The Women

 Adaptation
  By
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Fade In:

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. SAKS FIFTH AVENUE MAIN ENTRANCE - MAY MORNING

CAMERA IS AT STREET LEVEL. There are WOMEN'S LEGS AND FEET - walking this way and that on their way to here and there. Feet wearing flat shoes, high heels, sneakers, nurse's shoes, baby shoes, ankle boots, high tops, sandals, Birkenstocks, old shoes, new shoes, Dr. Scholl's, every imaginable type of ladies' footwear - a reflection of the women themselves in all their diversity.

A PAIR OF JIMMY CHOO'S ENTERS CAMERA LEFT with a TOY FEMALE POODLE with a full-on show cut. ENTERING CAMERA RIGHT is a pair of MANOLO BLAHLNIKS dragged into frame by a SCROUNGY LITTLE POUND MUTT wearing a Burberry collar and leash worth more than the dog. The two bitches (the dogs) confront each other, snarling and baring their teeth.

CHOO (V.O.)
Oh my God. Get that thing away!
Has that ugly mutt had its shots?!

MANOLO (V.O.)
Aretha, you've just been dissed. Go for the shoes. Bad shoes. Last season mark downs.

CHOO (V.O.)
These are Jimmy Choos, you idiot. I paid full price!

MANOLO (V.O.)
And I'm the idiot?

Manolo's ARMS REACH INTO FRAME and scoop up the squirming, snarling Aretha.

MANOLO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Just doing our job, ma'am. Making the streets safe for the tasteful.

Manolo turns on her heel. Aretha barks one more time at the Poodle who's being dragged away.

MANOLO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I know, you could have taken her.

CAMERA TILTS UP AND WIDENS to reveal Saks in all its Art Deco glory. WE ARE ON Manolo's BACK as we head toward the big glass doors.

A SINGLE CONTINUOUS SHOT as she ENTERS THE STORE, the CAMERA HER POV revealing every woman's fantasy of the perfect department store.

(CONTINUED)
EFX: HER POV BECOMES A COMPUTER GRID READOUT, ALA "THE TERMINATOR." As she scans the room: "BAG SALE, 20 FT."; "ALERT! GIVEAWAY AT CHANEL COUNTER"; "MUST OBTAIN SCARF!".

EFFECT BLEEDS into CU of big SUNGLASSES, the expanse of Saks first floor reflecting in them. PULL OUT. Manolo is smiling in pure delight. She is SYLVIE FOWLER - a whirling dervish in stiletto heels, one of New York's golden girls, an arbiter of taste and editor-in-chief of "CACHET" magazine.

We travel with her through the crowded ground floor where a MAKEOVER LADY is trolling for victims.

MAKEOVER LADY
Complimentary sample of our new creme with any purchase of twenty-five dollars or more.

FISH EYE on Makeover Lady as she peers into Sylvie's face.

MAKEOVER LADY (CONT'D)
How about you? Would you like to get a face lift in a jar?

SYLVIE
This is my face. Deal with it.

Sylvie continues her journey through the SAKS first floor. She pauses at a counter next to a SLIGHTLY OVERDRESSED WOMAN. She pulls the LATEST BLACKBERRY out of her bag and hits speed-dial.

2 EXT. CONNECTICUT COUNTRYSIDE - HAINES HOUSE YARD - SAME TIME 2

MARY HAINES, is up to her elbows in dirt as she prepares a large vegetable garden. She's in jeans, a man's pajama top with a nubbly sweater, Wellies, and no makeup. Somehow it looks cool. She has been hoeing the earth as if it were her mission in life. She starts to drag a huge sack of fertilizer that weighs more than she does. As she struggles with it, her cell phone RINGS. But where is it? She finds it under a clod of dirt. She checks the LCD.

MARY (INTO PHONE)
(out of breath)
Hey, Sylvie.

2A SPLIT SCREEN

SYLVIE
I'm looking at a woman right now who should be in my magazine. Caption: "There's a fine line between an outfit and a getup".

The OVERDRESSED WOMAN shoots Sylvie a dirty look.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Where are you? You aren't shopping, are you?

SYLVIE
I deserve it. I was in my office at six this morning. I just love Saturday at the office. There's no one there to distract me!

Mary continues to struggle with the fertilizer bag.

MARY
(breathing hard)
You should be on your way out here.
(she grunts)

SYLVIE
Mary, what are you doing, are you having sex?

MARY
Would I be on the phone with you? Don't answer that.

SYLVIE
I'm on my way upstairs for a manicure. What time is your little "do" today?

MARY
For the third time, twelve-thirty. I swear to God, Sylvie, do not be late. -

SYLVIE
Please, when am I ever late? I'll see you twelve-thirtyish.

MARY
No "ish", no "ish"!

END SPLIT SCREEN

Sylvie stows her phone as she heads toward the escalators.

3 INT. SAKS BEAUTY SALON - MOMENTS LATER

Sylvie pushes through the big glass doors. IT'S A WHIRLWIND OF ACTIVITY - women walking around in their smocks, hair wet, hair filled with tin foil, blow dryers going full blast, MUSIC PULSATING. Sylvie strides up to the check-in desk. There are TWO ASSISTANTS behind the desk, busier than air traffic control at O'Hare.

ASSISTANT #1
Hello, Ms. Fowler. How have you --
SYLVIE
(puts dog on the desk)
Aretha needs water.

ASSISTANT #1
Sparkling or still?

SYLVIE
Whatever. She drinks out of the toilet.

ASSISTANT #2
Tanya's ready for you, Ms. Fowler.

SYLVIE
And who is Tanya?

ASSISTANT #2
Our new manicurist. I think you'll like her.

SYLVIE
We'll see about that.

Sylvie leaves Aretha with the assistants and heads into the salon. She passes by a woman under a dryer reading "VOGUE". Sylvie takes a copy of "CACHET" out of her tote.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Time to upgrade, sweetie. Compliments of the editor.

She tosses the "VOGUE" onto a pile of discarded magazines and heads over to the MANICURIST'S TABLE.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Are you Tanya?

TANYA
That's me. Have a seat.

SYLVIE
(sitting)
Seriously. That's your name? Or are you really Susie from Brooklyn? And if it's a long story don't tell it because I'm in a hurry.

TANYA
I was born Eileen, if you want to know the truth. Then I went to this numerologist who told me that if I wanted to change my life I should change my name.

(examines Sylvie's palms)
Hmmmm, you're a very old soul. I never would have guessed.

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE
I try to stay out of the sun.

Tanya starts to remove Sylvie's old polish.

TANYA
I was working at Mr. Ronnie's on Astoria Boulevard. Do you know it?

SYLVIE
I don't get to Queens as much as I'd like to.

TANYA
The exact day I changed my name, this limousine pulls up to the shop and you cannot believe who gets out. Madonna!

SYLVIE
I have to be at a luncheon at one.

TANYA
Anyway, Madonna's on her way in from the airport and she breaks a nail. She sees the shop and in she walks. I cannot believe it. But all I see are her nails. And I say, what kind of butcher did this work? Then I give her a manicure like she's never had in this life or any other one. I even used my own polish. I mix my own colors. I have a gift.

Tanya's taking her good old time removing the polish.

SYLVIE
The luncheon's in Connecticut. It's a whole other state.

TANYA
I put Jungle Red on her that day. I'll never forget it. And then the next thing I know, I'm getting a call from Saks saying that Madonna was raving about my manicure and did I want a job. So do you want to try my Jungle Red?

Tanya produces a bottle of blood-red paint.

SYLVIE
Hmmm, that's not bad.

Tanya puts one of Sylvie's hands in the soak and starts to file the other.

(CONTINUED)
TANYA
I put this polish on one of the gals who works behind the perfume counter. She had just moved to town. And then bang. She's having an affair with a married man.

SYLVIE
Who isn't. Look, if you can't speed this up I'll have to come back another time. What's your Wednesday like?

TANYA
I'll check.
(pulls out her book)
The married man thing is tricky, isn't it. Especially if the guy is well-known. He's some big Hoo-ha on Wall Street. What's his name again? I can never remember it.
(flips through her book)
Wednesday, Wednesday...
(then suddenly)
Haines. That's it. Somebody Haines.

Sylvie, who has been digging through her bag for her wallet, stops dead.

SYLVIE
...It wouldn't, by any chance, be Stephen Haines, would it?

TANYA
Yeah, that's it. Wednesday at eleven or two?

SYLVIE
You know, Wednesday isn't good. I'd better get this taken care of now.

Sylvie plunks her hand back in the soak.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
So you're saying that Stephen Haines is having an affair with a salesgirl. What do you think that's all about?

TANYA
If you'd ever seen Crystal Allen, you wouldn't ask.

INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Lived in, cluttered, a mish-mosh of vintage furniture and kids' toys and a bunch of easels with half-completed paintings. None particularly promising. There's A BUZZ at the door. EDIE COHEN, a mass of Pre-Raphaelite red hair pinned this way and that, makes her way through the chaos. (CONTINUED)
She's dressed in a sort of ethnic/Soho/thriftshop chic. THREE SMALL GIRLS - seven, five and three - are orbiting her as she goes, piercing the air with high-pitched screams as they play keep-away with one of mommy's many hats.

The BUZZER RINGS AGAIN.

    EDIE
    (unfazed by the pandemonium)
    Yes, buzz buzz, I hear you.

Sylvie opens the door onto Edie's world. Sylvie takes it in.

    SYLVIE
    I swear to God, it scares me to come here.

    EDIE
    I'll be ready in a minute.

They quickly kiss cheeks and then move through the apartment as Edie adds layers to her outfit.

    SYLVIE
    I parked on 78th Street in front of a vacuum cleaner store. Don't let me forget.

    EDIE
    Why would you forget where you parked?

    SYLVIE
    I just heard something, Edie. It was very disturbing. I almost rear-ended somebody on the way over here.

    EDIE
    April, give mommy her hat. May, show June how to French-braid her hair like I taught you. And don't you say hello to your Aunt Sylvie?

    SYLVIE
    Hey, kids!

April recoils, May starts to cry and June runs into the other room.

    EDIE
    They love you.
    (calling into next room)
    Dora! I'm getting ready to leave!

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE
I have a splitting headache. Do you have any aspirin?

Edie continues to root through her apartment.

EDIE
God Sylvie, what did you hear? And where's my purse?

Sylvie sees a canvas on an easel.

SYLVIE
What's this supposed to be?

EDIE
I'm painting now.

SYLVIE
What happened to the pottery thing? And weren't you taking some puppet-making class?

EDIE
Let me tell you something, it's an odd crowd of people, the puppet people.

SYLVIE
I'd go insane living here. I don't know how Alan does it.

EDIE
Alan moved out. Here's my purse!

SYLVIE
Whoa, what??

EDIE
He's in a studio down on the eighth floor. I thought he needed a little space. Dora!

SYLVIE
(massaging temples)
Let's just go. I can't focus. Will you drive?

EDIE
Listen, Sylvie, if what you heard is about anybody we know, don't tell me. I mean it.

SYLVIE
Of course I won't tell you. It's too personal.

(Continued)
EDIE
It's about somebody we know, isn't it.

DORA, a young Latina, enters with a nine month old INFANT in her arms.

DORA
Mrs. Edie, we are getting low on breast milk.

EDIE
I have the pump in my bag. It plugs into the cigarette lighter in the car.

SYLVIE
Forget it, you're not driving.
(off infant)
And how are you today, li'l Miss January.

The baby STARTS TO CRY.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Let's go, let's go, let's go.

The other three girls have come back into the living room and are running around like banshees.

EDIE
(always unfazed)
Mommy's going to Connecticut now.
I'll be back in time for dinner.
Then we'll pick up daddy at his apartment and we'll all ride up the elevator together like a family, okay? Bye!

As Sylvie and Edie sail out the door -

5 EXT. ESTABLISHING - THE HAINES HOUSE - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

This is a beautiful country home. Not showy. Big porch, low stone walls and wildflower gardens. Suddenly a hybrid SUV doing 35 MPH over the speed bumps, screeches into the driveway. Mary jumps out. She's still in her gardening clothes, mud smudged on her face. She is juggling dry cleaning, bags of baguettes, flowers - and a large, freshly groomed GOLDEN RETRIEVER. The dog starts to drag her up the driveway.

6 INT. HAINES KITCHEN

There are two women in the kitchen - MAGGIE the housekeeper, who is a savvy take-no-prisoners personality - and UTA, a young and pretty Danish au pair who is reading The National Enquirer. Maggie is arranging a variety of gorgeous cold dishes in beautiful bowls and platters.

(CONTINUED)
The kitchen door bursts open and the dog scrambles in, jumping and knocking things over, grabbing food off the table.

MARY
Lucy. Sit. Stay. Lay down.

The dog ignores her. Mary rushes around unloading her bags. Maggie follows behind her "fixing". Mary puts a jar in the cabinet. Maggie moves it to a shelf. Mary puts the flowers on the counter, Maggie is right behind her with a vase. Mary puts a quart of milk in the cabinet, Maggie puts it in the fridge.

MARY (CONT'D)
(rushing around)
How did it get to be noon already? I've got sixty women on their way here for lunch and I'm not even showered.

MAGGIE
Did you pick up my dry cleaning?

Mary hands Maggie a cleaning bag.

MARY
What is wrong in this picture? (checks off list) Okay, dog clean, bread, flowers -- Hey, you know the thing that I made, the thing with the whatsits on the edge. You know.

MAGGIE
The bowl. With the freesia.

MARY
Yes. Where is that?

MAGGIE
Right in front of you.

MARY
Let's put the tortellini in that. Uta, what do you think?

UTA
(Danish accent; off tabloid)
Look at this. The face of the Virgin Mary appeared on a rag at a car wash in Los Angeles.

MAGGIE
It's hard to believe you come from the country that gives out the Nobel Prize.
That's Sweden! How many times do I have to tell you. I'm Danish. Like the pastry.

Mary starts to put the tortellini into the freesia bowl as an eleven-year-old girl, MOLLY, comes into the kitchen. She is at that awkward age where none of her parts seem to fit together and she is filled with pre-teen angst.

MOLLY
Mom, what's going on?
(MORE)
MOLLY (CONT'D)
You were supposed to help me today
with my book report.

Mary stops what she's doing, mortified.

MARY
Oh honey, I'm so sorry. I completely
forgot.

MOLLY
It's due Monday!

MARY
But today's the big fund raising
lunch for the Park. I'm co-chair.

MOLLY
What's more important, some big piece
of grass or my education?

Mary starts chopping up basil. Maggie finishes up the
tortellini transfer.

MARY
Molly, why do you save things for
the last minute? I'm sure Uta can
help you with your book report.

Suddenly Uta GASPS. They all turn to her.

UTA
(off tabloid)
Nicole Kidman has cellulite.

Molly gives Mary a pleading look.

MARY
What about after the luncheon? No
wait, I have to finish my sketches
which are late, late, late, then
pick up the plane tickets...

MOLLY
(mimicking)
Why do you save things for the last
minute?

Maggie is taking a tray of freshly baked cookies out of the
oven.

MAGGIE
Hey kiddo. Chocolate macademia?

MOLLY
No! That's, like, five points.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Since when are you counting calories?

MOLLY
Since I'm fat.

MARY
You're perfect.

Molly gives Mary an exasperated look and exits.

MARY (CONT'D)
I've got to shower.

She starts out.

MAGGIE
By the way, your father called.

Mary stops cold.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
He said he wants you to meet him in the city for lunch on Monday.

MARY
My father's taking me to lunch? I don't remember the last time he did that.

MAGGIE
He said it was important.

There's a moment, and then -

MARY
Oh my God, I think I know what this is about. He's finally going to hand me the business.

A wave of mixed emotions washes over Mary.

MARY (CONT'D)
Do you know how long I've waited for this?
(excited)
Oh my God.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

Big cozy bed, fireplace, good cabinetry. Piles of clippings from fashion and home magazines. A stack of half-read books. Intruding into the space is a Nordic Trak with a man's baseball cap and shorts tossed onto it. Several large suitcases are half-packed. Molly is on the unmade bed with the dog, flipping through a sketch pad.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Molly, how many times have I said no dog on the bed?

Mary shoos Lucy off the bed and then starts to strip off her clothes, dropping them on the floor as she goes. Molly continues to look at the sketches of blouses with jabots, A-line skirts, all very Talbots.

MOLLY
Hey Mom, how come you design clothes you wouldn't be caught dead in?

MARY
It's what grandpa manufactures. Those are his customers.
(a little smile)
But they're not going to be mine.

