

ONCE AROUND

Malia Scotch Marmo
Property of
Double Play Prods.

ONCE AROUND

BLACK SCREEN

Sound of a car taking a corner at high speed.

EXT: SMALL NEW ENGLAND TOWN ROTARY - DAY
AERIAL:

A convertible whips round and round the rotary. Inside, a man sings at the top of his lungs.

MAN

"That's the glory of that's the story of love..."

INT: MODERN HOUSE - DAY
A PAIR OF BLACK PATENT LEATHER MEN'S SHOES
are being polished..

VO

Joe! Joe! Damn that man. JOE!!

Marilyn, 55, feminine and motherly looking. She wears a very formal dress. She is polishing shoes as she stoops to the kitchen floor. When she rises up she is framed by the kitchen window.

INT/EXT: OUTSIDE THROUGH THE KITCHEN WINDOW - DAY

There is a huge long yard with yellow tents and 100 guests milling about. Central to the yard is a trellis with flowers.

Marilyn quickly conceals herself from the window, and exits.

INT: HALLWAY - DAY

MARILYN

Joe, are you in the bathroom? JOE!

A door swings open and Renata, 26, a plump, incredibly attractive woman, appears in her bra, pantyhose, and heels.

RENATA

What the hell are you talking about?

MARILYN

Watch that mouth. Where is your goddamn father?

RENATA (loudly)

Who knows? Christ, calm down will you?

Renata slams the door shut and Marilyn tries to open it.

MARILYN

Open up!

RENATA

We want to be alone, Ma.

There is girlish laughter from behind the door. Marilyn finally walks away and resumes calling out for Joe.

EXT: THE CONVERTIBLE

as it bombs down Main Street. The lake is on one side of the road, modest homes are on the other side. However, in the midst of the modest ones, stands a house that refuses to conform. The convertible suddenly turns into its driveway burning rubber past a sign that reads: Joe Bella and Family.

INT: MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Renata pulls a frilly purple dress over her head. She goes to a drawer and with great pride pulls out a box.

Jan, Renata's baby sister, about 23, is standing in her wedding dress in front of a mirror. Her eye suddenly catches Renata in the mirror and Jan turns, overwhelmed.

JAN

God! You are beautiful! You're glowing.

Renata starts fussing with Jan's veil.

RENATA

You're the one that's glowing. Just look at you.

Jan looks at herself and Renata in the mirror.

JAN

I look dressed up. You look like you're wearing your soul or something inside out today.

RENATA (sarcastic)

Fuck you.

Renata walks away and pulls something from the box.

JAN

Look what a plain face I have.

Renata comes from behind her and places a necklace around Jan's throat.

JAN (contd)

Your sapphire!

RENATA
Something borrowed, something blue, something
new. That's how it goes, right?

Jan admires it.

RENATA
Rob gave it to me three weeks ago. That's new
enough.

JAN
It's wonderful.

Renata puts on eye-liner, Jan puts on blush.

RENATA
It's my booby prize for going together for five
years.

JAN
Stop that. You know you guys are next.
Jan looks out the window just as their neighbor, Jim, 23 and tall,
exits his house in a black suit. He walks toward the Bellas'
backyard, his head down. Jan turns back to Renata.

JAN (contd)
(very pleased with herself)
I'm having an affair.

RENATA
You are not.

JAN
Oh yeah.

RENATA
I don't believe you...

JAN
You don't believe me because you don't want to.

RENATA
Oh god! I'm not listening to you! Mom!

JAN
With a mutual friend.

Renata runs to the bedroom door.

RENATA
Ma! Ma! Come in here!

Jan grabs her and twirls her around.

JAN
Shut up will you!

RENATA
• You're getting married in one second!

JAN
He said he won't see me anymore...

RENATA
Mother!

JAN
...AFTER I'm married. Anyway, if you were having
an affair you'd think it was great...

RENATA
It's Jim isn't it?

JAN
Never.

Renata grabs Jan by the arm and walks her backwards.

RENATA
He mopes around every time you're around, and
just hangs out his window, whenever you're in the
back yard. And you never ever run out of the
shower to take a call, not even when it's Peter.
I knew it.

Jan is against the wall. She pushes Renata backwards and begins to
sing the Wedding March as if it's a sleazy strip tease.

JAN (singing)
Here comes the bride all dressed in white bla bla
bla bla! Let's dance.

Jan tries to get Renata to dance. Renata reluctantly joins her.

RENATA
Christ! Jan, we've known Jim since we were
babies. Do you think Peter knows?

JAN (ignoring her)
Hmmm, hmmm, mmm bla bla bla...

RENATA (with a joking contempt)
You tell him everything.

JAN
...All dressed in white bla bla bla...

RENATA
It doesn't matter you'll have a whole new life
soon.

JAN
No I won't. Don't say that. It'll be the same.

RENATA
No it'll be different, you'll be married...

JAN
I don't want anything to change.

RENATA
You're gonna have a house and responsibilities...

JAN
I'll miss...everything.

Jan almost chokes on her words.

RENATA
Jan, are you sure you know what you're doing? I
mean do you...

JAN
...I wish I could just marry you.

Renata smiles.

RENATA
We've had all the fights.

JAN
We'd go to the Bahamas and eat and eat and eat
and at night go to the bars and pick up men.

RENATA
Right, like last time we were in Puerto Rico and
I picked up a mercenary.

JAN
We thought he said...

JAN & RENATA
...MISSIONARY!

JAN
God he wanted to fuck us both so badly.

They laugh, relishing the memory.

Their mother, Marilyn, pounds on the door.

MARILYN

Open up! They're all waiting, come on!

Jan freezes in Renata's arms.

JAN

It's time already? It can't be time. I'm not, I wasn't...are you sure, Mom?

Renata opens the door. Marilyn grabs Jan's hand.

MARILYN

Renata, don't just stand there. They're all waiting, the bridesmaids are in position. Just lead them to the trellis. Go ahead! Go!

Renata hesitates, then runs back to Jan.

MARILYN

Renata!

Renata fixes Jan's dress at the bustline, showing a little more cleavage..

RENATA (whispers)

Do good.

JAN (whispers back)

I will.

Renata stops again at the door. Marilyn is exasperated.

Jan blows Renata a kiss and Renata blows her one back.

RENATA

Dye.

Renata exits.

INT: KITCHEN - DAY

Marilyn rushes Jan through the kitchen. They stop at the kitchen door.

Marilyn hugs Jan.

Music sounds. It's the "Wedding March."

EXT: BACKYARD - DAY

Jan stumbles for a moment. Her eyes meet those of Jim, her next-door neighbor who is among the crowd. He gives her a woeful smile. Then a huge hand reaches around her waist and a large face kisses her cheek exuberantly.

JOE BELLA

Let's show you off, huh? Why not? I want them
to see my baby girl right up close.

He is thrilled. He shakes everyone's hands and repeatedly bearhugs Jan. Finally he gets Jan to the trellis. The Justice of the Peace is an old woman.

Renata stands directly behind Jan.

Beside Renata is Rob, the best man and Renata's boyfriend.

Beside Rob is Tony, Joe Bella's oldest. Tony is in his late 30's.. He is good natured, passive, and dreams of sailboats. Through the short civil service Renata manages to hold on to Jan's hand.

EXTREME CLOSE UP - A BOUQUET

as it tumbles and twirls through the blue sky. Renata's arms reach up. But the bouquet ricochets off her outstretched fingers and onto her forehead, falling to the ground.

Renata freezes. The guests stand motionless. Then, Joe Bella steps out, applauding as he walks to the bouquet.

JOE BELLA

That counts. It's the real thing. She's got it.

Everyone relaxes and applauds. Joe hands the bouquet to Renata. He hugs her.

JOE BELLA (contd)

You want to be smart? Go get that boyfriend of yours over here. We pour the champagne and set a date right now.

Renata looks over to Rob. He is leaning against a tree talking to a beautiful Chinese woman. Jan runs over to Renata.

JAN

Crazy ritual, huh?

Renata stares at the bouquet.

BACKYARD RECEPTION LINE

The line is full of large Italians. WE FOCUS ON Renata and Rob. A hugely large aunt goes over to Renata.

AUNT

You are lovely. You must be getting it today being the only unmarried Bella but let me tell you there are plenty of unmarried people who are very nice.

Renata looks to Rob for some comic relief but instead finds him uncomfortably yanking at his tie.

RENATA
That's great, auntie.

The aunt moves on. Renata tugs at Rob's sleeve.

RENATA (contd)
I'm sorry about this.

ROB
It's no problem. No problem.

RENATA
Why won't you look at me?

ROB
Look at you? I'm looking at you. Can I get something to drink?

RENATA
Of course.

Another uncle arrives.

UNCLE (to Rob)
Take my advice -- you'd thrive in marriage.
Right, Joe?

Joe Bella smiles. He gives the thumbs-up to Renata.

Rob leaves to go to the bar.

Renata looks at her father, who is now hugging two identical-looking nieces.

BACKYARD BAR

Renata joins Rob at the bar. Rob gulps down a drink.

ROB
Cheers.

RENATA
We have an agreement. And you're being an asshole.

ROB
What are you talking about?

RENATA
You gave me that sapphire necklace as an engagement ring. You said it yourself.

ROB

I noticed Jan is wearing it. It really made me feel closer to her knowing she was wearing it.

RENATA

I don't care one way or another if we get married or not. But you should know you look like a worm.

ROB

A worm! I'm being more sociable than...

RENATA

Shhh!

BACKYARD HEAR BAND

Joe Bella taps on the mike. He's changed out of his tuxedo and is wearing a bright red shirt.

JOE BELLA

Well I don't want to take up too much time here. But I just want to say before I say anything else that if Ma were alive today she'd be very happy and very proud. Of course she knew Peter and uh...

Joe becomes overly emotional.

JOE BELLA (contd)

What the hell I miss Ma.

Joe takes a moment to cry. Many hankies are pulled out. Renata, seeing her father cry, begins to cry herself. She turns to Rob.

RENATA

You have that weak, wormy, spineless face on today. Look at how you look at me.

Rob doesn't know how to fight her.

ROB

I want you to be happy.

RENATA

So, let's go pour champagne and set a date right now.

ROB

It's just that's maybe like announcing and this is Jan and Peter's day, it's not the way to do it.

Renata walks away toward Joe Bella.

ROB (contd)

You're pissed off! Renata! Let's go for a walk.

Renata stops and turns.

RENATA

No way am I leaving this wedding. I'm the
goddamn maid of honor.

She walks away.

Rob stands composing himself. Jim, long-faced, holds a video camera. He focuses on Jan's feet and slowly pans up to her smiling face as she jubilantly kisses Peter. His camera zooms in and suddenly drops. Jim looks at Rob.

JIM

How's it going, buddy?

Rob takes a gulp of whiskey.

ROB

I'm a spineless, ball-less worm.

Jim watches Jan and Peter.

JIM

So am I.

BACKYARD NEAR BAND

Joe Bella at the mike.

JOE BELLA

Jan baby, this is a song just for you whenever
you're down and there will be days when you're
down maybe you'll remember your old man and this
song.

He plays a solo on his guitar, "The Glory of Love."

JOE BELLA (contd)

"You gotta give a little, take a little.
And let your poor heart break a little.
That's the story of, that's the glory of..."

Jan sits on Peter's lap. Renata sits alone drinking vodka. Rob makes his way to Renata. He puts his arms around her and she stands up. The two embrace.

Marilyn leans against the wedding trellis smiling at Joe.

INT: NORTH END APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rob and Renata, still dressed as members of the wedding party, enter their small apartment. Rob immediately goes to the refrigerator and looks inside. Renata, agitated, goes to the kitchen window and opens it.

RENATA

I saw a good job in the newspaper.

ROB

I'm starving.

RENATA

You go to the Bahamas and get trained to sell condos to people in Boston. You could make a lot of money at that Rob.

ROB

What should I have? Huh, Ren?

RENATA

Wedding cake. It's in the bag.

Rob devours some of the cake and drinks milk from the carton. He goes to Renata and kisses her on her neck. She shrugs him off. He throws light playful Kung Fu chops which she blocks. She starts to laugh and blocks harder. This is a familiar game.

Rob playfully throws Renata down on the floor and straddles her. She laughs.

ROB

Something bothering you, Ren?

Rob teasingly slaps Renata's face, using her own hands.

RENATA (laughing)

I can't believe I still work in that stupid restaurant. You know Peter is planning on buying a house. He said so. What are you doing?

ROB

I...uh, I'm just...

Renata wrestles free from Rob and stands up.

RENATA

You said it. I'm just...nothing. You do nothing but eat and practice Kung Fu. You have no higher instincts.

ROB

That's not true.

RENATA

And, I'm not going to live in this rat hole apartment. I have a lot more than just a waitress in me.

She glares at Rob.

ROB

You're tired. Let's go to bed.
(beat) (exasperated but sincere)
I want you to be happy.

RENATA

You can't make me happy. You are not a whole and big enough man to make me happy. I could out you in anything. I could out run you, out job you, out balls you in anything. Anything. You're a miserable pathetic little girl. You know that?

ROB

What do you want me to do, bash you around a few times, polish off a couple of steaks? I'm sorry, I'm happy just as things are.

RENATA

Things stink as they are.

Renata begins to cry. Rob moves to comfort her. She moves away. He tries again. He holds her in his arms.

ROB

Please don't cry, Renata. Please, baby...come on.

Renata weakens. They kiss.

RENATA

I just want a house and a big important job...and I want you to fall on your knees and beg me to marry you. I want you to say, "You are the woman who'll change my life." I could, you know.

Rob kisses her.

ROB

I don't want my life changed, Ren.

Renata [lirts, teasingly undoing his tie.

RENATA

Is that sapphire an engagement promise? That's what you said it was.

He kisses her, tenderly.

ROB

Yes, there's no question about it.

RENATA

Are you ever, have you ever, no, listen now...do you intend to ever marry me?

Rob is kneeling in front of Renata. He kisses her hand.

ROB

Why?

RENATA

Tell me!

Renata affectionately kisses his forehead, his cheeks, his lips.

ROB

Renata...it's premature.

She puts her hands on his shoulders and smiles.

RENATA

Yes, you gotta be man enough to tell me. Yes or no.

ROB

I'm trying.

RENATA

Try your hardest, Rob.

ROB

Oh baby.

He kisses her a long time. Their lips hardly part when Renata coos.

RENATA

Tell me, sweetheart. I want to hear the exact words you choose.

ROB

I do not ever intend to marry you, Ren.

Renata is stunned. There is a long pause. Rob hesitates but goes to the door. He stops as if to say more but leaves. Renata's eyes fill with tears. She takes off the sapphire necklace, puts it on the table. It sits in wedding cake crumbs beside the bouquet.

EXT: BOSTON NORTH END STREET - VERY EARLY MORNING

Renata waks down the wet, empty street. She hugs a raincoat around her bridesmaid gown. She stops and looks through the bars of a fence to a park. A group of nuns watch over a dozen small

children. The children laugh and play exuberantly. Renata's head drops.

INT: CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Joe Bella and Marilyn ride in the front. Joe driving. Jan, Renata and Peter in the back seat. Renata is very upset.

RENATA

I want to rip my fingernails down his face.

She hits her fist a few times.

RENATA (contd)

Bang bang bang bang! I hope one of those blades in Kung Fu class flies off and slices Rob's head off. Oh...he is so mean, selfish, conceited.

She bursts into tears.

JAN

Look on the bright side, you can start all over with a new clean slate.

RENATA

A new slate! - There's no new slates. It's just one big boring loop! He said I was boring! He is so incredibly dull - oh he sickens me right here.

Renata starts pounding her gut. Peter takes her hand and starts to kiss it.

JAN

He'll regret his decision.

JOE BELLA

He had the best years of her life.

PETER

Hell, who could put up with all his eating. No one.

MARILYN

Take my word for it, he would have been a terrible husband.

RENATA

Rob will make a tremendous husband, he can be so sweet and caring...Who drove me everywhere? Who let me throw hot coffee on him, who said it didn't matter after I took his birthday cake back from him when he pissed me off?

JAN

He was very understanding.

RENATA

You know what I think? I think he has some lousy girlfriend that reads French books or something. He says I'm not intellectual. How many books has he ever read? He's terrible, terrible, horrible, horrible, terrible.

INT: AIRPORT GATE 22 - DAY

Jan and Peter slide into the boarding line. Jan grabs Renata and squeezes her close.

JAN

Oh Renata, I'm abandoning you when you need me most. Come with us! You can wear my clothes.

RENATA

No! I can take care of myself. You think I'm going to fall apart?

Jan considers.

JAN

I'm staying.

Renata turns her to her plane.

RENATA

Go! Have some faith in me.

They hug.

Joe Bella and Marilyn follow behind, giving hugs and kisses goodbye. Within seconds Jan and Peter disappear onto the plane.

JOE BELLA

Well!

RENATA (sniffing)

I'm gonna see if I can see them.

Renata walks up to the huge glass window. She looks tiny against the beautifully sterile expanse of the runway.

ANGLE ON: JOE BELLA AND MARILYN

by the gate.

JOE BELLA (sweetly, to Marilyn)

Come here.

Joe Bella opens his arms to Marilyn. The two embrace.

