

EIGHT DAYS

by  
Daniel McGovern

Daniel McGovern  
1915 Kimball Ct S.  
Lakeland, FL 33813  
863-868-5340

FADE IN:

EXT. UPSCALE HOME GREENICH CT. - PRESENT DAY

Snowdrifts have covered most of the yard. Children are running around playing in the drifts and making snow angels. They are having lots of snow filled fun.

INT. UPSCALE HOME - - CONTINUOUS

Sara and her husband George sit on a plush love seat. George has his arms outstretched, looking up at the intricate designs in the metal ceiling above. He has a look in his eyes as if on some kind of heavy psychotropic drug.

Margaret and her husband Jake sit Indian style on the floor next to the coffee table sorting through volumes of old photographs.

Laura, Steve's wife, sits sternly away from the rest in a queen ann chair watching the others with a pompous air. She obviously can not wait to leave.

STEVE

Walks downstairs carrying a huge cardboard box.

STEVE

(to Laura)

You're not going to believe what I found in the closet.

LAURA

(claps her hands  
sarcastically)

A box full of money.

She rolls into a maniacal laugh.

STEVE

Nope. Something better than that.

He nears the coffee table. Seeing that there is no room to place the box on top, he drops it to the floor with a **THUMP**. It was heavy.

JAKE

(to Steve)

Looks like you just got yourself a workout buddy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE

A bunch of old baseball cards.

He smiles.

JAKE

(like a kid)

I want those...I'll stick them on  
ebay, make some money...cha ching.

He smiles a greedy smile.

MARGARET

This guys always thinking of more  
ways to make money.

JAKE

You have too. If one way fails you  
have a back up.

STEVE

Sorry chump. They're mine. No back  
up for you out of these.

He smirks at Jake.

STEVE (CONT'D)

And look. I see Dwight Gooden's  
rookie card right on top in  
pristine condition...I remember  
baseball in the late eighties. The  
best games of all times were in  
the eighties.

He takes out the card and looks at it for a beat and  
passes it to Jake.

JAKE

Yeah, that's gotta be worth  
something...I'll give you twenty  
five bucks for it right now.

STEVE

Add two zeros baby and then we'll  
talk.

JAKE

Twenty five hundred bucks...Nah,  
you can keep it.

He passes the card back to Steve.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAURA  
(to Steve)  
More junk Steve.

STEVE

Peers at Laura sourly.

STEVE  
Just like your plate collection.  
..One night your all invited over  
the house. We're going to have a  
Greek party and break plates all  
night.

JAKE  
(to Laura)  
Those Norman Rockwell's have to be  
worth some money. Why don't you  
see what you can get for them.

LAURA  
I wouldn't sell them for my life.  
They were my mother's. They have  
sentimental value.

JAKE  
Well you can't complain about his  
baseball cards than can you? i  
mean what's sentimental to one  
isn't what is always sentimental  
to another.

LAURA  
Steve knows I can complain about  
anything I want. Isn't that right  
Steve?

STEVE  
Yeah, sure. You complain about  
almost everything I do.

His eyes move toward a thick leather bound book with aged paper. There is almost a mystical quality about the book as if it holds many secrets. It rests at the edge of the coffee table. He picks it up. On it's cover, written in white paint reads, *IRENE'S DIARY*.

He opens to the first page.

STEVE (CONT'D)  
(surprised)  
It's mom's diary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARGARET

Steve. You shouldn't read anyone's diary. It's private stuff.

Elizabeth walks out from the kitchen eating a bowl of chocolate ice cream.

ELIZABETH

Yeah, there might be some steamy stories about mom and dad in there.

MARGARET

As long as there aren't any drawings or diagrams on how they did it we're okay.

SARA

Oh, god. Don't say that.

ELIZABETH

Nothing to be embarrassed about. It is a natural human function. I'm sure they did it quite often. They did have four kids.

STEVE

(to Elizabeth)

You find a boyfriend yet, a steady one?

ELIZABETH

Haven't met the right guy yet to fall in love with.

STEVE

When you find love it's the best feeling in the world.

(he looks at Laura)

Isn't that right honey?

LAURA

Nervously smiles back at Steve.

ELIZABETH

They say a person's diary is from the soul, if it is a true diary. That's what some people say about the bible and all the other religious texts...Maybe God didn't come down and tell these people to write it. But it came from their own soul. In a sense from God.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARGARET

Whatever.

STEVE

Starts reading from the diary.

STEVE

(reading)

Hello. You must be very special if you're reading what I have written. It is 1927 and I am seven years old. My name is Irene McDonald.

Elizabeth interrupts.

ELIZABETH

That's a pretty thick book. I wonder if it covers her whole life there Steve O?

SARA

Mom loved to write. I never knew what she was writing though.

ELIZABETH

You never asked her even while you were living here. You guys have been here for like a couple of years.

SARA

You know. I didn't think about it. When you have two kids constantly at your heels, you'll understand. You don;t have time for anything.

MARGARET

If that ain't the truth. Kids and stress take up much of your time.

STEVE

Walks toward the fireplace and sits up against one of the columns.

LAURA

(to Steve)

You're not going to read that whole thing are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

STEVE

Yes I am. This is history. My mother's history...I think I'll entertain it a little.

He goes back to the diary and continues reading.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(reading)

I live in Connecticut in a nice little house. I have nice parents and a nice caregiver named Mimi. She has a different color skin, but mom and dad say it is not the color of the skin that makes someone good, it is their heart... My favorite pet is Charlie. He is a goat, a smart one. He is sleeping with me right now as I am writing this.

Margaret interrupts.

MARGARET

I thought I saw a picture of the first Charlie. He was a cute little guy.

She shuffles through the photos and finds it. She passes it around.

STEVE

(reading)

I am only seven years old, but I know what I want when I grow up. A family. A family to give love to just like I get everyday of my life.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL CONNECTICUT FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

(1927)

Irene (seven years old) runs up the icy front porch, dressed in an overcoat and hat. She opens the front door and runs up the stairs.

Her mothers voice yells out.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Shut the door honey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The wind blows the door shut.

IRENE (O.S.)  
(yelling)  
Hey dad. Hey mom. I'm gonna play  
in my room.

INT. MCDONALD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Irene hurries down the hallway, taking off her hat and overcoat. She enters:

HER BEDROOM

The room is decorated with all the necessities for a seven year old girl of that era. The two main focal points are a large wooden doll house, complete with family, and Charlie the goat.

Charlie is chewing on one of her paten leather shoes.

IRENE  
(to Charlie)  
You can not do that boy. Mom would  
have a nervous attack if she saw  
you doing that.

She bends down and pulls the shoe from Charlie's mouth and examines it. Teeth marks through and through. She throws it under the bed.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
(to Charlie)  
Mom can not see that. You did a  
number on it...I have an idea.  
Let's play family.

She slides the doll house closer to Charlie. Inside the doll house is a family: a father, mother, and a baby girl.

She takes the baby and places it in Charlie's mouth. He starts to nibble.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
(to Charlie)  
You be the baby and I'll be the  
mother and father. They're going  
to make...What should we have? It  
looks like you want breakfast. The  
father will have to go out and get  
the eggs and the mother will be at  
the stove starting to cook.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She grabs the mother doll and stands her next to the tiny stove replica for the era. She grabs the father and walks him along the wooden floor. She imagines a hen house, opens the door and gathers some imaginary eggs. She walks the father doll back along the wooden floor and into the house. She stands him next to the mother.

**NOTE: IRENE IMITATES A MAN AND WOMAN'S VOICE**

MAN'S VOICE

I got some eggs honey. I like mine scrambled.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Would you like bacon with those eggs.

MAN'S VOICE

Bacon is too chewy. It hurts my teeth. I only have five left and I have to keep them as long as I can.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Where's baby Sara?

MAN'S VOICE

She's playing with the goat.

WOMAN'S VOICE

I think she needs to be fed. Can you get her?

MAN'S VOICE

Sure honey.

Irene walks the man out of the house to Charlie and takes the baby doll from his mouth.

A VOICE yells up from downstairs. It is Mimi, the nanny.

MIMI (O.S.)

(yelling up)

It's time for supper sweetheart.

Irene jumps up and peeks her head out her bedroom door.

IRENE

(yelling down)

What are we having?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIMI (O.S.)

You know not to ask Mimi those questions child. Have I ever let down you or your parents?

IRENE

(softly)

Never.

She smiles.

MIMI (O.S.)

To answer your question I haven't started cooking it yet. It's in your room. Charlie's getting nice and fat.

Laughter from downstairs.

Irene runs through the hall and down the stairs.

KITCHEN

The McDonald's are seated at the table.

Mimi is serving.

Irene enters with a smile on her face and all return a pleasant smile. She moves toward Mimi and puts her arm around her thick waist.

IRENE

Hey mom. Hey dad.

MOTHER (IRMA)

Hello sweetheart.

FATHER (JOHN)

How's Charlie. Getting fat?

He smiles.

IRENE

(annoyed)

Dad.

MIMI

He's only kidding child. Your daddy's got more meat on him than Charlie.

Irene laughs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MIMI (CONT'D)

And Mimi's not too far behind the same.

IRMA

The same here Mimi. My waist is growing out.

MIMI

Good heavens. We all eatin too much. I best not cook so good anymore.

She laughs.

IRENE

(to Mimi)

Promise me one thing. Always cook good...In fact I want you to teach me tomorrow.

MIMI

Okay child, now sit.

She ushers Irene into a seat and pushes her close into the table.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOME - BACK TO SCENE

Elizabeth sits down next to Steve and peers over at the diary. She offers Steve a scoop of ice cream.

STEVE

(smiling)

No thanks. I have to watch my cholesterol.

JAKE

(to Steve)

Get some medication and you can eat whatever you want. That's what I do.

STEVE

I can't do that. My cholesterol is high enough.

JAKE

Yes you can. Don't be a party pooper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE  
(to Elizabeth)  
What the hell. Give me some ice  
cream.

Elizabeth

Shovels a spoonful of ice cream into Steve's mouth.

MARGARET  
(to Jake)  
You eat so much garbage, getting  
so fat and continue to buy  
expensive clothes. Your Rolex  
barely fits around your fat wrist.  
What kind of lesson are you  
teaching the kids?

JAKE

Brings his left wrist up and examines his watch.

JAKE  
It still fits pretty good...I'm  
two ten. I'm not that big. I know  
guys who are two thirty.

STEVE  
Yeah, but they're six three, not  
five six and don't take medication  
for cholesterol.

JAKE  
Okay, I'm vertically challenged  
not horizontally challenged. I  
need to grow upwards a little more  
and then I'll be normal.

STEVE  
What is normal?

ELIZABETH  
(answering)  
Normal is a state of mind. There  
is no normal...I consider  
normal..peace of mind. Free from  
anxiety.

JAKE  
(to Elizabeth)  
That's right. You're one of those  
freewill chicks from the village.  
That's okay.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAKE (CONT'D)

But normal isn't going to make you money or get that big house.

ELIZABETH

To me the house doesn't matter. Just piece of mind.

JAKE

To each his own.

MARGARET

George, how's the job hunting coming along?

GEORGE

Stretches out on the love seat, uncomfortable with the question. He blinks noticeably.

GEORGE

There's really nothing around. I've been looking. I can't find anything good...I don;t know. Nothing seems to fit.

Sara nudges George.

SARA

(to George)  
You want to order some pizza?

GEORGE

(answering)  
Yeah, that would be great honey.

His neck tics to the left.

SARA

Let's go...  
(addressing everyone)  
Guys, we're gonna order some pizza. Do I have suggestions. Plain?

MARGARET

Sausage and peppers.

JAKE

There you go Steve. I can eat sausage without feeling guilty. My cholesterol will not go above one fifty and I will not feel like having a heart attack tomorrow. That is pretty dam sweet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STEVE

Do you know what's in a sausage?

