SWEET 17
by Larry and Candace Postel
FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

A two story colonial home with a cast iron mailbox displaying the fleur-de-lis emblem. A high school spirit sign is stuck in the front yard. It reads: Candace - BFH Cheerleader.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

SCOTT and PAM LEJUNE (both early 40's) are sound asleep. The digital clock radio on Pam's nightstand reads 6:29am.

A framed photo is next to the clock radio. The picture is of an adorable seven year old girl in an ice skating outfit.

The time advances to 6:30 and the radio/alarm comes on. Willy DeVille's "Voodoo Charm" begins to play.

Scott's head pops up. He nudges Pam awake and lets out with a mischievous grin as he slips on his glasses.

    SCOTT
    It's time.

INT. CANDACE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Seventeen year old CANDACE is asleep. Her room is a total mess with clothes strewn all over the floor. Her iPhone rests on the nightstand next to her. Her iPad is at the foot of her bed.

    VOICES (O.S.)
    HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Startled, Candace awakens to see her parents standing there. She grumbles...

    CANDACE
    It'd be happier if you let me sleep.

She pulls the covers over her head. Scott pulls them off.

    SCOTT
    Come on. Time to get up.

    CANDACE
    Daaaaad!

    PAM
    Candace, your father and I have something to give you.
CANDACE
Just bring it in here.

PAM
Oh, it's too big for that.

SCOTT
It's in the garage.

Candace's eyes open wide.

CANDACE
Garage?!

She flies out of bed.

INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They're stopped at the door that leads to the garage.

SCOTT
Ready?

CANDACE
Yeah, yeah...let's go.

SCOTT
Close your eyes.

CANDACE
Seriously?!

PAM
Come on, Candace -- do it. He's been planning this for months.

Candace reluctantly does as told and closes her eyes.

Scott opens the door. Pam guides Candace inside.

INT. GARAGE

Eyes still closed, Candace stands between Scott and Pam.

SCOTT
You can open them now.

Candace does and looks before her. Her expression is not one of surprise or celebration. Instead, she appears confused, even disappointed.

Candace's POV: an older model forest green Volvo station wagon with a mylar balloon tied to the antenna that reads *Happy Sweet 17*. 
PAM
It's all yours. Your first car!

CANDACE
Wha...what is it?

SCOTT
What is it?! It's a Volvo XC-70.
(pause)
Number one in its class in NHTSA crash tests.

He goes over and bangs on the car's hood.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Solid as a rock.
(pause)
Nothing but the best for our baby.

Candace stares blankly at the car.

PAM
Well? Aren't you going to say something?

CANDACE
How long do I have to keep it?

SCOTT
What?! Is that all you can say?

CANDACE
You know I wanted a black BMW.

SCOTT
And I want a red Maserati -- but that doesn't mean I'm getting one.

CANDACE
But this is a...a...mom's car!

PAM
Candace, your father did a lot of research to find the safest car for someone your age.
(pause)
That's the most important thing right now.

SCOTT
Apparently not to her. She'd rather have us spend a fortune on a new BMW.
CANDACE
Not true. I'd take a used one.

PAM
My god, show a little appreciation. You're lucky to have any car at all. I didn't get my first until I was twenty.

CANDACE
I don't care. I'm literally not driving it. Everyone will laugh at me.

SCOTT
Is that right?

CANDACE
Yeah. It is.

SCOTT
Then I'll tell you what. You've got a choice.

CANDACE
What?

SCOTT
It's either drive this car or you can literally walk to school. (pause) Because our days of taking you are over.

EXT. STREET/INT. VOLVO - MORNING
Candace drives to school in her green Volvo station wagon. She's clearly uncomfortable and self-conscious.

She pulls up to a red light and stops. A white BMW convertible full of girls her age pulls up on her left side. A girl in the front passenger seat happens to glance over to see the Volvo -- with Candace at the wheel.

Candace glances over to see them.

CANDACE
Oh my god!!

She quickly moves both her sun visor and left arm over to the window to obscure their view of her. A moment later, the light turns green and Candace tears off down the road.
INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Candace eats lunch with three friends: HAYLEY, SHAYNE and BROOKE.

HAYLEY
I can't believe that car your parents got you.

SHAYNE
It's totally a mom car.

BROOKE
Make that a grand mom car.

The three crack up -- but not Candace.

CANDACE
Yeah, well, I don't plan on keeping it long.

SHAYNE
I got an idea. Why don't you leave it in the mall parking lot with the keys in it? Someone's sure to steal it. Then you get a new one.

HAYLEY
Yeah, I like that!

CANDACE
Umm, no. My parents are psycho and would find some way to blame it on me and end up getting me an even shittier car.

BROOKE
What could be shittier?

CANDACE
I don't know. But they'd find it.

HAYLEY
Hey, let's go out for dinner tonight for your birthday. I feel like sushi.

BROOKE
I'm down.

SHAYNE
Me too.
CANDACE
Ugh, I wish I could. But my mom's already planning a family birthday dinner...at home.

HAYLEY
Your parents really know how to ruin a birthday.

They all nod in agreement.

A hot guy comes over. This is SPENCER. He gives Candace a peck on the cheek.

SPENCER
Hey, babe. Happy birthday.
(grins)
I heard your parents gave you a badass station wagon.

Candace smirks.

Hayley sets her eyes on Spencer. It's obvious that she likes him; it does not go unnoticed by Candace.

HAYLEY
Hey, Spence.

SPENCER
Hayley.

HAYLEY
Candace is stuck home tonight. Wanna meet up at Rock-n-Sake?

Candace glares at Hayley, but Hayley's total focus is on Spencer.

Spencer glances at Candace to see her now glaring at him.

SPENCER
Uh, I don't think so.

Candace nods as if to say "Smart decision."

SPENCER (CONT'D)
Hey, I checked into the prom party bus.

BROOKE
How much?

SPENCER
Eighty each.
SHAYNE
You mean each couple?

SPENCER
No, each person.

BROOKE
Wait, aren't the guys paying for it?

SPENCER
Hell no. We're already covering the tickets, dinner and lake house rental. Not to mention the alcohol.

Candace puts her head in her hands and groans.

SPENCER (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

CANDACE
You know my dad. There's no way he's gonna give me another eighty dollars for the bus.

SPENCER
(big smile)
It's got a stripper pole.

Hayley enthusiastically smiles back at him.

HAYLEY
I'm totally fine with it, Spence.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Candace finishes dinner with her parents. Despite it being her birthday dinner, it's a quiet and tense atmosphere.

The kitchen is decorated with New Orleans memorabilia including Mardi Gras masks hanging on the wall, a pair of red crab claw oven mitts, a set of New Orleans jazz canisters -- and a pair of eerie-looking voodoo-style skull candle holders with purple candles.

PAM
How was your gumbo, Candace?

CANDACE
Fine.

More silence. Scott is clearly in no mood for conversation. Neither is Candace. But Pam tries to break the ice again.
PAM        
How'd you like driving your new car 
to school?

Candace glances over at her father. He glares back at her, 
awaiting her response. She smirks back.

CANDACE
Fine.

SCOTT
You can always walk.

CANDACE
I said it was fine, didn't I?

PAM       
Candace, did you know there's another 
reason for celebration tonight? 
(pause)
Your father was named CPA of the 
year at his firm. They're honoring 
him Friday night with a banquet. 
Isn't that wonderful?

CANDACE
Yeah. Wonderful.

Another pause.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
I know this might not be the best 
time to bring this up...

SCOTT
Then don't.

CANDACE
I need eighty dollars.

SCOTT
What the hell for?

CANDACE
The prom bus. Everyone's chipping 
in.

Scott angrily motions over to the kitchen counter.

SCOTT
You know what? Go get me a pen and 
piece of paper right now.
CANDACE
Oh my god!

SCOTT
Don't "oh my god" me. Just do it.

PAM
Candace, do as your father says.

Candace gets up, grabs a pen and note pad from the counter and plops them down on the table in front of Scott.

SCOTT
Okay, let's start from the top...

Pam gets up.

PAM
While you two sort this out, I'll get the cake.

Scott begins to write out a list.

SCOTT
Prom dress. How much was that again?

No response from Candace. Scott turns to Pam, who removes a chocolate birthday cake from the refrigerator. She places it on the counter.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Pam?

PAM
Huh?

SCOTT
Prom dress. How much?

PAM
Four hundred.

CANDACE
It was on sale.

SCOTT
Yeah, a real bargain I'm sure.

Scott jots down the figure as Pam begins to search the cupboards for something.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Shoes?
Candace remains silent. Pam continues to search the cupboards.

    SCOTT (CONT'D)
    Pam. Shoes?

She pauses a moment to think.

    PAM
    Ninety.

Scott adds to the list.

    SCOTT
    Jewelry?

    CANDACE
    (flippantly)
    Nothing. I'm borrowing some from Shayne.

    SCOTT
    Okay, great. No jewelry. Thank you, Shayne.

He crosses that off the list.

    SCOTT (CONT'D)
    All right, what else? I know I must be missing something.

No response from Candace.

    SCOTT (CONT'D)
    Pam?

She continues to search the cupboards to no avail.

    PAM
    Uh, makeup, hair and nails.

    SCOTT
    Oh, yeah! The old makeup, hair and nails. How much?

    PAM
    Probably around three hundred.

Scott pauses before jotting down the figure. He turns to Candace.

    SCOTT
    Wait a minute. Mom's great at makeup. Why can't she do it?
CANDACE

Uh, NOOOO!

Scott reluctantly adds in the figure.

Pam stares at the cupboards in complete frustration.

PAM
Shoot. I thought for sure we had some birthday candles.

She spots something on the counter. It's the two purple candles in the voodoo candle holders. She shrugs, removes them from the skulls and places the candles in the cake.

SCOTT
Okay, let's see what we got.

Like the CPA he is, Scott quickly tallies the list. Meanwhile, Pam lights the candles.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
So far we're at seven hundred ninety.

He turns to Candace.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
And now you're asking for another eighty? (sarcastic)
Why don't we just round it up to an even thousand?

CANDACE
Fine by me.

SCOTT
Look, young lady, I don't know where you think...

Candace suddenly throws her napkin on the table and abruptly gets up -- just as Pam brings the cake with lighted candles to the table. She cheerfully sings...

PAM
"Happy Birthday to you..."

CANDACE
You gotta be kidding, Mom.

PAM
It's your birthday. You at least have to blow out the candles and make a wish.
CANDACE
Yeah, right. The only wish I have is to graduate high school sooner so I can finally leave this house and get to college.

SCOTT
Just who do you think is going to be paying for college?

PAM
And Candace, I'm afraid you won't be going anywhere unless you get your grades up and start studying for the SAT like we've been telling you.

CANDACE
Oh my god! You're both unbelievable. This is exactly what I'm talking about. It's my effing birthday and you have to get on my case like always.

She storms out of the room.

Scott and Pam stare at the burning candles.

SCOTT
I know what I'd wish for.

PAM
What's that?

Scott glances over at the refrigerator at a photo of Candace at the age of seven.

SCOTT
For her to be that age again...when things were so much easier.

PAM
Yeah...those were the good old days.

In unison they blow out the candles, which emit a strange purple haze. And over on the counter the eyes on the voodoo skull heads ominously glow a bright red.

INT. CANDACE'S BEDROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

Candace stands in front of a full length mirror. She wears a New Orleans Saints tee-shirt that she sleeps in, but she holds her gorgeous prom dress in front of her. She puts her head through the neckline and hanger so the dress falls freely in front of her.
She gazes at herself in the mirror. She puts her hair up and poses at different angles. She likes what she sees.

