

TERMS OF ENDEARMENT

A Screenplay

by

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Based on the novel by
Larry McMurtry

Third Draft
February 9, 1983

1

OPEN ON:

1

A black screen at the lower left hand corner of which shines a small clown's face. It is barely noticeable as we BEGIN TITLES.

The music is bright but not so full that we don't discern with ever increasing awareness the off-screen voices of a man and a woman, AURORA and RUDYARD GREENWAY. We hear the downstairs front door close as AURORA arrives home and shouts upstairs to her husband. "Rudyard, I'm home. Those women always talks about the same things. I'm sorry I ever left Boston." He says, "Did you have a good time?" "How could I? I had a premonition something happened to the baby." He makes a sound. He's heard this before. "She's fine. You've got to stop imagining something's wrong with her all the time." The door at screen right opens and we now can recognize from the light flowing in from the hall that we are in a baby's room--the clown's face a small night light. The infant is in a hand-worked, excellent and therefore memorable crib. AURORA'S back is to the camera--her rear end a large one, perhaps tempting to some--and her back-lit outline is round and cushy. And now she turns toward the room and is facing the camera, still illuminated from behind--the mother's form we may all remember framed in the doorways of our rooms as we lay helpless and needing. AURORA stands still for a beat and then says her first on-screen words.

AURORA

I know, I know; you're right.
(then with eerie calm)
Rudyard, she's not breathing.

RUDYARD

Let's not go through this again.
She's asleep.

The lump under the pink blanket behind the light wooden bars of the crib is not budging. She leans backwards to call down the hall.

AURORA

No, no, it's crib death.

RUDYARD'S VOICE

(annoyed)
Aurora, it's just that she
hasn't slept today.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

AURORA

Maybe.

She pads quietly to her infant daughter's bed and coos softly.

AURORA

(cont'd)

Emma... Emma?

The infant lies still. AURORA leans over...then hikes herself up by placing her foot on the mattress so she fully leans over the bars--gracelessly to place her ear almost atop the infant's chest. She had heard something, but doubt still lingers. Very deliberately, AURORA pinches the infant who instantly begins wailing.

AURORA

(cont'd)

There, that's better.

She moves swiftly from the room and exits without a thought of pacifying the crying baby. As she closes the door:

CUT TO:

2

EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - EIGHT YEARS LATER - DAY

2

A two-door, dark car arrives. From the driver's seat steps a man of forty in a dark blue suit and cowboy boots. He was RUDYARD's employer. He holds a hand out to assist ROSIE DUNLOP, AURORA's maid for years and, though she doesn't know it, the last white maid in Houston. She refuses the hand and he concentrates on the next one out, folding back the front seat for EMMA GREENWAY--misshapen for a child of eight--her legs too short, her hands too thick--that sort of thing--hair, unusually stringy, is even worse after the sweaty and emotional funeral, a black ribbon hangs lifeless in her tresses. She too refuses help and indicates that the man should instead help the next occupant. That's AURORA, who emerges in black, one hand held by the man, the other by the maid. The first thing she does on emerging from the car is to remove her shoes. She has her arm around her young daughter as she moves barefoot across the lawn.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

AURORA

Thank you, Rosie.
(then to man)
Thank you.

AURORA is totally composed. The man stands there granite strong, West Texas' best.

MAN

Glad to help. He was about
the most dependable man who
ever worked for me.

She starts for the house holding EMMA by the hand as
ROSIE goes on ahead.

AURORA

It was nice knowing you.

EMMA

(to man)

Bye.

MAN

I'm real sorry about your daddy.

EMMA

Me, too. I loved him. He stuck
up for me sometimes.

MAN

Hey.

(Emma turns)

Take care of your momma.

EMMA shifts uncomfortably as her mother looks at her,
wanting the man's words to register. She absently
removes the ribbon from her hair.

3 INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - DAY

3

As they enter the house, AURORA walks straight to the
mantle over the never-used fireplace where there is a
framed picture of EMMA as a baby with her mother and
a framed picture of RUDYARD. AURORA takes down the
picture of RUDYARD. Then suddenly AURORA reacts having
just thought of something.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

ROSIE

What's wrong?

AURORA

I just remembered Rudyard wanted to be cremated.

(briefly, but,
genuinely, concerned)

Oh, damn it.

EMMA

(entering scene)

What are you going to do with Daddy's picture?

AURORA

I don't think we should leave it on the mantle. There comes a time when we have to stop living in the past.

EMMA

Can I have it?

AURORA hands it to her daughter. ROSIE loving the child from the doorway of the dining room where she is already setting the table for lunch. We follow EMMA past the stairs to the first floor room that is hers.

4 OMIT SCENE

4

5 INT. AURORA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

5

This room is more a symbol of compromise than a couple's private lair. A single headboard, two twin beds, barely separated with separate bedding. Aurora is vigorously brushing her teeth in the background. There is a great deal of energy about her since she has an emotional obstacle to overcome. Like someone running to the take-off mark in the broadjump, she now marches into the room from the bathroom to get into the one bed which is turned down. She can't do it--it's as if she hits an invisible wall. She makes a sudden detour and sits on the window seat, eyes the two beds, and then walks quickly out of the room.

6 INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - STAIRWELL

6

As she marches down and enters her daughter's room. She goes directly to the child, turns on the lights. An original movie soundtrack of the "Wizard of Oz" is in evidence along with a picture of her father.

AURORA

Emma...Emma, wake up.

EMMA

What's wrong?

AURORA

I just feel so tense. And I wondered how you felt. Do you want to sleep in my bed?

EMMA

No, thank you.

AURORA

Oh.

EMMA

(a beat; then)

Do you want to sleep in my bed again?

AURORA

Yes. All right.

As EMMA makes room and AURORA slides in next to her griping about the number of stuffed animals, she glances at her daughter's limp, stringy tresses.

AURORA

(cont'd)

What will we ever do with your hair?

She turns out the lights.

7 EXT. AURORA'S BLOCK - MID-SUMMER (EIGHT YEARS LATER) - DAY 7

EMMA, sixteen-years old, her hopeless hair, unaided by the style of the day, is the kind of high school girl whose near dumpiness seems only a minor hindrance because she so totally accepts it. Next to her is her best friend, PATSY CLARK. Patsy is a bright, blonde Bayou Club beauty. She is athletic, warm and sensitive.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Seemingly perfect in every way, with even the good grace to have a bit of a tortured soul. They are sitting on the lawn in their party dresses, protected from the grass by EMMA's white cardigan, which they are sharing. PATSY is sitting in a lady-like manner. EMMA is unaware that her dress is slightly above her knees, almost exposing her white underwear. They are gawking at some moving men carrying exotic furniture into the house immediately next door. Seeing the moving men looking at EMMA's underpants, PATSY jerks EMMA's dress down.

ROSIE exits from the side door of the house, having finished her day's work. She is carrying left-over food in a Tupperware container and wearing a rumpled, stained white maid's uniform that shows the effects of having worked eight hours in a hundred-degrees-plus weather.

ROSIE

(to Emma)

Good night, honey.

EMMA

Where's mama?

ROSIE

(matter-of-factly)

She's out back with that old fart who's trying to get into her pants.

EMMA

Thanks. Aren't you going to wait and see if the astronaut shows up?

ROSIE

Oh, they have one on every block in Houston.

She starts off. EMMA goes after her and kisses her good night.

PATSY

We better get going. There's barely enough time to get high before the dance.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

EMMA

I just want to say so long
to my mother. Why don't you
come in?

PATSY

I don't think I'm up to it
today.

EMMA

It would be nice to have a
mother somebody liked.

8 OMIT SCENE

8

9 EXT. AURORA'S BACKYARD - DAY

9

AURORA, nearing forty, is sadly slouched in a shaded
settee, fiddling with a discarded bouquet. Next to
her, sitting erectly, is EDWARD JOHNSON, fiftyish,
wearing Bermuda shorts and a golf hat. As we meet him,
he is making a bold move. He puts his hand deliberately
on top of Aurora's thigh. She sits up and looks at him.
He looks at her, hopefully. She points at his hand.
He withers and removes it.

EDWARD

Why don't you face up to the
fact that you have certain
biological needs?

AURORA

(absently)

Because I don't. I might have
romantic ones, though.

EDWARD

Well, I might not be a poetic
man, but I know that...

AURORA

(interrupting)

Don't be so sure.

EDWARD

Huh?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

AURORA
How long since you've tried to be romantic? If you could manage it, I might see things differently.

EMMA (O.S.)
(calling)
I'm going now.

AURORA
(to Edward)
Excuse me.

As she walks away:

EDWARD
Don't worry. I'll just wait here in the lush and heavy air.

AURORA goes to EMMA and immediately sets to work pulling and tugging EMMA'S dress. Suddenly distinctly more alive. She annoys her daughter all the more because she is improving her appearance. AURORA spits on her hand to plaster down some stray hairs. AURORA makes her final adjustment on her daughter--not only shoving her bra straps so they are not in evidence, but tugging each one to hoist her daughter's breasts higher.

AURORA
Can you believe Edward? Now he wants to take me to Tahiti.

EMMA
I can't believe how you tease these men. They've got feelings, too.

AURORA
Oh, you always make too much of things. Has he shown up yet?

EMMA
Who?

AURORA
"Who?" Is Patsy teaching you coy lessons? Stand up straight. Breedlove. Garrett Breedlove. Has he moved in?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED (2):

9

EMMA

Not yet. We're going to get going.

AURORA

Home by 11:00?

EDWARD

Could you introduce me to Emma?

EMMA

Oh God, I'm Emma. Hi, it's a pleasure to meet you.

EDWARD

I'm Edward--Edward Johnson.

EMMA

Oh! Edward Johnson. It's a pleasure to meet you.

(to Aurora)

Come say goodbye to Patsy.

Indicating her mother should come along, EMMA starts toward the driveway. AURORA not moving.

EMMA

Say goodbye to Patsy.

AURORA

Goodbye, Patsy.

PATSY (O.S.)

Goodbye, Mrs. Greenway

EMMA kisses her mother good night, then runs toward the driveway to meet PATSY.

EMMA

I look better, don't I?

PATSY

You look better.

EMMA

It's a good thing I said good night to my mother.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED (3):

9

At this moment, from behind the moving van, we see the two innocent girls' faces partially obscured as the moving men carry a very large and very erotic African fertility figure into the house.

10 INT. BRIDAL SALON - DAY - FIVE YEARS LATER

10

EMMA (now 21) posing in a bridal dress. She is flushed, tickled to the core that the dress is so fantastic. She has never looked so beautiful. PATSY is wearing a new maid of honor dress while AURORA sits observing. She is trying to be a good sport and not dampen the spirits. It is a difficult chore for her.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

EMMA

Well, isn't it something how
much fun this is?

(noting cap)

...nobody will see my hair.

AURORA

You look very nice.

(to saleswoman)

How much is it?

SALESWOMAN

Four hundred and eighty dollars.

AURORA groans so loudly it jolts the salesgirl.

EMMA

It is too much, isn't it?

AURORA

Well, Neiman's isn't the only
place to look for a wedding
dress. And it isn't like you're
having a big wedding.

EMMA

(accepting)

Yeah, I guess, and just to wear
once.

PATSY

(suddenly to Emma)

Emma, it's my wedding gift to you.

(to salesgirl)

She'll take it.

AURORA and PATSY exchange a look. PATSY will not be cowed.

11 EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

11

We see AURORA pacing through her bedroom window.

12 INT. EMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT

12

PATSY and EMMA are in pajamas, the stuffed animals
still in evidence.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12.

"King and I" is playing as EMMA ties together a stack of original cast albums, some blues, some jazz vocals. PATSY is rubbing a Marlboro back and forth between her fingers, the tobacco running out into an ashtray. She now begins to stuff the empty cigarette with marijuana. The wedding gown and maid of honor's dress hang prominently in the background.

PATSY

You getting nervous yet, Emma?

EMMA

No. It feels so natural. Is something wrong with me?

13 INT. AURORA'S ROOM - NIGHT

13

She sits at her window seat eating from a box of chocolates. She is troubled. She sighs, rises and starts downstairs.

14 INT. EMMA'S ROOM

14

The girls are smoking their revised Marlboro. Mary Martin is singing "Cockeyed Optimist" from "South Pacific".

PATSY

I feel a little foolish getting stoned to hear Ethel Merman.

EMMA

Mary Martin. You're crazy if you smoke these in a car, Patsy. The Texas troopers have gone crazy. Flap knows this one fella in the English department where a trooper was following him so he swallowed his grass--so they scraped his tongue and used that as evidence. He's going to get five years.

PATSY has not been listening.

PATSY

This is the last time we'll be like this.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

EMMA

I just plain refuse to get into
that kind of thinking. Oh, God,
this is the last time we'll be
like this, isn't it?

(hugging Patsy)

But we'll always love each other
and our babies will be best friends.

As they hug:

PATSY

It's always meant so much to me
that someone as nice as you
loved me.

EMMA

(sobbing)

Oh, Patsy, please, come on.

There is a knock on the door.

AURORA'S VOICE

Emma?

Instantly the two girls part and grab four aerosol cans
and spray the room, a can in each hand.

AURORA'S VOICE

(cont'd)

Open the door.

EMMA

You can't come in.

AURORA'S VOICE

What do you mean?

EMMA

(to Patsy)

What the hell? I'm getting married.

She opens the door. The marijuana cigarette in her mouth.
PATSY hysterical in the background.

EMMA

(cont'd)

What is it, Mom?

(CONTINUED)

14. CONTINUED:

14.

EMMA

(continuing)

I'll be there in a moment.

AURORA

(annoyed)

Oh, really. I need to talk to you.
 Why is this door locked? I want
 to talk to you. Meet me in my room.
 I'll be in my room.

We hear her walk away. EMMA is curious and a bit apprehensive.

PATSY

Maybe she's going to tell you
 how to have sex.

EMMA

She's only an expert on how to
 avoid it.

PATSY laughs.

EMMA

(continuing)

Oh, I shouldn't say things like
 that. I didn't mean it.

She bites her tongue.

15 OMIT SCENE

15

16 INT. AURORA'S ROOM

16

AURORA sitting under her favored painting--that small
 Renoir of two handsome women wearing hats and gowns.
 She looks grim.

AURORA

Would you want me to be silent
 about something that's for your
 own good even if it might hurt
 a little?

EMMA

Yes, ma'am, I sure would.

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED:

16

She dashes out, closing the door behind her. We hear her laughing, giddy--high on life, Texas weed and her own wit. AURORA is thrown by the totally unexpected behavior. She starts after EMMA who reappears, still having a great time.

AURORA

What have you been doing?

EMMA

Nothing. What is it, Momma? I really would like to get some sleep so I can look halfway decent tomorrow.

AURORA can't say what she has to in this atmosphere. Sulky and beleaguered, she retreats to the comfort of her window seat. It looks out on her garden; it is soft and well-cushioned and safe.

EMMA

(continuing; babying her)

Come on, what is it?

She moves to join her. AURORA looks at her, examining her daughter's face, liking the eyes, the round cheeks, distressed with the limp hair.

AURORA

I've been here all night trying to concentrate on what wedding gift to give you...

EMMA waits her out.

AURORA

(continuing)

For a minute, I thought of the Renoir that my mother gave me... but I couldn't reach a conclusion. Then I came to grips with the reason why I haven't been able to think of a gift for you.

EMMA

Oh, anything will do--plates, Corningware, a car, a house.

AURORA

Emma, I am totally convinced that your marrying Flap Horton tomorrow is a mistake of such gigantic proportions that it would cripple your destiny and make wretched your life.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

EMMA

Shut up. Why are you doing this to me?

AURORA

We won't get anywhere if you insist on taking this personally. You're not special enough to overcome a bad marriage.

EMMA reacts.

AURORA

(continuing)

Use your brain. Flap is limited. He has no imagination. Even at this age, all he wants is a secure teaching job. He's not that attractive..and how could you wake up every morning to those teeth?

EMMA

No, Mother, anybody can do this to anybody. God, hurting people is so easy. I mean, look at you. You're so worried about aging...those spots on your hands... your thighs are getting flabby...

AURORA

No, don't do this!

EMMA

You don't know anything about Flap that well. No, you won't do this.

AURORA

Postpone it a month. Then if you still insist...

EMMA

I didn't mean that. I meant that. I might have meant that. I'm getting married in the morning and I thank God for Flap Horton for getting me out of here. And if this is your attitude, I don't think you should bother to come to the wedding.

AURORA

I think you're right. They hypocrisy was bothering me too.

EMMA exits in disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

EMMA

My own mother's not coming to my wedding.

AURORA

Now I suppose you're mad at me.

17 EXT. AURORA'S STREET - DAY

17

A yellow '69 XKE convertible, it's top down, is forced to move slowly behind a milk delivery truck. In the truck are ROSIE and her husband, ROYCE. In the car are GARRETT BREEDLOVE and an eighteen-year old girl. GARRETT is a once famous astronaut for the United States of America. He is in his mid-forties and sexy. He's an easygoing over-achiever who truly believes that life can be simple and fun. GARRETT and his date are hungover from a night of carousing.

18 ANGLE ON AURORA

18

In a housedress as she stands barefoot on her front lawn, a garden tool in hand. She is looking with undisguised contempt at the former national hero as he pulls into the driveway immediately adjacent to her own, as ROYCE steers his truck into AURORA's driveway. It conceals BREEDLOVE's car from our view. AURORA quickly shifts her attention to ROSIE as she steps from the truck. ROSIE is wearing her best dress and carrying a piece of wedding cake and a bouquet.

ROSIE

(toward truck)

See you tonight, Roycie.

ROYCE'S VOICE

(from truck)

Hello.

AURORA

Hi, Royce.

ROSIE

(to Aurora)

No matter what my kids do to me, I hope I'm never such a stump as to not be at their wedding.

AURORA

They don't seem to have weddings---they just have christenings, don't they?

(CONTINUED)

18

CONTINUED:

18

ROSIE

Don't get me pissed at you. You're
having a hard enough time.

AURORA nods, a bit downcast. ROYCE backs the truck up, revealing GARRETT's XKE. He and the young woman have passed out in the car, their heads laying together, the girl's hand resting on his crotch. There is a NASA sticker in the window shield. AURORA takes in this picture postcard from the second level of hell and then advances on the car. She taps the young blonde girl gently on the shoulder.

AURORA

Miss...Miss...

The hungover girl mumbles incoherently--the chain reaction to AURORA's pushing her shoulder is to have the girl's hand jiggle the man's privates.

