

**Copyright (c) 2014 This screenplay may not be used or reproduced without the express written permission of the author.**

HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT

An original screenplay by Carla Sue Chonko

Based on the book

Letting Go

By C C Rayne

Carla Sue Chonko  
Author  
88 Spruce Drive  
Granville, OH 43023 740-331-2806  
Carlasuechonko.us

**Copyright (c) 2014 This screenplay may not be used or reproduced without the express written permission of the author.**

PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

HIGHWAY - SNOWING - A FEBRUARY AFTERNOON

Carlene is driving erratically down the highway. Tears flowing, hair is up with strands falling and eyeliner is smudged. She can't control the tears. No music playing on the radio as she yells out to no one.

CARLENE

William Is gone, suicide,  
Mom!!!!!!

(she  
shrieks  
MOM)

As she pulls into the parking lot of the Hospital  
she hits the steering wheel.

CARLENE

What the hell am I doing,  
where am I?

She looks up and sees **HOSPITAL**. She parks the  
car, sits for a moment, pulls out, drives around  
the lot, parks again. She sees emergency  
entrance, get's out of the car and walks towards  
the entrance like a robot. Enters the hospital  
and sits with her head down, fidgeting with her  
purse.

CARLENE

(under her  
breath)  
I am losing myself.

An older nurse approaches.

OLDER NURSE

Honey can I help you?

Carlene's voice is trembling. Too embarrassed to  
speak, mouth is open but nothing comes out. Nurse  
can see something is terribly wrong. She turns  
around to a younger nurse and says something  
inaudible.

OLDER NURSE

Why don't you come with us  
to a private room where we  
can talk.

They enter a small room off to the side of the  
hallway, and sit with Carlene close by.

OLDER NURSE

Honey you look like you're  
in pain. What can we do  
for you?

CARLENE

My heart is broken, my head  
is not in a good place....  
I'm having some really dark  
thoughts.

OLDER NURSE

Are you having thoughts of  
hurting yourself?

CARLENE

I... I... don't want to but  
I just want to sleep.

The two nurses talk to each other quietly.

YOUNG NURSE

Carlene, would it be ok if  
I take your vitals?

Carlene shakes her head ok as she takes her coat  
off. As the younger nurse starts to take the  
vitals the older nurse asks Carlene more  
questions.

OLDER NURSE

Have you taken any type of  
medications? How long have  
you had suicidal thoughts?

Carlene is numb to all the questions, her mind at  
the moment a blank. Nothing at all, she is kind  
of going through the motions.

OLDER NURSE

Carlene, we are going to  
admit you into the hospital  
for observation. We feel  
that you should spend the  
night with us. We will  
have a social worker down  
to talk to you shortly.

CARLENE

Ok, I am so tired.

(She says  
in a child  
like voice)

Carlene is admitted, given a gown and all of her belongings are removed from the room. There is a nurse sitting outside of her room to keep an eye on her as Carlene waits for the social worker.

CARLENE

Maybe at last!

The social worker shows up about 10 minutes later. Enters the room and introduces herself as Janet.

JANET

I hear you want to talk to me. Let's sit over here.

They move to a table and chairs by the window.

JANET

First I do not judge anybody I just feel at times people want to talk to somebody that understands and does not threaten them. I am just here to listen and help where I can

Janet then sits quietly and waits for Carlene. Carlene takes a big breath, fidgets for a moment and then.

CARLENE

I.. I... don't know if I can.

JANET

Go ahead honey, whatever you want to say or not, I am here for you.

There is silence. Carlene finally looks up, pushes the hair from her face and looks determined.

CARLENE

Yes.

(a Pause)

YES! I feel it is time  
that I tell someone what is  
hurting me, weighing me  
down to the point of  
exhaustion and I just don't  
want to fight back anymore.  
I am so tired.

Carlene sits back in her chair, looks out the  
window at the snow falling, takes a deep breath,  
squares her shoulders, turns to Janet.

CARLENE

I... I don't know where to  
start. There is so much  
hurt in my life, despair  
and abandonment that it all  
seems to blend together.  
One dark tunnel that I have  
been running down forever.  
I am so tired of it all and  
confusion seems to be my  
partner in life. I have  
depended on other people so  
much and they have failed  
me. I am so tired, I just  
want to shut the world out  
and close my eyes and let  
the comforting feel of  
sleep come over me. SO  
TIRED OF IT ALL....

JANET

Well Carlene, I have always  
believed starting at the  
beginning helps organize  
your thoughts. Why don't  
we start there and see  
where it takes us.

Carlene begins to talk, not at Janet but out the  
window. Feeling depleted of all fight, she just  
wants to tell her story to someone, to share her

feelings of despair, to empty her soul that has been so overburdened for so very long.

CARLENE

I remember bits and pieces from about 4 years old. So that is a good place to start.

(PAUSE,  
SIGH)

My Dad was the one man in my life that I felt good about. My mother on the other hand was my devil. She got religion early in my life and never let go. When I say religion I mean she was fanatical about it. The church was her salvation and she practiced it with fervor on all of us. Beat it into us regularly, and I do mean physically.

Carlene takes a deep breath, her shoulders slump, she sits back in the chair and looks out the window at the white snow. The snow seemed to have a calming affect on her as she begins to let go.

JANET

Carlene, would you like something to drink or eat before we go on with your story?

CARLENE

No, I am OK, I just want to talk, to tell someone. It has always been about others, it is my turn.

(A pause,  
deep  
breath, she  
continues  
talking and  
looking out

the window  
at the  
snow, like  
she is  
talking to  
the world,  
telling no  
one and  
everyone,  
letting  
go.)

CARLENE

(Looks away  
from the  
window and  
talks  
straight to  
Janet)

Janet, I need to tell you a  
little about my family so  
you will understand how I  
got where I am today.

JANET

Carlene, start wherever you  
want. It is in the telling  
that matters, the letting  
go.

CARLENE

(Carlene  
looks out  
the window  
again takes  
a deep  
breath,  
exhales  
slowly and  
begins.)

My mother met my dad when  
she was 22 and my dad was  
32, they were married  
shortly after that.

FADE OUT

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

Claudia 22 yrs, Gabe 32 yrs.; 1965 coming out of the small church, having just been married.

GABE

And now Claudia it all starts, lot's of kids, fun, and above all lot's of love.

CLAUDIA

Oh, Gabe yes, lot's of kids.

FADE OUT

FADE IN (TRANSITION IN AND OUT WITH CLAUDIA HAVING ONE CHILD AFTER THE OTHER IN NEXT FEW SHORT SCENES)

GABE (Television on;  
background news)

That damn asshole. I can't believe Johnson's sending more soldiers over there!

CLAUDIA (nursing first born  
William, 2 weeks old)

That just tears me up for the wives and their children.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

LATE EVENING, SNOWING HEAVILY, BACKGROUND MUSIC WITH SIMON & GARFUNKEL, HOMEWARD BOUND PLAYING ON RADIO; CLAUDIA AND GABE DRIVING FROM HOSPITAL PARKING LOT WITH 2ND CHILD, CARLENE.

CLAUDIA

Oh Gabe, she is just so beautiful.



(holding  
baby,  
sitting in  
back of  
car)

GABE

Yes she is honey. William  
is going to be such a good  
big brother. Wow, it's  
really coming down out  
here.

CLAUDIA

Humming to the music;  
lovingly looking at her  
baby girl.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

GRANDMA HALLIE

Come on in kids. Mom and  
dad have to go have another  
one! Why you keep having  
them right after the other?  
(Claudia  
outside in  
car)

GABE

Mom there's no since in  
acting like that. Now I'll  
be back tomorrow after work  
and pick Carlene and  
William up. Thanks for  
keeping them tonight.

GRANDPA FLOYD

There's my little pumpkins!  
Come on in here and give me  
a hug.

GRANDMA HALLIE

You smell of alcohol Floyd.  
Now go on...go clean up

'afore you handle these  
kids.

Gabe & Claudia at hospital.

CLAUDIA

Oh Gabe! Look at those  
dark curls. She is so  
beautiful , I want to name  
her after me Gabe. You are  
little Claudia Maddie.  
We'll call you Maddie.

GABE

Well...I don't know too  
many girls named after  
their mom's but I  
agree...let's call her by  
her middle name.

CLAUDIA AND GABE KISS. FADE OUT

FADE IN:

CLAUDIA PREGNANT, WASHING DISHES.

CLAUDIA

Oh God! Gabe come quick!  
(Hands on  
stomach,  
breathing  
heavy, lays  
on couch)

GABE

Claudia, what's wrong?

CLAUDIA

We need to get to the  
hospital Gabe, something is  
terribly wrong. I feel it!  
It's that same feeling I  
had when I had the

miscarriage last year. Oh  
Gabe hurry!

GABE

Hold on Claudia, it's going  
to be all right.

GABE AND CLAUDIA IN HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY  
AFTERNOON

CLAUDIA

(crying)

Oh God help me! I can't  
believe I lost her Gabe.  
What did I do wrong? She  
was full term. It's so  
different than before Gabe!

GABE

I'm so sorry Claudia.  
We'll get through this.  
(comforting  
her)

DR.

Claudia there was nothing  
we could do, the umbilical  
cord wrapped around her  
neck. It's not your fault.  
I'm so sorry for your loss.

GABE

Claudia, do you want to see  
her?

CLAUDIA

Yes, I do. Please bring  
her in so I can say good  
bye to her.

Nurse brings baby in, wrapped in blanket.

CLAUDIA

(crying)

We'll name her Penelope.

GABE

A beautiful name for a  
beautiful little girl.

Nurse reaches for baby, places her in a box.

CLAUDIA

What are you doing? Why is  
she in that box?

Nurse looks at Gabe for direction.

GABE

Please, remove her from  
that box. We'll have a  
casket and a proper funeral  
for our daughter.

CLAUDIA

What the hell is wrong with  
you? She is not just a  
piece of meat! She has a  
soul! She's a human being!

Gabe trying to console Claudia as nurse leaves  
room with baby.

GABE

Claudia, I know this is  
hard honey. We'll get  
through it.

CLAUDIA

I...I...just don't know how  
honey. I don't know how!  
(sobbing)

NURSE

Claudia, The doctor wants  
me to give you something to  
help you sleep. I ordered  
some dinner for you. You  
may not want to eat my  
dear, but please try to  
drink something okay?

Claudia nods yes.

GABE

Honey, listen since they are giving you something to sleep I'll be heading out. I'll wait to you fall asleep though. I'll see you in the morning and we'll work out the funeral plans. I'll ask mom and dad to help buy a casket for Penelope okay?

CLAUDIA

(reaches  
arms out to  
him)

GABE HOLDING CLAUDIA IN HIS ARMS UNTIL SHE DRIFTS  
OFF TO SLEEP. SHOULDERS SLUMPED, GABE LEAVES  
HOSPITAL.

FADE IN:

NIGHT

Elder Jones walks in  
Claudia's room.

ELDER JONES

Hello there sister. I'm a  
local pastor and visit  
patients from time to time  
here.

Claudia pushes her dinner tray away-shakes his  
hand.

ELDER JONES

No, go on ahead. Eat.  
Don't mind me. Just wanted  
to stop by and introduce  
myself. How are you today?

CLAUDIA

(sniffling)

Not well. I lost my baby  
today.

ELDER JONES

I'm so sorry. Do you mind  
if I pray for you?

CLAUDIA

Nods Yes.

ELDER JONES

Dear heavenly father. We  
come to you right now. We  
ask you to heal this  
sister's heart lord. She  
has just suffered a great  
loss. We ask that you make  
her whole oh god!  
Halalujah! Praise God!  
And lord, we ask you to  
come right now and fill  
this precious sister with  
your gift of the holy  
ghost. Ashanti ma ki ah!  
Halalujah! Praise you  
Lord!

CLAUDIA

(lips  
quivering)  
Yes lord. Praise you lord.  
(mimics  
Elder  
Jones-  
raises her  
hands in  
air)

ELDER JONES

Sister Claudia I'd like to  
invite you to our church we  
recently started.

ELDER JONES

Here's my card. The church  
is somewhat small and we're  
still working on another

building. But stop by and visit with us. The Lord has great things for you and your family.

CLAUDIA

Oh. Oh. Okay. Thank you...what was your name?

ELDER JONES

Elder Jones, sister. You can call me Elder, that would be just fine.

CLAUDIA

Okay. Thank you for praying for me Elder and for your card. I may just visit your church sometime.

ELDER JONES

Wonderful! We look forward to it. Now bring the whole family. God is working miracles.

CLAUDIA LOOKS SPELLBOUND AT ELDER JONES AS HE  
WALKS OUT DOOR

FADE IN:

CLAUDIA AND ANOTHER WOMAN WALKING FROM DOOR TO DOOR INVITING NEIGHBORS TO CHURCH. BIBLES ARE IN HANDS.

FADE OUT

FADE IN: SPRING 1971 EARLY EVENING

CLAUDIA

Gabe, I don't know why you have to buy that devil's brew! Why don't you just come to church with us? Tomorrow is Sunday..please come with me and the kids.

GABE

Claudia, now you know I just don't really feel comfortable there. And you preach at me about buying only a 6-pack one time a week but you go and give our money to that damn church!

CLAUDIA

How dare you! Who do you think you are talking about the Lord and a good church like that. You're gonna split hell wide open buddy!

GABE

I can't take this shit.  
(puts beer  
in fridge,  
leaves  
through  
backdoor-  
walking  
away)

CLAUDIA

(yelling  
out door)  
Oh yeh! Do that you no  
good alcoholic!  
(slams door  
shut)

Claudia making dinner. 5 yr old Carlene feeding bottle to 4th child, 2 month old Gabe Jr.

CARLENE

Mom, Gabe's done with his bottle.

CLAUDIA

Thank you honey. You know I don't know what I'd do



without you. I really  
depend on you sweetheart.

CARLENE

I love you mom.

CLAUDIA

I love you too honey. Now  
here, let me take baby Gabe  
and you kids go on now.  
Get up there at the table  
and eat your dinner.

WILLIAM

I'm hungry! Mumm..this is  
so good mom.

CLAUDIA

Thanks William. Now go  
on...all of you eat up and  
we'll listen to the gospel  
music on the radio after  
your baths.

FADE IN AND OUT

GOSPEL MUSIC PLAYING

DISSOLVE TO: LATE EVENING

CLAUDIA

(softly  
crying,  
sits at  
table in  
kitchen,  
praying)

Oh God, please help me. I  
need your strength right  
now. Touch Gabe's hear  
Lord.

CARLENE

(lights  
off, living  
room,  
sleeping

with Maddie  
on  
mattress)  
(whispers)  
Poor mom. Why won't Day  
just come to church with  
us? It'd make mom happier.

WILLIAM

Shhh!  
(lifts head  
up from  
covers.  
sleeping on  
couch)  
Just go to sleep Carlene.

CLAUDIA

(voice  
louder)  
Oh God! I am coming to you  
right now...help Gabe see  
the light.  
(speaks in  
tongues)  
In Jesus name. Amen.

CARLENE

William! Hey William!

WILLIAM

What?!  
(whispering  
loudly)

CARLENE

She is getting mad  
now...I'm scared.

WILLIAM

Shhh...just close your eyes  
Carlene. She's just  
getting in the spirit.

CLAUDIA  
William! William! Get up  
boy!

WILLIAM  
Great.  
(whispers  
under  
breath)  
I'm coming mom.  
(in  
kitchen)  
(rubs eyes  
sleepily)

CLAUDIA  
Now I know your dad is next  
door at that damnable bar.  
(putting  
jacket on  
him)  
I want you to go over there  
and tell him I need him.  
Go on now honey. And  
hurry!

WILLIAM IS SEEN WALKING INTO BAR. "IN THE  
SUMMERTIME" PLAYING ON JUKE BOX. WILLIAM FINDS  
GABE, TUGS ON HIS SHIRT. GABE PAYS BILL, LEAVES  
THE BAR. MUSIC FADES OUT AS THEY ARE SEEN WALKING  
INTO THE HOUSE.

CLAUDIA  
(hands on  
hips)  
Well, there you are!  
Welcome home you alcoholic  
devil! William, get over  
here with your sisters now!

William looks up at Gabe.

GABE

Go on William. Go on.  
What in the hell are you up  
to now Claudia?

CLAUDIA

I thought maybe you'd like  
to see a show Gabe. You  
don't want to serve the  
lord with us, so maybe you  
can just see what you're  
doing to your children!

Claudia opens fridge, removes can of beer, opens  
it.

GABE

What the hell...

Claudia forcefully puts beer to William's lips.

WILLIAM

Yuck!  
(gags)

CLAUDIA

Drink it! Drink it boy!  
(yelling)  
Maddie and Carlene begin  
crying.

CLAUDIA

Aww...you're next girls.  
(sneering)  
Come on Carlene, open up!  
I said open up or I'll bust  
your mouth wide open!  
(shrieking  
at her)  
That's a girl.

Beer spilt on Carlene's gown as Claudia removes  
from Carlene's mouth.

Carlene gagging but trying to keep the liquid in  
mouth.

Maddie looks up at Claudia with mouth wide open.  
Tears and snot streaming down face.

CLAUDIA

Good girl Maddie. You  
drink up sweetie. Let's  
show daddy what a good  
example he is to you kids.  
(sneering  
up at Gabe)

Gabe visibly shaken...mouth open, but no response.  
Shakes his head, walks quietly to outside  
darkness. Lights cigarette. Sits on back porch  
steps. Head down.

CLAUDIA

Oh kids, I'm so sorry.  
(wiping  
their  
mouths with  
kitchen  
rag)  
Please forgive me...If dad  
would just serve the lord  
with me, I wouldn't get so  
mad.

