

BORROWED BOY

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WHEAT FIELDS AT SUNSET

They go on for miles, rippling in the wind. A crop-duster flies by.

Off in the distance is a SMALL MIDWESTERN CITY. A HIGHWAY stretches towards it.

A GREYHOUND BUS ROARS past, headed into town.

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

The bus GRINDS to a stop, and the doors open with a HISS. PASSENGERS pour out.

One of them is an attractive WOMAN of twenty-four:

IRENE VARLEY.

She comes down the steps in drab clothes and no makeup, lugging a large duffel bag. Except for her excessive display of cleavage, she could be a young bag lady. She looks tired.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - NIGHT

Irene trudges along the sidewalk, close to the parked CARS, mainly recent models.

With her gaze straight ahead and her duffel bag obscuring the view, she surreptitiously tries each passing DOOR-HANDLE.

Locked. Locked. Locked.

Unlocked.

The car is old, beaten up.

A quick glance around, and she gets in.

INT. CAR

She shuts the door, then ducks down under the DASHBOARD. In a moment, she's tapping TWO WIRES together.

A SPARK and the engines SPUTTERS to life.

When the CAR DOOR is abruptly YANKED OPEN, she bolts upright.

In the street, a pissed off MAN glares down at her.

MAN  
Get out of my car.

Irene sits perfectly still, staring straight ahead through the windshield. It's as if she's trying to ignore him away. Only her eyes betray the terror of a trapped animal.

MAN (CONT'D)

Get OUT!

Her hand lunges for the gearshift.

MAN (CONT'D)

No fucking way.

He reaches in and grabs her arm, then roughly pulls her halfway from the car.

Suddenly, Irene is a blur of flailing arms, her body twisting away from him. The man holds on despite her sudden flurry, but is losing his grip as her thrashing grows wilder.

She lets out a piercing SHRIEK and claws at his eyes.

The startled man jolts back from her slashing fingernails, only to SLAM the top of his head against the door frame.

MAN (CONT'D)

Shit!

As he lets go of her, she flops back into the seat and pulls her knees to her chest.

With an ANIMAL GRUNT, Irene KICKS the man in the chest. He sprawls backwards off his feet.

AS he hits the pavement, an oncoming CAR screeches to a HALT just inches from his head.

She slams the door, then looks down at him through the window.

IRENE

(with genuine regret)

I'm sorry.

He sits up, but makes no attempt to stop her as she DRIVES AWAY.

CUT TO:

INT. FRELAINE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Boyfriend and girlfriend BILLY FRELAINE and JENNIFER ROYCE are attractive fourteen-year-olds. They're doing their algebra homework, while a Nicholas Sparks style romance movie called Inside Of Me plays in the background.

JENNIFER

$2x^2 + 4x - 4 = 0$ . Why do people need to learn algebra? And what *is* a quadratic?

BILLY

My father says that without algebra no one could build cars, pyramids, computers or make movies.

JENNIFER

Well Danica McKellar says that without me learning algebra, only the stupid boys will want to kiss me.

BILLY

Well then you better keep on studying.

Billy leans in to kiss Jennifer and she kisses back. Jennifer then shifts her attention to a very romantic section of the movie playing on the TV. The BEAUTIFUL ACTRESS in the romance is floating on her back in the water of a pond. Her wet clothing clearly shows the outlines of her attractive body as her HANDSOME BOYFRIEND kisses her and grazes her body sensually with his fingers. The music swells.

JENNIFER

I just love this scene. Don't you?

Jennifer's attention is on the romance, but Billy's eyes focus on the wet t-shirt action on the actresses chest and pelvis.

BEAUTIFUL ACTRESS

(to her boyfriend)

Show me how. Show me how to love you.

Jennifer's expression softens, then melts.

Billy's attention shifts from the screen, to Jennifer. She's fascinated by the film, so she doesn't notice his gaze wandering her body.

He suddenly KISSES her on the lips. And she kisses back.

As they neck, his hand on her waist begins to slide upward, slowly, as if to not draw attention to itself.

When he reaches her breast, she abruptly pulls away.

JENNIFER

Don't.

BILLY

Sorry.

JENNIFER  
I told you not to...

BILLY  
(miffed)  
I said I'm sorry.

JENNIFER  
I'm just not ready.

BILLY  
They're doing it in the movie.

JENNIFER  
That's in movies. And they're  
adults.

Billy looks down at his erection.

BILLY  
I'm an "adult".

She rolls her eyes at his stupid joke.

JENNIFER  
It's getting late, I gotta go.

BILLY  
Jen?

She looks down at him. He's holding his hands up in the open-palmed "no weapons" gesture.

She eyes him with theatrical wariness. He holds the pose, so she leans forward till their lips are just a breath apart.

JENNIFER  
No sudden moves.

A cautious kiss.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)  
Good night.

Jennifer turns to see a close up of the beautiful actress's face in ecstasy and her boyfriend's hands roving her body. Billy and Jennifer's expressions show that they understand the paradox and contradiction.

And off Jennifer goes.

INT. INDOOR SHOPPING MALL - DAY

The sprawling dining area of the food court. We DESCEND into the crowd and settle on...

BILLY AND THREE OF HIS FRIENDS, sitting around a cluttered table. They're fourteen and checking out girls: MARTIN still has baby fat, KEN is gangly, while STAN is the most attractive and knows it.

Their girl watching is accompanied by a running commentary.

KEN  
(pointing)  
No, the other one, in the mini.

MARTIN  
Where? I still don't see...

STAN  
So-so face, but a great ass.

MARTIN  
Where?!

STAN  
Above her legs, you idiot.

MARTIN  
No, I mean...

LAUGHTER drowns out his protest. Ken takes a picture of the girl with his camera phone.

BILLY  
Anyone else still hungry?

KEN  
Not for food.

Billy gets up and walks away. Ken spots another GIRL.

KEN (CONT'D)  
Jesus, are those pants or spray  
paint?

He takes another picture.

MARTIN  
Send me a copy.

AT A NEARBY BASKIN ROBBINS, Billy buys a triple-scoop strawberry ice cream cone. He starts eating while the change is still dropping into his palm.

From behind him:

IRENE (O.S.)  
Any good?

He turns and sees her. With fashion model hair and makeup, she's now party girl sexy in a little black dress, again, heavy on cleavage. A gold locket dangles between her breasts:

IRENE

BILLY

What?

IRENE

The ice cream. How is it?

BILLY

Uh...good.

IRENE

May I?

Before he can respond, she takes his hand and pulls the cone toward her, her lips moving in to meet it.

As she takes a bite, she looks directly into the boy's startled eyes.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Mmmmm, you're right. Thank you.

She releases his hand, her body still within his personal space. He stammers out a response.

BILLY

You're welcome.

She glides past him to the counter and quietly orders. Billy wanders away, slightly dazed.

BACK AT THE TABLE

STAN

(to Martin)

No, I'm serious, you gotta check it out. Girls' gymnastics is a guaranteed hard-on.

KEN

He's right. They're half naked, bouncing up'n down, doing splits...

Billy walks up to the table.

BILLY

You guys'll never believe what just ha...

MARTIN

Gazongas, ten o'clock.

Ignored, Billy sits down and eats his ice cream.

KEN

God, they're bigger than her head.

He takes another picture.

STAN  
But she's fat.

MARTIN  
(incredulous)  
She is not!

KEN  
I wouldn't kick her outta bed.

STAN  
No, you couldn't, cause she's fat!  
You'd have to roll her off.

MARTIN  
Whoa!

STAN  
What?

They all follow Martin's gaze.

Irene approaches, carrying a tray with a single cup of strawberry ice cream. Her eyes scan for a suitable table.

STAN (CONT'D)  
(softly)  
Now that's more like it.

The boys quietly watch her, ever more furtively the closer she gets. Ken's camera phone creeps discreetly up above the edge of the table for a quick shot.

Irene stops nearby and looks around for a place to sit, seemingly oblivious to their presence.

Then she looks straight at them. They quickly avert their eyes.

Her eyes lock onto Billy like claws, just for a couple of seconds, but long enough to start him squirming in his chair.

She smiles warmly.

IRENE  
Hi.

BILLY  
Hi.

She continues on her way. They watch her go.

She glances back over her shoulder-- caught, they study the table.

As soon as she's out of earshot:

STAN

Wow, great eye contact.

KEN

She musta thought you were someone else.

BILLY

No, I just met her at the Baskin...

MAN

You know her?!

BILLY

Well, kinda. She, um...licked my ice cream.

THAT gets their attention.

KEN

She what?

BILLY

Licked my ice crea...

MARTIN

No way! Why would she do that?

BILLY

I dunno.

STAN

Did you ask her out?

BILLY

(startled)

What? No!

STAN

Major fuck up. How many hints did you need?

BILLY

In case you haven't noticed, she's gotta have ten years on me.

KEN

Eight tops.

Irene settles at a table thirty feet away, then pulls a paperback novel from her purse. Eating ice cream, she starts to read.

STAN

So ask her out now.

BILLY

I can't do that.

MARTIN

Why not?

BILLY

(searching for a reason)

'Cause I'm goin' out with Jenny.

STAN

Oh Jesus, by the time she puts out...

STAN (CONT'D)

(indicating Irene)

She is hot, and, God knows why, she seems to like you. But, hey, if you wanna wimp out...

BILLY

(annoyed)

'scuse me, I'm not wimping...

STAN

(softens his tone)

C'mon, some friendly advice. Just give it a try. The worst she can do is say no. It's not like you'll be dead.

KEN

(under his breath)

You'll just wish you were.

They all stare at Billy expectantly, they barely stifle a cheer as he STANDS UP.

BILLY

Save my seat.

MARTIN

Can I have your ice cream?

He hands Martin the cone. Stan gives Billy a push.

STAN

Make us proud.

Conscious of their eyes on his back, he walks toward Irene with a slight swagger. His lips move as he quietly tests and discards opening lines.

When he's almost upon her, he forces a relaxed expression onto his face.

She looks up from her novel.

IRENE

Yes?

Strategies evaporate as his feigned composure crumbles. He searches for words, then points at the bowl.

BILLY  
How is it?

IRENE  
Good.

She scoops up and eats the last bite, then licks the spoon. During this awkward pause, Billy searches for another topic.

He notices the GOTHIC ROMANCE in her hand. On the cover, a beautiful woman in a low-cut gown is embraced by a handsome aristocrat. They're on the edge of a cliff, waves crashing below. The title is "DREAD DESIRE."

BILLY  
Uh, any good?

IRENE  
What?

BILLY  
The book.

IRENE  
It's okay. Why, do you want to read it?

BILLY  
Well, if it's any...no, not really.

IRENE  
That's good. It's not really for guys.

She extends her hand.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Debbi. With an "I".

He shakes it, his confidence growing.

BILLY  
Billy. Also with an "I."

IRENE  
(she laughs)  
Nice to meet you, Billy. Or do you prefer Bill? Or William?

BILLY  
No, Billy's okay. So...did your parents name you that?

IRENE  
I chose it myself. And you?

BILLY  
Me? What?

IRENE  
Did you alter your own name?

BILLY  
Did I...? No, I was just kidding.

His awkwardness returns.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
The I's not at the end. It's sorta,  
y'know, in the middle. Like normal.

IRENE  
Okay.

She rises swiftly to her feet, catching Billy off guard. She puts the book in her purse.

BILLY  
You leaving?

IRENE  
Yes.

BILLY  
(crestfallen)  
Oh. Well...bye.

She offers her hand again. He shakes it lethargically.

But she doesn't let go.

IRENE  
Billy?

BILLY  
Yes?

IRENE  
Come with me.

For a moment, her words hang in the air between them, not sinking in. But when they do, his eyes go wide.

BILLY  
You mean...want me to...

IRENE  
Come...with me. Yes.

Her gaze intense and inviting, her thumb lightly strokes the back of his hand.

BILLY  
I, uh...yeah, sure.

She starts to walk, all but pulling the surprised boy along.

THIRTY FEET AWAY

His friends stare, dumbfounded.

KEN  
I don't believe it.

STAN  
This is fuckin' weird.

MARTIN  
Jealous?

STAN  
Yeah, right. It's just weird, is all.

KEN  
Think he paid her?

Irene and Billy, now arm in arm, walk toward an exit.

While Irene seems oblivious to the stares of passersby, Billy glories in them, the envy of other boys, the competitive interest from the girls.

She leads him from the mall.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The stolen car moves through the city.

INT. CAR

Billy and Irene look straight ahead, she intent on her driving, he on his nervousness.

He sneaks a peek at her from the corner of his eye, she returns his glance. They both smile, then look away.

BILLY  
We almost there?

IRENE  
Be patient.

BILLY  
(amused)  
I can handle it, thanks.

They drive in silence. After several moments, Billy notices that the buildings are thinning out as they approach the edge of town.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Um, where're we going, Debby?

IRENE

My name's Irene.

BILLY

(a long pause)

Irene?

IRENE

Yes?

BILLY

Where're we going?

IRENE

Do I look familiar?

BILLY

What do you mean?

IRENE

I just...feel like we've met before.

BILLY

You mean, like, at the mall?

IRENE

Wherever.

BILLY

I dunno, maybe.

He takes a hard look at her.

BILLY (CONT'D)

No, I think I woulda remembered you.

She can barely mask her disappointment.

IRENE

Then I guess we didn't. My mistake.

Billy is confused and fighting a growing sense of unease.

His eyes drift to the passing landscape. The town has given way entirely to wheat fields.

With a mental jolt, Billy realizes that something is very wrong.

He tries to feign "casual", but the panic in his voice grows steadily.

BILLY

I have to go home now.

IRENE

What? No, you don't.

BILLY

No, really, I do. I hafta get home right away. For dinner. Maybe we should just turn around, okay?

IRENE

But we're almost there.

BILLY

No, it's too far. Just take me home. If I'm late, my parents'll get pissed and ground me and...

Irene JAMS on the brakes and the car skids to a stop on the shoulder.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Hey, what're you d...

As the car rocks in place, she LUNGES at him-- he jerks back - her lips crush against his, silencing him.

They slide down onto the seat, Irene on top, her chest pressing against him, her hands grasping the sides of his head as her tongue probes his mouth.

His struggles are short-lived as terror gives way to instinct -- gradually, he becomes a full participant, kissing her back with equal passion.

When her lips finally pull an inch away:

IRENE

You're right. If you come with me, your parents will be pissed.

Billy lets out a gasp when her hand closes on his crotch.

IRENE (CONT'D)

But it'll be worth it.

Her eyes lock on his, she slowly backs away till she's upright behind the wheel.

As she pulls the car back onto the highway, he watches her, excited, confused, hungry.

CUT TO:

EXT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - DUSK

The decaying house stands alone in the middle of nowhere: two stories of peeling paint and rotting wood rising out of a weed-choked lawn. There are no other homes nearby, just neglected fields that stretch to the horizon in every direction.

The sense of desolation is heightened by the red glow of the setting sun.

Irene's car speeds towards the house on a disintegrating road that becomes the driveway. Just shy of the garage, it jolts to a stop.

INT. CAR

Numbed by the long drive, neither Billy nor Irene make a move to get out. They look at the house. Her face hints at fear.

BILLY  
You live here?

She doesn't reply. She digs through her purse, then nervously fixes her makeup in the rear view mirror.

EXT. RICHARD'S PORCH - A MINUTE LATER

They approach the house, Irene with her duffel bag.

As they step onto the porch, the sight of the front door causes her to freeze. An odd pause.

BILLY  
Are we going in?

IRENE  
(snaps out of it)  
Uh, yeah. Of course.

From behind the door, UNSTEADY FOOTSTEPS APPROACH. Her stress seems to grow with each one.

As the knob turns, she forces a make believe smile. The door opens, revealing...

RICHARD

A worn out drunk in a bathrobe. Though only fifty, alcohol has carved ten extra years on his face. He doesn't recognize these people on his porch.

RICHARD  
Whattaya want?

IRENE  
Hello, Daddy.

Billy is startled.

But Richard is stunned. He just stares at her, glassy-eyed with shock, swaying as if in a strong wind.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Can we come in?

Richard SHUTS the door in her face.

He might as well have stabbed her.

She closes her eyes and swallows hard, as if fighting back tears.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
He's, um...

She takes a deep breath, steels herself, then opens the door. They see Richard wandering away, as if lost in his own house.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Daddy?

Fearfully, he turns to face them.

RICHARD  
You're gonna make trouble.

IRENE  
No, I won't. I promise.

She steps INSIDE. Billy hesitates, then follows.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - FOYER

IRENE  
Surprised to see me?

RICHARD  
No. Why are you here?

IRENE  
We need a place to stay.

Richard eyes Billy. His tone turns sarcastic.

RICHARD  
Oh, I get it. Like somewhere the maid won't walk in on ya'. And I thought you came to see yer ol' man.

