

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-five:

IRENE VARLEY.

She comes down the steps in drab clothes and no makeup, lugging a large duffel bag. She looks tired.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - NIGHT

Irene trudges along the sidewalk, close to the parked CARS.

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 trashing 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. TELEVISION SCREEN - NIGHT

As an AUDIENCE SCREAMS in horror, a circus ELEPHANT goes mad and kills its trainer.

JENNIFER (O.S.)
Yuck. This is gross.

INT. FRELAINE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BILLY FRELAINE and JENNIFER ROYCE are attractive fourteen year olds. They're sprawled on the couch in the darkened room, bathed in light from the TV.

JENNIFER
Why do guys like this stuff?

BILLY
I could turn it off.

JENNIFER
No, wait...

A CRAZY MAN is climbing over a fence at the ZOO. He leaps down into the GRIZZLY BEAR exhibit, and is quickly mauled.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Ewww.

Billy's attention shifts to Jennifer. She's fascinated by the carnage, so doesn't notice his eyes wandering her body.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Bet they killed the bear, Like it was his fault.

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 (CONT'D)
Don't.

BILLY
Sorry.

JENNIFER
I told you not to...

BILLY
(miffed)
I said I'm sorry.

The ROAR of an angry LION and the SCREAMS of it's victim.
They pretend to watch the screen for a few tense moments.

JENNIFER
I'm just not ready.

BILLY
So how come I'm ready?

JENNIFER
You're a guy. It's in your genes.

BILLY
Last time I checked.

She rolls her eyes at his stupid joke.

JENNIFER
It's getting late, I gotta go.

She stands up as a BULL gores some poor RODEO CLOWN.

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.

And off she 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, 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, the 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, Debbi?

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. The 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 snuffle 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. 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?

(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's 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's 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.

INT. KITCHEN

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)

(MORE)

IRENE (CONT'D)
 ...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. She sets a plate of eggs on the table.

He hesitates, then sits.

RICHARD enters, sluggish and bleary-eyed.

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

IRENE (CONT'D)
 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 BETTEY

(in unison)

No.

BETTY

He wouldn't run away.

LANSDALE

When fourteen-year-olds go missing,
it usually turns out to be
voluntary. And they're usually back
in a day or two. He could be
waiting for you at home right now.

BILLY

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?

BILLY

No.

FRANK

They're both pretty responsible.

LANSDALE

At that age, certain things can cloud their thinking.

BILLY

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 onto...

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 reopens the book, noisily flipping pages.

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 midnight, 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
opposed 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.

IRENE

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. 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
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. 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! Junior high
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' high school
guys. Or older.

RICHARD

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

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. 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.

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

He 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, suing 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 press 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 quietly nuzzles her face into his hair, then slips quietly out of bed, careful no 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 she gets to the bed, she 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...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.
(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

(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 the tire.

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's 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, pushes, punches, 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 it's 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 rage 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 clammers 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
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 awhile? 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 aspirin 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 up at the community BULLETIN BOARD.

Rows of FLIERS ask: "HAVE YOU SEEN ME?"

Suddenly unnerved, Billy slows slightly to scan the smiling faces of MISSING CHILDREN.

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.
(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

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. I swear to
God, I love you more everyday.

BILLY

(relieved)
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)

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. A 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 here 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 FIFTEEN.

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
(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 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. Though 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 small VOICE RECORDER.

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. In 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

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)

(MORE)

LANSDALE (CONT'D)

...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 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.

EXT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

*

Lansdale finds Richard's car behind the house and hides a GPS tracking device in the chassis.

*

*

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.

Setting it 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're 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.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

OFFICER JACOBSON, a uniformed policeman, sits in a chair outside Billy's door, reading a paperback.

He glances up briefly as Jennifer steps uneasily out of the room.

We MOVE with her 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. 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.

Billy's 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 florescent 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.

(MORE)

IRENE (CONT'D)

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.

Sniffing, 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.

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 drags a chair into the middle of the room and steps onto 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 it to the ceiling and holds it under a SPRINKLER.

BILLY

No, don't, there are sick people...

The spray of WATER extinguishes the flame.

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!

Doors open all along the corridor, and patients who can walk come pouring out, quickly clogging the hallway.

Lansdale now has to carefully weave her way through the panicked crowd.

INT. BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Oblivious to the rain, Irene jumps off the chair and falls to her knees before him.

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.

Then she's on her feet and heading toward the door.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Nurses scurry among the wet and terrified patients, directing traffic and pushing wheelchairs through the rain. Orderlies carry invalids piggyback. Evacuees rush en masse down the hall.