AURORA

(cont'd; shaking
harder)

Young woman...young woman...?

(to Garrett)

Child molester?

GIRL

(mumbling sexily as
she feels him)

Uh-oh, here goes the rocket.

AURORA, shocked, shakes her violently. The girl's eyes open and focus on this angry woman old enough to be her mother.

AURORA

Listen carefully! You've passed
out in a good neighborhood this
time. Wake him up and get him
inside! But give me a second.
So far I've avoided meeting him
and I'd like to keep it that way.

She moves to her house.

19 EXT. FLAP AND EMMA'S HOME - THAT NIGHT

19

This is a garage apartment. EMMA sits at the top of the stairs with her new husband, still half dressed in the clothes they were married in, a bit drunk from champagne, with their belongings inside awaiting the setting up of housekeeping if energy ever strikes. The air is extraordinarily sensual. They are somewhat sweaty as they eat barbecued beef off butcher paper. FLAP finishing off some corn-on-the-cob. FLAP is twenty-three and looks like a nice guy.

EMMA

I'm glad we didn't try to do a honeymoon.

The PHONE begins RINGING.

EMMA

She's going crazy. I'll make her wait 'til noon tomorrow. That's about all she could take.

FLAP

You're totally justified to stay clear away from her forever.

EMMA

Oh, she just came apart because I was leaving and she was feeling more alone.

FLAP

(as if to a simpleton)

Emma, your mother boycotted your wedding. She hates your husband and she only holds you in medium esteem.

EMMA

"Medium esteem"--you're so cute.

FLAP stands and helps her up, finishing some corn-on-the-cob. She gives him a little kiss and hand-in-hand they walk across their threshold.

20 INT. FLAP AND EMMA'S HOME - NIGHT

20

Books are stacked in piles, most of them paperbacks. As they move past the stacks:

(CONTINUED)

20

CONTINUED:

20

EMMA

Wouldn't it have been strange if one of us married someone who didn't like to read? And there must be millions of interesting people in the world who just don't like to read. I feel so totally good about us. I hope I get pregnant tonight.

FLAP

It would be nice. I love the way you look. You're so nice and round.

Now FLAP tosses his corn away and embraces her in good-natured sexuality and moves her toward the mattress lying on the floor without boxspring. We are waist high on EMMA as her husband lifts her bridal gown. As it covers her head and EMMA disappears in a white cloud, she sings, "Here Comes the Bride." The TELEPHONE continues to RING.

21 OMIT SCENE

21

22 OMIT SCENE

22

23&24

INT. EMMA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

23&24

EMMA and FLAP have just finished making love again. EMMA's wedding dress is carefully laid over some boxes of books. FLAP's tuxedo is on another pile of books.

FLAP

That is the strangest music to have sex to.

EMMA

I know.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

23&24

CONTINUED:

23&24

He smiles and reaches next to him for a paperback book. The PHONE starts RINGING. FLAP makes a sour face. EMMA decides to answer it. She leans across FLAP.

EMMA

(into phone)

I'm not ready to forgive you.
I'm happy--leave me alone. I
don't want to talk now.

She starts to hang up, then reconsiders.

EMMA

(continuing)

Oh, did you see the table cloth
Rosie made me? Oh, it's beautiful.
No, not yet. I thought omelettes.
No, I'll do them sort of Tex-Mex.
I don't feel like talking now. No,
I mean it. That was the worst
thing you ever did to me. Well,
I think you owe my husband an
apology. Well, until you do tell
it to my husband, I'm not going
to listen to any of your gossip.
He's right here.

FLAP gestures he wants no part of the phone. EMMA mimes that he must do this. He shakes his head. Finally, she wins the silent debate, FLAP taking the phone. EMMA's concentration on his end of the conversation is extraordinary.

FLAP

(into phone)

Hello, Mrs. Greenway...No, ma'am,
I'm not enjoying your predicament.

EMMA

(shouting toward
phone)

Momma, be nice. I'm not kidding.

FLAP

(overriding her)

As a matter of fact, I don't need
or desire an apology. All I want
is for you to understand and
appreciate my position, to respect
our marriage and to maybe wait
another fifteen minutes before you
call in the morning.

(More)

23&24

CONTINUED:

23&24

FLAP

(cont'd; grins)

Yes, I guess I've said my piece.
Okay. I'll put her on.

EMMA gives him a big kiss, takes the phone.

EMMA

(into phone)

Okay, speak to you later. Isn't
he great?

She hangs up.

25

INT. AURORA'S BEDROOM - WINDOW SEAT - DAY

25

As AURORA hangs up the phone, she hears the noise of vulgar male "walla" from outside. She looks out the window.

26

INT/EXT. STREET - GARRETT'S HOUSE - AURORA'S POV

An all-night party breaking up. A motley group of spent revelers saying goodbye to GARRETT at the door. He accepts their embraces while holding a waste basket full of empty liquor bottles in the other hand. Now he restrains one girl, bidding her to stay; she nods acquiescence. She waits for him while he happily goes around to the side of the house--the driveway adjoining AURORA'S--removes the lid from one of his main garbage cans to empty his container into it. He misses. The bottles crash. He looks at the mess, then does some twinkle-toed broken glass running back to the girl. She laughs.

27

INT. AURORA'S BEDROOM

27

As she looks at him with disgust, then pulls shut the Venetian blinds.

28-45

OMIT SCENES

28-45

46

INT. EMMA'S APARTMENT - SEVERAL MONTHS LATER - DUSK 46

It's furnished now--hand-crafted bookcases, bed, etc.
EMMA enters from the bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA

How do you like my new outfit?

FLAP

I love it. How much?

EMMA

Mother bought it for me so I wouldn't look poor next to Patsy.

FLAP

Oh, is Patsy going to be there tonight?

EMMA

(annoyed how this pleases him)

Yesss. Now I suppose you're in a hurry.

EMMA

No. I'm not in a hurry now.

EMMA

I bought you something.

FLAP

What?

EMMA moving toward icebox.

EMMA

(cooly)

I don't know. I just don't know.
A tie.

FLAP

How often do I wear a tie?

EMMA

Tonight you are.

FLAP

You didn't get that tie for me. You were worried about how I'd look to your mother. I wish you'd stop being such a quisling where she's concerned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

EMMA is hurt as she looks at him.

EMMA

Every time I feel really happy,
you turn perverse on me.

FLAP

(disbelief)

And buying that tie made you happy?

EMMA

Yes. Yes. I wish you would
understand that because you
really don't. I went to two or
three stores. I finally found
the right one. It made me very
happy describing your jacket to
the salesman, thinking how it
would go absolutely perfectly
with what you're wearing...

(picks it up and holds
it against his outfit
to see)

...which, by the way, it certainly
does. It was wonderful. It was fun.
It was a goddamned Mardi Gras buying
you that tie and you're too dumb
to understand that kind of happiness.

They move toward the door.

FLAP

(at door)

I'm sorry. I was terrible. Going
to your mother's always makes me a
little irrational.

EMMA

(exasperated)

Do you like the tie?

FLAP

Sure.

EMMA

Liar.

FLAP

No, I really like it.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED (3):

46

EMMA

I knew you would.

She looks towards him as he goes to the bathroom.

EMMA

(continuing)

Tie one of those big knots
in it.

47-55

INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

47-55

AURORA during the last tense moments before she serves dinner. We see ROSIE and PATSY in the background and a short Texan in a suede jacket and expensive boots (VERNON DAHLART). EDWARD approaches AURORA.

EDWARD

Who is that short gentleman?

AURORA

Not that it's any of your business, but...let's leave it at that.

EDWARD approaches VERNON.

EDWARD

I'm Edward Johnson, Aurora's friend.

VERNON

I'm Vernon Dahlart. God, isn't she something? I'm tongue-tied around her. You, too?

EDWARD

(ignoring the question)

How long have you known Aurora?

VERNON

I met her two weeks ago at church. First time I saw her, my knees buckled. You might say she's God's gift to Vernon Dahlart.

EDWARD

Then you like her?

VERNON

Oh no, does it show?

56

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

56

ROSIE, smoking, has a tray of drinks beside her as she and EMMA sit with feet up on the back porch. They are drinking.

ROSIE

So he stays away four whole days and when he comes back, he doesn't even stay awake long enough to rub my back.

EMMA

Want me to rub it?

(CONTINUED)

56

CONTINUED:

56

ROSIE

Would you?

EMMA gets up, stands behind ROSIE and rubs her back as PATSY comes up.

ROSIE

(cont'd)

He used to give me such a good lovin'--wild but polite. Remember how I used to tell you when you was young?

EMMA

My favorite stories.

ROSIE

You was always the best child I knowed. I always feel bad inside that I love you more than my...own. Anyways, after he fell asleep, my throat just closed on me. I got the choking feeling. You know what I'm talking about?

EMMA

No.

ROSIE

(surprised)

Oh, good.

PATSY now decides she can interrupt.

PATSY

Your mother's serving.

ROSIE

Let's go.

She walks briskly inside. PATSY and EMMA walking in behind her. EMMA feeling natural. For her the episode with ROSIE was not particularly special, but PATSY, as happens to her with some frequency in this friendship, feels shallow next to EMMA. There is a half-beat of alienation as PATSY walks alongside her.

EMMA

You okay?

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

PATSY

Yes.

She puts her arm around PATSY'S shoulder as they walk in.

57-59 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

57-59

They are all seated and halfway through the meal.

AURORA

I used to serve this when I lived in Boston. You haven't said a word, Vernon.

VERNON

Is that right? I feel like I haven't stopped talking since I came in. I guess it's because I've been thinking about you so much.

AURORA

Vernon, can I give you a suggestion on how to handle me?

VERNON

Yeah.

AURORA

Don't worship me until I've earned it.

VERNON

Okay, I appreciate any advice that you give me.

AURORA

And don't talk with your mouth full.

VERNON

Okay, sorry.

He pretends to take the food from his mouth and hold it in his hand.

VERNON

(continuing)

Now, I was saying...

AURORA cringes. VERNON opens his hand to reveal it is empty.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

57-59

CONTINUED:

57-59

VERNON

(cont'd)

I don't have anything in there.
I just did it to make you laugh.
I wouldn't do that, really.

FLAP

(to Patsy)

Emma says you helped her pick out
the tie for me. I really like it.
Thanks.

AURORA

(to Emma)

What's wrong with you?

EMMA

It does get my goat that my
husband lusts after my best
friend. Maybe my temper is due
to nature. There is some good
news. I'm unofficially pregnant.

AURORA

What do you mean?

EMMA

I didn't get the test back, but
you know me, I'm never late.

(off Aurora's look)

I'm going to get so mad if you're
not happy for me.

AURORA

Why would I be happy about being
a grandmother?

FLAP

Does this mean you won't be
knitting the baby any booties?

AURORA

Every time you get two drinks in
you, you try to confront me. Not
in my house.

AURORA rises and stalks out.

VERNON

(to himself)

Breathtaking.

60

EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

60

AURORA walks the lawn barefooted under the stars. This moment staggers her. She moves into a darker area so that we can just see her, but we hear her sighing, collecting herself. Suddenly she is illuminated by headlights as a long Lincoln pulls in the bordering driveway.

ANGLE ON CAR

As it stops. We see that GARRETT is in the passenger seat sitting beside two beautiful and beautifully-dressed young women. They are almost as young as the girls we've seen him with earlier, but there is a great difference. They are privileged, upper strata young women. The world owes them a living and it has shown every intention of paying up.

DORIS

Do you need some help?

GARRETT

I'll let you know after I stretch my legs.

He opens the car door and falls flat on his face. He laughs. DORIS leans out the window. She has obviously had her hands full with him for a good part of the evening.

DORIS

(leaning out
the window)

You're bleeding.

GARRETT

That's okay. Come inside.

DORIS

No, thank you.

GARRETT

Safety in numbers.

DORIS

No, thank you.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

GARRETT

What is there to be afraid of?

AURORA has almost forgotten herself and her problems to take a few steps closer where she stands taking everything in.

DORIS

Afraid???

GARRETT

Well then, Doris, why not come in?

DORIS

Because you're much older than the boys I date, because you're drunk, because when I went there tonight to see a United States astronaut give a lecture, I didn't expect him to prowl after us all night long. I expected a hero, not some silly flirt who has to keep his jacket open because his belly's getting to big.

GARRETT

(hopefully addressing
other girl)

Lee Anne, would you like to come in?

LEE ANNE

You'd better tend to that cut.

The car moves off. He grovels about trying to get to his feet.

GARRETT

(mumbling a judgement)

This wasn't a good time.

He tries to pull himself up by grabbing a full garbage can. Instead it tips over. Garbage is on him, he is bleeding considerably, grunting in genuine pain that has sobered him instantly as the heavy metal cans crashed against his head. Now AURORA steps out. He sees her.

GARRETT

(cont'd)

Will you give me a hand?

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

AURORA

Give you a hand? It's all I can
do not to step on your face.

She steps over him and crosses to the house.

GO TO BLACK.

61 INT. LARGE COLLEGE AUDITORIUM - DAY

61

The entire audience is made up of young women. They
are being addressed by a somewhat older, but decidedly
Eastern, woman.

SPEAKER

From birth you have your father's name,
then your husband's, then you're somebody's
mother. Everything starts with establishing
your own name and identity. If your
gynecologist calls you "honey" and you're
still calling him "Dr. Brown", make a deal.
What we're talking about today is not just
for women who do their shopping on Fifth
Avenue or Rodeo Drive...

ANGLE ON EMMA AND PATSY

EMMA is holding an adorable infant, her first born,
TOMMY. PATSY sits alongside her, somewhat intent.

EMMA

Where's Rodeo Drive?

PATSY

Beverly Hills.

EMMA nods.

SPEAKER

Don't make the mistake of thinking
this movement is for those women
out there. This will have impact
on your lives.

TOMMY starts crying. EMMA attempts to shush him. She is
embarrassed.

EMMA

Tommy-ssshhh.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

SPEAKER

(continuing)

The final tyranny is not how the established order views us but how we can be made to view ourselves.

TOMMY'S crying is now so pronounced that EMMA excuses herself, stepping over several other women.

SEATED GIRL

He's sweet looking.

EMMA

Thanks. Wish he was quieter.

And now she reaches the aisle.

SPEAKER

I said today there are three things you can do immediately and easily to make our lives better than we ever imagined possible. Now I'll tell you what those three things are. Number one...and the third one's a killer...number one, get rid of the guilt. You're not responsible for the ring around your husband's collar. Number two...

EMMA has moved up the stairs, behind the folding chairs. She tries to watch from the balcony to hear the rest of it, but now her baby sets off a couple of other crying infants and she moves out.

62 OMIT SCENE

62

63 INT. AURORA'S LAUNDRY ROOM - THREE YEARS LATER - DAY

63

Where EMMA (five months pregnant) is doing her clothes. Her mother looking out the window at her grandson. TOMMY, now a toddler, is moving after ROSIE, who darts away from him.

AURORA

Why do you let him run around like that?

EMMA

What do you mean? He's adorable.

The PHONE RINGS. EMMA picks it up.

AURORA

If it's Vernon, tell him...

EMMA

...that you're out.

AURORA

...that I'm resting.

(CONTINUED)

63

CONTINUED:

63

EMMA

(into phone)

Hi, Flap...Oh--where? No, I don't
want to wait to hear. Tell me.

(suddenly down)

My. Oh, you did not expect I'd be
happy--let's be honest with each
other before we have to start
pretending. Look, my mother's
right here trying to look
disinterested. So I'll see you
later. I know. Everything will
be fine.

She hangs up. The phone is barely on the cradle, then:

AURORA

How long are you going to keep
this a secret?

EMMA

The only school that's accepted
Flap as an associate is in Des
Moines. We're going to have to
move there for the fall semester.

AURORA has a dark moment, then mutters to herself.

AURORA

He can't even do the simple
things--like fail locally.

EMMA is briefly pissed at her mother.

64

OMIT SCENE

64

65-66

EXT. EMMA'S APARTMENT - DAY

65-66

An open trailer filled with their furniture is
attached to the rear of the HORTON'S Nash Rambler.
PATSY'S car and AURORA'S Chrysler are in evidence.

FLAP holding TOMMY in his arms leads the family down
the stairs, all helping to carry boxes and luggage,
for the leave-taking. EMMA, carrying hand luggage
and very pregnant, follows FLAP as does PATSY, ROSIE
and AURORA. PATSY, EMMA and ROSIE fall into each
other's arms, hugging and kissing as AURORA stands
near by.

(CONTINUED)

65-66

CONTINUED:

65-66

FLAP
(going down stairs)
Say goodbye.

EMMA
Say, wait a minute.

FLAP
(still continuing down stairs)
Come on, guys, let's get going.
(to Baby Tommy)
Say "Goodbye house".

TOMMY
Goodbye house.

ROSIE
Stay sweet, honey.

PATSY
(softly)
Well, Ems, I didn't expect to
be this devastated.

EMMA
I sure did.

AURORA
(to Rosie)
Rosie...please! They have to get
going! Come on. Let's go, Rosie.

ROSIE starts toward FLAP who is standing near front
of car. TOMMY has been put into back seat. As
ROSIE leaves group EMMA calls after her.

EMMA
All right...and make Momma drive
you home when you work late. Have
some fun sometimes too.
(to Aurora, teasing)
Don't act brave. I know you're
going to go to pieces without
me to nag.

AURORA
(moving to Flap)
Well, I'm glad somebody's able
to be in a joking mood.

As this is going on we see ROSIE move to TOMMY and as
she kisses him, he tries to avoid the kiss. She grabs
his head in both her hands and gives him a kiss on the
mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

65-66

ROSIE

He's got himself the sweetest lips.

PATSY has approached FLAP at front of car.

PATSY

You be good to her or we'll get you.

FLAP

Not you too, Patsy.

PATSY

I mean it.

PATSY and FLAP embrace. AURORA sees them; PATSY and FLAP stop embrace.

AURORA

(to Flap)

Have a good trip.

FLAP exits, goes around car to front seat.
EMMA is at back of car putting child in seat.

EMMA

Toes and feet in first. Now
take Momma's purse.

EMMA and AURORA move to back of car near door where
they embrace. EMMA breaks away first as AURORA
continues to hug her.

EMMA

(hugging; breaking away)

That's the first time I stopped
hugging first. I love it.

She hugs AURORA again. They break again. As AURORA
looks at EMMA she shakes her head in disapproval.

AURORA

Get yourself a decent maternity
dress.

EMMA grins and moves to front of car to get in.

EMMA

(to Aurora)

You had to get one in.