CARLENE

(hiccuping)  
It's ...o...o..kay  
m..m..mom.  
(hugs mom)

Claudia tucks girls in, kisses William on forehead  
then is seen walking outside.

CLAUDIA

I'm sorry Gabe. I don't  
know why I did that.  
I...I...just want you...

GABE

Claudia, that was awful.  
Those kids don't deserve  
that.

CLAUDIA

I know, I know! Oh God I know Gabe. I just have all this anger inside me and I pray that God will just take it away. I think if you just came to church with us, as a family...

GABE

(puts arm  
around  
Claudia)

I just don't agree with everything they preach their Claudia but maybe...just don't expect much but maybe I'll visit tomorrow. But you need to promise never to hurt those kids like that again.

CLAUDIA

Oh Gabe! Thank you. I love you so much honey.

(whispers)

Thank you Jesus

(as she  
hugs Gabe's  
neck)

FADE OUT:

FADE IN. SUMMER 1971 CHURCH SCENE. THE MUSIC IS LOUD, PEOPLE CLAPPING HANDS, SINGING, DANCING IN SPIRIT. CLAUDIA HANDS IN AIR, STOMPING FEET TO BEAT OF MUSIC; SPEAKING IN TONGUES. GABE SR SITTING ON PEW HOLDING 6 MONTH OLD BABY GABE; APPEARS UNINTERESTED IN HIS SURROUNDINGS. WILLIAM, CARLENE, MADDIE JUMPING UP AND DOWN, MIMICKING ADULTS. - DAY

FADE OUT TO THE MUSIC "I'LL FLY AWAY OH GLORY..":

DISSOLVE TO: SUNDAY AFTERNOON, SUMMER 1978

FADE IN: HOT- SUMMER 1971

Carlene outside on porch playing with Jack and Balls.

JOHN  
(16 yr. old  
teen  
neighbor)  
Hey there Carlene!  
(yelling  
from  
upstairs  
apt.  
leaning  
over  
banister)

CARLENE  
(age 5)  
Hi John.  
(smiles up  
at John as  
she  
continues  
to play  
alone with  
the jack  
and balls.)

JOHN  
Watcha doin'?

CARLENE  
Just playin'.  
(not  
looking up  
at him)

JOHN  
Wanna come up and see this  
new toy I got?

CARLENE  
(looks up  
at John)

Uh...I don't think mom  
would let me.

(back to  
bouncing  
the ball)

She said I had to stay on  
the front porch.

(non-  
chalant)

JOHN

Aww...no way! I asked your  
mom if you could come see  
my new toy. She said you  
could.

CARLENE

(looks  
puzzled)

When did ya see my mom?

JOHN

(stutters)

Uh..uh..she was uh..up here  
this morning! She asked us  
if we would come visit your  
church.

CARLENE

(smiles)

Oh yea...

JOHN

Cool! So...come on up and  
you can have some popcorn  
and pop.

CARLENE

Oh, I love pop.

(looks over  
shoulder  
questioning  
ly)

Okay...Can I bring my Jacks  
& Ball?



JOHN

Yea, if you wanna. But I  
have some new toys.

CARLENE

(yelling  
up)

Okay.

(leaves  
jack & ball  
in corner  
on porch)

I'm coming!

(smiling,  
running up  
the steps  
to John's  
apt)

Mmm...popcorn smells good.

(peeking in  
the apt.  
but not  
walking in,  
appears  
apprehensiv  
e)

JOHN

Well, just don't stand  
there. Come in.

Carlene cracking knuckles, turns head around as if  
looking for someone. John standing at the stove  
pouring popcorn into a bowl.

CARLENE

(standing a  
the  
doorway.  
Half in-  
half out,  
slowing  
moving  
inside)

Uh...I don't wanna get in  
trouble.

JOHN

(walks  
quickly to  
Carlene,  
grabs  
Carlene's  
arm-pulls  
her in  
apt., shuts  
door)

Hey, it's okay. Gosh  
Carlene, we're just gonna  
play. Dontcha want some  
pop?

CARLENE

Uh...uh...yeah.  
(stuttering  
)

JOHN

Okay...don't go anywhere.  
I'll get you a pop.  
(walks to  
fridge)

CARLENE

Where's your mom?

JOHN

Don't worry about that...

Carlene fidgeting with buttons on her dress and  
turns around to the door. Her hand is on door  
knob. John immediately is at her backside.

JOHN

Where ya going?  
(John's  
hand is on  
Carlene's)  
Take your hand off the door  
Carlene.

Carlene shuts her eyes. Frozen

CARLENE

I just wanna go...

JOHN

Not gonna happen Carlene.

(pulls her  
hand away  
from the  
door knob)

(sneers)

We're gonna play a game.

(He holds  
her hand  
walking to  
couch)

CARLENE

(eyes wide,  
breathing  
heavy, lips  
quivering,  
pulling  
away from  
John)

Please...don't...just...wan  
na...go...

John grabs her wrist with a jerk. Drags her to the couch. Carlene is stumbling trying to get away.

JOHN

Stop it!

(he gets  
close to  
the couch  
and pushes  
her down on  
it. Carlene  
stumbles  
and falls  
backward on  
to the  
couch)

CARLENE

(lays very  
still on  
couch as if  
frozen. Her  
arms up up  
criss cross  
in front of  
her chest.  
Lips  
quivering)

John on his knees, leans down to kiss Carlene.  
Uses his tongue to lick her face, tries to put his  
tongue in her mouth.

CARLENE

(eyes  
squeezed  
shut-lips  
closed  
tight)

Mmmmm

(shakes  
head back  
and forth)

JOHN

Open up damn it!  
(continues  
kissing her  
as he moves  
his hands  
up her  
dress)

CARLENE

(cries out)  
Uh!  
(wiggling  
around)

JOHN

Be still god damn it!  
(unzipping  
his pants)  
Fuck! Get up! I said get  
up god damn it!

CARLENE

(nervously  
stands up,  
feet  
wobbly)

Plea...please...I...jus...w  
anna..

JOHN

Come 'ere.  
(he sits on  
couch,  
aggressivel  
y grabs her  
arms and  
makes her  
stand in  
front of  
him)

Pull your dress up.  
(she is  
frozen  
still in  
front of  
him)

Now!  
(He grabs  
the hem of  
her dress  
with one  
hand, pulls  
it up and  
he shoves  
the other  
hand up her  
dress)

CARLENE

Ouch!  
(jerks  
back)

JOHN

You stupid bitch.  
(he grabs  
her and

throws her  
down on  
couch jerks  
her panties  
down her  
ankle and  
his head is  
seen down  
on her  
private  
part)

John unzips his pants, moving his hand to adjust himself and mounts Carlene. He is moving up and down on her

CARLENE

(eyes  
squeezed  
shut,  
trembling  
as tears  
flow,  
quivering  
lips open  
and close  
trying to  
say  
something.)

John immediately stops when he hears...

CLAUDIA

Carlene! Carlene! Where  
are you?

JOHN

Shit!  
(gets up  
and grabs  
Carlene  
roughly by  
arm)  
Get up! Get up!  
(grabs her  
by face)

Now listen. You never are allowed to tell anyone what we did. You here?

CARLENE

(nervously  
nodding  
head yes as  
she pulls  
panties up  
and jumps  
up from  
couch)

JOHN

Because if you do we both 'ill get in trouble. Both us! Understand?!

CARLENE

(continuous  
ly nodding  
head up and  
down)

JOHN

Okay...now go on. You don't wanna keep your mom waitin'. She'll beat your ass!

(sneers)

See ya later Carlene!

Carlene runs so fast-almost falls down steps.

CLAUDIA

Were up at their apartment?  
What's wrong with you?  
What did you do?

(jerks her  
arm)

Carlene, I swear to God,  
I'm gonna beat you  
senseless!

CARLENE

Mom! Mom!

(crying)  
He did stuff to me! Ugly  
stuff! It hurt!

CLAUDIA

(looks up  
toward apt)  
Get your butt in the house  
now! You better not come  
out!

(grabs her  
arm,  
whispering  
loudly)  
...and don't you dare,  
don't you dare say anything  
to your dad. You hear me?!  
(jerks on  
her arm  
with  
emphasis)

CARLENE

(hiccups)  
Ye...ye...yes...  
(crying,  
walking  
slowing up  
to house  
steps)

Claudia is seen walking up steps to apt. Can be  
heard screaming something inaudible.

FADE OUT

1975. CARLENE 8 YRS OLD; LAYING ON COUCH WITH  
BLANKET OVER HER HEAD, PULLING ON EYEBROWS  
NERVOUSLY. GOSPEL MUSIC IN BACKGROUND ON RADIO. -  
LATE AFTERNOON

GABE

Claudia, I'm heading  
outside. Gonna try to get  
the car started. I think I  
may need to walk up to the  
store and get some oil



first. William, you and  
Gabe want to take a walk  
with me?

WILLIAM (9 yr)  
Yeah! I'll go with ya.

GABE JR (5 yr)  
No...I play with my toys.  
(on floor  
playing  
with  
soldier  
figurines)

CARLENE  
(looks up  
from  
blanket)  
I'll come!

CLAUDIA  
No...you stay here. I need  
you to give Marlene  
(1 yr old)  
a bottle while I get dinner  
on the table. Keep an eye  
on Caitlynn  
(3 yr old)  
too. Maddie you help your  
sister.

Both Carlene & Maddie together say "K!"

Carlene makes bottle for Marlene, feeding her.

Claudia in kitchen making dinner.

MADDIE  
Carlene, when you're done  
with Marlene lay her down  
and let's play house with  
Caitlyn.

CAITLYN  
Baby...

(reaching  
for baby  
doll Maddie  
is holding)

CARLENE

I'm tired. I'm going to  
lay on the couch with  
Marlene. Maybe later okay?

MADDIE

I guess. Okay Caitlyn, you  
can be the mommy...I'll be  
the babysitter.  
(pretend  
play)

Carlene done feeding Marlene; curls up with her on  
couch. Carlene puts blanket over head and can be  
seen pulling on eyebrows nervously.

CLAUDIA

(swiftly  
remove  
blanket  
from  
Carlene)

What are you doing? I  
thought that's what you  
were doing! Pulling on  
those eyelashes and  
eyebrows again aren't ya?

CARLENE

No!

(eyes wide  
with fear)

I...I...was taking a nap  
with Marlene.

CLAUDIA

You lying little brat!  
(jerks on  
her arm  
harshly)

CARLENE

Ow!  
(winces  
with a  
shriek)

CLAUDIA  
Maddie, watch your sisters.  
You,  
(to  
Carlene)  
get your hind end up those  
stairs now! Get your dad's  
belt down to me. Now! I  
said now!  
(hits her  
arm)

Carlene runs up the steps, tripping on the way up.  
In parents bedroom, nervously looks around for  
dad's belt. Picks it up and begins crying...runs  
back downstairs when she hears mom yelling.

CLAUDIA  
Carlene! You better get  
down here!

CARLENE  
Coming!  
(with sobs)

CLAUDIA  
Pull your skirt up. You  
better not move one bit  
young lady. So help me God  
I'll kill you if you do!

Carlene pulls skirt up and bends over table,  
holding on tightly.

Claudia strikes her butt 6 times with the belt.  
Carlene jumping, screaming out with pain.

CLAUDIA  
What'd I tell you?  
Now...pull your pants down!  
I've had it with you making  
yourself look hideous!

Hits Carlene 2 times with belt on bare bottom.  
Carlene winces out with pain and the 3rd strike  
was on her legs.

CLAUDIA

See? You little brat! I  
told you not to move! You  
move, you get it all over!  
Pull your panties up.  
March up those steps now!  
We have some more learning  
to do!

CARLENE

But...I didn't...  
(stops  
herself  
immediately  
, pulls  
panties up,  
walking up  
steps)

Claudia continues hitting her with the belt. It  
strikes the back of her legs, her back and arms.

CARLENE

(crying,  
screams out  
in pain)  
I'm sorry! I'm sorry mom.  
I'll stop.

CLAUDIA

Stop right there!  
(grabs her  
by the  
hair,  
pulling her  
backwards)  
Don't you dare go in that  
room yet. Take your  
clothes off.

Carlene looks bewildered as snot and tears are flowing.

CLAUDIA

What'd I say? Take them  
off! Now!

Carlene strips down to underwear, holding arms  
over chest.

CLAUDIA

(smacks  
Carlene in  
face)  
I said everything!

Carlene's hands shake as she removes panties.

CLAUDIA

(loud  
whisper)  
Get your ass on that bed  
and don't you dare move,  
you little devil!

Carlene walks in her bedroom, sits on bed,  
shivering, naked on bed.

Claudia can be heard stomping down the stairs and  
back up the steps within seconds.

CLAUDIA

Here, scoot over.  
(has a  
bible in  
hand)  
Honey, I'm sorry. I love  
you and this won't happen  
again. But you have to  
behave yourself, okay?  
Now...I need to show you  
something.

CARLENE

(nods head  
up and  
down, arms

tight  
around  
herself)

CLAUDIA

(reading  
scripture)

First Corinthians, chapter  
6, verse 15. Know ye not  
that your bodies are the  
members of Christ? Know ye  
not that your body is the  
temple of the Holy Ghost.  
Carlene, your body is God's  
temple and when you are  
destroying it by pulling  
your eyebrows, well hell  
you're just like a smoker  
destroying their body. Do  
you see what I'm trying to  
teach you?

CARLENE

Y...Ye...Yes mom. I'm so  
sorry.  
(sobs)

CLAUDIA

Well, I think you need to  
tell Jesus your sorry. So,  
you're going to stay in  
this room until you pray  
through and make this  
right. So, go on and get  
under the covers.  
(tucks her  
in)

CARLENE

(stuttering  
)

C..c...can I...I...eat  
supper, put m..my..my..  
clothes on?

CLAUDIA

Are you serious? Young  
lady maybe you haven't  
learnt your lesson yet.

CARLENE

It's okay. I'm sorry!  
I'll pray and go to sleep.  
I won't pull my lashes out  
no more.

CLAUDIA

(smiles)

There. Now you're getting  
it.

(kisses her  
on cheek)

Now sleep. See you in the  
morning.

Claudia walks out of room.

Carlene seen blankets up over head, whimpers with  
pain when she moves from side to side.

FADE OUT

CARLENE AGE 10 AND WILLIAM 11 IN DARK  
BASEMENT/WASHER AND DRYER TO THE SIDE. CARLENE IS  
GETTING UP FROM FLOOR. WILLIAM'S BACK IS TO  
CAMERA, ZIPPING UP PANTS- DAY

CLAUDIA

William! Carlene! Where  
are you?

WILLIAM

Coming up mom! I was  
helping Carlene fold  
clothes!

CLAUDIA

Get up here, I need the  
trash taken out and Carlene  
I need you to help with the  
dishes.

CARLENE

Coming!  
(to  
William)  
Please, I can't do this no  
more.  
(tears in  
eyes)

WILLIAM  
(looks away  
with  
sadness)  
Nods head up and down  
without words. Walks  
slowly up steps.

CARLENE  
(straighten  
s dress,  
wipes  
tears,  
follows  
William up  
steps)

FADE OUT

DISSOLVE TO: SUNDAY AFTERNOON, SUMMER 1978

PLAYGROUND/PICNIC WITH CLAUDIA, GABE AND ALL THE  
KIDS. -

Claudia driving the car, Gabe in passenger seat,  
kids in back of station wagon. William and Gabe  
Jr.'s head out the window, smiling.

WILLIAM  
(age 13)  
WooHoo! Let's play guys!  
(football  
in hand,  
runs toward  
field)

CLAUDIA  
(age 35)



William, put that football  
down. We're going to sit  
at the picnic table as a  
family and eat first!

GABE

(age 45)

Yep, gonna eat first.

WILLIAM

(slowly  
walks with  
head down,  
ball tucked  
under arm.)

Okay.

(sits at  
table)

CARLENE

(age 12)

I'm not playing football  
William. You're mean! You  
tackle too hard.

WILLIAM

Chicken! Four-eyed  
chicken!

(sneers at  
Carlene)

CLAUDIA

Hey! That's enough! Now  
we're gonna get along and  
have fun. If Carlene  
doesn't want to play  
football she doesn't have  
to. Leave her alone  
William or I'll bust your  
hind end. You hear me?

WILLIAM

Yeah.

(head down,  
snaps head  
back up)

Maddie, you'll play right?

MADDIE

(age 11)  
(eating on  
chicken  
leg)

Sure. Gabe can play too.  
Hey, he can be on my team.  
Caitlyn can be on yours.

CLAUDIA

Maddie! Put that chicken  
leg down. Let's pray  
first.

Everyone's head is bowed.

CLAUDIA

Dear Heavenly Father, thank  
you for this meal. You  
always provide. Thank you  
for a beautiful day and a  
healthy family. God bless  
our pastor and his family  
today and all of the saints  
of the church. Thank you  
for a good service this  
morning Lord and for Gabe  
coming to church today.  
Halalujah. In Jesus name,  
Amen.

Everyone simultaneously says Amen.

GABE JR

(age 7)  
(wolfing  
down his  
lunch)

I'm done! Can I get up!

CLAUDIA

Are you sure? If you leave  
the table your done. Won't  
be seconds. It'll probably  
be gone.

GABE JR  
(excitedly)  
Yeah! I'm done mom.  
(fidgeting  
in seat)

CLAUDIA  
Go on then. Go play.  
Behave too!  
(emphasizes  
)

Gabe runs to the swings. Smiling from ear to ear.

