

GRACE & THE PUBLIC

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - OFFSHORE - WINTRY DAY

Chicago's skyline SEEN from the distance of Lake Michigan.

SOUND: HOWLING WIND.

SOUND: CHOPPY WATERS.

Fades the harsh elements.

ENTER GRACE'S voice: Precise. Crisp. Confident.

GRACE (V.O.)
Boys seem to like the girls.

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - DAY

As the MUSIC begins, WE skim over the waves. The watery expanse between US and the city quickly thins.

MUSIC: Like DAYA'S HIDE AWAY starts to play.

GRACE (V.O.)
Who laugh at anything.

WE grow closer to Chicago and its impressive skyline.

GRACE (V.O.)
The ones who get undressed. Before
the second date.

WE zoom in and hover over to the bumper to bumper traffic lines Lake Shore Drive below US.

INTO VIEW is the Hotel Drake's pink neon rooftop signage.

GRACE (V.O.)
Girls seem to like the boys. Who
don't appreciate.

EXT. CHICAGO SKYLINE - ABOVE THE DRAKE - DAY

WE fly high over The Drake Hotel's Rooftop. Then, WE dip down and descend fast to Michigan Avenue's overflowing sidewalks.

GRACE (V.O.)
All the money and the time that it
takes.

Bundled up CHICAGOANS traverse a snow-covered street.

GRACE (V.O.)
To be fly as a mother.

EXT. MICHIGAN AVE - THE MAGNIFICENT MILE - DAY

PEDESTRIANS rush about with wrapped packages in hands. The surrounding storefronts are all decked out for the holidays.

GRACE (V.O.)
Got my both eyes out for Mr. Right.
Guessing now I just don't know
where to find them. But I hope they
all come out tonight.

Last minute Holiday Shoppers rush about. Weighed down with gifts hidden in brand named bags.

WE follow a well-groomed BAD BOY who thinks love is but a game flirts with each passing attractive WOMAN.

Each woman is of different age, race, and financial status.

GRACE (V.O.)
Where do the good boys go to hide
away, hide away.

The bad boy's toothy grin makes all the women melt.

GRACE (V.O.)
I'm a good, good girl who needs a
little company. Looking high and
low, someone let me know. Where do
the good boys go to hide away, hide
away.

Beyond the shoppers, WE see a long Chicago Transit bus brakes in front of us and come to a halt. Plastered on its side is an enormous Coco Mademoiselle's ad features Keira Knightley in a sexy white lingerie pose.

GRACE (V.O.)
Boys seem to like the girls who
like to kiss and tell. Talking...

Hold on Keira's flawless face and her air-brushed perfection.

GRACE (V.O.)
Them up about things that do so
well. But I'd rather find a boy.

From both sides, pedestrians of all races and economic backgrounds cross MICHIGAN AVE.

EXT. MAGNIFICENT MILE - MICHIGAN AVE. CURB - DAY

Away pulls the Chicago Transit bus.

GRACE (V.O.)
Who is down for the chase. Putting
in the time that it takes.

EXT. MAGNIFICENT MILE - MICHIGAN AVE. CURB - DAY

URBAN WOMAN hails a cab. Her arms are weighted down and overwhelmed with brand-name shopping bags.

GRACE (V.O.)
To be fly as a mother. Hey! To
supply all of my heart's demands.

Urban woman approaches Hugo Boss Garbed SUPERMAN.

Taxi brakes and pulls up between a divide in the snow bank.

GRACE (V.O.)
Suit and tie 'cause undercover.
He's gonna save my life like
superman.

The cab slows to a stop.

Superman cuts in front of her and steals her cab.

GRACE (V.O.)
Hey!

The taxi cab takes off.

Reacts the urban woman.

GRACE (V.O.)
Where do the good boys go to...

EXT. MICHIGAN AVENUE - DAY

From above WE trail Superman's taxi cab as it enters the heavy bumper-to-bumper traffic.

GRACE (V.O.)
Hide away, hide away.

EXT. LAKE SHORE DRIVE - DAY

Superman's taxi cab cuts through slow Gold Coast traffic. Then, it jumps on Lake Shore Drive. The Drake Hotel is behind us now. The turns down E. Division Street.

GRACE (V.O.)
I'm a good...

EXT. HOTEL PUBLIC - GOLD COAST - DAY

WE stop before the tall stone structure of the former Ambassador East.

IMAGE: "The Public Signage."

WE pan up, then down the storied hotel.

GRACE (V.O.)
Good girl who needs a little
company.

SUPER: "The Hotel Public."

EXT. HOTEL PUBLIC - CURBSIDE - DAY

A yellow taxi cab swings in fast. Then, it stops in front of US. The DRIVER pops the trunk.

SUPER: "Friday. A few days before Christmas."

SUPER: "Inspired by Actual Events."

A JAZZY BELLHOP springs into action. He wears a fresh, pin-striped suit, bowler hat, and deep green great coat.

BELLHOP
Welcome to the Heart of Chicago's
Gold Coast. The Public. Where Grace
can take you places.
(beat)
Where money and...

The Bellhop grabs two suitcases from the cab's trunk. As he turns, he eyes the CAMERA and winks.

BELLHOP (CONT'D)
Hustling can't. Happy Holidays.

WE move to the driver side of the cab. WE see the big logo of the Chicago Cab Company. The yellow door opens.

SOUND: CHATTER.

WE see only the PASSENGERS' legs and shoes.

INT./EXT. HOTEL PUBLIC - ENTRANCE - DAY

The passengers enter the hotel's revolving doorway. WE stand atop a white marble stairwell and floor. WE pan up.

A massive crystal chandeliers hangs overhead.

In the lobby, to our right, is a hot pink Christmas tree two stories high. Huge gold bulbs hang down from it.

SOUND: LOBBY CHATTER.

The passengers' feet move up the steps. WE travel down the stairs to hotel's basement and its wall of fame. WE span the old photos of celebrities long dead taken in the hotel's legendary Pump Room.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - BASEMENT - DAY

On the wall is a framed LIFE Magazine article: *"The most exotic dining place in the U.S. The ultimate in cuisine and culinary showmanship."*

Then WE see more photos of celebrity filled booths. These are black and white snapshot of glamorous couples. Ghosts from the past smile back at us. Warns US our fun too will soon be over. THINK THE SHINING's framed black and white portraits.

Photos of past celebrities: Bogie and Bacall, Sinatra, young Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Durante, Jimmy Stewart, a twenty-something Shirley Temple with a cocktail.

Mixed in here is a photo of SALLY and WALT from a long time ago. WE span over it quickly. Hints to the audience what is to come. Visits from the Ghosts of Christmas Past.

IMAGE: old-time flash bulb IGNITES. WE see the chemical reaction travel via the wired circuit. Pop-flash white. The bright light blinds US.

DISSOLVE TO
BLACK:

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - THE PUMP ROOM - SAME

Before US, spheres of various sizes hang magically in midair. Sitting in the same booth, a middle-aged African American couple sit with their two children.

DAVE, late forties Superman. Tall, fit, and a self-confessed sports junkie.

GRACE, late forties Supermom on holiday who worries way too much about her family. She's pretty and petite.

ANNABEL, age 10, radiant and a mirror image of her Mother.

HOLDEN, age 8, a shy charmer with a splendid imagination.

Everyone except Grace stares down at their smartphones.

GRACE

Dave?

Dave watches last night's sports highlights via his phone.

DAVE

Yeah, Grace.

GRACE

Dave?!?

DAVE

Just one second. I'm watching...

Grace grabs his phone.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Hey!

Grace holds the phone in her hand and waves it over her head.

GRACE

You may get this back. So, Church on Sunday?

DAVE

Church?!?

GRACE

Na-Na wants us there.

DAVE

W-h-y?

GRACE

She's your Mother.

DAVE

Okay.

Grace hands the phone back.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Dave's focus returns to the device.

GRACE

Chicago has changed since we lived here.

Dave is once again engrossed in his phone.

DAVE

All things do.

ANNABEL

Do what?

DAVE

Change.

Grace takes a sip of her wine and makes a sour face.

GRACE

Ah! This wine is terrible.

DAVE

Order something else.

Grace looks around The Pump Room.

HOLDEN

M-o-m, my phone died.

Holden grabs Annabel's phone.

ANNABEL

Hey!

Dave pays them no mind.

Grace takes another sip.

GRACE

Yuck. What's the definition of insanity?

Grace pushes it away.

Annabel grabs her phone back.

HOLDEN
Hey! Momma!

ANNABEL
It's mine.

GRACE
I'm done.

DAVE
Good. The game is about to start.

Dave stands up. So does everyone but Grace.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Coming up to watch?

GRACE
No.

DAVE
Suit yourself.

GRACE
I'll stay down here. I have my
book.

DAVE
Okay. We're off!

Dave looks to his children.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Who remembers our room number?

The three race to the elevator bay.

Dave turns back to his wife.

DAVE (CONT'D)
See you at halftime.

Grace watches her family leave. Then, her interest goes to her book, "Help Thyself." She pages through it.

GRACE
Hmm.

INT. PUMP ROOM BAR - TEN MINUTES LATER

Grace eyes are closed. Her book rests on her chest.

Appears the half-naked WAITRESS.

WAITRESS

More wine?

Grace stares up.

GRACE

No thank you. I'm... fine.

Grace pops up and leaves the bar behind as she explores the rest of the hotel's first floor.

Grace crosses the...

THE LOBBY

The hotel has a high international vibe.

Wealthy DUTCH COUPLE speaks in Danish.

DUTCH MAN

(In Danish)

Hurry.

DUTCH WOMAN

(In Danish)

Why?

DUTCH MAN

(In Danish)

We're late. You took to long getting ready.

Grace walks pass them and smiles.

The Dutch couple are in no mood to be social.

So, Grace stares up at the high ceilings of the lobby. It's a white washed space void of color except for the hot pink Christmas tree. She stops at the tree. Then, she moves on.

She enters...

THE LIBRARY BAR,

As she does she whispers to herself.

GRACE

I never felt so small. So...

She looks around the bar.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Alone.

INT. THE LIBRARY BAR - CHAIRS BY THE FIRE - SAME

The rooms most sought after seats. Two are already occupied by two other women, FANNIE and SALLY.

Together, the two enjoy the fireplace's ample warmth.

FANNIE, think AMY ADAMS, wears workout clothes, fresh from Hot Yoga. Her smile is warm and inviting. She glows.

SALLY, think the sophisticated and beautiful HELEN MIRREN, looks to be in her late sixties. She is elegantly dressed.

Grace slowly approaches them.

GRACE (CONT'D)
May I?

FANNIE
Please do.

Fannie looks up, all bright and welcoming. She pats the seat next to her.

FANNIE (CONT'D)
Take a seat.

SALLY
Welcome.

GRACE
I'm Grace.

Grace sits and lays down her book on the table.

Sally glances down at it.

SALLY
So...

Sally attention moves from the book on the table to Grace. She peers into Grace's eyes, the windows into one's soul.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Who is Grace?

GRACE
Me? I'm a woman. A wife. A mother.
A daughter. A runner. A thinker. A
worrier... and to many. I am a
friend.

SALLY
A friend. Good.

Sally smiles wide.

SALLY (CONT'D)

We welcome all parts of you, Grace...
to our discussion.

Fannie raises her hand.

FANNIE

Hi, Grace. I'm Fannie. I'm
artistic. My loves are Hot Yoga.
All art. Cycling. Big cities.
Traveling. Laughing and eating.

GRACE

Wow. I think I definitely picked
the right place to sit.

FANNIE

Yes. Join us. We're sharing.
Unpacking our souls.

SALLY

That's quite a feat for an eighty
year old woman.

Fannie turns to Sally.

FANNIE

Impossible.

SALLY

Yet. True.

GRACE

You're so beautiful.

SALLY

Thank you.

FANNIE

We were just saying. How wonderful
it is to be women.

SALLY

At any age.

FANNIE

Men are so rigid.

GRACE

And guarded.

SALLY
They would never sit down with
strangers and open up.

