scotty. Patrick and Peggy question them.

PEGGY

What did you think you were doing?

ANNIE

Just fooling around.

PEGGY

And you drove here. Neither one of you has a license.

PATRICK

Stop harping on them, Peggy. It would have happened no matter what she was doing.

PEGGY

How do you know? Are you the medical expert now?

Dr. Wyndym enters.

PEGGY

What is it?

He indicates for them to come out into the hallway away from the kids.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

WYNDYM

Come to my office.

Patrick stops him.

PATRICK

We don't need an office. Tell us now.

Wyndym takes a deep breath.

WYNDYM

The donor kidney has contracted the same disease as her original kidney. And any transplanted kidney would probably do the same.

PEGGY

Donor kidney? It was my kidney.

PATRICK

What does this mean?

Peggy cuts in, in disbelief.

PEGGY

How could it not work? She was doing fine. She was the same as before. Weren't you monitoring this? You mean you just decided to announce that it failed? We're mother and daughter. It can't fail. We're one person.

(a beat)

I did everything right. The pills, the food, the tests, the hospital visits.

WYNDYM

Peggy, I'm sorry your kidney did not take. It is always a shock for the donor. But you shouldn't feel as though you failed.

Patrick holds her.

PATRICK

You did everything. We can't control what has happened.

Peggy pulls away.

PEGGY

I failed. Whatever I am, not what I did, failed.

WYNDYM

Stop this. What you are bought your daughter a year full of life. Can you say you wouldn't have done it if you would have known this outcome?

PEGGY

No, of course not.

WYNDYM

Feel good about what you were able to do, not what you are unable to do.

PATRICK

Does this mean she has to go back on dialysis? She never tolerated it well with all those fevers.

WYNDYM

CAPD might work better for her. It means Continous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis. Katie will wear a bag--

PEGGY

She'll love that.

Peggy hurries down the corridor, needing to be alone.

EXT. HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

Peggy rushes out into the sunlight, gasping in the fresh air, her face streaked with tears.

INT. NURSES STATION - DAY

C.U. on an embroidered pillow with the name "KATIE" stitched on it. Pull back to reveal it is being held by Lynne as the other NURSES and STAFF ogle over it with exclams of "She'll love it," etc. Lynne takes it on into Katie's room.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - DAY

Katie is asleep. Her room is full of flowers. She's been here a few days. Lynne goes over to put the pillow near her head. Katie stirs and sees the pillow. She smiles.

KATIE

How beautiful. You did that for me?

LYNNE

You see anybody else in here named Katie?

KATIE

This isn't what you do for all the invalids, is it?

LYNNE

Only ones I like.

KATIE

Thank you.

LYNNE

You're welcome. But you're not going to say thanks for my next present. It's time to dialyze.

She starts to hook up the machine.

KATIE

Can't I go down to the dialysis unit? It was a real party in there.

LYNNE

You will later.

KATIE

Well, when later? I'm a busy girl.

Lynne smiles. Katie is hooked up.

LYNNE

Daniel came up while you were asleep.

KATIE

Don't smile so snide. It's not like we're in love.

LYNNE

The first thing a person says when they're in love is that they're not in love. It protects the ego. Or is it the id? Anyway, he said his transplant should take place in two weeks.

KATIE

(happy for him)

Oh, that's great.

(another thought)

They really shouldn't call it a transplant. They don't take your other ones out. How come they left Mom's kidney in me? It's dead like my own.

LYNNE

It's too dangerous to take them out.

KATIE

But it's getting real crowded in there.

Suddenly Katie starts heaving.

LYNNE

Delay. Turn over on your side.

Katie does so. She heaves. Lynne cleans her up, looking worried. Katie takes a deep breath.

KATIE

That's the third time today.

LYNNE

You just have to get used to being dialyzed again.

KATIE

I'm never going to get used to it.

LYNNE

Yes, you will.

Lynne holds her hand. Katie is getting too sad as she watches the machine. After a beat.

KATIE

Ninety-percent chance. Did you know I had a ninety-percent chance?

LYNNE

Yes.

KATIE

Your head doesn't let you think about the ten percent. And then, here it is.

(madder)

I have three kidneys inside of me.
And none of them work!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL WALKWAY - DAY

Door marked "CAPD Unit." Under that, "Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis."

INT. CAPD UNIT - DAY

Katie sits with Peggy as they receive instruction from MELODY, a wizened nurse in her early sixties. Katie looks weak, drained, unenthusiastic. Peggy is worried.

MELODY

The advantage of wearing a bag is that you are free of a machine. You are now in charge.

KATIE

You don't have to sell me on it. I don't exactly have a great choice. It's the bag or the machine. Just please show me how I do it. And one more thing.

MELODY

Yes?

KATIE

Can I dance?

INT. DANCE ROOM - DAY

MUSIC OVER. Dressed not in the customary leotard, but bulky parachute pants to conceal the bag, Katie is trying very hard to keep up with her classmates. She is not as quick, weakened by the tragedy afflicting her body. The other dancers try not to notice. Annie purposely misses a step. She shrugs at Katie, but Katie can see through it. She looks in the mirror at the both of them. It is obvious Annie has become the better of the two in the interim. Gilversham dismisses the class. Katie hurries out ahead of Annie.

INT. DANCE SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Katie hurries to the bathroom with her dance bag. The other dancers prance off together into the joint dressing room. Katie closes the bathroom door. Annie looks at it sadly.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOME - DAY

A small tract home. ROCK MUSIC blares from its backyard. Down the street Katie gets off a bus. She finds the address and starts up to the house's door. She is about to knock when she hears the rock music. She heads around the back.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Daniel sits out in the sun, snapping his fingers to the music. Katie appears, smiles. He is recovering.

KATIE

Hi.

DANIEL

Oh, hi!

She comes to him.

KATIE

How did it go?

DANIEL

I haven't rejected it yet. Or, I mean, it hasn't rejected me. How are you?

KATIE

Busy changing my diapers

She indicates her bag. He laughs.

KATIE

I've missed you.

DANIEL

Now we can start dating. Real normal dating. Restaurants, movies, parties.

KATIE

You think so?

DANIEL

Come here. I missed you, too.

He pulls her to him and kisses her. She reacts pleasurably to their first real kiss.

DANIEL

You feel warm. Do you have a temperature?

KATIE

It's just you.

She kisses him back. A beat.

KATIE

Have you ever done it?

He's a bit surprised.

DANIEL

It? Uh, yeah.

KATIE

I think I want to do it.

DANIEL

I don't think we better rush into anything. And then this--

Meaning his recovery, his stomach.

KATIE

I know. I'm sorry. It's just that I'm sixteen already.

DANIEL

It's not a race.

KATIE

I know. I was just kinda thinking about it.

He kisses her as passionately as he possible can, or knows how.

INT. CARRIGAN'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Katie sits at the bar. She wears a different dress; it's a new day. Patrick leaves a customer and comes over to her, hugs her. He nods to Charles. He starts to fix her "regular." She looks very tired.

KATIE

No more Shirley Temples. I'd like a glass of wine, please.

PATRICK

Katie!

