

A Tale of Taxidermy

by
Jon Ecklund

Based on The Seagull

By
Anton Chekhov

Version for July 17th, 2004
Reading

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FADE IN:

COMMERCE REFUSE-TO-ENERGY FACILITY. MID MORNING

A trash dump. Seagulls feast on piles of garbage. One soars into the sky we follow it up and out over a road. Traffic below. We swoop lower over a city bus.

NOW INSIDE THE BUS

Through the somewhat dusty and grafitti-scratched windows we see block after block of East LA then Hollywood go by, the signs for turkey specials in the grocery store windows.

We slowly get a look around the bus and its occupants, finally settling on GABRIEL MILLER- Late 20's, Bohemian. He absentmindedly plays with his puca shell necklace as he watches the scenery go by. As the bus finally comes near his stop, he signals the driver and begins searching out the window. He smiles as he sees someone waiting for him.

AT THE BUS STOP

MADIGAN RUDNICK a mid to late 20's woman dressed all in black with dark sunglasses impatiently drags hard on her cigarette while leaning against a parked BMW.

MADIGAN

(smashing out her
cigarette on the ground)

Finally! Thank GOD!

As GABRIEL exits the bus, MADIGAN de-activates the BMW'S car alarm with an obnoxious "chirp", hops in the driver's seat with absolutely no acknowledgement of GABRIEL whatsoever. As he approaches the car grinning, MADIGAN momentarily considers speeding away. Finally, she hits the door unlock button and GABRIEL cheerfully lumbers into the passenger seat. The car squeals into traffic.

INSIDE THE CAR:

Stop and go traffic. Silence in the car.

MADIGAN
Why don't you just get a car?

GABRIEL shakes his head and smiles as he looks out the window.

MADIGAN
Well!?

GABRIEL
Why do you only wear black?

MADIGAN
(re: traffic)
Augh! This is impossible!

She pounds the steering wheel and lays on the horn. GABRIEL almost looks amused.

MADIGAN (CONT'D)
(to car in front of her)
C'mon! JACKASS!

GABRIEL
(to himself)
Simple question.

She guns the engine, passes the guy, (flips him off), returns to her original lane.

She shoots GABRIEL a look.

MADIGAN
Black suits my mood.

GABRIEL
What could be wrong?
I mean, you have this ...car...

MADIGAN
(frustrated with traffic)
AAAAGH!

Her Driving is getting more intense.

MADIGAN (cont'd)
It's not about that and you know it. You can be totally poor and be happy.

GABRIEL

In theory, sure. But in reality: I make 200 a week teaching, and my rent is 800! How do people ever afford a car like this? The American dream!? I'm living the Mexican dream: I live in America, and I have a job. That's as far as it goes.

MADIGAN

(to car on the right)

THAT'S right Dickhead! "There IS someone in this lane!" ASSHOLE!

She pulls a cigarette out and steers precariously while trying to light it.

MADIGAN (cont'd)

We are never going to make it. Henry's been planning this for so long...

GABRIEL

Oh...right. I forgot.

She smokes, he watches, stares out window.

GABRIEL

Thanksgiving is turning into such a lavish production.

No reaction from MADIGAN.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

(after some thought)

Henry and Jules:... They've been an item since you were in high school, haven't they?

No response.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

Makes sense...see they are both creative people...like minds gravitate toward one another.

(to himself)

They're both a little weird, but...

MADIGAN smokes harder.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

(changing course)

I'm just saying look at us: We are both... practical people. I love you, so I go on these ridiculous dysfunctional family things and I ride the bus for hours anytime you want to get together and I tolerate your smoking...and...what do I get from you?

MADIGAN says nothing but seems moved.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Exactly. Nothing. I guess it makes sense. I mean, I don't have any MONEY! I actually like teaching- so I'll never have any money...

MADIGAN

Shut up! I love...your love. I just can't love you back-that's all.

GABRIEL stares out the window. Long silence.

MADIGAN

Since we graduated you've become so fixated on money. You act like there's nothing worse than being without money.

GABRIEL scoffs.

MADIGAN

Well, there is! And just-
(stopping herself, almost
in tears)
Nevermind. You wouldn't understand.

He does.

GABRIEL

Gimme a cigarette.

she reaches for the cigarettes and suddenly has to slam on the brakes to avoid rear-ending someone...

MADIGAN

MOTHER-

GABRIEL

-FUCK!

we float up high in the sky as their car becomes a tiny speck heading for an incredibly crowded HOLLYWOOD FREEWAY.

The sounds of seagulls and waves crashing in the distance as we slowly descend back to Earth, getting closer and closer to a conspicuously wealthy designer-house. The house is surrounded by brambly land, quite a lot of it, and could easily be mistaken for a highschool designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Two men stand in the enormous front yard.

They are HENRY and his uncle DEAN. HENRY is scanning the roads below the Malibu house watching for someone.

DEAN

I just don't know what to do up here.

(Sighs)

I never thought I'd live this long I guess.

Enjoy your youth. It goes so fast...

Nothing left to do but fade into the sunset now...

HENRY continues to scan below.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(Laughs)

This is the twilight of the age of Aquarious... The air out here makes my bones hurt, I can fall asleep anytime of day, even though I'm never really comfortable...

HENRY

Mmm hmmm. You should move to a real city.

DEAN

I never intended to live out here! It embarrasses me to tell you the truth. I used to come here to hide out-get some rest, try to impress a foxy paralegal...but... I never really got any rest because I'd no sooner get here than I'd have to have a contractor come out to fix some earthquake damage, or mudslide damage, or some other major damned thing or another! The contractors would stay as long as I was here, so there was never any privacy and it'd wind up costing a fortune!

(realizes)

I never really liked coming here! Now, there's no place else to go...

HENRY

(in his own thoughts)

...this is what we never see. It's right here all the time. We completely ignore it. A theatre of elements. We'll start at five-thirty. Sharp. Just as the moon is taking over.

DEAN looks at HENRY admiringly.

DEAN

Ahh...Henry. That's what I mean-see you're a-I could never do what you do!

They share a moment of understanding.

DEAN (CONT'D)

(with slightly untoward interest)

So when is Julia going to get here?

HENRY

(checking his watch)

She should be here now.

Noticing his Uncle for the first time.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Don't you think you might want to spruce up a little for dinner? You look like a sleepwalker.

DEAN

I know! How does it happen!? Is it, the hair? Or the clothes? Oh Henry it doesn't matter, I've always looked like this.

(almost to himself)

God, I miss the Seventies. Everyone's hair was bad, and my secretary picked out my suits.

(sighs)

He takes a sip of his drink.

DEAN (cont'd)

Why is your mother so testy today?

HENRY

(with a smile)

She's bored. Jealous.

(MORE)

HENRY(cont'd)

She doesn't even know anything about my piece but she already hates it.

DEAN

Well I can say a lot of things about my sister...

DEAN shares a knowing look with HENRY

DEAN (cont'd)

But I know she can't hate anything you do.

HENRY

Wrong. Never underestimate that ego.

Last month when I couldn't make the rent and I asked her for a little help within earshot of another human being, she went into an Oscar-worthy fit of despair about how broke she is.

(incredulous)

To me! I know she's loaded!

DEAN

Well...maybe that wasn't really the point-

HENRY

The point was it embarrassed her. Pure and simple. Her only personal failure, right here in living-color, asking for a hand-out.

DEAN

Ah...I see.

After a time.

DEAN (cont'd)

What's this William like? He doesn't drink?

HENRY

He's alright I guess. Seems nice. His books are getting turned into grotesquely overproduced, crappy movies, so he's loaded.

DEAN

(knowing that he is)

Nervous about tonight?

HENRY scoffs at this.

HENRY

... I'm going down to wait for Jules. Maybe she missed the turn since you put all those huge bushes in.

HENRY goes.

DEAN

(calling after him)

See! I didn't want those! They're for erosion control they tell me!

INSIDE THE HOUSE

In the room just off of the main living room, WILLIAM sits in one of the overstuffed leather chairs reading a paper.

VIVIAN enters from the kitchen carrying trivets and garnishes. VIVIAN is HENRY'S mother. She is only 41.

VIVIAN

(sweetly)

Oh...I didn't know you were still in here, sweetheart.

WILLIAM

(without looking up)

Sorry?

VIVIAN

I said 'Oh...I didn't know you were still in here, sweetheart.'

WILLIAM

(without looking up)

Mmmm.

VIVIAN begins to set the trivets out on the table and arrange the garnishes. She does so almost like a maid in a stage play: everything a little larger than life. WILLIAM is oblivious.

VIVIAN

Oh...where is this going to go? It's going to be so nice to have people here for a holiday! Like a real family!

(MORE)

VIVIAN(cont'd)

When Mother and Dad were alive we used to have huge family holidays...lots of interesting people...I can't wait for you to meet my brother's friend, Dr. Douglas...he lives up the road. You'll like him...

(trying another tack)

I've had a crush on him since the first time I stayed out here.

WILLIAM reads on without acknowledgement of her.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

(counting place settings)

Let's see...Bobby and Tim are bringing his mother- you've met Bobby, my manager...Tim is his 'partner'...

WILLIAM still reads.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

Interesting story there...

(finally)

What could you possibly be reading in the Thanksgiving Day paper that has you so engrossed?

WILLIAM

Oh. It's not. It's uh, an old Times Book Review.

VIVIAN

Oh.

she sits next to him on the arm of the chair.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Is there a review of one of yours in this one?

WILLIAM

(finally looking up)

Hmm?

VIVIAN

I said 'Is there a review of one of your books in this one?'

WILLIAM smiles up at her rather sleepily.

WILLIAM

Oh, no, no. Just interesting...
 (as he pats her)
 Think I'll go for a little walk.

He gets up, stretches, and leaves the room.

VIVIAN

(not the response she was
 looking for)
 That's actually a good idea, because I need to
 set up this table for the buffet. Maggie is
 going to bring a lot of things out here soon.
 She really needs my help...

He is already gone.

A cellphone rings.

OUT IN THE DRIVEWAY

HENRY madly scrambles through his pockets to fish out his phone.

HENRY

(into phone)
 Where are you?

FROM A HORSE STABLE WE SEE

JULIA, 22, beautiful and fresh-faced, on her cellphone.

JULIA

(flatly)
 Ojai.

HENRY (VOICE ON PHONE)

What the hell are you doing in Ojai? We are
 about to EAT! Don't tell me you're not coming-

JULIA

(slightly amused)
 I'll be there for the show. I'm leaving in
 just a little bit.

A MAN dressed entirely from head to toe as a pilgrim walks by.

JULIA (cont'd)
 (looking around)
 You wouldn't believe this thing my parents-
 well my stepmother- dragged me to: you ride
 horses along this trail...

HENRY (VOICE ON PHONE)
 I'll kill her!

JULIA
 (reassuringly)
 I'll be there I promise. I think this was her
 way of trying to bond and foil my going to
 your uncle's house- but I brought my own car,
 so don't worry.

HENRY (VOICE ON PHONE)
 You have to leave now or you'll never make it
 in time!

JULIA
 God! Okay! Calm down. I'm nervous enough-

HENRY (VOICE ON PHONE)
 (sweetly and sincere)
 Don't be ridiculous! Baby, trust your talent-

JULIA
 Is William there?

HENRY paces in the road.

HENRY
 Yes...

JULIA (VOICE ON PHONE)
 Oh my God! What's he like?

HENRY
 Nothing special- I assure you.

JULIA (VOICE ON PHONE)
 He's young?

HENRY
 (scoffing)
 Like thirty-seven!

JULIA (VOICE ON PHONE)
 (very excited)
 I love his books!

HENRY
 Never read them.

JULIA (VOICE ON PHONE)
 They're making a movie out of Common Law.

HENRY
 Oh great. I can already see the Lifetime
 blurb:
 "Woman against live-in rapist".

JULIA (VOICE ON PHONE)
 (amused)
 I thought you never read them!

HENRY
 He's just some paralegal who lucked into a
 career writing pulp-fiction based on weird
 case studies. It's pure formula. Nothing
 original.

WILLIAM approaches on foot down the driveway.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 (catching sight of
 WILLIAM)
 Uh...I...Uh-

JULIA (VOICE ON PHONE)
 What did you say? I think you cut out for a
 minute.

HENRY
 Nothing.
 You're leaving NOW, right?

JULIA (VOICE ON PHONE)
 (to someone in background)
 Just a minute, dad- I'm on the phone. You and
 Sheila go, I don't want to do the Turkey
 Trot!
 (to HENRY again)
 Soon! I promise. Don't worry, I'll be there.
 Oh God, I'm so nervous now!

HENRY
I'm DYING until you get here.

JULIA (VOICE ON PHONE)
See you soon!

She has hung up. WILLIAM is just passing HENRY on the driveway.

HENRY
(indignantly to WILLIAM)
Julia will not be here for dinner!

HENRY storms up the driveway.

WILLIAM
Oh.

LATER IN THE AFTERNOON

we see the kitchen counter where every trimming imaginable for a Thanksgiving feast is being prepared by several pairs of very capable hands. One pair of hands however, seems out of place. Everything they reach for gets snatched up by faster more effective ones.

ZOOM OUT

To reveal that VIVIAN is helplessly in the way of the kitchen staff. She finally sees a can of gourmet cranberry sauce and snatches it up, searches for the electric can opener, opens it, tries to get the sauce to fall out of the can into a serving dish with no luck. Meanwhile things are disappearing quickly out of the kitchen into the dining room. Vivian grabs a spoon and begins to try to spoon the sauce out of the can.

MAGGIE
Eh, allow me...

MAGGIE deftly slides the cranberry sauce out of the can into the dish and with nearly one motion slices it beautifully, garnishes it magnificently, and whisks it away. Vivian takes a beat.

VIVIAN
(triumphantly to no one)
There!

Away from the hustle and bustle of the kitchen, DEAN is fixing himself another scotch from behind the bar. DR. DOUGLAS sits at one of the stools, and TIM leans on the bar 'ordering'.

DEAN
(to TIM)
...I don't know... What's in an apple martini?

TIM
(changing his mind)
Never mind, they're passé anyway. Oh! I know, how about a Campari and soda?

DEAN looks blank.

DEAN
How about a scotch?

DR. DOUGLAS nods approvingly.

TIM
(to DR. DOUGLAS)
Ooh...how masculine.

A shrug from DEAN.

A DOORBELL rings and we turn to the Foyer where a MAID is admitting MADIGAN and GABRIEL. MADIGAN hands her jacket to the maid absently and walks straight in.

MADIGAN
I'm getting a drink.

GABRIEL looks embarrassed. The MAID (MARISOL) shakes her head disdainfully.

GABRIEL
(apologetically)
El trafico estaba bien pesado!

MARISOL
(indicating MADIGAN)
?Estas seguro que era el trafico?

The sounds of a Thanksgiving Day football game on television grow louder as we travel into a television room where BOBBY is sitting on a big leather sofa. His elderly mother, NANA, dozes in the accompanying armchair.

HENRY barges into the room on his way to check the door and startles BOBBY out of his thoughts. BOBBY looks a little fearful that he might have been thinking out loud.

BOBBY
(invitingly)
Hey, Hank! Just watching the game here!

HENRY
Henry. And you don't have to pretend to like football on my account.

HENRY exits. BOBBY looks at the TV. An uncomfortable thought crosses his face. He reaches for the remote control.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

VIVIAN is wiping her hands on an apron as though she's actually been doing something in the kitchen.

VIVIAN
Oh hello Gabriel! Where's Maddy?

GABRIEL
Oh, she's just-

VIVIAN
(playing the Mother of the Year)
I think the MEN are in there watching football, why don't you join them? I may need Maddy's help in the kitchen- we are just about ready to eat, so send her in, okay?