JAKE

No. And I don't care too. It just tastes so dam good.

Sara and George get up and walk out of the room.

STEVE

(to Jake)

It's everything. Bones, intestines, testicles and all the other junk that is awful for you.

MARGARET

(to Steve)

He can't tell me there's no jobs around.

STEVE

How can he get a job with those tics. I don't think he can stop ticking to fill out an application, let alone walk through the door of a place.

MARGARET

(whispering)

I guess you're right...What does he have, that OCD disorder?

STEVE

Obsessive compulsive disorder. It can be pretty disabling.

ELIZABETH

He's been getting better. I think he's taking medication.

MARGARET

(disbelieving)

Really...I'd hate to have seen him when it was bad.

She rolls her eyes and continues looking through the pictures.

JAKE

I wonder how they make love? With all those tics and stuff. I wonder if he has a tic...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

He stands and gyrates his hips and throws his head to the left, dramatically imitating a tic.

They laugh quietly.

STEVE  
(interjecting)  
I doubt it.

JAKE  
Well, you never know. Does it tic  
to the right or to the left.

He tics his hips to the left and to the right.

STEVE  
That's a little to much.

LAURA  
How long's the pizza gonna take.  
I'm starving.

ELIZABETH  
It's pretty quick.

JAKE  
Laura, you look pale. You don't  
like the company. Are you okay?

LAURA  
(answering)  
I'm tired I guess. A lot going on.

JAKE  
I know the feeling with Christmas  
right around the corner...It is  
one hectic time of year. What do  
the kids want from Santa Claus?

LAURA  
Everything...Just like me. But  
Santa has a budget this year. We  
can't get everything we want.

She glares at Steve.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
(to Steve)  
Isn't that right?

STEVE

Ignoring the remark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JAKE

Well Santa has to have some kind of budget. The kids would be so spoiled if he didn't.

STEVE

(interrupting)

Well, they always seem to get what's on their list. And they are not spoiled. They're pretty good that way. Grateful kids.

JAKE

Kids are funny. You love them so much you have to give them what they want...No matter what the cost. I would do anything for my kids.

MARGARET

(sarcastically)

Listen to the money man here. He bought Jonathan a computer. The kid's four. He ruined it the first day. Right down the stairs. It splintered into a million pieces.

She punches him in the shoulder.

LAURA

Steve should be making more money for what he's doing. He runs the whole network...He goes to work everyday and even brings work home with him...The only cable I've seen in two years are the ones in back of the computer...What do you call those Steve?

STEVE

An RJ-45...There are other reasons why you have not seen more than an RJ-45 from me, anyway.

He looks back down at the diary and turns a page.

Elizabeth's eyes follow along.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(reading)

I don't like being sick and I don't like the doctor either.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

STEVE (CONT'D)

All they do is look in your throat  
and ears and give you a shot...

CUT TO:

INT. IRENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

(1927)

Irene is tucked under the covers with a wet cloth on her forehead. She is sick with fever. Charlie lays at the bottom of the bed.

Mimi is leaning over the bed holding the wet cloth on Irene's forehead.

IRENE

Am I dying?

MIMI

Dying. Honey you're sick with fever and if your lucky you will have many more in your lifetime.

IRENE

I'm lucky?

MIMI

The luckiest. You don't have to go to school when you're sick. You have your best friend sleeping in the bed with you. What more could a beautiful child want.

Irene starts to shed the covers.

IRENE

I feel hot.

MIMI

The fever's breaking child. Keep those covers on though. You need to open up those pores.

IRENE

Did mom call for...

A knock at the door.

MIMI

(finishing sentence  
with a smile)

...the doctor...Your father did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

I do not want a shot.

MIMI

Hush child. Not to worry.

She heads to the door and opens it.

The doctor walks in, dressed for winter and carrying a small black case.

DR. DONNELLY

Hello Mrs. and Mr. Goat.

Irene forces a smile.

IRENE

Good evening Dr. Donnelly.

DR. DONNELLY

Well I see a little girl is sick.

MIMI

And then some Doc. She is steaming like a tea pot.

DR. DONNELLY

Is she now.

He walks beside the bed and places his hand on Irene's forehead.

DR. DONNELLY (CONT'D)

I think we could cook an egg on this forehead...Let me listen to your chest and see how it sounds.

He pulls the stethoscope from around his neck and listens to her chest for a few beats. He stops and wraps the scope back around his neck.

DR. DONNELLY (CONT'D)

(to Irene)  
You have influenza.

IRENE

Is that bad?

DR. DONNELLY

It could be if you don't watch it. You need total bed rest for the next five days and lots of fluids. Water, none of that soda pop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Irene smiles. It seems like she escaped the shot.

IRENE

That's it.

Dr. Donnelly opens the black case and pulls out a needle.

DR. DONNELLY

Because of the fever being so high  
we need to give you a shot. This  
will help bring it down.

IRENE

Is it going to hurt?

DR. DONNELLY

How many shots have I given you.  
Plenty. This one will be just like  
the others, no worse.

He readies the needle.

Irene closes her eyes tight and looks away. She extends  
her right arm.

MIMI

(to Irene)

Think of something nice  
sweetheart.

IRENE

I'm thinking of the meatloaf you  
are going to teach me how to cook  
when I get better.

MIMI

Okay child. That meatloaf will  
smell something special.

Dr. Donnelly administers the shot and Irene does not  
flinch.

DR. DONNELLY

All done.

He rubs the spot hard.

Irene opens her eyes and looks at her arm.

IRENE

(surprised)

I didn't even feel it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DR. DONNELLY

Because you're getting older.

IRENE

I am getting bigger. I can not wait to be real big.

DR. DONNELLY

Don't rush it. These times are truly the best times of your life.

He pinches her nose.

DR. DONNELLY (CONT'D)

So you need to remember every little moment and cherish it. It is what you experience now that will shape your future and turn you into a nice young lady...A young lady with a goat.

(smiles)

You think Mr. Goat needs a shot too.

IRENE

(laughs)

He can not catch a people fever.

DR. DONNELLY

You are very smart. Goats hardly ever get sick.

MIMI

They just eat everything in sight.

DR. DONNELLY

That they do.

He starts to leave.

IRENE

Dr. Donnelly.

He turns around.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I used to be scared of doctors. I'm not scared of doctors anymore.

DR. DONNELLY

(smiles)

Never be scared of doctors. We are here to help people.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DR. DONNELLY (CONT'D)

You never know. You may wind up  
getting married to a doctor.

IRENE

Don't be silly.

DR. DONNELLY

Good night.

He smiles at Mimi and she smiles back.

Mimi closes the door behind him.

MIMI

Now was it that bad child?

She arranges the covers more tight on Irene.

MIMI (CONT'D)

Get yourself all worked up for the  
silliest thing.

IRENE

I love you Mimi.

MIMI

I love you too child...If you need  
me I'll be downstairs.

She starts to leave.

IRENE

Mimi. Can you get my book on the  
dresser.

Mimi looks towards the dresser and sees a leather bound  
book. She walks towards the dresser.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Can you also bring that tin of  
paint and the brush.

Mimi gathers them up and brings them over to Irene.

MIMI

Not too late child. I'm going to  
bring you up some more water in a  
bit.

She smiles and pats her hand on Irene's shoulder. She  
turns and walks out of the room, leaving the door  
slightly open.

Irene turns her attention to the book. On the cover she  
paints the words, *Irene's Diary*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

IRENE

Much better. Now it has a meaning.

INT. MCDONALD KITCHEN - WEEKS LATER

Mimi is teaching Irene how to make a meatloaf.

IRENE

Turns chop meat in her hands, mixing in onions.

MIMI

Cutting up more onions.

MIMI

(to Irene)

You have to have just enough  
onions in the loaf. And then we  
add something special.

She throws the onions into the mix and reaches for a red pepper. She cuts it up into fine pieces and throws it into the mix.

IRENE

Do you always put pepper in  
meatloaf.

MIMI

No child...Cooking is like an art.  
An artist takes a paintbrush and  
most of the times they do not know  
what it's going to look  
like...Just like the loaf. Right  
now we don't know what it will  
taste like. It might taste good.  
It also might make you throw  
up...It's all about  
experimentation.

IRENE

So you can add anything you want  
to a meatloaf?

MIMI

Anything. Though I wouldn't add  
chicken. Beef and chicken don't  
get along too well when they're  
cooked.

She reaches for a garlic clove and slices it into tiny slivers. She throws it into the loaf.

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CONTINUED:

IRENE

How long do I have to keep this up? My hands are falling asleep.

MIMI

Examines the loaf carefully.

MIMI

Just a little bit more and then we mold it into the pan.

IRENE

A little more.

She mixes it in her hands with more force.

MIMI

Child...that loaf looks about ready. Now mold it into the pan.

She moves a pan over to Irene.

IRENE

Places the mixed meat and molds it into the pan.

MIMI (CONT'D)

Now we can pour the sauce on top.

She hands Irene a glass of sauce.

IRENE

Pours the sauce on with care, making sure it is even over the whole loaf. She places the glass down.

MIMI (CONT'D)

You have made your first meatloaf.

Irene smiles.

MIMI (CONT'D)

Some ingredients you can not forget. What are they?

IRENE

Eggs, bread crumbs, milk, the meat. Peppers and tomatoes are an extra.

MIMI

That's right. You are an easy learner.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIMI (CONT'D)

That trait will take you far in life. Those who can not learn and listen easy have a difficult time in this world child. I think you will take what life has to give you in strides.

IRENE

How long does it take to cook?

MIMI

That, my dear, is another talent. You have to have a feel for when it is ready...A watch will help in the beginning. As you become more skilled you will not need it.

IRENE

How did you learn all the things you know?

MIMI

I've been around a long time child. When you've experienced as much as I have other's may think you know everything. When, in fact, you are just starting to learn the little things that lead to the big things.

IRENE

Do you think it's possible to learn everything in the world? Like all the different recipes.

MIMI

I know it's possible child... When I saw my daddy pass, that moment just before, he seemed to know everything. He wasn't a smart man either. The hand of God touched him at just the right moment. I was sad and proud at the same time. He became enlightened.

IRENE

Will you see him again someday?

MIMI

You mean like I'm seeing you now?

Irene shakes her head yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MIMI (CONT'D)

I'm sure. I hope it's not soon though. I've got some work to do with you first.

She breaks out laughing.

MIMI (CONT'D)

But I see him everyday in my dreams. And for now that is enough. When it's time, it's time. You have no control over it. So you don't think about it. You just walk tall through life doing the best you can and God will take care of the rest.

Irene opens the stove door. Her arm reaches up toward a draw and she pulls out a book of long matches. She takes one out.

IRENE

I want to lite it Mimi.

MIMI

You can. But take care not to burn yourself.

Irene strikes a match on the side of the box and lites the stove. She places the loaf in and closes the door.

IRENE

One meat loaf in the oven.

MIMI

You got that right child. From there it goes straight to the table.

IRENE

And then down the pipes... Let's hope mom and dad like it.

MIMI

Honey, they have no choice now.

INT. MCDONALD KITCHEN - LATER

John and Irma sit at the kitchen table in anticipation.

Irene and Mimi are standing at the counter, the meat loaf and trimmings are laid out and ready to serve.

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CONTINUED:

MIMI

(to Irene)

You start with the trimmings first  
child. The green beans, potatoes,  
the corn.

She passes each one to Irene and Irene places them on the  
kitchen table.

MIMI (CONT'D)

Then, lastly. The main course.

She passes the meatloaf to Irene and Irene brings it over  
to the table. She sits and watches her parents  
expression.

Mimi takes a seat right beside Irene. Both watch as John  
and Irma serve themselves. First a slice of meatloaf,  
then some green beans, corn and potatoes.

John takes the first bite of the loaf.

Irene and Mimi smile at each other.

JOHN

(commenting)

That's a pretty good meatloaf.

