

IF YOU LOVE SOMETHING...

an original screenplay by

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"If You Love Something..."

FADE IN:

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A prestigious Victorian house bathed in moonlight.

Leaning against a tree in the shadows, a silhouetted figure lights a cigarette. The image is reminiscent of James Dean.

ARGUING VOICES can be heard coming from the house.

The obscured figure looks toward the sound with keen interest.

INT. VELDA'S HOUSE - SAME

VELDA, an attractive woman in her forties with a fiery attitude...She's a control freak who's world is going out of control. Her world revolves around her daughter...

DESIREE is a seventeen year-old eye-catching honor student who's sick of being controlled by her mother.

They argue in Velda's posh living room as Desiree looks to escape out the front door.

VELDA

Desiree, you damn well better not be going to see that piece of white trash!

DESIREE

Don't talk about him like that!

VELDA

He's a drop out and convicted felon! How much worse can it get?!

DESIREE

Yeah, and he's a better person than you!

VELDA

What's that supposed to mean?

DESIREE

Just what I said.

Velda looks furious but tempers her anger into a sharp dagger.

VELDA

You're having sex with him aren't you?

DESIREE

That's none of your business.

(CONTINUED)

VELDA

As long as you live in this house it is.

DESIREE

I'm seventeen. I'm an adult.

VELDA

You *are* having sex with him. God forbid you catch a disease from that creature---no decent man will have you.

Desiree grabs a dress hat and heads for the door in disgust.

DESIREE

I'm outta here.

She opens the front door. Velda yells after her.

VELDA

Don't you dare see him!!!

Desiree exits SLAMMING THE DOOR behind her.

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE, FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Desiree puts on her hat as she runs down the steps of her mother's immaculate home and continues across the vast lawn.

She smiles mischievously as she sees a familiar beat up blue '69 Ford Mustang convertible parked out front with the top down. No one in sight. She approaches the vehicle....

From the shadows worn out leather work boots with loose laces approach her from behind. They're attached to...

CARY PAYNE, a nineteen year old with sharp features and a half smoked Marlboro hanging from his lips...

He grabs her from behind, gently covering her mouth.

CARY

Don't say a word.

He puts a blindfold over her eyes.

CARY (CONT'D)

(playfully)

Remove this an' I'll kill ya.

He helps her get in the Mustang, then he gracefully hops in the driver's side without opening the door.

INT. FORD MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

The interior has a seriously lived-in look except for the stereo. It's a state-of-the-art CD player worth more than the car. Music is clearly a priority over comfort.

(CONTINUED)

CARY

Buckle up.

Desiree feels around for her seat belt.

DESIREE

Where are we...

Cary puts his hand over her mouth.

CARY

Shhh.

He starts the car and REVS the engine. He looks toward the house, then takes a long drag off his cigarette.

From Cary's P.O.V. Velda watches from her living room window.

Cary puts the car stereo to use, cranking out a rebellious rock tune. Knowing he has an audience, he passionately kisses Desiree, then flicks his cigarette on Velda's grass...

He throws the car in gear, SPINNING THE TIRES across a patch of her manicured lawn in the process...Cary and Desiree SQUEAL off into the night.

EXT. NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - NIGHT

A bird's eye view of the Mustang as it pulls into a large unpaved cul-de-sac kicking up a cloud of dust behind it.

A full moon illuminates a turreted mansion under construction. In the b.g. the lights from the small town of Sandwich, MA lie on the horizon less than a mile away.

The Mustang smoothly pulls to the side of the road.

INT. FORD MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

Cary puts his cigarette out in an overflowing ash tray.

CARY

We're here.

Desiree reaches up to remove her blindfold. Cary stops her.

CARY (CONT'D)

Not yet.

Cary hops out of the car without opening the door.

INT. UNFINISHED MANSION (ENTRYWAY) - NIGHT

Cary leads Desiree into the vast unfinished mansion. In the darkness it has an eerie ambiance.

Cary carefully helps Desiree up a spiral staircase.

They reach the top of the stairs. He leads her down a hallway and into a large room.

INT. UNFINISHED MANSION BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

In stark contrast to the eerie entryway and stairs, what's here is inviting and appears magical.

Dozens of candles light up the room with a warm glow.

The ceiling has holes for sky lights giving a view of the stars. In the center of the unfinished room is a makeshift table with a white table cloth covering it.

A large bottle of wine, two glasses, and a single rose in a Coke can wait for romance.

A sleeping bag lies on the floor with a boom box next to it. Cary presses the play button. Train's "*Drops of Jupiter*" begins playing. Cary approaches Desiree and gently removes her blindfold then runs his fingers through her hair as he sings:

CARY

(singing)

NOW THAT SHE'S BACK IN THE ATMOSPHERE
WITH DROPS OF JUPITER IN HER HAIR.
SHE ACTS LIKE SUMMER AND WALKS LIKE
RAIN, REMINDS ME THAT THERE'S TIME
TO CHANGE...

Desiree looks at Cary, then at the romantic escape he created. She might be the happiest woman in the world right now.

DESIREE

I love you!

She throws her arms around his neck and kisses him.

CARY

You're outta this world.

DESIREE

God, I love that about you!

CARY

What?

DESIREE

Everything.

(pauses)

Well, not everything---I wish you'd
quit smoking.

She gives him a brief stern look and he shrugs his shoulders. They've gone over the "smoking" subject before.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

But I love your love of music. Your
creativity....

(she spins with her
arms outstretched)

All of this!

(CONTINUED)

CARY

Yeah, but I don't own any of it.

DESIREE

Who cares? Screw possessions. I don't need them if I've got you.

She smiles and spins again euphorically.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

I feel so alive when I'm with you!

Desiree gives him a quick kiss.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Promise me you'll love me forever and always be honest and faithful...no matter what happens.

CARY

(raises his hand)

I'll always love you. There's no one else I'd ever want. Promise.

Desiree gives him another kiss so intense shock waves can be felt as far as the moon.

As they part, Cary makes believe he's an aristocrat. He breaks into a very good upper class English accent which he uses for the rest of the scene. Desiree follows his lead.

CARY (CONT'D)

Wine and cheese?

DESIREE

Certainly.

Cary escorts her to the table like a gentleman, but he's obviously not used to the formality.

He grabs a couple of milk crates from under the table to use as chairs. He helps Desiree into her "seat".

He picks up the bottle of wine.

CARY

It's a real cork, my lady---not plastic.

He begins struggling with a cheap corkscrew.

DESIREE

You know where I really want to go with you some day?

CARY

No, where?

DESIREE

Venice!

(CONTINUED)

Desiree is uneasy with the compliment, but she loves hearing it from him. She doesn't get praise like this at home.

DESIREE
I'm not that good.

CARY
Yeah, you are.
(then quicker)
You write that essay yet?

Desiree looks away, lacking confidence.

DESIREE
I'm working on it.
(shrugs shoulders)
It's okay.

Cary touches her cheek and looks in her eyes. He's sincere.

CARY
Hey, your writing's great.

Desiree beams at Cary.

INT. UNFINISHED MANSION BEDROOM - LATER

It's a couple hours later. The candles are burning low, the wine is empty and Cary and Desiree are drunk and naked from the waist up in the sleeping bag.

DESIREE
(slurring)
It's okay. I want you to screw me.
I don't wanna go to college a virgin.

They kiss passionately. The candles flare up slightly. Cary pulls back from her.

CARY
You're just sayin' that 'cause you're drunk. You're stayin' a virgin 'till you get married.

DESIREE
It's my breasts---they're too small.

CARY
No...no...that's not it.

DESIREE
What's wrong with me then?

Silence for a beat.

CARY
Nuthin'. I wanna marry you.

Desiree's eyes light up. She loves the idea, she's dreamed of it as most teenagers do with their first true love.

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE

Let's do it! Let's get married!

CARY

I don't have a ring or nothin' for money.

DESIREE

Screw the ring and money. I've got \$2,000 in savings. That's enough to cover gas to Vegas an' a honeymoon.

CARY

You deserve more than that.

DESIREE

All I want is you.

CARY

You wouldn't mind bein' married to a poor convicted felon?

Desiree flirts seductively.

DESIREE

It's a turn-on for me.

CARY

You really wanna do this?

DESIREE

(no doubt)
Yeah.

CARY

One condition though---no holiday dinners with your parents.

DESIREE

Just 'cause my dad arrested you once...

Cary holds up two fingers.

CARY

Got me once as a minor.

DESIREE

Twice---doesn't mean he hates you.

Cary has his doubts.

CARY

If he handcuffed me any tighter he woulda cut off my hands.

Desiree shrugs. Then sticks out her hand to shake.

DESIREE

Okay, you got a deal.

(CONTINUED)

They shake.

CARY
Then let's do it tomorrow.

DESIREE
What about doin' it now?

CARY
I'm too drunk to drive.

DESIREE
No, I'm talkin' 'bout sex.

CARY
I can wait 'till tomorrow when you're
my wife.

Desiree gives him a drunken grin.

DESIREE
God, I love you!

She wraps her arms and legs around Cary and gives him another deep and passionate kiss.

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's later. Cary and Desiree stagger across the lawn toward Velda's house. They're thrilled about getting married.

CARY
Pick you up tomorrow 'round six.

DESIREE
Then Vegas.

They reach the front steps of the house.

DESIREE (CONT'D)
This is so cool!

CARY
I can't believe I only made it to
tenth grade and I'm marrying a future
Ivy Leaguer.

Desiree playfully punches Cary in the arm.

DESIREE
Hey, you're gettin' your G.E.D.

CARY
Yeah---if I can ever get through the
damn study book.

Desiree smiles mischievously.

DESIREE
You won't *this* weekend!

(CONTINUED)

Cary grins at the implications.

She hugs Cary and gives him another intense kiss. As they part, they both look completely lost in the moment.

Desiree staggers toward the front door. When she opens it....

VELDA (O.S.)
Where the hell were you!?

DESIREE (O.S.)
Put a sock in it mom.

The door closes. Cary smiles broadly as he strolls away.

INT. DESIREE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

If it's possible for a room to be immaculately cluttered, this is it. Countless books are organized by subject and neatly stacked several feet high. A desk sits near a window with a computer and several piles of writing projects.

Desiree happily closes a neatly packed suitcase, then floats across the room toward her computer. She looks at the title of her current writing project: "UNCONDITIONAL LOVE". She smiles, gleefully bursting with ideas, then glides over to her stereo.

She puts on headphones and turns the volume way up, then blissfully dances back to her computer singing Santana's "Smooth" off key.

DESIREE
(singing off key)
YOU'VE GOT THE KIND OF LOVIN' THAT
CAN BE SO SMOOTH. GIVE ME YOUR HEART,
MAKE IT REAL OR LET'S FORGET ABOUT
IT!

The wire gets entangled in the clutter. As she reaches her desk the headphones fly off her, ripping her back to reality.

EXT. MAIN STREET, SANDWICH, MA - NIGHT

Cary walks home through the quaint town, passing dimly lit stores---all closed for the night. Buzzed, he grins with illegal thoughts running through his head.

He approaches a jewelry store. His smile fades to a frown.

EXT. VELDA'S JEWELRY STORE - CONTINUOUS

A sales poster with Velda's smiling picture and the slogan, "We sell only the finest jewelry to the finest people in town" glares at him.

He looks at the poster in disgust, then beyond it, noticing an engagement ring for sale. The mischievous smile returns to his face.

EXT. VELDA'S JEWELRY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Cary hurls a brick through the store front window! The sound of BREAKING GLASS echoes down the quiet street.

No alarm sounds. Cary smiles to himself, pleased as he looks at the entryway he created. He glances down the street both ways. Quiet and dark. He proudly saunters through the window into the jewelry store...

INT. VELDA'S JEWELRY STORE - CONTINUOUS

GLASS CRUNCHES beneath his feet as he walks toward the engagement ring that caught his eye.

On closer examination the ring is too gaudy for his taste...but he sees an assortment of rings in another case. He strolls toward them.

INT. VELDA'S JEWELRY STORE, OFFICE - SAME

In a dark office a silent alarm flashes and BEEPS.

INT. VELDA'S JEWELRY STORE - SAME

Cary smashes the brick through a glass case. GLASS SHATTERS.

He begins sorting through the rings, then pauses for a moment to look outside. Still quiet. He's beginning to sober up. He goes back to the rings, picking up the pace.

INT. SHERIFFS CAR - SAME (MOVING)

MILTON MEYERS, a county sheriff in his forties with an over-protective nature cruises through town.

His RADIO CRACKLES. It's dispatch.

DISPATCH (O.S.)
Hey Milton.

Milton picks up the hand set.

MILTON
Yeah.

DISPATCH (O.S.)
We've got an alarm at 237 Main.

MILTON
Velda's?

DISPATCH (O.S.)
Yeah.

Milton hesitates for the slightest moment.

MILTON
Anyone else available?

(CONTINUED)

DISPATCH (O.S.)
No, Ralph called in sick.

MILTON
What about Ed?

DISPATCH (O.S.)
He said he's drunk.

MILTON
Shit. Okay, I got it. On my way.

Milton straightens up and puffs out his chest. He's ready for action. He hits the accelerator. The engine ROARS.

INT. VELDA'S JEWELRY STORE - SAME

A sapphire ring set in diamonds catches Cary's eye. Not too gaudy, not too simple...just right. Satisfied, he puts the ring in his pocket and walks quickly toward his exit, but...

A sapphire and diamond necklace sparkle in the low light.

CARY
Oh, what the hell.

He grabs the brick and darts toward the display.

He slams the brick down, SHATTERING THE GLASS.

Cary pulls the ring out of his pocket to make sure they're a perfect match. Bingo.

It's time to go. Cary leaves quickly. As he steps through the broken window...

EXT. VELDA'S JEWELRY STORE - CONTINUOUS

The sheriff's car races toward him with the cherry top strobe on. The SIREN WAILS briefly.

Cary looks like a deer caught in the headlights with the necklace in his hand.

The car SCREECHES to a stop. Milton leaps out with his gun drawn, using his door as a shield.

MILTON
Freeze!

Cary hasn't moved since the car approached. Milton moves forward with his gun trained on him.

MILTON (CONT'D)
Get your hands up, Cary!

Cary slowly raises his hands above his head. His life as he knows it is over.

Milton reaches Cary and begins cuffing him. Cary winces.

(CONTINUED)

MILTON (CONT'D)
 Three times' a charm. You're going
 away for a long time....

FADE TO BLACK

The sound of a PRISON CELL DOOR SLAMMING SHUT.

INSERT: "Four Years Later"

EXT. PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

The sun shines down on the Ivy League elite in caps and gowns---
 graduation day.

Desiree has a two carat engagement ring on her finger and
 stands at a podium looking refined and proper as can be.

She looks out at Milton and Velda. Pride fills their faces
 and they are both oblivious of each other---it also helps
 that there is an empty seat between them. Desiree focuses
 on the empty seat, frowns briefly, then glances down at her
 ring and smiles.

Desiree's speech continues through the next scene.

DESIREE
 As we go forth today, we leave behind
 our memories of the past to embark
 on a journey into a new future.

INT. STATE PRISON - DAY

Cary is collecting items in his small cell. He looks
 healthier but more cynical than he did a few years earlier.

His cell is wallpapered with letters from Desiree along with
 several pictures.

A calendar on the wall shows a number of black X's leading
 up to the current day---June 12th---circled in red.

Near the calendar is a handwritten letter that looks like
 it's been crumpled, torn up, and then taped back together.
 The letter is from Desiree and starts with: "*Dear Cary, I'm
 sorry but I can't see you anymore...*" It's signed "*Love
 Always, Desiree.*"

Cary glances at the letter then hastily pulls it off the
 wall---but carefully enough not to damage it.

DESIREE (V.O.)
 We do not go on this journey empty-
 handed. We carry with us our mementos
 of our college years....

INT. STATE PRISON, CHECKOUT AREA - DAY

Cary's receiving his personal possessions from a monotone
 PRISON DESK CLERK.

(CONTINUED)

PRISON DESK CLERK

One black leather jacket, one
corkscrew with cork still attached,
one set of keys, a wallet, a package
of condoms.

Cary looks at the package of condoms for an expiration date.
He tosses them back to the clerk.

CARY

Keep em'. They're expired. Probably
can use them for masturbation.

EXT. PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Desiree receives her diploma from the COLLEGE PRESIDENT.
She holds the diploma up triumphantly as she walks away.

INT. LINCOLN CENTER - NIGHT

The hall is packed by society's elite. Expensive suits and
gowns fill the audience.

RAFFERTY, a suave and reserved Englishman in his thirties
PLAYS exquisite original classical MUSIC ON A STEINWAY GRAND
PIANO to an entranced audience.

Rafferty is intensely passionate about his music.

His hands fly quickly over the ivory keys.

Enraptured, Desiree watches him as he finishes the piece.

The CROWD APPLAUDS! Like a master showman, Rafferty relishes
the moment.

As the applause dies down he speaks into his microphone, his
English accent indicative of his upper class nurturing...

RAFFERTY

This is a special night for me.
This morning I asked the most
beautiful girl in the world to marry
me---and she said yes.
(he pauses for effect)
Desiree, stand up and let the world
see how lucky I am!

