A SONG IN MY HEART

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Traffic congests the area.

SUPER: "MICHIGAN".

People move down the sidewalk in their daily routine.

A man in a black cowboy hat weaves his way through the city people, clearly out of place.

The man is GEORGE. A pleasant looking urban cowboy in his early twenties.

George gives a tip of his hat to a good-looking nonobservant woman. She passes him by.

He WHISTLES a happy tune as he walks on.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

TRISHA, mid-twenties, in a tailor-made suit, blonde hair in an updo, steps out of a store. Both of her arms are full of department store bags.

She takes a quick gimpse of her surroundings, her Heaven.

# TRISHA I love this city!

She notices a taxi cab coming her way. She rushes toward the curb. It drives on.

Another cab approaches. Trisha leans into the road, hails it. It's tire hits a puddle.

She dodges a splash of water.

# TRISHA

Jerk!

Checks her shoes.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

George WHISTLES a happy tune as he trots up steps.

He makes it to a door, unlocks it, and goes inside.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A large cardboard box sits in an abandoned lot that's overgrown with grass and weeds.

Trisha walks down the sidewalk. Her arms are still full with the shopping bags. As she comes closer to the box, it shakes with movement, and startles her.

She lifts her bags like a Louisville slugger, ready to strike at any trouble.

An old and dirty HOMELESS MAN pops his head out of the box.

HOMELESS MAN Hey, Barbie doll, if you let down your hair, I'll climb up your ladder of love.

Trisha cringes.

### TRISHA

Ew!

Her heel catches in the sidewalk crack and snaps off. She tumbles to the ground with a thump.

The homeless man stretches out of his box for a better look.

HOMELESS MAN You all right, baby?

She's slumped over in a heap.

TRISHA I'm perfectly fine, you filthy perv! And don't you call me baby! Just... leave me alone.

Trisha collects her heel.

TRISHA My favorite pair of Steve Maddens! I hate you!

He's unimpressed.

HOMELESS MAN You didn't have to fall that hard for me, baby. I usually leave em' with a broken heart.

Without a thought, and with the power of an all-star pitcher, Trisha heaves the heel at him.

The heel hurls end over end through the air...

...and bings him in the noggin. He sees stars. He's out cold.

TRISHA I told you not to call me baby!

She storms off.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

A small room with older appliances and cabinets.

A portable CD player on the table plays country MUSIC.

George sits at the table with a piece of paper, an  $8 \times 10$  bubble envelope, and a music CD in front of him. He writes something on the paper.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Trisha continues on her journey, barefoot, and still carrying those bags, but now there's a mean look on her face.

Two cute little GIRLS decorate a block of sidewalk with chalk. Trisha stomps between them, through their artwork.

Outraged, the girls reach beside them and arm themselves with cans silly string. They rush up behind Trisha and spray her down. Trisha turns toward them and faces them head on with an evil glare.

The girls run off SCREAMING. Trisha trudges on.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Tall, made of brick.

Barefoot and exhausted from the weight of the shopping bags, a frazzled Trisha makes it to the door.

She reaches for the doorknob and attempts to open the door. Her hands are too full. Her shoes drop from her hand and land on her foot.

# TRISHA

Ow!

Frustrated, she grabs her shoes and throws them into one of the bags. She opens the door and blunders inside.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - BACK TO GEORGE

George drops the music CD into the envelope and seals it.

A few barely audible KNOCKS come from another room.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Trisha kicks the door... harder than she expected.

# TRISHA

Ow!

She pouts, almost in tears, and palms the door.

TRISHA

George!

Nothing...

She sets the bags down and digs through her purse.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A humble, lived-in room. Filled with cheap hotel furniture.

Trisha pushes the door open. She loses her balance, trips over her bags, and falls inside the room.

She sits on the floor in a stupor and roars out a SCREAM. Her updo tumbles down around her shoulders.

Trisha takes a breath and regroups. She grabs the shopping bags and sets them inside the room.

She is about to close the door when BILL (30s) in coke bottle glasses, appears in the hallway. He peeks his head inside and has a look around.

> BILL I heard a scream. Is everything all right?

Trisha gives him a numb stare. She kicks the door closed.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - BACK TO GEORGE

George looks over the envelope and checks the address.

Trisha appears next to him. She turns the music down.

# TRISHA

You didn't hear me?

George pushes the envelope aside quickly. He takes a good, long look at her.

GEORGE Wow, you look horrible.

TRISHA

Thank you.

GEORGE What happened?

She changes the subject, hands him a keychain.

TRISHA Here. I bought this for you.

A closer look at the key chain reveals a goofy picture of the two of them making funny faces, enclosed in plastic.

TRISHA Do you remember that day?

GEORGE I sure do. What a good day. We won five hundred bucks on the three digit. -- This is nice, Trish. Thank you.

Trisha notices the envelope.

TRISHA George, what's that?

GEORGE Maybe this key chain will bring me luck.

Trisha frowns.

#### TRISHA

Great.

GEORGE

Don't be that way. This contest is in Nashville. I have a good chance at winning.

TRISHA I live in the real world, George. You should, too.

She goes to the fridge, opens it, and has a look inside. There's food, not a lot, but some. She closes the door. GEORGE You're so negative. Just listen to you.

TRISHA I'm not going to go hungry again. I had enough of that when I was a kid.

He keeps his cool.

GEORGE

We're not going to go hungry. It's only twenty dollars. And what if we were to win?

TRISHA

What if you were to win?

He goes to her and wraps his arms around her waist lovingly.

GEORGE I'd get a recording contract and be able to give you the kind of life you deserve. We could get married.

He gives her a sweet little kiss and she softens.

He touches her silly stringed hair, disgusted by the feel.

GEORGE Uh... What is this?

She breaks away.

TRISHA If you need me I'll be in the tub.

She leaves. George notices the silly string all over her back.

He pockets the key chain.

George lifts the envelope from the table and with starry eyes takes another look at it.

ROY (V.O.) Oh, brother. If that isn't a train runnin outta' track, I don't know what is.

ROY JOHNSON, a 40 year old Angel, in a white suit and tie, steps into view. He's tall and good-looking. He faces the camera and speaks to us.

ROY Hello. My name is Roy Johnson. There's someone else you should meet. And we, as well as George, will have to take a trip in order to meet her. Roy steps to the side, summons us past him, to a window that frames a pale blue sky and sunny day. ROY To the beautiful hills of Kentucky. Her home. Drifting toward the window. Focusing on a white cloud. A SERIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS: A small waterfall. A wooded path. A forest of pine trees. A dirt road in the country surrounded by trees. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY Drifting towards a destination, turning onto a dirt DRIVE that borders a lush green lawn. EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS A charming country home, oozing with welcome. Moving up the STEPS that lead to a screen door. The door opens for us. INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS Drifting into the room. Roy stands glaring at a 8 x 10 family photo on the wall. INSERT PHOTOS A school picture of teenaged Rebecca with a beaming smile. ROY (O.S.) This is my Rebecca. My Angel. Pretty young thing, isn't she? --And here's one of her with her Mama, Nadine, the love of my life. NADINE, in her twenties, cradles baby Rebecca lovingly.

ROY (O.S.) It wasn't much longer Nadine took ill and God called her home.

BACK TO SCENE

Roy touches Nadine's face.

ROY I promised Nadine that I would guide Rebecca down the right path. I never dreamed that the right path would split apart. But it did.

Roy turns away. He steps off and vanishes before our eyes.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Sunlight enters through the window.

It shines onto a few small potted plants in the windowsill.

ROY (V.O.) Like the sun, Rebecca was a bright light. A joyful soul.

REBECCA, 18, stands at the sink. Her happy disposition is in full bloom in the sun. She rinses some potatoes.

ROY (V.O.) With the voice of an Angel. A voice I thought she should share with the world. With Nashville.

Roy, 40, sits at the table. He focuses through glasses to read his newspaper.

Rebecca leans on the sink with one foot propped up on her knee and peels a potato.

REBECCA (sings) You're the song in my heart. You're the light on my face. You're the reason that I've found happiness. Happiness. You're the song in my heart. Yes, you are.

She HUMS out the melody.

Roy turns the page.

ROY (V.O.) It was all just a dream... until I saw the ad.

INSERT NEWSPAPER AD

"Fourth Annual Talent Search, July 8, Ramey Amphitheater, Louisville, KY, Winner will receive a recording contract with a top Nashville producer. For information call 555-1215."

> ROY (V.O.) I knew it was the right thing to do. Rebecca would enter that contest.

The ad blurs.

EXT. PARK - STAGE - DAY - ROY'S DAYDREAM

Rebecca stands behind a microphone surrounded by a sea of APPLAUSE. She takes a bow.

#### REBECCA

Thank you.

# ROY (V.O.) And she would win.

A MAN in a black suit joins Rebecca on stage.

MAN And this year's winner is --

He smiles as he hands her an envelope.

MAN -- Rebecca Johnson.

Rebecca is overwhelmed. The applause continues.

INT. JOHNSON'S LIVING ROOM - ROY'S DAYDREAM - NIGHT

Roy sits in a recliner watching television with a huge smile on his face.

ROY That's my girl!

ROY (V.O.) She'd be a star.

TELEVISION

Rebecca stands on a stage, holding onto a microphone. There's APPLAUSE.

ROY (V.O.) If I could just get her to Louisville.

Silver confetti drops down around her.

INT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE - BACK TO REALITY

The blurred ad comes back into focus.

Roy circles the ad with a pen.

He smiles to himself. This could be it.

He removes his reading glasses, gets up from the table, and takes the paper to Rebecca.

ROY This here is you, baby girl.

She reads the ad.

ROY Your voice is sweeter than the Angels in the Heavens. God blessed you with that voice so that you could be heard.

She looks up from the paper.

REBECCA That's too far away, Daddy.

ROY No, it's not. We can get you there. I'll drive.

He searches her face for approval. Gives her a nod of assurance. She focuses on the ad.

Roy reaches for a cupboard door. He opens it and pulls out a bag from inside.

ROY This is for you.

He has her attention now.

REBECCA What did you do?

He hands her the bag.

She eagerly opens it. Pulls out a plain, yet pretty cotton dress from inside. She's flabbergasted.

#### REBECCA

Daddy...

Roy slides over to the phone. He makes a call.

ROY Hello. I'm callin' about the contest. It's for my girl Rebecca Johnson. -- That's it? -- Thank ye'. We'll be there.

He hangs up the phone and eyes her with pride.

ROY We're all set.

REBECCA But I never said I wanted --

ROY

(interrupts)

Rebecca stares off in a daze.

REBECCA (interrupts) -- We can't go wastin' money on a trip for me. The rent's gonna be due.

Roy goes to her.