Molly tosses down the sketch pad and starts absently poking through the suitcases. She comes upon a diaphragm case and opens it. She knows what it is.

MOLLY
(coyly)
What's this?

MARY
(smart ass kid)
It's a travel coffee filter.

Mary snaps the diaphragm case shut and crosses into the bathroom.

MARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Why is this toilet seat always up?

We hear THE SEAT SLAM DOWN and then THE SHOWER ON. Molly picks up the baseball cap from the NordicTrak, puts it on. It has the ROLLING STONES ICONIC TONGUE on it.

8 INT. BATHROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Mary is in the shower. Molly walks in with the ball cap on. She's carrying a man's TOMMY BAHAMA SILK SHIRT in a loud print. It's still got the tags on it.

MOLLY
Mom, when did dad get this shirt?

Mary opens the shower door a crack to look.

MARY
What the hell is that?

MOLLY
It was in his closet.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
I guess daddy took a fashion risk.

MOLLY
I think he's having a mid-life crisis.

MARY
I think he's got a few more years before he goes out and buys a Harley.

Molly sits down on the toilet lid.

MOLLY
So how come you're not taking me to Venice?

MARY
Because daddy and I need some alone time together.

MOLLY
Which means you're going to have a lot of sex.

MARY TURNS THE SHOWER ABRUPTLY OFF.

MARY
Are you trying to kill me?

She grabs a terry robe and comes out of the shower. Molly takes the instructions out of an open box of tampons on the sink. She studies it.

MOLLY
Are these hard to put in? It looks impossible.

MARY
That's because Picasso drew that diagram. You don't have to worry about it now, okay?
(notices something in the sink)
Will you look at this?

Mary collects a bunch of hairs from the sink.

MOLLY
Dad's hairs. Gross.

MARY
Don't kid him about it. Seriously.
10 INT. HAINES LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THE DOORBELL RINGS. Maggie ENTERS from the kitchen.

    MAGGIE
    Here they come. The population of Salem has just dropped.

THE DOORBELL RINGS AGAIN.

    MAGGIE (CONT'D)
    Yeah, yeah, keep your Wonderbras on.

10A EXT. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Maggie opens the door to find Sylvie (with Aretha under her arm) and Edie on the porch in mid-argument.

    SYLVIE
    Well it's just a mess now! Who knows if that will come out. It's a brand new Lexus!

    EDIE
    Of course it will come out. It's from nature. Calm down.

Sylvie hands Aretha to Maggie.

    SYLVIE
    (to Maggie)
    She splattered breast milk all over my dashboard. I need a rag.

Sylvie grabs a dishtowel from Maggie's waistband and heads to her car, nearly colliding with ALEX FISHER. Alex is in shades, jeans, a Chanel leather jacket and motorcycle boots. She has what appears to be a very tall and thin SUPERMODEL, (NATASHA), with her.

    EDIE
    Oh my God, I can't believe you're here. I'm not sure I've ever seen you in the daylight.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
You haven't.
(off Sylvie)
What's Sylvie doing, wiping last night's date off the dashboard?

EDIE
Don't be crude, Alex. You're in Connecticut.
(turning her attention to Natasha)
Hello. I'm Edie Cohen.

NATASHA
Natasha.

EDIE
(looking for a last name)
Natasha...

NATASHA
Just Natasha.

EDIE
Oh. Nice to meet you...just Natasha.

ALEX
Natasha's a Supermodel.

NATASHA
(very testy)
I hate that word. Do not call me that. It objectifies me. I'm a person, not an accessory.

ALEX
Okay, fine. You're not a purse.

NATASHA
I'm going to get something to drink. Don't talk about me.

Natasha shoots Alex a somewhat menacing look and enters the house.

ALEX
She just finished anger management training.

EDIE
What's she have to be angry about?

ALEX
She's hungry.

Alex and Edie enter the house together and move into the living room.
When are you just going to settle down with someone who's right for you?

Like a man.

You know that I accept you as my gay friend. But all of a sudden half the world is gay. Explain that.

Baby, you have no idea how much better it is being in a relationship with a woman. If we're lost, we both ask for directions. When we watch tv, we watch one show at a time. No one drinks milk out of the carton, asks you to pull their finger, or obsesses over their decreasing ability to piss thirty feet. And when we have sex, neither one of us ever wants to have it with the lights on. Are you jealous yet?

Sylvie re-enters, along with MORE LUNCHEON GUESTS.

You owe me a hundred bucks to have my car detailed.

And tell me, Dorothy Parker, how much longer am I going to have to wait for your second book? I'd like to print an excerpt before I'm dead.

You don't just dash off a book full of "sharply observed, hilarious, yet deeply intelligent essays", to quote the New York Times.

Yeah, six years ago. Get on with it!

I think she's been distracted. Did you meet her date?

She nods toward Natasha who has passed up the petit fours and is eating a paper napkin. As Sylvie rolls her eyes --
MARY ENTERS. Despite playing "Beat the Clock", she looks great. She greets one of her guests, BARBARA DELACORTE. Barbara is a society lady supreme. We get the impression that there is no love lost between these two.

BARBARA
Mary!

MARY
Barbara. Great to see you.

They air kiss.

BARBARA
Is your hair damp?

MARY
Just running a little behind schedule. You know how it is.

BARBARA
Well it's just so generous of you to open your gorgeous home for Central Park. I know your mother was Chair of the Women's Committee for many years.

MARY
Yes. And it's very important to her that I carry on the tradition. And me too, of course.

BARBARA
I just don't know how you manage all the things in your life and still make time for so many charitable works.

MARY
Pharmaceuticals.

Barbara laughs the laugh of a woman with a lot of Valium in her purse.

MARY (CONT'D)
There's a champagne buffet outside on the lawn. Please. Enjoy yourself.

Barbara moves off and Mary crosses to Sylvie who is working on a flute of champagne.

MARY (CONT'D)
Amazing. You're here on time.

SYLVIE
I'm always on time. Is your hair damp?

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Shut up.

SYLVIE
Impressive turnout, by the way. Congrats.

MARY
Thanks for opening your rolodex.

SYLVIE
What are best friends for?

They look at each other. Suddenly some weird radar happens between them.

MARY/SYLVIE
/Nothing.

SYLVIE
Why are you asking?

MARY
You just looked at me funny. What's going on?

SYLVIE
Nothing.

MARY
Liar. Your eyes shifted. You're not telling me something.

SYLVIE
(dodging)
I tell you everything. And what's with you and the tense shoulders up to your ears?

MARY
Okay, okay. I wasn't going to say anything yet but -- I think my father's getting ready to hand me the business.

SYLVIE
Wow. Is that a good thing?

MARY
It's a great thing. Of course, I'm scared to death. It's a lot to take on. I'll have to talk it over with Stephen. He's not going to be thrilled.

SYLVIE
Stephen. Right. ...So where is he on a Saturday afternoon?

(CONTINUED)
MARY
At the office. Where he's been almost every day and night for the last month, putting together some hedge fund.

SYLVIE
Really.

MARY
But in twenty-four hours we're going to be drinking cappuccinos in the Piazza San Macro...
(studies Sylvie)
Are you sure you're alright?

SYLVIE
I'm great. I'm going to get something to eat.

As Sylvie heads towards the patio doors, the Golden Retriever runs between her legs and bounds outside. CAMERA STAYS WITH DOG as it takes us down into the sprawling yard where --

11 OMIT
12 EXT. HAINES PATIO/YARD - CONTINUOUS

The luncheon is in full swing. The rolling lawn is dotted with tables and market umbrellas. THIN WOMEN IN DESIGNER SUITS cruise the buffet table and pretend to eat. Lucy runs happily around the yard with Aretha. CAMERA FINDS SYLVIE, in sunglasses, moving across the lawn. She passes Molly.

SYLVIE
Cute top.

MOLLY
Cool shades.

Sylvie tosses the sunglasses to Molly.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Thanks!

Molly, delighted, takes off. SYLVIE FINDS HER WAY TO A TABLE WHERE EDIE AND ALEX ARE SITTING. Edie is attacking a huge plate of food.

ALEX
That's your second plate. Where are you putting it?

Edie puts her fork down, gets serious.

EDIE
Well, I might as well tell you. You'll find out soon enough anyway.

(CONTINUED)
Sylvie and Alex look at each other.

EDIE (CONT'D)
I'm eating for two.

Instead of the usual jubilation that accompanies such an announcement:

SYLVIE/ALEX
(disgust)
Oh for the love of God! Godssakes! /Don't you ever say "no"?

Mary walks over.

MARY
What. What's going on?

SYLVIE
Edie's knocked up.

MARY
Again?! Are you sure?

EDIE
Of course I'm sure. I want to keep trying until I get a boy.

ALEX
Don't we have enough of those?

EDIE
(to Sylvie and Alex)
You two don't understand. There is absolutely nothing more thrilling than knowing you are growing an actual human being inside you. Right, Mary?

MARY
You know, the other day I was going through some junk in the attic and I saw a box labeled "jars".

(off their looks)
Yeah I'm a jar saver, screw you.
Anyway, I open the box and it's not jars - it's a whole pile of Molly's baby clothes. I picked up one of those little rompers and man, I could feel the tug on my uterus.

SYLVIE
What are you saying, Mary? You want another baby?

ALEX
I'm just trying to get over the fact that she mislabeled something.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
I never planned on more than one.
But lately -- maybe because I know
the gate is closing...

Sylvie looks at Mary, worried. The "radar" kicks in again.

MARY (CONT'D)
What?

SYLVIE
Nothing.

MARY
Something.

EDIE
I have to pee. For the tenth time
today. Be right back.

Edie gets up and heads toward the house.

INT. POWDER ROOM

Edie enters and is about to shut the door when Sylvie slips
in and locks the door behind her.

EDIE
What are you doing?

SYLVIE
Look, I wasn't going to say anything,
but now I have to. Mary is like my
sister.

EDIE
I told you, Sylvie, I don't want to
know.
(then)
It's about Mary?

SYLVIE
This is in the vault, right?

EDIE
Vault.

SYLVIE
Stephen's having an affair.

EDIE
Oh my God. How do you know?

SYLVIE
The new manicurist at Saks told me.
Stephen's fooling around with some
woman who works behind the perfume
counter.

(CONTINUED)
EDIE
(derisively)
A spritzer girl?

SYLVIE
Can you believe that? What do you think she sells, Chanel Number Shit?

The women turn into the mirror, dig into their cosmetic bags and begin to work on themselves.

EDIE
So what are you thinking? That you want to tell Mary?

SYLVIE
I don't want to tell her. But Edie, she's talking about having another baby!

EDIE
This is very dangerous, Sylvie. What if the story's not true? How much can you trust a manicurist?

SYLVIE
Oh please. They know everything! Manicurists and florists. It's frightening how much information those people are carrying around.

EDIE
I don't think we should say anything. It could only come back to haunt us. The affair may even be over now for all we know.

SYLVIE
That's true.

EDIE
Besides, I don't think anyone's ever gotten into trouble by keeping their mouth shut. I know things about my friends - I mean, thinnnngs - and you couldn't pry it out of me.

They exchange a momentary suspicious glance.

EDIE (CONT'D)
Cheap hand towels.

SYLVIE
Let's go.

They cap their lipsticks and start for the door.

EDIE
I forgot to pee.

(CONTINUED)
As Edie comes back into the powder room -

14 EXT. HAINES HOUSE DRIVE COURT - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Mary is saying goodbye to the guests who are toting GIFT BAGS stuffed with goodies and "Cachet" magazine. ALEX AND NATASHA HAVE HOPPED INTO A FANCY SPORTS CAR CONVERTIBLE, Natasha at the wheel. Natasha is HONKING FURIOUSLY for others to get out of her way as Alex slinks down in her seat. Barbara Delacorte approaches Mary. She has absconded with HALF A DOZEN GIFT BAGS.

BARABARA

Everything was wonderful, Mary. I must have the name of your caterer. So yummy.

MARY

Actually, I prepared everything myself. I think people appreciate a personal touch.

Barbara and the others stare at Mary, mortified

BARABARA

You cooked? Mary, what were you thinking? Now we'll all have to do that. And not all of us are you. (laughs contemptuously)

MARY

I hope you tried some of the desserts, Barbara. I churned the butter myself.

BARABARA

I can't tell if you're kidding. Anyway, congratulations on a successful event.

As she heads toward her car -- MAGGIE POPS HER HEAD OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOOR.

MAGGIE

Telephone for you. It's him.

14A INT. STEPHEN'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Dark paneled walls, sports trophies, etc. A man's space. Mary heads into the study, sits at Stephen's desk and picks up the phone. There is a FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH OF HERSELF AND MOLLY.

MARY (INTO PHONE)

Hi honey. They're pretty much gone so it's safe to come home. Hey, since we're leaving so early in the morning, do you want to just grab dinner out and then --

(CONTINUED)
There's a long pause and Mary's face drops. In the background, Sylvie is hovering by the door. Edie motions for them to leave but Sylvie stays put.

MARY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Stephen, it took forever to plan this trip. We both really need this vacation. There's got to be some way.

(then, disappointed)
Alright. I'll call the travel agent. I guess Venice will still be there.
(fingers the framed photo)
When are you coming home?
(then)
I won't wait up.

She hangs up, turns to see Sylvie and Edie at the door.

MARY (CONT'D)
That goddamn office is sucking the life out of him.

SYLVIE
Well something definitely is.

EDIE
(quickly)
Sylvie, come on. We didn't mean to listen in.

Mary's mood is completely deflated.

MARY
Hey, thanks for being here today. It meant a lot to me.

SYLVIE
You going to be okay? I'd stay but we car pooled.

EDIE
I'm sorry. I've got little ones at home.

MARY
Don't worry about it. I'll be fine.

Sylvie gives Mary a hug and Edie and Sylvie disappear out the door.

MARY (CONT'D)
Goddamnit.

15 INT. SYLVIE'S OFFICE - MONDAY AFTERNOON

PAN ACROSS A CONFERENCE TABLE FULL OF LIPSTICK STAINED COFFEE CUPS and AN ASHTRAY WITH A CIGAR BUTT.

(CONTINUED)
A PAIR OF HANDS COMES INTO FRAME TO SWEEP AWAY THE DIRTY CUPS AND THE OFFENDING CIGAR. TILT UP to find TAYLOR, Sylvie's assistant, wearing a CARPEL TUNNEL BRACE ON EACH ARM. WE STAY WITH HER as she crosses Sylvie's office - one that is befitting of the editor-in-chief of a major women's magazine. Eye-popping view of Manhattan. TOP OF THE LINE MODERN FURNISHINGS. FRAMED MAGAZINE COVERS. CONTACT SHEETS AND PROOF SHEETS. A ROLLING RACK OF CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES FOR EDITORIAL APPROVAL. SYLVIE IS ON THE PHONE IN A HEATED CONVERSATION.

SYLVIE (INTO PHONE)
Ned, you've got to back me on this. It's time to stop talking down to our readers. That's the way "Cachet" is going to distinguish itself. You talk about branding the magazine? How about we become the thinking woman's fashion book. We bring on the provocative writers. We stop putting little Hollywood twits on the cover --

ANOTHER LINE RINGS IN THE B.G. Taylor picks it up.

SYLVIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Yes, I know the twits sell. But Ned, you hired me for a reason. Let me do my job, and this time next year, you'll look like a genius.

Taylor is motioning to Sylvie.

TAYLOR
Mary, line three.

SYLVIE (INTO PHONE)
Ned, I've got Ralph Lauren on the other line. I've got to go.

Sylvie hangs up on Ned and punches line three.

SYLVIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
So how was lunch with Dad? How does it feel to be head of your own design house?

INTERCUT:

16 EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE - SIMULTANEOUS

Mary is on her cell, trying to hail a cab.

MARY
He fired me!

SYLVIE
What?!
MARY
My own father! He said I was spreading myself too thin. That it showed in my work.
(she's buttoned her coat crooked)
Excuse me, but designing the right little frock for a woman to wear home after hip replacement surgery is not exactly my work!

SYLVIE
Aw honey. Come to my office. The Grey Goose rep was just here. We'll open a bottle and bitch about the men in our lives who don't believe in us.

MARY
Is Ned riding you again? Why doesn't he just trust your vision?

SYLVIE
Crisis of confidence. I can feel it. I need to pull a couple of great writers onto the magazine. And fast.

MARY
You can do it. Stop at nothing.

SYLVIE
I love you, you know that?

MARY
You wouldn't if you saw me.
(off her reflection in a car window)
Could you get me into Saks for a haircut?

