

GIRL, INTERRUPTED

screenplay by Lisa Loomer

Based on the book by Susana Kaysen

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Red Wagon Prods.
Doug Wick, Producer

FADE IN:

EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - DAY

It's the late sixties, early spring. Students rush past the ivy-covered halls of Harvard. Among them is SUSANNA KAYSEN, 17, not in any rush, and the only person in Cambridge this year in black: black turtleneck, black tights, black mini the size of a napkin... And she's smoking a Gauloise, a black french cigarette. She's tiny and pretty, with long black hair. The voiceover is Susanna at thirty.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

In 1967, instead of heading for college, I was about to enroll in a parallel universe.

Susanna reaches the light, and a PREPPY BLONDE turns and stares. Susanna stares right back.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

People ask me how I got there.
What you really want to know is if
you're likely to end up there as
well.

Susanna crosses on the red, leaving girl and camera behind.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

I can't answer the real question.
All I can tell you is it's easy.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRATTLE STREET - DAY

Filled with hippies--in tye-dye, in "army-navy", in patchwork... Enter Susanna, in black. She passes The Brattle Cinema, showing LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS. She passes A BOB DYLAN CLONE singing "MR. TAMBOURINE MAN". A hippy tosses change into his hat. She stumbles over some strung out kids on the sidewalk, and crosses into...

EXT. HARVARD SQUARE - DAY

The heart of the sixties. Susanna passes HIPPIES, STUDENTS, PROFESSORS, CAMBRIDGE MATRONS, SAILORS... She stares at A PANHANDLER talking to someone we cannot see. She passes another DYLAN CLONE singing "MR. TAMBOURINE MAN". Another hippy tosses change into his hat. Susanna goes down into the subway.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - DAY

The train is just pulling away as Susanna arrives. She takes this as a bad sign. A THIRD DYLAN CLONE sings "MR. TAMBOURINE MAN". Susanna stops and takes a bill from her purse.

SUSANNA

(simply)

Uhm, I'll give you five bucks to not sing that song.

DYLAN CLONE

Hey--cool, man. Far out. Peace.

She drops a five in his hat and moves on down the platform. He starts to sing "A HARD RAIN'S GONNA FALL".

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

She sits apart from the other passengers and takes out "The Poems Of Sylvia Plath." As she starts to read, her eyes fill with tears, and she takes a Gauloise from her purse.

THE SUBWAY

shoots into the tunnel.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM - DAY

SIMON STEBBINS, Susanna's English teacher, waits in front of the museum, which is an exact replica of a Florentine villa. Simon is in his thirties, charming, British, and self-involved. Susanna runs up and throws her arms around him.

SUSANNA

Hi!

SIMON

Hello, luv. You missed my class on Dylan Thomas.

SUSANNA

Sorry.

(laughs)

I never quite made it to school.

He takes her arm and leads her inside.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSEUM - DAY

They stand in front of a portrait of Manet's wife.

SUSANNA

I love the portraits. They're
so... unhappy.

They turn to a mostly naked portrait of Hercules holding a big
stick.

SUSANNA

(laughs)

Dress comfortably and carry a big
stick.

SIMON

(puts an arm around
her)

Susanna. Let me show you the
Vermeer.

They move out to...

THE COURTYARD

Passing a tiger painted on wood. Susanna gets in its face.

SUSANNA

Grrrrrr.

They stop in front of a painting of a girl having a music
lesson. But she's facing out of the picture. Her mouth is
slightly open as if she were about to say something. Susanna
looks her deep in the eyes.

SIMON

Isn't she extraordinary?

Susanna takes a step back, almost recoils.

SIMON

What is it, luv?

SUSANNA

(upset)

Don't you see? She's trying to get
out! See--her mouth is open and
she's trying to warn me. She's
saying, "Wait, don't, don't go--"

SIMON
(tenderly
condescending)
Susanna. You're upset. Shall we
get an expresso?

CUT TO:

INT. SIMON'S APARTMENT - DAY

They are making love in a squeaky brass bed, and he is reciting
Dylan Thomas--

SIMON
Nothing I cared,
in the lamb white days,
that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft
by the shadow of my hand
in the moon that is always
rising...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME

A short time later. THE CAMERA PANS the room: A shelf full of
books, a desk full of books, a cement block bookcase, with a
portrait of Simon and his wife.

SUSANNA (O.C.)
You ever think about it?

SIMON (O.C.)
I suppose.

ON THE BED

Susanna and Simon are sitting up, having a smoke.

SUSANNA
Of course it isn't something you
just jump into.

SIMON
I should think not.

SUSANNA
I mean, you need a motive.

SIMON
To be sure.

SUSANNA

Like there's this American history
paper you don't want to write...
Okay, well...

(drags on cigarette)
why not kill yourself?

SIMON

Well--

SUSANNA

Then, once you pose the question,
anything you do becomes part of the
debate. Make a stupid remark? Why
not kill yourself? Miss the train?
Better end it. Even the good stuff
gets in there. I really liked that
movie. Okay, maybe I shouldn't
kill myself. I bet most people
kill themselves just to end the
debate about whether they will or
won't--

SIMON

(kisses her head)
Why don't you just write a poem
about it, instead?
(checks his watch)
I have a tutorial at six, luv...

Hurt, she jumps out of bed, pretending she's just fine.

SUSANNA

Okay, well--see you in class!

CUT TO:

INT. KAYSEN HOME - NIGHT

A lovely home, filled with art and books. Down the hall, in
the living room, we see a small party of professors and wives
chatting and drinking wine. Susanna opens the front door and
tries to steal in. No luck. Her mother, SONIA, rushes in from
the living room. Sonia is an intelligent, talented, controlled
bundle of nerves. She is colorfully dressed and holds a plate
of hors d'oeuvres in her hand.

SONIA

(gaily)
Susanna!
(sotto; snaps)
You're late.

SUSANNA

Sorry!

Sonia pulls her towards the living room, just enough to show her to the guests.

SONIA

Look who's here, everybody!

(sotto)

Take off that ridiculous skirt and put on some lipstick. Why do you have to wear black all the time?

SUSANNA

(just truthful)

Because there's too much color in the world?

Susanna starts for the stairs, but is thwarted by the approach of MRS. NEILSON, a proper and well meaning lady in her forties.

MRS. NEILSON

Hello! Hello!

SONIA

(sotto)

Oh hell, never mind.

(charming)

Susanna, you remember Professor Neilson's wife, Mrs. Neilson.

SUSANNA

(just honest)

No...

MRS. NEILSON

Of course you do! My daughter is in your class, Laura Neilson.

(to Sonia)

Laura was just accepted at Radcliffe. What a conundrum.

(to Susanna)

I'm a Wellesley girl, myself, but I think a young woman these days should make up her own mind, don't you?

SONIA

Of course she does.

(offers hors
d'oeuvres)

Have you tried these?

MRS. NEILSON

(to Susanna)

Tell me your mother doesn't make the best Pigs 'N Blankets in the known world.

SUSANNA

I don't know. I don't eat meat.

MRS. NEILSON

Now that is a tragedy. Such a beautiful girl!

SONIA

Isn't she? I'd kill for that figure.

This worries Susanna.

MRS. NEILSON

And what are your plans, dear?

SUSANNA

I don't have any plans.

SONIA

(laughs)

She just cannot decide!

SUSANNA

(laughs awkwardly)

Well, I got the lowest score in the history of the high school on my SAT's--

MRS. NEILSON

(at a loss; laughs)

Well, that is a distinction, isn't it?

PAUL KAYSEN, head of the Harvard Law School, and Susanna's father, approaches. He's a brilliant, decent, distant, distracted man. A small terrier follows at his heels.

SUSANNA

Happy birthday, daddy.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek which he accepts but does not think to return.

PAUL

Thank you. Find me that new Mahler, would you, Charlene?

SUSANNA

(softly)

Susanna. Charlene's the dog.

PAUL

(hasn't heard)

Are we ready, Sonia?

SONIA
(gaily)
Come on in everybody!

Everyone moves towards the dining room. Except for Susanna, who starts for the stairs.

SONIA (CONT'D)
Where do you think you're going?

SUSANNA
Homework?

Sonia sighs and joins her guests. Susanna goes upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

A flowery room, obviously decorated by a mother. SKETCHES OF SPAIN on the record player. Susanna sits in the one piece of furniture she makes sense in, banging her wrist on the metal of her black butterfly chair. After a few moments, she drags herself up, goes to her desk, and opens her American History book. After another moment, she closes the book and goes back to her chair and her wrist banging. At first it looks like she may be keeping time to the music. After a while, we wonder.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A PIANO CONCERTO PLAYS can be heard from the library. Susanna peeks into...

THE STUDY

Her father is asleep at his desk, the terrier curled up in his lap.

SUSANNA continues down the hall and peeks into...

THE LIBRARY

Her mother is playing the piano, magnificently, in the dark.

SUSANNA leaves the house.

CUT TO:

INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Susanna sits across from MISS TYROLER, late sixties, who is looking through Susanna's file. Susanna's very tired.

MISS TYROLER
And your term paper, Miss Kaysen?

SUSANNA
(just honest)
I didn't write it. I have nothing to say on that topic.

MISS TYROLER
You could have picked another topic.

SUSANNA
(yawns)
I have nothing to say on any historical topic.

MISS TYROLER
I see. And our little problem with the SAT's?

SUSANNA
Well... you know how they give you a little story, and then they give you five titles, and then they ask, "What's the best title for this story?"

MISS TYROLER
I am familiar with that part of the exam.

SUSANNA
Well, I mean, if you really think about it, all five titles could be interesting--

Miss Tyroler closes her file.

MISS TYROLER
Miss Kaysen, what are your plans if you don't get into college?

SUSANNA
(simply)
I don't have a plan.

MISS TYROLER
Of course you do. Everyone has a plan.

SUSANNA
Oh--you mean like: A) Get married?
B) Join the WACs. C) Commit suicide--

MISS TYROLER
Have you thought about dental
hygiene?

SUSANNA
No...
(pause)
I'd like to be a writer.

Susanna smiles. Miss Tyroler smiles back.

MISS TYROLER
Well, that's fine, dear. But what
are you going to do?

They look at each other, each equally perplexed.

SUSANNA
Uhm... Graduate?

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL LAWN - DAY

The graduation ceremonies of a progressive private school. THE CAMERA PANS the parents: Well-dressed, beaming, except for Paul and Sonia who look dressed up and anxious. THE CAMERA PANS the students: serious and proud in their hats and robes... except for Susanna, who is asleep.

THE PRINCIPAL is at the podium, handing out diplomas.

PRINCIPAL
Andrea James. Debating team,
Yearbook, French Society, track...

ANDREA, next to Susanna, rises and steps over Susanna's feet. Susanna remains asleep. The Beatles' "STRAWBERRY FIELDS" BEGINS (and takes us into the next scene.)

PRINCIPAL (O.C.)
Susanna Kaysen...

CUT TO:

INT. CAMBRIDGE APARTMENT - NIGHT

A graduation party. Black light, posters, lava lamps, and "STRAWBERRY FIELDS". Kids dance, talk, drink, and pass hookas and bongos. Andrea offers Susanna a pill.

ANDREA
Acid?

SUSANNA

Personally, I find it redundant.

JOSH, a kind but nerdy boy approaches.

JOSH

Dance?

She rises without enthusiasm and they dance.

ANOTHER ANGLE

TWO RED HEADED TWINS watch Susanna enviously.

TWIN 1

I know she's fucking my English teacher.

TWIN 2

She is so cool.

ON JOSH AND SUSANNA

JOSH

So, what are your plans for, you know, after school?

She shrugs, "don't know".

THE CAMERA MOVES TWO FEET AWAY where two hippy boys are pouring themselves drinks.

HIPPY 1

Well, a lawyer of course. You?

HIPPY 2

Buddhist monk.

BACK TO SUSANNA AND JOSH

SUSANNA

You?

JOSH

Oh, well, I've always wanted to be an ethnobotanist. And you?

SUSANNA

I don't know. I was thinking of joining the WAC's.

JOSH

Oh yeah? That'll be an interesting career.

SUSANNA

Just kidding.

THE SONG ENDS. She stops dancing, much relieved.

JOSH

Oh, you mean you're not?

She looks at him in amazement and walks away. She looks around. Simon has arrived and is deep in conversation with the twins. Will JAMES, twenty, a good looking guy with a pony tail, notices her dismay and walks over. Will has an original mind and an easygoing way which make him truly cool among the wanna-be's.

WILL

I hate parties.

SUSANNA

So do I.

(pause)

What do you hate most?

WILL

The talking. You?

SUSANNA

The people.

WILL

Want to go for a walk?

SUSANNA

You're Andrea's brother, aren't you?

WILL

Guilty.

SUSANNA

Okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEMORIAL DRIVE - NIGHT

Will and Susanna walk by the Charles river. He plays the harmonica. e smokes.

SUSANNA

Where are we going?

WILL

Gee, I don't know. I don't really have a plan.

She smiles and takes his arm. They keep walking.

WILL (CONT'D)

Want to get an expresso?

SUSANNA

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. BLUE PARROT CAFE - NIGHT

It's dark and smokey and hip. Will and Susanna talk animatedly. A FEMALE FOLKSINGER sings a tragic song about love.

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

It's just about dawn. The bedroom is filled with pictures of Will's heros. Che Guevara, Huey Newton, Jimmy Hendrix. Will and Susanna lie on a mattress on the floor. She smokes. He has an arm around her.

SUSANNA

You ever think about it?

WILL

Well, I guess everybody thinks about it at some point.

SUSANNA

How would you do it?

WILL

Well, I don't know.

(laughs)

I guess I haven't really thought about it.

SUSANNA

A little slit in the veins of the arm?

WILL

I don't think so.

SUSANNA

Gun in your mouth?

WILL

No...

SUSANNA

Right. You taste it, it's cold.
Greasy. Yick. You put it back in
the drawer.

WILL

(relieved)

Right.

SUSANNA

Got to find another way. Got to
cultivate detachment. Like if
there's a window, you imagine
yourself falling out of it. Or if
there's a train coming, you imagine
yourself flattened under the
wheels.

WILL

(uneasy)

Uh-huh...

SUSANNA

And of course you have to have a
motive. You know, like there's
this job you don't want to take in
the Harvard accounting office.
Okay, well, why not kill yourself?

He turns and grabs her shoulders. There are tears in his eyes.

WILL

Listen. Just don't okay. I've
been trying to get the nerve to ask
you out since you were in the
seventh grade. I'd like to see you
again. And I have to go away for
awhile.

She pulls away from him.

SUSANNA

(hurt)

Oh. Where are you going?

WILL

The army.

Susanna looks at Che, Huey... Jimmy Hendrix.

SUSANNA

When?

WILL

Two-thirty.

SUSANNA

Oh. Well--

She jumps up and pulls her black mini-dress over her head, damned if she'll show her disappointment.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

You know, actually, I really ought to be going myself.

WILL

Hey, look. Stay a little. Please.

SUSANNA

Sorry. Can't. Will you look at the time?

WILL

I'll make some coffee--

SUSANNA

I'm trying to quit. I'll see you--

WILL

Susanna--

SUSANNA

(too brightly)

Today's the day I start my new job!

She's gone before he knows what's hit him.

CUT TO:

INT. HARVARD ACCOUNTING OFFICE - DAY

A long room, filled with rows of women typists. Susanna's in the middle of a row. Two male supervisors roam the aisles, smoking. One is white, the other's a debonair African American in his thirties, GRACY. GRACY approaches Susanna, as she lights up a cigarette.

GRACY

You can't smoke.

SUSANNA

But you're smoking.

GRACY

Typists are not permitted to smoke.

He checks her work, going down the page with his finger.

GRACY (CONT'D)

You're sending this student a bill
for twelve thousand dollars. The
tuition is one-two-o-o.