GRACE
Talk football, yes. Life, no.

SALLY
Their loss.

FANNIE
Well then. Has anyone read the wine
pairings yet?

Sally puts on her glasses. Then, she reads from the menu.

SALLY
Wine pairs well with, Haggis.
Potatoes. Meat. Bad decisions. Good
decisions. Lack of decisions. Ha!

Sally sets the menu down. Then, she removes her glasses.

GRACE
That pretty much covers life.

Sally agrees with a motherly smile.

FANNIE
Who's hungry for margarita pizza
and some more red wine?

Sally grabs a wine bottle from the table. She gives healthy
pours to Grace and Fannie's glasses. Though, she only saved a
splash of red for her glass.

SALLY
Hmm. How sad.

Sally looks up at Grace.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Do you like the hotel, dear?

GRACE
So far.

SALLY
I stayed her once. Eons ago.

FANNIE
I love it.

SALLY
Ian has a knack for making his
hotels feel like home.

GRACE
Ian?

FANNIE
Ian Schrager. Studio Fifty-Four
fame. This is his hotel.

SALLY
He marries innovative design, with
authentic style.

FANNIE
He's really turned this hotel
around. I'm in marketing. My firm
handles his chain of hotels.

GRACE
So, that is why you're here?

FANNIE
No. I live five minutes away.

Sally stares down at her empty glass.

SALLY
How tragic.

FANNIE
Here, Sally.

Fannie refills Sally's glass from her glass.

SALLY
Solidarity, dear. Thank you.

GRACE
Do you like what you do?

Fannie hesitates. Thinks hard and offers.

FANNIE
Sometimes.

SALLY
Marketing. Imagine. Women these
days have such wonderful options
for employment.

Fannie leans in and whispers.

FANNIE

Just between us girls. My true job is to make people uncomfortable. Buy stuff they shouldn't.

GRACE

It's working. We bought a Mini-Van a month ago, we can't afford.

FANNIE

We live in a consumer culture. Have me. Buy me. Throw me away.

SALLY

Conform or perish.

FANNIE

It's an art. To sell something that is significant to a few. Make it a must-have to the masses.

SALLY

Help thyself, indeed. Ah, it's ludicrous.

GRACE

It's either you're too thin.

FANNIE

Too fat.

SALLY

Too rich.

GRACE

Too poor. Too young, or...

SALLY

Too old.

GRACE

Whatever happen to contentment?

FANNIE

Yeah, and it's all bullshit too.

SALLY

We're all starving for attention.

NOTE: Heavy pause from all three characters.

FANNIE

Realness.

GRACE
We all want love.

FANNIE
We all want validation.

SALLY
It's a paradox. A mirror.

FANNIE
I represent the sick culture we
live in.

GRACE
Mass distractions.

FANNIE
Distractions. Wonderful word.

GRACE
Life is full of such theater.

SALLY
Yep. In the end, it's an estate
sale. Hmm.

Sally holds up her empty glass.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Who's ready for another?

FANNIE
Good luck finding our waitress.

SALLY
Then, it's time to hit the bar. Any
takers?

Sally pops up and waves her empty glass over the others.

GRACE
I'm good.

FANNIE
Me too.

SALLY
Alright. I shall return!

Sally points to her chair.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Save my seat, dears. I shan't be
long.

FANNIE

We will.

Fannie giggles a bit.

FANNIE (CONT'D)

I think Sally is starting to feel her wine.

GRACE

She is so regal. Reminds me of Lauren Bacall, or a Grace Kelly. A movie star.

INT. LIBRARY BAR - SAME

Sally stands before the bar.

NOTE: ALCOHOL BOTTLES ARTFULLY DISPLAYED ON THIN GLASS SHELVES IN YELLOW LIT FLOOR TO CEILING OPEN AIR CASE.

Sally sees...

A young BARTENDER, in his Twenties with Tats. He loads cases of good wine onto a small cart at the end of the bar.

Sally clears her throat.

The Bartender turns and notices Sally.

BARTENDER

Hi, there.

He approaches from the other end of the bar.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

May I help you?

SALLY

Yes, you may. Where are those fine wines headed to?

BARTENDER

We have a wedding reception upstairs tonight.

SALLY

Oh, yes. I've heard.

BARTENDER

Would you like to see a wine menu?

Sally sees a big bottle of Macallan Scotch on the colorful shelves. It dwarfs the other bottles.

SALLY
Not necessary. I want that.

She points at the big bottle.

BARTENDER
Mac Twelve?

Sally speaks in a different tune. Mocks her EX's Walt voice.

SALLY
Single malt. On the rocks. Not too watery. Understood?

BARTENDER
Of course.

Sally stares at herself via the mirror behind the bar.

SALLY
Walt. You did like life's finer things.

Sally smiles. As if, she recalls an old memory, a good one.

INT. LIBRARY BAR - FIREPLACE - SAME

Fannie and Grace chat as...

A handsome Alpha LION approaches Sally's choice seat by the fire.

LION
(Purrs)
May I?

Fannie looks up.

FANNIE
Seat is taken.

LION
Oh!?!

GRACE
Girls night.

The Lion's shoulders drop and droop. Then, he moves slowly on. His confidence shaken.

Grace closes her eyes.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Hmmmm. It's been some time since I was able to relax, like this.

FANNIE

Why is that?

GRACE

My Husband travels a lot for work. So, he's not much help.

FANNIE

Oh, that stinks.

GRACE

I spend most of my days running the kiddos from one event to another.

FANNIE

Hence the new Mini-Van?

GRACE

We're driving in style now.

FANNIE

Where are they?

GRACE

Upstairs. Watching a game. Dave cares more about sports than me.

FANNIE

It's a male thing.

GRACE

What?

FANNIE

Misplaced priorities.

GRACE

So, what about your family?

Fannie sips more wine.

FANNIE

I was an only child. Now, all alone. Both my parents have passed.

GRACE

I'm sorry.

FANNIE
They died some time ago.

GRACE
What were they like?

FANNIE
Idealists. Both teachers. Mom, Art.
Dad, English. They loved to travel.

GRACE
What was their favorite
destination?

Fannie grabs her phone.

FANNIE
Paris. This is me. At Six.
Underneath the Eiffel Tower.

Grace grabs Fannie's phone.

Image of a pig-tailed YOUNG FANNIE, age 6, with her parents.

Paris drapes in the background.

GRACE
Wow. Look at you. Seventies?

FANNIE
Yep.

GRACE
Your parents look so in love.

FANNIE
They were. Until, they weren't.

Approaches their waitress.

FANNIE (CONT'D)
Oh. Saved by the naked waitress.

Fannie waves.

FANNIE (CONT'D)
Two more over here, please.
(looks at Grace)
On me.

GRACE
Wow. She's wearing less than the
one in the Pump Room.

FANNIE
Cloaked in confidence.

GRACE
I wished I had her body.

FANNIE
Don't feed the insecurity. That
advice I learned the hard way.

Sally returns from the bar in disbelief.

SALLY
Seventeen dollars for a drink?

Sally takes her seat.

FANNIE
Welcome back, Sally.

SALLY
So, what did I miss?

GRACE
The naked waitress has rejoined us.

SALLY
Ah! I see. Youth. I vaguely recall
it.

FANNIE
Excuse me, ladies. I need to
tinkle.

Fannie gets up. She stares down at Sally and smiles.

FANNIE (CONT'D)
Save my seat.

SALLY
Dear one, we shall guard it with
our lives.

INT. LOBBY BAR - BATHROOM - DAY

Fancy bathroom with jazzy touches.

ECU: bathroom door.

SOUND: TOILET FLUSHES.

Fannie steps out of the stall. She HUMS, La Mer. She stops before the mirror. She continues to HUM. As she does so, she inspects herself. She stops HUMMING.

FANNIE
Ah, Paris...

Closer and closer, she moves to the mirror. She's draws herself to it. She stops an inch from her own reflection.

FANNIE (CONT'D)
Where have you gone?

FANNIE'S
FLASHBACK
BEGINS:

EXT. PARIS - DAY

NOTE: PIGTAILS IN PARIS: Fannie's perfect childhood day.

MONTAGE OF PLACES OF INTEREST IN THE CITY OF LIGHT.

FANNIE (V.O.)
My first trip to Paris was in
Pigtails. I was six.

SUPER: "Summer of 1977."

SERIES OF QUICK SNAPSHOTS:

1. EIFFEL TOWER.
2. STONE STEPS OF THE PALAIS DE CHAILLOT AND ITS FOUNTAINS.
3. PLACE SAINT-SULPICE.
4. RUE FÉROU.
5. JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG'S ITALIAN ICE STAND.
6. OSCAR WILDE'S GRAVE AT PÈRE LACHAISE CEMETERY.
7. THE METRO. LEADING TO THE QUARTER.
8. THE PANTHEON.
9. BOULEVARD DU MONTPARNASSE.
10. ENDS WITH THE STOREFRONT OF CLOSERIE DE LILAS.

FANNIE (V.O.)
 My parents were alive. In love. And
 together. Hmm. That day was...
 Perfect. See.

Fannie inhales.

FANNIE (V.O.)
 Breath it in.

EXT. CLOSERIE DE LILAS - DAY

WE peer in and see YOUNG FANNIE together with her...

Mother FAYE, late 20s art lover, with white daisies in hair.

Father HOWARD, 30s, Bohemian wannabe and a lover of words.

Beyond the glass within the cool café they are, each in
 Seventies hair styles and casual summer dress.

YOUNG FANNIE (V.O.)
 It was summertime. And the weather
 was spectacular.

INT. CLOSERIE DE LILAS - DAY

A few regulars fill the booths with espressos and newspapers
 in hand. The clientele is a mix of TOURISTS and COUNTRYMEN.

WE pan the place where Hemingway once worked.

INTERCUTS OF THE ROOM.

1. The long wood bar.
2. The big red booths.
3. Various pictures on the walls of celebrities.
4. The bronze plaque in script: "E. Hemingway."

HOWARD
 Papa Hem liked to write.

HOWARD, Fannie's Father, a book worshiper, hovers over an
 ELDERLY PARISIAN COUPLE.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Here!

The French couple responds with a gasp from the intrusion.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 With his back to the window, and
 the Light. For hours straight, he
 would lose himself, creating great,
 new gritty worlds. True
 masterpieces of fiction.

Frenchman takes a bite of his pastry. He eyes his wife raises
 up his newspaper.

FRENCHMAN
 (in French)
 Ah, the silliness of Americans.

HOWARD
 (in French too)
 Oh, while in Paris. Am I not a
 Parisian. *Non?*

Frenchman makes sour face to his wife.

The Frenchwoman puts down the tip of her newspaper.

Then, she eyes her husband and in unison say...

PARISIANS
 Non!

FRENCHWOMAN
 (in French)
 I told you we should not come here.
 It's always littered with tourists.

The Frenchman makes a face and returns to his paper.

Faye and Fannie laugh at Howard's eagerness to be French.

Howard laughs too and wanders with his family towards the
 restaurant's exit.

HOWARD
 Let's go see the City.

EXT. BOULEVARD DU MONTPARNASSE - DAY

Fannie's family explores Paris.

MUSIC: song plays like Charles Trenet's version, La Mer.

Fannie, Faye, and Howard walk along the tree-lined street.
 Each lays peek-a-boo behind the tress with one another.

Faye pulls out camera. She snaps off a few shots of Fannie and Howard enjoying the day.

EXT. GROUNDS OF THE SORBONNE - DAY

The family walks hand in hand on near the Sorbonne with the Pantheon in the background and travels down a narrow street with colorful people and shops.

EXT. PARIS METRO - DAY

Family heads down the steps. Into the belly of the old city, WE see businessmen with big hair and seventies wear, street performance, and uniformed students a little older than Fannie. Think of the Madeline books.

INT. ON-BOARD METRO TRAIN - SAME

As the door close, La Mer stops playing.

Fannie looks so small by the closing doors. She notices the colorful transit map. Everything is in French and color coded with funny intersecting lines.

She gazes up at him as he holds her hand.