SYLVIE
Oh, don't go to Saks. They'll butcher you.

MARY
Your hair always looks great. Come on, I really need a pick-me-up.
Love you, mean it. Talk to you later.

17 INT. BEAUTY SALON - LATER

The place is a hive, as usual. Mary enters and approaches the reception desk.

MARY
Hi, I'm Mary Haines. I think my friend Sylvie Fowler called ahead for me.
ASSISTANT #1
Yes she did. We can squeeze you in, but not for an hour. I'm really sorry.

MARY
Oh. Well could I get a manicure while I'm waiting?

ASSISTANT #1
Let me check.
(checks computer)
Let's see. Ok. Tanya's had a cancellation. First table, straight back.

MARY
Great. Thanks.

FOLLOW Mary to the manicure table where Tanya is setting up the tools of her trade.

MARY (CONT'D)
Tanya? Hi. They told me to come right back here.

TANYA
Oh sure. Have a seat.

Mary sits down. Tanya takes Mary's hands.

TANYA (CONT'D)
Let's have a look. Wow, what have you done to yourself?

MARY
I re-tiled my bathroom.

TANYA
Seriously?

MARY
I just want something neutral.

TANYA
You don't want to maybe take a walk on the wild side? How about this?
(shows bottle)
Jungle Red.

MARY
Way too much for me.
(selects another)
This is nice.

TANYA
(boring)
French Fawn. Whatever.

(CONTINUED)
She starts to file Mary's nails.

TANYA (CONT'D)
What's that perfume you're wearing?

MARY
Something my husband gave me.

TANYA
Where have I smelled that before? Oh, I know. It's the same scent my friend wears. She works the perfume counter downstairs. Expensive stuff. But she's got expensive taste, that one.

Mary starts flipping through "Cachet".

MARY
Don't cut the cuticles, okay?

TANYA (insulted)
Please.

(then)
Her name is Crystal. Crystal Allen.

MARY
Who?

TANYA
My friend at the perfume counter. That girl needs a man with money. And she's got one now, too. Married though.

MARY
(off magazine)
Narciso Rodriguez is so amazing.

TANYA
This guy she hooked - his picture's always in the business pages. For Crystal, that's like the classifieds for a husband. I can never remember that guy's name. Everybody knows him. That's a beautiful ring, by the way.

MARY
Thanks.

TANYA
On the wrong hand, though.

MARY
No, the right hand. It was a gift from my girl friends.

(MORE)
MARY (CONT'D)
We gave each other one last Christmas.

TANYA
Haines.

Mary looks up, startled. Tanya interprets this as interest in good gossip.

TANYA (CONT'D)
That's his name. Stephen Haines. I was there when she met him. Oh boy, what a performance. This Haines guy walks up to the counter, serious type, expensive suit, good-looking but thinning on top. He says he wants to buy some perfume for his wife. "What type of woman is she", Crystal says. And he says, "the kind who smells like soap." Which I thought was pretty sweet. But for Crystal, it was a challenge. So then she says, "Would you prefer something sexier"? And she runs her eyes up and down him the way a big cat looks at a slow wildebeest. I felt kind of bad for the guy. He didn't have a chance.

Mary is frozen, taking it all in.

TANYA (CONT'D)
So then she picks up the tester bottle of "Jezebel" -- that's the stuff you're wearing -- and sprays some on her wrist and in the crook of her arm for him to smell. He starts sniffing around her and I guess he liked it a little more than he planned. To tell you the truth, I think this was just a game for Crystal until he took out his credit card and she recognized his name.

MARY
...And then what happened?

TANYA
Well, she really pursued him. They started seeing each other. He takes her to nice dinners, buys her clothes, sends her flowers. In a vase. The kind you keep.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
(fumbling)
You know, I don't think I want a manicure. I just remembered, I have to be somewhere.

TANYA
Was I talking too much again? I'm sorry. I just try to entertain my clients while they're sitting here, Mrs...

MARY
Haines.

Now it's Tanya's turn to look startled.

TANYA
Oh God. Oh my God. I am so, so sorry. I had no idea. Me and my big mouth. Is there anything I can do to --

MARY
I want you to so stop telling that story. I mean it.

TANYA
Sure, sure, of course. I'll never mention it again. I promise, I promise.

Mary gathers up her things and quickly heads out. Tanya motions to a woman who's sweeping hair off the floor.

TANYA (CONT'D)
Donna. Good dirt.

Mary pauses before exiting the salon. She is shaking. HITS SPEED DIAL ON HER PHONE.

MARY (INTO PHONE)
It's Mary for Sylvie. When her meeting's over have her call me right away, please.

18 INT. RIALTO TEA ROOM - LATER

This is the place for the ladies-who-lunch. Sitting at a table is CATHERINE FRAZIER, an elegant woman in her late fifties, early sixties. She has a GIMLET in front of her. There's another one set at the place opposite her. She looks up and sees Mary making her way through the room full of bouffant hair.

MARY
I'm sorry I'm late, Mom. I was walking around in a daze. I lost track of the time.

(CONTINUED)
CATHERINE
I heard what happened. Your father's a real shit. I ordered you a gimlet. I know you don't drink in the afternoon, but you will eventually so why not start now.
(notices someone)
Oh. You want to see a bad face lift? Helen Danvers, two o'clock. She looks like she's re-entering the earth's atmosphere.

Mary takes a healthy taste of the gimlet.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Honey, what can I do? Do you want me to punish daddy?

MARY
Mom - Stephen's having an affair.

...What?

MARY
I can't believe those words came out of my mouth. I'm sick to my stomach.

CATHERINE
Who is she? One of your friends?

MARY
No. She sells perfume at Saks.

CATHERINE
She's...a spritzer girl?

MARY
How could I not have known? Three months ago he bought cowboy boots.

Catherine hands Mary a cocktail napkin to wipe her wet eyes.

MARY (CONT'D)
I never thought this would happen to me. I thought we were happy.

CATHERINE
What are you going to do?

MARY
What do you mean, what am I going to do. I'm going to tell Stephen to move out.

CATHERINE
Well that's not very smart. Someone once said that when you don't know what to do, do nothing.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Are you joking? My husband of thirteen years is cheating on me.
Do they talk about me when they're together? Do they laugh about how stupid I am? Please don't tell me to pretend nothing happened. My entire world has just been shattered and you have no idea what that feels like.

Catherine looks at her daughter for a long moment. Then -

CATHERINE
...Well, let me try. It feels like someone kicked you in the stomach. It feels like your heart stopped beating. It feels like that dream - you know the one - where you're falling and want so desperately to wake up before you hit the ground but it's all out of your control. You can't trust anything anymore. No one is who they say they are. Your life is changed forever. And the only thing that can be said for the whole ugly experience is that no one will ever be able to break your heart like that again.

Mary studies her mother's face, taken aback.

MARY
...I can't believe you never told me.

CATHERINE
I wanted you to love your father.

MARY
Who was she?

CATHERINE
Some little skank who sold fabric. I met her once. She wore too much makeup and her bra straps were always showing.

MARY
What did you do when you found out?

CATHERINE
Nothing. I had a smart mother, too. Mary, that girl doesn't mean anything more to Stephen than the fabric whore meant to your father. If he loved her, believe me, you would have felt it.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
I can't fake it, Mom. I can't be anywhere near him right now.

CATHERINE
Then this is what I think we should do. It's spring break. We'll go away for a couple of weeks. There's nothing like a heavy dose of a man's mistress to make him miss his wife.

MARY
What do you think this is, some 1930's movie? That's ridiculous.

CATHERINE
Can I remind you of something? You have a daughter. Just like I did. This is not just about you.

Mary looks at Catherine. There's no arguing this point and they both know it.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Call Stephen. Tell him I invited you and Molly up to the cottage in Maine. We'll leave tomorrow.

Mary leans back in her chair. She's drained.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
And I wouldn't discuss this with any of your friends. They'll all want to "help". And before you know it, you're taking care of them instead of yourself.

MARY
Oh God...

Catherine takes Mary's hand.

CATHERINE
I'm so sorry for you, baby. But it's nice to know you still need your mother.

Mary's cell phone RINGS. She checks the LCD. "SYLVIE". She looks at it for a beat, then turns the phone off.

19 EXT. CONNECTICUT ROAD - EARLY MORNING

Sylvie's sedan makes its way through a rural neighborhood of manicured lawns, split rail fences, ponds, and birds on wires.
INT. SYLVIE'S CAR

Sylvie is driving, looking burdened. Edie is in the back seat. Alex, half awake and a lot hung over, is nursing a RED BULL and gazing out the window.

ALEX
Was that a sunrise we just saw? Because I am on the wrong side of that thing.

SYLVIE
Stop complaining. I just thought Mary could use a few pals to take her to the airport.

ALEX
You know why I don't cultivate friendships? So I never have to drive anybody to the airport. And why does Mary need pals at -
  (checks watch)
Jesus, I just left a party two hours ago.

GPS VOICE
"At the next intersection make a left turn."

ALEX
Who the hell was that?

EDIE
The navigation lady. She's always calm. She never talks back. My husband's in love with her.

They ride along for a while saying nothing. The silence is heavy. Then -

ALEX
I'm sensing something. Something's not being said here. What's going on that I don't know about.

Sylvie catches Edie's "don't say anything" glare in the rear view mirror.

EDIE
Nothing's going on. Why would you even say that?

SYLVIE
Alex, what's your take on Mary and Stephen's marriage.

EDIE
Sylvie.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
I think it looks perfect from the outside. But something's not right there. Mary doesn't look at the cracks. She's busy filling them. Our girl, she's all blue sky. But sooner or later --

(then)
Wait, what's going on? Is Mary getting it on with somebody?

EDIE
Why do you think it's Mary?

SYLVIE
Edie.

ALEX
It's Stephen? Stephen's cheating on Mary?

SYLVIE
For godssakes, Edie, what a mouth.

EDIE
I didn't say anything!

ALEX
Wow. Anybody we know?

SYLVIE
Vault.

ALEX
Vault.

EDIE
Spritzer girl. Saks.

ALEX
Whoa. How's Mary taking it?

SYLVIE
Mary doesn't know.

ALEX
You didn't tell her?! What is wrong with you people?! We're all in the vault, why isn't she in the vault? Drag her into the damn vault!

SYLVIE
I've been struggling with this for days. Mary and I have been best friends since college. We've gotten each other through a lot of shit. But this is the biggest shit a woman can go through.

(MORE)
SYLVIE (CONT'D)
I think she should be told. That's what friends do. We pick up shovels and dig her out of this huge reeking pile of shit. ...Or maybe we just don't say anything.

ALEX
Listen. The woman has got to know. That's just the right thing to do. You want me to tell her? I'll tell her. I don't have a problem with it.

SYLVIE
Mary, Uta, and Maggie come down the walk with SUITCASES AND CARRY-ONS. Sylvie pops the trunk and gets out. Uta and Maggie toss bags into the car.

MARY
I could have taken a cab. I don't know why you're doing this.

SYLVIE
I know you sent Molly to stay with your mother last night. Why should you have to go to the airport alone.

MARY
Because that's what millions of people do every day?

Sylvie ignores her, closes the trunk and gets back into the car. Mary turns to Maggie and Uta.

MARY (CONT'D)
So you have the phone numbers at the hotel. And can you call the vet -- Dr. what's-his-name --

MAGGIE
Rogers.

MARY
Right. And then the guy is coming next week -- you know the guy from the place to fix the thing.

MAGGIE
Right. Don't worry, just have a good time.

Maggie and Uta turn and head back to the house.

UTA
Par-tay.

(CONTINUED)
Mary opens the passenger door and finds Alex there. She looks into the back seat, sees Edie.

MARY
What are you guys doing here?

SYLVIE
Just get in.

MARY
No. Everybody out. Hurry up.

The women exchange glances, then get out of the car. There's an awkward moment. Then Alex takes the bull by the horns.

ALEX
Okay, listen. There's a reason we're all here, around you, today. (chickening out) Sylvie has something to tell you.

Alex gets back in the car.

SYLVIE
(thanks a lot)
This is really hard, Mary.

MARY
Is it about the perfume bitch?

SYLVIE
You know?! And you didn't tell me? Right now Mary, honest to God, I am so hurt.

MARY
YOU??

And now they are all over each other -

MARY/SYLVIE/EDIE/ALEX
I can't believe you people were at my house and never said one thing/ You have no idea what it's like to tell your best friend something like that/ It was a burden carrying around that kind of information, believe me/ I was the one who thought you should be told so don't come down on me.

SYLVIE
Alright, alright, alright! It's out in the open now. I just want to know what Stephen said when you confronted him.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
I didn't confront him. He doesn't know I know.

ALEX/EDIE/SYLVIE
What??/Are you kidding??/This is unbelievable.

Exasperated, Edie gets into the car. Alex gets out.

MARY
Look, I appreciate everybody's wanting to help. But do me a favor and don't dissect and analyze every square inch of this. I can't handle it right now. Just be there for me. Silently. Okay? Now let's go.

As everyone loads back into the car -

SYLVIE
I should not be operating heavy machinery right now.

Dissolve to:

21A OMIT 21B
22 OMIT 22A
23 OMIT 23

(Continued)
Sylvie, Alex, and Edie are trolling the floor, through jewelry, into handbags. Edie has FOUR CHILDREN IN TOW — three walking and clinging, one in a stroller. Sylvie goes through the motions of shopping, picking up bracelets, bags, silently judging them, and discarding them.

**ALEX**
I am going on record right now. This is a bad idea. We have no game plan. We -- Oh my God, look at this bag.
(to Sylvie)
Can I have another advance?

**SYLVIE**
I'm not going to enable you. Finish your book.

**APRIL**
(tugging at her skirt)
Mommy, I'm tired of shopping. Can we go? I want to goooool.

**EDIE**
We can't go. Aunt Sylvie is stalking somebody. When she's finished, we can leave.

Suddenly April stops and plants her feet.

**APRIL**
(blood-curdling)
I hate this store!!

Heads turn. Sylvie bends down to eye level with April.
SYLVIE
(eerie calm)
April, I want you to listen to me.
I'm going to say something very
important and I want you to remember
it for the rest of your life.
(threatening)

April looks at her with the usual terrified expression and
becomes suddenly quiet.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Now let's do what we came here for.

Sylvie heads for the perfume counter as Alex, Edie, and the
brood reluctantly follow. As they approach, a saleswoman,
PAT, is on the phone. She calls across the floor:

PAT
Crystal, phone call for you.

Sylvie, Alex, and Edie's heads swivel and catch in their
scope - CRYSTAL ALLEN. Gorgeous, sexy with a touch of trash,
an incredible body wrapped in a dress she can't afford on
her salary. She's armed with a spritzer bottle and has been
spraying innocent victims, the last one in the eye. She
looks over at Pat, slightly annoyed.

PAT (CONT'D)
It's a guy.

This changes everything. SLOW MOTION as Crystal struts across
the aisle to take the call. Hair flows. Sylvie, Edie, and
Alex, slack-jawed, watch her as she goes.

ALEX
(admiringly)
Nothing jiggles.

SYLVIE
Jesus, Alex, not now.

EDIE
Alright, we've seen her. Now let's
get out of here.

SYLVIE
Not on your life.

Sylvie moves closer to the counter and pretends to examine
the perfumes. Crystal takes the phone.

CRYSTAL (INTO PHONE)
Hello? Stephen! I was hoping it
was you. Where have you been, baby?
I missed you this week.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CRYSTAL (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
(coy, sexy)
It's cruel and unusual punishment to be without you that long.
(giggles)
I say we make up for lost time.
What if I cook us a romantic dinner tonight?

PAT
(coaching)
The big white square thing with the fire coming out of it is the stove.

Sylvie, Alex and Edie are now listening in on the conversation.

CRYSTAL (INTO PHONE)
(smile fading)
Oh.
(brave act)
No, I understand. Your work comes first, of course. Don't worry about it. No really. I'll save you a piece of cake with a candle on it.

Pat looks at Crystal with total awe. As do our gals.

CRYSTAL (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
I didn't tell you before because I didn't want you to make a fuss. I'll have more birthdays.

Pat makes a worshipful "bowing down" gesture at Crystal.

CRYSTAL (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Oh Stephen, that's so sweet, but I'd feel guilty taking you away from important business. Are you sure? Oh baby, I'm one happy girl. I'll see you at eight. You know where.

She hangs up and Jekyll turns into Hyde.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
That fucking wife! Ever since she took off for wherever she is, he's been acting like some lost puppy. I've got an audition at four o'clock and now I've got to cook dinner. How the fuck did that happen?