SUSANNA

Oh.

SUSANNA'S POV

The o's start dancing around his finger on the page.

SUSANNA quickly looks up.

GRACY

Making mistakes. We can't have
that.

SUSANNA

I wouldn't make so many if I could
smoke--

GRACY

Maybe you wouldn't make so many in
another job.

CUT TO:

INT. GOURMET COOKWARE STORE - DAY

Susanna is desperately trying to look busy among the gourmet
pots and dishes and pans. As she dusts a floral platter...

SUSANNA'S POV

Other patterns start to emerge. A flower turns into a bird...
The bird's face turns into Sonia's... The bunch of flowers in
the middle of the plate turns into a picture of Susanna's
second grade class.

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN approaches.

CUSTOMER

Excuse me, do you have au gratin
dishes?

Susanna quickly puts down the plate.

SUSANNA

(cheery)
Yes, we do have them.

She goes to a shelf and carefully reaches for a dish.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

Right over...
(drops it)
here.

SUSANNA'S POV

The dish shatters on the floor. Worse, the checkerboard floor turns wavy.

SUSANNA looks very scared.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA'S ROOM - DAY

She lies under the covers with her eyes open. WE HEAR A CHOPIN POLONNAISE on the piano downstairs. She turns and faces the wall. After a moment, she turns back. Her mother tries a PHRASE ON THE PIANO, OVER AND OVER. Susanna sits up. Lies down. Sits up. Finally, she jumps out of bed and leaves the room. (She's already fully dressed.)

INT. HALLWAY

As Susanna goes down the hall, her mother conquers the phrase and continues THE POLONNAISE, which we now hear even LOUDER. Susanna enters the...

BATHROOM

She shuts the door, gets a bottle of aspirin from the medicine chest, opens it, and starts swallowing aspirin, two by two, three by three. THE MUSIC STOPS. She keeps swallowing. A few moments later, there's a knock at the door.

SONIA (O.C.)

Susanna!

SUSANNA

(startled)

WHAT?

SONIA (O.C.)

Are you going to get that milk I asked you for an hour ago, or not?

SUSANNA

Oh--sorry, mom! I'm sorry! Be right down!

She panics. She tries sticking her finger down her throat. It doesn't work. She throws some cold water on her face, opens the door, and runs out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Susanna walks quickly, fighting back tears.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Susanna pushes open the door and goes inside.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Her stride becomes wavy. She tries not to look at the checkerboard floor. She grabs on to the aisles, knocking cheery cereal boxes to the floor. A YOUNG MOTHER, with a baby in her cart, stares. Finally, Susanna makes her way to the frozen foods, holding on for dear life at the meat section.

CLOSE UP OF MEAT, bruised and bleeding in a tight wrapping.

SUSANNA wavers and falls.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Susanna has tubes down her nose and an IV in her arm. Sonia sits in a chair beside the bed. Paul paces.

SONIA

He's a marvellous psychiatrist.

Susanna tries to mumble something despite the tubes.

SONIA (CONT'D)

Professor Bowdoin's daughter saw him and he worked wonders. She's going back to Radcliffe in the spring.

PAUL

Bryn Mawr.

SONIA

Right. She never could have gotten into Radcliffe. Even if she weren't...

They turn to Susanna, pained.

PAUL

Why would you do such a thing, dear? Why?

Susanna tries to mumble a reply.

SONIA

The point is he's a gifted psychiatrist and extremely busy. He's agreed to see you next Tuesday as a professional courtesy to your father because he teaches at Harvard as well. Have a talk with him, what could it hurt? Of course, it's completely your decision. What do you say?

Susanna mumbles a reply, but the tubes make it tricky.

SONIA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, dear, is that a yes or a no?

Susanna nods. There are tears in her eyes. Paul goes to the window.

SONIA

(pats Susanna's hand)
Good. Then it's all settled. I'll give you money for the cab.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

A week later. Susanna sits across from DR. VILNUS, in a comfortable office in his suburban home. The doctor is a taut man with an imposing belly and small eyes, in his fifties. Susanna is picking at a pimple on her chin.

DR. VILNUS (CONT'D)

You have a pimple.

She doesn't reply.

DR. VILNUS (CONT'D)

You've been picking it.

(pause)

Picking at yourself.

She nods.

DR. VILNUS (CONT'D)

Have a boyfriend?

She shrugs.

DR. VILNUS (CONT'D)

(smiles)

Maybe a couple of boyfriends?

She shrugs. He puts his face close to hers.

DR. VILNUS (CONT'D)
Tell me, do you consider yourself a hippy?

She shakes her head no, incredulous.

SUSANNA'S POV

His face starts to change. It becomes squishy, then pointy, with lots of air vents and wet spots.

DR. VILNUS (CONT'D)
You need a rest. Don't you think?
Your parents are very concerned about you. Don't you think you need a rest?

SUSANNA blinks.

SUSANNA
I guess...

He goes to the next room, where WE CAN SEE HIM IN THE B.G. making a phone call. Susanna tries to concentrate on the family pictures on his desk. She yawns. He returns, pleased.

DR. VILNUS
I've got a bed for you. Just for a couple of weeks, okay?

SUSANNA
I'll go Friday. I have a job. I have a lunch date.

DR. VILNUS
Forget it. You aren't going to lunch. You're going to the hospital.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

The doctor takes Susanna by the elbow and leads her to a waiting cab. She gets in. He closes the door, and smiles at her through the window, his face looming large. THE DRIVER, a hippy, rolls down his window.

DRIVER
Where to?

DR. VILNUS
Take her to McLean.

Exhausted, Susanna lays her head back on the seat and closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILL STREET - DAY

The cab winds up the hill that leads to the hospital. It's a splendiferous early autumn day. The leaves are just starting to turn.

EXT. MCLEAN GROUNDS - DAY

The cab passes a group of old and gracious buildings which could be a college campus, heading for The Admissions Building. We see A LONG SHOT of the cab stopping, and a NURSE opening the door for Susanna, and leading her inside. A moment later, we see a CLOSE UP OF SUSANNA peering out through the window of the door, wide-eyed, startled, and scared.

BLACKOUT.

FADE IN:

INT. SOUTH BELKNAP NURSE'S STATION - DAY

The nurse's station of a medium security ward. A mostly glass room with a view of the narrow hall where patients hang out, waiting for medication, or just hanging out. The door is in two parts, with the top usually open, so nurses and patients can talk. VALERIE, the head day nurse, is reading the admission entry on her new patient. She's in her mid-thirties, African American, a straight shooter with a sense of humor, and smart. LILLIAN, a frightened, sensitive young white aide, hangs on her words. Both wear nurse's coats over street clothes.

VALERIE

(reading)

"Profoundly depressed, promiscuous, suicidal"... "increasing paternless of life"--does that sound like good English to you?

Lillian shakes her head no.

VALERIE

(flips the page)

Father is head of Harvard Law, mom's a housewife... "Not in therapy at this time"... "No plan."

CUT TO:

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

A LONG SHOT, impersonal, of a nurse checking Susanna's hair for lice. Susanna is nude.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S STATION

VALERIE

Let's see, if I were suicidal, who would I want to room with?

She glances across the way at a blackboard that lists about twenty girls' names. She considers them. Frowns.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

We'll figure it out later.

CUT TO:

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM

Susanna is dressed. A doctor knocks her knees for reflexes. They work. But her face is a mask.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH BELKNAP - DAY

Two stories, ivy-covered, it looks like a college dorm. Susanna is led inside by JOHN, a good natured Irish working class aide in his fifties, with a strong Boston accent.

INT. SOUTH BELKNAP - DAY

The first thing Susanna sees is a stairwell encased in metal grill work, like a cage. Susanna is frightened, but striving to maintain her cool.

SUSANNA

What's that?

JOHN

Oh, that's just there so the patients don't jump.

She looks at him to make sure he's not joking. He's not. He unlocks a door with a window meshed with chicken wire. A sign on the door says "Split Risk."

SUSANNA

"Split Risk?"

JOHN

Oh, that just means doctors and patients are coming in and out.

SUSANNA

And they're splitting the risk?

JOHN

(considers; then)

No, I don't think that's what it means.

They go through the door and there's a few feet of space and an identical door. He unlocks this one, and they go inside.

CUT TO:

THE NURSE'S STATION

LISA, a patient in her early twenties, is wagging an unlit cigarette and yelling at Valerie through the open part of the door. Lisa is thin and long, with long dirty brown hair, held at the neck with a silver clip. She almost always wears worn jeans, a red t-shirt with long sleeves, and a long beaded belt. She has beautiful long red nails. Lisa says the things we'd all like to say. Only we know better.

LISA

Hey! Who do I have to fuck to get a light around here?

VALERIE

All right, Lisa, don't be such a bore.

She gives Lisa a light, as John and Susanna appear behind Lisa.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Hi, Susanna. Welcome to SB-II.
I'm Valerie.

SUSANNA

(trying to remain composed)

Hello, Valerie.

Lisa turns around to Susanna as a "crazy" a drooling mental patient. Susanna lets out a little scream. Lisa laughs.

LISA

Later for you.

She saunters off. Susanna's completely taken aback.

VALERIE
 (smiles)
 Let's give you the tour.

CUT TO:

THE TV ROOM

The TV room is messy and smokey, with awful vinyl armchairs, card tables, and an orange sofa. A few PATIENTS are playing cards. Two CATATONICS are (not) watching a re-run of FATHER KNOWS BEST. One's in her thirties, pretty, with a hairstyle from the fifties. The other's in her teens, with a perpetually startled expression. JANET, an anorexic dancer of sixteen, works on her extension on the floor. DAISY, eighteen, plays solitaire. Daisy has a sexy way about her, but she's mean.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
 This is the TV room...

Valerie turns and starts to leave. Susanna stares at the catatonics, wondering if they're for real, when DAISY sashays over over and flicks her cigarette ash in the older Catatonic's mouth. Susanna quickly follows Valerie out to...

THE LIVING ROOM

It's got old floral sofas with cigarette holes. And no one's there.

VALERIE
 The living room... Everyone hates it.

Susanna peeks in and they continue on to...

THE HALLWAY

They pass three phone booths.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
 Phones... Each girl has a list of permitted numbers. You pick up the phone, a nurse will answer, and you tell her the number you want to call.

SUSANNA
 What if I need to call Information?

VALERIE
 What for?

SUSANNA
 For information.

VALERIE

Just ask the nurse.

They turn a corner.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

This is a seclusion room.

Susanna peeks into a small room with a window in the door, a bare mattress on the green linoleum floor, and well scratched chipped walls.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

You come here anytime you need to yell. You can request to be locked in, or, if you don't, somebody can join you.

(smiles)

And it can get noisy. By the way, if you don't feel like yelling, but you do feel like talking, you let me know.

Susanna nods, not meaning it. They continue the tour, stopping at a large blackboard near the Nurse's Station, filled with patients' names, level of privileges, with spaces to fill in destinations, times out, and times in.

VALERIE

As you begin to get privileges, here's where you sign in and out.

Susanna's name is at the bottom, with an "R" next to it.

SUSANNA

What's "R"?

VALERIE

Right now you're Restricted to the ward. You'll move to "two to one's" which means you can leave the ward with two nurses. Then "one to one's," one nurse to one patient, kinda like a bad conscience, "one to two's", one nurse to two patients, "Group", three or four patients to a nurse, then "Grounds" which means you can go all over the hospital alone.

SUSANNA

Uh-huh...

They move on. Valerie stops in front of a pleasant room, somewhere between a college dorm and a colonial hotel room. On

one of the twin beds is GEORGINA, an all-American looking girl of nineteen. She's reading SIDDHARTHA. Her energy is very high.

VALERIE

And this is your room. Georgina, this is Susanna, your new roommate.

GEORGINA

Oh great! Hi! No kidding?

SUSANNA

(tentatively)

Hi.

VALERIE

Dinner's in five.

Valerie leaves, and Susanna sits very gingerly on the other bed.

GEORGINA

Have you read this?

SUSANNA

No, I, uh, haven't gotten to it.

GEORGINA

It takes place in India. I'm going next summer with the Peace Corps. The people are suffering immensely. You like the Beatles?

SUSANNA

(baffled)

Uh--sure.

GEORGINA

The Beatles spend a lot of time in India. To study with the Maharishi. Which is fine, but, I mean, what if you turned on your water faucet and nothing ever came out again? What if you could never shower again for the rest of your life? What would you do? Meditate?

SUSANNA

(completely at a loss)

I don't meditate. I fall asleep.

GEORGINA

Right! Exactly! You have to take
action! Let's go.

Susanna looks at the window. It's meshed with chicken wire,
and locked too. She takes a deep breath, sighs, and follows
Georgina out.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

There are four tables, with a few girls each, dining on china
with plastic forks and spoons. Most are in their late teens or
early twenties. Lisa, Susanna, Georgina, Janet and THE
MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND, sit at one table. The latter is twenty,
small and round, and often in communication with friends we do
not see. CYNTHIA is getting coffee. She has a crewcut and is
dressed exactly like a man. Susanna is sure she's fallen
through the rabbit hole, but is determined to remain composed.

GEORGINA

(nods towards
Cynthia)

That's Cynthia. She's no crazier
than you or me. Her parents just
don't like her clothes.

(nods; sotto)

The Martian's Girlfriend, she's
nuts...

Susanna nods politely. POLLY enters and sits with Cynthia.
Polly always looks on the bright side, and is about the kindest
girl you'd ever want to meet. She has been burned from head to
toe. Susanna looks down at her food. It doesn't look good.

GEORGINA (CONT'D)

And that's Polly. She actually set
herself on fire. I don't know how
she got a hold of the gasoline.
She was too young to drive. I
mean, what did she do? Go to her
neighborhood garage and tell them
her father's car had run out of
gas? What courage. Now she wears
a slipcover.

LISA

Are you ever going to shut up?

GEORGINA

Silence is death--

Daisy, the girl Susanna saw in the TV room, enters carrying a foil wrapped chicken. She elbows another girl out of the way to get to the coffee pot.

GEORGINA (CONT'D)

And that's Daisy.

SUSANNA

"Daisy"?

GEORGINA

Her mother works for BETTER HOMES
AND GARDENS.

SUSANNA

What's she got there?

GEORGINA

A chicken. Her father brings her
one every week.

Daisy unwraps the chicken and starts peeling off and eating pieces of meat. Susanna watches, amazed.

LISA

He's in love with her. He can't
believe he produced her. He wants
to fuck her to make sure she's
real.

She reaches for Janet's dessert.

LISA (CONT'D)

Are you going to eat this?

JANET

I'm full.

GEORGINA

(whispers to Susanna)
She never eats anything. They
force feed her when she gets down
to seventy-five.

Susanna's plastic fork breaks.

GEORGINA (CONT'D)

You'll get used to it.

Lillian enters.

LISA

Just think of it as a perpetual
picnic. Can I get a LIGHT?

Lillian comes and lights her cigarette.

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND
(to Susanna)
I have a penis. Want to see it?

SUSANNA
Uh--no--thank you.

By now, Susanna really needs a cigarette.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)
(dying; to Lillian)
Could I get a light too?

Hands shaking, she takes a Gauloise from her shirt pocket.
Lillian lights it.

LISA
(laughs)
What the hell kind of cigarette is that?

Susanna can't help it, she has a perfect French accent--

SUSANNA
Gauloise.

LISA
Go-what?

SUSANNA
Gauloise.

GEORGINA
It's French. The French Resistance smoked them.

LISA
(laughs)
It's French?
(to Susanna)
Later for you.

She rises and saunters out. Again Susanna is taken aback.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL OUTSIDE NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

The girls are lined up for "Meds", or medication, and Susanna is the next up. MRS. MCWEENY, the head night nurse, holds a tray filled with little paper cups. She's in her fifties, always in uniform, with grey wavy hair that clings to her head

like a migraine. She has a tight smile and the soul of a prison matron.