KATIE

You're my dad. This is your restaurant. Are you going to turn me in?

PATRICK

Yes. Here's your Shirley Temple.

KATIE

My medicine doesn't say I can't have alcohol. I'm growing up, in case you haven't noticed.

PATRICK

I've noticed. But it doesn't mean you can drink wine.

KATIE

What does it mean? I can't do anything. You won't let me drive now. Mom watches me like a hawk. I can't go out anymore. I mean, think of when you were sixteen.

PATRICK

I know it's tough for you, sweetheart.

KATIE

Did you have sex when you were sixteen?

PATRICK

Katie!
(lower)
Not so loud.

KATIE

(lower)
Well?

PATRICK

Seventeen.

KATIE

Oh, I should wait a year, huh?

PATRICK

That's up to you. Why, you got someone in mind?

KATIE

Uh, uh... no. I can wait a year. It's probably no big deal anyway. Is it?

PATRICK

With the one you love, it is. Honey, you look tired. Maybe you better go home and take a nap.

KATIE

You're sounding like Mom.

PATRICK

Dads worry too.

She downs her Shirley Temple, indicates to Charles she wants another.

PATRICK

No, you've had enough.

KATIE

Dad, they're only Shirley Temples!

PATRICK

Katie, you've got a temperature. You're sweating and you're tired. You know when you have these symptoms you have to take it easy. Your sister's wedding is coming up, and I want you to feel well. Go home and rest.

KATIE

Okay, I'm going. I'm going!

She hurries out. Patrick tries to stop her.

PATRICK

Katie. Don't be mad.

He follows her. He is stopped just a second by a friendly customer.

EXT. CARRIGAN'S - DAY

As Katie sets foot in the parking lot she begins having a seizure. She clenches her fists and her teeth. People in the parking lot freeze in helplessness. A second later Patrick sprints out of the restaurant. She is choking.

PATRICK

Oh, my God. Call an ambulance!

Someone does. Patrick grabs his daughter, tips her head back, puts his finger in her mouth so she can breath. She does. She stops shaking. She relaxes. He seems relieved. Then suddenly, she stops breathing.

He has kept her air passageway open. So now he bends down and desperately performs mouth-to-mouth artificial resuscitation and then CPR. He probably learned it in the Army Reserve and this is probably the first time he's had to use it.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Same kind of room as before only now a smaller window is on the other side of the room. Katie is sleeping. Patrick and Peggy are with Wyndym.

WYNDYM

Her electrolytes are imbalanced. That caused the seizure. And she has an infection.

PATRICK

Another one?

WYNDYM

In her catheter opening for the CAPD.

PEGGY

I knew she shouldn't have gone by the restaurant. She should have come home and rested.

PATRICK

Try and tell Katie that.

WYNDYM

One trip to your restaurant did not bring this on.

PEGGY

(to Patrick)

Still, you're being too lenient with her.

Katie is waking. She looks at them.

KATIE

I don't want to hear you argue. What happened?

PEGGY

You had a seizure.

KATIE

Oh, damn.

They're surprised. They expected to have to explain.

PATRICK

What?

KATIE

Daniel warned me. He had a friend who had them. But he died.

She looks around.

WYNDYM

Katie, we're going to have to open a wrist shunt. Your peritoneal shunt is infected.

KATIE

I don't like this room.

PEGGY

Katie, listen to Dr. Wyndym.

KATIE

I don't like any of these rooms, but at least the other one had a bigger window. I want that room.

PATRICK

Katie, that isn't Dr. Wyndym's problem. We'll talk to the nurses, all right?

KATIE

I want that room! I want it now!

She starts to get out of bed. Falls. Gasps.

PEGGY

Katie!

She is grabbed by three sets of hands. She hates it.

KATIE

Let me go! Get away. I can get there on my own.

PEGGY

Katie, stop this!

KATIE

Stop what? Stop hurting? At least they could give me the bigger window! I'm a regular here now!

PATRICK

Let's get her that room, dammit!

Patrick tries to help her. Peggy is devastated.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Scotty, all alone and in his baseball uniform, throws balls into the air, whacks them as far as possible (not very far), then smiles proudly upwards. The camera turns and we see he is smiling up at a hospital window.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Katie watches him from the room she fought for as she receives her dialysis. She's back on the machine. She can't smile down at her brother. She feels too miserable. She can't feel happiness for anything or anybody. Lynne, the nurse, looks at the machine. Katie is almost finished. She scratches herself, her arms and legs, unnaturally and uncontrollably. Lynne prepares her.

KATIE

Why are we doing this?

LYNNE

Is this a quiz? So your blood can get clean again.

KATIE

It will never be clean again. This machine can only do ten percent of what a kidney can do.

LYNNE

Don't pull that on me. Nobody needs any more than ten percent.

KATIE

I need more. I feel sick all the time. And this itching. It's driving me crazy. Those stupid pills don't work.

LYNNE

I think we'll nominate you for the optimist-of-the-week award.

KATIE

I throw up every day from this machine. It's not making me feel any better. It never has. I'm feeling worse and worse. I hate this machine. I hated those stupid bags, too. I hate this place.

LYNNE

You hate me?

KATIE

No, you're a person.

Lynne is done withdrawing the tube from Katie's arm. She applies pressure with gauze, then starts out with a pat of encouragement to Katie. Katie continues to put pressure on the gauze.

LYNNE

So are you. A very special one.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CHILDREN'S WARD - NIGHT

Katie exits her room. She steps down the hallway looking in the doors. She nods hello to a couple of the children in the rooms. She ducks out of the ward.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY #2 - NIGHT

The adult ward. Katie walks down it, feeling curiously more restful. She's an adult now. Suddenly, she stops as she sees somebody in a room.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

The "somebody" is a vegetable being kept alive by machines. It cannot even be discerned if it is a male or female. Out of each arm are two machines, the throat has another, the cranium still another.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Katie is visibly shaken.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Katie lies in pain, her face contorted in pain. She tries to move to become more comfortable but is too exhausted. She closes her eyes, trying to sleep. A moment later, Annie appears in the doorway. She sees her friend asleep so she steps out. But her Katie's face shows that pain again. Annie comes back and holds her hand.

INT. DIALYSIS UNIT - DAY

Katie is pulled into the unit on a wheelchair by Lynne.

LYNNE

See there, Katie. Your old spot is waiting for you.

She is wheeled by Lynne over to where we saw her meet Daniel. Lynne pulls up her sleeve. She looks worried.

KATIE

Is it infected, too?

LYNNE

Yes, honey. We're going to have to open a shunt in your other wrist. William?

She calls out to the orderly for assistance.

KATIE

No.

LYNNE

What do you mean, no? You've done this before. We always have to open a new shunt when there's an infection.

KATIE

It doesn't make any difference.

LYNNE

Of course it does.

WILLIAM, the orderly, a black man in his twenties, strides over.

KATIE

None of it makes any difference. I mean, all of this. I do not walk out of here, or now, wheel out of here, feeling any better.

WILLIAM

Come on, sweetheart, I see people getting these infections all the time.

KATIE

That's real encouraging, William. Are you my doctor now? I know people don't get them as much as me. Right?