Candace grabs her iPhone from her nightstand and hits a number. She returns to the mirror.

**SPENCER'S VOICE (V.O.)**
It's Spencer. Leave a message and I'll call you back.

Candace continues to primp and pose in front of the mirror as she leaves the voice mail message for Spencer...

**CANDACE**
(into phone)
Hey, Spence. It's me. I just want you to know that I'm trying on my prom dress right now...
(pause)
You are literally going to have the hottest date at prom. No, make that in all of Louisiana.
(seductively)
Have a good night. Dream about me and the time we're going to have at prom. And after prom.

She ends the call and takes another look in the mirror.

**CANDACE (CONT'D)**
(to herself)
I am so effing hot.

**INT. MASTER BEDROOM – THE NEXT MORNING**

Scott and Pam are sound asleep. The clock reads: 6:05am.


**VOICE (O.S.)**
(softly)
Dad...

Without opening his eyes...

**SCOTT**
What is it?

**VOICE (O.S.)**
I don't feel well.
Scott finally cracks open his eyes. He's blind without his glasses, so he slips them on -- and then he sees something that clearly shocks him. Frozen in place, he nudges Pam.

SCOTT
Pam...wake up.

No response. Scott gives her a shake.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
I said wake up!

She glances over at the clock.

PAM
What's the matter with you? It's not time yet.

SCOTT
Just tell me I'm dreaming and you can go back to sleep.

PAM
What in the world are you talking about...

Pam has the same reaction as she turns over to see what Scott is staring at.

Their POV: SEVEN YEAR OLD CANDACE stands before them. She still wears the New Orleans Saints tee shirt that 17 year old Candace wore the previous night to sleep -- and now it hangs all the way to the ground.

CANDACE
I'm sorry I woke you up so early, but you don't have to act so weird.

(MORE)
CANDACE (CONT'D)
(pause)
I just came in because I don't feel well. Is it okay if I don't go to school? I don't have any tests or anything. And it's not about the car.

Scott and Pam exchange an incredulous glance.

PAM
I...uh...

SCOTT
Have you seen yourself this morning?

CANDACE
Oh my god! What are you talking about? Is this still about the prom? Is it some weird reverse psychology you're trying on me?

PAM
Candace, honey, go into our bathroom and look in the mirror.

A sudden look of horror overcomes Candace.

CANDACE
Shit! Do I have a big zit or something?!

She feels around her face and then tears off into the bathroom that's adjacent to the master bedroom.

As she goes, Scott takes off his glasses and thoroughly wipes the lenses.

SCOTT
It's gotta be a dream.

A moment later from the bathroom...

CANDACE (O.S.)
OH MY GOD...WHAT THE HELL?!

PAM
I don't think so.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Scott and Candace sit at the table while Pam makes coffee. Candace still wears her extra long Saints tee shirt. Like Scott, she's in deep thought. An idea hits her...
CANDACE
I know what happened! I got Benjamin Buttoned!!

SCOTT
What's that supposed to mean?

CANDACE
You took me to see it, Dad. Remember? Brad Pitt had this disease where he grew younger.

SCOTT
Uh, I don't think so. First of all, that was just a movie. And second, even if there was such a disease it wouldn't just happen overnight like that.

PAM
Scott, it actually is a disease. It's called Progeria.

SCOTT
Thank you for enlightening me, professor.

Pam brings two cups of coffee over to the table: one for Scott and one for herself.

CANDACE
Hey, what about me? I need my coffee in the morning too.

PAM
But Candace, that was when you were...older. I don't think it's appropriate at this age.

CANDACE
Ugh, correct me if I'm wrong, but this is unchartered territory for all of us. So I say give me my damn coffee...
(screams)
...before my freaking head explodes!!

SCOTT
All right...all right. Get her some, Pam. Please.

Pam goes over to the counter to pour a cup for Candace. While at the counter, she sees the voodoo candle holders minus the candles.
A knowing look registers on her face as she turns to Scott.

PAM
Our wish!

CANDACE
What wish?

Pam looks at the candle holders; Scott's eyes follow hers.

SCOTT
Let's not go there, Pam. I know you buy into all that stuff but...

CANDACE
What effing wish?!

Pam brings the cup of coffee to the table and puts it on the table in front of Candace. She takes a seat.

SCOTT
Go ahead and tell her.

PAM
Last night, after you left the kitchen, your dad and I made this, uh, silly little wish and then blew out the candles.

CANDACE
And what exactly was this silly little wish?

Pam appears extremely guilty.

PAM
That you were...uh...

She glances over at the refrigerator photo where Candace was the same age she is now.

PAM (CONT'D)
...that age again.

Candace lets it sink in a moment.

CANDACE
It's true! I always knew you loved me more when I was little.
(mocking)
I was so cute...and sweet...and innocent.
SCOTT
It's not true, Candace. And that's not what happened anyway.

CANDACE
Oh, I think mom's right and that's exactly what happened.

SCOTT
Okay, let's accept for the moment that it was the wish. But if that's the case, then why are you seven only in your body -- and not in your mind?

CANDACE
Because sometimes you just don't get what you wish for, Dad.
(pause)
Like how I wished for a car. I ended up getting one -- but the wrong one.

SCOTT
Look, young lady, I told you that you can walk to school from now on...

CANDACE
Yeah, it would be just like you to make a seven year old kid walk all the way to high school.

PAM
Stop it -- both of you!

They turn to Pam.

PAM (CONT'D)
This is getting us nowhere. We have to put our heads together and figure out a way to get Candace back to normal.

CANDACE
Uh, yeeaaah. And we better do it fast. Because prom is next week and everyone is going to be asking a lot of questions.

They sit there a moment contemplating the situation. Then...

PAM
The candles!
CANDACE
Huh?

PAM
We light the candles and reverse our wish!

SCOTT
Uh, I think not.

PAM
What do you mean? Why not?

SCOTT
I threw the candles out in the garbage last night.

CANDACE
So let's go get them.

SCOTT
Can't.

EXT. STREET - EARLIER THAT MORNING
The city garbage truck picks up the trash bin in front of the LeJune home and dumps it in the back.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING
Exasperated, Pam sits back down at the table.

PAM
Now what are we gonna do?

Candace takes a sip of the coffee and grimaces.

CANDACE
How 'bout starting with a trip to Starbucks? This coffee sucks.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - DAY
Still wearing the same long tee-shirt, Candace sits on the sofa texting on her iPhone.

Scott and Pam enter the room from different directions.

SCOTT
All right, I called the office and told them I'll be working from home... until further notice.
PAM
I called the high school and told them Candace has a virus.

SCOTT
What about the university?

PAM
I emailed Stephanie that I'm taking some vacation time. One of my teaching assistants will cover.

They look over at Candace on the sofa; she's texting away on her phone a mile a minute.

SCOTT
What are you doing?

CANDACE
I'm texting Shayne and Brooke.

PAM
What about? I thought we agreed not to tell anyone.

CANDACE
Chill, Mom. I'm just telling them to keep an eye on Hayley. I don't trust her.

SCOTT
Well, neither do we. We never have. But can I ask why you don't?

CANDACE
She's after Spencer. It's so obvious. And while I'm...

She makes air quote marks with her fingers.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
"..."out sick" I don't want her trying to move in and get Spencer to take her to prom instead of me.

SCOTT
Spencer wouldn't do that.

CANDACE
But Hayley would. You don't know girls, Dad.

PAM
She's right, Scott.
SCOTT
Okay, forget about that for now.
More importantly, what are we going
to do about, uh...
(pause)
Our situation.

CANDACE
That was caused by the both of you.

SCOTT
Look, if you had shown a little
more respect and a little less
attitude...

PAM
I have an idea.

Scott and Candace turn to listen.

PAM (CONT'D)
I think I remember the store where I
got the candles. It's in the Quarter.

SCOTT
And what do you think they can do?
Give her a magic potion and reverse
the spell...or whatever the hell
this is?

PAM
I don't know. But do you have any
better ideas?

CANDACE
Yeah, Dad. You got any better ideas?

SCOTT
All right...all right. We'll go.

Candace begins to get up.

CANDACE
I'll get ready.

SCOTT
No way...you're not stepping foot
outside this house.

CANDACE
What? You're going to leave a seven
year old child home alone? I ought
to call Child Protective Services on
you!
PAM
Stop it, you two!
(pause)
Scott, under the circumstances, I think Candace has to go.

She looks over at Candace in the long tee shirt.

PAM (CONT'D)
But first let's find something else for you to wear. You can't go out dressed like that.

CANDACE
(sarcastic)
What? Are you going to take me shopping at Justice -- or OshKosh?

SCOTT
Look, I don't think we need to go shopping anywhere and spend anymore money than we have to.

A grin registers on Pam's face.

PAM
We don't need to.

INT. HALLWAY

Pam and Candace wait while Scott stands on a step stool, looking at a top shelf inside a closet. There are labeled cardboard boxes on the shelf.

Pam points at a box. Handwritten on the side in black magic marker it says: 5 to 7.

PAM
That one.

Candace appears puzzled as Scott grabs the box.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - DAY

The cardboard box rests on the coffee table. Pam rips the tape and opens the flaps as Candace and Scott look on.

The box is filled with little girl's clothes, all neatly folded. Pam pulls out a pink frilly shirt with a rainbow on front.

She holds it out for Candace to see.
PAM
You remember this? It was one of your favorites in first grade.

CANDACE
Oh my god, yes!

Candace grabs the shirt and stares at it.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
I can't believe you kept it.

PAM
Oh, there's a lot more...

Pam and Candace excitedly start rummaging through the contents of the box. Scott rolls his eyes and heads out of the room.

SCOTT
I'm going to call the office again while you figure this out. But let's get going soon, okay?

Pam and Candace continue to rummage through the box, pulling out different items for seven year old Candace to wear.

PAM
Go make your call, Scott. We'll be ready in a few.

CANDACE
Yeah, Dad. Go chill.

EXT. BOURBON STREET - DAY

Scott, Pam and Candace walk down the famous street. They pass a seedy topless bar that's already open for business. A sign reads: THE BIG SLEAZY.

A SLEAZY MAN stands out in front beckoning passers-by to enter.

SLEAZY MAN
Come on in...hottest young girls in town...

Candace glances over at him.

PAM
Candace, don't look.

She puts her hand over Candace's eyes to shield her view.

Candace quickly removes her mom's hand.
CANDACE
Mom, you think I haven't seen this stuff before? I've been here plenty of times with my friends.

An ELDERLY FEMALE TOURIST walking close by overhears Candace's comment and does a double-take.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER STREET - SLIGHTLY LATER

Scott, Pam and Candace stand in front of a storefront with a sign: YOUDO VOODOO. In the window display are all sorts of voodoo trinkets and paraphernalia including talismans, charms, potions, incense, herbs, voodoo dolls, statues, tee-shirts -- and candles.

PAM
This is the place. I'm sure of it.

SCOTT
All right, but you do the talking. I don't want any part of this.

CANDACE
Uh, Dad. You already are part of this -- whether you like it or not.

Scott frowns and they enter.

INT. YOUDO VOODOO

The store is full of voodoo merchandise and clutter. The proprietor is an elderly man with grey dreadlocks, black top hat, a tie-die shirt, jeans and sandals. He looks like an old, eccentric hippie. This is PAPA DOC.