A SPOTLIGHT LANDS ON DESIREE. She stands, blushing. THE
CROWD APPLAUDS!

INT. PAROLE OFFICER'S OFFICE - DAY

Cary is waiting for someone. He puts his feet adorned with
badly worn Adidas running shoes up on the desk next to a
name plate that reads "Jerry Jackson".

Cary casually reads the inspirational quotes on the wall---
*"If you love something set it free....If it's a danger to
society send it to prison."*

(CONTINUED)

And "Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Screw up and you'll be back in prison."

A door opens and Cary quickly puts his feet down.

In walks Milton. He's not who Cary expected.

CARY
(under his breath)
Oh, shit.

Milton walks to the desk and sits down without smiling.

CARY (CONT'D)
Where's Jerry?

MILTON
Took early retirement. I'm filling
in until they find someone permanent.

CARY
(less than happy)
Great.

Milton doesn't say anything for a moment as he looks at a file on his desk.

Cary tries to play it cool.

CARY (CONT'D)
Hey, can I go?

MILTON
Go ahead and I'll arrest you before
you reach the hallway. Got that?

CARY
Loud and clear Sheriff Nottingham.

MILTON
Don't get smart with me! I can throw
you back in prison for spittin' on
the sidewalk.

Cary backs down. Milton now has his attention.

MILTON (CONT'D)
You'd better follow the law like a
road map. You've already got two
strikes. A third makes it life in
prison as a career criminal. You
want that?

CARY
No, sir.

MILTON
Good. The rules are simple. You've
got a nine o'clock curfew.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MILTON (CONT'D)

If you're a minute late plan on spending a night in jail for parole violation.

CARY

What if I have an emergency---I cut myself and I'm bleeding?

MILTON

You call me. If you can't get a hold of me, you bleed to death. You don't leave this county without permission. Step one foot outside Barnstable County without permission and...

Milton notices a fly on his desk. He hesitates for a moment, then SLAMS CARY'S FOLDER on his desk, killing the fly.

CARY

And what?

Milton lifts the folder, then flicks the dead fly in the garbage.

MILTON

You go to jail. Miss work, you go to jail. Meet me every Tuesday afternoon at 1:30PM. Miss an appointment and...

CARY

I go to jail.

MILTON

No, I beat you senseless, then you go to jail. Got that?

CARY

Yeah.

MILTON

Break any law and you'll be riding the shackle rabbit express back to prison. Do this right and there won't be any problems. Any questions?

CARY

Yeah. How much time do I have to find a job?

MILTON

None. I set you up with one.

CARY

What is it?

(CONTINUED)

MILTON

It doesn't matter 'cause you're gonna love it.

(he pauses for a beat)

Any more questions?

CARY

Yeah. How's Desiree?

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

New York's finest. Rafferty wears his tuxedo from his concert earlier. Two dozen roses are displayed on a table.

Desiree looks at Rafferty and smiles. She walks over to the roses and begins to sniff each one.

Rafferty pours two glasses of Dom Perignon.

DESIREE

You embarrassed me tonight.

RAFFERTY

I call it as I see it.

Desiree smiles but it fades quickly.

DESIREE

You missed my speech.

RAFFERTY

(tries to quote her)

As we go forth today, we leave behind our memories of the past and...bark at the future?

Desiree laughs at his mistake.

DESIREE

Embark on a journey.

Rafferty frowns at his error.

RAFFERTY

I'm sorry, I just made it and didn't want to disturb you by walking up front during your speech. That fund raising brunch dragged on forever. I didn't know anyone could talk so much about squirrels.

(he pauses)

Forgive me, dear?

DESIREE

(sincerely)

Forgiven.

Rafferty takes off his tie and cummerbund.

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY

Now that we're engaged, do you think we could....

DESIREE

Could what?

RAFFERTY

Make love.

DESIREE

Not until we're married.

Rafferty is slightly disappointed but he expected the response. He crosses to her and hands her a glass of champagne.

He lifts his glass and toasts Desiree. The crystal resonates.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Do you want a long or short engagement?

RAFFERTY

Short. Perhaps tomorrow night?

DESIREE

(laughs lightly)

No, that's too soon.

Rafferty strolls around the room thinking.

RAFFERTY

A month from today---July 12th.

Desiree's face brightens at the memory.

DESIREE

The day we met.

Rafferty lustily runs his eyes over Desiree.

RAFFERTY

I won't wait a day longer.

DESIREE

(happily)

I don't have much choice. July 12th it is.

Desiree reaches for the phone and begins dialing.

INT. VELDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is mostly dark except for the glow of an alarm clock that reads 12:11AM. Velda sleeps alone in a canopy bed.

The PHONE RINGS.

(CONTINUED)

VELDA

What the?

She sits up in bed, eyes at half mast, as the phone continues to RING. She rubs her eyes, then answers it.

VELDA (CONT'D)

Who died?

Velda reaches over and turns on a light.

INTERCUT

DESIREE

No one. Rafferty and I set a date!

This wakes her up. She's ecstatic.

VELDA

That's wonderful! When?

DESIREE

July 12th.

VELDA

Next month?!

DESIREE

Yes!

Velda springs out of bed.

VELDA

Oh no. That's not enough time.
(then more concerned)
What's the rush? Are you pregnant?

DESIREE

No, of course not.

Velda looks relieved.

VELDA

We've got so much to do! We'll start
by getting you a wedding gown.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Cary approaches SHEILA, a sweet woman in her fifties who has difficulty saying no to anyone.

CARY

You Sheila?

SHEILA

Yes, can I help you?

CARY

Yeah, Milton Meyers sent me.

(CONTINUED)

SHEILA
You must be Cary.

Cary nods.

In the b.g. MARNI, a spunky eighteen year-old woman with jet black hair and the most unusual earrings comes out from the stock area to see what's going on. She watches conspicuously.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Milton told me about you.

CARY
He say anything good?

SHEILA
No, but that don't matter. Milton's got a bit of a chip on his shoulder since Jerry quit.

CARY
Just so you know I'm never going back to prison. Been there, done that and it sucked....

Cary realizes he should speak more properly.

CARY (CONT'D)
Pardon my French.

Sheila forces a smile.

SHEILA
Do you have retail experience or taken any business courses?

Cary rubs the back of his neck, stressed.

CARY
No. Didn't finish high school---I was gonna get my G.E.D. but...

Sheila holds up her hand to stop Cary.

SHEILA
That don't matter. You've got a job. I need to make a few calls. Marni will show you the store.

On cue, Marni comes racing up to greet Cary. She acts excited like she's meeting her favorite movie star.

MARNI
You're Cary, right?

CARY
Yeah.

MARNI
I'm Marni.

(CONTINUED)

She enthusiastically shakes his hand. He looks at her oddly.

SHEILA

Show Cary the store and tell him what he's gonna be doing.

MARNI

Sure.

Marni ushers him away.

INT. DESIREE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Desiree sits at her computer in her slightly less cluttered bedroom. Unlike her energy before when she was writing, she looks more like a surgeon about to make an incision.

She begins typing the title of her newest essay: "Marriage: Stability and Honesty".

She pauses to look at her engagement ring for motivation. Satisfied, she begins typing away.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP, STOCK AREA - DAY

Marni and Cary sit on the floor eating pizza while they talk.

MARNI

So you're a convicted felon.

Cary takes a big bite and talks with his mouth full.

CARY

Yeah, got my picture taken, finger prints and everything.

MARNI

That's so cool! I can't believe I'm getting to work with a real criminal!

Cary rolls his eyes.

MARNI (CONT'D)

Whatcha do to get in?

CARY

(dead serious)
Killed someone who thought prison was cool.

Marni's not sure if he's serious or sarcastic.

MARNI

Really?

CARY

No. I stole a car when I was eighteen, then got caught robbing a jewelry store a year later.

(CONTINUED)

MARNI

Wow. Did you use a gun?

Cary takes another big bite.

CARY

No, a brick.

Marni looks confused.

EXT. MAIN STREET, SANDWICH, MA - DAY

It's a fantastic sunny day as Velda proudly escorts Desiree through the touristy town. Quaint shops (antiques, books, art, etc.) with their doors open invite people to wander in.

Velda looks radiant for a woman her age. She's happy Desiree is marrying Rafferty. She waves to a passing vehicle, trying to draw attention to both of them.

Desiree doesn't want the extra attention and shoots Velda a look that makes it clear.

They reach Velda's Jewelry Store. Sheila's Bridal Shop is a few stores down on the opposite side of the street. There's also an ice cream shop nearby.

VELDA

I'm going to stop in for a minute.

Desiree sighs.

Velda reaches into her purse and pulls out a couple of dollars. She hands them to Desiree.

VELDA (CONT'D)

Here. Buy yourself some ice cream.

Velda turns quickly and disappears inside her store. Desiree looks at the money in her hand with disgust. She feels she's just been treated like a child.

She stuffs the money in her purse and marches toward Sheila's.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Desiree strolls in and looks around excitedly at gowns and wedding favors.

She looks at a gown and begins daydreaming with a Cheshire grin on her face.

Cary approaches her from behind, unnoticed.

CARY

Need help?

Desiree turns to see Cary. He's literally the last person in the world she expected to see. The shock rips her from the daydream and sends her a rush of convoluted feelings.

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE

Cary? Wow---what're you doing here?

CARY

Working. What're you doin' here?

Desiree avoids eye contact.

DESIREE

Um, just browsing....thought I'd see what's in bridal shops these days.

CARY

Me.

There's an awkward moment of silence with palpable tension.

Desiree struggles to regain control of her emotions.

DESIREE

It wasn't working....We're too different.

CARY

Was that before or after you met this new guy?

DESIREE

It doesn't matter. It wasn't working.

CARY

Yeah, you wanted someone with money.

DESIREE

No, I wanted someone I could do things with--not just visit on weekends with prison guards watching.

CARY

I only had a year to go.

Desiree's emotions show in her watery eyes. Her voice trembles slightly as she gets angry and upset.

DESIREE

(yelling)

Do you know how long a year is?

(more calm and sad)

God, it's forever when you can't be with someone you love.

Desiree wipes a tear from her eye, with the gesture she is also wiping away her emotions.

Marni comes into view in the b.g. and watches the exchange.

CARY

(with confidence)

So, you still love me.

(CONTINUED)

Cary proudly leans against a mannequin, unaware his hand is on its breast.

DESIREE

No.

Desiree looks at Cary's hand. He removes it, embarrassed.

CARY

This guy's a rich Ivy leaguer, right?

DESIREE

No.

CARY

So he's a poor drop out like me?

DESIREE

I never thought you were a drop out until you wasted three years in prison and didn't get your G.E.D.

Desiree looks at Cary sharply.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Did you ever get it?

Cary hesitates for a moment.

CARY

Oh, yeah---um, I'm starting college in the fall.

Desiree looks at Cary skeptically. He's not a good liar.

DESIREE

Really?

CARY

Yeah.

DESIREE

Where are you going?

Cary uses the first college name that pops into his head.

CARY

I thought about...Harvard.

DESIREE

No way, try again.

Cary knows he's in deep but he keeps digging.

CARY

No, really---they've got a special program---for convicted felons. But it's still too expensive.

Desiree obviously doesn't believe him.

(CONTINUED)

CARY (CONT'D)

I'll probably go to one of the Boston colleges so I can catch Sox games.

INT. VELDA'S JEWELRY STORE - DAY

A handful of customers peruse the elegant store. A couple in their 30's lean over the counter to look at engagement rings. If there's a feature that brought this couple together it's their nose---they both have an incredibly big nose.

Velda is clearly good at her job and enjoys the social aspect of it. They look at a rather gaudy setting.

VELDA

The setting has to be something you'll be comfortable with because you'll wear it for the rest of your life.

The WOMAN GIGGLES at the prospect.

VELDA (CONT'D)

If you're not worried about it being comfortable twenty years from now you're not taking marriage as seriously as you should.

Velda looks up and sees an elderly woman hobble into the store. Velda smiles warmly.

VELDA (CONT'D)

Arlene! I've got it ready for you.

Arlene CLAPS her hands in excitement.

Velda turns to the couple.

VELDA (CONT'D)

I'll be with you in a minute.

Velda hustles to a drawer and pulls out an envelope. She gently removes a necklace with a locket to show Arlene.

ARLENE

You fixed it!

VELDA

I put a heavy-duty clasp on there so it shouldn't break as easily.

Arlene puts the necklace around her neck and opens the locket.

ARLENE

(longingly)
Roger!

A close up of the inside of the locket reveals that Roger is a cat.

(CONTINUED)

ARLENE (CONT'D)

How much do I owe you, Velda?

VELDA

It's on the house.

ARLENE

No, I should pay you something.

VELDA

Just give Roger some tuna for me.

Arlene smiles broadly. Velda has made her day.

Velda glances at her watch. Surprised, she turns to leave.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Cary and Desiree continue talking. They're getting more comfortable with each other.

CARY

So what's this guy do for a living?
He in construction, sales, a lawyer,
what?

DESIREE

He's a musician.

Cary looks surprised and impressed.

CARY

What clubs does he play?

DESIREE

All over.

CARY

Joe's Beers and Burgers kinda places?

DESIREE

This week he's playing at Red Rocks,
Colorado.

Cary is genuinely excited about this---he loves music.

CARY

Hey, the Moody Blues did an album
there. He doin' alternative stuff?

DESIREE

No, it's classical.

Cary whistles, making the sound of bomb dropping.

CARY

He's gotta be loaded.

DESIREE

Why's money so important to you?

(CONTINUED)

CARY
I couldn't care less about it---so
he's loaded---right?

DESIREE
He's not poor---but I don't care
about the money.

CARY
You love him?

DESIREE
(without eye contact)
Yeah...

This bothers Cary but he tries to play it cool.

CARY
Where's that leave us?

DESIREE
Friends.

CARY
Hmm. The "F" word.

Desiree begins to feel pangs of guilt.

DESIREE
No, I mean it. I still care about
you---as a friend.

Cary smiles as he regains confidence.

CARY
Good. Let's go to dinner tonight.

DESIREE
What?

In the b.g. Velda enters the store and walks toward Desiree.

CARY
Let's go to dinner---you know, as
friends. That's what friends do.
They spend time together and go out
to dinner.

DESIREE
I don't think it's a good idea.

CARY
Why not?

Desiree looks like she wants to object but can't find a good
excuse.

VELDA
Because she doesn't want anything to
do with you.

(CONTINUED)

Desiree turns to Velda.

DESIREE
Mom, butt out.

Velda looks at Cary with anger.

VELDA
She's a happy girl and I don't want
you bringing us more misery.

CARY
You were born miserable. Lighten
up.

VELDA
Don't you talk to me that way. You
don't know what you put her through!
I won't let you ruin her life!

CARY
Why don't you stop treating Desiree
like a little girl? She's old enough
to make her own decisions.

VELDA
As long as I'm alive none of her
decisions will involve you.

This strikes a rebellious chord with Desiree.

DESIREE
I'm an adult, I'll do what I want.

Cary smiles broadly at his minor victory.

CARY
How about dinner tonight---Chinese?

VELDA
Absolutely not---she's engaged.

Desiree shoots an angry, defiant look at her mother.

DESIREE
Sure, what time?

VELDA
I can't believe this!

CARY
Six?

DESIREE
Sounds fine.

CARY
I'll pick you up.

Velda looks like she's about to have an aneurysm.

EXT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - DAY

The police station looks more like a small town business office. Out front, a sign simply says "Sandwich Police" with a crescent seal.

An obese officer, LARRY, walks in carrying an over-stuffed Subway bag.

INT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - SAME

Velda sits impatiently in a waiting area looking at her watch. To her, each second that goes by is an eternity.

Larry looks at her unenthusiastically.

LARRY
I'll get Milt.

Larry plods off toward an office.

A moment later Milton approaches Velda looking somber. He knows his day is going downhill from here.

MILTON
What do you want?

Velda stands up as proper as she can. She's all business.

VELDA
I need you to do me a favor.

Milton laughs smugly as he leads Velda into his office.

INT. MILTON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Milton closes the door. Velda sits down.

MILTON
(skeptical)
A favor?

VELDA
Yes. I need a restraining order against Cary Payne so he can't go near Desiree.

MILTON
If he's giving Desiree a hard time she needs to come here herself.

VELDA
She's very busy with the wedding preparations.

MILTON
Bullshit. If it was important she'd find the time.

Velda stands up, angry. Her business-like attitude is gone.

(CONTINUED)

VELDA

I can't believe this! You won't even help your own daughter!

MILTON

If *she* was here I'd help her. But I'm not gonna help *you* muddle in her affairs.

VELDA

Muddle? What---do you want her to throw away what she's got?

MILTON

No. But I like to think she can make a decision for herself.

VELDA

You don't know her as well as I do.

MILTON

I know her a helluva lot better than you think. And if you think I'm gonna break the law for *you*, forget it.

Velda throws her head back in arrogant disgust. She turns without a word and walks to the door. She stops suddenly as she's struck by an idea.

VELDA

What if *I* get the restraining order against him?

Milton raises his eyebrows...

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

It's closing time and Cary and Marni are shutting down the shop, turning off lights, straightening displays and such.

