

Out of My Dreams

by

Gila Zalon

Copyright(c)by Gila Zalon

Gila Zalon
gilazon@icloud.com
973-951-1935

FADE IN:

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SOUND ON BLACK

An indistinct HUM mutates into . . .

BLACK & WHITE SEQUENCE

. . . a PARTY in progress. Hazy, amorphous, slow motion. Unclear VOICES punctuated by SPURTS OF LAUGHTER and ICE CLINKING in cocktail glasses. Suddenly . . .

ALL SOUNDS CEASE

. . . except that of HIGH HEELS CLICKING on wooden floors. Like a choreographed ballet, the guests turn towards the SOUND.

INTRODUCE THE COLOR RED

Wearing RED HEELS and a RED NIGHTGOWN, SHEILA, early 30s, effervescent and self-assured, glides into the midst of the party energizing the guests. It is now a proper party in progress.

The HUM OF VOICES and LAUGHTER are infectious. Sheila stops at various clusters of people. Chats, shakes hands, air-kisses.

In a corner of the room, a DOOR opens, beaming a BRIGHT STREAM OF LIGHT. Sheila removes herself from the guests, and examines the open door.

SOUNDS of CHILDREN PLAYING AND LAUGHING. BIRDS SINGING. The FAINT TINKLES of a HURDY-GURDY. All emanating from the BEAM OF LIGHT.

INT. STAIRCASE

Sheila climbs a narrow staircase, bathed in the LIGHT from above. When she reaches the top she is in ...

END B&W

INT. NORMA'S KITCHEN

...a bright, cheery, country kitchen. Handmade items everywhere.

Sheila watches NORMA, 60's, who fusses with objects in the room.

Like a 1960's hippy earth mother, Norma wears a long skirt and peasant blouse with crystal beads hanging from her neck and ears.

As she works, she smiles, dances and hums. At her feet, a CALICO CAT stretches and yawns.

SHEILA

Hello, Norma. What are you doing here?

Norma turns towards Sheila.

NORMA

I live here, sweetie, you know that.

She offers both of her hands to Sheila in greeting, a huge smile on her face.

NORMA (cont'd)

Stay awhile. Have some tea.

As Sheila approaches, Norma morphs into a witch-like figure. Her smile now twisted and mean.

COLOR returns to B&W.

Confused and frightened, Sheila turns and runs back down the flight of stairs.

INT. VICTORIAN LIVING ROOM

The room is dark and empty.

The incredible STILLNESS is interrupted by the SOUND of a child laughing.

Sheila approaches a ghostly vision in the corner. The laughter turns into HEAVY BREATHING, then into pathetic SOBS.

A blanket on the floor covers a small figure.

Sheila pulls off the blanket to reveal a LITTLE GIRL, a child-like replica of Sheila herself.

Terrified, the child SCREAMS.

Sheila SCREAMS.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT - SPRING
MORNING

A techno-modern bedroom. Sparse and chic. A clock next to the bed reads 7:00 AM.

In the roomy king-size bed, Sheila MOANS in her sleep.

Sheila's husband, BARRY, nice-looking, clean-cut, mid-30's, shakes her awake.

BARRY

Sheila, Sheila...wake up.

Sheila wakes up with a start and shrinks away from him. Becoming aware, she reaches out to him.

SHEILA

It was awful. Very scary.

BARRY

A nightmare?

Sheila nods. Barry folds her in his arms.

BARRY (cont'd)

You okay now?

Still in her dream.

SHEILA

It was...a big house. Something terrified me. I don't know what. I found a door to...like...another whole apartment. Norma was there.

BARRY

Who?

SHEILA

Norma. You know...Oh. Who is Norma? I was sure I knew her. I thought at first she was my mother, but....what did it mean?

Barry looks at his watch, eases himself off the bed. Sheila tries to hold him back. He resists.

BARRY
I'm late. Can't stay for breakfast.

He finishes dressing. A dark business suit, light blue shirt, red tie.

BARRY (cont'd)
See you at lunch.

SHEILA
Lunch?

BARRY
Remember? Eric's new house?

Barry kisses her on the head and exits.

The sunlight beams through the window. Sheila shakes herself into reality. She gets up, reaches for her cell phone. Checks it.

EXT. PARK - EARLY MORNING

A path around a man-made lake. Lush trees. A geyser sprays in the middle of the lake, chasing off the ducks that mill at the edges. The sky is blue.

PEOPLE populate the park: fishing, walking dogs, reading newspapers.

Two women, NADIA and TINA, both early 30's, run in tandem.

Sheila runs toward them, gulping water from a Fuji bottle, lost in thought. The women bar the road with their arms.

SHEILA
Excuse me, can I please...Oh!?

Sheila stops with a start! Then gives a little giggle.

The women turn and run alongside her.

SHEILA (cont'd)
Sorry. I'm in my own world.

NADIA
Where you been?

SHEILA
You know...busy.

TINA
Too busy for the book club?

NADIA
Or a lunch date?

SHEILA
Just finishing a big job. And I gotta
meet Barry for lunch. Sorry. It's
exhausting.

NADIA
Whadda you call taking care of kids? A
walk in the park?

TINA
You gotta make time for yourself,
whether it's kids or a job.

Sheila starts to outrun her friends.

SHEILA
Call me for the next Book Club. I'll
be there.

She shouts after them.

SHEILA (cont'd)
Make the next one at my place.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

A taxi pulls up in front of the building. Sheila exits,
holding a large envelope.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY

Sheila adjusts the Kate Spade handbag that hangs on her
shoulder and disappears into the elevator.

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE

Fabric swatches, rug samples, charts, interior design photos
line the walls. Vases and statuettes stand on bookshelves.
Sheila tosses her handbag onto a Bontempi Casa lounge chair
and sinks into her Herman Miller desk chair in front of her
desktop computer.

COMPUTER SCREEN

An Appointment Calendar: 10:00 A.M. Reba & Josh Rollins - New
3-BR Condo.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALLWAY

A good-looking, stylish young couple, REBA and JOSH ROLLINS, late 20's, stop at a door. The lettering reads: INTERIORS BY DESIGN. Reba is noticeably pregnant. They walk into...

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM

....a simple, chic, waiting room--faux Frank Stella designs line one wall. Reba and Josh approach the desk of KATIE, 30's, the receptionist/assistant. All smiles.

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE

A light tapping. Sheila's door opens.

KATIE

Reba and Josh are here.

SHEILA

Thanks, Katie. Will you be around?

KATIE

I'm gonna match that swatch you gave me.

SHEILA

Can you be back in an hour? I'm expecting a delivery and I gotta meet some muck-a-muck new client from Barry's office.

Katie's face is a big question mark.

SHEILA (cont'd)

His boss!

KATIE

His boss?

SHEILA

He wants to bring me into the business. Make me head of design for all their new properties.

Katie mouths a great big OOOH!

Katie ushers in Reba and Josh, then leaves the room, closing the door.

CONFERENCE TABLE

Reba and Josh study a large screen on the wall. Opposite them Sheila fiddles with her laptop. As she does....

COMPUTER SCREEN

....a series of rooms materialize on the 3-D design planner.

REBA

The condo has FOUR bedrooms.

SHEILA

Oh? Your plan has three. Where's the fourth?

Josh points to a spot on the screen.

JOSH

There. Next to the den. These plans were from the apartment we almost bought before...well, before we got pregnant. I'll get you the new ones.

SHEILA

Hmmm.

REBA

It's the baby's room. Just nine by twelve. Is that a problem?

JOSH

More like nine by ten I think.

Reba gives him a look.

REBA

They said nine by twelve on the plan.

JOSH

Nine by ten. Trust me. I saw the model.

Reba ignores him.

REBA

It's a boy, but we'd like the room to be sort of neutral. Maybe a light green? Or....

Sheila plays around with the program and produces another room.

SHEILA

The other bedrooms--still guest room and office?

REBA
And master, of course.

JOSH
The Master is pretty big. But the others? Nine by ten. Small. The whole thing was under two mill. It's just a starter.

Reba gives him a playful punch on his shoulder. He laughs and hugs his wife, patting her stomach. Sheila is uncomfortable. She concentrates on the computer program.

SHEILA
What you see here is the gist of the master suite, guest room and great room. If you okay it, I'll get my people to start work as soon as you want, while we play around with the baby's room.

Reba and Josh pull themselves away from each other, look briefly at the screen, and nod.

REBA
Looks great to me. If the colors are true, anyway. Josh?

JOSH
Your call.

Reba smiles and nods at Sheila.

JOSH (cont'd)
She makes the decisions. I pay the bills.

REBA
I'll get you a set of keys. Can we work on the baby's room soon?

Sheila nods and closes her laptop. The screen on the wall goes blank.

EXT. MODERN HIGH RISE - DAY

Sheila hops out of a cab and runs into the building....

INT. MODERN HIGH RISE

....waits for the elevator....

EXT. ELEVATOR

...enters the elevator. The door closes.

ON PANEL

The floor numbers range from 1 to 14. There is no 13th floor.

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION ROOM

A well-dressed young receptionist looks up as Sheila enters.
No smile.

RECEPTIONIST

I'll tell him you're here.

Sheila sits on a plushy chair. Checks her watch. Picks up a magazine. Puts it down.

Seconds later. Still no smile.

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)

He'd like you to meet him in the
conference room.

SHEILA

Thanks.

She grabs her stuff and heads towards an inner office.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Shelves lined with ARCHITECTURAL DIGESTS, books on real estate. Walls lined with PICTURES OF BUILDINGS. Long mahogany table with elegant chairs.

The table is "set" with party sandwiches, coffee cups and related paraphernalia. Cookies sit on a center plate.

At Sheila's entrance Barry's boss, ERIC STONE, 60's, rises and greets her with a kiss on the cheek. Barry remains seated, munching on a sandwich. He waves.

BARRY

Hey, love.

Sheila seats herself opposite Eric.

ERIC

Have a sandwich. Leftovers from
yesterday's office party.

Sheila checks out the array. Chooses a sandwich.

SHEILA

So what's this all about?

STONE

All About Eve! Ha ha. Actually, all about Reeve. That's the name of my new house in Connecticut. It's the old Reeve Mansion in--of all places, Stoneville. Funny? Eric Stone from Stoneville?

Barry laughs. Finishes his sandwich.

SHEILA

Oh? I thought your get-away house was in Denver?

STONE

That's only in the winter. We like to ski. Sorry I didn't have you do that one, but we used a great group that's familiar with Denver. So we ski in the winter and sail in the summer. Do you know Stoneville?

SHEILA

Not really. Barry went to Yale so I kind of know where it is. Up the coast somewhere. Do you own other properties up there?

STONE

Nope. This is to get away from business. So what do you need to know to get started?

SHEILA

Well, I need some plans, if possible. Pictures would be okay. And of course I need to look at the place.

STONE

Tell you what. Why don't you and Barry come up this weekend? Barry? Can you get away?

Sheila looks annoyed.

SHEILA

I'm not sure I can get away, Eric. I'll have to check my calendar.

STONE

Nonsense. Cancel it--whatever it is. This is more important. We're having a small cocktail party for my new neighbors. I want them to meet you so they don't call the cops when they see you breaking and entering.

BARRY

No problem, Eric. We'll work it out.

Eric looks meaningfully at Sheila.

STONE

It's not going to be a test, so don't worry. I've seen your work--and you're my girl. Our girl.

Sheila works her face into a smile.

Stone and Barry drink up their coffee and grab cookies. They all rise.

STONE (cont'd)

Okay, it's a date. Gotta run.

He gives Sheila a peck on the cheek. And leaves.

BARRY

I gotta run, also, hon. Meet you at Russo's at 6:00. Harvey and Gail. Remember?

SHEILA

Wait a minute. I'm not sure I want the responsibili...

BARRY

Cool it. You'll be great. And you'll make out like a bandit.

SHEILA

And what about lunch?

Sheila looks at the uneaten sandwich in front of her.

BARRY

We just did! See you later.

The peck on the cheek is repeated and Barry, too, runs out. Sheila touches her cheek. Oh well. She leaves the sandwich on the table...and leaves the room.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

Sheila picks out a donut and pays for her coffee/and. At the tables young people sit at their laptops.

EXT. STREET IN GREENWICH VILLAGE

Carrying her take-out bag, Sheila peers into store windows as she walks by.

A crafts store displaying pottery and art work of all sorts momentarily attracts Sheila's attention. She looks at the window display. Shakes her head and mutters.

SHEILA

How do they make any money?

Her cell phone alarm rings.

CLOSE ON ALARM: 12:00 Mrs. Janowsky.

Her phone shows 11:55.

Sheila hails a cab.

INT. SHEILA'S RECEPTION ROOM

Sheila runs in breathlessly. Katie is at the desk.

SHEILA

Sorry I'm late. Is Mrs. Janowsky here?
Did my delivery come?

Katie nods over to MRS. JANOWSKY, 60's, sitting patiently in one of the chairs.