Renata looks at her parents, then back to the plane. She tenses. Then Tony, their 39 year old son, appears, out of breath.

TONY

Dad.

MARILYN

What a pity! You just missed them. That's them, their plane.

JOE BELLA

One lousy honeymoon your sister goes on and you miss it.

Tony freezes.

JOE BELLA (contd)

Where's your wife?

TONY

She couldn't get...

JOE BELLA

Eh! Forget it - the point is you missed Jan going on her honeymoon.

(yells to Renata)

Come on, kid, let's get going, you're gonna be late for work.

RENATA

I'm not going back. I quit! I'm through with waitressing.

JOE BELLA

Are you crazy! Get over here!

MARILYN

Shhh...look, Joe.

The Iberia plane taxis away. It zooms down the runway. Joe puts his arm around Marilyn. They watch with deep satisfaction, when...

RENATA (yells)

I am never going back to any restaurant again. This world doesn't scare me one bit!

The plane mounts the deep orange sky.

EXT/INT: TENT IN BELLA YARD - NIGHT

A deflated white balloon blows under the tables. The huge tent flaps in the wind. Way in a corner Renata sits alone still in her nightgown, a newspaper open in front of her. She gets up, letting the newspaper blow off the table.

INT: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Renata slowly opens the bedroom door.

Joe Bella and Marilyn are wrapped in each other's arms asleep.

Renata whispers to their bed.

RENATA

Ma...Dad...

Renata pinches Joe's toe, he snores.

Renata shakes her mother awake.

MARILYN

What do you want?

RENATA

Can I sleep with you and Daddy?

Joe Bella wakes up.

JOE BELLA

What's going on, huh?

MARILYN

She wants to sleep with us.

Renata stands, unable to leave the room.

MARILYN (contd)

Well go get your own pillow. Go ahead.

Renata runs out of the room.

MARILYN (contd)

Now don't cram me in all night, Joe, give me some room to breathe.

Renata runs into the room, places her pillow beside her mother, and climbs into bed. Marilyn holds her. The room goes quiet.

Joe Bella turns to his right side and Marilyn and Renata follow. Quiet again.

Renata rolls over to her back. A streetlight hits her face.

RENATA

I feel sick.

Renata turns and holds her mother.

MARILYN

You're all right.

JOE BELLA
Goodnight, sweetheart.

MARILYN
Goodnight, love.

JOE BELLA
Goodnight, doll.

RENATA
Goodnight, Daddy. 'Night, Ma.

MARILYN
Goodnight, sugar.

All goes silent.

RENATA
I found a job selling condominiums in the Bahamas
to people in Boston.

JOE BELLA
Now you're talking. You'd be terrific. Take it.

RENATA
Really?

MARILYN
Go to sleep, sweetheart.

RENATA
I'm going...

MARILYN
Sleep.

Unable to sleep Renata turns again on her back, the streetlight
shines in her face, her eyes open, still wet from crying.

EXT: ROTARY - DAY

Joe Bella, Marilyn and Renata in the convertible.

RENATA
I'm doing the right thing, Dad?

JOE BELLA
Think about it, baby. You can't sleep with me
and your mother every night. You're doing
something for your future.

INT: AIRPORT - DAY

Marilyn and Joe Bella stand by a huge window and watch the plane to the Bahamas take off.

EXT: BAHAMAS AIRSTRIP - DAY

Renata and a group of about ten people are met by a small energetic woman with a bullhorn. She is the trainer. A steel drum band plays a welcome song to the group.

TRAINER

Welcome, trainees from Boston. There is a van waiting for us to take us to the Baha Condo Time Sharers' Complex.

Renata walks with other trainees. She struggles with two large suitcases.

EXT: CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - DAY

A vast condominium complex by the sea. There are acres of desolate bars and tennis courts.

INT: CONVENTION ROOM - CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - DAY

TRAINER

...Years ago we sold property and you could measure your purchase in square feet. Today with the innovation of Time Sharing we sell time. For example we sell you the first week in January for the rest of your life. Therefore one unit is sold 52 times to up to 52 different buyers.

The CAMERA PULLS OUT TO REVEAL the group of engrossed trainees smoking, drinking and taking notes. Renata stares far past the speaker, deep in her own thoughts. Her eyes water.

TRAINER (contd)

In sales technique I have only one essential thing to teach you and that is simply stated that as a salesperson, every person you come in contact with is going to be a liar. Potential buyers will always say they cannot afford what you have to sell. Find the true objections. With fellow salespeople, lawyers, clients, even family members, assume the lie.

The CAMERA MOVES CLOSER IN ON Renata who remains motionless except for the tears that stream down her cheeks.

INT: TELEPHONE BOOTH - CONVENTION HALL - DAY

RENATA

It's great here! I mean fabulous. I have learned so much. No I'm not being rash at all - you can't help but love the place...I can't talk any longer, Daddy, 'cause all us "trainees" are going to the pool, to check it out...tough job, right? So I gotta go now. Tell Mom hi. Hey, by the way, did Rob call? Oh. Gotta go before they rip me out of this phone booth.

She leaves the phone booth and there is no one at all in the halls. She walks down to the lobby and exits outside.

EXT: BAHAMAS CONDOMINIUM - DAY

It is very bright outside. The condominiums are absolutely empty. Renata walks purposefully toward the ocean, past many bars and pools and tennis courts until she can see a line of rocks jutting into the ocean.

On the end of the rocks stands a man in a three-piece suit. Renata is captivated. She follows a path to the rocks.

All the way down she keeps her eyes on this man who stands absolutely motionless looking out to the sea. He has white hair, he is wearing a very expensive suit, he is small and stout, and his feet seem firmly rooted to the ground. When she gets close enough to him he sees her. For a brief second they pass a look. He is the quintessential middle-aged businessman. Renata smiles at him but he ignores it and looks back to sea completely absorbed in his ponderings.

EXT: ELEVATOR THAT OPENS OUTSIDE - DAY

Renata waits for the elevator. She turns and watches the man on the rocks. A wave crashes up and around him. He remains still - untouched and unmoved by the wave.

The elevator doors open. Inside is a 40 year old woman in a string bikini and sunglasses, carrying a bottle of vodka. This is Peggy and she's drunk. The elevator doors shut. Then reopen.

PEGGY

Yoo hoo!

Renata turns.

RENATA

Oh, sorry.

Renata gets in. She pushes the 2nd floor button.

PEGGY

Oops. Going down. I pushed her already, doll.

Renata starts to get off the elevator but the doors close.

RENATA

Shit.

PEGGY

I know what you mean - shit. Right?

Peggy inspects Renata.

PEGGY

Sure.

RENATA

I have to get to my room.

Renata rattles her key. Peggy gives Renata a more careful once-over. She takes a swig of her vodka.

PEGGY

Married?

Renata shakes her head.

PEGGY

Separated?

Renata shakes her head. Peggy takes another swig.

PEGGY

Just plain old-fashioned lovesick?

RENATA

Look, I just don't feel like talking to a stranger - maybe some other lifetime. (beat)
I'm sorry, I just don't want to talk about it.

The elevator doors open.

PEGGY

Hey no problem, happy to keep it strangers, stranger.

Peggy backs out the elevator, waving goodbye with her vodka bottle. She continues to back away heading directly toward the edge of a pool. She staggers past a large sign that reads: POOL CLOSED - NO SWIMMING WITHOUT LIFEGUARD ON DUTY.

Renata watches the elevator doors start to close. There is a loud splash.

RENATA

Damn it!

She punches the open door button.

EXT: POOLSIDE - DAY

Renata peers over the edge of the pool. Peggy comes up floating on her back, her vodka bottle intact in one hand.

PEGGY

Wow! This sure does beat Somerville. C'mon in. It'll cheer you up. Wanna drink, stranger?

RENATA

I want to go to my room. Would you please take my hand and get out of the pool. You're drunk and I can't really leave you. TAKE MY HAND!

PEGGY

Sure!

Renata helps Peggy out of the pool. Peggy leans against her and soaks Renata's dress. Renata is pissed off but still gets Peggy to the elevator. The doors shut.

PEGGY

Going up!

RENATA

I'm gonna drop you at the lobby.

PEGGY

Look stranger, we're exactly where we started - where we first ever ever met. Hey, what the hell's wrong with you?

Renata ignores her.

PEGGY

Can I tell you something?

Peggy leans against the Emergency Stop. The elevator lurches to a halt and a bell rings in the distance. Renata tries to move Peggy.

RENATA

Please, let us go and leave me alone. I should never have come here. I'm all messed up. Now, please move your body off that button.

PEGGY

(rapid fire delivery)

Look, I'm married and it's one of those that don't work. Oh yeah and we're even in love. Except there's a problem. You see I can't get enough of him ever! But him, if I'm around for five days straight and things are going great he gets so fucking claustrophobic he's gonna jump out of his skin or kill me and he bolts. I've gotten to the point where I don't even know why I love him. Maybe if he suddenly stuck around I'd die or maybe if he stuck around I wouldn't die. I'd be as happy as a pig in shit. I've gotten to the point I don't even know.

Renata starts to cry.

PEGGY (contd)

Oh come on, honey! I'm just at the first page of the story.

Renata keeps crying.

PEGGY (contd)

Hey, look, it gets better every day, whatever your problem is, pretty soon it won't hurt at all.

The elevator stays stuck between floors. The distant alarm continues to sound and now people are beginning to shout offers of assistance.

Renata looks at Peggy. Decides to ignore the chaos.

RENATA

I'll never forget.

PEGGY

Sure you will. Pretty soon it won't hurt at all. Just say it out loud.

RENATA

I can't.

(then, to herself)

Get me out of here.

PEGGY

(coaxing)

Say pretty...go ahead. Say pretty. Pretty...?

RENATA

(with less conviction)

I want to go to my room.

PEGGY

You have to stay with it, go ahead.

Renata takes a slug from Peggy's bottle.

RENATA

I just want to believe that someone will love me
for the rest of my life.

PEGGY

You have a mother, don't you? She'll love you
forever.

Renata finally smiles. She wipes her tears and takes a deep
breath.

RENATA

(a revelation)

Maybe pretty soon it won't hurt...

Peggy straightens up and releases the elevator. It starts with a
bump.

RENATA (contd)

Maybe this - uh - in here -

She hits her gut.

RENATA (contd)

- will go away.

The elevator stops at Renata's floor.

RENATA

You know what I'm dying for? A red, red, giant
steak.

Renata looks down at her shoes.

PEGGY

Rare!

RENATA

And I'll wear my red hot, sexy shoes.

The doors open.

INT: HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

Renata throws both suitcases on the bed. She pops them open. One
is full of clothes. The other is filled with shoes.

Renata immediately selects a pair of red high heels.

EXT: OUTDOOR DINING AREA - CONDO COMPLEX - NIGHT

A pair of red high heels. A SLOW TILT-UP REVEALING Renata in a sexy red dress. She looks over the layout of tables and trainees; buffet and band. At the small podium is Sam, the man Renata saw on the rocks. Renata is struck by his appearance. Two trainee women in their 50's pass, looking the same way.

TRAINEE #1

That's the lead salesman here.

TRAINEE #2

He's overbearing.

EXT: AT THE MIKE - NIGHT

Sam gets up and takes the microphone from the musicians.

SAM

Hi!

(talking to the microphone)

Hey are you just awfully glad to see me or it that a pencil in your pocket?

(to the crowd)

Hey, welcome guys and especially gals, welcome all you lucky trainees to the Baha Condo family.

He claps until the crowd joins in.

SAM (contd)

In case you don't know me I'm Sam Sharp and I guess you could say I've sold a few of these babies myself. Like, like two hundred and seventeen shares of them.

A stunned silence in the audience.

SAM (contd)

Yeah goddamn right a successful salesman is never modest and last year I made \$880,000 on commission alone.

Now listen, you're probably all saying to yourselves who is that guy up there? Who is that hugely successful salesperson, that well-dressed, well-hung guy. I am a direct descendant of a long line of Lithuanian generals. My family, god bless each and every one of them, immigrated to this wonderful country forty years ago when I was just a little fellow in shorts...

EXT: TABLE - NIGHT

A woman in her forties has had enough.

WOMAN

God! Do you believe this guy?

RENATA

I think he must have been adorable in shorts.

Renata looks for her placecard. She finds it and immediately switches hers with the one that was placed beside Sam's. The trainer is sitting nearby and notices.

TRAINER

Now you're acting like a salesperson.

EXT: BANDSTAND - NIGHT

Back to Sam.

SAM

I hope you'll enjoy your dinner tonight. It should delight you, the meat was flown in special today by an incredibly good and loyal friend of mine from the Vietnam days. He's a meat packer now in Queens and he's doing, god bless him, terrific business! Lou Gruffi. I love Lou...Let's give Lou a round of applause! That's the spirit. I'll tell Lou you did that for him. Bon appetite!

Renata is joyfully applauding him at her seat.

RENATA

What a nice thing to do!

Sam comes to the table, his brow full of sweat. He takes a napkin and wipes it. Pulls out a cigarette.

Sam claps his hand and calls the wine steward.

SAM

It's time for the Pierrot du Pepe.

RENATA

I love that wine.

SAM

Not many people have heard of it.

RENATA

I used to work in the food industry.

SAM

Oh, so did I.

RENATA

I thought it was pretty unusual to find here. In the middle of well...it's beautiful here but it's empty.

SAM

I ordered about four cases for the trainees' session before I left New York. I have a great friend in New York, he's known as the king of French import wines.

RENATA

Really!

Sam looks her over, her red high heels fascinate him.

SAM

Red is a beautiful color.

RENATA

It's my favorite color. Your suit is gorgeous.

SAM

You really like it?

RENATA

Oh yes! I love it, it's wonderful.

SAM

I bought it in Japan.

RENATA

No!

SAM

Yes!

RENATA

Wow!

SAM

Tokyo is a wild place.

RENATA

Yeah! I can imagine.

SAM

Now look at you. That dress is great but you have to see the dresses in Tokyo. I'd love to buy you a dress in Tokyo.

RENATA

Wow!

They both laugh wildly.

Some musicians float by them playing "Fly Me To The Moon."

RENATA (contd)

- My Dad sings that song to my mother. "Fly Me To The Moon."

SAM

I grew up in the 40's when they wrote incredible songs, that's why I have such intense passions.

RENATA (seriously)

Oh, I believe that one hundred percent. I mean I know all those songs because of my Dad and hell, men in my own generation never have understood me at all, I mean if you know...

(begins to sing)

"Fly me to the moon and let me play among the stars
Let me see what spring is like on..."

Sam joins in and they do a duet.

SAM and RENATA

"...Jupiter and Mars.

In other words, hold my hand, in other words,
darling, kiss me."

SAM

What's your name?

RENATA

Renata.

EXT: ROOF OF CONDO - NIGHT

The view is spectacular. Chinese lanterns all over. Sam and Renata come out of an elevator.

SAM

Renata, have you ever died?

RENATA

No.

SAM

I made you think, huh?

RENATA (laughing)

A little.

SAM

Well think about this. Don't go home to Boston,
come to New York City with me. For a weekend.

RENATA
Sam I hardly know you.

SAM
Oh, Renata! I know a store in New York that only sells red shoes. That's the kind of place it is.

RENATA
Sam, I have this job now.

SAM
This job is bullshit. The only time shares left to sell are studios in July without views. There's no money here.

RENATA
But you're here.

SAM
Not for long. Come to New York City with me.

RENATA
But my family's in Boston, I have to get back to them, they're worried.

SAM
You're the second most beautiful woman I've ever seen. And you know who the first one is, don't you? Don't you?

Renata thinks about it.

RENATA
Your mother?

SAM
Who else?

They both laugh.

RENATA
I don't believe you!

SAM
There's this old Bahamian custom that says if you kiss a woman on a roof on the first night that you meet her she will believe everything you ever tell her. And that's a fact.

They have one ever-so-light kiss.

RENATA
I shouldn't have done that. You're wearing a wedding ring.

SAM
In business it's better to be married.

RENATA
But you kissed me.

SAM
I'm divorced.

She walks away.

RENATA
Oh.

SAM
The divorce was final on September 2.
She stops short.

RENATA
No!

SAM
It was.

RENATA
God, that's my birthday.

They kiss again.

SAM
Just for a weekend? This weekend.

RENATA
Everything is too sudden I'm immeasurably
flattered, I mean a weekend is just two days -
but I can't. I have my family...

SAM
Give me two days to feed you baby shrimp and
white wine as intensely as I can...

Renata places her finger gently to his lips to silence him.

RENATA
I saw you and the moment I did a voice in me said
I'm going to kiss this guy in front of an altar
with God as a witness.

SAM
It did?

RENATA
And something else.

SAM (whispers)
Please, come...

RENATA
That voice inside me...

SAM (almost kissing her)
Yes?

RENATA
I've never heard it ever until I saw you.

They kiss again.

EXT: AIRPORT - DAY

Renata runs out of a taxi. She looks around and runs into the terminal.

INT: CHECK IN COUNTER - DAY

Renata slides into line.

TICKET CLERK
Your name and flight number?

RENATA
Renata Bella.

Renata's eyes quickly run over all the men coming and going in the airport.

TICKET CLERK
I don't see anything for B-E-L-L-A to Boston.

RENATA
That is impossible, I confirmed it yesterday.