ROY

I want you to listen to me and I don't want to hear you makin' any more excuses.

He wraps an arm around her reassuringly.

ROY

The way I see it, this here is a sign from God. He's callin' out to you, Angel. To you. Least ways you should answer him.

She looks off in thought.

ROY And don't you go worrying yourself about the rent. That's my job --

He gives her a smile.

She eyes him, really? He nods.

Rebecca SQUEALS with delight. She wraps her arms around her father's neck and gives him a big hug.

ROY Honey, you're gonna shower those people with the sounds of Heaven above.

Roy kisses her on her head.

The phone RINGS.

Rebecca steps away from Roy.

He goes to the phone.

She holds the dress up for size and spins around happily.

Roy stands with the phone at his ear.

ROY Hey there, Phil. Guess where we're a goin'?

EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Roy sits in a rocking chair. Alone.

He lifts a guitar from his side and strums out a tune.

Twinkling stars fill the sky.

INT. JOHNSON HOUSE - ROY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Roy closes the door.

He moves to a dresser. On top of the dresser is a wedding photo of him and Nadine.

Roy lifts the photo and touches her face.

ROY I hope I'm doing the right thing, Nadine.

Next to the dresser is a small trash can. An open envelope inside it reads, "Rent". EXT. JOHNSON HOUSE - DAY

Rebecca steps outside wearing her new dress. She heads toward the steps.

Roy is two steps behind her, dressed in a suit and carrying a guitar.

He follows her down the steps.

DRIVEWAY

Roy and Rebecca are about to get into their car when another car pulls up behind them.

Inside that car is PHIL, a fifty year old good ol' boy and his Bible-toting wife IRENE, 48.

PHIL We come to see y'all off. It looks like we made it none too soon.

Irene gets out of the car and heads toward Rebecca.

IRENE You look so pretty. I reckon the next time we see you, you'll be a big time superstar.

Rebecca gives her a bashful smile.

ROY That's what we're hope'n for.

Phil watches from the driver's seat.

PHIL Well Roy, y'all have a good time. Make sure to call when you get back.

ROY

Will do.

Irene smoothes down a stray hair on Rebecca's head, then pulls her close, and gives her a hug.

> PHIL Hey, Irene, time's a wastin.

Irene turns to him.

PHIL Let these folks get goin'. They got a long haul ahead of um.

Irene takes a step back.

IRENE I'll be prayin' for ya.

REBECCA Thank you, Aunt Irene.

ROY (V.O.) Now, Irene wasn't her real Aunt. But she was like family --

IRENE

I almost forgot. I brought you some fried chicken for the trip.

Irene rushes toward the passenger door and gets inside.

ROY (V.O.) (continuing) -- so she didn't mind being called Aunt Irene at all. In fact, she wouldn't have it any other way.

Phil passes a picnic basket through the open window to Roy.

ROY That's mighty nice.

PHIL We'll see you soon.

Roy nods. Everyone waves as Phil backs out of the driveway and down the road.

Rebecca opens the passenger door of Roy's car.

Roy takes one last look at their house.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A beautiful sunny day.

The pavement is sandwiched within a wooded area.

ROY (V.O.) We couldn't have asked for any nicer weather.

The sun beats down on Roy's car as he drives it into view.

INT. ROY'S MOVING CAR - CONTINUOUS

The wind blows Rebecca's hair back as she looks out her open window.

ROY (V.O.) Rebecca was so excited. She'd never left our town before. --We'd been on the road for about an hour when...

REBECCA This sure is a big old world.

Roy smiles with amusement.

ROY I got a hunch that you're a gonna be see'n a whole lot more of it.

REBECCA Oh, Daddy, do you really think they'll like that song?

ROY That was your mama's song. I know they'll love it just as much as they love you.

Rebecca smiles.

REBECCA (sings) Scoot a little closer, Darlin'.

Roy joins in.

REBECCA AND ROY (sings) Darlin', come and whisper in my ear.

REBECCA (sings) Scoot a little closer, Darlin' and tell me what I want to hear.

ROY (sings) Tell me that you love me, Darlin'. REBECCA (sings) And that you'll always be true. Because if you love me, Darlin' --

An O.S. BOOM.

REBECCA

(sings)
-- I swear I'll never be blue.

Roy struggles to steer the vehicle.

ROY

Oh, no.

Tires SQUEAL.

Fright strikes across Rebecca's face.

REBECCA

Daddy?

ROY Hold on, Rebecca. We're in for a bumpy ride.

She braces herself against the seat.

INT./EXT. MOVING CAR - CONTINUOUS

The Johnson's car leaves the road.

The right front tire is blown out.

ROY (V.O.) Poor Rebecca.

The car heads straight toward a tree.

Rebecca SCREAMS.

The gap between them and the tree narrows quickly.

ROY (V.O.) There was nothing I could do.

A BLACK SCREEN

O.S. CRASH.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY Rebecca stands at a grave dressed in a black dress. She has two red roses in her hand. ROY (V.O.) It was my time to leave. She kneels down and places a rose on each of the side-byside graves. Phil steps toward her and helps her up as she wearily rises to her feet. ROY (V.O.) But I had made that promise to Nadine. And not even death could make me go back on my word to her. Roy (the Angel in a white suit) stands next to Phil. ROY (V.O.) I would come up with something. Phil and Rebecca turn away from the graves. Roy watches them leave. EXT. STREET - COCKTAIL BAR - NIGHT No movement at all. SUPER: "A FEW YEARS LATER IN MICHIGAN". ROY (V.O.) With a little help from God and fate, I found a way. INSERT BILLBOARD: "NOW APPEARING, GEORGE DAVIDSON." INT. COCKTAIL BAR - STAGE - NIGHT Moving down the path of a spotlight. Country/Blues guitar MUSIC plays. George, dressed in black, stands on stage. He belts out a riff on the guitar. Puts his heart into it. AT THE BAR A male CUSTOMER in his twenties downs his drink. He tosses some paper money on the counter and swivels his stool away

from the bar.

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PHYLLIS, the barmaid in her fifties, stands slouched over the bar in a daydream.

An empty dance floor between Phyllis and George.

George ends his song. The silence is deafening.

EXT. COCKTAIL BAR - NIGHT

George steps out into misty air. The street is deserted and awfully quiet.

Small puddles of rain reflect a lone streetlight.

George positions his hat. He heads away from the bar.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

George walks down the sidewalk.

He approaches a corner.

O.S. muffled girly LAUGHTER comes from close by.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Two drunk hookers, MONI (21) and TOSHAUNDA (22) LAUGH at their own silliness. They try to hold each other up as they stumble toward a street corner.

EXT. CITY STREET - CORNER - CONTINUOUS

The girls collide with George.

Moni straightens up quickly. She smiles seductively at George.

MONI Howdy there, cowboy.

George tips his hat.

# GEORGE

# Evenin'.

Moni gives him goo-goo eyes.

MONI You lookin' for a date?

George shakes his head no. He glides past them.

MONI

Good.

The girls LAUGH hysterically. Toshaunda turns to Moni.

TOSHAUNDA Moni. Tell me we didn't just see a cowboy?

MONI All right. We didn't just see a cowboy.

She LAUGHS.

MONI We just seen a fool!

They LAUGH LOUDER.

# TOSHAUNDA Oh, shoot! Help me, Jesus!

George looks over his shoulder at them.

They hold onto each other as they wobble down the road.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Loud RAP MUSIC comes from an empty car, parked at the curb.

George walks toward a small store.

A teen thug exits the store.

He slinks to the driver's side door of the parked car.

George makes it to the store. He pauses as he opens the door, noticing something across the street.

A beat up pick-up truck parked on the other side of the road with a price painted on the windshield: "\$750.00".

George turns back toward the store and goes in.

INT. GROCERY STORE - MEAT COUNTER - DAY

MAX, a plump fifty year old butcher stands behind the counter. He greets George with a smile.

MAX I haven't seen you around in a while. How've you been?

GEORGE I've been all right, Max.

MAX What can I get for ya?

George looks into the meat counter.

Bologna priced "\$1.98 Lb.".

GEORGE I'll take a pound of that baloney. Slice it thin.

MAX One pound of thin sliced baloney coming right up.

Max takes the bologna to the meat shaver.

George finds the beef tongue inside the meat counter.

GEORGE Do people really buy that?

Max wraps George's order.

MAX

What's that?

Max traces George's gaze to the beef tongue. He LAUGHS.

MAX Of course, they do. I wouldn't sell it if they didn't.

George's face shrivels.

MAX There's nothin' wrong with it. That is if you don't mind the calories or clogging up your arteries with cholesterol. -- I'd never touch it.

He motions to his waistline.

MAX Can't afford to. Too much fat. It'll plump you right up.

George shudders with the creeps.

GEORGE I guess there's no accounting for taste.

MAX Yep. To each his own.

Max writes the price on the wrapped bologna.

He places it on top of the counter.

MAX How's the music world been treating you, George? Good I hope.

GEORGE Well, no, not really. No one seems to like country music anymore.

MAX It's the times. They change. They'll change back again.

George mulls it over, agrees.

MAX

You've just got to build up a clientele or better yet, go somewhere where they'll appreciate you. You can't live on boloney forever, you know.

George nods in agreement. He takes the package of bologna.

GEORGE

Thanks, bud.

#### MAX

Sure.

George turns away. Max wipes down the counter with a rag.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Dimly lit. No customers at the bar. No customers in the room at all.

George and Phyllis stand together on the dance floor engaged in conversation.

DANCE FLOOR

George shakes his head, looks let down.

# PHYLLIS

I'm sorry.

He turns away. Phyllis watches him head toward the door.

#### PHYLLIS

Hey, George!

He turns back toward her.

PHYLLIS Give me a call in a few weeks. We'll see how things are then.

# GEORGE Thanks, Phyllis.

He continues toward the door.

Phyllis goes to the jukebox and drops a quarter in it. She searches the selections available.

EXT. COCKTAIL BAR - NIGHT

George walks down the sidewalk.

Cars drive past him. Rap MUSIC flows out from their open windows.

A man leans back on a building. He raises a 40 ounce beer to his lips and drinks.

George passes him by.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

George walks down an empty sidewalk.

Across the street, the homeless man's cardboard box. He pokes his head out and notices George.

HOMELESS MAN Hey, my brother!

George ignores him and keeps moving.

The homeless man scowls.

HOMELESS MAN Hey, cowboy!

George stops and gives him a look.

HOMELESS MAN Yeah, you! Could ya help a brother out with some spare change?

George lifts his arms.

GEORGE I'm all tapped out.

The homeless man moves back into the box. It wiggles with movement as he settles back in.

HOMELESS MAN (O.S.) You look tapped out. Why don't you get a job!

George throws out a LAUGH. He walks on.