IRENE

I did. I mean, just for a little while, I promise.

RICHARD

Hey, you're my little girl. What's mine is yours.

He heads for the den.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Up the stairs, door on the left. Do your own laundry, this ain't a motel.

IRENE

But, wait...

RICHARD

What, do you want me to carry your bag?

She holds the duffel bag out to Billy.

IRENE

Could you take this on up? I'll be along in a minute.

Billy starts to answer, but he can think of no response to express his confusion.

He takes the bag and carries it up the stairs. Irene watches him disappear onto the landing, then:

IRENE (CONT'D)

Daddy, I just want you to know how happy I am to see you ag...

Richard cuts her off with a sharp LAUGH.

IRENE (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

He reaches out and taps the tip of her nose.

RICHARD

Still a loon.

She's alone. Her face scrunches up, fighting back tears. She turns and runs up the stairs.

INT. IRENE AND BILLY'S BEDROOM

Billy fidgets nervously with the drapes as he watches the sun disappear below the horizon.

Irene rushes in, closes the door, then sags against it, tears streaming. Though in her direct line of vision, she doesn't seem to see him.

BILLY

Irene?

She sees him. A small smile and a sniffle as she wipes her eyes.

IRENE

Hi.

BILLY

Hi...what's wrong?

Her smile broadens eerily. She starts toward him, PICKING UP SPEED as she closes in.

IRENE

Not a thing.

She's on him like a wave, overwhelming him with a passion that's almost desperate.

IRENE (CONT'D)

God, I've missed you so much.

She kisses him furiously as she guides him backward toward the bed. The back of his knees meet the edge, and they TUMBLE OVER.

INT. IRENE AND BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moments after sex, Billy flops onto his back in a tangle of sheets, naked, covered with sweat, gasping for breath.

Irene, also naked (save for her locket), crawls into view and nestles beside him. Glowing with happiness, she watches his face, savoring the moment.

IRENE

Y'know, it's lucky we met.

He laughs/gasps his agreement.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I mean it. Do you know what the odds are against two people meeting?

BILLY

Mmm-mmm.

IRENE

Astronomical. I mean, we're only, like, ten years apart.  
(MORE)

IRENE (CONT'D)

That's nothing. What if we'd been born thirty years apart? Fifty. A hundred.

Her voice softens hypnotically as she gently strokes his hair.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Think about it. There are people who should have been together, but were born thousands of years apart, or in different parts of the world.

Whatever force compels men to pass out after sex now tugs at Billy. His eyelids grow heavy.

IRENE (CONT'D)

It just breaks my heart that these people, who should have been allowed to share their lives...never got to meet. They didn't even know the other one existed. And all the love in the world couldn't bring them together. Don't you see? Don't you see how lucky we are that we even met? Like Vili and Mary Kay.

(a pause)

Billy?

She studies his sleeping face. She moves her lips close to his ear and whispers directly into his subconscious.

IRENE (CONT'D)

No one will ever love you like I do.

She kisses him gently, then slips quietly out of bed.

INT. RICHARD'S DEN - NIGHT

The room is in darkness, except for one lamp on a table. It's sphere of light barely includes Richard sitting in a leather chair.

He's asleep. Or unconscious. A magazine lies open on his lap. On a nearby table, a vodka bottle and a half-eaten TV dinner.

Irene, dressed in a robe, steps cautiously out of the darkness, carrying an uncomfortable looking wooden chair. She sets it gently down and lowers onto it. Silence, broken only by the TICKING of GRANDFATHER clock.

IRENE

Daddy?

(a beat, louder)

Are you awake?

His eyes struggle open. He seems confused, studying her face as though it were a painting.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You okay?

He's startled when he realizes she's not just a dream. He starts to speak, but no words come to him. Instead, his gaze darts to the magazine and he pretends to read.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I just came down to say good night.

RICHARD

'night.

An awkward pause. He spears a meatball from the tray and eats it.

IRENE

You don't have to eat that stuff. I can cook it for you.

RICHARD

Cooking just makes a mess.

IRENE

So I'll clean up.

RICHARD

That's okay. This suits me fine.

IRENE

But...

RICHARD

(annoyed)  
I'm fine.  
(in the tense silence, he  
turns grudgingly cordial)  
Would you like some?

IRENE

No, thanks... Do you miss her?

RICHARD

(momentarily taken aback)  
No, I...I mean, what's the point?  
It won't bring her back.

IRENE

But you think about her.

RICHARD

I try not to.

He stabs the last meatball a little too hard. Before he can get it to his mouth, she picks up the aluminum tray.

IRENE  
Here, lemme just...

His hand lashes out and grabs her wrist.

RICHARD  
Leave it!

IRENE  
I was just...

RICHARD  
I said...leave it. Can take care of  
myself.  
(He releases her)  
Since you ran off, I'm what you'd  
call self sufficient.

Rubbing her wrist, she speaks in a whisper.

IRENE  
I'm sorry!

RICHARD  
Yeah, well...

They sit for a moment in the gloom, then she wearily starts to get up. His now calm voice stops her:

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
But I guess we could put that  
behind us.

She lowers back into her chair, suddenly hopeful.

IRENE  
Yes, we can.

RICHARD  
I mean, you would've left  
eventually. That's what children  
do.

IRENE  
But I came back. We could maybe,  
you know, start over. Try again.

RICHARD  
(a thoughtful beat)  
Maybe.  
(He returns to his  
magazine)  
You look tired, Irene. You should  
get some sleep.

She gets up, barely able to contain her joy.

IRENE  
I will. Thank you.

She impulsively kisses him on the forehead, then walks into the...

INT. DARKNESS

IRENE (O.S.)  
Billy, wake up. I'm lonely.

INT. DREAM SEQUENCE

IRENE'S locket looms HUGE before our eyes.

IRENE (O.S.)  
Wanna see something pretty?

Light dances off the gold front plate as fingertips pry it open, revealing...

INT. IRENE AND BILLY'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

DRAPES SLIDE OPEN LOUDLY...

...and SUNLIGHT washes over Billy's face, ending his DREAM. He wakes up squinting.

IRENE (O.S.)  
Breakfast.

BILLY  
Whuh?

She sits on the edge of the bed. Her dress and hair are now subdued, though vaguely reminiscent of a TV style 1950s housewife. She tousles his hair.

IRENE  
Time to get up.

BILLY  
(half asleep)  
Jus' five more minutes, 'kay?

IRENE  
Okay. Come on down when you're ready.

She kisses him on the forehead, then leaves. He sinks back into sleep.

His eyes pop open. He bolts upright.

BILLY  
I am in so much fuckin' trouble.

IRENE  
(cheerful)  
Good morning to you, too.

He paces frantically back and forth. His panic is balanced by her calm.

BILLY  
I'm screwed. I mean really screwed.

IRENE  
Relax...

BILLY  
You've gotta take me home. I mean, like, right now?

IRENE  
(mock pouting)  
You don't want to stay with me?

This stops him in his tracks.

BILLY  
I...well yeah, of course I...I mean, I don't want to leave, I just...

IRENE  
Then don't.

BILLY  
What're you, crazy? Please, if you just drive me home right now, maybe they won't be so...Jesus, what am I talking about? Overnight?

IRENE  
It's true, you're in a lot of trouble.

BILLY  
Oh shit.

IRENE  
I mean, it's not like you'll be in more trouble if you stay longer.

BILLY  
Trust me, they'll think of something. Jesus, they're gonna ground me for life.

She walks slowly, seductively toward him.

IRENE  
 No, they won't. Just tell 'em you  
 were kidnapped.

At first her words don't register.

BILLY  
 God, I wish I were dead. Hell, I am  
 de...  
 (he stops cold)  
 ...What?

Her face glides to within an inch of his. She looks into his eyes and gives him a long passionate KISS. Then:

IRENE  
 When you get back...  
 (kiss)  
 ...just tell them...  
 (kiss)  
 ...you were kidnapped...  
 (kiss)  
 ...but got away. You can stay as  
 long as you like...  
 (kiss)  
 ...then go home. It's perfect.

BILLY  
 But...they'll never believe me.

IRENE  
 Sure they will. The world's full of  
 psychos stealing kids these days.  
 (the best kiss yet)  
 Please don't leave yet.

BILLY  
 I gotta think about this.

IRENE  
 You can think while you eat.

With what seems a real effort, she turns away from him.

INT. KITCHEN

Billy is standing at the dining room table.

Irene sets a plate of eggs on the table.

Billy hesitates, then sits.

Richard enters, sluggish and bleary-eyed.

Irene's expression turns cautiously hopeful, while Billy guiltily averts his face from the man whose daughter he just slept with.

IRENE  
Good morning. Breakfast?

With a GROAN, Richard lowers himself into a chair.

RICHARD  
Those eggs look good. Got anymore?

IRENE  
(pleased)  
Sure.

She gets her own plate and brings it to him. As she sets it down, she kisses him on the forehead.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
I'll just make some more.

She returns to the stove.

Richard reaches across the table and takes Irene's fork.

He and Billy eat quietly, not looking at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Billy's parents (FRANK and BETTY) sit in wooden chairs, holding hands. They're exhausted, physically and emotionally.

Across from them, DETECTIVE LANSDALE is at her desk, calmly jotting notes on a missing persons report. She's been through this a thousand times.

LANSDALE  
Any recent custody battles?  
Disgruntled ex-husbands or wives?

FRANK  
No.

LANSDALE  
Any arguments between either of you  
and the boy?

FRANK AND BETTY  
(in unison)  
No.

BETTY  
He wouldn't run away.

LANSDALE  
When fourteen-year-olds go missing,  
it usually turns out to be  
voluntary.  
(MORE)

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

And they're usually back in a day or two. He could be waiting for you at home right now.

BETTY

But it's not something he would do.

LANSDALE

Is there anything causing more than usual stress in his life? Pressures at school, a fight or breakup with a girlfriend?

FRANK

Jennifer? Last time we saw them, they seemed fine.

LANSDALE

Is she missing?

BETTY

No.

FRANK

They're both pretty responsible.

LANSDALE

At that age, certain things can cloud their thinking.

BETTY

Please, detective, it's not just some...I know something's wrong. When I call his friends, a couple of them seemed...evasive, like they were covering for him. Maybe if you talked to them, they'd take this seriously.

LANSDALE

Yeah, probably. But like I said, he'll most likely be home soon.

Betty starts to object, but Lansdale raises her hand for quiet.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

And if he's not back by, say, eight tomorrow morning, give me a call and I'll go talk to those friends. Deal?

Betty looks to Frank, then gives the detective a reluctant nod.

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

Irene rummages through Richard's CLOSET. Billy waits nearby without a shirt, that "kid forced to try on new clothes" look on his face.

BILLY  
Maybe we shouldn't be messin' with  
his stuff.

IRENE  
He won't mind.

WE PULL BACK to reveal RICHARD, concealed just outside the open bedroom door. He looks like he minds.

She hands Billy an out-of-style shirt.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Here, try this on.

BILLY  
I prefer my clothes.

IRENE  
Gotta wash 'em sometime. Unless you  
wanna run around naked.

BILLY  
I will if you will.

She looks at Billy. A couple of sly grins.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY AND IRENE'S BEDROOM --- A SHORT WHILE LATER

Billy and Irene thrash about under the covers.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Richard, Irene and Billy sit around the table, quietly eating lunch. Richard reads, the newspaper hiding his face from the "young lovers".

They flirt as they eat, trading shy smiles and meaningful glances.

With sudden concern, she reaches out and touches his chin.

IRENE  
You have a scar.

BILLY

What? Oh, yeah, I got it when I was ten.

IRENE

What happened?

They both reach for the salt. Their hands touch, then pull away politely, each yielding to the other. She goes first.

BILLY

Well, we set up this board as a ramp, then tried to see who could jump their bike the highest.

IRENE

And who did?

BILLY

Uh, me. I just didn't land right.

She gives him the salt. Their fingertips meet again, this time lingering around the shaker.

IRENE

But you went the highest.

BILLY

Yeah.

IRENE

Cool.

Richard lowers the paper, finally revealing his face.

RICHARD

Excuse me, would anyone mind if I threw up?

Hands withdraw as Billy and Irene shrink into embarrassment.

IRENE

Sorry.

RICHARD

Hey, no problem. I'll just clear the table so that you can have sex on it.

Humiliated, she fights back tears.

IRENE

I said I'm sorry, it won't happen a...

RICHARD

I'm kidding.

In the stunned silence, he grins.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Jesus, young people can be so  
serious.

He SNAPS the newspaper straight between his hands and returns to his reading.

Irene forces a LAUGH, then returns to her food, shaken, feigning calm.

Billy watches, his expression guarded.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Irene is bent over in front of the open dryer, pulling out warm clothes.

Billy appears in the doorway behind her. He stops and his eyes settle on her ass.

She continues working with a slight smile, aware of his presence, but not letting on. As she stands up and reaches for a hanger, she "notices" him.

IRENE  
Oh, hi.

BILLY  
Hi. Need any help?

IRENE  
Nah. Thanks anyway.

She resumes her work. He hangs out to watch.

As she stands on tiptoe to fold a sheet, he admires her stretch.

As she rolls socks into balls, he watches her breasts shift in her blouse.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
I swear, you're like a kid with a  
new toy.

BILLY  
(innocent)  
What?

IRENE  
I gotta do the chores sometime.

BILLY  
I know.

IRENE  
 If you're bored, go watch TV.  
 That's gotta be more fun than  
 watching me clean.

He starts to object, but she cuts him off.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
 Later. I promise.

With a petulant SIGH, he leaves.

WE FOLLOW BILLY as he walks out into...

INT. FOYER

Then he hesitates, confused, just now he realizing that he doesn't know where the television is.

Across the foyer is a closed door. He crosses to it, opens it and steps into...

INT. RICHARD'S DEN

He stops in his tracks.

Richard sits in his chair, reading a book. His eyes flick up at the intrusion, then quickly back to the page.

BILLY  
 Uh, where's the TV?

RICHARD  
 In that cabinet. But, as you can see, the room is in use.

BILLY  
 Oh. Sorry.

Billy spots the bookshelf on the wall behind Richard. He gestures toward it.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
 Mind if I grab myself a...

Richard SLAMS shut the HARDCOVER.

RICHARD  
 Just...!

The man struggles to rein in his anger. He takes a deep breath.

Then, ignoring the startled boy, he re-opens the book, noisily flipping pages.

BILLY  
Do you have Internet. Or Skype? Or  
an iPad...?

Richard grimaces. Billy can take a hint. He stalks  
indignantly from the room, SLAMMING the door behind him.

INT. FOYER - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Billy, looking bored, lounges on the stairs.

Irene enters from the laundry room, her basket loaded with  
clean clothes. Billy watches her approach like a dog watching  
meat.

She stops at the foot of the stairs and returns his gaze,  
noting his lust. She SIGHS, then gives him a knowing smile.

IRENE  
C'mon, let's go.

She starts toward the kitchen. With a grin, he gets up and  
struts after her.

INT. KITCHEN

As Billy enters, she puts the basket down and pulls a pan  
from the cupboard.

IRENE  
Time to make yourself useful.

He lets out a groan.

BILLY  
I knew this was coming.

IRENE  
What?

BILLY  
Chores.

IRENE  
Not really.

BILLY  
So, what, you want me to mow the  
lawn? Paint the house?

IRENE  
I'd like you to read to me.

BILLY  
Excuse me?

IRENE  
It'll help pass the time while I do chores.

BILLY  
You're serious.

She pulls "Dread Desire" from her pocket and offers it to him.

IRENE  
C'mon, it would make me happy.

Grudgingly, he takes the book.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

She starts to make dinner. He opens to the bookmark and reads aloud.

BILLY  
Shaundra's hair, fanning out like  
angel's wings across the pillow,  
shimmered in the firelight.

He stops, eyes rolling in disbelief.

IRENE  
Humor me.

BILLY  
(a sigh)  
Her eyes glittered like opals,  
misting over with love and desire  
at the vision of his sculptured  
body, now revealed. As the Count  
lowered himself upon her, he  
reached for the heaving neckline of  
her taut bodice...

INT. FOYER - EARLY EVENING

Richard comes out of the den, headed toward the kitchen. He stops at the SOUND of LAUGHTER.

Across the foyer, Billy backs out through the kitchen door.

BILLY  
So you want me to wait near the  
bed?

IRENE (O.S.)  
No, in the bed.

BILLY  
Right. I'll be under the bed.

When he spins around and sees Richard, the boy's grin disappears.

An awkward beat, then Billy races up the stairs.

INT. KITCHEN

Irene's at the counter, HUMMING as she puts the finishing touches on a FANCY DINNER. Two of the three plates are sitting on a SERVING TRAY with drinks and CANDLES.

As Richard comes in behind her, she strikes a match and starts to light them.