WILLIAM  
'K! I'm done...come on  
Mad...let's go!

MADDIE  
Wait! Not done yet.

CARLENE  
Hey Day  
(to Gabe)  
Did you like church this  
morning?

GABE  
(shrugs  
shoulders)  
I guess.

CLAUDIA  
Carlene, are you done yet?  
(with  
piercing  
eyes)

CARLENE  
Uh...Yes. Almost.  
(head down  
and  
finishes  
lunch.  
walks to  
slides)

MADDIE

Me too!

(jumps down  
and runs  
toward ball  
field where  
William and  
now Gabe Jr  
is tossing  
foot ball  
back and  
forth)

CAITLYN

(age 6)

Can I get up? I'm done.

GABE

You sure pumpkin?

CAITLYN

Yep.

CLAUDIA

Go on. Go ahead and go  
play. Here take Marlene  
with you. She's done too.  
(Marlene  
age 4)

Claudia and Gabe seen cleaning up, then walking  
hand in hand around the park.

Carlene pushes Marlene on swing.

William, Gabe Jr., Caitlyn, Maddie play football,  
running, laughing.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

1985 SUMMER. CHURCH SERVICE ENDED. SISTER JONES  
(PASTORS WIFE) AND CARLENE ARE WALKING OUT SIDE BY  
SIDE AS OTHER SAINTS OF CHURCH ARE SHAKING HANDS,  
WALKING TO CARS. - MORNING

SISTER JONES  
Sister Carlene, Can I talk  
to you?

CARLENE  
Sure Sister Jones.  
(age 18,  
finished  
her senior  
year)

SISTER JONES  
You've been baby sitting  
the kids now for several  
years every weekend. They  
love you and you do such a  
wonderful job with them.

CARLENE  
Oh Sister Jones, I love  
them so much. It is such a  
blessing to be a part of  
your family. I actually  
look forward to the  
weekends at your house.

SISTER JONES  
Well...that's what I wanted  
to talk to you about. How  
would you like to nanny on  
a full time basis?

CARLENE  
(excitedly)  
Really? Are you serious?  
Oh, I'd love nothing more!

SISTER JONES  
Talk it over with your mom  
and family and let me know.  
We love you and would love  
for you to be a part of our  
family. We can discuss  
further details later.

Both hug and Carlene excitedly runs to Claudia's station wagon. She opens back seat and gets in; Claudia and the other kids were waiting in car for her, watching her talking to Sister Jones.

CLAUDIA

(driving  
out of  
church  
parking  
lot)

What was that all about?

CARLENE

Mom! You are not going to believe this!

CLAUDIA

What?  
(complacent  
)

CARLENE

Sister Jones asked if I'd want to babysit the kids as a full time job! Can you believe it?

CLAUDIA

Oh Carlene, that would be great! Praise God! Will they pick you up and bring you home every day?

CARLENE

I'm not sure. She didn't say; she wanted me to talk to you first.

CAITLYN

(age 12)  
I wanna go too! I like goin' to their house. They have good food.

GABE JR

(age 13)  
Shut up Caitlyn, gosh, you  
are so dumb some times.

CAITLYN  
You shut up!

CLAUDIA  
Stop it now! Don't let me  
pull this car over, because  
if I do I'll knock your  
heads off! You hear me?!  
(glaring at  
them in  
rear view  
mirror)

GABE JR AND CAITLYN  
Nods yes.

CLAUDIA  
Carlene, we'll talk to  
Sister Jones tonight after  
church and get more  
details. It's fine if you  
sit for the kids, but what  
did she offer to pay? And,  
why does she end you  
everyday rather than  
weekends now?

CARLENE  
Um...she didn't say  
anything about the pay. But  
I'll ask her tonight after  
church. I guess she's now  
going to work for Brother  
Teddy every day now at his  
office 'cause his business  
is picking up.

CLAUDIA  
Hmph! Well, she should be  
at home with her family,  
but if Brother Jones

approves then I guess God  
is in it. Yep, I guess  
that's fine. I hope you  
remember, you need to be  
able to contribute to this  
family too. So don't  
forget that.

Claudia looking in rear view mirror at Carlene,  
moves mirror so she can see her.

CARLENE

I know.  
(looks out  
car window,  
with  
sadness)

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

SUMMER 1986. EARLY EVENING. CARLENE (AGE 19) IN  
KITCHEN MAKING DINNER. BROTHER JONES SITTING AT  
TABLE READING BIBLE. JONES' CHILDREN CAN BE HEARD  
(INAUDIBLE) PLAYING-GIGGLING IN BACKGROUND IN  
LIVING ROOM.

CARLENE

(calls out  
to Brother  
Jones-he's  
at table in  
dining room  
reading  
Bible)  
Hey Brother Jones, Sister  
Jones called earlier and  
said she would be late.  
She told me to go ahead and  
make dinner. Will you be  
eating with us?

BROTHER JONES

(closes  
Bible,  
walks up



behind  
Carlene)  
She called you?  
Hmmm...wonder why she  
didn't call me? Yes, I'll  
be eating with you and the  
kids.

CARLENE  
You were out. I told her  
I'd give you the message.

BROTHER JONES  
(looks up  
from  
reading  
Bible,  
closes it,  
staring at  
Carlene's  
backside)  
You know, you sure are  
growing into a lovely young  
woman Sister Carlene. You  
are going to make someone  
very happy one day.

CARLENE  
(smiles  
nervously  
at him)  
Awww...Brother Jones.  
Thank you. That is the  
sweetest thing.  
(turns back  
to stove)  
Do you mind asking the  
children to...  
(freezes)

BROTHER JONES  
(standing  
very  
closely  
behind her,  
hands  
lightly on

her  
shoulders-  
whispers in  
her ear)

I really appreciate all you  
do around here Sister  
Carlene. I don't know how  
we'd make it without you.

Brother Jones presses up against her backside.

CARLENE

(freezes,  
eyes widen  
nervously)

B..B..Brother Jones, uh...I  
feel blessed to help out  
God's family.

(fidgets  
with  
spatula)

C..C..Can you watch over  
the pasta while I set the  
table?

BROTHER JONES

(backs up  
away from  
Carlene,  
head down,  
closes his  
eyes, puts  
hands over  
face)

CARLENE

Henna, come on in the  
kitchen honey, can you help  
me with set the table?

(nervously  
gets  
plates))

TIMMY

(shouts)  
I can! I can!

CARLENE

Timmy, I need you and  
Hannah to wash up honey and  
then you can help.

Carlene rushes out of  
kitchen as Hennah gets  
dishes out.

HELEN

Where's mom? Shouldn't we  
wait for her?

BROTHER JONES

She won't be home until  
later honey.  
(stirring  
sauce on  
stove)

CARLENE

(in  
bathroom,  
staring at  
mirror,)  
Oh Dear God, please, please  
help me.  
(washes  
hands and  
wipes tears  
from face,  
walks back  
to kitchen)  
Brother Jones, Helen,  
Timmy, Hannah at table  
waiting on Carlene.

BROTHER JONES

This looks yummy Sister  
Carlene  
(without  
eye  
contact)  
Timmy, you want to lead us  
in prayer?

Carlene's head is down and waits for Timmy to start blessing. Fade out with dark, classical music.

SAME DAY. NIGHT. KIDS IN BED. HOUSE IS DARK. CARLENE IN BASEMENT FOLDING LAUNDRY. SHE HEARS SOMEONE COMING DOWN STEPS. - CONTINUOUS

CARLENE

(looks up  
from  
folding)

Oh. Hi Brother Jones. Is  
Sister Jones home yet?

BROTHER JONES

No. Not yet.  
(standing  
at end of  
basement  
steps  
watching  
Carlene  
fold  
clothes)

CARLENE

(awkwardly  
walks to  
dryer to  
get more  
clothes  
out)

Well...is there  
something...

(bending  
over she  
feels his  
body  
pressing up  
against  
her)

BROTHER JONES

(as she  
straightens  
up he  
immediately  
has his  
arms around  
her from  
the back)  
Oh, Carlene...  
(whispers  
in her ear)

CARLENE  
(stuttering  
)  
Brother Jones, please.  
I..I..I..

BROTHER JONES  
Shhh...you are so special  
and you take such good care  
of us.  
(a door can  
be heard  
opened and  
shut)

Brother Jones quickly steps back from Carlene,  
rushes up steps. Carlene can hear inaudible  
conversation between Brother and Sister Jones.

Carlene looks up toward steps as Sister Jones  
walks down steps.

SISTER JONES  
Hi sweetie. Thanks for  
taking care of everything  
today. It's been a long  
day. I'm heading to  
bed...hey, are you alright?

CARLENE  
Yeah, I'm fine. Just  
tired. I'm going to finish  
this load and go on to bed.

SISTER JONES

Well, put that laundry  
down. You can finish that  
tomorrow. Come on...you  
get some sleep. You've  
outdone yourself today.  
Brother Jones seems tired  
too. He went on to bed.

Carlene nods and follows her up steps. Sister  
Jones gives her a hug and they both part ways to  
their own rooms.

FADE TO FOLLOWING DAY.

SISTER JONES DRIVING AWAY FROM HOUSE. CARLENE AND  
CHILDREN ARE IN KITCHEN EATING BREAKFAST. -  
MORNING

CARLENE

Hey guys, what do you say  
we go to the park today?

Timmy & Hannah excitedly smile, jump up and down.

CARLENE

But first, I have to go to  
mom's house. I have some  
clothes and shoes there I  
would like to get. Helen,  
do you want to come with  
us?

HELEN

(reading a  
book, looks  
up)  
Sure! When are we leaving?

CARLENE

As soon as you all help me  
clean up and get out of  
those pj's!

Timmy, Helen, Hannah all run out of the room...

CARLENE IS SEEN DRIVING UP THE DRIVE WAY TO  
PARENTS HOME. SHE AND KIDS JUMP OUT...WALK INTO  
HER PARENTS HOME. - DAY

CLAUDIA

(walks in  
kitchen  
from living  
room)

Well, hi there kids!

(hugs  
Timmy,  
Helen,  
Hanna)

What are you doing Carlene?

CARLENE

Hi mom!

(heading up  
steps)

CLAUDIA

What are you doing?

CARLENE

Going upstairs. I have  
some things I need to get.

CLAUDIA

Maddie, why don't you take  
the kids outside. I need  
to talk to Carlene.

CARLENE

(stops on  
2nd step,  
looks at  
Timmy,  
Helen,  
Hannah and  
motions for  
them to go)

What's wrong? Is this okay  
that I get some stuff?

(nervous)

CLAUDIA

Get down from those steps.  
(sneers)  
Who do you think you are?

Gabe Jr, Caitlyn & Marlene all walk out the front door.

CLAUDIA  
You think you can just come over anytime you want? You spoiled little preachers girl...you think because you are living with them now you something dontcha'! Well let me tell you, this is my home! You don't just walk back in here anytime you want!

CARLENE  
(heads toward the door, hand on knob, turns to Claudia)  
Mom, you are rude and need to pray that God helps you with all of that anger you have bottled up.  
(rushes out the door, runs to the car)  
Kids, get in the car now.  
Hurry!

All 3 children do as she says when they see Claudia running out the door, with a belt in her hand.

CLAUDIA  
(screaming, running toward Carlene)



Get over here you little  
brat!

CARLENE

(didn't  
make it to  
the door,  
runs behind  
her car as  
Claudia is  
chasing  
her)

Mom! Stop this! I'm 19  
years old, this has got to  
stop!

CLAUDIA

(close  
enough to  
strike the  
belt at  
Carlene's  
backside)

Come here you devil!  
(screaming  
at her)

CARLENE

(quickly  
runs out of  
reach from  
Claudia to  
drivers  
side of  
car, opens  
it and  
locks door.  
panicky)

Oh Lord kids! I'm so  
sorry!

CLAUDIA

(screaming,  
inaudible  
standing at  
driver's

side of  
car)

Carlene speeds out of driveway in reverse and  
heads out on to road.

CARLENE

Are you guys okay?

(pushes  
hair away  
from face)

Oh Lord! I am really  
sorry. Mom needs Jesus  
kids. We need to pray for  
her.

Helen and Timmy are laughing.

HELEN

That was scary but funny  
Carlene. I can't believe  
your mom was trying to whip  
you! What happened?

CARLENE

I don't know Helen, she  
just gets so mad and loses  
it. I just hope she  
doesn't take it out on the  
others. Oh God, please  
don't let her do that.

FADE OUT AS CARLENE DRIVES DOWN THE ROAD, WORRIED  
LOOK ON FACE.

FADE IN - LATER. CARLENE IN BED PRAYING. - NIGHT

CARLENE

Dear Lord, I need you right  
now. Please make a way for  
me to leave. I love  
working for you Jesus,  
taking care of my pastor's  
family, but things are  
right. I don't ask for  
much Lord, but just please  
make a way...

(is seen  
falling  
asleep)

ONE YEAR LATER. CARLENE 20 YRS. OLD; CLEANING  
HOUSE (STILL AT PASTOR'S HOME) - SPRING, 1987  
AFTERNOON

Phone ringing.

CARLENE

Hello.

CLAUDIA

Carlene? Hi honey. How  
are you?

CARLENE

I'm good, just cleaning.  
How are you?

CLAUDIA

Carlene, I have some bad  
news.

CARLENE

(puts down  
sweeper,  
appears  
upset)  
What is it mom?

CLAUDIA

Are you alone or is Brother  
or Sister Jones there with  
you?

CARLENE

Mom, you're scaring me.  
What is it? Oh, hold on  
Brother Jones just walked  
in.

BROTHER JONES

(whispers)  
Everything okay? Who is  
it?

CARLENE

(hand over  
phone)

It's mom. She has bad  
news...

CLAUDIA

Oh good. I'm glad Brother  
Jones is there. Honey, you  
know your dad has had this  
awful cough.

CARLENE

(with fear  
and tension  
in voice)

Yes! Yes! What is it mom?

CLAUDIA

(sniffing)

Honey, we just came home  
from the doctor. They ran  
some tests and he has lung  
cancer.

CARLENE

(drops  
phone,  
slumps to  
floor,  
holding  
head in  
hands;  
crying)

No! No! Oh God!

CLAUDIA

Hello? Hello? Carlene are  
you still there?

BROTHER JONES

(picks up  
phone)

Sister Claudia? It's  
Brother Jones. What's  
going on?

Brother Jones talking inaudible on phone. Hangs up.

BROTHER JONES

Sister...Carlene, come here.

(Carlene stands up, Brother Jones holds her as she sobs)

We're going to pray Carlene. God is a miracle worker. It's okay honey, let God know your pain. Oh Lord, we are asking for a miracle.

(speaks in tongues)

Carlene sobbing as he holds her. As she calms he releases her. They sit at table.

CARLENE

I...I...feel like this is my fault Brother Jones.

(twisting tissue in hand)

BROTHER JONES

Oh! Don't you do that to yourself. Why would you even think such a thing?

CLAUDIA

Because I prayed. I've been praying for the past 6 months for God to work something out that I could move on. I think you know...I need to leave here Brother Jones. This...

(stretches out arms)

isn't good.

BROTHER JONES

(looks long  
and serious  
at her)

You're right. You are  
absolutely right Sister  
Carlene. I'm so sorry.

But this

(emphasizes  
"this")

is not your fault! You got  
that? Do you believe me?

CARLENE

(blows  
nose)

I know...but...

BROTHER JONES

No Carlene, no buts about  
it. Sometimes God has  
plans that we can't see.  
Maybe this is His infinite  
wisdom to getting your dad  
saved.

CARLENE

(nods head  
up and  
down)

I just don't want to lose  
him.

BROTHER JONES

We'll call a fast, a prayer  
chain. God will heal him.  
You have to have faith.

CARLENE

(nodding)

Brother Jones, I need to go  
home. I have to be with  
dad right now. Mom will  
need me to work and help

out. I really need to be  
with my family..

(crying)

...but what will you guys  
do without me?

BROTHER JONES

I agree, it's for the best.  
Don't worry about us, it'll  
work out.

Sister Jones walks in house.

BROTHER JONES

Oh, hey. Honey, come over  
here. We need to talk.

SISTER JONES

What's wrong? Oh Carlene  
honey...what is it?

(sits  
beside her  
with her  
arms around  
her)

BROTHER JONES

She got some upsetting news  
today. Sister Claudia  
called. Gabe has lung  
cancer. They gave him  
about 6 months to live.

SISTER JONES

Oh no! Come here Carlene.

(reaches  
hug her)

Oh honey, we serve a mighty  
God. He will work a  
miracle.

Carlene in Sister Jones arms, nodding.

SISTER JONES

Now listen, maybe they  
caught it in time. Let's

just keep positive and  
trust in the Lord.

CARLENE

Thank you. Thank you both.  
Sister Jones, I feel it's  
best if I go home. My  
family needs me.

SISTER JONES

(eyes  
widened,  
slowly  
shakes head  
back and  
forth)

Well...don't you think you  
should think this  
through...why Carlene, we  
need you.

BROTHER JONES

Sister! I agree with  
Carlene. She needs to be  
with her family right now.  
Whatever she and her family  
need we'll support that.

Sister Jones abruptly gets up, picks up her purse.

SISTER JONES

I need to take a drive.  
I'll be back.  
(visibly  
upset)

CARLENE

(sits down,  
shakes her  
head  
confused)

BROTHER JONES

It's okay. She'll be fine.  
Now...let's get you packed.  
I'll get some boxes and you  
can start packing your



things. Let's get you  
home.

Fade out.