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

George approaches the building.

He looks up at a window and takes a deep breath.

He goes inside.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

George steps inside. He takes off his hat and sets it in a nearby chair.

Muffled CONVERSATION and Trish's LAUGHTER in another room catch George's attention.

He focuses on a closed door.

George goes to the door and pushes it open.

BEDROOM

Trisha lays on the bed.

Bill, dressed only in a pair of jeans, lays stretched out on the bed as comfy as can be right next to her.

Seeing George, they spring upright.

GEORGE Would you look at this. The two of you playin' house in my apartment.

Trisha jumps off of the bed.

George storms toward Bill. Suddenly he stops and throws his arms up in the air.

GEORGE She's not worth it.

Trisha follows behind George. He turns back, into her.

TRISHA What are you doing home? GEORGE Apparently, I'm finding out who you really are.

He turns to Bill.

GEORGE You're in for a handful with this one, bub.

Bill lifts his shirt from the floor, ready to leave.

GEORGE In fact, you can have everything here. I'm done with all of it.

George moves to the closet. He opens the door and takes a suitcase from inside.

Bill dashes out of the room.

Trisha stands behind George.

TRISHA What are you doing?

George ignores her. He opens the suitcase.

TRISHA I'm sorry, George. I didn't mean it. He's just a friend.

GEORGE You didn't mean it?!

George lifts an armful of hanging clothes from the pole.

TRISHA I was lonely, George. You weren't here. You're never here.

George folds his clothing in half and crams them into the suitcase.

GEORGE I thought I had two things in this messed up life that I could count on. My music and you. I was such a fool.

He turns back to his suitcase and locks it down. Clothes stick out of the sides.

TRISHA Go back home to your mama then, Mama's boy.

George rises to his feet with the suitcase in his hand. He gives her a dirty look. She GASPS.

TRISHA I'm sorry. I didn't mean that.

He turns away.

# TRISHA Please stay. I want you to stay.

She watches in desperation as he heads toward the door.

TRISHA George! Please! What about me?! Who's going to take care of things?

He stops. Turns to her for one last look.

GEORGE That's a good question.

He glances around the room.

GEORGE It looks like you're on your own.

George steps out of the room.

Trisha sinks onto the bed.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Deserted. Peaceful.

Rebecca sits next to her parents graves. Alone.

She lifts a bottle of wine from her side and takes a drink. She's not drunk, just calm and relaxed.

> REBECCA Just sometimes I get so lonely. --Surely, I have Irene and Phil... And I'm lucky to have them... It's just --

She takes another drink.

REBECCA -- Why? Why am I alive when it was all my fault?

Rebecca weeps.

REBECCA We should'a never left on that trip.

She takes another drink.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Lamplight floods down on a nightstand and reveals a phone, a bank passbook, and George's key chain.

George stretches across the bed. He reaches for the phone. Makes a phone call.

GEORGE Hey, Uncle Phil! How would you like a visit from your favorite nephew?

George settles back on a pillow. He smiles.

EXT. BANK - DAY

Focusing on the glass doorway. Reflections off the door prove it's a beautiful sunny day.

George steps out of the building with his guitar and suitcase in tow. He pauses.

The sun shines on his smiling face. He looks around at his surroundings, it's a brand new day.

With that, he leaves. There's a certain spring in his step.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Light traffic moves down the expressway.

A beat up pick-up truck moves along with the flow of traffic. The truck looks familiar. The same truck that was for sale in front of the grocery store.

INT./EXT. MOVING TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

A guitar rests on the seat.

George's key chain dangles from the key in the ignition.

George sits behind the wheel. He changes stations on the radio until he finds something he likes.

His fingers tap the steering wheel in time to the music as he drives on.

EXT. REST AREA - PARKING LOT - DAY

George stands outside of his parked truck. He checks the door, making sure it's locked up tight. He turns and starts toward the building.

George notices a young couple holding hands as they stroll toward the same rest area building. He gets a far away look on his face. We can tell it's painful for him.

He continues toward the building.

EXT. REST AREA - CONTINUOUS

The couple split apart. The woman goes one way. The man another.

George continues to the building.

Another couple, LOVER BOY and his GIRL, sit side-by-side on a picnic table and gaze into each other's eyes.

EXT. REST AREA - BUILDING - DAY

A sign on a door reads: "Men".

George pushes the door open and goes in.

EXT. REST AREA - BACK TO PICNIC TABLES

It's hard for him to tear himself away, but lover boy gets up while keeping his lips locked to his girl.

They finally break apart. She gives him a seductive smile as he backs away from her, keeping his eyes on her.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

George stands at a urinal.

The door opens. Lover boy from the picnic table enters. He walks to the sink and turns on the WATER.

LOVER BOY It sure is hot.

George turns away from the urinal. He moves to a sink.

Lover boy splashes some water on his face.

George washes his hands.

Lover boy takes a paper towel and dries his face.

LOVER BOY What is it? In the nineties?

George shrugs, he doesn't know.

The man checks his reflection in the mirror. Combs his hair back with his fingers.

LOVER BOY Can't wait to get to Niagra Falls. It'll be cooler there. I'm on our honeymoon.

George nods and gives a mock smile.

GEORGE Congratulations.

Lover boy pats George on his shoulder.

LOVER BOY

Thanks.

He turns away.

George scoops up some running WATER and splashes it on his face. He looks into the mirror and sees the deep loneliness.

BEAT

He comes back around and reaches for a paper towel.

EXT. REST AREA - PAY PHONE - DAY

George lifts the receiver and drops some coins into the slot. He makes a call.

George holds the key chain in his hand. He rubs it over and over again nervously, as he waits.

Three RINGS to an answer.

TRISHA (V.O.)

Hello...

George listens.

TRISHA (V.O.) Hello... No answer, huh? -- Bill, there's a pervert on the phone.

GEORGE

Aw, hell no.

George hangs up.

He slides his key off of the key chain.

He tosses the key chain in a nearby trash can and walks away.

George stops abruptly. He turns around and goes back.

George lifts the key chain from the garbage can. He takes a long hard look at the photo.

He slides the key chain into his pants pocket.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Shrubs on the right side of the grassy drive border a neighboring lot.

George's truck pulls up and parks.

He gets out of the truck.

FRONT YARD

Steps lead up to a porch that expands the width of the wellkept farm house.

George jogs up the steps.

PORCH

Phil stands inside the screen door.

PHIL

Hey, boy!

GEORGE

Uncle Phil!

Phil meets him outside. They hug.

Phil pulls back to get a better look at George.

PHIL I believe you've done some growin'.

George smiles.

# GEORGE

Do ya think?

Phil smiles with glee.

PHIL Yep, that's what I think.

He puts his arm around George and guides him toward the door.

#### PHIL

Your Aunt Irene's been waitin' on ya to get here. I sure hope you're hungry.

George gives Phil an uh-oh look.

Phil LAUGHS.

# PHIL

Maybe now she'll come out of the kitchen. She's been in there bakin' everything under the sun.

George smiles a genuine smile.

GEORGE

Aunt Irene.

The two step inside.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A cozy lived in room, warmed with handmade items.

PHIL Hey, Irene! Looky here at what the cat drug in.

George and Phil smile at each other in anticipation.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The table is the focal point of the kitchen. It's filled with pies, plates of cookies, and three loafs of homemade bread.

The kitchen counter holds more baked goods... two cakes.

A calendar on the wall reveals the month "JULY".

A very happy and excited Irene wipes her hands on her apron.

She smoothes down her slightly messed hair.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Irene meets Phil and George. She grabs George by the shoulder.

#### IRENE

Look at you!

She grabs a hold of George and gives him a tight and loving hug. George runs out of breath. He COUGHS. She lets go.

IRENE I bet you're hungry from your long trip.

#### PHIL

I told ya so.

Irene guides George further into the house.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

George sits at the table with Phil and Irene. He finishes off his piece of pie and sets his fork down.

#### IRENE

Get you some more.

George shakes his head and pats his full belly.

GEORGE No thanks, Aunt Irene, I'm stuffed. Irene smiles, pleased that he's full. EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY Rebecca, dressed in a waitress uniform with a ruffled apron, rushes toward the house. She eyes George's truck. She jogs up the steps. INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY Rebecca steps inside. She notices George's guitar and cowboy hat in a chair. She glances further into the house. INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY Irene, Phil, and George sit at the table, drinking coffee. IRENE So I was talkin' to your mama the other day. George looks up from his coffee cup. His gaze locks with Phil. IRENE Her and your daddy are headin' on one of those fancy cruises with shuffleboard games and the moonlighted dancing. George looks off in thought. Irene notices. IRENE You're still not talking to your mother? George shakes his head. GEORGE Uh uh.

Irene catches a scornful look from Phil.

IRENE I'm sorry, Hon'. She never did like that Trisha girl. It's a shame you two quit speakin' because of her.

Rebecca leans on the doorframe, half in -- half out of the room.

REBECCA

Hey.

Everyone looks her way.

IRENE

Rebecca. This here is my sister's boy, George. He came all the way from Michigan to stay with us for awhile.

Rebecca smiles shyly.

#### REBECCA

Hello.

George goes to Rebecca. He takes her hand.

GEORGE

Nice to meet you.

Irene elbows Phil. She nods toward the two.

Phil eyes the two as they shake hands. He turns toward Irene, shakes his head, no.

REBECCA Nice to meet you, too.

An O.S. phone RINGS.

Irene answers the phone.

IRENE Hello. -- Uh huh.

She covers the receiver and looks to George.

IRENE Speak of the Devil. -- Trisha.

GEORGE

Oh, no.

Irene nods, oh yes.

George reluctantly goes to the phone and takes his call.

# GEORGE

Hello.

Phil notices Rebecca's curious eyes on George.

PHIL Becka, did you have a hard day? You look kinda' tired.

She focuses on Phil, well, only for a second.

REBECCA My day was fine. Except my feet's a little sore.

George has her attention.

GEORGE I'm not coming back. You made that choice for me. Get on with your life, Trish. Leave me alone.

Rebecca straightens up, a little taken back by his conversation.

George hangs up the phone. Irene notices his somber attitude as he moves back to the table and sits down.

IRENE That's the third time she's called here today.

George's taken back.

GEORGE I'm sorry, Aunt Irene. It won't happen again.

Suddenly, it is quiet. Too quiet.

Rebecca steps up.

REBECCA Aunt Irene, I'll help you with supper after I rinse off, okay?

George glares off in thought.

IRENE

You just take your time, Hon. (to George) Rebecca's a waitress over at the Coney Island. She likes to get that grease smell off as soon as she gets home. And I don't blame her. Not one bit. Rebecca turns, leaves.

Irene catches George looking in her direction.

IRENE

I seen that.

GEORGE

What?

