

LURCH'S FRIENDS

by

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LURCH'S FRIENDS

FADE IN:

EXT. CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Recess...KIDS everywhere...

ERIN KELLY, a gangly eight-year-old, bounces a rubber ball off the 'No Ball Playing Allowed' sign on the side of the old brick building, playing catch with herself.

DEWEY, her eleven-year-old cousin, intercepts the ball as it comes back to her.

ERIN

Hey--!

DEWEY

What's the matter Erin, can't you read?

ERIN

C'mon, Dewey, give it here or I'll tell Aunt Nora on you--

DEWEY

Go ahead an' tell her, see if I care--

He bounces the ball over her head and walks off, whistling...

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

KEVIN KALECK, eleven, wears a leg brace and plastic-framed glasses as he looks for a spot to sit down with his lunch tray.

He finds an empty table and sits...Dewey appears and sprawls in a chair next to him.

DEWEY

Hey Lurch, what's for lunch?

(inspecting a
plastic juice
bottle)

Check it out, fruit juice for the fruit--

He reaches over and takes a pen from Kevin's shirt pocket, punctures the bottle with it, and puts the leaking bottle back on the tray.

DEWEY
Enjoy your lunch, spaz--

He tosses the pen in Kevin's lap and leaves...Kevin looks down at his tray.

ERIN (O.S.)
My brother says Dewey's a retard,
so you just gotta ignore him...

KEVIN
(sullenly)
Easy for him to say.

He looks away, ignoring her.

ERIN
You don't talk much, do you?
(waits, getting no
response)
God, are you rude...What's your
name, anyway?

KEVIN
(grudgingly)
Kevin.

ERIN
Mine's Erin, like you even care--

She cocks her head, hands on hips, studying him.

ERIN
You know, you'd be sorta cute if
you weren't so mean...

Erin's friend SHEILA appears, cutting off Kevin's reply.

SHEILA
What's up, Erin? I've been
waiting for you.

ERIN
Sorry, Sheila, I was talking to
Kevin, he's new here--

Sheila gives Kevin a brief, scornful look.

SHEILA

Whatever...Are you coming, or what?

ERIN

In a minute, okay? God, you're so impatient.

(to Kevin)

'Bye, Kevin...Nice meeting you.

KEVIN

Yeah, same here. Guess I'll see you around...

Erin grins back at him as Sheila pulls her away.

ERIN

Sure thing, dude...Maybe next time we can even talk without everyone bothering us--

Then they're gone, leaving Kevin alone at the table once more.

EXT. KELLY BUNGALOW - DAY

THAT AFTERNOON

A run-down, working-class neighborhood...Erin appears, swinging her backpack, and waves to MR. LUCAS, a neighbor watering his front lawn.

ERIN

Hey, Mr. Lucas...

He waves back as Erin runs up her front stairs and lets herself into the house.

A LITTLE LATER

Mr. Lucas has gone inside...Erin comes back out and skips down the steps, wearing old jeans and a ragged t-shirt.

INT. BEAR'S DEN - DAY

A typical corner bar, with a gravel parking lot out back and seedy rooms for rent upstairs.

Late afternoon now, the bar is dark and smoky, with scarred wooden booths along one wall and COUNTRY on the jukebox...

The bartender is CARL RILEY, in his forties and muscular, wearing a t-shirt that reads 'I Am The Bear.'

He serves a draft beer to ESTELLE KELLY (30's).

CARL

So, darlin,' when you gonna move
in with me?

She takes a cigarette from her pack on the bar and lights up, grinning at him.

ESTELLE

When I'm single and we're married.

BRIAN KELLY, Estelle's husband and Erin's father, comes out of the men's room and rejoins Estelle at the bar.

BRIAN

I heard that...

Carl indicates Brian's empty stein.

CARL

You ready, Bri?

BRIAN

You know it...

(hesitates,
embarrassed)

Hey, Carl, you think I could run a
tab till Friday? Diner's been slow
this week--

CARL

Hell, you're good for it.
(draws the beer)
Here you go--

He sets the fresh beer in front of Brian, as Estelle smirks and blows a cloud of smoke.

Erin enters and comes over to them...Brian sees her first.

BRIAN

Hi, Princess--

ERIN

Hey, Daddy...

She kisses his cheek, turns breathlessly to Estelle...

ERIN

Ma, I met a new kid at school today, his name's Kevin...Dewey was pickin' on him 'cause he wears a metal thing on his leg--

ESTELLE

You mean a leg brace...Well, leave it to Dewey to make fun of a cripple--

BRIAN

Cripple? Jesus, 'Stelle, now I know where the boy gets it...It must come from your side of the family.

ESTELLE

What? He's like those kids on the telethon, he's a cripple.

Brian shakes his head in disgust...Erin bites her lip, looking from one to the other.

ERIN

I called Dewey a retard earlier--

Brian grins and swipes a cigarette from Estelle's pack.

BRIAN

That's okay, sweetheart. Dewey is a retard.

Carl pours Estelle and Brian each a shot.

CARL

Dewey? Who the hell is Dewey?

BRIAN

(gestures at
Estelle)

Her sister's kid, who wouldn't know enough to sit down if his ass was on fire...

He downs his shot, while Estelle sips hers.

PETE, a rough-looking regular down the bar, slams down his empty beer bottle.

PETE
 Goddamnit, if you can't run with
 the big dogs, then stay on the
 fuckin' porch--

Carl takes Pete a new beer.

CARL
 (not overly angry)
 Pete, you dickhead, cut that shit
 out...

BRIAN
 (to Erin)
 C'mon, Princess, let's play some
 tunes--

ERIN
 Okay, but I get to pick first.

They head for the jukebox, with Brian singing loud and
 off-key to the tune of Kenny Rogers' 'LUCILLE.'

BRIAN
 'You picked a fine time to leave
 me, Lucille--'

ERIN
 (coming in on cue)
 '--with four hundred children and
 a crop in the field...'

Estelle watches them, puffing angrily on her cigarette...

INT. DEWEY'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is a pigsty...Dewey's overweight mother NORA sits
 at the kitchen table, beer in one hand, cigarette in the
 other...

Dewey sits across from her, struggling with his homework.

DEWEY
 (under his breath)
 Goddamnit--

NORA
 You're having so much trouble, why
 don't you ask Erin to help you?

DEWEY

She ain't in my grade, an'
besides, I'd rather fail than ask
that little bitch for anything--

NORA

Watch your fuckin' mouth...I won't
have that kind of language in my
house.

DEWEY

'Do as I say, not as I do?'

NORA

Goddamn right...I swear, ever
since you been hangin' with those
two Puerto Ricans down the street.
your potty mouth keeps gettin'
worse--

DEWEY

They ain't Rican, they're Mexican.

NORA

Wetbacks, huh? Why can't you find
some friends who are more like us?

Dewey gives her a look, then grins.

DEWEY

Maybe I should wear a white sheet,
too--

NORA

Don't be a smartass, you know what
I mean...

EXT. ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC - DAY

The offices of Dr. John Slowik...SOPHIE KALECK, Kevin's
fiftyish mother, with Kevin in tow, checks the address
against a slip of paper she holds...They go in.

LATER

They come out again...Kevin's got a big grin on his face and
no brace on his leg.

KEVIN

Jeez, Ma, I can't believe it...All I need is a lift in my shoe, and the doctor said I'll be as good as new--

Sophie grunts, not sharing Kevin's enthusiasm.

SOPHIE

I'll believe it when I see it.

INT. ERIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: SEVEN YEARS LATER

Bowling trophies...Cubs and Bears posters...A 'Lane Tech High School' pennant over the door.

The stereo plays softly, tuned to a COUNTRY station...

Erin, now slim, pretty, and fifteen, is sprawled asleep on her bed, tangled in the sheet...

She moans and rolls over, pulling the sheet with her as she slides off the bed onto the floor.

ERIN

(awake now)

That was clever--

She looks around sleepily, her tousled hair loose and in her eyes.

ESTELLE (O.S.)

(from downstairs)

Erin, are you up yet? You're almost late for school.

ERIN

(to herself)

My mother, the human alarm clock...

(calling out)

Actually, Ma, I'm on the floor, but never mind--

She jumps up and does a pirouette around the room.

ERIN

Alas, poor Erin, I knew her well--

She goes into the bathroom, closing the door...After a moment the SHOWER is heard.

Estelle enters, dressed for work as a waitress.

ESTELLE
God, what a mess--

She begins making the bed.

EXT. KELLY BUNGALOW - DAY

A fall morning, warm but cloudy after an overnight rain.

Estelle comes out on the front porch, picks up the Sun-Times, then sorts through the mail, muttering to herself...

ESTELLE
Mailed it last week, he
says...Can't squeeze blood from a
turnip, he says. I say shit, the
lying bastard--

She flings the mail, several pieces landing in a puddle, then sits on the steps and puts her face in her hands.

INT. ERIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Erin emerges from the bathroom wrapped in a towel, shaking out her damp hair...

She goes to the bed, where Estelle has laid out her short denim skirt, a blouse, panties, and a bra.

She picks up the bra disdainfully.

ERIN
Nice try, Ma--

She drops the bra and reaches for the blouse.

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - DAY

Erin, at the counter, pours two cups of coffee...She carries them to the table and sits, her backpack slung over the back of her chair.

Her brother TOM enters, twenty-one and shirtless...He sits, watching Erin stir several spoonfuls of sugar and powdered cream into her cup.

TOM

Maybe you'd like some coffee with that--

ERIN

I have some coffee, thank you very much...I can't drink it straight like you do, it tastes gross.

TOM

Yeah, but it'll put hair on your chest...

ERIN

It will?

(peeks down the front of her blouse)

Gee, I dunno, I don't think I'd want hairy tits...

(looks critically at Tom)

In your case, though, I'd say you're definitely not drinking enough, so here--

She pushes Tom's cup toward him. Estelle enters, tosses the mail on the table and hands Tom the newspaper. Seeing Erin, she stops.

ESTELLE

For Christ's sake, Erin, you're going to be late again--

ERIN

Ma, I told you before, I have study-hall first period, they don't make us go.

(drawing it out)

Remember?

ESTELLE

Well, you know how the buses run
sometimes...

(flicks at Erin's
hair)

And would you please do something
about your hair? Just once I'd
like to look at you without
wondering what color your eyes
are--

ERIN

They're blue, Ma, like Daddy's.
(shakes back her
hair)

See?

ESTELLE

Don't sass me, Erin. I'm not one
of the punks you run around with,
that you can talk to any damn way
you please--

ERIN

Why not, Ma? You sass me all the
time, and I'm your daughter.

She stands, swinging her backpack over her shoulder. Tom
looks up from the paper, amused.

TOM

Leaving so soon?

ERIN

Yeah.

(gives Estelle a
look)

I wouldn't wanna be late.

She leaves...Estelle sits in the vacated chair, absently
sipping from Erin's cup.

ESTELLE

(making a face)

My God, what'd she put in here?

TOM

You don't want to know.

He starts sorting through the mail.

TOM

Ma, how come some of these are wet?

ESTELLE

Oh, never mind...

EXT. LANE TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

LATER THAT MORNING

A C.T.A. bus pulls to the curb and several STUDENTS get off, including Erin.

As Erin heads toward the school, Sheila, now also fifteen, falls in next to her.

SHEILA

There you are...

(looks around)

What, no Kevin today? Or is he just being anti-social as usual?

ERIN

Don't start, Sheila...

SHEILA

Well, it's true, isn't it? The boy barely speaks, except when he's with you--

ERIN

So? He's just shy, is all--

SHEILA

Yeah, that's why you spend more time with him than you do with me--'cause he's shy.

ERIN

(scornfully)

Heck, you're just jealous.

This brings Sheila up short, and Erin stops also.