Cary looks at a chart with dates for weddings. He sees Desiree's July 12th wedding newly added in red ink. He thinks for a moment then shouts across the store to Marni.

CARY

Hey, Marni. How're you in math?

MARNI

Not bad. I only failed it to piss my parents off. Why?

CARY

No reason. Just wondering.

Cary stops for a moment to look in his wallet. There's only two dollars inside.

(CONTINUED)

CARY (CONT'D)

Hey. You know where I can get good Chinese food for two bucks?

MARNI

Not Chinese, but Benny's Burgers are only 99 cents each---plus tax.

CARY

I can't take Desiree there. I gotta wine and dine her.

Marni looks at Cary perplexed.

MARNI

What do you see in her? I mean, she seems like her shit doesn't stink.

CARY

She's a great girl.

Marni is a feminist and corrects him.

MARNI

Woman. She's past puberty.

CARY

Girl, woman...same difference.

MARNI

No. You get arrested for having sex with a girl.

Cary shrugs his shoulders. He gets her point.

CARY

You would'a had to know her a few years ago. She was different.

MARNI

The past is history.

Marni stops and looks around at the clean store.

MARNI (CONT'D)

We're done. Let's blow this joint.

They head toward the door.

CARY

You think you can loan me twenty bucks 'till payday?

As Marni's about to open the door she stops.

She opens her purse and pulls out an ATM card.

MARNI

I don't have any cash, but here's my MAC card. The PIN's right on it.

(CONTINUED)

Marni hands Cary her card. The PIN's taped next to her name: Marni Rosen. Cary can't believe she's doing this.

CARY

No.

Marni opens the door and they walk outside.

EXT. BRIDAL SHOP - CONTINUOUS

A Honda Civic is parked near the store. An attractive redhead, JEN, leans against the car.

MARNI

It's a loan 'till we get paid.

Cary's not used to anyone trusting him.

MARNI (CONT'D)

I trust you.

(then very happy)

Besides, my parents'll freak when I tell 'em I gave my MAC card to a criminal.

CARY

My parole officer'll freak too when they tell him.

Marni locks the store door. Jen walks toward her.

MARNI

Chill. They're out of town house hunting. Besides, they'd get on *my* case about it---not yours. It's cool.

JEN

(to Marni)

Hey babe, have a good day?

MARNI

Yeah.

Marni kisses Jen romantically as Cary watches with his jaw on the ground. Marni and Jen part.

MARNI (CONT'D)

This is Cary. He's a convicted felon.

Cary stares gape jawed as he shakes Jen's hand.

EXT. FIRST NATIONAL BANK - DAY

Cary is at a walk-up ATM. The screen reads: "Please enter amount."

He hesitates for a moment, then enters \$300. The screen reads, "\$300.00, correct?" His finger hovers over the "Yes" button.

(CONTINUED)

CARY
Don't be stupid.

He hits the "No" key.

EXT. MAIN STREET, SANDWICH - DAY

Cary approaches his Mustang. He's dressed up---wearing a nice shirt and tie that don't quite match. He carries a single long stem white rose.

Cary hops in the car without using the door....

...but his foot catches the door and he somersaults into the driver's seat, landing with his butt in the air.

INT. FORD MUSTANG - DAY (MOVING)

Cary looks through an assortment of CD's for the right one. He talks to himself.

CARY
Hootie. No. No good love songs.
Springsteen---No....too depressing.

He shakes his head, then his eyes light up and he smiles broadly as he grabs a Smash Mouth disc.

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE - DAY

The Mustang's stereo is cranked playing Smash Mouth's "*Walkin' On The Sun*" as Cary pulls into Velda's long driveway.

INT./EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - SAME

Velda's P.O.V. She looks out the window and sees (and hears) Cary pull into the driveway and park.

Velda hits speed dial on her cordless phone.

She watches Cary with disgust as he straightens his hair and tie in his rear view mirror.

VELDA
(into phone)
He's here.
(pauses, then loudly)
Yes, he's on my property! I want
him gone NOW!

Velda SLAMS the phone down on the counter.

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE - SAME

Cary has the rose clenched in his teeth as he carefully hops out of the Mustang without using the door. He glides toward the front door with confidence.

INT. VELDA'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - SAME

Desiree looks naturally beautiful wearing a summer dress. She's nervous as though this was a big date.

She looks in an antique mirror and adjusts a patch of hair that's out of place. It flops back down. She fixes it again--- it falls again. The third time's a charm. She continues to fidget nervously.

Velda hurriedly enters the room and looks at Desiree.

VELDA

I have earrings that would match that dress perfectly.

DESIREE

He's here.

VELDA

It'll just take a minute. Come upstairs. He can wait.

Desiree cautiously decides to humor Velda because it's a rare moment of kindness regarding Cary.

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE - SAME

As Cary approaches the door, a sheriff's vehicle quickly pulls in the driveway. Cary rings the doorbell as Milton gets out of his car.

INT. VELDA'S BEDROOM - SAME

The DOORBELL CHIMES as Velda sorts through a large jewelry box for the earrings.

VELDA

They're in here somewhere.

DESIREE

I'm gonna get that.

VELDA

He can wait. You waited three years for him before you wised up.

Velda pulls out earrings one at a time, slowly examining them as though they might magically change into the earrings she's looking for.

DESIREE

Mom, I'll be married by the time you find those.

VELDA

That wouldn't be so bad, would it?

Desiree turns and storms out of the room.

(CONTINUED)

Velda shouts after her.

VELDA (CONT'D)
I don't want you to ruin your life!

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE - SAME

Cary stands at the front door. Milton approaches him carrying an envelope.

MILTON
Cary Payne.

CARY
Yeah, what did I do now?

Milton extends the envelope to Cary. Cary opens it and glances at the letter.

INSERT: Close up on the letter--the words "RESTRAINING ORDER."

MILTON
You need to leave the premises immediately.

CARY
What?!

MILTON
You heard me. You need to leave. Now.

CARY
You gotta be kidding.

MILTON
No. Let's go.

CARY
Can I...

MILTON
No. Leave now or I'll arrest you.

CARY
This is bullshit.

Cary looks at the door for a moment then puts the rose down as a calling card. He reluctantly walks toward his car.

MILTON
Pull your car off the property and I'll explain the conditions.

Cary enters his Mustang by stepping on the bumper then he stomps to the drivers seat.

INT. VELDA'S HOUSE, ENTRYWAY - DAY

Desiree opens the front door. No one is there.

(CONTINUED)

Desiree looks down on the ground and sees a single white rose. She bends down to pick it up and inhales the fragrance. She takes another look around outside but sees no one.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Cary leans against his Mustang as Milton approaches.

CARY
This is *such* bullshit.

Cary is seething, but he knows Milton is the man in control. He bites his tongue.

MILTON
Can I see some ID.

CARY
You know who I am.

MILTON
Don't play games with me. I can bust you for resisting arrest.

Cary reluctantly takes out his wallet and pulls out his ID. In the process, Marni's MAC card falls to the ground.

Cary hurriedly picks it up. Milton eyes him up suspiciously.

MILTON (CONT'D)
Whatcha got there?

Cary shoves the MAC card in his pocket.

CARY
Nuthin'. Just a credit card.

Milton doesn't buy it. Cary can't lie to save his life.

MILTON
Let me see it.

CARY
It's just a MAC card.

MILTON
You said it was a credit card.

CARY
Same thing.

MILTON
Show it to me. Now.

INT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - DAY

Milton marches a handcuffed and protesting Cary into the police station.

(CONTINUED)

CARY

She lent it to me! Ask her!

MILTON

I bet.

INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

It's later and Cary is getting his one phone call. He's led to a pay phone by Larry, whose uniform is way too small. He hands Cary some change.

LARRY

Here's your phone. Here's your change. Make it quick.

CARY

The only thing you ever done quick was finish dessert.

Cary looks at the phone, then picks up the phone book hanging from it. He pages through the white pages looking for Marni Rosen. He finds the right page and scans it, but no Rosen's.

Cary contemplates his next move. He flips through the yellow pages looking for Chinese restaurants. He finds a quarter page ad for the Cheng Palace---offering free delivery. He dials, then talks into the phone.

CARY (CONT'D)

Hey, I'd like to place an order---to be delivered....

(he pauses and smiles)

Going to Desiree Meyers.

EXT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - DAY

Cary and Marni leave the station.

CARY

Thanks for comin' so quick.

MARNI

No problem.

They walk down the street. Cary shakes his head as a thought pops into it.

CARY

They could'a been my in-laws.

Marni considers this seriously.

MARNI

Holidays would've been tough.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Desiree enters carrying a brown paper bag.

(CONTINUED)

Marni approaches her politely.

MARNI
Can I help you?

Desiree seems very business like.

DESIREE
Yes, I'm looking for Cary.

Marni smiles broadly.

MARNI
He's in back. I'll get him.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP, STOCK ROOM - SAME

Cary is rearranging shoe boxes on shelves. Marni walks in, nearly singing.

MARNI
Guess who's here.

CARY
Police?

MARNI
No, Desiree. I think she wants to have lunch with you.

Cary looks in a full length mirror and straightens his hair and collar.

MARNI (CONT'D)
I can cover for you if you've gotta go.

CARY
Thanks.

Cary turns and walks out of the stock room and into the main floor area.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP, MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

A smiling Cary walks up to Desiree but she's not smiling.

CARY
How's it goin'?

Desiree throws the bag at him. It hits him in the chest and erupts like a volcano spewing Chinese food everywhere! Sweet and sour sauce drips from Cary's nose.

DESIREE
Next time you're arrested don't do me any favors. Just stay out of my life!

(CONTINUED)

She turns and walks toward the door then stops several feet from it, turning back to stare at Cary coldly.

DESIREE (CONT'D)
You owe me ten dollars.

CARY
It was only eight bucks and change.

DESIREE
I gave him a tip.

CARY
But it was free delivery.

DESIREE
Fine!! You only owe me eight dollars....Better yet, don't give me anything at all!

She turns and starts walking toward the door.

CARY
It wasn't what you think...

Desiree turns back at the door.

DESIREE
One thing my mother's right about:
you'll never change.

Desiree exits before Cary can get another word in.

INT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

Cary stands at a counter while MRS. DE BOER, a conservative secretary, waits on him.

CARY
I gotta take a G.E.D. test.

MRS. DE BOER
We have them on Tuesdays and Thursdays
at 9AM.

CARY
Which one's easier?

MRS. DE BOER
They're both the same.

Cary rubs the back of his neck.

CARY
I'll take it tomorrow.

EXT. CARY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

It's near sunset and Cary sits on an old picnic table with a few books and an open notebook.

(CONTINUED)

He eats bologna a slice at a time from the package as he talks, addressing someone we cannot see.

CARY

(chewing)

It's easy for you---you don't have to worry about this stuff. Whoever invented algebra has a sick sense of humor.

(gets another slice)

Mixing letters with numbers is like drinking and driving---it's stupid.

Cary looks at one of his books briefly.

CARY (CONT'D)

He was on drugs. Had to be.

He pauses again to look at the person he's been talking to.

CARY (CONT'D)

How're you with math?

From Cary's P.O.V. we see he's been talking to a stray cat. The cat looks at him and MEOWS.

CARY (CONT'D)

Didn't think so.

Cary tosses a piece of bologna to the hungry cat.

EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

It's the next day. Cary, drenched in sweat, runs smoothly toward the building. He's clearly run a great deal in prison.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Cary, still sweating profusely, enters the classroom where three students wait. Mrs. De Boer glares at Cary.

CARY

Running helps me think better.

She couldn't care less. She hands Cary a test booklet.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY (LATER)

TIME LAPSE as other students finish the test and disappear until...

Cary sits alone in the now empty room. He struggles with a math question. Mrs. De Boer looks up at the clock. As the second hand reaches 11AM...

MRS. DE BOER

Time's up. Put down your pencil and hand me your booklet.

Cary doesn't hear her---he's engrossed in the test.

(CONTINUED)

She approaches Cary's desk and snatches the pencil from his hand as he's about to answer the question.

MRS. DE BOER (CONT'D)
Time's up!

CARY
I knew that one!

MRS. DE BOER
Two hours. Not a minute more.

CARY
I didn't wanna whole minute. Just a few seconds.

She looks at him sternly.

CARY (CONT'D)
When do I find out how I did?

MRS. DE BOER
You'll get a letter within a week.

CARY
Can I come sooner to find out---in case I gotta take it again?

She's about to say no, but Cary speaks quickly.

CARY (CONT'D)
This is really important for me. I gotta get this....I gotta pass this and get into college. This is like a life and death situation.

The secretary looks at him skeptically.

MRS. DE BOER
Life and death?

CARY
Okay, it's a love and death situation. If I don't win back the girl---woman I was gonna marry I might as well be dead. See, she's real smart and I was real stupid and didn't try to get my G.E.D. and now I gotta have it. I been thinking and I really wanna go to college.

MRS. DE BOER
What do you plan on majoring in?

CARY
Gym---or what's it called---phys ed. I figure I can be a gym teacher and tell kids not to mess up their life like I did.

(CONTINUED)

Mrs. De Boer hesitates as she's going into new territory here---compassion.

MRS. DE BOER
Come to the office at 9AM tomorrow.
I should have the results then.

INT. VELDA'S HOUSE, DEN - NIGHT

Velda and Desiree are in the den eating cookies and shopping for wedding dresses online. Desiree looks skeptical at best.

VELDA
Isn't this better? You've got thousands of gowns to choose from and you don't have to deal with vulgar sales people.

DESIREE
(raising her voice)
I've got less than a month to find one I like *and* have it altered!

VELDA
Don't get snippy with me. It's just a suggestion. At least here you can have fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies and shop at the same time.
(resigned)
I guess we'll have to go up to Boston.

DESIREE
No, I'm going to Sheila's for a dress. I don't care if Cary works there.

VELDA
Great. Rafferty's going to be here tomorrow and you want me to shop with that piece of trash ex-boyfriend of yours.

The PHONE RINGS.

DESIREE
No, you're staying here. I'm going shopping with Rafferty alone.

Velda looks annoyed. She answers the phone.

VELDA
Hello?

INT. MILTON'S OFFICE - SAME

Milton sits at his desk with his feet up and a cup of coffee in hand. He talks into a speaker phone.

MILTON
Can I speak to Desiree?

(CONTINUED)

INTERCUT

Velda holds the phone out to Desiree as though it were a dead rat. She considers Milton and rats the same.

VELDA
It's your father.

Desiree doesn't look too pleased either, but she takes the phone.

DESIREE
Yes, Dad, what do you want?

MILTON
You don't need to cop an attitude with me.

DESIREE
Take me off speaker.

Milton picks up the phone.

MILTON
Sorry....I want to know if you and Rafferty can meet me for breakfast tomorrow, at eight.

DESIREE
You cooking?

Velda is agitated by the interruption and tries to butt in.

VELDA
What's he doing? Inviting you to dinner?

MILTON
Do I ever?

DESIREE
I wanted to make sure it wasn't a first.

She puts her hand over the phone and turns to Velda.

DESIREE (CONT'D)
No.

MILTON
How 'bout Sunny's? We could go to the beach afterwards.

DESIREE
That's fine. We'll see you then.

Desiree hangs up the phone.

EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT

Cary and Marni lie on a blanket looking up at a crystal clear sky filled with stars.

MARNI

Shit. You got busted and you never had sex with her---ever?

CARY

She was a virgin.

MARNI

Maybe you're gay and you don't know it.

Cary looks repulsed by the thought.

CARY

If I get the chance to do it with her again I won't wait.

MARNI

You probably didn't miss much.

Cary looks excited and points to the Northern sky.

CARY

Look! The Northern Lights!

In the sky a tremendous display of red and yellow streaks begins and grows quickly.

MARNI O.S.

Cool!

CARY O.S.

Maybe it's a good omen.

Cary thinks of the possibilities.

CARY

I think I passed the test.
(deeply remorseful)
But I'm such an asshole. I can't believe I lied to her about it.

MARNI

Get over it. Everybody lies.

Marni thinks for a moment.

MARNI (CONT'D)

If things don't work out and you wanna see what the other side's like, Jen knows this really nice guy I can set you up with.

Marni sees Cary staring off into space.

(CONTINUED)

CARY

I feel like I'm in a Lou Reed song.

MARNI

Who's Lou Reed?

CARY

Never mind.

He pauses, slightly suspicious.

CARY (CONT'D)

Why're you hangin' out with me?

Marni thinks for a moment.

MARNI

I don't know. You seem cool an' I think you could use a friend. Why?

CARY

Just wanted to make sure you weren't tryin' to convert me.

MARNI

No. We still friends?

CARY

Yeah. That's kinda where I'm at with every girl...

Marni shoots Cary a stern look.

CARY (CONT'D)

...Woman I know.

Suddenly Cary's digital watch alarm goes off...BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP ETC.

Cary springs to his feet like his butt is on fire.

CARY (CONT'D)

Shit! I gotta go!

Cary takes off like a bat out of hell.

He's running hard through the park.

Racing toward his car...

He hops in and tries to start it, but it just cranks without turning over. He doesn't have time for this shit.