MRS. MCWEENY

Good evening, Susanna. I'm Mrs. McWeeny. This is for you.

SUSANNA

(trying to be casual
about this)

You know, I think there must be some mistake--I don't take drugs.

MRS. MCWEENY

Everyone takes medication, dear. To help you sleep. It's time to go to bed.

SUSANNA

I'm eighteen years old. It's ten thirty. Why do I have to go to bed?

POLLY

(warmly)

Take it. It's just easier.

MRS. MCWEENY

(smiles tightly)

You can discuss it in the morning, dear, with your doctor. Meanwhile, we'll just have to agree to disagree.

Susanna rolls her eyes behind the nurse's back, but takes the pills. On her way back to her room, she passes the phones. Lisa is in one booth. Cynthia is two booths down. They are shouting a conversation-to each other.

LISA

So what do you want to do tomorrow?

CYNTHIA

Let's go over to the cafeteria.

LISA

With all those psychotics?

She makes the "crazy" face as Susanna passes by. Susanna hurries to her room.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Despite the meds, it's still noisy. Sounds of CRYING, sounds of FIGHTS. Georgina is asleep. Susanna lies in bed with wide eyes. There's a knock on the door and Lillian enters with a suitcase. Lillian's sentences all sound like questions.

LILLIAN

Checks? Oh Susanna, your mother dropped off some clothes?

She puts down the suitcase and leaves. Finally, Susanna lets down and starts to cry. She cries and cries, cries to the wall, stuffing a pillow in her mouth so no one will hear.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

The next morning, Susanna is reading SIDDHARTHA, when DR. WICK enters with a file. She is a horsey woman in her forties from South Africa, with a pronounced accent, and the soul of a boarding school matron. Susanna is determined to show her she's just fine.

DR. WICK

Good morning, I'm Dr. Wick.

SUSANNA

You're my doctor?

DR. WICK

I'm the ward doctor, yes.

SUSANNA

Where are you from?

DR. WICK

Johannesberg. Why do you ask?

SUSANNA

I just wondered--

DR. WICK

Hmmmm.

Dr. Wick makes a note in Susanna's file. Susanna tries to read it, but Dr. Wick pulls farther away.

DR. WICK

I understand you've been depressed. Would you like to tell me about that?

SUSANNA

Oh, no thank you. I was a little depressed.

(smiles brightly)

But now I'm fine.

("casually")

So, uh, how long do I have to stay here?

DR. WICK

Well, you'll have to speak with your therapist about that.

Susanna looks perplexed.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA'S ROOM - DAY

Half an hour later, DR. GRAY has taken Dr. Wick's place. He's in his thirties, warm and interested.

DR. GRAY

How are your bowels?

SUSANNA

(surprised)

Are you a psychiatrist?

DR. GRAY

I'm the resident psychiatrist here, yes. You and I will be talking about your priviledges, your medication...

SUSANNA

Oh good. Can I stop taking it?

DR. GRAY

Hmmmm.

He makes a note in her chart which she can't manage to read.

DR. GRAY (CONT'D)

Well, you'll have to speak with your therapist about that.

Susanna looks even more perplexed.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Susanna writes "Therapy" under "Destination" next to her name, and John accompanies her out.

PAUL

Two years!?

MELVIN

More or less. A good deal depends on her response to treatment, of course--

PAUL

Do you realize that's the cost of several college educations?

SONIA

Paul--

MELVIN

I understand your concern, Professor Kaysen.

SONIA

The doctor knows what her needs are, Paul. He's the expert here.

PAUL

Fine! Would you care to illuminate the problem for us, doctor?

MELVIN

I'll be happy to--

Paul whips out a psychiatric manual from his briefcase.

PAUL

Because I happen to have the DSM right here.

(turns to index)

What is her diagnosis, doctor?

Susanna sits up, frightened by the word "diagnosis."

SONIA

Paul--

MELVIN

(a glance at Susanna)

Professor Kaysen, I don't think it is in Susanna's best interest to--

PAUL

I am a lawyer, doctor. My daughter has the legal right to be informed of her own--

Susanna looks back and forth between them, wondering who will win.

MELVIN

(sighs)

All right, if it is helpful, you
can refer to "Borderline
Personality Disorder"--

SONIA

Borderline? You mean she's on the
borderline between sanity and--

PAUL

(checks index)

I have it.

SONIA

So she's not really--

PAUL

Here we are.

(reads, skimming)

"A pervasive pattern of instability
of self-image, interpersonal
relationships and mood, beginning
in early adulthood..."

ON SUSANNA

She looks increasingly worried.

PAUL (O.C.)

"Uncertainty about long term goals
or career choice... Mood shifts...
Impulsive--particularly in
activities that are potentially
self-damaging such as casual sex"--

BACK TO PAUL

PAUL

"Shopping sprees"--

(a glance at Sonia)

perhaps it is a genetic disorder--

(continues reading)

"psychoactive substance abuse"--

"quite often social contrariness

and a generally pessimistic

attitude are observed." Well,

doctor, that sounds rather like an

expert description of adolescence!

Melvin is taken aback. There's a moment of silence. Then--

SUSANNA

So can I go home?

Paul and Sonia turn and look at their daughter. Then, Melvin gets up, rising to his full five and a half feet.

MELVIN

That certainly is a fair assessment, Professor. However, we live in a time when adolescence can be a very dangerous proposition.

(with true concern)

Drugs... the hippy movement... the sexual revolution. And, especially where there has been an attempt at suicide, we want to do everything in our power to make sure that the symptoms you mention will, indeed, be limited to a developmental stage.

Paul sighs heavily, and looks out the window. The trees are bare.

PAUL

Well. You just make sure they are, doctor. You make sure they are.

Sonia turns to her daughter.

MELVIN

I'm sure we all have Susanna's best interest at heart.

SONIA

(encouraging)

Susanna, this is one of the most famous hospitals in the world! Robert Lowell was here, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath--

PAUL

(softly, to the window)

Poets. What is it about rhythm and cadence that makes their makers mad?

MELVIN

I beg your pardon?

SUSANNA

(without emotion)

Sylvia Plath stuck her head in an oven. Sylvia Plath is dead.

CUT TO:

INT. TV ROOM - NIGHT

Susanna, Lisa, Cynthia and Polly are playing cards. Lisa sits in the yellow vinyl chair, which is her chair. The two catatonics sit in their chairs, as usual. MY MOTHER THE CAR is on the TV.

LISA

(laughs)

"Borderline"? Man, you're not even a real nut! You see that guy on the TV? His mother's a car!

POLLY

That's not very nice, Lisa. Susanna can't help it if she didn't get a good diagnosis. That doesn't mean she doesn't have problems, too.

LISA

Like what? Can't get French cigarettes in the Gift Store?

Susanna has had it. She throws down her cards.

SUSANNA

So what's your diagnosis, huh?

LISA

Sociopath. We are very rare. And mostly we are men.

CYNTHIA

Hey, I'm a sociopath too, man.

LISA

Bullshit. You're not a sociopath, you're just a dyke.

(to Susanna)

Were you a debutante, too?

SUSANNA

(mortified)

A debutante?

CYNTHIA

(to Lisa)

Hey man, I was junkie. Just like you.

SUSANNA

(to Polly;
incredulous)

Do I look like a debutante?

POLLY

I was a debutante--

Cynthia pulls up her sleeves and shows Lisa her tracks.

LISA

(unimpressed)

A suburban junkie, Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

Hey, Lisa, junk's junk.

Lisa pulls up the sleeve of her red t-shirt and shoves her arm under Cynthia's nose. It's studded with lumps, gnarled and authentic.

LISA

These are tracks, man. Later for your tracks.

Next, she shoves her arm under Susanna's nose. Furious, Susanna pulls up her sleeve and shows her well-banged purple wrist. Lisa shakes her head, "big deal." Susanna gets up and storms out of the room to...

THE HALLWAY

Daisy is coming the other way and jabs Susanna with her elbow as she passes by.

SUSANNA

OW!

Susanna stops in front of the Nurse's Station and bangs on the window. Lillian's inside.

SUSANNA

Can I take a walk?

Lillian consults the blackboard.

LILLIAN

You're on one to two's? You can go with a nurse if you can find another patient to go with you?

SUSANNA

Never mind.

She continues down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

Georgina is sitting on the floor with WADE, a large, angry, paranoid young man of eighteen, as Susanna bursts into the room.

WADE
(jumps; paranoid)
HEY!

GEORGINA
(laughs)
This is Wade. Wade, Susanna.
Wade's father's a spy. Sit down!

SUSANNA
That's okay, I just thought I'd be
alone for awhile.

GEORGINA
Sit down, it's your room too!

Susanna sits tentatively, and takes her notebook from inside the night table.

SUSANNA
(doesn't buy it)
So, uh, your father's a spy?

WADE
You heard her.

SUSANNA
A spy for us?

WADE
He lives in Miami so he can get
over to Cuba. He invaded Cuba.
He's killed dozens of people with
his bare hands. He knows who
killed Kennedy.

GEORGINA
Did he kill Kennedy?

WADE
I don't think so, babe. But he
knows. He has these friends, Hunt
and Liddy. Liddy and Hunt, man.
These guys will do anything. I
mean, anything.

SUSANNA
Like what? What kinds of things
will they do?

WADE
I can't reveal.

SUSANNA
(thinks he's nuts)
Uh-huh.

John sticks his head in the door.

JOHN
Checks.

WADE
(paranoid)
Think they're going to hear
something. Think again.

Susanna rolls her eyes, opens her notebook, and starts to
write.

WADE
(yells)
Hey, what is that? What the hell
are you writing there?

He moves towards her. He's huge.

SUSANNA
(jumps up)
A poem! It's a poem!

WADE
(suspicious)
Is it about me?

SUSANNA
No!

She flees the room.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S STATION - DAY

Valerie enters. John is filling in forms.

VALERIE
How's Susanna doing?

JOHN

Oh fine. She's talking to Wade.
(laughs)
You know, the paranoid who thinks
his father is a "CIA operative with
dangerous friends"?

They smile and shake their heads.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Susanna sits alone on the floor, squeezed in tight between the radiator and the corner, writing furiously.

CUT TO:

INT. MELVIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Susanna is looking out the window.

MELVIN

Would you like to tell me what
you're feeling?

SUSANNA

What for? I already know what I'm
feeling.

MELVIN

You seem angry today.
(waits)

Are you angry?
(waits)

Why are you angry?

She whirls around.

SUSANNA

I'm angry because I feel like I'm
in a loony bin, which I think is a
perfectly sane reaction considering
where I am!

CUT TO:

INT. HYDROTHERAPY ROOM - DAY

Susanna is taking a bath in a huge tub, banging her wrist on the edge. Lillian enters.

LILLIAN

Checks?

SUSANNA

Did you bring my razor? I've got permission to shave my legs.

LILLIAN

I'm just the person on checks?

SUSANNA

(imitating)

I'm supposed to shave my legs?

Lillian nods and leaves. Susanna starts kicking water into the air. A moment later, Valerie enters, right in her line of fire. She sits on a chair next to the tub and hands Susanna a razor.

VALERIE

I needed that, actually. No time to shower. How's it going?

SUSANNA

Are you going to watch me shave my legs?

VALERIE

'Fraid so. I guess that's why they're so many hairy legs around here.

SUSANNA

Anybody ever watch you shave your legs?

VALERIE

Not if I can help it. But I got two kids and one bathroom.

SUSANNA

Can you lock the door?

VALERIE

Sometimes.

Susanna starts to shave her legs.

SUSANNA

But you can eat with a real fork.

VALERIE

That's true. By the way, you've got a visitor waiting in the Administration Building. You've got Grounds privileges, so you can actually walk over to the Cafeteria if you like.

SUSANNA

Who is it?

VALERIE

Soldier named Will James?

Susanna puts down the razor. She looks surprised, apprehensive.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Now, you know you don't have to see anybody if it's going to upset you.

Susanna picks up the razor and shaves faster.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Well, I guess it's a good thing you shaved your legs.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Will walks down the hall with Valerie. He wears an army uniform. Lisa, Lisa Cody, Georgina, Polly, The Martian's Girlfriend, and even Cynthia, have gathered outside the TV room to stare.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

Susanna is lying on the bed, happy. Will is just zipping up his pants, as John sticks his head in the door.

JOHN

Checks.

John glances at Will, frowns, and quickly leaves.

SUSANNA

(laughs)

Great timing. Hey, I never did it with a soldier before.

Will sits next to her.

WILL
Listen, I got a car out there.

SUSANNA
No plane?

WILL
(touches her face)
Be serious a moment, will you? My training's over. I'm supposed to leave for Nam after Christmas.

SUSANNA
(plays with his hair)
Will they let you grow your hair?

WILL
No.

SUSANNA
You can't grow your hair, I can't shave my legs--

WILL
I don't want to go.

SUSANNA
Your hair's not that bad. Didn't stop me.

WILL
I want to go to Canada. I want you to come. My car's right outside.

She gets up and goes to the window.

SUSANNA'S POV

A red VW bug is parked just a little down the hill from the ward.

SUSANNA hesitates a moment, then--

SUSANNA
(determined)
Let's go.

She goes to the closet and grabs her pea coat. He grabs his army jacket and they're gone.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF NURSE'S STATION

Susanna fills in "Cafeteria" next to her name on the big blackboard. Lisa, who's doing her nails on the floor nearby, watches curiously. Then Susanna and Will leave.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUTH BELKNAP ENTRANCE - DAY

Lillian unlocks the double doors for them.

LILLIAN
Have a good time?

SUSANNA
We will.

EXT. SOUTH BELKNAP - DAY

It's snowing. Susanna squints from the glare. They move very casually towards the car.

WILL
We'll get to the border by
midnight.

SUSANNA
Yes!

WILL
And then we can take our time.
Vancouver's beautiful. You'll love
it.

They're at the car now. Will opens the door for her.

WILL
Here we go.

She looks at the car. Then she looks at the long road leading down the hill from the hospital. And freezes.

WILL (CONT'D)
Get in, Susanna--

She doesn't move.

WILL (CONT'D)
What's the matter?
(waits)
Susanna? What is it?

SUSANNA
(terrified)
I... can't.

WILL
Why not?

SUSANNA

I...
(starts to cry)
can't.

WILL

I can't do this without you--please
Susanna--let's go!

SUSANNA

(crying)
Look, you're... making me--upset.
I--I'm not supposed to get upset--

WILL

(baffled)
I'm sorry--I--

SUSANNA

Maybe you should just go.

WILL

No--

SUSANNA

Please--just go, all right--just--
go!

He gets in the car, rolls down the windshield.

WILL

I'll write you--

SUSANNA

(yells)
Go!

He takes off. She watches the car disappear, horrified at what she's done. Then, very slowly, she climbs back up the hill to the ward.

ANGLE ON THE WARD

Someone watches from a second story window. MOVING IN CLOSER, we see it's Lisa... with a certain compassion in her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUTH BELKNAP - DAY

Lillian unlocks the double doors for Susanna, and she goes inside.

CUT TO:

LISA

So lend me Wade for an afternoon.
(to Susanna)

You have to fuck patients. Get rid
of that fascist soldier boyfriend
and get a patient boyfriend.

GEORGINA

What do you want with a soldier?

SUSANNA

Right.

POLLY

I think he's cute.

SUSANNA

(laughs)

I guess he couldn't do it in
fifteen minutes.

LISA

(to Polly)

You'd have to give him a blow job.

POLLY

Please.

GEORGINA

Too salty.

SUSANNA

Oh, I don't mind that.

Lisa regards her with new interest.

LISA

Oh yeah?

(a challenge)

Ever get one that had a really
bitter taste?

