

FLOWERS OF EVIL
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FLOWERS OF EVIL

A MERCEDES TIRE

Immaculate, white-rimmed, rolls up to a curb filled with dirt and debris.

EXT. AMERICAN BAR -- NIGHT

This bar is in the part of town that most normal people only see on the news after a bloody shoot-out.

Drugged-out punks with weapons showing cling to the corners.

Into this pit the Mercedes moves -- not a flashy drug-dealer car; this is an upper-middle-class family vehicle that sparkles.

The car glides into a spot in front of the bar between motorcycles and rusted trucks.

A glittering couple in their thirties get out.

This is GERRY and JULIA BANKS, good-looking and stylish. He strides confidently, with an air of importance and control. She's a little younger, but behind her movie-star-ish smile there's something locked up and nearly dead.

They are severely out of place. A moment of fear flashes across Gerry's face.

GERRY

Are you sure we should do this?

JULIA

Afraid to find out what's inside?

She smirks at him, takes his arm and propels him to the door. As they go in, a couple of unsavory characters bump into them coming out. One sports a huge death's head tattoo. Julia stares at the tattoo and trembles.

GERRY

You coming?

Julia shivers.

INT. AMERICAN BAR

It's worse inside. Drug deals go down at tables as men roll the chambers of their guns, point them at each other and laugh as the hammer clicks on an empty cartridge.

A haze of smoke blinds Gerry and Julia as they enter.

Heads turn and look at them; the looks are predatory. Gerry and Julia try to ignore the gazes and head to the bar. Gerry fumbles with his blackberry, hides it in a pocket, then puts on a macho stride -- he's no slouch, so he's not quite laughable.

The bartender looks grimly at them.

BARTENDER

You don't want to be here.

Gerry peels off a twenty-dollar bill from a money roll and puts it on the bar.

GERRY

Scotch and soda for me; a martini for the lady.

The bartender cracks a yellow smile and laughs at him. Gerry reaches for the money -- but the bartender stops him and goes obediently to make the drinks.

Gerry and Julia move down the bar towards a big, tough-looking guy.

He's an island to himself -- imposing, powerful, alone. His hand could crush a skull.

This is ROD. He's drinking shots. Gerry and Julia sit on either side of him. Julia looks at his unshaven face, watches him smoke. Gerry stares at his dirty overcoat, sees a tattoo snake out from under his sleeve.

Rod pays them no attention, just drinks his drinks. Julia leans in toward him with a seductive smile.

Suddenly, Rod whips over to her, staring right into her eyes. He downs a shot without breaking eye contact. His eyes try to be steely, but there's something vulnerable in them. His voice, however, has gravel in it.

ROD

Who are you?

JULIA

Who am I? Who are you?

ROD

What are you after?

JULIA

(seductively)

Fun.

Gerry speaks up from behind Rod, talking to his back.

GERRY

You're a man who likes fun, aren't you?

ROD

I know what I like. It may not be fun.

JULIA

Do you like me?

Rod stares at her without answering. He has another shot.

Gerry touches his shoulder.

GERRY

The lady asked you something.

Rod strikes like a snake, grabs Gerry by the throat and throws him backwards without looking at him.

ROD

(to Julia)

Why should I like you?

JULIA

I can be a lot of fun. So can my man.

Gerry climbs up off the floor, scrambling back to his barstool.

GERRY

(choking a bit)

Yes, we can.

JULIA

Shall we show you?

ROD

What if I don't like what I see? Waste my time and I get.. mad.

JULIA

We won't waste your time. Come with us.

ROD

Why should I?

Gerry pulls out his wad of cash, puts down some bills for Rod's tab. Rod eyes the money, then eyes Julia.

A HAND

Strokes the shiny hood of the Mercedes. Red neon reflects in its polished finish.

EXT. AMERICAN BAR

It's Rod's hand stroking the car. Gerry opens the door next to Rod, looking on with disapproval.

GERRY

Watch the finish..

Julia quickly guides Rod into the car.

INT. MERCEDES -- NIGHT

Rod sits in the back seat alone, like a prisoner. Gerry drives, Julia's in the passenger seat.

GERRY

I'm Gerry, this is Julia. What's your name, big guy?

ROD
 What do you care who I am?
 (to Julia)
 You just want a big strong body, a
 machine. I'm your machine.

He looks out the window at the glistening upper class suburban
 area they're driving through.

ROD
 Classy. You do this a lot?

GERRY
 Look, we'd like to know a little about
 you..

ROD
 (interrupting)
 I know you.

GERRY
 No.

JULIA
 It's impossible.

ROD
 I've seen your face.

GERRY
 It's a very common face. You saw someone
 like me.

ROD
 A poster.
 (he thinks)
 The election..

Gerry sags.

ROD
 Councilman Banks. Running for re-
 election. Trying to get my vote?

GERRY
 I can explain..

ROD
 Don't worry. My bar's way out of your
 district. No constituents there.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD -- NIGHT

They slow down as they near their house -- a big two-story brick
 building: homey, secure, normal.

INT. MERCEDES

Rod gazes in wonder at the house.

ROD

So respectable. What is it you do,
Gerry-boy, when you're not dabbling in
politics? You rich?

GERRY

(scowling)
I'm a dentist. I am not rich!

Julia rolls her eyes -- this is a thing with Gerry, kind of a psycho-
area for him. Gerry's blackberry buzzes; he fumbles in his pocket
and turns it off.

JULIA

Relax. We're having fun, remember?

They come to their driveway.

JULIA

Better pull in the back.

ROD

What for?

JULIA

Nosey neighbors.

ROD

(sarcastic)
Gosh, what would they think?

EXT. BACKYARD -- NIGHT

Rod gets out of the car and carefully scans the back yard: pool,
garden, partially built pool-house -- the epitome of suburbia.
Big hedges surround most of the yard.

It's all private except for the house right next to the driveway.
That house is even larger than Gerry and Julia's and even more
stylish, done in a Victorian mode.

THE NEIGHBORS' WINDOW

Inside the house next door, a couple in their fifties -- THE DUFFYS --
walk past the window; even in their nightclothes they look well-
dressed.

IN THE BACKYARD

Gerry sees the neighbors and pulls Julia to their own back door.

He looks over at Rod.

GERRY

(whispers to Rod)
Come on!

Rod smiles and saunters over to them. Gerry nervously unlocks the
back door.

ROD

Any kids?

GERRY

Quiet till we're inside.

Julia leans over to Rod and whispers to him, touching his ear with her lips.

JULIA

Our daughter's away. We're all alone.

He smiles.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALL -- NIGHT

This is a house that shows itself off with gaudy decorations: large vases, bad paintings, too-precious antiques. But Rod is impressed. He examines all the objects carefully, like a jeweler. When he moves a small curio, Gerry quickly puts it back in its spot.

GERRY

Why don't we have a drink in the living room?

He pushes Rod down the hallway.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Gerry mixes drinks at the wet bar. A plasma TV dominates the room. Julia puts on some sexy music at the huge sound/video center.

GERRY

Sweet sound system, isn't it?

Rod sees it all, settling on some pictures on the fireplace mantle: young Gerry and Julia getting married, them posing with their daughter, many of their daughter alone. She looks virginal, innocent.

ROD

She's cute.

Julia quickly takes the photo away from him.

JULIA

(curtly)

Leave her out of this.

(switching to seduction)

Concentrate on me.

She puts the photo back on the mantle, above the half-finished wall of the fireplace.

ROD

You need a handyman to finish that?

JULIA

You volunteering?

ROD
Someone should fix it.

GERRY
First the pool-house. That's what the neighbors can see.

Gerry sees Rod looking at what seems to be a wall safe partially obscured behind a painting. He forces a drink into Rod's hand.

GERRY
Gotta look good to them. Votes, you know.

Julia takes her coat off. Gerry sees that as a signal and leaves the room.

JULIA
We could go upstairs.

ROD
Why not start right here?

He grabs her by her neck, forcing her head back as he kisses her passionately. She gasps, bites his lip, unbuttons his shirt.

She strips him slowly, erotically, to the beat of the music. He lets her, never taking his eyes off her. She plays with that, trying to hide behind him as she snatches pieces of clothing. He's only got pants on now.

Suddenly tiring of the game, he snaps out, grasping her hair, pulling her to him, ripping off the top of her pantsuit. She steps out of the rest of it, revealing her sexy black underwear.

With a grunt, he's on her, moving his strong hands up and down her body. But his eyes are scoping out the possessions in the room.

He pushes her down on the sofa and starts to unzip his pants. She stops him, takes out a condom. He laughs.

ROD
You can put that on me but I guarantee you I'm not safe.

A noise makes him turn. Gerry has come back into the room, taping them with a tiny video camera.

Rod growls, leaps up and smashes Gerry against the wall.

ROD
What's your game?

Gerry chokes, holds up the video camera.

ROD
You're sick.

JULIA
It's how he gets his kicks.

ROD

I don't want to end up on Youtube.

She stands nearer to him and whispers in his ear.

JULIA

You want me, you get him, too.

Rod pulls Gerry's face closer to him.

ROD

Maybe I should do you, too. Maybe that's what you really want.

Gerry's breathing heavy, looking at Rod. But Rod throws him to the floor.

ROD

You're not worth it.

Rod goes back to Julia, takes her to the sofa, bends her over it as he ravishes her.

Gerry tapes them feverishly, knocking into the mantelpiece and sending photos flying. He motions occasionally to Julia to face the camera. But Julia's attention is solely on Rod.

JULIA

You know so much about what a woman wants.

ROD

I've been around.

JULIA

Where did you learn all this?

ROD

Shut up.

JULIA

Tell me who you are, tell me where you've been.

ROD

I was in the Navy..

There's an uneasy pause while Julia stares at him. Then she starts laughing hysterically.

JULIA

The Navy? The Navy? Where did that come from.

ROD

(angrily)

It's true. I was in the Navy.

Gerry laughs with Julia now. They sing the Village People's "In The Navy".

GERRY

In the Navy!

JULIA

You do a whole lot of work!

GERRY

In the Navy!

Rod trembles with anger.

ROD

Stop it! You've ruined it all!

JULIA

You ruined it, Rod. You never used that Navy line any of the other times.

GERRY

It took us right out of the fantasy. Couldn't you have made something up about India or Tibet?

ROD

But it's true..

JULIA

Twelve times we've done this and you never said it. Why say it now?

ROD

(to Julia)

I wanted to tell you something real. Not all this fake shit.

Julia is actually touched.

JULIA

Rod, how sweet.

Then she starts laughing again.

JULIA

In the Navy!

GERRY

(laughing, in tears)

Did this remind you of all those cute sailors in bell-bottoms?

Rod finally starts laughing himself, sitting on the sofa next to Julia.

ROD

I can't help it if you two suddenly get disco-nostalgia! Some kind of neurotic fixation.

GERRY

That's our English major, using those five dollar words.

GERRY (CONT'D)
How many handymen can do that?

Rod prickles a bit at that, so Julia tries to appease him.

JULIA
You never told us about your past before.

ROD
You didn't ask.

JULIA
Come on, it's been great. We've all loved it.

GERRY
(insincerely)
Sure we have.

ROD
Maybe I don't feel like playing games forever.

GERRY
Don't be a spoilsport. We just need better games.

Rod and Julia get dressed as they speak.

ROD
Like what? This one's old.

JULIA
Is it?

GERRY
I could play the guy in the bar.

ROD
They'd cut you up for bait before we got in the door.

Julia snickers. Gerry shoots her an angry look.

GERRY
Don't forget who thought of this in the first place. We wouldn't have had any of this fun if I hadn't started the whole thing.

ROD
So what do you suggest, master?

GERRY
(thinking)
Why don't we do it for real?

JULIA
What?

GERRY

Pick up some real people. None of this play-acting.

JULIA

That's not a good idea..

GERRY

Since when do you decide what's good or not good?

JULIA

Whatever you want.

GERRY

Rod, what do you think?

ROD

(shrugs)

Gotta be better than this.

Julia looks at both men, hurt. She turns away and picks up the fallen wedding photo of herself and Gerry in younger years.

Her face, now with a few lines in it, is reflected in the glass over the photo. She touches her face, comparing it to the very young face in the photograph.

Rod touches her on the shoulder.

ROD

It could be fun.

She turns and smiles a small smile at him.

JULIA

Sure. If you guys want to.

GERRY

Decision made. I'll pick the place.

ROD

What's that mean? The dentist's office?

JULIA

Probably the local schoolyard.

Gerry's look is the kind that kills.

ROD

I'll clean up and we'll go wherever you want.

He leaves the room, giving Julia a long, sexy stare.

GERRY

What kind of a crack was that?

JULIA

I'm sorry, I just..

GERRY

We have to stick together, especially with the election coming up.

JULIA

It's only Rod. He won't say anything. You pay him enough not to.

