

YOUNG ADULT

by  
Diablo Cody

1 EXT. BRICK CONDO BUILDING - MORNING 1

We can hear the sound of some reality TV show. Some girl pouring her heart out. We don't know from which of the identical condo balconies it emanates.

2 INT. CONDO (BEDROOM) - MORNING 2

We see the reality show playing on a mid sized LCD television. A grown woman speaking emotionally about something really pithy. A teenager in a woman's body.

MAVIS GARY stirs in bed. She's in her mid-30s, blonde, conventionally attractive.

Mavis looks at the TV. No reaction. She gets up and stumbles into the bathroom. She's wearing unflattering pajama pants and an old T-shirt.

3 INT. CONDO (KITCHEN) - SAME 3

Mavis enters the kitchen. There are empty liquor bottles on the counter.

Mavis bends down and unlatches a dog crate. A small, fluffy DOG appears. He's smiling. He never stops smiling.

MAVIS  
Good morning, Dolce.

Dolce jumps, excited. Mavis peels back the foil on a single-serving container of dog food and places it out on the balcony. She walks away, not particularly invested in the dog's breakfast routine.

4 INT. CONDO (LIVING ROOM) - SAME 4

Alone, Mavis swats at the air. She jogs in place, leaping intermittently like a hurdler. She looks silly.

Reveal she's playing Wii Fit.

5 EXT. CONDO (BALCONY) - SAME 5

Mavis sits on the small steel-girded balcony in her pajamas eating a pre-packed cottage cheese and fruit cup.

From Mavis's perch, we see downtown Minneapolis, the Mississippi River, and other converted loft buildings that used to be factories and granaries.

6 INT. CONDO (OFFICE AREA) - SAME

6

Mavis sits at her computer. Near the monitor, we see a shelf filled with 20 or 30 paperbacks. They're all titled Waverley Prep and numbered as if in a series.

There's also a large office binder that says WAVERLEY PREP SERIES BIBLE.

Mavis starts up her computer and opens a text document called pieceofshit.word. It's a work in progress; Mavis appears to be on page 87.

As she types, Mavis joylessly narrates the prose the prose that appears on the screen:

MAVIS

(voiceover)

Kendal Strickland wasn't just the prettiest girl at Waverly Prep. She was a legend. As a junior, the student council voted to dedicate the yearbook to her, even though another student had recently died.

Mavis stares at the document without enthusiasm.

She opens another window-- her email. She deletes all the overnight spam. We see a message that reads RE:RE:RE:END OF SERIES. Mavis notices the message, perhaps grimacing a little, but doesn't open it.

She then notices a NEW MESSAGE. The subject line says: "The best thing that ever happened to us"

Mavis pauses, then opens the email. We see a large photo of a NEWBORN BABY in a knitted cap that looks like the top of a blueberry. There's a small block of text beneath.

Mavis's expression is neutral as she reads the message. She closes the window. After a moment, she clicks it open again, re-reading.

And re-reading.

8 She reaches for a strand of hair near her ear and begins 8 yanking it in a distracted, obsessive-compulsive way.

She stops typing. Unable to resist, she opens the birth announcement email again. She hits PRINT.

An ERROR MESSAGE pops up.

7 INT. CONDO (OFFICE AREA) - MOMENTS LATER 7

Mavis is kneeling in front of the printer. She rips an INK CARTRIDGE out of the bowels of the printer and shakes it in frustration.

Mavis  
(to herself)  
Goddammit.

She locates a hole in the cartridge and SPITS in it.

8 EXT. CONDO (BALCONY) - same 8

Mavis sits on the balcony, eating her banana and reading the birth announcement.

Bands of strange ink colors run across the baby's face, making it look alternately pink, blue, and yellow.

Mavis cell phone buzzes. New voicemail. Distracted, Mavis hits "play." We hear a MAN's voice via speakerphone.

VOICEMAIL  
Hey Mavis, it's me again. Just calling to bug you. We need that draft of Waverley 178. We can work with something rough... Last one, honey. I know you can do it...hopefully by Fri--

Mavis hits "end," cutting off the message.

9 EXT. DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS - DAY 9

The birth announcement lands on a table, next to a plastic fast food tray.

Reveal Mavis, thrusting the announcement at her friend VICKI as if it's evidence in a trial.

Mavis and Vicki are in a courtyard behind a corporate building. Vicki is upholstered in a cheap business suit from the mall. She's not as pretty as Mavis and is clearly the "beta" in the relationship.

MAVIS  
This baby-- you know, this baby was just born like a month ago. A month. I mean, when you send something that soon, isn't it just for the inner circle?  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Not for the ex-girlfriend of the father, who doesn't even talk to him anymore. Frankly, it's a slap in the face. Right?

VICKI

You seem a little overly worked up about this.

MAVIS

I'm not worked up in the slightest. I just wanted to tell you about something that happened. God, excuse me.

She takes the birth announcement from Vicki and stuffs it in her purse.

VICKI

Well, good for them, right? Buddy seems like he'd be a decent father.

MAVIS

But can you imagine still living in Mercury? Trapped with a wife and a kid and some crappy job? It's like he's-- it's like he's a hostage.

VICKI

(unconvincing)  
Yup. We're lucky we got out. We have lives.

Their lives don't look all that appealing from this vantage point.

INT. CONDO (LIVING ROOM) - DAY

Mavis is curled up on the couch with her back to us. She appears to be taking a mid-day nap. Her body looks small and childlike.

In the background, a staged argument erupts from the TV. It's *Keeping up With the Kardashians*.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS "SKYWAY" - DAY

Mavis walks through the series of long, glass tubes that connect the buildings in downtown Minneapolis.

Alone, she resembles a hamster in a Habitrail.

12 INT. OFFICE DEPOT - DAY

12

Mavis selects a new ink cartridge from a wall display. Two uniformed TEENAGE EMPLOYEES talk in hushed tones while Mavis eavesdrops.

TEEN EMPLOYEE #1

I just think me and Tyler are like, soul twins. You know? Like, right before he texts me, it's like I can...

TEEN EMPLOYEE #2

Sense it.

TEEN EMPLOYEE #1

Yes! Like psychically. And it's like we have chemistry even over our phones.

TEEN EMPLOYEE #2

Like, *textual* chemistry.

The kids laugh.

13 INT. CONDO (OFFICE) - DAY

13

Mavis types quickly on her computer.

MAVIS

(voiceover)

Just as Kendal hit send, a message from Ryan popped up like magic. It couldn't be denied-- they had textual chemistry.

14 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

14

A trendy downtown place, the kind with exposed brick and oil lamps. Mavis sits across from a DATE. Her Blackberry sits on the table. Of course she has a drink.

We only see the back of her date's head, but he has nice hair. He seems friendly and a good candidate for Mavis. He's in the middle of a personal anecdote.

DATE

...Long story short, I ended up a volunteer teacher in Phnom Pehn.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

MAVIS

Oh my God. Yikes.

DATE

(confused)

Mm, yeah, it was probably the most rewarding thing I've ever done...

MAVIS

Oh right. Totally. Sure.

15 INT. CONDO (BEDROOM) - EARLY MORNING

15

The sun rises. It's a gray, quiet morning. Mavis opens her eyes. Her date is in bed next to her. His arm is splayed across her.

Mavis looks at him. What would normally be a perfect intimate moment is suffocating her.

Mavis sighs.

From bed, she catches sight of the BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT sticking out of her bag. She lifts the man's arm as if he's a mannequin and climbs out of bed.

Mavis opens her too-small closet, revealing some plastic stacking drawers, the kind kids have in dorm rooms. Impulsively, she kneels, opens one of the "blocks" and digs through its contents. It's basically a junk drawer.

Mavis finds what she's looking for and extracts it. It's a cassette tape. One of those '90s Memorex blank tapes that were marketed to teens; there are "cool" geometric shapes on the plastic casing.

She turns it to reveal the label, which reads "*Mad love, Buddy*" in ballpoint pen.

Mavis makes a decision. She reaches deep into her closet and pulls out a gigantic suitcase. She begins folding clothes and placing them in the suitcase.

Mavis packs neatly and judiciously, holding up outfits before they make the final cut.

The date sleeps, oblivious.

16 INT. CONDO (KITCHEN) - SAME

16

Mavis, now dressed, gets Dolce into a small dog carrier and zips up the sides. The carrier wriggles.

(CONTINUED)

7.  
16 CONTINUED: 16  
Mavis throws cans of dog food into a large pink Victoria's Secret shopping bag.

17 INT. CONDO (ENTRYWAY) - DAY 17  
With the suitcase, the bag, and the dog in tow, Mavis exits, as casually as though she were going to the store.

18 INT. CAR - DAY 18  
C.U. on the car's tape deck as Mavis pops in the tape.  
MUSIC UP: BUDDY'S MIX TAPE  
A '90s alterna-pop song fills the car. It's "The Concept" by Teenage Fanclub.  
Mavis mouths the words.

MAVIS  
*She wears denim wherever she goes.  
She's gonna buy some records from  
the Status Quo, oh yeah...*

19 EXT. MINNEAPOLIS - DAY 19  
The Mini takes one of the bridges across the Mississippi out of town.

20 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 20  
Mavis's car drives down a rural highway. Big box chains and ruined fields as far as the eye can see.

21 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY 21  
Mavis pumps gas at a truck stop. She steps away from the Mini and attempts to get Dolce to pee on some gravel.

MAVIS  
Dolce, take a pee.

22 INT. CAR - DAY 22  
Mavis still singing.

23 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 23

Continued shots of the Mini driving through the landscape of chain stores and farms.

24 EXT. HOTEL - DAY 24

The Mini Cooper pulls up to a Hampton Inn.

25 INT. HOTEL (LOBBY) - DAY 25

A 19 or 20-year-old GIRL is behind the counter. She wears the requisite business suit, but looks very young in it.

FRONT DESK GIRL  
Welcome to Hampton Inn. Do you  
have a reservation?

Mavis is annoyed by this basic question.

MAVIS  
No.

The girl recites her spiel as if she's just learned it.  
She peers at Dolce's bag, which is clearly a dog carrier.

FRONT DESK GIRL  
Is that a dog in your bag?

MAVIS  
Nope.

She's surprised by her own lie.

FRONT DESK GIRL  
We actually allow small pets with  
a cleaning deposit.

MAVIS  
In fact, I do have a dog, but he's  
in my vehicle.

The bag wriggles wildly, betraying Mavis instantly.

FRONT DESK GIRL  
Okay. I'll put that you have  
a dog.

She keys some information into the computer, eyeing Mavis suspiciously.

(CONTINUED)

9.  
25

25 CONTINUED:

FRONT DESK GIRL (CONT'D)  
How many keys do you need?

Mavis thinks.

MAVIS  
Two, please.

FRONT DESK GIRL  
Expecting company?

26 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY 26

Dolce scampers around on the bed. Mavis looks at the clock, then looks at her phone. She sits down on the bed and dials.

MAVIS  
(loudly, into phone)  
Personal. Mercury, Minnesota.  
Mercury, Minnesota. Slade.

27 EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING 27

Mavis darts across the pedestrian-unfriendly highway. The only structure we can see is a gas station/convenience store, starkly illuminated in the darkness.

28 INT. GAS STATION - SAME 28

Mavis runs her finger along the small, dim freezer case.

29 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 29

Mavis eats ice cream and drinks; the TV is on. She puts down her ice cream and picks up her phone.