Irene starts laughing.

John stops in mid bite.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

IRENE

I made it myself.

John smiles in disbelief.

JOHN

You're kidding. She's kidding Mimi  
isn't she?

MIMI

Sir, she is not kidding. She asked  
me to teach her to make a meatloaf  
and I did.

JOHN

I'm impressed...This is the work  
of a fine chef.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Irene and Mimi look at each other. Both smile with satisfaction.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Sara walks out the doorway leading from the kitchen, George following.

GEORGE

At the doorway he gets stuck and both arms extend out to the door jams. He grips the moldings tight.

SARA

Sensing George is not behind her, she turns back and notices he is stuck.

SARA

George.

All look to George.

GEORGE

Babe. I'm stuck...I can't get through the door.

SARA

Runs over to George and tries to pull him from the doorway.

JAKE

Stands up to assist.

JAKE

(to Sara)  
You need some help. I can help.

SARA

(answering)  
No, no. This happens from time to time.

JAKE

Sits back down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

(to Sara)  
You have to do it babe.

SARA

With everyone watching?

JAKE

What does she have to do to him?

MARGARET

You'll see. Supposedly it's the only way to get him out a doorway with minimal damage.

GEORGE

Everyone's seen it before except Jake.

MARGARET

We'll step outside.

She starts to stand and grabs Jake's shirt.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(to Jake)  
Need a jacket babe?

JAKE

(answering)  
No, I like the cold. Why what's going on?

GEORGE

Let them stay it's fine.

SARA

Guys, don't panic. It just means we have to titrate up the medication. Minor setback.

She stares directly into George's eyes and sees his inner struggle and turmoil caused by his OCD.

SARA (CONT'D)

You want to close your eye's baby?

JAKE

She's going to kick him between the legs? This is absolutely insane. I can't believe this. Poor guy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ELIZABETH

It's the only way to pry him from the door. Think of a seizure and you're grabbing onto something so tight that your hands start to hurt. It has to hurt like hell.

JAKE

(to Sara)

You sure you don't want me to do it? I used to be the kicker in high school.

STEVE

We don't need a field goal.

SARA

Nope. Got it all under control.

She chambers her right leg back.

GEORGE

Blinking like a son of a bitch.

GEORGE

Get me off.

MARGARET

Looks down at the floor not wanting to watch.

MARGARET

I can't see this.

SARA

Delivers a kick right between George's legs. He falls to the floor.

GEORGE

Curled up into a fetal position, groaning in discomfort.

GEORGE

Thanks honey.

SARA

(apologetic)

I'm so sorry baby.

She looks at the door jams and sees blood smeared on the woodwork from George's tight grip.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

All get up and head over to George. They huddle over him.

JAKE

(stifling a laugh)  
That was brutal...I've never seen  
a wife do that to their husband  
unless they were really angry.

He looks at the door jams.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Wow...I guess he really needed  
that...I don't know what would  
feel worse. His hands or his  
groin?

MARGARET

You want to find out.

She pretends to chamber her leg and Jake recoils.

JAKE

Don't you dare...I don;t need it,  
I don;t get stuck in doors.

MARGARET

I could think of other reasons why  
you need it...Lack of use.

SARA

It's the only way to stop him when  
he gets stuck in a door...If I  
waited too long there could have  
been lacerations on his hands.

STEVE

He'll be okay. She didn't kick him  
that hard.

He bends lower toward George.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(to George)  
Take some deep breaths buddy. The  
cramps will go away faster.

He helps George up and escorts him back to the love seat.  
George sits.

GEORGE

(screams)  
Ah!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

He quickly brushes off the germs that Steve transmitted to him while assisting.

STEVE

(to George)

I'm germless. Just washed my hands with anti bacteria soap.

GEORGE

How long ago?

STEVE

About ten minutes.

GEORGE

(panicking)

That's so long ago. That's six hundred seconds.

SARA

(to George)

Time for a lorazepam baby...Under the tongue.

She places a pill under George's tongue.

GEORGE

Six hundred seconds. That's really not too long...I think I'll live.

He calms down. The turmoil easing from his face. He brushes the sweat from his forehead.

SARA

(to George)

That's it baby. Calm down...The pizza will be here shortly.

GEORGE

(excited)

I can't wait for the pizza.

Margaret and Jake sit back down by the coffee table.

JAKE

That was absolutely crazy.

LAURA

Grabbing Steve by the shoulder.

LAURA

I need to talk to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

She escorts Steve over by the front door out of earshot.

LAURA (CONT'D)

How long are we going to stay here. You don't know what that guy is capable of?

STEVE

He's not going to do anything. He's completely harmless. I've known him for years...We've known him for years.

LAURA

I hope he doesn't go nuts on me.

STEVE

Have some compassion for the guy.

Steve makes his way back to the fireplace and sits down by the column.

STEVE (CONT'D)

We have some good reading material guys. This is like a family reunion. We haven't had one in a long time. Let's enjoy mom's diary.

Elizabeth sits down next to Steve.

JAKE

I could use a drink after that performance.

MARGARET

Sara, do you have anything to drink?

SARA

Got some scotch. Walker Blue.

JAKE

(smiling)  
Now you're talking. Let Walker walk right over here.

SARA

On the rocks?

JAKE

Just a little...Get some for George too. That should warm his nuts right up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

GEORGE

No thanks. Don't drink.

JAKE

You should start...A drink here  
and there is good for you.

Sara heads back into the kitchen.

STEVE

Continues reading from the diary.

STEVE

(reading)

I am eleven years old. Growing up  
is tough in a way. A girl has to  
go through all those body changes.  
I made a promise to myself that I  
would grow up, but remain a kid at  
heart. That is easy to do with  
Charlie at my side. He is getting  
older too, but age is kind to him.  
He always had a white beard...Last  
night something bad happened...

CUT TO:

EXT. CONNECTICUT TOWN - DAY

(1931)

School is out. Children run along the dirt road. There is  
something unusual in the way they run home. No idle chit  
chat, just a slight uneasiness on their faces.

Policemen are on the streets blowing whistles and waving  
people on with their batons.

Irene walks fast surrounded by other children. She spots  
an officer and breaks through the crowd of kids and heads  
over to him. He is in his fifties, a grandfatherly type.

IRENE

(addressing officer)

Pardon me officer. Is there some  
trouble in town?

OFFICER

(answering)

The town mayor set a curfew for  
five o'clock tonight.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFFICER (CONT'D)

No one is allowed out after five.  
A group of men will be marching  
through town.

IRENE

Like a parade?

OFFICER

(smiling)  
I guess you could call it that.

IRENE

Thank you sir.

She runs off.

EXT. SMALL CONNECTICUT FARM HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Irene runs up the front porch and into the house.

INT. MCDONALD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Irene closes the front door.

IRENE

(calling out)  
Mom, dad...

Mimi walks out from the kitchen, drying her hands on her  
apron.

MIMI

They're in the yard child  
gathering all the chickens and  
ducks.

IRENE

Why...are they going to sell them?

MIMI

No, child. It's for their own  
good. I suppose this house is  
going to get nice and dirty  
tonight. They're all coming in  
here.

IRENE

All of them.

Mimi shakes her head yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE (CONT'D)

I can see Charlie, but chickens and ducks. They're going to dirty all over.

MIMI

We just have to clean it now child, won't we.

IRENE

I'll help you clean up after them Mimi. The tiny ones are really cute.

Mimi's EYES water. She drifts off into thought.

MIMI

Irene. You are a young woman now. But you are still my little child and always will be. Even when you are twenty...If only the world was made up of people like you and your family. This place would be a whole lot better.

IRENE

Are you sad Mimi?

MIMI

No child.

IRENE

It's about the parade, isn't it?

MIMI

Who told you it was a parade?

IRENE

A policeman.

MIMI

Well, he's a fool then. It is no parade. I'm not going to explain it to you. I hope you don't have to see it...Just know that some people in this world are not good people...Most people are weak of mind. They go with the crowd. And then there are those few that make up their own minds and live happily...We better go see if your mother and father needs some help with those birds.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIMI (CONT'D)

If your father gets frustrated trying to catch them, we'll be eating chicken and duck everyday for the next year.

Mimi heads back into the kitchen.

Irene follows.

INT. MCDONALD HOUSE - NIGHT

The living room is dark, save a small lamp that illuminates enough of the room just so one can see to walk.

Chickens and ducks scurry along the living room floor. Some are on the couch and chairs. Feathers are everywhere.

Irene and Mimi are standing by the large window peeking out the curtains.

A CHANTING is coming from outside.

John and Irma stand by near the kitchen doorway.

JOHN

I can not believe what kind of people this world is made of...It is truly depressing.

IRMA

What can we do...just let them pass. It's late. Time will send them back home eventually.

JOHN

(to Mimi)  
Mimi...are you okay?

MIMI

(sighs)  
As good as I can be I guess...I feel that I should never have come here.

JOHN

That's nonsense Mimi. What could make you say that. Those people are animals. They have not one ounce of intelligence in their brains. Don't talk stupid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

What do you mean you shouldn't  
have come here. We love you Mimi.

Mimi embraces Irene and kisses her on the forehead.

MIMI

I love you too child.

A **ROCK** comes crashing through the window.

Mimi and Irene run back towards the kitchen.

IRENE

(screaming)  
What's happening Mimi?

MIMI

Holding onto Irene.

MIMI

Everything will be okay. Don't you  
worry...Go up to your room child.  
Charlie must be frightened.

IRENE

Charlie!

She runs up the stairs and stops halfway. She sits  
halfway up, her hands on the spindles.

A male **VOICE** yells out from outside the home.

MALE VOICE

McDonald. I know you have a  
colored in there...Send her out or  
we'll burn your yard.

Torches pass by the living room window. Glimpses of white  
cone hats and cloaks walking by the openings in the  
curtains.

JOHN

(to Irma)  
I'm going for it.

He walks into the kitchen.

Mimi and Irma look at each other and hug.

IRENE

Mom. What's happening?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIMI  
(answering)  
Get Charlie baby.

IRENE  
I'm not moving. Where's dad?

MIMI  
He went to get some persuasion  
child.

JOHN

Walks out from the kitchen cocking a **WINCHESTER**. He walks  
to the front door.

IRENE  
Dad?

JOHN  
This is a lesson to be learned.  
Sometimes you have to speak the  
same language as someone else.

He cocks the rifle.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
This is the only language they  
speak.

He places the gun beside the door and turns the knob. He  
pulls the door open to reveal:

**TWO HOODED MEN**

Standing on the porch. A crowd of clansmen are in the  
yard.

A **CROSS** burns.

MALE VOICE  
(to John)  
Send the colored out. We are  
purifying this town.

JOHN  
This isn't the south. If you want  
to continue your ignorance and  
stupidity I suggest you move  
yourself and your garbage down  
there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MALE VOICE  
(turning around)  
Burn the yard!

JOHN

Reaches behind the door and grabs the rifle. He aims it at the HOODED MAN'S leg and pulls the trigger.

**BANG!**

The hooded man drops and the rest of the clan flee.

JOHN

Unmasks the hooded man. It is the police officer that Irene had spoken too earlier.

IRENE

Stands up in shock.

IRENE  
He's a policeman. I spoke to him today. He said it was a parade.

JOHN  
A parade of idiots.

POLICEMAN  
You don't know what you just did.

JOHN  
Yes I do. I just shot you and got you fired at the same time. You come around my house again and I'll aim for your head.

JOHN

Kicks the policeman off the porch and steps outside. He cocks the rifle a second time.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
Get out of here...All of you.

He shoots a round off into the sky.

Hooded men disperse in fear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Take your friend with you.

(indicating  
policeman)

Make sure he goes to Sunday school  
this week. He needs it.

The policeman panics, spider crawling away from John.

POLICEMAN

(begging)

Don't shoot me, please. It was  
stupid.