SHEILA

I am not jealous! I just can't figure out how you can hang out with him so much, he's such a freakin' loser--

Erin sighs, blowing a strand of hair off her nose.

ERIN
Listen, Sheila. Kevin's my
friend, okay? Quit talking about
him that way.

SHEILA
And if I don't?

Erin just gives her a look...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Scattered STUDENTS eat breakfast...

Erin sits alone, sipping from a carton of chocolate milk.
TRACEY, her best friend, appears and slaps her books down.

TRACEY
Hey, Erin...

ERIN
(subdued)
Hi, Trace.

Tracey sits, sensing Erin's mood.

TRACEY
Fight with your mom again?

ERIN
Sort of, but not as bad as last
time...She was just being her
usual bitchy self.
(sighs)
Mainly I'm worried about Kev, he
called me late last night all
upset--

TRACEY
How come?

ERIN
His Ma was on the rag again...I
heard her in the background, she
was yelling stuff in Polish, then
she goes 'If you don't watch out,
young man, you'll end up dead in a
gutter somewhere--'

TRACEY
God, and I thought your mom was
bad.

ERIN

Yeah, but I've been dealing with her shit since birth...Kev's mom just started acting all weird since he turned eighteen, like all of a sudden he's supposed to be Joe Responsible or something--

TRACEY

That almost sounds like your mom, too...Is she still pushing you to find a job when you turn sixteen?

ERIN

All the time, but especially when my dad's child support is late.

(sips her milk)

It's funny, 'cause I can't wait to start work and get the hell out of there...Kev's offered to help me, if he ever finds a job--

TRACEY

Hell, you should ask your dad to hire you at the diner, he could pay you cash under the table.

(grins)

That would shut her up--

ERIN

(ruefully)

No, it wouldn't.

(sips her milk,
finishing it)

I have thought of it, though.

(checking her
watch)

Damn, the bell's about to ring--

The bell RINGS.

TRACEY

Man, you're good...

ERIN

I know. And don't you forget it, either.

She stands, arcing her empty milk carton into the nearest garbage can, and they join the rush of other students exiting the cafeteria.

STUDY HALL CLASSROOM

The TEACHER sits at his desk, shuffling papers.

Erin and Tracey enter, looking around...Kevin joins them, now eighteen, with long hair, wire-rimmed glasses, and only a slight limp.

KEVIN

Hey guys...C'mon, I staked out
some seats in the back.

Dewey's there, eighteen and cocky, carrying on with Sheila.

DEWEY

Damn, girl, make up your mind--

The teacher looks up.

TEACHER

Shhhh...

KEVIN

(whispering, to
Erin)

Kinda hard to make up something
you don't have...

Kevin and Erin laugh.

SHEILA

(angrily)

You should talk, Kevin, a gimp
like you--

ERIN

Better a gimp than a simp,
Sheila--

Before Sheila can reply, the teacher looks up sternly.

TEACHER

Shhhh!

Several STUDENTS mimic him in unison.

STUDENTS

Shhhh!

EXT. PUBLIC SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Afternoon, an eerie tint to the air, debris swirling...

Erin and Tracey sit their bikes, jackets knotted around their waists by the sleeves. Erin is barefoot.

ERIN

(nervously)

Jeez, it looks like a tornado or something...Why did her highness summon us, anyway?

TRACEY

She has a message for you.

ERIN

Oh, joy--

A flash of lightning startles them...Sheila rides up, skidding her bike to a stop.

SHEILA

Ah, just the two I wanted to see--

(to Erin)

I need to talk to you.

ERIN

Yeah, Trace told me. What's up?

SHEILA

Well, me and the others were talking, we're tired of you sticking up for Kevin all the time...You better watch out, Erin, or you won't be so popular anymore--

ERIN

Like I'm so popular now...Besides, why should I care what my stoner cousin and his friends think?

SHEILA

It's not just them, okay? Either you quit that shit with Kevin, or I quit my shit with you. It's that simple.

ERIN

Yeah, and simple is as simple does, too...

SHEILA

What's that supposed to mean?

Erin looks at the ground a moment, her voice low.

ERIN

I guess it means we're not friends anymore.

SHEILA

You'd pick Kevin over me? But he's a geek--

ERIN

And you're a bitch.

Sheila stares at them, near tears, as the rain starts to fall.

SHEILA

Screw you, Erin! Screw both of you--

She turns her bike violently and rides away...

TRACEY

Gee, that went well--

EXT. C.T.A. BUS STOP - DAY

A bus pulls up to the curb...Erin and Tracey board, on their way to school.

INT. BUS - DAY

Erin and Tracey pay their fares, then walk back to where Kevin sits reading a Louis L'Amour western.

ERIN

Hey, Kev...

KEVIN

(looking up)

Oh, hi, Erin...Hey, Trace.

TRACEY

(smiling)

Hey, yourself.

ERIN

Ready for Speech, Kev? What'd you do yours on?

KEVIN

Well, Mrs. Perry said to be original and pick a topic we know, which I did...That's all I'm saying.

The bus lurches...Erin grabs the overhead bar to keep from falling, causing her blouse to pull out of her jeans.

ERIN

So what are you reading now?

(tilts book to
read cover)

Another Louis L'Amour, huh? Boy, you sure must like his books--

Kevin, embarrassed, tries not to stare at her navel.

TRACEY

Erin, look...He's blushing!

ERIN

Yeah, he must have a tummy fetish, or something--

Kevin buries his nose in the book.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL SPEECH CLASS - DAY

A public-speaking class, with about twenty STUDENTS, including Erin and Kevin...MRS. PERRY, the teacher, stands at a podium.

MRS. PERRY

We have time for one more. Any volunteers?

KEVIN

I'll do mine...

He stands and walks to the podium, speech in hand...He surveys the room, flashing Erin a nervous grin...She smiles back, showing him her crossed fingers.

MRS. PERRY

Anytime you're ready, Kevin.

KEVIN

Okay, here goes...

(takes a deep
breath)

Being physically challenged can be
a bitch, 'cause right away some
people think you might be
retarded, too--

The class reacts, murmuring...Erin jumps to her feet,
looking stricken.

ERIN

Kevin, what--

MRS. PERRY

Erin, dear, you've already given
your speech. Please sit down and
allow Kevin the same courtesy.

Erin sits, her face flushed.

MRS. PERRY

Thank you.

Kevin, glancing at Erin, clears his throat and continues.

KEVIN

So anyway, there you are, and most
girls won't even look at you,
they'd rather hang out with the
jocks, which is weird 'cause as we
all know, jocks really are
retarded.

Mrs. Perry smiles indulgently as the class laughs...Erin,
slouched in her seat, stares sullenly at Kevin through her
hair.

KEVIN

Now okay, let's say a miracle
occurs...You actually find a girl
who doesn't care what her friends
think, a girl who might even like
you...What happens? You can't
afford to take her anywhere,
'cause you can't find a job.

More laughter...Kevin continues, not noticing Erin's hurt
look.

KEVIN

Let's face it, most bosses, they see a kid like me and it's like 'Better luck next time, son, and don't let the door hit you on the way out...'

(grins)

Then, since you can't afford a car either, you walk home.

The bell RINGS...Erin gathers her books and runs out.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Erin, slamming books into her locker...Kevin appears, out of breath.

KEVIN

What's wrong, Erin? Why'd you take off like that?

ERIN

Leave me alone.

KEVIN

(taken aback)

Jeez, what'd I do?

ERIN

You made them laugh at you!

KEVIN

Erin, they were laughing 'cause my speech was funny--

ERIN

Bullshit! They were laughing 'cause you gave them an excuse. It ain't like all of a sudden they like you--

KEVIN

Says who? And what do you know about it, anyway? Hell, Erin, you make friends like that--

(snaps his fingers)

--while I'm lucky if someone asks me what fuckin' time it is...

Nearby STUDENTS have paused to watch them argue, and of course one of them can't resist...

STUDENT

So dude, what time is it?

ERIN

(ignoring the
interruption)

I'm not blind, okay? I see how
people treat you, the way they
look at your leg when you walk by,
like it's contagious--

KEVIN

Damn, Erin, if being my friend is
so rough, just quit, okay? You
can't change anything, anyway--

He turns and walks off. Erin stares after him, tears on her
cheeks, then slams her locker shut...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Kevin's friend VINCE (early 20's) is working under the hood
of his car, RADIO up high...Inside the car, Kevin suddenly
slams his fist on the dash.

Vince looks up.

VINCE

Kaleck, you dork, easy on the
dash, okay? I just bought this
heap--

KEVIN

Like I give a shit.

VINCE

(grinning)

Watch it, buddy...You diss-a my
car, you take-a the bus--

He slams the hood, then gets in behind the wheel.

VINCE

What's up, anyway? You been acting
bogus since I got here.

KEVIN

Erin's mad at me.

VINCE

No shit? Dude, that girl worships
the ground you limp on--What'd you
do, shoot her dog?

KEVIN

She doesn't have a dog--

VINCE

That was a joke, doofus...Why is
she mad?

Kevin takes his speech from his pocket and hands it to
Vince, who unfolds it, reads slowly to himself, then hands
it back.

VINCE

You read that in Speech?

KEVIN

Yeah.

VINCE

Big mistake, man...I know you
didn't mean to, but it's almost
like you were making fun of her...
No wonder she's mad.

KEVIN

What should I do?

VINCE

Hell, call her and apologize...The
worst that could happen is, she'll
hang up on you.

KEVIN

(sarcastically)

Thanks, man, you're a big help.

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - DAY

Estelle is fixing dinner...The phone RINGS, and she answers.

ESTELLE

Hello? Oh, hi, Kevin...No, Erin
can't come to the phone right now,
she's busy...Yes, I'll tell her
you called. 'Bye, now...

She hangs up, looking smug.

EXT. KELLY BUNGALOW - DAY

Erin sits morosely on the steps...Estelle opens the door and leans out, cigarette in hand.

ESTELLE
Dinner's ready.

Erin doesn't answer...Estelle puffs her cigarette, then flicks it away.

ESTELLE
Now, Erin.

She returns inside...After a moment, Erin sighs and goes in.

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Erin pokes at her food, bored...Across from her, Estelle smokes a cigarette and sips coffee.

ERIN
You should cut down on those
cigarettes, Ma. Remember what the
doctor said--

ESTELLE
Never mind what the doctor said,
doctors don't know everything.
(puffs cigarette)
They just think they do.

ERIN
(after a moment)
Ma, I'm gonna go see who's down at
the Bear's Den, okay?

ESTELLE
(stubbing out
cigarette)
But you haven't finished your
turkey, or your peas--

ERIN
Ma, I hate peas, and this is like
the third time this week we've had
turkey...

Estelle stands and clears the table.

ESTELLE

Why'd you take so much, then, if
you couldn't finish it?

ERIN

I dunno, I guess I was less
hungrier than I thought.

She watches as Estelle stacks the dishes in the sink and
starts washing them.

ESTELLE

Honey, why don't you stay home,
you could read, or watch T.V.--

ERIN

'Cause Dewey's in there, watching
his stupid wrestling show...

Estelle turns, her hands soapy.

ESTELLE

Erin, you know I don't like you
going there after dark, with the
rough crowd and all--

ERIN

Yeah, but Tom'll prob'ly be there,
and I promise not to stay out
late...Please?

ESTELLE

Oh, all right, go...But be
careful, you hear?

ERIN

I will...Thanks, Ma.

She stands, as Dewey enters from the living room and goes to
the fridge for a beer.

DEWEY

(mimicking Erin)

'Thanks, Ma...' Hell, she just
wants to go see Lurch, her dipshit
boyfriend--

Erin stares at him, hands on hips.

ERIN

Kiss my rosy red ass, Dewey--

ESTELLE
 (hiding a smile)
 Erin, watch your tongue. After
 all, Dewey is our guest...

ERIN
 Oh, bullshit, Ma. He only comes
 over whenever Aunt Nora kicks him
 out, and then it's like he lives
 here...

