

'VIRTUOSO'

by

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BLACK

We hear the sound of an ORCHESTRA. Huge and wonderful, stirring the emotions. We then ...

FADE IN: A SUNSET OVER JOHANNESBURG

Bloody and uncompromising.

The swell of music subsides partially as the clear and haunting sound of a FLUTE SOLO takes over.

We TRACK along dirty streets to an EXPENSIVE APARTMENT BLOCK. TILTING UP ALONG THE OUTSIDE FACADE.

The sound of the orchestra fades completely and we are left with just the SOUND OF THE FLUTE.

We continue to TILT UP to ...

A BALCONY - NIGHT

ALICE stands framed by an arched doorway. She's nineteen - dark, pale, very intense. She plays the flute beautifully. The city goes to silhouette below. She plays for a moment longer, then walks into ...

A ROOM

It's hot and dark. A breeze languidly shifts silk drapes as Alice moves through. A MATCH FLARES in the corner illuminating a man's face as he lights a candle. Alice watches him through the flickering light as he lies back on the bed.

CRAIG

Come here ...

Alice walks to the bed slowly. CRAIG (the man) doesn't take his eyes off her.

CRAIG

Take that off.

Alice hesitates, then pulls the dress over her head. She's naked underneath. She drops her dress onto the bed. They watch each other.

CRAIG

God, you're beautiful!

She climbs onto the bed and sits astride him. Craig reaches forwards, traces his hands along her body, then brings her down towards him. It becomes passionate ...

Limbs entwine, bodies move and strain against one another. Craig rolls her over and her foot knocks the candle. It falls onto the sheets. They don't notice. The sheets catch fire and within seconds they're surrounded by FLAMES.

Alice panics. Craig pins her arms down and continues making love to her.

ALICE
(Thrashing)
The bed's on fire.

CRAIG
(Kissing her neck)
I love you.

The flames get higher, closer, eating in around them. Craig's lovemaking intensifies. Alice thrashes against him and manages to throw him off.

ALICE
(Bolting up)
You're crazy!

She picks up a VASE from the side table, throws water across the bed. Craig rolls off the bed and sits crouching in a corner, panting and watching her, as she thrashes BEATING and SMOTHERING the flames with a pillow.

DISSOLVE TO:

Blackened satin sheets mopping up water. Broken flowers lie scattered everywhere. Craig stands watching as Alice tries to clean up the mess.

Craig's in his late twenties. Goodlooking and athletic. Hair slicked back. Sure of himself. He starts laughing.

CRAIG
Can you believe this!

He switches on a light and we see the apartment properly. It's magnificent: high ceilings, polished wooden floors, and decorated stylishly: art deco pieces, silk drapes, exotic flower arrangements. The burnt mess on the bed is absurdly out of place.

Alice picks up her dress. Blackened. Most of the front burnt away.

ALICE
What am I going to wear home?

Craig opens a cupboard. Beautiful woman's clothes hang in perfect order. Craig selects one, tosses it to Alice.

CRAIG
That'll suit you.

Alice looks at the dress doubtfully. Black. Expensive.

CRAIG
Don't worry ... I'll tell her
it's being dry cleaned.
(Looking at his watch)
You better hurry. It's our show
tonight, she'll be home any
minute to change.

ALICE
(Throwing the dress on)
Shit ...
(Collecting her shoes)
That's all we need. ..

Craig picks up her bag and flute box, starts walking to the door. Alice follows. She looks waif-like in the sophisticated black dress.

ALICE
Will you phone me?

CRAIG
I don't know. Maybe we should
cool it a bit.

He opens the door and turns. Then seeing her face:

CRAIG
Hey ... hey ... what's this, huh?
(Taking her in his arms)
I love you, you know that, don't
you?
(Pulling back to look at her)
Don't you?

She nods. He steers her out.

CRAIG
(continuing)
I just don't know how to get out
of this.

ALICE
Move out and get another job.

Alice starts walking off down the corridor.

CRAIG
Hey!
(She turns)
It's going to be sooner than you think.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Alice turns into the street. Night lights reflect in oily puddles. A black Mercedes sports drives past Alice spraying water out and wetting her.

ALICE
(Shouting out)
Thanks!

The mercedes screeches to a halt outside Craig's apartment. Alice waits for the driver to get out. The door opens and a head throws long hair forwards and brushes it ... The driver gets out. Her expensive black outfit accentuates her curves. A woman ... By comparison Alice looks like a gawky girl.

MEG
(Calling up)
Craig ...

Alice freezes watching. Meg looks up towards the apartment.

MEG
(Calling louder)
Craig! Clothes in the car!

She takes a newspaper out of the car, slams the door and walks towards the entrance.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG STREETS - NIGHT

Alice walks. FOOTSTEPS BEHIND HER. She picks up speed, frightened. A HOBO stumbles up to her. Litter tumbles along, wrapping around their feet as they walk.

HOBO
Gimme a buck ...

Alice takes no notice. Walks.

HOBO
Come on, man, I'm hungry.

Alice fumbles in her purse, hands over some money.

ALICE
This is for bread ... okay?

INT. CRAIG'S FLAT - NIGHT

Craig works quickly. He bundles the burnt sheets and Alice's dress into a ball then quickly makes up the bed with clean sheets.

WE HEAR A KEY TURN IN THE LOCK ...
Craig panics. He dumps the sheets in a corner and lies down on the bed, grabs up a magazine and pretends to read.

MEG'S VOICE
Craig?

CRAIG
I'm in the bedroom, Babe.

Meg enters, stands in the doorway.

CRAIG
Howzit ...

She throws the newspaper onto the bed.

MEG
Guess what? I'm nominated for The Star Woman of the year.

CRAIG
(Grabbing up the paper)
What?!
(Looking at the article)
That is bloody amazing, Meggie!

He bolts up. Hugs her.

CRAIG
Well done.

MEG
(Hugging him back)
Nice, hey?

CRAIG
I'm proud of you.

MEG

(Disentangling herself)

Thanks.

(Looking around)

What's burning?

CRAIG

(Quickly trying to change the subject)

How did the showing go?

Meg goes to the dressing table. She unlocks a drawer and takes out three leather jewelery cases.

MEG

Hot. Clothing looked amazing.

(Opens the cases and lays them out flat - expensive jewelery in ordered rows)

Ronnie Sacks was in his element, silicone everywhere. You should've seen him ...

CRAIG

Ja, adjusting necklines.

Meg takes off her bracelet, breathes on it, rubs it with a cloth and places it carefully into the case.

MEG

... Wants a hundred thousand units of the little black dress.

CRAIG

What?!

She snaps off her earrings and places them in the case. Then the rings: takes them off one by one, rubs them with the cloth and places them in the case.

MEG

What did I tell you.

She methodically closes each case and places them back in the drawer. Locks it.

CRAIG

A hundred thousand units, that's a flipping fortune! That's ... what ... that's ... Meg, that's a million on that dress alone.

MEG

I know.

(Taking her dress and slip
off, and standing in
underwear and suspenders)
Oh ja, and we're invited to the
races this weekend.

(She hangs her dress up,
carefully smoothing out the
crinkles)
Ronnie's flying us down to Cape
Town for the Met in his jet.
(Slips into a silk gown)

CRAIG

Great. I'll design us something.

MEG

(Absently)
Fine ...
(Calling out)
Miriam!

CRAIG

I gave her the afternoon off.

MEG

Shit, Babe, I need my outfit
ironed for the show.

CRAIG

What time are we leaving?

MEG

Damn!
(Looking at her watch)
Seven ... Who's going to iron my
dress now?

CRAIG

I will. Just take it out.
(Walking off)
I'm going to shower.

Suddenly Meg sees the sheet and picks it up.

MEG

What's this? ...

Craig turns.

CRAIG

It got burnt.

MEG
I can see that.

CRAIG
Ja, I woke up and the whole bed
was on fire.

She watches him for a moment, then sees Alice's dress caught up in the sheet.

MEG
And this?

CRAIG
Just an idea for a new sample. It
was on the bed.

Meg holds his eye, then dumps the sheet and walks to her dressing table. She sits and starts brushing her hair.

CRAIG
Your hair looks beautiful.

INT. MARTINE'S FLAT - DAY

A WHITE RAT rolls around inside a ball.
We follow the rat past a huddle of bodies on the floor ...
MARTINE, LEANDRA, JANE and SANTI. Martine reaches out and
picks up the rat. She puts it on her chest and strokes it.
The rat moves across her chest and weaves into her long dark
hair.

MARTINE
(Laughing)
Ticklish ...

Martine's in her mid twenties, dark and incredibly
beautiful, but the drugs are taking their effect and she
looks hollow and exhausted.

The others are a mixture, Mulatto, Indian, White.
Over this the sound of the flute, repeating a single phrase
of music.

LEANDRA
Crush it.

JANE
Doctor, doctor ...

MARTINE
(Singing)

Doctor, doctor give me the
news...

On the floor is a KETTLE. Leandra has a teaspoon over the
steam. He tips it and empties a pink powder into a measuring
cup with water.

MARTINE
(Placing the rat inside the
ball and rolling over)
Looks okay ...

The rat rolls on and we follow it around the apartment.
The place is expensive but a pigsty: dirty clothing across
wooden floors, yesterdays junk food.

LEANDRA'S VOICE
Looks fucken A.

JANE'S VOICE
(Singing underneath)
We're going to party, fiesta,
together, forever ...

The rat rolls past Alice. She sits back straight, playing.

MARTINE
O - kay!
(Picking up a syringe)
...Leeeet's go...

Leandra gets down onto the floor and does pushups as Martine
syringues the mixture up.
Alice turns.

ALICE
Mart ...
(Nothing. She tries
again)
Martine ...

MARTINE
What?

ALICE
Please don't.

LEANDRA
Bitch bitch, nag nag ...

MARTINE
Don't hassle me about this,
Alice.

Alice turns her back. She starts playing again, harder, eyes closed.

MARTINE

Okay, okay - this is happening.
Who's first?

Leandra inspects his arms. The veins are full.

LEANDRA

(Sing song)

Let's do it.

He ties a sock around his arm.

Martine taps the syringe.

The NEEDLE comes up until it fills the screen.

PINK LIQUID squirts out through the top.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

A swirl of pink and red colour. Fabric shifting and moving across legs ...

A MODEL twirls on a ramp to music. APPLAUSE. She's smiling. The fabric flows around her. Another model crosses her and then another. Long legs. Perfect faces. More applause as the models move down the ramp in tight choreographed movements.

COMMENTATOR'S VOICE

And this from the Meg Ellis
Collection. Her flame story for
Autumn ...

REPORTERS in the audience jot down furiously. FLASHBULBS and more applause.

BACKSTAGE

A chaos of color, half naked bodies, clothing going on and off ... Dressers running. Make up artists with brushes. Hair stylists putting flowers in hair.

Meg and Craig work furiously, putting the final touches on the models.

MEG

(Adjusting a model's sleeves)
Make sure you sway so the fabric
moves.

Craig adjusts the neckline.

MEG
Okay - go!

The model moves off to make her entrance. We follow her through the opening and out onto:

THE RAMP

Loud vampy music. Lights. Five models move together in a tight number. The applause swells.

BACKSTAGE

Craig and Meg work on TWO MODELS. Evening wear - black chiffon dresses with hand made flowers, beadwork and tiaras. The sound of the RISING APPLAUSE.

CRAIG
They're going crazy out there.

MEG
I know.

Meg adjusts the lie of the fabric on the model's dress. The model bends to do the laces on her boots and her zip breaks.

MODEL
(Clutching her zip)
Shit!

MEG
Craig! The zip's gone.
(To the model, hissing)
You've put on weight.

Craig rushes over.

MEG
(Panicking)
What are we going to do?

CRAIG
(Looking around desperately)
Uh ...

He pulls the sash out of another outfit winds it around the model's waist.
The music fades.

MODEL
It's my number!

MEG

Craig!

CRAIG

Don't panic.

Craig winds the fabric, magically turning it into a bustle. Meg grabs up extra flowers and pins them along the rest of the broken zip. The effect is stunning. The opening beats of the next number.

CRAIG

(To the model)

Go!

They run with her, finally pinning on flowers.

CRAIG

(To the model)

Careful how you move.

She exits. Craig and Meg turn back to the next model. They're panting. Craig's sweating.

MEG

Well done, Baby.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG - NIGHT.

THE HILLBROW TOWER: its spire points up high above the streets. The sound of Alice's flute playing OVER ...

EXT. MARTINE'S APARTMENT/BALCONY - NIGHT

Alice sits cross legged on the floor, playing her flute. A ghetto blaster plays in front of her and she keeps up with a complicated flute solo.

Through the doorway behind her, we see A PILE OF BODIES on the floor of the living room. Breathing together slow.

Alice misses a beat. Rewinds and plays the phrase over. Then she turns up the volume and lets the music wash across her.

The SOUND OF GUNSHOT, people screaming. Alice leans over the railing looking into the street.

Immense TRAFFIC NOISE. SIRENS. She turns from the street towards:

THE LIVINGROOM ...

Darkness. SILENCE. And shapes.

LES stands towering above the bodies. He's thin and eel-like. Vicious dark eyes glare across the darkness. He picks up the syringe. Empty.

LES
Wellcanol ...

He throws it down and it pierces Martine's exposed thigh like a dart. She stirs briefly.

Alice stands in the door frame watching. Les looks up.

LES
What's she doing up here?

Mutual hostility.
More gunshot from outside. Then silence and deep drugged breathing.

LES
I've got a guy waiting for her downstairs.

Alice doesn't respond at all. Les is furious.

LES
Stupid bitch.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. Meg stands on the ramp surrounded by her models, smiling, bowing slightly.

The audience stands. Applaudes. The models applaud. Meg laughs, bows again, loving it.

BACKSTAGE ...

Craig stands obscured at the entrance to the ramp, watching.

INT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT/LINING ROOM - NIGHT

Craig sits slumped in the couch, his feet up on the coffee table, staring forwards, morose.

MEG'S VOICE
(Hyped up)
... And ... Michael Seth, of
the Seth Group, wants to see
me tomorrow.