A ringtone startles them -- Madonna's CHERISH. Julia rushes to her purse, pulls out her phone.

GERRY

We don't know anything about him. We didn't know he was in the Navy. Who's that, another of your admirers?

JULIA

Just our baby girl checking in. Why are you suddenly so worried about Rod?

Julia straightens the room up, Gerry follows, fixing up whatever she does so it meets his neatness mania.

GERRY

We've only known him six months. He fixes our home but who is he?

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Rod walks through the bedroom on his way to the master bathroom. He looks at their ornate bed, stops at the dressing table.

He opens the dressing table drawers and stares at the jewels Julia keeps there, sparkling and luminescent. He reaches in, but instead of jewels, he takes out her hairbrush. Lovingly he runs his fingers over Julia's hair in the brush, looking longingly into a mirror.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Julia finishes straightening up, putting the photos in order on the mantlepiece, the last one is a family pose of them with their daughter. Gerry looks at it with her.

GERRY

What a good-looking family.

Julia looks at him, sees that he speaks with no irony whatsoever.

JULIA

Gerry, do we have to..

He cuts her off with a glare.

GERRY

Fix your hair and we'll go.

He picks up his camera, pops out the flaschard puts it into a slot in his TV system and plays it.

The television screen shows Rod and Julia on the sofa. Gerry stares at it.

JULIA

What happens when we get there?

GERRY

I'll pick someone out and we'll bring them here.

ROD (O.S.)

We'll pick someone out.

Rod's in the doorway, cleaned up and ready to go.

GERRY

What?

ROD

We vote. Otherwise I don't go.

GERRY

All right. But I decide where.

They start to the front door. Julia straightens a picture on the wall as they leave.

EXT. CLUB NOVA -- NIGHT

Unlike the last bar, this club boasts plenty of nice cars and well-dressed people going inside.

Gerry walks with Julia to the front door as if he owns the place. Rod, under-dressed, uncomfortably follows them inside.

INT. CLUB NOVA

It's a semi-S&M club -- lots of leather inside, some bondage performances enacted on stages in the larger rooms.

Rod frowns. Gerry loves it. Julia smiles at him.

JULIA

Your kind of place?

GERRY

Reminds me of work. People bound down, helpless.. and I'm in charge.

JULIA

Gerry! Is being a dentist that sexy?

Rod wanders off in disgust.

ANOTHER PART OF THE CLUB

Rod looks at a female dominatrix show. It's not his thing, so he takes his drink and starts to wander.

A young woman in a black veil sweeps up to him. Underneath a black shawl, she seems to have schoolgirl clothes on. This is MEGAN.

She radiates sensuality, lets her flowing hair snake around her face like a child might.

MEGAN

Don't you like it here?

She licks her lips and smiles at him.

ROD

You're far too young to be here.

MEGAN

Appearances can be deceiving.

A tall -- taller than Rod -- bald man slinks up behind the girl:
FLETCHER. He has an old world charm and an air of mystery about
him. Years earlier, he'd have been the court poet or priest. Now
he finds his audiences elsewhere.

FLETCHER

(to Megan)

Who's your friend?

ROD

I'm no friend.

MEGAN

You could learn to be.

Rod turns to go, but a voice and a hand on his shoulder stop him.

GERRY

Who's this, Rod?

ROD

Don't know, don't care.

But Gerry does care, and sidles right up to Megan. Julia looks on
with alarm.

MEGAN

I'm Megan.

GERRY

Megan, great to meet..

MEGAN

And this is..

She points to Fletcher, but he interrupts her.

FLETCHER

Merely a voluptuous cat at his Queen's
feet.

MEGAN

It's poetry. Fletcher likes to speak
in poems.

GERRY

(thinks he's funny)

Fletcher? Like lecher?

FLETCHER
Far from it, my friend.

JULIA
Gerry..

GERRY
Sorry, rude of me. This is Julia.
Julia, Megan.

Julia sizes Megan up and doesn't like what she sees, especially a death's head tattoo on her wrist.

MEGAN
Can we be friends?

Julia pauses, so Gerry jumps in.

GERRY
Course we can. Close friends. Almost
like family.

MEGAN
You could be my parents. I never knew
them. I'd like them to be you.

GERRY
One big happy family!

Rod sulks, Julia looks threatened. Megan beams, touches Gerry's
face.

MEGAN
That's right, Daddy!

FLETCHER
Megan, let's buy the nice people drinks.
Help me carry.

Fletcher and Megan go to the bar.

GERRY
Quite an interesting, uh..

ROD
You mean, quite a hot little piece,
don't you?

GERRY
What's your prob, Rodney?

ROD
(hates that name)
There's something sick about them.

GERRY
Sick? We're having an affair with our
hired hand and a pretty little girl is
sick?

ROD
The guy's creepy. I say no.

GERRY
Well, it's majority rules. And Julia's voting with me, right?

JULIA
(hesitant)
It's just that..

GERRY
What's the matter, honey? You afraid of a little girl and some bald guy?

JULIA
No..

GERRY
Fine. Then it's settled.

ROD
No it's not.

GERRY
We voted and you're vetoed.

Fletcher and Megan return with drinks for them.

FLETCHER
(to Julia)
Here: a liquid sky that sows its stars within my heart.

JULIA
More poetry?

FLETCHER
You bring out the poet in me.

MEGAN
(to Gerry)
And what do I bring out in you?

GERRY
Uh, the beast.

Rod drinks silently, sullenly.

GERRY
Would you like to go somewhere more comfortable? We have a nice big house.

MEGAN
(excited)
A big house?

Gerry nods. Julia looks fearful.

MEGAN
In the suburbs?

MEGAN (CONT'D)
 (to Fletcher)
 Could we?

Fletcher smiles. Rod suddenly lashes out and grabs Fletcher by the collar.

ROD
 Are we being set up? How old is this girl?

GERRY
 (trying to keep things quiet)
 Don't be an asshole..

MEGAN
 (to Rod)
 You are the protective type.

She opens her purse, takes out her driver's license and holds it out to him.

MEGAN
 Twenty whole years old. I'm a big girl.

Rod lets go of Fletcher, who keeps that Cheshire cat grin.

FLETCHER
 Twenty very mature years.

Fletcher picks up a black leather briefcase with a large lock on it, motions to the exit.

FLETCHER
 Shall we?

ROD
 What have you got in there?

FLETCHER
 I carry my business with me. It's none of yours.

The group walks past Rod and Julia, who lag behind, looking uneasy. Then Rod puts his hand on Julia's shoulder and they follow.

INT. MERCEDES -- NIGHT

Rod sits in the back seat between Megan and Fletcher, his face tight and drawn. Julia tries to investigate the guests.

JULIA
 You in school, Megan?

MEGAN
 The world is my school.

GERRY
 (annoyed)
 Didn't you graduate?

MEGAN
Who needs to graduate?

GERRY
(upset)
You have to graduate. You can't just
walk out.

Rod likes seeing Gerry upset, so he grins at Megan, who smiles warmly back. Julia keeps digging.

JULIA
What line of business are you in, Mr.
Fletcher?

FLETCHER
Private business. So private I don't
discuss it.

He has a certain panache that even gives his refusals a pleasant, metric sound; he quickly checks a message on his iPhone, then turns to Megan.

FLETCHER
Dear indolent, I love to see in your
body bright,
How like shimmering silk the skin
reflects the light.

He reaches across Rod and caresses Megan, who giggles, but directs her gaze to Rod.

JULIA
How long have you two been together?

MEGAN
(a bit bored)
Seems like forever.

JULIA
Are you.. related?

MEGAN
In our spirits.

She looks out the window, sees the house and screams in delight.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY -- NIGHT

The group enters and Megan squeals, races up and down the hallway.

MEGAN
I love it. I want it!

IN THE DINING ROOM

Megan looks in all the cupboards, with Julia standing nearby, not knowing quite what to do.

MEGAN
You own all this stuff?

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Megan pores over the photos on the mantle, holds up a portrait of Gerry and Julia's daughter.

MEGAN
What's her name?

JULIA
(hesitantly)
Dawn..

MEGAN
Dawn could be my sister.

She holds the photo next to her face and the resemblance is amazing. Then she starts going through the CD collection, tossing them aside one by one.

Gerry picks them up and puts them back in place.

GERRY
Do you have to touch everything?

MEGAN
(holding a CD)
I've always wanted this one. What else is there?

She runs out of the room. Fletcher pushes his face close to Gerry's.

FLETCHER
This is what happens when you let strangers into your home.

MEGAN (O.S.)
What's in here?

IN THE HALLWAY

Halfway down the hall, a small anteroom leads to a locked door. Megan plays with the lock. Julia appears next to her.

MEGAN
What's in here?

JULIA
That's off limits.

MEGAN
Let me see. Please.

JULIA
No.

She ushers Megan back towards the living room.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Gerry hands the other two men drinks.

GERRY
Shanghai surprise!

FLETCHER
What is it?

GERRY
I said it's a surprise.

FLETCHER
I take it you've heard of food allergies?

GERRY
It's all booze. You're not allergic to
booze, are you?

The women enter from the hall and Megan slinks to Fletcher, takes a long drink from his glass.

MEGAN
He's not allergic to fun.

GERRY
Julia, put some music on.

Julia takes her time selecting a CD, so Gerry grabs one from her and puts it on: it's sexy, fast-beat music.

Megan pushes between Rod and Gerry, starts gyrating, dancing with them. Rod holds back at first, but when he sees Gerry enjoying himself, he also vies for Megan's attention.

Julia's in shock, seeing both her men already lost to her.

A hand touches her arm; she jumps. Fletcher smiles in a kind, almost fatherly way.

FLETCHER
You must want to dance.

He gently takes her to the center of the room and starts to dance with her. For such a tall man, he's never gawky -- he's actually elegant. Julia smiles at him.

JULIA
You're good.

FLETCHER
Oh, vows and perfumes, kisses infinite.

MEGAN

Has taken her shirt off, dances in a bra with the two men. Gerry and Rod each try to keep their eyes on her. Megan loves it.

FLETCHER

Starts to take his jacket off, realizes his briefcase sits nearby on a chair, picks it up, all the while continuing to dance.

Then he produces a pair of handcuffs.

JULIA
Those for me?

FLETCHER
Me, actually.

He handcuffs the briefcase to his hand.

JULIA
(confused)
Quite attached to that, aren't you?

FLETCHER
I like to keep my business near me.

Julia stares at him as he dances, clumsily now, with the briefcase hanging from his arm. He tries twirling it around his head, but it almost hits him.

Julia starts laughing at him, but the others in the room don't notice.

Their dancing becomes more heated. Megan has few clothes on, rubs against Rod, then Gerry. Each man tries to physically hold her away from the other one. Then they stop and stare at each other. It's about to become a fight.

But they're distracted by a loud gasp.

Fletcher falls to the floor, bright red and choking. They all watch him for a moment, stupefied.

Then Rod rushes to him, starts pounding on his chest. Gerry leans over them, Julia cradles Fletcher's head.

MEGAN
(to herself)
No!

Rod listens to Fletcher's heart.

ROD
He's dead.

JULIA
(drops Fletcher's head)
My God!

Megan runs from the room. Julia follows after her.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BATHROOM

Megan is locked in the bathroom. Julia pounds on the door.

JULIA
Megan? Come on out.

INT. BATHROOM

Megan huddles in a corner, gasping, shaking her head. She chokes out a strangled cry.

MEGAN

What did you do to him?

IN THE LIVING ROOM

The men step back from the body.

GERRY

Dead? He can't be dead.

ROD

See for yourself.

Gerry instead backs away from the corpse.

GERRY

(angrily)

People just don't die in my house.
This will fuck everything up!

ROD

We better call the police.

GERRY

The police? Now, wait a minute..

ROD

Wait?

GERRY

A dead body in my house. You know what
this will do to me?

ROD

To you? This man is dead.

GERRY

The election..

ROD

The election? You have to be kidding.

GERRY

What if he's a criminal.. or worse?

ROD

You should have thought of that earlier.

Julia comes back into the room.

JULIA

She won't come out of the bathroom.
She says we killed him.

GERRY

What?

(to Rod)

See? Now we can't call the police.

ROD

Give me your chell phone.

Rod starts go through Julia's purse for her phone.

JULIA
Oh, Lord. This will ruin us.

GERRY
Then stop him -- don't let him do this.

JULIA
We have to do the right thing.

GERRY
The right thing is to save our lives!

Rod pulls out the phone, but Julia puts her hand on his.

JULIA
You know what this would mean to us.
It's the end of all that we have. And
Dawn..

GERRY
That's right, our daughter! She can't
know about this.

Gerry goes to the corpse, ransacking its pockets.

GERRY
What would the police think: a wanted
man dies in our home, half-naked?

ROD
(to Julia)
You care about the election more than
this poor man?

JULIA
What can we do for him now?

Gerry pulls out Fletcher's wallet.