(CONTINUED)

65-66

CONTINUED (3):

65-66

AURORA, still standing at rear of car, calls to PATSY near front of car.

AURORA
(to Patsy)
Will you tell her? She always
thinks it's me when I say those
things.

AURORA turns to TOMMY. He stares at her. They are not close.

AURORA
Well, Tom.

She pats his head absently.

TOMMY
Goodbye, Mrs. Greenway.

ROSIE at rear of car, starts to cry and slowly move away.
PATSY turns to EMMA who is now in front seat of car.

PATSY
Write as soon as you get there
so I know your address and all.

EMMA
Shape up.

AURORA
(to Emma)
The phone bill is going to be
enormous.

EMMA smiles at her mother.

EMMA
Promise? I hope so.

FLAP
Can we go now?

EMMA
(to Aurora)
Wish me luck.
(wanting a last,
long look)
Okay. But go slow.

(CONTINUED)

65-66

CONTINUED (4):

65-66

FLAP, who is now in the driver's seat, pulls out fast and we see all waving goodbyes. AURORA and PATSY left standing together with just the length of the car separating them. PATSY starts to move toward AURORA. AURORA, seeing this, quickly turns away from PATSY and moves off. This leaves PATSY alone as we move in to CU on PATSY staring off toward receding car.

67-68

EMMA'S POV

67-68

Her mother, PATSY and ROSIE disappearing from sight.

69

OMIT SCENE

69

70

OMIT SCENE

70

71

EXT. EMMA'S APARTMENT - DAY

71

ROSIE crying. AURORA can't bear it.

ROSIE

Don't push me when I'm crying.

71 CONTINUED:

71

AURORA

It's not the end of the world.

ROSIE

It's the end of your world.
Emma's the only one who can
take ya.

AURORA

That's right, I don't have a
devoted husband like yours
to comfort me.

ROSIE

(fiercely mad)

Oh, you shit-head. Looks
like we're going to get along
wonderful without Emma, don't it?

AURORA

Just get in.

ROSIE and AURORA get in car.

72 INT. FLAP'S CAR - DAY

72

EMMA looking for the right radio station.
FLAP driving.

FLAP

Honey.

She looks at him.

FLAP

(continuing)

I think it's going to be good
for us to be away from your--
our families.

EMMA nods, edges closer to him.

TOMMY

I miss Houston.

EMMA

You don't know how lucky you are
Everybody wants to go to Des Moines.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

72

CONTINUED:

72

EMMA

(cont'd)

People come from all over the world to get one look at Des Moines before they die. Some people think it's the best city in Iowa.

FLAP grins at her.

TOMMY

I know you're teasing. Texas is the best.

EMMA gets on her knees and begins to fix up a bed for TOMMY in the back seat. As she does so...

EMMA

Stop worrying. We're going to see terrific new things.

As she turns back, her eye is caught by something out the window.

73

EMMA'S POV

73

A sign lit by a billboard lamp. It reads, "You are now leaving Texas."

74

BACK TO EMMA

74

Her eyes filling with tears. She is surprised and a bit embarrassed by her reaction. She turns to FLAP, pointing at the tears in her eyes, feeling foolish.

EMMA

Well, look at me.

75

EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - DAY

75

AURORA upset--barefoot. Walking her backyard, working the garden. We hear a man running, whooping, then the splash of water, then swimming, then a man emerging from a pool. AURORA does not approve.

AURORA

(yelling for quiet)

Will you please...if you will...?

(CONTINUED)

75

CONTINUED:

75

GARRETT, toweling himself, naked to the waist, at least from what we can see, comes to the fence separating the property.

GARRETT

Sorry. I just took a sauna and you can't help yelling when you hit that cold water.

She nods and continues puttering, unnerved by his near presence.

GARRETT

(continuing)

You're not going to ignore me when I speak directly to you?

AURORA

I'm not ignoring you. What am I supposed to say? Okay. I suppose it is hard not to yell when you hit that cold water.

He grins, muses whether to confess something to her. She has turned away.

GARRETT

Hey.

AURORA

(turning)

Hey?

She almost looks straight at him but is unable to and busies herself again.

GARRETT

Well, what is your name--Aurora?

AURORA

Yes.

GARRETT

You want a shock?

AURORA

Not especially.

GARRETT

They were going to have this NASA dinner at the White House. Some

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

75

GARRETT (CONT'D)
cosmonauts and all of us and I was thinking there was nobody I could take. Because everybody I flew with, their wives would have given me bitch bites up and down my back if I showed up with one of my regular girls and I don't know anyone their age. And then I thought, I could ask my next door neighbor.

She looks at him with astonishment.

GARRETT
(continuing easily)
Then they canceled the evening. But I was really going to ask you out for a minute there. In spite of everything. Isn't that a shocker?

AURORA
Sure. Imagine you having a date with someone where it wasn't necessarily a felony.

GARRETT
(having fun)
What would you have said if I'd asked you--seriously?

AURORA--just a bit unnerved--thinks for a beat, then:

AURORA
I would have said I'd like to see the White House.

GARRETT
So you would have gone. Well, Aurora, I'm the one who ended up shocked.

AURORA
(smiling despite herself)
Good night.

She starts in.

GARRETT
What the hell? You want to have dinner out sometime?

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (3)

75

AURORA

(too fast)

No. No, thank you.

GARRETT

Lunch. Don't ladies like you have
lunch a lot?

She turns, suspecting she's being teased, ready to be angry.

76 AURORA walks to her shoes and picks them up. She 76
wiggles her toes in the grass, looks at the attractive,
grinning man.

AURORA

You know, your manner isn't--there's
something like you think you're
toying with me.

GARRETT

Yes, I'm playing with you, Aurora.
Want to play? Have Lunch.

She crosses to him, then stopping a few feet away.

AURORA

See, that's just the element I mean.
If you want to have lunch at some
restaurant to have a more pleasant
atmosphere around the neighborhood,
I'm not going to say no, but...

GARRETT

Okay, then. We'll try it.

AURORA

But first, let's...
(on his grin)
I'm not fooling, first, let's clarify...

GARRETT gestures to her.

GARRETT

Come here. We're too far apart
to talk.She moves closer to the fence trying to seem amused and
patronizing when she actually feels terrified and 16
years old.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

76

GARRETT

(dripping sex)

Now, since you've agreed, let's save the rest of it. I know how you feel. There were countdowns when I had second thoughts. But I figured once you've said you'll do it and they strap you in and you're in the hands of something bigger and more powerful than yourself, you might as well look forward to the ride.

AURORA

I'm not going. There's really something wrong with you.

She half-runs to the house. GARRETT chuckles.

77 OMIT SCENE

77

78 EXT. HORTON HOUSE - DES MOINES - SIX A.M.

78

We are looking through bug-splattered glass--the windshield of the HORTON'S car, the bug bodies so prominent that they lend irony to EMMA'S first comment on her new home.

EMMA

It looks pretty.

79 EXT. HORTON HOUSE - DAY

79

The house is simple, close set on either side by very similar homes. FLAP begins toting the many boxes inside while EMMA struggles to manage TOMMY'S absolutely dead weight out of the rear seat of their two-door car.

(CONTINUED)

79

CONTINUED:

79

Finally, she gets him on her shoulder and moves on wobbly legs toward the front door of her new home while her husband carries in two stacks of books. There is in her a growing excitement. This far away from her mother, there comes a vague feeling of extra power, a kind of maturity.

DISSOLVE TO:

79a

INT. HORTON HOUSE - SEVERAL HOURS LATER - DAY

79a

EMMA's happy. As they get into spoon-style sleeping position. Even though the shade is down, the sun is up and the room is fairly well illuminated.

EMMA

God, I'm exhausted.

FLAP

You ever made love in Iowa?

EMMA

(turning to him; she's tickled)

Even after all that driving.

(a few kisses, then)

It's great that Tommy's room is all the way in the back, and we can get noisy when we want to.

FLAP

You get to do that little high-pitched squeak of yours.

EMMA

(swatting him)

Honestly...how about you?

(imitating him, she shouts)

Oh, my God--here I go again.

Yes! Yes! Yes!

FLAP

(sexy, soft)

Oh, God, here I go again. Yes--yes--yes.

EMMA

(surprised, shy)

You know your voice just made me wet.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

79a

CONTINUED:

79a

EMMA

(cont'd; suspicious)

How come you know how to make your
voice like that all of a sudden?

(sudden flash)

You know, we can't hear Tommy,
either. I'll check him.

She gets out of bed. He scowls at her. Before he can
say a critical word...

EMMA

(cont'd)

I'll just be a second. Don't
get pissy.

80

ON EMMA

80

As she moves through the house made maze-like by cartons
and boxes. She stops at TOMMY's door, then deliberately
catches herself and stops herself from entering. As she
walks back to her own room.

DISSOLVE TO:

81

SAME HOUSE - SIX MONTHS LATER - FEB. 1974

81

*

Some furniture has been purchased, the place homey. Notably
different from Houston as FLAP has moved from poor student
to poorer teacher, his furnishings have kept pace. We are
looking at TOMMY who is taking on the sophistication of an
aging toddler (about 3½ yrs old). We HEAR FLAP & EMMA's
conversation from their bedroom, as does TOMMY, who is not
especially interested. They are talking in loud whispers.

*

FLAP'S VOICE

I have eight or nine papers left
to grade--this isn't love; it's
selfishness.

EMMA'S VOICE

It's been almost a week since we've
been together. We've never gone a
whole week.

82

INT. HORTON'S BEDROOM

82

EMMA in bed pulling her dressed husband's arm. Even though they have conflicting priorities at this moment, this is more fun than argument. The reason they are whispering is apparent in the background, where we see EMMA's old crib holding her baby, TEDDY, (about 5 months old).

FLAP

Sure, we've gone a week.

EMMA

(releasing him)

Only during the real pregnant months. Forget it. Just do me a favor. Don't make me feel silly and I won't make you feel guilty.

FLAP

Fair enough. I have to hurry.

83

INT. HORTON'S OUTER ROOM

83

As FLAP gives his son a kiss on the way out.

FLAP

Be a good boy.

TOMMY watches his father leave, then watches his mother enter from the bedroom. She is blowing her nose, having just cried a bit. TOMMY is about to speak, then hears the noise of his father returning. FLAP takes EMMA by the hand.

FLAP

(cont'd)

Let's hurry.

EMMA

(gleeful)

I absolutely love that you came back. I absolutely love it, you have no idea. I feel like you've saved our lives.

(to Tommy)

We'll have breakfast in a minute, honey.

The bedroom door closes behind them. TOMMY walks to the door and outside.

- 84 EXT. HORTON'S HOUSE - DAY 84
As TOMMY sits on the steps we HEAR the faint sound of a woman's squeak.
- 85
THRU 92 OMITTED (SEE SCS. 1-98 THRU 7-98) OMIT THRU 92 * *
93. INT. AURORA'S BEDROOM - MORNING -5 YRS LATER (WINTER OF '78-'79) 93 *
AURORA enters bearing a tray - coffee, fresh rolls and small chocolate cakes. She sets the tray down near her window seat, plumps a pillow, gets in position and picks up the phone. *
- 94 INT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY 94
It is quite early. Emma (now four month's pregnant with Melanie) is looking out her front window. The alarm clock goes off in the bedroom. Almost simultaneously, the phone starts to ring. *
- 95 INT. BOYS' ROOM - DAY 95 *
TOMMY is 8½ years old. TEDDY is about 5½. *
(HALF PAGE OF DIALOGUE TO BE ADDED HERE TO ESTABLISH BOYS' PERSONALITIES AND RELATIONSHIP.) * *
- EMMA
Tommy, Teddy, move it. I have no time to fool with you.
- 96 INT. EMMA'S ROOM - DAY 96
Only one side of the bed looks slept in. She picks up the phone so that it stops ringing and then before saying anything puts it down, turns off the alarm clock, then returns to the phone.
- EMMA
(anxiously)
Hello...Oh, hi, Mother. Could we talk later? I've got the boys to get off. It's not a good time for me to be on the phone.

97 INT. AURORA'S DEN - DAY

97

AURORA is holding a telephone and eating a strawberry.

AURORA

Don't be so inconsiderate. I've gotten myself all set for a good talk with you. You have almost an hour to get the boys off. What's wrong?

EMMA

Nothing.

AURORA

Will you stop this and just tell me?!

EMMA

(suddenly)

Okay, Mother. I'd like you to loan me some money. I really and truly need it. Will you?

A beat.

EMMA

Don't you be quiet. You know how hard that was for me to ask. Say no if you want; just don't be quiet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURORA

(tenderly compassionate)
I'm sorry, Sweetheart. I was just thinking.

EMMA

(softening)
Thinking what?

AURORA

How much I hate to part with money.

EMMA

I wouldn't ask if...well, don't yell, but I really think I may be pregnant again.

AURORA

Oh, no. And I suppose you're going to go ahead and have it.

EMMA

Yes, of course. What's happening to you, anyway?

AURORA

Don't act like it's so terrible. I keep hearing about bright young women who are having simple abortions and getting wonderful jobs. You can go right next door to Colorado and get one.

EMMA

I don't know why I tell you anything. I seem to like you less and less.

AURORA

That's because I'm the only one who tells you the truth. How is your life going to get better if you keep having children with that man? How? What miracle is going to take place to rescue you?

EMMA

Leave me alone.

(then mad)

I need money. Why not just give me my painting to sell? You always promised me the Klee.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2)

97

AURORA

That's your security. I'm not going
to let you use it for rent.

We hear the sound of the front door close.

EMMA

(beaten)

Mom, let's not do this. I'll speak
to you later.

AURORA

If the money really...

EMMA

No. Don't give me the money.
It would make you crazy.

AURORA

(realistically)

Yes, it would.

EMMA

Call me tonight if you want...
Goodbye...

98 She hangs up as FLAP enters--unshaven.

98

She walks to him, studies him. He is scared. She
sniffs at his fear.

FLAP

What's wrong?

EMMA

Where've you been all night?

FLAP

I'm sorry, Ems. I fell asleep on
that big sofa at the library again.
I don't know what's wrong with me.

EMMA

Okay.

FLAP walks to her, pats her belly, trying to avoid her gaze.

EMMA

(low)

I'm on to you.

FLAP

I'm not doing anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA

You are too.

FLAP

I hate seeing you this unhappy.
You don't know how much I...

EMMA

Don't change the subject.

FLAP

What's the subject?

EMMA

(ominous)

That I'm on to you.

They look at each other.

EMMA

You wouldn't try to look so
innocent unless you were guilty.

FLAP

You've got to take my word for it.
You've got no other choice.

He starts to walk away. She blocks his path.

EMMA

(quietly to him)

If you are doing something and you're
trying to make me feel like I'm crazy
because I am bearing our child, then
you may have just sunk to a point so
low you may never recover. You may
have just panicked, Flap, and trying
to save yourself, you have thrown out
your character and principles. The
only way you can possibly redeem
yourself and be the man God intended
you to be is to take the responsibility
and admit anything that you may have
been doing tonight. If you don't do
that now--right now--you are a lost
man, a shell, a bag of shit dust.

FLAP is uncertain. EMMA'S gaze is unwavering, then
the phone RINGS. FLAP grabs it.

(CONTINUED)

98

CONTINUED:

98

FLAP

(happily)

Oh, hi—Aurora. How are you? Yes,
she's right here. It was nice
hearing your voice again.

He hands her the phone and exits. EMMA looks after him.

1-98

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - 6 MONTHS LATER - SPRING 1979

1-98

TOMMY is now almost 9 yrs old; TEDDY is 6; MELANIE is 1 month old. TOMMY and TEDDY are sitting in front of the house and HEARING the off-stage argument their parents are having. Baby MELANIE can be seen through the front window.

FLAP'S VOICE

I don't know why you don't get a
job if you're so worried about
money.

EMMA'S VOICE

What am I going to do with the baby?

FLAP'S VOICE

It's supposed to be a great day
when you get tenure.

EMMA'S VOICE

We don't have enough money to pay
the bills now. All tenure means is
we won't have enough money forever.

They briefly continue to fight as Emma asks Flap to take care of Melanie while she goes out. TOMMY begins to walk off. * *

TEDDY

Mommy said to wait right here.

TOMMY

You stay if you want.

TEDDY is torn, reluctant to disobey his mother, but unable to resist scurrying after his brother.

As they move down the block:

FLAP'S VOICE

Then I don't see why you can't
ask your mother for money.

(CONTINUED)

1-98

CONTINUED:

1-98

EMMA

When it's convenient for you,
you want me to call my mother.

FLAP

Call today. Why should today
be any different?

The boys are both upset, TEDDY seeking camaraderie, TOMMY
withdrawn.

1-98

CONTINUED: (2)

1-98

TEDDY

Tommy?

TOMMY

I don't want to talk.

TEDDY

What do you want to do?

TOMMY

(flaring out)

How about punching each other in
the stomach? You want to do that?

TEDDY looks at him, disappointed. There is a half-second attempt to stare him down, then:

TEDDY

Maybe later.

2-98

ON EMMA

2-98

Coming out of the house in the distance, distraught, looks up and down, spots her kids and comes marching toward them. TEDDY sees her and runs toward her, hugging her hard. She hugs him back. She is thirty-years old and obviously distraught. She comforts TEDDY and eyes TOMMY who has refused to budge.

EMMA

I told you to wait out front. Why'd
you go down here? Answer me, Tommy.

TOMMY

(challenging)

I didn't want people to think we
lived there.

EMMA is made more angry than guilty by the remark.

EMMA

Okay. We'll let you say one mean
thing to your mother each year.
So that'll do 'til you're eleven.

TOMMY

You're driving Daddy away.

(CONTINUED)

2-98 CONTINUED:

2-98 *

EMMA
Don't make me hit you on the street.
They walk to the car.

3-98 INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

3-98 *

EMMA pushing a full basket, her sons in tow. She pauses at the frozen food bin.

EMMA
(to Teddy)
You have never eaten Texas-style gumbo.

TEDDY
(excited)
No, can we?

He nudges TOMMY to join in the lobbying, but TOMMY, though dying for anything with the word "Texas" attached, remains aloof.

EMMA
Why not? It's a good time for a treat.

She takes some frozen shrimps, reacts to the high price, and drops it in her basket.

TEDDY
Yay!

TOMMY gestures he should take it a bit more calmly. His brother's exuberance embarrasses him.

4-98 OTHER ANGLE - CHECKOUT STAND

4-98 *

As the checker rings up the sale, a few people waiting in line behind the HORTONS. The checkout girl rings up the total.

