

The Women

Adaptation

By

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8/14/07	BLUE
8/17/07	PINK
8/22/07	YELLOW
8/30/07	GREEN
9/04/07	GOLDENROD
9/06/07	SALMON
9/11/07	CHERRY
9/14/07	BUFF

Fade In:

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

1 EXT. SAKS FIFTH AVENUE MAIN ENTRANCE - MAY MORNING

1

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 BLAHNIKS 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

2A

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

3

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 --

(CONTINUED)

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)
Hmmm, 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.

4

INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - A SHORT WHILE LATER

4

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 5

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 6

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.

(CONTINUED)

UTA

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)

(CONTINUED)

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.

7 INT. MASTER BEDROOM SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

7

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 come 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

8

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

10

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

10A

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.

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.

10B INT. HAINES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

10B

EDIE

When are you just going to settle down with someone who's right for you?

ALEX

Like a man.

EDIE

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

ALEX

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.

SYLVIE

(to Edie)

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

(to Alex)

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.

ALEX

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

SYLVIE

Yeah, six years ago. Get on with it!

EDIE

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 --

(CONTINUED)

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

What's wrong?/What's wrong? Nothing.
/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 11

12 EXT. HAINES PATIO/YARD - CONTINUOUS 12

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.

Eddie gets up and heads toward the house.

13 INT. POWDER ROOM

13

Eddie 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, *thinnngs* - 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

14

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

14A

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

15

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

16

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

MARY

He fired me!

SYLVIE

What?!

(CONTINUED)

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

17

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.

(CONTINUED)

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 girlfriends.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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

18

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.

CATHERINE

...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

19

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

20 INT. SYLVIE'S CAR

20

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

Eddie.

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)

(CONTINUED)

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.

21 EXT. HAINES HOUSE

21

Sylvie's car pulls up in front of the house. Sylvie HONKS. 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	21A
21B	OMIT	21B
22	OMIT	22
22A	OMIT	22A
23	OMIT	23

NOTE: INSERT TRANSITION LATER.

24 INT. SAKS - MAIN FLOOR - SAME DAY

24

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 goooo.

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.

(CONTINUED)

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)

Nobody. Hates. Saks.

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)

Eddie. What's the name of that perfume that Mary Haines is using? You know, the one Stephen bought for her?

Eddie 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. Eddie 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 Eddie hustles her brood out --

25 INT. CASTING DIRECTOR'S WAITING ROOM

25

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

26

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 choosy, 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.

27 INT. LA PERLA - CONTINUOUS

27

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

28

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

29

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 -

30 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM AREA

30

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 -
(checks 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)

(CONTINUED)

LINGERIE SALESWOMAN (CONT'D)

It only takes a few minutes to do a credit check.

CRYSTAL

Credit check? Hmm, 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.

31	OMIT	31
32	OMIT	32
33	INT. MARY'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS	33

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

34

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.

35

INT. CRYSTAL'S DRESSING ROOM

35

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.

36 INT. DRESSING ROOM AREA 36

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.

36A EXT. HAINES HOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING 36A

The house is dimly lit except for the master bedroom.

37 INT. HAINES LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT 37

As the CAMERA MOVES THROUGH THE EMPTY LIVING ROOM, we HEAR
 DISTANT, MUFFLED 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.

38 INT. THE KITCHEN

38

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)

(CONTINUED)

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 39

Mary is in her nightgown, a woman possessed, throwing Stephen's clothes out the window. The cowboy boots go out last.

40 INT. BATHROOM 40

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

41 OMIT 41

42 EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE 42

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.

43 INT. HAINES HOUSE SCREEN PORCH - NIGHT 43

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.

44 INT. CACHET MAGAZINE - SYLVIE'S OFFICE - A FEW DAYS LATER 44

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
 child. Sylvie makes note.

45 INT. WOMEN'S HEALTH CLUB - LATER

45

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.