He jumps out quickly and continues running...

A CATHEDRAL BELL CHIMES...BONG....BONG....BONG...Etc.

EXT. CARY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Cary's apartment lies ahead. He sprints at full speed. The bell chimes for the ninth time...BONG!

Cary turns the corner to his building and plows into Milton sending them both sprawling!

Milton pulls out his gun and points it at Cary.

MILTON

Freeze!

Cary freezes in the most uncomfortable position.

CARY

Don't shoot! It was an accident!

Milton stands up slowly with his .38 trained on Cary.

MILTON

What was?

CARY

Running into you.

MILTON

Where were you coming from in such a hurry?

CARY

Meadow Park.

MILTON

I could throw you in jail for missing your curfew.

CARY

I was only a few seconds late!

MILTON

You need to listen. I *could*, but I won't this time.

Cary still hasn't moved and looks very uncomfortable.

CARY

Thanks.

Cary looks at Milton's .38 still pointed in his direction.

CARY (CONT'D)

Can I get up?

MILTON

Yeah.

Milton lowers his .38 and offers Cary a hand. He pulls him up, then suddenly grabs Cary's collar and puts the .38 on Cary's chin.

(CONTINUED)

MILTON (CONT'D)

Don't mess with my daughter or else
next time I might slip and pull the
trigger. Got it?

Cary nods in agreement.

EXT. MAIN STREET, SANDWICH, MA - DAY

Cary takes his morning run, zipping through the waking town
at a good clip.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Cary passes an old book shop as it opens.

He goes by an elderly couple out walking.

A dog BARKS at him as he runs by.

He speeds past a boy on a bicycle delivering papers.

INT./EXT. RAFFERTY'S LIMO/MAIN STREET - SAME (MOVING)

Desiree and Rafferty ride in a limo with more amenities than
the Beverly Hills Hilton.

Desiree looks out the window. From her P.O.V. she sees Cary
running. She focuses on his feet, then looks behind him to
see if he's being chased. She stares at Cary, obviously
confused.

Rafferty notices her staring.

RAFFERTY

What're you gazing on?

Rafferty's voice breaks her trance.

DESIREE

Nothing. Just tired, that's all.

Desiree looks out the window, then turns back to Rafferty.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Do you think a person can change?

Rafferty ponders the question briefly.

RAFFERTY

Yes, I was once conservative...

The limo SKIDS as it nearly hits Cary crossing the street.
Desiree and Rafferty are jostled inside.

CARY

(shouting)

Asshole! Watch where you're goin'!

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY

Neanderthal on a quest for fire.
Where was I?

DESIREE

(gathering her thoughts)
Um...conservative.

RAFFERTY

Yes, I had been conservative with my
investments but my financial advisor
convinced me to go with aggressive
stocks.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Cary pulls up to the school in his Mustang. He hops out and
runs to the building.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Cary enters the office with wet hair fresh from showering.
He sees Mrs. De Boer and smiles confidently.

CARY

I passed, right?

She looks at him sternly and hands him a letter.

Cary begins reading it out loud.

CARY (CONT'D)

We regret to inform you that you did
not achieve the minimum passing grade
for the G.E.D. exam....Shit!

Mrs. De Boer gives him another stern look.

CARY (CONT'D)

Okay, how close was I?

MRS. DE BOER

You weren't.

This wasn't the answer he was looking for.

CARY

How many did I miss? I gotta know
so I know what to study.

She studies Cary's grief-stricken face. Unlike most of her
students, it's clear this means a lot to him.

MRS. DE BOER

(sighs)

You passed the English but you did
horrendously on the math.

CARY

I hate math. It sucks.

(CONTINUED)

Mrs. De Boer looks Cary in the eyes.

MRS. DE BOER
You'd better learn to like it.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Cary gets into his Mustang by stepping on the rear bumper and trudging toward the driver's seat.

INT. FORD MUSTANG - CONT.

He looks at the letter briefly, then angrily shoves it inside his glove compartment.

INT. SUNNY'S PANCAKE HOUSE - DAY

Desiree, Milton and an over-dressed Rafferty eat in a busy local breakfast hot spot. Not a pretty place, but great food. You can smell the fresh coffee and bacon.

MILTON
What do you two plan on doing after you get married?

DESIREE
Well, we....

Rafferty interrupts her.

RAFFERTY
I'd like to start a family.

This is news to Desiree.

Milton bites a juicy sausage in half. The grease squirts out and lands on Rafferty's silk shirt. Milton mumbles an apology.

Milton watches the following exchange like a ping pong match.

DESIREE
Not right away.

RAFFERTY
No, of course not---you're not pregnant!

DESIREE
We need a little time to get settled. I'd like to get my career going.

RAFFERTY
I'm all for that. Whatever you think you need, dear. You know I can be patient.

Desiree looks relieved but Milton eyes Rafferty critically.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Desiree lugs two beach chairs and a beach bag to the spot where Milton already lounges in a chair. Milton looks good for a man his age and clearly spends a fair amount of his spare time at the beach. He looks up, surprised.

MILTON
Where's Rafferty?

Desiree starts setting up the chairs.

DESIREE
He's a little self-conscious about being on the beach.

MILTON
(incredulous)
So he didn't come?

DESIREE
No, he's in the water.

Milton and Desiree look in that direction. Their POV: Rafferty's head floats up and down on the waves. Very few people are in the water.

MILTON
Are you sure about him?

DESIREE
(dumb question)
Yeah, Dad. I love him.

Desiree starts putting suntan lotion on herself.

DESIREE (CONT'D)
I know he's a little different but he's really a sweet, honest and intelligent man.
(then very excited)
Do you know where he's taking me for our honeymoon!?

Milton fails to reflect any of Desiree's excitement.

MILTON
No. I'm not psychic, but I'm probably the last to know.

Desiree isn't put off in the least.

DESIREE
He's taking me with him on a tour of Europe. Venice, Paris, Rome, London, Madrid, Athens---everywhere I've always wanted to go---he's set up a concert in each city!

A WHISTLE BLOWS!

(CONTINUED)

Desiree and Milton turn to see the lifeguards signaling everyone out of the water.

Off on the horizon it looks like something might be in the water, possibly a shark, but it's not clear. Through the commotion we hear someone mention "shark". In the b.g. a lifeguard looks through binoculars to get a better assessment of the situation.

Frightened, Rafferty runs out of the water. He wears a skimpy Speedo bathing suit and looks ridiculous by contrast to others on the beach because his skin is blindingly white. He quickly heads toward Desiree and Milton.

Self-conscious, Rafferty quickly grabs a towel and covers himself as much as possible.

RAFFERTY

There's a shark out there.

Milton peers out at the ocean.

MILTON

It's just a school of blues.

RAFFERTY

Blues?

MILTON

Blue fish. They're harmless. When they run they sometimes jump out of the water and look like a shark breaking the surface.

Desiree tries to make Rafferty feel better.

DESIREE

Sometimes sharks feed on blue fish.

Rafferty gets settled in a beach chair and covers himself. He picks up a James Bond novel.

MILTON

(to Rafferty)

Desiree told me about your honeymoon plans but didn't tell me where you two are going to settle down.

DESIREE

Dad, we really haven't had the chance to discuss it. Maybe we'll end up in New York, but we're not sure.

RAFFERTY

I'd sooner raise my children in a war zone than New York City. There's too much crime in America. Everyone has a gun. In England we have...

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE
 (interrupting/shocked)
 You're not thinking about...

Rafferty's cell phone RINGS. He pulls the phone from the beach bag and turns to Desiree.

RAFFERTY
 Excuse me.

He takes the call. Milton glares at him.

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)
 Hello. (Pauses to listen) Nothing I can't break away from. (Pauses) What's the gig? (Pauses) He's sick? They should've given it to me in the first place. (Pauses) Fly me out first thing in the morning. Call me back with the itinerary.

Rafferty hangs up the phone.

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)
 Elton John's sick. They want me to play Prince Albert's birthday party.

Desiree looks crushed.

DESIREE
 Oh.

RAFFERTY
 It's the royal family. It's not like I'm playing a benefit concert for lemmings on death row.

Milton is steaming. He focuses on Rafferty.

MILTON
 I don't give a damn about the royal family. This is my daughter you're dealing with.

Desiree turns to her father, annoyed.

DESIREE
 Dad, stay out of this.

Rafferty turns up the charm like a politician.

RAFFERTY
 Don't worry, I intend on treating Desiree like royalty.

CUT TO:

A bouquet flying through the air in slow motion...

As it descends it picks up speed to real time.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Cary runs with his arms outstretched. He catches the bouquet like a football and runs enthusiastically.

CARY
He's got it and heads toward the end-zone!

A mannequin is nearby. Cary makes believe it's a defender.

CARY (CONT'D)
He fakes the defender!

Cary passes an imaginary goal line.

CARY (CONT'D)
Touchdown!!!

Cary does an end-zone dance then turns to Marni.

CARY (CONT'D)
Can I spike this?

MARNI
Probably not a good idea.

Cary tosses the bouquet back to Marni. She catches it.

Marni glances at the clock.

MARNI (CONT'D)
I gotta meet Jen for lunch. Can you hold the fort down? Should be quiet.

CARY
No problem.

MARNI
Later.

Marni heads out the door.

EXT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Marni walks away in one direction while Desiree and Rafferty approach from the other holding hands.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Desiree and Rafferty enter the store.

Desiree suddenly sticks to Rafferty like metal to a magnet. She wants it to be clear who she's with.

RAFFERTY
What's with this?

DESIREE
What?

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY

I don't know. You just grabbed me like I'm going to run off.

DESIREE

We're getting married. I want to be close to you.

Cary freezes as he watches Desiree and Rafferty walking like Siamese twins. He wasn't expecting this and he's unnerved.

Desiree sees Cary. They are emotional mirrors of each other. She thought she could do this but now she's not so sure. She swallows nervously.

RAFFERTY

(shouts)

Can we get some help here? I need to marry this girl straight away.

Cary does a surprising thing---without a word he turns and flees to the stock room.

INT. STOCK ROOM - SAME

Cary paces like a caged animal, unsure of what to do. He marches past a mannequin modeling a tuxedo. Without breaking stride he punches it, knocking the head off.

Cary suddenly realizes what he needs: Music. He zeroes in on the store stereo and the box of CD's below it. He quickly pulls out his version of kryptonite against Superman, then deftly programs the CD player.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP, MAIN STORE AREA - SAME

ROCK MUSIC, (something with a sarcastic message like "*White Wedding*" or "*Power Windows*") plays from the speakers overhead.

Cary strolls toward them appearing calm, cool and collected.

CARY

Can I help you?

RAFFERTY

We're looking for a wedding gown.

CARY

What're you lookin' for? Traditional white, off white or something completely different?

Desiree knows Rafferty is traditional.

DESIREE

White. Pure white.

RAFFERTY

I want her to look perfect.

(CONTINUED)

Cary looks at Desiree, she looks away.

CARY
She already does.

Rafferty looks around at the gowns on display. He's clearly disapproving but he smiles politely.

RAFFERTY
Do you have anything here that doesn't resemble a prom dress?

CARY
Yeah.

Cary leads them to a rack of the cream of the crop gowns. He pulls a fabulous one from the rack and holds it up.

CARY (CONT'D)
How about something like this?

Desiree smiles, pleasantly surprised by Cary's good selection. Rafferty is less than impressed.

DESIREE
Can I try that on?

CARY
Yeah, but you'll need to let go of your fiancee first.

Desiree's smile falters as she lets go of Rafferty.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP, MAIN STORE AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Desiree exits the dressing room feeling good about herself. She proudly flaunts the gown.

Cary looks at her with awe inspired eyes. Rafferty shows as much emotion as an Olympic judge.

DESIREE
What do you think?

CARY
(truly awe-struck)
Wow.

RAFFERTY
(flatly)
No.

Desiree has suddenly lost that good feeling about herself.

DESIREE
What's wrong with it?

RAFFERTY
It makes you look fat.

Desiree looks in the mirror. Fat is an adjective that doesn't come to mind---but she's crushed.

(CONTINUED)

CARY
 (to Rafferty)
 What're you crazy?! She looks great.

RAFFERTY
 Not in that.

DESIREE
 I'll try something else.

Cary reaches for another gown and holds it up.
 Desiree likes it but waits for Rafferty's response first.

RAFFERTY
 No, that's mundane.

Cary is annoyed but does a great job of hiding his feelings.

CARY
 Let me get something from the back I
 think will work.

Cary runs off to the stock room.

INT. STOCK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frustrated, Cary pounds on a couple of boxes and punches the headless mannequin in the chest, knocking it over.

He takes a deep breath and looks around. His eyes stop on a thrillingly seductive special order gown. Cary hesitates for a moment then tears off the plastic wrap.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP, MAIN STORE AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Cary presents the dress to Desiree without getting Rafferty's consent.

CARY
 Try this.
 (whispering to Desiree)
 Guaranteed to give the corpse you're
 with a pulse.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP, MAIN STORE AREA - LATER

Desiree emerges from the fitting room and Cary's right on the money. She could pass for the sexiest bride in the world. The gown's revealing but leaves enough to the imagination.

Desiree looks in the mirror---Helen of Troy never looked this good.

Cary is breathless, but conservative Rafferty is turned off.

DESIREE
 (hopeful)
 What do you think?

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY

It makes you look like a tart.

DESIREE

(stunned)

A tart?

RAFFERTY

A prostitute.

Desiree is flabbergasted. She turns white and looks like she might puke. Her eyes begin to water.

Rafferty's cell phone RINGS as Desiree's first tear falls.

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)

(answering phone)

Yes? What's the itinerary?

A slow stream of tears trickle down Desiree's cheek.

Rafferty cups his hand over the receiver, then speaks to Desiree in a kind voice.

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)

I didn't mean that you're a prostitute, dear---that dress is hideously revealing.

(then into phone)

Is that the earliest?

(covers the phone and turns to Desiree)

I'll be with you in a moment, dear.

Cary is furious. He marches toward Rafferty.

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Okay, 6:35AM out of Boston, and then?

Cary rips the phone out of Rafferty's hand and disconnects the call. What follows goes quickly.

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)

What the....Where do you get off disconnecting phone calls?!!

Cary tosses the phone at Rafferty's chest.

CARY

Fuck your phone. You insulted her.

RAFFERTY

I didn't insult her---you did when you gave her that scandalous gown.

Rafferty turns to Desiree.

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)

We should do our business elsewhere.
Let's go. We can find a more suitable
selection at John Phillips in London.

Desiree wipes a tear and nods. She looks down longingly at the gown she's in but knows she should leave with Rafferty.

DESIREE

I need to change.

CARY

No, *he* needs to change.

Desiree is upset but tries to defend Rafferty between sobs.

DESIREE

Don't talk to him like that. He's a
wonderful, talented man!

CARY

He's an ass with a wallet.

Rafferty is an English gentleman and shows restraint.

RAFFERTY

We're leaving. Now. He's upsetting
you and there's no reason for us to
continue dealing with this.

Desiree chokes back her tears.

DESIREE

That's right, you have a concert for
the queen.

Desiree shows resolve and is ready to leave with Rafferty.
She looks at the gown she has on, unsure of what to do.

CARY

(despondently)

Wear it and bring it back later.

Desiree dashes to get her clothes out of the dressing room.
Rafferty turns to Cary.

RAFFERTY

If I wasn't a gentleman I'd assault
you.

CARY

(smiles briefly)

I'm not.

Cary punches Rafferty in the mouth, sending him sprawling to the floor.

CARY (CONT'D)

Don't fuck up her life.

(CONTINUED)

Rafferty slowly gets up as Desiree bolts out of the dressing room. She rushes over to him.

DESIREE
What happened?! Are you okay?

RAFFERTY
He struck me.

Desiree turns to Cary as a mother would a child.

DESIREE
What's wrong with you?!

CARY
Nothing. He insulted you.

DESIREE
Is that the only way you know to handle a problem? Oh, that's right--- if you don't have an engagement ring you steal it.

CARY
Maybe I wasn't raised the best but at least I don't give up on someone I love.

Rafferty stands up. He touches his lip and finds a small spot of blood on his finger. He's barely wounded. He pulls out his handy cell phone.

DESIREE
Who are you calling now?

RAFFERTY
The police.

DESIREE
Don't bother. It's not worth it.

RAFFERTY
(dialing)
It's the principal of the matter.
(into phone)
I need the police here straight away. I've just been assaulted.

EXT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY (LATER)

Looks like a major crime scene for the small town, with two sheriff's cars parked and an ambulance pulling away.

Desiree and Rafferty exit the shop. Rafferty's "wound" has been cleaned up. Desiree still wears the wedding gown.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - SAME

The commotion has died down. A hand-cuffed Cary stands in the b.g. trying to scratch his ear.

(CONTINUED)

Milton turns to Larry, who's shirt is stretched almost to a button-popping extreme.

MILTON
I'll take it from here, Larry.

LARRY
Okay, I'm gonna go for lunch.

MILTON
Larry, cut back on the cheeseburgers
or buy a new uniform.

Larry looks down at his stomach to confirm what he already knew.

LARRY
Yeah, Milt.

Larry trudges off.