She enters carrying champagne in tall glasses. Silk dressing gown loosely draped over expensive underwear.

MEG
...Can you believe it? The Seth
Group, Baby. If I get their
sponsorship ...
(Handing Craig his glass)
... you come on the overseas
trips with me.
(Lifting her glass)
To this! To money! To success!
Jesus! Long may it last.
(Downing her champagne)
Cheers.

CRAIG
(Moodily)
Cheers ...

MEG
Come, drink up. Let's get
motherless ...
(Stroking his chest)
I want to see you naked.
(Her hand stroking lower)
Get up and undress for me ...
slowly.

Craig doesn't move.

MEG
(Suddenly registering his
mood)
What's the matter?

CRAIG
I'm freaked with you, Meg.

MEG
Why?

CRAIG

You didn't acknowledge me. You didn't call me out onto the stage.

MEG
Don't be silly. It's my label.

CRAIG
I designed it with you, Meg.

Meg stares at him.

CRAIG
You take me completely for granted. Shit man!

MEG
I'm sorry ... I just didn't think...

CRAIG
You never do ...

MEG
I got caught up into the moment.

CRAIG
You take all my energy, Meg. Take, take, take. When are you going to give back a little?

They stare at each other.

MEG
(Crooning)
Ah, Baby ...

She undoes her gown. The silk slips slowly off her shoulders.

CRAIG
You hurt me, Meg.
(Watching her undress in spite of himself)
I won't be in your shadow.

MEG
Come ... undress. I want to see you ...

She takes his hand and places it on her throat. His hand starts to move down towards her breasts ... drawn to her.

EXT. CONCERT HALL - DAY

A cassipir with soldiers rumbles down the street. Alice turns off the sidewalk and runs up the stairs leading to the Concert Hall. She's carrying her flute.

INT. CONCERT HALL - MORNING

A buzz of music and chatter as an orchestra tunes up. Alice sits in the flautist's row, and arranges her sheet music. She looks up and catches the eye of one of the violinists - Julian. They smile at each other.

The conductor, MR VERSELLI, walks onto the stage. Grey haired and serious. A disciplinarian.

He passes the percussionist, taps his back, the percussionist straightens. Verselli walks on through the violinists. Listening.

VERSELLI
(To the first violinist)
Are we ready yet?

The first violinist plays middle C, setting the tone. The whole orchestra follows. A RESOUNDING MIDDLE C. Verselli climbs up onto his podium.

VERSELLI
(Tapping his baton)
Thank you.

Immediate silence. Verselli looks around.

VERSELLI (CONT'D)
Full rehearsal, please. Top to bottom.

The orchestra turns pages of music, shuffle, then settle into absolute silence. Verselli waits till you can hear a pin drop. He bows his head and cues the orchestra with his baton. The orchestra starts: A SWELL OF MUSIC.

Alice waits. All concentration.

Verselli cues the flautists.

They begin to play.

We see immediately that Alice's playing is different. Her whole body, her very being is bent and surrendered to the music.

EXT. CONCERT HALL - DAY (LATE)

The orchestra members spill out onto the street.

Alice walks with JULIAN: tall, slender, very gentle and open. He's carrying a violin case.
Julian steers her around a drunk collapsed against the stairs.

JULIAN
How'z things at home?

ALICE
Worse ...

JULIAN
Wanna get some coffee?

ALICE
I can't, Julian. I want to be
some-where in about five minutes.

JULIAN
(Looking at his watch)
Five minutes ... five ... four
and a half ...
(Mixing in with the crowd)
So who is he, Al? What does he
do, what does his father do,

ALICE
(Laughing)
How do you know?

JULIAN
I know you, Kruger. I know your
mind.

ALICE
I'm in trouble ... a lot of
trouble ... He's living with
some-one.

JULIAN
Kruger!

ALICE
You can't be logical about these
things, Jules. I'm trying.

JULIAN
Oh yes ?...

ALICE
I am! It's just ... it's just ...
I like him too much. What can I
say?

JULIAN
Don't come crying to me, Babe.

ALICE
... I will.

JULIAN
... Jus' don't come crying to me.

ALICE
(Playfully hitting his
shoulder)
Who else can I go crying to?
And by the way ...
(Peeling off, dodging traffic
to the other side of the
street)
... that's what friends are for.

Shouting at each other through the traffic:

JULIAN
Who says I want to be your
friend.

ALICE
(Laughing and moving off)
I love you.

JULIAN
Yeah, right.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG SIDEWALK - DAY

Mostly black. VENDORS selling tomatoes and bananas.
NEWSPAPER SELLERS shouting the days headlines. Black women
in colorful tribal clothes mixed with men in suits carrying
briefcases. Policemen with rifles.
Alice disappears into the crowd.

EXT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT/CORRIDOR - DAY (LATE)

Alice peeps out from behind the firescape. She darts across
the empty corridor and knocks on a door. Nothing. She

hesitates, looking up the corridor apprehensively. Knocks again.
Still nothing.

The WHINE of a lift arriving. SOUND of the lift door opening and closing, then voices ...
Then footsteps ...

Alice dashes back across the corridor and slips in behind the fire escape.

CRAIG AND MEG

Walk down the corridor. The vicious sound of MEG'S STILETTOS.
They're laden down with samples and patterns.
They stop at the door.

CRAIG
You've got the keys.

Meg lays the clothing on the floor, fumbles around for the keys. Craig leans heavily up against the door.

MEG
Keys ... keys ...
(Shaking the bag up and down)
They're not here ... I've left them in the car.

CRAIG
You always do this.

MEG
Do not bitch at me.

CRAIG
(Very strained)
Just give me the car keys, okay?

He grabs the keys from her.

Alice leans back up against the wall, staring out across the city.

The sun is beginning to set.

She starts off down the firescape.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JOUBERT PARK - DAY (LATE)

A POLICEMAN leans over a body on a bench. He takes the man's pulse.

Alice walks past, picks up her pace as the policeman takes a radio off his belt.

Alice walks on faster, past a black man chasing a black woman. He grabs out at her, she screams and the two fall heavily onto the grass.

INT. MARTINE'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (EARLY)

A BANDAGED ARM.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Leandra as he carefully unrolls the bandage exposing his arm.

LEANDRA

(Mumbling)

... does this look shit, or does
this look shit ...

(Poking around at the bruise)

Fucken colors of the rainbow ...

Jane sits next to him. Hooded and heavy.

Alice picks her way through the mess to her bed and stops.

ALICE

Who vomitted on my bed?

Nobody's taking any notice.

ALICE

(Throwing the sheets off)

You're cleaning this up, Leandra.

LEANDRA

No chance, Baby Shoes ...

(Inspecting his arm)

... fucken gangarene.

Alice crosses to the bathroom with the sheet.

ALICE

Creep!

SANTI

(Rummaging in her bag)

One of these days, I'll ... get
my life together ...

LEANDRA
 (To Alice)
 If you don't like it here leave,
 like we're not begging you to
 stay ...

ALICE
 (Shouting at Leandra)
 I'm not leaving my Sister to you
 scabs.

LEANDRA
 (To Alice)
 Like we're not on our bended
 knees.

As Alice passes, Santi empties a mess of pills and make-up
 out onto the floor. Alice steps on some pills, crushing
 them.

SANTI
 Man! Look where you're walking!

LEANDRA
 (Muttering)
 Mother Fucken Theresa ...

Santi gathers up the crushed pills and dry swallows them.

ALICE
 (Kicks out at the mess)
 Out of my way.

SANTI
 (Rummaging in her bag)
 I don't believe this ... I had a
 two bucks in here ...
 (To the others)
 Okay! Who scaled my bucks?

Les enters, walks through towards the bedroom.

ALICE
 One day I'm going to kick the lot
 of you out.

Les stops.

LES
 Oh, is that right?

LEANDRA
 (To Alice)
 Ja, let's see some action.

SANTI
Jane?

LEANDRA
(Mumbling, attention on his
arm)
Let's see some kung fu.

Les loses interest, disappears into the bedroom.

SANTI
(Shaking Jane)
You scaled my bucks.

LEANDRA
(Singing)
Everybody was kung fu fighting...
(Switching focus to Santi)
No-one scaled your bucks. You
probably spent your bucks.

SANTI
(Wailing)
I didn't spend it! I would know
if I'd spent it! I had two bucks
in here and now it's gone.

Alice storms out.

THE BATHROOM

Alice reaches through slimy water in the bath and pulls the
plug out.

ALICE
Yug ...

THE DRAIN GURGLES AND ALICE dumps the sheet into the bath.

From the room next door the sounds of a vicious physical
fight starts up. Fragments of:
'Don't hit me, Les ... please man ...'

A slap. A body bashing into a wall.

THE BEDROOM

Les blunders across the room towards Martine, knocking the
bedside table over. Perfume bottles, dead flowers fall
everywhere.

Martine crouches against the wall shielding her head.

Alice rushes in.

ALICE
(Screaming)
Stop it!

Les switches direction, takes Alice by the neck.

LES
Out of here, little Sister.

ALICE
Please, Les!

He pushes her out roughly and slams the door.
Alice falls hard into:

THE PASSAGEWAY

She struggles up. Sounds of the fight continue behind the closed door.

ALICE
(Hammering on the door)
I'm going to call the cops, Les!

LES' VOICE
(Shouting)
Ja! Call the cops and they'll
take us all in.

Alice looks into:

THE LIVING ROOM ...

No-one's taking any notice of the fight ...
Santi's on hands and knees searching for her money. She disappears in under the bed.

Leandra steals a packet of cigarettes from Santi's bag...

Jane stares forwards glassy eyed.

BATHROOM

Bathwater cascades over onto the floor. Alice stands ankle deep in it. She kicks at the water, spraying it at CAMERA.

INT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Craig's at his pattern table. He cuts across expensive fabric. The floor is a mess of discarded fabric and cardboard.

MIRIAM, the black maid, sweeps up.

Meg enters, crossing to the bedroom. She's eating from a plate as she walks.

CRAIG
What's for supper?

MEG
Whatever you want. Ask Miriam.

A caged canary twitters from the corner.
Meg moves across to the cage.

MEG
Hello, hello ... found your
tongue at last.
(Stops at the cage and
recoils)
Stinks ...
(Crossing to the bedroom)
Keep the cage clean, otherwise it
goes, Craig.

CRAIG
Yes, yes, yes.

Meg closes the bedroom door behind her.

CRAIG
Miriam ...
(Miriam stops sweeping
immediately)
Grill me some salmon, please ...
and vegetables, you can tidy up
later.

Miriam exits. Craig sweeps more fabric onto the floor, then stares blankly at the canary. It sings. Craig whistles back absently. Then goes to the phone. Dials.

INT. MARTINE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The phone rings ...
And rings.

Silence. Alice rushes for the phone.

ALICE
Hello?

INT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT - EVENING

CRAIG
 Hello, Alice?
 (Checking the bedroom door
 and keeping his voice down)
 Hello, my Baby ...
 (Sighs out)
 Shit man, I miss you ... what are
 you doing? ...
 (Cradling the receiver)
 I love you.

INT. MARTINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alice replaces the receiver, smiling. Her eyes close tight.
 She opens them ...
 Leandra and Jane lie together passed out.
 Santi's going through Leandra's pockets trying not to wake
 him.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (EARLY)

Alice cracks eggs into a pan.

Martine hobbles in. Dry blood across her chin and a black
 eye. She leans against the door.
 Alice turns. Reacts.

MARTINE
 Don't stare at me.

ALICE
 (Turning back to the stove)
 I'm not.

MARTINE
 (Eyes filling with tears)
 I'm a mess ... I'm not going to
 be able to work for a week, at
 least.

She sinks down at the table, head in hands. Alice brings the
 eggs to the table.

ALICE
 Here ... I made you breakfast.

MARTINE
 I'm not hungry.

Alice sits next to her.

ALICE
They're dragging you down, Mart.

The sound of the toilet flushing and Leandra stumbles through wiping his mouth. Alice watches.

ALICE
He's been vomitting again. This whole situation's becoming impossible.

Martine starts to cry. Alice puts her arm around her.

MARTINE
(Shrugging her off)
I don't want to be touched.

ALICE
Sorry ...

Martine chases the egg around her plate with a fork.

ALICE
Can't you kick them out, Mart?
Come on. Just tell them to leave.

MARTINE
I can't.

ALICE
Why not? What do you owe them?
(Beat)
You don't owe them anything. I want them out of here. They're sponging on you, Martine.

MARTINE
I don't want to be alone.

ALICE
You're not alone. I'm here.

MARTINE
You're hardly here, Al.

ALICE
Well, I'll come straight home after rehearsals.

MARTINE

I'm not an old woman. I'm young.
I'm a young woman! I don't want
anybody worrying about me.

ALICE

I do worry about you, Martine.

(Staring at her)

Now come ... eat a little of
this, I cooked it with red
pepper, it's really nice.

Martine picks up the fork and levers some egg on, she starts
to cry. She tries to get the egg to her mouth, but the
fork's shaking too hard. Alice watches helplessly.

THE LIVING ROOM

Jane lies spread out on the floor. Leandra's leaning over
her. He taps the side of her cheek intently. No response.

LEANDRA

Janie ...?

Alice enters. She collects sheet music together and packs
her flute in its case.

Leandra taps Jane's cheek harder, still no response.

LEANDRA

(Pathetic)

Come on, Babe, what's the matter
with you.

Alice walks past the kitchen

MARTINE'S VOICE

Alice ...

Alice stops looking into:

THE KITCHEN

MARTINE

I want you to find some-where
else to live ...
Some-where quiet, where you can
practice.

(Quieter)

Where you can breathe.

Martine drags herself up from the table and walks past

Alice into:

THE PASSAGEWAY

ALICE
What about you, Martine?

MARTINE
What about me? Well ... I'll just
carry on. Take it all a day at a
time. And if I die it's no great
loss to the world or humanity.

The two sisters stare at each other. Suddenly Martine's face
contorts. She clutches her stomach.

MARTINE
God, I feel sick ...
(Hobbling to her room)
Jesus Christ, I'm going to
fucking die.