FALL. 1987. CARLENE 20 YRS. SHE IS WEARING NURSES  
UNIFORM-HEADING TO WORK. SHE IS SITTING BESIDE  
GABE SR AS HE LAYS IN HOSPITAL BED IN THE FAMILY'S  
LIVING ROOM. - EVENING

CARLENE

Dad...dad...

GABE SR.

(whispers)

Yes dear?

(eyes  
flutter  
open and  
shut)

CARLENE

I'm heading to work now.  
Would you like some ice  
chips?

GABE SR.

No...but can you read to  
me?

CARLENE

Sure. I've got some time.  
Let's see...

(looks for  
Bible on  
end table,  
flips  
through  
pages)

Okay...this is Psalms dad.

(begins  
reading)

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name...

Gabe puts his hands together as if praying. Eyes are closed as his lips are moving but nothing coming out.

CARLENE

(tears  
coming down  
her face as  
she reads  
on)

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and forget none of his  
benefits; who pardons all  
of your iniquities, who  
heals all your diseases ...

Claudia walks in and silently sits on the other side of Gabe's bed, holds his hand and looks at Carlene with admiration.

CARLENE

...who redeems your life  
from the pit, who crowns  
you with loving kindness  
and compassion; who  
satisfies your years with  
good things, so that your  
youth is renewed like the  
eagle. Amen.

(puts the  
bible down  
and reaches  
for Gabe's  
other  
hand.)

CLAUDIA

Carlene, that was  
beautiful.

CARLENE

Thanks mom.  
(wipes away  
tears and  
blows nose)

GABE SR.

Sweetheart, thank you  
(whispering  
-voice  
cracks)

CLAUDIA STANDS UP. KISSES  
GABE.

Honey, are you in pain? Do  
you need anything right  
now?

GABE SR.  
(holds hand  
in air)  
I..I'm okay Claudia. I  
just want to sleep now.

CLAUDIA  
I'm going to clean up in  
the kitchen honey. When  
Carlene leaves for work  
I'll come back in and sit  
with you.

GABE SR.  
(slowly  
nods head)

CLAUDIA  
(gives  
Carlene  
hug)  
Have a good night at work  
honey. I love you.

CARLENE  
(hugs  
Claudia)  
I love you too mom.  
(whispers  
in her ear)  
...mom please call me  
if...if, you know.  
(looks over  
at Gabe Sr  
with  
sadness)

CLAUDIA

I will honey.  
(gives her  
one more  
hug and  
holds on to  
her close)  
(walks in  
kitchen)

CARLENE

Dad? I don't want to  
bother you anymore...I'm  
heading out to work. I  
love you so much!  
(leans over  
and kisses  
his  
forehead)

GABE

I love you too....hey,  
(looks out  
window that  
is beside  
his bed)  
Do you see that?

CARLENE

(looks out  
window)  
No, what is it dad?

GABE

The angel. He's waiting  
for me...  
(eyes wide,  
then  
flutters  
open and  
shut)

CARLENE

(leans  
close

toward his  
face)  
Dad,  
(tears)  
If you want to go, then go  
(whispering  
)  
We are okay. Mom will be  
okay...I'm going to stay  
and keep working. We all  
love you so much, but  
you've endured enough pain.  
Go ahead and go to sleep  
dad, it's okay.

GABE  
(a tear  
flows from  
his eye)  
I love you Carlenesue!  
(pats her  
hand)  
Thank you honey.  
(he gives  
her kiss on  
cheek as  
she leans  
in closer)

Carlene tucks him in, walks toward the front door  
to leave and watches Gabe close his eyes to sleep.  
Fade out

Fade in/out with music only for this next scene.

CHURCH IS FULL. CHOIR SINGING "I'LL FLY AWAY" IN A  
SOULFUL, ANGELIC, SLOW VERSION. SISTER JONES IS  
LEADING THE CHOIR, BROTHER JONES SITTING ON PULPIT  
WITH BIBLE AND NOTES IN HAND. GABE IN COFFIN AT  
FRONT OF CHURCH. CARLENE, MADDIE, GABE JR.,  
CAITLYN, WILLIAM, MARLENE SIT WITH CLAUDIA ON  
FRONT ROW, CRYING. - DAY

MARCH (EARLY SPRING) 1988, CARLENE 21. CAR PULLS  
UP TO HOUSE. - EVENING

MADDIE

Is that Matt?  
(looks out  
window)

CARLENE

Yep. It's him!

MADDIE

I didn't think you were  
going to go out with him.

CARLENE

I know...but he's been so  
nice Maddie. We're going  
to PUTT-PUTT and then out  
for pizza.

MADDIE

You know mom won't like it  
if he doesn't come to  
church.

CARLENE

You let me worry about  
that. We've already talked  
about it and he's coming to  
church tomorrow. He's even  
gonna pick me up.

Knock on door. Carlene answers it.

CARLENE

(Smiling)  
Hi Matt. Come on in.

MADDIE

Hi. I'm Maddie.

MATT

(shakes her  
hand)  
Nice to meet you Maddie.

CARLENE

Mom's not here right now or  
I'd introduce you...

MADDIE

(raises  
eyebrows in  
a  
questionabl  
e manner)

CARLENE

Maddie, tell mom I'll be  
home by ten. Please?

MADDIE

Sure. Have fun...  
(leaves  
room)

MATT

Well...you ready?  
(smiles  
down at  
Carlene)

CARLENE

Absolutely!  
(Puts her  
coat on,  
Matt helps  
her)

Thank you.  
(smiling  
entire  
time)

WEDDING DAY SUMMER 1988. CARLENE 21 YRS. - IN  
CLAUDIA'S HOUSE. - AFTERNOON

CLAUDIA

(screaming)  
Why do you have to marry  
him? You know he doesn't  
have the holy ghost  
Carlene!

CARLENE

Why are you doing this to  
me on my wedding day mom?  
Please stop!

CLAUDIA

He only started to go to  
church to get in your pants  
girl! Your dad would be  
ashamed of you right now.

(walking  
rapidly  
around the  
house while  
yelling)

WILLIAM

(walks in  
the house)  
Carlene, are you ready...

CARLENE

(grabs  
wedding  
dress  
roughly)  
Get me out of here William!

WILLIAM

(gently  
grabs her  
by  
shoulders)  
Hey, hey there..what's  
wrong?

CARLENE

Mom!  
(puts head  
down)  
William I've got to get out  
of here now...

Claudia can be heard stomping down the steps.

CLAUDIA

Well...there you are! The  
prodical son comes back



home to take his sister  
away!

WILLIAM

Carlene, go on outside...go  
on.

Carlene takes a bag and wedding dress, walks  
outside.

WILLIAM

Why in the hell do you have  
to continue this? What has  
she ever done to you that  
you treat her like this?

CLAUDIA

Don't you talk to me like  
that boy!

(reaches to  
hit  
him...he  
blocks her)

WILLIAM

Never again mom. Never!

Gives her a very angry look and slowly turns away  
from her. She has a moment of fear on her face.  
Stands still and watches him walk away.

WILLIAM

(walks  
outside to  
his truck  
where  
Carlene is  
standing,  
crying)

Hey there.

(holds her)

It's okay. It's going to  
be a beautiful day Carlene.

CARLENE

I...I...I don't know  
William.

WILLIAM

What are you saying?

Carlene looks up at William with confusion.

WILLIAM

Carlene, if you don't want to do this, then don't. We can just drive and call this whole thing off.

CARLENE

(tosses her  
gown on  
ground)

What other options do I have William? I have NO WHERE to go! I can't stay here anymore...she's going to kill me or I'm going to kill her. I can't take the abuse anymore! You'd think because I'm an adult she'd stop...but she's crazy William! I have no where...

WILLIAM

Okay, okay...  
(holds her  
again)

Let's go. Let's get you out of here. It's going to be good Carlene.

(picks up  
her gown  
and hands  
it to her)  
(Both get  
in truck,  
drive away)

FADE OUT TO MELANCHOLY MUSIC. CARLENE'S STARING  
OUT THE WINDOW.

FADE IN:

Carlene 2 months pregnant. Walking church ladies out to their cars from her apartment. Matt comes walking up the driveway and ignores when one of the ladies greeted him. Winter-evening.

CARLENE

Hi honey!  
(smiling at  
him,  
reaches to  
him)  
How was your day?

MATT

(Ignores  
her, shrugs  
shoulder  
and  
continues  
to walk in  
apartment)

CARLENE

(waving-  
smiles  
nervously  
at the  
women  
driving  
away)

Carlene walks into apartment. Matt is hanging coat up.

CARLENE

So...the fund raiser for  
the building fund went  
well!  
(cheerful)  
The party with the ladies  
went well and I think they  
enjoyed the treats.

MATT

What's for dinner?  
(grumpy)

CARLENE

Well...we have plenty of  
leftovers from the..

MATT

(hits table  
with fist)

I don't want your damn  
leftovers from your stupid  
party Carlene! You had  
time for your friends, you  
should've had time to have  
dinner ready!

CARLENE

Where is this coming from?  
What did I do?

MATT

(gets up  
from  
kitchen  
table,  
stands  
close to  
her)

It's not what you did!  
It's what you didn't do!  
(Hits the  
kitchen  
cupboard so  
hard the  
wood split)

Carlene runs out of kitchen to bedroom. Gets into  
the closet and hides.

CARLENE

(whispering  
)

Oh God...no, no, no! This  
is not happening! Please  
god...

(hands on  
head,  
shaking

back and  
forth)

MATT

(walks into  
bedroom)

Carlene, I'm sorry. Come  
out.

CARLENE

(head down,  
hands still  
on head)

Matt...I'm scared. Why did  
you..

MATT

(on knees,  
leans down  
inside  
closet)

Come here...I'm sorry.  
Sometimes I just get  
jealous and want you all  
for myself. Come here  
Carlene.

CARLENE

(on knees,  
crawls out  
of closet.  
Matt pulls  
her close)

I'm sorry about dinner.  
I'll make...

MATT

Sshhh...I'll eat what you  
already have. It's okay.

CARLENE

Matt, you scare me when you  
get angry like that.

MATT

I am so sorry. I don't  
know why I do...something

just snaps. When I was little my dad beat mom pretty badly but it was when he was drinking.

CARLENE

I didn't know that. Does he still do it?

MATT

No. He stopped drinking and it's better now. But I still remember...

(stares  
off)

I promise you, I won't ever put my hands on you. I know I've broken things and that scares you but I am not my dad Carlene.

CARLENE

(hugging  
him tight)

I love you Matt. We have a child to think about now. God will get us through anything. Do you want to pray with me?

MATT

Uh...you go ahead. I'm going to get something to eat.

(looks down  
at her)

You okay now?

CARLENE

Yeah. I'm fine.

Both get up and hug. Matt kisses Carlene passionately. He walks out of room, as Carlene gets on her knees by the bed to pray.

Fade out.

CARLENE & MATT ARE IN HOSPITAL ROOM. CARLENE  
DISHEVELED WITH SWEAT, LEGS IN STIRS, NURSE AT HER  
SIDE. - AFTERNOON

NURSE SANDY

The doctor will be here  
anytime. He had another  
delivery. How are you  
doing hon?

CARLENE

The contractions hurt, but  
okay.

NURSE SANDY

Do you still want to do  
this without any  
medication?

CARLENE

Yes, I don't want to put  
anything in my body that  
may hurt the baby.

NURSE SANDY

That's your decision dear.

Nurse Sandy opens I.V. kit.

Matt sitting in chair beside Carlene's bed,  
holding her hand and watching a baseball game on  
t.v. Carlene begins breathing heavy.

Nurse Sandy looks over at Matt, frown on face,  
turns back to getting the I.V. started in  
Carlene's hand.

NURSE SANDY

Matt, why don't you coach  
your wife in some  
breathing.

(kind of  
snippy in  
her tone)

MATT

That is why I'm sitting  
here.

Gives the nurse a very stern stare.

Stare doesn't faze her. She continues putting the  
I.V. in Carlene as she looks up for a second at  
him and smiles down at Carlene.

NURSE SANDY

Keep breathing, in, out.  
You're doing good Carlene.

Dr. Offenburger walks in.

DR. OFFENBURGER

Well now. What's going on  
in here?

Nurse finished with I.V.

NURSE SANDY

She's dialated 4  
centimeters and the  
contractions are now about  
5 minutes apart.

(speaks to  
Carlene)

Carlene, are you still  
wanting to do this without  
medication?

CARLENE

Yes. I can do this. Can I  
have a cold cloth?

(breathing  
heavy)

Oh God, here it comes  
again.

Nurse gets wash cloth from cabinet, rinses cold  
water, rings out and hands it to Matt.



MATT

Here honey.

Puts cold cloth on her head, holds her and and tells her to breath.

DR. OFFENBURGER

One, two, three breath.  
There ya go young lady.  
That's it.

Carlene and Dr are breathing together. He is very comforting toward her.

DR. OFFENBURGER

(to nurse)  
I'm heading back to the other delivery; page me when she's ready.

NURSE SANDY

Will do.

Matt continues to glance at the t.v. then back at Carlene. Nurse gives him another angry look.

CARLENE

Oh God, I feel like I'm going to get...  
(throws up, getting some on nurse.)  
I'm so sorry...  
(crying now)

Matt jerks away, arms flings out. Nurse brushes him away while she helps clean Carlene. Matt walks out of room.

NURSE SANDY

Don't you worry about it.  
That's why we wear these beautiful scrubs. Let's

get you cleaned up and  
comfortable.

Nurse fussing over Carlene. Rechecks her for  
dilation.

CARLENE

I feel like I want to push!  
Oh God!

NURSE SANDY

Hang on girl, let's check.

Nurse's hands under Carlene's sheet. Eyes look  
up.

NURSE SANDY

(Smiling at  
Carlene)

NURSE SANDY

You ready? I think it's  
time.

CARLENE

Oh God yes! Where's Matt?

NURSE SANDY

Getting him now honey.  
(Walks out  
of room and  
comes right  
back in.  
pages the  
doctor)

MATT

Let's do it!  
(Gives her  
a kiss on  
forehead)  
Carlene vaguely smiles

CARLENE

Okay! I'm ready.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Spring Evening, Matt picking Carlene and 8 month  
Mandi up from church.

CARLENE

Oh Matt...I'm sorry you  
missed a good service! God  
is so good. So...what  
happened to the car? And  
where did you get this one?  
(looking  
around the  
car)

MATT

Our car's engine blew. I  
got this one from a friend.

CARLENE

Engine blew? How? It's a  
new car Matt! We're still  
paying on that.

MATT

(non-  
chalant)  
I forgot to get the oil  
changed and the oil hasn't  
been checked since we got  
it.

CARLENE

Matt! How could you? What  
are we going to do now?

Matt tightened hands on steering wheel.

MATT

Hey! I'm working! You are  
the one who decided to stay  
home with her!  
(tosses his  
head to the  
side where

Mandi sits  
in back)

CARLENE

(mouth  
drops open)  
What is that supposed to  
mean?

Matt picks up speed in car. Face angry.

CARLENE

Matt...slow down  
(hand  
holding  
tightly to  
door  
handle,  
glances  
back at  
Mandi)

Matt abruptly pulls in drive way to house, gets  
out of car, slams door shut.

Carlene gets out, opens back door where Mandi is  
strapped in car seat.

CARLENE

(cheerfully  
)  
Hey sweet girl...it's  
okay...come on. Let's get  
you inside.  
(baby  
smiling)

Carlene walks into house. Matt is in kitchen  
pacing back and forth running hands through his  
hair. Carlene sets Mandi (still in carseat) by  
the front door.

CARLENE

Matt, Please can we just  
discuss this?  
(walks into  
kitchen)

I'm not blaming you  
honey...but..

Matt begins hitting the cupboard, splitting it.

CARLENE

Matt! Stop this! God we  
have a baby here! Please!

Matt screams out as he opens cupboards and throws  
dishes, glasses. Carlene panics, begins to walk  
out of kitchen and he grabs her by the arm.

MATT

Come here!  
(backhands  
her in  
face)  
I'm done! I'm done! I  
hate your church! I hate  
having to take care of you  
and your shit! You hear  
me?

Matt picks up Carlene and throws her into the  
trash. She falls backward into the trash can,  
trash all over floor.

She gets up and runs out of kitchen.

MATT

(screaming)  
Awww!  
(can hear  
banging. He  
is hitting  
the stove  
with an  
iron pan.)

Carlene reaches for Mandi (still in carseat)

CARLENE

Come here honey  
(smiles  
nervously  
at her,

wiping  
tears away  
from her  
face)

MATT

(grabs  
Carlene's  
hair, pulls  
her  
backward  
and up)

I could kill you with one  
hand. Did ya know that?

(up close  
to her  
face, hands  
close  
around her  
neck as she  
is slammed  
up against  
the wall)

CARLENE

(tears  
streaming  
down her  
face)

Plea...Please...Matt,  
I...I...I'm  
so...sooo...sorry. Mandi,  
I have to get Mandi Matt.

Matt throws Carlene onto the couch and walks back into kitchen. Banging and breaking of dishes can be heard.

Carlene awkwardly runs over to Mandi. Wiping her face she picks up diaper bag and Mandi's car seat, runs outside to neighbor's house.

CARLENE

(knocking  
hard on  
door)

Come on! Come on! Please!

A woman comes to door.

CARLENE

My name is Carlene, I'm  
your neighbor. Please, can  
I come in? My husband...

Woman opens door with mouth opened.

CHERYL

My name is Cheryl. Oh my  
god honey. What happened?

CARLENE

Hurry, lock the door. I  
don't think he'll come  
over, but we need to be  
safe.

CHERYL

Come on in...what can I do?

CARLENE

Can I use your phone?