30 INT. HOTEL ROOM (BATHROOM) - NIGHT 30

Now Mavis is in the tiny bathroom, holding the phone against her ear. She rolls a miniature shampoo bottle around in her free hand.

MAVIS  
Hi Buddy. This is Mavis. You know,  
Mavis Gary. Um, what's up? Ha. How  
are you? I'm just in town taking  
care of a real estate thing.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

MAVIS (CONT'D)

I thought we could get together  
for a drink and catch up. Okay.  
Call me if you're up for it. 'Bye.

She hangs up and looks in the mirror. The cruel  
fluorescent light fixture buzzes.

31 EXT. STREETS OF MERCURY - NIGHT 31

MUSIC UP: Buddy's mix tape

Mavis is back in her car, driving into town.

As she enters Mercury proper, we can see that it's a  
fairly charming place. Suburban houses, a classic Main  
Street, Mercury Senior High School. (Mavis slows to peek  
at the latter.)

It's literally a drive down Memory Lane. Only Memory Lane  
has changed a little.

We see a brand new KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN/TACO BELL/PIZZA  
HUT HYBRID. And then the ultimate sign of gentrification:  
a Starbucks. Mavis quietly marvels at all the changes.

32 EXT. WOODY'S SALOON - NIGHT 32

Mavis has arrived at a dive bar in Mercury's old  
"downtown" district.

As Mavis parks her car, her phone rings and she jumps,  
groping for it.

She still manages to play it cool in time for the  
salutation.

MAVIS

(on phone)

Hey, Buddy.

Her voice is soft and relieved.

Reveal BUDDY SLADE on the other line. He's a typical  
young suburban dad, attractive in a Midwestern way.

BUDDY

Mavis Gary. It's been...how long?

MAVIS

I'm not sure! Gosh. Wow.

Buddy's tone is mildly teasing.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

So you're actually back in town.  
Wow.

MAVIS

Oh, I'm just passing through. I'm  
insanely busy. As always.

BUDDY

Well, I don't know how long you're  
in town with your real estate  
thing, but I'd love to grab a  
drink.

MAVIS

Okay. Well, if you're feeling  
spontaneous, I can be at Woody's  
in, I don't know, 15 minutes?

Buddy laughs.

BUDDY

Spontaneous isn't really a thing  
these days. I don't know if you  
heard, but I'm a new dad.

Mavis's is trying a little too hard to sound happy.

MAVIS

No duh! Everyone knows, the whole  
gang. Yeah. I got the  
announcement. Thanks for that, by  
the way.

Buddy's voice is even and friendly through the phone.

BUDDY

Hey, you're welcome. So, uh, how  
about we meet at Champion  
O'Malley's tomorrow? It's a new  
place off 81. Kind of fun.

MAVIS

Of course. Yes. How about 8:30?

BUDDY

6 would be better.

Mavis walks in, flush with victory. Skynrd plays on the  
jukebox. Mavis seems particularly bright and blonde  
against the dingy palate of the bar.

(CONTINUED)

It's a weeknight, and Woody's Saloon is the kind of place that would even be tragic on a Friday. The place is mainly populated with barflies and other sad-looking individuals.

Mavis sits down at the bar.

MAVIS

Maker's Mark.

The BARTENDER obliges. Mavis drinks in such a way that we can tell she's an experienced and enthusiastic drinker.

Mavis looks around the bar. MATT FREEHAUF, 36, is watching her from an adjacent bar stool. He's sad-faced and overweight. There's a steel crutch, the permanent kind, leaning against his stool.

She glances over at Matt again. He's still staring.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

What?

MATT

I'm sorry. I believe we attended high school together.

MAVIS

At the same time?

MATT

Yes. You're Mavis Gary.

MAVIS

Mavis Gary-Crane now.

MATT

Matt Freehauf. My locker was actually right next to yours. For all of high school.

Mavis still doesn't recognize him.

MAVIS

Ah.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Of course. Matt Freehauf. Matt. Your locker was right there, by mine.

Mavis nods. The bartender pushes a second Maker's towards her, and she accepts it with a long, grateful sip. Matt begins talking again, and Mavis cringes.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

It's not like we ran in the same circles. You were extremely popular, if I recall. You won "Best Hair."

Mavis is fully aware of this.

MAVIS

Ha, did I? I forgot about that. What did you win?

Matt blinks at her naivete.

MATT

I didn't. They only give out like 15 of those, and generally to the same five people.

MAVIS

Oh. I guess so.

Mavis abruptly ends the conversation.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Well, nice seeing you again.

Mavis taps away at her cell phone idly. Matt's not ready to end the conversation.

MATT

What are you even doing back in Mercury? You didn't move home, did you?

MAVIS

(offended)

Of course not! Gross. I live in Minneapolis.

(then)

I'm just here taking care of this real estate thing. I have some property, so.

The lie makes her uncomfortable every time.

MATT

Aren't you some kind of writer now? I read about it in the *Sun*.

MAVIS

Yes, I'm an *author*.

MATT

Children's books, right?

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (3)

Mavis is offended yet again.

MAVIS

No. Y.A. That's industry speak for "young adult." I write a very successful teen series. You've probably seen it everywhere.

MATT

Vampires?

Mavis looks at him: Are you serious? She laughs heartily and takes another drink.

MUSIC UP as TIME PASSES.

DISSOLVE TO:

34 INT. WOODY'S SALOON - THREE BOURBONS LATER

34

Mavis is obviously drunk. Her body language is sloppy and she shouts over the music. She leans toward Matt; a few hours ago he seemed untouchable, but now she's encroaching on his personal space.

MATT

Take that, liver!

MAVIS

Weren't you the hate crime guy?

MATT

What?

MAVIS

(shouting)

You totally were! The hate crime guy! You got beat up, right? That's why the...

She gestures to the crutch. Matt sighs, significantly less drunk than she is.

MATT

Yes, Mavis. When I was a senior-- when we were seniors-- a bunch of jocks who thought I was gay jumped me in the woods and hit my legs and dick with a crowbar. It was national news. I mean, until people found out I wasn't actually gay. Then it wasn't a hate crime. It was just a fat guy getting his ass beat.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

(drunkenly cavalier)  
Didn't you get to miss a bunch of  
school?

MATT

Yes. I "got" to miss about six  
months. It was awesome.

Mavis leans in as if to whisper discreetly, but she's too  
drunk to modulate her voice.

MAVIS

How's your dick?

Matt is disarmed by her candor, but can match it.

MATT

Not great.

MAVIS

Does it work?

MATT

It kind of...

He begins to indicate a crooked arc with his hand.

This brave, honest moment goes unappreciated by Mavis.

She reaches for a bottle of an unfamiliar beverage, which  
Matt eyes with some alarm.

Mavis points to the bottle instructively. It's a cheesy  
brand of alcoholic cider.

MAVIS

Hard Jack. See? This is what Buddy  
Slade drinks!

She takes a passionate swig. Matt is confused.

MATT

Buddy Slade? That's a good, uh,  
fact.

(beat)

Mavis ignores the question. She toys with a patch of hair  
behind her ear, pulling on it.

MAVIS

Wanna know why I'm really in town?

MATT

Sure.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS  
(stage-whispering)  
I can't tell you here, man.

MATT  
(whispering back)  
Okay!

35 EXT. WOODY'S SALOON (REAR PARKING LOT) - NIGHT

35

Mavis and Matt stand in the parking lot near the kitchen entrance. As Matt moves further from the entrance, we can see how much effort it takes for him to walk, even with assistance.

Matt leans on his crutch, waiting for Mavis to speak.

MAVIS  
Buddy Slade and I are meant to be together and I'm here to get him back.

Matt laughs, assuming this is a joke.

MATT  
Really? Awesome. Buddy Slade, huh? I'm pretty sure Buddy's married. With a kid on the way.

MAVIS  
No, the kid's here. She had the baby. I don't care though. I have baggage, too, you know?

MATT  
Wait, are you not joking?

MAVIS  
I know people won't understand, but things like this happen. They do happen. Usually they happen in slow-motion. Like, two people are meant to be together and then they slowly get rid of what's keeping them apart. They get divorced, they reconfigure. And everyone's cool with that, right? Society's okay with that-- if you take your time like a goddamned emotional glacier.

Matt can barely follow her drunken rant. He is momentarily speechless.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Um, I would advise you...Mavis?  
Mavis, look at me. Okay. I would  
advise you to keep all this to  
yourself. Talk to a therapist or  
something.

Mavis is swaying and babbling.

MAVIS

Everyone has baggage, Matt. But  
love conquers all. Haven't you  
seen *The Graduate*? Or, I don't  
know, anything?

She notices a CAB has pulled up and is idling on the  
curb.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Oh. A taxi.

MATT

Yeah, we called them, remember?  
(exasperated)  
Listen, I don't know if you're  
serious, but Buddy Slade already  
has a whole life.

Mavis begins walking backward toward the car, lecturing  
to Matt as she stumbles.

MAVIS

A life? Ha. Babies are boring.  
Buddy's life is BORING. Boring!

The cab sputters off into the night. MATT waves  
halfheartedly.

Mavis wakes up, still wearing her clothes from the night  
before. Her dog is in bed with her. Smiling as always.

Mavis groans. She drinks from a big bottle of diet coke  
on her bed table.

Mavis trudges along the side of the road in the blinding  
sunlight. She looks terrible. This area of Mercury is  
charmless, full of big-box stores and office parks.

18.  
37 CONTINUED: 37  
Cars whiz by as Mavis ambles past the KenTacoHut like a hobo.

38 EXT. SMALL PARK - DAY 38  
Mavis sits on a bench, typing.

MAVIS  
(voiceover)  
Having spent the summer outside the bubble of waverly prep, Kendal looked around at her fellow students, thinking: did I really get that much better, or did everyone simply get worse? What's more, why was Ryan spending so much time with this dumpy new girl?

Her phone buzzes; it's another voicemail from her editor.

MAN  
(voiceover)  
Mavis, do you have any pages? We really need them; we can work with something rough...

39 INT. STRIP MALL NAIL SALON - DAY 39  
Mavis sits in a high-tech "throne." Her feet are in a swirling basin of water. The chair vibrates.  
A young GIRL on her knees buffs Mavis's feet. She reaches for a pedicure tool.

MAVIS  
Please don't use the callous slicer. No, don't. Do not. Unsanitary. Thanks.

40 INT. STRIP MALL NAIL SALON (BACK ROOM) - DAY 40  
A technician applies WAX to Mavis's eyebrows and rips it off efficiently. Mavis doesn't flinch.

41 INT. HOTEL ROOM (BATHROOM) - SAME 41  
Mavis applies makeup with a practiced hand and an arsenal of expensive brushes.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

She coats her face with foundation like a party clown. It looks shockingly natural once blended.

As her lips are glossed and her lashes blackened, we see that she's a truly gorgeous woman.

She wraps her hair around a curling iron, enjoying the process of making herself attractive.

42 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DUSK 42

Mavis sits on the bed, staring out the window. Waiting. She looks at the digital beside clock. It says 4:31.

She looks back out the window as the sun sinks.

43 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF MERCURY - DAY 43

Mavis is in the "big box" part of town-- Mercury's rapidly developing outskirts. Ugly sprawl. She searches for the new, unfamiliar bar Buddy suggested, singing along to the mix.

She spots the bar and pulls over, gripping the steering wheel.