She disappears into the room. Alice stands motionless.

INT/EXT. CRAIG'S CAR - DAY (EARLY)

Craig and Alice drive away from the city. Windows open.
Music on loud. Hair blowing madly.

CRAIG
I'm going to get fired.

ALICE
So am I. I'm supposed to be at a
rehearsal.

Hand going onto her leg peeling her dress back.

CRAIG
God, I want you. Come here.
(Pulling her over to him)
I've been going crazy.

They start to kiss.

The car hits the side of the road and slides across out of
control.

Craig turns the wheel sharply. The car spins in a circle and
comes to a sandy halt. They laugh.

CRAIG
Kiss me ...
(Alice is laughing)
I said, kiss me!

EXT. COUNTRY - DAY (LATE)

Alice and Craig kiss. They're down to underwear, entwined on a hammock, strung between two trees.

CRAIG
(Moaning, straining against her)
What am I going to do with you?

ALICE
I don't know ... tell me ...?

CRAIG
(Stroking, kissing her)
Child ...

EXT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT - DAY (LATE)

Establishing shot: A beautiful sunset repeats and reflects in the windows.

EXT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT/BALCONY - DAY (LATE)

Meg places the caged canary down on the lip of the balcony. She puts on long, plastic gardening gloves and picks up a watering can.

Fresh air. The canary ruffles its feathers and sings.

Meg waters potted orchids, moving backwards towards the cage.

From inside the cage, Meg's rear, a huge, brightly coloured floral mass approaches, GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER ...

MEG bumps into the cage. She turns.

Too late ... the cage falls out over the ledge.

THE FALLING CAGE

Spins OUT OF CONTROL, careering towards the sidewalk.

INSIDE THE CAGE

The canary's clipped wings beat frantically in a yellow whirl as ...

THE CAGE

Plummets towards the sidewalk, spinning.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY (LATE)

The cage crashes onto the roof of Meg's black sport's car and concertinas.

Yellow feathers, bird seed and blood.

EXT. BALCONY - DAY (LATE)

Meg leans over the balcony watching. She turns away, breathing quickly.

MEG

Oh, Jesus ...

EXT. COUNTRY FIELD - DAY (LATE)

Alice and Craig lie in amongst wild flowers and long grass. Alice tickles Craig's naked back.

ALICE

Anyway I've got to move out.
Martine wants me to ...

CRAIG

How long have you lived together?

ALICE

Well I've been with her since I was fourteen, from the time we got kicked out.

CRAIG

Kicked out?

ALICE

Ja ... There was an awful fight between my mother, Martine and Jack, my mother's lover. Martine wouldn't say what happened. Just

came in, started packing and told me we were leaving.

CRAIG
Radical ...

ALICE
Ug ... it was okay. Martine was really more my mother anyway.

He nestles up against her, puts his head on her breast.

CRAIG
I want to be with you tonight.

ALICE
You can't.

CRAIG
I'm gonna leave Meg.

ALICE
(Stroking his head)
That would be amazing ...
imagine ... we could go home
now...

CRAIG
Get into bed ... just lie
together.
(Kisses her softly)
God I want some peace ...
We better go.

ALICE
Yup ...

They stand, smooth out their clothes.

CRAIG
(Picking the grass off)
Can't go home with grass on my
clothes ...
(Half immitating Meg)
What's in your pants? I thought
you were at the factory all day.
Where have you been, Craig? And
don't lie to me.

They stare at each other, then start walking back through a sea of grass. Waving mesmerically to the horizon.

INT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Craig sits staring glazed through the bars of the BLOODY BIRD CAGE.

MEG'S VOICE

I'm sorry, I'm sorry ... It was
an accident, what can I say?

She enters, wrapping her face in bandages. Craig watches her through the bars of the cage. She sits down at her dressing table, ties the bandages in under the chin, then creams her hands.

MEG

I mean how do you think I feel?
You should see the roof of my
car.

She goes to the bed. Sits down next to him.

MEG

I'm sorry ... I know how you
loved that bird.

CRAIG

(Very hostile)
You look ridiculous.
I'm sick of sleeping with you
looking like that.

MEG

(Getting into bed)
Come forty five, Sweetheart, I'll
still be looking good.

CRAIG

Come forty five, you could get a
facelift.

MEG

I'm not going to let you get to
me, I know you're upset, so let's
just go to sleep.

She snaps the bedside light off.
Through the darkness:

CRAIG

I'm moving out.

Beat. Meg snaps the light back on, struggles up in bed.

MEG

What?

CRAIG

I said I'm moving out.

They stare at each other.

MEG

When?

CRAIG

Soon as I find some-where to go.

MEG

As soon as you find some-where to go?

Craig turns to face the wall. Meg unravels the bandages, fast.

MEG

I - am - talking to you!

CRAIG

(Sitting upright)

WHAT?

Meg bolts up, bandages falling around her face. She pulls a case off a shelf, kicks it savagely across the floor.

MEG

Pack!

CRAIG

What are you doing?

Meg scoops out a drawerful of his clothes, throws them across the bed.

MEG

Pack! If you're going to go, take your stuff and get out now.

Craig bolts out of the bed. Throws clothes into the case haphazardly, then storms into:

THE BATHROOM

Meg follows. Craig throws his toiletries into a bag.

MEG

What are you going to do now, may I know?

(Glaring at him)

Go back to working in a factory, cutting patterns?

CRAIG

I don't care.

Storming back to

THE BEDROOM

CRAIG

Anything's got to be better than this.

Craig's packs in a shirt.

MEG

Hey! I gave that to you.

CRAIG

So?

Meg grabs the shirt, Craig jerks it back and the shirt tears.

CRAIG

Nice.

Meg takes another shirt out of the case.

MEG

While we're about it ...
(Rips the shirt in half)

CRAIG

Okay - you want to play - let's play.

He goes to her cupboard, throws open the doors.

CRAIG

Let's see ...
(Flicking through.)
... made you lots of things,
didn't I? ... Really spoilt you.

He stops, goes back to a dress: very delicate embroidered silk.

MEG

No ...

Craig rips the dress open down the centre.

MEG

I hate you.

Craig picks up the birdcage.

CRAIG

And this? What about this?

MEG

That was an accident.

CRAIG

Bullshit!

He flings the cage. It smashes into a picture. Glass explodes outwards.

EXT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT - DAY (EARLY)

Craig storms to his car, clothes drop out of the half open case.

He throws the case inside the car, and goes back to collect the clothes.

Some-one, from an apartment above, throws a bucket of slimy WATER into the street drenching Craig and the fallen clothes.

MAN

(Shouting down)

That's for waking up the whole bloody neighbourhood.

CRAIG

(Shouting up)

Hey! Fuck you!

He gets into the car. Music on. Sunglasses on. Craig revs the car and screeches off into the street.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

An establishing shot: it's unkempt and isolated by tall trees. An incredible view of the city stretches out in front of it.

INT. COTTAGE/PASSAGEWAY - DAY

Alice and Craig walk down the passageway hand in hand.

BEDROOM

Only a bed and a sound system. Craig goes to the CD'S.

CRAIG

Okay ... what are we in the mood
for?

He puts on John Mitchell: 'I couldn't love you more' and
takes her in his arms.

CRAIG

Hello, my love ...

ALICE

Hello ...

Craig dances her slowly to the music.

CRAIG

You see? We waited and we got
what we wanted.

(Holding her tight)

This is all we need. Good sound
and empty space.

ALICE

It's beautiful, Craig, I'm so
happy.

He manouvers her onto the bed.

CRAIG

And a good bed.

Craig lies on the bed. Alice sits astride him.
He touches her breasts through her dress.
Alice responds.

ALICE

(Murmuring)

I've got a concert tonight, Craig
- I have to practice.

CRAIG

Okay ... There is time for
everything.

She takes her dress off. He undoes his belt.

DISSOLVE TO:

Craig and Alice lie surrounded by discarded clothing, asleep.

Alice stirs, suddenly comes awake.

ALICE

...What's the time ...

(Suddenly panicking)

Don't tell me ... don't tell me...

(Reaching for her watch)

Oh God! It's past seven!

She scrambles for her clothes. Craig surfaces.

CRAIG

What's the matter?

Alice rushes around trying to find her clothes. Craig starts laughing.

ALICE

It's not funny, I'm supposed to be tuning up already, they're going to kill me ... Oh, Julian...

CRAIG

Who's Julian?

ALICE

(Scrabbling through her case)

... One of the violinists ...

He'll never believe this. Where's my skirt ... Oh no! Don't tell me ...

She tips the case over, and looks through ...

ALICE

Craig, my concert clothes are at my Sister. What am I going to do?

INT. CONCERT HALL/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Alice runs along the corridor drowning in Craig's tuxedo.

She stops outside the stage door, takes a deep breath. The sound of the orchestra tuning up and the rustle of the audience. She opens the door and walks out onto ...

THE STAGE

The Orchestra tunes up as Alice walks through. It takes forever to get to her chair. Julian looks up inquiringly. She trips on the trouser leg and almost falls down into her chair.

She starts giggling and looks out into:

THE AUDITORIUM.

Finds Craig.
He's laughing.

ON THE STAGE

Alice lifts her flute, but the shirt cuffs are getting in the way. Her giggles get more out of control.

Julian's watching. He looks out into

THE AUDIENCE

... Sees Craig laughing.

Craig shifts his focus and finds himself staring at Julian.

The two men look at each other.

VERSELLI

Walks through the orchestra and everyone settles.

He takes up his position, raises his baton ...

Absolute silence. The baton goes ...

A huge swell of music as the concert begins.

INT. CONCERT HALL/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Alice and Julian walk down the corridor fast. Other members of the orchestra file past them.

JULIAN

What are you playing at, Al?

Two of the double bass players walk past, carrying their instruments.

FRANK
Played your heart out tonight,
hey, Alice.

ALICE
(Relieved)
Really?

FRANK
Uh-huh. I was watching you.

They move off.
One of the violinists walks past. Looks at Alice as he
passes.

JERRY
Hey, Alice!
(Laughing)
Some-one shrunk you in the night?

He moves on.

ALICE
Okay ... looks like I pulled it
off.

INT. VERSELLI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Verselli faces Alice across his desk, eyes narrowed. Alice
stands rooted to the spot.

VERSELLI
I thought you were serious, Miss
Kruger ...
You have not been practicing
properly... have you?

Alice says nothing.

VERSELLI (Cont'd)
Tell me, Miss Kruger, what is
more important for you than
anything else?

Watching her closely.

ALICE
I want to be happy.

VERSELLI
And how are you going to achieve
that...? Hmmm?

... I'll tell you ... only by expressing your inner potential. That is how. It's a wonderful thing, Miss Kruger ... potential for greatness. Everyone has it, but you, you have it in abundance.

(Watching her, continues softly)

And do you know what happens if your true potential is not expressed? ... You wind down slowly. Eventually all you lead is a life of quiet desperation ... Quiet desperation. Is that what you want, Miss Kruger?

ALICE

No.

VERSELLI

(continuing)

Now you go home and work. You work until your mouth feels numb and your back aches. You come to rehearsal tomorrow nauseus because you haven't slept. Is that clear?

Alice nods.

INT. COTTAGE/BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Alice sits on the bed, trying to practice. She runs up and down an octave without much motivation, then drops the flute.

She looks around the room, then wanders over to the CD'S.

ALICE

(Flicking through)

Bach ... Bach ... Beethoven ...
Stones!

(She takes the CD out)

Rolling stones ... okay.

The music blares out loud. Alice dances crazily to the music, singing:

ALICE

I can't get no ...
satisfaction...

She throws herself onto the bed and stares up at the ceiling.

ALICE
(Panting, muttering)
What's happening to me?

Craig walks in.

CRAIG
Come, Sweetie. Bedtime.

ALICE
I can't. I'm all wound up.

CRAIG
(Snapping the music off)
Well, wind down. I'm handling
Meg tomorrow. I need to get to
sleep.

ALICE
I'm supposed to practice.

CRAIG
It's two o'clock.
(Snapping off the lights)
To sleep.

Alice lies staring up. Through the darkness:

ALICE
I'm confused.

CRAIG
Go to sleep, you'll feel better
in the morning.

INT. CONCERT HALL/STAGE - DAY

The orchestra is rehearsing.

VERSELLI
No!

The playing stops.

VERSELLI
(To the percussionist)
Not boom BOOOM!
(To the others, throwing his
hands up)
He's drowning everything out.

(Back to the percussionist)
I don't want to hear you. I want
you underneath the music.
(To the others)
Continue, please.

The Orchestra continues.

The flautists turn pages, it's their movement next.
Alice watches Verselli apprehensively.

Verselli cues the flautists.

They begin to play.

Verselli immediately throws down his baton.
Absolute silence. Everyone sits rigid as they wait for the
explosion ...

VERSELLI
Miss Kruger!

She looks at him, eyes burning.

VERSELLI
Miss - Kruger! This is an
orchestra you are playing in. Are
you aware of that? You play like
you're at the market weighing up
meat. ONE TWO THREE FOUR, ONE TWO
THREE FOUR. No! It's a continuous
phrase.
What have I got here? Music
students or professionals.

Alice's eyes fill with tears.

VERSELLI
(Looking straight at her)
Miss Kruger - you are pushing me.
(Looking at the others)
Continue, please.

He cues them ... they continue.

Julian watches Alice over the top of his violin as he plays.

Alice plays. She blinks the tears back furious, but they
roll out over her cheeks.

INT. DESIGN STUDIO/CRAIG'S OFFICE - DAY

Craig packs the last of his magazines into a box.

He takes a last look around the empty office.
On the pinboard ... a polaroid of Craig and Meg - leaning together, laughing.
He takes it off, looks at it a moment, then pockets it.

Craig goes to the pattern rail, riffles through and takes patterns off.

MEG'S VOICE

I hope you're not thinking of taking those.

Craig looks up. Meg stands in the doorway watching.

CRAIG

Bloody right I'm taking them - I made them.

MEG

I wouldn't suggest that, Craig.