IRENE The way you looked at her.

GEORGE Me and her. We're not related?

IRENE

Oh, heavens no.

GEORGE

You and her?

IRENE No. No. She's been a very close friend of the family for years.

Phil gets up from the table.

PHIL George, how about me and you go out back. We can walk off some of that pie we just ate.

George rises from the table.

IRENE

Don't you two go wanderin' off too far. I'm whipping up some of my pork chops. Collard greens. Red beans and rice --

PHIL

(interrupting)
-- And anything else you got a
hankering for.

George wraps an arm around Phil.

GEORGE Aunt Irene, you're gonna have me lookin' like Uncle Phil here if you feed me like that.

Phil rubs his big belly proudly.
PHIL That's what a good woman will do for ya, son. Fatten ya up so's no other woman will look at ya twice.

Irene only half aims at Phil as she swats through the air.

IRENE (to Phil) Oh, you... (to George) Don't you pay him no mind.

Phil and George exchange smiles.

PHIL We'll be out back.

Irene rises from her chair. Clears the table.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

The backyard is large and well kept. There are shrubs.

A flower garden.

And a small vegetable garden.

It's very inviting... Comforting.

George and Phil mosey toward a couple lawn chairs in the middle of the yard.

GEORGE It's so peaceful here.

Phil nods in agreement. They sit in the chairs.

PHIL So, George, how long you plannin' on stayin' with us?

GEORGE Well, I'd like to find a job. Make a fresh start down here.

PHIL I think that'd be real nice, but are you sure you're not gonna miss Michigan?

George focuses off in the distance.

EXT. CITY STREET - GEORGE'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK - NIGHT Looking up at the building. The street is quiet. A couple's O.S. muffled LAUGHTER.

> TRISHA (V.O.) What are you doing home?

END FLASHBACK

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - BACK TO PRESENT

The trees are still. Birds are SINGING.

George looks to Phil.

GEORGE I can't say that I will.

Phil pats George on his back.

PHIL

Good deal.

The two focus off into the distance and relax.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

George sits on the step with his guitar in hand. He plays, "PEACE IN THE VALLEY" on his guitar.

GEORGE

(sings) Well, I'm tired and so weary, but I must go along till the Lord will come and call, call me away, oh yes.

Irene and Phil sit in chairs on the porch, enjoying the music.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - REBECCA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The lamp in front of the open window is on.

George's MUSIC enters through the window.

Rebecca sits on the bed. She drinks from a bottle of wine and paints her toenails.

GEORGE (O.S.) (sings) Well, the morning's so bright.

Unconciously, she sings along.

REBECCA (sings) And the Lamb is the light and the night is black, as black as the sea. She snaps out of it. GEORGE (O.S.) (sings) Oh, yes. Rebecca goes to the window and looks outside. EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT Rebecca stands inside the screen door, looking out. Phil and Irene sit in their chairs. George sits on the step, still plays, "PEACE IN THE VALLEY". GEORGE (sings) There'll be no sadness --Rebecca joins in. GEORGE AND REBECCA (sings) -- No sorrow, no troubles, I'll see. She joins them on the porch. GEORGE AND REBECCA (sings) There will be peace in the valley for me. REBECCA (sings) For me. George stops playing. He looks at Rebecca in a daze. GEORGE Beautiful. REBECCA I just love that song. APPLAUSE from Phil and Irene. Rebecca sits on the step next to George.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - REBECCA'S ROOM - NIGHT A happy Rebecca sits with George on the bed and sort through a mess of papers. Rebecca stacks papers into two piles. George lifts a paper and reads. GEORGE What's this? Rebecca takes a peek. INSERT PAPER The title reads: "GIVE ME A LITTLE KISS, DARLIN'". Rebecca takes the paper from him. REBECCA Nothing. It's nothing. She sets it aside. George thinks about it, but doesn't ask. Rebecca looks through more papers, then gets an idea. REBECCA What about a Christmas song? He looks interested. GEORGE Like what? REBECCA I've always liked O Holy Night. George really perks up. GEORGE Maybe. -- Yeah, why not? We could give it an upbeat. REBECCA With a little southern flare. GEORGE There ya' go. Let's give it a shot. He picks up his guitar, eager to get started.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

A full moon lights the sky.

Bluesy guitar MUSIC plays the intro to "O HOLY NIGHT".

George sits on a blanket on the ground and plays his guitar. Rebecca sits next to him. George nods, her cue.

# REBECCA (sings) O holy night!

GEORGE (sings) Holy night!

REBECCA AND ROY (sings) The stars are brightly shining.

GEORGE (sings) It is the night of our dear saviors birth.

REBECCA (sings) Long lay the world in sin and error pining.

GEORGE (sings) Till he appear'd.

REBECCA (sings) He appeared --

GEORGE AND REBECCA (sings) -- and the soul felt its worth.

Irene stands inside the door and listens.

REBECCA (sings) A thrill of hope

GEORGE (sings) Thrill of hope. REBECCA (sings) The weary world rejoices.

GEORGE (sings) For yonder breaks. Yonder breaks --

GEORGE AND REBECCA (sings) -- a new and glorious morn!

REBECCA (sings) Fall on your knees.

GEORGE (sings) Oh, hear the angel voices.

REBECCA (sings) Oh, night --

GEORGE AND REBECCA (sings) -- devine. Oh, night when Christ was born.

# IRENE

Amen.

She turns away.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

George stands at the top of the steps looking out into the distance, greeting the new day.

The sun shines on his smiling face. He begins to WHISTLE a happy tune.

George gallops down the steps.

He jumps up, kicks his heels together. Heads toward his truck.

EXT. FACTORY - DAY

George's truck is parked in the lot with a few other vehicles.

A sign posted in the grass reads: "HELP WANTED, GENERAL LABOR".

A medium-sized building.

DEWAYNE (20s) a factory worker, sits at a picnic table. He looks out into the distance.

DEWAYNE Looks like we got us some new blood.

Surrounding Dewayne, a few male workers of various ages take a break from eating or smoking to take a look.

George stands outside of the building. He looks over the papers in his hand. George feels their eyes, takes a look.

George flashes a wave. The guys acknowledge him.

EXT. ICE CREAM PLACE - NIGHT

George turns from the building. He has two ice cream cones.

Rebecca is by his side. He hands her one.

They move to a picnic table where Phil and Irene are already sitting side-by-side eating their ice cream cones.

George and Rebecca sit next to each other.

It's quiet. Too quiet. Boring.

A chunk of ice cream splats onto the picnic table.

Phil looks surprised.

# PHIL Well, son, what did you go and do?

George's wide eyes look at his empty cone in amazement. Rebecca, Phil, and Irene LAUGH.

#### GEORGE

Geesh.

George smiles with embarrassment.

He rises from his seat.

Rebecca watches George move back to the window to order.

He returns with a new cone and sits.

George reaches out toward Rebecca and tips her ice cream cone toward her. The tip of her nose, now covered in ice cream. She swipes it off.

GEORGE You sure are a messy eater.

Her jaw drops.

#### REBECCA

You...

He wraps an arm around her shoulder and gives her a comforting hug. They all LAUGH.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

George and Rebecca pull up in George's truck and park.

They meet each other outside. Together they inch across the lawn toward the house. It's quiet. Awkward.

# REBECCA

Thank you for the ice cream.

She looks over to George. He feels her gaze and turns toward her. She gives him a sweet smile.

#### REBECCA

Thank you.

Their eyes connect and there's magic. He pulls her toward him and kisses her passionately.

The kiss ends suddenly. Rebecca steps back in shock.

GEORGE I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that.

Rebecca nods, still in shock.

Phil and Irene pull into the driveway.

Fearing they've been caught, he steers her toward the house.

GEORGE Let's go inside, ice cream face.

She gives him a playful little poke.

The sky above them is full of twinkling stars.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - REBECCA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight filters in between the curtains.

Rebecca lays in bed, fast asleep. Alone.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - REBECCA'S WINDOW - NIGHT

George sneaks up to the window. He looks around, making sure no one sees him.

He TAPS loudly on the window. Louder than what he expected it to be. He hunches down, hides.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - REBECCA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

George's TAPPING wakes Rebecca.

She gets out of bed and goes to the window.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - REBECCA'S WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

George looks around, makes sure the coast is clear.

Rebecca appears inside the window.

Slowly, she slides the window open, trying to be quiet.

George is still looking around. He reaches up to tap on the window again. Rebecca grabs his hand.

George falls down to the ground, caught.

Rebecca covers her mouth, muffles her LAUGHTER.

GEORGE Ssshhh! You'll wake em'.

REBECCA What are you doing out there?

GEORGE I couldn't sleep. Meet me out back. There's something I want you to see.

# REBECCA

Okay.

She closes the window.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT Rebecca comes out of the house, wrapped in her robe. George holds out his hand to her. She goes toward him. EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAWN George and Rebecca stand together and look up at the sky. Beautiful colors of the sunrise unfold before their eyes. Pinks. Blues. Lavenders expand the horizon. Rebecca is in awe. REBECCA All the colors of a rainbow. The sun begins to rise and turns the sky gold. Light dances across leaves on the trees. Birds SING. REBECCA It's so beautiful. Like the sun has given birth to life. George smiles, he got the reaction he wanted. GEORGE It's given birth to a new day. Just like you --The back door SQUEAKS open O.S. IRENE (O.S.) (interrupting) -- What you two a doin' out there? George and Rebecca turn toward the house, caught. REBECCA Watching the sunrise. Irene's eyes widen. She knows. George wraps his arm around Rebecca. They walk together toward the house.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Rebecca, dressed in her waitress uniform, moves to the table.

She joins Phil, George, and Irene.

She sits down next to George.

He's dressed in a work uniform, too. A factory one. A plate of pancakes wait for Rebecca to dig in.

Phil downs his last sip of coffee.

George eyes Rebecca in between bites of pancakes.

Rebecca smiles as she eats.

Phil notices. He knows something is up.

PHIL Eat up, now. We gotta get goin'.

He takes his cup to the sink.

Rebecca gives George a flirty smile.

Irene lifts a lunch box from the counter and hands it to Phil. She gives him a kiss goodby.

IRENE Have a good day, Hon.

Rebecca only has eyes for George.

REBECCA See ya'll tonight.

George gives Rebecca a wink. He stands.

GEORGE I'm leaving, too.

Rebecca follows Phil out the door.

George kisses Irene on her cheek.

GEORGE You have a good day, too, Aunt Irene.

She lifts a bagged lunch from the counter.

#### IRENE

Your lunch.

She gives him a wink.

He leaves and Irene cleans up the breakfast dishes.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Clean and spotless.

Irene stands at the phone with the receiver to her ear.

# IRENE

Goodbye, then.