GERRY
Charles Baude; Remy Simon; Terence Neill --
all different names. Who was he? What
was his game?

ROD
We've got to call someone.

JULIA
Why? Just get rid of him.

GERRY
(catching on)
It's as if he were never here.

ROD
What?

JULIA
Just dump him. Who would care?

JULIA (CONT'D)
Especially if he's a criminal.

GERRY
He's got nothing on him to connect him
with us.

ROD
I can't believe you're saying this.

JULIA
What about the bag?

GERRY
What's in the bag?

Gerry pulls at the bag attached to Fletcher's arm. The body slides
a bit; then it sighs. They jump back.

GERRY
That was just a reflex response.

ROD
You're both crazy. We've got to make a
report.

JULIA
(a jolt of realization)
Oh my God -- what if Dawn comes home?

GERRY
We've got to hide the body and dump it
later.

ROD
You said Dawn was away.

JULIA
She's just at her friend's down the
street. If she comes back or if a
neighbor comes by..

ROD
I'm calling the police.

GERRY
No! What if they say we were
responsible? We gave him a drink.

ROD
We?

GERRY
He's an outlaw. Nobody will miss him!

JULIA
Nobody at all.

ROD
We don't even know how he died.

GERRY

That's the point. What if we did kill him? By accident, I mean.

JULIA

(taking control)

Put him upstairs for now. Then we can decide.

Rod doesn't move, so she turns it on for him.

JULIA

Rod, do this for me.

Rod sighs, then gets at Fletcher's head and shoulders. He looks at Gerry.

ROD

Well, come on.

GERRY

Right.

Gerry barely lifts Fletcher's feet. Rod takes the bulk of the weight and drags the body from the room.

ON THE STAIRWAY

The men struggle with the body; Gerry drops his end and the corpse thumps on the stairs.

GERRY

He smells awful.

ROD

What do you expect? He's dead.

GERRY

It's not his body, it's what he, you know, excreted.

ROD

That's what people do when they die.

GERRY

How do you know that?

Rod doesn't answer as they negotiate the top of the stairs.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

They groaningly put him on the bed. Gerry goes through Fletcher's pockets again.

GERRY

Damn key must be in here somewhere.

ROD

Forget it.

GERRY

I want to know what's in that bag.

ROD

You want to stay here alone with a dead man, that's up to you.

Rod leaves. Gerry hesitates, but then follows him, turning out the light behind him.

In the darkness, Fletcher's hand twitches.

ON THE STAIRWAY

Julia waits for them at the bottom of the stairs.

JULIA

Where did you put it?

ROD

In the bedroom.

JULIA

On our bed? Are you out of your mind?

GERRY

We couldn't just throw him on the floor. Shut up about it.

Gerry and Rod move to the living room, but Julia for once is not backing down.

JULIA

I can't believe you put it on the bed!

INT. LIVING ROOM

All three are upset, reach for their drinks. Then, as a group, they realize how Fletcher may have died and put down their drinks.

JULIA

You've got to get it out of here tonight.

ROD

We can't just dump him. We've got to do something.

GERRY

We have to make sure we're in the clear, that's all.

ROD

He was a human being. Imagine how the girl feels.

GERRY

The girl?

They look at one another.

INT. BATHROOM

The door to the bathroom cautiously opens inward, revealing Gerry, Julia and Rod.

GERRY
Megan, dear..

IN THE HALLWAY

The three of them see that Megan has disappeared.

GERRY
Shit - she's off to the police!

Gerry runs to the back door, with Rod behind him.

EXT. BACKYARD -- NIGHT

The men look around the yard. Julia watches from the door.

ROD
(yelling)
Megan! Megan, girl!

GERRY
Shut up -- the neighbors will hear.

He calls for Megan in a whisper.

GERRY
Megan! Megan!

Then they both head out the driveway to the front of the house.

EXT. FRONT YARD -- NIGHT

As they round the drive to the front yard, they both nearly jump out of their skins when confronted with the Duffys, the next-door neighbors.

Mr. Duffy is tall, tanned and distinguished. His wife wears a variety of fashionable wigs.

MR. DUFFY
There you are, Gerry. I know it's late, but you did say to come by to talk about election strategy.

MRS. DUFFY
You know my Arnold, always thinking.

MR. DUFFY
You boys look worried.

GERRY
No, no, everything's fine.

MR. DUFFY
Well, let's go in. I've got some important backers lined up for you..

GERRY

That would be great, but Julia, she's not well. Let's do it tomorrow, I mean, Sunday night.

MR. DUFFY

(a little annoyed)

A man should always be ready for opportunity when it knocks.

GERRY

I know. It can knock Sunday night.

MR. DUFFY

All right, Gerry. Let's go, dear.

Mrs. Duffy looks questioningly at Rod.

MRS. DUFFY

You boys working late?

GERRY

It's cooler at night.

MRS. DUFFY

Surely. Goodnight.

The Duffys leave. Gerry and Rod go in the front door.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Julia paces. The men come in talking.

GERRY

The bitch is turning us in right now.

ROD

Not if we call the police first.

GERRY

She could be calling her criminal friends.

JULIA

We have to do something..

MEGAN (O.S.)

What you'll do is what I tell you to do.

Megan stands in the doorway, holding the briefcase.

MEGAN

It's in my hands, Councilman.

JULIA

You? You're just a little tramp!

GERRY

You're a girl. I'll tell you what you're going to do.

MEGAN

Then I guess the police would love to talk to me..

GERRY

It's not our fault. He just died.

MEGAN

What did you give him to drink?

GERRY

(unnerved)

I didn't..

JULIA

We're just trying to make things all right.

MEGAN

So it's all right if you just dump the body somewhere. What will the neighbors think?

ROD

Megan, we don't want trouble. What should we do?

MEGAN

You'll do what I say. Because if this bag isn't delivered by morning, certain men will come looking for it.

GERRY

What men?

MEGAN

Not very nice men. And they'll go to the club and find out we came here.

ROD

Just give me the bag and we'll take care of it.

MEGAN

It's my game. I'm going. But I'll need some protection.

ROD

All right.

He puts on his jacket, getting ready to leave.

MEGAN

I'll take him.

She points at Gerry.

GERRY

Good idea.

JULIA
No! He can't go..

GERRY
It's all right, honey. I can take care
of myself.

MEGAN
Sure he can. Have you got a gun?

JULIA
Of course not!

GERRY
We're for gun control!

Megan sneers. She gestures to Rod.

MEGAN
You stay and take care of her. In case
someone shows up.

JULIA
Shows up?

ROD
I'll take care of her. You make sure
Gerry gets back OK.

GERRY
I'll be fine..

MEGAN
It's going to be quite a drive. We
better go.

She drags him toward the back door.

GERRY
We'll be back.

They leave. Julia and Rod hear the car drive away.

JULIA
What's she up to?

ROD
It's some drug deal, that's all.

He puts his hands on her shoulders.

ROD
It's going to be all right. I promise.
I won't let anything happen to you.

He means it and she likes that. She touches his face.

JULIA
We have to make things like they were.
Before she showed up.

She pulls away from him, playfully.

JULIA

I need to clean up. Care to join me?

Rod watches her go.

INT. MERCEDES -- NIGHT

Gerry drives the car, trying to get to know Megan. He's playing Dad.

GERRY

Where's your family?

MEGAN

Dad used to beat me, so Mom left him. Then she was killed in a horrible car accident.

Her voice gets choked up as she tells the story.

MEGAN

I was in Catholic boarding school for a while.

Gerry gets excited by that.

GERRY

Boarding school, huh?

MEGAN

Turn left here. How long have you been married?

GERRY

Fifteen years.

MEGAN

Why? Right here.

GERRY

That's just how long it's been.

MEGAN

I mean why get married in the first place? Go down this alley.

GERRY

Well, she was great. Prettiest cheerleader in high school. What else were we supposed to do?

MEGAN

So do you love her?

Gerry doesn't answer.

MEGAN

Stop here.

GERRY
What do we do now?

MEGAN
Wait for them.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Julia takes her shower. The bathroom door is open, leaking light into the bedroom next to it and onto Fletcher's dead body. The shower curtain hides the body from Julia.

Suddenly the curtain is ripped back roughly - it's Rod. Water drips on his clothes.

ROD
Don't you care that there's a dead body
ten feet away from you?

JULIA
Not with you here to protect me.

She wipes herself with soap, then starts rubbing it on him. He resists, so then she starts rubbing his hands on her soapy body. Rod steps all the way into the shower.

INT. MERCEDES -- MORNING

Gerry and Megan wait. The night starts to evaporate, leaving gray mist outside.

GERRY
This Fletcher, was he your..

MEGAN
My what?

GERRY
You know. Do you go for older guys?

MEGAN
I go for whatever's exciting.

GERRY
What's exciting?

MEGAN
Different things.

GERRY
What different things?

She's silent for a moment, then looks at him with wide eyes. His blackberry buzzes and he jerks the wheel while he silences it.

MEGAN
Tell me your fantasy.

GERRY
My what?

MEGAN

The secret sex fantasy you don't tell
your wife.

GERRY

What are you talking about?

MEGAN

All men have it. Tell me.

She smiles, touches his arm, reveals a little more with her skirt.
He finally gives in.

GERRY

You know those dental chairs? I'm at
work and I have all my chairs full..

(hesitates, licks his
lips)

They're full of young schoolgirls, bound
down so they can't move. Their mouths
are open for me to work on. They can't
do anything. But I can do whatever I
want to them.

He gets into it more and more as he tells it.

GERRY

They're powerless and I'm totally
powerful, in charge. I do them all.
Then they get loose and tie me down,
they hit me, humiliate me, hurt me, do
whatever they want to me.

He stops; he's sweating. He looks at Megan.

GERRY

Is that weird or what?

MEGAN

Show me.

She squeezes his hand.

MEGAN

I'll pretend I'm in your chair.

She leans back, mouth open.

MEGAN

Show me what you want to do.

Gerry quickly takes his clothes off. Naked, he puts his fingers
in her mouth; she sucks on them slowly, longingly. He starts
getting more and more excited, caressing her with his free hand.

As he starts to unbutton her blouse, lights shine on them as a car
pulls up near them and goes around a corner. They both peek out
the window at it.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM -- MORNING

Julia and Rod towel off after their watery experience, in kind of post-coital bliss. They laugh, drying each other off, and start to embrace.

ROD

Julia, you know how much I care..

A ringtone startles them, breaking the moment. Julia wraps the towel around her, runs into the bedroom.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Julia reaches for her cell phone -- on the floor where she dropped her purse, a little too close to Fletcher's dead body on the bed. Rod follows her.

Their eyes try to look anywhere but at the body. Unwatched by them, Fletcher's fingers on his left hand twitch.

JULIA

(on phone)

Hello.. Dawn, honey!

ROD

(protective)

What's the matter? Is she all right?

Julia waves him away.

DAWN

Sits in a glowing white night-dress, holding a bright pink cell phone. At fourteen, she's still naive and very innocent. Her soft hair flows around her baby face.

She talks into the phone she's holding.

DAWN

She's just awful. I need to come home..
if that's OK.

JULIA

Looks horrified.

JULIA

(into phone)

You want to come home?

She meets eyes with Rod. He signals her to say 'no'.

JULIA

(into phone)

No, honey, you should stay there. I
don't care if she did tell your special
secret to her sister.

Rod tries to take the phone and Julia pulls it from him.

JULIA

(continuing)

That's no reason to ruin the sleepover.
Apologize for yelling at her. You heard
me: apologize to her. Right now.

DAWN

Shakes her head, resignedly. She never wins these battles.

DAWN

All right, mother.

She hangs up.

JULIA

Hangs up as well, lets out a breath and turns to Rod.

JULIA

It's Okay.

They both look at the body.

INT. MERCEDES

Gerry's getting very excited as he caresses Megan, but she suddenly
pulls away from him and looks out the window.

MEGAN

It's time.

GERRY

(very annoyed)

Now? Can't it wait a minute?

MEGAN

I see them. I'll go make the exchange.

GERRY

It's not safe. I'll go with you.

MEGAN

They'll kill both of us if they see
you.

GERRY

(suddenly chivalrous)

I'd die for you, my lady.

She opens the door and he realizes he's still naked, gropes for
his underwear.

GERRY

But I'll do whatever you say.

She gets out of the car. He puts his clothes on, slumps down and
puts some bad oldies music on the radio.

As he's rocking out, he hears a siren and jumps. He looks out the
window.

HIS P.O.V.

A police car drives towards him at top speed.

IN THE CAR

Gerry ducks down behind the dashboard. He's frightened, breathing heavily -- when there's a knock at the door, making him jump even more.

He turns to see Megan. The police car has disappeared.

She carries a different bag this time, larger, heavier.

MEGAN

OK, I've got it.

GERRY

(trying to be cool)
Got it. Got what?

She gives him a playful slap on the cheek.