CRAIG

I couldn't care less what you suggest, my dear.

Craig picks up the patterns and the box.

MEG

You don't want to fuck with me.
(Watching each other)
Now put the patterns right back where you found them and leave.

Meg walks out. Craig throws the patterns down, and rams his fist through the pinboard.

INT. COTTAGE/ENTRANCE - DAY (LATE)

Craig walks in, dumps the box on the floor.
He drags himself down the passage to the -

BEDROOM

Alice lies curled up on the bed.

CRAIG

What a day ...

She turns to face him.

ALICE

Me too. Ah, Craig ...

He falls onto the bed. They cling to one another.

CRAIG
Awful, awful ...

They lie rocking each other.

ALICE
And I have to leave ... my day
isn't over yet.

CRAIG
(Acting the child)
Don't leave me. Cook for me,
please. Make me supper.

ALICE
I wish I could.

CRAIG
I need love.

ALICE
I've got a concert, what can I
do? And I still don't have my
blacks. I've got to stop by
Martine's...
(Kissing him)
I'm sorry.

INT. MARTINE'S FLAT/LIVING ROOM - DAY (LATE)

Drawn curtains. Small spokes of light are the only
indication that the light and the living are going on
outside.

Martine and Leandra sit limply up against the bed.
In the middle of the floor is the KETTLE and a A HALF EMPTY
SYRINGE.

Jane lies on the bed naked and half covered by sheets.
Lips blue. Rigid.

The white rat runs around the syringe sniffing at it.

Leandra and Martine watch, slowed down and giggling.
There's KNOCKING ON THE DOOR. They take no notice.

LEANDRA
He wants some, Mart.

MARTINE
(Leaning forward to the rat)
Baby ... Baby Boy ...

Shakily Martine brings the rat to her mouth. It bites her lip. Blood runs down her chin. Leandra picks up the syringue.

LEANDRA
Hold it down.

MARTINE
(Letting go the rat)
Can't, Lee.

The rat scuttles into Martine's hair.

LEANDRA
(Trying to disentangle the
rat)
Come here ...
(Freeing it)
Okay ... got you. Now, lie still.

He holds the twisting rat between his knees and syringes up the rest of the wellconal.

Alice enters.

ALICE
Martine ...?

Leandra gets the needle to the rat. It struggles terribly.

ALICE
What are you doing, Leandra?

She runs to Leandra, knocks the syringue out of his hand.

ALICE
(Picking up the rat)
This is sick of you, Leandra.
Sick!

Alice places the rat gently back into the cage and closes the door.

ALICE
What's the matter with you?

Martine and Leandra lie on the floor giggling.

ALICE
Shew, it smells terrible in here.
Open some windows.

Alice opens the curtains and windows. Martine and Leandra look up like moles, shield their eyes.

LEANDRA
Nooit, man ...

MARTINE
(Overlapping)
... Close the curtains.

LEANDRA
(Overlapping)
She's ... trying to fucken kill
me, ek se ...

Martine buries her head under a pillow to escape the light.

ALICE
Now, you're getting into bed,
Martine. And you're eating, if I
have to force feed you.
(Suddenly sees Jane)
What's the matter with Jane?

LEANDRA
She's sleeping.

Anticipating the worst, Alice moves towards Jane. She feels Jane's cheeks. Draws her hand back quickly.

ALICE
(Hushed)
Oh God ...
(Looking around)
Martine ...

Martine lies on the floor, her head buried under a pillow. Alice turns back. Slowly she covers Jane with the sheet. Leandra crawls to the bed.

LEANDRA
Uh - huh! She's hot, man ... she
doesn't ...
(Trying to draw the sheet
back)
... she doesn't want to be all
covered up ...
(To Jane)
Howzit, my Baby, howzit ...

ALICE
She's dead, Leandra.

LEANDRA
She isn't ... Mart ...
tune her ...
(To Alice, voice cracking)
Bullshit, man!
(Tapping Martine on the head)
Mart ... is Jane dossing or ...

MARTINE
(Feebly smacking his hand
away)
Okay!

Martine crawls to the bed, lays her head on the sheet over Jane's chest.

ALICE
She's dead, Martine ... I'm
calling an ambulance.

Alice goes to the phone.

MARTINE
(Listening to Jane's chest)
She's ... she's ...

LEANDRA
(Overlapping)
Tune me she's okay, Martine.
(Becoming pathetic)
... please, man...
(Starting to sob)
... Tune me...

Martine convulses. Leandra hits her on the back.
Alice replaces the receiver, sinks down looking into the room. We hear the sound of Martine vomiting.

INT. CONCERT HALL/CORRIDOR - NIGHT.

The SOUND of the orchestra. Alice runs up the corridor.
The sound of the CONCERT IN FULL TILT.
The FLUTE MOVEMENT starts. She stops running. Stands in the centre of the corridor staring ahead as it sinks in.

EXT. HILLBROW STREETS - NIGHT

Alice walks dazed through the crowds on the sidewalk.

A DRUNK staggers towards her and collapses under a poster advertising a holiday on Lake Malawi: 'Enjoy the warm heart of Africa'.

Alice moves past TWO BLIND MUSICIANS playing African wind instruments and singing hymns.
Alice crosses against the light. Cars screech, hoot.

INT. COTTAGE/ENTRANCE/LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Craig hammers pictures up on the wall. Alice enters.

CRAIG
What's been happening? Where have you been?

ALICE
Oh, Craig ...

CRAIG
This guy's been phoning and phoning - Julian or something. Who's Julian?

Alice drags herself to the phone and starts to dial. Craig watches her.

CRAIG
(Slight edge)
I'm talking to you, Baby. Who's Julian?

ALICE
I told you, Craig. He's one of the guys in the orchestra ...
(She listens as it starts to ring)
.. He plays the ... Hello, Jules...

She tries to talk, but the words aren't coming out. Craig watches.

INT. CONCERT HALL/CORRIDOR - DAY

Alice and Julian stand outside Verselli's door.

JULIAN
Just tell him what happened. It's going to be okay.

Alice braces herself, then knocks. And enters.
Julian stares off down the corridor, agitated. He looks at a noticeboard. A notice advertises auditions for the Paris Symphony Orchestra. Julian looks at it without seeing.

The door opens and Alice walks out and up the corridor.
Julian follows.

JULIAN

So?

(Alice doesn't respond.

Just walks)

Is it okay? What did he say?

(Nothing. Julian spins her to
face him)

Tell me what happened, Al?

ALICE

I got fired, okay?

She walks off. Julian runs back towards:

VERSELLI'S OFFICE

Julian faces Verselli across the desk.

VERSELLI

(Stony)

I don't care what happened, Mr.
Howard.

He gets up as if dismissing Julian.

JULIAN

Can't I at least explain?

VERSELLI

(Very emphatic)

I played the night my wife died.
She died at 6.30 and I was there
tuning up at 7.30. My throat was
constricted and I wanted to cry.

(Explaining)

I was battling to get the air
past my throat and into the
flute... Are you with me, Mr
Howard?

Julian looks down. Verselli watches him.

VERSELLI

Tragedy is part of the contract,
we get the good with the bad. And

we should be thankful for it! It
links us and it tests our spirit.
There is nothing further to say.

INT. COTTAGE/BEDROOM - DAY

Alice plays her flute. Hard, fast, full of emotion.
Then she places it in its box packs it away in a drawer.

THE STUDIO

Craig scans through fashion magazines, tearing out pages and
laying them out.

Alice enters.

ALICE
Okay, I'm all yours.

She cuddles up behind him.

ALICE
What can I do?

CRAIG
Aren't you practicing?

ALICE
No. I'm coming to work with you.

He turns round, takes her in his arms.

CRAIG
You're coming to work with me?
And what do you think you're
going to do?
(Stroking her)
Apart from distract me, as usual.

ALICE
Distract me ... you should talk.

CRAIG
So ...?

ALICE
I'm going to ... inspire you ...
Hey! I can model for you. You
need a model don't you?

Craig looks at Alice. The idea dawning on him.

DISSOLVE TO:

Alice stands paging through a fashion magazine while Craig sews the last hem into an outfit.

CRAIG
Take off your clothes.

ALICE
Take off your clothes...
(Seducing him)
Take off your clothes ...

Alice steps out of her dress.

ALICE
I like this job.

Craig passes the outfit over and Alice puts it on.

ALICE
(She spins around)
How's it look?

Craig watches.

CRAIG
Okay ...

He moves to her.

CRAIG (Cont'd)
Not bad ... actually looks quite
amazing, even if I say so myself.

He pins the blouse in so that it fits better under the arms.
Stands back to look.

CRAIG
Nice, Babe ... it suits you.

He fiddles with the blouse, adjusting the darts, touching
her breasts.

CRAIG
How does this feel ... hmmm? Bit
tight?

ALICE
Uh ... no ... feels great, if you
keep your hand right there.

He slips his hand under the dress and adjusts the dart from
underneath.

ALICE
HMMMM, even better.

CRAIG
Ssshhhh ...

Craig kneels down and adjusts the crutch.

CRAIG
Too tight?

ALICE
Uh ...

CRAIG
(His hands on her groin)
Come, tell me ...

ALICE
I don't know. It all feels very
good to me.
(Sinking down and trying to
kiss him)

CRAIG
(Getting annoyed)
Come on, Alice. Stand up. We're
working here.

ALICE
(Flustered)
Sorry ...
(Struggles up)

CRAIG
Now, tell me. Is it tight?

ALICE
It's fine.

INT. COTTAGE/LIVINGROOM - DAY (LATE)

Alice stares out through the window, provocative in her new
outfit. A bloody African sunset below. Over this we hear:

JULIAN'S VOICE
What do you mean you've given up
playing?

Alice turns round.

ALICE
Just that.

JULIAN
(Softly)
Why, Al?

ALICE
Because it's just not working
out, Jules.

JULIAN
(Desperately)
What about our plans to audition
for the Paris symphony? It's in
two months, Alice. You can't just
give that up!

ALICE
Oh yes I can. I just have.

JULIAN
It's the chance of a lifetime!

CRAIG'S VOICE
(Calling)
Alice ... Come here a minute,
Babe...

ALICE (Cont'd)
And you know what? It was easy!
It was so easy, you wouldn't
believe it.

They stare at each other horrified.

ALICE
Okay, I've said it.

CRAIG'S VOICE
Al!

Neither Alice nor Julian move.
Craig enters holding a dress.

CRAIG
I've been calling you, didn't you
hear?

ALICE
Sorry ...

The two men look at each other.

CRAIG
(Hostile)
Howzit ...

JULIAN
Ja, howzit ...

CRAIG
(To Alice)
Try this on for me.

Alice slips out of her dress and stands for a moment in underwear. Julian watches, then looks away.

She puts on the dress and Craig adjusts it.

CRAIG
Okay ... it's what I thought.

He pulls the dress back over Alice's head.

CRAIG
(Muttering to himself)
Darts are pulling ...

Julian watches.
Craig walks out and Alice changes.

JULIAN
So, what was all that about?

ALICE
(Shrugging)
I'm helping him with a range.

JULIAN
What's a range?

ALICE
Clothes ... I'm modelling for him.

JULIAN
You can't be serious, Kruger.

ALICE
I am.

CRAIG'S VOICE
Al - sorry, I need you again ...

JULIAN

Let's go for a walk. I've got to get out of here.

ALICE

Okay - let me just check with Craig.

JULIAN

(Throwing his hands up)

Now she has to check with Craig. What'd'you have to check with him for?

ALICE

I live with him, Jules.

JULIAN

She lives with him ... So what! I live with my budgie.

ALICE

Don't be silly ...

CRAIG'S VOICE

Alice!

ALICE

(Calling)

I'm coming!

(To Julian as she leaves)

Don't do this to me, Julian.

EXT. BACK STREET - NIGHT

Alice and Julian walk fast past a vacant lot. A group of black street kids sit around a burning tree trunk playing 'Soweto Jive'. A fat black mama dances round the edge of the fire. Some-where in the distance, an ambulance siren.

JULIAN

You're not a model, Kruger, you're a musician.

ALICE

I've had it with music, okay?

JULIAN

What's happened to you? You used to play like nothing else mattered. Like your whole world was falling in on you, but you'd play ...

ALICE

(Stops walking, like something's dawning on her)
I don't need it anymore. You're right. That's what it is. I don't have to run away from my life anymore. I'm in love with someone and I - am - enjoying - my life for a change.

Julian pulls up short, staring at her.

JULIAN

And what happens when you're not in love anymore? ...
You've got to play, regardless of what's going on in your life, or you're going to die inside.

ALICE

I feel pretty alive right now, thank you.

JULIAN

I am telling you, that if you don't have an outlet for your creative energy and you let it get all bottled up, you're going to ...

ALICE

(Interrupting)

You sound like Verselli. What - did he rehearse you? Did he send you over here to rub it in all over again?

JULIAN

I care about you, Alice. That's why I'm here. Not because of Verselli or anyone else, okay? Because I care about you!

He walks off fast. Alice watches for a moment, then runs after him.

ALICE

Jules

JULIAN

What?

ALICE
Julian, wait!

Alice puts her arm around him.

ALICE
I'm sorry ...

They walk. There's a commotion up ahead. They get closer.
A body lies face down on the sidewalk. Blood snakes from the skull.

ALICE
(Looking behind her)
Shit ... imagine dying on the pavement.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

Alice and Julian move along the top floor of the site. The city shines below. They stop looking out. Julian watches as the wind blows Alice's dress against her body, outlining it.

JULIAN
You look nice ... that dress suits you.

ALICE
Thanks.
(Teasing him)
Craig made it.

JULIAN
Oh great, think I'll just rip it off you. Send you home naked ... give him something to wonder about.

Alice laughs, leans against him.

JULIAN
So, how's Martine going to feel about you giving up? All those years she worked to put you through art school.

ALICE
She's not going to know.

Alice picks up stones, throws them out over the edge.

ALICE (Cont'd)
 I don't even think she cares
 anymore ... she's on the edge ...
 (Watching the stone)
 Imagine falling off a building.

THE STONE SPINS THROUGH THE AIR.