SUSANNA

(laughs)

Sure.

LISA

Puckery like lemons, only worse?

SUSANNA

(looks her in the
eye)

Yup.

LISA
(impressed)
No shit.

CYNTHIA
Do you mind? I'm trying to get
some work done here--

SUSANNA
Oh, who needs them anyway.

LISA
There you go, fuck 'em.

POLLY
Yeah!

GEORGINA
(puts an arm around
her)
Don't worry, we'll find you a new
one in the cafeteria.

POLLY
(puts an arm around
her too)
Yeah!

SUSANNA
(laughs)
Thanks a lot.

GEORGINA
Half hour checks. That'd be good.

CYNTHIA
A million dollars would be good,
too, man.

LISA
(sighs)
This place.

SUSANNA
(like an old hand
now)
Yeah. This place.

They shake their heads and sigh again.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY
Dr. Wick arrives for Susanna's session.

DR. WICK

Good morning. I understand you had sexual relations with a male visitor.

Susanna doesn't reply.

DR. WICK (CONT'D)

Tell me, would you consider yourself to be promiscuous?

SUSANNA

How many guys do I have to sleep with to be promiscuous?

DR. WICK

What do you think?

SUSANNA

Ten? Eight? Five?

Dr. Wick isn't giving any hints away.

SUSANNA

How many girls would a boy my age have to sleep with to be promiscuous? Twenty-two? Fifty-six? Hundred and six?

DR. WICK

(making a note)

I'm afraid I'm going to have to reduce your priviledges to one to two's.

SUSANNA

So I can be promiscuous with another patient and a nurse?

DR. WICK

So you can be safe.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

The girls are lined up in front of Mrs. McWeeny for Meds. Susanna is behind Lisa. Daisy comes sashaying down the hall.

LISA

Uh-oh. Watch out.

Too late. Daisy steps on Susanna's foot to get in front of her on line.

SUSANNA
Ow! What is her problem?

DAISY
(to Mrs. McWeeny)
I want my Ex Lax. I want my Colace.

SUSANNA
(to Lisa)
What's with the laxatives?

LISA
I don't know. Want to find out?

SUSANNA
Yeah.

LISA
I'm going to get in her room.

JANET
No one's ever been in Daisy's room.

LISA
I'm going to get to the bottom of this.

Lisa steps up to the Nurse's Station.

LISA (CONT'D)
Man, am I constipated. Wow.

Mrs. McWeeny narrows her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE NURSE'S STATION - DAY

The girls are watching Lisa work. Inside the nurse's station, Valerie is talking to a young student nurse, MARY. Lisa bangs on the open window and another student nurse, ANNE, comes to the door.

ANNE
(scared)
May I help you?

LISA
Man, am I constipated. Wow.

She elbows Susanna.

SUSANNA
Me too.

ANNE

Um...

She looks to Valerie, who comes to the door.

VALERIE

How about some castor oil?

LISA

This place is a fascist snake pit.
Give me a double dose of Ex-Lax!

VALERIE

I'm right here, Lisa. You don't
have to yell.

She hands her the pills. Susanna gives Lisa a thumbs up.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

Meds. Susanna's the next one up.

SUSANNA

Man am I constipated. Wow.

Mrs. McWeeny narrows her eyes.

LISA

Give us some Ex-Lax or I'll call my
lawyer!

Mrs. McWeeny sneers and mutters, shoves a bunch of pills in her
direction, and slams the door in her face.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF DAISY'S DOOR - DAY

Susanna, Polly, and Janet are huddled along the wall behind
Lisa, who's kncking on Daisy's door.

LISA

(to the door)
Hey, Daisy.

DAISY (O.C.)

Fuck off.

LISA

Hey, Daisy.

She kicks the door.

LISA (CONT'D)
I got something you want.

DAISY (O.C.)
Bullshit.

But Daisy opens the door, and Lisa slips in.

CUT TO:

INT. TV ROOM - NIGHT

ON THE TELEVISION

CHET HUNTLEY
The United States launched the "Tet
Offensive" today against all major
cities in South Vietnam...

We see footage of falling bodies. Sounds of bombs.

ON THE ROOM

Susanna and Georgina are watching, Georgina pacing in front of the TV. Janet watches and does plies, and The Martian's Girlfriend and Cynthia are playing cards. Lisa enters and pulls up her yellow chair in front of the TV.

LISA
Daisy's room is full of chicken.

GEORGINA
Hey! I'm watching that!

LISA
She eats chicken in there.

Susanna listens to Lisa, imagining the scene:

INT. DAISY'S ROOM - DAY

Daisy sits on her bed, picking apart a chicken, eating pieces with her hands. There are nine carcasses lined up on the floor like soldiers. We can still hear THE BOMBS FALL on the TV.

LISA (V.O.)
She has a special method she showed me. She peels off the meat because she likes to keep the carcasses whole. Then she puts the carcass on the floor next to the last carcass. She has about nine now. She says when she's got fourteen it's time to leave.

BACK TO THE TV ROOM

Georgina gets in Lisa's face.

GEORGINA

Jesus Christ! Those are real bodies! Don't you see those are real bodies falling on the ground?

JANET

(doing a plie)
Did you eat any of her chicken?

LISA

I don't want any of her disgusting chicken.

SUSANNA

What about the laxatives?

LISA

Needs 'em. Needs 'em because of the chicken.

SUSANNA

Why does she do it? Why?

LISA

Hey, man, I don't know everything. Maybe she's too pissed off to play cards.

GEORGINA

Well, I'm going to do something!

She gets up and storms out.

SUSANNA

Georgina? Have you seen my notebook?

LISA

I've seen your notebook.
(rises)
Come on.

They leave.

The Martian's Girlfriend throws down a card.

CYNTHIA

What is that card? That's a fucking Tarot card.

ON THE TV

LISA
(sighs)
I've been expecting this for a while.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE SECLUSION ROOM - NIGHT

Inside, POLLY'S CRYING. Lisa and Susanna are by the door, Lisa with a guitar.

LISA
(knocks)
Hey, Polly. It's Lisa.

She nudges Susanna.

SUSANNA
(tentatively)
And Susanna.

Polly keeps CRYING.

LISA
(hands guitar to Susanna)
Here, play her a song.

SUSANNA
What makes you think I play the guitar?

LISA
You're the type. Play.

Susanna takes the guitar and reluctantly starts to play a sad old folk song in a very pretty voice.

SUSANNA
(sings)
The water is wide,
I cannot cross o'er,
and neither have I the wings to fly--

LISA
(grabs guitar)
Later for that song. You want her to commit suicide?

Lisa sings, bluesily if badly, a la Aretha.

LISA (CONT'D)
If you want a do-right, all night,
woman, whoa-oh,
then you gotta be a--
(to Susanna)
Sing it, girl--

LISA AND SUSANNA
Do right, all night, man. You
gotta be a do right all night--

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME

Half-hour later.

LISA AND SUSANNA
(singing)
Good bye Ruby Tuesday,
who could hang a name on you?

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME

Half-hour later.

LISA AND SUSANNA
(singing
passionately)
'Cause you make me fe-ee-el,
you make me fe-ee-el,
you make me feel
like a natural woman--
wo-ma-a-an...

John comes down the hall, arms folded, like somebody's dad.

JOHN
Mrs. McWeeny wants you to go to
bed. Now.

LISA
(sings to John)
You make me fe--ee--el--

John rolls his eyes and walks on. Susanna slumps to the floor,
exhausted.

INT. SECLUSION ROOM

Polly is huddled in a corner in a straight jacket.

POLLY
(sings softly)
You make me feel
like a natural woman...

CUT TO:

INT. MELVIN'S OFFICE - DAY

The next morning, Susanna is half asleep.

MELVIN
You look sleepy. Are you sleepy?
(pause)
Perhaps you want to sleep with me.

Susanna's eyes pop open.

SUSANNA
What!? I'd rather sleep with Nixon
than sleep with you. I'd rather
sleep with Kissinger.

MELVIN
(nods)
Can you say more about that?

SUSANNA
I'm "sleepy" because somebody
cracked up, and I sat outside the
seclusion room all night long
singing. That is why I want to
sleep. And not with you.

MELVIN
Well, I appreciate your telling me
that. Tell me about the girl who
"cracked up." Why do you think she
got so upset?

SUSANNA
(full of emotion)
I don't know. Georgina says she
wears a slipcover. Maybe her seams
just started to... come apart.

MELVIN
I see.

Melvin nods and smiles, pleased about something.

SUSANNA
Can we just sit here Melvin? Could
it just be peaceful for a while?

MELVIN

It's entirely up to you.

Susanna closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

Susanna enters to find that Georgina has tie-dyed everything in sight: Bedspreads, sheets, curtains. And she's dressed head to toe tie-dye too.

GEORGINA

I told you I was going to do something. Bastards.

There's a whole pile of tie-dye on her bed too.

SUSANNA

Wow!

LILLIAN

Checks.
(sees it)
Oh my gosh.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE NURSE'S STATION - DAY

JANIS JOPLIN'S "TRY, JUST A LITTLE BIT HARDER" CAN BE HEARD BLASTING from Lisa's room, as Georgina, Susanna, Lisa, and The Martian's Girlfriend march down the hall, decked out in tie-dye.

WE SEE Lillian and Valerie conferring through the glass. Valerie sees the girls and goes out to the hall. It's the first time she (or we) have seen Susanna not in black.

VALERIE

Love those colors on you, girl.

SUSANNA

(unsure)
Really?

VALERIE

Susanna, your parents are coming this afternoon. It's your mother's birthday. You want to see her? What do you think?

Susanna looks to Lisa. Valerie notices.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH BELKNAP PORCH - DAY

A few minutes later. It's cold. February. Lisa and Susanna are standing outside talking.

SUSANNA

I don't know, I guess I should see her. Even if she did lock me up. I mean--it's her birthday.

LISA

So? I haven't seen my mother in two years.

SUSANNA

Really?

LISA

Well, they live in Mexico. My mother says "it costs a fortune to come up, an absolute fortune!" Like I care. You think I'm crazy? The whole family's bonkers, I'm just the designated hitter.

(like a mom)

"She's the reason I'm an alcoholic."

(like a dad)

"She's the reason I broke your nose." They got this big house in Mexico with a gate around it to keep the Mexicans out? Bo-ring. It's like being dead. You got to shoot speed just to stay alive. Man, you can get anything down there, right in the drug store. Mexico'd be great, if it weren't for my parents. I'll off myself before I go back there, I swear.

(stomps cigarette butt)

You want to see your folks?

SUSANNA

No. But--

LISA

Well, they locked you up because you're crazy, right? If you're crazy, you don't have to do a goddam thing.

Susanna smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

Sonia is on the phone in the lobby. Paul paces nearby.

SONIA

(into phone)

Are you sure you don't want to meet
in the coffee shop for just a few
minutes? Your father is dying to
see you...

(laughs)

No, no, I have way too many
birthdays to be any cause for
celebration. It's fine. Fine!
We'll call you next week.

She hangs up and turns to Paul.

SONIA

(shocked)

She doesn't want to see us. She
says she's too upset.

PAUL

I'm paying five hundred dollars a
week and she's too upset to see us?

SONIA

I'll just use the bathroom, and
then we'll go home.

She goes into the...

LADIES ROOM

She locks the door and runs the water. And then she starts to
cry. She sees her make-up is ruined and tries to stop the mask
from running down her face. But she can't stop crying.

IN THE LOBBY

Paul looks out the window.

PAUL'S POV

A nurse passes by with Polly, who now walks with a thorazine
shuffle, kind of like a motorized corpse.

PAUL shudders and checks his watch. Sonia appears behind him,
cheerful and composed, her face bare.

SONIA

All set?

PAUL

All set.

He hasn't noticed the change in her. He takes her arm, holding on tightly, and leads her out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Susanna is still in the phone booth, a little shaky. Lisa goes into the booth next to hers and picks up the phone.

LISA

(yells into phone)

How'd it go?

Susanna picks up her phone and they yell back and forth.

SUSANNA

(yells)

I did it!

LISA

(yells)

Let's celebrate!

SUSANNA

(yells)

How?

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S STATION - DAY

Valerie and Lillian are present. Lisa and Susanna have put in a request. Several of the other girls are huddled behind them.

LILLIAN

Ice cream, in the middle of winter?

VALERIE

(picks up phone)

If I can round up enough student nurses to take you--

LISA

(to Lillian)

After all, we can't fucking ski.

VALERIE

Let's see. Lisa's on one to one's, Susanna's on one to two's, Georgina and Daisy are on Grounds...

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH BELKNAP - DAY

It's a sunny winter day, with plenty of snow on the ground. Susanna, Lisa, Polly, Cynthia, The Martian's Girlfriend, and Daisy set off down the hill with Lillian and three nervous student nurses, Anne, Mary, and ROSE--who are the same age as their charges.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILL STREET - DAY

Anne and Mary are walking with Susanna and Lisa, who like them.

LISA

So how's the engagement, Mary?

MARY

Oh, you know. Joe wants me to do it before the wedding. I don't know.

LISA

(wisely)

Use a condom.

Mary blushes and nods. Anne is confiding to Susanna.

ANNE

And the thing is my grade wasn't that good so I don't know if the scholarship'll even be renewed.

SUSANNA

(concerned)

So work hard the rest of the semester and bring your grades up.

ANNE

I know. You're right.

Lillian is trying to keep up with Daisy.

LILLIAN

Wait up there, Daisy?

DAISY

Fuck you.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAILY'S ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

The girls march in. The nurses huddle closer to them, nervous.

CUT TO:

INT. BAILY'S ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

An old fashioned parlor, filled with suburban matrons. The girls, in tie-dye except for Cynthia, are at the counter muttering about flavors. Nervous nurses cling like velcro.

THE SUBURBAN MATRONS are trying, unsuccessfully, not to stare at the loonies. RON, a pimply faced teenager is behind the counter. Susanna looks around at the matrons.

SUSANNA'S POV

Mrs. Neilson is having coffee and chatting with friends.

SUSANNA

Oh God.

SUSANNA, in an effort to hide from view, gets too close to Daisy-- who stomps on her foot.

SUSANNA

Ow!

LILLIAN

(to Ron)

We'll have ten ice cream cones?

RON

What kind?

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

Peppermint stick.

POLLY

It's just called peppermint.

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

Peppermint dick.

POLLY

Honestly.

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

(yells)

PEPPERMINT CLIT!

ANGLE ON THE ROOM

Every single one of the matrons turns and stares.

ON THE GIRLS

Lillian nips The Martian's Girlfriend with her elbow.

LILLIAN
She'll have peppermint?

DAISY
Hot fudge sundae, chocolate,
jimmies, whipped cream, cherry.

RON
Anybody want nuts on these?

All ten women hold their breath.

SUSANNA
I don't think we need them.

The girls and nurses bust out laughing.

THE MATRONS shake their heads, pityingly.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME

A few minutes later, Daisy, Anne, Susanna and Lisa are eating ice cream at a table.

DAISY
I got an apartment.

LISA
Bullshit.

SUSANNA
(doesn't buy it)
You got an apartment?

DAISY
My father bought it for me.

LISA
(sotto, to Susanna)
A love nest.

SUSANNA
Wait a minute. You're getting out?

DAISY
In two weeks.

SUSANNA
Uh-huh. How big is the apartment,
Daisy?

DAISY

One bedroom, L-shaped living room,
eat-in chicken.

SUSANNA

You mean, eat-in kitchen?

DAISY

That's what I said, asshole.

ANNE

What do you like best about it?

DAISY

The sign.

SUSANNA

What sign?

DAISY

"If you lived here, you'd be home
by now." Every day, people will
drive past and read that sign and
think, "Yeah, if I lived here I'd
be home," and I will be home.
Motherfuckers.