She goes out...Estelle lights up, giving Dewey a thoughtful
 look.

EXT. BEAR'S DEN PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Two BLACK MEN sit on the back stairs, passing a bottle of
 liquor back and forth...One of them grins and calls out to
 Erin as she appears and crosses the lot toward the back
 door.

BLACK MAN
 Hey, baby, how 'bout a blow job
 for a couple horny niggers?

ERIN
 (tossing her hair)
 Not even in my next life--

Kevin comes out the back door as she reaches it...They
 regard each other awkwardly.

KEVIN
 Hey, Erin.

ERIN
 Hey.
 (pauses)
 I'm sorry about earlier, okay? I
 like being your friend, and I've
 been miserable since you told me
 to stop--

KEVIN
 I can't believe I said that...
 (touches her arm)
 I'm sorry, too, and I understand
 if you're still mad--

ERIN

Don't be silly. I can't stay mad at you, and besides, who else would I pick on?

KEVIN

Yeah, that would suck, not having you pick on me anymore...

(pauses)

I called you earlier, your mom said you couldn't come to the phone--

ERIN

She did? I didn't even know you called.

(suddenly angry)

Damn her, anyway! She's always doing stuff like that.

KEVIN

Mine, too, it must be a conspiracy.

ERIN

Then maybe we should form our own conspiracy, we'll show them--

(pauses)

So where were you off to, anyway?

KEVIN

The bowling alley, Vince said they might be hiring--

He smiles as an idea occurs to him.

KEVIN

Hey, why don't you come with me? We could bowl a few.

ERIN

I'd like that.

She kisses him shyly on the lips, blushing as the one black guy whistles and cheers.

BLACK MAN

Alright, sister...Woo-hoo!

KEVIN

(surprised)

What was that for?

ERIN

Nothing, okay? I just felt like it.

(takes his hand)

Now come on, let's go tell my brother where I'm going...

They go into the bar.

EXT. KELLY BUNGALOW - NIGHT

LATER

Erin sits with Kevin on the front steps.

ERIN

Thanks for walking me, Kev.

KEVIN

Hell, it was the least I could do, after letting you beat me at bowling--

ERIN

Uh-huh, just keep telling yourself that...

(pauses)

Sorry you missed out on that job, though.

KEVIN

(shrugs)

Same shit, different day...Still, I'm glad you were with me--

ERIN

Me too.

She snuggles against him, her head on his shoulder...

ANGLE on Estelle, looking out the window. She shakes her head and turns away, letting the curtain fall back into place.

INT. KALECK KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sophie, at the table drinking tea, hears Kevin enter the apartment o.s.

SOPHIE

Kevin, is that you?

KEVIN
(entering kitchen)
Of course it's me...Who were you
expecting?

SOPHIE
Don't be funny...Do you know it's
almost one in the morning?

KEVIN
Ma, I'm eighteen now, you don't
have to wait up for me anymore--

SOPHIE
I don't care how old you are,
you're still my son.

She gets up, pours herself more tea.

SOPHIE
(from the stove)
And if you think I'm going to keep
giving you money for your devil-
ment, so you can stay out all
night like a bum, you're sadly
mistaken.

Kevin sighs, giving Sophie an exasperated look.

KEVIN
Aw, give it a rest, Ma--

He exits the kitchen for his room...Sophie takes a bottle of
brandy from the cabinet above the sink, then sits back down.

SOPHIE
(as she spikes her
tea)
What a life...

INT. ERIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Erin sits cross-legged on the bed in her nightgown, reading
a novel...Estelle enters without knocking.

ESTELLE
(fastening an
earring)
Hon, I pulled a double again, so
don't wait up for me, okay?

ERIN

Whatever...

(sets down book)

Ma, how come you didn't tell me
Kevin called? You knew I was right
out front--

ESTELLE

Because I didn't want you
traipsing off with him, that's
how come...

(gives Erin a look)

And listen, don't think I didn't
see you out there, hanging all
over him like a common whore--

Erin, fiddling with the hem of her nightgown, looks up
sharply.

ERIN

Don't call me a whore, Ma.

ESTELLE

I didn't call you a whore. I just
said you were acting like one.

(gestures
impatiently)

Regardless, the point I'm trying
to make is, boys his age only have
one thing on their minds--

ERIN

And boys my age don't? Besides,
Ma, Kevin's a gentleman...

ESTELLE

He is, huh? Boy, are you naive.

ERIN

Maybe I am.

(shakes back her
hair)

At least I don't bitch all the
time, like you do--

ESTELLE

(smiling falsely)

Sweetheart, let's not argue, okay?
I have to run.

She goes out, closing the door. Erin picks up her book,
staring after her.

IN THE HALL

Estelle, walking away, hears the book BANG off the inside of Erin's door.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - DAY

Erin, wearing short denim cut-offs and an untucked white blouse, walks hand-in-hand with Kevin, who looks unhappy in a shirt and tie.

KEVIN

I look like an idiot dressed this way--

ERIN

Oh, hush, you look fine.

They pause in front of a large office building with a fast-food restaurant on the ground floor.

KEVIN

(nervous)

Well, here we are...Wish me luck.

ERIN

You know I do...

(kisses his cheek)

Now you go in there and show 'em who's boss.

KEVIN

(wryly)

Actually, Erin, the guy I'm here to see is boss--

ERIN

You know what I mean...Now go.

He goes, pushing through the revolving door.

A LITTLE LATER

Kevin comes out again, looking glum.

KEVIN

Well, that sucked a big one...

ERIN

(disappointed)

You didn't get it...

KEVIN

Nope...Dude said I can't do the management-trainee thing 'til I graduate, and I'm too qualified to flip burgers.

(smiles weakly)

You know, that thing in Speech really was meant as a joke--

ERIN

Kev, I'm sorry...You wanna try some more places?

KEVIN

Hell, right now I just want to go home and get out of these damn clothes...

They start walking.

INT. KALECK LIVING ROOM - DAY

LATER

A painting of 'The Last Supper' hangs prominently...

Erin sits cross-legged next to Kevin on the couch, her knee resting on his thigh...Kevin now wears casual clothing.

ERIN

So your mom's out of town, huh? No wonder you couldn't wait to get me back here...

KEVIN

She almost didn't go, she was afraid I'd throw a wild party, or something...

ERIN

(teasing)

Who's she kidding? We oughtta do something, though.

(pauses, thinking)

I know! I'll take off my shirt and dance on the table, and you can throw money at me--

She undoes several buttons of her blouse, then giggles at Kevin's shocked look.

ERIN
Kev, I was kidding, okay? I have
other ways to seduce you--

Even so, she doesn't re-button the blouse...

KEVIN
You know, Erin, sometimes I wonder
about you...

ERIN
That's the whole idea, silly.

He caresses her thigh, exploring the frayed edge of her
shorts.

KEVIN
(softly)
Sometimes I wonder why you even
like me--

ERIN
Because you're my friend, you've
always been there for me...

She looks down, letting her hair shadow her face.

ERIN
The thing is, Kev, I do like you,
maybe even more than you know, and
I always hoped you liked me, too.

She gazes at him, wide-eyed and solemn...They kiss, as Erin
guides his hand inside her blouse...

INT. BEAR'S DEN - DAY

LATER

Carl, tending bar, serves Pete a beer.

Erin and Kevin sit next to each other in a booth, sharing a
pitcher of soda.

KEVIN
(removing his
crucifix)
Here, Erin, I want you to have
this.

ERIN
 (touching it)
 Kev, it's beautiful--

KEVIN
 Here, let me put it on for you.

She leans forward, holding her hair off her neck, her blouse still half-open...

Kevin, distracted by the view, fumbles fastening the chain.

ERIN
 (teasing)
 Sure, take your time--

KEVIN
 (as it catches)
 There you go...I hope you like it.

ERIN
 Are you kidding? I love it...Thank you, Kev--

They kiss, and he starts carressing her thigh...

ANGLE on the back door as Dewey enters, flanked by his friends PONCH and VICTOR. Dewey spots Kevin and grins.

DEWEY
 Look, y'all, it's Lurch! Let's go initiate some shit--

Kevin sees them and tries to take his hand off Erin's thigh, but she won't let him.

ERIN
 (watching Dewey approach)
 Leave it there, okay? I like you touching me, and it's none of his damn business--

DEWEY
 (reaching the booth)
 So whaddaya think, guys, is this one of Jerry's Kids, or what?

ERIN
 C'mon, Dewey, cut the crap--

DEWEY

Or else what, Erin? Huh? What's a slutty little bitch like you gonna do, anyway?

Kevin stands suddenly, both scared and angry...Dewey's hand goes into his pocket.

ERIN

Don't, Kev, he's got a knife--

KEVIN

No shit, and two assholes backing him up...Fuck it, I'm outta here.

He heads for the back door...Victor follows, doing his best chicken imitation.

At the door Kevin looks back, his glance lingering on Erin.

Then he's gone...Erin stares after him, then turns on Dewey as Ponch and Victor head for the pool table.

ERIN

God, you're such an asshole.

She sits there dejectedly, putting her head down on her arms...Dewey sits across from her, helping himself to some soda.

DEWEY

Shit, this is warm--

He twirls the mug on the table, whistling the THEME from the 'Addams' Family.'

ERIN

(raising her head)

Leave me alone, Dewey.

DEWEY

(glancing around idly)

Wonder what your Ma would say, she seen you in here with Lurch, showin' off them tiny little titties of yours--

ERIN

Like she'd even care...Hell, I'm just living up to her expectations, anyway.

(MORE)

ERIN (cont'd)
 (smiles sweetly)
 And besides, I'm sure Aunt Nora'd
 be real proud, she ever seen you
 dealin' weed outta your damn
 locker--

Dewey reacts, splashing the pitcher of soda in Erin's face,
 then grabbing her by the hair.

DEWEY
 Listen up, bitch, 'cause if you
 ever say shit about that again,
 I'll hurt you so bad even Lurch
 won't wanna look at you.

Carl appears next to the booth.

CARL
 What the hell is this shit?

Dewey releases his grip on Erin's hair and sits back
 insolently.

DEWEY
 Nothing, man, just a little family
 quarrel...

ERIN
 (soaked and
 furious)
 You ain't family, you're just
 trash--

At the bar, Pete takes a gun from his waistband and sets it
 down next to his beer.

PETE
 Bring his happy ass over here,
 Carl. I wanna hear some more about
 how he's gonna hurt the little
 lady--

At the sight of the gun, Ponch and Victor toss their sticks
 on the pool table and slink out the back door.

CARL
 Come on, dickhead, you ain't got
 all day.

Dewey looks around for Ponch and Victor, but they're gone.

CARL
Yeah, your boyfriends left,
asshole...Now get the hell out of
here.

DEWEY
Ah, time to blow this fuckin'
pop-stand, anyway--

He stands and saunters out the back door...Carl returns
behind the bar, and Erin perches on a stool.

Carl tosses a towel at her.

CARL
Here, you're dripping all over my
damn bar--

ERIN
I love you, too, Carl.

She starts vigorously drying her hair with the towel.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Kevin waits impatiently...A MAN comes out, hands him a pint
of liquor in a paper bag.

KEVIN
Took you long enough.

MAN
Hell, kid, next time get it
yourself, huh?

He strolls off...Kevin opens the bottle, drinks...

INT. BEAR'S DEN - NIGHT

Erin, damp and disheveled, makes a call from the pay phone.

ERIN
(under her breath)
C'mon, somebody answer...
(waits several
RINGS)
Damn it--

She hangs up.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Vacant lots and abandoned cars...Kevin walks along, feeling no pain. Two HISPANIC GIRLS appear.

FIRST GIRL

Hey, if we sing for you, will you give us a dollar?

KEVIN

No, sorry--

SECOND GIRL

Fine, be that way...