Milton swaggers toward Cary, then shakes his head.

MILTON
How stupid can you be?

CARY
The guy's a jerk.

MILTON
Maybe, but he's marrying my daughter.

CARY
He doesn't deserve her.

MILTON
(with anger)
And you do?

CARY
No, but I love her and I can't help
that....
(respectfully as an
afterthought)
...Sir.

Milton scratches his head as he pulls out his handcuff keys.

MILTON
You got lucky this time. She
convinced him not to press charges.

Cary looks surprised and excited. It gives him hope.

CARY
She did?

Milton removes the cuffs, ignoring Cary's question.

(CONTINUED)

MILTON

This stunt will cost you a night in jail. You've got fifteen minutes to check in after your shift is done. If you're a minute late I'll have you in front of Judge Mortimer for parole violation. Got it?

CARY

Yes, sir.

Milton's eyes blaze for a moment as he's not sure if Cary's being respectful or sarcastic. He decides on the former.

Milton turns and leaves the store. A moment later Marni strolls in.

MARNI

Pretty quiet, huh?

An emotionally exhausted Cary just glares at her.

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Rafferty's limo is parked out front. A CHAUFFEUR opens the door as Rafferty and Desiree stand face to face.

RAFFERTY

Sorry I was tactless earlier.
Concerts for the royal family always
make me nervous.
(as an afterthought)
And a bit of a imbecile.

DESIREE

You're forgiven.

RAFFERTY

Ring you tomorrow?

Desiree nods.

DESIREE

Have a good trip. I'll miss you.

She smiles briefly.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Is your mouth okay now?

RAFFERTY

(touching it)
It still hurts.

Desiree gives Rafferty a quick kiss on the cheek. He looks mildly insulted by it.

DESIREE

I don't want to hurt your mouth.

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY

That's right. I'll see you soon.

Rafferty gets in the limo.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

Cary and Marni are tidying up the store.

Desiree walks up to Cary and hands him the gown.

DESIREE

Here.

Cary takes it from her.

CARY

Thanks.

They stand looking at each other. There are so many things they both want to say---it's an awkward moment. They glance at Marni.

MARNI

Um, I'm going to check on something in back.

Marni disappears to the rear of the store.

Cary and Desiree break the silence at the same time.

DESIREE

I'm sorry about before.

CARY

Hey, I'm sorry about before.

They laugh at the silliness of it.

CARY (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have hit him.

DESIREE

I shouldn't have been so rude.

CARY

We still friends?

DESIREE

Yeah---friends.

Desiree pauses and asks Cary a serious question.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

You're not going to get in trouble for this, are you?

Cary plays it cool. He gives a charming smile.

CARY

You know me. I get in, I get out.

There's another uncomfortable moment of silence.

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE

You think we might be able to go for
coffee and talk...
(as an afterthought)
...as friends?

Cary nods, then has a better idea.

CARY

How 'bout we go for a ride and talk?

DESIREE

Sure. When do you get off?

Cary looks up at the clock on the wall. It reads 5:20PM.
He sees Marni frantically signaling him to leave mouthing
"Go! Go!".

CARY

Now.

DESIREE

You don't have any plans, do you?

Cary hesitates for a moment, but this is too important.
He'll always be able to go to jail, but he won't always have
a chance to win Desiree's love.

CARY

Um, no. Nothin' that I'm locked into.

EXT. MAIN STREET, SANDWICH, MA - DAY

Cary opens the door of his Mustang for Desiree, then climbs
over the car to get in the drivers' seat.

INT. FORD MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

DESIREE

Ever thought of fixing the door?

Cary looks like he's about to say yes but...

CARY

No.

Cary looks over his shoulder suspiciously.

CARY (CONT'D)

Where to?

DESIREE

Surprise me.

INT./EXT. FORD MUSTANG / RT. 6 STATE HIGHWAY - DAY (MOVING)

Cary's convertible cruises down the Cape Cod highway while
playing some upbeat rock and roll.

(CONTINUED)

Desiree loves the liberating feel of the wind. She looks down and notices Cary's running sneakers. They need to shout over the wind and music.

DESIREE
When did you start running?

CARY
After I stopped smoking.

DESIREE
(sarcastic)
And *when* was that?

CARY
After my first year in the pen. I had to quit cigarettes or music 'cause I couldn't afford both.

Desiree is amazed by this unknown fact.

DESIREE
Why didn't you tell me?

CARY
I wanted to surprise you when I got out.

She smiles warmly at him.

DESIREE
Like getting your G.E.D. and going to college?

CARY
(swallows)
Um, yeah. Sort of like that.

Desiree unbuckles her seat belt and stands up, feeling the wind straight on. She's ecstatic.

DESIREE
God, I love convertibles!

CARY
A ragtop's the only way to go.

Cary sees a sign: Leaving Barnstable County---he shudders momentarily causing the car to swerve.

DESIREE
Anything wrong?

Cary glances at his watch: it's 5:50PM.

CARY
Nuthin'. Nothing's wrong.

He smiles nervously. Desiree looks ethereal.

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE
This car still fast?

Cary puts the pedal to the floor.

The Mustang engine ROARS. The car may not look like much but it moves---the speedometer quickly climbs past 100mph.

CARY
What do you think?

Desiree looks completely transformed into a free spirit---something she can't be with Rafferty. She spreads out her arms to embrace the wind in a euphoric gesture.

DESIREE
Yes!

They're both enjoying the moment as they...

Fly past a police car in a speed trap.

The police car burns rubber as it pulls out after them with lights flashing.

INT. FORD MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS (MOVING)

Cary looks at the police car in his rear view mirror.

CARY
Shit!

Cary lets off the gas and begins to slow down. Desiree turns around and sees the car in pursuit.

DESIREE
What're you going to do?

Cary thinks quickly of the other alternatives.

CARY
Put your seat belt on.

He floors it, pushing the speedometer over 110mph!

EXT. ROUTE 6, STATE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The police car is in the distance but gaining. Cary sees an off ramp. He turns the wheel at the last second! TIRES SCREECH as they go around the turn.

The police car SCREECHES after them with SIRENS WAILING!

EXT. PROVINCETOWN, MA - CONTINUOUS

Cary's car zips through the quaint Cap Cod town with the police car a block behind them.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

(CONTINUED)

Cary's Mustang racing around corners.

The police car closing in.

Frightened onlookers.

INT./EXT. FORD MUSTANG / PROVINCETOWN - CONTINUOUS (MOVING)

Cary looks focused on getting out of this situation.

Desiree's enjoying the ride.

They race past a docked ferry preparing to leave...a sign says "FERRY DEPARTS AT 6:00PM."

He speaks to Desiree without moving his eyes from the road.

CARY

What time is it?

DESIREE

Almost six.

CARY

What's *almost*?

DESIREE

Within a couple minutes either way.
My watch isn't an atomic clock.

CARY

Hang on. I got an idea.

He hits the gas and careens around another corner, briefly losing sight of the police car.

They come to an empty intersection.

Cary spins the wheel---the car skids, doing a one-eighty. They've now changed directions and are headed toward the police car!

Desiree's terrified. Cary is intensely calm.

The police car turns the corner heading toward them. Cary guns it again, daring a head on collision!

DESIREE

You're gonna get us killed!

The vehicles race toward each other at high speed.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Oh, my God...we're gonna die!

Total destruction is imminent...

CARY

(smiling coolly)
Have a little faith.

(CONTINUED)

At the last second Cary makes a sharp turn into an alley. The police car skids past them and slams into a parked Porsche.

EXT. FERRY DOCK - SAME

The Mustang bolts toward the ferry with the horn HONKING. A FERRY WORKER holding a clipboard shouts.

FERRY WORKER
Hey, Joe! Hold it. I got another.

The ferry worker holds up his hand to stop them.

FERRY WORKER (CONT'D)
You have reservations?

Cary looks nervous.

CARY
Ahh...reservations?

DESIREE
Um, yes. We're on the list.

The ferry worker looks at his clipboard.

FERRY WORKER
Simpson?

CARY
Yep, that's us.

FERRY WORKER
Okay. Move it quick.

He signals them on.

FERRY WORKER (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Ready to go, Joe!

The ferry pulls out.

EXT. FERRY - DAY (MOVING)

Desiree and Cary stand on the side of the ferry looking out over the ocean. A whale breaches in the distance.

DESIREE
This is beautiful. I spend so much time *near* the ocean but never go *on* it.

CARY
When I was a kid I dreamed of taking a rubber raft and finding some undiscovered island.

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE

Really?

CARY

Yeah. When I was eight I made it out about a hundred yards before the lifeguards whistled me in.

DESIREE

Weren't you worried about sharks or having enough food?

CARY

I thought sharks wouldn't eat rubber--- that was before I rented Jaws. And I brought a bag of M & M's with me.

Desiree folds her arms to keep warm.

DESIREE

If I'd known we were going on a ferry I would've brought a jacket.

CARY

If I'd known I would've brought one to give to you.

(starts removing shirt)

You can have my shirt.

DESIREE

No, no---keep it on. I'll be okay.

Cary puts his shirt on again, then comes up with an idea.

CARY

I can try and block the wind.

Cary moves to her right side to block the wind. He faces her, keeping his hands at his sides.

CARY (CONT'D)

How's that?

DESIREE

Better.

The wind tosses her hair again.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

(referring to left)

Now it's hitting this side.

Cary shuffles around Desiree to find another optimal wind blocking spot.

CARY

Better?

DESIREE

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

The wind shifts again.

DESIREE (CONT'D)
It's changing directions again.

Cary shuffles around Desiree yet again. Then he starts dancing around her.

CARY
I could dance around you all night,
or I could put my arms around you...
(as an afterthought)
As a friend.

He cautiously embraces her and they look into each other's eyes. Desiree looks as nervous as a scared rabbit.

CARY (CONT'D)
Better?

Desiree nods.

INT. SANDWICH POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Milton walks around the office area with a cup of coffee in hand. He looks at the clock on wall: it's well past six.

A nervous deputy, ED REILLY, enters the office quickly.

MILTON
Any sign?

ED
No, but Joan McCall saw him heading
east out of town.

MILTON
Keep looking and put it out on the
wire.

Ed scratches his head. He's uneasy about something.

ED
Something else you should know, Milt.

MILTON
What?

Milton goes to take a sip of coffee.

ED
Desiree was with him.

Milton spills his coffee on himself.

EXT. BOSTON HARBOR - DAY

Cary and Desiree drive off the ferry at Boston Harbor. Historic ships grace the magnificent port as the sun sets.

(CONTINUED)

INT. FORD MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS (MOVING)

Cary looks at Desiree.

CARY
Where to?

DESIREE
Dinner?

CARY
Fine by me. Long as it's not Chinese.
I had a bad experience with that
stuff.

EXT. CHARLES STREET, BOSTON - NIGHT

Cary and Desiree stroll down a cobblestone street lit by gaslight street lamps. It's a romantic atmosphere and they look like they want to hold hands but don't. They both fidget with their hands.

CARY
Thanks for dinner.

DESIREE
Don't mention it. I know you'd pay
if you had the money.

CARY
(not too hopeful)
Yeah, one day.

DESIREE
When you graduate college I bet you'll
be able to get a good job.

Cary nervously rubs the back of his neck.

CARY
Think so?

DESIREE
Without a doubt.

Desiree glances at her watch and looks disappointed.

DESIREE (CONT'D)
We'd better head back. Mom'll be
wondering where I am.

CARY
She know you're with me?

DESIREE
God, no! But I'm sure she'll find
out through her spy network.

Desiree pauses for a beat.

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Don't worry about her.

CARY

She's the least of my problems.

EXT./INT. MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY/FORD MUSTANG - NIGHT(MOVING)

Cary and Desiree cruise down the highway near the ocean. A full moon creates a path across the water.

Desiree looks at Cary. For the moment she's happy.

DESIREE

I've had a lotta fun tonight.

Cary looks at her and smiles.

CARY

What're you doin' this Saturday?

Desiree's happy moment is gone.

DESIREE

Um, flying to London.

CARY

What for?

DESIREE

To pick out a wedding dress.

Cary tries not to let this deter him, but he's hurt.

CARY

What about the weekend after that?

DESIREE

(apologetic)

I'm getting married.

CARY

Busy social calendar.

DESIREE

I'm sorry---what do you want me to say?

CARY

I don't know---forget it.

DESIREE

I still care about you, but...

BANG!!! A tire blows out! The car careens, then skids to a halt on an empty stretch of road. Desiree looks shaken up. Cary looks relatively calm. It's a minor problem for him.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

What was that?

(CONTINUED)

CARY

Blow out.

They get out of the car.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY/BEACH - CONTINUOUS

A sign near the car: "Beach Closed After Sunset"

They are a stone's throw from the beach. The CRASHING OF WAVES sounds magical in the night.

Cary opens the trunk and looks at the spare---it's flat.

CARY

Shit.

DESIREE

What?

CARY

Spare's flat.

Cary's not too disappointed.

DESIREE

Now what?

CARY

Either A: We walk to the next town and hope they've got an open gas station or...

Cary surveys the rest of the trunk and grins.

CARY (CONT'D)

B: We have a picnic.

DESIREE

A picnic?

Cary intentionally takes her question as an answer.

CARY

Sounds like a vote for B.

The trunk has the remnants of their last romantic evening four years earlier including an unopened bottle of wine, large plastic cups, moldy cheese, crackers, and a blanket.

Cary gathers up the items. He picks up the cheese and looks at it like a science project.

CARY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Weird.

He puts the cheese back down.

(CONTINUED)

He picks up the box of crackers and looks for an expiration date.

CARY (CONT'D)

You think unopened crackers would still be good if they expired in ninety-nine?

DESIREE

You eat them and I'll watch.

CARY

(to himself)

Probably not a good idea.

He tosses the crackers back.

CARY (CONT'D)

Hey, can you get the corkscrew from my glove box?

DESIREE

Sure.

She opens the glove compartment and finds the corkscrew with a cork still attached. It's sitting on Cary's G.E.D. failure notice.

Desiree looks at the corkscrew oddly but doesn't notice the envelope.

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - NIGHT

The blanket is spread out near the surf. The full moon illuminates both Cary and Desiree. They hold their plastic cups up to toast.

CARY

To the most beautiful and smartest--- woman I know, who can make any gown look great!

Desiree blushes but toasts.

DESIREE

No, I wish.

CARY

What do they say? Beauty's in the eye of the holder.

DESIREE

BE-holder.

CARY

I'd like to be holdin' you.

Again, Desiree blushes. This time she looks away from Cary.

(CONTINUED)

CARY (CONT'D)

Sorry about that.

Desiree looks Cary in the eye with genuine compassion.

DESIREE

No, I'm sorry.

CARY

Forget it. Let's just have fun.

DESIREE

You're right.

Desiree takes her full cup of wine and guzzles it.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Screw it. I'm not going to be a
free woman forever.

Cary chugs his wine.

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - NIGHT (LATER)

It's later, the bottle of wine lies in the sand empty. Cary and Desiree sit side by side looking out at the ocean surf. They're both pretty well buzzed.

CARY

Hey, if you change your mind let me
know.

Desiree turns her head and gives Cary an intoxicated grin.

DESIREE

'Bout what?

CARY

Gettin' married.

DESIREE

Oh, yeah.

Cary looks at her for a beat.

CARY

What do you want outta marriage?

DESIREE

I just wanna be loved for who I am.
Unconditionally. I wanna know that
if I get disfigured in some weird
accident I won't suddenly find myself
alone without a chance of ever getting
a date.

Cary's eyes penetrate Desiree. He's sincere.

(CONTINUED)

CARY

I'd still go out with you. Even if you looked like one of those paintings where the eyes and ears are all mixed up...

DESIREE

Picasso?

CARY

Yeah, him. Even if you looked like one of his paintings, I'd still go out with you. 'Cause I love who you are. It's just a bonus that you're amazingly beautiful too.

Desiree smiles, knowing that Cary is speaking from the heart.

CARY (CONT'D)

What're you gonna do with your degree?

DESIREE

I interned with the 'lantic Monthly and they offered me a staff writer position but Rafferty doesn't want me workin'.

Cary looks perplexed.

CARY

Why the hell not?

DESIREE

'Cause he wants to have kids an' thinks it'd disrupt my career.

CARY

Work and deal with the kid thing when it happens.

DESIREE

I told him that but he gave me a reason---sounded good at the time but I don't remember what it was.

CARY

Your writing's great. You think of shit I never dreamed of. You gotta do it.

Desiree looks at Cary fondly then at the ocean.

DESIREE

Wanna go swimmin'?

Cary begins kicking off his sneakers.

CARY

Hell yeah!

(CONTINUED)

Desiree strips down to her underwear. Cary looks at her longingly, then looks away. He strips down to his underwear.

Desiree scans Cary in the same lusty way he eyed her up.

DESIREE

Last one in's a rotten egg.

Desiree sprints toward the water with Cary racing right behind her. They both dive into the ocean surf and come up a moment later in chest deep water.

CARY

Shit that's cold!

Desiree has her arms folded across her chest. She's giggling like a school girl.

DESIREE

Do you see my bra?

Cary tries to look at her chest for it.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

(laughing)

It's not there! It came off when I dove in.