Crystal grabs her bag.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I've got to get out of here. Pat, can you find something to do tonight so Stephen and I can have the apartment?

(CONTINUED)
PAT
(resigned)
Fine. Have a nice "birthday".

As Crystal turns to dash out -

SYLVIE
Oh, excuse me. Can I get some help, please?

CRYSTAL
I'm sorry, I was just leaving. Pat can help you.

SYLVIE
I was told to ask for Crystal Allen. Is that you?

CRYSTAL
(wary)
Yes...

SYLVIE
I've heard you have a special way of knowing what a customer needs.

CRYSTAL
Is that so? And where did you hear that?

ALEX
Around.

Alex gives Crystal her best "sexy" look. Crystal ignores her.

SYLVIE
I've been wearing Chanel Number Five since my christening. I'm thinking of changing. What would you suggest?

CRYSTAL
Probably nothing too subtle.

ALEX LAUGHS, catches herself. Meanwhile, Edie's kids are getting restless.

SYLVIE
You're right about that. You always know exactly where you stand with me. No, I want a perfume to be a reflection of my personality -
(pointedly)
Smart, fearless, clever, loyal, protective of friends, ruthless if crossed...

(CONTINUED)
CRYSTAL
Are you shopping for a perfume or
writing a personal ad?

SYLVIE
You know, a friend of mine is wearing
something new. Her husband bought
it for her, here I think.
(suddenly)
Edie. What's the name of that perfume
that Mary Haines is using? You know,
the one Stephen bought for her?

Edie is suddenly a deer in the headlights. She goes mute.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
(to Crystal)
Maybe you waited on him. Stephen
Haines. Good-looking, receding
hairline. Platinum card, maybe that
rings a bell.

The WHINING AND CRYING explodes to a new level. Edie snaps.

EDIE
Oh for Chrissake, we all know you're
screwing Stephen and Mary's a friend
of ours so you better stop it, just
stop it!

They all look at her, stunned. As Edie hustles her brood
out --

25 INT. CASTING DIRECTOR'S WAITING ROOM

The room has HALF A DOZEN DAY-PLAYER HOPEFULS in various
states of sexy dress waiting their turn to be seen. A CASTING
ASSISTANT is at a desk, signing people in. Crystal walks
in. The other actresses check her out. She's going to be
competition alright, but they're only seeing the tip of the
iceberg. Crystal approaches the assistant.

CRYSTAL
Crystal Allen for the role of Ramona.

CASTING ASSISTANT
Sign in, please.

CRYSTAL
(signing)
How many scenes will I be reading?

CASTING ASSISTANT
Have both scenes prepared. You'll
read the first one. If they like
you, they'll ask you to read the
second one.

(CONTINUED)
CRYSTAL

Thanks.

Crystal turns to face her foes. She walks slowly over to an empty chair, letting them take a good long look at her. She sits and turns to the woman she’s determined to be her most formidable competition.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Great part for a day player, isn't it?

ACTRESS

(don't bother me)

Yes.

Crystal drops the bomb.

CRYSTAL

Three scenes was a lot to work on.

ACTRESS

...I thought there were only two scenes.

CRYSTAL

Really? I was given three scenes. You didn't get the third scene? Am I the only one?

Terror in the room.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said anything.

(flips her hair)

This is so awkward.

Having successfully psyched out everyone -

DISSOLVE:

26 EXT. MADISON AVENUE - A WARM THURSDAY IN JUNE - DAY

The street is full of women taking advantage of the late night shopping. Mary and Sylvie walk up Madison, loaded with bags.

SYLVIE

He cheated on you. And still, you've said nothing to him. This is not modern, Mary.

MARY

Ever since I got back from Maine it's been flowers and foot rubs and what-can-I-do-for-you-today-honey. Maybe my mother's right.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MARY (CONT'D)
Maybe the affair was no big deal and 
treating it that way is, actually, 
the more modern thing.

SYLVIE
When did you become French?

MARY
I haven't slept with him yet, though.

SYLVIE
Good. Make him suffer.

MARY
Can we stop talking about me? How's 
it going with Gary?

SYLVIE
It's over. I found a tank top in 
his closet. And pressed jeans.

MARY
You're too choosey, Sylvie. You 
know why? You're afraid to choose.

SYLVIE
No I'm not. I chose once, remember? 
It was all very nice until my career 
took off. "Sylvie, I'm happy for 
you", he said. "I want you to fly. 
I just don't think I can be with a 
woman who has that kind of wing span".

MARY
That was just him.

They stop in front of the LA PERLA boutique and check out 
the display window.

SYLVIE
I'm sorry, but men have a hard time 
being with a successful woman. So 
we shrink to fit. Like you.

MARY
What are you talking about?

SYLVIE
You were going to be Donna Karan. 
You put on the brakes because you 
knew you could eclipse Stephen.

MARY
Sylvie, when you fall in love, you 
don't think about how everything is 
going to work. You just go with 
your gut. Like on my first date 
with Stephen. He bought me a pumpkin.

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE
I hope it was Halloween.

They enter the boutique, examine the goods.

MARY
I mean, it was so sweet. We carved it together. We were such a good team. Thirteen years, thirteen pumpkins. That's what you think about when it's all coming apart. The pumpkin. The pumpkin matters.

SYLVIE
...I hate Halloween. All those strangers at the door.

MARY
You are purposely missing the point. Someday when you're not looking, when you're not thinking, you're going to meet a man you want to marry and that will be that.

SYLVIE
I am the man I want to marry, that's the problem.

MARY
Whoa, hold it.

Mary pulls a WHITE SATIN MERRY WIDOW off the rack.

MARY (CONT'D)
What do you think of this?

SYLVIE
On you? Really?

MARY
...I think Stephen might get lucky tonight.

A SALESWOMAN intercepts Mary.

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
Mrs. Haines. It's been a while since we've seen you. How may I help you?

MARY
I want to try this on.

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
(also surprised)
Really?

(CONTINUED)
MARY
What is everyone's deal?

28 INT. DRESSING ROOM AREA - MOMENTS LATER

There are rows of rooms with frosted doors so only the shopper's silhouette is visible. Mary and Sylvie follow the Saleswoman to a dressing room. The Saleswoman hangs the merry widow inside.

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
Here you go. Just call if you need me.

She exits.

SYLVIE
In or out.

Mary looks at all the hooks and straps.

MARY
In.

Sylvie follows Mary inside and they shut the door.

29 INT. MARY'S DRESSING ROOM

They plop down all their shopping bags.

MARY
I don't understand why they put fluorescent lights in dressing rooms. Why would a woman buy anything when it looks like her thighs were caught in a meteor shower?

A VOICE FROM OUTSIDE.

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN (O.S.)
(calling)
How are you doing in there Ms. Allen? Do you need another size or another color?

CRYSTAL (O.S.)
No. I like it. Don't go far though, I'll need a fitting.

Sylvie's ears perk up. She recognizes this voice. Mary holds the Merry Widow up to herself.

MARY
What do you think? Is this too much?

SYLVIE
(distracted)
Why don't I go out there and pick out a couple other things.

(CONTINUED)
Sylvie quickly exits the dressing room into -

INT. THE DRESSING ROOM AREA

The Saleswoman is by Crystal's door.

CRYSTAL (O.S.)
Is there a mirror with better light?

SALESWOMAN
Yes. Out here in the hall. But you probably don't want to --

CRYSTAL OPENS THE DRESSING ROOM DOOR, unencumbered by any sense of modesty. She crosses to a mirror and admires herself. She's in a black and gold corset, panties and garters with lace top stockings and stiletto heels. She looks amazing and somewhat pornographic. ANOTHER CUSTOMER is about to enter a dressing room with a similar outfit, takes one look at Crystal, gives up and leaves. SYLVIE HOVERS.

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
I have to say, you're my first customer brave enough to try that set on.

CRYSTAL
Do you have any cutlets? I want more lift.

The Saleswoman produces the cutlets.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I'm going to take it. How much is it?

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
That's Italian handmade lace, you know. That's why it's -
(chqueues tag)
Six hundred and fifty dollars.

The Saleswoman looks at Crystal to see if she's going to flinch. A seasoned saleswoman knows who's a player and who isn't. Crystal knows she's being sized up and calls her bluff.

CRYSTAL
Do you have it in any other colors?

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
Champagne.

CRYSTAL
I'll take it in champagne also.

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
Will that be cash or charge?

(CONTINUED)
CRYSTAL
Do you take personal checks?

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
No. But I'm happy to open a store charge for you.

(MORE)
LINGERIE SALESWOMAN (CONT'D)
It only takes a few minutes to do a credit check.

CRYSTAL
Credit check? Hmmm, I'm in a bit of a hurry. What if I gave you the name of someone to call? I'm sure he'd be happy to give you a credit card number over the phone.

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
We can try that. What's the gentleman's name?

CRYSTAL
Stephen Haines.
The saleswoman looks at her.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
...He's a friend of my family.
The Saleswoman smiles slightly. She's been doing this a long time and has seen it all.

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
Mrs. Haines is a client of ours. In fact, she's in the dressing room across the hall. Would you like me to have her approve this for you?

CRYSTAL
(quickly)
No. (lowering her voice)
I don't think that would be in very good taste. I'm relatively new in town and I haven't met Mrs. Haines yet. I'd hate to have this be our introduction. (pointed)
I'm sure you understand.

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN
I think I do. I'll phone Mr. Haines.
The SALESWOMAN EXITS, passing SYLVIE WHO IS EAVESDROPPING.

Crystal retreats into her dressing room. SYLVIE QUICKLY JUMPS BACK INTO MARY'S DRESSING ROOM.

Mary is in the merry widow, the garters flapping over jeans. (CONTINUED)
MARY
I don't know, is this flattering?

SYLVIE
Mary, she's here. In the dressing room across the hall. Crystal Allen.

MARY
What? How do you know?

SYLVIE
I heard the saleswoman talking to her. She's spending a fortune. And she's putting it on Stephen's account.

MARY
That's not true.

SYLVIE
If he's paying her bills, Mary, he's still involved with her.

MARY
(shaken, quiet)
I'm going home. Get me out of this thing.

She starts struggling with the hooks and eyes.

SYLVIE
You're going to leave? Mary, go in there. You've been running away from this whole mess since it started. What are you afraid of?

MARY
Of being made a worse fool than I already am.

SYLVIE
That woman is working her way into another life and it happens to be yours. If you don't stand up to her, it's only a matter of time before she's carving the pumpkin with your daughter. I'm giving you permission to behave badly. Now go out there and kick her ass!

At the mention of Molly's name, something snaps in Mary. The fuse is lit. She flings open the dressing room door.

34 INT. DRESSING ROOM AREA

Mary, in her crooked merry widow with flapping garters, bursts out into the area. She suddenly realizes she doesn't know where to go. Sylvie points her toward the big dressing room. Loaded for bear, Mary flings open the door.
Crystal, still in the red lace set and high heels, is brushing her hair. This is the first Mary has set eyes on her nemesis. She is stopped by the sight of Crystal in all her Crystalness.

MARY
(off Crystal)
Oh, shit.

CRYSTAL
Excuse me?

MARY
(recovering)
I'm Mary Haines.

Crystal doesn't register much reaction except to blink once.

CRYSTAL
Well. This is awkward. I guess he finally told you.

MARY
No, he never mentioned you. But I've known about you for a while.

CRYSTAL
Really? Then I guess I'm surprised I haven't heard from you sooner.

MARY
Not my style, really. But since you were in the vicinity, I thought I'd introduce myself.

The Saleswoman comes back in.

SALESWOMAN
Okay, Mr. Haines has approved -
(sees the two of them)
Whoa!

She does a very quick about face and exits.

CRYSTAL
Look, Mrs. Haines...I'm sorry for what this has done to you, I really am. I know Stephen never meant to hurt you.

MARY
You don't know anything about my husband.

CRYSTAL
I do know that a woman never steals another woman's husband. They usually go willingly.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
It sounds like you've got a lot of experience in that area. Stephen's a very smart man. Way too smart to take someone like you seriously.

She's touched a nerve in Crystal.

CRYSTAL
Mrs. Haines, I've met a lot of women like you. You have your nice houses and your fancy friends. Your calendars are always full with your social events and your shopping and your little charity lunches that make you feel like you're actually doing something with your lives. But you've stopped paying attention to your men. They get lonely. And then they come looking for somebody who knows how to make them feel appreciated again. And believe me, they do take that very, very seriously.

Now she's pushed Mary's button.

MARY
You know, I had this - I admit it - ridiculous idea that if you and I ever met and you saw that I was an actual human being and not some stray thought out in Connecticut, that you might possibly feel a little bit of remorse -- you know, one woman having that transcendent moment of connect with another -- and realize the scope of damage that you've done, not just to me, but to a family.

Crystal looks at her for a beat.

CRYSTAL
I have no idea what you just said.

MARY
Okay, I'm going to put this in terms even you can understand. You're going to stop seeing my husband.

CRYSTAL
I guess that's up to him, isn't it?

MARY
And by the way, I'll give you a tip. Stephen would never like anything that trashy.

(CONTINUED)
CRYSTAL
If Stephen doesn't like something
I'm wearing, I take it off.

Mary struggles for a comeback but has none. SHE EXITS.

SEVERAL SALESWOMEN and Sylvie have been milling around outside the room. They scatter as Mary comes out.

SYLVIE
You were great, Mary.

MARY
Get me out of here.

She slams back into her dressing room.

The house is dimly lit except for the master bedroom.

As the CAMERA MOVES THROUGH THE EMPTY LIVING ROOM, we HEAR DISTANT, MUZZLED VOICES coming from upstairs. It's intense. At the foot of the stairs we find Maggie in her bathrobe, straining to hear. Uta comes running down the staircase in a long T-shirt, tube socks and slippers. They speak in hushed voices.

MAGGIE
Well, come on, what's going on?

UTA
Oh, she is really giving it to him.
And he is not saying much because really, what could the cheating, lying bastard say?

MAGGIE
Okay, what else, what else?

CAMERA FOLLOWS as they move through the house toward the kitchen.

UTA
So they argue some more and then Mary gets very quiet and she says, "Stephen, do you want to be with her?"

MAGGIE
Good move. Force his hand.

UTA
And he says, "Mary, I love you".

(CONTINUED)
MAGGIE
Predictable.

INT. THE KITCHEN

They enter and start pouring themselves coffee.

UTA
But I think Mary was starting to listen to him. So he keeps talking. He says he never meant for the affair to turn into anything. He tried to end it more than once.

MAGGIE
Men get themselves into things and then they don't know how to get out. They're not like us. Continue.

UTA
But here's where he makes his big mistake. He says he kept seeing Crystal because he felt she got dependent on him and he didn't want to hurt her.

MAGGIE
Hurt her?!

UTA
That's exactly what Mary said! Then she makes her big mistake. She says, "How could you not see that she's just after your money?"

MAGGIE
Aw, she blew it. The last thing a man wants to hear is that his wife is the only one stupid enough to love him for himself. Nobody knows how to argue. I should run a school.

UTA
Okay, so now he asks her the big question. Is there any way they can put it all back together again. You should have heard him, his voice. It would have broke your heart.

MAGGIE
Who cares. Do we still have jobs or not?

UTA
Mary said she wants a divorce.

MAGGIE
(uh-oh)
...What did he say?

(CONTINUED)
UTA
He says he wished she'd take some
time to think it over. That he'd
spend the night in a hotel.

MAGGIE
And what did she say?

UTA
She said, "Here, take this with you".
And she threw her wedding band at
him!

MAGGIE
Oh, that's bad. That's very bad.

Maggie opens the kitchen drawer and starts quickly rifling
through it.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Where the hell's my address book.
There's a woman who keeps offering
me a job. Barbara somebody --

UTA
What are you doing? You can't desert
them now.
(stops)
Shhh! I hear something.

O.S. THE SOUND OF A CAR PULLING OUT OF THE DRIVEWAY. They
look at each other.

MAGGIE
That's it. We're on a sinking ship,
Uta. I have a cardinal rule: Never
get attached to the family. This is
exactly why.

The kitchen door swings open and Mary comes in. She looks a
wreck.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
(caught, covering)
And that, Uta, is why the
revolutionaries threw tea into Boston
Harbor.

MARY
I need to eat something.

She starts to rummage through cabinets like a bear.

MARY (CONT'D)
Low fat, low carb, fat free -- There's
fruit everywhere! Where's the junk?!

MAGGIE
You don't let me buy any.

(CONTINUED)
UTA
Why don't I fix you a drink?