JOHN

Make sure you resign tomorrow. I  
don't care if your captain is a  
member. I am not scared.

IRENE

Standing in the doorway watching. She makes eye contact  
with the policeman and his gaze makes her shimmer.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You better get your butt out of  
here now or I'll take out your  
other kneecap.

The policeman starts crawling toward the road.

Mimi and Irma appear in the doorway. All three hug and  
throw their arms around each other.

JOHN

Looks at the women and smiles slightly.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I doubt they'll be coming back.

IRENE

What about all the birds dad?

JOHN

They might as well sleep in for  
the night. They made a mess  
already. Save me a walk to the  
henhouse in the morning.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOME - CONTINUOUS

ON STEVE

As he continues reading.

STEVE

(reading)

That moment taught me a lesson about my own father and not everyone can say they truly learned a lesson from their parents. They may learn how to sow, cook, and other chores, but it is hard to get into the core of a person. That night I truly saw my dad's core. He was a man with the highest integrity and he was not afraid to stand up for it. Pity those who do not learn a valuable lesson from their parents or choose not to notice. If your parents are good they are the greatest gift of all. And mine were. They even changed my diaper when I was a baby.

ELIZABETH

She changed all of our diapers.

STEVE

(sentimental)

That she did, didn't she.

DOORBELL RINGS

ELIZABETH

Jumps up to answer it.

SARA

I've got the money Elizabeth.

She reaches into her pants pocket and pull out two twenty's. She hands them to Elizabeth.

MARGARET

(under breath)

I'll bet she has the money.

She continues sorting through pictures.

ELIZABETH

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Answers the door and pays the pizza delivery man. She leaves one of the pies outside on the chair for the kids.

ELIZABETH  
(yelling to kids)  
Guys. There's a pizza here for you. Don't let it freeze.

GIRL (O.S.)  
Okay, thanks.

A **SNOWBALL** hits Elizabeth right in the face. She brushes it off with a smile, closes the front door and heads back inside.

ELIZABETH  
They're too busy playing in the snow.

She puts the pies down on the coffee table and everyone helps themselves.

SARA

Shocked at Margaret's sarcastic remark.

SARA  
(to Margaret)  
What did you say under your breath just a moment ago.

MARGARET  
(denying)  
Nothing...why?

SARA  
Yes you did. You're an idiot. You always were...I lived with her for two years and did more than any of you for her...Were you here when she almost lit herself on fire? No... I was. I took care of mom.

She grabs a slice of pizza and starts waving it furiously at Margaret.

SARA (CONT'D)  
I heard what you said, but I want **everyone** to hear it.

MARGARET  
Calm down...Did I say anything Jake?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAKE

Doesn't want to get involved, but heard every word.

JAKE

You know when I have a drink  
that's all I concentrate on.  
Everything else is fuzzy.

He shakes his glass in recognition.

SARA

You heard it, you molly.

JAKE

I'm not getting involved in a  
petty fight between you and your  
sister. I'll wind up being the bad  
guy.

STEVE

(to Sara)

I think you're under a lot of  
stress. I think you need to stop  
it.

MARGARET

(to Sara)

Maybe it's you who needs the  
medication, not George.

COMPLETE SILENCE

ELIZABETH

Ouch.

SARA

You're a bitch.

SARA

Throws the slice of pizza right in Margaret's face.

MARGARET

Embarrassed. She quickly runs up the stairs, upset.

STEVE

(to Sara)

Are you finished?

He looks around. Sara is still steaming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LAURA

No, but you should be Steve. I really don't feel like staying when there's so much tension.

ELIZABETH

We're the typical dysfunctional family. Aren't you glad you married into it?

LAURA

Oh, I'm elated.

STEVE

I'm just going to skim through the book. I want all of us to listen.

LAURA

That's fine, as long as you don't take that thing home with you. Looks like it's infested with paper bugs.

ELIZABETH

(to Steve)

You can keep it at my apartment.

STEVE

(to Elizabeth)

Thanks. I wouldn't want anyone to freak out over a paper bug.

He makes pretend his hand is getting eaten by a page in the book.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Ah!!! My finger, my finger. It's got my finger. That's a big paper bug.

ELIZABETH

Laughs.

SARA

I used to love when the family got together. Now I can't wait until we go our separate ways.

STEVE

I hope your not speaking about everyone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SARA

No.

She turns her attention toward George.

SARA (CONT'D)

(to George)

You want a slice of pizza baby?  
Not the one on the floor.

He shakes his head yes.

SARA (CONT'D)

I'll set you over here.

She motions to a chair in the corner of the room. She walks over to it and turns it facing the wall.

GEORGE

Walks over to the chair and sits in it facing the wall.

GEORGE

(to Sara)

I can't stand arguments. It makes  
my head spin.

He sits and Sara hands him a slice of pizza.

SARA

I think you need a good soda to go  
with your lorazepam. I'll get you  
one baby.

JAKE

(softly to Sara)

What's going on?

SARA

He doesn't like anyone watching  
him eat. He's embarrassed.

JAKE

Oh.

She turns and walks into the kitchen.

JAKE

Smirks at George's condition.

STEVE

Notices Jake's foul sense of humor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

STEVE

(to Jake)  
What would you do if you were like that?

JAKE

I'd probably shoot myself.

STEVE

What a violent way to go.

JAKE

The surest way to go.

STEVE

No bridge, no pills?

JAKE

You'd suffer too much.

He leans back and smirks.

MARGARET

Walks down the stairs wiping her eyes. She heads over back by George.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(to Margaret)  
Hey baby. You okay?

MARGARET

Shaking her head yes.

STEVE

Looks back down at the book and continues reading.

STEVE

(reading)  
Some people say life is not fair.  
It is not fair to some and that is  
unfortunate. For me it is strange.  
We can not change the past, though  
I wish I could have changed it  
this Tuesday in May of nineteen  
thirty six. Birth is fascinating.  
Death is mysterious and brings  
terrible emotions and heartache. I  
was not prepared for this day.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

STEVE (CONT'D)

Oh, how I wish Dr. Donnelly had the powers of a shaman every child reads about in school. But doctors are only human.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

(1936)

Lights shine through the stained glass windows. Gospel singing is loud and being sung with pride.

EXT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

The large wooden doors open and the faithful file out in peace. Most are African Americans. They are smiling as if a thousand demons have been released from their heads and they are free to do their own goodwill.

Irene and Mimi emerge from the church, smiling and peaceful. They wave their goodbye's to other church members and depart on the lonely walk home.

MIMI

Singing like that child relaxes you for the whole night.

IRENE

The whole week. I feel like something was lifted from me. I feel like I could float.

She spins around with her arms outstretched.

MIMI

It's a good feeling when you come out. Your mind and spirit get so refreshed.

IRENE

Something strikes her attention and she gazes over the treetops up ahead. Her eyes go wide at the sight of smoke.

MIMI (CONT'D)

What is it child?

IRENE

(answering)  
There's something wrong Mimi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She points up ahead.

MIMI  
Let's hurry child.

They both take off. Irene running ahead at full speed.

EXT. MCDONALD HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is ablaze. Smoke billowing out the hole in the roof. The rafters collapse and feed the blaze into a frenzy.

IRENE

Runs INTO SHOT. All the energy is sucked out of her at the sight of her home in flames. She drops to her knees, thinking of her parents. The fire is brutal, taking life and turning it into ash. She buries her head into the dirt.

CHARLIE

Walks slowly toward her and brushes her head with his nose, comforting her.

MIMI

Runs over to Irene and drops beside her, staring at the blaze. She wraps her arms around her and starts to rock her back and forth.

IRENE  
(crying)  
They're gone Mimi. Life is not fair.

MIMI  
Hush child. Everything will be alright. God works in strange ways...Yes he does.

She continues rocking Irene back and forth. Tears dripping from her eyes, but not a whimper. She must be strong for Irene.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

People dressed in black gather around a grave site. Two wooden coffins rest by a freshly dug hole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A priest recites the lord's prayer for the recently departed.

Irene's head is dug into Mimi's breast. She does not want to look at the caskets.

The priest sprinkles holy water on the coffins and closes his bible.

ALL

Amen.

EXT. MCDONALD HOUSE - DAY

Workmen, mostly African American, are busy repairing the burnt home. New walls are being erected and rafters being replaced.

Irene, Mimi, and Charlie standby watching as the work gets done.

IRENE

You will stay with me Mimi, won't you?

MIMI

Child, my place is with you. This is home. With you and Charlie.

IRENE

We'll be able to make ends meet, with what was left in the bank and we'll continue to sell eggs to the markets.

MIMI

And you'll finish school. You're almost done.

IRENE

I would never quit school. It might come in handy some day.

MIMI

Admiring the work being done. She smiles.

MIMI

You see what happens when good people get together. They all help each other out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

I am so grateful towards you Mimi.

MIMI

You don't have to say it child.  
I've known that for years.

They walks towards the house. Charlie following close behind.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOME - CONTINUOUS

GEORGE

Still facing the opposite direction, finishing up his pizza. His hair a wild mess now and a stressed expression on his face. He can not deal with many people at once for a prolonged period of time and it shows. He is stressed to the max.

SARA

Standing above George.

SARA

You finished sweetheart?

GEORGE

Yeah...The lorazepam's working.  
I'm feeling much better.

He turns around his chair and faces everyone.

STEVE

Smiling at George.

STEVE

(to George)  
Welcome back buddy. Good to see a friendly face.

ELIZABETH

(commenting on diary)  
I wish I could have my grandparents.

MARGARET

I think we all do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE

Loosing both your parents in a fire that has to be pretty rough. Mom really never spoke about them that much. It must have been too painful.

JAKE

My dad had a heart attack when I was fourteen. I was a dirt bag back then. I had no feelings whatsoever...What is a person anyway. We're just a bunch of cells and chemicals thrown together. When we're dead, we're dead.

STEVE

(answering)

That's kind of cold and depressing. You don't believe in anything after death?

JAKE

Shaking his head no.

STEVE (CONT'D)

So what ever you do here is really for nothing then. Why get the fancy cars and nice house if when you die you are not going to remember any of it. All that hard work is a waste.

MARGARET

I don't believe in any of that crap either.

ELIZABETH

You don't believe in a soul?

MARGARET

Never really thought about it. Who's got time when you have to deal with life. Life is stressful.

ELIZABETH

Wow. I remember us all going to church every Sunday.

STEVE

Yeah, so much for catholic school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Steve and Elizabeth laugh.

GEORGE

Grabs his head as if trying to dampen a migraine.

GEORGE

Stop talking about death...I freak out at the word. It makes me think of an emptiness, a void.

He slaps his head.

SARA

Jumps in front of George.

SARA

(to George)

Don't think about it baby. There's no such thing as death. Remember your Buddha books.

STEVE

George. People who don't believe in anything after life really have nothing to live for in life. They may as well end it right now.

LAURA

If that ain't the truth.

JAKE

You don't believe Laura?

LAURA

(answering)

I'm not sure. And what do I have to live for?

STEVE

(to Laura)

You really think you have nothing to live for. What about me and the kids? If that's what you say in front of me, I'd hate to hear what you say behind my back.

LAURA

Smiles sarcastically.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LAURA

I'll tell you straight up. I'm an honest person.

STEVE

Maybe you should go spend another night with your boss.

LAURA

Shocked and speechless. That was supposed to be a secret.

LAURA

What's that supposed to mean?

STEVE

The cost of a private investigator only about seventy five dollars an hour. The cost of cheating, a divorce and the kids. You shouldn't have brought him back to our house.

ELIZABETH

Whoops.

SARA

(changing the subject)

Laura. How about I get you a nice drink? I think you could use one.

LAURA

(answering)

Please.

SARA

Heads off into the kitchen.

STEVE

(to Laura)

You want to tell everyone how he was...He was huge...fatter than Jake. Must have been two eighty.

He laughs.

ELIZABETH

(to Steve)

Let's keep going. But let's skip a little.