They look for it in the ocean. Desiree spots it in the surf.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

(pointing)

There it is!

Cary wades to where it is and grabs it.

He holds the bra up in his hand like a prize fish.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Toss it here.

CARY

(grinning)

What's it worth?

DESIREE

(smiling seductively)

I'll give you a kiss.

CARY

Sounds like a deal.

He tosses it to her. She holds it but doesn't put it on.

DESIREE

(impatiently seductive)

You want your kiss or not?

Cary dives under the water and comes up right in front of Desiree. Their eyes meet and lock onto each other.

(CONTINUED)

They kiss in the moonlit surf...a long, deep passionate kiss. Sparks fly like fireworks on the Fourth of July.

They part. Cary literally sweeps Desiree off her feet and holds her in his arms. They kiss again with even more passion than before. The sparks fly like fireworks at Disneyworld on Mickey Mouses' 50th birthday.

When they separate, Cary looks at Desiree and asks a question he asked before, but he's looking for a different answer.

CARY

What're you doin' a week from Saturday?

It just rained on Desiree's parade.

DESIREE

(dispirited)
Getting married.

Cary's smile wilts. He puts Desiree down.

CARY

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

He looks at the moon's glowing path over the ocean.

CARY (CONT'D)

I still love you...an' I know I always will. It doesn't matter what happens in two weeks, two years or two lifetimes. I'm always gonna feel this way.

Desiree regards Cary in the moonlight, then shakes her head to try and clear the cobwebs.

DESIREE

I don't know what I feel. I don't know if it's old feelings or new ones 'cause you've changed so much....God, I still can't believe you're going to college....I'm just really confused.

Cary knows he needs to tell her the truth about college.

CARY

There's something I gotta tell you....

From the beach a powerful flashlight shines in their eyes. Desiree covers herself up.

CARY (CONT'D)

(shouting)
Shut that off!

The figure holding the flashlight is a POLICE OFFICER.

(CONTINUED)

POLICE OFFICER
The beach is closed.

CARY
We're not on the beach---we're in
the water.

POLICE OFFICER
You better get out right now or I'll
fine you for trespassing.

CARY
Like I care.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY/BEACH - NIGHT

Clothed and wet, Cary and Desiree stand in front of the Mustang as it's being lifted by the hydraulics of a tow truck.

The police officer finishes writing out a ticket for Cary. He hands it to him with an air of contempt.

POLICE OFFICER
The fine is listed on the back. If
it's not paid within thirty days a
warrant will be issued.

Cary's pissed.

CARY
They'd issue a warrant for
trespassing? That's such bull...

Desiree puts her hand over Cary's mouth to shut him up and keep him from getting in more trouble.

DESIREE
It'll be taken care of officer.
Thank you.

The officer looks at Cary, then at Desiree. He turns and heads back to his vehicle.

DESIREE (CONT'D)
(to Cary)
I see you still haven't learned when
to shut up.

CARY
That was bogus.

DESIREE
Do you wanna push your luck and end
up in jail? You've already been
lucky once tonight.

INT. MILTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A "fugitive" poster of Cary is on Milton's wall, and an over-dramatic Velda is in Milton's office.

(CONTINUED)

VELDA

He must've abducted her....I know it.

MILTON

She could've gone willingly with him.

Velda paces like a fox trapped in a cage.

VELDA

She hasn't called! She's always reliable.

MILTON

Have you called her fiancee---what's his name?

VELDA

Rafferty---you should know his name by now.

MILTON

I try to forget.

VELDA

He'll be here after his concert. He wants me to call him as soon as we find anything out.

MILTON

(mumbling)

After his concert. Hmm.

Velda stops pacing.

VELDA

What was that?

MILTON

Nothing. Probably best to go home and wait for her to call. Let me know as soon as you hear from her.

EXT. PARKING LOT NEAR OCEAN - NIGHT

The Mustang is fixed but they're not in a hurry to get home. The stereo is cranked, blasting out Santana's "Smooth" as

Desiree and Cary dance seductively together beneath the moon. It's clear this is something they've done countless times before and they're loving every second of it! They're both great dancers.

"It's just like the ocean under the moon, it's the same as the emotion that I get from you, you got the kind of lovin' that can be so smooth..." They both sing along at the top of their lungs....

(CONTINUED)

CARY
GIMMEE YOUR HEART,
MAKE IT REAL OR LET'S
FORGET ABOUT IT!

DESIREE
GIVE ME YOUR HEART, MAKE
IT REAL OR LET'S FORGET
ABOUT IT!

Cary spins Desiree around, dips her and gives her a quick kiss.

INT./EXT. FORD MUSTANG/OUTSKIRTS OF SANDWICH - DAY (MOVING)

Cary and Desiree happily cruise down the highway with the stereo blaring upbeat rock music as they approach town.

Cary's so happy he looks like he just won the lottery, Desiree is cautiously ecstatic. She's had the most fun she's had in four years.

DESIREE
(shouts over music)
Can I get your phone number?

CARY
Yeah. 555-6942.

Desiree looks at him playfully.

DESIREE
I won't remember it unless I write
it down. You got a pen?

CARY
Should be one in the glove box.

Desiree pops open the glove compartment, grabs a pen and the first piece of paper she sees....Cary's rejection letter for the G.E.D.

Desiree is about to write when she looks at the paper. Cary keeps his eyes on the road, oblivious to her discovery.

CARY (CONT'D)
555-6942.

Desiree doesn't write she just reads the rejection letter. Her face goes white---she looks like she's going to vomit.

CARY (CONT'D)
I don't have an answering machine.
Best time to catch me is...

DESIREE
Stop the car.

CARY
What?

DESIREE
(yells)
Stop it! NOW!

(CONTINUED)

Cary stops the car with a short SCREECH.

Desiree gets out hurriedly, leaving the letter open on her seat. She walks away from the car without looking back. Cary watches her go, he's confused as hell.

EXT. SANDWICH, MA - CONTINUOUS

Cary stands up in his Mustang and shouts to Desiree.

CARY
What's wrong?

She stops and turns around with tears in her eyes.

DESIREE
(yelling)
You lied! It's all a lie! My
mother's right. You'll never change!

Desiree turns away and continues walking briskly and disappears down a side street.

INT. FORD MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

Cary looks bewildered, then he sees the letter on the seat. He sits down like a balloon losing air.

CARY
Shit.

Frustrated, he intentionally bangs his head against the steering wheel several times.

CARY (CONT'D)
Stupid, stupid, stupid.

He sits there for a moment with his head bowed.

SIRENS WAIL!

Cary pops his head up like a rabbit from a hole.

EXT. SANDWICH, MA - CONTINUOUS

It looks like hunting season.

Three sheriff's vehicles surround Cary's car.

Milton and several other officers jump out with guns drawn!

MILTON
Freeze! Get your hands up!

Cary raises his hands slowly, like he's fighting gravity.

INT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Cary is seated at a table in a small room. Milton looks like he's ready to explode. Cary looks emotionally destroyed.

(CONTINUED)

MILTON

I want answers and I want them fast
or I'll blow your head off.

CARY

Shoot first, ask questions later.

Milton grabs Cary by the collar, threatening.

MILTON

Don't screw with me. I wanna know
what you did with my daughter.

CARY

Nothing.

MILTON

Don't give me that bull!

CARY

We spent most of the night talking.
It was cool. No problems.

MILTON

Then what?

Cary feels remorseful and it shows---he's close to tears.

CARY

I really thought we had something
again, but I killed it.

Milton's worst fears are realized. He turns bright red,
pulls out his gun and shoves it against Cary's temple.

MILTON

You bastard. I should blow your
brains out right now.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

Ed Reilly, nervously opens the door slightly.

In his rage Milton looks ready to shoot Ed for interrupting,
then he lowers his gun, annoyed.

MILTON (CONT'D)

(pissed off)
What?

ED

Your daughter's on line two.

MILTON

(confused)
What?

ED

Desiree. Line two.

(CONTINUED)

Milton shoots Cary a fierce but questioning look, then turns to the officer.

ED (CONT'D)
You okay, Milt?

MILTON
Yeah, yeah.

Ed closes the door. Milton picks up the phone.

MILTON (CONT'D)
Hello?

EXT. VELDA'S FLOWER GARDEN - SAME

Desiree has a cordless phone and walks through Velda's fantastic garden. She's been crying. We cut back and forth.

DESIREE
Hi, Dad.

MILTON
Are you okay?

DESIREE
Yeah, just a little confused, upset
and I don't know what. I need someone
to talk to.

MILTON
Did he rape you?

Desiree laughs a bit, but it's an empty laugh.

DESIREE
No---nothing like that. But I can't
talk to Mom about it.

MILTON
I'll be there in ten minutes.

Milton hangs up the phone. He looks at Cary as though he's looking at a puzzle with a piece missing.

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE - DAY

The DOORBELL CHIMES. Milton stands at the front door.

Velda opens it, flustered. She begins ranting at Milton as he steps inside the house.

INT. VELDA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

VELDA
I can't believe your daughter. Less
than two weeks before she gets married
and she's running off with that
criminal!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VELDA (CONT'D)

I'm glad she finally found out what
he's all about. I just don't
understand...

Milton holds up a hand to silence Velda.

MILTON

Where is she?

VELDA

Out back.

EXT. VELDA'S FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

Desiree sits on a stone bench smelling a purple flower she
picked. Milton walks up to her. She stands up with tears
in her eyes.

DESIREE

Oh, Daddy!

Milton gives her a good hug and kisses her forehead.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

I've been so stupid.

Milton tries to lighten her mood.

MILTON

My girl---stupid? Never. Stubborn
and unconventional, maybe, but stupid---
never.

DESIREE

An hour ago I was thinking about
calling off the wedding.

MILTON

To save your mother some money?

Desiree manages a slight smile.

DESIREE

No. I thought Cary changed, but he
didn't. He lied to me about getting
his G.E.D. and going to college....But
I'm still confused.

Milton puts his arm around her. They walk through the garden.

DESIREE (CONT'D)

Did you have doubts with Mom?

MILTON

No, I was completely blind-sided.

Desiree gives Milton a look that says she wants to hear more.

(CONTINUED)

MILTON (CONT'D)

We had different priorities but I didn't see it 'till after you were born.

Milton quickly changes his tone to sound more upbeat.

MILTON (CONT'D)

But I wouldn't change anything for all the tea in China. If we hadn't married you wouldn't be here. So, as much as I wouldn't want to say it, marrying your mother was probably the best thing to happen to me.

Desiree smiles. She seems more at peace with her thoughts.

DESIREE

That's a relief.

Rafferty hurriedly enters the garden with Velda trailing him like a dog at his heels.

RAFFERTY

(genuinely concerned)

You're alright. Thank God! You had me worried.

He gives Desiree a hug and a kiss. They are out of fireworks.

DESIREE

(trying to convince herself)

Nothing to worry about. I'm fine. Yep, just fine. You're fine. We're all fine.

Milton watches the exchange with a critical eye.

RAFFERTY

It was hard for me to go on stage wondering if you were okay. If the concert was for anyone else I would've canceled in a heartbeat. It was the worst performance of my career. I couldn't stop worrying about you.

DESIREE

I'm fine.

RAFFERTY

You can't be fine if you vanished and you've been crying---something must be wrong. Is it me? Something I've done?

Desiree shakes her head "no."

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)

Do you feel I'm pressuring you into marriage?

DESIREE

No, I'm fine. These are tears of joy. I knew you were coming and I missed you.

RAFFERTY

What happened last night?

DESIREE

Bachelorette party. It's an American thing.

INT. SANDWICH JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Cary sits on a cot looking at the floor.

A PRISON GUARD walks up to cell bars.

PRISON GUARD

Payne, you have a visitor.

The guard unlocks the cell door. Marni enters. The guard closes the door. CLANK!

Cary lifts his weary head.

Marni looks like an endless well of enthusiasm.

MARNI

This is so cool! I've never been in jail before!

Marni looks around the small cell like a kid in a candy store with a twenty dollar bill---but there's not much to look at.

MARNI (CONT'D)

I really like the bars on the window.

CARY

(unenthusiastic)

Yeah, they have them at the Boston Hilton too.

Cary pauses and stares at Marni trying to get her attention. Finally he decides to cough.

MARNI

What do you need?

CARY

A favor. I have to learn math good enough to pass the G.E.D.

MARNI

(in perfect French)

La cervelle `a moi est `a toi.

(CONTINUED)

CARY
What's that mean?

MARNI
My brain's your brain.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

It's later. Cary's cell is dark. He sits alone by the window looking out at the full moon.

He leans his head against the bars and closes his eyes.

INT. DESIREE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Desiree wears a nightshirt with a picture of Shakespeare on it. She climbs into bed then turns out the light.

She lays there for a moment with her thoughts, then is drawn to the moonlight streaming through the window.

Desiree's P.O.V.--she gazes at the moon and closes her eyes for a moment. Dark. She opens them---the moon is visible.

Disturbed by memories of Cary, she walks to her nightstand and picks up an 8X10 glamour headshot of Rafferty. She puts the photo in the window to block her view of the moon.

She hops in bed, lays down and looks at the picture. From her P.O.V. the moon is still clearly visible.

She gets up again, then violently closes the blinds---blocking out the moon and covering up the photo.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Cary lies asleep by the window bathed in sunlight.

PRISON GUARD
(loud, booming voice)
Wake up sleeping beauty. You've got a visitor.

Cary stirs. He rubs his eyes, then his stiff neck.

CARY
Already? What time is it?

PRISON GUARD
Ten.

The guard opens the cell and lets a professional looking Marni in. She has a book, a notebook and a calculator.

PRISON GUARD (CONT'D)
(to Marni)
You've got thirty minutes.

He slams the cell door shut, CLANK!

(CONTINUED)

Cary tries to wake up but it's a slow process.

Marni is ready for business.

MARNI
How important is this?

CARY
(rubbing his eyes)
More important than anything else.

MARNI
Immensely important?

CARY
(yawning)
Critical.

Marni SLAPS Cary across the face. It catches his attention.

MARNI
Ready to work now?

Cary rubs his face and jaw.

CARY
Yeah.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY (LATER)

It's a little later and Marni and Cary sit on the bed with math paraphernalia spread out.

Cary struggles with a math problem.

CARY
I don't get how X can be anything.
Why don't they just put a number
there?

MARNI
In life you don't always have the
numbers.

CARY
It's stupid if you ask me.

MARNI
Yeah, it's stupid but you've gotta
learn it.

Marni lights up with an idea.

MARNI (CONT'D)
How was it you got out of prison
early?

CARY
Good time.

(CONTINUED)

MARNI

How's that work?

CARY

You start off with a bunch of days you won't hafta serve if you don't screw up in the pen.

MARNI

How many days?

CARY

Depends on how long your sentence is.

MARNI

X.

CARY

Huh?

MARNI

That's X. It's unknown and it can change from person to person.

CARY

That's X?

MARNI

Yeah. Let's say you're in for four years and you get thirty days of good time a year. If you screw up twice, how early will you get out?

CARY

How big of a screw up? Little or massive?

MARNI

Moderate.

CARY

That's easy. Three months.

MARNI

Good. Now try it with some of the problems.

The prison guard opens the door.

PRISON GUARD

Time's up.

Marni gets up and looks at Cary.

MARNI

Do the practice ones in the book.

Cary looks around his small cell.

(CONTINUED)

CARY

I thought about going for a run later,
but I guess I can study instead.

INT. JOHN PHILLIPS, LONDON - BRIDAL SECTION - DAY

Rafferty looks approvingly at someone O.S.

RAFFERTY

Now that's elegant, dear. Simply
lovely. That's the one.

He's looking at Desiree...

She's wearing the most hideously gaudy gown imaginable.

DESIREE

(repulsed)

Sure?

RAFFERTY

Certainly. It's you.

INT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Milton enters the station with a cup of coffee in hand. Ed
sits at the desk doing paperwork.

MILTON

Any problems I don't want to know
about?

ED

Nope. All quiet.

MILTON

Good. I need a break.

ED

You should take a look in on Payne.
He's been starin' at some book an'
writin' stuff down all night.

INT. CELLBLOCK - NIGHT

Milton quietly walks down the cellblock hallway. He stops
and peers in at Cary studying a book intensely. Cary looks
up and sees Milton staring at him. He SLAMS his book closed.

MILTON

Looking to God for answers?

CARY

Wish it was that easy.

MILTON

You'll be seeing Judge Mortimer on
Wednesday. I'm recommending he sends
you back to the pen.

(CONTINUED)

Milton pauses for a beat.

MILTON (CONT'D)
He usually listens to me.

Milton turns and starts walking away.

CARY
It was almost worth it.

Milton stops walking and turns back to Cary.

MILTON
How's that?

CARY
Your daughter---she's great.

MILTON
I know.

CARY
If I didn't know, I'd never guess
you're her Dad.

Milton walks away. His footsteps echo down the hallway.

Cary picks up the book, opens it to where he left off, and tries to read it by the moonlight.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Cary is passed out on the floor beneath his window with the book open as the sun rises.

Milton looks through the cell door at Cary.

Cary stirs slowly, then rubs his stiff neck.