VIVIAN flits back from whence she came. GABRIEL uncomfortably wanders into where the bar is.

MADIGAN
(raising her fresh drink)
Hey professor, just in time! We were just extolling the virtues of a well-aged single-malt.

She drinks deeply. DEAN, TIM, and DR. DOUGLAS all greet GABRIEL singularly.

LATER AT DINNER

The meal is well underway. Everyone sits at the same large table. A large silver candelabra in the center of the table towers above an enormous amount of food. The presentation is elaborate...a little too elaborate.

BOBBY

(To GABRIEL)

...She was absolutely riveting in that. I tried to represent her - Went backstage right after and insisted she call me. Gave her my card. She never called. Oh! What about Bradley Davis? He was always being compared to Richard Burton. Burton had nothing on him! He had it.

(with innuendo)

What ever happened to HIM?

VIVIAN

Oh God...we were children! I haven't thought of him in years. He's probably off doing the Scottish Play somewhere.

HENRY

(privately to DEAN)

You see? That's what I'm talking about.

DEAN

What do you mean?

HENRY

"The Scottish Play"? It's MacBeth! And in a theatre, you're not supposed to say it out loud or you'll invoke a curse. Have you noticed the candelabra?

One of the candles is unlit.

HENRY (cont'd)

She heard somewhere that in theatre it's bad luck to have three lights going at once.

DEAN

Is that like three on a match?

HENRY

We're not IN A THEATRE! She hasn't set foot in one since before I was born!

(MORE)

HENRY(cont'd)

Yet any minute I'm expecting her to start sounding like James Lipton!

DEAN

I kind of admire all those kind of traditions.
(to William, trying to relate)

I love artists and writers... At Yale, they were the ones having all the fun! Man! When I was younger, all I wanted out of life was an 'old lady' and Kurt Vonnegut's career. I guess I'm not getting either! ...

WILLIAM looks glazed.

BOBBY

(still talking about some actor)

...he was a classic. Like the stars of the forties. What was his name?

(Sighs)

There's no one like that now. That was a magic time for actors! There are no truly great actors anymore.

DOUGLAS

(aware of present company)

There are still a few 'greats'. I'd say on a whole actors are much more interesting than they used to be.

BOBBY

I don't agree at all.

MADIGAN

(for HENRY's benefit)

We, as a society, are entirely too obsessed with this whole subject.

BOBBY

(to DOUGLAS)

Well, it's all a matter of taste I guess. Either you have it or you don't!

TIM

(fully intending the double entendre)

I say Dick has excellent taste!

BOBBY is not amused. DOUGLAS gets embarrassed.

TIM

(to DOUGLAS)

I see the court is not the only place I can make you blush!

VIVIAN

The Court?

DOUGLAS

(good naturedly)

Raquetball. Once a week for six months now, and he has yet to beat me.

VIVIAN

(to DOUGLAS)

Now I am thoroughly impressed.

BOBBY

(to VIVIAN)

Oh it's disgusting really. I'm stuck at home every Thursday slaving through piles of scripts for you, so he gets to go play and have a spa day!

This conversation continues on its own. HENRY watches as VIVIAN pours on the charm for WILLIAM...MADIGAN is similarly focused on HENRY:

HENRY

(to GABRIEL and MADIGAN)

No...I don't even watch movies - I know all the plots before they come out!

GABRIEL

Yes! I know! Previews are out of control! They show every detail of the story!

NANA

(to GABRIEL, re: her meat)

Young man, will you cut this please?

GABRIEL cuts the meat for her.

MADIGAN

(quoting HENRY here)

'It's not what they show, it's what they don't! Nothing new! If they can't conceive a new idea, they shouldn't make a movie!'

GABRIEL

(agreeably)

You're right. Our generation has a real identity crisis. They couldn't even name us: "Generation X"! We are obsessed with our own childhood-

NANA

(re: the pieces of meat)

Not so big...

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Sorry...so we're remaking all the films we grew up with!

HENRY

No. The worst problem is pandering to the lowest common denominator to avoid alienating the pre-teen masses and their allowances!

VIVIAN

(to WILLIAM, BOBBY, TIM
ETC.)

...I had just gotten this cute little convertible, and I was cruising along on Sunset with the top down when I met him! He pulled up next to me and invited me to join him at the Chateau Marmont for drinks! That's when I found out he had a standing reservation for a bungalow there...

HENRY

(gleefully jumping in)

Is this the BEATTY story? She always neglects to tell the rest of this story.

VIVIAN

(playfully to Henry)

What are you talking about?

HENRY

(really enjoying himself)

She never mentions that I was about four years old and in the backseat when this whole thing happened! She kept pushing me down into the floor so he wouldn't see me!

VIVIAN
 (still playful)
 Oh don't be ridiculous! You weren't even born yet!

HENRY
 Oh, right, I forgot there's some kind of warp in the space/ time continuum around mom.

VIVIAN
 I heard that!
 (to WILLIAM)
 He's heard me tell this story before so he thinks he was there!

HENRY
 (addressing everyone)
 Anyway, you can guess where this story goes!

VIVIAN
 (as innocently as snow white)
 What? There's no more to it than that! I was just explaining how I knew about his arrangement with the Chateau...

HENRY
 (as a punchline)
 All I'm saying is: somehow I learned to play poker at a very tender age by a dude named Manny who claimed to be the parking valet at the Chateau Marmont!

VIVIAN
 (angry now)
 Are you sure that wasn't when you were supposed to be finishing your senior year of college?

HENRY
 (still playing)
 Ah, Touche'.

HENRY only just now realizes he's struck a real nerve. Too late, Game over.

Awkward silence.

NANA is smiling intently at GABRIEL as if she might say something, but doesn't.

DOUGLAS

Well... even without becoming a college graduate, Henry, you've managed to become a writer...and that must be pretty gratifying.

WILLIAM

Or terrifying.

DEAN

But to experience the thrill of creating something...man, that's where it's at... if I could create something beautiful from nothing, I just imagine I'd have to embrace the fear in exchange for the rush!

HENRY

(to WILLIAM)

I kinda know what you mean... "terrifying". Mom has always had famous actors and writers around, my entire life, and whenever they noticed me long enough to talk, I always felt that they were just humoring me, or assessing my inadequacies.

WILLIAM

Ah, yes. Well get used to that. It never goes away.

NANA

(a misty smile to GABRIEL)

I had a bowlegged boyfriend.

EVERYONE turns to look at NANA.

NANA

(enjoying the sudden attention)

He loved to dance!

As discreetly as possible everyone laughs.

NANA (cont'd)

And he could too! Bowlegs and all!

BOBBY

(to NANA)

Oh mother...

(to Gabriel)

I think she's flirting with you.

GABRIEL looks a little like a deer in the headlights.

MADIGAN

Nana, did you try these yams? They're the kind you like.

NANA is just beaming at GABRIEL.

HENRY checks his watch.

HENRY

(to all)

If you'll excuse me, I have to check on something.

He gets up and goes into the kitchen.

DEAN

He's nervous about his play.

VIVIAN

I keep hearing the word "play", is it a live performance, or is it a film? I thought he shooed us all out to dinner last night so he could film something?

MADIGAN

(eagerly)

It's both. It's an environmental, spoken-word, multi-media piece.

There is a moment where VIVIAN processes this description, then:

VIVIAN

I wish he would put as much energy into finishing college or getting a job.

DEAN

He'll figure it out. He'll be fine.

VIVIAN

Easy for you to say. You've- achieved something.

DOUGLAS

Well, I certainly can't wait to see what it is!

MADIGAN
 (almost girlishly)
 I know...me too!

MAGGIE enters from kitchen:

MAGGIE
 Ladies and gentlemen I've been asked to serve
 dessert. Our leading lady is on her way and
 'Jack Warner Jr.' in there expects everyone to
 be seated for the performance by no later than
 5:25. So who wants pie? I've got Pumpkin,
 Pecan, and Dutch Apple...

VIVIAN
 (rising)
 Oh let me-

As VIVIAN rises, MAGGIE shakes her head "no" with a wink as if to
 say "You've done more than enough".

VIVIAN
 (sitting down again)
 Are you sure?

MAGGIE
 Oh quite.

VIVIAN
 Well then, My dessert will be another glass of
 wine!

She raises her empty glass to WILLIAM.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
 Darling?

WILLIAM pours. MAGGIE spins on her heel with an expression that
 suggests she just dodged a bullet and returns to the kitchen.

IN THE KITCHEN

MAGGIE goes about preparing dessert. Miracle on 34th Street plays
 on the kitchen TV in Spanish.

HENRY
 (to MARISOL- a maid)
 It's just like you're the DJ.
 (MORE)

HENRY(cont'd)

You have to fade to "A" when I talk, and "B" when Julia talks. Understand?

MARISOL

(watching the television)

Si.

HENRY

And make sure the voice effects unit is "ON"- the green light has to be on or the whole thing will be ruined!

MARISOL

Si, yes...

HENRY

Do you have the script I gave you?

A car pulls into the driveway.

MARISOL is starting to look a little concerned.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Finally! She's here...

HENRY rushes to the microwave and pulls out a plate covered with a paper towel and heads out to the front door.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Find that script and go over it- we don't have much time!

MARISOL looks around the kitchen and finally remembers something and goes to the sink. She looks on both sides of the counter, then lifts some dirty dishes out of the sink.

MARISOL

Ah mi Dios!

She pulls a completely soaked and food-stained script out of the bottom of the sink.

IN THE DRIVEWAY

JULIA is just getting a garment bag out of the trunk of her car.

HENRY

Oh thank God you are here!

JULIA

I had to practically fly to get here in time!
I thought my dad was going to slash my tires
to keep me from coming...

They kiss hello.

JULIA (cont'd)

He's afraid I'll catch the acting bug!

HENRY kisses her again.

HENRY

(Mooney-eyed and in love)

My doctor says it's not contagious anymore.

JULIA

(Dreamily)

Even so... I just love it here. This house,
the cliff, the beach-I love being with you and
your family!

HENRY

Ah ... my defiant little seagull. God, I love
you...

He kisses her cheek. JULIA blushes but says nothing.

HENRY (cont'd)

Well, you know what they say, if you feed the
gulls they never leave you alone, so...

He produces the plate of food.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Voila'!

JULIA

Oh...it smells great!

HENRY

Yeah, Maggie really outdid herself this year.
Let's go-

JULIA

I'm so sorry, but I think it would make me
throw up right now.

He leads her toward another wing of the house.

HENRY

Don't be nervous! Mom's going to be blown away when she sees this!

JULIA

I'm not worried about your mother...but acting for William Gormand! It's a little intimidating!

HENRY

I could ask him to leave...

JULIA playfully swats HENRY

HENRY

Yeah, that's what I should do...hate for him to feel inadequate...

JULIA

Stop it!

They go as TIM and DR. DOUGLAS come out to the driveway. TIM rushes over to a shiny Lexus.

TIM

I knew this was yours!

DOUGLAS

Picked it up Monday.

TIM

Wow. Can I sit in it?

TIM is already getting in.

DOUGLAS

Certainly...

TIM

These are so sharp! Sit sit! Show me all the bells and whistles.

DOUGLAS sits in the passenger seat.

DOUGLAS

Uh...hand-stitched, Nappa leather, burled walnut trim...

(MORE)

DOUGLAS(cont'd)

It also has a Climate-Control system that adjusts automatically depending on where the sun is, how fast you're going and whether the top is up or down.

TIM

My 'lap is in the lap of luxury!'

TIM looks at DOUGLAS expectantly...there is an uncomfortable moment.

TIM

That's from the commercial.

DOUGLAS

Eh...oh...Yes. Right!

TIM

She'll probably be very impressed.

DOUGLAS

Who?

TIM

Whichever of your clients is throwing herself at you at the moment.

DOUGLAS

No...no. I never date patients.

TIM

Oh right. You've said that before. I guess it would be a turn off... no one knows your faults like your plastic surgeon.

DOUGLAS

Ah, I'm too old for all that.

TIM

Oh give me a break. I'm sure they throw themselves at you!

DOUGLAS

10 or 15 years ago maybe, but even then I think they just wanted free work done.

TIM

Is this the GPS?

DOUGLAS
(correcting him)
DVD Navigation system.

TIM starts pressing buttons and leans over the center console.

TIM
Nice sound system.

DOUGLAS
(with glee)
It's Mark Levinson designed. He is - well,
just Listen to this-

As DOUGLAS turns it up, TIM leans even closer and kisses him passionately.

TIM
(quietly)
I don't want any free work done.

DOUGLAS is stunned.

TIM
(breathlessly and sincere)
I didn't see this coming for a long time. I'm normally very attuned... But You! 'A man of wealth and taste', too great a catch to be single... quiet, conflicted... You drive me crazy at the club. The looks, the long lunches- when it finally dawned on me I couldn't believe-

DOUGLAS is now trembling.

DOUGLAS
Uh...

TIM
You're cold. I've got a jacket in the car...

DOUGLAS
I'm not...

TIM
But you're shaking!

DOUGLAS
No, I'm not gay!

HENRY knocks on the passenger window. Startling both of them nearly to death. Motions for DOUGLAS to open the window.

DOUGLAS complies like a man in a trance.

HENRY
(very excited)
Hey, consumers! You can admire the expensive car later. I really need for you to go back inside, we're about to begin. No stragglers!

HENRY runs back toward the fitness room.

Awkward silence.

THE BACK YARD- TEN MINUTES LATER

Everyone sits in white lawn chairs in front of a very large blank white movie screen. Behind it, the view HENRY spoke of earlier. HENRY stands behind everyone with a script & microphone. Through the microphone his voice sounds like a LAURIE ANDERSON/MARILYN MANSON collaboration.

HENRY (VOICE OVER MIC)
Ladies and gentlemen...Your attention please. We are about to begin. Please place any loose articles under the seat in front of you, and before we embark, federal regulations require that you close your eyes and direct your attention to the back of your eyelids until instructed to open them.

WE HEAR SOUND EFFECTS: A JETLINER AND INDUSTRIAL SOUNDS.

HENRY (VOICE OVER MIC CONT'D)
(his own voice)
It comes and it goes...It comes and goes. When I close my eyes I see these...squiggly objects...

WE HEAR "GLOOPY" SOUND EFFECTS.

HENRY (VOICE OVER MIC CONT'D)
Darting here and there...across a black background. Do you? You do.
(MORE)

HENRY(cont'd)

They remind me of a time when there was just water...just water and these squiggly objects and a vast void of nothing...

NOW WE HEAR TRIBAL SOUNDS LIKE DRUMS AND CHANTING

HENRY (VOICE OVER MIC CONT'D)

These visions we all have are cave paintings on the walls of our eyelids. A kind of record...a recording of what we - all life - used to be...just water and these...squiggly things. And in a million years...

VIVIAN

(to WILLIAM)

I feel like we're at the drive in!

HENRY (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

(noticing her comment)

Long after all we understand is gone...

VIVIAN

(to WILLIAM)

I guess he's too young to remember those!

HENRY (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

(pressing on despite
hearing VIVIAN)

When you CLOSE YOUR EYES then...You will see me!

A boom of sound effects and dazzling images on the screen. we hear Julia's disembodied voice, echoey and ethereal:

JULIA (VOICE ON MIC)

Open...Open...Open your eyes!

The dazzling images continue as everyone opens their eyes. Then everything goes mystically quiet. The screen instantly vanishes revealing JULIA in a beautiful white dress at the farthest edge of the lawn.

EVERYONE gasps at the effect. Julia is peering out over the ocean.

JULIA (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

Are they open? Welcome travelers.

(echoes of this phrase
repeat)

This is the record of our past. Your future.