STEVE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Thumbs through pages randomly coming to a stop. He continues reading from the diary.

STEVE

(reading)

Sometimes life can throw you a curve ball. I got that expression from my beautiful son Steve. My only son, dedicated to his children and computers. We didn't have computers when we were kids. We had to write everything down and think with our own minds...But like I said. I was thrown a curve ball in February of two thousand and six. Just after the holidays.

A TEAR drops from his eye and onto the page.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOME FOR THE ELDERLY - DAY

(2006)

A wasted shell of a building. It brings to mind one of those concentration camp type barracks where people would experience their last days of life. Against the snow covered grounds it has an even more ominous feeling.

A mini van pulls up in front. The passenger door opens and Sara steps out, expressionless.

STEVE

In the drivers seat. He sighs and puts the car in park. He wipes his watery eyes. He looks back in the rearview mirror and sees Irene and Margaret in the back.

IRENE

Heavy thoughts are tumbling through her mind. How did it come to this. It was so sudden and a surprise. She never asked anyone for anything and always cared for herself. To this very day she is still of mind and body and it shows in her appearance.

MARGARET

Anxious for Sara to slide open the door, leaning into Irene.

The side door slides open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

Looks at the entrance. In her present state of mind it seems like such a long walk. Certainly much different from her real home.

STEVE

(holding back tears)  
I checked the place out myself  
mom. It seems very nice. I think  
you'll like it.

IRENE

Did you go on the inside?

STEVE

I took a virtual tour.

IRENE

You mean you took an imitation  
tour. That doesn't give you a real  
feel of a place. I'm sorry...Could  
you smell it?

STEVE

No, I couldn't smell it mom. I'm  
sorry.

IRENE

You still need to grow a backbone.

MARGARET

Let's go mom. It's cold.

IRENE

What are you afraid of a little  
cold. You didn't have to come.

She steps out of the car. Margaret following behind.

MARGARET

Mom. You don't have to worry about  
a thing. Jake has arranged to make  
all the payments.

IRENE

(sarcastically)  
Well tell him he is such a great  
son in law.

The front door of the home slides open. An aide walks out  
pushing a wheelchair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEVE

Shuts the engine off and exits the van. He walks around to the other side.

SARA

Mom, do you want to be wheeled in?

IRENE

Does it look like I need to be wheeled in? My hip healed months ago. Just make sure I get all my things.

They walks towards the front doors of the old age home.

INT. HOME FOR THE ELDERLY - MOMENTS LATER

IRENE'S ROOM

A private room, hospital like and depressing. Irene's luggage is in the corner.

IRENE

Sits on the bed looking around the room. She stops at her three children standing in the doorway, they're coats still on.

IRENE

Thank you for driving me here. I don't want to keep you. You have to get back to your kids. Tell them grandma loves them and I'll call them this week.

SARA

I love you mom.

MARGARET

Me too mom.

STEVE

Tries to speak, but gets choked up. He looks away.

IRENE

I love you all...Tell Elizabeth I'll call her this week.

They leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

Pats the bed and looks around the room with a forced satisfaction.

IRENE (CONT'D)

When life throws you a curve ball  
you swing at it the best you can.

She walks over to her bags and takes out her diary. She walks back over to the bed and sits.

IRENE (CONT'D)

(to diary)

You have been with me a long time.  
For that I am grateful.

A knock at the door.

An African American woman stands in the doorway. She is the spitting image of Mimi. Her name is Emilia.

EMILIA

Am I disturbing your conversation  
with your book.

IRENE

Oh, no. You probably think I'm  
crazy talking to a book. But I  
really wasn't. I was just  
commenting.

EMILIA

Enters the room.

EMILIA

I don't think that's crazy at all  
baby. That book could listen to  
all your secrets and never tell  
another soul. A true confidant,  
that is what I call a best friend.

IRENE

Stares at Emilia intently.

IRENE

You remind me of someone long ago.  
Someone I was very close too. Her  
name was Mimi... How old are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMILIA

You know us women never discuss our age. I bet I am a lot older than you think.

IRENE

That's not true. Ask me my age.

EMILIA

How old are you?

IRENE

Twenty six.

EMILIA

(laughs)

Twenty six, going on...

IRENE

I can't say.

EMILIA

Well I'm twenty six too, going on I can't say...My name is Emilia and I am one of the nurses. I'll be one of your friends while you are here.

IRENE

My name is Irene. Pleased to meet you Emilia.

EMILIA

Looks around the room and notices Irene's luggage.

EMILIA

Do you need help unpacking?

IRENE

No...Not right now. I think I'll sit here and write a little. I like to write my thoughts down on paper. Not for someone to read, but to just put them out there, into the air. Like a good thought.

EMILIA

(smiling)

You enjoy writing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

IRENE

It's a passion of mine. I was always interested in literature and writing. Love Shakespeare and the Elizabethan era. So romantic and intelligent.

(quoting Hamlet)

*You come mosy carefully upon your hour.*

To Irene's surprise Emilia quotes the second line.

EMILIA

*Tis now struck twelve. Get thee to bed, Francisco.*

IRENE

You've read Shakespeare?

EMILIA

Strangely, I played Ophelia, a long time ago. I had a lot of fun with it.

IRENE

Grabs Emilia's arm in excitement.

IRENE

Maybe one day we can do a play here.

EMILIA

That may be kind of tough around here. You haven't met anybody yet. Some are like walking zombies and don't have to put on a costume for Halloween.

A MAN'S VOICE yells out.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Emilia. Call my mother and get in here. I need to be wiped.

EMILIA

That's Fred. He suffered from a stroke. Paralyzed from the neck down.

IRENE

The poor man. How old is he?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

EMILIA

Ninety one years young.

IRENE

Ninety one. God bless him. His mother's still alive?

EMILIA

(laughing)

She'd be about one hundred and twenty. Anything is possible though...I'll leave you to your writing and come back and see you soon. Dinner is at six. We all meet in the den. Has a nice tv. You'll get to meet everyone.

IRENE

How many people are here?

EMILIA

There's nine residents now on this floor and five workers, including me...If you want me, just call me.

EMILIA

Turns to go and heads to the door.

IRENE

Emilia. What happened to the person who was here before me.

EMILIA

Her name was Eve and she passed on.

IRENE

That's sad to hear.

EMILIA

Honey, life on earth is nothing more than a learning experience for the next one. So you better learn good.

IRENE

I think I have. I had three great teachers in my life.

EMILIA

Sounds like you taught them a few things yourself...I'll be back baby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

EMILIA

Exits the room.

IRENE

Stares at the doorway for a beat and smiles. She looks around the room and turns her attention back to her book.

INT. DEN - LATER

The residents are seated and their meals are set in front of them. Most are half asleep or comatose. Health Aids are assisting with feeding.

A LARGE TV is the focal point in the room. It is tuned to cable news station broadcasting depressing news about the war in Iraq.

IRENE

Walks in and looks around. She loses herself for a moment noticing that most are unlike her. Most have lost the will to live.

EMILIA

(to Irene)

Baby you okay?

IRENE

I'm fine.

EMILIA

Well, get yourself some food. Tonight's special is meatloaf. I made it myself.

IRENE

(spacey)

Meatloaf.

EMILIA

If you don't like meatloaf I guarantee you'll love mine. You can put anything you want in a meatloaf.

IRENE

(smiling)

I definitely don't have a problem with meatloaf.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

Walks over to the serving area where a man, dressed in white, stands behind a steel counter ready to serve. A name tag on his chest reads, *Charles*.

CHARLES

(to Irene)

And what can I get for this young beautiful woman tonight?

IRENE

I hear Emilia makes a great meatloaf.

CHARLES

That she does my lady. Meatloaf is her specialty. Even though I am the cook here when she tells me she wants to make a meatloaf, I let her.

IRENE

How often does she make a meatloaf?

CHARLES

Almost everyday. Makes my job a little more relaxing.

He puts a slice of meatloaf on a plate and puts the plate on a tray.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

And you need two servings of vegetables. That's house orders.

IRENE

I'll have the green beans and creamed corn.

CHARLES

You pour that creamed corn right on the meatloaf, one bite and your in heaven.

(laughs)

I'll only tell you that. If I tell one of the others they just might take me seriously.

IRENE

I know what you mean. They look half dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLES

It's the place. They don't exercise their minds. Most of them just sit there and vegetate. It's a sad state of affairs.

He adds cream corn and green beans to Irene's plate.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

And miss sunshine, you get a drink. We don't serve alcohol here though. It's soda or juice.

IRENE

(smiles)

Darn, I was hoping to get good and drunk.

CHARLES

Not a good idea around Jose over there.

He points to a man sleeping in his food.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

He looks all tranquil, calm and everything. But when he wakes up you better watch out. I'm not going to tell you why. But take my word for it. That man is a dog.

IRENE

I'm sure to take your advice. Thank you...I'll be crazy and go for the soda.

CHARLES

And there must be a beautiful name for a beautiful lady like yourself.

IRENE

My name is Irene Wendel. It used to be Irene McDonald, until I married a doctor.

CHARLES

Irene Wendel. I won't forget. I have a thing for names...What kind of a doctor was he?

IRENE

(answering)

A heart doctor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHARLES

A heart doctor. I could use one because mine is broken...Until you showed up. Now it's much better.

He smiles

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You come back for seconds.

IRENE

I'm watching my figure.

Both laugh.

IRENE

Walks over to an open chair and sits. She starts to eat the meatloaf.

IRENE (CONT'D)

(to Emilia)

I'm impressed Emilia. This meatloaf is one of the best I ever tasted.

EMILIA

Eat what your stomach can handle. If it can take four slices then eat four slices. It's all yours baby.

IRENE

Looks at the television and focuses on the news about Iraq.

IRENE

(commenting)

Those pour fellows over there. They don't belong there anymore...My father would always say. You can teach a dog to become civilized, but you cannot teach a person.

A frail woman, older looking than Irene, sits nearby. She opens her eyes quickly, hearing Irene. Her name is Annie.

ANNIE

(to Irene)

You have any?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

IRENE  
(answering)  
I'm sorry. Any what?

ANNIE  
Pot...marijuana...I'd even take  
some hash. You need to feel good  
in this place.

IRENE  
I never smoked it.

ANNIE  
You must have been one of those  
sissy kids growing up.

IRENE  
I beg your pardon. I never liked  
smoking. It is bad for your  
health.

ANNIE  
You're here anyway aren't you? You  
should have enjoyed life.

IRENE  
I enjoyed my entire life and will  
enjoy the rest. Whatever is left.  
I wish you to do the same.

She takes another bite of meatloaf and smiles at Annie.

EMILIA  
That's the right attitude baby.  
Annie you should learn from her.  
Maybe you'll smile a bit more.  
Start being more friendly.

ANNIE  
I don't need to make friends here.  
This is the last part of my trip.  
I'll be dying here.

She closes her eyes and falls back to sleep.

IRENE

Her **EYES** gaze out the window, her mind drifting away in  
thought. Perhaps, she too, is here to stay till the end  
of her days.

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - LATER

Irene is unpacking. She pulls out a small blue case and sits on the bed. She opens the case and it is a collection of **SMURFS**. She places them on the night stand one by one.

EMILIA

Knocks at the door and heads in.

IRENE

No need to knock. If you weren't welcome the door would have been shut.

EMILIA

(noticing the smurf collection)

I remember the show. It was one of the cutest shows on television. Television isn't the same. Now you have all those crazy reality shows that are the furthest thing from reality and cable news showing all the death.

IRENE

Technology can bring out the best or the worst in people. It's how one sees it...Life is funny, I guess.

EMILIA

How's that baby?

IRENE

You spend all that time caring and doing and they don't even offer to help you unpack.

EMILIA

You talking about your children?

She places a hand on Irene's shoulder.