44 INT. CHAMPION O'MALLEY'S - HAPPY HOUR 44

Champion's is a slick new sports bar, flooded with natural light and much more cheerful than Woody's. It lacks the grime, but it also lacks the character.

Mavis hides her horror in case anyone's looking.

She finds a table and positions herself so she has a clear view of the door. Cranes her neck ever so slightly.

A passing CHAMPIONS SERVER plunks down some silverware rolled in a napkin. Mavis recoils tensely.

MAVIS

Oh! No, no! I don't need silverware!

Her voice is a bit too loud.

CHAMPIONS SERVER

Oh, you're going to want to try the popcorn shrimp!

MAVIS

No. That's okay. Two Hard Jack  
ciders. Please.

Mavis nods. She takes out her phone and starts pretending  
to compose a text message.

Reveal the SCREEN of the phone: "jggjsgnkajwhriuawgf"

Mavis glances at the nearest table. A couple of GUYS are  
eating nachos and watching a basketball game on one of  
the overhead TVs.

Mavis sits up a little straighter, arching her back. She  
puts her elbows on the table, thrusting her breasts  
forward. She ruins the effect by looking down at her  
cleavage.

Then...

BUDDY enters the bar, wearing loose jeans and a flannel.

Mavis is pretending to text again. She glances up at  
Buddy with expert detachment, smiles and waves slightly.

Buddy rounds the corner toward Mavis.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Hey you!

BUDDY

Wow. Great to see you, hon.

Buddy and Mavis hug. Over Buddy's shoulder, we see  
Mavis's thrilled face. Her eyes are tightly closed.

They separate. Buddy slides into the booth across from  
Mavis.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

So! This is a midweek surprise.

MAVIS

I know. Hey, I ordered us a couple  
of Hard Jacks.

BUDDY

Whoa. Hard Jack? I haven't had one  
of those since college. Honestly,  
I haven't been drinking the past  
few months. Beth's nursing our  
girl, so I thought I'd, you know,  
show some solidarity.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

Of course. You have a baby.  
That must be so great. So are you  
still at General Mills?

BUDDY

Yup. Ad sales now. Don't love all  
the cold-calling, but my dad's  
still there, so we have lunch  
together most days.

(lamely)

We get pizza. Sub sandwiches...

MAVIS

Well, I'm just working my butt  
off. Doing my thing in the city.

BUDDY

Right, down there in the "Mini  
Apple."

MAVIS

(shrill)

Nobody calls it the "Mini Apple,"  
Buddy, God!

She laughs, slapping his hand. He doesn't recoil, but he  
doesn't respond either.

Buddy notices the WAITRESS preoccupied with another  
table.

BUDDY

Hey, I'm just gonna grab those  
ciders. Save our lady a trip.

MAVIS

How chivalrous.

Buddy gets up and heads over to the bar. Mavis turns her  
head in sync with his departing body, staring at him.

MUSIC UP: Something dreamy, sexy and worshipful, like "My  
Sweet Lord" by George Harrison.

In slow motion, we see Buddy sidle up to the bar, leaning  
toward the bartender. Mavis's gaze-- our gaze-- drifts  
down his body. Suddenly, Mavis is alive.

He's just an average suburban dad, but the way Mavis  
looks at him, he's the very embodiment of sensuality.

His back, softened by years of inactivity. The hang of  
his "relaxed fit" jeans.

(CONTINUED)

The way his thirty-dollar haircut feathers against the nape of his neck. Mavis drinks it all in, lost in a reverie.

On Mavis's face, hopeful and sad at once...

Then-- an interruption. Matt Freehauf.

MATT

Mavis?

He's standing over her booth, leaning on his crutch. Mavis is not thrilled to see him.

MAVIS

Freehauf. What are you doing here?

MATT

I work here. Bookkeeping, dealing with vendors and other sit-down jobs that won't tax my twisted, mangled body. And you?

MAVIS

(tightly)  
Just catching up with a friend.

MATT

Right. I see Buddy Slade up there procuring a couple of mind-erasers. You're not wasting any time, huh?

Mavis refuses to acknowledge the previous night's disclosure.

MAVIS

It was good running into you last night. Nice to see you again.

She half-waves, dismissing him.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

'Bye.

Matt stands his ground, enjoying her discomfort.

Buddy appears with the drinks. He doesn't seem super-tight with Matt, but he's friendly and familiar.

BUDDY

Hey, Freehauf, what's up man?

Matt high-fives him, glancing at Mavis.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Hi. Congratulations on the little one.

(pointed)

What a wonderful, permanent commitment to make.

Buddy's reaction.

BUDDY

Thanks, man.

(joking)

It's a ton of work, though, and on almost no sleep. I'm like a zombie these days.

Mavis flashes a quick, satisfied glance at Matt.

MATT

But so rewarding, right?

MAVIS

Nice to see you here, Matt. Thanks for stopping by.

Buddy interrupts politely, diffusing Mavis's rudeness.

BUDDY

You wanna join us for a round?

MAVIS

Ah ha ha ha...

Matt tortures Mavis briefly by pretending to consider the offer.

MATT

I would love to.

(then)

But sadly, I must decline. I've got work to do, and it takes me twice as long as an able-bodied man to complete even the simplest task.

BUDDY

Bummer.

Mavis sees how Matt uses his disability to make people feel uncomfortable. She might even like it.

MATT

I'll just leave you two to your little Mercury High reunion.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

(cheerful)

Ha ha. Let's go Injuns.

MATT

Actually, they changed their name to the Indians in '99. There was a whole campaign by the local Fon du Lac tribe and...

(No one is listening)

...whatever.

MATT limps away. Buddy watches him sympathetically.

BUDDY

Sucks what happened to Matt. I mean, the poor guy has suffered so much just for being gay.

We see Matt pause mid-limp several feet away. His shoulders sag with defeat.

MAVIS

He's not actually gay.

BUDDY

Really? Didn't you call him "that theater fag" all the time in high school?

We don't know if Matt overhears this or not.

MAVIS

"Theater fag" is an expression.

BUDDY

Well, whatever. Mercury's changed a lot since that happened. It's way less of a hick town.

MAVIS

Really?

BUDDY

Well, we have this place. Beats Woody's, right? And I heard they might be putting in a Chipotle at the mall. Lots of new stuff.

MAVIS

I saw you got a "KenTacoHut."

Buddy doesn't get it.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS (CONT'D)

You know. One of those combination  
Kentucky Fried, Taco Bell...

BUDDY

(interrupting)

Pizza Hut. I get it! KenTacoHut.  
That's funny. You sound like one  
of your crazy characters.

For some reason this observation seems to depress Mavis.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

So, how's, um, Allen?

Mavis is taken aback by this query.

MAVIS

Allen is great! He's fine.

(beat)

We're not married anymore, but...

BUDDY

Oh, I'm...

MAVIS

It's fine.

Buddy covers his gaffe with a well-timed compliment.

BUDDY

Well, that's Allen's loss. Sucks  
to be Allen.

Mavis laughs brightly, pleased beyond belief by this  
remark. Buddy tries a sip of Hard Jack and grimaces; he's  
long since outgrown the taste.

Mavis walks Buddy to his car.

BUDDY

Sorry I can't hang out longer, but  
I've got to relieve Beth. She has  
band practice tonight.

MAVIS

Beth is in a band?

Buddy chuckles and shakes his head, as if he thinks the  
whole band thing is a little goofy.

BUDDY

Yeah, it's just something she does with some other moms.

MAVIS

Wow. Cool.

BUDDY

Beth's the drummer.

MAVIS

Oh my God. Embarrassing.

BUDDY

Heh. Actually, Beth's band's playing here tomorrow.

He opens his car door and readies himself to climb in. Mavis smiles, unwilling to end the conversation. In the early evening light, she looks especially beguiling. She gazes at Buddy.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Hey, I have an idea. Why don't you stop by our house for a hang tomorrow? We'll have dinner, and then we can all go to Beth's show.

MAVIS

Yes. I would love that.

BUDDY

Oh-- you know what? This is kind of silly, but could you sign one of those Waverley Place books for me?

MAVIS

(flattered)

Yes!

BUDDY

It's not for me, obviously. It's for my niece, Kendra. She wants to be a writer someday.

MAVIS

Right, of course. But you know, my name isn't actually on the books. I mean, it's on the title page if you check inside, but I'm basically a ghostwriter.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

Still a pretty big deal compared  
to the rest of us.

Mavis lingers at the window.

MAVIS

It's so great to see you.

BUDDY

I always feel like we can pick up  
right where we left off.

Buddy examines her pretty face.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

You know what? You look exactly  
the same.

MAVIS

I do?

BUDDY

Yeah. It's like the rest of us  
changed and you just got lucky.

He starts the car and begins to pull out. Mavis continues  
to speak to him through the open window.

MAVIS

See you tomorrow!

BUDDY

Yup.

He drives away. Mavis pretends to walk to her car, but  
can't resist looking back.

Mavis sits on the hotel bed. She pulls at the same patch  
of hair behind her ear. Flips channels. Carefully, dials  
her Blackberry.

CROSS CUT  
PHONE CALL:

Matt Freehauf shuffles over to a wall-mounted telephone  
in a depressing "country" kitchen that looks like it was  
remodeled in 1989. He picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Hello?

Mavis's tone is sharp, teenage-bitchy.

MAVIS

I just want you to know that what you saw today wasn't what you think it was.

MATT

Oh. You're not trying to destroy Buddy Slade's marriage?

MAVIS

It's way more complicated than you could possibly know. Buddy and I have years of history between us, and it's very rich and complex.

MATT

Yeah, sounds like it's definitely beyond my comprehension.

Matt opens a bottle of KRAFT RANCH DRESSING.

SANDRA

Don't open a new ranch until the old one is done.

Matt ignores Sandra.

MAVIS

What?

MATT

Sorry...my sister. Forget it.

SANDRA

(still on the dressing)

Just so you know.

MAVIS

You want to hang out tonight? Get loaded or something?

The doorbell rings. Sandra answers the door. A sheepish Mavis stands on the doorstep. Her makeup, so expertly applied a few hours ago, now looks a bit messy. She doesn't care; Matt is not a real man to her.

(CONTINUED)

Sandra stands in the messy living room sizing up Mavis.

MAVIS

I'm Mavis.

SANDRA

I know. From high school.

It's practically an accusation.

MAVIS

Right!

SANDRA

I made you Rice Krispies squares  
that one time, for your birthday.

There's old hurt in Sandra's eyes. Mavis nods, smiling as if she remembers.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I got your locker combination from  
the vice principal and put them in  
your locker.

Even years later, Mavis doesn't give a shit.

MAVIS

Thank you.  
(then)  
So where's Matt?

SANDRA

He's in his cave.

On Mavis: *huh?*

Mavis walks through the dark front yard. She approaches an old garage. Circle Jerks can be heard from inside. Light emanates from windows in the garage door. She looks through to see Matt with goggles on, operating pipes and drums and stuff. She knocks on the glass. He opens the garage door revealing his bourbon distillery.

Mavis enters the garage, silently marveling at Matt's set-up. Matt turns around and seems almost embarrassed by how elaborate it all is.

MATT

Welcome to the distillery.

Mavis tries to sound blase and mocking, even though she's clearly impressed.

MAVIS

Are you making moonshine?

MATT

Screw you. This is aged bourbon.