TICKET CLERK
But I do have a Bella to New York City.

RENATA
Renata Bella? To New York City?

TICKET CLERK
(mimicking Renata's accent)
That's correct, to New York City.

Renata lights up.

INT: PLANE - DAY

Sam is romantically feeding Renata her airplane dinner.

Sam's fork suddenly becomes an airplane and dips and turns its way to Renata's mouth.

SAM

Vrrmmmm!

Renata, her head framed by clouds, snatches a bite.

EXT: SHALL TOWN ROTARY - DAY
AERIAL

A limo whipping around a rotary. Laughter inside.

INT: LIMO - DAY

In the back seat, Renata, Joe Bella and Sam are flying left and right as the car swerves round and round.

JOE BELLA

What suspension!

(to the driver)

You can crank her up ten more miles per hour. I mean this is an automobile!

Joe leans back and puts his arms around Renata.

JOE BELLA (contd)

Okay kid, now tell your old man all about your big-shot job.

Renata squeezes Joe Bella's arm. She can't take her eyes off of Joe Bella.

RENATA

Daddy, there's even champagne in that refrigerator.

Sam goes for the glasses, uncorks champagne.

JOE BELLA

No way can I take a glass of champagne, I get headaches and to be perfectly frank I don't like champagne. So what about your job? I'm dying to know.

Renata takes the bottle from Sam.

RENATA

Dad, I am with the most charismatic men I have ever known, doing wheelies in my home town in a limo. Please. One little toast.

Renata pours and entwines her arm around Joe's, so each drinks from the other's glass.

SAM

How do you refuse her, Joe. Tell me the secret.
I swear if I don't find out the secret soon, I'll
be doing the Tarantella in the nearest VFW hall.

Renata lets out a small squeal. She and Joe sip their champagne.

RENATA

To Sam, a real sharp tack.

JOE BELLA

I'll buy that.

Renata kisses Joe on the cheek.

SAM

To Joe Bella who I have known for a very short
while but who I can raise my glass to and
honestly say "to Joe Bella, a man made of love!"

Joe Bella laughs and drinks. They all sway to one side as they
take a corner. Joe Bella leans forward to the driver.

JOE BELLA

Next time around follow the lake. That way,
Renata, you'll tell both me and your mother about
your job.

(to Sam and Renata)

You gotta meet my wife, Sam. In fact...

(he raises his glass)

To Marilyn, the beautiful mother of my beautiful
daughter.

EXT: BELLA HOUSE - DAY

Marilyn is on the sloping Bella roof, cleaning a skylight.

The limo drives up. Marilyn walks to the edge of the roof.

MARILYN

Joe! Hello.

Joe Bella jumps out of the limo. Sam and Renata follow.

JOE BELLA

What the hell are you doing up there, get down.

Marilyn goes to the side of the house.

LADDER:

MARILYN

Someone has to clean the skylight. Hello,
babydoll!

Marilyn hugs Renata. Renata keeps her arms around her mother.

RENATA

Sam, this is my mother. Mom, this is Sam. Isn't she beautiful?

Sam takes her hand.

SAM

How do you explain a rose to someone who has never seen a rose before.

Marilyn smiles as Sam kisses her hand. Renata squeezes her tightly.

JOE BELLA

He detoured Renata to New York City just to drive with her to Boston.

SAM

If I had my way I would have driven her to California.

Renata looks from Joe to Marilyn. Renata is flushed.

MARILYN (excitedly)

What about the job? Do you like it honey?

RENATA

I learned I wouldn't be good at selling condos, right Sam?

SAM

She'd be sensational. But the place isn't good enough for her.

JOE BELLA

So! You're at square one again?

RENATA

Well not really, Dad.

She looks at Sam.

JOE BELLA

Well not really, Dad? What the hell -

THE SOUND OF BURNING RUBBER interrupts Joe Bella. Tony pulls up in a black Trans Am, whips into the driveway and slams to a shrieking stop. Extremely loud rap music blasts from the car. Tony shuts the engine and radio. He jumps out of the car and starts polishing a smudge. Then looks up.

TONY (casually)

Hi, Renata. Home early? How's the condo biz?

Renata grabs Sam. Joe Bella and Marilyn follow.

RENATA

• This is Sam.

Tony and Sam shake hands, checking each other out.

TONY

Nice limo.

SAM

It used to smell like a new car, now it's full of Renata's perfume.

Renata waves off the comment but enjoys it fully.

JOE BELLA

What the hell's that car you're driving?

Renata nudges her mother.

MARILYN

Tony, Sam, Renata...let's go up and have some nice ham and fried eggs.

TONY

I just stopped by to return Dad's battery charger. I have to go to work.

MARILYN

It's Saturday.

TONY

It's nice to meet you. I gotta go.

MARILYN

You have a small baby, Tony.

TONY

I have a plumber that cheats me and when I turn my back for one second...

Renata kisses Tony's cheek.

RENATA

Bye, Tony.

SAM

Tony, you'll have plenty of time to get to know me...

Renata shakes her head in full agreement and crosses her fingers to her parents. They shake hands again. Marilyn and Sam and Renata go up the stairs. Joe Bella stays around.

TONY

Who is he?

JOE BELLA

Don't make that face. He is quite a guy. Quite a guy. He's forty-five and sold eight hundred ninety thousand dollars worth of time shares in the Bahamas. I mean that guy sold the Bahamas, that's something.

TONY

I'd keep an eye on him.

JOE BELLA

You bought this car?

TONY

I love it.

JOE BELLA

Then you're a bigger asshole than I thought.

TONY

Thanks, Dad.

JOE BELLA

You're forty years old, have a wife and a new baby, and you don't even own a home yet.

Tony gets in car. Shuts door.

JOE BELLA (contd)

The car costs twenty thousand dollars.

Tony zooms off.

JOE BELLA (contd)

Asshole!

EXT: BELLA HOUSE - NIGHTTIME

The moon is full above the house. A few dim lights are on. The limo is still parked in front of the house.

INT: BELLA HOME - THE FRONT ROOM - NIGHTTIME

The limo driver is asleep on the couch. He snores away. Two or three empty vodka bottles are on the end table. Renata and Sam giggling in other part of the house.

LIT: GUEST ROOM - NIGHTTIME

Sam, still in his suit and tie, is on all fours. He howls to the moon out the window. Renata laughs uncontrollably.

SAM
Climb aboard, baby! Come on.

RENATA
I'm too fat.

SAM
Come on! I'm the horse and you're the fat lady
going to her lover! Mount the steed!

Renata laughs vigorously and climbs aboard. Sam wipes the sweat off his brow.

INT: BEDROOM - JOE BELLA AND MARILYN - NIGHTTIME

TV is on. Marilyn is in bed sitting up.

MARILYN
The room spins.

She starts to laugh. Amazed, she has a revelation.

MARILYN (contd)
Russian vodka!

JOE BELLA
It's two o'clock in the morning. I mean we don't
know this guy really. I think she should go to
her own goddamn room, it's close to two-thirty.

MARILYN
Joe, I don't mean to talk crazy but if they work
out I'll be the happiest mother in the world.
Joe! Where are you going?

INT: HALLWAY - BELLA HOUSE - NIGHTTIME

Joe Bella goes directly to guest room, opens door without knocking.
Renata is walking on all fours. Sam is laughing. They both look
up.

SAM
Joe, Joe! She is so funny! Get this, she's
showing me how her horse Horny...

RENATA
Shoni! God! His name is Shoni, Sam!

SAM
...she's showing me how her horse Shoni would
walk in the mud, in the spring, right after...

Renata gets off her fours and sits cross-legged on the bed.

RENATA

We woke you?

JOE BELLA

What the hell's the matter with you, Renata?
Your mother can't sleep.

Sam pours some vodka for himself, hands Joe a glass.

RENATA

Dad.

JOE BELLA

For christsakes it's three o'clock in the morning.

RENATA (impatiently)

Okay, fine. I'm going to bed.

JOE BELLA

Oh. What's that attitude? All of a sudden I'm the bad guy because it's three thirty in the morning and I'm saying go to bed for christsakes.

RENATA

All right.

JOE BELLA

Your mother wants some goddamn sleep.

Joe Bella leaves without shutting the door behind him.

SAM

Renata, don't let him be angry. Sweeten him up, buttercup.

Renata stands, takes two swigs of vodka and leaves the room.

INT: BELLA BEDROOM - NIGHTTIME

Joe and Marilyn lie in bed. Renata enters.

RENATA

Dad?

JOE BELLA

Don't worry, sweetheart, you're forgiven, just go to sleep now.

She doesn't move.

MARILYN

What's wrong? Are you okay?

RENATA

Oh what do you know? If I'm okay! If I told you how wrong everything has been since Rob...If I told either one of you, you'd probably call the cops on me or a priest or Jan or a medical doctor or...

(rapid-fire delivery)

Listen, I am clutching for dear life in there, okay. Hell! I've been split down the middle, split down the fucking middle - I've had my insides yanked out of me - I've been flung into this wasteland to figure out how come two plus two made five and at the same time I feel like I'm gonna turn into a white flame and suddenly go Pfft! Disintegrate. And you ask me if I'm okay! That's not the point. It's just not the point. The point is I don't want to be told when to go to bed.

JOE BELLA

All right, stay up late. No problem.

RENATA

You bet, you bet I'm staying up late, if I want.

JOE BELLA

Okay.

RENATA

Okay, Mom?

MARILYN

Okay, honey, stay up late if you want.

Renata walks to the door. Then stops. Reconsiders.

RENATA

And then again I just might go right to bed.

JOE BELLA

That's okay too.

She leaves gently shutting the door behind her.

INT: BELLA LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The limo driver asleep on the couch. Renata looks at him. She fixes his blanket. She goes outside.

EXT: BELLA HOUSE - NIGHT

Renata sees limo parked in the driveway. The full moon reflects on its shiny, black tail fender. She stares, calming down.

The light in Joe Bella's and Marilyn's bedroom goes off. Renata looks at the bedroom window and whispers:

RENATA

• Sorry.

INT: BELLA GUEST ROOM - NIGHTTIME

Sam is the fallen horse. He's crapped out on his side, his arms and legs stick out from his body. He snores through the tie that sits in his mouth like reins.

INT: BELLA KITCHEN - DAYTIME

CUT TO: CLOSE UP OF TWELVE CLOVES OF GARLIC

A deftly wielded cleaver rapidly chops them into paper thin slices. The garlic slices are slid into a frying pan loaded with other garlic slices.

Sam Sharp, in his suit and an apron that reads, "Kiss me I'm Italian," takes a drag off his cigarette and begins to crack eggs one-handed into a frying pan.

INT: BELLA HOUSE - GIRL'S ROOM - DAYTIME

Renata, in a towel, sings "Fly Me to the Moon" as she selects without hesitation an aquamarine sweater dress.

RENATA

Fill my heart with song, let me sing forevermore,
You are all I long for, all I worship and adore.

In one sexy motion Renata drops the dress over her head and the towel to the floor.

INT: BELLA BEDROOM - DAYTIME

JOE BELLA comes out of bathroom in his robe, freshly showered. Renata can now be heard whistling her song.

JOE BELLA

Do you hear that?

MARILYN

Is it really her?

INT: BELLA KITCHEN - DAYTIME

Renata, Joe and Marilyn arrive at once. Renata is dressed beautifully. Sam turns triumphantly, frying pan raised high.

SAM

Breakfast is served! Hey, Marilyn, do you know how to make eggs Lithuanian?

MARILYN

No, Sam.

SAM

Well, first you steal a dozen eggs.

He laughs at his joke, picks up a tray with a full breakfast on it and goes to the door.

SAM

Good morning, Renata.

RENATA (beaming)

Good morning, Sam.

SAM

Gotta feed my driver.

Sam exits outside.

Marilyn and Joe look at each other.

RENATA

Happy birthday, Daddy. Sorry if we kept you up, Mom.

They kiss. Marilyn looks to Joe, confused. Joe waves it off.

JOE BELLA (to Renata)

Where are you going, all dressed up?

Renata now sings "Moon River."

RENATA

"I'm off to see the world, there's such a lot of world to see..."

MARILYN

Your sister's coming home tonight, so don't forget that.

RENATA

I know. I know. Isn't it just an incredible day. Daddy's birthday, Jan's coming home.

Renata looks out to the lake. Sam now stands on the shore looking at the wintry surface of the lake.

RENATA (contd)

You don't mind him being here, do you?

JOE BELLA

Well...I'm surprised. I thought you'd come home with a job.

RENATA

I can't help it if it wasn't right for me.

MARILYN (to Renata)

Honey, don't even think about it, he's no problem.

Joe walks away.

Sam turns and waves. Renata waves back, throws on a coat and runs outside.

EXT: BOSTON - CITY STREET.- DAY

The limo drives down Storow Drive.

SAM

Let me see it again.

Renata smiles and unbuttons her coat. She is wearing a shimmering red silk dress.

RENATA

And my family would die if they knew. Sam, I should know -

SAM

Look at those buttons, the neckline, the red alligator belt.

RENATA

- more about you.

SAM

Leave your coat off.

RENATA

No, you're just going to stare at me.

SAM

I was going to smoke and stare at you.

He lights a cigarette.

RENATA

Listen, let me ask anything I want about you.

Sam moves closer to her.

SAM

Renata, I'm busting inside, I swear, the adrenalin in me is wow, kick ass. Do I look okay? 'Cause I'm going crazy.

RENATA

Why?

SAM

Why am I going crazy? You know if you were a food you'd be a lemon meringue pie.

RENATA

God that's gross. Stop that.

SAM

No, it's not, it's beautiful. Let me kiss your hand.

He takes her hand and kisses it. Then he puts it between his legs.

RENATA

Sam...what are you doing?

SAM

I haven't felt, I mean...it's just, you have awoken Sam Sharp. Do not move. If you care at all for me, this car, this moment - leave your hand there.

RENATA

I can't, I can't do this.

SAM

Live with me in New York City.

RENATA

No, that's impossible.

SAM

I'm knocked out, bowled over, everything, everything is you know what? You know what it is?

RENATA

What?

SAM

Now. There is a very fresh beginning starting right here. Kiss everything before now goodbye. Say yes. Say yes to me.

Renata moves her hand.

RENATA

God! I can hardly respond to that right now. You just can't go grabbing...and, and New York City - I am, I'm not, I'm -

They turn onto a bridge. Sam looks out.

SAM
Driver, stop here.

Sam opens the door and stands on the bridge.

SAM (contd)
Stand out here. Come on.

They both stand on the bridge.

RENATA
And look, I'll be honest, when I look out here,
the Charles...What are you doing? Sam, Sam! Put
me down.

Sam picks her up and puts her on the hood of the limo.

SAM
Trust me.

RENATA
Sam, listen, Sam, look over there at the science
museum, when I was a Brownie I used to go there.
Then when I was a Girl Scout, I took Jan, who was
a Brownie. I took her whole troop. Sam, why is
this so important to me?

SAM
You know when I was a little boy I used to sneak
into my mother's bedroom.

RENATA
So what!! We're talking about me, now...

SAM
My mother kept their bedroom so damn clean.

An ambulance zooms across the bridge, sirens on. Renata is
distracted.

SAM (contd)
And it was dark and the bed that my parents slept
in was old and indented. After my grandfather's
heart attack, I used to go in and stare at his
photo. It was by her hairpins. He was a general
in Lithuania.

RENATA
A general!

SAM
Yeah. And you know what I'd be thinking?

RENATA

You'd be a general too.

SAM

No.

RENATA

Bullshit.

SAM

No...I'd say, Sam, his blood, this hugely elegant man decorated with medals and stars - his blood is coursing through your veins. And I knew I had his virile, potent, powerful blood in me and I'd run out of the room, age seven, dying to do something decisive.

RENATA

I know that feeling, Sam. I had it just before I met you!

SAM

Do something to be remembered by and I'd go running out yelling: "Mommie, Mommie, did I really suck on your tits when I was a little boy?"

Sam laughs. Renata stares at him, shocked. Then laughs.

RENATA

And she'd smack you one.

SAM

Yeah but so what!

RENATA

Sam, what does this all mean?

SAM

Don't you understand? It means come to New York, live with me.

RENATA

I can't. I can't. Leaving my family is like renouncing my citizenship, or moving to Russia, or becoming Protestant.

SAM

Renata! You're a grown woman now...Act like one.

Renata shakes her head no.

RENATA

That's not the point.

Sam knocks on the windshield of the car. He motions to the driver to hand him the car phone.

Sam takes the car phone as long as it will go.

RENATA

Sam, what are you doing?

SAM

I'm dialing my accountant's number. Baby, I'm gonna look at the Charles River every day I got to live for the rest of my life and when he says why am I leaving New York, I'm gonna say 'cause man, I is in love!

Renata stands alone on the hood of the limousine parked on the side of the bridge over the Charles River.

INT: BELLA KITCHEN - DAYTIME

Joe Bella is standing up on a ladder. He is in the kitchen, changing a light fixture. He's sweating and having trouble with the whole thing.

MARILYN (VO)

He is very much older looking than forty-five.
He lives in New York City.

JOE BELLA

And I'm glad too. Imagine that guy on a day-to-day basis. Whew!

MARILYN

Look, he sent me all this!