IRENE

That's all that I have. And my grandchildren of course. But my grandchildren didn't have a say in this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMILIA

I see it all the time and I don't have a comment on that one. Only that you are right. Life is funny.

IRENE

Did you do it to your parents Emilia?

EMILIA

My parents died when I was very young. I didn't have the chance to see them grow old...I wish I had. Sometimes I wish I even died before they did. It was so painful. I loved them so much. But, I guess the man upstairs had something else planned for me now.

IRENE

I'm sorry for that. I know how it feels...If they had lived a normal lifespan would you have put them in a home?

EMILIA

Studies Irene as if trying to see why she is in a place like this.

EMILIA

No, I wouldn't have. They changed my diapers, I can change theirs. I would not want to see them in a place like this, unless I was the one taking care of them.

IRENE

My point precisely.

EMILIA

(changing the subject)

You and I need to read some Shakespeare. We'll have to plan it out. We'll do it in the den one day. Have a good time.

She looks at the luggage.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

You need help unpacking?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IRENE

Not tonight. I don't feel like unpacking everything just yet. Right now I have all the essentials. My diary, my Smurfs, and my bible.

EMILIA

(smiling)

Maybe tomorrow then...If you don't feel like being stuck in your room the whole night the television is on in the den until ten o'clock. They play cards also...That's if they can stay awake.

She laughs.

IRENE

I'll probably be out later. I think I'll stay here a bit, maybe write or read the bible a little.

EMILIA

Okay baby. You let me know if you need anything now.

She pats Irene on the shoulder and leaves the room.

IRENE

Lays back on her bed and opens her diary. She starts to write in it. Her mind wandering, finding thoughts and memories.

IRENE (V.O.)

Many years ago I imagined my life would have turned out this way, but not with the complications and losses. The complications were mostly external ones, not under my control. The losses, heavy internal ones, not under my control, but under God's control. I can not complain about those, but they did cause much heartache. My parents, Mimi, Charlie, and then my Jack. I don't think God made anyone like Jack before or after he died.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

IRENE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Though I hope some girl out there  
meets someone like him...If they  
did they would never meet someone  
that would come close. That is why  
I never remarried or cared to be  
in another man's presence. He was  
always radiant and easy going.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOME GREENICH CT. - DUSK

(1956)

The front door opens and a tall, radiant man walks in  
carrying a doctor's case. His name is Jack.

JACK

Hello...I'm home.

A much younger and pregnant Irene walks out to greet him  
with a smile. They embrace as if they have not seen each  
other for a long time, though it has just been nine  
hours.

IRENE

Dinner's almost ready honey. I'm  
making meatloaf tonight.

JACK

Interesting discovery I think we  
made at the hospital. It's about  
animal fats and heart attacks.

IRENE

Should we not eat the meatloaf?

JACK

I wouldn't quit meatloaf for the  
world...Where are the kids?

IRENE

Getting into a little mischief.

A bunch of children start screaming. They run into the  
living room full of mud and dirt. Sara (around eight  
years old), Margaret (around six), and Steve (around  
four). They grab Jack around the waist and pull him  
through the living room, into the kitchen, and out the  
back door.

EXT. UPSCALE HOME GREENICH CT. - CONTINUOUS

Sara, Margaret, and Steve pull Jack out the back door and into a pile of wet dirt. They pull him down splashing mud all over his good clothes. They all go down laughing.

IRENE

Stands at the door watching.

STEVE  
(yelling to Irene)  
Mom, I want Charlie.

IRENE

Opens the back door wide and a goat runs out and into the pile of mud.

STEVE (CONT'D)  
(to Irene)  
You come.

IRENE

Takes off her shoes and walks down the steps.

IRENE  
We only have about ten minutes and then dinner will be ready.

She walks close to the pile of mud and then Jack pulls her into the fun.

A KNOCK at a door.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ANNIE

Sitting in her wheelchair staring at Irene.

IRENE

Stares back.

ANNIE

Turns around and leaves, heading down the hall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

Puts her diary down, gets up out of bed and follows Annie out the room and down the hall.

ANNIE'S BEDROOM

Annie wheels into her room. It is simple, nothing much to give us any hints into Annie's personality or character. She wheels to the window and watches the falling snow by the lamppost outside.

IRENE

Walks into Annie's bedroom.

IRENE

(to Annie)

Can I come in?

ANNIE

If you'd like.

IRENE

(commenting on the  
snow)

It looks so beautiful outside at  
night, so clean.

ANNIE

It makes me think of when I was a  
kid, sleigh riding with my father.  
If I could turn back time, I  
would. I'd go back to the time I  
was a kid, not to when my kids  
were young. If I had known what  
they would do to me I never would  
have had them.

IRENE

Don't say that. It sounds so  
bitter.

ANNIE

Bitter. Bitter is an  
understatement...Before I was out  
of the house they all came in  
measuring furniture to see who  
would get what. That was before I  
even left...They didn't even have  
the decency to drive me here. They  
hired an ambulance and a nurse.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

My son has control of my money. It's strange, he has plenty of money. When you have money I guess you always want more, even if you have to declare your own mother incompetent. I can't even order a winter hat and gloves...They said I lost my marbles. I may have lost a few, but I still have the good ones.

IRENE

Do you see them a lot?

ANNIE

I've been here for five years and have not seen either one. I get a card and a gift for Christmas. For Christmas I get the same gift, a pair of cheap, white sneakers. I guess they think I'll jog right out of here. My daughter even forgot how to spell my name.

IRENE

What about your birthdays?

ANNIE

They forgot my birthday into my second year here.

IRENE

I'm going to get you something. I'll be right back.

She leaves and walks down the hallway to her room. She opens a bag and takes out a notebook and a pen. She leaves and walks back down the hallway to Annie's room. She places the notebook and pen on Annie's bed.

ANNIE

Wheels around and faces Irene.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I brought these for you. I like to write, I always have. Writing is the key to your true soul. It helps your soul rest. Nobody has to know what's written in it except you and God.

ANNIE

If you believe in him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

IRENE

You do believe in God, don't you?

ANNIE

I stopped believing in God decades ago.

IRENE

That is something you may want to reconsider.

ANNIE

That's why I would take any medicine to make me stop thinking...I lied about not wanting a friend here. You seem like a good friend.

(smiles)

By the way, I never smoked pot. It was a joke.

She breaks out into a laugh.

IRENE

Try writing a little bit. You never know it could be a masterpiece.

She leaves the room.

ANNIE

(calling after her)

Thank you.

INT. DEN - LATER

The atmosphere is quiet. Some residents are watching television or if their eyes are closed, listening to it.

IRENE

Walks in and is aghast at the depressing atmosphere. She heads over to a seat near the television. It is tuned into a travel show titled, *One Thousand Places to See Before You Die*. She looks around before sitting. Most of the residents are sleeping, save Fred.

FRED

They better hurry this dam show along then. I'm not gonna make it to the third episode.

JOSE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly sprouts up from his seat and heads over to the radio. He turns it up and tunes into salsa music.

NOTE: Lines in italics denote dialogue spoken in Spanish.

JOSE

*I want to dance. I feel eighty  
five years young. I need a nice  
lady.*

He looks around the room.

JOSE (CONT'D)

*Most of them seem like they half  
dead.*

He notices Irene and dances over to her.

JOSE (CONT'D)

*You want to dance young lady of  
the night?*

IRENE

I'm sorry, I don't speak Spanish.

JOSE

Okay, no problem I speak English.  
I asked you if you wanted to dance  
young lady of the evening?

IRENE

No thank you. I broke my hip and  
it isn't still quite right.

JOSE

(smiling)  
My nephew brought me some viagra.  
You won't have to use your hips. I  
just use mine.

IRENE

Not today.

JOSE

Am I ugly or something?

IRENE

You're definitely not ugly. I  
think you could get a women much  
younger than me.

JOSE

You think so. Wow! That's the best  
compliment I had in a long time.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOSE (CONT'D)

I need to go check myself out...I see you tomorrow.

He leaves the den.

EMILIA

You just saw the best of Jose baby. He's a character. One minute he'll be fast asleep or pretending to be and the next wide awake and horny.

IRENE

I can not imagine what he looks like under his clothes.

EMILIA

Trust me honey, you want him to keep those on. Especially after he took viagra. He's not supposed to get that in here. His nephew sneaks it in. One night he had to be rushed to emergency.

IRENE

Why?

EMILIA

(laughing)  
I can't tell you.

FRED

(answering)  
Because he had an erection the size of the Eifel Tower. He couldn't even walk straight. He was in agony, crying for his mother.

IRENE

Bursts out laughing.

CUT TO:

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - WEEKS LATER

The room is finally organized the way Irene likes it. Her clothes are neatly hung on hangers and her shoes are piled up neatly in a corner.

IRENE

Sits on the bed reading the bible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMILIA

Enters the room with a smile.

EMILIA

You have visitors baby. Your family's here.

IRENE

(smiling)  
I haven't seen my grandchildren in weeks.

EMILIA

A look of sadness passes on her face.

EMILIA

They're waiting for you in the den.

IRENE

Steps out of bed and walks to the mirror. She pats her hair down with her hands and looks to Emilia for approval.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

You look wonderful baby. Now come and see them.

EMILIA

Walks away down the hall.

IRENE

Takes a deep breath and walks out.

INT. DEN - MOMENTS LATER

Sara, Margaret, Steve, and Elizabeth stand waiting for their mother. They still have their coats zippered up tight as it was cold outside. They look indifferent.

IRENE

Walks in with a radiant smile. She embraces each one.

STEVE

(teary eyed)  
Hi mom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

I've missed you all so much. Where are the children?

MARGARET

(hesitating)

Well, mom. We thought it best if we didn't take the kids to a place like this. We thought it might scare them.

IRENE

Scare them to see their grandmother.

EMILIA

Stands behind the nurse's station looking on and listening.

STEVE

(excusing Margaret)

No mom. Not you. But some people here might scare them.

He looks around and sees some of the residents. Most are sleeping in seats. One man with drool, dripping down to the table.

CHARLES

Yells out from the kitchen.

CHARLES

Hey Irene. I see you got your fam here. What do you say we give them some of that fine meatloaf? It's Emilia's meatloaf again.

IRENE

That's Charles. He's a nice man and a good cook. Would you guys like to sit down and have some dinner?

MARGARET

No mom. We just came by to see how you were.

IRENE

That's nice to see you four all together...

(to Sara)

How's my George?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARA

He's doing better mom, thanks. He was asking about you. He wanted to come, but he's having a little problem going outside. Well, you know how it is.

IRENE

Well, sit down. We have tv. They make really good food here. The meatloaf tastes just like the way I used to make it.

She shows them a few chairs.

MARGARET

No mom. We really have to get back. I drove and Jake's not feeling well. The kids are driving him crazy.

IRENE

You need to leave so soon...I have some good news. My hip is doing much better and the doctor gave me some medicine to improve my memory. I saw the orthopedic last week and he doesn't expect me to fall again. I can go up and down stairs if I want to.

They all look at each other weird.

STEVE

That's great mom.

IRENE

I might be able to get out of here soon.

MARGARET

We'll have to see mom. Talk to the doctor.

STEVE

Looks down and quickly rubs a tear away.

EMILIA

(to Irene)

You go get your dinner baby. They don't know what their missing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She gazes over at Steve and they exchange a brief sentimental smile.

IRENE

Kisses her children goodbye and they walk away passing by the nurses desk.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

One day you are all going to be in a place like this.

MARGARET

Frightened. She looks at Emilia as if Emilia has a sixth sense.

IRENE

Walks over to the kitchen where Charles stands behind the steel table.

CHARLES

I'm gonna load the plate up just for you. Whatever you don't finish here bring back to your room and munch on it later.

IRENE

I think I'll bring it back to my room now. I need some rest.

CHARLES

You mean you're not going to let me look at a beautiful woman tonight. I mean I have Emilia over there, but she's too young.