They walk off...Kevin takes out his bottle, drains it, and tosses it into some bushes.

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tom sits at the table eating a sandwich...Erin enters urgently.

ERIN

Did Kevin call?

TOM

Nope...I thought he was with you.

ERIN

He was, 'til Dewey fucked with him and he took off...

(tugs his sleeve)

Come on, help me find him.

He stands reluctantly, and they leave.

EXT. VACANT LOT - NIGHT

Kevin, barely able to stand, fumbles with his zipper after urinating on the side of a building...

ANGLE on Dewey's car, illuminating Kevin with the headlights as it pulls into the lot.

Dewey, Ponch, and Victor exit the car.

DEWEY

Damn, look who's here, all alone and far from home--

Dewey pulls out his switchblade and clicks it open.

PONCH

Man, put that shit away before the
cops come--

DEWEY

Sure, after Lurch here kneels and
says he's sorry.
(to Kevin)
Kneel, goddamnit!

Kevin kneels unsteadily, almost toppling over.

DEWEY

All right, Lurch!

Kevin starts to rise, but Dewey pushes him back down...Ponch
and Victor laugh.

DEWEY

Stay there, we're not done with
you yet--

EXT. THE SAME STREET - A BLOCK AWAY - NIGHT

Tom's car, cruising slowly...

INT. TOM'S CAR - NIGHT

Tom and Erin, looking for Kevin.

TOM

(sarcastically)
Tell me again why you think he'd
be up this way...

ERIN

This is the way we came earlier,
walking to the bar from his house.

TOM

Yeah, but you said he left the bar
hours ago...He's probably home by
now.

They pass the vacant lot...Erin sees Kevin on the ground
with Dewey, Ponch, and Victor taunting him.

ERIN

Oh, God, it's him--

Tom slams on the brakes...Erin reaches under the seat and grabs a crowbar.

TOM
Damn, girl...What's that for?

ERIN
'Cause Dewey carries a knife. Now
come on before they hurt him.

TOM
Christ, now you're Rambo...

They get out of the car.

EXT. VACANT LOT - NIGHT

Erin comes up, with Tom right behind her.

ERIN
Back off, Dewey--

Ponch and Victor flank Dewey, facing Erin and Tom. On the ground Kevin appears to have passed out.

Victor grins, moving toward Erin...

VICTOR
Relax, girl, we were just messin'
with him--

He grabs for the crowbar...Erin swings it, nailing him solidly on the arm.

VICTOR
Ow, you bitch, you broke my
fuckin' arm--

Victor starts for Erin again, but Dewey stops him.

DEWEY
Screw it, man, it ain't worth it.
Let's get the fuck outta here.

They back off, getting into Dewey's car...Dewey leans out.

DEWEY
This ain't over, y'all--

They SCREECH out of the lot...Erin kneels next to Kevin, trying to slap him awake.

ERIN

Come on, Kev, don't pass out on me, we gotta get you home...

TOM

We should just take him to our house, he can sleep it off on the couch--

ERIN

What, so Ma can bitch? She hates Kevin now.

TOM

She'll get over it...Help me get him up and into the car.

With some effort, they get Kevin to his feet.

INT. KELLY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Erin and Tom, supporting Kevin between them, enter from outside...The screen door BANGS shut.

ERIN

Shit, Ma's gonna wake up for sure--

They stretch Kevin out on the sofa...Erin removes Kevin's glasses and sets them on the coffee table.

TOM

Stay here while I go get a blanket or something...

He leaves the room...Erin, perched on the sofa's armrest, gazes down at Kevin.

ERIN

I swear, I can't take you anywhere.

After a moment Tom returns and covers Kevin with a blanket.

TOM

There, he should be okay 'til morning.

(gives Erin a look)

Um, you might wanna button your shirt before Ma sees you...

Estelle enters before Erin can take his advice.

ESTELLE

What's going on here, you two?
(gestures at Kevin)
And who's that?

ERIN

That's Kevin, Ma...

ESTELLE

Oh, I see...But what were you all
drinking? It smells like a brewery
in here.

ERIN

We weren't drinking. He was like
that when me an' Tom found him.

ESTELLE

And you brought him here? Christ,
I can just imagine what the
neighbors must think--

ERIN

Nobody saw us, Ma.

ESTELLE

Thank God for that, at least...

She takes her cigarettes from the pocket of her robe and
lights one, her gaze on Erin's half-open blouse.

ESTELLE

I'd ask why your shirt is hangin'
open like that, but God forbid I
should call you a whore--

She turns and walks out...Tom shakes his head at Erin.

TOM

Damn, girl, she 'busted' you that
time...
(grins)
No pun intended.

ERIN

Oh, shut up.

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - DAY

Erin sits at the table in her nightgown, half-asleep, her
hair in her face...

Kevin enters, just out of the shower and wearing a robe.

KEVIN

'Morning, Cousin It...

ERIN

And good morning to you, too,
Lurch my dear...

(gestures toward
utility room)

Your clothes are in there, on top
of the dryer.

KEVIN

Thanks...Mind if I have some
coffee?

ERIN

Of course not. Mi casa is su casa,
or whatever--

Kevin pours himself a cup. then joins her at the table.

KEVIN

You're not mad at me for last
night, are you?

ERIN

Don't be silly. I was more worried
than anything--

KEVIN

(grins)

Yeah, that's why you kept slapping
me...

ERIN

I was hoping you wouldn't remember
that part.

KEVIN

Don't feel bad, okay? I'm just
glad you guys showed up when you
did.

ERIN

Me, too...God, I can't wait 'til
we finally do get a place of our
own--

KEVIN

Yeah, that'll be cool...
(grins)

(MORE)

KEVIN (cont'd)
 As I recall, someone still owes me
 a table dance.

ERIN
 (teasing)
 And as I recall, one of us has to
 actually have money to throw, too.

KEVIN
 We could always skip that part--

Kevin stands and comes up behind her...He begins to massage
 her neck.

ERIN
 That feels good...

He slips the straps of her nightgown out of the way so he
 can massage her shoulders.

ERIN
 (eyes closed)
 Oh, God...You have no idea what
 you're doing to me--

Tom enters, grinning.

TOM
 Yes, he does.
 (to Kevin)
 Better watch it, man, you'll make
 her nipples hard--

Kevin stops, embarrassed...Erin glares at Tom.

ERIN
 Pervert--
 (to Kevin)
 And you, nobody told you to stop,
 either.

EXT. KELLY BUNGALOW - DAY

A warm, breezy day, with the threat of rain.

Erin, in her cut-offs and a cropped t-shirt, plays catch
 with Tracey on the sidewalk...Tom and Vince sit on the front
 steps drinking beer from a cooler.

Across the street, a GIRL with spiked orange hair walks by.

ERIN

Hey, Tom, there's the perfect girl
for Vince...

(to Vince)

Go for it, dude!

VINCE

Thanks anyway, Erin, but even I'm
not that desperate--

TOM

Oh, you're not, huh? Then what's
that stuff squirting out your
ears?

Everyone but Vince laughs...Erin grabs a beer from the
cooler just as Sheila walks by, pretending to ignore them.

ERIN

Well, if it isn't Little Miss
Perfect, with her nose in the air
and her brains in her butt--

Sheila stops.

SHEILA

Why don't you just shut up, Erin?
You think you're so cool, but
Dewey got you good, and Kevin too,
making him kneel in the mud...I
just wish I coulda been there when
he splashed you--

Erin shakes up her beer, opens it, and sprays Sheila.

ERIN

There, stupid, now you know how it
felt--

SHEILA

You whore, I'll get you for that!

ERIN

Then why wait, Sheila? You're real
big on talking, how about now,
huh?

SHEILA

What, in front of your house? I
don't think so.

ERIN

Then where? If you ain't scared,
pick a place...

SHEILA

Meet me behind the bar in an hour,
bitch, and we'll see who's fuckin'
scared--

ERIN

I'll be there.

EXT. BEAR'S DEN PARKING LOT - DAY

A light, misty rain falls...Erin's there, her hair in a
loose ponytail, standing with Tracey, Tom, and Vince.

The two black guys are in their usual spot on the back
stairs...Seeing Erin, they wave and toast her with their
bottle.

ERIN

(waving back)

Hey, guys...

TOM

(eyebrows raised)

Friends of yours?

ERIN

And then some.

(nervously)

God, where is she? I hate waiting
like this--

At that moment the back door of the bar opens...Sheila comes
out, along with Dewey, Ponch, and Victor.

SHEILA

Shit, Erin, this was supposed to
be just you and me.

ERIN

(shrugs)

You brought your friends, I
brought mine.

Dewey reaches out suddenly and pulls off the bandanna
holding back Erin's hair...He pushes her toward Sheila, who
punches her in the face.

Erin staggers back, her nose bloody...Sheila picks up a handful of gravel.

ERIN
(shaking back her
hair)
I shoulda known you'd fight
dirty--

Sheila flings the gravel at Erin, then rushes, slamming her against a parked car.

They go at it, scratching and punching...A CROWD gathers.

Sheila wrestles Erin down, pulling her hair and slapping her, until Erin finally shoves her off.

The two girls stand shakily, breathing hard, staring at each other.

SHEILA
You're so stupid, Erin, this is
all your fault, you and Kevin--

ERIN
Yeah I know, if I was a spoiled
little brat like you, we'd get
along fine--
(smiles acidly)
By the way, does your dad still
have to change your sheets every
morning?

Sheila, shocked, slaps her...They go at it again, cheered on by the crowd, until Erin ultimately gets Sheila pinned, straddling her and holding her wrists.

SHEILA
(struggling)
Jesus, Erin, get off me, I can't
fuckin' breathe--

ERIN
Poor baby...You give?

SHEILA
(after a moment)
Yeah, I give...

Erin stands warily, letting Sheila up.

SHEILA

I swear, Erin, you better start
watching your back from now on--

She walks away, trailed by Dewey, Ponch, and Victor.

INT. BEAR'S DEN - DAY

Erin enters with the others, looking a mess, her t-shirt
torn and spotted with blood.

ERIN

Did you guys see, she tried to
bite my tit--

TOM

Hell, that's Kevin's job.

ERIN

You are so not funny.
(to Tracey)
Told you he's a perv--

Estelle comes out of the women's restroom, almost bumping
into Erin.

ERIN

Hey, Ma--

ESTELLE

Oh, my Lord, Erin, what the hell
happened to you?

She tries to wipe at the blood on Erin's face, but Erin
won't let her.

ERIN

Ma, I'm fine, okay? It's just a
bloody nose.

They reach the bar. Carl takes one look at Erin and pours
her a shot of whiskey.

Erin looks askance at Estelle.

ESTELLE

Go ahead, you look like you could
use it.

As Erin downs the shot, Estelle turns to Carl.

ESTELLE
Where's mine?

INT. KALECK LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sophie, doing some cleaning, finds Erin's school I.D. on the sofa.

She looks at it, her face showing conflicting emotions.

SOPHIE
Well, I suppose it was only a
matter of time...

She slips the card into her pocket.

EXT. ERIN'S STREET - NIGHT

Kevin walks, head down, hands in pockets...

A group of HISPANIC KIDS plays football in the street. One younger BOY, about ten, mimics Kevin's walk as he passes.

Kevin glances up, sees him, and stops. The boy, frightened, runs back to his friends.

BOY
Paco, Paco--

KEVIN
(under his breath)
Shit...

He starts toward them...PACO steps forward.

PACO
Hey, man, why you wanna mess with
my little brother, huh? He's just
a kid--

KEVIN
(unafraid)
I wasn't messing with him. He was
doing this--
(takes a few
steps, dragging
one foot)
When I saw him, he got scared.

PACO
 (smacking his
 brother)
 Were you doing that? Didn't Mama
 teach you better than that?
 (to Kevin,
 sincerely)
 Hey, dude, we're sorry...You ever
 need anything, man, we're there--

Paco sticks out his hand...Kevin hesitates, then shakes it.