PAPA DOC
Welcome to Youdo Voodoo. Are you here for our big potion sale? Buy two, get one free.

He gives Scott the once-over.

PAPA DOC (CONT'D)
Including those for erectile dysfunction.

Scott scowls back at him.

SCOTT
Not interested. Not needed.

PAPA DOC
Then what can I voo-do you for?
He grabs a voodoo doll and approaches Candace. He practically sticks it in her face.

PAPA DOC (CONT'D)
How about a dollie, little girl?
It's better than a Barbie.

Candace abruptly pushes the doll away.

CANDACE
How about getting that damn thing out of my face?
(mumbles)
Are you kidding me?

PAPA DOC
Huh, testy little one.

Pam looks at a candle display.

PAM
You have a lot of candles, but none in purple.

PAPA DOC
LSU fans?

PAM
Pardon me.

PAPA DOC
LSU. You know, purple and gold.

He claws the air with both hands.

PAPA DOC (CONT'D)
Go Tigers!

He lets out a growl.

PAM
No, we're not fans.

PAPA DOC
Then why purple?

Pam takes a look around to make sure there are no other customers in the store. There aren't.

PAM
Well...it's kind of a strange thing.
PAPA DOC
Hey, strange is my specialty. Hit me with it.

Pam motions at Candace.

PAM
You see my little girl?

PAPA DOC
Yeah, I seen plenty of her.

PAM
Well she's actually not that little. I mean, she wasn't until today.

PAPA DOC
Meaning?

SCOTT
Pam, just spit it out for chrissake.

Scott approaches Papa Doc.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
My wife thinks your candles caused her to grow younger overnight.

Papa Doc gets a knowing look on his face.

PAPA DOC
Ooooh, you mean she got Benjamin Buttoned.

CANDACE
That's what I said!

PAM
I thought if we get some more purple candles that we could make another wish and get her back to normal.

PAPA DOC
Hmmm. Interesting plan. Not bad for a novice. But as you can see, we're fresh out of purple.

CANDACE
Will another color work?

PAPA DOC
I'm afraid not. Each color does have its own significance.
He grabs an old voodoo book from the counter, blows off the dust, and flips through some pages until he finds what he's looking for.

PAPA DOC (CONT'D)
See here: Purple symbolizes eternal youth. And the Artist Formerly Known as Prince.

PAM
So what do we do now?

Papa Doc thinks to himself a moment.

PAPA DOC
You know what? Let me check with my suppliers and see what they say.

SCOTT
Your suppliers? Where are they?

PAPA DOC
China.

PAM
China!

PAPA DOC
I know...I know. I hate the idea of outsourcing, but business is business.

CANDACE
How long is this gonna take?

PAPA DOC
Oh, I don't know. Maybe a week -- give or take.

CANDACE
Well let's shoot for more give than take. I've got a prom coming up.

PAPA DOC
All righty, I'll see what I can do.

Pam takes out her purse and writes something down.

PAM
That's my name and number. Just call when you know something. Anytime -- night or day.
PAPA DOC
You got it.
(pause)
Hey, in the meantime are you sure
you don't want any potions? It's a
darn good special. I'll even throw
in a shrunken head for free.

SCOTT
Just call us when the candles come
in.

EXT. STREET/HOUSE - DAY

Scott's car drives up the street towards their house. Another
late model car is parked in front.

INT. SCOTT'S CAR

Pam is the first one to notice the car. A startled look
registers on her face.

PAM
Oh my god!

SCOTT
What? You too with the "oh my gods?"

PAM
Look!

Scott and Candace look to see the car.

CANDACE
Isn't that Uncle Mike's car?

PAM
What's the date today?

SCOTT
The sixteenth. Why?

PAM
Mike and Karen are going to Cancun.
I promised Karen that Sam could stay
with us while they're gone.

SCOTT
You've got to be shittin' me.

PAM
I wish I was.
CANDACE
Just when I thought it couldn't get worse.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Scott and Pam get out of the car, which is parked in the driveway. Candace stays inside.

MIKE and KAREN, mid-30's, get out of their car. Overweight Mike wears a loud Hawaiian shirt, khakis and a baseball style cap that says "Beachbum University." Karen is a Southern Belle, very proper and very high-strung.

They're followed by SAM, a thin 10 year old boy with big glasses. Sam carries a small suitcase and wears a super hero tee-shirt. He has the look of a kid who's bullied by everyone.

Karen appears frantic as she approaches Pam. She talks a mile a minute. Meanwhile, Mike eats a beignet from a bag.

KAREN
Where have you been? I've been trying to call your cell.

PAM
I'm so sorry, Kar. We...uh...got caught up in something.

KAREN
You do remember that Sam is staying, right? Our flight leaves soon and we don't have any other options.

Pam and Scott exchange a look. Sam goes over to Scott's car and stares in the window of the back seat where Candace sits.

PAM
Of course Sam can stay. You know he's always welcome.

SAM
Who's that?

They all turn so see Sam staring at Candace through the back window.

PAM
Oh, that's, uh, Ca...

SCOTT
Cathy. She's my brother's daughter.
Mike licks the powdered sugar from his fingers.

MIKE
That's funny. I don't remember your brother having a daughter.

PAM
Oh, sure. You must have seen her before.

SAM
Why doesn't she come out?

SCOTT
She's shy.

Pam goes to the back door and cracks it open. She whispers to Candace...

PAM
Come on out. Your name is Cathy and you're our niece. Got it?

Candace rolls her eyes and gets out of the car.

Karen appears startled when she sees her.

KAREN
My god, she's the spitting image of Candace when she was that age.

MIKE
You're right. It's uncanny.

Sam stares suspiciously at Candace.

SAM
I don't remember seeing her.

CANDACE
But I remember you. Your name's Sam and you have three turtles named Leo, Don and Mikey.

Sam seems shocked.

KAREN
She got you there, Sam. I bet you guys will have lots of fun together.
(pause)
By the way, where's Candace?
PAM
Oh, she's spending time this week at one of her girlfriend's houses. You know, getting ready for prom.

KAREN
Ah, yes. How fast she's growing up.

CANDACE
(mumbles)
Yeah, right.

KAREN
Oh, I just thought of something. Since Candace is going to be gone, what about your banquet Friday night? Who will stay with the kids?

Pam and Scott exchange a puzzled glance.

PAM
I don't know. We haven't thought about it.

KAREN
Well they obviously can't stay alone.

She removes a piece of paper and pen from her purse. She jots something down and hands it to Pam.

KAREN (CONT'D)
That's our babysitter. I'd suggest calling her today.

Mike glances at his watch.

MIKE
We better hit the road. The beach and a tall Margarita await.

Karen leans down to Sam and gives him a kiss.

KAREN
You be good. Listen to your aunt and uncle and play nice with little Cathy.

Karen and Mike head to the car, hop in and they're off.

Sam turns to Candace.

SAM
You wanna play super heroes? I'll be Batman and you can be Catwoman.
CANDACE
How 'bout we don't and say we did?

She abruptly turns and heads to the house, leaving a disappointed Sam standing there.

SCOTT
(to Sam)
Like I said, she's shy.

EXT. SCHOOL STUDENT PARKING LOT - DAY

School has ended and students pour into the lot. Hayley and Shayne walk to their cars together.

HAYLEY
What's with Candace? Have you heard anything from her?

SHAYNE
Just some text messages. She has a bad virus or something.

HAYLEY
Does she think she'll be better for prom?

SHAYNE
She thinks so. But she doesn't sound too sure.

HAYLEY
(fake as can be)
That's too bad. It would be terrible if she can't go.

Hayley looks over to see Spencer heading to his car with some friends.

HAYLEY (CONT'D)
(to Shayne)
I'll talk to you later.

Hayley takes off in the direction of Spencer.

INT. CANDACE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Candace is on her bed watching a raunchy MTV-style reality show. Her iPhone rests next to her on the nightstand.

There's a KNOCK on the closed door.

CANDACE
Who is it?
VOICE (O.S.)
Sam.
Candace rolls her eyes.

CANDACE
Come in.

He does. Sam looks at the TV and appears shocked.

SAM
You're allowed to watch that stuff?

CANDACE
Sure.

SAM
All we watch at our house is PBS and the Food Channel.

Sam plops down in a bean bag chair.

CANDACE
(sarcastic)
Make yourself right at home.

SAM
Thanks.

Sam removes something from his pocket. It's a slingshot. He pulls back its rubber band and pretends to take aim.

CANDACE
What in the world is that?

SAM
My Dark Knight slingshot.
(proudly)
I made it myself.

Candace rolls her eyes again and turns back to the TV.

SAM (CONT'D)
Can I ask you something?

CANDACE
What?

SAM
Why don't you like me?

CANDACE
What are you talking about? Why do you think that?
SAM
Nobody else does. And you don't want to do anything with me.

Candace mutes the TV.

CANDACE
First of all, I'm just a little preoccupied right now. Don't take it personally.
(pause)
And what about school? You must have some friends there.

SAM
I'm home schooled.

CANDACE
Oh, yeah. I forgot.

SAM
You forgot? How'd you know?

CANDACE
My, uh, aunt and uncle told me.

SAM
Oh.

Candace's iPhone vibrates. She grabs it and takes a look.

SAM (CONT'D)
Wow. You have your own iPhone? When'd you get it?

CANDACE
Last year for my birthday.

SAM
How old are you?

CANDACE
Seven. But I'm mature for my age.

SAM
Yeah, me too.

Candace reads the text and her eyes open wide.

CANDACE
Shit...shit...shit!

Sam seems shocked by her language.
Candace starts texting at a fast clip.

SAM
Who texted you?

CANDACE
Sam, did anyone ever tell you that you ask a lot of questions?

Sam appears hurt.

SAM
Yeah. Everyone.

CANDACE
Sorry, I didn't mean anything.

SAM
It's okay.

CANDACE
It's just a friend of mine from school. She said another girl in class is after my boyfriend.
(pause)
She's such a bitch!

As Candace goes back to texting, we hold on Sam's dumbstruck expression.

EXT. HOUSE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

A black Camaro pulls up and parks on the street in front of the LeJune home. Spencer gets out, shuts the door and heads up the sidewalk.

INT. CANDACE'S ROOM

Sitting on her bed, Candace hears the car outside. She goes to her second floor window that overlooks the street and front yard. She sees Spencer and her eyes open wide.

CANDACE
What the f...

EXT. FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Candace's expletive is drowned out by the RINGING of the doorbell by Spencer.

INT. FOYER

Pam arrives at the door and takes a look through the peep hole to see Spencer standing there.
A second later Scott arrives.

    SCOTT
    Who is it?
    PAM
    Spencer.
    SCOTT
    What's he want?
    PAM
    Obviously to see Candace.
    SCOTT
    Well, send him away.
    PAM
    What do I tell him?
    SCOTT
    She's sick. Stick with the story.

Scott heads off.

    PAM
    Where are you going?
    SCOTT
    To call the office. You can handle it.
    PAM
    Thanks a lot.

EXT. FRONT PORCH

Pam opens the door with a big, over-the-top smile.

    PAM
    Spencer, what a surprise!

    SPENCER
    Hi, Mrs. LeJune. I haven't been able to get hold of Candace other than a few text messages. Is there any way I could see her? Is she okay?

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Candace hides around the corner at the top of the staircase. She eavesdrops on her mom and Spencer down below.
EXT. FRONT PORCH/INT. FOYER

Back to Spencer and Pam.