GIRL
Forty-four dollars.

EMMA digs at her purse, stalls for a time while digging for additional money.

(CONTINUED)

4-98

CONTINUED:

4-98

TOMMY

(mortified)

You don't have enough money?

EMMA

(to girl)

I have thirty-eight dollars
and forty cents. I guess I'll
have to leave some things here.

The girl rolls her eyes. EMMA surveys what she's bought. As she does, the girl addresses her colleague at the next counter.

GIRL

(loudly)

Could I have the register key?
She doesn't have enough money.

TOMMY stands a few steps off. TEDDY clings to her. He suspects he's supposed to be mortified.

EMMA

(to sons)

There's nothing wrong with this.
I just took the wrong purse.

She hands back the "TV Guide." The girl deducts twenty-five cents.

GIRL

Forty-three dollars and
seventy-five cents.

EMMA feels at her hair, gives back the conditioner.

GIRL

Forty-one dollars and thirty-
five cents.

EMMA examines the remainder. She needs the meat and produce. She gives back a package of miniature candy bars.

TOMMY

You promised I could get
something.

(CONTINUED)

4-98

CONTINUED:

4-98

EMMA

I'm not giving back real food.

TOMMY

Give her this.

He indicates a box of Mydol.

EMMA

No way.

EMMA hands back the candy bars. She has just taken candy from her baby.

GIRL

Forty dollars and thirty-five cents.

TOMMY

(squawking)

Mommy!

EMMA quickly takes a single bar from the rack and hands one to TOMMY.

GIRL

Forty dollars and forty-five cents.

She looks at TEDDY who does not complain. EMMA takes another candy bar from the rack and gives it to TEDDY.

GIRL

(cont'd)

Forty dollars and fifty cents.
We're going in the wrong direction.

EMMA

(to girl)

Will you please stop being so god-damned nasty? That's not going to make this any easier. We're both people, you know.

GIRL

(somewhat muted)

Forty dollars and fifty cents.

TEDDY offers his mother his candy bar.

(CONTINUED)

4-98 CONTINUED: (2)

4-98

EMMA looks up. She has just been deeply touched by her son's action. There's something wrong with you if you don't want to hug her just now.

MAN'S VOICE

Mrs. Horton.

5-98 SAM BURNS, a man in his early 50's, stands there, a bottle of ginger ale sticking out of the paper bag he carried under his arm, with a great desire to rescue EMMA from embarrassment. It's not the sort of thing he does well.

5-98

SAM BURNS

I'm Sam Burns from the bank.
(jogging her memory)

I turned you down on the second
on your house?

EMMA

Of course. I knew who you were.

SAM BURNS

Could I help make up the difference
here?

EMMA

Sure. I'll get it back to you
tomorrow. Thanks.

He starts to hand the girl some money. There is the merest of hints that he may have had a few drinks.

SAM BURNS

(to girl)

You're a very rude young woman. I
know Douglas from the Rotary and I
can't believe he'd want you treating
customers badly.

GIRL

I don't think I was treating her
badly.

SAM BURNS

Then you must be from New York.

She hands him his change.

SAM BURNS

Thank you, miss.

(CONTINUED)

5-98 CONTINUED:

5-98

GIRL
(mumbling, broken)
...welcome.

He hefts her bundles and they exit.

6-98 EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

6-98

As the four of them walk towards the car.

EMMA
It was starting to feel like the
worst time I ever had. I wouldn't
have thought it was possible to get
cheered up so fast. I'm grateful.

SAM BURNS
No problem.

They smile, eyes meet. They shy from the contact,
then resume it. Two people who never flirt are
discovering what they've been missing.

TOMMY
(sharply)
Mommy. Mommy!

EMMA
Just give us a second. Wait over
by the car, honey.
(Tommy starts to speak)
Wait over by the car, honey.
(He starts to speak again)
(Emma loudly)
Wait over by the car, honey.
(He opens his mouth; Emma ups
her volume)
Wait over by the car, honey!!!
(Before he can speak, Emma
goes full out to assert her will)
Over by the car. Over by the car.
Now! Now! Now!

7-98 Throughout this confrontation TEDDY has been trying
to get TOMMY moving and now he finally does. SAM
smiling after them.

7-98

SAM
Nice boys. You're great with them
too.

(CONTINUED)

7-98 CONTINUED:

EMMA

I think all three of us are going
through a stage...

(a beat then)

Hey. Thanks again.

SAM

No thanks required. I've had a
lovely time.

EMMA

Me too.

They seem to have just had a retroactive date. There
is enormous reluctance to draw apart before confirming
the contact.

EMMA

I'll get the money back to you.

SAM

Don't bother yourself. You could
just drop it in the mail.

EMMA

To the bank?

SAM

Sure. You could even use a check-by-
mail envelope...

(a daring moment)

...or you could come in. Whichever.

EMMA

Maybe I'll just come in sometime.

SAM

That would be fine.

*

INT. AURORA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Gathered around the table, a birthday cake in the center, are AURORA, VERNON, the BANKER who wanted to take AURORA to Tahiti on Page 6, and a new face, the newly widowed DR. DOUGLAS RATCHER, a family physician--he delivered TOMMY. The BANKER is finishing reading a poem he wrote especially for the evening while AURORA busies herself licking the icing from some of the burnt out candles.

BANKER

And so another birthday for a gal
named Aurora Greenway.
Even though 50, she still takes my
breath away.
Mere mortals just gaze as she lights
up their sky.
A heavenly object--a siren's cry.

You're the best. Happy Birthday.
(he kisses her)

The poem has come from his heart. He looks at her.

AURORA

(to Vernon)

You want one too? Do you want a kiss?
You can have one if you want.
(she kisses him on the nose)

DR. RATCHER

You're not lying about your age, are you?

AURORA

Of course not!

DR. RATCHER

I thought you were 52. Come on,
Aurora, how do you expect to
fool the family doctor?

She stares at him.

DR. RATCHER

(kindly voice of reason)

I'm just saying it's better for you
emotionally to tell everyone your
age. We'll all still like you
just as much.

100

She looks at him, staggered that he's pursuing it.
 ROSIE has entered with more coffee. She is enjoying
 AURORA'S predicament.

100

VERNON

It seems to me she said her age.

AURORA

Thank you so much, Vernon. Now...

DR. RATCHER

My point is the number doesn't
 matter, but the effort to conceal
 it does.

AURORA

(to Rosie)

He's still talking about it.

ROSIE

Dr. Ratcher...

DR. RATCHER

Damn it--I'm trying to do some
 good here. The way to adjust to
 old age is...

AURORA is on her feet. She flees towards the kitchen.
 RATCHER goes after her. ROSIE grabs RATCHER in a
 bear hug from behind.

ROSIE

Doctor, you're a might confused
 now because of being recently
 widowed. So let me go after her.

101. INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

101

As ROSIE enters, kitchen is a mess from three courses of dishes.

AURORA

(agitated)

He wants me to accept old age--
 that man's a lunatic.

ROSIE

I thought it was good he only
 caught you on two years.

AURORA

(considering)

Yes, there was that. But Rosie, I'm
 starting to go. That's why I have
 such a miserable lot of suitors.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

101

ROSIE

Vernon's nice.

AURORA

He never even thinks about touching me.

ROSIE

(babying her)

Come on, you don't want to be touched that much anyways.

AURORA

(enjoying spooking Rosie)

Don't pretend you're not worried about some of the same things--veins and sunken eyes and shuffling along on tiny footsteps. Admit it. It's my birthday. Let's be close.

ROSIE

Okay, let's. It's a sin before God that you don't know how lucky a woman you are. And if you don't start showing some gratitude soon, you're going straight to hell.

She takes a pitcher of coffee and exits to the living room. AURORA sits for another beat, takes off her shoes and exits through the kitchen door leading outside.

102 EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

102

In her stocking feet she walks her lawn. In the background we can see her guests gathered at the window staring at her.

103 AURORA'S POV

103

The three male faces in the window--VERNON, the IDIOT DOCTOR, the PATHETIC BANKER--slim pickings.

104 ON AURORA

104

As she looks across at the astronaut's house, through the side window, we get a glimpse of his moving from view, apparently cooking. Now with sudden and extraordinary purpose, she runs across the lawn to his door where she rings the bell. Waits, then nervously backs up several steps.

GARRETT'S VOICE

Yeah? Be right there.

(CONTINUED)

104

CONTINUED:

104

She backs up some more so that she stands her ground strangely in the shadows a good ten feet away when GARRETT opens the door. He's in his fifties now. His face and body show it. His blessing is that he's blissfully unaware of that fact. He is wearing one of those short, velour bathrobes with nothing on underneath.

105

ON GARRETT

105

At first he doesn't see her, then does.

AURORA

I was curious whether you still wanted to take me to lunch.

GARRETT

I don't remember when we were supposed to...

AURORA

(argumentative)

A few years back you asked me to...

GARRETT

(incredulous)

A few years...

AURORA

(overriding)

...lunch and I wanted to know if the invitation still exists.

GARRETT pauses. She stares daggers from the dark. He then takes the easiest out.

GARRETT

Why not?

AURORA

When?

GARRETT

Tomorrow?

AURORA

All right.

She walks back to her house, GARRETT looking after her.

106-107

OMIT SCENES

106-107

108

INT. EMMA'S OLD STATION WAGON - DES MOINES - DAY

As it moves into a parking place at a shopping center in Des Moines. She gives herself a quick onceover in the cracked rearview mirror. This is interrupted by the HORN BEEP from the next car. An incredibly brief beep, like a man coughing ever so slightly to let someone know he's there. EMMA looks over.

109

EMMA'S POV

109

SAM BURNS getting out of his car trying not to show the strain of being more nervous than he's been in...ever. His grin is too wide. He is shrugging with his face, a sort of helpless gesture of raising his eyebrows and ears. He's a lucky man for he is approaching one of the few women around who would find his machinations endearing.

SAM BURNS

We both got here the same time.

EMMA

How are you? Nice to see you.

SAM BURNS

It's always so nice to see you.
I can hardly believe it.

EMMA

(touched)

You, too.

In an attempt to seal this romantic juncture, SAM BURNS looks away and pats her on the back. They move toward the restaurant.

110

EXT. GARRETT'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

110

As GARRETT opens the door of his yellow Corvette and AURORA slides in, with some difficulty. The top is down. Now GARRETT gets in, puts on his seat belt, glances at her as she pats at herself.

GARRETT

If you mind the open air, I
can...

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

110.

AURORA

No, don't worry. Grown women are prepared for life's little emergencies.

She removes a scarf matching her outfit. As she ties it in place, they pull out.

111 EXT. HOUSTON - MEMORIAL DRIVE - DAY

111

An eight-track playing loudly to override the force of wind in the open car. GARRETT is relaxed. He shouts over the wind to her.

GARRETT

(grinning)

Us going out together. Not bad.

AURORA is trying to be inconspicuous as she holds onto her scarf. She turns to give him a tight returning smile. The scarf flies off and her carefully-created mane whips wildly in the air.

AURORA

Would it be too much trouble to put the top up?

GARRETT

The top's home in my garage.

She takes this in. The CAMERA shows the huge, expansive sweep of road yet still ahead of them.

112 INT. RESTAURANT LADIES ROOM - DAY

112

AURORA using every muscle in her arm to brush the knots out of her hair while overhearing two apparently young women converse with each other from behind two adjoining closed toilet stalls. (Improvisation to begin speech).

WOMAN NUMBER ONE

Did I tell you about those vaginal suppositories? I know two girls who use them. They say it's ninety-six percent safe, better than a diaphragm, but not as good as the pill. It should work; it was invented in Germany.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

WOMAN NUMBER TWO

But what do you do with it?

WOMAN NUMBER ONE

You push it in and it sort of melts.
It gets real hot, but...

AURORA

(exploding)

Just quiet, please, until I leave.

ALTERNATE: Quiet in there until I leave.
Just quiet in there until I'm
out of here.

The girls are shocked into silence, AURORA exits.

WOMAN NUMBER ONE

Well, who was talking to her, anyway?

113 RESTAURANT - DAY

113

As AURORA slips into her chair across from GARRETT,
not looking at him.

AURORA

Well, I'm starving, and there's no
hidden meaning in that.Four younger women are seated at a nearby table.
GARRETT glances over.

GARRETT

Oysters?

AURORA

No, thank you.

GARRETT

They're good.
(eats it himself)

AURORA

That's very rude--to look at other
women when you're with me.

GARRETT

I think we're going to have to
get drunk.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

113

AURORA

(mulling)

To break the ice?

GARRETT

To kill that bug you have up your ass.

She starts to take offense but he is grinning at her, perhaps giving her some test.

AURORA

(to passing waiter)

I'll have some bourbon, preferably Wild Turkey.

GARRETT

(enormously pleased)

Aurora, you're not fun by any chance, are you?

AURORA

I don't think you should worry about that yet. Impatient boys sometimes miss dessert. (pause) I'll have that oyster now.

114 INT. COFFEE SHOPPE - DES MOINES OUTSKIRTS - DAY

114

The lights are brighter than the restaurant we just left. This place is not designed for leisurely dining or mid-day rendezvous. It is fast-order functional, kids with ketchup on their faces, but there is a knotty pine bar in the back which is where we find SAM BURNS and EMMA. They are holding hands in the shy manner of decent people preparing for mortal sin. SAM is being overwhelmed by both his good fortune and inner guilt. He is between a rock and a soft place.

SAM BURNS

You know, the thing I didn't expect was that there would be moments where I forget to be scared someone will see us together.

EMMA

Don't be so scared. Contemplating sin is all we've done.

SAM BURNS

I'm glad that you've been contemplating it too. I didn't know that.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

114

EMMA

After all these lunches...all this hand holding.

SAM BURNS

Emma, I'm not going back to the bank this afternoon. I have to go out and inspect a new home. It's pretty far out and it's empty.

A silence.

EMMA

I have to pick up the kids at five.

SAM BURNS

Oh--okay. I understand. Don't give it a thought.

(then)

It's only about a 25 minute ride each way. I could get you back here at 4:30 for sure...I'm really badgering you. I'm sorry.

EMMA

(touched/amused)

You're not badgering.

SAM BURNS

Emma, I haven't made love to a woman for almost three years.

EMMA

How come?

SAM BURNS

(embarrassed)

My wife has a disc problem in her back and she can't take having... any weight on her.

EMMA

(puzzled then)

I hope you don't mind my asking this. Well, have you ever thought of her getting on top?

SAM BURNS

Oh, she wouldn't do that.

EMMA

She might surprise you.

(CONTINUED)

Revised 3-21-83

114 Continued:

114

Emma suddenly turns to a passing waitress:

EMMA

Excuse me, this is one of the most fun
conversations I've had in my life, and
I want you to know about it!

114 CONTINUED:

114

SAM BURNS

I don't think so. That would
be so unlike her.

EMMA

Did you ask her?

SAM BURNS

(ruefully)

Ask her? I've done everything
but hire a skywriter.

EMMA laughs out loud.

115 EXT. IOWA HIGHWAY - DAY

115

As SAM BURNS' Fairlane moves along between rows of
cornfields. It is being routinely passed by other cars.
A tractor slows them down.

116 EXT. HOUSE - LONG SHOT - DAY

116

As EMMA gets out of her side of the car and moves up the
walk, then waits. SAM finally getting out from behind
the steering wheel and walking toward her.

SAM BURNS

This might be terrible to ask,
are you thinking about your
husband at all?

EMMA

I was a little.

SAM BURNS

We can go back right now.

EMMA

No, stop it, Sam. I want to do
this. I'm glad I don't know for
sure whether or not Flap's been
with somebody else. I'd hate to
worry whether I was just doing
this to get even.

117-118 EXT. HOUSTON HIGHWAY - DAY

117-118

As GARRETT's convertible at about thirty mph sways along
the waterside roadway connecting Galveston and Houston.

(CONTINUED)

117-118 CONTINUED:

117-118

Large ships in the background. GARRETT is sitting atop the driver's seat steering with his feet. AURORA, reluctantly playing his accomplice, one of her feet on the gas pedal, an awkward reach from her side of the car. She must shout to make herself heard over the wind.

AURORA
I'm not enjoying this.

GARRETT
Give it a chance.

AURORA
I'm stopping.

GARRETT
What?

She puts on the brake. He falls over the windshield, flipping onto the hood of the car, then bouncing off to the side onto the grassy shoulder of the road. He lies there. AURORA runs toward him, a bit panicked.

AURORA
How are you?

He moves. There are some bruises. She is bending over him.

AURORA
(cont'd)
It's not my fault, but I'm sorry.

GARRETT
If you wanted to get me on my back, you just had to ask.

He grabs her and pulls her down. Kissing her, she begins to come close to relaxing in the embrace, then GARRETT sticks his hand inside her blouse and into her bra. She pulls quickly away, but his hand is stuck there at an awkward angle.

GARRETT
(cont'd)
My hand! My hand!

AURORA
Get it out of there.

GARRETT
I can't! I swear it's breaking.

(CONTINUED)

117-118 CONTINUED:

117-118

AURORA

We were almost having a good time.
Why did you have to do this?

GARRETT

I'm sorry. Please, God, anything.
Bend down.

She bends over and he extracts his hand. The wrist is severely sprained.

AURORA

Why did you have to get drunk?

GARRETT

I'm not drunk anymore. The pain
sobered me up. Let's go.

He starts back toward the car rubbing his wrist. He keeps walking. AURORA, vulnerable, realizing if she doesn't hurry, he'll actually leave her alone, hurries to catch up. It is striking to see her, for the first time, tagging after a man.

119 INT. EMPTY HOUSE - IOWA - DAY

119

In the corner of an empty room between their two overcoats lie SAM BURNS and EMMA. They are squeezing each other making squeezing noises, a happy, energized afterglow.

SAM BURNS

God bless you, Emma.

EMMA

(grinning)

You look so nice and happy.

SAM BURNS

God bless you, Emma. I just feel
so wonderful. I just feel so...

(sudden yelp)

Excuse me.

He laughs. Then again, fervently.

SAM BURNS

God bless you, Emma.

(back to earth)

Oh, I shouldn't use the Lord's name.
I guess he made us all sinners though.
I'm so afraid we'll get caught. But
it's not right to say that, is it?

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED:

110

EMMA
(unconvincing)
No, it's okay.

SAM BURNS
Because I am afraid someone will
catch us.

EMMA
Sam, we're out here where even I
don't know where. Who's going to
see us?

SAM BURNS
I didn't mean today. I meant next
time. I was thinking Thursday.

She smiles.