INT. KELLY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Erin is curled up on the couch, reading. The doorbell
 RINGS...She goes to the door and looks out.

ERIN
 (surprised)
 Kevin--
 (opens door)
 God, are you okay? You usually
 call first...Come on in.

Kevin comes into the hall.

KEVIN
 Your mom won't mind, right? I know
 it's kinda late...

ERIN
 It's not that late, and besides,
 she pulled graveyard tonight...
 She won't be home 'til morning.

KEVIN
 Cool...Where's Tom?

ERIN
 Upstairs, listening to the CDs he
 got in the mail...Come on, we'll
 go up to my room.

INT. ERIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Erin and Kevin dance slow and close to a COUNTRY song as
 they talk...

KEVIN
 I can't believe I actually stood
 up to those guys...I thought
 (MORE)

KEVIN (cont'd)
they were gonna kick my ass for
sure.

ERIN
Well, they didn't, and Paco ain't
the type to go off on you for no
reason, anyway.

KEVIN
(surprised)
You know him?

ERIN
He lives right sown the street, we
talk sometimes...Him and his
buddies aren't a real gang, but
they keep the real gang-bangers
from bothering anyone.

The song ends...They walk to the bed and sit...Erin takes
Kevin's hand in hers.

ERIN
Is something wrong, Kev? You've
been awfully quiet tonight...
(teasing)
Even for you.

KEVIN
(looking ashamed)
I didn't get that grocery job I
told you about, they hired some
girl instead...

ERIN
Don't feel bad, I haven't had any
luck, either.

KEVIN
But--

ERIN
Just hush, okay? We're gonna be
fine...

She kisses him tenderly, a kiss which grows gradually more
passionate...

EXT. KELLY BUNGALOW - DAY

Estelle sits on the front steps, smoking, as Sophie appears.

SOPHIE

Excuse me, is this where Erin lives?

ESTELLE

Yeah, it is...What'd she do now?

SOPHIE

What? Oh, nothing...

(hands Estelle
Erin's I.D.)

This is hers, I found it in the cushions of my couch several days ago...I keep forgetting to give it to Kevin--

ESTELLE

Thank you...When did Erin lose this?

SOPHIE

To be honest with you, I have no idea.

ESTELLE

Oh? Weren't you home when Erin was there?

SOPHIE

I was in Rockford visiting my sister--

She gives Estelle a sharp look.

SOPHIE

What, you don't trust my son to behave properly around your little girl? Ha! He was raised better than that, believe you me--

She starts to turn away, hesitates...

ESTELLE

(acidly)

Was there something else?

SOPHIE

Just this...I don't know your daughter that well--Kevin's not one to bring his friends home--but from what he's told me, I think you should be very proud of her.

She walks off, leaving Estelle momentarily speechless.

INT. KELLY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Erin, sprawled on the couch watching a 9/11 DOCUMENTARY, looks up as Estelle comes in from outside.

ERIN

Hey, Ma...Who were you talking to?

ESTELLE

Kevin's mother. She brought you something.

She flips the I.D. onto Erin's chest.

ERIN

Cool, I've been looking for this...

Erin slips the I.D. into her pocket. Estelle lights a cigarette, giving Erin a look.

ESTELLE

Erin, we need to talk about you and this Kevin boy--

Erin sits up, eyeing Estelle warily.

ERIN

What about me and Kevin, Ma?

ESTELLE

Well, first of all, maybe you'd like to tell me what you were doing there, alone with him, while his mother was in Rockford, or wherever--

ERIN

Nothing, okay? He's my friend, and we're sort of seeing each other--

ESTELLE

That's what I was afraid of. My God, Erin, what do you see in him?

ERIN

Jeez, Ma, I just like him, okay? It's hard to explain...

ESTELLE

You're not fucking him, are you?

Erin jumps to her feet.

ERIN

No, Ma, I am not fucking him!

(shakes back her
hair)

I'm not fucking anybody, which is
more than you can say--

ESTELLE

And just what the hell is that
supposed to mean?

ERIN

It means I know about you and
Carl, okay? I know he was here
last night, and I guess I know
what you were doing, too...

ESTELLE

You do, huh? Let me tell you some-
thing, Erin. Who I fuck or when I
fuck is nobody's goddamn business,
least of all yours--

ERIN

Oh, right, like you're trying so
goddamn hard to keep it a
secret...

She goes to the window, looking out, her voice quieter now.

ERIN

Mrs. Lucas came up to me at the
store earlier, acting all
nosy...She goes 'Oh, Erin dear,
was that your Uncle Carl I saw
leaving your house this morning?
He's so handsome...'

She turns from the window, facing Estelle.

ERIN

I told her I don't have an Uncle
Carl.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Kevin, walking home from the bus stop after school, doesn't see Dewey, Ponch, and Victor walking behind him, each holding a piece of debris ready for throwing.

He turns into an alley as a shortcut.

DEWEY

Come on, we'll cut him off at the schoolyard--

Dewey leads off, running toward the street which parallels the alley.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Kevin, walking slowly, stops to tie his shoe...After a moment he walks on, the rear of the grammar school visible just ahead.

EXT. PUBLIC SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Dewey, Ponch, and Victor are crouched behind the back wall of the schoolyard, waiting...Kevin appears.

They pop up suddenly, yelling...

KEVIN

Oh, shit--

Ponch misses with a splintered table leg, but Dewey whips a flattened beer can which slices through Kevin's upper lip.

DEWEY

Got 'im! Let's go before he sics Erin on us--

They take off, laughing...

KEVIN

(yelling after them)

Fuck you, Dewey! You hear me? Fuck you!

He pulls a handkerchief from his back pocket and puts it to his bloody mouth.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Erin, at her locker before school...Kevin appears, his upper lip stitched and swollen.

ERIN

Hey, Kev...
(seeing his lip)
Jesus, what happened to you?

KEVIN

(embarrassed)
Uh, nothing...It was an accident--

Dewey, Ponch, and Victor saunter up.

DEWEY

Shit, Lurch, why don't you tell her what really happened, huh?

KEVIN

Tell her yourself, asshole...

Nearby STUDENTS, sensing a confrontation, gather around.

ERIN

Yeah, Dewey, why don't you tell me?

She shakes back her hair, advancing on him.

ERIN

This is between us anyway, isn't it, ever since we were little it's always been you an' me--

Face to face now, unafraid, staring into his eyes...

ERIN

So tell me, was it a fair fight, or did you and these two pricks--
(gestures at Ponch and Victor)
--gang up on him again? C'mon, Dewey, talk to me...
(pushes him)
Tell me again what a little bitch I am--

DEWEY

(grabbing his crotch)
Right here, Erin.

She slaps him...Dewey, incredulous, backhands her across the mouth, almost knocking her down...Kevin reacts.

KEVIN
Fuck this shit--

He starts for Dewey, but Victor slams him against a locker.

VICTOR
Easy, man, unless you wanna get hurt...

DEWEY
(to Victor)
Hold him.
(faces Erin)
What's up, Erin? You had enough, or do you want some more? We can do that, too--

Erin spits blood in his face.

DEWEY
Damn, girl, now I'm really gonna enjoy this...

He raises his hand to hit her again...Someone grabs it.

DEWEY
What the fuck--

He turns...Paco, with his friends spread out behind him, has a firm grip on Dewey's hand.

DEWEY
Who the hell are you?

PACO
(gesturing at Kevin)
Friends of his.
(to Victor)
What say you let go of him now, eh, bro?

Victor releases Kevin, who moves to Erin's side...Paco faces Dewey.

PACO
Listen up, dude, 'cause next time maybe you don't see us...Just the gun, man, pointing at you--
(mimics firing a
(MORE)

PACO (cont'd)
 gun)
 Pow...pow...pow.

DEWEY
 (suddenly nervous)
 So what do you want from me?

PACO
 Leave my friend alone, and his
 lady, too. Be cool, man, or we'll
 take you out--

He squeezes Dewey's hand, then lets go...Dewey looks around for Ponch and Victor, but they're already moving away.

He walks off, amid jeers from the other students.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Later at lunch, the cafeteria is crowded with noisy KIDS...Erin and Kevin eat at a table with Paco.

Kevin eats gingerly due to his lip...

PACO
 Hey, dude, you want my Jello? Lady gave me the wrong kind--

KEVIN
 No, I'm cool...Thanks, though.
 (sips his drink)
 And listen, man, thanks again for earlier, you saved my ass--

ERIN
 And mine, too, Paco...You were wonderful.

PACO
 (waving
 dismissively)
 Ah, those guys are pussies...If they bother you again, let me know.
 (to Erin)
 The white dude, he's your cousin, right?

ERIN
 (grinning)
 Yeah, but don't tell nobody.

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - DAY

Erin is perched on the counter sipping coffee, bare feet dangling...Estelle enters and tosses the mail on the table.

ERIN

Did it come?

ESTELLE

No, goddamnit--

She goes to the phone and angrily makes a call.

ESTELLE

(into phone)

Hello, Brian Kelly, please...

(waits)

He's not? Well, where the hell is he?

(listens, tapping
her foot)

Yes, ma'am, it is my business, and I'm sorry I snapped at you...It's just that he's late with the child support again and my daughter is starving--

Erin rolls her eyes.

ESTELLE

(listens,
continues)

Well, you can tell him I called if you want to, but better yet, tell him to send the damn check.

She hangs up.

ERIN

'My daughter is starving?' Right, Ma--

ESTELLE

Never you mind. If embarrassing him gets the money here sooner, what's wrong with that?

(lights a
cigarette)

So, what are your plans for today?

ERIN

I'm not sure. I'm supposed to meet Kevin, but that's not 'til later.

ESTELLE
 (sarcastically)
 You and Kevin, huh? Well that
 certainly doesn't surprise me.
 (looks at her
 watch)
 Damn, I'm gonna be late.

A quick peck on the cheek for Erin, and she's gone.

EXT. BRIAN'S DINER - DAY

Erin comes up, noting the 'Help Wanted' sign in the window,
 and goes inside.

INT. BRIAN'S DINER - DAY

A typical biscuits-and-gravy place...

Erin sits at the counter...The waitress, REBA, comes over.

ERIN
 Hey, Reba--

REBA
 Hi, Erin...What'll it be today?

ERIN
 Oh, just a raspberry iced-tea, I
 guess...Is my dad around?

REBA
 He'll be back any minute, he just
 stepped out to the bank.

She sets Erin's iced-tea in front of her.

REBA
 (grinning)
 Well, you don't look like you're
 starving, anyway--

ERIN
 Listen, I'm sorry about that,
 okay? My mom likes to exaggerate
 stuff sometimes...

Behind her the door opens and Brian enters, now in his
 forties...

BRIAN
(not noticing Erin)
Reba, did you call the guy about
register tape? We're on our last
roll...

REBA
Damn, I knew I forgot something--
She goes in back to make the call.

ERIN
Hey, Dad--

BRIAN
(surprised)
Erin...My God, it's been a while,
hasn't it?

ERIN
(apologetic)
Yeah, I know. It's just, with
school and everything--

BRIAN
(giving her a
pointed look)
Is that it? Just your school? Or
is your mother keeping you away
from me again?

ERIN
It wouldn't matter, I'd come visit
you anyway.

BRIAN
I appreciate that...

He goes behind the counter, grabs himself a beer...

ERIN
(teasing)
Can I have one?

BRIAN
Not here, okay? Your mother would
shit a brick--
(gestures toward a
booth)
Come on, we'll sit over there.

Erin grabs her iced-tea and follows Brian to the booth.

INT. KALECK KITCHEN - DAY

KITCHEN

Sophie sits at the table with her tea and brandy...Kevin enters, goes to the phone, and dials.