Uta quickly goes to the cabinet and takes out a bottle of scotch. She pours a big glass. Mary finds a stick of butter, a can of cocoa powder, and the sugar bowl. She grabs a plate, sits down at the table and lines up the ingredients. She dips the stick of butter into the cocoa powder and then dips that into sugar. She takes a big bite.

MARY
I think you should know that Stephen and I are splitting up.

Maggie and Uta let out Oscar-worthy gasps of disbelief.

MARY (CONT'D)
He was having an affair.

MAGGIE/UTA
Get out of here!/I don't believe it!

MARY
Do you want to know how stupid I am? I had myself convinced that Stephen's affair was no big deal. Just a little chapter, not the whole book. And that maybe if I just looked the other way, put the old blinders on, rose above it, everything would work itself out.

Mary takes another bite of the butter/cocoa/sugar thing.

MARY (CONT'D)
(mouth full)
What bullshit.

Uta takes a drink of scotch. Mary's really building a head of steam.

MARY (CONT'D)
I mean, it's not like I was deliriously happy every day of the marriage. But I didn't screw around, did I? Oh, I could have. Men have come on to me plenty. I thought about it once or twice, too. Because - This Just In - thirteen years of sex with the same man can get a little boring. I mean, Stephen had his bag of tricks and I knew them all. But did I complain? Did I go out and bang the Federal Express guy? And let me tell you something else. Stephen does not know how good he had it.

(MORE)
MARY (CONT'D)
There is nobody, and I mean nobody, who's going to give that man a better blow job than I did. I could suck nails out of a board, and that's a fact.

Uta passes the scotch glass to Maggie. Uta and Maggie are slack-jawed. Mary wipes cocoa from her mouth, then puts her head in her hands as the whole weight of it sinks in.

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh God.

MAGGIE
Listen, you can't think straight right now. You know what I do when I have a problem? Before I go to sleep, I tell myself I'm going to wake up with the answer. And then I do. You try that. You go on upstairs and get a good night's sleep. It's all going to look better in the morning.

Mary slowly gets up and starts out of the kitchen. She stops and turns to them, tremendous hurt and sadness in her eyes.

MARY
...I love you guys.

MAGGIE
You'll be fine. Go on upstairs.

Mary exits. Uta and Maggie look at each other.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
She's not going to dump him. I know how she feels about that man. And how he feels about her. He'll be back in the house by the end of the week.

SMASH CUT TO:

39 EXT. HAINES HOUSE - NEXT MORNING
Mary is in her nightgown, a woman possessed, throwing Stephen's clothes out the window. The cowboy boots go out last.

40 INT. BATHROOM
She's throwing his toiletries in the trash. Even the Rogaine.

41 OMIT
The final blow. Mary and her reluctant recruits - Uta and Maggie - are dragging the NordicTrak out onto the lawn. They leave it there, on its side, like a dead whale. CAMERA PANS UP to a bedroom window. A troubled Molly is looking on. She turns and disappears into her room.

Mary is a heap of sobs and Sylvie is there, trying to comfort her. Sylvie is holding her friend, rocking her.

MARY
I don't understand. Why did this happen to me?

SYLVIE
Oh sweetie...It happens in every relationship. Eventually somebody betrays somebody else - in a big way or a million small ones. That's just the nature of it.

MARY
What am I going to do?

SYLVIE
We'll figure it out.

Sylvie is in her office presiding over a staff meeting. Present are JEAN, ANNIE, GILDA, CORY, and her ASSISTANT TAYLOR, taking notes. All are perfectly dressed in the latest, greatest, with accessories to match.

GILDA
What about this for a cover blurb - "The 45 minute Orgasm".

SYLVIE
45 minutes? Who has the time? Listen, I really want to make a statement with this issue. It's time to cut ourselves away from the herd. Talk up to the reader.

JEAN
I thought we already were. What about that piece last month on living an authentic life?

SYLVIE
Come on, we tell women to feel good about themselves and then we print fifteen articles on crazy diets. (MORE)  

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE (CONT'D)
We run ads for wrinkle cremes and the models are 20 years old. We're driving women mad!

GILDA
Don't bite the hand that feeds you.

CORY
I really think when women pick up our magazine they're looking for the fantasy.

SYLVIE
(exasperated)
Will somebody show some balls around here?

Annie, younger than the others speaks up.

ANNIE
Okay, I know I'm the new kid, but here's what I would do if I were in charge of "Cachet". I would tie each issue around a theme. Brand it. And by branding each issue, we brand the whole magazine, give ourselves a more unique identity on the newsstand.

Sylvie pays attention. This girl is strong.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I'd make sure each theme has an edge. A sense of humor. For instance, "The Revenge Issue". How to get it, who to stick it to, the fine art of holding a grudge. We put an actress on the cover. Somebody young and hot. We make the whole thing irresistible. We become the guilty pleasure of the publishing world and that's how we turn it around.

The others nod, smiling. Sylvie feels a shiver go down her spine. This girl is a little too confident.

SYLVIE
Oh come on, Annie. Revenge? It's so retro. It's old-think. Don't we all have better things to do? It's the opposite of what I'm talking about.

TAYLOR
...But I would buy that magazine.

Et tu, Taylor.

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE
You know, I think we ought to take a
break, let it all percolate. Let's
pick it up after lunch.

They all file out, following Annie as if she's the Christ
cchild. Sylvie makes note.

INT. WOMEN'S HEALTH CLUB - LATER

It's a state-of-the-art club. There's a rock climbing wall.
Sylvie is hooked up to the suspension gear, struggling to
get to the top. Her trainer, KRISTEN, is below her.

SYLVIE
(struggling)
Please. I'm begging you. Let's
take a break.

KRISTEN
No breaks. What are the two most
feared words in the English language?

SYLVIE
(struggling)
Pool party.

KRISTEN
Keep climbing.

At that moment, a woman, BAILEY SMITH, enters the club.
Sylvie spots her, misses a toe hold, and is dangling now as
she watches Bailey head for the exercise equipment.

SYLVIE
Let me down. Hurry up!

As Kristin lowers Sylvie to the floor --

ANGLE ON -

A ROW OF ELLIPTICAL TRAINERS. Bailey is warming up. Sylvie
hops onto the trainer next to her.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Hey, Bailey Smith, isn't it? Sylvie
Fowler. We met at the MTV Awards.

BAILEY
Oh right. So how are things in the
hot seat at "Cachet"?

SYLVIE
I'm not going to be happy until I've
taken a nice big chunk out of "Vogue". You
know how I'm going to do that? By putting star writers on the
magazine. Like you.

(CONTINUED)
BAILEY
Thanks for the compliment but I'm not for sale. I'm happy at "The Post".

SYLVIE
I don't know why. You made a reputation writing brilliant profiles and now you're writing gossip for a tabloid.

BAILEY
I'm syndicated. I don't have to worry about money anymore. Besides, I write about people, not fashion.

SYLVIE
That's exactly what I want you to do. Write about interesting people in your own irreverent way. You'll sell magazines.

BAILEY
I hear your circulation's dropping. And you had staff defections last week.

SYLVIE
(tries to shrug it off)
Some people can't take the hills.

Bailey ups the speed on the elliptical. Sylvie does the same.

BAILEY
You know, I'd consider writing some pieces for you but I need something in return.

SYLVIE
You name it.

BAILEY
I'm preparing a series of columns about high-profile New York marriages. I hear one of them is breaking up.

Sylvie looks at her. She doesn't like where this is going.

BAILEY (CONT'D)
Come on. You know who I'm talking about.

SYLVIE
I don't know anything. And who cares anyway.
BAILEY
Are you joking? Messy divorces sell more papers than presidential campaigns. And Stephen Haines hounding around with some shopgirl? Jackpot.

SYLVIE
Sounds like you've already written the story. What do you need me for?

BAILEY
You're an editor. You know I need confirmation from an iron clad source. It would be totally confidential. You confirm this for me and I'm yours.

Hard ball. Sylvie takes a deep breath.

SYLVIE
Sorry. I can't help you.

BAILEY
That's too bad. Well, just because you wouldn't do me a favor, doesn't mean I won't do one for you. One of my spies saw your publisher having dinner last night with Talia Greene from "Harper's Bazaar".

Suddenly, Sylvie stops her machine.

SYLVIE
(thrown; covering)
I'm not worried. Ned wouldn't replace me. He's completely committed to my vision for the magazine.

BAILEY
All I'm saying is, there was some heavy wooing going on.

SYLVIE
Bailey, do not print that. What staff I have left will smell blood. It would completely destroy my credibility at "Cachet". And then I really am out the door.

BAILEY
I know. It's amazing how a little piece of gossip like that can unravel, actually, a whole career. Because when you think about it, where would you go after "Cachet"?

Off Sylvie's terrified look --
INT. HAINES BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE on "The New York Post" lying on the bed, folded back to reveal an UNFLATTERING CANDID SHOT OF MARY IN HER PAJAMAS PICKING UP THE NEWSPAPER FROM HER DRIVEWAY. Next to it is a PAPARAZZI PICTURE OF CRYSTAL IN SAKS, who appears to be posing. Above the photo screams the headline "Wall Street Whiz Dumps Wife for Shop Girl!" Mary's hand comes into frame and stuffs the paper into the trash.

INT. LESBIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CAMERA TRAVELS ACROSS A DANCE FLOOR where FEMALE COUPLES are slow dancing to a MELISSA ETHERIDGE SONG. MOVE DOWN THE BAR where women of all types are enjoying a "scene". Pass by tables of couples until we come to rest on SYLVIE, ALEX AND EDIE at a table positioned under a LARGE CANVAS OF EROTIC ART. Edie is staring at the painting, then turns to Alex.

EDIE
This is the last time you're picking the restaurant.

Alex is nursing a margarita and reading the Post article.

EDIE (CONT'D)
And put that away. She's going to be here any minute.

ALEX
If your life's going to be splattered across the papers, at least it should be a decent picture. And next to Crystal? Shouldn't there be a five day waiting period before you can buy a dress like that?

Sylvie takes a sip of her margarita. She looks distracted.

EDIE
You're awfully quiet for a change.

SYLVIE
Tough day at work, that's all.

ANGLE ON MARY -

- as she makes her way into the restaurant, passing a couple necking in the stairway. Edie spots her.

EDIE
Here she comes.

Alex stashes the paper as Mary approaches. She sits down, wound tight as a top.

MARY
Alex picked the restaurant, right?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MARY (CONT'D)
(off Sylvie's drink)
Wow, that looks great.
(takes a drink)
Mmmm.

EDIE
Okay. No big elephants on the table. Just when you thought it couldn't get any shittier! Do you want to have a laugh about it right now?

ALEX
Or do you just want to run off with a woman. 'Cause you're in the right place.

MARY
How about a woman and a margarita. That sounds good.

ALEX
Alright, she's going to be okay.

MARY
I am. I'm going to be fine. More than fine. I hired a lawyer today.

Edie stops, takes a beat.

EDIE
Mary...Don't you think maybe it's too soon for lawyers? I mean, let things settle down. A month from now, everything could look different.

MARY
That would be a very big magic trick.

EDIE
I know. I know. But I'm going to take a risk here and say something --

ALEX
And as we all know, you're the master at saying the last thing anybody wants to hear.

EDIE
There's always two sides to every story. Any one of us is capable, under the right circumstances, of making a big mistake. Right? Right? A good marriage counselor might ask, "And how were you culpable in this marriage"?

(continued)
MARY
How am I culpable? I married an asshole, that's how I'm culpable. And who's side are you on, Edie?

EDIE
I'm not taking sides. I'm -

MARY
Pick one! Pick a side!

EDIE
I'm on your side.

Mary looks to Alex.

ALEX
(quickly)
My money's on you, baby.

MARY
Alright.

Sylvie is looking increasingly uncomfortable.

MARY (CONT'D)
Here's what I want to know. I want to know how somebody like Bailey Smith faces herself in the mirror every morning. How do you make a living feeding off other people's pain?

Sylvie is about to jump out of her skin. Suddenly she explodes, the words tumbling out.

SYLVIE
Mary, it's my fault!

Alex and Edie are stunned, as is Mary.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Bailey Smith knew I was about to be fired. I needed her on the magazine. She practically blackmailed me. I didn't give her any information. She had all the details already. She just said "nod" if it's true. That's all I did is "nod". I was in a terrible position. I was scared! People do terrible things when they're scared. And this is terrible, I know that. I know.

Mary looks at Sylvie with cold eyes

(CONTINUED)
MARY
What is it you said, Sylvie? That betrayal in relationships is inevitable? I thought you were just talking about marriage. This is so much worse.

With that, Mary walks out. There's a long moment of silence as Sylvie, in pain, watches her friend leave. Alex and Edie stare at her, stunned.

ALEX
I never heard the words "I'm sorry."

SYLVIE
Of course I'm sorry! I'm sorry I was put in such a bad position. Is it so wrong to fight for a job I worked my whole life to get?

EDIE
Sylvie, it can't just be about work. The work isn't there to take care of you in the wheelchair days.

ALEX
That's why this is so bad. You and Mary -- and I say this with love -- you're both nuts. But together you make the perfect person.

SYLVIE
I think that's called co-dependance.

ALEX
All I'm saying is make it right. You've got to make it right.

On Sylvie's pained expression --

DISSOLVE TO:

48 INT. CRYSTAL AND PAT'S APARTMENT - A LATE SEPTEMBER NIGHT

CLOSE ON THE NEW YORK TIMES OBITUARY SECTION. PULL BACK TO REVEAL Crystal reading it on the couch. She circles something of interest. The apartment is the size of a closet, furnished with flea market finds and some Pier One. Pat is setting the table for dinner when there is a KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Crystal drops the newspaper revealing that she is only in her underwear. She crosses to the door and opens it, finding Tanya.

(Continued)
CRYSTAL

Hi!

She gives Tanya a hug. Tanya doesn't know where to look, what to do.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

C'mon in. Just hangin' out, very casual.

Tanya and Pat look at each other and shrug. Crystal is Crystal. Tanya proffers a bottle of Campari.

TANYA

Here. I brought you something classy. I know you're used to that these days.

CRYSTAL

I'll open it.

Crystal crosses to the little kitchen to get glasses.

TANYA

Wow, it smells very good in here.

CRYSTAL

I cooked. I've been taking classes.

Tanya looks at Pat in astonishment.

PAT

I know. It's the seventh sign of the apocalypse.

(CONTINUED)
TANYA
(off Crystal's state of undress)
Watch out for those grease splatters.

CRYSTAL
Stephen loves a good home-cooked meal.

Tanya notices the newspaper on the coffee table folded back to the obituaries.

TANYA
You're reading the obituaries and circling your favorites?

CRYSTAL
It's the best way to find a great apartment.

PAT
(to Tanya)
Frightening, right? I'm afraid to sleep with my door unlocked.

CRYSTAL
Stephen's living in a hotel right now because he's in the "guilty phase". That'll pass. It always does. By then I'll have found him a great apartment. And little by little I'll work my way in.

Crystal brings out the Campari and pours some glasses with soda.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Hey, do you guys want to watch me on the soap? I've got it on TiVo.

As they all gather around the little TV -

49 CU ON A TV SCREEN. WE ARE WATCHING THE SOAP.

THE SCENE IS SET IN A CORPORATE BOARD ROOM. Crystal, (as Ramona Fox), is in big hair and a power suit. She is confronting a YOUNG SWEET WOMAN in a pastel twin set.

RAMONA
Listen, Snowflake, I don't care whose daughter you are. You don't have what it takes to run a company like this. Now take a walk and never look back.

(CONTINUED)
SWEET WOMAN
My father will never let you get away with this, Ramona.

RAMONA
I'm sleeping with your father!

CLOSE ON SWEET WOMAN’S SHOCKED REACTION.

MATCH CUT TO:

50 INT. THE HAINES KITCHEN

TV SET IN THE KITCHEN AS THE SOAP ENDS. REVERSE TO -

Mary and Uta's shocked reaction. They have also Tivo'd the soap. Mary is in sweat pants and a robe, her hair uncombed.

MARY
Wow. I never saw that coming. Two weeks watching, and they just spring it on you.

UTA
They always do that.

MARY
Is it Friday? I hate Fridays. You have to wait the whole weekend to find out what happens.

Mary TURNS OFF THE TV.

MARY (CONT'D)
(out of the blue)
Let me ask you something, Uta. Do you think I'm sexually appealing?

UTA
...Now?

MARY
You know, in general. I'm going to have to start dating again. Which is just a tiny bit terrifying. I mean, you're out there. Is there anything new?

Uta would like to get out of this conversation.