YOUNG FANNIE

Do you know where we are going?

Howard bends down, close to her face and smiles. Then, he nods yes, and says.

HOWARD

No.

Faye hits him in the back of his head with her hand.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Ouch!

FAYE

Don't scare her.

Fannie eyes her fellow passengers.

HOWARD

(to Fannie)

Fannie, only good things will happen today. I promise.

YOUNG FANNIE

Okay.

Fannie reaches her trust limit.

YOUNG FANNIE (CONT'D)

So, where are we going?

HOWARD

We are off to see an old friend.

EXT. PÈRE LACHAISE CEMETERY - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

A cobblestone street lined with stone carved tombs, crypts, and mausoleums: all in various designs and shapes.

They reach their destination, Oscar Wilde's grave site.

Craved in the stone, "Oscar Wilde." The gravestone is covered in hundreds, if not thousands of red lipstick kisses.

Howard stops.

HOWARD

Here we are. Hi, Oscar. This is my daughter, Fannie.

Fannie sheepishly raises her hand.

YOUNG FANNIE

Hi.

HOWARD

She has a good heart too.

YOUNG FANNIE

Why are we here?

HOWARD

Paying our respects.

YOUNG FANNIE

But why?

FAYE

Because it's the right thing to do.

Fannie makes funny face.

YOUNG FANNIE

Okay. What's with all the smooches?

HOWARD

Some says it brings you luck to
give Oscar a kiss.

YOUNG FANNIE

Kiss a rock?

FAYE

I will show you. When your Father
and I where here. Years ago.

Howard grabs Fannie's arms and twirls her around.

HOWARD

We wished for you.

He stops. Then, he gives his wife and daughter a big smile
and moves away to explore more graves.

Fannie and her Mom stand side by side, together.

FAYE

Let's give it a try.

YOUNG FANNIE

I get a wish too?

FAYE

Yes... If you kiss, Oscar.

YOUNG FANNIE

Yuck.

FAYE

Pucker up.

Faye applies bright red lipstick.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Do you know what you want to wish
for dear?

Fannie thinks hard. Then, she nods yes.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Good.

Fannie runs up to the headstone and gives it a big kiss.

Howard returns.

HOWARD

Ready girls?

Faye closes her eyes and gives the stone a huge kiss.

FAYE
That ought to do it.

HOWARD
Who wants Italian Ice?

EXT. JARDIN DU LUXEMBOURG - VENDOR STAND - DAY

Fannie's family stands in line to get Italian Ice.

Howard steps up.

HOWARD
(in French)
Two scoops, please.

FAYE
One.

HOWARD
(in French)
One.

VENDOR hands cup over to Howard.

Howard gives the cup without a spoon to his daughter.

Fannie grabs it.

YOUNG FANNIE
Merci beaucoup.

Fannie looks at the cup without a spoon.

YOUNG FANNIE (CONT'D)
Where's my...

As if magic, Howard pulls a spoon from her hair.

HOWARD
(In French)
You may need this.

Fannie grabs the spoon.

YOUNG FANNIE
Merci.

HOWARD
You're welcome.

MONTAGE: Family wanders through the lush green park and hits various points of scenic interest.

EXT. RUE FÉROU - DAY

A narrow street full of colorful people and shops.

EXT. PLACE SAINT-SULPICE - DAY

The family walks by a Lion covered fountain.

EXT. PALAIS DE CHAILLOT - THE STEPS - STARRY NIGHT

Faye, Howard, and daughter gaze up in silence and admiration at the steely structure that represents Paris like no other.
THE END OF A GREAT DAY.

SOUND: the fountains' MOVING WATER.

VANTAGE POINT. Fannie's family enjoys a spectacular view of the Eiffel Tower, beyond the SPLASHING by fountains of Trocadéro Gardens, a canopy of stars hangs overhead.

HOWARD

It was a good day.

YOUNG FANNIE

The greatest.

Howard hugs his two girls hard. Then he bounces up from the steps. Grabs his wife's hand.

HOWARD

Get-up. Dance with me.

FAYE

Dance? There's no music.

HOWARD

The traffic. The fountains. My heartbeat. Amour.

FAYE

You sap.

HOWARD

Sorry, Mrs. Hobbs.

Faye attempts to get up.

Howard waves his index finger.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Non, my love. Too late.

Howard grabs his daughter's hand.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 My dance ticket is now full.

Faye sits back down.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 Fannie. Let's show Momma our moves.

Fannie and her Howard dance as WE hear accordion music play. Together, they twirl and spin. Until, her Daddy dips her.

YOUNG FANNIE
 I love you, Daddy.

Howard scoops her up and heads down the steps.

HOWARD
 I love you too. Now... it's time to get you to bed.

Fannie's tired head along with her long pigtails falls on her Father's broad shoulder. She melts into him.

Howard whispers into her ear.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 What did you wish for dear?

YOUNG FANNIE
 This.

FANNIE'S 1977
 FLASH BACK ENDS:

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - LIBRARY BAR - PRESENT NIGHT

Sally and Grace sits before the fireplace. They stop talking when Fannie returns from the bathroom.

SALLY
 We were being to worry about you, dear.

FANNIE
 I was just washing my hands.
 (looks at Grace)
 What?

SALLY
We see no ring on those freshly
washed fingers.

GRACE
(with flair)
Single in the city!

FANNIE
I have a boyfriend. Oscar. He's an
artist of sorts.

GRACE
And?

FANNIE
And. Our lives are a little hectic.

SALLY
A bohemian with dabbles in paint?

FANNIE
Oui.

SALLY
Interesting.

GRACE
How did you meet?

FANNIE'S GALLERY
FLASHBACK
BEGINS:

INT. CHICAGO ART GALLERY - OSCAR'S EXHIBIT - NIGHT

Fannie stares at a thick oil brushed painting. The colors in the portrait are warm and alive.

IMAGE is a picture of a young girl in ponytails in Paris. She stands at the steps of the Eiffel Tower.

Fannie wears a tailor-cut business suit, she stares at the portrait for a long while, totally engrossed.

OSCAR, a long haired Picasso walks up from behind. He speaks with a slight accent and his hands.

OSCAR
Do you hate it?

FANNIE
I don't know yet.

Oscar tilts his head to one side.

OSCAR
I've seen better.

FANNIE
I kind of like it.

OSCAR
You do?

FANNIE
Do you know the artist?

OSCAR
Not entirely.

Fannie looks around. The gallery buzzes with people.

FANNIE
Well, his work appears to be in
high demand.

OSCAR
He's hoping that's the case.

FANNIE
What do you see when you look at
this canvas?

OSCAR
Yet another failed attempt... to
capture what I see so rich, so
vividly in my head.

FANNIE
Well, with masterpieces, it's their
flaws and imperfections that make
them stand out.

OSCAR
Imperfections? I will need to keep
that in mind.

FANNIE
Hi. I'm Fannie.

OSCAR
I'm..

Oscar points to the poster advertising his show.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Oscar.

Fannie reacts to his name.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
What?

FANNIE
Nothing.

OSCAR
Let me show you something I'm
really proud of. Fewer flaws.

FANNIE'S GALLERY
FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - LOBBY BAR - PRESENT DAY

Grace, Sally, and Fannie are now fast friends. Sitting
together chatting, laughing, and drinking more wine.

GRACE
Show you something. Hmm... I'm sure
he did.

FANNIE
Grace!

Fannie looks at Sally as if it was her Grandmother.

SALLY
Oh, come on. I'm Eighty. Not Eight,
girls. I've seen my share. Some
much bigger than others.

Fannie almost SPITS out her wine.

Grace laughs hard and snorts.

Magically appears a woman in white in the background. An
expected BRIDE wanders through the lobby.

Fannie notices her.

FANNIE
Oh, a bride!

SALLY
Where?

Sally turns.

SALLY (CONT'D)
There.

GRACE
A wedding so close to Christmas?

FANNIE
I'm sure they saved some money.

SALLY
What is she wearing?

The Bride wears a hula-hoop skirt with a vintage mink wrap.

FANNIE
That's a unique combination.

GRACE
I think she's beautiful.
(looks at Fannie)
Artsy, even.

Fannie smiles.

SALLY
Truthfully, that picture right there. An expected Bride. Makes me incredibly sad.

GRACE
Why?

SALLY
To me it's a tragedy.

FANNIE
What do you mean?

GRACE
Sally, she looks happy.

SALLY
I know. That's what makes me so upset. All pretty in white.

Fannie looks at Grace.

Grace eyes Fannie back.

SALLY (CONT'D)
We all walk down the aisle with a truckload of dreams. Those dreams soon turn into fear, isolation. Then, even abandonment.

GRACE
It's not that bad.

Grace looks at Fannie again.

SALLY
Isn't it?

GRACE
Sally your scaring Fannie.

SALLY
Good. That lovely girl over there
will soon be pregnant.

Fannie leans in. Closer to Sally.

SALLY (CONT'D)
One after another, losing herself
more and more.

Grace grows dead quiet.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Her husband... the man who spoke for
better or worse. Zones out. Only
engages with work. Or worse,
sports. More and more, he hates
everything that he once cherished
about you.

FANNIE
Wow.

Across the room, the bride smiles and shares a big laugh with
her bridesmaids the room. Hold on these young women.

SALLY (O.S.)
But right now... at this exact
moment. She thinks she is embarking
on the best journey of her life.

ECU: Bride.

SALLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Little does she know. She is
doomed.

ECU: Sally.

Sally downs her Scotch quick. She looks at its emptiness as
only ice RATTLES in her glass. Then, she licks lips.

SOUND: SMACK.

SALLY (CONT'D)
I need another drink.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - LOBBY - NIGHT

With wine glasses in hand, Grace follows Fannie, and Fannie follows Sally.

Together, they leave the Library Bar, move across the lobby. Up winding stairs, to a small reception area atop the steps.

SOUND: HEELS TAPPING.

Behind them. Coming up fast is the tap, tap of high heels of the bridesmaids. The younger women pass them up the stairs. They giggle at one another, full of life.

BRIDESMAID #1

Excuse us. We're late.

GRACE

Sally, where are we going?

SALLY

In search of free liquor.

FANNIE

(whispers)

We're crashing it?

Sally's smile broadens.

SALLY

Sort of.

FANNIE

Sally?!? I'm wearing a yoga outfit.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - MEZZANINE - NIGHT

Outside the wedding reception, well dressed GUESTS chat before a bar.

The DJ plays a Frank Sinatra song like, Fly Me to the Moon.

The guests mingle and enjoy a glitzy Happy Hour of pink cocktails as pictures are taken.

Appears Sally's son, PETER Jr., in a fine tux. He's the Father of the groom.

PETER JR.

Mom! Where have you been hiding?

Sally embraces him.

SALLY
Downstairs. By the fire.

PETER JR.
I should've known.

FANNIE
(whispers)
That's no rental. That's Armani.

GRACE
What?

FANNIE
The tux.

GRACE
Oh. He's cute too. Hmm.

FANNIE
Like a young Redford.

Peter looks at the others and smiles.

SALLY
Ladies, this is Peter. My son.

Peter looks at Fannie's outfit.

PETER JR.
Welcome.

GRAM, the Groom, pokes head out of reception's door.

GRAM
Dad. We need you. Pictures.

PETER JR.
Okay. We'll catch up later, Mom.

Sally gives her son a peck on the cheek.

SALLY
You look so much like your Father.

Sally uses her thumb to remove her lipstick from his cheek.

PETER JR.
He's here.

Sally leans back and admires the man she created.

SALLY
I know.

Peter stops as he walks away and turns.

PETER JR.
I look nothing like Dad.

SALLY
You do, to me.

Peter shakes his head and leaves them.

Sally liberates a bottle of red wine from a waitress heading into the reception.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Thank you, dear. Raise your glasses, ladies. As advertised, free drinks.

Sally generously pours the wine.

FANNIE
Thank you.

Fannie eyes Sally's healthy pour.

FANNIE (CONT'D)
That's good.

GRACE
Aren't you needed in there?

SALLY
No. Not really. This is why I am here. My Grandson is about to experience his happy-ever-after.