Mavis circles the many tubes and pipes. Little hand painted figurines sit on various knobs, almost like little Oompa Loompas in Willy Wonka's factory.

Matt pours a shot from a hand-labeled bottle and hands it to Mavis.

MATT (CONT'D)

This is an eight-year. I don't have a lot of it.

He's proud of this batch-- and stingy with it-- but tries to act casual. Mavis downs the shot. Coughs. Takes the bottle. Reads the hand made label.

MAVIS

Mos Eisley Special Reserve?

MATT

It's a Star Wars thing...  
Cantina...

MAVIS

I was supposed to sip it.

She does.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Woody.

MATT

That's the oak.

Matt slowly moves up a small set of stairs that leads to his bedroom. Mavis follows.

MATT

So how'd the rest of your little  
"date" go yesterday?

(CONTINUED)

Mavis finishes off another shot.

MAVIS

Good, good. It was eye-opening though. Buddy-- he's clearly not happy.

MATT

He told you that?

MAVIS

He implied it. You can tell he's suffering. He looks completely exhausted. He told me he feels like a zombie.

Mavis takes in Matt's childhood bedroom. A twin bed. A record collection. A desk strewn with Testor's hobby glue, paint, and disembodied toy figurines.

MATT

I was there, and I suspect he was being flip.

MAVIS

It's a pretty strong statement to make. A zombie is a dead person, Matt.

MATT

Please, I'm a fat geek. I know what zombies are.

MAVIS

I think Buddy and I are having very similar feelings. The question is, who's going to make the first move?

MATT

(dry)  
I'm thinking it will be you.

Sandra eavesdrops in the hallway, listening to their conversation through the door. It's like a whole adolescent tableau being reenacted by people in their thirties.

53 INT. MATT'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - SAME

53

Mavis has wandered over to Matt's desk. She picks up a one-armed FIGURINE, showing little regard for Matt's personal property.

MAVIS

Aren't you a little old for GI Joes?

MATT

Hey. It's not a... I think that guy might still be wet...

Mavis turns the figurine over in her hand, examining it.

MAVIS

It's fine. You make these?

MATT

I combine them, mix and match. I'm taking Copperhead and attaching Mongol's arm...

(embarrassed)

It's a thing people do.

Mavis tosses the Doctor aside and flips through an issue of *ToyFare* magazine.

MAVIS

Do you ever make like, girl dolls?

MATT

I'm not a weirdo.

Mavis suddenly puts down the magazine and turns to him, her eyes aglow with a fucked-up idea.

MAVIS

I need to go check on something.

MATT

So do it.

MAVIS

(teenage-eager)

No. No, you have to come!

54 INT. CAR - NIGHT

54

A quiet street lined with trees and clean sidewalks. Crickets chirp.

Mavis drives slowly, peering out the window. Matt is in the passenger seat.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

I think this is it.

Mavis is chewing blue Bubble Yum. Stoner gum.

MAVIS

You think or you know?

MATT

This is definitely his house. He drives a Jeep Liberty.

MAVIS

That's ironic. Right? Because he *has* no liberty.

It's such a ridiculous, overwrought thing to say, but Matt is so drunk he can't help but giggle.

MATT

You're mentally ill.

Mavis looks out at Buddy's house in the darkness. It's small, ordinary. There's a light on in one of the rooms.

MAVIS

Do you see that light there?

MATT

Yeah.

MAVIS

I bet Buddy's awake and secretly jerking off or something.

MATT

Or perhaps he's caring for his infant daughter.

Mavis refuses to be affected by this remark. She blows a bubble as she watches the house.

MAVIS

The baby, the baby.

MATT

The problem that has no name.

Mavis throws the car into gear and drives off.

Mavis enters, bleary-eyed. She slept in most of her clothes and never removed her makeup.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: 55

She takes the paper hygiene guard off one of the drinking glasses, fills it with tap water, and takes a long drink. She looks awful.

56 EXT. MALL PARKING LOT (TO ESTABLISH) - DAY 56

Mavis parks in front of the square shaped dept store.

57 INT. MERCURY FASHION SQUARE - DAY 57

Mavis shops in the mall's flagship department store. It's not exactly Barney's New York.

Mavis flips through a rack of clothes. A SALES LADY, conservative, forties, approaches her.

SALES LADY

Can I help you find something?

MAVIS

Sure. I'm not having a ton of luck.

SALESLADY

Is this something for work?

MAVIS

No, it's for a special occasion. Not a formal occasion. Something chic and clean, but also a little bit edgy.

SALESLADY

Okay. We have some adorable new dresses that just came in.

MAVIS

Do you carry Marc Jacobs?

SALESLADY

I don't think we have that one.

MAVIS

I'm going to a rock concert with an old flame, and I think there's a chance we may reconnect.

The sales lady smiles.

SALESLADY

Get it girl! Let's show him what he's been missing.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

He's seen me recently, so he knows. But this is the first time his wife is seeing me in a while...

She doesn't know what's compelling her to say these things. But she's saying them as candidly as if she were in therapy.

SALESLADY

Well. It's the end of my shift, and my son needs to be picked up at school, so I'm just going to send over another associate. Okay? She's up on all the trends. I'm sure you'll find something.

MAVIS

Okay.

SALESLADY

(hurrying away)  
Shawna? Can you help this lady out?

With her first mission accomplished, Mavis walks into a bookstore and heads confidently back toward the Young Adult section. A COLLEGE-AGED MANAGER in an employee polo takes inventory nearby.

MAVIS

(to associate)  
Do you have the Waverley Prep books?

ASSOCIATE

Yeah, they've got their own display table over there.

He points to a table heaped with the pastel spines of various Waverley Prep titles.

MAVIS

(pleased)  
Wow. They must be really popular.

ASSOCIATE

Actually we just have a lot of surplus stock we're trying to clear out.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ASSOCIATE (CONT'D)

They were a big thing a couple of years ago, but now they're ending the series.

MAVIS

I wouldn't be so sure...

ASSOCIATE

Nope, it's true. We got a letter from the publisher. And the computer says "Do Not Shelve," so...

Mavis walks over to the table. She sifts through the books until she finds one of her own. Mavis opens the book to the flyleaf and begins to write in an unsubtle way. The associate notices.

ASSOCIATE (CONT'D)

Are you writing in there?

MAVIS

I'm the author. I'm signing it.

The associate still looks concerned that his merchandise is being vandalized.

ASSOCIATE

You're Jane MacMurray?

MAVIS

No. Jane MacMurray just created the series. I wrote the book. I'm Mavis Gary. Crane. See?

She points to the flyleaf, which does indeed read: "Story by Jane MacMurray. Written by Mavis Gary-Crane."

ASSOCIATE

Do you know Jane MacMurray?

MAVIS

Yes, I know her very well...  
(indignant)  
Look, I wrote this book.

ASSOCIATE

Okay. Wow.

MAVIS

Would you like a signed copy for the store?

ASSOCIATE

No, that's fine.

(CONTINUED)

Mavis grabs another book, wielding her pen threateningly.

MAVIS

I'll sign as many as you want. It adds value to your stock.

ASSOCIATE

Yeah, but when merchandise is signed, we can't send it back to the publisher.

MAVIS

Why would you send these back to the publisher?!

ASSOCIATE

Well, we're probably not going to sell them. The series is done. Hey...

Mavis is rapidly, manically signing another book, making her signature as big as possible. She reaches for another. As the associate moves toward her, she slams the book shut, backing away from the table.

MAVIS

Okay. Fine. Fine.

In a reprise of the earlier scene in the salon, we see Mavis prepare for the rock show including dark nail polish.

Mavis curls her hair and applies her rock show look.

MAVIS

(voicover)

Kendal Strickland never felt threatened. If anything, she felt a deep sense of pity for this rebound girl. Not in a competitive way-- she wasn't the type to show off. That said, she couldn't help her own popularity. It wasn't her fault that one year she was voted homecoming queen-- of a neighboring high school. Yes, Kendal Strickland was attractive; that was obvious.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Other girls were so insecure, stressing about their faces and their figures. Not Kendal. Hers was an effortless beauty that glowed from within. However, being that beautiful could also be intimidating. Some guys went for girls who were more ordinary. How could Kendal make sure her own perfection wouldn't scare away Ryan, the love of her life?

61 INT. MAVIS'S CAR - DAY

61

Mavis pulls up to the curb near Buddy's house. She's wearing her rock look. She looks good.

62 EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - DAY

62

Buddy's house is a modest one-story with a large porch. An old car is parked in the driveway. Everything is solidly lower middle class.

Buddy is on the porch building a children's apparatus.

Mavis walks up to the porch, carrying a small bag from the bookstore.

BUDDY

What's *uuuuup*?

He subtly flashes fake gang signs.

MAVIS

Hey.

They hug. Mavis hands Buddy the bag.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Here's that book for your niece.

BUDDY

Oh yeah. Thanks for remembering. I'll send it to her.

MAVIS

There's a character in this one that I based on you.

BUDDY

Huh?

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

In the book. I mean, I named him Ashby, but it's so blatantly you. When you read it, it'll be obvious.

BUDDY

I hope he's cool.

Mavis laughs nervously.

MAVIS

We're not even supposed to do that. We're supposed to stick to this character bible?

Mavis pauses, and with good reason. Buddy's wife BETH emerges from the house, holding the baby.

Beth has an inviting smile and wears a rock T-shirt with corduroys and Converse. She's still carrying some baby weight around her breasts and middle, but she's pretty.

BETH

Hey! Nice to see you again.

She hugs Mavis warmly, to Mavis's chagrin.

MAVIS

You too.  
 (looks at the baby)  
 Wow, there it is...  
 (searches)  
 Adorable.

BETH

Thank you.

They enter the house. It's modest, but warm and artsy.

BUDDY

Do you guys want drinks?

BETH

Can you bring me another Summer Ale?

BUDDY (O.C.)

You got it.

Mavis looks taken aback. Beth laughs.

(CONTINUED)

BETH

It's fine, I'll just pump and dump  
after the show. Don't worry, I'm  
not trying to get my kid hammered.

Beth places the baby in an aquarium-themed contraption  
with flashing lights and dangling seashells.

MAVIS

Wow, look at that.

BETH

Ah yes, the Funquarium. Always  
chills her out.

(to baby)

Yes! You love it.

(back to Mavis)

We're starting to get smiles.

Mavis smiles at the baby uncomfortably.

MAVIS

Cute.

BETH

Thanks. She's like Buddy's clone.

Mavis examines the baby's face.

MAVIS

No. She didn't. I can see you  
in there. A lot of you, in fact.

The observation is voiced almost aggressively, but Beth  
seems truly pleased to hear it.

Beth

Really? Thanks.

Buddy returns and hands Beth a beer.

BUDDY

Here you go, babe.

Buddy hands Mavis a plain bottle of water.

BETH

So, how's it going? I know you're  
a writer. I saw that nice article  
about you in the Sun.

MAVIS

Yes, I'm the author of a young  
adult series.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS (CONT'D)

It's disturbingly popular.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

I like your decor, what is this, shabby chic?

BUDDY

Pier one.

BETH

And a little bit Goodwill.

MAVIS

Me and Buddy used to go thrifting all the time.

(to Buddy)

Remember that in the '90s, thrifting? We had a huge stupid T-shirt collection. Just the dumbest things.

BETH

(fondly)

The '90s were awesome.

MAVIS

Yes, I used to sleep in Buddy's shirts. And boxers.

BUDDY

Heh.