CHERYL

Yes! Here, let me take  
your baby while you do what  
you need to do.

Cheryl sweetly and gently gets Mandi out of  
carseat. Holding her close. Mandi smiling.

CARLENE

(dialing)  
You know...she never cried  
out one time.  
(tears  
streaming  
down her  
face as she  
looks over  
at Mandi)

CHERYL

Well...now you are a sweet  
little thing aren't you?

CARLENE

She really is...Hello?  
Mom? I need help.

Fade out.

CHURCH SCENE. BROTHER JONES ON PULPIT TALKING TO  
CHURCH. VERY SOMBER TONE. - MORNING

Carlene holding one year old Mandi. Claudia  
sitting in pew in front of her. Marlene, Gabe Jr  
and Caitlyn sitting with Carlene.

BROTHER JONES

I have decided to talk to  
you this morning rather  
than preach. You all  
deserve to know what is  
going on.

(Organist playing very quietly in background)

BROTHER JONES

There have been rumors and  
I need to address those  
today if we are going to  
continue God's work. You  
all know Sister Jones has  
not been in church lately.

(he lowers  
his head  
and wipes  
his eyes  
with a  
hanky)

BROTHER ED

(other  
minister  
sitting on  
pulpit)

It's okay brother! We're  
here. We're behind you.



Church saints agree with Amen!

BROTHER JONES

She has moved away. As you know...there were uh...uh...rumors of us going through some difficult times. She has chosen a different life and I have fought hard but it's in God's hands now. She won't be back.

Church saints agasp.

BROTHER JONES

(lifts head  
up, facing  
ceiling)

But with the help of our Lord and Savior we will get through these trying times! God is still good! Halalujah?

(looks out  
to saints)

Church saints shout Halalujah. Some get up and start praying aloud, speaking in tongues. Organist begins playing louder and upbeat music.

Brother Jones speaking in tongues. Saints lifting hands and dancing, shouting.

BROTHER JONES

(looks over  
at  
organist,  
puts his  
hand out to  
stop  
playing)

Shhhh...listen folks. I am going to ask you to come up in front of the church and pray for me. Brother Ed, get the anointing oil and

lay hands on me. I am  
going to need the God's  
strength to get me through.

(he hands  
the bottle  
of oil to  
Brother Ed  
and moves  
off pulpit  
to front of  
church.  
Lifts his  
hands in  
air as  
everyone  
lays hands  
on him)

Church mournfully praying.

Fade out.

Carlene is sitting on couch folding clothes.  
Claudia is sitting in recliner reading her bible.  
Mandi on floor playing with toys.

CLAUDIA

(still  
looking  
down at  
bible)

You know I had coffee with  
Brother Jones last night?

CARLENE

You did? That's nice. I'm  
glad you are there for him  
mom. He seems to really  
enjoy your company.

CLAUDIA

Yeah, he's lonely, you can  
tell. He just seems so  
lost.

CARLENE

God will get him through  
this mom.

Claudia looks up from her bible.

CLAUDIA  
You know...he talks about  
you.

Carlene stops folding. Staring at her mom.

CARLENE  
What do you mean, he talks  
about me?

CLAUDIA  
(closes the  
bible)  
He likes you Carlene.  
There's no other way to put  
it. He said you've always  
been special to him. I  
really think if you play  
your cards right, he might  
just choose you.

CARLENE  
Choose me?  
(emphasizes  
the words)  
What does that supposed to  
mean?

CLAUDIA  
(suggestive  
ly)  
Well...there is another  
woman who is interested in  
him, but I don't think he  
is in her.

CARLENE  
Oh my goodness mom! I  
can't believe we are having  
this conversation! His  
divorce is not even over  
and he is our pastor! That

goes against everything we  
been taught. This  
conversation is over.

(continues  
to intently  
fold  
clothes)

CLAUDIA

What ever you say Carlene.  
But if God's will is in  
this there is nothing you  
can do about.

(abruptly  
gets up,  
puts bible  
on end  
table)

He said he'd like to have  
coffee with you this  
weekend. Your choice  
now...he wants to pick you  
up at 7:30 on Saturday.

(walking  
out of  
room)

Like I said, God's will.

Carlene sits on couch, shaking head. Puts head in  
piece of clothing, then looks up in air.

CARLENE

(whispers)  
God's will huh?  
(smiles)

Fade out.

Evening. Carlene and Brother Jones in his car  
parked in empty parking lot.

BROTHER JONES

Sister Carlene, thank you  
for having coffee with me.  
(shuts car  
off, turns  
to her)

You are so pretty.  
(gently  
brushes  
strand of  
hair out of  
her face)

CARLENE

Thank you  
(shyly,  
voice  
shaking)

BROTHER JONES

Can I kiss you?

CARLENE

Uh...if you want.

BROTHER JONES

Do you want me to?

CARLENE

(looks  
shyly up at  
him and  
nods her  
head up and  
down.  
Biting her  
lower lip)

Brother Jones moves closer to her and puts his  
hands around her face, kisses her passionately.  
She responds

BROTHER JONES

(whispers)  
Oh...Carlene, I'm so  
attracted to you.  
(he puts  
takes her  
hand and  
places it  
on the  
front of  
his pants)

Mmmmm...touch me.

Kissing continues as Carlene puts her hand on front of his pants. He moves his hand up her dress. She wiggles in seat.

Dissolve in and out of scene with Carlene and Brother Jones entering and leaving hotel. Love music playing-laughing, hugging, kissing, bed scene. Fade out

BROTHER JONES AND CARLENE IN CAR TOGETHER  
TRAVELING ON ROAD. COME TO A STOP LIGHT. - DAY

BROTHER JONES

Duck!  
(pushes  
Carlene's  
head down)  
Hurry! Stay down!

CARLENE

Wha..? Oh my God! What is  
it?

BROTHER JONES

It's Brother Ed. He's  
sitting right beside us  
(talking  
without  
trying to  
move lips)  
Just don't move Carlene.

CARLENE

This is so stupid! I can't  
take this anymore.

BROTHER JONES

Just stay down, I'll tell  
you when to get up.  
(begins  
driving)  
Okay. It's good now. You  
can get up.  
(releases  
his hand

from her  
head)

CARLENE

I can't keep this sneaking  
around up. Can you?

(with  
sadness in  
her voice)

BROTHER JONES

(runs hands  
through his  
hair)

I know...I know!

(slams  
hands on  
steering  
wheel)

Oh God help me!

CARLENE

I feel so bad sometimes  
when you're up their  
preaching...you  
know...about sin,  
fornication and that is  
exactly what we're doing.

BROTHER JONES

(pulls  
immediately  
to side of  
road)

Look at me! What we are  
doing is not a sin. God  
understands. It's  
just...just...complicated.  
I need to get the church  
ready for another minister  
to take over and then we  
can move on.

CARLENE

You don't think the saints  
will understand? If we

continue to go to church  
here?

BROTHER JONES

Oh Carlene, sweetie. We  
can't...we just can't do  
that. There are others  
who...

(pulls car  
back out  
onto road)  
It just wouldn't work.

CARLENE

Why?

(with  
emphasis)  
Because of the other woman  
in the church who has  
feelings for you?

BROTHER JONES

Now listen. I never...who  
told you about her?  
(looking at  
her with  
sincere  
eyes)

CARLENE

Mom.  
(pouty)

BROTHER JONES

Honey...nothing happened.  
She wanted it to but it  
didn't. So that's all I  
want to say about it.  
We'll get married. I know  
it's been over three years  
and you've been so patient.  
I'll get things rollin'.  
Okay?

CARLENE



(scoots  
over close  
to him)  
Okay...I love you so much.

BROTHER JONES  
I love you to.

Fade out

Fade in Carlene is driving on the highway with boxes and suitcases in her car. Pulls up to apartment building. Unpacking things and enters apartment. No furniture is in apartment.

CARLENE  
(hooks up  
phone,  
dials)  
Hi! I made it Todd!  
(Carlene  
calls  
Brother  
Jones by  
his first  
name now)  
I'm going to unpack some  
things and go get something  
to eat. I start training  
first thing in the morning.

TODD  
Great! Glad you made it  
safe. You know this is  
going to be a good move  
Carlene. We're a couple  
hours away from your family  
but we'll find another  
church soon.

CARLENE  
I'm sure Todd. Hey, how's  
Mandi? Did you get to  
visit her yet? I am so  
glad Marlene is watching  
her until you both arrive.

TODD

I saw her at the church the other night. She's fine honey.

CARLENE

(twisting  
phone cord)

Next week can't come soon enough! I wish you both were here.

TODD

It'll go by fast. Hey, I have to get off here. I have a meeting at the church to finalize some things. Call me when you get the arrangements ready for our marriage.

CARLENE

Yes! I meant to tell you. I called the courthouse. There is a judge available next Thursday at 1:00 p.m. Is that good?

TODD

Sure. I'll drive down that morning. We can go out to a nice dinner afterward to celebrate.

CARLENE

Oh, I have to work that night but if you arrive early we can go to an early lunch?

TODD

Perfect! I love you Carlene. Thanks for hanging in there with me. And...don't worry about working too much. I'm

going to get a  
job...somewhere.

CARLENE

Don't worry about that  
right now Todd...you've  
been through so much  
change. Leaving a church  
you spent your entire life  
trying to build and have to  
start over. I'll do all I  
can to help. I don't mind  
working. I love you too.  
Good night.

TODD

'Night Carlene. Have a  
good day tomorrow.

Both hang up. Fade out

Fade in

CARLENE WAKES UP. SMILES TO SELF. - MORNING

Stretches, gets out of bed. Turns music on.  
Dances around the bedroom to the shower.

Hair in rollers. Finds a dress to wear. Dressed.

Picks up phone to call.

CARLENE

Good morning!  
(smiling)  
I'm so excited. When are  
leaving?  
(looks sad)  
Aww...you won't be here for  
lunch? Okay...well, our  
ceremony is at 1:00.  
(pauses)  
Okay, tie up the looses  
ends then and I'll see you  
soon, be careful! I love  
you. Okay, bye.

Hangs up phone, sits on couch holding a pillow close to her. Staring out window, solemn look. Fade out to music.

CARLENE, TODD AND MANDI (5 YEARS OLD) SITTING AT KITCHEN TABLE EATING DINNER. - EVENING

Todd leaves table to take the phone in back room.

Carlene and Mandi eating.

Todd returns.

TODD

You're not going to believe who called.

(excitedly)

CARLENE

Who?

(eating)

TODD

That was Brother Asel..

(takes a bit of food)

CARLENE

(eyebrows together, sincere look)

Oh! Is everything okay with them?

TODD

Yes! Oh yes it's all good. He offered me a job Carlene!

CARLENE

Praise God! That is wonderful honey!

(Reaches over and hugs him)

Oh...wait!  
(hands up  
to her  
face)  
We'd have to move? Where  
is it again they live?

MANDI  
(claps  
hands  
excitedly)  
Yea! Yea! Daddy's got a  
job.

TODD  
(touches  
Mandi's  
hand  
sweetly)  
That's right sweetie.  
(looks at  
Carlene)  
They are in North Carolina.  
What do you think?

CARLENE  
(head up  
looking at  
ceiling,  
elbows on  
table,  
hands  
holding  
chin)  
Well...would you be part of  
the ministry? What  
position would you hold?

TODD  
They wouldn't pay us. We  
would help them with an  
outreach ministry. We  
would live in the church's  
apartment for free.  
Carlene, this is a great

opportunity for us to get  
on our feet. Plus...

(grabs her  
hand)

I know you've been upset  
about the phone calls from  
her...

CARLENE

(sneers)

Eve?

(takes her  
hand away  
from him,  
gets up  
from the  
table,  
taking  
dishes in  
kitchen)

I don't know why she still  
calls you. You said  
nothing ever happened  
between the two of you.

TODD

Honey,

(walks up  
behind her,  
arms around  
her waist)

Listen, nothing happened.  
She just needs counsel and  
prayer.

CARLENE

She has a pastor there now  
that she can counsel with!  
She's married for god sake  
Todd. You aren't her  
pastor to counsel her  
anymore...I just hate it  
when she calls you. I  
don't know why you have to  
take her calls in private.

TODD

I'll ask her not to call  
anymore.

(tries to  
kiss her)

CARLENE

(walks away  
from him)

Mandi, are you finished  
sweetheart?

MANDI

Yep!

(gets up  
from table  
licking her  
lips. Jumps  
into Todd's  
arms he  
swings her  
around)

I love you daddy!

TODD

I love you too baby.

(to  
Carlene)

Come here honey.

(she moves  
to him, he  
wraps arms  
around her)

Carlene, we're going to  
make it. You've been  
working so hard, bringing  
income in and have been so  
patient with me. This is a  
good break for us. I  
really feel God is in this.  
I told Brother Asel we'd  
pray about and give him a  
call next week.

CARLENE

(leaning on  
his chest,  
with one

arm around  
Mandi)

I agree Todd. The change  
will be good. The distance  
will do us good.

(staring  
down at  
floor with  
sadness but  
still in  
embraced  
with Todd)

(looks up,  
eyes wide)

Oh no! I forgot...

TODD

What's that?

(puts Mandi  
down, she  
runs to her  
room to  
play)

CARLENE

What about Matt? He still  
has supervised visits with  
Mandi.

TODD

I think it's time we talk  
about me adopting her  
Carlene. I love her. And  
by the way, it's not like  
Matt takes advantage of  
seeing her anyway. He  
didn't have issues with us  
moving a couple of hours  
away.

CARLENE

Do you think he'll go for  
it? I mean like give her  
up to let you adopt her?  
You are such a wonderful  
father to her.



TODD

Let's get in touch with him  
this weekend and discuss  
it. I think he'll actually  
be okay with it.

CARLENE

Oh Todd! That would be so  
wonderful.

(hug each  
other)

Fade out

SHOW ON SCREEN "1994 NORTH CAROLINA"

GOSPEL MUSIC CAN BE HEARD AS CARLENE, TODD AND  
MANDI ARE PULLING INTO PARKING LOT OF CHURCH WITH  
U-HAUL CAB ON BACK OF CAR. (NO TALKING) THEY EXIT  
THEIR CAR. BROTHER AND SISTER ASEL (PASTOR/WIFE)  
OF THE CHURCH THERE TO GREET THEM. HUGS EXCHANGED.  
ASEL'S WALK THEM THROUGH THE CHURCH TO THE  
BASEMENT WHERE A STUDIO APARTMENT IS - FADE OUT -  
EVENING

Fade in.

CHURCH BASEMENT (APARTMENT) - MORNING

CARLENE

Todd, it's been six months!  
I don't think I can stay  
down here another minute.  
It's just too small. And  
Sister Asel made it a point  
to tell me at church the  
other night. You have got  
to find a job Todd. I  
can't do this alone.

TODD

Carlene, I'm doing all I  
can do. God will provide.  
You need to have more  
faith.

CARLENE

I don't know anymore Todd

(wiping  
hands on  
dish towel  
shaking  
head back  
and forth,  
tears  
flowing)

I don't mind working  
Todd...matter of fact I  
actually love it there!  
Being a teacher assistant  
at Mandi's school is  
wonderful and the pay is  
good but we can't get a  
house on that alone. Honey  
you have to find something  
soon. We have to get out  
of here...

TODD

(starts  
pacing the  
kitchen)

Carlene, I...I...just don't  
know what else I can do. I  
thought I would have things  
figured out by now.

CARLENE

Just go to a car dealership  
or the mall...get a sales  
job, anything! You've got  
to accept it Todd...you're  
not pastoring anymore. You  
have to get a real job.

(looks up  
mouth open)

Oh honey! I'm sorry. I  
didn't mean it that way...I  
just...

TODD

No. No it's okay.  
I...I'll be back.

(walks  
outside,

car can be  
heard  
leaving  
parking  
lot)

Carlene walks to bedroom, kneels down to pray.  
Fade out

Fade in

Todd returns home. Carlene in bed. He gets in  
bed with her wraps arm around her. Snuggle.

TODD  
I got a job. God is good.  
(whispers)

CARLENE  
(sleepy)  
Mmmm...  
(eyes  
closed)  
Fade out.

SCENE IS CARLENE EXCITEDLY MOVING BOXES INTO NEW  
HOUSE. MANDI PLAYING IN THE YARD. HOUSE IS TINY,  
NO GRASS, SHANTY LOOKING HOUSE. - MORNING

TODD  
(arriving  
home from  
work, walks  
in house  
looking  
around)  
Honey, sorry I've not been  
a big help with the move  
this week. Wow! You got  
so much done. Is there  
anything else we need to  
move?

CARLENE  
(smiling  
from ear to  
ear)

Nope! Mandi was big  
helper. Wasn't you kiddo?  
(pats her  
on head)

MANDI

I was daddy! Look at my  
room! Come on daddy!  
(grabs his  
hand and he  
walks in  
her room  
with her)

CARLENE

I'm going to start dinner.  
(shouts so  
they can  
hear her)

TODD

(walks in  
kitchen)  
She is so excited about her  
own room. Did we get her  
new birth certificate yet?

CARLENE

Uh...I think it's supposed  
to be here in a week. So,  
how was work? Sell  
anything?

TODD

Just a long day on my feet.  
Sold a washer and dryer.  
Pray it picks up soon,  
sixty dollars a week is not  
worth it.

CARLENE

Well...with me getting that  
raise and more  
responsibilities at the  
school is helping. But  
Todd...there is something  
else I need to talk about.

TODD

What's that?

CARLENE

Church. You've not been going with us, even when it's your day off. That is not like you. Is something going on you need to tell me?

TODD

I don't want to have this conversation Carlene.