LYNNE

Okay, so you get them more. But we can take care of them.

KATIE

Next we'll have to open a leg shunt. I'm going to run out of places. Then what?

Lynne understands the seriousness of her pessimism.

LYNNE

(low)

Get Dr. Wyndym.

WILLIAM

Yes, ma'am.

William hurries out.

KATIE

He won't make any difference.

LYNNE

You have to have dialysis, Katie.

KATIE

Why?

LYNNE

You know why.

KATIE

You can't say it, can you?

LYNNE

Katie...

KATIE

I won't make you say it. I'll die.

LYNNE

Katie, other patients feel this way. They get over it.

Wyndym enters.

WYNDYM

What's the matter?

LYNNE

She's refusing another shunt. This one is infected.

WYNDYM

Katie, it'll be all right. We'll increase the cephalosporin so this one won't become infected.

KATIE

You said that last time. Tell me, honestly, is this the best you can offer me?

WYNDYM

Well, it is the best drug we have for...

KATIE

No. I mean my life. Is this the best life you can offer me?

A beat. He is torn between truth and false hope.

WYNDYM

Katie, we don't know what the future will bring.

She knows all he can offer is false hope.

KATIE

I'd like to go back to my room now.
I'd like to have a day off from this.
Is that possible? Please.

LYNNE

Not until we open that shunt.

Wyndym stops her.

WYNDYM

No, she can go back. William.

William comes to wheel Katie away. As she goes through the swinging doors, Wyndym looks after her, worried.

WYNDYM

She'll get over it.

Lynne nods in agreement, then follows her.

EXT. CHILDREN'S WARD - DAY

There is a life-sized dollhouse, swings, and a picnic area, in a courtyard outside the children's ward. Katie sits on bench. It could be a neighborhood park except that everyone wears robes and pajamas.

Patrick and Peggy enter the area and cross to Katie. She looks up.

KATIE

I refused another shunt because I need time to think.

PATRICK

What is it you have to think about, honey?

KATIE

Why I'm not feeling any better. Why I'm like this. Why nothing is working.

PEGGY

Katie, that's for the doctors to think about.

KATIE

I don't think so. They aren't going through what I am.

PATRICK

They're bringing in a psychiatrist. Apparently many patients go through this stage.

PEGGY

Talk to him, sweetheart. There're so many experts to help you.

KATIE

Don't sound so desperate. I know I only have two to three weeks to live if I don't go back on dialysis.

Her parents are surprised she knows. Especially Peggy.

PEGGY

Who told you that?

KATIE

My nurse, Lynne. She accidentally blurted it out 'cause she's upset with me. But I already kind of knew it wouldn't be much time. It just shows how much I need that machine.

PATRICK

(to Peggy)

Well, she's got to know that, honey.
Katie, they were talking about
drugging you, making the shunt--

KATIE

Oh, good. Then I'll really be able
to think.

PATRICK

But I said no.

KATIE

Thank you, Dad.

PEGGY

Stop talking like this. We can't talk
like this. You're being impulsive,
Katie. You've always been impulsive.

KATIE

It's not impulsive. I'm thinking it
out.

PATRICK

Can't you think while you're on
dialysis? I can't bear this. I want
you back on dialysis. Katie, we just
don't understand.

KATIE

Of course you don't. No one can
unless they're going through the same
thing. So I don't expect you to. I
only expect the truth. I went into
this believing that if I did
everything as I was told then I would
be the same as before. Now I know
that it is never going to happen.
Dialysis cannot make me feel better.

PEGGY

There are thousands of people around
the world who are living normal lives
on dialysis.

KATIE

Am I? Is throwing up every day
normal? Is exhaustion? Is not being
able to go to school? Not being able
to breathe? Is living a half-life?
Is the pain normal?

(MORE)

KATIE (Cont'd)

The sores from itching? I'm one in a million that it isn't working for. You always said I was one in a million. Please help me by understanding. I guess what I'm thinking about is that it would be better if I just let go. If I... died.

Her parents look at her, stunned.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. KATIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Katie is propped up in bed. DR. EKAZIAN, a sturdy, sensitive man, sits beside her.

EKAZIAN

Do you know what death is?

KATIE

Does anybody?

EKAZIAN

What does it mean to you?

KATIE

It means not being sick anymore.

EKAZIAN

Are you frightened of it?

KATIE

This is what shrinks do? Ask a bunch of questions?

EKAZIAN

Yes. Are you frightened of death?

KATIE

Isn't everybody? Aren't you?

EKAZIAN

I'm not choosing it. I'm waiting until it chooses me.

KATIE

But it is choosing me. I'm too tired to fight it.

EKAZIAN

Wouldn't you like to dance again?

KATIE

Of course.

EKAZIAN

Or see the leaves turn? Or the first snowfall?

KATIE

Yes, of course.

EKAZIAN

Those are things worth fighting for, aren't they? To enjoy?

KATIE

It is not fair that you should throw these things at me as if I don't want them. Of course I do. I love the first snowfall. I love everything. I love life. But I can't enjoy any of it anymore. My feeling so miserable stops me. Can you understand that?

EKAZIAN

Yes, I can. I have spent my entire professional life talking this over with young patients. They believe the best thing they can do is give up. It is a natural feeling. But it is a more natural feeling to want to live. It's a driving human instinct. They always change their minds.

KATIE

Always?

He nods.

KATIE

Doctor, I'd hate to ruin your track record. Maybe I shouldn't be your patient.

He sits back in his chair, struck by her seriousness.

INT. HOSPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Various people nervously, anxiously find places around a huge conference table. Dr. Wyndym, DR. DONAHUE, the hospital administrator, Pastor Wilkins and Dr. Ekazian. Patrick and Peggy are led into the room by a secretary. They look like they haven't slept in days. They are taken aback by all the faces. Much emotion. They are eager to seek help, overwhelmed by the subject, saddened by the choices.

WYNDYM

Hello, Patrick, Peggy, let me introduce you to Dr. Donahue, our administrator, and Dr. Ekazian, our staff psychiatrist. I'm sorry we have to assemble like this, but it is the third day she has refused a shunt. We have asked your pastor to be here because of the moral and ethical issues that may have to be involved.

Peggy immediately turns to the psychiatrist.

PEGGY

What has she said to you?

EKAZIAN

She's a very determined young lady. I will need more time with her.

PATRICK

What time? What are we doing sitting here? We should be with her right now. What is the point of this meeting?

DONAHUE

Do you want her to remain in the hospital?

PEGGY

Why, of course. She needs the services and attention. Is there a choice?

DONAHUE

If she remains here she is our responsibility. If she goes home, she is not.

WYNDYM

Get to the point, Bill.

DONAHUE

(to Pastor)

Would you, as a man of the church, support the Corrigan's if they backed their daughter in her decision to die?

PATRICK

There has been no decision!

DONAHUE

Not by you, but your daughter certainly has made one. Have you spoken to your pastor about it?

WILKINS

Yes, they have. Our church has no doctrine that considers passive euthenasia a sin as suicide. It is a personal issue.

EKAZIAN

(wistfully)

Too bad. I'm sure Donahue could have used your doctrines.