Lisa and Susanna look at each other and roll their eyes. Mrs.
Neilson stops by the table on her way out.

MRS. NEILSON

(so sensitive)

Susanna. How are you dear?

Susanna looks at Lisa, who crosses her eyes. Susanna turns to
Mrs. Neilson and smiles a wide "crazy" smile.

SUSANNA

(loony)

I'm fine!

Mrs. Neilson is too close to Daisy, who elbows her in the ribs.

MRS. NEILSON

Ow!

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH BELKNAP - DAY

The girls enter, singing. The nurses sing too.

GIRLS

Re-re-re-re, re-re-re-re,
gimme some respect,
when you get home...

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH BELKNAP PORCH - DAY

A few weeks later, Daisy is leaving with her father, a sad looking man, who adores her. The girls and Valerie are on the porch waving good-bye.

POLLY

Good luck, Daisy!

GIRLS

Bye, Daisy!

Daisy and her father get to their Buick. Daisy turns, and, for the first time, smiles.

DAISY

Bye bye!

The other girls go back to the ward. Susanna turns to Lisa. Valerie listens to their conversation.

SUSANNA

How can she be getting out? She's the craziest person I've ever met.

LISA

I told you. He's in love with her.

They start to go back to the ward.

SUSANNA

Boy, if she can make it out there, anybody can.

LISA

She'll be back. She comes back every year for her birthday. You'll see.

Valerie sighs and follows them inside.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S STATION - DAY

A few days later. Valerie is examining Susanna's face. It looks like it has a ping pong ball on one side.

VALERIE

Uh-oh. Wisdom tooth. We better go over to the dentist.

SUSANNA

The hospital dentist!?! His fingers taste like ear wax, Valerie.

Valerie thinks for a moment.

VALERIE

How 'bout I take you to my own dentist in Boston?

SUSANNA

(touched)

You'd really take me?

VALERIE

Why not?

CUT TO:

INT. CAB - DAY

It's a beautiful spring day outside, and Susanna looks around, excited, as they start to leave the hospital grounds. Once in a while, she steals a look at the DRIVER, who's young and very handsome. Valerie notices and smiles.

INT. CAB - DAY

They pass Waverly Square and Baily's. Susanna's taking in the suburban sights, such as they are, having a fine time.

INT. CAB - DAY

The cab moves through downtown Boston. The buildings are tall. The streets are filled with people, rushing, purposeful. Susanna stares straight ahead of her, anxious and scared.

VALERIE

Look around! You've been in the hospital eight months now. Doesn't cost to look.

SUSANNA

(stunned)

I've been locked up eight months?

VALERIE

Uh-huh.

(to the Driver)

You know what? We got some time, I think we'll just get out and walk.

DRIVER

Whatever you say.

He slows the car. Susanna looks wary.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMONWEALTH AVENUE - DAY

It's one of the most beautiful streets in Boston. Especially now, in April, with the magnolias in full bloom. Valerie holds the door for Susanna, who slowly gets out of the cab. Once out, Susanna looks around in awe.

VALERIE

Nice time of year.

SUSANNA

Yeah.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOSTON COMMON - DAY

Valerie and Susanna walk past A PAIR OF LOVERS, holding hands. Susanna stares; a tourist in the real world. They pass a group of YOUNG BLACKS in Afros and dashikis.

SUSANNA

New style, huh?

VALERIE

You bet.

They pass A NEIL YOUNG CLONE singing "Old Man." Susanna looks puzzled. They pass a group of YOUNG SOLDIERS, home on leave.

VALERIE

Hey, how's that soldier of yours?

SUSANNA

(realizes)

I... haven't heard.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK BAY STREET - DAY

They pass an old bookstore.

SUSANNA

Oh, Valerie--can we go in?

VALERIE

Why not? It's a public place.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Susanna moves up and down the aisles, like a kid in a candy store. Valerie tries to keep up. They come to the Art Section. Susanna finds a used book on Vermeer.

SUSANNA
 (leafs through)
 Oh--there's this painting I love--
 (finds it)
 Look!

VALERIE
 (reads the title)
 "Girl Interrupted at Her Music."

SUSANNA
 Can I buy it? I want to buy it.

VALERIE
 (laughs)
 If you've got the money, go on.

Next, Susanna moves down the Poetry aisle, grabbing books like candy on the way.

CUT TO:

EXT. TREMONT STREET - DAY

The theater district. Susanna looks up at the Marquees, not recognizing the titles. She peeks in a cafe. She looks at all the posters for local events that have been plastered along a wall. Valerie's getting a kick out of watching her. Finally, they come to an office building.

VALERIE
 Here we are, Susanna, we're here.

CUT TO:

INT. DENTIST OFFICE - DAY

The SECOND DENTIST is clean and dapper. Susanna sits in his chair. Valerie's nearby. The dentist holds a needle.

DENTIST 2
 Just lie back and count to ten.

SUSANNA
 (no fear)
 Okay.

BLACKOUT.

FADE IN:

Susanna sits up.

SUSANNA
How long did that take?

DENTIST 2
Oh nothing, in and out.

SUSANNA
Like five seconds? Two minutes?

DENTIST 2
Valerie--

VALERIE
All right, up you go.

SUSANNA
It's my time and I need to know how
much it was!

DENTIST 2
(to Valerie)
I'll let you handle this.

He rolls his eyes and walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. CAB - DAY

Susanna is looking out the window.

VALERIE
Here.
(hands her tooth)
I snitched it for you.

SUSANNA'S POV

They pass a high rise with a sign that says, "If you lived
here, you'd be home now."

ON SUSANNA AND VALERIE

SUSANNA
Thanks. But, you see, I've lost
some time, Valerie, and I need to
know how much. I need to know.

VALERIE
You were out about sixty seconds.

SUSANNA

Sixty seconds--eight months--it was
my time. My time.

VALERIE

Yes it was.

Susanna continues to look out the window, grabbing the sights.
Valerie smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. TV ROOM - NIGHT

Polly, The Martian's Girlfriend, Georgina, and Janet are
watching TV. Georgina paces in front of the television.

ON THE TV

Student protesters are being clubbed by policemen.

SUSANNA runs in.

SUSANNA

Where's Lisa?

GEORGINA

Oh that's a good question.
Students are being clubbed all over
the television. About a million
people died today in Viet Nam, and
you want to know where's Lisa--

POLLY

We got a letter from Daisy today.
With pictures of her apartment.
Look!

She hands Susanna some Polaroids, which Susanna quickly scans.

INSERT pictures of a modern living room, bedroom, and kitchen,
sparsely furnished.

JANET

And she has a dog. And a
boyfriend.

SUSANNA

(hands pictures back)
Nice. Where's Lisa?

A moment of silence. Then--

GEORGINA

She's gone.

SUSANNA

Lisa's gone?

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

(points to Mars)

Got her. Took her away. Bye-bye.
I heard it on the channels. Why
didn't they take me? Why? Why?

GEORGINA

Because you're not organized,
that's why.

POLLY

That's not very nice, Georgina.

(to Susanna)

She ran away this afternoon. Don't
worry, they'll find her by morning,
they always do.

GEORGINA

(upset)

Because she's not organized! If
she had any sense, she'd join up
with SDS--or the Panthers. That's
what I'm going to do. Wade has a
friend--

Susanna runs out of the room.

GEORGINA (CONT'D)

Hey!

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark and empty. Susanna stares out the window,
alone.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

Susanna is still in bed. Dr. Wick enters.

DR. WICK

Good morning.

(refers to chart)

Yesterday we were discussing your
mother, how you often felt
abandoned by her.

SUSANNA

(sits up)
Did they find Lisa?

DR. WICK

And now your friend is gone as well.

SUSANNA

So?

DR. WICK

Do you see some connection?

SUSANNA

I see the connection you're trying to make. If I talk about my mother for another hundred hours will that bring Lisa back?

DR. WICK

I'm afraid not, Susanna.

SUSANNA

SO?

Suddenly, they hear a commotion in the hallway--

LISA (O.S.)

GET YOUR FUCKING HANDS OFF ME YOU
SCHIZOPHRENIC BAT!

Susanna and Dr. Wick jump up and run out to the...

HALLWAY

John and Hector have Lisa by the arms. Mrs. McWeeny has her by the hair, so tightly her eyes bug out. Lisa's high as a kite and kicking whomever she can.

MRS. MCWEENY

Now Lisa, we all have to eat a peck of dirt sometime--

LISA

Get your hands off me, cheese pussy!

DR. WICK

No language, please--

The girls pop out of their rooms and follow as Lisa is dragged down the hall. Lisa kicks at Hector.

LISA
 (awful accent)
 Dejame, puto! Maricon!

HECTOR
 (upset)
 Shut up, you just shut up, you--

DR. WICK
 Take her to seclusion, please.

LISA
 Why? Am I contagious? Scared
 you're gonna catch it, doc? Whew,
 baby--
 (wails)
 'Cause you make me fe-ee-eel,
 you make me fe-ee-eel--

Dr. Wick follows, as they drag Lisa down the hall. Susanna runs after them and calls to Lisa--

SUSANNA
 How was it?

LISA
 Great! I got laid three times. If
 I were a man, these assholes
 would've bought me a beer.

A DOOR SLAMS.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE SECLUSION ROOM - NIGHT

Susanna peeks through the door.

SUSANNA'S POV

Through the chicken-wired window, we see Lisa, lying face down, with restraints around her wrists and ankles.

SUSANNA
 How come you didn't tell me you
 were going to run away?

LISA
 Hey, man. You were in Boston. I
 thought you were gonna run.

SUSANNA
 (hurt)
 I'd have told you.

LISA

So pardonnez-moi. Next time we
make it together. Deal?

SUSANNA

Deal.

CUT TO:

INT. TV ROOM - NIGHT

A few weeks later. Susanna and Lisa are playing cards. Chet
Huntley comes on the news.

ON THE TV

CHET HUNTLEY

Civil rights leader Martin Luther
King was assassinated in Memphis
today while supporting a civil
sanitation workers' strike. His
death led to riots in 125 cities--

THE GIRLS

watch, stunned and impotent. Valerie runs in and watches.
There are tears in her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TV ROOM - NIGHT

Two months later. The girls are watching...

ON THE TV

DAVID BRINKLEY

Senator Robert Kennedy was
assassinated today in Los Angeles.
Kennedy had just won the California
primary--

GEORGINA jumps up and gets in Brinkley's face.

GEORGINA

Oh my God. They shot Kennedy?

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

Again? They shot him again?

GEORGINA

(screams at her)

Bobby! Bobby, you idiot! They
shot Bobby!

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

Who's Bobby? Do I know Bobby?

GEORGINA

They're going to kill them.
They're going to kill them all!

LISA

They have to kill them. Don't you see? Otherwise it'll never settle down.

GEORGINA

Remember how they gagged Bobby Seale? They did that to me. When I had shock.

LISA

Don't you see the difference? They had to gag him because they're afraid people will believe what he says. Nobody's gonna kill you, Georgina. 'Cause he has what we're never gonna have.

GEORGINA

What?

SUSANNA

Credibility.

LISA

Credibility, man.

GEORGINA

I'm going to do something--

SUSANNA

We're in a loony bin, Georgina, what can we possibly do?

LISA

I'll do something.

CUT TO:

INT. TV ROOM - DAY

All of the furniture, the TV, the sprinkler system, and the two catatonics in their chairs, have been wrapped in toilet paper. Mrs. McWeeny pops her head in.

MRS. MCWEENY

Checks?

Her eyes narrow. Her nose twitches every so slightly too.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORCH - DAY

A bright sunny summer morning. Susanna and Lisa have put four chairs together to make two "beach chairs." Susanna has on her usual black mini and a rolled up black t-shirt. Lisa has rolled her jeans up to her knees. They're leaning back, smoking, and copping some rays. Lisa is snapping her fingers and singing the Rolling Stones' "Nineteenth Nervous Breakdown."

LISA

(sings)

Here comes your nineteenth
nervous breakdown--

(does guitar line)

Dddd1-dddd1-dddd1--ddd1--

Here comes your nineteenth
nervous breakdown--

Dr. Wick steps out to the porch from the ward and stands in front of Lisa.

DR. WICK

Lisa?

LISA

(guitar line)

Dddd1-dddd1-dddd1-ddddd1--

Sit down, Dr. Wick, take your shirt
off.

DR. WICK

I'd like to speak with you for a
moment, if you don't mind.

Susanna watches out of the corner of her eyes.

LISA

(without moving)

I don't mind, but could you move a
little, you're blocking my rays.

DR. WICK

You may prefer we speak in private--

LISA

Why? I can't take a shit in
private--

DR. WICK

(quickly)

Very well.

She sits on the porch railing.

DR. WICK

I have some very good news, Lisa.
You are going to be leaving the
hospital.

Susanna sits up, startled, but Lisa does not move.

LISA

Yeah?

DR. WICK

Your parents will be arriving from
Mexico in two weeks. They'll be
taking you out of the hospital and
back home with them.

Lisa turns on her side and looks at Dr. Wick.

LISA

Why? Don't you wuv me anymore?

DR. WICK

They will meet you at the airport.

SUSANNA

(upset)

But why?

LISA

(sits up)

'Cause they're tired of paying for
me to be crazy.

(pause; laughs)

And they don't want to have to come
all the way out here to pick me up.

Lisa and Susanna exchange a look.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

Susanna and Lisa enter quickly and immediately start to plan.
Georgina's in bed, depressed, facing the wall.

LISA

I got a junky friend who joined a
commune in San Francisco. We can
stay with them till we get our own
place.

SUSANNA

How do we get there?

LISA

We hitch hike, of course. If we have to, we turn a few tricks.

Susanna looks skeptical about this plan.

LISA

Okay, well you figure the money out. I can't think of everything for Chrissake.

SUSANNA

(shakes her)

Georgina!

GEORGINA

Leave me alone.

SUSANNA

How much money do you have, Georgina?

LISA

Are you kidding? Georgina MacDonald? MacDonald Douglas?

SUSANNA

She's probably lying--

GEORGINA

(wails)

It's true!

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Janet, The Martian's Girlfriend, Susanna, Cynthia, and Polly sit in a circle on the floor.

SUSANNA

(in Dr. Wick's accent)

Girls, I've called this meeting because I have some very good news. Lisa is getting out of the hospital.

JANET

She is?

GEORGINA

Her parents are meeting her at the airport in two weeks--

POLLY

Oh no!

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

Airport? Airport? Wow!

SUSANNA

(overlaps)

And we are going to create a little diversion so only one nurse will be available to take her in the cab and she can jump out at a red light and run away.

POLLY

What are we going to do?

SUSANNA

Well, girls...

("sighs")

we're just going to have to act crazy.

The girls look at each other.

CYNTHIA

I think we can swing that.

SUSANNA

(drops the imitation)

And, by the way, she's joining a commune in San Francisco so we're also going to have to raise about five hundred bucks.

JANET

What? How're we going to do that?

SUSANNA

(Dr. Wick's accent)

Girls, who else do you turn to when you're in need...?

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Georgina is on the phone with her father.

GEORGINA

(into phone)

See, dad, there's this correspondence course I want to take... Oh, uh, Business, Economics, you know...

IN THE NEXT PHONE BOOTH...

Polly is on the phone with her mother.

POLLY

(into phone)

I know we haven't spoken for a couple of months--... Oh, is it a year?... Well, I just wanted to let you know how much I love you...

IN THE NEXT PHONE BOOTH...

The Martian's Girlfriend is on the phone.

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

(into phone)

Who's Billy? Do I know Billy?... He's my brother? Okay, put him on.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Susanna and Janet fill in "Coffee Shop" next to their names on the blackboard. Both are on "Grounds" priviledges.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Janet is having lunch with her PARENTS. They are stern looking. And rather fat.

JANET

(looks at menu)

I'll have the tuna fish. And a coke.