(CONTINUED)

BAILEY

Are you joking? Messy divorces sell more papers than presidential campaigns. And Stephen Haines hound-dogging 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 --

CUT TO:

46 INT. HAINES BEDROOM - DAY

46

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.

47 INT. LESBIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

47

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 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.

Eddie 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

48

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 -

CUT TO:

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

49

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

50

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.

51 OMIT

51

52 OMIT 52
53 EXT. HAINES HOUSE - NEXT DAY 53

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.

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

54

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

55

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

56

Very woody. 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?

57 OMIT

57

58 EXT. THE WOODS - A YURT - NIGHT

58

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.

59 INT. YURT - CONTINUOUS

59

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.

(CONTINUED)

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

59A

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

60

61 INT. NY PIED A TERRE - NIGHT

61

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

62

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

63

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.

64 INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

64

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.

65 INT. HAINES BATHROOM - MORNING

65

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.

65A OMIT

65A

66 OMIT

66

66A EXT. CONNECTICUT ROAD - DAY

66A

Mary's car as it leaves Connecticut behind.

67 OMIT

67

67A EXT. FDR DRIVE - DAY

67A

Mary's car as the Manhattan skyline appears before it.

68 INT. PLASTIC SURGERY RECOVERY HOTEL - MANHATTAN - EARLY NOVEMBER DAY 68

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)

CATHERINE
What brought this on?

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

CATHERINE
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.

CATHERINE
Where are you going to get the money?

MARY
I'll have to find some backers.

CATHERINE
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.

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

They both start to laugh.

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

69 INT. LOFT SPACE, FLATIRON DISTRICT - NIGHT

69

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)

69A INT. LOFT SPACE, FLATIRON DISTRICT - A FEW WEEKS LATER 69A

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.

70

INT. SYLVIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

70

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.

71

INT. HAINES HOUSE - SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER

71

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.

72

INT. SUN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

72

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.

73

MARY'S POV, THE PATIO

73

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.

73A

EXT. PATIO - CONTINUOUS

73A

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)

(CONTINUED)

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.

MOLLY

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.

74 EXT. SYLVIE'S BROWNSTONE - THE NEXT DAY

74

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)

(CONTINUED)

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)

TANYA
No problem. It's the least I could do.

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.

76 OMIT

76

77 OMIT

77

78 OMIT

78

79 OMIT

79

80 OMIT

80

OMITTED

81 INT. STEPHEN'S PIED A TERRE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

81

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.

(CONTINUED)

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

81A

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)

Uta--

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

82

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

Don't be bitter Mary, it leads to Botox. Listen. I'm not sure about the opening sequence of the show. And I think you should reconsider where you place the coats.

*
*
*

MARY

Mom. When you said you'd underwrite me, I didn't think it meant you'd be "popping" by every five minutes with helpful suggestions.

CATHERINE

But you said you'd value my input.

MARY

That's what you say when you take a lot of money from somebody. Nobody ever means it. Now go find a seat.

CATHERINE

Just look at that opening sequence again.

*
*

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

Hi, honey. What's this?

MOLLY

They just came. They're from Dad.

Mary's a little taken aback.

MARY

There's some good food out there, honey. Go have some. And fingers crossed for me, okay?

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.

(CONTINUED)

She decides to slip the ring into her pocket instead of on her finger.

83 OMIT

83

84 INT. LOFT SPACE - CONTINUOUS

84

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
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)

*
*

*
*

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

I respect you. I hate you. But I respect you.

As Mary heads backstage --

85 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.

(CONTINUED)

GLEENDA

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.

GLEENDA

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...

(CONTINUED)

MARY

(amazed)
Saks Fifth Avenue is going to order
my clothes?

GLEENDA

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.

GLEENDA (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.

GLEENDA

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:

87 INT. HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS

87

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.)
Ohhhhhh! 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

88

Mary and Sylvie are in the process of putting on scrubs.

(CONTINUED)

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?

(CONTINUED)

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??

(CONTINUED)

SYVLIE

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)
Is that Jungle Red? Nice.

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)
Ahhhhhhhhh!

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