WYNDYM

(to Donahue)

Tell them what you're really worried about. It's not religion, it's not ethics, it's lawsuits.

PATRICK

Lawsuits!

DONAHUE

The hospital must protect itself. It must be legally documented that you have authorized the withdrawal of treatment on your daughter's behalf. This has to be done not only because she is a minor, but because there have been cases where the survivors regret supporting the patient's decision and, later, wish to sue the hospital.

PATRICK

I thought you called us here to give us medical advice, not legal advice.

WYNDYM

Lay off, Bill. I think Katie is just going through a stage. I've increased the antibiotics again. The shunt infection might clear up, and she'll see some hope.

DONAHUE

We pray for that. But understand our position. Her refusal of that shunt is a decision to die.

EKAZIAN

Maybe we should give her the hope of
a second transplant.

PATRICK

But that's lying. She knows the odds
are against her.

WYNDYM

I didn't tell her.

Peggy turns to Patrick. Patrick's face tells all.

PATRICK

She asked and I told the truth.

PEGGY

Patrick! How could you do that!

PATRICK

I've been honest with her from the
beginning. I won't lie to her. Not
Katie. I feel good about that one
thing.

(to Wyndym)

Would you have told her?

A beat.

WYNDYM

Yes, eventually. I'm sorry you had
to do it. None of us want to lose
her.

WILKINS

We aren't going to lose her. I'm
disappointed you're talking about
lawsuits before you're talking about
Katie's needs.

DONAHUE

It's as simple as this. If she
doesn't change her mind within a week
and a half, she will die.

INT. KATIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Katie is crying. She is in agony.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Wilkins, the Pastor, wheels Katie through a park next to the hospital. She is weakened, her words come out slightly slurred.

KATIE

It's real nice of you still visiting me after the trouble I've caused the church.

WILKINS

What trouble?

KATIE

Boy, you really do practice what you preach -- forgive and forget. Guess who was responsible for the shaving cream in the beds during last summer's retreat?

WILKINS

Are you proud of it or are you merely confessing?

KATIE

Both. So are you going to say the same things as my parents and everybody else? I've heard it all a hundred times. I'm going through a stage.

WILKINS

Is it a stage?

KATIE

I don't think so. I'm not afraid to die.

WILKINS

Katie, God loves you. He will take care of you always. But, first, he wants you to live on this earth as long as you can.

KATIE

It's not meant for me anymore.

WILKINS

Instead of telling him no, can you tell him you'll consider fighting? And who knows what our doctors will discover in the near future. Medical science has helped you so much already.

KATIE

You don't know how much I've gone through to come to this decision, do you?

WILKINS

I don't know your physical suffering nor your mental suffering from it.

KATIE

I won't suffer in heaven, Pastor Wilkins. Will I?

She looks up at him. A tear is forming.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Patrick and Peggy silently get ready for bed. Patrick goes to Peggy, tries to hold her but is rebuked. They climb into bed. So far away from each other on opposite sides. The light is turned off. They remain apart. Then Peggy moves over to him. Needing his protection. He takes her into his arms. They need to support each other.

INT. KATIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Katie lies awake. She mouths her bedtime prayer.

INT. NURSING STATION - NIGHT

Lynne is still there, although dressed to go home. Melody, the older nurse, is amazed.

MELODY

Lynne, go home. You're putting in fifteen hour days and they're not even paying you for it.

LYNNE

Melody, how can you sit out here all night knowing what's going on in there? Katie is dying!

MELODY

You've gotten too involved again. I thought we promised each other. The only way to remain strong in this job is to always remember there's a place with no pain for the children who pass through this ward.

LYNNE

But Katie has a choice.

MELODY

Did you give her those choices? Are you responsible for the decision? It's not easy on any of us. I'm taking tranquilizers to get to sleep. Go home. We can't have you burn out.

Lynne turns toward Katie's room.

LYNNE

I just want to make sure she gets to sleep okay.

She goes into her room.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Katie turns to the wall. Lynne enters. She knows Katie is still awake.

LYNNE

You want something more for the pain?

KATIE

No... Yes. No, I don't want to be drugged-up anymore.

Lynne waits.

KATIE

Lynne? I don't think I'm going to make it to the wedding. I thought I would. I don't want them to cancel it because of me.

LYNNE

(so still)

What do you want to do?

KATIE

I don't know.

LYNNE

Maybe you'll want to open your shunt.

KATIE

I thought you were on my side.

LYNNE

I just want you to be happy. Going to your sister's wedding would make you happy. And if you want to go to the wedding, think of all the other things you'll want to see and do.

KATIE

You've infiltrated the enemy lines, haven't you?

LYNNE

I love you. I'm not your enemy.

KATIE

I love you. You take such good care of me. We'll make it to the wedding, okay? But with no shunt. Just determination.

Lynn kisses her, then steps out of the room. Katie finally cries her heart out. Ultimately, she's all alone.

INT. HOSPITAL - CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND - DAY

Katie sits outside, her face tilted toward the sun. Wyndyn joins her.

WYNDYM

Geting a tan?

KATIE

Yeah, trying. I figured my bridesmaid dress would look better with a little color rather than this piece of white chalk for a face.

WYNDYM

Your spirits are up. You're back to being yourself. Isn't that wonderful?

KATIE

I am always myself.

WYNDYM

You're thinking clearer now.

KATIE

I haven't been clear?

WYNDYM

The toxins affect your thinking process.

KATIE

Now don't go being doctorish with me. Where's that bedside manner?

WYNDYM

I'm worried about you. All I think about is you and what you're trying to do.

KATIE

Not trying. Doing... I want you to tell me something.

WYNDYM

Anything.

KATIE

I went to the adult ward one day. I don't think I'm going to visit again. I saw a person, a thing, I didn't even know if it was a man or a woman, it had tubes going in all over its body. Do you know what I'm talking about?

WYNDYM

Yes.

KATIE

Could I end up like that? Tell the truth.

WYNDYM

I don't know.

KATIE

I'm going to die anyway. Someday, from this, aren't I?

Wyndym hedges the question, trying to be lighter.

WYNDYM

We don't know. It could be a hundred years from now.

KATIE

And where will you be for those
hundred years? By my side? Measuring
my urine? Rushing me to the hospital?
Feeling miserable with me?

WYNDYM

No, I won't be there.

KATIE

I will become worse. I'm thinking
more and more that I'm really right
in wanting to let go. I don't feel
as though I'd be giving up.

Lynne comes in, hesitates when she sees Wyndym. But they have
stopped talking. She continues to the machine, starts to
unhook her.

LYNNE

Your time's up.

Katie looks pointedly at Wyndym.

KATIE

That just about says it all, huh?

Wyndym is taken aback.

WYNDYM

I will see you tomorrow. And the day
after that. And after that. We'll
get past this.

He turns and leaves. Katie sighs to Lynne. Lynne looks at
her with pain.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Katie is wheeled down the hallway by Lynne. Katie takes over
and starts wheeling herself. A new day.

KATIE

I promised I'd teach him how to dance
for my sister's wedding.

LYNNE

That's fun.