(pause)

And a sundae.

Her parents beam.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Susanna is having lunch with Sonia.

SUSANNA

The thing is, I'd really like to get some new clothes. I mean, everything I have is--

(glances at her sweater in mock horror)

black!

SONIA
(delighted)
I'll pick up a few things for you!

SUSANNA
Well, I have priviledges now and--

SONIA
We'll go together!

SUSANNA
Well, my therapist thinks it's
important that I make my own
decisions, so--

SONIA
Of course, if you don't want my
opinion--

Suddenly, Susanna drops the act.

SUSANNA
(simply)
You know what? I don't need
clothes that bad.

She leaves. Sonia is mystified. She looks around hoping no
one has seen.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL COFFEE SHOP - DAY

As she leaves, Susanna passes a crow.

SUSANNA
Grrrr.

Cynthia approaches and digs into her pockets.

CYNTHIA
Hey. Here's a few bucks for Lisa.
(lies)
My folks are out of town.

SUSANNA
Thanks.

As Cynthia goes into the coffee shop, she remembers--

CYNTHIA
Oh--Dr. Wick has called a Hall
Meeting at four.

SUSANNA

Why?

CYNTHIA

Who am I, the Amazing Kreskin?

Worried, Susanna heads back to the ward.

CUT TO:

INT. TV ROOM - DAY

Dr. Wick is presiding at a Hall Meeting. The girls are sitting in a circle, Lisa in her yellow chair. Valerie, Mrs. McWeeny, and Lillian are also in attendance.

DR. WICK

Girls, I've called this meeting because I have some very bad news and I wanted you to hear it from me so there will be no confusion and we can get back to normal just as soon as possible.

Susanna and Lisa exchange a look.

DR. WICK

(clears her throat)
I believe you all knew Daisy?

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

Who's Daisy? Do I know Daisy?

DR. WICK

Daisy was a patient here, Melinda. Up until just a few months ago. And it is my great displeasure to tell you all that Daisy is dead.

ON SUSANNA

The color leaves her face, and she begins to imagine in her mind...

INT. DAISY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A modern living room, with a hand-me-down couch from Daisy's parents. THE CAMERA MOVES down the hall to the eat-in-kitchen where an untouched chicken waits on the counter. THE CAMERA CONTINUES to the bedroom... where Daisy hangs.

POLLY (V.O.)

How?

DR. WICK (V.O.)
I'm afraid she hung herself this morning.

POLLY (V.O.)
In her new apartment?

DR. WICK (V.O.)
I'm afraid so.

BACK TO THE ROOM

SUSANNA
(upset)
Was it her birthday?

DR. WICK
(surprised)
Why... yes. Why do you ask, Susanna?

Susanna looks at Lisa.

SUSANNA
Just wondered.

Georgina starts to cry.

JANET
What about the dog?

SUSANNA
There was no dog. Don't worry about it.

DR. WICK
On a brighter note, I believe you all know that Lisa will be going home in the morning--

CUT TO:

INT. LISA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lisa is lying on her bed, feet up the wall, listening to JANICE JOPLIN'S "LITTLE GIRL BLUE." After a moment, The Martian's Girlfriend runs in and hands Lisa a wad of bills.

LISA
Hey. Wow. Thanks.

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND
Wow!

She runs out, and Janet steps in and shyly hands Lisa some bills.

LISA
(sits up)
Oh man--thanks!

Janet smiles wanly and quickly leaves. Georgina enters, hands over a thick wad of bills, and breaks into tears.

LISA
(re: money)
Holy shit! Hey, too bad about Daisy, huh? I mean I hated the bitch, but still--

Georgina hugs Lisa tight and runs out of the room. Polly enters and hands Lisa her wad of bills.

LISA
Thanks, Polly, thanks a lot. Hey, Polly, you ever thought of joining a commune?

POLLY
Do they have children there?

LISA
Sure.

POLLY
I scare children, Lisa. But that's nice of you. Take care of yourself, Lisa.

Polly hugs Lisa and leaves. A tear escapes Lisa's eye, as Susanna enters and hands her a few bills.

SUSANNA
Sorry it isn't more.

LISA
(wipes tear fast)
No problem, man.

She goes to her bookshelf and takes out a bible. The inside has been gouged out and she removes some pills.

LISA
Hey, I tongued my meds this week, wanna get high?

SUSANNA
You know what? I kind of hate drugs.

LISA
That's cool. So--
(swallowing pills)
Think you can make it to the
Greyhound by Tuesday night?

Susanna doesn't reply. Lisa starts to pack.

LISA (CONT'D)
You're not gonna be a cheese pussy
are you? 'Cause you could pass,
you know.

SUSANNA
For what?

LISA
Normal. You're smart, you got
class. You could probably even get
a real good job. All I ever did
was sell lemonade and turn tricks.

SUSANNA
(with difficulty)
It'd make it harder for you.
I'll... catch up with you later.

LISA
Why?

SUSANNA
I need--

LISA
What? You need what?

Susanna is fighting tears.

SUSANNA
Daisy's... dead.

LISA
So? What should she have done?
Sat in her kitchen eating chicken
for another fifty years?

SUSANNA
I don't know. I just--

LISA
What?

SUSANNA

(breaking)

I just need to know somebody can--
be okay out there.

LISA

Oh, I'll be okay all right.

(waves money)

Look at all this! Hey, come on
man,

don't cry. Listen, I'll call you
when I get to San Francisco, all
right? I'll use a code name.

(thinks)

Gigi. I loved that movie, man.
Everybody was really nice. You're
not going to cry are you? Hey, I
know--let's celebrate.

SUSANNA

(sadly)

What? Watch TV?

LISA

Later for TV.

SUSANNA

Cards?

LISA

We can play cards when we're dead.
It's my last night, man! Let's
dance.

Lisa puts on THE ROLLING STONES and starts to dance like Mick Jagger. After a moment or two, Susanna gets up and joins her, tentatively at first. Little by little, she starts to let go. Lisa grabs her hand and they dance a kind of wild lindy, with twirls and everything. After a while, The Martian's Girlfriend wanders in and dances too.

ANGLE ON A BARBIE DOLL

covered with tatoos, hanging by a foot upside down.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Lisa is dressed as usual, but carrying an expensive suitcase. Valerie is accompanying her down the hall.

VALERIE

Lillian and I are going to take you to the plane. I'm going to miss you, girl.

Lisa smiles. Valerie puts an arm around her. As they pass the TV room, there is a LOUD CRASH, and Valerie and Lisa run in.

THE TV ROOM

Georgina has just thrown the TV against the wall. She and The Martian's Girlfriend are kicking it to pieces. Susanna, Janet, and Polly are very "upset".

GEORGINA

(kicking the TV)

SHIT! MOTHERFUCKERS! Tell the truth for a change! NUNS DON'T FLY!

POLLY

("wails")

The nun! The nun! She killed the nun!

SUSANNA

This fucking plaaaaace!

VALERIE

(to Lisa)

Do not move.

(yells to the hall)

Lillian!

Valerie runs out. The girls give each other the peace sign and keep yelling.

JANET

I hate that nun! And I hate THAT GIRL, too!

GEORGINA

Shut up, you skinny little--

Georgina nudges Lisa.

LISA

(joining in)

You shut up, you schizophrenic bat!

JANET

I hate you! I hate you! I hate all of you! Hate, hate, hate, hate, hate!

Janet starts throwing chairs, kicking furniture. But it's too real to be a performance. She's unleashing the anger of a lifetime. Enter Valerie, Lillian and John, fanned out in trouble shooting formation. Valerie has a tranquillizer and a cup of water.

VALERIE
All right, Janet, calm down.

JANET
HATE! HATE!

Valerie and John move towards Lisa.

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND
Uh-oh. Uh-oh. Uh-oh.

She tries to squeeze herself between the radiator and the wall.

VALERIE
(to Lisa)
Lillian will take you to the airport.
(to John)
You and I are going to have to stay here.

LISA
Okay.

VALERIE
(hands her a pill)
Take this, Lisa. I don't want any trouble.

LISA
Okay.

Lisa takes (tongues) the pill.

VALERIE
(to Lillian)
Go!

Lillian leads Lisa out.

JANET
(kicking John)
Hate, hate, hate, hate!

VALERIE
(to John)
Get her some wet sheets.

John goes for Janet.

DR. WICK
I know many of you are upset by
Lisa's departure...

Finally, Susanna raises her hand.

DR. WICK (CONT'D)
Susanna?

SUSANNA
Yes, I have a question I've been
wanting to ask for a long time.

DR. WICK
Very good. What is it, Susanna?

SUSANNA
Dr. Wick... What's crazy?

There are murmurs and giggles throughout the room.

DR. WICK
Well, it's not important what I
think, Susanna. What do you think?

SUSANNA
Answering questions with questions?

DR. WICK
Go on.

SUSANNA
Saying "Go on" when you have no
answer?

Dr. Wick nods, so she doesn't have to say "Go on."

SUSANNA
Nodding because you're afraid to
say something stupid?

The Martian's Girlfriend laughs.

DR. WICK
Why are you avoiding your own
feelings, Susanna?

SUSANNA
Turning things around? Giving
people drugs that make your life
easier! Shit. Lisa's not crazy.
Half the people in here aren't
crazy. They just tell the crazy
truth.

There's a moment of silence. Then--

CYNTHIA

Yeah.

Dr. Wick clears her throat and carefully considers her response.

DR. WICK

You are telling your truth,
Susanna. And that's a very good
thing.

She smiles. There's a piece of lettuce in her teeth.

SUSANNA

You have lettuce in your teeth, Dr.
Wick.

Dr. Wick doesn't know whether to believe her.

SUSANNA

It's the truth.

DR. WICK

Then, thank you for letting me
know.

She smiles again, teeth covered this time.

DR. WICK

Anyone else?

The girls smile.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

Susanna's next in line for Meds. Mrs. McWeeny proffers her tray.

MRS. MCWEENY

Medication, dear.

Susanna takes a swipe at the tray.

SUSANNA

Later for medication.
(shrugs)

You're getting addicted to my
taking it.

She moves on down the hall.

POLLY
(to no one in particular)
Fuck you! Fuck you!

VALERIE
Calm down, Polly.

John takes Janet out. Susanna yells at the top of her lungs.

SUSANNA
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

She runs to the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH BELKNAP - DAY

Lisa and Lillian are about to get into a cab. Lisa looks up at the window.

ON THE WINDOW

Susanna looks out at Lisa... and smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TV ROOM - DAY

The next morning. The room's back in shape. The girls file in for a Hall Meeting. Susanna stares at Lisa's yellow chair and, after a moment's hesitation, sits down. Valerie notices.

DR. WICK
Girls, I have some bad news concerning Lisa, and I want you to hear it from me so there will be no confusion. Lisa has run away.

Lillian looks down, ashamed. The girls "gasp."

DR. WICK
I'm sure she will be found and returned to her parents soon. Meanwhile, I thought it would be good for us to talk about our feelings as a group, so that things can get back to normal as soon as possible. I'm sure you have questions. Who would like to begin?

No one.

CUT TO:

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

Susanna is on her way to therapy, when Melvin drives up in a shiny new green sports car. Susanna laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. MELVIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Susanna bursts in, laughing.

SUSANNA
Melvin! I had an insight!

MELVIN
(pleased)
Yes?

SUSANNA
You have three cars, right?

He nods...

SUSANNA
A station wagon, a sedan, and a sports car?

He nods again.

SUSANNA
It's the psyche! See, the station wagon is the ego, sturdy and reliable, and the sedan is the superego, because it's how you want to present yourself, you know, powerful and impressive, and the sports car is the id--it's the id because it's irrepressible and fast and dangerous--and maybe a little forbidden, right?
(smiles)
It's new isn't it?

He doesn't nod.

SUSANNA
Don't you think it's great? Don't you think it's great that your cars are your psyche?

He doesn't nod.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM

The lights are out and they're lying in their beds.

SUSANNA

She must be in San Francisco by now. You know, a lot of great poets live in San Francisco. Ferlinghetti, Ginsberg. Gregory Corso, Orlovsky...

GEORGINA

Are you going to lie there and count poets?

SUSANNA

Only the live ones, yeah.

(recites)

"So I won't hang around in my hospital shift, repeating The Black Mass and all of it. I say Live, Live because of the sun, the dream, the excitable gift." Ann Sexton wrote that.

GEORGINA

Is she from San Francisco?

SUSANNA

No, but she's alive.

GEORGINA

Good. Can we go to sleep?

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

Dr. Wick enters and sits down for their session. Susanna is The Poems of Allen Ginsburg.

DR. WICK

Good morning.

SUSANNA

I want to request Town privileges, Dr. Wick. I think I'm ready--

DR. WICK

(smiles)

Perhaps you think you are ready to leave the hospital.

SUSANNA

Perhaps I do.

DR. WICK

Since it's such a lovely day, why don't we have our conversation outside?

SUSANNA

Okay.

They start to leave.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

Have you read Allen Ginsburg, Dr. Wick?

DR. WICK

No, I don't believe I have.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH BELKNAP - DAY

Dr. and Susanna move towards some chairs on the grass in front of the ward. They pass Cynthia, Polly, and Janet who are smoking on the porch.

DR. WICK

Have you thought about what you might want to do when you leave?

SUSANNA

I want to write. I want to be a writer.

DR. WICK

Well, that's a nice hobby. Have you thought about how you're going to make a living?

They sit.

SUSANNA

I'm going to write.

DR. WICK

Have you ever had a job?

SUSANNA

Of course. My job in the Harvard Accounting office.

(laughs)

And my job breaking au gratin dishes.

DR. WICK (CONT'D)
I see. And will you live with your
parents?

Susanna rolls her eyes and looks away.

DR. WICK (CONT'D)
Perhaps you need some time to think
about these things?

SUSANNA'S POV

A police car is pulling up the hill.

DR. WICK (O.C.)
A little more time to think things
through...

SUSANNA jumps up.

ON THE PORCH

Valerie comes out of the ward and watches with the other girls.

ON DR. WICK AND SUSANNA

Dr. Wick has been expecting Lisa and proceeds with calm.

DR. WICK
I'm sorry to say that Lisa did not
think her plans through. The
police found her at the Port
Authority bus station in New York
City. Prostituting herself. For
drug money, I presume. It's
terrible how a young woman may be
taken advantage of...

Susanna runs to the police car. The door opens and Lisa is led
out in handcuffs. She's dirty and worn, and this time she's
not kicking at all. She looks at Susanna and quickly looks
away. Dr. Wick goes to the POLICEMAN.

DR. WICK
I'm Dr. Wick, officer. I believe,
we just spoke on the phone.
(calls to the porch)
Valerie?

Valerie comes over, furious what Dr. Wick has done. She
watches as the fight trickles out of Susanna, sees the shame on
Lisa's face.

POLICEMAN
Well, here she is, ladies.

Dr. Wick and Valerie take Lisa's arms.

DR. WICK
Thank you, officer.

The policeman steals a curious look at the other girls and gets back in the car.

DR. WICK (CONT'D)
(to Lisa)
We'll be taking you over to the
Maximum Security Ward, dear.
You'll be safer there. Will you
excuse me, Susanna? We'll continue
our discussion tomorrow if you
don't mind.

Susanna watches, horrified, as Lisa is led away.

CUT TO:

INT. MAXIMUM SECURITY WARD - DAY

Susanna, Polly, and Georgina have come to visit Lisa. John has accompanied them. A nurse unlocks the double doors and they go inside. They walk down the hall to a...

NURSE'S STATION

It's encased in chicken wire glass, not open like theirs.

POLLY
I don't like this.

JOHN
You go on and see her. I'll meet
you back here.

He goes inside, and the girls continue down the hall with trepidation. They pass a bathroom. The toilet has no seats.

SUSANNA
Why no seats?