Alice and Julian lean over the edge, watching it fall.

JULIAN
 I read you go through four
 phases. First phase: you're
 shocked, uncomprehending. Second
 phase, you panic. Third phase,
 you get incredibly depressed.
 Fourth phase, you go into
 ecstasy. And all of that happens
 in the few seconds before you hit
 the ground.

The stone hits the ground. Ricochets, stinging the concrete
 slabs on the bottom level. Then settles.

Alice and Julian lean back in away from the edge.

ALICE
 Whew!
 (Suddenly)
 Let's go past Martine.

EXT. MARTINE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Alice and Julian stand outside the flat. Alice is knocking
 and knocking ...

ALICE
 Martine ...? Why isn't she
 answering?
 (Knocking)
 Open up Martine!

Alice tries to peer through the window.

ALICE
 Something's wrong.

INT. HOSPITAL CASUALTY - NIGHT

Alice and Julian run following Martine as she's wheeled on a
 stretcher.

The 'emergency' door bangs open and shut closing Alice and Julian out.

ALICE
(Peering through the glass)
What's going on in there? What's
happening to my Sister ...?
(Starting to break)
Oh, Mart ...

JULIAN
Come ... sit.

ALICE
I don't want to sit. I want to
know what's going on. Why don't
they tell me what's going on.
(Banging on the glass)
Let me in!
(To Julian)
They enjoy this.
(Shouting at the glass)
Sadists!

JULIAN
Sit, Alice!

She collapses onto a bench. The door from outside bursts open and a black man is wheeled through on a stretcher. Following behind is a policeman and another black man, handcuffed. He's also bleeding, but less severely.

BLACK MAN
(Protesting to the policeman)
No, sir. He stab me first. It was
him!

POLICEMAN
(Smacking his back)
Shut up.

Alice and Julian watch. The stretcher disappears through the glass doors. The other black man is taken into a room.

ALICE
What a mess. It's all a mess.
Everywhere you look.
(Burying her head in her
hands)
She's going to die, Julian.

JULIAN
She's not going to die.

ALICE

(Half crying)

You don't understand, how much I
love ... I mean if she dies...
What if she dies?

(Beat)

She's too young to die like this
Jules ... I mean ...

Julian puts his arm around her.

JULIAN

Sssshhh....

(Holding her tight)

Now listen to me ... First of
all, she isn't going to die,
okay? Second of all, I do
understand, and third and most
importantly of all, the only
things you can't live without,
are bread, air and water.

Alice starts to laugh.

DISSOLVE TO:

Alice lying curled up into a fetal position, Julian reading.
The door from 'Emergency' opens ... A DOCTOR walks out.
Alice jumps up.

DOCTOR

It's going to be alright. We've
got her stabilised, but she needs
intensive drying out. I suggest
she be admitted to Sterkfontein.

ALICE

Sterkfontein! ...

DOCTOR

(Cutting her short)

It's not only for psychiatric
problems. It's also a
rehabilitation centre for nervous
anxiety, breakdowns and drugs.
It's the only way. If we
discharge her...

(Shrugs)

I give her a week.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAWN

A cold, joyless dawn breaks. Alice and Julian walk out onto the sidewalk.

INT. COTTAGE/ENTRANCE DAWN

Craig sits in a chair staring ahead and smoking.

The SOUND OF THE KEY IN THE LOCK. Craig looks up as Alice enters.

CRAIG
(Suspicious)
Where have you been?

ALICE
My Sister's in hospital.

She sinks down into a chair. Craig stares at her.

CRAIG
So ... is she alright?

Alice nods.

CRAIG
Did Julian go with you?

ALICE
(Not registering)
Ja ... he stayed with me the whole time.

CRAIG
What a nice guy.

Alice looks at him, she's not sure what to make of this. Craig stares at her stonily.

ALICE
(Venturing)
He's my friend, Craig ...I've known him since I was fourteen.

CRAIG
He's in love with you.

ALICE
(Without conviction)
Rubbish ...

CRAIG
Don't lie to me, okay? I do not like being lied to.

ALICE

I'm not lying. He's never indicated that he's in love with me. He's just been a good friend... a very good friend.

They stare at each other. Craig doesn't give.

CRAIG

You don't know men, Alice. I promise you, he's in love with you and he's got one thing on mind.

ALICE

Well I'm not in love with him. Does that make you feel better?

She stares at him. Craig gives in, goes over to her.

CRAIG

I'm sorry, Babe, I've just been climbing the walls ...

ALICE

It's okay.

CRAIG

Forgive me.

Alice nods. He sits at her knees, puts his head in her lap.

ALICE

(Stroking his hair)

And you? What's been happening with you?

CRAIG

Well ... Edgars called. I'm seeing them this afternoon.

ALICE

That's great.

CRAIG

Are you up to a last fitting?

STUDIO

The clothes rail is full of samples. Craig kneels in front of Alice, pulling her trousers down.

CRAIG
Are they creeping up?

Alice jiggles her legs.

ALICE
Uh ... no ... feels fine.

CRAIG
Alright. You can take them off.

Craig zips the clothes into dust bags.

CRAIG
And if they don't like it ...
I'll have to get a job in a
factory or something.

ALICE
They're going to like it. This
stuff's amazing.

CRAIG
You don't understand, Alice. I
walk in there without an agent,
without a company. I don't even
have a label. I'm like, off the
streets.

(Zipping a bag up)
I'm a whore, Baby ... unless I'm
bloody lucky, they're going to
take one look at me and eat me up
for breakfast.

INT. EDGARS - DAY

We see through double glass doors. A business man sits
facing into the room.

A model in one of Craig's dresses twirls around in front of
him.

The business man shakes his head. Gestures. The model pulls
the dress out at her waist indicating that it's too big.

Craig talks fast. He walks around the model, nipping in the
dress.

INT. COTTAGE/ENTRANCE - DAY (LATE)

Craig stands in the kitchen with Alice. She's paused over her cooking.

CRAIG
Ronnie Sacks, the fucken shark,
reckons he'll take ten thousand
units if I come in at half. At
half! I can't cost it at half!

Craig slumps against the wall. Alice stands looking at him.

CRAIG (Cont'd)
And they didn't fit the house
model properly. You're not a
proper 34... I should've known.

He goes to the phone.

ALICE
What's a proper 34?

CRAIG
(Dialing)
Some-one with perfect 34
measurements.

ALICE
Maybe she's not a proper 34.

CRAIG
Don't be stupid. She's hired
because she's a proper 34. You're
not the proper 34. I can't use
you.

She watches him, then turns back to the vegetables.

CRAIG
(Into the phone)
Hi ... Meg ... it's Craig ...

Alice freezes, the vegetables blur in front of her.

CRAIG
Listen, I have to speak to you...

INT. MEG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Craig walks from the entrance into the living room. It's redecorated and the apartment looks completely different: the couches are covered in tapestry, zebra skins on the floor and different colored drapes.

Craig walks around, touches the drapes, then pauses at the coffee table. Lying strewn across are a couple of invitations. Craig picks them up. Reads through, eyebrows go up.

He wanders into the kitchen. Miriam's setting smoked salmon onto a silver platter. Meg's putting ice into a bucket. Hair curled. Suave and sensual.

CRAIG

I see you're off to the Okavango Swamps ... with the Seth Group, my dear!

MEG

Yup. All of a sudden I'm this big shot. Everyone's after me.

(To Miriam)

Put cucumber round the edge.

CRAIG

Okavango's supposed to be amazing...

(He opens the fridge.)

White chocolate mousse ...

(Taking it out)

Yes ...

MEG

(Whipping it out of his hands)

No you don't ...

(Putting it back into the fridge)

That is not for you.

The phone rings. Meg picks it up. Craig paces, uncomfortable.

MEG

Hello ...

(Complete change of voice)

Hi! ... Yes, of course I'm expecting you ... Come around eight ... perfect ...

(Replaces the receiver smiling slightly)

Right, Miriam, you can set the table with the good dishes.

(Opening a pot on the stove)

Hmmm ... Okay ...

(To Miriam)

Do we have wine in the fridge?

MIRIAM

Yes ma'am.

MEG

Good ...

(To Craig, walking out)

Come.

Craig follows her into ...

THE LIVING ROOM.

MEG

So, we're staying at Mnandi -
best lodge on the swamps ...

(Pausing to re-arrange a bowl
of flowers)

Every chalet looks right out over
the water.

CRAIG

Nice ...

Meg sits. Her skirt opens slightly. Expensive black
stockings and high shoes. Craig can't help looking as he sit
down.

MEG

(Rattling on)

Sunsets ... dug out canoes ...

God, I cannot wait.

(Suddenly focusing on him)

So? ... What do you want?

CRAIG

Well ... I ...

Shit, I need a drink.

MEG

There's whisky, help yourself.

CRAIG

(Pouring a scotch)

How do I say this?

MEG

Just try saying it.

CRAIG

Okay.

(Taking a swallow of whisky)

Uh ... I want to work with you
again.

Meg starts laughing.

MEG

Well that certainly didn't take long.

CRAIG

It's hard enough, don't rub it in.

MEG

And why, pray, do you want to work with me?

He gets up, paces. Stands at the window staring out.

MEG

What about your sixteen year old? Your little piece of fluff? Isn't she keeping up?

CRAIG

Come on, Meggie. We're a good team.

MEG

(Giving nothing)
Oh really?

CRAIG

(Getting passionate)
We are! We always have been. I need you, Meg, I can't handle the meetings and the business shit. You've spent years schmarming up to Ronnie Sacks, you're good at it.

MEG

Thanks.

CRAIG

You know what I mean. You do it brilliantly ... So? What do you say?

(Meg's just staring at him)
I need you.

(Still nothing)
Say something!

MEG

Okay. You get your own studio, two overseas trips for shows and

we use my pattern makers and CMT.
Deal is sixty five, thirty five.
Take it, or leave it.

He looks at her.

CRAIG
You're unspeakable.

MEG
No, Craig. I'm just
unsentimental. Comes from getting
smacked in the face and
surviving.

CRAIG
Okay ... I take it.

INT. STERKFORTEIN/MARTINE'S WARD - DAY

Martine lies on the bed staring off vacantly.

Alice puts CHOCOLATES and MAGAZINES down on the side table.
Martine takes no notice.

ALICE
Have a chocolate, Mart.

Nothing from Martine. Alice holds the box out.

ALICE
Look ... assorted nuts ...
(Picking one out)
Here... here's a hazelnut cluster
... you love these.

Martine knocks the chocolate out of her hand.

MARTINE
I don't want a fucken, stupid
chocolate, I want to get out of
this place and I want a downer...
Get me a downer.

Alice looks over towards ...

THE NURSE

Siting on a chair up against the wall reading a bestseller.

ALICE

Turns back to Martine.

ALICE

She's not going to give you a
downer, Martine ... I've asked
her twice.

MARTINE

(Starting to thrash)

I want a downer, get me a
vesperax, Alice, before I scream.

(Throwing the chocolates
towards the nurse)

Give me a vee, you stupid,
spinster bitch.

The chocolates scatter around the ward. Alice gets up
uneasily. The other patients lie quietly, staring off into a
void.

Martine starts to cry.

MARTINE

She's not going to give me a vee
... Shit, man ... I'm going to
explode!

Alice walks into the middle of the ward and stoops,
gathering up the fallen chocolates. She looks up ...

HEADS AND VACANT EYES

Looking at her from above.

ALICE

Returns to Martine's bed, quickly.

ALICE

Okay ...

(Putting the chocolates on
the bed)

... you're allowed to squash
every chocolate to find out
what's inside.

Come on, Mart ... this is your
speciality.

(Squashing the chocolate)

... Orange cream ...

(Eating it)

Nope ... that was coffee cream
... what's this? It's hard ...

MARTINE
(Mumbling)
Butterscotch ...

Alice unwraps the chocolate, bites it in half.

ALICE
It is!
(Giving the other half to
Martine)
You're an expert at this, Mart.

Martine bites down on the butterscotch, starts laughing
despite herself.

INT. JULIAN'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Julian puts an enamel kettle on the stove.

JULIAN
So I spoke to this buddy of mine,
Jake. You don't know him. He runs
that performance art club in
Troyville ...

Alice sits at his kitchen table cutting slices of bread.

ALICE
Oh, ja - I've walked past -

It's warm and messy.
A lopsided political Calendar with a picture of Mandela and
the caption: 'After the release'. 'Soweto jive' playing.

A budgie sits on top of its cage and sings loudly across the
kitchen.

JULIAN
(continuing)
Anyway, they're looking for some-
one to play percussion. Nothing
too fancy, bit of drums,
triangle, xylephone ... you know
the drift.

ALICE
And so?

Julian brings cheese and fruit to the table. The budgie
flies onto his shoulder and sits there.

JULIAN
(continuing)
And so I spoke to him and
suggested you.

ALICE
What for?

JULIAN
(Feeding the budgie some
apple)
So you can make a bit of money.
Perform.

ALICE
Doing what? Banging on a triangle
for three hours a night ... no
thank you. Anyway - I told you! I
don't want to perform. Will you
stop interfering?

The kettle starts whistling and the budgie starts to fly
chaotically around the kitchen.

JULIAN
Pinkie!

The budgie stops on the light fitting and hangs there head
down.

JULIAN
Pinkie! Get off there!
(The bird ignores him)
I'm surrounded by wayward,
uncontrollable women ... Pinkie!

ALICE
... Pinkie ... what kind of name
is that for a budgie ... anyway
it's blue! What's it called
Pinkie for?

JULIAN
I don't know! What's to be
logical about a Budgie's name.

The budgie flies down and perches on Alice's head.

ALICE
Now it's on my head ... it's
going to shit on my head, Jules.

JULIAN

Well, that's good luck. Anyway
... that's it, Kruger.

ALICE

Good luck according to who?

JULIAN

I don't know! The Demi-God of
Budgies.

(Bringing the tea)

I've had it. I'm not interfering
any more. From now on, you can do
what you like.

(He looks at her)

Make you feel better?

Alice looks out of the window.