RICHARD  
Smells good.

IRENE  
(happy to see him)  
Oh, hi. I was just gonna call you.

He looks at the elaborate setup on the tray, then at the SINGLE place setting on the table.

RICHARD  
What's goin' on?

IRENE  
Me'n Billy are having a little picnic upstairs. Our one day anniversary.

She grins at the idea. One more candle to go.

RICHARD  
So...I have to eat alone?

Irene stops cold, her good humor evaporating in the sudden chill. She's unsure if she just screwed up.

IRENE  
Uh, just for one night.

A nervous glance at her stone-faced father reveals little.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
I mean...if it's okay with you.

The forgotten MATCH BURNS her fingers.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Ow.

It falls with a HISS into a water glass.

He stares at her, impossible to read. Yet betrayal seems to hang in the air.

She strikes another match, lighting the last candle with a trembling hand.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
 We, um...I mean, we don't have to.  
 We could eat down here if you like,  
 the three of...

RICHARD  
 No, not necessary.

IRENE  
 It's really no troub...

RICHARD  
 (abrupt)  
 Don't.

She carefully puts her father's heaping plate on the table, then pulls out his chair for him. He doesn't sit.

IRENE  
 You sure it's okay?

RICHARD  
 (a dismissive shrug)  
 Go on.

Truly shaken, she picks up the serving tray.

IRENE  
 'kay.

She goes out the door, leaving him standing there.

INT. FOYER

At the base of the stairs, she glances back at the kitchen. Through the doorway, she can still see her father.

He picks up his DINNER...

And drops the ENTIRE PLATE into the GARBAGE CAN.

If Richard hears his daughter GASP, he ignores it as he pulls a TV dinner from the freezer.

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Lit only by moonlight, Richard sits in a chair, a half-empty vodka bottle beside him.

The SOUND of SEX FILTERS THROUGH THE WALL.

He doesn't move. He just listens.

His eyes are cold.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Irene scrambles eggs. She YELLS at the ceiling:

IRENE  
Daddy?! Breakfast!!

Billy lounges at the table and reads aloud from "Dread Desire". He seems to be getting into it, his performance now dramatic and committed.

BILLY  
...was a cruel man, chiseled out of  
ice. How could she love such a man?

Irene shovels the eggs onto three plates, then puts them on the table. Billy doesn't notice.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
One whose empire was built on the  
shattered lives of those who dared  
oppose him. Whose bed was forever  
moist with the tears of discarded  
lovers.

IRENE  
DADDY!!

Disappointed, she puts a metal lid over Richard's food to keep it warm. She sits.

BILLY  
And yet, despite this, or perhaps  
because of it, he stirred yearnings  
in her that she dared not ig...

She reaches across the table and shuts the book.

IRENE  
You can't read'n eat at the same  
time.

BILLY  
Sorry.

He starts to eat. She watches him expectantly.

IRENE  
Wanna talk?

BILLY  
Sure. 'bout what?

IRENE  
Anything.

He thinks hard, then comes up with something.

BILLY  
Are there any songs you like?  
Y'know, groups you listen to?

IRENE  
(thinks about it)  
Not really.

BILLY  
Oh.

A beat.

IRENE  
Are there some you think I should  
like?

BILLY  
Sure, there's...well, actually,  
with music you kinda have to hear  
it and decide for yourself.

IRENE  
Then that's what I'll do. I'll buy  
some music you like and listen to  
it.

BILLY  
Okay. Are you going to download it?

IRENE  
(oblivious)  
Just write down what you want, and  
I'll pick 'em up after the  
groceries.

BILLY  
Good deal.

IRENE  
Good.

Their conversation dies out. In the silence, each searches for another topic. Nothing comes to mind. They eat.

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

From his second floor window, Richard watches Irene DRIVE AWAY in her stolen car.

INT. BILLY AND IRENE'S BEDROOM

Short of sleep, Billy is taking a nap.

The CLICK of a LIGHTER startles him awake.

Richard stands at the foot of the bed, lighting a cigar.

Billy sits up quickly, wary.

BILLY  
She's not here.

Richard says nothing. He just smokes and watches the boy.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
When she gets back, I'll tell her  
you were looking for her.

RICHARD  
So, young man, what are your  
intentions?

BILLY  
Whaddaya mean?

He takes a puff and ambles toward Billy, who's sitting nervously on the edge of the bed.

RICHARD  
I mean, for my daughter. Since  
you're fucking her...  
(puffs)  
...you should marry her.

Now uncomfortably close, Richard blows a smoke ring over Billy's head.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Unless you'd rather she adopt you.

BILLY  
What do you want?

RICHARD  
(smiles)  
I'm sorry, just playin' with ya.  
You hungry?

BILLY  
What? Uh, no. I just had breakfast.

RICHARD  
But I didn't. Wanna keep me  
company?

The boy clearly doesn't, but says nothing.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
I'll take that as a yes. C'mon.

He starts towards the door. When Billy doesn't follow:

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
(overly cheerful)  
C'mon!

INT. KITCHEN

Billy lowers cautiously into a chair.

Richard sets a tall drinking glass before the boy and fills it half with ORANGE JUICE, half with VODKA.

RICHARD  
Enjoy.

Richard opens the fridge and pulls out some baloney.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Sandwiches okay?

BILLY  
Sure, whatever.

Billy tastes the drink, seems okay. He takes a couple of gulps like you would plain orange juice.

Richard eyes the boy's progress, barely restraining a smile as he flops meat onto Wonderbread.

He places two sandwiches on the table, then casually "freshens" the boy's half-empty glass.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
Thanks.

RICHARD  
You're welcome.

Richard pours himself a straight drink, then falls into a nearby chair and takes a sip.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Mmm. I remember the first time I got laid. How old are you Billy?

BILLY  
Fourteen.

RICHARD  
Well, I was thirteen. No, twelve.  
Amy Galloway was her name. An older woman. High school. And gorgeous, coulda dated college guys.  
(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

So we're watching TV, right? Just making out. All of a sudden, she unzips my pants, says she wants to give me a blow job.

(he relights his cigar)  
Mind if I smoke?

BILLY

No.

RICHARD

Would you like one?

BILLY

(a beat)  
No, thank you.

Richard chuckles quietly, then draws deeply. Billy drinks.

RICHARD

Where was I?

BILLY

(loosening up)  
She unzipped your fly.

RICHARD

Oh yeah. So she unzips my fly, right? Then she, like, lunges at it with her mouth open. Well, all I see are teeth and braces. I'm completely freaked out. Looked like she was coming at my dick with a fucking bear trap.

Billy LAUGHS so hard, screwdriver spews from his mouth.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Don't squirt it through your nose, you'll burn yourself.

Between the alcohol and laughing, the boy can barely speak.

BILLY

I remember my first time...I was ten.

They both crack up.

Then Richard's smile fades. He seems to be studying Billy.

RICHARD

Y'know, things woulda been so much simpler if I'd had a son.

He draws on the cigar and the tip glows red.

EXT. RICHARD'S FRONT YARD - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Richard and Billy, both wearing catcher's mitts, toss a BASEBALL back and forth across the lawn.

They're drunk, so they don't do it very well.

RICHARD

...and that's why you should always be dating two girls.

BILLY

Like a spare?

RICHARD

A back-up, exactly.

BILLY

But what if they find out about each other?

RICHARD

Then they'll both dump you, which is why you should always be fucking a third. But that's another lesson. The point is, you're too young to be tied down to one woman. I mean, Irene's cute'n all, but you could do better.

BILLY

(incredulous)

Are you nuts? She's gorgeous!

RICHARD

Okay, granted, she's hot. But you gotta admit she's a little... strange.

BILLY

Wonder where she got that from?

RICHARD

Touche.

He throws the ball at Billy a little too hard. It hits the leather with a THWACK.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

The point is, a good looking kid like you could, with a little confidence, be up to his ass in gorgeous girls. I'm sure your schools full of them.

Their aim seems to be improving as the ball hurtles between them with ever greater force.

BILLY  
Damn right. And, y'know, getting  
'em to go out with you ain't that  
hard.

RICHARD  
I rest my case.

BILLY  
The hard part is getting them to  
have SEX WITH YOU! Freshman girls  
don't put out!

Working himself into a righteous anger, Billy hurls the ball  
at Richard - THWACK.

RICHARD  
Then why are they always getting  
pregnant, huh? They gotta be  
fucking someone.

He hurls it back - THWACK.

BILLY  
Yeah, the football team. The really  
cute ones are doin' Seniors. Or  
older.

RICHARD  
Some things never change. Still, we  
already know you can attract older  
woman.

BILLY  
(a beat)  
Do you think that Irene would take  
me home?

RICHARD  
Why don't you ask her?

BILLY  
I think that she would say no.

RICHARD  
Well if you try to walk home son,  
you'll probably die. There's  
nothing around here for twenty  
miles. And it can get pretty cold  
at night and the snow is coming.

BILLY  
Could I ask you to take me home?

RICHARD  
You could ask...

Billy heaves the ball way too hard and Richard trails off as he watches it arc up over his head. Toward the house.

It SMASHES through a WINDOW.

Billy's cockiness freezes into fear.

Richard slowly returns his unblinking gaze to the boy. They stare at each other for several excruciating moments.

Then Richard grins.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Guess we'll have to finish the game  
inside.

CUT TO:

INT. FRELAINE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Frank and Betty on the couch, Detective Lansdale in a chair.

LANSDALE  
You were right, they were covering  
for him. Billy was last seen  
leaving the mall about four-thirty.  
With a young woman.

BETTY  
Not Jennifer?

LANSDALE  
No. The boys didn't know who she  
was. Neither did Billy, it seems.

FRANK  
Maybe she goes to another school.

LANSDALE  
Listen, I don't want to alarm you,  
but when I say a young woman, I  
mean mid-twenties.

BETTY  
An adult?

LANSDALE  
I'm afraid so.

She pulls two photographs from an envelope and lays them on the table.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)  
I hope these aren't too blurry.  
This one's a still from mall  
surveillance.  
(MORE)

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

And this is from his friend's camera phone. Do you know who she is?

BETTY

I...God, she looks so familiar. But I just can't...

Frank's expression turns dark as he recognizes her.

FRANK

Oh shit. It's *her*.

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

The front door swings open for Irene. Arms loaded with groceries, she struggles the key out of the lock.

IRENE

Billy?!!

From upstairs, an ADOLESCENT LAUGH, then Richard's voice.

RICHARD (O.S.)

You can do it, boy. I have faith in you.

She bumps the door closed with her hip and carries the bags toward the kitchen.

IRENE

Honey?! Could you come down and help me with the groceries?!

In reply, a DRINKING GLASS FALLS FROM ABOVE and SMASHES at her feet, showering her with vodka and glass shards.

BILLY (O.S.)

Sorry.

She looks up. Fifteen feet above her head is...

BILLY

Arms outstretched and cigar in hand, he's balanced on top of the upstairs baluster rail. He walks along it haltingly as if it were a tightrope.

IRENE

(under her breath)

Oh my god.

(screaming)

BILLY!!!

Startled, he loses his balance, arms wind milling as he totters outward.

She drops the bags and bolts for the STAIRS.

Taking them three at a time, she reaches the LANDING in seconds.

Through more luck than skill, he regains his balance.

BILLY  
Irene, lookit.

She wraps her arms around his waist and pulls him off the rail.

She lands on her back and Billy lands on top of her.

He rolls off her, his face to the ground. He starts to shake with what sounds like stifled SOBS. She lays her hand on his shoulder.

IRENE  
(breathlessly)  
Billy, are you okay?

He flops onto his back, LAUGHING so hard he can barely breathe.

The sound of CLINKING GLASS.

She looks up to see Richard watching them from the doorway of his room. Cigar clenched in his teeth, he fills a glass from a freshly opened vodka bottle.

RICHARD  
Boy trouble?

She rises to her knees, filled with rage.

IRENE  
Bastard!

Her father smiles, toasts her and takes a sip. Billy's now rolling from side to side.

BILLY  
Bear trap, bear trap.

IRENE  
Billy, please...

BILLY  
(like a lewd come-on)  
Adopt me, baby.

INT. BILLY AND IRENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Billy is OUT COLD on the bed.

Irene huddles beside him, her eyes fixed on the CLOSED BEDROOM DOOR.

From the other side can be heard RICHARD'S SLURRED RAVINGS. He STUMBLES about BANGING into things and CURSING.

From the bleak look of exhaustion on her face, it's clearly been going on for some time.

He starts to SING, loud and off-key. She clutches Billy's limp hand for strength.

Her father's SONG ENDS abruptly with a CRY of FEAR, the CRASH of BREAKING GLASS, and several THUDS like FLESH HITTING WOOD.

Startled, Irene bolts upright.

In the sudden quiet, she listens.

A LOW MOAN of PAIN. Concern creeps into her face.

She slides reluctantly out of bed, then walks to the door.

As her hand touches the lock, she freezes. A moment of indecision. Or self-preservation.

Then her hand falls away, leaving the door closed and locked.

RICHARD (O.S.)  
(weakly)  
Please, I need...it hurts.

She takes a deep breath and releases the lock.

INT. SECOND STORY LANDING

The door opens a crack and she peeks out, wary of a trap.

An overturned table, some broken glass, but no sign of her father.

She moves cautiously out onto the empty landing.

IRENE  
Daddy?

A groan.

She figures it out and rushes to the STAIRCASE.

Richard is sprawled on the steps halfway down. He clings to a baluster to keep from sliding any farther. He doesn't see her.

She takes a step down, then falters, not sure that she wants to get any closer.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
(timidly)  
Are you alright?

He looks up at her, his face upside down and flashes a friendly grin.

RICHARD  
Ah, an angel.

IRENE  
Do you need help?

RICHARD  
Naw, I can handle it.

With much grunting and straining, he fumbles himself to his feet, using the banister for leverage.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
See? Nuthin' to it.

He loses his balance and starts to fall backwards, then crumples onto his own ass and slides down several steps.

She rushes down and grabs him under the arms, halting his bumpy descent.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Owww! Damn stairs! Never did get the hang a' them.

IRENE  
Try to stand up.

RICHARD  
I should just rip 'em out, put in an escalator. Or maybe a fireman's pole.

IRENE  
You're too heavy. You gotta help.

RICHARD  
Would you like that, honey? Slidin' down a pole?

She struggles him to his feet. He puts his arm around her shoulders and they start up the stairs, Irene doing most of the work.

IRENE  
Steady...

He suddenly seems confused.

RICHARD  
Why're you still here?

IRENE  
I'm helping you to bed.

RICHARD  
I mean, in my house. You got what  
you came for. The kid's your sex  
slave.

IRENE  
It's not like that. We love each  
other.

RICHARD  
Hey, he's gettin' laid, what's not  
to love?

When they reach the landing, Richard steps up to a non-existent stair and STUMBLES to his KNEES. She looks down at him sadly.

IRENE  
You'll never understand. C'mon.

She tries to help him up, but he waves her away, averting his face, his eyes pressed shut as if fighting back tears.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
What is it?

RICHARD  
Listen, Irene...baby, I...

He chokes up.

IRENE  
Are you okay?

RICHARD  
These things I do...if I could take  
'em back...but I can't.

He starts to cry.

IRENE  
Here, lemme help you.

She gently pulls him to his feet, walks him toward his bedroom.

RICHARD  
I still miss her, y'know? All these  
years...

IRENE  
Me too.

RICHARD  
When she died, I just wasn't  
thinkin' straight. I guess  
I...messed up pretty bad.

Irene stops in her tracks, amazed at what she's hearing. Is he actually apologizing?

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Irene, I'm...I'm so sorry.

Stunned, overwhelmed, she starts to cry.

She suddenly gives him a desperate HUG. His face is buried in her hair, his arms hang loose.

IRENE  
Thank you.

Slowly, his arms rise behind her.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
It's okay. I'm here.

He hugs her.

Too tightly.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Daddy, not so...

She winces as he squeezes even harder. She struggles in his embrace, but is unsuccessful in pushing away.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Please, you're hurting...

His lips graze her ear, his voice a whisper:

RICHARD  
I missed you.

From across the landing.

BILLY  
Jesus!

Like walking death, Billy stands gawking at them from the bedroom doorway.

Richard steps casually back, releasing Irene, though one hand defiantly holds her wrist.

Her eyes are filled with shame.

Shocked (and still a little drunk), the boy can barely find the words.

RICHARD  
Go back to bed.

BILLY  
But what are you...?

RICHARD  
None of your business.

IRENE  
(placating)  
It's okay, Billy, I'll be along in  
a...

BILLY  
(erupting into fury)  
What the fuck did you do to her?!

Richard calmly slides his arm around his daughter's waist.

RICHARD  
Listen, junior, you've blundered  
into a tender moment here. Family  
stuff. So just go away and maybe I  
won't ground you.