Mavis pushes it a little further, addressing Beth.

MAVIS

I still have a few, I think.

Beth giggles, infuriatingly good-natured.

Beth

Hey, I still have one of my ex-boyfriend's T-shirts. I can't bring myself to get rid of it.

Buddy

What shirt?

Beth

Like I'd tell you!

Mavis sees a strange CHART leaning against the wall. It shows cartoon faces with different expressions. One says "HAPPY," one says "SAD" and so on.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

What's that chart?

BUDDY

Beth teaches special needs kids.

MAVIS

Ah.

BETH

A lot of my kids learn emotions cognitively. It doesn't come naturally to them the way it does for you or me. So we need to show them: This is what happy looks like. This is what anxious looks like. And so on.

Mavis is fascinated with the chart.

MAVIS

How about, like, neutral? What if you don't feel anything?

BETH

That's kind of how they are a lot of the time, so. Yeah. Don't need to teach it.

The band is tuning up on a tiny stage surrounded by brass rails. The lead singer, MARY ELLEN TRANTOWSKI, has tattoos on her arms and a cool (for Duluth) haircut. There's also a bass player, a guitarist, and of course, Beth. She fusses with her drums, tightening them up with a key.

MARY ELLEN

(into mic)

Testing! Four-four, three-three...

Mavis and Buddy linger by the bar. Mary Ellen notices Mavis. Her eyes narrow. She nudges the BASSIST.

MARY ELLEN (CONT'D)

My God. Is that Mavis Gary?

BASSIST

(shrugging)

Yeah, can you believe it? She came with Beth and Buddy. I don't know.

Mary Ellen's memories of Mavis are clearly not fond.

(CONTINUED)

MARY ELLEN

Psychotic prom queen bitch.

Mavis is over at the bar with Buddy.

MAVIS

Shots!

BUDDY

Oh. Thanks.

MAVIS

So are they any good?

BUDDY

What?

MAVIS

Are they good? The band.

Buddy finishes off the beer. His reply is frank, but not unkind.

BUDDY

No. No, they really aren't. But they have fun. Hey, look, Freehauf's over there.

Sure enough, Matt is leaning against an EMPLOYEES ONLY doorway near the rear of the bar. He watches the stage passively, his arms crossed over his belly. Mavis tries to not make eye contact.

MAVIS

Ha. God, he's always just lurking around, isn't he? So creepy! Look at his face. He's so doughy. He looks like a murderer.

It's a dumb, mean comment but Buddy is amused.

BUDDY

Yeah, he looks like he might own a few clown suits.

Mavis laughs.

MAVIS

You're so funny, Buddy.

He pokes her arm affectionately. Mavis is thrilled with this moment of attention and validation. She leans in and opens her mouth to speak. Alas, she's quickly drowned out by the sound of Beth doing an EXTREMELY LOUD SOUND CHECK on her drums.

(CONTINUED)

BANG! BANG! BANG! BOOM. BOOM. BOOM.

The sound guy gives Beth a thumbs-up from his console. Mavis is beyond irritated.

MARY ELLEN

(onstage)

Hello Mercury!

The small crowd cheers.

MARY ELLEN (CONT'D)

I'm Mary Ellen Trantowski and we are Nipple Confusion! Please be kind, as this is only our second show and we all have small children at home.

Friendly laughter from the crowd.

MARY ELLEN (CONT'D)

Our first song's a cover. This one goes out from our drummer Beth to her sweetheart Buddy.

She gestures to Beth, who grins and waves a drum stick in Buddy and Mavis's direction.

The song begins with a few loud strums and a familiar couplet sung by Mary Beth:

MARY ELLEN (CONT'D)

(singing)

*She wears denim wherever she goes...*

Mavis's face falls as she watches them play. This is HER song with Buddy. The song from the mix tape.

Beth pounds the drums with unschooled enthusiasm. Even though the band is technically sloppy, everyone is smiling and cheering.

Mavis's eyes fill up with tears. Or is she just drunk? She looks around. Up front, a PROUD DAD holds a toddler wearing large protective headphones.

Two KIDS, about 7 and 9, dance in front of the stage. The women in the band-- even Beth, who drums doggedly-- harmonize together on the chorus, and not very well.

MARY ELLEN & THE BAND

*I didn't want to hurt you, oh yeah...*

(CONTINUED)

Mavis looks at Buddy. He's rocking out, guzzling another beer.

Mavis glances at Matt Freehauf, who's still leaning against the doorway. Their eyes meet. His gaze is full of pity. She hates that he pities her.

Mavis suddenly turns to Buddy and shouts over the music.

MAVIS

(shouting)

Hey, do you remember we used to  
make out to this song?

Buddy leans in to hear her better.

BUDDY

(shouting)

Make out?

Mavis nods, grinning. Buddy smiles back.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Yeah. I do.

MAVIS

(shouting)

This song was playing the first  
time I went down on you.

Buddy isn't sure he heard her correctly, and neither are we. Mavis points to the floor to underscore her point, still smiling.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

The first time I went down on you.

BUDDY

I remember that.

Buddy and Mavis both seem to enjoy this not-altogether-appropriate moment. They redirect their eyes toward the stage. Now Mavis is swaying to the music with renewed enthusiasm.

Mavis opens the front door of the bar to exit. It's a typical postshow scene, albeit a little more family-friendly. The crowd spills out onto the sidewalk. Friends load BAND GEAR into someone's van. Beth and her band mates chat excitedly. Beth is clearly having a blast. Mavis and Buddy linger on the periphery.

(CONTINUED)

BETH

(laughing)

I messed up the fill so bad on  
"Haircut." I'm sorry guys.

BASSIST

No honey, you were great.

Buddy's voice is a loud, drunken bray.

BUDDY

Yeah, you guys were namazing.

MARY ELLEN

Did he just say "namazing?"

The women titter at Buddy's mistake.

BETH

(affectionate)

I think someone's had a  
few too many.

MAVIS

Oh, hardly...

MARY ELLEN

It's interesting to see you  
hanging around again, Mavis.

Mavis summons her best high-school bitch attitude.

MAVIS

Mary Ellen, you were great  
tonight. It's inspiring to see a  
single, *partnerless* mother with so  
much confidence onstage.

BUDDY

Yup, I'm pretty drunk. Bethie, we  
gotta get home. Relieve the  
babysitter.

He takes another swill of beer, amid protests from Beth's  
rowdy mom-friends.

BETH

Aw, really? I want to stay out  
just a little while longer.

BASSIST

Yeah Buddy, you can't have her  
back yet!

Beth pouts cutely, batting her lashes at Buddy.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS  
I'll drive him home.

BETH  
(eager)  
Really?

Mary Ellen gives Mavis the once-over. Mavis notices the coldness of her stare. Beth may be oblivious, but nothing gets past Mary Ellen.

BETH (CONT'D)  
(interrupting)  
Buddy, let Mavis drive you home,  
OK? I'm gonna stay and celebrate.

BUDDY  
Sure. Okay.

Mavis takes the Jeep keys from Buddy. She holds them up and clicks the "unlock" button triumphantly.

As the car BEEPS, Mavis flashes her best shit-eating grin at a scowling Mary Ellen.

BETH  
(happily)  
Thanks, Mavis!

The Jeep pulls up. Mavis and Buddy get out and walk up onto the porch. Buddy stumbles, leaning on Mavis. We hear their voices in the night.

MAVIS  
Easy.

BUDDY  
My tolerance has really gone down  
since you knew me.

MAVIS  
What do you mean, "since I knew  
you"? I still know you.

Buddy goes to enter the house, but Mavis stops him.

MAVIS (CONT'D)  
Hey, wait.

BUDDY  
What?

Mavis takes Buddy by the wrist and looks at his cheap Timex watch. To her, it's more beautiful than any Rolex. She pushes the "Indiglo" button, illuminating the watch, and shows Buddy the time. 10:53.

MAVIS

(whispering)

Look. You still have seven minutes. Don't you have that baby-sitter until 11?

BUDDY

Yeah. But we can't go anywhere.

MAVIS

That's true. We can't. But time is so precious.

Buddy's words are slurred.

BUDDY

For real. It goes so fast. Whoosh.

He leans against Mavis in a half-embrace, dangerously close.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Man. I just really love my daughter, you know?

Buddy is just being drunk and sentimental. But Mavis seems to interpret it as the beginning of a confession.

MAVIS

I know. I know. I can tell you're a great father. You're already going above and beyond in so many ways. You've really stepped up to the plate. You do too much, even.

Now Buddy's voice has become similarly low and intimate.

BUDDY

Do you think so?

MAVIS

Yes. You're such a good, good man, Buddy. Don't ever shortchange yourself.

Buddy chuckles softly and drunkenly. His hand has wandered to Mavis's bare arm. It's a friendly grip, more for balance than anything, but there's tension now.

(CONTINUED)

Buddy and Mavis's faces meet in a KISS. It's a hard close-mouthed kiss, but a kiss nonetheless.

Buddy pulls away quickly.

He lays one hand on Mavis's face, as if he knows he's made a mistake, but wouldn't mind kissing her again.

The BABYSITTER, an effeminate college-aged guy, suddenly opens the door and appears on the porch. He holds a pacifier in one hand and stares daggers at Mavis.

BABYSITTER

(indignant)

I thought I saw lights.

BUDDY

Yeah, um, Daniel. I'm home.

BABYSITTER

Where's Beth?

MAVIS

(exaggerating)

Beth wanted to stay out all night and party.

BABYSITTER

Well, we're all out of breastmilk and she doesn't want the nuk anymore.

He holds up the "nuk," a pacifier, as if it's tainted.

BUDDY

I got it.

Buddy heads into the house, drunk and flustered, not turning to say goodbye to Mavis.

MAVIS

Good night, Buddy.

BUDDY

Good night.

The transition is sudden, but we can immediately see that Mavis and Freehauf are drowning their sorrows again. Mavis is obviously drunk.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

You need to ease up, Mavis. You've been getting loaded every night.

MAVIS

It's called a bender. I have depression.

She declares it the way someone might say "I have a Pulitzer."

MATT

If you're so depressed, why don't you exercise or something? Take your poor dog for a walk for once.

MAVIS

Why don't you walk, fat ass?

MATT

Oh, there's some low-hanging fruit

MAVIS

You are low-hanging fruit.

MATT

Oh no. No.

MAVIS

What?

MATT

I hate this guy over here.

Matt nods toward a MAN in a WHEELCHAIR. The man is drinking a beer and laughing with a group of friends.

MAVIS

(surprised)

Ugh. My cousin Mike.

MATT

Mike Moran is your cousin?

Mavis

Unfortunately.

MIKE has spotted them and is wheeling over with a broad grin on his face.

MATT

Here comes the happiest cripple in Minnesota.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

Mavis? What is up, girly-friend?

He holds his arms outstretched. Mavis leans in reluctantly for a hug.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Holy shit, cuz, this is such a rad surprise!

Mavis is as wooden as Mike is enthusiastic.

MAVIS

I'm just in town taking care of a real estate thing. How are you?

MIKE

I'm great. You know, Kim and I just had our six-year anniversary.

MAVIS

Six years, what is that, wood? Porcelain?

Matt

Strychnine?

Mike

It's candy. Hee! Anyway, the kids are great. Work is a trip, but I play hard, too. I've been doing a lot of rock-climbing.

Matt is incredulous.

MATT

What, like, rock-crawling, you mean?