(MORE)

JULIA(cont'd)

This is the record. Past. Future...
 It comes and it goes. It comes and goes.
 Like the Sun. Like the Moon.
 It comes and goes
 Like the night. Like the tide.
 It comes and goes
 Like life. Like you.

VIVIAN

I feel like I'm being hypnotized!

HENRY

Shhh!

JULIA (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

For thousands of years there has been no life.
 All living things -all souls -are united in
 me. I am the sum of all. The soul. Soul. I.
 I am every memory.

JULIA begins to dance very slowly.

JULIA (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

I am every instinct.

She slowly gets nearer to the audience as she dances.

VIVIAN

(Her best Chakka Khan
 impression- to WILLIAM)

"I'm every woman..."

TIM laughs.

HENRY

(hissing)

Mother!

JULIA (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

I am all consciousness. But I am alone. I am
 lonely. I welcome the chance to speak. But
 there is no one to hear. True?

She looks toward the audience slowly as though she sees them.
 Then suddenly the film speeds up and she seems to supernaturally
 thrust forward toward us without really moving her legs. At that
 second, the real JULIA tears through the screen that had appeared
 to vanish!

EVERYONE is startled.

JULIA (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

True.

Her movements are part puppet, part zombie, part live actor.

JULIA (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

No one hears me. There is no one to hear.
Like a prisoner thrown into a deep empty well,
I do not know where I am or what awaits me.
My only companion is my only enemy: The
devil.

On "Devil" brilliant strobes flash and a large, terrifying vision of HENRY'S face flashes on the torn screen.

JULIA (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

This is his domain. The material world. One
day I will prevail over him and all matter and
I- the eternal spirit- will unite in beautiful
harmony-
I see my adversary drawing near...

HENRY begins to come down the center aisle. He is wearing crimson contact lenses and he carries a Catholic priests' incense burner on a chain- wafting an unpleasant odor.

VIVIAN

(holding her nose)

He's reinvented smell-o-vision!

HENRY

Mother!

JULIA (VOICE ON MIC CONT'D)

He is bored without his favorite plaything:
Mankind.

TIM

(Whispering to DR.

DOUGLAS)

Are you sure you don't want to wear my jacket?

VIVIAN

He's in the presence of the God of Hell-fire!
He'll be fine!

HENRY

That's it! We're done! Cut the projector!
Cut it! Kill the sound! Kill it! Kill- Turn
it off!

The sound amps go off with a pop.

VIVIAN
What? What is it?

HENRY
My bad...my bad everyone! I forgot the golden rule!
(to Vivian)
If it isn't about you it can't be allowed!
(to William)
Forgot to kiss the ring, man!
How can I ever join the elite ranks of those who are worthy to write and produce if I can't remember the rules!
(viciously smacks his own forehead)
How could I!? What was I thinking! I...

HENRY storms out. Mortified, JULIA disappears behind the screen. Everyone is silent.

VIVIAN
(laughing in disbelief)
Oh my god! What was that about?

DEAN
Oh Vivi...(pronounced: "Vee Vee")

VIVIAN
(suddenly serious)
"Oh Vivi", what?

DEAN
Nothing.

VIVIAN
Am I the only one not allowed to enjoy myself?

DEAN
(sighs)
Well- you hurt his pride.

VIVIAN
Oh I see! His little multimedia- whatever wasn't simply for our 'holiday entertainment', like he said...It was some kind of statement from 'the-artist-formerly-known-as my son'! Showing us what 'real' art is. Well I'm more than a little sick of this superior attitude!
(MORE)

VIVIAN(cont'd)

His constant little digs! Who the hell does he think he is?

DEAN

He just wanted you to like it.

VIVIAN

Then why-!? I've had my nose to the grindstone my whole life so that kid would have everything, and he can't wait to throw every little thing in my face. Like I'm worthless. Like he's embarrassed by me-- augh! too easy! That kid has had it too easy! Now suddenly his pretentious little rants are high art?

WILLIAM

(explaining)

Writing is- He's writing the best way he knows how.

VIVIAN

Let him write any way he wants! Just let him leave me the hell alone!

She lights a cigarette. Inhales. Thinks a moment.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

I just feel bad that he let me think it was a joke and now I find out it was supposed to be this "masterpiece"...

GABRIEL laughs out loud. Everyone turns to look at him.

GABRIEL

(not expecting the sudden attention)

Oh...I was just... See, The idea that "spirit"-which is probably energy- and "matter" have to one day combine is cool and all, but Quantum Mechanics predicts that every part of the universe is filled with infinite amounts of energy, and according to relativity, that should create infinite amounts of gravity everywhere!

(He finds this very funny)

Anyone familiar with String Theory?

No one speaks.

VIVIAN
 Oh Shit! Now I'm feeling really guilty. Why
 did I do that?
 (starting off)
 Henry! Baby? Henry!

MADIGAN
 I'll go.

VIVIAN
 Thank you, sweetheart.

MADIGAN heads off to look for HENRY. GABRIEL looks wounded.

VIVIAN
 (recovering herself)
 Well...let's all go back up to the house!
 There's coffee, that Brandy, and
 (to WILLIAM)
 dessert is probably starting to sound good to
 some of us!

JULIA comes out from behind the screen meekly.

VIVIAN (cont'd)
 OH! I forgot you were back there!

JULIA
 (sheepishly)
 I guess we probably aren't going to go on...

DEAN
 Bravo! Bravo!

Everyone applauds in their own way. They are all getting up to go
 inside.

VIVIAN
 Yes! You were positively beautiful up there!
 We were instantly smitten! You'd make a good
 actress.

JULIA
 Oh, I would love to pursue acting!

VIVIAN
 (as they retire)
 Then you should.
 (MORE)

VIVIAN(cont'd)

Let me introduce you: this is William Gormand. William, this is Julia Evans...

JULIA

Oh I'm a- very glad to-
(Laughs)
I love your books!

VIVIAN

You can't be shy, Julia. Otherwise the two of you will be absolutely mute all night! look! He's shy too!

They all head into the house, except DOUGLAS who seems lost in thought. The torn screen is moving in the wind and the empty chairs are all askew now.

DOUGLAS

(to HIMSELF)
It comes and goes...

IN THE LIVING ROOM A FEW MINUTES LATER

Everyone is being served coffee or a night cap while picking at desserts.

JULIA

It was pretty strange, huh?

WILLIAM

To tell you the truth, I didn't really understand it! But you were lovely! Very compelling to watch. Great effects...

They stand awkwardly at what is now 'the dessert Buffet'.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Is there a path that goes down to the beach from the house?

JULIA

Uh, there is I think, yeah-yes...

WILLIAM

I'll have to find that tomorrow...

JULIA

Oh, you walk? I mean-god, of course you walk! I mean you -like to?

WILLIAM

Yes I do.

VIVIAN

(laughing)

Careful, the two of you are liable to squirm yourselves to death.

(to JULIA)

Speechlessness is the sincerest form of flattery I find. This must be the mutual admiration society!

BACK OUT IN THE YARD

DOUGLAS is just about to head inside. HENRY enters from the shadows.

HENRY

(darkly)

Everyone's gone.

DOUGLAS

I'm here.

HENRY

You don't have to stay.

(with disgust)

I'm just avoiding Maddy. She's always lurking...

DOUGLAS

You know, I really enjoyed-

HENRY

Don't- I mean you don't need to say anything.

DOUGLAS

Oh... Well then.

DOUGLAS starts to go. Stops. Comes back.

DOUGLAS

No... You have a gift. This-tonight- it was good. Better than good...You are truly talented... But that doesn't entitle you to... anything. It's an obligation. You have to respect this talent- learn about it- or it will eat you alive.

HENRY
 (welling up)
 So then you...liked it?

DOUGLAS
 (sincerely)
 Well, yes- I think so. I didn't quite get it,
 but I didn't see all of it, so-

HENRY
 (A new thought-almost
 frantic)
 I'm sorry- where is Jules? I have to talk to
 her!

DOUGLAS
 She's in the house...

HENRY
 Go tell her to meet me in the exercise room,
 Please!
 (indicates house)
 I can't go in there.

DOUGLAS looks as though he'd like to clarify himself, but can't think how, and HENRY is already gone.

DOUGLAS
 ...I will.

Douglas turns to go into the house and discovers MADIGAN who has been smoking and crying in the shadows.

MADIGAN
 (through tears)
 He's in love with her, isn't he?

INSIDE THE HOUSE

BOBBY is in the middle of one of his "fabulous" stories.

BOBBY
 ...So Caesar had just been stabbed by the
 conspirators, and someone forgot to turn off
 the ringer on the stage managers' phone. It
 rang so loud the whole audience could hear it.
 (MORE)

BOBBY(cont'd)

O'toole, who was playing Brutus, turned to Burton, who was playing Cassius, and without missing a beat, said "Oh dear, what if it's for Caesar?" The audience went ballistic! True story! That, my friends-

During this story DOUGLAS and MADIGAN enter arm in arm heading for the kitchen.

DOUGLAS AND MADIGAN
(shared joke)
-Is great theatre!

BOBBY
(his standard tag-line)
-Is great theatre!

A pained laugh from MADIGAN as she and DOUGLAS pass through into the kitchen.

JULIA
Well, I have to get going. Thank you for everything!

VIVIAN
Go where? So soon?

JULIA
My Dad's expecting me.

VIVIAN
(sympathetically)
What a piece of work he is!

VIVIAN kisses JULIA's Cheek.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
But it is Thanksgiving and he no doubt wants to be with his family, so...you should go. Family is important.

JULIA
I feel so much more at home here!

DEAN
Oh then you have to stay!

JULIA
I really can't. I have to go.
(presses his hand warmly)
Thank you! Thank you all!

She goes. DOUGLAS re-enters from kitchen.

DOUGLAS

Where's Julia?

VIVIAN

Poor thing. She has to drive to Beverly Hills. Have you seen the 'stepmother'? I think they're the same age!

DOUGLAS

Actually, he brought her in to my office six months after the funeral!

VIVIAN

You are kidding! Well she got his money's worth.

VIVIAN indicates huge breasts. DOUGLAS shrugs.

BOBBY

(to TIM)

Do you think I should go get mother up and start getting her ready to go?

TIM

She's your mother...

(a furtive glance toward
DOUGLAS)

let her sleep awhile. It's still early.

MADIGAN re-enters from kitchen impatient for DOUGLAS' attention. Now with TIM leering and MADIGAN huffing, the Doctor chooses the lesser of three evils:

DOUGLAS

(to GABRIEL)

So String Theory...hmm?

GABRIEL

(eagerly)

Yes! Are you familiar with it?

DOUGLAS

Refresh my memory.

GABRIEL

Well, as current knowledge stands, we have two accepted theories of the universe: General Relativity and Quantum Mechanics. But as I said before, these two theories are mutually incompatible...

DOUGLAS

Right...too much gravity, or something?

DOUGLAS and GABRIEL exit. TIM and MADIGAN seem equally disgusted.
THE THIRD OF JULY (NINE MONTHS LATER)

(RADIOHEAD'S Meeting in the Aisle plays throughout Montage.)

MONTAGE:

IT'S MORNING AT THE MALIBU HOUSE

And it's a Beautiful, sunny day. Off in the distance we see WILLIAM sitting on a rock with a sandwich. While he muses, he tosses a crust to a hovering seagull, gets up and disappears over the ridge.

Roofers are putting shingles on a new addition to the house- a "Sun Room".

Through the window we see HENRY sitting, lap-top in lap, brooding out of the new giant plate-glass window. He acknowledges the noise above by simply turning up the jam box he's listening to.

(RADIOHEAD gets louder)

MARISOL is just finishing putting up a "Happy Independence Day" wreath on the front door and steps back to admire her work. MAGGIE opens the front door, sees it, and begins to take it down. They argue. (Marisol is very tiny, the wreath is way too low.)

MEANWHILE IN THE EXERCISE ROOM

VIVIAN is in the middle of a very suggestive position during her Pilates routine. She gives a quick glance to see if any of the construction workers are looking...they all are. She smiles to herself. MADIGAN enters in her street clothes, smoking a cigarette. VIVIAN has been expecting her. She gets up, takes the cigarette from MADIGAN, and offers instead a neatly folded pile of work-out clothes. Skeptically, MADIGAN disappears into the changing room. VIVIAN looks for a place to dispose of the cigarette, can't find one, takes a long drag.

INSIDE THE HOUSE, IN THE TELEVISION ROOM

GABRIEL sits squeezed on the very far end of the couch, content to be watching TV as DEAN is lying on the rest of it with a wet washcloth over his eyes. DOUGLAS sits in an easy chair. Checks his watch. Looks at DEAN with disgust, and switches channels. GABRIEL wants to assert that he was watching that program...but doesn't.

OUT FRONT

MAGGIE and MARISOL'S discussion of the "Independence Day" Decorations seems to have escalated into a tug of war.

WHILE IN THE SUNROOM

we see HENRY much as we just left him, lost in thought while staring out the window. He just sits and stares for a very long time. Suddenly something smashes into the plate glass in front of HENRY, sliding down to the ground below. It's a seagull. HENRY gets up, goes to the window. It is unbroken, but there's a bloody smear on the glass.

FROM OUTSIDE ON THE GROUND

where the seagull must be, we see HENRY'S stunned face peering down out of the window.

A WOMAN SCREAMS.

END MONTAGE.

VIVIAN rushes to the changing room door and flings it open to reveal MADIGAN dressed in a very 'eighties' leotard and tights. She is looking at herself in the full-length mirror in shock.

VIVIAN

(relieved)

Jesus! You scared the shit out of me! Are you okay?

MADIGAN

I look like a Marilyn Manson exercise video.

VIVIAN

The light in here is terrible-Here...

She produces a lipstick and begins to apply it to MADIGAN.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)

Never...ever...go anywhere without a good
lipstick...go like this.

She does that lip-smacking thing.

IN ANOTHER PART OF THE HOUSE

HENRY silently closes the door behind him. He crosses to a desk and opens one of the drawers to reveal a shiny .38 Caliber pistol and some bullets.

BACK IN THE EXERCISE ROOM

MADIGAN looks more uncomfortable than ever. Awkwardly, she tries to emulate VIVIAN'S form as they do a yoga routine. A True Hollywood Story-type program is on the television in the background.

VIVIAN

If I can do this, you can do it.
Breathe...maybe not. You know why you're
having so much trouble? I breathe, and I
never sit still. Whether I'm working or
playing, I'm always moving...breathing. You
just sit in that office chair all day smoking.

MADIGAN

Somebody has to work in that office...

VIVIAN

(personally concerned)

What do you mean?

MADIGAN

I don't know ... Dad's just having some kind
of mid-life thing, and I don't know what I'm
doing with my life, and I just feel really...

(she begins to cry)

...tired. Bitchy and tired and

(sobs)

...alone.

VIVIAN
You see that? You know why you're crying?

MADIGAN
Because I'm miserable?

VIVIAN
Muscle memory.

VIVIAN points knowingly to MADIGAN'S legs.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
(serious as a monk)
Go ahead and cry. Stretch and cry.

They continue stretching.

VIVIAN
I feel great! This is how I've kept it
together. I've had the discipline to do yoga.

As she stretches over her leg, she watches the TV for a moment.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
I love this channel...

TALKING HEAD #1 (ON TV)
... the complicated and misunderstood
relationship between Lennon and Ono was
emerging as the primary factor in both of
their lives...

VIVIAN
(referring to the T.V.
show)
I really understand that...

MADIGAN issues a shuddering sob like when a child is trying to
recover from crying.

INTERVIEWEE #1 (ON TV)
John would say: "Why don't people believe us
when we say we're simply in love?"

VIVIAN switches to the other leg.

VIVIAN
(to the TV)
Exactly! It's nobody's business anyway!

MADIGAN rolls her eyes as she tries to do what VIVIAN does.