There is a huge bouquet of roses and about ten bottles of Russian vodka on the table. Gail, the daughter-in-law, is a very stylish WASP in her late 30's.

GAIL

Well, forty-five is young!

JOE BELLA

I don't know why I'm putting in this fixture.

GAIL

Four dozen long stemmed roses, wow!

JOE BELLA (to Gail)

I'm sixty years old today, you'd think my goddamn son...your husband...

GAIL

And Renata likes him?

JOE BELLA

Like him? She's almost as enthused as your mother-in-law is.

Joe Bella climbs down the ladder, disgusted. He takes an overflowing ashtray and dumps the butts out the kitchen door, angrily. Marilyn takes a cake out of a box. Joe Bella sees it.

JOE BELLA (contd)

Don't do anything fancy for my birthday.

MARILYN

Can't you just for once take what's given and not go spoiling it with your thinking.

Joe Bella faces her.

JOE BELLA

There never was a day, Marilyn, that I would or could court you like that.

(he points to the flowers)

I'm sorry I liked just sitting on your stoop and holding your hand.

MARILYN

So did I.

He walks away to the door. He's angry. He stops.

JOE BELLA

Isn't it funny that on the one lousy day you want to stick a gun in your mouth everyone wants to come over and celebrate?

MARILYN

That's 'cause we love you.

INT: BELLA DINING ROOM - NIGHTTIME

Around the table there is Tony, Gail, Sam, Renata and Marilyn. Joe Bella is trying to get Renata to eat some cake.

JOE BELLA

You want to try the best chocolate cake you've ever eaten. Go on. Here. Take it. Oh, no, no, no, don't eat it yet. Marilyn! Where's the bananas, huh?

MARILYN

Coming up.

She pretends to sock Joe Bella with a banana.

MARILYN (contd)

Here it is.

JOE BELLA

I was gonna get them myself, sit down, Marilyn.
Sit.

MARILYN

I am sitting.

She leaves the table for some cream. Renata gulps down the slice of cake.

JOE BELLA

Now, oh! You ruined it! You ate it. Sam,
forget her. You want to try the best chocolate
cake in the world?

He cuts a new sliver.

He pours cream over the cake and pats the cake with his fork.

SAM

Oh come on, Joe! My arteries will clog up.

JOE BELLA

Just let this sop up all the cream, oh this is
fattening. There you go, Sam, eat it.

He lifts the cake dripping in cream to Sam's lips. He eats it.

JOE BELLA (contd)

Ah! Delicious! Right! Fabulous! Right!
Ah...but fattening...and you gotta watch your
weight, man. Isn't it good, Sam? you bet it is.
Come on, Sam, open up, one more...

SAM

Renata, go get your father's birthday gift.

Joe puts his hand over Renata's to keep her there.

JOE BELLA (to Sam)

You want to try it with a little bananas and
cream? Oh man! But you gotta watch out - you
have a little road tire around your waist -

RENATA (laughs)

Come on, Dad - I'll be right back.

JOE BELLA

Oh! No, no! I don't want a gift.

Renata gets up and returns with a big box.

RENATA

It's mostly from Sam. Open it.

JOE BELLA
I'm not gonna say no forever but you shouldn't
have done that. Really.

He opens it up and it is a black silk suit.

JOE BELLA (contd)
Oh my god, Jesus Christ, my god, Christ almighty,
what on earth did you do? A suit!

RENATA
He couldn't help it, Dad. He knew the moment he
saw you that you would stand out in a black suit.
It's all silk.

Sam nods in happy agreement.

Renata brings another box and gives it to Tony.

RENATA (contd)
Tony, we got you this. It was there and your
size, and well...

Tony puts on the jacket.

TONY
Wow! What do you say, Dad, huh?

JOE BELLA
Jesus, this is really incredible. Really, Tony,
you look, you look wow! Powerful.

A doorbell rings.

SAM
I think you should answer it, Joe.

JOE BELLA
Why? What's going on?

RENATA
Just do it, Dad. Answer the door.

Renata looks at her mother and Gail and winks.

Joe Bella goes to the door. An exotic, beautiful woman is there.

WOMAN
Joe Bella?

JOE BELLA
That's me.

Sam puts an album on the turntable. Lithuanian music plays. The woman opens her coat revealing that she is in a belly dance costume. She dances into the living room. Dragging Joe Bella with her. Joe Bella is amazed. He dances with her.

MARILYN (to Gail)

Look at him make a fool of himself.

Renata pinches her mother playfully on her arm and nods to her to look again at Joe.

Joe Bella has tears in his eyes. Sam pulls Renata along with them.

Joe Bella sweeps Marilyn into the dance. Sam, Joe Bella and Marilyn form a circle. They grab onto Tony and Gail and, forming a chain, they tour around the house. Tony grabs onto a bottle of vodka.

The dancing family go through the living room. They go through the kitchen. They go back towards the main room.

Sam gets in the middle of them and does something like a Russian hat dance.

EXT: BELLA DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

A taxi pulls up. Jan and Peter arrive. Peter wears a black leather jacket, black jeans.

JAN

Do you hear that? It sounds...

PETER

Byzantine?

Peter walks toward her, he puts his hands on her hips.

He yanks up her short skirt and pulls her to him.

JAN

Cut that out! Stop it now. Christsakes.

PETER

Let me put it inside real fast right now.

Jan looks at him like he's insane.

PETER (contd)

We'll go under that bush. Please. Just feel it. Just give it a touch.

JAN

This is a front lawn in America. Peter.

Jan pulls away from him. And dragging most of the luggage starts up the stairs to her front door.

JAN (contd)

They're dancing. They can't be dancing.

Peter watches Jan's ass as she puts her key in the door.

Jan opens the door. The dancing family passes. They all stop as if caught by a superior.

JOE BELLA

Hey! Baby! Meet Sam Sharp! Sam, this is Jan, our youngest. This is Peter, her husband.

MARILYN

The newlyweds!

RENATA

Jan, I was dying for you to come home!

They embrace.

JAN

Who's the guy?

RENATA

My new boyfriend.

Jan laughs aloud and hugs her tighter.

JAN

Who is he really?

RENATA (sternly)

I'm with him.

Renata refuses to respond to Jan's amazement.

RENATA (contd)

(to all)

My god! Look at her! You're not even suntanned!

(to Sam)

She probably sat in museums all day. Jan, this is Sam Sharp.

SAM

I hope you have a lifetime of great sex and joy.

Jan looks at Tony and Joe Bella. Peter heartily shakes Sam's hand. Tony breaks the ice.

TONY

That's what it's all about.

Renata grabs Tony and Joe's hands.

RENATA

Let's all go up to the kitchen and sing happy birthday again.

JOE BELLA

Oh for christsakes, lay off.

MARILYN (taking Jan's hand)

Let's.

They all head up the stairs. Jan has more to ask but Renata signals for her to back off.

Sam stands talking to the belly dancer in Lithuanian. Renata stops.

RENATA

Tell her to join us!

Sam opens his wallet and pulls out bills to pay dancer.

SAM

There's no reason, she did her shtick.

He folds the bills up small. He says something to her in Lithuanian. She shakes her breasts. He laughs and puts the money in her cleavage.

SAM (contd)

That's happy birthday in Lithuanian.

EXT: BELLA HOUSE - DAWN

A hot yellow streak of light refracts on a window.

INT: BELLA HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

Renata tosses and turns. The light hits Renata in the face. Her eyes open. She gets out of bed and exits room.

INT: KITCHEN - DAWN

Renata takes two aspirins. Looks outside. She smiles. The big Bella lawn shimmers with a white morning frost. She squints because a huge orange sun rises and fills the horizon.

Something catches her eye. Jan is standing in the yard by the clothesline.

EXT: BELLA YARD - DAWN

A clothesline with man's pants and shirts hung out, they are frozen solid in the cold. Jan taps on the pants and shirts. She tries to yank off a clothes pin.

INT: KITCHEN - DAWN

Renata is just about to knock on the window when -

EXT: ANOTHER PART OF THE YARD - DAWN

A man walks toward Jan. It is Jim. His feet crunch in the frozen grass.

Jan has placed a pair of frozen pants upright on the lawn. She laughs at the image. Then she struggles to remove another clothes pin when, from behind her, appears Jim.

INT: KITCHEN - DAWN

Renata sneaks behind a curtained window and carefully opens it to listen.

EXT: YARD - DAWN

JIM

I saw you come home last night.

JAN (startled)

Jim! You can't be here.

JIM

I was behind the big tree.

JAN

That's wonderful. But, Jim, we have to move a little from the window, my parents, Peter...

Jim falls to his knees.

JIM

I need you, I really need you.

Jan looks to the house. Renata moves just in time.

Jim stays on his knees, as if in pain.

JIM (contd)

Remember you needed me at your wedding and couldn't explain it?

JAN

It was insane to break up. You really missed me, didn't you?

JIM
I met a woman. She's phenomenal. She asked me to marry her. I want you there. Next Thursday. You have to be there. I can't look at you until you say yes.

JAN
How could you meet a woman, I've been away only...

JIM
A bar.

JAN
And you're going to marry someone you met in a bar. I went with Peter for five years! Look at me for christsakes!

JIM
I am kneeling on the exact spot you got married on.

JAN
Please, Jim. Get up.

JIM
If you don't give me your blessing I won't get married and if I don't get married, I'll stay here and freeze to death.

Jan looks anxiously to the kitchen window. Renata, captivated, forgets to move but all Jan can see is the glare from the rising sun.

Jan starts to cry.

Jim holds her legs and she kneels down to him on the ground. He kisses her face, frantically.

They kiss passionately, then Jan pulls away from him.

JAN
I am happy for you, you fucking asshole, okay?
I'm crying tears of goddamn happiness. Okay!
Now, go away! Now!

Jim runs away. Jan turns to the frozen pants beside her and kicks them away. She runs inside. Renata watches her from behind the living room doorway.

EXT: FROZEN LAKE - DAY

The limo is parked half on the ice. All its doors are open and Strauss-like skating music blasts from within. In and out of the limo, Renata, Joe, Marilyn, Jan and Peter are lacing skates. Every one of them wears a bright red scarf. There is a pile of empty skate boxes on the ice.

Sam is smoking, gliding through the air. It is revealed that he is on skates. He gives orders.

SAM

Come on, come on. I'm out here all by myself.
Come on, Joe, we'll whip the ladies around. Jan,
you ready for a little whipping?

Jan looks up. She's sitting on the hood of the limo. Peter laughs, skates by and pinches her breast. She gives him a look. He stops and pulls a price tag off her scarf. She returns to studying Sam.

SAM (VO)

Ren, Ren, hold on tight.

Sam is playing a game. He skates very fast and pulls Renata down along at the end of a hockey stick. Renata lets go and gracefully spins to a stop.

FURTHER DOWN THE ICE

Sam skates to Joe Bella, who is skating slowly, holding hands with Marilyn. He hands him the stick.

SAM

Come on, old buddy.

Joe Bella protests.

Sam thrusts the stick in his hands.

SAM

I'll take it easy on you. I just want you to see
what kind of takeoff you can get with these
Olympic babies.

OTHER PART OF ICE

Peter skates by Jan and Renata, hooking one on each arm.

RENATA

Peter, Sam got a job here as franchise director
for Women's Fitness World. He'll be making a
fortune - base!

PETER

Wow, you got to admit that Sam has flair.

RENATA

What do you think, Jan, you haven't told me what you think.

JAN

Well, you used to talk about having a job but -

RENATA

I'm asking you how you feel about Sam. What do you think?

JAN

I think you should take it slow. I thought you were supposed to be selling condos by now.

RENATA

And what are you doing that's so goddamn important?

JAN

At least I'm worried about my future - not avoiding it!

RENATA

Give me a break. You're so stuck here -

JAN

He? Ha! Your feet are nailed to the fucking kitchen floor. You don't do anything without Daddy's permission - or is it Sam's now? At least I, I...

Renata grabs Jan by her arm and skates the two of them away from Peter, who trails behind.

RENATA

What? Have Peter?

Jan jerks away from Renata and starts toward Peter.

RENATA (yells)

Or is it Jim?

Jan stops abruptly. She looks at Renata and then over to Peter. He waves.

RENATA

I saw you this morning.

Jan is silent.

RENATA
I'm just asking you to give me and Sam the same
kind of consideration you give a neighbor.

JAN
Come on, Renata, you hardly know the guy.

RENATA
Okay, fine! You can just screw off, okay. Just
screw off.

Renata skates off toward Sam. Peter skates up to Jan.

JAN (yelling after Renata)
Oh yeah. You're just pissed off I went on my
honeymoon instead of taking care of your stupid
broken heart. Lunatic!

RENATA
Oh yeah! That's right. Just keep believing that
one. That's right!

PETER
Jan!

JAN
She's a lunatic.

PETER
He makes her happy. Can't you see that?

He nudges Jan to look.

Sam is walking on the toes of his skates across the ice to Renata.
He sings "Ain't She Sweet." Renata laughs and sings happily with
him, waving her red scarf above her head like a lasso.

Jan turns to Peter who smiles at her and sings along.

PETER
Now I ask you very confidentially - ain't she
sweet?

Jan slaps him half seriously and looks after Renata with concern.

EXT: BELLA HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is dark. A light snaps on. Goes off. Goes back on and
stays on.

INT: BELLA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joe Bella and Marilyn asleep in bed. TV on.

The door opens. It is Jan. She walks up to them and shakes Joe Bella.

JAN

Dad, Mom, wake up.

Joe's eyes open, he nudges Marilyn.

JAN

I cannot sleep unless I say the following.

JOE BELLA

Then say it then...

JAN

Does anyone care that Renata is spending night and day with some bozo. We don't know a thing about the guy, he could be a criminal and he's living with us for some weird reason. Why?

JOE BELLA

Goddamn it...Marilyn, he's been here long enough, enough is enough. I'm getting pretty goddamn tired of smelling smoke and drinking vodka.

MARILYN

Joe, you invited him...you tell him.

Joe looks at Marilyn as though that is news to him.

MARILYN (contd)

Oh you know damn right well...you drove around in that limo at 9 A.M. drinking champagne and...well...after all that...

JOE BELLA

Don't you ever suggest that I am seduced by that bullshit. He goes tomorrow.

Jan, satisfied, leaves the room.

EXT: BELLA HOUSE - DAY

Sam and Joe Bella walk down the front stairs toward the cars.

JOE BELLA

Sam, I want to talk to you after the wedding.

Sam slaps Joe on the back.

SAM

Sure, Joe.

Jan, Peter and Marilyn come out of the house. Joe joins Jan.

JOE BELLA
You know, Jan, it's a little funny to be going to
this wedding. I mean Jim grew up right next door
and we never even met this girl.

JAN
Well, it's a fucked-up world, Dad.
Renata and Peter come down the stairs.

JOE BELLA
All your instincts want you to pull the kid to
the side and say what's your rush?

JAN
Sometimes people know, they just know like that
they're in love.
CLOSE ON RENATA: She turns and looks at Jan, astonished.

RENATA
I'm glad you're so open-minded, Jan.
Joe gets into the car. Jan goes to join Peter and Marilyn, when
Renata takes her by the arm.

RENATA
Jan, let's forget yesterday, okay?

JAN
I was being an asshole yesterday.

RENATA
No! You cared. And you're right, I have to take
it easy with Sam. Worry about myself more.

JAN
But I want you to have a good life. Throw
yourself at life - smack into it. You deserve
it.

RENATA
I want you to butt in as much as you want.

JAN
I promise, I'm gonna emphasize the positive from
now on.

RENATA
And I promise I'm gonna cool my jets with Sam.
Become objective.

She gives Jan a hug. As everyone gets in their cars. Marilyn
gives Jan a pat on the ass. They drive off.

EXT: COUNTRY-LIKE ROAD - DAY

Elvis Costello's "Waiting for the End of the World" plays.

Joe Bella and family drive down road in open convertible, everyone wears winter coats.

Sam and Renata in limo.

EXT: PERFECT HILLSIDE NEW ENGLAND CHAPEL - DAY

There are only two cars parked in the church parking lot. Then the convertible pulls up. With a great deal of noise and talk Joe Bella, Marilyn, Jan and Peter get out of car and go up to church door. Renata and Sam pull up and park beside convertible. Renata gets out of car, her dress catches and tears on the car door.

RENATA

I'm gonna scream, I love this dress! Look what happened, Sam!

Sam tends to Renata's dress getting more caught up in lifting up her dress and pinching her ass than mending the tear. Renata enjoys him but is agitated.

RENATA

Sam, something's bugging me...

A limo pulls up behind Renata and Sam. It is the bride, Honey.

SAM

My my my...I think you should take a look at this bride.

Renata's head pops up.

Honey is very sexy. You can't tell if her gown is trashy or if she'd make any gown look trashy.

SAM (contd)

Boy, oh boy, now that's a woman spelt with a big firm capital W.

Renata curiously watches Sam leer at Honey as she enters the church.

RENATA

Sam, how do I know you didn't just grab the first thing that grabbed you?

SAM

Renata...Renata.

He takes her in his arms, surprised by her question.

INT: CHURCH - DAY

Renata and Sam sit in the back of church. The service begins.

MINISTER

We are gathered here to unite...

Jan looks back at Renata. They wave. Sam takes Renata's hand.