KATIE

(lower)

He doesn't know about my decision.
I don't want him to know until he is
older. Dad will tell him. For now
he will believe I died naturally.

She wheels into the children's playroom.

INT. PLAYROOM - DAY

It seems incongruous that this room filled with dolls and coloring books should be the social area only a few doors down from Katie's room. Scotty is in it checking out the surroundings. Katie and Lynne enter.

KATIE

Hi.

SCOTTY

Hey, it's neat up here! How come
they're suddenly letting me up? Is
eleven years and five months old
enough now?

KATIE

Be quiet. We got a lot of work to do.
Move these chairs around. Give
yourself a space.

He follows her orders. Lynne switches on radio music.

KATIE

Now loosen up. We got to get the
rhythm in your body.

She starts to snap her fingers to the music. He does also.
Then he starts moving to the beat. He's awkward. Katie rolls
her eyes.

EXT. CARRIGAN HOME - DAY

Scotty is dancing at the wedding reception. The Carrigans' backyard is dressed up in white lace and flower arrangements. About a hundred people stand in groups with punch or a cocktail. Reverend Wilkins is there. Roz is surrounded by well-wishers. All her bridesmaids, Katie is one, wear the dress Katie picked out. Katie is snapping her fingers to the beat of the music played by the hired band who practice their act only on weekends, trying to get them to step it up. Daniel is not far behind. He keeps a close eye on her. Katie watches Scotty dance with Annie.

He has not improved much since his playroom lesson.
Seldom-visited GREAT AUNT EMILIA, 55, sits down next to her.
Katie is tired and out of breath.

EMILIA

There you are, Katie. So, we'll be
coming here someday for your wedding,
too, right? Are there any prospects?

Katie is dumbstruck. Daniel has been talking to a man nearby.
Katie abruptly gets up.

KATIE

Excuse me, Aunt Emilia. It's nice
seeing you. But I have to help
inside.

She starts for the house. Daniel goes after her. Peggy
senses something wrong and also starts after her. But Katie,
not seeing her mother, grabs Daniel's hand desperately and
disappears into the house. Peggy stops. There's someone to
help her. Maybe someone she needs more now. She goes back
to her guests. Patrick looks over at Peggy and senses her
worry. His eye catches something.

He turns to see Katie and Daniel up on the roof.

ANGLE ROOF

Daniel and Katie settle themselves on the roof.

DANIEL

This is great. This is your hiding
place?

KATIE

Not anymore.

She indicates down to her father, who looks up at them.

KATIE

Look at his face. He doesn't even
seem surprised. I bet he knew about
it all along.

ANGLE PATRICK

Patrick lifts his glass to them and tries to smile. He
doesn't look surprised to see them up there.

ANGLE PEGGY - Her face is in pain.

ANGLE ROOF

DANIEL

You seem happy to be here.

KATIE

Not you, too.

DANIEL

You laughed today. You were smiling.

KATIE

It hurt. I was really hoping that being back here, back in the family and my real life, would make me feel better. That it would make a difference.

DANIEL

And?

KATIE

I want to be happy. I have known what it's like to be happy. I also know I will never feel it again. I'm tired. I want to close my eyes and say goodbye. I feel so old.

DANIEL

(indicating the
wedding)

No, Katie, you could have all this. And college. And everything. There's so much.

KATIE

So much that I can't enjoy. Life was not meant to be lived this way. Being here has only helped me make up my mind more.

DANIEL

Katie, I can't let you do it. I know you have so many people fighting you and you didn't want to fight me. But look at me. Look what I went through. And I'm doing great.

KATIE

It all worked for you. It didn't for me... I can't have another transplant. I would reject it. And dialysis only makes me feel worse.

(MORE)

KATIE (Cont'd)

Did you know I can't have babies? I never thought about it until they told me. Then I wanted a baby more than anything in the world.

DANIEL

You can have other things. We have to adapt. We're special people with special problems, but we can have fun. I still went to the Grand Canyon. And when I'm a little better, we can plan another trip together.

KATIE

I wouldn't enjoy it. I would just see more of what I can't have.

DANIEL

Dammit, Katie, I never would have figured you to be a quitter.

KATIE

You of all people should know it's not that simple! I am not a quitter. It's not me. It is my body attacking me. My mind lost out. Now leave me alone!

Daniel starts to cry.

DANIEL

I... I can't leave you alone.

Katie puts her arm around him to comfort him.

KATIE

I'm sorry, Daniel.

DANIEL

I love you. I really do.

KATIE

I love you, too.

He hugs her desperately.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL STAFF ROOM - DAY

Assembled are Ekazien, Dr. Wyndym, Lynne, Donahue (the administrator) and Melody. The tone is desperate. They all look haggard.

DONOHUE

There must be some way to get her back on dialysis. We only have a few days.

MELODY

"We"?

DONOHUE

You know this will taint the hospital. I've been lucky so far in keeping the press out. But if this leaks we'll all be labeled accomplices to a suicide.

LYNNE

We don't care about what we're labeled, for God's sake. We want to keep this girl alive. There must be something we can do.

WYNDYM

Her father won't let us tranquilize her. And our discussions aren't going very far.

LYNNE

What about hypnosis?

EKAZIAN

I asked her parents. They said no. And then what would that accomplish?

LYNNE

(to Wyndym)

Don't you have the legal right to take custody of Katie?

MELODY

And do what?

LYNNE

Force treatment.

DONOHUE

I don't want the courts in on this!

MELODY

(to Lynne)

You're with her eight hours a day.
You see her pain and misery. Why
would you want to do that to her?

LYNNE

We can't let her die!

WYNDYM

I'm not going to step in between
parent and child. I shouldn't have
that right.

LYNNE

We have to use all we have. A young
girl is going to die. It will be our
fault if we don't stop it!

MELODY

And it will be our fault if we do stop
it!

EKAZIAN

We're doing all we can. I meet with
her everyday. She only seems to be
getting stronger in her decision.

LYNNE

Whose side are you two on?!

MELODY

Katie's. I'm older than any of you
so let me say my peace. We've all
seen people die. This is tougher
because she's chronically ill and not
terminally ill. But, still, are we
gods that can step in and force her
to live? Are we here to prolong her
suffering?

A beat.

WYNDYM

She's so young.

LYNNE

Her parents are going to regret this
the rest of their lives.

EXT. PARK - LATE DAY

Patrick walks briskly through the park with his head bowed, frustrated, distraught, occupied. Someone walks toward him, someone he knows, and waves hello, but Patrick doesn't notice until the someone is past. He nods without smiling. He stops by a tree and sadly watches two parents play with their three-year-old daughter. Pastor Wilkins comes up behind him, stands beside him. They look at each other. Wilkins leads him away from the sight.

A beat.

PATRICK

I see parents with their kids at the restaurant. Sometimes they yell at them. Sometimes they don't even look at them. They don't know how lucky they are. Nothing is going to make our lives the same again, is it?

WILKINS

You raised a headstrong, articulate and wise daughter.

PATRICK

I know. What did she say to you?

WILKINS

I said I was praying for her possibilities. She asked me if I had spoken to her doctor. When I said yes she said I must be praying real hard.