PAM
Spencer, that's so nice of you to be concerned. But I'm afraid Candace can't have any visitors. Doctor's orders.

SPENCER
What's she got? Everyone at school is wondering.

PAM
It's a, uh, rare virus -- but nothing too serious as long as she stays at home and doesn't talk.

SPENCER
Is it contagious?

PAM
Yes...very. It's airborne.

SPENCER
Wow, that's terrible. Is there anything I can do?

PAM
I'm afraid not, Spencer. But that's so sweet of you to ask.

On Candace upstairs: She's clearly touched by Spencer's concern.

SPENCER
Can I ask you something else, Mrs. LeJune?

PAM
Sure.

SPENCER
I'm just wondering if the doctor thinks she'll be better by prom.

PAM
We've got every hope that she'll be back to herself by then.

SPENCER
That's good to hear. I'd hate for her to miss it.
PAM
Yes, and I know she feels the same.

SPENCER
Well, tell her I stopped by. And when she can talk, please have her call me.

PAM
Will do, Spencer. Thanks again.

Spencer turns and heads down the sidewalk.

INT. FOYER
Pam shuts the door, lets out a sigh of relief and goes.

On Candace: After her mom is gone, she tiptoes down the stairs to the front door and opens it.

EXT. FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER
Just as Spencer reaches his car...

VOICE (O.S.)
Hi.

Spencer turns to see a little girl (Candace) on the sidewalk gazing at him.

SPENCER
Hello.

CANDACE
You're Spencer, aren't you?

Spencer approaches Candace.

SPENCER
That's right. And who are you?

CANDACE
I'm uh, Cathy. Candace's cousin.

SPENCER
Ah, so you're visiting?

CANDACE
Uh-huh.

SPENCER
That's weird. Her mom just told me how contagious she is.
CANDACE
Oh, right. But I stay away from her. My aunt and uncle even make me wear a mask most of the time.

SPENCER
Well that's good then.
(pause)
It was nice meeting you, Cathy.

He begins to head back to his car...

CANDACE
Spencer?

He turns back around.

SPENCER
Yeah.

CANDACE
I'm wondering something...

SPENCER
What's that?

CANDACE
Has Hayley asked you to go to the prom with her? You know, if Candace can't go.

He laughs.

SPENCER
Where'd you come up with that?

CANDACE
Oh, Candace told me that Hayley is a friend of hers -- and yours. So I was just wondering if maybe she asked you.

SPENCER
Did Candace ask you to ask me that?

CANDACE
Oh, no. Remember -- she can't even talk right now. And I'm not even allowed in her room.

Spencer tousles Candace's hair.
SPENCER
Don't worry yourself about grown-up things, Cathy. You go have some fun.

He reaches into his pocket.

SPENCER (CONT'D)
Hey, you like peppermint?

CANDACE
I guess so.

He grabs a wrapped peppermint hard candy and hands it to her.

SPENCER
Then you'll like that.

She hands it back to him.

CANDACE
I better not.

SPENCER
Why's that?

CANDACE
My parents told me never to accept candy from a stranger.

Spencer is taken aback by her comment.

SPENCER
But I'm not...oh, forget it.
(pause)
Bye, Cathy.

He hops in his car and takes off.

INT. YOUDO VOODOO - DAY

Papa Doc stands behind the counter reading a book: In Deep Voodoo. His phone rings and he answers...

PAPA DOC
Thanks for calling Youdo Voodoo, where Love Potion Number Nine is on sale everyday at just nine ninety nine.
(pause)
What can I voo-do you for today?
INT. LEJUNE KITCHEN

Pam is on her iPhone. Cross-cut between Papa Doc and Pam throughout their conversation.

PAM
Hello, this is Pam LeJune. I was calling to see how the purple candles are coming.

PAPA DOC
Ah yes. You're the mom of the little girl that got Benjamin Buttoned.

PAM
Right. Any news on the candles?

PAPA DOC
Unfortunately there's been a slight delay.

PAM
Delay? Why's that?

PAPA DOC
My supplier in China was temporarily shut down. Something having to do with toxic dye he was using.

PAM
That's awful.

PAPA DOC
No worries...he'll be back up and running in no time at all -- just as soon as he pays off the authorities.

PAM
Any idea when that might be?

PAPA DOC
Look, I said no worries. You wanted them next week and you'll get them next week. One thing about my supplier -- he may have his issues like a little hazardous material here and there...
(pause)
...but he always delivers on time.

PAM
That's so comforting to hear.
PAPA DOC
You want the tracking number when I get it?

PAM
No, no. That's not necessary. Just please keep me posted.

PAPA DOC
Will voo-do!

INT. LEJUNE FOYER/EXT. FRONT PORCH – EARLY EVENING

The doorbell rings.

PAM (O.S.)
I'll get it.

Dressed up for the banquet, Pam comes down the stairs. She puts on her second earring as she comes.

She reaches the front door and opens it. Standing there is JENNIFER, a very pretty and sweet 16 year old girl. Parked on the street in front of the house is her neon green Volkswagen Beetle.

PAM (CONT'D)
Hi, you must be Emily.

JENNIFER
Actually, no. Emily's sick so she asked me to come instead. I'm Jennifer.
(pause)
Is that okay?

PAM
Have you babysat before, Jennifer?

JENNIFER
Yes, all the time. I even do after care at our church.

PAM
Well then. I'm sure you'll do great.

Scott comes down the stairs followed by Candace and Sam. Scott is dressed in a suit and ready to go.

PAM (CONT'D)
Hey, guys -- this is Jennifer. She's going to be babysitting tonight.

Pam motions to Candace and Sam.
PAM (CONT'D)
This is our nephew Sam and our, uh, niece...Cathy.

On Sam: He's awestruck as he stares at Jennifer. It's love at first sight.

JENNIFER
Hello there.

Sam turns bright red as he tries to speak...

SAM
Huh...huh...huh...hello.

Candace grins as she sees Sam at a loss for words for the first time.

SCOTT
Thanks for coming, Jennifer. We shouldn't be any later than eleven or so.

JENNIFER
Sounds good.

Scott glances at his watch.

SCOTT
I guess we better be off.

PAM
I just want to have a word with Cathy before we go.

SCOTT
Fine. I'll meet you in the car.

He goes. As Sam continues to stare awkwardly and longingly at Jennifer, Pam takes Candace into the adjacent dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM

Pam reads the riot act to Candace.

PAM (hushed tone)
Look, I know you don't like this, but we have to go. Now behave yourself...and act your age.

CANDACE
Which age?
PAM
You know what I mean...
(stern)
Cathy.

CANDACE
(mocks in a child's voice)
Anything you say, Mommy. And will you bring me home a gold sticker if I'm good?

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - SLIGHTLY LATER

Sam sits on the bed playing a video game. Candace enters and closes the door behind.

CANDACE
Looks like someone in this room wants to have an adventure with the babysitter. And it's not me.

Sam stops playing and turns to her.

SAM
Huh? What do you mean by that?

CANDACE
You know what I mean. It's so obvious that you're in love with the babysitter.

SAM
So what if I am?

CANDACE
Uh, don't you think she's a little old for you?

SAM
Age is only a state of mind. And besides, maybe she's one of those cougars and likes younger men.

Candace laughs.

CANDACE
Yeah, right.

SAM
How do you think you know so much about this stuff anyway? You're even younger than me.
Candace pauses a moment.

CANDACE
You know how there are those whiz kids who are really smart at math or science?

SAM
Of course. I am at both.

CANDACE
Well I happen to be a whiz kid at all things related to love.

SAM
Really?

CANDACE
Really. And if you're nice to me, maybe I'll give you a few tips.

SAM
Wow, thanks.

Candace's iPhone vibrates. She checks an incoming text. She's startled by what she reads.

CANDACE
What the f...

She glances at Sam and catches herself.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
...hell.

SAM
What's the matter?

CANDACE
My friend Shayne says that my so-called friend Hayley asked my boyfriend out to dinner tonight. And he's going.

SAM
Sounds complicated.

CANDACE
It is.

Candace thinks a moment. An idea hits her.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Come on.
She picks up and leaves the room. Sam follows.

INT. CANDACE'S BEDROOM

Candace goes to her closet and removes a shoe box from the side. She opens it and takes out a wad of cash. She holds it up to Sam.

CANDACE
My emergency stash. And this is an emergency.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Jennifer sits on the couch playing on her iPad while listing to some tunes with earbuds.

Candace and Sam enter. Jennifer removes the buds.

JENNIFER
Hey there.

CANDACE
We're hungry.

JENNIFER
I thought you already had dinner before I got here.

CANDACE
We did. But we're hungry again.

JENNIFER
I'm sure there's something in the kitchen. You want me to get it for you? How 'bout some ice cream?

CANDACE
We want sushi.

JENNIFER
Sushi?!

CANDACE
Yeah, we love sushi. Don't we, Sam?

Sam grimaces. Candace elbows him.

SAM
Yeah, we love it. Raw fish wrapped in dried seaweed. It's the best.
JENNIFER
Well I don't know where we can get sushi.

CANDACE
I do.  Rock-n-Sake.

JENNIFER
Cathy, your aunt didn't say anything about leaving the house. And besides, I don't have money for a restaurant.

Candace pulls out her wad of cash.

CANDACE
I do.

JENNIFER
I don't know. Maybe I should call your aunt and see if it's okay.

She starts to reach for her phone on the table next to her.

CANDACE
No!

Jennifer stops.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
You don't want to bother them. My uncle's probably getting his award now.

SAM
Yeah, it's a big award...a huge award. The President's coming...the Vice President's coming...

Candace turns to Sam and motions with her index finger horizontally across her throat to cut it. Sam does.

She turns back to Jennifer.

CANDACE
Come on. They won't care. And it's really close.

Candace goes over to Jennifer and puts on her sweetest seven year old smile.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Pleeeeeease.
EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The sign reads: Ruth's Chris Steak House. Valets park expensive cars in front.

INT. RUTH'S CHRIS PRIVATE ROOM

It's cocktail hour before the banquet for Scott begins. Scott and Pam mingle with guests. At the moment they speak to a husband who works with Scott and his wife. They are JERRY and ALYSSA.

ALYSSA
(to Pam)
Jerry tells me that you're an English professor at Tulane.

PAM
Yes, that's right.

ALYSSA
That must be fascinating work.

Jerry (already tipsy) elbows Scott.

JERRY
It's got to be more fascinating than looking at freakin' spread sheets all day long, huh, Scott?

Scott rubs his aching arm where Jerry elbowed him.

ALYSSA
Isn't your daughter Candace?

PAM
Uh-huh.

ALYSSA
Well, I've got to tell you a story about her.

Scott and Pam exchange a wary glance, obviously preparing for the worst.

ALYSSA (CONT'D)
Our daughter Sofia goes to Camp Kateri. Candace was her junior counselor last year.

PAM
That's right. She's hoping to be a senior counselor this summer.
ALYSSA
She certainly deserves it. I have to tell you that Sofia has always been incredibly shy. She never even liked camp -- until your daughter came along.

SCOTT
Really?

ALYSSA
Oh, yes. Candace made sure to spend extra time with Sofia and brought her right out of her shell. By the end of the session, she was like a new person.

Scott and Pam exchange another glance, but this time one of surprise -- even pride.

PAM
Wow, we never knew. Candace rarely tells us anything.

ALYSSA
Then I'm glad you heard it from me. She's so wonderful with all the kids. I've heard other parents rave about her, too.