KATIE

Delivery's in your office.

SHEILA

Oh, Mrs. Janowsky. I'm so sorry.
Please, come into the office.
Everything is there waiting for your approval.

Mrs. Janowsky--not too happy--rises.

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE

Sheila's coffee and donut sit untouched on the desk.

The consulting table is laden with fabrics, paint chips, drawings. Mrs. Janowsky holds a few of them in her hand. Looks from one to the other.

MRS. JANOWSKY

It's hard to say. Can I take these all home and discuss it with my husband?

SHEILA

Of course. As soon as you decide, we can get the work started. Say next week?

MRS. JANOWSKY

Can you come over on Saturday? My husband will be home, and we can finalize it all then?

SHEILA

I'm so sorry. I'm booked for Saturday.

MRS. JANOWSKY

Sunday?

SHEILA

Afraid not. How about some time during the week? I can come over when your husband gets home from work.

MRS. JANOWSKY

At nine at night?

SHEILA

Sure, why not.

MRS. JANOWSKY

Maybe late in the week. He's so busy. No, actually, not this week at all. Maybe next week some time?

SHEILA

Of course. You tell me when.

She smiles, finds an envelope and puts the samples into it.

LATER

The coffee cup is untouched. The donut is half-eaten. Sheila finishes tacking pictures on her bulletin board. Baby room items. She stifles a yawn. Picks up the intercom.

SHEILA

(on phone)

Katie, can you hop over to that new kids' furniture store on sixty-eighth? Take pictures of cribs and changing tables and whatever. You can go right home and we'll look at them tomorrow. Thanks.

She hangs up. Opens her computer. Yawns. The clock on the wall says 3:30.

Sheila closes her eyes and rests her head on the desk.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Just a few minutes.

LATER:

Sheila wakes up with a start. It has gotten noticeably darker. The clock reads 5:30.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Omigod. How did I sleep for two hours? Impossible.

She hastily drinks some of the coffee and finishes the donut.

INT. LADIES ROOM

SOUND of toilet flushing.

At the sink she dabs her face, adds lipstick, combs her hair and inspects her clothes. She grabs her bag and runs out.

INT. RUSSO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is busy and the noise level high. Barry and Sheila sit with HARVEY and GAIL, both mid 30's, both lawyers.

GAIL

Did Eric really ask you to do his new house?

Sheila starts to answer.

BARRY

I think he's got a secret crush on her.

SHEILA

Nonsense. What he's got a crush on is his money and how to spend it.

Barry catches Sheila's eye. He shakes his head no.

HARVEY

What's money for if you don't spend it?

SHEILA

But this is his third house!

Barry kicks Sheila's leg under the table.

HARVEY

Why not? He's a real estate mogul, he may as well enjoy it.

GAIL

Actually, Sheila, we just got ourselves a summer house - upstate - and....

BARRY

By the way, Harvey, I hear your firm is taking on that malpractice case for Mercy Hospital?

HARVEY

Yeah. I can't talk about it, but the Plaintiff drives me nuts. Keeps saying stuff like this wouldn't happen if we had universal health care, blah blah blah.

SHEILA

What does that mean, exactly. Universal health care. You mean like Medicare for All kind of thing?

HARVEY

Sort of. He's under the mistaken impression that there'd be a lot fewer accidents and law suits if there was more oversight. Right.

BARRY

Ha! Sure. Oversee the doctors, oversee the hospitals, oversee your business, oversee your taxes....I hate people who proselytize.

The table talk drones on. Sheila turns off. She looks out into the restaurant. She looks at the other diners. She follows the waiters. Suddenly she's brought back by a loud voice.

GAIL
So Sheila, will you?

SHEILA
Will I? Will I what?

GAIL
Like I just said, will you come out
and look at the house this weekend?

SHEILA
Oh, I'm sorry Gail, I guess I....
Barry and I are going to Eric's new
house.

GAIL
How about during the week some time?
The boys don't have to go with us.

SHEILA
Sure. Call me tomorrow and I'll check
my calendar.

HARVEY
Nothing as healthy as breathing in
fresh country air. Whatever kind of
insurance you have.

BARRY
Definitely. Maybe we'll find a place
near you next year. Who knows? Do they
have a country club? We can take in a
game of golf.

Sheila's eyes widen. Really?

INT. SHEILA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Wearing RED PAJAMAS, Sheila looks into the mirror and combs
her hair with her fingers. She looks into her eyes and pulls
down the lower lids. Then starts brushing her teeth.

A MUFFLED VOICE is heard through the door.

SHEILA
Be right there.

IN THE MIRROR: QUICK FLASH OF VICTORIAN LIVING ROOM

Sheila is startled. But it disappears quickly. She shivers.

BEDROOM

Sheila enters the darkened bedroom. Barry is in bed.

SHEILA
Barry, do you love doing what you're
doing?

Barry grabs her and starts kissing her.

BARRY
Yup! Can't you tell?

Sheila pushes him away.

SHEILA
Silly. No--I mean buying up buildings
and--you know--throwing people out, or
whatever you do....

BARRY
We don't throw people out. We buy the
real estate and--and guess what? We
may be doing a deal with some foreign
investors that will bring in millions.
For us, I mean. Can't talk about it
yet, but we're up next for two or
three homes.

SHEILA
Why do we need two or three homes? We
haven't even got any kids yet.

BARRY
There's plenty of time for that.

He grabs her again, starts to make love.

SHEILA
I'm 33. There's not so much time.

As they make love, we cut back and forth between shots of
their functional, sparse and sterile bedroom and their love
making--which is the same.

B&W DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sheila is dressed in running clothes. She runs around the room
picking up pillows, opening drawers, searching in corners. She
is panicked.

Barry runs in.

BARRY
Hurry up. Hurry up. It's late, it's
late. We have a very important date.

Sheila looks in extremis.

BARRY (cont'd)
Get dressed. We'll be late.

VERANDA

It is all lit up. A PARTY is in progress. People are dancing to the beat of UNHEARD MUSIC.

INTRODUCE THE COLOR RED

Sheila is now wearing the RED NIGHTGOWN from her earlier dream. But she is barefoot. She passes a mirror and looks at herself in horror.

SHEILA
My makeup! I can't go out without my
makeup. Help me!

BARRY
Quick. Put on the red shoes.

The voices from the party join him. As a group:

ALL
Put on the red shoes. Put on the red
shoes.

LIVING ROOM

In a total panic, Sheila runs around the living room. She pushes away an Ottoman, revealing the RED SHOES she wore in her earlier dream. She puts on the shoes. Then, like Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz she closes her eyes and taps the shoes together.

SHEILA
I want to go home. I want to go home.

Suddenly Sheila finds herself....

INT. NORMA'S KITCHEN

END B&W

....in Norma's bright sunny kitchen.

Sheila screams silently when she sees Norma, whose face is contorted. She tries to run but is unable to move.

Norma extends her hand and, as she does, her face softens and is lit up with a warm, loving smile. At first Sheila is not sure, but Norma leads her to the table, where tea has been served in charming hand-made cups. On the table a handcrafted bowl with home-made cookies dominates. Sheila looks at the bowl, touches it. Admires it. Norma notices.

NORMA

I knew you'd like that one. It's yours, of course, if you want it. I make them. Take it with you when you leave.

Sheila is hesitant. She caresses the rim of the bowl.

NORMA (cont'd)

You used to love ceramics. Remember?

SHEILA

How--how did you know?

Norma smiles coyly.

SOUND: CHILDREN LAUGHING

Sheila grabs a cookie from the bowl and runs down the stairs into the

VICTORIAN HOUSE LIVING ROOM

...living room. There is the SOUND of A CHILD LAUGHING. She runs to the corner where the little girl was crying in the earlier dream. Only now she is laughing. Sheila gives her a cookie. The little girl kisses her.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sheila is in bed. The tears roll down her cheeks. Barry is dressing.

Sheila dries her eyes and watches Barry as he completes his wardrobe. When he turns to look at her, she quickly closes her eyes and feigns sleep.

EXT. TOWN PARK - MORNING

A small Arts & Crafts Fair dominates the scene. Sheila comes around on her run and stops to admire some of the work. At one stand she is taken with the artwork. A YOUNG MAN, 30's, smiles from his perch. She smiles back. He hands her a card.

A SHORT TIME LATER

Ducks and geese scramble off the road as Sheila approaches them. Spying Tina and Nadia she runs towards them. Nadia pushes a stroller as she runs. MADELINE, 2, Nadia's baby daughter, sits in the stroller. Tina runs alongside keeping up a stream of conversation.

TINA

I'm convinced it all adds up to World War Three. Except it's not only in Europe.

Sheila catches up.

SHEILA

What's not only in Europe?

TINA

World War Three.

SHEILA

Oh? So where else do you expect it?

TINA

Expect? It's been there for decades. Syria. Egypt. Israel. Africa. Asia. And soon right here in the U.S...if things don't change.

Both Sheila and Nadia give her an "uh-huh" look.

TINA (cont'd)

No--it's true! Almost all of those countries are in turmoil. And in Europe? Russia wants it all.

SHEILA

Okay, let's not go there. Let's talk instead about a book club. I need diversion.

Baby Madeline starts to cough. Nadia stops running to tend to her. They all stop. Sheila bends down and strokes Madeline's hair.

SHEILA (cont'd)
 You are so beautiful. Want to come
 play at my house some time?

The little girl gives her a wide-eyed look and smiles.

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Reba and Josh Rollins in front of the screen. They concentrate on the details.

Sheila sits at her laptop and waits patiently for their comments.

They look at the design. They look at each other. They smile.

REBA
 Looks good. What's that over there in
 the corner?

Reba looks up at Sheila.

REBA (cont'd)
 Er....uh....Sheila? This room looks a
 lot smaller than nine by twelve.

JOSH
 Nine by ten.

REBA
 Whatever.

SHEILA
 The dimensions are true, I'm afraid.
 It's not a very big room.

REBA
 Oh. Okay. Anyway, what's that in the
 corner?

She points to something on the monitor.

SHEILA
 That's a combination desk/bureau/work
 space. You can use it as a changing
 table when he's small, to play on when
 he gets older, and as a desk when he
 goes to school.

JOSH
 Hey! Great idea!

They continue studying the baby's room.

Sheila walks over to the window and looks out.

COURTYARD FROM WINDOW

The little girl from her dream looks up at her. Sheila blinks and turns back to the couple.

REBA

Did you make one of those for your own kids?

Sheila looks back at the courtyard. The little girl is no longer there. Sheila sighs.

REBA (cont'd)

Oh, wait. I think you said you had no kids yet. Right?

SHEILA

Well, that's that. I'll print it out. Now, how about the colors for the kitchen?

Sheila hurries over to the shelves, where she picks up a ring of color chips.

CLOSE on Sheila's HAND.

A glint of light reflects off her simple platinum WEDDING band and small diamond engagement ring.

A shopping bag on the conference table catches Reba's eye.

REBA

Oh! Is that for us?

Reba smiles slyly. Josh sits quietly. Unmoved.

SHEILA

Well, let's see.

Sheila removes a small lamp from the bag.

REBA

Lovely. For where?

SHEILA

The entrance hallway. On the little Heppleworth table we found. Remember?

REBA

Oh, yes. What else?

Sheila looks confused.

SHEILA

I think that was all I had prepared for today.

REBA

Really? Let's look.

Reba puts her hand in the bag and comes out with a bowl. A replica of the one in Norma's kitchen. Sheila gasps.

SHEILA

Oh! My God. How did this get there?

REBA

I love it! I hope it's for us. Is it?

Sheila catches herself.

SHEILA

I don't know. Do you really like it? It was just a....I mean yes! Of course it's for you. On the....on the side table in the dining room. For....for cookies.

REBA

How did you know I baked cookies? You are a dream, Sheila. (To Josh) Don't you think it just sets the tone in the dining room?

SHEILA

You think so?

REBA

Absolutely. You must tell me where you bought it. I'd love to see what else they have.

Sheila is a little disturbed. She has no idea where she bought it.

SHEILA

Well, they usually sell to the trade, you know....

REBA

Oh!....You mean you don't want me to know how much you marked it up. Don't worry, I expected to....

SHEILA

No, that's not it at all. I don't mark things up.

(MORE)

SHEILA (cont'd)

The truth is, I don't actually remember which store I got it at. Tell you what. I'll look it up and email the information to you.

Josh smiles blandly. Reba gives Sheila a hug. Sheila tries to hide her confusion.

LATER:

Sheila looks desperately through her receipts. Finally she finds

CLOSE ON RECEIPT

from a small village craft shop.

SHEILA (cont'd)

I don't believe this. I've never stepped foot in this place. Who the hell bought that for me? Who did this?

Sheila takes the receipt and leaves the office.

WAITING ROOM

Katie sits at the desk. Sheila shows her the receipt.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Katie, did you go to this shop and buy a cookie bowl?

Katie studies the receipt.