She lets out a DEEP BREATH of disgust and hangs up.

IRENE She's so danged headstrong.

She turns away from the phone.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Trisha hangs up the phone.

# TRISHA (to herself) He'll be back.

She looks off in the distance. Thinks.

Trisha shakes it off. She goes to the refrigerator, opens the door, and takes a look inside.

Not much of anything in there.

She closes the door. Goes back to the phone. Makes a call.

TRISHA Bill, what are you doing tonight?

A big fake smile spreads across her face.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - GEORGE'S ROOM - DAY

Sunlight filters in through the curtains and lights the room.

George lays on the bed. He wakes and checks the alarm clock. The clock reads, "10:30." EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Irene pulls weeds from her garden.

GEORGE (O.S.) There you are.

George, in his pajama pants and robe, walks toward her.

GEORGE Where is everyone?

IRENE Your Uncle Phil's takin' on some overtime and Rebecca usually goes for a walk on Saturday mornings.

George looks satisfied with her answer.

GEORGE Do you need some help?

IRENE No, no. This here is one part of my day that I enjoy the most.

She wipes perspiration from her brow.

IRENE That Trisha called this morning.

GEORGE

She did?

IRENE She calls everyday. Sometimes twiced.

GEORGE I wonder if something's wrong?

Irene looks concerned.

IRENE Other than you being gone? Probably not.

GEORGE She's never been on her own before.

IRENE

George?

GEORGE We were together a long time. I feel kind of responsible. -- Maybe I should talk to her next time she calls... make sure. Irene shakes her head. She gets back to gardening. George moves back toward the house. He reaches into his pocket, pulls out the key chain, and takes a look at it. EXT. CEMETERY - DAY Rebecca kneels at her parents' graves. She clears grass away from a headstone. REBECCA I wish you could've been there. She sits back in a dreamy-eyed daze. REBECCA It was so beautiful. I never saw the sunrise before. Suddenly she remembers something. REBECCA Oh, I almost forgot. He's a songwriter, too. I know Daddy would like that. She stares off into the distance with a smile. INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY Bill stands at the sink doing dishes. LIVING ROOM Trisha jets through the room. Her hair is piled on top of her head and she's dressed in a mini-skirt and fake fur coat. She stops at the door and turns and yells into the room. TRISHA Are you going to be here when I get back?

Bill steps into the room with the towel in his hand.

#### BILL

Do you want me to be here when you get back?

#### TRISHA

The thing is I'm not sure how long I'll be gone. I wouldn't even have to find a job if you'd just marry me. You've got money. You could take care of me if you wanted to.

Bill dries his hands on the towel.

TRISHA

If you're going to stay, you could pull out the vaccuum cleaner or do a little dusting for me.

Trisha notices Bill's sour face.

#### TRISHA

What? I figured you'd want to help me out. Don't you see I'm havin' a hard enough time here. -- Oh, nevermind.

She turns from him and leaves.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

The telephone RINGS.

Bill comes into the room with a feather duster in his hand. He answers the phone.

# BILL

Hello...

A CLICK from the other end.

Bill looks at the receiver, that's odd.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

George hangs up the phone. He's dressed in his dirty work clothes.

A crock pot on the counter gets his attention.

He lifts the lid. A cloud of steam rises and hits him in his face. He inhales the aroma.

# GEORGE

Mmm...

He puts the lid back on.

The sound of a sprinkler out back gets his attention.

He goes toward the door. Stops at the kitchen garbage can. He takes the key chain from his pocket.

George takes a look at the picture then slides it back in his pocket.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

A sprinkler showers the vegetable garden.

Irene and Phil sit in lawn chairs, beneath a shade tree.

George goes toward them.

GEORGE Where's Rebecca?

IRENE She's not home yet.

GEORGE I got my first paycheck. I wanted to take her out to celebrate. Maybe a movie.

George checks his watch.

GEORGE It's five thirty now.

Phil motions for Irene to go into the house.

IRENE I suppose I should check on supper.

Phil pats the arm of the empty chair.

PHIL Take a load off your feet, son. Becka should be here shortly. You got plenty a' time.

George sits.

PHIL So, you got your first paycheck. How you liken' that job? GEORGE It's a good one, Uncle Phil. Not too hard and after ninety days I'll be in the union.

Phil nods, satisfied with his answer.

PHIL

Good deal.

Phil gets a serious expression on his face.

PHIL

George, there's something I want to talk to you about and I don't want you to go taking it in the wrong way.

George gives Phil his undivided attention.

PHIL I noticed you and Rebecca's spending a lot of time together and I was wondering what your intentions were?

George is caught off guard.

GEORGE She's a wonderful girl, Uncle Phil.

PHIL

That's it?

George smiles with embarassment.

GEORGE We share a musical interest.

PHIL Our Rebecca's been through an awful lot in her lifetime.

GEORGE I wouldn't hurt her, Uncle Phil.

PHIL And I wadn't sayin ya would.

George stares off in confusion, trying to take it all in.

BEAT

He looks over to Phil.

PHIL There's a whole lot of hurt wrapped up inside that girl.

Rebecca comes out of the house in her waitress uniform.

George and Phil don't notice her coming toward them.

PHIL

They was on their way to a singing competition in Louisville when they had their accident.

GEORGE

Accident?

#### PHIL

Car accident. We all thought she would have won that contest, too, if they woulda made it there. -- I reckon the good Lord didn't see fit for it to be.

Rebecca, now at their side.

REBECCA That's right. He didn't see fit for it to be.

Caught, their heads snap toward her.

PHIL

Becka --

REBECCA (interrupts) -- So he punished me by takin' my daddy. It's all my fault that he's dead.

Phil stands.

#### PHIL

Becka, I --

REBECCA (interrupts) -- And I hate God for it. I hate him!

Rebecca turns and runs for the house.

GEORGE

Rebecca!

George runs after her.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY

George leans into a closed door.

# GEORGE Please, Rebecca, let me in.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - REBECCA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca sits on her bed and nurses a wine cooler.

#### REBECCA

Just go away.

The door opens. George comes in.

GEORGE

It was open.

She turns away unimpressed and gets back to her bottle.

George sits down next to her.

GEORGE You gotta let go of this hate. It's not healthy. It'll eat you up if you let it.

He reaches for her bottle. She pulls it back.

REBECCA You're a good one to talk about letting things go.

GEORGE

What?

REBECCA The way you tote around that girl's picture.

George is dumbstruck.

REBECCA You thought I didn't know?

GEORGE That's different.

She lets out a half-hearted LAUGH.

REBECCA Sure it is, only because you want her back.

Rebecca stands and moves away from him.

REBECCA Otherwise, you would have thrown it away a long time ago.

He stands in protest.

GEORGE I do not want her back.

REBECCA

Surely, you do.

She takes another drink.

He goes to her, takes the bottle, and sits it down.

GEORGE

No, I don't.

REBECCA

Right.

He inches closer to her.

# GEORGE

Right.

REBECCA I bet it's in your pocket right now. It's not healty, George.

George pulls the key chain from his pocket and takes a look.

GEORGE You want me to get rid of it?

REBECCA Suit yourself.

#### GEORGE

I will.

He takes his key from the key chain.

Rebecca holds a trash can toward him. He tosses it in.

Suddenly, he grabs a hold of her.

Without thinking, he pulls her close and kisses her. She kisses him back.

She wraps her arms around his neck.

MONTAGE

- George and Rebecca kiss beneath a velvet moon.

- George and Rebecca walk hand-in-hand down a country road.

- George sits on the porch steps and plays guitar. Rebecca sits on another step and sings.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Dewayne and his girl sit in lawn chairs.

SUPER: "THREE MONTHS LATER".

Rebecca and George sit in lawn chairs next to them. George strums his guitar as Rebecca sings "Georgia".

REBECCA (sings) Just an old sweet song keeps Georgia on my mind.

GEORGE

(sings) She said it's an old sweet song keeps Georgia on her mind.

The song ends. Dewayne and his girl clap.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Rebecca and George sit at the table and sip on coffee. George is in deep thought.

> REBECCA I had a good time last night. We should have them over more often.

George snaps out of it.

GEORGE Rebecca, it's now or never.

REBECCA What are you talking about?

GEORGE If we're going to do this thing, it's time we get our music out there to the public.

REBECCA But I'm scared, George.

George takes her by her hand.

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

George and Rebecca walk hand in hand toward a nondescript building. George has his guitar in his other hand.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

George and Rebecca sit in a recording booth.

George plays "O Holy Night" on the guitar.

REBECCA (sings) O holy night.

GEORGE (sings) Holy night.

REBECCA (sings) The stars are brightly shining.

She glances at George, it's good.

GEORGE AND REBECCA (sings) It is the night of our dear saviors birth.

He gives her a nod.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

George and Rebecca sit at the table.

Rebecca writes an address on  $8 \times 10$  bubble envelope from a list on a paper. She crosses an address off of the list then passes the envelope to George.

REBECCA What comes after this?

George inserts a letter and a CD into the envelope.

#### GEORGE

We wait.

Rebecca nods in understanding. She writes an address on another 8  $\times$  10 envelope.

George seals his envelope and places it on the top of a stack of envelopes.

EXT. FAST FOOD PLACE - CITY - DAY

A sign in the window reads: "NOW OPEN FOR BUSINESS."

Another sign reads: "THE BEST BURGERS IN TOWN".

INT. FAST FOOD PLACE - DAY

Trisha stands behind the counter. She has a paper hat on her head and doesn't look very happy.

MARY, a business woman in her 30s, stands opposite of Trisha. She stares down at the menu on the counter. There's a rather snooty, no nonsense air about her.

Trisha makes a sour face as she erases something from the order pad. The wedding rings on her left hand catch our eye. She accidently tears the paper, rips the top sheet off.

MARY I guess I'll have a burger with catsup and mustard and an order of fries.

Trisha looks relieved.

#### TRISHA

You're sure?

Mary nods.

Trisha lets out a half-hearted LAUGH. She turns away.

TRISHA Listen up, now! I got an order!

Mary digs through her purse.

TRISHA And you better make it quick, cos' Miss Thinks I'm Queen is waiting!

Mary looks up in shock.

Trisha glares over her shoulder at her.

TRISHA Let's see if I get this right.

She turns away again.

TRISHA

Queen Hoity Toity here, really wanted a chicken sandwich, but since we don't have 'em, she'll take a burger with mayo, lettuce, and onion.

Mary doesn't believe what she's hearing.

MARY That's not right!

Trisha flashes an evil grin.

TRISHA Oh, right! Excuuuse me!

AT THE GRILL

Bill frozen in shock. He listens with a spatula raised in his hand.

TRISHA (O.S.) Let's get her a cheeseburger. Slap on some catsup and mustard, and give her some fries cos' DING! DING! DING! She can read! Hooray!