MINISTER (contd)

...in holy wedlock Jim Redstone and Honey Beach.

Jan's head goes down.

MINISTER (contd)

Do you, Jim Redstone, take Honey Beach to be your lawful wedded bride to love, to honor and cherish all the days of your life?

As Jim mumbles his vows at the altar, Sam in a clear whisper recites the vows to Renata.

SAM

I Sam Sharp take Renata Bella to be my lawful wife to love and to honor...

RENATA (annoyed)

Stop that! That's not funny.

He continues over her protests.

SAM

...and cherish all the days of my life...Say the vows to me...say them, Renata.

The minister turns to Honey.

MINISTER

Do you, Honey Beach, take Jim Redstone as your lawful wedded husband to love, honor and cherish for all the days of your life?

Sam smiles and strokes Renata's cheek,

RENATA

Leave me alone.

SAM

I can't. Say "I, Renata take Sam Sharp..."

Jan looks back to Sam and Renata. Joe Bella turns too.

RENATA

Sam! This is not a fun game.

Honey begins her vows in a whisper.

Sam kisses Renata softly on the mouth.

SAM (coaxing)
I Renata Bella take Sam Sharp to be...

RENATA
My lawful wedded husband to love, honor and
cherish all the days of my life?

The seven or so guests, Honey and Jim, have all turned their
attention to Renata and Sam.

INT: CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

A little boy plays "The Wedding March" on the harmonica. He sits
alone in a corner of a large empty hall. There is only one table,
no food, no drinks. All the guests occupy one empty table.

Sam pops open a bottle of champagne.

SAM
I thought a little bubbly would be appropriate!

Renata begins to fill some Dixie cups. She pours too high and
several overflow.

JIM
I'm sorry there's nothing here.

Jim points out the little boy to Marilyn.

JIM (to Marilyn)
That's her son. I guess he's my son now too!

Marilyn smiles uneasily.

SAM
I'd like to make a toast.

Joe Bella tries to smile. He sits beside Jan and Marilyn. His arm
around each.

JIM
Oh! That's...that's great! Isn't that great,
Honey.

Honey sits on Peter's lap. She runs over to Sam and slips her arm
in his. He squeezes her tight to him.

HONEY
Weddings are so romantic.

Sam gets a roar of a laugh from her statement. Renata takes his other arm.

HONEY (contd)

Go ahead, Sammy.

RENATA

Make the toast.

SAM

Thank you, thank you...Those of you who know me a bit by now won't be surprised that I'd like to propose a toast to the consummate happiness of Jim and Honey.

Jim is a swell guy. I don't know him well, but I can tell from the way Jan is sweet on him, he must be one heck of a guy.

Joe and Peter look at Jan, who folds and refolds a hanky.

SAM (contd)

And Honey, well I don't really need to say anything about Honey, she and I got a chance to get acquainted a few minutes ago in the men's room and - all, all kidding aside!

Renata half-seriously socks him in the arm.

SAM (contd)

Inspired by the happiness and great love that we see around us, and the shining example of Joe Bella and his wife Marilyn, darling Jan and her husband Peter. Inspired by each one of you beautiful people, I would like to announce the engagement of Renata Bella and Sam Sharp the 4th. As we say in Lithuanian "_____ " which roughly translated means dogs can't make their dreams come true so people have to...thank you very much.

Sam presents a beautiful ring!

Renata is glowing.

Jim jumps to his feet and starts applauding wildly.

Joe Bella's face drops.

Jan starts to walk out. Marilyn grabs her.

MARILYN

How could you let your sister do this?

JAN

How could I? She told me a half hour ago she wanted to be independent of everybody.

MARILYN

God your father will fall apart.

Renata runs to Joe Bella with a glass of champagne. He tries to refuse it. Renata drags him to the others. Peter, Jim and Honey are making a round of toasts for Sam and Renata. Joe Bella is caught having to raise his glass to toast.

JIM

To love at first sight and all those under its spell.

Jan appears and moves Joe Bella away from the group.

JAN

Daddy, what are you going to do?

Renata sees Jan with Joe. Renata grabs Joe and returns him to Sam.

SAM

Joe! Dad. --

Sam bear hugs Joe.

SAM (contd)

Hey, now, what did you want to talk to me about.

JOE BELLA

No, no -

SAM

Joe! Dad, be frank, I'm almost your son now.

Sam pulls Renata to him and they kiss.

SAM (contd)

Don't tell me Joe Bella is shy!

JOE BELLA

No, now cut it out. I had something to say but the situation's different now.

Sam hits Joe on the arm.

SAM

It sure is!

Sam turns to Renata, gives Joe a wink and dances through the hall, humming his own tune.

The boy with the harmonica still plays alone in his corner.

EXT/INT: GARAGE - BELLA HOUSE - NIGHTTIME

A bare light bulb hangs over the engine of Tony's Trans Am. Rock and roll music is on. Tony is fixing his engine. He is spotless, his work is meticulous. Joe Bella comes down and immediately knocks over Tony's tool box.

TONY

Oh for christsakes! Watch out, Daddy!

JOE BELLA

You talk to your sister - goddamn it.

TONY

I never talk to her, Dad. You know that.

JOE BELLA

She's twenty-six. She's a grown woman. And Tony, she's so happy. I always knew she'd do this. Grow up, get married...there's nothing wrong with it. I just thought, she's so tough in many ways, I...

He can't talk. He starts to cry.

TONY

Just 'cause she gets married doesn't mean she's dying...

Tony keeps on working.

TONY (contd)

Daddy, Dad...stop. Come on, Daddy, nothing's gonna happen to her.

Tony stops working and goes over to Joe Bella.

TONY (contd)

She loves that guy.

He puts his arm around Joe Bella. Joe Bella holds onto Tony and starts to cry and cry.

JOE BELLA

I don't like all this crap, the suits, the dresses, the vodka, the cars, everything fancy...like we're all being kept by him.

TONY

Don't worry...Renata likes that.

Joe Bella controls himself.

JOE BELLA

I'll tell you he better not pull anything with her. He'll find out pretty damn fast what the hell I'm made of. I'm an animal when it comes to my family, an animal.

INT: HUGE DRESSING ROOM - BRIDAL STORE - DAY

Renata puts a gown over her head. Its beautiful lace tumbles to the ground.

Marilyn sits on the other side of huge dressing room. She is mesmerized. Renata looks beautiful.

Attendant enters and is frozen by the sight of Renata.

ATTENDANT

She is absolutely shimmering in that brocade.

Jan moves through the doorway.

MARILYN

Look at your sister. Love is just pouring out of her.

- JAN

Maybe I should get a mop.

Jan leaves.

Renata looks at the door as it closes. She kicks an empty hat box.

RENATA

Mom, you know what I want?

MARILYN

What, dear?

RENATA

I want to get married in your wedding gown. The one you wore to marry Daddy in.

MARILYN

I was a size tiny then.

RENATA

Unzip me, get me out of this thing.

Renata comes out of the gown. She is in a slip.

Renata looks at herself in the mirror, sucks in her gut.

RENATA

I'm gonna squeeze every last inch of me into it if it's the last thing I do.

MARILYN

I want to say one thing to you and that's all and I'm saying it 'cause your father won't.

RENATA (busy with dress)

What won't Daddy say?

MARILYN

We retire in three months. We have put aside money for your wedding. It will kill your father if he can't feel responsible for your wedding. I know Sam -

RENATA (cutting in)

Mother! Stop. We plan a simple wedding. Daddy will be in complete control. Word of honor.

Renata looks at herself in mirror. She suddenly turns and...

INT: OPULENT HALL - DAY

...completes turn as the photographer snaps her picture. There are rows and rows of flowers and floral archways. Tables and tables of food. Sam enters and takes Renata by the arm. CAMERA MOVES with them to dance floor that fills with dancers. IT MOVES ON to isolate Joe Bella sitting alone at a table, face in hands. Marilyn is with him.

MARILYN

Look, if it makes you feel good - we will pay for this.

JOE BELLA

Squander our whole retirement?

(pause)

Oh Marilyn, I'm so sorry.

Marilyn squeezes his hand.

Renata, full of life, runs up to them. The photographer is right behind. Renata sits on Joe Bella's lap, holds Marilyn's hand.

RENATA

Say cheese everyone.

The photo snaps. Renata jumps up.

RENATA

Dad, Mom - I know this is wild but I couldn't control Sam!

There is an abrupt end to the music and Sam is suddenly on the mike, scratching it.

SAM

Is that a locket in your pocket or are you just...no, no. I am overwhelmed. I am taking this mike because I am overwhelmed. I am overwhelmed by my beautiful bride.

Applause, applause.

SAM (contd)

I am overwhelmed by my beautiful mother-in-law...Marilyn. I am overwhelmed by everyone in this room. Each person here is love itself. Love embodied in great looking outfits...Give yourself a hand, huh?

Sam claps, waits for crowd to clap too and gets them going.

SAM (contd)

You guys...and gals, you just clapped for love...There is one man here who is Mr. Love himself. I'm talking about the richest man in this room, and I'm not talking dollars and cents, I'm talking heart...Joe, I think you know who you are. Let's give a big round of applause to the Big Guy...Joe Bella.

Everyone is applauding...Joe Bella gets up reluctantly. Sam meets him and walks him up to the stage.

SAM (to Joe, privately)

Hey, I know this is a big ta-do but Renata wanted everything! Try saying no to her! I've taken care of the bill, it's all paid for, done.

They get to the mike.

JOE BELLA

Okay, let's not make a big deal here. I'd like to say that...

He takes a moment to orient himself.

JOE BELLA (contd)

I'd like to sing a song to Renata.

He looks at Sam.

JOE BELLA (contd)

But Sam should listen carefully to it. Because for some reason, Renata, after meeting Sam you were always whistling this song. For some reason it's been in the air since you two met...

Joe Bella sings "Fly Me To The Moon."

Renata and Sam dance alone. Renata sings into Sam's ear:

RENATA

"In other words, darling, I love you..."

UNDER A TABLE

Two children, Johnny, 9, small and asthmatic, and Juliette, 10 and sophisticated, sit under the table drinking champagne from champagne glasses. Juliette opens a woman's purse and steals an Eve cigarette from a pack and pretends to smoke it.

MARILYN, TONY AND GAIL

Gail holds an infant in her arm. Tony sits looking at another woman at an adjacent table. She smiles to him. Gail nudges him and hands him their baby. He takes it with great love and holds it high in the air. The baby laughs wonderfully aloud.

A LIFTED LOAF OF BREAD

with decorative eggs in it, ribbons hanging from the loaf. Sam holds the loaf over his head and twirls around and around with it as all the young men at the wedding circle around him are clapping and singing. Sam's face is full of sweat, his skin pale, under his eyes are bluish circles. He keeps dancing furiously. Jan watches with her mother.

JAN

It's a fertility rite. Eggs, bread. They're dancing with genitals.

MARILYN

Oh Jan. They are not.

Jan walks away toward bathroom. Joe Bella intercepts her and vigorously drags her out of the celebration into the parking lot. Renata notices and follows, trying to catch up.

EXT: PARKING LOT - DAY

JOE BELLA

That is his gift to her. Do you see that?

He shows her a new Cadillac.

Jan attempts to get into the wedding spirit.

JAN

Oh Daddy, look at the interior, the leather, the dashboard...wow!

Renata smiles and is about to join them when Joe responds.

JOE BELLA

Knock it off, I'm not showing you this goddamn car.

JAN

You're not?

JOE BELLA

He buys her that car...this wedding service. It's like he's purchasing her. How can she do that?

JAN

Dad...

JOE BELLA

I am old fashioned and I am as sexist as the next guy. But Christ I always treat Mom as an equal. She's not a cow.

Renata is horrified. She sucks in her gut, checks the fit of her gown.

JAN

We all have to let Renata live her life now.

JOE BELLA

I should be happy.

Jan puts her arm around Joe Bella. Renata hides by the steps that lead outside. They go back inside.

Jan heads for ladies' room. Sam comes out of men's room just as Renata passes him. Sam motions for her to come into men's room. She smiles and ducks into it.

INT: MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Sam puts Renata against the door and lifts up her gown.

SAM

Can I get lost under your gown?

Renata smiles and Sam slips under her gown, periodically peeking his head out to answer her.

RENATA

I'm so confused, Sam. I want to move away. It's no good with my family so close. Let's go somewhere and live our own life.

SAM

I'm having the best time of my life right here with your family.

RENATA

I think we should begin new. Like you said.

SAM

I've been new for weeks, babycakes. In a few weeks, you'll be just fine.

OH Renata as Sam makes love to her, out of frame.

INT: HALL

A large woman in hot pink chiffon talks with another woman. The little girl, Juliette, runs up, starts tugging on her hand. The woman ignores her.

JULIETTE

Mom, Mom! Give me a light, give me a light, huh?

Finally she digs in her purse and absently lights Juliette's cigarette. Juliette puffs and walks away as her mother wakes up and chases her.

EXT: MEN'S ROOM

Sam leaves men's room, happy-faced. He lingers a moment. Then opens the door for Renata. She runs out. Kisses Sam and runs into the ladies' room.

INT: LADIES' ROOM - DAY

A stall. Jan's gown is up by her neck. She sits. The ladies' room door opens. It is Renata, humming "Fly Me To The Moon." Then little kids run in with champagne glasses.

RENATA

Hi Juliette! Hi Johnny! Oh! Can I have a sip? Pretty please?

Renata polishes off the champagne.

JULIETTE

Are you going to have a baby?

Renata starts to laugh. Juliette and Johnny do too. They all three laugh crazily, then Renata stops.

RENATA

Can you keep secrets?

JULIETTE

Yes!

RENATA

I am pregnant! Don't tell anyone! In a little while I'll have a little angel like you to love.

Renata kisses Juliette's forehead. Jan stands in horror behind the stall.

INT: RENATA AND SAM'S LUXURY APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A huge lobster, its claws spread out, is lifted over a boiling pan of water. He's dropped in. The cover is held down as lobster struggles. CAMERA PULLS OUT to Sam as he wipes his brow. Drinks down some vodka. Sam is down.

SAM

Renata, I did it. It was nasty but I did it. I need consolation, baby. Love buns?

INT: HUGE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Renata walks around punctuating her pregnancy by wearing pink silk pajamas. She sets a dinner table. Sam enters the room.

RENATA

My family's gonna die when they see this place. They had no idea this place was going to be so spectacular. I had no idea!

SAM

Oh god!

RENATA

Leave me alone, Sam.

SAM

Oh! It's killing me. I can't. Renata, you can't go walking around pregnant with those milk laden breasts with nipples the size of fucking sand dollars. How can you expect me to control instinct?

He grabs Renata from the back and playfully starts humping her. Renata finds this very funny.

SAM (contd)

Let me pound my jade hammer into your lotus flower. It will take ten seconds.

Renata hits him. The doorbell rings. Renata goes to answer the door but Sam stays attached to her from the back. His arms are locked around her big belly. The two of them walk to the door like a strange creature. Renata opens the door. It's the Bellas. Joe Bella has a terrier puppy in his arms.

JOE BELLA

Baby! Wow, what a place! Look at this, guys!

Marilyn, Jan, Peter, Tony, Gail and baby look in, amazed at the posh luxury.

RENATA

That's Apollo! Oh, he's so cute.

The terrier, Apollo, runs through the apartment.

JOE BELLA

He loves me.

Apollo runs back to the doorway and leaps up into Sam's arms. Renata looks at Marilyn uncomfortably. Marilyn shrugs good-naturedly.

JOE BELLA

Hey, watch it, Sam, you're hurting him.

Renata takes Apollo and gives him back to Joe Bella with a big smile.

RENATA

Sam's been cooking all day. He must smell something good on his apron.

She kisses Joe Bella.

SAM

Come in, everybody. Close the door, Jan doll.

Renata kisses Jan and shuts the door herself.

Marilyn smells the air.

MARILYN

Do I smell fish? Sam?

SAM

No, the sisters of mercy just came for donations.

(Sam pulls Renata close to him)

Oh Joe, look at my beautiful wife! She's so fecund with life - you just want to - so, so fuck-und with life!

Sam kisses her until she pushes him away.

RENATA

The lobsters, Sam...

SAM

There was a crustacean massacre in there. So you better be hungry, folks. Get the champagne, Jan. And Peter, uncork it.

Apollo runs after Sam to the kitchen.

JOE BELLA

Hey! Apollo!

Everyone walks around the apartment. There is a 360-degree view high-up on the thirty-second floor. Renata wraps a mink blanket around herself and brings everyone out on the balcony. There is ocean, airport, East Boston.

JOE BELLA (contd)

Boy, oh boy, Marilyn, how about living up here!
Huh, Jan?

Jan walks back into the apartment. Renata sticks her tongue out playfully behind Jan's back. Marilyn takes Renata's arm.

Sam comes in carrying a tray of 12 lobsters.

JAN

Wow! Nice view.

SAM

Yeah, you see the projects right where you were born across the airport.

JAN

(Turning away)
I'll go call everyone.

Jan gets to the balcony just as Sam's voice yells out.

SAM

Let's eat, come on! Marilyn, organize this group to sit down. Come on, Tony, Gail, here's a chair for the little one.

Jan stays with Peter on the balcony.

JAN

Well? You love it, don't you?