KATIE

Uh-uh. Sorry. Why?

SHEILA

Never mind. Lock up when you want to.

KATIE

So how did that meeting go yesterday? Did you take the job?

SHEILA

I don't know yet. It would certainly pay well. But I'm not sure if I could keep my own clients...

KATIE

Well, let me know if I need to look for another job.

SHEILA

Don't be silly. I would insist that we're a team. That is...if you want to?

KATIE

I don't know, either. I'd hate to give up the independence this job offers.

Sheila and Katie exchange looks.

INT. VILLAGE CRAFT SHOP - DAY

Sheila hurries into the shop. Hand-crafted gift items abound. Dolls, ceramics, tooled leather, art work, clothing, beads, jewelry of all kinds, and candles burning everywhere.

EVA, a new-age hippie type, is wrapping a gift for a well-dressed CUSTOMER. The proprietor, BEVERLY, a kind-looking African American approaches Sheila.

BEVERLY

Hi. Welcome back. What can we miraculously find for you this time?

SHEILA

You....you know me?

BEVERLY

Of course. You were here yesterday. How could we forget? We actually had the bowl you described.

SHEILA

Yes, yes, of course. It's good you remember your customers.

BEVERLY

So what's on today's menu?

SHEILA

Nothing. Actually, yes, something. Do you remember what time it was when I bought that bowl? I....I need it -- for my records, you know, and I go to so many places, I kind of misplaced all that information.

BEVERLY

Sure honey. (to Eva) Eva, when did we sell Sheila that bowl.

SHEILA

You know my name? Oh, dummy. Of course you know my name. But...but was I ever here before yesterday?

Beverly and Eva look concerned.

BEVERLY

You okay, honey? No, yesterday was the first time. We just had a great time-- like we do with all our customers-- mostly.

EVA

It was yesterday around four in the afternoon.

SHEILA

Are you sure it was yesterday? Of course. It had to have been. Thanks.

And she leaves. Beverly and Eva shake their heads in wonder.

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sheila lies on the bed asleep.

From the adjoining room Barry's voice can be heard on the telephone.

BARRY (O.S.)

(barely audible)

What do you mean they changed their minds? We just put up 20 mil--and we have this Chinese investor putting up the rest! Oh, they didn't change their minds? What the F...

Sheila moans in her sleep.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE LIVING ROOM

Sheila walks quickly through the house....

STAIRCASE

...up the stairs to...

NORMA'S KITCHEN

An incense candle burns in one corner of the room. Steam rises from a pot on the stove. Sheila stops and breathes in the odors. Then gets to the point.

SHEILA
I need to talk.

Norma needs no explanation.

NORMA
They loved it, didn't they? And you NEVER would have suggested anything like that to them. Right?

SHEILA
RIGHT!

Sheila starts pacing the room. She is worried and she is frightened. She can't make head or tails out of it all.

SHEILA (cont'd)
But how did you know?

NORMA
I know a lot of things about you. Call it Serendipity. You probably went into one of those--you know--zone outs. Automatic pilot. Something in your subconscious told you--and when you wouldn't listen--it took over. C'mere. Give me a hug and loosen up.

Norma gives her a big hug and Sheila melts in her arms.

With a sigh, Sheila moves away from Norma. She lifts the cover from the pot on the stove. Smells it.

SHEILA
That smells wonderful. What is it?

NORMA
Fresh vegetable stew. I grow my own.

SHEILA
Vegetables?

NORMA
And spices.

CLOSE ON kitchen garden with pots of spices and herbs.

NORMA (cont'd)
 Would you like some stew?

She takes another sniff of the food simmering in the pot.
 Wonderful. But....

SHEILA
 Maybe next time. I gotta run.

NORMA
 Run? Where?

SHEILA
 To....to....I don't know. I don't
 know. I'm so confused.

NORMA
 Talk to him.

SHEILA
 What?

NORMA
 I said, talk to him.

Norma smiles. Sheila doesn't. The SMOKE from the burning
 candle and the STEAM that rises from the pot on the stove fill
 the screen.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sheila wakes up. She breathes in deeply, as if trying to find
 the odors from her dream.

Barry is not in the room.

SHEILA
 Barry? Barry?

From the other room:

BARRY
 Sorry Hon. Didn't want to wake you.
 You were really out of it.

He walks into the room fully dressed.

BARRY (cont'd)
 Got an early meeting this morning.
 Forgot to tell you.
 (MORE)

BARRY (cont'd)

This new deal we're working on ran into some problems.

He gives her a peck on her head and runs out.

Sheila shouts after him.

SHEILA

Barry! What about dinner? I never see you anymore.

Barry runs back in again.

BARRY

Going to Eric's house tomorrow. Hope you didn't forget.

SHEILA

I didn't. But what time will you be home for dinner?

BARRY

Let's have dinner out so we can talk about tomorrow. It's very important we have the time to talk without your cooking.

SHEILA

We can talk over dinner--even if I'm cooking. And yes, I think we should talk.

BARRY

No, I mean it. We have a lot to talk about to prepare for tomorrow. Dinner out.

SHEILA

I'd rather have dinner in tonight. Honestly. I'm really tired. Is that okay? And something weird has been happening.

BARRY

Oh?

Barry looks at his watch.

BARRY (cont'd)

Okay. Dinner in. I'll be home around eight.

He runs out again. Sheila sighs.

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheila stretches. Shakes herself. Does some neck exercises.

Taking a look at her Bulletin Board she crosses out a section. Closes her computer. Looks around. Opens a closet door. Rummages. Looks under her desk. Searches a corner of the room. Scratches her head.

SHEILA

Katie?

No answer.

Sheila opens the door to the reception room and sticks her head out. Katie is at her desk studying a magazine.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Katie?

KATIE

Huh? Oh. Hi.

SHEILA

Did you see my camera? We're going to Barry's boss' house tomorrow and I can't find my camera.

KATIE

It's at the camera shop. Something was wrong with the....the whatchamcallit. I forget what.

SHEILA

Oh, shit. What do I do now?

KATIE

I'll call them and see if it's ready.

Katie dials a number. It rings. And rings. No answer. She hangs up.

KATIE (cont'd)

Sorry. Why don't you use your iphone?

SHEILA

I guess I'll have to. It's not exactly professional but....thanks.

Katie turns back to her magazine. Sheila closes the door to her office. She looks around. Sighs. Puts together a bag with swatches and paint colors and a small sketch book.

Walks quickly out the door to an empty reception room. Katie has gone.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The television is blaring. A News Program. Barry watches as he sips a martini.

BARRY
Sheila, can we sit in here? I gotta watch this special report.

SHEILA
I made a veggie stew--just for a change, you know? Can we eat in the dining room when it's over?

Barry checks his watch.

BARRY
It'll be on for a while yet. Let's eat in here.

SHEILA
But Barry...

BARRY
Shh.

Barry clears off the coffee table.

A SHORT TIME LATER

Sheila enters with a soup tureen. She sets it on the coffee table.

Leaves.

Returns with two bowls, spoons, forks, napkins. Sets them on the table.

Leaves.

Returns with a platter of bread and butter. Proceeds to the "table," which by now is quite crowded.

The TV reporter's words are unintelligible. Barry continues to watch.

Sheila is visibly annoyed.

SHEILA
Why don't you take what you want.

Barry helps himself to the stew, not taking his eyes off the TV. Sheila watches him watching.

BARRY

Some guy is suing a real estate group for discrimination. They're making a federal case out of it. A class action suit. I can understand class action suits, I guess, but this one looks out of control. They're suing the landlord, the bank, the tenants, the city....everyone!

He takes a bite of the stew. Studies the taste. Makes a face.

SHEILA

Don't you like it?

BARRY

Did you taste it?

SHEILA

Uh-huh.

Sheila does not sit down. She helps herself to some of the stew. Butters a piece of bread. Takes a bite.

SHEILA (cont'd)

I think it's delicious.

BARRY

It doesn't seem to have enough...you know...enough--substance. It tastes okay, but there's no bite.

SHEILA

Right. It's just vegetables.

Barry forces himself to take another bite. Breaks up a piece of bread and throws it into the stew. Watches the TV.

Sheila is now more annoyed.

SHEILA (cont'd)

I have a little problem, Barry.

No response.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Barry?

BARRY

I heard you. You think it's delicious. That's okay.

SHEILA
No, I meant....

Barry concentrates on the TV story. By now Sheila is angry.

SHEILA (cont'd)
I thought we needed to organize the weekend. What are the plans? I thought you needed to talk?

BARRY
Wait. It's almost over. Give me ten more minutes.

TEN MINUTES LATER

The program is over.

Barry has finished his stew and helping himself to more. Sheila is not in the room. Barry calls out.

BARRY (cont'd)
Sheila!

Sheila enters.

BARRY (cont'd)
An afternoon party. Simple, you know? Cocktails and stuff but not dress up. Local folk, you know? He's inaugurating his house, is what it is.

Sheila is noncommittal.

SHEILA
Okay, what time should we get there? When should we leave? And what do I need to bring along?

BARRY
Hmm. Party's at four. Takes about two hours to get there, including traffic problems.

SHEILA
Anything else?

BARRY
I honestly didn't ask. But Eric wants you to look around the house while we're there, so you take what you need to do that. Your call.

SHEILA

That's it? Can't I look around and take pictures on Sunday? 'Stead of while the party is going on?

BARRY

Guess so. C'mon, sit here and watch with me.

He pats the couch seat next to him. She sighs. Sits. He puts his arm around her. She leans into him. Sighs. Watches the TV.

SHEILA

I wanted to talk about something else.

He turns back to the television. Other news is on.

BARRY

I know. So did I. But we had some bad news today and I'm just too tired.

SHEILA

I'm sorry. I didn't know. It's just that we don't seem to have time to really talk to each other anymore.

Barry turns off the TV.

BARRY

Sorry, hon. I'm really sorry. I want to spend more meaningful time with you, but I'm single-minded. Remember when we were in college?

SHEILA

We had a really good time then, didn't we? Went to clubs, and you didn't mind being dragged to museums and stuff. And I didn't mind going to your fraternity parties.

BARRY

Seems like a million years ago. Who ever wouldda thunk what real life was all about?

SHEILA

Mmm. Wish real life was more like then.

BARRY

Truthfully--even then I couldn't think of anything without dreaming of--how can I make tons of money. And I'm doing it. I'm living my dream.

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Sheila rummages through her closet. Barry watches her as he adds a Boss shirt to his Armani suit.

Sheila pulls out a black skirt and white blouse. Barry shakes his head no. Goes to the closet. Pulls out an elegant red dress.

SHEILA

But you said it was casual. Local folk and all that.

BARRY

Local folk in Stoneville are very old-fashioned high-fashion wasps.

SHEILA

They still exist? I thought they went out with F. Scott Fitzgerald.

BARRY

Funny. No, they exist. And casual means they're not wearing Gucci.

SHEILA

Shit.

BARRY

Sorry. But it's not like you aren't aware of things like that.

SHEILA

Being aware doesn't mean I want to be part of it. Never mind. It's important to you.

She puts her skirt and blouse back in the closet and comes out with a red cocktail dress. Simple but elegant. In her drawer she finds a strand of pearls with earrings to match. Then she pulls out a pair of jeans and a T-shirt.

BARRY

It's not that far. You can wear the dress on the trip. I'm wearing my suit.

SHEILA
It's for Sunday.

She throws the jeans, shirt and sneakers into an overnight bag.

EXT. ERIC STONE'S HOUSE IN STONEVILLE - AFTERNOON

BMW's, MERCEDES, other luxury cars are parked in the driveway in front of the house. Sheila and Barry arrive in their Lexis.

Lights and MUSIC from the house.

INT. ERIC STONE'S LIVING ROOM

The CROWD mills around a bar, sits on old upholstered couches in the large formal room, clink cocktail glasses, eat hors d'oeuvres from trays passed around by WAITERS.

Sheila is wearing the red dress. Everyone else is mostly in shades of black and white. She shivers. The party MOMENTARILY MORPHS into her DREAM PARTY. She panics. Looks around for the door to her....to her what?

Sheila sees, dreamlike, the door to her attic.

Her attic? She pulls herself out of the sensation.

Barry leads her over to Eric and his wife, LETITIA, 50's. She wears a thigh-high cocktail dress, which shows off her too-fat knees and her smooth décolletage, covered with strands of a pearl and diamond necklace with earrings to match.

Eric shakes hands with Barry and gives Sheila a hug.

ERIC
You remember Letty, don't you?

SHEILA
Of course. How are you?

LETITIA
Wonderful, thank you. Very excited that you're going to do the house. I'll show you around when there's a lull in the goings-on.

ERIC
C'mon. Meet my new neighbors.

Eric takes each of them by the arm and walks them over to MICHAEL and DOLLY, 40's, who balance cocktail glasses and hors d'oeuvres neatly in their hands.

ERIC (cont'd)

Hey, you two, meet Sheila and Barry.
Barry's part of my team.