CARLENE

(shows him  
a piece of  
paper)

Well, we have to talk about Todd. I got the phone bill, do you think I don't read it? She's still calling and YOU

(emphasizes  
)

Are calling her! We are how many states away and this is still going on. Tell me one more time that something didn't happen between you two.

Silence. Todd staring at floor.

CARLENE

Spit it out Todd...I know you've been lying. Something happened and she's holding it over your head.

TODD

(puts head  
in hands,

begins to  
cry)  
Oh God forgive me!

CARLENE

(looks up  
at ceiling,  
tears come  
down face,  
walks into  
living  
room,  
slumbers on  
floor)  
God Todd! You didn't!

TODD

She said if I didn't stay  
in touch she was going to  
tell...

(walks in  
living  
room, sinks  
in  
recliner)

CARLENE

I knew it! How long?  
(silence)  
How long Todd?  
(almost  
screaming)

Todd briefly looks up at her, puts head in hands.

CARLENE

You were sleeping with her  
when we were sneaking  
around weren't you?

TODD

I'm so sorry Carlene!  
(almost  
inaudible,  
voice  
quivering)

CARLENE

And...Oh my god Todd! When  
you went back to Ohio for  
that weekend...did you?  
Please tell me you  
didn't...

TODD

I don't deserve you  
Carlene...

CARLENE

Oh Todd! Oh my god!  
(runs out  
of room to  
bathroom)

MANDI

(comes out  
of bedroom)  
What's wrong with mommy,  
daddy?

TODD

Come here honey

Todd reaches arms to Mandi, she jumps up in  
recliner on his lap.

TODD

Mommy is sad  
because...um...heard a sad  
story.

MANDI

What? What happened daddy?

TODD

It's an adult thing honey.  
But mommy will be okay.  
She just went to wash her  
face. She's okay I  
promise.

(hugging  
Mandi  
close)

Fade out.

SHOW ON SCREEN "1999 OHIO" - LATER

CARLENE AND MADDIE IN HOUSE.

CARLENE

Maddie, thank you so much  
for letting us stay here  
with you. I really  
appreciate it.

MADDIE

Carlene, you stay as long  
as you need to. I know  
this was a difficult  
decision for you. What is  
Todd going to do?

CARLENE

Well...for now he is  
staying in North Carolina.  
He said he's wrapping  
things up and will be back  
in Ohio. He wants to work  
it out, but I don't know  
(sighs  
heavily,  
holding  
head in  
hands)

MADDIE

You know...I think you both  
need some distance right  
now.

(wraps an  
arm around  
her)

Are you going to go back to  
church anywhere?

CARLENE

(snaps head  
up)

I don't even want to think  
about that! Maddie, I  
don't even know what I



believe anymore! God, when I think of all the sneaking around we did...I just still feel so guilty about that. We were hypocrites Maddie! And now..how could he cheat on me like that?

MADDIE

You know what?  
(Stands up,  
hands on  
hips)  
You need a drink!

CARLENE

No way...  
(stands up  
slowly)  
Maddie, I've never...

MADDIE

(interrupts  
)  
Exactly! You know Carlene,  
I never did believe the way  
you did. Leaving the  
church never affected me  
the way it's affecting you.  
Never had the guilt,  
because I knew it was all  
bullshit. And that's why  
you need to start  
somewhere! Come on, let's  
go.  
(Grabs her  
hand and  
the walk  
out of  
apartment  
together)

Both are in bar, giggling, drinking. Carlene is gaggy at first sip but then continues.

Transition scenes to Maddie and Carlene at women's clothing store. Carlene trying on pants, giggling.

Scenes of Carlene making changes with appearance, getting hair cut, wearing slacks. Walks with head in air around city, smiling. Fade out

Fade in

LATER - AFTERNOON CARLENE PULLS UP TO HOME, WALKS IN THE DOOR EXCITEDLY

CARLENE

Guess what! I got it!

MADDIE

You got it? That is so great! See, shedding all of those long skirts, adding some make up and cutting that long ass hair does a body good!

CARLENE

Okay..Okay! I get it! It took me a long time to get here so just shut it!

(smiling)

Just another month and I can start looking for my own place.

MADDIE

Things are looking up for her Carlene. Hey, by the way your attorney called this morning when you were out. She said the divorce papers are ready to be filed.

CARLENE

(head down)

I can't believe it's come to this, but you know I feel strong Maddie. I still care about Todd, but I just can't live that controlled life anymore...the church, him not being honest...I have to just move on.

MADDIE

And you are doing that Carlene. Is Mandi doing better?

CARLENE

She's struggling a little with it. I didn't give her details but explained the best way I could to a ten year old. He's picking her up this weekend for a visit. I hope he continues to do that... it would break her heart if he...

MADDIE

Don't think that way. He adopted her because he loves her Carlene. He is a good dad no matter what else I think of him.

CARLENE

True.

(walks out  
of room but  
peeks head  
back at  
Maddie in  
her office)

Hey, thank you. Thanks for everything. I don't know what I'd do without you.

MADDIE

Oh stop it!  
(jokingly)  
You would do the same for  
me.

CARLENE  
(shakes her  
head)  
No...I don't think I would.  
(smiling)

Maddie throws a box of tissues at her. Carlene  
leaves laughing.

Fade out

FADE IN CARLENE AND MADDIE MOVING BOXES INTO HER  
NEW APARTMENT. - AFTERNOON

MADDIE  
I think that's it! Come  
here Mandi, give aunt  
Maddie a hug.  
(hugs  
Mandi)  
I love you sweetie. If you  
ever want to just come over  
and spend the night let me  
know.  
(to  
Carlene)  
Hey...don't forget, have  
fun too! I'm always here  
if you need a sitter and  
want to get out. Okay?

CARLENE  
I know  
(reaches  
for Maddie,  
they  
embrace)  
Love you Maddie, and thanks  
for putting up with us all  
these months.

MADDIE

(gets in  
her car)  
Love ya's!  
(waving  
goodbye)

Carlene and Mandi (arm in arm) waving good bye to  
Maddie as she drives away.

CARLENE  
How about we go in there  
and make our first dinner  
together?

MANDI  
Sure! Pizza?

CARLENE  
Whatever you want kiddo!

Both run into apartment smiling ear to ear.

TRANSITION TO NEW DAY. CARLENE PULLS INTO  
APARTMENT PARKING LOT. MANDI IS SITTING ON FRONT  
PORCH WITH ANOTHER GIRL. - AFTERNOON

CARLENE  
Mandi? How was school  
today?  
(looks over  
at other  
girl  
questioning  
ly)

MANDI  
Good. Glad it's Friday!  
Can sleep in tomorrow.

CARLENE  
(to girl)  
Hi there, I'm Mandi's mom.  
What's your name?

SANDY  
(Mandi's  
friend)

I'm Sandy. I live right  
there

(points to  
apartment  
beside  
there's)

Mandi is in my class.

CARLENE

Well Sandy, it's lovely to  
meet you. Now if you'll  
excuse me, I have to get  
inside and get some dinner  
started.

MANDI

Can I stay with Sandy  
tonight? Please mom,  
please?

(hands up  
closed  
together  
begging)

CARLENE

I would have to meet your  
parents first Sandy, are  
they home?

SANDY

Yes! I'll go get 'em

CARLENE

How about if I go with you?

SANDY

Okay!

All walk over to Sandy's apartment. Introductions  
can be seen. Mandi & Sandy jump up and down,  
squeal. Carlene is seen walking back to apartment  
with Mandi

Mandi is packing a bag, Carlene gives her hug,  
shuts door.

Fade out

Fade in

CARLENE BEING PICKED UP BY CO WORKERS. PULL UP TO BAR, EATING, HAVING DRINKS AT LOCAL BAR. MUSIC IS LOUD- NIGHT

Co-workers pull Carlene on dance floor. All dancing, laughing. Co-workers walk back to table, Carlene continues to dance.

CARLENE

Woooo!

(dancing  
with beer  
in hand)

MARK

(co-worker)

Hey,

(trying to  
get Carlene  
to come  
back to  
table with  
him)

Come on Carlene. We're  
getting ready to leave.  
Come on and me and Mary  
will take you home.

CARLENE

Awww!

(shakes her  
head)

Nah...I'm not ready. I  
just met this guy and he's  
so fun Mark!

MARK

I'm not sure about this  
Carlene, you don't even  
know him. Come on...

(grabs her  
arm)

KEITH

Hey, it's okay. I can take  
her home.

CARLENE

See? He can take me home.  
(slightly  
slurred  
speech,  
appears  
drunk)

MARK

What's your name?

KEITH

(appears  
oriented)  
(reaches  
hand to  
shake  
Mark's)

My name is Keith. I have a  
group here with me if you  
would like to speak to  
them. I promise, I'll make  
sure she gets home safe.

One of Keith's friends (Jim) closeby. Comes in on  
conversation.

JIM

Hey, what's going on?

KEITH

It's okay...this is  
Carlene's co-worker Mark.  
He's just checking me out  
making sure I'm safe to  
take her home later. She  
wants to stay a little  
longer.

JIM



Oh man!

(slaps  
Keith on  
arm)

He's great man! He's our  
local prosecutor. Can't  
get any better than that!  
I promise, she's in good  
hands.

MARK

(reluctantl  
y)

Okay...I'm still not  
thrilled with it but if  
something happens to her I  
swear...

KEITH

Here, take my number.  
Here's my I.D., I promise,  
she is safe with me.

Mark and group of co-workers leave the bar,  
looking back and shaking their heads at Carlene.

Carlene and Keith continue to dance with each  
other.

Music fades to slow music. Carlene and Keith in  
each other's arms dancing slowly and kiss.

Fade out

FADE IN

FOLLOWING MORNING. KEITH DROPPING CARLENE OFF AT  
HOME, KISSES HER EXCHANGE NUMBERS - MORNING

KEITH

I'll call you. How about  
going out on a real date?

CARLENE

I'd love that...and...I had  
fun last night. Thanks for

being so sweet and dropping  
me off.

Kiss one more time. Carlene rushes out of car to  
house. Fade out

FOLLOWING WEEKEND. MANDI CAN BE SEEN GETTING IN  
TODD'S CAR. WAVES BYE TO CARLENE. CARLENE WALKS IN  
APARTMENT.

CARLENE

Well now...all alone. What  
to do...what to do on a  
Friday night.

(rubs hands  
together  
gets on  
phone)

Hey Maddie. What are you  
doing tonight?

(pauses)

Oh, okay. Well I'll call  
Gabe, see if he'd like to  
meet me for dinner and a  
drink.

(pauses)

...don't worry Maddie! I  
would never drive after  
drinking.

(pauses)

Okay, love you too.

Fade out

Fade in to bar scene. Carlene and Gabe having  
drinks together. Music loud. Kareoke is being  
set up.

GABE JR

This was fun Carlene. But  
I have to go. How about I  
drive you home and we'll  
get your car in the  
morning.

CARLENE

No! They're going to start  
Kareoke. Just stay for a  
couple more and we can sing  
together.

GABE JR

I can't sis.

CARLENE

(looks sad)

Okay...I'll call Maddie to  
come and get me if I need  
to. But I'll be fine.

GABE JR

Promise you won't drive  
Carlene. You haven't been  
drinking very long, and I  
would feel horrible leaving  
you if...

CARLENE

(interrupts  
)

Hey...seriously it's fine!  
I'll call Maddie if I need  
to. Go on...I'll be fine.

(Both hug  
and Gabe  
exits)

Carlene singing kareoke, drinking, laughing.

People begin to exit. Carlene is only one left.

BARTENDER

Closin' up young lady. Can  
I call a cab for you?

CARLENE

No. No. I'm fine. I have  
my own car. I seriously  
feel fine.

BARTENDER

(shakes  
head)

Whatever...see ya...

Carlene walks outside to darkness. Keys out to unlock door, keys drop to ground, picks them up, unlocks door. Rolls windows down, puts gum in mouth, pulls out very slowly. Driving very slow, cautiously. Pulls up to intersection, goes through red light. Can see lights behind her.

CARLENE

Shit! God damn it!

(pulls car  
over side  
of road)

Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

(hits  
steering  
wheel with  
hands)

OFFICER

Ma'am. License and  
registration please.

CARLENE

(struggling  
to find  
them, finds  
them, hands  
them to  
office)

Did I go through that  
light? I thought it was  
still yellow.

Officer looking at her I.D.

OFFICER

Have you been drinking  
tonight Miss?

CARLENE

(flashlight  
in her  
eyes)

Um...well, I had a couple  
of beers with my brother

earlier. But I feel fine,  
really!

OFFICER

You drove through a red  
light ma'am. You're eyes  
are bloodshot. Can I have  
you come out of the car  
please?

CARLENE

(begins  
sobbing)  
Seriously? Can you just  
take me home and I'll pick  
my car up tomorrow?  
Please, I can't...I  
can't...  
(crying,  
hands in  
head)

OFFICER

Ma'am I really you need to  
get out of the car.

Carlene gets out of car. Somber music plays as  
she is seen walking a straight line. Cars pass by  
looking. Her head down, she stops and leans  
against the car. Officer places her in backseat  
of cruiser. Drives away. Fade out

Fade in

Carlene is seen walking out of court. Maddie  
waiting on her outside.

MADDIE

(gives her  
a hug)  
So what happens now?

CARLENE

(tears)  
I lost my license for six  
months, will be put on  
probation and can't drive

until I get the license  
back! God! I really  
screwed up. I'm so  
embarrassed Maddie.

MADDIE

I told you to call me  
Carlene!

CARLENE

(jerks away  
from  
Maddie)

You know...you have drivin'  
and so has a lot of people  
I know after having a few  
drinks! Nothing happened  
to you guys. I make one  
mistake! One mistake  
Maddie! God, I get no  
breaks.

(falls back  
onto stump  
of court  
house)

MADDIE

Carlene, it's no excuse at  
all, but you just  
(emphasizes  
)

Started drinking. Doesn't  
make it right for me, or  
anyone! But you are just  
trying to fit all those  
lost years in a single day.  
It doesn't work like that  
Carlene. Moderation, pace  
yourself.

CARLENE

(staring  
out at cars  
driving by)

I know...I know...I have to  
go to this stupid three day  
inpatient thing with other

people who actually are  
alcoholics!

MADDIE

(begins to  
giggle)  
Well...just pretend like  
it's church.

CARLENE

(shoves her  
with her  
shoulder)  
Not funny girl!  
(both smile  
and stare  
out at  
traffic)  
You know...I'm glad no one  
was hurt, but I guess this  
is another story I'm going  
to tell huh?

MADDIE

Well...you are certainly  
full of 'em. Come on,  
let's go home. Guess I'm  
your new chauffer huh?  
(walking  
toward car)  
Does Keith know about this  
yet?

CARLENE

Yeah, I called him. He was  
sweet. You know we don't  
see each other anymore.

MADDIE

Since when?

CARLENE

Since two weeks ago. It  
was fun, an experience but  
we're just friends now.

Both walk to the car, Maddie pulls out of parking space.

Fade out.

Fade in

CARLENE HAVING NIGHTMARE. - NIGHT

CLAUDIA

You're going to hell  
Carlene!

(screaming,  
hair is  
bright red,  
surrounding  
her face,  
one tooth  
in front,  
eyes  
bloodshot,  
flailing a  
belt on a  
child)

Get your ass I here!

Transition to preacher on pulpit

BROTHER JONES

(screaming  
from  
pulpit,  
hands  
pointing at  
child  
sitting in  
front row)

Get her Sister! Get her!  
For thus saith the Lord,  
spare the rod spoil the  
child!

Child is on knees, white dress, head in hands,  
lips murmuring but nothing coming out

BROTHER JONES



You didn't pay your tithe  
Carlene!

(his eyes  
bloodshot,  
veins  
popping out  
on forehead  
and side of  
head, red  
faced)

CLAUDIA

Damn you to hell! Damn  
you!

Carlene seen in bed, tossing back and forth.  
Tears streaming down face, jerks up!

CARLENE

Oh God! Help me! I can't  
stand this.

(sobbing,  
lays head  
back on  
pillow.  
Stares out  
at night  
sky)

FADE OUT

Following morning Carlene sits at table looking in  
phone book drinking cup of coffee.

CARLENE

(dialing on  
phone)

Hello? Yes, My name is  
Carlene. I would like  
um...well, I would like to  
talk to someone. Yes!  
Yes! That's it, a  
counselor.

(pauses)

Yes I have insurance.  
Okay. Tomorrow would be  
great! Thank you so much.

Puts phone down. Lifts head in air, lets out Huge sigh.

CARLENE SITTING IN MEDICAL BUILDING. TECHNICIAN (DEBBIE) YELLS CARLENE'S NAME OUT LOUD. - MORNING

DEBBIE

My name is Debbie, I'll be going over some paperwork with you before you see your counselor. How are you today?

CARLENE

I'm okay Debbie. Thank you.

Carlene can be seen signing forms. Debbie leaves her alone in the room. Returns and walks her to another door.

DEBBIE

Carlene, this is your counselor, Susan. Good luck to you.

CARLENE

Thank you.  
(pauses,  
stands in  
place)

SUSAN

(gets up  
from desk,  
reaches her  
hand to  
her)  
Carlene? It's a pleasure.  
Come, have a seat dear.

CARLENE

Thank you.  
(sits in  
chair  
holding

purse close  
to her)

SUSAN

So, what can I help you  
with today?

CARLENE

Nightmares. Uh, well, I  
guess you'd need for me to  
explain it. See, I just  
recently stopped going to  
church and...and...well, I  
had to live a certain way.  
I couldn't cut my hair,  
wear make up or dress in  
men's attire.