GEORGINA
Could rip off a seat and whack
somebody, I don't know.

They pass rooms that are like cells, nothing inside but bare mattresses. The windows are high and barred. In one, A PATIENT in her thirties is naked, in another, A PATIENT in her forties stands stuck in a corner. Finally, they come to...

LISA'S ROOM

The girls enter quietly. Lisa is sitting on the mattress, a zombie.

SUSANNA

What the hell is she--

GEORGINA

Thorazine.

POLLY

I guess they're giving her more than they gave me.

SUSANNA

Where's her belt? What'd they think? She'd hang herself? Lisa!?

POLLY

Oh God, they cut her beautiful nails.

GEORGINA

They were sharps.

POLLY

Don't feel bad, Lisa, if you couldn't do it nobody can.

GEORGINA

She can't hear you, Polly. She's completely blotto. Look, Susanna, I'll meet you back at the nurse's station.

POLLY

I'll meet you back there too.

Georgina and Polly quickly leave. Susanna sits next to Lisa.

SUSANNA

Lisa? You said it would be okay,
Lisa. You promised--
(shakes her; furious)
You promised me!

Lisa says nothing.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

(gets up)
Later for you.

She leaves.

THE HALLWAY

Susanna walks quickly to the nurse's station.

GEORGINA
I just want to get out of here.

Susanna raps on the door.

SUSANNA
We need our escort back to SB-2.

The Nurse nods, but John does not appear.

GEORGINA
Maybe they tricked us. Gonna leave us here.

She pulls a lighter from her pocket and, hands shaking, lights a cigarette. Two nurses spring out of the Nurse's station.

NURSE
Give me that!

The other nurse grabs the cigarette.

SUSANNA
(yells)
We need our escort back to SB-2!

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Susanna ducks into the public phone booth and makes a call. But she's forgotten that you need a coin. She hangs up, puts in a dime, and calls again. She tries to sound just as normal as can be.

SUSANNA
(into phone)
Andrea? Hi, it's Susanna... I know, long time! Listen, Andrea, I was wondering if you could give me Will's number?... Yes, I do know where he is, he told me he was--
...

(shocked)
Viet Nam? He's in Viet Nam?... No, I didn't know that... You--...Uh-huh... Uh-huh... You are? Well, that's great, Andrea! You're going for the

(MORE)

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

whole semester?

(laughs too loud)

I guess French Society really paid off, huh? That's really great... That's great... Well, that's just great, Andrea... Great. Well, I'll talk to you soon, okay? Bye-bye.

Her hand is shaking and she has trouble hanging up the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Susanna, Polly, and Georgina are sitting on the floor. Susanna is staring at her hand. She fans out the fingers. She looks at the inside. She pokes at the bones, worried.

SUSANNA

Damn.

She begins to scratch at the back of her hand. It gets red and white. Finally, she chomps on it. Blood comes out.

GEORGINA

What the fuck are you doing?

SUSANNA

I'm trying to get to the bottom of this.

POLLY

Of what?

SUSANNA

My hand. There's nothing in there.

GEORGINA

Well, stop it.

SUSANNA

It's my hand! Do I have any bones? Do you think I have bones?

POLLY

Everybody has bones.

SUSANNA

But do I have any bones?

Polly goes out of the room.

SUSANNA
I just want to see them. I just
want to be sure.

GEORGINA
They're in there, I promise you.

SUSANNA'S POV

Her hand turns into a monkey's hand.

SUSANNA (V.O.)
It's not a real hand!

MRS. MCWEENY rushes in with a medication cup. Polly follows.

MRS. MCWEENY
Take this, dear.

GEORGINA
No!

But Susanna, in a daze, lets Mrs. McWeeny tip her head back...
and drinks.

SUSANNA
Oh no--I don't--I didn't--

GEORGINA
Thorazine!?

SUSANNA
(as it hits her)
Wow.

Her eyes start to glisten. She tries to get up, but sinks to
the floor.

BLACKOUT.

FADE IN:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

There's THE USUAL RUCKUS outside in the halls. But Susanna
remains asleep. Dr. Wick enters with Valerie.

DR. WICK
Susanna? How are you feeling this
morning, Susanna?

SUSANNA
(mumbles)
Head hurts...

DR. WICK
Well, you just stay in bed dear,
and rest.

Dr. Wick and Valerie start to leave.

VALERIE
You're not continuing the thorazine
are you?

DR. WICK
The important thing is for Susanna
to feel safe.

VALERIE
Are you continuing the thorazine?

DR. WICK
Well, I'll have to speak with her
therapist about that, Valerie.

She smiles at Valerie. But Valerie doesn't smile back.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Valerie enters. Susanna's still in bed.

VALERIE
Susanna.

SUSANNA
(mumbles)
I'm just going to rest for
awhile...

VALERIE
Okay.

She picks her up and carries her out to...

CUT TO:

INT. HYDROTHERAPY ROOM - DAY

Valerie carries her in and dumps her in the bath.

VALERIE
You just rest.

SUSANNA
What? What the hell--

VALERIE
(tests water)
I'm sorry, is it too cold?

SUSANNA
(yells)
Jesus! Are you going to wrap me in
wet sheets too? Tie me down and
give me shock?

VALERIE
Probably.

SUSANNA
(starts to cry)
Why don't you just give me some
more thorazine?

VALERIE
Oh, there's plenty more of that,
too.

SUSANNA
(screams)
GET ME OUT OF HERE!

Valerie says nothing.

SUSANNA
I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE!

VALERIE
(calmly)
So who's stopping you?

Valerie leaves. Susanna gets out of the tub, clinging to the
rails, still unsteady from the drug, and grabs the robe Valerie
has left for her.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Valerie is making cocoa. Susanna enters, looking very small in
the big white robe.

VALERIE
Drink this. It's good for you.
Gives you pimples.

Susanna sits, puts her head in her hands, and cries. Finally,
she blows her nose and speaks, without looking at Valerie.

SUSANNA

You probably think I'm just a
fucked up rich little white girl,
don't you.

VALERIE

Yeah, sometimes.

SUSANNA

After all, you've got to be well-
fed to have time for this much
self-pity, right?

VALERIE

(smiles)

That's true. And sometimes, God
help me, I envy you. Hell, I look
at the same TV you look at--what
they did to Martin,
what they did to Bobby Seale--
you think I wouldn't like to throw
my RCA against the wall?

SUSANNA

So why don't you?

VALERIE

(shrugs)

Because I can't afford to buy a new
one. Got kids to feed. Can't
afford to go nuts. Especially not
in a nice place like this. You see
any black catatonics around here?
I don't have the money.

(pause)

And maybe you can't afford more
time.

SUSANNA

So? So? What am I supposed to do?

Valerie sips her cocoa, thinking.

VALERIE

Look, it's just a crazy thought,
and Lord knows I wouldn't recommend
it to most patients, but... you
ever try acting sane? By the way,
how's the cocoa?

SUSANNA

(avoiding)

I don't know...

VALERIE

Sure you do.

SUSANNA

Well, Lisa would say it tastes like
shit.

VALERIE

She sure would. And maybe she'd
throw the cup against the wall,
too. Lisa sees a house of lies,
she tears it down.

(pause)

But you tell me, what does Lisa
build?

(sits)

I know the cocoa tastes like shit,
and you know it too. But just for
the hell of it, what do you think a
"sane" person would say?

SUSANNA

Oh, how do I know what a sane
person would say? Thanks for the
cocoa?

VALERIE

You're welcome.

Susanna scrunches up her face. Thinking.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

The next morning, Susanna is in bed when Dr. Wick makes her
rounds.

DR. WICK

Susanna?

SUSANNA

I'm okay, Dr. Wick. Just thinking.
(adds, with effort)
Thanks.

DR. WICK

(approving)

All right.

SUSANNA

Dr. Wick? Am I restricted to the
ward?

DR. WICK

I think you'll be fine on one to one's, Susanna. Our only concern is that you be safe.

SUSANNA

I understand.

Dr. Wick leaves. Susanna rolls her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S STATION - DAY

John and Lillian are filling out forms. Susanna knocks on the window.

SUSANNA

Can somebody go to the library with me? Please?

JOHN

I'll go.

SUSANNA

Thanks.

Susanna fills in "Library" next to her name on the blackboard.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL LIBRARY - DAY

Susanna and John enter. Susanna goes to THE LIBRARIAN.

SUSANNA

Good morning.

LIBRARIAN

Good morning.

SUSANNA

I'd like to see the DSM, please.

LIBRARIAN

The DSM? I'm not sure we--

SUSANNA

Look. My father is the head of the Harvard Law School. I want to look up my diagnosis.

(loses it; yells)

It's my constitutional right!

The librarian looks at John, who just shrugs. She gets Susanna the book. Susanna and John sits on the couch. John picks up SPORTS ILLUSTRATED and they start to read.

SUSANNA

Oh, man, listen to this.

John remains absorbed in the magazine.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

(reads)

"This person often experiences the instability of self-image as chronic feelings of emptiness or boredom."

(laughs)

Well, of course I was bored. I didn't want to ski, play tennis, go to gym class, or do anything but write poetry. My self image wasn't unstable. It was my parents image of me that was unstable--'cause it wasn't based on the truth!

(reads on)

"Uncertainty about several life issues, such as long term goals or career choice, types of friends or lovers to have..." John?

(elbows him)

John!

He looks up.

SUSANNA

Aren't you ever uncertain about types of lovers to have?

JOHN

(shakes head no)

I'm married.

SUSANNA

But aren't you ever uncertain?

He shrugs, meaning "maybe."

SUSANNA

So what do you do when you're uncertain?

JOHN

(thinks)

I bowl.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROUNDS - DAY

Susanna and John are walking back to the ward.

SUSANNA

But don't you ever ask yourself questions?

JOHN

Susanna, most people don't like a lot of questions, know what I'm saying? People don't want to hear about the tiger in the corner or the Martians on the channel or the phone calls from John the Baptist. Heck, he might give me a call too--

SUSANNA

Really? So what would you do?

JOHN

I'm not gonna pick up the phone.

SUSANNA

But don't you ever see faces in the clouds? A man in the moon?

JOHN

Sure.

SUSANNA

Sometimes I see faces in the rug, in the dishware. I know they're not really there, they're just visiting, but--

JOHN

So tell them to go home. Look at something else. Get up and go do something.

SUSANNA

Like what?

JOHN

I don't know. Bowl.

Susanna thinks about this.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Susanna is eating alone, thinking. Georgina plops down next to her, as Lillian enters with ALICE, fifteen, shy, and unworldly.

GEORGINA
Hey, look. New girl. Her name is
Alice Calais. C-a-l-a-i-s.

SUSANNA
("Cal-lay")
Calais. It's French.

GEORGINA
I know. But she says--
(rhyming)
"Alice Calais." She doesn't know
anything. She's like fresh from
the womb.

LILLIAN
Susanna? This is Alice Calais?

SUSANNA
Sit down, Alice, we're not going to
bite.

Alice sits, scared to death of them.

GEORGINA
You know, that's a French name.
Calais.

ALICE
It is?

GEORGINA
It's a place in France. They won
it from England in the Hundred
Years War.

ALICE
(amazed)
A hundred years?

Susanna and Georgina roll their eyes. Alice takes a bite of
food and her plastic fork breaks. She looks mortified.

SUSANNA
Don't worry. Just think of it as a
perpetual picnic.

ALICE
Thanks. I guess you've been here a
long time, huh?

She looks at Susanna with the respect you'd give a "lifer."
Susanna is disturbed by this.

SUSANNA

Yeah. I guess I have.

She gets up and leaves. Alice looks after her, wondering what she's done wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. MELVIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Susanna is having a session.

MELVIN

You seem upset. Would you like to tell me about that?

Susanna looks out the window. Once again, it is fall and the leaves are changing color. She sighs, turns to her therapist, and gets down to work.

SUSANNA

Uh--yes. You know, I guess I have been pretty upset lately.

MELVIN

Angry perhaps?

SUSANNA

("angry" for him)

Yeah.

MELVIN

Can you say more about that?

SUSANNA

Well...

(thinks)

I was pretty angry at Dr. Wick--

MELVIN

At Dr. Wick?

SUSANNA

(regroups)

Well, of course, I wasn't really angry at Dr. Wick--

MELVIN

Why are you really angry, Susanna?

SUSANNA

Why am I really angry?

(loses it; laughs)

Well, I guess I'm really angry because it's 1968, I'm nineteen years old and I can't fuck!

(quickly)

But that's not why I'm really angry--

She gets up and goes to the window. What can she give him? As a last resort, she tries...

SUSANNA

I guess I'm really angry at...

(sighs heavily)

my mother.

She rolls her eyes, but she's facing the window so he can't see.

SUSANNA

My mother.

She turns to him, to see if she's on the right track. He nods supportively.

MELVIN

Can you say more about that?

SUSANNA

Uh--sure.

(riffs)

It's like--you know those gene recession charts you do in high school?

He nods.

SUSANNA

Okay, well, I used to love to work out the sequence of blue eyes in families that had no characteristics except blue eyes and brown eyes. I guess... I guess my family had a lot of characteristics--achievements, ambitions, talents--that all seemed to be recessive in me.

MELVIN

That's a very good insight.

SUSANNA

It is?

She sits, encouraged.

MELVIN
Tell me. Were you breastfed,
Susanna?

SUSANNA
Was I--? No, no I don't think
so...

MELVIN
And what were you sent out to buy
the day you took the fifty aspirin?

SUSANNA
What was I--?

She thinks. What the hell is he getting at? Finally, she gets
it. She looks at him, narrows her eyes and says--

SUSANNA (CONT'D)
(with appropriate
bitterness)

Milk.

He nods, pleased with her. She nods, pleased with herself.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROUNDS - DAY

Susanna is walking back from therapy. She passes a crow.

SUSANNA
Grrr.
(stops; reconsiders)
Hello.
(reconsiders)
Grrrr.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA AND GEORGINA'S ROOM - DAY

A few days later, Susanna is having a session with Dr. Wick.

DR. WICK
You felt your father was a distant
man...

SUSANNA
("bitter")
Yes he was.

DR. WICK
But you needed his love.

SUSANNA
("vulnerable")
Yes I did.

DR. WICK
He is a professor--?

SUSANNA
(through her teeth)
Law.

DR. WICK
Tell me about your high school
English teacher.

Susanna gets up and walks around the room, riffing.

SUSANNA
Well, let's see. He took me to the
Gardner. There was this Vermeer--
this amazing painting of a girl
having a music lesson. Would you
like to see it?

DR. WICK
If you would like to share it with
me.

Susanna gets the book she bought in Boston and finds the
picture.

SUSANNA
See? Her teacher is bearing down
on her, trying to get her to pay
attention, but she's looking out--
out of the painting, looking for
someone who would--
(realizes)
see her.

Susanna realizes this is true, and her eyes fill with tears.

DR. WICK
That's a very good insight.

Susanna nods, lost in the painting.

DR. WICK (CONT'D)
And that's when you ah--when was
it?

SUSANNA

When was what?

DR. WICK

The--ah--attachment.

SUSANNA

What attachment?

DR. WICK

Your English teacher... How did it start?

SUSANNA

Oh--

Susanna understands what the doctor is after.

SUSANNA

Well, we had an espresso and we went back to his place.

DR. WICK

And?

SUSANNA

And we were sitting there on the sofa. And he said, "Do you want to fuck?"

Dr. Wick flushes. She's quite interested in this.

DR. WICK

He, uh, used that word?

SUSANNA

Yup.

DR. WICK

(flushes)

He said--

SUSANNA

He said, "Let's fuck."

DR. WICK

(clears her throat)

Go on...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The girls are lined up for Meds. Susanna is between Georgina and Cynthia. Cynthia gets her pill, and Susanna and Mrs.