Unable to shake hands they offer their elbows. Barry returns his elbow. Sheila waves.

MICHAEL

You got an eye out for a place in Stoneville? I'll introduce you to my real estate guy.

Michael winks--looks over at Eric. Barry smiles.

BARRY

Don't know yet. But when I do, I know who to ask. Really beautiful around here.

ERIC

Sheila's the go-to gal on house redecorating. She's got an eye, this one has.

DOLLY

How nice. Do you have a company, or do you work solo?

SHEILA

A company. Interiors by Design.

DOLLY

Be sure to give me your card and I'll pass your name on if anyone needs a decorator.

ERIC

Don't need her card. She's about to start working for me.

Sheila smiles and digs out a card from her handbag.

SHEILA

In the meantime...

She hands the card over to Dolly.

Another couple, JOHN and JACKIE, 50's, saunter over.

ERIC

I'm heading for the bar. Join me?

Eric grabs Barry's arm and draws him away. Michael and John follow. Jackie and Dolly remain behind with Sheila.

JACKIE

I hear you're doing over this old barn. Take my advice. Go modern. Letty wanted a new McMansion, but Barry was stuck on old-world--you know--this! Go modern. They will both be happy.

SHEILA

Thanks for the advice.

JACKIE

Oh, I'm Jackie. We live down the street about a quarter mile. Our tennis court abuts this property so Eric and Letty can use it when they want. You play tennis?

Sheila shakes her head no. Dolly interjects.

DOLLY

I do. But you went and put your court on the wrong side--no matter. We share ours with Bob and Chrissy.

JACKIE

You're welcome to join us any time, Dolly. You, too, Sheila. I'll teach you to play.

The conversations continue on. People laugh. Music plays.

LATER

The crowd has thinned. Letitia finds Sheila next to Barry in a small group of people.

LETITIA

There you are. Can I drag you away to take a peek at the rest of the house?

SHEILA

Oh. I thought I'd spend most of tomorrow looking around, taking pictures and notes and stuff. That kind of thing.

LETITIA

Tomorrow? Oh, are you staying in a hotel nearby?

Sheila looks puzzled.

SHEILA

No-o? Barry told me Eric had invited us to stay for the weekend.

LETITIA

Oh, that Eric. He never knows what the left hand is doing. No. We're heading up to Vermont to visit my daughter at her country home up there. We don't see enough of those delicious grandchildren.

SHEILA

Oh. Of course. Well, let me tell Barry and I'll get my notebook and tape.

LATER

With Letitia looking on, Sheila snaps pictures of the living room with her phone. Then they disappear into a....

LARGE BUTLER'S PANTRY

LETITIA

These iphones are just a marvel. Nobody uses cameras anymore.

And then into a....

HALLWAY

They walk up the stairs. Sheila continuously snaps pictures and takes notes.

I/E BARRY'S LEXIS - NIGHT

Barry drives. The radio plays soft rock. Sheila abruptly turns it off.

SHEILA

You mean to say Eric never told you we wouldn't be staying overnight?

BARRY

Guess he didn't know.

SHEILA

Then why did he invite us?

BARRY

I guess he figured--I don't know. What difference does it make?

SHEILA

Only that I turned down an appointment with one of my clients who really wanted me to show my stuff to her husband, who happens to be available only on weekends. That's all.

BARRY

Sorry hon. C'est la vie.

They drive in silence. Barry turns on the radio.

SHEILA

Please turn it off!

She reaches over and turns it off.

BARRY

Hey! What's eating you?

SHEILA

Nothing's eating me. I'd just rather take this time to talk.

BARRY

Okay. Talk. I'm listening.

SHEILA

That's not what I mean, Barry. It's not I'll talk you listen. It's--it's--let's both talk.

Barry is getting visibly annoyed. He aggressively passes a huge semi, who blows its horn.

BARRY

Fuck! What the hell's that all about?

Sheila clams up. Barry starts to drive quickly. Too quickly. Sheila stares at the road. Her eyes widen.

SHEILA

Never mind. Turn on the stupid radio.

BARRY

You are being totally absolutely crazy and I don't know what the fuck is bothering you.

SHEILA

I said never mind! We'll talk when we get home. Just drive.

Sheila turns on the car radio.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM

Barry and Sheila throw their things down. In complete silence.

BARRY

Okay. I mean....hey, I know you're upset that tomorrow's a bust. I guess we're both working too hard. Let's plan a vacation. Hey! Let's go to the movies tomorrow. We got a whole day, let's-- oh, wait a minute. I better not. We got another meeting coming up with the Chinese and I should take the time to prepare.

Sheila has opened up her iphotos and is studying some of the pictures she took.

SHEILA

It's okay. I can make some preliminary plans for Eric & Letty.

Barry starts to walk towards the bedroom. He turns to Sheila, who looks up. They both speak at the same time:

BARRY

Hey. I'm sorry. This deal can make or break me in this company. It's my chance to...well, you know...

SHEILA (cont'd)

Sorry, Barry. I just don't know what's come over me.

They laugh and hug. A little tentatively.

INT. BARRY'S OFFICE RECEPTION ROOM - MORNING

Barry hurries into the reception room, heading towards his office. The receptionist calls out.

RECEPTIONIST

Hey Barry--hop in to see Eric.

Barry changes directions and now heads towards Eric's office.

He knocks at the closed door.

ERIC (O.S.)

Come in. Whoever you are.

INT. ERIC STONE'S OFFICE

Barry's head peers in.

BARRY
You wanted to see me?

ERIC
Did that. Come on in.

Barry shuts the door behind him. Stands at Eric's desk.

ERIC (cont'd)
Sit. Sit. Take a load off. Relax.

Barry sits on the chair facing Eric over his desk.

ERIC (cont'd)
How would you feel about buying a country home? Not maybe in Stoneville, but wherever you want.

BARRY
Er--uh--is there a reason you're asking me this? I mean, it's not exactly in my plans. Yet.

ERIC
Well, there's a house I'd like you to look at. And I lied. It *is* in Stoneville. Got twelve rooms. Big enough for you?

BARRY
I can't really afford it yet. And Sheila--well, she's been talking about a family.

ERIC
Yeah. I know how expensive it is to raise a family. Believe me I know.

Barry stands.

BARRY
Well, thanks for the offer.

ERIC
Sit down. That's not why I asked you to see me.

Barry sits. Confused. It isn't?

ERIC (cont'd)
You know that Chinese deal you're working on? I mean *We* are working on?

BARRY

Listen, I even learned some Chinese for this. And the other night we were on the phone at three in the morning. At least it was three for me...

ERIC

I've been kept up to date. So here's what I'd like. How many guys have we got on this team?

BARRY

You know. Me and Mark and two associates.

ERIC

Right. Which is why I called you in.

Barry sits there. Huh?

ERIC (cont'd)

Here's it. I've been thinking. We get along real well--and I've kinda brought Sheila into the business, you know? And my son isn't interested at all in coming in with me. He figures he'll get his money whether he's working with me or not. See?

Barry continues to sit there. Is he kidding?

ERIC (cont'd)

And I want you to think about that house.

Barry remains silent. Waiting.

ERIC (cont'd)

Would it be easier to decide if I said we're considering you as a junior partner?

Barry's mouth falls open. His eyes widen. Gulp.

BARRY

Really?

ERIC

Come on, Barry. Everyone likes you. You've been pretty successful. You've set up a lot of good deals without my asking you to. Like this Chinese thing. I mean, I'm on top of it and all, but it is your baby.

BARRY

But...but I'm not sure if...

ERIC

Okay! Let me clue you in. Remember those people you met at my party?

Barry nods. Which ones?

ERIC (cont'd)

Well to a one they thought you and Sheila were just the best young couple. They want you in our neighborhood. They want Sheila to decorate their houses--yes, they googled her and called some of her clients. And they were happy to know you were one of my partners. They thought.

BARRY

But...But...I didn't tell anyone I was a partner.

ERIC

Guess they figured I wouldn't have invited you if you were just a lowly associate.

Barry finally leans back. Lets out a mouthful of air.

BARRY

Wow!

EXT. BARRY'S OFFICE RECEPTION ROOM

Barry walks in a daze past the receptionist into his own office. His cell phone RINGS.

BARRY

(on phone)

Barry here. (pause) I was just about to call you. (pause) Why the flower shop? I was calling to ask you to meet me for lunch. (pause) Okay. I hear you.

He looks at his watch.

BARRY (cont'd)

(on phone)

Twelve thirty. Be there.

INT. FLOWER SHOP

Sheila wanders around, smelling various flowers, sizing up the pots. A few CUSTOMERS wait to pay for their purchases.

Barry hurries in. Catches her from behind, kissing her neck.

BARRY
This for Eric's house?

SHEILA
No.

BARRY
What's it for then? I mean that you
wanted me to be here.

SHEILA
You'll see.

She takes his hand and brings him over to the refrigerated area.

SHEILA (cont'd)
I thought maybe a dozen of those
roses.

She points to a bouquet of red pink yellow and white roses.

BARRY
Sure. But...Uh. Why? For whom?

Sheila smiles and catches the eye of a salesperson.

SHEILA
Can I have a dozen of these, please?
Three of each.

LATER

EXT. FLOWER SHOP

The roses are wrapped in paper. Sheila pulls one rose out of the group and plants it on Barry's lapel. She then pulls off another one and delivers it to her hair.

Barry is by now totally confused.

SHEILA
Happy Eighth Anniversary.

Barry stands, open-mouthed.

BARRY
Yikes. I forgot.

Shaking himself out of the shock, he kisses her quickly on the mouth and takes her hand.

BARRY (cont'd)
I'm so sorry. So many things. So many things. C'mon, let's go to lunch. I'll give you an anniversary present.

INT. SMALL RESTAURANT - LATER

Sheila and Barry sit at a table near the window, studying menus. Other business types inhabit the place. It's kind of noisy.

A waiter refills their water glasses. Waits. Barry puts down his menu.

BARRY
A cocktail?

SHEILA
Too early.

BARRY
How about some wine then? It's a special occasion.
(to waiter)
Any recommendations?

WAITER
Bottle or glass?

Barry turns to Sheila. She shakes her head no.

BARRY
Just two glasses.

WAITER
Cabernet? Or maybe a nice Pinot Noir.

BARRY
Let's go for the Cabernet.

The waiter leaves.

SHEILA
So? Where's my present?

BARRY

Remember when I proposed to you? And I said I would take care of you in a style to which I'd like you to get accustomed?

SHEILA

And I said it didn't really matter to me. I'm just a poor girl from Brooklyn.

BARRY

And I said not for long? Well, it's about to start. How would you like to live in Stoneville?

SHEILA

Stoneville?

BARRY

Yeah. Stoneville.

SHEILA

I wouldn't.

Barry looks crestfallen.

SHEILA (cont'd)

I mean--it's so far from the city and all. And we both work here...

BARRY

That's true. But it would only be a weekend house.

Sheila is very clearly confused.

SHEILA

A weekend house? But how could we possibly afford both? Even if I take up Eric's offer and work for him we... Besides which, I want to cut down on my hours a little...

Barry laughs. He's enjoying her confusion.

BARRY

Wait, hold on. You'll be able to close up your own business, and just work for Eric. And only when you want to. You'll be able to hire helpers to do some of the work.

SHEILA

I have no idea what you're talking about. Except you're talking about two houses we won't be able to afford.

BARRY

Nope. I'm talking about moving up to a Junior Partner in the company. With a raise to go with it.

Sheila just stares.

BARRY (cont'd)

So what do you think?

The waiter brings wine, fills the glasses. Sheila rubs her temples.

FLASHES of the DREAM COCKTAIL PARTY.

BARRY (cont'd)

Sheila? I said so what do you think?

SHEILA

Think?

BARRY

You're looking far away. Are you okay?

Sheila shakes her head free of cobwebs.

SHEILA

Fine. Think? You mean about the house?

BARRY

No. I mean sure about the house. But about the promotion?

SHEILA

That's wonderful Barry. You truly deserve it. I'm very happy for you.

Sheila reaches out for Barry's hand.

SHEILA (cont'd)

For us.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barry switches on the television. Settles himself on the couch with his briefcase, and starts to read some business papers.

Sheila enters from the kitchen. She stares at the TV for a moment. It's a football game.

SHEILA
Good Night.

BARRY
Hey! Come join me.

SHEILA
No thanks. I'm going to bed. You know
I hate football.

BARRY
I'll be there in a little while. Gotta
know this inside out by tomorrow.

Sheila sighs. Responds under her breath.

SHEILA
Happy Anniversary.

She exits into the bedroom.

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM

In bed, Sheila reaches up and switches off the light. The TV can be HEARD through the closed bedroom door.

DREAM SEQUENCE

In the darkness Sheila gets out of bed, opens the bedroom door and walks...

INT. VICTORIAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

...into the living room of the Victorian house. Sheila is drawn by the light coming from the...

INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

...staircase. She follows the light up to...