SUSAN

What do you mean by men's  
attire Carlene?

CARLENE

You know! Pants, stuff  
like that. So, now I do  
and well, it's kind of  
weird. I got myself in  
trouble when I went out  
drinking by myself. Now,  
I'm really sorry about that  
and it won't happen again,  
but since then I've had so  
many nightmares. I can't  
sleep and I'm just  
wondering if I'm going to  
hell. I'm so confused.

(shakes her  
head back  
and forth,  
looks down  
at floor)

SUSAN

Carlene, it sounds to me  
like you've been raised  
this way?

CARLENE

Yes, all of my life. I'm the last sister out of all my brothers and sisters to have left it. I was married to a preacher too. I'm thirty-three years old now and I'm acting like a teenager.

SUSAN

Carlene, it sounds to me like you are just fine. You are just experiencing new feelings, new things out there that you never got to experience before. Am I right so far?

Carlene nods head up and down.

SUSAN

So, now you're feeling guilt over your mistake and fear over your changes?

Carlene nods head up and down.

SUSAN

Just know Carlene, you are not going to hell just because you are not going to church, or because you decided to change your appearance. That is not what God is about. Do you understand? Sounds to me you are going through some depression over leaving this group. Are you having a difficult time sleeping?

CARLENE

Yes!

SUSAN

Okay, when you leave here today, I'm going to introduce to our medical doctor on staff. He will prescribe you something to help you sleep. Why don't we meet each week to follow up?

CARLENE

Okay. Thank you. I just feel better already knowing I'm not going to hell.

Carlene is seen walking out of medical building, driving away. Turns radio on, smiling.

Carlene drives to Maddie's home to pick Mandi up.

CARLENE

Hi babe!  
(gives her  
a hug)

MANDI

Hi mama. Can we go stay here for dinner?

CARLENE

No...we have..

MADDIE

Stay! We're almost finished with the grill. We have plenty. So, how did it go?

CARLENE

Well, after seeing the counselor she sent me to the medical doctor there. Gave me some pills to sleep so hopefully that'll help with the nightmares too.

MADDIE

Good. Going back?

CARLENE

You know, I don't think I need to. She told me what I needed to hear. She said there is no way I'm going to hell just because I've made changes. I think I'll just take it day by day. I felt better just hearing it from someone else I guess.

MADDIE

Damn girl! You could've paid me to tell you...as I did! But I understand too, God you were in it so much longer. And believed!

(shakes  
head, sets  
table)

CARLENE

(helping  
her set  
table)

Yeah, well, moving forward right?

(smiling)

MADDIE

Talking about moving on...there is a party at the policeman's bar next weekend. Want to go with us?

CARLENE

I don't know Maddie...I still on probation. I don't want to get in trouble.

MADDIE

You're fine! You'll be safe with the police up there. They don't even

know you...no one will  
recognize you. It's a  
Halloween party and it's so  
fun, plus you can dress up  
and no one would really  
recognize you!

CARLENE

Okay! Mandi is with Todd  
that weekend so...

(looks  
down,  
pauses)

Yeah, I'll go. Why not?

Fade out.

FADE IN - EVENING. CARLENE AND FRIEND JOYCE WALK  
IN THE POLICEMAN'S BAR. BAND IS PLAYING ROCK  
MUSIC. MOST EVERYONE IN COSTUME'S.

CARLENE

Joyce, I'm not so sure I  
should be here.

JOYCE

Oh stop! You are just  
fine. Now just loosen up  
and let's have a drink.

CARLENE

I can't believe Maddie  
couldn't make it! She  
knows more people here than  
I do. Guess dating a cop  
helps huh?

JOYCE

I guess.

(to  
bartender)

I'll have a bourbon and  
water, Carlene will have  
a...

(looks at  
Carlene)

CARLENE

(looking  
around)

Oh! Sorry, I'll just have  
a Miller lite. Thanks

Women get their drinks and sit down at island bar.  
Talking and laughing.

JOYCE

Carlene, I'm going to say  
hi to some folks. You okay  
here?

CARLENE

Sure, go ahead. I'm okay.  
Just don't leave me!

JOYCE

I got ya girl!

Joyce gets out of seat to mingle. She is seen  
hugging other people and talking. Carlene sipping  
on her beer, nodding her head to the beat of the  
music. A man pulls up a seat beside her. She  
nods at him. He smiles.

GEORGE

Hi there. I'm George.

CARLENE

Nice to meet you George.  
(extends  
hand)  
I'm Carlene.

GEORGE

I know.

CARLENE

Do I know you?

GEORGE



Well...I don't know if you remember me, but we met a few months ago.

CARLENE

Are you a police officer?  
Oh! I know! My sister's boyfriend! He's a policeman and had a party a few weeks ago...was it there?

GEORGE

No Carlene, I was one of the State Troopers who was with the arresting officer when you were taken in for DUI.

Carlene freezes. Looks down at her beer, looks up at him and begins to leave. He lightly touches her hand.

GEORGE

Hey, it's okay. You're safe here. I felt so sorry for you that night. If it was up to me I would've just taken you home. But...the process was already beginning and my partner had to follow through with the arrest.

CARLENE

Oh My God! Wow. Well, I'm not driving if that's what you're wondering. I've learned my lesson!

GEORGE

You know...I could take you home.

CARLENE

Oh, that's not necessary. I have a ride.

GEORGE

Here, Here's my card. Call me sometime. Maybe we can go out for coffee sometime.

CARLENE

Uh...okay?

George gets up, walks up to bar, walks back to Carlene with a beer.

GEORGE

Here, this is on me.  
(walks  
away)

Joyce walks back to Carlene.

JOYCE

Hey, havin' fun?

CARLENE

You will not believe who just bought me a drink!

JOYCE

Who?  
(stretching  
the word,  
smiling)

CARLENE

George! The trooper that stopped me! Well, it wasn't really him who did it, he was actually in the car with him, but can you believe that?

JOYCE

Hmph! Not surprised. Be careful with some of these guys Carlene. Not all of them are so trustworthy.

Carlene looks around, sipping on beer

CARLENE

Oh, I don't know about  
that...he was nice  
and...Holy Shit! I think I  
know that guy!  
(looking at  
a very  
distinguish  
ed older  
man walking  
in the bar)

JOYCE

Oh, that's Judge Stokes.  
His first name is Rey. How  
do you know him?

Carlene ignores her and walks right up to Rey.

CARLENE

Hi there.  
(smiles  
from ear to  
ear)  
You are the judge who  
divorced me. I'm Carlene.  
(extends  
her hand)

REY

(shakes her  
hand with  
enthusiasm,  
smiling)  
Hey young lady, if I was  
married to you I wouldn't  
have divorced you!  
(giggles)

CARLENE

(laughs)  
No! That's not what I  
meant...

REY

I know what you meant. I  
do remember you. You were  
married to a preacher  
right?

Flirting with each other.

CARLENE

Right. I can't believe you  
remember me. I'm sure you  
see alot of people in your  
line of work.

REY

You were the one who I  
couldn't forget.

CARLENE

(looks  
down,  
almost  
embarrassed  
)

Well, that's sweet. Thank  
you.

REY

Come with me, I need a  
drink. What are you  
drinking?

CARLENE

Miller lite, but that's  
okay...I..

Rey ignores her, is up at the bar, returns with  
another beer for her.

Both are at the island bar, seen talking, laughing  
together. Music continues, loud. Everyone  
dancing.

REY

You dance?  
(shouting)

CARLENE

Not very well, but I think  
it's fun!

(shouting  
over music)

Rey grabs her hand and they go out on dance floor.  
Laughing, dancing closely, bumping backside,  
flirting with each other.

Music slows. They both stop dancing and head back  
to island bar.

REY

Wooo! Takes a drink.

(seems out  
of breath)

JOYCE

(walking up  
to them at  
the bar)

Hey girl, it's time. We  
gotta go.

(to Rey)

Hello Judge. Nice leg work  
out there.

(smiles at  
him then at  
Carlene)

REY

(gives  
Joyce a  
hug)

Joyce! So good to see you.  
You really have to leave so  
early?

JOYCE

Some of us have to work in  
the morning Judge.

REY

Can I take you home?

(to  
Carlene)

CARLENE

Uh...no thank you. I have to get home. But thanks for the dance and drinks. I had so much fun.

REY

Well...hey wait a minute. Here,

(gets out  
pen and  
grabs a  
napkin,  
writing)

Here's my number. Give me a call. I'd love to take you out to a nice dinner.

CARLENE

Oh, I don't know...

REY

Nothing more than dinner. You have to eat right?

CARLENE

Yes, but...

REY

But nothing. Just meet me here next Wednesday. I'll take you to that nice steakhouse around the corner.

CARLENE

I'll think about it.

REY

Okay, that's all I can ask. Take care kid!  
(gives her  
a hug)

Joyce drops Carlene off at apartment. Carlene walking up to her apartment door.

JOYCE

(yells out  
window)

Carlene, call him! He's  
good people!

CARLENE

(walks back  
to Joyce's  
car, leans  
in window  
as Joyce  
rolls it  
down)

Listen, I've had a DUI,  
he's

(emphasizes  
)

A Judge! Do the  
math...don't think he'd be  
interested.

JOYCE

You'd be surprised. He's a  
great guy Carlene. Just  
call him. You do gotta  
eat, right?

CARLENE

Goodnight Joyce! Drive  
safe.

(not  
looking at  
her, waving  
her off  
with her  
hand)

Fade out

REY IS IN CARLENE'S APARTMENT. MADDIE IS THERE  
STANDING BY MANDI. - NIGHT

MADDIE

She'll be right down. This  
is Mandi. Mandi can you  
say hi?

Mandi looks up at him. Shyly smiles

REY

Mandi, what grade are you  
in?

MANDI

Fifth.

REY

Great! Well there's your  
mom

(looking at  
Carlene  
entering  
room)

Hi there  
(gives her  
a hug)

Mandi looks at him, squeezes brows together,  
crosses arms.

CARLENE

Mandi, did you meet Rey?

REY

We did indeed! She's a  
pretty young lady.

CARLENE

Yes she is.

(to Mandi)

Listen, we won't be long.  
I want you to finish your  
homework. I'm just having  
dinner and will be home.  
Okay?

MANDI

Yeah,  
(walks out  
of room)

MADDIE



She'll be fine. I'll make  
sure she gets her math  
done.

CARLENE

Thanks again!

Rey and Carlene walk out of apartment.

Scenes transition of them flying to New York,  
walking into Broadway shows, flying to Las Vegas,  
gambling. Scenes of Rey wining and dining  
Carlene. Lots of laughter, fun scenes. Scene of  
him taking her to Aruba, Caribbean.

CARLENE AND MANDI EATING DINNER TOGETHER AT THEIR  
APARTMENT - AFTERNOON (MANDI IS 14 YEARS OLD)

CARLENE

Mandi, I need to ask you a  
question.

MANDI

Hmmm?  
(taking a  
bite of  
food)

CARLENE

Rey and I have been dating  
for three years now. He's  
asked me if we would like  
to live with him. You  
know...us all living  
together.

MANDI

(stops  
eating,  
looks away,  
then back  
at food)  
Here? In our apartment?

CARLENE

No honey  
(laughs)

He wants to buy us a new house? You know...something big for all of us?

MANDI

(raises eyebrows,  
smiles)

A new house? Wow! Where?

CARLENE

You know where your friends live in the new housing addition?

MANDI

No way! No freakin' way! Mama!

(excitedly)

CARLENE

Yep! Those! There is one that was newly built, never lived in. It's huge Mandi. We would have such a great life there.

MANDI

Yes! Yes! Yes!

(gets up  
and hugs  
Carlene)

CARLENE

We're going to go look at the house tomorrow night. Wanna go?

MANDI

No, you guys go. I have band practice. Can you pick me up after? Sandy isn't going. She has to go somewhere with her parents.

CARLENE

Sure. Okay...  
(gets up to  
clear  
dishes)  
You get workin' on that  
homework. I'll clean up  
here.

Mandi leaves room. Carlene dials on phone.

CARLENE

Rey? She's good!  
(pauses)  
She's actually excited.  
(pauses)  
Yep! Yep! Okay, see you  
tomorrow. What? No! I'm  
so upset Rey...it's been a  
month since Pete's visited  
her!  
(pauses)  
That's right, his loss.  
(pauses)  
She called and left him a  
few messages but no call  
back. She was hurt at  
first but now she's mad.  
It just breaks my heart.  
(listening)  
Thank you. That means alot  
Rey. I'm glad you're there  
for her too.

CARLENE

Love you too.  
(Hangs up,  
crosses her  
arms,  
closes eyes  
and smiles  
to self)

A QUICK SCENE WITH CARLENE AND REY WEDDING DAY.  
THEY AND MANDI CAN BE SEEN GETTING OUT OF LIMO.  
WALK TOGETHER INTO AN EXTRAVAGANT PARTY. DANCING,

DRINKING. REY AND CARLENE DANCE TO CELINE DION'S  
"HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN LOVE". REY AND MANDI DO A  
DANCE TOGETHER WITH MUSIC TO "BROWN EYED GIRL."  
CARLENE LOOKING AT A DISTANCE WITH TEARS. -  
EVENING

SCENE'S WITH REY THROWING PARTIES. LOTS OF  
DRINKING, FRIENDS, PLAYING POKER. - NIGHT

CARLENE

(in bed,  
Rey comes  
to bed.)

Rey?

REY

(sleeping  
on side,  
back  
against  
Carlene)

Hmmm?

CARLENE

(turns  
light on)

Rey? I need to talk to  
you.

REY

I'm tired. Turn the light  
off...we can talk in the  
morning.

CARLENE

Rey. You've been saying  
that for the last month.  
We need to talk now.

REY

(turns  
over, sits  
up)

Fine. What is it Carlene?

CARLENE

Now...you know I don't mind a party now and then. I love our friends, but Rey, every weekend? Seriously? We need to spend more time just alone! Just me, with only you. And with Mandi too.

REY

You know if I recall, you didn't seem to mind the parties when we were dating, but married a year now and you want to change?

CARLENE

Honey, I'm just saying...I need more than that.

REY

You know...if I recall I have provided a pretty good life for you. You've would've never been to the places if not for me. Hell, I even invited Mandi to Rome with us. Who does that?

CARLENE

(rolls back over on her side, turns light off.)

Forget it. You just love to please yourself and I can't compete with that. You don't even touch me anymore...

(sniffling)

Rey turns over abruptly. Fade out.

FADE IN. CARLENE IN HER CUBICAL AT WORK. TWO CO-WORKERS, ELAINE AND JANIE WALK IN. - MORNING

CARLENE

Hey ladies, what's up?

ELAINE

Listen, we are planning a backpacking trip to Europe. Do you think you'd like to come?

CARLENE

Wow! That's huge Elaine. Hmm..I'm not sure. That's kind of costly isn't it?

ELAINE

There are some great deals right now. From researching, the airfare and the Euro rail pass will be the most. We can stay in hostel's which is going to be less than hotel's.

CARLENE

You know..this sounds like what I need right now. Let me talk to Rey about it first. Things aren't the greatest right now.

JANIE

What's going on?

CARLENE

Nothing really...just a bump in the road...don't really want to get into it right now.

ELAINE

Well

(walking  
away)

Let us know, because we're going to start planning next week.

CARLENE

Sounds good.

FADE OUT:

Fade in to Carlene, Elaine, Janie landing in Paris France.

Transitions scenes to sight seeing The Louvre, Notre Dam Cathedral & eating lunch under the Eiffel Tower. Taking pictures of each other, laughing, self timed pictures. Continue scenes to being on Euro Rail, hiking with backpacks, in/out of hostels in Austria, Switzerland and Germany. Fade in scene to Rome Italy, night.

CARLENE

This is absolutely been the best trip girls!

(looking  
around at  
people  
dining  
outside of  
cafe's  
while all  
three are  
walking  
streets of  
Rome)

ELAINE

(looking at  
map)

Hey guys, stop. Janie and  
Carlene stop and stand  
beside her)

JANIE

What? Are we lost?

ELAINE

Well...we were supposed to  
be here, but I'm confused.

It's not where the bus is  
supposed to pick up us.

CARLENE

So? Let's go ask someone?

ELAINE

Absolutely not. We're  
smart, we can do this.

(Continues  
looking at  
map then  
around at  
signs)

CARLENE

Seriously? It's dark  
Elaine, it's our last night  
and we have an early flight  
tomorrow back home. Come  
on, let's just keep walking  
and ask someone.

JANIE

Yea, I agree with Carlene.  
It's dark and I don't want  
to be out all night  
wondering the streets in  
Rome.

ELAINE

Fine! Come on...  
(all three  
continue  
walking)

JANIE

Hey, there's a guard.

CARLENE

Where?

JANIE

By those flags. Man, look  
at all those flags...

CARLENE



I'm not so sure about this,  
it looks like an army base  
or something...

(stops,  
Elaine and  
Janie  
continue  
forward)

Italian woman (standing guard) dressed in army  
fatigues exits a booth speaking in Italian,  
pointing to them, holding hand up to stop. All  
girls stand still, eye balling each other.

ITALIAN WOMAN

(in  
Italian)  
Stop! Hold it there. What  
are you doing here?

We all freeze.

CARLENE

Uh...lost? We are lost.

Elaine gets map out and points to the map.

ITALIAN WOMAN

(English)  
Lost? One moment.  
(walks back  
in her  
booth, can  
be heard  
talking on  
walkie-  
talkie,  
static and  
a man's  
voice in  
Italian  
talking  
back to  
her)

ITALIAN WOMAN

Wait there.  
(to girls)

JANIE

(begins  
nervously  
giggling)

ELAINE

Janie! Stop it.