SAM BURNS
(cont'd; realizing)
Oh, I guess I am a fool, honey.

EMMA
Give me a kiss.

They kiss. EMMA hugs him, her face pressed against his coat.

EMMA
(cont'd)
It felt so good being with you.

SAM BURNS
(wonderment)
I wanted to hear you say that and
was ashamed of myself for wanting
something like that--then you say it.

120 OMIT SCENE

120

121 EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - DAY

121

As GARRETT, still pissed, walks her to her door.

AURORA
Would you like to come in?

GARRETT
I'd rather stick needles in my eyes.

(CONTINUED)

121

CONTINUED:

121

AURORA

Everything would have been fine
if you hadn't gotten drunk.

He looks at her, contemptuously.

AURORA

(cont'd)

I didn't want you to think I was
like your other girls.

GARRETT

Not much danger in that unless
you curtsy on my face real soon.

AURORA

What is it that makes you try so
hard to shock and insult me? I
really hate that way of talking,
which you must know, so why do
you do it?

She has a point. He considers it.

GARRETT

I tell you, I don't know what it
is about you, Aurora, but you
bring out the devil in me.

He smiles. She looks at him--she's flustered. He starts
to go.

AURORA

I suppose just because I'm not Little
Miss Round Heels, you're not going to
call.

He turns.

GARRETT

Little Miss Round Heels?

AURORA

Well, what do you call a woman who
falls over and has sex after a first
date?

GARRETT

Sweetheart.

She laughs despite herself. He is pleased at his joke.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

AURORA

Oh, look at you. You're so proud
of yourself.

GARRETT

See you around.

He keeps walking across the lawn to his house. AURORA walks toward her own, sneaking a few coy looks that are wasted for GARRETT never breaks stride, entering his house and closing the door, leaving AURORA awash with uncertainty, sighing with the impossible thrill of it all.

DISSOLVE TO:

122 OMIT SCENE

122

123 INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

123

SAM BURNS stands with washer-dryer working.

SAM

I'm in the laundry room so nobody
could hear me.

124-125 CLOSE ON EMMA

124-125

EMMA

But I can't hear you, either.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

She is in the bathroom sitting on the side of the tub.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

SAM

Oh...Wait a minute, we're getting
a quieter cycle.

The spin cycle stops and now he lowers his voice.

SAM

(cont'd)

Can you hear me now? Good. Is it
bad to call?

EMMA

No, I am definitely in the market
for sweet talk.

(CONTINUED)

124-125

CONTINUED:

124-125

TEDDY starts knocking on the bathroom door.

TEDDY
Mom, I have to go. Really.

EMMA
Just a second.

She opens the door. TEDDY enters and starts to pee while looking over at his mother.

EMMA
(cont'd; to Teddy)
Ssh. Ssh.

He looks confused as to how to make pissing quieter. Then, seeing she means it, he aims for the side of the bowl. From the muted sound, we know he has succeeded.

EMMA
(cont'd; into phone)
What were you saying?

SAM
Just how absolutely good I feel. And even though I'm scared--and we've committed adultery--no matter what happens, I'm just so grateful to God or the devil for letting me feel this way again.

EMMA
I'm sure glad you told me.

TEDDY reaches to flush. EMMA gestures him away, fearful the noise of the flush will break the mood.

TEDDY
But you told me always to...

She moves him out.

TEDDY
(cont'd)
Can I hold Melanie?

EMMA
Yes.

EMMA picks up the phone again.

EMMA
Sam?

(CONTINUED)

124-125

CONTINUED:

124-125

SAM
(nervously)
Is everything okay? Can you talk?

EMMA
Yes.

SAM
I've just been thinking how great it would be if we could be with each other sometimes--or just once even--in a real room with a real bed and...

OPERATOR
(cutting in)
I have an emergency call from Mrs. Aurora Greenway in Houston, Texas, for Mrs. Emma Horton.

SAM
Oh, no...

EMMA
It's okay, Sam, she always does that when the line's busy.

OPERATOR
Will you release?

SAM
Yes, of course, operator. We were just talking.

EMMA
Speak to you later.

She hangs up and the PHONE RINGS immediately.

EMMA
Hi. How'd it go?

126 INT. AURORA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

126

She is wearing a bathrobe and eating a chocolate eclair.

AURORA
The astronaut's impossible. An arrogant, self-centered, and, yes, somewhat entertaining man--who has realized his ambition and is at last forever a spoiled child.

(CONTINUED)

126

CONTINUED:

126

EMMA

(pleased)

Talk about your match made in heaven.

AURORA

You'd think so, wouldn't you? But I really think he's just not going to have any more to do with me.

EMMA

Aw, why?

AURORA

I don't want to tell you.

EMMA

Is it because you won't go to bed with him?

AURORA

On a first date.

EMMA

Well, it's hardly a first date, Mom... He's been living ten feet away for twenty years. I mean, why don't you at least talk about the real reason?

AURORA

I don't know what you mean.

EMMA

That's it's been about that long since you've done it.

AURORA

Shut up! I mean it!

EMMA

Oh, come on.

EMMA

It's just us.

AURORA

I'll hang up.

EMMA

(giving in)

Okay. Sorry I upset you. So long.

AURORA hangs up and stands there in the middle of the room. She walks to her window and opens it.

127 OMIT SCENE 127
 128 HER POV 128
 Over the fence, she can see GARRETT doing laps in his pool.
 129 AURORA 129

Taking a bite of her éclair and then throwing it into a wastebasket. She is experiencing the first gnawing stages of an anxiety threatening to escape and ravage her after decades of quiet. She crosses to a dresser and searches for a particular nightgown, finds it. She sits, nightgown on her lap, and goes through the phone book. She writes down a number which she finds. All the while, through the open window, we HEAR GARRETT doing his laps. She takes off one earring and tosses her head a bit to get the receiver just right before dialing. The phone rings until eventually we hear the SOUND of laps stop. We hear the muffled voice of GARRETT at the other end saying, "Hello."

AURORA

(her voice not behaving)

Hello, Garrett. I was just sitting here realizing that I'd never shown you my Renoir. Would you care to come over and see my Renoir? Oh, stop it. You know Renoir's a painter. Sometimes it's really stupid to pretend you're stupid. I am saying what I mean.. I'm inviting you to look at my Renoir. Yes, it happens to be in my bedroom. Don't cackle. Do you want to see it? Whenever you like. You could come right now or be a fool. See you in a bit then.

(suddenly uncertain)

If I don't answer the bell, the back door's open.

She hangs up, holds herself briefly. The excitement so great that it's unwelcome. She stands and crosses to the bathroom, more frightened than she expected.

We remain in the bedroom area where we HEAR the rustle of satin and then the DOORBELL RING.

AURORA'S VOICE

Oh, my--he ran it?

She rushes from the bathroom dressed in her nightgown and carrying a largish mirror which she sets up near the door GARRETT will soon enter. Now she turns off the light, moves quickly back to the doorway of the bathroom and poses, backlit, in the doorway trying to make out her image.

(CONTINUED)

129

CONTINUED:

129

The nightgown is simple and sexy. Then we HEAR GARRETT on the stairs. She rushes across the room, takes the mirror back inside the bathroom. There is a KNOCK on the bedroom door. AURORA enters wearing a bathrobe over her nightgown.

AURORA

Garrett?

GARRETT'S VOICE

Sure.

She opens the door. He is wearing wet swimming trunks.

GARRETT

(apologetically)

I was doing laps when you called.
Lucky for you I'd only done eight.

He grins at her. She turns her back on him and looks up at her painting as he approaches from behind. He puts his hands on her shoulders.

GARRETT

(cont'd)

I like the painting. I like
everything in here.

(into her ear)

Relax, baby, it's going to be great.

She wheels on him, sputtering in indignation, feeling genuinely and deeply reduced and insulted.

AURORA

Just who do you think you're
talking to like this? Don't
you realize I'm a grandmother!

And with that, she takes his face and gives him a stunning, open-mouthed, expert kiss. They break. He is staggered.

AURORA

(cont'd)

It's not flattering if you look too
surprised. Just give me a minute.

Her self-image buoyed by her own actions, she moves toward the bathroom pausing to scoop up a perfume atomizer from her dresser.

(CONTINUED)

129

CONTINUED:

129

GARRETT waits, a hand reaches around to turn off the light and then we see AURORA as she posed earlier, backlit and intriguing.

GARRETT

I like the lights on.

AURORA

Then go home and turn them on.

He accepts her conditions and stands waiting in the shadows. She moves toward the bed. In the darkness, we can see him stepping out of his elasticized swim trunks, hopping a bit as he fails to release the second leg smoothly while AURORA turns back the covers and slips inside. He joins her under the covers.

GARRETT

This is the softest mattress
I've ever been on!

AURORA

Well, coming from you...
(then a whispered
secret)

I always like to splurge on
bedding.

We hear a rustle and see him start to move with enormous energy.

AURORA

(cont'd)

No.

(a small kiss)

Let's lie still for a while.
All right?

130

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

130

EMMA and FLAP asleep, her arm over his chest. TOMMY and TEDDY enter. TEDDY begins to move toward his mother's side of the bed to wake her. TOMMY restrains him and leads the way to FLAP. In the b.g. now that the door is open, we hear a fierce, barking COUGH.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

130

TOMMY

Dad? Dad?

He awakens terrified, making noises of fear for a second so that the boys, alarmed, back off. EMMA remains asleep.

FLAP

(a whisper)

What's wrong?

TEDDY

(soft)

Melanie's sick--hear her?

FLAP listens for a second, then jostles EMMA vigorously.

FLAP

The baby's sick.

EMMA is sleepily but nonetheless quickly on the move. In the instant before she's awake she has already covered a good deal of floor space and mumbled some comforting words. Now, awake, she turns the lights on at the door, turns to FLAP, sitting in bed.

EMMA

You coming?

FLAP gets out of bed.

131 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

131

Which has been turned into a nursery. As EMMA turns the lights on and hears MELANIE'S seal-like cough and notes the baby's limbs are going.

EMMA

I need a thermometer.

FLAP, standing in the doorway, starts to think about where the thermometer might be. TEDDY dashes to a drawer, tearing at things inside.

EMMA

(to Teddy)

Don't get frantic.

He brings the thermometer. TOMMY, an old hand, gives her a nearby bottle of Vaseline.

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

131

FLAP walks to her, his manner suggesting that it is she who is in danger of becoming unglued. He takes the baby; EMMA sticks the thermometer in. She stands there holding it. TEDDY is patting the baby consolingly. TOMMY is loitering in the doorway.

EMMA

Teddy, she doesn't even feel that hot. You go ahead to bed.

TEDDY

I won't be able to sleep, so why can't...

EMMA

Please. I'll come in soon...

FLAP

Come on, boys, it's bad enough we're making this a drama. It's not going to qualify as high drama.

The boys exit.

EMMA

I'm sure it's the croup.
 (on Flap's expression)
 Remember Tommy had it twice...
 (on Flap's expression)
 ...a throat infection and we had to steam him...
 (on Flap's expression)
 ...maybe you were at the library.

132 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

132

EMMA sitting on the toilet seat, MELANIE in her lap, gorgeous even in sickness. FLAP turns on the hot water full blast as the steam begins to gather.

FLAP

How long do we keep her here?

EMMA

What are you going to do-- go back to sleep?

FLAP

I just asked how long.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED:

132

EMMA

Until her throat clears or I lose
four pounds, whichever comes first.
About twenty minutes. I don't
know. We'll see how she sounds...

FLAP leans against the sink...

FLAP

I've been offered a job.

EMMA

Why didn't you say something?

FLAP

I wanted to think about it. It's
head of the English department at
Kearney State College at about the
same money.

EMMA

Where is that?

FLAP

Nebraska.

EMMA

I want to stay here.

FLAP

You don't like it here. Why do you
want to stay all of a sudden?

EMMA

The kids, school, the housing thing,
the baby, the cars, pediatricians,
the kids...I just want to stay here.

FLAP

It's head of the department.

133 INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

133

The boys going off to school. EMMA, not having slept
all night, kettles boiling on the stove to provide some
mist for MELANIE, whose cough sounds better. EMMA
picks up the phone.

134 INT. AURORA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

134

She lies there staring at the far wall, her body along-
side one of this nation's heroes. Her arm rests on

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED:

her sleeping lover. She seems to be smiling. She reaches over and dials the phone.

134

INTERCUT WITH:

135 EMMA'S KITCHEN

Steam and MELANIE and croup.

135

EMMA

(into phone)

Oh, hi. You don't know the night I had.

AURORA smiles.

EMMA

(cont'd)

Melanie has the croup. Naturally, it happened about two a.m. I still haven't been to sleep and I don't know whether he means it or not, but Flap's talking about moving us to this small college in Nebraska. And I tell you, Mom. I think Sam's become someone I... well, that I at least need a little, you know?

AURORA

(whispering)

I'm lying here next to the astronaut.

136 ANGLE ON GARRETT

136

His face turned toward us and away from AURORA. His eyes click open at the mention of his occupation. While in Des Moines, EMMA forgets her own life on hearing this awesome news.

EMMA

Are you really?

AURORA

Um-hmm.

EMMA

(boldly)

How was it?

AURORA

I'll speak to you later.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

136

EMMA

Okay, I'll let you go. So long.
I feel so good for you.

EMMA hangs up. Her spirits buoyed. She checks out her baby daughter, sees that she's looking better, says some words of encouragement, i.e., "Well, we're bouncing right back, huh, Melanie?" Turns off the kettles, wipes away some perspiration and resumes her own day.

137 OMIT SCENE

137

138 INT. VERNON'S CAR - DAY

138

VERNON is driving ROSIE home.

ROSIE

You can just drop me at the
bus stop.

VERNON

No, I'll give you a ride home.

139 THEIR POV

139

AURORA and GARRETT, their backs to VERNON, walking slowly arm-in-arm. ROSIE looks over to VERNON to see how he's taking it.

VERNON

(simply)

Whoever it is is one lucky bastard.

ROSIE

Oh, you are the best little man,
Vernon.

140 EXT. HOUSTON NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

140

AURORA and GARRETT walking.

GARRETT

You understand that I see other
women, don't you?

AURORA

I didn't think we were engaged.
Your ego, really.

141 OTHER STREET

141

GARRETT

Should we eat in?

AURORA

You're saving a fortune on me.

GARRETT

I'll cook...three months and you
haven't seen my place.

AURORA

My best instincts had me avoiding it.

142 OMIT SCENE

142

143-143 INT. GARRETT'S KITCHEN

143-144

Steak, fries, and a bottle of wine.

143-144 INT. GARRETT'S KITCHEN

143-144

AURORA aglow, the living room filled with astronaut memorabilia--pictures, a piece of rock, a NASA flag, a model of a missile. AURORA now stares at a moon globe with raised surfaces denoting the craters of the moon.

GARRETT

(proudly)

What do you think?

AURORA

(easily)

Well, I think it's sad that you think you need this to impress girls.

GARRETT

(angrily)

Need it? Sometimes it isn't enough. I don't think there's a thing wrong with using all your assets.

AURORA

Except it turns your profession into a sex trap.

GARRETT

Oh, come on. We all use whatever we have. I earned it. It's as much a part of me as anything else.

AURORA

I didn't realize I was tripping over such a deeply-felt principle.

GARRETT

(agitated)

Man, how many men have you had to step on to get on that high a horse? But you're not so different, believe me, you're going to ask me very soon what it was like out in space just like every dolly does and I'll give you my stock answer and you'll love it. You'll see. You'll ask. So don't act like it's nothing to you.

A silent beat. He a bit perturbed at himself for letting her get under his skin.

AURORA

(flustered--backing down)

Well, of course, I'm curious about what it was like out there.

(CONTINUED)

143-144 CONTINUED: (2)

143-144

GARRETT

(immediately)

It's a long, long, long way away
and when you're there you feel that
you've got a long, long, long way
to get back. It's not much different
than being out in a field in west
Texas except the sky is black and
you keep thinking how far away you
are from people.

AURORA

That's your stock answer.

GARRETT

And it's true.

AURORA

And you always leave it at that.

GARRETT

I wouldn't know what else to say
and that happens to be all they
require.

145 INT. GARRETT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

145

He is in AURORA'S arms, the moonlight filtering through the window. GARRETT, for now anyway, feels understood, challenged, loved. He is talking about himself in the manner of a hungry man having his first meal in months. She is, as he will later comment, a girl you can really talk to.

GARRETT

You know what bothers me? None of us ever got together one night, closed all the doors and compared notes on the experience. You'd swear there was a rule that we had to pretend it wasn't the fun that it was--that if we started saying just how much fun it was they wouldn't let anybody go up anymore. I even got a little talking to for laughing through a transmission once.

AURORA

(fascinated)

Keep talking.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

145

GARRETT

And you do sense the speed. I
remember looking out the window...
(catching himself)

I'm like somebody with a belly
telling stories about Korea...

AURORA makes a motion that he should stop that stuff
and continue.

GARRETT

Anyway, at this one point, I could
see part of the spacecraft and tell
that it's whistling across the ground,
but it doesn't make a sound so that
the one thing you can hear, the only
noise in the world, is your heartbeat.
It's indescribable, or I just can't
tell it better--but that was my moment--
the one that doesn't go away. You
know what I mean?

AURORA

Yes. This is my moment.

He shifts uncomfortably.

AURORA

(continuing)

Don't get nervous.

He laughs.

146-151 OMIT SCENE

146-151

152A EXT. PLATT RIVER - DAY

152A

It is sunny and warm. EMMA and SAM are swimming in the river.

152 INT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

152

Empty. She goes from room to room, then exits.

153 EXT. UNIVERSITY OF DES MOINES - DAY

153

EMMA walking and searching near the English building of FLAP'S college. She stops.

FLAP, his back to her and us, but we recognize the winter jacket. He is talking with what appears to be intimacy to a tall, attractive woman in her late 20's, a colleague. They are under a street light. The girl has her hand up to FLAP'S face. They are clearly lovers. Her name is JANICE.

154 EMMA

154

Her suspicions confirmed. The truth jolts her and turns her mean. She advances on the couple with the stealth of Indians and wronged, plump women.

155 EMMA'S POV

155

Now she is close enough to make out murmured voices.

JANICE

Will you please, please, please,
please stop telling me this is
just a crush?

FLAP'S MURMURED VOICE

(a little chuckle)

Janice, the whole fun in getting
mixed up with somebody unavailable
and a little older is that sometimes
you get to hear what's really going on.

JANICE

(amused)

That's wonderful, Flap, you are such a...