MEGAN

The money, my big, bad tooth-flosser.
We could run away now.

GERRY

(thinking about it)
We could.

MEGAN

But we'd leave your wife and Rod with
that dead body. And your daughter, you
don't want to leave her, do you?

GERRY

(lying)
No, of course not.

Megan shoots him a mysterious look.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- MORNING

Rod, now fully clothed, stares at the dead body. Julia comes out of the bathroom, also dressed, hugs him.

JULIA

It's exciting, isn't it?

ROD

He's dead. Don't you care?

JULIA

Once he's gone and once we've got rid
of that girl, we'll be fine.

ROD

Will we?

JULIA
Just like old times. With this one
thrilling memory.

ROD
It's not just a memory. It's illegal
and immoral.

JULIA
Since when does a guy who wants to steal
his employer's wife have such morals?

ROD
That's different. I'm going to call
the police.

JULIA
Wait.

ROD
We have to do it.

JULIA
You do and I'll tell them you did it.

ROD
(shocked, betrayed)
What?

JULIA
"Officer, we didn't really know him.
He's worked in our yard for a few
months.."

She taunts him, acting out the conversation while waltzing around
him and the body.

JULIA
"He doesn't live anywhere, he doesn't
have a real job. We don't know where
he came from."

Rod stares at her, looking angry, but looking especially trapped.

INT. MERCEDES -- MORNING

Megan caresses Gerry's hair, mussing it up as he drives the car,
while prying for information.

MEGAN
Where is Rod from?

GERRY
Don't know. Just a nice guy, good
handyman. Works in the yard.

MEGAN
Is that the only place he works?

GERRY
What do you mean?

MEGAN

My poor little idiot, it's obvious. He wants your Julia all to himself.

GERRY

But..

MEGAN

You think he likes that threeway thing? He's just waiting to take her away from you.

GERRY

He always hates it when I'm there. He hated me taping it.

MEGAN

(eagerly)

You taped it? Can I see it?

GERRY

Of course, my little angel.

MEGAN

We need protection against him if he tries anything. Do you know where we can get a gun?

He looks at her and his gun control philosophy goes out the window.

EXT. KERNEY HOUSE

This is in the dumpy part of the suburbs: run-down, dirty. In fact, a city dump is right over the back yard.

INT. MERCEDES

Gerry checks the address on his pocket computer with that on the house -- he's obviously never been there before.

EXT. KERNEY HOUSE

There's KERNEY working in the driveway: a squat, none-too-bright guy who wears his baseball cap backwards. Gerry and Megan ride up in the car.

IN THE CAR

Gerry whispers to Megan.

GERRY

Get down and stay hidden while I talk to him.

Megan overacts that it's a big secret and lies down on the floor.

OUTSIDE

Gerry stumbles out of the car as Kerney approaches.

KERNEY

Gerry Banks, I'll be fried! What are you doing in this neck?

GERRY

Need a favor, Kerney.

KERNEY

You just name it. Anything for my dentist.. and my councilman.

They walk near the car. Megan keeps teasing Gerry by popping up into view whenever he can see the car and Kerney can't. This makes him all the more nervous as the transaction proceeds.

GERRY

See, our street's been having problems with burglars..

KERNEY

Shit, yeah, cocksuckers!

GERRY

So I was wondering -- could I borrow one of your guns..

KERNEY

(almost yelling)

A gun!

GERRY

(shushing him)

Just for a little while. I'm gonna buy one, but there's that damn waiting period.

KERNEY

Oh yeah, fuck that waiting period!

GERRY

Could be some free dental work in it for you.

Kerney smiles a brown-toothed smile.

KERNEY

Well hell, yeah, lemme getcha one.

He runs into his house.

Gerry gives Megan a thumbs-up and she blows him a long kiss.

Kerney comes back out holding a bundle wrapped in dirty cloth.

KERNEY

Here ya go, Gerry. You know how to use one of these?

GERRY

(lying)

Course I do.

KERNEY

Figures. I put in extra ammo and everything.

Gerry takes the bundle from him quickly and jumps back in the car.

KERNEY

You sure you're OK?

GERRY

Top of the world. Don't forget your semi-annual checkup.

Gerry tears out of the driveway as Kerney waves goodbye.

INT. MERCEDES -- DAY

Megan grabs the bundle.

MEGAN

(excited)

Let me see.

Gerry pushes her hands away, takes the gun and puts it in his belt with a macho swagger.

GERRY

Now I'll really be in charge.

(grinning at her)

I've never felt like this before. You're making me a better man.

Megan grins back at him.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Julia sits alone in the living room, touching the video camera that lies next to her. She hears the car pull in the drive and hides the camera just as Gerry and Megan come in.

GERRY

Where's Rod?

JULIA

(coldly)

Out back somewhere. Didn't you see him?

Megan notices her coldness and smiles. She starts to head upstairs with the case.

JULIA

How much money did you get?

MEGAN

Enough.

JULIA

Going to share it?

MEGAN
We'll see. If you all do what I want.

JULIA
What do you want?

MEGAN
Breakfast. Make it for me.

Julia doesn't move.

MEGAN
Do it.

Julia leaves the room. Gerry puts his hand on Megan's shoulders.

GERRY
Couldn't have done it better myself.

She brushes his arms away.

MEGAN
(commandingly)
Should you be at work today?

GERRY
No, it's Saturday.

MEGAN
What do you do on Saturday?

GERRY
I've been working with Rod on the pool house.

MEGAN
Then go do that!

Gerry is taken aback. So Megan pretends it's their big secret.

MEGAN
Or the neighbors will get suspicious, darling.

She runs her finger down his shirt front to his belt.

GERRY
Sure. Let me get my yard clothes on.

He leaves the room. She walks over to the painting that hides the wall safe, looks behind it and examines the safe -- can't get it open.

She hears a voice -- Rod coming this way. She leaves the safe and goes upstairs, taking the bag with her.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Megan looks around the bedroom at all the possessions, opens Julia's jewelry boxes and tries on some bad costume pieces, looking in the mirror.

She turns, looks at Fletcher's body, sits on the bed next to it while wearing the jewelry.

MEGAN
 Seek not my heart;
 The beasts have eaten it;
 My heart is as a palace
 Plundered by the wolves..

ROD
 Are we the wolves?

He's in the doorway.

ROD
 What game are you playing?

MEGAN
 It's called survival.

She holds up the bag.

MEGAN
 If I didn't have this, would you and
 Gerry and Julia just let me go?

ROD
 I would.

MEGAN
 Well you're that way. They're not.

She walks close to him and speaks in conspiratorial tones.

MEGAN
 They're out to get you. They want you
 to take the blame for all this.

ROD
 How do you know?

MEGAN
 Gerry talks a lot. I notice you haven't
 called the police yourself yet.

ROD
 I don't have a cell phone.

That startles her for a moment.

MEGAN
 You're old-fashioned, aren't you?

She sits him on the bed with her near the corpse.

MEGAN
 We have a lot in common, you and I. No
 home. Broken families. We're smarter
 than they are. We don't live by their
 rules.

Rod fights his attraction to her.

ROD
How do you know about my family?

MEGAN
Kindred spirits. I just know.

ROD
Where's your family?

MEGAN
Died in a boating accident when I was two. I lived in orphanages. It was awful.

An inspiration hits her.

MEGAN
Let's get out of here. Take the money and go.

ROD
That wouldn't be right.

MEGAN
Is it right to take the fall for an.. accident?

She touches his face softly.

MEGAN
They don't understand you. You're a philosopher and a poet.

ROD
(surprised)
I studied philosophy and literature.

MEGAN
I could tell. Let's leave together.

He puts his hand on hers, is tempted. But a voice breaks the spell: Julia's in the doorway, scowling.

JULIA
Breakfast is served.

INT. DINING ROOM -- DAY

A tense breakfast. Gerry, now in work-clothes, doesn't notice. He's humming, cheerfully. Julia serves, glaring at Megan.

GERRY
Better suit up, Rod. We're gonna work on the pool house.

ROD
We've been up all night..

GERRY

Can't handle it, Rodney? Gotta act normal today, then dump the body tonight.

ROD

(contemptuously)
So that's the plan.

GERRY

(to Julia)
What a wonderful breakfast, honey. You should do this more often.

JULIA

(now raging)
Get out! All of you! Go do your manly things and leave me alone.

Rod leaves quickly. Megan follows him, but throws a telling look back at Julia. Gerry goes up to Julia and softly speaks.

GERRY

Do this for now till we know what she's up to.

He touches her neck, but she slams the plates into a pile and storms out of the dining room.

IN THE HALLWAY

Julia walks to the door that had been locked the night before, looks around, then opens the lock and goes inside.

EXT. BACK YARD -- DAY

Gerry and Rod come out the back door and run right into the Duffys, looking out the open window over the driveway.

MR. DUFFY

Keeping out of trouble, Gerry?

GERRY

Sure thing, Mr. Duffy. No trouble here.

Megan appears in the doorway, wearing a small schoolgirl dress (one of Dawn's, we suppose). It's tiny, reveals things it shouldn't.

Gerry tries to block the view from Mr. Duffy.

MR. DUFFY

Once you're re-elected, we can work on the campaign for mayor down the line.

Rod snorts in disgust and walks off.

GERRY

Mayor? You think so?

MR. DUFFY

You have the right stuff, Gerry.

Gerry looks back; Megan's gone.

INT. DINING ROOM -- MORNING

Megan dashes into the dining room.

MEGAN

Julia?

IN THE BACKYARD

The men work on the pool house, as far away from each other as they can.

ROD

Not in that soil, Gerry. It's too soft.
And I think there's plumbing under there.

Gerry looks at Rod angrily and jabs his shovel into the ground, lifting up a big chunk of dirt.

He slams the shovel back into the ground, hits something hard.

Water streams up from a burst pipe into his face.

IN THE HALLWAY

Megan comes upon the door to the mystery room. It's unlocked. She peeks inside.

INT. STUDIO -- DAY

It's Julia's studio; she's got several easels set up, various paintings hang on and lean against the walls.

The paintings are amateurish but show a very dark side for Julia. Some show creatures in pain; others are exaggerated landscapes, painful to the eye.

Julia paints with ferocity, facing one window, her back to Megan.

MEGAN

They're wonderful.

JULIA

Get out of here. This is private.

MEGAN

I mean it. I went to art school for a while. These are beautiful.

She circles the paintings.

MEGAN

Like Van Gogh.

She looks over Julia's shoulder at what she's painting now: a bouquet of skeletal flowers.

JULIA

Right.

JULIA (CONT'D)

This is my self-portrait with family.

MEGAN

It must be so dull for you, your life here. With him. No outlet for your.. spirit.

Julia stops painting, looks away, out the window.

JULIA

You don't know..

MEGAN

How can you stand to be locked up like this? He keeps you in chains.

JULIA

Does he?

MEGAN

He pushes you around. He told you to shut up.

JULIA

(turning on Megan)
Why were you touching him?

MEGAN

Touching him?

JULIA

Rod. Upstairs. Were you seducing him?

MEGAN

Me? He was the seducer. Gave me some sob story about his broken home. I felt sorry for him.
(wicked grin)
And he is a fox.

JULIA

Men.

MEGAN

Can't trust them.

She puts her hands on Julia's.

MEGAN

Who needs them? It could be just us two, together.

Julia resists, but hesitantly.

JULIA

What are you talking about?

MEGAN

Julia, you're such a beautiful flower
to be closed up here, chained in this
room.

She kisses Julia softly on her cheek, then again on the neck.

JULIA

What are you doing?

MEGAN

Making you bloom.

EXT. BACK YARD

Gerry stands there, soaked. Rod tries not to laugh at him.

GERRY

Honey! I could use some help here.

He sloshes towards the house. Rod smashes his shovel into the
ground behind him.

IN THE STUDIO

The women laugh, knocking over paint that splashes onto them, onto
the floor.

IN THE KITCHEN

Gerry grabs a dishtowel, starts wiping himself off. Looks around
the empty room.

GERRY

Julia!

IN THE HALLWAY

Gerry enters the hallway, heads toward the studio door.

IN THE STUDIO

The women laugh, throw paint on each other. They pause and Julia
stares at Megan, reaches up to touch her hair..

As the door smashes open and Gerry stands there, wet as a drowned
rat. Julia's expression turns to disgust.

GERRY

What are you two up to?

JULIA

I've been teaching Megan how to paint.

MEGAN

She's quite an artist.

They laugh. Gerry's puzzled.

GERRY

(to Megan)

I need to talk to you. Alone.

She gets up, gives Julia a grin, squeezes past Gerry to leave.

IN THE HALLWAY

Gerry confronts Megan.

GERRY

What are you doing?

MEGAN

Just being friendly.

GERRY

You said..

(switches to a whisper)

we were going to leave together.

MEGAN

(whispering back)

We will. But she's suspicious. We don't want her trying anything.