SOPHIE

Calling that girlfriend of yours again?

KEVIN

Her name is Erin, Ma.

He listens to several RINGS, hangs up...

SOPHIE

You know, if you quit worrying about your friends so much and studied more, maybe you'd have found a job by now.

KEVIN

Yeah, Ma, and if pigs had wings, they'd fly.

He goes out.

INT. BRIAN'S DINER - DAY

Erin and Brian in the booth, talking...

BRIAN

Erin, does your mother ever talk about that time, you know, when we got divorced?

Erin fidgets, unable to meet his gaze.

ERIN

She says you stopped being my father the day you walked out on us--

BRIAN

She's been saying that, that I deserted you?

ERIN

Uh-huh.

(sips her tea)

I always wondered how much of it was true.

BRIAN

Well, for one thing, I didn't walk out on you...She was the one who asked for the damn divorce, not me--

ERIN

Wait a minute...You mean the whole thing was her idea? You left 'cause she made you?

BRIAN

Yeah...She went to court and said I was a bad influence on you and Tom--

ERIN

I was only eight years old! How could you be a bad influence?

BRIAN

Hell, you know how she is...Anyone who doesn't agree with her way of thinking is a bad influence.

ERIN

(ruefully)

Gee, there must be a lot of you.

She sucks the last of her iced-tea through the straw.

ERIN

Now, about that sign in the window--

EXT. BRIAN'S DINER - DAY

Erin comes out...Behind her in the diner, Reba takes the 'Help Wanted' sign out of the window.

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Erin, at the table drinking coffee, watches Estelle do the dishes.

ERIN

Ma, there's something I need to tell you...

ESTELLE

(turns, worried)

What now?

ERIN

Nothing bad, okay? I have a job.

ESTELLE

Oh...How considerate of you to tell me. And where, pray tell, will you be working?

ERIN

For Daddy, at the diner.

ESTELLE

Like hell, Erin, I won't have it--

ERIN

Why not, Ma? 'Cause you don't like him? That's bullshit--

ESTELLE

Is it? My God, Erin, I've spent the last seven years busting my ass to support you and Tom, and what do I get? Nothing but grief--

ERIN

Ma, look. I know you've been busting your ass, okay? At least now you won't have to worry about mine so much.

She stands, putting on her jacket.

ERIN

Besides, you're always sayin' how I need to learn more responsibility, right? Well, this is my chance, and I'm taking it.

She leaves.

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - NIGHT

Erin sits with Kevin, sharing a sundae...Kevin looks doubtfully at the plastic bag on the seat next to him.

KEVIN

I don't know, Erin, what if she doesn't like it?

ERIN

Relax, okay? Of course she'll like it...That scarf was made for her.

KEVIN

(grinning)

I keep telling you, it's not a scarf, it's a babushka.

ERIN

It's a scarf...And besides, whatever the heck it is, your mom will love it.

KEVIN

I hope you're right--

ERIN

I'm always right...Now, hurry up and help me finish this thing so we can walk around some more.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Erin and Kevin walk leisurely, holding hands...Kevin carries the plastic bag.

KEVIN

So what are you gonna do, now that you know what really happened with your folks?

ERIN

I don't know...I'm so pissed at my mom right now I could scream, but my dad made me promise not to say anything.

KEVIN

You gonna tell her he hired you?

ERIN

I already did...Needless to see, my dear mother was not pleased--

KEVIN

Gee, I'll bet that was fun...

ERIN

Too much fun, if you ask me--

They continue walking.

EXT. NEARBY INTERSECTION - NIGHT

A van waits for the light, STEREO pounding...

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Victor drives...Ponch rides shotgun, a half-full bottle of tequila cradled in his lap.

VICTOR

Shit, where is that asshole? We
been cruising around all day...

(suddenly excited)

Hey, there's Lurch, with that
bitch Erin--

He floors the accelerator.

PONCH

Man, what the fuck you doing?
Remember those dudes at school--

VICTOR

Fuck those putos, okay? I still
owe Erin for that time with the
goddamn crowbar...

PONCH

Shit, man, that's crazy--

He grabs for the wheel...They struggle for control of the van.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The van veers toward the sidewalk, its headlights washing over Erin and Kevin, who have paused to admire a lighted store display...

KEVIN

(reacting)

Christ, Erin, get down--

He pushes Erin down...The van hits him, knocking him through the store window, then comes to a stop with its front wheels off the ground and inside the display.

Ponch gets out of the van, shaken but unhurt.

He looks down...Kevin lies motionless in a pool of blood, with his head at the feet of a mannequin and his lower body under the van.

PONCH

Oh, shit...

Ponch looks around wildly, sees Victor unconscious in the van, then takes off running.

ANGLE on Erin, dazed and bleeding under the van...

ERIN

Jesus, Kev, there's glass all over you, and blood--

She hooks her fingers in Kevin's belt, pulls herself forward...The van's bumper, inches above Kevin's back, stops her.

ERIN

Oh, my God--Kevin...

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

A LITTLE LATER

A team of PARAMEDICS works on Kevin, while Victor, in cuffs, is escorted to a paddy wagon by a COP.

A CROWD gathers...

FIRST BYSTANDER

Hey, man, what's goin' on?

SECOND BYSTANDER

I don't know, looks like homey got hit by the van...

FIRST BYSTANDER

No shit--

(calls out)

Hey, Ruben, over here, man, check this shit out...

RUBEN appears, craning for a better look.

RUBEN

Damn...I never seen so much blood,
that dude's had it--

FIRST BYSTANDER

Hey, Ruben, lemme get a square--

ANGLE on Erin, watching from the back seat of a squad car.

INT. KEVIN'S INTENSIVE CARE ROOM - NIGHT

Erin, her minor injuries treated, enters the room and moves to the bed, where Kevin lies unconscious.

ERIN

Hey, Kev...I know you can't hear
me, but I had to see you--

She takes his hand, squeezes it...

ERIN

You gotta get better, okay? It'll
be hard at first, but you know
I'll be here if you need me...

A NURSE pokes her head in the door.

NURSE

I'm sorry, miss, but visitors are
not allowed on this end of the
floor.

Erin glances up, her cheeks wet with tears, then glances down at Kevin again.

ERIN

I love you, Kev--

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

A LITTLE LATER

Erin's there, slouched in a chair, waiting along with Tracey, Tom, and Vince.

IN THE CORRIDOR

Estelle talks to a DOCTOR.

ESTELLE

Are you sure she'll be all right,
Doctor? Shouldn't you admit her
just in case?

DOCTOR

Don't worry, Mrs. Kelly, your
daughter will be fine.
(frowns)
It's her friend we're worried
about,...

He hurries off, just as Brian appears...Erin sees him and
rushes into his arms.

ERIN

Daddy, I'm so glad you came--

Estelle turns on Brian, furious.

ESTELLE

What the hell are you doing here?
(grabs Erin's arm)
Come on, Erin--

ERIN

(jerking free)
No, Ma...Daddy's here 'cause I
called him.

ESTELLE

You called him? Erin, you know
goddamn well how I feel about
that--

ERIN

Yeah, I do...I just don't care
anymore.

The doctor appears, shaking his head sadly, while down the
hall Sophie can be seen sobbing.

DOCTOR

I'm sorry...We did what we could,
but the loss of blood was just too
great--

ERIN

(softly)
No...
(starts to cry)
Oh, God, no--

She runs from the hospital...the others react...Vince swears and punches a wall.

EXT. HOSPITAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Erin, running desperately...She stumbles and falls on the grass, sobbing...

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - DAY

Tom and Vince drink beer at the table, wearing suits, while outside, rain lashes against the windows.

TOM

So what time's the wake, four?

VINCE

Yeah.

(looks at watch)

I thought you said she'd be right down.

TOM

Chill out, Bonzo, unless you'd like to go up there an' get her--

VINCE

And get my ass chewed off? No thanks.

Erin enters, wearing her denim skirt and a midriff-baring top under her jacket.

ERIN

Okay, guys, I'm ready--

TOM

You're gonna wear that?

ERIN

Well, that dress I had on was too tight, and it itched--

TOM

Erin, we're going to a wake. People won't understand.

ERIN

So? Kevin woulda liked it--

Tom looks at Vince for help.

VINCE

Don't look at me, she's your
sister--

INT. FUNERAL HOME FOYER - NIGHT

Erin sits on a couch, looking lost...Sophie appears and sits
next to her.

SOPHIE

You're Erin...I haven't seen you
since you all were children, but
Kevin spoke very highly of you...

ERIN

Oh, Mrs. Kaleck...I'm so sorry for
what happened. Please don't hate
me for being with him--

SOPHIE

My Lord, child, I don't hate
you...You made his life better,
and for that I thank you.

(touches Erin's
knee)

Now come on, I have something that
might help.

They stand, and Sophie leads her toward the restrooms.

INT. FUNERAL HOME WOMEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sophie and Erin stand at the sink...Sophie pulls a flask
from her purse and offers it to Erin.

ERIN

(caught by
surprise)

Thank you--

She takes a sip, starts coughing...

ERIN

Jesus, what is this stuff?

SOPHIE

Brandy, child...Consider it
medicinal.

ERIN
 (doubtfully)
 If you say so--

She offers the flask back, but Sophie shakes her head.

SOPHIE
 No, keep it...I have to get back
 to the other old fogies in there,
 and it wouldn't do to be tipsy...

She goes out. Erin stares after her, then takes another sip
 of the brandy. This time she doesn't cough.

INT. FUNERAL HOME FOYER - NIGHT

Erin is sitting on the couch again, Sophie's flask cradled
 in her lap...Vince appears and sits next to her, looking
 haggard.

VINCE
 Man, I can't believe this is
 happening--
 (notices the flask)
 Damn, girl, where'd you get that?

ERIN
 From Kev's mom, if you can believe
 that...She called it medicinal,
 or something...
 (offers him the
 flask)
 Here, try some, then we'll go in.

He takes a swig, hands the flask back...Erin caps it and
 slips it into her inside jacket pocket.

VINCE
 Good stuff...Sophie always did
 like her brandy--

ERIN
 But why is she being so nice to
 me? All she ever did before was
 bitch.

VINCE
 Because you were his friend, you
 accepted him the way he was...I
 don't think his mom ever figured
 out how to do that.

Erin stares at him, her grief plain...

ERIN

What'd he ever do, Vince? Huh?
 What'd he fuckin' do, that made
 God take him from us?

She starts to cry...Vince awkwardly puts an arm around her.

VINCE

He didn't do anything...I think
 maybe God just wanted to spare him
 from any more bullshit--

INT. FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

KEVIN'S PARLOR

Most of the MOURNERS are older...A framed portrait of Kevin sits on a chair next to the closed coffin.

Erin and Vince enter the parlor...Erin impulsively grabs Vince's hand.

ERIN

Stay with me...

VINCE

Don't worry, I'm not going
 anywhere--

At the coffin, they cross themselves and kneel...Erin touches the casket gently.

EXT. CEMETERY - KEVIN'S FUNERAL - DAY

A sunny, cool day...

Erin, Tom, Tracey, and Vince stand behind Sophie and the other MOURNERS as the PRIEST finishes the eulogy.

People begin drifting away...

Erin moves closer, watching as the coffin is lowered. Tracey hands her some flowers, which she tosses in on top of it.

EXT. VACANT LOT - NIGHT

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Erin, her hair lank and unwashed, stands throwing rocks at an abandoned car.

Vince's car pulls up...Vince gets out and comes up to her.

VINCE

Hey, Erin...Your brother said I might find you here--

ERIN

My brother talks too much.
(throws a rock)
So, why are you looking for me, anyway?

VINCE

I haven't seen you around lately.
(shrugs)
I was worried.

ERIN

(softly)
I'm glad someone was...
(throws another rock)
Are you still going to the bonfire?

VINCE

I dunno...probably.