IRENE

(smiling)  
I feel like I need to write a little tonight. It opens your eyes to your own soul and brings you peace.

CHARLES

Can you write something for me?

IRENE

What would you like?

CHARLES

Anything. Maybe a poem or something.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

It doesn't have to be one of those  
that rhyme. Just something  
uplifting.

IRENE

I would love to write you  
something Charles.

CHARLES

(smiling)  
Okay then. I'll be waiting.

IRENE

Walks away and heads towards her room.

EMILIA

(to Irene)  
I'll see you in a bit baby.

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - LATER

The dinner tray rests on the night table with the Smurfs.  
Not one piece of food has been touched.

IRENE

Lays on the bed writing.

EMILIA

Walks in.

EMILIA

You okay?

IRENE

Looks up from her diary. She is visibly upset, but holds  
it well.

IRENE

Yes, I'm fine.

EMILIA

I see Annie in there. She's been  
writing for weeks. I don't know  
what she's been writing though.  
She says it's a secret...What  
about you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

Right now I'm writing something for Charles. He said he wanted something uplifting.

EMILIA

You seem to be good at that. Annie never wrote anything in the years that she's been here. She never read anything. She likes to do those things now.

IRENE

I had a friend. Her name was Mimi. I told you, that you reminded me of her. That was a long time ago. I think I got my passion for reading and writing from her. She had the most interesting stories to tell. They were hard stories though, emotionally. Sometimes they brought tears to your eyes when you listened to her speak. Other times they would make you laugh so hard you would roll off the bed.

EMILIA

Sounds like you learned a lot from Mimi. I bet you could tell her a few stories of your own now.

She sits at the foot of the bed.

IRENE

Everyone has stories to tell. When you get older you just have a lot more.

EMILIA

How did you get here?

IRENE

By car.

She laughs.

EMILIA

Who told you that you were coming to a place like this?

IRENE

That's kind of a funny story...I was very family oriented.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IRENE (CONT'D)

I knew from when I was a child that I wanted a family...Family gatherings were always big at my house. My husband died when the children were very young. A car crash took him instantly. So he never experienced the gatherings or the grandchildren...It would just be me, my children and theirs. Eventually the reunions became far and in between.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOME - DAY

(8 MONTHS AGO)

IRENE

Standing in front of her bedroom mirror dolling herself up.

IRENE (V.O.)

We didn't have a family reunion in a long time. My daughter Sara, her husband George and their children had been living with me for awhile. George had a nervous breakdown and was unable to work so I took them in...Well Margaret, Steve and Elizabeth were coming as well. To my surprise no grandchildren.

Margaret's VOICE calls out from the dining room.

MARGARET (O.S.)

Mom, you coming.

IRENE

(smiling)

I'll be right there.

She finishes powdering herself up and walks out the room.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sara, Margaret, Steve and Elizabeth sit at the dining room table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

Walks in with a smile. Her smile turns into surprise when she notices no grandchildren are present.

IRENE

Where are the kids?

MARGARET

They're not coming today mom.

STEVE

Mom. This isn't something that we decided on lightly.

MARGARET

We think it is best for you. You're still recovering from your hip surgery and you have the other thing going on. We think it's better that you go to a place where they can take care of you a lot better than we can...We've checked out a few and we narrowed it down to one about ten minutes away.

IRENE

Oh, I see. I'm not falling anymore. I can walk around without anyone helping me. I don't ask any one of you to do anything for me. In fact I do a lot for each and everyone of you...Sara.

She looks at Sara and Sara looks away.

IRENE (CONT'D)

My memory isn't that bad when it comes to giving out money...I left the stove on one night and you are going to hold that against me. How many of you accidentally left the stove on? If I had been in my twenties and left the stove on it would have just been a simple accident. But because I am elderly I get punished for it. That was the first time it happened.

MARGARET

It could have been your last.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARA

(crying)  
It could have been our last  
mom...The kids and George.

IRENE

If you weren't living here then it  
would not have been. Was it your  
last? I don't think so. You are  
here, right?

SARA

I am here mom...I know, but...

IRENE

But nothing. I see where this is  
going.

ELIZABETH

Speechless and teary eyed. Clearly she did not want to be  
here under such circumstances.

MARGARET

Mom. We don't want you to get  
hurt.

IRENE

Get hurt. How old am I? It's the  
younger people now a days that  
should be thinking of getting  
hurt. Not people like me. If I had  
gotten hurt I wouldn't have lived  
such a long life. I can handle  
myself.

MARGARET

Mom...We all decided this is  
what's best for you. You know we  
have your best interest at heart.

IRENE

Well it looks like you and Sara  
have made your decision then.

MARGARET

It wasn't just me and Sara.

She looks over at Steve and his head is down.

IRENE

I see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARGARET

What can we do? All our lives are stressed to the max.

IRENE

What did I do when you were young, when you're father died?

STEVE

(unconvincing)  
Mom...this is only temporary. Just until you get better. I promise.

He looks down at his lap.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emilia has listened intently to Irene's story. She pats her leg.

IRENE

That is how I was told. My opinion didn't matter. The decision was made...And now I'm here...The fire wasn't even a fire. It was a grease fire.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Irene is preparing dinner. She is dressed like a youth and sports pigtails. She has finished putting the last touches on a meatloaf and places it into the oven. She turns the dial clockwise, all the way.

IRENE

I think mom, dad, Mimi, Sara, George and the kids are going to love this meatloaf. I think it's the best one I am going to cook.

She starts circling, dancing by herself, humming to a tune that she only knows.

IRENE (CONT'D)

And my Jack...

She stops in her tracks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE (CONT'D)

Where is he? He must be late.  
Making his rounds. Someone  
probably didn't show up...

She grabs her forehead.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I need an aspirin.

She heads over to the kitchen cabinet and opens it. She takes out a bottle of aspirin, opens it and places one in her mouth. She opens the faucet and fills a glass of water and swallows the pill. She places the glass down and rests both hands on the counter anticipating relief. She collapses to the floor.

TIME PASSES

IRENE

Laying on the floor, unconscious.

**FLAMES** start shooting out from the oven. The **SMOKE DETECTOR** sounds off.

SARA

Runs into the kitchen.

SARA

(screaming)

MOM!

She rushes to Irene and then looks back at the oven, flames coming out the side. She heads toward the oven and opens it. She tries to grab the meatloaf, it's too hot. She puts a towel over her hand and takes out the meatloaf and puts it in the sink. She opens the water and the fire is extinguished.

SARA (CONT'D)

(yelling)

George...Call an ambulance. It's  
mom.

IRENE

Lays on the floor, eyes closed and shaking.

**SIRENS** in the distance.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. IRENE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emilia continues to pat Irene's leg.

EMILIA

I'm sorry baby. It shouldn't have been that way.

IRENE

I felt powerful all my life. Not a bad powerful. I was never egotistical or snooty...When Jack died, I worked as a waitress. Imagine the widow of a doctor working at a diner to make ends meet. I enjoyed it. Met nice people. The house had no bank note on it and I worked just to buy the kids whatever they needed.

EMILIA

You are a strong woman Irene. Your friend Mimi taught you well.

IRENE

I didn't have time to thank her. If I did I would have told her a lot more...You can learn a lot from people, but not enough. It seems like when you learn just enough from someone they are moved away from you some how.

EMILIA

God works in strange ways baby.

IRENE

He does, doesn't he.

She smiles vaguely.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is cleaned and the crew is ready to leave.

CHARLES

Leans against a wall with a note in his hands. He reads it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

(reading note)

Dear Charles...You wanted something uplifting to read. I had to think a bit on this. Recently my spirits have not been too uplifting for personal reasons. You have been uplifting to me and probably not even aware of it. You have a gift inside you whether, you know it or not. A gift of hiding your own pain so that others do not feel bad. You can not be happy everyday and if you are you are faking it. That is a gift. I do not know what to call it, but unselfish is a good word for it. Now you know you have a gift. Keep smiling, smiley face.

Tears drip from his eyes. He quickly wipes them away.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(talking to crew)

Okay everyone. Let's pack up for the night. Let's go home to our families, have a good night and start it all over again tomorrow.

INT. IRENE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

IRENE

Fast asleep. Her door is open. Nurses are running by. Her eyes open and moments pass. A body wrapped in a white sheet is wheeled down the hallway. She stares on.

FRED

Scurrying down the hall. He stops at Irene's door.

FRED

(to Irene)

Annie kicked the bucket...Do you think she went to heaven or hell?

He laughs and scurries off.

IRENE

(to self)

I'm sure she went where she is most loved.

INT. ANNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

IRENE

Standing above Annie's bed looking at the notebook. She opens it and sees that Annie did not do any writing, but beautiful artwork. We notice a penciled drawing of the view from Annie's bedroom at night with snowfall. This was the night that she opened up to Annie and gave her the notebook.

EMILIA

Enters Annie's room.

EMILIA

I thought you would be here.

IRENE

Life goes on. She was quite an artist you know. I never expected it.

She shows Emilia the book and Emilia flips through the pages.

EMILIA

She certainly was. All this time I thought she was writing.

IRENE

Well, she wasn't. She was communicating in the best way she knew how. By drawing...Look at this picture.

IRENE

Thumbs through the notebook and comes to the drawing of the view outside the window, at night, and with snowfall.

IRENE (CONT'D)

This drawing is from the night I gave her this notebook. It was snowing, beautiful outside. All the dirt covered up by white cotton.

EMILIA

She was a hard person to get through too and you did it in just a short time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE

She'll be okay. She's in a better place now...Is her family coming for her stuff?

EMILIA

Doubt it. They aren't even making the funeral arrangements. The hospital is.

IRENE

I'd like to bring that book back to my room then and look at it.

EMILIA

I'm sure Annie was going to show it to you anyway.

She hands the book over to Irene.

INT. HALLWAY HOSPITAL - LATER

Annie's artwork is taped along the walls. Residents and staff members walk slowly, admiring each drawing as if it is a Picasso.

A staff member is pushing Fred along.

FRED

Stop at this one over here.

He rolls his eyes in the direction of a drawing.

FRED (CONT'D)

I want to buy that one for my mother. She loves cats...She likes dogs too. Let's see if we can find a dog. I want to buy her a dog.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - DAY

(2 months ago)

Irene and Emilia sit in a waiting room with other patients. Irene is reading a bible.

A receptionist calls out a name.

RECEPTIONIST

Irene Wendel. You can come back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A DOOR opens and a woman dressed in blue scrubs, carrying a chart, waves Irene in.

EMILIA

Do you want me to come with you.

IRENE

Sure, why not. No secrets here.

They walk in and the door closes behind them.

INT. EXAM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Irene sits on the exam table, her hands folded in her lap. Emilia stands at her side.

A middle aged doctor walks in carrying a chart and some x-rays. He is balding and wearing glasses. He is blunt and to the point, cold.

DOCTOR

Mrs. Wendel...The cat scan came back and you have a tumor in the frontal lobe of your brain.

IRENE

(loss for words)  
...What does that mean?

DOCTOR

Well there's treatment...Surgery is out of the question because of your age and this type of tumor spreads quickly.

IRENE

I see. So they wouldn't waste the time on me to do surgery because of my age and because it spreads quickly.

She takes a deep breath.

DOCTOR

Surgery would do you more harm than good...I can give you the name of an excellent oncologist.

IRENE

Stares at the doctor in disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

What's the matter.

He rubs his face.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Do I have something on my face?

IRENE

No... You have said enough...My husband was a heart doctor. He must have taken an extra class than you did.

DOCTOR

What class?

IRENE

(answering)

A class on humanity...I know insurance doesn't pay much now. But you chose a profession for yourself. I do think it was the wrong one. You still have time to retire.

She steps off the exam table and into Emilia's arms.

EMILIA

(to doctor)

We won't be sending anymore patients to your office...You don't have any personality and neither does your staff...Good day.