INT. MEG'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Meg and Craig sit on the couch surrounded by fashion
magazines, fabric swatches, samples. They're leaning over a
magazine.

MEG

(Pointing to a photo)

That's amazing. Very big for next
Summer - it's the whole new age
look - white linen, crystals,
rough cotton...

CRAIG

Nice ...

MEG

(continuing)

I love that neckline. It's like,
everything's so clean, so almost
demure, then you throw in that
neckline.

CRAIG

(Laughing)

I see what you're saying.

MEG

(continuing)

Maybe you get really cheeky and
style in black underwear.

CRAIG

Black underwear?

MEG
Could work ...

She unbuttons her blouse and lets it fall away.

Craig watches.

Meg picks up a piece of fabric, white, very soft. She drapes it against herself. The sheeress of the fabric accentuates the black underwear and Meg's shape underneath.

CRAIG
That looks amazing ...

Meg's aware of the effect she's having.

MEG
All we have to do is turn this loose in a showing with Ronnie Sacks.

CRAIG
Hoo boy, he'll blow his whole budget.

MEG
I'm telling you. We style a whole story around this he'll order five hundred thousand ...
(Looking at him)
At your thirty five percent, you're going to rake it in.

INT. COTTAGE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dark. And the CLOCK TICKING. Craig creeps in carrying his shoes. He tiptoes over to the bed.

CRAIG
You're awake ... howzit, Angel...

Alice lies staring out.

ALICE
Hi ...

CRAIG
(Leaning over and kissing her)
Sorry I'm late ... I've just had a meeting with Meg ... Come, give me a hug.

Craig takes her in his arms, pulls her up in bed. Alice's eyes stay open. After a moment she pulls back.

ALICE
How'd it go?

Craig undresses, leaving his clothes in a pile on the floor as he talks.

CRAIG
Well, we're already talking the summer story. She's got a brilliant idea. I'm telling you, Al, I'm going to clean up.
(Putting his hand out)
Put it here!

Alice places her hand in his. He shakes it.

CRAIG
(continuing)
You're looking at bucks, China.

ALICE
(Without conviction)
That's nice ...

CRAIG
(continuing)
So. I move into the new studio tomorrow.

ALICE
That's quick.

CRAIG
Yup. There's one thing about Meg, she moves fast.

He goes to the CD'S. Puts on Van Morrison.

Craig starts to dance round as if he's waltzing with someone.
Hips tilting. Sexy. Alice watches.

CRAIG
(Singing)
'It's a wonderful night for a moondance ...'
(Clapping his hands)
So, what's there to eat? I'm flipping ravenous ...

ALICE
What do you feel like?

CRAIG
... White chocolate mousse.
Can you make that?

ALICE
White chocolate mousse?

CRAIG
(Taking no notice. Singing,
eye closed)
'And every time I touch you, I
just tremble inside ...'

Alice stares at him.

DISSOLVE TO:

CRAIG ASLEEP

His whole face is relaxed, almost smiling.

ALICE

Leans up on one elbow, watching him.

KITCHEN

The remainders of BREAKFAST on the table. Alice chases toast
around her plate.

Craig speaks on the phone.

CRAIG
(Full of energy)
Ja ... Ja! Absafuckenlutely! ...
So I'll meet you for lunch ...
okay ... 1.30 ... The Spaghetti
factory ...
(Laughing)
No! No, I'm into pasta ...

Alice stabs the toast with her fork.

CRAIG'S VOICE
(continuing)
Forget it ... you can have
salad...
(Laughing)

Keeps you in shape, Meggie.
 (Lowering his voice)
 Yes, yes, we know all about your
 shape. 'Kay ... Later...

He puts the phone down, turns round and claps his hands
 together. He's very dressed up.

CRAIG
 Amazing ...
 (Rummaging in his briefcase.)
 Okay ... I'm outta here ...

Alice looks at him, closes her eyes and we ...

DISSOLVE TO:

Craig standing in front of Meg bare chested.
 She fits a shirt on him as if he's a model.
 He stands legs spread ... Meg smiles and runs her hands
 across the shirt.

MEG
 Feels good ...

It speeds up getting faster and closer as ...

... Meg's hands run down his torso, adjusting the shirt,
 lightly letting her hands stray.
 ... Seductive eyes.

FASTER

... As her hand runs down his torso, parting the shirt.

CLOSER

... As she bites her lip.
 ... Her hand running to his groin.

MEG
 (mouthing)
 I want you ...

VERY CLOSE

... As lips crush down on one another.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

ALICE

Watching Craig.

CRAIG STRAIGHTENS

Holding his briefcase.

CRAIG

See ya later ... Schwweeetheart.

He leans down, kisses her goodbye.

CRAIG

Do me a favour, Babe, tidy up a
bit ...

(Walking out)

Might be late ...

Alice looks at him.

CRAIG

First day, you know ...

Craig stops at the door, kisses his fingers to his lips.
Alice half smiles. She stares ahead as his footsteps
retreat.

The sound of the door closing. Then ABSOLUTE SILENCE.

She taps the side of her cup with a spoon. Stares down.
The coffee swims up at her.

BEDROOM

Alice turns to face the early morning devastation: Unmade
bed, Craig's clothes in a heap, upturned magazines.

She picks up the duvet and throws it back onto the bed.

EXT. STREET IN THE SUBURBS - (DAY)

Alice walks. An electronic gate flashes along behind her.
Signs: 'Immediate armed response'. Two vicious BULL TERRIERS
run alongside the gate, snarling.

Alice's eyes fix on the dogs:

TONGUES, TEETH AND BULGING EYES.

ALICE

Screws her eyes shut and starts to run.

INT. STERKFORTEIN/MARTINE'S WARD - DAY

Alice stands behind the bed taking hair twirls out of Martine's hair. Alice looks out over the ward:

PATIENTS LIE VACANTLY.

Watery eyes. shaking hands.

ALICE

Returns her focus to Martine. Concentrates on brushing her hair.

ALICE

Got any hair spray?

MARTINE

Ja, right. Hairspray. first thing I packed.

ALICE

Well, you'll just have to sleep sitting up.

(Holding out a mirror)

Look ...

MARTINE

(Pleased with the effect)

I want a doctor to flirt with -

(Calling to the nurse)

Hey, Ice Cubes, I need a doctor.

Get me ... Doctor Nodes ...

The nurse takes no notice. Martine picks a piece of bread off her lunch plate and rolls it into a ball.

MARTINE

I'm talking to you ...

ALICE

(Trying to divert her)

Martine ...

MARTINE

(Aiming the bread pebble at the nurse)

What?

ALICE

I brought you something ...

(Taking an aliceband out of
her purse)
I think you should have this.

The aliceband is beautiful. Full of colored stones.

ALICE
Present.
(Holding it out to the light)
Remember ...
(The stones catch the light)

MARTINE
Hey! That's the aliceband I gave
you! First birthday away from
home. I can't believe you kept
this.

ALICE
For luck in the outside world.

MARTINE
(Turning the aliceband)
Right ...

ALICE
Here ... let it work for you.

MARTINE
Put it into my hair, immediately.
(Looking at herself in the
mirror)
The pscho downer queen ... Hey,
Mother Iceland, where's Doctor
Nodes?
(Throws the bread and it hits
the nurse's clipboard.)
I want him in my bed ...
Hey, Spinster Ice Cubes -

NURSE
(Very tense)
What?

MARTINE
See?
(Very logically)
She knows her name.

Alice bursts out laughing. Martine joins in.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG PARK - DAY (LATE)

Alice sits on a bench in the park, surrounded by LAY ABOUTS: lying, sleeping, eating take aways.

A FILTHY CHILD

Carefully weaves through the bodies carrying a plastic bag filled with water. A TINY GOLDFISH swims around inside.

A MAN WITH A LACERATED HAND

Chases a woman up the path. They run chaotically getting closer to the child.

ALICE WATCHES

ALICE
Careful!

MAN
(To the woman)
I'm gonna klup you ...

He smashes into the child and the child drops the bag. Water runs out of the bag across the grass. The goldfish flips and twists.

Alice rushes over, grabs up the bag and runs with it to the fountain. The child follows.

THE BAG PLUNGES INTO THE FOUNTAIN

And fills up with water.

ALICE

Hands it to the child shakily. The SOUND of THUNDER.
Alice walks quickly through the park. Past three soldiers with rifles.

SOLDIER 1
Hello, beautiful.

Alice takes no notice. Walks on faster.

SOLDIER 1
(Calling after her)

Hey, d'you think you piss eau de cologne?

Rowdy laughter.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG - DAY (LATE)

The afternoon is turning ominous. Alice walks. 'Grey area'. Tacky and third world. Mulatto kids zoom dinky toys. Women in curlers shout across the street.

Alice hesitates at the entrance to an industrial block, then walks in.

CORRIDOR

Alice walks along the corridor. Thunder's getting closer. She stops outside a door, steels herself, then knocks ...

The moment seems to last forever. She leans against the wall trying to look casual.

Craig opens the door.

CRAIG
Oh ... hi, Babe ...

ALICE
(Very uncomfortable)
Hi ...

They stare at each other. Laughter, music playing and fragments of Meg and a model moving around inside.

CRAIG
Well ... is something wrong?

ALICE
No ... Uh ... Just at a bit of a loose end ... that's all.

CRAIG
Okay well, I've still got work to do, why don't you meet me at home a bit later?

Manhattan Transfer singing 'I like coffee, I like tea'.

MEG
(Calling)
Craig ... ?

Shrieking laughter. Craig looks over his shoulder, laughs, then turns back to Alice.
Alice and Craig look at each other.

CRAIG
(Dismissing her)
Okay ...?

NEXT. STREETS - NIGHT (EARLY)

HIGHVELD THUNDERSTORM: vicious, drenching rain and lightning across the sky like demented snakes.

Water sprays up around Alice as she runs along the sidewalk. Street lights illuminate her for a second. She slows - walks out of breath and drenched.

TORN TRASH BAGS sweep chaotically along and into a storm water drain.

INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Darkness. Shapes illuminated by lightning for a brief second.

Alice stands in the middle of the floor, drenched. Rough contemporary music, something like 'Yello' competing with the thunder.

Alice stares out of the window.

HER REFLECTION

Buckles with the rain, contorting and dissolving into:

CRAIG AND MEG

Making love to the music. Energised, passionate, vicious.

ALICE TURNS FROM THE WINDOW

And looks into the room. The song is over.
Only the sound of the storm outside and the clock ticking.

DISSOLVE TO:

Alice awake in bed.

Craig tiptoes into the room. Alice sits up.

ALICE
(Immediately)
It's after twelve. Where have you been?

CRAIG
What do you mean, where have I been? I've been at work of course.

ALICE
I'm not stupid, Craig, okay?

CRAIG
(Tight)
Well, you obviously are, because you're starting with me.

ALICE
(Watching him closely)
You're lying to me.

CRAIG
Babe, let's get one thing straight - I don't lie. Ever!
(Roughly getting into bed)
Maybe you're lying. That's the theory, you know. Suspect others of lying means you're a liar yourself.

ALICE
What are you talking about?

CRAIG
You see the world through your own eyes, Alice. You suspect everyone of lying because you're a liar yourself.

ALICE
(Confused)
I'm not a liar.

CRAIG
Fine.

They lie in silence.

CRAIG
I - was - at - work. Okay?

ALICE
(Soft)
Okay ...

Craig turns to her, suddenly changing tack.

CRAIG
Come on, Babe ...
(Taking her in his arms)
Don't freak. It's just till I get
the range out, then we'll be back
to normal - I promise.

EXT. CONCERT HALL - DAY (EARLY)

The orchestra members arrive for work. Instruments in different shaped boxes. Jeans and tee shirts. Julian parks and runs across the street.

Alice stands across the road, partially obscured and watches.

She waits till they're all in and follows.

INT. CONCERT HALL/STAGE - DAY (EARLY)

Chit chat, shuffling and tuning up as the Orchestra settles.

Verselli talks to A NEW MUSICIAN. Wax-like and serious. She nods, then takes up Alice's old seat.

WINGS

Alice stands back against the wall watching.

VERSELLI'S VOICE
Alright ... settle down please...

THE STAGE

The new flautist methodically arranges her sheet music.

VERSELLI
We'll begin with the Beethoven
for the first half of tomorrow's
programme.

Sheet music shuffling. Silence. Then the music ...

WINGS

The sound is amplified. Alice leans back against the wall as the music takes over.

EXT. STERKFORTEIN - DAY

Martine and Alice sit in the garden of the hospital. It's safe and warm. Beds of flowers. Little pathways.

MARTINE

What's freaking you out?

ALICE

Nothing.

MARTINE

It's your boyfriend,
what's his face ...

ALICE

(Without conviction)

Not really ...

MARTINE

It is, I know the signs.

Alice's eyes fill with tears. Martine puts her arm around her.

ALICE

(Ashamed, roughly wiping the
tears away)

I'll be fine.

MARTINE

You're too needy, man! He treats
you like dirt 'cause he knows
he's got power.

ALICE

Yup ...

MARTINE

Stupid shit ... and it's not
going to come right till neither
of you needs the other. Those are
the best relationships. Trust me.
I'm an expert. I've never got it
right.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG - DAY

Alice walks along the sidewalk. She turns. Stops. Walks back the way she came.

EXT. SIDEWALK/CRAIG'S STUDIO BLOCK - DAY

Alice walks up to the entrance and goes inside.

LOBBY

She loses courage. Starts off towards the street. Suddenly freezes.

OUTSIDE ...

Meg gets out of her Mercedes and crosses the street. She's carrying a bottle of champagne.

BACK IN THE LOBBY ...

Alice slips behind a pillar just as Meg enters the building.

Meg presses the elevator button. She tosses her head forwards and brushes her hair.

Alice stands pressed up between the pillar and the wall watching ...

The elevator arrives. Meg gets in. Dabs on perfume.

Alice's eyes narrow. She walks back into the lobby. Sees a door leading into the:

BACK YARD

The building is rough: washing lines, dustbins and a fire escape snaking upwards.

Alice climbs getting higher. She stops looking along the corridor.