120

McWeeny come eye to eye. This is a tough one. Finally,
Susanna decides.

SUSANNA

Thank you, Mrs. McWeeny, to tell
you the truth I'm exhausted. You
know, therapy is really hard work.

Mrs. McWeeny smiles her tight little smile.

GEORGINA

(to Susanna)

Jees, what are you running for,
Valedictorian?

CYNTHIA

You know you could just wait till
your insurance runs out.

SUSANNA

I don't have the time.

Susanna "takes" the pill and they move on down the hall. When
they turn the corner, she spits it out and smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA'S ROOM - DAY

Dr. Gray is making rounds.

DR. GRAY

And your bowels?

SUSANNA

(pats stomach)

Very well, thank you.

DR. GRAY

Any problem with your medication?

SUSANNA

Nope.

DR. GRAY

Your priviledges?

SUSANNA

Well, I would like to request Town
Priviledges, Dr. Gray--

DR. GRAY

For?

SUSANNA

Thanksgiving. I'd really like to spend it with my parents. I haven't seen them in a really long time.

DR. GRAY

Well, I'll have to speak with your therapist--
(smiles)
But I think it can be arranged.

CUT TO:

INT. KAYSEN DINING ROOM - NIGHT

BEGIN ON a magnificent Thanksgiving dinner table, loaded with plenty. A HAND reaches for the sweet potatoes.

SONIA (O.C.)

(charming)

Have some sweet potatoes.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Susanna, Paul, and Sonia at a candle-lit table which could easily seat twelve. MAHLER is on the stereo. Susanna takes the sweet potatoes.

SUSANNA

Thanks.

Susanna piles her plate.

PAUL

What can I carve you, dear? Light meat or dark?

SUSANNA

Well, actually, I'm a vegetarian--
(pause)

But it is Thanksgiving, so what the hell.

He smiles and piles her plate.

SONIA

Your doctors are so pleased with your progress, Susanna.

PAUL

They think you're doing remarkably well.

SONIA

You know, Professor Simm's daughter was at McClean for almost three years. And it looks like you'll be getting out in less than two.

SUSANNA

Well, I couldn't have done it without you mom.
(quickly; to Paul)
Or without you!

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME

An hour later. UNDER THE TABLE, we see the dog, Charlene, eating a pile of turkey at Susanna's feet.

THE FAMILY

is just rising from the meal.

SUSANNA

Well, that really was delicious. I sure wish I didn't have to get back to the hospital--

SONIA

So soon?

SUSANNA

Well, it is the rules.

PAUL

And I have a paper due in the morning. So, if you ladies will excuse me?

(to Susanna)

I'm very proud of you, dear.

She's never heard this before. It throws her.

SUSANNA

(touched)

Are you, daddy?

He kisses her lightly on the cheek and leaves. Susanna and Sonia continue to the...

HALLWAY

As Susanna gets her coat, Sonia takes a package from the closet.

SONIA

(shyly)
Susanna--I bought you a present.
Since we didn't see you on your
birthday...

SUSANNA

Thank you, mom, thanks a lot.

SONIA

Open it. We got it on Carnaby
Street! When we were in London.

SUSANNA

London--

Susanna opens the box and takes out a short "mod" dress.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

(sincerely)
It's a great dress.

SONIA

I thought it was very you.

Susanna pauses. Then she says, very simply.

SUSANNA

No, it's not me, mom. See, it has
all these wonderful colors--

SONIA

Yes!

SUSANNA

And this wild pattern. Kind of
like The Fauves.

SONIA

That's just what I said to your
father. It's like a Fauve
painting.

SUSANNA

It really is.

SONIA

Try it on.

SUSANNA

I don't need to.
(simply, without anger)
Because I'll never wear it.
(kisses her)
But I thank you for it. And I'll see you soon.

She leaves.

EXT. KAYSEN HOME - NIGHT

Susanna leans against the door for a moment, listening as a BEEHTOVEN SONATA begins on the piano inside, moved by the music, and how beautifully her mother does play. She looks up at the night sky, which she hasn't seen for quite a while, then slowly walks towards the waiting cab.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A week later, Susanna is alone, writing a poem. Valerie enters.

VALERIE

Checks--hey, how's it going?

SUSANNA

Fine. You'd be proud of me, Valerie.

VALERIE

Yeah?

SUSANNA

(angry)
I'm faking it. I'm faking it really well.

VALERIE

(sits)
Listen, Susanna. What do you think the rest of us are doing out there-- breakfast to coffee break, coffee break to lunchtime? Me, I work eight hours in here, get back on the bus--and I got to tell you, from where I sit? Sometimes I think "insanity" is just... giving up the act. Most people in here don't have a choice about it. You do.

SUSANNA

Some choice.

VALERIE

That's right. You fake it on the bus and you tell the truth in your work. I don't lie to my patients, don't lie in your poetry and you'll do all right.

(gets up)

You got a meeting with your doctors in five.

Valerie leaves. Susanna stares at the pattern in the tattered oriental rug. Daring it to do something. It doesn't move.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S MEETING ROOM - DAY

Susanna enters. Her three doctors sit at the round table, along with the hospital social worker, MRS. SIMON, early thirties, and eager. Behind them, through the window, we see snow falling outside.

MELVIN

Come in, Susanna, sit down.

She takes a seat in the circle.

DR. WICK

Susanna, we have spoken with your parents and we have agreed with them that it is time for you to leave the hospital.

Susanna nods.

MELVIN

Continuing as an outpatient of course.

Susanna nods.

DR. WICK

We think it would be a good idea for you to start thinking about a job. This is Mrs. Simon, our new social worker, whom we have already spoken with about you.

Mrs. Simon smiles.

MELVIN

Have you given any thought as to what you'd like to do?

SUSANNA

Well, I'm going to--
(catches herself)
What do you think, Mrs. Simon?

MRS. SIMON

Have you thought about dental hygiene? The course is only a year and I'm confident that you could handle the responsibilities.

SUSANNA

Hmmmmn. I'll give it some thought. I don't want to just jump into anything.

(smiles)

After all, we're talking about my future.

Everyone smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

A few weeks later, Susanna is putting on makeup. Georgina hands her a lipstick.

GEORGINA

More. You need a little more.

Polly enters with nail polish.

POLLY

Here you go.

SUSANNA

Thanks.

Janet and Alice squeeze in. Cynthia stands in the doorway.

JANET

Where are you staying?

GEORGINA

With the soldier! He got shot! Isn't that great? He's out of the fucking army!

SUSANNA

It's just for a while.

POLLY

What's the first thing you're going to do when you get to Cambridge?

SUSANNA

I'm going to lock a bathroom door.

GEORGINA

Have sex.

JANET

Yes!

POLLY

Please have sex for us.

GEORGINA

Wade's on so much medication he's absolutely useless.

SUSANNA

I'll see what I can do.

Polly starts to sing. She's remarkably good.

POLLY

Cause you make me fe-ee-eel.
You make me fe-ee-eel,
you make me feel like a--

The song hits Susanna like a knife, and she runs out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROUNDS - DAY

It's snowing. Susanna runs and runs. Finally, she reaches the Maximum Security Ward. She runs up the steps and knocks on the door.

CUT TO:

INT. MAXIMUM SECURITY - DAY

A nurse leads Susanna down the hall.

NURSE

She's in the TV room. Over there.

Susanna goes to...

THE TV ROOM

A GIDGET RE-RUN is on the TV. A few heavily medicated patients are watching. Among them is Lisa. Susanna goes to her, catching her breath.

SUSANNA

Lisa--

LISA

(through a blur of medication)

Hey.

SUSANNA

(with wonder)

I'm leaving. I'm leaving today, Lisa. Isn't that crazy? Melvin wrote the telephone company so I could get a phone--

(scribbles a number)

You know, in case of an emergency or something. So I'm going to have a phone. In Cambridge--

LISA

Yeah?

Susanna hands her the piece of paper.

SUSANNA

I don't know--maybe I'll be back by the time you get back to the ward. Who knows?

(laughs)

I mean--what if I've forgotten how to unlock a front door?

She notices that Lisa is sitting with her fingers tucked in, hiding her nails.

SUSANNA

Give me your hand. Give me your hand, Lisa.

Very slowly, Lisa does as she's told. Susanna takes Polly's nail polish from her pocket and starts to paint Lisa's nails red. GIDGET CHATTERS ON THE TV.

SUSANNA

I don't do this as well as you do... I'm really not very good at this--

Susanna finishes quickly, because Lisa's nails are so short.

LISA

Cool.

Susanna doesn't know what else to do. She gets up, unable to stay or to leave.

SUSANNA

(fighting tears)

I'll be waiting for you...

LISA

(nods vaguely)

Whatever--

Susanna leaves her the polish, kisses her cheek, and starts to go.

LISA

(softly)

Later...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Susanna carries her suitcase. Georgina, Polly, and Cynthia accompany her to the Nurse's Station.

SUSANNA

(excited)

John, can you call me a cab?

JOHN

You're a cab.

The girls crack up laughing.

SUSANNA

I love that.

CYNTHIA

Yeah, me too.

John comes out and hands Susanna the eraser. She erases her name from the board.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH BELKNAP PORCH - DAY

The girls have gathered on the porch to say good-bye. Susanna hugs Polly.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

So I guess I got better. Or better than I used to be before I went into the hospital...

Susanna hugs Georgina.

GEORGINA

(weeping)

Call me. I'm getting out of here by the summer. But I promise I'll come see you before I leave the country. I mean--Nixon! For chrissake!

Susanna hugs Janet who is also crying. She hugs The Martian's Girlfriend.

MARTIAN'S GIRLFRIEND

Wow!

She hugs Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

Stay cool, man.

And Valerie...

VALERIE

I'm going to miss you, girl. But don't come back.

CLOSE ON SUSANNA

as she turns and sees the waiting cab... the winding road down the hill. There's excitement in her eyes, and fear too.

Then she takes a deep breath, goes to the cab, and gets in.

EXT. MILL STREET - DAY

The cab moves down the hill.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

Maybe I'd spent enough time crying and yelling and was ready to move on to something else...

CUT TO:

EXT. HARVARD SQUARE - DAY

They are stuck in traffic because of a huge protest march of STUDENTS against the war. Susanna looks out the window, fascinated.

SUSANNA (V.O.)
Surely, I'd learned to treasure
freedom and would do anything I
could to get it and keep it--

CUT TO:

EXT. WILL'S BUILDING - DAY

A ramshackle place near Central Square. Susanna knocks on the door.

SUSANNA (V.O.)
The question was, what could I do?

Will opens the door, in a wheel chair.

WILL
Don't freak out. It'll heal.

SUSANNA
How did--

She follows him inside.

WILL
The gentry shot me.

SUSANNA
No! You were running away?

WILL
(smiles; sighs)
He was on LSD.

Susanna closes and locks the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He has a real bed now. They have just made love. He has an
arm around her.

WILL
You ever think about it?

SUSANNA
Well, not much since I went into
the hospital.

WILL
I think about it.

SUSANNA
Since Viet Nam?

WILL

(nods)

I mean, it's like... travelling to another universe. Everything you've been taught your whole life is up for grabs. Everyday you see people dying all around you--you think, what's the point? What am I here for? It could all end--

(snaps fingers)

just like that--so--why not get married?

She turns to him.

SUSANNA

Listen. Sometimes I have a problem with a checkerboard floor. It doesn't move around like it used to... but it could. And sometimes I... just get sad.

(laughs/cries)

Most of the time, my misery has been transformed into common unhappiness, so by Freud's definition, maybe I have achieved mental health--but sometimes... I just get sad.

(laughs)

Not now. I'm pretty happy now--

WILL

Will you tell me when you get sad?

SUSANNA

Yes. But I can't promise that'll make it go away.

He takes her in his arms.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSANNA'S HOUSE - DAY

1980. A sparsely furnished house in Cambridge, filled with books. On the coffee table, there's a copy of VOGUE, with Janet, model then and gorgeous on the cover.

Susanna is at her desk. Her hair is short and curly and she wears leggings and a denim vest. An almost-completed manuscript of GIRL, INTERRUPTED is beside her, and she's typing away.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

(laughs)

I still ask myself if I'm crazy. I ask other people too. "Is this a crazy thing to say?" I'll ask before saying something that probably isn't crazy.

She lights a cigarette.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

If I do something out of the ordinary--take two baths in one day, or jump up and go out for a walk--I say to myself: Are you crazy?

Susanna stares at the line she has just written, which is the one we have just heard. Impulsively, she jumps up, grabs her jacket and goes downstairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUSANNA'S HOUSE - DAY

Susanna walks, glad to be outside. She passes a playground. She passes A SKINHEAD... A BUSINESSMAN... She passes A HOMELESS WOMAN, talking to friends we cannot see.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

It's a common phrase, I know. But it means something particular to me: the security screens, the plastic forks... the shimmering, ever-shifting borderline that like all boundaries just begs to be crossed...

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - DAY

Susanna crosses into The Gap--just as another woman is coming out, caught up in conversation with a little toast colored boy.

SUSANNA (V.O.)

I do not want to cross it again.

The women bump right into each other.

LISA

(pissed)

Hey! What the--

They look at each other. Lisa looks just about the same, still in jeans, but she's added a gold chain and sapphire ring.

SUSANNA

Lisa!

LISA

Hey, man, how you doin'? Hey, this is my kid. Aaron say hello to Susanna.

SUSANNA

Hi!

Aaron hides behind Lisa's leg. He looks like a Mexican Lisa.

SUSANNA (CONT'D)

What have you been doing?

LISA

The kid. That's all you can do. You have kids?

SUSANNA

Books.

LISA

That's cool.

SUSANNA

What about the father?

LISA

Later for him.

SUSANNA

Where are you living?

LISA

You won't believe this. I'm living in Brookline. I'm a suburban matron in Brookline. I've got the kid, I take the kid to nursery school, I've got an apartment, I've got furniture. Fridays we go to temple.

SUSANNA

Temple? Why?

LISA

I want...

(falters)

I want us to be a real family, with
(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)
 furniture, and all that. I want
 him to have a real life. And
 temple helps. I don't know why,
 but it helps.

SUSANNA
 What's with the jewelry?

LISA
 (to Aaron)
 Presents from grandma, right?
 (to Susanna)
 Everything changes when you have
 kids. Want to see something
 fantastic?

SUSANNA
 Sure.

Lisa pulls up her t-shirt and grabs the skin of her abdomen
 which expands like an according till she's holding the flap of
 skin a foot away from her body. She let's go and it goes back
 to normal.

SUSANNA
 Wow.

A YUPPIE WOMAN stares at Lisa. Susanna and Lisa stare right
 back. The Yuppie quickly moves on.

LISA
 Kids. That's what happens.

AARON
 (shrieks)
 MO-MMY!

LISA
 We better go. Say good-bye, Aaron.

AARON
 Good-bye.

SUSANNA
 Bye, Lisa!

After a few steps, Lisa turns.

LISA
 Hey--you ever think of those days
 in there, in that place?

SUSANNA

Yes, I do think of them.

LISA

Me too.

(pause)

Oh well...

She looks around. Someone is putting up a Reagan poster. A COUPLE argue as they enter a gourmet food store.

LISA

It's a mean world out here.

(laughs)

Gotta maintain a little insanity, right?

SUSANNA

Yes, Lisa. You sure do.

They go their separate ways. Susanna crosses into...

HARVARD SQUARE

Aside from the new stores, it hasn't changed. It's still a place where people from parallel universes live side by side. She passes A GROUP OF AFRICAN AMERICAN KIDS singing an early rap song. She passes TWO TEENAGE GIRLS in retro garb from the sixties. STUDENTS, STUDENTS EVERYWHERE. She passes a group of SOUTH AMERICAN MUSICIANS playing "Mr. Tamborine Man"... and drops a dollar in a Peruvian hat.

THE END