In an alcohol fueled rage, Billy lunges toward Richard.

BILLY  
Get your hands off her!

As the boy bears down on her seemingly unconcerned father,  
Irene jumps between them. She stops Billy with her hands on  
his chest.

IRENE  
Wait, nothing hap...

BILLY  
I'm gonna break your face, you f...

IRENE  
Don't hurt him! He's drunk, he  
doesn't know what he's doing.

Behind her, Richard leans against the wall, arms crossed.

RICHARD  
I don't need you to protect me from  
a shit-faced little boy.

BILLY  
You sick fuck!

IRENE  
Billy!

She takes his face in her hands, finally getting his attention.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Billy, please don't. Don't.

Her pleas somewhat dissipate Billy's rage. He glares knives at Richard, but reluctantly obeys.

She gently takes the boy's arms and starts to lead him away, back toward the bedroom.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
It's okay, c'mon.

RICHARD  
Listen to your mother.

His eyes locked on Richard's smirking face, Billy has to be pulled the whole way.

As they pass through the doorway, Richard grins and waves goodbye.

INT. BILLY AND IRENE'S BEDROOM

Irene shuts the door as Billy begins to pace and fume.

BILLY  
I don't fucking believe...I swear  
I'm going to kill him.

She wraps her arms around him. He's as rigid as stone.

IRENE  
You don't have to do that.

She kisses him lightly on the cheek, but he's too distracted by anger to notice.

BILLY  
Can't believe you stuck up for him.

IRENE  
Please try to understand. He  
doesn't know how to act around  
people. He's been alone a long  
time.

BILLY  
He deserves to be. C'mon, let's get  
outta here.

Her hands slide down his shirt, undoing buttons.

IRENE  
But he needs me.

Incredulous, he breaks free of her.

BILLY  
I don't like him and I wanna leave.

IRENE  
But...

BILLY  
C'mon, Irene, lets get outta here.  
Please?

IRENE  
It's not that simple.

BILLY  
Well, I'm going.

He marches angrily to the door, touches the knob...

IRENE  
Wait...

He stops. She struggles silently.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
I'll go with you.

BILLY  
Great. Let's go.

IRENE  
I have to tell him first.

BILLY  
Why?

IRENE  
Because...I have to. I just do.

He throws up his hands.

BILLY  
Okay, fine. But I'll go with you in  
case he tries something.

IRENE  
Not now. When he's...feeling  
better.

He starts to protest. She cuts him off.

IRENE (CONT'D)

In the morning. I promise. We really should get some sleep before we go.

He considers this. She gives him a slight smile, toys with his belt buckle.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Why are you still dressed?

INT. IRENE AND BILLY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Irene and Billy are asleep, her body spooning his.

Her eyes open. She gently nuzzles her face into his hair, then slips quietly out of bed, careful not to wake him.

As she puts on her robe, she notices Billy's clothes scattered on the floor. She sighs good naturedly. Men.

She picks up his pants and his WALLET slips from the pocket and falls to the floor.

She retrieves it and starts to lay it on the dresser. But she stops, hand poised in midair, a puzzled look on her face.

With the wallet cupped in her palm, she moves her thumb slowly over the leather in a circular motion, tracing the shape of something inside. She flips it open.

And out slips a CONDOM.

Startled, she stares at it, then looks across the room at the sleeping boy.

Then her hands fly into action, searching the wallet for further contraband.

She finds it:

A PHOTOGRAPH of BILLY and JENNIFER. They're at a carnival, holding hands.

IRENE

Oh god.

Suddenly furious, she slams the wallet onto the dresser.

Across the room, Billy MOANS at the disturbance, but does not wake up.

In a white-hot rage, Irene suddenly marches toward Billy, all rational thought slipping away.

She gets to the bed, stops abruptly, looming over the boy. As she glares down at his face, her fist trembles, clenching and unclenching as if it yearns to hurt him.

Then her breathing slows and a creepy calm descends. As she watches him asleep, her fury turns cold.

She RIPS the PHOTO in half. Jennifer flutters to the floor.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

A hangover breakfast.

Billy, Irene and Richard sit quietly at the table, eating. Richard ignores the others, going about his meal as if alone.

Billy watches him, barely masking his contempt. Then he glances at Irene and discreetly motions with his head toward her father-- "tell him".

She returns his reminder with an icy stare.

Billy withers, confused at her anger. He returns to his breakfast.

He scoops up a fork full of scrambled eggs. As he starts to put the food in his mouth, he feels something FLAP against his chin. He looks down at the fork.

BILLY  
What the hell...?

IRENE  
What's the matter, Billy? Egg shells?

Richard looks at the boy, then let's out a LAUGH.

For hanging from Billy's fork are several inches of translucent rubber-- the CONDOM.

BILLY  
(irked)  
What is this?

IRENE  
You tell me.

BILLY  
I don't know what...  
(he figures it out)  
...oh shit.

She holds up the ripped picture of Jennifer.

IRENE  
Who's this?

Fear crosses Billy's face, then quickly shifts into defiance.

BILLY  
Came with the wallet.

She STANDS abruptly, jolting the table.

IRENE  
WHO IS SHE?

He glares back at her, refusing to answer.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
(soft menace)  
Who is she?

BILLY  
You had no right.

A standoff.

She CRUSHES the photo into a ball.

She stalks to the garbage can and throws it in. Then she's gone.

Richard CHUCKLES and resumes eating.

Billy stares after her through the empty doorway.

His eyes shift to the garbage can.

EXT. RICHARD'S FRONT YARD - DAY

IRENE (O.S.)  
I'm sorry.

He sees her standing nearby with her hands behind her back, looking remorseful. He doesn't reply.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
I mean it, I'm really sorry. I had no right to go through your stuff.

BILLY  
Hey, what's mine is yours.

IRENE  
I've been thinking about this morning...I realize I have to learn to control my jealousy. It's an unhealthy emotion, I know that.  
(an awkward pause)  
That girl...did you and she...ever?

BILLY  
No.

IRENE  
So I'm your first?

BILLY  
Yeah.

IRENE  
I'm glad.

BILLY  
Who was your first?

IRENE  
(taken aback)  
...I brought you something.

From behind her back appears a triple scoop ice cream cone, just starting to melt. He almost smiles, but catches himself. He's supposed to be angry.

BILLY  
A bribe?

IRENE  
Yes.

BILLY  
Strawberry.

IRENE  
Yes.

BILLY  
(softening)  
My favorite.  
(a beat)  
When are we gonna leave?

IRENE  
Soon. I promise.

She holds out the ice cream. His hand rises slowly and closes around the cone. She doesn't let go. He licks it.

She moves in and licks the other side. They move the cone out of the way and kiss.

She wraps her arms around him, then pushes off with her legs. Giggling, they swing on a tire hanging from the tree.

EXT. FIELD NEAR RICHARD'S HOUSE - DAY

Irene and Billy chase each other through the waist-high weeds, whooping and hollering like children.

They meet, embrace, break apart and the chase resumes.

INT. IRENE AND BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Irene is asleep.

Billy lies next to her, deep in thought. His mind wrestles with...issues.

He studies her face for signs of consciousness.

BILLY  
(whispering)  
Irene?

She doesn't stir.

He slips quietly out of bed, then tiptoes to the door.

He gently slides the bolt. The door swings open with inevitable SQUEAL of RUSTY HINGES. He looks back at Irene, still asleep.

INT. KITCHEN - A MINUTE LATER

Leaving the lights off, Billy moves cautiously into the MOONLIT room. His socks whisper across the linoleum.

When he reaches the garbage can, he starts to dig.

He finds what he's looking for. He uncrumples it and holds it up to the moonlight.

THE PHOTOGRAPH

Jennifer smiles at him from wrinkled paper.

He stares at her, his face a tangle of confused emotions.

Billy does not notice as Irene walks up quietly behind him.

When she sees the photo in his hand, her expression shifts instantly to rage.

He senses someone behind him and starts to turn.

She PUNCHES him in the side of the head.

Caught off guard, his sock-covered feet slip out from under him. As he FALLS to the floor, his HEAD HITS the edge of the COUNTER.

Her rage vanishes as quickly as it erupted.

She looks genuinely confused that Billy is sprawled at her feet, as if she just walked in and found him this way.

IRENE  
Billy...? Are you okay?

He looks up at her with stunned eyes, consciousness wavering. Then his head lolls to the side as he passes out.

She snaps, chokes back a sob.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Oh God.

She falls to her knees, hands hovering helplessly in the air. She nudges him gently.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Please wake up.

He MOANS. She lets out a strangled, hysterical LAUGH.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Oh, thank God, thank God you're alright, you're gonna be...come to bed, okay? Please get up.

The LIGHTS FLASH ON. Irene looks up with a GASP.

Richard stands in the doorway, fully dressed.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Help me.

Her father doesn't move, doesn't blink.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Please, we've got to get him to bed.

A beat. Richard strides forward.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He hooks Billy under the arms and brusquely pulls him to his feet.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Be careful.

Richard DRAGS the half-conscious boy toward a door OPPOSITE the one they entered. Irene follows.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Where're you going? We have to take him upstairs.

Ignoring her, Richard shoulders the door open. STAIRS DESCEND into the CELLAR.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
(growing fear)  
Daddy? What are you doing?! NO!!

Richard gives Billy a SHOVE and the boy topples into darkness.

INT. CELLAR

Billy's TUMBLE down the stairs ends abruptly when his HEAD hits the CONCRETE FLOOR.

INT. KITCHEN

Irene is frozen in stunned silence.

Her father turns toward her. His face is now a mask of drunken lust.

With horror, she realizes what's about to happen.

IRENE  
Oh God.

She BOLTS toward the kitchen door. He starts after her.

WE MOVE WITH IRENE as she bursts into:

INT. FOYER

She rushes to the front door and starts to pull it open.

Richard's body slams against it, forcing it shut.

She turns and hurtles up.

INT. STAIRS

She takes them three at a time, Richard at her heels. As she reaches the top, he catches her ankle, sending her sprawling onto:

INT. LANDING

She flips onto her back and kicks wildly at him. He stays just out of reach, attempting to grab her thrashing feet.

He captures an ankle, then the other, then forces her legs apart.

She pulls her knees to her chin, then rams her feet into his chest. He flails back. Only a lucky banister grab saves him from falling down the stairs.

As he pulls himself onto the landing, she's up and running toward the nearest open door. She plunges into:

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM

She slams the door and bolts it.

Then hurries over to the window and tries to slide it open.

It's painted shut.

Grunting, she strains unsuccessfully to free it.

There's a polite KNOCK at the door.

IRENE  
GO AWAY!!

The door SMASHES OPEN. And Richard walks casually into the room.

Trapped, Irene backs fearfully into a corner.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Don't hurt me.

When Richard unbuckles his belt, she starts to cry.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Daddy, please...

RICHARD  
Shhhhh.

He unzips his fly.

IRENE  
It's not fair.

INT. CELLAR

Irene's SCREAM cuts through two floors. Billy's eyes pop open, filled with confusion and fear.

BILLY  
Irene?

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM

Richard's forearm is pressed across her throat, pinning her to the wall. As she struggles madly to escape, he yanks her nightgown up above her waist. Her eyes filled with terror, she flails at him, pushing, punching, grabs handfuls of his hair. He tries to force down her panties.

She kicks at his shins. He grabs her behind the knee and jerks her leg up off the ground.

She CLAWS at his eyes. A fingernail hits its target.

RICHARD  
DAMN IT!!

He pulls back his FIST, ready to smash her face.

A DISTANT MUFFLED VOICE filters up through the floor:

BILLY (O.S.)  
Irene?!

Richard turns his head abruptly at the sound.

During this brief moment of distraction, Irene's straining fingers manage to grab a VODKA BOTTLE off the night stand.

As he turns back towards her, the swinging bottle connects, SHATTERING across his face. He jumps back.

For a stunned moment, time stops and neither is sure what to do. Richard's hand moves to his hemorrhaging cheek and he flinches at the touch.

The sight of blood on his fingers fills him with rage.

RICHARD  
Bitch.

Irene snaps out of it and tries to rush past him to the door.

As she flies by, Richard grabs her hair and her momentum almost pulls her off her feet.

She spins around and slashes at him with the jagged remains of the bottle.

A gash opens on Richard's arm. He lets loose a HOWL of pain.

She swings again. He lets go of her hair just in time to avert another slice. She backs up slowly toward the door, still swinging the bottleneck to fend him off.

INT. KITCHEN

Billy, on his stomach, drags himself up the last step and through the cellar doorway. He lays on the linoleum, exhausted and in pain.

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM

Her father inches forward, matching her cautious retreat. He looks like a wild animal, eager to hurt her if he could just get at her. His frustrated eyes dart between her face and the jagged glass arcing before her.

She suddenly turns and runs for the doorway.

Her escape is cut short by a flying TACKLE. He catches her legs and they both SLAM to the GROUND.

She rolls onto her side and yanks her right leg free.

Richard, on his stomach, still clutches the left.

She KICKS him in the face.

He's stunned, but doesn't let go. She kicks him three more times, rapid fire. He still won't let go. A fifth kick, especially savage, and his NOSE BREAKS with an audible CRACK.

He lets go.

Wild with fear and adrenaline surging, she keeps kicking, just to make sure. She sits up, arms braced behind her, eyes gone mad as years of pent-up anger come pouring out in a vicious barrage of kicks to his head, each blow accompanied by a CRY of animal rage.

Abruptly, she stops, stunned at her own ferocity. She scuttles away from him.

He doesn't follow.

She clambers to her feet and leans panting against the doorjamb. Her still wary eyes are locked on her motionless lump of a father, face down on the floor.

IRENE

You alive?

Richard slowly, painfully raises his bloody and battered face. She GASPS at his appearance. Glaring up at her, he struggles out words through broken teeth.

RICHARD

Fuck off.

He lays his head down, tired of discussing the matter.

She starts to speak, but can think of nothing to say. She swallows hard, fighting back angry tears at the injustice of it all.

In a last act of defiance, Irene reaches out and flicks off the light.

Framed by the doorway, her silhouette shuts the door, throwing the room into:

INT. DARKNESS

The SOUND of a CAR ENGINE STARTING, then a SCREECH of RUBBER.

EXT. HOOD OF THE MOVING CAR - DAWN

We see Irene and Billy as they drive out of the pitch-black GARAGE.

Billy flinches in the sudden glare of DAWN, quickly shielding his eyes.

Irene cries quietly behind the wheel.

Through the back window, the HOUSE recedes into the distance. Neither Billy nor Irene look back. They drive in silence, Irene's tears subsiding into sniffles. Finally:

IRENE  
Canada or Mexico?

BILLY  
(sluggish)  
What?

IRENE  
Where do you wanna go, Canada or Mexico? Skiing or sunbathing?

He rubs his temples, clearly in pain.

BILLY  
I' um...it's a toss up. I don't care.

IRENE  
Didn't draft dodgers go to Canada? No one ever sent them back, did they?

BILLY  
I think criminals run to Mexico.

IRENE  
(offended)  
We're not criminals, Billy. We're in love. Remember that.

BILLY  
(slight appeasement)  
Sorry...Canada?

IRENE

Fine. Map's in the glove box.

Billy reaches for it, then stops, his arm extended. He looks at his HAND.

It's SHAKING.

BILLY

Irene?

IRENE

I don't think it's locked.

When she sees his trembling hand, fear flares within her. But she quickly subdues it.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You didn't get much sleep. You must be tired.

BILLY

Must be.

IRENE

Why don't you close your eyes for a while? Then we'll get some food. Build up your strength.

Confused, he lowers his hand.

EXT. FREEWAY - LATER THAT DAY

It passes through a medium-sized town. Irene's car speeds into view.

INT. CAR

Irene barely watches the road as she throws worried glances Billy's way.

His SLEEP is troubled, his face sweaty and pasty white.

Something up ahead catches her attention. A green highway sign sails by: HOSPITAL NEXT OFF-RAMP

Irene broods for a moment. Billy tosses fitfully. Ahead is the off-ramp, a hundred yards off. She slows the car, her mind struggling with indecision.

Fifty yards. The car slows even more, almost to a crawl.

A TRUCK rushes up behind them, HONKING ANGRILY as it changes lanes. Billy wakes up with a start, eyes frightened.

Thirty yards. Twenty. Ten. A choice has to be made.

Passing by the off-ramp, the car speeds up on its way down the highway.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Billy is in the magazine section, looking pale and sickly under fluorescent lights. He slowly spins a circular paperback display, watching the covers go by.

A book catches his attention. A weak smile as he pulls it off the rack.

INT. CHECKOUT LINE

Irene empties the cart as a CASHIER scans the groceries.

Billy limps into view.

IRENE  
Hi. Is the Tylenol working?

BILLY  
Kinda. Got you a gift.