Patrick smiles at his daughter's humor, then gets serious again.

PATRICK

I can't believe we've done every thing. I thought doctors were gods. Or at least maybe my daughter was and that she would never die. I've never even faced my own death. And she's looking it straight in the eye. I don't even know if I could make the same decision. How can this be what she wants?

INT. KATIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Katie sits up in bed talking to Dr. Ekazian, the psychiatrist. Again, we see her scratching, her shortness of breath, her weariness.

A cot has been set up in the room. An adult woman's overnight bag now sits on it.

EKAZIAN

We don't want you to have a romanticized view of death. Many teenagers do. They think Romeo and Juliet.

KATIE

Don't worry about me. I nearly flunked Shakespeare. But come on, I know it's the end. I don't even know about heaven. Don't tell Wilkie that. That's our pastor. If there is a heaven and if I get there I've got a few questions to put to God. Like why did he do this to me? And, if he doesn't have a good answer I'm going to punch him out.

He smiles.

KATIE

(continuing)

Aren't you tired of asking me questions.

EKAZIAN

You know what I'm here for.

KATIE

Like everyone else, you want to explore my possibilities, make sure I'm emotionally stable and not brain damaged, see if I understand the meaning of death and that I'm not making this decision out of depression. Am I getting close?

He shakes his head yes.

EKAZIAN

Am I getting close?

KATIE

You're doing a fine job. You're getting your answers, aren't you?

EKAZIAN

We have to be convinced this is what you want. You can't change your mind when you're dead.

He leans back in his chair and looks at her hard.

EXT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Ekazian sits with Patrick.

EKAZIAN

How are you feeling?

PATRICK

Numb.

EKAZIAN

How's Peggy?

PATRICK

The same. She can't believe it's happening. She spends the nights here with her.

EKAZIAN

Are you now supporting Katie in her decision?

PATRICK

I don't know what support means anymore. Seems like either way I stand I'm wrong.

EKAZIAN

Your motive cannot be wrong.

PATRICK

How does she seem to you?

EKAZIAN

I think that since she has made her decision firm her spirits have improved.

PATRICK

Oh, my God.

It is sinking in.

EKAZIAN

I'm sorry, Patrick. But I am honestly coming to believe that this is really what she wants. As hard as it is for us to believe. I have had many other young patients consider letting go but never have they been so convinced. I have come to admire her conviction.

Patrick is glazed. He gets up from the table.

EKAZIAN

Patrick?

He hurries out of the cafeteria. Ekazian stands up, sadly lets him go.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY LEVEL - NIGHT

Patrick hurries to the elevator and angrily pushes all the buttons. No elevator comes fast enough. He needs an escape. He runs out of the hospital.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Patrick goes for his car, gets in and screeches off.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The LeBaron angrily pulls out into the street. Another car HONKS.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Patrick races down the highway. He passes other cars.

INT. LeBARON - DAY

Patrick is crying. Another car changes lanes in front of him. He is traveling fast.

EXT. LeBARON - DAY

The LeBaron narrowly misses the car and suddenly slows down.

INT. KATIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Peggy is preparing the cot in Katie's room. She climbs into it. She is in a nightgown. They are both ready for bed. Katie turn off the bed light.

KATIE

Goodnight, Mom.

PEGGY

Goodnight, Katie.

A beat.

KATIE
Mom, I'm glad you're here. I didn't like the idea at first, you spending the nights here, but it's okay now.

PEGGY
Good.

KATIE
And Mom?

PEGGY
Yes?

KATIE
I'm going to be here in the morning.

This is hard to take. Peggy doesn't know how to respond. Suddenly, a figure appears in the darkened room. Katie and Peggy look up and need a moment to see who it is.

KATIE
Dad?

PATRICK
Hi, honey.

He comes over to kiss her. Katie turns on the light.

KATIE
What are you doing here? What about Scotty?

PATRICK
Roz came home.

Peggy looks from Patrick to Katie.

KATIE
You know I don't want to change anyone's life around.

PATRICK
She surprised me. It's okay. Can't I sleep here, too?

KATIE
Yeah.

She tries to find her nurse call button.

PATRICK
No, don't bother anybody. I can sleep in the chair.

He sits down in it. Katie turns off the light.

KATIE

Goodnight, Dad.

PATRICK

Goodnight, honey.

Patrick takes Peggy's hand in his. Through the dim light Katie can see their joined hands. She leans back on her pillow and bites her lip to keep from crying.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Patrick sleeps on the floor in a blanket. Both Peggy and Katie are still asleep. Katie stirs. Lynne walks in with the breakfast tray. She is surprised but warmed to see Patrick on the floor.

LYNNE

Rise and shine.

Lynne presents the tray to Katie.

KATIE

Isn't this something? Now that I can eat anything I want I'm not hungry.

Peggy and Patrick awake.

LYNNE

(to the parents)

I'll bring in something for you, too.

She exits. Patrick and Peggy are happy to see Katie.

KATIE

Hi.

PEGGY

Good morning.

Always the more affectionate parent, Patrick kisses her good morning. Regarding her breakfast.

PATRICK

That looks pretty good.

KATIE

You eat it. If I eat it I'll probably die a day earlier.

Patrick and Peggy react.

KATIE (cont'd)

I've discovered my body is fighting against me. My mind says sleep but my stomach says live. The less I eat, and I'm really not hungry, the less toxins build up, and the more time I have. Haven't I become scientific?

Katie indicates the breakfast to her father again. Peggy has to turn away. Patrick suddenly lashes out at the breakfast.

PATRICK

Stop! Do you really know what you're doing? What you're saying? How can you be so calm about it?

PEGGY

Patrick!

KATIE

What else do you want me to do, Dad? Cry every minute? Or would you just like me to go back on dialysis and live depressed and miserable? Then at least you'll see me around. Maybe once in a while I'll smile for you and say a few funny lines and you'll think I was the same as before. But I won't be. I can't be. I've been forcing out the smile for a long time. I want to exit as nicely as possible.

PATRICK

Honey, I'm sorry. Please, just... God, I don't know how you feel.

KATIE

Let me die! It's simple as that. I can't go on living this way.

At that moment Lynne starts to enter with the trays. She senses their need to be alone and leaves.

Patrick hangs his head. Peggy goes to Katie.

PEGGY

Katie, we're trying to help.

KATIE

Then listen to me! Do I have to spend all my last energies to convince all of you that I just want to close my eyes?

(MORE)

KATIE (Cont'd)

(a beat)

Mom, Dad, I'm not going to be in pain while I die.

PATRICK

How can we let you go, honey? Could you let us go like this?

KATIE

If you wanted to, yes. Please. I have to trust you. I have to know that when it gets real bad, when my brain is filled up and I can't think anymore, when I'm a vegetable, and I know that's going to happen, that you're not going to do something to keep me here. You're not going to plug me in at the last minute.

PEGGY

Oh, Katie...

KATIE

I know nothing is going to separate me from your love. Not even death.

Peggy bends down and hugs Katie with all her might. Patrick hugs them both.

INT. HOSPITAL STAFF ROOM - DAY

Another staff meeting with Ekazian, Lynne, Melody, and Wyndym.