GERRY

No. But go clean yourself up. You're a mess.

He points at the paint smears on her and she smirks because he's way more of a mess than she is.

EXT. BACK YARD

The men work, not speaking to each other, hammering and sawing pieces of wood.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Julia, now cleaned up, curls up on the sofa, asleep. One paint smudge lightly stains her cheek.

Megan sneaks in, sees her, walks to her purse on the coffee table and takes something out of it.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Megan enters the bedroom, looks sadly at Fletcher, goes to the dresser and rummages through Gerry's wallet, taking out a card and a slip of paper.

EXT. FRONT YARD -- DAY

Megan comes out the front door, walks to the car in the driveway, gets in and backs out.

IN THE BACKYARD

Gerry hears the car start -- he stops working.

GERRY
What's Julia doing?

He throws down his tools, runs into the house, followed by Rod.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Gerry runs into the living room, sees Julia sleeping.

GERRY
She took the car!

Julia wakes up with a start as Gerry runs upstairs.

IN THE BEDROOM

Gerry runs into the bedroom, sees the body with the new money case re-attached to it.

He runs back downstairs. Behind him, Fletcher's cheek makes a slight movement.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Julia groggily sits up. Rod peers out the window at the empty driveway.

GERRY
The money's still here.

ROD
She's up to something.

JULIA
She might have some appointment. Who knows?

ROD
Why didn't she take one of us?

GERRY
She left the bag. She's coming back.

ROD
How do we know the money's in the bag?

THE BEDROOM

The three of them stand around the body and the bag. Julia looks a little fearfully at the corpse. Gerry gingerly fingers the bag.

GERRY
Feels full.

JULIA
Of course it is. She wouldn't lie.

ROD
I'm going to open it.

He pulls at the lock on the bag -- no luck. Tugs harder, hits it. The body starts to fall off the bed.

GERRY

Rod, stop it, dammit!

Gerry curses as he pushes the body back up on the bed. Rod leaves the room, comes back with a hammer. He kneels down to smash the lock.

GERRY

Put that away. It's not your money.

ROD

I told you I'm opening it. She's up to some game.

GERRY

You're a fucking day laborer and you'll do as you're told.

Rod rises, holds the hammer to threaten Gerry.

ROD

You sniveling little..

GERRY

Come on, try something, Rodney!

JULIA

Stop this macho stuff! You're both so useless..

Suddenly Megan's in the doorway.

MEGAN

What are you doing?

They all look at her for a moment, surprised.

GERRY

He wanted to open the bag. He doesn't trust you.

ROD

Ask her where she's been.

GERRY

You stop telling us what to do.

ROD

(to Megan)

Where were you?

MEGAN

I had to get my stuff from a friend's apartment.

As she speaks, she walks to the bag, unlocks it and reaches a hand inside.

GERRY
Friend? What friend?

MEGAN
Don't worry, she wasn't home. I knew
she'd be at work.

JULIA
She?

Megan takes her hand from the bag and holds out several hundred
dollars in twenties. She looks directly at Rod.

MEGAN
Satisfied?

GERRY
See, it's all fine.

MEGAN
There was one problem -- the car..

GERRY
(panicked)
What about the car?

Megan has a knapsack with her now, which she carries to the bed,
then sits next to Fletcher.

MEGAN
Some jerk ran a stop sign.

GERRY
Oh my god! The car!

JULIA
(tenderly)
Are you all right?

MEGAN
I'm fine. But it was so awful. I
managed to get it down the street to
the garage.

Rod bores holes in her with an untrusting stare.

GERRY
Good girl.

ROD
Don't you get it? They saw her! Driving
your car.

MEGAN
Don't worry. I said I was a friend of
your daughter's . A very nice mechanic.
(suggestively)
Says he knows you and your wife well.

Gerry and Julia look rather ashamed.

ROD

You two would fuck a stray dog off the street.

GERRY

You watch your mouth.

ROD

So how do we carry the body tonight?

THE PLASMA T.V. SCREEN

The footage of Julia and Rod doing their dance of seduction appears on screen.

MEGAN AND JULIA

Sip drinks in front of the television in the living room. Megan's got the case of money with her. She watches Julia watching the footage.

She puts her hand on Julia's bare leg.

MEGAN

Will they be gone long?

JULIA

Doesn't take long to rent a van. Unless Gerry starts haggling about the price.

MEGAN

Does he have a lot of money?

JULIA

Why?

MEGAN

I wondered if this money would be enough for us. Or if we need his, too.

JULIA

We're not leaving him behind.

MEGAN

There's something in that wall safe.

JULIA

I don't really know about that.

MEGAN

Doesn't he let you know anything?

JULIA

He's in charge; he's always been in charge.

MEGAN

We could get rid of him.

Julia almost gasps.

MEGAN

I mean pay him off. Let him go where he wants. Would you miss him?

JULIA

He's my husband.

MEGAN

Do you love him?

JULIA

I'm his wife. Of course.

MEGAN

Then why are you picking people up in bars?

JULIA

That's just a game. With Rod, it was just fun. The three of us having fun. I loved that. Then you..

MEGAN

You like me, don't you?

JULIA

Now I do.

MEGAN

I want to know all about you. Why did you get married?

JULIA

I don't know. Got out of high school, got married and had a kid. That's what you're supposed to do, isn't it?

MEGAN

So you didn't want your daughter?

JULIA

No, yes. We didn't plan it. But that's what married couples do. Have a family.

MEGAN

Is it? Is that what you're supposed to do? Who says?

JULIA

What?

MEGAN

So you lock away what you really are in a back room and give up all your dreams for your family? Is that it?

JULIA

You ask very silly questions.

Megan smiles and runs her hand up Julia's thigh.

INT. VAN -- DAY

Rod drives, Gerry ignores him, leans out the window to some passersby, handing out bumper stickers.

GERRY
Gerry Banks for Councilman.

Rod pulls him back inside.

ROD
Listen to me, Gerry. Why are we doing this? We're just getting in deeper and deeper.

GERRY
Why do you stick around? Leave if it bothers you.

ROD
I can't..

GERRY
Ha! You want that money. Admit it.

ROD
No..

GERRY
Megan. You like her. Well, I've got her.

ROD
She's just using you. She tried to seduce me, too.

GERRY
Not true, Rodney.

ROD
She's using you; she doesn't care one bit about you.

Gerry whips towards him angrily, pulling out the gun and pointing it right at him.

GERRY
You don't know what you're talking about!
Shut up!

Rod swerves, slams on the brakes.

ROD
Put that thing away!

Gerry looks crazed, holds the gun even closer to Rod.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Megan touches Julia's hair softly as Julia continues watching the tape of her and Rod. Megan whispers to her.

MEGAN

"Light falls my kiss,
As the ephemeral wing
That scarcely stirs
The shining of a lake.
What ruinous pain
Your lover's kiss would bring."

EXT. FRONT YARD

The van pulls up. Gerry and Rod get out and notice the Duffys walking their golden retriever. They're staring at the van.

GERRY

My car had a small accident. So we rented this. To distribute those campaign leaflets.

He slaps a bumper sticker on the back of the van.

MR. DUFFY

Good thinking. We'll stop by later and help you load up.

GERRY

I don't want to put you to any trouble..

MRS. DUFFY

No trouble, Councilman Banks.

They walk off, smiling. Gerry pushes Rod ahead and smashes open the front door.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

The men barge in and the women start, looking guilty. Gerry's in a rage, grabs Megan and pulls her to the stairs.

JULIA

Gerry!

ON THE STAIRWAY

Gerry forces Megan up the stairs.

MEGAN

What are you doing?

She struggles with him, breaks away and runs up the stairs ahead of him.

THE LIVING ROOM

Rod stares at Julia, still recovering from the men's entrance.

ROD

She's got you, too. She's bad news, Julia.

JULIA

So leave if you're so afraid of her.

ROD

Afraid?

JULIA

Afraid she's smarter than you. You can't impress her with your college degree and your ten-dollar words. She knows more than you do.

ROD

She's just a conniving slut.

Julia nearly slaps him, looks behind him and sees the footage still playing on the television. Angrily, she pulls the flash card out and tosses it across the room, nearly hitting him with it.

JULIA

What's he doing with her, anyway?

THE MASTER BEDROOM

Gerry runs into the bedroom, looking for Megan. She's not there, but he comes face to face with the corpse.

He reaches over and pulls on the money case, attached again to Fletcher's wrist. It's almost as if the corpse is holding onto it. Unnerved, he feels for the gun in his belt and leaves.

THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Gerry dashes down the hallway towards another door and flings it open.

DAWN'S BEDROOM

This is their daughter's bedroom, full of stuffed animals, rock posters, teen idol pictures plastered on the walls. In the center is a pink bed with all the trimmings.

Megan lies on the bed in Dawn's very small schoolgirl outfit.

MEGAN

Like it?

GERRY

What were you and Julia doing?

MEGAN

You didn't answer my question.

GERRY

And Rod, he said you tried to seduce him.

MEGAN

That's him, trying to separate us. He won't let you be happy. He wants your wife, the money, everything!

Gerry stands right over her.

MEGAN

So, do you like it?

She sticks her foot out and rubs his leg.

MEGAN

It's what you want, isn't it? Bouncing
your daughter on your knee got you horny.
And Julia, well she's not getting
younger.

She kneels on top of the bed and pulls him down to her.

MEGAN

There's something I want you to do..

She whispers into his ear, then bites it playfully.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Rod has a drink, looking miserable. Julia paces frustratedly.
Her cell phone rings. Julia starts, then picks it up.

JULIA

Hello?

No answer, so she hangs up. It rings again.

JULIA

Hello?

Nothing. She slams it shut. Rod knocks his drink back in one
gulp.

ROD

Gerry has a gun.

JULIA

Ridiculous -- he's for gun control.

ROD

Well, he's out of control and he's got
a fucking gun.

JULIA

He what?

ROD

Someone is going to get hurt.

JULIA

What's taking them so long?

MEGAN

Smiles as she sits in Dawn's bedroom at a computer and starts
pressing buttons on the keyboard.

THE MASTER BEDROOM

Julia and Rod enter the room, turning on the lights. The corpse stares at her.

JULIA
Where are they?

ROD
It's that damn money making us all crazy.

He grabs a candlestick from the mantle.

ROD
I'm going to open it now.

JULIA
You saw the money..

He starts smashing the lock with the candlestick. But then hears the click of a gun hammer.

The gun is right next to his temple, with a livid Gerry holding it.

JULIA
Gerry, don't!

GERRY
I knew it. Trying to take it all for yourself!

ROD
You're an idiot.

Rod stands slowly, facing Gerry.

GERRY
I never wanted to hire you in the first place. It was my wife.

He pushes the gun against Rod's head, hurting him.

GERRY
Now you want my wife and my money!

ROD
Your money.

GERRY
I've earned it.

ROD
You're crazy.

Gerry starts to squeeze the trigger.

JULIA
Don't do it, Gerry!

GERRY

No one tells me what to do.

Megan appears in the doorway.

MEGAN

What are you men up to?

As tensions reach a crescendo, Julia's cell rings. Megan's nearest and picks it up.

MEGAN

(into phone)

Yes? Oh my God.

She disconnects, looks at the money case, then all of them.

MEGAN

They're coming for it.

GERRY

Who?

JULIA

What?

MEGAN

The deal was bad, the drugs were no good. They want the money back. They're coming here!

GERRY

(waving the gun)

Calm down. They don't know where we are.

MEGAN

They found the goddam phone number.

They can find us.

(close to Gerry)

They're dangerous, very dangerous. We have to get out of here now.

Gerry holds Megan, which upsets Julia. Rod just watches that gun carefully.

GERRY

It's daylight. We can't load the body in the van now.

JULIA

Who put you in charge?

MEGAN

We have to go now!

She unlocks the case and flies downstairs, knocking Gerry as she runs.

Rod takes that opportunity to floor him with a punch.

ROD
I'm taking that gun!

GERRY
Fuck the gun -- she's got the money.

Gerry breaks loose and runs downstairs; the others follow.

DOWNSTAIRS

Near the backdoor, Gerry catches up to Megan, slams the back door shut and grabs her.

MEGAN
They'll kill me! And if you're with me, they'll kill you.

Rod and Julia run up to them.

ROD
So you screwed them, too.

GERRY
(to Rod)
You shut up.

MEGAN
It wasn't me. It must have been Fletcher.

ROD
Don't lie..

JULIA
Leave her alone..

GERRY
Since when do you tell me what..

MEGAN
All of you shut up..

And the doorbell rings.

It freezes them all. Gerry is the first to act. He takes Megan and the money, heads to the stairs.

GERRY
We'll hide you upstairs. They won't know you're here.

They disappear.

THE LIVING ROOM

Rod and Julia enter the living room, peer out the windows.

ROD
Can't see them.

JULIA
Should we leave out the back?