MILTON
There's a cot to sleep on.

Cary yawns.

CARY
I know. I was studying and fell
asleep.

MILTON
Studying what?

CARY
Math for my G.E.D.

MILTON
Little late for that now.

CARY
I gotta prove I can do it.

(CONTINUED)

MILTON

When and how were you planning on taking the test?

Cary scratches his head, then sheepishly replies.

CARY

Can I get a pass today to take it?

Milton starts laughing.

MILTON

You couldn't follow orders to return before. Why should I trust you now?

CARY

I've been a failure all my life and this is something I can do to prove I'm not. Desiree always told me I was better than this. If I took off, I'd be provin' her wrong---and I don't want to do that, sir.

(he pauses)

I respect her too much to do that.

Milton weighs Cary's words.

MILTON

How long's the test?

CARY

Two hours.

MILTON

You've got two and half from the time you get checked out. If you're a minute late or you come back without your release forms signed I'll make sure you never see daylight again.

EXT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - DAY

Standing on the steps of the police station, Cary folds up a piece of paper and puts it in his pocket. Then he looks at his watch: nine o'clock.

He uses his fingers to count.

CARY

(to himself)

Ten. Eleven and a half. Eleven-thirty.

He sprints one hundred yards down the street to the school building.

Cary darts up the steps and disappears inside.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

LINDA, an intelligent looking pregnant teenager and MELVIN, an annoying greasy-haired burnout are ready to take the test.

Mrs. De Boer looks at the clock on the wall as Cary enters the room. She hands him a booklet and a pencil. He hands her the folded up piece of paper.

CARY
You have to sign that so the jail
knows I was here.

Mrs. De Boer takes the paper without saying a word.

CARY (CONT'D)
You think you can grade this right
away when I'm done?

Mrs. De Boer looks at the other test takers.

MRS. DE BOER
You'll get your results next week.

Cary dejectedly takes a seat.

MRS. DE BOER (CONT'D)
You have exactly two hours to take
the exam....Begin.

The room is quiet and the three are working diligently.

Melvin turns to the pregnant teenager.

MELVIN
Bet you're wishin' he would'a used a
condom.

Linda tries to ignore him, but she's disturbed.

MRS. DE BOER
Please be quiet, Melvin.

All's quiet for another moment. Then Melvin turns to Linda.

MELVIN
Hey, maybe when we're done we can do
it out back. You ain't no virgin.

Linda gets upset.

LINDA
Shut up!

Cary stands up.

MRS. DE BOER
Melvin, I told you...

(CONTINUED)

CARY

Let me take care of this.

Cary looks down on Melvin, coldly.

CARY (CONT'D)

Maybe you don't care about your G.E.D.
but it's important to me and I think
it is for her.

MELVIN

Chill, I was just goofin'.

CARY

Say you're sorry to her.

MELVIN

Eat me.

Cary calmly places his hand on Melvin's shoulder then pushes a pressure point causing Melvin to wince and squirm in pain.

CARY

What was that?

MELVIN

I'm sorry.

CARY

Say another word and I'll make you
eat this test
 (he puts the pencil
 on Melvin's nose)
---pencil first.

Cary releases his grip. He turns to Mrs. De Boer.

CARY (CONT'D)

Situation's under control.

Cary sits down and resumes taking his test.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY (LATER)

It's later and Melvin drops his test at Mrs. De Boer's feet and leaves the room.

Linda finishes a moment later, hands her test in and leaves.

Cary continues working diligently.

Mrs. De Boer looks up at the clock, it says eleven.

MRS. DE BOER

Time's up.

Cary drops his pencil.

He looks up at Mrs. De Boer with pleading eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CARY

Sure you can't grade this?

Mrs. De Boer looks at him sternly but doesn't say a word.

Cary hands her his test.

CARY (CONT'D)

Please.

She walks back to her desk and pulls out an answer key. She immediately gets to work grading it.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY (LATER)

The clock reads 11:10AM. Cary paces with his fingers crossed.

Mrs. De Boer begins counting his mistakes and totaling up the exam. She writes a number down, then looks up at Cary with an emotionless, business-like attitude.

MRS. DE BOER

You passed.

Cary jubilantly leaps in the air and pumps his fist.

CARY

YES!!!

He's a bundle of excitement. Mrs. De Boer continues to be business-like in spite of his joy.

CARY (CONT'D)

Can you write something down on paper that says I passed?

A fleeting smile crosses Mrs. De Boer's lips.

MRS. DE BOER

Yes.

She pulls out some stationary and handwrites a letter. She stamps it with an official state stamp then hands it to Cary along with his release form from jail.

MRS. DE BOER (CONT'D)

Good luck.

CARY

Can I use that pen?

Mrs. De Boer hands Cary the pen and he writes something on the back of the letter.

CARY (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Cary glances at his watch and takes off running.

EXT. VELDA'S HOUSE - DAY

It's pouring as a drenched and winded Cary runs up to the door of Velda's house and RINGS the doorbell. He glances at his watch---11:18AM.

A moment later Desiree opens the door. She's flabbergasted.

DESIREE
Um, what're you doing here?

CARY
I passed.

He hands her the note with his test results. Desiree looks at it briefly.

DESIREE
So.

CARY
Doesn't that make things better?

DESIREE
No.

The rain keeps falling on Cary.

CARY
What do you see in him?

DESIREE
He's responsible, stable and I trust him. That's more than I can say for you.

CARY
I'm never gonna be perfect, but I love you and I always will.

VELDA (O.S.)
Desiree, who's there?

Desiree turns and shouts to Velda.

DESIREE
No one important.

Cary hangs his head in the rain.

CARY
Tell me what you want---I'll do it.

Desiree struggles with her emotions.

DESIREE
I want you to leave.

CARY
You really love him?

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE
What kind of question is that?

CARY
Easy....If you know the answer.

Desiree looks away from Cary.

DESIREE
Of course.

CARY
Look me in the eye and tell me.
I'll never see you again.

She looks Cary in the eye but can't tell him. She lies to herself.

DESIREE
I don't have to tell you anything.

CARY
You can't.

DESIREE
I can, I just don't feel like it.

Velda walks into view behind Desiree. Her jaw drops.

VELDA
What's he doing here?!!

DESIREE
Leaving.

Velda picks up a cordless phone and dials.

VELDA
(into phone)
Milton. Cary's on my front steps.
I want him arrested.

CARY
I love you...

DESIREE
You better leave if you know what's
good for you.

Cary turns to leave, then stops, turning back to Desiree.

CARY
What's your wedding song?

DESIREE
That's none of your business.

CARY
Probably some meaningless pop song.

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE
It's "Pachelbel's Canon."

CARY
(sarcastic)
That's original. He come up with
that on his own or did he get help?

Desiree is offended.

DESIREE
What's wrong with it?! It's a
beautiful classical piece.

CARY
I thought you were more original
than that. Why not somethin' like
"Gold Dust Woman?"

Desiree looks annoyed. He's struck a chord.

DESIREE
Cheap shot...I don't think about his
money, but you know what? He makes
more in one concert than you'll ever
make in a year.

CARY
And you had more fun in one night
with me than you had in a year with
him.

Cary glances at his watch, then hears a POLICE SIREN.

CARY (CONT'D)
They're playing my song. Gotta run.

Cary turns and bolts off into the pouring rain.

He sprints across Velda's lawn and cuts through some bushes
just as Milton's car pulls up the driveway.

INT. VELDA'S HOUSE - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Milton remains calm as he speaks to a hysterical Velda.

VELDA
He was right here!

DESIREE
I don't know *who* that was.

MILTON
Was it Cary?

Desiree shakes her head "no" and avoids eye contact.

Milton glances at the paper in Desiree's hand. He can see
the word "G.E.D." on it.

(CONTINUED)

VELDA

Why are you protecting that creature?!
 (turning to Milton)
 He was just here! I saw him with my
 own two eyes!

Milton looks at his watch: 11:28AM. He pulls a police radio
 out of his jacket.

MILTON

I'll find out.

EXT. SANDWICH, MA - DAY (RAINING)

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Cary hurdling a bush.

Running past someone walking their dog---they get tangled in
 the leash and fall.

Looking up at a digital bank clock that reads 11:28AM. He
 picks up the pace.

Cary suddenly stops cold as he passes Velda's Jewelry Store.
 In the window is an announcement of Desiree's wedding with a
 photo of Desiree and Rafferty smiling. Cary stares at it in
 the pouring rain. He looks defeated as reality hits home.
 He turns and shuffles slowly through the rain.

A bolt of lightning flashes overhead. The THUNDER shakes
 Cary from his trance. He begins to run again.

The police station is in view. Cary breaks into an all out
 sprint like an Olympian going for a gold medal.

MILTON (V.O.)

Dispatch, this is Milton. Has Payne
 checked in yet?

Cary leaps up the steps and through the front door of the
 police station.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

(radio voice)
 Yeah, Milt. The drowned rat got in
 just under the wire.

INT. VELDA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Milton speaks into the phone.

MILTON

Thanks.

He disconnects, glances at the paper in Desiree's hand again,
 then turns to Velda.

(CONTINUED)

MILTON (CONT'D)

You better get your eyes checked.
There's no way he could've made it
cross town in five minutes.

Velda steams as she stares at Desiree suspiciously.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Cary lies lifeless on his cot with a pillow over his face.

The cell door opens and Marni walks in carrying a folder.
She looks at Cary's body.

MARNI

Cary.
(more concerned)
Cary!

He doesn't move.

Marni leans over in pinches him hard.

Cary jumps up.

CARY

Ouch! Why'd you do that!?

MARNI

I thought you were dead.

CARY

I wish.

MARNI

Did you pass?

CARY

Yeah, but it doesn't matter.

Cary lays back down on his cot. He puts the pillow back
over his face.

MARNI

What're you doing?

Cary talks through his pillow.

CARY

Trying to kill myself.

MARNI

How's it workin'?

Cary removes the pillow.

CARY

As good as everything else.

He's quiet for a beat.

(CONTINUED)

CARY (CONT'D)

To quote Dire Straits, "Sometimes you're the windshield, sometimes you're the bug." I'm squashed.

Marni looks at him then lights up with energy.

MARNI

Hey! You've got your G.E.D. That might be enough to keep you outta prison.

CARY

Who cares? I can rot here, there, or on the street. It doesn't matter. She doesn't want me.

MARNI

Is she angry at you or indifferent?

Cary looks up at her.

CARY

She's pissed.

MARNI

(happy as a clam)
That's great!

CARY

How's that?

MARNI

Indifference is the opposite of love. If she didn't care at all you'd be in trouble. If she's pissed she still loves you.

Cary scratches his head trying to figure this out.

CARY

It's good that she's pissed at me?

MARNI

Yeah. You just have to get her unpissed.

CARY

(desperate)
I gotta get out of here.

MARNI

What do they have on you?

CARY

Only parole violation. I haven't broken the law yet---just bent it.

(CONTINUED)

MARNI

Good. Get to work on these.
 (hands Cary the folder)
 They're college applications.

Cary opens the folder.

MARNI (CONT'D)

There's also an invite to Desiree's wedding.

CARY

How'd you get it?

MARNI

Jen works at the printer.

She pauses for a moment.

MARNI (CONT'D)

It's gonna be on a boat.

CARY

(sarcastically hopeful)
 The Titanic?

INT. CELLBLOCK - NIGHT

Cary sits on his cot working diligently on his college applications as Milton watches from the hallway unnoticed.

MILTON

What do you have there?

CARY

College application.

Milton laughs. Cary is dead serious.

MILTON

You really think you're gonna go to college?

CARY

Hell yeah....If I don't get sent back to the pen. Desiree's been trying to get me to do something with my life for a long time. Besides, I'm not worth a shit as a criminal 'cause I keep getting caught.

Milton realizes Cary is serious.

MILTON

What're you gonna major in?

CARY

Physical education.

Another beat.

(CONTINUED)

CARY (CONT'D)

I know I'm not book smart but I can run good and I like kids.

Milton shrugs his shoulders. Seems like a good answer.

CARY (CONT'D)

What do you think of the guy she's marryin'?

MILTON

What's it matter to you?

Cary looks around his cell. He's dying to know but tries to hide his interest.

CARY

Not much now. Just curious.

Milton doesn't say anything so Cary plows on.

CARY (CONT'D)

Desiree says he's stable. Seems like a wealthy assho---pardon my French---slimeball. The guy's phone's more important to him than her.

Silence for a beat.

Cary drums with his fingers. Then he holds a hand up to his ear.

CARY (CONT'D)

I don't hear you defending your future son-in-law.

Milton frowns.

MILTON

No need to. That's her choice.

CARY

I'm no prize but she deserves more than a cell phone with a wallet. She'll never have fun with that stiff.

Milton turns and starts walking away. He stops when Cary talks.

CARY (CONT'D)

She's got a beautiful laugh. It'd be a sin if she never used it again, sir.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE MORTIMER, a graying man with a somber face sits on the bench.

(CONTINUED)

Cary and his ancient court appointed attorney, JAY RUMSTOCK, sit before the judge. Milton sits with the youthful prosecuting attorney, KELLY SCHULTZ.

Judge Mortimer looks at Cary with contempt.

JUDGE MORTIMER
Mr. Payne, weren't you just released
from prison?

CARY
Yeah.

JUDGE MORTIMER
Why're you in such a rush to go back?

CARY
I'm not.

Cary's elderly attorney unenthusiastically stands up and coughs vigorously. Any moment he may cough up a lung.

He pauses to straighten himself up. He checks his hand to see if he coughed anything up. Nope. Then he looks down at notes in a folder.

JAY RUMSTOCK
Your honor. My client has proven he
is a fit father in spite of his DUI
charges.

Judge Mortimer looks at the lawyer, annoyed.

JUDGE MORTIMER
Jay, that's for your eleven O'clock.

Jay looks down at the folder, then at Cary. He nonchalantly flips through his folder, pausing to have a coughing fit.

JUDGE MORTIMER (CONT'D)
While he's looking, let's hear from
the prosecution.
(he turns to Kelly)
Miss Schultz?

Kelly stands up very formally.

KELLY SCHULTZ
Your honor, Mr. Payne violated three
counts of his parole. He failed to
report to his parole officer, he was
out past curfew, and he left
Barnstable County without permission.

CARY
But I came back.

JUDGE MORTIMER
You'll speak when you are spoken to,
young man.

(CONTINUED)

Cary puts one hand over his mouth and does a mock salute with his other. Judge Mortimer is anything but pleased.

JUDGE MORTIMER (CONT'D)
Milt, what's your recommendation?
Should we send him to see the parole board?

Milton stands up and looks uncertain.

MILTON
The three parole violations were in a twenty-four hour period and could be grouped as one violation. His record indicates he's a non-violent offender.

The judge is caught off guard by Milton's response.

JUDGE MORTIMER
Anything else?

MILTON
He's made good use of his time in jail by acquiring his G.E.D.

Judge Mortimer turns to Cary.

JUDGE MORTIMER
Anything you would like to add, young man?

CARY
Yeah. I'm working on going to college. I've done a couple applications already.

Judge Mortimer nods, then scratches his head.

JUDGE MORTIMER
How much time has he served?

Kelly Schultz looks at a paper in a folder.

KELLY SCHULTZ
Four days.

The judge thinks for a brief moment.

JUDGE MORTIMER
Let's make it one week.

He looks at Cary gravely.

JUDGE MORTIMER (CONT'D)
But I will not see you again in my courtroom. Next time you will go directly before the parole board and likely spend the rest of your parole in the penitentiary.

EXT. VELDA'S FLOWER GARDEN - DAY

Velda talks on a cordless phone as she walks through her garden picking out weeds and dead flowers.

VELDA
He's getting out on her wedding day!
What kind of screwed up justice system
is this?!

She pauses to listen and snip a dying rose. In the b.g. Desiree sticks her head outside and listens.

VELDA (CONT'D)
I don't want him showing up and
ruining the wedding. Thank God
Rafferty wants to have it on a ship.

She pauses to listen. Desiree walks outside, still unnoticed.

VELDA (CONT'D)
Don't tell me what to do! I'll take
care of him on my own!

Velda disconnects the call. Desiree walks up to her.

DESIREE
Who was that?

VELDA
The caterer. They had a problem but
it's under control now. Don't worry
about it dear.

INT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - DAY

Velda, provocatively dressed, smiles brightly as she approaches fat Larry at the front desk. Larry takes notice but goes with the routine.

VELDA
Hi!

LARRY
Milt's not here. He works tonight.

VELDA
That's okay, I wasn't looking for
him.

Larry looks surprised.

LARRY
Something I can help you with?

VELDA
Maybe. Are you working tomorrow
morning?

(CONTINUED)

LARRY

Yeah, someone's gotta hold down the fort while Milt's at the wedding.

VELDA

What time is Cary Payne to be released?

LARRY

We usually cut 'em loose 'round ten in the morning.

Velda changes her position so that her shapely leg protrudes from her skirt.

VELDA

Could you wait until noon?

Larry is hesitant as he lustily eyes up Velda's leg as he might a juicy steak.

LARRY

If it's okay with Milt it's okay with me.

VELDA

I'd rather not have Milton involved. It's just to protect Desiree. You know how he can get---following the law to the letter.