TALKING HEAD #1 (ON TV)

...friends were beginning to notice that Yoko was spending more and more time with John...

INTERVIEWEE #2 (ON TV)

She went everywhere with John...and anyone could see she just doted on him- positively adored the man-lavished him with compliments, hung on his every word...

VIVIAN stretches to the middle.

VIVIAN

(to TV)

It's easy to do when you're in love!

(to MADIGAN)

It's the same way with William and me...

MADIGAN

OWWWW! Shit!-Shit!-Shit! Oooh that hurts!

MADIGAN has pulled an inner thigh muscle.

VIVIAN

Oh dear...

IN THE TELEVISION ROOM

GABRIEL, and DOUGLAS are sitting exactly as we last saw them. DEAN is missing from the picture. We hear ice clinking into a glass in the other room.

DEAN (O.S.)

Anyone else want a Bloody Mary while I'm up?

The doorbell rings.

DEAN (O.S.)

I'll get that...

DOUGLAS sighs. VIVIAN supports MADIGAN as they pass by on their way to the kitchen.

VIVIAN

(to DOUGLAS)

Pulled muscle: Ice then Heat, right?

GABRIEL jumps up to help.

GABRIEL
 (to MADIGAN)
 What happen-
 (re: her outfit)
 Wow, look at you!

DOUGLAS

(to VIVIAN)
 Usually. 15 minute intervals of
 each. What happened?

MADIGAN

(to GABRIEL)
 Shut up.

VIVIAN

(to DOUGLAS)
 Over stretched.

MADIGAN snaps her fingers and points to couch. GABRIEL helps her to sit down.

VIVIAN

(re: television)
 Oh you're watching it too! I love this
 channel.

She settles on arm of couch.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

Gabe honey, in the freezer is one of those ice
 packs...

GABRIEL

I'm on it.

He goes. DEAN returns from the front door with JULIA (and a Bloody Mary).

DEAN

(presenting her like a
 trophy)
 Look look- Now it's a real Independence-Day
 celebration!

JULIA crosses over to VIVIAN and gives her a big hug.

JULIA

Dad took Sheila to San Francisco for 3 days,
 so I'm completely free!

VIVIAN

Well aren't we lucky?

DEAN
 (to JULIA)
 You look beautiful today!

VIVIAN
 Yes, that lipstick is a great color on you.

VIVIAN shares a look with MADIGAN.

VIVIAN (cont'd)
 You didn't happen to see William on your way
 in did you?

JULIA
 I think I may have seen him on the footpath.

VIVIAN
 Where on Earth that man wanders to...

A silence.

JULIA
 What are you watching?

VIVIAN
 Oh don't you love this channel?

VIVIAN turns the volume up. They all watch.

VIVIAN
 It's that flashback show! This
 one's about John and Yoko, it
 reminds me so much of William
 and Me...

TALKING HEAD #1
 ...asserted that 'Yoko's
 flattery and praise had
 brainwashed John and **she was**
systematically cutting him off
from every other relationship he
had'...

VIVIAN

 Well not this part. This is the
 part where they just speculate.

INTERVIEWEE #3
 (British accent)
He must have felt suffocated, or
at the very least Isolated.
That was precisely why he was
supposed to have wound up having
that affair with the young
 assistant. Yoko was just so-

VIVIAN raises the remote control and switches the TV off. At this
 precise moment, a SHOT rings out. VIVIAN looks at the remote
 control then...

VIVIAN
God! That was weird!

DEAN
Fourth of July revelries have begun!

DOUGLAS
(referring to DEAN)
Or one of Mrs. Winchester here's construction workers!

DEAN
That solarium is going to be great for my arthritis.

DOUGLAS
What arthritis!?

DEAN
And it's passive-solar...so it will help heat the whole house. That's what they tell me...

VIVIAN
(unsettled)
Has anyone seen Henry? What's bothering him lately? I'm starting to seriously worry about that kid.

MADIGAN
He's depressed. It's going around.

DEAN
You know, I think it runs in our family. That's another thing the solarium is supposed to help with, They say that sunlight-

DOUGLAS
Cures alcoholism?

GABRIEL enters with the ice pack.

GABRIEL
Who's an alcoholic?

He tries to apply the ice-pack to MADIGAN'S leg.

MADIGAN
Hey...I can do it, thank you.

VIVIAN

I think you should go to a spa Dean. You'd be amazed how much better you'd feel after a eucalyptus wrap.

DEAN

Well according to this quack, there's nothing wrong with me at all!

DOUGLAS

Oh I never said that. You have a disease all right. And you will most certainly die from it. If you-

DEAN

(to JULIA, flirting)

I spent twenty-eight years with the A.C.L.U. While everyone else was out screwing and getting high, I was defending the Bill of Rights! I didn't have time for fun. Now I'm retired, I try to enjoy a lazy morning with a good Bloody Mary, and 'Hugh Hefner' over here wants to stand in judgement?

(to Douglas)

You've had your fun-all your life. Let me have mine.

DOUGLAS

Feeling sorry for yourself is not going to make your hangover go away.

DEAN

Exactly right...

DEAN takes a nice big drink.

MADIGAN

Well, thanks for the workout, Viv.

MADIGAN gets up with some difficulty.

VIVIAN

(sympathetically)

Oh...sweetie...

DOUGLAS

(to MADIGAN)

After 15 minutes, apply some heat. Then do the cold compress again.

MADIGAN (CONT'D)

Stat. I'm gonna go get out of this-attractive exercise ensemble. Hey professor: Little help?

GABRIEL helps her out. Doorbell rings.

DOUGLAS

(re: MADIGAN's drinking)
There's another one to watch.

DEAN

She has no joy in her life.

DOUGLAS

Oh don't be ridiculous.

DEAN

(to JULIA)
This from the BOOB doctor.

Just as DEAN is about to go answer the door, BOBBY swoops into the TV room with a big smile.

BOBBY

Ah! Here we all are!

He kisses VIVIAN on the cheek and then JULIA.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Beautiful as always.
(to VIVIAN)
You'll never guess what came in the mail today!

VIVIAN

What?

He produces some papers.

BOBBY

It looks like a contract for the 'Paper Mill Playhouse!'

VIVIAN

Oh! That was fast!
(to Julia)
I'm going to go on stage again!

JULIA

Really! What Play?

VIVIAN

It's going to be so much fun! I'm playing one of the sisters in THE THREE SISTERS!

BOBBY

Yes, it's marvelous! When exactly were you planning on letting me in on this little secret?

VIVIAN

It's no secret! I'm telling you now.

(to DOUGLAS and DEAN)

I enjoy my time here -with you- I really do, but I am so ready to dive into a really good part- just me in my little New York hotel room learning my lines, ordering room-service! Life in the theatre-

JULIA

Oh! That sounds so great!

BOBBY

Last time I checked it was in New Jersey. And how do you plan to do WOMAN ON THE BRINK if you're in New Jersey?

VIVIAN

That terrible Movie of the Week?

BOBBY

We talked about this three weeks ago, you said you'd do it- I've already told them!

VIVIAN

I need to do this play. It's much more important to me.

BOBBY

You have no idea what it takes to be your manager do you?

VIVIAN

What are you insinuating?

BOBBY
 (Back-peddling some)
 It's a very difficult climate right now and
 you can not afford to-

VIVIAN
 Oh don't give me that shit! I'm not some
 twenty-two-year-old-

BOBBY
 And that's my point!

VIVIAN
 Who do you work for? I'm doing this play!
 And that's all there is to it!

She storms out slamming doors all the way.

BOBBY
 (furiously calling after
 her)
 Great! And when you get back, you can find
 yourself another manager!!

He starts to go back out the front door and nearly runs straight
 into TIM.

BOBBY
 I thought I told you to wait in the car!

TIM
 I didn't know how long you were going to be...

BOBBY
 We're all done here!

BOBBY storms out the front door.

DEAN
 (Irish courage re: BOBBY)
 Can you believe this guy! In my house!
 (to TIM)
 YOU! You stay right here! I'm gonna ...have a
 word with little lord fauntleroy...Stay here!

DEAN storms out the front door after BOBBY.

JULIA
 (intensely uncomfortable)
 Maybe I should...go try to talk to Vivian?

TIM
 Yeah, I ...I mean, I don't know, I'm just the
 dog apparently: "wait in the car- Stay! Stay!"

JULIA goes off after VIVIAN.

DOUGLAS
 (shaking his head)
 All this...drama! It's so...boring.

TIM
 This is what it's like now. I mean all the
 time. I just can't take it anymore. He's
 so...tense! All the time! So rude!

A moment. TIM sits.

TIM (CONT'D)
 I...came in because I saw your car...and you
 don't come to the club anymore since- look, I
 know I was too forward, and I'm sorry. We can
 go slower-

DOUGLAS
 I'm sixty years old. Don't you think if I
 were-

TIM
 Oh God, you got bored. I waited too long! I
 should've trusted my instincts...I wasn't
 sure, and then I thought I was being so smart-
 you know, playing it cool-

JULIA comes running down the hall.

JULIA
 Vivian has locked herself in the bedroom,
 she's fine. But I think Dean is having an
 asthma attack or something?

DOUGLAS gets up.

DOUGLAS
 Yeah, I'd better go give him a shot...
 of scotch.

TIM
I'm coming with you!

They go out front. JULIA is left alone with the feeling she could very possibly be on Candid Camera. JULIA walks out the french doors onto the deck.

In the yard, the remnants of HENRY'S screen can still be seen. She remembers for a moment. In the distance she watches William heading in from his roaming. Suddenly:

HENRY (O.S.)
Are you alone?

JULIA nearly jumps out of her skin.

HENRY is standing down on the lawn right below the deck.

JULIA
God, you scared me.

He hoists himself up onto the deck.

HENRY
I did something terrible.
(holding up the seagull)
I killed it.

He places it at her feet.

JULIA
(recoiling)
Oh my God...

HENRY
My turn soon.

JULIA
When did you ...get like this?

HENRY
I haven't changed. You just don't see me anymore...a cold glass wall between us.

JULIA
You're so moody...dark...you don't make sense-
...I just don't understand-

HENRY

I lost you the night of that stupid fiasco!
No one wants a 'failure'. I've burned it.
Everything... Your coldness ... it kills.
It's like waking up to a burglary- I can't
believe it. What's to understand? You
thought it was mediocre... so: I'm not
worthy... I understand it!

WILLIAM approaches on the lawn from the other end of the house.

HENRY

(bitterly)

Here comes golden boy now...look how you bask
in his glow...

He touches her cheek.

HENRY (cont'd)

I remember that look...

HENRY goes inside quickly.

JULIA

(to WILLIAM)

Hello ...

WILLIAM comes up the steps.

WILLIAM

Uh, that door is open I take it?

JULIA

Yes, why?

WILLIAM

Well, Vivian has locked every door on that end
of the house. Apparently she's packing and
we're leaving. I'm not sure why. I'm just
steering clear of...whatever that is...

AT THE SAME TIME IN VIVIAN'S BEDROOM

Suitcases have been thrown on the bed, and masses of clothes are everywhere. VIVIAN sits at a vanity, crying quietly. It is one of those supremely private moments. She begins to study herself in the mirror as she cries.

TIM listens at the door. BOBBY approaches. TIM doesn't acknowledge him. TIM listens. BOBBY waits. Finally:

BOBBY
 (too loudly)
 Well? What is she do-

With a ferocious but silent wave of the hand, TIM silences BOBBY.

TIM
 (Very quietly)
 I'm handling this!

He listens.

TIM
 She's crying.

BOBBY
 (reluctant to be
 whispering)
 Tim, please- let me take care of-

TIM
 (a voiceless shout)
 YOU!
 (He points down the hall)
 GO! NOW! Go on! ...Mush!

Reluctantly, BOBBY moves off.

IN THE TELEVISION ROOM

MADIGAN limps in, back in black, supported by GABRIEL. DOUGLAS sits alone watching the television, arms folded.

MADIGAN
 What's going on?

DOUGLAS
 (Without looking up)
 The Orioles are up by 3, top of the 7th...

Ice cubes "Plink" into a glass in the other room.

DEAN (O.S.)
 (on a rant)
 ...I mean that's all I'm saying! Have a
 little decorum! You know?

Again, DOUGLAS doesn't look up.

DOUGLAS
 Uh huh.

MADIGAN and GABRIEL are trying to figure out what's been going on.

DEAN (O.S.)
 (still yelling in)
 You don't just come into a man's house and
 make threats! There's no threatening!

DOUGLAS
 (Numbly watching the
 game.)
 So you said.

MADIGAN
 Who's making threats?

DEAN comes into the TV room, sees MADIGAN and GABRIEL, sets the
 fresh drink down in front of DOUGLAS as:

DEAN
 (to MADIGAN)
 Your dad- has really crossed the line-

DOUGLAS
 (Re: the drink)
 I didn't want this.

DEAN
 You didn't?

DOUGLAS shakes his head.

DEAN (cont'd)
 Oh.

DEAN picks it up and takes a sip.

DEAN (cont'd)
 Can I get you two a Bloody Mary?

A pavlovian nod from MADIGAN, and DEAN goes back to make them.

IN VIVIAN'S BEDROOM

TIM has breached the inner sanctum and is standing behind VIVIAN absently brushing her hair. They are talking in the mirror.

TIM

...What can I do? Put yourself in my shoes!
What can I do?

VIVIAN

(Still sniffing)
God... I had no idea. But you two have been
together-

TIM

Ten years. Next month. So...you see, really
you're very lucky...

VIVIAN

Oh...that's...
(she starts to well up
again)
That makes me so sad.

TIM

Don't be. Hope springs eternal.
(re: styling her hair)
God, why are we so good at this? Cliche's are
so true!

He steps back to reveal his work. VIVIAN starts to laugh. A quiet knock and a sheepish BOBBY peeks his head in.

BOBBY

Am I...Interrupting?

VIVIAN gets up and rushes to BOBBY.

VIVIAN

(As she gives him a big
hug)
Oh...sweetie...I'm such a bully... Can you
forgive me?

BOBBY looks rather surprised, but hugs her back. A satisfied TIM mouths the words: "YOU OWE ME...BIG TIME."

OUT ON THE DECK

WILLIAM and JULIA have been having quite a conversation.

JULIA

(she laughs)

I just would never have thought you would feel any doubt- I mean...I'd give up everything for the opportunity to create like you, as an actress. I'd live in a box and just eat bread and water if I could experience the sheer joy of that kind of recognition-to be appreciated like that.

JULIA gets a little embarrassed. From inside the house:

VIVIAN

(calling for him)

William? William where are you?

WILLIAM

Well, I guess it's time to pack...I don't want to go away...it's really nice here.

JULIA

It is. Do you see that house: three hills over?

WILLIAM

yes.

JULIA

That was my mother's when she was alive. Dean and my parents used to be neighbors. I grew up out here.

WILLIAM

Very nice.

He sees the seagull.

WILLIAM

What...is that?

JULIA

Oh god. A seagull. I can't believe it. Henry killed it.

WILLIAM

Wow. That's a ...little strange.

He observes it very closely.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

I really wish we weren't leaving.
 (knowing that no one can)
 See if you can talk Vivian into staying
 longer.

He goes into the house. As he walks, he makes a note in his palm pilot. We stay on JULIA as she watches him go.

VIVIAN (O.S.)

(Calling for him)

William?

WILLIAM (O.S.)

I'm coming...

Julia stands on the deck looking out. In the background, we see VIVIAN as she intercepts WILLIAM. She is arm-in-arm with BOBBY. She has a handful of wadded Kleenex, and a Bloody Mary.

VIVIAN

(sniffling)

You don't have to pack.

(smiling to BOBBY)

We're going to be staying for a while yet.