Gram appears again out from the reception hall. As he walks by, he waves to his Grandma.

GRAM
Thanks for coming, Ge-Ge.

SALLY
Wouldn't miss it for the world, dear one.

Gram crosses the floor.

FANNIE
He seems nice.

SALLY

Does he? Hmm... maybe. It's so hard to tell with men.

SALLY'S 1957
FLASHBACK:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - THE DOCKS - DAY

Newlyweds wave *bon voyage* as they stand together on the deck of the U.S.S. UNITED STATES as it shoves off.

A glammed up, YOUNG SALLY (Grace Kelly-like) and YOUNG WALT (think of a young Guy Pearce: handsome, self-assured and borderline arrogant). Together, they stand on a confetti-ridden deck waving their good-byes to America.

YOUNG SALLY (V.O.)

Walt and I married in March.

SUPER: "Summer of 1957."

The ideal couple stare into one another's eyes. Then, they lean into one another and kiss. Apparently to all, happy with their lives.

SALLY (V.O.)

And off to West Africa in June. We sailed on the United States from New York to Le Havre. Then, we flew to Africa, to Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo, now Zaire.

EXT. THE SAHARA DESERT - FROM THE AIR - DAY

The desert seen from the air. An ocean of dunes for mile after mile over the deep contours of wavy sand.

SALLY (V.O.)

The trip across the Sahara seemed to last forever. It gave a real sense of distance traveled, which you don't get with jets these days.

Young Sally seats by a window, staring out beyond the propeller to the endless sand.

SALLY (V.O.)

Walt read.

Walt reads a book, Africa on The Verge of Freedom.

SALLY (V.O.)

I worried.

She turns to Walt. Who's preoccupied with his reading.

EXT. THE CONGO - LEOPOLDVILLE AIRPORT - DAY

Walt and Sally arrives in the Congo.

Walt walks down the steps leading down to the tarmac triumphantly. Coolly, he puts on his Ray-Ban sunglasses. He appears to be immune to the scorching heat. Walt looks like an Agent out of the Matrix, clean, bright, obedient, and ready to convert.

Sally follows and fans herself with a magazine.

YOUNG SALLY (V.O.)

My first impression of Africa. It was blazing hot! Humid. Of course, in those days we always traveled in stockings and girdles and wore hats and gloves. Amazing how the world has changed. Hmm.

Walt speaks to a PORTER.

YOUNG WALT

(in French)

Grab those two bags. Take them there.

And points to a Lockheed Electra starting her engines on the tarmac fifty yards from them.

YOUNG WALT (CONT'D)

Plane to Yaoundé?

PORTER

(in French)

Yes. You better hurry.

The porter grabs Sally's suitcases.

YOUNG WALT

Sally!

The three of them hurry towards the Lockheed Electra. Its engines are very LOUD. Making communicating difficult.

Walt YELLS out.

YOUNG WALT (CONT'D)
That's your plane!

YOUNG SALLY
What?!? My plane? What about you?

YOUNG WALT
I need to get briefed. Here. Before
we set up shop.

YOUNG SALLY
Oh. I didn't realize.

Sally wanders up the steel steps in a daze.

The plane's engines ROARS louder.

Walt stands at the bottom stairs.

YOUNG WALT
Don't worry. I will be home in a
couple of days.

Sally turns sees her new foreign environment.

YOUNG SALLY
Home?

Sally looks down.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)
Can't I stay here with you?

YOUNG WALT
You would be bored!

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT appears and waves her to take her seat.

YOUNG WALT (CONT'D)
Anyways! You need to get the house
in order. Imagine, we are the first
official American presence in
Cameroon. Time to make our mark!

YOUNG SALLY
Great.

YOUNG WALT
I have a man waiting for you at
Doulala. His name is Marcus.

The engines LOUD NOISE ruin the exchange.

YOUNG SALLY
What?!?

YOUNG WALT
Marcus!

The flight attendant aids Sally into the plane.

YOUNG SALLY
(whispers)
Who's Marcus?

INT. LOCKHEED ELECTRA - AISLE - SAME

Sally moves to her seat. Through a window, she sees Walt.

He waves once at her plane. Then, he quickly turns and walks toward the terminal.

YOUNG SALLY (V.O.)
Leopoldville was the supervisory post for Yaoundé, which was just being opened, and Walt stayed there for a couple of days to get briefed. So I went on ahead, alone.

EXT. PORT CITY OF DOUALA, CAMEROON - DAY

A Lockheed Electra circles Cameroon's Port City.

QUICK SERIES OF CUTS:

1. The Port.
2. The Electra lands.
3. Ground CREWS run up.
4. PERSONNEL secure the stairs to the plane.
5. Sally emerges from the craft.
6. She stares out her new home.
7. Sub-Saharan Africa: Lush. Green. Heavenly.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

MARCUS waits by a Series One Four-Door Hardtop Green Land Rover Station Wagon Safari Style with spare tire on the hood, he holds a cardboard sign that says, "CUTTER."

Marcus watches no one else depart the plane but Sally.

SUPER: "Cameroon."

Marcus holds sign still at his chest.

MARCUS

Mrs. Cutter. Welcome to Cameroon.

YOUNG SALLY

Thank you.

Sally moves to grab her luggage.

Marcus cuts between her and her luggage as it unloads from the plane.

MARCUS

I got it.

YOUNG SALLY

I'm capable.

MARCUS

Yes, but its my job.

Marcus smiles fatherly at Sally.

YOUNG SALLY

Thank you.

Marcus nods.

EXT. ROAD TO SALLY'S NEW HOME - DAY

Marcus looks at Sally in the rear view mirror.

MARCUS

It's going to be all right, Mame.
The Baynard's left the house in
great shape.

YOUNG SALLY

The Baynard's?

MARCUS

Oil man. Went back home... quick.
Very quick.

YOUNG SALLY

Why?

MARCUS

UPC.

YOUNG SALLY

UPC?

Marcus eyes her in mirror.

MARCUS

Bad men. Terrorists.

He turns the radio on and searches for a station.

SOUND: STATIC.

MARCUS

You American, not French. You be
okay.

Marcus attempts to find a suitable station. He twists the dial from the left to the right.

SOUND: MORE STATIC UNTIL...

He finally finds a station: Le Grand Kalle et l'African Jazz

(Joseph Kabasele) - Yoka nainu miziki-like plays.

Sally stares out the window at various objects of local flair. For the next two years this is her home.

EXT. OUTSIDE DOUALA - RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Sally's car pulls up a long dirt drive.

The Land Rover's high beams land on a small farmhouse.

Darkness surrounds them.

YOUNG SALLY

This is it?

MARCUS

Trust me. It looks better in the
daylight.

INT. FARMHOUSE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sunshine fills the living room as Sally inspects the farmhouse's various African inspired décor, animal skins, tusks, and colorful prints.

YOUNG SALLY

Hmm.

Sally sees an African hunting mask as it hangs from a nearby wall.

ECU: Exotic mask.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

Interesting tastes the Baynard's
possess.

Sally sees note left by Marcus on the coffee table.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

Hmm. What's this?

Sally reads it aloud.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

Went to town for supplies. Marcus.

Sally looks around. She impersonates Marcus' deep voice.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

It looks better in the daylight?
Not to me it doesn't.

Sally explores her new reality. Checks out the kitchen. She acts not overly impressed with the appliances. He opens the tiny stove and looks in it.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

This works? Please.

Sally stumps away.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

Who lives like this?

Only silence answers her.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

Oh, yes. Me.

Sally sees her reflection in the kitchen window.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

First official American presence.
Ugh. Walt?!?

Sally plays with the kitchen historic spigot. She pumps it. Nothing. She tries again, harder.

Then, on cue, rich brown water flows out.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

Lovely.

Sally stares out the window and down the long red dirt road that leads to her freedom.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

That's what I need, fresh air.

EXT. HOUSE - TERRACE - DAY

Sally sits down with her book, The Politics of Inequality.

YOUNG SALLY

This is nice.

Sally grows bored of the book. So, she pops up and stretches her body as she reaches for the sky.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

Awww! How about a walk?

Sally jumps off the terrace.

EXT. HOUSE GROUNDS - RED DIRT ROAD - DAY

Sally stops as the red dirt road ends. She stares, left to right, down where it merges with another blood colored road. This road leads to town, and her escape.

Her home is in the background. Palm trees, high grass, thick thickets, and green vegetation everywhere else.

Sally still stands at the crossroads.

NOTE: Hold on this. Make it uncomfortable for the audience. Think North by Northwest. Think Castaway.

SOUND: ANIMAL PRIMAL SCREAM!

It resonates from the bush across the street.

Sally sees a rock at her feet.

ECU: LARGE ROCK in read dirt.

Sally kneels a bit to pick it up. Once more the bush comes alive with animal chatter. Then, suddenly it all stops. Once again, it becomes eerily quiet.

Sally tosses the rock feebly in the bush. The rock hits a palm tree thirty feet away with a DING!

In response, a lion's ROAR reverberates from nearby.

Sally backs away slowly.

YOUNG SALLY
Nice, kitty, kitty.

Sally turns, and hurries back.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)
Splendid. I now have neighbors that
can eat you. Walt!

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER DAY

Marcus returns with a box of supplies in hands.

MUSIC: La Mer plays on an old phonograph.

MARCUS
How was your first day, Mrs.
Cutter?

Sally appears inebriated, as she dances by herself.

YOUNG SALLY
Nothing a few martinis couldn't
fix.

MARCUS
Good. Hungry?

YOUNG SALLY
Hungry? No. Thirsty? Yes.

Sally grabs a bottle of wine out of the box he holds.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)
Yeah! Where's a bottle opener?

MARCUS
The kitchen.

Marcus moves towards the kitchen to set down the box.

YOUNG SALLY
Any messages from Mr. Cutter?

MARCUS
No. I checked.

YOUNG SALLY
Okay. I think I'm going to retire.

Sally holds up the bottle.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)
Night. Night.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Within mosquito netting, Sally sleeps in her bed. Soft light from a nearby Kerosene lantern highlights her face.

SOUND: Subtle SNORES.

Through her bedroom windows, WE see headlights barreling down the long drive. Closer and closer, they come.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - FROM THE ROAD - NIGHT

Menacingly, the Land Rover long beams grows closer and closer to the darkened house.

INT. LAND ROVER - SAME

The vehicle approaches the farmhouse at top speed.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Sally continues to sleep.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - GROUNDS - SAME

The Land Rover brakes hard as red dust covers the screen.

INT. FARMHOUSE - FOYER DOOR - SAME

Long hard, silence behind the wooden barrier between the STRANGER and the home's inhabitants.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DRIVEWAY - SAME

The Land Rover's door slams as the stranger works his way to the door. The figure holds a shotgun in his right hand.

The gun is pointed to the ground.

INT. FARMHOUSE - FOYER DOOR - SAME

Still behind the door, the house appears dead asleep.

SOUND: car down SLAMS! FOOTSTEPS on gravel. CREAKS, the terrace's boards. Pause. Then, a fist WHALES on the door, BANG! BANG! BANG!

INT. FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Sally awakens slowly.

 YOUNG SALLY
 No. No. No, world. I need more
 beauty rest.

Sally hears the BANGING.

 YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)
 Walt!!!

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Alarmed, Marcus lights a lamp. He holds a revolver in his hands and inches toward the door.

Through, the door he hears.

 STRANGER
 Henri!

INT. FARMHOUSE - FOYER - SAME

Appears Sally, in an elegant robe. She meets Marcus in the foyer behind the door.

 YOUNG SALLY
 Who's Henri?

Marcus holds the lantern lamp high.

 MARCUS
 Would you like a gun?

 YOUNG SALLY
 We have guns?

Marcus shows Sally his revolver.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)
Let's try diplomacy first. Who's
there?!?

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DOORWAY - SAME

PETER OSBORNE stands before the door. He's a rugged adventurer and dresses in Safari wear and high boots. Think Robert Redford in Out of Africa, all tan and dreamy.