DOCTOR

Closes Irene's chart and shakes his head.

CUT TO:

INT. EMILIA'S CAR - ROLLING

IRENE

Staring out the window, watching the trees roll by. The leaves are green and full. She is solemn and thoughtful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMILIA

You can do the treatment. It is not like years ago.

IRENE

My time is near Emilia. I have lived a good life and for that I am grateful...I would like to do one more thing before it's too late.

EMILIA

What's that baby?

IRENE

Actually two things. One I haven't done in a long time.

EMILIA

Whatever it is, you name it.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - MOMENTS LATER

IRENE

Walks along a row of tombstones looking for a particular stone.

EMILIA

Follows closely.

IRENE

Jack's was so easy to find. I would always come here with the children on his birthday...But Mimi's. I didn't think I would forget where she lay...I guess the doctor was right. I would start to forget the easiest things.

EMILIA

Nonsense baby. Everyone forgets every now and then. Stop being so hard on yourself.

IRENE

I would feel awful if I pass without visiting her one last time. She was family. In some ways I loved her more than my parents. That doesn't sound nice.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRENE (CONT'D)

I guess I can not explain it in a way that I really want to. But I was with her more...She taught me how to be a person.

IRENE

Looking around.

IRENE (CONT'D)

(getting frustrated)

Darn...I can't remember.

She throws her hands up to her head.

EMILIA

Stop worrying baby. These are nothing, but stones. These stones just have writing on them that's all. You hold them in your heart and mind. That is the best place for them.

IRENE

I know, but I just wanted to see it one last time.

She starts walking fast up the rows of tombstones searching in vane for Mimi's resting place. She trips and quickly gets back up. She starts to run and falls again.

EMILIA

Runs towards Irene. She stops and kneels beside her.

EMILIA

You're trying too hard to remember. Sometimes we just forget things for whatever reason...

IRENE

You're right. I hope she'll forgive me. I tried.

EMILIA

Helps Irene to her feet.

EMILIA

I'm sure she'll forgive you.

IRENE

I never got a chance to say goodbye to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMILIA

You don't have to say goodbye to anyone. Why would you?

IRENE

We'll see them again some day, right.

She smirks.

EMILIA

I believe you will.

She smiles.

They walk off toward the car.

IRENE

This will be my last spring.

EMILIA

Stop talking nonsense. You are healthy for your age. You see the rest of them at the home...Maybe you should get a second opinion.

IRENE

The only one I would trust a second opinion from is Jack. And I plan on asking him soon.

CUT TO:

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Residents are seated for dinner. The television tuned to the usual depressing news station.

IRENE

Walks towards Charles.

CHARLES

There she is finally. I was waiting for you to walk in. Always fashionably late for dinner.

IRENE

Hello Charles. What is on the menu for tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES

Tonight, my lady, we have your favorite. Emilia's meatloaf.

IRENE

Well, I have to have some of that. Pile it on.

CHARLES

Pile it on I will. What sides?

IRENE

Creamed corn on top and potatoes. Lots of gravy.

CHARLES

That's the way to live. You made it this far no need to watch your cholesterol...

He prepares a tray and hands it to Irene.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I have a little note for you.

He puts a folded piece of paper on the tray.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

It's not a love note, don't worry. It's a safe note...I told that to all my ex girlfriends after I broke up with them...It takes the fear out of reading it.

IRENE

I'll bring it back to my room and read it in private...I'm sure a girl would love a love note from you Charles.

CHARLES

You let me know if you want seconds.

IRENE

Walks off with the tray, down the hallway and into her room. She places the tray at the foot of her bed and hops in. Above her bed is the drawing of the view from outside Annie's room when they both first spoke.

She opens the note and reads it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IRENE

(reading note)

I thought I would write you a note this time. I am not much of a writer, but thought I'd give it a shot. Seeing you here is an inspiration for me. When I get old, if I am lucky enough to get there, I hope it is with your kind of spirit. A free spirit. You were right, I do hold a lot of pain. But seeing you smile, especially when you get your meatloaf, takes most of it away.

She takes a bite of meatloaf.

IRENE (CONT'D)

It is a great meatloaf.

She reaches for her head and rubs her forehead. She lays back down in bed.

CUT TO:

INT. DEN - NIGHT

(2 weeks ago)

Residents and staff are seated in the den. Irene and Fred are the center of attention. They have just finished reading Hamlet by Shakespeare.

Everyone is clapping.

IRENE

Looks at Fred and places a kiss on his forehead. He returns the kiss with a smile.

EMILIA

Looks on with a smile of satisfaction.

IRENE

Collapses with a thud. Her head hitting the floor.

EMILIA

Runs to Irene.

CUT TO:

INT. IRENE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Irene lays in her bed with Emilia at her side. Irene's voice is strained as she waits for her passing moment.

EMILIA

You need to take your pain medicine.

She places a dropper in Irene's mouth and administers a drop of morphine.

IRENE

Well, the doctor was wrong. My mind stayed with me till the very end.

EMILIA

He was wrong, wasn't he. They don't know much of anything.

EMILIA

Takes a wet cloth and rubs Irene's forehead.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

Do you want me to call your family?

IRENE

I don't want to bother them. How many times did they come see me. Why should I let them see me at my last breath.

EMILIA

We won't call them then.

IRENE

Dying is weird. It's not as bad as they make it out to be. I lived a full life.

EMILIA

That you did child...You still have pain?

IRENE

The pain is still there, but it doesn't hurt anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMILIA

If it gets bad again we'll give you some more medicine.

She rubs Irene's forehead again.

IRENE

I remember when I was a child and used to get sick. Mimi would come in and stay with me. She would rub my head just like your doing. She had a way with people. You remind me of her, exactly like her. You might even be her.

EMILIA

Do you think that's possible now child? I would be over one hundred.

She laughs.

IRENE

I don't know. I guess if life is possible, anything is possible...Will you make sure my family gets my diary?

EMILIA

That I would be happy to give them.

IRENE

Do you think I will meet my parents on the otherside?

EMILIA

I'm sure they are waiting for you.

IRENE

I wonder what they look like.

EMILIA

The same as when they left you, no different.

IRENE

Emilia, what are your thoughts on death.

EMILIA

I don't believe in death child. Only life and life has many stages.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IRENE

It's strange though. The dying process...I guess I am kind of scared, I just don't want to admit it.

EMILIA

Don't be scared. You've done this many times before...Some people get stuck though.

IRENE

What do you mean?

EMILIA

Like me. I kind of feel stuck...

She looks at Irene seriously.

EMILIA (CONT'D)

I think Charlie will be waiting for you too. Keep your shoes away from him this time.

IRENE

Did I ever tell you about Charlie? I don;t think I ever did.

EMILIA

You told me about everything that was important to you...And in life that is all that matters. The people who truly love you will never leave.

IRENE

I didn't think I mentioned Charlie...He was my first love.

EMILIA

I know...he was truly your first love and will always be...Just like you will always be my little child even when you are eighty seven.

She puts another drop under Irene's tongue.

IRENE

Mimi?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

EMILIA

Close your eyes now child. I told you I would never leave you...Do not be frightened your loved ones are waiting...I will be going with you on this trip.

IRENE

That's the best thing I've heard in a long time.

She smiles.

EMILIA

Rubs Irene's forehead and Irene's eyes close. She draws her last breath.

STEVE (V.O.)

Thank you my dears for the time I have been here. I remember everyday of my life and I realize I achieved what I wanted, but it didn't end how I imagined. I gave you every minute, every second of my life and you forgot me when I was closest to death. I had eight days of a dream come true. You, my family, my life, came eight times to visit me when I was here. I am thankful for those eight times. I love you all and please love everyone to the last minute like I did to you...Love, Mom.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOME - BACK TO SCENE

STEVE

Closes the diary and rubs his eyes.

ELIZABETH

Wow. I feel like garbage now.

STEVE

It definitely didn't end like it should have. She was right. I wish I had read this before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELIZABETH

That would have been impossible.  
She wouldn't have shown it to you.  
This was her private stuff.

STEVE

I wish that I would have listened  
to her. I didn't do that. None of  
us did.

MARGARET

What do you mean? We did what was  
right. Anyway it was how many  
months ago and your still feeling  
it.

STEVE

How many months ago. That was  
mom...You and Sara planned  
everything out. I should have  
spoken out at the time and took  
her in if it was so much of an  
inconvenience to you both.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. You guys lived ten minutes  
away. And Sara, you and your  
husband lived with her. She helped  
you take care of everything, even  
money.

STEVE

Reading that diary made me realize  
the mistakes I made and continue  
to make. She should have never  
have went to that home.

MARGARET

(breaking down)

No she shouldn't have. We were all  
selfish. Life isn't about the  
money or the cars you drive...

JAKE

Or the watch on your wrist.

SARA

Do you think she forgives us...I  
mean if there is an afterlife?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEVE

Knowing mom. I'm sure she does...She's probably watching us right now and laughing at what idiots we were.

GEORGE

If she went to a home just for that. I should have been placed in a home long ago for crazy.

STEVE

We can't throw away what's good to us, but we can toss aside what is not so good...

(to Laura)

You have the keys for the car. The kids and I will not be going with you.

LAURA

You think so, do you? We'll see about that.

She stands up in a fury and looks for the keys.

STEVE

They're on the table.

He looks towards the table.

LAURA

Pounces through the front door. Moments later a car starts. The tires spin in the snow as it leaves.

A kids VOICE yells out.

KID (O.S.)

Where's your mother going?

ANOTHER KID (O.S.)

She looked crazy.

STEVE

Those family reunions were kind of fun.

He stands.

SARA

They were always fun...They were the best with mom though.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ELIZABETH

Guys...I was like the black sheep in the family. But I would like to do those family reunions, even though I don't have someone to bring.

She stands.

STEVE

You have extra room in the apartment for three? Just for awhile.

ELIZABETH

Got plenty of room.

She smiles.

STEVE

The kids always wanted to live in the city.

ELIZABETH

Let's go. We'll show them the tree...There has to be plenty of Santa's running around too.

STEVE

Sounds like a plan...You guys have plans for Christmas Eve?

MARGARET

No, we don't...I guess we'll meet here.

(to Sara)

Is that okay with you and George?

SARA

I'm sure we'll have a good time.

GEORGE

I'd love that.

He raises his hand and lets it drop just as quick.

They walk out the front door.

EXT. UPSCALE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Steve and Elizabeth walk down the front steps. The children are still playing in the snow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Elizabeth calls out to the kids.

ELIZABETH

Guys, come on. You are going to be staying at Aunt Elizabeth's for a little bit.

Two girls run up to Elizabeth and throw their arms around her.

They all walk to Elizabeth's car and get in. The car starts and drives down the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. UPSCALE HOME - NIGHT

The lights are on and we SEE the shadows of children playing in the upstairs window and Sara and George dancing slow in the living room.

Two female figures stand outside in the snow, their backs towards the **CAMERA**. It is unmistakable that they are Irene and Mimi. They are both dressed for the weather.

MIMI

You did it child. You brought them together.

IRENE

I guess I did, didn't I?

MIMI

No mistakes about it...Any bitterness?

IRENE

No, not really.

They put an arm around one another.

MIMI

Life is strange...You spend so much time caring for someone and they throw you a curve ball...

They both laugh.

IRENE

Then they regret it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIMI

Regret it with a lesson  
learned...Would you do that to  
your children?

IRENE

Never in a million years.

MIMI

That's good to hear...Because a  
million years is what we  
have...Merry Christmas child.

IRENE

Merry Christmas Mimi...Can we go  
see them?

MIMI

Why yes we can...We have all the  
time in the world.

They walk down the sidewalk. Snow starts to fall.

IRENE

I wonder how Annie's doing.

MIMI

I'm sure she's just fine.

A goat runs out from a bush and starts walking at their  
side.

THE END

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CONTINUED: (3)

(CONT'D)