He gives her the book.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
The sequel to "Dread Desire".

IRENE  
Wow, this is great! Thanks.

She hands it to the cashier, who scans it. As the book slides toward the BAGGER, Billy INTERCEPTS it.

BILLY  
(turning playful)  
Here, lemme read it to you.

She pays the cashier.

IRENE  
You mean right now?

BILLY  
Sure, why not?

IRENE  
'cause we haven't finished the first one?

As she pushes the cart toward the exit, he starts to read:

BILLY  
Shaundra's dreams had come true.  
But dreams can crumble.

She laughs and pulls the book from his hand, tossing it in a bag.

IRENE  
We'll read it in Canada.

BILLY  
Yes, dear.

Because of his limp, he trails behind her, which is why she doesn't notice him glance back at the check out stands.

Rows of electronic cash register displays ask: "HAVE YOU SEEN ME?"

Suddenly unnerved, Billy slows slightly to watch the smiling faces of MISSING CHILDREN appear sequentially. And then Billy's face is shown, on dozens of checkout screens stacked in perspective.

INT. CAR - DUSK

They drive in silence. Irene sneaks a glance at Billy. He stares straight ahead, deep in thought.

IRENE  
You okay?

BILLY  
Hmm?

IRENE  
You haven't said a word in hours.

BILLY  
Sorry.

IRENE  
Why don't you read to me? We're so close to the end.

BILLY  
(a long pause)  
I wanna call my parents.

The car swerves slightly as she tenses. Her voice goes cold.

IRENE  
No problem. They can come pick you up.

BILLY  
No, that's not what I want. It's just...I dunno, they're probably worried sick. I just think it'll make 'em feel better if they know I'm okay.

Several nervous beats while Billy waits for her response.  
Then:

IRENE

You are the most considerate man  
I've ever met, Billy Frelaine. I  
swear to God, I love you more  
everyday.

BILLY

Then I can call 'em?

IRENE

No.

BILLY

But...

IRENE

Billy, you gotta know their phone's  
gonna be tapped. You call to say  
hi, the cops'll know where we are.

BILLY

So I'll use a pay phone. We'll be  
gone before they show up.

IRENE

We don't even want them to know  
what state we're in. They'd figure  
out where we're going and we'll end  
up having to run a roadblock. I'm  
sorry, but it's out of the  
question.

Oncoming headlights wash across their faces. Billy winces.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

They sit in a booth, quietly eating dinner. Billy barely  
touches his food. He breaks the tense silence.

BILLY

How 'bout a letter?

IRENE

Billy...

BILLY

Okay, a postcard. With a picture of  
London on it.

IRENE

And a postmark from here. Billy,  
listen to me.

(she puts a comforting  
hand on his)  
(MORE)

IRENE (CONT'D)

I know how painful it is to leave home. Believe me, I do. But everyone has to eventually. Each of us goes out and starts a new life. Most natural thing in the world. You just got a head start, that's all.

BILLY

I dunno, I just thought I should...

IRENE

(suddenly harsh)

Billy. You can't go back and be their "little boy" again.

BILLY

I didn't say...

IRENE

I mean, is that what you really want? To live under their rules? Their curfews? Losing every fight? Punished anytime they feel like it? You gonna give up all this freedom for that? Are you?

BILLY

(quietly)

I' um...no, I guess not.

IRENE

(calm again)

Good. That's good.

She returns to her food. He considers her words, but finds no resolution in them. He stands, still clearly troubled.

BILLY

I gotta pee.

He turns to leave.

IRENE

Billy?

BILLY

Yeah?

IRENE

Billy, I...come here.

He does. She reaches up and slides her fingers into his hair. Looking up into his eyes, she pulls his head down till their lips almost meet.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I love you.

She kisses him, long and deep.

Other customers start to notice, watching from the corners of their eyes. Several TEENAGE BOYS at a nearby table gawk openly, clearly impressed.

At last, the kiss concludes.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
When things cool down a bit, we'll  
let them know you're okay.

BILLY  
Thank you.

IRENE  
Wash your hands.

Billy limps away. He passes the teenage boys, oblivious to their admiration.

INT. REST ROOM

Billy enters, then stops in his tracks.

On the wall hangs a PAY PHONE.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

WAITRESS  
Can I get you anything else?

IRENE  
Just the check, thanks. No, wait.  
Do you have strawberry ice cream?

WAITRESS  
One scoop or two?

IRENE  
Three.

WAITRESS  
Coming right up.

Irene is pleased. But her smile quickly vanishes as TWO HIGHWAY PATROL OFFICERS walk into the restaurant.

INT. REST ROOM

Billy flushes the urinal and walks to the sink.

As he washes his hands, his eyes dart to the phone reflected in the mirror.

Drying his hands, he starts to leave. It takes a real effort to avert his eyes from the phone as he passes. He puts his hand on the door, hesitates.

He walks back and grabs the receiver. Punches numbers. Nervously feeds in the required change.

RINGING. A CLICK.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

This is Jennifer. I'm not in right now...

ANOTHER GIRL (O.S.)

She's lying.

SEVERAL GIRLS BURST OUT laughing, their giggles cut off by the BEEP. Billy is momentarily at a loss for words, shaken by this brush with his old life.

BILLY

Uh...hi, this is Billy. Could you do me a favor? Tell my parents I'm okay, okay? Tell 'em I love 'em.

(a long pause)

I guess I better say something or the machine'll cut me off...

Listen, Jenny, I...I really miss you. I mean it, I miss you a lot.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM

His VOICE IS FILTERED through the answering machine.

BILLY (O.S.)

It's just that...well, things are different now. Everything's changed.

Jennifer enters, wearing a robe and towel drying her hair.

BILLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I can't go back to the way things were. Please try to understand...

She recognizes his voice and bolts toward the phone.

BILLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...Goodbye.

She picks up the receiver, talking fast and frantic.

JENNIFER

No, don't hang up Billy. Please don't hang up. Where are you? Everyone's going crazy looking for you. Billy...?

A beat. Then:

BILLY (O.S.)

Yes?

INTERCUT BILLY AND JENNIFER

BILLY (CONT'D)

I'm fine.

JENNIFER

You gotta call the police. No, wait, tell me where you are, I'll call them.

BILLY

No, I'm fine. Don't worry about me. I'm sorry I made everyone crazy.

JENNIFER

God, Billy, she didn't hurt you, did she?

BILLY

Whaddaya mean?

JENNIFER

Irene

His eyes go wide.

BILLY

I...don't know what you're talking about.

JENNIFER

The girl who kidnapped you. I mean, when you were a kid, the baby sitter. The police think she did it again.

Billy has never been more stunned. He tries to respond, but can't find the words.

JENNIFER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Billy?...Billy?!

IRENE (O.S.)

(hushed)

Billy, wake up.

INT. FRELAINE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

BILLY IS FOUR YEARS OLD.

IRENE IS FOURTEEN.

They're on the couch, an afghan across their laps. The only light is from the unwatched TV. Strawberry ice cream melts in a bowl with two spoons.

The small boy SLEEPS, nestled against her, encircled by her arms. She whispers in his ear with just a hint of desperation.

IRENE YOUNG  
Billy, wake up. I'm lonely.

His eyes open slowly. Delighted, she smiles.

IRENE YOUNG (CONT'D)  
Hi.

BILLY YOUNG  
(only half awake)  
Hi.

IRENE YOUNG  
I got a surprise for you. Wanna see something pretty?

She reaches down into the front of her shirt and pulls out the LOCKET. She holds it before Billy's eyes, then opens it to show him the PHOTO inside.

IRENE YOUNG (CONT'D)  
See? It's you. Now you'll always be near my heart. You're beautiful, didja know that?

BILLY YOUNG  
Mmmmm.

IRENE YOUNG  
I thought so. It's your eyes, I think. I mean, your nose is cute'n all, but compared to your eyes...

She cuddles even closer.

IRENE YOUNG (CONT'D)  
It's almost like...like you can look in 'em and see the man you're gonna be. A good man.

She taps Billy lightly on the forehead.

IRENE YOUNG (CONT'D)  
He's right in here.

She kisses him on the forehead. He giggles. This makes her giggle. She kisses him on the lips, quick and playful.

As she pulls back, she looks in his eyes and her smile wavers. Her playful expression ebbs away, replaced by something else.

Something vaguely disturbing.

Then, slowly, she lowers her lips to his. This kiss is longer, more intense. Almost sexual.

When she finally pulls away, they look at each other, confused at what just happened. She's transfixed by his gaze, like a deer paralyzed by oncoming headlights. For several seconds, she's unable to look away. Then:

The decision snaps into place like a mousetrap. She knows what she has to do.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Marching down the sidewalk with a stolen suitcase, Irene pulls the now fully dressed boy by the hand. She moves so quickly, Billy almost has to run to keep up.

BILLY YOUNG  
But where we goin'?

No reply. A car drives by, headlights sweeping past.

BILLY YOUNG (CONT'D)  
Renee, where we...?

IRENE YOUNG  
For a walk.

BILLY YOUNG  
But it's dark.

IRENE YOUNG  
Your mom said I should take you for a walk.

BILLY YOUNG  
She did?

IRENE YOUNG  
She did. Has she ever lied to you before?

BILLY YOUNG  
No.

IRENE YOUNG  
Then it's settled.

Billy tries to think this through, sensing flaws in the logic.

Oncoming HEADLIGHTS become an SUV. Irene stops abruptly.

BILLY YOUNG

Reenee?

IRENE YOUNG

(with genuine horror)

Oh God.

As the SUV drives past, she sees Frank's startled face in the window, Betty peering past him from the passenger side.

Irene drops the suitcase, picks up Billy and BOLTS down the street.

The car SQUEALS to a stop, doors opening.

WE MOVE WITH YOUNG IRENE

Terrified, she runs as fast as she can, struggling under the weight of a four-year-old. Frank is behind her, gaining steadily and closing the gap.

As streetlights whip by, the runners rush through pools of light, one after another. A blur of trees, shadows and glowing windows flashing by.

Her long hair waves wildly about Billy's face, her desperate BREATHING loud in his ear. Clutching the back of her neck, the boy rocks and jolts in her arms.

He sees the BLACK SILHOUETTE that pursues them growing larger. It bursts into light and becomes his FATHER.

BILLY

Daddy!

Frank is almost upon them, closer, closer, his arm stretches toward them. Billy watches his father's grasping fingers, inches away, straining to grab a handful of her hair.

CUT TO:

INT. REST ROOM

JENNIFER (O.S.)

Billy? Are you there?

Her FRANTIC VOICE is tinny and far away. Although his ear is to the phone, Billy doesn't hear her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET (FLASHBACK)

In silence, Frank WRESTLES the small boy from Irene's arms.

Then father and son watch Irene run crying into the night.  
Into darkness.

INT. REST ROOM

JENNIFER (O.S.)  
Please talk to me.

BILLY  
I...gotta go.

JENNIFER (O.S.)  
No, don't hang...

His hand shaking, he hangs up.

For a moment he clings to the phone. Then his arm drops like dead weight.

He turns to the door.

And finds himself face to face with OFFICER PRESSLER of the Highway Patrol.

Billy GASPS. This makes Pressler smile.

PRESSLER  
Everyone does that.

He walks past Billy into a stall.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

Back at the table, Irene fidgets nervously.

Billy, drained of color, limps slowly toward her. He moves as if the air were thick. When he arrives:

IRENE  
(hushed)  
I saw him. There's another one by the door. Just sit down and act natural. When the bill comes, we're outta here.

He remains standing, not quite there.

BILLY  
Irene...

IRENE  
Sit down, you'll draw attention to us.

Billy reaches sluggishly for her LOCKET.

When she realizes what he's doing, she grabs it first, wrapping her fist around it.

A standoff.

Her eyes are frightened, his unnervingly distant.

BILLY

Show me.

Her mind races for a way out, but can find none.

She timidly opens the locket, revealing Billy's four-year-old face.

IRENE

I...should have told you. I'm sorry.

Suddenly furious, he YELLS in a WHISPER.

BILLY

You're sorry?

IRENE

Yes, I...

BILLY

I don't believe this. That was you. You're the one who kidnapped me.

He sags into his seat, trembling with rage.

IRENE

It wasn't like that. We were...

BILLY

I don't believe this. I don't fucking...you lied to me.

IRENE

I never...I mean, I just...didn't tell you everything.

BILLY

No shit.

Her eyes dart nervously to OFFICER ANDERSON, reading a menu at a booth near the cash register.

IRENE

Please, could we discuss this later?

BILLY

What, so you can lie to me again?

IRENE

Billy, none of that's important now. It's just the past. All that matters is that we love each oth...

BILLY

I should just hitch a ride with those cops.

IRENE

Oh God, no. Please, it'll all become clear if you just let me explain. You're all I've got, so you gotta let me..

Irene abruptly shuts up as the waitress appears and places a bowl of strawberry ice cream in front of her.

WAITRESS

Will there be anything else?

IRENE

No.

The waitress pulls out the check pad, her eyes darting from Irene to Billy. She can sense the tension. She totals the bill quickly, then leaves.

Irene tentatively pushes the bowl across the table.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Here, I got this for you.

He makes no move to eat it. Just stares at the table.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Billy. I want you to listen to me, 'cause this is important. Maybe the most important thing I've ever said. Are you listening?

His angry gaze rises to her face. She speaks slowly and deliberately.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You...are the most precious thing in my life. You always have been and you always will be. Without you, I would die...Do you understand?

Silence. She searches his face for some sign of softening, but finds none.

IRENE (CONT'D)

(defeated)

I'll go pay the check. When I get back, we'll, um...it'll be okay.

She gets up as if with her last ounce of strength. As she shuffles away, he watches her, his face finally showing a hint of sympathy.

His gaze shifts to the ice cream. He SIGHS heavily and picks up the spoon.

Suddenly, Billy has a SEIZURE.

The SPASMS that overwhelm his body last for only a second, then are gone.

The boy is left startled and confused. His eyes search out Irene, across the room paying the cashier.

Moving sluggishly, he tries to get up.

As he does, his eyes roll back in his head.

Unconscious, Billy drops to the floor.

Someone SCREAMS.

Irene looks up and sees that Billy is no longer at the table. Her eyes widen in fear. Several customers rise from their seats, blocking her view.

Craning her neck, she can just make out Billy's hand, limp on the floor. Still holding the spoon.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Oh God.

She shoulders her way between the gawkers and runs toward him.

Officer ANDERSON is suddenly blocking her way. She COLLIDES with him.

ANDERSON

Careful.

He steadies her, then darts toward Billy. As he weaves his way through a group of onlookers, he talks into his radio.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Get out here, we got a problem.

The officer kneels by the unconscious boy. He pulls back an eyelid, then checks pulse and breathing.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

(to the crowd)

Could you please stand back and give him some air, thank you!

(into the radio)

(MORE)

## ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Mary, send an ambulance to the coffee shop on Route 33 at Mill Road.

Irene watches, helpless.

The gathering crowd eclipses Billy from her view.

And with all eyes on the boy, no one notices as she walks out of the coffee shop and into the dark.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Frank and Betty rush from an opening elevator, then charge down the corridor.

INT. HOSPITAL MRI ROOM

Billy's head glides into the gleaming white TUBE of an MRI.

He flinches at the sudden POUNDING NOISE, then holds still as instructed.

A cross section of his SKULL flickers on a nearby MONITOR.

Clearly visible on the surface of his brain is the dark blotch of a SUBDURAL HEMATOMA.

INT. WAITING ROOM

His parents on a couch, holding hands.

INT. OPERATING ROOM

We hear RESPIRATION and a HEART MONITOR. Billy is unconscious on a tilted table, his head shaved and secured with clamps.

A SURGEON withdraws BLOOD from the boy's SKULL with a SYRINGE.

INT. BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Billy sleeps, the top of his head WRAPPED in GAUZE.

His parents sleep on the other bed, cuddling close to fit in the narrow space.

The PHONE RINGS - Betty's eyes open sleepily - Frank picks up the receiver before the second ring and lays his hand reassuringly on her hair. Billy remains asleep.

FRANK  
 (softly)  
 Hello?

GIRL (O.S.)  
 Hi, can I talk to Billy?

FRANK  
 Who is this?

GIRL (O.S.)  
 I'm Lisa, from Billy's history  
 class? We're all really upset about  
 what happened. Is he okay?

FRANK  
 That's nice of you, thanks. The  
 doctor says he'll be as good as  
 new.

GIRL (O.S.)  
 That's really great. Can I say hi?

FRANK  
 He needs to rest now, but leave  
 your number and I'll have him call  
 you.

GIRL (O.S.)  
 Please? I'll be quick. I promise.

Frank can just make out the SOUND of TRAFFIC through the  
 phone.

He looks at Betty. Her eyes are closed again, her breathing  
 steady. Asleep? Hard to tell.