WILLIAM

Oh.

JULIA has overheard this and is quietly overjoyed.

DISSOLVE TO:

FIREWORKS BURSTING IN THE NIGHTTIME SKY.

It is now the evening of THE FOURTH OF JULY.

From a high vantage point we can see that DEAN has had the perfect Fourth of July Barbecue on the lawn, complete with full BB-Q buffet and bar set-up. The edges of the lawn are trimmed with Tiki torches and pretty paper lanterns. Everyone is sitting in lawn chairs staring up at the fabulous fireworks display being given by the nearby beach club.

we are seeing all of this from HENRY'S point of view as he stands alone in darkness on the uppermost deck of the house. As somber as BATMAN.

OUT IN THE YARD

Everyone sits staring up into the sky, drunk and full.

VIVIAN

(sitting on WILLIAM'S lap)

Ooh...those are so pretty! They remind me of champagne!

GABRIEL

(to no one in particular)

Sodium salts...

There is a large "Boom" from the beach below.

DEAN

(searching the sky)

Oh this is gonna be a big one!

JULIA

(to DEAN)

When I was little we watched these fireworks from our house every year-Mom and Dad and I... It's been a long time. Thank you for having me-

A large explosion in the air, followed by several "Pops", one of which is particularly loud.

DEAN

(regarding the firework)

Wow! I was right! Holy Christ!

(to JULIA)

It's my distinct pleasure to have you, sweetheart!

He puts an arm around her- not quite fatherly.

GABRIEL

Lithium...Magnesium -or maybe Aluminum...and Copper salts.

MADIGAN

(to GABRIEL)

What are you muttering about?

GABRIEL

Red, white, and blue! Lithium, Magnesium, and copper salts! The coloring in these explosions is caused by the exothermic reaction of different elements-

MADIGAN

Okay okay- Nevermind.

VIVIAN

(pointing)

Gabriel, what makes that pretty orange?

GABRIEL

Most likely Charcoal or some other form of carbon.

VIVIAN

(disappointed)

Oh. Really?

(to WILLIAM)

I thought it would be gold or something.

DOUGLAS

There! That bright green one!

(to GABRIEL)

Let me guess...Barium...uh-

GABRIEL

Barium Nitrate! Yes! That's great! Somebody remembers their chemistry.

DEAN

(to DOUGLAS)

Show off.

DOUGLAS

"An 'element' never forgets"

DEAN

(re: DOUGLAS' joke)

Boo... Now who's drunk?

DOUGLAS regards DEAN with a look that makes DEAN Self-conscious enough to remove his arm from JULIA's shoulder.

GABRIEL

(growing enthusiasm)

Of course it would have to be Barium Nitrate,
because Barium-

MADIGAN

(getting up)

I need a refill if we're going
to play Periodic Table party
games...

GABRIEL

(continuing)

-can't exist on it's own, it has
to be bonded with other
elements.

She goes to the 'Bar' table. She puts fresh ice in her glass as she listens to their conversation.

GABRIEL (O.S.)

I wonder what kind of money firework
technicians make?

DEAN (O.S.)

You mean the guys who make them or the guys
who light them?

She Pours about a sixteen-count of vodka.

GABRIEL (O.S.)

Well, I'm sure the firing process is done by
computer...

She doesn't really have any room for a mixer, so she takes a big sip then carefully dribbles a little juice in.

GABRIEL (CONTD)

But I bet there's money to be made if you
experiment with different metal combinations,
develop unique colors and document the
formulas... then get them patented....

Suddenly a big flare lights up the sky and the entire lawn. It reveals HENRY standing three feet in front of her, his face entirely covered in blood. In this eerie light he looks like a casualty of war. He raises his hand in a gesture for help.

HENRY

(in a complete state of
shock)

I made a mistake.

MADIGAN screams. HENRY collapses. The overhead flare goes out.

ONE WEEK LATER IN A HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

WILLIAM sits across from MADIGAN who looks a little more bedraggled than usual.

MADIGAN

...If he had seriously...you know...I don't know what I would've done.

A long pause.

WILLIAM

How long have you been...in love with him?

MADIGAN doesn't answer but nearly wells up into tears.

MADIGAN

(about to deny it, then:)

I see why you're a good writer.

(she thinks a moment.)

I've made a decision.

William waits for it.

MADIGAN

I'm going to marry Gabe.

DEAN

But what about-

MADIGAN

-Once I get married I won't have time to... feel... that.

WILLIAM

I see...

MADIGAN

(desperate enthusiasm)

Let's go back across the street for one more!
Please-please-please?

WILLIAM

Don't you have to drive home?

MADIGAN

Oh God. We're not gonna get drunk or anything, I'm just enjoying this conversation- and I'd like to be enjoying it over another drink!

WILLIAM

They'll be down soon. I wish we weren't leaving. You and I could sit down sometime and get really torn up.

MADIGAN

Ask Viv to stay another week. They don't start principal photography for like 10 days. I just did the contracts.

WILLIAM

There's no way we're staying now. Not since Henry's little stunt. She refers to it as "his accident", The hospital has had him on suicide watch, yet somehow she's got it in her head that he really wants to shoot me! Why would he-?

MADIGAN

Well insane jealousy for one.

WILLIAM looks a little startled.

MADIGAN (cont'd)

Maybe I should write...

JULIA comes off of the elevator.

MADIGAN

(her worries intruding)

Gabe isn't...(sighs) so many things.

(Struggling with herself)

But he's kind, and he loves me.

Poor bastard.

MADIGAN rises.

MADIGAN (cont'd)

Well, Billy boy, It's been good. I hope you don't think I'm a freak. -Oh well-if you do. Thank you for listening to me. Really.

Not knowing what else to do, she shakes his hand.

MADIGAN (cont'd)

Hey, send me your books! And be sure to autograph them- and none of this generic, "best wishes" crap either. Write something like: "To Maddy, the deepest and most troubling soul I've ever had the misfortune to encounter... Get well soon!" Something like that.

(noticing JULIA)

Okay-bye.

She goes. JULIA approaches.

JULIA

Heads or tails?

She flips a coin.

WILLIAM

Tails.

She checks it.

JULIA

Oh.

(sighs with trepidation)

...I'm trying to decide what kind of acting to pursue...I'm scared of New York...what do you think?

WILLIAM

You should...listen to your instincts.

JULIA

(a little flushed)

I wanted to- well, everyone's leaving, and who knows if we'll see each other again, so I-

She hands him a little medallion.

JULIA (CONT'D)

It's just a little -It's a key chain- I had your initials engraved...and on this side is the name of your book, Tornado Iris.

WILLIAM

Wow! That's really ...Thank you! What a nice thing!

JULIA
 (shrugging)
 It's a little memento!

WILLIAM
 It is! Of a short, but productive friendship!
 You gave me an idea for a story last week, you
 know...When you were standing... So beautiful
 and sad...with that seagull.

JULIA
 oh...that seagull...

The elevator dings.

JULIA
 (hurriedly)
 I'm going on ahead-it's best. I've been
 invited to the house this evening...so, I'll
 be there...to see you off...

She goes as VIVIAN and DEAN come off the elevator.

As WILLIAM turns the medallion over we see the inscription:

"Tornado Iris page 235, lines 29-30"

VIVIAN (O.S.)
 ...What about your night vision?

DEAN (O.S.)
 Look- I'm driving you to the airport, that's
 all there is to it. I've got to do something.
 I feel like a moldy old ...stump cooped up in
 that house all the time-alone.

VIVIAN (O.S.)
 Well...alright.
 (to WILLIAM)
 Was that Julia?

WILLIAM
 Yes.

VIVIAN
 (pointedly)
 Sorry if we interrupted you.

WILLIAM
 (rather preoccupied.)
 The gift shop here sells books?

VIVIAN
 I'm sure they do...

WILLIAM
 Be right back.

William goes.

VIVIAN
 (shifting gears
 deliberately)
 Anyway...But I love what you're doing with
 that house... It's your new hobby!

She watches WILLIAM go.

VIVIAN (cont'd)
 Listen, please keep an eye on Henry. Help him
 get back on track.

She hesitates a moment.

VIVIAN (cont'd)
 (troubled)
 I can't believe I'm leaving without
 knowing...why he shot himself. I just think
 it's best for him that I take William with me
 to North Carolina- don't you?

DEAN
 I think there's more to it than just that.
 Henry's struggling with who he is. He spends
 too much time in that damned house. He
 feels...less than a man. He needs to get out
 and see the world...

VIVIAN
 (seriously)
 Maybe he should join the Navy...

DEAN
 I think maybe you should spring for him to go
 to New York for a little-

VIVIAN
 (reflexively)
 -He's an adult now! If he wants to go off to New York, then he needs to get a job just like everyone-

DEAN
 Now, I'm not suggesting...oh Christ...I'm sorry ...I'm...just- very dizzy...

He staggers. She tries to support him.

VIVIAN
 Oh God! Dean! Somebody help! He's going to faint!

An orderly approaches with a bandaged HENRY in a wheelchair. He rushes to DEAN's side.

DEAN
 Oh for Chrissake! How pathetic.
 (to orderly)
 I'm fine- I'm fine. Really...

HENRY
 (getting out of his wheelchair)
 Here Dean, I'll let you borrow my ride!

DEAN
 (to HENRY)
 No, I'm fine, really...

ORDERLY
 (to HENRY)
 You need to have a seat here,
 (to DEAN)
 we can get another wheelchair-

DEAN
 (collecting himself)
 That won't be necessary.

HENRY
 (to VIVIAN)
 It's okay Mom. He gets like this 'cause he forgets to eat.

VIVIAN
 Oh Dean, really...

WILLIAM returns.

WILLIAM

They didn't have it...Oh, are we ready?

A beat.

DEAN looks at WILLIAM.

DEAN

C'mon William. It's you and me in your car.

(to VIVIAN)

We'll stop by a Wendy's.

He drags WILLIAM out the door.

WILLIAM

Oh... do you mind if we stop at a bookstore?

DEAN and WILLIAM are gone. VIVIAN and HENRY look at each other in silence. Neither one really wanting to be in the other's exclusive company.

INSIDE THE CAR A LITTLE LATER

VIVIAN is driving. HENRY sits in the passenger seat. Silence.

VIVIAN

Well, this is good!

Silence.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

...just you and me!

After a while:

VIVIAN (cont'd)

Your uncle worries me.

HENRY

He's just unhappy. He feels 'put out to pasture'. Abandoned.

VIVIAN

Sitting around drinking and feeling sorry for himself is not going to get him anywhere.

HENRY

You should know.

Silence.

VIVIAN

(trying to be light)

I'd better hurry and get you home. Wearing that bandage, someone might mistake you for that Muhammad Abdulla- whatever on the news!

Despite himself, HENRY is charmed by her. He smiles for the first time in a long while.

VIVIAN

(encouraged)

It looked like it was healing nicely yesterday when they changed it...Dr. Douglas said he can make it so you won't even hardly have a scar...

She takes his hand.

VIVIAN

After we leave, there won't be anymore messing with guns...?

HENRY

No. That was a stupid, drunken moment. It won't happen again.

He kisses her hand.

HENRY (cont'd)

(looking at her hand)

You remember when we lived in that apartment over in Hollywood - I was really little-they were digging that pool? There was a big pile of dirt. Some kids started a dirt-clod fight and I got hit in the head? I started crying, you came running out, picked up a dirt clod and zinged it about 30 yards, screaming "how do you like it? Huh!?" You scared the shit out of that kid. I just remember looking at your hands as you cleaned my face and put ice on the knot on my head. So gentle. I was amazed that these were the same hands that could zing a dirt-clod like Nolan Ryan! You remember that?

VIVIAN
(genuinely at a loss)

No...

HENRY
You remember...that was the place where that
painter lived upstairs-

VIVIAN
That I remember.

HENRY
Of course. He painted all those weird ghost-
town scenes...he had a girls name...

VIVIAN
It wasn't a girls name!

HENRY
Whatever...

VIVIAN
(remembering)
Fay!

HENRY
Right! C'mon, that's not a girls name?

VIVIAN
Well...I remember thinking it was very...I
don't know...different.

HENRY
(amused)
Uh huh...
This past week has been really good. You
know?...like the old days. I mean I know I
scared you and everything, but...you're all I
have left...and I just...why are you wasting
your time with this guy...?

VIVIAN
You don't understand him, Henry...He is truly-

HENRY
But I can already see that he's pulling us
apart-

VIVIAN

That's ridiculous! I'm the one taking him away- or have you forgotten that you swore to me you were going to kill him in the ambulance?

HENRY

I told you, I was drunk...Look, the point is- we're at each others throats, and where is he? Off somewhere developing Julia's character- trying to convince her that he's brilliant- laughing at us!

VIVIAN

You love this don't you! To throw Shit in my face! I love and respect that man, and I will not have you talk like that!

HENRY

Well I don't have to love or respect him! I hate him!

VIVIAN

You're just...jealous!! You wish you had one-tenth of his talent!

HENRY

At least I'm not some mainstream, blockbuster-brainwashed moron who confuses art with consumerist morality tales! I'm sick of all of you and your Capitalist-fucking-Republican ignorance!

Angry, but not even sure what he means, VIVIAN drives. Silence. After a long while, HENRY turns the radio on.

VIVIAN

Turn it down!

VIVIAN turns it off.

HENRY

Why can't we have a little music for the ride-

He cranks it back up again.

VIVIAN

Because- I can't hear- I need to concentrate!

She tries to turn it down again. He grabs her hand.

HENRY

I can hear fine- if there's a problem, I'll let you know-

They struggle.

VIVIAN

Stop it!

HENRY

I don't want to have to listen to:
(imitating VIVIAN)
"I-need- a- man- to- validate-my existence"!

VIVIAN

How dare you- you ...worthless little shit!

HENRY

So...now we're down to it -

HENRY opens his door as though he will jump out. They are going very fast.

VIVIAN

What are you-? YOU ARE NOT GOING TO HOLD ME FOR RANSOM WITH THIS KIND OF CRAP!

She reaches for his arm to keep him from jumping.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

Shut that door!

He makes a show of trying to shake her off, but they are in the wrong lane now. A car horn shrieks, VIVIAN looks up, screams, and swerves. Their car goes into a spin.

HENRY

Shiiiiiiiiit!

VIVIAN

Fuuuuuuuuuuuck!

The car careens off the road, slamming into a guardrail that protects from a very steep drop-off.

Silence but for the windshield wipers which have come on.

VIVIAN

(bursting into tears)

Are you okay!?!? Oh my God! I'm so sorry!

(MORE)

VIVIAN(cont'd)

I'm sorry, my baby! My precious little baby!
I'm so sorry!

HENRY, angry and scared, but moved by his mothers tears- starts crying too. They fall into each others arms in a sobbing fit.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

Please forgive me...please forgive me...

HENRY

Oh mom...! ...If you only...so unhappy! She doesn't love me! I can't write...you're leaving me...I'm so... lost...

VIVIAN

Don't. Don't. Shh...shh...it's okay...it's okay...everything is gonna be-

She tries to erase his anguish with kisses.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

okay...everything is gonna be okay...

We pull away from the car, wipers waving happily, leaving the two of them crying in each others arms.

LATER THAT AFTERNOON BACK AT THE HOUSE

WILLIAM sits in a chair with a scotch, reading a new paperback edition of his book, Tornado Iris. VIVIAN comes in looking absolutely strung out.

VIVIAN

We're back...

WILLIAM keeps reading.

VIVIAN

(a little psychotically)
I said, "We're back!"

WILLIAM nods in acknowledgement.

VIVIAN

I hope you're all packed.

WILLIAM

Yeah...

He re-reads a few lines. Shuts the book and clutches it to his chest. A heavy sigh.