JANIE

I can't help it...  
(snorts)  
When I get nervous I laugh.

ELAINE

Oh my god! You guys...this  
is the United Nations!

JANET

No!

CARLENE

(looking at  
all the  
flags)

That makes sense. Holy  
crap you guys! I hope  
we're not in trouble...

Italian man in fatigue clothing rushes out with great presence. He and woman guard talking, pointing to girls, in Italian. Italian man walks up to Carlene, Elaine and Janie. Smiles down at them.

ITALINAN MAN

(speaking  
English  
with  
Italian  
accent)

Hello. My name is Tony. I  
am United Nations officer.  
So...you are lost? Yes?

ELAINE

Yes. If you could just  
show us here on the map...

TONY

(interups)  
Come. Come with me now.  
We will get you  
transportation.  
(He walks  
toward  
building,  
looks  
behind to  
make sure  
they are  
following  
him)

CARLENE

(whispers  
as she is  
walking  
along side  
Elaine and  
Janie)  
...guys, I don't think we  
should do this...

JANIE

Do you have another option?  
Plus, this is the United  
Nations building. It's  
safe!

Tony holds door open for the three women. They  
look around in awe as they enter the building of  
the United Nations. There are two more guards  
smiling at them. They walk up to the girls and  
greet them with handshakes.

TONY

Welcome to the United  
Nations of Roam. Come,  
(motions  
for them to

follow him.  
They walk  
into a  
large room  
with long  
tables and  
T.V. is on  
a stand.  
More guards  
watching  
and  
gesturing  
at T.V.,  
speaking  
loudly in  
Italian.)

We are watching football,  
'eh I think you call it  
soccer in the United  
States...we just finished  
dinner. Hungry?

ELAINE

No. No we're fine. We  
just need to get to our  
hotel. We have an early  
flight tomorrow.

TONY

Certainly. But first, we  
have desert and wine  
together.

(he motions  
for another  
guard to  
help him  
pour wine  
and places  
desert  
plates in  
front of  
the women)

Scene with girls watching soccer, cheering for the  
U.S. and guards cheering for Italian team. Wine  
being poured, eating cake, taking pictures of

girls and UN guards. Tony takes the women on tour of the building.

Women and guards on balcony drinking wine. Night. Scenery is amazing, city can be seen with lights all around. Tony pulls chair close to Carlene. Elaine watching close by, with frown on face.

TONY

(whispers  
something  
in  
Carlene's  
ear.  
Carlene  
shyly  
smiles and  
looks away  
in  
distance)

ELAINE

(gets up)  
I think we should head  
back. We have an early  
flight. We appreciate the  
entertainment and enjoyed  
your company. Will you be  
taking us back to the hotel  
or do we need to find other  
transportation?  
(to Tony)

TONY

Aww..stay, stay, only few  
more moments...  
(English is  
choppy)

ELAINE

No. We need to go now.  
(gives  
Carlene  
stern look)

CARLENE

(looking at  
Elaine)  
Yes, I agree. We do have  
to go.

TONY  
Fine, I understand.  
(gets on  
phone/walki  
e talkie,  
speaks in  
Italian)  
(To girls)  
The car is ready. Georgio  
and I will take you now.  
Come, Come..  
(motions  
for girls  
to follow  
him)

Carlene is in back seat middle of car with Tony on  
her right, Elaine on her left. Janie is up front  
with Georgio driving.

Tony leans close to Carlene.

TONY  
(whispering  
)  
Here, take my card.  
(Carlene  
sneakly  
takes it  
while  
looking at  
Elaine)  
Please call me. I will  
wait by the sea for you  
when you can return.

Elaine looks over to check on Carlene and gives  
Tony stern look. Car pulls into hotel parking  
lot. All get out.

TONY

(hugs  
Carlene)  
Remember, keep in touch.  
You are beautiful woman.

CARLENE  
Thank you for the ride.

TONY  
Promise?

CARLENE  
Sure.  
(smiles up  
at him)  
Why not?

Elaine standing at front entrance to hotel. Janie  
already inside.

ELAINE  
Come on Carlene...

TONY  
Go. Your boss is waiting.

Carlene laughs and walks in hotel with Elaine.

Scene where girls are on airplane. Plane takes  
off. Fade out.

CARLENE AT HER OFFICE. CELL PHONE RINGS. SHE WALKS  
OUTSIDE TO ANSWER - MORNING

CARLENE  
Hello?

TONY  
My love. How are you?

CARLENE  
Tony! Hi! I'm good, good.  
I'm surprised you called.

TONY  
Yes? I told you I would.

CARLENE

Tony, I may have to get a different cell phone so we can talk. My husband is on this plan...

TONY

I understand. I will email you Yes?

CARLENE

Actually that would be best. Do you still have my email address?

TONY

I do yes. I email you something today and you answer soon. Yes?

CARLENE

I will. Good to hear your voice.

TONY

Sure. Sure. Bye now.

Carlene closes phone, walks in office. Sits at computer, smiles as she begins working on paperwork.

Looks up and sees light come on computer for email notice. Clicks open. It reads: My love, amore, I told you I wait by the sea for you. Now, you come to see me soon, Yes? If you can?

Carlene responds: I would love to come back to Italy. I have to make arrangements first. Things are not well with me and Rey. I will contact you next week.

Tony : Si amore.

Carlene scoots back in her chair, smiles nervously and gets back to work.



CARLENE AND REY AT HOME. MANDI IN HER ROOM. -  
AFTERNOON

CARLENE

(walks into  
Rey's  
office.  
He's doing  
paperwork)  
Rey, can we talk?

REY

Sure. Sit.  
(motions  
for her to  
sit. He  
pushes back  
from his  
desk. Still  
in chair,  
leans back  
w/authority  
. Hand on  
chin)

CARLENE

(sits on  
chair, head  
down, hands  
wringing)  
What do you think about  
counseling? Me, you?

REY

Carlene, seriously?  
(scoots  
back up to  
desk, looks  
at  
computer,  
not making  
eye contact  
with her)  
Not gonna happen kid.

CARLENE

Are you for real?

(angry  
tone)  
You know...when the time  
comes Rey...remember this  
day.

REY  
(ignores  
her,  
continues  
to work on  
paperwork)  
Close the door when you  
leave.

Carlene gets up from her chair, moves to doorway,  
stares in at him, tears come to her eyes. Closes  
door. Walks out of office. Goes to Mandi's room.

MANDI  
Hey!  
(looks like  
she's doing  
homework)

CARLENE  
Are you about done with  
your homework honey?

MANDI  
Just one more problem then  
yes!  
(sighs with  
relief)  
When's dinner?

CARLENE  
I thought you and I could  
go get something.

MANDI  
What about Rey?

CARLENE  
He's playing poker tonight  
at the policeman's club.

MANDI

Can we get pizza?

CARLENE

Sure. I'll order it and we can go pick it up. You want to drive? You need the practice...

MANDI

Yes!

(puts right  
arm up  
excitedly)

LATER THAT EVENING CARLENE AND MANDI AT TABLE  
EATING PIZZA.

FADE IN:

CARLENE

Honey, I have something to talk to you about.

MANDI

(takes a  
drink)

What?

CARLENE

I know you can feel some of the tension between me and Rey lately. I need to get a way for a few days and do some thinking.

Mandi stares up at her.

MANDI

Where mom?

CARLENE

Mandi, I need you to trust me okay?

MANDI

Yeah

(not  
looking at  
her,  
flippant  
tone)

CARLENE

Honey, I'm serious.

MANDI

Okay! Okay! I trust you.  
Gosh, what's going on?

CARLENE

Do you remember the officer  
I met in Italy with my  
girlfriends? The one that  
works for the United  
Nations?

MANDI

You goin' back to Italy?  
(Eyes  
widen)

CARLENE

(closes  
eyes, hands  
over eyes,  
puts them  
down)

Yes. I am. And I'm only  
telling you, Maddie,  
Marlene and Caitlyn. NO  
ONE

(emphasizes  
)

Else knows. Okay?

MANDI

I guess...What about Rey?

CARLENE

Mandi, this is serious. I  
am only telling you this  
because I'm going so far.  
You know I don't like

lying, but I just can't  
tell Rey about this. You  
have to trust me. He knows  
I'm going away for a few  
days but I didn't give him  
details. I don't want him  
to know this right now.  
I'll let him know when I  
feel the time is right.  
Look at me sweety.

MANDI

I got it mom!  
(pauses)  
So...is this like a you  
know..um...are you and this  
guy...

CARLENE

No honey. He's a friend  
and I have some time and  
just need to get a way.  
It's an adult situation and  
I promise you I'll tell you  
more soon. But are we  
clear?

MANDI

Yes. Clear as glass!  
(laughs)

CARLENE

(reaches  
over and  
hugs her  
close)  
I love you so much Mandi!  
You know you are my world.  
(kisses her  
on neck and  
cheeks)

MANDI

Yeah, yeah...okay that's  
enough. I love you to  
mama.

Fade out.

FADE IN. CARLENE IS SEEN ON PLANE, TONY PICKING  
HER UP AT AIRPORT. HUGS. HE KISSES HER ON CHEEK. -  
EVENING

TONY

I can not believe this!  
You are here my love.

CARLENE

(looks up  
in his  
eyes)  
I...I can't either.

TONY

You seem nervous...Why?

CARLENE

(shakes  
head  
smiling)  
Nervous, excited. Can't  
believe I'm doing this...?

TONY

Come  
(walks her  
to  
passengers  
side of  
car)  
Get in amore...we go to a  
villa I rented in Ostria on  
the beach.

CARLENE

The beach? Oh Tony!  
Sounds relaxing...  
(she is  
getting  
comfortable  
in car,  
shifting)

Car is seen driving. Fade out.

Scenes flash in and out with Carlene and Tony with picnic on beach, lay in each other's arms, kissing, drinking wine. Shower together in villa. Carlene drying hair as Tony enters the bathroom.

TONY

Amore, I have friends coming over. Remember my team you met at the UN?

CARLENE

(stops drying hair)

Oh! Yeah, Yeah, some of them. Georgio...uh I can't remember the others' names.

TONY

Well. They will be here tonight. We eat and enjoy the summer evening together. Yes?

CARLENE

Sounds lovely.  
(Smiles as he kisses her forehead)

Evening, outside, patio from villa. Tony, Carlene and friends sitting around large table with only candles lighting. Everyone toasts Salute! Eating, drinking, everyone talking in Italian. Carlene observing, appears lost for a moment. Tony interrupts her stare.

TONY

(whispers)  
Amore, problem?

CARLENE

No. No.

(nervously)  
Well...it's just....I kind  
of feel left out of the  
conversation. It's  
difficult for me to  
understand...

TONY

Awww...Yes! I see? I am  
sorry my love. No problem.  
They are talking about  
work, family. I translate?  
Yes?

CARLENE

Don't worry...it's fine.  
I'll just enjoy the  
evening.

(smiles at  
him)  
(He leans  
in to kiss  
her as  
friends  
clap and  
shout  
something  
in Italian.  
Carlene  
turns head,  
shyly.)

TONY

Do not be embarrassed  
amore. They mean well.  
They are happy you are  
here.

CARLENE

(Smiles at  
the group)  
Gracia!  
(All cheer,  
Gracia!)  
Salute!  
(raises her  
glass)



(All cheer  
Salute and  
laugh)

Fade out.

Fade in and out (morning) of flashes Tony taking Carlene on tour of Sistine Chapel and taking pictures of each other, Tony asks tourists to take pictures of them together. Dining at local market, outside with wine and gelato. Continued flashes into the evening of Tony and Carlene at the Treve Fountain, tossing coins.

Transition to Carlene at airport. Tony has his arms around her.

TONY

I will miss you Amore.

CARLENE

Me too.

(looks up  
at him)

I had so much fun Tony.  
Thank you.

TONY

Call me when you are home.

CARLENE

Tony...

(pauses)

I don't know what will  
happen with me and Rey...

TONY

Shhh...do not speak of  
this. We, me

(points to  
self)

You,

(points to  
Carlene)

Had a love Amore. We had  
love if only for a moment.

(hugs her  
tighter)  
If you wish to return to  
me...I wait.

Carlene tears up. Wipes her eyes and they kiss.

CARLENE

Good bye Tony.  
(walking  
away as  
their hands  
are seen  
releasing  
slowly.)

Fade out.

Fade back in to hospital scene from beginning:

Carlene is sitting up in hospital bed. Hands  
twisting tissue in hand. Face red from crying.

SOCIAL WORKER:

Wow Carlene. You've lived  
an incredible life. What  
happened after you came  
back from Rome?

CARLENE

Rey and I ended up  
divorcing. It was not an  
ugly divorce, but... it was  
just embarrassing.

SOCIAL WORKER:

Why?  
(writing on  
clipboard)

CARLENE

Another marriage down the  
tubes.

SOCIAL WORKER:

Okay...let's move forward.  
Tell me about your

relationship with your  
current husband...uh....AJ?

CARLENE

Yes. AJ. He is amazing.  
He's my best friend...

(As Carlene is talking about her and A.J. show  
soft scene of her standing beside him on their  
wedding day in front of small group/pool side.  
Sunny day)

CARLENE

Marrying A.J. was the best  
day of my life. His mom  
walked him down the small  
aisle and his father walked  
me. It was wonderful  
because they too shared the  
same anniversary day.

Carlene looks out window as she continues talking  
to social worker.

CARLENE

But I haven't been honest  
with him about how I've  
been feeling.

SOCIAL WORKER:

And why is that Carlene?

CARLENE

I'm not sure...I just am  
afraid...afraid...of what I  
really don't know.

SOCIAL WORKER:

Carlene, I think you do  
know. Do you think he'll  
look at you differently?

Carlene begins tearing up again, snifs, nods head.

SOCIAL WORKER:

You know...you said he was  
your best friend. I

believe that. I know you  
believe that. So just  
trust that.

Social worker's pager goes off. She looks down at  
it and excuses herself for a moment.

Carlene lays head back and sighs big sigh.

Social worker returns.

SOCIAL WORKER

Carlene, we have a hospital  
that is prepared for you.  
It's a wonderful mental  
health facility and you  
will get the help you have  
wanted and needed for a  
long time. This is a great  
beginning for you Carlene.  
I'll call your husband and  
let him know where you'll  
be.

CARLENE

Thank you. I'm just so  
tired.

SOCIAL WORKER:

It'll be another 45 minutes  
for them to be here. Do  
you want to continue  
talking or would you rather  
rest?

CARLENE

I'd rather keep talking.

SOCIAL WORKER:

Okay....so your brother...

CARLENE

William. He and I didn't  
talk for about three  
years...I wanted, well I  
asked him to go to

counseling with me. I...I  
was just...

(holds head  
with hands)

God! It's so damn hard  
talking about it....I was  
so mad at him! He refused  
to get help and this is  
what happened!

(flails  
hand out  
expressivel  
y)

SOCIAL WORKER

Suicide?

CARLENE

Yeah...suicide. If he'd  
just...or if I'd...

(tears  
streaming  
down face  
again)

SOCIAL WORKER

You know Carlene, it was  
not your fault. Obviously  
he had some issues he did  
not resolve and depression.  
You said you reached out  
right?

Carlene nods head.

SOCIAL WORKER

He made those choices, not  
you. He made the choice to  
not get some help. But you  
are. You are strong  
Carlene. It takes strength  
to walk in here and say  
help me. You are making  
the right choice to be  
healthy.

CARLENE

I know this...I do. I  
guess it'll just take  
time...I just get so mad  
because he left me without  
resolving anything.

SOCIAL WORKER

Just give this time. It's  
okay to take time out to  
get some help. I'm glad we  
found the right place for  
you to go to.

(looks up,  
E.M.T's  
walking in  
room with  
stretcher)

Okay dear, it looks like  
they're ready for you. I  
did call your husband. He  
said he loves you and he's  
proud of you.

Carlene tearing up, nodding as she gets up on the  
stretcher.

Soft music ("Safe & Sound" by Taylor Swift OR "It  
ain't over" by Murette Brown Clark) playing as  
she is wheeled out into ambulance. There is a  
blanket wrapped around her. Inside ambulance she  
is laying on the stretcher looking outside. Dark,  
snowing. E.M.T. woman sitting beside her.  
Ambulance pulls into hospital. Music continues  
playing softly as scene's of her going through the  
process of admission. Her face is red, eyes  
swollen from crying, still appears  
distracted...fade out.

FADE IN:

Music "Here for you" by Neil Young playing. Sun  
is shining, even though snow on ground. A.J.  
pulls into hospital picking up Carlene. She is  
smiling. She drops her bags and runs to his arms.  
Fade out as they are hugging.

Transition in with music "Good Life" by One Republic. Scene's Fade in/out Carlene sitting in therapist office. Show different scenes with her and therapist (cry, laugh, smile,) and close with scenes of her signing copies of her book at book signing, volunteering and playing outside with her dogs, hiking with A.J.

THE END.

CARLENE LIVES IN GRANVILLE, OHIO WITH HER HUSBAND A.J. SHE ADOPTED TWO RESCUE DOGS AND CONTINUES TO VOLUNTEER.

CARLENE FORGAVE HER MOM HOWEVER SHE HAS NO RELATIONSHIP WITH HER.

CARLENE FORGAVE HER BROTHER AND HAS FOUND PEACE AND STRENGTH BY LETTING GO OF WHAT SHE CANNOT CONTROL.

**Copyright (c) 2014 This screenplay may not be used or reproduced without the express written permission of the author.**