FRANK  
 Irene?

Betty bolts upright and starts to speak, but Frank gently  
 puts a fingertip to her lips. She stays quiet.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
 Irene?

A long pause. You can almost hear Irene thinking. Her voice  
 drops an octave.

IRENE (O.S.)  
 Yes?

FRANK  
 You've got to stop this.

IRENE (O.S.)  
 You don't understand. I love him.

FRANK

You hurt him.

IRENE (O.S.)

But that was an accident, I swear it.

FRANK

Irene, please, listen to me. You can't call him anymore, or visit, or...

IRENE (O.S.)

But I...

FRANK

Just stay away from him. You'll only get yourself in more trouble.

IRENE (O.S.)

But I love him.

FRANK

You have to stop.

An awkward pause. Billy has struggled his eyes open to watch his parents through a haze on anesthesia.

IRENE (O.S.)

Is he really okay?

FRANK

(bitter)

He will be.

IRENE (O.S.)

The doctors are sure?

FRANK

Yeah.

IRENE (O.S.)

I mean completely, positively sure?

FRANK

He'll be fine.

IRENE (O.S.)

That's good. That's really...

(she suddenly starts to

sob)

Please let me talk to...

FRANK

(at the end of his

patience)

Irene, enough. This has got to end.

A beat, then a CLICK as Irene HANGS Up.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Without lights or sirens, a POLICE CAR hurtles past blurred neon.

It suddenly veers toward the curb and SQUEALS to a stop.

Flashing red lights come to life as the SPOTLIGHT hits a PAY PHONE.

It's empty.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

The lights are off and the vertical blinds are closed, but sunlight still manages to shaft in through the cracks.

LANSDALE

You comfortable? It's not too bright in here, is it?

Billy fidgets nervously in his bed. The detective sits in a nearby chair. Just the two of them.

BILLY

I'm fine.

LANSDALE

That's good.

She turns on a video camera setup on a tripod.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

So what I'd like us to do now is just talk about what happened. You know, fill in some of the details. That okay with you?

He's staring at the table, too uncomfortable to meet her gaze.

BILLY

Sure, I guess.

LANSDALE

Okay, let's start at the mall.

The boy looks up uneasily at the detective.

BILLY  
Ma'am?

LANSDALE  
Yes?

BILLY  
If you catch her...

LANSDALE  
When we catch her.

BILLY  
When you catch her...what're you  
gonna do to her?

LANSDALE  
I'm not going to do anything to  
her. That's up to the court.  
(a beat)  
What's on your mind, Billy?

BILLY  
Nothing. It's just that...I was  
thinking...maybe if I don't press  
charges, you guys could...

LANSDALE  
That's not really an option.

BILLY  
Why not?

LANSDALE  
'cause you're a kid. You're too  
young to make a decision like that.

BILLY  
But I don't wanna get her in  
trouble.

LANSDALE  
She's already in trouble. And she  
brought it on herself. What she did  
was wrong.

BILLY  
I know that, but...but she doesn't.

LANSDALE  
Billy, that's not really...

BILLY  
I mean, she doesn't understand what  
she did was wrong. I don't think  
she's quite...y'know...

Billy taps his temple.

LANSDALE

You're saying she's crazy?

BILLY

Well, kinda. I think she's been through some really bad stuff in her life and...I dunno, could use some help. You should send her to a doctor, not to jail.

LANSDALE

Like I said, that's not up to me.

BILLY

She didn't mean any harm.

Lansdale gives a tired SIGH.

LANSDALE

Yes, I understand. Irene's mother Kate Varley, died several months before Irene first kidnapped you. Traffic accident. I'm sure that tragedy was pretty hard on Irene, not to mention her dad, a Mr. Richard Varley. Did Irene ever talk about them?

BILLY

(lying)

No.

LANSDALE

Listen, Billy...very soon, you are going to have to testify in a court of law. So it's important that you understand one thing. If you get on that witness stand and say anything to protect her, and I mean anything...

(a dramatic pause)

...then the prosecutor will finally say out loud what everyone's been too polite to say, which is, you went with her to get laid, then stuck around to get laid some more, and to hell with your parents, and to hell with the agony you put them through.

Lansdale is quiet for a long moment to let Billy stew on this. The boy looks badly shaken.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

(cold)

So just tell me what happened.  
Okay?

The silence hangs like a sword over his head. Then, in a voice almost too soft to hear:

BILLY

No.

LANSDALE

Excuse me?

BILLY

I said no. I won't help you put her in jail.

She leans back with a resigned SIGH.

LANSDALE

You want me to be honest with you, Billy? I don't give a fuck who you have sex with. I really don't. Hell, I got laid younger than you and I turned out fine.

Billy looks stunned that this adult would talk to him like this.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

All I care about is that bitch beat you so bad, you needed a fucking operation.

BILLY

But she didn't.

LANSDALE

Stop protecting her, Billy, 'cause I will get her, with or without your...

BILLY

She didn't do this to me.

LANSDALE

Really? Then who did?

BILLY

I...fell down some stairs.

Lansdale LAUGHS.

LANSDALE

If I had a nickel for every time...

BILLY

It was her father.

LANSDALE  
 (startled)  
 Her what?

CUT TO:

EXT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

Lansdale is KNOCKING hard on the front door. From inside:

RICHARD (O.S.)  
 Who is it?

LANSDALE  
 Mr. Varley, my name is Detective  
 Lansdale. I'd like to ask you a few  
 questions?

After a beat, Richard cautiously opens the door. He looks as  
 you'd expect a few days after a severe beating.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)  
 Such as, what happened to you?

RICHARD  
 I had an accident.

LANSDALE  
 And that was...?

RICHARD  
 I fell down the stairs.

Her professionalism cracks and a LAUGH slips out.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
 Did I say something funny?

LANSDALE  
 Sorry. I need to ask you about  
 Irene.

RICHARD  
 Has she been arrested?

LANSDALE  
 Not yet.

He SIGHS deeply.

RICHARD  
 That poor girl. It never ends.

LANSDALE  
 Would you care to elaborate?

RICHARD  
It's...difficult to talk about.

LANSDALE  
Please try.

RICHARD  
(voice dripping with pain)  
Irene, she's, um...she'd always  
been a strange child. But the shock  
of her mother's death, it seems to  
have...well, the sad fact is, my  
daughter's insane.

LANSDALE  
I assume there's some record of her  
medical treatment.

RICHARD  
I'm afraid not. When I tried to  
take her to a doctor, she ran away.

LANSDALE  
So how does this "insanity" reveal  
itself?

RICHARD  
She lies. Constantly. Irene lives  
in a fantasy world, and if it's  
challenged, she can  
become...violent.

LANSDALE  
Did she beat you up?

RICHARD  
(annoyed)  
I already told you what...I'm a  
grown man, Detective, I can take  
care of myself. That boy,  
however...

LANSDALE  
You mean Billy?

RICHARD  
I assume that's why you're here. By  
the way, is he really eighteen?

LANSDALE  
Not quite.

RICHARD  
I thought he was lying. Anyway,  
they showed up here  
last...Thursday, I think. I let  
them stay, of course. I do what I  
can for her.

LANSDALE

Of course.

RICHARD

But right away, they started to fight. Lots of screaming. After a few days, well, the boy tried to go home and...

He trails off, distressed by the "memory".

LANSDALE

And...?

RICHARD

She went crazy. Hurt him pretty bad. I tried to stop her, but...

LANSDALE

Why didn't you call the police?

RICHARD

They left right after. Didn't tell me where they were going.

LANSDALE

(a thoughtful pause)

The boy said you beat him up.

RICHARD

What?! That's absurd, why would I...I barely knew him.

LANSDALE

So he's lying to protect a woman who put him in the hospital?

RICHARD

For God's sake, he was sleeping with her. You figure it out.

LANSDALE

I'd like to hear your theory.

RICHARD

He thinks he's in love. Don't you remember being a teenager? It's like being retarded.

LANSDALE

(a slight smile)

Good point. Would you mind coming to the hospital to talk to him?

RICHARD

Why would I want to do that?

LANSDALE

Because I have to clear up this matter and thought maybe you'd want to clear your name.

RICHARD

Of course I...

LANSDALE

Confronting the boy could help. I find that most people won't lie about you right to your face.

RICHARD

Am I being arrested?

LANSDALE

No. Not at this time.

A pause as he considers his options.

RICHARD

Then...good night.

He closes the door.

CUT TO:

INT. BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

Billy sleeps.

From across the room comes a small SOUND, barely audible.

His eyes open a fraction.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

Hi.

He bolts upright, eyes huge.

It's dark, save for a reading lamp in the farthest corner. It shines on Jennifer in a chair.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

It's okay, just me. Sorry I scared you.

He lets out a long breath and slumps back against the headboard.

BILLY

How long you been here?

JENNIFER

Awhile. Brought some homework. Quadratic equations.

Mentioning quadratic math has a slightly flirty context because of the steamy chick flick that they were watching originally. Setting her homework aside, she gets up and walks tentatively toward him.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

How ya doin'?

BILLY

There's a hole in my head.

JENNIFER

I always thought so.

A week ago he would've laughed. Now he just fidgets nervously, his manner distant.

BILLY

Where are my parents?

JENNIFER

They went home. Looked pretty tired.

BILLY

You saw 'em?

JENNIFER

That cop wouldn't let me in till they vouched for me. Musta thought I was Irene disguised as a kid.

Awkwardness hangs in the air between them. She points back at the reading lamp.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. They said I should leave the lights off.

BILLY

No, it's fine.

JENNIFER

She turn you into a vampire?

BILLY

Light hurts my eyes. 'Cause of the head trauma.

JENNIFER

Jeez. Forever?

BILLY

No, just...it'll go away...um, listen, Jennifer, I'm not really feeling that well.

JENNIFER

Oh, I'm sorry. Would you like me to get the nurse?

BILLY

Maybe I should just get some more sleep.

JENNIFER

Oh...I guess I should go.

BILLY

Yeah, I guess.

She makes no move to leave.

JENNIFER

Well...bye.

BILLY

Bye.

JENNIFER

I'll drop by tomorrow, okay?

BILLY

Sure. I'll be here.

JENNIFER

Okay.

BILLY

'kay.

She waits for a reprieve. None comes.

Lansdale enters and watches Jennifer leave. Lansdale turns to Billy and sees a tear in his eye.

LANSDALE

Billy?

BILLY

(weakly)  
Yes?

LANSDALE

I've been looking at the police report from when Irene kidnapped you ten years ago. There were some suggestions from one of Irene's aunts of sexual molestation by Irene's father Richard. Does that sound plausible to you.

BILLY

What?

LANSDALE

I'm talking about rape Billy. And I'm talking about incest. It would appear that these illegal sexual acts started after Irene's mother died.

BILLY

He tried to rape her. Richard did...I guess. They had these humongous fights.

Lansdale shows Billy an eleven year old photo of a very happy and healthy looking Richard, arms wrapped affectionately around wife Kate and thirteen-year-old Irene.

LANSDALE

That's a photo of Irene with her father Richard Varley and her mother Kate, just before Kate died.

Billy is visibly shocked. Richard looks very young, before the booze and the grief took it's toll. The family looks angelic, playful and serene.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

The booze will do that to you kid.

Lansdale shows Billy another photo, a news clipping of a happy and healthy teen age Boy Scout becoming an Eagle Scout. The photo is captioned "Richard Varley, new Eagle Scout Troop 504".

Billy chuckles at the photo of the clean cut teenage Richard and thinks about the stories that Richard told him about his high school hijinks.

BILLY

(to himself)

Bear trap.

LANSDALE

Do you have any idea what Irene's been doing for the last ten years since she originally kidnapped you?

BILLY

No.

LANSDALE

We don't know either. She fell completely off the grid. There's no record of her having a driver's license, going to school, no paper trail at all. As a fugitive felon, her options were limited. Maybe she became a crack whore or found some sugar daddy. Who knows.

(MORE)

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

After Kate Varley died, Richard Varley sold his home here in town and moved to that farm house where you stayed. It's been in his family for several decades.

Billy has no answers about Irene's past.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

Billy, why did you run away with Irene?

BILLY

Because of...her.

LANSDALE

Who, Irene?

BILLY

No...Jennifer.

LANSDALE

But you already had Jennifer. She's your girlfriend. Right?

BILLY

Not really. Not in the way that mattered.

LANSDALE

Jennifer is...this is all about Jennifer, not Irene?

BILLY

Irene did something really good for me, even though I guess that it's wrong. When I woke up in the morning, Irene was there. And she wasn't wearing any clothes. And she looked really, really...nice. And then she'd kiss me. And then she'd...

(restrained smirk)

And then she'd tell me how much she loved me.

LANSDALE

And so what was the problem, Romeo?

BILLY

Irene wasn't Jennifer. She's nice and all and she's really sexy. But she's kinda...stupid.

LANSDALE

(smirk)

That she is.

BILLY

What I really wanted to do was wake up with Jennifer. I can talk to her, or at least I thought that I could. I want to do with Jennifer what I did with Irene. But Jen wouldn't let me. She got really mad.

Lansdale leans back, smiling. It's all about sex. Some things in life never change.

LANSDALE

You know Billy, I also ran away from home when I was your age. I was fourteen and he was twenty. His name was Robin and he rode this hog. I met him at the arcade.

BILLY

What's a hog?

LANSDALE

It's a really bitchin' motorcycle, a Harley. And Robin was the sexiest thing. And he swept me off my feet.

BILLY

(getting interested)  
How did he do that?

LANSDALE

He wasn't afraid of anything. Especially me. I ran off with him and we went camping by the river, the Murray. We got drunk, we fucked all night, starting at sunset and then all night long.

Billy is once again shocked that Lansdale would tell a kid these things.

BILLY

What happened then?

LANSDALE

He went swimming, I guess...but we were drinking...

BILLY

And?

LANSDALE

I woke up the next morning and he wasn't in the sleeping bag with me. So I got up and looked around.

(MORE)

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

His body was floating in the river,  
stuck on a branch. He got drunk and  
then drowned.

Billy is stunned.

BILLY

What happened then?

LANSDALE

I got on Robin's hog and I drove  
back home. Big bike. Good thing I  
was tall for my age. My mother  
didn't punish me. She was sort of a  
free thinker. My mom, she cried  
with me. She knew what it was like  
to be in love at fourteen. And when  
I say in love, I mean a really  
crazy kind of obsession, that could  
make a girl do anything. You know,  
deep inside most girls is a little  
drama queen, this wild animal that  
wants to get out.

BILLY

You mean like Irene?

LANSDALE

No, not quite that insane. I never  
kidnapped anyone. But every girl  
dreams of being bad. With the right  
man, anyway. All that you have to  
do is figure out how to be that  
man. Any girl will admit this, *if*  
she's telling the truth.

BILLY

So was Jennifer was lying to me?

LANSDALE

Lying about what?

BILLY

About wanting to...to have sex with  
me.

LANSDALE

Women lie to themselves. About who  
they really are. Sure, lots of men  
will lie to women, they'll say  
anything to get into the sack with  
a dame. And conversely, some women  
will believe anything to get that  
guy into bed with her.

BILLY

So what do I do now? With Jennifer?

LANSDALE

You have to understand that boys and girls think differently. Men use love to get sex and women use sex to get love. Which did you use with Irene?

BILLY

I was four. I didn't use anything.

LANSDALE

All that a four-year-old has is love.

Billy is still confused.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

So with Jennifer, maybe you got love and sex backwards. Maybe you have to wait a little longer. Not every girl was a precocious little slut like me. Billy, don't do any more stupid things, like run away from home, like I did. Try to think like a girl, see things from her crazed point of view. And then maybe things can work out with Jennifer.

BILLY

So what does Jennifer want?

LANSDALE

What all women want. To be swept away in a sea of passion. And just when she's least expecting it. Sex is always best with someone that you love. Or that you hate.

Lansdale exits the hospital room past OFFICER JACOBSON, a uniformed policeman. He sits in a chair outside Billy's door, reading a paperback.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

We MOVE with Jennifer as she wanders down the hall, dazed by rejection. Then her pace quickens, her face scrunching up to fight back tears. She starts to RUN...

...toward an approaching NURSE:

It's Irene, of course, dressed like one, Florence Nightingale white apron and cap, too vain to wear the scrubs of the other nurses. As she walks, she pretends to consult a chart stolen from the foot of some patient's bed.

Her hair is now cropped short and dyed another color.

As Jennifer flies past, IRENE recognizes her. Without slowing, she lets slip a flash of anger, looking over her shoulder to watch the teenager rush off.

Then she returns her gaze to the chart and continues her steady march toward Jacobson.

With a quick glance, Jacobson casually admires the figure of the approaching nurse, then returns to his book.

As Irene walks past the officer, she pulls something from her pocket, then abruptly turns toward him.