He looks at VIVIAN.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

You don't really want to take a night-flight do you? Let's go tomorrow afternoon.

VIVIAN shakes her head in disbelief.

WILLIAM

I'll go through my travel agent-

VIVIAN

Wil, I know...why you want to stay. But when you sober up a little bit-

WILLIAM

Maybe I don't need to sober up! Maybe I need to be intoxicated.

VIVIAN starts to lose it. WILLIAM reaches for her hand.

WILLIAM (cont'd)

We are ...great friends, you and I. We understand each other...

VIVIAN

I can't hear this.

WILLIAM

I started having all these feelings about- I thought they were about Julia- but they are really about me.

VIVIAN

And how little you know yourself?

WILLIAM

I spend so much time absorbing everything around me- like a black hole. I feel so empty all the time. When I'm with her I'm not that person...I feel euphoric-alive...please...I need...

VIVIAN

No, no...I'm just a woman...you can't talk to me like this...I can't...take it!

WILLIAM

But you're not-just a woman. You are so much more...my confidant. You understand how I've never experienced this before...When I was trying to get started writing, I was always the one taking, taking, taking- I finally have something to give! Don't you see?

VIVIAN

You are insane!

WILLIAM

let me be!

VIVIAN

Everyone is...you are all conspiring today...to DESTROY me!

WILLIAM

(appealing to some cruel deity)

You're not even trying to understand...

She slowly turns to face him. Something crosses her face.

VIVIAN

Okay... you're right...I'm not being a very good friend.

She sits on the arm of the chair.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

As a friend, I'm just amazed that you aren't at all embarrassed. I mean, am I so...

She moves very close to his face.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

insubstantial, that you can talk about other women like I'm not one myself?

She kisses him...well.

VIVIAN (cont'd)

(kissing him variously)

I know you're a little crazy right now...my...friend...my...lover... but you know as well as I what we are to each other...

She slides to her knees.

VIVIAN (cont'd)
 You are my dream...of perfection...my every...
 and only happiness...my paradise...

She slowly moves up his lap, kissing his hands.

VIVIAN (cont'd)
 If you go away- even for an hour- I will have
 no purpose- you are my reason for being- you
 own me...I own you...

WILLIAM
 Someone could come in...

He tries to help her up.

VIVIAN
 Let them. I'm not ashamed. This is who I am.

THE HOUSE LATER THAT EVENING

DEAN's car-a little worse for wear- sits out in the driveway with its trunk open. WILLIAM is packing the last pieces of the luggage into it. EVERYONE except HENRY have gathered in the foyer to see VIVIAN and WILLIAM off. TIM presents VIVIAN with a card.

TIM
 From Bobby and me!
 (whispering)
 It's really from me.

VIVIAN
 (opening it)
 Oh, You didn't have to!
 (opening it)
 ...Oh thank you! Oh, This is wonderful!

TIM
 I figure every "Woman on the Brink" needs a
 mud bath and a facial! -I'm glad you decided
 to go!
 (referring to the card)
 It's non-refundable and this place is only in
 North Carolina- but it's supposed to be the
 best!

VIVIAN
You're so sweet.

TIM
(actually getting teary)
I'm sorry about...all that before.

VIVIAN hugs him.

VIVIAN
Oh shush! Everything is fine...

TIM
(losing it)
Hope springs eternal, right?

VIVIAN
(losing it as well)
It does...it really does. It will all work out.

MAGGIE and MARISOL each hug her goodbye.

DEAN
(to WILLIAM)
Are you all set?

WILLIAM
Uh...yeah, I think so.

VIVIAN
Where is Henry? Tell him we're leaving. We have to say goodbye!

DEAN
(sheepishly to WILLIAM)
You don't mind driving?

WILLIAM
Oh...

He feels his shirt pockets.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
I forgot my glasses.

He heads back into the house. Everyone else heads outside.

WILLIAM
 (Calling out front)
 I'll be right there...

JULIA comes into the room.

JULIA
 So this is it...You're leaving.
 (breathlessly)
 I've finally decided. I'm going to New York!
 I'm finally starting my own life...maybe we'll
 see each other there!

WILLIAM
 Oh! Great!

The air has become electrified.

WILLIAM (cont'd)
 Uh...Let me give you my cell phone
 number...When you get settled give me a call
 and let me know where you are...

JULIA
 Oh...

VIVIAN (O.S.)
 (Calling from outside)
 William?

WILLIAM
 I've got to go...
 (A reeling moment)
 God, your eyes...so beautiful, so...

He sweeps her up and kisses her frantically and passionately.

VIVIAN (O.S.)
 (calling from out front)
 William? I found your glasses...

WILLIAM
 Call me...if you...want...

He rushes out.

EARLY EVENING. WINTER. TOPANGA CANYON DRIVE. TWO YEARS
LATER

The weather is dark. An old Volvo station wagon tailgates another car as it winds its way along the remote section of the road heading to Malibu.

MADIGAN thumps her wedding band against the steering wheel to the beat as she smokes and drives like a madwoman. The inside of the car is a clutter of fast food flotsam and a baby jetsam- complete with car seat. GABRIEL habitually grips the overhead handle in the passenger seat.

GABRIEL
You can't pass here.

MADIGAN
Then this J-hole should pull over!

A squeal of tires. GABRIEL grips in silence.

GABRIEL
We're not going to spend the night, are we?

MADIGAN
You don't have to.

GABRIEL
Don't you feel a little weird leaving Jeremy with my mom overnight?...Tonight? It's Christmas Eve!

MADIGAN
Hey, she offered.

GABRIEL shakes his head. Stares out window.

MADIGAN (cont'd)
We're going to spend all day with her tomorrow and I haven't seen dad in months. 11-month-olds don't understand Christmas!

GABRIEL is silent.

MADIGAN (cont'd)
Besides, we could all be together as a family if your mother wasn't such a homophobe!

GABRIEL
 Maybe I'll just drop you off...

She flicks her cigarette out the window.

MADIGAN
 (happily)
 That's fine.

GABRIEL
 God! You're not supposed to do that! It's
 bad enough that you haven't quit- do you have
 to light the whole state on fire?

It has, in fact, started drizzling. MADIGAN calmly turns the
 windshield wipers on and looks at GABRIEL as if to say, "See?
 It's raining!"

GABRIEL
 (to himself)
 It's still littering.

The car in front of her has finally turned off and she hits the
 gas.

LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT...SAME TIME

Among a fairly light stream of debarking passengers, we find
 WILLIAM walking with JULIA. As he walks, he looks up ahead and
 smiles at VIVIAN who waits for him in the baggage claim. She is
 dressed conspicuously like a movie star who wants to remain
 anonymous.

Upon seeing WILLIAM, she lowers her dark glasses for a moment, to
 be sure she's not hallucinating. As he approaches, we discover
 the girl is not JULIA at all-just a girlish autograph hound-as she
 brandishes a copy of his paperback, thanks him, and moves off.

WILLIAM
 (making fun of her
 'disguise')
 Hey, aren't you...that actress!

VIVIAN
 (not getting the joke-just
 loving the attention)
 Oh, stop it!

She gives him a warm hug, and kisses him.

VIVIAN
 (happily)
 Merry Christmas!
 (re: the girl)
 An adoring fan?

VIVIAN takes his arm as they walk. They move toward the luggage carousel and pass by a movie advertisement on the wall with the title: "TORNADO IRIS". It has a large photo of VIVIAN and two male leads, accompanied by several smaller photos of the supporting cast, superimposed over a beautiful purplish flower. The tag line reads: "Inside a rare passion grows a turbulent obsession".

THE MALIBU HOUSE. SAME TIME.

A dramatic orchestral theme plays as we see that the house has a rough two years. It looks as though it tried to evolve into three different kinds of building, got tired and went into hibernation with all of the abandoned construction projects. Now it is slowly being swallowed by its landscaping. As we get nearer we can see a lone figure standing in the large window of the solarium, gazing out over the choppy, white-crested waves. It is HENRY.

IN THE LIVING ROOM- AT THE SAME TIME

DOUGLAS enters to find DEAN dozing in a chair with an afghan in his lap. He is as DOUGLAS suggested, slowly drinking himself to death. A cane rests at his feet by the new fireplace. The room is barely recognizable.

DOUGLAS
 Well. You've certainly made some changes in here! It's very...eclectic.

DEAN
 (Groggily)
 Where did you come from?

DOUGLAS
 It's good to see you too. I let myself in. I guess Vivian's not back from the airport yet?

DEAN
 ...am I dying?

DOUGLAS

What?

DEAN

You sent for my sister?

DOUGLAS

Unbelievable.

You've forgotten it's Christmas Eve?

DEAN

(he rubs his eyes trying
to wake up)

OH...C'mon...Nevermind! ...no sense of
humor... Man- oh- man!

(a "do-over")

Merry Christmas!

DOUGLAS

Yes...Merry Christmas.

DEAN

(coming to his senses)

Can I get you something?

DOUGLAS

No...thank you.

MARISOL passes through with her coat on and a small shopping bag.

MARISOL

Okay...Bye-bye!...Merry Christmas!

DOUGLAS

Merry Christmas!

DEAN

(pitifully waving her
over)

Uh...Mary sweetheart, before you go...

OUT IN THE DRIVEWAY THE VOLVO HAS JUST PULLED UP

MADIGAN

(re: the house)

Jeez...who killed the gardener?

MADIGAN catches sight of HENRY in the window as she parks.

MADIGAN

So, you'll be back to pick me up tomorrow?

GABRIEL

You act like you want me to leave.

MADIGAN

I thought you didn't want to stay.

GABRIEL

Well I ought to at least come in-

MADIGAN

Fine. Whatever. You can help me with the presents...

A FEW MINUTES LATER

MADIGAN and GABRIEL each with a double arm-load of presents wait at the front door. Their eyes are simultaneously drawn to something at about waist level. They both crouch down to read "Feliz Navidad!" on the Christmas wreath, a mere three feet off the ground. The door barely opens and we hear:

MARISOL (O.S.)

(a muffled shout)

Entre! Por favor! Come in! Come in!

As GABRIEL and MADIGAN push the door open we realize that MARISOL couldn't open the door because her arms are full of a lot of bedding stuff (Down comforter, sheets, pillows, etc. A pile as tall as she is).

GABRIEL

Merry Christmas! Feliz Navidad!

MARISOL

(struggling with her load)

Merry Christmas!

GABRIEL

What's all this?

MARISOL

Mr. Dean wants to sleep in Henry's room now.

GABRIEL

Why?

MARISOL
 Ah mi Dios! Scared of the dark maybe-
 (lowering her voice)
 He's like a little baby now!

MADIGAN
 Here-

MADIGAN dumps her presents on top of GABRIEL'S, leaving him with quite a stack.

MADIGAN (cont'd)
 (to Marisol)
 Let me help you!

MADIGAN grabs the stuff out of MARISOL's arms, starts off down the hall.

MARISOL
 No-

MADIGAN
 I insist, It's Christmas Eve!

MARISOL
 No no! Henry's room es aqui!

She points to the solarium. MADIGAN spins around almost eagerly and heads for the solarium. MARISOL, still wearing her coat, stares dumbfounded after her.

MARISOL (cont'd)
 (to herself re: MADIGAN's
 eagerness to do
 housework)
 Es un Milagro de la Navidad!

(it's a Christmas Miracle!)

GABRIEL
 (Losing his control of the
 packages)
 Uh...Me podria ayudar usted, por favor?

(Little help...please?)

MARISOL
 (helping him)
 Oh si! Si!...

FLASHBACK TO ONE YEAR AGO...THE JOYCE THEATRE IN NEW YORK

The same dramatic orchestral music as before plays as we see a performance of a particular Martha Graham-style pas de deux. The male dancer cradles the female dancer in his body with impossible ease on the floor and they rock back and forth. The woman looks so in-love and safe in his arms. The dance continues with beautiful representations of true partnering. The two dancers could not appear to be more in love with each other. Just as it appears the woman may fall, the man is there to elegantly support her as she looks into his eyes lovingly appreciating his strength and her freedom. He lifts her into the air...The Pas de Deux is nearing its beautiful and dramatic climax. We discover JULIA, in the audience, riveted to the action on stage. She finds the images there beautiful, shocking, and painful. She is moved to tears.

Seated in the very back row of the balcony we find HENRY. He is also transfixed by what is happening on stage.

The Performance concludes, and the audience bursts into applause.

OUTSIDE THE JOYCE THEATRE A FEW MINUTES LATER ON THE SIDEWALK

a sea of bodies exit the theatre into the brisk night. A sudden gap in the crowd reveals JULIA standing at the curb, a glassy-eyed vision of loveliness.

HENRY (O.S.)

JULIA!? I can't believe it...

JULIA turns to see HENRY.

JULIA

(Strange mix of sadness,
fear and relief)

Oh my God! I... Henry!

A KNOCKING sound.

DISSOLVE TO:

PRESENT NIGHT

HENRY has been staring out the big plate glass window lost in this memory as he watches the ocean boil. Another muffled knock at the door startles him out of it.

HENRY

Come in.

MADIGAN (O.S.)

(From outside)

I can't my hands are full.

Grudgingly, HENRY opens the door.

HENRY

(Re: the bedding)

Whoa, what's all this?

MADIGAN

(almost falling into the
room with the bedding)

I guess this is for your room mate.

HENRY

(wearily)

Oh yeah. You can put it over there.

She flops the stuff down.

MADIGAN

(she crosses to hug him)

Merry Christmas!

HENRY

(returning her hug)

Yeah, You too.

MADIGAN

Restricted to the tower, huh? What's your
crime?

HENRY

It's just easier for me to write in here. I
can get out to the garden...for a smoke. Dean
says it's the warmest room in the house...I
think he's just lonely.

She starts to make up the lounge-bed. Henry sits at his desk, and
stares out.

MADIGAN

Sorry if I'm interrupting. It won't take
long.

HENRY

Take your time.

She busies herself with the bedding, searching for words.
Finally...

MADIGAN

I read your feature in ESQUIRE-

A KNOCK on the door.

HENRY

(to himself)

Jesus.

(then irritably)

Come in.

GABRIEL enters.

GABRIEL

(to MADIGAN)

Okay, I put the packages under the tree...

(to HENRY)

Merry Christmas! Hey, I read your Generation-X thing in ESQUIRE Magazine!

MADIGAN grimaces.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

Yeah... really great! I don't normally ever read that magazine, but we happened to have that issue at home. What was it: "Poisoned by Nostalgia"?

HENRY

Oh...yes...

MADIGAN

(to GABRIEL)

So you'll be back tomorrow?

The DOORBELL rings.

GABRIEL

(hopefully)

Uh, yeah. Yeah...Unless you want me to stay and we can leave together later on...

MADIGAN
 (convincingly concerned)
 Go. Spend some time with your mom.

Sounds of greetings from the front hall.

GABRIEL
 (he tries to kiss her)
 Jeremy and I are gonna miss you, Little
 Mother!

MADIGAN
 (severely)
 Don't...ever call me that.

GABRIEL
 (an uncertain laugh)
 Yes ma'am! Well, I guess I'm off-

MADIGAN
 Okay! Good bye! Drive carefully.

As GABRIEL heads toward the door, TIM comes bursting into the room with a Santa Hat on.

TIM
 Jingle, jingle!? It's me, the spirit of Peace
 on Earth and Goodwill toward Men-
 (to Madigan as he hugs
 her)
 and you too sweetie!

GABRIEL looks questioningly to MADIGAN as if to ask "Can I stay a little longer?" She pretends not to notice as she hugs TIM "Hello".

OUT IN THE FOYER

DOUGLAS and DEAN, greet BOBBY, and NANA as MAGGIE collects their coats. MAGGIE is wearing a coat herself.