MIKE

Nahh, I'm vertical, bro. Believe it or not. You should try it, Matt. We can do anything a normal can do. Probably more, because we've had to reboot for extra positivity, know what I'm saying? You should try it!

MAVIS

(dry)  
Yeah, you should try it, Matt.

MATT

No.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

I love the way this guy talks. He's like, "no." I'm so glad you guys are buds, I can totally see it. It's like *Will and Grace*.

MAVIS

It is!

MATT

No, it isn't.

MIKE

Look, I'm gonna roll back to my boys, but we should chat later! I'll buy you a scotch or whatever you've got there. I love this place-- total time capsule, right?

Mavis hoists her glass. Mike wheels away.

MATT

When did he get that chair?  
Sophomore year?

Mavis rolls her eyes.

MAVIS

Junior. Car wreck. He got so much attention.

MATT

I remember. And then, of course, he was the "popular cripple." Practically ruined high school for me.

MAVIS

Yeah, well he ruined my Sweet Sixteen.

(off Matt's look)

It was that weekend!

Seething with old resentment, they watch Mike "dance" in his wheelchair.

MATT

You're a piece of work.

MAVIS

You're a piece of shit.

MATT loudly clinks Mavis's stationary glass.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (4) 67

Mavis responds in a quieter way: She puts her glass against his and holds it there for a beat, like a kiss.

68 EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT 68

Mavis drives her MINI Cooper into the parking lot of the Homeway Suites.

She pulls crookedly into a spot, never hitting the brakes, and proceeds to slam the front end of her car into a lamp post. Not hard enough to wreck the car, per se, but hard enough to crumple the front end.

69 INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING 69

Mavis wakes up in her clothes. She peels her flushed, pillow-creased face off the bed and rubs her neck. Remembers.

70 EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - MORNING 70

Mavis walks out to her car and surveys the aftermath. The situation looks even worse in the harsh light of morning.

She walks away.

71 INT. KENTACOHUT - DAY 71

Mavis sits in the kentaco hut, typing.

MAVIS

(voiceover)

The kiss was electric.  
 Transformative. Spiritual.  
 Enchanted. It was like their first  
 kiss all over again, except now  
 they knew exactly what they were  
 doing.

Behind her, TWO TEENAGE GIRLS are waiting in line and talking about their love lives. Mavis listens.

TEENAGE GIRL #1

So I said, like, listen, Kyle.  
 You're everything to me. You're my  
 sun, my moon, my galaxy; when are  
 you going to get this?

TEENAGE GIRL #2

And he was like, *not* getting it...

(CONTINUED)

TEENAGE GIRL #1

Right!

The girls shut their car doors. Mavis begins typing...

Mavis's CELL PHONE rings. It's Buddy. Oh my God!

Mavis stares at the ringing phone as if it's an oracle.

MAVIS

(to herself)

Hello. Hello.

(warmly)

Hey you!

That's it.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

(picking up)

Hey you!

Cross cut  
phone call:

INT. BUDDY'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - DAY

Close on Buddy, leaning against the wall with a diet soda in his hand. No longer jocular, he seems nervous to speak to her. Something has changed in his demeanor.

BUDDY

Hi, how are you?

MAVIS

I'm good. I'm good. What is it, Bud?

BUDDY

How much longer are you going to be in town?

Could it be? Is Buddy on the same page as her?

MAVIS

I'm here for you. How-- how long do you need?

BUDDY

I was just wondering, if you're still around this weekend, if you'd like to come to the baby's naming ceremony. It's just a little hippie thing out in the yard. Not religious or anything.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

MAVIS

Buddy, I would love to come.

BUDDY

Good. Great. Saturday, at the house, around one.

His tone is still oddly stoic.

MAVIS

Okay. Great.

Mavis hangs up, quietly thrilled.

73 BACK ON BUDDY:

73

Buddy hangs up and turns around. Reveal Beth, wearing the baby in a complicated sling. Her expression is unreadable.

74 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

74

Mavis is walking back with Dolce in his bag. Her spirits are high.

There's a silver Lincoln sedan slowly cruising down the street. After a few beats, we realize it's tailing Mavis.

Mavis doesn't notice right away, but eventually looks over her shoulder. The car's halting pace is suspicious.

Finally, Mavis stops. The car also stops. The driver's side window rolls down. From our angle, we can't see the driver.

We boom down to find HEDDA GARY, a handsome woman in her early sixties.

MAVIS

Hi, Mom.

75 INT. HEDDA'S CAR - day

75

Mavis is now in the passenger seat while Hedda drives. Dolce is sitting comfortably in Hedda's lap.

MAVIS

I wasn't avoiding you. I was planning to call.

Hedda glances over and gazes at her daughter in the driver's seat. Mavis stares straight ahead.

(CONTINUED)

HEDDA

It's been so long, I almost forgot what you look like.

MAVIS

Look, I'm sorry. Okay?

HEDDA

We just miss you. Your daddy's going to freak out. Why didn't you just come stay with us?

MAVIS

I needed a quiet place I could write. I have tons of work to catch up on.

HEDDA

Are the books still selling well?

MAVIS

I can hardly keep up.

HEDDA

I heard you were back here to work on some kind of real estate transaction? I was just surprised you didn't use Aunt Lena as your broker. She's a little hurt.

Even Mavis is a bit taken aback by the journey of her lies.

76

EXT. HEDDA AND DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

76

Establishing.

77

INT. HEDDA AND DAVID'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - DAY

77

Mavis peeks into her old bedroom. It's the bedroom of a popular girl from the '90s-- which seems pretty sad and faded now. Bulletin board, covered in blue ribbons. Diploma from the University of Minnesota, and some Kappa Alpha Theta stuff. A sparkly "BEST HAIR" certificate.

A PHOTO STRIP from a carnival style machine. "What will your kids look like?!" A snapshot of Teenage Mavis on the left. Teenage Buddy on the right. A strange cobbled together baby with thick eyebrows in the middle.

A framed 8 x 10 class photo of Mavis with HUGE BANGS sitting in the corner.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

Next to the photo, there's a smaller snapshot of Mavis and Buddy on some kind of class trip.

Mavis opens the closet. From a pile of old clothes, she retrieves a GREEN SWEATSHIRT and unfolds it eagerly. We can't see what's on the front of it.

78 INT. HEDDA AND DAVID'S HOUSE (hallway) - day

78

Mavis exits the room. In the hallway, there's a large WEDDING PICTURE in a silver frame.

Mavis in a chic white dress, cuddled up to ALLEN, an average-looking man who seems thrilled to be wedded to her. Allen brandishes a silver CAKE SERVER as if it's a weapon. Mavis, the bride, smiles and plays along.

Mavis wanders into an empty living room. Exhales.

79 INT. HEDDA AND DAVID'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - SAME

79

Mavis sits across the kitchen table from Hedda and also her father, DAVID. They're in the midst of dining. It feels strangely like Mavis is still a teenager.

DAVID

I hope you're eating enough in the city.

HEDDA

It's important to take care of yourself, sweetie.

MAVIS

I think I might be an alcoholic.

HEDDA

*Very funny.*

Mavis begins tugging at her usual lock of hair. David notices.

DAVID

You're not still pulling it, are you?

Mavis sighs.

MAVIS

Stop.

(CONTINUED)

HEDDA

(apologetic)

It's just that your hair is so beautiful.

MAVIS

(switching subjects)

Mom? Can you please take down that picture of me and Allen?

HEDDA

Which photo, sweetie?

MAVIS

Our wedding picture? We're divorced.

HEDDA

We just thought it was a nice memory.

MAVIS

Of my failed marriage?

Hedda pats Mavis's arm sincerely.

HEDDA

The wedding wasn't a failure. Remember that tiramisu?

Mavis wanders over to the fridge and briefly checks inside. Old habit.

DAVID

I like that Allen.

MAVIS

Dad, he's my ex-husband. You're supposed to be on my team.

DAVID

He's a nice guy. That's all. I didn't know there were teams.

Mavis says nothing.

HEDDA

Have you seen any old friends on this visit?

MAVIS

(pointedly)

Actually, I've seen quite a bit of Buddy.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

The old beau, eh?

HEDDA

I remember you kids were so cute  
in high school.

MAVIS

In a way, I feel like we've grown  
even closer as adults. It's funny  
how those initial instincts can  
often be so right. You can make  
mistakes along the way, but the  
world has a way of bringing you  
back to the person you're meant to  
be with.

(back in the real  
world)

I mean, we just click, you know?

Her parents are a little skeptical. Hedda tries to be  
understanding.

HEDDA

It's good to keep those people in  
your life. People that really know  
you best.

Mavis smiles. Thinking- her mom understands.

HEDDA (CONT'D)

That new baby of his is just  
darling.

Mavis stops smiling.

MAVIS

(sincerely)  
Have you seen it up close?

HEDDA

I suppose. Is everything okay?

MAVIS

I'm sure. Probably too early to  
tell, anyway. Buddy always said  
we'd make pretty cute kids.

Hedda and David exchange a glance. Mavis suddenly  
remembers something

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Hey, did you guys ever sell my  
Cabriolet?

80 EXT. MATT'S HOUSE - EVENING 80

Mavis pulls up in the Cabriolet. Matt is working in the garage. Mavis climbs out of the car.

MATT

(snarky)

Nice ride. Is that a drop-top?

MAVIS

I just saw my mother and father.

MATT

Heavy. What are they like?

MAVIS

They're horrible. I've been through a lot. Let's go drink in the woods behind the school.

81 EXT. MERCURY HIGH FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT 81

Mavis and Matt cross the football field. Mavis walks at an insensitively brisk pace. Matt keeps up.

MAVIS

Our school is so ugly. It looks just like a factory.

MATT

It used to be a rubber fabrication plant in the '20s.

MAVIS

You know everything.

82 EXT. WOODS BEHIND THE SCHOOL - NIGHT 82

Mercury High is lit up like a brick prison. Past the football and soccer fields, there's a small wooded area. Mavis and Matt trek through the overgrowth.

Mavis shivers in her tank top. She reaches into her purse and takes out the red sweatshirt she found at her parent's house. She pulls it on. It's a traditional high school P.E. shirt. On the front label, there's a large surname written in Magic Marker: SLADE.

Matt glances at the shirt but doesn't say anything. Mavis takes a swig from a flask. Touches a tree trunk fondly.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

These woods were like Hump City back in the day. I remember being out here with a few different guys.

MATT

I never knew you were a slut.

MAVIS

I was normal.

Mavis leans against a tree, quietly revisiting her high school sex memories. Until:

MATT

So what's going on with old Buddy? How's the master plan unfolding?

MAVIS

Funny you should ask. He called me today and asked me if I would participate in his daughter's naming ceremony on Saturday. I mean, there's still so much that's unspoken, but come on. He's involving me in his child's life.

Matt interrupts. This is too much.

MATT

Mavis, are you batshit crazy? Buddy's married, okay? By all accounts, happily married. You need to snap out of this. I know you're not this delusional.

MAVIS

(sarcastic)

Oh yeah, Matt, happily married men go to bars alone with their ex-girlfriends all the time. They call them privately. They make out with them on the porch... It was really intense and passionate.

(pointing)

This is his shirt.

The giant SLADE on the front of the shirt could not be more obvious.