MARY (CONT'D)
Hey. Maybe you and I could go out together some night. Maybe tomorrow. What are you doing tomorrow?

Maggie enters in the nick of time, saving Uta. She has groceries and a pumpkin under her arm. She takes in the scene.

(CONTINUED)
MAGGIE
Oh for godssakes, it's the middle of the afternoon. Your daughter's going to be home from school any minute. You want her to see her mother in her bathrobe? Again?

MARY
I don't look at clocks anymore. It's very liberating.

The PHONE RINGS. Maggie answers it.

MAGGIE (INTO PHONE)
Haines residence. Oh, hello. Sure, I still recognize your voice. Me? Holding down the fort. I'll see if she's here.

(then, cups hand over phone)
Mr. Haines is on the phone.

MARY
Tell him I'm not here.

MAGGIE
I'm a bad liar. If I were better at it, I'd be embezzling from you.

MARY
I don't want to talk to him. I'm busy.

Maggie loses her patience.

MAGGIE
Alright, look. I'm the housekeeper. I cook, I clean, I run errands and that's it. I'm not your secretary, I'm not your mother, I'm not your pal, I'm not involved. Now take care of your own business.

Maggie stares Mary down. Mary reluctantly takes the phone.

MARY (INTO PHONE)
Hello, Stephen. I haven't connected with the appraiser yet. I'll do it next week.

(then)
Oh. I'm sure she'd love to carve a pumpkin with you.

(this is hard)
Thank you for the invitation, but I think you two are better off on your own. I wouldn't have the first idea how to be around you, Stephen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MARY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
(listens briefly)
I've already told you, no marriage
counselor. It's over. I'll have
Molly call you.

Mary hangs up. She turns to find Molly standing in the
doorway.

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh, sweetie. I didn't mean for you
to hear that.

Molly turns and walks away, leaving Mary behind.
Sylvie's car pulls into the Haines driveway. She gets out, walks across the lawn to a window and tries to peer in. Nothing. She moves to the next window. Nothing. Suddenly -

    MAGGIE
    May I help you?

Sylvie jumps a mile.

    SYLVIE
    What do you think you're doing, sneaking up on me like that?

    MAGGIE
    What do you think you're doing, casing the house like a Jehovah's Witness.

    SYLVIE
    I'm looking for Mary. I've left some messages and she hasn't called back.

    MAGGIE
    She's not here.

    SYLVIE
    Where did she go?

    MAGGIE
    Out of town.

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE
Out of town where?

MAGGIE
You think I'd tell you?

SYLVIE
What about Molly?

MAGGIE
Molly's in school. That's where kids go on weekdays.

SYLVIE
Cute.

MAGGIE
Are we done now? I have things to do and your Prada's are wrecking my perennials.

As Maggie heads back to the house -

54 INT. SYLVIE'S CAR - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Sylvie is driving out of Mary's neighborhood and passes a park. Something catches her eye. TWO GIRLS ON A BENCH. They're young but dressed a little tarty, with too much eye make up and short skirts. Sylvie suddenly realizes that one of the girls is Molly. She stops, starts to back up.

MOLLY
Oh man...

ASHLEY
Who's that?

MOLLY
One of my mother's friends. You better go.

The girl takes off as Sylvie approaches.

55 EXT. CITY PARK - CONTINUOUS

SYLVIE
Small world, isn't it. Why aren't you in school?

MOLLY
I didn't feel like it today.

Sylvie sits down on the bench next to her.

SYLVIE
So this is kind of a new look for you.

(CONTINUED)
MOLLY
I leave the house in my uniform and then after school I change into the stuff I hid in my backpack. A lot of the girls do it.

SYLVIE
Clever. You wouldn't happen to have a cigarette, would you?

Molly reaches into her backpack and takes out a pack of cigarettes that's half empty. She offers Sylvie one.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Thanks.

Sylvie takes the whole pack and puts it in her pocket.

MOLLY
Hey!

SYLVIE
Does your mother know you smoke?

MOLLY
No. And don't tell her. I do it so I won't eat.

SYLVIE
Your weight is fine.

MOLLY
I hate my body. I want to look like the models in your magazine.

SYLVIE
Nobody looks like those girls. Not even them. They're all airbrushed and retouched.

MOLLY
Then why don't you put regular people in there?

SYLVIE
I know, it's hypocritical. But life is complicated.

MOLLY
I'm starting to figure that out.

SYLVIE
Want to talk about it?

MOLLY
No...

(then)
How old were you when you had sex?

(CONTINUED)
Sylvie is thrown.

SYLVIE

Thirty.

Molly manages a smile.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
It was horrible. Hurt like hell. And totally embarrassing because we had no idea what we were doing. We were up in his room one night, big Farrah Fawcett poster staring down on the bed. Star Wars sheets. Just tragic. I didn't have sex again for a really long time.

(she smiles at the memory)

But then I met somebody. And it was worth the wait. The guy and I were crazy for each other. And then magically, it was all really easy.

MOLLY
So you're telling me exactly what my mother would say if I could even ask her about it. Don't have sex until you're in love.

SYLVIE
Nope. I've had pretty great sex just for the hell of it, I won't lie to you. But there's no sex like the kind you have when you love somebody and they love you back.

Molly sits there for a moment, absorbing it.

MOLLY
You would make the coolest mother.

SYLVIE
(taken aback, flattered)
Really? No I wouldn't. Really? Kids don't seem to take to me.

MOLLY
You'd be a great mom. Not like mine. I could be in the same room with her and it's like she's not there at all.

SYLVIE
Listen Molly, I know you're going through a tough time. If there's anything you want to talk about - day or night - you call me, okay? I want you to promise. Say you promise.

(Continued)
MOLLY
I promise.

SYLVIE
...So where is your mother, anyway?

SMASH CUT TO:

56 EXT. BERKSHIRE MOUNTAINS -- DAWN

Very woodsy. An OLD LODGE in the background. A group of about TEN WOMEN IN HIKING GEAR are standing before a FLOTILLA OF CANOES. Mary SWATS A MOSQUITO on her neck. A very lean, fit and serious woman, HELGA, turns to address them.

HELGA
Alright, everyone. Take a deep, cleansing breath. Look around. Respect the power of nature. This is why you have come to The Camp. Let it heal you. So. Divorce, how many?

All the hands go up. Mary raises hers in a sort of half-committed position. Suddenly, the piercing voice of LEAH MILLER.

LEAH
Hold on. I'm coming. Don't start yet. Hold on.

Leah trots out to the group dragging a wheelie suitcase behind her. Fifty-ish, she is wearing a velour jogging outfit and some serious jewelry.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Sorry, I'm not used to getting up at the crack of friggin' dawn, excuse my French. Is this the time you always start? Because I'm pretty sure the lake will still be here at noon.

HELGA
(don't mess with me)
We always canoe at dawn.

LEAH
I always fake my orgasms. That doesn't make it right.

Helga scowls at Leah, then turns and faces the sparkling lake.

HELGA
Let's go!

(CONTINUED)
With a fist triumphantly in the air, Helga and the others hoist canoes over their heads and start to march to the creek, their heads in the boats, their legs like a caterpillars.

LEAH
(muffled; head in canoe)
Who's going to take my bag? When was the last time this thing was cleaned. What is this, gum?

EXT. THE WOODS - A YURT - NIGHT
A FLASHLIGHT BEAM. Mary and Leah, saddled with backpacks, come out of the bushes and lay eyes on the yurt.

MARY
Well, here's our "room". Welcome to the Berserk-shires.

LEAH
What the hell is this? A yurt?

Mary struggles to shed her backpack.

LEAH (CONT'D)
I hate the whole idea of camping out. I slept with the door open once, that's as close as I got.

They crawl into the yurt.

INT. YURT - CONTINUOUS
There are two basic cots and an oil lamp.

LEAH
This place makes Betty Ford look like Disneyland. I should know. I ran screaming out of Betty twice.

Mary collapses on her cot. Leah starts fishing around in her pocket for something.

LEAH (CONT'D)
I smell yak. I don't think it's my imagination.

Leah takes out a joint, lights up, takes a drag.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Ohhhhh yes. This'll take the edge off.

Leah offers Mary a toke.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
No thanks. Where'd you get that, anyway? They even took away my Altoids.

LEAH
I made friends with Buck, the ranger boy. Another - guess what - aspiring actor. I thought I left them all back home in La-La land, where your dentist is writing a screenplay and your gardener's playing Willy Lowman at a dinner theater in Torrance. He got me the joint, I took his head shot.

MARY
How long have you been an agent?

LEAH
Since 1852. At ICM they call me "The Countess". I can turn anybody into a star. Even our little ranger boy. He's cute, I'm bored, and my guest house is empty. Who knows, maybe he's the next Michael Douglas. Another shit bag who left me. (coughs a phlegmy cough)

These people have no loyalties. I was the only one who was honest with him. I said, "Michael, nobody wants to see that bare ass hanging out anymore". And bang, he's gone. (takes a toke)

Maybe there was a better way to put it, I don't know. (then)

So what are you in for?

MARY
I ran away from home. Got fired from all my jobs. Wife, mother, daughter. Broke up with my best friend - that was the worst.

LEAH
I just bailed out of husband number four. No, five. I keep blocking one of them out because he tried to kill me. L'amour, L'amour. (takes a drag)

MARY
You know what -- Give me that joint.

Mary takes the joint and inhales deeply, holding her breath. Then she coughs.
MARY (CONT'D)
Oh my God. I haven't done this since my freshman year of college. I ate an entire tube of toothpaste. Wow, this is strong.

Leah reaches for the joint but Mary takes another hit.

MARY (CONT'D)
Here's the thing. I'm one of those people -- I really try to do the right thing. I do. I let the person in the grocery line with one item go in front of me. I give money to homeless people. I recycle. And I never cheat. Well, I did once. I cheated at Monopoly. I was the little top hat. I moved it a couple extra spaces. I was only a kid, so it probably doesn't count. But it's funny how I remembered that just now. Why do you think that is? Anyway -- What was my point?

LEAH
(in for a long night)
Oh boy...a talker.

Leah reaches for the joint and starts to take a slow hit.

MARY
Anyway, that's the kind of person I am. And so I have to ask myself why has my whole world come tumbling down? Can you not bogart that please?

She takes the joint back.

MARY (CONT'D)
I mean, I've spent a lifetime trying to be everything to everybody. But somehow, somebody's always disappointed.

She takes a long toke and hands it back to Leah.

LEAH
Let me tell you Leah Miller's secret of life: Don't give a shit about anybody else. Be selfish. Because once you ask the question, "What about me?" -- everything changes. For the better.

Mary blinks, as if seeing something for the first time.

LEAH (CONT'D)
I mean -- Who are you, Mary? What do you want?

(CONTINUED)
MARY

(thrown)
What do I want? That's a tough one.
What do I want? Wow. Well. I have no idea. How about that. A grown woman who has no idea what she wants.
That's a very sad statement. I'm feeling very sad.

LEAH

No. Don't go to the sad place. I'm not equipped.

Suddenly --

MARY

I have to have a cheese burger.

LEAH

Yes! With bacon. And fries. We've got to bust out of this place.

MARY

They took our car keys.

LEAH

No problem. I know how to hot-wire a car. I learned it at Hazelton.

59A EXT. YURT - CONTINUOUS

Smoke is billowing out of it. Leah and Mary pick up the flashlights, laughing hysterically --

MARY

We're in a yurt!

As they scramble toward the woods they SEE A FLASHLIGHT coming toward them and HEAR TWIGS CRACKING underfoot.

MARY (CONT'D)

Shhh! Down.

A figure emerges.

WOMAN

.twisting her ankle)
Ouch! Jesus, I hate nature.

MARY

Sylvie?

SYLVIE

Ahhhhh!!!!!

Mary shines the flashlight in her eyes.

MARY

What the hell are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE
I have to talk to you.

LEAH
I'm starving. Are you coming?

MARY
...No. I think I'm going to stay.

LEAH
Okay. Well, good luck. And remember. You didn't lose a husband. You gained a closet.

As she scrambles off into the woods --

LEAH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Are there bears here?

Sylvie and Mary are left alone to face each other.

SYLVIE
Mary, I can count on one hand how many times I've said "I'm sorry", in my life.
   (very heartfelt)
   But I'm sorry, Mary.

MARY
Well -- that's a start.

SYLVIE
And also -- I called Stephen last week.

MARY
Sylvie, why would you ever do a thing like --

SYLVIE
You need to hear this. We had dinner. He poured his heart out. He asked me a million questions about you. He was wearing his wedding band. He said he couldn't bring himself to take it off yet. He knew he made a terrible mistake but was still hoping you'd find some way to forgive him. We kind of bonded over that.

Mary softens a little.

MARY
Why are you doing this? You're the one who doesn't believe in marriage.

SYLVIE
But I'm bitter and cynical.
   (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE (CONT'D)
You're a pumpkin carver. Mary, for
God sakes, you have so much at stake
here.

Mary looks at Sylvie. Suddenly an expression of relief washes
over her.

MARY
Give me your cell phone.

Sylvie starts digging in her purse.

MARY (CONT'D)
Hurry before I change my mind.

Sylvie reaches into her pocket and hands Mary her phone. Mary
dials.

MARY (CONT'D)
Do you have anything to eat?

SYLVIE
(looking in bag)
Tic Tacs. A Xanax.

MARY (INTO PHONE)
Stephen Haines, please. He's a guest
in the hotel. Oh. Did he leave a
forwarding number?

Mary motions for Sylvie to give her something to write with. Sylvie
hands her a lip liner. Mary writes the number on her hand.

MARY (CONT'D)
Thank you.
(hangs up and redials)
He must have gotten his own place.
What am I going to say? If he's not
there, should I leave a message?
God, I'm stoned.

CUT TO:

60 OMIT

61 INT. NY PIED A TERRE - NIGHT

It looks like a soon-to-be divorced man's place. Minimal
furniture. Big plasma screen. Chair in front of it. Unpacked
boxes. NordicTrak in the living room. SUDDENLY,
CRYSTAL'S VOICE.

CRYSTAL (V.O.)
I'm leaving, Stephen! Call me!

No answer from Stephen. Crystal appears, scowling. She has
an overnight bag and a tote.

(CONTINUED)
She spies the FRAMED PHOTO OF MARY AND MOLLY on a side table. She stops, tosses the picture in a drawer. She reaches into her tote and takes out HER FRAMED HEAD SHOT, which she puts in its place. Just then there is the SOUND OF A CELL PHONE RINGING. Crystal sees Stephen's phone on a coffee table. She hesitates. Curiosity getting the best of her. She checks to make sure Stephen doesn't walk in. She picks up the phone.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Hello. Stephen's cell phone. This is Crystal speaking.

CUT BACK TO:

62 EXT. THE CAMP PARKING LOT

Mary is stunned. She quickly hangs up and hands the phone back to Sylvie. She is devastated.

MARY
She answered his phone. Oh yeah, he's in a lot of pain.

SYLVIE
I didn't know. How was I supposed to know?

MARY
(tosses cell phone back to Sylvie)
Don't do me any more favors, alright?

As Mary walks off into the night -

DISSOLVE TO:

63 INT. MEETING ROOM, NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - TWO WEEKS LATER

A DOZEN SOCIETY WOMEN including Barbara Delacorte, are sitting at a table. There's tea and a cookie platter that no one dares touch. They are buzzing about Mary. "SHE MUST BE SO HUMILIATED; HOW OLD DO YOU THINK THAT SPRITZER GIRL IS?; I WOULD HIDE IN A CAVE FOR A YEAR."

MARY ENTERS. The buzzing abruptly stops. Suddenly BARBARA STANDS AND BEGINS TO APPLAUD. THE OTHERS FOLLOW SUIT. Mary grimaces, finds a seat. They all sit.

BARBARA
'Nuff said. Shall we start? I'm sure my co-chair, Mary Haines, will agree when I make this prediction: That this year's charity ball honoring the work of William Styron will be the most successful in the Library's history.

Again applause. Mary seems restless.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
How much money do we spend on this ball every year?

Everyone in the room falls silent.

MARY (CONT'D)
A lot, right? It seems to me that money should be going to the library. So I'm going to propose something radical. Why don't we send "Un-invitations" to a "Non-Ball". No one has to get dressed up on a Sunday night, no one has to eat rubber chicken. Just write out your check, stay home, order a pizza and we'll tell you who wasn't there and what they didn't wear.

A long silence. Then -

BARBARA
You mean...no party?

Everyone looks around, stunned.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
...But we like the party. It's what we do.

MARY
You're right, you're right. What was I thinking?