His jaw drops.

BACK AT THE COUNTER

Mary's face is flushed. Trisha smiles devilishly at her.

MARY Where's your manager?

TRISHA There's no manager here.

MARY You can keep your food. You're gonna' need it in the unemployment line.

TRISHA You think you're so smart.

Mary storms off. Trisha shouts after her.

TRISHA That just goes to show how much you know, Queenie! Right now you're in my court! And I'm the only queen here! Trisha rips the top sheet from the pad. She wads it up.

The paper wad drops a few feet short of hitting Mary. She walks out the door.

Bill looks like a shy and beaten man. He goes to Trisha.

BILL How are we going to stay in business if you chase away the customers?

Trisha throws her hat on the counter.

TRISHA She made me mad!

BILL So, she was a customer.

TRISHA Ya know what, Bill? It all boils down to respect and my level of respect is boiling over!

She moves out from around the counter.

TRISHA You don't care about me. And you certainly don't care how other people treat me, either!

Bill is dumbfounded.

BILL How could you say such a thing? You know that's not true.

She ignores him.

TRISHA I'm tired. I'm going home.

He watches her go toward the door. In a fit of anger, he pounds his fist on the counter.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Irene stands at the sink and rinses off some lettuce.

Rebecca enters through the back door, carrying a pumpkin.

REBECCA

Aunt Irene...

Yes, Hon'.

#### REBECCA

I was wonderin' why George never talks about his parents. He won't say. He just says he'd rather not talk about them.

Irene sits the lettuce in a bowl and turns the water off.

IRENE

That Trisha girl in Michigan is the cause.

REBECCA

What? Why?

IRENE Sit down, Hon'.

Rebecca sits. Irene joins her.

IRENE

George's mama saw Trisha as a lowlife gold-digger.

REBECCA

Gold-digger?

IRENE Anything she wanted, he got for her. He thought he was in love. --

Rebecca searches her eyes, was he?

IRENE -- No. She had him blindsided and Alice let it be known.

Irene looks off in thought.

IRENE So Trisha gave him an ultimatum. It's either them or her.

Rebecca thinks for a second.

REBECCA Maybe I can do something. Nothing is more important than family.

Irene hugs Rebecca.

INT. HOUSE - REBECCA'S ROOM - NIGHT

George sits on the bed with his guitar in his arms. He strums out a tune.

Rebecca takes a paper from inside her dresser drawer.

INSERT TITLE ON PAPER: "GIVE ME A LITTLE KISS, DARLIN'".

She closes the drawer.

REBECCA This song is very precious to me.

She takes the paper to George.

GEORGE I remember this.

REBECCA My mama and daddy wrote it. Family is so special. So precious. You never know what you've got until it's gone.

That strikes a cord with George. He looks her in the eye.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - REBECCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rebecca sits on her bed. Alone.

REBECCA You know I don't hate you, Lord. I was just feelin bad. Lonely. He was all I had.

She gets up and looks out the window at Irene sweeping off the sidewalk.

REBECCA Aunt Irene says, ours is not to question why.

She turns away.

REBECCA

Just, Lord, if you don't want me singing with George, give me a sign. I'll quit, but I need to ask something of you.

She turns to a framed photo of George on her dresser.

EXT. FACTORY - DAY

George sits at a picnic table and eats his lunch.

Dewayne sits with him. He tackles a foot long sub with vigor.

GEORGE That's when she said, you never know what you've got until it's gone.

Dewayne CACKLES.

DEWAYNE Sounds to me like she's baiting you.

GEORGE

Huh?

DEWAYNE She's ready to get hitched.

A BELL rings.

Dewayne looks to the building.

DEWAYNE

Damn...

He wraps up what's left of his sub.

George looks off in thought.

EXT. HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Phil and George sit side-by-side in lawn chairs listening to music from the radio.

George breaks the silence.

GEORGE So, what would you think about me and Rebecca gettin married?

Phil turns to him wide eyed.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Phil gets out of his parked car. George pulls his truck up behind him.

George quietly gets out of the truck.

He's dressed in his factory uniform.

# GEORGE (whispers) Uncle Phil.

Phil focuses on George.

George cups something in his hand. He goes toward Phil.

PHIL

You got it?

George nods.

George and Phil walk toward the house.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Rebecca stands at the sink, and dries dishes.

George stands in the doorway, half in -- half out. Phil is behind him. He peeks over George's shoulder.

GEORGE

Hey.

Rebecca faces him.

# REBECCA You're a little late today.

George wobbles, overdramatically unsteady, dizzy.

He reaches for his head.

# GEORGE I feel kind of funny.

Rebecca looks concerned.

Irene is setting the table for supper. She drops the silverware. She appears concerned, too.

Rebecca goes to George.

# REBECCA Are you alright?

Irene notices a slight wave from Phil. His smile. George grabs his chest.

> GEORGE I think it's my heart.

He falls down on the floor.

Irene inches closer.

Rebecca leans over him.

# REBECCA Should I do C P R?

She reaches for George's hand.

He turns it over, reveals a ring box.

Rebecca GASPS. She stumbles to her feet.

Irene smiles.

IRENE Oh, you! I thought you was really hurt.

Phil LAUGHS.

Irene steps to Phil. She wraps her arms around his big belly in a hug.

George kneels before Rebecca. He opens the box and shows her the ring. He takes her by the hand.

GEORGE Rebecca Johnson, you are the song in my heart. I love you. Please tell me that you'll be my wife.

REBECCA This is such a surprise. Are you sure you want to marry me?

GEORGE You're so very precious to me, Rebecca. I don't want to lose you. Please marry me.

Rebecca nods, yes!

#### IRENE

Aww...

Phil's smile is huge, beaming.

George springs to his feet. He lifts Rebecca and spins her around in a circle. They kiss.

Phil and Irene rush to them. Rebecca shows them her ring.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Trisha enters the room with mail in her hand. She sets her keys on the hook. Takes off her coat.

She thumbs through the mail. An 8 x 10 envelope catches her eye. She looks interested. Very interested.

INSERT - THE RETURN ADDRESS ON THE ENVELOPE:

"Harvey Wallman, President, New Sounds Music Production, 327 Main Street, Nashville, TN 37201".

Trisha rips open the envelope like an excited child. She takes out a letter. Reads.

TRISHA (V.O.) Greetings from Nashville. Due to the large number of submissions we received, we were forced to extend our deadline. We're sorry for the delay.

Trisha moves into the

KITCHEN

and sits at the table.

She kicks off her shoes and continues to read.

Snow falls outside the window.

TRISHA (V.O.) We are pleased to announce that you have won second place in our contest.

Trisha carries the letter with her to the

BEDROOM

She sits on the bed and contiues to read.

TRISHA (V.O.) Enclosed you will find your second place certificate. A check for twenty five hundred dollars --Ooo! And a recording contract!

She drops the letter, completely dumbfounded. She collects herself and starts to read again.

TRISHA (V.O.) It's in your best interest that you go over the contract and contact us as soon as possible. We'll be waiting to hear from you.

Trisha sets the paper down.

TRISHA Oh -- my -- gawd! Now he can marry me like he wanted to!

Her jaw drops with excitement.

TRISHA I always knew he'd be a star!

Trisha searches the envelope. She pulls out the check. She likes the looks of it.

EXT. FAST FOOD PLACE - CITY - NIGHT

The street is empty.

Bill steps out of the building. Alone. He turns back and locks the door.

He walks away.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bill enters. He just drags, tired from a long day's work.

Trisha sleeps on the couch.

Bill glances at her as he walks past.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

The room is dark except for a sliver of light coming in from between the curtains. Bill is asleep in bed. Alone.

Trisha is dressed. She stands next to the bed and sneaks through Bill's pants pockets. She pulls out a wad of paper money.

Trisha freezes as Bill moves around in his sleep.

He rolls and is still.

She crams all of the money into her pants pocket and sneaks out of the room.

LIVING ROOM

Trisha steps out of the apartment with a suitcase in her hand.

She quietly closes the door behind her.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A bus moves down the road.

A closer look at the bus reveals Trisha sitting inside, looking out of the window.

INT. MOVING BUS - CONTINUOUS

Trisha stares out the window in deep thought.

She turns her wedding rings around and around nervously.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Bill's in his boxers and his hair is all messed up. He yawns, staggers groggily toward the fridge.

He notices a note on the table. He stops, lifts the note, and reads.

INSERT NOTE:

"Bill, Something important has come up, MY LIFE. I've gone to make things right with George."

#### BILL

Son of a...

He wads the note up. Tosses it across the room.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Irene stands at the sink, filling the coffee pot with water.

Moving toward the calendar on the wall.

INSERT CALENDAR:

"November"

The first two weeks are X'd out. The 29th is enclosed inside a red heart.

INT. BRIDAL STORE - DAY

Rebecca and Irene search through a rack of wedding dresses for the perfect gown.

Rebecca finds one. She takes it off the rack, eyes it.

INT. BRIDAL STORE - DRESSING ROOM

Rebecca stands in front of a mirror in a beautiful white wedding gown.

She turns around, checks every angle for the fit.

Irene stands behind her and looks into the mirror.

IRENE Oh, sweetie, I think this is the one.

Rebecca gives a nod of approval.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The room is dark, except for a single ray of light entering through the window.

The phone RINGS.

There is movement in the room. An arm reaches for the phone. It's Irene in her nightgown. She lifts the receiver.

# IRENE

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - IRENE AND TRISHA

Trisha stands in the rain at a payphone.

Hello.

IRENE Hello.

TRISHA

Aunt Irene!

IRENE Who is this?

TRISHA It's Trisha, silly. Could I speak to George? IRENE Trisha, it's the middle of the night. Everyone's in bed.

TRISHA I'm sorry, but I have to speak with George. It's very important. Our future depends on it.

IRENE Your future? I'm sorry, Trisha. George doesn't live here anymore. He's moved away.

TRISHA Moved away! Where is he?

IRENE It wouldn't set well for me to say. He's getting married.

The phone drops from Trisha's hand. It dangles on the cord.

IRENE (V.O.) Hello -- Trisha?

Irene stares at the receiver. She hangs up the phone. She looks up to the Heavens.

# IRENE Forgive me, Lord.

She takes the receiver from the phone and sets it on the counter.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

George notices the phone off of the hook.

He sets the receiver back in place.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Irene sits amongst the other parishioners.

The PASTOR, a chubby man in his fifties, talks into a microphone as he speaks.

PASTOR There will be many tests throughout our lifetimes. For God has a plan. And it's a mighty good plan.

A woman springs up from her seat.