ALICE'S POV - PART OF CRAIG'S STUDIO

She's on the same level as Craig's studio. Height is needed.

SHE CLIMBS HIGHER ...

And stops on the level above the studio. Looks down...
JAZZ MUSIC coming from an apartment some-where.

ALICE'S POV - INTO CRAIG'S STUDIO

A better vantage point, but it's not ideal. The angle only allows her to see part of Craig's design table in the front of the studio.

ALICE

Steadies herself and watches ...

INSIDE THE STUDIO

It's deserted for a moment, then Craig enters carrying a ream of chiffon fabric and a sample blouse. He's talking. He lays the blouse across the table. Meg enters. They lean over the table discussing the blouse.

OUTSIDE

Alice watches ...

INSIDE THE STUDIO

Craig turns Meg around and takes off her jacket. She turns back to face him wearing a soft, revealing blouse. He looks at it, then indicates the distance between chest and sleeve, lightly touching her breasts.

OUTSIDE

Alice watches, trying to get a reading on the action.

INSIDE

Meg and Craig talk. Gesture.
Craig holds up the sample blouse and Meg shakes her head. She unbuttons her blouse and lets it fall, standing in front of him in her underwear.

Craig cuts off a piece of fabric and places it across her shoulders.

OUTSIDE

Alice turns away, takes a few steps down, but can't leave.
She's drawn back to ...

THE STUDIO

Craig adjusts the fabric draping it carefully across her breasts.

Meg looks up. They're very close. Staring at each other.
Craig trails his finger down the fabric, down her cleavage,
parting the fabric, letting it fall away.
Craig touches her breasts. Begins to kiss her neck ...

OUTSIDE

Alice turns away, gasping. She leans over the railing.
In the yard below a dog barks and snarls up at her like a
vision from hell. She turns back to ...

THE STUDIO

It is deserted.

ALICE RUNS

Down the firescape.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG - NIGHT

Music: bawdy and basey adds a dimension of lewdness plays
over:

Alice running along the sidewalk. Color and shapes blur
behind her. Everything's speeding up, becoming distorted.

INT. STORE - DAY

She walks chaotically down the aisle. Stops at the magazine
rack, pulls a magazine off and starts to page through.

THE CAFE OWNER

Gesticulates: 'Put the magazine back.'

ALICE

Looks at the Owner. Her eyes narrow.

HE STANDS

Faced by a firing squad of black gunmen. Rifles bark out. He crashes back into shelves of eggs. FALLING DOWN SLOMO. Blood and eggs.

ALICE RUNS

PASSES THE ENTERTAINMENT ARCADE ...

Fragmented shapes inside viciously bang the buttons. Computerised music. Video game monsters bop across the screen. Chasing and killing.

Alice runs.

PASSES A GROUP OF BLACK GLUE SNIFFERS ...

One reaches out a hand putting on a 'forlorn' act. His mouth gets bigger and bigger ... Just lips talking. Alice runs. The kid drops the act and goes back to the others. Takes a sniff of glue.

She runs.

PASSES THE 'HAPPY CHICKEN' ...

Neon sign winks 'Happy Chicken' above a window full of cooking, dripping fowl. Alice looks in at the window and the birds become real, squawking and bleeding, eyes bulging as they turn round on the spoke.

Alice runs.

PASSES A GROUP OF PUNKS

Leaning up against a shop widow. Sequined dresses in the window on display and the punks in black and chains in front of it.

PUNK 1

(To some-one O.S.)

Hey you! ... You fucken poes!

(Louder)

Hey You! Ja! I'm talking to you!

You poes! ... Well aren't you going to do something?

Alice runs. Color from shop windows whirring behind.

PASSES TWO BLACK STREET KIDS ...

They sit on the edge of the sidewalk. A loaf of bread between them. One holds a mini block of butter over a lighter. The paper shines out gold.

Alice runs.

PASSES A GROUP OF HOBOS ...

Lying in a spaghetti heap. The images speed up:

... A hobo rummaging in a dustbin.
... A hand grasping a bottle of meths.

FASTER

... As a leathery mouth smiles, opens.

CLOSER

... On cracked yellow teeth.
... A hobo hitting the pavement.
... Liquid running down ravaged cheeks.

VERY CLOSE

HOBO
(mouthing)
Fuck you.

INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Pouring rain hammering at the windows. Thunder and lightning.

Craig sits at his table, copying a design from a VOGUE MAGAZINE. Alice sets the table.

ALICE
Why do you copy from magazines?

CRAIG
(Absently)
Because ...

ALICE
Because what?

CRAIG
(Impatiently)
Because Alice ... the trends are
established overseas.

ALICE
I think it's a cheat.

CRAIG
Well everyone does it ...

ALICE
(continuing)
That's why we never get anywhere
in this place. Everything's
always a copy of something
overseas. Where are the artists?
Where are the originals?

Craig looks up irritated. Alice walks off. Craig resumes
sketching. Alice returns with a tray of bread, cheese and
salad. Bangs it down. Looking for a fight.

ALICE
So ... is Meg an artist?

CRAIG
No, Alice. Meg is a
businesswoman.

ALICE
(Cutting slices of bread)
You admire that, don't you?

CRAIG
I admire a person who works.

Alice puts the knife down.

ALICE
What's that supposed to mean?

CRAIG
Exactly that.

ALICE
Rubbish. It's a comment on the
fact that I'm not working.

CRAIG
Stop being so paranoid.

ALICE
I'm not.

CRAIG
You are. Look at you. You're
pathetic.
(Looking at the table)
What's for supper?

Alice paces. Out of control, a hysteria building.

CRAIG
Bread and cheese? What is this, a
fucking jail cell?
(Moodily slapping cheese on
bread)
A - Mazing.

ALICE
(Taking no notice)
You still find Meg attractive,
don't you?

Craig picks through the salad, picks up a tatty looking
piece of lettuce, then throws it back into the bowl.

CRAIG
Shit ...

ALICE
I want to know! Do you still find
Meg attractive?

CRAIG
Yes I do.

ALICE
(Losing control)
I bet you fantasize about her
when you're with me. I bet you
close your eyes and think of her.

Craig throws his bread down and goes for her. Shakes her
hard.

CRAIG
Shut up, Alice.

The phone rings.
No-one answers. Alice and Craig glare at each other.
Finally Craig picks up.

CRAIG
Hello ...?
(Looks across at Alice)
... Hi, Meggie ...

EXT. JOHANNESBURG STREET - NIGHT

Pouring rain. Alice walks.
Dingy houses, barbed wire, broken glass on walls signal a poorer part of town.

Alice passes four policemen searching around in the bushes with torches. Beams of light flash this way and that.

One straightens holding up a bloodied tee shirt. Rain runs the blood out in a red stream. Alice stands watching.

EXT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

Alice walks through the deserted parking area.
Distorted music blares out through the rain.
Colored lights in the trees reflect everywhere.

A couple of black waiters in penguin suits huddle under an umbrella, laughing, rolling smokes.
Lines of rain fall from the umbrella enclosing them in a tunnel of colored water.

A car drives into the parking area and makes for Alice.
It screeches to a halt. Rain water sprays up in arcs from the wheels.

Alice registers but continues to walk. The car creeps along behind her. She stops abruptly. The car stops.

She half turns.

ALICE
Having fun?

Nothing from the driver. She stands facing the car. Make-up smudged down her face in lines.

ALICE
(Squinting into the headlights)
Having a whale of a time?

Nothing. She turns back. Starts to walk.

ALICE
(To herself)
Jerk ...

The car moves off after her. Alice stops.

ALICE
(Whipping round, shielding
her eyes)
Got a problem?

BOY
(Shouting out of the window)
Need a lift?
(Exaggerated skatey accent)
Let's go for a driiiiife

EXT/INT. CAR - NIGHT

Alice and the ARMY BOY. Thin and so tall, that his head's touching the roof of the car.

They face forwards. Windscreen wipers slapping back and forth. 'The Doors' playing 'When you're strange'. He sings to the music pumping up his performance over the refrain 'When you're strange'.

Twisted around the rearview mirror is a SMALL GREEN SNAKE. On the back seat is an INDIAN GUY passed out. Stale take aways curled on the dash. A skeleton key ring jiggles from the rearview mirror.

The boy crushes a smoke as he drives. Alice just stares up ahead.

BOY
I'm a murderer ...

Alice is frightened. The boy looks at her.
Smiles ...
Windscreen wipers banging back and forwards.

BOY
I'm killing time.

ALICE
Very funny.

BOY
(Lighting a joint)
Have a fight with your boyfriend?

Alice stares forward. He passes her the joint, she shakes her head.

BOY (CONT'D)
(Talking through the smoke)
Ja, my chick also left me ...

Moved on to greener pastures, so to speak.

(Dragging on the joint)

But like it was a balls up. I was pumping this other stukkie and she knew. Went on like that for lank time.

(Smoking)

Like, they like to suffer, you know - chicks. My view on the world for free ...

(He lightly touches the snake. It shifts, coiling.

To Alice:)

Real ...

(Laughing)

Kwaai, hey? ... Ja man, what's that saying ... a man must ... a man ... my ol' man was always chirping it ... A man must work and a woman must weep.

The chorus plays. He turns up the volume,

BOY

(Singing out loud)

'When you're straaaaa - n - ge'

He picks up the packet of chips.
Alice watches him.

The chips distort, becoming a packet of amputated fingers, blood. He moves one towards his mouth.

Alice opens and closes her eyes, trying to refocus.

ALICE

I feel sick ...

She opens the window, rain sweeps in.

She leans out into the rain. It drenches her instantly.

Alice sits back against the seat. The inside of the car is soaked.

BOY

Are you fucken mal, or what?

ALICE

Do me a favour, can you do me a big favour please?

EXT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Julian runs through pouring rain to his car and gets in.

INT/EXT. JULIAN'S CAR - NIGHT

He turns on the ignition. Windscreen wipers start up.
Lightning suddenly illuminates Alice's face staring in at
the window. Julian jumps in shock.

JULIAN

Alice!

He gets out. Takes off his jacket, puts it around her.

JULIAN

Come. In the car.

He steers her round to the passenger side.

EXT. ROAD ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY (VERY EARLY)

The car drives fast along straight road, flanked by
sunflower fields on either side. The rows of sunflowers whip
past the car in horizontal, then vertical lines. Mesmeric.

Julian brings the car to a halt. They get out.
The field of flowers stretch out brilliantly.

EXT. SUNFLOWER FIELD - DAY (EARLY)

Alice and Julian walk through the sunflowers. The flowers
are huge, magical.

JULIAN

Look ...

(Pointing out)

Like ... a sea of suns.

ALICE

(Looking down)

There's a beetle caught in that
web ... it's going to get eaten,
Jules.

He takes the beetle out of the web with a leaf.

JULIAN

There ...

ALICE

You can't do that in the real world. You just get eaten. Finished.

JULIAN
You're just seeing the ugly side. Come on, Al, look around you.

ALICE
All I see is the pain and ugliness.

JULIAN
You've lost touch and I'm telling you, it's because you're not expressing yourself. Use your talent and you're part of all this. This ... power!

They walk, moving towards the horizon.

ALICE
Why can't I leave him, Jules?

JULIAN
You think you're losing something. You're not.

They walk, getting further from CAMERA.

JULIAN'S VOICE
There's an old saying ... when something is being taken away with one hand, something new is being given to you with the other.

Small figures swallowed up into the colour.

DISSOLVE TO:

Alice and Julian lying amongst the flowers.
Julian leans up on his elbow looking down at her.

JULIAN
Alice, Alice ...

He moves her hair out of her eyes. She looks up at him.
Suddenly the whole feeling is different. Full of intensity.

JULIAN
Leave him. I'll wait for you in the car while you pack.

Alice looks away. Julian watches her. He sighs. Looks off into the flowers.

JULIAN

No - you're not going to, are you, Kruger?

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY (EARLY)

The sun is low, catching the grass. Early morning bird and insect sounds.

Craig sits in the garden, sunglasses on. He smokes, biting down hard on the cigarette.

The sound of a CAR ARRIVING. THE DOORS OPENING AND CLOSING.

Craig gets up quickly, walks round the side of the cottage and peers into:

THE STREET ...

Alice gets out of Julian's car. He hands her a bunch of flowers.

CRAIG

Drops his cigarette and grinds it into the ground, then leans back against the wall waiting ...

Alice walks in. She pulls up short, seeing Craig.

CRAIG

(Viciously)

This is a nice time to come home.

(Alice stares at him)

I have stayed up all night worrying about you.

ALICE

What goes around comes around, Craig.

CRAIG

What's that supposed to mean?

ALICE

I've stayed up night after night waiting for you to get home.

CRAIG

You trying to punish me? Huh?

(Knocking the flowers out of

her hand)
You trying to turn me into a
shit?

ALICE
You are a shit, Craig.

Alice starts walking to the door.

CRAIG
Where have you been?

Alice doesn't answer.

CRAIG
I - am - talking - to - you!

Alice keeps walking.

CRAIG
You were with your musician
friend, weren't you?
(Following and catching up)
You spent the night on the town
with the piano player ...
(Spinning her round to face
him)
DIDN'T YOU?
(Beat. No answer.)
You did! I saw you.
(Grabbing her arm)
So, did you fuck him? Huh?

ALICE
(Trying to get her arm loose)
You are hurting me.

CRAIG
(Interrupting)
Is he good? Better than me? HUH?

ALICE
I know about you and Meg, Craig.

CRAIG
(Shouting)
Don't confuse the issue.

He hits her. Alice falls to the ground.

ALICE
Okay! I did fuck him.

She looks up: Craig stands above her, head backlit like a burning ball.

CRAIG
You're sick, you know that? You
should go and get some help.
(Walking off)
And your musician buddy's going
to get his teeth kicked in.

ALICE
(Running after him)
Craig! ...

CRAIG
Leave me alone.

ALICE
Nothing happened.
(Grabbing onto him)
I promise ...

CRAIG
(Shouting)
LEAVE ME ALONE!

Craig gets into his car. Drives out. Alice runs after him, grabs onto the rearview mirror and runs alongside the car.