ERIN

Then take me with you, okay? I can't stand it at home anymore--

VINCE

(doffing an imaginary cap)
It would be a pleasure, m'lady...

ERIN

Fuck it, then, let's go now.

She throws one last rock, and they walk to his car.

EXT. WOODED AREA BEHIND LANE STADIUM - NIGHT

Someone has built a bonfire...Erin and Vince stand by his car, drinking, surrounded by other PARTYING STUDENTS...

J.C., a former student with long hair and a goatee, appears among them, greeting and high-fiving the other kids, who've obviously been awaiting his arrival.

ERIN

Who's that guy?

VINCE

They call him J.C. He's the dude to see if you're into chemical dependency...

ERIN

Why do they call him J.C.?

VINCE

(wryly)

Oh, I'm thinking maybe the hair and the beard, but I could be wrong...

J.C. comes up to them, grinning.

J.C.

Vincent, my man...How's life? I see you finally brought a babe to the party--

VINCE

No, man, this is Erin, she's a friend of mine...

J.C.

Pleased to meet you, really--

He takes her hand and kisses it, then lifts the flap of his jacket pocket, revealing a row of joints.

J.C.

Anybody for some weed?

ERIN

(swiping one)

Sure, twist my arm...

J.C.

Damn, a girl after my own heart... Now if you'll both excuse me, I gotta go tend to my flock--

He walks off...Erin takes out a lighter and fires up the joint.

VINCE
I didn't know you toked.

ERIN
I didn't used to, before...Now I
do.

She inhales deeply on the joint, then passes it to him...

A LITTLE LATER

Erin sits cross-legged on the hood of Vince's car, sipping a beer, while inside the car Vince fiddles with the RADIO.

ERIN
God, this sucks--

Vince rejoins her.

VINCE
There, finally some decent
tunes...
(noting Erin's
mood)
What's up, Erin? You okay?

ERIN
(softly)
I don't want to be here anymore.

VINCE
Then come on, I'll drive you home.

ERIN
Sure, 'cause I'll be so much
happier there...

She finishes her beer and angrily crumples the can.

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Estelle sits at the table, drinking coffee and smoking,
while Tom sits across from her reading the paper.

Erin enters, wearing an old flannel shirt as a nightdress,
and goes to the sink for a glass of water.

ESTELLE
Well, well...Look who decided to
honor us with her presence for a
change--

At the sink, Erin stiffens.

TOM

Ma, maybe you should lay off...

ESTELLE

(ignoring him)

I mean, Christ, Erin, I know this might be hard for you to believe, but life does go on...Don't you think it's time you snapped out of it and and rejoined the real world?

Erin turns, clutching her glass tightly.

ERIN

This is the real world, Ma. You an' Tom an' this shitty house, this is as real as it gets, and I hate it! You act like you're so smart, but it's all bullshit, you don't know a goddamn thing--

ESTELLE

And you do? Hell, Erin, you're still a punk kid, what do you know about anything?

ERIN

I know you lied to me about Daddy! God, all those times I had to hear what a bastard he was for leavin' us, an' the whole time it was your fault--

(turns on Tom)

And what about you? You're older than me, you must've known Ma was lying--

Estelle stands angrily.

ESTELLE

That's enough, Erin! Just 'cause you're still mooning after that crippled Polack boy doesn't mean you got a right to smart-mouth your brother and me--

Erin reacts, shattering the glass in the sink.

ERIN

Fuck you, Ma! Kevin was the best friend I ever had, how dare you say that? You're such a bitch--

Estelle is on her in a flash, shaking her...She smacks Erin across the face twice, then grabs her wrists as Erin tries to fend her off...

ESTELLE

Listen to me, little girl! I'm still your mother, you hear? The next time you swear like that, or raise your hand to me, so help me, Erin, I'll beat the living shit out of you!

She releases Erin, roughly...Erin falls back against the sink, breathing hard...

ERIN

God, I hate you--

She pushes past Estelle and flees to her room.

INT. ERIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A LITTLE LATER

Erin sits cross-legged on the bed, her tear-streaked face nearly hidden by her hair...

There's a KNOCK at the door.

ERIN

You can't come in now.

She takes a razor blade from her shirt pocket, looks at it a moment, and slices it across her left wrist.

The cut is superficial...Blood oozes out and drips on her bare thigh.

ERIN

(suddenly scared)

Oh, Jesus--

Another, more impatient KNOCK, then Tom opens the door.

TOM

Erin, are you okay? I think we should talk--

(MORE)

TOM (cont'd)
(sees the blood)
Christ, what the hell did you do?

ERIN
Nothing, okay? I'm sorry! Tell her
I'm fucking sorry--

She goes to him, bleeding on his shirt and sobbing, her face buried against his chest.

TOM
Don't apologize anymore, okay?
Next time it might kill you--

INT. BATHROOM OFF ERIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Erin stands at the sink, the water running, while Tom dabs at her wrist with a wad of wet tissue.

ERIN
You know, I'm glad you're my
brother, even if you are a pain in
the butt sometimes...

TOM
(ruefully)
I love you, too. I'm just glad you
didn't cut that deep...

He tosses the bloody tissue into the toilet, takes out a Band-Aid...

ERIN
Does this mean we have to like
each other now?

Tom applies the Band-Aid, looking solemn.

TOM
Only when no one else is around,
okay? I have a reputation to
uphold.

ERIN
Yeah, me too...Tell you what, I'll
tell Tracey you beat me up and
steal food off my plate, and you
can tell Vince what a little brat
I am--

TOM
(grinning)
Hell, I do that now. Think of
something else.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Vince's car pulls up in front of the boarded-up storefront
where the van hit Kevin...Tom and Vince get out.

TOM
Damn, I had a feeling we'd end up
here--

VINCE
I had to, man...I had to see where
it happened.

Tom stares at shards of glass on the pavement, at a dark
stain that could've been blood...

TOM
It happened right here? Damn--

VINCE
Yeah.
(looks around)
This is cold shit, man, some real
cold shit, and the bitch of it is,
it's only the first time--

They look at each other, neither one saying
anything...Finally Vince breaks the silence.

VINCE
Man, let's get outta here and hit
the Den, I'm buying,

They get back in the car.

EXT. BEAR'S DEN - NIGHT

Vince's car pulls up in front and parks. Vince and Tom get
out and walk toward the front door.

INT. BEAR'S DEN - NIGHT

MEGAN, a pretty barmaid, works the bar...Vince, sitting at
the bar with Tom, rattles the ice in his glass.

VINCE

Got that next round ordered yet?
This one went kinda fast...

TOM

Slow down, vodka-breath, you're
supposed to drive home--

VINCE

Bullshit, man, I drove home last
time.

(rattles ice again)

Now, you gonna order, or what?

Tom sighs, signalling Megan for another round.

TOM

Hey, Megan, down here--

Megan hops off her stool and comes over, smiling at them.

MEGAN

So what can I get you guys this
time?

VINCE

Whatever this'll buy--

Vince stuffs several bills down the front of Megan's blouse.

TOM

Jesus Christ...

He stands, takes hold of Vince's arm...

TOM

Come along, Bonzo, time to go
night-night...

VINCE

(resisting)

Shit, dude, what's your hurry?

(gestures at Megan)

Besides, I already paid--

TOM

You sure did...Come on, let's get
you the hell outta here.

Megan, looking embarrassed, retrieves the money from her
blouse.

MEGAN

What about his money?

TOM

Hell, keep it...He won't remember giving it to you anyway.

MEGAN

Well, if you say so...

Tom maneuvers Vince toward the door.

EXT. BEAR'S DEN - NIGHT

Erin appears just as Tom brings Vince out.

ERIN

Hey, guys...Jeez, what's with Vince? Is he okay?

TOM

He will be, as soon as I get his drunken ass home--

VINCE

(breaking free)

Home, my ass...The night's still young, and so am I--

He runs into the street, dodging traffic...

ERIN

God, he's gonna get himself killed--

TOM

No shit...

They wait for a break in traffic, following Vince as he walks backward away from them.

About a block further down, a C.T.A. elevated train passes above the street...

Vince takes a parking ticket from the windshield of a parked car, rips it, and sends the pieces fluttering in the air.

TOM

Come on, man, don't do this shit, okay?

VINCE

What, you think I'm drunk?

He jumps onto the hood of another parked car.

VINCE

(louder)

You think I'm fuckin' drunk?

He walks over the roof, onto the trunk, then jumps down, only staggering a little...Erin approaches him.

ERIN

Hey, Vince...

(takes his hand)

Walk with me, okay?

They start walking...Tom moves to follow, but Erin shakes her head at him.

ERIN

(as they walk)

What's up, Vince? Why are you like this, huh? Talk to me--

VINCE

I still miss him, you know? I fuckin' miss him, but no one wants to talk about it anymore...

ERIN

I know what you mean...Trace is like the only one who'll even listen if I mention Kev's name--

They pause under the el tracks, as another train passes overhead...

Vince removes his jacket, spreads it out on the muddy ground next to a fence, and sits on it...

VINCE

(gesturing for her to join him)

Have a seat, Erin. We're gonna talk about it.

ERIN

Okay, but this is so weird...

She sits next to him on the jacket, and for a short time neither speaks...Then Erin pushes up the left sleeve of her jacket.

ERIN

I need to show you something, but please don't freak, okay? I feel stupid enough already--

She shows him the healing scab on her wrist.

VINCE

Jesus--

ERIN

I did that one night after this huge fight with my mom...

VINCE

Damn, Erin, you shoulda called me--

ERIN

I know...I was just so angry, and it didn't seem like anyone cared--

VINCE

Well, I care, damnit--

ERIN

I'm glad you do.

(gives him a look)

And the next time you run into traffic like that, I'll kick your ass, you hear?

VINCE

(sheepishly)

Sorry about that, I don't know what got into me back there...

He glances back the way they had come, where Tom stands waiting.

VINCE

Damn, I almost forgot about your brother...We better head back.

He stands, helping Erin to her feet.

ERIN

What about your jacket?

VINCE

(glancing at it)

Fuck it, it's trashed anyway...

They start back...

INT. BEAR'S DEN - NIGHT

Megan pours Vince a shot...It's late, and they have the place to themselves.

VINCE

Listen, I'm sorry if I laid a lot of shit on you last time about Kevin...

MEGAN

Hey, not a problem...I liked Kevin, too, he was always real sweet--

(grins)

And oh, yeah, that wasn't all you laid on me that night...

VINCE

Don't remind me...Sorry about that.

MEGAN

Don't be, that's one tip I'll always remember.

Vince downs the shot, chases it with a sip of beer...Megan scratches violently at her shoulder.

MEGAN

Damn, this stupid bra keeps itching me--

VINCE

You could always take it off...

MEGAN

I thought you'd never ask.

She reaches inside her blouse, slips out of the bra, and tosses it aside.

VINCE

I've always wondered how girls managed to do that.

MEGAN

It's easier when we're sloshed.
(grins impishly)
Maybe later I'll even show you how
it's done...

She pours another shot for him, and one for herself.

INT. BEAR'S DEN - DAY

THE NEXT MORNING

Behind the bar, Carl has just found Megan's discarded bra.

CARL

What the hell--

Erin comes in and sits at the bar, setting her backpack on the stool next to her.

ERIN

'Morning, Carl...Nice bra.

Carl quickly stashes the bra...Erin opens the backpack, pulls out a small potted plant...Carl sets a soda in front of her.

CARL

Here you go, sweetheart...
(noticing the
plant)
Jesus, what the hell is that? It's
not for me, is it?

ERIN

No, silly, it's for Kevin's grave,
his birthday's coming up.

Next she takes several college brochures out of her backpack and spreads them on the bar for Carl to see.

ERIN

I called some places like you
said, these came today...I thought
you could help me pick which ones
look good.