BOBBY
 (to MAGGIE)
 Where can I put this thing? It's heavy and it
 stinks.

TIM (O.S.)
 I heard that!

MAGGIE

What is it?

BOBBY

Tim's mother's Cheese ball.

MAGGIE

(taking the plate)

I'll put it out in the living room.

(aside to DEAN)

Now, I've made you a fine Christmas dinner.
It just needs warming. Don't you go lettin'
your sister do anything without reading the
instructions I left her-

(to herself)

Sure that woman can starve a clock.

DEAN gives an assuring nod.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Well, Take care! Merry Christmas everyone!

MAGGIE heads back to the kitchen.

BACK IN THE SOLARIUM

MADIGAN continues to make the bed.

TIM

...the whole drive up here he complained about
that cheese ball! He says I'm too "Mid-
western"! I can't help it, it's a family
tradition!

(to MADIGAN)

And if ever a family needed some tradition,
it's yours honey!

GABRIEL

You can say that again!

MADIGAN gives GABRIEL a withering look.

GABRIEL

Well, I'd better be heading out...

TIM

(no loss)

Oh, are you leaving? Well, Merry Christmas.

GABRIEL

Merry Christmas.

He goes out.

TIM

(Wheeling on HENRY)

So...Mr. Published Author! I brag about you all the time at the club! It's made me very popular of course. Have you gotten taller?

(deliciously)

What's this? A slumber party?

HENRY

DEAN's going to start staying in here with me...

TIM

Oh.

(Re: HENRY and MADIGAN)

I thought maybe you two were finally-

MADIGAN

(instantly)

Tim!

TIM

(clapping a hand to his mouth)

Oop! Did I just say that?

HENRY gets up silently and leaves.

MADIGAN

Great...perfect.

TIM

I'm sorry...I'm so bad...

IN THE LIVING ROOM

The fire burns warmly in the fireplace. Everyone sits around the coffee table noshing on the crackers and cheese ball.

GABRIEL

(to DEAN)

...but you see, if I don't get the job, we are in real trouble...Three of us living on what I make at the Day-school just isn't going to work!

DOUGLAS

(addressing the others)

Give it up Gabriel, you're talking to a man who doesn't know how truly blessed he is!

HENRY has silently appeared in the doorway, lost in his thoughts.

DEAN

(to DOUGLAS)

What do you know about it?

DOUGLAS

(noticing HENRY)

The author emerges! I bet you're regretting your decision to move back here Henry! Soon Dean'll be trying to get you to write the heart-rending story of his life.

DEAN

(to Douglas)

Why can't you leave what you don't understand alone?

DOUGLAS

Oh turn that record over!

MADIGAN and TIM enter with a tray of glasses and the thermos.

TIM (cont'd)

Jingle, jingle!

(to BOBBY)

Bobby, did you bring the gifts in?

BOBBY has just popped a whole Cracker with cheese into his mouth.

TIM (cont'd)

I'm sorry?

BOBBY gestures that his mouth is full.

TIM (cont'd)
 (Ironically)
 What, can't talk 'cuz your mouth's full of
 mid-western cheeseball?
 (under his breath)
 God I surely miss those days...
 (big production)
 Well everyone, once again, I bring you: The
 LUNDQUIST FAMILY SECRET RECIPE YULE NOG!

Various remarks of approval from those so inclined. MADIGAN has noticed that GABRIEL is still here.

GABRIEL
 (to MADIGAN, sheepishly)
 Maybe I'll just...stay for a little...?

MADIGAN
 I'm not your mother. You don't need my
 permission.

MADIGAN distributes the glasses, TIM begins pouring.

GABRIEL
 Henry, how did you like living in New York?

TIM
 -and why on Earth would you ever leave?

Realizing this question is for him, HENRY looks up to see who asked it.

HENRY
 It was fine, but I can write anywhere.

GABRIEL
 Right? It might as well be somewhere that's
 rent-free!

TIM
 Well it certainly agreed with you, you've got
 this whole Colin Farrell thing going on!

GABRIEL
 I can't imagine living anywhere like New York.

DOUGLAS

I did my internship there. The moment you set foot on the sidewalk, you realize that you are only a small part of a much larger organism: Yellow-taxi corpuscles, depositing their sustenance to every part of the city's body. You're no longer just you, but part of a collective consciousness...

TIM

How poetic...

DOUGLAS

Well, give credit where it's due: It's like that idea from Henry's play with Julia! Speaking of...

HENRY has drifted far away from this conversation as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

AFTER THE DANCE PERFORMANCE. (ONE YEAR AGO.)

JULIA and HENRY walk along the lively sidewalk...

JULIA

(re: the dance
performance)

...It was so unbelievably beautiful.

HENRY

(very passionately)

It was you and me.

JULIA

What?

HENRY

I mean... when he was rocking her in his whole body like that. I just couldn't help thinking it was like you and me!

JULIA

Really? You thought that?

HENRY

(Very excited)

Yes!

He stops and looks into her eyes.

JULIA
(Searching his eyes)
You thought of you and me?

HENRY nods meaningfully. He is so happy.

DISSOLVE TO:

MALIBU HOUSE LIVING ROOM. (PRESENT DAY.)

Everyone is looking expectantly at HENRY.

HENRY
I'm sorry?

DOUGLAS
Julia! Is she still in New York?

HENRY
Oh...I don't really know. Once I got to New York, we kind of lost touch. She was...she had other considerations. The last time I saw her was a year ago...

He gazes into the fire.

DEAN
(sighing to himself)
...What a stunner.

DOUGLAS
What's that?

DEAN
Just...a remarkable young lady! ...I have to confess, I was a little smitten with her myself.

DOUGLAS
You don't say.

The conversation begins to fade as the flickering fire sounds grow.

DEAN

I just meant that I never met girls like that when I was younger, If I had, I'd probably be a lot better off today...

DOUGLAS

Here we go...

DISSOLVE TO:

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE. (ONE YEAR AGO.)

HENRY and JULIA sit at a tiny table for two. It is a cozy, dark, and romantic restaurant with a lovely fire in the fireplace. HENRY has had several drinks.

HENRY

Life is...life is tricky. A balancing act that is never in balance. One thing comes, another goes. No building, constant give-and-take. Gain something, lose something.

JULIA

(Enjoying herself)

Isn't that a kind of balance?

HENRY

But some seem to gain a lot...all at once. It's always the other person. Never you. Someone else is always doing the things you want to do. Those who attain all of your goals seem to be on another planet from the one you live on.

JULIA

(Smiling)

Oh...I've missed you. Hey, what were you doing at a dance performance all by yourself?

HENRY

I should ask you the same thing! The Law firm gets tickets to stuff all the time...everyone takes what they want, and whatever's left they toss to us proofers.

(Holding up the stub)

The last one! See! It was ordained by the gods! We were meant to find each other!

JULIA
 (distractedly)
 I guess so...

HENRY just can't stop smiling.

JULIA (cont'd)
 I'm sorry, you were saying something...

HENRY
 (happily)
 I was? Oh! Think about famous people! When a "Famous person" is in your presence, and you actually get to talk with them- you always say too much- spilling out your hopes and problems as they sit there, silently.

TEARS are welling up in JULIA'S eyes.

HENRY
 (encouraged by her emotion)
 What is on the other side of that satisfied, content, demeanor of people you admire? I think it's strategy. I think to get what you really want, you have to always be planning. You have to be ready to do whatever it takes, whenever you have an opportunity...

JULIA not sure whether to laugh or cry grabs HENRY'S hands over the table to shut him up. She kisses him. Deeply. It's a "thank you". She stands, clutches a green scarf to her and grabs her coat.

JULIA
 I have to go.

HENRY
 (totally shocked)
 What's wrong?

With an apology in her eyes,

JULIA
 It's just... something I have to do...

Uncertain of what else to say, she turns and goes:

TIM (O.S.)
I think they're here! This party is
officially started!

DISSOLVE TO:

The sound of TIM's voice has snapped us back to Christmas-Present:
We hear VIVIAN and WILLIAM coming in the front door. HENRY is
sitting right where he was. He hadn't realized that everyone left
the room to greet VIVIAN and WILLIAM, except for himself and NANA.
NANA sips her eggnog and smiles that misty faraway smile at HENRY.

VIVIAN (O.S.)
Merry Christmas! Oh...It's so
good to see you!

DEAN (O.S.)
Hello there, Merry Christmas
Will!

BOBBY (O.S.)
Darling, like a fine wine-

VIVIAN (O.S.)
Bobby I swear to God- if you
finish that sentence I will
never speak to you again!

BOBBY (O.S.)
What? I was going to say-

TIM(O.S.)
Cheese it Bobby!

As everyone comes into the living room. GABRIEL takes their coats
away.

VIVIAN
(crossing to hug her)
Merry Christmas Nana!

NANA
(hugging a complete
stranger)
Oh...

WILLIAM
(noticing DEAN's cane)
How did you hurt your leg?

DEAN
Agh...never get old! Knee surgery.

VIVIAN
He'll be better than new in a few weeks.

WILLIAM
 (warmly hugging her)
 Maddy...

MADIGAN
 (re: her attire, hair,
 body, etc.)
 God, how did you recognize me!?

WILLIAM
 So!

He holds her left hand and observes the ring on it.

MADIGAN
 Yes...ages ago.

WILLIAM
 (sincerely)
 Happily ever after...I'm sure.

He sees HENRY. Haltingly he crosses to extend a handshake.

VIVIAN
 (to HENRY)
 Look what William has brought for you Sweetie!

WILLIAM
 (Shaking hands)
 ...You're creating quite a stir! I've been
 getting all kinds of questions about you in
 New York...

He holds up a brand new hard-cover book.

VIVIAN
 It's the collection of short-stories you're
 in!

WILLIAM
 It's the publisher's Mock up. Kind of
 souvenir stuff. Thought you would like to
 have it.

HENRY
 That's nice of you. Thanks.

WILLIAM

Well...Merry Christmas! Sorry I didn't wrap it.

HENRY

(politely)

Will you be staying for a while?

WILLIAM

No, I actually have to get back to New York before New Years'. I've got rewrites to do ...I'm past my deadline. You know how it is...

MADIGAN

(to GABRIEL)

What are you doing?

GABRIEL who was just pouring himself a second Nog, stops mid-pour.

GABRIEL

I was just...

MADIGAN

Aren't you about to drive home...?

GABRIEL

Uh...I guess...I am...

MADIGAN

I'm just saying...

GABRIEL

(smiling good-naturedly)

No, no...you're right, I should probably get going.

(he goes to kiss her)

Good night li-

(catching himself)

uh- light of my life.

GABRIEL (cont'd)

(to BOBBY)

I'd love to stay, but my mom is at our house with the baby...you know... Merry Christmas everyone!

BOBBY
 (ironically)
 Yes, wish your mother a "Merry Christmas" for us.

GABRIEL
 (a little embarrassed)
 I will.

He goes. TIM produces a deck of cards.

TIM
 Who's ready to play!?

VIVIAN
 (to WILLIAM)
 Oh...I forgot to warn you about the card game!
 It's a Christmas Eve tradition going back
 to...our grandfather? When Dean and I were
 kids, the goal was to get good enough to play
 at the "adult table"!

DEAN
 We did too! Caused many a family feud my
 sister and I!

HENRY opens the book of short stories. The spine "cracks". It's never been opened. He regards it with a quiet sigh.

VIVIAN
 (to WILLIAM)
 Do you want to play?

WILLIAM
 Uh...I don't really know card games.

DEAN
 Perfect! You're about to get schooled...

TIM has already begun setting up the game table.

VIVIAN
 Just don't let them convince you to play for
 money! They're all card sharks!

HENRY
 (getting up)
 Or card "sharps" even.

VIVIAN

That's what I said: "Card Sharks". Why don't you play sweetie, I need to get started with the food soon.

HENRY

No, thank you...not right now...

HENRY goes.

VIVIAN

Well, I'll go get things started in the kitchen, then I may have time for one hand...

Everyone approves.

OUTSIDE

At the foot of the long drive, a car with its lights off rolls to a gentle stop. From this vantage point, all we can see of the house is the light in the huge windows of the solarium.

INSIDE THIS CAR

JULIA picks a present up out of the passenger seat and clutches it to her chest as she looks up at the imposing windows.

DISSOLVE TO:

END OF DANCE PERFORMANCE. (ONE YEAR AGO.)

JULIA has been so affected by the Martha Graham piece that she is openly sobbing as she applauds. After a moment, she turns to say something to the person next to her and realizes that the seat is empty. Just as she is about to panic, WILLIAM comes back to his seat applauding Politely.

WILLIAM

Did I miss the best part?

JULIA

Where... did you go?

WILLIAM
 (Noticing her tears)
 Are you okay, Kiddo?

JULIA
 (Taking his arm)
 Yeah...fine...it was just really moving...I
 looked up and you were-

They begin to move out of their seats into the aisle.

WILLIAM
 My phone. You must have been pretty
 engrossed! Joshua wants me to come by this
 little thing for a while.

JULIA
 Now?

WILLIAM
 (Shrugging)
 ...my book comes out tomorrow! I don't really
 want to- these things are in my contract!

JULIA
 Well, how long will we be there?

WILLIAM reaches into his pocket and pulls out his vibrating cell
 phone. He opens it and puts it to his ear as he forges ahead
 through the patrons. JULIA has to struggle to keep up.

WILLIAM
 (into phone)
 Hello? Yes! -on my way...I promise!
 Yes...Un Deux Trois. ...Fourty-fourth. I
 know! See you soon!

He closes the phone and pockets it.

WILLIAM
 (to JULIA)
 Joshua. He hates for anyone to be late when
 he wants to pat himself on the back. He'll
 make a couple of speeches, take credit for
 everything, and ...I'll be done.

JULIA
 (Sensing his discomfort)
 Okay...

WILLIAM

I'll meet you back at the room and- you can have a little Jacuzzi or something and I'll just be right along. Here, let me- let me get you a cab-

He hails a cab.

WILLIAM

(Afterthought)

So you liked it?

A cab pulls up.

JULIA

...Yes...it was amazing.

WILLIAM

(He checks his watch.)

Actually, do you mind if I grab this one? ...I'm sorry...I just -I'm supposed to be in midtown in five minutes- He's giving a toast...

JULIA

Okay...Um...

WILLIAM

(remembering)

Oh...You had a surprise for me! Oh, I'm sorry...I'm messing this up, aren't I? Tell you what, order up a bottle of champagne from room service, and when I get back you can surprise me then, okay?

JULIA

It can wait. Go get your praise...you deserve it. I'll see you back at the room...

(almost imploring)

I love you...

He blows her a kiss as he gets in. He mouths the words "Thank you" through the window. As the cab pulls out, we see WILLIAMS green scarf has fallen in the street. JULIA picks it up and stands there for a moment about to be overwhelmed, as we see HENRY come out of the theatre doors.

HENRY

JULIA!? I can't believe it...

JULIA turns to see HENRY.

JULIA
 (Sadness, fear and relief)
 Oh my God! I... Henry!

DISSOLVE TO:

MALIBU HOUSE DRIVEWAY. (PRESENT DAY.)

Resolved to go up, JULIA gets out of the car and closes the door quietly.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

WILLIAM, MADIGAN, and DOUGLAS, are at the game table...NANA drifts in and out of sleep in an easy chair...BOBBY stands, nursing his drink and watching disinterestedly. DEAN enters. His knee is giving him a lot of pain and he's not very good with the cane. He nearly loses his balance as he sits at the game table.

DEAN
 ...well...I couldn't...I couldn't find it, but
 I know I saved it somewhere.

DOUGLAS
 Why don't you just tell us what it was?

DEAN
 Well, because I wanted to show it to you! I
 don't remember exactly what it said, but it
 was an article I found about Henry's book.