156 EMMA leans forward from a few feet away and shouts
in a wild rush.

156

EMMA

...incredible asshole.

She turns away. He reacts.

156 CONTINUED:

156

FLAP
(to Janice)
Excuse me.

157 ON FLAP

157

As he turns and begins to run after his outraged wife and we SEE for the first time that he has their beautiful baby in a pouch over his chest. The baby is making it enormously difficult for FLAP to catch up with EMMA because he has to keep his hand on MELANIE to keep her from bouncing around too much. Though not long--this is our chase scene.

FLAP
(calling)
Emma--Emma. Goddamn it, you're going to ruin us.

158 ON EMMA

158

Fleeing but listening.

FLAP
(more calling)
You're a spectacle, Emma.

159 ON FLAP AND MELANIE

159

FLAP, a bit over the edge with guilt, shame and fear. MELANIE having the best time she has ever had in her life.

160 ON EMMA

160

As she rounds a corner, breathing hard, she sneaks a little look back at her husband and child. She slows, looks again, stops and faces FLAP.

EMMA
Stop jiggling her. She's going to throw up!

FLAP slows to a walk, catches his breath. EMMA walks quickly and ignores FLAP while checking out the baby strapped to his body.

FLAP
Your timing was great. You caught us before we did anything.

EMMA looks at him briefly and contemptuously. He has insulted her intelligence.

(CONTINUED)

160 CONTINUED:

160

EMMA
Give me the baby!

She starts yanking at the pouch straps.

EMMA
(difficulty with straps)
I'm taking the car. I'm taking
the kids and going to Houston.

FLAP
You don't know if I did anything.

EMMA
I know what you did and why. You
did it to forget you're a failure.

FLAP
That's your mother talking.

161 EMMA, overwrought, now holds MELANIE in both hands
and gestures with the infant as if it were her
hand.

161

EMMA
(pointing baby at herself)
That's me talking!

FLAP
You don't know what I did with her.
(slyly)
I don't know what you do when you're
out on your afternoon drives.

EMMA rolls her eyes as if having heard the most
preposterous sentence she has ever suffered.

EMMA
(almost friendly)
You're lucky I'm going off. I'd
sure make your life hell if I
stayed around now.

With that she walks off and FLAP wisely lets her go.

162-163

OMIT SCENE

162-163

163 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

163

The car moving along.

164 INT. CAR - NIGHT

164

Junk food wrappers abound.

TEDDY

(to Tommy)

Hey, look. Isn't that great?

165 HIS POV

165

An illuminated sign--"WELCOME TO TEXAS". With some billboards and motels and blackness beyond.

TEDDY

(impressed)

So that's what it looks like.

166 OMIT SCENE

166

167 EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

167

ROSIE dashes out the side door. EMMA begins beeping the horn. GARRETT'S door opens. By the time she comes into the driveway ROSIE is right alongside the car looking at MELANIE.

ROSIE

Well, talk about your beautiful.

168 ON AURORA

168

Pausing in the driveway separating her house from GARRETT'S. AURORA is flushed, excited, trying to contain it.

AURORA

Come see Emma and her children.

GARRETT

No. You don't need an outsider right now.

(CONTINUED)

168 CONTINUED:

168.

AURORA
You're not an outsider.

GARRETT
I'll see them later.

EMMA is out of the car several feet away. She moves quickly toward AURORA.

AURORA
Emma, this is Garrett, the one I told you about.

EMMA
It's a pleasure to meet you. It's very good to see you. I've heard so much about you.

169 GARRETT would like not to be here.

GARRETT
(uncomfortably)
Your mother's been looking forward to this.
(to Aurora)
Go ahead.

AURORA
Anything wrong?

GARRETT
No.

EMMA
It's nice to have met you.

GARRETT
It's nice to be home.

EMMA
It's great. It's great.
(she moves towards car)
It's nice meeting you.

AURORA
I'll be over later. They're probably tired anyway and want to get to sleep early.

(suggestively)
And I'd like to get to bed early.

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED:

169

TEDDY
(calling)
Grandma! Grandma! Grandma!

170 AURORA shushes TEDDY while maintaining a tight smile. She senses GARRETT'S discomfort but this is not time to deal with it.

170

ROSIE
(to Tommy in car)
Will you get out? You've just
been sitting there. Come on out.

AURORA
Which one is the squeezer?

ROSIE
This one likes to squeeze. This
one does.

AURORA goes to TOMMY. She kisses him and TEDDY and they have a none-too-good embrace.

AURORA
Where's the baby?
(taking the baby out of car)

EMMA
I keep thinking she looks a little like you.

AURORA.
A little? It's like looking in the mirror.

EMMA
She loved to drive. She didn't cry once.

AURORA
Get the suitcases.

EMMA
Mom.

AURORA
(hugging Emma half-heartedly)
Well, I talk to you every day.

172 INT. EMMA'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT

172

Where a rollaway bed has been added to EMMA'S old bed. TOMMY and TEDDY are in bed, AURORA and EMMA alternating tucking and kissing. They turn the light out and then stand together framed in the doorway saying their goodnights.

EMMA

You know, you just look wonderful.

AURORA

(sincerely)

You look terrible. No one wants a girl who looks washed out and tired all the time.

EMMA

Mother, I just drove another thousand miles. Besides, all the men love me just as I am.

AURORA

I want to talk. Are you going to go to sleep now?

EMMA

We can talk.

AURORA

Let's talk. It's just your pattern that you finally take this small step away from Flap and it's toward this unavailable, married, older Iowan.

EMMA

How's it with you and the astronaut?

AURORA

He has a name.

EMMA

Oh, he does, does he?

EMMA and AURORA exit to AURORA'S bedroom.

TOMMY

Those two are crazy.

173 INT. AURORA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

173

AURORA

No, I tell you it's so strange to find out relatively, relatively late in life that sex is so...so fan-fucking-tastic.

(they both laugh)

Anyway, that's what he calls it.

AURORA

(suddenly)

Emma, I'm moth to flame. This affair is just going to kill me.

EMMA

(touched)

Maybe not. Why do you think that?

AURORA

(tears showing; her voice breaking)

I didn't know I'd start to need him.

EMMA moves to embrace her mother and in hugging jiggles the milk she is holding. It spills on them. The tender communion ends with AURORA returning to her role.

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED:

173

AURORA

(cont'd)

Honestly, Emma.

(looking at nightgown)

I just got this. You're too old
to be this clumsy.

174 EXT. PATSY'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

174

Top River Oaks stuff this house. The back yard is lush and deep. It has a swimming pool with a 12-foot slide and decking and a rather substantial treehouse. PATSY, some seven years older than when we last saw her, is sitting next to EMMA in a cushy chaise lounge, holding and marveling over MELANIE while, in the b.g., TOMMY and TEDDY are having a terrific time swimming with PATSY'S daughter, MEG, who is just between the two boys in size and age. TOMMY is notably more animated and joyous than we've seen him. PATSY is still a knockout, though no longer a natural one. EMMA watches with pleasure as her blonde friend cuddles her blonde daughter.

EMMA

You look more like her mother than
I do.175 MEG runs up to PATSY, shivering from swimming. EMMA 175
grabs a towel for her.

MEG

(to Patsy)

Mommy, can we have lunch?

PATSY

Yes.

(calling to boys)

What do you want to eat?

TOMMY

Anything I want?

PATSY

(calling)

Sure

TOMMY

(quickly)

Gumbo?

MEG exits.

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED:

175

EMMA

I always promise to make it for them but you just can't get the fish back home. Do you miss Los Angeles? Was it great to be there?

PATSY

It was interesting dating Jews after the divorce. They are so lively.

EMMA

I haven't noticed that.

PATSY

In Los Angeles they were so anxious to make you feel as if they understood your secret thoughts better than anybody. Damned if they didn't sometimes.

EMMA

That does sound good. I do that with Sam and he gets such a kick out of it. What else?

176 The phone rings, PATSY answers it.

176

PATSY

(into phone)

Hello? Oh, hi, Flap. I'm fine. God, it's been so long. Oh, I guess I look older like all of us. Yes, I have a whole new daughter and husband you haven't met.

(she laughs and then glancing at Emma changes her laugh to a look of disapproval over what Flap has said)

You sound the same and I'm not sure that's such a good thing. Yes, she's right here. Oh, she has not. We have other things to talk about besides you.

She hands the phone to EMMA.

(CONTINUED)

176

CONTINUED:

176

EMMA

(coldly into phone)

Hello. Fine. They're fine. She's fine. I've told everyone in Houston that you're terrible and nobody wants to see you again. Oh, don't worry. I'm half-kidding. What's up? Feeling contrite?

EMMA'S expression darkens. She is shaken.

EMMA

I can't believe you did that to us.

She wipes some sudden tears from her eyes? PATSY moves closer, questioning.

EMMA

(continuing)

I think you're spiteful, Flap, and I don't know when in hell that happened to you. Goodbye.

She hangs up.

EMMA

He accepted the job in Kearney, Nebraska. So we have to go on back and move by next week.

PATSY

I don't know why you don't leave him.

EMMA

(gathering her thoughts)

Me neither. Honestly!

177 OMIT SCENE

177

178 GARRETT comes out of the house. He is subdued,
ill-at-ease.

GARRETT
Aurora?

AURORA
Well, hello, stranger. Has it only
been two days?

GARRETT
Can we go some place and talk?

AURORA
My garden.

They stroll back towards the garden--AURORA feeling
that "choking feeling"--she keeps looking, waiting
for him to notice that she's anxious and lighten
the mood. When she does catch his eye, he breaks
off the contact.

179 GARDEN AREA

179

GARRETT
You probably know what I'm going
to say.

179 CONTINUED:

179

AURORA

Maybe not. I hope not.

GARRETT

You're some kind of woman, but I'm the wrong kind of man and it doesn't look like my shot at being the right kind is as good as I was hoping.

AURORA

Are you intentionally sounding like an idiot to make this easier for me?

GARRETT

Well...

Several beats, she looks at him, he shifts embarrassed. Some code insisting that he can't leave until she dismisses him.

AURORA

(continuing low)

You don't even know that you're going to miss me.

GARRETT

Look, I don't want to blow smoke up your ass.

AURORA

What a relief.

GARRETT

It's just that I'm starting to feel an obligation here that makes it rough, especially when I live right next door. I started to feel like I had to watch what I was doing in my own house. I hope you know that my feelings for you are...

She looks at him hard--he breaks off.

GARRETT

(continuing)

You really don't like me.

AURORA

I just wish you'd go take a flying screw for yourself.

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED: (2)

179

GARRETT

(utter sincerity)

I am going to miss you. I do feel bad.

AURORA

You're lucky. I feel humiliated.

She is nakedly pained and angry as she looks at him. It's unsettling and there is a trace of real anguish in GARRETT as he awkwardly exits. We hold on AURORA for a beat then:

180 EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DES MOINES

180

As her car pulls up, the kids run to see their father. FLAP emerges from inside and embraces the boys, moves over to greet MELANIE, all the while avoiding contact with EMMA.

FLAP

(conciliatory to Emma)

I've been packing for us all week.

FLAP kisses MELANIE who reacts with delight.

EMMA

She sure remembers her daddy.

FLAP

You going to stay mad?

EMMA

(ironically)

Yes, I thought being uprooted with my children without my consent was at least worth a pout.

She walks towards the house, loaded down.

FLAP

It's the head of the department.

181 OMIT SCENE

181

182 EXT. PARKING LOT - COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

182

The setting for their first nervous meeting. We see EMMA'S car arrive at the spot next to SAM'S car, the area illuminated by the coffee shop and adjacent stores. SAM gets out of the car. He looks at EMMA sitting behind the wheel. She's a little jumpy about

(CONTINUED)

182 CONTINUED:

182

getting started because there's last minute packing to do. He walks over to the car, leans in.

EMMA

Don't cry, Sam.

SAM BURNS

(muffled)

I'm sorry, honey. Just give me a second.

She digs into her purse and hands him some Kleenex which he uses with his back to her.

SAM BURNS

(continuing)

Don't know what I'll do.

EMMA

Oh, my.

SAM

- I bought a going away thing for you and I forgot to bring it. Dottie's right. I'm a born bumbler.

EMMA

Oh, you are not.

SAM BURNS

Can I have a picture of you?

Wiping away some tears, she goes through the junk of her glove compartment hurriedly, opens her wallet. And removes a picture.

EMMA

This is all I have--Flap's in it.

SAM BURNS

I don't mind.

She hands it to him, drives away.

183 OMIT SCENE

183

184 EXT. KEARNEY STATE COLLEGE - DAY

184

A campus which would consider "functional" a compliment. A "Kearney State College" sign in the right foreground. EMMA is walking with MELANIE, now aged two, toddling alongside wearing her best dress. They turn into one of the older buildings, the English department.

185 INT. ENGLISH DEPARTMENT - DAY

185

A perfect older, white-haired ELDERLY SECRETARY is seated behind a desk. She is genuinely delighted to see the new arrivals.

ELDERLY SECRETARY

Good morning, Emma. Hi, baby.

MELANIE

Hi, Evelyn.

EMMA

She wanted her daddy to see her dressed up for the doctor.

ELDERLY SECRETARY

He should be here any minute.

The door opens and a familiar looking woman enters.

WOMAN

Will you please tell Mr. Horton...

But now EMMA has turned and seen her. The woman reacts quickly.

WOMAN

(continuing)

Never mind.

She exits. But EMMA breaks after her, MELANIE following as best she can.

186 INT. LONG HALLWAY - DAY

186

It is heavily trafficked with students and faculty.

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED:

186

EMMA

(calling)

Don't make me run after you.

The young woman turns, the same young woman EMMA caught FLAP with in Des Moines, JANICE. EMMA looks at her, now certain who she is.

EMMA

How long have you been here or are you the reason we moved to Nebraska?

JANICE

I think Flap should talk to you. I've been telling him so. I shouldn't say anything before he does, except that I don't think there's an emotion you're having that I couldn't validate.

EMMA

Well, if he wants to talk, just tell him his wife and his baby will be at the doctor's getting their flu shots.

187 INT. DR. BUDGE'S OFFICE - DAY

187

DR. BUDGE is an overweight version of a Norman Rockwell G.P. He has just finished giving MELANIE her shot and she is crying and screaming.

EMMA

Come on, Melanie. It's all over. If it makes you feel better, I have to get a shot now myself.

MELANIE calms and smiles. The doctor swabs her arm and then begins moving it, looking underneath. EMMA indicates a box of lollypops.

EMMA

(to doctor)

Can I give Melanie one of these?

The doctor nods and continues to examine her. Then stops, his attention focuses on her arm. EMMA leans to give the lollypop to MELANIE.

(CONTINUED)

187 CONTINUED:

187

EMMA

If my husband calls, they'll let us know, won't they?

DR. BUDGE

You have a lump in your armpit. How long has it been there?

EMMA

I don't know. Melanie, stop kicking that cabinet.

MELANIE gives the metal file cabinet one more little kick, then stops.

DR. BUDGE

There are two of them, not very big though. I have to be out of town for a week and I hate to leave them that long because they're going to have to come out and be looked at.

EMMA

Goodness. Do I have to be scared?

DR. BUDGE

All it means if you're scared is that you'll be that much happier when it turns out to be nothing.

EMMA nods, managing a smile. She takes MELANIE by the hand.

MELANIE

Mommy should get a pop too. For her shot.

EMMA

That's right.

The doctor hands her one. She unwraps it and puts it in her mouth.

188 INT. AURORA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

188

AURORA sitting at the table alone, the light on.

AURORA

(into phone)

I know what it is. You don't keep yourself up so your sweat glands have stopped up. It's a cyst.

189 INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

189

EMMA in the booth with MELANIE.

EMMA

He says he could almost do the operation in his office but I'll go in overnight.

AURORA

Do they have good hospitals in Nebraska?

EMMA

Sure. So I shouldn't worry, right?

AURORA

It's a cyst--it's right where your oil glands are and they've stopped up because you've never learned what to eat or how to wash.

EMMA

Okay, thanks. Oh, say hi to Melanie.

She hands MELANIE the phone.

190 INT. FLAP AND EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

190

FLAP standing there taking in the news.

EMMA

What's her name?

FLAP

Janice. What did the doctor say?

EMMA

I told you. The scariest thing was that he wanted to do it so fast. Janice--straight hair.

(imitating Janice)

"I can't say anything until he does." I'm going to get myself one of Patsy's Jews if you don't watch out.

FLAP

But that thing he said about feeling good when it turns out to be nothing. I think that's a good indication, don't you?

EMMA

(scolding)

I'm not going to make you feel better, Flap. I'm just too mad.

191 EXT. AURORA'S BACK YARD - DAY

191

VERNON sitting outside, fidgeting.

192 INT. AURORA'S HOUSE - DAY

192

AURORA looking out at him. She has just finished dialing the phone.

AURORA

Hello, Flap. Have you heard anything?

193 INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - DAY

193

FLAP cooking hamburgers for the kids, sheltering the phone so he has privacy.

FLAP

No. Then Emma hasn't called you either?

AURORA

No. How are the children?

FLAP

I wish I was so carefree.

AURORA

Yes, well, they have nothing to feel ashamed about.

FLAP

You always seem to lose your manners around me, Aurora.

AURORA

Oh, stop. Let me know if you hear.

She hangs up.

194 EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - DAY

194

As she walks out to the garden. And finds GARRETT and VERNON talking over the back fence. She stands frozen for a moment then decides to walk over to them.

AURORA

Do you two know each other?

VERNON

We was just seeing to that.

(CONTINUED)

194 CONTINUED:

194

GARRETT

Vernon was just telling me that Emma's in the hospital for tests. What kind of tests?

AURORA

(ignoring him)

Vernon, why don't we go inside?

VERNON leans forward to give her some sotto advice, pulling at her arm some to get her ear down to his range.

VERNON

I think you'd feel better if you talked to him about it.

AURORA

(to Garrett)

They're taking a biopsy.

GARRETT grimaces broadly as if just suffering an incredibly sharp stomach pain.

AURORA

What's wrong with you?

GARRETT

Sorry. Nothing. I'm squeamish about words like "biopsy". It's just a thing with me. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

But his expression remains enormously strained. VERNON looks at him with distaste.

VERNON

Let's go inside.

He starts to escort her away, then turns to GARRETT.

VERNON

I don't know why you'd feel squeamish about anything. Didn't you fellas have to piss and dump down a tube in your leg?

AURORA laughs, pats VERNON on the back. He grins broadly and modestly. AURORA looks at GARRETT with challenge. But GARRETT, damn him, endures justified ridicule with some grace.