INT. NORMA'S KITCHEN - DAY

...Norma's kitchen. It is a bright, sunlit, lovely day in the "upstairs apartment," and as Sheila walks in she sees Norma, dressed as before, humming and watering some plants. Norma notices her.

NORMA
Hi, sweetie. Missed you. Stay awhile.

Sheila sits down at the kitchen table. She suddenly looks very relaxed and comfortable. She is still wearing her nightgown.

Norma sets a cup in front of her. On the table is the cookie bowl--her bowl. Sheila turns to Norma who pours tea into the cup. Sheila takes a cookie from the bowl.

They both sip the tea and munch on a cookie. Sheila sighs deeply.

REALITY

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Barry enters the bedroom. Sheila sleeps deeply. He kisses her forehead gently.

DREAM

INT. NORMA'S KITCHEN

Sheila brushes her forehead lightly.

SHEILA

I feel so--I don't know--so peaceful.

NORMA (CONT'D)

You can feel that way whenever you need to. I'm always here.

SHEILA

Not if I'm working twenty-four seven.

NORMA

Many people work twenty-four seven and are happy. It depends on what you do.

SHEILA

But I like what I do. I think.

NORMA

You do?

More tea. Another cookie.

SHEILA

What kind of work do you do? I mean to earn a living?

NORMA

I don't need as much money as you do. I make all of my own clothes, and just about everything else you see here.

With this she picks up her cat and gives it a warm hug.

SHEILA

But that's so 1960's. Things are different now. Things aren't as simple as they used to be.

NORMA

Why not? Why shouldn't they be?

SHEILA

Because--because of technology. Because money is more important. Because....because I don't know.

NORMA

Have you thought about what's important to you? Not what's important to everyone else, but what's important to you? Do you want to join the One Percent and have more money than you need?

Sheila is stopped in her tracks.

SHEILA

What are you? Who are you? What do you ...How do you...?

Sheila gets up quickly. The peaceful moment has passed.

SHEILA (cont'd)

I've got to go. Thanks for the tea.

Sheila gets up nervously and leaves.

CLOSE ON NORMA'S BRIGHT SUNLIT KITCHEN WINDOW.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The bright sunlight shines through the window and wakes Sheila. Barry isn't there.

A note on the pillow says: CALL YOU LATER.

INT. REBA AND JOSH'S BABY'S ROOM - A WEEK LATER

Katie and Sheila put the finishing touches on the room--a window shade with a toy car motif. A crib in medium dark wood. A changing table that can convert into a desk. The ceiling is painted with clouds and little stars.

Reba and Josh join them. Their arms around each other, they beam.

REBA
It's everything I hoped for. No,
really. I mean it!

SHEILA
We'll finish the rest of it next week.

Sheila turns to Katie, who switches off the light. The stars twinkle.

REBA
Oo-ooh!

They all laugh.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sheila, Tina and Nadia sprawl on the sofa and chair. The coffee table has books, notebooks, pens, as well as cups of coffee.

SHEILA
I hope I can stay up for this. We
spent the whole day finishing up the
baby's room. I'm exhausted.

TINA
Maybe it's just what you need.

Nadia sips her cup of coffee.

NADIA
I keep telling myself to give up
coffee. I know it's bad for me.

She tilts the cup. Empty.

NADIA (cont'd)
No seconds, please. Even if I ask for
it.

TINA
"My own view is that this planet is
used as a penal colony, lunatic asylum
and dumping ground by a superior
civilization, to get rid of the
undesirable and unfit. I can't prove
it, but you can't disprove it either."

SHEILA
What has that got to do with coffee?

TINA
Christopher Hitchens.

She holds up a copy of a book.

CLOSE ON: GOD IS NOT GREAT by Christopher Hitchens.

TINA (cont'd)
Not to say that we're in that category, or that I believe it, but we get so hung up on our addictions, our prejudices, our narrow-minded idealism that I'm hard put not to believe it.

SHEILA
All that because Nadia wants to give up coffee? Wow!

Nadia sits up straight. She grabs a book from the table.

NADIA
How about this one?

CLOSE: DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN'S "TEAM OF RIVALS."

NADIA (cont'd)
The movie "Lincoln" was based on it. Won an Oscar a few years ago.

SHEILA
I know. I really wanted to see it, but Barry didn't have the time. Haven't seen a movie in ages.

TINA
So? Go alone.

SHEILA
I haven't gone to a movie--or anything else--alone since I got married. Which means I don't go to many movies. Or anything else.

NADIA
Neither do I. But that's only because who can afford a baby sitter?

Tina looks aghast at Nadia. Sits up.

TINA

Not only isn't that cool, it's anti-feminist. I mean for God's sake, our Vice President is a woman! And maybe soon our president will be, too. Let Timmy babysit. And you go to the movies. Or wherever else you want to go. Like tonight.

NADIA

Right. And soon I'm going to be a caffeinated AWOL. So let's choose a book.

Silence. They look through the books. They think about it.

SHEILA

I'm in a hurry too. I have a nine o'clock appointment.

TINA

Tonight? You're working tonight? You're just as nuts as Barry. What is your problem?

NADIA

At least you soon won't be part of the bottom ninety nine percent.

SHEILA

Yeah--but not yet.

TINA

Will you still be our friend when you are?

SHEILA

Don't be silly. Come on, let's choose a book fast. I'm meeting a client who doesn't get home until nine. Anyway I don't have the time to read a complicated biography.

NADIA

Ditto. My vote is no historical biography.

TINA

And no Christopher Hitchens?

NADIA AND SHEILA

No Christopher Hitchens.

More silence. More thinking.

SHEILA
I'd really like to start with Freud's
"Interpretation of Dreams."

Tina and Nadia give her a look.

NADIA
Oh oh. That sounds like a story. Wanna
talk?

SHEILA
No.

TINA
I'll tell you what. Why don't we start
with something quick and easy. Until
we get back into the swing of this
thing.

Nods from the others.

SHEILA
Like how about a good mystery?

EXT. JANOWSKY HOME - NIGHT

An old Victorian home on a quiet street in a suburban town.

INT. JANOWSKY DINING ROOM

Mrs. Janowsky and her husband, MR. JANOWSKY, 60's, look over
Sheila's designs. Sheila admires the beautiful old beams in
the ceiling. The oak paneled walls. The window seat
overlooking a large backyard.

SHEILA
Why do you want to remove these beams
Mr. Janowsky?

MR. JANOWSKY
Margaret--our daughter--thinks if we
modernize the house we can get more
money when we sell it.

SHEILA
Oh? I didn't know you were planning to
sell the house.

MRS. JANOWSKY
We're not. Not right now, anyhow.

MR. JANOWSKY
But you never know.

Sheila touches the wood in the doorways and is suddenly jolted. THIS IS THE HOUSE IN HER DREAMS.

MRS. JANOWSKY
Is anything wrong, dear?

SHEILA
No. No, not at all. Could I get some water please?

Mr. Janowsky gets up and disappears into the kitchen.

MRS. JANOWSKY
My husband feels like he never did anything for the children while they were growing up.

SHEILA
Did they grow up in this house?

MRS. JANOWSKY
Oh, yes. And so did I. It's an old family house. And I love it. Trouble is my husband....

Mr. Janowsky enters with a glass of water. Sheila drinks it gratefully.

SHEILA
I was so impressed with this place the first time I was here. You can see I didn't suggest anything that would detract from the old world charm.

MR. JANOWSKY
Exactly. Which is why I wanted to speak with you. Ella loves what you did. But frankly, Sheila....can I call you Sheila? I'm Tom.

SHEILA
Of course, Tom.

MR. JANOWSKY
Frankly, Margaret, my daughter, is so adamant and she can be very convincing. It makes no difference to me either way. But I want to give her a chance to feel she's got something to say in this family. And that I love her enough to see her point of view.

SHEILA
Doesn't she have a family of her own?

Mrs. Janowsky looks down at her fingernails.

MR. JANOWSKY

She has two children. They'll--they'll
be moving in with us. She just sp....

He looks quickly at his wife who mouths "shh" and shakes her
head "no."

MR. JANOWSKY (cont'd)

Well, never mind. She doesn't want to
live in the house she grew up in
because she says her memories of it
are not good.

MRS. JANOWSKY

Tom was away an awful lot. He thought
it was more important to earn a living
for his family than to...

MR. JANOWSKY

It was. It was. But I didn't know how
much I would regret it and now --

SHEILA

Now you think it's time to make up for
it?

MR. JANOWSKY

Exactly. Just so.

Sheila takes a look around the wood-trimmed room.

SHEILA

Well, then let's look at the plans
again, and if that's what you both
want, we'll give the whole house a
modern makeover.

They all study the plans again. Sheila starts to make notes.

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE - MORNING

Sheila is at her computer. Katie looks over her shoulder.

KATIE

I always dreamed of living in a house
like that when I was growing up.
Too bad they want to get rid of all
that fabulous wood.

SHEILA

I know. It makes me sad. My instincts tell me it's the wrong way to go. But I have to do what the clients want. Blah blah blah, as Harvey would say.

KATIE

Whoops. Sounds like your heart isn't gonna be in this one.

SHEILA

Just kick me if you think I'm making it all too personal. It's just a job.

Sheila futzes around with the program. Katie continues to watch.

Suddenly she slams her computer shut.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Screw it. I have to go back to it when I'm more objective.

She starts to put together some papers and pictures laid out on her conference table. She puts them in a folder.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Anyway, I've got a date with Barry's boss and his wife. Wanna come with?

KATIE

No thanks. You can fill me in later.

INT. BARRY'S CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Papers are spread out on the table. Letitia and Eric turn from the table and face Sheila.

ERIC

Well, here are the specs on the house. What do you think? Any ideas?

SHEILA

Let's start with you. What do you really want? Tell me and I'll try to bring it to life.

ERIC

Tell you what. Talk to Letty. She makes the decisions, I pay the bills. See you guys later.

Eric leaves. Sheila turns to Letitia.

LETITIA

Let me treat you to lunch and we'll swap ideas.

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE

Sheila is at her computer. Katie looks over her shoulder.

KATIE

It's blank.

SHEILA

I know.

Katie and Sheila stare at the computer.

SHEILA (cont'd)

What do you think?

KATIE

I think you should do like they say. He pays the bills, she makes the decisions.

Sheila plays around with the keys. Leans back. She pushes the delete button.

KATIE (cont'd)

I think you need a break.

Sheila gets up, cricks her neck. Does a deep knee bend.

SHEILA

I'm idea-less. I have absolutely no vision of how to make an uncharming house out of a charming house, and make everyone think it's charming.

KATIE

Which house is this? Janowsky or Eric?

SHEILA

Both. Damn it.

Katie gets up. Looks out the window. It's getting dark.

KATIE

I'm going home. Screw them. Do what you want and then let them say no, and then just tell Barry you can't do it.

SHEILA

Yup. Great idea. Barry loses his promotion and I'm on everyone's shit list.

KATIE

Sounds good to me.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Television on. Barry working. Sheila nibbling on a salad.

LATER

Television on. Barry working and drinking a cocktail. Sheila sprawled on couch.

LATER

Television on. Barry nodding off. Sheila lost in thought.

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barry enters the room quietly. Sheila is half asleep. A book she has been reading lies on her chest.

Barry removes the book. Slips into bed. Sheila sighs, turns toward him. He puts his arms around her.

SHEILA

Do you think you'll lose your promotion if I take Eric at his word?

BARRY

I don't know what you're talking about. But I think you should take Eric at his word.

They kiss.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. NORMA'S KITCHEN

Acrylic paints sit on the dining room table. Norma carefully applies a design to a clay vase.

Sheila watches her carefully.

Norma stops what she is doing and offers Sheila a brush.

Sheila applies paint to the other side of the vase. Both women are intent on their work. Finally, Sheila puts down her brush. She leans back. Smiles. Sighs. She is....relaxed and happy.

SHEILA

Why do I feel more relaxed here than anywhere?

NORMA

You tell me.

SHEILA

Because I'm in my own head, and not leading anyone else's life?

NORMA

Sounds right to me.

Sheila stops what she is doing and stares at Norma.

SHEILA

Are you my mother?

Norma smiles and puts her arms around Sheila.

NORMA

What do you think?

SHEILA

I think it's a stupid question. It sounds like a children's book.

Sheila spies the cookie bowl on a counter. She takes a cookie and walks quietly out of the room.

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE LIVING ROOM

At the far end of the living room, the Little Girl sits on the floor, drawing with crayons on a large sheet of paper.

Sheila approaches, offers her a cookie, and sits on the floor next to her. Together they fill the paper with pictures of houses, flowers, trees and animals.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Barry pulls up the shades. The day is cloudy. Barry is fully dressed. Sheila wakes up. She wipes away tears from her eyes.

BARRY

Hey, what are you crying about?

SHEILA

Nothing.

BARRY

Doesn't look like nothing to me.

SHEILA

I'm just waking up is all.