He sets his shotgun down by the door.

PETER SR.
(in French)
Come on, Henri!

Peter KNOCKS louder.

PETER SR. (CONT'D)
Open up.

INT. FARMHOUSE - FOYER DOOR - SAME

Marcus opens the door slowly.

Peter strikes another wallop with his fist. He falls into the foyer a bit as he misses the door.

PETER SR.
About time, old sport.

MARCUS
No, Henri here.

PETER SR.
No. Henri?

Peter looks back and forth at Marcus and Sally.

PETER SR. (CONT'D)
But this is his house.

MARCUS
Not anymore. Sold it.

Peter walks deeper into the home.

PETER SR.
Sold it? When?

MARCUS

Last month. They returned to Paris.
Tired of dealing with the UPC.

PETER SR.

Ahh. I see. Well, I've been in the
bush awhile.

Peter looks at Sally again and smiles hard.

PETER SR. (CONT'D)

My apologizes, Mame.

Sally pulls at the drawstrings of her robe. She eyes Peter.

YOUNG SALLY

You're American?

PETER SR.

Aren't you?

YOUNG SALLY

Yes. Boston.

PETER SR.

St. Louis.

YOUNG SALLY

Hmm. The gateway to the West. Come
in. I'm in need of home.

Sally looks to Marcus.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

Tea, please.

Marcus lowers his revolver and shrugs. Then, he moves to the
kitchen to start the tea.

PETER SR.

I'm sorry. Forgive me.

Sally lights another lantern and stands awkwardly before the
leopard skin-covered chair.

YOUNG SALLY

Please. Have a seat. I don't think
these seats bite.

PETER SR.

They look like they might.

Peter seats down.

Sally does the same.

YOUNG SALLY
Why are you here?

PETER SR.
Men killed an elephant today.

YOUNG SALLY
An elephant... Why? I thought they
were protected.

PETER SR.
Not from poachers.

YOUNG SALLY
Cruel place?

PETER SR.
She was a Mother, and her calf
escaped.

YOUNG SALLY
What can we do?

PETER SR.
Help me find her calf. Save her.

MARCUS
(from the kitchen)
Impossible! Mr. Cutter is not home.

YOUNG SALLY
Thankfully, Mrs. Cutter is. I can
help.

PETER SR.
Are you sure?

Marcus returns with a tray of small cookies. His body
movements and manner do not hide his thoughts on the subject.
Though, he says nothing.

YOUNG SALLY
Of course. Finally, something
important for me to do. Let me
change. Marcus you stay here. If
Mr. Cutter returns tell him, I'm
helping save a baby elephant's
life... with Mister?

PETER SR.
Osborne, Mame.

YOUNG SALLY
Mr. Osborne. I shan't be long.

PETER SR.
Call me, Peter.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Sally and Peter travels down a winding country road at high speed. It is pitch black. The Land Rover's beams cut through the deep, dark night. Here, and there, the lights capture various animals in action.

INT. LAND ROVER - SAME

Sally looks out as Peter drives.

YOUNG SALLY
It's so dark.

PETER SR.
I know. She's going to be hard to track.

YOUNG SALLY
Why couldn't this wait until morning?

PETER SR.
The villagers. With her Mother dead. The calf is fair game.

YOUNG SALLY
Fair game?

PETER SR.
Elephant meat is considered a delicacy.

Peter changes gears.

Sally leans back in her seat. She is thankful for the company. She stares straight out as the Land Rover's headlights cuts through the night.

YOUNG SALLY
How does one overcome the feeling of total isolation here?

PETER SR.

It takes time. But there is no better place in the entire world than here.

YOUNG SALLY

Well, for me... the jury is still out.

Peter turns to Sally and smiles. He has a great smile.

PETER SR.

Fair enough.

YOUNG SALLY

How long have you been here?

PETER SR.

Some time now. I learned my trade from an old Frenchman who had gone native.

YOUNG SALLY

Gone native? You mean, mad. That I believe. The heat. The barrenness of the jungle. The differences in culture. It may as well be the moon.

PETER SR.

Africa is the original Garden of Eden. Here, is where civilization began. Created by God.

Sally blushes a bit.

YOUNG SALLY

Are you Adam then?

Peter draws closer.

PETER SR.

Eve?

YOUNG SALLY

Hmm... the wilds of Africa.

Suddenly a baby elephant runs across their headlights.

PETER SR.

There she is! Grab that spotlight. Shine it over there!

Sally does.

The baby elephant chase begins.

THE HUNT MONTAGE

1. Baby elephant lit up as it races off.
2. Peter expertly catching up.
3. Sally holds the spotlight on the elephant as it runs as fast as it can.

YOUNG SALLY
I didn't know they could run so fast.

PETER SR.
Yeah, if it wanted to, it could destroy this Rover.

YOUNG SALLY
Great.

PETER SR.
Here. Hold the wheel.

Sally does. With one hand on the wheel and the other she targets the elephant at high speed.

Peter grabs a huge tranquilizer gun from the back seat. He sticks it out the window and aims. With a pull of his finger, a tranquilizer darts strikes the elephant near it's neck.

ECU: Red dart in neck.

PETER SR. (CONT'D)
Okay. This is going to take a couple of minutes.

The elephant turns on the Rover.

Peter turns the vehicle out of its way.

YOUNG SALLY
That was close.

PETER SR.
Africa is never boring to me.

EXT. PETER'S ANIMAL COMPOUND - DAY BREAK

On the fringes of Yaoundé is Osborne's home.

SALLY (V.O.)

That night was an extraordinary experience. Exciting. Surreal. I felt wild and alive.

MUSIC: Mancini - Baby Elephant Walk like song plays.

DESCRIPTION OF ANIMAL COMPOUND: bins for larger animals, extensive facilities for monkeys, living quarters and play cages for gorillas, and a pool for hippos and crocodiles.

Darkness retreats as beams of pink light break the horizon.

THE BABY ELEPHANT SLEEPS, NOW SAFE IN A BIN.

The grounds are full of animals he is sending back to the States to zoos: many are baby lowland gorillas in red knit, pullover sweaters.

YOUNG SALLY

Quite an extraordinary place you have here. The lair of a great hunter.

PETER SR.

Trapper. There is a difference.

YOUNG SALLY

I'm certain of it. So Peter, what drove you here from St. Louis?

PETER SR.

Good fortune, I suppose. I was a battery salesman until I craved more.

Peter smiles at her hard and long.

The two long for one another.

Sally feeds two lowland baby gorillas in sweaters.

Peter points to them.

PETER SR. (CONT'D)

Allow me to introduce you to my family. This is, Susie. And this is, Sammie.

Sally bends over and reaches on her hand.

YOUNG SALLY

How do you do?

Susie and Sammie pays her no mind, and passes Sally as if she is not even there. Then, they climb up Peter's arm to his wide shoulders where they rest and eye Sally.

PETER SR.

My babies. Hmm. Care for some coffee?

YOUNG SALLY

I would love some. Thank you.

EXT. MONKEY CAGES - LATER

Sally wanders and explores the compound full of exotic animals. She stops and stares through a mesh fence as monkeys chase about and play.

In the distance, they see a long straight line of dirt. A vehicle approaches at high speed.

INT. LAND ROVER - SAME

Marcus drives Walt at top speed to Peter's compound.

EXT. MONKEY CAGES - SAME

Sally sees the vehicle as it nears closer.

Peter hands Sally a cup of steaming coffee.

PETER SR.

Your husband, I suppose?

Sally nods.

YOUNG SALLY

Yep.

She takes a sip of her coffee.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)

Hmm. Its good.

PETER SR.

I'm sure he's been worried sick.

YOUNG SALLY

It would be nice if he was. He's more the jealous type.

Sally smiles back.

YOUNG SALLY (CONT'D)
Thank you, for the coffee.

Peter and Sally eye on another as Walt's car draws closer and closer. They savagely kiss one another.

Peter steps back.

PETER SR.
That was nice.

Sally uses her thumb and forefinger to hold up his chin.

YOUNG SALLY
I will be seeing ya.

Sally walks toward the approaching vehicle.

PETER SR.
I hope so, Mrs. Cutter.

Sally turns.

YOUNG SALLY
You can count on it.

In the cage, two lowland baby gorillas SCREECH and play.

SALLY (V.O.)
Peter's home was always full of such exotic animals. My favorites were the baby gorillas. These are the lowland gorillas that are now nearly extinct. Hmm, sad. Peter would have eight to ten of them around at a time. All wearing little red, pullover sweaters, he made for them. He gave each a name and called them his children.

SALLY'S 1957
FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. THE PUBLIC - CORRIDOR - PRESENT DAY

Grace and Fannie listen to Sally as she finishes her story about her time in Africa. The three of them huddle around a tall cocktail table wrapped in white.

FANNIE
Peter?

Fannie looks at Sally's son.

SALLY

I would go there often. When I needed an escape. It was quite enchanting place.

Across the room, Peter orders a drink at the bar.

GRACE

Sally?!? You mean Peter is...

Sally holds up her hand and interjects.

SALLY

That's entirely a different story. One cut to short. Hmm.

An ELEGANT LADY in her late Fifties walks by them. The woman stops and turns. She looks directly at Sally. She walks up to her and their table.

ELEGANT LADY

Excuse me. Mrs. Cutter?

SALLY

Ah! Saved by the randomness of life.

ELEGANT LADY

I believe we met before at a State Dinner in the Nineties. I'm...

SALLY

Sorry, dear. Wrong Mrs. Cutter. My term ended the same year as Nixon's.

ELEGANT LADY

Oh?

Sally points across the room.

SALLY

The Ambassador's current wife is over there. The bitch in pink.

ELEGANT LADY

Ahhh... yes. Thank you.

Sally broadly smiles at the woman as she flees.

FANNIE

Do you ever regret leaving him?

Sally mocks his name in tone.

SALLY
Ambassador Cutter? No. Never.

GRACE
And Peter the Trapper?

SALLY
Yes. But like I said...

GRACE/FANNIE
That's another story.

FANNIE
Nineteen-Fifty-seven? That means...

SALLY
Shh. I'm Eighty-ish.

FANNIE
You're full of secrets.

Sally and Fannie laugh as Grace grows quiet.

FANNIE (CONT'D)
Grace... what's wrong?

GRACE
You two shared your deep dark
secrets. I need to share mine....
I'm debating divorce.

SALLY
Is it that bad?

GRACE
Its getting there.

FANNIE
I'm sorry, Grace.

GRACE
I love my children. I do.

SALLY
But...

GRACE
My husband is no longer the man I
married.

SALLY
When we date. We dream. We desire.
When you get married.. we designate.
We demand.

FANNIE
How did you meet?

GRACE
It was so long ago. But we were
friends, until... we were more. Hmm,
our first date was so perfect.

GRACE'S 1997
FLASHBACK:

EXT. LINCOLN PARK - GRACE'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Street view barred by a black wrought fence, beyond the
barrier sits a tiny garden-like courtyard.

The CAMERA moves up and over the fence into the courtyard's
green space. Down a narrow sidewalk lined with grass, towards
the apartment's main stone arched entrance.

SUPER: "CHICAGO. 1997."

EXT. GRACE'S APARTMENT ENTRANCE - DAY

On the buzzer's panel, a laundry list of names matching up
with the occupants for the apartments.

ECU: 2B's handwritten placard reads, "Grace Wilson."

INT. GRACE'S STUDIO - DAY

A younger Grace stands near window with a telephone in hand.
A spiral cord attaches the base to its receiver.

YOUNG GRACE
You know, this is a date right?
(pauses)
Good.

INT. YELLOW CAB - DAY

Grace drives in a cab as it drives up Lincoln Avenue. She
stares out as it cuts in and out of traffic. Soon, the CABBY
stops at Dave's address.

CABBY
Fifty-Nine, Eighty-Nine North
Halstead, lady.

A younger Dave emerges from his home and waves.

YOUNG GRACE
There he is.

Dave jumps in. He looks bright and alive. He gives Grace a peck on the cheek.

YOUNG DAVE
You look good.