BARBARA
Okay, so getting back to -

MARY
(interrupting)
But for my part, I personally cannot go to one more ball in a dress that costs more than the gross national product of Uruguay and try to make conversation with some social-climbing dim bulb who thinks Camus lives at Sea World. Ladies, I'm sorry, but I'm resigning. Good luck with everything. And when you're all dancing to Peter Duchin's orchestra in a room decorated to look like the train car in "Sophie's Choice", I'll be home actually reading the book.

As her final shocker, MARY STUFFS A COOKIE IN HER MOUTH. THEN TAKES TWO MORE FOR THE ROAD, and exits.
INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

OVERHEAD SHOT OF THE BED. TIME LAPSE, SEVERAL WEEKS. Mary is asleep, curled up on her side of the bed. She moves toward the middle. She's in the middle. The DOG is on the bed now. She grabs a pillow from Stephen's side. She throws a leg over to Stephen's side. She rolls onto Steven's side. She is sprawled across the entire bed, finally claiming it as her own.

INT. HAINES BATHROOM - MORNING

CLOSE on mirror. Mary's face lifts up from the sink into frame. As she pats herself dry she takes a good long look at herself. She fingers her long, wavy hair. Time for a change.

INT. PLASTIC SURGERY RECOVERY HOTEL - MANHATTAN - EARLY NOVEMBER DAY

We're in the lounge of a small boutique hotel. MARY ENTERS. Her hair is straight and edgy. Her look is more pulled together. She looks great. She sees a NURSE, and flags her.

MARY
Excuse me. I'm here to visit my mother, Catherine Frazier. How is she doing?

NURSE
Well, she's still in some pain. But that's to be expected. She's in there.

The Nurse moves off. We FOLLOW Mary into a sitting room where we find that all the "guests" in this hotel are WOMEN IN BATHROBES WEARING HUGE POST-FACELIFT HELMETS. Virtually the entire head is in a cast and the only part of the face that's visible is swollen eyes and a slit for the mouth. Mary enters and looks around. She approaches a woman.

MARY
Mom?

(CONTINUED)
The woman shakes her head "no". She approaches another woman who waves her off.

CATHERINE
Over here, Mary.

Mary follows the direction of her mother's voice to the far end of the room. She finds Catherine seated at a table in her robe and helmet. There's a pot of tea and two cups in front of her. She's pouring a cup for Mary.

MARY
(staring at her)
My God. Does it hurt?

CATHERINE
I just spent thousands of dollars to look "rested". Yes, it hurts.

MARY
I can't believe you did this.

CATHERINE
Have you looked around lately? There are no sixty year old women. I was the only one left.

She takes a pain pill from her pocket. She rests the pill on her tongue and then retracts it and swallows.

MARY
Mom...it's okay. What did you always say to me? Don't look back. No regrets.

CATHERINE
Oh, I'm so full of shit. I have plenty of regrets. I regret that I never accomplished anything of my own. I was ambivalent. And frankly, I wanted things - a big house, beautiful clothes - it was easier to get status from your father than to get it for myself. I'm ashamed to say that, Mary, as I sit here before you, chopped up and sewn back together in my attempt to turn back time...I know I failed you in a lot of ways. But probably none more than that.

Mary looks at her mother and takes her hand.

MARY
Mom, I've been thinking about something. I want to go back to work. But not for Dad. I want to design my own collection.

(CONTINUED)
CATHARINE
What brought this on?

MARY
Hitting bottom. Having nothing to lose. I highly recommend it.

CATHARINE
I'd be smiling now if it wouldn't blow out eighty stitches.

MARY
I don't want to take on more than I can handle. A small collection to start.

CATHARINE
Where are you going to get the money?

MARY
I'll have to find some backers.

CATHARINE
What about me? I have my inheritance. I never did anything with it. What could be a better investment than you?

Mary looks at her mother. Suddenly there's a connection we have not seen between them yet.

MARY
You know, someday when I'm sitting there with my head in a helmet, I hope my daughter has as much love and respect for me as I do for you right now.

Catherine looks at her and attempts a smile.

CATHARINE
You're even more full of shit than I am.

They both start to laugh.

CATHARINE (CONT'D)
Ow, ow....

INT. LOFT SPACE, FLATIRON DISTRICT - NIGHT

Mary walks into the small, dark, utterly empty space. She takes down a "FOR RENT" sign, then reaches into her bag and removes a rolled up paper. It's a banner. She attaches it with thumb tacks to a bare wall. The banner announces the name of her new company: "Mary Haines Studio".

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

(CONTINUED)
INT. LOFT SPACE, FLATIRON DISTRICT - A FEW WEEKS LATER

THE BANNER. PAN DOWN from it to reveal a design studio in full swing with SEAMSTRESSES, PATTERN CUTTERS, etc. working away. In the midst of it all, Mary is leading the troops.
INT. SYLVIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sylvie's alone. The sun is setting in the window behind her. She's on the phone.

SYLVIE (INTO PHONE)
Ned, please. I know it's not the strongest issue I've turned out, but next month is a whole different story. Bailey Smith is writing a profile of Christiane Amanpour and Alex Fisher is getting me some advance material from her new --

Ned interrupts her. It's like Sylvie's been stabbed in the heart.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Ned, you can't do this. Nobody turns around a magazine in under a year. Just give me three more issues. I've got this great idea.
(pitching desperately)
A whole issue on revenge. How to get it, who to stick it to, the lost art of holding a grudge, how to construct the perfect rumor, the ten best random acts of getting even. We'll put some hot young actress on the cover.

She anxiously awaits Ned's reaction. Then --

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Yes. Thank you. I think it will be brilliant, too. Okay then. I'll see you in the morning.

Sylvie hangs up. Her job has been saved. She looks around her beloved office. But there is no joy in her eyes.

INT. HAINES HOUSE - SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER

Mary walks in, arms full of portfolios and fabric samples. Buzzed from work, she's in a great mood.

MARY
Hello? Where is everybody?

She dumps everything in the living room and heads into the sun room.

INT. SUN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie, is there, straightening up.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Oh, there you are. What a day. I had to completely recut a pattern. The fit model didn't show up. And all that new fabric that came from Italy? The whole dye lot was off. But it's going to be good, Maggie!

(then)
Where's Molly?

MAGGIE
Out there.

Mary looks out to the patio.

Molly is sitting on the flagstone with a large box of tampons. She's made a small bonfire with some of them, and is methodically adding "logs" to the blaze.

MARY
What is she doing?

MAGGIE,
She says she doesn't want to be a woman.

Mary enters from the kitchen door. She watches Molly for a moment, then kneels down next to her.

MARY
You've got a pretty good little bonfire going there.

MOLLY
I started it with the "slenders" and now I'm adding the "supers". That's the trick.

Mary watches her for a moment. Then -

MARY
Boy, wouldn't it be great if when you were born they handed you a rule book. And every time you came up against something you didn't know how to handle, you could look it up in the book and there would be the answer.

MOLLY
You know, I used to feel sorry for the kids in my class.

(MORE)
MOLLY (CONT'D)
Every other weekend with dad except when mom's boyfriend sleeps over and then dad gets you two in a row. I used to feel sorry for them. Now I'm one of them.

MARY
Let's just talk about it, Molly. I'm here now.

MOLLY
I can't talk to you the way I talk to Sylvie.

MARY
...You've been talking to Sylvie?

MOLLY
She's been helping me.

Mary feels this incredible pang of jealousy.

MARY
I want to help you, too. Why won't you let me help you?

MOLLY
Because all you'll do is tell me everything's going to be fine. And it isn't. Dad is in an apartment with practically no furniture. And that Crystal woman is always showing up there. She doesn't even call first. And then she leaves things behind. A dress. A purse. An ugly lamp! I don't think he even likes her that much. He's just lonely. He misses you.

MARY
Molly -- I can't.

Molly looks at her mother for a long beat.

MARY
I remember when I used to watch you get ready to go out with Dad. And you'd let me put on one of your dresses and your high heels and I'd draw lipstick on. I wanted to be you.

Mary looks at Molly, asking with her eyes: "And now?"

MOLLY (CONT'D)
I'm going to go call Sylvie.

Molly gets up and exits into the house, leaving Mary crushed.
EXT. SYLVIE'S BROWNSTONE - THE NEXT DAY

Sylvie comes onto the stoop of her Upper East Side brownstone. There's a cold wind. She's in pants (rare for her) and a warm jacket. She heads up the block. As she walks, she becomes aware of the sound of heels clicking behind her, walking faster, catching up with her. As she stops in front of a KOREAN VEGETABLE STAND on the corner, she turns.

SYLVIE
(surprised)
Mary.

MARY
I want to know what you're talking to my daughter about.

SYLVIE
I promised her I wouldn't discuss it.

MARY
The child is having emotional problems and now you decide to be discreet?

SYLVIE
I just thought she needed a safe place to -

MARY
(angry)
I'm the safe place, okay? That's my job, not yours. I'm the mother. Not you.

SYLVIE
She said she loves me!

MARY
Sure. You're her pal. You never have to say no. Show me the stretch marks, baby, then you can do all the mothering you want.

(off her clothes)
What is this, casual Friday? It's Wednesday.

SYLVIE
Yeah, I know.

The radar.

MARY
What's wrong.

SYLVIE
Nothing.

(CONTINUED)
MARY

Something.

SYLVIE

Let's just drop it, okay? I didn't mean to cause problems. I was just trying to help.

MARY

Don't you ever get tired of saying that?

Mary turns and starts to walk away. Sylvie picks up a tomato from the vegetable stand. She hits Mary with it.

MARY (CONT'D)

OW!

SYLVIE

(angry)

How dare you reprimand me for stepping in where you should have been all along. You have not been there for your child, Mary. You have not been there for anybody. You're out of focus!

Mary whacks Sylvie back with a green pepper. Hard. Sylvie can't believe it. She grabs a hand full of lettuce and throws it.

MARY

Don't you criticize me! What are you going to do, Sylvie? Get Molly to trust you and then betray her like you did me?

SYLVIE

Do you have any idea how hard it is to be your friend? Who are you? You're unknowable! No wonder Stephen had an affair!

MARY

(livid)

I want to know what was going on inside you, that you had to sell out your best friend. Is that what's most important to you, Sylvie? Your job? Is it all about your job?

SYLVIE

I quit my job!!

MARY

(shocked)

What?

(Continued)
SYLVIE
What else could I do?
(MORE)
SYLVIE (CONT'D)
They weren't supporting me. There was no fulfillment there anymore.

MARY
I can't believe you did that. Your job was everything to you.

SYLVIE
That's the problem! I mean, how could I be so out of whack that I sold you out.

MARY
You were in an impossible position. Of course you'd want to keep your job. It's what you do. You're great at it.

SYLVIE
Oh, it's nothing compared to being responsible for a child. I don't know how you do it.

MARY
I'm a terrible mother! Look what I'm passing down from my own mother. I can't even talk to my daughter about sex.

SYLVIE
Well sure, it's easy for me. I didn't change her diapers. I mean -

MARY
You are doing me a huge favor, goddamn it. Thank you. Thank you for that.

SYLVIE
Anything I can do. You have a huge job there. Huge. I am so glad I never had kids. You know, that's the last impermissible thing you can say at a dinner party - that you don't want children.

MARY
Well I'm going to have a dinner party and then you can say that.

They stop, look at each other.

SYLVIE
Oh my God, I'm exhausted.

MARY
We're a big mess.

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE
I like your hair, though.
    (she picks some lettuce
out of it)

They sit down on the curb. Mary takes a deep breath.

MARY
I got my divorce papers today. All
I have to do is sign. Why don't I
seem to be able to find a pen?

SYLVIE
Mary, it's the 21st Century. It's
okay for people to fight for their
relationships.

MARY
...You know what this feels like?
The Phantom Limb Syndrome. You lose
a part of your body - like an arm -
but you still have that sensation,
that it's still there.

SYLVIE
I'm sure Stephen feels the same way.

MARY
I'm not talking about me and Stephen.
I'm talking about me and you.

As Mary puts her arm around Sylvie -

SMASH CUT:

75    INT. BEAUTY SALON - A SHORT WHILE LATER.                        75

Mary and Sylvie come through the glass doors, guns loaded.

SYLVIE
Fan out.

Mary cuts a swathe to Tanya's manicure table. Sylvie splits
off and heads for another part of the salon. As Mary arrives
at Tanya's table, Tanya is setting up the tools of her trade.

MARY
Hi. Remember me?

TANYA
(surprised)
Mrs. Haines.

MARY
My nails are a real mess. But then,
why wouldn't they be, with what I've
been through. Do you have time?

(Continued)
No sooner does Mary sit down than Sylvie "runs into" her.

SYLVIE
Mary!

MARY
Sylvie!

They air kiss.

SYLVIE
How have you been? How's it going with "you know who?"

MARY
Absolutely fantastic. It's like we never skipped a beat. Off the charts.

SYLVIE
I am so jealous.

MARY
I think it's the whole sneaking around thing that gives it that yummy edge.

SYLVIE
Well, nothing like having an affair with your estranged husband to put the spark back in things.

Mary adopts a mock look of horror. She nods toward Tanya who has been listening to this, riveted.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Oh. God. I'm such an idiot. I'd better go before I put my foot in it again. Great seeing you, Mary. Call me!

MARY
Will do!

They air kiss again and Sylvie trots off. Mary sits down at Tanya's table.

MARY (CONT'D)
(to Tanya)
That was very awkward. You don't still see Crystal anymore, do you? You have to forget what you just heard. My life's been complicated enough this year.

(CONTINUED)
TANYA
Oh, it's all safe with me. Did you decide on a color?

MARY
(slaps her hands on the table)
Jungle Red.
OMITTED
Crystal is soaking in bubbles in the bathtub. She's on a cordless phone.

CRYSTAL (INTO PHONE)
Are you sure, Tanya? I can't believe he's seeing her behind my back. I'm practically living with the man. Doesn't anyone have respect for the rules anymore?!

Molly walks in. She has her coat on.

MOLLY
My father's taking me home now.

CRYSTAL
(jumps)
Christ almighty, you scared me.
(into phone)
Gotta go.

Crystal hangs up.

MOLLY
(disgusted)
He said I should say good-night.

CRYSTAL
Oh. Well come here and give me a little kiss.
MOLLY
That's okay.

CRYSTAL
Come on. Give me a kiss. We just spent the weekend together.

MOLLY
It's hot in here and I have my coat on.

CRYSTAL
Well, alright. Good-night.

MOLLY
Good-night.

She starts to the door.

CRYSTAL
Good-night who?

Silence.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I've asked you to call me Aunt Crystal.

MOLLY
I don't want to.

Molly starts out and Crystal stops her.

CRYSTAL
Hey! Come back here. I've bent over backwards to be nice to you. I fixed up your room, I made your favorite dinner -

MOLLY
Who screws up macaroni and cheese?

CRYSTAL
The point is, I made the effort. Why don't you make an effort? What is your problem?

MOLLY
I don't like you.

CRYSTAL
What kind of stupid answer is that? Everybody likes me. And what do you think your father would do if he knew how you talked to me.

MOLLY
I don't think he cares.

(CONTINUED)
CRYSTAL
What's that supposed to mean?
(then)
Why, what did he say?

MOLLY
Nothing. By the way, I won't be here next Friday. My mother's having a fashion show. Yeah, it's something she's always wanted to do and now she's doing it. My father thinks it's great.
(deftly)
The whole thing is kind of....sexy to him. You know, a woman coming into her own and all that. At least that's what I heard him say. Well, enjoy your bath.

Now it's Molly's turn to smile to herself. As she exits, Crystal sits up in her tub, steam rising.

CRYSTAL
Stephen!

81A INT. HAINES LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie and Uta are trimming a Christmas tree.

MAGGIE
I don't know what they do in your country but they don't throw the tinsel in clumps. We place it here.
Place it.

Mary has come down the stairs. She's got a tote bag and a notebook, a camera, and a coat over her arm. She seems very calm and collected.

MARY
Okay. I'm going.

Uta and Maggie turn.

UTA
Ah! Ohmigod. This is it. The big day! Look at you! I don't know how you are so calm and collected. You must be freaking out inside!

MAGGIE
(subtly moving Uta aside)

MARY
It's okay. Actually, I'm doing okay. For now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MARY (CONT'D)
I mean, I always pictured myself in this place. But a part of me never let me get there. And now-- here I am. For better or for worse, as they say.

MAGGIE
Listen, kiddo. It doesn't matter what happens tonight. What counts is that you showed up. You've got a lot of guts, kiddo. I always knew there was someone else inside you.