EKAZIAN

We have to band together in one decision. We cannot continue to present to Katie our very split views. I urge each of you to confront your own feeling about death.

LYNNE

Please, don't start analyzing us.

EKAZIAN

Give me a minute. You have been forced to confront mortality. It's uncomfortable. You want to deny it by keeping her alive.

(MORE)

EKAZIAN (Cont'd)

A natural death is difficult enough but the choosing of death by a patient is a slap in the face to you and the care and the training you offer. I mean all of you.

WYNDYM

I can only try my best. I haven't been slapped in the face.

MELODY

Yes, you have, Dr. Wyndym. The pink is still showing. I suggest you go home and look in the mirror. Real hard.

She looks sternly at Wyndym and Lynne.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRY - DAY

Patrick is leaving the hospital. Donohue comes up behind him.

DONOHUE

Mr. Corrigan. Excuse me.

PATRICK

What is it?

DONOHUE

I have a duty to this hospital. I want to avoid problems.

PATRICK

I'm sorry we're a "problem."

DONOHUE

A patient who is a minor does not have the legal right to refuse treatment. You have the right to order its withdrawal, however. You are the one who must make the legal decision. If you don't the courts may step in and order treatment.

PATRICK

And you don't want your hospital to make front page news?

DONOHUE

Do you want Katie to?

PATRICK

She may be a minor but she's always known what she's wanted. It's her life. Why are we pretending it's our decision?

DONOHUE

Someone has to make the final judgment.

PATRICK

Judgment! The judgment has been made. Not by me, not by you, not by anybody but by the person who has the right to make it. Kathleen Carrigan! She is begging to die. Why do we have to make her beg any more? It's her human right to die when and how she feels is best for her.

DONOHUE

Then let's not make her beg any longer. If you're defending her decision I must have that on paper. I'll have our lawyer draw it up.

PATRICK

What if we take her home? Will your hospital be responsible then?

DONOHUE

No.

PATRICK

I want people around her that support her.

DONOHUE

The staff is trying the best they can. We're only human.

PATRICK

So are we.

He walks back in the hospital angrily.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Peggy exits Katie's room with a worked-over food tray. She looks tired, haggard. Patrick rushes up to her, grabs her arm. Low:

PATRICK
We're taking her home.

PEGGY
Why?

PATRICK
They're making this feel like a sin.

PEGGY
No, they're not. They're confused.
Like us. But they can make her more
comfortable here.

PATRICK
We'll hire a nurse.

PEGGY
She's been on pain medicine, honey.
You sign her out of here and it's
going to be impossible to get it.
It's strong stuff.

PATRICK
We'll get it.

PEGGY
Don't take her home because your pride
is being stepped on.

DONOHUE
Donohue wants us to sign these
papers--

PEGGY
Then let's sign them, for God's sake.

She looks at him sternly, then walks on to deliver the tray to
Lynne.

INT. JUSTIN PENNING'S OFFICE - DAY

Patrick and Peggy read over papers prepared by a lawyer.
Donahue is present.

DONAHUE
Maybe you'd like your own lawyer to
look them over.

PATRICK

I understand it. We are signing away our daughter's life. We are saying it's all right that she dies, and we will never make a fuss about it.

He picks up a pen.

PATRICK (cont'd)

It's an awful thing to sign. It's awful that you had to draw such a thing up. Maybe it's not your fault, but this paranoia has got to stop somewhere.

Peggy clutches his arm. Patrick bends over to sign. It's tough on all of them.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM - DAY

Katie is propped up on pillows. Ekazian, Lynne, Melody, William, and Wyndym are situated around her. The CAMERA PANS to each of their faces.

KATIE

(voice trembling)

I know what I'm doing is hard to understand. Most people never want to think about dying, so when it comes up it's kinda weird. I never thought about it before. But I guess you guys have to once in a while. Well, here's one of those times. I just want you to know I don't blame anyone. You don't have to feel you didn't try your best, because you did. Thank you.

The CAMERA ends on Katie, bravely not to cry.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Wyndym and Lynne are red-eyed, consoling each other with silence in a corner. Patrick and Peggy come upon them, especially surprised to see Wyndym so shook-up. He tries to put on his doctor veneer. It doesn't work.

WYNDYM

I'm sorry.

Patrick puts his arm around Wyndym.

WYNDYM

She's going to go into a coma. That's
when you say goodbye.

Lynne takes Peggy's hand.

EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

Scotty shows off some dance steps to Katie. He has gotten
better.

SCOTTY

Whadya think? I made them up myself.

KATIE

You need lessons.

SCOTTY

I'll look like a sissy in those
classes. When you get better you can
teach me when no one's looking.

This stings her. She wants to say goodbye but can't directly.
She doesn't want him to know of her choice at his young age.

KATIE

We've had fun times together, don't
you think?

SCOTTY

(mystified)

Well, yeah. The best. A lot of guys
don't want to hang around with their
sisters, but you're cool.

He's grown up a lot in the last two years.

KATIE

I'm sorry I made you do some of the
things I made you do.

SCOTTY

Really? What's the matter?

KATIE

I could have given you a police
record. Remember when we tied all the
garden hoses together in back of
K-Mart?

SCOTTY

(laughing)
Yeah. They had to spend the whole
next day taking them apart.

KATIE

It didn't get us anywhere.

SCOTTY

We had fun.

KATIE

I haven't set a good example for you.

SCOTTY

So? You're a sister.

KATIE

I've never chickened out. Remember
that.

SCOTTY

What's wrong?

She wants to tell him. Maybe she will.

KATIE

Nothing. Show me your steps again.

He hesitates.

SCOTTY

Oh, guess what! Sarah ran off with
Mike. They eloped.

KATIE

Really!

SCOTTY

Everyone's talking about it. They're
so surprised.

KATIE

We could have told them, huh? We saw
it coming. Okay, let's see these
great steps of yours.

He dances.

KATIE

Point your toes. The least you can
do is point your toes.

She holds onto her chair for strength. Just holding on.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

FADE IN:

EXT. CARRIGAN HOUSE - DAY

The Sunbird sits in the driveway. Patrick drives up in the LeBaron.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM (HOME) - DAY

Peggy straightens up the room. Patrick appears in the doorway. Tenseness between them.

PEGGY

What are you doing home?

PATRICK

I've closed up the restaurant for awhile.

Peggy reacts.

PATRICK

Don't tell Katie. I just can't do it anymore. I can't go in there and pretend. What are you doing here?

PEGGY

Katie wanted more things. When will you open it up?

PATRICK

I don't know. I don't know.

PEGGY

Oh, Patrick.

PATRICK

I'm sorry I can't be strong for you.

PEGGY

What is strong?

PATRICK

I don't feel like a father. I thought fathers were always in control.

PEGGY

Not always. Only when the mothers give up. We can't be losing her. We can't. I never assumed bringing a child into this world would mean a forever thing but nothing, NOTHING, can ever prepare anyone for this.

PATRICK

How are we going to get through the day?

PEGGY

I keep thinking that one more conversation, one more expert to consult, one more pill to take, one more book to study, is going to change her mind.