Jerry elbows Scott again.

JERRY
Sounds like you sure did something right with her, huh, buddy boy?

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
A different restaurant. The sign on this one reads: Rock-n-Sake.

INT. ROCK-N-SAKE
The hip sushi place is filled with good looking young men and women, many of which are millennials. Techno music plays in the background.

Jennifer, Sam and Candace are led to the dining area by a HOSTESS. As they go, Candace scans the restaurant. She spots what she's looking for: Spencer and Hayley sitting alone at a table. The table directly behind them happens to be vacant.

The hostess begins to seat them at another table.
Candace points to the table behind Spencer and Hayley.

CANDACE
Can we sit over there instead?

JENNIFER
Cathy, what's wrong with this one?

Candace shivers and hugs herself.

CANDACE
It's kind of cold right here.

SAM
I'm fine.

CANDACE
(sternly)
Well I'm not -- and I'm paying.

The hostess is taken aback. So is Jennifer.

HOSTESS
Sure, honey. Whatever you say.

She moves them over to the other table. Candace shields herself behind Jennifer so Spencer doesn't see her. Sam also clings to Jennifer, but for a different reason.

At the table, Candace takes the seat directly behind Hayley so they are back-to-back.

CANDACE
(to hostess)
Much better. Thanks, lady.

HOSTESS
You're welcome.

She hands Jennifer and Sam a menu. Candace gets an anime coloring book and two crayons.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)
Your waitress will be over in a sec.

Jennifer and Sam begin to browse their menus.

SAM
I guess they don't have burgers here, do they?

JENNIFER
I don't think so, Sam.
SAM
Maybe next time you babysit we can
go to Atomic Burger.
(hopeful)
Or we could even go if you're not
babysitting.

Meanwhile, Candace tunes into the conversation right behind
her between Spencer and Hayley.

HAYLEY
Where do you think you're going to
apply to school?

SPENCER
Well, my parents want me to stay in-
state, but I'm thinking either U.T.
Austin or Arizona.

HAYLEY
Oh my god, those are my top two
choices! Of course, I'd probably
stand a better chance getting into
Arizona.

SPENCER
I hear that. Everyone and his brother
wants to go to U.T.

HAYLEY
And his sister.

Hayley chuckles; Spencer forces a polite grin. He's clearly
not into Hayley as much as she is into him.

Candace scowls as she hears the conversation. She mutters
under her breath...

CANDACE
(mocking Hayley)
"And his sister."

The WAITRESS comes over.

WAITRESS
Have you guys decided yet?

Without looking at the menu, Candace announces...

CANDACE
We'll start with an order of edamame.
Then we'll have a Dream Roll, a Dragon
Roll...and the Rock-n-Roll.
The waitress marks them down.

WAITRESS
Wow, you know your sushi, young lady.

CANDACE
Thanks. I learned it on Sesame Street. The Japanese version.

WAITRESS
O...kay.
(pause)
Anything to drink?

CANDACE
I wish. But I better stick with water tonight.

INT. RUTH'S CHRIS LADIES RESTROOM - SAME TIME

Pam is at the counter making a phone call in private. The line RINGS and RINGS. Finally, Candace's voice answers at the other end with a recorded message...

CANDACE (V.O.)
Like totally...like wow...like I'm not here right now. Leave a message at the beep...I'll call you back if you're not a creep.

There is a BEEP and Pam leaves a message.

PAM
(urgently)
Candace, where are you? I want to make sure everything is okay. Call me back or text ASAP.

She ends the call.

VOICE (O.S.)
Is there a problem?

Pam turns to see Alyssa standing there.

PAM
Oh...just trying to reach Candace.

ALYSSA
Don't worry. Knowing what I know about her, I'll bet she's probably immersed in her studies right now.
(MORE)
(with a wink)
Sounds like the acorn doesn't fall far from the tree.

INT. ROCK-N-SAKE

Spencer and Hayley share an order of edamame. The waitress also brings an order of edamame over to Candace and company.

Candace remains tuned to the conversation behind her as Sam continues to make small talk with Jennifer.

SAM
Say, Jennifer, do you happen to like the Big Bang Theory?

JENNIFER
I've only seen it a couple times. It's cute.

SAM
Interesting.

He turns to show her his profile.

SAM (CONT'D)
I've been told I resemble a young Howard.

As Sam continues to woo Jennifer, Candace leans back so she can better hear the conversation between Hayley and Spencer.

HAYLEY
Have you decided yet about prom?

SPENCER
What do you mean?

HAYLEY
I mean it sounds like Candace isn't going.

SPENCER
But I was just at her house this afternoon. Her mom said she expects her to be okay by then.

Candace seems pleased by Spencer's comment.

HAYLEY
That's not what I heard.
SPENCER
Really?

HAYLEY
Yeah. I heard she has a really bad disease...like that Ebola or something.

SPENCER
Ebola?!

HAYLEY
(coy)
That's what everyone's saying.

Spencer shakes his head in disbelief.

Candace is livid.

CANDACE
(mutters)
Bitch! I'll Ebola her!!

She spontaneously grabs an edamame pod and tosses it over her shoulder.

On Hayley: The pod lands right on top of her head. She panics as if a bug has landed there.

HAYLEY
Wha...what's that?

She reaches up and grabs at the edamame pod, which gets tangled in her hair. She finally gets it out.

HAYLEY (CONT'D)
How'd that get there?

Just then, another edamame pod plops right into her glass of water. She and Spencer watch as it slowly sinks to the bottom.

HAYLEY (CONT'D)
What the hell?

Spencer shrugs, but he does seem amused. So does Candace, who glances behind her, using her anime coloring book to shield her face.

HAYLEY (CONT'D)
Anyway, where was I?
(pause)
Oh, yeah...the prom.
(MORE)
HAYLEY (CONT'D)
Since it looks like Candace can't go...would you like to go with me?

Candace turns fifty shades of red.

SPENCER
I thought Carson asked you.

HAYLEY
He did. But I could have a change in plans...
(flirtatiously)
...if another opportunity arises.

She reaches over and takes Spencer's hand.

HAYLEY (CONT'D)
Besides, whether or not Candace can make it, I know you'd have a much better time with me.

She takes Spencer's hand and places his middle finger in her mouth.

Candace turns around to look, again using her anime coloring book to shield her face.

CANDACE
(angered, to Jennifer)
I have to use the restroom.

JENNIFER
You need me to come with?

CANDACE
No, I'm good.

Candace suddenly and intentionally scoots back her chair as hard as she possibly can. The back of her chair hits Hayley's chair, violently jerking Hayley's head forward -- with Spencer's finger still in her mouth.

Hayley's eyes pop out of her head as Spencer's finger goes halfway down her throat. She begins to loudly gag and hack. Diners at the neighboring tables turn to see.

Candace happily heads off in the direction of the restroom.

SPENCER
Hayley, are you all right? I'm so sorry!
Hayley looks to see the little girl walking off. She tries to speak, but is still hacking and gagging...

HAYLEY
That little...
(hack, hack)
...brat...
(gag, gag)
...did this!

Just then, Candace turns back around and makes eye contact with Hayley. She stares at her with a smug grin. Hayley's eyes open wide -- as if she recognizes the little girl from somewhere.

SPENCER
Come on, let's get out of here.

He removes his wallet and tosses some bills on the table.

SPENCER (CONT'D)
That should cover it.

As they pick up to leave, Hayley glances back in the direction where the little girl was -- but she's gone.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jennifer's neon green Beetle goes down the road.

INT. BEETLE

Sam sits in the front passenger seat. Candace sits in back. Jennifer sees something up ahead and her eyes light up.

JENNIFER
Hey, I got an idea.

SAM
What?

JENNIFER
We're gonna go ice skating.

CANDACE
Ice skating?

JENNIFER
Yeah, it's still early. Come on, it'll be fun.

CANDACE
I'm down.
JENNIFER
How about you, Sam?

SAM
Well, I've never actually skated before.
    (grins)
I may have to hold your hand.

INT. ICE SKATING ARENA/RINK

Jennifer, Candace and Sam sit on a bench in an area adjacent to the rink where they lace up their rented skates.

SAM
I don't know if this is a good idea.
I'm not very good at sports.

CANDACE
Stop whining. It's a cinch. I've been ice skating for years.

JENNIFER
For years? When'd you start?

CANDACE
Uh, as soon as I could walk my parents had me in skates.

SAM
As soon as I could walk my parents had me reading the dictionary.

Jennifer has her skates laced and is ready to go.

JENNIFER
All right. I'm heading out. I'll meet you guys on the rink.

She goes and begins to skate. Sam watches her in awe.

Candace snaps her fingers in front of Sam's eyes.

CANDACE
Snap out of it, lover boy.

Sam does. He then turns his attention to something else on the rink that startles, even frightens him.

SAM
Oh no.

CANDACE
What's that?
SAM
See those two over there?

He points at TWO BOYS his own age skating along.

CANDACE
Yeah, what about them?

SAM
They live down the street from me.

CANDACE
So what's the big deal?

SAM
They hate me.

CANDACE
Why's that?

SAM
Uh, look at me.

She does.

CANDACE
Good point. But don't worry about them. Just concentrate on staying on your feet.

INT. RINK - SLIGHTLY LATER

Jennifer continues to glide effortlessly around the rink. She's found a couple of girlfriends and they skate together.

Candace is also adept on her skates, but Sam has problems. He keeps slipping and sliding -- and falling.

SAM
Why couldn't we have gone bumper bowling instead? That I can do.

Candace leaves Sam behind and continues on.

Just as Sam manages to get to his feet by clinging to the side, one of the boys he pointed out to Candace sees him. He calls out to his friend...

BOY 1
Hey, look who's here.

The second boy sees Sam. Devious smiles register on both their faces as they head towards Sam.
Sam still clings to the wall with his feet flailing about on the ice.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Having a problem, dweeb?

Sam looks to see the boys scowling at him. He falls again.

**SAM**

No, not really. I love falling on my butt. It's a hobby of mine.

**BOY 2**

Then let us help.

**BOY 1**

Yeah, it's the neighborly thing to do.

Each boy grabs one of Sam's arms and they lift him up. Then they begin to skate with Sam between them. His feet barely touch the ice.

On the other side of the rink, Candace skates with Jennifer and her friends.

The boys pick up speed with Sam still between them.

**SAM**

Uh, this really isn't necessary.

**BOY 1**

Oh, I think it is.

They begin to skate directly towards the wall.

**BOY 1 (CONT'D)**

On the count of three, you're on your own.

Sam sees the wall straight ahead as the boys pick up steam.

**BOY 1 (CONT'D)**

One...

**BOY 2**

Two...

Sam closes his eyes and braces himself.

**BOYS TOGETHER**

Three!
They release Sam and quickly turn to avoid the wall themselves. Sam smashes into it with a THUD. The boys burst out laughing and skate on.

Sam manages to sit up; his nose bleeds and his glasses are askew.

    VOICE (O.S.)
    What happened?

Sam looks up to see Candace.

    SAM
    What do you think?

Candace looks over to see the two boys laughing hysterically. Her eyes narrow.

    CANDACE
    Stay here.

    SAM
    As if I have a choice.

INT. RINK - MOMENTS LATER

The two boys still skate around together. Just then, one of them looks to see an angry little girl skating right at them like a missile.

    BOY 1
    What the...

Just as Candace reaches the boys, she does a split and trips them both at the same time. They crash hard to the ground in a heap.

Candace skates back around to them. They're still dazed and confused on the ice.