He hugs her.

PETER

I love you, I don't give a shit where we live.

Jan pulls away, unconvinced.

INT: APARTMENT - DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

A mountain of lobster carcasses.

SAM

Okay, I have something really important to say.
All right...Peter.

Peter is rubbing his hand up Jan's skirt. He looks up.

SAM (contd)

You have been a very patient and diligent young man. Jan is deciding which course to take in her life, which is one hundred percent understandable. You've been sweet enough to support her exploration, morally speaking.

(Sam turns to all present)

And it's not easy for him to help when he is always out looking for a job. I've recently reorganized at work and I think there is a very nice job for you as a locations analyst.

Peter's face drops.

PETER

I don't know if I want to be a locations analyst.

JOE BELLA

Listen to him, will you?

SAM

Pete, Peter...Forty-five thousand a year with quarterly raises, that's what it is.

JAN

Wow.

PETER

Forty-five thousand dollars.

SAM

Try it out. Give our company a trial period. Stay if you like it, I know they'll love you.

RENATA

Daddy, isn't he incredible. Just like that! He solves everyone's problems like, like no one can.

JAN

(alarmed)

Renata!

RENATA

Well, I mean...

JOE BELLA

Yeah, yeah...

RENATA

Well, all I meant was, well...

Renata gets up to serve some coffee. She smiles at Peter.

Joe Bella stands up.

JOE BELLA

Well! Sam, you certainly have ah...where's the bathroom in this joint?

They point to it and Joe Bella leaves the table. Renata walks over to Sam to have a moment alone but he motions that everyone huddle together. They all get up, Gail has her arm linked with Sam, Renata is linked to his other arm. The terrier runs at Sam's feet. Jan grabs Peter by the arm.

JAN

Don't take that job. You'll be different.

PETER

Baby...

Joe Bella comes out of the bathroom and sees no one sitting. They are all by a closet.

SAM

Joe! Daddy! Yoo hoo! Over here!

JOE BELLA

Oh, what the hell is going on now?

SAM

No one ever gave you a proper retirement...

JOE BELLA

'Cause I asked everyone not to.

SAM

Open the closet.

JOE BELLA

I hope you didn't waste your money on another suit.

Joe Bella opens the door and it's the belly dancer from his birthday party. She starts shaking and dancing. On her stomach is written "Good Luck, Joe!"

Joe Bella attempts a smile to get into the spirit. Marilyn looks at Sam. Renata smiles with some difficulty as well. Gail and Peter stand. Sam starts to dance with the belly dancer.

SAM (to Renata)

Dance with me, honey, come on!

Renata doesn't move. She puts her arm around Joe Bella and she smiles but shakes her head no.

EXT: BALCONY - NIGHT

Renata sits alone. She looks out on the beautiful twinkling skyline. Sam comes out in his robe with a glass of vodka and a cigarette.

SAM

(beat) Can't you sleep? Come to bed.

RENATA

I'm thinking.

SAM

What about?

RENATA

You.

SAM

Oho.

Sam pulls up a chair and sits down.

SAM (contd)

Just tell me the good stuff.

RENATA

Sam, sometimes I imagine I actually know what it's like to win the lottery. Knowing you is like winning the people lottery. You have all the qualities I ever longed for - you're bold, in-charge, a risk-taker - and I think I must share those traits 'cause here we are together -

SAM

- Add smart, spirited, kind -

RENATA

(interrupting to keep to her line of thought)
But don't you notice, I think -

SAM

What?

RENATA (smiles)

Don't you notice, 'cause I think I do, that my father is, I don't know, feeling maybe a little, um, dethroned? Or, unnecessary, or maybe less powerful or just...

Sam moves his chair closer to her.

SAM

Baby, you can't dethrone the king of kings.

RENATA

Sam, that's true but I saw it in him anyway. He does. Maybe, Sam...you could...

SAM

No, no, no. Listen to me. You want me to back off. Be a completely different man. Quiet -

RENATA

My god, no, I'd never ask you to be different. I just mean - we could just - or you could maintain your interest but -

SAM

Keep a little on the side?

He flicks his butt over the railing.

RENATA

Yeah.

SAM

More spectator, less coach.

RENATA

Yeah, Sam, but I don't want to be changing you, isn't that asking you to be someone else?

SAM

Renata, you're looking at a chameleon. I could get on my toes and be a Bolshoi ballerina if I so chose.

Renata laughs.

SAM (contd)

But for the record, you're wrong. Peter was bowled over, the kid's face was shining, your father was very pleased for Jan. You didn't see the happy stuff, did you?

He smiles.

RENATA

Maybe you're right.

SAM

Sure I am. Look, I'll prove it. I'll back way down and you watch. Wow, they'll hate it. They'll be begging me to -

RENATA

It's just that my father acted sort of sad tonight.

SAM

Renata!

RENATA

I know. I know. You can't dethrone the king of kings.

INT: BELLA KITCHEN - DAY

Marilyn folds laundry, Jan reads want-ads. She sighs. Peter enters wearing a three-piece suit, Jan looks up, stunned. Peter struts by her and kisses Marilyn on the neck.

PETER

Thanks for pressing my shirt, Mom.

JAN

Where the hell are you going?

PETER (smiling)

Funny you should ask. Honey, don't be upset just be happy. I'm going for the cold cash - green! Anyone here know what a locations analyst is?

(laughs)

Oh my god, I'm gonna be late.

He kisses Jan.

JAN

Peter! We gotta talk!

He leaves. Jan stares out after him.

MARILYN

Don't give that young man a hard time, god knows he deserves a break like this.

JAN

Mom! I married a man who wears black leather jackets with black jeans and black T-shirts. Forty-five thousand dollars, it's fishy. Ma, are you listening?

CAMERA PULLS OUT to Marilyn by sink, passes Jan at the center, looks to adjoining room. Joe Bella sleeps in chair. Apollo snores in his arms.

MARILYN

Be happy he has a job. I feel like putting a bomb under your father's chair and igniting it. He sits there in his robe all day, all night.

JAN

Stop, Mom, leave him alone.

MARILYN

Look at this. You talk about work.

Marilyn flexes her arm muscle.

MARILYN (contd)

Hanging up clothes, mopping floors, making beds -
DUSTING!

Marilyn stands on one leg balancing.

MARILYN (contd)

Climbing ladders, cleaning skylights.

She bends down and touches her toes.

MARILYN (contd)

Picking up clothes, broken glass, spilt milk, dog
waste. Aaaii!

JAN

What are you doing?

Marilyn whips up.

MARILYN

He promised me he was going to paint landscapes,
pour cement out on that damn walk, go to a space
launch, take...

Joe Bella yells from the other room.

JOE BELLA

Yeah! Well I decided what I really want to do is
build a boat, paint it, put it to sea, and die on
it.

MARILYN

That son of a bitch!

Marilyn leaves kitchen.

INT: ADJOINING ROOM - DAY

Joe Bella sits in his big chair.

MARILYN

Why are you sleeping at twelve in the afternoon?

JOE BELLA

Trying to daydream. Leave me alone, huh,
Marilyn. Ever since I retired you can't stand
it, can you? Come on, Apollo.

Jan comes to doorway.

JOE BELLA (contd)

I'll be at my pregnant daughter's if anyone
cares.

He leaves.

JAN

Mom! Dad! Mom! What are you doing?

Marilyn is dragging Joe Bella's huge chair across the room to the
kitchen door. Gail enters with the baby.

MARILYN

Help me!

GAIL

What's going on?

Gail and Jan run to Marilyn.

MARILYN (contd)

Grab that end!

Marilyn takes Joe Bella's big chair out to the middle of the lawn
and drops it down. She starts to cry.

MARILYN (contd)

He's so miserable, he's so miserable...and that
goddamn Sam Sharp. And my own daughter, she lets
him dominate everything!

She kicks the chair. Gail puts her arms around Marilyn.

JAN

Mom, Momma...Don't cry...don't cry, he's, he's
just...please stop, huh? Mommy...

Marilyn stops crying. Takes a breath and looks at what she's done.

MARILYN

Oh my god! Jan, what did I do? Oh god, I'm
going crazy. I got to get this back inside.
Help me. What did I do?

JAN

It's okay, Mom...Come on, lift...one, two,
three...

Gail and Jan carry the chair in.

EXT: BALCONY OF RENATA AND SAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

JOE BELLA

The thing is she doesn't understand when a man works forty years -

RENATA

- Sam could never stop working, it makes me worry. His grandfather, who was a general, had a heart attack once.

JOE BELLA

Honey, it's great you love your husband but your mind is only thinking Sam, Sam, Sam. I get the feeling that if I told you your mother and I were getting a divorce, you'd say but Sam doesn't believe in divorce.

RENATA

Oh, now that's not true, Daddy, really, that's not true at all.

JOE BELLA

Renata, you have to see the whole picture. Including other people. It will make your feelings for him even better. Otherwise, what is it about?

RENATA

Maybe it appears I don't see but Daddy I am looking and thinking and seeing -

Renata is cut off by Sam calling out as he enters.

SAM

Honeycakes, your big daddy's home! Throw in the roast and bend over!...Dad!

Joe Bella stands, immediately puts on his coat.

RENATA

Oh, don't go. We're talking.

SAM

Joe, terrific you're here, I want your advice.

Renata smiles.

Sam hands him two fancy brochures, one red, one blue.

SAM

Which do you like better, Joe? The red or the blue?

Joe Bella examines them.

JOE BELLA

I like the blue one - this one is way too provocative. First off you start the thing off with a goddamn question! If I got sent a brochure, which I got a shitload at work every day, and it started with a question, I'd say they're assholes, they're being provocative where I want safe, they're asking questions where I want answers, fuck 'em - I'd put it in the basket.

SAM

Exactly. Renata, your father is one smart cookie.

RENATA

Well, no one has to tell me that!

Renata gives Joe Bella a love punch to his shoulder.

They all walk to the door.

SAM

One smart cookie. That's exactly why I'm gonna use the other one. Sam Sharp is going after something different. I'm going after the new breed.

RENATA

Sam!

JOE BELLA

Well then, if you need an old fart just give me a call.

RENATA

Dad!

Joe Bella kisses Renata and leaves.

RENATA

You trapped him! Just to feel important!

SAM

I asked his opinion because I value it.

RENATA

No sir, you said you wanted the red one. That's what you said. You're trying to make a fool of him. We discussed all of this, Sam! Jesus Christ!

She runs to the balcony.

EXT: BALCONY - DAY

Renata looks down 25 stories to the sea of parked cars below. She focuses on Joe Bella in his convertible, Apollo is jumping around. Joe Bella's head rests on the steering wheel.

RENATA

Sam!

EXT: BELLA HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Tony is pouring a big bag of cement into a wheelbarrow. Joe Bella hands him a hose. As Tony adds water, Joe Bella starts to mix the cement by hand.

Marilyn calls out from the kitchen.

MARILYN

Take it easy, Joe!

JOE BELLA

Shows how much your mother knows about work.
Once you start mixing cement you can't stop.

Tony sits down and wipes his hands. Gail comes out with the baby. She puts it up to Tony, and Tony kisses its stomach.

GAIL

(to Joe Bella)

Renata's here.

Joe Bella keeps mixing. Tony focuses his attention on the lake. Renata comes out.

Jan comes around the corner dragging a railroad tie for the walk.

RENATA

Can I talk to you, Dad? It's about Sam.

Jan drops the tie. Gail shushes the baby and looks up. Marilyn, who is still inside the house, slides open the window and looks out. Tony continues to stare out at the lake. Joe Bella continues working but gives all his attention to Renata.

JOE BELLA

Sure, honey, is everything okay?

RENATA

Okay? It's wonderful. I'm just here to seek
counsel about Sam.

Apollo comes running out and positions himself expectantly at Renata's feet.

JAN

You are?

Marilyn leans out the window and looks at Jan.

MARILYN

Let your sister speak.

TONY

Is he giving you trouble, Renata?

Gail listens intently.

RENATA

Okay, for starters, would everyone here agree with me that Sam can be a little excessive at times?

JAN

I can agree with that.

GAIL

Why? Because he offered your husband the job of a lifetime?

TONY

Don't confuse a big salary with the job of a lifetime.

GAIL

Well, you must have the job of a lifetime.

TONY

What the hell does that mean? I love my job - it's all mine.

JOE BELLA

Wait a minute, wait a minute. We're talking about Renata and her problems with Sam.

RENATA

I don't have a problem with Sam. I came to seek counsel about Sam. Perhaps the problem is mine.

Marilyn leans out.

MARILYN

That is what she said, dear.

JOE BELLA

I know that, for christsake.

RENATA

Okay, okay, does anyone think that Sam can be a little domineering?

JAN

I do. Look, why can't anyone say the truth: he's exceedingly domineering, egotistical, old-fashioned, sexist, goofy, immensely materialistic and he boasts.

RENATA

Fuck you, Jan.

GAIL

Come on, Renata. She's joking. We all know Sam is just like Dad.

JAN

How can you say that? My god, Tony, how can she say that?

GAIL

No, I just bet Dad was identical to Sam when he was young. Right, Mom?

JOE BELLA (laughs)

Me? I'm a simple guy - right?

MARILYN

Well, Joe was not really -

JOE BELLA

What? Not really what? She's going to screw herself all up somehow.

MARILYN

Well, you were content just to sit on a stoop and hold my hand.

JOE BELLA

Jesus Christ. Sorry, Marilyn.

MARILYN

I loved that!

JAN

Really, that's not an insult, Dad, it's a compliment. She's complimenting you, Dad. Dad's not like Sam. Jesus, not one bit. Dad doesn't care about "things."

RENATA

Back off, Jan. Your husband likes "things."

GAIL

Come on. Sam and Dad both love their families more than anything else in the whole world, are extremely generous and have to be one thousand percent involved in everything.

TONY

Shit. Why don't you run away with this guy?

The baby begins to cry.

JAN

My father's not like that at all. He doesn't go out of his way to completely alter other people's lives!

RENATA

Peter did what he wanted to do!

JAN

All I'm saying is Dad is one hundred percent different than Sam.

JOE BELLA

Of course I'm different. Christ Almighty, you can't compare the two of us! That's not the point. Aren't we supposed to try and counsel Renata? I mean isn't that our purpose? Everybody quiet now, and Renata, speak your mind.

Long pause.

Renata looks at each person.

RENATA

No, never mind. I don't know what exactly I was coming to find out. Sam is delightful and fun and I'm so so glad we're having a little baby together. So fine, so absolutely fine. I'll see you all at Grandma's memorial.

Renata leaves.

The rest of the family sits, looking at each other.

INT: RENATA AND SAM'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Renata is sitting on the bed putting on her red high heels. She bends over her large belly with difficulty.

SAM

Let me help.

RENATA

No, I want to always feel I can put my own shoes on.

(she bends)

Ouch! You know how you feel stuffed after Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner? Imagine feeling that way every single moment of the day! I better wear my sneakers. I think my grandmother would approve.

SAM

You know you look beautiful, Renata.

RENATA

Oh, Sam, wake up.

SAM

I think about your grandmother I never knew and I look at you and...well, we're going to be a family soon. My god.

Renata gets up with difficulty. Sam helps her. This is a routine of theirs. She looks at him.

RENATA

Sam, I don't think this matters if I tell you this or not, but I'd like it on the books. Go back to being yourself.

Sam stops short and beams.

SAM

I told you they'd hate it, didn't I?

INT: BELLA HOME - GIRL'S ROOM - DUSK

Jan and Gail and baby sit on floor in leotards and tights. Jan reads a book entitled "How To Paint Landscapes." The door opens. Peter doesn't come in, instead, he waves a check through the door.

GAIL

I think Peter's trying to tell you something.

PETER

A lot of cashola.

He enters, dressed in a three-piece suit, smiling and waving his check. Gail laughs. Jan shakes her head.

PETER (contd)

VCR's, CD's, Digital TV's, Porsches, Shih-Tzus - Guess how much? No, it's more than you just thought. He threw me a bonus.

Peter tightens his tie.

JAN

How much of a bonus?

He puts the check down the front of his pants.

PETER

Find out.

JAN

Fuck off.

GAIL (singing out)

Bye!

JAN

Don't go.

Gail leaves. Peter walks up to Jan's face.

PETER

Come on, get it with your mouth. You know you want to.

JAN

God, I don't know how much longer I can separate you from your professional life.

PETER

Can't use your hands. Come on, play. I've been looking at all these executive women with hard asses and big math brains.

JAN

I'm starting to get disappointed in you.

Jan starts to unzip his pants with her teeth. Peter stops her, looks at her.

PETER

Don't say that. That's not funny.

There is a knock on door. Neither answers.

JOE BELLA (off)

We're leaving in 30 minutes. Don't hold us up!

INT: CHURCH - NIGHT

About 40 relatives (aunts, uncles, cousins) stand in various areas of the church. A bowed priest's head as he prays to himself at an altar. The Bella family stand in the first pew, each head bent in prayer.

PRIEST

May Jennie Bella and all the faithfully departed
of our Church rest in everlasting peace with our
one Lord and Savior Christ...Amen. Go in peace.

The relatives lost in their thoughts begin to leave their pews.
CAMERA FOLLOWS Renata as she goes to the altar to light a candle.
Sam touches her shoulder.

SAM

Look.