#### WOMAN

# Hallelujah!

#### PASTOR

In God's plan only the righteous will join him in his kingdom. Yet he gives everyone a chance to. He said if the sinners repent and are baptized with the waters of the Holy Spirit, then they too shall dwell with him in his house of beauty known as Heaven.

Irene nods.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The color pink fills the entire screen.

It's a pink tissue flower.

Many more flowers are about to overflow in the paper sack.

Irene sits at the table making the flowers. A roll of string and three boxes of pink tissue sit on the table in front of her.

> GEORGE (O.S.) Aunt Irene.

> > IRENE

I'm in here.

George stands in the doorway, half in -- half out.

GEORGE

How ya doing?

IRENE

They're all but done.

She lifts the bag so he can get a look.

IRENE Three bags should do, shouldn't it?

George sits at the table with Irene. He watches her place a flower into the bag.

IRENE I spoke with Pastor Don today about you and Rebecca.
#### GEORGE

You did?

IRENE He said he'd like for you to sing in our Christmas play.

GEORGE

That sounds great.

The phone RINGS.

Irene ignores it. She takes a few tissues from the box and folds them together in a fan.

IRENE I know you're not a church goer. Neither is Rebecca, but maybe you could come to church with me next Sunday.

The phone bothers George.

GEORGE Do you want me to get that?

IRENE Oh no, just let it go.

She ties a string around the middle of the fan.

IRENE Maybe I could talk your Uncle Phil into going, too. It could be a nice family day.

GEORGE It could be important.

The phone STOPS RINGING.

Irene smiles with satisfaction.

### IRENE

Or not.

She shapes a flower out of the fan.

The phone RINGS.

He looks over to Irene. She glances up at him.

### IRENE

It'll stop soon.

The phone continues to RING.

She sits the pink flower aside.

IRENE I was thinkin about fryin' up some chicken. Are you hungry?

George gives her a strange look.

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Trisha steps out of a room. She's dressed to kill in a Miniskirt. Fur coat. She closes the door behind her.

Her nose lifts as she slinks toward a waiting taxi cab.

She gets into the back seat. The cab pulls away.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

George moves across the lawn to the

DRIVEWAY

where his truck is parked. He opens the door.

The taxi with Trisha in it pulls up behind him, blocks him in.

Trisha gets out of the cab.

#### TRISHA

Hey, stranger.

George looks like he's seen a ghost, doesn't know what to say.

He waits by the open door of his truck, staring at her.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A sedan moves down the road leisurely.

INT./EXT. MOVING SEDAN - CONTIUNOUS

ALICE, 50s, sits in the passenger seat. She's draped in a fur coat, has her hair in an updo, and looks very well to do. She toys with the strands of pearls around her neck as she looks out the window.

HENRY, 50s, sits behind the wheel. He's a very handsome silver-haired gentleman in a tailored suit. His black cowboy hat sits on the seat, between the two.

Alice looks at her wristwatch.

ALICE Are we going to be there on time?

Henry CHUCKLES.

#### HENRY

You're a pip, Alice. We haven't seen our son in years and now suddenly you're worried about minutes.

She turns to him.

ALICE It's been sooo long. I just don't want to make a bad impression.

He shakes his head in agreement.

### HENRY

Too long.

She turns back to the window as he drives on.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

The taxicab leaves Trisha there and backs away.

George waves his hands wildly as he runs for the cab.

GEORGE

Hey!

The cab continues to the

ROAD

and drives off quickly.

BACK TO GEORGE AND TRISHA

Trisha moves toward George. She acts as if nothing has happened between the two. She seems very happy.

#### TRISHA I've missed you.

George frowns, sees right through her.

GEORGE You better call that cab back.

Trisha forces herself into him, too close for comfort.

TRISHA Aw, George, I've come all this way to see you. Aren't you the least bit happy to see me?

He glares at her.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Rebecca, dressed in her work uniform, walks at a leisurely pace.

REBECCA (sings) Go tell it on the mountain. Over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

There's a little spring in her step.

She HUMS out the tune as she walks on.

INT. FAST FOOD PLACE - CITY - DAY

Bill wipes the counter with a rag.

A bell at the O.S. door CHIMES as it opens.

He turns toward the door and smiles.

BILL

Hello.

Mary approaches Bill. The place is otherwise empty.

MARY Are you the manager?

BILL I guess you could say that. I own the place.

MARY Good. I'd like to speak to you about one of your employees.

Mary sets her purse on the counter.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Rebecca moseys to Phil's driveway. She stops. Looks.

DRIVEWAY

Trisha wraps her arms around George.

GEORGE So, maybe they do like my music.

TRISHA Baby, you deserve it. Now you can give me the life I deserve, just like you always wanted to.

He removes her arms from his body.

GEORGE Wait until Becka finds out.

She kisses George on his cheek. Suddenly, it dawns on her.

TRISHA Did you just say Becka? Oh, that's right. You should tell her the wedding is off.

Rebecca GASPS.

George looks toward the sound. He finds Rebecca at the end of the driveway. She has seen the kiss. Heard Trisha.

GEORGE

Rebecca?

She just stares.

Trisha's face brightens into a devilish grin.

She scoots even closer to George.

The sedan pulls into the driveway carrying Henry and Alice.

George looks completly amazed.

GEORGE

Dad? Mom?

TRISHA Oh, snap! We got us a freakin' family reunion goin' on here.

Rebecca turns away and runs off.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Rebecca runs down the road.

Tears stream down her face.

EXT. PHIL'S DRIVEWAY - BACK TO GEORGE AND TRISHA

Trisha takes George by his arm.

TRISHA I take it that's Rebecca. The girl who wants to marry you.

Henry and Alice get out of the car.

ALICE I thought you were done with this piece of white trash.

TRISHA Who you calling white trash, big momma?

George breaks away from Trisha.

Alice and Trisha give each other dirty looks.

George rushes toward his father.

GEORGE Look Dad, I don't have time to explain right now, but I really need you to move your car.

Henry moves toward him with open arms.

HENRY Aren't you even going to give your old man a hug?

George can barely contain himself.

GEORGE Dad, if you don't move your car, I'll have to run after her! The woman I love just ran away!

HENRY Well, why didn't you say so?

Henry rushes to his car. He starts it and backs up. George backs up behind him. Beeps his HORN. Trisha and Alice get out of the way. He makes it to the

ROAD

His MOTOR roars and his tires kick up dust as he backs up.

Henry sticks his head out the window.

## HENRY Go get her, Bubba!

He pulls back into the drive and sees Alice and Trisha glaring at each other with seething anger.

PORCH

Irene steps outside.

She nervously dries her hands on her apron. Looks around out front.

IRENE What's all the commotion?

## DRIVEWAY

Trisha picks up the letter that George had dropped. She turns toward the house. Her face brightens with a smile.

TRISHA Oh, hi there, Aunt Irene.

## ALICE

Irene.

Henry gives Irene a tip of his hat.

PORCH

Irene looks shocked.

## IRENE

Good Lord.

She stretches to look to the road, even though the stretching won't help with her view.

The road is empty.

Trisha moves across the lawn. Coming closer.

Henry tries to hold Alice back, but it's not working.

#### ALICE Oh no, she's not.

Alice breaks free. She runs up behind Trisha. INT./EXT. GEORGE'S MOVING TRUCK - ROAD - DAY George drives down the road.

He looks out the window. Searching.

### GEORGE Becka, where are you?

INT./EXT. GEORGE'S MOVING TRUCK - ROAD - DAY

George passes in front of the ice cream place. He notices the empty picnic table.

A sign in the window reads: "CLOSED FOR THE SEASON".

EXT. ICE CREAM PLACE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Rebecca has ice cream on the tip of her nose. She LAUGHS.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO SCENE

The empty picnic table.

He looks around some more.

The sidewalk is empty.

George shivers from a chill. He turns on his heat, drives on.

EXT. FAST FOOD PLACE - CITY - DAY

Snow falls on Bill as he locks the door.

Mary stands next to him, waiting. They turn and leave together, arm in arm.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Irene stands opposite Trisha. Alice and Henry are on Irene's side. Irene looks angry. Trisha takes a prideful stance, completely full of herself.

TRISHA

I don't care if any of you like it or not. I've come to take him home with me. I lost him once and it's not gonna' happen again.

ALICE Yes, it will happen again. I never liked you.

Irene leans in toward Trisha.

IRENE

You didn't lose him. He ran away from you, just as fast as his feet could fly.

Trisha keeps up the egotistical act.

TRISHA

Maybe so, but me and George have been together a long time. He'll come around. He always does. He loves me.

Trisha brushes her hair away from her face, flashing the wedding set on her manicured hand.

Irene grabs her hand. Gets a better look.

IRENE What in Heavens name is this?

ALICE You stole those. Didn't you?

Trisha forgot to remove her rings. She covers them with her other hand, trying to hide them, but knows it's too late.

TRISHA A minor setback.

She glares at Alice.

TRISHA And no, I didn't steal them! They're mine!

She looks sort of embarrased.

TRISHA I know it was the wrong thing to do.

She pumps herself back up, regains her composure as she looks at the wedding set on her finger.

TRISHA George could never have been able to afford rings like this before. But now he can.

Trisha looks Alice in the eye.

TRISHA Maybe I'll make him buy me a diamond twice this size.

Henry grabs a hold of Alice and holds her back.

ALICE

Let me at her!

#### IRENE

You hussy!

Irene's hand doubles up into a fist.

IRENE Oh, no, you don't!

She swings with the swift power of a professional boxer. It connects with Trisha's eye.

Trisha falls back, and down to the ground.

TRISHA

Yeeeooowww!

Irene jumps around the lawn like a boxer in the middle of sparing. She wants more.

IRENE

Get up!

Henry appears to be in shock.

HENRY

Good God.

Alice LAUGHS.

ALICE You go, sister!

Trisha stares at Irene in shock.

IRENE I said get up!

Trisha gets up quickly, and runs off.

Irene looks up to the Heavens.

#### IRENE Forgive me, God.

Alice LAUGHS and LAUGHS.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Phil pulls into the driveway and parks behind Henry's sedan.

The yard looks normal. No sign of a scuffle.

No one around.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The sink is full of ice, water, and Irene's right hand.

Henry and Alice sit at the table.

Phil enters the room and notices his company.

PHIL Henry! So good to see you again! And Alice!

He turns toward Irene.

PHIL To what do we owe this special occasion?

Irene forces a smile.

IRENE

Rebecca called them. She wanted to bring the family back together again.

PHIL She's a good girl.

Phil notices something strange with Irene. He gets a confused look on his face.

PHIL And what are you doin'?

Irene lifts an ice pack from the sink and presses it against her hand.

PHIL

What happened!?

She goes to the table and takes a seat.

Phil sits down too.

PHIL

Irene?

Irene stares straight ahead into the air, lost in a trance, remembering.