Realizing he screwed up, Jacobson goes for his gun, but too late.

Irene also has a GUN and it's pointed at his face.

JACOBSON

Fuck.

IRENE

Shhhh.

Jacobson's eyes shift left (an empty hallway) and right (a far off nursing station), then back to Irene.

JACOBSON

Miss Varley...

IRENE

Inside.

Jacobson looks into her eyes and sees the righteous fanaticism. She would kill him if necessary.

He carefully lowers his hand from the grip of his gun, stands, and steps into...

BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Irene follows the policeman in, as she flicks a switch and floods the room with fluorescent light.

Startled, the boy sits up, covering his squinting eyes.

BILLY

Irene?

IRENE

Hi.

JACOBSON

Miss Varley, please...

IRENE

Shhhh. Give me your gun.

He slowly draws it from the holster and slides it across the floor. Billy watches in amazement.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
And your radio. Billy, get dressed.

The boy doesn't move. Jacobson pulls the radio from his belt, then slides it to her.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Get in the closet.

JACOBSON  
Please don't do this.

IRENE  
The closet. Handcuff yourself to the pole and throw me the key.

Angry and humiliated, Jacobson does as he's told.

When he's safely restrained inside, she shuts the closet door.

Then she turns toward Billy, inadvertently POINTING THE GUN AT HIM.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
I'm so happy to see...

Horrified, he jerks back against the headboard, not breathing. Startled by his reaction, she follows his terrified gaze down to the gun in her hand.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Oh God, Billy, you didn't think I was gonna...?

She stuffs it in her pocket and rushes to him.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
I would never hurt you. Never. I'd cut off my hands before I'd...

Overwhelmed, she hugs him, her voice choked with emotion.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
I missed you so much. C'mon, get dressed, we'll celebrate later.

BILLY  
But I can't just...

IRENE  
Billy, there's no time to talk now, we have to leave.

BILLY  
But I'm sick.

IRENE  
No, you'll be fine. Your dad said so.

BILLY  
I should really stay.

IRENE  
(incredulous)  
How can you say that? You're like a prisoner here. They've got guards on the door, they won't let you talk on the phone. Face it, Billy, you might as well be under arrest. And I'm here to set you free.

BILLY  
They're just trying to protect me.

IRENE  
From what?! I'm not going to hurt you. I love you.

BILLY  
Irene...

IRENE  
(her tone softens)  
Billy, I've got something important to tell you.

BILLY  
(cautiously)  
What?

Words won't do this moment justice. She reaches into a pocket and pulls out a flat white plastic stick. She holds it up triumphantly, close to his face. There's a small window with a blue plus sign.

Billy stares at it, baffled. She gives him a huge grin.

IRENE  
Our baby. He's inside me.

BILLY  
You're...

IRENE  
So you see, I had to come back. I had no choice. I owed it to our baby to bring you home. 'cause he needs his father. One parent families, they just don't work. A child needs both of his...

Irene just now notices a tear sliding down Billy's stunned face.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Billy, what's wrong?

Suddenly, Billy loses it, breaking down completely. Tears stream, convulsive sobs rack his body.

She tenderly cups his face in her hands.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Shhhh, it's okay. Shhhh.

BILLY  
But I don't want a baby.

IRENE  
Of course you do. That's why people fall in love in the first place. To create a child.

Her hands drop to her chest and open the locket.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
Trust me, Billy, our baby's gonna be so beautiful...

She lifts it to his eyes, shows him his own four-year-old face.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
...'cause you are.

BILLY  
But I'm...I mean, I'm not really old enough to...

IRENE  
Billy, we've been through this, remember? 'bout how everyone has to grow up?

BILLY  
But I don't want a baby.

Anger creeps into her voice.

IRENE  
Listen, I know this is a big responsibility, but you have to... Billy, I want you to stop crying, okay? It's getting on my nerves.

BILLY  
I'm sorry.

Sniffling, he tries to fight back the tears.

IRENE

It's okay, just stop crying. You have to be an adult about this. You have a responsibility to your child. But that's not a bad thing. It's just a part of growing up. Do you understand?

She takes his hands in hers.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Do you?

BILLY

Yeah.

IRENE

That's good. Now put on your clothes and let's go.

BILLY

I...can't.

A long, tense pause.

Still holding his hands, Irene suddenly LUNGES BACKWARDS, YANKING the startled boy head-first OFF THE BED.

Still tangled by the sheets, he tumbles to the floor, landing with a GRUNT on his side.

As she tries to pull him to his feet, he struggles loose, then quickly scuttles under the bed. She clings to his ankle.

IRENE

Stop it, you're acting like a baby!

BILLY

Lemme go!

He kicks free, crawls out of reach.

She throws up her hands in frustration and goes around to the other side of the bed.

There she finds Billy huddled against the night stand, face hidden behind his knees. She glares down at him.

IRENE

Billy? What kind of man gets a girl pregnant, then refuses to...? LOOK AT ME!!!

He looks up, scared and very young.

The RADIO on the floor SQUAWKS to life.

LANSDALE (O.S.)  
Hey, Jacobson, is the kid awake? I  
need to talk to him again.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT

Through the automatic doors, we MOVE with Lansdale as she walks out of the night into the bright lobby.

LANSDALE  
(into her radio)  
Jacobson...? Jacobson?! Oh shit.

Lansdale bolts into the hospital.

INT. BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Stunned silence.

Then Irene snaps into action. She grabs a bottle of rubbing alcohol and douses the curtain with it. She reaches into her pocket.

BILLY  
Irene, what're you...?

IRENE  
Trust me.

She pulls out a CIGARETTE LIGHTER and flicks on the FLAME.

Then she lifts the flame to the curtain and it dramatically ignites.

BILLY  
No, don't, there are sick people...

A spray of WATER rains down from the SPRINKLER.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Lansdale runs down an empty hall, yelling into her radio.

LANSDALE  
...and a possible officer down! I  
need as much backup as...

Her voice is drowned out by the FIRE ALARM.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)  
God dammit!

Lansdale now has to carefully weave her way through the panicked crowd.

INT. BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

IRENE

Please, Billy, don't leave me alone!

BILLY

You gotta get outta here.

IRENE

(talking fast)

I'm not leaving without you and if we stay they'll catch me and throw me in jail and our son'll be raised in prison. Is that what you want?

BILLY

Reenee, please, if you don't go, they'll arrest...

IRENE

Come with me. We can start over.

BILLY

No.

She starts to speak, but he cuts her off.

BILLY (CONT'D)

No!!

(then softer)

No.

A long beat as it finally sinks in. Mascara runs down her face and a sad calm descends.

IRENE

Will you miss me?

BILLY

Yes.

IRENE

Promise?

BILLY

I promise. You better go.

She leans in and gives him a heartbroken kiss.

IRENE

No one will ever love you like I do.

Irene pours more rubbing alcohol on an empty gurney, sets it ablaze, opens the doors and shoots the flaming bed into the corridor, igniting another curtain outside. Then she's on her feet and heading toward the door.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Nurses scurry among the terrified patients, directing traffic and pushing wheelchairs through the smoke and sprinkler rain. Evacuees rush en masse down the hall. Others grab fire extinguishers, in the chaos.

Irene steps out of Billy's room and joins them.

INT. BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

He watches the closed door as though hypnotized.

POUNGING from inside the CLOSET. The boy lets out a startled GASP, having forgotten the handcuffed officer was there.

With barely the energy to accomplish it, Billy gets up and opens the closet.

JACOBSON

Find a cop.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Drawn along by the crowd, Irene approaches the stairwell.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL

Lansdale struggles upward against the descending tide of people.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

When Irene sees the detective come through the doorway, she freezes. She knows instinctively who this angry looking woman is.

Lansdale also stops, not fooled for a moment by the nurse costume.

For a beat, the two woman stare at each other, drenched, the mob surging past.

LANSDALE

Irene...

Irene turns and plunges back the way she came, forcing her way between terrified patients. Lansdale bolts after her.

Dodging wheelchairs and gurneys, Irene scrambles through the crowd, Lansdale on her heels. People scatter before them.

When BILLY steps out of his room into the corridor, he sees Irene and Lansdale rushing toward him through the downpour and smoke.

And they see him.

IRENE  
BILLEEEEE!!!!

LANSDALE  
Get outta the way!!

Billy presses his back to the wall.

He watches Irene's desperate face approach.

Gaining on her, Lansdale stretches out her arm, grasping fingers inches from Irene's collar.

As they hurtle past Billy...

He thrusts out his leg.

The detective trips, sails through the air and goes down hard, sprawled on her stomach as she slides along the wet linoleum.

Irene plunges into the crowd...

...and is gone.

Lansdale scrambles to her feet, unable to believe what's just happened. She stares down the hall at where Irene used to be.

The she turns on the boy, enraged.

LANSDALE (CONT'D)  
You little fucker!

Unashamed, Billy meets the detective's fiery gaze.

She suddenly charges toward him while reaching into her jacket. Billy is startled. Is she really going to pull a gun on him?

Of course not, Lansdale takes out her radio as she SHOVES past him. She slams through the door to his room to check on Jacobson's fate.

As it swings shut behind her, Billy leans against the wall, exhausted.

We PULL BACK. The boy is eclipsed from view by crowds of evacuees crisscrossing through the artificial rain.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL YARD

Billy and Jennifer walk through the busy school yard, nervously not looking at one another. Billy still has his head bandages on, it is just a few days after Irene's escape.

Stan approaches Billy, smiles an evil grin and High Fives Billy, pointedly ignoring Jennifer.

STAN

Hey Billy. How's the rock star?

(to Jennifer)

And how's the virgin queen?

As Billy and the disgusted Jennifer move past Stan, the crowd of students around Billy and Jennifer grows in size. The students know about Billy's kidnapping, from the news reports. Some gawk, some whisper, others give knowing smirks of admiration to Billy, "I'm not worthy" bows and faux military salutes.

Stan smiles at Billy and then starts chanting:

STAN (CONT'D)

Billy, Billy, Billy!

The crowd of students gets caught up in the mob like frenzy that Stan is whipping up. The crowd's chanting of Billy's name becomes louder and more rhythmic.

Two flirty sixteen-year-old Mean Girls, friends NINA and JOHNETTE appear. Nina wears a halter and low cut jeans and Johnette sports a tube top and frilly skirt. They are a couple of years older and more corrupted than Billy and Jennifer.

Johnette looks at Nina for approval and then teasingly pulls down her tube top flashing Billy with her breast.

Jennifer is shocked.

STAN (CONT'D)

Wardrobe malfunction!

Still chanting, the crowd roars its' approval. Now emboldened, Nina pulls up her halter top, also revealing her breasts to all.

The crowd yells again!

Nina and Johnette giggle at one another and at Jennifer, while Stan continues to egg on the mob. BUBBA, a tall, muscular football player in a letterman jacket looks at Jennifer, who nervously refuses Bubba's stare.

Jennifer looks mortified and Billy saddened, as we push into their faces. The chanting of Billy's name reverberates.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Billy is in a hospital style bed that has been temporarily setup in the center of his bedroom. He continues to wear his head bandage. His normal bunk bed is still at the side of the room.

Jennifer sits silently in a chair, pretending to read a book. They glare at one another. Impasse.

JENNIFER

Billy...can you do me a favor?

BILLY

Yes.

JENNIFER

Could you tell me what happened with you and Irene? When she kidnapped you.

BILLY

I told Detective Lansdale everything that happened. You could ask her.

JENNIFER

If you told her, then you could tell me.

BILLY

No I can't...I tried to tell you before, but you didn't listen.

JENNIFER

Billy, I'm your girlfriend. Your special person. You can trust me with anything.

BILLY

I tried to tell you before. But you...said no. And stop with calling me your boyfriend. You don't know what that means.

JENNIFER

What did I say no to?

BILLY

You know what you said no to... during the movie and algebra.

JENNIFER

No, I don't know what you mean... maybe you could teach me what it means to be your girlfriend. I get straight A's in every other subject. Did Irene teach you?

BILLY  
 Maybe you're too young to learn the  
 subject.

JENNIFER  
 Were you too young?

Billy doesn't want to talk about the fact that Irene had sex  
 with him and Jennifer wouldn't.

Another impasse. And so Jennifer goes back to reading.

And then Billy notices *which* book.

Dread Desire.

BILLY  
 (slightly panicked)  
 How did that you get *that*?

JENNIFER  
 What?

BILLY  
*That book.*

JENNIFER  
 Oh, it's good...it's sort of dumb.  
 I don't think that you would like  
 it.

BILLY  
 Maybe I would.

JENNIFER  
 It's sort of for girls.

BILLY  
*That I know.*

Jennifer is inquisitive.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
 Read it to me. Out loud.

JENNIFER  
 What?

BILLY  
 Read it to me.

Jennifer has no idea about why Billy would want to be read  
 to, especially from a romance novel. But she starts reading  
 aloud anyway.

JENNIFER  
 In love, timing is everything,  
 thought Shaundra.  
 (MORE)

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

For if she had been the Count's first and only love, maybe the carnal world of flesh and temptation would not have hardened his soul to her adoration of him. Could not the count see that Shaundra was his true love? A woman who still saw the inner beauty of that sweet boy from long ago, poised on the slippery precipice between the innocence of youth and the depravity of adulthood.

Billy interrupts, reciting aloud the next paragraph of the book, *from memory*.

BILLY

Were the star crossed lovers never to be soul mates? His love was so close, yet so far. In his long absence, she had saved herself for him. But in Paris he betrayed her, and had returned from the continent a cold hearted monster, a serial manipulator of female flesh.

Billy nods to Jennifer to continue reading aloud.

JENNIFER

No man can know the secrets in a woman's heart. How cruel that the Count could always intuit and thus possess Shaundra's deepest confidences, nay her very being. But then he crushed her love beneath his boots.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(Looking up)

Wow.

BILLY

Yes, wow.

JENNIFER

Do you think that Shaundra and the Count will ever find true love?

BILLY

I haven't finished reading the book, so I don't know yet. But I think that Shaundra was a little too young to really understand love.

JENNIFER

Juliet was only thirteen when she married Romeo.

BILLY

And look what happened to them!

Billy goes to his computer and plays an adorable home movie of Billy and Jennifer from when they were eight-years-old. It is of a cotillion, training for children in ballroom dancing and etiquette.

The eight-year-old Billy and Jennifer on video are formally dressed, as if at a prom. She wears a gown and white gloves, plus a corsage. He wears a suit.

The home movie Billy bows to Jennifer, asking for a dance. She curtseys back. The contemporary Billy/Jennifer do the same.

We intercut between the video screen couple dancing, and Billy and Jennifer doing the same steps. On video the children waltz, Billy and Jennifer box step.

On screen the eight-year-old Billy dips Jennifer and the current Jennifer giggles as they mimic the video, their lips inches apart.

Billy and Jennifer slow dance, nice and close.

JENNIFER

At cotillion, my mother used to say that dancing is like making love standing up.

BILLY

Adults can be so weird. But that is probably true.

JENNIFER

You were so adorable when we were eight.

BILLY

I had two left feet.

JENNIFER

That is so true! But you were cute with your bow tie and those shiny black shoes.

BILLY

I loved your white gloves. When the light was behind you, I could see right through your dress.

JENNIFER

Boys.

The on-screen children dance the bunny hop, as do Billy and Jennifer.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Did you like the bunny hop?

Billy smiles at the memory, hums the Bunny Hop theme along with the TV and caresses her waist from behind, as they hop to the silly rhythm.

BILLY

I loved holding your hips.

The cotillion home movie ends with a close up of little Billy and Jennifer dancing cheek to cheek. There is an awkward silence between the modern Billy and Jennifer, as they are still cheek to cheek as the music abruptly ends and they are now embarrassed in their embrace.

And so Billy goes to the TV and turns on the romance film Inside Of Me, which was originally playing when Billy was first rejected, trying to touch Jennifer's breast.

The BEAUTIFUL ACTRESS and HANDSOME BOYFRIEND in the film on the TV are in a love montage, dancing.

The film Inside Of Me switches to the love theme music and the on-screen couple is in the water again, her wet diaphanous dress now sheer and clingy.

Billy and Jennifer notice that the pivotal scene is playing.

Billy runs his hands through Jennifer's hair. She turns, looks at him and kisses him deeply.

BILLY (CONT'D)

(mock romance)

Hello, Shaundra.

JENNIFER

Hello, Count. Why didn't you wait for me?

BILLY

Why did you make me wait?

JENNIFER

(sadly)

I don't know.

On screen HANDSOME BOYFRIEND's hand grazes the BEAUTIFUL ACTRESS's breast. Billy and Jennifer dance close.

BILLY

If I were older, like those football players...or we were older, would it have been better?

JENNIFER

Sometimes you were too, I don't know...nice.

BILLY

Am I being too nice now?