MATT

Yes, I noticed. They probably noticed in space.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MATT (CONT'D)

And FYI, you look completely insane wearing it. Look, I don't know exactly what Buddy's doing with you, or what you think he's doing with you, but I do know that whatever it is, it's not cool. And you need to move on.

MAVIS

You're one to talk, Matt. All you care about is some scuffle that happened 20 years ago. You lean on that crutch and you lean on excuses, and you and I both know that you've used the whole thing as an excuse to do nothing.

MATT

A scuffle? You don't know shit about what happened to me. Those jocks you used to blow during lunch-- they shattered my legs, they bashed in my skull, they mangled my cock so I have to piss and cum sideways for the rest of my life, and they left me for dead. Things aren't so great "down south." I can barely get off alone, let alone with another person.

Mavis knows she's in the wrong, but can never admit it. Her voice has a false note of encouragement.

MAVIS

What's done is done. You can't dwell on the past.

Matt is flabbergasted.

MATT

Are you kidding? Talk about dwelling in the past. I mean, here you are, back in Mercury like a loser, trying to score with a guy who's happily married and--

The word "happily" seems to set Mavis off.

MAVIS

Buddy is not happy! Stop saying that!

Mavis's face is ghoulishly sad, a fact which is not lost on Matt.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

You're hardly the authority on happiness, Sylvia.

Mavis turns to walk away toward the street. She turns back to Matt with a false note of compassion in her voice.

MAVIS

It's really a shame that you're like this. If you had a good personality, none of the other stuff would matter to people.

MATT

Right, no one would care about my broken body. Hey, why don't you use my crutch as a metaphor again? That was masterful. You should put that in one of your little teenage stories. God knows you don't know anything about being an adult.

Mavis storms off, huddled in Buddy's sweatshirt.

MUSIC UP

Mavis sits alone in the restaurant. She eats a combo platter that showcases the very best of KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell.

MAVIS

(voiceover)

It wasn't the first time Kendal Strickland was let down. For all the good they did, beauty and popularity didn't inspire much loyalty. Would it be nice to have peers? Friends she could respect? Sure, but Kendal knew the lone march of being special a little too well. She was used to blazing her own trail. It was obvious that Ryan still loved her. Crystal clear.

Mavis sits on her bed, writing. The bed is littered with trash.

(CONTINUED)

## MAVIS

(voiceover)

And perhaps that was unfair to his new girlfriend. But Kendal Strickland was going to think about herself for a change. "Who was taking care of Kendal?" she asked her bedroom mirror. And on the subject of fair, was it fair that people misjudged Kendal's intelligence just because she was so beautiful? Was it fair that everyone thought her life was so easy when it was anything but? No! Life wasn't fair, and it was up to Kendal to step in and make things right.

Sometimes, in order to heal, a few people have to get hurt.

85 INT. NAIL SALON - DAY 85

Rock show nail polish is rubbed off. Pastel nail polish is brushed on.

86 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY 86

Mature make-up. Mature clothes. Mavis is reborn.

87 INT. CABRIOLET - DAY 87

Mavis is dolled up in another one of her designer dresses. Today is the day of Buddy's party, and despite everything, she's determined to look her best.

She drives the Red Rocket into a strip mall parking lot.

88 INT. BABIES R' US - DAY 88

Mavis walks in, overwhelmed by all the bright, adorable merchandise.

She strolls down the aisles, looking lithe and alien next to all the dumpy moms buying breast pumps and onesies. Her high heels clack against the linoleum.

She approaches a display of beribboned BURP CLOTHS and grabs a pack of them.

89 EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE (TO ESTABLISH) - DAY 89

Mavis pulls up to the curb near Buddy's house.

90 INT./EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - DAY 90

Mavis stands on the porch, holding a baby gift in a decorative bag. She rings the doorbell.

Buddy's mother, JAN answers. She's in her sixties and has let herself go. Her voice is as coarse as her short hair.

MAVIS

Hi, Jan.

JAN

Well! It's been a very long time since I've seen you.

MAVIS

I've been a busy lady.

JAN

So I hear. Buddy's been very busy, ha ha! And Bethie. I'm finally a grandma.

MAVIS

I'm so glad for you.

Buddy intercepts at just the right moment.

BUDDY

Hey there.

He reaches for Mavis, who hugs him enthusiastically. Mid-hug, Mavis looks at Jan over Buddy's shoulder. It's an aggressive, pointed stare. Jan stares back.

MAVIS

I brought a present.

She offers the gift bag awkwardly.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

They're just burp cloths.

BUDDY

Great, we always need more pukers.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Hey Mom, I think Beth needs help with the endive thing.

(CONTINUED)

Mavis is encouraged. Buddy wants to be alone with her.

JAN

Grandma to the rescue!

JAN scurries off to the kitchen. The small house is crowded with friends and relatives. People are spilling out into the yard.

DANIEL, the suspicious babysitter from the other night, is socializing across the room. He sees Mavis and gives her the stink eye. She returns the look with her best Pretty Bitch Death Stare.

Mavis turns her attention back to Buddy, smiling. But Buddy is already distracted. He's grabbed a LITTLE BOY and has turned the shrieking child upside-down. The boy's giggles drown out Mavis.

BUDDY

(playful)

Get outta here, Carter-bug!

He releases the boy.

MAVIS

I think we need to talk.

BUDDY

Sure.

Buddy glances around the room, then gestures for Mavis to follow him into the hallway. They enter the baby's room. Mavis shuts the door behind her.

The baby's room is cheaply but sweetly decorated. Mavis seems disturbed to be here.

BUDDY

So what's going on?

MAVIS

Ugh. There's so many things I know we both want to say.

BUDDY

(confused)

Okay? Let's not say all of them. I gotta get Beth's gift ready.

(confiding)

I got her a drum set.

MAVIS

You are so thoughtful. Even during all this.

BUDDY

Hey, she pushed it out.

MAVIS

I just wanted to tell you that I'm feeling everything you're feeling. These past few days have been some of the best of my life.

BUDDY

They have?

MAVIS

You don't have to pretend.

(taps his head)

I know what's in here.

(taps his heart)

And I know what's in here.

Mavis closes her eyes and begins to move in.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

(breathless)

Buddy, you're my moon. My stars.

You're my whole galaxy...

Her lips go slack for a kiss as she lunges toward Buddy.

He quickly realizes what's happening and pushes Mavis away strongly. Perhaps even shoving her actual face.

It's a hard, humiliating rejection.

BUDDY

Mavis, what are you doing?

MAVIS

You don't have to be afraid. You can come to the city with me, like we always planned.

BUDDY

What the hell are you talking about?!

MAVIS

We can work it out. We'll handle it like adults.

BUDDY

Mavis, I'm a married man.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: (2)

91

MAVIS

I know. We can beat this thing together.

Buddy looks at Mavis. A sad, pathetic look.

BUDDY

You're better than this.

Mavis blinks in disbelief.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

(leaving)

I have to go. You should leave.

Flustered, he walks out of the room.

92 INT. BUDDY'S HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - SAME

92

Buddy returns to the party, trying to regain composure. JAN has reappeared in the living room, now holding the BABY. She's surrounded by admiring guests.

JAN

Look who's up!

JAN thrusts the baby into Buddy's arms. Buddy is stressed, but reacts maturely.

Mavis has now emerged from the baby's room. She lingers between the hallway and the living room, watching.

BUDDY

(to baby)

Hi, sweet pea.

(to his mother)

Will you get everyone to go outside?

The assembled relatives are delighted. Everyone loves a daddy with his baby girl.

Mavis watches the "show" as women coo over Buddy's paternal stylings. There's scorn and hurt in her eyes.

Mavis wanders away toward a folding table that's been set up as a makeshift bar in the overcrowded room. She pours herself a shot of Jim Beam, checks to see if anyone's looking, and downs it.

Swallow. Repeat.

93 EXT. BUDDY'S YARD - DAY

93

Mavis moves through the yard, now clutching a fruity drink that's nearly gone. She's stumbling a little, drinking too fast.

Everything looks grotesque. All these pale, simple people, their potato salad and their punch...Mavis is sick.

A female, non-denominational MINISTER wearing a colorful stole smiles at Mavis with bad teeth.

Mary Ellen and some other moms are hanging out near the food. Mary Ellen sees Mavis and murmurs something to the clique. They LAUGH, doing a crappy job of disguising their disdain.

JAN walks out of the house, clapping her hands.

JAN

Listen up, everyone!

Everyone obliges.

JAN (CONT'D)

I think Buddy has a little surprise for Beth, so if you'll just direct your attention to the garage...

Mavis isn't paying attention. She wanders in a daze.

BETH

Mavis? Are you okay?

MAVIS

I would be if I could get a drink.

BETH

There's some right here.

She reaches for a pitcher of punch, but is temporarily distracted by an OLDER RELATIVE.

BETH (CONT'D)

What? Oh no, she's fine with Grandpa right now. Thank you, Uncle Bob.

She turns back toward Mavis and accidentally bumps against a party guest. Most of the punch splashes onto the front of Mavis's minidress.

(CONTINUED)

BETH (CONT'D)  
(stammering)  
Oh! I'll get something...

MAVIS  
Oh my God. Oh my God. Fuck you!  
Fuck you!

Beth backs off, blinking. The edge on Mavis's voice grabs people's attention. Conversation stops.

Mavis laughs.

MAVIS (CONT'D)  
I'm just joking, Beth. God, you should see your face. You're just standing there like a big lump.

Beth's confused half-smile fades.

MAVIS (CONT'D)  
No, just kidding. For real, I love your sweater.

She tugs on the sleeve of Beth's loose-fitting sweater.

Beth reminds patient.

BETH  
I'll go get a rag.

MAVIS  
You guys sure have a lot of rags around here. Burp cloths, whatever.

Everyone is staring at Mavis.

MAVIS (CONT'D)  
The funny thing is, I actually could have had this party a long time ago. I mean, this very same party. Buddy and I were together for four years.  
(nodding toward JAN)  
JAN knows.

Beth appears, offering a rag. She gently and discreetly tries to towel off Mavis, but Mavis resists, pushing her away.

BETH  
(quietly)  
You want to clean up, Mavis?

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

No, don't worry. It's silk. It's fucked.

JAN looks away, already mortified.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Remember? We were inseparable, in more ways than one! Ooh, I'm sorry, JAN, Kirk... Buddy got me pregnant.

HEDDA

Mavis...

MAVIS

(loudly)

Wait, I'm telling a story. Buddy got me pregnant when I was 20, when we were almost broken up. And I decided to keep it, are you hearing this? We were going to keep the baby like this-- we were going to have a baby and a naming party and a Funquarium and little fruit hats and all that. And twelve weeks in, I had, well, I had Buddy's miscarriage, which I wouldn't wish for-- to happen to anyone.

Shocked silence. Beth looks like she wants to die.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Maybe if things had been a little bit more hospitable, you know, down south, in my broken body, Buddy and I would be here right now. With a teenager, and probably even more kids. We always came back to each other. Always. Didn't we, JAN?

The garage door opens noisily. Reveal Buddy's legs, then Buddy's entire body, then Buddy's smiling face.

He stands expectantly next to a BRAND NEW DRUM KIT. There's a jaunty bow tied to the ride cymbal.

Nobody says a word.

BUDDY

You guys, it's a new drum kit for Beth.

(CONTINUED)

An ELDERLY MAN claps dutifully. A few people join in, but most people are still whispering.

Buddy hits the CRASH CYMBAL for emphasis, confused.