Renata turns.

Scattered in different pews are her grandmother's seven, now-aged
children, still kneeling and praying.

INT: BASEMENT OF CHURCH - NIGHTTIME

Relatives sit at tables. Joe Bella is at the mike.

He strums on his guitar and sings in Italian the end of "Mama."
One by one each of his brothers and sisters join in. When they
finish the hall is silent and overcome with emotion. Joe Bella
wipes his eyes.

JOE BELLA

Wow!

And suddenly everyone spontaneously starts to laugh.

JOE BELLA (contd)

Let's all enjoy ourselves now!

The atmosphere is full of socializing and laughter, and talking.
Marilyn, Sam and Renata sit at one table.

SAM

That is a great song. A great song. You know we
have a wonderful song in Lithuanian that is the
same idea, it praises the mother.

(he looks at Renata)

And why not? It's the noblest and oldest
profession...

Joe Bella comes over and sits down.

SAM (contd)

Joe, Joe, that was magnificent.

JOE BELLA

I really don't want to hear that, okay? But
thanks.

SAM

No, I mean it, you are really sensational.

JOE BELLA

Cut it out.

Sam gets to his feet. And heads for the mike. Gail walks over and gives Joe a kiss on the cheek.

JOE BELLA (contd)

Renata, is he gonna make a speech? It's not appropriate here.

Renata rests her head on Joe's shoulder.

RENATA

I don't know what he's doing, Dad. But I feel gross...pains across my - ouch!

She fights a cramp. Gail takes her hand.

JOE BELLA

Are you okay, honey? Baby?

Joe Bella signals to Marilyn to cut off Sam.

Marilyn gets up and heads for the mike. Joe Bella puts his arm around Renata. She exhales and relaxes.

Joe hears tapping from the P.A. system. He looks with concern and starts to get up. Renata holds him down with another cramp.

JOE BELLA

Are you...

RENATA

It's natural. I had these last night, they pass.

BY THE MICROPHONE

Sam takes hold of the mike.

SAM

Hello excuse me...hello...greetings...

Marilyn arrives.

MARILYN

What are you doing?

SAM

I'm gonna sing this beautiful Lithuanian song about motherhood.

MARILYN

Oh, Sam...you know, the Bellas are a funny group. And they are very funny about the memory of their mother. Don't, don't sing.

SAM

Marilyn! It's about this mother who is devoted to her son. Everything she does, every action, cooking, cleaning, is done for her son who's going on a journey...

MARILYN

Sam, dear, I'm sure your song is a very wonderful one. And interesting to hear, but not now.

SAM

You listen and tell me after if I was wrong.

Marilyn takes the mike from him.

MARILYN

Sam, I have the mike in my hand because I can't seem to reach you and it's probably my fault because I sound like I'm trying to ask you not to sing but actually I'm telling you, you can't. You can't do it.

He takes the mike from her hand.

SAM

This song will hit the spot.

MARILYN

Sam, hand me that mike.

SAM

You're serious.

MARILYN

Hand me the mike and then go to your seat and sit beside Renata. Okay?

SAM

I'm gonna sing my beautiful Lithuanian song about motherhood.

MARILYN

Over my dead body. Now go sit down.

SAM

Marilyn, I'm sorry you feel...

MARILYN

Put that mike down. Right now.

TABLE

Renata starts up toward them sensing a fight. Joe Bella starts up. But Renata puts her hand over his.

RENATA

Daddy, let me see what's going on. I want to talk to Sam alone.

Joe lets her walk a few steps. But he fidgets, gets up and follows Renata to the mike.

MIKE AREA

Marilyn reaches for the mike. The two struggle for control of it.

SAM

Marilyn, I want to sing this song and I say it's the right place to sing this song.

MARILYN

It is totally the wrong place and you are the wrong person to sing today. Now you have had free rein over us but at this moment I am telling you it's over...I will kill you before I let you sing that song and upset my husband and his family. Now make a move for the mike. Go ahead. I will kill you.

SAM

Is that right?

MARILYN

That is damn right.

Renata arrives. Joe is right behind her. Sam smiles at her. Renata yanks the mike from Sam's hand. The microphone taps her chin. Her words amplify throughout the hall.

RENATA

Stop it, Sam!

Everyone in the room looks up. Renata signals to Joe Bella. Renata angrily coils the mike cord very tightly around the mike. She turns to Joe.

RENATA (contd)

Daddy, unplug this damn thing, please.
(he does)

Sam Sharp! You are wrong. This is the Bella family's, my father's family's memorial for their mother, not your mother. You are here to pay respects. Sam? Sam, are you listening to me?

SAM

Hell, I want to pay my respects, Renata. We're on the same team, you and me.

RENATA

No, Sam! You are pulling this mike from my mother's hands! Can't you see you're tearing this family apart? You got to see that! Now let go of this crazy idea! You are tearing us apart!

INT: RENATA AND SAM'S LUXURY APARTMENT - NIGHTTIME

All the curtains are pulled and the apartment is dark. Sound of crying and of a projector. Renata watches a home movie of the Bella family twenty years younger at the beach. Renata is on the sofa, her clothes flung on the floor, she's naked and crying her eyes out. Sam opens the door. He's still dressed from the memorial.

SAM

Honey? Renata...honey! Sweetheart, please forgive me.

Renata motions to go away.

SAM (contd)

You're crying. Oh, don't cry, please don't cry. I don't blame you. You must think you married some sort of animal. Pulling that mike from your mother's hands.

Renata throws her face into the pillow. Sam sees the movies playing on the screen.

SAM (contd)

You're watching family movies? Oh, Renata, darling, no one can pull your family apart. No one. Not even a big, stupid fool like me.

Renata shakes her head.

SAM

I am. (beat) Renata, sweetheart, you have to look at me or talk to me, or say something. Because I cannot live with your silence. I really cannot bear it. I am so deeply sorry.

Renata looks up. Sam takes this as his opportunity to sit beside her. He takes her hand. She pulls it away from him.

SAM (contd)

(looking at the screen)

Look!

Renata looks down. She gently puts her hand in Sam's. Sam squeezes it, sincerely relieved. He kisses her hand lightly. Sam looks at the screen and his eyes light up.

SAM (contd)

Look! Mom and Dad! Oh, how handsome Daddy is!
Look at Mom! Isn't she nice! She is, huh?

Renata won't look.

SAM (contd)

Aren't you gonna watch? Come on.

He starts to make animal shadows on the screen, she doesn't react. Then he gets up and turns the projector around.

He aims its images onto Renata's fat belly. Renata looks down at her belly.

SAM (contd)

Look, there goes Tony on your belly button.
There you are! Look at you, oh boy!

He claps. Renata finally looks.

RENATA (with awe)

Jan as a baby...no! That's me!

Renata as a baby tumbles about on her belly. Sam beams.

SAM

Oh, my son's going to have your fire.

Jan as a three year old.

SAM (contd)

And Jan's biting tongue...damn good for a lawyer.

RENATA

There's Tony!

SAM

Tony, well...He should be as strong and muscular as Tony.

RENATA

Yes! And he'll have my mother's goodness and my father's wisdom.

SAM

We're gonna have a beautiful baby, Renata...

Sam falls to his knees.

SAM

Thank you, Renata, thank you for forgiving me.

Renata rocks his head in her lap.

A sudden breath breaks the quiet. Sam looks up.

RENATA (calmly)

Sam, I think, I think...

Another sudden breath.

RENATA

Sam, you're gonna be a daddy.

LIT: HOSPITAL - DAWN

Sam paces by the nurses' station eating saltines. Joe and Marilyn appear down the hall.

SAM

Hey!

JOE BELLA

The kids are parking the cars. They'll be right up. How is she?

SAM

Good, good. Before you guys go in, let me say, Marilyn, about the memorial -

MARILYN

Sam, you were being enthusiastic.

SAM

That's right, Marilyn, I was enthusiastic and I was too much myself. You guys make me feel so goddamned comfortable.

JOE BELLA

Let's put all that behind us. We got a good reason to look ahead.

SAM

She is so beautiful.

Sam puts his arm around Joe Bella and Joe slaps his shoulder. Jan, Peter, Tony and Gail turn the corner.

LIT: HOSPITAL ROOM - DAWN

Baby in Renata's arms in hospital bed.

The door opens. Sam, Joe, Tony, Gail, Jan, Peter and Marilyn all enter. They crowd around the bed. Renata is beaming. She shows everyone the baby.

SAM

It's a girl! It's incredible! I don't think I even thought it was possible I could make a girl!

They all ooh and aah.

SAM

Hey everybody, look behind you.

A band crowds in behind them.

SAM (contd)

I arranged ten minutes for the band. What the hell!

The band plays a Lithuanian song.

SAM (contd)

Hell! Let's all hold hands! You take little no-name's hand, Peter, and everyone join hands, and we'll make a ring of love around the infant. Come on, Gail, hold Tony's hand...come on now, that's good, and Marilyn, take mine, there you go, and Jan, take Tony's hand. And Joe, take the baby's other side.

They all finally stand holding hands around the baby, Renata smiling away. The band plays and Sam begins to sing his Lithuanian song for mothers.

END ON Renata's face, eyes full of tears of happiness.

EXT: BELLA HOUSE - BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

There is the sound of crackling and pounding thunder as high winds bear through the backyard and pouring rains fall. The storm tosses and twirls a hanging bird house from a tree.

Marilyn runs out into the storm.

The bird house is flung off its nail. It's gently carried by the wind and falls smack on Marilyn's shoe. She picks it up and runs inside.

INT: BELLA HOUSE - NIGHTTIME

Marilyn sets a table for dinner. Jan flips through a magazine.

MARILYN

A place for Dad, for Renata and Jan and Tony and Gail...

A knock at the door. Marilyn answers it. It's Sam.

MARILYN (contd)

Sam! You shouldn't have driven here in this storm.

SAM

Nothing keeps me from my babies.

MARILYN (yells)

Renata! Get out here! Your husband is here!
Jan, get your sister.

Jan flips through her magazine. Marilyn cuddles the baby.

RENATA

Sam, I wish you wouldn't drive in this weather!

SAM

The weather out there is poetry, baby, poetry!
Kiss me, most potent life-giving force on earth.

They kiss.

MARILYN

Doesn't anyone want to kiss the baby?

Sam and Renata pull apart. Sam rushes to the baby.

SAM

Look what I brought my baby doll.

He hands Renata a gift box. Renata opens it and pulls out a lacy long baptism dress.

RENATA and MARILYN

Oh my god! It's incredible!

SAM

The lace on the dress, it's by the same lace maker who makes the Bishop's vestments!

RENATA

No! Oh, you will be so pretty at your baptism.

Baby laughing. Sam picks her up and twirls baby over his head.

JIT: BELLA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The whole family, plus two crying babies, sit around the table. Joe Bella is in a robe. Peter and Sam are in three-piece suits. Dessert is on the table.

JOE BELLA
Shut up those babies, Marilyn! All we have to do
is get a goddamn baptism date! Now we must be
capable of that!

RENATA
First off. Okay. I want Jan to be godmother.
And I would think it would be an honor, I mean, I
want Tony to be godfather. And I'd like to add
that Sam here is being pretty terrific. Hell, he
has friends of his own. People in Vietnam.
Okay, so he's quite happy that Tony be godfather.

GAIL
Why do you have the baptism on the day that we
are going on our very first vacation in 15 years!
Just answer me that!

SAM (to Joe Bella)
Okay. My Lithuanian parents won't understand how
their little granddaughter was born on March 29th
and wasn't baptized 17 days later according to
ancient tradition. Tradition they have abided by
all their lives.

RENATA
The bottom line is Tony will not give up shit to
be there.

TONY
And you are following some bullshit tradition
that apparently means more to you than me, Gail,
and our baby's happiness.

RENATA
Okay, fuck you, Tony!

MARILYN
Joe, do something here, for the love of god!

TONY (to Renata)
Don't you ever speak to me like that.

Renata stands up.

RENATA
There's a baptism and it is this Saturday. You
are the godmother, you are the godfather. I hope
you can fucking attend. Jan, you don't suddenly
have to leave town, do you?

GAIL
I'll strangle you, I swear, I'll strangle you!

Tony and Peter hold Gail off of Renata. Renata is poised to punch Gail.

JOE BELLA

Okay, okay, that's it. That is it. The end.
Done. Fine. I want everyone out. Everyone.
Marilyn, sit down. Joey, Gail, just go to your
car and go home, you did nothing wrong. Jan and
Peter, go to your room. Please.

The seriousness of Joe Bella's voice clears the room. Gail moves to get the coats. Tony follows her.

MARILYN

Joe?

JOE BELLA

Marilyn, please. Don't you start. I know what
I'm doing.

Just Sam and Renata remain.

SAM

You know, Joe, I would be happy to pick up any
financial losses Tony might -

JOE BELLA

No, no, no, we are not going to discuss this
further. Renata, I want you to ask Sam - because
he's your husband - ask him to please wait in the
car for you.

RENATA

Why are you acting like this, Dad?

MARILYN

Answer her, honey.

JOE BELLA

Marilyn, please.

RENATA

Okay. Sam, will you please go wait in the car
for me.

SAM

Sure, no problem. I'll be in the car.

Sam leaves.

RENATA

I'm overreacting, I know. But she's my very
first baby. What is this, Ma?

MARILYN

I honestly don't know.

JOE BELLA

I'm going to say something for the first time in my life without consulting your mother. But I think she is going to very much agree with me. Renata...Sam is a wonderful man. He is a generous and kind man, but he's killing us. He's killing us. Is it true, Marilyn?

MARILYN

He means well.

JOE BELLA

Is it true, Marilyn?

MARILYN

Yes.

RENATA

How can you...how can you say that about Sam? He has done nothing but great, great -

JOE BELLA

Renata, if he was not killing us, I could take anything. I hate to say this, but I am more afraid of what will happen if I don't. You and the baby are always, forever, welcome here, but I do not want Sam in this house again. At least not until we all get control of ourselves.

There is a silence as each takes in what Joe is saying.

JOE BELLA (contd)

I simply don't know what else to do. I'm sorry.

RENATA

Well, why don't you just get a gun and blow my head off 'cause if Sam is not welcome here, I am not welcome here.

She picks up her baby and goes to the door.

RENATA

In fact, why don't you just douse the place in kerosene and blow it up! Oh! And do me a favor, do not come to the baptism - you're not welcome.

EXT: BELLA HOUSE - NIGHT

Renata runs down stairs, but stops and looks at her parents' bedroom window. She is about to turn back, but instead runs to the limo. The driver takes the baby and puts her in the front babyseat.

She opens the door to the back seat. Sam watches TV, he smiles.

SAM

God you are incredible when you're angry.

RENATA

Shut up, Sam. Please.

SAM

Hey, don't you worry. The baptism is going to be dynamite and Tony will be there, guaranteed. Get in.

RENATA

Once I thought, no, once I wished, that my parents would drive off the road in their car and die. Because then I would be different.

SAM

What kind of talk is that, Renata?

RENATA

Sam, my parents said you are not welcome there. And you know what? I'm happy. For the first time I can just stand on my own two feet. Let's get the hell out of here.

She gets in the back of the limo. It takes off. Marilyn and Joe Bella watch the car from their bedroom window.

EXT: BOSTON HARBOR - NIGHT

A huge bolt of lightning flashes over Boston Harbor. Renata and Sam's apartment lights up the shore.

INT: RENATA AND SAM'S LUXURY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Renata and Sam asleep as rain and thunder persist. Baby is nearby in crib. Suddenly Renata's head pops up.

RENATA

Dad!

Sam wakes up instantly.

SAM

Renata.

RENATA

Sam! Oh, Sam! I was dreaming. I was cleaning the skylight at my parents' house and it suddenly went on fire and then I was engulfed in flames and then I fell through the skylight and died. I died, Sam, oh, it was horrible!

SAM

Renata, every Lithuanian knows about that dream. That dream's not about dying. It's the giving birth dream. It's about birth, Renata, of your new self...the mother, the new Renata.

Renata hears all this like a sudden revelation. She jumps out of bed.

RENATA

Yes! Yes! Sam, don't think about this, but I have to go somewhere.

SAM

Anywhere, name it, babycakes.

Renata runs around the bedroom in her nightgown, then finds her coat and flings it around her. She gives Sam a big kiss.

RENATA

I love you.

SAM

What are you...

She's gone. He climbs out of bed.

SAM (contd)

Hey! Wait a minute, Renata! Hey!

There's a bang of thunder and the baby starts to cry. Sam's attention is pulled to her.

EXT: LJMO - NIGHT

Rain pours down as the limo drives down dark suburban streets. It pulls into the Bella driveway. Renata runs out in her overcoat and negligee. She taps on the driver's window.

RENATA

Why don't you wait inside?

The chauffeur comes out wearing pajamas and a chauffeur's cap.

INT: HALLWAY - BELLA BEDROOM DOOR - NIGHTTIME

The chauffeur waits a discreet distance from Renata as she pounds on Bella's bedroom door.

MARILYN (lazy voice)

Wait a minute.

Renata hears a rustling of covers and her parents whispering.

RENATA (to herself)

Oh, great.

MARILYN

Hold on, Jan...

RENATA

Ma, listen, you don't even have to come to the door. I just want to say one thing.