JENNIFER

(melting)

You are just right...

Billy smiles and massages Jennifer's breast, as in the on-screen film.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(ooohing with pleasure)

No...no...

And then Jennifer's "no" stops meaning "yes", the "no" starts *really* meaning "no" and she screams. Billy has once again moved too fast.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

No!

BILLY

Soul mates, huh? You're no Shaundra.

JENNIFER

You're no Count.

BILLY

Oh yes I am! You know what I liked about Irene? I could do whatever I wanted without getting yelled at. You treat me like a boy. You Virgin Whore!

JENNIFER

What?!

BILLY

Virgin and whore, both at the same time!

Jennifer starts crying and climbs into the upper bunk bed, looking down at Billy in the hospital bed.

JENNIFER

Fuck you, Billy! You don't know anything!

She pulls a pillow over her head.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is about an hour later.

Billy is alone in bed. Until he feels an arm lovingly wrap around him.

BILLY  
(happily)  
Jennifer...?

Billy smiles and turns to embrace her. Except that it is Irene in bed with Billy, not Jennifer!

IRENE  
My name is Irene, not Jennifer.  
You're not still thinking about  
that bitch.

BILLY  
Irene...

Irene gets astride Billy and boldly mounts him. Billy's resistance fades slightly as Irene is penetrated.

IRENE  
Billy, let's make another baby. I'm  
already pregnant with our first  
child, maybe if we do it again we  
could have twins.

As Billy's face grimaces with the biological impossibility of Irene's bizarre twins idea, he catches Jennifer's eye. Irene does not know that Jennifer is hidden in the upper bunk bed, with a bird's eye, voyeuristic view of their lovemaking. Jennifer wants to run, to call the police. But Jennifer realizes that Irene might be armed and could *kill* her. Exit through the bedroom door might be blocked by Irene, a woman who will do anything to get the man that she wants.

As Billy locks eyes with Jennifer, he becomes defiant. And like the Stockholm Syndrome, Jennifer surrenders to the moment. And to the lure of the unknown...

MONTAGE BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer watches Billy and Irene make love, with morbid fascination and repulsion. It is one thing to see explicit love making in a romance film, another in person. These are acts that she has never seen so close and the variety, romance and subtlety of the sex surprises her. Jennifer is both attracted and repelled.

And who is Jennifer to interfere, she thinks? Yes, what Billy and Irene are doing is illegal and weird. But Billy has Free Will and Jennifer is going to let Billy exercise it, for this moment for Jennifer exposes deep buried mysteries.

This love making montage has the feel of a music video, hard rock music for the first part (The Mirrors I Don't Know) plays, with dramatic camera crane movements orbiting around the scene.

Billy and Irene's embracing shadows dance on the wall behind Jennifer.

The second part of the montage uses softer music. The classic Turtles song So Happy Together plays. The song provides irony and counter-point when combined with voyeur Jennifer watching Bill and Irene making love.

Irene clutches her locket of Billy, as she spasms with pleasure in his embrace.

Billy continues to secretly make eye contact with Jennifer, unbeknownst to Irene. With Billy's expressions he challenges Jennifer, almost saying, "This could be you. This *should* be you".

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Later, Billy and Irene are finally asleep, spooning in bed.

Irene awakens to see Jennifer looming over them.

JENNIFER

He's mine. Get out.

Irene looks over at Billy, who is now awake. Billy motions with his eyes for Irene to leave.

But Irene's expression is still defiant. So Jennifer rips the bedspread off of Irene, leaving her naked and vulnerable. Irene defensively covers her body with her arms and pulls up her legs, almost to the fetal position.

Irene looks up at the top bunk bed. And then looks at Jennifer. And then...Irene knows that she was *watched*. Irene sadly looks at Billy, whose look confirms that he has *played* Irene by having sex with her in front of Jennifer. Betrayal. And the loss of innocence.

IRENE

(to Billy)

*She saw us?*

JENNIFER

Scat!

It's two against one and Irene senses that she has lost.

IRENE

(to Billy)

You pig!

Irene hurried gets dressed and ready to leave, under Jennifer's watchful stare.

But then Irene has an epiphany and rethinks her retreat.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
 (to Jennifer)  
 You little *bitch*! You little  
 cheater. Billy, how could you leave  
 me for this whore who fucks foot  
 ball players.

Billy looks confused. Irene rips off her top, exposing her breasts and pointing to them.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
 Billy! Listen, to me. You're giving  
 up *these* for that two timing cow.  
 No one will ever love you like I  
 do.

The topless Irene screams and prepares to attack Jennifer.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
 (to Jennifer)  
 You whore!

BUT A TASER DART PIERCES IRENE'S BREAST.

The camera cuts to reveal Lansdale at the shooting end of the TASER.

Irene does a stunned double take, looking from the dart in her chest, up to the detective.

LANSDALE  
 Ms. Varley, please shut up.

Lansdale pulls the trigger and Irene collapses to the floor with the 50,000 volt shock.

The commotion has roused Betty and Frank and they arrive just in time to see Irene writhing on the ground.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Police lights from outside play over the room, as the shackled Irene is strapped into a gurney by EMTs. Frank comforts Billy and Betty comforts Jennifer, as Lansdale wraps up the arrest.

Billy and Jennifer hold hands as the police start to wheel Irene out.

IRENE  
 (to Jennifer)  
 Thanks for lending Billy to me.

JENNIFER

Thanks for borrowing him from me.

IRENE

(to Billy)

No one will ever love you like I  
do. *No one.*

A look of disbelief is on Frank and Betty's face. But with Irene wheeled out, Frank and Betty go back to bed.

The romantic and bittersweet Jann Arden song All the Days swells up.

Jennifer gets into bed with Billy.

They are both clothed. Jennifer looks deeply at Billy and then cuddles with him.

Jennifer gets up, and sits astride Billy, cow girl style. She romantically grazes Billy's shirt with her fingers.

She takes off her top, leaving on her bra. She slides her pelvis off of Billy and then cuddles with him again.

JENNIFER

(facetiously)

Show me how. Show me how to love  
you.

And Jennifer kisses Billy deeply.

Jennifer squeezes Billy tightly, as if to keep him from ever being stolen away again.

EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE

Irene is carted away by the paramedics, still being strapped into the gurney.

Lansdale considers her.

Irene caresses her supposedly pregnant abdomen somewhat manically, staring back at Billy's window as she is loaded into the ambulance. Through the window, Irene sadly views Billy and Jennifer cuddling.

INT IRENE IN AMBULANCE

MONTAGE - FLASHBACK to a montage of Irene's memories.

Irene is fourteen. In slow motion she is happily running through the park with her pre alcoholic father Richard, prancing Golden Retriever SONNY and beautiful mother Kate.

Richard, Kate and Irene play baseball. We cut close to Richard tossing the ball back and forth with Irene, just as he later did with Billy at the farmhouse.

INT YOUNG IRENE BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Richard and Kate look lovingly into the bedroom of their daughter, fourteen year old Irene. They kiss. And we dissolve into Richard and Kate in their bedroom, romantically and passionately making love.

DISSOLVE TO:

KATE'S CAR - INT FLASHBACK

Richard and Kate are in the front seats, dog Sonny and fourteen year old Irene riding in the back. As Kate drives she lovingly caresses Richard. But Kate is not paying attention to the road, but to Richard. Terror crosses the faces of the four occupants as the bliss is broken up by the honking of oncoming traffic. The car crashes into a truck and flips over, in slow motion. The vehicle spins over and over.

As the car comes to a stop, we see the faces of Irene, Richard and Sonny. The dog clamors over to Kate, licking her face. But Kate's head is bloodied, slumped over the steering wheel. She does not move...

DISSOLVE TO:

Irene, Sonny and Richard at Kate's funeral. Richard is devastated, slumped over and clinging onto young Irene for emotional support. Sonny is smiling and happy, as always. The tombstone has an engraved mezzotint portrait of Richard, Kate, Sonny and Irene, in a romance novel type of painting, reminiscent of the cover of Dread Desire.

DISSOLVE TO:

A broken, drunken Richard raping the fourteen-year-old Irene. She is terrified as she runs from Richard and cries when she is finally caught, subdued and raped.

DISSOLVE TO:

In flashback we repeat the scene of fourteen-year-old Irene lovingly baby sitting the four-year-old Billy, then kidnapping him.

BILLY AND IRENE'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

Flash forward to the current Irene happily making love with fourteen-year-old Billy (two weeks ago). The scene has an idyllic and dreamy quality to it.

## IRENE SEEDY HOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

One week previous, Irene is in a flea bag hotel. The lighting is green and sickly from the cheap fluorescent lights. Irene sadly looks at her Home Pregnancy Test HPT stick, which is *negative* (one week ago). Irene then applies *food coloring* to the HPT stick, so that it appears to be *positive* for pregnancy.

She holds the HPT up to the light, admiring her fraudulent handiwork. We now know that Irene was not actually pregnant.

## BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK - FOUR DAYS PREVIOUS

We reprise the scene of Irene in the hospital, *lying* to Billy about her being pregnant.

## HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

In the hospital hallway Jennifer runs away from Billy, passing by Irene, but from a different camera angle. So now it is revealed that she *runs into the arms of Bubba*, the letterman jock football player from the earlier "rock star" scene at the school, where the students chant Billy's name. Jennifer cries as she deep kisses Bubba. She pulls away from Bubba, her fingertips touching, as she is torn between two very different beaus.

Irene and Jennifer's eyes meet. Irene now knows Jennifer's secret, that she has cheated on Billy. Jennifer shoots a look of guilt at Irene, whose icy stare at Jennifer is now twice as cold as it was a moment before.

Jennifer runs from Bubba and Irene, the actual events now revealed.

## FLASH FORWARD - BILLY'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

The camera pulls out from Jennifer's conflicted face, as we see that we are current day, with her still in Billy's embrace.

## INT LANSDALE IN AMBULANCE

The camera pushes into Lansdale's face as we FLASH BACK to:

## RIVER BANK DUSK - FLASHBACK

The fourteen-year-old YOUNG LANSDALE is making out with her older handsome and shirtless boyfriend Robin. They recline on a sleeping bag on the shore, while Robin's hands run through Lansdale's hair. Young Lansdale passionately nibbles Robin's lips and then her mouth moves to Robin's bare chest.

One of Robin's hands caresses Lansdale's butt and the other teases her breast.

Lansdale looks into Robin's eyes with adoration and passion. She leans onto her back and pulls Robin on top of her. Young Lansdale surrenders...

RIVER BANK SUNRISE - FLASHBACK

Lansdale awakens alone in the sleeping bag, the embers of their campfire still smoldering.

Lansdale can still feel Robin inside of her from the night before.

But where is he?

Lansdale walks along the pastoral shore line, the sound of rapids in the distance.

And then...

She finds the drunken and drowned Robin in the river, bobbing around, stuck on a branch. His bottle of alcohol floats nonchalantly nearby. Robin's body is bloated and almost unrecognizable.

Lansdale pulls back in disgust and shock.

Young Lansdale staggers back to the camp site. She gathers her emotional strength and rides off on Robin's Harley.

INT LANSDALE IN AMBULANCE - PRESENT

FLASH FORWARD into the current day ambulance. The camera pulls out on Lansdale's face. She is crying.

INT BILLY BEDROOM - FLASH BACK

We repeat the voyeur scene with Irene in Billy's bedroom, covertly watched by Jennifer.

Irene straddles Billy cow girl style, making love to him.

She pumps her pelvis, holding the locket in one hand and presses her other hand to Billy's shoulder.

Irene has a deranged look on her face as Billy ejaculates inside of her.

IRENE

*I'm going to have our baby, Billy.*

## BILLY'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

Close on Billy's face, as he sleeps with Jennifer. Billy awakens with a start, his eyes opening in shock. Billy has a shocking epiphany dawn on him, that Irene was insuring that she really was pregnant when she had sex with him again earlier that night. Irene's line echoes through Billy's thoughts.

IRENE

*I'm going to have our baby, Billy.*

Billy looks over at Jennifer. He flashes back to Irene earlier that night.

IRENE (CONT'D)

(to Jennifer)

You little bitch! You little cheater. Billy, how could you leave me for this whore who fucks football players?

Billy flashes back to the school yard scene where the students chant Billy's name.

## SCHOOL YARD - FLASHBACK

Unseen in the previous "rock star" scene is Billy now observing uncomfortable and incriminating body language and glances between Jennifer and Bubba.

## BILLY'S BEDROOM

FLASH FORWARD to present. Billy is cuddling with the sleeping Jennifer, but a frown crosses over his face. Jennifer awakens with a shock.

BILLY

(accusing)

*Bubba!?*

## FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY - FLASHBACK

Jennifer is with her friends at the field, during the Varsity football practice. Bubba is going through athletic drills with the team. It is hot and he takes off his shirt. He is tall, sweaty and muscular.

Jennifer makes guilty and confused eye contact with Bubba. Something sexual stirs within her that she has not felt up to this point with Billy.

EXT. RICHARD'S FRONT YARD - FLASHBACK

Richard and Billy toss the BASEBALL, in flashback.

BILLY

Yeah, the football team. The really cute ones are doin' Seniors. Or older.

RICHARD

Some things never change. Still, we already know you can attract older woman.

BILLY'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

Flash forward, Billy with Jennifer.

BILLY

*Bubba?*

BUBBA'S PICKUP TRUCK - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Bubba is having sex with Jennifer doggy style, in the Astroturf lined bed of his pickup truck. She does not look happy. Bubba is rough and insensitive.

BILLY'S BEDROOM - CURRENT

JENNIFER

(guiltily)

Bubba...he's awful. And he's stupid...he's no count. He's not you...I was confused.

Billy is furious. He grabs Jennifer roughly.

BILLY

All that time, when I was doing it with Irene. I was always thinking of you. Who were you thinking of? With Bubba. When you fucked him.

JENNIFER

(lying)

I don't know.

Billy angrily feels up Jennifer's breast.

BILLY

Who are you thinking of now?

JENNIFER

You...

BILLY

For real?

Jennifer makes peace. She gently pulls down Billy's pants, leaving his underwear on. She lays her head down on his crotch, nuzzling the cloth.

She moves her face up to Billy's chest, kisses it and then lays her head against's Billy's.

JENNIFER

I saw what you did with Irene.

Silence..

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I want you to do that with me.  
Okay? Can you forgive me?

Billy softens. He starts gently making love with Jennifer. He strokes her hair. He looks into her eyes. He takes his time.

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

A disheveled Richard is alone in his farmhouse bed, curled up with a vodka bottle, crying. The camera pushes into his bruised and saddened face, as he thinks of his deceased wife Kate.

RICHARD AND KATE BEDROOM - FLASHBACK TEN YEARS

The camera dollies around the naked Richard and Kate. They are on their knees, embracing on the bed. As the camera orbits around, it reveals that the dog Sonny and Richard's cat SEYMOUR are happily watching their masters make love. Seymour is cuddled up with the dog and affectionately licks Sonny, mirroring the affection that Richard and Kate are showing one another.

RIVER BANK DUSK - FLASHBACK

Young Lansdale and Robin make love very passionately on the shore of the beach.

INT LANSDALE IN AMBULANCE

Lansdale has a tear in her eye. A part of her still loves deceased bad boy, alcoholic statutory rapist Robin, from forty years back.

## EXT. FIELD NEAR RICHARD'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK

Irene and Billy chase each other as before, through the waist-high weeds.

They meet, embrace, take off their clothes and make love in the open field.

## INT IRENE IN AMBULANCE - CURRENT

Flash forward to current, shackled Irene in the ambulance. She looks up to Lansdale. They both have tears in their eyes, for true love that will always be lost.

Lansdale moves to Irene and gently takes hold of her handcuffed hand. Enemies, but erstwhile soul mates.

## BILLY'S BEDROOM - CURRENT

Jennifer and Billy are sitting cross legged, making love. Jennifer is moaning and kissing Billy wildly.

As she climaxes, we flash Jennifer's image of Bubba shirtless on the screen, the sweat running down his muscles. Jennifer has a moment of guilt run across her face, still attracted to uncouth Bubba on a primal, sexual level.

Jennifer then sees Bubba standing in his letterman jacket with mean girls Johnette and Nina on either side. They are in cheer leading uniforms. Johnette's fingers romantically graze Bubba's pectorals. Nina's fingers move lovingly to Bubba's back and then slide down to his butt. The mean girls look up at Jennifer, both taunting her with the eternal threat of infidelity on Bubba's part and in another way inviting Jennifer into joining their sordid romantic inner circle. We are not quite sure whether this is a dream of Jennifer's or not.

And then Jennifer returns her conflicted and bittersweet thoughts and passion to Billy, biting his lip and holding him tightly as they make love, on and on.

Jann Arden's song All the Days continues to play, over the credits.

END