YOUNG GRACE
So do you.

Dave and Grace smile at one another.

The cabby pulls out into traffic.

The date has begun.

EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT

Dave and Grace's cab stops underneath the lit-up marquee reads, "STOMP."

Dave pays.

The couple pops out and gazes up to the marquee.

YOUNG DAVE/YOUNG GRACE
Wow.

They clasp each other's hands and enter the theatre.

INT. THEATRE - LOBBY - SAME

Dave and Grace cross the lobby.

GRACE (V.O.)
STOMP was explosive. And utterly
unforgettable. It was the perfect
first date.

INT. THEATRE - SEATS - SAME

Dave and Grace find their seats within a packed theatre.

GRACE (V.O.)
We held hands all night.

SERIES OF STAGE SHOTS:

1. STOMP performers use brooms to sweep the stage.

SOUND: SWEEPS hard bristle brooms.

2. STOMP performers use sticks to hit garage cans.

SOUND: TIN! 2x.

3. REACTION SHOT of audiences' amazement.

INT. THEATRE - STAGE - LATER

On stage, the performers stand tall. They are proud of their hard work. Rightly so.

FROM THE SEATS

The audience shows their appreciation.

GRACE (V.O.)

At the end. The cast came out and bowed. We cheered.

ON THE STAGE

The cast bows low and long. Some wave.

INT. THEATRE - LOBBY - SAME

Content, Grace and Dave flee the theatre.

YOUNG DAVE

That was wonderful. Thank you.

YOUNG GRACE

You're welcome.

Grace walks towards cabs.

YOUNG DAVE

It's such a nice night. Let's walk.

Dave offers her his hand.

Grace accepts it.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - BROWNSTONES - MAGICAL NIGHT

Grace and Dave traverse down the tree-lined street.

Grace stops. She looks up towards light filled windows. There, above them, families live out their nightly rituals of eating, living, and sleeping.

YOUNG GRACE

Do you ever wonder what it would be like to be them?

YOUNG DAVE

Sometimes.

Grace and Dave looks at one another intensely.

Grace tilts her head and smiles at Dave.

Then, together they walk on, down the street. Still they hold one another's hands, as they swing them.

EXT. MICHIGAN AVENUE - WATER TOWER - NIGHT

Grace and Dave cross the square the square.

EXT. JOHN HANCOCK BUILDING - NIGHT

Dave looks up into the heavens.

YOUNG DAVE

Drink?

Grace smiles.

YOUNG GRACE

What do you have in mind?

INT. HANCOCK'S 94TH FLOOR - NIGHT

As the city's lights lay at their feet, Dave and Grace seat and have cocktails by the window. Big buildings look small.

Dave tells joke.

YOUNG DAVE

So, whatever I say, you must repeat... the man said. Got it?

YOUNG GRACE

Got it.

YOUNG DAVE
No... Repeat, the man said.

INT. HANCOCK'S 94TH FLOOR - A LITTLE LATER
Dave reacts to his own joke with laughter.
Grace eyes Dave.

YOUNG GRACE
That didn't make sense at all.

YOUNG DAVE
I know.

Dave comes in for a kiss.
Grace obliges.

YOUNG GRACE
Dessert?

YOUNG DAVE
What do you have in mind?

YOUNG GRACE
Not that.

INT. HANCOCK BUILDING - CHEESECAKE FACTORY - NIGHT
Dave and Grace sit in a mushroom-inspired booth.
Dave looks over his half-inch thick menu.

YOUNG DAVE
There are too many options.

YOUNG GRACE
Not for me.

A WAITRESS approaches table.

WAITRESS
Have you decided?

YOUNG GRACE
Two decaf coffees and a slice of
creamy cheesecake with the graham
cracker crust.

The WAITRESS grabs their menus.

YOUNG GRACE (CONT'D)
Easy peasy.

INT. CHEESECAKE FACTORY - BOOTH - LATER

Dave and Grace in full conversation. Grace fights Dave for the last bite of cheesecake.

YOUNG DAVE
Too slow.

YOUNG GRACE
And I thought your were a gentlemen.

Dave apparently wins. He taunts her with the last piece of cheesecake on his fork.

YOUNG DAVE
I am. Here. Open up.

Dave feeds her.

YOUNG GRACE
It's been a good night.

The WAITRESS comes over.

YOUNG DAVE
It has. Check please.

The WAITRESS leaves.

Dave eyes Grace hard. She looks young and radiant.

YOUNG GRACE
What?

YOUNG DAVE
Nothing.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - STARRY NIGHT

On Dave and Grace's walk home. They lean in close to one another. A lit up city stands in the background.

MUSIC: song like Everything But the Girl's, We Walk the Same Line plays.

YOUNG GRACE (V.O.)
 If you lose your faith, babe, you
 can have mine, and if you're lost
 I'm right behind, cause we walk the
 same line.

GRACE'S 1997
 FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - WEDDING RECEPTION - PRESENT

At a table, Fannie and Sally listen to Grace.

GRACE
 What happened? I don't know where
 those two people have gone.
 Conversations used to come so easy.
 Now with the kids and our hectic
 schedules, we never talk. He never
 talks!

Around them, guests slow dance to, We Walk the Same Line.

GRACE (CONT'D)
 Free Thyself.

FANNIE
 Self-help? Mankind's marketing.

SALLY
 To live. You must let life's
 disappointments die.

FANNIE
 Where's the justice in that?

SALLY
 Chalk it up to GRACE.

ECU: Walt slow dances with his new wife.

SALLY (CONT'D)
 Forgiving, those who don't truly
 deserve it.

GRACE
 How did your marriage end?

SALLY
 I got tire of his bullshit.

GRACE
 Yeah.

SALLY
Time for me to visit the powder
room.

Sally gets up.

SALLY (CONT'D)
I shall be right back.

FANNIE
I really need to get out of this
yoga outfit.

GRACE
I have a plan.

Grace bounces up.

Sally moves to the restroom. On her way, she sees Peter
talking to a group of friends.

Peter waves her over.

Sally joins him.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - RECEPTION HALL - SAME

Near the cake table, Peter's friends leave as Sally arrives.

Sally sees Peter holds an extra plate of wedding cake.

SALLY
Is that for me?

Peter hoists up the cake.

PETER JR.
It could be.

Peter hands the cake over.

SALLY
Thank you.

PETER JR.
Who are your friends?

SALLY
Women I met downstairs.

PETER JR.
The true Ambassador.

Sally takes another bite of cake.

PETER JR. (CONT'D)
You know Dad's been asking about
you, all day long.

SALLY
I'm right here.

Sally looks down at her empty plate. Then, she licks fork.

SALLY (CONT'D)
If he wishes to know how I am, he
should ask me directly?

PETER JR.
Okay. Okay. I'm just relying a
message.

SALLY
Message delivered.

PETER JR.
You two.

SALLY
Quite a pair aren't we?

PETER JR.
Yep. Stubborn to a fault.

SALLY
True. Though, we did manage to
raise some amazing children.

PETER JR.
Yes, but I owe everything good in
my life to you.

SALLY
That's not true, dear.

PETER JR.
You gave everything of yourself.

SALLY
Your Father...

PETER JR.
Was never around.

SALLY
No. He wasn't.

Peter stares into his drink.

PETER JR.

Yeah... I remember everyone thought
I was lazy and dumb.

SALLY

Sweetie, you were dyslexic.

PETER JR.

Yes, and you helped me. Found me
the best tutors in Kinshasa,
Algiers, Tabriz, and only god
remembers where else.

SALLY

That's what Mother's do. Now. You
showed them, Mister big-time
banker.

PETER JR.

You always believed in me.

Sally gently touches his chin, to make eye-contact.

SALLY

I'm proud of you. Not because of
your occupation. Because you're a
good Father.

PETER JR.

Thank you, Mother.

Peter grabs her empty plate and leaves. As he does, he turns.

PETER JR. (CONT'D)

I love you.

Sally grows quiet.

Peter starts to walk away.

SALLY

Peter!

Peter turns again.

PETER JR.

Yes?

SALLY

I love you too!

PETER JR.

I know.

Sally looks at Walt across the room.

SALLY

Walt.

SALLY'S 1972
FLASHBACK:

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - CUTTER HOME - MOVING DAY

MOVERS pack up a corporate moving truck outside Sally's home.

SUPER: "1972."

A portable radio plays the local news.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Last night, five men are arrested
inside the Democratic National
Committee's headquarters office.

Young PETER hits button on the radio as he walks by. The new
radio station plays a song like Bill Withers, Use Me.

Moving men trek in and out of the home. They load up a vast,
moving truck with boxes and family affects.

Sally directs a MAN with a clipboard.

YOUNG SALLY

The ones with the purple stickers
stay too.

HEAD MOVER stands with the a clipboard by Sally.

HEAD MOVER

Yes, Mame.

THE DRIVEWAY

Walt arrives in a shiny new car. He pulls up the driveway.

Sally moves across the small yard to meet him as he gets out.

Walt walks straight pass her.

YOUNG WALT

They done yet?

YOUNG SALLY

Almost.

Walt hurries up the steps.

Sally follows him.

INT. CUTTER HOME - SAME

Walt sees stack of boxes marked, "stay."

Sally cuts in front of him.

YOUNG WALT

What's this? Goodwill?

YOUNG SALLY

You could say that.

YOUNG WALT

What?

YOUNG SALLY

I told you I wasn't going to Saigon.

YOUNG WALT

We go, where we are told.

YOUNG SALLY

I don't.

YOUNG WALT

So. Where are those boxes really going then?

YOUNG SALLY

To my new apartment.

WALT

I see.

Walt kicks open the screen door. Then, he walks out.

ON THE POACH

He turns back to Sally.

YOUNG WALT

You'll be back.

SALLY'S 1972
FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. RECEPTION HALL - LADIES RESTROOM - SAME

ECU: bathroom stall door.

SOUND: toilet FLUSHES.

SOUND: Door UNLOCKS.

Sally exits a stall as the BRIDE stands before the mirror.

The Bride fixes her make-up.

SALLY
Oh, lovely dress.

BRIDE
(from the reflection in
the mirror)
Thank you. It was my Mother's.

SALLY
She's not here today? Is she?

BRIDE
No.

SALLY
I see.

BRIDE
You're Gram's Grandmother aren't
you?

Sally joins the bride at the sinks. She washes hands.

SALLY
I am!

The bride plays with her hair a bit.

The two stare in the mirror. They could be related how
closely they look. The only difference is their ages.

SALLY (CONT'D)
May I ask you a personal question?

BRIDE
Knock yourself out.

SALLY
 Why did you choose my Grandson to
 marry?

BRIDE
 Because he loves me. Warts and all.

SALLY
 That's good.

Bride gives Sally a small hug.

BRIDE
 Thank you for coming.

Tears form in corner of Sally's eyes. She squeezes the Bride
 even harder.

SALLY
 I wish you both happiness.

A group of other women GUESTS enters the restroom loudly.

MAID OF HONOR
 So, this is where you have been
 hiding.

Sally leaves the bathroom.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - CORRIDOR - SAME

Grace and Fannie hold hands as they walk side by side down
 the long hallway that leads to Grace's room.

FANNIE
 People change, Grace.

Fannie looks at Grace.

FANNIE (CONT'D)
 And not always for the better.

FANNIE'S 1977
 PARIS FLASHBACK:

EXT. PALAIS DE CHAILLOT - THE STEPS - STARRY NIGHT

Howard carries Fannie down steps with his wife in tow.

FANNIE (V.O.)
 Paris was perfect, Grace. But like
 most good things... they must end.

EXT. CHICAGO HOSPITAL - DAY

Seventies PEOPLE walk before the hospital's signage.

INT. CHICAGO HOSPITAL - EXAM ROOM - SAME

A big bellied Faye lays flat in a hospital bed.

SUPER. "CHICAGO. 1977."

Howard and Fannie stand by her side as a DOCTOR rubs an Ultrasound wand on Faye's exposed belly.

ECU: GRITTY ULTRASOUND IMAGE.

They see the gray scale of a maternal abdomen.