Beth has tears in her eyes.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

Beth can barely speak.

BETH

Nothing.

Mavis is laughing.

MAVIS

What do you mean, nothing? What's wrong with you? Are you one of those kids who needs a chart to learn feelings? Why are you covering for me? Stand up for yourself, Beth!

HEDDA

That's enough, Mavis! You're drunk!

Beth moves closer to Mavis, putting her hand on Mavis's back. Mavis spins around, surveying the shocked crowd.

MAVIS

I've been drunk the whole time  
I've been back and nobody gave two  
shits until  
(indicating Beth)  
this one got bent out of shape...

She stumbles away from Beth. Buddy charges forward and herds her over to the fence, trying to move her away from the crowd.

BUDDY

(hushed)  
What the hell are you doing?

MAVIS

Why did you invite me?

BUDDY

I didn't invite you. My wife did.  
Beth practically forced me to call  
you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY (CONT'D)

I mean, she even stood there and supervised to make sure I'd do it. She feels sorry for you; we all do. It's obvious you've been having some...mental, uh, sickness, some depression, and you're very lonely and confused. So Beth made me invite you even though I knew it would be a mistake. I knew it.

Beth has joined Buddy by his side. Her face is creased with worry.

MAVIS

(to Buddy)

You're lying.

Beth's voice is low and sad.

BETH

He's not.

Mavis looks at Beth's face. Her eyes are full of pity and concern. Still sympathetic!

MAVIS

What about now? Do you hate me now? I hate you, so it should be easy. What the hell is wrong with you people?

Mavis tries to stagger out of the yard, but accidentally misses the gate. She begins kicking the fence. Hedda calls out to her weakly.

HEDDA

Mavis, honey...

MAVIS

(to Buddy)

I came back for you. For you. And I hate this town. It's a hick lake town that smells like fish shit. I just want you to know that.

Mavis leaves. Buddy holds Beth close.

The doorbell chimes. Matt limps to the door.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

94

Matt opens the door to reveal Mavis, weeping hysterically. Her dress is covered in punch, and she's practically incoherent.

MAVIS

I screwed up so bad! I screwed up so bad!

Matt grabs Mavis by her arms and guides her to his room as she sobs violently.

95 INT. MATT'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - SAME

95

Mavis throws herself on Matt. He loses his balance and falls onto the bed.

MATT

Where have you been?

Mavis weeps, sniffing into Matt's T-shirt.

MAVIS

I'm crazy. And no one loves me. You don't love me.

MAT

Guys like me are born loving women like you.

MAVIS

I went to Buddy's house.

MATT

What happened?

Mavis starts weeping again. Her eyes are a mess. She bats ineffectually at her face with a mascara-smearred hand.

MAVIS

My dress is ruined.

She reaches down and pulls off her stained dress in one rapid gesture. Her breasts are deformed by the "chicken cutlets" she's been wearing to make them look bigger.

MATT

Let me get you a shirt...

Mavis kneels there, staring at him, not trying to cover herself up. She sniffles.

MAVIS

I want your shirt.

(CONTINUED)

Matt looks down at his Hanes Beefy Tee.

MATT

The one I'm wearing?

Mavis looks at him, shirtless and helpless, and nods. Shaking, Matt removes his shirt and hands it to Mavis.

Mavis holds the shirt against her body for a moment, then lays it aside.

Matt is not the type of guy who feels comfortable without a shirt. His arms are crossed.

MAVIS

You hide me.

She reaches for Matt. He can't help but reach back, partially to embrace her, but also so they both feel less naked. They hug tightly, obscuring each other's bare chests. Mavis reaches down and unties Matt's pajama pants. They drop to reveal his leg. Having heard about his accident the entire film, we finally see the result, a scarred and atrophied leg, that is mostly skin and bone. It's heartbreakingly frail.

Mavis begins to pull Matt. One step and then another. She sits down on his bed. Matt tips forward and awkwardly lowers on top of her. His breath is short.

From underneath, Mavis pulls off his underwear, exposing him completely. Her own underwear are so small they barely count. Neither of them are really moving, but Matt's in between her legs.

They start to rock back and forth. Mavis's hands rake Matt's back and bare ass as if they were making love.

Silence. Room tone. Matt and Mavis are under the covers now, lying next to each other.

Matt's voice comes out in a stunned croak.

MATT

Why Buddy?

Mavis's responds in a sleepy whisper.

MAVIS

He's a good man. He's kind.

MATT

Are other men unkind?

MAVIS

He knew me when I was at my best.

MATT

You weren't at your best then, Mavis. I saw you every day. You had this little mirror in your locker. It was shaped like a heart, and you looked at that mirror more than you ever looked at me. And I was at my best.

Mavis reaches over and puts her hand on Matt's face. She looks at him for a long time, widening her eyes exaggeratedly. Staring.

They're nose to nose. Mavis snuffles, but Matt doesn't pull away.

Mavis wakes up in Matt's bed. Matt is still asleep. His arm is draped across Mavis like the arm of her wealthy date that we saw early on.

She slips out easily and puts on her soiled dress.

Mavis creeps upstairs.

Sandra is standing in the kitchen washing dishes before work. She wears nurse's scrubs and the sides of her permed hair are slicked back into a dated half-ponytail look. A coffee pot percolates on the counter.

Sandra turns around and sees Mavis. Sandra's face is bare and homely. A morning face, on a non-morning person.

MAVIS

Good morning.

SANDRA

Hi.

MAVIS

Coffee?

Sandra nods. Mavis walks into the kitchen and takes two mugs off the counter. One says "I HATE MY JOB, BUT I NEED THE \$\$\$." The other has a kitten on it. She pours coffee into both mugs and pushes one across to Sandra.

SANDRA

Thank you.

Mavis puts Sandra's cup down on the kitchen table. She sits down and gestures for Sandra to join her.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Do you still write those books?

MAVIS

No. The series is over. It was cancelled. I'm actually writing the last book right now.

SANDRA

What happens?

MAVIS

(honestly)  
I don't know.

A beat of silence.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

Hey, do you know a girl named Beth? She married Buddy Slade, from school?

SANDRA

Umm...Yeah, I know that Beth.

MAVIS

What do you think of her?

SANDRA

Uh--

Sandra is about to say something nice and/or neutral. But Mavis is wrinkling her nose and mouth as if coaching Sandra to give a certain response.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I--

Mavis tilts her head, still wrinkling her nose.

(CONTINUED)

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Yeah, I don't really like her. And I think you're way prettier than her.

What happened to your dress?

Out of what seems like nowhere, Mavis begins a strange teenage crying breakdown. Sandra rushes to her side.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

What did I say? What's wrong?

MAVIS

I have a lot of problems.

SANDRA

Can't you get a new dress?

Mavis stops and looks at Sandra - *poor pathetic Sandra.*

MAVIS

I... It's very difficult for me to be happy. And other people-- it's so simple for them. They just grow up. They're so... fulfilled.

SANDRA

I don't feel fulfilled.

MAVIS

Well...

(about to say something insulting and catches herself)

SANDRA

... and frankly, if you don't feel fulfilled with all the stuff you have...

A long beat as they both think about this. Mavis looks at Sandra. The house around her. She seems to come to an important life assessment.

MAVIS

Sandra, I need to change.

Mavis means it. For the first time, she's not just talking.

However, Sandra is beginning to tremble.

SANDRA

No, you don't.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

(quietly caught off  
guard)

What?

Sandra

You're the only person in Mercury  
who could write a book or wear a  
dress like that.

MAVIS

I'm sure there's plenty of  
people...

SANDRA

(a quiet truth)

Everyone here is fat and dumb.

MAVIS

Don't say that.

(then)

Do you really think so?

SANDRA

Yes. Everyone wishes they could be  
like you. You know, living in the  
city, famous, and beautiful and  
all that.

MAVIS

(false modesty)

I'm not famous.

SANDRA

Well, you know, *special*... or  
whatever. Some days, during a slow  
shift, I'll just think about you  
living in your cool apartment...  
Going out and stuff... it seems  
really nice.

MAVIS

But everyone here seems so happy  
with a lot less. They don't even  
seem to care what happens to them.

Sandra gets very serious. Quiet. And sure of herself.

SANDRA

That's because it doesn't matter  
what happens to them.

Mavis raises an eyebrow.

(CONTINUED)

SANDRA (CONT'D)

They're nothing. Might as well die.

She lowers her voice.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

(practically  
whispering)

Fuck Mercury.

Mavis begins to warm back up.

MAVIS

Thank you Sandra. I needed that.

Sandra is thrilled to bask in her hero's rebirth.

Slowly but surely, life returns to Mavis's eyes. Life and resolve. She smacks the table with resolve and rises.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

You're right; this place blows. I need to head back to Minneapolis.

Sandra is unsure for a moment, but then out of nowhere decides to seize the moment.

SANDRA

Take me with you.

MAVIS

Excuse me?

SANDRA

Take me with you. You know, to the Mini Apple.

Mavis is picking up her expensive purse. She gives a sympathetic smile.

MAVIS

You're good here.

SANDRA

Oh.

Mavis enters. The room is in shambles. There's some dog shit in the background. She scoops Dolce into her arms, genuinely feeling horrible for having left him all night.

(CONTINUED)

MAVIS

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I  
won't leave you like this again.

Dolce licks her, immediately forgiving like all dogs.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Dolce. I'm sorry.

Mavis picks up Buddy's red SLADE sweatshirt and begins  
using it as a rag to clean the carpet.

She chucks it into the garbage, carrying Dolce into the  
bathroom.

MAVIS (CONT'D)

(voiceover)

Graduation turned out to be a  
bittersweet ceremony for Kendal.  
While honored to be the  
valedictorian of her class, there  
was an unmistakable air of  
sadness over the sudden death of  
Ryan Ashby. Who could have  
imagined when Ryan and his  
girlfriend set sail that day that  
it would be the last time anyone  
ever saw them.  
Poor Ryan, lost at sea.

Mavis appears with her luggage and dog in tow. The  
original front desk girl is working.

Mavis slides her two key cards onto the desk.

FRONT DESK GIRL

They don't need these back. No one  
ever returns them. You can put  
them in a scrapbook or whatever.

Mavis snorts derisively.

Mavis signs a receipt. She notices some cheap DONUTS  
piled on a tray in the corner.

FRONT DESK GIRL (CONT'D)

Just so you know, those donuts are  
for a convention. They're not for  
guests.

101 INT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY 101

Mavis eats a donut as she piles her stuff into the MINI.

Mavis climbs into the car. Starts it. Throws it into reverse. Floors it.

The front fender of the car is still attached to the parking block. It rips violently as Mavis guns it. She drives away, nonchalant.

102 INT. DENNY'S - DAY 102

Mavis sits in a booth typing on her laptop. We read:

MAVIS

(voiceover)

Kendal felt the weight of her high school years lifting off of her as she emptied out her locker. Sure, she'd think about Waverly from time to time; cheer squad, the debate team, sneaking into the woods for a drink after class. But her best years were still ahead of her.

Kendal Strickland was ready for the world.

It was time to look to the future

103 EXT. ROADSIDE DENNY'S - DAY 103

Mavis walks around the front of the car and takes a look at the damage.

MAVIS

(voiceover)

As she boarded the train to Cambridge, she took one last look at her small town and blew it a kiss, thinking:

Life, here I come.

In a strange way, the car's mangled front seems to stare back at her like a disfigured face.

The end.