BOBBY
 I hear the reviews have been brutal!

VIVIAN and TIM cross through with casserole dishes etc. for the buffet they are setting up in the other room.

VIVIAN
 What's been brutal?

BOBBY
 Henry's book reviews.

VIVIAN

Ugh! He should ignore them all.

She comes back into living room and sits at the game table.

DOUGLAS

What did you think of it?

VIVIAN

The review?

DOUGLAS

His book!

VIVIAN

Oh, I haven't read it yet. Can you believe it? I haven't had time!

(squeezing WILLIAM's arm)

I'm saving it for our trip!

MADIGAN

(to WILLIAM re: the game)

I call...

HENRY enters quietly. Goes to window and silently pours himself a drink from the decanter set there.

BOBBY

(at the fireplace)

Oh my god...this is real! I never noticed...creepy.

BOBBY is looking at the stuffed seagull on the rustically decorated mantle over the fireplace.

DEAN

(to MADIGAN)

Two pair...

(looking over to the mantle)

Yeah...It sure is.

(to WILLIAM)

Hey, now you can take that with you...I never knew where to ship it.

WILLIAM

What?

DEAN
(Pointing)
That ...seagull! ...I have no idea where
Marisol went to get it stuffed for you.

WILLIAM
(thinking)
Why would she do that?

DEAN
Some story you were working on...she said you
asked her to!

DEAN looks at DOUGLAS as if to say "and you think I'm bad?"

WILLIAM
Huh...

DISSOLVE TO:

ROYALTON HOTEL. SUITE BATHROOM. (ONE YEAR AGO.) LATE-NIGHT.

The bathroom door slides open as a mischievously grinning WILLIAM
pokes his head in.

WILLIAM
Sorry it's so late...Julia?

He looks confused as we widen to see the bathroom is empty except
for his green scarf wrapped around the neck of a bottle of
champagne in a bucket of melted ice. On the bathroom mirror,
written in lipstick, is the exclamation: "Surprise!" He searches
the other room to no avail:

WILLIAM (O.S.)
Julia?

DISSOLVE TO:

MALIBU HOUSE LIVING ROOM. (PRESENT DAY.)

MADIGAN
(to WILLIAM)
C'mon...whataya got?

WILLIAM
 (from the game table)
 Ah, I have this...

MADIGAN
 That's a ...Royal Flush.
 (dead pan)
 Never played before, huh?

Disgusted, MADIGAN tosses her cards down.

WILLIAM
 Did I win?

VIVIAN
 (To the whole room)
 It doesn't surprise me! WILLIAM was born
 lucky! Everything he touches...
 (a grandiose wave of the
 arm)
 Well, shall we eat? William, you haven't
 eaten all day you must be starved...

Everyone starts to get up and head to the dining room with VIVIAN
 herding them...except for HENRY who stares into his drink...

TIM
 What are you working on now, HENRY? Have you
 written any screenplays?

Before HENRY can answer-

VIVIAN
 Tim!? Come sit by William and tell him your
 airport story- You've got to hear this
 William!

VIVIAN comes back into the living room. HENRY watches as she
 plays the role of perfect mother.

VIVIAN
 (Sing-Song)
 Nana!

NANA startles awake.

VIVIAN (cont'd)
 Time to eat! Come into the dining room, Tim
 is going to tell a funny story!

NANA

Is that a woman or a man?

VIVIAN

Oh Nana...

NANA

(Whispering too loudly)

Looks like a horse-faced girl I knew in school.

VIVIAN

(To HENRY)

You are coming to dinner aren't you?

HENRY

I'm so full of all your delicious appetizers...I'm not hungry.

VIVIAN

You do what you want...

HENRY is struck by her lack of effort with him as she leads NANA into the other room and TIM's story can be heard gaining momentum.

IN THE SOLARIUM

From outside looking in, we see HENRY enter, take a big swig of his drink, and sit heavily at his desk. He regards the new hardcover book sitting there. He picks it up.

Now we see that JULIA has quietly made her way onto the deck and is peering in at HENRY. She watches as HENRY tosses the gift book into the waste basket, sighs and runs his hand through his hair. She watches him for a moment as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

AFTER THE DANCE PERFORMANCE. (ONE YEAR AGO.)

From outside we see HENRY sitting at the table much the same way we just saw him in the solarium as JULIA comes out the door in a hurry. She puts the green scarf around her neck as she walks past the window, catches a glimpse of HENRY distraughtly running his fingers through his hair wondering what just happened. She steels herself and rushes to the curb to hail a cab.

CAFE UN DEUX TROIS. MINUTES LATER.

JULIA takes a nervous breath, braces herself and goes in.

The restaurant, a popular after-theatre spot is packed to the gills. As the maitre' d approaches her, JULIA unwraps the scarf from around her neck.

MAITRE' D

Are you joining someone tonight?

Just as JULIA is about to answer she notices a rather boisterous table off against the wall. We immediately see WILLIAM as he is being clapped on the back, and congratulated by another man. As the man steps aside, we see VIVIAN dressed to the nines, sitting next to WILLIAM beaming proudly up at him.

The green scarf drops to the ground in slow motion as we hear:

MAITRE' D (O.S.)

Miss? Can I help you?

ROYALTON HOTEL. SUITE BATHROOM. -MOMENTS LATER.

Hurriedly and amid sobs, JULIA throws her essentials into a small bag-leaving what appears to be a man's shaving kit open on the counter. She pauses to look at herself in the mirror. For a moment she stops...observes herself...the sobbing comes back full force. She takes a lipstick and begins to press it to the mirror. A telephone rings.

NOW WE'RE IN JULIA'S APARTMENT. (STILL ONE YEAR AGO.) THE NEXT DAY.

Wearing the same dress and remnants of the make-up from the night before, JULIA has passed out on her couch. The telephone rings one more time and we hear Julia's outgoing message on her machine. William's voice comes on

WILLIAM (ON ANSWERING MACHINE)

Julia...Where did you go? I'm going to keep calling until I reach you. What's going on?

DISSOLVE TO:

MALIBU HOUSE DECK OUTSIDE SOLARIUM. (PRESENT DAY.)

Unprepared for this flood of memory, JULIA swoons as she turns away from the windows. With tears streaming, she begins to head back to her car. In the background we can see that HENRY has heard something and comes to the door to look. Upon seeing her he dashes outside.

HENRY

Julia?

She freezes on the steps.

HENRY

What are you doing here?

She turns to face him.

JULIA

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have-

HENRY

No! No! I'm so... I can't believe it! I had this crazy feeling...and you're here!

JULIA

(lowering her voice)

Is there anyone...

She points to the solarium.

HENRY

No. Not a soul. Come in...please!

She comes up the steps.

JULIA

(Hugging him)

Merry Christmas!

She gives him the gift and shudders in his arms.

HENRY

Merry- oh I wish I'd known you were coming I would've-

(he buries his face in her hair)

JULIA
It's okay! It's nothing...

They come into the room.

JULIA (cont'd)
(re: the room)
Oh this is so nice!

Turning to him again.

JULIA (cont'd)
Will anyone come in?

HENRY
No they're all eating.

She looks concerned.

HENRY
Here...

He slides a chair in front of the door.

HENRY (cont'd)
Let me look at you!

JULIA
(sniffles)
Oh god, don't. I look terrible.

He takes her coat, puts it down.

HENRY
(genuine fascination)
No...no you look...beautiful...older...

She begins to cry.

HENRY
No, I mean...not OLD! Just more...I don't
know- worldly!

JULIA
yeah...

HENRY
Please...

He grabs a box of kleenex off the desk. He gives it to her.

HENRY (cont'd)
Don't cry. No crying...this is- You can't
cry! It's a rule...

She calms down.

HENRY (cont'd)
How long have you been in California?

JULIA
A week.

HENRY
Why didn't you-

JULIA
I've been afraid ...you hated me.

HENRY
What?! Why? Why would I-

JULIA
Can we sit?

He sits on the bed offering her the chair.

JULIA
This is good...yes, this is better. We'll sit
and talk...like we used to...

She begins to cry again.

HENRY
You're doing it again!

JULIA
No...it's good. It's cathartic, you know?
It's been a year...since I really let myself.
I'm sorry...

She begins to laugh at how hard she is crying. It catches hold and takes over for a moment. HENRY begins to laugh too despite himself. After a time she takes his hand.

JULIA

Oh Henry. Here we are...you've done it...you're doing it! Writing! And I'm acting...we've really done it, haven't we?

She laughs again for a moment.

JULIA (cont'd)

We've chosen the hardest fucking road!

Henry nods. She smiles.

JULIA (cont'd)

When I lived out here, I used to dream about being famous and what I'd do...and tomorrow I'm leaving for...

She begins laughing again.

JULIA (cont'd)

Missouri!

HENRY

(smiling)

Missouri?

JULIA

For...

(gasping for air)

Six...months!

Henry begins to laugh too.

JULIA (cont'd)

(hysterically laughing)

to play...a...fish!!

HENRY

(laughing at her laughing)

What!?

JULIA

(finally getting it together)

Branson Missouri. Not a fish. The Sea Witch-
in The Little Mermaid.

HENRY
 (disbelief)
 Wh-Why?

JULIA
 (forcing herself to be
 serious)
 My agent says my resume needs more...
 (starting to laugh again)
 regional...

Laughing so hard she can't speak.

HENRY
 ...Theatre?

She nods while convulsing in laughter. He watches her. After a long moment.

HENRY
 I did... hate you.

Suddenly nothing is funny. She looks at him.

HENRY (cont'd)
 I wanted to erase you... everything you ever
 gave me. But I realized that even if I did
 ...I couldn't destroy your place...in my
 heart. Ever. Yes, I started to get
 published, and I thought "now she'll see...now
 she'll be sorry..." But I was miserable!
 Because it didn't matter. You weren't
 there...

JULIA
 Oh...don't... No...

She gets up.

HENRY
 You were all that really mattered.

JULIA
 I shouldn't have come. I'm sorry-I have to go.

She gets her coat.

HENRY
(Helplessly)
Where are you staying?

JULIA
Sheila's house.

Putting on her coat. He nods in understanding.

JULIA (cont'd)
Is your mother here?

HENRY
Yeah. Dean had an operation on his knee so
she came out last week.

Just then from the other room:

WILLIAM (O.S.)
(a punch line to some
story)
...she wouldn't believe it! I couldn't
convince her!

VIVIAN and others laugh. JULIA falls motionless as she listens.

JULIA
(welling up)
He's here too.

HENRY
Yes. Today. Look, I know...about...you and
him.

JULIA awash with shame, rushes to leave.

HENRY (cont'd)
(stopping her)
It doesn't matter.

As she looks into his face:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE. (ONE YEAR AGO.)

JULIA wears a hospital gown. With the help of a nurse in scrubs, she lies back onto a beige Vinyl-padded examination table while putting her legs in stirrups.

From JULIA's POV we see the nurse looming over her.

NURSE
(soothing)
You just try to relax...

DOCTOR (O.S.)
(brightly)
That's fine. Now, I need you to move down
some more...all the way down...Good...-

We hear a machine whir on.

NURSE
You can hold my hand if you want to.

As the nurse backs out of view, we notice the fluorescent light immediately overhead has been covered with a 'soothing' transparency photo of the California Coast-line. It has been up there for a while and has started to fade. The machine whirs to a higher speed:

DOCTOR (O.S.)
This is going to be a little uncomfortable...

we move in on the sadly discolored scene on the ceiling. Suddenly we are inside the photo itself, and now we are soaring up the coastline in the air. The landscape is all colored exactly like the transparency photo. We arrive at the Malibu House. HENRY stands in the driveway, discolored like the landscape. We swoop right up to his greenish, innocently smiling face:

HENRY
(with a surreal echo)
Ah...my defiant little seagull!

Everything spins, the picture, the doctor's masked face, and very bright lights...as we

DISSOLVE TO:

SOLARIUM. (PRESENT)

JULIA

I'm your seagull...

She becomes unsteady. As HENRY reaches to support her, she pulls away.

JULIA (cont'd)

No...that's not true.

She sits back down with HENRY's help.

JULIA (cont'd)

He didn't believe in my dreams...so neither did I. I gave up. But now... I'm different. Now I live when I'm acting. I don't just pretend. I am. I don't question anymore. I believe. You see...I've figured it out. It doesn't matter what you want to do...writing, acting...anything...what matters is believing...and knowing how to endure when no one else believes. How to survive and have faith. I have it now...and I'm not afraid anymore.

HENRY

It's like you've discovered...how to fly...
(welling up with tears)
and all I can think is: "It's a long way
down..."

JULIA

You'll be fine. I'm gonna go.

HENRY

Let me come with you- I can write-

Shaking her head and pressing her finger to his lips.

JULIA

Promise me you'll come to opening night when I hit it big?

She stands. He slowly accepts that she means it. He nods.

JULIA (cont'd)
 (unsteady)
 ...I'm exhausted...and hungry.

HENRY
 Well at least let me- Maggie made a huge meal!
 I can go and-

JULIA
 No.
 (the tears are coming
 back)
 And when you see William, don't say anything.
 I...still love him.

She hugs him hard.

JULIA (cont'd)
 Good bye Henry!
 Don't forget your present!

She runs out. He watches her go all the way. He turns, regards the present with tear-filled desperate eyes. He opens the card and reads it.

JULIA (V.O.)
 Dear Henry, You told me once that you
 destroyed this. I sincerely hope that's not
 true, but just in case, here it is- I hope I
 have it right.

He tears the package open as though it might contain the answer to all his questions. It is a picture frame with a handwritten document on parchment paper inside. As HENRY reads we slowly pull back to see more and more of him as we hear:

JULIA (V.O.)
 "When I close my eyes I see these...squiggly
 objects...Darting here and there...across a
 black background. Do you? You do. They
 remind me of a time when there was just
 water..."

He sets the frame down on the desk. He takes the disk out of his computer and breaks it in half. He takes out a box full of disks and begins destroying them any way he can.

BACK IN THE DINING ROOM- SAME TIME.

The meal has been a success. DOUGLAS slices a pie, VIVIAN feeds WILLIAM a bite of something that looks delicious and decadent as they listen to TIM who is telling a story that BOBBY keeps interrupting. MADIGAN contemplates whether her drink needs refreshing, DEAN seems to be nodding off, NANA is surprisingly alert-as she tries to remember where she met the "Horse-faced" girl who's talking...all as we hear:

JULIA (V.O. cont'd)

...just water and these squiggly objects...
and a vast void of nothing...
These visions we all have are cave paintings
on the walls of our eyelids.
A kind of record...
a recording of what we-
all life-

We slowly pan away from the table and over to the mantle where the seagull rests. Next to it is a framed black and white photo of a laughing, carefree, twenty-one-year-old VIVIAN waving at the camera as she sits in a flashy convertible. In the back seat stands a five-year old HENRY. We tighten on the photo:

JULIA (V.O.) (cont'd)

used to be...
just water and these...squiggly things.
And in a million years...
Long after televangelists...
Long after automobiles and skyscrapers...
Long after all we understand is gone...
When you close your eyes then...
You will see me!"

At that exact moment we hear a gunshot. As we get closer to the photo we become aware of the expression on little HENRY's face...He's not smiling for the camera. The sun is directly in his eyes. We continue to zero in on his face and it's increasingly apparent pensive scowl as we hear:

VIVIAN (O.S.)

What was that?

The sound of several people rushing out of their chairs.

DOUGLAS (O.S.)

Stay in here-

VIVIAN (O.S.)

Let go!-

Henry? Oh my god! No! Oh God! No, no, no,

My baby boy!

(sobbing)

My baby!

We get closer and closer to little HENRY'S face until we seem to get lost in the void of his troubled eye.

FADE OUT.

THE END.