Sheila gets out of bed. Walks dreamily to the bathroom.

SHEILA (cont'd)

I'm fine.

BARRY

Fine? She says she's fine? Doesn't look that way to me. Are you sure you're all right?

Sheila sticks her head out of the bathroom door.

SHEILA

Fine.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Sheila sits on a bench with her drawing pad and pencil.

The crafts tents are set up not far from her.

Tina and Nadia walk up slowly behind her. Sheila doesn't notice. They start to laugh. Sheila turns in surprise.

SHEILA

Oh!

NADIA

We didn't see you running so we looked for you.

They look at the drawing.

TINA

Haven't seen you drawing since college. You were good. How come you don't do it anymore?

SHEILA

I draw. You know. For the clients and stuff.

TINA

True. But you don't paint what's in your heart any more. I blame it on Barry. He got you into it.

SHEILA

He thought I should use my talent to do something useful. That could earn some money.

NADIA

So? Paint in your spare time. That's when I do my jewelry.

TINA

And that's when I write.

SHEILA

I don't really have any spare time.

NADIA

Try having kids. Then you'll really know what not having spare time means.

Sheila goes back to her pad. They watch. Tina starts to run in place.

TINA

I gotta run. Literally. Still on for tonight?

SHEILA

Tonight?

NADIA AND TINA

Yeah, tonight.

SHEILA

Oh. I forgot. I didn't read the book yet.

TINA

That's okay. Read a few chapters and you'll get the gist of the whole thing. See you at my place?

They run off. Sheila closes her pad.

She walks over to the craft tents. Stops at the tent of the Young Man. She handles and admires his work. Shows him her sketch pad. He nods his head. They talk....

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheila peers into the reception area. Katie is not at the desk.

Sheila locks the door, puts her phone on "do not disturb," and turns off her cell phone.

She rummages through the closet and removes a portable artist's easel, which she places on her conference table.

From a bag she removes a variety of water color paints and brushes, which she places on a spread of newspaper on the table. Next to that she spreads some of the fabrics she has collected as samples.

She stares trance-like at the canvas. The clock on her desk reads 2:00.

LATER

It is 6:00 pm. A knock at the door. Sheila seems to wake up.

On the canvas is Norma's kitchen--with collages of flower pots and herbs. Norma--half painting half collage--tends to her garden.

The knock is repeated on the door.

KATIE

Sheila?

She tries the door. It is locked.

KATIE (cont'd)

Sheila? Are you okay?

SHEILA

I'm fine. What's up?

KATIE

I just walked in and there are three messages on the phone. I thought you were working all afternoon.

Sheila unlocks the door. Katie walks in.

SHEILA

I was. I turned off the phone so I could concentrate.

Katie spies the water color/collage. She steps back admiringly.

KATIE

Wow. I didn't know you could do this.
Which client is it for?

SHEILA

I don't know. Maybe just for me.

INT. NADIA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Coffee, cookies, books on table. Very sparse room. A table with a computer holds the spotlight in front of the window which overlooks the park.

Tina, Nadia and Sheila. Nadia holds Madeline on her lap. She is in pajamas and ready for bed.

NADIA

Say night-night to Sheila and Tina.

MADELEINE

Night-night.

Nadia picks her up and brings her over first to Tina and then to Sheila, to get a goodnight kiss. Madeline puts her head on Nadia's shoulder. Already asleep.

Nadia leaves the room with the baby.

SHEILA

She is so cute.

TINA

Yes she is. But she can be a pain in the neck.

SHEILA

She's just a baby! You sound like Barry.

TINA

Nah. Barry likes kids. He just wants to be rich before he has them so he can hire a nanny and send them off to private school.

SHEILA

Did he tell you that?

TINA

Of course not! When have I ever seen Barry when you and Nadia weren't around? Except maybe when we were at school. And not even then.

Sheila ponders this.

TINA (cont'd)

No. It's just obvious from everything you've said.

Tina helps herself to the cookies in a cookie plate.

SHEILA'S POV

The cookie plate MORPHS into the ceramic bowl from Norma's kitchen. Sheila jumps. It MORPHS back to reality.

TINA (cont'd)

You okay sweetie?

SHEILA

Sure. I'm fine. Sorry. Must have been a ghost passing by.

TINA

Right.

Nadia returns. She collapses on the couch and steals a cookie from the plate.

NADIA

I shouldn't be doing this, but after a long hard day it's comfort food or nothing.

Tina leafs through the Christopher Hitchens book.

TINA

Okay. Down to business. So did we all read A Pocket Full of Rye?

SHEILA

Somehow I managed to read some of it.

NADIA

So did I.

TINA

So let's talk about it.

LATER:

The cookie plate is empty. The coffee cups likewise. Sheila yawns.

NADIA

Stop yawning. It's catching.

SHEILA

Yeah. I guess we've dissected Agatha Christie about as far as we could go. My general opinion is: who cares?

NADIA

There are better mysteries, but I thought that would kind of get us going. We could try Mary Jane Clark-- she also writes about women--her mysteries have some social content.

TINA

Why don't we give the Christopher Hitchens a go? He's easy to read. Very clever, and we'd have tons to talk about.

SHEILA

So what do you think about his views? Before we get involved, I mean.

TINA

His views on religion? I haven't read the book yet.

SHEILA

So what are your views?

TINA

I think if people need to believe in something, and need the formality of organized religion to give them comfort, then all power to them.

SHEILA

Oh. And you?

TINA

I consider myself a Born Again.

SHEILA

You're kidding. You're a born again?

TINA

When I see what's going on in this world--where people use their religion to gain power--to wipe out everyone who doesn't believe what they do-- even within their own religion, then I am a born-again Atheist.

NADIA

But your folks were very religious, as I recall. Do you get along with them?

TINA

Of course I do. You can believe in God if you like. It's not a crime. In some cases it's a blessing. As long as people do not do unto others what they would not have others do unto them.

The thought sinks in. On all of them.

TINA (cont'd)

I just can't reconcile what goes on in the world, with the existence of a God.

NADIA

How come you never married? Are you gay?

An awkward silence.

TINA

No. I'm not gay. Really. If I were gay wouldn't you guys know it already?

NADIA

But I hardly ever remember you dating when we were at school. I mean we hung out together. But did you date anyone?

SHEILA

I kind of remember someone. Didn't you go out with this tall guy with glasses and a beard? You never introduced him.

TINA

Well you didn't tell me who you were dating when you first started going out with Barry. So?

SHEILA

True.

TINA

Nobody ever seemed interested in me and my love life--not when we were kids. So I didn't share.

SHEILA

It's true. I was selfish and too involved with Barry--more than I was with school, even.

NADIA

And I was more interested in school than in anyone's love life. Not even my own. My how things do change.

TINA

But the point is, look at you two. I mean--are you happy, Sheila?

An awkward silence.

SHEILA

I...uh...I don't know. I suppose so. No--maybe. I don't know.

TINA

So Nadia. You're the only happily married one here. I figure I have a one-third chance of being happy if I get married. And since I'm perfectly happy unmarried, why take the chance?

Awkward silence.

TINA (cont'd)

Okay. Let's get back to books. I vote for Mary Jane Clark's "Nowhere to Run." They've got three copies at the library.

SHEILA

Just what the doctor ordered. Let's do it.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Sheila's van drives North on the Connecticut Turnpike.

I/E. SHEILA'S VAN

The back of the van is piled with picture frames, small pieces of furniture and boxes.

Katie holds a notepad in front of her. Sheila drives.

KATIE

You sure they already delivered the couch?

SHEILA
They said they did.

KATIE
Okay. Check. Guess that does it.

They drive along in silence.

KATIE (cont'd)
So why are you so...so...I don't know.
So disinterested?

ShEILA
Because I don't like what I did.

KATIE
So why did you do it?

SHEILA
Because Letitia was very definite
about what she wanted and I followed
her instructions. And Eric said she's
the boss. And Barry said I should
listen to Eric.

KATIE
Well cheer up. I think there are some
nice touches there.

SHEILA
Yeah. Sure.

EXT. ERIC STONE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sheila opens the door with a key. She and Katie start removing
boxes from the car and bringing them into the house.

KATIE
Okay. This is the last one.

She closes the rear door of the van and enters the house.

LATER

Sheila and Katie sit on the front veranda of the house. Letty
and Eric exit the front door.

LETITIA
I love it. It's just what I wanted.

She hugs first Sheila, then Katie.

Eric looks anything but pleased. Sheila looks at him.

SHEILA

And you?

ERIC

I don't want to talk about it.

LETITIA

Don't mind him. He'll get used to it.

ERIC

I will NOT get used to it. I HATE it!

He stomps off and gets into his car. Sheila and Katie are stunned. Letitia says nothing.

INT. RUSSO'S RESTAURANT - EVENING

Sheila, Barry, Harvey and Gail. They are hunched over coffee.

GAIL

So how did it go?

SHEILA

She loved it. He hated it.

GAIL

Oh-oh.

BARRY

It's not so bad. Eric says his neighbors think it's great.

HARVEY

So Letty called the shots and he's giving in that easy? What a softie.

GAIL

Hey! You telling me you're not going to go along with what Sheila and I do on our house?

HARVEY

I'm telling you that, unlike Eric, I want to be part of the decision-making.

The playful squabbling continues. Sheila disappears into her world.

LATER

The table has been cleaned. Harvey pays the bill. Sheila sits there as the others rise.

GAIL
You okay Sheila?

SheILA
Sure. I'm fine. Just ate a little too much.

Sheila rises with the others. Picks up her bag from the arm of the chair.

GAIL
Don't mind Harvey. We'll all agree when it comes time.

SHEILA
I'm not....I may not....I don't know if I'll have the time to work on the house Gail.

GAIL
We're not in a hurry. Whenever you're ready.

SHEILA
I'm....I'll....

Sheila forces a smile.

SHEILA (cont'd)
Sure.

BARRY
Come on guys. I gotta be in early tomorrow. Eric hinted that the house fiasco may break up his marriage. And now I'm worried about it breaking up my partner possibilities.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Sheila sits morosely on the couch. Barry pours himself a cognac. Offers her one. She refuses.

BARRY
Hey, I'm sorry. I know it's not your fault. It's just I'm...you know. I have to tread carefully and Eric-- well, he's disappointed and he's taking it out on me.

SHEILA

Why doesn't he take it out on his wife? She's the one that made the decision.

Sheila walks out of the bathroom.

BARRY

But she's not my boss.

SHEILA

And he's not mine. He says she makes the decision, he pays the bill. Well she made the decision. And she loved what I did.

Sheila clutches her stomach.

BARRY

Are you okay?

SHEILA

Fine.

There is a long pause. Barry pours himself another cognac.

Sheila puts down her drink.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Barry, why did we decide not to have children?

BARRY

(alarmed)

You're not pregnant are you? Oh my god, so that's why you've been acting so weird lately.

Barry takes a look at Sheila's crestfallen face.

BARRY (cont'd)

Children just weren't in our plans. Not yet, I mean. Maybe after I become partner. IF I become partner. After this.

Barry pours himself a third shot. Down the hatch.

SHEILA

After this? You mean if you don't make partner it will be MY FAULT?

Barry studies her.

BARRY

If you're pregnant, of course we'll have a child, unless you want an abortion. How the hell did you get pregnant, anyway? You're on the pill.

SHEILA

Don't worry, I'm not pregnant. I was just curious. I'm not sure I remember why we made that decision. That's all.

Barry is visibly relieved. Sheila is not. He puts his arms around her.

BARRY

So if you're not pregnant, what's wrong?

SHEILA

I don't know. I ate too much. It doesn't matter.

Sheila pulls herself away from Barry and runs into the bedroom.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. NORMA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Norma puts a large pot of water on the stove. She adds a bowlful of vegetables which have been prepared for cooking.

Sheila is sitting at the dining table in tears.

Norma covers the pot and joins a sobbing Sheila. She puts her arms around her.

NORMA

It's your life, you know. Only you can decide what to do with it.

Sheila sobs.

SHEILA

It's too late. I've made my bed.

NORMA

Nonsense. Think of what you want. Think of what's best for you. Nobody will be hurt if you change--not really. But you will be hurt if you don't.

They sit in silence. Slowly Sheila relaxes. Slowly she breathes in the moment.

The sun beams through the windows in the house.

Sheila reaches over to the cookie bowl on the table. Takes a cookie. Chews on it slowly. The sobbing quiets.

NORMA (cont'd)

Go ahead. Finish your work. Then move on.

SHEILA

Move on?

NORMA

To where you have to be.

Sheila stops eating. She is very annoyed.

SHEILA

Why are you pushing me that way. Are you my conscience or something?

NORMA

Exactly.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. JANOWSKY HOME - DAY

The beams in the dining room ceiling have been removed. The old dining room table has been replaced by an unimpressive Ikea-style dining room table. The wallpaper on the walls has been removed and the walls are painted white and decorated with framed prints of birds and landscapes.