MARILYN

Renata! Is that you? Are you okay?

JOE BELLA

Is the baby all right?

RENATA

The baby's fine. I just want to say that - I'm not sure what I want to say. Oh, I know what I want to say: if someone gives you something and they give it to you...
(Renata's voice loses steam as though she talks without conviction),
in the spirit of love and affection...

Marilyn opens the door. Renata closes the door. They play a tug-of-war with the door.

RENATA (contd)

Mother, please, it's easier with the door shut.

JOE BELLA

Stop that. Have you gone out of your mind, Renata?

The door whips open.

RENATA

No, yes. Listen...

(she shuts the door) (to door)

I just want to say when someone gives you something with love and affection, you accept...
(again she loses her conviction)
...love and affection...Oh, this is stupid.

Renata opens the door. Marilyn and Joe are in their robes looking at Renata with expectation. Then, Marilyn goes to embrace her.

MARILYN

Oh, Renata. How is our little granddaughter?

RENATA

Hi, Mom.

Joe gives Renata a hug.

JOE BELLA

Renata, we all lost our heads. How's the little baby?

RENATA (suddenly recharged)

Listen, I'm talking about Sam. Don't accept gifts if you don't want them. Or else really, really accept them. Maybe you'll have some fun with Sam then. Because Sam's fun. That's all.

Renata turns to leave.

MARILYN

That's not why your father asked him to leave. Is it, Joe?

JOE BELLA

No.

MARILYN

You don't know your father at all if you think that's why he asked him to leave.

RENATA

I don't understand.

JOE BELLA

Renata, get in my shoes for one moment. And I'll say right up front that I'm not too sure what has gone wrong and also I don't know why things have gone wrong. But I know how I feel. I feel like my wife, daughter and sons-in-law, plus my own son, and even you, are all falling apart from me and each other, and maybe that's good; maybe there's a time. Like in nature, there are volcanoes, and if you're not involved directly, all sorts of fantastic things come from volcanoes. Maybe that's what's happening to us. I don't know. So, I have to stop everything and think. It's not the gifts, it's not -

RENATA

Oh, Dad.

She goes to hug him.

JOE BELLA

No, no, no. You're right.

(with some doubt in his voice)

We want to accept Sam. I want to try.

MARILYN

That's true.

RENATA

Okay.

(pause)

Well, goodnight.

JOE BELLA and MARILYN

Goodnight.

RENATA

Bye.

Renata turns and the chauffeur sleepily follows her out. Marilyn turns to Joe.

MARILYN

Joe, I love you at home, at work, in the garden,
in the car...You know that, don't you?

They embrace.

INT: RENATA AND SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHTTIME

Sam is asleep in a chair by baby's crib. Renata, in the dark, goes to bed and sits down.

RENATA

Sam, darling? Sam?

SAM (from the corner)

Yes.

Renata jumps.

RENATA

Sam?

SAM

Shhh...She's asleep.

Sam comes over and kisses Renata, gets under the covers and looks at her.

SAM (contd)

Your eyes are shining! Where have you been?

She beams.

RENATA

My parents really want to understand and...Oh,
Sam...my father said he'd try, not in a bad way.
I guess our romance caused a lot of excitement.
I guess you're just that sort of guy!

She kisses him. She pulls away, beaming at him.

INT: OPULENT CATHEDRAL - DAY

Huge church is completely empty and dark except for the parents, godparents and baby at the altar. Joe and Marilyn and Peter enter. Marilyn blows Renata a kiss. Joe nods to Sam. Renata is soaring.

The priest walks around the altar three times. Renata holds the baby, Jan and Tony at either side of her.

Priest places the baby in Renata's arms. He instructs her to raise it up as he anoints its head. She raises it three times.

Sam waves bowl of incense. Sam wipes his brow. Incense streams around his face.

The priest now gives the baby to Sam.

LONG SHOT - THE HUGE ALMOST EMPTY CHURCH

Sam lifts the baby up and priest applies anointment.

CLOSER SHOT

as Sam lifts her up a second time.

On the third lift, Sam gasps for air. Tony, quick to the jump, grabs the baby as Sam, arms uplifted, freezes in pain and then jerks, as his body contracts and he falls to ground.

Renata screams in horror.

EXTREME CLOSE UP - WHITE SCREEN

Snowy sky.

INT: BELLA HOME - DAY

Heavily decorated for Christmas. Marilyn and Jan in kitchen. Marilyn opens oven, pulls out turkey. Jan reads from cookbook, "Cooking For Your Heart."

JAN

Okay, so cholesterol deposits in the arteries...

MARILYN

But turkey's okay, right?

JAN

Well, dark meat is saturated with double fat proteins.

MARILYN

Then no dark meat for Sam. And we shouldn't serve wine.

JOE BELLA

I'm shocked by every person in this room.

Tony comes to the door with a shovel.

TONY

It would be better to clear a path to the back but that's longer and I know that extreme temperature swings can cause shock to the circulatory systems of...

JOE BELLA

You've all gone nuts...Christ! Sam comes up the front walk. And if he wants to go out and make a fucking snowman, he'll do it. And if he wants to smoke a pack of Lucky Strikes, he'll smoke a pack of Lucky Strikes.

JAN

Dad, he'd die instantly if he smoked, just die.

MARILYN

Joe...Think of Renata.

TONY

Really, Dad. Normally if a guy wanted to jump out a window, okay. But this is different. And Mom's right, think of Renata.

JOE BELLA

It's kinder to let the man be a free man. Just think about that.

INT: BELLA HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Joe Bella puts bottles of wine on table set for Christmas dinner. Marilyn stands watching. Knock on door. Renata.

RENATA

Hi! He's here. He's doing fine although his bronchial tubes suddenly restricted but his inhaler regulated him immediately.

INT: CAR - DAY

Tony opens the back and takes out the wheelchair. Sam, pale and gasping for breath, swallows a nitro-glycerine tablet. He recovers, the rest of the family runs down to the car.

MARILYN and PETER and JAN

Hi! Merry Christmas!

Renata quickly takes baby out of car and hands her to Jan.

PETER

Hi, Sam!

Sam stays within the car. Struggling to keep up with excitement. Jan knocks on the window. Blows him a kiss. Everyone crowds around the car.

JOE BELLA

Okay! Okay! Enough! Everyone move away. Give him some air, for christsakes! Why don't you all go upstairs.

They all leave.

JOE BELLA (contd)

You okay, buddy?

Sam rolls down the window. He is pale.

SAM

In family paradise.

Joe forces a little laugh but is concerned.

Joe Bella brings wheelchair to car. He lifts Sam out of car. Sam's arms wrap around Joe's neck for support. Joe places Sam in the wheelchair. But Sam tightens his arms around Joe's neck, Joe holds him in his arms. A long pause, as Joe rocks Sam in his arms.

INT: DINNER TABLE

Dinner is over. Sam keeps piling food on his plate (dark meat) and drinking wine. Everyone looks at Joe Bella.

JOE BELLA

They're all on the attack 'cause you're eating dark meat. I say live your life and that doesn't mean let me live it for you.

SAM

I'm glad you say that, Joe, 'cause there is one thing I will never go without and that is...

(he pulls out a cigarette)
A cigarette after Christmas dinner.

Everyone is shocked. Renata stands up.

RENATA

Daddy!

Marilyn and Jan leave the table.

PETER

Can I bum one from you, Sam, I left mine in the car.

Renata runs from the table.

INT: BELLA BEDROOM - NIGHTTIME

Renata on bed, crying. Baby is asleep on parents' bed. It's dark inside.

RENATA

You want to drop dead and die right before my eyes. Is that what you want?

SAM

No, honey, I won't. Come on, babycakes, huh? I love you more than life itself.

RENATA

Life! I thought life improved and always got better. But instead all I see is pain and sorrow and something horrible.

SAM

Goddamn it, Renata! You can look at that baby of ours and say all you can see is sorrow and pain and something horrible.

RENATA

No...I can't...but I'm scared if I touch you or make love to you, you're gonna die in my arms and I would have killed you.

Sam laughs.

SAM

I'm not gonna die on you, Renata. I'm living for the first time in my life. I kick death in the teeth, Renata. I spit in his face, see that schmuck over there...

RENATA

That's a picture of my grandfather, Sam.

SAM

Right, Giuseppe Condutti Bella, well, Mr. Giuseppe is a dead motherfucker and I'm a living motherfucker...that makes me one thousand times better than your grandfather. Listen, Renata, if death had hands I'd smash them and if death had eyes I'd burn them out of their sockets for you and if death had a liver I'd bite it out with my teeth and stomp on it...

Sam pulls himself out of the wheelchair and stands over the bed. He takes a step to her.

RENATA

Sam!

SAM

...and if death had a cock I'd kick it in the balls and send him off squealing.

(he lies on the bed with Renata)

At this time in my life nothing can touch me but you, and if this world is halfway to being exquisite, you add the other half that makes it so...what else can I tell you? I'm seeing it clear and goddamn it, Renata, you gotta see it clear with me.

RENATA

I'll try, Sam. I really will try.

INT: BELLA HOUSE - DUSK

Joe and Marilyn sleep together in Joe Bella's chair. Apollo on their lap. Guitar by chair.

Gail and Tony are curled up on the sofa, asleep, their baby asleep at feet.

Jan and Peter play Blackjack for pennies in the same room. Christmas lights flicker.

CHRISTMAS DAY or DAY AFTER

INT: BELLA LIVING ROOM - DAY

Under the big Christmas tree. A fire is roaring in the fireplace. Sam is in his wheelchair holding the baby. Renata is picking up all the wrapping paper and discarded boxes and throwing them in the fireplace. Sam mumbles baby talk to the baby and wiggles her over his head in the air. Renata quickly takes the baby from him.

RENATA

Daddy is such a nut, huh? Daddy is such a crazy stupid nut-brain. Want to kill yourself, baby?

She puts the baby under the tree and she cries.

SAM

Oh...Mummy's a meany, isn't she? She's a big fat meany. Mummy's like a big mean cow: Mooooo! Mooooo! Mooooo!

RENATA

And Daddy's such a skinny robust man he knows just what he's talking about, he's a real expert on health and physical fitness.

RENATA

I can skate figure eights you can dream about.

SAM

Renata throws a huge ball of wrapping paper in the fireplace and the flame roars hot. She backs away.

RENATA (contd)

Anyway, I can be fat, I had a baby.

SAM

I can be anything I want 'cause I have a pump
that goes plop plop pow! Whenever I want it
to...bango!

Renata stares at him a moment in shock. Sam wheels himself to her.

-- SAM (contd)

Bango wango pow! If I hold my breath and smoke
two cigarettes in rapid succession my heart can
be set like a fucking field of dynamite. Ba
zoom!!

Suddenly the baby starts to laugh.

SAM (contd)

Ba zoom! She likes it. Ba zoom!

Renata laughs too and kneels down by the baby. She nuzzles the baby with her face.

RENATA

Ba zoom! Ba zoom!

RENATA and SAM

Ba zoom!

They all laugh. Renata laughs loudly. She lets her head fall on Sam's thigh.

RENATA

Daddy's such a funny man. A funny, fat old man.

She keeps her head on his thigh. Sam becomes dispirited, pondering. Renata senses his sudden change.

RENATA (contd)

Let's go outside, Sam.

Sam smiles absently and shakes his head no.

Renata takes off alone skating fast in a straight line from the shore. Sam enjoys her every second. He pushes himself, the baby in his arms, onto the frozen lake. It's a struggle.

RENATA

is skating fast, the wind hits her cheeks. She is happy. She turns abruptly to her audience and is exasperated to see Sam struggle to move to her. She skates back to him.

SAM (yells)

Not bad. Not bad.

RENATA

Sam, my god, are you crazy, you can fall through the ice and god only knows what the hell can happen. And the baby, Jesus Christ, Sam!

SAM

There's hundreds of people skating.

RENATA

Yeah...

SAM

Ice boats...

RENATA

Yeah...

SAM

And a goddamn Buick Impala police car.

RENATA

Well, I've had enough anyway, let's go in, please.

SAM

You know, I'm going to skate out here with our little girl some day. That's what I'm aiming for. I'm going to skate faster than any heart patient ever skated in the history of heart patients.

RENATA

Let's not break any records yet.

(pause)

So what do you want to see? My figure eights...my spin? One leg, or one leg with a spin, what?

SAM

See out there, there's that hole, in the ice.

RENATA

What hole?

SAM

- straight out there, a fishing hole, there's, like, a pile of ice on the...

RENATA

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I see it.

SAM

Go out, straight out, and come back. Go! Go!

Renata takes off.

SAM (contd)

(to baby)

Got to warm Momma up.

Sam is alone with the baby. The cold wind hits his face. There is utter silence, he seems completely at peace. Then the sound of Renata's blades are heard. He turns. She's exuberant.

RENATA

Not bad for one hundred and forty-five pounds!
Wow! I forgot how great it felt to let the ice
pass below your feet. Fwheh, fwheh...what next?
What do you wanna see?

SAM

Give me a series of figure eights.

RENATA

How many?

SAM

Gimme say six.

RENATA

No, fourteen for the months we've been together.

SAM

And make out past the fishing hole. See that ice
boat.

A beautiful ice boat glides across the lake.

RENATA

You got it.

She takes off.

Sam sits alone again. Only the eerie sound of the ice moving is heard. An ice boat passes, its sails full of wind and power. He watches the boat. It passes Renata and only then he remembers to

watch her. She's a tiny figure. Sam looks down at the baby. He holds its hands and blows air into them.

SAM

. Look at this big sky. Look...see the
birdie...look at the birdies, all the
birdies...they're saying hi to us!
(he lifts the baby in the air)
Yoo-hoo, this is the little baby...she says
hi...hi...hi...

Sam looks at the birds overhead in awe, hundreds fly over to him.

CUT TO: RENATA

She has stopped too to look up at all the birds. She sees Sam wave to her. She waves to them too.

RENATA

Goodnight, birds!
(she laughs)
See ya later!

She skates towards Sam. She yells:

RENATA (contd)

Watch me go backwards. Backwards...

She skates backwards towards him. Her face is full of fun and her cheeks are red and satisfaction fills her eyes. She gets closer. She looks over her shoulder and just feet away from Sam she comes to a dramatic Ice Follies stop. Her blades send ice high into the air landing on Sam's lap.

Suddenly her face changes from joy to fear. Sam is slumped over in his wheelchair. Baby lies smiling on his lap.

RENATA (contd)

Sam! Sam!
(then a panic)
Sam! Sam! God! No! No!

She grabs the baby. And places her lips against Sam's, kissing him frantically. No response.

She falls to her knees in tears, her head on his thigh, crying.

RENATA (contd)

No no no no.

INT: BELLA LIVING ROOM - NIGHTTIME

Renata looks out the curtains to the lake. All is quiet. She holds her baby. Jan sits on the couch.

JAN

Ren.

Jan starts to cry, pouring out tears. Renata comes over to her. She strokes Jan's hair and wipes the tears from her eyes, but they keep pouring out. The baby is laughing.

RENATA

I had -

Jan doesn't hear. She cries and cries.

JAN

He died. He just died. And there's nothing more to do about it now. Oh, Ren. I'm sorry.
(more tears)

Renata puts the baby in Jan's arms. Jan takes her close to her. Renata puts her arm around Jan and rocks the two of them.

RENATA

I had the greatest time in my life, Jan. The greatest time ever.

Marilyn snuggles into Joe Bella's arms.

EXT: SMALL TOWN - ROTARY - DAY

Rotary is empty. The funeral procession enters the rotary. There is a hearse followed by a limo, Joe Bella's convertible, and a black Trans Am.

LIT: JAN AND PETER'S CONVERTIBLE - DAY

PETER

We should move into our own place. Go to a nice inexpensive town and find a place to live.

JAN

There's always Somerville.

PETER

No! Jan! I mean like Shanghai or Singapore! Our neighborhood can be the whole world! The whole world! I'm dead serious.

She starts to laugh.

JAN

We could do that, couldn't we, Peter? Huh? We could just all of a sudden be from Shanghai!

Peter takes her hand and starts to make out with it.

INT: TRANS AM

Tony drives. Gail holds baby.

TONY

It sounds awful but this car was not made for
funerals.

Gail is a million miles away.

GAIL

Tony, how come I never got to know Sam? I just
bitched and worried about me and you and never
got to know him. How did that happen? Huh?

Tony puts his hand on her thigh.

INT: LIMO

Joe Bella sits between Marilyn and Renata. Renata holds the baby.
Marilyn whispers to Joe Bella. Joe Bella looks surprised. They
both look at Renata, who stares out the window. Joe Bella holds
Renata's hand and kisses her.

JOE BELLA

One for the big guy...

He leans forward and whispers something to the driver...

"Always In My Heart" begins to play.

The procession rounds the rotary, then begins to take the exit up
onto the highway, when suddenly the limo overtakes the hearse. The
limo starts again around the rotary and the limo driver waves for
the hearse driver to follow suit. The hearse falls in between the
limo and the convertible, the Trans Am bringing up the rear. Then
the limo driver hits the gas pedal and the procession takes one
fast spin around the rotary.

It rounds a second time, and then a third, until finally it slows
down again to a distinguished pace and proceeds up the highway ramp
out of town.

Music continues through end credits.

THE END