PATRICK

Peggy. We have to get past that. We are not going to change her mind!

PEGGY

How can we get past that! She isn't dead yet!

PATRICK

Support her, honey.

She blurts out something that has been bottled up.

PEGGY

I can't do that!

She runs from the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

In the foyer Peggy hurriedly puts together her things to leave. Patrick appears on the stairs. Suddenly he falls into a lump on the stairs. He is sobbing harder than he ever has in his life. She watches in horror. She's never seen her man this way. She wants to turn away. She can't. They are joined together. She comes to him on the stairs, puts her arm around him.

PEGGY

I feel so small. This is so beyond us.

They hold each other.

INT. KATIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Roz sits next to Katie.

KATIE

That was quick.

ROZ

I haven't told Mom and Dad yet.

KATIE

Congratulations.

ROZ

Katie, I want you to see my baby.

KATIE

Are you going to make a scene?

ROZ

How can you be so impossible; you were born to be impossible.

KATIE

Help me think of good times.

A beat. Roz is trying.

ROZ

When we got our first pool. The above-ground. And you poked a hole in it and the next-door neighbor's dog nearly drowned.

They laugh together.

KATIE

That was a good time? Um. Go on.

ROZ

Christmas Eve at Grandma Weller's. Before she... died. Getting sick on candy canes.

KATIE

That's good.

ROZ

Your spring recital.

KATIE

Yeah.

ROZ

Katie, I'm going to name my baby
Katie.

KATIE

And if it's a boy.

ROZ

K.C. For your initials. Katie
Carrigan.

KATIE

I don't want you to do anything
impulsive.

ROZ

It's not. I love you, Katie.

Katie reaches out her hand.

KATIE

I love you. I always have. Even when
I was pretending to hate you. It's
what sisters are supposed to do, I
guess.

ROZ

Me, too. Always have.

They hold hands.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Daniel wheels Katie out of her room. Lynne is alarmed.

LYNNE

Where are you going?

KATIE

Out.

LYNNE

Does Wyndym know? Did you get
permission?

KATIE

Now, Lynne, does that really matter?

No, it doesn't. Lynne is taken aback. Daniel wheels her into
an elevator.

KATIE

See ya.

INT. TOYOTA - DAY

Daniel drives. Katie rolls down the window, feels the wind. It's a beautiful day.

DANIEL

Nice, huh?

KATIE

I haven't forgotten.

DANIEL

(banging the steering wheel)

Dammit, Katie. I'd do anything for you. How can I get you to change your mind?

KATIE

Shut up and drive... Sorry, just drive, please.

EXT. GILVERSHAM SCHOOL OF DANCE - DAY

The Toyota pulls up.

INT. DANCE ROOM - DAY

The class is doing a Katie-like number. Annie is at its helm. Gilversham is enjoying it, snapping her fingers to the beat of the music. Things have certainly changed around here since we first saw the place two years ago.

Katie appears in the doorway, Daniel is at her side. Katie watches. Annie sees her, is both happy and sad to see her, and tries that much harder. The number ends. Katie claps. The class turns to her. Annie begins clapping for Katie. One by one the class starts clapping for Katie. It's about as thunderous as fifteen sixteen-year-olds plus a teacher can get.

EXT. GILVERSHAM SCHOOL - DAY

Katie sits on the grass. The girls from the class pass her and say hi. Daniel stands by the car. Annie exits the building and watches Katie. Katie sees her. Annie fights a tear. It is a struggle, but she comes toward Katie.

ANNIE

Roz told me. I was going to come by.

KATIE

I know.

Gilversham walks to her car. She calls over to Katie.

GILVERSHAM

Katie, I'll be looking forward to seeing your brother every Tuesday.

KATIE

I beg your pardon?

GILVERSHAM

Scotty signed up for the 4:30 jazz class. Bye.

She gets into her car. Katie starts laughing. So does Annie. Uncontrollable. Then the laughter turns to tears as they clasp one another.

INT. TOYOTA - DAY

Daniel drives. Katie is weak, her eyes are closed and leans against the seat. Daniel touches her hand.

KATIE

Where is it?

DANIEL

Coming up. On your right.

She opens her eyes.

EXT. CARRIGAN'S - DAY

No cars are in the parking lot. A sign announces the restaurant is closed.

INT. TOYOTA - DAY

Katie lets out a heavy, worried sigh.

INT. KATIE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Katie's bed is fixed by Lynne. Patrick assists her. Lynne exits.

KATIE
Dad, what's the matter with you?

PATRICK
What?

KATIE
I went by the restaurant today and it was closed. Why?

PATRICK
How did you go out?

KATIE
I walked out. Why?

PATRICK
You shouldn't have gone out.

KATIE
Why not?

She's got a point.

PATRICK
I only closed it for a while.

KATIE
Why?

PATRICK
You haven't stopped asking why since you were two years old. Because I don't feel like entertaining people right now, that's why.

KATIE
Will you entertain me? Open it.

PATRICK
You sure you can?

KATIE
I'm in control. I can do anything I want.

(a beat as Patrick takes this in)
Dad, I'm sorry. This is hurting you so much. I don't want to hurt anybody. Especially you.

He holds her. Katie snuggles into him. She falls asleep in his arms.

INT. CARRIGAN'S - DAY

The Carrigan family are the only patrons. Charles waits on them. Katie is in the booth seat, propped up by pillows. She is in a near stupor. She can't eat. She stumbles over her words

KATIE

I'm sorry. Maybe this wasn't such a great idea. Can we go home?

They immediately make the move to get her home. As they take her to the door.

SCOTTY

What is it?

Roz turns to him. It's not up to her to tell him.

ROZ

Dad--

PATRICK

Scotty, Katie is very, very ill.

Scotty is shaken. He breaks down, turns away. Then he pulls himself together to help.

INT. KATIE'S ROOM (HOME) - DAY

Katie is lying on her bed, eyes closed. Scotty stands there with the rest of the family. He speaks low.

SCOTTY

She never told me how bad it was. She made it seem like it would go away.

Katie's words are jumbled, stammering, but underneath it all, lucid thoughts. She tries to keep her eyes open.

KATIE

Away, go, it will.

They hold her hands.

PEGGY

Honey, we love you. We're here with you.

KATIE

Don't be... sad. I had sixteen years of good. You are a family wonderful. No better. Thanks for being on my side.

PATRICK

Katie, is there anything else you want?

KATIE

The Will.

PEGGY

Yes, you wrote a Will. It's in your desk. Annie gets your clothes. Scotty gets your dance records. The baby will get your furniture.

KATIE

Nice.

PEGGY

Very nice.

KATIE

Love you always.

PATRICK

We love you always.

KATIE

Don't cry. Smile when you think of me.

They force smiles through their tears.

KATIE

(continuing)

I was funny, wasn't I? Made you laugh?

PATRICK

You always made us laugh.

KATIE

You can keep laughing, you know. It's okay.

She squeezes their hands, they nod their promises, and she closes her eyes. Her body is taking her into a coma. Patrick whispers a goodbye.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Scotty sits up on the roof alone, watching family and friends file into the house. He's wearing a dark suit. His parents join him.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT SEVEN

THE END