Mr. Janowsky beams. Mrs. Janowsky looks sad. Sheila is sympathetic. She, too, is sad.

Mr. JANOWSKY

My daughter Margaret loves it. We decided we don't have to do the kitchen yet because the other rooms are so up-to-date. Much more salable.

SHEILA

When you're ready I can recommend a kitchen contractor I work with. He's very reasonable--and very good.

MRS. JANOWSKY

I don't want to touch the kitchen.
Please. It's my sanctuary. Maybe just
a paint job one day.

MR. JANOWSKY

But you heard Margaret. She thinks we
should have marble countertops and get
rid of those old cabinets.

Mrs. Janowsky is close to tears.

MRS. JANOWSKY

I know what Margaret said. But it's
still my home. She can move in, and I
will love having her. She's my
daughter--and those kids....But we're
not dead yet, and it's still my home.

Mrs. Janowsky bursts into tears. Mr. Janowsky puts his arms
around her. Sheila looks away.

EXT. PARK ART SHOW - MORNING

The art fair is setting up in the park. Sheila runs up and
stops at the Young Man's booth as he sets up his collection.
Ceramic lamps. Paintings. Painted bowls. A landscape
"painting" created in clay.

YOUNG MAN

Hi again.

Sheila studies one of the pieces. Looks at the price.

SHEILA

Is that considered expensive?

YOUNG MAN

Depends on what you mean by expensive.

SHEILA

I mean, can a lot of people afford
your stuff?

YOUNG MAN

Enough do. And if they love it they
can pay it out. And I have all kinds
of prices. Something for everyone.

SHEILA

Can you afford to--well--take care of
your family?

YOUNG MAN

I don't have a family. Yet. But I imagine that when I do we will make do quite nicely.

Sheila studies one of the clay "paintings."

SHEILA

Can I have another card? I lost the one you gave me.

The Young Man grabs a card from a tray and gives it to her.

YOUNG MAN

You can call me or email me, if you're interested in anything.

Sheila starts to run off.

SHEILA

Thanks. Have a great day. And good luck.

He calls after her.

YOUNG MAN

Hey! How's your painting going?

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE - DAY

The easel is set up under the window. Sheila hums as she works on a new collage.

Stopping for a moment, she looks out the window. The Little Girl from her dreams is standing there. Sheila waves. The Little Girl waves back.

The TELEPHONE RINGS. She ignores it.

HOURS LATER

Sheila picks up her messages. One is from Katie.

KATIE (v.O.)

Sorry. Guess you're not in. I'm not feeling great. Let me know if you need me today. Otherwise I'll take the day off.

The next is from Mrs. Janowsky.

MRS. JANOWSKY (V.O.)

Hello, Sheila. My daughter wanted to thank you personally for what you did. Can you call me when you get a chance? And--uh--Sheila. I know it's not what you and I would have liked, but peace in the family...? You know.

The next is from Barry.

BARRY (V.O.)

You're not on your cell and you're not at the office. Call me when you get a chance. We need to talk about Harvey and Gail.

Sheila hangs up the phone. She picks up a large brown envelope, turns off the lights. It is dark outside.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barry sits on the couch with a cocktail. The TV blasts.

Sheila walks in with her large envelope. Barry switches off the TV.

BARRY

Where were you all day?

SHEILA

Working. Around.

BARRY

I couldn't reach you.

SHEILA

I know. I got your message.

She unties her envelope and takes out a collage painting of the Little Girl. She is surrounded by the trees and flowers and houses that they created in the dream.

Sheila shows the collage to Barry.

BARRY

Very nice. Who is it for?

SHEILA

Us.

BARRY

Us? Why? Where would we put it? It doesn't belong here.

SHEILA

I was thinking of redoing some of the apartment. Make it more...what? Livable? Artistic?

BARRY

What's wrong with it now? I don't want it, anyway. Put it up in your office. Pour yourself a drink and let's figure out how you can work with Harvey and Gail.

Sheila returns the work to its envelope.

SHEILA

Not now, Barry. I'm tired. You must be, too. You've been working all hours.

BARRY

Okay. We'll talk about it in the morning. I'll join you in a little.

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sheila sits up in bed reading.

CLOSE: Title of book: GOD IS NOT GREAT.

The book next to it is NOWHERE TO RUN. It is closed.

Sheila turns the page, yawns, falls asleep. The book falls onto her stomach.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. NORMA'S KITCHEN

Sheila and Norma drink tea. The cookie bowl which sits in the middle of the table is empty.

Norma hums a tune. Her cat stretches. Sees a light beam from the window. Runs after it.

Sheila smiles. Breathes deeply. Leans back.

SHEILA

So what do you think about it?

NORMA

Religion? If people need to believe in something, and need the formality of organized religion to give them comfort, then all power to them.

Sheila is taken aback. She's heard this before.

SHEILA

Oh. That's what Tina said. Wow! Did you know that?

NORMA

I told you I know a lot about you.

Sheila has to think about this. She studies her fingernails. Sips tea. Rises and moves over to the profusion of plants near the window.

SHEILA

And you? Are you religious?

NORMA

Not really. I don't have a religious belief, if that's what you mean.

SHEILA

Oh. But somehow I thought you were very spiritual.

NORMA

Don't confuse spirituality with religion. You can be very spiritual--be one with the universe--with your fellow creatures and your own inner soul--without the trappings of a religion.

Sheila sips her tea. Looks out of the window at an unreal world. White billowing clouds. Blue sky. Very green treetops. Birds flitting between the branches. Beauty and tranquility.

Sheila moves from the window.

SHEILA

Who are you?

NORMA

More importantly, who are YOU?

Sheila shivers.

OUT OF HER DREAM

SHEILA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Barry walks quietly into the room. He removes the book and flattens Sheila's pillow. Sheila turns on her side with a little moan.

INTO HER DREAM

NORMA'S KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Sheila gives a little moan. Then a sigh.

SHEILA

I used to be afraid of you.

NORMA

That's because you saw me in your own image. You didn't know me. Just as you didn't know yourself.

SHEILA

What do you mean saw you in my own image? Isn't this a dream? Aren't all dreams my own image?

NORMA

It's a dream if you choose it to be a dream.

SHEILA

How do I get to know you?

NORMA

The same way you get to know yourself.

Sheila turns to the cookie bowl. It is full. She reaches for a cookie.

SHEILA

Can I leave without going downstairs?

NORMA

It's up to you.

Sheila gets up. Picks up another cookie from the bowl.

INT. STAIRCASE

Sheila walks slowly down the staircase to the Victorian living room. It's very quiet. No sounds.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sheila stretches in bed. Gets up slowly. Walks into the bathroom in a dream-like state.

In the bathroom, Barry, in his underwear, stares into the mirror, feels his smooth cheeks, runs a towel over his face.

Through the mirror, a reflection of Sheila looking at him dreamily.

BARRY

You're looking relaxed today. No bad dreams?

SHEILA

Uh-uh.

BARRY

Great. First time in months I've seen you looking happy.

SHEILA

Uh-huh.

Barry wonders. Looks at her glowing face. Looks at her stomach.

SHEILA (cont'd)

No, I told you, I'm not pregnant. What's your problem with pregnancy, anyway.

Barry leaves the bathroom, turning away from Sheila. He steps into a walk-in closet. Sheila moves out of the bathroom.

BARRY

Nothing. I told you. Just not yet.

SHEILA

It's not a burden. We can both work.

BARRY

I don't want to talk about it. You're willing to give up a good job with Harvey and Gail...

Sheila starts to protest.

SHEILA

Hey, wait.....

BARRY

Don't deny it. Meanwhile I've got some important stuff happening and my mind isn't on family.

Dressed, Barry walks out of the closet and out of the bedroom, leaving Sheila stiff and angry.

He sticks his head back in.

BARRY (cont'd)

Let's have dinner out tonight. We can talk about it then. In fact, let's ask Harvey and Gail to join us. We can work it out with them.

Sheila does not move. Her good mood is switched off. Tears well in her eyes. She snaps them away and heads to the walk-in closet.

EXT. PARK - MORNING

The early morning sunshine leaves red markings in the sky and on the water. Only a few people are out this early in the morning.

In the distance two people run in tandem. As they get closer, it is Tina and a MAN. Engrossed in conversation, they run past Sheila, who sits in a shady area, hidden by trees. In front of her is an easel, set up with charcoal and water colors at the ready.

Sheila watches the ducks and geese shake water from their feather as they march onto the dry land, looking for food. One WALKER throws bread crumbs and the animals crowd around looking for their share.

Sheila studies her subjects--and paints.

Not far away vans and trucks arrive, setting up for the Art Show.

EXT. PARK ART SHOW - DAY

The show is set up. Sheila walks over to the Young Man. She shows him her painting. He studies it and smiles. He sets it up on a ledge for a better look and nods. This time she gives him her card. They shake hands.

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheila works on the canvas, appliqueing fabric, wood, leather and feathers on the water color surface. The trees, birds, sky and park come to life in a 3-D montage.

Katie enters. She looks over the canvas.

KATIE

That's great. I love it.

SHEILA

Barry doesn't. He hates what I'm doing. Listen, can you make sure the Rollins' place is finished? I'll be around to inspect tomorrow, but I can't get there today.

KATIE

Sure. How can he not love this?

SHEILA

He wants me to work on Gail & Harvey's house. What do you think?

KATIE

Well, it's your business to work on houses, but it's up to you, of course.

SHEILA

I said I wouldn't do it.

KATIE

Why don't you just ignore Barry? Let him do his thing, you do yours.

SHEILA

I would. But I have to contribute financially. What would you do if you weren't working here?

KATIE

Me? I'd be miserable. Like I said, it's a great job.

SHEILA

It doesn't pay very much.

KATIE

No, but it's fun. Why? I thought that job at Eric's office was off the table.

SHEILA

It is. I was just wondering what you would do if I gave this up.

KATIE

If you did, I wouldn't like it, but I'm sure I'd find something else.

SHEILA

Take care of the Rollins' place will you? I have to go somewhere, and meet Barry for dinner.

Katie leaves.

Sheila studies the three canvases: Norma and her kitchen, the Little Girl, and the park scene. She sets them in a large artist's envelope. Dials her cell phone.

SHEILA (cont'd)

This is Sheila. Remember me?

INT. VILLAGE CRAFT SHOP - LATER

There are at least TWO CUSTOMERS admiring the wares, and ONE CUSTOMER paying for their purchase. Sheila holds on to a ceramic "cookie" bowl and waits her turn.

Eva spies her from across the room.

BEVERLY

Hi, Sheila. I was hoping you'd be back. Do you have anything in mind?

SHEILA

I was wondering if I could do a little swap. Do you ever sell artwork here? Paintings?

BEVERLY

Sometimes. It depends. Do you want to look at something?

Sheila notices the large file in Sheila's hand.

SHEILA

Well, not exactly. Yes and no. I would like this bowl--

BEVERLY

Sure. Let me help you.

SHEILA

No. Wait. What I'd like is to pay for it with some paintings, well, artwork of sorts. Is that possible?

BEVERLY

I've never done anything like that before. Tell you what. Why don't you show me what you're talking about and we'll see if it's do-able.

Beverly clears off a nearby table. Sheila nervously starts unwrapping the package.

SHEILA

I don't know why I'm doing this. I think I must be crazy.

BEVERLY

No harm in trying. If we like it, we'll--well, let's see.

Sheila removes the three canvases and sets them on the table. Beverly studies them. Sheila watches Beverly's face. Sees her shake her head.

Sheila starts to pick up the canvases.

SHEILA

Never mind. I knew it was a dumb idea.

Beverly stops her. Calls out to Eva.

BEVERLY

Eva! Come on over and take a look at these.

Eva trundles over to the table.

EVA

Do you know who made them? Are you repping them?

SHEILA

Repping? No! They're....Look, never mind, I didn't want to bother you. Let me take them back.

EVA

Why?

BEVERLY

Here's the problem, Eva. Sheila wants to swap them for a ceramic bowl.

SHEILA

It's okay. I'll pay for the bowl, and we can forget about everything else.

BEVERLY

So who did these. Did you?

SHEILA

Yes. I'm sorry. I didn't want to put you on the spot.

Sheila and Eva exchange looks.

BEVERLY

Here's what I think. The paintings are worth more than the bowl, so we couldn't in all fairness make a swap. Why don't you leave them with us. Let me know how much you want, we'll offer them up for sale. We typically take 40% of everything we sell. If we haven't sold them in a month, you can take them back and try elsewhere. Fair enough?

Sheila is in a state of disbelief.

EVA

Let me wrap this bowl for you. You can pay for it after we've sold the paintings.

SHEILA

Or after you HAVEN'T sold the paintings.

They all laugh. Sheila is very relieved. Beverly and Eva walk over to the counter with the bowl.

INT. RUSSO'S RESTAURANT

Sheila, Barry, Gail and Harvey at their usual table. Food gone. Coffee finished.