ROD
Why would they ring the doorbell?

JULIA
To scare us?

She's scared; Rod puts his hand on hers.

ROD
Julia.. no matter what I said, I won't
let anything happen to you.

Gerry rushes in, interrupting their moment.

GERRY
We'll keep them down here. We'll tell
them we don't know anything.

ROD
I'm sure they'll buy that.

JULIA
He's right, Rod. We can't let them
near her.

Gerry waves the gun from her to the front door.

GERRY
You open it.

JULIA
(shocked)
Me?

GERRY
They won't shoot an unarmed woman.

Rod rolls his eyes. Julia gulps and goes to the door. The men follow her out of the living room.

HALLWAY NEAR FRONT DOOR

The men wait in the hallway, trying to act cool, but they're frightened.

Julia goes to the outside door and opens it. They can see her, but the door blocks their view of whoever's outside. Only a silhouette shows through the translucent glass on the door.

JULIA
Oh my god!

The door opens all the way. Julia turns and steps forward, followed by her daughter, Dawn.

Dawn's fourteen and seems the epitome of virginal beauty. Innocent and not at all suspicious of the world around her. Until now.

DAWN
Mom, why was the bolt on the front door?

JULIA
Dawn! You're back early.

DAWN
Somebody called and said you were having
a party.

JULIA
Someone called?

Dawn sees her father and Rod.

DAWN
Hi, Daddy. Rod, working this late on
Saturday?

GERRY
Wanted to get that pool house finished.

DAWN
Good! It's finished?

GERRY
Not quite.

She smiles at Rod and gives him their special high-five. He beams
at her.

ROD
Hey, Dawn. You know, there's no party.
Must have been a crank call.

JULIA
You could go back to Cathy's.

DAWN
She's so immature. But what do you
expect, she's thirteen. What are you
three doing?

They all stand there, saying nothing. She realizes she's not
wanted, as usual.

DAWN
I'll just go upstairs.

Julia tries to intercept her.

JULIA
Why don't you come have something to
eat first?

But she's already up the stairs.

DAWN
In a minute.

GERRY

Just stay out of our room, dear, it's a mess and we don't want the door open.

INT. DAWN'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Dawn enters her room, sees it in disarray. She puts her stuff down as her cell rings.

DOWNSTAIRS

Julia's cell rings; Gerry's blackberry buzzes.

JULIA

All the phones...?

ROD

At once?

GERRY

Dawn. Don't answer your phone!

UPSTAIRS

Dawn's already got her pink phone out.

DAWN

It's probably Cathy. Hello?

DOWNSTAIRS

Julia grabs her phone, Gerry takes out his blackberry.

UPSTAIRS

DAWN

Hello? Wrong number I guess.

DOWNSTAIRS

Julia starts up the stairs as she answers her phone.

JULIA

Hello? Hello?

Gerry gets on his blackberry.

GERRY

Who is it?

UPSTAIRS

Dawn walks out in the hallway, looks at a text message on her cell with a puzzled look. She sees the closed door of her parents' room,

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Julia hangs up her phone, shaking her head.

JULIA

No one.

GERRY

Nobody on mine, either.

The three of them look at each other, wondering what to do next.

DAWN (O.S.)

Hey! Who's this in your bedroom?

They stare at one another in panic. Rod breaks first, running up the stairs. The others follow.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Rod bounds up the stairs, stops near the bedroom door, takes a deep breath and opens it.

DAWN (O.S.)

Who is this, anyway?

IN THE BEDROOM

Rod enters to find Dawn standing inside the doorway staring at: Megan, sitting all by herself on the bed. No sign of Fletcher or the money or anything else out of the ordinary. Just Megan, smiling.

MEGAN

I'm Megan. You must be Dawn.

Julia and Gerry run in, breathless -- and then they both look like they're going to faint.

DAWN

Did you guys hire another daughter?

MEGAN

I wish. I'm a friend of.. Rod's. From out of town.

Rod dumbly nods his head, as do Gerry and Julia a moment later.

MEGAN

Had nowhere to stay. So your parents let me use your room. Sorry it's a mess.

ROD

Megan is the daughter of my best friend. He said to take care of her and since I don't have a permanent place..

JULIA

He brought her here.

Dawn pulls away from them, angrily.

DAWN

I can't believe you let her stay in my room!

She runs out of the bedroom. Julia starts to follow her, but Megan puts a hand on her arm.

MEGAN

Let me talk to her.

JULIA

I'm her mother..

MEGAN

Remember who's in charge.

Megan leaves. The three of them look at the empty bed.

IN DAWN'S ROOM

Megan softly opens the door and watches Dawn straightening up her room, putting everything back in its place.

MEGAN

(softly)
I'm sorry.

Dawn gives her a glance, but keeps straightening up.

MEGAN

I violated your world. I shouldn't have. It's my fault.

She walks toward Dawn.

MEGAN

But I was all alone with nowhere to go. You know what that's like, don't you? To be all alone?

Dawn turns and they regard each other. Megan looks just like an older version of Dawn.

MEGAN

You don't leave this room that much, do you?

DAWN

No reason to.

MEGAN

And when you do, you go stay at your friends' place, don't you?

DAWN

Yes.

MEGAN

So you know what I mean. About being alone.

IN THE MASTER BEDROOM

Gerry opens closets, looks in the bathroom frantically.

GERRY

Where is it?

JULIA

She was in here alone. She couldn't move it.

ROD

(leaving)

Let's ask her..

JULIA

Not in front of Dawn.

IN THE HALLWAY

Rod goes to the door of Dawn's bedroom. He hears whispering, hesitates, then knocks.

MEGAN & DAWN (O.S.)

Go away!

IN THE MASTER BEDROOM

Gerry tears the room apart, the bed, the drawers.

GERRY

He couldn't have gotten up and walked away!

JULIA

(gasping)

He wasn't dead.

GERRY

He wasn't breathing. His heart wasn't beating.

JULIA

Maybe he was faking. I thought he was looking at us in the bathroom.

Gerry stops and turns to her.

GERRY

We? Who? You and I haven't been up here. What were "we" doing?

JULIA

Nothing. I meant me. I was taking a shower.

GERRY

Did you fuck him in our shower with the body right there?

JULIA

What were you and Megan doing in our car all night?

Rod enters and hears the end of the argument.

GERRY

What did she tell you?

ROD

You two get your heads screwed on and help me figure this out. Was he dead or not?

Gerry has a sudden inspiration.

GERRY

Catalepsy.

ROD

What?

GERRY

(dragging it from memory)

Heard about it in med school. A physical condition that makes the body rigid. They lose all sensation.

He slams his fist into the wall, angrily.

GERRY

He'd seem dead.

ROD

No pulse?

GERRY

Too faint. Damn, it's obvious, so obvious. I should have known.

JULIA

So.. what? He woke up and went somewhere?

ROD

Where? Why doesn't he just talk to us?

GERRY

The money. He must have taken the money and left. We've got to find him.

ROD

Why? Let him go. All our problems go with him. If he's not dead, we can't be blamed for anything.

A ringtone, but none of theirs. On the floor near the bed is Fletcher's iPhone. They all look at it.

JULIA

It's them!

Gerry grabs the phone and yells into it.

GERRY

We don't have it! It's Fletcher --
he's alive and he took it!

There's an audible click. Gerry looks ashen.

GERRY

They're going to come for that money.
We have to find him now.

They leave the room in a big hurry.

DOWNSTAIRS

They run into different rooms, looking, searching.

EXT. BACK YARD -- DAY

All three come out the back door, look around the back yard, even
in the pool. Then Rod and Gerry head to the van.

GERRY

We'll go look. You stay here.

JULIA

Alone? What if they come here? What
if Fletcher comes back? Dawn is inside!

Speaking of which: Dawn and Megan appear in the back doorway.

DAWN

Where are you going?

JULIA

Get inside now!

DAWN

Mother!

JULIA

Get inside. This is none of your
business.

Dawn is angry but does as she's told. Megan touches her shoulder
and whispers in her ear as she goes inside.

ROD

Fletcher's gone.

MEGAN

I know. I heard him get up while I hid
in the bathroom. By the time I got
there, he was gone. He wasn't really
dead. Just like him.

ROD

We have to find him, but someone has to
stay here.

Gerry grins at Megan, expecting to be left with her.

MEGAN

I know where he might have gone. I'll go with Rod. Gerry has the gun, so he should stay here.

JULIA

Yes, he should. To protect his family.

GERRY

Rod can stay. I should go. I can deal with whatever's out there.

JULIA

Leave Rod here? We don't even know him.

Rod opens the van door and yells to Megan.

ROD

Get in.

Megan does, smiling -- blows Gerry a little kiss goodbye. They drive off.

Julia looks at him in disgust and goes inside.

INT. VAN -- DAY

Rod drives, trying not to look at Megan.

MEGAN

You studied literature and philosophy. So why are you here?

ROD

Don't play your game with me. I'm on to you. Yes, I studied literature, including Baudelaire, your favorite.

MEGAN

You know Baudelaire?

ROD

"O grandest of the angels and most wise
O fallen God, fate-driven from the skies
Satan, at last take pity on our pain."

MEGAN

Am I Satan?

ROD

Just quoting a poem.

MEGAN

How does a poet-philosopher end up working for them?

ROD

We're looking for Fletcher.

ROD (CONT'D)

Where would he go?

MEGAN

We can try his place. But it might not be safe.

ROD

We'll park nearby and check it out.

INT. DINING ROOM -- DAY

Gerry, Julia and Dawn sit at the dining room table, having a cold meal.

JULIA

What are you doing in school this week, sweetie?

DAWN

Do you care?

JULIA

Dawn!

DAWN

Megan says you didn't even want me.

She gets up and runs from the table. Julia looks to Gerry, who's just gazing out the window.

JULIA

Didn't you hear her?

GERRY

What? Who cares?

Julia throws her napkin at him and leaves the room.

INT. STUDIO -- DAY

Julia starts painting: a weird, impressionistic piece with a woman amidst shadows, a death's head hanging over her.

Day ends. Shadows loom out the window.

A figure passes by outside; Julia glances up, thinks she saw something, shrugs and continues.

It gets darker. She looks up again.

It's Fletcher in the window! She screams, drops her brush, knocks over the painting.

JULIA

Gerry!

She runs to the door, but can't open it.

The window is opening and Fletcher, looking disfigured, is trying to get in.

Julia loses control, screaming and pounding on the door.

Finally it opens -- Dawn stands on the other side.

DAWN

Mom? What is it?

Julia, gasping, turns and points at the window. But it's shut and no one is there.

INT. VAN -- NIGHT

Rod and Megan watch the building across the street. Suspicious characters lurk near the front of the building.

MEGAN

How did you end up at their house?
You're no handyman.

ROD

It doesn't matter what I am.

MEGAN

They never asked you, did they? They
never cared who you were.

She can tell she's hit a nerve.

MEGAN

So who are you?

ROD

(hesitantly)
Someone who should have done better.

He sighs, looks out the window. Some of those suspicious characters seem to have moved closer to them.

ROD

I was great in school, but when I got
out, the world didn't care. Wandered a
lot. Learned about the world.

MEGAN

We do have a lot in common.

She touches his hand, holds it. He looks at her, seems tempted, but instead opens the car door and gets out.

EXT. CAR

Megan gets out and joins Rod.

MEGAN

Let's leave. Let's go away. We don't
want to go back. We don't want their
world.

ROD

I can't leave Julia..

MEGAN
(contemptuously)
Her!

ROD
Or Dawn.

MEGAN
We'll save her. I have money. We'll
take her away!

She pulls money from her pocket.

ROD
I thought Fletcher took the money.

MEGAN
I raided their automatic tellers when I
took the car out. Gerry keeps his PIN
number right in his wallet.

ROD
You little witch!

MEGAN
And there were some cashier's checks in
that wall safe. Something to do with
the election.

ROD
How did you break into that?

Megan's seen something across the street. Someone's over there --
someone big, going inside.

MEGAN
Is that him? I think it is.

She dashes across the street. Rod follows.

OUTSIDE THE BUILDING

The door's locked but Megan knows the passcode. They go inside.

INT. FLETCHER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

The door opens; Megan enters, taking her key out of the lock.
Rod's right behind her.

They creep around carefully in the dark, but it's soon obvious no
one's here, so Megan puts on a light.

The room is Spartan, nearly empty, except for a chair and a
mattress, a whip and a small table. On the table sits a box of
Cocoa Pebbles cereal.

ROD
What's going on here?

MEGAN
He was a weird guy, lived like a monk.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
A monk with desires.

ROD
So why was he dealing drugs?

MEGAN
He liked the danger, it was all he lived for.

She cracks the whip.

MEGAN
Do you like danger?

INT. LIVING ROOM

Julia and Gerry sit on opposite ends of the sofa. He's got the gun out, acting macho.

GERRY
You're sure it was him?

JULIA
I know it was. Where were you?