(CONTINUED)

194 CONTINUED: (2)

194

GARRETT

I'm sorry you're going through this,
Aurora.

She nods and starts back towards the house.

195 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NEBRASKA - NIGHT

195

EMMA lying there, playing with her hair, looking at THE WALTONS. DR. BUDGE enters. He sits on the bed. For the merest beat EMMA avoids dealing with him, then looks his way.

DR. BUDGE

Dear, you have a malignancy.

We hold several beats to study EMMA'S reaction.

196 INT. AURORA'S KITCHEN - DAY

196

AURORA hangs up the phone. ROSIE is busy nearby.

AURORA

(to Rosie)

Our girl's in trouble. She has a sort of cyst that turned out to be malignant. She has to go to a hospital in Lincoln.

The two women embrace. ROSIE does with ease something she has never done before. She kisses AURORA on the cheek.

ROSIE

You're not leaving me here. Somebody's got to take care of those kids of hers.

197 EXT. LINCOLN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

197

Establishing shot.

198 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE AT HOSPITAL - DAY

198

PATSY sits alongside AURORA. PATSY is wearing a fur coat and looks dazzling. This is a new doctor, DR. MAISE. He is too calm. He also cannot seem to control his eyes from clicking over to PATSY occasionally. AURORA not missing this aspect of the interview.

(CONTINUED)

198 CONTINUED:

198

DR. MAISE

We'll release her in a few days.
We do more and more on an out
patient basis. We won't need to
take her back here at all unless
the illness escalates.

AURORA

But you're not telling me anything.

DR. MAISE

I think I am. I'm trying to.
What are you confused about?

AURORA

How is she?

DR. MAISE

I always tell people to hope for
the best and prepare for the worst.

AURORA

(dumbfounded)

And they let you get away with that?

DR. MAISE

(dealing with her)

Look, this is a serious condition.
The chances of a response are going
to be about one in three. That's
not as good as we'd like, but if you
do get a response, it could be quite
meaningful.

199 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

199

MAISE, AURORA and PATSY walking along.

DR. MAISE

(to Patsy)

Are you going to stay in Nebraska long?

PATSY

I don't think so.

DR. MAISE

(daring a witticism)

It's too bad. I was thinking of
marching you through the wards to
give some of our male patients
the will to live.

(CONTINUED)

199 CONTINUED:

199

He snickers at this but not until AURORA wheels and stares at him.

AURORA

I keep on telling myself your personality has nothing to do with your abilities. That is true, isn't it?

DR. MAISE

I'm sorry. It might have been a bad joke but you're wrong to take the attitude that everything is so desperate and serious now and it's not going to do your daughter any good to get those signals.

PATSY

I think he's right--Aurora.

AURORA

(giving in)

Well, we're not with Emma right now.

PATSY

But when we are?

AURORA

Of course.

They enter her room.

200 INT. EMMA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

200

She's reading the kids' letters and enjoying herself. AURORA and PATSY enter with broadly fixed smiles on their faces.

EMMA

What's wrong now?

PATSY and AURORA smile with some sincerity at their transparency.

AURORA

(sitting on the bed)

I just get so frustrated with the doctor. But it all boils down to you're getting out of here tomorrow and you won't have to stay here again.

EMMA

Unless it spreads more. But I tell you I don't feel sick.

(CONTINUED)

200 CONTINUED:

200

PATSY

I think you can tell more about your condition yourself than they can. Hey, I want you to come to New York for a visit. My treat.

EMMA

Well, we'll see. You have to read the kids' letters. Teddy says he can't sleep but Melanie can. Tommy says he doesn't think there's anything to be "really concerned about".

PATSY

I mean it. You have some time before you have to see the doctor again. Spend a few days in New York.

AURORA

I don't think it's a bad idea for you to have a vacation by yourself. With Rosie and I here, you might as well take advantage of the freedom.

EMMA

I'm not like one of those kids they take to see Disneyland before the end, am I?

AURORA

Oh, stop it?

201 EXT. 59TH STREET BRIDGE - NIGHT

201

A lovely evening.

202 INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

202

PATSY in the back seat with EMMA, who looks strange in this setting.

PATSY

Look, Emma.

203 THEIR POV

203

New York City lit up.

204 ON EMMA

204

Delighted.

EMMA

I can't believe I'm here.

205 INT. RIVER CAFE - DAY

205

PATSY and EMMA and three other women in their late 20's or early 30's are being seated at a large round table. The East River traffic just a few feet away, the Brooklyn Bridge overhead, the city beyond, a piano player at work on the atmosphere. There isn't a Welsh coal miner who wouldn't instantly guess which of the five women was the rube. EMMA is out of her element, but there is enough inner security to make her only vaguely uncomfortable in the midst of these well-groomed, seemingly-sure-of-themselves contemporaries.

PATSY
(making introductions)
Emma, this is Lizbeth.

EMMA
Hi, Elizabeth.

LIZBETH
Hi. It's Lizbeth.

EMMA
Isn't that what I said?

LIZBETH
You said Elizabeth with an "E".
It's Lizbeth.

EMMA
Two names--Liz Beth?

LIZBETH
No, one name--Lizbeth. It doesn't matter.

PATSY
And this is Jane.

EMMA
Thank heavens.

She gets a nice little laugh.

PATSY
And this is Victoria.

206 MOVING SHOT

206

Following waiter to the table some 60 minutes later. He lays down coffee for all but EMMA who has also ordered an incredibly gooey dessert. There is a good deal of intelligent, though nonetheless chirpy, chatter.

(CONTINUED)

206 CONTINUED:

206

The women are just finishing examining two photographs--
EMMA'S of her kids and LIZBETH'S of hers.

EMMA

(to Lizbeth)

I love the uniform their school
gives them.

LIZBETH

Well, yours are wonderful. They
make me feel like I'm going
through one of those old Saturday
Evening Posts--the little girl's
incredible.

PATSY

And don't think she doesn't know it.

EMMA

Patsy and her...have a real thing...
(thinking then)
Well, with the boys too.

PATSY nods calmly.

VICTORIA

(to Emma)

You going to wait till she's in
school before you go back to work?

EMMA

I've never really worked.

A half-beat of silent, shocked reaction.

JANE

(firmly and democratically)

Well, that's okay.

EMMA

Thanks.

EMMA starts to eat her dessert and then feels all eyes
on her. She stops a spoonful of the stuff and sees
her diet-conscious table mates looking on ravenously.

EMMA

Anybody want some?

They all say "no".

207 EXT. RIVER CAFE PARKING LOT - DAY - LONG SHOT

207

Breezy, right on the water. PATSY talking to her three New York friends as they wait for taxis. The mood seems different. Two of the women genuinely aghast, and then the conversation stops abruptly with the exclamation, "Oh, that poor thing" hanging in the air.

208 ON EMMA

208

As she approaches the taxi uncertain with the three of them staring at her.

EMMA

What's wrong?

LIZBETH

Nothing.

A cab approaches. Suddenly, the women are pressing too hard to seem natural.

VICTORIA

(shaking hands)

It was a great honor meeting you, Emma. I hope you have a wonderful time here.

JANE

I think those beautiful children are lucky to have you for a mommy.

PATSY

Go ahead. You girls take the first one. We're not in a hurry.

LIZBETH

(to Emma)

You sure?

EMMA nods, a bit down. PATSY is embarrassed. Their cab pulls away.

EMMA

You just told them, huh?

PATSY

(nods)

You don't mind, do you?

EMMA

No, of course not.

209

She walks to the water's edge. EMMA starts to cry. This young Texas woman, this midlander, standing on an alien coast smack in front of one of the world's sophisticated cities, feeling sorry for herself for the first time.

209

PATSY

Emma. , Please, no...why?

She walks quickly after EMMA.

EMMA

Oh, it's not you, Patsy. I like people knowing. I mean why not? But, oh, I'm getting tired all the time and sometimes I get pains in different places...

(now agitated)

And why do your husband and those women have to walk on eggs like that when they know?

EMMA is getting mad.

EMMA

Can you just tell them it's okay to talk about cancer? I mean it's not so terrible. In less than two hours they were saying how two of them had had abortions and three of them had been divorced and how one of them hasn't spoken to her mother in four years and how one of them has her "little Natalie" at boarding school because she has to travel for her job-- well, hell, Patsy--hell!! If that's okay to talk about...

(suddenly remembering)

Oh, and there was the one with the yeast disease that was afraid it was vaginal herpes at first...If all that's fit conversation for lunch and everyone is still thought to be perfectly all right, then what is so God awful unspeakable about my little tumors?

PATSY

Sure, of course. What do you want me to do?

EMMA

Well, tell them it's not so tragic. People do get better. Tell them it's okay to talk about the cancer.

210 INT PATSY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

210

A few couples, well dressed but casually seated around PATSY'S living room. MEG, PATSY'S daughter, kissing her mother and father good night. PATSY'S husband, JACK, is a good looking, well-connected, young partner at Solomon Brothers. They are drinking and eating little chili canapes that PATSY'S made. One of the women fills a silence.

WOMAN

(brightly and conversationally)

Patsy tells us you have cancer.

PATSY laughs so suddenly she spits out her little chili dog. It virtually flies across the room. EMMA breaks up laughing with her.

WOMAN

We should really talk later. I'm a nutritionist and my husband's with Ticketron.

EMMA nods and exits to terrace.

211 EXT. PATSY'S TERRACE - NIGHT

211

An attractive, 5'5", intense man, PHIL, who's often told he looks like Rick Dreyfuss, is standing close to her smoking a joint.

PHIL

Want a hit--maybe to help with the nausea?

EMMA

No. I think that's only if you're having chemotherapy.

PHIL

Were you feeling anything tonight?

EMMA

Sick, you mean?'

PHIL

No. Between us.

EMMA

Not really. But I liked that you sit forward in your chair like you're very interested in what people are saying but it's really so your feet will touch the floor. It's sweet.

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED:

211

PHIL

I wouldn't be bringing up the cancer
but Patsy said it was okay.

EMMA

It is okay.

PHIL

I work for her husband. My older
brother had cancer and now he's fine.

EMMA

What kind did he have?

PHIL

Skin cancer.

Before she can say anything.

PHIL

(continuing defensively)

I know. That's the best kind.

(a beat)

I'd really like to take you out
sometime.

EMMA

I'm sorry. I have to go back very
soon and Patsy has a lot planned--
Broadway shows and things--and I'm
married and have three kids--and
there is the cancer.

PHIL

Yeah, I figured it was a long shot.

They stand for a beat.

EMMA

Excuse me.

She walks in. PATSY is standing with her husband.

PATSY

You don't feel like meeting somebody
right now who had a mastectomy, do you?

EMMA

(polite)

Maybe in a bit.

212 INT. MEG'S ROOM - NIGHT

212

MEG, PATSY'S daughter, is sitting up in bed reading.
EMMA walks in.

EMMA
How you doing?

MEG
Fine.

EMMA picks up the phone and begins to dial.

MEG
Will you tell Tommy I said hi?

EMMA
I'll do better than that. I'll
tell him you have a crush on him.

MEG
Aunt Emma, you wouldn't.

EMMA laughs, then hangs up the phone, thinks for a
beat, then:

EMMA
Meg?

MEG
Uh-huh?

EMMA
From your point of view, having
lived in three or four places,
how is it being in New York?

MEG
Well, I think it's my favorite
because no matter what you're
fond of, they have it.

EMMA
Not if you like nature.

MEG
Yes. Because we have a house in
East Hampton that's right on the
ocean and has woods out behind.

EMMA
And you have fun here as a kid and
all?

(CONTINUED)

212 CONTINUED:

MEG

Oh, yes.

EMMA takes this in and dials.

EMMA

(into phone)

Hi, Mom...

(listens)

Well, you know how Tommy is. Look, they're having this party for me so I can't talk long but I'm thinking of coming back a couple of days early.

213 EXT. SHOT - LINCOLN GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

213

214 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

214

EMMA and her mother enter carrying a little suitcase containing personal toiletries, a radio, etc. A woman a few years younger than EMMA is in one of the room's two beds. Even in bed, with the covers up, she seems a bit too big and gawky. Her name is MELBA.

MELBA

Hi.

EMMA

Hi.

AURORA nods.

MELBA

(to Emma)

You going to be in here?

EMMA

Uh-huh. My name's Emma.

MELBA

I'm Melba Lanke. My husband, Dick, is the high school basketball coach.

DR. MAISE walks in. He nods to AURORA, then draws the curtain separating EMMA'S area from MELBA'S.

DR. MAISE

Excuse us a moment.

215 ON MELBA'S AREA

215

AURORA and EMMA now shut off from view.

(CONTINUED)

215 CONTINUED:

215

DR. MAISE

Melba, there are certain options you have to consider on the kind of treatment we'll be following. We need to decide whether to operate.

MELBA

What do you think, Dr. Maise?

DR. MAISE

Well, the problem is that if we don't operate, the chances are one in four of achieving a cure. But if we operate, the chances of a cure become one in two.

MELBA

(heartened)

Oh.

DR. MAISE

But the chances of surviving the operation are two in three.

MELBA

Oh. So if we just keep on doing what we're doing, my chances are one in three.

DR. MAISE

(correcting)

One in four.

MELBA

One in four--sorry.

DR. MAISE

That's okay.

MELBA

What's one in three?

DR. MAISE

There is no one in three. The chances of surviving the operation are two in three.

MELBA

(trying)

One in three if we don't do any...

DR. MAISE

(patiently correcting)

One in four.

(CONTINUED)

215 CONTINUED: (2)

215

MELBA

Why do I keep getting that wrong?
One in four if we don't do anything...

DR. MAISE

Right.

MELBA

(encouraged)

Two of three if I have the operation...

DR. MAISE

(coaching)

But...

MELBA

(she knows this one)

...the chances of surviving the
operation are one in two.

DR. MAISE

That's right.

MELBA laughs a bit flushed with her success at having gotten it down. DR. MAISE opens the curtain separating the two areas. EMMA and AURORA awake. MELBA looking over at them as soon as the doctor exits.

MELBA

I should have written it down.

216 EXT. HOLIDAY INN - LINCOLN, NEBRASKA - NIGHT

216

As a cab leaves AURORA off at her hotel. The sign contains a provocative message: "Home of the Pleasure Dome."

217 INT. HOLIDAY INN - NIGHT.

217

As AURORA walks past the reception desk where first by din and then by actual sight we see:

218 INT. PLEASURE DOME - NIGHT

218

A monument to a certain type taste. It has a giant indoor area with a sweating indoor pool, some matted and torn artificial turf serving as a miniature golf course, ping-pong tables, shuffleboard and scores of pinball machines, all of it covered by a plastic top creating an eerie translucence. Most of the rooms at this Holiday Inn have balconies facing out on the Pleasure Dome. So it is a weary AURORA we see climb up to the balcony and open the door to one of these rooms.

(CONTINUED)

219 INT. AURORA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

219

She closes the door but still there are the chorus of pinball bells which cannot be shut out. She sits on the bed.

220 INT. EMMA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

220

AURORA, dressed colorfully, is supervising the two men hanging AURORA'S Renoir and Klee. She also squeezes her armpit periodically. EMMA is in bed. She is genuinely cheered by the additions.

EMMA

(looking at paintings)

I can't believe you did this.

AURORA

Sure.

(to men)

Be careful. Those paintings are worth more than you'll make in your lifetime.

The men turn and react.

EMMA

(sotto)

You treat them like that, they're going to start pissing in my soup to get even.

221 INT. HOLIDAY INN COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

221

AURORA eating a desultory meal with VERNON. There is so little to say. He is concerned for her. She catches him looking at her at one point as she unconsciously squeezes her armpit. She stops and pats his hand in reassurance.

222 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

222

AURORA at the nurse's station. There is a large clock prominent in the background which reads seven minutes past eight. AURORA is extraordinarily agitated, hyper, manic.

AURORA

It's after eight. Give her the pain shot.

NURSE

Mrs. Greenway, I was going to.

(CONTINUED)

222 CONTINUED:

222

AURORA

Then go ahead. It's after eight.

NURSE

Just a few minutes.

AURORA

Why should she have to have the pain right now? It's time for her shot.

NURSE

You act like...

AURORA

She only has to hold out till eight. Give her the shot.

NURSE

Your attitude isn't...

AURORA

We'll talk later. Give her the shot.

NURSE

If you're going to behave like...

AURORA

(screaming)

Give her the shot.

The nurse looks wide-eyed. AURORA too did not anticipate her outburst. The nurse scurries towards EMMA'S room.

223 INT. EMMA'S ROOM - DAY

223

EMMA lying in bed, the doctor sitting at her bedside. EMMA looking intelligent and relaxed despite the doctor's words. His manner is not the least bit emotional. A professional rendering facts.

DR. MAISE

The response to the drugs we've tried isn't what we'd hoped. But there are investigatory drugs which we are willing to utilize. However, if you become incapacitated or it becomes unreasonable for you to handle your affairs for a block of time, it might be wise to make some decisions now so that your areas of responsibility don't become notably disordered.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

223 CONTINUED:

223

DR. MAISE (CONT'D)
 (he looks at her for half a beat)
 Any questions?

EMMA
 No.

She looks off, lost in the fact that she will not survive her illness. The doctor hesitates, not sure she's gotten the message. She senses this.

EMMA
 (continuing)
 I know what you're saying. I've got to decide what to do with the kids.

224 INT. RESTAURANT - HOLIDAY INN - LINCOLN - NIGHT 224

225 INT. HOLIDAY INN - LOBBY 225

Following AURORA into the Pleasure Dome.

226 INT. PLEASURE DOME - NIGHT 226

She stands watching TOMMY and TEDDY swim in the indoor pool. They are having a fine time. TEDDY hops out and, giggling, pretends he's going to push AURORA in. TOMMY calls to his brother from the pool.

TOMMY
 Pushing Grandma in isn't a half bad idea.

AURORA
 (to Tommy)
 You'd better not. I'm not kidding.
 Push your father in if you want.

TOMMY gets out of the pool and advances ominously on AURORA. She fixes him with a look, but just then there is a call from the balcony surrounding the Pleasure Dome.

VOICE
 Aurora.

AURORA looks up.

227 HER POV 227

There, near the pinball machines, a flight bag beside him, is GARRETT.

228 ON AURORA

228

She walks towards the stairway, GARRETT down the stairs. They embrace.

229 AURORA AND GARRETT

229

She is trying very hard and with noteworthy success not to cry.

AURORA

Well, whoever expected you to be a nice guy?