GAIL

Meanwhile, we're ready to start fixing it up so we can hang out.

BARRY

You like it there?

GAIL

Love it. We both do. Hard to relax here in the city. There we can just, well, just relax. Only it needs to get finished.

BARRY

Love to come up and see it.

GAIL

Sure.

Gail looks sidewise at Sheila. Questions.

GAIL (cont'd)

Then you can look around and we can come up with ideas?

BARRY

Great. Name the date and time. We're on our way.

SHEILA

I'd love to see your place, Gail. I just don't know if I'm ready to take on another job just yet.

BARRY

Why not? You're done with Eric.

Sheila nods. She is noncommittal.

GAIL

I'll wait til you get over the shock. Guess you don't often have people complain about your work.

BARRY

Specially her husband's boss. Don't worry. We'll work it out. Let's figure maybe in a week or two?

GAIL

Actually, Sheila, you do look kind of tired.

Gail leans in to Sheila conspiratorially.

GAIL (cont'd)

Are you pregnant?

Sheila pulls back. Looks at Barry. Looks at Gail.

SHEILA
No, I'm just tired.

Harvey waves to the waiter. Takes out his credit card.

HARVEY
So it's a date. Come up to our new
place in a couple of weeks. Bring a
tennis racket. We'll lob a little.

Barry adds his credit card to the bill. Gail applies a coat of
lipstick.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The television blares. Above it Barry shouts to be heard.

BARRY
They're our best friends. How can you
just dis them that way?

SHEILA
I didn't dis them. Right now, I don't
have the...

Realizing she, too, is shouting, she turns off the TV.

SHEILA (cont'd)
...time.

BARRY
The time? What the fuck are you doing
all day while I'm working my ass off?
You're having fun drawing on a
computer.

Sheila is aghast.

SHEILA
Are you angry at me for doing what I
do? I bring in good money. I thought
money was everything.

BARRY
Money isn't everything. Only almost.
But pleasing your boss and your
friends....that's what's important.

SHEILA
How about also pleasing ourselves?

BARRY

Are you nuts? Of course we're pleasing ourselves. We work hard, we've got a great apartment. We're going to buy a house. We own a Lexus and a van. And we have enough to eat out with our friends at some terrific restaurants.

SHEILA

Don't you think you'd like to do something else sometimes?

BARRY

Sure. I'd like to travel. Go to Paris, or Italy. Maybe Hawaii for great vacations.

SHEILA

There's not much else we need to do then, to make things better?

BARRY

Yes there is. I want you to work on Gail and Barry's house. That's what I want. And that's what you can do. I'm tired. I'm going to bed.

Barry starts to leave the room. Sheila tries to stop him.

SHEILA

You can't be serious. This is the first honest conversation we've had since...since...

Barry pulls away.

BARRY

I said I'm tired. We'll talk about it tomorrow after work.

SHEILA

No we won't. I'm busy. But you've given me a lot to think about.

Barry leaves the room. Sheila sinks into the couch. The tears well up. But her face takes on a look of defiance.

INT. NADIA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sheila sits on the floor playing with Madeline. They "draw" pictures on pieces of paper. Tina leafs through a book. Nadia drinks her coffee.

SHEILA

That's very good, Madeline. Maybe you'll be an artist one day.

Madeline smiles. Nadia scoops her up.

NADIA

Okay. Say night-night to everyone. It's bedtime.

Madeline pouts and looks like she's about to cry.

NADIA (cont'd)

Too bad. That's life. Bedtime is bedtime. Night-night everyone.

Nadia carries Madeline over to Sheila and Tina who give her a kiss. They disappear.

TINA

So you actually started reading Hitchens? Where did you get the time you're always complaining about not having?

SHEILA

I told Harvey and Gail I wouldn't do their house. The Janowsky's are done. So I'm only still working on the Rollins apartment.

TINA

Wow. Got it. What about Barry?

SHEILA

He's miffed at my not doing Gail's new house.

TINA

Too bad on him. And good for you. Do I detect some backbone?

Sheila is grateful for the recognition.

Nadia returns. Bounces back on the couch, and retrieves her coffee.

NADIA

Okay. Where were we?

TINA

Sheila read Hitchens. Sort of. I'm jealous.

(MORE)

TINA (cont'd)

Truth is, it's hard earning a living and finding time to do what you need to do. What you really want to do.

NADIA

If you're putting child care in that category, I'm with you.

SHEILA

Hey! Aren't you the one that preaches we should take time to do what we need to do? Put your money where your mouth is!

TINA

Really, I talk a lot, but I envy both of you. You've got someone who shares your life, helps earn a living--

Sheila and Nadia are both surprised.

SHEILA

I thought you liked being alone.

TINA

No, I said I didn't want to be married.

NADIA

Wait. Stop. What is this you're trying to tell us?

SHEILA

I know. You're dating someone. He looks very nice.

Silence.

TINA

How did you know?

SHEILA

I know a lot of things.

Sheila gives them a very mysterious look. Tina is aghast.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Don't be so shocked. I saw you running in the park with a very nice looking man. You were pretty involved, so I assumed he was more than a friend.

TINA

Well, I started writing a novel--and I went to this professional editor who ...

SHEILA

How great. Someone who shares your thoughts and ideas? Now I'm the one who envies you.

NADIA

Me too. No! Not really! But I mean...

TINA

You're both sounding very cryptic.

SHEILA

Just getting back to our discussion. I think it was about time and space... you know, like in your own space? And having time to do what you want?

NADIA

And really--Tim is great. And I'm lucky that he--you know--old-fashioned and all--but that he's the breadwinner. But I just wish I could work on my jewelry full time. Create some wonderful original stuff--you know--feel...feel like I used to.

Now Sheila and Tina look at Nadia.

NADIA (cont'd)

Don't look at me that way. I love being who I am. And I will make the space to create my jewelry--and anything else I want to create.

SHEILA

That day will come. When your kids are in school full time. But I've decided to think seriously about taking the time and space to do what I want to do, not what's expected of me.

Tina and Nadia now both look at Sheila.

TINA

Wow. All that from Christopher Hitchins? Are you...I mean how do you... . . .

SHEILA

I don't know yet. But I know that my time and my space has become very precious to me.

The women understand, and nod. Then, without planning, a spontaneous group hug.

INT. BARRY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

In his office Barry sits at the computer, the light shining on his face. He stares intently, studying the screen.

He wipes his eye. Picks up the phone. Dials. He listens.

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM

The phone rings in the bedroom. Sheila gets into bed without answering. Four rings. The answering machine picks up.

BARRY (V.O.)

It's just me. I'm working late. I'll try you at the office. Don't wait up.

BARRY'S OFFICE

He dials again.

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE

The phone rings. The answering machine answers: Interiors by Design. Leave a detailed message, I'll get back.

BARRY (V.O.)

Tried you at home. I'll try your cell. Don't wait up, I won't wake you. We'll talk tomorrow morning.

SHEILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barry tiptoes into the bedroom. Suddenly the light goes on. Sheila sits up in bed.

BARRY

I'm sorry. Did I wake you?

SHEILA

No. I was waiting for you. You said we would continue talking tonight. I went to my book club and came home, and you weren't here.

BARRY

I tried calling you.

SHEILA

I know. I got your message. If you said we would talk tonight, why did you work so late?

BARRY

That's not part of this discussion. You know this is what I want to do. It's very important to me.

SHEILA

You're right. I do know. I just want you to know that it's not...that I'm not...

BARRY

Look. It's late. I have an early meeting. We'll meet for lunch...just you and me...and we'll clear the air.

SHEILA

It's okay Barry. In one fell swoop you have vacuumed up all the dust. The air is clear. Sleep well. Be well. Good night.

Sheila turns out the light. The room is dark. As Barry breathes easily into sleep...

...Sheila gets out of bed and walks into...

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. NORMA'S KITCHEN

...Norma's kitchen, still in her nightgown. She admires a blouse on the dining room table.

SHEILA

I never wore anything like this. Is it comfortable?

NORMA

Try it on.

SHEILA

I saw some interesting things at a crafts show.

NORMA

You should have bought one of them.

SHEILA

Yes. Maybe I will.

She picks up the blouse and holds it against herself. Norma approves.

Peace prevails. The light shines brightly through the window. Norma clears the table.

NORMA

And you've been painting. Some very interesting things. In fact, some very beautiful things.

Sheila smiles.

The cat curls up at Sheila's feet. She picks it up and starts to stroke it.

NORMA (cont'd)

I'm glad you've finally come to a decision. I'm with you all the way.

SHEILA

You have to be. You ARE me. We're in this together. Somehow.

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barry turns over in his sleep and reaches out to Sheila's side of the bed. It is empty.

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Barry wakes up, turns over to Sheila's side of the bed. She's not there.

Barry sits up and calls out toward the living room.

BARRY

Sheila? What are you doing up so early?

He gets out of bed and peers into the bathroom.

BARRY (cont'd)

Sheila?

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM

Barry walks into the living room. He notices Sheila's painting of the little girl propped against the couch.

BARRY
Sheila, where the hell are you?

He goes to the phone and dials a number. On the other end we hear:

SHEILA (V.O.)
(on answering machine)
Interiors by Design. Leave a detailed message and we'll get back.

BARRY
(on phone)
It's early morning. I never saw you get up before me. Where are you? Call me.

A MONTAGE OF SCENES OF BARRY LOOKING FOR SHEILA:

INT. SHEILA'S OFFICE - DAY

Barry knocks at the door and enters. Katie sits by the telephone, reading a book.

BARRY
Did you see Sheila?

KATIE
No. I thought she was probably with you. Isn't she?

BARRY
No. Where else could she be?

KATIE
I think she said she was working with the Rollins.

BARRY
Give me their number.

Katie scribbles a number on a paper. Barry grabs it and runs out.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Barry is on the telephone.

BARRY

I know he's gonna have my ass. Well fuck him. I don't know where Sheila is, and I'm staying here til she calls or comes home.

He slams the phone down. Dials.

BARRY (cont'd)

Hi. Is this Mrs. Rollins? Have you seen Sheila today? Thanks.

He dials another number.

BARRY (cont'd)

Hi Tina. This is Barry. Have you seen Sheila? She wasn't running in the park this morning? Oh. Okay.

He dials another number.

BARRY (cont'd)

It's Barry. Did Sheila change her mind about doing your house? Oh. Thanks.

INT. RUSSO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Barry runs into the restaurant. He talks to the waiter. He talks to the Maitre D' who knows them.

INT. SHEILA'S LIVING ROOM - VERY LATE AT NIGHT

Barry is again talking on the telephone.

Barry paces the floor. Makes another call.

BARRY (on phone)

I'd like to report a missing person.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - MORNING

POLICE DET. DEVITO sits at his desk. Barry sits opposite. He hasn't shaven. His eyes are red.

DETECTIVE DEVITO

We're doing all we can to locate your wife. Nobody was found hurt or dead at the park. There are no accidents reported at any hospital involving a person of her description. Does she have any other friends or relatives besides what you've given us?

BARRY

Not that I know of.

DETECTIVE DEVITO

I'm sorry to have to ask this, but have the two of you been having any domestic problems? Maybe she took off for a while.

BARRY

No. Everything's fine.

DETECTIVE DEVITO

We'll keep looking. If anything changes, you let us know.

BARRY

Thanks. I will.

Barry rises.

EXT. STREET SCENES - DAY

Barry is looking everywhere. He thinks he sees her in every woman with a short skirt and jacket. He looks at the backs of three or four women, all of whom look just like her from behind, but have a different face.

INT. FLOWER SHOP

Barry talks to the people in the shop. No. Nobody has seen her. He leaves.

EXT. PARK CRAFTS FAIR

At the Fair, Barry runs frantically from one booth to the next, desperately seeking Sheila.

At one of the booths the paintings and clay sculptures of the Young Artist are on display.

Two women, dressed in earthtone long skirts and peasant blouses are chatting with the Young Artist, admiring his work. They laugh.

ON THE WOMEN'S HANDS: no wedding rings.

Barry continues looking at all the women in the crowd. He notices the backs of the two women. They could be mother and daughter.

The Young Artist looks up at the younger of the two women. He smiles at her. The three of them move to another stand. There are lovely plants and herbs. The younger woman chooses one and turns to hand the plant to....Norma.

Sheila, transformed, is dressed like and smiles like Norma.

SHEILA

This is for you. For being more like a mother....no. For being you, and letting me be me.

Sheila hugs Norma. As she does, Barry walks by, looking desperately. He bumps into Sheila. He doesn't recognize her.

BARRY

Oh, excuse me.

He turns away and continues to walk through the stands.

The Young Artist purchases a single flower and hands it to Sheila.

YOUNG MAN

And this is for you.

Sheila curtsies.

SHEILA

Thank you, sweet Prince.

He bows and returns to his booth.

Norma takes Sheila's arm in a motherly fashion and they walk on, right past Barry. There is no sign of recognition on either side.

FADE OUT.