    BOY 2
    Whadya do that for?

    BOY 1
    Yeah, who are you?

    CANDACE
    I'll tell you who I am, you little shits.

She points to Sam.
CANDACE (CONT'D)
I'm his guardian angel. And if I ever hear of you messing with him again, I'm gonna cut off your dicks and stick them so far up your asses that you'll literally be effing yourselves.
(pause)
Got it?

The two boys are so stunned that all they can do is nod.

Just then, Candace's phone RINGS. She grabs it from her pocket. For the benefit of the boys, she switches to her sweet little girl's voice.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Hi, Mommy.

INT. RUTH'S CHRIS RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

Pam is in a corridor on her phone. Cross-cut between Pam and Candace.

PAM
Candace, where have you been? I've been trying to call you.

CANDACE
My phone was on silent.

PAM
Is everything okay?

Candace glances down at the two boys who remain literally frozen in place.

CANDACE
Yes, it's all good.

PAM
And how's Sam?

CANDACE
He's good, too.

PAM
All right. We'll see you later then. Love you.

CANDACE
Love you too, Mommy.
Candace ends the call. She turns back to the boys, giving them the universal sign for "I'm watching you" by pointing two fingers at her eyes and then back at them. They remain speechless as Candace skates off.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Scott's already in bed and the door is closed. Pam enters from the adjacent bathroom. Like Candace, she also wears a New Orleans Saints tee shirt to sleep in -- but Pam's is short, well above her knees.

Scott watches Pam closely, admiringly as she comes to bed and climbs in. Once she's under covers, Scott cuddles up to her from behind. He begins to caress her and kiss the nape of her neck.

    SCOTT
    You look so hot tonight.

    PAM
    You've gotta be kidding.

    SCOTT
    Come on...let's play a little ball.
    I'll be Drew Brees and you can be my tight end.

    PAM
    Scott, that sounds so gay.

    SCOTT
    Anything but.

He kisses her neck more. She begins to give in.

    PAM
    What about Candace and Sam?

    SCOTT
    They won't bother us. Come on. It's been so long.

    PAM
    All right. But we've gotta be extra quiet.

    SCOTT
    Yes!
        (whispers)
    I mean, yes.

They both shed their clothes from underneath the sheets and toss them aside. They begin to kiss...and moan.
Just as they're about to engage...

CANDACE'S VOICE (O.S.)
I can't sleep.

Scott and Pam break apart with lightning fast speed. They look up to see the bedroom door open with Candace standing there.

Candace plops down on the bed. Naked beneath the sheets, Scott and Pam frantically pull the sheets close to their necks so their bodies are completely covered.

PAM
What's wrong?

CANDACE
What do you think? I'm totally stressed.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Wearing his PJ's, Sam exits the guest bedroom and heads to the hall bathroom. He hears voices coming from the master bedroom and stops to eavesdrop.

INT. BEDROOM

Candace moves to the head of the bed, right in between Scott and Pam.

CANDACE
I'm gonna sleep in here tonight. Just like old times.

She starts to scoot underneath the sheets. Scott abruptly puts his arm down to stop her.

SCOTT
No!

CANDACE
What's the matter with you?!

PAM
It's just that...

SCOTT
It's uh...

Just then, Candace spots Scott's underwear on the floor next to the bed.
CANDACE
Oh my god! You were doing it, weren't you?!

A shocked look registers on her face.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Now I know!

PAM
What?

CANDACE
All those times when I was little you were lying to me.
(pause)
Like when Hayley was spending the night that time and we heard mom screaming in here...

Pam and Scott exchange a look; their gig is up.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
So I came to the door to see what was wrong and dad said you were just watching a horror movie and mom got scared.
(pause)
You were in here doing it!

She grimaces.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Ewwwwww!

SCOTT
Can we please change the subject?

CANDACE
Uh, yeaaah.

PAM
I got one. How's your SAT prep going? You know the test is just two weeks away.

CANDACE
Are you kidding me? I tell you I'm stressed and that's your response?

PAM
Candace, I'm just trying to help.
CANDACE
Well you're doing a pretty shitty job of it, Mom.

She hops off the bed.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
I'm out of here.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME
Still standing outside the door, Sam gets a knowing look.

SAM (mutters)
Candace.

He hurries into the bathroom just as Candace exits the bedroom.

INT. CANDACE'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING
Candace lies in bed reading the SAT Study Guide. She appears incredibly bored and disinterested.

VOICE (O.S.)
Studying hard...Candace?

Candace looks up to see Sam standing at the door.

CANDACE
Come in and shut the door.

INT. CANDACE'S ROOM - SLIGHTLY LATER
Candace and Sam sit on the bed talking.

CANDACE
...and that's what happened. I swear to god.

SAM
I get it.

CANDACE
What? You really do?

SAM
Sure. Remember, you're talking to probably the biggest science fiction nerd in all of New Orleans.
CANDACE
Have you ever heard of anything like this happening before?

Sam thinks a moment.

SAM
Well, there was Matthew Ryder.

CANDACE
Who the hell is Matthew Ryder?

SAM
You may know of him as Waverider. In Armageddon 2001, he traveled to the past to escape Monarch, the dystopian dictator...and subsequently teamed up with Captain Atom. (pause) But I think that's probably a little different.

Candace stares blankly back at him.

CANDACE
Uh, yeah.

SAM
So, what do you do now?

CANDACE
Just sit and wait until that crazy voodoo guy gets in the candles so we can reverse the curse...or whatever this is.

SAM
Makes sense to me.

Sam glances at Candace's SAT Study Guide.

SAM (CONT'D)
Mind if I have a look?

CANDACE
Knock yourself out.

She hands it to him. Sam flips to a page and studies it.

SAM
This stuff's not so hard.

CANDACE
Maybe to you.
Sam thinks to himself.

SAM
I got an idea.

CANDACE
Why am I not surprised?

SAM
I help you prepare for the SAT in exchange for you helping me.

CANDACE
What could I possibly help you at?

A big grin registers on Sam's face.

MONTAGE

INT. CANDACE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Candace sits on the bed as Sam tutors her. He holds the SAT Study Guide in hand.

SAM
Okay, the first thing to know about standardized tests is to never leave any multiple choice questions blank. If you don't know an answer, it's always better to guess. Got it?

CANDACE
(shrugs)
I guess.

SAM
See, you're learning already!

INT. GUEST ROOM - DAY

Sam sits on the bed as Candace tutors him. She has photos of cute girls from a preteen magazine taped on the wall. She points to them as she speaks.

CANDACE
Okay, the first thing to know about girls is that they like guys who are confident but also sensitive. Got it?

Sam suddenly puts down his head, covers his eyes, and begins to cry.
CANDACE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?!

Sam looks up. His eyes are dry; he was pretending.

SAM
Just what you told me.

CANDACE
I said sensitive...not pathetic.

INT. CANDACE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam uses flash cards to help Candace with her SAT vocabulary. He holds up a card with the word "Noxious."

SAM
Use it in a sentence.

Candace thinks a moment.

CANDACE
Got it!
(pause)
That guy hitting on me was literally so ob-noxious I couldn't even handle it.

SAM
Let's get serious here.

CANDACE
I am.

Sam shakes his head.

SAM
Let's try another...

He holds up the next card. It reads "Cajole."

CANDACE
Too easy!
(Spanish accent)
He had a big pair of ca-holies.

INT. CANDACE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Sam sits in front of the mirror. Candace stands next to him.

CANDACE
We're gonna give you a complete 180.
SAM
But I like the way I look. People
tell me I resemble a young Clark
Kent. Or Peter Parker.

CANDACE
I think we can do better.

SAM
What's better than Superman or Spider-
Man?

CANDACE
Uh, Zac Efron. Or Chris Hemsworth.

She takes some hair gel, rubs it in Sam's scalp, and then
gives him a spike on top (a la David Beckham).

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Not bad...not bad at all.

SAM
I don't like it.

CANDACE
You should. It's very in right now.

She studies Sam a moment, then starts to reach for his
glasses.

SAM
Hey, what are you doing?

CANDACE
You need to lose those. They don't
work with the new hair.

SAM
Well my eyes don't work without them.

Candace goes ahead and removes the glasses.

CANDACE
Sometimes you have to make small
sacrifices for the sake of beauty,
Sam.

Sam squints as he tries to see himself in the mirror.

SAM
I can't even see myself now.

CANDACE
Good. Then you can't whine anymore.
INT. CANDACE'S ROOM - DAY

Sam continues with his flash card vocabulary training. Slowly but surely, Candace begins to catch on. They go through the cards at a faster and faster rate.

INT. GUEST ROOM - DAY

Candace teaches Sam to walk like a hip, cool guy. He struggles at first, but also begins to catch on.

INT. CANDACE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sam stands at a white board showing Candace how to work a math equation. She sits on her bed paying close attention and taking notes.

Scott and Pam peek into the room to see Sam and Candace at work. They appear puzzled but pleased.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Candace turns on some music. She teaches Sam some New Orleans bounce dance moves. He's awkward at first, but then he begins to get it. They dance together in perfect harmony and have a great time.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Scott lies on a chaise lounge working on his iPad. From out of the blue, Candace plops down in the chaise next to him.

CANDACE

Hey, Dad.

SCOTT

Hey.

He takes a look around.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Where's Sam?

CANDACE

Upstairs playing a video game.

SCOTT

Something tells me he's probably pretty good at that.

CANDACE

Something tells me you're right.
They share a grin.

A moment passes. Candace sees something out of the corner of her eye.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Oh my god!

She gets up and goes over to an old croquet set in the corner of the yard.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
I didn't know we still had this.

SCOTT
Actually, we're not supposed to. Mom's been telling me to take it to Goodwill.

CANDACE
Well I'm glad you haven't.

Candace grabs a metal wicket and sticks it in the grass several feet away. She goes back to the set and removes a mallet and ball. She aims, swings...and the ball heads right through the center of the wicket.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
I still got it!

SCOTT
Not bad.

CANDACE
Come on, Dad. Let's play.

SCOTT
Candace, I've got work to do.

CANDACE
Oh, come on. We haven't played since I was little.

Scott gazes at her. A loving smile overcomes him.

SCOTT
Well, seeing that you're little again, I guess we have to.

CANDACE
Yes!

He gets up and joins her at the set as they remove the rest of the wickets.
CANDACE (CONT'D)
Hey, Dad. Before we play, there's one thing...

SCOTT
What's that?

CANDACE
I may be small in size. But I can still kick your ass.

SCOTT
Spoken like a true seven year old.

They begin to place the wickets around the yard.

On house: Pam looks out through a back window with a big grin as she watches Scott and Candace start to play.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A white BMW pulls up and stops on the street two houses down and across from the LeJune home.

INT. BMW

Hayley is the driver. Shayne sits next to her. Hayley turns off the car, then grabs a pair of binoculars from the back floorboard.

HAYLEY
Okay, now we wait.

SHAYNE
For what?

HAYLEY
I don't know. Until we see something unusual.

SHAYNE
Like what?

Hayley focuses the binoculars on a second floor window.

HAYLEY
Like Candace.

SHAYNE
What's so unusual about Candace being in her own house?

Exasperated, Hayley turns to Shayne.
HAYLEY
Look, I don't believe all this stuff about her being sick. I think there's something else going on.
(pause)
And I told you about that little bitch at the restaurant.

SHAYNE
Yeah...yeah. She had eyes just like Candace.

HAYLEY
That's right. And look at this.