They embrace.

230 OTHER ANGLE

230

Showing VERNON watching them, suffering, at the very least, enormous discomfort, since PATSY and ROSIE are looking at him and actually verbalizing their feelings as they say softly and almost in unison.

ROSIE, PATSY

Awww.

He looks around and walks off in the opposite direction. ROSIE makes a simple statement of fact to PATSY.

ROSIE

I'd like a shot at him now.

231 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

231

As AURORA and GARRETT walk.

ON GARRETT.

Getting the willies in the hospital.

AURORA

You can wait in that little reception room. She said she really loved that you came and the way you did it.

232 INT. RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

232

As GARRETT lights up, visibly more relaxed and sits down next to an older working man wearing a sports jacket over his house painting togs.

GARRETT

How you doing?

(CONTINUED)

232 CONTINUED:

232

MAN

Fine. They just opened up my wife's neck.

GARRETT blanches. AURORA enters the background but stands silently watching. She is amused.

MAN

It turned out to be a big tumor--the size of a crenshaw melon but benign.

GARRETT

(woozy)

Well, great.

233 INT. EMMA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

233

ROSIE and MELANIE visiting. EMMA is caressing MELANIE'S long, thick, blonde hair. ROSIE, awkward, out of her element, and still trying to postpone fully dealing with EMMA'S condition.

EMMA

God, how I miss washing this mane of hers. Wherever did she get it from?

ROSIE

(downcast)

Oh, you and your thing about hair.

(brightening)

The other day Melanie was asking about where she came from and I told her to ask her momma.

MELANIE

I know.

EMMA

Who told you?

MELANIE

I came from in there.

She points to EMMA'S stomach.

EMMA

Teddy told you, the blabbermouth.

ROSIE gets up and walks towards the exit. As she does so she hears EMMA say to MELANIE.

EMMA

You love your Aunt Patsy?

MELANIE.

Yes.

234 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

234

As ROSIE steps into the corridor. She stands for a moment, then HEARS EMMA and MELANIE singing a song together and begins to cry.

235 INT. LINCOLN AIRPORT - DAY

235

Where AURORA sees GARRETT off. They embrace and as part of the embrace, he grabs a good handful of her rear end.

GARRETT

Take care of yourself. I'll call you. I'm glad I saw Emma.

AURORA

I'm sure your being there meant a lot to h...

(catching herself, then directly)

It meant a lot to me.

(now briskly)

I'm at the hospital all the time or I'll call you. No, then if you're with someone, you'll have that funny sound in your voice. Oh, I don't care. Who cares? Thanks for coming. I love you.

They hug again holding each other's rears.

236 AURORA starts away from him, stops.

236

AURORA

(calling)

Garrett.

He stops, she walks to him.

AURORA

I can't help being curious. Do you have any reaction to my telling you that I love you?

GARRETT

I was just inches from a clean getaway.

AURORA

Well, you're stuck now so you might as well face up. You're old enough to tell and I'm old enough to hear your reaction to my saying "I love you".

(he hesitates)

Tell me. Really.

(CONTINUED)

236 CONTINUED:

236

GARRETT

(distressed, then honestly)
All I can think of is my stock answer.

AURORA

Which is?

GARRETT

(with style)
I love you too, kid.

AURORA

(enjoying him)
Why is it the most fun you have
is always at my expense?

He hefts his flight bag, grins, musses her graying hair
a bit and exits.

LONG DISSOLVE TO:

237 INT. EMMA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

237

AURORA and EMMA each in their own thoughts. A trace of
a smile on AURORA'S face. Now AURORA looks at her daughter.

AURORA

Why are you always looking out
the window? Is it to avoid me?

EMMA

Oh, everything isn't always about
you. I have a lot to figure out.

AURORA

Let's not fight so much.

EMMA

(honestly)
What do you mean? When do we fight?

AURORA

You amaze me. I think of us as
always fighting.

EMMA

No, that's just from your end,
because you're never satisfied
with me.

AURORA looks at her. EMMA goes back to mulling.

238 INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY

238

AURORA going through the line, looking with extraordinary distaste as people in front of her have food plopped into their plates, wet glops covered with thick syrups. She addresses the black woman behind the counter.

AURORA
You don't put any gravy on the
cottage cheese, do you?

WOMAN
You crazy?

AURORA
I'll have some cottage cheese and
some whole wheat toast.

WOMAN
You want gravy on the toast?

AURORA
No, thank you.

The woman hands her the food. AURORA walks with her tray. She sees PATSY with the three kids just finishing a meal. PATSY looks tanned and gorgeous. They are all wearing ski clothes. They greet each other. TOMMY, a perfunctory hug; TEDDY, a squeeze; MELANIE, utterly kissable. TOMMY puts down a different water glass in front of AURORA.

TOMMY
Can we go back to the shop?

PATSY nods.

PATSY
Wouldn't you know? I take them
away skiing and the most excited
they got is when they found this
novelty section in the gift shop.
Do you think they should see
their mother today?

AURORA
I'd wait.

PATSY
I told Emma I thought Melwnie should
be with me, and the boys too if she
wants. She didn't want to discuss
it until she'd had a chance to go
over it with poor Flap.

AURORA
I'm going to raise the children.

238 CONTINUED:

238

PATSY

We'll see. I didn't want to do anything behind your back. That's why I wanted you to know I've spoken with Emma.

AURORA just looks at her. It is not a friendly look.

PATSY

It's silly for us to dislike each other now, isn't it?

AURORA

Maybe not.

PATSY

Well, I'm not mad at you.

She exits.

240 OTHER ANGLE

240

TEDDY and TOMMY spying on AURORA'S table from afar.

241 ON CASHIER'S DESK

241

FLAP, a huge tray of food and two books under his arm, is just about to set himself down at an empty table for respite. He sits, props up the book, savoring 15 minutes of ease and peace but now he looks up.

242 FLAP'S POV

242

His mother-in-law. She is looking at him.

243 ON FLAP

243

As reluctantly and dutifully he folds his book, hefts his tray and walks to AURORA'S table. FLAP is wearing the distinctive tie EMMA bought for him with AURORA'S money years ago.

FLAP

Hello.

AURORA

Hello.

FLAP

Did you see her yet today?

AURORA

I was with her most of last night and today--as usual.

(CONTINUED)

243 CONTINUED:

243

FLAP

Well?

AURORA

She wants to die--and sometimes I do too.

AURORA sips some water; it dribbles down her chin.

FLAP

I haven't talked to the kids yet. I'm not sure how much they realize. They know something bad is happening.

AURORA

Patsy wants to raise Melanie and maybe the boys. Don't you think they should be with me?

FLAP

What can you be thinking? I'll raise them. They are mine.

AURORA did not expect this. She sips her water. It dribbles down her chin. Absently, she wipes the water away.

AURORA

You don't have the resources.

FLAP

You can't make an argument out of this.

She is growing angry and trying not to. She sips some water; it runs down her chin. The problem of getting water to stay in her mouth is beginning to vie for her attention.

AURORA

Raising three children and working full time and running after women requires a lot more energy than you have. You've always had a knowledge of your own weakness--don't lose that quality now that you need it most.

She sips and dribbles. FLAP rises, watches AURORA dab at her chin.

FLAP

You have no right nor any invitation to discuss where or how my children live...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

243 CONTINUED: (2)

243

FLAP (CONT'D)

(realizing)

That's a...what do you call it?...
a dribble glass. You're drinking
from a dribble glass.

He looks around along with AURORA.

244 THEIR POV

244

The kids looking on. AURORA is pissed; FLAP is proud
of his brood.

245 INT. EMMA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

245

FLAP is seated beside her bed.

EMMA

From what the doctor says, I think
we have to have...

(ruefully)

..."the talk" now.

FLAP looks at her, then away. Some quality he doesn't
have may be expected of him. But now he turns back
and holds her gaze.

FLAP

(baring his soul)

Do you know how much I hate the
idea of losing you?

EMMA

Yes.

FLAP

(frustration venting)

Nobody seems to know that but you...

He calms, sits down, starts to speak, almost doesn't.

EMMA

(encouraging)

What?

FLAP

Oh. Just thinking about my identity
and not having one anymore.

(bittersweet irony)

I mean who am I if I'm not the man
who's failing Emma?

(CONTINUED)

245 CONTINUED:

245

EMMA

You didn't fail me.

FLAP

Let's not talk about this. I feel like I'm sucking after forgiveness-- which I probably am.

EMMA

You weren't any more terrible than me...

FLAP

Except for the cheating.

EMMA

Oh, let's not do this. We had our problems, Flap, but it wasn't over whether we loved each other...

Oh, look, I didn't even notice...
(she fingers his tie, moved by the gesture he made in wearing it)

Honestly. Oh, gosh. And it was really buried away. I know the mess it must have been for you finding it.

He grins. There is a strange but uncommonly easy intimacy between them. As they relax, this visit begins to have some of the elements of a good time.

FLAP

The house still isn't in one piece. It was in the last box I looked in.

EMMA

I'll bet.

FLAP

(loving her)

You're so easy to please. I don't know why I couldn't do more of it.

EMMA

(a beat then)

I feel so sorry for you. What are you going to do?

FLAP

I love teaching English. I'll be all right.

(CONTINUED)

245 CONTINUED: (2)

245

EMMA

I'm so glad we're talking. I just am. It just means so much to me that we can still feel like this--so much. Honest. Wow. Thank heavens.

FLAP

(amazed at her)

I swear.

She grabs one of his ears and holds it affectionately.

EMMA

Listen, I am getting tired. Just tell me, hon, do you really want to raise them?

He looks down, thinks, then at her.

FLAP

I never thought I was the sort of man who'd give up his kids.

EMMA

I don't think you want that much work. You have no idea what it takes. As hard as you think it is, you'd end up wishing it were that easy.

He thinks.

EMMA

Patsy and Momma can afford help. That makes a very big difference.

FLAP

Where do you want them?

EMMA

I don't want them living with Janice.

FLAP

(hesitantly)

She's not so bad.

EMMA

Oh, yes she is--for my kids she is.

She takes his hand.

EMMA

(continuing)

I think they'd better not stay with you, honey.

(CONTINUED)

245 CONTINUED: (3)

245

FLAP is scared and ashamed.

FLAP
I'll really miss them.

EMMA
Yes, you will.

FLAP
Maybe we should let Patsy take them.
It would be easy for me to work
research summers in New York.

EMMA
No. Patsy only really cares about
Melanie. I want them with Mother.
I'll make sure she lets you see
them and have them and help decide
things for them.

FLAP sighs.

FLAP
(ruefully)
I guess they should be with your
mother. I probably have that coming.

EMMA
Bring the boys to see me tomorrow,
will you? That one's been waiting
there for me. It's time I did it.

246 INT. EMMA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

246

PATSY is putting some make-up on EMMA, getting her
spruced up for her boys.

PATSY
Is it terrible to say that I just
can't stand seeing your mother get
her hands on that little girl? I'd
just love to raise that little girl.

EMMA
I'd let you. But Teddy can't spare her.

PATSY pauses. She always adores the way EMMA thinks.
She is heavy-hearted but is working against the emotion,
trying to supply energy to her friend's hospital room.

PATSY
I suppose Melanie will manage all by
herself no matter who takes care of her.

(CONTINUED)

246 CONTINUED:

246

EMMA

Keep an eye on Teddy, though. Okay? He's going to take this so damn personally. Tommy's been trying not to need me for years but Teddy's going to be so scared without me.

Tears come. PATSY dries them, does some patch work with the make-up. Then she patches herself.

PATSY

He's so like you, Teddy. A real innocent.

EMMA

I wasn't so innocent.

PATSY

I really wish you wouldn't use the past tense. Anyway, I'm having the kids visit a lot. She can't fight me on that.

EMMA

I'll make sure she doesn't. Thanks for helping me stall but you'd better send them in.

PATSY

Do I get to say something ever?

EMMA

Oh, we don't have to...

PATSY starts for the door, turns.

PATSY

There's just this. Besides loving you, I don't think you realize how I've depended on you. You're my touchstone, Emma..

She exits. EMMA sits there alone preparing to tackle the final task she has set for herself, her farewell to her children. At this moment she is thinking hard, concentrating on how she will deal with this. She is at work. We HEAR the door open. She looks over towards it.

EMMA

Hi, boys.

247 HER POV

247

As TOMMY and TEDDY enter their mother's room. TOMMY steeling himself, his younger brother already in tears. He moves quickly to his mother and buries his head in the covers. TOMMY is enormously uncomfortable and rigid. TEDDY is a bit out of control because suddenly, here with his mother, he feels comfortable enough to say what he's been thinking since she was hospitalized.

TEDDY

I love you and I miss you. And,
oh God, I want you to come home.

He lifts his head and takes some breaths; EMMA pets him, looks almost a bit stern at TOMMY and gestures him to come closer.

248 ON TOMMY

248

As he hesitates for half a beat, then walks to the bed. She touches his face.

EMMA

You both look so gigantic to me.
And I must look pretty bad to you.

TEDDY is so shocked with her appearance he can't answer, just look embarrassed. TOMMY shows a small measure of grace.

TOMMY

Not so bad.

249 ON EMMA

249

Strangely she feels deep appreciation for TOMMY'S words.

EMMA

You both need a haircut. You have,
both of you, beautiful eyes and I
want people to see them. I don't
care how long it gets in back but
clip those bangs. They're too long.

TOMMY

That's a matter of opinion.

EMMA

Just keep the hair out of your eyes.

TOMMY

Are you getting well?

EMMA

Uh-uh.

(CONTINUED)

249 CONTINUED:

249

TEDDY'S eyes dart, as if looking for escape.

EMMA

(continuing)

...I'm sorry about this. But I can't help it. And I can't talk to you too much longer or else I'll start to get real upset. But we had lots of years and we did a lot of talking--and some people don't get that... Listen, I want you to make a lot of friends. And don't be afraid of girls--they're going to be so much help to you, I swear.

TOMMY

We're not afraid of girls. What makes you think that?

EMMA

Well, you might be later on.

TOMMY

I doubt it.

TEDDY

(sobbing to Tommy)

Why don't you just shut up?

TOMMY

(half-heartedly)

You shut up.

EMMA

Shhh. Come on. Teddy? Give me a kiss.

They kiss on the lips. TEDDY kisses her a few extra times and so does she. She does the last extra kisses in a way which makes him smile. She gestures to TOMMY who kisses her cheek quickly. He is tortured and somehow being stiff and foul is simpler for him right now.

EMMA

Tommy, be sweet. Be sweet, please. Don't keep pretending you dislike me. That's silly.

TOMMY

(strained)

I like you.

(CONTINUED)

249 CONTINUED: (2)

249

EMMA

Then will you listen to me especially hard?

TOMMY

What?

EMMA

You'll listen close?

TOMMY

I said, what?

EMMA

(petting his arm)

I know that you like me. I know it. But for the last year or two you've been pretending you hate me. I love you a lot, as much as I love anybody, as much as I love myself. And in a few years when I haven't been around to be on your tail about something or irritating you, you're going to remember my buying your baseball glove when you thought we were too broke, and how I read you those stories and let you goof off instead of mowing the lawn... lots of things. You're going to realize you loved me. And maybe you're going to feel badly because you never told me. Don't. Because I already know you love me. So you must not ever do that to yourself. Okay?

TOMMY pauses. His brother looking at him with hope and urging that he says "I love you". He doesn't.

TOMMY

Okay.

EMMA

Good. You'd both better run along now. Take care. I was scared of this, but I think it went really well, don't you?

The boys nod.

250 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

250

AURORA seated with MELANIE on her lap as the boys enter the scene.

(CONTINUED)

250 CONTINUED:

250

AURORA
Come on, your father's back at the
hotel.

251 MOVING SHOT - CLOSE ON TOMMY

251

As he moves along, glancing back occasionally.

252 EXT. HOSPITAL GROUNDS - DAY

252

AURORA making conversation to soothe TEDDY who keeps lapsing unexpectedly into tears or sniffing. TOMMY lags behind, pausing, looking back at the hospital, then catching up.

AURORA
You know, I was speaking to this
boy back in River Oaks where I live
and he was telling me how great the
Cub Scouts are in Houston, just
about the best there are.

TOMMY
(simply)
We never were Scouts. Our mother
was too lazy to check it out.

AURORA'S hand hits him so hard that he is knocked down and several feet away by the blow. MELANIE giggles nervously. TOMMY starts to scamper away. AURORA goes after him. He almost runs for it. She has him by the arm. Finally, he stops struggling; he starts crying. AURORA comforts him. Gentler than we've seen her.

AURORA
That's a boy. I just can't have
you criticize your mother around me.

253 INT. EMMA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

253

One light on. FLAP dozing in a chair. AURORA seated across the room, looking at EMMA, who is on even more life support systems, and now EMMA looks back. Her mother smiles at her with quiet and mystic reassurance-- their final communication. EMMA turns; AURORA looks out the window. The door opens, a nurse enters. She checks EMMA. This is the same nurse who had the run-in with AURORA. She's a bit reluctant to approach her. She touches FLAP, who awakens.

NURSE
Mr. Horton. She's gone.

(CONTINUED)

253 CONTINUED:

253

FLAP gets to his feet. He looks at AURORA, who rises.

AURORA

I'm so stupid. After all she's been through, I thought I'd feel relief when she went...Oh, my sweet little thing...

(a wail)

Oh, Emma...please.

She catches herself, looks at FLAP, sadness flowing again. He stands quite still, something approaching dignity.

AURORA

(continuing)

There's nothing harder, is there?

She looks at FLAP again, a step and they are in each other's arms, AURORA kisses his brow, he kisses her back. They look towards the bed. Then:

AURORA

Let's go.

FLAP opens the door, waits for her; she gestures that he should go first. An instant where she looks back from the doorway.

FADE OUT:

TO END TITLES OVER:

254 EXT. AURORA'S HOUSE - DAY

254

As the last of the three limousines return from EMMA'S funeral.

255 INT. AURORA'S KITCHEN - DAY

255

ROSIE, PATSY and AURORA preparing some food. They argue with AURORA and each other about who should not be doing this.

256 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

256

GARRETT, VERNON, the BANKER, the DOCTOR, TOMMY, TEDDY, MELANIE, FLAP, PATSY'S husband, MEG, CECIL HORTON and SAM BURNS, off by himself, lost until PATSY comes up and begins to tell him how much EMMA cared about him. The casual, mournful, unstructured conversation of our characters, as they drink, eat and talk about EMMA and inevitably about her mother as well. This to continue as we finally...

FADE OUT.