CARL

(grins)
You got it...Just don't tell your
mother I'm helping you, she'd have
my ass--

ERIN

And the rest of you, too.

Down the bar, Pete and his friend EARL carry on a heated conversation.

EARL

That's fool talk, Pete, and you know it...But, since you got that bug up your ass again, I guess I gotta hear it one more time--

He sips his drink, then wipes his mouth with his sleeve.

PETE

Fool talk, hell. I'm telling you, folks around here are born strange... 'Member Allan Ray, they said he'd go to college for sure?

EARL

Yeah, so?

PETE

So he's been livin' off his Ma twenty years now, don't do a goddam thing but drink and watch T.V.--

ERIN

(interrupting)

I got an uncle like that, 'cept he's in jail--

Earl pulls a handkerchief from his shirt pocket, blows his nose in it, and puts it back in his pocket.

Pete looks disgusted.

PETE

Thought you was gonna use your sleeve for that, too...

(sips his drink)

I swear, any goddamn fool can look at you and see I'm right--

ERIN

C'mon, guys, be nice...

She stands, digging in her pocket for quarters, then heads for the jukebox.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Erin kneels at Kevin's grave, placing the plant in various spots, finally finding one she likes.

ERIN

There, perfect.

She stands, brushing grass off her bare legs, then slings her backpack over her shoulder.

ERIN

Be happy, Kev--

She wipes at her eyes and walks away, careful not to step on any headstones.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Sheila, at her locker after school, is talking with Ponch. They see Erin enter the girls' washroom.

INT. GIRLS' WASHROOM - DAY

Erin stands at the sink, splashing her face with water. Sheila and Ponch enter.

SHEILA

Grab her--

Ponch tries...Erin struggles fiercely, stomping on his instep, almost getting away...

SHEILA

Oh, no you don't, Erin--

Sheila punches Erin in the stomach, then knees her in the face as she doubles over...

SHEILA

Hold her up.

Ponch pulls Erin up by the hair...She's barely conscious, her face bloody...Sheila slaps her.

SHEILA

How does it feel, Erin, huh?

(slaps her again)

Maybe when I'm done with you,
they'll be changing your sheets at
the fucking hospital--

ERIN
(weakly)
Go to hell...

Sheila hits her again, then steps back.

SHEILA
Ponch, gimme your knife.

Ponch hesitates, but hands her his switchblade...

She clicks it open, using the blade to pop the buttons on Erin's blouse, which parts slightly.

SHEILA
Consider this a warning, Erin--

She pricks the skin between Erin's breasts, drawing blood.

SHEILA
--'cause next time you won't get
off so fuckin' easy.

Sheila hands Ponch back his knife, and they leave.

Erin goes to the sink, looking at herself in the mirror.

ERIN
(under her breath)
Next time, bitch, I'll see you
first.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

LATER

Erin walks along, cleaned up a little, her blouse knotted into a halter under her unzipped jacket. PEOPLE who pass her stare at her battered face.

An old WINO appears, pushing a junk-filled cart.

WINO
Girl, you got any change? I need a
drink bad--

ERIN
I might...

She searches her pockets, pulls out a five...

WINO
(staring at the
money)
That'll do.

ERIN
Yeah, I'll bet...
(looks at cart)
Can I go through your stuff?

WINO
(suspicious)
How much you gonna give me?

Erin holds up the five.

WINO
Deal.

EXT. DEWEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A LITTLE LATER

Dewey, Sheila, and Ponch, partying on the front porch...

ACROSS THE STREET

Erin crouches behind a parked car, watching them. She reaches into her backpack and pulls out an empty bottle.

ERIN
(under her breath)
Get off on this, you little slut--

Erin stands, throwing the bottle...

ON THE PORCH

The bottle shatters on the railing, showering Dewey, Ponch, and Sheila with glass.

DEWEY
(touching his
bloody ear)
What the fuck--

A chunk of metal bangs off the mailbox...a sawed-off table leg breaks a window...

They dive for cover.

ACROSS THE STREET

Erin stands looking at them, then walks away...

INT. KELLY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Estelle is fixing dinner...The phone RINGS, and she answers.

ESTELLE

Hello? Oh, hey, Nora.

(listens)

Where's who? Erin?

(listens some more)

Nora...First of all, my daughter is not, as you so delicately put it, a stupid cunt. Call her that again and I'll come over there and knock you on your fat ass.

(pauses, takes a breath)

Second of all, if she did hit Dewey, I'm sure she had good reason...

(listens)

She broke a window, too? Maybe her aim was off...Listen, Nora, let me let you go, I think Erin's coming now--

She hangs up...Erin enters from outside, letting her backpack drop. Seeing Estelle, she ducks her head so her hair hides her bruised face.

ERIN

Hey, Ma...

She drops wearily into a chair...Estelle gives her a look, her eyes going to the knotted blouse.

ESTELLE

Jesus, Erin, if you insist on wearing your shirt like that, can't you at least wear something underneath?

ERIN

Yeah, God forbid the neighbors should talk about me...Was that Aunt Nora?

ESTELLE

Yeah, it was...Erin, what's going on? She said you hit Dewey with a bottle, he's gonna need stitches--

ERIN

I was trying for Sheila, but I missed an' hit the railing...
(shrugs)
Shit happens.

ESTELLE

I don't believe this, Erin! You could've really hurt someone, and you're not even sorry--

Erin shakes back her hair so Estelle can see her face.

ERIN

See this, Ma? Sheila did this to me.

(points to her chest)

She did this, too, while that fag Ponch held me up by the hair--

ESTELLE

But, my God, Erin, why? Didn't you all used to be friends?

ERIN

Me and Sheila were, once...

ESTELLE

Then why'd she do that to you?

ERIN

'Cause I was Kevin's friend, too, and they didn't like him...
(shrugs)
After a while they decided not to like me, either.

She gives Estelle a small, bitter smile.

ERIN

But, hell, why should anyone like me, anyway? You sure as hell don't--

Estelle starts to reply, hesitates, then turns defensive.

ESTELLE

And why should I, Erin? I've raised you the best I know how, and for what? Half the time I don't even know what to do with you anymore...

ERIN

It's too late to do anything with me, Ma. This is who I am, whether you like it or not--

ESTELLE

Maybe so, but I still have some say in your life...Like that stuff with you working for your father-- I could still forbid that, you know.

ERIN

And I'd be gone, Ma. You'd never see me again.

ESTELLE

(derisively)

You've really been thinking about this, haven't you, planning your escape--

ERIN

Hell, Ma, I've been planning my escape since I was twelve.

She stands and goes to the back door.

ESTELLE

You're going out again? But what about dinner?

ERIN

I'll nuke something later, right now my stomach ain't too happy...

She goes out.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE CEMETERY - NIGHT

LATER

Erin stands looking through the locked gate...She glances around, seeing no one, then climbs over.

INSIDE THE CEMETERY

Erin walks slowly, finally reaching Kevin's grave. She kneels, crying, fingering the crucifix he'd given her.

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sophie's there...She holds a framed photo of Kevin and Erin, taken five years earlier at a party.

The doorbell RINGS.

Sophie takes a moment to compose herself...The doorbell RINGS again.

SOPHIE

Hold your horses, I'm coming...

INT. KALECK LIVING ROOM - DAY

LIVING ROOM

Sophie goes to the door, still holding the photo...

SOPHIE

(cautiously)

Hello, who's there?

ERIN (O.S.)

(in the hall)

Hi, Mrs. Kaleck...It's me, Erin.

SOPHIE

Oh, yes, Erin...

She opens the door, sees Erin standing in the hall.

SOPHIE

How are you, child?

ERIN

Okay, I guess...I hope I'm not bothering you--

SOPHIE

No, no, please come in, it's no bother...

She leads Erin to the couch, and they sit...On the coffee table is a Sun-Times, open to the obituary page.

SOPHIE

Would you care for something to drink? I have lemonade in the fridge--

ERIN

(starting to cry)

No, thank you...

(wipes at her eyes)

Damnit, I wasn't gonna cry. It's just that today's his birthday and you're here all by yourself--

SOPHIE

(touched)

Why, thank you, Erin, you're sweet for caring...

She pauses, absently smoothing her dress.

SOPHIE

I was just in his room, you know, straightening up a bit...

(hands Erin the photo)

He had this on his nightstand.

ERIN

I remember this...It was his thirteenth birthday, you gave him a cake with all these baseball players on it--

SOPHIE

(ruefully)

Yes, and then I gave them away to all you kids as you were leaving...God, I never heard the end of it, he nearly threw a fit--

ERIN

Yeah, I remember that--

She sets the photo on the coffee table, noticing the newspaper.

ERIN

(softly)

You read it...

SOPHIE

Yes, dear, I did. People have been calling me all day to tell me

(MORE)

SOPHIE (cont'd)
 about it...
 (smiles sadly)
 It was the best birthday present
 you could have given him.

Erin smiles at Sophie through her tears, hugs her...

LATER

Erin, ready to go, stands with Sophie at the door.

SOPHIE
 Thank you for coming, Erin. You
 made today a little more bearable
 for me.
 (pauses)
 Was there something of Kevin's I
 could give you as a keepsake?

ERIN
 No, thank you...
 (fingers the
 crucifix)
 I already have something.

Sophie shocks Erin by laughing.

SOPHIE
 (after a moment)
 I'm sorry, Erin, please don't
 think I'm laughing at you...It's
 just that I should have known--

ERIN
 What? This is the crucifix Kevin
 gave me...

SOPHIE
 I know, child. He told me he lost
 it.

ERIN
 (disappointed)
 Oh...then here--

She reaches back to unfasten the chain, but Sophie stops her.

SOPHIE
 What, now you don't want it? I
 know it must mean a lot to you--

ERIN

It does.

SOPHIE

Then keep it. There's no one else
I'd rather see wearing it.

ERIN

Thank you...God, now I'm really
gonna cry--

She gives Sophie another hug, then leaves...

INT. BEAR'S DEN - DAY

A LITTLE LATER

The bar is crowded, with Carl and Megan both working.

Tracey, Tom, and Vince are in a booth decorated for Kevin's
birthday, waiting on a fresh round of drinks...

Erin appears and joins them, sitting next to Tom.

ERIN

(breathlessly)

Hey, guys...

TOM

Where the hell were you? We almost
toasted without you--

ERIN

You wouldn't dare!

Megan brings their tray of drinks, starts passing them
out...She smiles at Erin.

MEGAN

Hi, there...Diet Pepsi for you,
right?

ERIN

Uh-huh...

Megan hands her a stein of soda.

MEGAN

See, I remembered...

TOM
Yeah, you're not senile, like
Carl...

VINCE
(grinning)
Or half as ugly.

Behind the bar, Carl takes the ribbing in stride...

CARL
Very funny, you assholes--

Megan collects their money and moves off...Tom turns to
Vince.

TOM
So, Bonzo, you gonna make that
toast, or what?

VINCE
Hell, that's Erin's job. And quit
calling me Bonzo.
(to Erin, teasing)
Anyway, now that you're finally
here, is there anything you'd say
to Kevin if you had the chance?

Erin thinks a moment, then smiles.

ERIN
Just that his mother loves him,
even if she did give away all his
baseball men that time--

TOM
Damn, I remember that...

VINCE
So do I...The dude was practically
in tears.

ERIN
Hush, okay? I wasn't done.

She pulls a piece of paper from her pocket and unfolds it.

ERIN
I put this in the paper for Kev's
birthday...His mom really liked
it.
(reading now)
'In memory of Kevin Kaleck...A
(MORE)

ERIN (cont'd)
good friend is hard to find, and
even harder to forget. Kev, you
were our friend, and you know
we'll never forget you. Happy
Birthday, and love always, Erin.'

She looks up at them, suddenly shy...No one speaks...Vince
is the first to raise his glass.

FREEZE FRAME

as they toast, and the glasses shatter.

FADE OUT.