She opens the center console and grabs a small flashlight and a photo. She turns on the flashlight and aims it at the photo so Shayne can see.

INSERT: The photo is of Candace and Hayley together when they were both seven.

SHAYNE
So what about it?

HAYLEY
That's exactly what that little girl looked like. She was even wearing the same shirt.

SHAYNE
Meaning?

HAYLEY
I don't know. But there's something going on -- and I'm gonna find out what it is.

SHAYNE
Hayley, this obsession you have with Spencer is really getting to you.

HAYLEY
Maybe Spencer's worth getting.

SHAYNE
But he's Candace's boyfriend!

HAYLEY
What is it with you and Candace? Maybe you're the one who's obsessed.

Hayley turns her focus back to the second floor window. Shayne opens the door to get out.
SHAYNE
You know what? You can go it alone.
I'm outta here.
(pause)
Candace is ten times the friend you are. She always has been.

She slams the door shut and begins to walk back in the direction they came from.

HAYLEY
(mutters)
Enjoy the walk home.

Hayley focuses her attention back on the house.

INT. CANDACE'S ROOM - NIGHT
Candace and Sam lie on Candace's bed watching a movie on TV and eating from a big bowl of popcorn. The movie ends.

SAM
So what did you think?

CANDACE
I liked it. But what happened to Peter's parents? How come he lived with his aunt and uncle?

SAM
Peter was told when he was young that they died in a car accident, so that's when he moved in with Uncle Ben and Aunt May.
(pause)
But in reality, they were spies who were traitors to the Russians. And that's how they died.

CANDACE
That's kind of sad.

SAM
Yeah, but we all have our dark side.

CANDACE
I guess so.

Candace's iPhone vibrates. She grabs it and looks at an incoming text.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Shit!
SAM
What is it?

CANDACE
It's from my friend Shayne.
(pause)
See for yourself...

She hands him the phone so Sam can read the text. As Sam does, Candace turns off the light and goes to her window. She stealthily pulls back the shade and peeks outside.

Her POV: Hayley's white BMW is parked on the street two houses down. Hayley can be seen inside with binoculars looking right back at the LeJune home. But being that Candace has dimmed the lights, Hayley can't see her.

Sam joins her at the window and peeks out.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
What a bitch.

SAM
Yeah, what a bitch.

CANDACE
Hey, watch your language!

SAM
What? You said it yourself.

CANDACE
But you're just a kid.

SAM
Sorry.

A pause.

CANDACE
I'd love to get her somehow.

Sam thinks to himself. He glances at the TV where the credits are still rolling from the movie they watched. A mischievous grin registers on his face.

SAM
I think I know how.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Hayley's car is still parked in the same spot. A street light directly over the car is the only light around.
CU of Sam's Dark Knight sling-shot being pulled back...then a rock flies through the air and shatters the street light. It's now almost pitch black.

INT. HAYLEY'S CAR

Hayley hears the sound of the glass shattering and looks up through her windshield to see what happened. Then, when she turns back to look through her side window...

A masked face wearing a hoodie pops out of the darkness right at the window; it gazes ominously at Hayley. It's an eerie Mardi Gras-style mask worn by Sam. Hayley's view is such that she can't tell it's just a kid.

Hayley is already frightened half to death when...Sam lifts his hand to reveal a giant red crab claw. It's one of Pam's oven mitts, but in the darkness it appears quite scary.

Sam points the giant claw at Hayley, who SCREAMS bloody murder. A second later, there's a KNOCK on Hayley's front passenger window. She turns to see another masked face (Candace) wearing a hoodie. Using her own crab claw, Candace menacingly beckons Hayley.

INT. CAR/EXT. STREET

Still SCREAMING, Hayley frantically cranks the car. She accidentally puts it in reverse and SCREECHES backwards, hitting a trash can and then a neighbor's brick mailbox, badly denting the rear of her BMW. She then manages to put the car in drive -- and speeds off down the street.

Candace and Sam burst out laughing and slap high fives with their crab claws.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Scott works on his iPad as Pam watches the late local news on TV. She mutes the volume and turns to Scott.

PAM
You know, this sounds crazy -- but I think Sam is having a positive effect on Candace.

SCOTT
You think?

PAM
Yeah, I do. It's really amazing. I've worked with her all these years on her studies -- and nothing.

(MORE)
PAM (CONT'D)
Then Sam comes along and in just a few days he has a break through.

SCOTT
You think you've been too hard on her?

PAM
Maybe so. Must be the teacher in me.

SCOTT
I've probably been a little rigid myself sometimes.

PAM
A little?

Pam glances at the TV and her eyes open wide.

PAM (CONT'D)
What the hell?

She un-mutes the volume. It's a breaking news report.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - NIGHT (ON TV)

A female REPORTER stands in the street in front of Youdo Voodoo. There are several police cars with flashing lights and DEA vans in the street around it.

REPORTER
I'm at the French Quarter where a DEA raid has uncovered what could very well be the largest drug front in the Gulf region.
(pause)
Our sources tell us that the proprietor of Youdo Voodoo, Steven Schwartzberg, aka Papa Doc, has been selling and shipping massive amounts of marijuana hidden inside a variety of products including voodoo dolls, statues and candle holders.

The front doors of Youdo Voodoo open. Two DEA agents escort the handcuffed Papa Doc out the door.

REPORTER (CONT'D)
There he is now...let me see if I can get a word with him.
The reporter approaches Papa Doc as the agents are about to place him into the back of a police car. They pause a moment to let the reporter interview him.

    REPORTER (CONT'D)
    Mr. Schwartzberg, are the allegations true? What do you have to say for yourself?

    PAPA DOC
    You can call me Papa Doc, sweetheart. As for the allegations, they are totally false.

    REPORTER
    But what about the two tons of marijuana the agents found in the back of your store?

    PAPA DOC
    Oh, that? It's just for my glaucoma. (smiles to camera) To my loyal customers out there, don't worry...Papa Doc will be back soon with a "Get out of jail" sale! (pause) Everything will be marked down including oils, bath salts, beads...

An AGENT pushes Papa Doc's head down to get him in the back seat. But Papa Doc keeps going...

    PAPA DOC (CONT'D)
    ...talismans, tarot cards, potions, lotions...

The TV is turned off.

Back to Scott and Pam, who are clearly stunned by the news.

    SCOTT
    What do we tell Candace?

    PAM
    What do we tell everyone?

EXT. FRONT PORCH - THE NEXT MORNING

Back from vacation and burned to a crisp, Karen picks Sam up. Mike remains in the car waiting.

    KAREN
    Thanks so much, you guys. I hope Sam wasn't any trouble.
PAM
Not at all.

KAREN
Sam, where are your glasses?

Sam proudly touches the top of his hair, which is still spiked.

SAM
They don't work with the hair.

Candace and Sam exchange a grin.

KAREN
Thank your aunt and uncle -- and say good-bye.

SAM
(to Scott and Pam)
Thanks for having me.

He turns to Candace.

SAM (CONT'D)
Bye, Can...uh, Cathy.

CANDACE
(winks)
Bye, dweeb.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SLIGHTLY LATER

Candace sits in a chair. Her parents sit across from her with glum expressions.

PAM
Candace, we have something to tell you.

Candace senses something wrong.

CANDACE
What? It's about the voodoo guy, isn't it? I bet he's not getting the candles, is he?

SCOTT
Well, see what happened...

The doorbell RINGS.

Scott and Pam exchange a puzzled look.
PAM
Who could that be?

SCOTT
No idea.

Scott gets up and leaves the room.

INT. FOYER/EXT. FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Scott arrives at the front door and opens it. Standing there is an elderly woman with grey dreadlocks, black top hat, tie die shirt, jeans and sandals. She's the female version of Papa Doc. This is MAMA DOC.

Mama Doc holds a box the size of a shoe box. It's wrapped in plain brown paper.

SCOTT
Uh, can I help you?

MAMA DOC
No, but I think I can help you.

Scott gazes at the woman a moment.

SCOTT
Wait a minute. You look familiar.

MAMA DOC
I'm Mama Doc. You know my old man.

SCOTT
You mean...from the Quarter? The one on the news last night?

MAMA DOC
That's the one.

She holds out the box to Scott.

MAMA DOC (CONT'D)
He asked me to make sure you get this.

Scott takes it.

SCOTT
Is it what I think it is?

MAMA DOC
You mean three ounces of primo weed?
SCOTT
What?!

MAMA DOC
Just messin' with you.

Mama Doc begins to head back down the sidewalk. An old Volkswagen van is parked on the curb.

SCOTT
Wait a minute...do I owe you anything?

MAMA DOC
Don't worry about it. Just give us a good review on yelp.

She flashes the peace sign and goes.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Scott re-enters the room with the box.

PAM
What is it?

CANDACE
Who's it from?

SCOTT
You wouldn't believe it if I told you.

He unwraps and opens it.

He removes two purple candles, identical to the others. Candace sees them and excitedly jumps up out of the chair. She takes the candles and holds them up, beaming.

CANDACE
Oh my god. We got them!

Scott sees something else in the box: a note. He removes it.

PAM
What's it say?

Scott reads the note out loud.

SCOTT
"Papa Doc always comes through. Come visit me when you can at my new address...to be determined.

(MORE)
CANDACE
What does that mean?

PAM
Never mind. It's not important now.

CANDACE
You're right about that.

She cradles the candles.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Prom...here I come!

INT. LEJUNE DINING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Candace is seated at the table with Scott. Pam is o.s. in the adjacent kitchen.

CANDACE
(shouts)
Mom, what are you doing?

PAM (O.S.)
You'll see.

CANDACE
(to Scott)
You know what she's doing?

SCOTT
Patience, my dear.

A moment later..

PAM (O.S.)
Okay, ready or not.

Pam turns off the lights and enters the room. She carries a chocolate cake with the two purple candles. The candles are already burning; they cast the only light in the room.

She sets the cake down on the table in front of Candace, then takes a seat.

PAM (CONT'D)
If we're going to re-do this thing, we're going to do it right.
Scott and Pam gaze at Candace, then turn back to the cake and close their eyes as Candace watches.

They concentrate hard as they make their silent wishes...and then blow out the candles. The room goes dark.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Scott and Pam are sound asleep. The clock reads: 6:05am.


    VOICE (O.S.)
    (softly)
    Dad...

Without opening his eyes...

    SCOTT
    What is it?

    VOICE (O.S.)
    I don't feel well.

Scott finally cracks open his eyes and slips on his glasses.

His POV: Candace is standing at his side. It's still seven year old Candace. Her face is flushed, her eyes are glassy, she looks terrible.

    SCOTT
    I see what you mean. The wish didn't work.

    CANDACE
    No, not that.

    SCOTT
    Then what?

    CANDACE
    My throat's killing me.

Pam wakes up to see Candace standing there.

    PAM
    What's wrong, sweetie?

    CANDACE
    I'm sick.

Pam gets up and goes to Candace. She feels her head.
PAM
My god, you're burning up with fever.
(pause)
Scott, we've got to get her to a doctor.

SCOTT
What doctor? We can't take her to Jacobs. She'd ask too many questions.

PAM
I know. There's a doc-in-the-box down from Rouses.

INT. EMERGENCY CLINIC - DAY
Scott stands at the front counter. Pam and Candace stand at his side.

The RECEPTIONIST gets off the phone.

RECEPTIONIST
Your insurance company says your policy covers you and your wife...and a seventeen year old daughter.
(she glances at Candace)
There's nothing about a young child.