GERRY
I was upstairs cleaning up. I never got to take a shower like you did.

JULIA
So where did he go?

The doorbell rings. They both stare at each other, eyes wide.

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

They both jump and run for the hallway.

GERRY
No, Dawn!

IN THE HALLWAY

Dawn's almost at the front door. Gerry runs at top speed, but she gets there first and opens it.

DAWN
Oh, hi.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Gerry pulls Dawn back and pushes forward with his gun out.

The Duffys stand in front of him, aghast.

MR. DUFFY
Gerry! What the hell are you doing?

Gerry's shellshocked.

GERRY

We.. we heard noises. Burglars, we thought.

MRS. DUFFY

But a gun!

MR. DUFFY

You're letting the stress of the election get to you. Here, let us in..

Gerry pulls the door nearly shut, just his face peering out.

GERRY

No. Not now.

MRS. DUFFY

But why ever not?

GERRY

(finally losing it)

Just get out of here! Go back to your big fucking house and leave me alone!

He slams the door shut.

The Duffys look totally dismayed, leave and walk back to their house. As they do, the van pulls in the drive.

IN THE VAN

Rod doesn't talk to Megan, just parks near the rear of the house and gets out.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Julia and Dawn sit on the sofa; Julia looks at the unfinished fireplace.

JULIA

We'll get that taken care of soon.

DAWN

Didn't you hear me, Mom? Dad's acting crazy. He had a gun!

Gerry stalks in and kicks the fireplace, dislodging some stone.

GERRY

Fucking busybodies! I don't need their help to win the election.

JULIA

Gerry, what did you do?

They hear the back door being opened -- Gerry and Julia go towards the hall nervously. But it's Rod and Megan.

GERRY

What took you so long?

JULIA
Did you find him?

DAWN
Find who?

Rod assesses the situation quickly and takes Dawn by the hand.

ROD
It's late, Dawn. Time to get you
upstairs to bed.

DAWN
I want to stay with Megan.

MEGAN
I'll see you real soon, Dawn. Go to
bed.

Rod leads Dawn upstairs. Gerry pulls his gun out again.

GERRY
What were you two up to?

MEGAN
Trying to save your skin. But he wasn't
there.

JULIA
He was here. He tried to get in a
window, but then he left. Did you see
him?

Gerry and Megan look at each other, then at Julia.

MEGAN
No. We didn't see anyone.

UPSTAIRS

Rod has the door to Dawn's room open. She sits on her bed, pouting.

ROD
Go to sleep, sweetie. It'll be fine in
the morning.

He shuts the door and ever-so-quietly takes out a key and locks
it.

As he turns, Megan appears next to him and softly touches him on
the shoulder. She takes him by the hand and pulls him into the
master bedroom.

IN THE BEDROOM

Megan turns on a low light.

MEGAN
Do you have a daughter?

ROD
Almost did. False alarm. I think about
it a lot.

MEGAN
Dawn trusts you.

ROD
I know. That's why I'm still here.
They don't treat her right.

MEGAN
They don't treat anyone right.

She pulls him onto the bed and they sit on it.

MEGAN
You're better than them. Dawn should
be your daughter.

She massages his back, his shoulders.

MEGAN
Tell me your fantasy.

He stops her massage, just looks at her intently.

MEGAN
We can go. You, me and Dawn. We can
be a family together.

She kisses him and he kisses back. She starts to undo his pants
while he wrestles with her shirt. But one of her hands snakes
into his pocket and sneaks out the key to Dawn's room.

The bright overhead light snaps on, making them turn. To see Gerry
and his gun.

GERRY
You whore!

He raises his hand with the gun and comes at her, but Rod's quicker,
barreling into him and smashing him into the wall. Julia runs in.

JULIA
What's all the..

She's almost knocked over by the men. Megan holds out her hand
and takes Julia's. She seems amused by the fight.

MEGAN
Men.

Rod has gotten the gun from Gerry and holds it on him.

ROD
Just calm down.

GERRY
You should calm down, studboy, the way
you and that bitch were going at it.

JULIA

Gerry!

ROD

You're out of control.

GERRY

No, she's out of control. She wanted to keep all the money, so we hid it. And we hid more than that.

ROD

You're making this up.

GERRY

Am I? Let's go look in the hall closet.
(laughing)
Go ahead and take a look!

Rod motions him out the door with the gun. Julia follows. Megan sits on the bed, her expression unreadable.

IN THE HALLWAY

Rod holds the gun on Gerry, points him to the closet at the end of the hallway.

GERRY

Afraid to see what's in there, Rodney?

Rod pushes him out of the way, takes the knob and pulls the door open.

Fletcher's body falls out, limp in a pile on the floor. The case of money falls on top of him. Julia lets out a gasp.

GERRY

We put him in there. He's heavy, but passion gives you strength.

He turns to Julia. As they talk, no one sees Fletcher's hand move slightly.

GERRY

It wasn't Fletcher coming in the window, it was me. We were gonna scare you away and get out with the money. She promised me.

JULIA

I think she promised all of us, that.. witch!

ROD

Where is she?

He runs down the hall to the master bedroom.

ROD

She's gone.

From the other end of the hallway in Dawn's room, they hear voices. The adults converge on the door. Rod hides the gun and pushes the door open.

IN THE BEDROOM

Inside both girls, Dawn and Megan, sit on the floor, dressed exactly alike.

DAWN
Mother! Can't I have any privacy with my best friend?

GERRY
(to Megan)
Get out of here. You're corrupting my daughter.

MEGAN
Me? And what are you planning on doing with her?

DAWN
You never planned on doing anything with me because you didn't plan on having me!

MEGAN
And what was that you told me about bouncing her on your knee?

GERRY
Shut up!

He slams the door shut. Megan looks at Dawn.

MEGAN
See how they are? You can't stay here.

DAWN
They are my parents.

MEGAN
What does that matter?

DAWN
I owe them something.

MEGAN
For having you accidentally? They owe you a life. I can show you how to live.

Dawn stares at Megan and breaks into a big smile.

IN THE HALLWAY

Julia is in Gerry's face.

JULIA
What did you say about our daughter?

GERRY

She's making things up to make us fight.

JULIA

She's doing a good job of it.

ROD

Stop it. We have to get rid of this body. Dawn can't see it.

He and Gerry walk over to Fletcher and lift him with a maximum of grunting. They carry it to the stairs.

ON THE STAIRWAY

Navigating the stairs, they trip and fall down them in a heap, the corpse on top of Gerry. He screams.

UPSTAIRS

Dawn comes out of her room and leans over the railing at the top of the stairs.

DAWN

Mom? Dad? What are you doing?

DOWNSTAIRS

The men scramble to their feet.

JULIA

She mustn't see it. Hide it, quick!

GERRY

Take it to the back.

They pick it up and move it down the hallway. Gerry stops in front of the studio door.

GERRY

In here.

JULIA

Not in my studio! Where will I work?

GERRY

Screw the work. This is more important. We can lock it in here. Open it.

ROD

Hurry.

Julia disgustedly opens it.

IN THE STUDIO

They carry the body inside, knocking over paintings and paint. Gerry kicks some canvases out of the way. Rod accidentally puts his foot through Julia's latest work.

JULIA

Rod!

GERRY

Stop over-reacting.

Julia runs from the room.

The men move the body to a corner. As they do so, the gun slips out of Rod's belt and falls to the floor. They plop the body down and Gerry scoops up the gun.

GERRY

Let's go.

He leaves. Rod watches him go, hesitates, but then follows.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Julia sits, steaming, on the sofa, smoking a cigarette. Gerry waves the gun around.

GERRY

We have to get Dawn out of here, get rid of the body and then we're fine.

JULIA

(coldly)

Your plans have been working out so well so far.

GERRY

Don't give me that tone..

JULIA

(standing, in his face)

You try to scare me out of my home, make sexual remarks about our daughter..

GERRY

I told you..

ROD

Both of you just shut..

Gerry's blackberry buzzes. He snatches it out angrily and yells into it.

GERRY

Fletcher's dead! You can have his body. We had nothing to do with it!

He stands, listening, then hangs up.

ROD

Did they say anything?

GERRY

They whispered "we're coming".

JULIA
Let's get the girls.

GERRY
No. Let's move the body and the case.
Then they have nothing on us.

ROD
Let's just give them the case.

GERRY
Give them my money?

And the lights go out. Julia screams. There's the sound of a crash from outside.

GERRY
Shit! Where's the gun?

JULIA
Where's Dawn?

ROD
I'll get her. You stay down here and don't move.

GERRY
I'll get to the fucking fuse box once I find the gun.

UPSTAIRS

Rod stumbles up the stairs, fumbles around in a closet and comes up with a flashlight.

He flashes it towards Dawn's bedroom and pushes open the door.

HIS P.O.V.

The light pans across an empty room.

IN THE KITCHEN

In the darkness lit only by the moon outside, Julia has found her way into the kitchen. She opens a drawer and pulls out a big, deadly-looking knife.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Gerry finally finds his gun, then hears a banging sound from the back door. He heads that way.

IN THE HALLWAY

Gerry creeps one way, Julia the other. As they near each other, they pause, peering into the darkness. Julia sees movement, lashes out with her knife. Gerry's gun goes off.

Then the lights come back on. Julia and Gerry are at each other's throats. Gerry's bleeding from a knife wound. There's a bullet hole in a nearby wall.

Rod runs into the hallway.

ROD
She did it. The girls were back near
the fusebox. They ran back upstairs.

GERRY
She? She's making us kill each other.

JULIA
Oh, Gerry, I didn't mean..

ROD
We have to call the police now.

JULIA
What would they do?

GERRY
Put us under arrest for suspicion in
Fletcher's death.

He bandages his wound with part of his shirt, brandishes the gun.

GERRY
We've moved the body so many times,
there's no telling how he died.

He motions them both back into the living room.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

As they walk in, Gerry sees the wall safe open and empty.

ROD
She said she got into it. Lord knows
how.

Gerry kicks at the unfinished fireplace, breaking it apart, smashing
stones to the floor.

GERRY
She's got my money. She's got their
money. And she's playing us all for
idiots.

He turns to Rod and Julia.

GERRY
She's the only thing stopping us from
solving this little problem.

JULIA
Gerry, it's far from little..

GERRY
We would have dumped the body, hidden
the money. But she's in the way.
There's only one answer.

He becomes very quiet for a moment, eying them both with a crazed look.

GERRY
We have to kill her.

ROD
No.

JULIA
That's nuts!

GERRY
What choice do we have? They'll be here and she'll be dancing around telling them it was all our fault.

ROD
We could just let her walk away.

GERRY
They'll want to know where she is. And where Fletcher is. We can give them both bodies.

ROD
We can't do this.

GERRY
Yes, we can. They're degenerates and drug-dealers. No one will care.

ROD
Dawn will.

JULIA
Leave her out of this.

DAWN (O.S.)
Leave me out of what?

Dawn stands in the doorway, Megan behind her.

GERRY
Megan has to go. She can't stay.

MEGAN
Sure I can.

JULIA
(manufacturing quickly)
We had a call that her father isn't well and she should go to him.

MEGAN
But..

GERRY
Now you wouldn't want your poor father to be without his dear daughter, would you?

DAWN

I'll go with her. You wanted me out of the house for a few days.

MEGAN

Yay! We'll go together. Let's pack.

They laugh and run upstairs.

JULIA

What do we do now?

GERRY

Come upstairs with me. You keep Dawn in her room. I'll take care of Megan.

ROD

You can't just kill her. What's she done?

GERRY

Torn down our lives, torn us apart.

ROD

Maybe there wasn't anything worth keeping together.

He storms out of the room.

GERRY

You with me?

Julia nods and they go up the stairs.

IN THE FRONT YARD

Rod sits on the edge of the porch, his head in his hands.

IN DAWN'S ROOM

Gerry and Julia enter the room like storm troopers; the girls are laughing and throwing clothes at each other. They freeze when the adults come in.

JULIA

Dawn, honey, let Mom help you. Gerry and Megan have to have a talk.

MEGAN

I don't need to talk to him.

GERRY

Yes, you do.

He roughly grabs her by the arm and forces her out the door.

Dawn watches them go, turns to her mother.

DAWN

Mom, can Megan live with us?

EXT. BACK YARD -- NIGHT

Gerry pushes Megan out the back door of the house and into the nether regions of the yard, near the partially built pool house.

He takes the gun out, points it at her.

GERRY

You played us for saps.

MEGAN

I didn't make you anything but what you already are.

GERRY

You promised me we'd be together.

MEGAN

We are together, right now. Or haven't you noticed?

GERRY

We just want to be rid of you.

MEGAN

No, you don't. You want just the opposite. You want me all the time.

GERRY

(wavering)

No.. you have to go.

MEGAN

The neighbors will hear.

GERRY

I have that all set up. Told them about a burglar. You're it.