Appears Young Fannie.

YOUNG FANNIE

Wow.

SOUND: 3x DUM! of the baby's heartbeat.

DOCTOR

Everything looks good here.

Faye looks up from her bed.

FAYE

Name?

HOWARD

Paris?

FAYE

What if its a boy?

HOWARD

A boy?

DOCTOR

You want to know?

HOWARD/FAYE

No!

DOCTOR

Okay.

Faye looks hard at the image of the baby inside her.

SOUND: 3x DUM! of the heartbeat.

 YOUNG FANNIE
Hey! What about Oscar?

 FAYE
Oscar?

 HOWARD
Seems fitting.

Faye looks at her daughter and smiles.

 FAYE
You see, Fannie. Wishes do come
true.

EXT. SUBURBAN CHICAGO - FANNIE'S HOME - DAY

The front lawn of Fannie's childhood home is covered in colorful leaves of every color.

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Empty of people. WE scan across a mantel full of family photos.

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - DINING ROOM - SAME

Empty of people. WE scan across a table set for dinner.

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - KITCHEN - SAME

Empty of people. Though, dinner cooks on the stove.

SOUND: muffled from upstairs. Heavy footsteps clamor about.

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - STAIRWELL - SAME

Empty of people. White-carpeted stairs led up to the second floor. Every other step has a speck of rich, red blood.

ECU: speck of blood on white pristine carpet.

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - SAME

Faye's back as she races down the hallway.

FAYE

No. No. No!

CLOSE-UP of her round robed belly as the bathroom door swings closed.

SOUND: SLAM!

WE pan down to more tiny droplets of blood.

Behind the door, Faye weeps.

FAYE (O.S.)

No. I'm eleven weeks. Please God
no.

WE hear more heavy sobs.

FANNIE (V.O.)

We lost Oscar that day. And yep.
The baby in her was a boy.

Fannie pauses to the point awkwardness.

FANNIE (V.O.)

Everything changed after that.
Everything.

CUT TO KITCHEN:

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - 1970'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Faye at kitchen table, in daze. She stares blankly at the wall. A plate of untouched food sits before her.

FANNIE (V.O.)

My Mom grew distant.

HOWARD

Honey. You should eat.

FAYE

(voice void of emotion)
One month ago, I was pregnant. Now,
I am not.

Fannie looks down at her plate and begins to cry.

EXT. FANNIE'S HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT - WEEKS LATER

Fannie clears dishes from the table as Faye sits in an emotionless state. A deep depression has taken her over.

FANNIE (V.O.)
There was nothing we could say or do.

SHOT: Faye's plate untouched, still full of food.

YOUNG FANNIE
You done, Mom?

Faye does not answer or protest as Fannie clears plate.

As Fannie clears the plate, it drops out of her hands onto the floor.

SHOT: falling plate SMASHES!

Scatters white shards of plate, carrots, and peas.

Howard emerges from the kitchen.

HOWARD
Everything okay?

YOUNG FANNIE
(whispers)
What's wrong with Mom?

HOWARD
Come.

Howard takes Fannie into kitchen.

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - 1970'S KITCHEN - SAME

Howard kneels down to Fannie's level.

HOWARD
She just needs more time. Okay?

Fannie nods.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
We will get through this. Right?

EXT. FANNIE'S HOME - WINTRY DAY

Blizzard-like weather. Everything is snow-colored white.

FANNIE (V.O.)
 My Father and I tried to fix it. We
 failed.

Fannie finishes a huge snowman. She places her scarf, ear
 muffs, and hat on his head.

YOUNG FANNIE
 Okay. Your name is going to be
 Oscar. And you are going to make
 Mommy happy again. Right?

ECU: CUTE SNOW MAN.

YOUNG FANNIE
 Good.

Fannie happy with her creation starts to sing as she heads
 back into her home.

YOUNG FANNIE (CONT'D)
 The weather outside is frightful.

Fannie climbs her steps and enters her home.

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - FOYER - SAME

Fannie takes off boots in the foyer.

YOUNG FANNIE
 But the fire is so DELIGHT...f-u-l.

FAYE (O.S.)
 I will never be the same!!!

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Howard and Faye argue.

HOWARD
 You want a child so bad?

Howard grabs his wife and shakes her.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
 You have one. Outside. Playing in
 the snow. Her name is FAN..

Howard sees Fannie in the foyer. He stops in mid-sentence.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Honey?!?

Fannie runs off to her room.

Howard chases her.

YOUNG FANNIE

Oscar, I hate you!!

On the a small table is a framed family photo.

ECU: the perfect Parisian day photo. Howard, Faye, and

Fannie stands before the Eiffel Tower.

FANNIE (V.O.)

It wasn't long after that. Dad moved out. Found a new place, and a new family to love. It was heart-rending to see their love erode. Then, it fade entirely away. Until one day...

INT. GREASY SPOON - DAY - FIVE YEARS LATER

Howard and his now twelve year old daughter sit in a booth at a greasy spoon in utter silence.

Howard is emotionless to his daughter.

YOUNG FANNIE (V.O.)

My Dad took me to some greasy spoon to tell me he was accepting a new job... out of town.

SUPER: "Chicago. 1984."

Howard slowly takes a sip from his coffee.

HOWARD

Ah. Well, my new job is in...

FANNIE (V.O.)

New York?!? I listened to how my Father was rationalizing about moving away from me. So... I panicked.

HOWARD

I arranged it with your Mother.

FANNIE (V.O.)
I threw my chips all in.

HOWARD
You will spend...

FANNIE (V.O.)
At the word, Christmas, I screamed.

Fannie SCREAMS!

YOUNG FANNIE
No!!!

Howard stares up from his meal.

The CROWDED restaurant stares at Fannie.

Fannie eyes them back.

YOUNG FANNIE (CONT'D)
What? You people never see a girl
with her heart broken before?

Howard gets mad and pops up. He tosses money on table.

HOWARD
Let's go.

YOUNG FANNIE
Daddy, won't you miss me?

INT. HOWARD'S LINCOLN TOWN CAR - DAY

Howard stares straight out beyond the long hood.

HOWARD
Never make a spectacle of me again.

Fannie sits beside him and starts to cry.

YOUNG FANNIE
Why?

Fannie sobs uncontrollably.

HOWARD
Don't wear your heart on your
sleeve, Fannie. You're not a child
anymore.

Howard starts the car.

FANNIE (V.O.)
I was too stunned to respond. But I did.

YOUNG FANNIE
You've changed, Daddy.

Howard turns his head and backs the car out slowly.

HOWARD
Haven't we all.

FANNIE (V.O.)
I was twelve when my parents finally divorced.

FANNIE TEENAGE HOME LIFE MONTAGE.

QUICK SERIES OF CUTS:

1. Faye at home grading papers.
2. Faye pays no attention as Fannie enters the kitchen.
3. Fannie stops and looks at her aging Mother.
4. Faye takes a huge sip of her wine.

FANNIE (V.O.)
I had to go through my teens alone.
My Dad was gone. My Mother numbed herself from life.

INT. FANNIE'S HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

High School STUDENTS flow in one direction and Fannie travels opposite them. She wears all black. They were all bright cheerful colors.

SUPER: "Chicago. 1989."

FANNIE (V.O.)
The world no longer made sense to me. So I re-invented myself. Wore black.

As she walks against this current of students, they all smirk and eye her hard.

FANNIE (V.O.)
Listened to alternative music. I was different. I no longer cried.
(MORE)

FANNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 In fact, I no longer felt anything
 at all.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - BLEACHERS - NIGHT

Fannie, under the bleachers and the Friday night lights, and
 some friends smoke pot.

FANNIE (V.O.)
 At football games, I hung-out under
 the bleachers with the burnouts and
 smoked pot.

Two male BURN-OUTS make their moves on Fannie.

She allows them.

FANNIE (V.O.)
 I was so hungry for attention.

FANNIE'S 1980'S
 FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - CORRIDOR - PRESENT NIGHT

Grace and Fannie sit facing one another. Their backs rest on
 opposing walls of the hall.

Grace ponders what Fannie has shared.

FANNIE
 When I kissed Oscar Wilde's
 gravestone in that cemetery in
 Paris. I doomed our family.

GRACE
 Why?

FANNIE
 I wished to be an only child.

GRACE
 F-a-n-n-i-e. It isn't your fault.
 You were only six.

FANNIE
 Still.

GRACE
 Do you ever wonder how different
 your life would have been if your
 Mother did not lose her child?

Fannie nods her head no.

FANNIE

Yes.

Fannie tears up.

Grace moves over and comforts her.

GRACE

Close your eyes.

FANNIE

What?

GRACE

Do it.

Fannie closes her eyes.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Imagine, the home you grew up in.

FANNIE

Okay.

INT. FANNIE'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Fannie wanders around.

GRACE (V.O.)

Where are you?

FANNIE

The kitchen.

GRACE (V.O.)

Okay. Work your way to your room.

Fannie climbs the back steps to the...

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY.

SOUND: MUFFLED SOBBING.

GRACE (V.O.)

Where are you?

FANNIE

The hallway. There's someone in my room. Crying.

GRACE (V.O.)

Go to her.

Fannie does. Her old room's door is ajar. She peeks in.

FANNIE

Hello?

Fannie pushes open the door. On the bed, is a six year old girl in pigtails.

GRACE (V.O.)

Who's crying?

The six year old version of Fannie looks up.

FANNIE

Me.

GRACE (V.O.)

Walk to her. Comfort her.

Fannie slowly sits by her former self.

The two inspect one another. Yet, say nothing.

Fannie hugs the child hard.

FANNIE

It's not your...

GRACE (V.O.)

She knows. Do you?

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - CORRIDOR - PRESENT NIGHT

Fannie opens her teared-filled eyes.

FANNIE

Thank you.

GRACE

For what?

FANNIE

Closure, I think?

GRACE

We're all starving for attention.

FANNIE

And realness.

GRACE
Yet, forgiveness lies within us. If
we do the work.

FANNIE
So we must, Help Thyself?

GRACE
Yep. First chapter.

Fannie hugs Grace.

FANNIE
I'm so glad I met you.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - RECEPTION HALL - SAME

Sally approaches the table.

Other WOMEN WEDDING GUESTS have liberated it.

SALLY
Girls, maybe I'm wrong about
brides.

The strange women look up at Sally.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Oops. Wrong, ladies.

Sally raises her glass.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Cheers.

On the table, Fannie's smartphone starts to ring.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

She scoops it up from the table and sees a photo of OSCAR.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Oscar! Hmm.

Sally answers the phone.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Oscar, dear. I'm in dreadful need
of a dancing partner.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - HALLWAY - SAME

Grace stands before her room. She holds her key in her hand, but she hesitates.

Fannie helps her.

FANNIE

*When we meet what we are afraid
of...*

Together, they enter the key.

GRACE

We find out what we are made of.

Grace pushes the door open.

Grace and Fannie walk in.

INT. GRACE'S ROOM - SAME

Grace's family huddles around the room's TV.

GRACE

Get up David Shone!

DAVE

Momma's back!

Dave turns his attention from the TV to his wife.

DAVE (CONT'D)

And she brought a friend?

FANNIE

Hi, Dave!

DAVE

Hi?

Holden and Annabel look at Fannie.

FANNIE

Hi, Holden and Annabel.

ANNABEL

Hi.

HOLDEN

Who are you?

GRACE
This is Fannie. She's artistic.
Loves Hot Yoga. Traveling. Laughing
and...

FANNIE
Eating.

Grace eyes her family hard.

GRACE
And we are going to treat her like
family. Hear me?!?

DAVE/ANNABEL/HOLDEN
Yes, Momma.

Fannie smells herself.

FANNIE
Sorry, guys. I stink.

GRACE
Shower. I have the perfect outfit
you can wear.

Fannie waves to the others as she enters the bathroom.

DAVE
Who's that?

GRACE
There's a wedding downstairs.

SOUND: SHHHH! shower starts.

HOLDEN
A wedding?!? Dad!

Grace eyes Holden. Then, she eyes Dave.