IRENE I don't know what to say other than my insides caught on fire and I couldn't help myself.

HENRY You would have been proud of her, Phil. She's a natural. Got a real nice right hook.

#### PHIL

What?

ALICE She popped Trisha right between her eyes!

Alice busts into LAUGHTER.

# PHIL

Trisha?

ALICE That's the first time I've ever seen that girl at a loss for words. She high-tailed it out of here right quick.

HENRY She probably thought I was gonna let you at her, too.

Henry joins Alice in LAUGHTER.

Irene looks at her, surprised by her laughter.

Phil gets it. He shoots out a belly LAUGH.

Irene finally sees the funny in what has happened and joins in their LAUGHTER.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A taxicab moves down the road.

Trisha looks out of the back window at the scenery.

INT. MOVING CAB - CONTINUOUS

Trisha's eye is swollen and red.

TRISHA Oh, this isn't over. Not by any means.

The letter from Nashville is gripped tight in her hand.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

George parks the truck. He gets out, looks at something in the distance.

GEORGE

Rebecca!

Rebecca kneels at the graves.

She turns toward him and rises to her feet.

She watches him rush toward her.

REBECCA George, is this my sign? Have I lost you, too?

He scoops her into his arms.

GEORGE You haven't lost me. I'm right here. Where I'll always be.

REBECCA Then why is she here, George? I heard her say something about the two of you's future.

He steps back and looks into her eyes.

GEORGE She's not a part of our future. She came here from Michigan with some good news for us.

George extends his hand to her.

GEORGE Let's go home.

She takes it.

GEORGE I'll tell you all about it in the truck.

They turn from the graves.

EXT. PHIL'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

George and Rebecca search different areas.

They look all along the shrubs.

GEORGE It's gotta' be here.

REBECCA You're sure it's not in the truck?

GEORGE I'm sure. Please help me find it.

An O.S. vehicle pulls into the drive.

George turns toward the sound.

A taxicab carries Trisha. It idles in the driveway, right next to Rebecca.

Rebecca looks to George for his reaction.

George freezes with surprise.

Rebecca watches Trisha get out of the cab.

PORCH

Phil opens the screen door, and steps outside. He looks out to the driveway, and appears very concerned.

DRIVEWAY

Trisha's shiner is in full bloom.

George's jaw drops.

GEORGE What happened to you?

TRISHA Enough with the games George. Are you coming home with me or not?

Rebecca looks into the back of the taxi cab.

An 8 x 10 envelope on the seat.

INSERT ADDRESS ON THE ENVELOPE:

"George Davidson, 55 2nd Street Apartment #3, Detroit, Michigan 48212"

She opens the door and takes the envelope.

George stands with Trisha, tries to reason with her.

GEORGE Look, Trish, I have a new life now. I'm getting married in a few days.

TRISHA You wanted to marry me, too, not that long ago.

## PORCH

Phil has had enough. He moves down the steps, ready to confront her.

Irene rushes up behind him.

PHIL I think it's best that you leave right now, Missey, before I sick my wife back on ya!

Irene shrinks in embarrassment.

DRIVEWAY

George looks confused.

GEORGE

Aunt Irene?

Trisha frowns at George.

## TRISHA

I'm waiting?

George turns to her. He looks totally disgusted.

GEORGE Go home, Trisha.

TRISHA You want me to go home?

GEORGE

Yes.

TRISHA Without you?

GEORGE

Yes.

TRISHA No. If I leave, I take the contract with me. You love your music, right?

George looks around and finds Rebecca awaiting his answer.

GEORGE Yes, I surely do.

Trisha smiles with satisfaction.

Alice and Henry watch them from the porch.

GEORGE But I love my Rebecca more. She's my life now. So, if you're gonna take it, take it. I really don't care.

Rebecca rolls up the envelope.

She tucks it in the back of her uniform, in the strap of her apron.

REBECCA Hey, you! Get your hands off of my man before I tear them off.

Rebecca arms herself with a fallen branch and goes toward Trisha.

Irene, Phil, Alice, and Henry back her up.

GEORGE I think you should leave now.

Trisha notices the gang coming toward her. She turns. Runs.

Trisha fumbles into the side of the cab.

TRISHA Fine, but remember one thing, George, you're the loser, not me. You always have been and you always will be. You'll see.

Rebecca steps forward with the stick raised and ready to strike.

The cab backs out of the driveway with Trisha inside it. Henry wraps an arm around George.

# HENRY That girl's not right.

Everyone gathers together around George.

ROAD

Trisha stares at them through the back window.

The cab peels away.

DRIVEWAY

Alice takes Irene by the hand.

### ALICE I bet she saw you coming.

George looks between the bushes. He squats to get a better look.

GEORGE I could have sworn that she dropped it.

Rebecca takes the envelope out from behind her back and holds it out to him.

REBECCA Is this what you're lookin' for?

George eyes the envelope. That's it!

He jumps up, lifts Rebecca off of her feet, and twirls her around in a hug.

Alice goes to them.

## ALICE You must be Rebecca.

Rebecca nods.

ALICE I'm so glad George finally found a nice girl. Welcome to the family, Hon'.

Alice gives her a hug.

They all walk toward the house together.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Trisha steps inside. She sets her suitcase down and puts her key on a hook.

LAUGHTER and MUFFLED CONVERSATION from another room get her attention.

The bedroom door is closed. Trisha swings the door open.

BEDROOM

Bill, as comfortable as he can be, sprawled out on the bed, dressed only in a pair of blue jeans.

Mary sits on the bed, dressed in a robe.

Trisha GASPS. She stares at them in shock, taking it all in.

Mary's eyes are fixed on Trisha as she rises from the bed. Suddenly, she puts on an arrogant smile.

Scott frowns at Trisha, he's pissed.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A beautiful day for a November wedding. Only a few clouds in the sky.

The church bells RING.

A heavenly ray of sun breaks through clouds and shines down onto the building.

Rebecca and George burst through the doors as man and wife. Rebecca is beautiful in her white wedding gown, and George is handsome as can be in a black tux and cowboy hat.

Phil, Irene, Alice and Henry, are the only guests waiting outside. They throw rice on the newlyweds.

George and Rebecca kiss under a shower of rice.

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

The wind blows Rebecca's hair back as she and George rush hand-in-hand toward the building.

A sign in the window reads: "RECORDING STUDIO".

They go inside the building.

INT. HAMBURGER JOINT - CITY - DAY

A teenage EMPLOYEE takes her time wiping off trays. SUPER: "THE FOLLOWING YEAR".

> RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (loud speaker) Woo hoo! Only ten more shopping days till Christmas! This song goes out to Joan. A sweet little thing over at Woodside Mall.

A girl stands with her back to us at the shake machine. She's dressed in a uniform and wipes the machine off with a rag.

> RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (loud speaker) O Holy Night. One of George and Rebecca Davidson's latest hits.

The girl is Trisha. She doesn't look happy.

The MUSIC plays over the loudspeaker.

TRISHA Will someone turn that off!

It gets quiet. Extremely quiet.

A female customer goes toward the counter. She clears her throat to get attention.

Trisha turns around. She looks shocked.

The customer is Mary. She smiles at Trisha.

MARY Long time no see.

Trisha sucks it up, tries to be polite.

TRISHA May I take your order?

MARY

Sure, but first I want you to take a gander at what your soon-to-be ex-husband bought for me.

Mary extends her left hand toward Trisha for her to see. The ring is beautiful. A large diamond solitaire.

# MARY

Nice, huh?

Trisha smirks and looks away.

Mary grins.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Phil sits on the sofa in front of the television.

PHIL Hurry up, woman! It's about to start.

Irene rushes into the room carrying a bowl of popcorn.

She sits next to Phil and puts the bowl of popcorn between the two of them.

IRENE Don't spill now.

Phil flinches like he's scared.

PHIL Okay, Slugger!

He CHUCKLES.

IRENE Oh, you. I need a better nickname.

PHIL All right then. How about sweetie pie?

IRENE

Aw...

She gives him a kiss on his cheek.

Phil lifts the popcorn to his lap. He pulls Irene closer to him, closing the gap between the two. She rests her head on his shoulder.

They focus their attention on the television while they eat the popcorn.

ON THE TV

George and Rebecca are on a stage. A country/bluesy version of "GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN" begins to play.

REBECCA (sings) Go tell it on the mountain. GEORGE AND REBECCA (sings) Over the hills and everywhere. Together, they begin to move around on stage. BACK TO SCENE Phil and Irene sit on the edge of the sofa, glued to the tube, enjoying. REBECCA AND GEORGE (V.O.) (sings) Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born. Phil wraps an arm around her. They bop around to the music. INT. APARTMENT - DAY Trisha sits on a sofa and watches television. TELEVISION George and Rebecca hang onto each other as they sing. GEORGE AND REBECCA (sing) That Jesus Christ is born. BACK TO SCENE Trisha rolls her eyes and turns off the T.V. She eyes a guitar in the corner of the room. INT. APARTMENT - DAY Trisha sits on a sofa with a guitar in her hands. BRUCE (20s) good looking, sits next to her. He positions her fingers on the neck of the guitar. TRISHA So, Bruce, are you married? BRUCE No, I haven't been able to find the right girl yet.

Trisha smiles devilishly. She strums out a cord on the guitar.

Trisha scoots closer to him.

TRISHA Maybe it would help me if you put your arm around me to position my fingers.

He puts his arm around her and moves her fingers on the neck.

MONTAGE

- Rebecca and George sing together on a stage.

- Rebecca, Irene, and Alice sit at Irene's kitchen table. Rebecca lifts a baby outfit up from the table, and smiles. Her stomach is huge, pregnant.

- George carries a suitcase, and helps pregnant Rebecca out of the front door. She holds her belly, winces in pain, labor.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

George looks up from the BABY in Rebecca's arms to her.

GEORGE I think we should call him Roy.

Rebecca looks at the baby lovingly. She caresses his tiny cheek.

REBECCA I think that would be real nice.

George and Rebecca kiss.

Rays of Heavenly light shower the young family.

George and Rebecca cuddle with the baby.

A much more conservative Alice in slacks and a nice blouse bursts into the room. Her hairstyle is different, too. It's loose, flows around her shoulders. She carries a large teddy bear.

Henry is a few steps behind her with a bouquet of flowers.

Phil steps into the room carrying a bouquet of flowers too, and a few balloons. He's beaming, the proud uncle.

Irene is right there behind him, carrying a cake.

Dewayne follows behind Irene with a wrapped gift.

They all gather around Rebecca's bed.

George notices Alice's new hairdo. He touches it and smiles. He gives her a hug.

ROY (V.O.) And that's only the start to their story. They lived happily ever after.

Everyone is happy, smiling.

FADE OUT.