Megan unbuttons her blouse and pulls it open.

MEGAN

If you want to shoot me, do it in the heart, because of all the passion there for you.

She takes her top completely off, standing half-naked in the moonlight.

MEGAN

Do it, Gerry, do it.

He jumps at her and the gun goes off.

IN DAWN'S ROOM

Julia and Dawn jump at the sound of the shot.

DAWN

Mom?

ON THE FRONT PORCH

Rod jumps up and runs around the house.

IN THE BACKYARD

The gun hit nothing. It lies on the ground next to Gerry and Megan. Gerry holds Megan by the waist, kneeling before her, sobbing. She strokes his head.

GERRY

I'm so unhappy here. I only wanted to be happy.

MEGAN

I know.

GERRY

You made me alive again. You're all I want.

Megan nods, then sees Rod coming around the house. He looks at her.

ROD

Go inside.

She does, secretly picking up the gun. Rod lifts Gerry up.

ROD

You're fucking insane. She's only a girl. You would have killed her.

GERRY

(teary-eyed)

I can't let anyone else have her.

UPSTAIRS

Julia locks Dawn in her room with another key.

JULIA

Stay there until I say it's safe, honey.

Dawn pounds on the door from the other side.

DAWN (O.S.)

Mom!

Julia goes downstairs.

DOWNSTAIRS

Julia wanders the hallway, sees the door to her studio open a crack. She steels herself, walks inside.

IN THE STUDIO

One lone bulb burns intently. Megan sits in front of an empty canvas, painting.

She paints a portrait of Fletcher's corpse; she has it posed in a grotesque sitting position, the gun in his lap.

Julia looks from the gun to Megan.

JULIA
What are you doing?

MEGAN
Creating. Isn't that what women do?

Julia edges toward the gun.

JULIA
Creating what?

MEGAN
A world of my own. Where I can do what I want.

Julia's very near the gun, but Megan steps forward and places her hand on the gun. Near her hand, Fletcher's arm twitches slightly but the women don't see it.

MEGAN
Why do you stay?

JULIA
This is my house; this is my family. I have to stay.

MEGAN
Who says?

JULIA
You really try to put people off balance.

MEGAN
I don't think I've ever met anyone balanced.

Julia points to the body.

JULIA
Did he treat you badly?

MEGAN
Don't they all? I was a thing to him and he liked to control me. Sound familiar?

JULIA
Wasn't he disgusting?

MEGAN
At least he liked poetry.

She steps forward, as if on stage.

MEGAN

"Poor perfect beauty, a grand river
breaks
As your tears fall into my anxious
soil.."

She does a little dance turn as she speaks, gesturing to all Julia's paintings.

MEGAN

What does Gerry think of this room?

JULIA

He makes sure I know it's all his. He
paid for it, and he's..

MEGAN

Not rich. I know. And Rod, do you
love him?

JULIA

Underneath he's the same. Wants women
to do what he wants. Just a gentler
leash.

Megan picks up the gun; Julia backs off, nervous.

MEGAN

Scum! They're all scum. They trash
your paintings, your creations. They
control your life.

She points the gun at Fletcher's corpse.

MEGAN

Let's put all of them in that fat dead
body and get rid of them.

JULIA

What?

MEGAN

Let's say they're all right in there.
What do we do to them?

She aims the gun at Fletcher, one eye over the gun's sights.

FLETCHER

Lies there, but his eyelids flutter.

HIS P.O.V.

Megan has the gun pointed right at his face.

MEGAN

We shoot them, we kill them, we break
the bond. Get rid of the leash.

JULIA

Looks from the corpse to Megan.

JULIA
Are you crazy? Shooting a dead man?

MEGAN
It's the only thing I can shoot. Let's
do it. You do it.

She gives Julia the gun. Julia is shocked, but takes it and holds it unsteadily.

MEGAN
Do it.

Julia waves the gun, points it at Megan. Her eyes become intense and focused. She starts to pull the trigger.

Megan stares at her, then smiles.

MEGAN
Am I really the source of your troubles?
Did I steal your men away from you? Or
would they have gone away with any young
girl?

She walks closer and closer to the muzzle of the gun.

MEGAN
It's them! It's men -- disgusting,
obsessive, controlling men. They're
all in there.

She points to the corpse.

Julia looks at the body, looks around at the paintings that the men ruined.

MEGAN
It's men, men, men..

JULIA
Men, men, men, men!

FLETCHER'S P.O.V.

Julia aims the gun right at him.

THE GUN

Goes off twice.

THE BODY

Jerks a little as the shots hit.

JULIA AND MEGAN

Laugh.

MEGAN
How do you feel?

JULIA
Good. Powerful.

MEGAN
That's right. You're in control. You
don't need men.

Gerry and Rod appear at the door.

GERRY
What is going on?

ROD
Are you all right?

JULIA
Go away.

ROD
What?

Julia points the gun at them.

JULIA
You are not needed. Leave.

GERRY
We have to talk..

JULIA
When I'm ready, we'll talk. Go.

They do. Julia laughs loudly.

MEGAN
You were great.

She touches Julia's hand, brushes her ear with her lips.

MEGAN
Stay here with me.

Julia now points the gun at her.

JULIA
I'm in charge. And I don't need you,
either.

MEGAN
(scared)
Julia?

IN THE LIVING ROOM

The men pace back and forth as Julia enters, holding the gun.

GERRY
You got the gun -- give it to me.

She pulls it away from him.

JULIA
You are not in charge. I am.

GERRY
Did you kill her?

JULIA
She's not the problem. And why didn't you, anyway?

GERRY
I couldn't. She reminds me of Dawn.

Rod snorts at that.

GERRY
Don't be so high and mighty, mister. You're the one most likely to be blamed here.

ROD
You're out of your mind.

GERRY
How do we know you haven't met Fletcher or Megan before? How do we know where you're from?

ROD
Dammit, I've stood by you through all of this. Julia, say something. You know I'm right.

JULIA
Do I?

ROD
(very hurt)
Julia..

She hands him the gun.

JULIA
You kill her.

ROD
I can't..

GERRY
If you don't, you take the fall.

JULIA
It's you or her.

ROD
So that's the way it is. And you're ordering me to do it?

JULIA

I'm telling you what you have to do.

He throws the gun at her and she catches it.

ROD

Somebody's got to do something. But not with that.

He leaves the room, heads for the studio.

Gerry and Julia remain. He tries to get close to her, but she gestures him away with the gun.

GERRY

I wouldn't have left with her. It was nothing, a fling. I didn't mean it.

Julia ignores him.

GERRY

Julia, you know I need you. You're my wife!

He kneels down, across the room from her.

GERRY

Please, Julia. We have a home, a family. I'll do anything you want. I'll fix this fireplace.

He awkwardly puts some of the stones back in place.

GERRY

Anything. You have to take me back. Dawn needs you. I need you.

She deigns to look at him.

JULIA

Do you?

GERRY

Oh yes!

JULIA

(holding the gun on him)
Prove it. Crawl to me.

He starts to crawl on his belly across the rug.

JULIA

Say I'm in charge.

GERRY

You're in charge. You've always been in charge. I'm nothing, a worm without you.

He's almost at her feet.

GERRY

You'll stay with me, won't you? Once we get rid of her. She makes us all crazy. We're not really like that.

Julia looks down at him.

JULIA

I'll stay. On my terms.

He hugs her knees, buries his head in her lap.

IN THE STUDIO

Rod enters the studio and sees Megan sitting next to Fletcher's body, dangling her feet and smiling.

MEGAN

Come to kill me, too?

ROD

You've got to go.

MEGAN

(her smile wavers)

You're going to do it.

ROD

Someone's got to.

She kneels before him, exposes her throat.

MEGAN

Strangle me. I want to look into your eyes as I die.

ROD

You're not going to die. Just leave. Climb out the window and don't come back.

MEGAN

(standing)

But I'm having fun here.

ROD

Fun? Has it all been fun and games?

MEGAN

Pretty much. It's what I do.

ROD

Were there ever any drugs?

MEGAN

Fletcher liked to play make-believe. Pretended he was so dangerous. But it was all just pretend.

ROD

And the mafia? The ones after the drugs?

Megan takes her own cell out of her pocket.

MEGAN

I made all those calls. Pretty good game, huh? Dawn helped with the last few.

ROD

Just go.

MEGAN

What will you do? You can't stay with them.

ROD

No. Not after what I've seen of them. They're the worst..

MEGAN

We could do the world a favor.

ROD

What are you saying?

MEGAN

They could go like Fletcher.

ROD

(his mind racing)
Like Fletcher? You didn't.

MEGAN

(shrugging)
There are drugs that look like heart attacks. And some that paralyze the nervous system.

She walks over to the body and kicks it.

MEGAN

It doesn't matter. After all that's been done to it, it won't look like drugs.

ROD

Get out of here. Now.

MEGAN

Not without her.

ROD

Who?

MEGAN

Dawn. I have to save her. You want to save her, don't you?

ROD

She has to stay here.

MEGAN

She's waiting in the front yard for me.

Megan walks to the front window and opens it.

MEGAN

Come with us. You're not like them.
We can be a good family together.

She starts to climb outside.

MEGAN

What have you got here, anyway?

ROD

You're insane. I have to take care of
Dawn.

MEGAN

So take care of her. Come on.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Gerry rushes into the room where Julia sits. He's carrying the
bag of money.

GERRY

She left this upstairs. Now we've got
it.

He takes a stone from the fireplace and smashes the lock. Ripping
it open, he pours the contents on the floor.

It's all blank paper, no money.

JULIA

My god.

GERRY

She's still got it. And she's probably
leaving right now. With Rod.

He runs out into the hallway to the studio.

GERRY (O.S.)

They're gone!

He comes back into the room, frantic, looks out a window.

GERRY

They're both going towards the front.
What do we do? We have to go after
them.

JULIA

Let them go. We'll blame them.

Julia's cell phone rings.

GERRY

Could be those drug-dealers.

GERRY (CONT'D)

What if they come here?

She holds up the gun.

JULIA

Where are the rest of the bullets?

EXT. FRONT YARD -- SUNRISE

Megan hooks up with Dawn, who gives a little yell and takes her hand.

DAWN

Freedom!

MEGAN

Not for them.

Rod catches up to them.

ROD

What are you talking about?

MEGAN

The gun, fingerprints, powder traces on both their hands, the dead body.

ROD

You framed them.

MEGAN

I saved her. That's what I do. Find kids that were stuck in places like I was. Then I set them free.

ROD

(to Dawn)

Is that what you want? Your parents in jail for something they didn't do?

DAWN

I never want to see them again as long as I live.

Rod grabs both girls by the arms.

ROD

We have to go back.

MEGAN

No!

Megan breaks free from him but he holds Dawn tightly.

ROD

We're going back.

INSIDE

The phone continues to ring as Gerry hands Julia the bullets and she loads the gun.

There's a sound outside.

GERRY
Did you hear that?

They both head toward the front door.

GERRY
We'll say it was the burglar. They're
criminals. The police will believe us.

JULIA
Then we'll send them after Megan and
Rod.

The door handle starts moving, a shadow on the porch behind the door.

Julia raises the gun, her hand on the trigger. Gerry puts his hand on hers.

They fire together.

There's a gasp. The door opens inwards.

Rod stands there, looking at them, shot in the heart. He holds his hand over the wound, stares at Julia, slumps forward.

Behind Rod stands Dawn, looking at them in horror.

DAWN
You killed him!

She runs off. Gerry and Julia stand frozen for a moment, then Julia runs forward.

JULIA
Dawn!

OUTSIDE

The Duffys race from their house to the Banks' front door. Mr. Duffy is on his cell, calling 911. Julia tries to run past them, but Mr. Duffy stops her.

DAWN

Runs down the street. As she nears the auto repair shop, the now-fixed Mercedes pulls up next to her. The window rolls down to reveal Megan.

Police sirens wail nearby. One cop car passes them.

MEGAN
Get in.

Dawn does.

IN THE CAR

Megan starts the engine and looks over at Dawn, whose eyes are filled with tears.

MEGAN

See how they are? They killed him.
It's a tough world. Good thing you
have me to protect you.

She touches Dawn's wet cheek.

MEGAN

There's so much I have to teach you.

Dawn nods and they drive off.

OUTSIDE THE MERCEDES

A police car rushes past them, lights flashing.

MR. DUFFY (O.S.)

Gerry, what is all this?

GERRY

Stares in horror at the tableau in front of his house. Julia now sits next to the dying Rod, cradling his head and holding his hand.

Mr. Duffy stands in the doorway with his wife, holding the bag and the bundles of paper.

MR. DUFFY

There's a dead body inside, and this
paper that looks like stacks of money.

MRS. DUFFY

What's going on here?

The flashing lights of the police car appear down the street.

GERRY

I can explain everything. I can
explain..

He falls to his knees as the police arrive.

FADE OUT:

THE END