DAVE
Son, listen to your Momma.

Dave plays with Holden's hair.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Get dressed in your Sunday best.

INT. GRACE'S ROOM - BATHROOM - LATER

Grace and Fannie act like sisters sharing the mirror.

Fannie looks at her belongings.

FANNIE
I must've left my phone downstairs.

GRACE
Sally's there.

FANNIE
Yeah, but she's going to think we ditched her.

GRACE
Nonsense. I will call your phone.
Here. Dial it.

Fannie does.

Grace walks out of the bathroom.

Annabel strolls.

Dave and Holden are by the bathroom door peering in.

DAVE
Honey. We will meet you in the
lobby.

GRACE (O.S.)
Okay!

DAVE
See you down there, Fannie.

FANNIE
Okay.

Holden stares at Fannie. Then, he breaks eye contact.

HOLDEN
You're pretty.

Fannie scoops down and kisses his cheek.

FANNIE
Thank you, Holden.

DAVE
Let's go.

Leaves Dave and Holden.

As the door closes, Fannie hears Dave.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Well played, H-o-l-d-e-n.

Annabel comes in the bathroom. The phone in her hand blares out Lizzo's Scuse Me like song plays.

ANNABEL
Mirror, mirror on the wall, tell me
what you see.

Annabel stops beside Fannie.

Fannie watches Annabel perform into front of the mirror.

ANNABEL (CONT'D)
It's that, oh my God, it's lookin'
heavenly. Aah. Poppin' Power
Rangers, purple, yellow, pink.

Grace comes in.

GRACE
Throwin' ones, wonder what my mama
think.

Grace taps off Annabel's phone.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Out! That's what I think.

ANNABEL
Mom!

Annabel storms out.

Grace and Fannie stand side by side.

FANNIE
Any luck with Sally?

GRACE
Nope. She's probably dancing or...

GRACE/FANNIE
At the bar.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - RECEPTION HALL - SAME

Sally stands at the bar waiting for her drink.

A BARTENDER approaches.

Walt snuggles up to Sally and orders his drink.

WALT
(to the bartender)
Single malt. On the rocks.

The bartender sets down Sally's drink.

SALLY/WALT
Not to watery.

SALLY
Understood?

The bartender nods.

WALT
I thought I did.

SALLY
Great wedding.

WALT
Yeah. I... miss you.
(pauses)
I wish I would've handled things
differently.

Sally holds up a finger to his lips.

SALLY
Shh. We raised great children.

Walt turns and looks at the family Sally and he created.

WALT
We did!

MUSIC: an Everly Brothers like song plays.

Walt offers his hand.

WALT (CONT'D)
May I have this dance?

SALLY
What about Mrs. Cutter, two-point
O?

Sally holds up two of her fingers.

WALT
Bad hip.

SALLY
Poor girl.

WALT

Yeah. Plus, I prefer to dance with you.

The two embrace as friends again.

Walt escorts Sally to the dance floor.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - LOBBY - SAME

Dave sits in a lobby chair and looks at smartphone.

Holden is in the chair beside him.

Grace, Fannie, and Annabel come into shot.

Dave looks up from his phone and eyes his wife.

DAVE

Wow!

GRACE

Is that 'wow' for me or Fannie?

Dave pops up.

DAVE

It's for you.

The two embrace.

Fannie and Annabel smile.

Fannie sees Oscar enter the lobby dressed in a fine suit.

Fannie moves to him.

Dave leans in and kisses Grace.

GRACE

Thanks, honey.

DAVE

I'm sorry about today.

Grace places her forefinger on Dave's lips.

GRACE

Shh. Remember, this is a date.

DAVE

I almost forgot.

Dave kisses Grace again long and hard.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - LOBBY - SAME

Near the front desk, Fannie joins Oscar.

OSCAR
So, this is where you go after hot
yoga.

Oscar looks around.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Nice!

FANNIE
What are you doing here?

Oscar stops looking around and eyes Fannie.

OSCAR
I was invited!

FANNIE
To what?

Sally's head pops over the second floor rail.

SALLY
Yoo-hoo!

Fannie and Grace look up, and raise their arms high.

FANNIE/GRACE
Sally!

SALLY
Get your fannies up here!

OSCAR
Nice pun.

Oscar looks up at Sally.

Sally eyes Oscar.

SALLY
That you, Oscar?!?

Oscar shouts up to Sally.

OSCAR
Yep! You ready to dance?!?

SALLY
Race you to the dance floor...

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - ENTRANCE - SAME

Enters an aging African Trapper, PETER SR. He's tan, fresh-fallen snow melts on his broad shoulders.

Sally sees him and shouts down.

SALLY
Peter!!!
(Jane Seymour in Somewhere
in Time. Richard!!!)

Peter Sr. looks up and smiles.

Sally hurries to the stairs.

Peter Sr. rushes up to meet her.

They entangle at mid-flight.

SALLY (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

Peter Sr. removes an invitation from his overcoat.

PETER SR.
I'm sorry. My flight was delayed.

Sally looks over the invitation in his hands.

SALLY
How?!?

At the top of the steps is their son, Peter. He holds a flute of Champagne high, in a toast to his true parents.

PETER JR.
Cheers!

SALLY
Peter?!?

Peter beams at the top of the steps.

SALLY (CONT'D)
You little radical.

Sally blows her son Peter a kiss. She leans into Peter Sr.

SALLY (CONT'D)
Thank you for traveling all this way.

PETER SR.
I've never recovered fully from you leaving.

Sally and Peter Sr. embraces one another.

Peter Sr. Brushes a stray curl from her face.

PETER SR. (CONT'D)
I miss you.

Then, they kiss.

Dave wanders pass.

DAVE
Heck of a party.

Grace leads Dave, Holden, and Annabel up the steps.

Fannie looks at Oscar.

OSCAR
Sally is awesome!

Oscar moves closer to Fannie.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Now, you really should be more careful with your phone.

FANNIE
Yeah. Hmm.

OSCAR
What?

FANNIE
Turn around. Show off that suit.

OSCAR
Your wish is my command.

FANNIE
(whispers)
Wish?

Oscar twirls a bit.

OSCAR
See anything you like girl?

Oscar stops and sees Fannie tearing up. He rushes to her.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Honey, what's wrong?

FANNIE
Do you want kids?

OSCAR
Yes, we should start trying,
immediately.

FANNIE
I'm serious.

Oscar caresses Fannie.

OSCAR
So, am I.

FANNIE
But?

OSCAR
We are not your folks.

FANNIE
But... We're so old.

OSCAR
Then, we will adopt.

Oscar scoops Fannie up and carries her to the stairs.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
My little worry-wart, you look so
beautiful in this color.

FANNIE
I do?

Oscar carries Fannie up the steps and smiles down at her.

OSCAR
You do.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - DANCE FLOOR - SAME

CRAZY MUSIC plays, as Sally and Peter Sr. dances close by the
Bride and Groom.

Around them, Grace and her family dances too.

Along with, Oscar and Fannie. Even though, its a fast song, the two slow dance together.

SALLY

Do you ever wonder...

Peter Sr. twirls Sally and dips her.

PETER SR.

When are you coming home?

SALLY

I'm never going to leave your side.
How does that sound?

PETER SR.

Good.

Peter Sr. and Sally embrace.

Near them, Dave and Grace dance and eye one another as if it was there first date.

A bare-footed Annabel taps her Momma on the shoulder.

ANNABEL

My turn with Daddy.

Grace looks down at Annabel.

GRACE

Okay.

DAVE

Where's your shoes?!?

ANNABEL

They hurt.

DAVE

Okay.

Dave bows.

DAVE (CONT'D)

May I have this dance?

Annabel curtsies.

ANNABEL

You may.

Holden is doing the Robot, as Grace looks to him.

GRACE
Come here boy! I get to dance with
you!

Holden eyes his Mother in mid-Robot.

HOLDEN
Oh, no you don't.

Holden runs off.

Grace chases after him.

Dave and Annabel dance together.

ANNABEL
You're a lucky man, Daddy.

DAVE
To dance with you?

ANNABEL
To have met Mommy.

Dave looks at Grace as she chases Holden on the dance floor.

DAVE
The luckiest.

Annabel gazes up.

ANNABEL
So, Daddy... you better shape up.
We need your A game from now on.

Dave looks at Grace as she dances with Holden.

DAVE
You'll have it.

ANNABEL
Good.

Annabel hugs her Father.

DAVE
How did you get so wise?

ANNABEL
Momma.

MUSIC: New song plays, a slow one.

Guests flee the dance floor escape Walt and Sally, Oscar and Fannie, and Grace returns to dance with Dave.

Grace cuts in.

GRACE

My turn.

ANNABEL

He's all yours.

Annabel races away.

In the center of the dance floor, the three couples slow dances in a small cluster performing semi-circles.

Annabel and Holden run across the shot. The two chases down a FLOWER GIRL and an ALTAR BOY.

Fannie melts into Oscar.

FANNIE

How did I get so lucky.

Oscar twirls Fannie a bit.

OSCAR

I was thinking the same thing.

Oscar leads Fannie back to him.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Two perfect... imperfections.

FANNIE

Yeah.

GRACE

Thank you, Sally!

FANNIE

Happy endings, are possible.

SALLY

Happy beginnings...

Peter Sr. twirls Sally in a circle.

Walt watches from the rear in jealous envy.

GRACE

Live in the now.

FANNIE
Not the future.

SALLY
Or the past.

PETER SR.
Now, how does everyone know one
another here?

FANNIE
That's easy, Peter. We sat and
talked.

SALLY
(to Fannie and Grace)
I appreciate you both. Showing an
old woman to live again.

The three women hurry over to one another with hugs.

FANNIE
What a night!

Sally and Grace look at one another.

GRACE/SALLY
It's not over yet.

Group hug of Sally, Fannie, and Grace.

MUSIC: New fast song starts.

Everyone races back to their dancing partners.

MUSIC: Plays I Had the Time of My Life/Pitbull's F.U.N. like
song. You know, it's time to shake your booty song.

Dancefloor scene: Think of the end of Dirty Dancing. Crazy
dancing. Snapshots of happy couples. One after another.
Everyone is showing us their moves.

WE slowly ZOOM out.

The WEDDING PARTY is alive and jumps in the background. The
music continues to play.

Then, WE land on the Jazzy Porter. He still wears his green
greatcoat and bowler hat. He looks cool.

Jazzy Porter stands to the right corner of the shot.

JAZZY PORTER
Here. At The Public. We serve YOU.
What you need.
(winks at us)
Forgiveness, and Grace!

DISSOLVE TO:
TEASER SCENE
FOR THE ONES
THAT WAIT:

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - ELEVATOR - SAME

Holden, all alone, rides in it. As Pitbull-like music continues to play, he shows US his awesome dance moves.

INT. HOTEL PUBLIC - ELEVATOR BAY - SAME

Annabel hits the "UP" button.

IMAGE: The "UP" arrow ignites.

SOUND: DING!

Annabel's elevator arrives.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME

Appears Holden inside, the elevator door slides open.

Holden's awesome dance moves end as he sees his sister. He bows low. Then, he springs up.

Holden mouths something like: F.U.N. Fun.

Annabel shakes her head and turns to the CAMERA.

ECU: Annabel.

ANNABEL
Boys?!?

INT. DANCEFLOOR - SAME TIME

The Bride and Groom slow dance together. As the Groom dips the Bride, the MUSIC changes.

Grace and Dave, Oscar and Fannie, and Sally and Peter Sr. dances as a song like The Hustle begins to play.

Grace, Fannie, and Sally cut from their partners, and join one another in the middle of the dancefloor.

GRACE
Woo, woo. Do it!

FANNIE
Woo, woo. Do it!

SALLY
Woo, woo. Do it!

The three of them twirl around.

SALLY/GRACE/FANNIE
Do the Hustle! Do the Hustle.

The three join back up with their dance partners.

Each couple shows off their mad moves. Then, each couple does their version of the Hustle as they depart.

MUSIC: The Hustle continues to play.

FADE TO BLACK:

FINI