Mary grins at Maggie, then hugs her. Maggie doesn't quite know what to do.

MARY
Thank you, Maggie. I love you, do you know that?

Maggie is struck dumb.

MARY (CONT'D)
Okay. I'm going. Here I go! Wish me luck.

And Mary is out the door. Hold for a beat. Then -

UTA
Maggie-- can it be? Are you "involved"?

MAGGIE
Shut up and decorate.

82 INT. LOFT SPACE - SHOW NIGHT

The loft has been decorated for the show with a catwalk and a black and white set. BUYERS are arriving with their note pads and cameras. MOLLY IS PASSING OUT PROGRAMS. Edie, now hugely pregnant, is scarfing food at the buffet table. Alex is watching, riveted.

ALEX
You should be on the Discovery Channel.

"Backstage" is make-shift, behind a scrim. It's a hub of activity as DRESSERS, HAIR AND MAKEUP PEOPLE AND MODELS hurry to get ready for the show. NATASHA approaches a makeup station clogged with OTHER MODELS. Seeing there is no room for her, she scowls at them. The other models make way in fear. She sits down and begins to primp.

CARMEN, Mary's assistant, quickly enters with a garment bag. She crosses to Mary who is unpacking boxes of Manolos.

(CONTINUED)
CARMEN
Here's the last dress and the white belts never made it.

MARY
Let's go with the black. And let's start sandpapering the bottoms of these shoes. The runway is slippery.

CARMEN
I'm on it.

As CARMEN CROSSES OUT, Catherine approaches, post facelift. She looks quite good.

CATHERINE
(urgently)
Mary? Excuse me. A word, please.
MARY
Can you believe the turn-out, Mom?
All the best boutiques are here.
God, now I'm nervous. If I throw up, will you hold my head?

CATHERINE
It's going to be great. By the way, your father stopped by earlier and said to tell you he didn't think you had this kind of talent.

MARY
(sarcastically)
Fantastic!

(Continued)
Catherine moves off. Mary begins to anxiously scan the crowd. She sees Molly making her way toward her with a large bouquet of flowers.

Mary's a little taken aback.

Mary

Hi, honey. What's this?

Molly

They just came. They're from Dad.

Molly starts out, then turns back to her mother.

Molly

Mom? This is really cool.

She exits, having paid Mary the highest compliment. Mary turns her attention to Stephen's flowers. She smells them, then opens the card.

Cu, Card: Mary's Wedding Band is taped to it. It reads, "I want to get to know you again. Have I missed my chance? Love, Stephen".

For a moment, all the activity in the room fades into a blur as Mary sees nothing but the ring. She peels it off the card and holds it in her hand. She looks at the spot it used to occupy on her ring finger.

(Continued)
Then she looks around at this new world she has created, as if weighing the two options.
She decides to slip the ring into her pocket instead of on her finger.

Buyers are settling into their chairs. Catherine takes a seat next to Alex and Edie. Edie looks at her for a long moment.

**EDIE**
You look very...refreshed...Catherine.

They eye each other suspiciously. The LIGHTS DIM. With no time to spare, Sylvie ducks inside with A VERY STYLISH WOMAN whom she guides into a seat.

MUSIC UP. THE FIRST MODEL comes out in a fabulous skirt and jacket. Simple, elegant, but edgy and downtown. AS THE SHOW CONTINUES, the palette is black and white with the occasional shot of red - shoes, a belt, a bag, a scarf.

Mary is watching from an unobtrusive vantage point when, in the background, WE SEE CRYSTAL ENTERING THE SHOW. Crystal spies Mary and starts to make her way toward her, slowing down briefly to take in the show. But she's on a mission. She taps Mary on the shoulder. Mary jumps.

**CRYSTAL**
I want to talk to you.

**MARY**
(surprised; hushed)
You can't be here. This is by invitation only.

**CRYSTAL**
I'll make it quick. Stephen dumped me. It's your fault.

**MARY**
Wow. I'm the other woman.

**CRYSTAL**
I want you to stop seeing your husband.

**MARY**
I think that's up to him, isn't it? *Now go away. I'm busy here.*

Crystal really hasn't been aware of the show. She stops and takes a look.

**CRYSTAL**
...You did this? By yourself?

(CONTINUED)
She is clearly impressed.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
They're beautiful.

MARY
...Thank you.

CRYSTAL
I've never done anything on my own worth spit, if you want to know the truth. I don't even know how to be in a relationship. The other person is always there. Their crap is in the closets. They expect things of you. It's hard! And can we talk about that treadmill in the bedroom? And the hair. The hair in the sink! God forbid you should ever mention it. And that child. There's no pleasing her. I don't know how you did it all those years.

MARY
Shhhhh!

CRYSTAL
Listen, I'm kind of a mess here. Woman to woman. Any advice for me?

MARY
You are unbelievable. Yeah, I've got advice. Men come and go. Get yourself some girlfriends.

CRYSTAL
Oh, right. Right. Well. Good luck with all of this. I mean that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
I respect you. I hate you. But I respect you.

As Mary heads backstage --

ANGLE ON THE CATWALK

It's the BIG FINALE. THE MODELS file out in a spectacular succession of RED GOWNS. There's HUGE APPLAUSE. Molly pushes Mary out onto the catwalk to take her bow in one of her own creations. Catherine is beaming. Molly is clearly very proud of her mother. Mary exits the catwalk and emerges onto the floor.

CATHERINE
(hugging and very teary)
Oh, Mary, I'm so proud of you.

MARY
OK, Mom.

CATHERINE
Everything was so beautiful.

MARY
Mom.

CATHERINE
I guess I'm living a little vicariously. Feeling a little jealous, even. Maybe a touch competitive --

MARY
Mom. More than I need to know right now.

CATHERINE
OK. I'll take Molly home.

Mary sees Sylvie motioning for her to come over. Mary excuses herself and crosses to Sylvie.

MARY
Okay, so give it to me straight. What did you think?

SYLVIE
It was transforming! But it doesn't matter what I think. This is the lady whose opinion counts.

Sylvie gestures to the Stylish Woman she brought to the show.

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE (CONT'D)
Mary Haines, I'd like you to meet
Glenda Hill, head buyer for Saks
Fifth Avenue.

MARY
Oh. Oh wow. I didn't know you were coming.
GLENDA
I don't ordinarily "crash" fashion shows but Sylvie called me and insisted I come. She said I'd be missing something if I didn't. And she was right.

MARY
(flattered, excited)
Really? Really? I don't know what to say.

Sylvie is beaming.

GLENDA
It's a small collection, but I find it fresh and forward. I assume you'd be open to a few changes for the Saks customer -- maybe a hemline here, a jacket there...
MARY
(amazed)
Saks Fifth Avenue is going to order my clothes?

GLENDA
We'll start with the New York store and if the clothes do well, we'll expand into all fifty-nine stores.

Sylvie is ready to burst with excitement. But Mary is reeling.

GLENDA (CONT'D)
And of course we'll need everything shipped by spring. Are you geared up for that?

Mary doesn't know what to say.

SYLVIE
I think she's a little shell-shocked.

MARY
Would you mind if I took a little time to think about it?

Glenda looks at Sylvie, her nose clearly out of joint.

GLENDA
Think about it? Don't take too long.

Glenda hands Mary her card and exits. Sylvie looks at Mary, dumbfounded. Edie waddles over with her coat around her waist.

EDIE
Oh, Mary, the show was amazing. We're all so proud of you. I wish I could stay longer to help you celebrate, but my water just broke.

MARY
What? Oh my God!

SYLVIE
Alex!

They begin to kick into another gear.

MARY
I'll call a taxi.

SYLVIE
I've got my car. Come on, let's go.

ALEX
What's going on?

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Edie's going into labor.

ALEX
Oh sure, steal the focus.

They all begin to hustle Edie out.

SYLVIE
Come on. Let's move it, move it, move it. Somebody call Alan.

EDIE
Oh, it's okay. He's out of town on business.

MARY
Who goes out of town when their wife is due?!

EDIE
A man with four children.

As they all hustle out --

CUT TO:
The hospital is decorated for Christmas. CAROLS ARE PLAYING OVER THE PA SYSTEM. CRASH. DOUBLE DOORS OPEN. Edie is in a wheelchair that Sylvie and Mary are pushing at high speed. Alex sprints alongside them.

SYLVIE
Hang in there Edie.

EDIE
Contraction coming! Ohhhhh!

MARY
The contractions are only minutes apart.

EDIE
Every baby comes faster than the one before. I had the last one in under two hours.

Alex barrels up to the admissions desk.

ALEX
(uncharacteristically frantic)
Our friend's having a baby! We need a room right away. We've got to hurry, let's hurry, please hurry.

ADMISSIONS NURSE
Does she have insurance?

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
She doesn't need insurance. Have four, get the fifth one free. Put her in a room! Do it now!

EDIE
I feel another contraction coming.

MARY
One minute apart.

ALEX
One minute!

ADMISSIONS NURSE
I think we'll take you right to the delivery room.

ALEX
This is what I'm saying, this is what I've been saying!

As the nurse comes around the desk to take charge of the wheelchair.

ADMISSIONS NURSE
Which one of you is the birth coach?

EDIE
(pointing to Alex)
She is.

ALEX
What? Why me?

EDIE
It'll be a good experience for you. Don't worry, I'll help you through it.

The Nurse tilts the wheelchair back to swivel it around, aiming it at Alex. Edie opens her knees.

EDIE (CONT'D)
(contraction.)
Ohhhhhhh! This is going to be a big baby.

ALEX
Don't aim that thing at me. It's loaded.

A panicked Alex follows Edie and the Nurse, leaving Sylvie and Mary behind.

88 INT. WAITING ROOM - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Mary and Sylvie are in the process of putting on scrubs.
SYLVIE
I just don't understand it, Mary.
Glenda Hill is an arbiter of taste.
She is a really big deal. Why didn't you jump on that?
MARY
I don't know if I'm ready for such a huge order.

SYLVIE
You weren't expecting to be a success?

MARY
It depends on how you define it. If I can do good work on a small, personal scale, that will make me happy. Besides, I have a daughter who needs me right now.

SYLVIE
All I know is, your kid looked at you today in a whole new way. You gave her a mother who got something for herself. That's important!

MARY
Remember when they told us we couldn't have it all? I think we can have it all. The question is, do we want it all.

SYLVIE
I don't want it all. I just want a really nice piece of it. And anyway, a balanced life is over-rated.

MARY
Will you listen to us? Why are we like this?

SYLVIE
We're women. But you know what, Mary? We can handle anything. We'll be each other's wives.

They are helping each other tie their smocks now.

MARY
You are so loveable, Sylvie Fowler. Did you know how loveable you are?

SYLVIE
It is so funny that you should say that! I met a guy!

MARY
You met a guy??
SYLVIE
I'm considering giving him my real phone number.

MARY
That's huge! How did you feel?

SYLVIE
I don't know. I think I --

MARY
No thinking! How did you feel?

SYLVIE
I felt -- I almost couldn't talk. I had butterflies. Like the time I found my dog in the pound.

MARY
Yes! This is great! I'll tell you what. You give this guy your phone number and I'll design your wedding dress.

SYLVIE
Can it be black?

Suddenly a SCRUB NURSE enters the waiting room.

SCRUB NURSE
We're very close. You better come inside.

Sylvie and Mary jump up and follow the nurse.

89 INT. DELIVERY ROOM 89

Pandemonium. A FEMALE DOCTOR is at the stirrups. VARIOUS NURSES are doing their jobs. Alex is holding Edie's shoulders while Edie strains and pushes. Edie has turned into a monster.

EDIE
I want my husband!! Where the hell is that schmuck!!

ALEX
He's on his way, I swear!

EDIE
(to Alex)
You're not doing the breathing right! What is so complicated?? It's like this!

(puffs rhythmically)

ALEX
Somebody better take over here before her head spins completely around.

(CONTINUED)
SYLVIE
I've got your back, girlfriend.

Sylvie comes around the bed. She sees Edie's toes in the stirrups.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

MARY
Okay, sweetie, focus on my voice, just listen to my voice.

A FETAL MONITOR'S BEEPING INDICATES A CONTRACTION COMING. Sylvie props up Edie's shoulders. Mary takes Edie's hand.

ALEX
Here comes another contraction!

Alex backs against a wall.

MARY
Okay Edie, let's use this one, let's use it -

Mary starts to rhythmically puff while Edie is overtaken by the contraction.

EDIE
(screams)
Ahhhhhhhh!

SYLVIE
Oh my God. I'm never having sex again. Sew me up right now!

MARY
Okay, we got through that one. Rest and breathe...
(to doctor)
How's she doing?

DOCTOR
We're a couple pushes away. This baby has a big head.

ALEX
Can you see it yet?
(looks)
Oh my God, Oh my God!

She looks like she's going to faint. A CELL PHONE RINGS. Everyone checks, doctor and nurses, too.

MARY
It's me.

She pulls out her phone.

(CONTINUED)
MARY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Hello? Stephen.

The FETAL MONITOR STARTS BEEPING insistently again.

SYLVIE
(indicating)
Mary. Mary. Mary.

MARY (INTO PHONE)
Can you hold a minute? This is kind of a bad time. Edie focus on that spot on the wall. See it? Send all your pain there and --

EDIE
Aghhhhhhhhh!

DOCTOR
That was a good one!

SYLVIE/ALEX
Whooo!/I'm not going to make it.

MARY (INTO PHONE)
Edie's having a baby. Can I call you back?

EDIE
No, don't hang up! Talk to him! (to Alex)
Thirsty!!

Alex hops to.

MARY (INTO PHONE)
Can you hold on a second?
(hits hold)
He wants to go on a date.

EDIE
Good!

MARY
I don't think I can get past everything.

Edie is sweating and exhausted but manages to talk between breaths.

EDIE
You'll get past it. Just like Alan did.

SYLVIE
Whoa, back up.

(CONTINUED)
EDIE
Don't look so shocked! Five years ago. It just happened. When Alan found out, it almost killed him. And that almost killed me. But he forgave me. Not right away. But he did. You know why? He's a good man. He knows I love him. He loves me. We love our kids.

The fetal monitor starts to beep again.

EDIE (CONT'D)
And that's all I'm saying because I'm exhausted and I want this kid out of me right now! Right now! Get it out!!!

MARY (INTO PHONE)
Stephen? Okay, listen. I'll own up to my part in all this. I mean how could I share myself with you if I didn't know who I was. I want things now that I put aside. And I'm going to get them. And anybody who's part of my life has to want those things for me, too. You're going to have to work pretty hard here, Stephen. Trust doesn't happen overnight. No guarantees. So if you can accept that, I can see you Tuesday at eight. That's all I have available, I'm a very busy person.

Fast beeping!

MARY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Okay, fine, I've gotta go!

DOCTOR
We're crowning. One more push, Edie!

As the women rally around Edie and CHEER HER ON. Edie's face contorts and with a mighty push there's suddenly the SOUND OF CRYING. And then -

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Congratulations. It's - a boy!

There's A MOMENT OF STUNNED SILENCE. Then the room erupts in JUBILANT SCREAMS. Alex completely breaks down, sobbing like a total softy. And as they all jump and cry and embrace each other as the great friends that they are -

DISSOLVE TO:
CODA

With perhaps ETTA JAMES' "AT LAST" PLAYING OVER A SERIES OF DISSOLVES:

90A OMIT 90A
90B OMIT 90B
90C OMIT 90C
90D OMIT 90D
90E INT. HAINES HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT 90E

Mary and Molly and Maggie and Uta are at the table, carving a pumpkin together, having a wonderful time.

90EE INT. SYVIE'S BEDROOM - DAY 90EE

Sylvie opens her closet door. Her clothes are mingled with A MAN'S WARDROBE. She smiles.

90F OMIT 90F
90G INT. LESBIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT 90G

Alex is SLOW DANCING at the LESBIAN RESTAURANT with CRYSTAL, who is wearing one of MARY'S DRESSES.

90H EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY 90H

CU on a CAFE TABLE. There's a copy of "Sylvie" Magazine and a copy of Alex's latest book. Three glasses of champagne are set down -- and one cup of tea. PULL BACK. Our four gals are at the table which is in an outdoor restaurant high on a rooftop in Manhattan. Edie takes a sip of tea. Mary, Sylvie, and Alex stare at her, putting two and two together. Edie tells them something that makes them all throw their hands up in disbelief. Of course, we know what it is. As we CRANE UP OVER THE MANHATTAN SKYLINE --

FADE OUT.

THE END