Irene steps out of Billy's room and joins them.

INT. BILLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

He watches the closed door as though hypnotized.

POUNDING 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 women 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 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.

Then 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. STREET - DUSK

*

IRENE'S FACE

*

Her hair has grown out a bit. It glows in the twilight.

*

A strawberry ice cream cone rises into view and she licks it.

*

We PULL BACK to reveal her sitting on a curb, leaning against a lamppost.

*

*

She's visibly PREGNANT.

*

Dwarfed by darkening buildings, she watches the setting sun.

*

As she licks the ice cream, she has a sudden realization.

*

IRENE

You can taste this, can't you?

(she smiles downward)

Of course you can. Want some more?

She takes another bite, then lays her hand over her baby as if seeking strength from it.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You're gonna be beautiful.

The streetlight flickers on, casting her in a cone of light.

FADE TO BLACK.

1 INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

1

Lansdale enters Billy's bedroom, where a sick room bed has been set up near Billy's original bunk beds. When she sees that the coast is clear, the bandaged Billy enters, seated in a wheelchair maneuvered by Frank. Betty and Jennifer bring up the rear.

Billy is fairly ambulatory and moves unassisted from the wheelchair to the sick room bed. The bed is motorized and will tilt up and down.

LANSDALE

(to Billy's parents)

Billy is free to move about the house, but he is not to leave the premises. My team will be surveilling your home twenty-four hours a day.

(pointedly, to Billy)

Ms. Varley is a very determined and obsessive young woman. We'll all need to work as a team to protect Billy.

Billy is both defiant and guilty in his dealings with Lansdale and avoids eye contact. The rejected Jennifer holds hands with Billy, although he still is remote to her.

FRANK

You'll have our full cooperation,
Detective Lansdale.

All look furtively at Billy, aware, to various degrees, of Billy's complicity in Irene's misbehavior.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Billy and Jennifer walk together during lunch break at their junior high school. His head is still lightly bandaged.

Lansdale walks some distance behind them, providing security against Irene. Billy is not happy about Lansdale's unwanted presence.

Billy and Jennifer pass through the crowds of students, who regard Billy with awe and fascination. Because of Billy's kidnapping, he is sort of a rock star at school.

Billy and Jennifer encounter Stan and Billy's other male friends. After nervous looks are exchanged between Stan and Billy, Stan opens up a big smile and high-fives Billy. Stan's other friends fall into step and pat Billy on the back.

Jennifer and Lansdale are not amused.

Bill and Jennifer move on, approaching a gaggle of girls, the loose girls.

The loose girls, who previously would have ignored Billy, now preen and flirt with him.

NINA, dressed in a halter and low cut jeans, smiles at Billy and gestures like she is giving Billy a blow-job. Nina's slutty friend JEANETTE wears a tube top and a short frilly skirt. Jeanette licks her lips and teases Billy by pulling down her tube top, briefly exposing her breast.

Again, Jennifer and Lansdale are not amused.

Billy walks up to Jeanette. He stares at her. Jeanette waits for Billy's next move, as does the crowd of teens.

Billy briskly and roughly embraces Jeanette and gives her a long French kiss.

Stan and the crowd are impressed.

Jennifer and Lansdale are not amused.

Alone, Billy walks away from Jennifer. Without looking back, Billy's face has a look that says "Fuck you, Jennifer".

Jennifer's face shows how hurt that she is, that Billy is taking out his anger at Jen's chastity this way.

Close on Lansdale, we see that she knows that things are bad, that Billy has more problems than just his criminal relationship with Irene. Things must change, for Billy and Jennifer.

There are limits to what Lansdale can do as a policeman. But in other ways, Lansdale sees unusual solutions to unusual problems.

2 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

2

The camera starts out close on Lansdale in her car. The unmarked vehicle is equipped with high-tech computer screens, on which she reviews the history of Irene's crimes. We peripherally see Irene's teenage mug shots, her mental institution incarceration files, photos of the young Billy, etc.

On another LCD screen, we see a map of the cemetery where Lansdale is parked, with a blinking marker indicating the moving GPS position of the car that Lansdale is tracking.

We pull back to see that Lansdale is parked on a hill in the graveyard. We rack to see Richard's car in the distance, slowing to a stop at a tombstone. Lansdale pulls out a video camera and zooms in on Richard's approach.

3 EXT. CEMETERY GRAVE SITE - DAY

3

A cleaned up Richard stands at the tomb, although he has yet to fully heal from his contusions.

We move close on the tombstone. The name engraved is Kathryn Varley and also engraved is a photo of a younger Richard, Irene and wife/mother Kathryn. Much happier times.