Larry is nervous.

LARRY

Well, I don't....

Velda puts a finger over his mouth to hush him.

VELDA

What're you doing next Friday night?

LARRY

Um, I dunno.

VELDA

Maybe you can come over for a drink...
(she hesitates briefly)
And a snack if I'm not too tired.

She gives Larry her most seductive look. He wants her and she knows it.

LARRY

Um, I'd like that.

VELDA

Do we have a deal?

Larry is salivating.

(CONTINUED)

LARRY

Yeah.

She winks at him and smiles.

VELDA

I'll see you next Friday.

Velda leaves with a seductive walk. Larry lustily watches her go.

EXT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Cary's Mustang sits in a lot behind the police station.

Velda wears a blonde wig and dark clothes. She nervously approaches Cary's car.

She looks for the gas tank, then opens it with one finger nail as though it might be carrying a disease.

She removes the gas cap with a rag, then pours a liter Coke bottle filled with sugar into the tank. She looks around, paranoid, closes the gas tank and darts off.

INT. DESIREE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Desiree meticulously organizes things on her dresser for better efficiency in the morning. She appears obsessive about it and the obsession seems to be repressed nervousness.

Out of the corner of her eye she notices the G.E.D. letter Cary gave her.

She picks it up and opens it, then notices something written on the back. She turns it over and reads it.

CARY (V.O.)

Des, "I'm sorry now, and I don't know how to get it back to good." I love you. That's Matchbox 20.

(pause for a beat)

I added the I love you part in, though. Love, Cary.

She looks at the letter a little longer then speaks to herself.

DESIREE

You should've thought about that before you stole the jewelry.

RAFFERTY (O.S.)

What was that, dear?

Desiree jumps! She turns to see Rafferty standing in the doorway holding something behind his back.

(CONTINUED)

DESIREE

You scared me. What're you doing here?

RAFFERTY

I just wanted to give you a pre-wedding present.

Rafferty walks toward her and hands her a black case. She opens it revealing a magnificent sapphire and diamond necklace like the one Cary tried to steal for her years earlier.

DESIREE

Wow, this is too much. You shouldn't have....

RAFFERTY

Don't be silly. Tomorrow you'll be my wife. I love you. Anything you want will be yours.

Rafferty puts his hands on her waist in a caring gesture.

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)

You've seemed a little distracted lately. Is something bothering you?

A long beat. Desiree hesitates.

DESIREE

No---not really. I've just been worried about where we'll live...

She wants to say more but she doesn't.

RAFFERTY

I've pondered this long and hard. I know you don't want to live in England---that's fine, I get back there enough when I tour to see family.

(looks at her tenderly)

After our honeymoon we'll go on a long holiday to find a home---maybe upstate New York---even here if you really like it.

(sounds supportive)

As far as work, if you feel it's necessary you can always free load. Sell your writing independently. You've written free load before.

DESIREE

Free lance.

Rafferty is genuinely embarrassed. He realizes his mistake.

RAFFERTY

Sorry. Free lance.

Rafferty tenderly touches Desiree's cheek.

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)

The bottom line is I know I was rushing things and I hope you're ready to get married. Are you?

DESIREE

Yes, I'm fine...and the necklace is beautiful.

RAFFERTY

Good. I don't want you to forget how much you mean to me.

DESIREE

I know. Thanks.

She gives Rafferty a slightly awkward hug. They part.

RAFFERTY

At noon tomorrow we sail into a new life together.

Desiree doesn't think but blurts out a reply.

DESIREE

I'll bring my life jacket.

INT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - DAY

Larry slowly goes over paperwork for Cary. He's triple-checking everything while Cary gets more impatient.

CARY

How 'bout you give me my keys and I'll come back later?

LARRY

Almost done.

Cary looks at his watch---it's nearly noon.

Larry hands Cary a paper to sign. He points to a line.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Sign there.

Cary tries to sign but the pen doesn't work. He hands him the sheet back.

CARY

There you go.

Larry looks at it.

LARRY

You didn't sign.

(CONTINUED)

CARY

(yelling)

The pen doesn't work!!! I'll come
back and write my name in blood but
I gotta get out of here now!!!

Larry glances up at the clock. It says 11:56AM. Then he
hands Cary a new pen. Cary quickly signs.

CARY (CONT'D)

Can I get my keys now?!

Larry looks in a manilla envelope for Cary's keys.

LARRY

I don't see them. You sure you had
them?

CARY

I was in my car when they arrested
me! The car's out back so you've
got the keys!!!

Larry glances at the clock again, then looks in the envelope
one more time.

LARRY

Here they are. I can't believe I
didn't see them in there.

CARY

Your stomach must've blocked your
view.

Cary grabs the keys from him and bolts out the door.

MUSIC: William Tell Overture (Lone Ranger Theme).

EXT. SANDWICH POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Cary races around the building and jumps into his Mustang.
He turns the key and the ENGINE ROARS to life.

INT./EXT. FORD MUSTANG/SANDWICH - CONTINUOUS

Cary throws it in gear and guns it. The TIRES CHIRP, then
the ENGINE KNOCKS and shudders to a halt.

CARY

Shit!

Cary turns the key again, the engine sounds sick and doesn't
turn over. Cary BANGS the steering wheel.

He jumps out of the car and notices a beat up, blue station
wagon parked with the keys in the ignition.

INT./EXT. STATION WAGON/SANDWICH - CONTINUOUS

He quickly climbs in the car and puts his hand on the key.
He hesitates.

CARY

Shit! What're you doing?

He springs out of the car and runs as fast as he can.

INT. LIMO - DAY (MOVING)

Desiree, Velda and Milton ride in the limo en route to the wedding. Desiree fidgets, then opens the power sun roof.

VELDA

What're you doing?

DESIREE

Getting fresh air.

VELDA

You're going to mess up your hair.

Milton looks on with annoyed boredom as this is another reason he divorced Velda.

EXT. BUSY SIDEWALK - DAY

Cary races down the sidewalk as people walk in and out of shops creating a never ending flow of obstructions for him.

He runs into a MIDDLE AGED COUPLE, knocking them over. He gets up quickly---apologizes briefly---and continues running.

He runs between tables at an outdoor cafe trying to be polite as possible, shouting "excuse me" as he goes.

He bumps into a WAITER with a full tray and sends him sprawling, splattering food and drinks on other patrons.

EXT. CAPE COD CANAL - DAY

A magnificent sailing ship from the 1800's is lavishly decorated for the wedding. The ship is a buzz of activity with well dressed guests and crew.

The white limo pulls up to the pier with Desiree standing through the open sun roof.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Cary continues running all out. He's sweating and pushing as hard as he can.

EXT. HISTORIC SHIP - DAY

The vessel is about to set sail.

(CONTINUED)

Desiree looks out onto land, wondering if Cary is out there somewhere. Rafferty stands behind her.

RAFFERTY
What're you looking at, dear?

Desiree is slightly startled.

DESIREE
Nothing. I'm just tired.

RAFFERTY
I was so excited I couldn't sleep either.

The ship is untied from the dock and begins heading out of the channel.

EXT. CAPE COD CANAL AND BEACH - DAY

Cary runs along the dock and sees the ship at the end of the canal heading out to sea. He bolts after it.

There's a strong breeze---but the ship moves swiftly through rough water. He's too late.

Cary watches the ship carrying his dreams out to sea. He looks devastated.

EXT. HISTORIC SHIP - DAY (MOVING)

The vessel pitches side to side in the strong wind and choppy water causing most passengers sway or hold on to keep balance (this continues throughout).

Desiree's hair blows in her face as Velda uses a can of hair spray in a vain attempt to keep it in place. Milton watches.

DESIREE
Give it up, Mom.

VELDA
I want you to look beautiful.

MILTON
She *is* beautiful. Let her be happy for a minute.

Velda gives up. Rafferty saunters over to them.

RAFFERTY
They're not going out as far, with the water rough as it is. We'll just have the ceremony and head back to shore for the celebration.

EXT. CAPE COD CANAL AND BEACH - DAY

Cary looks longingly at the ship. It holds steady less than a half mile off shore.

(CONTINUED)

Cary's expression changes from one of defeat to maniacal hope. He spies two eight year old boys fighting over an inflatable duck raft.

BOY #1
It's my turn!

BOY #2
No, it's my turn!

BOY #1
Is not!

BOY #2
Is too!

Cary interrupts them by confiscating the flimsy raft.

CARY
It's my turn.

They look at him but don't say a word.

Cary runs with the duck raft into the ocean surf. He leaps onto the raft while lunging over a breaker and begins fiercely paddling with his arms.

EXT. HISTORIC SHIP - DAY

Desiree and Rafferty rock back and forth while the wedding ceremony commences. A bronze-tan PRIEST, twenties, reads from his bible while holding on to a stationary pole.

PRIEST
We are gathered together, in the
sight of God, to join Desiree and
Rafferty in holy matrimony.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Cary continues to tread the water fiercely while gaining on the ship.

A WHISTLE BLOWS.

He turns to see a lifeguard signal him to come in.

CARY
(resuming paddling)
Yeah, right.

As he paddles he notices a large object swim past him below the surface of the water. He thinks "shark". He stops paddling for a few seconds then looks at the ship.

CARY (CONT'D)
Shit!

He resumes paddling, picking up his pace.

(CONTINUED)

Another shape swims underneath him. He can't tell what it is, but it doesn't appear friendly. The rough water and darkening sky make it seem more ominous. Half of Cary's sweat is from nervousness.

CARY (CONT'D)

This is a mean duck I got here, so stay away.

He paddles frantically, looking in all directions neurotically.

EXT. HISTORIC SHIP - DAY

The priest is lecturing on the importance of good values as he holds on to his pole.

PRIEST

Love knows no bounds. With Desiree and Rafferty it was able to cross the ocean to be fulfilled. Love is fearless....

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Cary's less than forty yards from the ship.

He sees another dark shape swim beneath him. This time he gets a good look at it---relief shows on his face. It's only a school of blue fish.

CARY

Thank God.

Then he sees a larger shape pass under water. This time there's no mistaking it---it's a mako shark following the blue fish! Real panic sets in.

CARY (CONT'D)

Oh, shit!

He paddles fiercely with a wide-eyed look as he nears the ship.

A dorsal fin breaks the surface off to his left!

CARY (CONT'D)

Come on duck. Faster!

He reaches the front of the ship. Several ropes dangle a good six feet above the water.

The dorsal fin vanishes as Cary sizes up the situation. He slowly tries to stand up on his duck raft.

Cary wobbles as he gets to his feet.

EXT. HISTORIC SHIP - SAME

The priest is about to start the vows.

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST

Do you, Desiree Andrea Meyers...

A LOUD SPLASH interrupts the priest.

EXT. OCEAN - SAME

Cary flounders in the water, then awkwardly climbs on his duck raft. He tries to stand up again.

EXT. HISTORIC SHIP - SAME

The priest continues.

PRIEST

...take Rafferty Prescott Adams the
Third to be your lawfully wedded
husband. To love and to cherish, in
sickness and in health, until death
do you part?

DESIREE

I...

Cary, soaked and exhausted, flops onto the deck with a THUD as he topples over an ice sculpture of Venus.

The falling sculpture startles Velda, causing her to fall. It CRASHES to the deck, scattering ice everywhere! The GUESTS gasp and gape.

Desiree stares at Cary in shock.

Rafferty turns and barks to a couple of burly USHERS.

RAFFERTY

Get him out of here!

Velda begins standing up.

VELDA

Throw him off!

Velda slips and falls on the ice, breaking the heel off one of her shoes.

Two ushers grab the exhausted Cary by the arms.

DESIREE

Cary!

CARY

I was in the neighborhood, thought
I'd drop by.

USHER #1

(to Rafferty)
Where do you want him?

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY

When you catch something you don't
want you throw it back.

The ushers look at each other then drag Cary toward the side.

CARY

There's a shark out there!

Velda gets up again.

VELDA

Good. Maybe it can stomach you,
because I sure as hell can't!

Desiree watches Cary. She's at a loss for words as her
emotions are more turbulent than the ocean.

The ushers try to hoist Cary up as he struggles.

DESIREE

Wait!

RAFFERTY

I've been waiting long enough.

One of the ushers slips on the ice and the three of them
fall to the deck. Cary gets loose.

Velda turns to Milton.

VELDA

Arrest him!

Milton ignores her.

Cary looks for a place to run, then focuses on the mast. He
quickly climbs up ten feet.

Rafferty looks at Cary with contempt. Then he turns to the
wedding guests.

RAFFERTY

I apologize for the disruption. On
with the ceremony!

Desiree looks up at Cary with concern.

Rafferty takes Desiree by the arm, escorting her away.

Cary jumps down from the mast.

CARY

I object to the wedding. He doesn't
love her!

RAFFERTY

No one asked your opinion.

(CONTINUED)

CARY
Why do you love her?

RAFFERTY
I'm not going to waste my time
answering such a ludicrous question.

CARY
It's not ludicrous.

Cary turns to ask a six year old FLOWER GIRL as an aside.

CARY (CONT'D)
What's ludicrous mean?

The flower girl whispers to Cary.

FLOWER GIRL
I think it means silly.

Milton stares at Rafferty deeply.

MILTON
I'd like to know why.

Desiree straightens up.

DESIREE
Me too.

Rafferty is shocked, he lets go of her arm.

RAFFERTY
I can't believe this!

CARY
If you're so smart you should be
able to answer it.

Everyone looks on. Rafferty feels like he's on trial.

RAFFERTY
She's a beautiful girl.

CARY
Woman. She's a woman.

RAFFERTY
Girl, woman. They're the same.

CARY
Why not marry the flower girl instead?
She's cute.

There's silence from the guests but the flower girl giggles.

CARY (CONT'D)
Whatcha gonna do when Desiree gets
old and wrinkled?

(CONTINUED)

RAFFERTY
I'll still love her.

Desiree looks at Rafferty, uncertain of the truth.

DESIREE
Will you?

RAFFERTY
Of course, dear.

CARY
You don't know what's so wonderful
about her, do you?

Cary pauses, half expecting an answer.

Rafferty shakes his head in disgust. He can't believe this
is happening.

CARY (CONT'D)
She's got a smile that'll warm a
cold night. And when I hear her
laugh it's like being a kid all over
again. She's not something to put
in a museum---that's ludicrous.

Cary turns for approval of using the new word. The flower
girl smiles and nods.

CARY (CONT'D)
She's like the ocean---always changing
and always the same in some ways.
You can't make her into a swimming
pool.

RAFFERTY
You're saying that because you lost
her to a better man.

CARY
She deserves better than you or me.
But if what you can give her will
make her truly happy, I wish you
both the best of luck.

Cary looks at Desiree. He's said what he wanted to say.

CARY (CONT'D)
You got a wedding to do. I'm outta
here.

RAFFERTY
Good.

Cary looks over the side and sees his rubber duck raft has
floated away.

He sees a davit with a small life boat attached.

(CONTINUED)

CARY
Can I borrow this?

RAFFERTY
No.

CARY
Then I guess I gotta stay. My duck
floated off.

Rafferty looks hot under the collar.

RAFFERTY
Take the boat and leave.

Rafferty begins trying to restore order to the chaos and
attempts to lead everyone to the front of the ship.

RAFFERTY (CONT'D)
(shouts to guests)
I apologize for the interruption.
We'll resume the ceremony at the
bow.

Desiree looks flustered. She walks between her parents.
Milton turns to her and whispers.

MILTON
Are you sure you're doing the right
thing? It's not too late.

Desiree straightens up and has resolved to go through with
the wedding.

DESIREE
Yes, I'm sure.

Cary begins working the davit's pulley system. He looks at
Desiree, her back is turned toward him.

Desiree turns around to look at Cary. He smiles at her and
extends his hand toward her as a final gesture.

Velda watches Desiree as she glances at the suave Rafferty,
then back at Cary.

VELDA
Don't even think about it!

A mischievous smile crosses Desiree's face.

CARY
Gimme your heart, make it real or
let's forget about it.

Desiree turns and runs to Cary and embraces him.

DESIREE
I can't forget about it.

(CONTINUED)

CARY

Then gimme your heart.

DESIREE

You've already got it.

Cary hops in the life boat, then lifts Desiree in.

Rafferty realizes what's going on. He runs across the deck and slips on the ice and falls gracelessly.

Milton goes over to help lower the boat. He turns to Velda.

MILTON

Get over here---I could use your help. It's a chance to make your daughter happy.

Velda reluctantly walks over and helps Milton with the ropes.

Desiree and Cary look up at them.

DESIREE

Thanks.

CARY

Thanks, Mom. Dad.

Velda doesn't say a word. She forces a smile---but it looks unnatural.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Cary and Desiree sit next to each other. They each have an oar and row the boat together.

DESIREE

What do you think, Vegas?

CARY

Think your dad'll let me go?

DESIREE

Yeah, if you promise to be good.

CARY

How 'bout you meet me at my place, I don't want your mom getting me arrested again.

DESIREE

You're not leaving my sight 'till we're married.

They stop rowing for a moment and kiss passionately. FREEZE FRAME.

FINAL FADE OUT.

THE END