CRAIG
Let go ...

ALICE
(Sobbing)
Nothing ... I promise.

Craig screeches round a corner. The rearview mirror comes away in her hand. Alice stands in the road watching as the car disappears.

INT. CONCERT HALL - DAY

Craig storms through the lobby. A few musicians lounge around in chairs, drinking coffee and smoking.

CRAIG
(To the first musician he
sees, very aggressive)
Where's Julian?

MUSICIAN 1
(To the others in his group)
Where's Jules?

MUSICIAN 2
(Shrugging)
Rehearsing probably.

MUSICIAN 1
Try the hall.

Craig walks quickly towards the doors to the hall.

THE HALL

Julian and five other violinists sit on the stage in a row practicing. The stage is being re-arranged and instruments are randomly placed.

Craig bangs the doors open.

CRAIG
JULIAN!

Julian looks up, but continues playing.

Craig weaves chaotically through the chairs, knocking into them, building himself into more and more of a fury. The other violinists stop playing.

VIOLINIST
What's going on?

Julian keeps an eye on Craig from the stage, but doesn't stop playing.

CRAIG
I'm gonna knock the shit out of you.

The other violinists move out of the way. Craig blunders up onto the stage. He trips over the drums. Symbols clatter to the floor. The drum rolls across the stage.

Julian places his violin carefully into its case, closes it and straightens.

Craig reaches him and throws a wild punch. Julian's ready...

He knocks Craig back across the chairs with one fast blow. Craig doesn't recover. Chairs break, music stands smash as Julian smacks him around the stage. Craig lands dangerously close to the orchestra pit. Julian grabs him up by the shirt, preventing his fall.

JULIAN
 I could kill you, China. I could
 take you apart.
 (Glaring at each other, out
 of breath)
 But I won't. You know why?...
 'Cause life is going to do it for
 me.
 (Throwing Craig onto the
 safety of the stage)
 Now leave, okay? Before I
 change my mind and turn you into
 a fucken zombie.

Julian picks up his violin case and leaves.

INT. COTTAGE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice packs. Branches tap tap against the window. She draws
 her jersey around tighter. SOUND of an EERIE SQUEAKING
 coming from outside.

Alice freezes. She creeps out of the room and down

THE PASSAGE

It is dark and unfriendly. Keeping close to the wall, she
 moves carefully into

THE LOUNGE

And looks through the window into the garden.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Cold and windy with the moon racing through clouds. The
 deserted swing arcs up and down, creaking.

INT . COTTAGE/LOUNGE - NIGHT

Alice retreats into the lounge. A knock on the door. She
 freezes. Nothing but the sound of the creaking swing for a
 moment ... then more knocking. Finally:

MARTINE
 Alice ... ?

ALICE
 (Very relieved)
 Martine ... ?

INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Alice and Martine lie in the bath. Soothing candlelight and steam rising. Alice rests up against Martine's chest, her hair spreading out in the water. Martine plays with it.

MARTINE

Lovely hair ... I always loved your hair.

(Smoothing down her hair)

I want you to do so well, Al. I want you to make all this mess seem worth it ...

Alice gets up.

ALICE

Let's get into bed, Martine. I didn't sleep last night.

She towels off, walks to the door.

MARTINE

Play for me.

Alice freezes.

MARTINE

(Panicking and calling out)

Alice?

ALICE

I'm here.

MARTINE

... got a fright.

(Settling back)

Chopin ... I'd love that.

ALICE

Later.

MARTINE

No. Now. While I'm in the bath. It'll be like in the flat. Before ... Les and ...

(Peters out)

You know ...

Alice can't refuse.

ALICE

Okay.

BEDROOM

Alice walks to the cupboard, opens the drawer and takes the flute box out.

She sits on the bed. Slowly brings the flute to her mouth. Blows through. A soft middle C.

BATHROOM

Martine lies in the bath, hair floating around her like a dark halo.

Alice enters with a ghetto blaster and a handful of cassettes. She sits down in a corner of the bathroom behind Martine.

ALICE

Chopin ... Okay ...

Alice sorts through the cassettes quietly, then puts one in the machine.

MARTINE

You always used to play Chopin
when we lived at home ...
remember ...?

ALICE

Yup ...

She switches on - it's the sound of Alice practicing. Martine sinks down lower in the bath, closes her eyes.

Alice sits crouching in the corner next to the ghetto blaster listening.

MARTINE

(Very quiet)

Home ... you playing Chopin ...
and me and Mom killing each
other, 'cause she's unhappy with
Jack and she's taking it out on
me ...

(Listening to the music)

Seems like another lifetime ...
don't you think? ...

BEDROOM

All Alice's belongings are packed in two cases.

Alice takes two undershirts out of her case, puts one on and hands the other to Martine.

ALICE
Come Mart, get into bed.

MARTINE
Where are you going?

ALICE
You were right. He treats me like shit. I'm moving out ... first thing tomorrow.

Martine gets in. They lie together.

MARTINE
Is he coming home?

ALICE
I doubt it.

MARTINE
Creep ... Probably fucking some stupid, insignificant chick somewhere to get his confidence up ... like Jack ... and Les.
(Quieter)
Whenever there's a creep, we find them.

They lie on their backs. Martine's eyes are closed. She's very frail. Something almost deathly about her.

MARTINE (Cont'd)
... We let them into our hearts and we lose our center.
(Taking off her undershirt)
Tickle me ...
(Turning her back to Alice)
Like you used to ... remember?

Alice turns onto her side facing Martine's back. It's long and curved. Slowly Alice starts to tickle Martine's back. Martine sighs out, closes her eyes.

MARTINE
Higher ...

Alice traces her fingers gently along Martine's back into her hair.

MARTINE

That's so nice ... I'll do you
... ten more minutes ... ten for
me, ten for you ... remember?

ALICE

Uh-huh.

MARTINE

I don't want to be alone. Please,
Al. Don't leave me alone.

ALICE

I won't. I'm right here.

Martine sighs out relaxing. Alice continues to tickle her.

MARTINE

(Very haltingly)

I love you, Alice ...

Alice almost stops.

MARTINE (Cont'd)

I've never said that to you ...
funny, hey?

It's so easy to tell the creeps,
why's it so hard to tell your
family?

ALICE

I don't know ... 'cause it's
silent love, maybe.

MARTINE

(Singing)

Sil - i - lent love ... no ...
what's the words to that song?

ALICE

Silent night ...

They lapse into silence. Alice continues to tickle Martine.
Martine starts to fall asleep.

ALICE

Tomorrow morning I'm going to
speak to Julian.

Martine's fast asleep.

ALICE (CONT'D)

... Ask him if we can stay there
for a while.

(Tickling her)
It'll be so nice, Mart.
(Lies back, sighs out)
We'll be safe.

DISSOLVE TO:

MORNING.

Martine comes awake with a start.
The room is empty. The suitcases are gone.

MARTINE
(Calling)
Alice ...

She gets out of bed. Goes to the door and peers round into
the passageway. It's deserted.

MARTINE
Al? ...

OUTSIDE IN THE GARDEN ...

Alice stands under a mulberry bush, filling a bowl with the
fruit.

INSIDE

Martine wanders aimlessly into

CRAIG'S STUDIO

She goes to the rail: beautiful dresses of all colors hang
from the rail. Martine touches them and the dresses move
softly under her hands. She stares at the dresses, then
picks one out. Holds it up to her and turns to:

THE WINDOW

Martine's image mixes in with the reflections of flowers and
trees from the garden. Shadowy.

She drops the dress and picks out another one. Holds it up
against her, then a third. A vivid red dress.

She stares at herself. The rich color of the dress only
serves to accentuate her palour.

BATHROOM

Martine stands at the mirror applying make-up. Red lipstick. Her hand is shaking and she smudges the lipstick outside the contour of her mouth. She looks around. Lying at the side of the bath, is the aliceband. She puts it in her hair.

EXT. JOHANNESBURG STREETS - DAY

Martine weaves through people on the sidewalk wearing the red dress and aliceband. She looks beautiful somehow, out of place with the grey surroundings. She weaves along the sidewalk, bumping into people, disorientated.

INT. COTTAGE/BEDROOM - DAY

ALICE'S VOICE

Martine ... time to get up.

The room is empty. The curtains suck in and out of the window with the wind. Alice enters.

ALICE

Let's hit the road, Jack.

She freezes, seeing the empty room.

ALICE

(Running out)

Martine ... !

Into:

CRAIG'S STUDIO

Dresses scattered everywhere.

EXT. MARTINE'S APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY

Martine wanders down the street. She passes a cripple, holding on to a bunch of balloons.

CRIPPLE

(As Martine passes)

Buy a balloon, before they all
burst. Help me please.

Martine doesn't hear. She turns into the entrance. Two of the balloons pop.

EXT. MARTINE'S APARTMENT BLOCK/ROOF - DAY

Martine walks through lines of washing to the edge of the roof.

She climbs over the top and onto a ledge. She stands staring down into the street.

MARTINE'S POV - FAR BELOW

A busy intersection. Cars race.

MARTINE RETREATS

She stands with her back against the wall. Breathing fast.

EXT. STREETS - DAY (LATE)

Alice runs.

EXT. ROOF - DAY (LATE)

Martine sits curled up in a corner on the ledge.

She looks down:

HER POV

A line of jacaranda trees have turned the sidewalk purple.

MARTINE ...

takes her aliceband off and lets the sun shine through the stones.

HER POV

Everything is heightened, more intense:
The jacaranda petals blur into purple rivers below her ...
Colored lights bounce off the aliceband like huge rays.

MARTINE TURNS THE ALICEBAND

Spellbound.

A PIDGEON on the ledge below flutters up and close.

Martine starts, drops the aliceband. She reaches over trying to catch it and falls ...

THROUGH THE AIR.

A small figure against blue African sky. The red dress billows around her. A falling bird.

The aliceband flies through the air and lands stinging the tarmac.

EXT. MARTINE'S APARTMENT - DAY (LATE)

Alice runs towards the apartment block. She's out of breath. An ambulance is parked outside.

Alice slows.

The ambulance men load a stretcher with a covered body.

Alice stops.

The ambulance pulls off.

Alice walks slowly towards the accident site. Her face bleached with fear. She stops. Staring down.

The aliceband lies on the sidewalk, glinting.

FADE OUT

We hear footsteps OVER ...

FADE IN: INT. CONCERT HALL - DAY

Musicians in smart black hang around waiting, whispering. The atmosphere is electric, tense. Alice walks down the corridor carrying her flute case.

Julian stands at the stage door talking to a stagehand.

Alice walks past them.

JULIAN
(Astonished)
Alice!

She takes no notice, walks in through the door.

STAGEHAND

Hey! You can't go in there.

STAGE WINGS

Alice walks through the wings towards the stage.
The sound of a violin playing. Julian and the stagehand follow.

STAGEHAND
(Whispering)
There are auditions going on.

JULIAN
(Whispering)
Alice!

STAGEHAND
(Getting desperate)
You're not allowed in here.

Alice doesn't hear. She walks out onto the stage. A harpist sits playing in a small pool of light. Alice walks into the light and squints out into the auditorium. The harpist plays on a little longer, then stops.

HARPIST
(Looking at her in amazement)
Excuse me!

IN THE AUDITORIUM

The auditioning panel whisper amongst themselves, looking at the stage. Amongst them is Verselli.

VERSELLI
Is that you Miss Kruger ?

ALICE
(Small voice)
I have to play, Mr Verselli...
(Taking out her flute)
Excuse me ... Excuse me for
barging in like this ...

IN THE WINGS

Julian stands watching, horrified.
Awful silence.

ON THE STAGE ...

Alice brings the flute to her mouth and blows ... nothing.

IN THE AUDITORIUM

The auditioning panel whisper amongst themselves.

ON THE STAGE

Alice blows again. Nothing's coming through the flute. Her face buckles and she begins to cry. Air from her crying goes through the flute and it squeaks. The more she cries the more it squeaks.

IN THE AUDITORIUM

The panel confer. One tries to restrain laughter, and starts to snort. Verselli starts moving towards the stage.

IN THE WINGS

Julian watches. He can't take it, walks out onto

THE STAGE

Verselli crosses towards Alice.

VERSELLI
Miss Kruger.

JULIAN
It's alright ...

He reaches Alice. Puts his arm around her gently. She's weeping.

JULIAN
Come, Al ...

Verselli watches as Julian manoevers Alice up and steers her out of the light and back across the stage.

INT. JULIAN'S APARTMENT - DAY (LATE)

Alice lies on a couch, covered with a blanket. Julian puts a tray of food down next to her. Then he sits on the carpet underneath the window.

JULIAN
Mind if I play?

He takes his sweatshirt off so that he's dressed in only a black sleeveless tee shirt. He runs the bow across the strings and his arms are very strong and well defined.

Alice watches as he begins to play.

His arms are powerful, very sure. The music by contrast is soft and sensitive. Julian's hair falls across his eyes. Light from the window behind backlights him so that he's on fire.

Alice becomes entranced. She watches as his playing gets more dramatic ... his arm deftly stroking the bow across the strings ... faster, firmer. And the sound of the music like fire ... like silk.

Alice picks her flute up off the floor. Brings it to her lips and blows through. Nothing happens.

JULIAN
That's beautiful.

She blows through and the flute squeaks.

JULIAN
Hmmm ... what a beautiful note.

Alice starts to laugh. Release. She lifts the flute and tries again. More squeaking and laughing. But slowly it changes into music. They start to play together, softly, harmonising in with each other.

It builds. Emotion floods through and colors the music. Explosive. Passionate. Sensitive. Incredible.

The sound of an orchestra swells up underneath, supporting the music. Intensifying it further.

They look up, absolutely focused on each other as the sound of the orchestra builds.

We begin to PULL BACK through the room. Pinkie sits on top of her cage singing ... through the curtains and out into a garden ... late afternoon sun across the grass. Jacaranda petals tumbling across the lawn with the wind. Tilting up and leaving them behind as the music swells to a crescendo and we ...

FADE OUT.

THE END