Irene appears behind Richard. After all of the pain just suffered, Kate's tombstone is the only place that either could go.

Cathartic conversation about the past between Irene and Richard.

Irene embraces Richard. She cries. Lansdale sees the tears in Irene's eyes. The fire of Lansdale's pursuit softens.

As Irene continues to embrace Richard, she notices Lansdale in the distance. They make eye contact.

Since Lansdale does not pursue, Irene senses that something has changed in Lansdale. Irene then defiantly returns to her car and drives off.

Lansdale's assistant places GPS device on Irene's car.

4 EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 4

Lansdale is parked in her unmarked police vehicle, outside of Billy's bedroom window. Her night vision video camera is aimed at Billy and Jennifer.

5 INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 5

Jennifer tries to get Billy to open up about what happened with Irene.

Billy evades the subject by reading Dread Desire 2 to her. The story is a Greek chorus that foreshadows Jennifer and Billy's future.

BILLY
 (reading from Dread Desire
 Part 2)
 "He was just a boy. And although
 she lived in a woman's body, she
 was still just a child herself.

Billy asks Jennifer if she loves him. She says yes, but she won't have sex with him. Billy says that Irene gave him everything that he ever wanted, adulthood, sex, gave him everything except for what he wanted most: Jennifer. And now Jennifer won't give herself to him. So what was the point of giving up Irene?

Jennifer climbs up to the upper bunk bed, where she can still see Billy in the large sick bed.

6 INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT 6

Irene climbs through Billy's window, in view of Lansdale in her unmarked police car.

Irene gets in Billy's bed and the sleepy Billy mistakenly thinks that it is Jennifer.

Irene is pissed off at being called Jennifer and starts slapping Billy. But then she is upset that she has hit Billy again and starts foreplay with him.

Irene thinks that it would be cool if she had twins (Irene's

a ditz)

Jennifer is in the bunk bed and sees all. She is shocked by Billy giving Irene oral sex. During sex, Billy looks up at Jennifer in the bunk bed, rubbing it in that Jennifer said no to sex with Billy. Jennifer is attracted and repulsed by the sight and sounds of sex, which she has never seen for real.

IRENE

All we do is fight and fuck! Is it too late for TWINS?

7 INT. FRANK AND BETTY'S BEDROOM 7

Frank and Betty sleep, and are almost awoken by the loud sex sounds from Irene in Billy's bedroom.

8 INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 8

In the afterglow, Billy refuses to go with Irene. Irene exits back through the window.

9 EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 9

Irene encounters her erstwhile new ally Lansdale. They talk about life in the mental institution. Lansdale sees the night vision video, which is out of Irene's sight.

10 INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 10

Billy is "confident" with Jennifer, as Richard had suggested that a man who wants to be successful with a woman will be.

Jennifer reluctantly gets back into bed with Billy. We can't see what they are doing, besides cuddling.

They stand up and slow dance. Wings Live And Let Die plays.

11 EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 11

Lansdale and Irene bond, like Mother and Daughter. Lansdale has the same first name as Irene's mother, Kate.

Lansdale explains to Irene that she had sex young, that it had scarred rape victim Irene, but not Lansdale. The

detective thinks that Billy might come out well from the experience, despite the negative effect of the kidnapping and head injury.

Lansdale shows Irene the night vision video replay of Billy and Jennifer dancing.

Irene runs from Lansdale, ready to kill Jennifer. Not again, shrugs Lansdale.

Lansdale to Irene: Love is a battlefield. Men are pigs.

12

EXT. BILLY'S HOUSE - DAWN

12

Billy and Jennifer walk outside to see the sunrise. They are surprised to see Irene asleep, fetal like, in her mommy Lansdale's lap. Tough Lansdale is bemused by Irene's affections, which she sees as partially an unhealthy transference. Vice police often let prostitutes operate unfettered, so that the prostitutes can lead the detective to bigger fish. Parents often will let a child take the chance of hurting themselves on a swing, etc, because being over protective creates a forbidden fruit syndrome and does not allow the child to learn from failure.

When police deal with a barricaded hostage taker, they can either negotiate with the kidnapper or call for the SWAT snipers. Either method might obtain the release of the hostages, depending on the circumstance. When Lansdale "bonds" with Irene, she is switch hitting between "SWAT" and negotiator methods. Lansdale is cynical and pragmatic. She does what works. When Irene get's up out of Lansdale's lap, we see that, comically, Irene is already handcuffed.

Lansdale still arrests Irene. The daughter she never had. Billy and Jennifer understand the unlikely and beneficial catalyst that crazy Irene has been for them.