SCOTT
Then what do we do?

RECEPTIONIST
You can pay the full amount since she's not covered.
(pause)
It could be a bit pricey without insurance.

SCOTT
Look, I don't care what it costs. She is my daughter and money's no object.
(pause)
Just get us in. Please.

Scott glances over at Candace, who seems touched by her dad's concern.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY
A DOCTOR checks Candace out. Scott and Pam stand nearby.

The doctor sticks a tongue depressor down Candace's throat and takes a look.
DOCTOR
I'm not surprised she feels like this. Her tonsils are huge. I'm sure it's strep.

Pam turns to Scott.

PAM
Just like the good old days.

DOCTOR
What do you mean?

SCOTT
Just that she has a history of strep.

DOCTOR
Well I'd look into getting those tonsils removed ASAP.

CANDACE
No way in hell I'm going through that again.

DOCTOR
Excuse me?

CANDACE
You heard me. Been there, done that.

DOCTOR
Young lady, I'm afraid you must be mistaken. Tonsils normally don't grow back, especially at your age.

CANDACE
They do when you've been Benjamin Buttoned.

The doctor stares blankly back at her.

EXT. PHARMACY DRIVE-THRU - DAY

Scott's car pulls out of the drive-thru lane.

INT. CAR

Scott begins the drive home. Pam turns around to Candace in back.

PAM
Once you start on the medicine, you should be better in no time at all.

(MORE)
PAM (CONT'D)
I bet even tomorrow you'll be like new.

CANDACE
Yeah, big whoop. It's not like I'll be going to prom. Much less anywhere else.

As Scott drives on, Candace gazes at both parents in front. For a brief second, she sees them both 10 years younger, when they actually were driving seven year old Candace home from the doctor.

Candace shakes her head to clear the image. Her expression suddenly softens.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
Thanks for taking such good care of me.

Scott smiles warmly back at Candace in the rearview mirror. Pam turns around again.

PAM
Always, sweetheart.

INT. CANDACE'S ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Wearing her pajamas, Candace sits glumly on the floor sorting through two cardboard boxes of her old clothes.

PAM'S VOICE (O.S.)
What are you doing?

Candace turns to see both her parents standing at the door.

CANDACE
Arranging my new wardrobe. Looks like I'll be needing it.

Scott and Pam take a seat on Candace's bed.

SCOTT
You feeling better today?

Candace glances over at the container of pink Amoxicillin on her nightstand.

CANDACE
Yeah. That pink puke still does the trick.
Candace continues to silently sort the clothes. She removes a beautiful little girl's dress from one of the boxes.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
I remember this one.

Candace holds it up in front of her. It's the perfect size for her age now.

PAM
I remember too. We got it for the Valentine's Day father-daughter dance at the club.

CANDACE
But then dad had to leave on a work trip and we couldn't go.

SCOTT
You don't know how disappointed I was, Candace.

CANDACE
I know. But then the next year I got sick and we couldn't go again. So I never got to wear it.

Candace starts to fold up the dress to put it back in the box.

CANDACE (CONT'D)
I guess I have shitty luck when it comes to dances.

Pam and Scott exchange a look.

PAM
(to Scott)
Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

He smiles back at her.

SCOTT
I believe I am.

PAM
Candace, put the dress on.

CANDACE
What?

SCOTT
You heard your mom. Put the dress on.
PAM
And meet us downstairs in fifteen minutes.

Pam reaches into the same box and grabs a pair of pretty shoes that match the dress.

PAM (CONT'D)
And wear these, too.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - SLIGHTLY LATER

Pam and Scott wait in the room for Candace. Scott has changed into a jacket and slacks.

Pam stands at a Bose-style Wi-Fi music system; she searches the menu using a remote.

A second later, Candace enters the room. She wears the dress and shoes -- and looks adorable. Pam and Scott gaze at her, beaming.

CANDACE
Will you tell me now what this is all about?

Pam motions to Scott.

PAM
I'll let your dad tell you.

SCOTT
Candace, since we didn't get to go to the dance back then, we're going to do it now.
(pause)
I know it's no consolation for missing the prom tonight...

Candace seems deeply touched.

CANDACE
It's perfect.

SCOTT
Really?

CANDACE
Really.

Scott puts his arms out to Candace as Pam turns on the music. Pam has already shut the blinds so it's fairly dark in the room. She dims the overhead lights a bit.
John Mayer's "Fathers be good to your daughters" begins to play. And Candace and Scott begin to dance.

Scott holds Candace tightly. Scott has tears in his eyes. So does Pam. Candace steps on her dad's feet and they start to dance like that.

As the song begins to wind down, Pam sees something that startles her. Her eyes open wide and her jaw drops.

Scott's eyes also open wide as he realizes something strange taking place.

When the song ends, we pull back to see that Candace is seventeen again. Her dress is bulging at the seams. She still stands on Scott's feet.

Candace doesn't even realize the change at first -- until she sees both parents gazing incredulously at her. Then she looks down at herself. She, too, is incredulous. She runs into an adjacent bathroom...

CANDACE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(screams)
OH MY GOD...I'M BACK!

EXT. STREET - THAT NIGHT

Candace's Volvo goes down the road.

INT. VOLVO

Wearing her prom dress, Candace drives. Seated next to her in a suit is Sam.

CANDACE
Thanks for being my prom date, Sam.

SAM
Are you kidding? It's the least I could do after you bailed me out with those two assholes at the skating rink.

CANDACE
Yeah, they were assholes, all right.

SAM
I don't know what you said to them, but every time they see me now they run the other way.

Candace brushes off some lint from Sam's lapel.
CANDACE
Are you nervous?

SAM
What? Me nervous? I'm a ten year old geek going to a high school prom. What's to be nervous about?

CANDACE
Well, I do appreciate it. And remember, just like you said, age is only a state of mind.

They pull up to the hotel drive where valets await.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

The prom is in full swing. On the dance floor are Candace's group of friends including Shayne and her date, Brooke and her date -- and Hayley and Spencer.

Shayne sees something out of the corner of her eye that causes a startled reaction. She taps Brooke on the shoulder and points at whatever it is o.s. Their dates also turn to look, then more and more students join in, all with the same shocked expressions.

Finally, Hayley and Spencer turn to look and see what the commotion is all about.

Their POV: Standing at the entrance to the ballroom is Candace. Standing next to her is a ten year old boy.

Hayley bursts out laughing. But not Spencer. He heads towards Candace, leaving Hayley standing alone.

HAYLEY
Spencer, what the hell?

Spencer reaches Candace.

SPENCER
You made it.

CANDACE
Looks that way.

He glances at Sam.

SPENCER
Who's this?

Sam takes a step towards Spencer.
SAM
Your worst nightmare.

Candace pulls Sam back.

CANDACE
Sam, please. Let me handle this.
(to Spencer)
Being that you took Hayley, I had to
find someone else to go with.

Spencer glances back at Hayley who glares at him, motioning
for him to come back.

SPENCER
Look, I didn't want to take her.
It's just that I didn't hear from
you...and she practically forced
herself on me.
(pause)
Candace, you're the only one I wanted
to be here with. Honest to god.

As Candace gazes at Spencer, her expression softens.

CANDACE
Where does that leave us now?
Tonight?

Sam tugs on Candace's arm.

SAM
Can I speak to you -- in private?

They move over a few feet, out of ear-shot of Spencer.

SAM (CONT'D)
No worries, Candace. I understand.
I got you here and that's good enough
for me.

Candace grins.

CANDACE
You got me here?

SAM
Well, kinda.

Sam takes a look around at all the hot girls. He likes what
he sees. He straightens his tie and prims his spiked hair.
SAM (CONT'D)
I think I'll just have a looksy around.
(pause)
After all, you know I like older women.

He heads off.

SPENCER
Wanna dance?

CANDACE
I'd love to.

They start to head off to the dance floor, but Spencer stops.

SPENCER
Uh, Candace, you're not contagious anymore, are you?

CANDACE
No, I'm not contagious.

He takes her hand and they go to the dance floor.

Back to Hayley standing all by herself.

HAYLEY
Son of a bitch!
(pause)
What am I -- chopped liver?

VOICE (O.S.)
I happen to like chopped liver.

Hayley turns to see the same ten year old boy who came with Candace standing next to her.

SAM
(winks)
I also don't mind a little tongue.

Hayley stares at Sam.

HAYLEY
You're pretty confident for a kid your age, aren't you?

Sam pauses for effect.

SAM
Confident...yet sensitive.
Hayley pauses for effect.

    HAYLEY
    Wanna dance?
    
    SAM
    Fuck yeah!

He takes her arm and off they go to the dance floor.

EXT. LEJUNE HOME - DAY

Title: 17 months later.

Candace's Volvo station wagon is parked in the driveway. Its tailgate is open and the back cargo area is stuffed with cardboard boxes and plastic bins.

Candace exits the house carrying another box. Scott follows carrying some clothes on hangers. And Pam comes out carrying a desk lamp in one hand and a bed pillow in the other.

They load everything into the back of the station wagon.

    CANDACE
    I think that's it.

Scott and Pam appear sad.

    PAM
    Yep.

    SCOTT
    Looks that way to me.

    CANDACE
    Well, then. I guess it's time...

    PAM
    Call us when you get there.

    CANDACE
    Mom, it's only eighty miles to LSU.

Scott claws the air and growls like Papa Doc did.

    SCOTT
    Go Tigers!

    CANDACE
    Hey, maybe I should get some purple candles for my dorm room.
PAM
Uh, let's not and say we did.

They all share a laugh.

Candace gives them both big hugs, then climbs in the car as Scott closes the tailgate.

Candace rolls down the window.

CANDACE
I love you guys. And you know what else, Dad?

SCOTT
What?

CANDACE
I love this car.

With that, Candace drives off down the street.

Scott puts his arm around Pam.

SCOTT
There goes our little girl.

PAM
She's not so little anymore.

SCOTT
She'll always be our little girl.

They watch as Candace's forest green Volvo disappears in the distance.

FADE OUT

As the credits begin to roll...

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER STREET – DAY

Papa Doc is out of jail and doing a commercial. He's dressed as usual with one exception: an ankle monitoring bracelet.

Behind him is a new storefront with a sign that's covered with a large tarp.

PAPA DOC
Papa Doc here and I'd like to invite y'all down to the grand opening of my brand new digs...
He makes a grand gesture with his arm and the tarp drops, revealing the sign: **VOODOO IN THE BAYOU**.

**PAPA DOC (CONT'D)**
That's right. Voodoo in the Bayou is your Voodoo superstore...

He holds up a shrunken head on a stick.

**PAPA DOC (CONT'D)**
...with guaranteed *shrunken* prices every day!

He speaks to someone o.s.

**PAPA DOC (CONT'D)**
Mama, come on over here and tell 'em.

Mama Doc joins Papa Doc.

**MAMA DOC**
You got that right, Papa. We got wiccans...we got witchcraft...we got wands. We're your one stop shop for all your voodoo and hoodoo needs!!

**PAPA DOC**
So y'all come on down now to Voodoo in the Bayou.

Papa Doc turns to his other side.

**PAPA DOC (CONT'D)**
Hit it, boys!!

Pull back to reveal a four piece CAJUN BAND on the street. They play a reprise of Willy DeVille's "Voodoo Charm."

Papa Doc and Mama Doc begin to dance. Others from the street join in. It's a real New Orleans style celebration.

The music and dancing continue as the credits roll.